

A Chassidisher **Derher**

א חסידישער דערהער

The Great Exodus

RELIVING THE INCREDIBLE KIRUVIM THE REBBE
SHOWED RUSSIAN CHASSIDIM 50 YEARS AGO

Expressions of the Heart

ALL ABOUT SAYING TEHILLIM

"לבנין עדי עד"

THE REBBE'S PARTICIPATION AT
THE WEDDINGS OF CHASSIDIM



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This magazine
has been made possible

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

לרגל יום הבהיר ר"ח כסלו

גוט יום טוב! לשנה טובה בלימוד החסידות

ודרכי החסידות תכתבו ותחתמו!



On Yud-Tes Kislev, we will celebrate Rosh Hashanah L'Chassidus; our connection with אילנא דחיי, the "Tree of Life"—the teachings of Chassidus and the Rabbeim who bring them to us.

When it comes to the *maayanos* of Chassidus, each one of our Rabbeim had a unique style and method of delivery in sharing their holy words. On several occasions the Rebbe pointed out these differences and the lessons we can learn from each of them.¹

One fascinating point that the Rebbe spoke about in the style and delivery of Chassidus is about the Rabbeim's *maamarim* of Acharon Shel Pesach and how they differed from the general style of the rest of the year.

Interestingly, many of the Rabbeim (especially from the Rebbe Maharash and on) would deliver *maamarim* in series known as "*hemsheichim*," where one subject could be continued throughout a full year or even longer. On Acharon Shel Pesach however, the *maamarim* are usually a subject of their own, breaking from the theme of the *hemshech*.

Additionally, the Rabbeim would generally give out their *maamarim* in writing after reciting them orally. The Acharon Shel Pesach *maamarim* were an exception: They were not written down by the Rabbeim after Yom Tov, and they are studied today from "*hanachos*," transcriptions of the *maamarim* written by the Chassidim from their memory.

Why the break from normal practice?

The Rebbe explains that Acharon Shel Pesach—being the eighth day of Pesach and symbolizing the number "eight" which transcends the usual order of things—is on a level of its own. While seven represents the natural order—the seven days of creation—eight is the one that breaks all boundaries and stands out higher than creation.

Therefore, says the Rebbe, the Chassidus said on Acharon Shel Pesach was in a league of its own, not just

a continuation in the theme of the ongoing *hemshech*. Likewise, the Rebbeim couldn't put the *maamarim* down on paper and commit them to specific words. Doing so would have placed a "*hagbala*," a limitation on an otherwise boundless, transcendent idea that doesn't belong in specific *oisyos*.²



These two variances mentioned by the Rebbe in the delivery of the Acharon Shel Pesach *maamarim* are actually commonplace in the Rebbe's *maamarim* throughout the year:

As is well known, the Rebbe almost never wrote down his own *maamarim*, deviating from the practice of most of the Rebbeim before him.

In the diaries of the legendary *choizer*, Reb Yoel Kahn *a"h*, he records how after the Rebbe delivered the first *maamar* on Yud Shevat 5711*, he was certain that the Rebbe was going to give a transcription in his own handwriting.

In *yechidus* one week later, the Rebbe asked Reb Yoel about the *hanachos* from the Yud Shevat *farbrengen*. Reb Yoel responded that the Rebbe is obviously referring to the *sichos*, because the *maamar* will be written by the Rebbe himself.

"What's the problem? You can't make a *hanacha* from the *maamar*?" the Rebbe asked. Reb Yoel responded that he couldn't do it.

"And what about the *maamar* from the following Shabbos?" the Rebbe continued. Reb Yoel again responded that he can't do it.

"What? You had too much *mashke*?" the Rebbe replied.

Reb Yoel insisted that the Rebbe should write the *maamar* himself, but the Rebbe wouldn't let up. The Rebbe told Reb Yoel to write up whatever he can, and the Rebbe will see what to do about writing the *maamar*.³

And that's how it went for the next few decades. The Rebbe delivered hundreds of *maamarim* at *farbrengens* and on other occasions, but never wrote them down

himself. At times, especially in the later years, the Rebbe edited *maamarim* and gave them out in that way, but he never wrote a full *maamar* as the preceding Rebbeim had.

The second point about the Acharon Shel Pesach *maamarim* is also largely true about the Rebbe's *maamarim* throughout the year. The Rebbe rarely delivered *maamarim* in *hemsheichim*.

Perhaps it could be said that these unique features of the Rebbe's Chassidus demonstrate, as the Rebbe explained in the *sicha* on Acharon Shel Pesach, that the Rebbe's Chassidus is on a different dimension than all the preceding Rebbeim.

The Rebbe said that our generation is the *dor hashvi'i*; the one that will actually bring Moshiach and make the *geulah* a reality in this lowly world. Just like the seven *tzaddikim* from Avraham Avinu and on, each of our Rebbeim brought *Elokus* down to a lower realm. But just like it was Moshe Rabbeinu who completed the task and brought the *Shechina* down on Har Sinai, it is the Rebbe who brings *Elokus* to the depths of *olam hazeh*, transforming the very physical world into a *dira b'tachtonim*.

The Baal Shem Tov was promised that Moshiach will come when the *maayanos* of Chassidus reach the outside, and in these last moments of *galus*, it is ultimately the Rebbe's Chassidus that tips the scale and brings the *geula*, may it be *teikef umiyad Mammosh!*

A Chassidisher Derher

מוצש"ק כ"ח ה'תשפ"א
שנת המאה ועשרים להולדת כ"ק אדמו"ר

1. See for example Simchas Torah Night 5747, et. al.
2. Acharon Shel Pesach 5744, *sicha* 6.
3. Yemei Bereishis p. 403.



Shemittah Talk



מוקדש לזכות
כ"ק אדמו"ר נשיא דורנו
יבוא ויגאלנו ויוליכנו קוממיות לארצינו הק'
תיכף ומיד ממש!
ע"י הרוצה בעילום שמו

For the most part, *Shemittah* is a passive mitzvah. We refrain from working the land and from collecting debts; primarily inactivity. There seems to be no proactive action attached to the mitzvah.

However there is an instance where *Shemittah* does require action:

When a person takes a loan, once *Shemittah* arrives his obligation to pay it back is voided, but the *chachamim* encourage the debtor to repay it anyways.

If the debtor chooses to repay it after *Shemittah*, the creditor must

first proclaim "*Meshamet ani*—I am observing *Shemittah* [–hence your debt is annulled],” and only if the debtor still insists on returning it, may the creditor accept it. This proclamation is the **proactive** action of *Shemittah*.

The deeper meaning of this is: *Shemittah* corresponds to the *sefirah* of *malchus*. On the one hand *malchus* is a passive *sefirah*, for it receives its energy from the other *sefiros*, and it does not produce anything of its own. On the other hand, *malchus* also represents the

world of speech which seems to also be proactive. Hence, *Shemittah*, which corresponds to the *sefirah* of *malchus*, combines passiveness but also stresses the importance of speech.

This also explains the Midrash that states, that those who keep *Shemittah* are called עושי דברו לשמוע בקול דברו—rather than refer to it as mitzvos or *chukim*, we choose the expression of “adhering to Hashem’s words,” which best suits *Shemittah* which is connected to the world of *dibbur*.

(Adapted from
Likkutei Sichos vol. 17, p. 295)



לעבן מיט'ן רבין



טור 'לעבן מיט'ן 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

A Special Anniversary Gift

KISLEV 5741*



Yud-Daled Kislev, the wedding anniversary of the Rebbe and Rebbetzin, was often marked by Chassidim in a special fashion. Typically, Chassidim would celebrate by making *hachlatos* to give the Rebbe *nachas*. However, major milestone years warranted something unique and memorable. Thus, for the fiftieth anniversary (5739*), N'shei U'bnos Chabad commissioned a *sefer Torah* to be written in honor of the Rebbe and Rebbetzin.

In 5741*, the Sefer Torah was finally completed. Consequently, the week of Yud-Daled Kislev was particularly joyous and eventful. Presented here is an account of the major highlights of that week.

SHABBOS PARSHAS VAYISHLACH - YUD-DALED KISLEV

As the Rebbe set out to walk home on Friday night, a group of *bochurim* began to sing "*Meheira yishama*." The Rebbe lifted both hands, waved to

encourage the singing, and continued to do so as he walked onto the street.

The next morning, when the Rebbe arrived at 770, he notified that a *farbrengen* would take place that day.

The *farbrengen* began with a long *sicha* on the topic of *chasunah* and an explanation of the *brachos* said at every Jewish wedding. The Rebbe explained that although no two minds are alike (“*ein de’oseihen shavos*”), the *brachos* and *tefillos* are all the same. This is because they tap into the deepest part of the *neshamah*, where all Yidden are intrinsically one and the same.

At the end of the *sicha*, the Rebbe explained the connection between *chasunah* and *geulah*: “Just like there are 12 preparatory months before marriage,¹ there is a similar preparatory stage for the marriage of *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* and the Yidden. However, we are now approaching the end of this period, as ‘*hinei hinei Moshiach ba*’ (Moshiach is already coming).”

The next *sicha* dealt with *mitzvos* that are unique to women, including *neshek*, child-bearing, *taharas hamishpacha*, and *kashrus*. After that *sicha*, the Rebbe said the *maamar* “*V’chol Banayich Limudei Hashem*”² (which is based on the *maamar* that the Friediker Rebbe said the week of the Rebbe’s wedding, at the *ufruf* and *Chosson Mohl Seudah*).

MONDAY - 16 KISLEV

Several years earlier, a group of *N’shei U’bnos Chabad* in Eretz Yisroel commissioned a *sefer Torah* to be written in honor of the Rebbe and Rebbetzin’s fiftieth anniversary (14 Kislev 5739*). Upon the Rebbe’s *hora’ah*, the *sefer Torah* will be housed in the Beis Menachem shul of Kfar Chabad. Numerous people in Eretz Yisroel participated in donating towards this initiative.

When the representatives came to the Rebbe for Yud Shevat 5740*, commemorating 30 years of the *nesius*, the Rebbe instructed them in *yechidus* that the Torah should be completed by the coming Yud-Tes Kislev of 5741*. The Rebbe also told them to purchase two *mantels* for the Torah, one darker *mantel* to be used throughout the year, and a white one for the *Yomim Nora’im*, as well as a silver *yad*. The Rebbe then gave them 44 dollars as his and the Rebbetzin’s participation in the writing of the Torah.



Now, right before Yud-Tes Kislev, the Torah was ready. Since the Rebbe was involved with the *sefer Torah* from its inception and had expressed a great interest at every step, it was decided that an invitation would be sent to the Rebbe and the Rebbetzin, inviting them to come to Eretz Yisroel to personally attend the *siyum sefer Torah*. The invitation was signed by many members of *anash* and supporters of Chabad. Reb Zushe Rivkin, founder and *gabbai* of the Beis Menachem shul, was chosen to deliver the invitation to the Rebbe in person.

On Monday night, Reb Zushe arrived. He had brought with him the invitation bearing the signatures of thousands of *anash* and supporters of Chabad, as well as the silver *yad* that the Rebbe had



requested for the Torah. After Maariv, he waited in *Gan Eden Hatachton* with the signed invitation in his hand. At this point the hallway was abuzz, as many *bochurim* were anticipating this momentous occasion.

The Rebbe welcomed him and said, “*Shalom aleichem* Reb Zushe, when do you depart from here?”

Reb Zushe answered, “*Im yirtzeh Hashem*, tomorrow afternoon at 4:00 p.m.” He then presented the invitation to the Rebbe. The Rebbe gazed at

it for a moment and asked, “Are any of these new signatures?” Reb Zushe responded affirmatively. The Rebbe asked, “What time are you departing from here tomorrow?”

Reb Zushe answered, “The flight is leaving at 6:00.”

The Rebbe replied, “In that case, there will be a short *farbrengen* in honor of the *sefer Torah* tomorrow before you leave. It cannot be tonight, as there is a wedding. But since you have come from Eretz Yisroel especially for this, we will have a *mesibas pereidah* (farewell gathering) tomorrow at 2:00 or 2:30. I will say a few words and the *farbrengen* will continue until Mincha. Leave the silver *yad* with me, I will bring it to the *farbrengen* tomorrow and I will return it to you immediately afterwards. Go and rest, and perhaps by tomorrow Moshiach will already have come.”

Reb Zushe quickly added, “Together with the Rebbe.” To which the Rebbe replied, “Then we will all go together. *Yasher koach gadol* [to you] on behalf of all the *meshalchim*. We will see each other at the *farbrengen* that will take place tomorrow at around 2:15.”

Reb Zushe said, “*Yasher koach gadol*” and turned to leave.

Reb Zushe left the Rebbe’s room, beaming with joy. After he relayed the news about the surprise *farbrengen*, the rejoicing that erupted in 770 was indescribable.

Later that night, several model crowns for the *sefer Torah* were brought to the Rebbe. The Rebbe chose the base of one style crown and the top of another. The two halves were brought to a silversmith who worked overnight soldering them together. Although the Torah already had a crown in Kfar Chabad, this crown was a gift from the Rebbe. In addition, the Rebbe had also ordered a silver *yad* for the “*Sefer Torah Shel Moshiach*.”

TUESDAY - 17 KISLEV

When the Rebbe arrived in 770 he informed *mazkirus* that the *farbrengen* would be at 2:30 and would last for one hour.

As per schedule, at 2:30 the Rebbe entered the *farbrengen* accompanied by the singing of “We Want Moshiach Now.” In his hand the Rebbe held his *siddur* and a paper bag with the signed invitation. Walking right behind the Rebbe was





Rabbi Groner, holding the silver crown and the silver *yad*, which he laid down next to the Rebbe.

The Rebbe opened the farbrengen by recalling a letter from the Frieddiker Rebbe which says that several days before a *siyum sefer Torah*, it is announced throughout the city. The Rebbe added that nowadays, since we have greater opportunities for publicity, we must make a special effort to ensure that the message gets out and has its maximum impact. This is especially the case here,

as the message is about an inclusive *sefer Torah* that unites Jews worldwide.

The Rebbe elaborated regarding the importance of writing a *sefer Torah*, the significance of the fact that the *siyum* is in Eretz Yisroel, and its connection to the *geulah* of Yud-Tes Kislev. As an aside, the Rebbe emphasized how unique it is that the inspiration to write the Torah came about through *n'shei Chabad* and only later garnered momentum among the men. This is reminiscent of how Moshe addressed the Yidden at *matan Torah*, first “*Ko somar l'beis Yaakov*” which alluded to the women, and only then “*v'sageid l'bnei Yisroel*” referring to the men.

Addressing all those who are not able to personally attend the *siyum Sefer Torah*, the Rebbe said that the Baal Shem Tov's teaching, that “*b'makom shemachshavto shel adam, sham hu nimtza*” (where a person's thoughts are, that is where he is), is not a figurative expression, rather he is actually present there!”

The Rebbe continued: Since we want everybody to be part of the *siyum Sefer Torah*, we will donate a *kesser* for this Torah on behalf of everyone. This way everyone will have the *zechus* in participating in this *sefer Torah* (as “*zachin l'adam shelo befanav*”).

At the end of the *sicha*, the Rebbe said: “The *gabbai* of the shul in Kfar Chabad is here with us now at the behest of his community, and he has been especially active in this project, so we will appoint him as a “*shliach l'holacha*” to represent all those involved, and take the *kesser* together with the *tzedakah* funds raised here back to Eretz Yisroel. This *tzedakah* will be distributed in Eretz Yisroel on behalf of all those present at the farbrengen here and everywhere else.”

After this *sicha*, the Rebbe poured Reb Zushe a cup of *mashke* and told him to say *l'chaim*. Then, the Rebbe stood up, and announced “*B'shem kol ha'kahal*” and handed him the *kesser*, *yad*, and *tzedakah* money for Eretz Yisroel. When the Rebbe stood up, so did everyone else and the energy was palpable.

He then gave Reb Zushe a bottle of *mashke* and instructed him to mix it with other *mashke* and to distribute it to the attendees at the *siyum sefer Torah*. Reb Zushe *bentched* the Rebbe that he should be the one to place the *kesser* on the Torah in Eretz Yisroel, and the Rebbe answered *amen*.

The Rebbe then summoned the silversmith who had made the original *kesser*, poured him *l'chaim*,

handed him a piece of cake, and gave him a *bracha* that he should be *zoche* to make many more crowns for *sifrei Torah* and to learn and keep what is written in the Torah.

At the end of the *farbrengen*, after several *niggunim* were sung, the Rebbe said: “We will now daven Mincha and as the Gemara says, “One should always be scrupulous regarding Mincha as Eliyahu Hanavi was only answered for Mincha.” We will all proclaim “*Havaye hu ha'Elokim, Havaye hu ha'Elokim*”³ and may we accomplish *b'ruchnius* all that *karbanos* accomplished in the *Beis Hamikdash*.” The Rebbe then concluded with a *bracha* for the *geulah*.

As the Rebbe left the *farbrengen*, a *mazkir* rushed over and asked what Reb Zushe was to do with the dollar bills upon his arrival in Eretz Yisroel. The Rebbe replied that he should give them to the *vaad ruchni* of Kfar Chabad and they will do whatever they think is best. ❶

1. Mishnah Kesubos 5:2.

2. This *maamer* was *mugah* in 5748 and was printed in “*Kuntres Yud-Daled Kislev 5748*.”

3. This was alluding to the episode with Eliyahu and the Yidden at Har HaCarmel, where the Yidden proclaimed “ה' הוא האלוקים” after Eliyahu offered his *korban*.



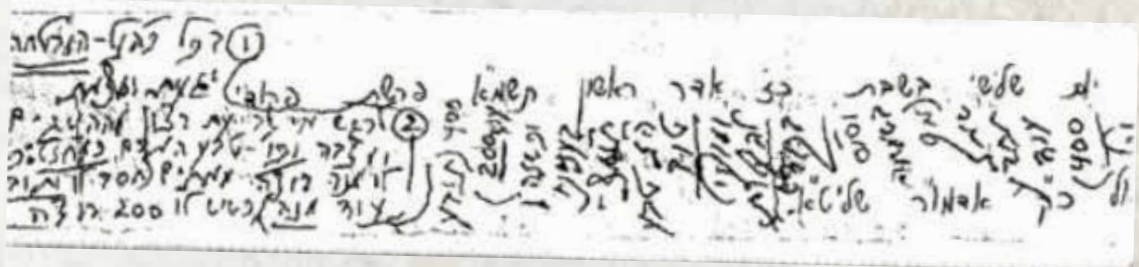


כתב יד
קודש

You're Not Happy?

In response to a woman who wrote about her
status of *avodas Hashem*, the Rebbe writes:

מוקדש לחיזוק ההתקשרות
לכ"ק אדמו"ר
נדפס ע"י
הרה"ת ר' יצחק מאיר וזוגתו מרת לאה
ומשפחתם שיחיו
שפאלטר



1) With regards to all of the above, you were **guaranteed** that if you work hard, you will succeed.

(1) בכל כהנ"ל - **הובטחה** יגעת ומצאת

2) About the fact that you do not feel content from your accomplishments and from your overall situation, **etc.**—the nature of a person is, as **Chazal say**: One who has 100 wants 200 (i.e. he feels like he is lacking and **demand**s the additional **100**); one who has 200 wants 400 (i.e. he demands an additional **200**). When it comes to Torah and mitzvos, this nature is **good** and useful, prompting **growth** in matters of holiness. And eventually [it will lead to doing so with] happiness as well (even though, [after you reach the next level] you will demand **400**). This is simple to understand.

(2) לרגש אי שביעת רצון מההישגים ומצבה וכו' - טבע האדם **כמחז"ל**: כשיש לו מנה רוצה מאתים (חסר לו **ותובע עוד מנה**), כשיש לו 200 רוצה 400 (תובע עוד **200**). וכשזהו בעיני תומ"צ - ה"ז טבע **טוב** ומועיל **להעלות** בקודש. וסו"ס בשמחה (אף שאז תתבע עוד **400**) וק"ל.

לזכות
החייל בצבאות ה' מאיר שלמה שיחי' ניו
שיגדל להיות חי"ל לנח"ר כ"ק אדמו"ר
נדפס ע"י
משפחתו שיחיו

A painting of a bearded man with a long, flowing beard, wearing a red robe, playing a large harp. The background is a mix of yellow and red, suggesting a dramatic or heavenly setting. The man's eyes are closed, and his expression is one of deep concentration or spiritual connection.

EXPRESSIONS OF THE HEART TEHILLIM

There is hardly another book in all of Jewish history replete with so much meaning, embedded in the heart of the Jewish people like Dovid Hamelech's Sefer Tehillim. While the Chumash might be more fundamental, it could likely be said that there were far more Jews who occupied their time with the recital of Tehillim than those who studied Chumash.

In times of distress, it is Tehillim more than anything else that soothes the souls of the Jewish people, reinforcing our *bitachon* in Hashem's ever present hand in our lives. And likewise in times of joy, it is Tehillim that we recite to express our gratitude for His constant guidance, blessings, and salvation.

The *Hallel* that Chazal instituted to be recited on the joyous milestones throughout our history is taken entirely from Tehillim. So is the chapter of Ashrei ("*Tehilla L'Dovid*"), the recital of which Chazal promised can bring anyone into *olam haba*. The famous "*Mizmor L'Dovid*" that soothes our souls with *bitachon* comes from Tehillim (23), as does "*Lamnatzeiach Yaancha*," which we recite in times of distress. Chapters of Tehillim are woven through every part of davening, from *Pessukei D'Zimra*, to *Tikkun Chatzos*, to *Kabbalas Shabbos*.

With the revelation of Chassidus, a major theme that the Baal Shem Tov taught was the potency of the davening and mitzvos of the simple Yidden, done with wholehearted sincerity and love of Hashem. Once during a Shabbos meal with his closest disciples, the members of the "*chevraya kadisha*," the Baal Shem Tov had them close their eyes and suddenly they heard the most beautiful sublime recitation of Tehillim, said with heartrending emotion. The members of the group were moved to immediate tears.

"Hearing those words of Tehillim," the Maggid later related to the Alter



DOVID HAMELECH'S KEVER IN YERUSHALAYIM

Rebbe, "my heart was filled with such intense longing and love for Hashem, such that I had never experienced before. My shoes were soaking with a mixture of sweat and tears, emerging from the deepest *teshuvah* from the core of my soul..."

After the *talmidim* opened their eyes, the Baal Shem Tov revealed to them that those words of Tehillim were coming from the simple Yidden, who recited Tehillim with utmost sincerity from the bottom of their hearts, with genuine *emunah*.

The Maggid later related that he spent years after that trying to gain a *tikkun* for having previously dismissed the simple Yidden as being less worthy.¹

The Tzemach Tzedek summed up the power of reciting Tehillim in these famous words, cited by the Rebbe in Hayom Yom:

"If you only knew the power of *pesukim* of Tehillim and their effect in the highest Heavens, you would recite them constantly. Know that the chapters of Tehillim shatter all barriers, they ascend higher and still higher with no interference; they prostrate themselves in supplication

before the Master of all worlds, and they effect and accomplish with kindness and compassion..."²

In recent generations, the Rabbeim placed even more emphasis on the importance of constant Tehillim recital, including a daily section of Tehillim after davening, and the entire Sefer Tehillim every month on Shabbos Mevarchim.

The Rebbe often told people to recite extra *kapitelach* of Tehillim as a *segulah* in many instances, including: Help with making the proper decision,³ finding a *shidduch*,⁴ having a healthy pregnancy,⁵ having a successful surgery,⁶ being healed from various ailments,⁷ being saved from troubles and distress.⁸

The Rebbe once wrote to an individual who was undergoing surgery: "It would be a good thing if you could keep with you in the hospital a kosher mezuzah, and take upon yourself that as soon as you leave the hospital, you will give something to tzedakah in the name of Rabbi Meir Baal Haness, and to recite every day a chapter of Tehillim in *Lashon Hakodesh* or, if this is too difficult for you, in English..."⁹



LETTERS FROM THE REBBE REGARDING THE “CHEVRAS TEHILLIM”.

To individuals who wrote to the Rebbe that they had a longstanding custom of reciting the entire Tehillim every day, but they wished to discontinue this practice because it takes away from their learning, the Rebbe told them unequivocally that they should keep at it.

“Even though it seems to you that the reason why you took on this practice no longer applies,” the Rebbe writes to one individual, “you must still continue anyways. Who knows what is more precious to Hashem [your Tehillim or learning deeper subjects in Torah like Gemara]...”¹⁰

Oftentimes, the Rebbe advised people to keep *sefarim* in their cars as a means of protection, usually specifying a *siddur*, Tanya, and Tehillim.

The Rebbe also encouraged children to have their own *sefarim* in their rooms, including a personal Sefer Tehillim belonging to the child.¹¹

During the trying times of World War II and the ravaging Holocaust, the Frieddiker Rebbe founded an international “Chevras Tehillim”—a fellowship of people who would recite Tehillim. The flagship group was based

in Yerushalayim, and they would recite the entire Tehillim every day at the site of Dovid Hamelech’s burial.

The Frieddiker Rebbe entrusted the newly founded Machne Yisroel organization, headed by the Rebbe, to lead this initiative. In many of the Rebbe’s letters from that period, he encourages individuals and community leaders to join this program.¹²

When the Rebbe was invited to address the conference of Agudas Harabbonim, he asked the rabbonim to encourage their communities to join the program and he also gave a scholarly explanation as to the importance of everyone reciting Tehillim.¹³

DAILY TEHILLIM

The author of the *Tzeida LaDerech*, Reb Menachem ben Zerach of Spain, divided the Tehillim for recital on two tracks: one with seven parts, to be recited daily over a week, and one with thirty parts, to be recited daily over a month.

The Rabbeim generally followed the thirty-day track, thus completing the entire Tehillim every month. In times of distress, they recited an extra *shiur* of Tehillim adding the one for the day of the week. Most famously, the Alter Rebbe added this *shiur* during his time in prison, which is why he was reciting the *possuk* of “*Pada B’shalom*” on Yud-Tes Kislev, which that year occurred on a Tuesday.¹⁴

This method of saying Tehillim daily was not so widespread until the year 5687*, when the Frieddiker Rebbe declared that this practice should be adopted by everyone. Later in the year, the Frieddiker Rebbe was arrested, imprisoned, and then sent to exile in Kostroma.

While in Kostroma, the Frieddiker Rebbe had a discussion with two Chassidim, Reb Elya Chaim Althaus and Reb Michoel Dvorkin. Reb Elya Chaim later recorded in his diary:

“The Rebbe told us as follows, verbatim:

“Before the year 5687*, I was frightened. I wasn’t thinking about myself, I was worried about the Chassidim. Before I gave the instruction about reciting Tehillim, things were very difficult for me...”

“I asked [the Rebbe], ‘When was the instruction about Tehillim given?’ He answered, ‘On Simchas Torah.’

“Then I recalled: On the day of Simchas Torah, the Rebbe kept asking all of *anash* to accept upon themselves to recite the daily section of Tehillim after davening...

“I have no doubt that the note we found in the Rebbe’s room on the day of his arrest about reciting Tehillim was also written in Elul 5686* or Tishrei 5687*.

“This is what was written in the note found on the Rebbe’s holy table after his arrest on 15 Sivan 5687* in Leningrad:

“Attention Chassidim and all Jews who are waiting for Moshiach. Please

convey in my name to all Chassidim across the world—in all *Chassidishe* shuls they should recite the daily section of Tehillim as divided for the days of the month, both on Shabbos and every day... To Chassidim you should say that I command it, to other Jews you should say that out of *ahavas Yisroel* and seeking the best for all Jews, I request of them that they should fulfill this...”

One year later, on 15 Sivan 5688*, the Frierdiker Rebbe had already left Russia and was living in Riga, Latvia, and he penned a letter asking that this request be instituted from then on. “This is appropriate for every shul,” he writes. “It is not specifically for the Chassidic community...”¹⁵

Although this *takanah* to recite Tehillim would later be incorporated in the famous daily *shiurim* of Chitas, the Rebbe mentioned specifically the *takanah* of Tehillim more than any of the other *shiurim*. In countless letters to individuals who turned to the Rebbe for *brachos*, the Rebbe instructs that they should diligently recite the daily portion of Tehillim as a channel for all good things.

The daily *shiur* Tehillim has since become almost a part of davening. Interestingly, when the Frierdiker Rebbe instituted reciting Tehillim in shul, he emphasized that it should not be done by the *chazzan* standing in front of the shul, so as not to look like we are adding something new to the long-established *sefer hatefillah*. Instead, the Tehillim recital should be led by someone standing at the *bima* in the middle of the shul.

The Rebbe once explained that with time, this point had been forgotten, since the *chazzan* is already in front of the shul and having him move to the middle would be *tircha d'tzibura*, inconveniencing the crowd and making everyone wait. Instead, the Rebbe said that we should be careful to recite *Al Tira* and *Ach Tzaddikim*

before beginning with the daily *shiur* Tehillim, demonstrating that the official davening is over.¹⁶

When the Rebbe davened at the *amud* when in *aveilus* and on *yahrtzeits*, he always concluded with the daily *shiur* Tehillim, reciting the last *possuk* of each *kapitel* out loud for all to hear.

In addition to the daily *shiur* Tehillim, the Frierdiker Rebbe revealed that the Baal Shem Tov instituted another cycle of reciting the entire Tehillim, during the months of Elul and Tishrei. The Rebbe writes in Hayom Yom:

“When the Tzemach Tzedek was nine years old, the Alter Rebbe said to him: I received from my Rebbe (the Maggid) who received from his Rebbe (the Baal Shem Tov) in the name of his well-known Rebbe [Achiya Hashiloni], that from the second day of Rosh Chodesh Elul until Yom Kippur we are to say three chapters of Tehillim every day. Then, on Yom Kippur, thirty-six (chapters): Nine before Kol Nidrei, nine before going to sleep, nine after Musaf, and nine after Neilah...”¹⁷

PERSONAL KAPITEL

The Frierdiker Rebbe writes that the Alter Rebbe heard from the Maggid, who heard from the Baal Shem Tov, that before reciting the daily *shiur* in Tehillim, a person should recite the *kapitel* that corresponds with his age.¹⁸ The Rebbe once pointed out that in one of the Alter Rebbe’s *maamarim*, the words “*hakapitel shelo*” appear, describing the personal individual *kapitel* of each person corresponding to their age.¹⁹

Bochurim who would come into *yechidus* with the Rebbe in honor of their birthdays were often told by the Rebbe to study their new *kapitel* with the Tzemach Tzedek’s explanations in *Yahel Ohr*. Also, when speaking



REB CHAIM DOVID LAINE, THE CHOSSID FROM NEVEL WHOM THE FRIERDIKER REBBE MENTIONS AS HAVING FIRST SUGGESTED THE IDEA OF RECITING THE ENTIRE TEHILLIM ON SHABBOS.

in *yechidus kholis* to those celebrating their bar and bas mitzvahs, the Rebbe would often specifically mention the importance of learning their new *kapitel* on the day of their bar or bas mitzvah.

The Frierdiker Rebbe also mentions that some people recite the *kapitelach* of their children too, as a *segulah* for them to remain true to the Torah way.²⁰

Before the Rebbetzin’s passing in 5748*, the Rebbe generally did not daven Shacharis with the *minyan* every day and he would join the yeshiva’s *minyan* for *krias haTorah* on Mondays and Thursdays. After *kriah* was over, the Rebbe was usually seen reciting his own and the Rebbetzin’s *kapitelach*, and—until her passing in 5725*—also his mother’s.

SHABBOS MEVARCHIM

As the day that blesses the forthcoming month, the Frierdiker Rebbe taught that Shabbos Mevarchim is a day of utmost importance and



Tehillim. Afterwards, for about an hour, study a *maamar* Chassidus that everyone can understand, and then daven. The time to farbreng is to be determined according to the circumstances in the place they live (for material and spiritual success)...²²

From then on, this *seder* was established in all Chabad communities the world over.

The Rebbe was exceptionally scrupulous about keeping the *takanos* of Shabbos Mevarchim. Throughout all the years without fail, the Rebbe joined the *minyan* every single Shabbos Mevarchim to recite the entire Tehillim before Shacharis. Additionally, the Rebbe farbrenged every single Shabbos Mevarchim throughout all the years of the *nesius*, without ever missing even one.

Once, when the Rebbe bemoaned the fact that Chassidim are not paying attention and appreciating all the hours of Torah discussed at the farbrengens, he remarked that this coming Shabbos Mevarchim, he will nevertheless have to farbreng again because “we have no choice, it’s a *takanah* of the Frieddiker Rebbe...”

Just how important the reciting of Tehillim on Shabbos Mevarchim is, is underscored by the Rebbe’s famous statement in Hayom Yom:

“Studying a *parshah* of Chumash with Rashi every day (Sunday until *sheini*, Monday until *shlishi*, etc.), saying Tehillim every day and the entire Tehillim on Shabbos Mevarchim—be diligent about all of these. It is crucial for you, for your children and your children’s children...”²³

TEHILLIM ON ROSH HASHANAH

Since the *avodah* of Rosh Hashanah is mainly about *kabbalas ol*, crowning Hashem as our king, our Rabbeim instructed that the time should be

AMONG THE PRECIOUS BELONGINGS REBBETZIN CHANA BROUGHT TO HER HUSBAND WHEN SHE JOINED HIM IN HIS GALUS IN KAZAKHSTAN, WAS A TEHILLIM FROM WHICH HE WOULD DAVEN FOR HOURS. REBBETZIN CHANA WROTE A MEMORANDUM IN THE COVER OF THE TEHILLIM, HOW THE TEHILLIM WAS SOAKED THROUGH WITH THE COPIOUS TEARS HARAV LEVI YITZCHAK SHED WHEN RECITING TEHILLIM DURING HIS HARSH YEARS IN GALUS.

should therefore be utilized in an appropriate manner.

After one of the Chassidim wrote to the Frieddiker Rebbe about his idea that all the Chassidim in Nevel should recite the entire Tehillim every Shabbos, the Frieddiker Rebbe instead instructed that this should be done on Shabbos Mevarchim, together with a *Chassidishe* farbrengen in each community.

In an undated letter written in the summer of 5695*, the Frieddiker Rebbe says: “I was very pleased that

you recite Tehillim as a community every Shabbos Mevarchim, just as my dear friend the Chossid Reb Chaim Dovid [Laine] suggested, and that you farbreng together with true brotherly love...”²¹

About a month later, the Frieddiker Rebbe wrote an open letter to all *anash* and *Temimim*, asking them to adopt this *seder* for every Shabbos Mevarchim in their communities.

“On Shabbos Mevarchim, Chassidim are to assemble in shul early in the morning to say the entire

used for saying Tehillim, the simple recital of which represents our *kabbalas ol*.

The Tzemach Tzedek's sons once came into his room on Rosh Hashanah while the crowd outside was reciting Tehillim and asked that he say Chassidus. The Tzemach Tzedek replied: "They are all saying Tehillim and you want Chassidus? Tehillim is better!"

With the onset of Rosh Hashanah in 770 each year, the Rebbe joined the crowd for Tehillim reciting for a while before Maariv.²⁴

On the night of Yom Kippur, the Rebbe instituted that the entire Tehillim should be recited after Maariv. In 5711*, the first year of the Rebbe's *nesius*, the Rebbe himself stood at the *amud* and led the recital of the entire Tehillim. The same thing happened one year later in 5712*.

THE REBBE'S KAPITEL

On a number of occasions, the Rebbe spoke about the importance for Chassidim to recite the Rebbe's *kapitel* every day, as a means of connecting with him and a channel to receive his *brachos*.

"It would be appropriate to say the Rebbe's *kapitel* everyday," the Rebbe writes to an individual, "which right now is *kapitel* 71, and a few times a week you should learn words of Chassidus from him. Do this at least until the upcoming Yud Shevat. This will serve as a broad channel to bring the Rebbe's blessings into this physical world..."²⁵

At a *farbrengen* during the first year after the Frierdiker Rebbe's *histalkus*, the Rebbe explained:

"In a *sicha* on Yud-Beis Tammuz last year, the [Frierdiker] Rebbe said: 'Every day, every Chossid should recite a chapter of Tehillim with the specific intent that the *zechus* of the Rabbeim

should be drawn unto himself and that the revelation of light should be absorbed and integrated within him in a *pnimius*.'

"...We can assume that the intention here was that every Chossid should continue to recite the Rebbe's *kapitel* of Tehillim, in accordance with the number of his years.

"Some Chassidim were accustomed to reciting the Rebbe's *kapitel*, but after Yud Shvat doubts arose as to whether or not they should continue. And now that Yud-Beis Tammuz, the Rebbe's birthday, has passed, they are unsure as to whether they should continue with *kapitel* 70, or begin *kapitel* 71; in other words, whether or not the addition of years is still relevant after *histalkus*.

"The [Frierdiker] Rebbe clarified this question by saying on the last Yud-Gimmel Tammuz of his life in this world, that every day, every Chossid should recite a *kapitel* of Tehillim—the Rebbe's *kapitel*, so that his merit will thereby be elicited, and the revelation of his light will be integrated within each individual in a *pnimius*..."²⁶

To a group of *bochurim* leaving for Merkos Shlichus, the Rebbe said that by reciting the Rebbe's *kapitel*, we are able to internalize what the Rebbe wants from us as Chassidim.²⁷

TORAH AND TEFILLAH

The Rebbe explained on a number of occasions that Tehillim, while being a part of the Torah (one of the 24 *Kisvei Kodesh*), also consists of *tefillas sheb'Torah*. The most important aspect of Torah study is comprehension—using your intellect. However when it comes to Tehillim, the most important thing is the heart and feeling that goes along with the words.

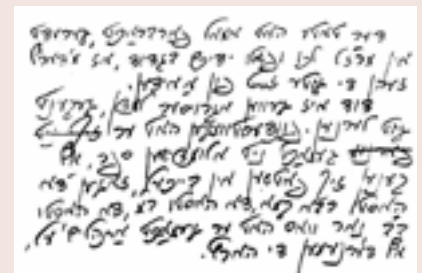
The Midrash says that when Dovid Hamelech said, "יהיו לרצון אמרי פי"—May the words of my mouth be willfully accepted," he was asking Hashem that when a Yid says Tehillim, it should be considered as if he is studying the subjects of *Negaim* and *Ahalos*, some of the deepest and most complex *halachos* of Torah.²⁸

Indeed, the Rebbe writes in Hayom Yom that when Moshiach comes, we will finally see the full depth of accomplishments by the words of Tehillim said with heartfelt sincerity of the simple Yidden.²⁹

WHAT DID DOVID MAKE?

In a rare moment in *yechidus* with the Rebbe, the Frierdiker Rebbe revealed an extraordinary thing about Dovid Hamelech's Sefer Tehillim.

Upon returning to his room downstairs at 770, the Rebbe recorded the words he heard in his holy handwriting, and he subsequently gave the note to Reb Sholom Chaskind as a gift:



דער טאטע האט אמאל פארבראכט, גערעדט אין מרז"ל לכו ופשטו ידיכם בגדוד, אז מ'דארף זעהן די גוטע זייט פון א אידען. דוד איז געווען אגרויסער למדן, געקענט גוט לערנען. פונדעסטוועגען האט ער געמאכט ניט אלומדישען ספר, אף קענען זיך פאטשען אין בייכעל, זאגען דא האסטו בבא קמא דא האסטו ב"ב, נאר וואס האט ער געמאכט א תהילים'על, אף דערנעמען די הארץ.

My father [the Rebbe Rashab] once *farbrenged*, speaking about the words of Chazal [that Dovid Hamelech said]: "Go stretch forth your hands with the army," explaining that we must always



JEM194530

THE REBBE RECITES TEHILLIM FOLLOWING KRIAS HATORAH, 27 ELUL 5743*

see the good side of a fellow Jew. [See Igros Kodesh Admur HaRayyatz vol. 3, p. 136 for a full explanation.]

Dovid was a great *lamdan*, he knew how to learn very well. Nevertheless, he did not make a scholarly *sefer*, to allow himself to pat his stomach and say, “Here is Bava Kama, here is Bava Metzia, here is Bava Basra.” Rather, what did he make? A small Tehillim, to inspire the heart.

(Yemei Melech vol. 3, p. 1052)

NO KUNTZEN!

“When Moshiach comes,” the Rebbe once proclaimed at a *farbrengen*, “he will not hear of any *kuntzen*. He will demand of you to offer an exact account, like the *possuk* says, אלה פקודי המשכן: Write down

for me on a piece of paper how many Chassidim you made! How many Yidden did you influence to become Chassidim of the Rebbe? How many Yidden did you influence to come and recite the entire Tehillim on Shabbos Mevarchim?!³⁰ **1**

1. Kovetz Michtavim.
2. Hayom Yom 24 Shevat.
3. Igros Kodesh vol. 9 p. 71.
4. Ibid. vol. 6, p. 264.
5. Ibid. vol. 5 p. 105.
6. Ibid. vol. 5 p. 180.
7. Ibid. vol. 5 p. 208.
8. Ibid. vol. 18 p. 58.
9. Ibid. vol. 5 p. 175.
10. Ibid. vol. 5 p. 315.
11. Hisvaaduyos 5747 vol. 2 p. 648.
12. See Igros Kodesh vol. 1, p. 55, et. al. Yemei Melech vol. 2, p. 668.

13. Reshimos *choveres* 52.
14. Igros Kodesh Admur HaRayyatz vol. 3 p. 473.
15. Kovetz Michtavim, Tehillim.
16. Sichos Kodesh 5730, vol. 1 p. 42.
17. Hayom Yom 1 Elul.
18. Igros Kodesh Admur HaRayyatz vol. 10 p. 53.
19. Sichos Kodesh 5738 vol. 3 p. 57.
20. Igros Kodesh Admur HaRayyatz vol. 1 p. 31.
21. Igros Kodesh Admur HaRayyatz vol. 3 p. 411.
22. Ibid. p. 422. Hayom Yom 26 Kislev.
23. Hayom Yom 25 Shevat.
24. See Otzar Minhagei Chabad Tishrei p. 48.
25. Igros Kodesh vol. 3 p. 350.
26. Toras Menachem vol. 1 p. 149.
27. 12 Menachem-Av 5710.
28. Shavuot 5737.
29. Hayom Yom 24 Iyar.
30. Shabbos Parshas Pekudei 5727.



לע"נ
ר' יהודה ע"ה
בן ר' משה יעקב ע"ה
ביסטאן
גלב"ע ר"ח כסלו ה'תשנ"ט
תנ"צ'ה'

נדפס ע"י בנו
הרה"ת השליח ר' יוסף יצחק
וזוגתו מרת ביילא רחל ומשפחתם שיחיו
ביסטאן

When You'll Finish Your Shlichus

*Rabbi Gershon Jacobson was the founder and editor of Der Algemeiner Journal.
His son, Rabbi Simon Jacobson, shared this story.*

The Rebbe gave my father many *kiruvim*. In 5750*, my father was ill, and ended up being in the hospital for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. In those years, the Rebbe would begin giving *lekach* to everyone a few days before Yom Kippur, so on Erev Yom Kippur itself only select people received. I was summoned to receive a piece of *lekach*, which the Rebbe wanted to give me for my father.

So I stood in *Gan Eden Hatachton*¹ and the Rebbe gave me *lekach*—two pieces of honey cake—and the Rebbe said, “*Dos is faren tatten. Er zol hoben a zissen un gezunten yahr* — This is for your father. He should have a sweet and healthy year.” Then the Rebbe smiled, and said to me, “*Un zog em, az er vet farendiken zein shlichus dorten, vet men em fun dorten aroislozen* — Tell him that when he completes his *shlichus* there [in the hospital], they’ll discharge him from there.”

I went straight to the hospital that day—Erev Yom Kippur—and I brought my father the honey cake and told him exactly what the Rebbe had said. Just to show you that this wasn’t just a nice line that the Rebbe had said, on Motzei Yom Kippur, Rabbi

Hodakov, the head of *mazkirus*, came to see my father. Rabbi Hodakov himself was already ailing and aging—it wasn’t easy for him to travel—but he came to see my father and said to him, “The Rebbe wants to know if you already finished your *shlichus* in the hospital.”

Now my father wasn’t in the hospital for a sightseeing tour—he was sick. He had no choice. But the Rebbe didn’t see it that way. There has to be a *shlichus* there. He was there for a reason. Hashem, in His mysterious ways, decided that the only way to get him there was through an illness.

My father spoke to some of the doctors and other attendants and patients. We don’t know what exactly he spoke about, but my father, in general, was very charismatic and made a strong impact on people. So I’m assuming that he fulfilled his *shlichus* there by having *hashpa’ah* on some of the people he came into contact with in the hospital. And the Rebbe was confident that by telling my father about his *shlichus*, my father would know what to do. **T**

1. The Rebbe’s antechamber.

לזכות
החייל בצבאות ה'
פינחס זאב וואלף שיחי'
לרגל הולדתו ד' אייר ה'תשפ"א
נדפס ע"י הוריו
הרה"ת ר' נחום וזוגתו מרת צבי'
ומשפחתם שיחי'
שפירא

The Thought That Counts

Simchas Torah 5728*

Presented is an original letter penned by the famed Chossid, Reb Yechezkel ("Chatche") Feigin, mazkir of the Friediker Rebbe. Reb Chatche's letters are known for their depth of content and genuine Chassidische warmth, conveying authentic Chassidische hanachos of generations past.

In this letter, Reb Chatche writes from Riga, Latvia to his friend Reb Yochanan Gordon and his brother Yosef Yitzchok, who were then living in the United States, about the importance of maintaining a strong connection with the Rebbe and to write to him often.

B"H. 16 Tammuz 5693*. Riga.

To my dear and esteemed friends, Reb Yosef Yitzchok and Reb Yochanan Gordon,
Shalom U'vracha!

Your letter along with the check for \$65 was received, and enclosed are receipts. I am sending the receipts to your brother Rabbi S. since the letter was not sent by you, and I don't know your address. I thought it may have changed because it has been a long time since we received any letters from you.

I actually wanted to bring that very point to your attention. The *temimim* who learned more Chassidus than anyone else should really understand this on their own, and due to *ahavas Yisroel* for all Yidden in general, and more specifically, the brotherly love between *temimim*, we need to teach one another:

While it is true that considering the very stressful financial situation that the Rebbe is going through right now, anyone who can be called a Chossid has a sacred obligation to try and send *ma'amad* [funds for the Rebbe's discretion], nevertheless, one should not hinge how often he writes to the Rebbe based on whether he will send

money or not. Just because one is unable to send money, he should not refrain from writing to the Rebbe.

Especially nowadays, when Hashem has decreed that many members of *anash* are far away from the Rebbe and are unable to travel; the only means of *hiskashus* are through the *maamarim* which are sent out [to the various respective communities], and by the Chassidim writing letters to the Rebbe.

It is extremely important to always be on the Rebbe's mind. True, every member of *anash* is constantly engraved in his mind and he remembers each of them always, nevertheless it is still vital that the Chassidim write to him.

Firstly, every *bracha* or *hashpa'a* from the Rebbe must be first stimulated from below, by writing a letter to the Rebbe. This is how Hashem set up all of *seder hishtalshelus* all the way up to the highest levels. Even Hashem Himself wants us to recite *pesukim* of "*zichronos*;" although there is certainly "no forgetfulness at His holy throne"—it is our duty to "remind" Him of that fact. The same is true of *tzaddikim*, who are likened to their Creator. We are supposed to stimulate their memory of us by reminding them.



The simple explanation is: When writing a letter to the Rebbe, a Chossid awakens his heart with a connection to his Rebbe, making himself into a receptacle worthy of having the Rebbe remember about him.

I recall once in Lubavitch at a farbrengen—I don't remember if it was Simchas Torah or Yud-Tes Kislev—one of the participants was feeling a bit uplifted by the immense joy of the occasion, and he called out [to the Rebbe Rashab]: “רבי האט מיך אין זינען—Rebbe, keep me in mind!” The Rebbe replied: “האט מיך אין הארצין—Keep me in your heart...”

There is also a deeper explanation that is important to know:

About two days before the [Frierdiker] Rebbe left for his travels, I heard something from him that made a very deep impression on me and I feel compelled to share it with you, my friends. However, bear in mind that the written word will sometimes mask over the true intention of what was actually said, so I ask that you read this with the proper attention so as not to misconstrue the Rebbe's words, *chas v'shalom*.

The Rebbe was talking about a certain individual who had not written in a very long time, and he asked me if I

had received any word from this person recently. The Rebbe added that Chassidim ought to know how distressed I am when I don't receive word from them for a long time.

To better explain this concept, the Rebbe related a story:

Once, the Kremenchuger Rav, Reb Yosef Tumarkin, was sitting in the Tzemach Tzedek's room copying manuscripts of responsa or words of Chassidus. The Tzemach Tzedek had two rooms, and in the room where Reb Yosef was sitting there were piles of *panim*, set in a very specific order, as well as the money sent along with the *panim*, also in a very specific order. The Tzemach Tzedek was davening in the next room, moving about from one room to the other while davening. Suddenly, the Tzemach Tzedek came over to the desk and tapped around at one of the piles, as if looking for something. He picked up one of the *panim* from one pile and moved it to a different pile, and then he took a coin from one of the money piles and put it into a different one.

Reb Yosef watched this whole episode, and after the Tzemach Tzedek left the room, he took a *pan* from one pile and mixed it into another. A short while later, the Tzemach Tzedek came back into the room, came over to the piles and looked for that specific *pan*, and placed it back where it was

before. This occurred several times and the Tzemach Tzedek restored the order of the piles each time. This is exactly how the Rebbe told the story as he heard it from Rashbatz.

Rashbatz told the Rebbe that he had related this story to the Rebbe Maharash, and the Rebbe Maharash explained to him that there is a difference between the *panim* from those whose fates were already sealed in heaven for life, and those who...[were sealed for the opposite] *Rachmana litzlan*. The latter require a full revocation of the decree upon them. Then there are those who have not yet received a final verdict whose fates are still undetermined. There might be differences between one person and another, how long it will take until their fate gets sealed, and so on.

Then the [Friediker] Rebbe explained:

Just like we know from *Chazal* how speaking negatively about another can do them great harm, *chas v'shalom*, similarly, a bad thought can also have an effect; only in a higher realm.

He related the story of how the Baal Shem Tov once covered the eyes of one of his students, and the student saw an individual running after another person with an axe, ready to kill him. These were two *baalei batim* who frequented the Baal Shem Tov's court. The student immediately fainted. When the student awoke, the Baal Shem Tov explained that the murder did not occur in this world. It was only that the person with the axe was having a dispute with his fellow, and in the heat of the moment the thought crossed his mind that "I want to kill that person." So in a higher world, this thought came to be and the attempted

killing actually occurred. This is how effective a Yid's thought can be!

By placing his holy hand over his student's eyes, the Baal Shem Tov was able to show the person how reality works in the higher worlds.

What I gathered from the [Friediker] Rebbe's words was that he is constantly thinking about each of his Chassidim, so when a while passes and he hasn't heard from one of them, it is hard for him to avoid the thought that perhaps something [bad] happened to that individual. This is human nature; when you don't hear from someone for a long time, you start thinking along those lines.

It seems that [the Friediker Rebbe] telling me this story was to teach us how potent a thought can be, and that if [he doesn't hear from someone for a while] the thoughts that the Rebbe thinks about that individual until he can confirm that he's doing well might have... [a negative effect].

I think that if you consider all of the above you will understand how important this is. The [Friediker Rebbe] told me many times and demanded: Why is it that when a person has a *tzara*, they immediately notify the Rebbe, but then when Hashem helps [and the issue is resolved], they don't bother to notify?

It seems that the reason he told me the first story [about the Tzemach Tzedek] is also connected with this issue:

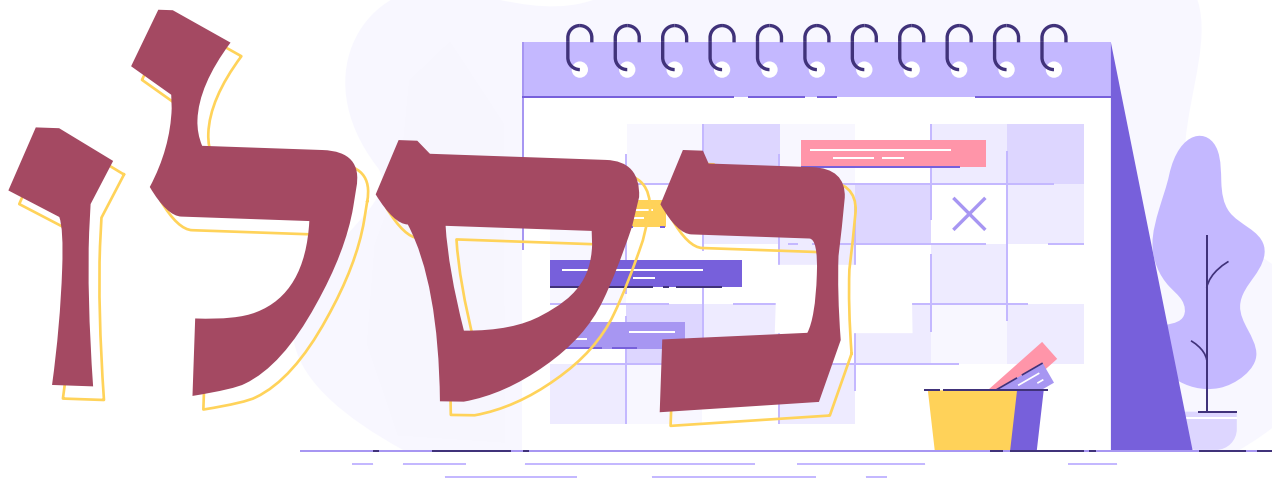
One might think, why is it important to write to the Rebbe? The Rebbe can just ask for Hashem's mercy for that person, no matter the situation! But the truth is that each *pan* is different, and for this the Rebbe needs to know the exact situation of the writer, etc.

There is much more to be said about this subject but I think that you will be able to discern and understand it on your own, as long as you are occupied with learning Chassidus. Obviously, you are not learning as much as you did when you were in Dokshitz; the reality of life has changed since then. You probably spend more time just on traveling than you did on all your work as a *shochet* back in Dokshitz. Nevertheless, I'm certain that you still learn Chassidus with fervor.

Otherwise, there is no real news here. The Rebbe Shlita traveled to Marienbad. Although he himself did not think about it because his situation would never allow it, nevertheless he gave in to the doctors' opinion, and a few members of *anash and temimim* were able to scratch together the funds needed for the trip. We hope that Hashem will send him whatever he needs there. Whatever you sent was forwarded there, including the content of the letter and the transcription. Please don't wait for an answer right now, because there was no real question in the letter. There have not been any letters from the Rebbe yet, and no real news, only that he began receiving treatment. On the day of his *geulah*, Yud-Beis Tammuz, the Rebbe was in Warsaw on his way to Marienbad. May Hashem help that his trip should be fruitful.

Your friend who seeks your best, and blesses you with all good,
Yechezkel E.

Please send special regards to your esteemed uncle, R.S.Z. Alpert, and to your esteemed brother Reb Avraham. **1**



The Month of Kislev

- The month of Kislev has many special aspects to it. It is commonly referred to by Yiddish as “*chodesh hageulah*.”¹ The Rebbe once noted that due to the many Yomim Tovim in this month, the entire month is considered one Yom Tov, to the extent that the month of Cheshvan can be called Erev Yom Tov (even though Cheshvan doesn’t even contain one Yom Tov).²

- Since the month of Kislev is the third month from Tishrei, the beginning of the year, it is especially connected to Torah (which was given in Chodesh Sivan—the third month from Nissan). In light of this, the Rebbe instructed Chassidim to increase their study of Torah—*nigleh* and Chassidus—quantitatively and qualitatively.³ The Rebbe also wanted Chassidim to learn at least one thing from the Torah of each of the first three Rabbeim every day of the month, and if possible from every Rebbe.⁴

The year 5749* marked 200 years since the passing of the Tzemach Tzedek. The Rebbe instructed that the learning of Chassidus in Chodesh Kislev be in a way clearly paralleled with *nigleh*, which was the Tzemach Tzedek’s unique form of learning.

- The month of Kislev is also called a Chassidisher month. Therefore there should be an increase of:

1. Farbrengens for men, women, and children throughout

the month (especially on special occasions, like on Chassidishe Yomim Tovim and Chanukah) with the purpose of taking upon oneself to increase in the learning of *nigleh* and Chassidus, as well as *hafatzas hamaayanos*. In order for the farbrengens to be most effective, the Rebbe instructed Chassidim to prepare well for the farbrengens in advance.

2. Learning Chassidus during this month, as well as influencing others—both men and women—to learn Chassidus.⁵

The Days of Tes and Yud Kislev - The Mittler Rebbe is born, passed away, and freed from prison

- Today, the Rebbe explained, is especially befitting to increase one’s learning the Chassidus of the *ba’al hageulah* and to make a farbrengen.⁶ The Rebbe specifically encouraged the learning of the Mittler Rebbe’s *maamar Padah Beshalom* (in Shaarei Teshuva).⁷

- The Midrash connects the *possuk* פדה בשלום נפשי with the importance of Torah, *gemilus chassadim*, and davening with a *minyán*. Therefore a day connected to this *possuk* (as it is part of the daily Tehillim) is an opportune time to add in these three things. This includes one’s

מוקדש לחיזוק ההתקשרות לכ"ק אדמו"ר
ולזכרון הרבנית הצדקנית
לרגל יום הבהיר י"ד כסלו
נדפס ע"י
הרה"ת ר' לוי יצחק הלוי
וזוגתו מרת חנה ומשפחתם שיחיו
רייטיק



personal *avodah* in davening, to be invested to the extent that the body is dripping sweat, as was said about the *avodah* of the Mitteler Rebbe.⁸

- This does not detract from the main theme we consistently saw by the Mitteler Rebbe—revealing the spiritual within the physical, which is the final step in bringing about the *geulah*. As the Tzemach Tzedek said about the Mitteler Rebbe, “If his finger would be cut, Chassidus would spout from it (in the spiritual sense).”⁹

- In 5749*, the Rebbe instructed Chassidim to arrange farbrengens every day from Yud Kislev through Yud-Tes Kislev.¹⁰

Yud-Daled Kislev - The wedding anniversary of the Rebbe and Rebbetzin

- During the farbrengen marking the Rebbe and Rebbetzin's 50th wedding anniversary, the Rebbe instituted a new initiative—that every *chosson* should be given, in addition to a Shas, also a tzedakah *pushka*.

- The Rebbe also instructed women and girls to form groups wherever there is a Jewish community,

focusing on their involvement in spreading Yiddishkeit, primarily mitzvos unique to women; married women should teach others about the mitzvah of family purity (*taharas hamishpacha*).¹¹

Yud-Tes and Chof Kislev - The Alter Rebbe is freed from prison

- In the days prior to Yud-Tes Kislev, the Rebbe would instruct Chassidim to expand the printing of *sefarim* of *Torah Shebaal Peh*, and to increase the learning of Chassidus, specifically in newly printed *sefarim*.¹²

- As was the case in 5558*, the first anniversary of Yud-Tes Kislev, there should be farbrengens from Yud-Tes Kislev until Chanukah.¹³ For a farbrengen to be most effective, and in order for there to be the most participation possible, all necessary preparations should be done in advance. It is also advisable to ask the advice of multiple people, in order for the farbrengens to be at its best (without any personal agendas, etc.).¹⁴

- On Yud-Tes Kislev, the Rosh Hashanah for Chassidus, each person should *bentch* one another with “לשנה טובה בלימוד החסידות ובדרכי החסידות תכתב ותחתם”, specifically in the singular (as we do on Rosh Hashanah).¹⁵

- In the Hayom Yom for Yud-Tes Kislev, the Rebbe describes the day as a "...a day for farbrengen and taking *hachlatos* to establish times for study of *nigleh* and Chassidus publicly, and to strengthen the *darkei haChassidim* in true friendship." Additionally, the Rebbe encouraged the utilization of the day to add in the three things about which Hashem says לי כאילו פדאני ("they are tantamount to redeeming me"): Torah, *tefillah* and *tzedakah*. The Rebbe also stressed that the farbrengens should occur in every home, to further highlight how every person can be a good influence on another.¹⁶

- When the Alter Rebbe was freed, he wrote a letter to Chassidim where he explained that the *geulah* was really for all Yidden. The Rebbe would thus instruct Chassidim to make Yud-Tes Kislev a time of increased *ahavas Yisroel*, especially through teaching Chassidus to another Yid.¹⁷

- In the days after Yud-Tes Kislev, the Rebbe strongly encouraged Chassidim to add in learning *maamarim* of the Alter Rebbe.¹⁸ The Rebbe would also instruct Chassidim at this time to start preparing for Chanukah, in the practical preparations and also to learn the appropriate *halachos*.¹⁹

- The Alter Rebbe requested that there should be a *chalukas hashas* each year in every *minyán* of Yidden. From the year 5663*, the *chalukah* in Lubavitch took place on Chof-Daled Teves. (When the Rebbe asked the Friediker Rebbe why this was so, he said that there was no time on Yud-Tes Kislev.²⁰) In 5713*, The Rebbe reinstituted the *chalukas hashas* on Yud-Tes Kislev itself.²¹

- To bring the learning of the whole Shas to fruition, the Rebbe would write his own *masechte*-pledge on paper and encouraged Chassidim to do so as well, in order to make it a tangible concept. He also suggested that the written pledge be entrusted with someone else, thus inclining one to have more of a responsibility to fulfil it.²²

- The Rebbe made it very clear that *tachanun* is not said on Yud-Tes Kislev, and moreover, that saying *tachanun* is wrong.²³

- The Rebbe noted that in the letter written by the Alter Rebbe about his release, he specifically mentions the impact that the story had on the "nations and officers of the world." This is an indication for us to increase our influence on the nations of the world, by teaching them Torah-based morality and *Sheva Mitzvos B'nei Noach*.

Chanukah

- In the days prior to Chanukah, as with every Yom Tov, there should be an increase in *tzedakah*, both physically (that every Yid should have all they need for Chanukah), and spiritually (by increasing one's learning Chassidus connected to Chanukah).²⁴ Of course, as mentioned in *halacha* one should increase *tzedakah* during the days of Chanukah itself.²⁵

- If at every Yom Tov we wish each other with "A *Gut Yom Tov*," how much more so on a day like Chanukah which is themed on spreading light, we should certainly wish each other with "A *Gut Yom Tov*."²⁶

- The Rambam refers to the days of Chanukah as "days of joy." And although there are differences with regards to the *halachos* of *simcha* on this Yom Tov compared to other Yomim Tovim, being that on Chanukah we act with *mehadrin min hamehadrin*, we must do the same in increasing as much *simcha* as possible during Chanukah.²⁷

- With regards to the menorah, there should be specific emphasis on the aesthetics of the mitzvah, to have a beautiful menorah.²⁸

- The Rebbe would instruct Chassidim to also have a menorah in shul lit throughout the whole day (as long as it is in a place that there is no risk of danger for children).²⁹

- The Rebbe explains that the days of Chanukah are a special time to increase in *chinuch*, which in many ways is the theme of Chanukah.³⁰

- On Yud-Tes Kislev 5712*, the Rebbe told the *bochurim* to be involved in spreading Chassidus, however it shouldn't be at the expense of *seder*. The Rebbe then said that in ten days he will be asking for the list of *talmidim* that

come on time, “in relation to a certain matter.” On the fifth night of Chanukah, the Rebbe gave *Chanukah gelt* to the *bochurim*. This occurred every year until 5720*.

- The Rebbe distributed *Chanukah gelt* a few more times throughout the *nesius*, including when Mivtza Chanukah was launched, when he gave *Chanukah gelt* to those who were involved in the *mivtzoim*.

- The Rebbe instructed that *Chanukah gelt* should be given from parents to their children and grandchildren, before and after marriage. And it should be given on every day of Chanukah.³¹ The Rebbe also told Chassidim to give to soldiers they were going to visit for Mivtza Chanukah.³²

- The Rebbe also asked that children should give *Chanukah gelt* amongst themselves.³³

- The Rebbe encouraged Chassidim to make gatherings with children over Chanukah and to speak to them about the story of Chanukah, with lessons that are applicable for their daily lives.³⁴

- In 5748*, the Rebbe said that young children should be educated to have a menorah of their own, lit by the door to their room, their *mikdash me'at*.³⁵

- On Yud-Tes Kislev 5734*, the Rebbe launched the international Mivtza Chanukah campaign, in relation to the Yom Kippur War, focusing on visits to Israeli soldiers on Chanukah, as well as the widows and orphans of those who had fallen in battle.

“On Chanukah one has to ensure that Chanukah candles will be lit in every place where Jewish people live, both in public areas for *pirsumei nisa*, and in private homes, at least one menorah per house. If you meet anyone who doesn’t have a menorah, you should give one to them, and it would also be fitting that every child light their own menorah.”³⁶

- *Mivtzoim* on Chanukah is not only meant to reach Yidden. The Rebbe explained that since the menorah is lit in the front of the house for all to see, the goal should be to influence non-Jews too, to increase in the observance of their commandments, which contain the theme of illuminating the world.³⁷

1 Sefer Hasichos 5752 vol. 1 page 125.

2 Sefer Hasichos 5749 vol. 1 page 78 fn. 1.

3 Toras Menachem 5751 vol. 1 page 354-356.

4 Toras Menachem 5749 vol. 1 page 374.

5 Toras Menachem 5749 vol. 1, pages 383-385, 404-405.

6 Toras Menachem 5749 pages vol. 1, 404-405.

7 Toras Menachem 5749 vol. 1, page 407.

8 Toras Menachem 5748 vol. 1, pages 579-582.

9 Sefer Hasichos 5752 pages 149 and 152.

10 Toras Menachem 5749 vol. 1, page 404.

11 14 Kislev 5739 sicha 5.

12 Sefer Hasichos 5748 vol. 1, page 131.

13 Toras Menachem 5750 vol. 2, page 12-13.

14 Sefer Hasichos 5751 vol. 1, page 178.

15 Toras Menachem 5749 vol. 2, page 4.

16 Toras Menachem 5752 vol. 1, page 368.

17 Toras Menachem 5749 vol. 2 page 12.

18 Toras Menachem 5749 vol. 2 page 7.

19 Toras Menachem 5750 vol. 2 page 11.

20 Hayom Yom 19 Kislev.

21 Toras Menachem 5713 vol. 1 page 216.

See Sefer Hasichos 5752 vol. 2 page 476 for the explanation.

22 Sefer Hasichos 5752 vol. 2 page 490.

23 Igros Kodesh vol. 7 page 125. See Derher Kislev 5774 page 24 for the full letter in English.

24 Toras Menachem 5750 vol. 2 page 32 - 34.

25 Toras Menachem 5748 vol. 2 page 102.

26 Ibid. Page 65.

27 Toras Menachem 5749 vol. 2, page 30, page 34 fn. 79.

28 Toras Menachem 5750 vol. 2, page 86 fn.

69.

29 Toras Menachem 5750 vol. 2, page 51 fn.

69.

30 Toras Menachem 5748 vol. 2 page 58.

31 Sichos Kodesh 5737 vol. 1 page 358

32 Sichos Kodesh 5734 vol. 1 page 196

33 Likkutei Sichos vol. 20 page 450 - 451.

See Derher Kislev 5779 for details about giving *Chanukah gelt*.

34 Sichos Kodesh 5733 Parshas Vayeishev page 209.

35 Toras Menachem 5748 vol. 2 page 64.

36 Sichos Kodesh 5734 vol. 1 pages 195-200.

37 Toras Menachem 5750 vol. 2 page 52.



"לבנין עצדי עצד"

THE REBBE'S PARTICIPATION AT THE WEDDINGS OF CHASSIDIM

It didn't take long after the Rebbe's arrival on the shores of the United States in 5701* and his work at the helm of the Lubavitch movement, that *bochurim and anash* gravitated towards him, many developing a close relationship with the Rebbe in those early years. As a result, Chassidim would share with the Rebbe their joyous moments as well as their personal anguish. This closeness only intensified once the Rebbe accepted the *nesius*. The father-like love the Rebbe showered upon his Chassidim knew no bounds. There is one area where this was uniquely expressed—the Rebbe's participation in the family *simchahs* of Chassidim.

Beginning in his early days in America, Chassidim would invite the Rebbe to join in their *tenaim* and weddings. The Rebbe participated as the son-in-law of the Rebbe, and later as the Rebbe. Before the Rebbe's *nesius*, he would usually be honored with reciting some of the *sheva brachos* under the *chupah*, occasionally being the *mesader kiddushin* as well. After assuming the *nesius*, the Rebbe continued to be *mesader kiddushin* at *chupahs* for over ten years.

In an earlier edition of Derher, we published a general overview of the Rebbe's practice of being *mesader kiddushin* (see Derher, Kislev 5773).

In connection with Yud-Daled Kislev, the date of the Rebbe and Rebbetzin's *chasunah*, we present the following article. This compilation is not intended to serve as a broader overview of this unique practice of the Rebbe, rather we intend to bring before the reader a more nuanced understanding of the Rebbe's involvement in the Chassidim's personal *simchahs*, by underlining various particular stories which offer us a window into the Rebbe's joining in *simchahs* and his involvement in every step of the way leading up to their weddings.

Most of the material for this article was culled from the *sefer* "*Mekadesh Yisroel*" by Kehos.

EARLY YEARS

During the years prior to the Frierdiker Rebbe's *histalkus*, the Rebbe would often attend weddings of *anash* that took place in the greater New York City area. Usually, the Rebbe recited one of the *brachos* under the *chupah*, and in some cases he was *mesader kiddushin* as well. In various instances, the Rebbe also addressed the crowd during the *seudah*.

Though very uncommon today, in those days there would regularly be a ceremony held for the *tenaim* at the time of the couple's engagement. Generally, the Rebbe would not attend the *tenaim*, yet families who enjoyed a close relationship with *beis harav* would often insist for the Rebbe to attend.

In Elul of 5703*, the *tenaim* ceremony of Rabbi Mordechai Altein, who was engaged to the daughter of Rabbi Yisroel Jacobson, took place in a shul in East New York. Both the Rebbe and Rebbetzin participated. When the *mechutanim* began to write the *nusach* of the *tenaim*, the Rebbe commented that the *nusach* prepared is different from the *nusach* traditionally written by *beis harav*. Being that no one present had the *nusach* of *beis harav* handy, the Rebbe took a taxi to his home, returning with a *tenaim* document, which had in it handwritten notations from the Tzemach Tzedek.

A few months later, on 22 Kislev 5704*, their wedding took place. This would be the first wedding in America at which the Rebbe addressed the crowd.

Following the wedding, a fascinating article was written by Rabbi Hodakov for one of the local Yiddish newspapers, in which he describes the events of the wedding, including the Rebbe's address. The article was edited by the Rebbe before being published.



THE REBBE SPEAKS AT A WEDDING ON 4 TAMMUZ, 5704*

KEHOT PUBLICATION SOCIETY

The article reads:

"A Beautiful Chassidische Wedding in Brownsville. On Sunday, 22 Kislev, the well-known Rabbi Yisroel Jacobson married off his daughter... Siddur kiddushin and sheva brachos were recited by the sons-in-law of the Lubavitcher Rebbe...

"A great impact was left on the crowd from the address delivered by Harav M. Schneerson, in which he expressed that through the very fact that the Jewish people serve one G-d and have one Torah, they are a unified nation, wherever they may be spread out [throughout the world]. A result of which, the joy of one Jew can uplift the mood of all other Jews.

"The Jewish people are distinct in their steadfast trust in Hashem,

to the point that even in the most bitter circumstances, we are sure of our ultimate victory. Yet, it is always necessary for Yidden to be dedicated to Yiddishkeit with mesiras nefesh; just like Matisyahu and his children, Yiddishe children must be protected with their Yiddishkait... Just as the jug of oil was protected from the unclean Greek hands and therefore shone brightly..."

This address was later discovered in the Rebbe's Reshimos, where the Rebbe recorded brief notes of what he was going to say. Aside from this address, another ten addresses for weddings are recorded in the Reshimos, including instances where although the Rebbe had prepared an address, he did not end up delivering it. On these Reshimos the Rebbe noted

FOR WHAT DID YOU COME?

At the wedding of Elya Chaim Carlebach, the Rebbe was honored with the first two *brachos* at the *chupah*. Following the *chupah*, the Rebbe returned to the hall, where he had a conversation with Rabbi Eliezer Silver. When the dancing began the Rebbe commented to a few *bochurim* instructing them to join the dancing, saying, “For what purpose did you come? Was it in order to eat or to add in *simchas chosson v’kallah?*”

TIME THE REBBE CHERISHED

The last wedding the Rebbe attended before the Frierdiker Rebbe’s *histalkus* was that of Reb Leibel Dubov, which took place only three days before Yud Shvat. Following the *chupah*, the *chosson*’s father, Reb Yitzchok Dubov, approached the Rebbe requesting that he remain at the wedding for the *seudah*.

The Rebbe replied by saying that each Thursday night, as well as *leil Shabbos* he learns with the Frierdiker Rebbe in private, concluding: “Never, will I give up this privilege!”

next to the title לא נאמר, indicating that it wasn’t delivered.

PARTICIPATION AS REBBE

During the year of *aveilus* for the Frierdiker Rebbe, the Rebbe refrained



ADAR 5706*. THE REBBE PARTICIPATES IN A TENOIM CELEBRATION. NOTE THE PICTURE OF THE FRIERDIKER REBBE.



THE REBBE SITS AT THE HEAD TABLE OF THE WEDDING SEUDA ON 23 ADAR II, 5706*

from participating in any weddings. When the period of *aveilus* came to an end and the Rebbe accepted the *nesius*, the Rebbe’s responsibilities grew, leaving less time available to participate in all weddings of Chassidim. It was at this point that the Rebbe laid out specific conditions for his participation at weddings: The *chosson* must agree to grow a beard, and the *kallah* to wear a *sheitel* after the wedding.

The first wedding the Rebbe attended following the *histalkus* of the Frierdiker Rebbe, was that of Reb Leibel Posner, which took place just two weeks after the Rebbe accepted the *nesius*. As opposed to the weddings the Rebbe attended earlier, now it

was the ‘Lubavitcher Rebbe’ who was *mesader kiddushin*.

On his wedding day, Reb Leibel entered the Rebbe’s room requesting the Rebbe to participate in his wedding, explaining that he wished to honor the Rebbe with *siddur kiddushin*. The Rebbe responded that the honor of *siddur kiddushin* belongs to the *kallah*’s side¹, to which Reb Leibel replied that he is indeed speaking on their behalf as well. The Rebbe agreed, and asked to be notified when they are ready to proceed with the *chupah*.

The Rebbe arrived at the hall during the *kabbalas ponim* and sat down near the *chosson* at the head of the table.



AT THE WEDDING OF REB ZALMAN POSNER ON 6 KISLEV 5710, THE REBBE CAN BE SEEN CONVERSING WITH SOME OF THE ELDER CHASSIDIM.



AT THE SAME WEDDING, THE REBBETZINS SIT AT ONE TABLE. FROM RIGHT TO LEFT: REBBETZIN NECHAMA DINA, REBBETZIN CHANA AND REBBETZIN CHAYA MUSHKA.

A few days later, Rabbi Berel Baumgarten wrote a letter to a friend, in which he described what had transpired during the wedding:

"A week ago was Leibel Posner's wedding, at which the Rebbe was present. When the Rebbe arrived, he sat near the chosson at the kabbalas ponim as usual and began speaking with the father of the kallah who is a shochet in New Jersey.

"At the beginning of their conversation, the Rebbe asked 'Where will the chupah take place? Does the roof open or will it take place outside?' The mechutan replied that the chupah is scheduled to be held indoors. It was evident that the Rebbe was troubled by this notion. 'The chupah will be held inside?'" asked the Rebbe. Instantly the father of the chosson along with his son, the chosson, readily agreed to have the chupah outdoors, yet the kallah's father was hesitant, giving various reasons. The Rebbe replied by saying, 'My wedding also took place during the winter, and yet the chupah was outdoors, under the sky—and baruch Hashem, I am happy with the shidduch.'

"When he continued to argue, the chosson motioned to his father-in-law,

asking him to end the discussion, which he then did. Rabbi Eliyahu Simpson then pointed out that at this point it is not possible to obtain a permit to perform the chupah on the street. The Rebbe motioned that not necessarily is it so...

"The father of the chosson got up and left to arrange the last-minute chupah arrangements, returning about five minutes later saying that everything is set up.

"The Rebbe went on to speak to the mechutan about his origins. He told the Rebbe he came from Germany, to which the Rebbe replied, 'Germany gave us much Torah and much gedulah (wealth). Then he paused for a moment and continued with a sigh, 'and much tzaros too... Torah had its effect in many places the world over: Babylon, Persia, Germany, France, Poland, Russia, and now America. Everything is now ready, what remains necessary is only the arrival of Moshiach...'

"The Rebbe then continued saying, 'Since the histalkus of my father-in-law the [Friediker] Rebbe, I haven't left the door of his home, aside from going home to rest and going to the Ohel. Now, the first time I am leaving 770 is to participate in your daughter's

wedding, for a simchah. Being that joy transcends all boundaries, may Hashem see to it that this simchah shall bring us to transcend our present boundaries, including the 'boundaries' surrounding the Tziyun Hakadosh, the building of which was recently completed..."

"After the conversation, the chosson went to the badeken, while the Rebbe's demeanor had become increasingly serious, similar to how it is when the Rebbe prepares to recite a maamar. The Rebbe instructed us to sing, while he went outside and waited near the chupah for the chosson and kallah to arrive."

In his diary, Reb Yoel Kahan recorded: "When the singing had finished, the Rebbe said: 'Chassidus teaches that a wedding symbolizes the Aibershter's infinite greatness, which is revealed then... A niggun also has an infinite trait, for a niggun always repeats itself. The Rebbe then instructed that the niggun should be sung again."

Rabbi Baumgarten continued to describe the scene of the chupah: "The Rebbe was mesader kiddushin and also recited the sheva brachos. When the Rebbe recited the bracha שוש תשיש ותגל his eyes filled with tears, while



he continued to recite it in his unique tone. Again, while reciting the words ישמע בערי יהודה ובחוצות ירושלים the Rebbe stopped for a moment, his tears preventing him from continuing.”

After the *chupah* the Rebbe returned to the hall and spoke again for a few minutes with the *kallah's* father, wishing him *mazal tov*. Soon after the Rebbe left the wedding, while the crowd sang *Ki B'simcha Seitzeiu* until the Rebbe's car was out of sight.

A RARE EXCEPTION

A few months later, Rabbi Herschel Shusterman, the rav of the Lubavitcher shul in Chicago, suggested a *shidduch* for Dr. Avrohom Seligson. The Rebbe supported the idea and continued to be involved in every step of the *shidduch* from the engagement through the wedding.

Initially, the *kallah's* father, Reb Yitzchok Meir Pinsker, who was a disciple of the Chofetz Chaim, expressed hesitation at taking a *chosson* for his daughter who was a doctor. The Rebbe sent a message to him through Rabbi Shusterman that in the Litvishe circles Dr. Seligson would be considered a *gaon*. The engagement

was on Chof Cheshvan in Dr. Seligson's apartment. The Rebbe and Rebbetzin sent over their own serving utensils to be used at the *seudah*. The Rebbe suggested that Dr. Seligson sponsor the publication of the Rebbe Rashab's *maamar* פ"פ סמוכים לעד תר"פ and the Rebbe personally composed the dedication, noting that the *chosson* was a doctor by including the words גומל חסד בגופו.

The Rebbe set the wedding date for the fifth night of Chanukah. In *yechidus* with the couple and their families, the Rebbe spoke with the *kallah's* father at length, praising the *chosson* in glowing terms. The *ufruf* was held in 770 on Shabbos Parshas Vayeishev and during the *farbrengen* the Rebbe spoke about the concept of marriage.

As mentioned earlier, at that point the Rebbe's *siddur kiddushin* was on condition that the *chosson* would grow his beard. At the time Dr. Seligson did not have a beard and the Rebbe asked Reb Shmuel Levitin whether it was halachically permissible for him to make an exception to this rule, for the Rebbe acted upon it more than three times which halachically gives it the stringency of an oath. Reb Shmuel immediately responded that the Rebbe's condition applied only to the students of Tomchei Temimim and Dr. Seligson was not a student at Tomchei Temimim. In addition, Reb Shmuel pointed out that since he was a relative of the Rebbe³, this was not an issue. The Rebbe was pleased with his response.

The wedding took place in Manhattan. The *kabbalas ponim* began with the Rebbe's arrival. The guests included venerable Chassidim, as well as prominent Litvishe rabbanim. The Rebbe sat next to the head of the table, and Chassidim sang *niggunim* while the Rebbe spoke to the *chosson* and reviewed the *kesubah*.

The Rebbe then said a *sicha*, explaining the connection between a wedding and Chanukah. At one point, the *chosson* started to pour a drink for the Rebbe. The Rebbe declined, saying that Chazal compared a *chosson* to a king and one must not be served by a king. Later, the Rebbe repeated this when the *chosson* took the elevator together with the Rebbe to the ground floor for the *chupah*. The Rebbe insisted that the *chosson* enter and exit first since he was compared to a king.

The *chupah* was set up indoors, under a retractable skylight. Before beginning the *chupah*, the Rebbe looked up to see if the skylight was indeed open, which it was, and then proceeded to start the *chupah*. The Rebbe was *mesader kiddushin* and recited all of the *sheva brachos*. The Rebbe offered the final *bracha* to the father of the *kallah*, who refused and requested that the Rebbe recite the final *bracha* as well. After the *chupah*, the Rebbe instructed the *bochurim* to begin dancing, during which the Rebbe spoke with a few people for about ten minutes, and then returned to 770.

After the wedding, the Rebbetzin borrowed the wedding album from Mrs. Seligson for a few days. It was implied that she wanted the album to show the Rebbe. Several years later Reb Moshe Groner collected all the photos of the Rebbe then available, most of which were from the Rebbe at weddings. He showed them to Rebbetzin Chana, who browsed through the photographs and commented on all of them. When she reached the photos of Dr. Seligson's wedding she told Reb Moshe, "For this wedding, the Rebbe made an exception of being *mesader kiddushin* although he did not have a beard."

NEW CONDITIONS

The year was 5714*. The number of responsibilities the Rebbe carried



THE REBBE PARTICIPATES IN THE KABBOLOS PONIM OF REB LEBEL DUBOV ON 7 SHEVAT 5710*, JUST THREE DAYS BEFORE THE HISTALKUS OF THE FRIEDIKER REBBE.



12 ELUL, 5708*. WEDDING OF REB VELVEL SCHILDKRAUT

on his shoulders kept increasing day after day, and the trips to and from various halls around New York were becoming too time-consuming. The Rebbe's secretariat announced that from now on the Rebbe would only participate in *chupahs* that were held in the courtyard of 770.

Despite how busy he was, the Rebbe reserved a special father-like relationship showing boundless care and concern for the *bochurim*,

often being actively involved in their *shidduchim*. This was uniquely expressed with the story of Reb Berel Junik's *shidduch* and preparation for his wedding.

Reb Berel merited to serve as a *meshamesh bakodesh*, carrying out many tasks for Rebbetzin Chana, as well as for the Rebbe and Rebbetzin. Naturally, he maintained a very close relationship with *beis harav*.

When Reb Berel arrived in New York, he was already of marriageable age. During those years, the Rebbe would speak to him on numerous occasions on the topic of *shidduchim*. In his diary, the first mention of this was early on in 5711*. The Rebbe mentioned to him that his parents had written a letter, asking the Rebbe to encourage their son Berel to begin looking for a *shidduch*.

Ultimately, it took another few years until he was ready to move forward, and then too, it was only with the Rebbe's urging. In his diary, Reb Berel recorded the Rebbe's consistent encouragement to him. The following are snippets from his diary. Reb Berel wrote:

Yechidus. Tuesday, Erev Rosh Chodesh Iyar, 5713*. 10:30-11:00 p.m.

The Rebbe: "Who must begin this conversation? Presumably, it must be me.

This is in continuation to what Rabbi Hodakov spoke with you, [regarding a shidduch proposal]. Let us speak undiplomatically. As opposed to being nervous of each other, better we fear Hashem...

"How do you intend to approach this? Through Rabbi Hodakov [who tried to set up a shidduch for me per the Rebbe's instructions] — No. Through someone else—Reb Itcheh Goldin—No. How exactly will you have the opportunity to meet someone? Do you want the Aibershter to present someone, and all you need to do is close your eyes and say 'Harei at mekudeshes'?

"Someone must suggest an idea, which is also with Hashem's help. Why do you seek to have it arranged miraculously? This is the way it's meant to be, you will speak over the phone and then you will meet. Obviously, the chupah isn't set up instantly, it will take time. Yet, the way you're sitting in your room, or in shul—how do you expect it will come to be?!

"After you will date—whether this shidduch pleases you or not... Then, there is the other side as well. These details, if you won't want to, you won't need to share. If you have something you would like to clarify then [you may] ask.

"Why do I speak of this with you? Because I feel a responsibility to the bochurim who behave in a Torah manner... It is my responsibility to help them... Being that you don't have another way to meet someone, I asked Rabbis Hodakov, Goldin, and others, to think of you...

"How will this happen? [Do you consider] to say nafshi chashka b'Torah, that you intend to spend another five years in yeshiva... I tend to think differently... (especially, since you already have some sort of income...)

"...Generally speaking, the frumme community is limited. To stop a girl in the street and talk to her or to enter Beis Yaakov and look for someone to meet, this is obviously not the way to do things...

[In response to a suggestion I had previously pushed off, the Rebbe said:] "Is this just an excuse, or is it actually so? I heard a few weeks ago she was supposed to be here, and she may be here again in a few weeks...

"May Hashem help, it should go easy and soon, and you should think in these terms as well."

Monday, 23 Tammuz 5713*, 11:00

The Rebbe: "What is with regards to what we discussed? What kind of excuse did you prepare today?"

Berel Junik: "As of now, nothing."

The Rebbe: "I see that things aren't moving forward, we're in the same place we were one, two, three, and four years ago. Through a middle man, as everyone else does—you don't want. On your own, you won't do it. Hashem does miracles, but it must be within the realm of nature.

"Do you expect to wake up and be standing under the chupah? ...Your parents are in Canada... In a few days I



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TWO PICTURES FROM THE WEDDING OF REB LEIBEL POSNER ON 30 SHEVAT 5711*, THE FIRST TO TAKE PLACE AFTER THE KABBOLOS HANESIYUS. IN THE FIRST, THE REBBE CAN BE SEEN CONVERSING WITH THE ELDER CHASSIDIM AT THE KABBOLOS PONIM. THE SECOND PICTURE WAS TAKEN DURING THE RECITATION OF THE SHEVA BRACHOS UNDER THE CHUPA.

will see, if you don't begin to take action alone, I will write to your parents..."

Wednesday, 5 Menachem Av, 5713*

"...May Hashem grant you an appropriate shidduch, both materially as well as spiritually, this year. I don't mean 5713*, but rather this year since your birthday..."

During the year 5714*, Reb Berel met his then-to-be wife. As things progressed, he went to inform the

Rebbe where things are holding. Reb Berel wrote:

Friday, [Erev Shabbos Parshas] Shmini, 5714*

The Rebbe: "How many times did you meet? About her [where she is holding], I will hear from her.

"Nu, mazal tov! It should be בשעה טובה ומוצלחת. May you have a Yiddishe and Chassidishe home. Would you like to enter [for yechidus] together or separately? Your father doesn't know yet?



28 KISLEV, 5712*. WEDDING OF DR. SELIGSON.

Is it a secret like everything? Call your father, better before Shabbos. You can call from the Merkos office. Why should you deny him this pleasure [to hear where things are holding]? Presumably, everything will go well.”

Tuesday night, Parshas Tazria, 5714*

The Rebbe: “One needs to be joyful, as we are told בשמחה ה' עבדו את ה'. Moreover, joy must be visible on one's face. What must be before you will say 'it's good' Reb Ber? You already have a haskama and bracha, what else would you like?

“I think the 'Vort' should take place before Pesach... You should see to it that your parents should travel for the 'Vort,' or at least one of them. And when the mechutanim will be here, together they'll set a date for the wedding. The wedding should not be scheduled for a long time from now.”

Tuesday, 4 Nissan 5714*

The Rebbe: “What date did they set for the wedding?”

Berel Junik: “After Shavuos.”

Rebbe: “What date?”

Berel Junik: “The Rebbe suggested the Thursday after Shavuos.”

...The Rebbe: “You said over a maamar? Which?”

Berel Junik: “Ad-nai Sefasai.”

The Rebbe: “This is from 5712*...”

Wednesday, 11 Nissan 5714

The Rebbe: “Regarding the mezonos [the Rebbe gave] - how did I tell you, with the words 'You should eat this at the chasunah?' ...If so, you should have eaten it by the Tenaim, but you should not sell the leftovers to a goy [for Pesach]. You may eat them now and it will be considered as [if you ate them] then. Take a piece for you and a piece for your kallah.”

First day of Chol Hamoed Pesach, 5714*

...Berel Junik: “I would like for the Rebbe Shlita to be mesader kiddushin.”

The Rebbe: “If I will travel to a hall I will later have many tzaros... the chupah can be done here and the seudah somewhere else, whichever way is more comfortable...”

Sunday, [Parshas] Nasso, 27 Iyar, 5714*

The Rebbe: “When do you plan to go to the Ohel? [It would be] best to go on the day of the wedding...” Turning to the kallah the Rebbe continued: “Most probably you will go to the Ohel as well.

You shouldn't go alone, go with your brother. If your mother wants to go too, she should go along with you.

“May [the wedding] be בשעה טובה ומוצלחת, may you build a Yiddishe and Chassidishe home, may you have nachas from Hashem and may Hashem have nachas from you.

“...On the day of the chupah, you should give tzedakah from money that you earned, not from other money such as gifts you received.”

9 Sivan, 5714*

The Rebbe gave his siddur to the chosson and said: “When the crowd gathers or most of the crowd, you can notify me. I will be here at 8:00 or a little before 8:00. You should daven with a gartel...”

PERSONAL ENCOURAGEMENT

The Rebbe's condition that the chosson must grow a beard was not limited only to the weddings the Rebbe attended, rather (perhaps mainly) it was also a means to encourage bochorim to grow their beards, which was not too common in those days.

In the summer of 5718*, Reb Sholom Ber Raskin, then a bochor, entered the Rebbe's room for yechidus. During the yechidus, he mentioned to the Rebbe the name of a young woman who came up as a potential shidduch for him. The Rebbe replied saying, “[This is] a fine idea, she is a Chassidishe daughter...[the idea] pleases me.”

The Rebbe then continued: “There is something I would like to request of you. It would be a fine idea if you were to let your beard grow. Your father had a beard, your grandfather had a beard... not because this is my will, rather for it is the will of Hashem.” Reb Sholom Ber then asked if the Rebbe would be mesader kiddushin. The Rebbe replied, “If you will fulfill what

I requested of you, then I will fulfill what you are requesting of me.”

On a Friday afternoon some two weeks later, Reb Sholom Ber received a telephone call from Rabbi Hodakov who wanted to know if he had decided to fulfill what the Rebbe had spoken to him about in *yechidus*, concluding that if yes, he is to place a note on the Rebbe's *shtender* before *Kabbalas Shabbos*.

A few weeks later, the Rebbe saw Reb Sholom Ber with his beard which had already started to fill in, and commented that “It would be a fine idea for you to visit the Ohel with the *tzelem Elokim*.”

A few months later his wedding took place, at which he merited the Rebbe's *siddur kiddushin*.

LATER YEARS

In the year 5720*, it became increasingly clear that the Rebbe was gradually withdrawing from performing *siddur kiddushin* at weddings. At this point, the Rebbe laid out a new condition for the *siddur kiddushin*: The couple would need to undertake the commitment of going on *shlichus*.

Rabbi Avrohom Korf related:

“When I returned from *shlichus* in Eretz Yisroel in the summer of 5716*,⁵ I wrote to the Rebbe requesting that when the time comes, he should send me on *shlichus*.

“When the time of my wedding was approaching in the year 5720*, the Rebbe had officially discontinued his custom of performing *siddur kiddushin* for *anash*. Nonetheless, when I requested the Rebbe to be *mesader kiddushin* at my *chupah* the Rebbe accepted.

“A few weeks later, someone who didn't merit the Rebbe's *siddur kiddushin*, asked the Rebbe something to the effect of ‘*lama nigara*’ pointing to our wedding where the Rebbe was *mesader kiddushin*. The Rebbe's

response was that ‘The other *chosson* is going on *shlichus*.’”

This would last for the next three years, while it was becoming increasingly rare for the Rebbe to participate in weddings. In the middle of 5722*, the Rebbe offered Rabbi Sholom Posner of Pittsburgh that he would perform *siddur kiddushin* at the wedding of his daughter to Rabbi

Avrohom Sasonkin, which was to take place during the summer. Since the wedding was to take place in Pittsburgh, the Rebbe suggested the *chupah* be held in the early afternoon in the courtyard of 770, and the wedding reception would take place later in the evening in Pittsburgh.

This came as a surprise, for the Rebbe had seemingly already stopped

IN PLACE OF PARENTS

Reb Tzvi Abba Lerman was a student in 770. When it came time for him to get married, his parents were not able to be present. Naturally, he wasn't in the best state of mind as a result. Knowing this, the Rebbe paid particular interest that he should be aided in whatever he may need.

The Rebbe instructed him to go to Rabbi Hodakov and take a loan of \$500, in order to buy a diamond ring for the *kallah*. Later, the Rebbe confirmed that he had everything else he needed for the wedding. Shortly before the wedding the Rebbe instructed him to take another \$500 loan from Rabbi Hodakov, in order to buy a *sheitel* for the *kallah*.

At the *chupah*, which took place in the courtyard of 770, the Rebbe was *mesader kiddushin*.

Being that his parents were not present, the question arose as to who should fill their place to be the *shushvinin* who escort the *chosson* and *kallah* to the *chupah*. When the *chosson* proposed this question to the Rebbe, the Rebbe responded by asking, “Whom do you learn with?” The *chosson* replied that he learns under Rabbi Chaim Meir Bukiet. The Rebbe instructed that he should honor his teacher with *shushvinus*.



THE REBBE SPEAKS AT A KABBOLOS PONIM ON 26 KISLEV, 5714*. THIS WAS ONE OF THE LAST TIMES THE REBBE WAS MESADER KIDDUSHIN AT A HALL.



2 KISLEV, 5714*. THE REBBE EXITS THE WEDDING HALL AFTER THE CHUPA.

was to take place in England, during the winter of 5723*.

“The Rebbe responded that the date and location of the wedding are to be decided by the *mechutanim*. However, if they are to ask the Rebbe’s opinion—‘I don’t see why not to wait until the summer, allowing the *chosson* the opportunity to finish his studies in yeshiva.’ Regarding *siddur kiddushin*, the Rebbe emphasized that this tradition had already been discontinued.

“Being that the Rebbe was no longer performing *siddur kiddushin* at weddings, invitations began announcing *chupahs* taking place at locations other than 770.

“Once the location of our wedding was set for New York, my father-in-law said to the Rebbe that he is looking forward to the Rebbe’s *siddur kiddushin*, as the wedding is being held in New York. The Rebbe remained silent and only smiled in response. It seemed clear to us as though the Rebbe was reluctant to accept *siddur kiddushin* since this tradition had officially stopped.

“Months went by and it was about ten days before my wedding. My *kallah* and I went into the Rebbe’s room for *yechidus*. Among other things, the Rebbe asked if the *chupah* must necessarily begin at seven-thirty in the evening, as posted on the invitation, or perhaps can it be moved. I replied that if the Rebbe would like, it can be moved. The Rebbe then said to me, ‘I’ll speak it over with your *mechutan*.’

“That same night my father-in-law entered *yechidus* as well. The Rebbe asked him why doesn’t he reschedule the *chupah* earlier, explaining that ‘it’s a pity on the *chosson* and *kallah* that they should need to fast for so long.’ My father-in-law responded saying, ‘If the Rebbe would accept the *siddur kiddushin* they are prepared to fast for two weeks!’ The Rebbe responded, ‘That is unnecessary,’ and asked to



THE REBBE LOOKS ON AS THE KESUBA IS READ AT THE WEDDING OF REB BEREL JUNIK ON 9 SIVAN 5714*.

THIS WAS THE ONLY PICTURE OF THE REBBE HANGING IN THE REBBE’S HOME. REB BEREL JUNIK SHOWED THE REBBETZIN THE PHOTOS FROM HIS WEDDING AND SHE REQUESTED A COPY OF THIS PICTURE.

performing *siddur kiddushin*. The Rebbe instructed that this remain an absolute secret, that none of the relatives should know of the Rebbe’s participation beforehand. (So much so that at one point before the wedding Rabbi Groner asked a relative about it, and they were taken aback by the fact that even the Rebbe’s secretaries weren’t aware...)

The very last wedding at which the Rebbe performed *siddur kiddushin*, was that of Rabbi and Mrs. Shmuel Lew. At first, it seemed as though the Rebbe had already stopped performing *siddur kiddushin* altogether. Then, in a

fascinating chain of events, the Rebbe accepted their request. Rabbi Lew related:

“Towards the end of 5722* I became engaged to the daughter of Reb Zalman Jaffe, of Manchester, England, who merited to have a special relationship with *beis harav*. Shortly thereafter, my father-in-law was discussing possible wedding dates with the Rebbe, suggesting that if the Rebbe would agree to be the *mesader kiddushin*, the wedding would take place in New York, during the summer of 5723*. Alternatively, the wedding

have the *chupah* rescheduled for five o'clock in the afternoon.

"Immediately after this conversation, we hastily printed and sent out corrected invitations with the updated time for the *chupah*. The Rebbe made it clear that the Rebbe's name should not be on the invitation, and obviously, there should be no mention of the Rebbe performing *siddur kiddushin*. The Rebbe himself edited the text of the invitation, underlining five o'clock *precisely* three times.

"It was a few days before the wedding when Rabbi Hodakov approached me and asked 'Who will be *mesader kiddushin*?' Clarifying, he wanted to know who is going to organize the *kesubah* and so on. He also asked if the *kallah* has two *sheitels*, for when one is being washed, the other can be worn. Another issue he mentioned was at what point will the *kallah* begin to wear her *sheitel*, implying that she should begin to wear it before the *chupah*.

"The Rebbe had instructed me to go to the Ohel on my wedding day. He also instructed me to learn from the *sefer Reishis Chochmah* in the days before the wedding.

"On the day of our wedding, the Rebbe went to the Ohel. At 3:30, my father-in-law wanted to begin the *kabbalas ponim*, in order to have the *chupah* begin precisely on time. It was now a quarter to five, and the Rebbe was yet to return. Rabbi Hodakov commented that it never occurred before that the Rebbe should return from the Ohel and not daven Mincha immediately. Hence, the *chupah* is presumed to be a bit delayed. My father-in-law insisted, 'The Rebbe said five, precisely five it will be!'

"We began the preparations for the *chupah* in front of 770. Five minutes ahead of five o'clock, the Rebbe's car pulled up, and the Rebbe went into his room, where he told Rabbi Hodakov

that he is going to the *chupah* before Mincha. Indeed, the *chupah* took place precisely at five! As usual, at a *chupah* in front of 770, Rabbi Kazarnovsky called out: 'Iz men *mechabed Kvod Kedushas Adoneinu Moreinu V'rabeinu mit siddur kiddushin*.'

"After the *chupah*, the Rebbe waited until we—the *chosson* and *kallah*—left the *chupah*, as was his custom. The Rebbe looked at us then with a very serious look.

"As a side note," concluded Rabbi Lew fondly, "throughout the *chupah* the sun was shining brightly. About three minutes after the *chupah* concluded, the rain began to come pouring down..."



In conclusion, we must not forget that even after the Rebbe ceased to perform *siddur kiddushin*, Chassidim always continued to invite the Rebbe to participate in their wedding. In return, the Rebbe would send back a letter with his *brachos* to the *chosson* and *kallah*, which is customarily read under the *chupah*. The Rebbe would also give his *siddur* to every *chosson* to daven with on the day of his wedding.⁶

Even in much later years, Chassidim would try to schedule their *chupah* for a time when the Rebbe would be in 770. According to some accounts, at times the Rebbe would stand near the window in his room to observe the *chupah* and answer "Amen" to the *brachos*.

At times, immediately after the *chupah*, the *chosson* and *kallah* had an opportunity to see the Rebbe for a brief moment. Either this was when the Rebbe was leaving 770 for his home, or if a *chalukah* was taking place downstairs in shul and the *chosson* and *kallah* would go by the Rebbe together.

Many recall this personal moment they merited to have with the Rebbe to be truly unique. With a broad smile the Rebbe would wish the couple "mazel tov." **T**

1. As is the Chabad custom.
2. Referring to the structure built for the Ohel of the Frierdiker Rebbe.
3. He was a descendant of Reb Chaim Avraham, son of the Alter Rebbe.
4. The custom among Chassidim is to begin wearing a gartel at Mincha before the wedding, when davening with the Rebbe's *siddur*.
5. See Derher Sivan 5774.
6. See Derher, Adar 5776.



THE REBBE WISHES MAZEL TOV TO A CHOSSON KALLA WHO CAME DOWNSTAIRS TO RECEIVE A KUNTRES FROM THE REBBE RIGHT AFTER THEIR CHUPPA ON THE EVE OF EREV ROSH HASHANA 5750*.



The Mysterious Guests

“Where can I take you gentlemen,” asked the simple, G-d fearing wagon driver of the two distinguished looking Yidden he found standing at the wagon stop in the Baranovitz train station.

Unbeknownst to him, the pair was the Rebbe Rashab and his son the Frierdiker Rebbe, on their journey back from Vilna where they had been attending a meeting of leading rabbis.

This was late Thursday night. It was clear that they wouldn’t make it back

to Lubavitch in time for Shabbos and so they would be spending the holy day in a local hotel.

There were many choices of wagons, each more luxurious than the other, yet the Rebbe and his son opted for a simple looking one without blankets and material to avoid any concern of *shatnez*.

“Please take us to a hotel,” replied the Rebbe Rashab.

Baranovitz was a transit town for many businessmen so this request was common, however, he

discerned something special about them and offered to host them.

“Please join me for Shabbos,” he insisted. “I have a clean empty room that you can use all for yourselves.”

The Rebbe kindly rejected the offer and insisted that they will stay in the hotel. Upon arrival, the Rebbe paid the man handsomely and wished him well. Before departing, the wagon driver again invited them over. “Please come by on Shabbos morning for a hot drink.

I have a cow that gives us milk. Please join us.” He pointed in the direction of his home and indicated that it was not far from where they were staying.

“My son,” said the Rebbe Rashab on Shabbos morning, “We should go over to the wagon driver’s home and take him up on his offer for a hot drink.”

As they approached the house, they overheard the man reciting Tehillim in a sweet voice. Hearing footsteps approaching, the wagon driver glanced up

לזכות
הרה"ת הרב שלום דוב בער
וזוגתו מרת חיה מושקא שיחיו
לרגל יום נישואיהם -
יום הבהיר ראש חודש כסלו
ולזכות בנותיהם ברכה ליפשא, עליזה
ושיינדל, ובנם מנחם מענדל שיחיו
שוחאט



from his *sefer* and warmly greeted his guests.

He prepared a hot drink of “cholent milk,” milk that had been warming all night on the stove and they spoke together until it was time to leave for shul.

In shul, the Rebbe and his son were greeted warmly and their persona made a considerable impression on the townsfolk, yet no one knew the identities of their guests.

As is customary, the Rebbe and his son were honored with an *aliyah*

and they made a generous pledge to the shul.

The *shamash* of the shul, seasoned in his trade, knew that the many businessmen who came through town would leave quickly after Shabbos so he would make sure to receive any donations that had been pledged before they were gone. As soon as Maariv was over, he went over to the Rebbe Rashab to collect the money that he had committed to giving.

At the same time, another traveler who had frequented the city

of Lubavitch, recognized who these guests were and quickly went over to greet them.

In a loud voice he called out, “This is the Lubavitcher Rebbe and his son!”

A big tumult ensued as the news traveled like wildfire. People quickly gathered around to ask for forgiveness for not having accorded the Rebbe the respect he deserved. They also begged him to stay a few extra days in town and promised to take care of his lodgings with great generosity.

“I can’t stay here any longer,” replied the Rebbe Rashab.

The train pulled into the station and they were on their way.

The Rebbe Rashab did not want to be recognized for the duration of that Shabbos. The train station was large with many travelers coming through and Baranovitz is situated near other large towns. Yet despite all of this, the Rebbe’s will was carried out and his identity was hidden. **T**

(*Likkutei Sippurim*,
Perlow, p. 271)

The Great Exodus



5732 and the Russian Chassidim*





This year marks 50 years since a fascinating period in Chabad: *The exodus of Russian Jewry.*

For close to 50 years, the Iron Curtain had been sealed shut. A small crack had opened for a short time after World War II, but afterwards almost no one had been able to leave. Millions of Jews lived there with no hope of ever reaching a free land.

For the hundreds of *anash* families that remained in Russia, the suffering was ten-fold. They desperately wanted to raise their children in the ways of Chassidus—but the government persecution continued without letup. The large network of underground *chinuch* institutions was not as strong as it had previously been. The thought of leaving Russia and uniting with the Rebbe seemed like a distant dream.

In 770, the plight of Russian Jews remained a constant presence. At every farbrengen, the Rebbe would mention the Russian Jews. Letters and instructions from “*Dyedushka*—grandfather” would secretly make their way into Russia.

And then, the unthinkable happened. The government began allowing families to leave. Beginning with a small trickle in 5726*, the doors began opening even wider in 5730*-5731*. Soon, hundreds of *anash* families began arriving in Eretz Yisroel.

The Rebbe personally invited each immigrant to visit 770 at the Rebbe’s expense. Each Tishrei, a large group of new immigrants would arrive.

They became a feature of 770 life in those years. The Rebbe would exhibit great *kiruvim* towards them; at farbrengens the Rebbe would speak about their self-sacrifice and Russian *niggunim*—like *Ech Ti Ziemlak*—became a staple of farbrengens, led by the new immigrants.

The year 5732* brought perhaps the largest such group of new immigrants, and the Rebbe showered them with attention.

A *Chassidisher Derher* sat with two of the Rebbe’s shlichim, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Zaltzman (Toronto) and Rabbi Moshe Chaim Levin (Kensington, NY). Both arrived to the Rebbe from the Soviet Union during that year as young *bochurim*—Rabbi Zaltzman for Tishrei and Rabbi Levin before Pesach—and they merited to live through those special times in 770.

We thank them for their fascinating interviews.

לע"נ
הרה"ח השליח ר' חיים ב"ר שמואל גרשון ניסן ע"ה
גורביץ

נפטר ביום ג' פ' ויקרא בעיצומו של "מבצע מצה"
ג' ניסן ה'תשפ"א

נתרם ע"י בנו
הרה"ת ר' רפאל דובער
וזוגתו מרת רבקה ומשפחתם שיחיו
גורביץ

Before we begin discussing your time with the Rebbe, please tell us about your years in Russia.

Rabbi Zaltzman: I was born in 5716* and grew up in Samarkand. We were an old Lubavitch family—my grandfather, Reb Avrohom, was a *Tomim* in Lubavitch. However, my father never saw the Rabbeim. He was born five years after the Friediker Rebbe left Russia.

Samarkand was unique in that it boasted a decent number of such *chassidishe* families. We had a warm, *chassidishe* culture that was unparalleled throughout the Soviet Union. My mother was from Moscow but when my parents got married my father insisted on bringing her to Samarkand because no place could possibly compete with its *chassidishe* environment.

Most children in *chassidishe* families were forced to attend the Russian public schools but my parents were adamant that their children would not attend, come what may. The authorities were told that I lived with my grandparents in Moscow, but that meant that I couldn't be seen in Samarkand. For the nine months of the school year, I would not venture out of my house at all; I couldn't even go close to the windows.

One of the elder Chassidim once berated my father for keeping me locked up at home. "He is going to go crazy!" But my father answered with a straight face, "Better a *kranker* (not healthy) *Yid* than a *gezunter* (healthy) *goy*."

I learned together with a small group of children for several hours a day. During the rest of the time, my mother would have to occupy me with cooking cholent and gefilte fish and all sorts of activities to ensure that I



REB MOSHE CHAIM (SECOND FROM THE RIGHT) AS A BOY IN MOSCOW IN 5725*.

didn't begin climbing the walls out of boredom.

When I reached middle school age, it became easier to avoid enrollment and I was finally able to be in the sunlight. We had a small yeshiva—housed in the storage shed at the far end of our backyard—where we learned Torah and grew into genuine *chassidishe bochurim*. Some teachers were elder Chassidim who had seen the Rebbe Rashab, while others were simply *bochurim* a few years older than us.

What was your level of connection to the Rebbe?

Rabbi Levin: I grew up in Moscow and Riga. We knew that there was a Rebbe in America, and in spirit, we were fully dedicated to the Rebbe's *inyanim*. Everything revolved around the Rebbe; every farbrengen was about our desire to see the Rebbe. However, we had very little knowledge about the Rebbe. There was one picture—the full portrait image of the Rebbe at a doorway holding a *siddur*, on his way to *siddur kiddushin*. It was carefully hidden away.

From the mid 5720s*, Jewish tourists would occasionally arrive from America. It was dangerous to speak to them, but sometimes we would endanger ourselves to send messages to the Rebbe through them. I was once arrested for a short time while making contact with such a tourist.

We would ask them to send regards to the Rebbe, and sometimes we would send a bottle of *mashke* with them, upon which we would transcribe our names and mother's names. Many of these tourists ended up seeing the Rebbe and developing a connection to the Rebbe through us. If the tourist had seen the Rebbe, we would milk every piece of information from him.

We had an abundance of Chassidus *sefarim* which had been printed before the revolution; there were *genizos* full of them. But new material was hard to come by. Sometimes, relatives from America would send *maamarim* disguised within personal family letters—the letter would begin with regular pleasantries, and then randomly transition into a *maamar*.

At some point, a copy of Hayom Yom arrived in Russia. It was passed

from city to city, and we all copied the entire thing by hand. At some point we also received the first four volumes of Likkutei Sichos, and copied them by hand too. We also received two Nichoach records.

When I became a *bochur*, I traveled to learn in the yeshiva in Samarkand. There, we always farbrenged about our hope to one day see the Rebbe. However, it was not something that seemed possible.

Rabbi Zaltzman: When we would write to our cousins in America, we would sneak in questions for the Rebbe. When my father needed an operation and when my mother was expecting a child, they made sure to receive the Rebbe's *bracha*.

One Simchas Torah at our private *hakafos*, someone came over to me and told me secretly that he had *mashke* from the Rebbe. He gave me a sip on condition I didn't breathe a word about it to anyone.

When the first shliach—Reb Binyamin Katz—came to Russia, my father and uncle made a special trip to see him in Tashkent, and they brought back the niggun *Hoshia Es Amecha*.

We never imagined that we would actually manage to leave; we used to *bentch* each other that Moshiach should come and we should leave Russia—in that order. But I heard that the Rebbe said the opposite: A Chossid once said that “Moshiach should come so that the Russian Jews will be able to leave,” and the Rebbe responded that the opposite order would be more correct.

But by the time of my bar mitzvah in 5729*, things started to change. My bar mitzvah farbrengen actually revolved around the fact that our neighbor Itche Mishulovin had received permission to leave. We were all very excited—and quite envious—that he would soon see the Rebbe.

When did you leave Russia? What happened when you arrived in Eretz Yisroel?

Rabbi Levin: I remember three shluchim of the Rebbe coming to Russia: Rabbi Nissan Mindel, Rabbi Binyomin Katz, and Reb Gershon Ber Jacobson.

Rabbi Mindel's shlichus was top secret, and only a few Chassidim met with him against his will. Binyomin Katz, on the other hand, traveled throughout Russia and connected with a number of Chassidim¹. But Reb Gershon Ber's visit was very special for our family. He brought the Rebbe's *bracha* which got us out of Russia, with open miracles.

We arrived in Eretz Yisroel on Rosh Chodesh Kislev 5732*. Shortly after our arrival, my father took me on a visit to his old friend, Reb Velvel Zalmanov, and he had a special treat for us: He put on a record player and played a recording of the Rebbe's farbrengen. This was the first time I heard the Rebbe's voice.

Rabbi Zaltzman: We left Russia for Eretz Yisroel on 12 Av 5731*, and settled in Nachlas Har Chabad.

I vividly remember the first time I heard the Rebbe's voice. It was Chof Av 5731*. We woke up in the middle of the night, went to *mikveh* in Nachlah, and then traveled by bus to Kfar Chabad to hear the 3:30 a.m. hookup. The yeshiva was packed with *anash* from all over Eretz Yisroel.

Several weeks later, I heard that my father would be going to the Rebbe for Tishrei. I understood the prices were prohibitive, but I couldn't withhold myself from asking to go along; after all, we had wished all our lives to go to the Rebbe, and now I finally had the opportunity! In the end, Rabbi Hodakov called us all in after Simchas Torah and reimbursed us for the full cost of the trip.

How was the experience of arriving at 770 and seeing the Rebbe?

Rabbi Levin: It was a very special moment—we had waited our entire lives for it!



REB YOSEF YITZCHAK ZALTZMAN WITH HIS FAMILY SHORTLY BEFORE LEAVING RUSSIA IN THE SUMMER OF 5731*.

ZALTZMAN FAMILY

I arrived in 770 during Maariv on 7 Nissan 5732*, together with the entire *kevutzah* of that year. I was 19 years old. We waited in the foyer, and when the door opened for the Rebbe to return to his room, I saw the Rebbe for the first time. I said *Shehecheyanu* out loud, and the Rebbe responded with *Amen* while looking closely at me.

I had an interesting story in the days that followed: I came down with a high fever; Yud-Alef Nissan was approaching, and missing the farbrengen was unthinkable, but Dr. Seligson told me to find a place to sit. I listened to his advice, but as the farbrengen progressed, I found it more and more difficult to remain.

But then I experienced a miracle. After the *maamar*, I said *l'chaim* to the Rebbe, and the Rebbe nodded his head at me—twice. Suddenly, I began to feel better. I quickly regained my strength, and by the next morning I was able to rejoin the *seider hayeshiva*.

Rabbi Zaltzman: Our flight to New York was through London, where we joined an entire charter of Chassidim going to 770. One of them was Reb Mendel Futerfas who had left Russia eight years earlier. He had stayed in our house in Samarkand and we knew him well. Needless to say, the entire trip was one long farbrengen.

We arrived in New York on Thursday, 26 Elul 5731*, and the first time I saw the Rebbe was when he returned from the Ohel. All the new Russian immigrants made sure to be there, lining the walkway to 770 from both sides.

The Rebbe's car pulled up and I saw the Rebbe's holy image for the first time. The Rebbe was clearly in a hurry; he opened the door before the car stopped moving and began walking very quickly up the walkway. But then, some of us began to recite *Shehecheyanu*. The Rebbe slowed his pace considerably, and answered a



REB BEREL ZALTZMAN SINGING AT THE REBBE'S REQUEST AT THE FARBRENGEN OF 13 TISHREI 5736*.

clear *Amen*. Then, he picked up his pace again and entered his room.

What was it like to finally be by the Rebbe?

Rabbi Zaltzman: On our first Shabbos in 770, the *gabbaim* approached my father—a talented singer and *chazzan*—and asked him to lead Musaf. My father refused. He could not fathom davening in front of the Rebbe; it was a job for a *chassidishe Yid*, and he did not feel worthy of it.

Seeing his persistence, Reb Mendel Futerfas came over to speak to him.

"I understand," he said, "why you feel uncomfortable. But imagine the *nachas* the Rebbe will have when a 35-year-old *yungerman* from Russia, born and bred after the Frierdiker Rebbe left, davens with the original *nusach* of Lubavitch as you learned it from your father. The Rebbe will definitely have a lot of *nachas*. Don't do it for yourself; do it for the Rebbe!"

My father agreed. I remember how he was trembling during the opening *kaddish* and even during the beginning of *chazaras hashatz*. Finally, during Kesser, he took a breath and began to sing beautifully. We noticed that the

Rebbe kept on glancing at him during his 'performance.'

Afterwards, Reb Mendel came over to my father.

"Ah! You should have seen the love in the Rebbe's eyes as he looked at you!"

Right after davening, we prepared for the farbrengen. Someone directed me to the *bochurim*'s place, and I nonchalantly took a place on the bench.

Soon, a *bochur* came over and said, "This is my place," so I moved back a little. Another *bochur* came with the same claim, and I moved again. I soon realized that there were set places and I would be left with nothing...

I asked them to give me some space as a new guest from Russia, but my request fell on deaf ears and they tried to casually move me back until I was almost off the bench. I held tightly onto a poll and didn't budge.

After the Rashi *sicha*, the Rebbe asked all the Russians to come up and receive *l'chaim*. After the adults received *mashke*, I went up as well.

The Rebbe asked me for my name, and I said, "Yosef Yitzchak."

"*Vos iz dein tzveiter nomen*—what is your second name?"



THE FIRST RECORD PRODUCED BY REB BERELE ZALTSMAN SOON AFTER ARRIVING IN ERETZ YISROEL. THE REBBE REQUESTED HE MAKE THIS RECORD AND EVEN PARTICIPATED WITH SEVERAL THOUSAND DOLLARS.

I didn't understand what the Rebbe meant. The Rebbe smiled and said, "*Familye nomen.*"

"Zaltsman," I replied.

"The *shliach tzibbur* is your father?" the Rebbe asked, pointing at my father.

I nodded yes.

"*L'chaim v'livracha*," the Rebbe gave me *l'chaim*.

As I returned to my place, I realized that the *bochurim* had the opportunity to keep me out. But this time they were wiser, having seen that the Rebbe gave me *l'chaim*.

It was worth their while. The Rebbe then said two *sichos* in Russian, one for the men and one for the women, and I was able to translate it—to some extent—for them.

As a postscript to the story:

People overheard the Rebbe call my father "the *shliach tzibur*," and concluded that he must be *chazzan* on Rosh Hashanah as well. There were various *chazakos* for leading the davening in 770, but they made a raffle and Rabbi Yosef Wineberg was chosen to give my father his place as *chazzan* on the first day. Rabbi Wineberg was hesitant, and wrote to the Rebbe for a *bracha* that he not be harmed by breaking his custom. The Rebbe blessed him and it was all settled.

The *gabbaim* also took my father to the store to purchase a kapote. After all, in Russia we only wore short jackets to ensure that we blended into the population. Now my father became 'part of the crowd.'

On the first night of Rosh Hashanah, I heard that if I wanted a good place for *tekios*, I needed to come early in the morning and grab a place. I came the next morning and stood there for several hours, but before Shacharis, the *gabbai* announced that the Rebbe wanted the Russian guests to stand on the *bimah* during *tekios* together with him; we were about 35 people!

It was amazing. I stood right behind the Rebbe, and I needed to hold the crush of people from pushing into the Rebbe—it was a very small *bimah* at the time.

I remember hearing the Rebbe singing a *tenua* to himself. It was very intense. At one point, when the Rebbe threw his tallis over the *panim*, it fell all the way over his head. For a moment, I saw the Rebbe's hair, and it was literally sticking up like needles.

On Motzei Rosh Hashanah, the Rebbe asked my father to sing Russian *niggunim* during *kos shel bracha*. I was standing on the top row of the

bleachers when suddenly the *bochurim* pulled me out, "The Rebbe is speaking to you!"

The Rebbe was pointing to me; he said, "*Du bist doch mechuyav in kibud av, farvos helfst nisht dem tatte zingen*—you are obligated to honor your father, why don't you help him sing?"

I went to stand next to my father, and the Rebbe asked him with a smile, "*Er ken zingen*—can he sing?"

My father smiled and shrugged, so the Rebbe said, "*Yetzt iz doch bein hazmanim, nishto kein seder hayeshivah, kenst doch em lernen*—it is now vacation time and yeshiva is not in session, so you could teach him..."

Rabbi Levin: On Pesach, the Rebbe held a *farbrengen* on the first two days of Yom Tov, where he asked the Russian children to recite *Mah Nishtanah*. On the first day, it was a very small group, but on the second day, they already prepared a special platform, the *bimah* of *krias haTorah*, to hold all the children who had come to participate.

It was a very special moment. It seems to me that all the *farbrengens* that Pesach were in honor of the guests and the Rebbe was very *ufgeleigt* throughout.



REB MOSHE CHAIM LEVIN RECEIVING DOLLARS FROM THE REBBE AS A "TANKIST" ON 30 TISHREI 5736*.

At one of the farbrengens, the Rebbe asked my father to sing a *niggun*. He began singing but the crowd didn't know the tune and didn't sing along. Surprised, my father looked at the crowd and blurted out, "This is Shloime der Geler's *niggun*!"

The Rebbe gave him a beautiful smile, and some people began to sing along.

I also remember another farbrengen where the Rebbe held an "auction"—over who had sat the longest in Soviet prisons.

People began raising their hands—three years, four years, five years, and so on. One Georgian Jew claimed the winning title with eight years, but the Rebbe told him in Russian, "But he sat longer," pointing at my father, who had been in prison for ten years of his life.

What about yechidus? When did you go into the Rebbe's room for the first time?

Rabbi Levin: My first *yeichidus* was considered very long, lasting a full seven minutes. *Bochurim* usually went for one minute, but since it was my first *yeichidus*, I wrote my entire life-story, filling up almost two pages.

At that *yeichidus*, the Rebbe gave me a special instruction which I still fulfill today:

He instructed me—unprompted—to work with Russian youth. "*Ton un mashpia zein oif di vos zeinen arois mei'achorei masach habarzel vehamedinos hasmuchos la*—influence those who left from behind the Iron Curtain and the nearby countries." He repeated this instruction twice.

There used to be a day school for Russians in Crown Heights, and I began teaching there for an hour every day.

Then, at one farbrengen, the Rebbe said a sharp *sicha* that *bochurim* should learn and do nothing else. I got scared and asked *hanhalah* what I should do,

but they told me that the Rebbe was only referring to those doing activities without permission of *hanhalah*.

My parents also had a very interesting *yeichidus* during their first visit to the Rebbe.

The Rebbe first told them as follows:

הש"ת וועט אייך העלפן, און אייך דארף מען דאך נישט דערציילן אז ער טוט נישט. דאס איז דא אין אמעריקע – דארף מען דערציילן אז הש"ת טוט נישט.

"Hashem will help you. You don't need to be told that He does miracles. Here in America, people need to be told that Hashem does miracles."

My mother told the Rebbe that my father was dealing with a challenging situation ("א שווערע פּעקל אויפן הארצן"). The Rebbe turned to him with a smile and said,

"אויב איר האט א פּעקל אויפן הארצן, לאזט אים איבער דא."

"If you have a 'package' weighing down on your heart, leave it here."

He pointed to the corner, to the wall near the window, and added, "אלע לאזן דא איבער זייערע פּעקלאך. עס וועט קיינעם נישט שאטן. ס'וועט מיר אויך נישט שאטן. דא ווערט דאס צוריקן."

"Everyone leaves their 'packages' here. It won't hurt anyone. It won't hurt me either. Here they fall apart..."

The Rebbe asked my father where he wanted to settle down, but he didn't respond. He was hoping the Rebbe would choose. The Rebbe asked again, but he still remained quiet. When he asked a third time, he responded, "Wherever the Rebbe will say..."

The Rebbe said that since my grandmother hadn't seen her brother for 40 years, we should settle near him in Eretz Yisroel.

Rabbi Zaltzman: From the moment I stepped foot in New York, and even before, I understood that I wanted to remain near the Rebbe in yeshiva. I actually told my parents to buy me a one-way ticket—thereby saving them money—but my mother immediately

ruled out my brilliant idea. "You are 15 years old; you are coming home after Tishrei."

I didn't make a fuss, but I also did not give up on the idea.

After Rosh Hashanah, when Rabbi Hodakov spoke to us about *yeichidus*, I asked to enter alone, as I was already 15 years old. Rabbi Hodakov offered the day after Yom Kippur or the day after Simchas Torah, and I chose the earlier date; our trip back was only a few days after Simchas Torah, and I wanted more time to act.

On Yom Kippur morning, my friends Shmuel Notik and Yossel Misholovin—with whom I grew up in Samarkand—told me that Rabbi Shmuel Heber would be *farhering* them the next day for Morristown yeshiva. I decided to join them without telling my father, and by the next morning, I had been accepted into the yeshiva. But I still needed my father's permission.

That night was my *yeichidus*. Reb Mendel Futerfas and Reb Berke Chein told me to write about my entire life—all my experiences of *mesiras nefesh* in Russia, and so on. After writing it all out, I added a paragraph saying that I had been accepted into Morristown, and I asked for the Rebbe's agreement and blessing.

With just a few hours until my *yeichidus*, I sat down in the small *zal* to recite Tehillim. My father sat down next to me.

"Did you write your *tzetel yet*?" he asked me. "Can I see it?"

Now I was in trouble.

"Tatty," I said, "you could read the first page, but the second page is private, between me and the Rebbe."

My father, to my surprise, was very impressed. He proudly told his friends that his young son felt so connected to the Rebbe that he had matters which he shared only with the Rebbe and not with his own father.

Meanwhile, I waited near the Rebbe's room. The line got shorter and shorter, and soon it was my turn. I was obviously very nervous.

I walked in. The Rebbe was reading a letter; after a few moments, he placed the letter aside and looked up at me to take my letter.

The Rebbe placed it on the table and read it very quickly, moving his head back and forth. He made several notes with a pencil, and then he looked up at me to answer my questions in order.

"In merit of the *mesiras nefesh* of your parents for your education, Hashem should give you success in learning Torah with *hasmadah* and fulfilling mitzvos with *hiddur*."

That was the gist of the Rebbe's *bracha*. The Rebbe answered a question I had asked, and then he continued:

"Since the yeshiva in Morristown accepted you, may it be in a good and auspicious hour."

With that, the *yechidus* was over.

I began backing out of the room, but—facing the Rebbe—I couldn't find the doorknob. Rabbi Groner somehow realized, and he opened the door and pulled me out. My father was waiting anxiously outside the room. "What did the Rebbe say?"

"Tatty, I don't want to forget the Rebbe's words. Let me write them down."

I sat at a table and began writing out the Rebbe's answers with my father watching over my shoulder.

"Morristown? Accepted? What's going on?" My father asked in shock.

But with the Rebbe's *bracha* in my hand, he accepted it wholeheartedly. We called my mother to share the news with her, and she gave her blessing as well. That's how I had the *zechus* to remain near the Rebbe.

Afterwards, Reb Michael Teitelbaum—who had been my father's teacher in Samarkand—reprimanded my father, claiming that Oholei Torah was a more *chassidishe* yeshiva. My father brought up the matter in his own *yechidus*, but the Rebbe brushed away his concerns.

"The *hanhalah* is the same in both yeshivos, and the *bochurim* are the same in both. But in Morristown, there is better air..."

What was the Rebbe's *yachas* to the Russians? Did you feel special?

Rabbi Levin: We were a group of six Russian *bochurim* who came to New York as part of the *kevutze* from Eretz Yisroel for the duration of one year, but the Rebbe asked that special effort be made to obtain permission for the six of us to remain for an additional year.



REB YOSEF YITZCHAK ZALTZMAN (TOP RIGHT) AS A BACHUR IN 770 PARTICIPATING IN A "CHAZARA" OF THE REBBE'S FARBRENGEN.



JEM 41508

REB YOSEF YITZCHAK ZALTZMAN BY A "SUNDAY DOLLARS" ON 30 SHEVAT 5750*.

This was meant to be a secret; we weren't supposed to know about it. We 'smelled' something after a half a year, when Reb Shlomo Zarchi warned us not to slack off on the *sedarim*, "because it would impact our future." That's when we realized that something was going on.

We remained for an extra half a year, from Nissan to the end of Elul 5733*. Afterwards, they couldn't extend our permission, and we had

to return to Eretz Yisroel. We left for Eretz Yisroel shortly before Tishrei.

It was very disappointing. 5734* was a *Shnas Hakhel*; large numbers of Chassidim were coming for Tishrei, while we were compelled to leave.

Before we left, the Rebbe called us all over at the farbrengen and gave us *mashke*, and on Sunday, we had a *yechidus* together. The Rebbe said to take the *mashke* to Eretz Yisroel, to hold farbrengens with the Russian *bochurim* learning in the various

Chabad yeshivos, and to repeat the Rebbe's *sichos*. If it was too difficult to go to all places together, we were to split up the locations. (I must note that those farbrengens were very impactful.)

I asked the Rebbe for a *bracha* to come back as soon as possible. Indeed, most of us managed to find our way back to New York within the next year.

Rabbi Zaltzman: Over that year and beyond, the Rebbe showed many beautiful *kiruvim* to the Russian

Jews. On Chanukah, the Rebbe sent *Chanukah gelt*—dollars—to all the *bochurim* in Morristown. But to the three Russians, myself included, the Rebbe gave silver dollars.

On the first night of Sukkos, there was an interesting occurrence.

I was told that all the Russians were gathering in *Gan Eden Hatachton* after Maariv to speak to the Rebbe. I obviously joined as well. The Rebbe noticed us as he came in and opened his hands in surprise, wondering what we were doing there.

Reb Yaakov Notik began talking. He said that we had never had the merit of participating in the Rebbe's farbrengen in the Sukkah, and asked that the Rebbe farbreng in the Sukkah once again.

I didn't know at the time, but there was a backstory. A year earlier, the Rebbe had ceased the farbrengens in the Sukkah when the crush of the crowds had simply become too dangerous. But the Chassidim had never lost hope, and they thought that perhaps the Rebbe would do it for the Russians.

As the Rebbe opened the door, he said, "*M'hot eich untergeshtelt*—you were set up..."

Sharply, the Rebbe asked, "*Ver vet nemen achrayus far pikuach nefesh? S'iz umeglich, s'iz a sakana*—Who will take responsibility for the *pikuach nefesh*? It's impossible, it's dangerous."

But before he entered the room, the Rebbe said, "*Ich vel nisht bleiben kein baal chov*—I won't remain in debt to you..."

Two special events followed: That Shabbos Chol Hamoed, the Rebbe came down to the big shul at eight o'clock in the morning to deliver a *maamar*. Additionally, on Motzei Shabbos Bereishis, the Rebbe held a special farbrengen to see off the guests..

Another very special thing happened during that month:

One day, we received a message: The Rebbe wants all the Russians to come into his room. When we all gathered in *Gan Eden Hatachton*, Rabbi Hodakov brought us in, and the Rebbe made a request. He asked us to visit Reb Moshe Feinstein and tell him about our lives in Russia.

"*Pravet nisht kein anivus; zog em vi der Shver's Chassidim hoben gelebt in Rusland*—Don't display any humility; tell him how the Friediker Rebbe's Chassidim lived in Russia."

Rabbi Klein and Rabbi Krinsky drove us to Reb Moshe's home. We gathered around his table, and he paid special attention to the three young *bochurim*, testing us in our learning. I remember that after I answered his question, he began to cry. I was frightened; I thought I insulted him. It took me a moment to realize that he was actually overcome with emotion seeing Jewish children from Russia who were proficient in Gemara, Rashi and Tosfos.

He turned to us and asked, "How did you manage to do it?"

Reb Yaakov Notik responded, "Did we have a choice?"

Rabbi Levin: On Erev Pesach, when the Rebbe distributed matzah, my father asked the Rebbe if he should send matzah to Russia.

The Rebbe said "Yes. To whom?"

My father said, "To our *yungeleit*." "To whom?"

My father began listing names of the *anash* in Riga, and the Rebbe said, "And for Yirmiyah [Branover] too? *Ich hob fun em bakumen a telegram*—I received a telegram from him."

Amazingly, he had sent a *mazal tov* telegram from Russia to the Rebbe in honor of Yud-Alef Nissan (he left Russia a year later).

On Erev Yom Kippur half a year later, I asked the Rebbe for *lekach* for the Russian Jews, and the Rebbe gave me three pieces. I soon realized that the Rebbe gave me an exact amount:

On Erev Pesach, my father had received four pieces for the four *anash* families living in Riga. Since then, one family had left, so I therefore received only three pieces.

Wow! We can listen to your stories all day long! What do you have to share, in closing?

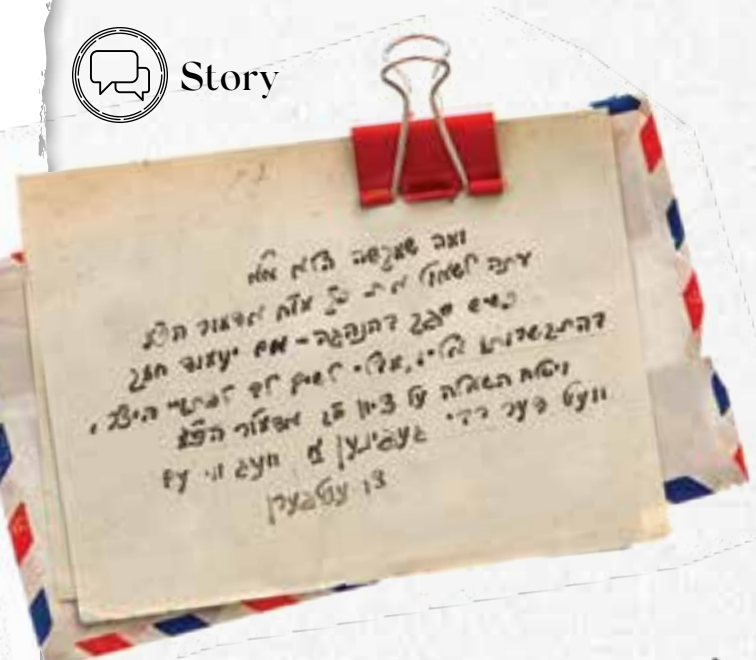
Rabbi Zaltzman: When we lived in Russia, our hope was to be able to live as Chassidim in the free world, near the Rebbe. With Hashem's help, that wish came true. But as time passed, the initial excitement began to dissipate, and at the same time, I began to understand that in our generation, there was a far greater mission: *hafatzas hamaayanos*.

I quickly came to the conclusion that I wanted to be a part of the Rebbe's army. As a *bochur* I began working with Russian children in camp, and I hoped with all my heart that the Rebbe would allow me to become a shliach when the time came. Indeed, all of the *bochurim* from our group in Russia went into shlichus and *avodas hakodesh*.

I like to tell *bochurim* that our situation in Russia was very similar to our situation today. My father grew up in Russia without ever seeing the Rebbe, and he yet raised a beautiful *chassidishe* family. We knew next to nothing, only that we had a Rebbe, but that didn't stop us from being true *chassidishe bochurim* and *yungerleit*.

Today, despite not seeing the Rebbe, we have so much more. It is not an ideal situation, but it is also no excuse for us being anything less than perfect. **1**

1. See our interview with him, "A Crack in the Iron Curtain," *Derher* Adar 5775.



דער רבי וועט געפינען אַ וועג...

נדפס ע"י ולזכות
הרה"ת ר' שרגא פייוול
וזוגתו מרת דבורה לאה
ומשפחתם שיחיו
מאן

Will You Open Chabad in Jamaica?

AS TOLD BY RABBI YAAKOV RASKIN (MOBAY, JAMAICA)

Immediately following our marriage in Elul 5773*, my wife and I started looking for a place to go on shlichus. After several months of following different leads, we were told that the island of Jamaica was ready for a permanent Chabad presence and we were offered the opportunity to visit the island to decide for ourselves.

In preparation for our trip, the Merkos Shluchim from the previous summer provided us with a list of Yidden they met in Jamaica. We were told that Raymond Doweck, a *varemech Yid* who kept kosher, was an important person to visit. When we called him before our trip to set up an appointment we learned that he had just suffered a stroke and was in the hospital.

On 3 Adar II we landed in Jamaica and headed straight to the hospital to visit Mr. Doweck. As I entered his hospital room, I was surprised to see a couple I had met a few years back at my sister's Chabad House. Michael and Debbie Flacks are regulars at the Chabad of Monte Carlo where my brother-in-law and sister, Rabbi Tanchum and Chani Matusof, are the shluchim.

It turns out that Debbie is Raymond's niece and they had flown to Jamaica as soon as they heard of his condition since his prognosis was not very good.

We spent time with them, put on tefillin with Raymond and when Debbie heard about the purpose of our visit to the island she excitedly told us that her uncle's dream for

Hearing this I was absolutely stunned. Days earlier I had asked the Rebbe for a clear sign about shlichus to Jamaica and it didn't seem like it could be any clearer than this!

many years was to have Chabad in Jamaica. We cautioned her that we were only coming to check it out and there was no guarantee that we would actually move there.

The rest of our week-long stay was very successful and we kept in touch with the Doweck family, continuously giving them support and encouragement during that most difficult time.

Two weeks later another shlichus option came up and we went to the Ohel on Sunday, 21 Adar II, to ask the Rebbe for a clear sign whether we should go on shlichus to Jamaica or look into further options.

Later that day, Michael Flacks notified me that Raymond passed away on Shabbos and that the funeral would happen in Eretz Yisroel on Wednesday. Since I had been in touch with the family over the last 3 weeks, he requested that I participate in the funeral and offered to pay for my flight to Eretz Yisroel.

I was unsure about going, but the fact that this all happened within hours of our asking the Rebbe for a clear sign about shlichus to Jamaica gave me the feeling that it might actually be the right thing for me to participate in this funeral.

That year I was learning in the *kolel* near the Ohel and as I contemplated my trip to Eretz Yisroel I decided to write a letter to the Rebbe. As I prepared to write my letter I noticed the video of the Rebbe's farbrengen of Purim 5732* playing on the screen in the visitor center.

In between the *sichos* a Rabbi Singer approached the Rebbe and had a brief conversation in which he apparently

mentioned that he would be visiting Eretz Yisroel. After wishing him success the Rebbe said, "You will probably daven at the Kosel... before anything else."¹

I felt this clip was the Rebbe's answer to me and I accepted the invitation to participate in Raymond's funeral in Eretz Yisroel.

After the funeral I was speaking with Debbie's father Albert Doweck, Raymond's brother.

"So Rabbi Raskin," Albert asked. "Will you open Chabad in Jamaica or will you not open Chabad in Jamaica?"

Shocked by the directness of his question I was unsure how to respond.

"Listen, if you plan to move down soon, you can start off living in Raymond's house until you find a place of your own, and I will be your first supporter."

Hearing this I was absolutely stunned. Days earlier I had asked the Rebbe for a clear sign about shlichus to Jamaica and it didn't seem like it could be any clearer than this!

On 6 Tammuz we moved down to Jamaica and lived in Raymond's home in Kingston for four weeks until we found a suitable place to live and to start our operations. And that's how our shlichus to Jamaica came to be. **T**

1. Living Torah, Disc 164 Program 653. chabad.org/3614877

YOUR STORY

Share your story with A Chassidisher Derher by emailing stories@derher.org.



Moments

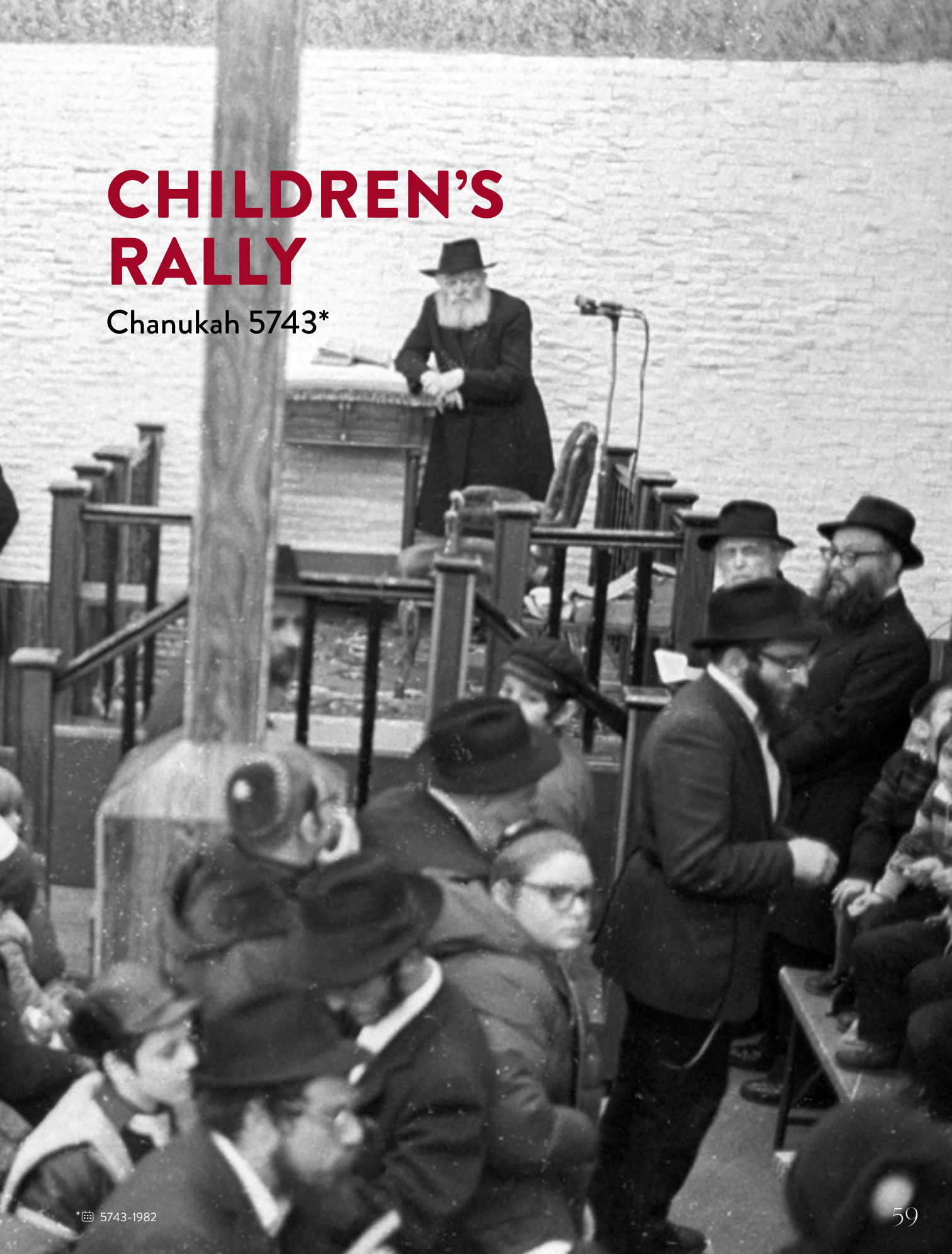
In memory of our loving uncle
Stuart (Shmuel Yisroel)
ben Hersh Leib a"v

Dedicated by
Shaya and Miriam Rochester



CHILDREN'S RALLY

Chanukah 5743*



The Rebbe davens Mincha with the children followed by *hadlakas neiros*.





After the recital of the 12 *pesukim*, the Rebbe delivered three *sichos*, the third one partially in Russian, to be conveyed to children behind the Iron Curtain, speaking about Tzivos Hashem, every child having a letter in the children's Sefer Torah, and tzedakah.







The Rebbe gives coins to the *madrachim* and teachers to be distributed to every child. Each child received three coins, two for tzedakah and one for themselves.





The Rebbe gives stacks of dollars to the *tankisten* to distribute to all present and instructs them not to save any for those that aren't present but to return all extras to *mazikrus*.



MAARIV





Letters

A forum for readers to send their feedback, add to, or ask any questions about articles. Submit your letter to feedback@derher.org.

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

Reb Moshe Leib Rodshtein / Ohel Story Correction

Dear Editors,

First I would like to thank you once again for the amazing *ruach chayim* filled with *chassidishe lachluchis* that you bring into our home every month. In the Iyar issue we enjoyed the beautiful write-up about the *mazkir* Reb Moshe Leib Rodshtein z”l [“Service and Discretion”, Derher Iyar 5781]. One of the stories mentioned there was that he once brought an electric envelope opener to the Rebbe in order to alleviate the burden of time that it took the Rebbe to open the enormous amount of mail that arrived daily. The Rebbe looked at the machine for a few moments but refused to use it.

I heard an additional detail about the story from my father-in-law, the *mazkir* Reb Binyomin Klein z”l: The Rebbe commented to Reb Moshe Leib: פאר מיין שווער וואלט דאס געווען א זאך, איך דארף דאס ניט —for my father-in-law [the Friediker Rebbe] this would have been useful, but I don’t need it).

In the Elul issue, in the inspiring story told by Rabbi Yossi Gordon [*The Letter Arrived on Time*, Derher Elul 5781] some minor errors should be corrected. It describes how Rabbi Groner z”l gave Reb Yehoshua

Binyomin Gordon z”l the letter from the Rebbe, and upon opening the envelope he was shocked to find a letter from the Rebbe dated Elul 5748*. As there is a picture of the letter accompanying the article, one can see that the actual date of the letter is the 12th of Adar 5748*. Towards the end of the article it says that “in the letter, the Rebbe wishes him success with the upcoming dinner and that although he is going through difficult times, he should know that things will work out.” In the letter the Rebbe wishes the participants in the banquet success in the endeavor on behalf of Chabad of the Valley, but there is no mention of difficult times, etc. What was meant to be stated was that the fact that Reb Yehoshua Binyomin received this letter from the Rebbe ten years after the Rebbe had written it, while he was going through difficult times, and right after he poured out his heart to the Rebbe at the Ohel, was a clear message from the Rebbe to him, that “although he is going through difficult times, he should know that things will work out.”

Hatzlachah rabbah in the continuation of your vital work to illuminate and warm the homes of thousands of families of *anash*.

Pesach Schmerling

FAR ROCKAWAY, NY

Rambam Before Davening

Dear Editors,

Thank you for your article about *limmud haRamabam* ["Rambam - A Farbrengen," Tammuz 5781]. It is a great source of inspiration and encouragement in fulfilling this *takanah* properly.

In the article, Rabbi Lew shared about a *bohcur* who had been learning Rambam before davening and the Rebbe wrote to him "ימשיך".

The full story is that in 5751* Reb Binyamin Lehrer, now a member of *anash* in Nachlas Har Chabad, was a *bochur* learning in the yeshiva in Lod. Every day he would learn Chitas and three *perakim* of Rambam before davening. His *mashpia* mentioned to him that it is not appropriate to be learning Rambam in the morning before davening, since it is considered *nigleh*, not Chassidus.

When he wrote to the Rebbe, asking what he should do. The Rebbe's full answer was "ימשיך במנהגו ויבשר טוב", that he should continue learning Rambam before davening as he had been doing.

Sender Glubkow

BROOKLYN, NY

Correction

In the letter from Sholom Zirkind in the back of the Elul edition which was translated from Hebrew, it was mistakenly written that Mrs. Groner, who traveled by ship from California to Australia, crossing the dateline, was a day ahead of the Australian schedule. It was supposed to read the other way around, that the American schedule is a day behind Australia. When Mrs. Groner arrived in Sydney on Shabbos, it was Friday according to her original schedule.





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