



BEHIND THE PICTURE

זורע צדקות מצמיח ישועות

A GLIMPSE INTO THE SUNDAY DOLLARS LINE

Photo Credits: JEM/The Living Archive

Many Chassidim fondly recall receiving coins from the Rebbe to give to Tzedakah. This began, at a certain point during the Rebbe's nesius, when the Rebbe would enter and exit 770, during rallies and on other occasions—and was reserved exclusively for children.¹ For the children who received the coins, this was also an opportunity to have a personal moment with the Rebbe.

From the year 5741, the Rebbe no longer held private Yechidus, and for many children this was their chance for a rare personal encounter with the Rebbe.

In the winter of 5746 the practice changed.

The Rebbe began handing out nickels each Sunday to anyone who stood near the Rebbe's room when the Rebbe entered or exited. These *chalukos* usually lasted about ten minutes and would begin a few minutes after the Rebbe had arrived in 770 from his house.

Sunday, Yud Alef Nissan, 5746, brought with it a further development—one that caused a frenzy of excitement amongst Chassidim. Word had gone out that the Rebbe would be giving dollar bills for Tzedaka to all who came forward to the Rebbe's room.² Within a short time, hundreds of Chassidim gathered outside

the Rebbe's room and formed a long line, hoping to take advantage of this unique opportunity.

Two weeks later, the Rebbe began distributing dollars every Sunday, giving thousands of Yidden the opportunity to have a personal encounter with the Rebbe.³

The Rebbe arrived at 770 each Sunday at around 10:00 and would immediately enter his room. A few minutes later, the Rebbe would emerge and give out dollars for all those who had lined up, using a shtender that had been specially built for this purpose. The shtender was placed in





It seemed that members of every facet in Yiddishkeit, and in fact the entire world, could be found on the 'Sunday dollars line'. Talmidei Chachomim and businessmen, children and elderly, community leaders and regular citizens, politicians and military leaders, journalists, entire families, Yidden on any level of involvement in Yiddishkeit and from any stream of Yiddishkeit, and even non-Jews.

At the entrance of 770 was a mitzvot stand, offering men the chance to put

on T'fillin and giving women brochures about Neshek. Yarmulkas and shawls were available for those that needed, as well as cold water and light refreshments.

The *vaad hamesader* arranged a system to channel the crowds into organized lines. The main shul in 770 was divided in half, creating a space for both men and woman to wait. Every half hour the groups would alternate, climbing the stairs in the back of the shul leading to the upstairs hallway.

But even the large Shul could often not contain the crowds of people converging

upon 770. The lines would then extend outside and wind down the block toward Brooklyn Ave.

Hours could pass before one would ascend the stairs and continue down the hallway into the lobby of 770, in anticipation of standing before the Rebbe.

To every individual the Rebbe gave a personal moment, where his entire attention and gaze was focused on you exclusively, as well as a dollar, gazing intently and uttering *Brocha V'hatzlocha* as they passed. Many took advantage





front of the elevator door in the lobby at the entrance to 770.

After Chof Beis Shevat 5748 the Rebbe would give out the dollars following Shacharis, which was held at the Rebbe's home. This continued even for a while after the year of *aveilus*, until the Rebbe returned to 770, whereupon the Rebbe continued giving dollars from the front lobby of 770.

Only when the long lines of people waiting to receive dollars finally dwindled did the Rebbe then go to the Ohel.

In 5751, however, the Rebbe's schedule changed somewhat. The Rebbe began to visit the Ohel on Monday, and would begin giving out dollars at a noticeably later time than previously.

As the years progressed, the lines grew larger and larger, sometimes up to 6 or 7 hours (!). Beginning with the last Sunday of Cheshvan 5752,⁴ the Rebbe would daven Mincha with a small minyan in Gan Eden Hatachton, and only afterward did the dollars line begin.

ALL WALKS OF LIFE

Word spread quickly that a chance for a personal moment with the Rebbe could be had each Sunday. Individuals and families from across the world travelled to 770 to take advantage of this awesome opportunity. It became widespread practice upon marking a milestone, or celebrating a simcha, that families and organizations would ensure to inform the Rebbe of this and ask a brocha during Sunday dollars.



of this moment, asking for a brocha for whatever they required. Others made a point of passing by quickly, not wanting to take up the Rebbe's precious time.

Who can ascribe the tremendous *nissim* that transpired during this *chaluka*? While hundreds of stories have been told, many others are still unknown. The childless, the penniless, the ill and worse all received brochos during the Sunday dollars. Still others, asked the Rebbe which Jewish name to choose for themselves.

Showering encouragement, the Rebbe fortified the *emuna* and raised the spirit of leaders and individuals alike.

Once a person had received their dollar and passed by the Rebbe they would continue to proceed into Gan Eden Hatachton, passing by the Rebbe's room, than continue and exit through a set of stairs at the far end of Gan Eden Hatachton, which led to outside. A variety of Tzedaka collectors stood outside, giving people the chance to immediately give the amount of dollars they had received from the Rebbe to Tzedaka.

WINDOW TO THE WORLD

Among the vast array of people lined up each Sunday stood many dignitaries and respected Rabbonim who also wanted a chance to encounter the Rebbe.

On some occasions these figures would be allowed to sidestep the line and were seen by the Rebbe without much waiting.

Through watching the videos of dollars available to us, one can enjoy viewing

powerful conversations that the Rebbe had with these individuals, encouraging them to use their potential to the maximum. These individuals, and many others as well, often brought special presents to the Rebbe. Seforim, proclamations, and letters were just some of the things the Rebbe would receive. Shluchim and heads of *mosdos* would often present the Rebbe with a key to their building or the city where it was located.

The Rebbe often expressed much gratitude for these presents, and would usually reciprocate with an extra dollar or more.

A distinct sense of *Nachas Ruach* could be seen on the Rebbe's face when talmidim or talmidos would inform the Rebbe of a milestone in *limud hatorah* they had reached.

The Rebbe himself or one of the Mazkirus would place whatever had been presented on the side in a paper bag prepared for this purpose.

LINGERING EFFECT

Rabbi Chaim Boruch Halberstam, who directed WLCC and was responsible for broadcasting the Rebbe's sichos via audio hookup, had the privilege of video recording and photographing the dollars line.

From the middle of 5748, Reb Chaim Boruch would stand and monitor the video camera that stood on a tripod silently witnessing the magnificent and precious moments, recording and capturing them for posterity. Shortly after receiving ones

dollar, one could obtain their video by visiting the WLCC "Duplicator" office on the corner of Kingston Ave. and Union St.

When the line drew to a close the Rebbe would hand a dollar to each of the Mazkirus and *vaad hamesader* that were present. The number of dollars given by the Rebbe on a regular Sunday was often close to 6000 (!). Then, the Rebbe would place a dollar in the large paper bag that held any gifts that were given that day and return to his room.

Almost every Sunday from Yud Alef Nissan 5746, Klal Yisroel merited unprecedented *giluyim* during the Sunday dollars. The last time the world was *zoche* to this *chaluka* was on Sunday, 26 Adar Rishon, 5752.

While today every Chossid has the opportunity to encounter the Rebbe through being at the Rebbe's Ohel, it is with great anticipation that we await the Geulah Shleima, when we will be reunited with the Rebbe b'gashmiyus as well. **D**

1. Often in Yechidus the Rebbe would also give money as *Shlichus Mitzvah* to individuals who were traveling abroad, usually in the currency of the destination country.
2. Time after time the Rebbe explained that the dollars were meant as a *Shlichus Mitzvah*, so that the meeting of two Yidden should result in a Mitzvah that benefits a third Yid. Not wanting to part with the dollar that the Rebbe had personally given, people would usually give an equivalent amount of their own money to Tzedaka and keep the priceless dollars for themselves.
3. The first Sunday following Yud Alef Nissan was in middle of Chol Hamoeid.
4. During the Kinus Hashluchim.

