



לעבן מיט'ן רבין



5734, V. SCHILDKRAUT VIA JEM 108458

In honor of
Mordechai Leib ben Yael
For a full and speedy recovery
Refuah shleima ukrova

The Soldier and His Helmet

IYAR 5734*



We present the following account of the month of Iyar 5734* in the Rebbe's presence, based on the diary of Reb Yitzchok Meir Sosover, a *bochur* at the time. The month ended with a terrible tragedy in Ma'alot, Eretz Yisroel which the Rebbe addressed, and after which the Rebbe bolstered the five existing *mitvzoim*.

TUESDAY, ROSH CHODESH IYAR

The outgoing *kvutza* group was notified that instead of *yechidus klalis*, they would be going by the Rebbe in *Gan Eden Hatachton* before their departure tomorrow. At 6:00 p.m. it was announced

that because the Rebbe would be leaving to the Ohel tomorrow, they would be passing by the Rebbe beforehand, at 12:30.

Later at night the Rebbe asked Rabbi Krinsky if the entire *kvutza* was notified that it would be at 12:30 the following day. When Rabbi Groner handed in the members of the *kvutza's panim*, the Rebbe again asked if everyone was notified.

WEDNESDAY, BEIS IYAR, TIFERES SHEB'TIFERES

At 1:05 p.m. the *kvutza bochurim* were brought into *Gan Eden Hatachton*. The Rebbe blessed them:

“Travel in good health, may it be an *aliya* both *b’gashmius uv’ruchnius*. Bring good tidings there, and send good tidings back here, and the main thing—fulfill all that’s written in the *michtav klali* and its addition.”

The Rebbe then handed each one of the *bochurim* a copy of the *michtav klali* from Yud-Aleph Nissan, which included an addition addressed to the *kvutza*, and three dollars. Before they began leaving, the Rebbe added: “The money should be given to *tzedakah*.” After they had left, the Rebbe conversed with Reb Shloime Maidanchik, who was also travelling to Eretz Yisroel. At 3:30, the Rebbe left for the Ohel.

SUNDAY, 6 IYAR

At 3:15, the Rebbe davened Mincha in the large *zal*, to accommodate a group of visitors that came to see the Rebbe. During the last *kaddish*, the Rebbe gazed at all the guests.

MONDAY, 7 IYAR, BAHAB FAST

Maariv tonight was early, at 8:30, because the Rebbe was fasting Bahab.¹

The artist Reb Hendel Lieberman was standing near the Rebbe’s door at around 11:30 p.m. The Rebbe asked him about his work, and he replied that he’s currently doing some for Oholei Torah. The Rebbe then asked why he isn’t doing projects for the yeshiva in Miami,² to which he replied that it’s too difficult there. The Rebbe then wished him “*bracha v’hatzlacha*.”

FRIDAY, 11 IYAR

On the way to his room at 10:15 a.m., the Rebbe glanced into the *zal*. I was practically the only one in the room.

MOTZEI SHABBOS PARSHAS ACHAREI-KEDOSHIM, 13 IYAR

At Maariv, the Rebbe recited *kaddish yasom* after Aleinu, said the *mishnayos*, and again recited *kaddish*. This was immediately followed by Kiddush Levana. The crowd was large, with intense pushing. At one point, the Rebbe made a hand-motion toward the *bochurim*. After reciting *kaddish yasom* following Aleinu, the Rebbe shook the corners of his tallis katan, and proclaimed “*A gut chodesh*.”

Before leaving, the Rebbe turned toward the crowd and exclaimed (to Reb Meir Harlig): “People

are standing without uttering a word [of Kiddush Levana]! Was there a *minyán* that recited Kiddush Levana? Everything becomes a ceremony; people come out to be *mekadesh* the *levana* and are completely silent!”

SUNDAY, 13 IYAR

Today is the *yahrtzeit* of the Rebbe’s brother, Reb Yisroel Arye Leib. Someone is davening at the *amud* for the *yahrtzeit*. At “*Ashrei - Uva L’Tziyon*” the Rebbe entered Shacharis and recited all the *kaddeishim*.

MONDAY, 14 IYAR, BAHAB FAST

The Rebbe entered Mincha at 3:15. As the Rebbe exited the *zal*, Reb Itche Churgin, who is being hospitalized today, was standing at the door. The Rebbe gave him a pocket-sized siddur and blessed him.

WEDNESDAY, 16 IYAR

This morning, two *bochurim* submitted *tzetlach* to the Rebbe. One of them received the following answer within 10 minutes:





THE REBBE READS A NOTE DURING YECHIDUS FOLLOWING A SICHU TO N'SHEI U'BNOS CHABAD, ELUL 5730.

“ת”ח ת”ח ואזכיר עה”צ [על הצינין] ומצו”ב [ומצורף בזה] המכתב כללי דל”ג בעומר.”

“Many thanks, I will mention it at the Ohel. Enclosed is the *michtav klali* for Lag Ba’omer.” (The *michtav klali*³ was still at the printer then, and he received an advance copy.)

Despite the *michtav klali* not being published yet, the Rebbe instructed *mazkirus* to also give an advance copy to Tzvi Lieder, who is leaving town this afternoon. As he was entering Maariv, the Rebbe handed tzedakah to a pauper standing at the door.

THURSDAY, 17 IYAR

The Rebbe entered the *zal* for *krias haTorah* at 10:15. Upon exiting, the Rebbe handed several coins to a tzedakah collector standing at the door (three American coins and four Canadian).

FRIDAY NIGHT, 19 IYAR

Following Kabbalas Shabbos, the Rebbe left 770 and headed home via Kingston and Union (as opposed to the usual route via Brooklyn). On the way, the Rebbe gazed at the Tzach building, where the Kinus N’shei Chabad was taking place. Presumably that is why the Rebbe took this route.

SHABBOS PARSHAS EMOR, 19 IYAR

The Rebbe began leaving Shacharis before the *gabbai* announced what time Mincha would be, thus signalling that there would be a farbrengen today. During the farbrengen, the Rebbe elaborated on the *michtav klali*’s message regarding *kvius ittim l’Torah*, as we learn from Rashbi, whose Torah was his trade. The Rebbe also spoke at great length negating

machlokes. Two *sichos* were dedicated to explaining the passage in Pirkei Avos⁴ “...כנסיה שהיא לשם” “שמים” which the Rebbe connected to the ongoing Kinus N’shei Chabad.

During one of the *sichos* the Rebbe mentioned that *halacha* clearly states that it is forbidden to bite one’s nails on Shabbos. [It seems one of the attendees was biting his nails.] Following one of the *sichos*, the Rebbe instructed the Russian immigrants to say *l’chaim*. The Rebbe then summoned Reb Moshe Friedman who had emigrated from Russia to Nachlas Har Chabad, poured him a *l’chaim*, and handed him a bottle of *mashke*. The farbrengen was quite joyous, with the Rebbe often encouraging the singing and lasted longer than usual, from 1:30 to 6:00.

The Rebbe entered Maariv at 8:40. After Maariv, *chazzara* took place. Reb Yoel had a difficult time *chazzering* because he was very hoarse.

SUNDAY, 20 IYAR

At 7:40 p.m., Rabbi Hodakov knocked on the Rebbe’s door. Several minutes later, the Rebbe joined the Kinus N’shei Chabad in the big shul, via the stairs in the hallway. The *sicha* was followed by a *yechidus* of sorts for out-of-town women. Each woman passed by the Rebbe—who was sitting in his place—and handed him their note. The Rebbe looked at each woman, taking their notes and reading them a bit (with reading glasses at times), and then placing them in a bag. On some of the pages the Rebbe made notations, some had just a few marks, others had several lines.

Yechidus was held tonight, and ended at 2:00 a.m. The Rebbe then came out to daven Maariv.

MONDAY, 21 IYAR

The Rebbe returned from his house to 770 at 7:00 p.m. On the way into his room, the Rebbe was approached by Reb Itche Churgin, to whom he told that *kabbalas haTorah* must be in a joyous fashion.

WEDNESDAY, 23 IYAR

The Rebbe entered Mincha at 3:30 (instead of the regular time of 3:15). Some are speculating that the delay was due to what took place in Ma’alot. (Some five hours earlier, a number of Yidden were massacred, *r”l*, and many more injured, during a terrorist attack in the Netiv Meir school in Ma’alot, Eretz Yisroel.)

THURSDAY, 24 IYAR

Everyone is discussing the news coming in from Eretz Yisroel. Rumor has it that the Rebbe had instructed that the *mezuzos* of the school where the children studied be checked, only to be found *possul*.

Yechidus took place tonight. In between *yechidusen* the Rebbe davened Maariv, at 11:30. Following Maariv, the Rebbe held *yechidus* with an Israeli Phantom pilot who was downed and captured in the War of Attrition, and released after the Yom Kippur War. He left immediately thereafter and no one managed to ask him about the *yechidus*.

Someone asked the Rebbe in *yechidus* tonight what he should be *misbonen* on before davening—a set *inyan* in Chassidus, or whatever he’s learning at the time. The Rebbe answered with the latter.

An Israeli *bochur* who went in to *yechidus* mentioned to the Rebbe that he wants to get married. The Rebbe responded (amongst other things): “You want to get married, yet you don’t possess life’s foundation... You have a choice to either stay here and receive guidance from the *hanhala* for your daily *seder*, and if you don’t desire this—pack your bags and return to Eretz Yisroel...”

SHABBOS PARSHAS BEHAR-BECHUKOSAI, 26 IYAR

The Rebbe began the *farbrengen* invoking the *halacha* that “*mefakchin al tzarchei tzibur b’Shabbos*”—communal matters should be discussed on Shabbos,⁵ in order to remedy whatever necessary. The Rebbe went on to quote the Rambam’s words⁶ that when a misfortune occurs, one shouldn’t say that what happened was merely a chance occurrence but rather in such a situation, we must examine our own deeds, and see where we can improve.

The Rebbe began by lamenting the “*Mihu Yehudi*” decree, “first they register non-Jews as Yidden, then—one *aveira* leads to another...” Then the Rebbe continued and spoke at length that the rabbanim must emphasize and ensure that every house has a kosher *mezuzah*, its idea being “ה' ישמר ובוואך צאתך ובוואך” (Hashem will guard your going out and your coming in).⁷ “And this is not exclusive for Lubavitch; it’s a *possuk* in Torah.”

The Rebbe noted that at times, *hashgacha pratit* is necessary in order to understand the importance of *mezuzah*. The Rebbe continued: “Throughout the summer I spoke extensively about *mitvza mezuzah*,



without knowing what was pushing me so much about this, and why I mentioned that this is a matter of 'שומר דלתות ישראל,' and so on. Now we're seeing that all that happened is related to *mitvza mezuzah*."

The Rebbe divulged: "They contacted me from Tzfas—where the children live—to be mentioned at the Ohel and to be davened for. They then told me that they checked the school's *mezuzos*, and 17 were found *possul*, the same number of those murdered.⁸ The following day I was updated that there were 20 casualties, which astonished me. I asked them to check once more, and they found four additional rooms, two of the *mezuzos* were *possul* and the other two were questionably *possul*..."

SUNDAY, 27 IYAR

A *bochur* who is travelling to Eretz Yisroel wrote to the Rebbe that he wants to learn in *kolel* there. The Rebbe replied: "Why are you writing to me that you want to learn in *kolel* in Eretz Yisroel, while here—you didn't learn..."

In subsequent farbrengens, the Rebbe continued to address the tragic massacre and what our response ought to be. The Rebbe explained that it wasn't Mihu Yehudi, or the lack of kosher mezuzos that caused it, but rather, like a soldier who wears a helmet for

protection, mitzvas tefillin, mezuzah, as well as learning Torah and giving tzedakah and abolishing the g'zeira of Mihu Yehudi are the "armor" Hashem protects us with.

*The Rebbe vigorously encouraged the mitvzoim, stressing that in addition to all their other merits, they can prevent such a tragedy from occurring again, ch"v. It was during this period that the now iconic "mitzvah tanks" first began. For more on this, see Tanks Against Assimilation, Derher Tammuz 5776. **T***

1. Bahab stands for "beis, hei, beis," (Monday, Thursday, Monday) and refers to a series of fasts that follow Pesach and Sukkos, in the months of Iyar and Cheshvan. See Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch *siman* 492. The Rebbe explained (Hisvaaduyos 5748 pp. 257-260) that these days, most Yidden don't fast, because we are closer to the time of Moshiach. The Rebbe clarified, however, that those who do fast—*tavo aleihem bracha*, and they should continue doing so. Indeed, the Rebbe would fast Bahab, from before the *nesius*.
2. He would spend time in Miami during the winter.
3. Printed in Igros Kodesh vol. 29 p. 157.
4. 4:11
5. See Shabbos 150a
6. Hilchos Taaniyos 1:3
7. Tehillim 121:8
8. See Igros Kodesh vol. 29 p. 162.



CIRCA 5730S