



לעבן מיטן רבי'ן



CIRCA CHESHVAN 5725, RABBI NOCHUM KAPLAN

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

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

Melech Basadeh

ELUL 5723*



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

23 ELUL

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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CIRCA MID 5720S

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

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

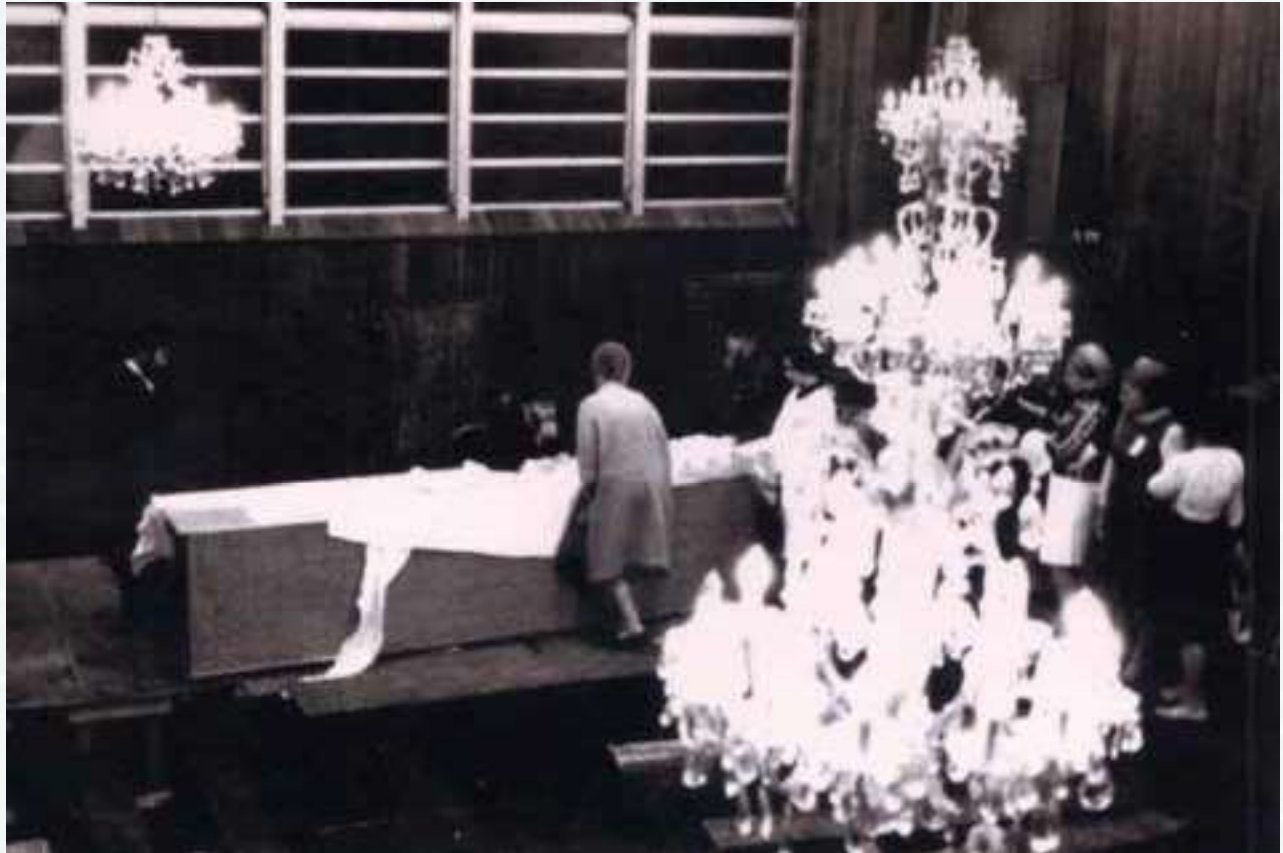
After "*Barchu*" the Rebbe sits down in his place with his right hand over his forehead, facing the crowd and his back to the wall. The area around the Rebbe's place, about 6-8 feet or so, stays empty.

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

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

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

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



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

SHABBOS MEVARCHIM – PARSHAS NITZAVIM-VAYELECH

Shabbos was filled with many uplifting and exhilarating experiences.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

FARBRENGEN

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

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

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

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

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

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

MONDAY, 27 ELUL

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

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

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

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

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

WEDNESDAY, EREV ROSH HASHANAH

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

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

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



CIRCA MID 57205

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

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

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

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