



BEHIND THE PICTURE

MINCHA IN GAN EDEN HATACHTON

Winter – 5752

Pictures courtesy of Jewish Educational Media

There are pictures of the Rebbe high on his platform at the front of the large shul in 770, often encouraging the chassidim's song, or davening a *tefilah* with a large crowd assembled. These photographs have become iconic, for they immediately bring to mind the joy and excitement of Tishrei, the warmth and glow of Chanukah rallies, along with many other emotions.

Less known, however, is that on several occasions in 5752 the Rebbe davened Sunday mincha upstairs, right outside his holy room—in the *gan eden hatachton*.

Ever since the distribution of dollars started on a weekly basis in 5746, the routine began sometime in the morning and it would last several hours. However in the summer of 5751, 'dollars' was

moved to begin in the early afternoon, around 1:30 p.m. Because it often lasted four or five hours, by which time it would be too late to daven mincha in the winter, the Rebbe decided that, beginning on 26 Cheshvan 5752, he would daven mincha before starting to distribute dollars. This new routine remained in place until the last distribution of Sunday dollars—as of now—on 26 Adar I, 5752. (The exception was Chanukah, when the Rebbe davened mincha in the big shul followed by *hadlokas haneiros*.)

Although we cannot expect to know the reason for this or any of the Rebbe's *hanhagos*, some have speculated that the Rebbe didn't want to daven this *tefilah* downstairs, as was the norm in that period, because the main shul below was

busy with people lining up for 'dollars.' Davening in the upstairs zal was not an option either, as the Rebbe did not want to disturb the *seder* of yeshiva¹.

For these *tefilos*, a *shtender* was placed alongside the wall between *gan eden hatachton* and the Rebbe's room, facing *mizrach*. A very small minyan, consisting of members of *mazkirus* and a few others, was formed. On some occasions, others joined as well; *chassanim* were allowed in as well in order to receive the Rebbe's siddur from his holy hand, and the family would receive coins for *tzedakah* (at times the Rebbe would give coins to everyone else present, as well). If there was a bar mitzvah boy, or other special guests, they too were allowed in to join.

One notable item of these special *teffilos*

occurred during *nefillas apayim*. The Rebbe would cover his holy forehead, despite not being in the presence of an *aron kodesh* (which, according to some opinions, is not necessary).

On Yud Kislev the Rebbe always recited kaddish for his uncle, Reb Shmuel Shneerson (5648-5704), brother of Reb Levi Yitzchok, and brother-in-law of Rebbetzin Chana². In 5752, when Yud Kislev fell out on Sunday, a microphone was installed to enable the large crowd below to hear the Rebbe reciting kaddish.

Upon the conclusion of mincha the Rebbe would enter *gan eden haelyon* and reemerge a few minutes after, beginning the regular dollars distribution. **D**

1. It should be noted that in the 5720s, when the Rebbe returned late from the Ohel, he often davened mincha in Gan Eden hatachton, so as not to disturb the learning in the zal.
2. Reb Shmuel Schneersohn married Rebbetzin Miriam Gittel Yanovsky, sister of Rebbetzin Chana.



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