

# Derher

A Chassidisher

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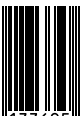
**THE REBBE'S ADVICE  
AND GUIDANCE FOR  
WORKING AT  
PARNASAH**

**Heart, Mind,  
and Home**

CHECKING TEFILLIN  
AND MEZUZOS

**A Soldier in Yerushalayim**  
THE STORY OF REB AVRUM HERSH COHEN

\$5.95



ELUL 5781  
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This magazine  
has been made possible

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

**T**he month of Elul, in addition to all its many special qualities, marks the start of a new school year, a new *shnas halimudim* in yeshivos and schools around the world. The truth is that the entire year is an opportune time to focus on our children's education. The Rebbe famously quotes the Rebbe Rashab in Hayom Yom as saying that every individual has an "absolute obligation" to think about their children's *chinuch* every day for thirty minutes. But when the month of Elul is here, our focus on *chinuch* only intensifies.

Many parents and educators ask how to properly instill Chassidishe values into the hearts and minds of their children. More specifically—how to teach their children to develop a sense of *hiskashrus* and an excitement towards the Rebbe and all that the Rebbe wants of us; especially in a time when we don't see the Rebbe physically.

Perhaps we can glean some direction in this regard from a fascinating *sicha* on a Rashi in Parshas Vayelech. The *posuk* says: הִקְהִילוּ אֵלַי אֶת כָּל זִקְנֵי שִׁבְטֵיכֶם וְשִׁטְרֵיכֶם—Moshe Rabbeinu summoned the elders of the tribes. Rashi comments that Moshe Rabbeinu didn't use the trumpets, like he would usually do when he wished to gather the people, because it was the day of his passing and the trumpets had been hidden away. The reason being that "אין שלטון ביום המות"—a person does not have rulership on the day of his passing.



The Rebbe asks:

How is it possible that on the day of his passing Moshe Rabbeinu no longer had full control of his leadership of the Jewish people? Moshe Rabbeinu, the faithful shepherd that he was, tended to the Jewish people every day. Obviously, as in all matters of holiness, Moshe Rabbeinu certainly attained higher levels each and every day (“מעלין” – “בִּקְדָּשׁ”), and his leadership became stronger and stronger. How is it possible that specifically on the day of his passing, a most significant and special day of his life, his leadership was somehow diminished?!

The answer, says the Rebbe, is that his leadership of B’nei Yisroel reached such a high level, that he surpassed the sense of being called a “ruler” over them. Of course, he still maintained his connection with his flock, but Moshe Rabbeinu’s connection with the Jewish people on that day was on a much higher level than usual. For this reason he did not need the trumpets in order to get their attention.

Then the Rebbe brings it into very practical terms: Every Jewish child knows that they have a connection with Moshe Rabbeinu. “*Torah tziva lanu Moshe...*” We each received an inheritance, an inborn gift, taught to us by Moshe Rabbeinu. In other words, our connection to Moshe is at the very core of our being. Every Jewish child has Moshe Rabbeinu “in his pocket”!

His connection to Moshe Rabbeinu even plays itself out in everyday life: A child is willing to forgo a candy or give up time from playing with toys just to be able to learn a word of Torah.

The children themselves feel and want this. In fact, if their parents wouldn’t get in the way, this connection with Moshe Rabbeinu and his Torah would shine all the time! Sometimes parents think they’re doing their child a favor by stopping them from learning to give them something to eat; they’re concerned about the child’s health. But the best thing they can give their child to improve their health is more Torah!

The Rebbe’s guidance could not be more clear:

We need to recognize that our children already have it within themselves. They already possess an intrinsic connection with Moshe Rabbeinu, and with *our* Moshe Rabbeinu, inherent inside them. Our job is only to reveal it and let it shine, without getting too much in the way.

With that, Hashem will help us all to see success in our efforts, with *nachas* from our children and students, and the children will walk the front lines in the march to the *geula*, *teikef umiyad Mamosh*.

בברכת כתיבה וחתימה טובה לשנה טובה ומתוקה.

**A Chassidisher Derher**

כ"ף מנחם אב ה'תשפ"א

שנת המאה ועשרים להולדת כ"ק אדמו"ר



# This is Who He Wants

רמב"ם הלכות אישות פכ"ה ה"ב

When a man marries a woman without having made any specifications about the matter, and it is discovered that she has one of the blemishes [that mar] a woman's [appeal to her husband], as outlined above: If the husband neither knew nor heard about this blemish, and did not willingly accept it, he [may] divorce [his wife] without having to pay [her the money due her by virtue of] her kesubah—neither the fundamental requirement nor the additional amount...

...By contrast, with regard to physical blemishes that are openly seen, the husband cannot claim [not to have known about the blemish]. For they can be seen by everyone, and it may be assumed that he heard about them and accepted [the matter].

הכונס אשה סתם ונמצא  
בה מום ממומי הנשים שכבר  
בארונום ולא ידע הבעל במום  
זה ולא שמע בו ורצה הרי זו  
תצא בלא כתבה לא עקר ולא  
תוספת... וחזקה ששמע ורצה.  
אבל במומין שבגלוי אינו יכול  
לטעון שהרי הכל רואין אותן  
ואומרין לו וחזקתו ששמע  
ונתפס.



# מחזור הארבעים 40 CYCLES OF LEARNING RAMBAM



לזכות  
הרה"ת ר' גד דוד וזוגתו מרת שירה  
וילדיהם  
נתנאל חיים, נחמה אסתר, חוה מזל,  
מנחם מענדל, נעמי חנה,  
משה אליהו שיחיו  
סבג

At every Jewish wedding under the *chupah*, we say, מקדש עמו ישראל על ידי חופה וקידושין, Hashem married us—the Jewish people—with *chupah* and *kiddushin*.

Just as with a human marriage, if one was aware of the faults of the woman it is self understood that he accepted it willingly, so too Hashem was certainly aware of our flaws, and yet He not only accepted but willingly went along with us.

As the Rambam writes, in his clear and lucid words: “שמע ורצה”—[the husband] heard about it, and **wanted** it. He didn’t merely **accept** it or just go along with it; he truly **wanted** her the way she is. Similarly, Hashem not only accepts us with all our faults and shortcomings; He wants us exactly the way we are, and He opens the door for us to do *teshuvah* for our wrongdoings, bringing us to an even higher level

than where we would have been without our sins.

The lesson is clear: No matter the situation we are in and how lowly we might feel, Hashem is with us at that stage and at that moment, by His choice! And at any moment, Hashem is ready to redeem us from *galus* and take us out of our lowly state, may it be speedily, now!

(11 and 13 Nissan 5748, *Sefer Hasichos* 5748, p. 379.)





לעבן מיטן רבין



CIRCA CHESHVAN 5725, RABBI NOCHUM KAPLAN

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'ה

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

# Melech Basadeh

ELUL 5723\*



From the diary of Menachem Malov, a *yungerman* from Eretz Yisroel  
 who traveled to the Rebbe for the first time for Tishrei 5724\*.

## 23 ELUL

When we arrived in New York, we were greeted in the airport by a group of *bochurim* learning in 770, as well as dear friends from Eretz Yisroel—some of whom we had not seen for 15 years! There was singing and dancing, and we were given a warm and joyous welcome. Following a heartfelt

"*shalom aleichem*," we boarded the large bus sent from the yeshiva which would deliver us to our final destination: 770 Eastern Parkway—the Rebbe's shul.

We arrived at 770, and we literally sang and danced our way inside—so full of joy and excitement were we to be in the Rebbe's *daled amos*! We arrived shortly before Maariv, so there was no

need to wait too long to catch our first glimpse of the Rebbe.

At 9:30 p.m. the Rebbe left his room to go to the *zal* for Maariv. I had managed to place myself right opposite the door to the Rebbe's room, and I readied myself both mentally and emotionally for this awesome experience that would take place in just a few moments—my first time seeing the Rebbe in person, face to face; the excitement and trepidation was mounting.

The door to the Rebbe's room opened, and I watched the Rebbe come out and lock the door behind him with a key. In one hand the Rebbe held a *siddur* and a *gartel*, and with the other hand, he withdrew from his pocket some coins for *tzedakah* which he then proceeded to distribute in the corridor. The Rebbe entered the *zal* with rapid strides, kissing the mezuzah on his way in.

Due to the close proximity of my spot (directly opposite the Rebbe's room), I was an obvious "target" for the Rebbe's piercing eyes: The Rebbe's gaze penetrated me to the core. I had imagined that I would recognize this look when I received it, based on pictures I had previously seen. But now that the Rebbe's eyes were actually meeting my own, I was suddenly overcome with an intense fear, and I could feel my heart pounding in my chest. At that



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CIRCA MID 5720S

moment I felt that with just this one fleeting look, the Rebbe was examining my entire being from head to toe—he saw everything.

It is not for nothing, I realized, that the *bochurim* constantly tried to escape the Rebbe's penetrating gaze. At the same time, being that they want to watch and see everything that the Rebbe is doing, each one hides behind the other's shoulders, and watches from afar...

After "*Barchu*" the Rebbe sits down in his place with his right hand over his forehead, facing the crowd and his back to the wall. The area around the Rebbe's place, about 6-8 feet or so, stays empty.

Throughout the entire *tefillah* the Rebbe remains still in his place; he does not move around or sway back and forth. The only part of him that moves are his lips, silently mouthing the words.

The Rebbe finished *Shemoneh Esrei* almost exactly together with the *chazzan*, so the *chazzan* began *kaddish* right away. The Rebbe waits until the *chazzan* says the words "*Tiskabel...*" before taking the few steps back to his place.

During *Aleinu*, the Rebbe once again fixed us with a penetrating gaze, and after Maariv ended the Rebbe gave a swing with his hand; a signal for the Chassidim to break out in song. The gathered Chassidim burst into a spirited rendition of "*Ufaratzta*," and after the Rebbe returned to his room, those who were present joined each other in a spontaneous and lively dance.

The next day, a public message was delivered through *mazkirus*, notifying the crowd that the Rebbe will not be receiving people for *yechidus* until after Rosh Hashanah.





THE REBBE SPEAKS TO THE WOMEN FOLLOWING THE SICHA TO N'SHEI U'BNOS CHABAD, CIRCA MID 5720S\*.

### SHABBOS MEVARCHIM – PARSHAS NITZAVIM-VAYELECH

Shabbos was filled with many uplifting and exhilarating experiences.

At the conclusion of Tehillim on Shabbos morning, a path was cleared for the Rebbe to leave the shul. A short while later the Rebbe returned wearing his tallis and Shacharis began.

The atmosphere in the room during davening had a festive tone to it, and the emotions in the air uplifted and refreshed the spirit. Davening moved at a relatively quick pace, and when the *minyan* was up to “*Hoàderes v’hoemuna*” the Rebbe made a motion with his finger, and the crowd began to sing: “*Hoàderes v’hoemuna...*”

At this point, the Rebbe opened up a Tanya that was sitting on his *shtender*, keeping his eyes in the *sefer* until the *minyan* was up to “*Vay’varech Dovid*,” at which point the Rebbe closed the Tanya and gathered his front *tzitzis* for “*Baruch Sheàmar*.”

In general, it is interesting to see how the Rebbe stands for the entire davening—and *krias haTorah*, as well—without sitting down even once.

When the *chazzan* reaches *Birchas Kohanim* in *chazaras hashatz* (where the *minhag* is to look at the *chazzan* while answering “*Amen*” to the *brochos*), those standing between the Rebbe’s place and that of the *chazzan* move aside, so as not to block the Rebbe’s view of the *chazzan*. This scene repeats itself when the *aron kodesh* is opened for *krias haTorah*.

Being that the large *bimah* for *krias haTorah* was not yet set up, some of my friends who had been in 770 for a while advised me to get a place closer to the *bimah*, and this way I would be able to hear the Rebbe as he reads the Haftarah. Indeed, I was able to hear the Rebbe as he said the Haftarah in a quiet voice, pronouncing each word slowly and carefully: “שׁוֹשׁ אִשִּׁישׁ בָּהּ...”

The Rebbe’s voice was filled with emotion, and you could hear the Rebbe sobbing silently as he read word after word, *possuk* after *possuk*... Until he came to the *possuk*: “מִדּוֹעַ אָדוֹם לְלִבּוֹשִׁיךָ...”, upon which the Rebbe completely broke down, weeping uncontrollably; the crying was so intense, that the Rebbe was simply unable to continue reading. From that point on, until the end of the Haftarah, it became too difficult to even hear.

## FARBRENGEN

About an hour after Shacharis ended, the Rebbe's began farbrenging, going on for about 3 hours, from 1:30 p.m. until 4:30 p.m.

I had always been told in yeshiva that one ought to stand by the Rebbe's farbrengen, but my friends advised me to get a seat for the farbrengen. Their reasoning was, there is barely any space to stand, and to find a spot that I could—so to speak—make “mine” would be virtually impossible. So I would therefore be better off finding a seat by one of the tables.

It was not an easy task to concentrate and grasp everything the Rebbe said. The Rebbe speaks in a very concise manner, and the *sichos* consist of vast amounts of information, which are condensed into brief and concise words. Combine that with all the pushing and the feelings of excitement when listening to the Rebbe talk.

At one point during the farbrengen, the Rebbe stood up in his place, and danced with tremendous joy and energy. The thousands of people present danced along in their places—a sight to behold: Rows and rows of faces jumping up and down, rising and falling to the rhythm of the song, all together creating a mighty and powerful roar.

The farbrengen finished around 4:30 p.m. and though we had not yet eaten *seudas Shabbos*, the *chozer* Reb Yoel Kahn got up on a table and proceeded to make a *chazara* on all the *sichos* said at the farbrengen. Reb Yoel is the type of person who retains everything he hears, and does not lose even a drop. He absorbs everything the Rebbe says at the farbrengens, and has a phenomenal grasp and comprehension of the vast and diverse range of topics and ideas expounded on in the *sichos*. After each farbrengen, he sits for hours and reviews out loud the entire farbrengen, exactly the way it was said. Because I had never witnessed this scene that I had heard much about, I decided to stay and listen.

On Motzei Shabbos there was a *melave malka*, and Reb Yoel made a second *chazara* of the farbrengen.

## MONDAY, 27 ELUL

More guests arrived today from all around the world to be together with the Rebbe for Yom Tov. Amongst them were groups from Australia, Morocco, Paris, London, Italy and Canada. There was also a group of *bochurim* from Lod (Eretz

Yisroel), who will be staying by the Rebbe for an extended period.

Tonight, the Rebbe spoke to the N'shei Chabad who gather each year in the days leading up to Rosh Hashanah in 770 to receive the Rebbe's *bracha* for the coming year. The Rebbe spoke about the difference between the month of Elul, and the rest of the year; it is much like the difference between the way the king is in the field, and the way he is when in the palace.

After the Rebbe finished speaking, the women formed a line, and waited for their turn to hand the Rebbe a *pidyon*. It was a remarkable and heart-warming sight to behold—the cheerful countenance the Rebbe displayed, and the patience with which he sat and received each *pidyon*. Most of the women waited as the Rebbe read their *tzetel* and gave them his *bracha* before continuing on, but the Rebbe did not display any signs of being in a rush—even though it is just a few days before Rosh Hashanah. In fact, this was the first time I saw the Rebbe's face free of its usual serious expression...

In the meantime, the *zal* upstairs was filling up with more and more guests who just arrived, and I watched with growing amazement and wonder: “How will all these people fit in here?” This place looks much too small to contain the multitudes of guests still arriving.

## WEDNESDAY, EREV ROSH HASHANAH

We woke up early for *selichos*. After Shacharis and *hataras nedarim*, we got into a line and waited for the moment the Rebbe would open the door to his room and begin receiving the many *pidyonos* from people.

As I waited, my entire being was consumed with the thought, that in just a few moments—for the first time in my life—I will be handing my *pidyon* straight into the Rebbe's hand. I had placed my *pidyon* inside an envelope and wrote my name on the outside. Eventually it was my turn, and the Rebbe took my envelope without even glancing at the name written on it, and *bentched* me with a “שנה טובה ומתוקה.”

We had also brought with us *pidyonos* from Eretz Yisroel from people who asked us to deliver them to the Rebbe. As soon as we arrived, we were instructed by *mazkirus* to bring these *pidyonos* straight to the *mazkirus* office.



CIRCA MID 5720S

In general, whenever I sent a *tzetel* through the *mazkirus*, they would put it inside a closed envelope, and only the Rebbe would open the envelope to read the *tzetel*. I would receive an answer back from the Rebbe—sometimes, the very same day—but never later than the following day. The answer would come in the form of the Rebbe's handwriting on the very same paper that I had sent in. But for all the money in the world, *mazkirus* would never hand over the actual paper, rather, you would need to copy the Rebbe's answer onto another piece of paper.

After I handed over my *pidyon* to the Rebbe, I was curious and decided to stand on the side and watch as the Rebbe receives others' *pidyonos* as well. For two full hours, the Rebbe stood and received

*pidyonos* from people. The Rebbe stood on the threshold of his room, and when the person handed over his *pidyon* the Rebbe took it in his right hand, *bentched* the individual with a “שנה טובה ומתוקה”, and then passed the *pidyon* on to his left hand. After a handful of *pidyonos* accumulated, the Rebbe brought them into his room and then returned to the door to continue taking *pidyonos*. This went on until about 11:30 a.m., at which point the Rebbe went to the Ohel.

Large bags, filled with *pidyonos* were brought along to the Ohel, and the Rebbe stood there for hours reading through them. The Rebbe returned to 770 in the afternoon, continued receiving *pidyonos*, and *bentching* each person with a “שנה טובה ומתוקה.” **T**





Ksav Yad Kodesh

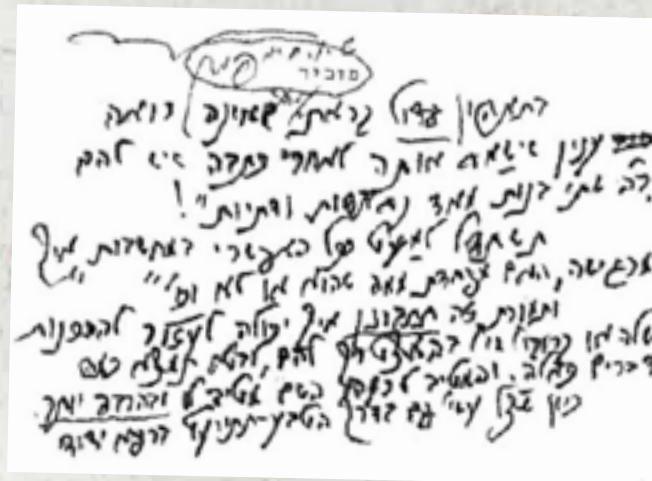


כתב יד  
קודש

# Be There for Another

The Rebbe advises a woman on how to recognize  
her blessings and bring positive energy into her life:

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  
גורקאו



In **great** astonishment I read [what you wrote] that you don't see anything that can make you happy—after you wrote that you have “*Baruch Hashem, two very nice and religious daughters!*”

You should try to minimize as much as possible these thoughts of “how do I feel, and if I am afraid of something or not, **and so on.**”

Instead, you should **contemplate** what you can do to help your neighbors or relatives with what they may need, and you surely will find such opportunities. One who is good to his fellow, Hashem is good to him, **many times over.**

Since you must do something by natural means as well, you should consult with a doctor who is a friend.

בתימהון **גדול** קראתי שאינה רואה ענין שישמח אותה לאחרית כתבה שיש להם “ב”ה שתי בנות מאד נחמדות ודתיות!”

תשתדל למעט ככל האפשרי במחשבות “איך מרגישה, האם מפחדת ממה שהוא או לא וכו”

ותמורת זה **תתבונן** איך יכולה לעזור להשכנות שלה או קרובי' ש' בהמצטרך להם, ובטח תמצא כמה דברים כאלה. והמטיב לרעהו השם מטיב לו **ובהרבה יותר.**

כיון שצ”ל עשי' גם בדרך הטבע - תתייעץ ברופא ידיד

# HEART, MIND, AND HOME

*checking tefillin and mezuzot*





לזכות  
הרה"ת ר' צבי הירש  
וזוגתו מרת חנה ומשפחתם שיחיו  
באקמאן



Throughout the years of the Rebbe's *nesius*, there were a few 'classic' answers that Chassidim would receive in response to inquiries and requests. For example, the Rebbe would almost always respond to letters with "*Azkir al haTziyun*—I will mention it at the Ohel."

One unique response was "*bedikas tefillin u'mezuzos*—check your tefillin and mezuzos." Countless stories abound with miracles that resulted from this instruction of the Rebbe.

The Rebbe also emphasized that during the month of Elul, it is a general Jewish custom to check tefillin and mezuzos. In conjunction with Elul this year, we bring you the following pages with stories, instructions and the Rebbe's overall attitude toward every aspect of *kashrus* and *hiddur* in tefillin and mezuzos.



# THE HALACHA

Why do we check tefillin in the first place? Must tefillin and mezuzos be checked according to *halacha*?

The Gemara says<sup>1</sup> that a mezuzah on a personal home must be checked twice every seven years, and a mezuzah of the *tzibbur* must be checked twice every 50 years.

The Talmud Bavli doesn't give specific instructions for tefillin, but the Yerushalmi writes: "Rebbe says: Tefillin must be checked once every 12 months. Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel says: They don't need to be checked at all. Hillel Hazaken said: My tefillin are from my maternal grandfather" (— indicating that they were never checked).<sup>2</sup> The *halacha* based on this statement would be quite simple. We rule according to Hillel, so tefillin do not need to be checked. Indeed, that is the ruling of the Rambam.<sup>3</sup>

However, Mechilta<sup>4</sup> and Midrash Tanchuma<sup>5</sup> have a different *girsas*. According to their version, Beis Hillel is of the opinion that they must be checked once a year, while Beis Shammai maintains that they don't need to be checked at all. In fact, they also bring the story about Hillel's grandfather's tefillin, but they attribute the story not to Hillel but to Shammai!

As a practical *halacha*, the Shulchan Aruch rules<sup>6</sup> according to the Yerushalmi, that tefillin don't need to be checked at all (unless they are only worn occasionally, in which case they must be checked twice every seven years). However, in *sefarim* throughout the generations,<sup>7</sup> many *poskim* recommend checking tefillin anyway twice every seven years. First of all, you thereby observe the opinion of the Midrash, and secondly, tefillin have often been found to be *possul*.

Certain *poskim* suggested checking them even more often. In *Orchos Chayim*, there is a custom attributed to the Baalei Tosfos to check tefillin once a year, and in later generations, as recorded in Kitzur Shulchan Aruch, it became customary to check tefillin and mezuzos during the month of Elul. The Rebbe often mentioned this custom during the month of Elul.<sup>8</sup>



### the rebbe's instructions

The Rebbe's instructions to check tefillin and mezuzos usually came with no explanations. Often, the Rebbe would just write a *roshei teivos*: בדמהזוהה"פ (—*bedikas hamezuzos v'hatfillin*, check your mezuzos and tefillin). However, there were occasions when the Rebbe added that they should be checked only if they had not been checked during the preceding year.<sup>9</sup>

In one letter, the Rebbe explained to a questioner that his instruction to check tefillin wasn't because he suspected that something was wrong, but because the opinion of the Mechilta was to check tefillin once a year, especially because tefillin and mezuzos can deteriorate. "And when it comes to health," the Rebbe adds, "we engage in activities even with the slightest hope that they will better the situation."<sup>10</sup>

As a general rule, the Rebbe encouraged people to check them regularly. In a *sicha* in Elul 5748\*, the Rebbe asked that the custom to check tefillin be publicized as a worthy *minhag* to do during Elul.<sup>11</sup>

During Mivtza Mezuzah, when various individuals raised questions about the Rebbe's push for a massive mezuzah-checking campaign, the Rebbe explained that in our day, tefillin and mezuzos are of inferior quality, and weather and other factors can damage them.

It was especially important to hold the campaign, the Rebbe explained, because some tefillin and mezuzos are *possul* when they are sold! Many unsuspecting Jews purchase their mezuzos from unscrupulous sellers, who sell them paper mezuzos *lechatchilah*. The Rebbe mentioned that on one occasion, a mezuzah was found to contain *Birchas Kohanim*, no less!<sup>12</sup>

In the later years, the Rebbe instituted this directive as a unique standard response — if a person called *mazkirus* with a health problem, they were to suggest checking tefillin and mezuzos even without consulting the Rebbe first!

### the first tefillin messages

The Rebbe's '*koch*' in tefillin and mezuzos can be traced back to 5704\*,

when Machane Yisrael began outreach to Jewish soldiers serving in the United States Military, much before the era of *mivtzoim*, which began in 5727\*. One of the main initiatives was to encourage soldiers to put on tefillin every day, and they were offered pairs of tefillin for a low price.

The Rebbe sent a letter to the soldiers which contained a message from the Frierdiker Rebbe about

“WHEN IT COMES TO HEALTH,  
WE ENGAGE IN ACTIVITIES EVEN WITH  
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\* 5748-1988, 5704-1944, 5727-1967



wearing Tefillin - a message which was echoed by the Rebbe many years later:

“Our sages said that someone who puts on tefillin lives a long life. Our brothers in the military! Make sure to put on tefillin each and every weekday! A soldier who cannot put them on in the morning, should do so in the afternoon, as long as it is before sundown. This is a *segulah* for Hashem to bring them home in peace.”<sup>13</sup>

In a letter to a donor, the Rebbe explains that this ‘Mivtza Tefillin’ was one of the most significant parts of Machane Yisrael’s work with the military.

“With Hashem’s help,” the Rebbe writes, “the campaign is successful. Many of those who haven’t worn tefillin for many years, or perhaps have never worn it in their lives, have now begun to fulfill this great mitzvah.”

Towards the end of the same letter, the Rebbe encourages him to take part in the *mivtza* as well.

“Once we are on the topic, I will suggest that since you’ve had the merit of supporting the purchase of tefillin... speak to your acquaintances who cherish G-d’s word, and begin an organized campaign in your city to promote tefillin...”<sup>14</sup>

### taking it to a new level

The days before the Six Day War ushered in an entirely new *tekufah* with regards to Mivtza Tefillin. As the entire Jewish world trembled at the thought of a war against all Arab armies, the Rebbe publicly declared that victory was at hand, and announced the *mivtza* — the first of all *mivtzoim* — that every Jewish male over bar mitzvah, and especially every soldier, put on tefillin “that are checked, kosher and *mehudar*.”<sup>15</sup> The benefits were two-fold: The Gemara associates wearing tefillin with long life, and also says that tefillin will cause the other nations to fear us.

A massive campaign was set in motion, encouraging tefillin wearing in the IDF and throughout the world. Countless Jews put on tefillin during those early months, and the inspiration continued for a long time afterwards. The tefillin stand at the Kosel has given the merit of tefillin to more than a million Jews over the years.

Although the war concluded within one week, the Rebbe didn’t allow the *mivtza* to end, and continued to speak about it regularly for years afterwards.

Despite the fact that the Rebbe announced many initiatives in the years that followed, Mivtza Tefillin retained its pride of place. Every Shabbos after davening in 770, the *gabbai* would make an announcement encouraging *anash* to go on *mivtzoim* on Sunday, when they were off of work; this announcement continued for decades.<sup>16</sup>

### from tefillin to mezuzos

Before Chanukah 5734\*, the Rebbe began expanding the *mivtzoim* campaigns. Chanukah and Purim *mivtzoim* were taken to new levels, and the Rebbe announced three new campaigns around Yud Shevat: Mezuzah, Tzedakah and Bayis Malei Sefarim.

In the following Iyar, a mass terror attack occurred in the Israeli town of Maalot, and many children were killed.<sup>17</sup> The Rebbe asked to check the mezuzos in the school they were in, and shockingly, the *posule* mezuzos matched the number of casualties.

We cannot suggest, the Rebbe said, that the reason people were killed was because there was a problem with the mezuzos. But, on the other hand, just as a soldier must wear his helmet for protection, a mezuzah protects the inhabitants of the home just as well.

The most suitable response to the tragedy, the Rebbe said, would be to



reach out to every Jewish home and ensure that they affix proper, kosher mezuzos (as well as *sefarim* and a tzedakah *pushka*).<sup>18</sup>

During the following months, the Rebbe intensified the mezuzah campaign, encouraging that every Jewish home have kosher mezuzos, through checking old ones and purchasing new ones. During the same period, the *bochurim* at 770 invented the mitzvah tanks, and they started going out to the streets of New York every single day, spreading the Rebbe’s message.

Throughout Sivan, Tammuz and further, the mezuzah campaign was a constant presence in the Rebbe’s *sichos*,





TZACH/RASKIN FAMILY ARCHIVES

and the Rebbe held several special farbrengens just to promote these mitzvot.

### *the all encompassing mitzvot*

One of the enduring themes in the Rebbe's letters and *sichos* is the inherent connection between physicality and spirituality. Some people prefer to compartmentalize their life into separate sections, separating the spiritual from the mundane, but the Rebbe always explained that Torah, being *Toras Emes* and *Toras Chayim*, is relevant and important in every aspect of life.

"There is surely no need to point out to you," the Rebbe writes to one individual, "that *ruchnius* and *gashmius* are connected with one another. Medical experts recognize that the health of the body is associated with the health of the soul, and not only with the soul in general but with the *nefesh ha'Elohis* in particular..."

Throughout the years, patterns emerged in which the Rebbe pointed to specific connections between physical and spiritual; if someone was lacking in a specific matter, the Rebbe often instructed them to focus on the mitzvah that related to that specific field. For families who struggled to have children, the Rebbe

suggested renewed focus on *taharas hamishpacha*, and for individuals struggling with financial issues, the Rebbe pointed to Shabbos observance or tzedakah.

But there was one concept that the Rebbe employed overall — as something that was relevant to all issues: Meticulous observance of the mitzvot of tefillin and mezuzah. It is difficult to describe how many topics the Rebbe associated with checking tefillin and mezuzos.

The Rebbe gave this suggestion to people traveling to Eretz Yisroel, to people struggling to have children, to people struggling with all sorts of



health issues, and as a simple response to people requesting a 'generic' *bracha*.

It was applicable to spiritual and physical maladies alike. People who lacked *bitachon*, who sought success, who were losing their memory, who were struggling with raising children in the way of Yiddishkeit, who had bad dreams, who were struggling with faith, loneliness or *yiras Shamayim*, anger, learning disabilities, *machshavos zaros*, *shidduchim*, *shalom bayis* — they were all instructed to check their tefillin and mezuzos. It is difficult to find an issue in which the Rebbe *didn't* suggest checking tefillin and mezuzos.<sup>19</sup>

The mitzvos of tefillin and mezuzah are not minor aspects in our *avodas Hashem*; on a spiritual level, they have broad implications.

Tefillin impacts our *shibud halev vehamoach*, as we will explain, changing our very nature. Mezuzah is a mitzvah that serves as a reminder of Hashem's presence and a general protection from harm.

Both are central to the life of a Yid, and hence are possible solutions to any issue that might appear in a person's life. At any junction and at every challenge — as we see from the Rebbe's instructions — checking one's tefillin and mezuzos is a worthy endeavor.

One individual approached the Rebbe at a *yechidus* of Machane Yisrael, and asked, "Is there anything I should be doing to help bring Moshiach?"

The Rebbe responded immediately:

"The first thing to do is to check your tefillin and the mezuzos in your house. The second thing is to spread Yiddishkeit around you as much as possible."

Reading the Rebbe's instructions, we discover a very basic point. Whenever we are faced with a challenge, be it physical or spiritual, don't look at it from a superficial level,

seeking to correct the apparent issue. Go to the source — Torah and *mitzvos*, the spiritual life-source that sustains us — and correct the deeper issue that is causing the external problem.

### *a rebbe's look*

While many directives to check tefillin and mezuzos came through *maanos*, there were also many people who received the directive at “dollars” encounters, which, to our benefit, were fully recorded on video.

In many of those videos, we clearly see ‘*Rebbishe hanhaga*’ at play. A great variety of people will approach the Rebbe requesting the very same blessing, yet, some of them are instructed to check their tefillin and mezuzos, while others are not. For reasons that remain unknown to us, the Rebbe felt that those specific people were in need of that directive.

The Rebbe instructed one woman to check her mezuzos after she suffered from migraine headaches. When she commented that she had just purchased new ones, the Rebbe responded that sometimes, new mezuzos need to be checked as well.

One fellow was instructed by the Rebbe on several occasions to check his tefillin and mezuzos, and when he responded that he had checked them and they had been found to be kosher, the Rebbe said — quite uncharacteristically — “*Es shtimt nisht*—it doesn’t make sense.” Sometime later, he returned to report that he had discovered the issue.

Over time, Chassidim understood that such a directive needed to be followed to the letter, even when it seemed unnecessary. On one occasion, in response to a request for a *bracha*, the Rebbe instructed for that person’s tefillin to be checked. This individual didn’t own tefillin at all, so a new pair was purchased. Hearing about the Rebbe’s directive, someone suggested

that the new pair be specifically checked, as well. To the *sofer’s* shock and amazement, he discovered that the *parshiyos* had been inserted incorrectly.

Often, the problems in the tefillin or mezuzos were found in unconventional places, such as in their placement on the door. In some cases, the Rebbe included in his instructions, to check the mezuzos “*vofen kviusam*—the manner of their placement...”

### *why tefillin? why mezuzah?*

Each time the Rebbe announced a new campaign, there was a certain group of naysayers that automatically opposed it, often making quite shocking statements to back up their position. Sometimes, the Rebbe would respond and explain why specifically the *mitvza* at hand was indeed so important.

During the farbrengen of 13 Tishrei 5737\*, the Rebbe spoke about all the different *mitvzoim* and addressed opponents to *Mitvza Mezuzah*, explaining why tefillin and mezuzos were so important, and how they were actually connected to each other and to other *mitvzoim*.

After all, the Rebbe explained, all *mitzvos* are based on a foundation of a dedication to Hashem, and that is the very theme of tefillin.


“Tefillin is associated with *shibud halev vehamoach*, dedicating one’s heart and mind to Hashem; it is a central part of the *mitzvah*. And while tefillin addresses that concept internally, regarding the body and soul of the individual, it is addressed in a more broader sense through the *mitzvah* of *mezuzah*. When we fulfill the *mitzvah* of *mezuzah*, we are told that ‘Hashem will protect your goings and comings forever,’ that Hashem will protect all those in the home and

everything in the home — ensuring that they fulfill Hashem’s will.

“Don’t be embarrassed by the *leitzanei hador* who deride *Mitvza Mezuzah*. Recently, one of them expressed himself by saying, ‘What will thousands of mezuzos accomplish exactly?’ Our response is, ‘*lo meiheim, velo meihamonam*’ (we will have absolutely nothing to do with them). We follow the dictates of Shulchan Aruch, which rules that if a home has even a single *mezuzah*, it channels the blessing of long life for the inhabitants and their children. This ruling is unique, because the Mechaber doesn’t normally write reasons for rulings. So, essentially, this is a *halacha* itself — that a single *mezuzah* is a blessing for long life.

“How is it possible for a Yid, who knows about the Shulchan Aruch... to make such statements, and moreover, to claim that he heard so from his leader; it is a case of ‘*rabam dakru*—they stabbed their teacher...’ In fact, the reason is simple. The *mezuzah* in his own home is not kosher, and therefore he lacks Hashem’s spiritual protection... Because there is a non-kosher *mezuzah*, he was able to stumble in a *mezuzah*-related issue...”<sup>20</sup>

The importance of kosher tefillin wasn’t just relevant to tefillin-related matters but to all matters of serving Hashem.

When a certain *rosh yeshiva* developed a habit to inexplicably oppose any *mitvza* that came out of 770, the Rebbe said publicly at a farbrengen that he came to the conclusion that the individual davens in *possule* tefillin. His lack of *shibud halev vehamoach* was the only possible explanation for the incessant opposition to matters of pure Torah and *mitzvos*, and it was necessary to say so publicly, the Rebbe said, to ensure that his words didn’t weaken the efforts.<sup>21</sup> 



# stories and maanos



## the ben zachar

A Jew named Chalfon Na'im worked as a chef in Tomchei Temimim of Kiryat Gat. Chalfon and his wife were blessed with four daughters, and they desperately wanted a son. Mrs. Na'im would experience significant stress every time she went into labor; she felt that her entire family derided her for her large family of daughters. After her fourth birth, she fell into a severe depression.

When Rabbi Sholom Dovber Wolpo traveled to the Rebbe in the summer of 5740\*, he wrote to the Rebbe about the situation.

The Rebbe instructed them to check their tefillin and to enhance their observance of *taharas hamishpacha*. To their shock, a full word — “*zachor es hayom hazeh*” — was missing from the tefillin.

New tefillin were purchased, and soon, Mrs. Na'im was expecting another child. Rabbi Wolpo photographed the tefillin and notified the local newspapers, who published a piece about the story. The article ended by saying, “The whole Kiryat Gat is waiting to see if she will have a girl or boy...”

One fine day several months later, Reb Chalfon telephoned Rabbi Wolpo to share the news of their new *ben zachar*, whom they decided to name Menachem Mendel. The newspapers were quick to report: “The Rebbe's ‘tikun’ helped; a baby boy was born!”

רגיל הנני עתה להציע לכמה מהפונים אלי בדהתפוחהמ”ז

I am now accustomed to direct many of those who reach out to me to check their tefillin and mezuzos.



בדהמזוהת”פ ככתוב בזה”ק שהמזוזות שומרות אפילו כשיוצאים מן הבית.

Check your mezuzos and tefillin, as the holy Zohar states, mezuzos protect you even when you leave your home.

## ashkelon's miracle

Several years ago, Rabbi Leibel Rabinovitch and his wife, shluchim in Ashkelon, woke up to a frightening cry.

“Abba, Ima, I can't walk...”

Their two-year-old daughter had suddenly lost control of her legs. They rushed to the hospital, but nothing in the battery of tests could pinpoint the problem.

Rabbi Rabinovitch quickly removed all his mezuzos and brought them to a *sofer*, while also writing a letter to the Ohel. The next day, as they sat with their daughter in the hospital, she suddenly hopped up, “I'm able to walk again!”

Everyone was shocked and the doctors were dumbfounded, but suddenly, Rabbi Rabinovitch's phone rang. It was the *sofer* on the line.

“There was a slight problem in one mezuzah. The *veis* of *uvelechtech* was split, and I just corrected it. Your mezuzah is as good as new.”

Now it all made sense. Witnessing this open miracle, Rabbi Rabinovitch shared the story with friends and family, and soon a local journalist called to report the story.

Within a short time, the entire city was buzzing about the miraculous occurrence. Many people, including the entire staff of the newspaper, came to write letters to the Rebbe and have their mezuzos checked...

“I had not intended to publicize the story,” Rabbi Rabinovitch told *A Chassidisher Derher*, “but in the end, an entire city was lifted up by a story of the Rebbe's miracle.”

For the full story, see *A Chassidisher Derher*, Nissan 5777.

### how does he wear it?

In 5743\*, a Torah scholar living in Monsey was involved in a terrible car accident, and the doctors predicted that he would never walk again. His Lubavitcher neighbor called *mazkirus* on his behalf, and was instructed to check his tefillin.

However, the injured fellow protested. “I just checked them several months ago!”

A follow up call brought a clarified directive: “Check how he *wears* the tefillin!”

The Lubavitcher was a bit embarrassed to bring up the issue with a devoutly *frum* person, but to his surprise, the Torah scholar turned white. “I can’t believe it!”

The *sofer* had, for some reason, enlarged the size of his head-straps, causing the tefillin to fall down onto his forehead. The issue was immediately rectified, and one week later, he left the hospital a healthy man.<sup>22</sup>

### the challenge

Rabbi Moshe Yaakov Weiss was the respected rav of the Neve Achiezer neighborhood in Bnei Brak. In 5748\*, he began to feel ill, and the doctors soon discovered a series of medical problems that were quite complicated to resolve.

Despite not being Lubavitcher Chassidim, one of his children faxed *mazkirus* and received the Rebbe’s reply — “Check the tefillin and mezuzos.”

Rabbi Weiss’s tefillin were family heirlooms from before the Holocaust. Upon the advice of a *sofer*, he replaced the *battim* which were slowly degenerating, while retaining the *parshiyos* which were still in perfect condition.

However, his situation continued to deteriorate. His illness could not be treated with chemotherapy until his terribly swollen spleen was removed in surgery, which could not be conducted until the water was removed from his lungs. It was a very confusing and complicated situation, and he decided to write to the Rebbe once again.

Very quickly, they received a response. “Check the tefillin.”

The family thought it was a mistake, and tried to ignore it. But after a few days of continued agony, his son ‘conceded’ and took the tefillin to a prominent *sofer*.

The *sofer* was in the middle of eating his dinner, and apologized, saying that he had a long line of customers waiting. But when the son explained the background to the story, the *sofer* suddenly changed his attitude. Seeing the chance to ‘test’ a miracle of the Lubavitcher Rebbe before his own eyes, he left his plate and enthusiastically headed into his study.

The miracle was quick in coming. As he pried open the tefillin, 30 letters tumbled out. Apparently, the old *parshiyos* had crumbled when being inserted into the new *batim*.

New *parshiyos* were purchased. Early the next morning, Reb Moshe Yaakov enthusiastically donned them to daven Shacharis, when a doctor approached them with a novel idea of treatment. The method proved successful, and over the next few months, he made a complete recovery.

That Shavuot, Reb Moshe Yaakov traveled to 770, where he drank in the Rebbe’s *sichos* and received many *kiruvim* from the Rebbe. He became — by his own admission — an enthusiastic Chossid.<sup>23</sup>

1. Yoma 11a.

2. Eiruvim 10:1.

3. Hilchos Tefillin 2:11.

4. Vayikra 25:29.

5. End of Parshas Bo.

6. Orach Chayim 39:10.

7. See the *nosei keilim* on Shulchan Aruch.

8. Citing the Matteh Efraim, 581:10.

9. *Veha’eir Eineinu Bisorasecha* pg. 287.

10. Igros Kodesh vol. 11 pg. 348.

11. Sefer Hasichos 5748 vol. 2 pg. 610.

12. 20 Av 5734. Sichos Kodesh pg. 377

13. Igros Kodesh vol. 1 pg. 185.

14. Igros Kodesh vol. 1 pg. 245-6.

15. Toras Menachem vol. 50 p. 433

16. For the full story of Mivtza Tefillin, see “Reconnecting,” *Derher Iyar* 5777.

17. See *Leben Mitten Rebbe’n*, *Derher Tammuz*, 5776.

18. Shabbos Behar-Bechukosai 5734. Sichos Kodesh pg. 123.

19. See “*Ben Yud Gimmel L’Mitzvos*” for a collection of the Rebbe’s *maanos* in this regard.

20. Sichos Kodesh 5737 vol. 1 pg. 73-4

21. Sichos Kodesh 5740, Erev Chag HaShavuot pg. 194.

22. Kfar Chabad issue 1713 pg. 56.

23. From the account of his son, Kfar Chabad Magazine.

# The One and Only תורה אחת



Torah is extremely diverse.

Within every facet of Torah, in every area and in every subject, there are four general ways to explain the concepts at hand: “*P’shat*,” the literal meaning; “*remez*,” the allegorical meaning, “*drush*,” the metaphorical meaning, and “*sod*,” the secret and hidden meaning.

We are also told that there are “*shivim panim laTorah*,” seventy angles of how to understand each concept in Torah.

There is *Mikra*, *Mishnah*, *Halacha*, *Aggada*, *Kabbalah*, and so on.

But at the very base of it all, Torah is really all one.

The *possuk* says: “תורה אחת יהי” לכם—One Torah shall be for you all, and the Midrash interprets this to mean that entirety of Torah is called “One.”<sup>1</sup>

The Rebbe explains that the reason Torah is essentially one, even though it seems so diverse and multi-faceted, is because the Torah comes from Hashem—who is the ultimate “One.” Hashem put Himself into the Torah

and it is therefore a true manifestation of His Oneness. Just like Hashem’s greatness radiates to the lower worlds through various manifestations of *chessed*, *gevurah*, etc.—but we all understand that Hashem’s essence is truly one; so too the Torah is only superficially divided. When we dig deep beneath the surface and get to its core, we discover that the Torah is indeed the “תורה אחת.”<sup>2</sup>

## A Major Theme

This becomes a major theme throughout the Rebbe’s Torah and is seen in almost every *sicha* in Likkutei Sichos and throughout all of the Rebbe’s *farbrengens*.

The Rebbe’s *sichos* famously weave through every area in Torah seamlessly. It is almost impossible to find a time when the Rebbe spoke about only one area in Torah without touching upon various others and bringing them into the discussion.

The Rebbe might be analyzing Rashi’s comments on a *possuk* in *Chumash* and explaining how they

can be appreciated in the mind of a five-year-old child. At the same time, he points out a wonderful *chiddush* in *halacha* implied by this same Rashi. And he concludes with a lesson in *avodas Hashem* that draws upon the deepest concepts of Chassidus.

Likewise, within each area of Torah itself, the Rebbe seeks to reveal an underlying principle that weaves through the entire subject and shows a unifying aspect to it all. When two *Tanaim* or *Amoraim* argue with one another in more than one instance, even if the subject matter is vastly different in each instance, the Rebbe will find an underlying theme to explain how each of their respective opinions is aligned with what they stated about another subject. Beis Shammai’s opinion in one subject is likely due to the same underlying principle applied in another subject, and so is Beis Hillel’s.<sup>3</sup>

In this vein, the Rebbe very much follows the precedent set by the Rogatchover Gaon, who often sought the connection through these



לזכות  
ברכה ליפשא תחי'  
שוחאט  
לרגל יום הולדתה - י"ז אלול  
ולזכות הוריה  
הרה"ת הרב שלום דוב בער  
וזוגתו מרת חיה מושקא שיחיו  
ולזכות אחיותיה עליזה ושיינדל תחיינה



underlying principles of various personalities and various subjects in Torah.<sup>4</sup>

This premise that all of Torah is one, leads us to many conclusions:

### Once and For All

Firstly, since all of Torah is one, a lesson that we learn from one area of Torah is applicable to all other areas as well. And a lesson that we learn from the whole of Torah in general can be applied to each specific subject.

For example:

The Rebbe points out how the whole of Torah is supposed to be learned every day with the enthusiasm and excitement of something new. "Don't let it be like an antiquated law," says Rashi, "but like a new one..."<sup>5</sup> In another source it says that Torah should be not only *like* new, but **חדשים**—genuinely new, without any qualifications.<sup>6</sup> The Rebbe explains that while we start with viewing Torah and mitzvos *as if* they were new, the ultimate goal is to view them as literally new.

This is a lesson about Torah in general. And since the whole of Torah is one, the Rebbe says that we can apply this principle to another area as well:

*Chazal* say that when one learns the Torah taught by a certain Rebbe, he should consider it *as if* the originator of that Torah teaching is standing in front of him. But based on Rashi's words about the two-steps in "*like* new" or "*really* new," we can apply the same principle here: Not only is it *as if* the original teacher is in front of us—on a higher level he is *actually here!*<sup>7</sup>

### One and the Same

Another important point that stems from the fact that all of Torah is one, is something the Rebbe repeated numerous times and in variety of contexts:

All the various *pirushim* in one Torah-concept all must share an underlying connection. Even if they sound vastly different on the surface, if we dig deep enough we should be able

to find that unifying thread between them all.<sup>8</sup>

As Rashi says, the Torah's words are "כפטיש יפוצץ סלע"—like a hammer shattering a stone into many small pieces. Meaning, all the various explanations on any given *posuk* are offshoots of the same stone. Obviously then, we can look and find the underlying unifier between them all.<sup>9</sup>

Additionally, when one learns even a single small part of the Torah, in a sense he is really learning the Torah in its entirety. For we know the rule that עצם כשאתה תופס במקצתו אתה תופס "בכולו"—when you grasp even a small part of the essence of an entity, you have the entirety of the entity in your hand.

That's why *Chazal* say that when you learn one part of Torah, "הוא עמל" —במקום זה ותורתו עומלת לו במקום אחר—when one toils in Torah in one place, the Torah works for him in another place. Even though they may be two completely different subjects in Torah, learning one of them will help you understand the other.<sup>10</sup>



## Nigleh and Chassidus

Some people ask: How can you demand of me to learn Chassidus? Let me first fill my mind with Shas and *poskim*. *Halevai* I should fulfill my obligation of Torah study in that area...

But the truth is, every Yid is obligated to learn the entire Torah; both the revealed aspect and the hidden. The whole of Torah was given

by Hashem to each and every Jew personally. At *Mattan Torah* Hashem addressed each person as “ה' אלקיך”—your G-d, in the singular form. You cannot say that one part of Torah is for you while the other part is not. It’s all **תורה אחת**—Torah is one!<sup>11</sup>

The Rebbe spoke about this almost fiercely and on a constant basis: *Nigleh* and Chassidus are not two separate entities, *chas v’shalom*. Both are part

of the one and only Torah, given by *Hashem Echad*.

For this reason, Chassidus is for every Jew—even small children. We cannot distinguish and say that until a certain age we should refrain from teaching someone an entire section of the Torah. As a matter of fact, the Rebbe often noted that even as a toddler, the Friediker Rebbe was taught to read *Aleph-Beis* from the title page of a *Tanya*! Even before he was shown the “*Beis*” of *Bereishis*, he was already taught to learn from a *sefer* of Chassidus. And this mirrors the way Hashem taught Torah to the Jewish people as a whole: Even before teaching them the first mitzvah of “*Anochi*,” He first revealed Himself at Har Sinai, showing the Jewish people the deepest secrets of the *Merkava*, etc.<sup>12</sup>

Likewise, it is impossible to understand all of *nigleh* properly without learning Chassidus as well. In fact the Rebbe pointed to several *halachos* and *sugyos* in *nigleh* that are quite difficult to understand without an explanation of Chassidus.<sup>13</sup>

Ultimately, all of Torah is comparable to a person (“זאת התורה” “אדם”). Just like a person is made up of a body and a soul, likewise the Torah has the body—*nigleh*, and the soul—Chassidus. Both must work together in

### “It’s In My Name”

In many *sichos*, the Rebbe pointed out that the style of the Tzemach Tzedek was to connect *nigleh* and Chassidus seamlessly. His *maamarim* are filled with quotes from all areas of Torah—and they all make up a beautiful tapestry demonstrating how the whole of Torah is really one. (See 29 Elul 5742.)

In one instance, the Rebbe told a prominent rav in *yeichidus*:

“The Rogatchover was not the first one who was able to weave all of Torah together. We find a similar precedent in the work of the Tzemach Tzedek, in his *sefer Derech Mitzvosecha*.”

The rav commented that he noticed this style in the Rebbe’s *sichos*, and the Rebbe remarked:

“I am named after the Tzemach Tzedek, so I try to follow his path in this regard...”

(*Yechidus* with Rabbi Moshe Grossberg, *Hamelech B’mesibo*, vol. 2, p. 259.)

In another letter, the Rebbe attests that the objective of all the Rabbeim is to “connect and unify the revealed aspect of Torah and the hidden aspect of Torah, to make them into one **תורה אחת**...”

(4 Shevat 5715)



perfect  
symmetry:  
You cannot  
have one  
without the  
other and  
there can be no  
irreconcilable conflicts  
between them either.

As the Rebbe once wrote to an individual:

“I was shocked that you wrote how you have ‘no idea’ about *pnimius haTorah* (which in our time has been revealed in the teachings of Chassidus). Obviously my trouble is that you write this so heartlessly and as if this is a ‘technical issue’ which doesn’t necessarily need to be addressed. [This is a gravely wrong approach, for] all parts of the Torah complement one another. We were all given just one Torah...”<sup>14</sup>

## One People

In addition to the Torah itself being “one” as a manifestation of “*Hashem Echad*,” the Torah is also the ultimate “unifier” in this world; particularly in

bringing  
the Jewish  
people together  
and revealing how  
they too are really one.

The Rebbe elaborated on this concept when launching two of his landmark global campaigns: the daily study of Rambam<sup>15</sup> and the global *Sifrei Torah Hakloli'im*.

In addition to the symbolism that a *sefer Torah* has—how each and every letter is important to make up a complete and kosher *sefer Torah*, just like every *neshama* is important for the completion of *Klal Yisroel*—moreover:

The only way to bring out the deepest and truest *achdus* between all Yidden is through Torah—תורה אחת.

In all other areas of life, we differ from one another. We all have unique needs and wants when it comes to the material aspects of our lives, and we all have unique strengths and talents when it comes to building a community and so on. The only thing that can really bring about true *achdus* is Torah.<sup>16</sup>

This is what has kept the Yidden together throughout the generations. Starting from the birth of our nation: at Har Sinai, the Torah highlights that we camped at the mountain כאיש אחד—like one man with one

heart. Why? Because we were נגד ההר, at the backdrop of Har Sinai, where we would receive the “*Torah Achas*” from “*Hashem Echad*.” The Torah was our first unifier, and this has kept us as one nation ever since—no matter what level a Yid stands at, whether as a “head of the tribes” or a “wood chopper” and “water drawer.” We are all part of the same nation, chosen by “*Hashem Echad*,” brought together by a “*Torah Achas*” forever.<sup>17</sup> **T**

1. Yalkut Shimoni, Torah, 1-2.

2. See 19 Kislev 5733, sicha 4.

3. See *Torah Achas, Toras Emes, Toras Chaim*, an essay by Rabbi M.M. Kaplan in the *sefer Hashvi'i*.

4. See Likkutei Sichos vol. 19 p. 57; vol. 16, p. 572.

5. Rashi and Sifri Vaeschanan 6:6.

6. Rashi and Tanchuma, Yisro 19:1; Rashi and Sifri Eikev 11,13; Rashi and Tanchuma Ki Savo 26:16.

7. 10 Kislev 5744, sicha 1.

8. See 12 Sivan 5743, sicha 1.

9. Purim 5721, sicha 3.

10. Shabbos Parshas Noach 5745, sicha 4.

11. Shavuot 5716, sicha 6.

12. Shabbos Parshas Shemos 5743, sicha 2.

13. See 19 Kislev 5722, sicha 8.

14. Letter 7 Nissan 5718.

15. See Likkutei Sichos vol. 27, p. 230.

16. See 12 Tammuz 5743, sicha 1, et. al.

17. See letter Lag B'Omer 5735. Michtav Kloli 11 Nissan 5742. 6 Tishrei 5743, sicha 1. Et. al.





# Early Roots

Early Years  
can be purchased  
at [JEMstore.com](http://JEMstore.com)

Much has been told and written about the famous city of Nikolayev, the Rebbe's birthplace and a bastion of Chabad Chassidim for generations.<sup>1</sup> Members of the Rebbe's family led the Jewish community as rabbonim for close to 100 years, beginning with the Rebbe's great-great-grandfather, Harav Avraham Dovid Lavut.

In recently discovered documents, the full story of Harav Lavut's appointment to the position was revealed and subsequently published by JEM in the new Hebrew edition of the book "Early Years" about the Rebbe's formative years.

In the beginning of the nineteenth century, a law was passed in the Russian Empire compelling all appointed city rabbis to hold a certificate of ordination by one of the government recognized rabbinical seminaries, attesting to the individual's proficiency in various Jewish as well as secular subjects.

In the year 5614, the fledgling Jewish community of Nikolayev invited Harav Lavut to move from the nearby village of Romanovka to serve as their rav, even though he did not have the necessary government recognized certificate. As more secular business people moved into the community, an attempt was made to vote in a more modern rabbi, but Harav Lavut remained in his position for years to come. Later, a government recognized rabbi was officially appointed as the city's rabbi, while Harav Lavut was called the "assistant rabbi." But for all intents and purposes, Harav Lavut remained the acting rav and led the Jewish community until his passing in 5650.

Presented here is the original document recording the election of Harav Lavut by members of the business community in Nikolayev, dated 8 May, 1862 (20 Iyar 5622).

Each elector was given one black pin and one white pin to put inside the pot. A white pin meant a vote for Harav Lavut, a black pin meant a vote against.

"Number of white votes [for] Harav Lavut: 14

"Number of black votes: 0"

*Read the full story, including a series of documents pertaining to Harav Lavut's appointment as rav, and many more new and fascinating details about the Rebbe and his family in the newly published volume: "שנים ראשונות"—Early Years, now in Hebrew.*

1. See *A Cradle of Greatness, Nikolayev and its Chassidim*, Derher Nissan 5781.

14. — . —

[illegible]

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Harvard University Library

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לזכות  
הת' יהושע חיים שיחי'  
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וזוגתו מרת טויבא יונה ומשפחתם שיחיו  
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# BLESSING AND SUCCESS

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

**The Rebbe's Advice and Guidance  
for Working at Parnasah**



## THE STORY IS TOLD OF THE BAAL SHEM TOV,

that one day he went and knocked on the window shutter of a house, saying that he needs *parnasah*, and then walked away. Suddenly, a Yid came running out of the house and chased the Baal Shem Tov, asking him for the amount that he needed, which he promptly gave the Baal Shem Tov.

The Baal Shem Tov was later asked: What was that all about? If you needed to ask for money, why did you run away? Why didn't you wait for the homeowner to respond to your knocking? And if you knew you would receive the money in a miraculous way, why did you bother knocking at all?

The Baal Shem Tov explained:

In order for Hashem to bless us with *parnasah*, the Torah tells us we need to have "וּבִרְכָּךְ ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ בְּכָל אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשֶׂה"—there needs to be an action to contain the blessing. Knocking on the shutter is also an "action." As soon as I did the knock, I fulfilled my obligation. Then it was up to Hashem to send His blessing. Whether He sent it through this Yid, who lives at this house, or through another Yid someplace else, is entirely not my concern.

The Rebbe uses this story as an important lesson for how a Yid's approach to *parnasah* should be:

We must always remember that ultimately it is Hashem's blessing that brings us what we need. The work that we do to receive that blessing is only a "*levush*," a garment that clothes the blessing itself. If we focus too much on the garment, not only will it not result in the intended blessing, it will actually hinder our chances at it.

The Tzemach Tzedek explains that much like a person's garment, where care must be taken that it fit properly—a garment that is too long will make the person trip and not be able to walk straight—similarly, when it comes to *parnasah*,

a person should not overindulge in creating the vessel for Hashem's blessing. This refers not only to always adhering to *halacha*, since needless to say, we must never do anything against the Torah to obtain *parnasah*, but even within the parameters of *halacha*, overindulgence in the pursuit of *parnasah* is still unnecessary.

If a Yid realizes that his "feet are short," i.e. the *gashmius* aspects of life are not the primary goal and we only need a small amount of it, he will then only minimally engage in work. The remainder of his time will be dedicated to matters of the "head" and matters of the "heart"—studying Torah diligently and performing mitzvos.<sup>1</sup>

As the Rebbe sometimes put it: Focusing exclusively on your work is like someone who sews wallets all day to hold his money but doesn't actually do any productive work to earn a living. Similarly, your job is like a "wallet"—a receptacle to hold Hashem's blessings. When you focus on the right things, then you can be certain that "בִּרְכַּת ה' הִיא תַעֲשִׂיר"—Hashem's blessings will not only suffice for a minimal livelihood, but they will bring riches!<sup>2</sup>

Someone who focuses only on the physical job without realizing that Hashem's blessing is what brings the money, is like a person going to a bank to deposit a check when there's no money in the account to back it up. It is a worthless piece of paper and will not get you anywhere!<sup>3</sup>

This is a fascinating perspective, how Chassidus teaches us to view the world and our place within it.

Instead of asking why we should daven to Hashem for *parnasah* when we have to go out and work for a living regardless, Chassidus turns the tables:

The Tzemach Tzedek asks: Why do we have to go to work everyday if we know that regardless of what we do, everything comes from Hashem? He creates the world and sustains its inhabitants every moment—what good will our petty physical labor bring? For that matter, what effect will our davening have on the process, if

Hashem already predetermined everything we are supposed to earn during the previous Rosh Hashanah?

He continues with a lengthy explanation how Hashem's *hashapa'a* is predetermined, but it requires work to have it manifest in our daily lives and in the precise manner that we need it.

In the same way, Hashem decided to hide His ever-present hand under the guise of nature. So much so that it seems as if nature controls itself. This is, of course, a classic form of *avoda zara*. The truth is that Hashem obviously operates through nature and it is our job to recognize this and act accordingly.<sup>4</sup>

Why did Hashem create the world in this manner? Why can't we just learn Torah day and night and have our physical needs taken care of in a supernatural way?

The answer is, as the Midrash asserts: "ששת ימים תעבד, זו מצות עשה—six days you shall work, this is a positive mitzvah..."

We were placed in this world to work with it and refine the sparks of *kedusha*, transforming the world into a *dira b'tachtonim*.<sup>5</sup>

But obviously, the true source of our *parnasah* is only from Hashem's blessing, and being aware of this allows us to be in tune with reality. In fact, the Rebbe points out that true *bitachon* in Hashem is when we recognize that everything comes *directly* from Him. The only reason why we do the work is because that's what Hashem told us to do. The sustenance itself, however, has *nothing* to do with the natural means! Much like the Yidden in the *midbar*, who were sustained by the *man* from heaven: Hashem designed that only enough for one day at a time was provided, so that the Yidden would realize quite tangibly that everything comes directly from Hashem. We too should adapt this sort of reliance and *bitachon* in Hashem, even as we work at our regular jobs.<sup>6</sup>

## HE'LL TAKE CARE OF YOU TOO

I wish to comment on the general impression I gathered from your letter: It seems like you are once again in a worrisome state, and you also worry about whether or not you will have enough to sustain yourself, *chas v'shalom*.

It was obviously quite shocking to hear something like this from you. The words of the Torah, especially in Chassidus, about the importance of *bitachon* should be more than enough [to change your attitude]!

(Of course, this is no contradiction to a person's working at a job as a means of *parnasah*, as it says, "וּבִרְכַּת ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ בְּכָל אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשֶׂה—Hashem will bless you in all that you do." Nevertheless, the work must be done in accordance with the *possuk* "יֹאכֵל כֹּפֶיךָ כִּי תֹאכַל—Eat with the toil of your

hands..." not with the toil of your mind and heart.)

This is all the more shocking when it comes to someone like you, who saw miracles in a very tangible way in your own life. Why would you suddenly begin to worry if the Master of the universe, who feeds and sustains all creations, some 1.8 billion people [at the time this letter was written -ed.], will be able to sustain you and your family as well, in a good, kosher, and abundant manner?

It is a pity to waste more time on such an obvious matter. Let us pray that you should finally see things as they are, and you will redouble your efforts in spreading and strengthening Yiddishkeit around you, and then Hashem will increase in His blessings, according to His capacity—which is many-times fold...

(Letter dated 4 Teves 5716)

## THE JEWISH PERSPECTIVE

Why does a Yid need *parnasah* to begin with? Simply gathering wealth for its own sake is not a Jewish value. The Rebbe writes in Hayom Yom: “ניט הייזער און געלד איז דער אידישער רייכטום—Jewish wealth is not about houses and gold...”

The reason a Yid needs *parnasah* is in order to be able to serve Hashem properly: First and foremost, to be able to give tzedakah from the earnings, and to be able to support and sustain one’s family in a way that they will be able to serve Hashem through Torah and mitzvos.<sup>7</sup>

With this in mind, a person will certainly not want to focus too much of his energy on business and the like. Instead, he will do what it takes to make a reasonable *keli* for Hashem’s blessings, and trust that Hashem will do His part.

Ultimately it is up to every one of us to recognize that our *parnasah* comes from Hashem alone.

Someone once wrote to the Rebbe complaining that he has yet to find a good source for *parnasah*. The Rebbe took issue with his wording and replied:

“With all due respect, you did not choose your words carefully, for it is clear for all to see, and we recite it in the *siddur* with Hashem’s name, that He is the העולם כולו בטובו זן—He sustains the entire world in His goodness, with grace, with kindness, and with mercy... This text was written by Moshe Rabbeinu, the original receiver of the Torah, and the faithful shepherd of all the Jewish people, until the end of time...”<sup>8</sup>

Chassidus continuously educates us about this very point:

The physical world we live in is merely a mask over its true existence, its true *chayus*, which is *Elokus*. The more we internalize this message, the better we can live according to this reality.

The Torah says that the sun and the moon radiate onto earth and cause produce to grow. But only a fool would consider the idea of praying to the sun for more sustenance! The sun

has no ability to give more or less light on its own; it is merely a tool in Hashem hands.

Similarly, our *parnasah* is all a manifestation of Hashem’s kindness that will certainly come down in the correct measure if we daven properly to Hashem and do our *avoda* in the best way. The physical job that we do to earn a living is only a garment that conceals the reality behind it. Therefore, if at times it seems that the time we spend davening and learning is at odds with going to work, only a fool would choose work over davening!<sup>9</sup>

The Rebbe Rashab once reprimanded his Chassidim for not devoting enough of their time to davening and learning. When one of the *baalei battim* complained that “we are busy, we have no time,” the Rebbe Rashab responded: “For learning Chassidus you cannot find the time, but you seem to do fine when it comes to eating and sleeping...”

The Rebbe Rashab went on to explain that by dedicating time to learn Torah, one’s world is illuminated and their eyes are opened to a new reality. A person can be searching for his *parnasah* while stumbling around like a blind person. When one learns Torah and gives time for *avodas Hashem*, Heaven helps them find good opportunities immediately without having to waste precious time tapping in the dark.<sup>10</sup>

As the Rebbe said at one farbrengen:

When you follow the ways of the Torah, especially as it pertains to running your business, even when it seems to go against the natural order of things, Hashem will respond in kind.

A person might think: How can I keep to all these rules without absorbing major losses in business? I have to close up shop for Shabbos and Yom Tov while my non-Jewish competitors remain open. I have to spend my mornings davening and learning Torah, and only then do I get to my business. Then, right in the thick of my busy schedule, I need to stop and daven Mincha! Being extra careful about stealing, *hasagas gevul* (infringing on another’s territory), *ona’a* (fraud);



all these things are preventing me from getting ahead in business!

This does not make any business sense!

The answer, says the Rebbe, is that when you act in a manner that defies the natural order, trusting in Hashem and following His ways even when it doesn't make sense, Hashem will send you your livelihood from a place that transcends nature altogether.<sup>11</sup>

In this vein, when people asked the Rebbe about leaving their studies in yeshiva to assist their parents with *parnasah*, the Rebbe advised that this makes no sense in the long run.

"You need to explain to your father," the Rebbe writes, "that Hashem is the one who feeds and sustains all the inhabitants of the world, as we recite in the beginning of *bentching*. Obviously then, we need to work as hard as we can to follow His will, which will in turn bring all the blessings we need for *parnasah*. One of the ways to do that is by studying Torah—the Torah of life—diligently..."<sup>12</sup>

Likewise, the Rebbe explained to members of *anash* in Australia who wouldn't get involved in communal activities because they were too busy with *parnasah*, that their approach defies logic:

"There are two parts in making *parnasah*:

a) Receiving the necessary provisions from Hashem, b) Making sure that those provisions manifest in whatever it is that we need.

"...If someone thinks they don't have time to work on the first part, because they are too busy spending all their time only on the second part, this is plainly absurd. The way to receive *parnasah* from above is obviously through Torah and mitzvos. This applies especially to *anash* and Temimim who were sent to a specific country on a special mission by *hashgacha pratis*. How will their obsession with making a living help at all, if this is only taking them away from the shlichus that they have—which is the exact source of their *parnasah* in heaven!"<sup>13</sup>

The Alter Rebbe famously put it to a Chossid who complained about his lack of *parnasah*:

"You seem only concerned about what you need; not about what you are needed for. If you worry and take care of what is needed from you, Hashem will give you what you want from Him..."

The Frierdiker Rebbe adds in a letter:

"When it comes to what you need, your worry and concern will do nothing to help the situation. But when it comes to what you are needed for, you can absolutely make it better!

"As to your question about your personal situation, remove all worry from your heart. Remember the days that you sat in prison, לא עלינו, and rejoice over the good and kindness that Hashem has shown you since then. Hashem will certainly bring you the right opportunity for ample *parnasah* with peace of mind, allowing you to pore over Torah and *avoda*, fulfilling your life's mission—to illuminate your surroundings with the light of Torah and *avoda*."<sup>14</sup>

## BALANCING ACT: THE RIGHT SIZE

In addition to understanding that Hashem is the source of our *parnasah* and that a job is merely a *keli* with which to receive His blessing, the Rebbe also emphasizes the need to work at this *keli*, and to make sure it is the proper size.

"You are certainly occupied with *parnasah* as much as necessary," the Rebbe writes to an individual. "Because supporting yourself and your family is a mitzvah from Hashem, which you must fulfill faithfully—not just haphazardly (אויף יוצא וועגען), and certainly not trying to evade the commandment of the Torah 'א' ברכך ה'—that Hashem will bless you in all that you **do**. Obviously, you need to do this without worry and without overly indulging in it, but on the other hand, you need to act on this in the fullest sense. May Hashem grant you success..."<sup>15</sup>

And being that it is a mitzvah, the Rebbe points out, together with the commandment to act, we are also given the ability to carry it out.<sup>16</sup>

*“How do you know you’re running towards your parnasah? Maybe you’re running away from it!”*

The Rebbe often encouraged people to keep looking for appropriate means of *parnasah*, and gently reprimanded them if he sensed a laziness in this regard.<sup>17</sup>

As the Tzemach Tzedek points out, a person’s means for *parnasah* need to be so efficient, that he should be able to convince himself of “כחי וועוצם די עשה לי את החיל הזה—the power of my hand has built this success for me...” Otherwise, it is not a sufficient garment to clothe the blessings of Hashem.<sup>18</sup>

The Torah clearly says “יגיע כפך כי תאכל—with the **toil** of your palms you will eat.” You need to work hard at your job, fairly and honestly, and then you will merit Hashem’s blessing.

Even though the means for *parnasah* are only a *keli*, the *navi* says “כלים רקים אל תמעיט—do not withhold your empty vessels.” The Rebbe encouraged people to think big and broadly; even to set out vast “*keilim*” for *parnasah*, all the while of course remembering that it is ultimately Hashem’s decision what to send your way.<sup>19</sup> The Rebbe once related a story about a person who was davening in shul and then, at the second davening concluded, he immediately ran out the door. Someone asked him, “where are you running to?” The individual replied, “I have a mitzvah to make a living and support my family. I need to go fast!” So they asked him in return, “How do you know you’re running towards your *parnasah*? Maybe you’re running away from it!” Perhaps by waiting in shul for an additional five minutes, someone would have walked in and offered him a lucrative business deal!

Ultimately, we don’t know where our *parnasah* is really going to come from. We need to follow what it says in Shulchan Aruch, serve Hashem to the best of our ability, and do our

best when it comes to *parnasah*. Everything else is in Hashem’s hands.<sup>20</sup>

## **BROADENING BOTH FRONTS**

...In reply to your letter from Tuesday of *parshas Lech Lecha*, in which you ask if you should take the opportunity to move your business to a busier corner, but you would need to take on more debt to do so.

In my opinion, it is worthwhile to do this, in order to broaden the *keilim* for your *parnasah*, and you will merit the fulfillment of the *possuk* ‘הרחב פִּיךָ וְאִמְלֵאֲהוּ—Open your mouth wider and I [Hashem] will fill it up’. At the same time, you must also broaden the channels through which your *parnasah* will flow, namely by being meticulous in your mitzvah observance...

...Enclosed is a check from one of the funds established by my father-in-law, the Rebbe, the value of which you should invest in this endeavor of moving your business, and this will bring you increased success.

*(Letter 12 Mar-Cheshvan 5712)*

## **HOW TO USE YOUR HEAD**

Chassidus teaches that when it comes to *parnasah*, a person should only use his hands and not involve his higher faculties.<sup>21</sup>

Contemplating, over-calculating, and worrying about *parnasah* will not only not help your situation; it might even ruin it.

The Rebbe explains that there are certainly times when we need to use our heads for matters of *parnasah*. But the problem begins when a person thinks *too much* about it. You only need to use a fair amount of *sechel* that pertains to your doing the work itself. All the rest of your

contemplations and calculations are unnecessary and potentially harmful.

"I don't like what I'm gathering from your letter," the Rebbe writes to an individual. "You think your merchandise is not up to par because you don't spend enough time thinking about business... Save your ability to think deeply only for spiritual matters, not for business. Obviously, you can't work only with the palms of your hands while your eyes are closed. You need to use your 'practical mind'—ensuring that what you're doing for *parnasah* will actually bring about the desired results. I hope that from now on you will follow Torah's ways, by doing what you have to do in order to make a living within the bounds of nature. And Hashem will bless you to succeed in a supernatural way..."<sup>22</sup>

When a person wrote to the Rebbe that he is stressing over finding a job, and that he thinks his difficulties have to do with the fact that he is *frum*, the Rebbe would not hear of it. "We say in *bentching* that Hashem sustains all inhabitants of the world—including you. How can anyone stop you from finding a job if Hashem wants you to have one?! ...If you increase in your Torah and mitzvos, Hashem will increase His blessings to you too..."<sup>23</sup>

## CLEAN KEILIM

Another important point about recognizing the true source of our *parnasah*, is that a person should stay far away from any hint of immoral or forbidden behavior. If you think that the business itself is the only way to make money, you might get carried away in desperation and cut corners or bend *halacha* here and there. But when you recognize that ultimately everything comes only from Hashem, then on the contrary—you will make sure that your business dealings are all 100% kosher and can serve as a good *keli* for Hashem's blessing.<sup>24</sup>

The Rebbe notes that this can be especially challenging in this country, a free society with open and competitive markets. In such an environment, it can be very enticing to keep

*Any normal person understands that making the right choice in this instance is not even a challenge!*

your business open late on Friday afternoon, or *c"v* even to have it running on Shabbos manned by non-Jews. But with a strong faith and conviction that the business itself is not bringing you one penny—everything comes only from Hashem—a person can withstand the test and make the right decision.<sup>25</sup>

Yes, it is possible that people who employ these tactics might make more money. It is possible that a Yid who keeps his store open on Shabbos or bends the rules of honesty here and there will earn more than his neighbor who meticulously follows the Torah. But this is shortsighted and temporary.

At the end of the day, money earned through immoral means is not "good" money and it will ultimately be disposed of for unpleasant causes.

The Rebbe Rashab compares this to the *man* which contained no waste in it. We all want our *parnasah* to be like the *man*—even if it is less in quantity, it should only contain what we need for good purposes.<sup>26</sup>

The Rebbe explains:

There are those who ask: Why do the wicked prosper? Why is it that my neighbor who keeps his business running on Shabbos earns thousands of dollars more than me?

But the truth is, if you had a choice between good health and more money, you would obviously choose optimal health. You don't want to have a lot of money, just so that when you get sick you are able to pay top dollar to the best doctors for treatment. Any normal person understands that making the right choice in this instance is not even a challenge!<sup>27</sup>



## INVESTING IN NURSING HOMES

According to the reports I have from the way nursing homes are run—most of the profit comes from decreasing the healthcare provided to the patients who really need it, or by providing less food, less heat, **or the like**. I heard similar reports from **many** people.

Since hearing that, anyone who asks me I do not advise them to get involved in this business, because it seems that this challenge presents itself **day-in day-out** and it is very difficult to overcome. (Some people try to make this “permissible” by explaining that the actual withholding is done by others, and you can’t appoint a messenger to do an *aveira* for you, etc.)

(Letter 18 Adar I 5733)

## WHEN THE GOING GETS TOUGH

Throughout the years, countless Yidden from all over the world turned to the Rebbe to unburden their hearts, seeking comfort, counsel and advice as to how to deal with life’s many challenges.

Of course, chief among them were people who struggled to make a living to respectably support themselves and their families. The Rebbe often told people to adopt the proper perspective on the matter; to remember that *parnasah* comes from Hashem and to have *bitachon* that He will send you everything you need.

In a beautiful letter written to a Chossid who worked in *chinuch* and complained about his lack of *parnasah*, the Rebbe says:

“...About *parnasah gashmis*, Hashem will surely help. Chazal tell us that a person should never be dejected from a temporary strain. All the more so, *anash* [like you] who came from Russia and saw open miracles, and who clearly witnessed how money is worthless and material

possessions are of no value, should certainly not be fazed by something of this sort.

“Although it is true that material strain is quite distracting and can disturb your concentration on *avodas Hashem*, you need to daven to Hashem for exactly that! Cry out to Hashem ‘*min hameitzar*,’ from the narrow straits, and Hashem will answer you with great abundance—first and foremost abundance in *ruchnius*, removing all hindrances to *avodas Hashem*, and then also abundance in *gashmius* as well.

“...You complain that with your work in the field of Torah-true education, you go about working hard all day and you come home with almost nothing to show for it.

“It is shocking to see how even after hearing and contemplating the words of our Rabbeim, you still think they were talking to someone else and not to you!

“You certainly know about the Baal Shem Tov’s teaching [that a *neshama* comes down to this world just] to do a favor for another Yid, whether in *gashmius* or in *ruchnius*. Imagine: Hashem sends down a part of Himself into this lowly world to occupy—as Rashbatz referred to it—a sack of flesh and bones, just for one favor! Certainly each and every one of us must feel fortunate that Hashem has given us the opportunity to do many of these favors throughout the day...”<sup>28</sup>

Additionally, the Rebbe often gave people specific instructions about what to do in order to deserve more of Hashem’s blessings in this regard:

- Give tzedakah before davening and then daven to Hashem with extra *kavana*.
- Live your life according to the Torah in all matters.
- Strengthen your *bitachon* in Hashem, this will hasten the manifesting of His blessings.
- Check your tefillin to ensure that they are completely kosher.<sup>29</sup>

- Give *maaser* to *tzedakah*, as the Torah says “*עשר בשביל שתתעשר*—Tithe so that you will become rich.” Give additional *tzedakah* on top of that.<sup>30</sup>
- Have set daily *shiurim* in Torah—*nigleh* and *Chassidus*.<sup>31</sup>
- People who asked the Rebbe about *parnasah* and were not yet married, the Rebbe encouraged them to get married, and if you’re already married—improve *shalom bayis*.<sup>32</sup>
- Work in the Rebbe’s *mosdos*.<sup>33</sup>
- Connect to the Rebbe and follow his wishes, especially when it comes to *achdus* and *ahavas Yisroel*.<sup>34</sup>
- Grow a beard as a channel for Hashem’s blessing.<sup>35</sup>
- Spend time learning in yeshiva.<sup>36</sup>
- Spread Yiddishkeit (see *ksav yad kodesh*).

## WORK ON YIDDISHKEIT



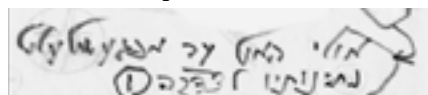
בטח עוסק בהפצת היהדות וכו' וה' גם מהסגולות לפרנסה

You certainly are **engaged** in spreading Yiddishkeit, etc. This is also one of the ways to merit [Hashem’s blessings for] *parnasah*.

*Like every other area of life, the Rebbe always encouraged people to see the field and place of their parnasah as a shlichus from Hashem.*

## WHAT CAUSES BUSINESS TO FAIL?

In response to someone who wrote about difficulties in business, describing how, “Suddenly, sales ceased completely,” the Rebbe replied:



אולי האט ער אפגעשטעלט נתינותו לצדקה

Perhaps he stopped his contributions to *tzedakah*.

## DOING YOUR PART

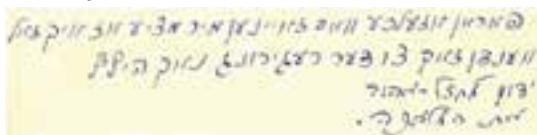
In addition to increasing in Torah and mitzvos and fixing things from a spiritual standpoint, the Rebbe also often gave practical advice and guidance about how to increase *parnasah* in a natural way:

- Discuss all matters of business with *yedidim mevinim*, friends who know you and care about you, understand the situation, and can offer wise counsel.<sup>37</sup>
- Do not leave a source of *parnasah* unless you have something solid to move to right away.<sup>38</sup>
- At times it is advisable to move to another city for *parnasah*. It is not up to you to “force” Hashem to give you a job specifically in one place.<sup>39</sup>
- In a free society (unlike the way it was in Russia), one should never do things against the law.<sup>40</sup>
- It is not advisable to invest in the stock market. Hashem can find you other ways to make money without all the stress and heartache that come along with the uncertainties of stocks.<sup>41</sup>

- It is better to find your *parnasah* through endeavors that are less worrisome and stressful.<sup>42</sup>
- You don't need to enjoy the work itself, as long as you can respectably support yourself and your family and give considerable *tzedakah*.<sup>43</sup>
- Do not enter into a partnership without knowing all the details of the deal. Seek the opinion of an objective party in this regard.<sup>44</sup>
- Be weary of a deal that sounds "too good to be true."<sup>45</sup>

## GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE

In response to an individual who was having difficulty with *parnasah* and wrote to the Rebbe that "some people suggest I should try to get some help from the government," the Rebbe replied:



ידוע מחז"ל - אהוב את המלאכה.

The words of Chazal are known:  
Always prefer to work [on your own].

## THE REAL MISSION

Like every other area of life, the Rebbe always encouraged people to see the field and place of their *parnasah* as a *shlichus* from Hashem. If you find yourself in a specific place at a specific time, it is obviously due to *hashgacha pratis*. It is your duty to utilize this situation as an opportunity to spread Yiddishkeit around you.

The Rebbe records a beautiful story in this regard in *Hayom Yom*:

The Rebbe Maharash once told the Chossid Reb Elye Abeler, a simple man in terms of scholarship: "Elye, I envy you. You travel to

various fairs, you meet many people. Sometimes, in the middle of a business transaction, you get into a warm discussion about a 'Yiddishe vort,' a saying from the Ein Yakov, etc., and you arouse the other fellow's interest in studying *nigleh* and *Chassidus*. This causes joy on High, and Hashem rewards such 'trade' with the blessings of children, health and sustenance; the larger the fair the more work there is and the greater is the livelihood earned."<sup>46</sup>

The Rebbe often encouraged people to take advantage of their business relationships to help their associates advance in Yiddishkeit,<sup>47</sup> or even to teach their non-Jewish associates about *sheva mitzvos b'nei Noach*, about morality, and so on.<sup>48</sup>

Many times, members of *anash* who had business dealings in faraway countries were asked to fulfil various forms of *shlichus*, and to use their ties in those countries to better the situation of Yiddishkeit there.<sup>49</sup>

## BOTH ENDS

In summation, the Rebbe wants us to understand that *parnasah* has two elements to it:

On the one hand, we need to remember that all our money comes from Hashem. No matter what we do at work, we will never earn one extra cent above what Hashem has determined for us. With that in mind, our physical jobs become trivial. There is no need to stress over work and overly indulge ourselves in business. The business is merely a *keli* for Hashem's blessing.

Remembering this point is especially important in this country, where great emphasis is placed on earning more and more money. From the time a child is born, his or her parents are already thinking about what the child will do to earn a living when they get older, and they constantly badger their child with these thoughts.<sup>50</sup>

But on the other hand, it is important to do our part within the natural means to have enough *parnasah*, even ample *parnasah*, in order to support ourselves and our families and to be



able to serve Hashem with peace of mind and give lots of tzedakah.

The Rebbe once said about the Yidden who recently emigrated from the Soviet Union that they should see much success in their quest for *parnasah*, since their having material abundance is important at all spiritual levels, all the way up to *Atzmus*!

Indeed, the Rebbe wished for every single Yid to have physical and material riches.

In a fascinating conversation with the Kapishnizer Rebbe, the Rebbe argued that the challenge of having riches is better and more worthwhile than the challenge of poverty. The Kapishnizer Rebbe initially tried to counter the Rebbe's assertion but the Rebbe kept telling him to let it go and allow for all Yidden to be wealthy.

Finally at the end, the Kapishnizer Rebbe told the Rebbe:

"I'm already an elderly man. Why should I ask Hashem for riches. Let me instead ask Hashem for Moshiach!"

**The Rebbe:** Why must they be a contradiction? Ask Hashem for both! At the very least, you must agree that Hashem should give all the Yidden riches.

**Kapishnizer Rebbe:** Yes, I agree with a full heart.<sup>51</sup>



On Shabbos Parshas Teruma 5752\*, the Rebbe urged everyone to work at acquiring riches. First and foremost, spiritual wealth through Torah and *mitzvos*; but also material wealth in the most literal sense, in order to use the money to serve Hashem with peace of mind, and of course to give much tzedakah. **T**

1. Motzei Shabbos Parshas Tazria-Metzora 5739, *se'if* 34.
2. Motzei Lag B'Omer 5740.
3. See Likkutei Sichos vol. 6, p. 193.
4. Derech Mitzvosecha, Mitzvas Tiglachas Metzora, 106a.
5. Shabbos Parshas Vaera 5723.
6. See Likkutei Sichos vol. 16, p. 177. Toras Menachem vol. 11, p. 58.
7. Likkutei Torah-Toras Shmuel, Kol Yisroel 5626, p. 168.
8. Letter 26 Tishrei 5719.

9. See Kuntres U'maayan, Maamar 25. Ve'yadaata Moscow, p. 57.
10. Igros Kodesh Admur Rayyatz, vol. 4, p. 425.
11. Shabbos Parshas Shelach 5713.
12. Letter 4 Teves 5715. See also letter 15 Tammuz 5714.
13. Letter 11 Kislev 5715.
14. Igros Kodesh Admur Rayyatz, vol. 3, p. 120.
15. Letter 24 Sivan 5714.
16. See letter 24 Menachem Av, 5721.
17. See letter 25 Teves 5715. 8 Cheshvan 5722.
18. Derech Mitzvosecha, 107a.
19. See Shabbos Parshas Vayakhel-Pikudei 5715, et. al.
20. Second day of Sukkos 5731.
21. See Maamar Mayim Rabbim 5738, et. al.
22. Letter 22 Cheshvan 5718.
23. Letter 21 Iyar 5714. See Ve'yadaata Moscow, p. 58. Shabbos Parshas Mattos 5714.
24. Ve'yadaata Moscow, p. 57.
25. Purim 5740.
26. Sefer Hasichos Toras Sholom, p. 5.
27. Night of Simchas Torah 5712.
28. Letter 6 Nissan 5714; Igros Kodesh vol. 21, #8013.
29. Letter 29 Adar I 5722.
30. Letter 1 Iyar 5717.
31. Letter 13 Shevat 5713, et. al.
32. Ibid. Letter 23 Cheshvan 5716.
33. Letters 24 Nissan and 4 Iyar 5714.
34. Letter Rosh Chodesh Teves 5713.
35. Letter 22 Adar I 5722, et. al.
36. Letter 26 Elul 5720.
37. Sicha 15 Shevat 5748. Countless letters and *maanos*, et. al.
38. Letter 24 Teves 5726, et. al.
39. Letter 2 Iyar 5715.
40. Letter 20 Sivan 5716, et. al.
41. Letter 21 Shevat 5718, et. al.
42. Letter 15 Teves 5720.
43. Letter 26 Teves 5722.
44. Igros Kodesh vol 24, #9376.
45. Letter 20 Cheshvan 5728.
46. 16 Iyar.
47. Motzei Shabbos 19 Kislev 5733, *sicha* 1.
48. 11 Nissan 5743, *sicha* 2, et. al.
49. See Igros Kodesh vol. 31, p. 194, et. al.
50. See Acharon Shel Pesach 5723, et. al.
51. 3 Menachem-Av 5718.



# A Moment At The Door

לזכר נשמת  
שיינא גאלדא ע"ה  
בת יבלחט"א ר' מיכאל הלוי שיחי'  
גוטלייזער  
נלב"ע כ"ח אלול ה'תשע"ו  
ת"נ צ"ב ה'  
נדפס ע"י זקניה  
הרה"ת ר' יצחק מאיר וזוגתו מרת לאה  
ומשפחתם שיחי'  
שפאלטר

"How did you become a Chossid?" was a question Reb Hillel Paritcher would ask annually at the Yud-Tes Kislev farbrengen. Each year someone else would share their fascinating tale of how they embraced a Chassidic lifestyle.

One senior Chossid shared his incredible story:

In my younger years I was a staunch *misnaged* and opposed anything to do with Chassidim. As it turns out, I married the daughter of a Chossid but this did not change my stance.

My father-in-law would routinely bring up the topic of Chassidus and the Rebbe, yet each time I continued in my stubborn path.

Being a Chossid, my father-in-law would travel

to the Alter Rebbe and encouraged, coaxed and pleaded with me to join. Each time I brushed him off with a different excuse. "The journey would be *bitul Torah*," I often claimed.

On one occasion, my father-in-law was so distraught that he discussed the matter with the Alter Rebbe. He replied, "Don't worry about it now, when I come to your house I will meet him."

Some time later the Alter Rebbe visited our town and stayed with my in-laws.

My father-in-law called me over and said that the Alter Rebbe was in the house and I should go meet him. However, I still refused.

Fully determined that the meeting take place, my father-in-law asked four young men to physically drag me into the Alter Rebbe's room.

As I crossed the threshold, I immediately turned around to exit the room.

The Alter Rebbe then called out to me, "Young man, do you know how to learn?"

My response was sharp and pointed, "I know how to learn and I don't need you or your teachings!"

He then continued with a follow up question, "What about your learning of Musar and areas of *yiras Shamayim*—your *kav chumtin*?" I told him that this was a few minutes per

day and that was enough for me.

"But," said the Alter Rebbe to me, "Does it not say *'eravta*—you need to mix it in?"

I stopped short in my tracks and declared, "Rebbe, I am yours!"

Each year when this Chossid repeated his story and he reached the part when he was at the door, tears would pour from his eyes. **1**

1. The Alter Rebbe quoted the Gemara that says one adds a *kav* (small measurement) of *chumtin* (native earth) to the produce. This *chumtin* acts as a natural preservative to keep the produce fresh. In a deeper sense, it is referring to the learning of Chassidus, Musar, etc.

2. Meaning, it is not enough to have the *kav*, it needs to be mixed into every part of your day.

לזכות  
הרה"ת ר' ישראל פסח  
וזוגתו מרת שולמית ליבא  
ומשפחתם שיחיו  
בעניש  
להצלחה מרובה  
במילוי שליחותם הק'  
בבעיון ניו ג'רסי



## The Miracle Was That They Listened

*Rabbi Hershel Chitrik, of blessed memory, was a shliach in Rio De Janeiro for many years.  
He was interviewed in 5769 as part of JEM's Here's My Story project.*

The president of the Agudah of Brazil was a very capable man; he was the president of the community, the president of the *Chevra Kadisha*, he was the president of all the institutions. He was an excellent speaker, intelligent and a *talmid chacham* — a pillar of the community.

His wife once traveled to Miami and she had a briefcase with her, and customs officials discovered millions of dollars of diamonds sewn into her suitcase. At that time, diamonds carried a high duty, and as far as the customs officials saw, she was smuggling them. She protested that she had been given the bag to give as a gift to a woman in Miami, but to no avail: she was arrested.

The scandal was tremendous — even the president of Brazil got involved — and it was the biggest *chilul Hashem* that Brazil had ever seen. The family hired

the best American lawyers they could get, but they couldn't do anything. They said, "At the minimum, she will get 10 years in prison."

Her brother-in-law came to America because he was ashamed to be seen in Brazil. I happened to be in America for Yom Tov, and I spoke to this brother-in-law, whose name was Dovid. I told him, "Dovid, you see that the lawyers are saying it's a lost case. Why not come with me to the Rebbe?" Now, he was a *litvak* who had studied in the Mir Yeshiva, and he initially refused to join me. But I was insistent: "What will it cost you? Come to the Rebbe!"

So he came to the Rebbe. It was a Thursday, and I arranged for him to go into *yechidus*. He tearfully told the Rebbe the story. The Rebbe told him, "Go to Miami." The Rebbe didn't say the name of a person to go to, or an address where he should go. When





RABBI HERSHEL CHITRIK WITH COMMUNITY MEMBERS IN BRAZIL.

Dovid came out of *yechidus*, he asked me, “Go to Miami? What will I do in Miami?” I said, “Don’t be a fool! The Rebbe told you to go to Miami. The lawyers said you’ve already lost. The government has an airtight case against her. You have nothing to lose.” So he went to Miami. He booked a kosher hotel on a Friday, he asked about a *minyan* and was directed to one not far away.

He was an emotional person and was crying throughout davening. After davening, a man walked over to him and asked, “Why are you crying?” “You can’t help me,” he responded. But the man insisted, so Dovid sat down and told him the whole story amid tears, of the suitcase she had been given, the inspection in the airport and the arrest, concluding with, “And the Rebbe sent me to Miami so here I am.”

After he finished the story, the man asked him, “When is the court case? Tuesday, right?” “Yes,” Dovid replied.

“I am the judge.”

“And you’ve convinced me that she’s telling the truth, and is the victim of a smuggling ring that used her to unwittingly bring the diamonds into the country.”

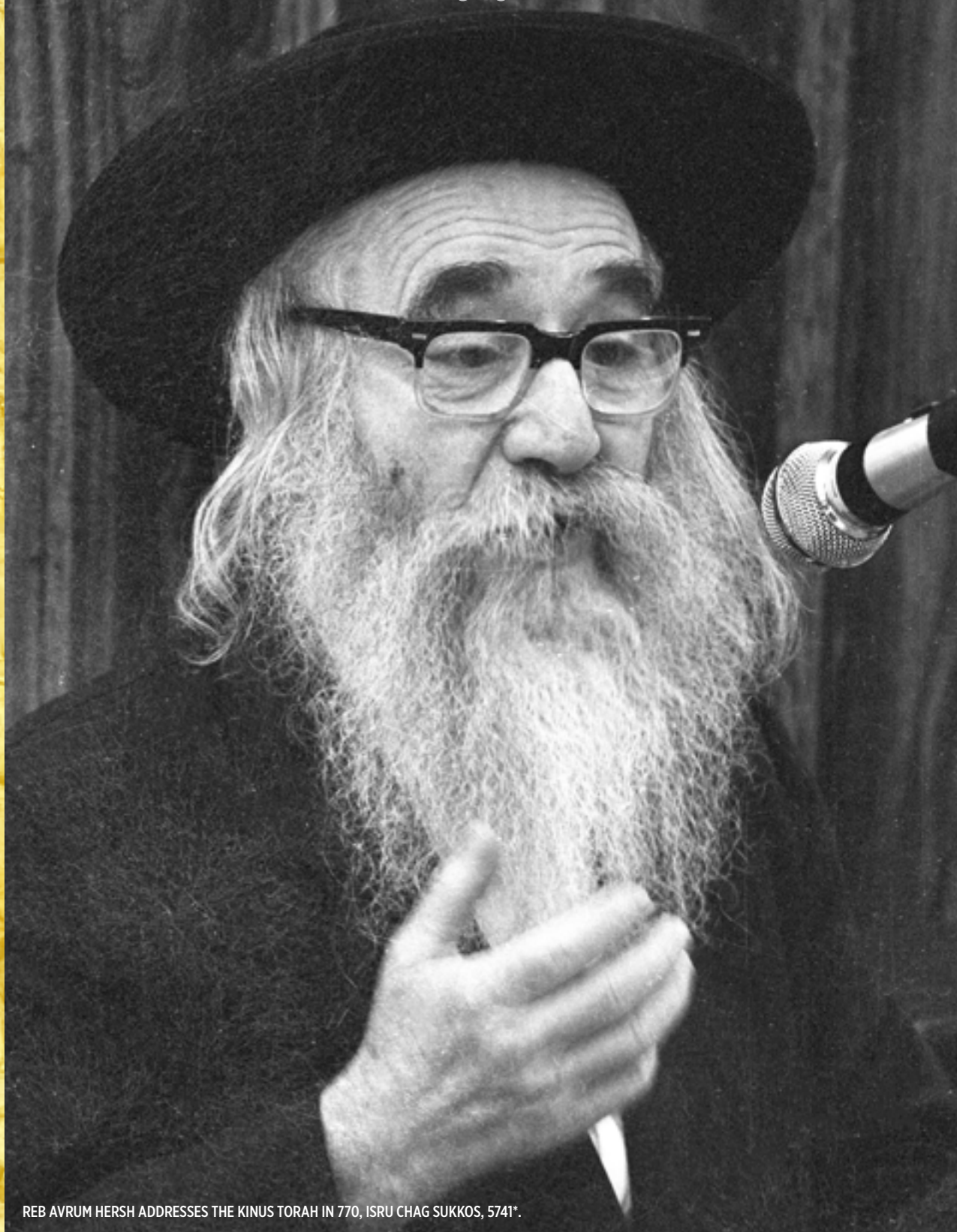
And she was set free.

A year later, the judge visited Brazil, and they made a *seudas hodaah*, at which the judge was present — and so was I.

When I came to the Rebbe the following Rosh Hashanah, the Rebbe wanted to know what happened, so I told the Rebbe the whole story. I said, “The whole city of Rio De Janeiro is talking about the miracle of the Rebbe.”

The Rebbe laughed and said, “*Ay, Chitrik, di mofes is geven az zey hoben tzugehert*” — “The miracle was that they listened to me.” **T**

לזכות משפחת קארנפעלד  
בורביינק, קאליפורניא



REB AVRUM HERSH ADDRESSES THE KINUS TORAH IN 770, ISRU CHAG SUKKOS, 5741\*.

LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 0157





REB AVRAHAM HERSH (RIGHT) SITTING BEHIND THE REBBE AT THE FARBRENGEN OF 12 TISHREI, 5744.

LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 209527

# *A Soldier in Yerushalayim*

## REB AVRUM HERSH COHEN



Harav Avrohom Tzvi HaKohen—known to all simply as Reb Avrum Hersh Cohen—was one of the most respected *talmidei chachamim* in Yerushalayim who mentored distinguished modern-day *rabbanim* and *poskim* in Eretz Yisroel. A passionate Lubavitcher Chossid with a tremendous love for and *hiskashrus* to the Rebbe, he merited to serve as the Rebbe's shliach in ways that no one else could replicate. Following are snippets of the life and times of this unique soldier in *dor hashvi'i*.<sup>1</sup>



## EARLY LIFE

Reb Avrum Hersh was born on 12 Nissan<sup>2</sup> 5676\* and hailed from a family of *kohanim meyuchasim* who were distinguished Alexander Chassidim from Lodz, Poland. In Poland, yeshivos were not very common at the time and most *chassidishe bochurim* learned in a local *shteibel* or *kloiz* on their own or in informal groups. Avrum Hersh learned with great *hasmadah* in the Alexander *shtiebel*.

As a young *bochur*, Avrum Hersh became known as a tremendous *lamdan*, whose learning was only surpassed by his great *yiras Shamayim*.

The years between the two world wars were a time of great tension for Jews in Poland, and in the spring of 5694\* Avrum Hersh's family made plans to emigrate to Eretz Yisroel after receiving a *bracha* to do so from the Alexander Rebbe, the Akeidas Yitzchok. To their dismay Avrum Hersh was not able to join them since he had just turned 18 and was of military age, but he urged them to emigrate without him and he would follow them soon after. It took a full year of much hard work and miracles for Avrum Hersh to finally reach Eretz Yisroel and rejoin his family who had by then settled in Yerushalayim.

In Yerushalayim there was a wealth of yeshivos for him to choose from but after learning in several of them he settled on learning on his own in one of the shuls, as he had done in Lodz.

Simcha Bunim and Yisroel Tzvi Heber were two brothers from Lodz who had learned together with Avrum Hersh in the Alexander *shteibel* in Lodz and had emigrated to Yerushalayim around the same time. Their father Reb Chaim Eliezer was already connected to Chabad and sent his elder son Simcha Bunim to learn in Yeshivas Toras Emes. Yisroel Tzvi, who was too young to officially enroll in the yeshiva, would participate



REB AVRUM HERSH'S PASSPORT WITH WHICH HE LEFT POLAND FOR ERETZ YISROEL.

COHEN FAMILY

in the *shiurim* and farbrengens of the legendary mashpia Reb Alter Simchovitch.

At one point, the two brothers reunited with their old friend Avrum Hersh. They described to him the greatness of their *mashpia* Reb Alter and the special atmosphere of Yeshivas Toras Emes and encouraged him to see for himself.

During the month of Elul 5697\*, the Frieddiker Rebbe penned the famous *igeres* to all *talmidei hayeshivos* throughout the world describing the appropriate behavior of *yeshiva bochurim* throughout the 48 hours of Rosh Hashanah.<sup>3</sup>

When the *igeres* arrived in Toras Emes, Reb Alter held a farbrengen and explained the *igeres* at great length and the true meaning of *avodas hateshuva*. This *igeres* and Reb Alter's farbrengen had a deep impact on Avrum Hersh and transformed him into a full-fledged Lubavitcher Chossid.

"Reb Alter was permeated with the awareness that the yeshiva is the Rebbe's *mosad* and every moment needed to be utilized to the fullest," Reb Avrum Hersh later recounted. "He demanded that one should be able to

present the Rebbe a detailed report of how every moment was used. 'You think your time belongs to you!?' Reb Alter would say.

"I became a Chabad Chossid because of him."

Reb Alter passed away at the young age of 48, only two years after Avrum Hersh became a *Tomim* and he later said, "Had Reb Alter lived longer he would have conquered all of Yerushalayim."

**"GET ME MORE SUCH CHASSIDISHE CHASSANIM..."**

In the winter of 5700\* Reb Avrum Hersh became engaged to Rivka Mattel Vaisfisch, the daughter of Reb Avrohom Elchonon Vaisfisch and granddaughter of Rav Dovid Baharan, the eldest and one of the most distinguished *poskim* in Yerushalayim at the time. Rav Dovid hailed from a Litvisher family of *talmidei HaGr"a*, who were opposed to Chassidus for many generations. He was directly involved in the *shidduchim* of all his granddaughters and when he met with Avrum Hersh he was so impressed with him that he exclaimed to his son-in-law Reb Avrohom Elchonon

Vaisfisch, “Today I purchased a *sefer Torah* for your daughter!”

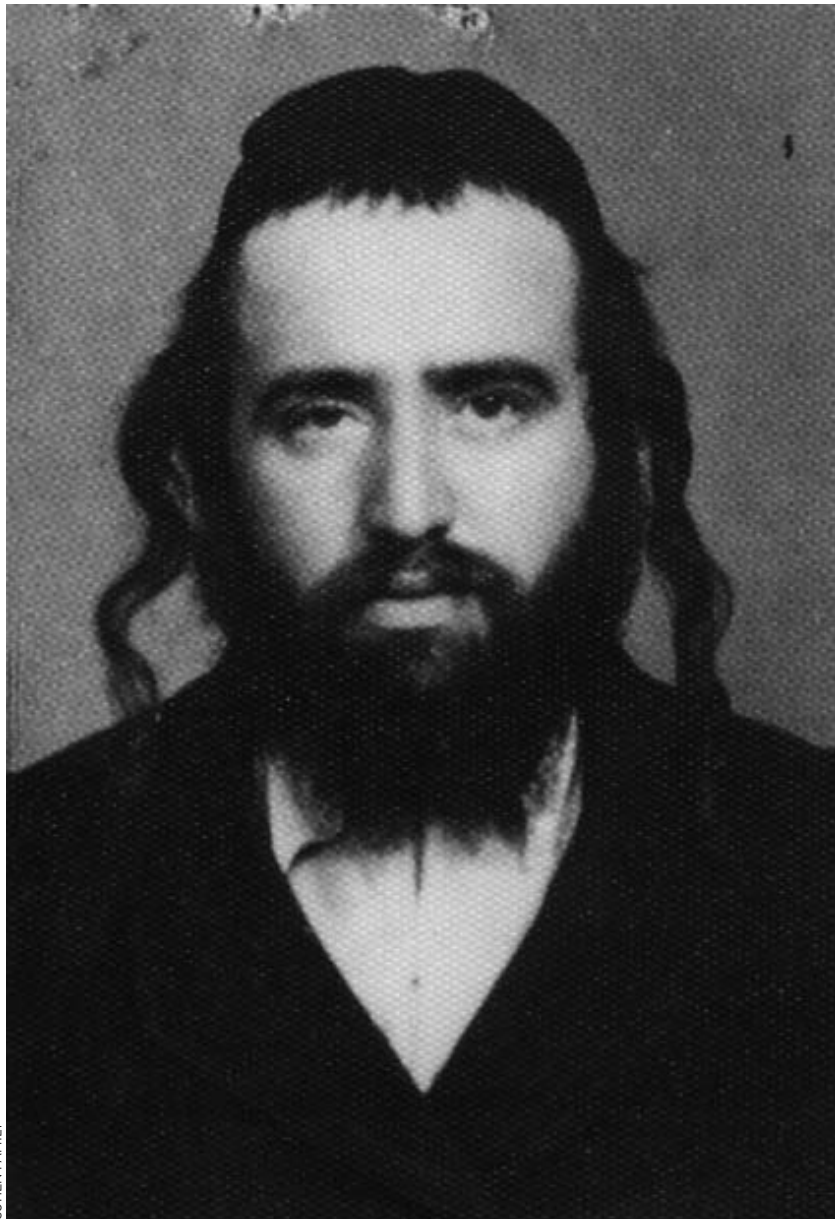
When his *talmidim* once asked him how he could choose Chassidim as *chassanim* for his granddaughters, Rav Dovid replied, “If you have more such Chassidim, bring them to me!”

Over time Reb Avrum Hersh learned *halacha* together with his wife’s

distinguished grandfather, and after several months they started learning Chassidus together which transformed Rav Dovid’s approach to Chassidus in general.

Reb Avrum Hersh’s family was very poor and he needed to arrange the finances for his upcoming wedding. He had collected a significant sum of

*Rav Dovid replied, “If you have more such Chassidim, bring them to me!”*



## EVERYONE HAS A UNIQUE MISSION

Reb Arum Hersh’s father-in-law, Reb Avrohom Elchonon Vaisfisch, was an *ehrliche Yid* who made a living from owning a grocery in Yerushalayim. After marrying off all his children in 5725\* he wished to sell the grocery and dedicate his life to learning Torah all day, but was hesitant to make such a decision without proper guidance. Although he was not a Lubavitcher chossid he asked his grandson Shmuel Yechezkel Cohen, who was in 770 that year for “*Kvutza*,” to present this question to the Rebbe when he would be in *yechidus*. The Rebbe responded that he should not sell the grocery and continue working there.

Reb Avrohom Elchonon was troubled by the Rebbe’s answer and approached Rav Shlomo Zalman Aurbach, who was his neighbor, and asked him what to do. He very much wanted to learn Torah full time but the Rebbe had advised him to keep the grocery...

Rav Shlomo Zalman Aurbach explained to him that every *neshama* has a unique mission in this world. There are those who are meant to learn Torah all day and there are those who are meant to serve as an example of a proper and honest *baal eisek*. “Apparently the Rebbe is telling you that this is the mission of your *neshama* in this world.”

Reb Avrohom Elchonon continued working in the grocery for many years until he had a stroke while standing in the store and passed away two weeks later.

money, but decided to use the money to purchase the best pairs of Rashi and Rabbeinu Tam tefillin he could find.

He had heard that in 5690\*, during the famous visit to Eretz Yisroel, the Frierdiker Rebbe purchased tefillin *parshiyos* for the Rebbe by Reb Nachman Papirna, a *sofer* in Yerushalayim, so he invested his small fortune in purchasing beautiful *parshiyos* from the same *sofer* as well as top quality *batim*.

Reb Avrum Hersh continued learning in the *kollel* of Toras Emes for approximately ten years after his wedding. During this time he frequently wrote letters to the Frierdiker Rebbe. In 5701\* he and his friend Reb Moshe Veber arranged for the alumni of Toras Emes to daven together on Shabbosim and organized *melave malka* farbrengens in each other's homes. The Frierdiker Rebbe was pleased by this arrangement and

emphasized the importance of the *melave malka* farbrengens<sup>4</sup>, a tradition that continued for many decades.

## BRANCHING OUT

In 5711\* Reb Avrum Hersh started learning in the *kollel* of “Yeshivas Meah Shearim.” The members of this *kollel* came from a mix of backgrounds and he started bringing the influence of Lubavitch to these various circles in many different ways.

Despite his relative youth, Reb Avrum Hersh was well known for his *lomdus*, especially for his brilliant clarity in *halacha*. He would converse with one and all in matters of learning and he impressed the greatest minds of Yerushalayim.

Every Friday a group of *poskim* gathered in the office of Israel's chief rabbi Harav Yitzchok Herzog to discuss many of the complicated halachic questions of the time and Reb

Avrum Hersh regularly participated in these discussions.

He would constantly recite words of Torah or was deep in thought, but at the same time he was a shining example of *ahavas Yisroel* to all. He had an open home with many guests throughout the year and knew how to listen to people and help them in their time of need. He paid special attention to those *bochurim* in the neighborhood who he noticed were gradually drifting away from Yiddishkeit and patiently and lovingly inspired them. The heads of what later became many distinguished families in Yerushalayim are from today due to his influence.

In 5714\*, Reb Avrum Hersh was appointed *rosh yeshiva* of the Yeshiva L'Tzeirim of the “Toldos Aharon” community, a post he held for close to ten years. During this time he taught and mentored many *talmidim* who later became noted rabbanim, *poskim* and *roshei yeshiva*. Most famous among them was Harav Meir Bransdorfer, a member of the Badatz Eidah Hachareidis and a most distinguished *posek* of recent times.

## SHLIACH TO NETUREI KARTA

From the earliest days of the Rebbe's *nesius*, the Rebbe instructed the Chassidim in Yerushalayim to invest their efforts in arranging *shiurim* in Chassidus wherever possible. Reb Avrum Hersh was intensely involved in this project and personally delivered multiple *shiurei Chassidus* and had set *chavrusos* with many individuals. But there was one specific *shiur Tanya* that Reb Avrum Hersh delivered three times a week for decades that the Rebbe personally initiated and had a unique interest in its development and growth.

The Neturei Karta community of Meah Shearim, known for its radical anti-Zionist position, did not appreciate the Rebbe's strong support for the development of Eretz Yisroel,



REB AVRUM HERSH (FAR LEFT) WELCOMES RAV EFRAIM YOLLES TO HIS KOLLEL, LAG B'OMER 5728\*.



*"I suggest that you should set up a shiur Tanya... in one of the shuls of the Neturei Karta, in whose newspaper was recently published an article discouraging people from learning Chassidus."*

and misunderstood it as support of the Zionist ideology. In 5716\* they published a sharply worded protest against Lubavitch in their newspaper "Hachoma" because Mr. Zalman Shazar, a member of the Israeli government at the time, was honored at a Yud-Beis Tammuz farbrengen.

Later that summer the Rebbe sent a group of *bochurim* as shlichim to Eretz Yisroel to inspire the Chassidim after the terrorist attack in Kfar Chabad.<sup>5</sup> They spent a full week in Yerushalayim and their visit made waves in the Yerushalmi community. In response, the "Hachoma" published a scathing article against the Baal Shem Tov and Chassidim in general and called for people to refrain from learning Chassidus.

On 24 Elul 5716\* the Rebbe penned an *igeres* to Reb Avrum Hersh:<sup>6</sup>

"Based on the reports from the shlichim about their visit to Yerushalayim and specifically in Meah Shearim: I suggest that you should set up a *shiur Tanya*... in one of the shuls of the Neturei Karta, in whose newspaper was recently published an article discouraging people from learning Chassidus.

"... I hear that there are one or two who were practically affected by this discouragement. It is self understood that those who 'drink the waters' of the Baal Shem Tov must not only protest against such declarations... they must intensify the dissemination of the Baal Shem Tov's teachings specifically in the strongholds of opposition.

"I am sending this letter as express mail so that you should be able to

start working on this *shiur* before the new year begins. It would be best if the first *shiur* would happen on Erev Rosh Hashanah—to 'purify' the entire previous year."

When Reb Avrum Hersh received this express letter from the Rebbe on Erev Rosh Hashanah he immediately set about fulfilling the Rebbe's request. He decided that the Kehal Yerei'im shul was the right place to have the *shiur*, and in order to secure the necessary permissions to do so he sought out the support of Rav Amram Bloi, one of the foremost leaders of the Neturei Karta. They shared a family connection, and despite their strong ideological differences they maintained a special friendship and mutual respect for each other.

When Reb Avrum Hersh showed up at Rav Amram Bloi's home with a request to start a *shiur Tanya* that very day, he asked, "Did the Rebbe instruct you to approach me for my support on this matter?"

"No. The Rebbe only instructed me to start the *shiur* today in a Neturei Karta shul," Reb Avrum Hersh replied. "I decided on my own that you were the right person to consult with."

"If so, I and my sons will come with you now to hear a *shiur* in Tanya at the Kehal Yerei'im shul!" Rav Amram declared, and thus began the *shiur Tanya* at the Neturei Karta Shul on Erev Rosh Hashanah, exactly as the Rebbe had requested!

Reb Avrum Hersh was surprised at how easily Rav Amram agreed to the *shiur* and was willing to personally

participate in it on such a busy day like Erev Rosh Hashanah. Rav Amram confided to him that he had also received an *igeres* from the Rebbe that morning,<sup>7</sup> written on 24 Elul, requesting that despite the ideological differences between Lubavitch and Neturei Karta, he should arrange a *shiur* in Chassidus in a shul under his influence, and that the *shiur* should happen at least once during the year 5716\*.

"I just witnessed such clear *ruach hakodesh* from the Rebbe! The Rebbe did not specifically instruct you whom to consult with about starting the *shiur* and yet you decided on your own to approach me about it."

Before the start of the *shiur* Rav Amram made one condition with Reb Avrum Hersh. The members of the Neturei Karta would only agree to listen to a *shiur* from him if he would commit to never participate in Israeli elections ever again. Otherwise, he explained, there was no chance for the *shiur* to succeed.

Since time was of essence and he had no option of asking the Rebbe about this,<sup>8</sup> Reb Avrum Hersh agreed to the condition and the *shiur* took off. When he reported this to the Rebbe later on, the Rebbe agreed that a *shiur Tanya* with Neturei Karta was by far more important than participating in the elections.

Immediately after Rosh Hashanah, Reb Avrum Hersh reported the establishment of the *shiur* to the Rebbe. He merited to receive the Rebbe's response dated 8 Tishrei,<sup>9</sup> acknowledging the good news of the establishment of the *shiur* with the instruction that the *shiur* should happen at least three times a week in a way that three days should not pass without a *shiur Chassidus* there.

A month later the Rebbe sent another *igeres* inquiring about the development of the *shiur* and encouraged him to utilize the month







REB AVRUM HERSH JOINS FELLOW LUBAVITCHER CHASSIDIM IN JOYOUS DANCING BEFORE TRAVELING TO THE REBBE FOR TISHREI 5721\*.

of Kislev in the best possible way to disseminate Chassidus “in the place that you merited to be the shliach,” and concluded with a special regards to all the participants in the “שיעור הכי” שיעור הכי—most esteemed *shiur*.”

On 3 Teves 5717\* the Rebbe defined this *shiur* as מצוה שאי אפשר לעשותה על ידי אחרים—a mitzvah that cannot be accomplished by others.

The Rebbe continued following the progress of the *shiur* with special interest and it succeeded in creating a great shift by many of the members of the Neturei Karta in their overall attitude to Chassidus.

### **SHEHECHEYANU!**

Reb Avrum Hersh’s most fervent wish was to merit to be in the Rebbe’s

presence, but traveling to New York from Eretz Yisroel in those days was prohibitive on multiple levels. In honor of Tishrei 5721\*, a special chartered flight was arranged for Chassidim to travel to the Rebbe<sup>10</sup> and Reb Avrum Hersh decided he would take advantage of the opportunity at all costs. The discounted price of the charter far exceeded his financial means at the time and his wife was distraught that his trip to the Rebbe would sink them deeper in debt.

She expressed her concerns in a letter to the Rebbe and merited to receive the Rebbe’s response:<sup>11</sup>

“Even when only one family member undertakes such a trip and has the opportunity to be at the Ohel... to request all that is necessary,

this is on behalf of the entire family, especially his wife and children. In other words, this will benefit the family materially and spiritually.”

The historic charter flight landed in New York on Monday, 27 Elul, and Reb Avrum Hersh merited to see the Rebbe for the first time during *krias haTorah* that morning. At Mincha the Rebbe skipped *tachanun* and afterwards entered the main shul and said a *maamar* ד"ה לך אמר לבי בקשו פני.

At the *simchas beis hashoeva* farbrengen in the sukkah, the Rebbe requested before the seventh *sicha* that the organizers of the annual Tzach convention (which occurred earlier that day) deliver a report of the event. Rabbi Yosef Wineberg briefly described the speeches given



## THE SPECIAL DOLLARS

During the month of Tishrei Reb Avrum Hersh merited to have *yechidus* 3 times. Among the many topics discussed, the Rebbe instructed him to purchase a gift for his wife. In what was apparently a response to his wife's concern about the financial strain of the trip, the Rebbe said to him that since he delivers many Tanya shiurim with *mesiras nefesh*, he would like to participate in the costs of his trip. The Rebbe handed him a \$100 bill and said, "I don't want you to keep it as a *segulah*. I want you to use it to cover the costs of the trip."

The next day, the Rebbe's secretary Reb Moshe Leib Rodshtein asked him about his *yechidus*. He shared with him the story of the \$100 bill and confided that he was unsure of how to proceed.

After a few moments of thought Reb Moshe Leib said, "I suggest you go to the bank and change the \$100 bill for one hundred single dollar bills and sell each dollar for \$10."

Together they went across the street to the bank and procured the 100 single dollar bills and when they returned to 770, Reb Moshe Leib pulled out a stamp he had prepared with the words: דולר לברכה מכ"ק אדמו"ר שליט"א - מרחשון תשכ"א (A dollar of blessing from the Rebbe Shlita - Marcheshvan 5721).

Reb Avrum Hersh asked Reb Moshe Leib how he has the audacity to do such a thing and he responded, "If the Rebbe wants this \$100 bill to cover the costs of your trip, surely this is what the Rebbe had in mind."

He kept a dollar for each of his immediate family members and sold the rest. Needless to say, the sale of the special dollars covered the costs of the trip to the Rebbe. Reb Avrum Hersh kept this special dollar very dearly and requested from his family to insert it in his hand before his burial.

## THE REBBE'S ONLY CHILD

In one *yechidus* the Rebbe said to Reb Avrum Hersh, "One of your relatives is currently unwell." Reb Avrum Hersh thought for a moment and asked if the Rebbe was referring to his wife's cousin Reb Yitzchok Weinstock who was having an issue with his leg. "I am referring to him, but he has a different medical issue at the moment," the Rebbe said.

Suddenly Reb Avrum Hersh recalled that Reb Yitzchok had given him a *pan* for the Rebbe which he had forgotten to bring with him to *yechidus* and he told the Rebbe he would give it to Mazkirus as soon as possible.

"He has a second name," the Rebbe continued. Reb Avrum Hersh could not recall the name and the Rebbe continued "Yitzchok Shmuel."

Reb Avrum Hersh would repeat this story with much excitement and conclude: "Reb Yitzchok is a dear relative and neighbor of mine whom I see often and yet I did not know his full name, was unaware of his most recent medical issue and even forgot to bring his *pan* to *yechidus*. Yet the Rebbe knew his full name, was fully up to date and concerned about his medical condition! The only explanation I have for this is that for the Rebbe, the Nossi Hador, every Yid is like an only child!"

by the various Tzach representatives throughout the world and towards the end said: "Reb Avrum Hersh from Yerushalayim greeted the crowd and emphasized that the first thing he heard from the Rebbe was about the *inyan* of <sup>12</sup>בקשו פני."

After that first glorious Tishrei he merited to be in the Rebbe's presence, he did his utmost to come back to 770 at every possible opportunity. After he married off all his children, he traveled to New York every Tishrei until 5750\*, when he was unable to travel any longer due to his age and illness.



REB AVRUM HERSH AT A YECHIDUS KLOLIS FOR THE GUESTS JOINING THE REBBE FOR TISHREI, 26 TISHREI 5745\*.

LEVI FREDIN VIA JEM 2/5780

Rabbi Yisroel Glitzenstein relates: "I once observed as Reb Avrum Hersh arrived in 770 in the month of Adar 5733\* and he stood in the front foyer waiting to see the Rebbe. As the Rebbe left his room, Reb Avrum Hersh started reciting *Shehechyanu* out loud, slowly and with great emotion. The Rebbe stopped and gazed at Reb Avrum Hersh until he finished the *bracha* and answered 'amen.'"

This scene happened each time he came to 770. In 5736\*, after the Rebbe answered Amen to Reb Avrum Hersh's *Shehechyanu*, the Rebbe wished him "Mazel Tov" for his child's recent wedding.

He always merited to have a lengthy *yeichidus* and often the Rebbe spoke with him in learning. Once, when the *mazkir* opened the door many times due to the overflowing crowd waiting for *yeichidus*, the Rebbe

told Reb Avrum Hersh that the continuation of the *yeichidus* will be at the upcoming Shabbos farbrengen.

During his visits to 770, Reb Avrum Hersh was treated with utmost respect. In the 5740s\* his place at farbrengens was on the dais behind the Rebbe and at davening he had a spot in the front row behind the Rebbe's *bima*. On Erev Rosh Hashanah he was one of the ten *rabbanim* who served as the *beis din* for the Rebbe's *hataras nedarim*.

During *Birchas Kohanim* on Yom Tov he made a point to stand in the front row of *Kohanim* facing the Rebbe and it was obvious to the observers that the Rebbe gazed upon him as he reached his place and even afterwards.

At the *kinus Torah* of Tishrei 5734\*, Rabbi Mordechai Mentlik introduced Reb Avrum Hersh and said, "We all saw how the Rebbe waited for Reb Avrum Hersh at *Birchas Kohanim* and

escorted him with his gaze until he reached his place."

He was also from the first *Kohanim* to invite his grandchildren who were not yet Bar Mitzvah to join him on the *Bima* for *Birchas Kohanim*. Once when he was on the *bima* without his grandchildren the Rebbe motioned to him with his hands as if to say, "Where are the *einiklach*?"

Well known for his *lomdus* in non-Chabad circles, many Yidden from surrounding neighborhoods came to 770 for the *kinus Torah* just to hear Reb Avrum Hersh speak. During Tishrei 5721\*, the Rebbe sent him together with Reb Sholom Morozov to give a *shiur* in Chassidus in Williamsburg and he continued giving *shiurim* in various communities in New York whenever he visited. Even when there was serious tension between Satmar and Lubavitch, the Rebbe instructed



REB AVRUM HERSH (SITTING, LEFT) PARTICIPATING IN THE BEIS DIN FOR THE REBBE'S HATORAS NEDARIM, EREV ROSH HASHANAH, 5744\*.

him to visit them as usual, and indeed everything went well.

He was offered good accommodations by well meaning hosts, but he insisted on sleeping in the accommodations offered by the Eshel Hachnosas Orchim by Reb Moshe Yeruslavsky so that he would be able to spend every available moment in 770 and not feel obligated to spend time with his hosts.

When he returned to Eretz Yisroel from 770 he would share his experience in such a passionate and exciting way that swept everyone up in the inspiration of Beis Chayeinu.

On Simchas Torah 5721\*, the Rebbe taught the *niggun* “*Ata Vechartanu*,” and Reb Avrum Hersh made a point of teaching the *niggun* to groups of *bochurim* in many yeshivos in Yerushalayim, even those who were ideologically opposed to Lubavitch.

He once described how amazing it is that traveling to the Rebbe is so miraculous that as he prepares to leave a taxi pulls up, carries his suitcases for him until the plane and everything happens in such a comfortable and easy manner. He was asked, “What’s the big deal? You pay for the service!” to which he responded, “The money I

have is sent to me by Hashem. I spend all my time teaching His Torah and He ensures that I have sufficient money that I should have the ability to travel to Beis Chayeinu, hear Chassidus and through this remain *mekushar* to the Rebbe.”

## ROSH KOLLEL

In the summer of 5722\*, Reb Avrum Hersh was appointed *mashgiach ruchni* of the Central Yeshiva of Tomchei Temimim in Eretz Yisroel, located at the time in the *pardes* in Lod. He loved the *bochurim* very much and was dedicated to their spiritual and material welfare. Each month he would write a *duch* to the Rebbe reporting on every *bochur’s* progress in learning and *avodas Hashem*.

During the month of Tishrei 5723\*, the older classes of the yeshiva moved to the newly built building in Kfar Chabad. Reb Avrum Hersh would sleep in the Yeshiva dormitory throughout the week instead of traveling back and forth to Yerushalayim.

Within a year, the *hanhala* decided to appoint Reb Avrum Hersh as *maggid shiur* for the older *bochurim* to focus on learning *halacha l’maaseh*.

Several months later, in the summer of 5724\* the Rebbe established a *kollel* in Kfar Chabad for newly married men, and Reb Avrum Hersh was eventually appointed to be the *rosh kollel*. Thus began a new chapter in his life as he mentored and guided dozens of young Chassidim who eventually became rabbanim and *poskim* themselves under his tutelage.

In 5729\*,<sup>13</sup> the Rebbe established the Nachalas Har Chabad neighborhood in Kiryat Malachi by sending some of the members of the *kollel* to establish a *kollel* there, and Reb Avrum Hersh was appointed *rosh kollel* there as well. He would travel

## THE ALTER REBBE’S SHULCHAN ARUCH

Reb Avrum Hersh had a tremendous passion for learning the Alter Rebbe’s Shulchan Aruch. With his wealth of knowledge in learning he was able to focus on every word and nuance of the *halacha* and derive fascinating *chiddushim* in *halacha l’maaseh*.

During his *yechidus* in Tishrei 5721\*, the Rebbe spoke with him about the importance of inspiring people to “*koch*” in the Alter Rebbe’s Shulchan Aruch, especially in non-Chabad circles.

“With whom else can I speak about this? Who else understands the importance of this more than you?” the Rebbe said to him.

Reb Avrum Hersh would constantly share the tremendous clarity of the Alter Rebbe’s Shulchan Aruch to rapt audiences and to each he would conclude in a different way. To Lubavitcher Chassidim he would say, “The *neshama chadasha*, the Alter Rebbe who gifted us the holy Tanya, also wrote the Shulchan Aruch. We ought to learn it with the proper focus and attention.”

To non-Lubavitch crowds he would say, “The one who wrote this tremendous Shulchan Aruch wrote the Tanya as well...”

Once the Brisker Rov (HaGRI”Z) answered a “*tzorich iyun*” of Reb Akiva Eiger in Hilchos Matzah based on a *vort* from his father Reb Chaim Brisker. Reb Avrum Hersh opened up the Alter Rebbe’s Shulchan Aruch and pointed out to a friend of his, who was a *talmid* of the Brisker Rov, that this idea is already articulated in the Alter Rebbe’s precise language in Shulchan Aruch.

Afterwards the Brisker Rov commented, “Any ‘good *vort*’ one can say in Orach Chayim - it’s already in the Alter Rebbe’s Shulchan Aruch! His language is precise like the Rambam!”<sup>14</sup>

In 5727\* the Rebbe instructed the members of the *kollel* in Kfar Chabad to prepare *mareh mekomos*, *tziyunim* and *hearos* to the Alter Rebbe’s Shulchan Aruch. This groundbreaking project was done under the guidance of Reb Avrum Hersh.



there once a week to give a *shiur* and to keep track of their progress.

The Rebbe's approach to the *kollel* was that *yungerleit* should learn there for two years and then get involved in *hafatzas hamaayanos* in various ways. In 5731\* there was a group of *yungerleit* who especially excelled in their learning and they strongly wished to remain in the *kollel*, even if they would not continue receiving the *kollel* stipend. When Reb Avrum Hersh was in *yechidus* during Tishrei 5732\* he asked the Rebbe about the possibility of allowing these *yungerleit* to remain in the *kollel* for some more time.

The Rebbe said that the *horaah* for *yungerleit* to learn in *kollel* for two years was specific. The whole purpose of learning in *kollel* is in order to eventually go out into the world to be involved in *hafatza*. If a *yungerman* does not fulfill the purpose of *kollel*, it calls into question the years he spent learning in *kollel*.

Although his official responsibilities in Kfar Chabad were in the *kollel*, Reb Avrum Hersh gave *shiurim* to *balebatim* in Gemara and Shulchan Aruch as well. The Rebbe also instructed him to test *bochurim* and *yungerleit* for *semicha*, which he did for many decades.

After close to 20 years of his dedication to the *kollel* in Kfar Chabad and Nachalas Har Chabad, the constant traveling became difficult for him and in 5744\* Reb Avrum Hersh became the *rosh kollel* of "Kollel Shamir" and "Kollel Kol Yaakov-Chabad" in Yerushalayim. Rabbi Yisroel Halperin relates: "When Reb Avrum Hersh left the post of *rosh kollel* in Kfar Chabad I met Reb Mendel Futerfas in the hallway and he said to me, 'You must find a way to keep Reb Avrum Hersh here in Kfar Chabad. We all need his *chayus*, even I need it!'"



### "LISTENING TO MOSHE RABBEINU!"

As a dedicated Chossid, Reb Avrum Hersh's greatest pleasure in life was to hear the Rebbe's voice. In the early years when it was very difficult to find recordings of the Rebbe's farbrengens he made every effort to acquire them and spent hours listening to them. His dedicated time for listening to farbrengens was at 3:30 a.m. Many recall walking in the dark alleyways of the Batei Varsha neighborhood of Yerushalayim in those early morning hours and hearing the Rebbe's voice emanating from Reb Avrum Hersh's apartment.

Once a Chossid visiting Eretz Yisroel brought him a recording of a *Yechidus Klotis* which had not been broadcast through WLCC. Reb Avrum Hersh was so pleased that he put it into the playing device right away and they listened to the *sicha* together. Suddenly a Litvishe *rosh yeshiva* knocked on his door to discuss a difficult question in *halacha* with him and asked who they were listening to. "Moshe Rabbeinu!" Reb Avrum Hersh exclaimed with great emotion.

In the 5730s\*, when the live hookups of the Rebbe's farbrengens became routine, Reb Avrum Hersh

was among the first to arrive in Yeshivas Toras Emes ready to listen to the farbrengen like a soldier, even if there was a surprise *sicha* when it was already in middle of the night in Eretz Yisroel.

Reb Avrum Hersh had a tremendous *koch* in the Rebbe's *sichos* and when Likkutei Sichos started to be published on a weekly basis, he

always had the *likkut* with him and would learn every word with great depth. He would discuss the content of the *sichos* with one and all and would often comment on the greatness of the *chiddushim* in every line and footnote. "Since the days of Moshe Rabbeinu there has not been such a revelation of Torah!" he would say with great excitement.

"One who has never learned Likkutei Sichos never saw *geonus* in his life. One who has not toiled tirelessly to understand the footnotes of Likkutei Sichos, has never seen *amkus* in his life."

On one of the walls of his home he had a photo of the Alter Rebbe and a photo of the Rebbe and a clock in between the two photos. He would often tell his visitors: "The Alter Rebbe and the Rebbe are the same. The only separation between them is time..."

## MIVTZOIM

When the Rebbe initiated Mivtza Tefillin in 5727\*, Reb Avrum Hersh immediately dedicated himself to it. A special tefillin booth was established at the plaza of the Kosel and *anash* of Yerushalayim had a set rotation of shifts manning the booth at all hours of the day, every day of the week. Due to his responsibilities outside of Yerushalayim, the only free time Reb Avrum Hersh had was on Erev Shabbos, and each week he stood at the Kosel dressed in his Shabbos clothing and aided the thousands of Yidden there in wrapping tefillin until minutes before Shabbos began. He would then daven Kabbalas Shabbos and walk back home. This continued until he was no longer able to walk.

Once a Yid at the Kosel refused to wrap tefillin, so Reb Hersh handed him a coin and a *tzedakah pushka* and encouraged him to at least do the mitzvah of *tzedakah*, to which he agreed. Several minutes later the man returned and asked to wrap tefillin.

He would accompany the *kolle yungerleit* who would travel to nearby towns and villages to *kasher* kitchens, guiding them in the *halachos* and getting involved in the work himself.

Once, when he joined another *yungerman* visiting homes in a nearby town to offer them new mezuzos or to check their old ones, they came upon the home of an elderly woman who



COHEN FAMILY

REB AVRAHAM HERSH STANDING AT THE TEFILLIN BOOTH AT THE KOSEL EREV SHABBOS, DRESSED IN THE TRADITIONAL YERUSHALMI SHABBOS GARB.

*Reb Hersh handed him a coin and a tzedakah pushka and encouraged him to at least do the mitzvah of tzedakah...*

told them that she is very not religious and had only one mezuzah in her home. Reb Avrum Hersh exclaimed, "You have one mezuzah? You are very religious!" She was so moved by his genuine comment that she purchased new mezuzos for all the doors of her home.

A group of Chassidim once came to Yeshivas Chevron to sell letters in the Sefer Torah Hakloli to the *bochurim*. Reb Avrum Hersh approached the *mashgiach* and after a lengthy conversation received permission for the Chassidim to do so after the *seder*.

In 5732\* a delegation of Chassidim met with Harav Yechezkel Abramski, the *rosh yeshiva* of Yeshivas Slobodka in Bnei Brak, asking him to sign on to an important initiative of the Rebbe. When Reb Avrum Hersh saw that Rav Abramski was very friendly and respectful but hesitant to sign on to the initiative, he asked him what *sugya* he was learning at the time and then started discussing the *sugya* in great depth with brilliant clarity. Rav Abramski was so impressed by this and immediately signed on to the initiative.

## AWAITING MOSHIACH

As a *Kohen*, Reb Avrum Hersh anticipated the imminent arrival of Moshiach with an extra level of practicality. He was proficient in the *halachos* of the *avodah* in the *Beis Hamikdash* and would learn those *masechtos* regularly.

When he was once told by his doctors that he would need to undergo surgery to treat a certain illness in his legs, he started trembling. The doctors tried to calm him that it was a routine surgery, but he explained to them that he was worried that the surgery would render him a בעל מום and he would not be able to serve as a *Kohen* in the third *Beis Hamikdash* when Moshiach comes.

He wrote a letter to the Rebbe asking for a *bracha* that he would not need to undergo the surgery and the Rebbe instructed him to take certain medicines instead. When he recovered from the illness without needing surgery he arranged a big *seudas hodaah* for the fact that he was still worthy of serving in the *Beis Hamikdash*.

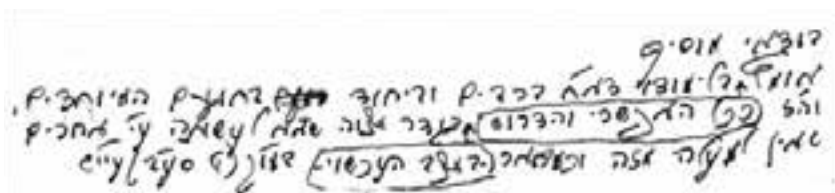
Later in life he once contracted an infection for which the doctors

insisted he needed to amputate a finger. He was adamantly opposed to the idea for the same reason, and instead elected to take a strong medicine that caused him to become very ill. One of his *talmidim* was in 770 for Simchas Torah and at *kos shel bracha* he asked the Rebbe for a *bracha* for Reb Avrum Hersh, who went on to recover from the illness without requiring an amputation.

After a lengthy illness, Reb Avrum Hersh passed away on 24 Av 5755\*. His grandson who was tending to him at the time offered him some food, and Reb Avrum Hersh ate a bit, made a *bracha acharona*, ending loudly and clearly with the words "*Boruch chei ha'olamim...*"

Those were his final words in this world; a befitting conclusion to the life of a passionate Chossid, who left children and grandchildren and generations of *talmidim*, Chassidim and *mekusharim* to the Rebbe. **T**

1. All the information in this article is gleaned from the *sefer* "Reb Avrum Hersh," by Shneur Zalman Rabinovich, Nachalas Har Chabad, 5775.
2. The day after Yud-Alef Nissan. Once in *yeichidus* the Rebbe said to him as an affectionate side point: "Your *yom huledes* is the day after..."
3. Kovetz Michtavim in the end of Tehillim Ohel Yosef Yitzchok.
4. Igros Kodesh Rayatz vol. 5 page 333.
5. See Derher Magazine #20 page 32.
6. Igros Kodesh vol. 13 page 459.
7. Ibid. page 471.
8. The Rebbe generally strongly encouraged all frum Yidden to participate in the elections to ensure that Israeli law would be more in line with *halacha*.
9. Igros Kodesh vol. 14 page 12.
10. See Derher Magazine #23 page 14.
11. Igros Kodesh vol. 19 page 396.
12. Hear the audio at Ashreinu.app 18 Tishrei Sicha 7 15:55.
13. See Derher Magazine #86 page 18.
14. Kovetz Kinus Torah (New York) vol. 20 page 56.

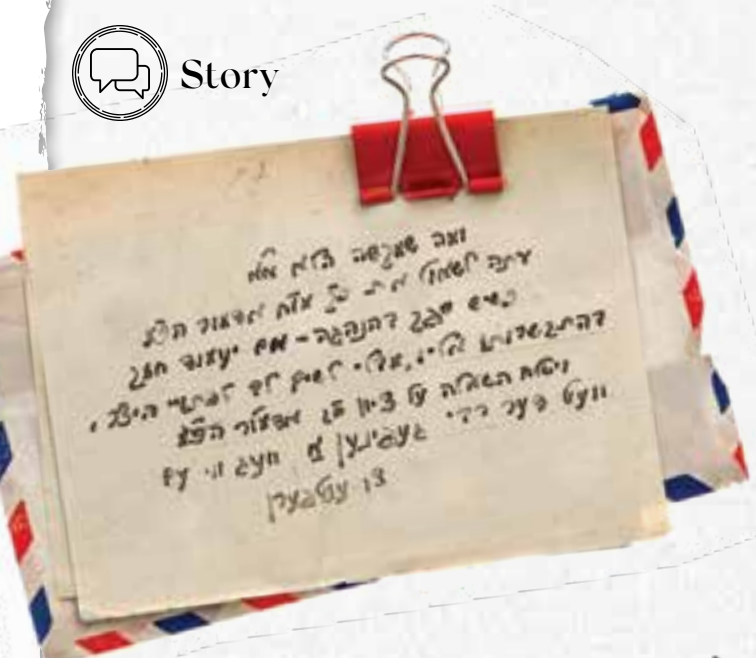


THE REBBE'S HANDWRITTEN POSTSCRIPT TO REB AVRUM HERSH:

בודאי מוסיף אומץ ככל האפשרי והדרוש בלימוד דא"ח ברבים וביחוד בחוגים המיוחדים, וה"ז - במצב העכשו - בגדר מצוה שא"א לעשותה ע"י אחרים שאין למעלה מזה וכמבואר במו"ק (ט טע"ב) עיי"ש

YOU WILL CERTAINLY INTENSIFY YOUR EFFORTS AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE AND NECESSARY WITH REGARDS TO TEACHING CHASSIDUS IN PUBLIC, ESPECIALLY IN THE "UNIQUE COMMUNITIES." IN OUR CURRENT SITUATION, THIS IS A "MITZVAH WHICH CANNOT BE DONE THROUGH ANY OTHERS"; THE HIGHEST FORM OF A MITZVAH, AS EXPLAINED IN THE GEMARA, MOED KATAN 9B. SEE THERE.





# דער רבי וועט געפינען א וועג...

Dedicated In memory of

**Herb Schulman**

**Hersh Laib Ben Wolf**

By the **Schulman**

and **Goldin** Families

## The Letter Arrived On Time

AS TOLD BY RABBI YOSHI GORDON (WOODLAND HILLS, CA)

My father, Rabbi Yehoshua Gordon, served as the Rebbe's shliach in Encino, California, for over 40 years. He merited to build an empire of *Batei Chabad* in the area known as "The Valley" where today there are more than 30 Chabad Houses, staffed by over 80 shluchim serving the tens of thousands of Yidden living here.

In the month of Elul 5758\*, my father was experiencing some very serious financial problems. When he traveled to the east coast to visit my grandfather, Rabbi Sholom Ber Gordon, whose health had started deteriorating, his first stop was at the Ohel where he asked the Rebbe for a *bracha*

for success. After spending a few days with his father in Englewood, New Jersey, he decided to go to the Ohel once again before flying back to Los Angeles.

This time at the Ohel he poured out his heart to the Rebbe, expressing the urgency of his situation.

While standing at the Ohel he said: "Rebbe, I know you are with me all the time. But I need you to show me that you are truly with me. Please give me a sign that you are with me."

Before heading to the airport he went to 770 to daven Mincha and as he stood there, Rabbi Leibel Groner tapped

ELIYAHU M. SCHWARTZ  
Lubavitch  
770 Avenue of the Americas  
New York, N.Y. 10018  
425-1210

UNIVERSITY TIME CHAD  
CHAD  
CHAD  
CHAD

By the Grace of G-d  
Elul of Adar, 5748  
Ezer of Chabad  
Brooklyn, N.Y.

To All Participants in the Annual  
Banquet of Chabad of the Valley  
Becine, California

Greeting and Blessings!

I was pleased to be informed of the forthcoming annual event  
taking place on the 14th of Adar. I take pleasure in extending  
congratulations and heartfelt wishes to the worthy honorees,  
distinguished guests, and all participants in this event.  
May it be blessed with a full measure of achievement both  
materially and spiritually, especially as it is taking place  
in the year of Makkai.

The Mitzvah of Makkai, as evidenced in the Torah, is that at  
the end of every seven years, immediately after the year of  
Shmittah, when Jews make their pilgrimages to the Beit Hamikdash  
(Temple), during the festival of Succos, all Jews had to be gathered  
(Makkai) - the men, and the women, and the children over battles,  
and the king had to take sections from the Torah, selected for  
and the king had to read to the Jews in the observance of Mitzvos and  
their content to admonish Jews in the observance of Mitzvos and  
strengthen them in their faith and in Yiddishkeit, and it made  
a profound impression on them, as if they heard it from G-d  
himself.

Although the Mitzvah of Makkai, in its concrete and plain form,  
is connected with the time of the Beit Hamikdash, there is the  
well known principle that all mitzvos that are connected with the  
Beit Hamikdash, such as sacrifices and the like, are in their  
spiritual content relevant at all times. This is why the daily  
prayers, which have been directed in the place of the sacrifices,  
prayers, which have been directed in the place of the sacrifices,  
completely in submission to his G-d, and is ready to sacrifice  
the best of his possessions and his most passionate interests (the  
"fat and the blood") to the will of G-d - and it is acceptable to  
G-d as a "burnt offering" in the Beit Hamikdash. Indeed, also during  
the times when Jews had a central sanctuary and Makkai and actually  
offered sacrifices there, it was the Jewish heart that he desired  
most, in accordance with his imperative, request, and promise:  
"Let them make Me a sanctuary and I will dwell within them" - in  
their innermost Jewish hearts.

It is also obvious how strongly the Mitzvah of Makkai emphasizes

the Torah-education of our children. It follows that also those who  
are grown in years but still "children" in Yiddishkeit: all those  
"who know not," who, for one reason or another, did not get the  
proper Jewish education, and even those who belong to the category  
of "one who knows not to ask," namely, those who do not know, and  
these also must be assembled to let them hear and learn what Torah  
is, what a Mitzvah is, in a manner of learning that would imbue  
them with fear of G-d, and, most importantly, that they should  
"observe and do all the words of this Torah," the Torah from Sinai  
that shall never be changed - all of the above with such impact,  
"as if they heard it from G-d himself."

Chabad of the Valley, as Chabad-Lubavitch everywhere else -  
has, with the help of G-d, and of its dedicated students, made  
substantial achievements in helping Jews become even more fully  
and intimately aware of Torah and Mitzvos in their everyday experience,  
and is committed to continue this vital activity in a consistently  
growing measure. I am confident that everyone of you will intensely  
will further your active participation in the vital activities  
and programs to keep the light of Torah shining even more  
brightly.

Hashem will surely bless you with Mitzvos in this endeavor,  
as well as in all your needs, both materially and spiritually.

With esteem and blessings,

*[Signature]*

THE REBBE'S LETTER ADDRESSED TO THE CHABAD OF  
THE VALLEY ANNUAL BANQUET IN 5748. RABBI GORDON  
RECEIVED IT IN THE SUMMER OF 5758.



him on the shoulder and said, "Yehoshua, when you finish  
davening please come to my office for a few minutes."

My father was confused as to what this could be about  
and as he walked over to Rabbi Groner's office he felt like an  
elementary school kid that had been called to the principal's  
office.

As he entered the office, Rabbi Groner opened his desk  
drawer and pulled out an envelope.

"Yehoshua, this letter is for you."

Bewildered, my father opened the envelope and was  
shocked to find a letter from the Rebbe dated Elul 5748\*,  
exactly ten years earlier.

Every year, my father would host an annual fundraising  
dinner for Chabad of the Valley. He would always notify  
the Rebbe about the dinner and ask for a *bracha* for success,  
and each year he merited to receive a letter of *bracha* and  
encouragement from the Rebbe.

During the month of Adar 5748\*, right after the  
Rebbetzin's *histalkus*, the Rebbe was at his home throughout  
the week. My father did not merit to receive a letter from

the Rebbe in connection with the dinner as he usually did  
but he figured that it was due to the unusual circumstances  
and did not feel it was appropriate to ask about it.

Now, exactly ten years later, the Rebbe's letter in  
connection with the dinner of 5748\* was finally delivered to  
him, barely an hour after standing at the Ohel and begging  
the Rebbe for a clear sign.

With a rush of emotion he opened the letter and was  
overwhelmed with what he read.

In the letter, the Rebbe wishes him much success with  
the upcoming dinner and that although he is going through  
difficult times, he should know that things will work out.

The letter reached him exactly on time... ①

## YOUR STORY

Share your story with A Chassidisher Derher by  
emailing [stories@derher.org](mailto:stories@derher.org).





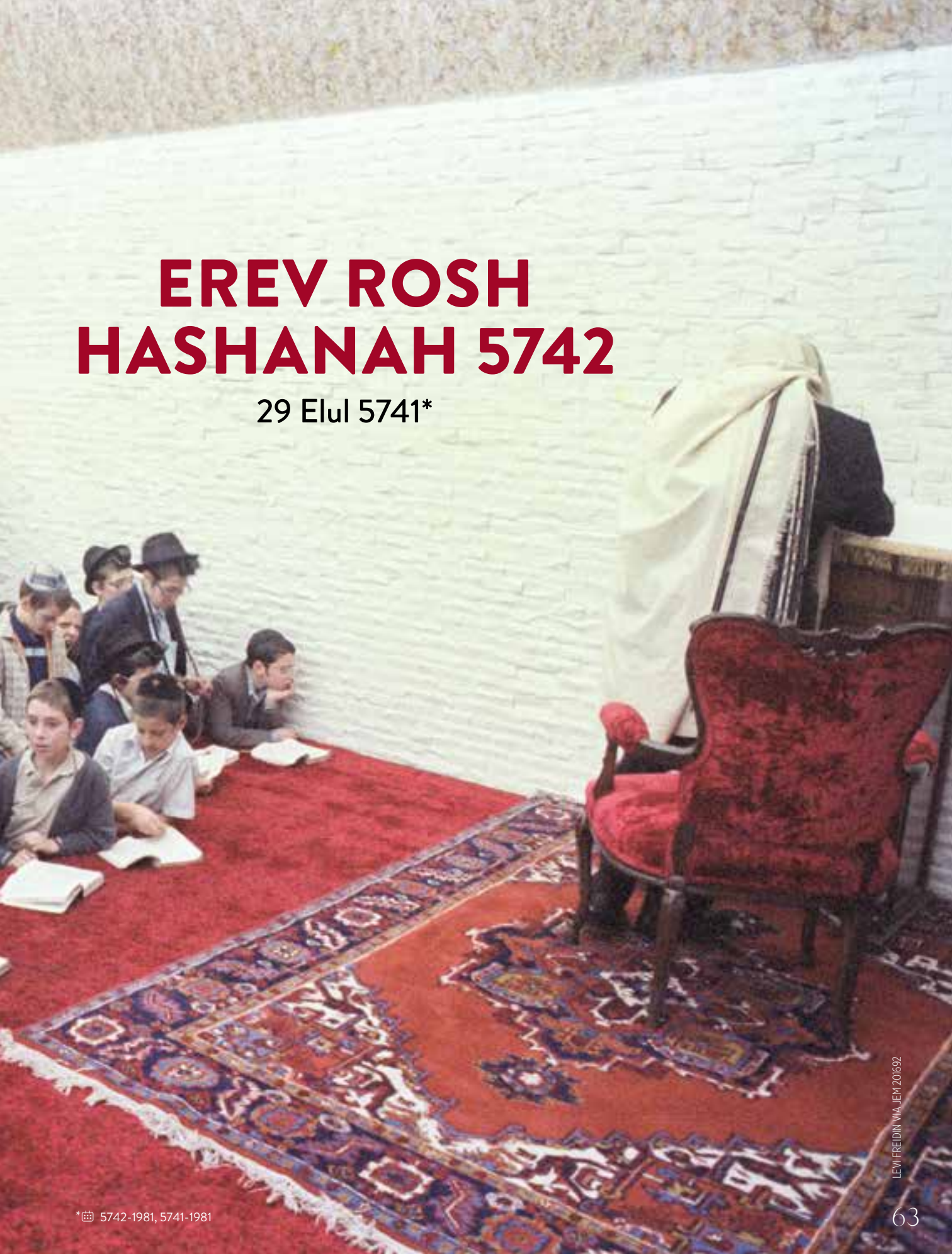
לזכות  
מרת חסיא תחי'  
לרגל יום הולדתה התשעים  
ז' מנחם אב ה'תשפ"א  
לאורך ימים ושנים טובות  
נדפס ע"י בנה  
הרה"ת ר' יוסף יצחק וזוגתו מרת הדסה  
ומשפחתם שיחיו  
ניו





# EREV ROSH HASHANAH 5742

29 Elul 5741\*



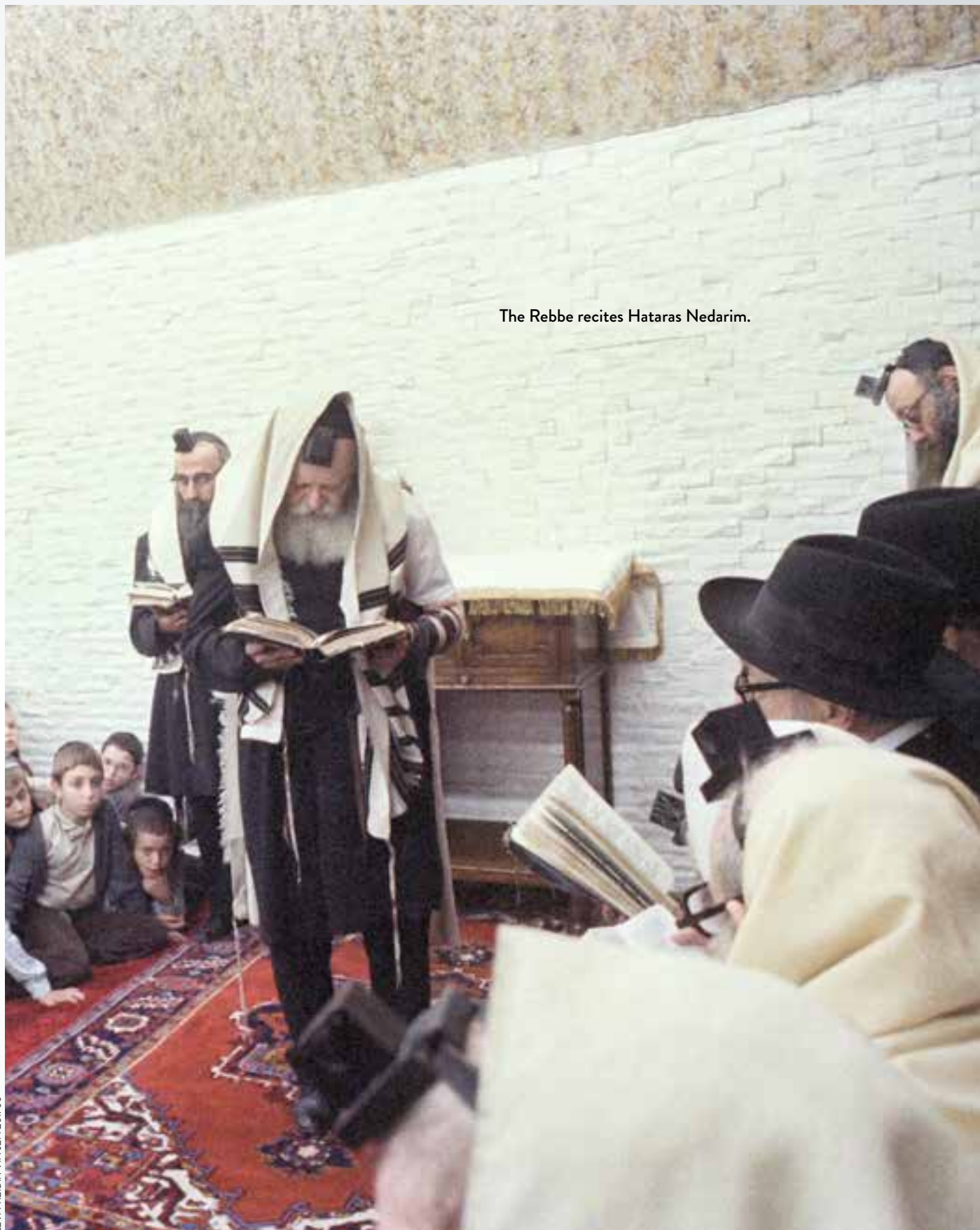
Before the Rebbe started davening with the minyan everyday in 5748\*, Erev Rosh Hashanah was one of the few special times a year that the Rebbe would daven with the Chassidim on a weekday.



LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 201694



The Rebbe recites Hataras Nedarim.





After Shacharis, the line for *panim*  
starts to grow in front of 770.



28 ELUL 5741, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 199968



28 ELUL 5741, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 199268





YOSSI MELAMED VIA JEM 115658

Yidden from all walks of life come to receive  
the Rebbe's *brachos* for the new year.



28 ELUL 5741, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 201675



LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 199981



LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 199986

LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 201705





LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 200535

Following *panim*, the Rebbe leaves for the Ohel, where he spends the remaining hours of the day, returning to 770 shortly before Mincha.



LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 209135





LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 209136



LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 209137



LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 199345



# Letters

A forum for readers to send their feedback, add to, or ask any questions about articles. Submit your letter to [feedback@derher.org](mailto:feedback@derher.org).

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

## My Grandmother's Trip Across the Date Line

*Dear Editors,*

In the Sivan magazine there was an article about the Rebbe's *sichos* and letters regarding the International Date Line and crossing it during the Omer [*Crossing the Line*, Derher Sivan 5781].

There is another interesting *sugya* regarding the Date Line which was not mentioned in the article. This is in regards to Shabbos. I will share an interesting story about this which took place with my grandparents, Rabbi Yitzchak Dovid and Rebbeztin Devorah Groner A"H, the Rebbe's shluchim to Melbourne.

My grandfather arrived on the Rebbe's shlichus to Australia by plane on 23 Kislev 5719. My grandmother stayed behind with the children for a few months and traveled by boat at the end of Iyar that year.

As they were on the boat, my grandmother noticed on the Itinerary that they would be crossing the Date Line on a Friday night, and that in the morning (which was now Sunday morning), the ship was scheduled to make a stop in Fiji (an island 2,800 miles from Australia).

Not knowing what to do, my grandmother sent a telegram (through Morse code) to her brother-in-law Rabbi Leibel Groner A"H.

Reb Leibel wrote a letter to his brother Reb Yitzchak Dovid, where he outlined the

discussions he had with the Rebbe on this topic:

"Devorah 'תת' sent me a telegram that the ship is passing the Date Line on Friday night and she is asking how to conduct herself. I showed the telegram to the Rebbe and he answered that I should first ask a *shaala* by Rabbi Henkin. Once he answers me, the Rebbe will tell me what to do.

"Rabbi Henkin *paskened* that she should keep Shabbos according to the schedule she was on beforehand, disregarding the Date Line. However, after Shabbos, she should start to follow the schedule according to the location of the boat (i.e. Motzei Shabbos is now Sunday night). When I told the Rebbe about Rabbi Henkin's *psak*, the Rebbe said that I should ask Rav Menachem Kashar also. Rabbi Kashar *paskened* that she should continue on her schedule during the entire trip on the boat, thereby observing the whole Shabbos on her schedule and the following Shabbos too (if they are still travelling then). However, if they arrive in Sydney on Erev Shabbos (in Australia which is Shabbos for her), she should also be careful not to violate any *melacha deoraisa* on the following day, which is Shabbos according to Australian schedule. From then on, she should follow Australian schedule.

"After I notified the Rebbe about all of this, the Rebbe instructed as follows:

"As long as she is on the boat, she should disregard the Date Line and keep Shabbos as

if she is still in New York. The next day will be Sunday for her and then Monday, Tuesday, etc. If she will be on the boat the following Shabbos as well, then she should continue on her schedule. However, it is clear that when it is Shabbos according to the location of the boat (and the passengers) she should make sure to act publicly as if it is Shabbos even in front of non-Jews. This is all during the time she is on the boat. However once she goes off the boat she should follow the schedule of the current location.'

"The Rebbe continued: 'It becomes a complicated *shaala*, however, if she arrives in Sydney when it is Shabbos for her and Friday in Sydney. So, you should check exactly what day she is scheduled to arrive and then ask me again.'

"I sent the Rebbe's *hora'ah* to her by telegram immediately after exiting the Rebbe's room.

The next day, I found out that the boat is scheduled to arrive in Sydney on Shabbos (according to Australian schedule) at 8 AM. I notified the Rebbe and the Rebbe said I should ask again after Shabbos.

"On Sunday night, the Rebbe said to me: 'If the boat stops for a period of time at any other port before arriving in Sydney, she should go off the boat and try if possible to sleep overnight—the entire night or some of it—in the city. Or at least, she should eat a meal with bread there, making *Hamotzi* and then *bentch*. This will make it a *kevius* and now she can disregard her original schedule and join the schedule of that location.

"There still remains a *shaala* about how she should conduct herself when she arrives on Shabbos in Australia. Yitzchak can ask this to a rov over there or you can ask a rov. However, the proper *hora'ah* is that she should try to remain on the boat until after *havdalah* and if that is not possible, she should remain in the houses which belong to the port until after *havdalah*. You should let Yitzchak know about this as well.' Those were the Rebbe's words.

"Today I telegraphed this to Devorah and our father told me that in the letter that he

received from you today, you wrote to him that you arranged that she should be able to stay on the boat until after Shabbos. When I told this to the Rebbe, he said 'Very good.'"

Based on the Rebbe's *hora'os*, my grandmother didn't go off the boat in the morning when they arrived in Fiji as it was still Shabbos for her. The following Wednesday, when the boat stopped in Auckland, New Zealand, she went off the boat with the family and ate a meal. They couldn't sleep there because the boat wasn't there overnight.

**Sholom Zirkind**

BROOKLYN, NY

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## Shavuos 5735 in 770

### *Dear Editors*

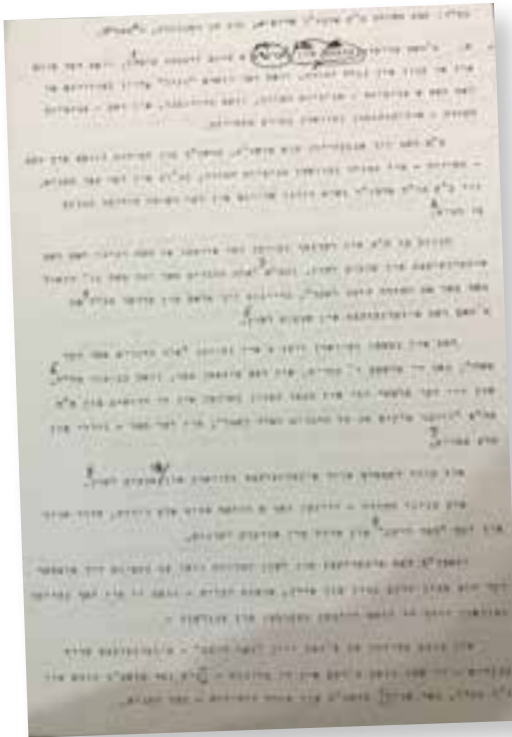
I have admired the work of the Vaad Hatmimim Haolomi in general, and A Chassidisher Derher in particular since its inception. You have made the *hergeshim* and the years that we spent as *bochurim* in 770 with the Rebbe on a daily basis alive and vibrant to today's *temimim* and *anash*.

In the Sivan issue in the article about Shavuus 5735 and the Bilingual Tanya (page 15), you wrote the story of the Rebbe calling over Rabbi Shmuel Lew and handing him his own *ksav yad* of the *sicha*, copies of which he had just distributed to the English guests. The Rebbe said "*machen a fotostat (in England?) un opshiken tzurik.*" (Make a photocopy (in England?) and send it back here.)

The Rebbe said this quietly to Rabbi Lew, but as I was standing next to him, I was able to hear what the Rebbe said.

As soon as Rabbi Lew came back to his place I told him I could make a photocopy for him now if he wanted. Copy machines were not common in those days but I knew where there was one in the offices adjoining 770.

He gave me the *ksav* and I ran to make a copy—actually two copies, one of which I kept. I am enclosing here the first page of that *ksav*.



Shavuot 5735 was memorable in many ways and your article enabled me to relive those exciting days.

Thank you and please continue your important work for us all.

**Rabbi Lipa Brennan**  
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK

## The Captured Ship

*Dear Editors,*

In the Derher article on 28 Sivan, it mentions the famous *maaseh* that the Rebbe had a ticket to sail and the Frierdiker Rebbe sent a telegram not to go on the ship, and “it later turned out that the entire ship was captured by the Italians.”

Is there a source for this story? I never saw a name of who told it over, and there are two

versions of the story (another where the ship was sunk).

I started searching for evidence, and I couldn’t find anything about any refugee ship in 1941 being sunk or having passengers interred by the Italians (or another nation, for that matter).

The Derher is usually very thorough, but I wonder if this story didn’t grow a long beard over the decades.

Has anything been verified?

Thanks.

**Yankev Bock**

*Dear Yankev,*

Thank you for taking interest and reaching out with your feedback.

The source of the story is in Yemei Melech, vol. 1, p. 535. It was related by the famous Chassidische poet, Reb Tzvi Meir Steinmetz, who heard it from Rabbi Dovid Halberstam, who was with the Rebbe in France at the time this story occurred. The story is also cited in the Kovetz Chof Ches Sivan, distributed by the Rebbe in 5751.

Thanks again and please continue enjoying the Derher,

**The Editors**

