

A Chassidisher **Derher**

א חסידישער דערהער



שנת
הקולאת
העם



TISHREI 5783
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מוקדש לחיזוק ההתקשרות
לכ"ק אדמו"ר

נדפס ע"י
הרה"ת ר' צבי אלימלך וזוגתו מרת חי' מושקא שיחיו
שפאלטר

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Rabbi Tzvi Altein

Publisher

Rabbi Yossi Kamman

Editor in Chief

Rabbi Mendel Jacobs

Director of Operations

Rabbi Levi Kesselman

Managing Editor

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Administrator

Rabbi Levi Weg

Circulation and Marketing

Rabbi Mendy Shishler

Photo Research/Editing

Rabbi Avremi Browd

Editors

Rabbi Mendel Alperowitz

Rabbi Dovid Olidort

Copy Editor

Rabbi Eliezer Zalmanov

Design

Rabbi Mendel Bergstein

Contributors

Rabbi Yanky Bell • Rabbi Yossi Bendet • Rabbi Koppel Chaiton • Rabbi Avrohom Moshe Dyce • Rabbi Tzemach Feller
Rabbi Mendy Goldberg • Rabbi Levi Gourarie • Rabbi Levi Greenberg • Rabbi Menachem Mendel Greenberg
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has been made possible

לזכות
הרה"ת ר' שלום וזוגתו מרת שרה
וילדיהם ישראל, ריסא, חי' מושקא,
אמונה מלכה, יעקב יהודה, ולאה שיחיו
אייזיקוביץ

ולזכרון הצדקנית הרבנית
מרת חנה ע"ה
שניאורסאהן
בת הרה"ג הרה"ח ר' מאיר שלמה ע"ה
אמו של ב"ק אדמו"ר
לרגל היארצייט-הילולא ו' תשרי



THE KING WILL TEACH TORAH

The new year is upon us, and a special year it is—“*Shnas Hakhel*,” a year when the Yidden would gather in the *Beis Hamikdash* to hear the Torah from the mouth of the king and be inspired to strengthen themselves in *yiras Hashem*. The Rebbe famously teaches that the mitzvah of Hakhel, although not practiced today in the primal way, is still very much applicable and should be acted on by all of us throughout the year.

In the original *pessukim* that teach us about Hakhel, Moshe Rabbeinu calls together the leaders and elders of the people and informs them about the mitzvah to gather the people once every seven years:

“בבוא כל ישראל לראות את פני ה' אלהיך במקום אשר יבחר תקרא את התורה הזאת נגד כל ישראל...”

“When all the Jewish people come to appear before Hashem in the place he will choose, **you** should read this Torah in front of all the Jewish people...”

The Rebbe points out that the word “תקרא—you should read” is written singular, even though as noted, Moshe Rabbeinu was talking to a group of leaders and elders. Therefore, Rashi comments on the word “תקרא” and says that it was only the king who would read from the Torah, and everyone else would listen.



ABOUT THE COVER:

During the Hakhel year of 5748, the Rebbe deviated from the previous Lubavitch minhag and held together all four minim throughout the entire Hallel, instead of just the lulav. The Rebbe explained that to emphasize how important Hakhel is and its theme of Jewish unity, he wished to hold all four minim—representative of all four types of Yidden—together throughout the entire Hallel.

More specifically: the king of whom Moshe Rabbeinu speaks is actually Yehoshua, the next leader of the people. Just a few *pessukim* earlier, Moshe Rabbeinu speaks directly to Yehoshua and tells him to be strong, “For you will come with these people into the land and give it to them as an inheritance...” We can therefore assume that when Moshe Rabbeinu now reverts back to singular form, he is again speaking to Yehoshua, saying that he should read from the Torah at the Hakhel ceremony.

The Rebbe derives an incredible lesson for us from these *pessukim*:

The Yidden were still in the desert at the time that this mitzvah was given. Moshe Rabbeinu is telling them that in order to safely exit the desert, whether a geographical desert or a spiritual desert devoid of *kedusha*, they must base their journey on Torah study. Only then will we be successful in reaching our destination of *Eretz Hakodesh—Eretz Yisroel*.

But that’s not enough. You also need to connect yourself with the Rebbe of your time, and learn Torah specifically from him. The Rebbe’s Torah will have an everlasting effect on the one who hears it from him. You may have heard this Torah from your Rebbe a full *shemita*-cycle ago, or perhaps several *shemita*-

cycles ago. You may have heard a vort from the Rebbe Rashab or the [Friediker] Rebbe many years ago. But as Chassidim say, “א חסידישער ווארט גייט ניט פארפאלן”—a *vort* of Chassidus will ultimately never get lost.” Eventually, the *vort* will percolate and penetrate, until it has the desired effect.¹

As we stand at the threshold of a Shnas Hakhel, it’s an opportune time to commit to studying the Rebbe’s Torah diligently, and to allow his holy words inside ourselves to effect real change. And more importantly, to listen to the Torah from the Rebbe, our *melech*, himself, on audio and video recordings, bringing the experience of Hakhel to us today in the most authentic way.

And let us hope that with Hashem’s help this year we will indeed fulfill the mitzvah of Hakhel in the original sense, with the Melech Hamoshiach in the *Beis Hamikdash*—and be reunited with the Rebbe, along with all of the Jewish people:

קהל גדול ישובו הנה!
בברכת כתיבה וחתימה טובה לשנה טובה ומתוקה,

The Editors

י"א אלול ה'תשפ"ב
מאה ועשרים שנה

1. Shabbos Parshas Nitzavim-Vayelech 5733.



Kinusei Hakhel

Hakhel is clearly no regular *mitvza*. Unlike other *mitvzoim*, like *mitvza tefillin*, which entail encouraging a single person to do a mitzvah, the focus of *hakhel* is to arrange communal gatherings and influence many people at a time. It can feel intimidating to get involved in these activities. “I’m not a leader, I’m not an activist, I’m not a rabbi, I’m not a *mashpia*.” It’s easy to feel like *mitvza hakhel* is out of one’s league.

The Rebbe acknowledged this feeling, yet strongly opposed the notion. Every person is a leader on some level, the Rebbe said, and everyone can influence others. Some people have more and some have less,

but everyone has some influence and can gather at least a few people.¹

Kinusim should therefore be arranged by everyone; men, women and children.

The king was the one who would gather the Jewish people, and every person is a “king” and a leader in his or her own way.²

“This is within the capability of every single man and woman,” the Rebbe said. “[There are] those that think they are only ‘small people’ and can’t really do much. However, [this mindset is wrong, because] only the world’s concealment of holiness can bring someone to think this way! The truth of the matter is that every

person was given the highest and most amazing *kochos!*”

Reach out to everyone you know—family, friends, acquaintances, neighbors, business associates, classmates, and on and on—and bring them together for a *kinus hakhel*. Even children should make *kinusim* for their friends. This is especially incumbent upon the “kings,” those with status in their circles—a *rav* in his community, an educator in his classroom, and a father in his family.³

When should they be held?

One should find every opportunity possible to make a *kinus hakhel*, and even more so on special days like Shabbos and Yom Tov. [On Vov



Tishrei, the Rebbe listed special times to make *kinusei hakhel*, mentioning almost every day from the day he was speaking until the end of Tishrei: Aseres Yemei Teshuvah, Yom Kippur, the four days between Yom Kippur and Sukkos, Sukkos, Chol Hamoed, and Shemini Atzeres and Simchas Torah. The Rebbe wanted *kinusei hakhel* to be held at every opportunity.⁴

Where should they be held?

In a “*Beis Hamikdash*”—in an atmosphere of holiness.⁵ Even better if it is done in an actual holy place, like a shul, *beis midrash*, etc.⁶ The main point is to arrange it in the right time and setting so that the influence and inspiration will be at its fullest.⁷ The *kinusei hakhel* can also be done virtually—over the telephone and the like—in order to reach all Jews, no matter how far they are.⁸

What should I speak about?

Quite simply, speak from the heart and inspire the participants to engage

in Torah and *mitzvos*. No audience is the same, so find the appropriate words that will have an effect on your specific crowd.⁹ Certain things are particularly effective; for example, focus on the message of the *pesukim* that were read during *hakhel*.¹⁰

Describe *hakhel* in the *Beis Hamikdash*, how the entire Jewish nation—men, women, and children—would listen closely as the king would read the *pesukim* of *hakhel*; how they would listen with powerful *kavanah*, knowing that it’s as if they are hearing it from Hashem himself! [We see clearly, the Rebbe says, that when a person describes *hakhel* in the *Beis Hamikdash* with all its details, it makes a powerful impression on the listeners, and brings them *yiras Hashem*.]¹¹

Speak about the fact that after the *Beis Hamikdash* was destroyed, Hashem’s *Beis Hamikdash* is in the heart of every Yid.¹²

The *kinusei hakhel* should be tailored according to the time of the

year: During Sukkos, gather Yidden for a *hakhel* gathering and dance for *simchas beis hashoevah*,¹³ before Chof Cheshvan, arrange *hakhel* farbrengens in every place, and so on.¹⁴ **T**

1. Toras Menachem 5748 vol. 1 p. 339.

2. Ibid. p. 224 note 45; p. 524.

3. Ibid. p. 97.

4. Ibid. p. 119.

5. Ibid. p. 97.

6. Ibid. p. 152.

7. Ibid. p. 118.

8. Ibid. p. 233-234.

9. Ibid. p. 416.

10. This includes various *parshiyos* of Devarim: From the beginning of the sefer through *Shema Yisrael* (6:4); The second paragraph of *Shema*, *Vehaya im shamòà* (11:13-21); (14:22-27) “עשר תעשר” (17:14-20); (26:12-15) “כי תכלה לעשר” The section about appointing a king (17:14-20); The blessings and curses (28:1-69). Also the *parsha* of Kedoshim (see Rashi Vayikra 19,2.)

11. Ibid. p. 152.

12. Ibid. p. 154.

13. Ibid. p. 178.

14. Ibid. p. 455.



בתבנית קודש



Taking part in the ceremony of placing a mezuzah (a small case containing a passage of scripture) on the doorway of the Chabad House are (from left) Irwin Chodnick and his daughter Rena (right) Rabbi Meir Chodnick.

Spirituality finds needed amid uproar of financial

By Wes Smith

Jay Davis, a trader in soybeans, and Avi Goldfeder, a trader in bonds, paused in a room on South LaSalle Street in the Loop one day this week to heed a sound unlike anything they hear on the floor of the Board of Trade or Commodities Exchange.

It was the sound of a *shofar*, or ram's horn, calling them away from the screaming pursuit of money and to a quiet cluster of offices on the seventh floor of the Traders Building at 401 S. LaSalle St.

The Chabad House of the Loop, a study and social outreach center for Jews, opened Wednesday in plush office space donated by the LaSalle Street stock-and-options trading firm, F.P. Quinn & Co.

From 7 to 5 on weekdays, the Chabad House will offer study classes, a library and spiritual counseling from an in-house rabbi to Jews of all branches seeking sanctuary in the hard heart of the city's financial district.

Lunch, strictly kosher, will be served as well.

"This is needed," Goldfeder said. "It is good to know it is here in the middle of the largest

financial district outside of New York."

"This is taking Judaism out to where the Jews are—a spiritual oasis—where you can find respite from high-powered work and from telephones," said Dr. Dennis Citrin, a physician heavily outnumbered at the opening ceremonies by brokers, traders, lawyers and rabbis.

For more than two years, Rabbi Daniel Moscovitz conducted once-a-week, noontime discussions on the Torah (the first five books of the Bible) in office space provided by the trading firm.

Those meetings have blossomed into a Chabad House to serve the "Jewish neighborhood" in the Loop. Chabad Houses also serve Jews in several suburbs and city neighborhoods, Rabbi Moscovitz said.

"The people who came to our weekly discussion group here said it provided them with a refuge from business where they could study their heritage," the rabbi said.

Rabbi Moscovitz is a Hasidic Orthodox Jew. He practices in the Lubavitch branch, which stresses a joyful approach to life—another welcome relief from the serious business of parlaying

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נובאק

HAKHEL IS COMING!

The following is the Rebbe's response to Rabbi Daniel Moscovitz, the head shliach to Illinois at the time, written on the margin of Rabbi Moscovitz's letter.

Special thanks are due to Rabbi Moscovitz's son, the current head shliach, Rabbi Meir Shimon Moscovitz, for sharing this *ksav yad kodesh* with us.



Tribune photo by Quentin Doeh
...n Ross, David-Irwin Binter with
Rabbi Daniel Moscovitz and
Benhiyouan.

Sanctuary in the financial district

pork bellies into big dollars.
"The most important thing is that people can come here to take a break, especially from the pressure of the trading floor, to study something on a higher level," the rabbi said. "We will have lunch and coffee and cake and a library where they can come and browse, a kitchen for the mind."

Rabbi Moscovitz and others at the opening said that even amid the feverish capitalism of LaSalle Street, there are people searching for religious truth and something more fundamental to their lives than the heavings of the stock market.


"There are many people here looking for spirituality, and this is a spiritual oasis for them," Citrin said. "The Chabad House is about the fact that religion and spirituality are not one-day-a-week events; they pervade our lives and this place belongs here in the middle of the working environment of so many Jews—and the food is good, too."

Trader Jay Davis found the drink to his liking as well.

"There is a lot of good cheer with these people," he said. "And there is always a little vodka around."



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מאקאוו

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אנא אוכלת
הנה זמן חתונתך (צוק)
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Director

RABBI YOSEF POSNER
Administrator

RABBI BINYOMIN SCHEIMAN
Director of Activities

RABBI SHLOM B STOCK
Director of Community Outreach

HABBI

In his letter, Rabbi Moscovitz writes:

3 Elul, Erev Shabbos Parshas Shoftim, 5747.

לכ"ק אדמו"ר שליט"א

Enclosed is an article [from the Chicago Tribune] about the dedication and opening of the new Chabad House in Downtown [Chicago].

I ask for the Rebbe's *bracha* that the ensuing activities there, and in all of our institutions, should be with success.

Daniel Yitzchok ben Tzivia Moscovitz

The Rebbe responds:

נת' ות"ח ואזכיר עה"צ

לשלוח לו המצו"ב ואולי כדאי שיו"ל מחדש קיצור מהנ"ל (ובהוספה?) להצלחת הפעולות לדלול ודשנת הקהל

It was received, with thanks. I will mention this at the Ohel.

[Mazkirus should] send the attached [article] back to him [Rabbi Moscovitz]. Perhaps it would be worthwhile to republish a synopsis of this [article] (with some additions?) in order to have more success in the activities of the month of Elul, and of [the upcoming] year of Hakhel.



לעבן מיטן רבין



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ע"י בנם
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 וזוגתו מרת פעסל לאה ומשפחתם שיחיו
 רוהר

טור 'לעבן מיטן רבין' הוקדש לזכרון ולעילוי נשמת
 ר' שמואל ב"ר יהושע אליהו ז"ל
 ואשתו מרת שרה ע"ה בת ר' יקותיאל ומרת לאה הי"ד
 ת'נ'צ'ב'ה

Tishrei In Lubavitch – Through Joy

TISHREI 5736*

PART 2



Spending Tishrei with the Rebbe is the dearest wish of every Chossid. In the following diary, Rabbi Yisroel Shimon Bekerman who came from Eretz Yisroel for Tishrei 5736*, describes his experiences with the Rebbe during this festive month.

VOV TISHREI

The farbrengen of Vov Tishrei was especially joyous. At the end of the farbrengen, the Rebbe instructed us to sing the *niggun Hup Kazak* while clapping along. The Rebbe encouraged the singing and we all found ourselves jumping in our places. I was swept away, completely engulfed by the *simcha* in the room. The joy that we witnessed was unparalleled and impossible to properly articulate. The only other occasion I could compare it to would be Simchas Torah.

This seemed to be part of a theme that had begun on Erev Rosh Hashanah when the Rebbe tearfully mentioned "וכיפר אדמתו עמו"—urging Hashem to bring about atonement for his land and his people. This continued on Rosh Hashanah when the Rebbe spoke about how we have to ask Hashem for even our physical mundane needs. Finally, now on Vov Tishrei, the Rebbe brought down such joy and once again repeated the message of "וכיפר אדמתו עמו." It seems as though the Rebbe was taking care of some heavenly affairs, ensuring the wellbeing of the Jewish people.

SHABBOS SHUVA

On Shabbos Shuva the Rebbe farbrenged for four hours. Once again the Rebbe addressed "וכיפר אדמתו"—that Hashem wants to reconcile with us. Some people are pacified through *ruchnius*, others require physical things to be satisfied. Regardless of where they are holding, Hashem meets each and every Yid on their own individual

level. Even little children get what they need from Hashem despite the sometimes juvenile nature of their desires.

The Rebbe continued: "It is known that on "Shabbos, *kol melachtach asuyah* (all your work is complete)." Accordingly, since today is Shabbos Shuvah, our *teshuvah* is already accomplished. Therefore, since Shabbos blesses the past week as well as the week ahead, a Yid who before today did not even contemplate *teshuvah*, can now achieve *teshuvah* for both the past and the future.

Once again, it was obvious that the Rebbe was trying to draw down tangible blessings for all Yidden.

EREV YOM KIPPUR

We just returned from Mincha with the Rebbe. It is interesting how despite everything seeming the same, Erev Rosh Hashanah, Rosh Hashanah, Aseres Yemei Teshuva, Shabbos Shuvah and Yom Kippur; still, each moment resonates in a unique way. Even a common Mincha becomes a special moment to cherish, as if it was the first time in my life encountering the Rebbe and the first time hearing his words.

Before Mincha the Rebbe came in holding a bag of coins. There were hundreds of plates laid out by many charities and the Rebbe deposited a coin in each one. After the first bag was exhausted, the secretaries gave the Rebbe a second bag due to the sheer volume of various charities.

After Mincha we experienced what it must have felt like to be at Har Sinai. The Rebbe gave



THE REBBE GIVES A BRACHA TO ANASH ON EREV YOM KIPPUR 5736*.



THE LINE LEADING UP TO RECEIVE LEKACH FROM THE REBBE ON EREV YOM KIPPUR.

his *bracha* to all assembled, specifying that he is blessing each one of us personally and collectively as a part of the entire Jewish people. “*A chasimah un gmar chasimah tovah, leshanah tovah umesukah, betov hanireh vehanigleh, lematah me’asarah tefachim.*”

I then waited my turn to receive *lekach* from the Rebbe. The experience left me trembling, and I felt lightheaded and dizzy. It took me some time to calm down from such a memorable encounter.

The line stretched for blocks and I waited for hours amongst people of all backgrounds and ages, some with infants just weeks old, all there for the same purpose—to receive *lekach* from the *nossi hador*. There was a lot of pushing until finally my turn arrived. On the Rebbe’s table I noticed multiple *sefarim*, particularly the book מאחורי מסך הברזל by Reb Foleh Kahan describing his experiences behind the Iron Curtain. The Rebbe handed me the *lekach* and said לחתימה טובה לשנה טובה ומתוקה.”

The distribution of *lekach* started at 3:00 p.m. and continued until an hour before *shkiah*, with a short break for *Mincha*. This was all aside for the people that will arrive after Yom Kippur and will receive *lekach* from the Rebbe on Hoshanah Rabbah.

YOM KIPPUR

Yom Kippur went by smoothly, not once did it feel like a fast day. The experience was

otherworldly, it was as if we were angels, especially at the climax—Neilah and Napoleon’s March. The Rebbe got up on his chair and led the tremendous crowd, clapping and singing enthusiastically. The entire room was pulsating with energy. Multitudes of people merged into one solid entity, it felt like the very foundations of the earth were shaking to our rhythm.

Once again I was overtaken with emotion: Here stood the *nossi hador* in his full glory upon the conclusion of the monumental *avodah* of Yom Kippur. Only moments before the shofar blast marking the end of the day, the Rebbe was preoccupied with bringing down as much *simcha poretz geder* as possible. Thus concluded the *avodah* of that holy day, to the beat of Napoleon’s March.

After Maariv the Rebbe announced “*Gut yom tov, gut yom tov, gut yom tov!*” Everyone responded loudly, and then we began the *niggun Ki Vesimcha*. Later, upon leaving his room, the Rebbe instructed us to sing *Ki Vesimcha* again and he waved his hand in encouragement to the *niggun* as he walked outside.

As the Rebbe walked down the stairs many people were pushing to catch a glimpse. I was shoved around many times while still in my tallis and *kittel* until suddenly I found myself standing right in front of the Rebbe.

13 TISHREI

The Rebbe farbrenged for Yud-Gimmel Tishrei. The general theme of the farbrengen was about the influence that a Yid has over the world around him.

We sang the *niggunim Lichatchila Aribber* and *Hup Kazak* with tremendous joy. The Rebbe then instructed us to sing a *niggun* from Eretz Yisroel so we sang *Hoshi’ah Es Amecha*. Afterwards the Rebbe told us to sing a *niggun* that related to the *simcha* of Sukkos, Simchas Torah, and Moshiach. We sang *Ki Vesimcha* and the Rebbe stood up to his full height and clapped while singing along. It felt like this would be the moment that the Rebbe would transport us all to Eretz Yisroel with the *Beis Hamikdash Hashlishi*. It was a great privilege to witness such joy and so many *giluyim*.

EREV SUKKOS

On Erev Sukkos we were told to prepare ourselves to enter the Rebbe’s room. The Vaad of Kfar Chabad was summoned in, and there we

received *daled minim* from the Rebbe.

Afterwards all residents of Kfar Chabad were called into the Rebbe's room. There were more than a *minyán* of people there: four members of the *vaad*, the rav, and multiple people from all over including two individuals from Nachlas Har Chabad.

I watched as the Rebbe walked across the room and inspected the *daled minim* which he then placed on the table and chair. I was standing next to the Rebbe and had a tape recorder in my pocket which was recording. The Rebbe proceeded to give us a long *bracha*.

After the Rebbe concluded the *bracha*, Reb Yisroel Kok approached the Rebbe and said that every Shabbos he was accustomed to giving candies to the children who answer amen to the *chazan*. The Rebbe smiled and said "Nu, take two *hadassim*."

CHOL HAMOED

Overall, Sukkos was very rainy, and we were subject to a nonstop deluge. The Rebbe sent out a *tzetel* addressing how one can have *simcha* in the rain which can be viewed as an impediment to eating outdoors in the sukkah. "Since we fulfill the mitzvah of sukkah with a *bracha* in such circumstances, it is proof that Hashem is content with our service, especially as the very wording of the *bracha* explicitly states that we are fulfilling Hashem's command." Once again the Rebbe continued the pattern of drawing down the positive regarding Yidden.

MIVTZOIM

Despite the extra difficulty posed by the rain, we were very busy, especially because guests from Eretz Yisrael are seen as guests of honor at the various *simchas beis hasho'evah* farbrengens.

On Wednesday we took a sukkah mobile to several schools and helped many children *bentch* lulav and give tzedakah. In the evening we participated in a farbrengen at a big shul.

We also visited the mayor of New York, Mr. Abraham Beame. After he *bentched* lulav, Reb Shloimke Madanchik embraced him and presented him with a beautiful esrog box from Kfar Chabad, as well as a photo album from the school in Kfar Chabad. The mayor reciprocated by presenting him with a golden key to the city of New York.

Present at this event was a gaggle of photographers and reporters. Reb Shloimke introduced us as his associates (he referred to me as the manager of the building department). He then repeated a *sicha* of the Rebbe and afterwards acknowledged that he was aware of the financial difficulties facing the city. "In our city (Kfar Chabad) we also have financial difficulties, but we rely on Hashem to take care of us. Take my advice, and do the same." The Mayor and the press appreciated this message.

SIMCHAS TORAH

Monday, Isru Chag, 6:30 a.m.

For two mornings now, I have said *krias shema she'al hamita* together with the morning *brachos*. Although it is impossible to adequately describe what has transpired over the past 48 hours, I will attempt to share something of my experience to the best of my ability.

KOS SHEL BRACHA

Long lines of Chassidim were standing on tables waiting their turn to receive wine from the Rebbe. Every few minutes the Rebbe would wave his arm, encouraging the singing of hundreds of *bochurim*



A GROUP OF CHASSIDIM FROM ERETZ YISROEL DO MIVTZOIM ON CHOL HAMOED SUKKOS WITH THE JEWISH MAYOR OF NEW YORK AT THE TIME, MR. ABRAHAM BEAME (RABBI SHIMON BEKERMAN IS SECOND TO LEFT).

and *yungerleit*. Every so often, the Rebbe would signal with his fingers to whistle and anyone able to whistle would do so, joining in with a deafening shrill sound.

Photographer Levi Yitzchok Freidin from Eretz Yisroel, received much attention from the Rebbe throughout the entire month. Now, he stood near the Rebbe who turned to him and while smiling, instructed him to say *l'chaim* three times, in an unprecedented scene.

At 4:00 a.m. there were still people arriving, bringing their small children, even babies, to the Rebbe, after a farbrengen that started at 6:15 p.m. on Simchas Torah.

Now, let me attempt to describe *hakafos* on Shemini Atzeres and Simchas Torah:

It was a true “super-storm” of joy, we danced until we couldn’t dance anymore and then kept dancing. We danced until our souls could leave our bodies, but they didn’t. Even after *hakafos* ended and the Rebbe had gone back to his room, the dancing continued with enduring vigor.

Big circles, small circles, we danced around and around.

After the farbrengen of Leil Simchas Torah it was announced that we should go outside for 45 minutes so that the room can be set up for *hakafos*. Not wasting a minute of this holy day, Eastern Parkway was alive in a storm of dancing. After all, during the farbrengen, the Rebbe spoke about how a Yid has to feel the *simcha* of Simchas Torah because Hashem instructed us to be happy on this day. Even if someone isn’t feeling it yet, and is only dancing out of *kabala ol*, still “*mitoch shelo lishma ba lishma*”—he must engage in the *simcha* without delay. So of course we danced away. The Rebbe stood for a tremendous amount of time with us, singing and dancing, so how could one not?

This triggered memories of dancing in a bunker on Simchas Torah during the Yom Kippur War, two years ago. In contrast, this Simchas Torah was different. Here, I experienced true *simcha*. I recalled what the Rebbe said about the sweat of *simcha shel mitzvah*, how although Michal bas Shaul was a big *tzadeikes*, she could not fathom this true expression of joy. Thus, she was punished for criticizing Dovid Hamelech, saying it is unbecoming of a king to dance wildly in front of the masses. This teaches us the immense value of dancing on Simchas Torah.



THE REBBE SMILES AT REB LEVI FREIDIN DURING KOS SHEL BRACHA, MOTZEI SIMCHAS TORAH 5736*.

THE REBBE’S HAKAFAH

It was wondrous to witness the *hakafah* of the Rebbe. I managed to squeeze under one of the tables surrounding the *bima* where the *hakafah* was taking place.

It is impossible to capture this tremendous sight with words. Rashag, who always appeared stoic, was animated during the *hakafah*, and the Rebbe danced without pausing. From where I was crouched I saw a sea of people dancing, all joined together as one person, separated only by the four large support pillars.

As usual, like every year, dignitaries from the Israeli consulate came to participate in the *hakafos* on the second night. This year the chief justice of the Israeli supreme court, Chaim Cohen, attended as well. They received the second *hakafah* and sang *Utzu Eitza Vesufar*.

I noticed that throughout their *hakafah* the Rebbe appeared to be gazing at them and saying something in an undertone.

Before the *hakafah* Mr. Cohen reached to take a heavy Sefer Torah but it was suggested that he take a lighter one instead. The Rebbe exclaimed, “A Yid wants to take upon himself the yoke of Torah, why would you withhold that from him?!” **T**


1. See *hosafos* to Likkutei Sichos vol. 14 page 433.
2. See Sichas Leil Simchas Torah, ois 33.



לזכות ילדינו היקרים
יצחק צבי, מנחם מענדל, אברהם
מאיר, יהודית, וישראל ארי' לייב
שיחיו
שיגדלו להיות חסידים יראי
שמים ולמדנים

נדפס ע"י
הרה"ת ר' אליעזר זוגתו
מרת חנה שיחיו
וואלף

The First Mivtza



*In addition to the famous 10 mitvzoim,
every Yom Tov is known for its special
mitvza initiated by the Rebbe to assist fellow
Yidden with the mitzvot of the day.*

*The first of all of these mitvzoim was
Mivtza Daled Minim, launched by the
Rebbe in advance of Tishrei 5714*.¹*

*Presented here is a copy of the duch
submitted to the Rebbe upon the
conclusion of this first historic mitvza.*

During the first two days of Sukkos, almost all the *talmidim* and a few *balei-batim* went out with *daled minim* to the streets and parks of Crown Heights, Brownsville, East New York, and the Bronx, to enable members of the public to participate in this mitzvah. At a few locations, groups of children gathered together [spontaneously], which made a very nice impression. There were some people who went back into their houses to obtain a head covering and wash their hands before performing the mitzvah.

In total, they were able to help some 150 of our Jewish brethren fulfill this mitzvah.

Rabbi Elya Gross arranged a *mesibas Shabbos* in

the Rebbe's sukkah, as well as in the Rebbe's shul during the first two days of Yom Tov. Each time there were approximately 25 children in attendance.

Some of the responses from the non-*frum* people about this:

With tears in their eyes: "It's been so many years since we've fulfilled (or we've never had the chance to fulfill) this mitzvah."

"Please come back on the remaining days of Yom Tov." Or: "For the next few days we will come to you."

"Thank you so much for doing this."

All of the above responders were very

surprised that we wouldn't take the money that they wanted to give on the spot.

Some negative responses:

“Why are you engaged in such frivolous activities?!”;

“Whoever wants to, already did the mitzvah earlier...”;

“Mind your own business...”; and similar responses.

Some of the responses from the frum people:

“How precious and special are

these activities of Lubavitch!”

“If only all the Rebbe's would follow suit,” etc.

“This is *bitul Torah!*”; “A chillul Hashem!”; “Why have you specifically chosen this mitzvah?”; “These Yidden [that you attempt to bring back] are in the category of those who deserve to be pushed down and not brought up!”; and similar responses.

These are the names of all those who participated in the above:

First Day

Sholom Dovber Vishedsky
Sholom Dovber Raskin
Sholom Dovber Futerfas
Levertov Moshe
Pinchos Korf
Yosef Blizinsky
Yoel Kahn
Peretz Faigenson
Chaim Dovid Wichnin
Binyomin Mintz
Sholom Dovber Alperovich
Gedalya Korf
Yisroel Duchman
Yitzchok Gansburg
Sholom Dovber Raskin
Sholom Dovber Gansburg
Sholom Dovber Vishedsky
Sholom Dovber Gurary
Shmuel Fogelman
Yisroel Shmuel Engel
Alexander Piekarsky
Bentzion Yosef Raices
Yitzchok Springer
Avrohom Yitzchok Shemtov
Dovber Mochkin
Yaakov Holtzman
Sholom Dovber Gurkov
Tzvi Lann
Boruch Brikman
Dovid Schochet
Yitzchok Nimshansky
Shmaryahu Pruss

Chaim Yehuda Krinsky

Aharon Chitrik

Moshe Gurkov

Second Day

Sholom Dovber Raskin
Yitzchok Pevsner
Chaim Dovid Nota Wichnin
Pinchos Zev Marozov
Gedalya Korf
Yitzchok Gansburg
Sholom Dovber Gurary
Yosef Raices
Yisroel Shmuel Engel
Alexander Piekarsky
Sholom Dovber Shemtov
Shmuel Dovid Raichik
Yitzchok Springer
Reuven Deitch
Sholom Dovber Gorodetsky
Avrohom Yitzchok Shemtov
Boruch Brikman
Yitzchok Nimshansky
Sholom Yisroel Hodakov
Dovid Schochet
Binyomin Katz
Aharon Chitrik
Kalman Brikman
Yehuda Kordish
Gershon Dovber Jacobson
Yaakov Begun
Moshe Goldman
Avrohom Korf
Mordechai Gorodetsky
Moshe Gurkov
Yosef Schochet
Shafran
Sholom Dovber Tarshish
Shmuel Katz

1. Reb Elya Gross, a *bochur* studying in 770 at the time, recorded in his diary from Elul 5713*:

“Rabbi Hodakov summoned Berel Shemtov and me and told us to arrange that on Sukkos, everyone should go out to the streets with their lulav and esrog. We should also bring together Jewish children in the sukkah, *bentch* lulav and esrog with them, and also offer them refreshments and recite *‘Leishev Basukkah.’*”

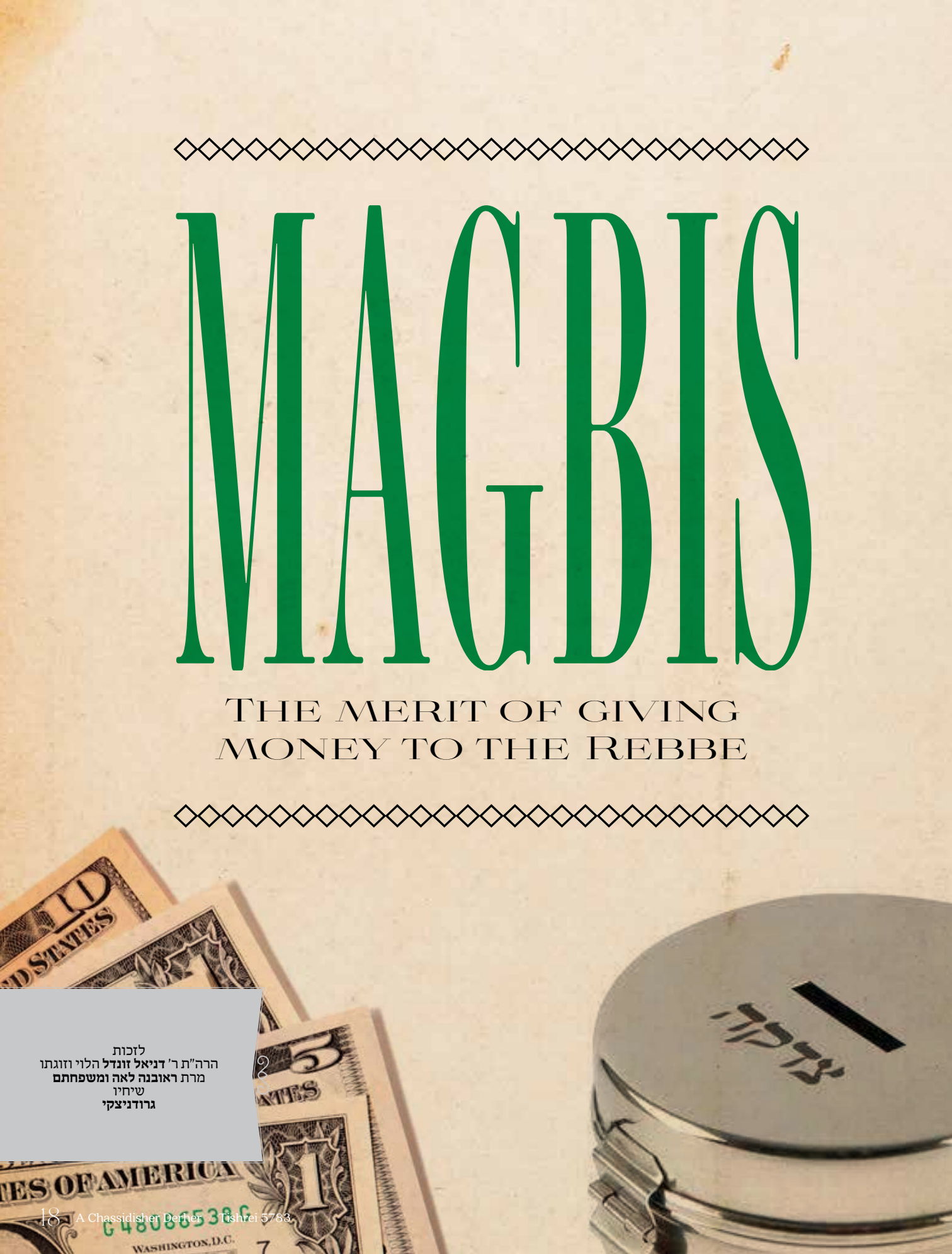
“He is telling us this now [before Rosh Hashanah] so we should prepare for it in advance, and have enough time to tell those going out of town about this idea as well.

“Later, Berel Shemtov told me that it seems like this instruction came from the Rebbe. (Perhaps he was told so explicitly?)”



MAGBIS

THE MERIT OF GIVING
MONEY TO THE REBBE



לזכות
הרה"ת ר' דניאל זונדל הלוי זוגתו
מרת ראובנה לאה ומשפחתם
שיחיו
גרודניצקי

“Everything the Rebbe spoke about, or even thought of, succeeds. Sooner or later, they eventually happen and grow every day. They happen through intermediaries; not because they cannot happen without them, rather, because דער רבי איז א גוטער (the Rebbe is benevolent), and he wants to share the merits with as many Yidden as possible, so he determined that others should be involved in these peulos.

“The Rebbe clearly stated regarding the Sefer Torah L’kabbalas Penei Moshiach that he could have provided all the necessary funds for it on his own, but he wanted to share the merit with many more Yidden...

“For this reason the Rebbe also instituted that all these peulos should be accomplished through money, and he provided the merit for as many Yidden as possible to participate financially. This is for their own benefit, as the Gemara declares, עשר בשביל שתתעשר, —give maaser to tzedakah and you will become wealthy.

“Ironically, when we make an appeal to benefit these peulos, people resist... They think they are doing the Rebbe a favor by donating to his causes. Do they really think that the Rebbe while in Gan Eden, or even down here in the physical world, cannot be connected to Atzmus U’mehus without their money?! The Rebbe is doing them a favor!...”

In this fascinating *sicha*¹ from the second farbrengen of Shabbos Bereishis² 5714*, the Rebbe clarifies the dynamic of the Rebbe and Chossid relationship accomplished through tzedakah. Since the establishment of Chassidus Chabad, “*maamed*” was and continues to be an integral element of *hiskashrus*. *Maamed* is money Chassidim send to the Rebbe on a consistent basis for the personal use of the Rebbe and his household, to be used as he sees fit. An important aspect of writing a *pan* (*pidyon nefesh*) to the Rebbe is including *demei pan* (money for *pidyon nefesh*), given to the Rebbe.

However, while these ideas are integral to a Chossid’s personal *hiskashrus*, the Rabbeim throughout the generations also made appeals for specific causes or funds, to which Yidden would donate enthusiastically. In our generation most of the Rebbe’s appeals occurred at specific major farbrengens; each for a specific fund or cause.

The way it worked: During the farbrengen the Rebbe would say a short *sicha* regarding the appeal for the respective cause or fund, and envelopes would be distributed to the crowd. As the crowd sang *niggunim* and the Rebbe responded *lchaim* to the assembled, the participants either inserted

* 5714-1953

cash or checks into the envelopes or wrote their pledge on a note. The Rebbe would also add that all were welcome to include their names and the names of their family members on the note in the envelope to be mentioned at the Ohel for a *bracha*.

The envelopes were then passed up to the Rebbe's table and, in the early years, the Rebbe personally inserted them into large manila envelopes. In later years, a large paper bag (or even a second) was filled by the *mazkirim*. After the Rebbe recited the *bracha acharonah* and concluded the *farbrengen*, he placed his siddur into the large bag and carried it himself out of the *farbrengen*.

Often an appeal letter was sent out to Chassidim around the world allowing those who were not present at the *farbrengen* the opportunity to participate in the *magbis*. If the traditional day for the *magbis* occurred on Shabbos and there was no weekday *farbrengen* associated with that date, the *magbis* happened through mailed letters from Machane Yisroel. On the rare occasions the Rebbe did not mention the specific *magbis* at the relevant *farbrengen*, Chassidim were expected to donate to these funds at the appropriate times, since they were already routine, and it was not necessary for the Rebbe to announce them each year.³

In later years the Rebbe held *magbiyos* for general causes at more *farbrengens*, however, this article explores the consistent *magbiyos* which took place at specific *farbrengens* for specific funds that the Rebbe established throughout the years.

KEREN HASHANAH

At the second *farbrengen* of Shabbos Bereishis 5714* the Rebbe started the third *sicha*⁴ with explaining that the month of Tishrei is a general month through which all divine influences flow to the rest of the year.

“As in the case of all Divine blessings, the channel through which these influences are actually brought down on this earth to be enjoyed as Divine blessings—is tzedakah...”

“All the above is an introduction to a suggestion I wish to make. This year, 5714, has a total of 383 days. My suggestion is that everyone make a special contribution to tzedakah for each day of the year, in the amount of 383 money units: half cents, cents, nickels, dimes, dollars, 100 dollars, or 1,800 dollars (or corresponding amounts in local currency). This contribution will be a channel through which to bring down and enjoy Hashem's blessings, materially and spiritually, every day throughout the year.”*

The Rebbe explained that this special contribution should be made in addition to the regular tzedakah one already gives and that everyone should give according to their means, similar to the fact that in the *Beis Hamikdash* a wealthy person

IN A LETTER,
THE FRIERDIKER
REBBE
ACKNOWLEDGES
'MAAMED' SENT
BY ONE OF THE
TEMIMIM.



could not bring a *korban* that was appropriate for the poor.

“Everyone may, of course, distribute this contribution personally as he thinks fit,⁵ making a contribution every day to the charity of his choice. However, owing to one's preoccupation or pressure of circumstances, one may forget to make this daily contribution. Besides, one cannot always be certain that his contribution will go to the most deserving cause.

“Therefore, all those who wish to trust me, may contribute the said amount to the General Fund under my auspices, from which funds are distributed daily for various tzedakah purposes. Thus, one's contribution will be sure to reach its proper destination.”

In addition to the advantage of ensuring one gives tzedakah every day through this fund, the Rebbe explained two more benefits of this initiative:

**“THEREFORE, ALL
THOSE WHO WISH
TO TRUST ME, MAY
CONTRIBUTE THE
SAID AMOUNT TO THE
GENERAL FUND UNDER
MY AUSPICES...”**

1) Although giving money alone is the mitzvah, an integral element of tzedakah is the impact it has on the receiver. Not everyone is capable of giving the type of money that can make a significant impact on others every day. However, when one contributes even a small amount to a general fund, the money blends together with the other funds “like liquids”⁶ and the substantial donation disbursed from the general fund is credited even to the “small” donors.

2) In the times of the *Beis Hamikdash*, the daily *korbanos* were paid for by the *machatzis hashekel* the Yidden gave each year in the month of Adar. The new “fiscal year” started on Rosh Chodesh Nissan.

“While everyone tried to send in his half-shekel at the earliest possible time, some contributions inevitably came in late. Yet everyone, including the stragglers, was deemed to have a share in the services rendered, even where the services were rendered before the contributions came in. The gabbai tzedakah has in his power to include in the tzedakah disbursements all future donors, so that belated contributions become retroactive, and the donors enjoy the full benefits of the tzedakah.

“The same applies in our case. A condition is made that all who will contribute to the General Fund will enjoy the benefits of the tzedakah disbursements, even those made in advance of their contributions.”

Nevertheless, the Rebbe concluded, everyone should endeavor to make their donation as soon as possible, because *zerizus* is an important element. In addition, “there is a practical necessity to send in the contributions without delay, for disbursements have to be made by the Fund every day. Each timely contribution will help the Fund operate with greater ease,

in the merit of which the donor will also be blessed with relief [from distress] and extra blessings, materially and spiritually.”

After Shabbos, this *sicha* was transcribed in Yiddish and English and then edited by the Rebbe and published with the Rebbe’s *shaar blatt* (see photo). The *sicha* was disseminated to many communities around the world together with an appeal letter.



This General Fund was set up under the auspices of Machane Yisrael as a separate account called “Machane Israel Special Account.” All the money collected for this purpose was deposited in this account and every day the Rebbe’s secretary, Rabbi Hodakov, deposited a check from this account to two respective tzedakah causes, one before Shacharis and one before Mincha. This arrangement continues until today.

Thus started an annual *minhag* for Yidden to contribute a defined amount of money for the Rebbe to distribute on their behalf every single day of the year. Regarding Shabbos and Yom Tov, the appropriate amount of tzedakah was distributed beforehand for that day.

Tzedakah should be donated to Keren Hashanah on behalf of all family members as well and can obviously be given from *maaser* money.⁷



For the first few years this special fund was called “Tzedakah 383” or “Tzedakah 354,” depending on the amount of days in that year. Eventually it came to be known as “Keren Hashanah.”

Although one should donate to the fund before Rosh Hashanah of the new year,⁸ the Rebbe would speak about Keren Hashanah each year specifically at the Simchas Torah farbrengen.⁹ When the Rebbe spoke to the Chassidim from his room on Motzei Simchas Torah 5738* (a mere two days after suffering a heart attack during *hakafos* on Shemini Atzeres) he mentioned the importance of donating to Keren Hashanah.

The Rebbe explained that the reason he speaks about it publicly on Simchas Torah is in order for the donation to be done with tremendous *simcha*.¹⁰

KEREN CHANA

In 5726*, a year after the *histalkus* of the Rebbe’s mother Rebbetzin Chana, the Rebbe established a fund called Keren Chana to provide interest free loans for extended periods of time for girls to pay tuition for their continued education in *limudei kodesh*.¹¹

Through this “*we will raise a generation of Jewish women who will observe all of the mitzvos they are equally obligated to observe like the men, and especially the mitzvos uniquely bequeathed to the Jewish women, as alluded to in the name Chana.*”¹² (Challah—*kashrus*, *nidah*—*taharas hamishpachah*, and *hadlakas neiros Shabbos Kodesh*.)

KEREN TORAH

On Yud Shevat 5715* the Rebbe explained a story of the Alter Rebbe requesting of his grandson following his wedding to remove the “*kotinkeh*,” the most beautiful element of his

brand new fur coat, and promised him *אתי עמי במחיצתי*—you will forever be with me in *Gan Eden*.

At the time, ornate fur coats were a fashion trend, and the Alter Rebbe wished to “break” this *kelipah* by having his young grandson do such a radical thing.

“*The inappropriate attitude in America today is the obsession with preparing young people for a secure financial future.*”

As a result, children are forced to learn secular studies from a tender young age when their minds should instead be molded by Torah the entire day. In order to break this *kelipah*, the Rebbe announced that he was seeking *bochurim* who would devote themselves to learning Torah without worrying about the future.

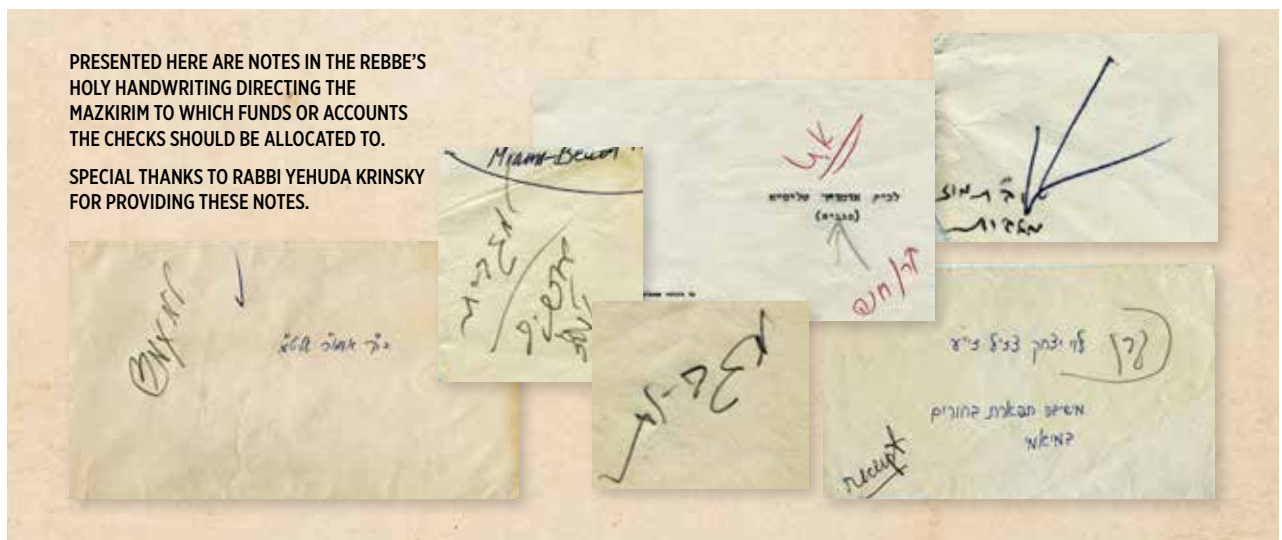
“*Regarding children and younger teenagers, we need to convince the parents to give them a better education. However, older bochurim can make their own decisions and I appeal to them to dedicate their time to learning Torah.*”

Those who would commit themselves to this would be fully supported and the Rebbe established a special fund called “Keren Torah” to support this new endeavor.

Another American *kelipah* is the necessity to advertise all the wonderful things one does, so in order to break that as well, those who donated to this fund would remain anonymous.

KEREN HACHOMESH

Upon his return from the Rebbetzin’s *levaya* on Chof-Beis Shevat 5748*, and after receiving the crowds who passed by to be *menachem avel* following Mincha, the Rebbe called Rabbi Krinsky into his room on the second floor of his home and told him that he wishes to establish a new fund called “Keren Hachomesh.”





The name of the fund spells the initials of the Rebbetzin's name, "Harabbonis Chaya Mushka Schneerson." Initially, the Rebbe earmarked the funds to support causes associated with Jewish women, i.e. *hachnasas kallah*, *taharas hamishpachah*, and the like. On Chof-Beis Shevat 5750* the Rebbe announced that the funds from this *keren* would be distributed to all Lubavitcher institutions that applied to receive financial assistance.

KUPAS RABBEINU

The Rebbe Rashab had a tradition to make a *magbis* at the Purim farbrengen to support his causes (institutions and private individuals) known as Kupas Rabbeinu (lit. our Rebbe's [collection] box).¹³

At the Purim farbrengen of 5713* the Rebbe explained the importance of following the traditions of the Rabbeim and therefore restarted the tradition of holding an appeal for Kupas Rabbeinu.¹⁴

*"In addition to all the advantages of the mitzvah of tzedakah... donating to a cause the Rebbe Rashab would collect for, at the traditional time it was always done (which means that it is an auspicious time for this), brings with it increased blessing and success. And we can come to the Rebbe Rashab and demand he should shower upon us all the Heavenly assurances in a practical sense..."*¹⁵

KEREN OHOLEI YOSEF YITZCHOK

The first time the Rebbe did something close¹⁶ to a *magbis* at a farbrengen was on Yud-Gimmel Tammuz 5712*. After the *maamar*, the Rebbe explained the tremendous blessings one

can receive as a result of giving tzedakah, especially for Torah education and especially in connection with the birthday and *yom hageulah* of the Frierdiker Rebbe.

In the two years since Yud Shevat 5710* many educational institutions were established with the name "Oholei Yosef Yitzchok" operating in the spirit of, and in accordance with the wishes of the Frierdiker Rebbe.

*"Although these institutions are successful in a way that defies all logic, they have not yet reached the point of operating without money... Perhaps the reason for this is so that many others can participate in these projects by donating money for them."*¹⁷

The Rebbe encouraged everyone to participate, even if only with 18 cents, and instructed the pledges to be paid up within eight days of Yud-Beis Tammuz. Those present could make pledges on behalf of those who were not present based on the halachic premise of זכין לאדם שלא בפניו.

KEREN LEVI YITZCHOK

At the farbrengen of Chof Av 5724*, the Rebbe related a recent episode. A young Lubavitcher woman was owed a lot of money from the school where she had taught *limudei kodesh* for several years. Recently she unexpectedly received a check from her employer for \$5,000 (over \$45,000 in today's value). Instead of using it for her own needs, she reasoned that since she managed for so long without that money, she would give it all to tzedakah. With her husband's consent, she sent the entire sum directly to the Rebbe.

"I don't know if they have put away another \$5,000 in savings! And, keiny ayin hara, this is a family with many children. She is a young, American-born woman, and her husband was also born

* 5750-1990, 5713-1953, 5712-1952, 5710-1950, 5724-1964,

“...THIS WAS DONE BY PEOPLE WHO WERE NOT EDUCATED WITH MESIRAS NEFESH BEHIND THE IRON CURTAIN, RATHER IN A COUNTRY THAT IS CONSIDERED A MATERIALISTIC COUNTRY, WHERE THE DOLLAR IS ABOVE ALL ELSE.”

here and works hard to make a living. Nevertheless, in her mind, the only reason this old debt was paid was in order for it all to go directly to Hashem, without leaving anything for themselves!

“She didn’t take half for herself and give half for Hashem; she didn’t even save some for the *limudei kodesh* education of her children—she gave it directly to Hashem, and gladly!

“This is a model to emulate, and there should be many more like her among *Yidden*—to give, and give joyfully. If they give more, that’s even better, but at least they should give the equivalent of \$5,000 to someone in her situation. As mentioned, this was done by people who were not educated with *mesiras nefesh* behind the Iron Curtain, rather in a country that is considered a materialistic country, where the dollar is above all else.”

Due to the unique circumstances of this donation, the Rebbe wanted to start something special in connection with the 20th anniversary of Chof Av, the *yom hilulah* of his father Harav Levi Yitzchok, who was *nistalek* in 5704*.


The Rebbe decried the unfortunate phenomenon that *melamdim* who taught *limudei kodesh* were treated worse than teachers who taught secular studies. Not only were they paid less money, the schools often gave them post-dated checks, which means that they could only benefit from them at a later time. This sorry state of affairs also impacts the attitude the children have to *limudei kodesh* versus their secular studies.

To correct this situation the Rebbe established a special fund called “Keren Levi Yitzchok” for *melamdim* to “cash in” their post-dated checks and thus alleviate their financial burdens, restoring the dignity they deserve.¹⁸

On Chof Av 5740* the Rebbe established *Kolel Tiferes Zekeinim Levi Yitzchok*, an organization to engage elderly *Yidden* in Torah study.¹⁹

“As it is customary to make a *magbis* every Chof Av for *Keren Levi Yitzchok*, the proceeds will be committed to an official financial participation in every new *kolel* that will be established.

Those that will be named ‘*Kolel Tiferes Zekeinim*’ will receive a token \$18 participation and those called ‘*Kolel Tiferes Zekeinim Levi Yitzchok*’ will receive a \$100 participation.”²⁰

Henceforth the proceeds of *Keren Levi Yitzchok* were dedicated to supporting Torah study.²¹ 

1. Toras Menachem vol. 10 page 130. See also Toras Menachem vol. 6 page 54.
2. When *Simchas Torah* occurred on Friday, the Rebbe would hold two *farbrengens* on *Shabbos Bereishis*. The first was held at the standard time after *Shacharis*, dedicated to *Shabbos Mevarchim*. The second one would be towards the end of *Shabbos*, as a continuation from the *Simchas Torah farbrengen* of the previous day, and it would conclude with *kos shel bracha*.
3. Toras Menachem *Hisvaaduyos* 5745 vol. 2 page 1169.
4. *Likkutei Sichos* vol. 2 page 651.
5. See *Igros Kodesh* vol. 10 page 112.
6. When liquids mix they are inseparable and indistinguishable.
7. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 21 page 376 (13 *Tishrei* 5718).
8. Toras Menachem *Hisvaaduyos* 5746 vol. 1 page 397.
9. *Sefer Haminhagim* page 69.
10. Toras Menachem vol. 24 page 167.
11. *Sefer Haminhagim* page 88.
12. Toras Menachem vol. 48 page 68.
13. Toras Shalom page 243.
14. *Sefer Haminhagim* page 74.
15. *Likkutei Sichos* vol. 2 page 538.
16. In the *sicha* the Rebbe clearly stated “I am not making an appeal.” However, this was the first time the model of passing out envelopes at the *farbrengen* was established by the Rebbe.
17. Toras Menachem vol. 6 page 54.
18. Toras Menachem vol. 40 page 325.
19. See *Derher Magazine* 71.
20. *Sichos Kodesh* 5740 vol. 3 page 902
21. Toras Menachem *Hisvaaduyos* 5742 vol. 4 page 2046.



Someone Who Cared

Rabbi Mendel Blachman
of Yeshivat Kerem B'Yavneh
related the following story.

I am not from a Lubavitcher family, to say the least. My *zeyde* learned in Volozhin and was a *dayan* in Grodno. My father prepared *shiurim* with Reb Shimon Shkop — we didn't exactly come from the Chassidische world.

B'hashgacha pratis, as an eleven-year-old boy I ended up learning in the Lubavitcher yeshiva on Bedford and Dean in the Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood of Brooklyn. For Shabbos, we would be sent off to eat with various families in Crown Heights. I was fortunate enough to be a *ben bayis* at the home of Reb Yochanon Gordon, who was the *gabbai* of 770.

We used to daven in 770 in the *small zal* upstairs. One day, my *menahel*, Rabbi Tenenbaum called me into his office and said, "The Rebbe says you're losing weight. And the Rebbe says that it's probably because you're too lazy to *bentch*, so you don't eat bread. The Rebbe says to assign two *bachurim* to make sure that you wash and eat bread at every meal."

The Rebbe was exactly correct.

This was something that changed my life. The Rebbe cared about a boy like me, who did not come from a Lubavitcher family, and I planned to stay just for three years and then go on to learn in Ponevezh. But the Rebbe was concerned about me and I will cherish it for the rest of my life.

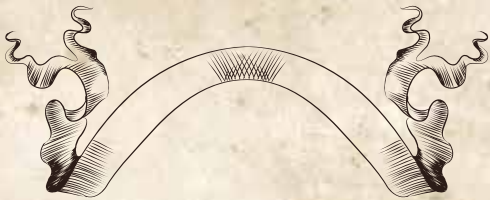
My bar mitzvah took place while I was learning in Lubavitcher Yeshiva. It was between Yom Kippur and Sukkos, a time when every Chossid wants to be near the Rebbe. So I told my parents, "I'll come home after Shabbos Bereishis and you'll do my bar mitzvah then."

Soon afterwards, I went into *yechidus* for the first time. The Rebbe went through my *pan* and asked me, "Do you know your *pshetl*?" I answered that I did. "Your father isn't here, so I will test you on your *pshetl*," the Rebbe said.

I was in awe — it was daunting, but at the same time, the Rebbe was telling me, "I'll be your substitute father." I somehow got through the *pshetl*, and then the Rebbe asked, "Nu, and what's with a *maamar*?" Again the Rebbe said that my father wasn't there to *farher* me on the *maamar*, so he would do so.

I began saying the *maamar*, and the Rebbe stopped me in the middle, saying that that was sufficient for the *farher*. Then the Rebbe called for Rabbi Gordon and said, "This boy will have his *aliyah* two days after Yom Kippur. His parents aren't here; we have to make him a party. Call Rabbi Simpson, Rabbi Jacobson, Rabbi Levitin; tell them to come after Shacharis and he'll *chazzer* the *maamar* in 770."

The Rebbe made me my bar mitzvah. 1



DANCING AND CRYING

TISHREI IN THE PRESENCE OF
HARAV LEVI YITZCHOK



לעילוי נשמת
ר' יצחק ליב
בן ר' חיים אהרן ע"ה
בלאק
נלב"ע ערב חגה"ס י"ד תשרי ה'תשע"ח
תנ"צ'בה

נדפס ע"י משפחתו שיחיו



SELECTIONS OF THIS ARTICLE ARE TAKEN FROM
REBBETZIN CHANA'S MEMOIRS BY KEHOT PUBLICATION SOCIETY

Hakafos in Yekaterinoslav, at the home of the rav, Harav Levi Yitzchok, was a momentous and unforgettable event for anyone who was *zoche* to attend. Years later, children from Yekaterinoslav would account their childhood visits to “the rav’s” house as a highlight of their warm, old-country memories, moments of genuine happiness and warmth in the cold and trying years of Czarist and then Communist Russia.

What stands out in these auspicious moments of the month of Tishrei in the presence of Harav Levi Yitzchok and Rebbetzin Chana was not just the extreme devotion, reverence, and joy that was exhibited throughout these special occasions. Nor was it just their acceptance of, and commitment to, the thousands of local Yidden and refugees from all over, spanning all stripes and backgrounds. Rather, it is the courage and determination that they displayed in the unique and demanding circumstances that beset them and the Jewish community, under the Bolshevik hammer in Yekaterinoslav and in the dank Russian prison cell, and following that, out in the central-Asian wasteland, exiled from their home and distanced from their flock.

A hint of this sentiment can be seen in a letter that Rebbetzin Chana received from two not-entirely-*frum chazanim* (see below, Tishrei 5695*) who spent the month of Tishrei in Yekaterinoslav in 5695*. They described their impression of *hakafos* by Harav Levi Yitzchok: “This is the first time in our lives we’ve witnessed a phenomenon like the rav of Yekaterinoslav, who even as he rejoiced on Yom Tov with extraordinarily joyous dancing was weeping with indescribable tears. Yet the tears impelled him to dance even more energetically!”

This unyielding spirit that Harav Levi Yitzchok lived by, served as an inspiration to everyone that

encountered him, both in his home town and on the road, and stirred many wandering and troubled Jews towards *teshuvah*.

Yekaterinoslav

The Yomim Tovim of Tishrei, serving as the head of the year in gravity, awe, and elation were quintessential moments in Harav Levi Yitzchok’s leadership and personal *hanhaga*.¹

Rebbetzin Chana described the respect and sympathy shown to her by the city’s Yidden after she returned from visiting Harav Levi Yitzchok in prison, noting that they fenced off Harav Levi Yitzchok’s seat in shul out of reverence, and continued to pay his salary. The greatest respect, though, is seen specifically in the impression Harav Levi Yitzchok left on the *kehillah*, as Rebbetzin Chana writes in her *zichronos*:

“During the years before his arrest, there had been some machlokes between him and some congregants concerning the nusach of the tefillos, tekias shofar on Rosh Hashanah even during the silent Musaf, holding hakafos on the nights of both Shemini Atzeres and Simchas Torah, and the like. Now, however, there were no differing opinions, and everything was conducted as if my husband was still present. Even his greatest erstwhile opponents now proclaimed that the rav’s wishes, whatever they were, should be followed.

“Later, when I related all this to my husband, he was deeply gratified and pleased with this report.

“Now the congregation and the chazan sang all the Yom Tov tunes that my husband would use for the prayers, and on Simchas Torah sang the niggunim he used to sing.”

Harav Levi Yitzchok’s imprint on the Yidden that he led can be found in numerous memoirs of Yekaterinoslav natives, who wrote longingly of their experiences with Harav Levi Yitzchok



RABBI PINCHOS GELMAN WHO FOR MANY YEARS SHARED THE POSITION OF RAV IN YEKATERINOSLAV WITH HARAV LEVI YITZCHOK.

and his family. The “rav’s house” is remembered as the beating heart of Yiddishkeit and Yidden in the city.

And undoubtedly, there is no period more fondly reminisced than the Yomim Tovim of Tishrei in his holy presence.

The Proletarian Minyan

In Rebbetzin Chana’s memoirs, she describes the happenings of Tishrei 5695*. This Tishrei was several years after the Communists took over, and at this point, the weight of the Soviet suppression of Yiddishkeit, both in feeling and in practice, was heavily felt by the Yidden in the city. The effects of the Bolshevik revolution impacted the *kehillah* from within just as from without.

Rebbetzin Chana describes the shul that remained open through this turbulent period, where Harav Levi Yitzchok davened during this specific *tekufah*:

“There were only two small shuls left in Dnepropetrovsk [the city’s new name], one at the edge of town and the other at the center. The latter had not been confiscated by the government because

its founders and congregants were working-class craftsmen.

"My husband, the rav, attended this shul. The gabbai was a tailor, the treasurer was a shoemaker, and most of the congregants practiced similar trades. These officials presided over their small 'kingdom,' which was then well within their capability.

"When the rav began attending the shul, he attracted new congregants from a more diverse background, and the administration soon found it too difficult to continue managing the shul. They had to remain at their posts, however, to ensure that the shul retained its strictly 'proletarian' character. Various amusing anecdotes could be told about how they operated the shul, but they aren't important enough to record.

"They declared their great deference and absolute respect for the rav. He had not been well-known to them until then, but when they got to know him, they agreed that he seemed to be 'a very fine Jew' who apparently wasn't close with the 'bourgeoisie,' and therefore could be fully trusted."

Rebbetzin Chana proceeds to explain how there were still chazanim around who were able to lead the tefillos on the Yomim Noraim, and what had brought them to Dnepropetrovsk and to Harav Levi Yitzchok:

"Virtually no practicing chazanim were left in the Soviet Union by then. Yet some Jews with a flair for Jewish music were familiar with the traditional nusach tunes of the Yom Tov tefillos and served as chazanim during the month of Tishrei. As employees of the government, they were entitled to one month's vacation a year. Accordingly, they scheduled their vacation for the month of Tishrei. They generally wouldn't remain in their home towns but traveled to other cities seeking an appointment to lead the tefillos in a shul.

"Expressed in these chazanim's prayers was their full year of pent-up,

deep-seated feelings.

"Two such chazanim came from Moscow to Yekaterinoslav for the Yomim Noraim and Sukkos. One was an opera singer, one of the theater's best performers. He dressed and looked like a typical stage performer.

"Accompanying him was another man who was more like a traditional shliach tzibbur. A bookkeeper at a government concern, he was a talented singer, and was also Torah-literate. He descended from the rav of Slavita.

"The performer, if I remember correctly, was a descendant of Reb Avraham 'the Malach,' who is buried in Fastov, near Kiev. His surname was Lieber, which he said was also his grandfather's family name.

"As a performer, his face was cosmetically made up and didn't sport even a mustache. But he would tell stories he heard from his grandfather and chasidische stories in general, with the 'broken heart' of a veteran Chossid.

"Both chazanim related that they had wanted to spend this month, which is filled with prayers, and its attendant inspiring atmosphere, in a traditional Jewish environment. While in Moscow, they heard of the rav's comportment in face of that era's difficulties and they decided to travel to Yekaterinoslav for

that month.

"Upon arriving, they visited my husband to seek his advice on how to secure paid positions as chazanim while at the same time using their talents to arouse and reinforce Jewish feelings—which the regime was trying to extinguish. 'That,' they explained, 'is why we have come to you, the rav.'

"Indeed, they were hired to lead the prayers of the Yomim Noraim and Sukkos in the shul where my husband davened.

"My writing abilities are far insufficient to describe our shul's inspiring atmosphere and the outpouring of the soul expressed there on those holy days under the influence of the rav and these two chazanim."

As this was the shul of the proletariat working class and they were under Soviet rule, many Yidden unfortunately went to work on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Unfazed, Harav Levi Yitzchok set up the minyan in a way that everybody would be able to attend and take part in the tefillos:

"Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur fell on weekdays when the congregants were required to report for work. My husband arranged an early 'first minyan' which completed its services by 8:00 a.m., after which its participants went straight to



A RECENT PHOTO OF JEWS GATHERED INSIDE THE SHUL IN DNEPROPETROVSK WHERE THE REBBE'S FATHER WAS RAV AND DAVENED. THE SHUL WAS CONFISCATED BY THE COMMUNISTS IN 5695* AND WAS RESTORED TO ITS ORIGINAL LOOK AFTER IT WAS RETURNED TO THE JEWISH COMMUNITY.

work.

“On Yom Kippur, however, they didn’t go home after work but returned to shul in time for Ne’ilah. For this tefilah, the shul was overcrowded, with many forced to stand outside. Everyone was exhausted from the fast and from having walked long distances. The physical strain was in addition to the spiritual agony from their awareness of the exalted day on which they had had to work, besides the heartbreakingly emotional prayers of the chazanim—all this was indescribable.

“The mispaleim expressed heartfelt thanks to my husband for making it possible for them to participate in congregational prayers on the Yomim Noraim, despite the early hour.

“Copious tears poured down my husband’s face as they spoke to him about this. Deriving intense satisfaction from their spiritual inspiration, he would comment with joy, ‘Oh, how special Yidden are!’

“We were afraid to discuss such subjects very much. But my husband was pleased to have accomplished all this.”

Harav Levi Yitzchok, who wouldn’t allow his community to not follow halacha, arranged with the chazanim that the tefillos would conclude only after the fast was over, ensuring that nobody would be *nichshal* in breaking the fast. Harav Levi Yitzchok stood up for this even against the blatant discontent from many of his *mispaleim*:

“Beginning after midday on Yom Kippur, my husband would diplomatically arrange the length of time the remaining services would take so that they should not end too early, for that would enable the congregants to leave for home and break their fast before it was over. Among the congregants were various types [from more frum to less so, and many wanted to break their fast as early as possible]. Other shuls in town finished much earlier, and to ensure that the same shouldn’t happen here, my husband arranged with the chazan

to stretch out the previous tefillos so that no time was left for singing during Neilah.

“One of the congregants, a craftsman who considered himself—and was so considered by others—a talmid chacham, became so incensed that my husband was keeping the congregation later than at other shuls, that he spoke out angrily against him. His audacity was somewhat mitigated by the fact that his outburst took place not at the front, eastern end of the shul [where the rav sat and the chazan led the tefillos], but near the exit. He pointed out that the rav was a descendant of a revolutionary against the government, who was imprisoned for sowing divisiveness, and now, like his ancestor, the rav was doing the same!

“All this was a great strain upon my husband. Even the finer congregants were unhappy with his extending the length of the davening, although they kept it to themselves. The more common elements, however, expressed their dissatisfaction openly. Yet my husband was truly gratified by what he was doing, although it was something he had to enforce, because—as he always said—he had accomplished that Jews should not do what was forbidden [breaking their fast when it was still Yom Kippur].”

The Rebbetzin goes on to describe Motzei Yom Kippur with Harav Levi Yitzchok. This is less of a look at his leadership, but more a peek into Harav Levi Yitzchok’s personal *hanhagah* and *avodah*.

“When my husband would return home after Yom Kippur, he couldn’t easily settle back into the everyday mundane existence. After coming home quite late in the evening, he drank only a glass of tea. Then he remained sitting, still garbed in his kittel and the gartel of his great-great-grandfather, the Tzemach Tzedek, to lead a *farbrengen* until two or three o’clock in the morning.

“This was his regular *minhag* on Motzei Yom Kippur, both when Jewish



YESHAYAHU SHER

life had been less constricted and later when Judaism could be practiced almost solely within the confines of one’s own home.

“Some of our friends were aware of my husband’s custom and they would eat a quick evening meal with their families before coming to our home. My husband would deliver a *maamar* on subjects connected with the tefillos of Yom Kippur. In later years he spoke about the great qualities of Yidden, their *mesiras nefesh* to observe *Yiddishkeit*, and how they expressed their love towards other Yidden in that difficult era.

“Ten or fifteen people always attended this *farbrengen*, which included dancing as enthusiastically as on *Simchas Torah*.”

Hakafos at the Rav’s Home

Following the passion-filled *Yomim Noraim* that Harav Levi Yitzchok led for the many Yidden of the city, came the joyous days of *Sukkos* and *Shemini Atzeres*, culminating in *hakafos* at the rav’s own home, which took place on the evening of *Simchas Torah*.

Yeshayahu Sher, a native son of Yekatrinoslav who later moved to Eretz Yisroel as a writer and educator, relates in his memoirs recollections

of the inspiring Simchas Torahs of his youth:

"I returned from hakafof in the Choral Shul and came right over to the rav's house. Before my eyes, I saw a great number of Chassidim twirling in circles of dance and song, an engulfing joy like this I have not known till today."

Among the many Chassidim he saw that night, Yeshayahu recalls seeing the Rebbe as a young man rejoicing with the Torah. This vision remained with him throughout his entire life:

"Before my eyes I observed the divine sight of Chassidim seeped with devotion and exhilaration, some dancing quite professionally on the tables and benches. Between the dancing Chassidim, I saw the rav's eldest son Menachem Mendel. The young and revered rav [see sidebar] was also dancing on the table, and he was singing joyous tunes from the Baal Hatanya and other Rebbes. (This Menachem Mendel is today's Lubavitcher Rebbe.) I walked out heading home inspired and excited, even though I myself was a son to a family of misnagdim."

Yeshayahu was just one of the multitudes of young and old, men and women, who stopped by Harav Levi Yitzchok's Simchas Torah *hakafof*. Yidden from all walks of life, bridging all political affiliations, found themselves drawn to Harav Levi Yitzchok. Chassidim and *misnagdim*, observant and not.

When Harav Levi Yitzchok was arrested in 5699* by a group of Soviet officials who audaciously took apart the home and rummaged through Harav Levi Yitzchok's possessions, Rebbetzin Chana recognized one of these insolent officials as a local Yid who only months earlier was a guest in their home and a participant in the Simchas Torah celebration.

While there may have been some guests who would not repay Harav Levi Yitzchok's hospitality in kind, a loyal friend was also formed one

Simchas Torah night. Dr. Landman served as a senior surgeon in a government hospital and took his vacation for the month of Tishrei. He traveled to Yekaterinoslav to celebrate in the famed rav's presence and to be uplifted by Harav Levi Yitzchok's Yom Tov and Simchas Torah, which he proceeded to do with great joy, igniting in his *Yiddishe* heart a flame of *kedusha* and gratitude.

Years later, in 5706*, Rebbetzin Chana was in the village of Kraskovo near Moscow, and since she was lacking legal registration and holding one of the most infamous last names in Russia, she was forced to find a new place to stay almost every night. Eventually, Rebbetzin Chana traveled to the nearby Malachovka, where Dr. Landman resided. The doctor received Rebbetzin Chana warmly and welcomed her into his home without fear, reminiscing his days in the presence of Harav Levi Yitzchok.

After getting a feel of the impact of Harav Levi Yitzchok's *hakafof* from the perspective of different community members, it is essential to bring the brilliant retelling of the night's energy from Rebbetzin Chana herself, continuing her description of Tishrei 5695*:

"Our spacious apartment had been confiscated by the authorities in 1929 (5689). The small official community that still existed in our city at the time built us an apartment of three small rooms in a privately owned property, because we were not permitted to reside anywhere else."

"Notwithstanding our small apartment, any Yid in the entire city who wished to rejoice on Yom Tov came to our home. After dark, young people would stealthily arrive as well. Due to the cramped conditions and the fact that none of our visitors wanted anyone else to know he was visiting the rav, they all tried to hide from everyone else. They used to visit in small groups, and my

husband spent time with each person separately, so that during the time they spent with him they were able to forget which country they lived in and under whose regime."

"The above-mentioned chazanim were also present. As a result of the Yom Tov tefillos and the farbrengens, the performer's attitude had changed from his original ulterior motive of earning money to a genuine heartfelt expression, which impacted and stirred all the congregants. He declared that his positive transformation was thanks solely to the rav."

"Following the chazanim's departure, I received a letter from them. After thanking me for various things, they wrote: 'This is the first time in our lives we've witnessed a phenomenon like the rav of Yekaterinoslav, who even as he rejoiced on Yom Tov with extraordinarily joyous dancing was weeping with indescribable tears. Yet the tears impelled him to dance even more energetically!'"

Another unique perspective which would be interesting to explore, is that of a Tomim who spent Simchas Torah with Harav Levi Yitzchok.

Reb Meir Itkin was a student in Tomchei Temimim in the small *chassidische* town Nevel. After a series of arrests had the *bochurim* dispersed to different towns and villages, a group of close to 20 *bochurim* arrived in Yekaterinoslav and set up a small yeshiva in an old shul in the outskirts of the city. The *bochurim* for the most part avoided the center of the city and made sure not to be seen with or near Harav Levi Yitzchok, out of fear of what the authorities might do to either of them.

There were a few exceptions though. On Hoshana Rabba 5690*, Reb Meir went to Harav Levi Yitzchok's home to make the *bracha* on his lulav and stayed in the center of town for Shemini Atzeres and Simchas Torah. Reb Meir described that there was a big farbrengen with a multitude

* 5699-1939, 5706-1946, 5695-1934



MRS. VERDINA SHLONSKY LIVED AS A CHILD DOWN THE HALL FROM THE HOME OF HARAV LEVI YITZCHOK AND REBBETZIN CHANA. SHE PUBLISHED HER MEMORIES OF THE SCHNEERSON HOME IN THE 'MAARIV' NEWSPAPER AND TRANSCRIBED THE NOTES TO TWO NIGGUNIM THAT STOOD OUT IN HER MEMORY (ONE OF WHICH IS THE FAMOUS HAKAFOS NIGGUN).

of people and Harav Levi Yitzchok cited the famous line “*Simchas Torah schadt nisht*—Simchas Torah doesn’t harm” [i.e. things that are said and done on Simchas Torah, even if they can cause a negative outcome if done at a regular time, when said on Simchas Torah, they don’t cause harm].

Harav Levi Yitzchok spoke at length to the crowd, and addressed the *bochurim* specifically for close to half an hour, expounding on deep concepts in Kabbalah. Reb Meir recalled one point that Harav Levi Yitzchok made, connecting the two meanings of the word “*prachim*,” flowers, and young men (aged 13 to 20, like *pirchei kehunah*), explaining that a person can truly sprout and grow in the teenage years, after they are already *mechuyav* in mitzvos on the one hand, but before they are really *chayav* in *onshin*.

The divine *simcha* found in all these

descriptions, the boundless joy and the spirited dancing were all set to the tune of the high-spirited “Harav Levi Yitzchok’s *Hakafos Niggun*,” a *niggun* that while traced back to the Alter Rebbe, was sung and popularized by Harav Levi Yitzchok. The Rebbe had a special *chavivus* for this *niggun*, and “Harav Levi Yitzchok’s *Niggun*” became a staple by the Rebbe and Chassidim, not only on Simchas Torah but at countless *farbrengens*, and in the later years, at almost every *farbrengen*.

Words of encouragement to the Temimim and words of inspiration to the entire community; an open home for anyone searching for a bit of *Chassidische* warmth and personal attention given to each and every visitor; all set to the outstanding rhythm of *simcha* displayed in “Harav Levi Yitzchok’s *Niggun*”; these portrayals provide a glimpse into the uniqueness of Simchas Torah with Harav Levi Yitzchok.

Yom Kippur In Captivity

Harav Levi Yitzchok’s work in Dnepropetrovsk that ultimately led to his arrest, and the ensuing harassment by the authorities that climaxed in his arrest and deportation to the distant and isolated villages of Kazakhstan, have been described at length in “*The Rav of Yekaterinoslav*” [A Chassidisher Derher, Menachem Av 5776].

But after describing Tishrei in Yekaterinoslav, we now take a look at the Yom Kippur of 5700* which Harav Levi Yitzchok spent in prison. This account of Harav Levi Yitzchok on Yom Kippur was told over by a *goyishe* cellmate to Rebbetzin Chana a few weeks after the events took place. This depiction allows us a small peek into Harav Levi Yitzchok’s *avodah* on this special day, with no *minyán*, no *Yidden*, and no *machzor*, just “*Yisrael*

u’Malka bilchudohi.”

In Rebbetzin Chana’s *zichronos*, she tells of various arrangements she made to ease Harav Levi Yitzchok’s suffering and assist him in celebrating the Yomim Tovim as best as possible:

“*Time passed in this way, until the month of Tishrei arrived. My husband’s turn to receive packages occurred on the day before Rosh Hashanah and on the day before Yom Kippur. This was comforting as I would be able to send him various foods—meat and fish—which would remind him somewhat of Yom Tov at home.*

“*In anticipation of Yom Kippur, I secretly requested from a Jewish doctor that worked there that he pay a visit to my husband. Indeed, late at night after Yom Kippur and havdalah he visited my husband’s cell, handed him a cigarette—quite a treat under the circumstances—and spent some time with him observing how he ate as he broke his fast.*”

Rebbetzin Chana goes on to describe the interesting messenger that arrived from Harav Levi Yitzchok, and his descriptions of Harav Levi Yitzchok’s *Yom Kippur avodah* and of course, his wellbeing:

“*One day, on an afternoon in the month of Cheshvan, a young man entered our home. He ascended the steps, walked into our apartment, and went straight to the dining room. He asked no one for directions; it was as if he knew the house well. The young man seated himself on a chair and introduced himself by asserting that if I breathe a word to anyone about his visit, we will both be in danger!*

“*Rachel, the girl who stayed in our home for many years, was present in the room when the man entered.*

“*—She was so devoted to us that she had pleaded with the NKVD agents that they arrest her and spare the rav, insisting that she will gladly, with all her heart, be imprisoned in his place for the entire term of his sentence.—*

“*When the young man noticed her,*

he said that her presence did not concern him, and proceeded to state that he wished to convey regards from 'Levik Zalmanovitch.' It is impossible to express in writing the feelings that I experienced at that moment...

"He continued: 'Your husband gave me an exact description of your home so that I would not need to ask anyone for directions, and would go unnoticed.

Levik Zalmanovitch was thirty-two days in solitary confinement and on the thirty-third day I was confined to that cell with him.'

"He was a Christian, and an engineer, who was released after six months of incarceration. Before his release, he promised my husband that as soon as he would return home and change out of his prison uniform, he

would bring regards from him. This he did, and immediately came to our home.

"He related that he had spent the month of Tishrei together with my husband. 'As long as I live, I will never forget his Yom Kippur. He wept and cried out aloud the entire day, reciting chapters of Psalms by heart until late at night. He didn't say a single word to me the entire day, and I didn't have the courage to

SELICHOS DURING WORLD WAR I

During World War I, Czar Nikolai II decreed that all Jews living in areas that were close to borders and were "suspect" of the possibility of collaborating with the German side, must uproot and move inland. The harsh decree didn't even leave time for the people to get their things in order, forcing them out of their homes within a 24-hour period. This mass banishment created a huge refugee crisis for the Jewish community across the Russian empire, with a sizable portion of these Jewish refugees exiled from their cities in Poland, Lithuania, and the Baltic states, settling in Yekaterinoslav.

Harav Levi Yitzchok and Rebbetzin Chana (with the help of their children) spearheaded a rescue and relief organization for the thousands. Harav Levi Yitzchok utilized his contacts and his influence with the powerful and the affluent, and Rebbetzin Chana oversaw the provision of food and shelter to the many displaced families.

One of the cruel and antisemitic decrees of the Czar was the order to take two "guarantors" from each community to ensure that none of the Jewish community members would engage in espionage for the German side, leaving no doubt as to what would happen to these "guarantors" if anyone would have the hint of a suspicion against any Jew of collaborating with the Germans.

These "guarantors" were picked up by the authorities and hoisted away to an unknown location. No one was able to contact them or even gain any information as of their whereabouts or wellbeing.

The scared and broken families of these "guarantors" who had just recently been banished from their homes, came crying to Harav Levi Yitzchok begging for help.

Harav Levi Yitzchok pulled every string, using his contacts with the Jewish well-fixed movers and shakers and the local authorities, finally being allowed to visit them. He was then granted permission to send them kosher food and a *sefer Torah*, and then finally arranged for them to be moved to one cell where they would be able to be together. At some point, Harav Levi Yitzchok succeeded in having them moved to a regular home where they were allowed regular visits and relative freedom, aside from two guards that remained on the premises.

The final release of these captive Yidden came after even more tireless work on Harav Levi Yitzchok's part, during the *yemei haselichos* of 5676*.

Harav Levi Yitzchok had these newly-released Yidden over for the first night of *selichos* in the shul across the street from his home. The joy and the gratitude of these few dozen Yidden that were released through Harav Levi Yitzchok's strenuous *hishtadlus* was indescribable.

The words "*Lechayim tovim mimcha nishaer*," were repeated a number of times by the emotional and animated "guarantors," and they pointed to their rescuer, Harav Levi Yitzchok, alluding to Harav Levi Yitzchok's assistance in granting them back their lives.



A JEWISH REFUGEE DURING WORLD WAR I.

initiate a conversation.’

“Later, when we were already in exile, my husband told me that not having a siddur or machzor on that Yom Kippur, he recited what he remembered by heart—which was enough to keep him occupied for the entire day.”

Kazakhstan

The account of Harav Levi Yitzchok’s last years in exile, the many tzaros that he suffered, and the stories of Rebbetzin Chana and the small number of Chassidim that assisted him, can be found in great detail in the aforementioned article. Here, we bring a heartening description of Harav Levi Yitzchok and Rebbetzin Chana’s last two Tishreis in Chi’ili, Kazakhstan, in the years 5703* and 5704*, the latter being Harav Levi Yitzchok’s final Tishrei in this world.

Rebbetzin Chana begins relating the happenings of Tishrei 5704*, contrasting them with those of the previous year, 5703*:

“The Yomim Tovim [Yomim Noraim of 5704*] approached. The previous year [5703*] we had davened on the Yomim Noraim locked inside our room, hidden away so that no one should see us.

“This year, however, the evacuated Jews had rented a room located far from the village center, to hold a minyan there. A Torah scroll had been sent to us from Kzyl-Orda, the regional capital, and a considerable crowd assembled—men and women, young and old, all kinds of Jews.

“My husband gave instructions on how everything should be conducted, and was regularly consulted on various details. He could not oversee all this openly, lest it jeopardize the entire project and place him in particular danger. But he paid no heed to this risk, and it all proceeded without mishap.”

Rebbetzin Chana describes the special unexpected assembly of diverse Yidden that ended up spending Yom

Kippur with Harav Levi Yitzchok the previous year:

“I recall how, on the previous Yom Kippur [5703*], only three of us had davened at our home, the third being the Jewish deportee who stayed with us every Yom Tov. I had brought a single machzor from home. I cannot possibly describe our feelings during those tefillos.

“In the middle of our davening, we noticed a young man trying to look through our window (although it was so well draped by a curtain that nothing was visible outside). We were frightened he might be a spy, and our guest was afraid to let him in. But my husband, zichrono livracha, unlocked the door and invited him in.

“It was a young Jewish deportee from Lithuania. He had no idea what had happened to his parents. He had been drafted here by the authorities for forced labor. A week earlier, while riding with his horse and wagon, he noticed my husband, and ‘saw something special on his face.’ He immediately decided to find out where he lived, so that he could ‘weep next to him on Yom Kippur.’ Over the past week, he had found out our address.

“The young man knew many of the Yom Kippur prayers by heart. He had been afraid to request the whole day off, so he worked until 11:00 a.m., riding around with his horse and wagon, and by 12:00 noon arrived at our address, after changing out of his workday clothes.

“Half an hour later, a frightened Jewish woman showed up. She had fled from Nikolayev with her husband, and living now just four kilometers from our village, had learned that we were living there.

“Her husband had declared that if G-d can so mistreat Jews, he had no desire to pray. But his wife insisted she now wanted to pray more than ever before in her life. She was fasting and had walked the four-kilometer distance, but was afraid to ask for our address,

because visiting a rabbi, especially a deportee, required utmost caution.

“Observing this gathering of Jews praying under such circumstances, each with a bitterly broken heart, I don’t know what else could evoke similar anguish.”

For Sukkos, Harav Levi Yitzchok outwitted the landlord, and managed to set up a sukkah:

“For a sukkah, we paid to build an ante-room to our room—ostensibly for the purpose of preventing cold winter air from blowing straight through our door. When our landlady demanded that we finish the room with a roof, we told her that presently we couldn’t afford it but would do so before the onset of the winter cold.”

Rebbetzin Chana continues describing Simchas Torah of the year 5703*, recounting the deep and emotional hakafof that Harav Levi Yitzchok celebrated alone with Rebbetzin Chana in their small room. Not having a Sefer Torah, Harav Levi Yitzchok conducted the hakafof with a Tanya and a volume of Mishnayos that Rebbetzin Chana managed to get from the Sefardic chacham in Alma Ata.

“We didn’t yet have a Torah in our possession. Our guest who ate his Yom Tov meals with us had found work as a night-watchman and had to spend his nights in the fields guarding the produce, so now he could come only during the day. Thus, only I was present with my husband in our room at night.

“The time of hakafof arrived. It is most difficult for an ordinary person like me to describe my husband’s emotional experience, as was evident on his face. He started reciting the customary pesukim preceding the actual hakafof—‘Ata Horeisa Lodaas Ki Hashem Hu Haelokim, Ein Od Milvado’—using the same tune he used back at home [in Dnepetrovsk], when he celebrated hakafof in shul together with many hundreds of Jews. The following night, he used to celebrate hakafof in our home



REBBETZIN CHANA AT A WEDDING. CIRCA EARLY 5720'S

with several dozen of those close to him. Whether at shul or at our home, it was not just [his] dancing—it seemed like the very paving stones danced along to his joy.

“Here, too, he enveloped himself with such joy. He recited every verse, and after every circuit he sang and danced, alone, to the niggun known in our hometown as ‘the Rav’s Niggun.’ He circled around in the narrow space in our room between his bed and the table, reciting the verses of the hakafof:

“Zach V’Yashar, Hoshiah Na... Tov U’meytiv Aneinu Be’yom Kareinu.’

“He wanted this to be pure joy, and his deep emotion was manifest in the words he recited:

“Yodea Machshavos, Hoshiah Na... Loveish Tzedakos, Aneinu Be’yom Kareinu.’

“This was a most difficult experience for me to endure. Sitting on a wooden stool in the corner, I observed the immensity and intensity of my husband’s love of the Torah as he danced away all the seven hakafof.

“Following hakafof on Simchas Torah morning, he recited ‘Sisu v’simchu b’Simchas Torah’ with similar enthusiasm.”

Nearly a year went by with a few developments, resulting in the Tishrei of 5704* being markedly different than the previous years, most noticeably in the fact that Harav Levi Yitzchok was once again able to lead the Yidden around him in the tefilos and hakafof, making this Tishrei an elevating period despite the difficult circumstances:

“This year [5704*], however, there were quite a number of evacuated Jews in our village, forming a small community.

“In Russia, during the month of Tishrei, even non-observant Jews become religiously oriented. Accordingly, people started to visit my husband, recognizing him as a central figure for religious affairs. Each had personal questions and requests. They included Jews from Bessarabia, Poland and many other places. Most were women, because the

Soviet occupational army in Bessarabia had deported entire Jewish families and, on their journey into exile, had separated women from their husbands, so now they were asking for help in locating their husbands. Everyone’s heart was utterly broken by their experiences.

“An exception was some evacuees from Moscow and similar cities, who were gratified that they had been spared from the danger of the war zone and had even managed to bring some of their possessions—which they immediately traded on the market. But they, too, found the cramped conditions, the primitive state of the homes, and the poor climate very difficult to tolerate.

“Many of the younger evacuees found employment in various concerns. But they were regarded with envy and lived in constant state of anxiety.

“From all these Jews, a large group assembled for tefillos of the Yomim Noraim. None were qualified to serve as a chazan, baal koreh, or baal tokeia. They were simple Jews and not Torah observant. We had received a sefer Torah, and I had brought a shofar from home. Since there was no one else, my husband performed all these functions himself. He performed it all with such deep emotion—‘kol atzmosai tomarna’—for he hadn’t had the benefit of such prayer for five years—the entire congregation in a refined state of spirituality, accompanied by copious weeping; it was absolutely awesome.

“The walk from the apartment where the prayers took place to our own room was quite a distance. We had to cross two ‘valleys,’ walking downhill and then uphill. On Motzei Yom Kippur, after kiddush levanah, when my husband walked into our room, I could barely recognize him—his face had so changed. But he was very happy at having successfully completed all the tefillos of the Yomim Noraim.

“For the first two days of Sukkos, tefillos could not be held at that apartment. For the final days, however, the

rental arrangements were renewed. It is impossible to describe that Simchas Torah's great joy—real dancing! Participating in the dancing and singing were Jews who back at home, had never done this. Many declared that spending Yom Tov together with my husband in shul enabled them to forget all their troubles,

as they felt only his inspirational effect upon them.

“Several participants even held special ‘kiddush’ celebrations in their quarters, inviting others to partake of food and drink. This didn’t happen in any of the surrounding towns; only in our village, because of my husband’s

presence there. People declared that they would never forget him.

“Witnessing my husband’s rejoicing, one could think he had never experienced any misfortune. But his face already betrayed his poor health. On the other hand, his spirit remained quite resolute.”

TISHREI WITH THE REBBE – MOMENTS FROM THE REBBE’S EARLY YEARS

While a dive into the Tishreis of the Rebbe’s youth and later as a *bochur* and a *yungerman* is really a discussion for itself, we will highlight a few Tishrei moments that the Rebbe experienced with or in connection to his parents.

The Rebbe’s first Tishreis were spent in his birth town of Nikolayev, and even after the family moved to Yekaterinoslav, Rebbetzin Chana would continue to visit her parents for parts of Tishrei in Nikolayev, where her father served as *rav*, and of course, the Rebbe and his brother came along as well.

Batsheva Althaus, daughter of the famous Chossid Reb Elye Chaim Althaus from Nikolayev described the frequent visits of the Rebbe’s family to Nikolayev, and shared a number of conversations she remembered from back then. Among the memories that stood out in her mind, was the sight of Rebbetzin Chana’s eldest son, the Rebbe, as a young child, dancing with extreme passion and *chayus* “just like the older Chassidim and possibly even more.”

It is interesting to note that this description of the Rebbe’s lively dancing, seen here at such a young age, is mentioned time and again in people’s memories of the Rebbe all throughout an array of times and places. Another such description is found in Rabbi Yitzchok Dubov’s letter from 5720*, describing his first encounter with the Rebbe during Tishrei 5689* in Riga at the Frierdiker Rebbe’s *hakafo*s: “The Rebbe, who at the point, behaved as ‘just’ one of people, went out of his limitations on Simchas Torah and allowed no one to rest, proclaiming ‘On Simchas Torah, we must dance the entire time, without any respite.’ It felt as if a burning fire was

coming forth from this quiet young man (the Rebbe).” A similar description is found in the recollections of a childhood family friend, Yeshayahu Sher, cited in the main article, where he describes the Rebbe’s dancing and the effect it had on him.

In Yeshayahu’s retelling, he refers to the Rebbe as “*harav hatza’ir*” [the young *rav*]. Incidentally, this title hints to an interesting document found that is also dated back to the month of Tishrei. It’s a memorandum from a meeting of the board of the Farbrichneh Shul in the industrial part of Yekaterinoslav, where they appointed the Rebbe, who was then only 17 years old, as the *rav* of their shul, to *pasken* questions of *issur v’heter* and learn with the congregants. While there is some lack of clarity how serious this *rabbanus* position was, and if this wasn’t just some formal documentation, it still shows very much on how Harav Levi Yitzchok’s *bechor*, the Rebbe, was viewed by the community.

Another important Sukkos moment in the Rebbe’s life as a young *bochur*, took place in the year 5683*, when the Rebbe traveled to Rostov for Sukkos. There he met for the first time his Rebbe and future father-in-Law, the Frierdiker Rebbe, a fact that the Rebbe shared with Rabbi Hodakov at some point in 5716*.



THE ORIGINAL INTERVIEW WITH REBBETZIN CHANA AS PUBLISHED IN ‘DI YIDDISHE HEIM’, KISLEV 5724*.

It is amazing to read the account of Harav Levi Yitzchok's last Tishrei *balma dein*. Keeping in mind the many long months and years of suffering they had been through and the isolated situation they still found themselves in—and accounting for Harav Levi Yitzchok's already worsening health condition and the fact that this Tishrei took place in middle of the horrifying destruction of Jewish Europe in World War II—Harav Levi Yitzchok and Rebbetzin Chana's resilience and spirit, serving as a fountain of *kedusha* and *chayus* that spread to all the surrounding Yidden, is a story that is powerful and telling, both about that specific Tishrei, but even more so about what Harav Levi Yitzchok stood for and exemplified.

Last Tishrei Together

Amid the final preparations for the Rebbe to leave Russia together with the Frieddiker Rebbe, the Rebbe traveled from Leningrad—where he had spent Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur with the Frieddiker Rebbe—to Dnepropetrovsk to spend Sukkos and Simchas Torah with his parents. This would turn out to be the last Yom Tov the Rebbe spent with his father, and the last time they would see each other.

Rebbetzin Chana described in an interview to “Di Yiddishe Heim,” the mixed feelings they all had that Yom Tov. No one aside from Harav Levi Yitzchok, Rebbetzin Chana, and the Rebbe, knew that the Rebbe would be leaving soon, and the sadness that lurked under the surface.

The Rebbe was extraordinarily happy and cheerful and infused everyone else with this joy both in the shul and in their home. The family danced and sang with extra *chayus*, masking their true feelings, trying to

THE REBBE'S PASSPORT WHICH WAS USED TO LEAVE RUSSIA AT THE END OF TISHREI 5688



achieve extra happiness no matter the situation.

Among the people that the Rebbe danced with was a wandering Kotzker Chossid who, oblivious to the situation, sang a *niggun* that he brought with him. The *niggun* with seemingly innocent words was like salt on their wounds, bringing to the forefront the emotions they were struggling to hide. “Yankel is going out to a long road, to a long road, without a penny in his pocket, Yankel returns home from the distant road, and his pockets are full!”

“The son (the Rebbe), danced for a while in one circle with this Kotzker Chossid but every time I caught a

glimpse of my son's face, I saw how painful it was for him to need to leave us... but they also said, so to speak, Mother, don't worry...”

On Isru Chag, Thursday, the Rebbe traveled with his mother from Dnepropetrovsk and arrived a few days later in Leningrad, from where the Rebbe followed the Frieddiker Rebbe, who had left just a few days earlier, crossing the border to Latvia on the following Tuesday, 29 Tishrei 5688*. ①

1. For more about the story of Harav Levi Yitzchok and his leadership, see *A Towering Giant*, Derher Menachem-Av 5782.

לזכות
החיילת בצבאות ה'
שיינא תח"ל ראפארט
לרגל יום הולדתה ט' תשרי

נדפס ע"י זקיניה
הרה"ת ר' יוסף יצחק אהרן וזוגתו
מרת נחמה ביילא ומשפחתם שיחיו
בראקמאן

PRACTICAL HORA'OS

A CLOSER
LOOK AT
SOME OF
THE REBBE'S
HORA'OS

SILK ON SHABBOS

A PRACTICE OF CHASSIDIM
WITH DEEP SIGNIFICANCE

The *kapote* or *sirtuk*, the traditional coat Chassidim wore for generations, is customarily worn on Shabbos, Yom Tov, and many other special occasions.

Historically, Chassidim were meticulous to wear a *kapote* made of silk on Shabbos. Yet throughout the generations, especially due to the tremendous financial strain on Chassidim in Russia, this practice became less common, and even rare and unknown.

Beginning in the earliest years of the Rebbe's *nesius*, he began encouraging Chassidim to once again adopt this practice of wearing silk on Shabbos.

"ZAI DENE ZUPITZE"

During the farbrengen of Simchas Torah 5711*, the Rebbe instructed Reb Menachem Zev Halevi Greenglass to wear his *sirtuk* inside-out. The next day, he asked the Rebbe for an explanation; was the Rebbe implying that he was not worthy of wearing a silk *kapote*?

The Rebbe replied that his intention was so that the atmosphere of Simchas Torah should be more evident. And with regards to the *sirtuk* itself, on the contrary!

The Rebbe continued: "It should be instituted that all *yungerleit* wear silk *kapotes* on Shabbos and Yom Tov, and *yasher kocham* to those who do so."

The Rebbe explained that the custom of wearing silk on Shabbos is actually clearly explained in a *maamar* of the Rebbe Rashab (see below). In addition, the Rebbe said, as Chassidim, we must act in a way of "וּנְפַלְיֵנוּ" that we are unique. This expresses itself in wearing silk ("זיידענע זופיעעס") on Shabbos.

The Rebbe continued, "I am surprised that Chassidim, like so-and-so, do not wear silk *kapotes* on Shabbos. The reason for [their actions] this is seemingly because of the poverty in Russia, which made it impossible to wear silk *kapotes*."

"In any event, the time has come to start wearing silk *kapotes*, and it will gradually be instituted as a custom for all—that all *yungerleit* wear silk *kapotes* on Shabbos and Yom Tov."

Smiling, the Rebbe added, "This is even though I myself still wear a '*pinjak*' (a short jacket) on weekdays."¹

SILK SIGNIFICANCE

In a footnote to a *maamar*, the Rebbe Rashab explains the practice of wearing silk on Shabbos: On Shabbos, a revelation of *Olam Habriah* comes into the world,




UNTIL 5750*, THE REBBE WOULD NOT WEAR A SILK KAPOTE REGULARLY DURING THE WEEK. THE EXCEPTION WAS ON SPECIAL OCCASIONS, SUCH AS FARBRENGENS, LAG B'OMER PARADES, ETC.

in contrast with the weekday. Therefore, one should be meticulous to wear clothing made from animals — *chai* — who correspond with the world of *Briah*.²

This explanation should, seemingly, exclude materials such as cotton or flax as they grow from the ground.

Taking this a step further, the Rebbe explained that silk has an advantage over any other materials that come from animals, even wool. Although wool comes from sheep, it is the *tzomeach* of the sheep, a material that grows from it, and not the sheep itself. Silk on the other hand, comes from the silkworm itself, making it the ultimate *chai*, and is thus the most appropriate to wear on Shabbos.³

An additional reason the Rebbe gave: The Rabbeim would customarily wear silk on Shabbos. A custom that a Rebbe practices in public serves as a lesson for Chassidim and should be followed.⁴ 

1. Toras Menachem 5711 vol. 1 pg. 53.
2. Sefer Hamaamarim 5662 pg. 231 (older version). The Rebbe Rashab cites the Mikdash Melech as a source for this custom, although we don't find mention of it in this sefer. It was recently discovered in the Kehilas Yaakov, a sefer often cited by the Rebbe Maharash and the Rebbe Rashab.
3. Toras Menachem 5715 vol. 1 pg. 309.
4. Toras Menachem 5748 vol. 4 pg. 304.
5. Beis Chayeinu 5752 issue 121 pg. 27.

DURING THE WEEK

Harav Efrayim Yolles, a distinguished rav from Philadelphia, would visit the Rebbe annually during Chol Hamoed Pesach, meriting a special *yechidus*.

During his 5747* visit, the Rebbe noticed that his grandchild was wearing silk. The Rebbe asked: “Is it your custom to wear silk during the weekdays?”

Rav Yolles replied: “They wear a *chalat*. It's not silk or wool.”

The Rebbe said: “I would have been more glad if you said that you wear silk during the weekdays as well. [Wearing] silk is connected to Chassidus.”

Rav Yolles replied: “Yes, I heard from Chassidim that the Rebbe spoke about the importance of wearing silk in the first years.”⁵

A ROUNDTABLE

HAK HISVAADUS



E DISCUSSION

THE CHASSIDIM

לע"נ
הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' שמעון
בהר"ר שמואל זאנוויל הי"ד
גאלדמאן
גלב"ע כ"ט תשרי ה'תשע"ז

ולע"נ זוגתו
מרת אסתר
בת הרה"ח ר' יוחנן ע"ה
גלב"ע טו"ב תשרי ה'תשע"ד

ולע"נ
ר' יצחק יעקב
ב"ר משה ע"ה
סימאן
גלב"ע ד' אדר א' ה'תשע"ט
תנ"צ'ב'ה'

*In honor of Shnas Hakhel—5783, A Chassidisher Derher sat down for an in-depth discussion with **Rabbi Yosef Greenberg**, Anchorage, AK, **Rabbi Shmuel Greisman**, Yerushalayim, **Rabbi Avrohom Mann**, Toronto, ON, **Rabbi Mendel Raskin** Côte S.-Luc, QC, and **Rabbi Levi Slonim**, Binghamton, NY, about Hakhel with the Rebbe and how we all can and must get involved in this special mitvza.*

Can you share with us some of your memories of Hakhel with the Rebbe?

 **Rabbi Mendel Raskin:**

The first year of Hakhel with the Rebbe that I remember was 5741*. That year the Rebbe surprised us with a new initiative of taking to the streets and dancing all night long for *simchas beis hashoevah*. The Rebbe took Hakhel as we knew it to a whole new level. The whole model of Sukkos changed from that year on. On each night of Sukkos, the Rebbe would speak a *sicha* prior to the dancing of *simchas beis hashoevah*. We felt that the *melech* was speaking to us just as the mitzvah of Hakhel was performed in the times of the *Beis Hamikdash*.

In 5748* the Rebbe took Hakhel to even greater heights and intensity. That year the Rebbe held all four of the *daled minim* including the esrog for the entire Hallel, explaining that because of Hakhel he changed from his usual *minhag* to only hold the lulav (as was the custom of the Friediker Rebbe) and instead expressed the unity of all four representations of Yidden.

Throughout the *sichos*, Hakhel was a constant theme. The Rebbe made mention that when the king spoke to the nation at Hakhel, everyone had to be there without exception. Even at the typical *shalosh regalim* not everyone attended. The Rambam writes about Hakhel that we have to listen to the king “with awe, fear and trepidation just as when the Torah was given on Har Sinai.” The Rambam continues: “Even great *chachamim* who know the entire Torah, they too must listen with great intent (*bekavanah gedolah yeseirah*).”

The Rebbe explained that when the *chachamim* listen to the *melech* reading



CHASSIDIM DANCE ON KINGSTON AVE. DURING CHOL HAMOED SUKKOS 5741*, THE YEAR THE REBBE STARTED THIS INITIATIVE.

from the Torah, the intention is not for them to gain more knowledge, for they are already *chachamim gedolim*! The goal is to improve the “*kavanah yeseirah*” – increased attentiveness.

The concept of Hakhel, says the Rebbe, is to bring us back to Har Sinai, so to speak, and once again listen to the Torah as it is taught *mipi haGevurah*, resulting in *lechazek das haemes*—strengthening our true understanding in *Elokus*.

The Rebbe saw that we are nearing the time of the third *Beis Hamikdash*. As a preparation (similar to what started seven years earlier - dancing each night of Sukkos for the *simchas beis hashoevah*) he instituted that we make Hakhel gatherings, encouraging that we maximize our efforts in making as many as possible.

Although the mitzvah of Hakhel in the *Beis Hamikdash* was only on Sukkos, the Rebbe said that gatherings should be made throughout the entire *shnas Hakhel*. All through the year the Rebbe kept encouraging

us to make another Hakhel and another. When it came the month of Elul, the Rebbe said that we should use the time we have left and make as many Hakhels as possible. The Rebbe took a forgotten mitzvah and made a huge *shturem* out of it.

The Rebbe said that every one of us plays a role as a leader in one way or another. Whether it is a rav in a shul, parents in their family, a boss at work or community leaders in their communities, everyone has an audience to which they must give over the message of Hashem during the year of Hakhel.

We saw clearly how the Rebbe lifted up the whole world during this year (5748*). Throughout the Hakhel years with the Rebbe, we find a new “message from the *melech*” in each one. In 5727* the Rebbe launched *mitvza tefillin*. Tefillin was not just another one of the campaigns; as we all know it took the world by storm. There are countless Jews whose lives have been transformed through it. In 5734*, another Hakhel year, the Rebbe



came out with five of the *mitvzoim*. In 5741* the Rebbe started Tzivos Hashem, *simchas beis hashoevah*, and *ois b'sefer Torah*. In 5748* of course came the actual mitvza of Hakhel!

🎙️ Rabbi Avrohom Mann:

Tishrei with the Rebbe in the year 5748* was an extraordinary experience. Every *sicha* was infused with Hakhel.

The Rebbe referred to 5748* as a *keitz*. *Hakafos* that year was unreal. I spent many Tishrei months in the Rebbe's presence and each was uplifting and special but none were like 5748*. Even my father—who had spent the Yomim Tovim of Tishrei each year with the Rebbe since 5728*—said that he never saw anything like 5748*.

The simcha was beyond anything one can imagine. For example, the Rebbe had a big *koch* in Harav Levi Yitzchok's *hakafos niggun*. During the three day Yom Tov of Shemini Atzeres, Simchas Torah and Shabbos Bereishis the Rebbe started it 18 times! Usually

at the end of *kos shel bracha* the Rebbe would give us a short *bracha*. This time the *bracha* was wishing us success with making Hakhel gatherings.

Would more people than usual come to the Rebbe during years of Hakhel?

🎙️ Rabbi Raskin:

Absolutely! 770 was noticeably more full during Hakhel years, especially for the month of Tishrei. Being by the Rebbe during Hakhel we felt that the Rebbe picked us up and put us in the Beis Hamikdash. Each night we would hear a *sicha* from the *melech* after which we danced at *simchas beis hashoevah* all through the night.

The same applies today, we need to bring people to the *melech*, to bring Yidden to the Rebbe. We also need to connect people to the Rebbe's Torah. The idea of Hakhel is that the *melech* speaks and everyone listens. Surely this is the time more than ever that we need to listen to the Rebbe, learn his Torah and bring other Yidden to the Rebbe and teach them his Torah.

During the Kinus Hashluchim of 5748* the Rebbe distributed *kuntreisim* to the shluchim. A shliach from Brazil was present and upon giving him the *kuntres* the Rebbe mentioned how it was nice to see him here after his being absent for the past 15 years. Being accustomed to visiting the Rebbe every two to three years, the shliach was confused by the Rebbe's words. After asking a few people for an explanation without receiving a satisfactory answer, he decided to ask the Rebbe the meaning of his words.

On one of his letters he received back from the Rebbe the following was written: "Regarding what I said about not seeing you for 15 years, this comes in relation to what I've been

speaking about lately at great length, about Hakhel, and in connection with the last two Hakhels [i.e. he had not been by the Rebbe during those Hakhel years]. You should be *mevatel* this *chazakah* by your visit now."

Indeed, upon investigation, it turned out that from the year 5719* till the year 5748* he had missed two Hakhel years. Each time he didn't come for Hakhel, it was like he wasn't by the Rebbe for 7 years!

Can you share with us some of what the *bochurim* did in connection with the shturem of Hakhel?

🎙️ Rabbi Mann:

That year (5748*) I learned in the yeshiva in Kiryat Gat. Each week we would go to different local shuls and *chazer* Chassidus in connection with Hakhel. I only missed two weeks. *Bochurim* would look for every opportunity to make Hakhel

In the *shalshes hayachas* of Hayom Yom, the Rebbe added in *ksav yad kodesh* on the year 5741*:
 "מעורר שהשנה שנת הקהל"
 "האנשים נשים והטף"

gatherings; in other communities, in shuls, and among the *bochurim* themselves. During *bein hazmanim* I would go home to Yerushalayim. It was hard to find shuls there that would allow us to speak but we would go to every last shul we possibly could and make Hakhels. *Bochurim* looked for every opportunity to *ker a velt*.

🕯️ **Rabbi Raskin:**

In 5748* I was already on shlichus. We tried to make as many Hakhel gatherings as possible. We started a weekly *Hakhel melaveh malkah* where we would sing *niggunim* and share *divrei Torah*. Many *baalei teshuva* were inspired by these gatherings.

Aside from the gatherings that we made, we also asked the *mekuravim* to make their own Hakhel gatherings in their own homes, and that they should have one of the participants prepare a *dvar Torah* to share. As per the Rebbe's instructions, we made cards for each person to fill out with their Hakhel commitments.

Are there any special expressions the Rebbe used about Hakhel which stand out in your mind?

🕯️ **Rabbi Mann:**

I remember Shabbos Bereishis 5748*, when the Rebbe spoke about Hakhel according to *nigleh*, and asked, why is it that we don't make a *zecher* for Hakhel? The explanation the Rebbe gave was that the entire idea of Hakhel is to add in our *yiras Shamayim*. When we make a *zecher* of something, whatever it may be, we make it noticeable that the action we're doing is merely a remembrance and not the thing itself. When we come together for Hakhel, however,



A HAKHEL GATHERING OF THE BOCHURIM IN KIRYAT GAT IN 5748*.

we strengthen each other in our *yiras Shamayim*. Hence, it is no longer a *zecher*, this is Hakhel itself!

🕯️ **Rabbi Raskin:**

The Rebbe once expressed himself saying that it is not enough that we don't stand on the side as spectators; Hakhel should involve us to the point that we are perceived by others as a "Hakhel Yid!" When we walk down the street, people notice and say, "look there goes a 'Hakhel Jew.'" That is an expression (amongst others) which really caught my attention and I'm sure it had a similar effect on others. The Rebbe wants Hakhel to be not only something that we take part in, internalize, and take to action; he wants Hakhel to really transform who we are and bring us to a better, more refined place.

A mitzvah that was seemingly so far removed from our reality, physically and even spiritually, the Rebbe brought down to our realm, making it the focal point of the entire year.

What sets a Hakhel gathering apart

from every other gathering?

🕯️ **Rabbi Raskin:**

One of the things that is unique about Hakhel in contrast to usual events, is that the Rebbe asked that every person initiate Hakhel gatherings. Every individual has their own circle that they can bring together and have an impact on.

Of course in Yiddishkeit our daily routine is full of gatherings, beginning with davening three times a day with a *minyan*. But Hakhel is a time when we must invest extra effort in strengthening the gatherings, both in quantity of events, as well as pushing more people to join in the various *kinusim*.

We should look for opportunities whenever and with whomever we can to make Hakhel gatherings; be it Shabbos, Yom Tov, Chanukah, Purim, or just a regular day of the week. It might be assembling our family together and sharing a *dvar Torah*, or arranging a meeting of people that we are acquainted with to watch a video of the Rebbe. The idea is Yidden coming together for the purpose of strengthening *yiras Shamayim*.

After Simchas Torah 5741*, the

Rebbe sent out a *michtav kloli* calling for the *shturem* in Hakhel to be brought to action. The practical suggestion for the gatherings which the Rebbe advises in the letter addressed to each of us, is to learn from the weekly *parsha* and give *tzedakah* in increments of ten. There is an abundance of *sichos* from the Rebbe with beautiful explanations on Hakhel, connecting Hakhel to the weekly *parsha* and so many other parts of Torah. Sharing these eternal messages is surely a great way to celebrate Hakhel.

Can you share with us what you did in your *makom hashlichus* last Hakhel?

Rabbi Raskin:

Together with other shluchim in the area, we hosted a joint mega Hakhel event, where all the local Chabad House and *anash* communities came together. We pulled together

a crowd of over 1,000 people from all over and all age groups *baruch Hashem*. A few dignified guests addressed the audience, along with several inspirational video presentations and clips of the Rebbe. We encouraged everyone to take on their own Hakhel resolution of bringing Yidden together, and we distributed personal commitment cards for people to fill. Many individuals did just that, and with Hashem's help the project was a success.

The greatest manifestation of the Rebbe's call to Hakhel that I've seen, took shape seven years ago, last time around. The amount of *koch* and diligence that was witnessed of Chassidim heeding the Rebbe's call to action in the *mitvza* of Hakhel was more than ever before.

I'm sure the same happened in communities all over the world last Hakhel and this year the work will double and triple.

Specifically now, in a time when sadly we don't hear the Rebbe's far-brengens, we unite and observe the mitzvah of Hakhel as a preparation

and a heartfelt plea to Hashem that we finally merit to experience the ultimate Hakhel, with the true *למען ילמדו למען ישמעו* directly from our Rebbe.

Rabbi Slonim:

What we did in Binghamton last Hakhel year: Firstly, we sat down and brainstormed ways that we can really fulfill what the Rebbe wants in regard to Hakhel. What can we do on campus that will create a true appreciation for Hakhel by the students, and that will draw together as many people as possible. We put a lot of thought into it and came up with a project called "Unite 4 Purpose."

We empowered students to create their own Hakhel gatherings. We started off with a kickoff event for the organizers of the Hakhels, we explained the idea, and gave them the resources needed including food and several options of content to speak about during the Hakhels, etc.

We also gave them talking points to explain to others - in a concise, thorough and relatable manner - the idea of Hakhel and its importance.



MOTZEI SIMCHAS TORAH 5748*.

We gave the participating student organizers cards where they can fill out how many gatherings they will make, and other Hakhel initiatives that they would like to take on. After a two week interval, we held a larger unity event where the organizers each brought their groups of people to participate in an inspiring program themed around Hakhel and the importance of unity.

(A bit earlier in the year, during Sukkos, we actually had a group of students dress up and reenact Hakhel as it would have been in the *Beis Hamikdash*. That was a cute idea that turned out really nice.)

“Unite 4 Purpose” created a big *shturem* on campus. Most students, even if they came from an observant home, had never heard of Hakhel. It created a buzz. There was a lot of talk and excitement about it. There were certain people that were reached through this initiative that wouldn’t usually come to Chabad, but Hakhel brought them through the door.

In general, we always try to empower students to do *mitvzoim*, whether on Chanukah to distribute menorahs, or to join us on *mitvza lulav*, etc. but this was something special. A lot of time was spent creating all the material and talking points and we consulted with a professional to come up with the name “Unite 4 Purpose.” We wanted something that would be interesting, that would also speak to the heart of the purpose of Hakhel.

We hoped and tried to achieve two things at the same time: To inspire people to do their own Hakhels, and to have one large Hakhel with everyone together. We had a committee that ran it and got other friends involved but eventually many more students got involved.

Shluchim are always doing events, especially shluchim on campus. For example every year we host Shabbat

2000 where we bring 2000 Jewish students together for Friday night. However, we didn’t want to just get up at the event and say that the event is in honor of Hakhel. It would just go through one ear and out the other.

We wanted to do something special and unique that would create an impression on the students that this is something that we are doing specifically for Hakhel without any other reason. When someone shows up to one of these events they know that it is not happening because of Shabbos or Chanukah or any other occasion. It is happening solely for the purpose of Hakhel. *Baruch Hashem* we saw first hand that it is possible to achieve, we just need to put in some effort.

With Hashem’s help all of the wonderful *peulos* in Hakhel that we have already done, and continue to do will cause the Rebbe much *nachas*, and will bring about the ultimate Hakhel speedily with the coming of Moshiach.

Rabbi Shmuel Greisman, thank you so much for joining us. Can you share with us some insight on the connection

between the *Sefer Torah L'yaldei Yisroel* and Hakhel?

The connection between the *Sefer Torah L'yaldei Yisroel* and Hakhel can be found in many of the *sichos* on the topic. One of the things that is mentioned, is that the writing of a *sefer Torah* is considered a mini-Har Sinai, and Hakhel as well is connected to Har Sinai.

The launching of the *Sefer Torah L'yaldei Yisroel* was at the farbrengen of Yud-Aleph Nissan 5741*. The Rebbe explained that the purpose of the campaign was not just fulfilling the mitzvah of *ksivas sefer Torah*, although that is also accomplished through buying letters in a *sefer Torah*. Rather, the purpose here is the unity of Jewish children.

The Rebbe stated that *klal Yisroel* is in need of *bracha*. The *achdus* of *yaldei Yisroel* will bring the *brachos* the Jewish nation needs at the present time.

In the farbrengen of Parshas Behaaloscha 5741*, the Rebbe explains that when the king would read the Torah at Hakhel, parents would bring their children, even newborn babies, connecting them too with Hakhel and “*kol divrei haTorah*” which the *melech* would read. Therefore, the Rebbe says, the *Sefer Torah L'yaldei*



THOUSANDS OF STUDENTS GATHER FOR A HAKHEL EVENT IN BINGHAMTON N.Y., 5776*.

Yisroel should be completed in the year of Hakhel, and in the old city of Yerushalayim, which connects all Yidden and makes them one entity.

The Rebbe added that when Moshiach will come, he will read both in *Moshiach's Sefer Torah* as well as the *Sefer Torah Lyaldei Yisroel*.

The Rebbe instructed that the *sefer Torah* be written in the Tzemach Tzedek Shul and that it should be completed on the last day of the Hakhel year—Erev Rosh Hashanah—which is also the birthday of the Tzemach Tzedek. Erev Rosh Hashanah that year was on a Monday, a *yom hakriah*. The Rebbe pointed out that together with finishing the *sefer Torah* we will also be able to fulfill the “*velamdah*” through reading from the Torah itself.

Everyone got very involved, and we sold all the letters by the end of Tammuz! Therefore, upon the Rebbe's directive, the *siyum* was held earlier, on Chof Av.

When the second *sefer Torah* was nearing completion in 5746*, we weren't sure where the *siyum* should take place: Should it be held in Tzemach Tzedek Shul like the previous one or perhaps we should do it in the 770 of Kfar Chabad which had been recently completed. I presented the Rebbe the question, to which he responded by underlining that it should be completed just as the first one in the Tzemach Tzedek Shul.

The third *sefer Torah* was written after Gimmel Tammuz, and we held the *siyum* the same way the Rebbe had instructed us with the first and second Torahs, in the Tzemach Tzedek Shul in Yerushalayim. The same followed for the subsequent four *Sifrei Torah Lyaldei Yisroel*.

If you go to the Tzemach Tzedek Shul and open the *aron kodesh*, there are *Sifrei Torah Lyaldei Yisroel* with more than two million children's letters. There is literally a Hakhel of two million



A SIYUM SEFER TORAH L'YALDEI YISROEL IN THE TZEMACH TZEDEK SHUL IN YERUSHALAYIM.

children all in one *aron kodesh!*

Now we are more than a third of the way into the eighth *sefer Torah*. If all of *anash* get involved in getting children signed up to the *Sefer Torah Lyaldei Yisroel*—if every Lubavitcher gets 10 or 15 children to buy an *ois b'sefer Torah*—we can have an eighth *Sefer Torah Lyaldei Yisroel* concluded in this year of Hakhel! Chazal say: “אין בן דוד בא אלא במוצאי שביעית”—it is in our hands to make it happen.

🕯 *Rabbi Raskin:*

I would like to add that in the *farbrengen* of Shabbos Parshas Noach 5748*, the Rebbe connected the idea of *siyum sefer Torah*—that week a *sefer Torah* which was written in honor of the Rebbe was being finished—to Hakhel. The Rebbe explained that the last words we write in a Torah are “*kol Yisroel*,” an indicator to the concept of Hakhel.

We are joined by Rabbi Yosef Greenberg who was involved in the “Hakhel Office,” established in

accordance with the Rebbe's instruction in 5748*. Rabbi Greenberg thank you for joining us. Can you bring us into that world and tell us about the efforts you had a part in?

🕯 *Rabbi Yosef Greenberg:*

Mivtza Hakhel 5748* was one of the biggest *mivtzoim* in the 5740s*. The reason for that is because the Rebbe kept speaking about it with such intense fervor and perpetuated the *mivtza* through an entire year and even further.

The *shturem* the Rebbe made about Hakhel reached and affected everyone. You just couldn't possibly stay away from it; the *michtav kloli*, the *farbrengens*, the *yechidus klolis* and everything else, was all Hakhel. The Rebbe placed a great emphasis on Hakhel, elaborating on every aspect; from the essence of the *mitzvah* and its halachic implications, through the minutest

details of *mitvza Hakhel* by which the Rebbe charged every Yid to apply Hakhel to every part of their lives.

The first meeting we (the *bochurim*) convened to make a plan of action was on Motzei Shabbos Bereishis. The Rebbe asked that there be a person designated to be in charge of the *mitvza*. Reb Yonoson Hackner agreed to fill that position on condition that we would help him. Zalman Liberow, Yoskeh Meizlish and I ran the operations of *mateh Hakhel* throughout the year.

The Torah of the Rebbe on Hakhel is spread through tens of *farbren-gens*, *igros*, *reshimos* and *yechidusen*, so I put together a booklet covering the points that the Rebbe spoke over Tishrei and added *biurim* that the Rebbe gave in previous years.

The Rebbe expounded with tremendous detail addressing even the “smallest” specifics. To name a few:

The personal resolution cards that he suggested were to have space for the person to write his or her name

and mother’s name, address, phone number, and that they accept upon themselves to make a Hakhel gathering. There should also be a space for a person to give permission to be called once a month to be asked what they’ve done. Each community should appoint someone to collect the Hakhel cards and organize them, and to check on their progress.

The Rebbe explained that there are several advantages to having the cards:

1. They will give a feeling of responsibility to fulfill the resolutions.
2. They will add in *achdus Yisroel* because many are doing it.
3. They will encourage more people to do it because they’ll see others doing it.
4. Each *yochid* will feel like they are part of something *merkazi* (central) and know that if an *eitzah tovah* is needed, there is somewhere to turn to for help.

The Rebbe said that it should be published in the newspapers. Additionally, every school should have

their own Hakhel; same with every community. If there is a neighborhood with many congregations, they should all have one big Hakhel together and it should be done in a way that all the institutions work together.

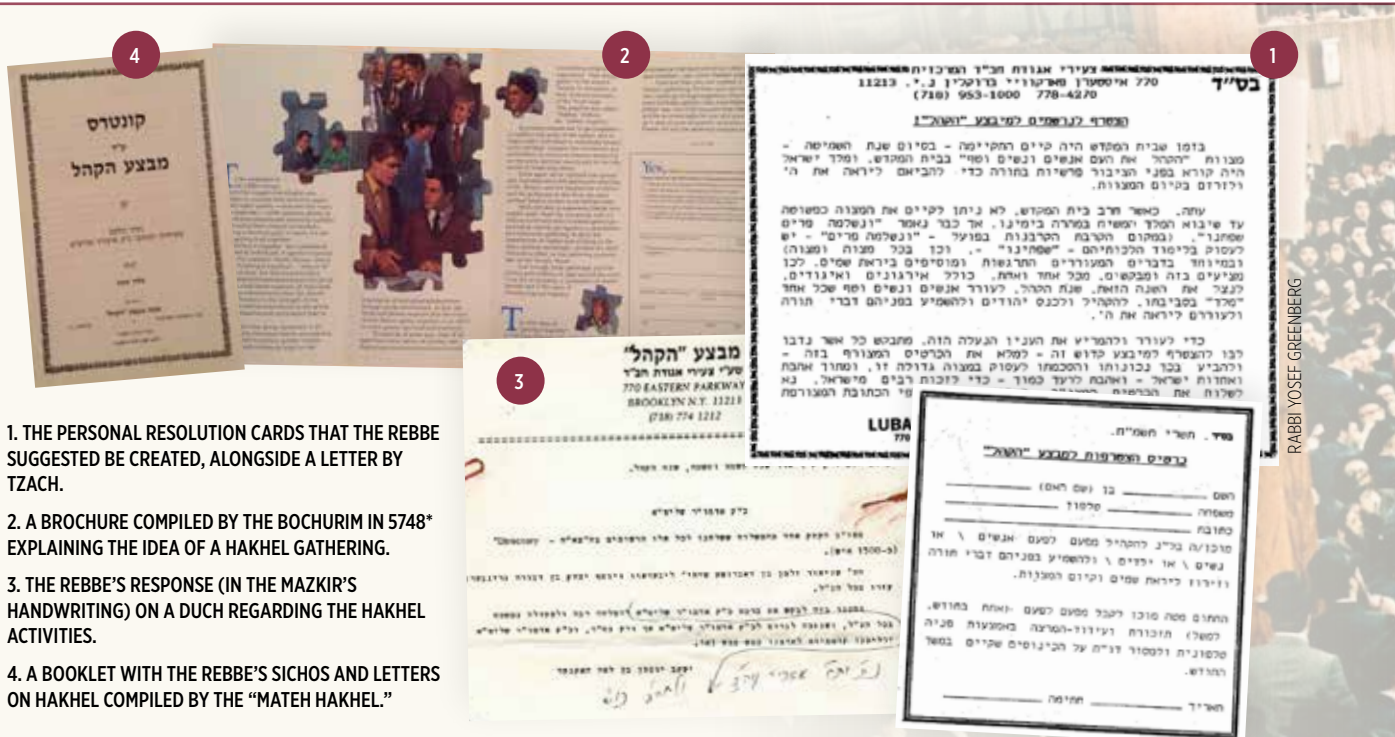
The Rebbe also spoke about the Hakhel of the *yochid*, that each person has with himself. The Hakhel for *anashim* and *nashim*, men and women, should be separate and it should be held in a *makom kadosh*.

Every person is a “*melech*”—a *man-hig* in his group:

A teacher in a school, a father in his family, a leader in his community, a director in his *mosad*, etc. The Rebbe really went into detail and demanded *peulos* of Hakhel from every person, to be done with the people who they have influence on.

Every month we used to send a special mailing to everyone in the *shechuna* of Crown Heights and we received many answers from the Rebbe about our activities.

On Yud-Beis Tammuz, the



1. THE PERSONAL RESOLUTION CARDS THAT THE REBBE SUGGESTED BE CREATED, ALONGSIDE A LETTER BY TZACH.
2. A BROCHURE COMPILED BY THE BOCHURIM IN 5748* EXPLAINING THE IDEA OF A HAKHEL GATHERING.
3. THE REBBE’S RESPONSE (IN THE MAZKIR’S HANDWRITING) ON A DUCH REGARDING THE HAKHEL ACTIVITIES.
4. A BOOKLET WITH THE REBBE’S SICHOS AND LETTERS ON HAKHEL COMPILED BY THE “MATEH HAKHEL.”

RABBI YOSEF GREENBERG

Rebbe asked that people learn the *maamar* “Asara Sheyoshvin.” We printed a full page ad in the *Algemeiner Journal* with the *maamar* and the Rebbe’s request that people learn it. Reb Dovid Raskin sent a *tzetel* to the Rebbe reporting on it.

The *shturem* in Hakhel continued throughout the year and we at *mateh Hakhel* continued to pursue it in various ways. For example, at several Shabbos farbrengens throughout the summer, the Rebbe spoke about the “*matzav mavhil*” (alarming reality) that hundreds of thousands of Jewish children are still without any basic Torah education. So we sent out a letter to everyone in Crown Heights about the “*matzav mavhil*” as follows:

“There are children going around without even a drop of *chayus* of Yiddishkeit. The Rebbe demands from everyone, especially during this year of Hakhel, to be *meorer* every Yid about the *aleph-beis* of Yiddishkeit. All the *tirutzim* that we are busy with other things won’t help. Therefore, we

include in this third mailing connected with *mitvza Hakhel* a list of practical suggestions that can be used for Hakhel. As per the Rebbe’s instruction, everyone should include a *duch* of what they take upon themselves. Enclosed is a page where each person can write their *duch* with a return envelope in which it can be sent back.”

We also sent a brochure for people to use for Hakhel.

I don’t remember any other *mitvza* that lasted an entire year, besides, perhaps, *ois b’sefar Torah 5742**, but this was a *mitvza* that took over the entire year. The Rebbe uplifted the crowd and empowered and activated them into a reality that is Hakhel.

In 5747*, the Rebbe encouraged people, even children, to make their homes into a Beis Chabad, but in 5748* it seems that the Rebbe was pushing the Chassidim outwards, to have effect on their surroundings, to impact other Yidden. Even towards the end of the year, in Tammuz, the Rebbe said that people should report

three new initiatives that they committed to implement in connection with Hakhel. The Rebbe kept demanding action, not allowing anyone to rest.

The Rebbe wanted a new office to be opened under Tzach for Hakhel. One might think that *mitvza Mezuzah* or *mitvza Kashrus*—those are *mitvzoim* that need an office, while Hakhel is just a gathering here and there. Why the need for an office? But the Rebbe specifically wanted a call to action in full gear.

As we enter this year of Hakhel in 5783, we are to learn, relive and contemplate the *shturem* and call to action that the Rebbe made about Hakhel. Surely, as the Rebbe always demanded from us, we must double and triple our efforts uniting as Chassidim and uniting the entire world until we will join together in greeting *Moshiach Tzidkeinu* with the ultimate Hakhel in the *Beis Hamikdash*, where we will once again have “*velamdah es bnei Yisroel*,” we will hear *Torah chadasha* from the Rebbe. **1**



Timely Titles

KLALEI RASHI



Following the passing of the Rebbe's mother, Rebbetzin Chana, on Vov Tishrei 5725*, the Rebbe began a new series that would later become known as "Rashi sichos." Over decades of farbrengens, the Rebbe resolved myriads of difficulties that arise when studying Rashi and revealed an entirely new approach to the study of Rashi. Years later, after sufficient material had accumulated, a book was compiled in an attempt to codify the Rebbe's unique methodology that is "Klalei Rashi".

לזכות
החיילת בצבאות ה'
חנה גוּטא בת העניא חסידה
לרגל יום הולדתה כ"ז תשרי
לרפואה שלימה וקרובה

נדפס ע"י הוריה
הרה"ת ר' צבי אלימלך וזוגתו
מרת העניא חסידה ומשפחתם שיחיו
רבקין



Not for nothing is Rashi considered the foremost commentator on the Torah. His commentary provides exceptional clarity and insight, yet remains faithful to the precise literal reading of the text. It is for this reason that his commentary is of great aid to scholars and laymen alike. In fact, Rashi was famously dubbed “*Rabon Shel Yisroel*” (an acrostic of his initials), testifying to his influence among all Jews, from the most learned scholar to the youngest child embarking on the journey of Torah study.

This is the secret to Rashi’s success. Master of simplicity, he was able to reduce lengthy complex discussion into a concise coherent explanation that fits with the literal meaning of the verse. The Rebbe often emphasized that this is the cornerstone of Rashi’s corpus, as he himself testified: “I come only to explain the literal meaning of scripture.”¹ While every word in the Torah carries layers upon layers of meaning, Rashi’s objective was to isolate the most simple and basic understanding. He strived to make the Torah accessible to the earliest beginner who lacks previous experience, the *ben chamesh l’mikra* (a five-year-old).

Despite this apparent goal, one might be struck by many glaring inconsistencies. Often enough, Rashi does indeed resort to alternate explanations, occasionally addressing more advanced questions, which belie his simple approach and forsake his usual clarity. In some instances, he even quotes other commentaries and raises issues from additional sources. As a result, more recent *meforshim* have struggled to pinpoint Rashi’s exact metric. Why does he occasionally digress from his usual simple route?

In order to understand the exceptions, we first need to understand the rule. Once we learn how Rashi operates, these questions fall away.

Hundreds of years after Rashi’s commentary became popular amongst the masses, our perception of the classic commentary has recently been revised. For a period of 25 years the Rebbe delivered many *sichos* that shed light on the inner workings of Rashi. In his unique style, the Rebbe would introduce a particular Rashi and dissect it, asking a battery of analytical questions. Using carefully crafted principles he would proceed to reconstruct our understanding of what Rashi is attempting to accomplish and re-explain his commentary accordingly. After resolving all of the difficulties, the Rebbe generally taught an additional deeper explanation called *inyanim muflaim* and *yeyna shel Torah* that exposed the mystical dimension of Rashi’s commentary, often with a practical personal *horòah*.

Currently, there are more than 800 selections of Rashi’s commentary that have been subjected to the Rebbe’s novel interpretation. Many of these have been printed and published, primarily in Likkutei Sichos, comprising almost a third of the 39-volume set. But although many were familiar with this new genre, it had yet to be developed and consolidated into a cohesive study. Enter Rabbi Tuvia Blau, an acclaimed author and educator who made it his mission to compile such a work. Culled from the Rebbe’s teachings and talks, he presents a total of 620 principles that comprise Rashi’s methodology.

OVERVIEW

Klalei Rashi contains: a foreword, a letter from the Rebbe to the author, an introduction, and essays titled “Toras Chesed,” “Fundamental Principles,” “Principles of Rashi,” and “Examples of Principles.” The third edition also contains an overview of the history and evolution of the book from its inception.

Introduction: Here the author takes a deep dive into the role of Rashi as a commentator. What is his primary objective? Who is his commentary geared to? How does he accomplish that? Laying down the premise that Rashi’s goal is to provide the basic explanation to aid the beginner, he addresses the significance of its simplicity and explores its role in the structure of *Pardes*. Of course, this whole buildup is all to introduce the Rebbe’s revolutionary path, which sheds light on all of the above.

Toras Chesed: In this essay Rabbi Blau examines the Rebbe’s approach to navigating the dichotomy of *Toras emes* and

Toras chesed, objective truth vs. what’s kind and benevolent. Providing many examples, he paints a clear picture of the Rebbe’s ability to reconcile many concepts in Torah that seem to be mutually exclusive. Although it is somewhat relevant here, this essay is really an impressive work that encompasses more than the scope of this book and deserves recognition in its own right.

Fundamental Principles (Klalim Besisiyim): While 620 principles seem like a large number, in truth they are but offshoots and subcategories of 11 general principles. These are ideas that are frequently repeated in many Rashi *sichos* and are presented here in their raw form.

Principles of Rashi (Klalei Rashi): The largest and most important section of the book, containing 20 chapters of principles that have been culled from the Rebbe’s Rashi *sichos*. Presented in bullet form, these short paragraphs succinctly outline Rashi’s methodology. These are accompanied by

footnotes which reference the sources, enabling one to trace the principle to the original *sicha* or *sichos* from which it is derived. Besides the inherent value in assembling a structure to Rashi's commentary, studying these principles will train the reader to learn Rashi accurately. In the third edition, subtitles have been added to each individual principle. (See sidebar for a sample page.)

BACKGROUND

In the winter of 5731*, the Torah journal “*Shmaatin*” (vol. 28) ran a feature by Rabbi Blau where he introduced the Rebbe's unique Rashi learning formula to a wider audience for the first time. A premature concept, the article contained 11 principles and provided 6 examples. The piece was considered a breakthrough of sorts in certain Torah circles and garnered much positive feedback.

Shortly afterward, at the farbrengen of Shabbos Parshas Shemini 5731*, the Rebbe proposed that somebody should assemble a collection of Rashi's principles. This would serve as a learning aid and would eliminate repetition as the Rebbe would not need to reintroduce these principles in every Rashi *sicha*. The Rebbe also explained that although Rashi never explicitly wrote down his formula, it can be gleaned from his commentary.

Several months later, Rabbi Blau received a letter from Rabbi Hodakov appointing him to the task of compiling such a work. This of course, galvanized him into action and the momentous project began to form, occupying every spare moment of his time. Later, he received another letter encouraging the undertaking, this time instructing him to keep track of every Rashi the Rebbe explained.²

The Rebbe was very pleased with the initial work and would frequently reference it. He also sent a letter to the editors of “*Shmaatin*” acknowledging their recognition of the new genre.

Throughout the next few years, the Rebbe constantly urged



Examples of Principles (Hadgamos L'Klaim): Instead of only enumerating abstract principles, Rabbi Blau provides examples. To illustrate many of the above principles, he chose selections of various *sichos* and rewrote them in a way that clearly demonstrates which principles are at play. This section of the book has not yet been published in its third edition.

Rabbi Blau to increase his efforts and hurry the production of the *sefer*. In one instance the Rebbe intimated that the *zechus* might be transferred to someone else. Finally, in the winter of 5740*, he sent the first draft to the Rebbe. In a letter to Rabbi Blau, the Rebbe expressed his appreciation and noted that “*chochmah nosaf al melacha gedolah yesh kan*” (in addition to the immense labor, this work reflects impressive scholarship).

During this period, the Rebbe enthusiastically mentioned this project at several farbrengens, describing the role of Rashi's commentary and the effort required to extract his methodology. Finally, towards the end of 5740*, the first edition of Klalei Rashi was unveiled. Upon the Rebbe's instruction, the *shaar blatt* (cover page) to the *sefer* had the same border design as that of the Rebbe's other *sefarim*. This first edition contained a total of 207 principles and amounted to 130 pages. Since its release, the *sefer* has been referenced a number of times in Likkutei Sichos.

In a *yechidus* during Tishrei of 5741*, the Rebbe thanked Rabbi Blau for his efforts and advised him to write a second edition in a less scholarly language utilizing a more user-friendly design, apropos to Rashi's readership being the “*ben chamesh l'mikra*.” In addition, the Rebbe sent a letter outlining his request for a second expanded edition which would then be followed by a third. Throughout the next few years, the Rebbe continuously urged Rabbi Blau to persist in his efforts, directing him to isolate more principles to be included in the upcoming volume.

Thus, in 5751* a second edition appeared on the shelves. This edition contained 389 principles with 19 examples, and also included an introduction and an essay titled “*Toras Chesed*,” altogether amounting to 249 pages.

Most recently in 5778*, a third revised edition was published, comprising 20 chapters and an impressive 620 principles. The section of examples was removed and will soon be released as a separate volume. **T**

1. See Rashi's commentary to Bereishis 3:8, 3:24, and in several other places too.

2. These would later form the basis to the set *Biurim L'Pirush Rashi*.

A LEAF FROM THE BOOK

CHAPTER 3: BEN CHAMESH L'MIKRA

פרק ג "בן חמש למקרא"

[1] מטרתו של רש"י: לבאר את התורה גם ל"בן חמש" כיון שהתורה ניתנה כך שהתחלת הלימוד בה הוא על-ידי ילד בגיל חמש, כנאמרו "בן חמש שנים - למקרא", מסתבר שלכל דבר בתורה קיים ביאור והסבר בסגנון המתאים להבנתו של "בן חמש למקרא".¹ מטרתו של רש"י בפירושו היא לבאר את התורה בדרך הפשוטה ביותר, בה יוכל אפילו "בן חמש למקרא", שזה עתה החל בלימוד החומש, להבין את כוונת התורה.²

[2] פירוש רש"י מותאם ומובן לו לאור האמור כתב רש"י את פירושו באופן שיתאים ויהיה מובן גם ל"בן חמש למקרא",³ לפי רמת הבנתו ולפי ידיעתו את המציאות בה הוא חי ושאותה הוא מכיר.⁴

[3] גם לשונו של רש"י ברורה ומובנת לו רש"י כתב את פירושו בסגנון פשוט וברור כך שגם "בן חמש למקרא" יבין את בוונתו, מבלי נתינת מקום למענות בכונתו של רש"י. מכך מובן שאין לפרש את דברי רש"י באופן שאינו מתאים ללשונו של רש"י בהבנה ראשונית.⁵

1. אבות פרק ה, משנה כב (לגירסת אדמו"ר הזקן בסידורו).
2. התוועדויות תשמ"ו חלק ד עמוד 351.
3. ראה לעיל פרק א, "ואני לא באתי אלא...", כללים: 1, 3, ובנספח שם. להלן כלל 45.
4. ראה להלן כללים 55-56.
5. ראה גם לעיל: מבוא, טעף ח'. פרק א, כללים 4-5. פרק ב, כללים: 2 (בהערה 286), 3, 10, 13.
6. חלק טז עמוד 149. חלק ה עמוד 20 הערה 30 ועמוד 30. חלק ו עמוד 144. חלק ט עמוד 39 ואילך ועמוד 135. וראה גם חלק כז עמוד 38 הערה 12. התוועדויות תשמ"ג חלק ב עמוד 1022. התוועדויות תשמ"ז חלק ב עמוד 112. ובמקומות שנסמנו להלן כללים 20-24.
7. חלק ו עמוד 221. חלק טז עמוד 113 הערה 30. חלק טז עמוד 322 הערה 10. חלק כא עמוד 31. חלק כז עמוד 256 והערה 17. וראה גם להלן פרק ט, בחירת המקור ושניונים ממנו, כללים 17-14; 21.

Rashi's goal — to explain Torah even to a five-year-old:

Since the Torah is intended to be studied from the tender age of five years old, it follows that everything in the Torah can be explained in a way that is understood by a five-year-old. Thus, the purpose of Rashi's commentary is to explain the Torah in such a way.

Rashi's explanation — to suit the child's understanding:

Accordingly, Rashi's commentary is age appropriate and suitable for the child's level of maturity and previous experience.

Rashi's vocabulary — to use familiar language:

Rashi's commentary is written as such that it leaves no room for error, even for a five-year-old. Thus, Rashi cannot be saying anything that isn't understood at first glance.

RASHI'S EXPECTATIONS

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פרק ג

התחשבותו של רש"י בו

[4] מתרץ קושיות הנובעות מידעותיו רש"י מתרץ בפירושו קושיות המתעוררות לבן החמש בהבנת פסוקי התורה לאור ידיעותיו הקודמות.⁸

[5] מסדר את דבריו לפי רש"י מסדר את דבריו בפירושו בהתחשב עם ידיעותיו, הבנתו ואורח חייו של בן החמש, ואת גם כאשר מצד סדר הדברים אמור להיות שונה (כגון: לפי סדר הפסוקים במקרא).⁹

[6] מוסיף דברים להמחשה לעתים מוסיף רש"י דברים בפירושו כדי שבן החמש יבין את המדובר גם ממצאות חייו.¹⁰

[7] סומך עליו שיתרץ לפי ידיעותיו אין רש"י מתייחס לקושי בפירוש הכתובים כשבן החמש מסוגל להרצו בעצמו על פי ידיעותיו.¹¹

[8] אינו זקוק להוכיח כשמוכן מידעותיו אין רש"י זקוק להביא הוכחה לדבריו כאשר הם מוכנים לבן החמש על פי ידיעותיו.¹²

[9] רש"י סומך על ידיעות בן החמש פעמים והכרחו של רש"י לדבריו הוא ממצאות החיים הידועה לבן החמש.¹³

8. חלק ט עמוד 39. חלק כו עמוד 38 הערה 12. תורת מנחם - התועדויות חלק מו עמוד 400. התועדויות תשמ"ח חלק ב עמוד 491 הערה 38. התועדויות תשמ"ט חלק א עמוד 265. וראה לעיל פרק ב, "פרשנדתא", סוף כלל 3.

9. התועדויות תשמ"ג חלק ג עמודים 1459-1460; 1465, וחלק ד עמוד 1780.

10. שיחת ש"ק פרשת תשא תשמ"מ (שיחות קודש תשמ"מ חלק ב עמודים 403-404). וראה גם לעיל פרק ב, "פרשנדתא", כלל 57, ובנסמן שם.

11. התועדויות תשמ"מ חלק ב עמודים 879-880. התועדויות תשמ"ז חלק א עמוד 481.

12. התועדויות תשמ"ח חלק א עמוד 440.

13. התועדויות תשמ"ח חלק א עמוד 465.

Questions that arise:

Rashi answers questions that arise from *pesukim* that a five-year-old would have previously encountered.

Structure of explanation:

Rashi only addresses problems that would arise from a five-year-old's prior knowledge or understanding.

Illustration:

Sometimes Rashi adds explanation by illustrating an idea with a concept that exists in the world of a five-year-old.

Rashi relies on the child to answer his own questions:

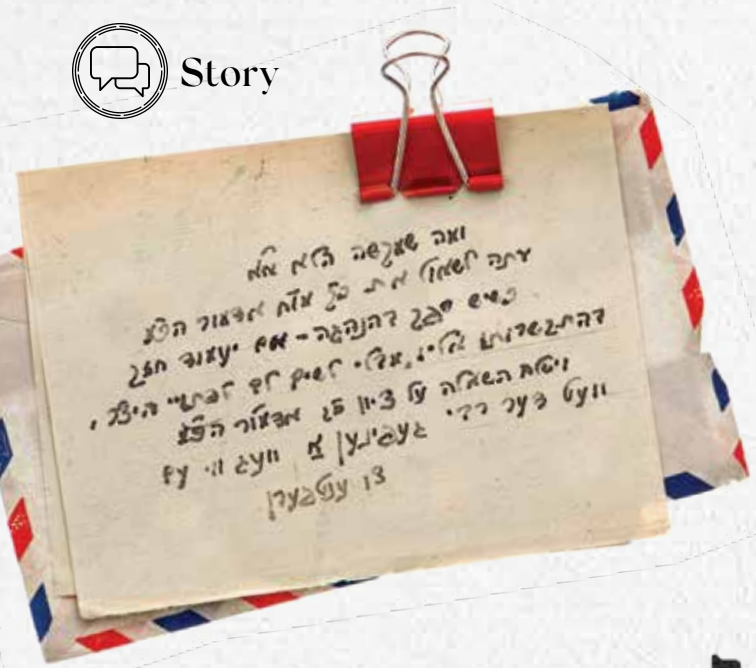
Rashi won't address something that a child could answer from prior knowledge.

Necessity of proof:

Rashi doesn't need to prove anything that is already apparent to the five-year-old.

Rashi relies on the child's knowledge:

Sometimes Rashi may prove something based on the life experience of a five-year-old.



דער רבי וועט געפינען א וועג...

זכות
דוד בן שיינא לרגל יום
הולדתו, לשנת הצלחה בכל
מכל מכל כל, אמן, והצלחה
מרובה בעבודת השליחות

Same Scan, Opposite Conclusions

AS TOLD BY ASAF EREZ (WASILLA, AK)

In 5740*, when I was 15 years old, my father was appointed to be the security manager for El Al cargo at JFK airport. Our family moved from Israel to Long Island for my father's new job and that's how I came to spend my teenage years in America.

We were an Orthodox family but had no meaningful connection with Chabad at the time. Rabbi Kuti Rapp, the shliach to JFK airport, was very active with all the El Al employees. He invited my father to come to the Rebbe's farbrengen and naturally I tagged along. We were seated together with other dignitaries and had the opportunity to see the Rebbe, say *l'chaim* to him, and hear the simultaneous Hebrew translations of the *sichos* through the devices available at the weekday farbrengens.

After that first farbrengen we participated in many more,

which gave us many opportunities to see the Rebbe. By the end of my father's three year appointment we had grown very close to Chabad and my father even started growing a beard. We returned to Israel in 5743*.

Five years later, after concluding my military service I returned to New York and Rabbi Rapp arranged for me to stay at the Lubavitcher Yeshiva dormitory at 1414 President Street until I found other lodgings. It was around Chanukah time of 5749* and every morning Rabbi Rapp took me with him to the Rebbe's home for Shacharis. For several weeks I had the merit to see and hear the Rebbe lead the *tefillos* and those memories are seared in my soul forever.

Since then Chabad has been an important part of my life and I have maintained strong connections and relationships with many shlichim over the years. When the Ohel app was

*☎ 5740-1980, 5743-1983, 5749-1988

developed, I downloaded it and started writing letters to the Rebbe that way on behalf of myself and others.

During the month of Iyar 5782* I was driving in Wasilla, Alaska, where I now live, and another driver ran a red light and smashed into my car. I was taken to the hospital with six broken ribs and a lacerated spleen, and after four painful days was discharged home.

A few days later, on Monday 29 Iyar, I started experiencing unbearable pain in my lower back and immediately returned to the hospital. While I was still in the emergency room, one of the surgeons approached me with some grim news. “Unfortunately, it appears from the CT scan that your spleen is still bleeding.”

“Are you sure?” I asked him. “When they discharged me last week I was told it was not bleeding any more.” He explained that the spleen is very sensitive and any sudden movement could have caused it to reopen. This would explain the nature of my back pain which he assured me had nothing to do with my broken ribs. As a result it was imperative for me to undergo an emergency procedure to cauterize it in order to stop the bleeding. If the bleeding was not stopped properly they would need to remove my spleen and some serious complications could follow. The other surgeon and the night shift radiologist both agreed with the first surgeon’s diagnosis and I was scheduled to have the operation the next morning.

Although my situation was not life threatening at the moment I was not too happy with the news I had just received. Suddenly I received a call from a good friend of mine, Rabbi Avrohom Moshe Dyce, shliach in Gresham, Oregon. He had heard about my injuries and called to see how I was doing. I shared with him the latest unfortunate developments and he suggested I write a letter to the Rebbe right away. In all the chaos surrounding my accident and my injuries I had completely forgotten about the app on my phone and decided to do so right away.

In the meantime issues came up throughout the night and it was very early in the morning when I finally composed a letter to the Rebbe from my hospital bed describing the accident, my injuries, and the fact that I was scheduled to undergo an urgent procedure to save my spleen. I concluded with a request for a *bracha* that Hashem grant me a complete and speedy recovery.

A few hours later the morning shift surgeon who had handled my care two weeks earlier right after the accident came into my room and said he was puzzled



RABBI YEKUSIEL RAPP DELIVERING MISHLOACH MANOS TO THE EL AL OFFICES AT JFK AIRPORT IN 5743*.

with the diagnosis the night shift doctors had given me.

“Your spleen is not bleeding,” the surgeon told me. “The scan only showed some signs of the bleeding due to the laceration you experienced during the car accident two weeks ago, but there is nothing wrong with it now.”

“Are you sure?!” I asked in disbelief. “Two surgeons and a radiologist said I needed this procedure immediately. All three of them were wrong?!”

“I don’t know what to tell you,” he responded. “I just reviewed this scan together with the other surgeon as well as with the radiologist in the morning shift and all three of us see no reason to operate. Your spleen is fine.”

Nonetheless he scheduled me to have a procedure done in Anchorage a week later just to be absolutely sure, but he was emphatic that there was nothing wrong with it. Regarding the back pain he explained at great length that it was due to the broken ribs for which he prescribed some pain killers and promptly discharged me from the hospital.

While it seems so mysterious that two teams of doctors reviewing the same CT scan would arrive at completely opposite conclusions, I know what caused the changed diagnosis. 📌

YOUR STORY

Share your story with A Chassidisher Derher by emailing stories@derher.org.

NO TIME
TO READ?
LISTEN!

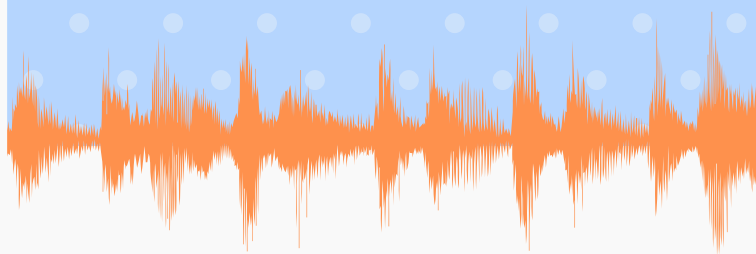


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AUDIO VERSION
TO HEAR THESE
STORIES
COME TO LIFE.



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מוקדש לחיזוק ההתקשרות
לכ"ק אדמו"ר

נדפס ע"י
הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל וזוגתו
מרת ברכה ומשפחתם שיחיו
טעלדאן



KOS SHEL BRACHA

MOTZEI SIMCHAS TORAH 5747*

We present a beautiful gallery of photos of this unique occasion from JEM's The Living Archive.

*For a full overview of kos shel bracha over the years, see
"Overflow of Blessing," Derher Nissan, 5777.*







JEM 3352



JEM 123990



JEM10784



JEM10860

The Rebbe would customarily distribute small bottles of *mashke* to shluchim, *askanim*, and occasionally other individuals.



JEM10469

Between pours, the Rebbe encourages the lively singing.



JEM 10454

“Sar Hamashkim,”
rosh yeshiva of 770,
Rabbi Mordechai
Mentlik fills the
Rebbe’s *becher*.



A common scene at *kos shel bracha* was Chazan Tzvi Hirsh Tsatskis leading the singing of “Ech Ti Ziemlyak.” The Rebbe encouraged the singing with one hand as he distributed the *kos shel bracha* with the other. Chazan Tsatskis’s daughter Tanya was singing along into the microphone, and after a few minutes, the Rebbe instructed Rabbi Groner to tell her, gently, that she was too old to be singing in front of men. After a few moments the Rebbe looked back at her, seemingly out of concern that she might be upset. In the middle of the song, the Rebbe put down his *becher*, turned to face the young girl, and started clapping in her direction with amazing enthusiasm.





JEM 10637



JEM 116464



JEM 10638

At the end of the long night, the Rebbe recites a *bracha acharona*.

Letters

A forum for readers to send their feedback, add to, or ask any questions about articles. Submit your letter to feedback@derher.org.

Submissions may be slightly modified by our editorial staff before publishing.

The Rebbe's Efforts Not In Vain

In continuation to my previous letter to the editor printed in Derher Sivan 5782, sharing stories of the Rebbe and my family during the time they were in Paris, and in connection with the article on Reb Zev Greenglass, in the Derher of Iyar 5780—I would like to share the history behind our family's planned move to Montreal from Paris as I heard it from my father, Reb Isser Kluwgant:

As mentioned in the article, the main person working on papers for our family to be able to immigrate was Rabbi Leibel Kramer, the *menahel* of the yeshiva in Montreal, who did so upon the behest of the Rebbe.

Rebbetzin Chana really wanted our family to move to Montreal, which would be possible with the help of our relatives, the Lavut family, who would sponsor my father and his family.

The Rebbetzin asked her son, our Rebbe, to ask the Rebbe Rayatz's permission for the Kluwgant family to move to Montreal. This was after she found out that we were destined to go to Australia.

In the meantime the Rebbe was already working with Rabbi Kramer to arrange visas to Canada and my father was corresponding a lot with the Rebbe on this.

The Rebbe Rayatz told the Rebbe that

since the two sisters (my mother and Mrs. Manya Althaus) came together from Russia, they shouldn't be separated, but remain together. Being that the Althaus family had no reason to go to Montreal, both families should move to Australia.

Upon hearing this from the Rebbe, Rebbetzin Chana asked the Rebbe to please approach the Rebbe Rayatz again. As my father was her closest first cousin, she very much wanted us to be as close to her as possible. The Rebbe approached the Rebbe Rayatz again, and this time he said that "*letovas nishmaso*" he should go to Australia.

As a side note, I find it meaningful to note that the Rebbe's efforts, as the Rebbetzin's, weren't in vain *chas v'shalom*, as decades later my father's grandson, Rabbi Moshe New, moved on shlichus to Montreal and established the beautiful and very successful Montreal Torah Center!

Rabbi Sholom Mendel Kluwgant
MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

A Lesson The Rebbe Taught About The "Eshalonen"

I found the articles in the Adar II 5782 Derher especially interesting and meaningful being that both of my *elter zeides* had a connection to what was discussed in the magazine. My *elter zeide*

Reb Menachem Tiechtel was *zoche* to observe the Rebbe during his visit to Paris in 5707* and my *elter zeide* and *bubbe* Reb Meir and Mrs. Sima Itkin escaped Russia in the “*eshalonen*” great escape.

I'd like to share some interesting things connected to these two topics:

1) My *elter zeide* Reb Menachem Tiechtel was living in Paris when the Rebbe visited and shared his recollections of the special visit (as printed in JEM's Here's My Story issue 498):

At that time there were many *Admurim* and respected rabbonim who would be seen in Paris wearing their traditional rabbinic garb. The Rebbe differed from this norm wearing the light-colored hat and European jacket that he would always wear. However, despite the lack of external shows of piety, people immediately recognized that the Rebbe was an extraordinary and holy person.

He shared how astonished he was to observe how while the Rebbe was waiting to see his mother for the first time after being separated for 18 years he had a *sefer* opened before him and was totally involved in what he was learning.

When the Rebbe actually saw and greeted his mother for the first time, the look on the Rebbe's face was indescribable. His face shone in a special way and the way he behaved reflected on what is spoken about in Chassidus that *moach shalit al halev* at all times.

During the time the Rebbe was in Paris he visited the girls school that my *elter zeide* ran and spoke to the girls in French. Numerous times throughout his speech the Rebbe cried profusely.

Many of the girls at the institution were broken by the Holocaust and the loss of their parents and family members. The Rebbe spent time speaking to the many girls, giving them *chizuk* and encouragement.

There was one particular girl who was orphaned from both of her parents, and

the Rebbe spoke to her for a long time, encouraging her not to give up hope. The Rebbe's visit and speaking to the girls brought light and *simcha* to the girls of the school and left a strong impression.

My *elter zeide* was *zoche* to be at the special farbrengen that took place on Chof Sivan, the night before the Rebbe departed to America with Rebbetzin Chana (arriving on Chof-Ches Sivan). This farbrengen lasted over 11 hours from 8:00 p.m. until almost 8 a.m.(!) One of the fascinating highlights was how the Rebbe spoke *divrei Torah* about the names of all of the participants in the farbrengen and connected it to their personality.

My *elter zeide* said that the Chassidim were “*mamash arois fun di keilim*” from this farbrengen and bemoaned the fact that he did not have the *sechel* to transcribe the Rebbe's *sichos* of that time.

2) In connection to the “*eshalonen*” escape I want to share a reference that the Rebbe made to the escape during the farbrengen of Vov Tishrei 5742*.

The Rebbe discusses the tremendous *mesiras nefesh* his mother, Rebbetzin



Chana, had to enable Harav Levi Yitzchok to write his *chidushei Torah*. She made homemade ink he used to write them and later smuggled the manuscripts out of Almaty which led to them eventually being brought out of the Soviet Union and printed by the Rebbe.

In connection to this, the Rebbe shared something intriguing about the escape of Rebbetzin Chana as part of the *eshalonen* and a powerful lesson that we can learn from the story:

“There was no reason to think that any Jew would be allowed to leave that country, certainly not someone who had been in exile and even more so a Jewish woman who had been in exile and remained under surveillance as a suspect. This was particularly so since she carried our family name (‘Schneerson’) which itself was a ‘certificate’ that the person belongs under arrest, and should be denied the right to travel that country, and certainly the right to leave it.

“Although it was necessary for her to use a false name on her passport, nevertheless, knowing how carefully they scrutinize documents in that country, changing the name was effective only because they chose to look the other way. It was kept at lower bureaucratic levels, among lower officials, but their superiors knew of all the tricks. They knew she was leaving but they didn’t mind. Why didn’t it bother them? Because ‘The hearts of kings and ministers are in Hashem’s hand.’ This is what Hashem wanted, so it came to be. As quoted earlier, ‘Many are the thoughts in man’s heart, but Hashem’s plan prevails.’

“What we must learn from this story is not a lesson in how Hashem behaves, but a lesson in how a Yid behaves:

“At times, in spite of one’s best intentions and desire to do what is proper and necessary—that which Hashem’s Torah, the Torah of Truth demands of them—he can find himself in a situation,



a dilemma, in which it would appear impossible to do so. This was my mother's case: For many years in that country in those days, it was impossible—certainly for an elderly woman, with manuscripts—to travel across the border. For 50 consecutive years, which Torah calls 'eternity,' people tried to leave and failed, except for a few individuals who weren't carrying manuscripts. One would think that it would be a waste of time and effort to try to achieve something that had been impossible for so long.

"Why attempt something that has been unsuccessful for 50 consecutive years? Since 'practical action is the main thing,' what makes that a priority above other projects which can be achieved with less effort?"

"The above story demonstrates that when one truly resolves to follow the Torah's instructions and is not intimidated by the difficulties, then sooner or later—it may take a day, a month, a year or more but in the end—the word of Hashem prevails.' Hashem's mission is fulfilled and you have the merit to be the one through whom it happened, and the result benefits not only an individual or a few people but many people."

(Living Torah Disc 1 Program 2 www.chabad.org/160601. Toras Menachem 5742 vol. 1 pg. 59).

Yosef Meir Tiechtel

YESHIVAS LUBAVITCH, DETROIT

"Der Rebbe Bleibt Nisht Kein Baal Chov"

In the Derher magazine Issue 120, Tammuz 5782, in the *Leben Miten Rebbe'n* article about the Rebbe's visit to Gan Yisroel, it was written that during the trip to Gan Yisroel "somehow, one of the right tires was punctured. All of the occupants exited the vehicle besides for the Rebbe. It took Rabbi Krinsky around ten minutes to

change the tire, and after the short pit stop, they were back on their way."

This seems to be a translation from the story as it appears in the book "Binos Deshe" (Kehos, 5753), but in recent years more details have surfaced which include an amazing lesson of how the Rebbe does not remain a "*baal chov*" (indebted) to anyone.

The correct story was published in the L'Chaim Publication Issue #1586 and is connected to a story that happened with my father, Rabbi Mordy Hirsch, director of the Mitzvah Tank Organization:

One Sunday in 5771*, Rabbi Hirsch was on his way back home from a trip to Costco. His trunk was loaded with groceries when he noticed an elderly Jew on the side of the road standing near his car with a flat tire.

Rabbi Hirsch explained, "I hadn't dealt with a flat tire for at least 10 years. But *b'hashgacha protis*, just a week prior a few *bochurim* called me up in desperate need of help with a flat tire and I helped them fix it. Three days later, while I was driving my car, one of the tires went flat. With no alternative, I repeated what I had taught the boys a few days earlier, but this time I did it myself."

It was a busy Brooklyn road and there were hundreds of other people who could have helped the elderly Jew, but for some reason, that Sunday with a car loaded with perishables, he decided to stop and help. "All my tools were still in the trunk from the previous two flats."

Rabbi Hirsch helped out the elderly man, who identified himself as Dr. Hoffman, and fitted the car with a new wheel.

Before parting, Dr. Hoffman asked Rabbi Hirsch what he does for a living. "I am shliach of the Lubavitcher Rebbe with the mitzvah tanks," he replied.

A few days later Dr. Hoffman got in touch with my father and told him:

"You should know that the

Rebbe himself sent you to change my tire!” And the doctor began telling the following story:

As a young psychiatrist, Dr. Hoffman lived in Brooklyn, commuting daily to New Square, New York, where his practice was. He knew the route like the back of his hand but on one particular summer day in 5717*, deep in thought, he missed his exit for the first time. Trying to find his way, he ended up on another highway altogether. As soon as he began driving on that “mistaken” highway, he saw a group of Chassidim surrounding a car on the side of the road. Dr. Hoffman pulled over to see if he could help them.

They informed him that they had a flat tire. The doctor had all of the necessary tools in his trunk to help them and got to work on the flat tire. As he worked, they explained that they were on the way to the Catskill Mountains. They pointed out the Lubavitcher Rebbe who was in the car immersed in a *sefer*. They were accompanying the Rebbe on his visit to the boys’ overnight camp Gan Yisroel.

When the tire was fixed and the Chassidim returned to the car, the Rebbe walked over to Dr. Hoffman and tried to pay him for his efforts.

“*Ich nem nisht, s’iz mein mitzvah*—I won’t take it, it’s my mitzvah,” the doctor told the Rebbe.

“*A mentch arbet, darf men tzolen*—If a person works one must pay him,” responded the Rebbe but Dr. Hoffman refused to take any payment.

Over 50 years had passed. Now Dr. Hoffman had gotten a flat tire. “At the time that you changed my tire, I didn’t think much about it but when I got home, the memory of that summer day came back to me as well as the Rebbe’s words—‘If a person works one must pay him.’

“On a throughway used by thousands of people daily, a corridor connecting Borough Park and Williamsburg, who

stops to change my tire? A Lubavitcher Chossid from Crown Heights and what’s more, when I asked you what you do, you told me that you are a shliach of the Rebbe. I couldn’t help but think that the Rebbe was paying me back.”

I should add:

My father told me after this story was published that Rabbi Yakov Holtzman, who as a *bochur* helped in the Rebbe and Rebbetzin’s house and was *zoche* to be in the car with the Rebbe on this trip, explained how both versions of the events occurred: After waiting some time on the side of the road, Dr. Hoffman pulled over to help. He had all the necessary tools in his car to give the tire enough air to get to a nearby gas station. Afterwards at the gas station, it took Rabbi Krinsky about 10 minutes to take off the tire and replace it, and then they were back on their way.

Zalmy Hirsch

BROOKLYN, NY

