



לע"נ
 הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' אברהם דוב
 בן הרב יהושע
 נלב"ע כ"ד טבת ה'תשע"ג
 ולע"נ
 זוגתו מרת ליבא בת ר' ברוך
 נלב"ע כ"א טבת ה'תשס"ד
 נדפס ע"י
 הרה"ת ר' אליהו וזוגתו מרת דליה
 ומשפחתם שיחיו
 העכט
 לאורך ימים ושנים טובות ובריאות
 ולהצלחה רבה ומופלגה בעבודת
 השליחות
 בגשמיות וברוחניות



RABBI PINNY LEW

Heaven On Earth

ROSH HASHANAH—YOM KIPPUR 5718



In honor of Tishrei—*chodesh hashvi'i*, we present the following account of Aseres Yemei Teshuvah 5718, sixty years ago, in the Rebbe's presence.

These stories were recorded by Reb Yitzchok (Itch'ke) Gansburg a"h, a *yungerman* at the time, who made the long trip from Eretz Yisroel to spend his first Tishrei with the Rebbe. The following are excerpts from letters he wrote during his stay and sent to his family back home.



EREV ROSH HASHANAH, 5718

The Rebbe's *shacharis minyan*, starting at precisely nine o'clock, went very swiftly. After davening, a bench was set up for a *minyan* of elder Chassidim, before whom the Rebbe recited *hataras nedarim*. Upon concluding, the Rebbe thanked the elder Chassidim, and wished them "a *gut yohr, shanah tovah u'mesukah*." The Rebbe then went to his room, reappearing at his door an hour later to receive *panim*.

After receiving the *pan kloli* from the elder Chassidim, the Rebbe responded with a short *bracha* and then left 770 for the Ohel.

By the time the Rebbe arrived at the Ohel, I had already left. However, I heard a detailed description of the Rebbe's conduct from others who were present:

The Rebbe knocks on the door (as if requesting permission to enter), waits a moment, and proceeds to enter, standing facing the *matzeiva*. The Rebbe recites Maane Lashon, stopping where it instructs to light a candle.

The Rebbe then proceeds with the holy *avodah* of reading *panim*, an activity that may last hours on end. Although the Rebbe's lips move intermittently, his voice isn't heard. This time the Rebbe stood for five hours.

ROSH HASHANAH NIGHT 5718

All the Rosh Hashanah *tefillos* took place in the *shalash*.¹ I managed to secure a spot from where I had a good view of the Rebbe during *tefillos*. A crowd of hundreds was gathered.

At precisely eight o'clock, the Rebbe entered carrying a Siddur Torah Ohr with a *maamar* between the pages, as well as a Tehillim Yahel-Ohr, and ascended the *bima*; immediately sitting down to recite Tehillim. Several minutes later, the Rebbe closed the Tehillim and opened the *siddur*. This was the *chazzan's* cue to begin *Shir Hamaalos*.

A split-second after davening's conclusion, a path cleared through which the Rebbe walked, while in a hushed tone wishing all "Gut Yom Tov, *lshana tova...*" The Rebbe remained in his room for a long while.

TEKIOS

I managed to obtain the spot that I had the night before [near where the Rebbe davens] for *shacharis* as well. Others procured places near the *bima* [where the Rebbe is called to *maftir* and blows *tekios*], some standing there for hours beforehand. I decided to stay where I was, as the saying goes, one can't "dance at both weddings..."

However, following *shacharis* I changed my mind and I approached the *bima* in an attempt to secure a prime spot, which, with great efforts, I managed to do.

It was announced several times in the Rebbe's name that the assembled should not be standing

atop chairs, but one can imagine how many heard this announcement... In fact, the Rebbe paused before *maftir*, proclaiming that everyone should descend from the benches, as this puts one's fulfilling the mitzvah of shofar into question. Obviously, this announcement had an effect.

I, for one, procured a prime vantage point from where I could see the Rebbe's holy face.

When the Rebbe entered for *shacharis* earlier in the day, he was accompanied by Rabbi Leibel Groner, who was carrying two parcels of *panim*; one the size of my tallis bag, and the other slightly smaller. Both had wrapping paper on the outside, and were tied with cords. When the Rebbe was called up for *maftir*, he brought these bundles along.

Upon reaching *maftir*, the Rebbe removed a kerchief from his pocket containing three *shofaros*, each individually wrapped in its own kerchief, and placed them on the *bima*. Although the Rebbe cried during the *haftarah*, it didn't at all compare to what took place during *tekios*.

Following the *haftarah*, the Rebbe spread his tallis over the packages, and after a short pause, intense wails could be heard emanating from under the Rebbe's tallis. Some were able to make out tunes of *niggunim*. After standing somewhat more upright, the Rebbe again unfurled the tallis over the *panim*. Uncovering his holy face, the Rebbe recited the *brachos*, and proceeded to blow a black-colored shofar that had almost no curves.

Following *tekios*, the Rebbe returned to his place, and *musaf* began.

Following the haftarah, the Rebbe spread his tallis over the packages, and after a short pause, intense wails could be heard emanating from under the tallis. Some were able to make out tones of niggunim.

TASHLICH

After *mincha*, the Chassidim left for *tashlich*. Before leaving, all lined up in an orderly fashion. I estimate that around four hundred individuals stood in pairs, with another five hundred who weren't assembled in such order. Add to that



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the many children who walked at the front. All patiently awaited the Rebbe's arrival. Rabbi Hodakov appeared and relayed to Reb Dovid Raskin (organizer of the procession) in the Rebbe's name, that upon its return to 770 as well, the parade should proceed in an orderly fashion, with spaces between each line.

Many passersby, including Jewish men and women from the surrounding neighborhoods, gathered to watch the spectacle. The Rebbe appeared, wearing a coat, accompanied by Rabbi Hodakov. Upon his arrival, the Rebbe motioned to intensify the singing, while approaching the front of the procession.

After marching in song for close to half an hour, we reached a brook located within a big park.² Many people had already been waiting there.

After *tashlich*, all proceeded to march back in song and dance. Despite all the admonitions, never-

ending pushing and shoving ensued, this due to the fact that everyone, myself included, desired to see the Rebbe the entire time.

Upon the crowd's arrival at 770, the Rebbe went straight to his room, but not before encouraging the singing and dancing. Once in the room, the Rebbe opened the window shades, observing the dancing for a lengthy period of time.

Maariv commenced at exactly eight o'clock, and the next morning's *shacharis* at precisely ten o'clock. The Rebbe and Rashag recited *kaddish* during *maariv*, rumor has it that it's for the *yahrtzeit* of Rebbetzin Sheina, the Frierdiker Rebbe's daughter.

ROSH HASHANAH FARBRENGEN

On the second day of Rosh Hashanah at forty-three, I was already waiting in my farbrengens-place. The Rebbe arrived at around six. After washing his hands near the table, the Rebbe recited



Hamotzi. The Rebbe then said *Hagafen* followed by responding to *l'chaim* from the crowd, after which he drank a bit of water, and *bentched*. (Being that it was Erev Shabbos, the *seuda* was rushed, in order to finish before *shkiah*.)

Reb Zalman Duchman then announced that the Rebbe would distribute *kos shel bracha*, and all should approach from the right side, without pushing. After the assembled returned to their places and sang a *niggun*, the Rebbe proceeded with the *maamar* "תקעו בחודש שופר". During the final portion of the *maamar*, tears could be seen in his holy eyes.

The Rebbe then spoke a *sicha* on the specialty of this year's *kvi'us*, with Shabbos immediately following Rosh Hashanah. The Rebbe concluded with wishes for a *shannah tovah*.

Kabbolas Shabbos took place immediately following the *farbrengen*, led by Reb Itche Churgin.

Once in the room, the Rebbe opened the window shades, observing the dancing for a lengthy period of time.

FARBRENGEN – SHABBOS SHUVA, 3 TISHREI

Upon the Rebbe's exit from shul following *musaf*, it was made known that there would be a *farbrengen*. Tables were immediately set with tablecloths, and I was glad I had a good spot.

At exactly one o'clock the Rebbe entered. As the assembled said *l'chaim*, the Rebbe answered "*l'chaim v'livracha*. With the pushing more intense than usual, I hung "between heaven and earth." (As an aside, I witnessed how Reb Pinye Althoiz listened to *tekios* while grabbing onto the ceiling, literally hanging between worlds...) The Rebbe motioned

that I should say *l'chaim*, which I did. My heart thumps as I recall this, my first time...

After the assembled sang the *niggun hachanah*, the Rebbe recited the *maamar* "דרשוה' בהמצאו." The Rebbe's holy eyes again filled with tears toward the *maamar's* end, without actually crying.

Between *sichos*, Reb Pinye Althoiz related a story to the Rebbe (about the fact that ש"ת stands for שבת as well as שמחת תורה), to which the Rebbe smiled broadly. It's a real pleasure to see the Rebbe smile.

Upon the Rebbe's exit at three o'clock, Reb Yoel Kahan immediately sat down at the table to begin a *chazara*.

YECHIDUS

I merited to enter the Rebbe's holy chamber today, Wednesday, 7 Tishrei 5718, at 8:50 p.m.

The Rebbe began receiving visitors for *yechidus* at eight p.m. Many people were gathered, quietly awaiting their turn in their Shabbos attire and *gartlach*. Amongst those gathered I observed a certain couple from Eretz Yisroel with their sick child. They are returning to their home in Tel Aviv tomorrow, and they came to receive a *bracha*. The Rebbe handed the boy a golden dollar coin as a gift, telling him that it will surely be allowed into Eretz Yisroel.

I was number fifteen in the queue. Reb Peretz Mochkin was the first to enter, followed by Reb Chaim Tashkenter from Paris, and others.

Upon entering *yechidus*, I recited *שהחיינו*, to which the Rebbe answered "Amen." The Rebbe asked whether my trip here was with the complete consent of my family, to which I answered that it definitely was. After taking the letter I had prepared beforehand, the Rebbe scanned it for five seconds, and proceeded to answer my queries.

At the *yechidus's* end, I expressed worry that my words would remain rhetoric alone, not accomplishing anything. To that, the Rebbe asked me: "Were you at the Ohel?" I responded that my body had been there. The Rebbe countered: "And the *neshamah* was certainly there, therefore, why wouldn't you be able to actually accomplish?!"

I then asked if it would be worthwhile to stay here a while to earn the costs of my travel expenses. The Rebbe answered that I should return home after Shabbos Bereishis.

The Rebbe ended off by saying: "There's no need for melancholy. And if a question arises, write to me. If necessary, you can also telephone the *mazkirus*. *Chasima ug'mar chasima tova.*"

8 TISHREI – ILL INDIVIDUALS

Lately, many people are under the weather, some even contracting fever, due to frigid temperatures.



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Some of the guests couldn't even make it to *yechidus* due to their health. I pray to Hashem that this should pass over me, although I do have a bit of a cold.

Reb Shmuel Levitin spoke with the Rebbe today about the sick *bochurim*, and what they should do about *tevilah* in the *mikveh* tomorrow, prior to Yom Kippur. The Rebbe responded: “*Tevilah* has two components: 1—*tevilah* for *taharah*; and 2—*tevilah* after *teshuvah*. Thus, for *taharah*, they should study two *perakim* of *Masechta Mikva'os*; and for *teshuvah*—they should *tovel* in the *mikveh*, as the Baal Shem Tov promised that one *tevilah* won't do harm. However, they shouldn't *tovel* more than once.”

The Rebbe then added: “The story³ of the Alter Rebbe on Simchas Torah is well known; here it should happen on Erev Yom Kippur.” (The Rebbe was referring to when the Alter Rebbe cured sick individuals on Simchas Torah.) The Rebbe continued, “If all the *bochurim* are gathered in one location, I'll visit them tomorrow and distribute *lekach*.”

The Rebbe then added: “The story of the Alter Rebbe on Simchas Torah is well known; here it should happen on Erev Yom Kippur.”

EREV YOM KIPPUR

The Rebbe stood at the entrance of his room, distributing *lekach* to all who stretched out their hands. A line was formed, and people entered from one side and exited on the other, to the *chatzer*. When my turn came, the Rebbe put a piece into my outstretched arm. He then tipped his ear—as if waiting to hear for whom I'm asking. Taking my cue, I requested for my father, my father-in-law, my brother, and my uncle. Each time I said a name, the Rebbe handed me a slice for that individual. When I got to my uncle, the Rebbe motioned, as if to ask “Which one?” I answered “Moshe ben Nechamah,” to which the Rebbe immediately responded “Dotlibov,” to which I responded affirmatively, after which he handed me a slice for him.

As all this transpired, I was putting more and more pieces into my left hand, pondering how I'll manage to remember which is for whom. At that moment, the Rebbe turned to me and said: “It doesn't matter if you mix, regardless everyone will receive what he needs. *A gut yohr*.”

Later in the day, a message was given through Rabbi Leibel Groner that whoever had not received *lekach* in the morning should line up, and they'll receive now. Several minutes later, the Rebbe's door opened again, and a small crowd passed by, each person receiving *lekach*. Upon seeing a girl stick the piece of *lekach* into her mouth, the Rebbe told her to recite the *bracha*, waiting until she finished.

At the distribution's end, the door was shut. Several minutes later, the Rebbe emerged. Trembling, the Rebbe closed his eyes and said “*A chasimah tovah; a g'mar chasimah tovah*; may it be drawn down in true and revealed good, below ten *tefachim*. Inasmuch as Yom Kippur is Shabbos, may there be protection from all damaging-forces. *A gut yohr*.”

The Rebbe then closed his door, and made his way to *mincha*.

Due to the fact that many were not present during the *bracha*, Reb Shmuel Levitin and Reb Yerachmiel Benyaminson requested of the Rebbe to repeat it. The Rebbe responded “It was already given.”

When the Rebbe was already wearing his tallis and *kittel*, prior to *Kol Nidrei*, the *bochurim* exclusively entered the Rebbe's room for a *bracha*. The Rebbe recited *birkas Kohanim*, in addition to some other words.

YOM KIPPUR NIGHT

Neiros neshamah were being sold in shul, and hundreds were lit in all its corners. At seven-thirty, the Rebbe entered with a stern look on his face, carrying a Siddur Torah Ohr and Tehillim. After reciting several *kapitlach* Tehillim, the Rebbe opened the *siddur*, this being the signal for *Kol Nidrei* to begin.

Before *Kol Nidrei*, the Rebbe was handed a small Torah; another was given to Rashag and I believe also to Reb Shmuel Levitin, as well as another to the *chazzan*, Reb Shmuel Zalmanov.

Following *maariv*, the crowd sat down to recite the entire Tehillim. The Rebbe remained, reciting it with the assembled.



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IN THE FRIERDIKER REBBE'S APARTMENT.

SHACHARIS, MUSAF

Shacharis began at ten o'clock. The Rebbe could be seen reciting Tehillim during *chazaras hashatz*. Additionally, it seemed that the Rebbe recited *Al Cheit* alone, not waiting for the *chazzan*.

Reb Yossel Wineberg led *musaf*. The Rebbe's eyes are trained on Reb Yossel as he recites והכהנים והעם. Obviously, a path is immediately cleared between the Rebbe and the *chazzan*. When the *minyán* recited the *Asara Harugei Malchus*, the Rebbe recited, without interruption, *kapitlach* 78 and 56.⁴ When the assembled sang *Ki Anu Amecha*, chanting the entire *piyut* in the famous tune that the Rebbe taught the previous year, the Rebbe tapped along on his *shtender*, signaling his satisfaction.

NE'ILAH

Davening ended at 4:05 p.m. followed by a break. The Rebbe entered the shul again at five-thirty, and both *mincha* and *ne'ilah* were recited hastily. The Rebbe received *Maftir Yonah*, breaking out in tears in middle.

Reb Shmuel Zalmanov was *chazzan* for *ne'ilah*. It's amazing how the Rebbe davens without displaying any outward expression, even during the special times, including now, for example.

One doesn't have the slightest clue as to what is transpiring in the higher realms...

The shofar was blown before *Tiskabel* of the final *Kaddish*, after which the Rebbe motioned for the Chassidim to begin singing the march, which they immediately did, with the Rebbe tapping along on his *shtender*. Suddenly, the Rebbe pulled his tallis lower over his holy face. He then picked it up, turning to face the assembled while clapping enthusiastically. The Rebbe then motioned for the shofar to be blown again.⁵

The Rebbe's hat was brought to him for *maariv*, after which he returned to his room.

MOTZOEI YOM KIPPUR

On motzoei Yom Kippur, I was invited to join the *seudah* in the Frierdiker Rebbe's apartment upstairs. At the table's head is the Frierdiker Rebbe's chair. The Rebbe entered the *seudah* after all were already settled in their seats.

The Rebbe entered carrying his siddur. After washing and sitting down, the Rebbe made *Hamotzi*, cut the challah, and distributed the pieces. The Rebbe dipped some of his challah in honey.

The Rebbe barely spoke during the *seudah*, aside from encouraging the attendees to speak. Upon the Rebbe's request, Reb Pinye Althoiz spoke and sang, in addition to Reb Shmuel Levitin. The Rebbe constantly glanced in the direction of the Frierdiker Rebbe's chair, even shedding a few tears, but in a very quiet manner.

For the second part of the *seudah*, *bochurim* and guests stood on the side to observe. The Rebbe, however, acted as if he didn't see them.

When the Rebbe left, they pounced on the *shirayim*. After spending a short while in his room, the Rebbe went home. On his way to the car, the Rebbe was approached by someone who had once studied in Tomchei Temimim in Lubavitch, and had since become quite distanced. The individual told the Rebbe: "Last year you gave me a small cup..." The Rebbe smiled, instructing one of the *bochurim* there to give him *l'chaim*. **1**

1. Today the rearmost portion of the big shul. See *The Heartbeat of Lubavitch, Part II*, A Chassidisher Derher Iyar 5775.
2. Brooklyn Botanical Gardens.
3. Likkutei Dibburim vol. 2 p. 486
4. See Otzar Minhagei Chabad Elul-Tishrei p. 229
5. Following the *minhag* to blow the shofar after the march. This was the standard practice in the later years, without blowing before the singing, and is what we follow today.