



לזכות החייל בצבאות ה'
 ישראל צבי שיחי'
 לרגל הולדתו
 ב' דחג השבועות ה'תשע"ז
 ולזכות הוריו
 הרה"ת ר' ברוך שלום
 וזוגתו מרת חנה שיחיו זאייאנץ
 שלוחי כ"ק אדמו"ר
 איסאקווא, וואשינגטאן
 נדפס ע"י זקניו
 הרה"ת ר' משה גדול
 וזוגתו מרת שושנה טרקסלער
 והרה"ת ר' יוסף
 וזוגתו מרת פרומט שיחיו זאייאנץ



RABBI PINNY LEW

CIRCA 5724.

Elul in Lubavitch

ELUL 5724



In Elul 5724, Hatomim
 Menachem Mendel (Menny)
 Wolff of Eretz Yisroel,
 nineteen-years-old at the
 time, traveled for the first time
 to New York, to spend the year
 of "kevetza" in the Rebbe's presence.



Presented here are excerpts from his diary in the
 weeks just after he arrived.

FRIDAY, 13 ELUL

This was my first trip to the Rebbe. We spent
 many months, in fact the entire summer, preparing
 ourselves for the trip.

Along with my luggage I brought a special
 parcel: a case of newly printed pocket-size *siddurim*,
 produced by the Kehos branch in Eretz Yisroel for
 the first time. The bulk of them were set aside for
 the Rebbe, many of which he distributed in *yechidus*
 throughout the following month.

Our welcoming delegation brought us for the very first time to 770. Great excitement took hold of me as I realized my long awaited dream—I was in 770!

The Frieddiker Rebbe's vivid descriptions in Likkutei Diburim¹ of the Elul aura in Lubavitch came to life!

After a short tour of 770's rooms and hallways, my friend Shmuel Heber escorted me to the yeshiva dormitory. We brought our luggage and set up our bedrooms.

I then made my way to the yeshiva office—Reb Dovid Raskin's cubicle within the already small room in 770; he approved our stay.

It's interesting that despite the extremely limited office-space throughout 770, it is from here that light goes out to the entire world.

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SHABBOS PARSHAS TEITZEI, 14 ELUL

At 7:20 p.m. on Erev Shabbos the Rebbe arrived at 770, opened the door of *gan eden hatachton*, and glanced behind him. This was my first time ever seeing the Rebbe. ברוך שהחיינו וקיימנו והגיענו לזמן. "הזהר!"

On Shabbos morning, the Rebbe entered *shacharis* at precisely ten o'clock, carrying a Siddur Torah-Ohr, a Tanya, and a Chumash Torah Temima.

As *maftir* nears, the crowds push near the *bima*, all desiring to hear the Rebbe recite the *haftarah*. The Rebbe is called up for *maftir* with "עמוד אדונו" "מורנו ורבנו בהר" לוי יצחק. Upon reaching the *bima*, the Rebbe displays a serious demeanor. While reciting the *brachos*, he quietly lifts the Torah several times, pronouncing every word clearly.

The *brachos* of the *haftarah* are recited word-for-word, in the original tune. One listening to the *haftarah* feels that this is not just a repetition of a once said *nevuah*, rather, as if the *novi* is reciting

it right now! A great solemnity is visible on the Rebbe's holy face. At the *haftarah's* end, the Rebbe descends from the *bima* and returns to his place for *musaf*.

When the *chazzan* reached *Keser* during *musaf's chazaras hashatz*, the Rebbe tapped on his *shtender*, this being the signal to sing *Hu Elokeinu*. After indicating twice, the Rebbe energetically motioned to intensify the singing. During the *chazzan's* recital as well, the Rebbe continued to tap on the *bima*.

Following davening, the assembled awaited the *gabbai's* announcement regarding the *farbrengen*, but alas, he only mentioned the upcoming *shiurim*, set to take place on Sunday. The momentary doubt as to whether the Rebbe would *farbreng* was soon cleared up, as Rabbi Hodakov emerged from the Rebbe's room with the good news that the Rebbe would *farbreng* at 1:30.

The Rebbe entered the hall at the designated time. After the singing of a *niggun*, Reb Osher Sassonkin said *l'chaim* to the Rebbe on behalf of the Jews of Russia, as well as a few more words that I didn't catch.

Towards the end of the *farbrengen*, the Rebbe underscored the guests' obligation to arrange study schedules during their stay. At the *farbrengen's* conclusion, the Rebbe instructed that the *mezonos* on the table be distributed to those who attend tomorrow's *shiurim*.

Following *bentching* (unlike usual Shabbos *farbrengens*, the Rebbe washed for *hamotzi* today) the Rebbe stood up quickly, and left the hall.

Several minutes later, the Rebbe entered the small *zal* for *mincha*, and approached his place. Because I was informed beforehand, I managed to obtain a good spot. Following *krias haTorah*, I was trembling as I *bentched Hagomel* in the Rebbe's presence, after which I was also honored with *hagbah*, throughout which I continued to shake. At that moment I decided that I would no longer perform such *kibudim* in the Rebbe's presence.

After *mincha*, we hurriedly ate *seudas Shabbos* so we would be able to attend *chazara*. Presiding over *chazara* is the Chossid Reb Yoel Kahan. Near him sit several helpers who attempted to "record" the Rebbe's words in their memory. Elder Chassidim attend as well. Reb Eliyahu Yaichel-Simpson, who merited to be a *chozer* for the Rebbe Rashab, eagerly participates just as one of the youths. Now and then, Reb Yoel dismisses the words of some participants. This first *chazara* concluded at 7:15, followed by

a short break, after which the Rebbe entered the *zal* for *maariv*. Half an hour after *maariv*, a second *chazara* takes place.²

At that moment I decided that I would no longer perform such kibudim in the Rebbe's presence.

SUNDAY, 15 ELUL

Although he stood many hours today at the Ohel, the Rebbe receives individuals at night for *yechidus*.

I heard that the schedule of the nights set for *yechidus* is the same as that of the Frieddiker Rebbe during his stay in Warsaw: Sunday night, Tuesday night, and Thursday night. It begins at 8:00, and ends when the last visitor leaves. Tonight's final *yechidus* concluded at 2:30 a.m.

Over the course of the night, we attempted to catch some tidbits from *yechidusen*. I succeeded in hearing about Hatomim Emmanuel Althaus's *yechidus*. His father, Reb Shmuel Betzalel Althaus, is close to the Rebbe's family, and currently lives in Australia. Emmanuel was a young child when the Rebbe visited Paris in 5707.³

He related that when he entered the room, the Rebbe told him "*Shalom aleichem*"—something quite rare. The Rebbe also instructed him to get settled in *yeshiva*, as well as to give *tzedaka* tomorrow for his birthday, being that he hadn't given today. At some

point during the *yechidus* the Rebbe told him, "Why are you so downcast? The Althauses never relished such things..."

WEDNESDAY, CHAI ELUL

Upon the Rebbe's return from the Ohel today, Rabbi Hodakov entered his holy room with several *sefarim*. The rumor is that these *sefarim* are from the great Tunisian *chachamim*, and arrived here recently (see below). After leaving the Rebbe's room, Rabbi Hodakov was called back inside, and he rushed in.

The Rebbe didn't leave for home until twelve o'clock a.m. I noticed that all the *mazkirim* wait until the Rebbe's departure for the night, aside for *yechidus* nights, when there's a rotation for escorting visitors in and out of the Rebbe's room.

THURSDAY, 19 ELUL

After arriving at 770 in the morning, the Rebbe proceeded to the *zal* for *krias haTorah*.

Rabbi Simcha Zirkind, as well as others who hadn't yet *bentched Gomel*, were called to the Torah. (Rabbi Zirkind is one of the *shluchim* in Tunisia, and rumor has it that he's the one who brought the *sefarim* from there.) The Rebbe motioned that Rabbi Zirkind should also be honored with *hagbah*, and someone else with *gelila*.

FRIDAY, 20 ELUL

When the Rebbe arrived at 770 in the afternoon, he stopped at the threshold and conversed with Reb Binyomin Gorodetzky (the Lubavitch representative in Europe, North Africa, and Eretz Yisrael).



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SHABBOS SELICHOS, 21 ELUL

As the Rebbe entered the shul for *shacharis*, he removed a Chumash that was sitting atop a Tanya, handing it to Reb Zalman Duchman, who was standing nearby.

During the *haftarah* the Rebbe wept profusely, pausing three times in the middle. The emotion in the air was palpable, and it was clear that the Rebbe was stifling further tears.

At 'Hu Elokeinu,' the Rebbe motioned for the crowd to sing, encouraging them to assist the *chazzan* in his rendition as well.

At davening's end, the Rebbe didn't wait for the *gabbai* to announce when *mincha* would be, this indicating that there would be a *farbrengen*.

At 1:40, the Rebbe entered the *farbrengen*, proceeding to the first *sicha* without first making *kiddush*. The Rebbe discussed the *parsha* of the week, mentioning the *possuk* "והי' כי תבא אל הארץ," deducing practical implications in *avodas Hashem*. Following the *sicha*, Reb Yitzchok Noach (Itche) Rivkin turned to the Rebbe and exclaimed: "*Lchaim* that Hashem should help the Russian Jews leave [the U.S.S.R.]" The Rebbe answered "Amen," adding: "Included in every *tefillah* are the words '*v'meheira v'yameinu*'—no doubt you intended that your request be fulfilled speedily in our days, and abundantly."

The Rebbe then added that the Russian Jews should be released *b'chesed uv'rachamim*, with all their possessions, and as today's *haftarah* describes: "With their sons and daughters, their young and old."

The Rebbe suddenly turned to Reb Osher Sassonkin and said: "Reb Osher, why aren't you saying anything?" This was probably in continuation from last Shabbos, when Reb Osher said *lchaim* to the Rebbe, and requested a *bracha* for the Russian Jews.

Reb Osher rose from his place and requested a *bracha*. He then mustered the courage to propose: "Just as we complete the entire Tehillim every Shabbos mevorchim, let's do the same every Shabbos, to merit all the Jews in Russia."

Throughout Reb Osher's dialogue, the Rebbe smiled broadly. It's a great pleasure seeing the Rebbe smile; his face usually carries a serious expression.

The crowd began singing, at which point the Rebbe turned to Reb Yoske Perman from Kfar



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Chabad, asking with hand motions where his young son is. Reb Yoske ran to fetch him, and handed him *lchaim*. The Rebbe gazed at the boy after he drank the *lchaim*, and smilingly told his father, motioning as well, that the child can now go.

SELICHOS, 1:00 AM

An enormous crowd gathered for *selichos* at one one o'clock in the morning. Amongst the attendees are many Chassidim of other circles as well.

Great excitement, and even greater pushing, ensued, as all struggled to be close to the Rebbe.

As the pushing intensified, the *chazzan*, Reb Yosef (Yossel) Wineberg, began a heartfelt "*Ashrei yoshvei veisecha...*" In the middle of *selichos*, the Rebbe lifted his holy hand to cover his face; it seems the Rebbe was crying.

At the conclusion of *selichos*, the Rebbe motioned for "רחמנא דעני" to be sung. The vast crowd continued in joyous song until close to three o'clock a.m. The Rebbe himself left for home as soon as *selichos* ended.

In the middle of selichos, the Rebbe lifted his holy hand to cover his face; it seems the Rebbe was crying.

SUNDAY, 22 ELUL

As the Rebbe entered *mincha*, several beggars stood near the door. The Rebbe handed each of them several coins.

As the Rebbe tightened his *gartel* for *maariv*, he gazed at the famed Chossid Reb Mendel Futerfas, who had arrived together with his son and *anash* from England a mere few hours earlier.

The Rebbe recited Kaddish Yasom after *Aleinu*.⁴ He then opened a *sefer*, said Mishnayos, and recited Kaddish D'rabbanan.

TUESDAY, 24 ELUL

At 8:20 p.m. the Rebbe addressed the Jewish women's gathering taking place in the downstairs shul, holding the microphone in his hand. Two letters were presented to the Rebbe, after which he said a *sicha*. Following the *sicha*, the women handed the Rebbe *panim*, after which a lengthy queue of women formed, each approaching the Rebbe with requests; this went on for a long while. It was special to see how the Rebbe patiently answered each one of them in a detailed way, and gave them *brachos*.

After the event, the Rebbe returned to his room. A mere hour later, *yechidus* began, ending only much later. *Maariv* took place after all the *yechidusen* concluded. The Rebbe recited the *kaddeishim*.⁵

SHABBOS PARSHAS NITZAVIM, 28 ELUL

Following Friday night's davening, the crowd broke into a song. The Rebbe encouraged the singing, which led to lengthy singing and dancing.

In the morning, the Rebbe entered shul for Shabbos mevorchim Tehillim at 8:30 a.m., carrying a Tehillim Yahel-Or. The Rebbe recites Tehillim at a swift pace. Upon finishing (as the *minyán* was still up to *kapitel* 130), the Rebbe opened his *siddur* and said *korbanos*.

The *farbrengen* began at 1:40. The Rebbe addressed the crowd with two *sichos*, and a *maamar* beginning with the words "אתם נצבים." During the

maamar, Reb Binyomin Gorodetzky wasn't feeling well, and at the *maamar's* end, his father-in-law, the *mashpia* Reb Shmuel Levitin, approached the Rebbe to inform him of the situation. The Rebbe called for Dr. Seligson, and asked him to examine Reb Binyomin. The doctor did exactly as he was told, and reported back to the Rebbe that all is in order. The Rebbe determined: "He's a doctor, and if he says it's nothing—it's nothing..."

In middle of the *farbrengen*, Harav Nochum Trebnik presented a bottle of *mashke* from the Chassidim in Kfar Chabad to the Rebbe. The Rebbe responded: "They should be successful, and they should be able to exclaim, 'See the plants I have grown...'"

The Rebbe requested that the *niggun* "אין אדיר," traditionally sung by the Jews of North Africa, be sung, in addition to another *niggun*. The joy was phenomenal; we were literally jumping in the air!

One of the guests approached the Rebbe to receive *mashke*, but the Rebbe continued encouraging the crowd in their singing, turning to him only afterward.

In the next *sicha*, the Rebbe requested that the yeshiva students be tested in their studies until Shemini Atzeres. The Rebbe added that this directive should be publicized via radio and can be said in his name; that so be done in all the yeshivos.

The Rebbe devoted an additional *sicha* to the Jews in Russia, and *bentched* them bountifully. The Rebbe then requested that his words be publicized, and that the leftover *mashke* from the *farbrengen* be distributed.

Following *mincha* upstairs, the Rebbe left for home. Children stood along the way, singing "*Hosheia Es Amecha*," which the Rebbe encouraged with his holy hands. As he was walking, someone approached the Rebbe and they conversed for a while. The conversation lasted the entire duration of the Rebbe's walk home. **1**

1. Likkutei Diburim vol. 1 p. 153.

2. For more on the seder of *chazara*, see *Retaining Chassidus (Part II)*, Derher Adar II 5776.

3. See *Yemei Melech* vol. 3 p. 975. See also *Total Transformation: The French Revolution*, Derher Shevat 5776.

4. For the *yahrtzeit* of Reb Meir Shlomo Yanovsky, the Rebbe's maternal grandfather. For more on this, see *Beis Harav: The Rebbe's Illustrious Lineage*, Derher Elul 5776.

5. Unknown for who.