

# Derher

A Chassidisher

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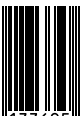
**THE REBBE'S ADVICE  
AND GUIDANCE FOR  
WORKING AT  
PARNASAH**

**Heart, Mind,  
and Home**

CHECKING TEFILLIN  
AND MEZUZOS

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

\$5.95



ELUL 5781  
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לעבן מיטן רבין



CIRCA CHESHVAN 5725, RABBI NOCHUM KAPLAN

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

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

# Melech Basadeh

ELUL 5723\*



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

## 23 ELUL

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

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

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



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

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

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

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



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# HEART, MIND, AND HOME

*checking tefillin and mezuzot*





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



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

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

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





# THE HALACHA

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

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

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

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

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

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



### the rebbe's instructions

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

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

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

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

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

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

### the first tefillin messages

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

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

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

“WHEN IT COMES TO HEALTH,  
WE ENGAGE IN ACTIVITIES EVEN WITH  
THE SLIGHTEST HOPE THAT THEY WILL  
BETTER THE SITUATION.”

\* 5748-1988, 5704-1944, 5727-1967

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

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

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

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

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

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

### taking it to a new level

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

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

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

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

### from tefillin to mezuzos

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

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

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

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



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

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

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



# The One and Only תורה אחת



Torah is extremely diverse.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## A Major Theme

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

### Once and For All

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

For example:

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

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

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

### One and the Same

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

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

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

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

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

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



## Nigleh and Chassidus

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### “It’s In My Name”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(4 Shevat 5715)





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

As the Rebbe once wrote to an individual:

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

## One People

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1. Yalkut Shimoni, Torah, 1-2.

2. See 19 Kislev 5733, sicha 4.

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

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

5. Rashi and Sifri Vaeschanan 6:6.

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

7. 10 Kislev 5744, sicha 1.

8. See 12 Sivan 5743, sicha 1.

9. Purim 5721, sicha 3.

10. Shabbos Parshas Noach 5745, sicha 4.

11. Shavuot 5716, sicha 6.

12. Shabbos Parshas Shemos 5743, sicha 2.

13. See 19 Kislev 5722, sicha 8.

14. Letter 7 Nissan 5718.

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

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

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

לזכות  
הת' יהושע חיים שיחי'  
לרגל יום הולדתו ה' אלול  
שימשיך ללכת מחיל אל חיל  
לנח"ר כ"ק אדמו"ר  
נדפס ע"י הוריו  
הרה"ת ר' אברהם אבא  
וזוגתו מרת טוֹיבא יונה ומשפחתם שיחיו  
פרידמאן

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

# BLESSING AND SUCCESS

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

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



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

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

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

The Baal Shem Tov explained:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## HE'LL TAKE CARE OF YOU TOO

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

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

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

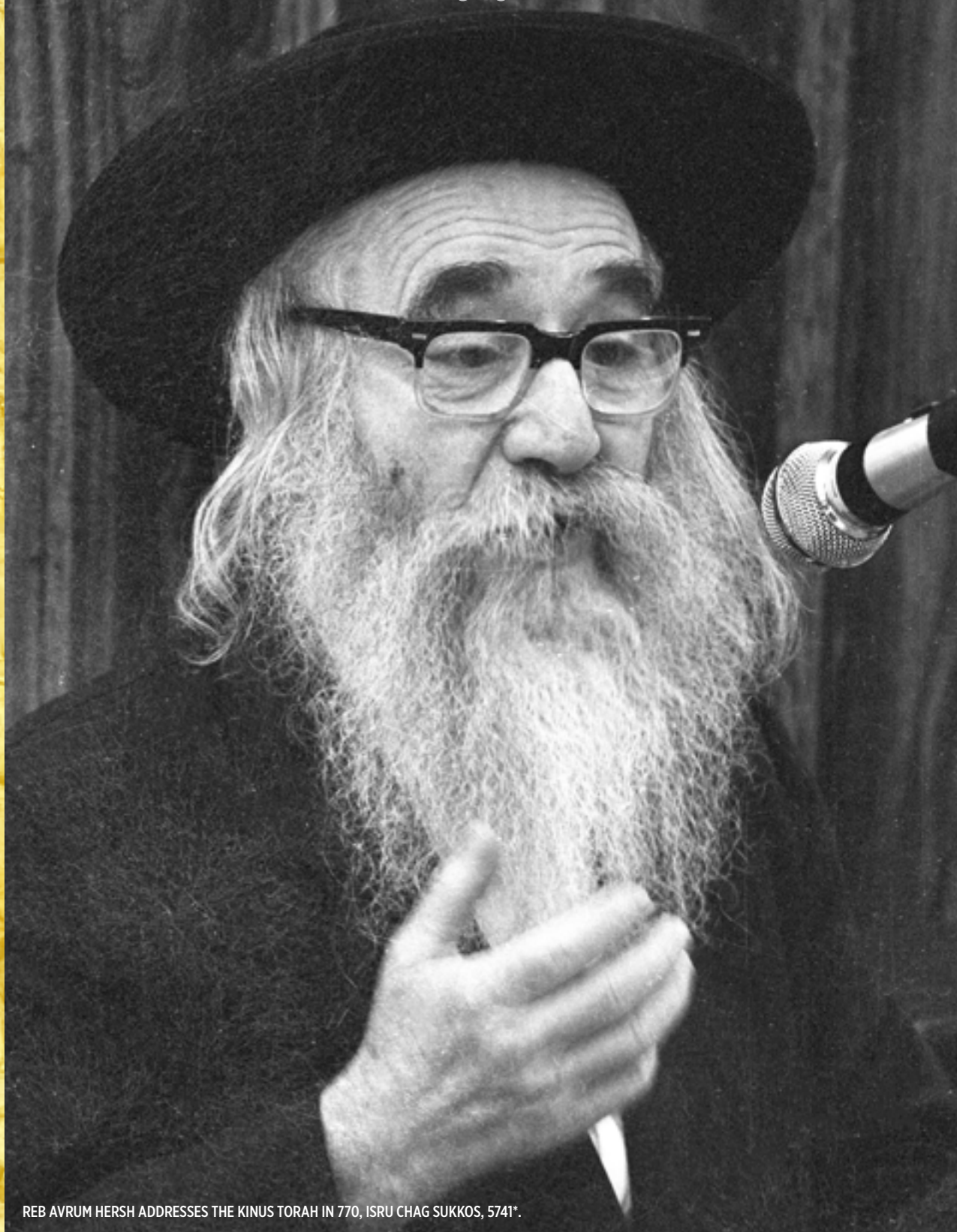
hands..." not with the toil of your mind and heart.)

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

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

(Letter dated 4 Teves 5716)

לזכות משפחת קארנפעלד  
בורביינק, קאליפורניא



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

LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 0157





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

LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 209527

# *A Soldier in Yerushalayim*

## REB AVRUM HERSH COHEN



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



## EARLY LIFE

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

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

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

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

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



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

COHEN FAMILY

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

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

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

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

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

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

"I became a Chabad Chossid because of him."

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

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

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



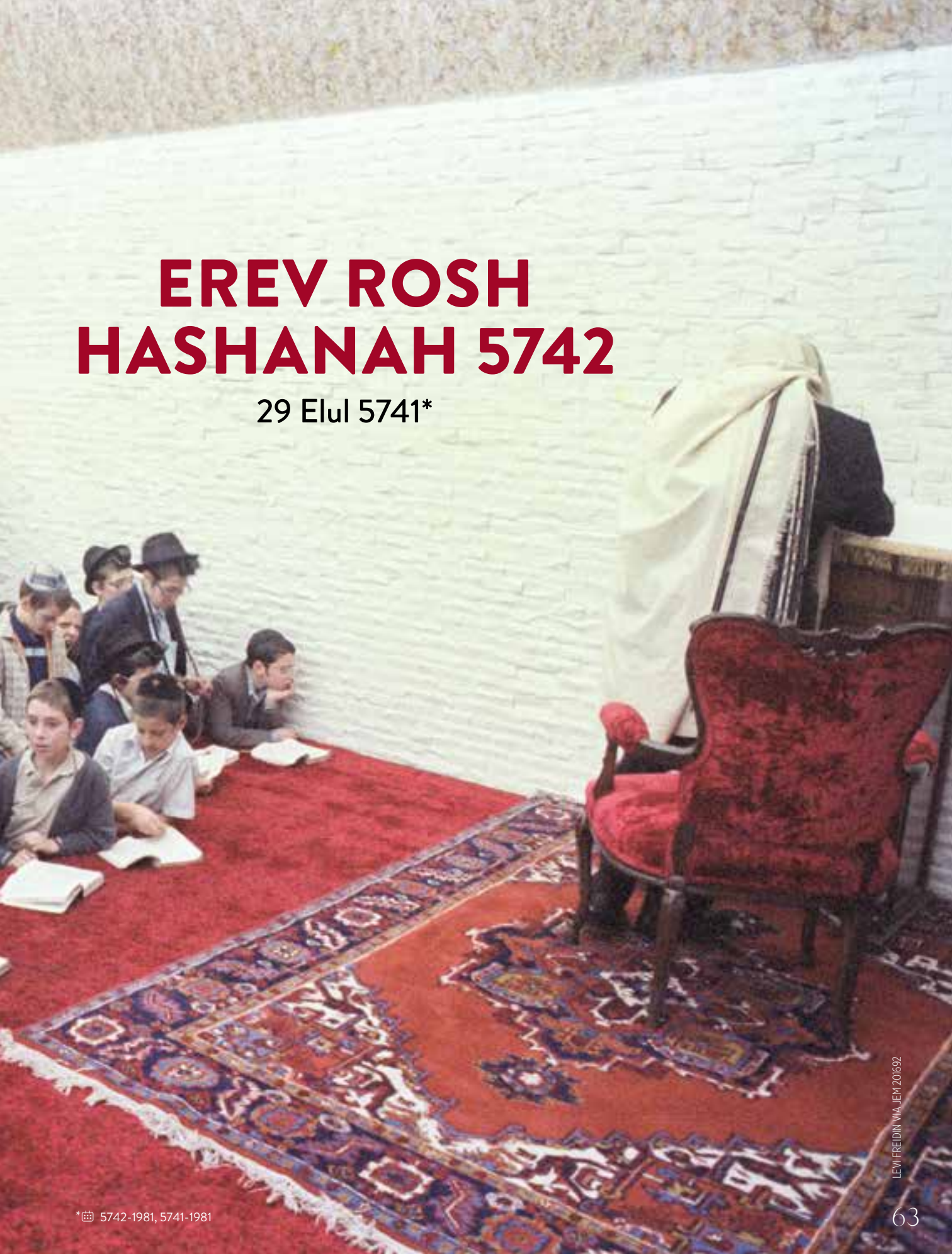
לזכות  
מרת חסיא תחי'  
לרגל יום הולדתה התשעים  
ז' מנחם אב ה'תשפ"א  
לאורך ימים ושנים טובות  
נדפס ע"י בנה  
הרה"ת ר' יוסף יצחק וזוגתו מרת הדסה  
ומשפחתם שיחיו  
ניו





# EREV ROSH HASHANAH 5742

29 Elul 5741\*





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



LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 201694

The Rebbe recites Hataras Nedarim.

