

Derher

A Chassidisher

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Pioneer

THE STORY OF A YOUNG BOCHUR'S
JOURNEY TO THE REBBE

The Baal Shem Tov

CHILDHOOD AND EARLY YEARS

Shabbos with the Rebbe

A ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION



SIVAN 5783
ISSUE 131 (208)
JUNE 2023



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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

בקשר עם יום הבהיר כ"ח סיון



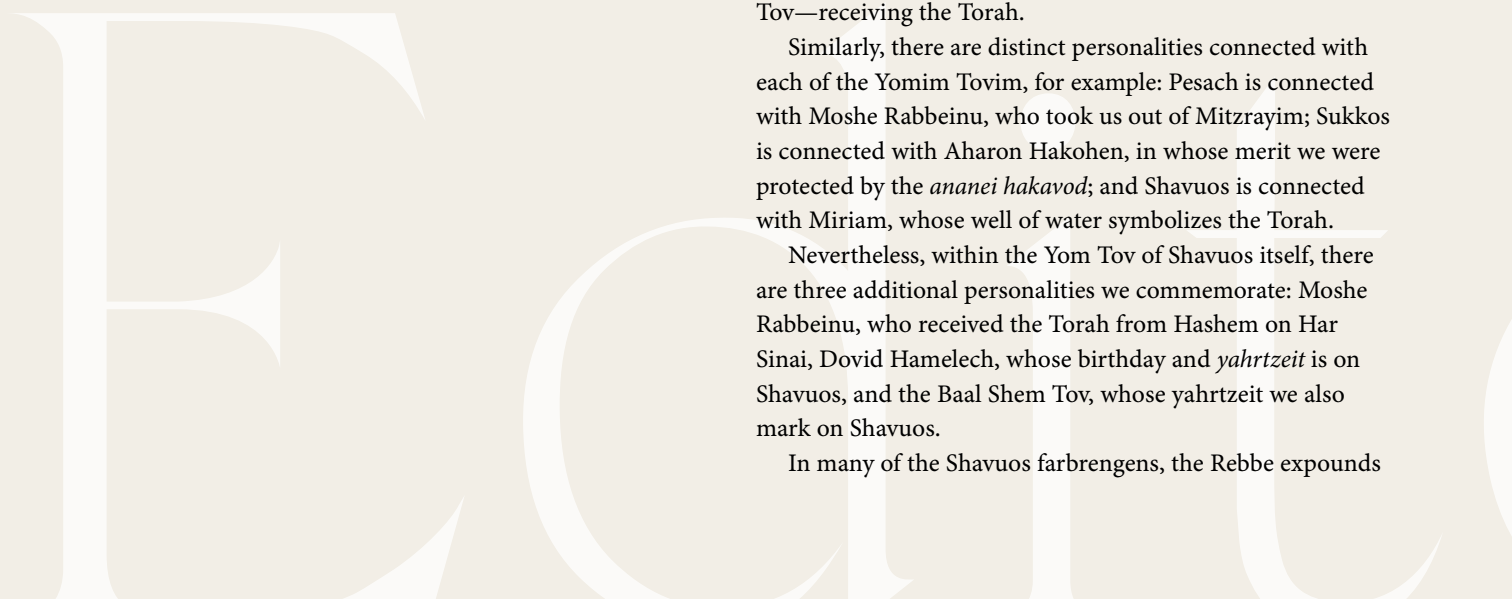
At the center of the month of Sivan is the special Yom Tov of Shavuos—*Zman Matan Toraseinu*.

Like every idea in Torah, each Yom Tov has its general theme that manifests itself into many varying details. Shavuos is no different: There is a general theme, the fact that it is a Yom Tov like all others and shares the same *kedusha* as them all; and then there is the specific theme of this Yom Tov—receiving the Torah.

Similarly, there are distinct personalities connected with each of the Yomim Tovim, for example: Pesach is connected with Moshe Rabbeinu, who took us out of Mitzrayim; Sukkos is connected with Aharon Hakohen, in whose merit we were protected by the *ananei hakavod*; and Shavuos is connected with Miriam, whose well of water symbolizes the Torah.

Nevertheless, within the Yom Tov of Shavuos itself, there are three additional personalities we commemorate: Moshe Rabbeinu, who received the Torah from Hashem on Har Sinai, Dovid Hamelech, whose birthday and *yahrtzeit* is on Shavuos, and the Baal Shem Tov, whose *yahrtzeit* we also mark on Shavuos.

In many of the Shavuos *farbrengens*, the Rebbe expounds



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פפ

on these personalities, highlighting what they had in common and how it pertains to our lives today.

In one unique *sicha*, the Rebbe pointed to something incredible found in each of these three individuals' life-stories:

All of them were self-taught.

Moshe Rabbeinu grew up in the house of Pharaoh no less, away from his original home and the Jewish community. Dovid Hamelech was a shepherd from a very young age; he could not have spent much time studying in yeshiva in his youth like many other Jewish leaders. The Baal Shem Tov was famously orphaned from both his parents before the age of five; he also did not have anyone to teach him in those earliest years of his life. Nevertheless, all of these three individuals were able to educate themselves in the ways of Hashem, and they especially excelled in *ahavas Yisroel*—love and care for every single Jew, no matter who they are and what their standing is.

In fact, the Baal Shem Tov's very name is "Yisroel"—which beckons back to the famous ruling of Chazal that

"אע"פ שחטא ישראל הוא"—a Jew remains a Jew ("Yisroel") even if he sins.

This serves as an important lesson to all of us: No matter how we were raised, we all have the ability to retrain ourselves to have true *ahavas Yisroel* towards each and every fellow Yid.

This is an especially pertinent message in this year of Hakhel—a time of unity and gathering for all the Jewish people.

May we merit the speedy arrival of *Moshiach tzidkeinu*, when we will experience the ultimate Hakhel in the *Beis Hamikdash*, and be reunited with the Rebbe, *teikef umiyad Mammosh!*

בברכת קבלת התורה בשמחה ובפנימיות,

The Editors
יג אייר ה'תשפ"ג
שנת הקהל את העם

1. Adapted from Sichas Shavuos 5743, forty years ago.



The Ultimate Sacrifice

'Your Children Have Sinned'

The Gemara in Shabbos¹ tells us that when Moshiach comes, Hashem will tell Avraham Avinu, “Your children have sinned before me,” to which Avrohom will respond, “Let them be destroyed to sanctify Your Name.” Hashem will tell the same to Yaakov, only to receive the same response. Finally, Hashem will say to Yitzchok, “Your children have sinned before me.” Yitzchok will reply, “When the Yidden said ‘*Naaseh v’nishma*, you called them ‘My son, my firstborn Yisroel.’ Now that they have sinned, they are my children and not Your children?”

At first glance, this dialogue is not understood. Is Yitzchok’s answer so deep that Avraham and Yaakov couldn’t come up with it? Why is Yitzchok specifically the one to give this response?

Three Avos – Shalosh Regalim

First, we must understand the connection between Yitzchok and the Yom Tov of Shavuos. As is known, the *shalosh regalim* correspond to the three Avos; Pesach is connected to Avrohom, Sukkos to Yaakov, and Shavuos to Yitzchok. However, in addition to the scriptural associations between the *regalim* and their

respective Avos, there exists a deeper connection.

Pesach, the holiday celebrating our freedom from slavery in Mitzrayim, reflects Avraham’s indiscriminate *hachnosas orchim*—offering hospitality to anyone, no matter how lowly they were. In this merit, Hashem took the Jews out of Egypt, even though they were on a low spiritual level at the time.

Yaakov, who amassed an immense number of livestock during his time with Lavan, recognized that it was not his talent that brought about such success; rather it was Hashem’s blessing, and that it was temporary—just like Sukkos.

Shavuos, however, seems to apply



לזכות
השליח הרה"ת ר' יצחק בן שיינא שיח' **טייכטל**
לרגל יום הולדתו ביום י' סיון.
לשנת ברכה והצלחה בעבודת
השליחות, לחיזוק ההתקשרות לנשיא
דורנו, ולנחת רוח רב מכל יוצאי חלציו

נדבת משפחתו שיחיו



to all the Avos, not just Yitzchok. All the Avos were involved in Torah study, and Yaakov specifically was referred to as a “*yoshev ohel*”—one who sat and learned Torah.

Torah with Kabbalas Ol

Delving deeper into what learning Torah really means, we can see the clear connection between Yitzchok and *Matan Torah*. Torah is not meant to be studied only for intellectual enjoyment, and most certainly not for gaining knowledge or becoming a “scholar.” Rather, one should learn Torah with *kabbalas ol*. This is exemplified from the first moment of *Matan Torah*; when the Jews said “*Naaseh v’nishma*,” they gave themselves over to the Torah completely.

Yitzchok had this level of sacrifice within him. Although Yaakov and Avrohom both experienced some

form of *mesiras nefesh* throughout their lives, it cannot compare to the practical *mesiras nefesh* Yitzchok had during the *Akeidah*, when his *neshamah* literally left his body.²

The Mesiras Nefesh of Matan Torah

There is a question asked regarding the *possuk*³, “And the whole nation saw the sounds... and the sound of the shofar.” Why isn’t the sound of the shofar included within the rest of the sounds that the nation experienced by *Matan Torah*? The answer is that the shofar was from the ram which was sacrificed instead of Yitzchok by the *Akeidah*. This shofar, which represents the ultimate *mesiras nefesh*, was emphasized because the Torah was only given in the merit of the Yidden’s complete *bittul* and *kabbalas ol* at that time. This ultimate sacrifice is the connection between Yitzchok and the

holiday of Shavuos.

With this in mind we can understand why Yitzchok will choose this argument: “When the Jews said ‘*Naaseh v’nishma*,’ you called them ‘My son, my firstborn Yisroel,’ but now that they have sinned, they are my children and not Your children?” *Matan Torah*—when the Jews dedicated themselves by saying “*Naaseh v’nishma*”—was inspired by the original *mesiras nefesh* of Yitzchok.

This idea is relevant at all times. All the Yidden throughout all generations were at Har Sinai, and all of them experienced this *mesiras nefesh*. We all have it within us, we just need to reveal it. **T**

Adapted from the sicha of the second day of Shavuos 5726

1. 89b.
2. Zohar I 60a.
3. Yisro 20:15.



כתב יד קודש



לזכות
החייל בצבאות ה'
צבי מאיר שיחי
לרגל הולדתו י"ג ניסן ה'תשפ"ג שנת הקהל

ולזכות הוריו
הרה"ת ר' מיכאל וזוגתו מרת **חנה מושקא שיחי**
מישולבין

נדפס ע"י זקניו
הרה"ת ר' חיים ברוך וזוגתו **שטערנא שרה ומש**
פחתם שיחי
אלבסקי

IT'S NOT REAL

In the following note, the Rebbe responds to an individual who wrote to him that after reading books on Jewish philosophy, he began experiencing doubts in his faith, and it was having a negative effect on his physical health:

חתימה
 להוסיף בקשר להספקות
 והשאלות המתעוררות
 אצלו - צ"ח טוב שלמשך איזה
 חצי שנה יסיר מעל ראשו
 (לא אלאם) קהפנות, שאם
 תשובה שידרוח "ולא" יהיה
 אסוף יותר ואופר אבות
 כדק"ע - ולהעיר גם
 מהרצ"ח ה"י ירושלים ספ"ק וכו'
 אהובות (circled)
 רבני הפלך
 איב ניש על ויהי און
 נש על נון ס"י אפגריסן פון
 אלקות
 קלען רפואות הניח - יעשה
 כצעה אהבה של שני רופאים
 אחיהם.

[Instruction to the *mazkir* to conclude with a] signature.

Add this [as a postscript]:

Regarding the doubts and questions that arise in your mind: It would be best if for the duration of a few months you **take your mind off** them completely (not by battling these doubts). We can thereby hope that you will "recover" [spiritually], and you will by default be in a better position to respond to these [doubts] properly.

Also, take note of the Rambam's declaration in Hilchos Gerushin, end of ch. 2 [that even a person who outwardly professes an unwillingness to follow the Torah, on the inside "he wants to perform all the mitzvos and avoid all the transgressions; it is only his *yetzer hara* that presses him..."]

In the words of the Alter Rebbe: "A Jew neither wants nor is able to be disconnected from G-dliness."

Regarding your physical health: follow the unanimous guidance of two specialist doctors.

חתימה

להוסיף

בקשר להספקות והשאלות המתעוררות
 אצלו - מה טוב שלמשך איזה חדשים
יסיח דעת מהם לגמרי (לא מלחמה
 בהספקות), שאז התקוה ש"יבריא",
 ובמילא יהי מסוגל יותר ומוכשר לפותרם
 כדבעי.

- ולהעיר ג"כ מהודעת הרמב"ם הל'
 גירושין ספ"ב, ובל' רבנו הזקן א איד ניט
 ער וויל און ניט ער קען זיין אפגערסן פון
 אלקות.

בנוגע לבריאות הגוף - יעשה כדעה
 אחידה של שני רופאים מומחים.



THE REBBE LEAVES FOR THE OHEL ON EREV SHAVUOS 5730. THE REBBE SUBSEQUENTLY GAVE PERMISSION FOR THIS PHOTO TO BE USED IN PUBLICATIONS

20 QUESTIONS - ONE RASHI

SHAVUOS 5730*

COMPILED BY: RABBI YANKY BELL

ע"י בנם	טור 'לעבן מיטן רבי'ן הוקדש לזכרון ולעילוי נשמת
ר' יקותיאל יהודה	ר' שמואל ב"ר יהושע אליהו ז"ל
וזוגתו מרת פעסל לאה ומשפחתם שיחיו	ואשתו מרת שרה ע"ה בת ר' יקותיאל ומרת לאה הי"ד
רוהר	ת"נ צ"ב ה'

Reb Zalmon and Mrs. Roselyn Jaffe merited tremendous kiruvim from the Rebbe over the years. Beginning in 5724, Reb Zalmon and his family would visit the Rebbe each year for the Yom Tov of Shavuos. Reb Zalmon wrote a detailed diary, in his unique style, of the time he spent in the Rebbe's presence and the Rebbe very much encouraged this endeavor. These are published in his "My Encounter with the Rebbe" series. The following are excerpts from Reb Zalmon's detailed description of his trip to the Rebbe for Shavuos 5730*:*

(The diary of the first part of this trip, up to Rosh Chodesh Sivan, was published previously in Derher, Weekly, Issue 15.)

The Shabbos Before Shavuos

Shabbos Parshas Bamidbar, Sivan 2, I had an *aliyah* in the Rebbe's shul thank G-d. At 1:30 the Rebbe held a farbrengen that went on until six.

During the second niggun, the Rebbe got so excited he jumped up to dance and waved his arms, conducting the tempo. When the Rebbe stands, all stand. Everybody standing, singing and jumping and the tempo getting faster and faster. It was impossible to keep up. Yet the Rebbe is egging me on, faster and faster.

During the course of this farbrengen, I had already said *l'chaim* to the Rebbe three or four times, yet, the Rebbe leaned over the head table and said, "Say *l'chaim*" and added, "*Du bahalst zich unter dem tish!*" (you are hiding under the table).

Yom Tov Meals with the Rebbe

Shavuos was now approaching and, once again, I had the zechus of being invited to partake of Yom Tov meals with the Rebbe [in the Friediker Rebbe's apartment¹].

The seating arrangements and the food were similar to the past few years. The routine was the same too. But this

year I had a good helpmate in my endeavors to make the Rebbe *freilich*. Rabbi [Chaim] Gutnick took my advice, followed my lead and a good time was had by all.

I remarked that Her Majesty the Queen was well represented, from Canada, from Great Britain and by Rabbi Gutnick who was a chaplain in Her Majesty's forces in Australia. The Rebbe said that Rabbi Gutnick had an even higher title - a Kohen.

At the outset of the first meal - the first night of Yom Tov - and recalling that the previous year I had earned good commission from the Rebbe for suggesting that we should continue to sing "*Ha'aderes v'Ha'emuna*" at 770 during davening, just as all Lubavitcher branches all over the world were still doing on Yom Tov, I declared to the Rebbe that I would like to discuss some business matter.

The Rebbe agreed to hear my proposition, but said I must not talk in English but in Yiddish, for many of the dozen or so guests could not understand English.

I asked why do we not sing "Hu Elokeinu" here at 770 during davening. The Rebbe said that he had not seen this song being sung at the Previous Rebbe's shul.

So I asked, "Did they sing it in Lubavitch?"

The Rebbe pointed to another rabbi who had been in Lubavitch. He said that they had not sung it in Lubavitch.

I offered, "That was Lubavitch of yesteryear, but today we live in a modern world where we need happy niggunim. Anyway, the entire world learnt to sing that song

from here, like in Manchester and Israel, but here they don't sing it?"

The Rebbe confided that even though he had not heard "Ein k'Elokeinu" being sung in his father-in-law's shul, "When I was in Berlin the first time, I did hear this song."

I had not been asking about "Ein k'Elokeinu," but "Hu Elokeinu!"

"Still," I added, "I have been here now for two weeks and have not heard them singing Hu Elokeinu!"

The Rebbe said, "That is your fault."

"I am only a soldier," I protested.

"If so, I am 'commanding' you to sing it," said the Rebbe.

I figured I would also put in a word for singing "Kalie Atoh" during davening, so I said, "In Manchester we sing 'Kalie Atoh' at the end of Hallel."

The Rebbe mentioned, "It is a song of the Alter Rebbe."

"So why is it not sung here?" I asked.

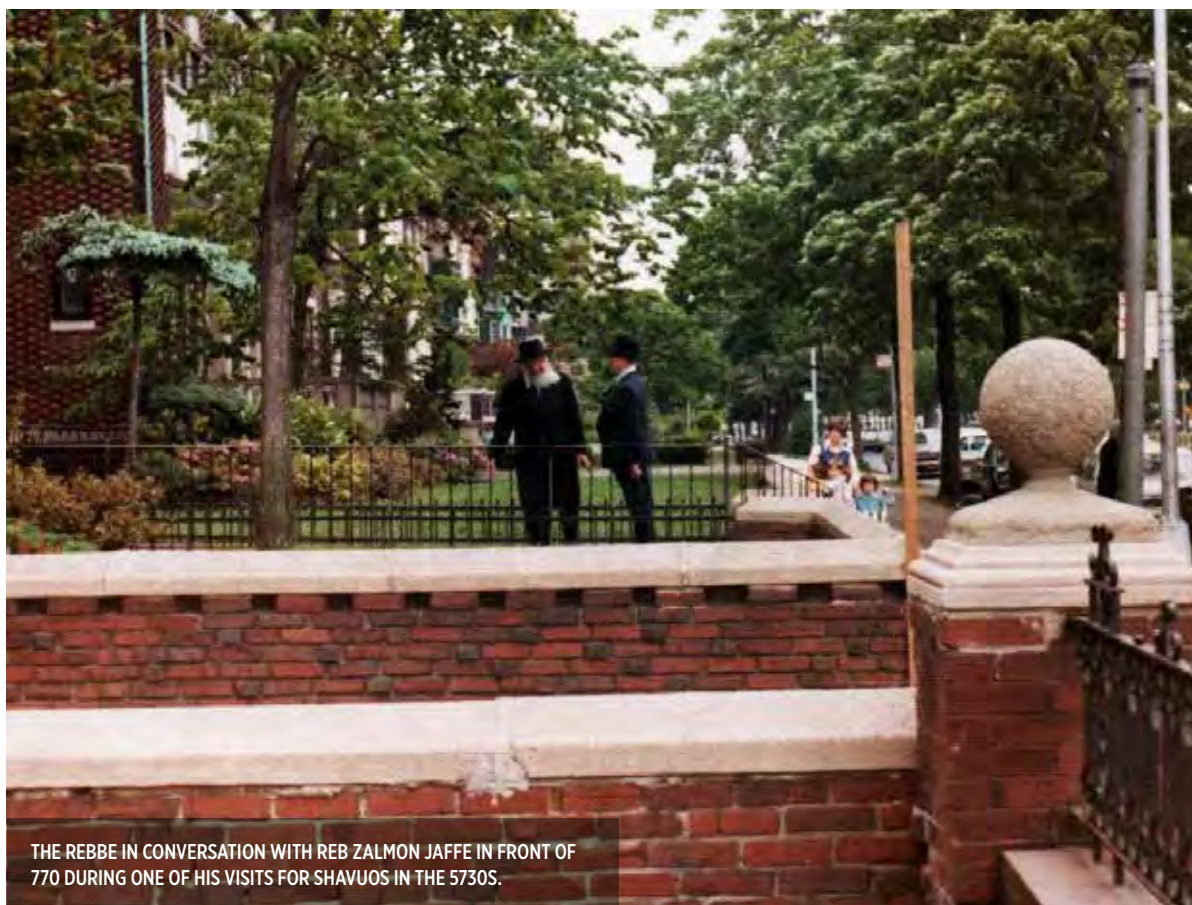
"Tomorrow, we should sing this song too," said the Rebbe. "And those who are here now, if they will be there tomorrow, should help you."

So it was settled and I was to be allowed to commence singing during davening tomorrow.

I did very well, I must admit. In the event, I started the first tune on Shavuos morning. I felt like Nachshon ben Aminodov who was the first to jump into the Red Sea before it split. The congregation hesitated quite a while before they joined in. Later, one fellow severely reprimanded me for singing in shul without the Rebbe giving the signal. I explained that the Rebbe had already given me permission previously, and I certainly would not do anything against protocol. He apologized profusely.

During the meal of the first day, I thanked the Rebbe "for helping me with the niggunim, but it was difficult."

The Rebbe commented that it would be much easier on the following day and indeed it was.



THE REBBE IN CONVERSATION WITH REB ZALMON JAFFE IN FRONT OF 770 DURING ONE OF HIS VISITS FOR SHAVUOS IN THE 5730S.

The trouble was that I was then inundated with requests to sing various other niggunim. Obviously, I had to decline. One cannot, or should not, overdo a good thing. I was quite satisfied with what was achieved.

I still continue the custom of starting to sing a niggun when the Rebbe leaves the shul, so the Rebbe is sung out; but instead of helping me by joining in and being *freilich*, I get blank stares and a few smiles of approval and even disapproval. Fortunately, my old friend, Rabbi Shemtov, and my new friend, Zvi Fisher, had pity on me, and we danced and sang together for the Rebbe.

Well, to revert back to meals with the Rebbe. Every meal was *freilich*. I sang many niggunim and told a few good jokes. I had just concluded what I thought was a good joke, when the Rebbe remarked that he did not like the joke at all, as I had related something detrimental about the Jewish people. Therefore, I must immediately express something good about Jewish people, now and at once. This I did, and the Rebbe raised his glass and wished me *l'chaim*. At a subsequent farbrengen I thought of something very good to say about Jews. This time the Rebbe made me say *l'chaim* in a very loud voice.

At one point during the meal on the first day of Yom Tov, the Rebbe said to me, "You have to sing a niggun."

I proposed, "Bli neder tonight I will sing two niggunim."

"Sing now at least a *halbeh* niggun (half a niggun)," said the Rebbe.

So off we went with another song.

When we finished singing, the Rebbe said to me, "And now say a complete *l'chaim*."

I then asked the Rebbe a question on Rashi. The Rebbe always stresses that Rashi wrote his commentary so even a five-year-old can understand. I have yet to find a five-year-old who could answer this question:

G-d commands the kohanim: "So shall you bless the children of Israel 'omor lohem' (say to them)."² In Rashi's commentary of this verse, he gives three explanations to the words of 'omor lohem'. But, instead of including all three explanations in one entry under a shared heading, as Rashi usually does when having more than one interpretation, there is a separate heading for each of the three explanations.

The Rebbe promised to discuss this question at the next farbrengen on Shabbos.

At the last Yom Tov meal, I told the Rebbe that Rabbi Gutnick wanted to give me an answer on the Rashi; but

I did not want to hear it because I prefer to hear the Rebbe's answer.

The Rebbe said, "It is not a contradiction. Especially as Rabbi Gutnick is himself a *kohen*." Rabbi Gutnick gave an answer, but it seems that the Rebbe had something else in mind.

This last meal on Shavuos had a very happy atmosphere.

We sang the words from the final verses in the Rebbe's perek of Tehillim (chapter 69) to the tune of "Dayenu." The Rebbe had been quoting these verses at every farbrengen this year, "Kee Elokim yoshiya Tzion."

The Rebbe was exceptionally pleased with this new song and, his face beaming, asked whose inspired idea this was³. Someone explained that some of the yeshiva boys had hit on this brilliant idea.

The Rebbe said, "They are very appropriate words."

Rabbi Gutnick said that since the tune was from "Dayenu" which means "enough," I am asking of the Rebbe at this auspicious time that it should be *dayenu* to all *tzorrus!*

The Rebbe answered, "*Amen, kein yehi rotzon*, (so should be the will)."

In due course, this niggun became "top of the pops."

The Shabbos After Shavuos

Our last Shabbos at 770 this year, the Shabbos after Shavuos, was Parshas Nasso, Sivan 9. Again, we had the *zechus* of a farbrengen with the Rebbe, from 1:30 prompt until five, thus keeping up my reputation of there being a farbrengen on almost every Shabbos I am present at 770.

It was extremely *freilich*. At one point, even though I had already wished the Rebbe *l'chaim* twice, the Rebbe stated that I was not *yotze* with the *l'chaims* of my grandsons.

Then the Rebbe started with the "question" on Rashi which I had presented to the Rebbe at the meal.

Actually – and typically of the Rebbe – I had asked but one question on this *possuk*, but the Rebbe had many more questions on that same Rashi.

The Rebbe began by saying that one question had been asked on a Rashi, "but when the Rashi is learnt as a five-year-old should learn it, we will see how many questions there are."

The Rebbe started on the questions. When the Rebbe



THE REBBE SHAKES THE HAND OF 4-YEAR-OLD YOSSEI LEW BEFORE THE JAFFE FAMILY'S RETURN TO ENGLAND AFTER THEIR VISIT IN SIVAN 5728.

JEM 109655

got to question number eight on this same *possuk*, he stopped to ask me, “How many questions is that?” I answered correctly. At eleven, again, “how many?”

At fourteen, I answered, “fourteen,” but somebody else shouted, “fifteen.”

The Rebbe said, “We will have an auction, does anybody say sixteen?” (My answer was correct.)

And so the Rebbe kept on asking more questions on the same *possuk* until he had asked twenty unique questions on that one Rashi! Then the Rebbe started on ONE approach to the Rashi, which answered all twenty questions – brilliant! One of the twenty questions on this Rashi:

Why was *omor* “*lohem*” (say to them - the Kohen to the people) in the plural, whilst *yevarechecha* (you shall bless - the Kohen shall bless one Jew) in the singular? The answer the Rebbe gave was that the kohen had to concentrate with great *kavana* to feel that he was blessing each one individually and collectively.

(I later told the Rebbe that this was no *chiddush* (nothing new) as the Rebbe had told me many years ago that he spoke to everyone individually at a *farbrengen*. This

remark pleased the Rebbe.)

The Rebbe then spoke very strongly once more on the theme of “Who is a Jew?” He mentioned a Reform rabbi who made conversions which consisted only of a certificate. This piece of paper, which was given to the applicant straight away without any formal instruction, stated that this man was now a Jew. Even a *bris* was not required, or indeed performed, as this Reform leader did not believe in shedding blood, and he had pity on this poor fellow. So this man’s children or grandchildren would in time, G-d forbid, be able to marry one of your children or grandchildren while they were not even Jewish. We must also consider them and the future.

During the *farbrengen*, the Rebbe handed me a bottle of vodka. “A little for now, a little for the plane, and the rest for Manchester.” Shmuel [Lew - Reb Zalman’s son in law] also received a bottle to “give to students.” We did very well indeed.

The Hand Shakes

One Shabbos, Yossi (6) and Mendy (4 ½) were standing at the doorway of 770 when the Rebbe arrived. He

said “Good Shabbos” to Mendy, who gave the Rebbe his hand to shake whilst answering “Good Shabbos.” The Rebbe also shook hands with Yossi. A large argument and debate ensued on whether the Rebbe had given his hand first or if the boys were rude and had stuck out their hands. Was it correct or was it wrong, and so on. Well, the following day we had just returned to 770; we were all standing at the doorway of 770 when the Rebbe happened to be coming along. The Rebbe touched his hat, smiled at Roselyn and me, and firmly and smartly shook hands with Mendy and Yossi.

Farewell Yechidus

Monday night, Sivan 11, the climax of our visit had arrived. At 9:40, Roselyn and I entered the Rebbe’s room for *yechidus*.

Initially, our *yechidus* with the Rebbe was to be on Sunday, Sivan 10. However, there were so many people coming to see the Rebbe this time that the following night, Monday, was also declared a *yechidus* night! This was extremely unusual, two consecutive nights! I had never heard of such a thing.

So we had our *yechidus* on Monday evening. Roselyn and I had very rarely been lucky to enter so early. Four or six in the morning, yes, but before 10:00!

Actually, some people were delayed so we took their turn. We received a splendid greeting from the Rebbe, who remarked with a twinkle in his eye that we had come well prepared with pads and pens. I replied that we had come thousands of miles for this interview and every word of the Rebbe was so important that we could not afford to miss anything.

“Are you needing to write 1,000 lines or 100 lines?” asked the Rebbe.

“No,” I replied, “but why should I take any chances?”

The Rebbe requested that I keep writing to him every two weeks as hitherto. Since we were leaving from 770 for home the next night at 9:30, I asked whether we would miss Maariv.

The Rebbe told us that he would be visiting the Ohel again, so Mincha would be at 8:30 and maariv ten minutes earlier than usual. “My wife will be delighted to see me ten minutes earlier,” added the Rebbe.

The Rebbe mentioned that he had not answered every one of the twenty Rashi questions. He would give these later on. The Rebbe advised us to come next year again

for Shabbos Mevorchim, “because you are always wanting a *farbrengen*.”

I told the Rebbe that “A Chossid must have no pity on his Rebbe, and not give in, if it concerns Torah.” I pointed out that the Rebbe had spoken for fourteen hours over the Shavuos period, “That is a great deal of Torah.”

“Ah,” said the Rebbe, “You say that after the event, not before.”

I admitted that I could not understand everything at a *farbrengen*.

“Yes,” said the Rebbe, “They are not words one uses every day in business.”

(This reminded me of the time I told the Rebbe that in the English translation of his Pesach - or other - messages, some English words were so difficult to understand that one needed a dictionary handy. The Rebbe said that, “The purpose of my letters is not for the study of English.”)


[After talking about the broadcasts of the Rebbe’s *farbrengens* to Eretz Yisroel] I said that the *farbrengens* were received exceedingly well in London (in Manchester, too, now) except that the Rebbe was not there in person and also that it was an awkward time, 2 a.m. until 9 a.m.; otherwise it was very nice indeed, with comfortable chairs and tables, refreshments, no crush, etc.

“Shah!” said the Rebbe. “Don’t tell anyone here; they will all want to go to London for the *farbrengen*! Still”, the Rebbe added, “it is a pity I keep everybody up all over the world.”

The Rebbe said he was very pleased with my grandsons, Yossi and Mendy Lew, who had attended every service at 770. I remarked that, while here, a great impression had been made on them that will last them all their lives.

“No, no,” said the Rebbe. “They will come plenty of more times.”

After a stay of one hour and ten minutes, we left the Rebbe’s presence.

One friend from England, Hershel Peckar, went into *yechidus* after we left. He came out flushed and excited. The Rebbe had given him \$100 to buy his wife (whom he had left at home in London) a gift! 

1. This is where the Rebbe and the Rebbetzin would eat the Yom Tov Seudos until 5731.

2. Bamidbar 6:23

3. See Derher Weekly, Tazria 5771, “Yud-Aleph Nissan Niggunim.”



“The Rebbe Was Looking for Someone”

Rabbi Yosef Gopin of Hartford, Connecticut, shared the following stories during the virtual farbrengen celebrating Yud-Aleph Nissan–120 years. They illustrate the extent to which the Rebbe was attuned to each individual even while farbrenging with thousands.

In 5734*, a relative of mine was visiting the United States from Eretz Yisroel after concluding his mandatory army service. Despite his background, he was a troubled youth who was very far from Yiddishkeit and Chassidishkeit and had drawn attention for his misbehavior many times. When he arrived in New York, Rabbi Zalman Shimon Dworkin immediately arranged that he be granted a *yeichidus* with the Rebbe. The Rebbe spoke warmly to him, speaking about his illustrious grandfather and his family, but it had no effect on the young man.

That year was the year of the Yom Kippur War. Shemini Atzeres was some two weeks after the war had broken out in Eretz Yisroel, and at the Rebbe’s *hakafos* there were special spiritual actions clearly taking place, with the Rebbe interceding for the Jewish nation during this crisis. Amid this unique *hakafos*, with the fate of Eretz Yisroel hanging in the balance, among the crowd of thousands stood this young man, far from the spot where *hakafos* were taking place.

As the Rebbe went to the first *hakafa*, it was clear that he was searching for someone in the crowd. And then the Rebbe spotted him. The Rebbe waved his arm towards him in a sign of uplifting encouragement. Each time the Rebbe circled around during this *hakafa*, he again waved his arm to this young man. That was the first *hakafa*. Then came the seventh *hakafa*, and once again the Rebbe led the *hakafa* and

again the same thing happened.

The next night, in the space near the *ches*-shaped barrier of tables that surrounded the space where the Rebbe’s *hakafos* would take place, there was a commotion. Every inch of room was accounted for, as people would stand for hours before *hakafos* to reserve their *makom kavua* — their “spot.” But a newcomer was here, this young man, and he would not budge from the spot he had taken. People tried to move him, but he was strong and resisted their efforts.

He was determined to be there.

For years afterwards, he stood right near the Rebbe during *hakafos*, and the Rebbe would warmly wave his arm to him.

✪

On Yud-Aleph Nissan 5737*, when I came home from a long day spent distributing matzah, my wife told me that a man had come to the house and demanded to see the rabbi. “The rabbi isn’t here,” my wife replied. “Come to tonight’s Tanya *shiur* and you can meet him.” The man agreed, and told my wife, “Tell the rabbi that I’m the first Chabadnik here in Hartford.”

And so, at 8:00 p.m. the man came in for the *shiur*, and I started talking with him. “What’s your story, I asked.”

“I grew up in Hartford,” the man — who told me his name is Alexander — explained. “I never knew my father, and my mother couldn’t afford to feed me — I was hungry.

לזכות
החיילת בצבאות ה'
בת שבע רייזל תחי'
לרגל הולדתה י"א שבט ה'תשפ"ג
שנת הקהל

ולזכות הוריה ר' יעקב ישראל
וזוגתו מרת נחמה חי' מושקא
שיחיו מוצקין

נדפס ע"י זקיניה
הרה"ת ר' אברהם יואל וזוגתו
מרת גאלדא ומשפחתם שיחיו
קיעומואן



RABBI YOSEF GOPIN

We were very poor. One of my mother's friends told her that she, too, struggled to feed her child, and she sent her to New York, to a place called Chabad Lubavitch, to the yeshiva on Bedford and Dean — 'It's a very good school; it's clean, it's warm in the winter, there's good food and good classes. The only problem is that your son might become a religious Jew.' My mother said she wouldn't mind if that happened, and sure enough we took the train to New York, met the *hanhalah*, and I was accepted to yeshiva and given a room." And who were Alexander's two roommates? Two boys who had just come from Russia — Avremel and Berel Lipsker.

For the weekends, the yeshiva would close; the students would go to Crown Heights and stay with families. The arrangement was that the *bochurim* were expected to go to *mikveh* before Shabbos, and to daven in 770.

"As I was on the way to the *mikveh*," the man continued his story, "I met a young man. He asked me my name, where I was from, and so on. We got into a conversation, and this became a habit — I would meet this man on my way to the *mikveh* and we would talk. Then, after a few weeks, I realized who this was — it was the Rebbe."

He went on to tell me that unfortunately, he had left the yeshiva and his life had taken a turn for the worse. But lately, he had begun coming back to Yiddishkeit. He was now married — to a Jewish woman — and had a child, and davened in a *frum shul*. So I told him, "Tonight is Yud-Aleph Nissan. Tomorrow night will be the farbrengen, it's the Rebbe's 75th birthday — you must come!"

"Rabbi, you're crazy," he replied. To travel three hours each way in those days was very uncommon. So of course the Tanya *shiur* that night was all about how important it is to go to the Rebbe, and at the end of the night he told me, "If

I can rearrange my meetings, I'll come with you." At 9:00 he called me and said, "Rabbi, I arranged everything, and I'm going with you."

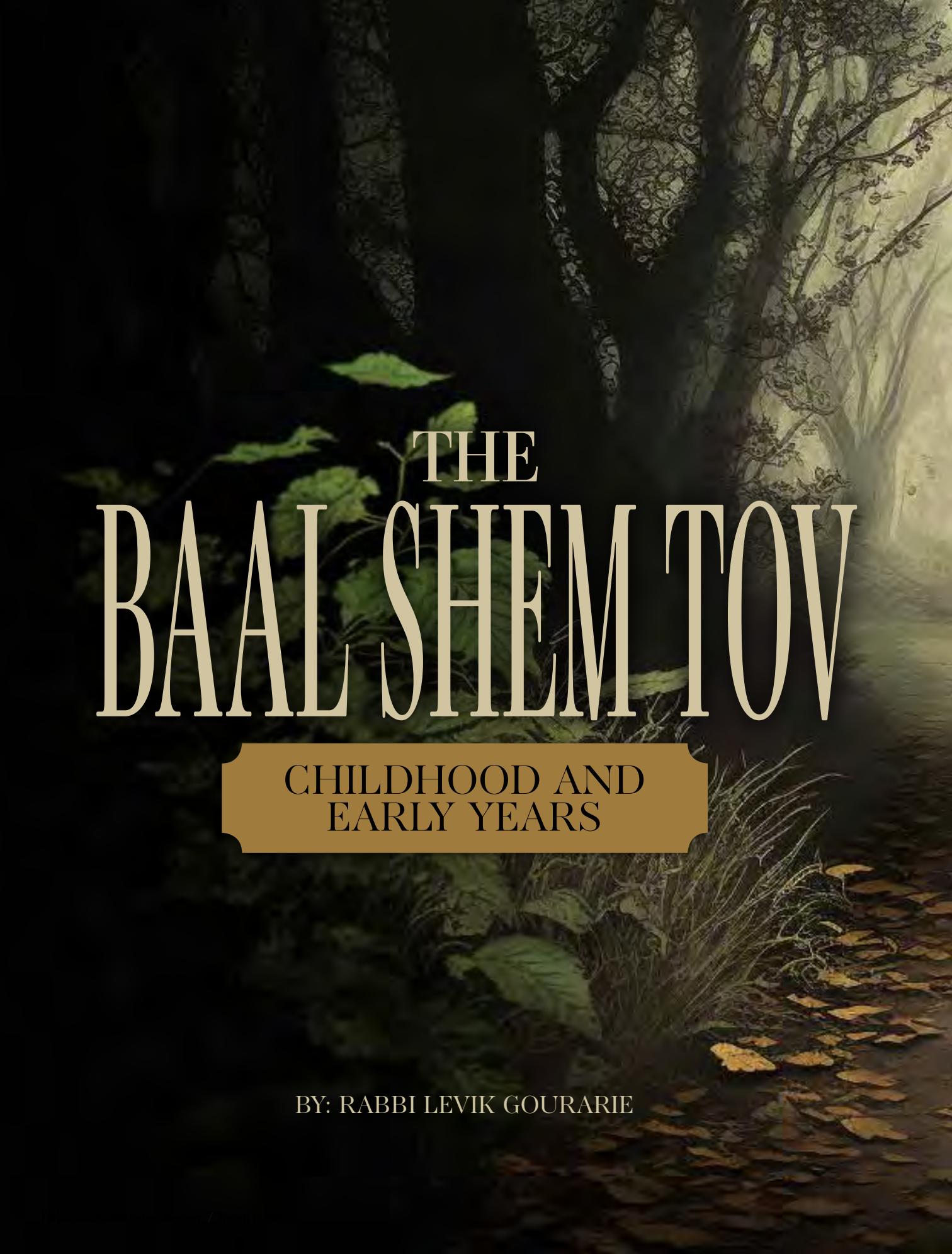
So we drove to New York that afternoon and arrived at 770, where we met Avremel and Berel Lipsker, who welcomed him and made him feel comfortable. As the farbrengen began, Alexander, who had appeared to be a rather cynical fellow, was quite emotional, even crying.

We traveled home, and this fellow was clearly very affected by the experience. After Pesach, we sat down to write a letter to the Rebbe, detailing Alexander's whole story. Ten days later, I got a letter from the Rebbe, in English, for this man. Rabbi Nissan Mindel, the Rebbe's secretary, had included a request that I should read him the letter and explain it to him.

The Rebbe wrote him a full-page letter, and at the end apologized that he didn't have this man's address, so "I sent it to our mutual friend, Rabbi Gopin."

The Rebbe wrote, "It was a pleasure, after such a long interval, to see you, to receive your letter, and I'm happy to hear that you're married and involved in education. You write to me that you learned in Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim. You should know that this yeshiva was established by *nesiei Yisroel* — the Rebbe Rashab and his son, my father-in-law the Rebbe — and with *mesiras nefesh*. Therefore, the powers of *mesiras nefesh* are invested in this *mosad*. And therefore, the powers of *mesiras nefesh* are in you. The holiness did not leave its place." The Rebbe then gave him a *bracha* to succeed in fulfilling the mitzvos.

When I got this letter, I wondered, "Is this letter to him, or also to me?" If the Rebbe expects from such a person, who was so far, so much — what can be expected of me? **T**



THE
BAAL SHEM TOV

CHILDHOOD AND
EARLY YEARS

BY: RABBI LEVIK GOURARIE



לזכות
השליח הת' גבריאל נח שיחי'
לרגל הגיעו לעול מצוות ט' אייר ה'תשפ"ג שנת הקהל
השי"ת יצליחו להיות חי"ל לנח"ר כ"ק אדמו"ר

נדפס ע"י הוריו
הרה"ת ר' דוד וזוגתו מרת פערל גאלדא שיחיו
טייכטל

The first day of Shavuot marks the yahrtzeit of the Baal Shem Tov, Rabbeinu Yisroel Baal Shem Tov, the founder and disseminator of Chassidus.

The figure of the Baal Shem Tov is larger than life. From his birth to his passing, all his travels and encounters, and the stories that accompany them, are all cloaked in “Baal Shemske” fantastical excitement. But it is not only his life story that was out of this world, it is also the impact that he had on the entire Jewish world that is incredible.

To truly appreciate the work and life of the Baal Shem Tov, it is important to look back at the history leading up to the appearance of the Baal Shem Tov on the scene of Jewish life.

The Baal Shem Tov arrived at a pivotal point for the Jewish masses, awakening the simple Jews and their leaders from the deep slumber of galus and desperation, towards the light and warmth of Chassidus, bringing the Jewish people ultimately on their final way towards the geulah.

The Tradition of Kabbalah

The study of Kabbalah throughout the generations was a hidden study unique to specific individuals, transmitted covertly from generation to generation by those in the know, to those who were deemed fitting of this great study. Additionally, the secrets of Kabbalah existed beneath the surface in *nigleh*, and also on various levels, as can be seen all across the Midrash, Gemara, and works of the Rishonim.

As the generations went on—once the Sefer HaZohar was discovered and publicized—the study of Kabbalah gradually grew, yet it continued to be limited in the range of the study and was accompanied by bans and restrictions on the characters of the students. While many of the great scholars of the sixteenth century learned Kabbalah and taught their close students, the majority of the Torah students were not allowed to study it, often not even being aware of the study that was going on clandestinely.

[For example, both in the Levush's yeshiva and in the Bach's yeshiva, Kabbalah was studied. In the latter it was a hidden *shiur* only for older and married students.]

Rabbeinu Eliyahu Baal Shem and the Nistarim

Things began to change when a tzaddik appeared in the city of Worms, Germany in 5350 (1590). He was the first “Baal Shem”—Rabbeinu Eliyahu Baal Shem—gaining recognition as a wondrous healer and miracle worker. Most importantly, he established a yeshiva of which he was in charge.

The yeshiva which began in Worms and then later traveled to Chelm (Poland), eventually taking root in Prague (Bohemia), was run entirely by Reb Eliyahu and stood out among all other yeshivos as the only yeshiva where there was an open emphasis on the learning and dissemination of the hidden secrets of the Torah.

As can be imagined, a great holy war was waged against Reb Eliyahu and his yeshiva. While there were of course those that supported him (at one point the Maharal came to examine the yeshiva and show support for Reb Eliyahu), a large portion of the rabbonim in Germany opposed him and his novel approach. Reb Eliyahu was not deterred and the yeshiva ran under his tutelage for the next forty years, before he passed on the leadership to his student Reb Yoel.

Due to the attacks on the use and the study of Kabbalah, which understandably only increased during the Shabsai Tzvi

fiasco, the *talmidim* of Reb Eliyahu would often not display their views and opinions publicly in support of Kabbalah. Rather they would wait to find people they determined were able to understand and be fit to join in their study and way of life.

Thus began the movement of the *nistarim* (the hidden), a group of devoted *talmidim* of the mystical part of Torah and their great teacher Reb Eliyahu Baal Shem, who kept their stature and identity under wraps, often under the guise of being simple craftsmen and townspeople. The *nistarim* would also share their studies whenever possible.

Eventually, Reb Eliyahu made the *nistarim* an official network and would send these *talmidim* in small groups to experience “*galus*,” wandering through the countryside as a means of *teshuva*, and traveling from town to town, quietly spreading the light and warmth of the hidden part of the Torah.

Second Generation of Nistarim

During the next century and beyond—from the appearance of Reb Eliyahu Baal Shem in 5350* until the Baal Shem Tov took full leadership of the *nistarim* in 5494*—the network of *nistarim* grew clandestinely, yet steadily, under the direction of Reb Eliyahu's prize *talmid* Rabbeinu Yoel Baal Shem of Zamutsch. He was also a great miracle worker and disseminator of Kabbalah. Following him, the movement was led by his *talmid* Reb Odom Baal Shem of Ropshitz, Galicia.

The Baal Shems all ran yeshivos, taught Kabbalah, and healed people. They performed miracles all across Eastern Europe, in addition to leading the *nistarim* and preparing the ground for the Baal Shem Tov's *hisgalus* down the line. [An amazing story is told of Rabbeinu Yoel Baal Shem saving a town of Jews during the pogroms of *Tach v'Tat* (5408*-09*)].

The groups of *nistarim* that were popping up all across greater Poland–Lithuania, while growing in number, still did not turn Kabbalah into a way of life. It remained solely a study, and as such it still did not change much in the general makeup of the Jewish communities of that period.

While they did try to inspire their communities in the limited capacity they had, the situation of the general Jewish community seemed beyond repair. The Jewish people of the time were writhing in pain and confusion, coming after a terrible crisis of faith and the total destruction of their lives and their communities.

A Painful Century

During this fateful century, two immensely transformative tragedies befell the Jewish people, each shocking the very soul

and spirit of the nation.

First came a sweeping catastrophe that devastated the entire structure of the Jewish world at the time. In 5408-09 (1648-9), Bogdan Khmelnicki *yemach shemo* and his horde of cossacks revolted against the Polish *pritzim* (landlords and noblemen) who were the overlords of all the towns, villages, and countryside, trying to claim back the land for their tribe.

The cossacks, who turned out to be vicious heartless antisemites, spent most of their time attacking close to 300 Jewish communities across the region (today's Ukraine, Poland, and Belarus), ransacking, murdering, torturing, and destroying the Jews and their towns.

In the aftermath, tens of thousands of Jews were murdered, while many others were sold into slavery. With people escaping and moving to the larger cities, many communities were wiped out entirely, while others that survived lost their leadership and their direction. The Jewish people were hurt and tired, clinging to their faith and hope for a better time.

Then came the second blow, the crisis of faith. Following the massacres of the cossacks, the false Moshiach Shabsai Tzvi, riding on the Jewish people's hope for salvation and redemption, swept up huge portions of the population with messianic fervor and baseless anticipation. He promised them his revelation as Moshiach, and recovery and retribution following the tragedies they had just experienced.

Many Jews, longing for some good news, followed the imposter, only to have their hopes dashed and their faith shaken when he ultimately converted to Islam to save his own life.

This fiasco also served to tear the Jewish communities apart, with leaders and congregants on either side of the argument, splintering, sowing hatred and mistrust that only grew as Shabsai Tzvi converted and his followers split again, deepening the crisis of faith and the fear of hope.

After the raids of the cossacks and the communal trauma of Shabsai Tzvi, the Jewish community was in shambles. These two events had quite literally demolished Jewish life and infrastructure, not only obliterating myriads of Jews, but also wiping out any economic or community stability that they may have had before. The poverty and physical need only deepened the terrible spiritual situation, with Torah knowledge dwindling and a dearth of Jewish education becoming increasingly common in the typical Jewish community.

Following this challenge of education and study,

the rift that came between the elite—the Torah scholars and yeshiva students—and the simple masses of uneducated, often illiterate, people, grew stronger and wider, creating a deep division that the post-*tach v'tat* leadership did not know how to handle.

The divide, alienation, confusion, and frustration resulted in an even further deepening crisis of faith. The Rebbe explains that calling on someone's name wakes a person even if the person is in a faint, not just asleep. The Jewish people were in need of a revival—a revolution—and for that, the name Yisroel was whispered into their ear—Yisroel ben Eliezer—the Baal Shem Tov.

The Baal Shem Tov's Early Childhood

"I was born in the town *okup* in 5458*, and when I reached five years of age I was orphaned of my father and mother, of blessed memory. I lived on the account of the community, who supported me with food and drink, clothing, and tuition. But when the community leaders saw that I had no *siman bracha* (a sign of blessing, success) in my learning, they left



THE FIRST PRINTING OF THE ZOHAR IN THE YEAR 5318 (1558), 140 YEARS BEFORE THE BIRTH OF THE BAAL SHEM TOV



A SEFER OF REFUOS FROM THE TEACHINGS OF REB YOEL BAAL SHEM, TRANSCRIBED BY HIS TALMID.



me alone and I went from city to city and from settlement to settlement until I reached the city of Brod.”

The above is how the Baal Shem Tov himself summarized his youth in a letter that he penned in the summer of 5493*. Each of these details contains much more than can be seen in this letter itself, and this we can learn from the *sichos* of the Frierdiker Rebbe and the *sefer* Shivchei HaBesht.

The Baal Shem Tov was born on Chai Elul of 5458* to his saintly father Reb Eliezer and his holy mother Sarah, in the outskirts of the town of Tlust in a trench (an *okup*) where his family lived. His birth was a miraculous blessing, being that his father was 100 years old and his mother was 90.

Reb Eliezer and Sarah were childless for many years and spent all their money and efforts on *hachnasas orchim*. One Shabbos afternoon, a guest arrived from nowhere (it seemed to everyone that he must have traveled to get there) but this did not stop Reb Eliezer from inviting him in, providing him with all his Shabbos needs and caring for him. After the other guests taunted Reb Eliezer for honoring such a guest (who seemed to have desecrated Shabbos), Reb Eliezer was even more careful in honoring the guest.

On Sunday afternoon, as the guest set out to leave, he revealed to Reb Eliezer that he was in fact Eliyahu Hanavi and that he was sent to test and see how Reb Eliezer would treat him. Now that he had passed the test, the couple would be blessed with a son. He concluded that when your son will be two and half years old, tell him that Hashem is the *Aibershter* of heaven and earth, Him you should fear, and aside Him, you should fear no creation in this world.

[Shivchei HaBesht recounts a very different story about the Baal Shem Tov’s parents. In the story, Reb Eliezer of Wallachia (Moldova) gets taken by bandits, sold into slavery, serves as a slave, then as a military general, then as a minister. Then after many years in this faraway land, and after staying strong in his commitment to Yiddishkeit (for example, not marrying the minister’s daughter when the king tried pairing them together), he was blessed with being able to have a special child. He was finally allowed to travel home to reconnect with his wife, who had become a midwife in the interim, and the elderly couple was blessed with the Baal Shem Tov.]

The Baal Shem Tov was an extraordinary person from birth. It is brought in the name of the Alter Rebbe that the Baal Shem Tov was never a child. In a *tzetel* from the Alter Rebbe, he writes that the Baal Shem Tov recognized his creator at three years old, and that the Baal Shem Tov was talking and walking at three months of age.

As can be seen in the Baal Shem Tov’s letter, he was orphaned from both parents by the age of five, his father passing away a year before his mother. Before his father passed, he told his young son, “Do not fear anyone aside from Hashem and love every Yid with your entire soul, no matter who and



ILLUSTRATION OF A HORDE OF COSSACKS DURING THEIR REVOLT AGAINST THE POLISH LANDLORDS IN 5408-09 (1648-9).

no matter how.” These two foundations—*yiras Shamayim* and *ahavas Yisroel*—took the young Baal Shem Tov through his entire life.

For the first two years after being left alone in the world, the young Yisroel remained in his hometown and was supported by the community. While the townspeople tried getting him to behave like everyone else, he was already following his own path, walking fearlessly around town and venturing out to the forest outside of town. The Baal Shem Tov loved going there for the peace and quiet, for the lack of lies and ego, and for the concentration he needed to review his studies. He spent more and more time in the forest, often even staying overnight. Whenever anyone questioned him about his behavior, he would explain that the forest doesn’t scare him because his father taught him not to be afraid of anything besides Hashem.

After about two years, circa 5466* (at around seven years old), the Baal Shem Tov met an impressive-looking Yid in the forest who began learning together with him. He proceeded to take the young Baal Shem Tov with him on his travels and wanderings for the next three years, learning with him daily and caring for all his physical needs.

This unnamed man eventually brought him to a humble home on the outskirts of a small village where he introduced the young Baal Shem Tov to the owner of the house, the Baal Shem Tov’s new teacher, Reb Meir.

The Baal Shem Tov and the Nistarim

While Reb Meir may have looked like a simple Jew, he was in fact a member of the society of the *nistarim* and a great

tzaddik and *mekubal*. He took care of the Baal Shem Tov, eventually introducing him to the *nistarim* and Reb Odom Baal Shem, and learned with him for the next four years (5470*-5474*).

All this time the Baal Shem Tov grew in his Torah study and Kabbalah. He recounted that when he was 16 years old, he had already been involved with the *nistarim*, knew a distinguishable amount of Kabbalah, and davened from time to time with the *kavanos* of the Arizal as taught to him by a member of the *nistarim*.

By the age of 14, the Baal Shem Tov had already joined the *nistarim*, quickly becoming an active member and leader in this special society. He was also especially sent the writings and the special secrets from Reb Odom Baal Shem where he passed on the foundations of the work of the Baal Shems.

On the occasion of his sixteenth birthday (Chai Elul 5474*), the Baal Shem Tov merited his first private revelation of Eliyahu Hanavi, where Eliyahu Hanavi explained to him that Hashem garners tremendous *nachas* from the basic praising of Hashem by the simple people, more than the sublime *yichudim* [spiritual workings] of the greatest *tzaddikim*. At this point, the Baal Shem Tov took it as a path in the service of Hashem to encourage simple Yidden to thank their creator and shared this new *avodah* with the entire group of *nistarim*.

At age 18 (in 5476*), the Baal Shem Tov suggested that the *nistarim*, in addition to their regular work trying to uplift the simple people, should begin taking active roles in education. He proposed that they go from town to town to establish small *chadarim* [schools] where there weren't any, and even to accept the position of teacher where there was no one else to fill that role. The Baal Shem Tov's proposition was accepted by the *nistarim* and they began implementing this stage of the Baal Shem Tov's reformation, essentially setting the important foundation of Chasidus on the solid establishment of proper *chinuch*.

Around this time, the Baal Shem Tov was appointed leader of the local group of *nistarim* (which was under the leadership of Rabbeinu Odom Baal Shem). The Baal Shem Tov took this organization very seriously, having reports sent in with the work that was being done and the impact the *nistarim* were making on their communities. The Rebbe explained that the Baal Shem Tov was so much further than his colleagues, that he was even a *nistar* to the other *nistarim*.

Another important emphasis the Baal Shem Tov directed the *nistarim* to busy themselves with (closer

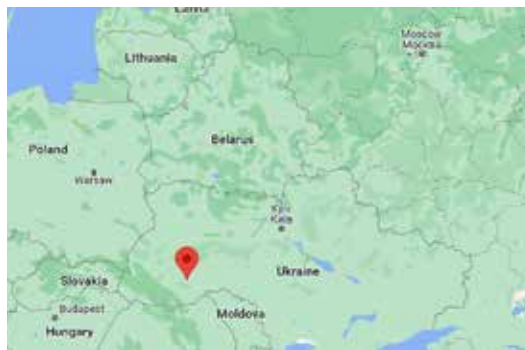
to 5480*), was the basic betterment of the people's material conditions—encouraging them to put Yidden's physical needs even before their spiritual needs.

The Baal Shem Tov and the *nistarim* worked to convince Jews to move out of the big cities (where many had settled after the massacres of *tach v'tat*), back to the villages and the countryside, explaining that they would have an easier time finding employment and a livelihood in the less condensed towns. (We see this idea implemented by the first Chabad Rabbeim as well.) In addition, the Baal Shem Tov and the *nistarim* lifted the people's spirits, giving them hope, a sense of self-worth, and the feeling of a life worth living for—focusing on the *guf* (body) of the Jewish people before the *neshama*.

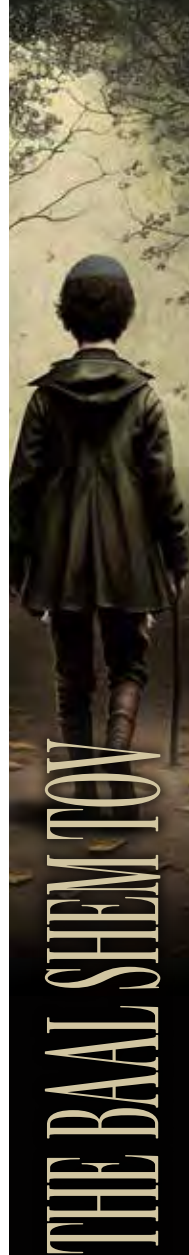
Another campaign the Baal Shem Tov and the *nistarim* fought for their downtrodden brethren, was responding to and shielding the Yidden from the wrath of the infamous *maggidim* that were (albeit with good intentions) breaking the spirit of the Jewish people. Instead, they introduced their own style of *maggidus*, sharing inspirational and heart-warming stories from Tanach and Midrashim.

The Baal Shem Tov as a Bahelfer

Leading up to the Baal Shem Tov's *hisgalus* and work in the communal eye, he held a position that encapsulated the essence of his life work—serving as a “bahelfer” [assistant] to a *cheder* teacher. This involved taking the children to and from *cheder*, guarding them against any dangerous assailants, showering them with love and instilling in them the foundations of our faith, answering with them *amen* and *baruch hu u'varuch shemo*, and teaching them



THE RED POINTER INDICATES THE CITY OF TLOSTE, WHERE THE BAAL SHEM TOV WAS BORN. THIS REGION OF UKRAINE IS KNOWN AS “PODOLIA” AND IS WHERE THE BAAL SHEM LIVED AND OPERATED FOR MOST OF HIS LIFE.



THE BAAL SHEM TOV

tefillos like *Modeh Ani* and *Shema Yisroel*.

The Rebbe explained that it was in this position that the Baal Shem Tov proved his worth as a leader and shepherd of his people. As *bahelfer*, the *ahavas Yisroel* expressed and the deep care that the Baal Shem Tov displayed for every single child, foreshadowed his life's work, especially in his focus on the basics of *chinuch* and *emunah*—building up the new generation on the strong foundations of Yiddishkeit.

Personal Life

Prior to his *hisgalus*, the Baal Shem Tov settled in a small town near Brod where he served as a *melamed* and a spiritual leader for the small local community. It was during his time in this town that he met his future father-in-law Reb Avraham, father of his soon-to-be wife Leah Rochel (in letters in Shivchei HaBesht, she is called Chana) and her brother Reb Gershon Kitover, who was then the *rosh beis din* in the city.

The Baal Shem Tov secretly arranged his *shidduch* with Reb Avraham's daughter (who he saw in *ruach hakodesh* was meant to be his wife) all the while keeping his true stature a secret from everyone.

Even after the *shidduch* was confirmed, the Baal Shem Tov didn't get married right away. Only after Reb Avraham passed away a short while later, did the Baal Shem Tov make his way to Brod to marry his wife.

When the Baal Shem Tov approached Reb Gershon Kitover with the *shidduch* he had arranged with his sister with their father's approval, Reb Gershon was appalled and shocked by the *shidduch* that his father made with this "simple" man. The *kallah* intervened and said that her father's wishes should be upheld and that she would happily marry the Baal Shem Tov.

At some point, the Baal Shem Tov revealed to his wife who he really was, but it would take a while longer before he revealed his true greatness to his brother-in-law, Reb Gershon.

[In HaTomim, a letter (from the Kherson Genizah) is cited, where the Baal Shem Tov writes to Reb Gershon apologizing for not being able to learn, but that hopefully by helping out in the *cheder* he'll pick up some Torah.]

Following his marriage and the secret he was hiding from Reb Gershon, the Baal Shem Tov set out to wander again, living in a small town where he was able to serve Hashem and be *misboded*—isolate and spend time in solitude—without being bothered.

It was during this period, in the years 5480* and 5485*, that their two children were born, Odel (5480*) and Reb Tzvi Hirsh (5485*).

It is written in histories of the Baal Shem Tov that for a period of time, he owned a tavern in the village, and it is also mentioned that for some time the Baal Shem Tov served as a



custodian in his brother-in-law Reb Gershon Kitover's house.

[There is a letter in HaTomim where the Baal Shem Tov writes to his wife that somebody will be bringing the spirits to her instead of him. This letter may back the tavern story.]

During this period (post-Brod, pre-*hisgalus*), the Baal Shem Tov spent time in the mountains between Kosov and Kitov where he would be *misboded* and study the secrets of Torah, coming home for Shabbos, and then repeat the same schedule the next week.

Throughout this entire period, he continued on as the leader of the *nistarim* of the region, running operations, visiting towns, and corresponding with his colleagues, the fellow *nistarim*.

It is brought in *sefarim* that the Baal Shem Tov spent the first 26 years of his life (the numerical value of the name *Havaye*) in hiding, and the last 26 years post revelation. The middle 10 years were the years when the Baal Shem Tov prepared to move from the first 26 to the next.

Learning with Achiyah Hashiloni

Ten years before the Baal Shem Tov's *hisgalus*, on Chai Elul 5484*, a man appeared to the Baal Shem Tov and told him to come and meet him in the mountains right outside town, where he will teach him Torah. After the Baal Shem Tov saw him a second time during his immersion in the *mikveh* on

Erev Shabbos, he decided to go meet the man in the mountains on the following Sunday.

The Baal Shem Tov recounted that while it was snowy and difficult to walk, he went to *mikveh* and set out to meet the man in the mountains. The man had the Baal Shem Tov follow him to a cave where there were two chairs and a *sefer*. The *sefer*—which was unnamed—amazed the Baal Shem Tov, containing unimaginable secrets of Torah.

The Baal Shem Tov and his new teacher sat and studied for a few hours, which the Baal Shem Tov described as opening his mind and everything becoming clear to him. After they finished learning, they made up to meet again the next day, and they studied together for the next 10 years.

Only after a full year did the man reveal his name saying that he was the great Achiyah Hashiloni.

The learning and the preparations went on. The Baal Shem Tov tried holding back from needing to reveal himself to the world. He explained that he enjoyed his life of learning, spiritual isolation, and the ambiguity he held as a *nistar*. But after pressure and clear directions from on high that he was meant to reveal himself, the Baal Shem Tov ultimately

relented.

The story of the Baal Shem Tov's revelation, leadership, and legacy, will be'zras Hashem be published in the upcoming Elul Derher in connection with Chai Elul, the Baal Shem Tov's birthday.

The early years of the Baal Shem Tov, from his miraculous birth to his time studying with Achiyah Hashiloni, shed light on the true character of the Baal Shem Tov.

The Frierdiker Rebbe explained that in the *chinuch* the Baal Shem Tov received from his father we can see the basis of all the Baal Shem Tov's ideas—undaunted *yiras Shamayim* and boundless *ahavas Yisroel*.

So, too, in his work with the *nistarim* and the simple Yidden, on to his work as a *bahelfer*, inspiring and educating Jewish children through love, the secret of the Baal Shem Tov can be seen.

It is this secret of the *neshamah* that he revealed, which shaped his life and continues to be the foundation and life of the movement that he founded—Chassidus. **T**

1. Sefer HaToldos, vol. 1, p. 55.
2. The Rebbe further explains this idea, originally from Reb Pinchos Koritzer, in Likkutei Sichos vol. 6, p. 285.
3. Letter from the Baal Shem Tov, HaTomim, vol. 1, p. 19.
4. The exact history of the Baal Shem Tov remains unclear. The *sefer Shivchei HaBaal Shem Tov* is accepted as a special *sefer* across all communities, including Lubavitch, but it is also clear that we don't accept all the versions of the stories there to be accurate. Two fundamental sources that we do have are the *sichos* of the Frierdiker Rebbe and the letters found in the Kherson Genizah that were published in HaTomim. For the basic outline of the story we will use these aforementioned sources.
5. Toras Menachem, vol. 28, p. 12.
6. Recorded in a note by the Alter Rebbe, Kovetz Yagdil Torah NY, vol. 31.
7. Sefer Hatoldos, p. 27
8. Yagdil Torah *ibid*.
9. Sefer Hasichos 5702-3 (Hebrew), p. 169.
10. Sefer Hasichos 5703, p. 165.
11. Toras Menachem, vol. 27, p. 176.
12. Toras Menachem, vol. 36, p. 5.
13. Letter from the Frierdiker Rebbe, HaTomim, vol. 1, pg. 138.
14. The Rebbe references the story where the Baal Shem Tov saved the children from vicious dogs—Toras Menachem, vol. 38, p. 150. (See also *Shivchei HaBesht* where the Baal Shem Tov saves them from a werewolf.)
15. There it is written that The Baal Shem Tov was married to someone and she passed away soon after their marriage.



A HANDWRITTEN COPY OF ONE OF THE LETTERS OF THE BAAL SHEM TOV TO HIS BROTHER IN LAW REB AVROHOM GERSHON KITOVER DISCOVERED IN THE "KHERSON GENIZAH." IN THIS LETTER FROM LAG B'OMER 5493 (1733), THE BAAL SHEM TOV ADDRESSES HIS UPCOMING HISGALUS AS PER THE INSTRUCTION OF REB ADAM BAAL SHEM.



נדפס ע"י ולזכות
הרה"ת ר' לוי יצחק זווגתו מרת שיינא חי'
ומשפחתם שיחיו
גרינברג

PRACTICAL HORA'OS

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

NEW HOME

BY: RABBI TZEMACH FELLER

Moving into a new home is a monumental occasion, one that carries *ruchniyus'dike* significance as well. Over the years, the Rebbe provided numerous *horaos* regarding moving into a new home, as will be shared below.

WHEN TO MOVE IN

Certain days of the week, dates of the month, and times of the year are more auspicious than others. If possible, these should be preferred for move-in dates.

- **After 15 Av**
“It would be ideal to wait until after the 15th of Av, if you can wait that long.”¹
- **In Nissan — but before Pesach and Sefira**
“The idea of bringing some belongings into the new home before Pesach is a good one, as it is known that the month of Nissan is the month of freedom in everything — also freedom from worries and limitations.”²
- **On Tuesday (and not on Monday or Wednesday)**
“It’s ideal to move on [Tuesday], the day on which ‘It was good’ was said twice,³ if it’s not a bother; if it is a bother, you can move on other days of the week (besides for Monday and Wednesday).”⁴
- **In Elul**
“Based on the saying of our sages, if it’s possible, [you should schedule your move] not in this month [Av] but instead in the month of Elul — the Month of Mercy.”⁵

FIRST BRING IN A CHITAS

The Rebbe instructed that before the furniture and other household effects are brought into the home, we should bring in a Siddur, Chumash, Tehillim and Tanya. This is in addition to the *minhag* to bring in bread and salt as the first items into the home.

“You are certainly aware of the recent *minhag* of *anash* to bring into the new home first of all a Siddur, Chumash, Tehillim and Tanya.”⁶

“Before you bring in the furniture, bring in a Siddur, Chumash, Tehillim and Tanya.”⁷

“It is our *minhag* to bring in first of all a Siddur, Chumash, Tehillim and Tanya — in addition to the *minhag* (which I believe is commonly observed everywhere) of bringing in bread and salt.”⁸

HOST A FARBRENGEN

A *chassidische chanukas habayis* — housewarming — means hosting a farbrengen in the new home, as the Rebbe often instructed.

“Certainly you will dedicate the new house with a *chassidische farbrengen*. The way one starts off, that’s how Hashem guides things — that it should be a *chassidische*, warm home, with *ahavas Hashem*, *ahavas haTorah*, and *ahavas Yisroel*...”⁹

“Since you already moved into your new home, it is necessary to arrange for a proper *chassidische farbrengen*, to reminisce about old times, when we farbrenged without being concerned about what so-and-so would say, what the left side or the right side would say. We just knew that a *chassidische farbrengen* — to hear *chassidus*, a *chassidische vort*, and a story of our *rebbeim* — this brings in light, and a little bit of light pushes away much darkness.”¹⁰

“Regarding what you wrote about a housewarming: although in *sifrei nigleh* there is some discussion about this... since it is a *minhag Yisroel*, and what’s more — this is the main thing — the Alter Rebbe explains in a *maamar Chassidus*, “The Reason We Host A Joyous Feast When Dedicating a Home” (this *maamar* is now in print, and comes from the *bichel* written by Reb Pinchas from Shklov), you should do so. When you’ll farbreng at a *chassidische farbrengen*, and when you’ll hear words of Torah and Chassidus, there will be physical and spiritual benefits.”¹¹

PUT UP MEZUZOS IMMEDIATELY

“... And also to immediately put up mezuzos— without a *bracha*, of course¹² — and after 30 days, check one of the mezuzos, or you may change it for a nicer one ... and therefore you’ll be obligated to make a *bracha* [upon replacing it], and you’ll have in mind the other mezuzos [which are already up].”¹³

“Our *minhag in chutz la’aretz*¹⁴ is to put up the mezuzah without a *bracha* immediately upon moving in, and on the 30th day we remove a mezuzah to check it (or to exchange it for a more *mehudar* one) and we put it up with a *bracha*, having in mind the other mezuzos.”¹⁵

TAKE CARE OF YOUR SPIRITUAL HOME TOO!

The Rebbe often emphasized that when moving into a new home, one should focus on building up one’s *ruchniyusdike* home — the Torah and mitzvos that surround the person. The Rebbe often quoted Likkutei Torah and Siddur Im Dach, from the *maamar* beginning “*Mizmor Shir Chanukas Habayis*,” as well as the *hemshech* of Mayim Rabbim 5636, which discuss the *ruchniyusdike* home and how to acquire and build it.

“Chassidus explains the importance of a home in *ruchniyus* ... and as is known, *gashmiyus* is directly affected by the *ruchniyusdike* things that are called by the same name. Therefore, to a certain extent, *gashmiyusdike* things also inspire their *ruchniyusdike* equivalents. May this take place for you through buying this house — that the home should be complete in *gashmiyus* and *ruchniyus*.”¹⁶

“May your moving into a new home be ‘One who changes their place, changes their *mazal*’ — for good and *bracha*, *b’gashmiyus* and *b’ruchniyus*.

“Certainly, in connection to this, you’ll strengthen your spiritual dwelling, which is Torah study... which is Hashem’s home.”¹⁷ **T**

1. Igros Kodesh vol. 9 no. 2849.
2. Ibid. vol. 10 no. 3374.
3. See Bereishis 1, 10-12.
4. Igros Kodesh vol. 15 no. 5716.
5. Ibid. vol. 19 no. 7388.
6. Ibid. vol. 12 no. 3972.
7. Ibid. vol. 9 no. 2849.
8. Ibid. vol. 19, p. 389.
9. Ibid. vol. 4 no. 939.
10. Ibid. vol. 4 no. 1042.
11. Ibid. vol. 10 no. 3182.
12. A *bracha* is not said for putting up a mezuzah until one has lived in the home for 30 days.
13. Ibid. vol. 12 no. 3972.
14. See Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah siman 286 se’if 22: One who rents a home in *chutz la’aretz* or stays at an inn in Eretz Yisroel is exempt from *mezuzah* for 30 days. One who rents a home in Eretz Yisroel is immediately obligated to put up a *mezuzah* because of the obligation to dwell in Eretz Yisroel.
15. Igros Kodesh vol. 19, *ibid*.
16. Ibid. vol. 3 no. 608.
17. Ibid. vol 7 no. 2214.



RABBI ELIEZER ZIRKIND

לזכות
החייל בצבאות ה'
לוי יצחק שיחי'
לרגל האפשרעניש' שלו כ"ד סיון
ה'תשפ"ג שנת הקהל

נדפס ע"י הוריו
הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל זווגתו מרת
מרים ברכה שיחיו
שפאלטר

Standing Boldly

Written By: Rabbi Mendel Jacobs

Presented here is a copy of an interesting typed note, with an addition in the Rebbe's holy handwriting at the bottom.

The following is the background story:

In Elul 5712*, Rabbi Eliezer Zirkind was drafted into the US army to join the Korean War effort. When he refused to shave his beard and *peyos*, he was threatened by the army's command with up to 10 years in prison, and the Jewish Welfare Board stepped in on his behalf. It was decided that they would consult the opinions of three rabbis. One of the rabbis selected was Rabbi Yosef Eliyahu Henkin, who ruled that Rabbi Zirkind should stand his ground when it came to shaving his *peyos*, but he should be more lenient about the beard, especially considering the harsh sentence he would potentially face for failing to obey the order.

Rabbi Zirkind asked the members of the JWB to also seek the Rebbe's opinion, and a delegation of them came to the Rebbe for *yechidus*.

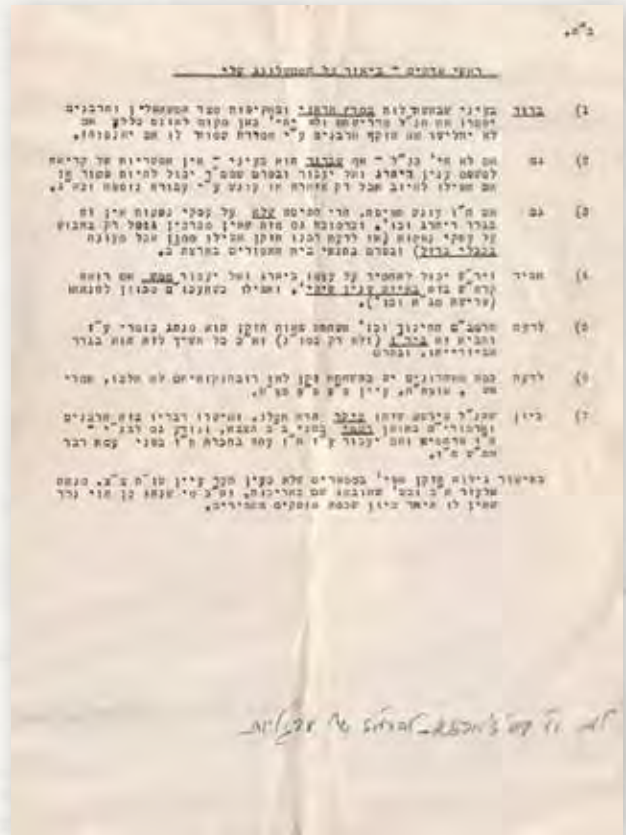
The Rebbe was adamant that Rabbi Zirkind should stand his ground about not shaving his beard too, saying, "Once you accepted upon yourself the ruling of the Tzemach Tzedek [that shaving one's beard is a Torah prohibition], you need to stick with it until the end [יהרג ואל יעבור]."¹

This note is a synopsis of the Rebbe's words in *yechidus*, clarifying his opinion on the matter.²

B”H.

Outline—Explanation of my approach

1. It is clear to me that if the chaplain and the rabbis will stand firm and employ **effective, vigorous** efforts, they [the army] will retract this order and there will be no coercion whatsoever. This is providing that they [=the chaplain etc.] don’t impede on the legitimacy of rabbis by stating that it will be permissible [for him to shave] if they force him to.
2. Also: even if this were not the case—even though it is **glaringly obvious** to me—you cannot refer to his being called to court as a life-threatening situation, since he could very well be exonerated. Even if he is found guilty, he may just be given a warning or a penalty of having to do more work [in the army] or the like.
3. Even if he does get sentenced to prison, *chas v’shalom*; going to prison with no chance of capital punishment does not constitute a scenario where one should transgress an *aveirah* to avoid death.
4. An overtly pious individual is allowed to be more stringent upon himself and accept the death penalty—even if this were a life-threatening case, if it will bring about a *kiddush Hashem*, **no matter what the potential transgression is**. This is even if the non-Jewish powers-that-be are only doing this for their own pleasure. (See Prisha, Magen Avraham, et. al.)
5. According to the Rambam, the Sefer Hachinuch, and others, destroying the corners of one’s beard is the practice of idolatrous priests. This is cited by the Rambam [also] in his Sefer Hayad [i.e. as a halachic ruling] (and not only in the Moreh Nevuchim). If so, anything that touches upon this prohibition is in the category of a subsidiary [to *avoda zara*]. Especially considering the fact that:
6. According to several *acharonim*, destroying one’s beard includes a biblical prohibition of “בחקותיהם” וּבְחֻקֹתֵיהֶם “לא תלכו”—not following in the ways of the nations; Imrei Eish, Otzar Hachaim. See Tzemach Tzedek siman 90, 91.
7. Once this fellow [Rabbi Zirkind] publicized that [not shaving his beard] is a **fundamental** part of his religion, and he was officially vindicated by rabbis and Rebbes in front of Army representatives, and other Jews found out about it—it is now considered a matter of public knowledge. If he transgresses this now by force, it would constitute a *chilul Hashem* in public, *chas veshalom*.

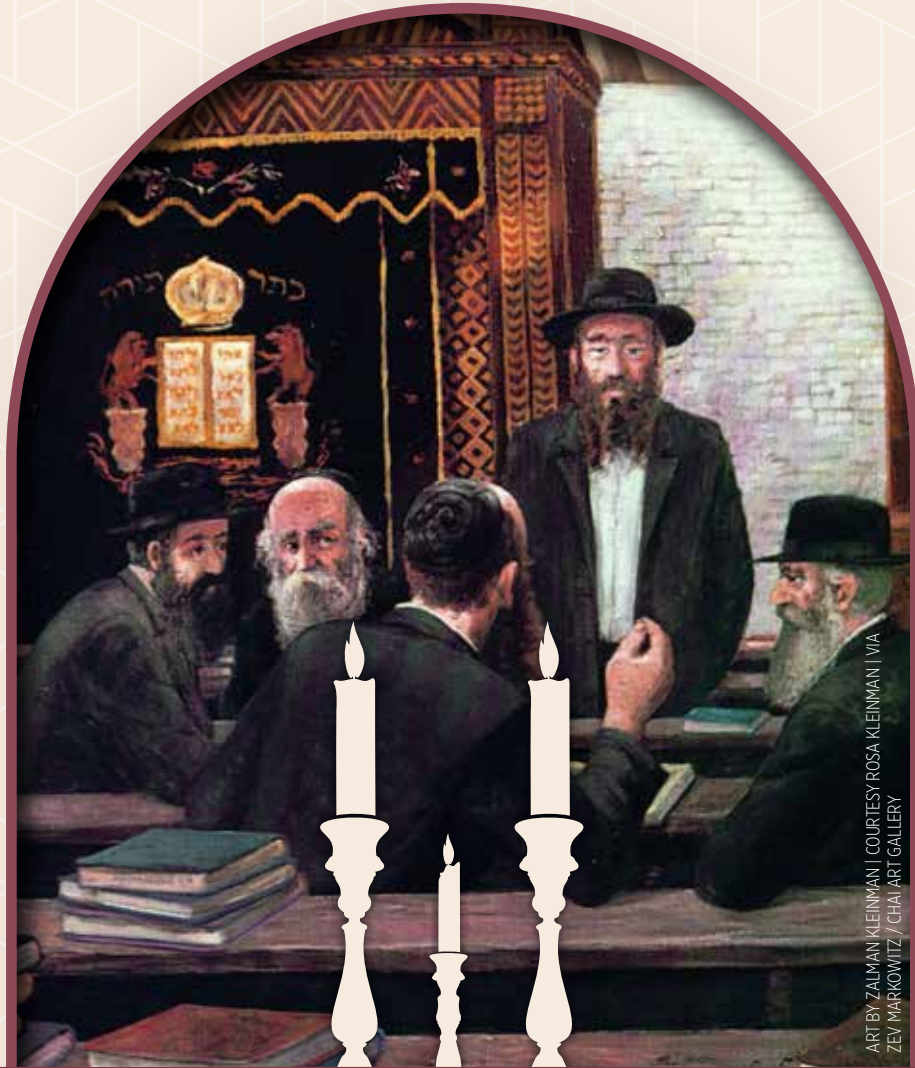


Regarding the prohibition of cutting one’s beard even with scissors without destruction of the hairs, see the Tzemach Tzedek’s responsa, Minchas Elazar vol. 2, and the *sefarim* he cites, at length. In that case, one who already keeps this practice can be considered a *neder* which cannot be undone, since there are several *poskim* who are stringent in this matter.

The following line was added by the Rebbe in his holy handwriting:

See the references cited in the sefer “Zayin Arazim” by Rabbi A.Z. Margolis.³ **1**

1. Another version of what the Rebbe said: “Since this is an instance of the US government opposing *halacha*, it is like an example of ‘עֲרֻקְתָּא דְּמַסְתָּאנָא’” (when a government opposes even a small Jewish custom, and we are commanded to fight for it with our lives—Gemara Sanhedrin 74a-b).
2. Published by Vaad Hanachos B’Lahak for Shabbos Parshas Toldos, 5783.
3. The Rebbe is referring to the sefer “*Amudei Arazim*” with seven sections, by Rabbi Asher Zelig Margolis.



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Shabbos *with the* Rebbe

A ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION



Rabbi Aharon
Blesofsky



Rabbi Yisroel Tzvi
Glitzenstein



Rabbi Hershel
Raskin



Rabbi Asi
Spiegel



Rabbi Shaul
Wilhelm

מוקדש
לחיזוק ההתקשרות לכ"ק אדמו"ר
בקשר עם יום הבהיר כ"ח סיון

נדפס ע"י
הרה"ת יוסף דוד וזוגתו מרת רבקה
בניהם ובתם
מנחם מענדל, לוי, חנה, ישראל ארלי לייב, דובער שיחיו
שטראקס

Every moment with the Rebbe is special and unique. Indeed, no moment in the Rebbe's presence can be called "regular."

Shabbos is no different. A "regular" Shabbos with the Rebbe is rich with pure and timeless moments that remain etched in the hearts of Chassidim who merited to spend them with the Rebbe. Be it an early morning Shabbos Mevarchim Tehillim, a joyous *Lecha Dodi*, perhaps a Motzei Shabbos Maariv, or the highlight of it all, the Shabbos farbrengen—these regular moments with the Rebbe all hold so much richness and depth.

A Chassidisher Derher sat down with several Chassidim who merited to spend time in 770 for a roundtable discussion about a typical Shabbos with the Rebbe; Rabbi Aharon Blesofsky, Rabbi Yisroel Tzvi Glitzenstein, Rabbi Hershel Raskin, Rabbi Asi Spiegel and Rabbi Shaul Wilhelm.

We must note that this article is a general overview of the standard weekly Shabbos schedule, and does not include the details of the many special events and extraordinary occurrences that took place throughout the years.

Despite the time that has passed since those last "regular" Shabbos moments with the Rebbe, we remain ever confident that very soon we will merit once again to stand at the Rebbe's Shabbos farbrengen, or just to partake in a "regular" Shabbos Shacharis, with the coming of Moshiach now!*

* Much of the material in this article is culled from the kovetz "Shabbos Mite'n Rebbe'n", published by the Vaad Talmidei Hatmimim Haolami, unless otherwise noted.

By: MENDEL ZAKLIKOVSKY

EREV SHABBOS

The atmosphere of Shabbos with the Rebbe begins on Friday afternoon, Erev Shabbos, as the day-to-day hustle and bustle slowly grinds to a halt and the serenity of Shabbos spreads its wings over 770.

In earlier years, the Rebbe spent Shabbos at his home on President Street. On Friday afternoon the Rebbe would visit his home for some time, returning shortly before Shabbos in time for Mincha.

Beginning in 5742*, the Rebbe and the Rebbetzin spent Shabbos in an apartment behind the library next-door to 770, renovated especially for this purpose.

The Rebbetzin would come to the library on Erev Shabbos with one of the *mashabakim*, usually Reb Sholom Ber Gansburg or Reb Chesed Halberstam. Shortly before Shabbos, the Rebbe would walk to the library for a short visit, bringing with him a bottle of wine.¹

The Rebbe entered the library from the main entrance facing Eastern Parkway. In Adar 5746*, a new

entrance was built from the back of the *chatzer*, giving the Rebbe easier access.

Upon returning to 770, which was usually shortly before *licht bentchen*, the Rebbe joined Chassidim for Mincha. The Rebbe would enter the shul dressed in a Shabbos *sirtuk*, and would daven at his Shabbos place, on the south side of the *zal*, next to the door of the *cheder sheini*.²

“Mincha on Erev Shabbos was a special *tefillah*,” Rabbi Yisroel Tzvi Glitzenstein recalls. “During my years in 770, the Rebbe would stand during the entire davening, and during *chazaras hashatz* he would rest his head on his hands and close his eyes for extended periods of time.”

“After the events of Shemini Atzeres 5738*, the Rebbe stopped joining the Chassidim for Mincha on Erev Shabbos,” relates Rabbi Shaul Wilhelm. “In the summer of 5748* the Rebbe once again resumed davening Mincha with the Chassidim, but at the same time as Mincha on a regular day, at 3:15. There was usually



a small crowd during Mincha (as all the *bochurim* were on *mitzaim*), and those who merited to be there remember the special intimate atmosphere.”

After davening the Rebbe would return to his room until Kabbalas Shabbos.

After the Rebbetzin’s *histalkus* on Chof-Beis Shevat 5748*, the Rebbe would light Shabbos candles in his room, using the Rebbetzin’s candlesticks. The Rebbe would light Shabbos candles around 25 minutes before *shekiah*, as was the Rebbetzin’s custom.

KABBALAS SHABBOS

Around an hour after *licht bentchen*, the Rebbe would come to the big shul to daven Kabbalas Shabbos.

“In the mid 5740s*, the Rebbe began entering the shul for Kabbalas Shabbos fifteen minutes earlier than usual,” relates Rabbi Hershel Raskin. “Many of the *balebatim* who would come from home for Kabbalas Shabbos only arrived at 770 towards the end of davening. Around that time we asked the *mazkir* Reb Leibel Groner if there was a reason for this change of schedule. Rabbi Groner answered us that the Rebbe had told him “איך וויל פארענדיקען דאווענען איידער די רעדנערס קומען—I want to finish davening before the talkers come.”

The Rebbe would enter the shul for Kabbalas Shabbos wearing his *gartel* and with a serious expression. To those who wished the Rebbe “*Gut Shabbos*” the Rebbe would simply nod.

“In the 5750s*, 770 would be packed during Kabbalas Shabbos,” relates Rabbi Shaul Wilhelm. “Davening would usually be very lively, and many people would come to witness the Rebbe encouraging the singing of *Lecha Dodi*. I remember one electrifying Kabbalas Shabbos, on Shabbos Bereishis 5751*. It was during a three day Yom Tov and the atmosphere was “wow!” When the Rebbe entered, the shul looked like *hakafos*, and the Rebbe vigorously encouraged the singing at *Lecha Dodi*.”

“In my days in 770, *Lecha Dodi* wasn’t sung,” relates Rabbi Aharon Blesofsky. “They only began singing it in the mid 5740s*, at the behest of Mr. Zalmon Jaffe. In later years the Rebbe would encourage the singing especially after *Bo’i veshalom*.”

“One particular moment that stands out in my mind,” relates Rabbi Raskin, “was when the Rebbe would turn around by *Bo’i v’shalom*. The Rebbe would turn to his left — without his *siddur* — until he would be facing west. After saying *Bo’i v’shalom* the Rebbe would turn back, until he reached his place. It was a special sight to behold (a ‘*reiche tziyur*’) to see the Rebbe

SHABBOS CANDLES

One Friday afternoon in 5749* (or 5750*), the *mazkirim* realized that they had run out of Shabbos candles. As Shabbos was rapidly approaching, someone ran to Reb Zalman Gurary’s house, which was right next to 770, to get candles from him.

The candles that were procured were long, six hour candles. A few months went by with the Rebbe using these extra long candles each Shabbos. When the box of candles finished, the *mazkirim* purchased standard candles once again. Before lighting Shabbos candles on the first Friday after the standard candles were purchased, the Rebbe asked: “וואו זיינען די אנדערע ליכט?”—Where are the other candles? Obviously, from then on they began purchasing the longer, six hour candles.

facing the crowd in such a fashion.”

In the later years, the Rebbe would come into Kabbalas Shabbos holding various *kovtzim* in his *siddur*. During davening, the Rebbe would look into these different *kovtzim*, especially the weekly *kovtzei ha’oros* published by Oholei Torah and the yeshiva in Morristown.

“In my years the Rebbe would learn the weekly *lik-kut* from the beginning of Kabbalas Shabbos,” relates Rabbi Glitzenstein. “It was a real sight to see the Rebbe learning a *sicha* that he spoke at a *farbrengen* and then edited (at least) twice...”

Usually, the Rebbe would stand from the beginning of Kabbalas Shabbos until *Borchu*.

After davening, the Rebbe would turn to face the crowd and wait for the *gabbai* to make his announcements about *shalom zachors*, Shacharis the next morning, etc. After the announcements, as the Rebbe would leave the shul, the Rebbe would wish Chassidim (starting with Rashag) “*Gut Shabbos*” until he got to his room.

Upon returning to his room, the Rebbe would stay there for a period of time, usually until around eight or ten o’clock.

“After the Rebbe left the shul on Friday night, the

crowd would sit down to learn the weekly *likkut*,” relates Rabbi Spiegel. “Usually, the *likkut* would be printed shortly before Shabbos, and the average *bochur* would only see it once Shabbos started. Although we would begin studying the new *sicha* already at the beginning of Shabbos, the deep and intense study (“*horovanye*”) would begin after Kabbalas Shabbos. That was the “*koch*” on Friday night, *bochurim* would learn *bchavrusa* and toil in the *likkut*.”

GOING HOME

“On Friday nights the *zal* would remain full for several hours,” Rabbi Wilhelm remembers. “Many *bochurim* would leave 770 only after the Rebbe returned to his home (or to the library); the feeling was that we’re not going to make *kiddush* before the Rebbe does.

“In the years when the Rebbe stayed at the library for Shabbos, we would crowd by the windows of the upstairs *zal* to see the Rebbe walk across the *chatzer* to the library.

“One fond memory that I have in this regard is from Rosh Hashanah 5748*. Rosh Hashanah was on Thursday and Friday, and there was a very joyous farbrengen on Friday evening. When the Rebbe left for the library after the farbrengen, the scene was beautiful, almost picturesque. The area in front of the Rebbe was empty, behind the Rebbe was a crowd of *bochurim*, obviously keeping a distance, and then there was a whole load of *bochurim* crowding by the windows of the *zal* to watch the Rebbe. The Rebbe walked to the library in an exceptionally joyous way, encouraging the singing with both of his hands. I was so excited!”

When walking in the street on Shabbos, the Rebbe would wear a coat over his *sirtuk*, even in the summer (presumably due to Kabbalistic explanations. Some say that this *minhag* came as a *hora'ah* from the Friediker Rebbe). Although the Rebbe would walk at a brisk pace during the week, on Shabbos he would walk slower.

In the 5720s*, a practice developed of two *bochurim* following behind the Rebbe, escorting him as he walked home. The two *bochurim* (based on a weekly rotation) would wait in the small *zal* until they would hear the Rebbe leaving, at which point they would begin following at a short distance. The Rebbe would generally not interact with them at all, though at times the Rebbe wished them “*Gut Shabbos*” when they reached his home.

“I vividly remember escorting the Rebbe home on Friday nights,” relates Rabbi Blesofsky. “The Rebbe would continuously walk without stopping or making

detours. If there was a puddle he walked through the puddle, and even when he would cross the street the Rebbe would barely stop for cars!”

For the rest of the *bochurim*, Friday night was not a time to waste. “On Friday nights a *bochur* would have to rest properly,” remembers Rabbi Spiegel. “Otherwise you wouldn’t have *kochos* for the farbrengen the next day!”

Rabbi Wilhelm relates: “In the period after Chof-Beis Shevat, when the Rebbe would stay in his room, I remember occasionally walking by the Rebbe’s room before going to sleep on Friday night and seeing the Shabbos candles flickering through the window.”

SHABBOS MORNING

On Shabbos morning the Rebbe would leave his house for 770 at around 9:30. A pair of *bochurim* would wait a short distance away from the house to escort the Rebbe on his way to 770.

In the first years of the Rebbe’s *nesius*, the Rebbe would walk through the *zal* after arriving. Several times the Rebbe said a surprise *maamar* upon arriving on Shabbos morning; a special surprise for those *bochurim* who were on time for *sefer Chassidus*!

On Shabbos Mevarchim the Rebbe would enter the *shul* for Tehillim at 8:30 a.m. He would usually stand while saying Tehillim, and even the times that he would sit, he would stand up for certain portions.

For many years the Rebbe would use a *Tehillim Yahel Ohr* with commentary from the Tzemach Tzedek. “It was fascinating to watch the Rebbe say Tehillim from the *Yahel Ohr*,” relates Rabbi Blesofsky. “Due to the length of the commentary, many pages in the *sefer* don’t have any words from Tehillim on them at all. As the Rebbe would be reading Tehillim, he would finger through the upcoming pages of commentary until reaching the next page of Tehillim. The Rebbe would do this without looking at any of the pages he was fingering through!”

From Shabbos Mevarchim Av 5745* and on (when the *sefarim* case began), the Rebbe started using the regular Tehillim - *Oholei Yosef Yitzchok*. Some time later, Chassidim prepared for the Rebbe a larger Tehillim, which the Rebbe used from then on.

When the *chazzan* finished Tehillim, the Rebbe would leave the *shul*. If the Rebbe had not finished yet, as was often the case, he would hold his place with a bookmark or his finger before closing the Tehillim.

SHACHARIS

A most memorable part of Shabbos with the Rebbe was definitely Shacharis. Indeed, until Chof-Beis Shevat 5748*, Shabbos was the one opportunity during the week when Chassidim were privileged to daven Shacharis with the Rebbe.

Shacharis would begin at 10:00, and on Shabbos Mevarchim, around a half hour later.

The Rebbe would enter the *shul* wearing a *gartel* and a *tallis* with his siddur and a *Chumash Torah Temimah* in his hands. Starting in 5744*, the Rebbe would enter the shul holding enlarged copies of the *haftarah*, and after Chof-Beis Shevat 5748*, he would bring a Tehillim as well.

Until 5738*, the Rebbe would bring a Tanya into the *shul*, and in later years also *kovtzei ha'oros* that were published for that Shabbos. The Rebbe would look into these *kovtzim* until *Baruch She'amar* and throughout *pesukei d'zimrah*. Many times the Rebbe would be seen learning from a *sefer* or saying Tehillim too.

"In my years, there was no singing during davening in 770 (as discussed earlier in regards to *Lecha Dodi*), including *Mimkomach*, *Sim Shalom* and the like," relates Rabbi Blesofsky. "Only in later years, as proposed by Mr. Zalmon Jaffe (with the Rebbe's encouragement), did Chassidim begin singing more."

Only on occasion did the Rebbe stand throughout the entire davening. During *krias ha'Torah* though, the Rebbe would usually stand (primarily until the events

of Shemini Atzeres 5738*, after which the Rebbe began to sit).

HAFTARAH

A highlight of Shabbos was undoubtedly hearing the Rebbe read the *haftarah*; the Rebbe's holy voice reciting the words of the *novi* in a simple yet soul-penetrating tune still rings clearly in the ears of those who merited to hear it.

Following the tradition of the *nesi'im* throughout the generations, the Rebbe would receive the *aliyah* of the *maftir*, already from the first days of his *nesius*.³

Rabbi Hodakov once delivered a message from the Rebbe to Reb Michoel Teitelbaum, the *menahel* of Oholei Torah, that the *bochurim* should be sure to learn the weekly *haftarah* properly, with the *mefarshim*. These instructions, continued Rabbi Hodakov, are especially for those *bochurim* who push to hear the Rebbe read the *haftarah* on Shabbos.⁴

"Every week *bochurim* would push close to the *bima* to hear the Rebbe," relates Rabbi Blesofsky, "If a *bochur* didn't have a spot close to the *bima*, he wouldn't be able to hear the Rebbe's voice. *Baruch Hashem*, I had an excellent spot during the *haftarah*!"

Already during *kaddish* after the seventh *aliyah*, the Rebbe would stand up in his place until the *gabbai's* voice would ring out, calling him up for *maftir*. The Rebbe would take his siddur and Chumash (or enlarged *haftarah* papers in the later years), and walk briskly to



THE REBBE RETURNING FROM THE LIBRARY TO 770 ON EREV SHABBOS, 20 AV 5745, AS CAMPERS FROM GAN YISROEL LINE THE SIDEWALK.

the *bima* at the center of the shul.

After the *maftir aliyah* and *hagbah*, the Rebbe would take his place at the front center of the *bima*, facing east, and open his Chumash to the *haftarah* and his siddur to the *brachos*. (In 5752*, they began including the *brachos* of the *haftarah* in the enlarged copies as well).

Once *gelilah* was completed, a hush would befall the crowd and the Rebbe would begin reading the *brachos* of the *haftarah* in a soft tone. In order not to miss a single note from the Rebbe, Chassidim would not read along in the *haftarah*, but would remain absolutely silent.⁵

In the earlier years, the Rebbe's voice would choke with emotion almost every Shabbos as he read the words of the *haftarah*. As the years progressed and the crowd grew—and especially after the *bima* was moved atop a platform—the tears and emotion in the Rebbe's voice became less apparent, aside from several exceptions on rare occasions.

After the *haftarah*, the Rebbe would return to his place.

MUSAF

"After the *haftarah*, the conclusion of davening would usually pass uneventfully," recalls Rabbi Raskin. "For many years *Hu Elokeinu* was not sung during Musaf, until the Rebbe spoke a sharp *sicha* about how

he shouldn't need to remind Chassidim about basic things, including to sing *Hu Elokeinu*.⁶ From then on *Hu Elokeinu* was sung every week."

After reciting the *yom* Tehillim and concluding davening, the Rebbe would stand in his place, turn to face the crowd, adjust his *tallis* and listen to the *gabbai's* announcements. Only after the *gabbai* would finish, would the Rebbe leave the shul for his room.

"In my years in 770," relates Rabbi Wilhelm, "a regular Shabbos Shacharis would finish around 12:15.



THE REBBE AS CHAZAN

Several times a year, on a *yahrtzeit*, the Rebbe would lead the *tefillos* as a *shliach tzibbur*. Occasionally, these *yahrtzeits* would fall out on Shabbos, and Chassidim would have the great *zechus* of hearing the Rebbe lead the davening in a special Shabbos tune.

"The tune that the Rebbe used on Shabbos was generally very simple," recalls Rabbi Blesofsky. "For those familiar with *neginah*, the Rebbe's tune was Nikolayev style, rooted in the history of the Rebbe's childhood town. Although the Rebbe would add his own twists to these existing tunes. One memorable part of davening was *Lecha Dodi*, the Rebbe would lead the crowd in a simple yet beautiful tune, stanza by stanza."

As noted in the article, there was generally no singing during davening in the early years. When the Rebbe was *chazan*, he rarely sang—or started—any *niggunim* as well.

One of the exceptions was on Shabbos Chof Av 5723*. The Rebbe was *chazan* for Shacharis and he started reciting "*Kel Adon*." Suddenly, when he reached the words "*pe'er v'chavod*," the Rebbe began singing the words to the tune of *niggun Shamil*. The Rebbe continued singing until the end of the *piyut*.

Noteworthy is that the last time the Rebbe was *chazan* on Shabbos (*le'eis ata*), on Shabbos Vov Tishrei 5752*, he led the entire davening, both Friday night and Shabbos day, in a weekday tune.

Shacharis on Shabbos Mevarchim could have finished later, up to around 1:00. On those Shabbosim people would become very anxious, as it would leave less than a half hour between Shacharis and the farbrengen!”

On a Shabbos when there was no farbrengen, the Rebbe would return to his room for a period of time, often until two or three o'clock in the afternoon, and then walk home (or to the library). The *bochurim* would escort the Rebbe home on Shabbos day as well.

“On one particular Shabbos day that I had the *zechus* of escorting the Rebbe, it was raining heavily outside,” recalls Rabbi Glitzenstein. “When the Rebbe came to the doorway of 770 he looked around and, noticing the rain, lifted his coat collar and began walking home. On Shabbos the Rebbe customarily walked slower than usual and this time was no different. I followed behind together with another *bochur*, and when we came near the Rebbe’s house we watched the Rebbe climb the steps from afar.

“We saw the Rebbetzin open both of the front doors for the Rebbe. The Rebbe entered and through the glass doors we noticed the Rebbe shaking off the rain in the front hallway. Suddenly the Rebbe and the Rebbetzin both turned and looked at us for a few seconds that seemed to last an eternity. I will never forget that moment...”

FARBENGEN

If you ask a Chossid to encapsulate Shabbos with the Rebbe, he will undoubtedly respond with a single pointed answer: the Rebbe’s farbrengen. The farbrengen was both the highlight of Shabbos, and it was also something that weighed on everyone’s minds the entire day; whether it meant scrutinizing the Rebbe’s motions to determine if there would be a farbrengen or scrambling to secure a good spot immediately after Shacharis.

No article can adequately describe the Rebbe’s farbrengens. Farbrengens were the setting at which the Rebbe taught us everything we know, where he addressed the world and revitalized world Jewry. During farbrengens the Rebbe lifted participants to a new world, bringing heaven down to earth in a real and tangible way. This is all in addition to the tremendous amount of history associated with the Rebbe’s farbrengens, spanning many different periods and settings.

Thus, we will present a very general overview, as just a small taste of these timeless moments, without going into too many details.

“The best way to describe the farbrengens on Shabbos with the Rebbe is ‘*gilui Elokus*,’” says Rabbi Raskin.



THE TABLE THE REBBE USED FOR SHABBOS (AT THE WALL OPPOSITE THE REBBE’S DESK) AT WHICH THE REBBE ATE ALL THE SEUDOS ON SHABBOS AFTER THE REBBETZIN’S HISTALKUS.

IN THE PICTURE WE CAN SEE THE REBBETZIN’S CANDLESTICKS, A NIGHT LAMP, EATING UTENSILS AND A THERMOS.

“Whether it was the *sichos*, the *niggunim*, saying *l’chaim* to the Rebbe, or seeing the Rebbe standing up and dancing—we were transplanted to a different world during the farbrengen. In a very literal sense, after the farbrengen it would take me time to land back in reality, *poshut b’gashmiyus*.”

“In my years in 770, Shabbos for a *bochur* was about one thing: to be at the farbrengen,” recalls Rabbi Spiegel. “Being present at the farbrengen was no easy task, it meant concentrating and focusing on the Rebbe’s words for hours straight, all while standing in a physically cramped space; it was a literal *avodah*. I remember many times feeling the need to rest after a farbrengen, as it took a lot of mental strength to be properly present at the Shabbos farbrengen.”

“It’s important to note that the farbrengens on Shabbos were different than the farbrengens during the week,” relates Rabbi Blesofsky. “The farbrengens during the week were more public and official, the Rebbe would speak to the world. At the Shabbos farbrengens there was a smaller crowd and the atmosphere was less formal and more personal; the Rebbe was more ‘with the Chassidim,’ so to speak.”

In the summer of 5705*, while the Frierdiker Rebbe was spending time at a health resort in Morristown, he instructed the Rebbe to begin farbrenging with the Chassidim. From then on, the Rebbe farbrenged every Shabbos Mevarchim throughout the years, with no exception!⁷

Occasionally, the Rebbe would farbreng on other weeks during the month, in honor of a special occasion or a *yoma d’pagra*.

“The farbrengens in the earlier years had a very



THE REBBE PERUSING A SEFER (PRESUMABLY A LIKKUTEI LEVI YITZCHOK) DURING A MOTZEI SHABBOS FARBRENGEN IN 5740.

special tone to them,” relates Rabbi Blesofsky. “The *olam* was smaller, and the atmosphere was more intimate. We would also sing slower *niggunim*; some *niggunim* would be sung regularly every week.”

In addition to the monthly Shabbos Mevarchim farbrengens, there were different *tekufos* in the frequency of the Rebbe’s Shabbos farbrengens throughout the years.

In the year following the *histalkus* of the Rebbe’s mother, Rebbetzin Chana, the Rebbe farbrenged every week. In the 5730s* and 5740s* as well, there were periods that the Rebbe farbrenged every week. Following the *histalkus* of the Rebbetzin on Chof-Beis Shevat 5748*, the Rebbe began farbrenging every week until Parshas Vayakhel 5752*, the last Shabbos before the events of Chof-Zayin Adar.

One *tekufah* in the Shabbos farbrengens began after the Rebbe had a heart attack on Shemini Atzeres 5738*. From then on, the Rebbe farbrenged on Motzei Shabbos, when a microphone can be used. Although this lasted for about 30 months—until Motzei Shabbos Shemos 5740*—the Rebbe expressed that the Motzei Shabbos farbrengens were an exception due to abnormal circumstances; and when he resumed farbrenging on Shabbos day, he similarly expressed that it was just a return to the regular schedule.

“After Chof-Beis Shevat 5748* the Rebbe moved

to his house,” Rabbi Raskin relates. “Before the first Shabbos, which was a Shabbos Mevarchim, the Rebbe asked Rabbi Piekarski if it was halachically permissible for him to farbreng, as it was still during *shiva*. Rabbi Piekarski answered that if the Rebbe doesn’t farbreng it would be considered ‘*aveilus b’farhesya*’ which is forbidden on Shabbos. Sure enough, the Rebbe came to 770 for Shabbos and held a farbrengen.

“The next few weeks the Rebbe stayed home for Shabbos and there was no farbrengen. The week after *shloshim* was Shabbos Mevarchim Nissan, and there was a farbrengen. The Rebbe continued to farbreng for a few weeks, until Pesach. Those few farbrengens seemed to be an exception to the Rebbe’s general farbrengen schedule, and after Pesach we weren’t sure what the *seider* would be. The Shabbos after Pesach was also a Shabbos Mevarchim (Iyar), so there was obviously a farbrengen, but before the next Shabbos we really didn’t know what to expect.

“Ultimately, the Rebbe farbrenged that week, and continued to farbreng every single week without exception until Shabbos Vayakhel 5752*, the last Shabbos before Chof-Zayin Adar. I remember hearing that the Rebbe told Rabbi Groner: ‘פון יעצט אן ביז משיח, וועט קומען, גייט מען פארבריינגען יעדער שבת, און דאס וועט זיין לעילוי נשמתה’—from now on until Moshiach will come, we will farbreng every Shabbos, *l’ilui nishmas*

the Rebbetzin.

“With the farbrengens becoming weekly, the style of the farbrengens also gradually changed: The Rebbe stopped saying *maamarim*, explaining Rashis and Likkutei Levi Yitzchok, and all-in-all the farbrengens got shorter.

“Also, the weekly farbrengens changed the entire Shabbos atmosphere in 770. Now that there was a guaranteed farbrengen every week, groups began to arrive to spend Shabbos in 770. It became like a Shabbos package—they would be at the farbrengen on Shabbos and receive a dollar on Sunday morning. For Chassidim as well, the new schedule changed their week: Chassidim would almost never leave for Shabbos. Even if someone traveled he would always try to make sure to be back in 770 for the Shabbos farbrengen.

“On Shabbosim when the Rebbe would farbreng, as soon as the Rebbe would leave the shul after davening, pandemonium would erupt and the shul would experience a total makeover. Bleachers would be set up and everyone would be running to and fro trying to grab the best place possible.”

On weeks that no farbrengen was scheduled (in earlier years), different methods were created to determine if the Rebbe would be holding a surprise farbrengen. On many occasions, especially on a Shabbos in close proximity to a special day, the Rebbe would farbreng, often without advance warning before Shabbos.

Both when the farbrengens were held in the small *zal* upstairs and in the large shul downstairs, the Rebbe would sit on the south side facing north, and Chassidim would crowd around below. In the small *zal* three long tables would protrude from the head table where the Rebbe was seated, and in the big *zal*, in addition to the many tables that protruded from the Rebbe’s farbrengen *bima*, thousands more Chassidim would crowd around on bleachers constructed from 770’s benches.

The Rebbe’s chair would be moved from his davening place to the farbrengen *bima*, and his silver *becher* would be rinsed and placed by the Rebbe’s place. A small platter with cake would sit on the Rebbe’s left, and a silver napkin holder would sit somewhere on the table as well. A small wrist watch would also be placed at the Rebbe’s place by Reb Berel Junik (which the Rebbe would glance at occasionally). In earlier years there would be an additional glass cup on the Rebbe’s table, together with a bottle of half-and-half soda (or a pitcher of water).

Reb Meir Harlig was in charge of providing the cake and the wine for the farbrengen, which he would bring to 770 on Erev Shabbos.⁸ The honor of sponsoring the



Read More About the Rebbe’s Farbrengens!

For a general overview of the history of the Rebbe’s farbrengens, the topics discussed at the farbrengens, the various methods Chassidim created to determine if the Rebbe would farbreng, and more, see “*A Taste of Reality*,” A Chassidisher Derher, Tammuz 5778.

For a schematic of the Rebbe’s farbrengens in the large *zal* downstairs, see A Chassidisher Derher, Nissan 5777, pg. 45.

For a detailed overview of the *sichos* discussing Rashi, see “*Revolution in Rashi*,” A Chassidisher Derher, Tishrei 5775 (part one) and Shevat 5775 (part two).

For a detailed overview of the Rebbe’s *biurim* in Likkutei Levi Yitzchok, see “*Interpreting the Depth*,” A Chassidisher Derher, Av 5781.

To read about different topics discussed at farbrengens and their connection to Moshiach, see “*What We’re All About*,” A Chassidisher Derher, Tammuz 5779.

Ultimately, the best way to get a taste of the Rebbe’s farbrengens is by learning them from the original Sichos Kodesh or Toras Menachem.

farbeisin for the *farbrenge* was sold on Shabbos Bereishis, as one of the “mitzvos” customarily auctioned off at the beginning of the year.

Also on the Rebbe’s table were several *sefarim* that the Rebbe would glance in during the *farbrenge*; a Chumash and a Likkutei Levi Yitzchok.

Throughout most of the years, the scheduled time for the *farbrenge*s was at 1:30 p.m. Until the 5730s* the Rebbe would enter the *farbrenge* in silence, and in later years Chassidim began to sing as the Rebbe took his place at the head table.

The Rebbe would enter the *farbrenge* wearing a *gartel* and holding his siddur. When the Rebbe reached his place he would sit down, open the siddur, clean out the *becher* with a napkin and move the *becher* to the side towards the *sar hamashkim* (Rabbi Mordechai Mentlik, and after his passing in 5748*, Reb Berel Junik). Many times, before passing the *becher* to be filled by the *sar hamashkim*, the Rebbe would pour some wine into the *becher* from a small bottle he brought with him to the *farbrenge*.

As the *sar hamashkim* would fill the Rebbe’s *becher*, the Rebbe would take several pieces of cake from the platter and place it on the table in a napkin.

Until the 5730s* the Rebbe would only make *kiddush* during the *farbrenge* if it was Shabbos Mevarchim. From then on the Rebbe began making *kiddush* at every Shabbos *farbrenge*, in earlier years standing and in later years rising slightly during the *bracha*. Some Chassidim note that in the later few years the Rebbe would make *kiddush* in his room earlier and would recite *seder shalosh seudos* before drinking from the *becher* at the *farbrenge*.

“Everything at the *farbrenge* had a *seder* to it,” relates Rabbi Spiegel. “Right after the Rebbe made *kiddush*, the *niggun* composed on the Rebbe’s *kapitel* would be sung after the first *sicha*.”

“After Chof-Ches Nissan 5751*, and as the Rebbe began speaking more and more about the imminent arrival of Moshiach, Chassidim began singing the *niggun* with the words ‘*Es kumt shoin di geulah*’ as the Rebbe entered the *farbrenge*.”

Throughout the years, the build of the *farbrenge* would vary from week to week. As the years progressed, the *farbrenge*s became more structured: the first two (or three) *sichos* would be about the special lesson learnt from the week and the time of year. Then would be a *maamar*, then questions on Rashi, Likkutei Levi Yitzchok, Pirkei Avos (in the summer), Hilchos Beis Habechira (during the three weeks) and Rambam (after the launch of Takanas HaRambam in 5744*). In



THE REBBE DAVENS MAARIV AT HIS SHTENDER ON THE *FARBRENGE* BIMA, AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE *FARBRENGE* OF MOTZEI SIMCHAS TORAH 5752.

the subsequent *sichos*, the Rebbe would answer these questions.

The weekly *farbrenge*s from 5748* and on consisted of anywhere between two to seven *sichos*, though usually there were around three.

“One highlight of the *farbrenge* was during the later part of the *farbrenge*—the *chalukas hamashke*,” relates Rabbi Blesofsky. “It was a chance for anyone to receive a bottle of *mashke* from the Rebbe for a specific *farbrenge* or a *peulah* that he was organizing.”

“In the earlier years, people would simply approach the Rebbe during the *farbrenge* with a bottle of *mashke* and the Rebbe would pour them some *lchaim* from the bottle. As the years progressed, a *seder* was made that the *mashke* bottle had to be submitted to Rabbi Groner before Shabbos and Rabbi Groner would bring the bottles to the *farbrenge*.”

“In my years, the *mashke* bottles would be kept under the table during the *farbrenge*, and as the *chalukas hamashke* would begin, the bottles would be placed on the table near the Rebbe. Each bottle had a rubber band and a note attached to it with the relevant information. The Rebbe would call up each person, pour some *mashke* into his cup, and the recipient would make an announcement about why he is receiving the bottle of *mashke*. At times the Rebbe would give instructions to distribute the *mashke* in a specific place, etc. This distribution often went on for quite a while!”

MINCHA

In the earlier years, even on a Shabbos when there was a farbrengen, the Rebbe would daven Mincha in the *zal* upstairs. In later years the Rebbe would daven Mincha with the Chassidim downstairs.

Beginning in Adar 5746*, in an effort to make it easier for the Rebbe, his davening *shrender* would be set up on the farbrengen bima, near the Rebbe's chair.

During this *tekufah*, the Rebbe would sometimes take a seat at the farbrengen table during Mincha, facing the crowd. Many Chassidim fondly remember the special *tziyur* of the Rebbe sitting and facing the crowd during davening.

When the farbrengen would finish early, the Rebbe would head home after Mincha and the crowds of Chassidim would accompany him outside, before heading to their own respective homes.

After the farbrengen, many Chassidim would group together to review the farbrengen, in a practice called "*chazara*." Although the central *chazara* would be held on Motzei Shabbos, small groups of Chassidim would begin reviewing the farbrengen right away.

"After the farbrengen," remembers Rabbi Spiegel, "people would return home to grab a bite or to rest until Maariv. Remember, many Chassidim had barely eaten the whole day!"

On a Shabbos when there was no farbrengen, the Rebbe would return to 770 for Mincha about a half hour before *shkiah*.

During the summer months, the Rebbe would stay in his place after Mincha and say Pirkei Avos, either from his siddur or from specially enlarged copies. Several times during the early years of the *nesius* the Rebbe said a *sicha* after Mincha.

"Shabbos afternoon in 770 after a farbrengen (or if there was no farbrengen) was quiet," relates Rabbi Raskin. "Reb Osher Sasonkin would make a seder *niggunim* in the downstairs shul. In later years during the summer weeks, many people would participate in a special *sefer niggunim* and *chazoras dach* led by Reb Yoel Kahn and others.

MOTZEI SHABBOS

Maariv on Motzei Shabbos would take place in the upstairs *zal*, unless there was a big crowd present. The Rebbe would usually enter as soon as Shabbos was over, glance at the clock, and begin Maariv.

The Rebbe would daven this *tefillah* in his usual weekday spot, immediately upon entering the *zal* from

WHERE IS THE HAVDALAH CANDLE?

One Motzei Shabbos in the 5730s* there was no *havdalah* candle, and the *mavdil* skipped the *bracha*. Chassidim were immediately able to tell that the Rebbe wasn't happy.

After the *mavdil* finished drinking the wine, the Rebbe left his *siddur* open on the table and went to his room. Moments later he returned with a *havdalah* candle, one that had been given to him by *anash* of London sometime earlier. The candle was lit and the Chassidim made the *bracha* "*Borei me'orei ha'aish*." Only afterwards did the Rebbe return to his room.

the lobby on the left.

After davening the Rebbe would remain in the *zal* until after *havdalah*, though not being *yotzei* himself from the communal *havdalah*. During *havdalah* he would gaze at the person reciting *havdalah* and answer "*la'Yehudim*," and "*amen*." Only after the *mavdil* would finish reciting the *bracha acharona* and the *gabbai* would finish his announcements would the Rebbe return to his room.

After the communal *havdalah* in the *zal*, the Rebbe would make *havdalah* for the Rebbetzin. After Chof-Beis Shevat the Rebbe would make *havdalah* in his room.

On a Motzei Shabbos seven days after the *molad* the Rebbe would recite *kiddush levana* outside 770, on the service lane. (Occasionally, when the sky was cloudy on Motzei Shabbos, the Rebbe would recite *kiddush levana* later in the week.) ①

1. See *Shabbos at The Library*, Derher Sivan 5776.
2. See *Honor In Place*, Derher Teves 5776
3. See *sichas* Leil Simchas Torah 5715.
4. *Techayenu* issue 8 pg. 107.
5. See *Ketzos Hashulchan*, notes to *Badei Hashulchan*, sec. 85:2.
6. *Matos-Masei* 5740, *Sichos Kodesh* vol. 3 pg. 655.
7. See *Chabad.org*/2849311. *Shalshelas Hayachas* (Hayom Yom) 5710.
8. See *A Life in Beis Chayenu*, Derher Teves 5777.

TIMELINE

EREV SHABBOS

LEIL SHABBOS

SHABBOS DAY

In later years, the Rebbe kindles Shabbos candles around 25 minutes before *shkiah*.

In earlier years, the Rebbe stays in 770 until 8:00-10:00 pm and then departs for home (or the library). In later years, the Rebbe resides in his room.

The Rebbe receives the *aliyah* of *maftir*, and recites the *haftarah*.

An hour before Shabbos, the Rebbe visits his home, returning to 770 shortly before Shabbos. When the Rebbe and Rebbetzin spend Shabbos in the library, the Rebbe visits the library.

After Kabbalas Shabbos, the Rebbe leaves the shul, wishing Chassidim on his way out "A Gut Shabbos."

The Rebbe arrives in 770 before 10:00, followed by an escort of *bochurim*. On Shabbos Mevarchim the Rebbe arrives at around 8:00.

Until 5738, the Rebbe enters the shul for Mincha a short while before Shabbos. Beginning in 5748, the Rebbe davens Mincha at 3:15.

Chassidim sit down to study the new *likkut* that was published for Shabbos.

On Shabbos Mevarchim, the Rebbe enters the shul for Tehillim at 8:30; usually a smaller crowd is present.

Around an hour after *shkiah* (or a bit earlier, in some years), the Rebbe enters the shul for Kabbalas Shabbos.

A pair of *bochurim* escort the Rebbe to his home, following behind at a distance.

Shacharis begins at 10:00, or around a half hour later on Shabbos Mevarchim.



SHABBOS AFTERNOON

On Shabbosim when there is a farbrengen, the Rebbe enters the shul at 1:30 (or earlier, in the earlier years). The farbrengens vary in length and style; some weeks the farbrengen goes for only two hours and some weeks it can go almost until *shkiah*.

Following Shacharis, the Rebbe returns to his room. On Shabbosim when there is a farbrengen, the shul undergoes a total transformation in preparation for the farbrengen.

On a summer week, if the farbrengen ends early, the Rebbe goes home after the farbrengen (and Mincha), returning to 770 in time for Maariv. During this time, small groups of Chassidim participate in *chazara* of the farbrengen.

On Shabbosim when the Rebbe does not farbreng, the Rebbe stays in his room for several hours, and leaves for home (or to the library) in the mid or late afternoon.

On weeks when there is no farbrengen, the Rebbe returns to 770 before *shkiah* for Mincha.

After the farbrengen the Rebbe davens Mincha. In earlier years the Rebbe davens upstairs with a small crowd. In later years the Rebbe begins davening Mincha downstairs as well. Eventually, the Rebbe begins davening Mincha on the farbrengen *bima* itself.

The Rebbe enters the shul for Maariv promptly when Shabbos is over.

MOTZEI SHABBOS

The Rebbe remains in the *zal* for *havdalah*, and makes *havdalah* himself later.

On weeks when *kiddush levana* is recited, the Rebbe recites *kiddush levana* outside 770.

A large *chazara* takes place in 770 led by a team of *chozrim*. Chassidim interject with comments and corrections and the "*manichim*" (transcribers) jot down notes from the *chazara* to be further transcribed during the week.

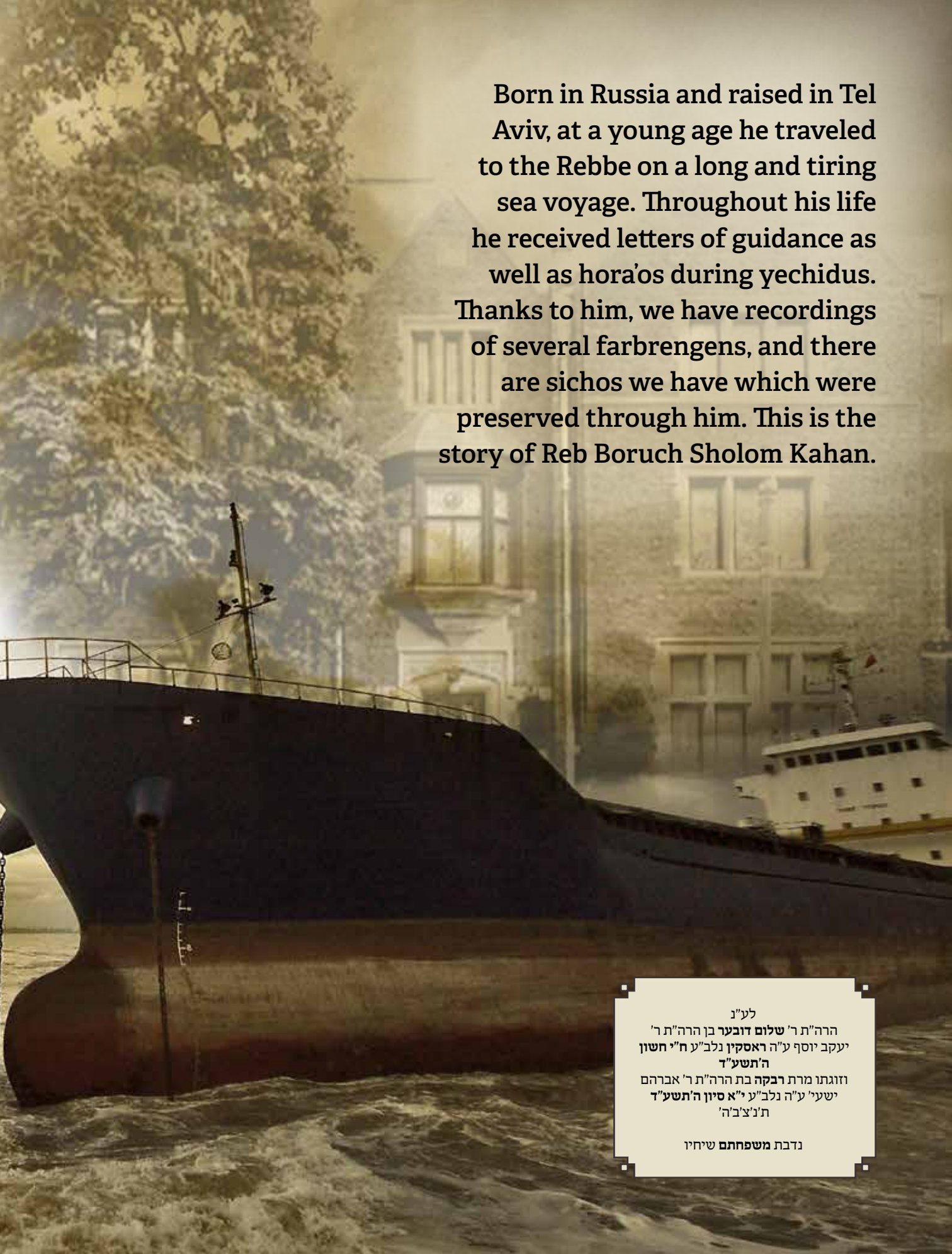


PIONEER

THE STORY OF A YOUNG BOCHUR'S JOURNEY TO THE REBBE

Written by: Rabbi Mendel Vogel

Sections of this interview are reprinted from
Kfar Chabad magazine, issue 1960

A large black ship is shown at sea, with a white building and trees in the background. The scene is set in a hazy, golden light. The ship is the central focus, moving from left to right. The background features a large, multi-story white building with many windows, and a large tree with dense foliage to the left. The overall atmosphere is serene and historical.

Born in Russia and raised in Tel Aviv, at a young age he traveled to the Rebbe on a long and tiring sea voyage. Throughout his life he received letters of guidance as well as hora'os during yechidus. Thanks to him, we have recordings of several farbrengens, and there are sichos we have which were preserved through him. This is the story of Reb Boruch Sholom Kahan.

לע"נ

הרה"ת ר' שלום דובער בן הרה"ת ר'
יעקב יוסף ע"ה ראסקין נלב"ע ח"י חשון
ה'תשע"ד

וזוגתו מרת רבקה בת הרה"ת ר' אברהם
ישעי' ע"ה נלב"ע י"א סיון ה'תשע"ד
ת"נצ"ב'ה'

נדבת משפחתם שיחיו

Childhood

Reb Boruch Sholom Kahan was born in the city of Kharkov in 5694* to his parents Reb Michael Yehuda Arye Leib (brother of Reb Foleh) and Chaya Kahan. (Chaya was the daughter of Reb Aharon Tumarkin, a Chabad Chossid and rav of the Chabad community in Kharkov, and one of the first students of Tomchei Temimim in Lubavitch.)

When he was two years old, his family immigrated to Eretz Yisroel and settled in Tel Aviv. "A number of years after we and additional families from *anash* settled in Tel Aviv, the *cheder* "B'nei Temimim" was established. But in the beginning there was no Chabad *cheder*, so my father sent me to learn with a *melamed* (his last name was Berman) who had also emigrated from Kharkov.

"When 'B'nei Temimim' opened, my father sent me there. Reb Chaim Shaul Brook taught us Gemara, Reb Nissen Eber taught us Chumash, and Reb Dovid Chanzin taught the older *bochurim*."

Yeshiva Years

After concluding his years in *cheder*, Boruch Sholom went to learn in the yeshiva "Achei Temimim" in Tel Aviv, headed by the *mashpia* Reb Chaim Shaul Brook. In the summer of 5710*, he continued his studies in the *yeshiva gedola*, which was under the leadership of the *mashpia* Reb Shlomo Chaim Kesselman. Throughout his years in Tel Aviv, Boruch Sholom soaked up the *chassidische* lifestyle around him, exemplified by the great Chassidic personalities in the vicinity. One such individual was the *mashpia*, Reb Zalman Moshe Hayitzchaki, a neighbor of the Kahan family, who Boruch Sholom used to see davening at length. Moshe Gourarie, Shmerel Gourarie, Nochum Goldshmid, Chaim Yosef Rosenblum and Pinye Althaus are the names of other Chassidim who Boruch Sholom had the opportunity to observe during farbrengens, in their learning, their singing of *niggunim* and their general *avodas Hashem*.

The years of his youth are rich with memorable experiences, some of which are unforgettable. One such

memory is receiving the news of the Frierdiker Rebbe's *histalkus* which, incidentally, arrived on the very same day that his cousin, Yoel Kahan, had boarded a ship to travel to New York to be with the Frierdiker Rebbe.

The news of the Rebbe's official acceptance of the *nesius* on Yud Shevat 5711* left a very strong impression on Boruch Sholom. Even many years later, the memory remains vivid in his mind:

"In those days, there was no [easy access to a] telephone. It took about a week after the farbrengen of Yud Shevat for a letter to reach us in the yeshiva informing us of the news. It was in the middle of the day when we found out. Reb Shlomo Chaim made an announcement for everyone to stop their learning, and he sat down to farbreng. His joy was so tremendous, that he began to dance on a table—and then on top of the *bima*—all the while singing the *niggun*: איז דער רבי איז דא, איז האדרת והאמונה אוואדי דא... "again and again... This went on for hours."

Around Pesach time of 5711*, the yeshiva transferred from Tel Aviv to Lod, where he continued to study until 5717*.



THE BOCHURIM AND HANHALA OF YESHIVAS ACHEI TEMIMIM, CIRCA 5715*. REB BORUCH SHOLOM KAHAN IS SITTING ON THE BOTTOM ROW SECOND TO THE LEFT.

Traveling To The Rebbe

Ahead of Yud Shevat 5717*, Boruch Sholom made the long trip to New York to be with the Rebbe. It was very difficult to procure the exit visa needed to leave the country, but somehow he succeeded. Due to the Suez Crisis in the Sinai Peninsula, his journey was longer and more arduous than usual. He first had to make the trip to Paris, France, and there he boarded a ship traveling to New York. The transatlantic sea voyage brought with it its own difficulties. The wintry weather caused the sea to become

extremely turbulent. The raging waves were large and powerful, and at one point the ship began to tilt on its side.

Finally, after a lengthy and exhausting trip, the ship reached the shores of the United States on the eve of 7 Shevat 5717*. Boruch Sholom had his very first glimpse of the Rebbe the next day at Mincha, and his first *yechidus* took place about a month after he arrived. During the *yechidus*, he asked the Rebbe if as part of his continued studies in 770 he should continue learning *Yoreh De'ah*, being that he had already begun. The Rebbe replied that it was up to the *hanhala* of the yeshiva to decide such matters.

Morning Maamarim

In those early years, the Rebbe displayed unique warmth and attention towards the *bochurim*. The *bochurim* learned in the small *zal* across from the Rebbe's room, and more than once, the Rebbe stepped into the *zal* on his way in and out of 770 to watch the *bochurim* learning. Reb Boruch Sholom later recalled a unique privilege the *bochurim* merited to have:

“In the summer days, the heat was unbearable. There was no air conditioning in the yeshiva dorm, and it was simply impossible to fall asleep because of the heat and humidity. At 3–4 o'clock in the morning it would become cooler and then it was possible to go to sleep. This had a negative impact on the *bochurim's* attendance for *seder Chassidus* in the morning, and it happened more than once when the Rebbe came into *zal* at 8:00 a.m. that there were only a few *bochurim* present.

It seems that this was the impetus for the new practice which the Rebbe began thereafter, to occasionally recite a *maamar* on Shabbos morning. Only



REB BORUCH SHOLOM PICTURED WITH HIS PARENTS AT THE LOD AIRPORT ON HIS WAY TO THE REBBE IN 5717*.

the *bochurim* who had come on time to *seder* merited to be present on these occasions. The Rebbe would recite the *maamar* in his room and once the *maamar* started the door would be locked. On one such occasion, Shabbos *parshas Balak* 5718*, the Rebbe instructed Reb Dovid Raskin to tell the *bochurim* to enter the Rebbe's room—we were a total of 7 or 8 *bochurim*—and the Rebbe said then the *maamar* ד"ה ויהי שארית יעקב, which was a continuation of the *maamar* that was said on Yud-Beis Tammuz (ד"ה מי מנה עפר יעקב). I remember how the Rebbe wept while saying the *maamar*. Since Reb Yoel was not present, the *chazara* and the preparation of the *hanacha* of the *maamar* was performed by Reb Yisroel Friedman, one of the *bochurim* present at the *maamar*, with the assistance of other *bochurim*.”

Shivas Kanei Hamenorah

“During the years of the ‘yuds’ (5710*–5720*) the Rebbe spoke about the *bochurim* writing *chidushei Torah*, and encouraged it. It was then that the Rebbe introduced the concept of

the “*shivas kanei hamenorah*” (lit. the seven branches of the menorah). The idea was to designate 14 *bochurim* whose job it would be to dedicate themselves completely to a specific area; seven *bochurim* in Chassidus and seven *bochurim* in *nigleh*.

“They were to deliver *shiurim* and *pilpulim* on their respective topics in front of the whole yeshiva. The Rebbe wanted their presentations to be written up to be printed and distributed in the form of a pamphlet titled ‘*Pilpul HaTalmidim*’. Since then, it has become standard for Lubavitcher yeshivos all over to publish such *kovtzim*, but back then this was a *chiddush*.

“In those years, the yeshiva in 770 was relatively small, and there were some *bochurim* who did not take their learning as seriously as they should have. I remember once the Rebbe said: ‘*Farvos fargint men mir nisht hoben Chassidim lomdim*—Why do people not indulge me to have Chassidim who are scholars?’ The Rebbe especially encouraged us in this regard.

“There was a *bochur* by the name of Yitzchok Raitport who was one of the ‘*kanim*,’ and I remember how extremely dedicated he was to his studies. Every day, he would remain in the *zal* two hours after *seder* to write

down his *chiddushei Torah*. I remember how once during a farbrengen, the Rebbe suddenly said: “There is a *bochur* here, Reb Yitzchok Raitport—he should say *lchaim*.” Then the Rebbe said that in his honor, he will now discuss an *inyan* in *nigleh*. The Rebbe wanted us to know of the satisfaction and joy he derived when we were committed to our learning and wrote *chiddushei Torah*.”

A Bochur's Memories

On Shabbos *parshas Metzora* 5717*, the Rebbe held a special farbrengen in honor of the *ufruf* of Dovid Schochet. After Shacharis the chosson's father, Harav Dov Yehuda Schochet, asked the Rebbe to farbreng. Even though ordinarily there would not have been a farbrengen that Shabbos (it was not a Shabbos Mevarchim), the Rebbe agreed and a short while later came out to farbreng. It was a remarkable farbrengen; it was when the Rebbe said the extraordinary *biur* on the concept of the “*chamisha kolos*,” which is printed in *Likkutei Sichos* vol. 6. I was standing not far from the Rebbe, and at one point I heard the Rebbe talking—it was almost as if he was talking to himself. His eyes gazed ahead, not towards anyone in particular. The Rebbe began to relate how there is a *jungerman* who was involved in business, and the Rebbe asked him why he does not have fixed times for learning. He replied that he does not have the time because he is too occupied with his business. After some time, his profits started to decline and his business took a turn for the worse. The Rebbe continued to relate how he had tried again to get through to him, telling him that since he has more time now, he can learn... “He did not listen to me,” the Rebbe continued,

“and now he is bankrupt and in very dire straits—and I am unable to help him...”

In those years, the Rebbe would go to and from 770 by foot. The *bochurim* set up a rotation amongst themselves, taking turns escorting the Rebbe home every night. They would follow at a distance until the Rebbe arrived at his house. One night, it was my turn to walk the Rebbe home. I went together with another *bochur* and when the Rebbe reached his house, he opened the door and went inside. Having accomplished our mission, we turned around and went back to 770. After a while, the public pay phone in 770 began to ring, and one of the *bochurim*, Avremel Shemtov, picked it up: “*Duh redt Mrs. Schneerson fun President Street*—This is Mrs. Schneerson from President Street speaking”—it was the Rebbetzin! The Rebbetzin wanted to know where the Rebbe was; we explained that we had walked the Rebbe home and had seen the Rebbe going into the house—but the Rebbetzin said that the Rebbe is not home. It is easy to imagine how we felt at that moment... Avremel figured that the Rebbe must have immediately turned around and walked back to 770, which meant that the Rebbe must have been walking behind us the whole way back... It wasn't possible to call the phone in the Rebbe's room directly, so, usually, when the Rebbetzin wanted to reach the Rebbe she would call the *mazkirus* office, and they would transfer the call to the Rebbe's room. However, the *mazkirus* office was closed for the night, and nobody was there to take her call. What were we to do? Avremel took action and proceeded to write on a piece of paper that the Rebbetzin was trying to reach the Rebbe, and he slipped the note under the door to the Rebbe's room. The Rebbetzin did not call 770 again, so we understood that she successfully reached the Rebbe.

Each morning, the Rebbetzin would prepare a thermos of hot tea for the Rebbe. Before he got married, Nachman Sudak would come to the house every morning to pick up the thermos, which the Rebbetzin would leave for him in the foyer, and deliver it to 770. After Rabbi Sudak got married, the *zechus* of picking up and delivering the thermos became mine. One morning, as I was nearing the house, I saw the Rebbetzin sitting outside on the porch. When I came closer, she asked me what I needed, and I answered that I am the one who picks up the thermos. She told me to return in about a half-hour, and the thermos would be ready.

Typing The Sichos

As a *bochur*, Boruch Sholom was involved in the first-of-its-kind publication of *sichos* which the Rebbe himself edited, and which would later become the first four volumes of *Likkutei Sichos*.

It all began when he was still a *bochur* in Lod. Reb Berel Kesselman had received a typewriter as a gift, and he announced in yeshiva that whoever will learn how to type with it will get



ONE OF THE FIRST KUNTREISIM תוכן עניינים בדא"ח לחזור בבתי כנסיות
CONTAINING THE REBBE'S EDITED SICHS
TO BE CHAZZERED IN SHULS.

to keep the typewriter, on condition that he will also type the Rebbe's *sichos* and bring him a copy. "I accepted the task and went out to buy a manual explaining how to work the machine. For two weeks I learnt how to type on a typewriter and became somewhat of a professional typist. I was able to type up *sichos*, and with time my expertise grew.

"When I got to New York, I wanted to purchase a typewriter. So I asked for a loan from the Rebbe's secretary at the time, Reb Moshe Leib Rodshtein (who was my mother's uncle and who, in general, kept an eye out for me), and I purchased a typewriter (which I still have to this day). I typed up *sichos* and sold copies, and in a relatively short time I was able to pay back the loan. Due to my expertise, I became a repository for many valuable and rare manuscripts, since everyone who had in their possession a *ksav yad* or *reshima* made use of my services and brought them to me to get a typed

copy. Because of this, I had in my possession for a period of time some rare *reshimos* from the Frieddiker Rebbe—including the famous and lengthy letter about Tisha B'Av that the Frieddiker Rebbe had sent to his daughter, the Rebbetzin, amongst others."

In the days leading up to Shavuot 5718*, a major breakthrough occurred—the Rebbe finally agreed to edit and publish a *sicha* every week in an official manner. Until that point, the Rebbe had not allowed his *sichos* to be published in print. Rabbi Yehuda Leib Raskin and Rabbi Nachman Sudak, who were then *bochurim*, wrote to the Rebbe and asked for permission to publish the Rebbe's *sichos*. They also urged Rabbi Hodakov to join in their efforts, and ultimately the Rebbe agreed. From then on, the Rebbe began to release a *sicha* each week to be printed in a special *kuntres*. The *sichos* were used by the *bochurim* who visited the neighborhood shuls each Shabbos to *chazer* Chassidus.

Appropriately, the *kuntres* was titled: "תוכן עניינים בדא"ח לחזור בבתי כנסיות—Topics in Chassidus to be delivered in shuls." Eventually, these *sichos* were compiled into a single volume, and the Rebbe gave it the title: "Likkutei Sichos."

"When the whole initiative began," Reb Boruch Sholom relates, "I was asked to help out, as I was an experienced typist. My job was to type up the draft of the *sicha*, which would then be edited by the Rebbe. I would leave sufficient space between each line for the Rebbe to leave his comments. After the Rebbe finished editing the draft, Nachman Sudak would then retype the *sicha* including any edits the Rebbe might have made, and I took care of the formatting. We would work the whole Thursday night each week to produce 500 stencil copies of the *sicha*. At times, we would stay up working until 9 o'clock in the morning."

Boruch Sholom would also type up the transcripts of the Rebbe's



REB BORUCH SHOLOM SITTING TO THE REBBE'S LEFT (IN THE GRAY JACKET) AT A FARBRENGEN.

maamarim which Reb Yoel had written. “In those years, the Rebbe did not allow for the *maamarim* to be published. I would try to get Reb Yoel to let me keep copies of *maamarim* which I had typed for him, and sometimes I succeeded.” Following the farbrengen of Purim 5718*, Boruch Sholom asked Reb Leibel Groner if he could borrow his *hanacha* of the Purim *maamar* to make a copy. At first he refused, but eventually he agreed. A year later, around Purim time 5719*, the Rebbe requested the *hanacha* of the previous year’s Purim *maamar*. Rabbi Groner searched for his own *hanacha*, but he could not find it. Remembering that Boruch Sholom had made a copy of it for himself, he called him and asked him to bring his copy for the Rebbe to use. “I obviously did so, and it was brought to the Rebbe. After a couple of days, the *maamar* was returned to me.”

Recording Farbrengens

Reb Boruch Sholom was also involved in documenting the famous farbrengen of Purim 5718*: “I very much desired to own a recording device so I could record the farbrengens, and with some effort, I was able to purchase such a device. It was hidden in my clothing, and in my hand I held a tiny microphone which connected by wire to the device—thus, I was able to record the farbrengens.” The farbrengen of Purim 5718* was no different, and Boruch Sholom used his device to record it: “After the third *sicha*, someone brought in a larger recording device and proceeded to record the rest of the farbrengen, but

the first three *sichos* were missing from that recording. On the following Shabbos, the Rebbe called Reb Yoel and Reb Avrohom Shemtov into his room, and asked them to *chazer* for him the *sichos* of Purim. When I heard about that, I figured that I should let Reb Yoel know that I have a recording of the entire *farbrengen*. That is indeed what I did, and Reb Yoel was overjoyed when I informed him. He came to my room, closed the door and sat for hours listening to the recorded *sichos*. Later, the Rebbe instructed that those *sichos* should be printed, and I had the *zechus* of being the one to type them up.”

Yechidus

Throughout his years as a *bochur*, Reb Boruch Sholom merited to have *yechidus* with the Rebbe a number of



YOSSI MELAMED VIA JEM 129656 (22 NISSAN 5743)

times. Mostly, they were on the occasion of his birthday, as was the custom in those days.

“One year, my birthday fell out on a Friday, and in my birthday *yechidus* the Rebbe asked me if I read שניים שנים מקרא ואחד תרגום every week. The truth is that up until that point, I had not been careful with this. The Rebbe instructed me to start doing so on my birthday, and that in general, I should make sure to finish it on Friday (and not push it off). Since then, I have always been careful about this.”

In another *yechidus*, he asked the Rebbe what he should do about the fact that his *hachlatos* do not last long. The Rebbe answered that *hachlatos* start in the mind and heart, but they can get stuck there. Therefore, immediately after one makes a *hachlata* he must express it in words, and then he should translate it right away into a tangible action.

Being a *kohen*, Reb Boruch Sholom would be asked from time to time to participate in a *pidyon haben*, and over time he collected a number of silver dollars. During one *yechidus* he presented 10 silver dollars to the Rebbe as a gift. “The Rebbe took one of the silver dollars, handed it back to me and said: *‘M’git nisht avek altz—One mustn’t give away everything.’*

“Years later, after I was already married, my wife and I together with our then young daughter merited to have a *yechidus*. Right in the beginning, the Rebbe turned to my daughter and asked her if she could recite *‘Shema yisroel.’* She responded affirmatively, and the Rebbe asked her to say it. She placed her hand over her eyes, but still was not saying the words. The Rebbe encouraged her, *‘Ye ye,’* and then she began to recite the *possuk*. The Rebbe then took a silver dollar out of his drawer and gave it to her. It is possible that it was one of the coins I had given the Rebbe years earlier.”

“On the same note, I remember



REB BORUCH SHOLOM IN CONVERSATION WITH A JEWISH BOY DURING AN EXHIBITION ON MITVZOIM IN 5736*.

another *yechidus* we had when my daughter was younger and not yet able to talk. I wanted her to remain awake during the *yechidus*, so I put a big lollipop into her hand. After we had already entered the Rebbe’s room, she noticed that I had not removed the wrapper from the candy. So she promptly walked up to the Rebbe so he could open it for her, and, indeed, the Rebbe proceeded to do so.”

Shochet in New Haven

In 5720*, Reb Boruch Sholom was asked if he could move to New Haven, where there was a need for a *shochet*. He had learnt *shechita* under the tutelage of Reb Berel Junik, and was therefore qualified for the job. “I asked the Rebbe if I should accept the proposition and the Rebbe gave his consent but with the following conditions: I need to have more practice, and I should retake the exams required when becoming an ordained *shochet*.”

A Proper Shidduch

It was during that time that Reb Dovid Raskin suggested a *shidduch* for him. “I did not know the family, but the girl—who eventually became my wife—had given the Rebbe a list of six *bochurim* that had been suggested for her. The Rebbe looked through the names, stopped by mine and told her that this suggestion would be a good idea for her. *Baruch Hashem*, the *shidduch* materialized and on 27 Elul 5720* we got married.”

His wife’s older sister was still not married when they became engaged, and they asked the Rebbe what to do in that regard. The Rebbe instructed them to put aside a sum of money for her sister’s wedding, and it should meanwhile be held by a third party. In addition, they should ask her forgiveness for going ahead.

Mivtzoim

Following their wedding, the new couple lived in New Haven where



HANGING on the FENCE at YALE

At some point in every life comes a moment of the spiritual crossroads. Jonathan Rosenblum remembers his.

When I was in law school, Tuesday was my favorite day. (Along with Shabbos, Hanukah and my first 100), and then while in front of the TV with the daily Times.

Sounds pretty fantastic, I know. But do not suspect that such a day did not do its own careful planning as yet in its own special idiosyncrasy, every minute had to be carefully calibrated to achieve my day's end what was that goal? Nothing momentous than maximizing the use of football watched while leaving enough time to get in

different warm-up shifts for the law school basketball game. These morning shifts had the key to good preparation.

Only ten by in the morning, I then lived in a transient quarters, housing over 1,200 college freshmen. (In those days, only one of the two main gates to the quadrangle was open, and parked directly in front of that gate was a Mitzvah House.

Every week, as I passed by, I was amazed. "Are you Jewish?" his phrasing, some asked me then, and inside, I was always proud of being Jewish. This the first question that inevitably to a second. "Do you want to put on tefillin?"

Though the last time I put on tefillin was my last mitzvah, I could not come up with a good reason not to comply. But as my business will tell you, it takes a while to get the back of these straps, so my stint in the

Mitzvah House never took less than 10 minutes, but I invariably missed some of my warm-up shifts.

Finally, one Sunday, I decided I could take it no longer. Instead of going out the open gate, I climbed over the 10 foot fence topped by wrought iron spikes on the opposite side of the quadrangle.

I managed to get out just over the fence and onto a hooded on the other side. But as I started to lift the animal and over the spikes, my foot slipped on the icy concrete and the spike shot up under my sweat suit jacket, stopping just short of the legpads.

I was left hanging, my feet flailing, my back to New Haven Gates. It seemed like an eternity until I regained my footing, though it was probably less than 12 seconds.

Why, the reader will ask, am I laboring this tale of youthful humiliation? The truth is that that seemingly trivial incident was a turning point in my life. As I was dangling on the fence, I could not help but picture how ridiculous I

must appear to holiday shoppers.

And it seemed to me that if the simple question: "Are you Jewish?" — had led me to undertake the climbing or falling, perhaps I should require a time more deeply into what it means to be Jewish.

Nothing very logical about that, just are moments of spiritual arousal always completely logical?

No, I did not rush back to my room, pack my bags, and head off for Jerusalem to growl in a yeshiva. That was still years away. But a seed was planted.

I suspect that every Jew will at some point experience a similar flash of possibilities and personally considered, if-Of granted on the probability of being Jewish of the World, there is neither the graceless in which we are raised, then comes a moment of which seemed to last forever looking.

Reprinted with permission from the July 25, 1998 issue of the Jerusalem Post International Edition.

KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK

THE ARTICLE THAT APPEARED IN THE JERUSALEM POST

Boruch Sholom continued to serve as a *shochet*. In 5736* he began working in the plastic factory run by Reb Dovid Deitch, also a resident of New Haven. Besides for his work, he also got involved in the mitzvah campaigns which the Rebbe initiated over the years.

"One year," he related, "a 'Shabbos with Chabad' program was arranged for a particular university in Pennsylvania. It was a big success (one product of that Shabbos was Professor Yaakov Hanoka), and I thought to myself that it might be a good idea to have something similar at Yale University in New Haven. I got in touch with the rabbi who served the students on campus and we became friendly. Eventually, we were able to arrange a Chanukah party for the students, and we brought down Rabbis Berel Baumgarten, Nissan Mindel and Moshe Feller to speak for the students. The event lasted late into the night, and the students asked many questions. From then on, whenever the Rebbe sent out a letter which was 'k'loli-proti,' I received one as well.

"When the idea of the mitzvah tanks began, the press picked up on

it and prestigious American newspapers began carrying stories about the 'synagogue on wheels,' leading to an increased awareness amongst American Jews of the importance of Yiddishkeit and Jewish pride. Seeing the phenomenon, I also wanted to utilize the mitzvah tank idea—at that time, no one outside of New York had done this. In the plastic factory where I worked at the time, there were a large number of truck drivers employed to deliver wares to customers. I approached one of the drivers who had a unique type of truck with a built-in seating arrangement, and I asked him if I could use it. He offered to rent it to me for \$800, a huge sum in those days—I was earning just \$100 a week... I recruited local *anash*, and on Chol Hamoed Sukkos we drove around in our 'tank,' offering Yidden the opportunity to shake *lulav*."

He also arranged shifts of *anash* to go out every Sunday with the tank to do *mitzvaim*. His first recruits were people who he had himself drawn in: Dr. Yosef Sandman, a professor of politics and government, Reb Leibel Haris, a professor of economics, and

Mr. Esterman, a journalist for one of the biggest magazines in the US. They would stand on the truck together with Reb Boruch Sholom and stop all Jewish passersby. "We were standing on the tank," he relates, "when suddenly we were approached by two Jewish fellows who introduced themselves as the editors of Yale University's magazine 'Yale News,' and they asked if they could interview us. We agreed, and they ended up publishing a front-page article talking about our tank and activities; then, this was a *chiddush*. It made a big *kiddush Hashem*, of course, and a greater sense of Jewish pride was felt amongst the students.

"Later, I received a photograph from the Jerusalem Post. A little background: At the time, there was something of a phenomenon happening where an unusually large number of *baalei teshuva* were coming through the doors of yeshivos. The Jerusalem Post had decided to do a series of interviews with these individuals, and one of the interviewees related how he had been a student at Yale University. Once, as he was walking on campus, he saw the mitzvah tank from Chabad in front of him and he had almost no choice but to walk past it. Although the other route was too long, he decided to climb over the fence to circumvent the tank. As he proceeded to climb the fence, his pants got caught. He took that as a sign and decided to go over to the tank despite his earlier feeling. Thanks to that encounter, he eventually returned to his Jewish roots. The article was accompanied by a humorous illustration of the fellow hanging from the fence by his pants... On one of the occasions when we recruited *bochurim* to help with various activities in New Haven, I showed them this article, and one of the *bochurim* tells me that the individual in the article is his uncle. Today, he is a rav in an *anash* community." ❶

NO TIME
TO READ?
LISTEN!

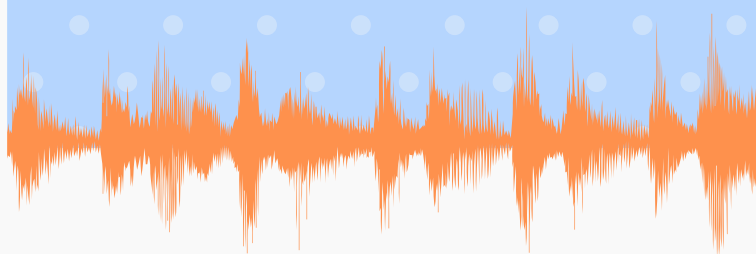


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Timely Titles

By: RABBI MENDY GOLDBERG

לע"נ
מזכיר כ"ק אדמו"ר
הרה"ח ר' ירחמיאל בנימין בן מנחם הלוי
ע"ה קליין
נלב"ע י"ח סיון ה'תשע"ה
ת"צ'ב'ה'
נדפס ע"י משפחתו שיחיו

TZAVA'AS HARIVASH



Shavuot commemorates the *yahrzeit* of the holy Baal Shem Tov, who opened the floodgates to reveal and disseminate the esoteric wisdom of the innermost dimension of the Torah, *Toras HaChassidus*. Among the various compilations of his profound teachings, one work that remains particularly noteworthy is the early Chassidic handbook, *Tzava'as Harivash*.



*Shortly before the dawn of the sixth millennium,
the Jewish people were in a state of collective
unconsciousness, in a deep coma of galus.*

Reeling from the devastation of massacres and pogroms, scarred by the emotional turmoil of false messianic hopes and disappointments, Jews were broken in body and spirit. Societal rifts kept Torah from the masses, further depriving them of any chance at revival and condemning them to a lifetime of hopeless ignorance. Until, like a beacon of light in the darkest of nights, the neshama of the Baal Shem Tov was dispatched to this world — to awaken the Jewish spirit from its slumber of centuries. With his arrival, a fresh breath of life was breathed into the Jewish nation, bringing with it relief, hope, and healing. Through his teachings, the Baal Shem Tov revitalized their souls, infusing their lives with the warmth and meaning of the inner dimension of the Torah.

The emergence of the Baal Shem Tov triggered a pivotal turning point in history. It was then that the spark of Moshiach flickered into existence and the world was propelled into a new era of preparation for the final redemption. The proliferation of the Baal Shem Tov's revolutionary teachings, and his legacy of disseminating Chassidus are tangible manifestations of this profound shift, as they offer a taste of G-dly revelation, providing a glimmer of what is to come.

Although the Baal Shem Tov did not personally transcribe any of his teachings, we are left with written records by some of his disciples. These include the *sefarim*: Toldos Yaakov Yosef, Kesser Shem Tov, Likkutim Yekarim, and others. But the first collection of his teachings to be printed, and the only such work to be explicitly acknowledged by the Alter Rebbe,¹ is his bequest to Chassidim, “Tzava’as Harivash.”



OVERVIEW



Tzava’as Harivash is a specialized anthology of teachings and instructions attributed to the Baal Shem Tov and the Maggid that constitute a manual for the religious life and observance of a Chossid. Many of these teachings were compiled from assorted manuscripts and writings of various disciples of the Maggid. This collection isn't random but an edited selection of teachings with one theme; these are “instructions and rules of proper conduct” — selected passages that form a manual for religious ethics. In the Kehos edition, these passages were divided into individual paragraphs and numbered, with footnotes added for relevant sources, citations, and annotations. Additionally, this edition includes substantial appendices containing comprehensive indexes and other supplementary material.

Presented in a concise and clear instructional style, these 144 passages offer unique insights into essential Chassidic concepts, and practical guidance on their implementation. A dominant theme is the concept of *dveikus*, one's attachment to Hashem in all aspects of daily life. Another central topic is *tefillah*, which features over 40 passages dedicated to the proper manner of prayer, including advice on the correct preparations, the precise intentions, and overcoming foreign thoughts and other distractions. Some teachings cover devotional modes for the study of Torah and observance of mitzvos, and advise how to fulfill them with the right meditations. Others address classic Chassidic ideas such as how to achieve joy while avoiding the pitfalls of pride and pretense, and not yielding to one's desires and impulses. Despite their brevity, these teachings are clear and readable.

👉 **Hosafos: Tanya Iggeres Hakodesh Siman 25:** The Kehos edition also includes the famous letter in Iggeres Hakodesh, where the Alter Rebbe references the *sefer* Tzava'as Harivash to address a mistaken interpretation of passage 120, clarifying the delicate concept of the Shechinah vesting itself in *kelipos*. Like the rest of the *sefer*, this letter is accompanied by extensive footnotes providing sources and annotations. Below is an excerpt from the relevant passages in which the Alter Rebbe discusses the *sefer* Tzava'as Harivash:

“The book called Tzava'as Rivash, though in fact it is not at all his will or testament, and he did not decree anything before his passing; they are merely gleanings of his pure sayings that were gathered as “compilations after compilations,” and [the compilers] did not know how to phrase his teachings exactly. The connotation,

however, of the teachings is absolutely true... As for the compiler [of Tzava'as Harivash] ... he did not know how to determine the precise term, for the Baal Shem Tov, of blessed memory, used to deliver Torah teachings in Yiddish, not in Lashon Hakodesh. The compiler, translating these discourses into Hebrew, transmitted their content, not their precise terminology, and in this case, he erred.”

(Further elaboration on some of these points will be provided in the section “Background.”)

👉 **Biurim M'kvod Kedushas Admu"r Zy"ra:** Another feature of the recent edition is a selection of 14 relevant excerpts from various *sichos* and *maamarim* where the Rebbe expounds on different passages from Tzava'as Harivash. A significant portion of these were taught in the year 5720*, during which the Rebbe commemorated the 200th anniversary of the Baal Shem Tov's *yahrzeit*. This collection was originally published as an individual pamphlet and was only later included in subsequent editions of the *sefer*.

👉 **He'oros V'tziyunim:** Following the scheme of the passage divisions from the main text, these are additional notes and source references that were added as an appendix.

👉 **Maftuchos:** These are indexes to assist one in locating concepts, *pesukim*, and *maamarei chazal* that are mentioned in this *sefer*.

👉 **Nisfachim:** A list of the *sefarim* that record the collected teachings of the Baal Shem Tov and the Maggid from which this work is compiled, and a bibliographic list of all printings of the *sefer* Tzava'as Harivash.

BACKGROUND

The manuscript of Tzava'as Harivash first surfaced in 5553*, discovered in the saddlebag of Reb Yeshayah of Yanov.² While its precise literary origin remains unknown, it is clear that Tzava'as Harivash is a collection of the Baal Shem Tov's teachings that had previously appeared in various

manuscripts attributed to different disciples of the Maggid. It appears that an anonymous editor compiled this work, carefully selecting from these manuscripts to create a manual for divine service. However, due to the delicate process of copying from one manuscript to another, typographical mistakes

and inconsistencies inevitably crept in. Nonetheless, once Tzava's Harivash was published, it quickly gained widespread popularity and was distributed by Chassidim far and wide.

Due to its availability and accessibility, the pamphlet Tzava's Harivash eventually made its way into the hands of the *misnagdim*, which opened up a Pandora's box of troubles for Chassidim. The *misnagdim* perceived Tzava's Harivash as the foundational doctrine of Chassidus and they caricatured it as a subversive, anti-Torah manifesto, making it a prime target of their attacks. In their efforts to discredit the Chassidim, the *misnagdim* combed through the pamphlet and singled out approximately 11 passages as objectionable and blasphemous. One passage that was deemed especially problematic was section 120 which states that when a gentile disrupts one's prayer, he should realize that it is *hashgacha pratis* and that this disturbance is only possible because the *Shechinah* dwells in the mouth of the gentile — in order for him to overcome it. This assertion outraged the *misnagdim*, particularly the Vilna Gaon, who claimed it was heretical to suggest that the *Shechinah* could reside in a place of impurity where mentioning Hashem's name is forbidden. Since then, this passage served as a chief ammunition in the arsenal of talking points *misnagdim* would use to antagonize Chassidim.

When confronted with this objection, the Alter Rebbe composed a detailed response to the Vilna community, demonstrating the legitimacy of this principle. He acknowledged that the term "*sharsah*" (dwells) is inappropriate, blaming it on the incorrect translation into Hebrew of the Baal Shem Tov's Yiddish (the language in which he taught), and should be amended to "*nislabsah*" (is vested in). There is a significant difference between these expressions: *Hashra'ah*, "indwelling of the *Shechinah*," implies a complete and revealed manifestation of G-dliness which occurs strictly in the realm of *kedushah*. In contrast, *halbashah*, "investment of the *Shechinah*," implies no more than a flow of divine light and vitality from the *Shechinah* that is limited by *tzimtzum* and concealment. This can occur even in the realm of *kelipah*, where the *Shechinah* is trapped in exile.³ The Alter Rebbe noted, however, that this does not appear to be the *misnagdim*'s major objection: It seems that they question the very notion that the *Shechinah* can be vested in the *kelipos*, notwithstanding the fact that this is stated clearly in Kabbalah in general, and in the teachings of the Arizal in particular. This reply appears in Tanya, Iggeres Hakodesh, *siman* 25 (see above in "Overview").

But the *misnagdim* in Vilna were not appeased. Upon the insidious counsel of Avigdor Chaimovitch, the rav of Pinsk and the informant who orchestrated the Alter Rebbe's imprisonment, the Vilna Gaon consented to a drastic move. On Erev Pesach of 5556*, copies of Tzava's Harivash were ceremoniously burned alongside the *chametz* in a public

bonfire on the streets of Vilna, in a brazen display of protest.

In an effort to end this ongoing dispute, Chassidim attempted to arrange a meeting between the Alter Rebbe and representatives of the Vilna Gaon, during which the latter could articulate their grievances and two respected figures would mediate the discussion. In response to his Chassidim's concerns about the conflict, the Alter Rebbe penned a letter acknowledging that he was aware of the tensions and the Vilna Gaon's stance, and regarding the burned book, he cautioned his Chassidim that it is unwise to wage the war of the Baal Shem Tov and incite harsh judgements on the *misnagdim*, for that is not the path Hashem desires.

In regards to the proposed debate, the Alter Rebbe concurred with the sentiment of pursuing peace, but he pointed out that all previous attempts to settle the dispute were for naught. He suggested that, given that there was no comparable authority in Lithuania who could challenge the Vilna Gaon, it would be more prudent to seek out prominent *gedolim* from other countries to adjudicate the matter. He proposed that the Vilna Gaon should send a letter outlining all his problems, and the Alter Rebbe would respond in kind with clear and concise answers to each point. Both letters would be widely circulated to influential leaders near and far, and the Alter Rebbe was confident that the majority would recognize the rightness of his position. However, by the time the letter with this proposal reached the Vilna Gaon, he was already mortally ill and passed away shortly thereafter, thus preventing the debate from ever taking place.

The polemic against Tzava's Harivash flared up once again when Avigdor leveled a series of slanderous accusations against the Alter Rebbe before the Czarist regime, resulting in the Alter Rebbe's second imprisonment in 5561*. His official claim to the government was that the Alter Rebbe was promoting a new religion that posed a threat to the state and needed to be stopped.

To support his allegations, Avigdor submitted two depositions which decried the objectionable passages in the *sefer* Tzava's Harivash. One addressed to the authorities and the other to be presented to the Alter Rebbe for his response. However, there were notable differences between the two, with Avigdor toning



THE SPECIAL PRINTING OF TZAVA'S HARIVASH IN 5735*.

*☎ 5556-1796, 5561-1801, 5735-1975

down his criticism in the latter deposition, presumably realizing that many of his supposed refutations were absurd and would be easily dismissed. Still, both depositions were rife with misquotations and distortions. The Alter Rebbe exposed these distortions, and offered clear and convincing explanations which vindicated Tzava'as Harivash and the Chassidic philosophy, and brought about his acquittal and liberation from imprisonment.

Over a century later, the year 5720* marked a great milestone — 200 years since the passing of the Baal Shem Tov. To commemorate this auspicious anniversary, the Rebbe began to promote the teachings of the Baal Shem Tov with renewed vigor and encouraged Chassidim to redouble their efforts to disseminate these teachings. To this end, the Rebbe announced that Kehos would undertake to republish the classic work of the Baal Shem Tov's teachings, Tzava'as Harivash. Indeed, shortly thereafter Reb Avrohom Chanoch Glitzenstein was charged with the task of making new paragraph divisions in the main text of Tzava'as Harivash, and was instructed to add footnotes as he saw fit. Throughout the year, the Rebbe discussed selected passages from Tzava'as Harivash at many farbrengens, offering new insights and explanations.

When the Rebbe renewed the initiative of publishing the *sefarim* of the Baal Shem Tov and the Maggid in 5735*, Kehos published the new edition of Tzava'as Harivash, which was expertly revised by Rabbi Immanuel Schochet. This edition was meticulously researched and involved extensive textual comparisons of various manuscripts and *sefarim* of the Baal Shem Tov and the Maggid. It stands out for its exceptional quality and academic standard, with an abundance of cross-references, comprehensive annotations, indexes, and citations to other works. In the introduction, Rabbi Schochet presents an elaborate discussion to determine the provenance of the work, concluding that it is a compilation culled from the collected works of the Maggid's disciples. He also discusses the possible identity of the figure who compiled and edited the collection, initially entertaining the idea that it was the Maggid himself. However, he retracts this hypothesis after receiving a response from the Rebbe upon seeing the first draft of this introduction: The Rebbe asserted that the Alter Rebbe would certainly not have referred to his teacher, the Maggid, as a mere compiler, and thus it could not be him.

Over the years, the Kehos edition of Tzava'as Harivash underwent several reprints, with Rabbi Schochet adding corrections and supplementary material to subsequent editions. In addition to this, he also authored a complete English rendition of Tzava'as Harivash, replete with sources, commentary, and notes on the passages that were perceived to be controversial, which was published by Kehos. **T**

A Word On The Title:

As previously mentioned in the “Overview,” the Alter Rebbe writes clearly and emphatically⁴ in *Iggeres Hakodesh* that Tzava'as Harivash cannot be considered the Baal Shem Tov's “last will” because “he did not decree anything before his passing.” Therefore, the term “*tzava'ah*” should be understood metaphorically,⁵ referring to the Baal Shem Tov's legacy and testament to his Chassidim in the form of his instructions and guidelines for ideal religious conduct.⁶ Accordingly, the title of the sefer appears to be derived from its opening passage, which reads “*Tzava'ah me'Rivash*.”⁷

1. See *sichas Chai Elul 5742*, where the Rebbe affirms that this was deliberate, despite the availability of the sefer *Toldos Yaakov Yosef*.

2. Also referred to as Reb Yeshayah of Dinowitz, where he moved later in life.

3. For the broader theological context of this debate, see *Derher Av 5780*, “*Reality — Tzimtzum Kipshuto?*”

4. For alternative *nuschaos* of this phrase which can alter its meaning drastically, see “*Tanya B'tziruf Marei Mekomos Likkutei Pirushim V'shinui Nuschaos*”.

5. When Rabbi Schochet noted this in his introduction to the new Kehos edition, the Rebbe commented (in the response mentioned above) that from the statement of the Alter Rebbe it is clear that he understood the title to refer to a last will and therefore negated that assumption. (Implying that he only rejected the literal interpretation of “will” and not a metaphorical one.)

6. However, there is still some confusion regarding this matter because two sources present information that appears to contradict this conclusion. 1) In the transcript of the Alter Rebbe's interrogation during his second imprisonment, he testified to the authenticity of Tzava'as Harivash, stating that “it was compiled by an individual who was present at the time of his passing.” This suggests that Tzava'as Harivash is not merely a collection of instructions, but because of the context of its transmission, it is more closely associated with an actual will in a literal sense. 2) Among the documents discovered in the Cherson Geniza, there is a letter from the Baal Shem Tov addressed to Reb Yeshayah of Yanov which contains an amendment to an earlier version of a will that was drafted by — Reb Yeshayah of Yanov. This shows that the Baal Shem Tov did, in fact, have an actual will that was incidentally composed by the person in whose possession Tzava'as Harivash was discovered.

Several have attempted to answer these questions, but the matter remains unresolved.

7. In his introduction, Rabbi Schochet notes that although the original title as it appears in earlier prints is “*Sefer Tzava'as Harivash V'Hanhagos Yesharos*” he utilized editorial discretion and dropped the second part of the title to avoid confusion with the similar *sefer* called “*Hanhagos Yesharos*” (*Darhei Yesharim*) by Reb Mendel of Premishlan.

A LEAF FROM THE BOOK

TZAVA'S HARIVASH Sections 50 - 52

צוואת הריב"ש (סימן משינב)
כא
 (לידי נבטות משכחת וז"א שמענות) הבורא ית', ואדיל שחוקתו של אדם
 (זה מוחסו שדא) מביאתו לידי ענה;

ב
 ונגם לא יחסל במני בני אדם, אפילו כשמוכר עמרו, אם מחשבותיהם
 אינם לבורא ית' תמיד דבוקה, כי יהיה לו שגם בנפשו מחמת
 דהמשחלות.

ובבני אדם כשרים, שמתשבותיהם דבוקה והעדן בבורא ית', יחסל
 דוקא, ויקנה קדושה בנפשו (ז"א ששם זה ימנו קדושה נשמה
 בששון).

כא
 הרימוד יהיה בסת ובשמחה גדולה, וזה מטעם מחשבות זרות:

כב
כשארם עובד המוד את (הבורא) ית' בכל רגע אין לו פנאי להתנאות
 ולארוג את הגאווה ושאר מדות הרעות:

מקבילות ומראה מקומות

שם יום ה' יום ה' יום ה' - מגילה ית', א. ומה במלך בית - שד"ח ע"ה א"ה ובידוע ד"ד
 - כי רובא נבטות הוה בעשי קדושה לחרוץ ח"כ שיה' בעיקר יסוה כשילת בשם וחדיל
 וסודו ד"ה ודאה ר"ח שער הקדושה פ"א (מבוא) לידי ענה ודאה באמר כ"ה, לקוד מפרש תוליד
 כ"ה י"ה כל מי ששומע קולו ויחזק נפשו ויגדיל כ"ה, כי אפי' רמבי"ה כי ומה ד"ה ע"ה וד"ה
 חסידים וישיב ודאה ג"כ וז"ה פ"ה. א"כ והקומת הסוד ה. ב ד"ה תשיבנות ופ"ה ב"ה תוס' דבורה
 הריב"ה פ"ה, ד"ה שער הענה פ"ה - ד"ה עוד מעלה ה' ופי' והבא כפ"ה. שער האמונה את הכל.

ג
 תהי' אופיא ע"ה ב. לק"ה בת. א.

גא
 מראה בת. א.

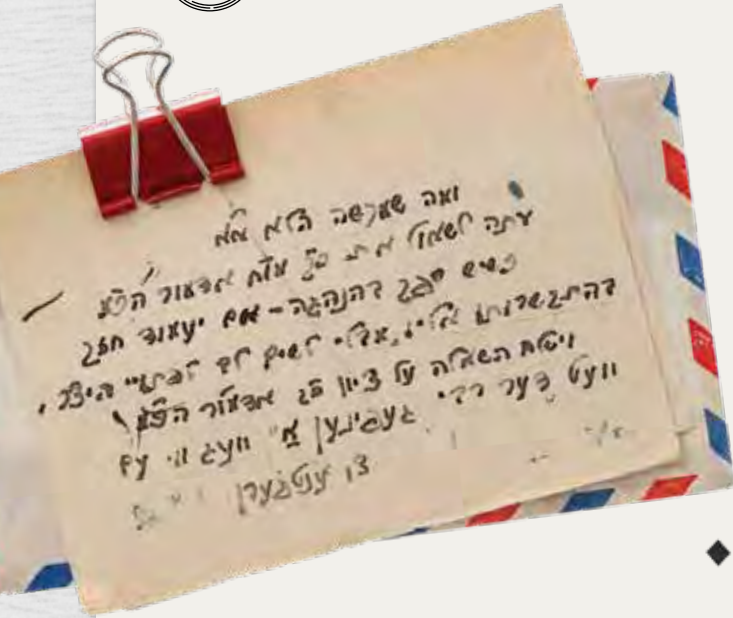
גב
 לסי' ה' ג. אופיא ק"ה ב.

50. Do not gaze at the face of people whose thoughts are not continuously attached to the Creator, blessed be He, even when speaking to them; for that gaze will blemish your soul.

As for fit people however, i.e., those whose thoughts are attached to the Creator, blessed be He, you ought to gaze at them and thus accrue holiness to your soul.

51. Torah-study must be with intensity and great joy. This will diminish alien thoughts.

52. When one serves G-d every moment, there is no opportunity to be arrogant, to love pride or other character traits that are evil.



לזכות
 השלוחה מרת פערל גאלדא שתחי'
 לרגל יום הולדתה א' אייר,
 הבחור הת' השליח לוי שיחי'
 לרגל יום הולדתו י"ב אייר,
 הבחור הת' השליח מאיר שיחי',
 לרגל יום הולדתו כ"ט אייר

נדפס ע"י הרה"ת ר' דוד ומשפחתם שיחי'
 טייכטל

דער רבי וועט געפינען א וועג...

WRITTEN BY: RABBI LEVI GREENBERG

Wiping Out My Debt



AS TOLD BY
HATOMIM SHMUEL LABKOWSKI
 (S. PAULO BRAZIL)

In the Southern Hemisphere, Chanukah is in the summer and Shavuot is in the winter, so as a *talmid* in the Lubavitch Yeshiva of S. Paulo, Brazil, in Shevat of 5781* I was working as a camp counselor in Gan Yisroel. I wanted to be by the Rebbe for Yud Shevat which was fast approaching, and as an American citizen I was able to travel to the United States despite the Covid regulations in place at the time.

My passport expired and I needed to apply for an emergency replacement. I was told that arranging an appointment at the American embassy on such short notice would be a significant challenge but I decided to give it a try.

Amazingly they had an opening for that Friday and I made arrangements to leave camp for several hours to make it to my appointment. I caught a ride to the city at 6:00 a.m. after two sleepless nights of color war. My father met me at the embassy with all my necessary documents and I made the three-hour ride back to camp before Shabbos, confident in the Rebbe's *brachos* to help me come for Yud Shevat.

With my passport arranged, I started working on booking a flight departing Thursday, 8 Shevat, and returning on Monday, 12 Shevat. A good friend loaned me the \$471 necessary to purchase the flight, and a Brazilian fellow

offered to reimburse the cost on condition that I made the round trip.

At the time, every traveler from Brazil to the US needed to provide a negative Covid test taken within 72 hours of boarding the flight. When I went to the pharmacy on Wednesday afternoon to take a Covid test, I tested positive and was horrified to realize that I would not be able to travel to New York the next day. I was disappointed at losing this chance to travel to the Rebbe after not being there in over a year but I understood that everything is *b'hashgacha protis* and it was certainly for the best.


The Latam Airlines policy at the time dictated that if one could not travel due to Covid, their ticket would be fully reimbursed as credits to be used for a different flight later on. When I called the airline to cancel my flight I was assured that my credits were in place.

In honor of Yud-Aleph Nissan, I decided to travel to the Rebbe with my Yud Shevat credits. Much to my chagrin, the airline agents were inexplicably unable to book a new flight for me. After spending hours on the phone, it became clear to me that my flight credits were gone and I was now close to \$500 in debt. A big bother for a *yeshiva bochur*.

Four months later I was preparing to travel to the US during the month of Elul to begin the new *zman* in Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim Nyack. The night before my flight I encountered a Jew who lives in my

apartment building with whom I've always exchanged greetings but had no meaningful relationship. I shared with him that I was studying in the United States for the coming year and bid him farewell.

The next day, Friday 15 Elul, I was at the Ohel. Among the various things I wrote about in my *tzetel* to the Rebbe, I mentioned that I had a debt to deal with, due to the airline not honoring my flight credits from my aborted Yud Shevat trip. I was in touch with a lawyer who specializes in airline-related lawsuits and asked for a *bracha* to be able to resolve the debt issue either through the efforts of the lawyer or באופן אחר—in some other fashion.

A few hours later I called my mother to wish her a good Shabbos and she told me that the neighbor I had spoken with the night before came over to our apartment a few hours earlier to give me a gift in honor of my trip to the US. She told him I already left so he left an envelope with her for me. She opened the envelope and enclosed in it was \$500 USD—almost the exact amount I needed to pay off my debt! 

YOUR STORY

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





לזכות
 שלוחי כ"ק אדמו"ר למדינת
 אריזאנא, ובכל אתר ואתר
 נדפס ע"י
 הרה"ת ר' חיים שניאור זלמן
 וזוגתו מרת צפורה חי' ומשפחתם
 שיחיו
 לברטוב

CHOF-CHES SIVAN

5751*

One of the most memorable celebrations of Chof-Ches Sivan in the Rebbe's presence was in 5751*, marking 50 years since the Rebbe and Rebbetzin's arrival in New York, in 5701*. In honor of the special occasion, the Rebbe said a sicha and distributed a unique kovetz to men, women and children, consisting of sichos and maamarim that had previously been said or published in connection with the day and its message.

Compiled By: Rabbi Shabi Soffer

Following Mincha, the Rebbe descended from the *bimah* to the *dollars shtender*. Reb Zalman Gurary benched the Rebbe in the name of all the Chassidim in honor of the special occasion. He mentioned the spiritual revolution the Rebbe began in America and wished the Rebbe abundant success in the ultimate goal of bringing Moshiach. This was followed by *birchas kohanim*, after which the Rebbe began reciting a *sicha*.





The Rebbe spoke for approximately 20 minutes about the spiritual significance of the arrival of Lubavitch in America, as the final step in the process of bringing *Matan Torah* to the Western Hemisphere, and what it accomplished through the spreading of *pnimiyus haTorah*. The Rebbe also discussed the significance of 770 as the headquarters of this transformative revolution.

Following Maariv, the *gabbai* announced that as the *kovtzim* were not yet ready for distribution, there would be a short intermission. (Knowing that the Rebbe had just returned from the Ohel where he had spent the day and was still fasting, it was anticipated that the Rebbe would take the opportunity to break his fast.)

The Rebbe smiled broadly and replied, “Instead of an intermission, we will make a continuation,” and continued the sicha for another *eight* minutes.



The Rebbe distributes the *kovetz*.





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 Blessings from a Sheitel

Thank you for your special article about the Rebbe's strong encouragement to wear only a sheitel in public which was very informative and interesting.

I'd like to share a personal story in my family about this topic.

My father, Reb Moshe Elya Gerlitzky, was chosen to be one of the nine bochurim the Frierdiker Rebbe sent to Montreal in Cheshvan 5701*. They established the yeshiva in Montreal a day after their arrival and through 5702* they built it up even more. Towards the end of 5702* the Frierdiker Rebbe sent a shliach (Reb Shmuel Levitin, if I recall correctly) to tell the bochurim that they should now "do shidduchim." (Until that point, they hadn't wanted to hear about shidduchim because they were not instructed to do so yet.)

In Cheshvan 5703* my father got engaged to my mother, Chana Etka Rosenblum, and received the Frierdiker Rebbe's bracha. My father arranged a yechidus for my mother with the Frierdiker Rebbe and she traveled to New York for this special yechidus.

This historic yechidus remained

with my mother her entire life. The Frierdiker Rebbe's speech was difficult to comprehend so Reb Eliyahu Simpson, one of the Frierdiker Rebbe's mazkirim, went in with her in order to explain what the Rebbe said. During the yechidus the Rebbe lifted his holy hands and put them down on the table after each sentence he said. "You should cover your hair, keep kashrus, taharas hamishpacha, and keep an authentic Jewish household as befitting someone marrying a talmid of Tomchei Tmimim." Then the Rebbe blessed her with many brachos to have children, nachas, etc.

My mother was born in Montreal when there was no Jewish girls' school in the city. She was brought up frum and knew how to daven and read the siddur. When she was told to put on a sheitel, there was no one (with the exception of one older woman who had come from Europe years earlier) in the city of Montreal who got married and covered their hair. My mother was the first young woman (she was 18 years old at the time) in Montreal to cover her hair immediately after the wedding with a sheitel. After her there were others among the wives of the nine bochurim who followed her example,

but she was the “Nachshon” who jumped into the sea first.

The Rebbe’s brachos were fulfilled and though my parents are not alive, they *baruch Hashem* have over 800 descendants (!) that are following the path they forged.

Sincerely,

Rivkah Aisenbach
MONTREAL, CANADA

Reb Tuvya Belkin

In the recent Adar Derher (issue 128), on page 27 there is a picture of a page written by Reb Tuvya Belkin brought to the Rebbe by Reb Chanoch Glitzenshtein, with the Rebbe’s ksav yad kodesh on it, saying: רשימות מר טובי' של בעלקין.

However, apparently this is **not** from the booklet Reb Chanoch Glitzenshtein brought to the Rebbe when he first came to the Rebbe in 5720* as it says in the

article, because:

1. From looking at the ksav yad kodesh it seems to be from before the years of the Rebbe’s nesius. For example the letter ayin is written round and not straight (which is how the Rebbe wrote from around the year 5708*).

2. Reb Tuvya Belkin passed away on 6 Adar 5708* and in the ksav yad kodesh it says שי.

Rather, we must say that it’s a booklet that Reb Tuvya himself sent the Frierdiker Rebbe as per his request (see Igros of the Frierdiker Rebbe חלק ה' אגרת א'תקלט and the הערות there) and the Rebbe wrote a description on it then.

Levi Kamman
TORONTO ZAL

