

A Chassidisher **Derher**

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בה

Sacred & Secure

The Integrity of Eretz Yisroel

**"This Is Only
the Beginning!"**

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW
WITH RABBI YOSHI GRONER

Interpreting the Depth

THE REBBE'S TEACHINGS ON HIS FATHER'S TORAH



AV 5781
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has been made possible

לזכות

הרה"ת ר' שלום וזוגתו מרת שרה
וילדיהם ישראל, ריסא, חי' מושקא,
אמונה מלכה, יעקב יהודה, ולאה שיחיו
אייזיקוביץ

בקשר עם כ"ף מנחם אב
יום הסתלקות כ"ק הרה"ג הרה"ח המקובל וכו'
ר' לוי יצחק ז"ל שניאורסאהן
אביו של כ"ק אדמו"ר

ולע"נ זקנינו הרה"ת והחסיד בעל מרץ למופת
ר' יעקב יהודה בר' יהושע ע"ה

העכט



On Chof Menachem-Av, we mark the *yom hahilula* of the *ga'on*, *mekubal*, and *tzaddik*, the Rebbe's saintly father, Harav Levi Yitzchok.

In addition to being a towering personality and giant of the last century, we know from the Rebbe's description of his father that Harav Levi Yitzchok wasn't just another special *tzaddik* and *talmid chacham*. "After my father-in-law, the Rebbe left Russia," the Rebbe once explained, "my father was the only remaining leader in that country who was a descendant of the Alter Rebbe, the Mittler Rebbe, and the Tzemach Tzedek, and he was therefore an address for all to turn to for guidance, etc. Eventually, he was arrested on account of his activities in spreading Yiddishkeit and Chassidus, and he ultimately passed away in *galus*..."¹ Incredible words, usually reserved only for the Rabbeim, the *nesi'ei hador*.

On another occasion, the Rebbe indicated that his foremost "rebbe," his teacher of Torah, was his father. Based on a statement of Rabbi Elazar about his teacher, Rabbi Yochanan, the Rebbe revealed that... "Rabbi Elazar was a student of Rabbi Yochanan, but not his son. Nevertheless he didn't specify that all his knowledge was imparted by his master, as this was obvious. How much more so in my case—a student who is also a son. Everyone knows the source of my knowledge."²

On many occasions, the Rebbe extolled his father's *mesiras nefesh* and the fact that unlike many others, he actually paid the ultimate price, giving up his very life for Yiddishkeit and even being buried in a remote location in *galus*.

Throughout the years, the Rebbe established *kollelim* carrying his father's name and undertook many initiatives in his *zechus*, most notably—publishing and elucidating the remnants of Harav Levi Yitzchok's many teachings and writings (the majority of which were lost). In fact, one of the routine subjects discussed by the Rebbe at virtually every Shabbos farbrengen, alongside a *sicha* on Rashi, is a section of Harav Levi Yitzchok's writings.³

In one fascinating *sicha*, the Rebbe speaks about the significance of the name Levi Yitzchok and its connection with the *geula*. The Rebbe also mentions that Harav Levi Yitzchok is a descendant of Dovid Hamelech, and the seventh generation from the Alter Rebbe.⁴

The significance of "seven" and the seventh generation is of course well known in *dor hashvi'i*. Chazal say that "כל—השביעין חביבין"—all sevenths are cherished." It was Moshe Rabbeinu, the seventh leader from Avraham Avinu who succeeded in bringing the *Shechina* down to earth, and it is our generation, the seventh since the founding of

Chabad that will succeed in completing the job and bring Moshiach.



Taking into account that the Rebbe places his father as the seventh generation from the Alter Rebbe (by birth), this indicates that the Rebbe, in a certain sense, is of the **eighth** generation.

This can be appreciated in context of a *maamar*⁵ that the Rebbe said explaining the two aspects of Moshe Rabbeinu's greatness: One is the fact that he was the seventh, and the second aspect is that he also possessed an element of "eight," highlighted on the eighth day of the inauguration of the *Mishkan*—"וַיְהִי בַיּוֹם הַשְּׁמִינִי."

Seven represents the order of this world, as formulated in the six days of creation together with Shabbos. But even in Shabbos itself, there is an element of "eight," higher than creation altogether. This higher element of Shabbos is experienced towards the end of Shabbos, at the time of "רעוא דרעוין."

The same is true about Moshe Rabbeinu: Although he succeeded in bringing down the *Shechina* at *Mattan Torah* due to his status as the seventh leader, he has a part in the process of the final *geula* too, which is higher than the whole of creation, representative in the number eight. Chazal famously say that "משה הוא גואל ראשון הוא," "גואל אחרון," Moshe was our first redeemer, and he will be our final redeemer. Chassidus explains further that the *gematriya* of "משה" plus "אחד" equals 358, the same *gematriya* as משיח.

The Rebbe explains that Avraham Avinu's accomplishments didn't have a real lasting effect in the world, whereas Moshe Rabbeinu, the seventh, was able to bring the highest levels of *Elokus* into the natural world order. Then, with the construction of the *Mishkan*, he was able to draw from the level of "*shemini*"—the eighth element, even higher than creation.

However, even Moshe Rabbeinu's work in revealing *Elokus* was only temporary. The true and complete revelation will be with the final *geula* and the coming of Moshiach.

In this sense, while the Rebbe spoke of our generation as the *dor hashvi'i*, the seventh generation, it must certainly be said that the Rebbe also includes the element of the "**eight**," just like Moshe Rabbeinu who included both these elements in his *avoda*.

It is therefore fascinating to see how the Rebbe speaks of his father as the seventh generation from the Alter Rebbe, adding the element of "*shemini*," the eighth generation (by birth) in the Rebbe himself.

Although it is true that, as mentioned, the Rebbe considered everything he taught to be an extension of the Torah he learned from his father, in earlier years, the Rebbe rarely referenced this clearly. As the years progressed, the Rebbe mentioned Harav Levi Yitzchok more often and more openly. In 5730*, the Rebbe published his father's writings and began teaching them at farbrengens. The Rebbe started including his father's teachings in the *maamarim* that cited Torah from each of the Rabbeim. Also with the ensuing years, the Rebbe sang his father's *niggun* much more frequently, at almost every farbrengen.

Perhaps it could be said that as we drew closer to the revelation of Moshiach, it became an appropriate time to include this element of "*shemini*," in addition to the general *avoda of dor hashvi'i*.

May we indeed merit the full and final revelation of Moshiach, upon the completion of all of our *avoda*, and as the Rebbe says in one of the Chof Menachem-Av *maamarim*:

Even *tzaddikim* take part in the *avoda* of transforming darkness and *kelipa* into light. Although they themselves are not fazed by the darkness of *galus*, nevertheless they experience *nisyonos* and challenges, demanding that they act with *mesiras nefesh*, and in this manner they refine even the lowest of *kelipos*. With their *avoda*, they bequeathed to their children and to their students these qualities of *mesiras nefesh*, ensuring that we too have all these advantages, without having to experience any of the hardships and challenges *chas v'shalom*. We will no longer need to have *mesiras nefesh* in the literal sense, but instead we will fulfill the concept by giving away our own will for Hashem. This will bring the final *geula* when we will be reunited with the *baal hahilula* and go all together to Eretz Yisroel, may it be *teikef umiyad Mammosh*.⁶

A Chassidisher Derher

ט"ו תמוז ה'תשפ"א

שנת המאה ועשרים להולדת כ"ק אדמו"ר

1. Shabbos Parshas Va'eschanan 5748.
2. Chof Av 5739.
3. See *Interpreting the Depth* in this issue.
4. Shabbos Parshas Ekev 5749.
5. Vayehi Bayom Hashmini 5742.
6. V'haya Ekev Tishme'un 5727.



If you do it with joy, it will last

The Rambam opens Sefer Zmanim with the *possuk*: “נְחַלְתִּי—יְגִדְוֶהֶךָ לְעוֹלָם, כִּי שָׁשׂוֹן לִבִּי הָיָה—I inherited Your testimonies forever, for they are the joy of my heart.”

In the Rambam’s own words, Sefer Zmanim deals specifically with those mitzvos and *halachos* that are limited to certain times of the year, for example Shabbos which is once a week, Pesach in the month of Nissan, and so on.

It is therefore perplexing that the Rambam opens this *sefer* with a *possuk* that refers to mitzvos that are “forever”—nonstop. This term would better fit mitzvos such as believing in Hashem and loving Hashem which are constant *mitzvos* and are forever; not just

because they reoccur consistently, but that they are constant obligations with no interruptions.

The answer is:

Precisely because the laws in Sefer Mada and Sefer Ahava deal with mitzvos that one must perform continuously, the Rambam need not cite a *possuk* to show that these are eternal concepts: The *halachos* themselves indicate that.

In Sefer Zmanim, however, which deals with mitzvos that do not apply all the time but only at certain intervals, it is necessary to ensure that one not think that these mitzvos are in any way only periodical and not constant.

At the very least, it is necessary to ensure that even when learning these time-sensitive *halachos* at a different time of the year, one does not learn the laws with less enthusiasm and vitality, since they technically apply only at certain times.

The Rambam therefore begins specifically this *sefer* with the *possuk*, “I have inherited Your testimonies forever.” The mitzvos in this *sefer* are *eidus*—“testimonies”—testifying to certain events. Shabbos is a testimony that Hashem created the world; Pesach is a testimony (and remembrance) to the exodus from Mitzrayim; Sukkos is a testimony that Hashem had the Yidden dwell in



מחזור הארבעים 40 CYCLES OF LEARNING RAMBAM

לזכות שלוחי כ"ק אדמו"ר בכל קצוי תבל
להצלחה רבה ומופלגה למעלה מן המשוער

נדפס ע"י

שלוחי כ"ק אדמו"ר

לפאלם ביטש גארדענס, פלארידא

הרה"ת ר' דוד צבי וזוגתו מרת חנה שיחיו

ויגלר

Sukkos when they left Mitzrayim. Similarly, the other mitzvos in this book are testimonies to events that took place at certain times, and are therefore kept only at stated times.

Nevertheless, these mitzvos must be kept in the manner of, "I have inherited Your testimonies **forever**." These mitzvos are part of the Torah, and the "Torah which Moshe commanded us is the inheritance of the congregation of Yaakov" throughout all generations—forever.

They are also "forever," by means of their influence that affects the whole year. Shabbos is one example: The commandment, "Remember the Shabbos day to sanctify it" is an obligation that

applies to all the days of the week. Pesach too: One must remember the *yetzias Mitzrayim* every day of the year.

The rest of the *possuk* then explains the reason for this: "For they are the rejoicing of my heart." When the mitzvah of Shabbos, for example, is done with "the rejoicing of my heart," then, although Shabbos is actually kept only one day a week, it nevertheless transcends time for the person. A person lives with the idea of Shabbos on Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, until the next Shabbos, when one rises yet higher in his appreciation of Shabbos. The same goes for the meaning of

all the other festivals in the *sefer* of Zmanim—because they are the "rejoicing of my heart," they permeate the rest of the year until the celebration of that festival next year.

The Rambam begins the *sefer* of Zmanim with this verse as an introduction to the study of the whole book. Although one will be learning about mitzvos that are fulfilled only at certain times, they are nevertheless, in the category of "I have inherited Your testimonies forever" — for "they are the rejoicing of my heart."

(Adapted from Sichas

Erev Shavuos 5744.

Parts of this translation originally appeared in Sichos in English.)



לעבן מיטן רבין



JEM 102917

ע"י בנם
ר' יקותיאל יהודה
וזוגתו מרת פעסל לאה ומשפחתם שיחיו
רוהר

טור 'לעבן מיטן רבין' הוקדש לזכרון ולעילוי נשמת
ר' שמואל ב"ר יהושע אליהו ז"ל
ואשתו מרת שרה ע"ה בת ר' יקותיאל ומרת לאה הי"ד
ת"נ צ"ב

Presidential Visit

MENACHEM AV 5726*



President Shneur Zalman Shazar was a close friend of Lubavitch and a Chossid of the Rebbe. During his many years in Israeli politics, he was involved in numerous projects on behalf of the Rebbe and Chabad in Eretz Yisroel, and he visited the Rebbe a number of times during his trips to America.¹

When he visited New York in the summer of 5726*, he very much wanted to see the Rebbe,

but this came with more difficulties than expected. Mr. Shazar had already become President of Israel at that time, and some Israeli officials felt that it would break protocol for the President to go to the Rebbe. If Mr. Shazar wanted to see the Rebbe—they contended—it would be more appropriate for the Rebbe to visit him.

As a result of this dilemma, when Mr. Shazar arrived in the U.S. (on a Thursday) he called

mazkirus to inquire if it is possible for the Rebbe to come visit him. The Rebbe responded that he will be visiting the Ohel the next day, and only afterwards will he be able to give an answer.

The next day (Friday) at 3:00 in the afternoon, Mr. Shazar received a telephone call from Rabbi Hodakov telling him that the Rebbe wanted to speak to him. The Rebbe spoke to Mr. Shazar on the phone, and told him that he was not granted permission by his father-in-law to go visit him. The Rebbe said to him in Russian: "I am no longer *balabos*!" i.e. it is not up to him to decide to go.

Mr. Shazar was still under pressure to cancel his visit to the Rebbe, but ultimately his wish to see the Rebbe prevailed.

THURSDAY, 11 MENACHEM-AV

At 7:30 this morning, Rabbis Hodakov, Mindel and Kazarnovsky drove together to the airport to greet President Shazar upon his arrival as per the Rebbe's *hora'ah*. (Rabbi Hodakov wore a *sirtuk* for the trip.)

MOTZEI SHABBOS PARSHAS VA'ESCHANAN, 13 MENACHEM-AV

Already before Maariv, police arrived to prepare the area outside 770 in anticipation for the important visitor coming to see the Rebbe tonight. The tumult grew as a crowd began to form in front of 770, and more and more people began to arrive, hoping to catch a glimpse of this momentous and historical meeting between the Rebbe and Mr. Shazar, the President of Israel at the time.

The Rebbe came into the shul for Maariv at 9:00 p.m. After Maariv, the commotion and frantic preparations began in earnest: Members from the Shin Bet (Israeli Security Agency) and officials from the Israeli Consulate in Manhattan arrived at 770, and at 10:00 p.m. Rabbi Hodakov was asked to provide an (estimated) schedule for the evening. Everyone was asked to vacate the Merkos office, and Rabbi Hodakov spoke alone with a representative of the Israeli security team.

Meanwhile, Reb Shmuel Levitin and Reb Moshe Leib Rodshtein went into the Rebbe's room and they were instructed to go—together with Reb Itche Goldin and some other Chassidim—to the hotel where President Shazar was staying.



CROWDS GATHER OUTSIDE 770



MEETING WITH PRESIDENT SHAZAR AT HIS HOTEL ROOM. R-L REB MOSHE LEIB RODSHTein, REB SHMUEL LEVITIN, PRESIDENT SHAZAR, REB ITCHE GOLDIN

More police arrived and Rabbi Hodakov instructed that everyone leave the building of 770. Whoever was still there went outside, including those working in the Merkos office. Police positioned themselves in front of the entrance to keep the area under surveillance. There were police personnel stationed in the *chatzer* outside the *zal* too. Inside, the *zal* was arranged to welcome the President and his entourage when they would arrive.

Accompanied by the delegation of distinguished Chassidim who had come to greet him, Mr. Shazar set out from his hotel. Whilst the motorcade led by a police escort sped through the streets of New York City, Mr. Shazar farbrenged and chatted with the delegation of Chassidim.

The crowd standing outside 770 was estimated by police to be around 4,000 people.

Minutes before President Shazar arrived at 770, Rabbi Hodakov came outside and asked that when the car arrives, Chassidim should sing Napoleon's march to greet him.

At 11:30 p.m., the President and his entourage—a procession of about 10 cars—pulled up in front of 770. Rabbi Groner immediately notified the Rebbe of their arrival, and the Rebbe made his way towards the entrance of 770.

President Shazar stepped out of his car and walked up the pathway towards the front door where the Rebbe was waiting to greet him. When Mr. Shazar finally reached the Rebbe, they kissed and embraced each other. Shazar—completely overwhelmed with emotion—grasped the Rebbe's beard with his hand, and cried out, "Rebbe, Rebbe!", his face white from excitement.

Holding Mr. Shazar's arm, the Rebbe walked with him into the *zal*, where the president kissed the *paroches* on the *aron kodesh*. He then introduced to the Rebbe the officials and diplomats who accompanied him on the visit.

Afterwards, the Rebbe walked together with Mr. Shazar through the hallway towards his room, and along with Mr. Shazar's entire entourage and a few Chassidim, they entered the Rebbe's room. There

was hardly any space in the room due to the large number of people present.

When Mr. Shazar entered the Rebbe's room, the Rebbe pointed to his table and said: "By this very table, many Jews poured their hearts out—and this I couldn't bring along if I would make the visit!"²

Everyone settled down, and Mr. Shazar began by asking the Rebbe about the *halacha* of making a "*shehecheyanu*" (upon seeing a friend after a long period of time). This led to a short discussion on the topic, and the Rebbe went into various details regarding an instance when someone sees a friend for the first time after 30 days, and when the two friends corresponded with each other through sending letters to one another.

Mr. Shazar proudly informed the Rebbe that he is still keeping the *shiurim* in *nigleh* and Chassidus which the Rebbe had instructed him to start the last time he was here, and he specified the names of the participants in his *shiur*. He also spoke about the big *koch* being made for young children to learn Chassidus.



JEM 102916

He shared with the Rebbe about his desire to go to a place where there is a set schedule for learning Chassidus, but that due to his position as president he was unable to do so until now. Now however, construction for the new “Presidential Residence” was underway, and the location was right across the street from a shul in which there is a set *kvius* for learning Chassidus!

At some point during their conversation, the Rebbe presented Mr. Shazar with a newly printed *kuntres* containing a *maamar* from the Rebbe Maharash on the *possuk* “נחמו נחמו עמי”, which was said exactly 100 years earlier, in the year 5626* (תרכ”ו). The Rebbe told him that the *maamar* was printed especially in honor of the visit, and that the *kuntres* he is receiving is the very first copy. The Rebbe also wrote a personal note on the *kuntres* before presenting it to him.

Mr. Shazar told the Rebbe that he also brought him a gift, and the Rebbe said to him that he will take a look at it later in the *yeichidus*.

Mr. Shazar commented about the fact that there are those who exhibit a hostile attitude towards

Eretz Yisroel (and he mentioned the names of certain individuals)—but the Rebbe displays love for Eretz Yisroel. The Rebbe responded that deep down, they too possess a love for Eretz Yisroel.

Mr. Shazar’s personal doctor had come along with him on this visit, and during the *yeichidus* he voiced his concern that the meeting should not go on for too long so as not to put too much strain on him, which could adversely affect his health... The Rebbe interjected, “We are not discussing personal matters here; we are speaking about matters that have to do with thousands of Yidden!”

The Rebbe then said to Mr. Shazar that even though he is only a representative of *anash*, nevertheless, being that his father-in-law the Frieddiker Rebbe had tremendous *mesiras nefesh* on behalf of Russian Jewry, the outcome of their discussion will certainly hold some benefit for the Russian Jews.

After about a half hour of talking, Reb Shmuel Levitin commented that Mr. Shazar would probably like to speak with the Rebbe in private as well. At this point, everyone in the room left, and Mr.



ENTERING THE ZAL

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THE REBBE PRESENTS PRESIDENT SHAZAR
WITH THE KUNTRES NACHAMU NACHAMU
AMI FROM THE REBBE MAHARASH

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Shazar and the Rebbe were left to speak in private. Mr. Shazar removed his hat and replaced it with a large, black *yarmulke*. During the *yechidus*, coffee was served.

Mr. Shazar presented the Rebbe with a small wooden box containing *kisvei yad*—handwritten manuscripts—from the Rebbe Rashab. These manuscripts had been in the possession of the Frieddiker Rebbe and were lost during the Holocaust. Later they were found at the municipal library in Warsaw and eventually made their way to Eretz Yisroel.

The doctor had said that the *yechidus* should not go on past 1:10 a.m. The *yechidus* began at 11:40 p.m.; after about a half hour everyone else left the room, and Mr. Shazar stayed alone with the Rebbe until 1:20 a.m., at which time photographers came into the room to take pictures and at 1:40 a.m. Shazar came out of the Rebbe's room.

After leaving the room, he went straight to the Merkos office where he was broadcast live on Israeli radio through the station *Kol Yisrael*. Mr. Shazar said that he is speaking now from the Rebbe's house, and that he had just come out from the Rebbe's room where he had a very heartwarming and genuine discussion with the Rebbe in which they discussed important and timely matters concerning—not only the fate of those living in Eretz Yisroel—but the fate of world Jewry as a whole. He expressed how extremely grateful he is to the Rebbe for giving him so much of his time... "And I must stop now, for the Rebbe has left his room to escort me..."

The Rebbe escorted Mr. Shazar to his car while they continued speaking along the way. The Rebbe wished a "*gut voch*" to Mr. Shazar, who then got into his car along with Rabbi Hodakov and a few other Chassidim who accompanied him back to his hotel. (Rabbi Krinsky also drove to the hotel in a separate car together with a few elder Chassidim.)

The whole time, police were protecting the Rebbe from the large crowds, and when the Rebbe turned to go back inside, two police officers escorted the Rebbe to the front door of 770 while holding his arms. The Rebbe thanked them and returned to his room.

The Rebbetzin went into the Rebbe's room and was there for about a half hour. The Rebbe left 770 to go home at 2:30 a.m., and a half hour later, the Chassidim who had escorted Mr. Shazar to his hotel returned. Rabbi Hodakov, who had also gone along

to the hotel, went into his office to call the Rebbe's home and give a report of the trip to the hotel.

~

After Mr. Shazar returned to Eretz Yisroel, he shared interesting details³ surrounding his visit to the Rebbe with Rabbi Ezriel Zelig Slonim:

"The Rebbe showed me the place where the Frieddiker Rebbe rejoiced on Simchas Torah and wept on Tisha B'av, saying, 'This I couldn't have brought to you.'

"The Rebbe also told my escorts, 'In this room, tens of thousands of Yidden received guidance and strength. This is why our meeting must take place here.'"

~

After Mr. Shazar returned to Eretz Yisroel, the Rebbe sent him a letter to greet him upon his arrival. "I want to once again express my heartfelt thanks and the great satisfaction and *nachas-ruach* you brought me with the precious gift...

"Of course, I appreciate from the depth of my heart the great pleasure you afforded me by coming for another face-to-face visit and for the opportunity to speak with you privately; even though the allotted time we had did not at all reflect the importance of the subjects we spoke about, and certainly not all the subjects we didn't yet speak about. We will, in due time, correspond about these issues in writing..."⁴ **T**

1. See *A Purim Guest*, Derher Adar II 5774.

2. Nossi V'Chossid p. 257.

3. Kfar Chabad 505, p. 39.

4. 17 Menachem-Av 5727.



PRESIDENT SHAZAR BROADCASTS ON KOL YISRAEL RADIO FROM THE MERKOS OFFICE



כתב יד קודש

Prioritizing Your Charity

In a letter to a Jewish individual who wanted to offer support for causes beyond the Jewish community, the Rebbe offers guidance on the importance of prioritizing one's own community first:



Dedicated by
Tzvi and Chana Morantz שיחיו
In honor of their
51st wedding anniversary
And in honor of their children
Rabbi Menachem Mendel and
Shoshana Scheiner and family
Boruch and Rochel Ahava
Waldman and family
שיחיו



In reply to your question on the content of my previous letter:

My intention was not to write merely about the theoretical and about people in general—since there are very **actual** [practical] and **urgent** matters that are important in **your life** right now. For example:

The **fact** is that you were born to Jewish parents and they raised you, etc. while being assisted by many other Jews [in your community]. **Everything** that you have (including your mental capacities, your emotions, your drive for action, and so on) were all made possible thanks to the above [nurturing you received]. It follows that:

- a) There is a **universally** accepted principle that when a **relative** is in **danger**, one should not waste his time philosophising and going about the whole world to find the most desperate people who need his help, etc.
- b) Another basic principle: The first thing one needs to do is to **repay** what is owed to those who helped him become a person of means that is capable of helping others (whether the individual people or the community as a whole, etc.). Only then can one consider who is next on his list to be helped and in what order, etc.

במענה לשאלתו בנוגע תוכן מכתבי הקודם: לא הייתה כוונתי לכתוב אליו בעניינים טיארטיים ובנוגע לבנ"א בכלל - בשעה שיש ענינים אקטואלים דחופים בחייו ומהם: עובדא היא שגולד להורים בנ"י והם גדלוהו כ' ובזה נסתייעו מעוד כו"כ מבנ"י. וכל מה שיש לו (הבנה, רגש מרץ וכו') נתאפשר רק הודות להנ"ל ומזה:

א) עקרון מקובל על הכל: כשקרוב נמצא בסכנה אין הזמ"ג - להתעסק בעניינים פילוסופיים ולשוטט בעולם לבחון מי העם החשוב ביותר לעזור וכו'.

ב) וג"ז עקרון כנ"ל - לכל לראש צ"ל פרע"ח לכל אלו (האישים, הסביבה וכו') שסייעוהו להעשות אדם שיכול לעזור לזולתו - ורק לאחר"ז יש מקום לחשבון מי קודם לעזור וכו'.

לזכות
הרה"ת ר' משה וזוגתו מרת שרה חנה
ומשפחתם שיחיו
גורארי'
טאמס ריווער, ניו ג'רסי

ספ

Sacred & Secure

The Rebbe's Campaign to Ensure
"Shleimus Haaretz"—the Integrity
of Eretz Yisroel

One of the Rebbe's most famous campaigns is *Shleimus Haaretz*, the call for Eretz Yisroel to remain complete and secure. In countless *sichos*, the Rebbe addressed the issue time and again, calling on the leaders of the Israeli government to chart a path that would lead them to be safe, strong, and following Hashem's directives.

For a comprehensive collection of the Rebbe's *sichos* on the topic, see *Karasi Vein Oneh*. For a more general overview of the Rebbe's connection to Eretz Yisroel, see *B'rega Ha'emet*, Kineret/Zmora-Bitan, 2017.



FOUNDATION 1: It's All Ours

Before approaching the topics of wars, land for peace, and Israeli policies, we need to ask ourselves a simple question. What right do we Yidden have over Eretz Yisroel?

Some might respond that the modern Israeli state gained its legitimacy with the United Nations vote of 1947, or perhaps earlier, with Lord Balfour's declaration in 1917. Others might point to the recognition of the international community in our day, and, more specifically, to the support of the United States. Some might even say that the Land of Israel is the Jewish homeland, where our kings, prophets, and farmers lived thousands of years before any of its current residents.

But many of these rational arguments can be refuted. The British revoked Lord Balfour's declaration. The United Nations could overturn their vote at any time and the international community could change its mind overnight. And was Israel really always the Jewish homeland? Our own Torah describes how we expelled the Canaani, Chiti, Emori, Chivi, Prizi, Yevusi and Girgashi from their comfortable homes to make room for the Jewish nation emigrating from the desert. And what if we were there first? The White House sits on land that once belonged to the Native Americans. Does that mean that the president will willingly give up his seat to any Native American that demands it?

So there is only one answer that remains.

In the beginning, Hashem created the heavens and the earth. Naturally, He retains full rights to

His handiwork, and He chose to take Eretz Yisroel from those nations and give it to us. It may have legitimately belonged to the Canaanim at a time, but the moment Yehoshua and the Jewish people came marching through the Jordan river, the land became ours forever.

This is expressed in the first Rashi on the Torah. Did you ever wonder why Torah, a book of laws, begins with the story of creation? The answer is, Rashi says, so that nobody should ever be able to say, "You stole the land from us." We didn't steal it from anyone, then or now. It is ours, granted to us by Hashem Himself — the ultimate owner, by virtue of being its Creator.

This leads us to two very important points:

1) You Can't Just Give It Away.

The Land of Israel isn't the personal possession of any Israeli politician, nor is it the collective possession of all Israeli citizens.

Every Jew owns a parcel of Eretz Yisroel, measuring at least one square *amah*. Did you know that that is the only way you are permitted to do a *pruzbul*? A *pruzbul* can be conducted only by someone who owns land in Eretz Yisroel. The fact that we all do so regularly, every seven years, is because we actually *do* own land in Eretz Yisroel, albeit a very tiny portion.

Therefore, no politician has the mandate to negotiate, let alone transfer, any piece of Eretz Yisroel from Jewish hands to anyone else.

Everyone's Question

When journalist Moshe Ishon was in *yechidus* with the Rebbe, he asked the Rebbe a question, that, in his own words, "many people were asking."

"What gives a person in America the right to opine on policies regarding Eretz Yisroel?"

"The Rebbe smiled," he later recounted, "as if he had heard the question before and was well-versed in all the articles published against him."

"Every Jew," the Rebbe responded, "owns a portion of Eretz Yisroel." The Rebbe explained the idea of the *pruzbul*, and every Jew's one square *amah*.

"You might think," the Rebbe said after a pause, "that a Jew can only give an opinion about his own portion. But that is not the case. He is obligated to give an opinion about the entire situation, and if he remains silent, he carries responsibility for everything that happens there."

(*Karasi Ve'in Oneh* pg. 74)

Abraham's purchase in Hebron entered in records at UN

HEBRON, MA'ARIV — For the first time in history, an agreement made around 1900 B.C. was entered in the UN's records. It was the purchase of the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron by Abraham from the Hittites, recorded in the Bible and in the Talmud. The agreement was made in the name of the Jewish people, and it was entered in the UN's records as a historical document. The agreement was made in the name of the Jewish people, and it was entered in the UN's records as a historical document. The agreement was made in the name of the Jewish people, and it was entered in the UN's records as a historical document.



Chaim Halevi Hertzog, an Israeli ambassador and politician, speaking at the UN. The photo is a black and white photograph of Chaim Halevi Hertzog, an Israeli ambassador and politician, speaking at the UN. The photo is a black and white photograph of Chaim Halevi Hertzog, an Israeli ambassador and politician, speaking at the UN.

THE JERUSALEM POST REPORTS ON DR. HERZOG'S SPEECH AT THE UN

Say That Chevron is Yours

Chaim Halevi Hertzog was Israel's ambassador to the United Nations (and later its president), and was famous for his proud and unabashed defense of the Jewish people. In 5736, he attended the Rebbe's Simchas Torah farbrengen. During the *sichos* and the conversation with him, the Rebbe told him to declare from the pulpit of the United Nations that Chevron — which was being hotly discussed at the time — belongs to him personally, as a Levi. He soon did exactly that, and his speech made a significant impact.

Doing so would be theft in broad daylight. It simply does not belong to them.

In addition to this basic point, the Rebbe would often say that the thought of returning land is the greatest slap in the face to the *Aibershter*. In His abundant kindness, He gave us large portions of Eretz Yisroel through amazing miracles. Are we really going to simply turn around and hand them to other nations?

2) Say It As It Is

When presenting your case for Eretz Yisroel, make Torah your foundation.

Israeli representatives have always loved to ingratiate themselves with the international community by talking about its rights based on the United Nations vote or referencing the Holocaust as a reason the Jewish people need a homeland.

But those explanations don't hold water, and the world knows that as well as we do.

The only way to present a legitimate case for Eretz Yisroel is by basing it on the eternal foundations of the Torah.

What is its name?

Geulah Cohen, a well-known journalist and politician, asked the Rebbe why he refuses to use the term “the State of Israel.” The Rebbe responded:¹

“The reason is simple: Eretz Canaan was given to *b'nei Yisroel* at the *Bris Bein Habesarim* with Avraham Avinu, and its name became Eretz Yisroel. This became established over thousands of years, in the Torah, and among all people...

“Changing the name weakens the claim of *b'nei Yisroel* to the land... a new name paints the entire topic as something new that occurred in 1948, seemingly indicating that our claim to the land begins then... contrary to the Torah's perspective.

“Furthermore, there are those that interpret the name ‘the State of Israel’ as part of a general approach: to become a regular nation among the family of nations. This approach has been disastrous, and has caused countless losses, both physically and spiritually.”

The land belongs to us because, “So said G-d!”

It may seem to be an odd explanation for the modern world of the twenty-first century, but its effect is surprising. First of all, a vast amount of the world's population firmly believe in the “Bible.” But moreover: Even if a listener doesn't agree, he will

learn to respect and understand your perspective. People respect people who respect themselves. If you don't have the strength to lay this foundation, all the buildings you will erect on top will just come crashing down.

FOUNDATION 2:

Stay Safe

While many in Eretz Yisroel agree that the land belongs to us, they maintain that there is another factor that compels us to negotiate with the Arabs and give away portions of land: The overarching Jewish value of human life, the *halacha* of *pikuach nefesh*.

This theory is known as “land for peace.” If only we were to give land to the Arabs, whether Sinai to the Egyptians, Golan Heights to the Syrians, or Yehuda, Shomron and Gaza to the Palestinians — we would finally be able to live in peace with our neighbors and no more bloodshed would occur.

Doesn't the *halacha* of *pikuach nefesh* override the value of Eretz *Hakodesh* belonging to the Jewish people?

This question was especially relevant in the late 5730s* and early 5740s*, when Israel negotiated the surrender of the Sinai Desert. As one politician told a Chabad delegation, “Sinai is not a part of the historic Land of Israel, so why is the Rebbe opposed to the idea?” To the Rebbe's profound consternation, the delegation did not know what to reply. In countless *sichos*, the Rebbe had spoken specifically about this very issue.

The concern of *pikuach nefesh* is valid. Saving a single Jewish life is absolutely a priority. The question is, however, what will actually save a life? Some people maintain that by surrendering land we can achieve peace and thereby save lives. The short term risk would be outweighed by the positive result of peace, which will undoubtedly save many lives. The opponents of this theory say that peace

can easily cease in a moment, while the danger posed by relinquishing land is irreversible. Which side is right? How do we approach *pikuach nefesh*?

The answer to any question, the Rebbe answered, must be found within *halacha* itself; “*D'var Hashem zu halacha*” — Jewish law must be the basic guide for everything in our lives. And in fact, Shulchan Aruch — in Hilchos Shabbos *siman shin-chof-tes* (329) — has a clear *halacha* for just this scenario!

נכרים שצרו על עיירות ישראל, אם באו על עסק ממון אין מחללין עליהם את השבת. ואם באו על עסק נפשות, ואפילו באו סתם ויש לחוש שמא באו על עסקי נפשות, ואפילו עדיין לא באו אלא ממשמשין לבא, יוצאים עליהם בכלי זין ומחללים עליהם את השבת. ובעיר הסמוכה לספר, אפילו אינם רוצים לבא אלא על עסקי תבן וקש, מחללין עליהם את השבת שמא ילכדו העיר ומשם תהא הארץ נוחה ליכבש לפניהם:

“When non-Jews besiege a Jewish city: If they come for monetary issues, we do not desecrate Shabbos [to protect ourselves]. If they come to kill or come with no clear reason, and even if they didn't come yet but plan to come, we go out with weapons and desecrate Shabbos. In a city that is near the border, even if they just come for straw or hay, we desecrate Shabbos, because they might conquer the city and from there, it will be easy for them to conquer the entire land.”

The source of this *halacha* is a Gemara in Eiruvin.² In the *sugya* there, it is clear that it has nothing to do with the sanctity of Eretz Yisroel. In fact, the Gemara applies the *halacha* even to the city of Neharda'a, in Bavel. The

Gemara explains that we see this same *halacha* applied in a story in Tanach:

While Dovid was escaping the wrath of Shaul, he heard that the city of K'ilah, a border town, was under threat by the Pelishtim, who were plundering the town's threshing floors and stealing their harvest. Dovid was told by Hashem that despite the fear of Shaul he was to march to K'ilah and fight the Pelishtim. He did so and wrought severe defeat upon them.

This *halacha* seems to focus on *chilul shabbos*, but its underlying message is about the Jewish approach to *pikuach nefesh*. The first and foremost priority, the *halacha* says, is securing the borders of the Jewish settlement. The very possibility that the enemy might conquer the border town necessitates that we go to war — where we might sustain losses to Jewish life — because leaving the border unsecured leaves us open to much greater danger.

Dovid Hamelech could have argued otherwise. “If we allow them to take the grain, they will leave us alone,” he could have reasoned. “But if we go to war, soldiers will die in battle. Shouldn't we retreat for the sake of *pikuach nefesh*?”

Clearly, *halacha* chooses the opposite approach. The law of *pikuach nefesh* dictates that first and foremost, we secure our borders and strengthen our military standing. Peace accords are nice, but not on the account of our ability to protect ourselves.

In our day, this *halacha* clearly applies to areas like Gaza, Yehudah and Shomron, the Golan Heights and even most of the Sinai Desert. Eretz Yisroel is a small country; putting

any of those areas under Arab control means bringing the potential front line of war closer to home.

The Rebbe also clarified another point about *pikuach nefesh*: *Halacha* is, by definition, applied only to immediate and definite circumstances. One is not permitted to transgress *halacha* to learn to become a doctor, in the hope that he will save lives in the future. Likewise, the immediate danger of giving land to the enemy overrides any potential risk or danger that may arise in the future by retaining control over it.

The Big Problem: The Goy Within

When the idea of a Jewish state arose in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, many of its supporters thought it would solve anti-Semitism. Not because Jews would be able to protect themselves, but because Jew-hatred would cease to exist if we only became a nation like all others. If we would somehow transform ourselves from a religious and ethnic minority scattered across host countries to a nation with its own land, language and culture, there would be no reason for the non-Jews to hate us.

The immediate result was the association of Zionism with secularism. Being *frum* was a part of the “*Galus*-Jew”; once we had a national homeland, there would be no need for “external trappings” to preserve our Jewish identity. Unfortunately, countless Jews lost touch with their Yiddishkeit as a result of this approach.

But there were also long-term ramifications.

In the eyes of many politicians in Israel’s early years (and among some to this day), the greatest achievement was to be welcomed among the nations. They would go to great lengths to earn the approval of the western world. Before every political decision, one

question loomed large: What would the world say?

Before Yom Kippur 5734*, it had become clear that the Egyptians were planning a surprise attack on Eretz Yisroel. From a military perspective, the best approach would be to surprise the enemy first. But during a secret meeting, Prime Minister Golda Meir refused to authorize the move.

A surprise attack on the enemy — when no apparent war seemed to be on the horizon — would be too difficult to explain to the international community. It was a fateful decision. Israel paid with many lives for the decision to allow the enemy to strike first.

This was a problem during peacetime as well. Right after the

Who gets to decide?

Who gets to decide whether a certain piece of land constitutes a “border-town” that cannot be returned? Who do we ask to determine if a certain parcel of land is vital to the safety of the rest of the country?

The Rebbe explained that as in every matter of *halacha*, we turn to the experts of the field. With a question of a person who is ill, we turn to a professional doctor. In this case, the doctor is the currently acting military expert — and not the politicians leading the country or retired military officials. A military expert needs to be asked to make a simple determination: If we return this parcel of land, will it be harder or easier to defend the country?

A politician is usually not an expert in military matters. He has political concerns that he inevitably needs to consider as well — will giving back land make him more popular internationally? Will it help Eretz Yisroel in the United Nations? But *halacha* doesn’t allow us to make those considerations in the face of *pikuach nefesh*. There is only one question to be asked: does the retreat endanger lives now?



EGYPTIAN SOLDIERS PLANT THEIR FLAG ON ONE OF THE BAR LEV LINE OUTPOSTS

ISRAEL GOVERNMENT PRESS OFFICE

Six Day War, when the world was astounded by Israeli victories, the government sent a delegation to Washington informing them that they were willing to return the conquered

land in exchange for peace. Their offer shocked the Americans, but to the politicians in Eretz Yisroel, it was a sensible decision. One of their greatest priorities was to feel welcomed in

the world. If the Arab states would make peace with them in exchange for that land, it was a sacrifice they were willing to make.

When Yitzchak Rabin came for a *yechidus*, the Rebbe spoke with him at length about this issue. The Rebbe cited the posuk, "הן עם לבדד ישכון, ובגוים לא יתחשב." The Jewish people are fundamentally separated from the other nations, and there is nothing we could do to change that. When we continue to pursue the goal of being like everyone else, we will only weaken ourselves.

In *sichos*, the Rebbe would often speak about the Israeli leaders' irrational fear of "what will be said about us." It seemed to be a fulfillment of the *tochacha* — that we will fear a קול עלה נידף, the mere sound of a leaf fluttering. The Rebbe explained that it stems from a deep-seated feeling of inadequacy next to the gentiles. Those leaders were held sway by the א-ל-זר אשר בקרבך, the little *goy* inside every person's heart. This feeling of inadequacy made them yearn for acceptance, and dictated their disastrous approach to public policy.

The result of this inferiority complex was as amusing as it was sad. The Israelis would enter into negotiations by offering to give everything they had conquered. Every negotiator realizes the foolishness of this approach. In any situation, one should begin at the very extreme end and only slowly pull to the middle.

The Rebbe once pointed out that there are several types of negotiators. Some come with the intent to retain — and receive — as much as they possibly can. Others come with the intention to make a show and leave without any real results. And then there are the Israeli negotiators: They don't come with a goal to gain or give away land. Their goal is to find favor in the eyes of the other side. If giving

When Achav begged for recognition

There was once a child in *cheder* who was mortified to hear the story of Yosef being sold by his own brothers. But the next year, he didn't seem perturbed. "If Yosef was already sold by his brothers last year," the child explained, "He should have learned his lesson by now..."

The Rebbe cited this story when he spoke about the Israelis' attempt to give away the land conquered during the Six Day War.

This same occurrence happened in Tanach [Melachim I, *perek* 20], the Rebbe pointed out.

Ben Hadad, king of Aram, attacked the army of Achav, king of Yisroel. By the seventh day, Achav had won a decisive victory.

Seeing the disaster, Hadad's advisors suggested another approach. "We heard that the Israelite kings are kind people," they told him. "Let's offer to make peace."

They sent a delegation to Achav to offer peace. To their absolute shock and delight, Achav said to them, "Ben Hadad? He is my brother! How is he doing?"

Needless to say, they left with good terms for their peace treaty — with disastrous results for the Jewish people. The decision to make peace would haunt them for a very long time.

(13 Tammuz, Matos-Masei 5729)



BULLDOZERS LEVEL THE HOUSES ADJOINING THE KOSEL HAMAARAVI TO ENLARGE THE PUBLIC AREA. THE AREA WAS CLEARED IN ONE NIGHT TO AVOID INTERNATIONAL CONDEMNATION, AND MAYOR TEDDY KOLLEK DIDN'T WAIT FOR OFFICIAL PERMISSION BEFORE DOING IT.

away everything will do the trick, they are willing to try that option too.

This resulted in a repeating sequence of events: Whenever the Israelis would gain an advantage, they would immediately offer to give it up for the sake of peace.

How To Do Business: Make the Most of It

In wartime and peacetime, the Rebbe always encouraged the government to use the exact opposite approach. Always maximize your potential gains and reject pressures to retreat. Every time you give in to demands, the Rebbe said, you invite a new set of demands in their place.

A common occurrence during the Israeli-Arab wars was that when the Israelis would begin to win, the Arabs would ask the United Nations to broker a ceasefire. The Israelis would agree, and then the Arabs would use it to bolster their positions — even against the rules of the very ceasefire they requested.

The Rebbe was diametrically opposed to these ceasefires, instead always insisting that Israel conclude their campaigns with a decisive victory. During the Yom Kippur War, the Rebbe encouraged the Israelis to continue their conquest until they occupied Damascus and Cairo, the capitals of Syria and Egypt, even if only for a short time. The very image of Israeli tanks in an Arab capital would totally change the rules of the game.

During the years after the Six Day War, when the Egyptians were hoping to regain control of the Suez Canal, the Rebbe told the Israelis to destroy it — albeit “mistakenly” — to show the Egyptians that they mean business.

The Rebbe maintained the same approach in negotiations for peace. The Rebbe was not fundamentally opposed to peace treaties. Quite to the contrary. However, he was opposed



RABBI PINCHAS HIRSCHPRUNG GIVES A PSAK DIN ON SHLEIMUS HAARETZ. FOR THE FULL STORY BEHIND THIS PICTURE, SEE A PSAK DIN FOR THE WORLD, DERHER IYAR 5776

to the manner in which the Israelis negotiated.

In the early 5740s*, President Jimmy Carter pressured Prime Minister Menachem Begin into surrendering the entire Sinai Desert to Egypt. The Rebbe pointed out that President Carter and President Sadat of Egypt were politically motivated to come home with a peace treaty. If Begin would have been stronger, Carter would have shifted his pressure to Sadat, and they would have reached an agreement with much more favorable terms for the Israelis. Instead, Begin capitulated in short order and gave up the entire Sinai to Egypt in return for no more than a piece of paper with a promise of peace — which they proceeded to violate not too soon afterwards.

The result was a never-ending disaster. Instead of oil independence, the Israelis were forced to purchase oil at high rates from other sources, putting a major strain on the economy and putting their military at a disadvantage. Instead of having a wide swath of land holding back potential enemies, the Egyptians were now

right at the border of Eretz Yisroel. And, most importantly, the Israelis had demonstrated that they would give land away for nothing more than empty promises. This gave way to a never-ending list of demands which continues — unfortunately — to this very day.

Two more cases are worth mentioning:

Autonomy:

After the Six Day War, the Israeli government retained control over the entire Arab population of the newly recovered territories. Over time, they began to talk about autonomy. As a gesture to the population, Israel would allow the Arabs to control their own administration, including their own police force. The Rebbe opposed the move. Giving weapons to hostile Arabs was dangerous in itself, but moreover, the very statement that the Jews were willing to relinquish control was a sign of weakness and the Arabs would immediately take advantage of it. From autonomy, it would be a short road to full-on statehood, an even greater danger.

TO SHEVAT 5736 JEM 102939

Prisoner Exchange Deals

When warring countries capture enemy soldiers, they often use them to broker deals for the mutual benefit of both sides. In the early years, Israel also swapped prisoners with Arab countries, usually for an equal number of captives.

But as time went on, a worrying trend emerged. Jewish captives would be ransomed for increasingly large numbers of Arab prisoners. In 5739*, Israel released 76 terrorists for a single Israeli soldier.

The Rebbe pointed to the very clear danger in such lopsided deals: it was an open invitation to kidnap Israelis in order to free terrorists. Needless to say, the deals have only grown since then.

The Rebbe would often repeat these themes whenever there was a terrorist attack in Eretz Yisroel, pointing out that the terror attacks often occur right after the government shows weakness — by agreeing to return land, grant autonomy, or free many prisoners.

Settle Everything

What is the best way to declare that you are not willing to give away land? The Rebbe said that deeds, not words, are the most important statements.

In many *sichos*, the Rebbe encouraged the Israeli government to settle Jews all over the territories they had conquered — in the Golan Heights, Yehudah and Shomron, Gaza, and the Sinai Desert. There is no way to better say, “We are here to stay,” than by establishing a physical presence.

However, the Rebbe never instructed individual families to settle in the so-called “occupied territories.” When Arik Sharon asked the Rebbe to encourage Chassidim to settle in Chevron, the Rebbe said that he couldn’t trust the government to fully support the people who would choose to settle there. Unfortunately, it was Arik Sharon himself who forcibly removed all Jews from Gaza and gave it up to the Arabs. The devastating results are still felt until this day.

The only way to ensure the safety and security of Eretz Yisroel is by firmly rejecting any such proposals.

Merely speaking about the topic already endangers Jewish lives.



PURIM 5729*. AT MANY FARBRENGENS IN THOSE YEARS, THE REBBE WOULD SPEAK AT LENGTH ABOUT THE SITUATION IN ERETZ YISROEL

Timeline

No Gain

In 5716*, in response to Egyptian aggression, the IDF attacked Egyptian forces and advanced through the Sinai Desert all the way to the Suez Canal. Due to American pressure, they soon retreated without any tangible gains.

Many years later, when the Rebbe recounted the history of the Israeli government's many mistakes, this was named "Mistake number one."³

"The reason for the retreat was a desire to please Washington. And recently, it has been published that someone in Washington said clearly that they had never imagined that Israel would so foolishly agree to give the enemy an opening. They put pressure because they had no choice, but they never imagined the Israelis would agree."

A Miracle in Six Days

The first messages about *Shleimus Haaretz* came from the Rebbe in the aftermath of the Six Day War. The war itself, the Rebbe said, was a profound miracle. The army acted correctly by striking first and gaining the upper hand.

However, the Rebbe criticized the government for their lackluster campaign to reconquer the Old City of Yerushalayim. Hoping Jordan would

stay out of the fray, the government didn't prepare any battle plans for Yerushalayim. And once Jordan attacked and Israel decided to take the Old City back, they instructed the soldiers to engage in hand-to-hand combat instead of shelling the area with massive bombs. They wanted to preserve the non-Jewish religious shrines, but it came at great cost to human life.

In the years that followed, the government didn't encourage Jews to settle in the newly acquired areas like the Old City, and even declared that they were willing to return land for the sake of peace. The Rebbe spoke out against both elements, first in *yechidus* and private correspondence, and then publicly, at the farbrengens.

A Disaster of a War

On Yom Kippur 5734*, the Arab countries launched a surprise attack against Israel. From the outset, the Israeli response was a disaster. Despite clear warnings, Prime Minister Golda Meir refused to strike the Arabs first, because she was worried it would harm Israel's international reputation. When the army managed to turn the tide, the Israelis agreed to ceasefires that allowed the Arabs to regroup and negotiate. The Rebbe hoped

that the army would push until the Arab capitals for a decisive victory, but instead, they agreed to deals that allowed the Arabs to go home with a sense of triumph.

Over the following years, the Rebbe occasionally addressed these issues at farbrengens. The Rebbe called to settle all the "occupied territories" with Jews, especially Chevron and other historic Jewish sites. Those years were plagued by occasional terrorist attacks by the newly forming Palestinian terror groups. The Rebbe criticized the government whenever the response was too weak, but also praised them for their strong responses — such as the Mivtza Litani, which cleared terrorism from the Lebanon border.

Pressure to surrender land didn't abate, and the Rebbe constantly encouraged Israeli leaders to remain steadfast in their refusal and to assert from every possible platform that Eretz Yisroel belongs to the Jews because it was given to them by Hashem Himself.

The Wretched Deal

In 5738*, President Sadat of Egypt visited Eretz Yisroel and offered to make peace. President Jimmy Carter jumped on the bandwagon and began to put immense pressure on Prime Minister Begin to return Sinai and even reach a deal with the Palestinians, while promising that America would ensure that all sides keep the deal.

Over the next few years, the Rebbe spoke about the issue at almost every single farbrengen, in long, painful *sichos*. The Rebbe constantly repeated a few basic points:

- Giving land to the enemies puts lives in imminent danger.



EGYPTIAN PRESIDENT ANWAR SADAT SPEAKING IN THE ISRAELI KNESSET



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REPORTER ODED BEN-AMI ASKS THE REBBE WHO SHOULD BE THE PRIME MINISTER OF ISRAEL

(This is when the Rebbe began to focus on *siman shin-chof-tes*). Sinai also has vast oil reserves, which were a major advantage for the Israeli military and economy.

- A peace deal can be revoked at a moment's notice.
- You can not rely on another country for your defense and America cannot be trusted to protect the interests of Eretz Yisroel at all costs. (The Rebbe pointed out that due to political concerns, America had just revoked their support for Taiwan, despite long-standing agreements.)
- Giving in to pressure is an invitation for even more pressure.
- Giving away land is a slap in the face to the *Aibershter* who gave it to us with profound miracles, and a slap in the face to the *kedoshim* soldiers who gave their very lives to attain it.

To the Rebbe's profound dismay, Begin buckled under pressure and agreed to give away the entire Sinai Desert in exchange for an official "peace deal." The Rebbe continued to speak about it often. He dubbed it the "*chozeh ha'umlal*—the wretched deal," and called for the Israelis to stop the deal in its tracks and salvage whatever was still possible.

Peace in the Galilee

In 5742*, Israel launched a second mission into Lebanon to rid the area of Palestinian terrorists. They immediately botched the invasion by agreeing to numerous ceasefires at a disadvantage and getting bogged down in the Lebanese political mess, instead of entering, eliminating the terrorists, and immediately making an exit.⁴

From Autonomy to Statehood

In the 5740s*, a strong movement got underway to give autonomy to the Palestinians living under Israeli control. The Rebbe warned that establishing a quasi-government would only result in a desire for full statehood, and would embolden the

residents to carry out attacks against Jews throughout Eretz Yisroel.

In 5750*, Shimon Peres attempted to break apart Prime Minister Shamir's right-wing government and create his own coalition which would further the cause of "peace." Just before the plan materialized, the Rebbe once again reiterated that his long-standing position on *Shleimus Haaretz* hadn't changed. Several *frum* politicians immediately backed out of the plan, causing it to fall apart.

Some time later, Prime Minister Shamir seemed to be moving in the direction of autonomy as well. In a long conversation on Yud Shevat 5752*, one of the Rebbe's last references to *Shleimus Haaretz*, the Rebbe warned a visiting politician that he — the Rebbe — would do everything in his power to dismantle the government if they went in that direction.

(Unfortunately, the Rebbe's call went unheeded. Over the next few years, Israel went ahead with the Oslo Accords, which gave the Palestinians limited autonomy over certain areas. Israel went so far as to welcome Arafat and his cohorts into areas under their control. Just as the Rebbe predicted, the move gave rise to two intifadas and never-ending demands for full Palestinian statehood. The disengagement from Gaza just exacerbated the mess and gave rise to a full terrorist organization right next to Eretz Yisroel's borders.)

The Best Prime Minister

Analysts and reporters have often attempted to define the Rebbe's stance on Eretz Yisroel as aligned with a certain party or a certain politician. However, the Rebbe always clarified that he was apolitical; he never endorsed the right-wing parties over the left-wing parties. Instead, the Rebbe encouraged them all to follow the dictates of Torah.

In 5750*, a reporter tried to get a statement from the Rebbe endorsing Yitzchak Shamir for prime minister, knowing that the Rebbe approved of his strong stance against autonomy.

"Should Mr. Shamir be the prime minister?" he asked.

"I don't mix into politics," the Rebbe responded. "And more importantly, I hope that very soon, the prime minister will be Moshiach Tzidkeinu.

"However, in the few moments that are left before Moshiach arrives, they should follow his policy — that we cannot relinquish a single inch of land.

"This will bring peace to the country and to its surroundings; if they give in, there will be no end to it, and the more you give, the more the enemies of Israel will demand, and that will result in the opposite of peace and tranquility."⁸ ①

1. Igros Kodesh vol. 26 lt. 9698.
2. 45a.
3. 15 Tammuz 5739.
4. See *Peace in the Galilee*, Derher Nissan 5779.
5. *Karasi Ve'in Oneh* pg. 694.
6. *Karasi Ve'in Oneh* pg. 701.
7. Pesachim 113a.
8. 6 Nissan 5750, to Oded ben Ami.

Halachic Questions

Rabbanim and Rebbes would often ask the Rebbe to clarify his opinion regarding the halachic status of *Shleimus Haaretz*. The following are several examples:

The Gemara says that Jews made a promise not to take up arms to conquer Eretz Yisroel. Does that still apply?

No. That was only a question before the state was established. In our day, Jews live in Eretz Yisroel and they are obligated to defend themselves — just as Jews anywhere — based on *siman shin-chof-tes*.

Does the modern state have the halachic status of a *kibbush rabim*? Does returning land transgress the prohibition of *Lo Sichanem*, not allowing idol worshippers into our land?

Both questions are irrelevant. *Lo sichanem* applies only to Eretz Yisroel and can be overruled by an issue of *pikuach nefesh*. Here, the prohibition to give land is itself a matter of *pikuach nefesh*, which is applicable in Eretz Yisroel and in the Diaspora equally.⁵

Is there a mitzvah to go to war to conquer more land?

No. Going to war necessitates approval of a *melech* or Sanhedrin, and so on. But a war of self-defense is an obligation, due to *pikuach nefesh*.⁶

The Gemara⁷ tells us not to provoke non-Jews, even those who are not powerful (אל תתגרה בגוי קטן). Is that no longer relevant?

It is relevant, but it cannot overrule our obligation to fulfill Torah and mitzvos, including the *halacha* of *pikuach nefesh*. (The Rebbe did reference this concept when the Israelis went out of their way to accuse the French president of anti-Semitism. Their accusation didn't protect any lives and only served to anger a potential ally.)

Higher and Higher ישראל קדמו



The only thing that gives the Torah its significance and importance is that it was given to the Yidden! Therefore, as soon as there is even a minor concern that the Jews might be in danger, *chas v'shalom*, Moshe Rabbeinu did not waste a moment. He did not need to consult with anyone; not even with Hashem Himself. He simply broke the *luchos*; those *luchos* created by the very essence of Hashem...

Because if all of the Torah exists only to bring out the special innate quality of the Jewish people, then the moment that the Torah might be causing them some trouble, *chas v'shalom*, and a choice needs to be made between the Yidden or the Torah, there is no competition at all. Moshe Rabbeinu took the *luchos* and **broke them** in order to save the Jewish people...

(Leil Simchas Torah 5747)

Who Came First?

The source:

The Midrash states:

שני דברים קדמו לעולם תורה וישראל,
ואיני יודע איזה מהם קודם, כשהוא אומר צו את
בנ"י דבר אל בני, אומר אני ישראל קדמו...

"Two things preceded the world: Torah and the Jewish people. I don't know which one of them came first. But when the Torah says "Command the B'nei Yisroel," "Speak to the B'nei Yisroel," I can say that the Jewish people came first..."¹

The Rebbe points out that the way this discussion is written sounds quite

unusual. Why does the Midrash assert that "I don't know" which one came first? Once we establish that the Jewish people came first, isn't that enough to do away with the question altogether?

No, says the Rebbe. Because down here in this physical world, the Torah seems to be on a higher level than the Yidden. Only when we look deeper into their spiritual sources do we discover the truth—that the Yidden are higher. That is the meaning of "I don't know" which is greater. Because the fact that the Yidden are greater comes from a place that transcends

knowledge; I **do not** and **can not** know!

This is also why the Midrash uses the term "אומר אני—I say" when offering the conclusion. This is Eliyahu Hanavi talking, saying "I say," i.e. the essence of his *neshama*, which is always unified with Hashem. It is at that innermost point of the *neshama* that we can recognize its transcendence even over the Torah.²

In a deeper sense:

Torah and mitzvos are merely mediums, so-to-speak, for the Yidden to reach their ultimate potential. When Yidden keep Torah and mitzvos, they connect themselves, as they exist in this physical world, with the essence of Hashem, revealing their true selves in the process. This is the purpose of all of creation: For Yidden to use Torah and mitzvos to reveal the *Atzmus* of Hashem in the physical world and create a *dira betachtonim*.³

In the fall of 5752*, the Rebbe was visited by the Sephardic chief rabbi of Israel, Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu, and



they had an hour-long discussion on various Torah topics. One of the issues spoken about at great length was about how special the Jewish people are, even in reference to the Torah itself.

The Rebbe began by citing the Alter Rebbe's ruling that whenever 10 Yidden come together, Hashem's presence resides among them—even if they are **not** involved in Torah study. "This is because the Yidden are higher than Torah," the Rebbe explained. "Torah itself says that the Yidden came first—not only chronologically, but in order of significance too..."

"This is true even while the *neshamos* are down here in this world, clothed in physical bodies. When a Yid wakes up in the morning—even before he washes his hands and even before he recites Modeh Ani while in a state that he cannot even utter any words of Torah—he still has his *neshama* and is still very much greater than the Torah itself!⁴

Moreover, the Rebbe explained, the superiority of the Jewish people

over the Torah is even regarding their physical bodies. The physical body has the unique quality in the fact that you truly see Hashem's infinite capability of creation in it. The *neshama*, as a spiritual being, does not express Hashem's power of creation as much. Furthermore, only in and with the physical body are we able to fulfill our mission of keeping Torah and mitzvos. Therefore, the body of a Yid

is extremely precious and needs to be properly cared for at all times.⁵

What Does Torah Do?

Although it is true that Yidden are greater and more important than Torah—it is the Torah itself that brings this fact to light and reveals the Yidden's intrinsic value. When Yidden keep the Torah and do what they are supposed to do, this inner

What Was The Alter Rebbe's Focus?

When summing up the Alter Rebbe's accomplishments during his physical lifetime, there are various facets. But the most important thing he accomplished was "הנפש אשר עשו"—The people he made..."

True, he wrote and disseminated much Torah: Tanya, Shulchan Aruch, and all the *maamarim* which cover a vast breadth and depth—"Longer than the earth and wider than the sea."

But they pale in comparison to his accomplishments in the lives of other people. After all, *tzaddikim* are likened to their Creator. In Eliyahu Rabba there is a lengthy discussion of what came first in Hashem's creations—Torah or the Jewish people. And the conclusion is that the thought of the Jewish people came first, before anything else...

(Chof Daled Teves 5741)

truth of the superiority of the Jewish people is revealed. That is not to say that keeping Torah is their only virtue. On the contrary—Hashem loves the Jewish people like a father loves his children, simply because of who they are and for no other reason at all. But in order for their innate qualities to be felt and expressed, even down here in this lowly world—they need to keep Torah and mitzvos.⁶

This is what the Torah is about—revealing the inner virtue of the Jewish people. That’s why the conclusion of the entire Torah sums up this theme by alluding to the story of Moshe Rabbeinu’s breaking of the *luchos* in order to save the Yidden, as we shall soon explain.⁷

With this in mind, it becomes clear that Torah and mitzvos can **never** cause harm to the Jewish people. Even when a Yid fails to fulfill his mission of Torah and mitzvos, *chas v’shalom*, it is impossible for this to result in a real degradation. The only reason why Torah exists is in order to reveal the greatness of the Jewish people—obviously it cannot do the opposite!

The only reason a Yid is sometimes able to stumble and transgress the Torah is due to the great elevation that

occurs after he corrects his mistake and does *teshuva*. With this, a Yid can reach an even greater level than where he was before the mistake.⁸

In a similar vein, Torah receives its holiness from the Jewish people: A *sefer Torah* only attains its *kedusha* if a Yid tans the hides into parchment with the express intent that it be לשם קדושת, ספר תורה, and the same is true with all the other necessary steps to create a *sefer Torah*.

Even a *p’sak halacha* only becomes part of the Torah when it is ruled on explicitly by a Yid down here in this world.⁹

One of the most famous farbrengens where the Rebbe discussed this subject was the night of Simchas Torah 5747*, before *hakafos*. It was a rare sight as the Rebbe broke down in tears during what seemed to be an ordinary analysis of a Rashi on Chumash. The Rebbe kept crying throughout the entire explanation as tears streamed down from his holy eyes and on to the floor, uttering the words in between the deep and emotional sobs.

The Rebbe began by asking a few questions on Rashi’s comment on the final *possuk* in Chumash, where he

explains the words “לעיני כל ישראל”—all the wonders that Moshe did in front of the eyes of all the Jewish people—to mean that he “broke the *luchos* in front of their eyes, and Hashem agreed with his decision...”

Why would the Torah end off, in Rashi’s view, on such a negative note—one that seems to be an act of destruction of Torah? How does this fit in with all the positive descriptions of Moshe Rabbeinu in this *possuk* about his care and concern and leadership of the Jewish people?

The Rebbe bases the explanation on another Rashi in Parshas Ki Sisa, when Hashem told Moshe Rabbeinu to carve out a new set of *luchos*. Rashi cites a *masnal*:

“There was a king who had betrothed a woman and then left her among his maidservants while he left the country. The maidservants acted immorally, and in the process, rumors were circulating about the king’s fiancé. A friend of the king acted quickly and tore up the marriage contract, saying, ‘If the king will decide to kill her, I will tell him that she is not yet your wife.’



“The king is Hashem, the maidservants are the *eirev rav*, the friend is Moshe, the betrothed woman is the Jewish people...”

In other words, Moshe Rabbeinu broke the *luchos* in order to save the Jewish people from Hashem’s punishment.

Moshe Rabbeinu was able to break the *luchos*, created and crafted by the hand of Hashem Himself, in order to save the Yidden. Because the only reason why the Torah exists is in order to reveal the greatness of the Jewish people! If a situation arises where the Torah could *chas v’shalom* be harming the existence of the Jewish people, there is no question—Moshe Rabbeinu did not think twice: he **broke** the *luchos*!

After listing all the other qualities of Moshe Rabbeinu and his leadership of the Jewish people, the Torah concludes with this one—because this is indeed the greatest of them all!

Moshe Rabbeinu’s whole being was Torah. The entire Torah is called

“תורת משה”—because his whole existence was Torah. Nevertheless, he was ready and willing to break his very essence, throwing down the precious *luchos* (which contained the basis for the entire Torah) and breaking them to pieces, just to protect a small minority of the Jewish nation who had stumbled and worshipped *avoda zara*!

This is the greatest description of Moshe Rabbeinu, the true and faithful shepherd of the Jewish people.

The Bottom Line:

Two important lessons that we can apply to our personal *avoda* from all of the above:

Firstly, we now understand how important the existence of the Jewish people is, even in the most physical sense. The body of a Yid is precious and takes precedence over everything else in the world. This is why, explains the Rebbe, the Chabad way of caring for fellow Jews is to help them out, first and foremost, with their basic physical needs. This is not done on condition that they should later learn some Torah or the like. We give them whatever they need, and

even “luxuries,” without any strings attached.¹⁰

Secondly, the Rebbe points out that we, as the Jewish people have the ability, and in fact the obligation, to demand whatever it is that we need from Hashem. Even if according to the rules of the Torah, we are *chas v’shalom* not deserving of the *geula* right now, we still have the power to override that ruling—because Yidden are greater and higher than the Torah itself—and we must demand of Hashem to put an end to the *galus*, “***Daloi galus***,” and send us the *geula* with **Moshiach now!**¹¹ **T**

1. In several *maamarim* this statement is quoted from Tanna D’vei Eliyahu, although in our print of this Midrash the statement is written differently. See Sefer Hasichos 5752 p. 117, fn. 24.
2. Leil Simchas Torah 5747, se’if 34.
3. 15 Tammuz 5739, se’if 16-17.
4. Se’if 3.
5. Se’if 4.
6. Sefer Hasichos 5752 pp. 116-117.
7. Leil Simchas Torah 5747 se’if 38.
8. Shabbos Parshas Shoftim 5749 se’if 5-6.
9. Yechidus with Rabbi Eliyahu, se’if 6.
10. Yechidus with Rabbi Eliyahu, se’if 5.
11. Leil Simchas Torah 5747, se’if 40.



INTERPRETING THE DEPTH

The Rebbe's Teachings on his Father's Torah

The story of Harav Levi Yitzchok's writings is a wonder. Of the thousands of pages he authored during his lifetime, precious little reached the free world to be studied by future generations.¹ When the first writings of Harav Levi Yitzchok reached the Rebbe in New York, the Rebbe published them in the set of Likkutei Levi Yitzchok. In the introduction, the Rebbe wrote, *"With gratitude to Hashem I have had a great merit, that a handful of my father's letters, along with several of his sefarim...*

including sefarim... in which he wrote his commentaries on the margins, have reached me..."

Alongside the publishing of these *sefarim*, the Rebbe dedicated many hours delving into them at farbrengens throughout the years. Usually, this was at the Shabbos farbrengen while the *sefer* Likkutei Levi Yitzchok was on the table in front of the Rebbe.

In previous editions of the *Derher*, we had various articles discussing the Torah of Harav Levi Yitzchok, including the story of how these

precious writings reached the Rebbe.

In this article we take a look at the *sichos* the Rebbe dedicated to teaching his father's writings, and how ultimately they were gathered together and were published in the first *sefer* to bear the name "*Toras Menachem*."

Much of the material for this article was prepared from *Derher* interviews with Rabbi Chaim Shaul Brook, Rabbi Asher Farkash, Rabbi Dovid Feldman, and Rabbi Eli Wolff.

לע"נ
הרה"ח הרה"ת שמואל דוד
בן הרה"ח הרה"ת יעקב יוסף ע"ה
תנ"צ'ב'ה
נדפס ע"י בנו
הרה"ת מיכאל יצחק וזוגתו מרת חנה
ומשפחתם שיחיו
גורקאוו

Studies in Rashi

One of the most famous revolutionary learning methods the Rebbe introduced is his unique approach to understanding Rashi on Chumash.

In the middle of a lengthy explanation on the Zohar discussing the verses in Parshas Vayishlach where Shimon and Levi attack the city of Shechem, Harav Levi Yitzchok analyzes one Rashi¹: On the words ואת כל חילם "[they took] all their wealth," Rashi translates the word חילם as their wealth, bringing three different *pesukim* from Tanach as sources for this interpretation. Harav Levi Yitzchok comments: "[Why does] Rashi find it necessary to bring three sources and does not suffice with one? [Secondly,] why are these sources brought out of order? [Thirdly,] the source quoted from *kapitel* 49 in Tehillim is a later verse as opposed to the same word which is also found in an earlier verse in the same *kapitel*?"

Harav Levi Yitzchok goes on to explain this Rashi in a way of *drush*, learning that each source Rashi cites is telling us what happened with the wealth of Shechem. With this idea, he answers the above questions.

Although this isn't the typical *peshuto shel mikra* explanation (and perhaps can fit into the category of things Rashi mentions to answer the questions of a *talmid memulach*), it is fascinating to see how the Rebbe's father analyzes Rashi using the same method of analysis the Rebbe taught throughout the years.

"It is customary on a yahrtzeit to discuss a Torah idea from the one whose yahrtzeit we are commemorating; yet in our circumstance this wouldn't be necessary, similar to the story told in the Gemara²:

"Rebbi Elazar said over a Torah passage during a discussion in the Beis Medrash, yet he did not quote his teacher Rebbi Yochanan while doing so. Rebbi Yochanan was troubled by this until he was told [by the students] 'Rebbi Elazar is your faithful student, whatever he teaches—everyone knows is your teaching!'

"This episode is told in the Gemara regarding an ordinary student, (i.e. Rebbi Elazar, who wasn't a son of his teacher Rebbi Yochanan). How much more so is this true regarding a faithful student who is also a son of his teacher... in such a circumstance it would be redundant to quote these teachings in his name [i.e. for the Rebbe to quote his father Harav Levi Yitzchok in the

previous sichos], for 'everyone knows it is your teaching!'"

"We don't know much about the Rebbe's relationship with his father Harav Levi Yitzchok and their relationship through Torah study while the Rebbe was growing up, their learning together and so on," says Rabbi Eli Wolff, "for the Rebbe spoke very little of it. However, much of their correspondence from after the Rebbe left the USSR has been documented. The Rebbe held onto these precious writings he had from his father, and years later published them in the set of Likkutei Levi Yitzchok, together with the writings that Harav Levi Yitzchok wrote while in exile.

"In these letters, we discover various correspondences in which the Rebbe held discussions in learning. What becomes evident is the similar learning method the Rebbe shared with his father, offering us a window into the education the Rebbe received

A Paralleled Approach

At the farbrengen of Chof Av 5739*, about three and a half hours into the farbrengen, the Rebbe was about to begin teaching a segment of his father's Torah, as he had been doing for several years. This time however the Rebbe began with an introduction, in which he explained why he hadn't yet spoken of his father's Torah until this point in the farbrengen:

while learning with his father in his early years.”

“One particular way this comes across,” says Rabbi Dovid Feldman, “is seen from the general approach of Harav Levi Yitzchok. In his notes on the Zohar, Harav Levi Yitzchok zeroes in on the smallest of details, through which he explains how the most abstract ideas that the Zohar is teaching us, express themselves through the most minute and (seemingly) irrelevant details, giving a whole new perspective on what the Zohar states.

“For instance, when the Zohar describes a conversation between Rabbi Yehuda and Rabbi Yosi, Harav Levi Yitzchok comments in his notes why this conversation transpired with Rabbi Yehuda, for he represents *sefiras hachessed*, and Rabbi Yosi, who represents *sefiras hamalchus*, and then goes on to thereby explain why they each said what they said. Or, whether the passage is written in masculine

or feminine tense, and even on such (seemingly) trivial details as the time and place where the passage was said.

“Throughout the Rebbe’s Torah,” continues Rabbi Feldman, “the Rebbe teaches with a very similar approach. In the deepest *maamarim*, the Rebbe focuses on the details of how the previous Rabbeim said the *maamar*, for example the order different things were said, through which the Rebbe teaches a revolutionary idea. Additionally, the notion that the Rebbe explains a piece of *nigleh d’Torah* according to its *pnimius*, and again, every detail is exact, for it is the same Torah—this approach is parallel to Harav Levi Yitzchok’s. The Rebbe sees the whole Torah as one entity, with Torah’s ideas in all subjects weaving together with one another. The Rebbe always concludes with *hamaaseh hu ha’ikar*, the action is essential. The Rebbe takes the loftiest of ideas discussed and translates these concepts into action.”

At Every Farbrengen

In later years, after publishing his father’s Torah, the Rebbe dedicated many hours delving into it at farbrengens.

The first of Harav Levi Yitzchok’s *sefarim* to be published contained notes he had written on Tanya, together with the first *sefer* of notes on the Zohar. These two *sefarim* were printed by Kehos in 5730*.⁵

Here’s how the story began: On Chof Av 5729*, the Rebbe asked that his father’s writings on the margins of his *sefarim* should be printed as soon as possible.

Rabbi Leibel Groner recorded in his diary: “When I entered, [the Rebbe] asked me if Schusterman’s [printing press] is working today. I answered ‘yes,’ and [the Rebbe] said, ‘If so, please give this [the Zohar containing his father’s notes on the margins] to them and ask that they begin working on [preparing] it today..’”

Every day, the Rebbe asked Rabbi Groner for an update on where the work was holding, until one day Rabbi Groner notified the Rebbe that they were having great difficulty deciphering the text. Harav Levi Yitzchok had written in tiny script,

Harav Levi Yitzchok’s Torah is divided into a five volume set:

- *Likkutei Levi Yitzchok - He’aros L’Sefer HaZohar - Bereishis*
- *Likkutei Levi Yitzchok - He’aros L’Sefer HaZohar - Shemos-Devarim* (These two *sefarim* were written on the margins of the Zohar that he possessed in exile.)
- *Likkutei Levi Yitzchok - He’aros Al Sefer HaTanya* - (This was also originally written on the margins of his Tanya that he possessed in exile. As a side note, since the Rebbe received the original Tanya his father had written the notes on, it remained in the Rebbe’s room throughout the nesius.)
- *Toras Levi Yitzchok - Chiddushim U’Biurim L’Shas Mishnah U’Gemara*
- *Likkutei Levi Yitzchok - Likkutim Al Pesukei Tanach U’Maamarei Chazal; Igros Kodesh* (Including the letters and *reshimos* that were sent to the Rebbe during the years before his arrest and exile.)

Important to note is that these five volumes are a very small amount of writings in comparison to the vast teachings of Harav Levi Yitzchok, transcribed during his years as *rav*, which were tragically lost during the war, and to this day have not been found. Once at a farbrengen, the Rebbe stated that his father had written plenty of teachings comprising thousands of booklets!⁴





often keeping one paragraph going in long circles around the page and continuing on to other pages. This made typesetting an almost impossible feat.

At that point, the Rebbe said they should enlist the help of Reb Zalman Levitin (Haditcher), an expert on decoding old manuscripts and a great *talmid chacham* and *ga'on*. Reb Zalman pored over the *kisvei yad kodesh* and worked through them, writing out all the text consecutively and clearly. Oftentimes throughout his work, Reb Zalman would send his questions on Harav Levi Yitzchok's writings to the Rebbe, and the Rebbe responded with lengthy explanations. After one year, on Chof Av 5730*, the first volume of Likkutei Levi Yitzchok on Tanya was finally published.

Beginning on Chof Av 5730* the Rebbe started teaching a portion from his father's writings at each Shabbos farbrengen. At first, the Rebbe taught his father's notes on Igeres Hatshuva, and about a year later the Rebbe began teaching from his father's notes on the Zohar of that week's *parsha*.

Rabbi Asher Farkash relates: "On a typical Shabbos, the Rebbe would bring the Likkutei Levi Yitzchok with him to the farbrengen. During the *niggun* after the *maamar*, he would open a Chumash for a few minutes to look over the Rashi he was about to teach. Then, the Rebbe would open the Likkutei Levi Yitzchok and review it before teaching.

"In the following *sicha*, after the Rebbe asked the questions on Rashi, the Rebbe would quote the Zohar, then

Harav Levi Yitzchok's notes. Then, the Rebbe would go on to ask a handful of questions on what his father wrote, oftentimes concluding: *'Due to the lack of paper and ink, my father's writing was very limited, he therefore wrote in only a few words. As a result, he also omitted how this applies to our avodas Hashem, for he relies on us to learn and understand it...'*

"In the following *sicha*, after answering the questions on Rashi, the Rebbe would return to discuss his father's notes on the Zohar, answering the questions and then would explain how this is a lesson in our *avodas Hashem*.

"Usually, the Rebbe wouldn't speak of the actual idea Harav Levi Yitzchok wrote and discuss it on a deeper level, rather he would explain what was

written in a different context. For instance, where Harav Levi Yitzchok explains the names of the *tanaim* brought in the Zohar using Kabbalah terminology, the Rebbe explained it in the terminology of Chassidus and ultimately how it translates in *avodas Hashem*. What the Rebbe did was translate his father's ideas into a context most of us are more familiar with.⁶

"By doing so, he 'decoded' much of his father's writings, otherwise they would have been viewed as a *sefer* beyond the comprehension of those who don't study Kabbalah. Also, through these *sichos* the Rebbe taught *how* his father's writings must be learned, and thus 'opened the gates' to the study of his father's Torah. It is fair to say that without these *sichos*, the *sefarim* of Likkutei Levi Yitzchok would have been viewed as a set of closed books for those in the general public who aren't too familiar with Kabbalah."

(It should be noted that although the Rebbe printed over 700 pages of his father's Torah that were written at proper length in letters or *reshimos*, generally speaking, the Rebbe focused in his *sichos* only on the notes written on the margins of the Tanya and Zohar from exile. However, on rare occasions, in weeks that there were no *he'aros* from Harav Levi Yitzchok on the Zohar, the Rebbe discussed an idea from his father's letters, which were written with much greater length and explanation.)

Collecting These Sichos

Rabbi Feldman relates: "When I came to learn in the yeshiva of 770 in 5734*, I began attending *chazara* after the Rebbe's farbrengens, during which I would write down short notes for myself. Later, I would write up a *hanacha* of the farbrengen and send it to my family in Eretz Yisroel.

"I remember the first farbrengen after I came to 770. The Rebbe shared a section from the Zohar together with his father's notes on it, and then went on to teach it with a new explanation.

"At first I was a bit confused, so I asked one of the older *bochurim* to explain it to me. He said to me, 'Likkutei Levi Yitzchok? These *sichos* are very deep and complicated; not for most people to try and understand...'

"I was very disturbed hearing such rhetoric, and at that moment I said to myself, 'One day we will *bézzras Hashem* print a *sefer* collecting these *sichos*.'"

Rabbi Chaim Shaul Brook related:

"In the late 5740s*, Rabbi Feldman approached me with his idea to print this *sefer* and shortly thereafter the work began. We started collecting old *hanachos* and began putting the *sefer* together. With so many new farbrengens, *sichos* and *maamarim* to transcribe on a constant basis, this process took quite a while. Once a week, we would set aside time to review these *sichos* and put them down on paper alongside the original Torah of Harav Levi Yitzchok.

"Just before Hei Teves 5750*, we were finally at the finishing stages

Where Does He Find Time?

Rabbi Asher Farkash relates:

"Soon after the first *sefer* Toras Menachem–Tiferes Levi Yitzchok was printed, I was *zoche* to be sent together with the group of Talmidim Hashluchim to Melbourne, Australia. On the way, we stopped over in Eretz Yisroel for a few days. Among the things we did there, we visited the chief rabbi, Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu, and we presented him with the new *sefer* as a gift. He opened it and skimmed through it briefly. Afterward he proclaimed with amazement, "*Ribbono Shel Olam!* How does the Rebbe have time for all of this?! He carries the weight of the whole world on his shoulders, and yet now publishes a *sefer* with explanations on the Zohar!"



HARAV LEVI YITZCHOK'S HANDWRITTEN NOTES ON THE ZOHAR

of preparing the *sefer* for print. At this point we submitted the draft to the Rebbe, together with a letter in which we wrote that we prepared this *sefer* and we are now asking for the Rebbe's approval for publication. The Rebbe answered that we should give it to someone who wasn't involved up to this point to review everything as a final editor. Rabbi Dovid Olidort reviewed the *sefer*."

Rabbi Feldman: "When we were about to print, I brought the first section prepared to Rabbi Leibel Groner to give to the Rebbe. Rabbi

Groner then suggested, given that this was days ahead of Yud Shevat *shnas ha'arbaim* (commemorating 40 years of the Rebbe's *nesius*), that it would be fitting for a new *sefer* to carry the title "Toras Menachem," just as it was with the *sefarim* Toras Shmuel and Toras Shalom which were given their respective titles by the Rebbe. [Until this point no *sefer* was published with the title Torah Menachem. -ed.]

"Although we were somewhat hesitant and worried that the Rebbe would turn down our request, we prepared the title page and

introduction carrying the name Toras Menachem–Tiferes Levi Yitzchok."

Rabbi Brook: "It was a Monday morning, 25 Teves when we received the Rebbe's answer. The Rebbe approved the *sefer*'s title, as well as the introduction we wrote, and added the date for the publication at the end of the foreword. We were elated! The Rebbe had officially agreed to the title 'Toras Menachem.'

"In addition to approving the *sefer*, the Rebbe also requested that the *sefer* be printed by Shabbos, just five days later!



“We got straight to work. Preparing a book for print in the days before computers was no simple task. Much of what can be done today by clicking a few buttons, then had to be done manually.

“Immediately after we received the Rebbe’s approval, I called Reb Yossi Laine from The Print House who agreed to do whatever it would take to have the *sefer* ready. Rabbis Feldman, Kalmanson, Laine and myself worked nonstop around the clock and *baruch Hashem* we got the first two *sefarim* printed by Wednesday night, eve of 28 Teves.

“In hindsight, I don’t know how we physically got the job done. The Rebbe gave us *kochos* that were supernatural, there’s no other way to explain it!

“Straight away we ran to give the first *sefer* to the Rebbe. We attached a letter to it in which we wrote ‘... in honor of the 28th of Teves, the

110th birthdate of the Rebbe’s mother, Rebbetzin Chana...’

“Shortly afterwards we received an answer. The Rebbe circled this line and wrote: נת’ח ודבר בעיתו והזמ”ג להזכיר על הציון באותו היום (It was received with appreciation, and at the appropriate time, to be mentioned at the Ohel on this day [i.e. the Rebbetzin’s birthdate]). The next day the Rebbe went to the Ohel and took the *sefer* along with him.

“In the following days, 2,000 copies of the *sefarim* we printed arrived. It was a few days before Yud Shevat *sh’nas ha’arbaim* and the first *sefer* to carry the name ‘*Toras Menachem*’ was now available. Naturally, all were sold out in only a short few days.”

Volume Two and the New Picture

Rabbi Brook: “The second volume (Shemos) was almost ready for publication in Elul 5751*. That year

Chai Elul was on a Wednesday (Rosh Hashanah was two weeks later on Monday), and just about then we were getting ready to print.

“Around that time Rabbi Shlomo Cunin returned from Russia with the KGB file of Harav Levi Yitzchok’s arrest which was given over by the Russian government to Agudas Chasidei Chabad. In the file was a picture of Harav Levi Yitzchok, taken at the time of his arrest.” [Up until this point the only known picture of Harav Levi Yitzchok was the picture taken while he was in exile after years of suffering. -ed.]

“I wrote a letter to the Rebbe saying that we are printing the second volume of Tiferes Levi Yitzchok in honor of Vov Tishrei, and being that in Likkutei Levi Yitzchok the old picture was printed, we are asking the Rebbe’s permission to print this picture in the introduction to the new *sefer* (after editing to make it fit for print).



HARAV LEVI YITZCHOK AT THE TIME OF HIS ARREST IN 5699*



HARAV LEVI YITZCHOK AFTER YEARS IN EXILE

“I approached Rabbi Krinsky and asked him if he would bring my letter to the Rebbe and discuss it with the Rebbe in person. He readily agreed, and I remember standing and watching the next day as the Rebbe got into the car together with Rabbi Krinsky to go to the Ohel. Rabbi Krinsky handed the Rebbe a piece of paper which I assumed was my letter.

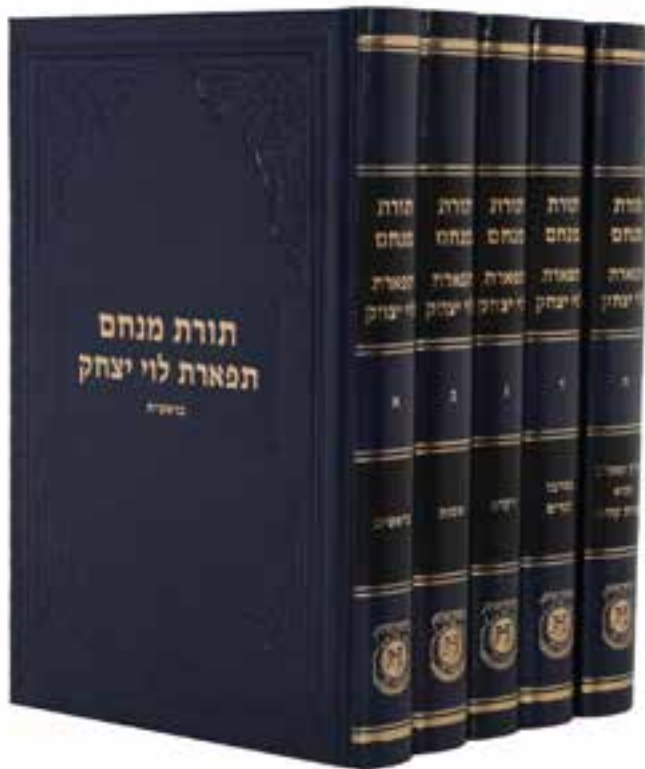
“The next day Rabbi Groner notified me that there is an answer from the Rebbe. The Rebbe instructed us to print both pictures with copyright permission from Kehos, along with an explanation of the circumstances under which each picture had been taken.

“Now, we were running out of time. It was almost Shabbos, the following Monday and Tuesday were Rosh Hashanah, and we needed it before the following Shabbos, Vov Tishrei. I rushed to Manhattan where I located a professional artist who was able to edit the picture to make it fit for printing within a few hours.

“When I got the picture back from the artist, Rabbi Krinsky wanted to bring it right away to show the Rebbe. I told him though that we only have one copy and we would need it back for printing.

“It was after Maariv, Rabbi Krinsky went into the Rebbe’s room and handed the Rebbe the picture. The Rebbe took one look at it and asked Rabbi Krinsky “דאס קען בלייבען בא מיר, נא?—This can stay with me, correct?” He answered that we need it for the printing, so the Rebbe said, “נאכט, בא דרוקט מען דאך נישט. נא, אין דער פרי וועט עס זיין—During the night they aren’t printing. Nu, in the morning they will have it.” Indeed, first thing in the morning Rabbi Groner called me that the Rebbe gave him the envelope with the picture to give me.

“A few days later, on Thursday night while the Rebbe was distributing *lekach*, Rabbi Moshe Weiss who had



sponsored the printing, came by and handed the Rebbe the brand new *sefer* which had just arrived. The Rebbe smiled very broadly, then checked his pockets and said, “פאר א ספר דארף מען צאלען, איך האב אבער נישט קיין געלט בא מיר—For a *sefer* one must pay, but I don’t have any money with me.” The Rebbe then gave him another piece of *lekach* (which was wrapped with a dollar bill), and said: ‘In here there’s also a dollar; and this *lekach* should be for the *sefer*.’”

To date, five volumes of *Toras Menachem*—*Tiferes Levi Yitzchok* have been published, containing these *sichos*. At one farbrengen, while the Rebbe was speaking of the extent of his fathers *mesiras nefesh* for spreading *Yiddishkeit* in the Soviet Union, the Rebbe said:

“Even while in harsh exile, aside for his personal study of Torah, he continued spreading Torah study and strengthening

Yiddishkeit, including through transcribing his Torah innovations despite the difficulty in obtaining paper and ink... mainly for the public to benefit from these writings... especially after they were published... which are studied by many until this very day!” ¹

1. See *Precious Little of a Vast Treasure*, *Derher Menachem*-Av 5774.
2. *Yevamos* 93b.
3. See *Likkutei Levi Yitzchok* - *Hearos L'Sefer Hazohar* - *Bereishis* page 150.
4. *Hisvaaduyos* 5750 vol. 4, page 150.
5. To read the complete story of how these *sefarim* made it from Kazakhstan to the Rebbe, see *Derher* Av 5774.
6. For a glimpse into these unique *sichos*, see the *Dvar Malchus* section in the editions of *Derher* throughout the year 5780, where several of these *sichos* have been translated.
7. See the foreword to *Toras Menachem* - *Tiferes Levi Yitzchok*, vol. 1.

לזכות
החיייל בצבאות ה'
מנחם מענדל שיחי'
לרגל יום הולדתו י"ד מנחם אב
לשנת הצלחה בכל מכל כל, בגו"ר
נדפס ע"י הוריו
הרה"ת ר' דוד וזוגתו מרת פערל גאלדא
ומשפחתם שיחיו
טייכטל

You Don't Just Give "Shalom"

This story was related by Rabbi Shmuel Lew, and took place circa 5711-5712*.*

In the early years of the Rebbe's *nesius* there was a Bobover *kehila* in Crown Heights. One afternoon, two Bobover Chassidim were standing on Eastern Parkway; one of the Chassidim was local and the other was visiting from out of town. In those years the Rebbe would walk to 770 from his home or from his daily visits to Rebbetzin Chana.

As these two Bobover Chassidim stood there, the Rebbe was seen walking from a distance. This caught the visitor's attention and he asked his local friend if he knew who this person was because he looked like a very special Jew. He replied, "That is the new Lubavitcher Rebbe."

Excited by this, the visitor decided to approach the Rebbe to give "*shalom*" with a handshake, as is often customary in *Chassidishe* circles. His friend tried to advise him not to but before he had the chance to do so, the visiting friend had already approached the Rebbe.

As he shook the Rebbe's holy hand and gave *shalom*, the Rebbe asked him his name and where he was from. He gave his name and told the Rebbe that he was currently living in Cleveland, Ohio.

The Rebbe replied that the community had begun building — or had begun discussions about building — a *mikveh* three years earlier, and had for some reason not seen much progress. The Rebbe asked him if he was aware of this and encouraged him to see what he could do to help make it happen.

The visitor answered respectfully that he wasn't a community activist; he merely lived there, worked for *parnasah* and was not involved in much else.

The Rebbe told him, "But you have more to do with it than I do. You're from Cleveland; I am not. I'm here in Brooklyn and [yet] I must inform you of what is happening with the *mikveh* in your own city?" The Rebbe urged and encouraged him to take upon himself to do what he could to make sure the *mikveh* would be built as soon as possible, and then the Rebbe continued on his way.

Returning to his friend, he repeated what had just transpired and noted how he regretted the encounter because now he has this responsibility. Hearing this, the local replied, "I tried to warn you. Everyone knows that when you see the Lubavitcher Rebbe you don't just give *shalom* — he gives you a job to do." **T**



The Imperfect Watch

“Rebbe,” cried the distraught Chossid, “Who would want to marry my daughter? She is completely mute and hasn’t spoken a word in her life!”

The Alter Rebbe listened to the anguished cries of the father and instructed him to go to the yeshiva and seek out a poor young man who was learning there. “Perhaps he will agree to the match,” he concluded.

The man quickly made his way over there and found the individual who matched the description he had been given.

“Would you be willing to marry my daughter?” he began cautiously. “In return, I will give you an enormous dowry and you can also become a partner in my flourishing business. One thing you need to know is that she doesn’t talk. She is mute. But she

is a fine young girl and will make a wonderful wife and mother.”

Every moment of silence was torture. Finally he heard the words he had long been praying to hear. “Yes! I agree to the *shidduch*.”

Life began happily for the young couple. They soon had children to care for and the husband saw great success in his business activities, greatly supported and guided by his father-in-law.

But as time went by, the young man decided that he no longer had any interest in living with a mute wife and that he didn’t want to live this kind of life. Soon after, he separated from her with the intention of giving her a divorce.

Her father, of course, was devastated by the news.

He immediately went to his son-in-law to plead with

him to change his mind. “After all,” he argued, “All your wealth is because of me.” But to no avail. The man had made up his mind.

Brokenhearted, he made the trip to Petersburg (where the Alter Rebbe was at the time) and begged the Alter Rebbe to help him.

“Where is he now?” asked the Alter Rebbe.

“He is here in this city.”

“In that case have him come here so we can talk.”

“Nu...!” questioned the Alter Rebbe, when the son-in-law appeared before him. Brazenly the man replied, “You would not want to live with such a woman. I also refuse to.” With those words he stormed out of the room.

Once outside on the streets, he tried having a conversation with a passerby but not a word came out of his mouth. “I am now mute as well,” the

horrified thought entered his mind.

He knew exactly what had caused this and he went running back to the Alter Rebbe. He grabbed a paper and pen and quickly wrote a note how he truly regrets his actions and words and he is doing complete *teshuvah*.

As suddenly as it had disappeared, his power of speech returned to him. As he began speaking again, it was noticeable that he had a stutter. “Rebbe,” he cried, “I did *teshuvah*, why hasn’t my speech been fully restored as it was before.” The Rebbe replied, “A watch that is broken and later fixed does not function as smoothly as before!” ❶

(*Reshimas Sippurim*,
Reb Chaim Eliyahu
Mishulovin, p. 15)

A photograph of a group of Orthodox Jewish men, likely Chassidim, gathered around a large wooden pole. They are wearing black suits and hats, and many have long white beards. They are looking at a large, white, rectangular object, possibly a document or a scroll, which is partially visible in the foreground. The background shows more people, some wearing hats, suggesting a public or communal gathering.

“This Is Only the Beginning!”

Exclusive Interview with
Rabbi Yossi Groner

לזכות
מרת חיה מושקא תחי'
שוחאט
לרגל יום הולדתה - י"ט מנחם אב
ולזכות בעלה הרה"ת שלום דוב בער שיחי',
ובנותיהם ברכה ליפשא, עליזה ושיינדל
תחיינה



Rabbi Yossi
Groner, head
shliach to the
Carolinas and son
of Rabbi Leibel Groner,
the Rebbe's longtime
mazkir, shares memories
of 770 and of the early
years of his shlichus.

MOTZEI SIMCHAS TORAH 5752*

Early Childhood

My earliest distinct memory of the Rebbe is from my upshernish in 5719*. My parents brought me and my twin brother Menachem Mendel to the Rebbe's room. It seemed to me that it was late at night, and I believe it was a night of *yechidus*. With a serious expression, the Rebbe pulled out a pair of scissors from his desk drawer, cut a little piece of my hair and then handed me a silver dollar. He then did the same for my brother.

The next special memory that stands out in my mind is from Simchas Torah 5724*. I was almost eight years old and at the beginning of *hakafos* I was standing on the top of the bleachers to the Rebbe's left. But after some time, I jumped down from my place and joined my father who was standing next to the Rebbe's *shtender* and I was able to see the Rebbe's face throughout *hakafos*.

It was a very special experience. Seeing the Rebbe's unbridled *simcha* as he pointed to all four directions while singing *Ufaratzta* and the extreme hand motions he made during Harav Levi Yitzchok's *niggun* is indescribable. Later that night, after the *seudas Yom Tov* in the Friediker Rebbe's apartment, the Rebbe came downstairs, distributed *l'chaim* to those who accepted upon themselves to learn more Chassidus during the coming year. He then taught two *niggunim*: *Hu Elokeinu* and the slow *Ki Anu Amecha*.

It was a little after 7:00 a.m. when the Rebbe left 770 to go home. It was cold outside and the Chassidim gathered outside in front of 770 were singing the final stanza of *Hu Elokeinu*. I positioned myself inside the front corridor right near the front door of 770 and was the only person near the door.

When the Rebbe came out of his room and walked towards the front

door of 770, he stopped right in front of me and started to wave his hands to the tune the Chassidim were singing outside the open door, while looking straight at me with a big smile. I started jumping up and down singing together with them. This is just one example of the special attention the Rebbe gave us children in those early years.

Crown Heights at the time was a very diverse Jewish neighborhood. We knew that the Rebbe is the essence of *kedusha* and the epicenter of our lives was 770. We spent as much time as possible there and loved hanging around the *bochurim*.

It was common in those days to see the Rebbe walking from his home to 770 and back. Although there was a rotation of *bochurim* who would walk several paces behind the Rebbe at night, during the day the Rebbe walked alone from his home to 770 and to visit his mother, Rebbetzin Chana. At times, non-Lubavitchers would approach the Rebbe and start conversations.

One afternoon the Rebbetzin called the *mazkirus* office with a message for the Rebbe and my father said that the Rebbe was not yet in 770. She expressed concern because the Rebbe had left the house a while back, so my father ran out of 770 and he saw the Rebbe speaking with a certain individual on Brooklyn Avenue. He politely but firmly told him that the Rebbe is very busy and he should

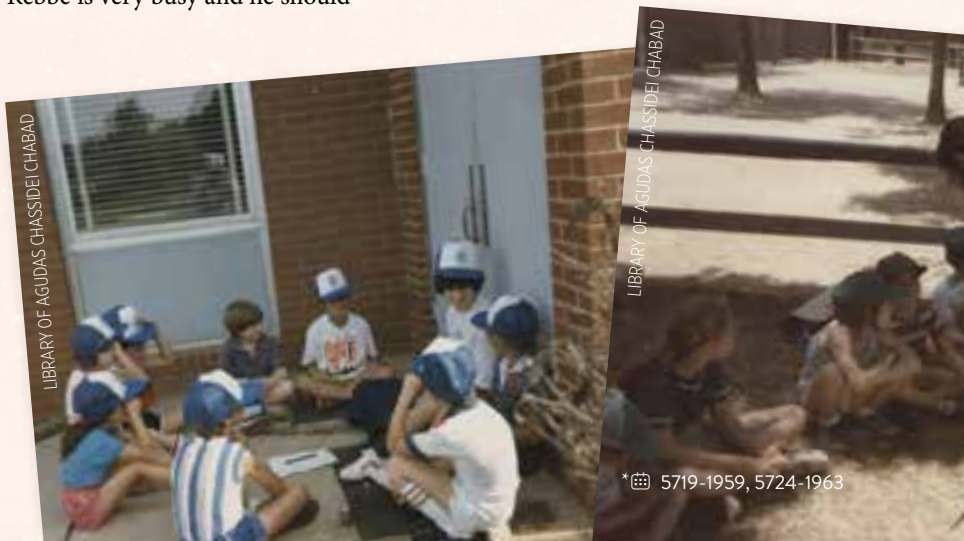
schedule an appointment for *yechidus* at the *mazkirus* office.

One peculiar story about the Rebbe walking in Crown Heights:

There was a small Belzer *shtiebel* on Eastern Parkway between Brooklyn Avenue and New York Avenue. One afternoon they were missing a tenth for a *minyan* and a fellow who was not from the neighborhood and had never seen the Rebbe before, offered to find a "*tzenter*" on the street. Standing on the corner of Brooklyn Avenue and Eastern Parkway he saw the Rebbe walking towards the corner and asked if he could help them with the *minyan* in the *shtiebel*...

When my father noticed that the Rebbe was delayed in returning to 770, he ran towards the corner and asked a child riding a bicycle if he had seen the Rebbe, and the child directed him to the Belzer *shtiebel*. Upon entering, he saw the Rebbe standing near the bookshelf looking into a *sefer* as the rest of the *minyan* davened. The Rebbe motioned to my father to remain and then left.

Learning in Oholei Torah, our bus driver was Reb Yankel Holzman. He would sing *niggunim* with us during the ride. One day, as he turned into the service lane of Eastern Parkway we all saw the Rebbe walking towards 770. We were singing a *freilicher Chassidisher niggun* with the bus windows wide open and the Rebbe



waved his hands in encouragement to the *niggun* with a big smile. Reb Yankel stopped the bus, jumped into the middle of the bus and we all started dancing.

From a very young age we were at farbrengens. As children we mainly participated in the *niggunim* and focused on the exciting things that happened at the farbrengen such as when the Rebbe stood up to dance and other special events like that.

When we were 10 years old my brother and I made a *hachlata* to remain for every farbrengen from beginning to end. It was not easy, and it was obviously difficult to follow the *sichos* and *maamarim*, but we encouraged each other. Every Sunday our *melamed* would start class by asking the students to repeat something we had heard at the Rebbe's farbrengen and everyone had a chance to stand up and share something. This trained us to listen as best as we could and try to learn directly from the Rebbe.

Mazkir's Children

We were well aware of the great merit our father had to serve the Rebbe as a *mazkir* and felt a responsibility as his children as well. We barely saw our father throughout the week. Some evenings he would come home briefly between 6:00 and 7:00 p.m. and then rush back to 770, returning home very late at

night, often at 1:00 a.m. He then did much of his work associated with Otzar HaChassidim, preparing *sifrei Chassidus* for publication, since it was difficult to do this work during regular office hours. Early in the morning he would serve us breakfast and leave immediately.

We saw him most on Shabbos. During the *seudos* he would read and explain a letter of the Rebbe and he often shared a fresh story of the Rebbe, which were usually amazing miracles, while obviously omitting any identifying details.

Discretion was ingrained in us from very early on. Although my father never shared what he saw and heard by the Rebbe, it was inevitable that we would see or overhear something that was considered privileged information. For example, writing a letter to the Rebbe from Russia was extremely dangerous, so Chassidim would send their letters to relatives living in New York who then brought them to 770. Another option was to send the letters to our home, addressed to "Zeide." Whenever we saw the Russian envelopes addressed to Zeide we immediately put them in a designated spot in our home—without ever speaking about it to anyone—and my father would then bring them to the Rebbe.

The fact that our father was a *mazkir* did not mean we had extra privileges. We had to arrange our own places at farbrengens and all other occasions just like the rest of the kids and *bochurim*. My father never wanted

us to stand out as privileged children. Our classmates would have *yechidus* with their families at least once a year on their fathers' birthdays, but I did not have *yechidus* from my upshernish until bar mitzvah, after which I merited to the annual *yechidus* on my birthday like the rest of the *bochurim*.

Nevertheless, there were some special things we were able to observe that others were unable to. For example, on Chol Hamoed we davened in 770¹ and followed our father as he followed the Rebbe back to his room. Waiting on the steps in *Gan Eden Hatachton* we were able to catch a glimpse of what was happening inside as my father walked in and out. The Rebbe was sitting at the side of his desk learning—every single time. This made a very big impression on me.

The Rebbe always inquired about our family and wanted to know everything about each one of us. I know this from reading my father's diaries now, and we also knew about this at the time in several ways.

An interesting gesture the Rebbe once made to my parents was in 5735* when my brother and I were sent on shlichus to the yeshiva in Kfar Chabad.

Every Lubavitcher *bochur's* dream was to learn by the Rebbe and the *hanhalos* of the yeshivos in Eretz Yisroel, Brunoy and Montreal expressed to the Rebbe that if all the *bochurim* would all flock to New York they could shut down their yeshivos. In Elul of 5734* the Rebbe announced that in order to allow *bochurim* from out-of-town yeshivos to experience learning near the Rebbe's *daled amos*, groups of *bochurim* from New York would be sent as shlichim to out-of-town yeshivos to keep them going.²

The largest group was sent to Eretz Yisroel to Yeshivas Toras Emes in Yerushalayim and to the yeshiva in Kfar Chabad. When we arrived, a group photo was taken of us and sent to the Rebbe. Upon receiving



5735-1975, 5734-1974



LIBRARY OF AGUDAS CHASSIDEI CHABAD



THE GROUP OF SHLUCHIM UPON THEIR ARRIVAL IN ERETZ YISROEL

the photo, the Rebbe handed it to my father to give it to my mother so that “she should have a photo of her children at home.”

An Energy Jolt

Although we saw the Rebbe often, we never took it for granted. Seeing the Rebbe was always an uplifting experience. Observing the Rebbe during a *tefilah*, hearing a *sicha* or *maamar*, getting a nod of *l'chaim* from the Rebbe at a *farbrengen*, and especially going into *yechidus*, were all life-changing experiences. It was noticeable when a *bochur* was preparing for *yechidus*. For months beforehand his entire behavior—his davening and learning and even just the way he spoke—was entirely different.

All those encounters were expected and one typically prepared for them. But when you had an unexpected interaction with the Rebbe, this caused a real shake-up to the system.

I'll share with you three such experiences I merited to have.

After the terrifying events of Shemini Atzeres 5738* the Rebbe did not daven in the main shul downstairs for many months. Even after Rosh Chodesh Kislev, when the Rebbe returned somewhat to the regular routine, he davened in the upstairs *zal* for all Shabbos *tefillas* in addition to joining the *bochurim's minyan* on Monday and Thursday for *krias haTorah*. On Friday night there was *sefer Chassidus* until 8:30 p.m. and the Rebbe would daven with the *bochurim* then. On Shabbos morning the *minyan* for Shacharis was exclusively for *baalei batim* and there was a rotation system to determine who would attend.

On Erev Pesach the Rebbe gave my father many instructions regarding Pesach and one of them was that he would start davening with the main *minyan* downstairs on Yom Tov morning. My father was to notify the Rebbe when the *minyan* was up to *chazaras hashatz*, and the Rebbe would then join the *minyan* for Hallel.

That night as we were walking home for the *sefer*, my father said he was very worried because for some

reason he was under the impression that the Rebbe was unsure if my father properly understood all the instructions regarding the next morning's Shacharis.

“Why don't you tell the Rebbe that you understood the instructions clearly?” I innocently asked.

My father looked at me in complete shock. “You never initiate a conversation with the Rebbe!” he said.

I found it amazing that despite the fact that he worked in such proximity to the Rebbe for close to 30 years, he still had a total *bittul* for the Rebbe and would never initiate a conversation on his own.

In general I observed that every time my father walked into the Rebbe's room he would first pause, straighten his *kapota*, hat and beard and only then enter. There was always an aura of reverence, formality and awe whenever he was in the Rebbe's presence. He often said that although he observed the Rebbe so frequently, he never felt at ease or felt that he grasped the Rebbe in any way. Serving the Rebbe is to serve true *malchus* - and one felt it all the time.

My father always told me that the closer one gets to the Rebbe the more they realize how little they know of the greatness of the Rebbe.

Now, back to the story of Pesach 5738*. The next morning, many members of *anash*, who usually davened in *minyanim* that took place in other parts of 770 and from many other shuls, joined the downstairs *minyan*, since it was the first time the Rebbe was davening downstairs since Shemini Atzeres. The shul was packed from wall to wall and no one was anywhere else in 770, even the *mazkirim*.

I was not davening with the *minyan* and when my *chavrusa* approached me to discuss something, I suggested we move our conversation upstairs. Speaking in the hallway near the *zal*,



we suddenly heard the door to *Gan Eden Hatachton* open and I saw the *bochur* standing in the front entrance of 770 become pale and run out the front door.

Instinctively I ran to the entrance and saw the Rebbe wearing a tallis, holding the door of *Gan Eden Hatachton* open with one hand. The Rebbe asked me if I knew where the *minyán* downstairs was up to. I said that when I was downstairs they were up to *Yishtabach*. The Rebbe thought for a moment and said, “Nu, be sure I am notified when they are up to *chazaras hashatz*.”

I answered “Yes.” (Whenever I observed my father receiving an instruction from the Rebbe he always simply answered “Yes,” so I did the same.)

The Rebbe said “Thank you” and walked back into his room. I ran downstairs as fast as I could and told my father what had just transpired and he said, “You see [why I was concerned]?”

That brief interaction with the Rebbe shook me to my core and I could not sleep for three nights

straight. It was completely unexpected and being alone with the Rebbe as the Rebbe gazed at me like that was just so overwhelming and gave me an unbelievable adrenaline boost.

Two years later, on Acharon Shel Pesach after Shacharis, I was in the front entranceway of 770 conversing with Reb Yoel Kahn and several others. Suddenly the Rebbe appeared in the doorway of *Gan Eden Hatachton*. An immediate hush fell over the room and everyone moved to the side. I approached the Rebbe and the Rebbe asked me if my father was in the area. I said I would find him immediately and the Rebbe said “Thank you,” and returned to his room. Although it was not as dramatic as the previous encounter, it was definitely unexpected and made a deep impression on me.

The next story happened many years later when I was already on shlichus in Charlotte for 12 years.

It was during Tishrei of 5752*. I was experiencing a very difficult financial crisis that needed to be resolved and felt I needed to be by

the Rebbe for Simchas Torah. I made arrangements for the other shlichim in town to fill in for me for Yom Tov and I drove to New York on the night of Hoshana Rabba with two of my children.

I received *lekach* (wrapped in a plastic bag with a dollar bill) from the Rebbe the next day and the Rebbe called me back and gave me another piece of *lekach* saying “דאס איז פאר - די הרחבה אין געלט ביי דיר” - this is [a *bracha*] that you should have financial abundance.

I was shocked to hear this because I had not written to the Rebbe about the problem and when I asked my father later if he mentioned anything to the Rebbe about it he said he had not. The Rebbe’s revealed *ruach hakodesh* and unsolicited *bracha* already gave me much encouragement.

For *hakafos*, my brother Aharon managed to arrange a spot for me right next to him which was very close to the Rebbe’s place. (I had lost my original spot when I went on shlichus.) Simchas Torah night the Rebbe pointed to me and said to my father

with a big smile, “I believe he is your relative. Make sure he says *l’chaim!*”

I approached the Rebbe with a cup of *l’chaim* and asked for a *bracha*, and as the *minhag* is on Simchas Torah, I gave a *bracha* to the Rebbe to which he answered a very loud “Amen!” By now I was sufficiently confident that everything would work out and sure enough the next day a friend of mine who was aware of my problem arranged a large donation from one of the Lubavitcher *gevirim* that would help avert the looming crisis.

The next morning I wrote a letter thanking the Rebbe for the *brachos* and described the significant donation that had been arranged for Chabad of Charlotte. Within a short while the Rebbe responded *אזכיר על הציון*.

I needed to drive for 10 hours that day back to Charlotte and I was exhausted, because no one ever slept during the three days of Hoshana Rabba, Shemini Atzeres and Simchas Torah by the Rebbe. I planned on leaving early but Reb Meir Harlig encouraged me to wait a few more minutes because the Rebbe would be going to the Ohel and I would be able to see the Rebbe one more time before leaving.

I stood near my father’s office which was at the other end of *Gan Eden Hatachton* together with a few others and we were surprised when the Rebbe came out of his room several minutes earlier than expected. We pushed ourselves against the wall to give the Rebbe as much room as possible to reach the stairs towards the driveway and the Rebbe handed each one of us a coin to give to *tzedakah* in the *pushka* affixed outside the door to my father’s office.

The Rebbe turned to me and said, “I heard that you already received a donation.”

I was stunned and momentarily speechless but as the Rebbe turned

towards the stairs I managed to say, “The Rebbe’s *brachos* materialized.”

The Rebbe turned around to face me and with a penetrating but loving look said, “This is only the beginning!”

The tremendous *bracha* and complete unexpectedness of the interaction with the Rebbe gave me such an energy jolt, I could have driven to South America with that energy...

Shlichus

As I mentioned earlier, I was sent on shlichus as a *bochur* to the yeshiva in Kfar Chabad for the years 5735* and 5736*. In the summer of 5736* I needed to return to New York for a while and during that time I went on Merkos Shlichus to North Carolina. There was no shliach there at the time and we started making contacts with communities and individuals throughout the state.

On Purim 5736* we visited many Israeli army bases and did a lot of *mivtzoim*. I was awed at the tremendous respect the generals and officers had for the Rebbe and how the soldiers so appreciated our visits, and I wrote a seven page report about the experience to my father.

He gave the report to the Rebbe with a cover note that read: *אולי יגרום נחת רוח*—perhaps this report will be a source of *nachas* to the Rebbe. The Rebbe edited my father’s note to read *גרום נחת רוח רב*—it is a source of much *nachas*.

For a *bochur* to receive such a reaction from the Rebbe on a *duch* of *mivtzoim* was like winning the lottery. Our greatest wish in life was to bring *nachas* to the Rebbe and this was the motivating factor in my decision to go on shlichus when the time would come: To bring the Rebbe *nachas*.

During the summer of 5737*, I returned to both Carolinas on Merkos Shlichus with a friend and we were very successful. After submitting a

detailed *duch* to the Rebbe about the shlichus, Rabbi Hodakov instructed me to keep up the connection since there was no shliach there, but all my activities needed to be done with the permission of the *hanhala*.

I visited those states for Chanukah and Purim; and for Simchas Torah 5739* I decided to go to North Carolina, because I was so traumatized by the events of Shemini Atzeres 5738* that I preferred to be on the Rebbe’s shlichus for Yom Tov than to be in 770. I asked the *hanhala* for permission and when I wrote to the Rebbe about my plan, the Rebbe underlined the words about the *hanhala*’s permission and wrote: *ויהא בהצלחה רבה*. Rabbi Dovid Raskin was very impressed since he rarely saw such an expression on a *bochur*’s note.

After my wedding, I suggested to Rabbi Moshe Kotlarsky that perhaps it was time to open a branch of Chabad in North Carolina. He consulted with Rabbi Hodakov who agreed to write a note to the Rebbe about the idea.

The Rebbe responded that since there was no kosher *mikveh* in Charlotte they should find a couple whose wife no longer needed one, adding in parentheses that it is to avoid giving off the impression that one is permitted to live in a city without a *mikveh*.

Apparently the shlichus was not for us.

The next day Rabbi Kotlarsky came running to me and said that



20 KISLEV 5747, YOSSIE MELAMED VIA JEM 306778

the Rebbe just asked Rabbi Hodakov what is doing with Charlotte. When he responded that they were seeking an older couple to go there on shlichus, the Rebbe asked, "און וועגן בויען א מקוה? דאט מען גארנישט געטראכט?" (And about building a new *mikvah* you didn't think?") They were silent, and the Rebbe continued, "זאלסט טראכטן וועגן?" ("You should think about it...")

In consultation with Rabbi Zalman Shimon Dvorkin it became clear that it would be very difficult to build a *mikveh* before arriving there so he determined that as long as we would make it our top priority and build a *mikveh* within a year or two, it was appropriate for us to move there on shlichus.

Rabbi Kolarsky solicited a generous contribution from Reb Yosef ("Usseh") Deitch, and our *mikveh* was ready within a year but North Carolina was experiencing a drought at the time. On Yud-Tes Kislev we received the permit from the city and miraculously there was such a rainstorm that the *mikveh* filled within hours.

Generally I sent a *duch* to the Rebbe at least once a month and at times even every two weeks. One of

the main motivators for me was the following story. On Shemini Atzeres 5738* a bed was brought into the Rebbe's room, and even after the Rebbe's health improved the doctors requested that the bed remain in the room so the Rebbe could rest for some time during the day. I asked my father what the Rebbe did during that time and he said that the Rebbe read the *duchos* from the shlichim. This was the Rebbe's "leisure" activity...

The Senator

One of the earliest supporters of Chabad in North Carolina was State Senator Marshall Rauch who was rated the second most powerful man in the state. I met him once while I was still a *bochur* together with Rabbi Moshe Kotlarsky, and he told us that, while all of his business ventures were doing quite well, there was one venture he was having trouble with.

We advised him to write a letter to the Rebbe asking for a *bracha* and that he should commit to wearing tefillin every weekday. He followed our advice and within days his business problem was resolved.

In the early 5740s* the state legislature debated a certain law that if ratified in North Carolina would have national ramifications and negatively impact the Orthodox community in a very strong way. Rabbi Moshe Bogomilsky notified me that representatives from Agudas Israel will contact me to encourage me to



RABBI GRONER AND RABBI MOSHE KOTLARSKY WITH FORMER STATE SENATOR MARSHALL RAUCH

send telegrams to my state legislators opposing the law, which they did.

I called *mazkirus* and asked to speak with Rabbi Hodakov to be sure that it was the right thing to do.

"How will you sign the telegram?" he asked. "You can sign in the name of Lubavitch?"

"I can sign the telegram with Lubavitch of North Carolina," I suggested.

"The only one who speaks for Lubavitch is the Rebbe," Rabbi Hodakov said decisively, and then continued, "You have a good friend who is a senator. Why don't you speak with him?"

I reached Senator Rauch in his business office and he was completely unaware of the debate raging about this law. After I filled him in on what was going on, he expressed his opposition to the law and told me he will work things out.

This was on a Thursday and the law was scheduled for debate on Monday. Senator Rauch arranged several meetings to determine where things were holding, and on Friday one of the senators introduced a referendum that would not allow the legislature



to even debate that law for another 25 years. There was a forced vote and a slim majority voted in support of the referendum, which was a very big victory. It became a national sensation and the media reported (mostly in a negative light) that Senator Rauch was responsible for destroying the law on a national level as a result of what he did in North Carolina.

On Motzei Shabbos he called me for a *d'var Torah* to include in a speech he was preparing for a Jewish function and I asked him how he felt about all the negative national attention he was getting. He said he knew he did the right thing and did not care about all the noise.

Rabbi Bogomilsky told me afterwards that all the *frum* lobbyists in New York heard what had happened behind the scenes and were awed at the fact that the crisis was averted due to the Rebbe's shliach's connection with a powerful state senator through influencing him to wear tefillin and Torah learning. They saw how the Rebbe's reach extended much further and deeper than all of their lobbying efforts.

Our Job as Shluchim

This guidance from Rabbi Hodakov, that only the Rebbe speaks on behalf of Lubavitch in all national or global matters, stood me in good stead several years later. A prominent member of the Charlotte Jewish community, who sat on the national board of a Jewish organization, reached out to me about the thorny issue of *Mihu Yehudi*.

I told him I am not a spokesman for Lubavitch and only the Rebbe can discuss this issue. He wrote a letter to the Rebbe and an interesting correspondence ensued. I was copied on every letter and was actually enjoying this entire back and forth.

Eventually he offered a suggestion that was not practical and not in the

spirit of *halacha* and I warned him it would never happen. Sure enough his idea was rejected and although the exchange had been very respectful until then, he wrote a very nasty letter to the Rebbe. I received the copy of the letter a day earlier than it would arrive in New York and when I read it I became sick from disgust but mainly terrified that the Rebbe would receive such a horrible letter.

I frantically called my father and started screaming that he should intercept the letter before the Rebbe opened it. My father reminded me that he cannot do that because the rule is that all the Rebbe's mail is opened by the Rebbe, and when I realized it was inevitable the Rebbe would see the letter I felt guilty for indirectly causing it and I started crying uncontrollably, fasting and saying Tehillim.

The next morning my father called to hear how I was doing and my wife told him what was going on. Some time later that morning he called again and said that when he was in the Rebbe's room, he saw the Rebbe read the letter from North Carolina. When the Rebbe finished reading it he put it down and asked my father how I was doing to which he responded that I am sitting on the floor, fasting and saying Tehillim. The Rebbe instructed him to go out of the room and call me immediately to tell me to stop what I was doing.

My wife and I decided that we would terminate all contact with this man because he had written such a

terrible letter to the Rebbe but the Rebbe instructed us to forget about the episode and to be *mekarev* him even more than before. If the topic of *Mihu Yehudi* came up we should confidently say that it's not our business and that our job is to encourage Yidden to learn Torah and do *mitzvos* and nothing else.

For some time afterwards the Rebbe asked my father about our continued connection with this fellow, and today his children, grandchildren and great grandchildren are all involved with Chabad on various levels and several of them are even *frum*.

A few years later there was a more public struggle going on in the community about *Mihu Yehudi* and I was forced to participate in a public debate on the topic. I wrote a letter to the Rebbe asking for a *bracha*. An hour before the debate as I was nervously preparing my remarks for the debate I got a call from my father. He told me that he was in the Rebbe's room and the Rebbe was writing a response to Rabbi Yaakov Yehuda Hecht on a question he asked regarding *Mihu Yehudi*.

"Suddenly the Rebbe put down his pencil and told me that what he is writing now is relevant to my son, and proceeded to dictate for 10 minutes exactly what you should say during the debate. The Rebbe told me to call you immediately with this message."

I transcribed everything my father said to me in the Rebbe's name and





the debate turned out to be a major success.

A few years after Gimmel Tammuz I was faced with a new crisis. There were elements in the community pushing for certain reforms in our school and a prominent supporter arranged a meeting with other rabbis to apply pressure on us to make changes to our curriculum that were unacceptable to us.

The night before the meeting I was very frustrated and said to my wife that usually in these situations we would write to the Rebbe. But what can we do now?

Early the next morning, when I entered my office before the *Shacharis minyan*, I saw a fax from a friend who works in the Rebbe's library that had been sent in the middle of the night.

Here is some background to this fax. There was a non-Jewish man who was a descendant of a certain Lubavitcher family and he was interested to learn more about his ancestors.

Several weeks before receiving this fax I discussed this Lubavitcher family tree with one of the researchers in the Rebbe's library. He commented that he just read a beautiful letter from the Rebbe to Mr. Kaddish Luz, the Speaker of the Israeli Knesset, who was also a descendant of this specific Lubavitcher family, describing the failure of the Kibbutz movement. The letter was set to be printed in the new volume of the Rebbe's *Igros Kodesh*, volume 23, that was being prepared at the time and he

offered to fax me a copy of this letter, but apparently forgot to do so.

Out of the blue, this letter appeared in my fax machine, but the amazing thing is that the letter printed right before this one was a response to an educator who was under pressure to change things in his school. The Rebbe encouraged this educator to be strong and firmly resist these changes, providing a powerful explanation that applied to the very topic being discussed at the important meeting I was having that night!

Throughout the meeting I responded to all of their challenges by reciting the Rebbe's letter almost verbatim and everything worked out in the best possible way.

In awe of the open miracle I had just witnessed, I called the researcher and asked him what possessed him to send the letter we had spoken about weeks earlier in the middle of the night?

He said to me that in his sleep last night he felt someone coming to him and saying, "You told Yossi Groner you would send him a certain *igeres* and you didn't send it to him yet!" He woke up with a start and when he went back to sleep felt the same thing again, so he hurriedly ran to the library in the middle of the night and faxed the letter to me. The previous letter was on the same page so that letter came in the fax as well.

This was a miracle I experienced after Gimmel Tammuz, which illustrates that our connection to the Rebbe has not changed. The Rebbe continues to care for all of his Chassidim the same way he did before Gimmel Tammuz.

Going to the Ohel is our form of *yechidus* and the Rebbe finds a way to guide us in everything. It's important to realize that before Gimmel Tammuz when we wrote letters to the Rebbe we did not always merit to receive answers. One needed to have a special

zechus to receive an answer then and the same is true now. Sometimes the Rebbe's answers came in writing and at times the answer came in other forms.

We miss the Rebbe terribly but the Rebbe is not absent, *chas veshalom*. The Rebbe continues to be with us every step of the way, all the time.

To feel this one needs to work hard. Aside from learning Chitas and three *perakim* Rambam every day, it is crucial to have a *kvius* in learning the Rebbe's Torah every day. When I go on long distance drives I listen to a recording of the Rebbe's *farbrengen* and this gives me the feeling that the Rebbe is with me the entire time.

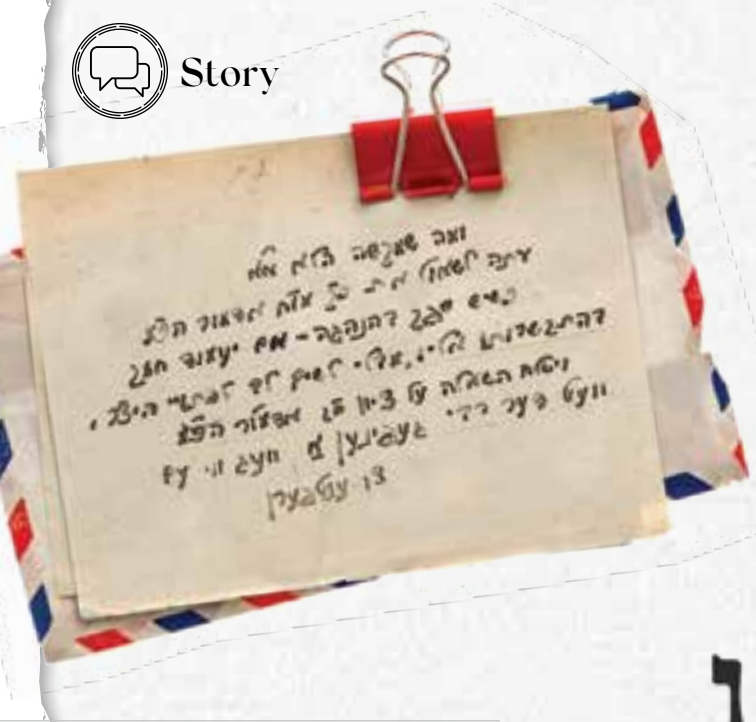
I'd like to conclude with the following thought. In the early years, people had the opportunity to have a private *yechidus* with the Rebbe, mainly for their *yom huledes*. In 5735* the Rebbe discontinued this and only visitors and special people were able to have *yechidus* and the Rebbe said that the *farbrengen* will serve as *yechidus* for the rest of us. Some time later *yechidus kholis* started, but then in 5746* the Rebbe started giving out dollars on Sundays and later on even more often during the week.

The Sunday dollars was an unprecedented phenomenon in Lubavitch history. For the first time ever, every man, woman and child was able to approach the Rebbe to receive a *shlichus mitzvah*, a *bracha* and even the opportunity to say a few words.

I think the Rebbe did this in order to empower every single Yid in our generation to be his *shliach*. He gave each and every one of us tremendous *kochos*, continues to guide us and care for us every step of the way and the more we are aware of this we will succeed in fulfilling our mission in preparing the world for Moshiach. T

1 In those years, the Rebbe didn't daven *Shacharis* with the *minyan* on most weekdays.

2 See *Simchas Torah* Day 5735, sicha 3.



דער רבי וועט געפינען א וועג...

לזכות הילדה
פיגה טאובה

לרגל יום הולדתה כ"ד מנחם אב
יה"ר שתגדל לתורה לחופה ולמעשים טובים
מתוך בריאות נכונה
ושפע בגור'ר לנח"ר כ"ק אדמו"ר
והוריה הי"ו

Public Menorah in the Texas Outback

AS TOLD BY RABBI SAADYA KAUFMAN (HOUSTON, TX)

In Tammuz 5780*, my wife and I were appointed by Rabbi Shimon Lazaroff to be the Rebbe's shlichim serving remote Yidden spread out over 200,000 square miles of the great state of Texas. For over 10 years now I have served as the regional *mashgiach* for the OU, based out of Houston, Texas. My *hashgacha* work takes me all over the state and it was an opportune time to start Chabad of Texas Towns, to reach Yidden in towns and villages too remote for established shlichim.

We immediately started gathering names of Jews who had contacted various shlichim from different parts of the state. Despite the Covid situation we managed to assemble groups of Yidden and helped them celebrate the Yomim Tovim in various ways.

Beaumont, Texas is a town of 118,000 residents with a small Jewish community and we wanted to arrange a public menorah lighting at City Hall. I consulted with a Jewish fellow living there about my plan and he excitedly shared



with me that there was a Jewish councilmember by the name of Mike Getz who would certainly help out.

A quick search online yielded the email addresses of Councilmember Getz and Mayor Ames and I sent them both an email with a proposal to have the first public menorah lighting in Beaumont this Chanukah. I described what the event was all about and how this was a tradition observed all over the country.

Councilmember Getz was very enthusiastic about the idea but several hours later I received a message from the mayor's office that it wouldn't be possible to have the public lighting at City Hall and that Councilmember Getz would be the right person to help us find a more suitable location in town.

Unsure of what to make of this rejection I wrote back to the mayor's office requesting a phone meeting to clarify the proposal.

That night I was speaking with my son learning in the yeshiva in New Haven. He mentioned to me that the yeshiva was going to the Ohel the next morning. I shared with him the latest with Chabad of Texas Towns, describing my efforts in arranging the first menorah lighting in Beaumont and the mayor's rejection and asked him to ask the Rebbe for a *bracha* that we should succeed in this *peulah*.

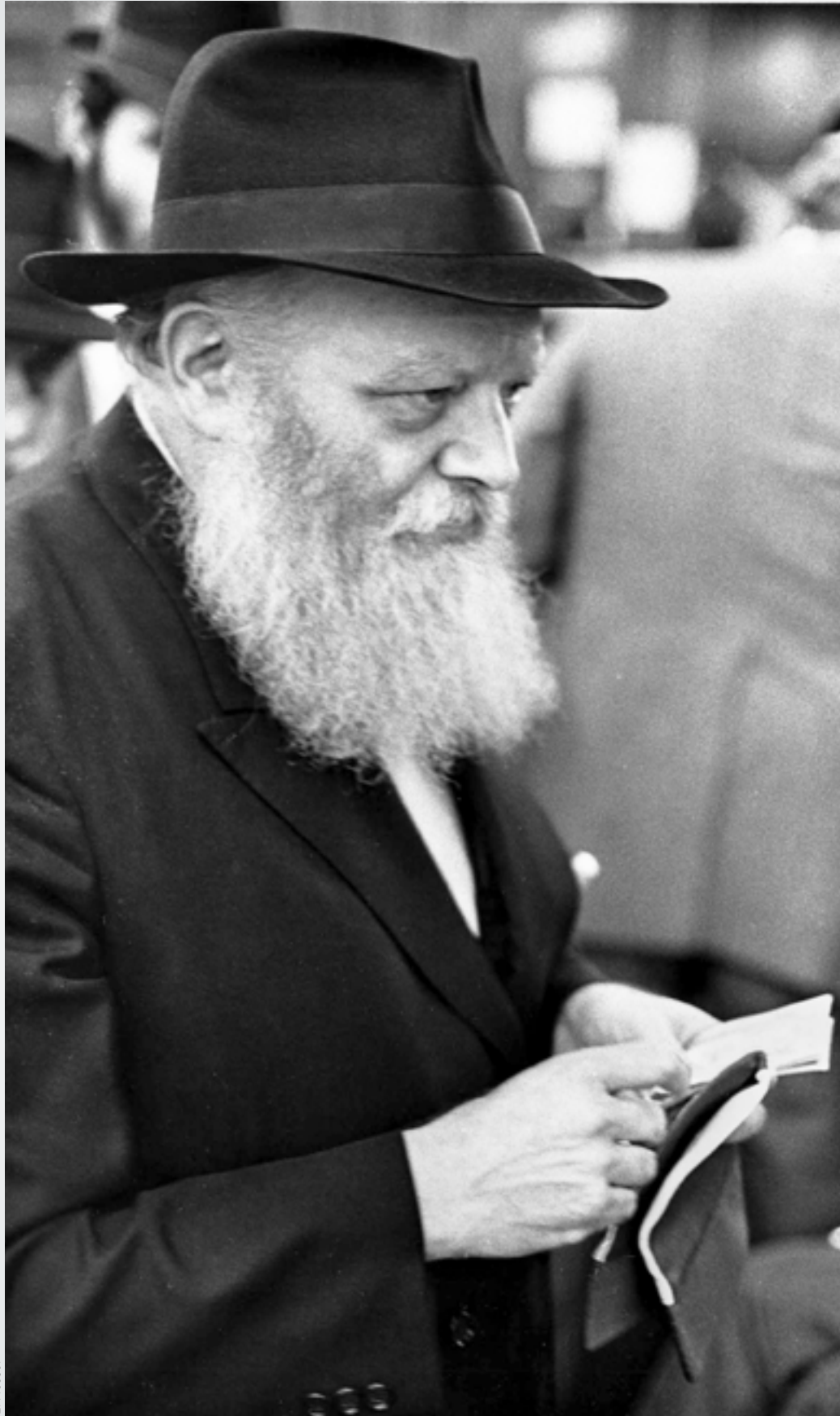
At 11:30 a.m. the next morning I received a call from the mayor's office. The mayor's assistant was on the line and she said that the mayor reviewed my email and was very supportive of the public menorah lighting. We spent several more minutes on the phone discussing the details and she was very helpful in ensuring that everything would happen in the best possible way.

An hour later my son called me saying that they just arrived in Crown Heights. I told him what had happened just an hour earlier and we quickly realized that the phone call from the mayor's office came in as he was standing at the Ohel asking the Rebbe for a *bracha*.

On the seventh night of Chanukah, Councilmember Getz proudly lit the brand new six-foot menorah in front of City Hall as Mayor Ames and a crowd of several dozen looked on. There was a special energy in the crowd and the local paper ran the story on the front page the next day. Our first *pirsumei nisa* in the Texas outback. **1**

YOUR STORY

Share your story with A Chassidisher Derher by emailing stories@derher.org.



JEM105307



EXCEPTIONAL SOLDIERS

On 23 Av 5736* a delegation of injured IDF veterans visited the Rebbe, while on a trip to the U.S. and Canada to attend the Paralympics in Toronto. We present a special photo gallery from this unique occasion.

The Rebbe came downstairs and said a *sicha* in *Lashon Hakodesh*. He explained that having a physical weakness or being deprived of a limb or a faculty, indicates that Hashem has given the *neschama* special powers to overcome those limitations and to surpass the achievements of ordinary people. The Rebbe suggested that these people not be called “disabled” or “handicapped” but rather special and unique, as they possess unique potentials that the rest of us do not, as well as the ability to be a living example of how every Yid can serve Hashem with *simcha*, overcoming all challenges.



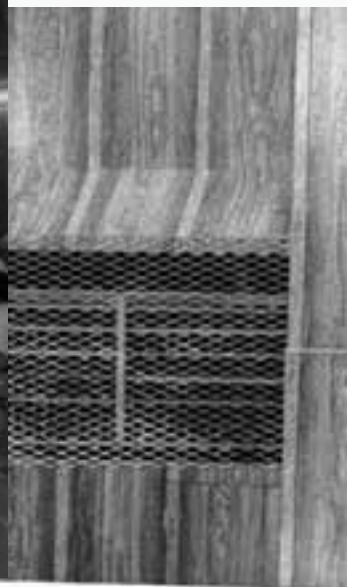
YOSSI MELAMED VIA JEM 24024



YOSHI MELAMED VIA JEM 24021



YOSSI MELAMED VIA JEM 24030



The Rebbe continued to speak of recent terror attacks that occurred during the days prior to this occasion, requesting that each person do something to strengthen security measures through properly fulfilling the mitzvah of mezuzah, checking and verifying that they are kosher when returning home.



JEM 105291







The Rebbe concluded by thanking the participants for the visit and gave a *bracha* that Hashem should help them succeed in bringing joy, light and Yiddishkeit to every place they will visit in Eretz Yisroel and outside.



JEM 105168



After the *sicha*, the Rebbe came down from the farbrengen *bima* to distribute dollars and share a personal moment with each visitor.



YOSSI MELAMED VIA JEM 105238



JEM105185



JEM105186



JEM105242



JEM105308

Mr. Joseph Cabiliv related:

From that terrible day on which I had woken without my legs in Rambam Hospital, I have seen all sorts of things in the eyes of those who looked at me: pain, pity, revulsion, anger. But this was the first time in all those years that I encountered true empathy. With that glance that lasted barely a second and the faint smile on his lips, the Rebbe conveyed to me that he is with me—utterly and exclusively with me.

He walked from wheelchair to wheelchair, shaking our hands, giving each a dollar, and adding a personal word or two. When my turn came, I saw his face up close and I felt like a child. He gazed deeply into my eyes, took my hand between his own, pressed it firmly, and said, “Thank you” with a slight nod of his head.

I later learned that he had said something different to each one of us. To me he said, “Thank you”—somehow he sensed that that was exactly what I needed to hear. With those two words, the Rebbe erased all the bitterness and despair that had accumulated in my heart. I carried the Rebbe’s “Thank you” back to Israel, and I carry it with me to this very day.



YOSSI MELAMED VIA JEM 23989

Letters

A forum for readers to send their feedback, add to, or ask any questions about articles. Submit your letter to feedback@derher.org.

Submissions may be slightly modified by our editorial staff before publishing.

My Great Uncle Rabbi Rodshtein

Dear Editors,

The *Derher* published a string of anecdotes that provided a sense of Rabbi Moshe Leib Rodshtein. As his great-niece, I want to add to the pastiche of stories so that your readership will have a better sense of “*De Feter*” (Uncle) as we lovingly called him.

My father, Yisroel (Izzy) Chanowitz, lost his parents and some siblings during the Holocaust. His parents and three siblings perished in Glubokie (Belarus). He, his eldest sister and two brothers survived the war. One brother went to Palestine, while he and two brothers escaped to Shanghai.

Rabbi Moshe Leib Rodshtein and his wife Kayla (nee Chanowitz) made their way to Chicago, IL while World War II was raging. The Chanowitz brothers, having obtained transit visas via Chiune Sugihara, were stranded in Kobe, Japan. Under threat of being deported to a ghetto in Shanghai, they wrote multiple telegrams to Rabbi Rodshtein in Chicago, asking him to intervene and obtain visas for them to travel to the United States. *De Feter* worked at it, but was unsuccessful, and the Chanowitz siblings spent the war in Shanghai with the other students in Yeshiva Tomchei Temimim Lubavitch. One of them passed away there, and another suffered malnutrition.

After the war, the three Chanowitz siblings in Shanghai made their way, by boat and

train, to Crown Heights. Later, the brother in Palestine joined them. *De Feter* and *De Muma* (Aunt) became parental surrogates to the orphans. *Feter* and *Muma* walked them down to the *chupah*, and became the grandparent figures to their children.

It was *De Feter* who convinced my parents to send me to Camp Emunah. *De Feter* and *De Muma* cared for me and my brother when my mother sat *shiva* for her father. Shabbos afternoons we often visited them on Rogers Avenue. *De Feter* always had treats for us and *De Muma* kept a box of toys to keep us joyfully occupied.

My father ran a car rental on Kingston Avenue. I recall that as a youngster he sometimes gave me envelopes to deliver to *De Feter*. I felt very important walking up the steps of 770 and right through the main hall, past the *beis midrash* to *De Feter's* office all the way in the back. He always greeted me joyfully, asking me how my day went at school. [Years later this office would be converted into the place that a *shiddur* (broadcast) of a *farbrengen* could be beamed to places across the globe.]

These days, after Yom Kippur there is a tractor trailer on Eastern Parkway where *bochurim* and visitors can line up and get some food on which to break their fast. It was Rabbi Rodshtein who began this tradition. He was concerned that the yeshiva *bochurim* were very hungry at the end of the fast day and it would be a while until they could get food at the yeshiva or get to someone's home to break

their fast. So, he decided to make it possible for them to break their fast right in 770.

It began modestly. At the end of Yom Kippur, *De Feter* and my father would hurry to set up a table right inside the office door. I was in the background using a can opener to punch holes in large cans of orange juice and pouring juice into paper cups. My father was slicing up trays of *lekach* (honey cake) which had been baked by *De Muma*. *Bochurim* lined the hallway and Rabbi Rodshtein stood and handed out a cup of juice and a piece of cake to each *bochur* as he passed, wishing him “*ah gut yohr*.” Demand grew and outpaced what *De Muma* could bake so my father ordered honey cake from Albany Bakery. I remember the relief I felt the first time I pulled off the string tied around the huge box and discovered that someone in the bakery had sliced the cake! When *De Feter* passed away, my father carried on the tradition. At some point demand was too great and the current arrangement on Eastern Parkway began.

When I was a little girl, *De Feter* was a smiling, concerned grandfather figure in my life. I remember the softness of his beard as he hugged me. By the time I was 10 years old, I understood how important his position was as the Hebrew secretary for the Frierdiker Rebbe and subsequently the Rebbe. Rabbi Rodshtein passed away when I was in my early teens. But his legacy has stayed with me.

As a Jewish educator I have worked as a Jewish day school administrator in various parts of the USA. In each city, as a representative of my day school, I would meet the local Chabad shliach. To impress the older generation of Chassidim I would mention that I was “*fun de gezah*” (I had Chabad roots). Curious that a Modern Orthodox day school administrator had Chabad roots, they would inquire about my family name. As part of my story I would explain that Rabbi Moshe Leib Rodshtein was my great-uncle. The modicum of respect they had for *De Feter* and his legacy always warmed my heart. *Yehi zichro baruch*.

Chaye (Chanowitz) Kohl

HIGHLAND PARK, NEW JERSEY

Names from the Rebbe

Dear Editors,

In a recent article published about the significance and power of names, you included a list of Hebrew names that the Rebbe suggested to people based on their secular names.

Below is a list of some additional names the Rebbe suggested to people during Sunday dollars:

Joy - Simcha

Clina - Nekiya

Lucas - Asher

Ashi Natalie - Natalie

Stephanie - Sara

Ken - Kinyan

Jane - Yonah

Elcie - Aliya (*ayin lamed yud, hey*)

Maximillian - Mordechai

Jacqueline - Simcha

Kolet - Keili or Kelia

Lida (Persian name) - Leah/Malka

Mash (Persian woman's name which means moon and sun) - Shemesh or Shimshiya

Nedjma (French name) - Nechama or Kreindel

There are two times that I came across women with the name Roya (a Persian name which means dream) coming to dollars and asking the Rebbe for a name. One time the Rebbe responded with the name Chelma/Tikva. The other time the Rebbe suggested “Raya”—*reish ayin yud, hey*.

Zalmy Ceitlin

BROOKLYN, NY

