



לעבן מיטן רבי'ן



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

טור 'לעבן מיטן רבי'ן' הוקדש לזכרון ולעילוי נשמת
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ת"נצ'ב'ה

The Winter Selichos

TEVES 5725*



The year 5725* started off on a painful note with the passing of the Rebbe's mother, Rebbetzin Chana. Consequently, throughout the year the Rebbe would daven at the *amud*, and would also farbreng every Shabbos.

The following is an account of what transpired during the month of Teves 5725*. It is primarily sourced from the diaries of Rabbi Meni Wolff, who was a *bochur* in 770 that year. Included is a transcript of his personal *yechidus* which took place that month.

THURSDAY - 5 TEVES

During *chazaras hashatz* of Mincha, the Rebbe cried profusely from *Shema Koleinu* until the end of *shemoneh esrei*.

Later that night the *hanhalah* of 770 had *yechidus* with the Rebbe (as was the custom every month). After all the other *hanhalah* members left, Reb Shmuel Levitin remained, to share good news with the Rebbe intending to lift the Rebbe's spirits. He informed the Rebbe that the *temimim* are active in their efforts of "*Ufaratzta*" and they are teaching Chassidus to many who have not yet been exposed to it.

The Rebbe responded, “In 5715* the gates were opened for Moshiach. Since then, all that is left to do is to spread *sichos* wherever possible, in every shul, yeshiva, and anywhere else. We are especially fortunate that nowadays there is much less opposition to this endeavor.”

(The Rebbe then named several such shuls, that were formerly against the prospect of visitors coming to teach *sichos* but have since become open to it, as well as several *baalei batim* who would go frequently.)

The Rebbe then went on to say that if only the *baalei batim* who hear *sichos* at farbrengens would go out and publicize them, Moshiach would have already come. There is a direct correlation between the spreading of Chassidus and Moshiach’s arrival. Although the idea of “*Ufaratzta*” was only formally launched in 5718*, the gates for Moshiach were open since 5715*. Whoever works to publicize the *sichos* will have it good both *begashmiyus* and *beruchniyus*.

These passionate words to Reb Shmuel Levitin generated much excitement amongst the *temimim*, and many of them committed on the spot to go to different shuls and speak between Mincha and Maariv on Shabbos.

SHABBOS PARSHAS VAYIGASH - 7 TEVES

The farbrengen of Shabbos left the crowd in high spirits, and the Rebbe was particularly joyous.

Towards the end of the farbrengen, the Rebbe distributed *l’chaim* to those for whom this Shabbos was a special occasion. Reb Shlomo Giladi, who was returning to Eretz Yisroel that week, was given a bottle and instructed to farbreng in Lod, Kfar Chabad, and Yerushalayim.

Hatomim Shimon Lazaroff, who was a *chosson*, nervously approached the Rebbe with a bottle of *mashke* and hastily backed away before he took back the bottle. The Rebbe called him back and made an amused gesture and smiled at him. He was followed by Reb Hirshel Shifrin and then Reb Chaim Tashkenter (Horowitz) who was also flustered and promptly forgot to say *l’chaim*. The Rebbe chuckled at this as well.

That night, Motzei Shabbos, the Rebbe did *kiddush levana*. At the words “*tipol aleihem*” the Rebbe touched his lips three times. At the end of *kiddush levana*, the Rebbe shook the corners of his *tzitzis*, the right corner towards his right



and the left towards his left. The Rebbe then wished everyone “*A gut voch, a gut chodesh.*”

TUESDAY - ASARA B'TEVES

Throughout *selichos* the Rebbe was choked with emotion and sobbed a great deal. At certain points, he had to pause and simply could not continue.¹

Many of those present were particularly struck by how the Rebbe expressed himself in such a raw and open manner without restraint. Chassidim had never heard anything like this in the past and it was the topic of conversation amongst *anash* for a while afterward.

At the conclusion of *Selichos*, the Rebbe sang “*Rachamana D’anei*” with added fervor as he banged on the *shtender* and shook his head. The singing continued longer than usual.

SHABBOS PARSHAS SHEMOS - 21 TEVES

During the farbrengen the Rebbe told a story of Rebbetzin Sheina (Horenstein, the third daughter of the Friediker Rebbe), as Shabbos was her birthday. The story was that once as a young girl, her grandfather (the Rebbe Rashab) told her that anything done on Shabbos should be done with the intent of honoring Shabbos, even (trivial things like) sleep. She responded that she is indeed able to do everything with the



A PICTURE OF REBBETZIN SHEINA AS A CHILD.

intent of honoring Shabbos, except for sleeping.

The Rebbe then explained that since the subject of the story is a *neshama klalis*, this dialogue is relevant to us. The lesson is that even our sleep, which represents the lowest and most mundane faculties of a person, must be for the sake of Shabbos. This is achieved through the toil that one exerts before Shabbos.²

The next *sicha* was very stirring. The Rebbe spoke about the cries of the Yidden during *galus Mitzrayim* mentioned in this week's *parsha*. At a certain point the Rebbe cried out, "*Voss vil Er m'zol mekayem zain mitzvos, er zol unz aroisnemen fun galus*—Why does Hashem still need our mitzvos? He should take us out of *galus* already!" He quoted the Frierdiker Rebbe teaching, that Hashem derives (*kevayachol*) pleasure out of the fact that we are in *galus* because the value of our *avodah* is so much greater. The Rebbe exclaimed, "*Zol Er mevater zain oifen taanug, un aroisnemen fun galus*—Hashem should forgo this pleasure and take us out of *galus*!" The atmosphere was very tense; while the Rebbe was sobbing, many Chassidim were crying. The *sicha* concluded with a *bracha*.

Afterward, the Rebbe poured *l'chaim* for many of the visitors, including approximately 30 college students who were there as part of the "Pegisha"³ arranged by Tzach. The *mashke* from the bottle swiftly ran out, so they had to mix it with several other bottles to continue the distribution. The Rebbe was in high spirits and nodded encouragingly to Reb Zalman Posner, one of the organizers of the Pegisha. The farbrengen ended on a high note, with the Rebbe encouraging the intense singing of "*Hoshia Es Amecha*."

SUNDAY - 22 TEVES

When the Rebbe came to 770 that morning, somebody attempted to hold the door open for him. However, the Rebbe instructed this individual, that he must in fact enter first, as he was carrying tallis and tefillin.

YECHIDUS

(The following is a direct excerpt from the diary of Rabbi Meni Wolff describing the day of his *yechidus*.)

As a *hachana* for our *yechidus* we had a farbrengen last night with Reb Sholom Marozov in our dormitory on Troy Avenue.

Tonight was *yechidus*.

The first *bochur* to enter the Rebbe's room was *hatomim* Chaim Yehuda Rabinowitz. When he came out, he related that the Rebbe had advised him to learn the "*halachos hatzrichos*" (pertinent and necessary halachos) of Shulchan Aruch such as *Hilchos Shabbos* and *Birchos Hanehenin*. The Rebbe also thanked him for committing to learn a *masechta l'iluy nishmas* Rebbetzin Chana.

After him *hatomim* Nosson Ashkenazi went in. I was next in line to enter. The pressure was mounting, I was feeling very emotional and trembling with fear. This would happen to all of us when we were about to enter for *yechidus*. Our stomachs churned nervously. Ashkenazi stepped out, walking backwards...

I went over and grasped the door handle, and then knocked lightly as I opened the door. While closing the door I felt the Rebbe stare at me. I walked over to the table and the Rebbe stretched out his hand. I gave him my *tzetl*, my heart beating strongly, overwhelmed with emotion, trembling. The Rebbe read my *tzetl*, started to fold back the papers and let out a sigh. The Rebbe continued to read the paper, one hand on the table, the other hand resting on a drawer that extended from the table.

The Rebbe began to read another page and I had no idea what was to come. The Rebbe was flipping through the pages, back and forth, his body turned to face my direction, but his eyes were fixed to the paper.



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Then the Rebbe began to respond to several of the things I had written about.

“Regarding your eyesight, you must consult with a doctor, as everything must be done *al pi teva* (with natural means).

“As to Shulchan Aruch,” continued the Rebbe, (—I had forgotten to write which *chelek* I was currently studying—) “Which *chelek* are you learning? I don’t know, but if it is *chelek alef* that is good, and you shall add another *chelek* to your study schedule.”

I had also written about my memory, to which the Rebbe responded: “Regarding your memory, see to it that you study *Mishnayos baal peh* to the degree that they will be etched in your mind, and your head should be occupied with *maamarim* of any size. You should have much *hatzlacha* in your learning of *nigleh* and Chassidus, as well as your *kiyum mitzvos b’hiddur*. Your father and mother should enjoy much *chassidishe nachas* from you.”

This is about all I remember. The Rebbe continued to flip through the pages, gave me a sharp look and at that moment I understood

that my *yeichidus* was over. As I began to leave the room, I noticed the Rebbe inserting my paper into a pile of papers or perhaps writing something down. I don’t exactly recall. I opened the door and walked out. I had spent a total of four minutes in the Rebbe’s room.

The Rebbe had instructed several other *bochurim* that night to review *Mishnayos* and *maamarim baal peh*. One *bochur* had asked the Rebbe about *tefilah*, and the Rebbe advised that he daven while looking into the *siddur* and said no further on the subject. To another *bochur*, the Rebbe suggested that he should review both *nigleh* and *Chassidus baal peh* when he walks in the street. The Rebbe told yet another *bochur* that it is preferable to learn with one *nigleh chavrusa* for the entire day, rather than have two *chavrusos* and switch from the morning to the afternoon.

For some reason, I left the *yeichidus* rather broken and crushed. I sat alone motionlessly in a corner and cried for a long time. After I reviewed the entire *yeichidus* in my mind, my spirits had plummeted. And so it remained for the rest of the week. At



the next Shabbos farbrengen, the Rebbe gave me a look with both eyes which restored my spirits.”

TUESDAY - CHOF DALED TEVES

After Mincha, the Rebbe stopped to speak to a non-observant teenager, who frequently merited special attention from the Rebbe. This time, the Rebbe told him to work a little and not to think about himself, to be healthy, and that he should get married and send the Rebbe an invitation to his wedding. The Rebbe also advised him to learn Gemara with someone and see to it that he should be healthy and able to learn. The conversation lasted for around 15 minutes. The affection and warmth that the Rebbe showered on him was almost like that of a father to his son. It was clear that the teenager extremely appreciated the conversation. The Rebbe spoke with him in English.

THURSDAY - CHOF ZAYIN TEVES

Tonight before the Rebbe left 770 to go home late in the evening, he peered into the zal and saw my brother Nosson resting on a bench. As he continued walking, the Rebbe noticed me hiding behind the wall and leaned over to see who it was.

SHABBOS MEVARCHIM SHEVAT, PARSHAS VAEIRA - 28 TEVES

During the farbrengen today, the Rebbe told Reb Yona Edelkopf to make an announcement about a *melava malka* that would take place that Motzei Shabbos in honor of the Cheder Torah Ohr (an extracurricular afternoon/Sunday program

that would teach Yiddishkeit to public school students in Eretz Yisroel). Reb Yona promptly made the announcement, however, he omitted several important details. The Rebbe then said “*Vu, vos, ven,*” meaning that he should clarify the important details. Reb Yona got up again and added a few words. The Rebbe smiled and told him to be even more explicit, like Hashem told Avraham at the *akeida*, “*bincha, yechidcha, Yitzchok.*” Reb Yona made his announcement again. The Rebbe smiled throughout. Ultimately the Rebbe asked someone else to make the announcement properly, which he did with all of the relevant details.

Apparently, the Rebbe had given 100 dollars towards this *melava malka*. The Rebbe gave Reb Yona *l'chaim* to distribute at the *melava malka*. Reb Yona then gave the Rebbe more *mashke* also for the Melava Malka. The Rebbe responded, “*Ich geb eich meine, vos git ir mir andere*—I am giving you from my *mashke*, why are you giving me yours?” and made a dismissive gesture, but ultimately gave him from that *mashke* too.

Before the Rebbe left to walk home, he noticed that it was snowing outside, so he lifted the collar of his coat and walked home slowly. **T**

1. <https://ashreinu.page.link/3rvr> - minute 12:00
2. See the continuation of the sicha, for the Rebbe's lesson from Rebbetzin Sheina's response, in *Toras Menachem* Vol. 42, p. 113.
3. See “Changing Lives Forever – The Story of the Pegisha” - Magazine 79 (154), Adar II 5779.