



לעבן מיט'ן רבי'ן

ר' שמואל ע"ה  
בן הרה"ח ר' פרץ ע"ה  
מאצקין  
גלב"ע כ"ד סיון ה'תשס"ב  
נדפס ע"י משפחתו שיחי



THE REBBE CONVERSES WITH REB ZALMON  
DURING HIS VISIT TO THE REBBE FOR SHAVUOS 5728.

RABBI PINNY LEW

# An Example From Manchester

SHAVUOS 5728



Reb Zalmon and Mrs. Roselyn Jaffee merited tremendous *kiruvim* from the Rebbe over the years. Beginning 5724, Reb Zalmon and his family would visit the Rebbe each year for the Yom Tov of Shavuos. Reb Zalmon wrote a detailed diary, in his unique style, of the time he spent in the Rebbe's presence and the Rebbe very much encouraged this endeavour. These would be published in his "My Encounter with the Rebbe" series (Today available in book form published by his son Reb Avrohom). Here we present excerpts of his visit to the Rebbe fifty years ago, Shavuos 5728.

## IMMEDIATE YECHIDUS

We arrived at 770 about 9:00 p.m. on Sivan 3, 5728 (May 30, 1968). I was told the Rebbe wanted to see me straight away, before Maariv. The Rebbe was still fasting. The Rebbe would fast whenever he visited his father-in-law's resting place - about three times a week.<sup>1</sup>

We had a half-hour *yechidus* this time. The Rebbe promised that we would have *yechidus* two more times during this visit, "one would be a short one and another a long one." The Rebbe said that this *yechidus*, before Shavuos, the holiday

celebrating the giving of the Torah, was “in the *midbar* (desert); the others would be after *kabolas haTorah* (giving of the Torah).”

(The Rebbe insisted on shaking hands with me during this *yechidus*!)

I told the Rebbe that I was not prepared to have a *yechidus* so soon after arrival.

The Rebbe asked me [about my children and grandchildren] “Is Shmuel here? Hindy? Their children? Avrohom? I was happy to notify the Rebbe that they were indeed all here.

### FIRST NIGHT OF SHAVUOS

This year, on the first night of Shavuos, we started the Yom Tov dinner [in the Frieddiker Rebbe’s apartment] around 10:00. There were 12 people present on this occasion. The meal started with the usual somber and quiet, that lasted for about ten minutes. There was never any talking or singing until the fish was served and eaten. I then asked the Rebbe if I may sing a niggun.

The Rebbe said “Of course, but first you need to say *l’chaim*.”

After saying a *l’chaim*, I started the old Lubavitcher niggun of “*ach lelokim*.” After the next course, we sang “*hinei ma tov*” and finally “*Uforatzto*.” I then remarked that I was pleased that at last, even at 770, we were having “*Uforatzto*.”

The Rebbe answered “It is only a *hascholo* (beginning).”

### FIRST DAY OF SHAVUOS

On the first day of Shavuos, before luncheon, we partook of the customary *milchig kiddush*. After a one hour break, we sat down—with the Rebbe, too—for Yom Tov lunch. A very happy atmosphere prevailed and the Rebbe said many words of Torah.

I mentioned that the Rebbe always stresses that Rashi wrote his commentary, so that even a five year old would understand. I told the Rebbe I would like to ask a question, even though my question may be “*ah narishe shaileh*” (a silly question).

The Rashi from this week’s parsha (Nosso 87:89), explains a few different points from the *posuk*, but he does not do so in the order of the verse, which is Rashi’s usual way. The Rebbe said, “The *farbrengen* of Shavuos comes before parshas Nosso, if I answer your question now, I too will be answering out of order!”

*The Rebbe said, “The farbrengen of Shavuos comes before parshas Nosso, if I answer your question now, I too will be answering out of order!”*

Today, the Rebbe again asked me to sing a niggun. I said that I wanted to sing “*al achas*,” but I did not know it properly. The Rebbe suggested that I ask Hendel Liberman (whom we all called Fetter—uncle—Hendel) to sing it. Fetter Hendel was delighted, but he did not sing the words, only the tune.

The Rebbe interrupted him, “No words? Give him a *siddur*!”

So Fetter Hendel started again, and once more, without the words, although he now held a *siddur* in his hands.

I then spoke about those who don’t listen to the Rebbe and then wonder why things are not going the way they should. I connected it with an old Jewish joke about a *ganef* (thief) who, without knowing whose house he was breaking into, came through the chimney of his Rabbi’s house in the middle of the night. The Rabbi was learning, and he looked up startled and asked, “What are you doing here, Yankel?”

Yankel answered, “Rebbe, I need to ask you a *shaileh* (question).”

“Nu!” (ask).

“*Vi azoi kricht men arois fun danent?*” (How does one scramble out of here?)

The Rebbe laughed and agreed with me, and said “Too many have the *teretz* before the *shaileh* (the answer before the question).”



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## SECOND NIGHT OF SHAVUOS

During the meal on the second night of Yom Tov, I related to everyone how in England, the name of Lubavitch and the Rebbe was becoming very well known.

The Rebbe said “We need to start thinking of establishing Lubavitch in an additional city.”

The Rebbe asked about our financial difficulties in England and then he said to me, “Since people think you are rich, in the end you will indeed become rich!”

The best and most wonderful moment was when I quoted someone who had stated to me that if you wanted to erect a new building, you just get the money and put it up! “Anyone,” I answered, “can put up a building with money. The *kuntz* (trick) is to put it up without money.”

Rashag then interposed, “How did you build then?”

“With the Rebbe and his *brochos*,” I replied.

What a precious moment it was! All were delighted with this answer, because it pointed out that one had to do what the Rebbe instructed and it would be crowned with success.

Incidentally, if I, personally, would have always done what the Rebbe told me to do, I would have had many great successes; I was good at telling others to take heed of the Rebbe’s advice.

At the subsequent farbrengen, Rashag approached the Rebbe for a *brocha* for his yeshiva. The Rebbe told him to follow the example of Manchester!

## YECHIDUS

After Shavuos we had our *yechidus*. Upon entering, the Rebbe rose and asked [my wife] Roselyn to be seated. She sat, with paper and pencil in her hand, ready to write down the vital points that would arise but after one and a half hours of our *yechidus*, Roselyn had written “the Rebbe said that the farbrengen was made especially for me.” That was all she had written down!

We did enjoy a wonderful time with our Rebbe, where our communal and personal affairs were discussed and we got plenty of helpful and friendly advice.

## SHABBOS NOSSO FARBRENGEN

On Shabbos Parshas Nasso, 12 Sivan, we were privileged to a farbrengen. During this farbrengen,

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the Rebbe did talk about that Rashi question I had asked during the Shavuos meals.<sup>2</sup> During the course of the farbrengen, the Rebbe distributed some bottles of mashke to various participants.

Then the Rebbe called me up to the top table and handed me his full tray of cake saying “this is commission for the Rashi”.

I asked the Rebbe, “What should I do with it?” “*Zei vellen dir vaizen vos tzu ton mit dem*” (they will show you what to do with it), said the Rebbe, looking at the yeshiva boys. I was practically mobbed by the yeshiva boys and just managed to salvage a small piece of cake for my wife!

## FORMALLY DEMANDING A FARBRENGEN

On Tuesday, 15 Sivan, the Rebbe went to the Ohel. After the Rebbe got back we all davened Maariv, after which the Rebbe left 770 for home. Roselyn and I met the Rebbe in the street. The Rebbe touched his hat to Roselyn and asked her if she enjoyed Yom Tov in spite of my leaving her for the meals at the Rebbe’s table, to which Roselyn said, “Yes.”

I then thanked the Rebbe for the previous Shabbos farbrengen, and told the Rebbe it was most enjoyable. The Rebbe replied, “It was my pleasure.” Always the perfect gentleman is our Rebbe.

Since I have been coming to 770, beginning in 5719 (1959), there has been a farbrengen on almost every Shabbos I have been present. Please G-d, I hope this will continue. I was well aware that there was not meant to be a farbrengen on the upcoming Shabbos [B’haaloscha], which was the last Shabbos of our stay in New York this year. If one wants something, then one must ask for it. So, I then requested another farbrengen for the next Shabbos.

“Have a *ru’eker* (restful) Shabbos,” said the Rebbe. There is no farbrengen scheduled for this Shabbos. So there it was. It seemed quite clear, no farbrengen, definitely no.

Many of the yeshiva boys were telling me that they want a farbrengen; didn’t we all!



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As this will also be my last Shabbos with the Rebbe for the next twelve months, I must take home enough to last until next Shavuot! Additionally, some of my friends on the charter flight have come here for their first and only time. They deserve and need another farbrengen too. On the other hand, I really should have *rachmonus* (pity) on the Rebbe. I was really stumped! But, a chossid who wants to hear a word of Torah from his Rebbe, must not have *rachmonus*.

I was meant to go into *yechidus* Thursday night, and I figured it would be easier to ask the Rebbe personally and not through a written correspondence. However, Rabbi Chodakov begged me to postpone my *yechidus* until Sunday night. "Too many people, better for the office, better for the other people and better for the Rebbe." I told Rabbi Chodakov that I wanted to talk to the Rebbe about a farbrengen and Sunday would be too late. He suggested that I indeed write this to the Rebbe.

A lengthy correspondence ensued (not through the post office), in which I pointed out that I was resting every day while in New York and the farbrengen was the only time I could hear the Rebbe saying a word of Torah. Besides which, all those people had come from England especially to hear the Rebbe. Two farbrengens, on Shavuot and the following Shabbos, were not enough. I wrote to the Rebbe that I had stayed in New York especially for this. I could have just as well gone home last week.

*"...They will show you what to do with it," said the Rebbe, looking at the yeshiva boys.*

I don't need rest on Shabbos. I rest all week while in New York.

Meanwhile, the Rebbe kept indicating that there would not be a farbrengen. So much so that Rabbi Chodakov, when called by the yeshiva in Newark, New Jersey, told them not to come in for this Shabbos as there would not be a farbrengen.

By Friday afternoon there was still no change. The Rebbe, it seemed, would not relent. There was definitely not going to be a farbrengen.

On Friday night, the Rebbe left 770 at 11:30! Which is extremely late. "Pundits" close at hand say that when the Rebbe goes home late on Friday night, there is a good chance of a farbrengen the following day.

On Shabbos morning, when the Rebbe came down for Shacharis, he called over Rabbi Zalman Duchman and showed him a Rashi and said he would be speaking on that Rashi at the farbrengen this afternoon.

So in the end we felt very lucky to have a farbrengen on this Shabbos. **T**

1. The Rebbe did drink, as is the custom. See *Igros Kodesh Admur HaRayatz* vol. 6, p. 282, fn.
2. See *Toras Menachem*



THE REBBE GREETs REB ZALMON'S GRANDSON, YOSSl LEW.

RABBI PINNY LEW