



BEHIND THE PICTURE

KIDDUSH LEVANA

The Rebbe's Minhagim

EDITORIAL NOTE: The account that follows is a general collection of the Rebbe's hanhagos. It is possible that these hanhagos have changed (or stopped altogether) over the years, and some readers may recall things differently, or may have heard things not mentioned here. הפך בה והפך בה דכולא בה.

It is important to note that many of the hanhagos recounted here are not unique to the Rebbe's conduct and have sources in earlier seforim as well. Along with the pictures depicting these actions, we found it appropriate and helpful to mention all of them nonetheless.

“A gesture of a *tzadik*, certainly seeing him and hearing his voice, must make an impression never to be forgotten.”¹

These words, recorded in Hayom Yom following a seemingly ‘simple’ story of a *tzadik*'s gesture, can teach us to what lengths one must go in order to take note of the Rebbe's any action. And all the more so a story related to *avodas Hashem* directly.

As is known, the Rebbe's performed every mitzvah meticulously, showing care and concern in every detail. This includes several personal *minhagim*, some of which were transmitted throughout the generations from *nosi* to *nosi*, and many others which remain unknown.

At first glance, it was often hard to tell if the Rebbe was doing something in keeping with a particular *minhag* or for other reasons. But upon closer look,

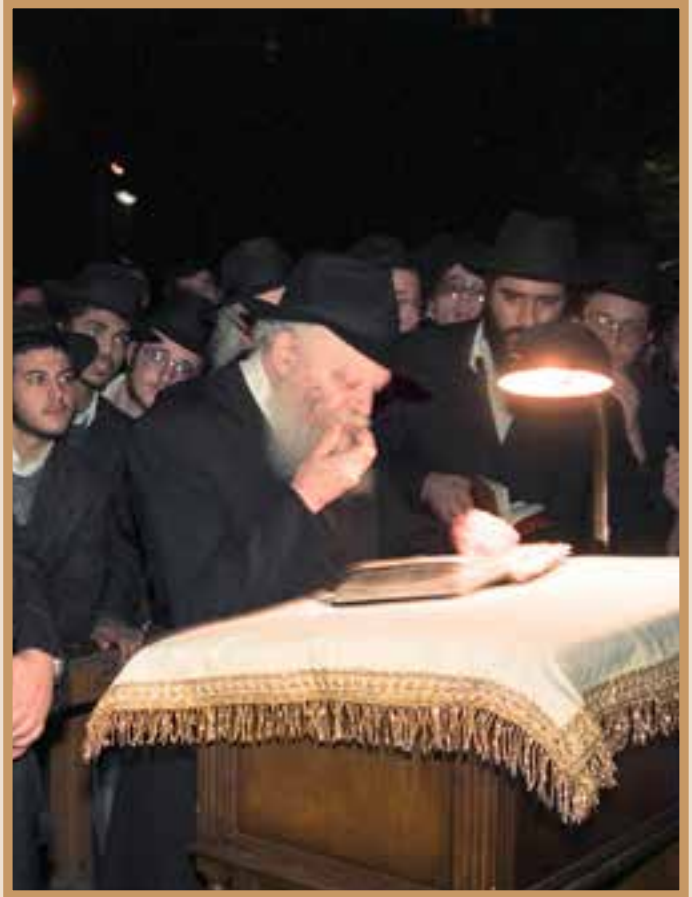
it is sometimes possible to discern several interesting facts from the Rebbe's performance of mitzvos, which of course, “must make an impression never to be forgotten.”²

In the case of *Kiddush Levana* which of course was held outdoors, there are several notable, albeit subtle *hanhagos*.

The Rebbe recited the *brachos* on the sidewalk in front of the main entrance to 770, holding the siddur in his hands.³

While the custom brought in the Alter Rebbe's siddur is to gaze at the moon before the *bracha* (after *Hallelukah*) the Rebbe looked upwards one additional time, at the beginning of the whole *Kiddush Levana*.

An age-old tradition dating back to early sources has it that *Kiddush Levana* is a *segulah* against toothaches. Indeed in



some circles a brief sentence is added to the *tefillah*, asking that we never suffer from toothaches.

At the paragraph “*Baruch Osech*” the Rebbe would elevate himself slightly as it says in the siddur, while passing his holy hand on his moustache, directly above his teeth. Many speculate that this practice was related to the tradition mentioned above.

While the crowd present was almost always large, when it came to exchange the traditional “*Sholom Aleichem*” the Rebbe usually directed his greeting at the nearby *mazkirim* or other aides. The Rebbe generally turned to his right side for the first greeting, then to his left for the second, and further back for the third.

Upon the conclusion of *Kiddush Levana* the Rebbe would grasp the knots of his *tzitzis*⁴ and shake them, as per the *minhag* in the siddur. After that the Rebbe would head back into 770 wishing those present “*Ah gut voch*” and “*Ah gut choidesh*.”⁵ **D**



1. Hayom Yom, 14 Teves

2. *ibid.*

3. It wasn't until 5743 that a lectern and small reading-light were brought out for the occasion.

4. The siddur instructs to shake the “*shulei*” (bottom of) *tallis katan*.

5. Unless of course it was a weeknight.