

# *A Chassidisher* **Derher**

א חסידישער דערהער

**נפלאות  
בכל!**

THE EVENTS OF  
TISHREI 5752 IN THE  
REBBE'S PRESENCE—A  
ROUNDTABLE  
DISCUSSION

INCLUDING  
NEW MATERIAL  
FROM THE  
UPCOMING  
BOOK,  
**MY STORY  
VOL. II**

## **Keep Your Camp Holy**

THE REBBE  
AND THE IDF

## **A Spiritual Sabbatical**

MARKING SHNAS  
HASHEMITTA



**TISHREI 5782**  
ISSUE 110 (187)  
NOVEMBER 2021

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JEM 150406

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## Special Thanks to

Rabbi Mendel Gourarie • Rabbi Chaim Shaul Brook • Rabbi Yosef B. Friedman • Rabbi Sholom Ber Levin • Rabbi Shmuel Lubecki • Rabbi Michael Seligson • Rabbi Elkanah Shmotkin • Rabbi Avraham D. Vaisfiche

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A Chassidisher Derher (ISSN 26411059) (USPS 21880) is published monthly by A Chassidisher Derher Inc, 784 Eastern Pkwy. Brooklyn, NY 11213.

Subscription price \$71 a year. Periodicals postage paid at Brooklyn, NY.

POSTMASTER: Please send address changes to A Chassidisher Derher, 784 Eastern Pkwy. Brooklyn, NY 11213.



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This magazine  
has been made possible

לזכות

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

ולזכרון הצדקנית הרבנית מרת חנה ע"ה  
שניאורסאהן

בת הרה"ג הרה"ח ר' מאיר שלמה ע"ה  
אמו של כ"ק אדמו"ר

לרגל היארצייט-הילולא ו' תשרי

As the month of Tishrei approaches, a month filled with so many special *yomim tovim* and *yemei d'pagra*, we try to uplift ourselves and tap into the spiritual energy and heavenly *hashpaah* available during these times—most importantly by learning the meaning of these days in the *maamorim* and *sichos*. Beginning with the month of Elul, when Hashem is “in the field,” leading right into Rosh Hashanah, the time when we crown Hashem as our king, Yom Kippur—“*Achas b'shana*,” the day the innermost part of our *neshamah* and its intrinsic bond with Hashem shines. And on to Sukkos, with all the holy *makifim* we experience, the joy of the *simchas beis hashoeva*, and of course Shemini Atzeres and Simchas Torah.

The greatness of these *yomim tovim* is magnified when experienced in the Rebbe's presence, as the Rebbe would bring these *giluyim* to life in a very real and tangible way.

With all this in mind, a person might sometimes feel dejected when having a harder time to connect with all these lofty concepts and really feel them on a personal emotional level.

In a broader sense, this issue can be felt throughout the year as well, with all matters of Yiddishkeit, and especially in our lives as Chassidim. All the more so nowadays, when we don't have the *zechus* to see the Rebbe physically, we sometimes feel this challenge in our *hiskashrus*. We try hard and we connect with the Rebbe, by studying his Torah and following his *hora'os*, but sometimes it's hard to feel this sense of *hiskashrus* as well.

In this regard, we turn to some of the *sichos* where the Rebbe addresses this very issue:

One year on Shavuos, the Rebbe discussed the words of the *tefilah* “*Ata V'chartanu*”—words that we say in davening on every *yom tov*, but which are especially applicable to the *yom tov* of Shavuos. After all, the time when Hashem actually chose the Jewish people as His nation was at *mattan Torah*, the theme of Shavuos. From the inspiration of Shavuos, the *tefilah* of *Ata V'chartanu* infuses meaning into the rest of the *yomim tovim*, and ultimately to every day of the year, allowing us to feel and appreciate that Hashem chose us as His special people, and to act as such.

But then the Rebbe asks:

What about a person who doesn't feel all these lofty things? You're telling him to think about the sublimity of Hashem's *bechira*, in the meantime he's having a hard time just sticking with the *pirush hamilos*—thinking about the



basic meaning of the words he's saying! If he could just control his thoughts throughout this short *tefilah* of *Ata V'chartanu*, and think about the words and nothing else, that would already be a great accomplishment!

To console our worried friend, the Rebbe relates a story of the Alter Rebbe:

The Alter Rebbe's brother, Maharil, once asked him about the words of the *possuk* "והסרתי את לב האבן מבשרכם"—I [Hashem] will remove the heart of stone from within you and give you instead a heart of flesh... Why does the *novi* specifically mention a heart?

The Alter Rebbe explained: When it comes to matters of the heart, a person is not always in complete control of his feelings. Therefore, our main obligation is to learn, understand, and contemplate what the Torah says, and Hashem will be the one to make sure that it manifests in our feelings as well.<sup>1</sup>

A second time the Rebbe spoke about this issue:

At the conclusion of the *shloshim* after the Rebbetzin's *histalkus*, the Rebbe discussed the various stages in mourning mandated by *halacha*: crying for the first three days, eulogy for seven, etc. The Rebbe points out that not always is it easy to automatically move from one stage to another, especially given the natural grief felt after the loss of a relative.

In this regard, we find a fascinating Midrash about the *para aduma*: Moshe Rabbeinu couldn't understand how the ashes of a *para aduma* can completely do away with the remnants of death, lingering in the *tumas meis*. Hashem had to show the explanation to Moshe Rabbeinu, and only he alone would be the one to understand this phenomenon. If Moshe Rabbeinu had a hard time with this, all the more so will we, ordinary people.

Nevertheless, the Torah tells us that we need to act according to *halacha*, because our actions are obviously within our full control. As far as the feelings of the heart, we can only do as much as we can. We learn, understand, and act accordingly, and hopefully Hashem will do the rest, allowing our hearts to follow too.<sup>2</sup>

The lesson is clear:

Our job is to learn what the Rebbe says about each *yom tov*, to think and connect with what we're learning, and recognize the truth as it really is. We can also read the stories of how these *yomim tovim* were celebrated in the Rebbe's presence physically, and to watch the videos of when these *giluyim* were apparent and visible to the physical eye. Whether or not we also feel it on an emotional level is not necessarily in our hands and

therefore it is not expected of us—Hashem only demands what we are capable of doing. By doing our part, we can prepare ourselves for the time of Moshiach, when Hashem will indeed change our hearts for the better.

And to conclude with an interesting story:

It was Rosh Chodesh Shevat 5710, less than two weeks before the Frierdiker Rebbe's *histalkus*. A group of *bochurim* (originally from Russia) who were learning in Paris had come to New York to learn in the yeshiva, and they wanted to go into *yechidus* with the Frierdiker Rebbe right away. But the Frierdiker Rebbe told the *gabbai*, Reb Moshe Leib Rodshtein, that they should wait until after Shabbos.

Reb Moshe Leib explained to the *bochurim* that Chassidim always preferred to first hear words of Chassidus from the Rebbe and only then to go into *yechidus*. Perhaps this is why the Frierdiker Rebbe told them to wait.

In those years, the Frierdiker Rebbe was not well and he didn't deliver Chassidus on Shabbos anymore, but Reb Moshe Leib told them: "A Rebbe speaks Chassidus every Shabbos. Sometimes we see and hear it, sometimes we don't. But the *hashpaah* of the words of Chassidus comes regardless."<sup>3</sup>

We know without a doubt that the Rebbe is still showering us with all the *giluyim* and *hashpaos*, whether on an ordinary day and especially on the *yomim tovim* of Tishrei, just like he did in years past. Whether we see it or not, whether we feel it or not, everything is there for us to tap in and connect.

Now it's our job to work with it, to internalize it, and hopefully with the Rebbe's *brachos*, Hashem will give us the ability to feel it as well. In this regard, traveling to be near the Rebbe during this auspicious time is obviously of utmost importance.

With Hashem's help, we will indeed merit to see all the *giluyim* again, in a very physical way, when we will see the Rebbe again with the coming of Moshiach, *teikef umiyad Mamosh*.

בברכת כתיבה וחתימה טובה לשנה טובה ומתוקה,

**A Chassidisher Derher**

יום הבהיר חי אלול ה'תשפ"א

שנת המאה ועשרים להולדת כ"ק אדמו"ר

1. Shavuot 5737, sicha 1-2.

2. 21 Adar 5748.

3. Yemei Bereishis p. 55.



# Shemitah—What It's All About

*Shemitah* in its original meaning requires taking a year off. When the Yidden lived in Eretz Yisroel, their primary occupation was working the land. By Torah mandating a year of rest for the land, the default is that most Yidden will not work for the whole year.

In addition to being out of work, they would seemingly also be out of food, for if the land is not worked,

nothing grows. The Torah therefore follows by saying that by keeping the *Shemitah* year, the Yidden display their trust in Hashem—that He will provide for them even when naturally abandoning the fields for a year would be detrimental.

But what are Yidden to do with their free time? Their faith may be displayed by not doing anything,

but do they have a whole year with nothing to do?

The answer is that the Torah does not need to tell you how to fill your free time! Every Yid has an obligation to fill every moment with *limmud haTorah*. If even one free moment was not spent learning Torah, a Yid is considered to be “shaming the word of Hashem” (as the Alter Rebbe highlights in the first *perek* of Tanya).



לזכות

הרה"ת ר' לוי שיחי' וולבובסקי  
לרגל יום הולדתו ר"ח מנחם אב

לשנת הצלחה בגשמיות וברוחניות שימשיך  
ללכת מחיל אל חיל בכל עניינו  
לנחת רוח כ"ק אדמו"ר

So obviously if one has a year off, the time should be spent learning extra Torah.

Although most Yidden in Eretz Yisroel today are not occupied with agriculture, and those outside of Eretz Yisroel do not have the obligations of *Shemitah*, the message of *Shemitah* is still relevant: To fill every free moment with *limmud haTorah*.

In fact, even before the *Shemitah* year starts, we were commanded to let the land rest and not sow the land for 30 days before Rosh Hashanah of *Shemitah*. Thus, for 30 days before *Shemitah*, Yidden are already increasing in Torah.

(Adapted from  
*Sichas Chai Elul 5739*)





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

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

# "They Carry the Aron"

TISHREI 5713\*



The following is an account written by Rabbi Sholom Ber Shemtov of parts of Tishrei 5713\*.

Rabbi Shemtov was a bochur in 770 at the time.

Throughout all the days of *selichos*, the Rebbe davened Shacharis together with the *minyán*.

Following Shacharis on the morning of Erev Rosh Hashanah, at around 11:00 a.m., the Rebbe began receiving *pidyonos* from the Chassidim. The Rebbe opened up the door to his room and stood near the doorway as everyone filed by and

gave their *pidyonos*. The Rebbe *bentched* everyone with "*Ah kesivah v'chasimah tovah*." The Rebbe's countenance shone with a fiery glow, as he took each *pidyon* into his hand.

After everyone gave the Rebbe their personal *panim*, a few individuals entered the Rebbe's room to hand him a *pan kloli* on behalf of all the

Chassidim. The Rebbe said to them: “The *Aibershter* should fulfill all of the *brachos* that one individual wishes to another, and especially those that pertain to the general public. And just as it is written regarding the *churban* of the *Beis Hamikdash*, that its process began at the end of a *Shemidah* year, so too should the beginning of the *geulah* through Moshiach Tzidkeinu take place at the end of this *Shemidah* year.”<sup>1</sup>

The Rebbe had already instructed earlier that those who will be bringing their *pan* straight to the Ohel should only write their names, and nothing more. Those who will be giving their *panim* to the Rebbe, on the other hand, can also add in their *pidyon* specific requests. The Rebbe didn’t spend a long time at the Ohel, only an hour or two.

### ROSH HASHANAH NIGHT

As soon as the Rebbe came into shul, he immediately began saying Tehillim. Only after a little while did the *minyan* begin to daven Maariv (the same occurred on the second night of Rosh Hashanah).

After Maariv, the *gabbai* asked the Rebbe what time Shacharis should be the following morning. The Rebbe responded that it should be at 10:00 o’clock. In response to the *gabbai*’s surprise at the late time given, the Rebbe said that the *chazzan* should not repeat words while singing davening (in other words, he should not drag out the davening).

### FIRST DAY OF ROSH HASHANAH

The first day of Rosh Hashanah occurred on Shabbos, hence shofar was not blown.

While reading the *haftarah*, the Rebbe cried profusely.

### SECOND DAY OF ROSH HASHANAH

During davening on the second day of Yom Tov, the Rebbe said all the *kadeishim* that are recited on a *yahrtzeit*.<sup>2</sup>

Before *krias haTorah* even started, those assembled in the shul began to push themselves closer to the *bima*. The crowding was so intense that some people almost fainted. Needless to say, it was quite a feat for the densely packed crowd to create an ample enough path for the Rebbe to reach the *bima*, in order to recite the *kaddish* after *leining*.

The Rebbe brought along with him to the *bima* the *shofaros* that he would be using for the *tekios*



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following the *haftarah*. In addition, the *gabbai* brought to the *bima* the two large bags of *pidyonos*<sup>3</sup> which the Rebbe had brought into the shul with him. These bags were placed next to the Rebbe on the *bima* throughout *tekios*.

Today, as well, the Rebbe cried while reading the *haftarah*, though not as heavily as yesterday.

The Rebbe’s face was covered with his tallis while reciting “*Lamnatzeach*” and the *pesukim* before *tekios*. The Rebbe uncovered his face which was shining like fire and recited the *brachos*. The Rebbe blew the first *tekiah* and then handed the shofar to someone else<sup>4</sup> who blew the rest of the *tekios*.

After the *tekios*, the Rebbe announced the *pesukim* himself. Then he covered his face again with the tallis and said *Ashrei* while holding on with two hands to the *sifrei Torah* which stood on either side of him the entire time.

Shortly after Mincha, the *gabbai* came out of the Rebbe’s room and announced that the Rebbe would be leaving soon at a fast pace to *tashlich* [at Brooklyn Botanic Gardens], therefore those who cannot walk fast, should leave now.

A few minutes later the Rebbe came out of his room and began walking swiftly, leading the parade



of Chassidim walking to Tashlich. It is beautiful to see this site of the king leading the way, followed by all the Chassidim, as voices can be heard from the onlookers, “Here is the Rebbe,” “Here is the Lubavitcher Rebbe.”

*Niggunim* were sung the whole way to Tashlich and back. After Tashlich the Rebbe instructed that the crowd should dance with joy.

As soon as everyone returned, they washed right away. Soon, the Rebbe entered the shul and washed his hands for a *seudah*. Last year the Rebbe also washed and explained that although he had not seen this *minhag* by the Frierdiker Rebbe, and it is not a simple thing to institute new *sedarim*, he wants to eat *seudas Yom Tov* with the people. This year the Rebbe said, “Since this entire practice is a *chiddush*, we can add another *chiddush*: Let us say *l’chaim* and ask Hashem for a *kesivah v’chasimah tovah*.” Right away, everyone said *l’chaim*. Then *bentching* took place and the Rebbe distributed *kos shel bracha* before the time of *shkiah*.

The Rebbe said a *maamar* “*Hayom Haras Olam*” which lasted almost an hour. The *maamar* was very

deep with lots of *haskalah* and even the *manichim* didn’t fully grasp it. Then the Rebbe said a short *sicha*.

After the *gabbai* made *havdalah*, as the Rebbe was about to leave, he announced: “*Havdalah* is separation which means that the *kedushah* becomes hidden. In explaining that the *kedushah* is not fully gone, an analogy is offered of a father that hides from his son so that the son will search for him. As we move on from Rosh Hashanah, which gives special *koach* for the search, may Hashem help us that we will actually search for Him. When we will search for Him (“דרשו”) we will find Him (“בהמצאו”), and when we call out to Him (“קראוהו”), He will be close (“בהיותו קרוב”).

## SUKKOS

On the first two days of Sukkos there were no farbrengens. On Tuesday, the second day of Chol Hamoed, the Rebbe farbrenged for three hours. At the end of the farbrengen the Rebbe said, “There are many more *inyanim* to talk about regarding *Hakhel* and other things. We will leave these for tomorrow. The next day the Rebbe farbrenged for four hours.

## SHEMINI ATZERES

*Hakafos* on Shemini Atezeres night lasted from 8:00 until 10:00 p.m. The Rebbe danced with Rashag and Reb Shmuel Levitin for the first and seventh *hakafos*.

After Shacharis on the morning of Shemini Atzeres, Chassidim sang and danced according to the Rebbe’s instruction.

## SIMCHAS TORAH

On the second night (eve of Simchas Torah), the Rebbe said that the farbrengen will start at 8:00 p.m. and explained that he is starting at a later hour so that the *bochurim* who went to bring joy in the various shuls would be able to be there. The farbrengen concluded at 10:00, followed by *hakafos*, which went on until 2:00 a.m.

After *hakafos* the Rebbes sent a message that more rounds of *hakafos* should take place until every *bochur* gets a chance to hold a *sefer Torah*.

At 3:00 a.m., after eating *seudas Yom Tov*, the Rebbe came back into the shul and stayed while “*Ata Hareisa*” was recited again and every *bochur* that was present recited a *possuk*.



“The *bochurim* are the most important, they are the ones who carry the *aron*,” the Rebbe said. “Let them say the *possuk* ‘*Vayehi binsoa ha’aron*’ three times, and the main thing is they should say it loudly.”

When they reached the *possuk* “*Ki mitziyon*” the Rebbe asked again that this *possuk* be recited by all the *bochurim* together, adding, “Say it word by word so that it doesn’t get mixed up.”

At 6:00 a.m. the Rebbe came out of his room and saw that people were still dancing. “*Krias Shema* can already be recited,” the Rebbe said. Turning to one of them (who was also a *rav*), the Rebbe said, “Nu, tell them that they should go to sleep for a few hours and then continue. *A gutte nacht*.”

At 5:00 p.m. the Rebbe came down to the *sukkah*<sup>5</sup> and washed his hands. After a *niggun* and *l’chaim* the Rebbe began saying a *maamar* “*Lehavin Inyan Simchas Torah*” which lasted for 35 minutes.

One person asked the Rebbe for a *bracha* for his brother. The Rebbe responded that “the *Aibershter* should help that you too [the Rebbe said his name] will have a *geulah*. The Rebbe cried profusely and gave him *l’chaim* and a piece of *challah*.

The Rebbe requested from someone to take something upon himself and someone else tried to excuse him, to which the Rebbe responded: “I wish you wouldn’t excuse him, that way you won’t have issues that people have to excuse you for.”

The *farbrengen* lasted 7 hours. **7**

1. 5712 was a Shemitah year.
2. The second day of Rosh Hashanah is the *yahrtzeit* of the Rebbetzin’s sister, Rebbetzin Sheina Hy”d.
3. Others suggest that there was clothing inside these bags.
4. Reb Mendel Tenenbaum.
5. The *shalash* at the time, now the back of the downstairs shul.

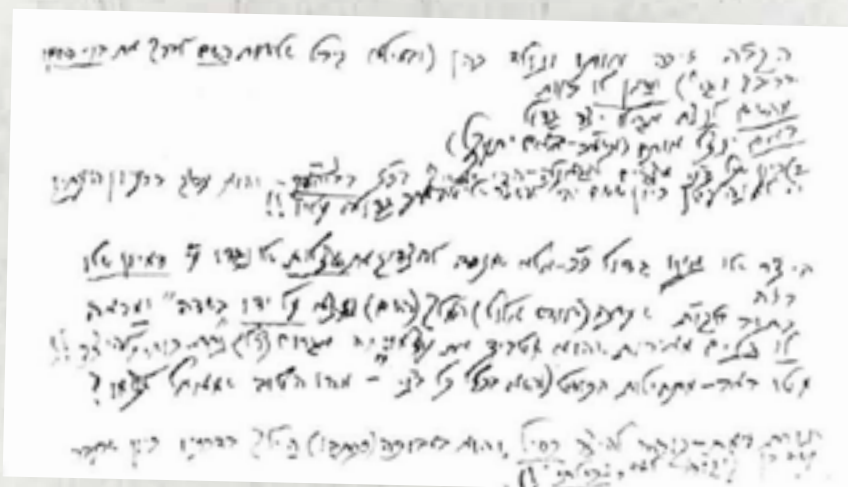




## כתב יד קודש

# Use Your Brains!

The Rebbe's strong response to an individual who was struggling to make the proper decisions in his spiritual life, calling on him to recognize the great privileges he was given, to pick himself up and follow the straight path with Hashem's help.



לזכות  
הת' לוי יצחק הלוי שיחי'  
לרגל הגיעו לעול מצוות  
ו' תשרי ה'תשפ"א  
נדפס ע"י הוריו  
הרה"ת ר' דניאל זונדל הלוי זוגתו מרת  
ראובנה לאה ומשפחתם שיחי'  
גרודניצקי



Hashem gave you the *zechus* that you were born a *Kohen* (and with that you received the mission from **Hashem** to bless **Hashem's children** with “*Yevorechecha*” etc.). **You were given** the power from **Hashem** to win over even a great *yetzer hara*, if you use the [power] (not if you are lazy).

Since all the Jewish people await the *geula*, you will continue all of the above [privileges] in the ***Beis Hamikdash***. Yet you occupy yourself with the idea that perhaps you should move to Manhattan, a place where the *yetzer hara* will have even more control over you!!

[The truth is that] your *yetzer hara* is not even so big; you are merely trying to justify your **laziness**, by **imagining** it is so..

In Likkutei Torah it is written that at the present time (in the month of Elul), the King (Hashem) finds Himself **close to you**, in “the field,” and He shows you a shining face; yet you plague yourself [with the question]: “How can I bring *nachas* (*Rachmana letzlan*)” to the *yetzer hara*!!

From the 15th of Av, all the Jewish people, including you, begin the process of being inscribed and sealed [for the coming year] for good. What type of good do you wish for yourself?

The “Torah of Truth” refers to the *yetzer hara* as a **fool**, yet you are still perturbed (as you write), considering following in his ways, since you have done so in the past (although you refer to that experience] as “**my failure**”!).

הקב"ה זיכה אותו ונולד כהן (ובמילא קיבל שליחות **השם** לברך את **בני השם**! יברכך וגו') **ונתן לו** כוחות **מהשם** לנצח אפילו יצר גדול **באם** ינצל אותם (משא"כ - באם יתעצל)

(2) כיון שכל בנ"י מצפים להגאולה - הרי ימשיך בכ"ז **בביהמ"ק** - והוא עסוק ברעיון היעתיק. למנהעטן כיון ששם יהי' להיצר שליטה יותר גדולה עליו!!

היצר שלו **אינו** גדול כ"כ - אלא שמנסה להצדיק את **העצלות** שלו נגדו ע"י **דמיון** שלו בזה

כתוב בלקו"ת שעתה (חודש אלול) המלך (השם) נמצא **על ידו** "בשדה" ומראה לו פנים מאירות, והוא מטריד את עצמו: "מה אגרום (ר"ל) נחת רוח" להיצר!!

מט"ו באב - מתחילות הכוח"ט (והוא בכלל כל בנ"י) - מהו הטוב שמאחל לעצמו?

תורת אמת - קוראה להיצר **כסיל**, והוא במבוכה (ככתבו) הילך בדרכיו כיון שבעבר עשה כן (וקורא לזה **נכשלתי** !)




לזכות ילדינו היקרים  
יצחק צבי, מנחם מענדל, אברהם מאיר,  
יהודית, וישראל ארי' לייב שיחיו  
שיגדלו להיות חסידים  
יראי שמים ולמדנים

נדפס ע"י  
הרה"ת ר' אליעזר וזוגתו מרת חנה שיחיו  
וואלף



# KEEP YOUR CAMP HOLY

THE REBBE  
AND THE IDF



In Eretz Yisroel, there is a continuous conflict between the communities of varying religious observance regarding the military: What is more important, serving in the army or learning Torah?

Many secular Jews developed animosity for *yeshiva bochurim*.

Many religious Jews developed animosity towards soldiers.

Of course, the Rebbe had a different attitude.

*Parts of this article are included from the forthcoming book **My Story vol. II**, featuring interviews from the My Encounter with the Rebbe series. Special thanks to **Rabbi Elkanah Shmotkin** and **Rabbi Yechiel Cagen** of JEM for sharing this with us for publication.*



## THE SPECIAL HAKAFA

It was Simchas Torah night in 5737\*. 770 was packed to the rafters. The energy was palpable; as *hakafah* followed *hakafah*, the Rebbe encouraged the singing to ever greater heights.

Suddenly, the Rebbe motioned to the *gabbai*, Reb Moshe Pinchas Katz. He informed him that he would say a few words before the fifth *hakafah*.

As soon as the *gabbai* announced, “*Ad kan, hakafah daled*,” the Rebbe began making his way to the edge of his platform. In a loud voice, the Rebbe declared:

“During these days of *galus*, there are those who protect their fellow Jews in *chutz laaretz*, and those who protect their brethren in the Holy Land by risking their lives on the borders. They are the *levush* for Hashem’s constant protection...

“All those who are or were in the army should go to the fifth *hakafah*, with the *niggun*, ‘*Hoshia es amecha*.’”

As thousands of *anash* and *bochurim* watched, a large group of Chassidim — soldiers and veterans — made their way to the center of the shul. They were led by Reb Zushe Wilmovsky, who had fought in the War of Independence. The Rebbe personally led the *pesukim*, and then began singing, “*Hoshia es amecha*...”<sup>1</sup>

That Simchas Torah came a short time after the Entebbe raid. Terrorists had hijacked an airplane full of passengers, and in a move that amazed the entire world, the IDF flew to Uganda and



REB ZUSHE WILMOVSKY (CENTER) WHILE SERVING DURING THE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE, CIRCA 5708-9.

rescued the hostages with minimal casualties.

As the Jews of Eretz Yisroel celebrated the soldiers and their victory, some rabbonim decried them. It was the work of the Satan, they said, because Hashem does not do miracles through “*reshaim*” — the secular soldiers of the Zionist state.

Over the next few months, the Rebbe publicly and forthrightly rejected those claims. It was a clear miracle by the hand of Hashem, the Rebbe said, and the soldiers who risked their lives for their fellow Jews had a tremendous merit.<sup>2</sup>

The Rebbe’s opinion came as no surprise. Throughout the years, the Rebbe’s high regard for the soldiers and their *mesiras nefesh* was well-known. They courageously placed themselves in harm’s way to protect fellow Jews, and that was a profound *zechus* — regardless of

questions regarding Eretz Yisroel and Zionism.

The Rebbe described their battles as a *milchemes mitzvah*. A well-known rav once asked the Rebbe how that could be so, if the Rambam writes that soldiers in a *milchemes mitzvah* must “have in mind to sanctify Hashem’s name?”<sup>3</sup>

The Rebbe responded, “They are not religious before they go out to protect and perhaps afterwards as well, but some of them are changed and inspired in times of clear danger. If so, at that moment, they are considered to be fighting Hashem’s wars.”<sup>4</sup>

The amazing miracles experienced by the soldiers in the IDF were specifically because of their special merit. “These are Yidden who go on complete *mesiras nefesh*,” the Rebbe said, “so they are clearly worthy *keilim* for open miracles to take place through them.”<sup>5</sup>





## THE UNIT DOESN'T MATTER

After the Yom Kippur War, a soldier wrote to the Rebbe about his disappointment that due to health issues, he could not serve in a combat position.

The Rebbe responded:

“A soldier’s mission is obviously to be of the greatest benefit to the army (and not to find opportunities to display his power and fearlessness). Sometimes, it is specifically your unit that brings the greatest benefit, as long as you serve there **without** bitterness.”

(*Igros Kodesh* vol. 29 pg. 119)

## WHOSE POWER IS IT?

After the amazing victories during the Six Day War, many people began seeing the IDF as a super-powerful force of protection, deliberately leaving out Hashem’s name.

But in the Rebbe’s *sichos* and letters, there is a recurring theme: The importance of remembering that their successes come directly from the hand of Hashem. And in order to merit Hashem’s continued blessings, the Rebbe often pointed out, it was important for the army to fulfill the obligations of “*Ve’haya machanecha kadosh*.”

As an army of Jews protecting the Jewish people in Eretz Yisroel, the Rebbe always looked for ways to enhance the level of Yiddishkeit observed in the military. Every Lubavitcher who served in the army was tasked by the Rebbe with ‘making a *sevivah*’ of Yiddishkeit around him, and the Rebbe strongly supported the Rabbanut of the IDF for their work in this regard.

A large number of the Rebbe’s *mivtzoim* campaigns actually began

in the army and remained a very large focus throughout the years. *Mivtza Tefillin* famously began for soldiers before the Six Day War.<sup>6</sup> *Mivtza Chanukah* began in the aftermath of the Yom Kippur War, with a great emphasis on soldiers as well.<sup>7</sup> *Mivtza Purim* — which began in the 5720s\* — was a relatively minor project until the Rebbe expanded it to the military in 5731\*.<sup>8</sup> The *mivtzoim* of *bayis maleh sefarim* and *tzedakah* began with the Rebbe’s call following the Yom Kippur War that soldiers be given

sets of tefillin, siddurim, Tehillims and tzedakah pushkas [see later section].<sup>9</sup> During the time of *Mivtza Sefer Torah*, which coincided with the time of the first Lebanon War, the Rebbe initiated a special campaign to write a *sefer Torah* for the soldiers.<sup>10</sup>

Many of these *mivtzoim* were personally subsidized by the Rebbe in part or in full, and the Rebbe always waited to receive detailed reports about them. On one notable occasion, when *bochurim* were stranded on *mivtzoim* in the Sinai Desert one Purim, the Rebbe waited until they arranged their own hookup before beginning the Purim farbrengen in 770!<sup>11</sup>

These *mivtzoim* made a major impact. It bolstered the Yiddishkeit of the soldiers and gave them hope and encouragement during some very difficult times. The *bochurim* would bring the Rebbe’s words — sometimes messages directly from the Rebbe — to the soldiers, giving them strength from the knowledge



19 TISHREI 5744. TZVIKA FRIEDMAN VIA JEM 150359



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## GET USED TO THE LOOKS

The following paragraph was written in the Rebbe's letter that was sent to many injured soldiers.

"After you recover with Hashem's help, and return to normal life, you will no doubt need to get used to the way people react upon seeing you and your body's state..."

"However, every upright, honest and grateful person will immediately recognize that you are someone who protected him and his family with literal self-sacrifice, to the point that an everlasting remembrance of your self-sacrifice was engraved in your body..."

(*Igros Kodesh* vol. 29  
pg. 37-8)

that someone cared deeply for the sacrifice they were making.

Through these campaigns, the Rebbe was able to create a personal connection with countless Yidden in Eretz Yisroel; a connection that continued long after they finished their military service. For the rest of their lives, people recalled and cherished these positive experiences, and they influenced many aspects of their lives.

## FINDING THE MIRACLE

In good times, the public sometimes needed to be reminded that success comes from Hashem. But the Yom Kippur War wasn't exactly a shining success, and people quickly remembered that

the IDF wasn't infallible. Many felt that the war didn't have miracles like the Six Day War, and began saying the opposite: "Why did Hashem abandon us, *r"l*?" This time, the Rebbe encouraged them, saying that Hashem's hand was still guiding them. The Rebbe pointed out that there were miracles that actually surpassed those of the previous war:

"After the Egyptians successfully crossed the Suez Canal, there was absolutely nothing stopping them from advancing all the way to Tel Aviv... For some inexplicable reason they stopped after advancing only 12 kilometers!

"History proves how great this miracle was. During World

War II the French built an impregnable defense line called the Maginot Line. A line of concrete fortifications, obstacles, and weapon installations so strong that the Bar Lev Line in the Sinai was nothing in comparison to it. The Nazis *ym"l* burst through the line with their powerful armor (similar to what the Egyptians did to the Bar Lev Line) and within a day they conquered all of France!"<sup>12</sup>

During the same period, the Rebbe spoke at length<sup>13</sup> about the soldiers' morale. Thousands of young soldiers had died and many

more were injured, and as a result, the survivors' morale was very low. The army's view was that the soldiers needed entertainment. The other view — which the soldiers themselves expressed — was that they needed to be spiritually uplifted.

Instead of considering the issue theoretically, the Rebbe said, it must be approached scientifically. When finding the solution to a problem, the question is not what could or should work; it's what has worked in an identical situation in the past.

Throughout the generations, the Jewish people have sought strength in different ways; sometimes they looked for it in Torah, but other times — many other times — they searched other avenues, as far back as the golden calf.

History has shown that the single thing that has kept the Jewish nation alive was not a common language (there isn't one) nor a common dress (we don't have one), but the fulfillment of Torah and mitzvos. Anyone veering from that path either found their way back or assimilated. So when there is an issue of morale in a Jewish army, we must use the tried and true solution — strengthening Torah observance among the soldiers, thereby tapping into the secret weapon of the Jewish people.

More specifically, the Rebbe proposed that they should be given sets of tefillin, siddurim, Tehillims and tzedakah pushkas. Having them around would give the soldiers access to these materials, as well as serve as a physical reminder

to fulfill these mitzvos. Providing for their spiritual needs, the Rebbe said, will give the soldiers true meaning in their lives and energy in fulfilling their mission.

## CONSTANT CONCERN

The Rebbe's profound love and concern for the soldiers was expressed in countless ways. When the Rebbe would speak about the question of returning land, he would often mention that soldiers had lost their lives conquering it. When soldiers and former soldiers would visit the Rebbe, they all felt the Rebbe's deep concern for their well-being. When the injured soldiers visited 770, the Rebbe extended an unprecedented welcome, delivering a *sicha* in *Lashon Hakodesh* and then approaching each one individually, heaping praise and encouragement on them.

This love was also extended to the families of the soldiers.

Several months after the Six Day War, the Rebbe's secretary Rabbi

Hodakov sent a letter to Tzach in Eretz Yisroel.

"I was informed that some 70 *almanos* of fallen soldiers are expecting children... Obviously, giving birth and taking care of the home and other children is all the more difficult without a husband and father... You will surely bring up the matter with the Chabad women who are active in this regard and figure out how to be of assistance. Obviously, when the children are born, Tzach will assist with arranging a *bris* with the full *hiddur* and joy."<sup>14</sup>

After the Rebbe's instructions came to Eretz Yisroel, Mrs. Shifra Marozov — who lost her husband Dovid (see next section) in the fighting just two weeks earlier — took it upon herself and began reaching out to her fellow widows, encouraging them and finding ways to assist them.

One of the most famous events she would arrange with Tzach was the annual bar mitzvah for the orphans. Each year, a massive



BAR MITZVAH FOR THE SONS OF THE FALLEN SOLDIERS IN KFAR CHABAD, 5737.

ISRAELI GOVERNMENT PRESS OFFICE



## WHERE IS ABBA?

After the Yom Kippur War, a young widow wrote the Rebbe a letter:

"I have a 7-year-old daughter and a 5-year-old son. How should I explain to them that their father's death in battle was G-d's will? My son asks, 'Why doesn't Moshiach come already?' My daughter asks, 'Where is my father?' What should I tell them?"

On the letter, the Rebbe wrote a few short lines:

"Explain to them (the truth) that some souls are so pure that Hashem wants them in Heaven, after they completed their mission on earth and defended the Jewish people in Eretz Yisroel. In Heaven, they seek out the wellbeing of all those close to them and especially their children, and ask Hashem that they be successful in their studies and behavior, etc. And when the children behave well, it gives *nachas* and pleasure to the soul, which continues to live and exist."

celebration would be held in Kfar Chabad, attended by thousands of people. The top-tier politicians of the country always made sure to show up, and the Rebbe would send the boys a personal message.

Many of these women began a personal connection to the Rebbe.

"In 1973," Mrs. Marozov related, "I traveled to the Rebbe. Before I went, I told my friends they could write letters that I would personally deliver to the Rebbe. Before long, I had a stack of letters addressed to the Rebbe. One woman, however, had written a note directly to me: 'Shifra, tell the Rebbe how broken I am. I want to get married already.'"

"I handed the Rebbe that letter as well, and he blessed her to find a marriage partner and create a home with him. Two weeks passed and she met an eligible bachelor, whom she soon married.

"She later remarked, 'You know who my *shadchan* was? The Lubavitcher Rebbe!'"<sup>15</sup>

## LEARNING TORAH OR ENLISTING IN THE ARMY

After the Six Day War, the fighting continued sporadically on the Egyptian front. One day, Chassidim in Kfar Chabad received terribly shocking news. One of their own, Reb Dovid Marozov, had been killed in action while serving in the reserves.

The news sent shockwaves throughout the Chabad world, and during a farbrengen a short time later, the Rebbe spoke in a choked voice about "Chonye's *ainikel*" who had passed on while protecting his brothers and sisters.



Before mentioning his specific story, the Rebbe raised a general question: Who is more worthy? Soldiers who protect at the front, or *yeshiva bochurim* who protect the nation through Torah learning?

Each is important, the Rebbe noted. The Gemara tells us that Dovid Hamelech's Torah learning facilitated Yoav's wars, and Yoav's wars facilitated Dovid's Torah learning, in a Yissachar—Zevulun style relationship.

But can one be considered more worthy than the other? In the relationship between Yissachar and Zevulun, Zevulun is considered more important for facilitating Yissachar's learning. "How much more so regarding the soldiers," the Rebbe said, "who put their lives on the line to protect their fellow Jews from their enemies."<sup>16</sup>

Several months later the Rebbe again spoke about this topic, this time emphasizing the importance of Torah learning:

"Without Dovid's Torah learning, i.e. without Torah's assertion that the Holy Land belongs to the Holy Nation, Yoav wouldn't have any claim [with which to go to war]! In order for the army to be successful, there must be a counterpart who makes the spiritual effort! Just as someone who abandons the front is a deserter from the army, so too, if someone is in a yeshiva learning Torah for the sake of the Jewish nation but then closes his Gemara to prove that he can be a warrior too, he is a deserter as well!"<sup>17</sup>

Indeed, from the IDF's earliest days, *yeshiva bochurim* were

absolved of army service due to their Torah learning, and the Rebbe strongly criticized any attempt to draft them even for short periods of time. In 5733\*, members of the *Mafdal* (a religious-Zionist political party) voiced support of *yeshiva bochurim* enlisting even if only for short periods of time, and the Rebbe pointed out how absurd it was.

“Moshe Dayan and Ben-Gurion absolved *yeshiva bochurim* of army service, and specifically those who speak in the name of Judaism support drafting the *yeshiva bochurim!*”<sup>18</sup>

However, when individuals left *yeshiva* to work, they put themselves in a different situation. An individual once wrote to the Rebbe, asking for advice in obtaining a *petur* in order to go to work. When he didn’t receive a response, he asked a friend to bring it up in *yechidus*.

The Rebbe’s answer wasn’t what he expected. The Rebbe quoted the Gemara, “מאי חזית דדמא דידך—סמיק טפי—Why do you think your blood is redder than another’s?” If he would learn Torah, the Rebbe said, he would be eligible for a deferment, but what right does he have to go to work while someone else puts his life on the line for his safety...<sup>19</sup>

In those years, Israeli *bochurim* would often go through elaborate schemes to obtain deferments that would allow them to leave the country and come to the Rebbe. However, the Rebbe never voiced support for those actions and always rejected them when asked.



BAR MITZVAH FOR THE SONS OF THE FALLEN SOLDIERS IN KFAR CHABAD, 5737.

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REB BENTZION SHEMTOV (LEFT) AND REB MENDEL FUTERFAS SHARE A LIGHT MOMENT WITH A GROUP OF SOLDIERS, CHANUKAH 5734.

LEVI FREDIN VIA JEM 288049

A *bochur* once wrote to the Rebbe regarding his legal problems as a result of those actions, and the Rebbe personally cut out that entire section of the letter before returning it with a *maaneh*. He wrote his answer (directing the *bochur* to consult with certain individuals) on a section of the letter which contained no incriminating details, and attached

it with a paperclip to the part of the letter which contained the *bochur's* name.<sup>20</sup>

## WHEN WOMEN WERE DRAFTED...

When Rabbi Tuvia Blau was a young *bochur* and gradually becoming a Lubavitcher Chossid, he exchanged a fascinating correspondence with Reb Uriel

## WHAT ARE THEY READING?

*Rabbi Aron Noach Blasbalg served as a member of the board of directors of Poalei Agudas Yisrael for 25 years. In a 5716\* yechidus with the Rebbe, he witnessed the Rebbe's great concern for the material and spiritual wellbeing of the soldiers of the IDF:*

I was among the delegation that was dispatched to meet with the Rebbe. The others included Rabbi Shabsi Shoenfeld, a Torah scholar who was a Gerrer chassid; Shimshon Heller, the secretary of the American branch of Poalei Agudas Yisroel; and Rolly Greisman, who was a major in the Israel army—he just happened to be in New York and he wanted to come along. The major was an imposing fellow, tall—six-foot-three, maybe—and he was dressed in a military uniform.

Soon he began to focus primarily on the IDF major about life in the IDF, for what seemed to me more than two hours.

When we arrived, the Rebbe invited us all to sit down, and he immediately started asking us questions, even before we had a chance to tell him why we were there. Soon he began to focus primarily on the major. He questioned him about life in the IDF for what seemed to me more than two hours. I believe we arrived at about 11 p.m., and the meeting lasted until about 2 a.m.

The Rebbe said to the major, “Soldiers have spare time. What do they read?”

The major answered that there is a kiosk on every base where newspapers and magazines are available practically for free.

“Are any religious newspapers available?” the Rebbe wanted to know.

It turned out that Hatzofeh was the only one.

“What about religious books?” the Rebbe pressed on. When he heard that they were not available, he said, “They must be made available. Maybe you can make it happen?”

The Rebbe started talking about military matters. He began to ask about the tanks and armored personnel carriers.

Then the Rebbe took the conversation in an entirely different direction. He started talking about military matters. He began to ask about the tanks and armored



personnel carriers. How thick were the protective steel plates on the sides? Were they straight or were they curved? Were they bent inwards or outwards?

The major wasn't sure about it all. He said that the light ones had plates x centimeters thick—I don't remember the numbers—while the heavy ones had plates double that.

“I don't understand it!” the Rebbe exclaimed, “Why don't they use heavier steel plates?”

The major had no answer.

Then he wanted to know what type of machine gun the Israeli army was using.

They had the Thompson machine gun at that time—American surplus from the Second World War.

“Why don't you buy machine guns from Sweden?” the Rebbe asked.

The major was surprised. “Why? What's wrong with this one?”

The Rebbe had a ready answer. The Swedish gun shoots many more bullets per minute than the Thompson. And it has a greater velocity also.

For two hours, the Rebbe went through all the armaments—the infantry, the armored corps, the paratroopers. He had questions regarding every single detail.

When we walked out, the major said, “I've never seen such a thing! Even in the IDF we don't have anybody who knows everything. Certain people know their areas, and others know other areas. But no one knows everything!”

But in that audience, the Rebbe did seem to know it all.

*(Here's My Story, JEM, [chabad.org/2599434](http://chabad.org/2599434))*





Tzimmer,<sup>21</sup> who served as a member of *mazkirus* at the time.

In one letter, he references one of the biggest issues of the day: *Giyus banos*. The Israeli army recruits women as well as men, and at some point, the government wanted to extend that obligation to religious women too. Needless to say, the entire *frum* world was up-in-arms. As far as they were

concerned, this was a matter of *yehareg v'aal yaavor*.

A massive solidarity-protest was held in New York for this issue — and a number of other religious concerns — but the Rebbe (obviously) didn't attend. In his letter, the young Tuvia asked why that was the case. Reb Uriel's answer sheds light on the Rebbe's broader perspective of the issue:



“First of all, although the Rebbe didn't attend, the *yeshiva bochurim* did — with permission... but on a more fundamental level, I happened to have a *yechidus* where the Rebbe shared his opinion of the matter with me. The *issur* of women in the military is in effect from when *any* woman is enlisted, whether religious or not, and the *issur* applies to men and women equally [to avoid being in an improper, mixed environment]. Why were they [the *frum* Jews] quiet a whole time, only speaking up when they wanted to draft the religious girls? If the mandatory draft of religious women will be abolished, the *frum* Jews will once again be quiet, *essentially agreeing to the general enlistment of women in the military...*”<sup>22</sup>

As the Rebbe explained to Reb Uriel and also wrote in numerous letters,<sup>23</sup> the problem of *giyus banos* wasn't (only) about the effect it would have on the individual woman. In addition to the prohibition of *lo silbash*, it created a problem for everyone present. The Rebbe cited the *possuk* “*Vehaya machanecha kadosh*,” for the army to receive Hashem's blessings, it needed to be a holy place.

One young woman wanted to enlist in the army out of her own free will. In response, the Rebbe noted that based on the above-mentioned *pesukim*, “it is as if someone wants to put out a fire, *Rachmana litzlan*, by pouring kerosene on the flames, because kerosene is liquid—just like water...”<sup>24</sup>

## AVOIDING COMMITMENT

An American Jew once enlisted in the Rabbanut of the IDF and later came to the United States for a short visit. While on break, he decided to remain in America and abandon his remaining service. The Rebbe responded to his letter with the following *maaneh*:

כותב שהתחייב לצבא הגנה לישראל שבמשך זמן קצר יחזור לשרת שם בצבא משך כמה חודשים. כיוון שהמדובר ב"הגנה לישראל" - על כל פנים ספק דפיקוח נפש - **וכבר התחייב** - יברר פסק דין רב מורה הוראה בפועל מומחה - **על פי שולחן ערוך** מה יעשה.

2. הדגשתי **על פי שולחן ערוך** - כי ישנם אנשים שמבטלים התחייבות זו על-ידי תעודה בלתי אמיתית וכיוצא בזה.

3. פשיטא שאין להנזכר לעיל שייכות כלל להיחס לציונות וכיוצא בזה - כי אם אך ורק בתוצאות התחייבות למוסד המגין **בפועל** על בני ישראל **משכניהם ממש**...

"You write that you committed to return to the IDF to serve for several months. Since they are the **"Defense of Israel"** — for at least a *safek pikuach nefesh* — **and you already committed** — you should ask a competent rav what you should do **according to Shulchan Aruch**.

"I emphasized **according to Shulchan Aruch** — because there are those who avoid this obligation through false documentation, etc.

"Obviously, this has nothing to do with the attitude towards Zionism, etc. — rather, it is specifically about your obligation to an institution that **actively** protects *B'nei Yisroel*— **from their literal neighbors**."

A rav was consulted and ruled that he didn't need to return because a) there was no active war, b) a *neder* that puts one in danger is void, and c) the IDF takes into account that new *olim* will fill in for those who return to their homelands.

The Rebbe responded as follows:

(א...) שהמדובר **בהגנה ומשכניהם ממש** - היינו מהערביים השכנים (בירושלים העתיקה, ברמלה הסמוכה לתל אביב, בשכם וכו') שחלק חשוב מהם או רובם - **מחבלים** כדמוכח **ממעשיהם**, מדיבוריהם וכו' - מהיראה ללכת בירושלים

העתיקה בלילה וכו', **ורק** הידיעה שיש צה"ל (הגנה) מעכבתם. - **ולא הזכרתי מלחמה כלל**.

(ב) התחייב (היינו - **לבני אדם**) להיות רב צבאי בצה"ל בירושלים וכו'. היינו: (א) לא נדר **לשמים** ויכול לשאול להפירו, כי אם התחייב לבני אדם וגם להם **שייכות** בזה. (ב) שאין בזה **כל סכנה כלל** בשבילו (כי אם רק כמדת **כל בני ישראל** תושבי ירושלים).

(ג) בהנ"ל **אין מקום** לשאלה הכל [האם כל] אחד ואחד מחוייב להתחייב... שכבר התחייב **ונתקבל**.

(ד) אפילו אם מנהל המשרד [הצבאי] שקיבלו - יבטל התחייבותו - קרוב לוודאי **שעל-פי שולחן ערוך** - אין לזה תוקף, כיוון שתוקפו **על-פי שולחן ערוך** תלויה בהנהגתו על-פי **חוקי המשרד** - ובהם **שאסור** לבטל מפני רגש ידידות דהמקבל להמבקש, או נוחיות דהמבקש **וכו'**.

"We are dealing with **protecting [them] from their actual neighbors** — from the neighboring Arabs (in the Old City of Yerushalayim, Ramle near Tel Aviv, Shechem, etc.) of which many or most are **terrorists**, as evident from **their actions** and words, etc. — from the fear of walking in the Old City of Yerushalayim at night, etc., **and only** their awareness of IDF ("defense") restrains them. — I didn't mention **war at all**.

"You committed (i.e. to people) to be a military rabbi in Yerushalayim, etc. Meaning: 1) It is not a *neder* between you and Hashem which you can revoke, rather a commitment to human beings who have a **relation** [to the matter] as well. 2) It poses **no danger at all** to you (more than the danger posed to **all Jewish** residents of Yerushalayim).

"There is no place here for the question as to whether all people are obligated to enlist... because you already committed and were accepted.

"Even if the chief of the department who accepted you will absolve you of your obligation, it is very likely that **according to Shulchan Aruch** it has no validity, because its validity **according to Shulchan Aruch** depends on the **laws of the Ministry** — including the fact that it is **forbidden** to absolve a commitment based on a personal relationship, or the petitioner's convenience, etc."

## LESSONS FROM THE MILITARY

In many letters, the Rebbe points out several lessons we can learn specifically from an army.

Here are two of them:

“The training of a military imbues the soldiers with a nature to immediately carry out the mission with *kabbalas ol* and self-sacrifice... *naaseh* before *nishmah*.

“And another important point: A mission is not the soldier’s personal matter. It impacts the survival of the entire army... Therefore the soldier carries it out without questioning whether it or its components are important. Only the commander-in-chief truly understands the importance of every single detail.

“These two concepts are the fundamental rules of life for every Yid who lives his day-to-day life in accordance with Hashem’s Torah and mitzvos...”<sup>25</sup> **T**

1. Similar *hakafos* took place in the following years, as described in *yomanim*. For the full *sicha*, see Likkutei Sichos vol. 14 pg. 444.

2. For the Rebbe’s approach to Entebbe, see “*Against All Odds*,” Derher Sivan 5775

3. Hilchos Melachim 7:15

4. Hiskashrus issue 41 pg. 14

5. Toras Menachem 5742 vol. 3 pg. 1731

6. See “*Reconnecting*,” Derher Iyar 5777.

7. See “*Illumination*,” Derher Kislev 5776.

8. See “*Orah Vesimcha*,” Derher Adar 5775.

9. See “*Redefining the Home*,” Derher Teves 5777..

10. See “*Peace in the Galilee*,” Derher Nissan 5779

11. See Derher Adar 5775 pg. 20.

12. Sichos Kodesh 5734 vol. 1 page 136

13. Sichos Kodesh 5734 vol. 1 p. 148-158.

See also Igros Kodesh vol. 29 pg. 41

14. Hiskashrus issue 41 pg. 14

15. chabad.org/4077108.

16. 14 Tammuz 5727. Toras Menachem vol. 50 pg. 241

17. 6 Tishrei 5728. Toras Menachem vol. 51 pg. 72-4

18. Vayakhel 5733. Toras Menachem vol. 71 pg. 205. See also pg. 233, and vol. 72 pg. 31

19. Hiskashrus issue 41 pg. 13

20. Heard in first person. Name withheld upon request.

21. To read about this fascinating personality, read “*Devoted Chossid, Man of the World*,” Derher Sivan 5778.

22. Igros Chossid pg. 35-6

23. See Igros Kodesh vol. 15 pg. 252 and vol. 12 pg. 33

24. Igros Kodesh vol. 23 pg. 89-90

25. Igros Kodesh vol. 29 pg. 35



2 KISLEV 5734, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 273953



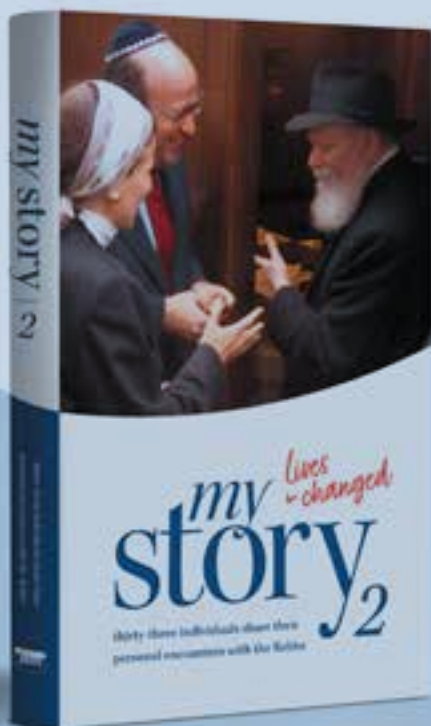
28 KISLEV 5744, TZVIKA FRIEDMAN VIA JEM 150475



**One** of the individuals through whom the Rebbe had a major impact on the wellbeing of the IDF soldiers was **Rabbi Mordechai Piron**, the Chief Military Rabbi of the IDF from 1971 to 1977. Rabbi Piron enjoyed a longstanding close relationship with the Rebbe, and he related some of the details of the programs the Rebbe initiated with his help.

His full story will be released in the upcoming *My Story* vol. II published by JEM, based on his interview with JEM's *My Encounter* team.

The following are some selections of his story from the upcoming book:



During one audience – in 1973 – the Rebbe spoke about how I could instill the spirit of Torah into the soldiers of the IDF. He said, “By force, you will achieve nothing. The way to persuade people is by showing them the richness of the Torah.” I recall that he also said, “The State of Israel exists today, but it faces many challenges, because so many of the gentile nations are not ready to accept the fact that the Jewish people have a state and that we will continue to flourish here.”

In practical terms, he convinced me – because he was so adamant about it – that every unit in the IDF must have a pair of *tefillin* (in addition to a small library of Jewish holy books, as well as a charity box), so that whenever a soldier wanted to don *tefillin*, it would be available to him. As a result, we brought in Chabad *chasidim* to Tzrifin, the main IDF base, to stand there and offer *tefillin* to many soldiers, who accepted the idea good-naturedly, even happily, and were willing to do it.

At that time, as now, there were many Chabad *chasidim* serving in the IDF, and the Rebbe asked me more than once: “Did you meet Chabad soldiers? How do these soldiers behave? What do they do? How are they? How can we help them?”

I was happy to report that the Chabad soldiers were sturdy, serious, obedient, and that they wanted to continue in the spirit of Chabad.

When I did meet such soldiers, I would tell them, “I visited the Rebbe,” and I could see how impressed they were by that – for them, this was a tremendous thing. And they would ask me, “What happened? What did you talk about?” So I would tell them what I could, and this strengthened them.

The *tefillin* campaign was very successful, as was the Rebbe’s campaign to affix *mezuzot* throughout

the IDF. The Rebbe considered this very important, and he urged me to get it done. And so I did. In a joint effort with Rabbis Ephraim Wolff and Shlomo Maidanchik, I put up about 60,000 *mezuzahs* throughout the IDF facilities. Afterwards, I got a letter from the Rebbe indicating that he was pleased.

One day during the thick of the *mezuzah* campaign, I received an urgent message that I must appear before the Chief of Staff. When I arrived, I found him sitting there with the head of the budget department. Both had very grim expressions on their faces. “We’ve discovered a major case of corruption in connection with the *mezuzahs*,” the budget head began. “We’re paying a great deal of money for each of these *mezuzah* scrolls. This is excessive – we can get them printed through our vendors for a fraction of the price!”

I had been nervous going in, but now I relaxed. I proceeded to explain that printed *mezuzah* scrolls could never be kosher – they had to be hand-written by a scribe or they would be worthless.

I made sure to pass on that story to the Rebbe so he could get a chuckle out of it. But, in truth, it wasn’t amusing – it was all very serious. This was an important, holy campaign which we launched on the Rebbe’s insistence. The Rebbe made it clear to me that just as the *mezuzah* guards the Jewish home, it also guards the barracks where the soldiers live. It guards the guardians of the Nation of Israel.



Among the Israelis who headed various ministries and departments, I was not the only one who would come to see the Rebbe. Indeed, I would venture to say that everybody who was anybody came.

I know for sure that there were officers at the highest level of the IDF, officials at the highest level of the Defense Ministry, and government ministers who were routinely in touch with the Rebbe. And they were impressed by him, just as I was. They asked his advice, which they took very, very seriously.

I assumed, though I cannot be sure, that from these visitors the Rebbe received his clear and up-to-date information of what was going on in Israel's armed services. He even had knowledge – which surprised me – about strategic and tactical matters. When I'd begin to explain to him some issue or another, he would already know all about it and even add to my words. When I'd look at him in surprise, impressed by how much he knew, he would just smile.

Once, he asked me what was happening with the peace talks. In my answer, I explained that if we decide to retreat from some places, it's possible that, by way of compromise, the Arabs might agree to a peace treaty – the hope being that if we show good will, so will they.

The Rebbe was completely opposed to this approach. He held that this was downright dangerous from a security perspective, and that we had no right to give up any portion of the Land of Israel. He explained that the Land belongs to G-d, and He chose to give it to the Jewish people. So what right do we have to annul His gift?



More than a few times, the Rebbe wrote to me. Some of these letters have been published, some not. Again and again, he pointed out that the IDF can be a forum for instilling Torah values in the youth of Israel.

In one letter, written in the summer of 1974, the Rebbe wrote: "As we discussed many times, soldiers are



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RABBI PIRON RECITING KADDISH AT THE FUNERAL OF PRESIDENT ZALMAN SHAZAR, 5734.

inclined and ready to receive guidance in matters of Torah." He went on to explain that just as our ancestors declared at Mount Sinai, "we will do and we will hear," putting action before understanding, so too soldiers follow orders first before understanding the reason for them. Secondly, in the army, the commanders make determinations based on the needs of entire battalions, or even the needs of the country at large, rather than on the needs of individual soldiers.

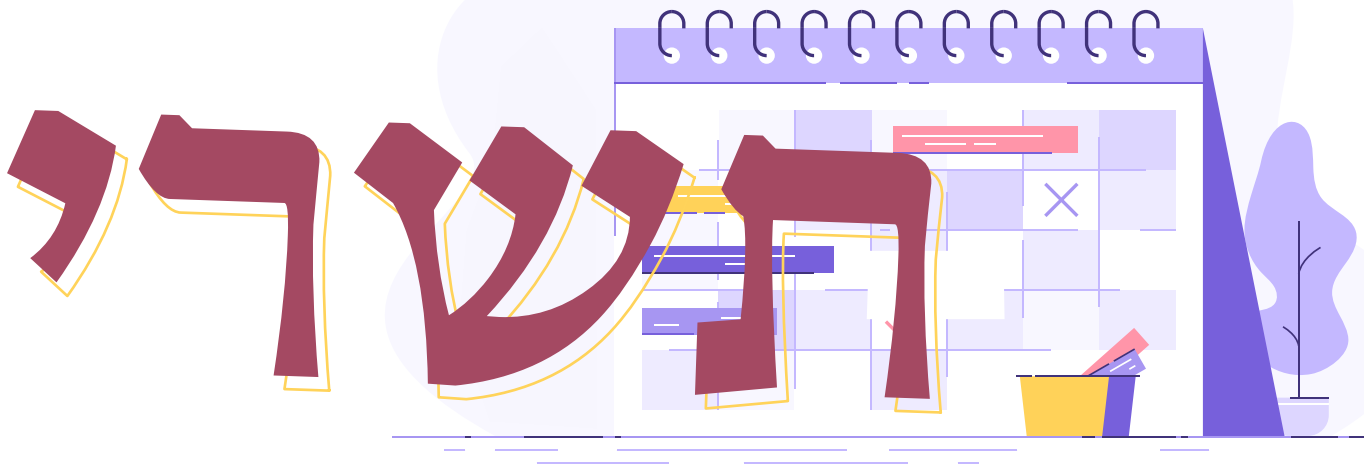
These are the prerequisites for receiving the Torah and its *mitzvot*: 1) putting action before understanding; and 2) that all Jews are responsible for one another. In the words of the Rambam [also known as Maimonides] it is a matter of Jewish law: "A person should always look at himself as equally balanced between merit and sin, and the world as equally balanced between merit and sin. If he performs one *mitzvah*, he tips his balance and that of the world to the side of merit and brings deliverance and salvation to himself and others."

In his correspondence, the Rebbe always urged us to seize the opportunity we had to make a difference and supported all of our efforts.

His support meant the most to me after the Yom Kippur War, when I was responsible for burying 2,300 fallen soldiers. That was my fate; that's what Divine Providence wanted of me. It was a very difficult period for me, as I had to visit many widows and mothers and tell them the catastrophic news.

It was a terrible time, and the Rebbe understood the toll this took on me. He tried to strengthen my spirits so that I shouldn't falter, telling me that what I did during the war was a very big *mitzvah*. And he predicted that Israel would continue to get stronger. After going through this horrendous war, in which we defied the odds and were victorious, we would become even stronger, with G-d's help, going from strength to strength. He emphasized this several times. To hear this was so important to me.

When the Rebbe passed away, I felt as if a member of my close family had died. Like my own father was no longer around... really and truly. I was devastated and lost for a long time. I couldn't grasp that he was gone. For some reason, I had convinced myself that such a great Jew would live forever.



## Introduction

The Rebbe taught us many times that one of the most important forms of *hiskashrus* is *kiyum hora'osav*—following the Rebbe's instructions. At every *sicha* and farbrengen, the bottom line of it all is always a directive from the Rebbe: whether increasing in Torah and mitzvos in general or regarding a specific action.

In this new column, we will highlight some of the various *hora'os* the Rebbe gave pertaining to the dates of each month.

It is important to note that obviously some of these *hora'os* were only relevant during the year that the Rebbe discussed them. Nevertheless, as with all parts of Torah, there are applicable lessons from each one of them pertinent to all times.

## 9 Elul – Erev Rosh Hashanah and birthday of the Tzemach Tzedek

In honor of the birthday of the Tzemach Tzedek, the Rebbe instructed:

- To add in giving tzedakah, to learn something additional from the Tzemach Tzedek's Torah<sup>1</sup> and to increase our efforts in the spreading of Chassidus.<sup>2</sup>
- In 5749\*, the 200th anniversary of the Tzemach Tzedek's birth, the Rebbe instructed that everyone should give tzedakah in multiples of 200. The Rebbe

also distributed the *kuntres* "קיצורים והערות לספר 'התניא'" to the Chassidim to learn.

- The Rabbeim had a custom before Rosh Hashanah to dedicate time for a conversation with their wives, eventually establishing it as a custom for all to follow.<sup>3</sup>
- In the later years, the Rebbe would discuss the acronym of the year's number (for example, the year 5750\* was called *השנה תהא שנת נסים*) which would be highlighted throughout the entire year.
- The Rebbe encouraged that an appeal should be made to raise funds for people who need help with their Yom Tov needs, similar to a *ma'os chitim* fund for Pesach, based on the words of the *possuk*, "ושלחו", מנות לאין גבון לו".<sup>4</sup>

## Rosh Hashanah

- In honor of the coming year, everyone should resolve to be more meticulous in their performance of Torah and mitzvos throughout the year, beginning by taking on a new *hiddur*.<sup>5</sup>
- The Rebbe instructed to mention the Rabbeim by name and to sing a *niggun* connected to each one respectively.<sup>6</sup>



## Aseres Yemei Teshuva

- The Rebbe encouraged Chassidim to learn the *halachos* pertaining to these days, as there are many *minhagim* that diverge from our usual practice throughout the year.<sup>7</sup>
- During the Aseres Yemei Teshuva, *farbrengens* should be arranged on Shabbos Shuva, Motzei Shabbos Shuva, and Erev Yom Kippur.<sup>8</sup>

## 6 Tishrei - Yahrtzeit of the Rebbe's Mother, Rebbetzin Chana

- On this day, the Rebbe often encouraged an increase of effort in the three mitzvos connected to women (which are also the *roshei teivos* of Rebbetzin Chana's name): **Challah** (and *kashrus* in general), **nidah** (*taharas hamishpacha*), and **hadlakas haneiros**. This includes taking time to learn the necessary *halachos* for these mitzvos.<sup>9</sup>
- The Rebbe also started a fund called Keren Chana in her memory, intended to provide financial aid to girls wishing to learn in Jewish seminaries. Most years—whenever Vov Tishrei was on a weekday—the Rebbe made a *magbis* (an appeal for tzedakah) for this fund.

## Yom Kippur

- It is customary to request “*lekach*” (honey cake or the like). When the Rebbe distributed *lekach*, he would wish each person a “*Shana tova u'mesuka*.”<sup>10</sup>
- In the Rebbe's presence, the *niggun* of Napoleon's March was sung at the end of Yom Kippur.<sup>11</sup>
- A person should work on themselves to reach a level that even after the fast ends on Motzei Yom Kippur, he should not feel the rush to eat and drink as soon as possible.<sup>12</sup>
- The Rebbe often mentioned in regards to the *minhag* to work on the sukkah immediately after Yom Kippur, that it can be fulfilled by at least speaking about it.<sup>13</sup>

## 13 Tishrei - Yahrtzeit of the Rebbe Maharash

- Starting in 5733\*, the Rebbe would *farbreng* every year on this day.

לזכות  
מאיר, מנחם מענדל, לוי, ישראל, נחום,  
שמואל, שניאור זלמן ואיטא שיחיו  
נדפס ע"י הוריהם  
הרה"ת ר' יוסף יצחק הכהן  
ומרת נחמה דינה שיחיו  
בלעסאפסקי  
לחיוזוק ההתקשרות לכ"ק אדמו"ר זי"ע  
ולהצלחה רבה ומופלגה בכל עניניהם

- It is befitting to learn the first *maamar* the Rebbe Maharash said—on 13 Tishrei or the days following.<sup>14</sup>
- In 5743\*, the 100th anniversary of the Rebbe Maharash's *histalkus*, the Rebbe started the year by announcing that this year everything should be done in a way of *lechatchila ariber*—a motto of the Rebbe Maharash.<sup>15</sup>

## Sukkos

- Before Sukkos begins, announcements should be made—as well as to ensure<sup>16</sup>—that those who need assistance with all their Yom Tov needs will receive it. Moreover, those who can should go about actively looking for people in need of assistance.<sup>17</sup>
- In building the sukkah, the Rabbeim would stress the importance of adding as much *s'chach* as possible, to the extent of verbally saying so. They were not concerned about not seeing the stars (the solution being, to thrust a stick through the *s'chach*, thereby leaving a hole big enough for the stars to be visible).<sup>18</sup>
- On Erev Sukkos, one should increase in giving tzedakah.<sup>19</sup>
- Being that the Torah says the word “*simcha*” three times regarding Sukkos, it is appropriate to announce “Good Yom Tov” three times as well.<sup>20</sup>
- Beginning in 5714\*, the Rebbe started “*mitvza lulav*,” an initiative for Chassidim to reach out and give other Yidden the opportunity to shake lulav,<sup>21</sup> including hospital patients and prison inmates. In addition to the mitzvah of *daled minim* itself, by giving them a chance to shake the lulav and feel the joy of the Yom Tov, it also adds to their *simcha*.<sup>22</sup>
- Sukkos is called *זמן שמחתינו*, which is connected to the giving of the Torah (the second set of *Luchos*).

It is therefore fitting to increase in learning Torah, specifically Chassidus.<sup>23</sup>

- Each day of Sukkos is defined by the *ushpiz* of that day. This can be emphasized by mentioning the *ushpizin*, either by name or by elaborating on what they stood for. (Starting in 5741\*, the Rebbe would say a *sicha* every night of Sukkos, addressing the *ushpizin* of that night.)<sup>24</sup> We should also learn something additional on every night of Sukkos, connected to the *ushpizin* of that day.<sup>25</sup>
- In 5748\*, the year of *Hakhel*, the Rebbe explained that although it is not the usual *minhag*, he nevertheless felt “compelled” to hold all of the *daled minim* (including the esrog) during Hallel, highlighting the theme of the year—“*Shmas Hakhel*.”<sup>26</sup>
- Starting in 5741\*, the Rebbe initiated that young children, boys and girls, should gather three times throughout Tishrei—before Rosh Hashanah, during *Aseres Yemei Teshuvah*, and during Sukkos.

During these rallies, the children should add in *Torah*, *tefillah*, and *tzedakah*. The rallies should take place both in Eretz Yisroel (specifically at Me’aras Hamachpela and Kever Rochel) and all over the world.<sup>27</sup>

## Simchas Beis Hashoevah

- One of the main parts of Sukkos the Rebbe constantly spoke of time and time again, is to celebrate *simchas beis hashoevah*, even at the expense of sleeping,<sup>28</sup> adding fervor each night to that of the night before.
- This joy must energize a person’s entire being, both by singing (with the mouth) and dancing (with the feet).<sup>29</sup> This joy is intensified with the understanding that all of the *ushpizin* visit us on every night of Sukkos, and they are dancing together with us.<sup>30</sup>
- *Simchas Beis hashoevah* should affect the streets as well, by increasing the number of people dancing.<sup>31</sup> Even people who are just passing by, or those who are dancing but only due to peer pressure, should be *schlepped* in to the dancing<sup>32</sup> (די גאס זאל טאנצן<sup>33</sup>!).

- In 5741\*, when the first day of Chol Hamoed was on Shabbos, the Rebbe said that being that in *galus* music is not required the way it was in the *Beis Hamikdash*, *simchas beis hashoevah* should also take place on Shabbos and Yom Tov (with oral singing replacing the lack of music).<sup>34</sup> On weekdays, when there was indeed *simchas beis hashoevah* in the *Beis Hamikdash*, the joy should be all the more greater.<sup>35</sup>
- Women and children should also join in *simchas beis hashoevah*.<sup>36</sup> And just like in the times of the *Beis Hamikdash*, the atmosphere of *ruach hakodesh* is drawn to everyone present, even to the young children who don’t understand what is happening.<sup>37</sup>
- On Sukkos 5734\*, just after the Yom Kippur War broke out, the Rebbe announced that throughout Sukkos there should be continuous *farbrengens*, until it will be “אומלוא הארץ פארברענגענעס’ את הוי’ כמים”<sup>38</sup> לים מכסים. And when coming home, one should review what was spoken of at the *farbrengens*.<sup>39</sup>
- This great joy should go beyond the community as well. The Rebbe instructed that people should visit—with their wives and children—the nearby communities and bring *simchas Yom Tov* there too. (This is in addition to teaching Chassidus there and helping them fulfill the mitzvah of *daled minim*.)<sup>40</sup>

## Hoshanah Rabbah

- On the night of Hoshanah Rabbah, which is Erev Simchas Torah and the final stretch of *simchas beis hashoevah*, the *simcha* should increase even more than before.<sup>41</sup> The Rebbe also made it clear that besides the many things occurring on this short day, we still must not forget to continue and add in the regular *avodah* of Sukkos—*mitvza lulav* and spreading Chassidus.<sup>42</sup>
- The Rebbe also reinstated the old tradition that the *gabbaim* distribute apples and honey to members of the community who are saying Tehillim.<sup>43</sup>

## Shemini Atzeres and Simchas Torah

- At the beginning of this very joyous day, the Rebbe wanted Chassidim to start the *hakafos* with a *l'chaim*.<sup>44</sup>

In 5744\*, the Rebbe instructed Chassidim to *bentch* each other before *hakafos*, in the *nusach* of *Birchas Kohanim*.<sup>45</sup>

- It is important to bring everyone, including the young children, to participate in the dancing on Simchas Torah.<sup>46</sup>
- The Rebbe also encouraged people to walk to shuls in neighboring communities and bring the joy of Simchas Torah to others (what is otherwise known as *tahalucha*)<sup>47</sup>.

- In 5737\*, in the wake of attacks on Yidden in Chevron and Yerushalayim, the Rebbe instructed Chassidim to host “second *hakafos*” both in *Me’aras Hamachpeilah* (in Chevron) and in the Tzemach Tzedek shul (in Yerushalayim).<sup>48</sup>
- The *minhag* at one point was to go to private houses to spread the joy of this day, saying *l'chaim*, and dancing. These days, everyone comes together to the shul instead.<sup>49</sup>
- Every Simchas Torah from 5716\* until 5724\*, and in 5734\*, the Rebbe taught a *niggun*, primarily taken from the davening of Yom Kippur.
- After Simchas Torah, when the *avodah* of Cheshvan is underway, we formally announce “יעקב הלך לדרוכו”—the term calling on us to implement the inspiration from the first month of the year throughout the rest of the coming year.<sup>50</sup>

1. Sefer Hasichos 5751, vol. 2, pg. 360.

2. Hisvaaduyos 5749 vol. 4, pg. 388.

3. 2 Tishrei 5748, Hisvaaduyos vol. 1 pg. 39.

4. Rosh Hashanah 5738, Likkutei Sichos vol. 14, p. 372.

5. First days of Rosh Hashanah 5750, Hisvaaduyos vol. 1, pg. 17.

6. 2 Tishrei 5749, Hisvaaduyos vol. 1, pg. 9.

7. Sefer Hasichos 5752 vol. 1 pg. 21.

8. Hisvaaduyos 5750 vol. 1 pg. 86.

9. Hisvaaduyos 5750 vol. 1, pg. 65

10. Ibid. pg. 83.

11. Hisvaaduyos 5749 vol. 4, pg. 11 footnote 83.

12. Hisvaaduyos 5750 pgs. 1 and 230.

13. Ibid. pg. 105.

14. Hisvaaduyos 5749 vol. 4, pg. 11 fn. 83.

15. Hisvaaduyos 5743 vol. 1, pg. 62.

16. Hisvaaduyos 5748 vol. 4, pg. 315

17. Hisvaaduyos 5749 vol. 1, pg. 81. Shabbos Nitzavim 5751.

18. Hisvaaduyos 5750 vol. 1, pg. 164

19. Ibid. pg. 119.

20. Ibid. pg. 148.

21. Shalshes Hayachas, Hayom Yom.

22. Sichos Kodesh 5738 pg. 138

23. Hisvaaduyos 5751 pg. 107

24. Hisvaaduyos 5749 vol. 1, pg. 159.

25. Mayanei Hayeshua pg. 139.

26. Toras Menachem 5748, vol. 1, pg. 245.

27. Likkutei Sichos vol. 24, pg. 310.

28. Hisvaaduyos 5749 vol. 1, pgs. 119-120.

29. Hisvaaduyos 5749 vol. 1, pg. 106.

30. Hisvaaduyos 5749 vol. 1, pg. 143.

31. Mayanei Hayeshua pg. 132.

32. Ibid. pg. 106. Hisvaaduyos 5749 vol. 1, pg. 106.

33. Sichos Kodesh 5744 vol. 1, pg. 297.

34. Sichos Kodesh 5741 vol. 1, pg. 140.

35. Ibid. pg. 148.

36. Hisvaaduyos 5749 vol. 1, pg. 130 fn. 77.

37. Sichos Kodesh 5744 vol. 1, pg. 217.

38. Kuntres of the second day of Sukkos, Vaad Hanachos B’Lahak, pg. 4.

39. Sichos Kodesh 5752 vol. 1, pg. 115.

40. Hisvaaduyos 5752 vol. 1, pg. 98.

41. Hisvaaduyos 5750 vol. 1, pg. 194.

42. Hisvaaduyos 5751 vol. 1, pg. 149.

43. Sichos Kodesh 5752 vol. 1, pg. 180.

44. Hisvaaduyos 5750 vol. 1, pg. 220.

45. Hisvaaduyos 5744 vol. 1, pg. 317.

46. Hisvaaduyos 5749, vol. 1, pg. 87.

47. Sichos Kodesh 5752 vol. 1, pg. 210.

48. Sichos Kodesh 5737 vol. 1, pg. 204.

49. Hisvaaduyos 5748 vol. 1, pg. 301.

50. Hisvaaduyos 5750 vol. 1, pg. 311.





לזכות  
החיילת בצבאות ה'  
גוטא תחי'  
לרגל יום הולדתה כ"ז תשרי  
לשנת הצלחה בגו"ר לנח"ר כ"ק אדמו"ר  
נדפס ע"י הוריה  
הרה"ת ר' צבי אלימלך  
וזוגתו מרת העניא חס"ה  
ומשפחתם שיחיו  
רבקין

# “The Rebbe Brought His Followers to a High Point”

*Simchas Torah 5728\**



*In honor of the festive month of Tishrei, we present this beautiful description of Simchas Torah with the Rebbe in the year 5728 as published in the New York Times. On Isru Chag of Sukkos, Rabbi Leibel Groner recorded in his diary, presumably about this article: “The Rebbe was given a copy of the newspaper article about Simchas Torah and he was very pleased, especially by the accompanying photograph...”*

## HASIDIC JEWS CELEBRATE 3 DAYS TO MARK SIMHATH TORAH; SINGING AND DANCING ARE AT HIGH PITCH IN CONGREGATION HERE

by Sidney E. Zion

Thousands of Hasidic Jews ended a long weekend of singing, dancing, jumping and clapping yesterday, rejoicing as ever in the Torah, if a little tired from it all.

“We hustle—religion is no picnic with us,” said a red-bearded young rabbi, Samuel Schrage,<sup>1</sup> at the height of the tumultuous Simhath Torah festivities at the Lubavitcher Synagogue, 770 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn.

The happiest day in the Hebrew calendar, Simhath Torah (literally “rejoicing in the law”) marks the completion of the Torah cycle, a year-long reading through the Five Books of Moses, which detail the basic guidance and teaching imparted to Israel. The cycle ends with the chanting of the last chapter of the last book and the reading of the first chapter of the first book.

The holiday is celebrated with gaiety by all branches of Judaism, but none bring to it the exuberant joy of the Hasidim, whose rejoicing in strict Orthodox beliefs leads them to pitches of religious excitement unknown in others less fervid.

Indeed, while Simhath Torah officially ended before sundown on Friday, Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky said confidently: “The Rebbe will keep things moving right up to Sunday.”<sup>2</sup>

## CONVERGE ON BROOKLYN

And he did, speaking until 1:30 a.m. yesterday<sup>3</sup> when the service ended with the singing of “Dem Rebbens Niggun” (“The Rabbi’s Tune”), written by Schneor Zalman, the founder of the movement.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe is Menachem M. Schneerson, who, as the rabbi of rabbis, is the leader of 250,000 people, the world’s largest Hasidic group.

Black-coated, bearded Jews from many parts of the world flocked to Brooklyn last week to be near the Rebbe, and in the early hours of Friday,<sup>4</sup> the cavernous synagogue was packed.

The 65-year-old Rabbi Schneerson, whose family traces back some 200 years to the group’s birthplace in the Russian village of Lubavitch, brought 30 elderly Russian Jews to Brooklyn for a visit over the holidays.<sup>5</sup>

Many had been imprisoned in the Soviet Union and were quietly released and sent to Israel within the last two years, due largely to the efforts of the Lubavitcher movement.

# 'Hasidic Jews Celebrate 3 Days to Mark Simhath Torah

Singing and Dancing  
Are at High Pitch in  
Congregation Here

By SUMNEY E. JOON

Thousands of Hasidic Jews ended a long weekend of singing, dancing, jumping and clapping yesterday, rejoicing as ever in the Torah. It is a time lived from it all.

"We built—erigon" is no picnic with us," said a red-headed young rabbi, Samuel Schiagel, at the height of the annual seven-day Simhath Torah festivities at the Lubavitcher Synagogue, 770 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn.

The happiest day in the Hebrew calendar, Simhath Torah (literally "rejoicing in the law") marks the completion of the Torah cycle, a year-long reading through the five books of Moses, which detail the laws, guidance and teaching imparted to Israel. This cycle ends with the chanting of the last chapter of the last book and the reading of the first chapter of the first book.



Hasidic Jews at the Lubavitcher Synagogue on the Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, as they celebrated Simhath Torah. Seated at table, center, is the rabbi of rabbis, Menachem M. Schneerson, leader of New York's Hasidic congregations.

THE NEW YORK TIMES

Some of the Russian émigrés, white-bearded and wearing peaked caps reminiscent of the Lenin period, stood behind the Rebbe's dais for five hours as he spoke in Yiddish to 1,500 people on subjects ranging from the mystical interpretation of the scriptures as contained in the Cabala, to hippies.

"That man spent 22 years in a Russian prison," a congregant said, pointing to an old but alert man standing by Rabbi Schneerson.<sup>6</sup> "All his life he's waited to be where he is now, all his life to be with the Lubavitcher Rebbe on Simhath Torah."

## VODKA IS SERVED

Rabbi Schneerson stopped speaking from time to time to serve vodka and sponge cake to those around him. As the Rebbe sipped, so did the Hasidim. Women of the synagogue looked down from the balcony.

But the singing and dancing was dominant as the pulsating rhythms of the melodies turned the synagogues into a festive hall.

A visitor, the Rev. William Sloane Coffin Jr., chaplain of Yale University, smiled as he watched the celebration. "Wonderful," he said, "wonderful, just wonderful."

Rabbi Schneerson, patriarchal figure in a long black coat and soft black hat, led the singing at the apex of the Simhath Torah ceremonies. Using his right hand to conduct, he brought followers to a high point and the chanting and jumping seemed to rock the building.

He then turned and began to pray,<sup>7</sup> and the congregants stopped where they were.

Finally, the Torahs were removed from the Ark and Rabbi Schneerson walked<sup>8</sup> with his closest followers between the crowds swarming to get near him.

In the middle of the synagogue, Rabbi Schneerson and a few elders did the traditional dance – one man's arm on another's shoulder, circling the floor with scrolls in hand.

At a high post nearby, where the rabbi had earlier led the singing, a Russian Jew looked into the eyes of a stranger, smiled, and without a word put his arm on the stranger's shoulder and the two danced until the rabbi stopped. **1**

1. A Crown Heights activist in those years. See *Here's My Story*, Jem, Erev Shabbos Ki Teizei 5775; see also *Crown Heights*, Derher, Cheshvan 5777.

2. Shemini Atzeres and Simchas Torah that year occurred on Thursday and Friday, and *kos shel bracha* lasted through the night on Motzei Shabbos.

3. The Rebbe began the second farbrengen of Shabbos Bereishis close to *shkia*, continuing long after Shabbos had ended.

4. Preparing for the farbrengen of the night of Simchas Torah, before *hakafos*.

5. See *Igros Kodesh* vol. 24, p. 384, where the Rebbe invites the emigres to come to New York for Tishrei with all travel expenses paid.

6. Presumably speaking of the Chossid, Reb Lazer Nannes.

7. I.e. the *hakafos* themselves began.

8. For the first and seventh *hakafos*, the Rebbe danced in the middle of the shul.



לעילוי נשמת  
ר' בנציון בן ר' דוד ע"ה  
נלב"ע ו' אלול ה'תשע"ט  
תנ"צ'ב'ה'

נדפס ע"י בנו  
הרה"ת ר' שמואל אהרן וזוגתו מרת חנה  
ומשפחתם שיחיו  
נובאק



## The Shemitah Fund

"A Jewish man bought a vineyard in Chevron, and he leases it out to a non-Jew who works the land and takes an allotted amount of the produce each year. In this city, it is impossible to keep land unless you have non-Jews working it, because the

non-Jews are the dominant majority, and if they don't have stakes in the land, they will destroy it or steal the crop in the middle of the night... The question is: What should he do during the *Shemitah* year to ensure that the non-Jew's plowing and sowing of the land don't cause the Jewish owner to

transgress the prohibition of working his land during *Shemitah*..."<sup>1</sup>

This question was posed to Harav Mordechai Ruviyo, the Av Beis Din in Chevron in the second half of the 16th century. It seems that in his time, it was starting to become more common for Yidden to own land in Eretz Yisroel and the laws of *Shemitah* were



# A Spiritual Sabbatical

## שנת השמיטה — שבת לה'

On the threshold of the Shemitah year of 5782\*, we present some of the Rebbe's insights into the meaning of Shemitah, as well as the Rebbe's involvement in promoting the fulfillment of this mitzvah in Eretz Yisroel today.

thus becoming relevant again in a very practical sense.

Even though *Shemitah* is an important mitzvah in the Torah, for much of Jewish history it rarely had any practical implication. Being a mitzvah directly connected to the land of Eretz Yisroel, it would only apply when Yidden lived and owned

agricultural land there, which was not the reality for centuries, until fairly recently.

When the main waves of immigration arrived from Eastern Europe beginning in the year 5642\*, scores of families made their livings by working the land and relied heavily on its produce for their daily sustenance.

When *Shemitah* came around in 5649\*, many rabbonim had to deal with the reality that these families would lose a full year of *parnasa*, in what was already a barely manageable economic environment.

Some rabbonim proposed what became known as a “*heter mechira*,” a method through which the Yid sells

\*📅 5782-2021, 5642-1882, 5649-1889

his land to a non-Jew for the year of *Shemittah* and thereby releases the holy status of *shevi'is* from the produce, allowing them to be sold for profit.

Many other rabbonim, however, vehemently opposed this proposal, unwilling to so easily dismiss a beautiful mitzvah that was finally once again becoming part of our practice and possibly causing people to transgress *issurim d'Oraisa* (according to some *poskim*).

In order to make keeping this mitzvah feasible, rabbonim and communal activists set out to raise the funds needed to help these families make it through the year. *Shadarim* were sent out to various Jewish communities in Europe to help collect money for the newly established fund.

As the years went on, more funds were established for this purpose, and even more so once the huge waves of Holocaust survivors and other Yidden flocked to Eretz Yisroel after the second World War, and the “State of Israel” was established in Eretz Yisroel in 5708\*.

It took many decades until the various funds consolidated their efforts and formed one unified organization to help people fulfill the mitzvah of *Shemittah*.

We see a hint at this in a letter from the Rebbe to two distinguished rabbonim from Eretz Yisroel who had written to the Rebbe, asking for his support of their *Shemittah* fund:

“When the founders of the *Shemittah* Fund of New York visited me, they specifically told me that they have designated monies to assist any person in Eretz Yisroel who keeps *Shemittah*, without distinction. These people can certainly be trusted for their word, especially considering that offering assistance to people in all settlements is what the Torah would demand of them. I am surprised that you don’t mention in your letter whether you receive assistance from

that fund. You will certainly reach out to them now, if you haven’t done so yet.

“Either way, based on the *possuk* ‘חבר אני לכל אשר יראוך—I am a companion to all who fear You,’ I have enclosed a personal check...

“P.S. Regarding your request for a letter of approbation, it is well known that this practice is not customary in Beis Harav...”<sup>2</sup>

Throughout the ensuing years, the Rebbe offered encouragement and support to the various individuals and organizations that promoted *Shemittah* observance. One of the famous personalities active in raising funds was Rabbi Binyomin Mendelson, the Av Beis Din of Komemius in Eretz Yisroel. The Rebbe corresponded with him on many occasions and at times offered financial support for his work as well.<sup>3</sup>

At a farbrengen just before the *Shemittah* year of 5747\*, the Rebbe called upon everyone to contribute to the Keren HaShemittah, quoting the *possuk* “גבורי כח עושי דברו—Those who have immense strength and follow the words of Hashem,” which the Midrash says, applies to people who keep *Shemittah*.<sup>4</sup>

## The Early Years

The first *Shemittah* after the State was established in Eretz Yisroel was 5712\*. It would prove to be a very difficult year for *frum* Yidden, as the new country was in its infancy and enough nutritious food was hard to come by even in regular years. Many Jews chose to rely on the “*heter mechira*,” selling their land to non-Jews and continuing production even through *Shemittah*. The Rebbe strongly discouraged this.

In a letter to Reb Shneur Zalman Garelik, the rav of Kfar Chabad, the Rebbe wrote: “According to my sources, the *frum* communities in Eretz Yisroel do not intend on relying



on any leniencies and will keep *Shemittah* in its proper form...”<sup>5</sup>

The newly established village of Kfar Chabad was occupied by many Chassidim who had escaped the persecution of the Soviets and just barely avoided the horrors of the Holocaust. Sympathizing with their plight, the various government ministers in Eretz Yisroel worked hard to allocate large portions of land for the Chassidim to work with, even supplying the necessary machinery and assistance with training. The Chassidim were afraid that all this goodwill would disappear if a mere few years after starting on their





4 SIVAN 5747, LEVI FREDIN VIA JEM 5740

agricultural experiment, they would take a full-year sabbatical.

The Rebbe brought this up with Mr. Mordechai Surkis, head of the city council in Kfar Saba and an important member of the Histadrut (labor union) when he visited the Rebbe in *yechidus*. The Rebbe soon wrote to Rabbi Garelik: "You write that rumor has it that the government might force farmers to work the land during the *Shemittah* year. Mr. Surkis, a member of the Histadrut who holds close ties with government officials, visited me recently and when we spoke about this subject he promised me that he will do everything in his power to ensure that



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the residents of Kfar Chabad will be able to act as they see fit, without any external pressure...”

As the beginning of *Shemitah* approached, the Rebbe guided and assisted the leaders of the village on how to procure the necessary means to support the fledgling community throughout the coming year.<sup>6</sup>

## Shabbos L'Hashem

In addition to the practical observance of the mitzvah of *Shemitah*, the Rebbe called on everyone to recognize the inner meaning of the mitzvah—as the Torah calls it: a “Shabbos for Hashem.”

“It is obvious,” the Rebbe writes in a letter, “that although the practical aspect of the mitzvah only deals with agricultural ventures, and is only applicable in Eretz Yisroel and not in the diaspora, this does not mean that the meaning of the mitzvah, and the practical lessons derived from it, are in any way limited. They apply to each and every Jew, in each and every place...”

“...The fact that the Torah frees a person from investing their time and energy in working the land during this

hallowed time, obligates (and offers the privilege) that he or she should instead dedicate their time to the most important pursuits of a person's life; spiritual pursuits like davening, learning Torah, and working on one's *middos* and emotions...”<sup>7</sup>

The Rebbe explains that this is not just due to the technical fact that because a person is given more free hours to their day, he is supposed to use the time for learning. It's more than that: the Torah is freeing a person's heart and mind from worry and indulgence in the material world. This newfound serenity offers the person the opportunity to live more elevated and engage in *ruchnius* properly.<sup>8</sup>

Another beautiful aspect to the mitzvah of *Shemitah*, and the meaning behind the words “Shabbos L'Hashem:”

The Chinuch explains that the mitzvah of *Shemitah* is meant to remind a person that ultimately, all his possessions are not his own, but they belong to Hashem.<sup>9</sup>

In a sense, the Torah commands a person to renounce his personal

ownership over his hard-worked and hard-maintained property, and to consider it “*hefker*” for the year, allowing all people to harvest it at will.

“...The *Shemitah* year emphasizes the concept that although the Creator has given the earth to man, for food and use, he must remember that the real and permanent proprietor is G-d, as it is written, ‘To G-d belongs the earth and everything contained therein, the world and those that dwell in it.’ In order to emphasize and reinforce this awareness at all times, so that it be actualized and implemented into the daily life, G-d set aside the Seventh Year as a Shabbos-like (“Sabbatical”) year, when all work in the field and orchard ceases for the duration of the entire year... This is how a Jew attests to the fact that the true Master of the World is G-d...”

The lesson that the Rebbe teaches from this concept is that in the year of *Shemitah*, recognizing that Hashem is the ultimate owner of all our possessions, we should increase in the mitzvah of *tzedakah*:

“...Needless to say, the practice of *Tzedakah* is not limited to money, but includes ‘money, body and soul,’ spiritual *Tzedakah*, which obligates every Jew to help another Jew who is ‘poor’ in Torah and Mitzvot. However much a person values his time and efforts to use them for his own Torah edification and the practice of the Mitzvot, he is told that he must not consider himself as the exclusive proprietor, but must devote of his time and efforts to the dissemination of the Torah and Mitzvot among those who are ‘poor and needy’ in these matters.”<sup>10</sup>

## It's Not About Land Preservation

In a fascinating letter written in response to an individual whose perception of *Shemitah* was quite limited and even ill-conceived, the

Rebbe laid out a beautiful explanation of the inner meaning of this mitzvah:

The writer had suggested that much like Shabbos, which was given by Hashem in order for the person to replenish the energy lost during the past week of hard work and to regain strength for the coming week, *Shemittah* was given to replenish the minerals lost to the crop of the previous six years and to replenish for the coming seasons.

The Rebbe explains that this approach is, in the best case, a gross misconception.

Imagine, says the Rebbe, a person who gives charity to a needy individual. Would you say that the main thing occurring on here is a hand placing a piece of food into another person's possession? Of course not! There is so much more to the act of charity, beginning with the kindness found in the heart of the giver, the "*chesed*" that stems from his *neschama*, which in turn is ingrained in him by the *middas hachessed* of Hashem. To say that all that is happening is a mere technical transaction of goods is obviously a very small-minded, even mistaken, perception of events.

The same is true with Torah and mitzvot: The most important element of Torah and mitzvot is the fact that they were given by Hashem; they are therefore divine ordinances, which are intrinsically holy, and are the best formula for human conduct. This is true of every single mitzvah, whether a material benefit from it is apparent or not. It is also possible that the mitzvah carries with it an obvious and tangible benefit as well, like feeling rested after keeping Shabbos or the like. But this is certainly not all there is to the mitzvah, and not even a fundamental part of it.

As a matter of fact, modern science doesn't see any real reason to keep a field fallow for a whole year in order to enhance its fertility. On the contrary,

keeping the seeding cycle going and constant fertilization are actually better for the land than letting it sit idly.

Obviously then, there is a deeper reason and meaning to the mitzvah of *Shemittah*.

In this regard, the Rebbe notes an interesting phenomenon:

The early Romans considered the Jewish people "lazy" for needing a day off from work every seven days. When the world finally caught on and almost all of civilization adopted the idea of a once-a-week sabbath (whether on Sunday or on Friday), it was their way of "giving in" to the weakness of the human spirit and "admitting" that the human body needs that time to rest.

But this is exactly not what the Torah's Shabbos is about! The Jewish approach to Shabbos is a completely positive one. The Midrash states that when Hashem looked back at creation after six days, He saw that everything was "very good," except that one thing was missing: "*menucha*" (rest). So He introduced Shabbos—and with it the concept of rest came to the world.

In other words, Shabbos and *Shemittah* are not just mere "timeouts" from the hustle of everyday life. The Torah tells us that "a person was created to toil," and a meaningless "vacation" has no place in Hashem's world. Hashem gave us Shabbos and *Shemittah* as a **positive** force; a time to change our focus from the mundane to the spiritual. A time to rejuvenate our *neschamos* with Torah and mitzvot, spending more time on spirituality than we could on a regular workday.<sup>11</sup>

## Announce It!

Based on the above, the Rebbe called on people to utilize the year of *Shemittah* for what it was originally intended, and to increase Torah study in all ways possible.

In a lengthy conversation with Harav Pinchas Menachem Alter (the

"Pnei Menachem," then *rosh yeshiva* and later Rebbe) of Ger and Harav Menashe Klein, the Rebbe called on them to come out with a "*kol koreh*" or the like, encouraging people to increase in Torah study during the coming *Shemittah* year.

"You can do it as a 'suggestion' or a 'good idea,'" said the Rebbe, "and offer *brachos* to anyone who will follow. This way you're not forcing anything on the population. But this is an idea cited in many early sources and holy *sefarim*; it is not a new thing..."<sup>12</sup>

## Pruzbul

One of the important practical points the Rebbe discussed about *Shemittah* is the *halachos* of "*pruzbul*."

According to Torah law, any loan that is still outstanding as a *Shemittah* year passes is considered void and no longer collectable.

However, *Chazal* instituted that a person can perform a formality known as a "*pruzbul*," where he transfers the ownership of the debt to *beis din*, making them the creditors instead of the lender himself.

Nowadays, according to most *poskim* there is no need to perform a *pruzbul* anymore. However the Alter Rebbe in Shulchan Aruch says that a *yarei Shamayim* should be scrupulous and do it in its proper time, at the end of the sixth year before *Shemittah*.

The Rebbe writes that it is a "*mitzvah lefarsem*"—it is incumbent that we publicize this ruling of the Alter Rebbe about doing a *pruzbul* before Rosh Hashanah of a *Shemittah* year. (Sefer Haminhagim p. 86)

"Because we cherish the institutions of our *Chachamim*, and we are especially keen on following in the ways of the Alter Rebbe, it is worthwhile to lend money to one another before *Shemittah*, just to be able to perform a *pruzbul*..." (Likkutei Sichos vol. 24, p. 317)



29 ELUL 5747, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 11500

FOLLOWING HATORAS NEDORIM, THE REBBE RECITES THE PRUZBUL, AT THE CONCLUSION OF SHNAS HASHEMITAH, EREV ROSH HASHANAH 5748.

The Rebbe himself would recite the words of the *pruzbul* immediately after performing *Hataras Nedarim* on Erev Rosh Hashanah of the sixth year, going into a *Shemitah* year. On some occasions, the Rebbe also recited the *pruzbul* at the end of the *Shemitah* year itself (which is mentioned by some *poskim*), but not always.

At the end of the *Shemitah* year of 5747\*, the Rebbe recited the *pruzbul* and instructed that everyone should do so at the end of a *Shemitah* year as well. (Hayom Yom, Shalshes Hayachas 5747. See Otzar Minhagei Chabad, Elul-Tishrei, p. 40)

## Chabad

In conclusion, let us take a look at a lesson that the Rebbe derives from the words of the Torah describing the commandment of *Shemitah*:

שנת שבתון יהי לארץ, שבת לה:

The word “שבתון” means to “stop.” In a deeper, spiritual sense, the Torah indicates that the year of *Shemitah* should influence the Jew to a lasting

“cessation” and rest from all that is “earthly” and coarse; that he must become more spiritual and refined.

It should bring him to “שבת לה”—to be dedicated to Hashem, and not to the cause of false ideals and ideas which, high-sounding though they may be, drag down humanity into the mire of materialistic selfishness and coarseness. Only the ideals of Torah and mitzvos translated into everyday life lead to true refinement and elevation of the soul. This is the way of our patriarch, Avraham Avinu, who sacrificed his life for this ideal, and he passed it down to his children—that is how our people, the Jewish nation, has lived for more than 3,000 years!

The message of the *Shemitah* year is, therefore, a call for lasting cessation from the earthly and material, and a dedication to the higher things in life, in accordance with the Torah and mitzvos. A call to spirituality which should permeate every phase of one’s daily life, one’s thought, speech

and every action, including eating, business, and general conduct.

Let us heed this call and rededicate ourselves to a life which is spiritually fuller, richer and more perfect, bearing the imprint of the Torah and mitzvos in everything we do, in our thought, word and deed. With such resolution in our hearts, we may be confident of a

שנה טובה ומתוקה, בטוב הנראה והנגלה.<sup>13</sup>

1. Shaalos U'Teshuvos Shemen Hamor, Yoreh De'ah siman 4.
2. Igros Kodesh vol. 18, p. 253.
3. Nitzutzei Rebbe, Hiskashrus #683.
4. Shabbos Parshas Re'eh 5746.
5. Igros Kodesh vol 4, p. 154.
6. See Igros Kodesh vol. 5, p. 28. Vol. 21, p. 165.
7. Michtav Kloli, Rosh Chodesh Cheshvan 5747.
8. Shabbos Parshas-Matos Masei 5747.
9. Sefer Hachinuch, Mitzvah 328.
10. Michtav Kloli, 6 Tishrei 5733.
11. Letter in English, 20 Iyar 5740. Kfar Chabad #1593.
12. Sichos Kodesh 5739 vol. 3, p. 765.
13. Michtav Kloli, 3 Selichos 5711.





# Did You Ask Permission?

Reb Nochum of Chernobyl was engrossed in his studies in the court of the Mezritcher Maggid, when an elderly gentleman approached him.

"Reb Nochum," he began softly, "Your learning is very precious in heaven and it has created an angel. I am that angel and I would like to learn Torah with you."

"I will ask my Rebbe, the Maggid," he replied. "I do not do anything without receiving his permission."

Reb Nochum dutifully described the encounter to the Maggid who then asked, "Did you hear or learn anything from him?"

"No," answered Reb Nochum.

"Very well then, you should know he is not a

holy angel but rather from the forces of impurity."

Reb Nochum had no inkling that the elderly, innocent looking man was not pure and holy. It was his ingrained approach that nothing is done without asking permission first.

From where did he receive this iron clad rule that saved his soul?

He answered this question with a story from his childhood:

"My mother passed away when I was still quite young and so for most of my life I grew up with an adopted mother who had children of her own. At mealtimes it was abundantly clear that she would serve her own biological children larger portions than I received. I

became accustomed to this and accepted it as a part of life.

"One day I came home from *cheder* feeling hungry so I went into the kitchen to get something to eat. On the stove I saw that my stepmother had prepared a large dish but she was not in the kitchen to serve me. Not wanting to wait around, I took a portion by myself, making sure it was the same smaller amount that I usually received.

"When she came back home and saw what I had done, she slapped me for my behavior. In my defense, I let her know that I took the smaller amount.

"True," she said, 'but you did it without asking and that itself is an offense. We

don't do anything without asking!'

Reb Nochum concluded: "That slap and lesson stuck with me my whole life and actually saved me from the danger of learning with an angel of the *sitra achara*."

Reb Shmuel Levitin once related this story in front of the Frierdiker Rebbe, and the Frierdiker Rebbe remarked that the food he tasted was sour cream ("זויער-מילך").

The fact that Reb Nochum had to receive that slap was an incident of *hashgacha pratis*, in order to save him from listening to the forces of evil decades later. ⑦

(Adapted from Shmuos V'Sippurim vol. 1, p. 22)



# Caring For A Stranger

Mid 5710s\*

*This story was related by Daniel\* to Rabbi Mendel Scharf who shared it with us for this publication*

The tragic loss of his father and the family's breadwinner left a massive weight of responsibility on the shoulders of the oldest child, a boy of only 15 years old. Coping with the pain on a personal level was challenging enough but mustering the strength to be there for his family seemed almost impossible at times.

Daniel\* recalls those difficult days and weeks:

"I was walking to shul on Shabbos the same way I had been doing for years alongside my father... but now I was doing it alone. I was feeling pretty down at the time and was looking to keep to myself. As I passed fellow Yidden also going to shul I wished them 'Gut Shabbos' out of habit and continued on my way.

"I noticed a Chassidic looking man coming my way and called out 'Gut Shabbos'. His next words changed my life forever.

"Gut Shabbos,' he responded warmly, 'and how are you doing? How was your week?' I couldn't put my finger on it but I felt completely comfortable opening up to this stranger and sharing with him what was going on in my life. It was a show of deep concern and empathy that I didn't even realize I desperately needed.

"As I made my way to shul the next week, I silently hoped I would meet him again. Sure enough, we crossed paths and had another conversation. This repeated itself week after week and became somewhat unofficially official.

לע"נ  
הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' שמעון  
בהר"ר שמואל זאנוויל ע"ה הי"ד  
גאלדמאן  
נלב"ע כ"ט תשרי ה'תשע"ז  
ולע"נ זוגתו  
מרת אסתר בת הרה"ח ר' יוחנן ע"ה  
גאלדמאן  
נלב"ע ט"ב תשרי ה'תשע"ד  
ולע"נ  
ר' יצחק יעקב ב"ר משה ע"ה  
סיימאן  
נלב"ע ד' אדר א' ה'תשע"ט  
תנ"צ' ב'ה'

*"I stood there stunned. It never occurred to me that I had been talking to the Rebbe. I was overcome with regret that I had 'wasted' so much of his time."*

I savored these moments. His words and more importantly his care were the strength that carried me through each week."

A number of months later, Daniel and his friend were discussing Purim plans. His friend, somewhat connected to Chabad, convinced him to join the Lubavitcher Rebbe's Purim farbrengen which in those years took place in local halls to accommodate the large crowd.

Daniel agreed and they entered the shul surrounded by thousands of Chassidim and Yidden coming to celebrate this special day with the Rebbe.

As Daniel shifted and squirmed around to get a better spot and view of the head table, his eyes locked onto the Rebbe who he had never seen before. Or so he thought.

Instantly he recognized the Rebbe as the same Chassidic man who he had been meeting up with every Shabbos morning.

Daniel describes the magnitude of this revelation:

"I stood there stunned. It never occurred to me that I had been talking to the Rebbe. I was overcome with regret that I had 'wasted' so much of his time. At that moment I pledged to myself that I would not show up for our weekly Shabbos meeting. I was so embarrassed that when I got engaged and my *kallah*, who had some connection with Chabad, was going to get a bracha from the Rebbe, I opted not to go.

"One thing is for certain; those meetings saved me in many ways and set me on a path of healing. It never ceases to amaze me how the Rebbe took the time to care for me, a complete stranger." **T**

\* Name added for the sake of clarity.





לזכות  
הבחור מענדל שיחי' סלונים  
לרגל הגיעו לעול מצוות  
י"ד תשרי ה'תשפ"ב

שיגדל להיות חסיד ירא שמים ולמדן  
כרצון כ"ק אדמו"ר ויגרום נחת רוח רב  
לכ"ק אדמו"ר

נדפס ע"י משפחתו שיחיו



# נפלאות בכל

*The Events of  
Tishrei 5752\*  
in the Rebbe's Presence*

3 TISHREI 5752, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 159231

THE REBBE RECITES THE HAFTORAH ON TZOM GEDALYA.



# This year marks 30 years

since the unforgettable Tishrei of 5752\*. Although the month of Tishrei in the Rebbe's presence was always an uplifting and invigorating experience, Tishrei 5752\* was truly extraordinary. Many can recall the scores of occurrences that transpired, which went far beyond the ordinary Tishrei "structure." It was as though the Rebbe was injecting more and more energy into the Chassidim, being in public more than usual, and infusing them with many additional Heavenly *giluyim*, etched in the hearts and minds of those who merited to be present at the time. A number of the many phenomenal events of that Tishrei are documented in the following few pages.

In preparing this article, we spoke with Rabbi Yitzchok Loewenthal of Copenhagen, Denmark; Rabbi Moshe Orenstein of Netanya, Eretz Yisroel; Rabbi Mendel Scharf of Detroit, Michigan; Rabbi Pesach Schmerling of Far Rockaway, New York; Rabbi Yehuda Teichtal of Berlin, Germany, and Rabbi Eliezer Zalmanov of Munster, Indiana—all of whom merited to be present in 770 at the time—so that they could each share their personal memories.

The following is not a complete documentation of all the occurrences of this Tishrei; merely a few personal memories of the major events are told over in this article. For a more complete story, it is advisable to read the yomanim of this period, specifically the sefer "**Yemei Bracha**", and the Rebbe's *sichos* as they have been published in the *seforim*.

As it turned out, this would be the last Tishrei before the Rebbe had a stroke in Adar I, 5752\*. As Chassidim, we are certain beyond any shadow of a doubt that the Rebbe continues to pour *brachos* and *kochos* during the special month of Tishrei, especially to those who have come to spend the Yom Tov in his holy presence.

Although we don't currently have the privilege to witness these great *giluyim*, the Rebbe's connection to us, and ours to him, remain steadfast today as ever before. Our hope is that the following article will inspire its readers to strengthen their *hiskashrus* to the Rebbe during these auspicious days. Let us hope that Hashem will have mercy upon us in this merit and grant that we finally be able to see our Rebbe and merit to live through Tishrei with the Rebbe again *teikef umiyad Mamosh!*



## A Most Unique Time

**Rabbi Loewenthal:** “Before we begin discussing the events of Tishrei 5752\*–*T’hei Shnas Niflaos Bakol*, and how extraordinary it truly was, there is an important point I would like to clarify. The summer leading up to this Tishrei was an unusual time period, with many rare occurrences. As a result, during Tishrei it didn’t seem to me as though this Tishrei was different. Yes, the regular Tishrei structure was different and unprecedented; however, in context of the months leading up to that Tishrei, things seemed rather normal, since everything at that time transcended its usual structure.

“In other words, just as in every year, Tishrei was special. It was a most inspiring and uplifting time, especially considering the ‘wealth’ of *hashpa’a* that the Rebbe showered us with, from the farbrengens to the *chalukos*, *tekios* to *hakafos*, and everything in between.

But this year, building on what we had experienced in the time period leading up to Tishrei, everything seemed normal. To put it simply, it felt like that at that point in time there was a different set of rules.

“At the Shabbos farbrengens during the weeks leading up to Tishrei, there were many uplifting *sichos*, many of which contained revolutionary ideas. The Rebbe expressed himself in ways we never heard before, these were *giluyim* of a different level.

“For example, on Shabbos Parshas Shoftim the Rebbe spoke at length of the Frieddiker Rebbe as being a *navi*, who gave us a clear *nevuah*: Moshiach’s arrival is imminent, and it is our obligation to encourage each and every Yid to follow the Rebbe’s *hora’os* and advice. Two weeks later, the Rebbe spoke about the mitzvah of *bikkurim*, which is brought to the *Kohen Gadol*, etc. which in our generation is the [Frieddiker] Rebbe, *nesi doreinu*, and

thus, the meaning of *bikkurim* is to ‘bring’ our every thought, speech, and action to *nesi doreinu*...”

## Leil Gimmel D’Selichos

“About a week before Rosh Hashanah, on the eve of the third day of Selichos, the Rebbe said a very unique *sicha*. The Rebbe instructed that a farbrengen be held with a ‘*shturem*’ while mentioning that in days of old, in the town of Lubavitch, Chassidim would come to Selichos while still ‘*shokelen*’ (swaying) from the *lchaim* they said earlier that night.

“The fact that the Rebbe instructed us to farbreng with a *shturem* wasn’t something novel, yet this time wasn’t like ever before; the Rebbe indicated that he wants us to farbreng with a *shturem* a whole night long—literally! Needless to say, when the Rebbe came into shul for Selichos many Chassidim were saying Selichos while they were ‘*shokelen*’...”



THE REBBE DELIVERS A SICHA, 26 ELUL 5751.

LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 157595

## Welcoming the Guests

**Rabbi Orenstein:** “Every year, hundreds of Chassidim from around the world would come to New York to spend the month of Tishrei with the Rebbe. The largest group of guests were the *bochurim* coming from Eretz Yisroel. I was learning then in 770. I remember that this year, the group arrived on Thursday, 26 Elul. Together with their arrival, the atmosphere in 770 shifted gears, within a few short hours 770’s quieter and regular days paused until after Tishrei and was replaced with the ‘hustle and bustle’ of Tishrei.

“That afternoon, the Rebbe went to the Ohel at about 3:30, returning at about 8:15. Shortly thereafter the Rebbe came downstairs to shul for Mincha and Maariv. Beforehand, the Rebbe told Rabbi Groner there would be a *sicha* following davening, so the *shtender* facing the crowd was already set up. (Oftentimes, the Rebbe would only motion towards the end of davening, indicating that there was about to be a *sicha*, in which case the *shtender* would hurriedly be set up and everyone would gather close to the front to get a place for the *sicha*. This time, however, everyone knew there would be a *sicha*, so whoever wanted to get a good place was able to do so in advance.)

“When the Rebbe entered the shul it was packed from wall to wall. During the beginning of Mincha, the Rebbe turned around for a moment and observed the crowd of guests.

“Towards the conclusion of the *sicha*, the Rebbe mentioned the famous saying of Chassidim of old, quoted in Hayom Yom, that they considered the day of their arrival in Lubavitch as their birthdate. I remember standing by the *sicha* and thinking to myself that this is the *kabbalas panim* (welcome) the Rebbe is giving his guests. The Rebbe really had



THE REBBE RECITES HATORAS NEDARIM, EREV ROSH HASHANAH 5752.

*nachas ruach* seeing them. The Rebbe spoke, showing a close connection to them like a *mashpia* in a yeshiva, as if to say, ‘Listen up, you need to take this day seriously!’

“In hindsight, this was the last time we merited the Rebbe greeting his guests verbally. When I think back to that *sicha*, it becomes clear to me that the Rebbe wanted to point out to us how much it meant to him that Chassidim come to spend Tishrei in

his holy presence. He said it then for all the future Tishreis, until we will once again merit to hear the Rebbe speak to us again, may it be this year!”

## Erev Rosh Hashanah

**Rabbi Teichtal:** “That year, Erev Rosh Hashanah was on a Sunday. In the later morning hours, two lines were forming outside 770. A line of those who came to give the Rebbe *panim*, alongside a second line of

29 ELUL 5751, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM165384





IN THE DAYS LEADING UP TO ROSH HASHANAH, THE REBBE RECEIVES PANIM FROM THOUSANDS.

those who came for the standard Sunday dollars. In the early afternoon, the Rebbe began accepting *panim*, wishing everyone who passed by ‘*Kesiva vachasima tova*.’ Afterwards, the Rebbe came out for the regular Sunday dollars.

“When the Rebbe went to the Ohel, as he would on every Erev Rosh Hashanah, it was already quite late in the day. The Rebbe returned from the Ohel only minutes before the onset of Rosh Hashanah.”

## Rosh Hashanah

**Rabbi Schmerling:** “During davening on Rosh Hashanah, there was a huge amount of pushing in the front half of shul, everyone was trying to get a good place for the Rebbe’s *tekios*. Needless to say, the situation in shul was quite chaotic. Usually, the sounds of the pushing subsided by the time *krias haTorah* had begun, yet this

year it just wouldn’t end. When the *ba’al koreh* started to read I wasn’t able to hear.

“At some point during *kriah*, I don’t remember exactly when, the Rebbe turned around and walked to the corner of his *bima* and began motioning with his right hand to different people instructing them to go down from standing on tables and so on; the Rebbe was establishing an order in the shul by himself. The Rebbe remained standing there until they called him up for his *aliyah*.

“Due to the huge crowd packed into 770, forming a pathway for the Rebbe to go through the crowd to the *bima* wasn’t a simple task. Two members of the *vaad hamesader* walked directly in front of the Rebbe to create a pathway, yet it was very narrow and part of the way the Rebbe had to walk sideways.

“Even during the *haftarah* there was still so much pushing that I couldn’t hear. At that point, I started to get worried that this was going to continue through *tekios*, yet the moment the Rebbe’s holy voice was heard reciting ‘*Lamnatzeiach*’ the shul fell silent.”

**Rabbi Teichtal:** “When the Rebbe said ‘*Lamnatzeiach*’ and the *pesukim* afterwards, there was a very soft silence in the shul. The Rebbe’s holy tone was clearly heard as he recited the *pesukim*. In the *possuk* of “*Arov avdecha*,” the Rebbe emphasized the word *al* for a long moment’.

**Rabbi Loewenthal:** “Every year, during the moments leading up to *tekios* there was a thick tension felt in the air, everyone was focused on the Rebbe. I remember the *tekios* that year were particularly clear and smooth.”

**Rabbi Teichtal:** “At the Rosh Hashanah *farbrengen* the Rebbe



## From Mivtzoim You Never Lose!

**Rabbi Teichtal:** “On the morning of the first day of Rosh Hashanah I came to 770 early in the morning to secure my place for *tekios*. A little while later, an older fellow approached me and asked me to join him on *mivtzoim* until davening would begin. At first, I was reluctant. I knew if I leave now I will most likely lose my place. But then I said to myself, ‘Here I have an opportunity to put myself on the side, and do what the Rebbe wants!’ which is exactly what I did.

“We came back to 770 about a half hour before davening. It was packed, there was no way I could make it back to my place. So I hung onto the fellow I went with and ‘landed’ near his place in the front of the shul. As it turns out, this was a far better place than the place I had secured for myself earlier. From this place, not only was I able to hear the *tekios*, I was also able to see the Rebbe’s holy face throughout the *tekios*, from how he set up the *shofros* until the end.”



THE REBBE ENCOURAGES THE SINGING DURING KOS SHEL BROCHO, MOTZOEI ROSH HASHANAH 5752.

spoke about the year 5752\* being a *shana temima* (a “wholesome” year; a leap year with thirteen months and the most days possible<sup>2</sup>) an idea he highlighted throughout Tishrei. After the *farbrengen*, the Rebbe distributed *kos shel bracha*. When it ended, before leaving shul the Rebbe began singing his father’s *hakafos niggun*. This would be the first of the many times the Rebbe started it throughout that Tishrei.”



THE REBBE RECITES HAVADALA AT THE CONCLUSION OF ROSH HASHANAH.

2 SHEVAT 5752, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 158588



2 TISHREI 5752, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 158884

## Shabbos Shuvah

**Rabbi Teichtal:** “Shabbos was Vov Tishrei, the *yahrtzeit* of Rebbetzin Chana, and the Rebbe was *chazan* for all *tefillos*. One thing that stands out in my mind was during Musaf. When the Rebbe started to sing “*Hu Elokeinu*” Chassidim remained quiet in an attempt to hear the Rebbe singing himself. Yet the Rebbe motioned that he wanted everyone to sing along.

When everyone finished singing, we heard the Rebbe singing the end of the niggun “*Lihiyos lachem l'Elokim.*”

**Rabbi Scharf:** “Towards the conclusion of a typical Shabbos farbrengen, the Rebbe would give out bottles of *mashke* for those hosting events during the coming week. These individuals would go up to the Rebbe's place, and the Rebbe would pour some of their *mashke* into their cup to say *l'chaim* at the farbrengen.

“At the farbrengen of Shabbos Shuvah, my brothers and I merited to receive a bottle of *mashke* for the upcoming *yahrtzeit* of our father. The Rebbe poured from the bottle into a cup and gave it together with a piece of cake to each of us to say *l'chaim.*”

**Rabbi Teichtal:** “On Sunday, the Rebbe held a *yechidus* for the members of Machne Yisroel Development Fund. There was a large crowd of people who came to see the Rebbe, so it lasted for



a long time, until after midnight. At its conclusion, before the Rebbe left shul, the Rebbe began singing his father's *hakafos niggun*. I remember how the crowd joined in with such excitement.

"As a rule, during this Tishrei, there was a strong sense of elevated spirits throughout the whole month in reaction to the Rebbe's constant push for joy."

## Erev Yom Kippur

**Rabbi Schmerling:** "Every year the Rebbe would do *kaparos* alone in his room. In the early morning, the *mazkir* would bring the chicken into the Rebbe's room. A few minutes later the Rebbe would come outside to the *chatzer* holding the chicken in his hands where Rabbi Yisroel Shimon Kalmenson would *shecht* it.

"On Erev Yom Kippur 5752\*, the *shechita* was held outside the front door of 770 which enabled many more people to witness this special moment. There was more place to stand and the Rebbe was elevated which made it easier for more people to see. A large crowd gathered on the sidewalk outside 770. At about 8:30 a.m. the Rebbe walked out for *kaparos* with a very serious expression."

**Rabbi Loewenthal:** "The Rebbe came downstairs for Mincha at 3:15. After davening the Rebbe said a *sicha*, full of '*himeldike osiyos*.' The Rebbe spoke of the mitzvah of eating and drinking on Erev Yom Kippur and went on to speak about the imminent arrival of Moshiach, stating that if Moshiach will come today, the '*Chassidische seuda*' of today will continue into Yom Kippur with the *shor habar* and *levyasan*. Yom Kippur will then be celebrated with the greatest joy, similar to what occurred when the first *Beis Hamikdash* was dedicated!

"The Rebbe continued saying that Yom Hakippurim can be interpreted to mean that Yom Kippur is similar to



AFTER PERFORMING KAPOROS IN HIS ROOM, THE REBBE EXITS 770 HOLDING THE CHICKEN FOR THE SHECHITA.

Purim, in the context of being greater than Purim, which demands us to be in a state of joyful celebration—'*Ad delo yada*'—far greater than the joyful celebration of Purim!

"The Rebbe spoke for about an hour, concluding the *sicha* by beginning his father's *hakafos niggun* and vigorously encouraged the singing. This was a very unusual conduct for Erev Yom Kippur.

"Before leaving shul, the Rebbe gave out dollars for tzedakah, during which a big circle of dancing formed in the center of the shul, in light of the remarkable words we had just merited to hear from the Rebbe.

"After hearing this *sicha*, before returning to 770 to receive our *bracha* from the Rebbe as *bochurim*, we stopped off at our dormitory where we all said *l'chaim*."

9 TISHREI 5752, CHAIM B HALBERSTAM VIA JEM 8587



ON THE WAY TO MINCHA OF EREV YOM KIPPUR, THE REBBE STOPS TO PUT COINS INTO THE MANY TZEDAKAH BOXES.



## Yom Kippur

**Rabbi Tiechtal:** “Napoleon’s March’ of this year is one of those scenes that will stay with me for my whole life. When the special moment arrived, all eyes were focused on the Rebbe. At first, the Rebbe remained at his *shtender* facing the wall, while encouraging the singing with his hand. Moments later, the Rebbe turned around and went up the steps facing the crowd, and began to encourage the singing intensely, while his face was covered with his tallis. No words would do justice to describing what it was like. It was a very powerful moment, it felt as though this is it! Nothing else existed then...

“At the end of the singing, instead of going down from the steps and back to his place as the Rebbe would usually do, the Rebbe remained standing on top of the steps facing the crowd. The Rebbe removed the tallis from covering his face, and his face was beaming brilliantly. It was as though the surreal experience of ‘Napoleon’s March’ froze.

“Rabbi Tenenbaum blew the shofar, which was followed by the cry of *לשנה הבאה בירושלים*. Just then, in a surprise to everyone present, the Rebbe motioned—the singing should continue! The crowd began singing as the Rebbe descended from the steps returning to his place for Maariv. After Havdalah, before heading back to his room, the Rebbe began singing his father’s *hakafos niggun* once again.”

## B’shem Hashem

**Rabbi Loewenthal:** “As mentioned earlier, throughout Tishrei, there were many things that stood out making Tishrei of *Niflaos Bakol* unique. The first major event that was unprecedented and came as a big surprise, was on the morning after Yom Kippur. An announcement came out from *mazkirus* that the Rebbe is going to give out dollars for tzedakah

to boys and girls under bar and bas mitzvah only. The Rebbe stressed that this is only for children and said that their teachers or parents shouldn’t try to make any *kuntzen* (tricks) and try to receive a dollar themselves.”

**Rabbi Scharf:** “At the time I was a child and therefore merited to receive a dollar on that day. First the girls from Beis Rivkah went by, then the boys from Oholei Torah. We went by the Rebbe class by class, to each one of us the Rebbe gave a dollar, while

the Rebbe looked at each of us with a beaming smile. It was indeed a very special moment.”

**Rabbi Zalmanov:** “This was a unique opportunity for me to receive a dollar from the Rebbe on a ‘regular’ day, since we generally avoided going to ‘dollars’ other than for special occasions (such as birthdays) so as not to inconvenience the Rebbe (we also only went for *kos shel bracha* once a year, not every time it happened).”



THE REBBE RETURNS TO HIS ROOM AT THE CONCLUSION OF YOM KIPPUR.

10 TISHREI 5752, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 217697



17 TISHREI 5752, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 219218



THE REBBE RECEIVES AN ALIYA, FIRST DAY OF CHOL HAMOED SUKKOS.

LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 160145



THE REBBE GREETES SHLUCHIM AND SUPPORTERS DURING THE YECHIDUS FOR THE MACHNE ISRAEL DEVELOPMENT FUND, 7 TISHREI 5752.



## Niflaos Bakol, Literally!

**Rabbi Loewenthal:** “I had a personal story that took place during these days. A friend of mine invented for himself a place at the Rebbe’s farbrengens right near the Rebbe. He cut a hole open in the top of the table to the Rebbe’s left. During farbrengens he would find himself sitting no less than inside the table. Like this, he wasn’t blocking anyone, and at the same time was able to be very close to the Rebbe and was therefore able to hear and see very well.

“After Yom Kippur, my friend told me that he was leaving town and that I would be able to take his place until he returns. It was truly an amazing place, almost never was I so close, able to hear and see everything!

“At the farbrengen of Shabbos Parshas Haazinu, Yud-Gimmel Tishrei, during the second *niggun*, the Rebbe looked straight at me and waved towards me with his holy hand. I didn’t know what that meant, so I picked up a cup and said *l’chaim* to the Rebbe. Towards the end of the farbrengen this repeated itself. After the farbrengen, my friends came over to me and asked, ‘Yitzi, what’s going on?!’ The truth is though that I had no idea.

“Later that night, a friend invited me to join him for a trip to New Jersey to do *mitzvoin* on the next day, Erev Yom Tov. I readily agreed and hopped into the van.

“On the way, the driver took a sharp turn off the highway. The car turned over and I went flying out the window, landed straight on the concrete and fell unconscious. After a few minutes, I woke up and by the time the police arrived they didn’t believe my story that I flew out the window. It didn’t make sense that I was already back on my feet. It was nothing short of a miracle.

“We went to the hospital where they examined me with x-rays, during which I was repeating to the doctor, who was a Yid, what the Rebbe was speaking about the fact that this year is a year of wonders, *Niflaos Bakol*, and so on. We had a nice conversation, while in the meantime, in disbelief of the results, they ran an x-ray again. Seeing the confirmed results the doctor came back into the room and said to me, ‘You may go home and tell your rabbi he knows what he’s talking about!’ Then, when I was leaving I heard one of the nurses saying, ‘That’s the miracle boy!’ At this point, I already understood the meaning of the attention the Rebbe gave me at the farbrengen.”

## Sukkos

**Rabbi Loewenthal:** “Throughout this Tishrei, there were different modifications made in an attempt to make things easier for the Rebbe, and out of concern for the Rebbe’s health. Among these changes, it was decided that the *sicha* the Rebbe says on the Yom Tov nights of Sukkos will be said

at the Rebbe’s farbrengen place (as opposed to the front of shul, which also made it possible for many more people present to be able to hear). A chair was set up, hoping the Rebbe would speak while sitting. The fact that the *sicha* would be said here was great news for me personally, I had the perfect place (see sidebar), and I

would surely be able to catch every word.”

**Rabbi Schmerling:** “For this purpose, a makeshift bridge was erected, and after Maariv the Rebbe walked over this bridge to his farbrengen place. When the Rebbe arrived, the Rebbe asked, ‘Where is the *shtender*?’ Rabbi Groner attempted to ask if the Rebbe would sit. In the end, the Rebbe stood leaning with his fists on the table without a *shtender*. (Subsequently, this turned out to be a bigger strain on the Rebbe.) I was standing close enough to see, I was shaken when I noticed the Rebbe’s knuckles were completely white from the pressure and yet the Rebbe continued speaking for over a half-an-hour!

“Needless to say, before the next night the *shtender* was brought over, and on Motzei Yom Tov again, the *sicha* was said from this place. Before the Rebbe began the *sicha*, the Rebbe started singing ‘*V’samachta*.’ It was a very special moment. The Rebbe stood in the center of the shul and encouraged the singing of the Chassidim with great vigor.”

## The Great Surprise

**Rabbi Loewenthal:** “The greatest surprise of Tishrei *Niflaos Bakol* was undoubtedly the events of the first morning of Sukkos. I woke up early and was present in front of 770 at 8:00 a.m. when the Rebbe came out to his sukkah to make the *bracha* on the *lulav* and *esrog*. There were only a handful of *bochurim* present.

“The Rebbe came out holding his *lulav* and *esrog* and went into his sukkah in the yard in front of 770. About ten minutes later, the Rebbe left his sukkah and started walking towards the large sukkah of 770. Personally, I thought the Rebbe was going to check the *mezonos* that were prepared for the guests. We followed the Rebbe into the sukkah and to our

surprise the Rebbe just continued walking until the end of the sukkah.”

**Rabbi Schmerling:** “When the Rebbe came out in the morning, I was already waiting in line to make the *bracha* on the Rebbe’s *lulav* as soon as possible. I wanted to be part of the early crowd in order to be ready for davening at 10:00 when the Rebbe was expected to come downstairs for Shacharis. In a short amount of time, it became clear that davening wasn’t going to begin at the regular time today. The news made its way down the line that ‘the Rebbe is there!’ The Rebbe had said he wanted to watch everyone make the *bracha* on the *lulav* that day. To be honest, I didn’t know exactly what that meant until it was almost my turn when I saw the Rebbe standing in the corner of the sukkah where everyone *bentched*, watching everyone make the *bracha*.

“For many *bochurim*, to have to say a *bracha* in the Rebbe’s presence was very difficult. You see, most *bochurim* never spoke to the Rebbe. Even when they went for dollars on their birthday for example, instead of telling the Rebbe ‘*Heint iz mein yom huledes*’ (today is my birthday) they would ask Rabbi Groner to tell the Rebbe it’s their birthday, out of awe of speaking directly to the Rebbe.

“Personally, I would tell the Rebbe these things directly, yet nonetheless, this situation was very different. You weren’t just saying a *bracha*, you were also doing something. The Rebbe is standing on the side and observing you from up close, while you are doing a mitzvah. For me, it was a very overwhelming experience. I must point out, the Rebbe was not gazing with a stern penetrating look, like the Rebbe would look at you during dollars for instance. It felt like the Rebbe is looking with a *sever panim yafos* (graciously). It was the most profound and intimate moment



THE REBBE EXITING THE SUKKAH, CHOL HAMOED SUKKOS.

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everyone merited to have with the Rebbe on that day.

“Many people, the Rebbe helped them make the *bracha* by correcting their mistakes. One individual who came from France and didn’t know the *brachos*, the Rebbe said the whole *bracha* with him, word by word!”

**Rabbi Teichtal:** “I want to point out, the space in this sukkah was very limited. Aside from the fact that the Rebbe was observing you, it had a feeling of a private *yechidus*, you were alone with the Rebbe for that moment. The Rebbe looked at each person with a fatherly look. I remember at one point Reb Shimshon Stock suggested that the Rebbe should sit. The Rebbe declined and wished him *‘a gut Yom Tov.’*”

**Rabbi Zalmanov:** “I was 12 years old, so not yet able to *bentch* on the Rebbe’s *lulav*, instead I stood on a table in the sukkah by the window of the *cheder sheini*, watching the Rebbe the entire time.

“Since the Rebbe kept asking if there were more people that didn’t *bentch* yet, it was understood that he wanted everyone to come, even those that initially were not planning to. For some people that caused a dilemma, as they had already *bentched* on their own *daled minim*. I overheard one *yungerman* tell another to just get in line and when it is his turn, he should mumble the *bracha* without actually saying Hashem’s name. But that suggestion was immediately rejected by others, who had reported that the Rebbe wanted to hear everyone’s *bracha* clearly and be able to answer “Amen” for each person.”

**Rabbi Schmerling:** “The Rebbe waited until everyone *bentched*, and it took close to six and a half hours, until after 2:30 in the afternoon! Only then did the Rebbe come downstairs to shul for Shacharis.”

**Rabbi Teichtal:** “During Hallel, when the crowd sang *Halelu es*

*Hashem kol goyim,*’ the Rebbe encouraged the singing very much, more than usual. We later learned that at exactly that moment President Bush held a speech in the UN about Eretz Yisroel which led to the Madrid Conference that took place a few weeks later.”

**Rabbi Schmerling:** “Towards the end of Musaf, Rabbi Groner asked the Rebbe regarding Mincha. The Rebbe motioned that he was going to daven Mincha right after Musaf. Rabbi Groner asked if he should go upstairs and bring down the Rebbe’s hat. The Rebbe motioned him that it wasn’t necessary. Immediately following Musaf the Rebbe davened Mincha, with his tallis, something very unusual.”

## Shemini Atzeres

**Rabbi Teichtal:** “When the Rebbe entered shul for Maariv of Shemini Atzeres, he turned around to the crowd and encouraged the singing in a most extraordinary way. The Rebbe did not give any time to ‘warm up’; as soon as Simchas Torah began, he began encouraging the joy of the Chassidim with the full intensity, surpassing all expectations. The same thing repeated itself when the Rebbe entered shul for *hakafos* a short while later, immediately motioning to whistle as well!”

**Rabbi Schmerling:** “After Maariv on the night of Shemini Atzeres, the Rebbe said a *sicha*. The Rebbe instructed everyone to go outside to the sukkah and make Kiddush. Then the Rebbe went on to state *brachos* which began with each letter of the Aleph-Beis: *shnas orah*, *shnas bracha* and so on, articulating many of them at great length. Upon reaching the letter *pei*, the Rebbe said, ‘May it be a *shnas pidus* (redemption) and especially with regard to the ability to articulate words of Torah *b’peh* (with one’s mouth)...’ Unfortunately, a few



THE UNIQUE DISTRIBUTION OF DOLLARS TO CHILDREN, 11 TISHREI 5752.

short months later, after 27 Adar I, these words took on a frightening new meaning...

“At the conclusion of the *sicha*, the Rebbe began his father’s *hakafos niggun* and then made his way back upstairs to his room.”

**Rabbi Loewenthal:** “This was the first of many *niggunim* that the Rebbe started that night. At the conclusion of the first recitation of ‘*Ata Horeisa*’ the Rebbe began this *niggun* again. After the second and third recitation of ‘*Ata Horeisa*’ the Rebbe started the *niggun* of ‘*Zol shoin zein di geulah.*’ Afterwards, the Rebbe recited the *possuk* of “*V’haya Zaracha*” three times, and again began to sing his father’s *hakafos niggun*, intensely encouraging the singing. The moment the singing finished, the Rebbe began to sing ‘*Ufaratzta*’ while again strongly encouraging the singing.

“During *hakafos*, the Rebe would always go to the center of the shul for the first *hakafa*. He would hold his small *sefer Torah* while dancing vigorously, swaying the *sefer Torah* in all directions.”

**Rabbi Scharf:** “During the intermediate *hakafos* various groups were honored to go with the *sifrei Torah* to the *hakafa*, while the Rebbe





LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 86140



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THE REBBE INSPECTS A LULAV, EREV SUKKOS.

would remain at his place in the front of shul on the elevated *bima* and encourage the singing from there.

“To the right of the Rebbe’s *bima*, there was a small window of space between it and the wall for older Chassidim who weren’t capable of enduring all the pushing.

“In general, throughout *hakafos* many people felt it was an auspicious time to request the Rebbe’s *bracha* for whatever it may be they needed. Indeed, many people merited special *brachos* during *hakafos*. I remember witnessing one of these on the night of Shemini Atzeres.

“The fifth *hakafa* was given to rabbonim and *mashpi'im*. Rabbi Hillel Pewzner of Paris who was standing among the older Chassidim, on his way to the *hakafa* had to pass by the Rebbe’s *bima*. At the time he was suffering with an ailment in his feet and he approached the Rebbe and asked for a *bracha*. The Rebbe turned to him and answered ‘Amen’ to his request.

“Another thing that stands out in my memory from that night is the 6th *hakafa*, which was given to the *tankisten* and *shluchim* from around the world. When they went for the *hakafa* they sang ‘*Shluchei Adoinenu*.’



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SHACHARIS, SECOND DAY OF CHOL HAMOED SUKKOS.

The Rebbe turned to face the shluchim dancing and observed them with a distinctive look, yet didn't encourage the singing throughout the *hakafa*."

**Rabbi Loewenthal:** "Just as the first *hakafa*, the seventh and final *hakafa* was the Rebbe's. The Rebbe would again dance in the center of the shul holding his small *sefer Torah*. The *hakafa* began by motioning the crowd to sing the regular *hakafos niggun* and danced around and around for several minutes. When the Rebbe slowed down, the singing became quiet as everyone thought the *hakafa* was over. Suddenly, to everyone's surprise, the Rebbe began to sing 'Ufaratzta,' continuing the *hakafa* for several more minutes. When this concluded, again everyone was sure the *hakafa* was over, but the Rebbe's holy voice was heard loud and clear 'N'yet n'yet nikavoh' while continuing to dance and encourage the singing very intensely for several more minutes.

"At the conclusion of the night, just before leaving shul, the Rebbe started his father's *hakafos niggun* one more time. In a manner different from years prior, in just one night we merited to hear the Rebbe start a total of ten *niggunim*!"

## Simchas Torah

**Rabbi Teichtal:** "While we were on *tahalucha*, the Rebbe's farbrengen had started. Naturally, on the way back we ran as fast as we could. I remember arriving at 770 in the middle of the farbrengen. The crowd was singing 'Zol shoin zein di geulah,' and a few minutes into the *niggun* the Rebbe suddenly stood up on his feet and began dancing in his place with great joy. The Rebbe was waving his hands in all directions, and also motioned to whistle. It was very *malchus'dik*. This lasted for about five minutes.

"Later in the farbrengen, the Rebbe explained the *pesukim* of 'Ata Hareisa,' concluding by saying that

the Chabad custom is to add 'V'haya Zaracha...' reciting the complete *possuk* in the tone the Rebbe used for the recitation before *hakafos*. Everyone responded after the Rebbe in the same tone 'V'haya Zaracha...' This repeated itself another two times. After the third time, the Rebbe began singing 'Ufaratzta.' It was very *freilich*!"

**Rabbi Scharf:** "There is one thing that stands out in my memory from the eve of that Simchas Torah that I presume went mostly unnoticed. There was a *bochur* from Eretz Yisroel, who apparently wasn't fully familiar with the way things worked in 770. He made himself a place for *hakafos* by connecting a board to the front left beam of the shul, on which he climbed and was standing on top of it when the Rebbe came into the shul.

"This *bochur* made it up to his place and was grabbing onto the beam as tight as he could, while people behind him were trying to get him down from his place, as apparently he was somewhat obscuring their view of *hakafos*. I was watching this from the side and it was obvious that the *bochur* didn't stand a chance in this struggle.

"All this was going on while the Rebbe had already entered the shul from the back. 770 was so packed that the *vaad hamesader* had to force a space open for the Rebbe to be able to pass. Needless to say, it took a good few minutes till the Rebbe got to his place in front of the shul.

"As the Rebbe approached the beams in the front, the people behind were just about successful in pulling this *bochur* down, when the Rebbe looked up for a moment at what was happening and everything stopped. In a quick and mostly unnoticed gesture, the Rebbe saved this *bochur*'s place for *hakafos*. This episode reminded me again that no matter how many people may be packed into 770, the Rebbe remains fully attentive to the needs of each and every individual."

**Rabbi Zalmanov:** That Simchas Torah was the first time I had a "good place" for *hakafos*. My father's friend offered to take me to his place, right next to the Rebbe's *bima* in front of the shul. In addition to being able to hear the Rebbe recite *Ata Horeisa*, etc., that spot also had the advantage that when the Rebbe went to the middle of the shul for the first and seventh *hakafos*, I was able to go onto the Rebbe's *bima* and see across the entire shul, watching the Rebbe dance with the Torah, without anyone obstructing my view.

On Simchas Torah morning 770 was emptier than the night before, so *hakafos* felt a lot more intimate. This was especially the case for me, as there was a designated place for children near the "*ches*," separated by a piece of plywood, and we were as close to the Rebbe as one could ever get during *hakafos*. Several times during *hakafos*, in the middle of the dancing and with his tallis constantly slipping, the Rebbe reached towards the plywood to allow us to touch the *sefer Torah* and kiss it.

**Rabbi Schmerling:** "The *hakafos* of Simchas Torah morning I remember very vividly. As in the previous two nights, the Rebbe went to the center of the shul for the *hakafa*. I had a very good place so I was able to see from up close how vibrantly the Rebbe was dancing. The Rebbe was holding his small *sefer Torah* while dancing in a circle repeatedly. The Rebbe's joyous dancing was so intense that his tallis kept slipping almost completely off. The *mazkirim* were sitting on the floor near the Rebbe and had to keep jumping up to fix the placement of the Rebbe's tallis.

"While the Rebbe was dancing around and around, I was able to see clearly how the Rebbe was focused on making individual contact with everyone present! It was awe-inspiring; the Rebbe was dancing with so much enthusiasm and at the same time was





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THE REBBE ENCOURAGES THE SINGING AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE CHILDREN'S RALLY ON CHOL HAMOED SUKKOS.

staring very deeply into every single individual present! On a personal level, I must say that although every time the Rebbe looked at you it was very moving, this time the Rebbe looked at me, I felt it was unique. I can't describe it in words but it definitely captivated me on an entirely different level.

"Today, when I think back to the events of that Tishrei, the last one we merited to be with the Rebbe before 27 Adar, it is clear to me that besides for the overwhelming amount of *giluyim* on a general level, the Rebbe also made a particular effort on both the first day of Sukkos and on Simchas Torah to connect with every Chosid in the most intimate way possible."

## Seeing Off the Guests

**Rabbi Schmerling:** "At the conclusion of Tishrei the Rebbe held

a *yechidus* for all the guests who came for Tishrei. As usual, the *yechidus* was held in groups. The first group consisted of *chassanim* and *kallots*, the second group was children of bar and bas mitzvah, and the third group was the *bochurim*. Those who were learning in New York and weren't guests, myself included, were in the women's section upstairs. The Rebbe spoke to the *bochurim* for longer than usual.

"For many, this *yechidus* was sort of a culmination of the whole Tishrei. After everything we had experienced and hearing from the Rebbe extraordinary ideas, mostly about Moshiach, at the farbrengens and *sichos* throughout the whole month, and living with the '*koch*' the Rebbe had infused us with, the Rebbe was now speaking directly to the *bochurim*.

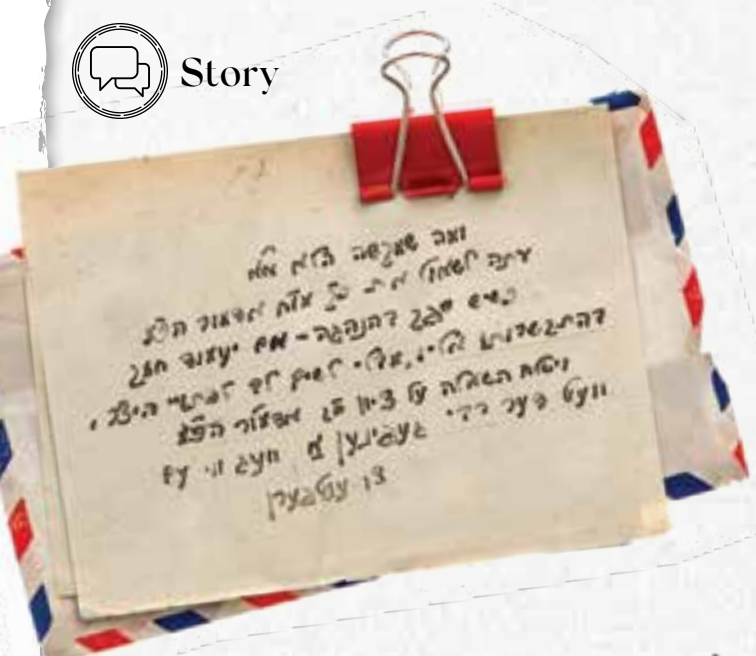
The Rebbe spoke of the obligation the *bochurim* have to study Torah, reiterating this five times throughout the *sicha*! The Rebbe went on to say that the involvement in learning must be to the point that at night one should be dreaming about the subjects in Torah he is learning!

"It was evident that the Rebbe was telling us *bochurim* that no matter what is going on, the Rebbe's main demand to the *bochurim* never changed, and as *bochurim* we are meant to stay focused on our study of Torah first and foremost." **T**

1. See letter by Reb E.C. Althoiz about the year 5687, the year the Frierdiker Rebbe was arrested; Likkutei Diburim (LaHaK) vol. 5 p. 1358. As well, see Derher Tishrei 5774, about the year 5748, the year of the Rebbetzin's *histalkus*.

2. See Sichas Shabbos Parshas Nitzavim 5751, Rosh Hashanah and Shabbos Shuva 5752.





# דער רבי וועט געפינען א וועג...

לזכות דוד בן שיינא שיחי'  
לרגל יום הולדתו,  
לשנת הצלחה בכל מכל כל, אמן  
והצלחה מרובה בעבודת השליחות

## Davening for Each Other

AS TOLD BY RABBI AVRAHAM BLEICH (DETROIT, MI)

Several years ago I celebrated the wedding of my son in Eretz Yisroel on the same night that a former *talmid* of mine from the Stoliner Yeshiva got married in America. We are both Stoliner Chassidim and a year and a half later I met this former *talmid* in Yerushalayim as we were spending Rosh Hashanah by the Stoliner Rebbe.

We were happy to see each other in person and started catching up. At some point in the conversation he confided with me that he and his wife had been concerned as time passed from the wedding and in consultation with

fertility experts they discovered that both of them had insurmountable fertility issues.

I felt his pain and said to him that my son's *chasunah* took place on the same night as his and thus far he and his wife had also not been blessed with children or to even become pregnant, although there were no known fertility issues. In the spirit of the teaching of Chazal, "כל המבקש" — רחמים על חבירו והוא צריך לאותו דבר הוא נענה תחילה — whoever davens for mercy for his friend, when he needs the same thing, he is answered first," I suggested that we exchange



names. He would daven on behalf of my son and daughter-in-law and I would daven for him and his wife.

Several months later I was delighted to hear the good news from my son that they were expecting a child, but I hesitated to share this with my *talmid*, lest he did not have similar news to share and my news would just pour salt on his wounds.

A few months later I was in New York for a wedding and delightfully ran into my *talmid*. Now that we were face to face I asked him if there was any progress and he joyfully told me that they were expecting a child very soon. "I should have notified you earlier but I hesitated, lest I hurt you..."

Needless to say I was happy to report that my son and daughter-in-law were blessed as well, and he then proceeded to share with me an amazing story.

As he had mentioned to me months earlier in Yerushalayim, he and his wife were diagnosed with insurmountable fertility issues. They continued seeking medical advice and eventually the fertility experts devised a plan of action to at least give it a try.

Throughout the entire process they had gone to the Ohel on numerous occasions to ask for a *bracha* and on the night before the anticipated procedure they went to the Ohel as well.

The next morning, before heading out to the clinic for the fertility procedure his wife was shocked and delighted to discover that she was pregnant!

Elated and in shock they arrived in time for their appointment and shared the news with their doctor. In disbelief, the doctor ordered a more comprehensive lab test and the results were undeniable: This couple who had both been diagnosed with insurmountable fertility issues did not need the scheduled procedure after all! A clear miracle!

A few days later, his wife suggested that they return to the Ohel to thank the Rebbe for such a wonderful miracle and to daven on behalf of my son and daughter-in-law that they should also be blessed with children.

Amazed at the story he just shared, I asked him if he knew the date he and his wife were at the Ohel. He pulled out his phone and checked his calendar to determine the date of the scheduled procedure and after a phone call or two we connected the dots: My daughter-in-law had become pregnant at the earliest opportunity after my *talmid* and his wife had returned to the Ohel to daven for my son and daughter-in-law.

Baruch Hashem, both couples gave birth to healthy baby girls one week apart. **❶**

## YOUR STORY

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



Moments

לזכות  
הת' ארי' לייב שיחי' וועג  
לרגל הגיעו לעול מצוות  
ז' תשרי ה'תשפ"ב

שיגדל להיות חסיד ירא שמים ולמדן  
ויגרום נחת רוח רב לכ"ק אדמו"ר

נדפס ע"י  
משפחתו שיחיו



# TISHREI MOMENTS

5 - 6 Tishrei 5745\*







The Rebbe enters the main shul for *krias HaTorah*.



The Rebbe receives the third *aliyah*.



The *sefer Torah* used was the recently completed sixth *Sefer Torah Haklali* arranged by Rabbi Yisroel Deren, who was then the shliach in Springfield, Massachusetts. Before *hagbah*, the Rebbe instructed Rabbi Deren that the *niggun* “*Sisu Vesimchu*” be sung as the Torah is returned to the *aron kodesh*.



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LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 2185

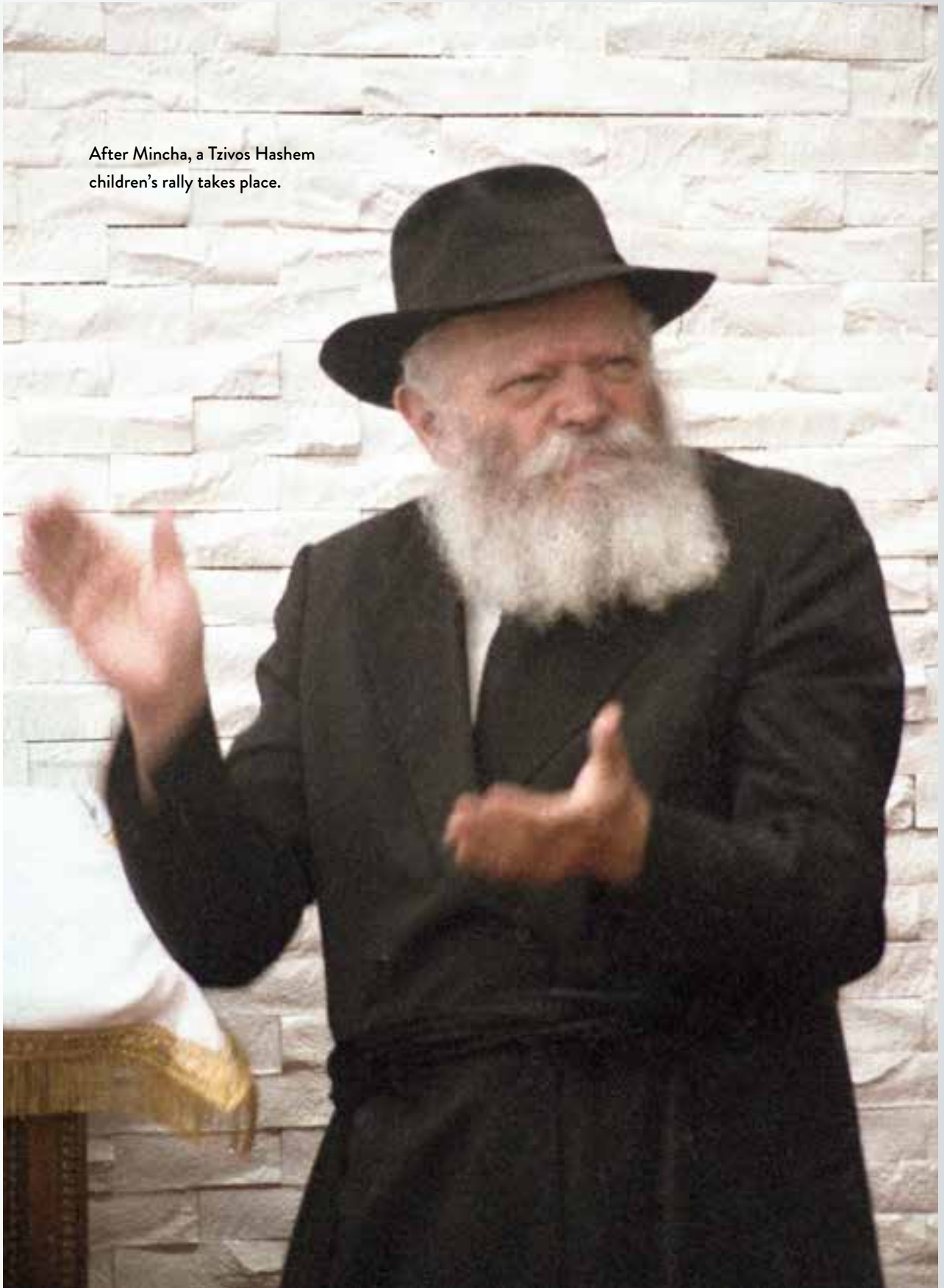




The Rebbe encourages the singing.



After Mincha, a Tzivos Hashem  
children's rally takes place.





The Rebbe spoke three *sichos* followed by a distribution of coins for tzedakah to teachers, *madrichim*, and *madrichos* to distribute to the children.



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LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 212231

## VOV TISHREI - MAARIV

At 9:30, Maariv of Vov Tishrei, the 20th Yartzeit of Rebbetzin Chana, the Rebbe's mother, began in 770.

The Rebbe davened at the *amud*. Davening was followed by a surprise *sicha* about the power of Jewish women and the importance of the *mitzvot* pertaining to them. The Rebbe encouraged and requested initiatives in memory of Rebbetzin Chana in multiples of 20 (commemorating her 20th *yahrtzeit*).



LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 212310



LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 212314



# 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.

## Picture of Harav Levi Yitzchak

*Dear Editors,*

In the article about Tiferes Levi Yitzchak [*Interpreting the Depth*, Av 5781], you wrote about the picture of Harav Levi Yitzchak, which was discovered in 5751 and subsequently included in Tiferes Levi Yitzchak vol. 2, a cause of much *nachas* to the Rebbe.

I was the one who merited to receive this picture before Pesach that year. At the time, I was sent by Ezras Achim as a shliach to oversee the activities of Chabad in Dnepropetrovsk, filling in for my cousin, Rabbi Shmuel Kamitzeky, who was out of town

One day as I was sitting at my desk in the shul on Katzubinskaya Street, a man walked in and introduced himself as a member of the KGB. "I have a present for you," he exclaimed in Russian, and put down a picture on the table. I was in absolute shock when in front of me I saw the mug shot of the Rebbe's father with small words on the bottom "Schneerson, Levik, Zalmanowitz."

My priority was that I get it to the Rebbe as fast as possible. Three *bochurim*, Avremel Brashivetzky, Manis Barash and Sholom Wilhelm came from Moscow to Dnepropetrovsk to run a children's matzah bakery. The *bochurim* took the picture back with them to Moscow and gave it to Reb Berel Levin who was scheduled to Travel from

Moscow to New York for Pesach. It took a few months until it was published in the *sefer*, as recounted in the article by Reb Chaim Shaul.

The shul that we were based in was on Katzubinskaya Street. This was not the original shul of the Rebbe's father. That was on Mironova Street and was then occupied as an office building.

Each day, on my walk to shul from the hotel I was staying at, I took a detour and stopped by the building on Mironova Street. I would knock and each day the same woman would open the door. I would tell her that we want the building back! This became my daily routine.

(These were crazy times for Yiddishkeit in Russia. One could wake up in the morning and decide they were opening a *cheder* and by the afternoon, there could be a group of fifty children. I was naive but I kept trying my luck.)

One day, after an entire month of doing this, a man answered the door. He introduced himself as the manager of the building and asked me to leave them alone. When I gave him my regular speech that the building was stolen by them and actually belongs to us, the man said "You know what, bring me \$40,000, and the building is yours." Although I had no means of getting \$40,000, I immediately wrote to the Rebbe asking if I should try to raise the money so we can get Harav Levi Yitzchak's shul back.

The Rebbe answered: "If you have 40 thousand dollars, you should spend it on *haftatzas hamaayanos!*"

The Rebbe's answer surprised us but showed us what his priorities were for Lubavitch and us as his Shluchim in Russia at the time.

Later, the building was indeed returned to Lubavitch and now serves as an orphanage for Jewish Children in Dnepropetrovsk.

**Chaim Drizin**

BROOKLYN, NY

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## Not Even in Sinai

Dear Editors,

The article about *shleimus haAratz* in the Av magazine is a true masterpiece, covering such a broad topic and something the Rebbe spoke about numerous (a few hundred!) occasions. It must have been a big job for your research team.

I would like to add a point to the article which possibly was not stressed enough although it was mentioned.

The first part of the article dealt with the Rebbe's strong words that Eretz Yisrael belongs to every Yid and no one has the right to "give it away." It is a gift from Hashem and completely out of the hands of individuals.

The second part of the article focused on *pikuach nefesh*, something the Rebbe stressed more and more as time went on, eventually becoming the main argument against any kind of peace treaty that would include

giving even the smallest piece of land in Eretz Yisroel to the Arabs.

Now, this does not only apply to land within the perimeters of Eretz Yisrael. Usually, the Rebbe stressed that the prohibition against giving away "אף שטל", even a tiny spot is because every part of Eretz Yisrael belongs to the Yidden. However, there are a few instances where the Rebbe said that giving away **anything**, even in Sinai which is not in the perimeters of Eretz Yisrael, is absolutely out of the question. The Rebbe explained that none of the military experts see it as helping the Yidden, just the opposite!

In other words, *pikuach nefesh* is not an addition to the fact that Eretz Yisrael is the land given to us by Hashem. It applies even in a square foot of the Sinai Desert, which was conquered by Israel during the Six Day War. Giving away anything is a cause for disaster!

In a letter from the Rebbe dated 25 Tammuz 5737, he spells it out very clearly:

כל אלה מסוג זה ששאלתי דעתם (במישרין או בעקיפין)  
בזה ענו פה אחד שהחזרת השטחים (ום בסיני - מחוץ  
לגבולות אה"ק) מגבירה סכנת פקו"נ. לא נמצא ע"ע אף  
מומחה צבאי אחד שיאמר אחרת.

"Every single military expert whom I asked for their opinion on this matter, whether directly or indirectly, answered unequivocally that giving back territory, also in Sinai which is outside of the Holy Land will intensify the risk of *pikuach nefesh*. I have yet to find even one military expert who says otherwise."

**Asher Dewick**

BROOKLYN, NY

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## Correction

In the article about Reb Asher Zeilingold [*Fondest Memories*, Sivan 5781] on p. 46, we included a photo of three Chassidim with a caption "Reb Asher and Reb Shmuel Lew. Iyar 5725."

The third man in the picture is Reb Bentzion Schaffran a"h, a Lubavitcher activist who dedicated his life to the Rebbe's *inyanim*. His name was accidentally omitted. We apologize for the error.

**The Editors**