



The following is from the diary of R.M.W., a bochur learning at 770 in 5725:

SHABBOS SHUVA, 6 TISHREI

At 10:00, the Rebbe entered the *shul* for *shacharis*. After the *davening* began, the Rebbe looked as if he was waiting for someone or something, as he kept on looking to the side. Rabbi Groner approached and spoke with the Rebbe for a minute, and then went to Rabbi Hodakov and then back to the Rebbe. As of now, no one knows what exactly is happening, but it seems as if something is wrong.

At 1:30, the Rebbe entered the *shul* for a *farbrengen*. During the *farbrengen*, Dr. Seligson approached the Rebbe and spoke to him for a few minutes. After a few *sichos*, everyone found out

what was happening. Dr. Seligson asked the Rebbe for his mother's name, and called out, "*Chana bas Rochel L'refua Sheleimo*." It was then that the crowd understood the circumstances.

(Now I'll fill in the details of what happened throughout the day, which were disclosed to me only later. Although she was not well lately, Rebbetzin Chana came to 770 on Rosh Hashanah to participate in the *tefillas* and hear *shofar* blowing from the Rebbe. On the second day of Rosh Hashanah, she was feeling much worse. The next day, she told Reb Berel Junik, "I know that going to *shul* yesterday did me harm, but I'm happy that I went. The *tekios* were amazing! Hashem

should bestow upon him much strength. You don't begin to comprehend what you have. I'm not saying this as a mother, but rather because that is the truth!")

On Friday night, the Rebbe visited his mother (as he would on a daily basis). Later, the Rebbe asked Reb Berel to visit his mother, who found her feeling relatively well. At 4:30 in the morning, the nurse noticed that the Rebbetzin was not feeling well. Immediately, she knocked on the door of a neighbor, Reb Avrohom Feller, who called Dr. Seligson. She then ran to 770 and told one of the bochurim about the situation. A few bochurim ran to the Rebbe's house and knocked on

the door, but there was no response until Reb Avrohom Feller arrived and knocked as well.

The Rebbe hurried to his mother's home and remained there until just before 10:00. When Reb Berel arrived he noticed that the Rebbetzin was not aware of her serious condition. When Reb Berel came to report to the Rebbe, the Rebbe asked that there be two women with her at her side. When Rabbi Junik returned, the Rebbe asked him to go back after *davening* and to have Dr. Seligson revisit as well.)

The *farbrengen* continued, and the Rebbe began to explain the teaching of the Baal Shem Tov that the

concealment of G-dliness during the time of *galus* is itself hidden and not noticeable. The Rebbe began to weep, leaning his head on his hands; a frightening sight to behold. Abruptly, the Rebbe passed his hand over his forehead, and the cries immediately ceased.

Later on, while speaking about the fact that non-Jews do not have the power obstruct the *mitzvos* of Hashem, the Rebbe began to cry again.

The farbrengen ended at 4:00. Reb Berel Junik ran to Rebbetzin Chana's house and found her breathing heavily. He came over to her and she grabbed onto his arm, saying, "Help me!" It seemed as if she wanted to fight on, but wasn't able. Reb Berel ran to 770 and told Dr. Seligson that Rebbetzin Chana's conditioned worsened and he hurried out.

After *mincha*, Reb Berel told the Rebbe that his mother had asked if he could come see her. The Rebbe rushed out of *shul* to his room; dropped off the handkerchiefs from his pocket, and continued to his mother's house (the Rebbe encouraged the singing on his way out from the farbrengen as well as on the way out of his room as he left for his mother's house).

Upon arriving there, the Rebbe found his mother in a very critical condition, lying in terrible pain and breathing with great difficulty. The Rebbe approached her bedside and asked Reb Berel to call two more doctors.

Meanwhile, Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka arrived.

At first, the Rebbe was opposed to have his mother taken to the hospital, but after the two doctors, in addition to Dr. Seligson, agreed that it was vital, the Rebbe said, "Since this is the opinion of three doctors, I give my consent." She was immediately placed in an ambulance and the Rebbe sat at her side.

As soon as the news reached 770, everyone began immediately to recite *Tehillim*. Many people began to walk towards the hospital along with a "Shabbos Goy" who carried a meal for the Rebbe.

At the hospital, the doctors did all they can to help the situation, but after a while, they came out and told the Rebbe that they think it's too late for her to recover. The Rebbe suggested a number of medical methods that

EMMES ALEIN!

The Rebbe's *mazkir*, Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky relates:

During the *shiva*, Rabbi Yosef B. Soloveichik came to the Rebbe to be *manachem avel*, and a scholarly discussion ensued on the topic of "*onan*." The Rebbe mentioned that according to the Rambam, the status of *onan* ends with the burial of the departed relative, but Rabbi Soloveichik argued, "Lubavitcher Rebbe, there is no such Rambam!"

The Rebbe remarked that although in the *Sefer HaYad* the Rambam doesn't rule this way, in his *Pirush HaMishnayos* he does.

Later on, in a letter to Rabbi Soloveichik on Erev Sukkos, the Rebbe followed up on the subject, saying that he has since seen the newer versions of the Rambam's *Pirush HaMishnayos* where he writes that he reconsidered this ruling, and the status of *onan* remains throughout the entire day of the passing.

Upon receiving the letter, Rabbi Soloveichik commented on the Rebbe's insistence to stand corrected (according to this later version of Rambam) – "He is so truthful. He is the epitome of truth! (*Emes alein*)".



might be able to improve the situation, and the doctors promised that they would try. A bit later, the doctors again said that their efforts were to no avail. Once more, the Rebbe proposed ideas, but things didn't get better.

At approximately 6:00 pm, Rebbetzin Chana's soul ascended to heaven in the presence of her illustrious son, the Rebbe. The Rebbe stood facing the window, his eyes heavenward. All was quiet and every so often, the Rebbe let out a cry. Some of the people there realized that the Rebbe had not yet eaten, so they offered him the meal that was brought, but the Rebbe refused to eat it and asked if there was a *Rav* present who can give ruling if it is *halachicly* permissible to eat the meal in such circumstances. Rabbi Groner approached, saying that he is a *Rav* and that the Rebbe should eat, but the Rebbe refused and asked if there was a *Shulchan Aruch* in the area. In the end, the Rebbe didn't eat the meal.

The Rebbe asked if anyone from the Chevra Kadisha were present and then asked for Rabbi Jacobson. Seeing all the pushing, the Rebbe said, "No one should push, only those who have been in the *mikveh* today should enter the room to say *Tehillim*. The bochurim are here totally unnecessarily, and as for everyone else, there's no reason to push; this is not a *farbrengen*."

Reb Yosef Wineberg asked the Rebbe if he should announce the news of the passing on his Motzaei



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Shabbos radio program, and the Rebbe answered affirmatively. Reb Yisroel Jacobson and Reb Elya Simpson of the Chevra Kadisha arrived and asked everyone to leave the room except for some of the elder Chassidim.

After Shabbos went out, the Rebbe asked if anyone present had a *siddur*, but no one did. After *maariv*, the Rebbe recited *Kaddish*. An hour later, Rebbetzin Chana was brought to her home, at 1418 President Street. (Interestingly, the Rebbe asked that before the coffin arrives at the building, the family of Reb Yaakov Moshe Friedman, who lived at 1414 President Street and was

close with the Rebbetzin, be notified of its arrival, and that he and his sons not sleep at home that night since they were Kohanim and were prohibited from being in the adjoining building). Before leaving the Rebbetzin's apartment, the Rebbe asked that a *minyan* remain there for the night.

7 TISHREI

At 8:00, the Rebbe arrived at 770 from his home. It was immediately announced that the funeral procession would begin at 11:00. At 9:15, the Rebbe left his room and joined the *minyan* to say *Kaddish* after the *Shir Shel Yom*. During the recitation, the Rebbe cried faintly.

At 11:05, the Rebbe left his room with a bag full of *seforim* in hand and was driven to his mother's house. The funeral began immediately, with the Rebbe following closely behind the coffin. When the Rebbe noticed a photographer videoing the scene, he was very displeased and motioned with his hand that he to stop to do so. The Rebbe continued to gaze at the coffin until it was placed in the car of the Chevra Kadisha. Then the Rebbe asked if anyone knew where the plastic mat was (seemingly, the one which some blood had spilled onto) and a particular piece of wood. When those nearby

answered that all had been arranged, the Rebbe looked quite satisfied.

The procession continued by foot through Kingston Avenue to 770 and from there to the cemetery. On the way to the burial, the Rebbe asked a few times, “Why are the bochurim here?” The Rebbe also asked that the women should not follow after the coffin.

After covering the grave, the Rebbe said some *Tehillim* and *Kaddish*. Due to much crying, the Rebbe was almost unable to finish. The entire crowd, including Rabbonim, Rebbes, and Roshei Yeshivos, all felt a deep sense of mourning at the time.

The “lines” were then formed. The Rebbe removed his shoes and asked that the bochurim not participate in the lines.

While passing by the Ohel, the Rebbe walked inside for two minutes, and after exiting, he entered the car and was driven to his mother’s house.

Throughout the *shiva* days, a lottery was arranged to determine who would participate in the Rebbe’s *minyanim*. After the first *mincha*, *anash* passed by the Rebbe in a line to perform *nichum aveilim*. When the Rebbe noticed bochurim going by as well, he gave them a startling look, as if to ask, “What are they doing here?”

8 TISHREI

Shacharis began at 10:00 am. Throughout the *davening*, the Rebbe cried occasionally. Reb Zelig Katzman was called to the Torah to name a newborn daughter and he asked the Rebbe if he may name her


after Rebbetzin Chana. The Rebbe agreed and blessed her with a long life (later on, the Rebbe sent him sixty-three dollars, the equivalence of the word “Chana”).

Throughout the day, many distinguished individuals came to visit the Rebbe. After *maariv*, Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka came to the house.

EREV YOM KIPPUR

The Rebbe did not distribute *lekach* today, but rumour has it that he will do so on Hoshanah Rabba. After *mincha*, at 4:00 pm, the Rebbe got up and asked that a *minyan* take place in the house for at least one *davening* each day through Yom Kippur.

At 6:00 pm, the Rebbe went to the *mikvah* and then entered

his room for a bit, walking out while his face was covered with his *tallis* and blessed the *bochurim* that were standing in *Gan Eden Hatachton*. After a few minutes, the Rebbe went to the shul downstairs, stood up on a table, and said a *brocha* to all present. The relatively small crowd (the *brocha* came unexpected) was not able to hear the Rebbe very well, since he spoke with closed eyes and his words were accompanied with tears. Rabbi Hodakov told the Rebbe that many people weren’t present and even those who were didn’t hear. The Rebbe climbed upon the table a second time and repeated the *brocha* again, word for word. 

NOT FOR YOU

Rabbi Shmuel Lew relates:

Less than a week before Yom Kippur, 5725, a Jew from Greenland wrote a letter to the Rebbe, asking that he send a *shliach* to lead Yom Kippur services on the Air Force base there.

It was an extremely difficult task to obtain all the necessary papers, as security-checks for such a visit were highly intensive, and travel was slow and costly in those days, but by using the right connections (including contacts in the Pentagon), the matter was duly arranged.

I was summoned by Rabbi Hodakov, who told me: “I have a *shlichus* for you,” laying out some of the details of this mission.

During the farbrengen that Shabbos, Vov Tishrei, the Rebbe announced: “There is a *shliach* here who is heading very far north,” and summoned me to receive a bottle of *mashke*.

After pouring some in my cup, the Rebbe instructed that I distribute a bit here and a bit in Greenland, use some for before the fast – “*far-fastin zich*,” and some for after the fast – “*up-fastin zich*”; and some I should bring back here.

Later on that day, the Rebbe’s mother was taken to the hospital. When we heard about this, we walked to the hospital and went up to the ninth floor, and upon the Rebbe’s request, recited *Tehillim*.

Before sunset, the Rebbe’s mother passed away.

I received a message in the name of Rabbi Hodakov: “Tell Shmuel that for him, there is no funeral tomorrow!” Imagine, what was occupying the Rebbe’s mind at such a moment? That I should not consider delaying my trip and continue with my *shlichus*!

The Rebbe asked that we form a small *minyan* for *maariv* and I was the *chazzan*. Before we began, the Rebbe glanced out the window in attempt to determine which direction was east by the position of the moon, but it was a cloudy night and the moon was not visible, so the Rebbe asked Rabbi Krinsky to find out from the hospital staff instead.

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