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THE STORY OF A MILESTONE ACHIEVEMENT IN "יפוצו מעיינותיך חוצה".

PRESENTED IN HONOR OF YUD-TES KISLEV, CHAG HAGEULAH OF
THE ALTER REBBE AND ROSH HASHANAH L'CHASSIDUS.
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Janny Rach

CHASSIDUS
ON THE
FRONT LINES

For a frum Jew living in the 21st century, it is taken for granted that technology can and should be utilized for Jewish causes. Of course Jewish events should be broadcast on television—how else would the larger community be informed? Of course there should be Jewish websites—how else can millions of Jews be reached?

This concept is so baked into our identity that it's difficult to imagine otherwise. But if you turn the clock of history back a mere few decades, the idea of using technology—for any purpose whatsoever—was far from accepted. And, when you think about it, it isn't too difficult to understand why.

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The Dilemma

The War had just ended. Millions of Yidden had been murdered in the Holocaust, and hundreds of *frum* communities had been decimated. In the place of flourishing yeshivos and thriving *shtibelach*, there were now ghost towns. In the place of booming communities with hundreds of thousands of Chassidim, there were now a few stray survivors. The Yidden of the U.S.S.R. were hardly spared, as Jewish life was quickly being destroyed by the terrors of communism.

Those who were able fled to the welcoming shores of America, the land of freedom; but when they arrived, they found themselves in a strange country, hostile to everything religious and G-dly.

The contrast between life in the *alte heim* (old home) and America could hardly have been starker. Take Lubavitch as an example: forty years earlier there had been tens of thousands of Lubavitcher Chassidim spread throughout Russia and Ukraine, and a flourishing yeshiva with hundreds of students. Now there was hardly a minyan on Shabbos.

Whereas the Yidden had previously lived in close-knit *frum* communities surrounded by like-minded brethren, they were now vastly outnumbered in this new country. Although it was nominally a country of religious freedom, the American culture despised anyone who was different; *frum* Yidden often lost their jobs for not working on Shabbos, and they

couldn't even get one if they wore a beard.

When you look back at it today, it seems inevitable that the Jewish community would eventually get back on it's feet and flourish in the new world. But at the time, this was far from assured. Judaism was hanging on by a thread, and the future was precarious.

What does one do in such a situation? How do you deal with this vast new world that despises everything you stand for? How do you create a Jewish, *chassidische* home in such an inhospitable environment?

There were two major approaches to this issue. The first was to compromise where you must, and keep what you can. This meant that many *frum* Yidden were sending their kids to public school, and almost everyone was sending them to college. Growing a beard was almost unheard of. You did what you needed in order to blend into the secular world.

The other approach was to try re-creating the experience of a *shtetel*—to retreat to insular communities where the secular world was kept at arm's length, shying away from any contact with the outside world. In order to keep them in the fold, children were often taught that those outside their



JEWISH IMMIGRANTS FROM EUROPE DISEMBARK ON THE SHORES OF THE UNITED STATES FOR A LIFE IN THE "NEW WORLD"



MILLIONS OF YIDDEN HAD BEEN MURDERED IN THE HOLOCAUST, AND HUNDREDS OF FRUM COMMUNITIES HAD BEEN DECIMATED.

community were abhorrent human beings, deserving of only disgust and contempt.

And then the Rebbe demonstrated that there was a third way—a truly revolutionary approach that demanded unfathomable courage, but that ultimately paved the way for a flourishing Judaism in the 20th century and beyond.

On the one hand, the Rebbe fought tirelessly to remove the influences and *hanachos* of the outside world from the Jewish home. In an era when Chassidish communities from other *krayzen* were teaching their children *limudei chol*—how could you not?!—the Rebbe was pushing to have it removed from schools. At a time when many *frum* women did not wear head-coverings, the Rebbe was persuading one person after another to wear a *shaitel*.

Yet, at the same time, the Rebbe didn't shy away from the outside world—he showed the Chasidim how to transform it. He trained generations of Chassidim that instead of fearing the outside world, they should conquer it. He sent young *bochurim* all over America to bring their Jewish brothers closer, confident that the *bochurim* would be the ones doing the influencing and not the other way around. Instead of building a moat around his Chassidim, hoping the secular influences won't seep in, the Rebbe sent his Chassidim out to the world to make it a holier place.

These issues were especially evident when it came to dealing with technology, the symbol of the new world. With the advent of television and radio, outside influences were sneaking into the *frum* home like never before; and these new technologies were on the rise, becoming ever more prevalent. Indeed, having a television was almost an American emblem, and those that didn't have one were looked at as relics



FRIEDMAN FAMILY

THE REBBE TAUGHT TO EMBRACE TECHNOLOGY AS A MEANS OF SPREADING YIDDISHKEIT AND CHASSIDUS

of the distant past. And if you didn't listen to the radio, you belonged in a different century.

Again, there seemed to be two approaches. Some people—many of them *frum*, G-d fearing Yidden—compromised. Others rejected technology completely, outlawing the use of radio and television altogether.

Here, too, the Rebbe showed a third approach. In a time when many, many *chassidish* homes had televisions, when it seemed inevitable that this was the new normal, the Rebbe rallied against it. *When the worst things in the world are but a click away, who's to guarantee that you'll keep to the better channels?! "How can you bring the galach into your own home?!"* Slowly but surely, the Rebbe ripped this mindset out of the Lubavitch mind; today, the ultimate symbol of a Lubavitch home is that it has no television.

But this was only with regards to Chassidim using these technologies for their own entertainment. When an opportunity arose to utilize them for Yiddishkeit, the Rebbe didn't hesitate. Lubavitchers who had never watched television in their lives found themselves under the hot glare of camera lights explaining the message of Chanukah. *Bochurim*, who wouldn't dream of listening to the radio, found

themselves giving long interviews about their Merkos Shlichus at local radio stations.

The Rebbe's way was met with fierce opposition, both from the left—for casually shrugging off the conventions of the new world, and from the right—for openly engaging with it. Ultimately, though, the Rebbe's path proved to be the only correct one, and slowly but surely the Jewish world caught on. A college education—which once seemed so absolutely critical for a Jewish boy—is now off the table for a *chareidish* *bochur*. Wearing a beard—which was once out of the question for a non-radical—has become normal. The *kiruv* movement—which was once so vehemently criticized—is now emulated across the spectrum of the Jewish world.

And the use of technology for holiness has become so commonplace that no-one can remember when it wasn't.

The *shiurei Tanya* on the radio were from the first entryways of *hafaztas hamaayanos* through technology, and were a symbol of the Rebbe's revolutionary outlook.

In the Beginning

As early as 5712, the Rebbe was encouraging the use of modern



RABBI YOSEF WINEBERG IN HIS YOUTH

technology and radio broadcasting for spreading Chassidus; in a letter that year, the Rebbe wrote to a Chabad *askan* in Eretz Yisroel commending him on the use of radio broadcasting for *hafotza*. But it would take several years until there would be a systematic, weekly *shiur* on the radio.

As with many of the ideas of *hafatza* in *dor hashvi'i*, the Rebbe left room for the Chassidim to initiate them. This is true of the systematic *shiurim* on the radio as well which the Rebbe agreed to when it was proven that there was someone ready to dedicate himself to the idea.

In the summer of 5718, Rabbi Yosef Wineberg, a prominent activist for the central Yeshiva Tomchei Temimim, began a weekly *shiur* on the radio. It was a way of drumming up support for the yeshiva, and while speaking about various topics of Torah and Chassidus, he would mention the importance of supporting the yeshiva.

Giving this *shiur* made him realize the potential of the radio, and—encouraged by all the feedback he was receiving—he got the idea to start a Tanya *shiur* on the radio. The next time he had *yechidus* with the Rebbe, in Cheshvan 5719 (in proximity to his birthday), Rabbi Wineberg brought it

up to the Rebbe. “Rabbi Teitz² has a *shiur* in Gemara. Why don’t we make a *shiur* in Tanya?”

The Rebbe thought for a second. Then he answered, “The time has not yet arrived.”

Rabbi Wineberg’s first thought was that the Rebbe had rejected the idea because of the serious responsibility involved in giving such a *shiur*; a responsibility that a single person couldn’t possibly shoulder alone. He quickly said that he did indeed recognize the responsibility involved and had never considered preparing the *shiurim* all on his own. Maybe, he proposed to the Rebbe, he could prepare the *shiurim*, and the Rebbe could review them.

But the Rebbe’s answer remained. “The time has not yet arrived.”

A year passed. Rabbi Wineberg found out that Rabbi Nochum Goldshmidt had started a Tanya *shiur* on the radio in Israel. So, when he went into *yechidus* for his birthday, he asked again for permission,



THE REBBE SHOWED THAT THERE WAS A THIRD WAY - AN APPROACH THAT DEMANDED UNFATHOMABLE COURAGE, BUT ULTIMATELY SHOWED THE WAY FOR JUDAISM IN THE 20TH CENTURY.

considering that Eretz Yisrael had already established one.

Again, the Rebbe did not agree.

After a few weeks had passed, Rabbi Wineberg decided that he had to try actually doing something. And so, he compiled a sample *shiur* to give in to the Rebbe, together with a letter in which he explained why he thought he was capable of shouldering such a weighty task; namely, that he was relying on the *shiurim* he had heard in Otwock from the legendary *mashpia* Rabbi Boruch Friedman *hy”d*.

Suddenly, everything changed. Shortly afterwards, he received the *shiur* back from the Rebbe, and it was full of the Rebbe’s *ha’aros* and corrections. Together with the *shiur* was a hundred dollar bill for the expenses of the *shiur*, and the Rebbe’s *brocha* for success.

Bringing it Together

Now that the *shiur* finally had the Rebbe’s blessing, the real challenges began.

Some people weren’t ready to accept the idea of Tanya *shiurim* on the radio; one of them, a prominent Chassid, took Rabbi Wineberg to task about it. “How do you have the *chutzpah* to take upon yourself such a responsibility!?” he demanded.

“If I don’t do it, no-one else will,” Rabbi Wineberg replied.

But this was from the smaller issues. Arranging a *shiur* on the radio took much effort and there were many technical details involved; it was a big workload for one person. Rabbi Wineberg called a meeting with a few of his friends and asked them to become part of a *vaad* which would assist in making the technical arrangements. Several of them agreed to get involved, taking upon themselves the various responsibilities of putting the *shiur* together. In the end, though, Rabbi Wineberg found himself working pretty much alone.

Although Rabbi Wineberg was only just beginning to scramble the *shiur* together and figure out what he was doing, the Rebbe already had plans for far in the future. In a *biur* on the second *perek* of Tanya, the Rebbe commented, “For the first time—this will suffice,” i.e. the next time this *perek* will be covered it will be with more explanation. Not only did the Rebbe expect the *shiur* to complete the entire Tanya—itself a task that spanned decades—he was already planning for the second time around!

During a *yechidus* shortly afterwards, Rabbi Wineberg spoke to the Rebbe of the difficult time he was having arranging the *shiur* all on his own, especially since he had to juggle it with his responsibilities as a

fundraiser for Tomchei Temimim and his duties to his family.

The Rebbe smiled, and said, “Nu... You can call another meeting!” On a serious note, the Rebbe told him, “You must take upon yourself an absolute *hachlata* to learn through the entire Tanya at least once.”

The *shiur* was ultimately arranged through the *Vaad Lehafatzas Chassidus*, of which Rabbi Wineberg was chairman. Preparing the *shiur* was a long and involved process: First, Rabbi Wineberg would prepare a draft. This draft was given for editing to Rabbi Mendel Tenenbaum, a friend of his from Otwock, who was also a member of the *Vaad*. Once a final draft was completed, it was given to the Rebbe. The Rebbe would add edits,

comments, notes, and sometimes even lengthy explanations. These were incorporated into the *shiur* by Rabbi Wineberg, who would retype the entire *shiur* again with the Rebbe’s additions.

Although the actual *shiur* was only fifteen minutes long, it occupied much more time in Rabbi Wineberg’s schedule. First he had to prepare the material, and then he had to give the *shiur* itself, which included making the trip to the studio, recording the *shiur*, and making the return trip home. The short, fifteen minute *shiur* took up sixteen or seventeen hours a week!

[Later on, recording the *shiur* itself became much easier, since he began recording in the WLCC broadcasting office. In the last few years, he delivered the *shiur* over the phone.]

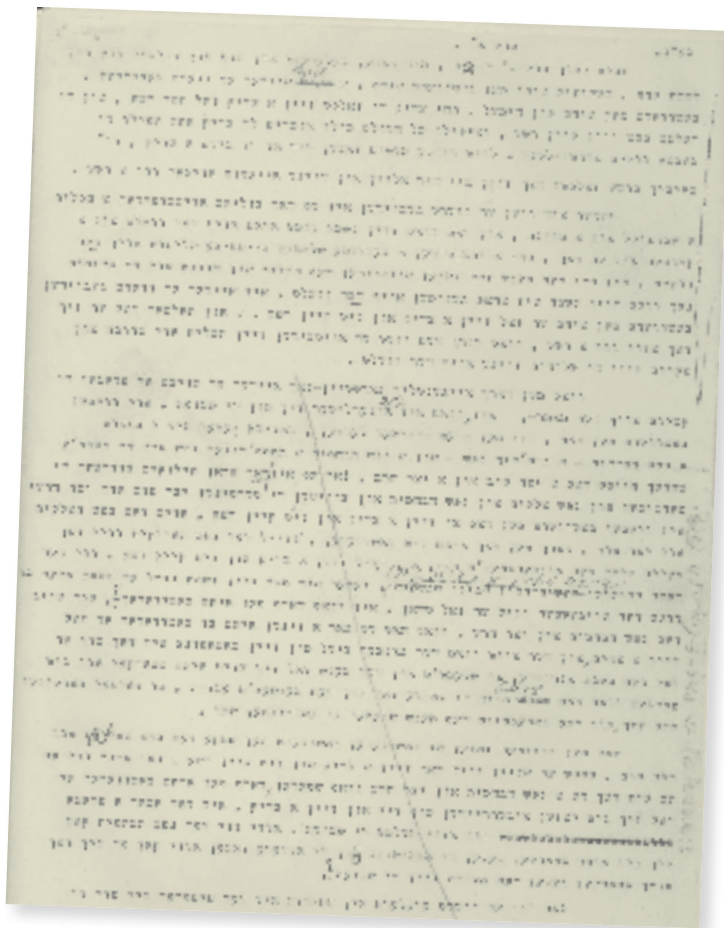
Keeping Focussed

From the outset, Rabbi Wineberg’s plan was to focus the *shiur* solely on the simple meaning of the Tanya, only explaining the concepts of Chassidus that were crucial for understanding the text, without elaborating on the concepts of Chassidus that came up on the way. And that is what he did for the first few *shiurim*.

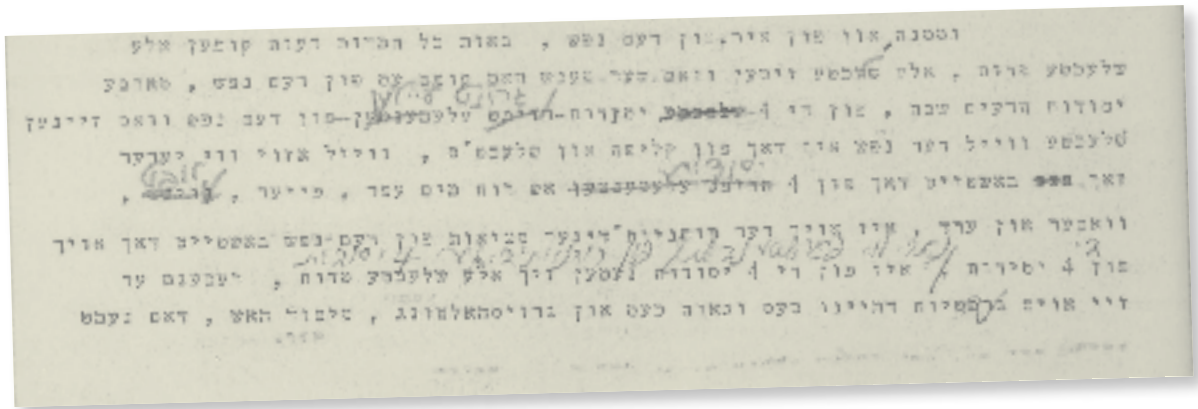
And yet - he wondered if he was doing the right thing. In the *shiurim* in Israel, Rabbi Goldshmidt would elaborate at length on the themes of Chassidus that came up in Tanya, even ones that had no direct relation to the text at hand, and his *shiur* was very successful. Maybe that was the right way to go?

He wrote his question to the Rebbe: Should he continue with a *shiur* focussed on the simple *pshat*, or should he switch to a *shiur* only loosely based on the text, mostly centered on explaining concepts of Chassidus?

The Rebbe’s answer was definitive. The *shiur* should be simple and to the point, and—to the extent possible—it



THE REBBE CROSSED OUT A LENGTHY EXPLANATION ON THE FIRST PEREK OF TANYA, EXPLAINING THAT IT WOULD CONFUSE THE BEGINNERS JOINING THE SHIUR, AS THEY ARE THE PRIORITY – “בלבל המתחילים – שהם העיקר דהשידור”



THE REBBE CORRECTS RABBI WINEBERG'S TRANSLATION OF THE WORD AS רוח TO ווינט IN HIS HOLY HANDWRITING

should be accessible to every single person tuning in, even beginners. When Rabbi Wineberg noted that Rabbi Goldshmidt was teaching differently, the Rebbe replied, "There, in Eretz Yisroel, it's different."

According to Rabbi Wineberg's understanding at the time, the Rebbe wanted the *shiur* to serve as a vehicle to bring all types of people closer to learning Chassidus, even beginners. So it was crucial that they be easy to understand.

This style was kept throughout the lifetime of the *shiur*, and at times it was the Rebbe himself who ensured



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this. For example: in the first *perek* of Tanya, the Alter Rebbe writes that משיביעין אותו תהי צדיק—the *neshama* is sworn that he will be a *tzaddik*. The Tzemach Tzedek explains that the word משיביע, sworn, also hints to שובע, satisfied; meaning that the *neshama* is satiated with the *kochos* to do its *avoda*. This is a famous *biur*, one that the Rebbe mentioned in *sichos* and *maamarim* many times, and Rabbi Wineberg included it in the *shiur*. However, when it was edited by the Rebbe, he crossed it out, explaining that "it will confuse the beginners, who are the priority in the *shiur*."

On Motzei Shabbos parshas Yisro, 5720 - the two hundredth year since the Histalkus of the Baal Shem Tov - the first Tanya *shiur* on the radio began.

The Rebbe's Biurim

The *shiurim* clearly had a very important standing by the Rebbe, and this is seen first and foremost in the fact that the Rebbe reviewed them and added his notes and explanations. To put this into perspective, in those years, in the 5720s, the Rebbe rarely edited anything—even his own Torah. It was a rarity for a *muga'dike maamar* to come out from the Rebbe. (When the *chozrim* asked for more *maamarim* to be edited, the Rebbe answered that he didn't have time for it.) The same was true with *sichos*; there were very few *muga'dike sichos* at that time. Even

in the later years, only a handful of publications merited such personal editing from the Rebbe. Thus, the fact that the Rebbe edited the *shiurim* is the biggest testament to their unique prominence by the Rebbe.

Although the Rebbe's *biurim* are quoted as such in *Shiurim B'Sefer Hatanya*, a lot of the Rebbe's input is not visible to the eye, since much of it consists of small, yet significant edits that are incorporated into the explanations: a corrected word, a deleted line, an edited paragraph, etc. When seeing the original documents of the Rebbe's *hagahos*, one is amazed by the sheer volume of *hagahos* and *biurim*, ranging from simple tweaks to the translation, to long, profound explanations; from basic clarifications in *pshat* to groundbreaking commentaries.

The Rebbe paid close attention to every detail, even changing individual words. For example, in the first *perek* of Tanya, the Alter Rebbe mentions the four *yesodos* that make up the world: *aish*, *ruach*, *mayim*, and *afar*. Rabbi Wineberg translated them into Yiddish as *faiyer*, *vint*, *vasser*, *un erd*—fire, wind, water and earth.

Stop for a moment and look at the translation.

See anything wrong?

The Rebbe crossed out the word *vint* [wind] and replaced it with *luft* [air]!



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FACSIMILE OF THE ORIGINAL KSAV YAD KODESH OF THE REBBE'S BIUR ON PEREK 49, WRITTEN ON MOTZOEI SHABBOS CHANUKAH 5738. THE REBBE SPENT THREE HOURS WRITING THIS BIUR.

FARBRENGEN MOTZOEI SHABBOS CHANUKAH 5738, THE REBBE'S SECOND PUBLIC APPEARANCE SINCE THE HEART ATTACK SOME TWO MONTHS PRIOR.

A subtle change - yet significant.

Sometimes it wasn't about the content as much as the delivery; the Rebbe would cross out material that wasn't crucial for understanding the *perek*, or add a couple of words that framed the following few lines.

For example: In the first page of Tanya, as part of a litany of questions on the conventional understanding of the *beinoni*, the Alter Rebbe brings down a certain *maamar Razal* describing the persona of the *beinoni*. In the original draft, Rabbi Wineberg wrote a full paragraph explaining how this *maamar razal* would be explained later on in Tanya, in *perek yud gimmel*. Crossing it out, the Rebbe wrote, *shayach l'perek yud gimmel*, it belongs in *perek yud gimmel*. [It seems that the Rebbe saw it unnecessary, or even confusing, to answer the Alter Rebbe's questions before he did so himself.]

And then there were the actual *biurim*. Focussing almost solely on the simple meaning of the *perek*, these explanations clarified difficult passages, explained confusing language, resolved contradictory texts, and answered questions that no-

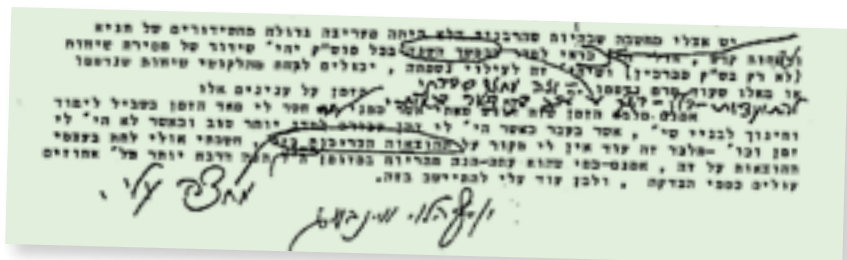
one had even thought to ask before. Though most of these are short *biurim* sprinkled throughout the *prakim*, some of them are quite lengthy. One of the longest is a *biur* on *perek mem tes*, and it has a fascinating backstory.

On Motzei Shabbos Chanukah 5738, the *shiur* was up to *perek mem tes*; since it was shortly after the Rebbe's heart-attack, the Shabbos *farbrengen* was scheduled for later that night. [From after the heart attack until the winter of 5740, the Rebbe would hold the regular Shabbos *farbrengens* on motzei Shabbos instead of shabbos afternoon]. Although the Rebbe had already finished editing the *perek*, he wrote another long *biur*—which took three hours (!) to complete. Seeing that it

was getting late and Rabbi Wineberg wouldn't have time to incorporate it into that night's *shiur*, the Rebbe called Rabbi Binyomin Klein and told him, "*Git dus Vainberg'in, zol er tun mit dem vos er vil*—Give this to Wineberg, let him do with it what he wants." [Due to its length and profundity, Rabbi Wineberg spent the next three weeks explaining it to his listeners.]

This was only one *biur* on one *perek*. It's impossible to estimate how many hours the Rebbe poured into these *hagahos* and *biurim* throughout the years.

These *biurim* and *hagahos* forge a fundamental commentary on the Tanya, navigating a reader through difficult concepts and complicated language, and revealing entirely



RABBI WINEBERG'S LETTER WHERE HE NOTIFIES THE REBBE OF HIS IDEA TO TEACH A PART OF THAT WEEK'S RASHI SICHA ON THE RADIO. THE REBBE'S RESPONSE, ENCOURAGING RABBI WINEBERG AND UNDERTAKING HALF OF THE COSTS, CAN BE SEEN IN THE REBBE'S HOLY HANDWRITING.

וְלֹכְנֵי נִקְרְאוּ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אַחִים מִמֶּנּוּ
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 וְלֹכְנֵי נִקְרְאוּ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אַחִים מִמֶּנּוּ

THE REBBE'S HA'ORA ON TANYA PEREK 32 "ולכן נקראו בני ישראל אחים ממנו"

Throughout the *hagahos* and *biurim*, the Rebbe shows how every single word of Tanya is precise and exact. The following is one small example.

In *perek lamed beis* the Alter Rebbe explains that when a person makes his *neshama* primary, he will be able to truly fulfill the mitzvah of *ahavas Yisroel*. One of the reasons for this is that the *neshamos* of all Yidden come from the same father, Hashem; as such, all Yidden are "*achim mamash*—literally brothers." When a person focusses on his *neshama*, loving a fellow Yid becomes as natural as loving a brother.

Why does the Alter Rebbe write that Yidden are *achim mamash* [literally brothers]?

Reading it superficially, it seems that the Alter Rebbe is simply emphasizing his point.

In a short *hagaha*, the Rebbe explains that this innocent looking word is actually crucial to the text. In other places in Torah, the word *achim* doesn't necessarily mean brothers. For example, in parshas Lech Lecha, when Avraham Avinu tells his nephew Lot that they are "*achim*," he means to say that they are relatives (or, according to another *pirush*, that they looked alike). The Alter Rebbe therefore emphasizes that when we say that Yidden are *achim*, we don't mean *achim* as in relatives, or *achim* as in look-alikes, rather *achim mamash*, literally brothers.

In the Rebbe's words: (כהפ"י לך יג', ח). ולא קרובים או דומין (כהפ"י לך יג', ח). And not relatives or look-alikes (as in Lech Lecha *perek yud gimmel, passuk ches*.)



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A FARBRENGEN IN THE EARLY 5720S. RABBI WINEBERG CAN BE SEEN STANDING TO THE REBBE'S LEFT.

new depths in the Alter Rebbe's words. They are a critical tool for understanding the Tanya, and it would be foolhardy for anyone approaching the Tanya to miss them. And, in truth, almost anyone who learns Tanya is benefiting from the Rebbe's explanations—whether he knows it or not—since they are baked into most major commentaries on the Tanya.

Sichos

On the weeks of Motzei Shabbos Mivarchim, Rabbi Wineberg would take some time from the *shiur* to deliver a selection of the *sichos* from the Rebbe's farbrengen. In 5725, after Rebbetzin Chana passed away, Rabbi Wineberg wrote to the Rebbe that, in memory of the Rebbetzin who had

been a "great admirer of the *shiurim* on Tanya and *sichos*" (see below for further details on this point), he was thinking that it might be *kidai* [a good idea] to buy another fifteen minutes of airtime and begin delivering the Rebbe's *sichos* every week, not only on Shabbos Mivarchim. Since these were weeks without a farbrengen, he would take *sichos* either from the Likutei Sichos or from the unpublished *sichos*.

He wasn't sure if the idea was practical, though, since he didn't have a source of funding to buy the extra airtime, and it would be difficult to fund it himself.

Regarding the general proposal, the Rebbe circled the word *kidai*—meaning that he should go ahead with it. Then the Rebbe wrote:

"זוהו מחזק סברתי להתועדות -בל"נ [=בלי נדר]- בש"ק [=בשבט קדש] במשך השנה עכ"פ [=על כל פנים] בקיצור בכמות

- This supports my thought to farbreng, *bli neder*, [every] Shabbos during the entire year; at least short ones - time-wise."

In other words, the Rebbe was considering the idea of beginning to farbreng every Shabbos, and Rabbi Wineberg's proposal to deliver the



A LETTER FROM RABBI WEINBERG TO THE REBBE FROM 5725, ASKING THE REBBE'S ADVICE HOW TO DELIVER THE SICHAS ON THE RADIO. THE REBBE'S COMMENTS ARE WRITTEN IN HIS HOLY HANDWRITING.

sichos on the radio was supporting that decision! [Ultimately, as we all know, the Rebbe did indeed farbreng every week of 5725.]

In regards to funding, the Rebbe answered, “מחצה עלי—half is on me(!)”³

Once the Rebbe undertook half of the costs, Rabbi Wineberg decided that, instead of looking for other people to sponsor the second half, he would pay for it himself, and he hastened to inform the Rebbe. Shortly afterwards, in a *yechidus* with Rabbi Wineberg's son, Rabbi Avraham Weinberg, the Rebbe said: “Tell your father that he should let me know how much my share in the partnership is. Your father knows which partnership [I am referring to]...” When he got the message, Rabbi Wineberg hurried to update the Rebbe on the amount.

Thus, in addition to the regular Tanya shiur, Rabbi Wineberg began *chazzering* the Rebbe's *sichos* every week, garnering enthusiastic feedback from the public. During the first year, 5725, the Rebbe farbrenged every week (as mentioned, the Rebbe said that these *shiurim* played a part in his decision to do so), and it was during these farbrengens that the

Rebbe introduced the revolutionary Rashi *sichos*. When Rabbi Wineberg *chazzered* these *sichos* on the radio, the public's reaction was one of pure amazement.

For the first few years, the *sicha* would be given in to the Rebbe for *hagaha* (together with the Tanya *shiur*), and this continued until 5727. During that year, Rabbi Wineberg had a wedding to attend in Eretz Yisroel, and he prepared a recording of his *shiurim* before the trip. As always, he submitted the *sicha* for *hagaha* before he recorded the *shiur*, but he noted that there may not be enough time for the Rebbe to edit it and for him to record it before the trip.

The Rebbe answered that it is not necessary for the *shiur* to be *muga* this time, being that all past *shiurim* have been perfect, and the future ones will surely continue to be as well. Better that there be more time to prepare the *shiur*.

This answer, which was a powerful vote of confidence in the way the *sichos* were being delivered, made Rabbi Wineberg realize that the Rebbe didn't find it necessary to be *magiha* the *sichos*—which meant that sending them in for *hagaha* would put an unnecessary inconvenience on the Rebbe's time. So from then on, he stopped submitting them for *hagaha*.

In truth, there had been another vote of confidence a few years prior.

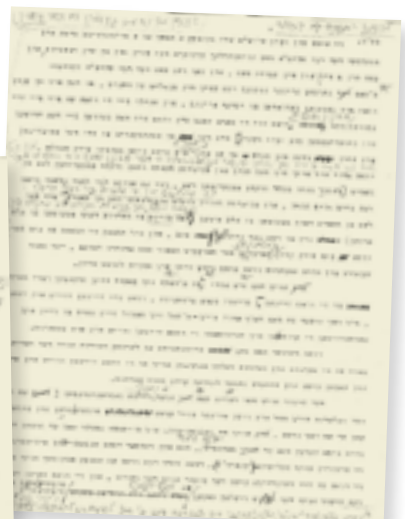
The Rebbe's mother, Rebbetzin Chana, once said to the Rebbe: When it comes to *chazzering* the *sichos*, there are a few types of people. There are those who deliver it in a manner which easy to understand, but lacks in the depth. There are others who deliver it in a manner that retains the depth, but is impossible to understand. Then there is the way it is said on the radio, the Rebbetzin concluded, which is both easy to understand and retains the profundity. She asked the Rebbe if he agreed with her assessment. “*Oifin veg*,” the Rebbe answered. (“In the right direction...”)

Surprise Listener

Then it was discovered that the Rebbe himself listened to the *shiurim*.

One week Rabbi Wineberg was out of town, and realizing that he wouldn't be able to give the *shiur*, he called Rabbi Hodakov and asked him what to do. Rabbi Hodakov quickly relayed the question to the Rebbe, who instructed that Rabbi Moshe Pinchas Katz should substitute for him. In a subsequent *yechidus*, the Rebbe told Rabbi Katz, “I closed the door to my room and listened to the *shiur*, and it was good.”

The Rebbe encouraged Rabbi Wineberg along every step of the way,



THE SICHAS OF 15 SHEVAT 5723 WITH THE REBBE'S HANDWRITTEN HAGOCHOS, WHERE THE REBBE SPOKE AT LENGTH ON THE IMPORTANCE OF THE TANYA SHIURIM ON THE RADIO.



THE REBBE HANDS RABBI WINEBERG A STACK OF SINGLE DOLLAR BILLS FOR THE WOMEN AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE EREV ROSH HASHANA FARBRENGEN, 5742

THE *SHIUR* FOLLOWING THE *HISTALKUS* OF THE Rebbe's mother, Rebbetzin Chana, was dedicated in her honor, but Rabbi Wineberg didn't consider it important enough to inform the Rebbe during *shiva*, and only wrote about it after Yom Kippur. The Rebbe answered, "Thank you for informing [me] about this. At any time, a person constantly awaits good news, and especially in such a time, etc." [I.e. during a time of *aveilus*.]

FOLLOWING THE HEART ATTACK ON SIMCHAS TORAH 5738, in a bid to minimize the Rebbe's workload, Rabbi Wineberg decided that, for the next while, he wouldn't give any new *shiurim* to the Rebbe for review. Instead, he would take the *shiurim* that had already been prepared and stretch them out for an extra few weeks. After a single week passed, the Rebbe asked Rabbi Groner, "Why aren't the *shiurim* coming?"



and helped him through some of the challenging moments. Often Rabbi Wineberg would pre-record the Tanya *shiur* on Friday and deliver it to the radio station in Manhattan. That way he would only have to *chazzer* the *sicha* live on-air. One Friday, after he had returned from the studio late in the afternoon, he received a call from Rabbi Hodakov: The Rebbe had made some changes in the *shiur*—there was a *mahadura basra* - a second edition.

There was no time to re-record another *shiur* before Shabbos, so it would have to be delivered live.

Here came the problem. Usually, Rabbi Wineberg would have the Tanya *shiur* completely ready by Motzei Shabbos, and he would spend the drive to Manhattan preparing his *chazzara* of the farbrengen. But now he had to spend the entire drive to Manhattan preparing the *shiur* with

the Rebbe's new *hagahos*, and he didn't have time to review the farbrengen.

After the *shiur* he wrote the whole story to the Rebbe, admitting that he was afraid that the *sichos* לא נמסרו "לא כראוי"—had not been given over correctly. Crossing out the word לא, the Rebbe left the words נמסרו כראוי—"were given over correctly"—and added, "וזכות הרבים מסעייתו—the merit of the public aids him."

Every year, on the anniversary of the *shiurei Tanya* (usually on Shabbos parshas Yisro), the Rebbe would make special mention of the occasion, and on significant ones (like the first, second, seventh, tenth, etc.) he would expound on the meaning of that specific anniversary.

When the *shiur* concluded the entire Tanya for the first time, a task that took twenty two years (!), the Rebbe marked the momentous occasion, speaking about the importance of the *shiurim* and instructing that the Alter Rebbe's *niggun*, which is only reserved for special occasions, be sung three times.⁴

There were even times that the Rebbe publicly praised Rabbi Wineberg personally for his initiative, a rare phenomenon at the Rebbe's farbrengens. At one farbrengen, the Rebbe said: "Some people do not involve themselves in *hafatzas hamaayanos*, with the excuse that 'I can't do it alone, and no-one else will help me!' They have a living example from the *shiurei Tanya* on the radio: They were arranged by one man alone, without any assistance from others, yet they have continued for seven years!"⁵

In addition, the Rebbe would occasionally take time at a farbrengen to explain the Tanya being learned on the radio at that time. [One classic example is the farbrengen parshas noach 5725, when the Rebbe gave a lengthy *biur* on *perek mem alef*, later printed in *Shiurim B'sefer Hatanya*, and in *Lekutei Sichos*.]



THEN THERE IS THE WAY IT'S SAID ON THE RADIO, THE REBBETZIN CONCLUDED, WHICH IS BOTH EASY TO UNDERSTAND AND RETAINS THE PROFUNDITY. SHE ASKED THE REBBE IF HE AGREED WITH HER ASSESSMENT. "OIFIN VEG," THE REBBE ANSWERED.

It was during these farbrengens that the Rebbe gave us a glimpse into why he considered the *shiurei Tanya* so significant. On one occasion the Rebbe explained: In general, when Chassidus is publicized to the world—when the *ma'ayanos* are spread to the *chutza*—it can only reach so far. When *sifrei Chassidus* and *kuntreisim* are printed and distributed, it can go only as far as the physical paper; when *shiurei Chassidus* are taught, they can only reach as far as the words can be heard. There always remains a part of the world—a *chutza*—where Chassidus has not yet touched.

However, when *shiurei Chassidus* are given on the radio, the words of Chassidus spread throughout the entire world simultaneously, to every *chutza* there may be. Thus, the radio is the ultimate tool for *hafatzas hamaayanos chutza*.⁶

The Rebbe also taught fascinating lessons in *avodas Hashem* from the radio itself—for example, from the on-and-off button. You always have the choice to turn it on, and hear what's going on in the world, or turn it off, and shut the world out. The same choice faces every Yid, the Rebbe said. If he "turns the button on" he will hear the words of Hashem; but he also has

the ability to "turn the button off" and go against Hashem's will, *r*".⁷

Into a Sefer

As time went on, many people began asking Rabbi Wineberg for recordings of previous *shiurim*, which they wished to review. Thus, Rabbi Wineberg began recording the *shiurim* and making them available for the public, a project that merited the Rebbe's personal involvement in the smallest details. (The Rebbe was even involved in the lettering on the envelope containing the *shiurim*.)

In the end, the project fizzled out, and only a few *shiurim* were recorded.

Then, Rabbi Moshe Leib Rodshtein, one of the Rebbe's secretaries, came up with the idea of turning the *shiurim* into a sefer. At first, Rabbi Wineberg found the idea strange; but, nevertheless, he wrote the new proposal to the Rebbe—who turned it down.

The next morning, Rabbi Wineberg was in for a surprise: the Rebbe had decided that the *sefer* should be published. Thus, the work on *Shiurim B'sefer Hatanya* began.

All the *shiurim* had to be re-edited and adapted to a written format, but since they had been edited by the

Rebbe, Rabbi Wineberg was careful not to make any real changes. The work took quite a while, but once the *sefer* was published, it became a best-selling *pirush* on Tanya, translated in many languages and published in countless editions.

Controversy

From the very beginning, there were always people who complained about the idea of giving *shiurim* on the radio, their argument being "how can you use such an impure object for such a holy goal?"

Addressing these arguments on numerous occasions throughout the years, the Rebbe often quoted a famous Midrash: "The world itself was unworthy of using gold. Why was it created? For the *Beis Hamikdash*." Seemingly, the Rebbe said, this Midrash applies to every single creation in the world, for everything was created for Hashem's glory. Why is gold singled out? Because gold is a unique creation, and it is therefore more obvious that it was created solely for the direct use of the *Beis Hamikdash*. Similarly, the Rebbe explained, the radio is a unique creation: it transcends the regular limitations of time and space, reaching the entire world in miniscule amounts of time. Such an extraordinary creation was surely created in order to be used for *kedusha*.⁸

The Rebbe illustrated this point with the oft-repeated story of his grandfather, Reb Meir Shlomo Yanovsky, and the Rebbe Maharash.⁹ Shortly after his wedding, Reb Meir Shlomo traveled to the Rebbe Maharash's court to be a *zitzer*, to *zitz* (sit) and learn for a few months, a common practice in those days.

Now, the Rebbe Maharash lived in great luxury, and all his personal items were made of gold: a gold cigarette holder; a gold snuffbox; two gold watches, each with gold chains; a cane

with a gold handle; and gold cutlery. His clothing and carriage were covered in gold.

When Reb Meir Shlomo returned to his hometown, he told them about it, and a certain Chassid—a *baalibatishe* Chassid—criticized this behavior. “What kind of *seder* is this? Is having everything made of gold really such a necessity? The Rebbe should give that money to *tzedaka* and survive on bare essentials!”

Reb Meir Shlomo answered: “*Petach, petach!* Fool, fool! For whom do you think gold was created for? For me and for you? Or for the *goyim*, *l’havdil?* It was created for him!”

The same is true in regards to the radio, the Rebbe said. The sole reason it was created was for *shiurei Chassidus!*

Many years later, in the 5740s, the controversy again erupted about the fact that Lubavitch was using the radio for *shiurei Chassidus*. Using sharp terms, the Rebbe strongly defended the practice and admonished those acting in an hypocritical manner to impede *hafatzas hamaayanos*: campaigning against the use of technology for Chassidus while using it for their own business. The Rebbe reiterated his explanation from the previous years, that everything in the world must be used for *kedusha*, and pointed to the Midrash that “gold was created for the *Beis Hamikdash*,” even though it was used for idols for thousands of years before and after the *Beis hamikdash* was built.¹⁰

This time, though, the Rebbe went one step further. He didn’t suffice with addressing the question of why the radio may be utilized for *kedusha*; he addressed a different, more interesting question, the type of question which doesn’t usually get asked, much less answered. Why did Hashem create radio waves in the first place?

The Rebbe went on to give a long, in depth explanation according to

Chassidus, which, briefly, goes as follows: Superficially, the world looks and feels like a physical, limited world. The purpose of a Yid is to reveal that there is more to the world than it seems—it is a manifestation of *Elokus*. This is accomplished by following Torah and mitzvos, thereby revealing the *Elokus* hidden within the world.

However, Yidden need something to remind them that the world isn’t just how it seems. Therefore, Hashem put something in the world that defies its limitations, a limitless creation in a limited world—namely, radio waves. Radio waves are not bound by the regular rules of time and space, reaching across the world in miniscule amounts of time.

And this is why Hashem created the radio (and telegrams, etc.)—to show a Yid that he, too, is not bound by the constraints and concealments of the world; he has the power to reveal the *Elokus* hidden deep inside. (The radio *does* have some limitations, and it does take some amount of time for the radio waves to travel—after all it does exist in our physical, limited world. Nevertheless, it defies the regular, normal limitations of the world, thus demonstrating that there is something beyond the limitations.)¹¹

This is how the Rebbe explained the existence of the radio, and this was but one reflection of the Rebbe’s general attitude

towards technology, modernity, and the world in general. The universe is *dira betachtonim* waiting to be made—we just have to go out and make it. **T**

1. See Likutei Sichos vol. 18 p. 459.
2. Rabbi Pinchas Mordechai Teitz was a prominent Rav in Elizabeth, New Jersey. Rabbi Teitz knew the Rebbe from Riga, where the Frieddiker Rebbe told him that he could take questions to the Rebbe, and he received much kiruv from the Rebbe, especially with regard to his traveling to the former Soviet Union to strengthen the Jewish communities there. During a yechidus in 5714, the Rebbe encouraged Rabbi Teitz to give a weekly Gemara shiur on the radio, and he later hosted a weekly radio program called “Daf HaSHavua - Talmudic Seminar of the Air”. See Igros Kodesh vol. 8 p. קל"ו.
3. See ksav yad kodesh in Derher supplement, Vov Tishrei 5775, p. 19.
4. Farbrengen Shabbos Parshas Tazria-Metzora 5742.
5. Shabbos Parshas Mishpotim, 5725.
6. 12 Sivan 5720.
7. Purim 5721.
8. Shabbos Parshas Mishpotim, 5722.
9. 12 Sivan, 5720, Purim, 5728.
10. Lekutei Sichos vol. 26 p. 359 and on.
11. Ibid.



A RECORD OF RABBI WINEBERG’S RECORDED SHIURIM ON THE RADIO