

Derher

A Chassidisher

א חסידישער דערהער

We Are All One. Really?

EXAMINING A FASCINATING LAG
B'OMER ADDRESS BY THE REBBE

ESCAPE to SHANGHAI

TOMCHEI
TEMIMIM'S
BATTLE FOR
SURVIVAL



IYAR 5785
ISSUE 155 (232)
MAY 2025

לעילוי נשמות
הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' רפאל שלמה בן ר' קלונימוס קלמן ע"ה
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INCREASED ILLUMINATION

This month, we celebrate the Yom Tov of Lag B'Omer. Although there are several reasons given for the joy on this date, the Rebbe focuses on one reason cited by the Arizal and quoted in Chassidus:

On this day, Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai passed away—at that time “he reached the highest of levels, expressed by the [deep] concepts he learned with his students at that time. A spark of the light of Moshiach shined through him...”¹

Every year, we again experience the same energy that prevailed on that Lag B'Omer. “Fortunate is the person,” the Rebbe writes, “who will use this momentous day, the day that *pnimiyus* haTorah was revealed, to strengthen himself and recommit to studying it regularly.”

It's a day to resolve to study more Chassidus on one's own, as well as with friends and colleagues, and to influence others to do the same.

With the light of Chassidus, we will illuminate the study of all other areas of Torah. We will come to know Hashem in all aspects of our lives, and to know what He expects of us; whether in davening, Torah study, mitzvah observance, or the general conduct of our everyday lives.

With the study of *pnimiyus* haTorah, we will be redeemed from this *galus*, with Hashem's mercy.²

May it be *teikef umiyad mamash*.

The Editors

יום הבהיר יא ניסן ה'תשפ"ה

1. Siddur Im Dach, Shaar Lag B'Omer, 304c.

2. Igros Kodesh vol. 4, p. 275.



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(מכתב יום ד' י' לחדש מנ"א תשנ"ה)

“In addition to thanks, I would like to add the blessing of ‘mazal tov’ for your merit in taking part in such an important project, bringing merit to the masses, illuminating their souls with the light of the words of my father-in-law, the Rebbe Shlita, inspiring them to Torah, Avoda, & Gemilus Chasadim...”

(THE REBBE'S LETTER, 10 MENACHEM-AV 5703)

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Daytime Purification

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COMPILED BY: RABBI MENDEL VOGEL

זאת תהי' תורת המצורע ביום טהרתו וגו' (יד, ב)
זאת תהי' תורת וגו': מלמד שאין
מטהרין אותו בלילה. (רש"י)

This shall be the law of the
person afflicted with *tzora'as*,
on the day of his purification.

“This shall be the law of the person afflicted with
tzora'as: This teaches [us] that [one afflicted with
tzora'as] is not [pronounced] pure at night.” (Rashi)

We need to understand:

1. Understood simply (and as *meforshim* indeed explain),
Rashi derives this *din* from the word “*beyom*,” which implies
that the purification happens specifically by day, and not at
night. Why, then, is the *dibbur hamaschil*: “זאת תהי' תורת,”
when, seemingly, it would make more sense for it to be: “ביום”
טהרתו?

2. Why does Rashi write the ruling in the negative, שאין

“מטהרין אותו בלילה” (that one is not pronounced pure at night),
and not in the affirmative “שמטהרין אותו ביום” (that one is
pronounced pure during the day); similar to the way *Chazal*
say it: “וטהרתו ביום” (his purification should be by day)¹; or
“כל היום כשר... לטהרת המצורע” (the entire day is fit for purifying
a *metzora*)²?

The explanation is as follows:

According to Rashi, the word “*beyom*” is not sufficient
proof that the *possuk* is specifically talking about daytime.
The word “*yom*” refers to a full twenty-four hour day—which
includes both day and night (for example: יהי ערב ויהי בקר יום
“אחד—there was nightfall, and [then] morning, [constituting]
one [full] day”).

Therefore, Rashi bases his words (not on the word “*beyom*”
but rather) on the (seemingly unnecessary) words which lead
up to “*beyom*”:

“זאת תהי' תורת.”

Each of these three words connotes precision, telling us
that one must observe these laws following the narrower,
more precise meaning of the *pesukim*. Hence, the conclusion
of the *possuk*—“ביום טהרתו”—must also be understood in its



narrowest sense: the *metzora* is to be declared pure in *daytime*.

This is also why, in the *dibbur hamaschil*, Rashi adds the word "וגו'" (etcetera) after the words "זאת תהי' תורת": To hint that his source for this ruling is the word "*beyom*" as it is understood in light of the preceding words —"זאת תהי' תורת."

According to this, we can understand the difference between the Rashi's terminology, which uses the negative approach, focusing on when we do *not* pronounce him pure ("שאינ מטהרין אותו בלילה"), and the affirmative language of *Chazal*, focusing on when we *do* pronounce him pure ("וטהרתו ביום"):

The above-mentioned quotes from *Chazal* are in the context of Halacha. Contrary to Chumash, whenever the word "*Beyom*" appears in Halacha it usually refers to "daytime." Therefore, *Chazal* immediately interpret "*Beyom*" in our *posuk* to mean daytime. And since they learn the ruling directly from the word "*Beyom*," they phrase it in the affirmative "וטהרתו ביום."

Rashi, on the other hand, is commenting on a *possuk* in Chumash. And since the word "*Beyom*" by itself is not enough (as explained earlier), we need the introductory words of "זאת תהי' תורת" to reduce "*Beyom*" to its narrowest meaning and thereby *negate* the idea of the *metzora* being purified at night. Hence Rashi's language, "שאינ מטהרין אותו בלילה."

There is a practical difference in Halacha between Rashi's way of arriving at this ruling versus that of *Chazal*; namely, with regard to the following question: Can a *metzora* be purified during *bein hashmashos* (twilight), a time which—according to one opinion—is neither day nor night?

Since *Chazal* learn from the word "*Beyom*" that the purification needs to take place specifically during the day, it *cannot* be performed during *bein hashmashos* since it is not day. But according to Rashi, who arrives at the ruling by (limiting the meaning of "*Beyom*" and thereby) excluding *nighttime* purification, it would, indeed, be permissible to do it during

bein hashmashos since it is not yet night.



The Alter Rebbe says in Likkutei Torah that since the *metzora*'s misdeeds brings negative energies into the world ("names of *kelipa*"), his *tikkun* is to throw himself into Torah study, being that "all of Torah is names of Hashem."

This is why, when describing the purification process of the *metzora*, the Torah begins with the words "זאת תהי' תורת", since his primary *tikkun* happens (not by being brought to the *kohen* etc. but rather) through studying Torah; he is then able to transform the "impure names" into "pure names."

But in order to ensure that his Torah learning will be with *bittul*—for only then will it bring his needed *tikkun*—he must come to the *kohen* ("וְהוּבָא אֶל הַכֹּהֵן"), since the *kohen* is the one who can instill this *bittul* in him.

Takeaway:

It is possible to learn Torah and forget that it is *Hashem's* Torah. True, one must become one with the Torah he learns until it becomes one's *own* Torah ("תורתו"). But this can only happen after prefacing the first part of the *possuk*—"בְּתוֹרַת ה' הִפְצֹו": Once one has a feeling of *bittul* and recognition of the fact that Torah is *Hashem's* wisdom and will, he can then study Torah in a way that he becomes one with it.

(Likkutei Sichos vol. 12, p. 78)

1. Toras Kohanim 14:2.
2. Megillah 21a.
3. Tehillim 1:2.



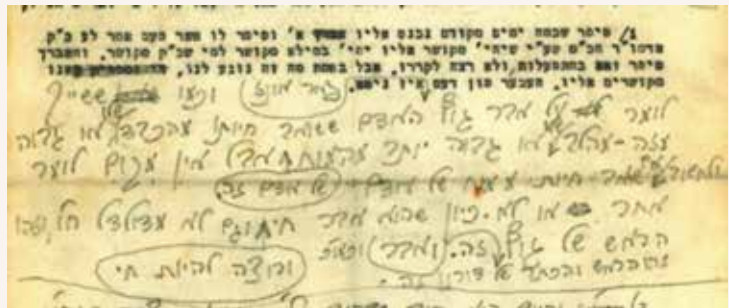
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לגדל כיו"ח שי' לתחומע"ט
מתוך שמחה והרחבה.
אזכיר עה"צ "זכ"ז באופן
לכתחילה אריבער"

Compiled By: Rabbi Levi Greenberg (OH)

Written By: Rabbi Mendel Jacobs

Where Is Your Head?

At the farbrengen on Beis Iyar 5710, the Rebbe spoke about the importance of staying connected to the [Frierdiker] Rebbe with total dedication, and related a story in this regard. The following is an explanation¹ that the Rebbe added on the transcript of the sicha, later incorporated into the text²:



[אנו מקושרים אליו,
העכער פון דעם] פאר אונז
[איז ניטא]. וכמו ששייך
לומר על אבר גוף האדם
ששואב חיותו מהכבד שלו,
או גבוה מזה - מהלב שלו
או גבוה יותר מהמוח של
אדם זה, אבל אין מקום
לומר ולחשוב אם שואב
חיות ממוח של אדם אחר
או לא. כיון שהוא אבר חי
ורוצה להיות חי וגם לא
מדולדל ח"ו, וזהו הראש
של גוף ואבר זה. וכמו"כ זהו
הראש והכתר של דורנו זה.

The Rebbe related that a few days earlier, a young man came to him and said that the Frierdiker Rebbe had once told him, "If you connect yourself to me, you will be connected with he to whom I am connected."

This young man recounted his story with excitement, and the Rebbe did not want to temper it. However, the truth is, why is this important for us to know? We connect ourselves with him [the Rebbe], and as far as we're concerned, there's nothing beyond that.

An example: One might say that a particular limb of his body draws its sustenance from the liver, or higher than that, from his heart, or even higher than that, from the brain of this very person. However, one cannot say or think about whether it gets sustenance from the brain of a different person or not. Because you're speaking of a living limb, and you want it to remain [completely] alive—not hanging by a thread, *chas v'shalom*, [it must remain connected to] the head of this body and this very limb. The same applies to the "head" and the "crown" of this generation. [One must seek to remain connected to the head of *our* generation, without considering a connection to any element beyond that.]

1. Published in *Teshura Levin-Belinow* 5784.

2. *Toras Menachem* vol. 1, p. 39.

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שיחיו
רוהר



A YEAR OF MIRACLES

Joy & Pride

IYAR—5750

Continuing through our story of the special
year of Nissim with the Rebbe—5750.

COMPILED BY: RABBI YANKY BELL

WRITTEN BY: RABBI MENDEL JACOBS



CHAIM BARUCH HALBERSTAM VIA JEM 10544



THE REBBE WAVES TO THE CHILDREN
AT THE LAG B'OMER PARADE, 5750.

This month, the Rebbe distributed dollars for tzedakah more and more frequently. Someone noted that in the first week of Iyar, the Rebbe distributed dollars every day of the week, from Sunday through Thursday.

Towards the beginning of the month of Iyar, shluchim around the world received checks from the Rebbe for \$2082, which is twice the amount \$1041, one for Yud-Aleph Nissan and one for Pesach (each comprised of \$1000, plus \$41 in honor of the 41st year of the Rebbe's *nesius*). On Beis Iyar, the Rebbe instructed that another round of checks should be sent out in the amount of \$1157 each, in honor of the 157th birthday of the Rebbe Maharash.

This month also saw some interesting encounters between the Rebbe and photographers who had come to 770.

On Sunday, 4 Iyar, a woman taking photos of the Rebbe for one of the news outlets came to the Rebbe for dollars, and the Rebbe gave her an extra dollar, "For your photography." At the end of the distribution, the Rebbe was about to enter his room, and the woman snapped a photo. The Rebbe smiled at her and asked, "Is that the last picture you're taking, or the first?"

Later, when the Rebbe exited 770 and was about to get into the car to go to the mikvah, three photographers were standing nearby (including the one from earlier).

The Rebbe called them over and gave them nickels and quarters, saying, "This is for charity!" When the Rebbe left for the Ohel, this woman was again standing nearby, and the Rebbe gave her a nickel "for charity."

On Friday, 9 Iyar, the Rebbe encouraged this woman to begin lighting Shabbos candles each week. The next Sunday during dollars, she reported to the Rebbe that she had indeed begun lighting candles, and the Rebbe wished her "a happy year," then gave her an additional dollar, "For success in all your activities."

The legendary photographer, Reb Levi Friedin, who usually captures the month of Tishrei with the Rebbe, was also present at 770 this month. On the night of 19 Iyar after Maariv, the Rebbe was on his way out of shul after having distributed dollars, and Reb Levi snapped many photos, one after another. The Rebbe waved his hand toward Reb Levi in encouragement, coming within inches of the camera.

Lag B'Omer Guests

A highlight of this month is the special Yom Tov Lag B'Omer, which we will soon explore. Preparations were underway for a beautiful parade. On 6 Iyar, the Rebbe gave his consent for the parade to be broadcast live on television, and the preparations went into high gear.

Naturally, guests traveled from far and near to be with

THE REBBE GIVES
A COIN FOR
TZEDAKAH TO A
PHOTOGRAPHER,
4 IYAR 5750.



YOSSI MELAMED VIA JEW NEWS 1992



THE REBBE WAVES HIS HAND TOWARD REB LEVI FREIDIN AFTER MAARIV, 19 IYAR 5750.

LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEN 242447

the Rebbe on this occasion. Most notably, Rabbi Aharon Eliezer Ceitlin of Tzfas brought a large group of guests from his city; the group spent a few weeks at 770, and the Rebbe showered them with attention throughout their stay.

At the farbrengen on Shabbos, 17 Iyar, Erev Lag B'Omer, the Rebbe addressed the guests from Tzfas. Their city is right near Miron, the Rebbe explained, the place where Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai is buried. For many generations, it's been the custom that the inhabitants of Tzfas go up to Miron to celebrate Lag B'Omer. Their city too is special, as it is the place from which the Arizal spread *pnimiyus haTorah*. When Lag B'Omer occurs on a Sunday, many in Tzfas have the custom to go to Miron for the entire Shabbos. But our guests find themselves here in New York instead, in the shul of the Frierdiker Rebbe, who spreads *pnimiyus haTorah* in our generation.

The Rebbe concluded, "The group of guests from the holy city of Tzfas, as well as guests from the holy city of Yerushalayim and other places around the world, should all say '*l'chaim*', and with that they will merit good life

('l'chaim tovim') and long life ('l'chaim aruchim'), which will manifest completely with the imminent *geulah*. If Moshiach comes now, they won't even have to worry about planning their trip back home to Eretz Yisroel, since we will all fly together on the heavenly clouds!"

When the guests didn't respond immediately, the Rebbe lifted his hand as if to ask, "Why aren't you saying *l'chaim* yet?" Everyone began saying *l'chaim*, and the Rebbe waved his hand towards them as a gesture that they should sing. The Rebbe encouraged the singing vigorously, bringing the crowd to an immense joy.

The next day at the Lag B'Omer parade, the Rebbe again gave this group extra attention, clapping his hands joyfully as they marched by.

Later in the month, on 27 Iyar—the day before the Tzfas guests were scheduled to leave—the Rebbe edited the aforementioned part of the *sicha* especially for them. The next morning, the group sat down in the shul at 770 to study this special *sicha* together.

That night, just before the group left for the airport, they had the *zechus* to pass by the Rebbe together and



THE GROUP OF GUESTS FROM TZFAS PASS BEFORE THE REBBE AT THE LAG B'OMER PARADE, 5750.

MORDECHA BARON VIA JEW 148355

receive dollars from him after Maariv. The Rebbe smiled at each one with a special fatherly gaze in his eyes. As the Rebbe left the shul, members of the group stood at the door, and the Rebbe blessed them with “*Fohrt gezu-nterheit, hatzlacha rabba!*” (Travel safely, much success.) When the Rebbe emerged from the elevator outside his room, all the women of the group were standing there, and the Rebbe blessed them as well.

As the two buses waited outside to take the guests to the airport, Chassidim came out to see them off, breaking out in a joyous dance.

Farbrengens

Each Shabbos, the Rebbe held a farbrengen at 1:30 p.m., delivering timely words of Torah.

On the first Shabbos of the month, Parshas Tazria-Metzora, the Rebbe entered the farbrengen with his siddur and large copies of that week’s *perek* from Pirkei Avos. Before the fifth *sicha*, the Rebbe opened his siddur, took out the copies, and then read out sections from the Mishnah, offering explanations.

After the farbrengen ended, the Rebbe davened Mincha with the crowd as usual while still on the farbrengen

platform. After Mincha, the Rebbe sat down at the same place where he farbrenged, took out the large copies of Pirkei Avos, and learned through the *perek* as usual.

The next week, on Shabbos Parshas Acharei-Kedoshim, 10 Iyar, the Rebbe spoke about the upcoming Yom Tov of Lag B’Omer. There is a full week left until this special day, the Rebbe said, and each day should be utilized to make the proper preparations. It is an opportune time to gather Jewish children and make parades, under the slogan “*Yachad kol yaldei Yisroel*” (all Jewish children united). Since we are talking about educating young children, we must ensure that the messages of Lag B’Omer are portrayed in a manner that they can understand, with decorations, flags, banners, and slogans that they can relate to. These preparations should be done bearing in mind that the previous Lag B’Omer parade was extremely successful, more than anyone imagined. Towards the end of the *sicha*, the Rebbe spoke about the imminent *geulah*, when we will march with *Nessi Doreinu*, *Moshiach tzidkeinu* at our lead!

The crowd sang *Ki Elokim*, and the Rebbe encouraged the singing by waving both hands in all directions with immense joy.

Towards the end of the farbrengen, the Rebbe said



THE COINS MINTED IN HONOR OF LAG B'OMER 5750, DISTRIBUTED AT THE PARADE.

that the crowd should once again sing a song connected with Lag B'Omer (even though it was already sung at the beginning of the farbrengen), and the Rebbe himself began singing, “*Hinei ma tov...*” while waving his hand, indicating that everyone should join in.

Yud-Gimmel Iyar

On the 13th of the month is the *yahrtzeit* of the Rebbe's brother, Reb Yisroel Aryeh Leib. The *mashpia*, Reb Shia Korf, davens at the *amud* on this day at the Rebbe's behest, and the Rebbe himself recites all the *Kaddeishim*.

A group of *talmidim-hashluchim* at Yeshivas Toras Emes in Yerushalayim wrote to the Rebbe that they traveled up to Tzfas on this day to visit the resting place of Reb Yisroel Aryeh Leib, and the Rebbe responded:

נת' ות"ח ותנוח דעתם וכו' והזמ"ג פסח שני ול"ג בעומר וכו', אזכיר עה"צ.

[The report was] received, thank you. Let their minds be at ease [much as they have let my mind be at ease]. It is an appropriate time: [around the time of] Pesach Sheini, Lag B'Omer, etc. I will mention this at the Ohel.

Lag B'Omer Coins

Of course, the highlight of the month in the Rebbe's presence was the beautiful Lag B'Omer parade. The Rebbe wanted to give out a special memento at the event—a coin minted specifically for Lag B'Omer. Four days before Lag B'Omer, on 14 Iyar, the Rebbe asked Rabbi Krinsky if it would be possible to have such a coin ready in time.

After some initial research, Rabbi Krinsky wrote to the Rebbe that he was only able to find one factory that could mint such a coin, but they would only be ready on Sunday, Lag B'Omer itself. The Rebbe responded on the note that this would already be after the parade started, and therefore it didn't make sense to go ahead with it. “It seems that it's my fault, since I didn't mention anything about it earlier,” the Rebbe wrote. Rabbi Krinsky shuddered when

reading those words. Immediately he decided that come what may, the coins must be ready in time.

Indeed, after much hard work, and by enlisting the help of his son Reb Dovid and his son-in-law Reb Yosef Boruch Friedman, he was able to report to the Rebbe that the coins would be ready early Sunday morning. The Rebbe was very satisfied, and he responded: “ותנוח לי בהנ”ל—דעתו בעניניו כמו שעשה בנוגע לי בהנ”ל”—May your mind be at ease in your own matters, much as you have done for me [by taking care of] all of the above.”

The Great Parade

On Sunday, Lag B'Omer, thousands of children gathered on Eastern Parkway to celebrate this special day. At



THE REBBE STEPS OUT TO THE PARADE.



LEVI FREDIN VIA JEN 2/42/49

A GROUP OF GIRLS BEARING THE REBBETZIN'S NAME PASSES BEFORE THE REBBE AT THE PARADE.

11:00 a.m., the master of ceremonies, Rabbi J. J. Hecht introduced “the Rebbe Shimon Bar Yochai of our time, the *nossi* of our generation, the Lubavitcher Rebbe *shlita*,” who would now join the parade. As the band played “Ani Maamin,” the Rebbe emerged from 770 and walked up to the platform.

After the 12 *pessukim* were recited, the Rebbe addressed the children. He spoke about the great unity brought about by this gathering, and the hope that it would inspire a greater unity among all of mankind, by recognizing the One Creator of us all. The Rebbe concluded that in addition to the usual distribution of money for *tzedakah*, he would also distribute a silver coin as a memento from this event to all children present, and in their honor, to the adults as well¹.

Rabbi Hecht translated the Rebbe’s *sicha* into English, and then, at around 12:00 p.m., the parade began.

First to march by was a unit of police officers on horseback, and the Rebbe applauded them along with the whole crowd. Soon afterward they were followed by a delegation from the United States army, led by Chaplain Yaakov Goldstein in a real battle tank.

A special moment was when a group of some 200 girls named Chaya Mushka passed the Rebbe, with a

banner stating, “*Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Meidelach*.” The Rebbe’s face was quite serious as he watched the children pass by.

Toward the end of the parade, at around 2:00, rain began to fall on the crowd. The Rebbe didn’t pay any attention to it, and continued waving at the children. Then the Rebbe distributed packets of coins to the chap-erones, to be distributed to the children and adults in attendance. The Rebbe gave out about 30 packets in total, each containing 89 coins.

As the rain was pouring down harder, the Rebbe concluded the distribution, then turned towards the crowd and began singing slowly, in a loud voice, “*Hinei ma tov...*”

With that, the Rebbe turned around and returned to 770, concluding the Lag B’Omer parade.

Later that day, on the way to the Ohel, the Rebbe’s car drove through the Lag B’Omer fair on Empire Blvd. The Rebbe waved at the children as his car passed them by.

N’shei Chabad

Toward the end of the month, on 25 Iyar, the Rebbe addressed the 35th international convention of N’shei U’bnos Chabad.

It was a long and busy day. The Rebbe gave out dollars,



THE REBBE
ADDRESSES THE
CHILDREN.

as he did every Sunday, until 3:55 p.m. Then the Rebbe went to the *mikvah*. Upon the Rebbe's return from the *mikvah*, the photographer, Reb Levi Freidin, stood at the door of the Rebbe's car and asked the Rebbe on behalf of all Chassidim not to go to the Ohel today, as it would be very hard on the Rebbe's health. However, soon afterward the Rebbe left for the Ohel, returning at 10:20 p.m.

The large shul downstairs was packed with women and girls awaiting the Rebbe's address. In the meantime, the Rebbe davened Mincha and Maariv in the small *zal* upstairs.

At close to 11:00 p.m., the Rebbe left his room and went downstairs to greet the gathering of women.

The theme of the convention was "*V'chol bonayich limudei Hashem*"—Torah and Mitzvos are the ultimate peace.

As the Rebbe entered, he waved several times at the crowd, walking by the centerpiece—a model of a globe being held up by children studying Torah.

The Rebbe addressed the women for 45 minutes, speaking about their most important role as the mainstay of the Jewish home, and how in recent generations, women have begun studying Torah rigorously as well.

At the conclusion of the *sicha*, the Rebbe gave packets of dollars to the organizers to be distributed to all the women present. On his way out, the Rebbe stopped by the centerpiece situated near his table and gazed at it for a short while.

Dollars

As he did every month, the Rebbe distributed dollars for tzedakah to thousands of visitors every Sunday, along with *brachos* and guidance for what they needed.

In fact, this month the Rebbe wrote to an individual who wished to see him in *yechidus*:

ביום א' ... שזהו יחידות דעתה ובהוספה - שליחות צדקה. אזכיר

עה"צ

[Come for dollars] on Sunday, for this is the *yechidus* in the current time. [In fact it is even] greater [than *yechidus*, since it includes] - making each one an emissary to give tzedakah. I will mention this at the Ohel.

On Sunday, 4 Iyar, Reb Mordechai Kanelsky brought a boy who had just had his *bris milah*, along with the one who acted as *sandek*. The *sandek* asked the Rebbe for a *bracha* for his business, and the Rebbe said, "A *sandek* must be wealthy. May this materialize soon."

A woman passed by the Rebbe and wished him, "till 120." The Rebbe responded, "May you live till 121!"

Another woman told the Rebbe that her grandfather was a famous *rav*. The Rebbe said, "May you live to see your grandchildren also becoming *rabbanim*."

Another woman asked the Rebbe for a *bracha* for her father who is very old. The Rebbe asked, "How old is he?" and she said he was 88. The Rebbe responded, "He has another 33 years until 120. Why are you calling him old?!"

Mr. Yechiel Leiter came to the Rebbe, who is



WAVING TO THE CHILDREN.



THE REBBE DISTRIBUTES PACKETS OF COINS AT THE END OF THE PARADE.

organizing a dinner for the Torah institutions of Chevron. The Rebbe gave him a *bracha* for the dinner, then said, “Tell them that all of your [the Rebbe pointed at Mr. Leiter] and my [the Rebbe pointed at himself] and their [the Rebbe pointed at the others] prayers ascend to heaven through Chevron!”

One of Mr. Leiter’s helpers told the Rebbe that he was recently in Chevron and visited Beit Romano, Beit Schneerson, and he saw 120 children learning Torah. They have nowhere else to go; there are no stores there or anything. They just sit and learn the whole time.

The Rebbe was very pleased and he responded, “If only we could say the same about New York. Don’t just tell this to me; tell this to the others here who do have stores to visit...”

The Rebbe concluded: “May we all meet together very soon in Chevron with Moshiach.”

Rabbi Yerachmiel Benjaminson introduced



THE REBBE'S
CAR ON EMPIRE
BLVD. EN ROUTE
TO THE LAG
B'OMER FAIR.

Mr. Goldstein, the owner of Bencraft hatters who supplies the Rebbe's hats. The Rebbe blessed him with good livelihood, and to use it in a good and healthy manner. Then the Rebbe lifted his hat with a big smile.

A woman came to the Rebbe and said that she has entered into depression. The Rebbe said, "If you entered it, you can come out of it soon. It's up to you. Check the mezuzos of your home."

A woman came to the Rebbe and said that she's married for many years and doesn't yet have children, and asked the Rebbe to daven for her. The Rebbe asked, "Have you been to doctors?" She told the Rebbe that the doctors have given up hope. The Rebbe responded, "Then it is worthwhile to think about adoption. You'll do something about adoption, and that will be a *segula* to have your own child together with your husband."

Two children passed by the Rebbe together, and one of them said, "We want Moshiach now." The Rebbe turned to the second child and asked, "And what about you? Do you want Moshiach?" The child answered yes, and the Rebbe asked, "Now?" The child again answered yes, and the Rebbe smiled broadly.

On Sunday, 11 Iyar, an individual told the Rebbe that he doesn't know what to do, since he is in need of a "*groise refua*" (a great cure). The Rebbe said, "For Hashem, nothing is too big. He will be able to give it to you."

A woman told the Rebbe that her son is getting good

suggestions for *shidduchim*, but he's afraid to go ahead with them since he has a problem with high sugar (diabetes). The Rebbe responded, "Who is afraid of diabetes today? You can take insulin and forget about the whole thing!"

An individual told the Rebbe that he needs a lot of money for his organization, and the Rebbe said, "You become intimidated (*nispo'el*) by money?!"

An individual asked the Rebbe what to do about his medical situation, and the Rebbe said, "I'm not a doctor. You need to ask this to an expert doctor who deals with these things; either way, they can find you a cure." The individual told the Rebbe that there is no cure for his ailment, and the Rebbe said, "Today they do kidney transplants or some other treatments. Either way, there is a cure for this, as is well known in the whole New York."

An individual asked the Rebbe for a *bracha* to have *yiras Shomayim*, and the Rebbe told him to give tzedakah on Lag B'Omer, since it's a special, "*mazal'dike*" day.

To a few children who passed by, the Rebbe said that they should make sure to participate in the upcoming Lag B'Omer parade.

A woman came crying to the Rebbe that her husband doesn't have *parnassa*, and the Rebbe said, "Why are you crying? It's better to laugh!" ①

1. See "We Are All One" in this issue, based on the *sicha*.

לזכות
כל נכדינו שיחיו
שיגדלו לתורה לחופה ולמעשים
טובים לנח"ר כ"ק אדמו"ר

נדפס ע"י
הרה"ת ר' יצחק מאיר
וזוגתו מרת לאה שיחיו
שפאלטר

ESCAPE to SHANGHAI

**TOMCHEI
TEMIMIM'S
BATTLE FOR
SURVIVAL**

BY RABBI MENDY GREENBERG

(Twinsburg, OH)



Curacao (and other Netherlands colonies) 1940 VIII 22
 Consul du Japon à Kaunas.



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Curacao (and other Netherlands colonies) 1940 VIII 22
 Consul du Japon à Kaunas.

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TRAPPED

It was a quiet Friday morning in Otwock. A group of *bochurim* emerged from the mikvah, exhausted from an all-night farbrengen celebrating Tes-Vov Elul, the anniversary of Tomchei Temimim's founding 42 years earlier.

As they set out on the half-hour walk back to the Yeshiva, a series of deafening explosions shattered the morning stillness. Planes roared overhead at an alarmingly low altitude, shaking the air with their noise.

At first, they hoped it was just a Polish military exercise. But as they made their way back, the grim reality set in. Germany had attacked Poland. The Luftwaffe had just bombed Otwock, leveling buildings and leaving many dead. Poland was at war.

Panic gripped the city. Reports flooded in—the Polish army was in retreat, the Germans were advancing quickly. The bombings continued. Fear and confusion spread. Should they flee to Warsaw? Would the capital be any safer? Should they head east, deeper into Poland? Or was it best to stay put?

Amid the chaos, the Frierdiker Rebbe's home remained an island of calm. He showed no fear, reassuring those around him. Over the next few days, he gave clear instructions: the American *bochurim* were to contact the U.S.

consul and leave Poland immediately, and any *bochur* who wished to could return home to his family. Reb Yudel Eber, the Rosh Yeshiva, covered all travel expenses from the Frierdiker Rebbe's personal funds.

With war raging, maintaining the Yeshiva was no longer possible. The *bochurim* scattered—some followed the Frierdiker Rebbe and his family to Warsaw, others returned home. A group of twelve remained in Otwock, keeping up the *sedorim* as best they could.

Over Tishrei, the Germans swiftly crushed the Polish army, and the entire region fell under Nazi occupation. Nazi soldiers patrolled the streets, tormenting Jews at will. Food was scarce and uncertainty loomed. Families with young children or elderly relatives felt they had no choice but to stay put and hope the worst had passed, but those who could—like the *bochurim*—began searching for a way out.

But there was nowhere to go. To the west lay Nazi Germany; to the east, another menace—the Soviet Union. Under the terms of the German-Soviet non-aggression pact, the Soviets had taken control of eastern Poland, bringing them dangerously close. To the north, Lithuania and Latvia refused to accept Polish refugees, and access to those regions was blocked by Soviet-occupied territory.

While Chassidim in America worked tirelessly to



WARSAW AFTER THE LUFTWAFFE BOMBED THE CITY.

secure the Frierdiker Rebbe's rescue, he, in turn, focused on finding a way to save the *bochurim*. As a Latvian citizen, he had the right to enter Latvia and from there to travel to America. But the *bochurim*, Polish citizens, had no clear escape route.¹

THE ONLY WAY OUT

A ray of hope appeared in Cheshvan. The historic Lithuanian city of Vilna, which had been annexed to eastern Poland after World War I, was now being returned to Lithuania by Stalin in exchange for the right to station Soviet troops on Lithuanian soil. The 4th of Cheshvan was the date set for the transition when Vilna would shift from Soviet Communist rule to free and democratic Lithuania. If they could make it there in time, they would suddenly find themselves in another—and much better—country.

On the designated day, a small group of *bochurim* in Vilna watched in disbelief as Soviet soldiers disappeared and were replaced by marching Lithuanian troops. It seemed too good to be true. Almost immediately, yeshivos and Jewish institutions began to regroup, the economy stabilized, and store shelves—once empty—were suddenly stocked again. For the first time in weeks, people could breathe a sigh of relief.

Only a few *bochurim* made it to Vilna in time and joined the local Tomchei Temimim that had been established by Reb Yitzchok Dovber Ushpal before the war. It was the sole surviving branch of Tomchei Temimim. The Russian yeshivos remained underground, and the Polish ones had been dismantled—only Vilna remained. From Poland, the Frierdiker Rebbe came to a decision: Vilna would become the new center for reestablishing the entire Tomchei Temimim network.

“My friends and I,” related Reb Avraham Yitzchak Garfinkel, “were in Warsaw, learning in secret. After a few weeks, we began to wonder—should we stay and wait it out, or was it time to run?”

“In mid-Kislev, we visited the [Frierdiker] Rebbe. His son-in-law, Rashag, greeted us warmly and shared exciting news: the Russians had returned Vilna to Lithuania. The [Frierdiker] Rebbe wanted the *bochurim* to escape to Vilna and rebuild the yeshiva.

“That same day, we had *yechidus*. The [Frierdiker] Rebbe, his face shining, blessed me with a safe journey and success in reestablishing the yeshiva.

“He asked if we were ready to flee and cross two borders—Germany to Russia, then Russia to Lithuania. He



THE FRIERDIKER REBBE OUTSIDE HIS HOME
IN OTWOCK, CIRCA LATE 1930S.

urged me to tell everyone along the way to escape as well, but not to stay under Communist rule—only to Vilna. He promised to cover travel expenses and stressed that time was of the essence. Any day, the situation could change.”

Group after group began to embark on the journey, and *bochurim* began to trickle into Vilna. Each came with a story. Shmuel Dovid Raichik had lost his boots in the Lithuanian forest, suffering from frostbite. Avraham Yitzchak Garfinkel had fallen off a bridge while attempting to avoid the soldiers. Moshe Elya Gerlitzky had gotten lost in the forest during a blizzard when he suddenly found his friend Sh'ele Bronstien, who guided him like an angel from heaven. Others were arrested and spent several nights in jail. But as the months passed, more and more *bochurim* made it.

As winter turned into spring, forty *bochurim* sat together in the Apatov Shteibel, learning Chassidus and *nigleh*, farbrenging with their *mashpi'im*, and spreading Chassidus to the other refugee *bochurim* in the area. When *maamarim* would be reviewed at the end of Shabbos (“*raava d'raavin*”), many non-Chabad



REB YITZCHOK DOVBER USHPAL TAKES LEAVE OF HIS STUDENTS IN VILNA AS HE DEPARTS FOR AMERICA, 5700.

LIBRARY OF AGUDAS CHASSIDEI CHABAD



REB AVROHOM YITZCHAK GARFINKEL (FIRST ON THE RIGHT) WITH FELLOW TEMIMIM IN VILNA.

LIBRARY OF AGUDAS CHASSIDEI CHABAD



LUBAVITCHER BOCHURIM LEARNING IN VILNA.

LIBRARY OF AGUDAS CHASSIDEI CHABAD



GROUP PHOTO OF ALL TALMIDIM IN VILNA.

LIBRARY OF AGUDAS CHASSIDEI CHABAD

bochurim and refugees would come to listen. True, they were no longer in close proximity to the Frierdiker Rebbe, but they hoped to soon be reunited. In the meantime, Vilna was their oasis. For an entire winter, they carried on as if there was no war.

THE GREAT RUSSIAN BEAR

“Everything was going smoothly,” related Reb Avraham Yitzchak Garfinkel, “until the first night of Shavuot. In the middle of the night, as we said *Tikkun Leil Shavuot*, a deep, rumbling sound filled the air. Russian tanks were rolling down the main street, right outside the yeshiva.

“The Soviets had taken over the Baltics — Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. Their governments had already fallen, and now the Communists were marching through the streets, singing songs about how their ‘great’ government had freed these countries from fascism.

“Overnight, everything changed. Fear gripped the city. People were afraid to speak. Stores emptied, and even basic necessities became hard to find, despite Soviet promises that everything would be fine.

“For us, the future looked bleak. We knew there was no way a yeshiva could survive under Communist rule. Staying wasn’t an option; we had to run. But to where?”

The *bochurim* were already exploring immigration options. The most natural route was to follow the Frierdiker Rebbe to New York, and the Frierdiker Rebbe had indeed been working to secure visas, but so far without success. His attempts to obtain visas to Eretz Yisroel also didn’t bear fruit.

Time was running out. The Soviet takeover would be formalized in less than six weeks, and Lithuania would cease to exist as an independent country. All foreign consulates would shut down. But where could they go? War was raging across Europe.

The only viable escape route seemed to be a long journey across the entire Soviet Union

to the Pacific Ocean, and from there—hoping against hope—to somehow gain entry to America. But there was a major problem: the Russians wouldn't issue travel visas unless travelers had a final destination. Without an American visa, they couldn't even begin their journey.

Then, someone discovered a loophole.

THE NON-VISA VISA

A *bochur* from Holland who was learning in Telz had relocated to Vilna as well, and learned in his correspondence with the Dutch ambassador in Riga that no visa was required to enter the Dutch Caribbean colony of Curacao. Instead, entry was granted solely at the discretion of the island's governor.

He realized this could be his ticket out. If the ambassador would write in his passport that no visa was needed but omit the part about requiring the governor's approval, he could then approach the Japanese ambassador for transit visas through Japan. With those visas in hand, he could ask the Soviets for exit visas, leave Russia for Japan, and then hopefully find his way to America.

To his delight, the ambassador agreed and instructed the Dutch consul in Lithuania, Jan Zwartendijk, to issue similar visas to anyone who requested them. Suddenly, the

Dutch consul found himself overwhelmed with thousands of requests for these Curacao “non-visa” visas.

Issuing them was not without risk. The statement he stamped was only half true, and Holland and the Soviet Union had no diplomatic relations. If the Soviets disapproved of what he was doing, they could easily send him to Siberia. But Zwartendijk chose to help, stamping visas day and night, giving thousands of Jewish refugees a desperately needed lifeline.

The next step was securing Japanese transit visas. Here, another righteous individual stepped forward. Japanese diplomat Chiune Sugihara telegraphed his government to ask for permission, but when he received no clear response, he made the decision himself. For weeks, he worked tirelessly, issuing as many visas as he could.²

FOLLOW THE AMSHINOVER

But not everyone was convinced. Would the Soviets actually recognize Curacao as a valid destination and grant exit visas? Or would they arrest everyone and send them to Siberia for trying to leave the Soviet “paradise,” as had happened to so many who tried to leave Soviet-controlled Poland? While several thousand Jews took up the ruse, most refugees decided to stay put.



ONE OF THE TRANSIT VISAS ISSUED FOR A JEWISH REFUGEE BY JAPANESE DIPLOMAT CHIUNE SUGIHARA, 5700.



THE AMSHINOVER REBBE, REB SHIMON SHOLOM KALISH, AROUND THE WAR YEARS.

Uncertain, the bochurim of Tomchei Temimim sent a telegram to the Friediker Rebbe in New York, asking for guidance. His response came swiftly: follow the advice of the Amshinover Rebbe.

The Amshinover Rebbe had been close with the Friediker Rebbe back in Otwock, and after escaping to Vilna, he became the spiritual mentor of the refugees. When he heard about the visas, he said, “I’m going.” That was enough; Tomchei Temimim was going too.

Then came the most nerve-wracking step: applying for Soviet transit visas. The NKVD required every applicant to fill out a detailed questionnaire about their background, plans, and history. The *bochurim* submitted their forms—and then waited. And waited.

Weeks turned into months. Summer faded into fall. The Soviets, mercifully, allowed the yeshivos to remain open, but tension still ran high. Thanks to the foresight of Reb Yitzchak Hendel, the yeshiva had stocked up on non-perishable goods—like soap, lightbulbs and the like—right after the Soviet invasion. Now, with store

MIVTZA LULAV IN VILNA

During the Sukkos right after the Soviet takeover, esrogim were impossible to come by, but the resourceful *bochurim* of Tomchei Temimim managed to obtain not one, but four separate esrogim.

A short time later, a message arrived from the Brisker Rov, Reb Velvel Soloveitchik, also a refugee in Vilna. He asked that the *bochurim* be so kind as to give him one of the esrogim. At first, they refused. These esrogim were more precious than gold; they had already decided to divide Vilna into four districts and to make each set of Arba’ah Minim publicly available to the population each morning of Yom Tov.

But the Brisker Rov told them a story. A year earlier, under German bombardment of Warsaw, the Friediker Rebbe had similarly obtained a few precious esrogim—and he had reserved one of them especially for the Brisker Rov, personally carrying them as he fled from one building to another to escape the bombing. Hearing this account, the *bochurim* acquiesced.

That Sukkos, the scene on Vilna streets was prescient; Lubavitcher *bochurim* walking around with sets of Arba’ah Minim, offering passerby the chance to recite the bracha. It was perhaps the first instance of Mivtza Lulav.

shelves bare, they were able to sell them at a profit to help keep the yeshiva running.

After the Yomim Tovim of Tishrei, the silence finally broke. *Bochurim* began receiving summonses for “interviews” with the NKVD. Fear gripped them—were they walking into a trap? But to their immense relief, the meetings were brief and superficial. Then, the news they had been waiting for: visas approved. They were free to leave.

The Soviets had just one “small” condition. The cost

of the visa and travel would be \$169 per person—an astronomical sum, worth over \$3,500 today. In exchange, the refugees would officially be treated as “honored tourists,” given the finest hotels and first-class train accommodations.

Of course, the *bochurim* had nothing close to that amount. They sent an urgent telegram to Rashag, and the money was wired immediately. The Friediker Rebbe took on immense debt to save them—but now, at last, the journey could begin.

TRAVELING THROUGH RUSSIA

“Kindly note,” Rashag wrote to a government official regarding the *bochurim*, “that we must be very careful ... that nothing should be said about these students having any connection with Rabbi Schneersohn or Chabad, for this information is not advisable for Russia and it would bring much harm to these students.”

The *bochurim* knew they were heading into dangerous territory. Most of them came from non-Chabad, *Poilishe* families, but their years in Tomchei Temimim had given them an appreciation for the hardships of Russian Jews. Before they left, they were sent a message from America: bring along *seforim*, *tashmishei kedusha*, *sichos*, and *maamarim* of the Friediker Rebbe—anything that could be left behind to benefit the Chassidim trapped under Soviet rule.

Their journey began in Teves. A full year had passed since the yeshiva had regrouped in Vilna, and nearly a year and a half since the war broke out. Despite the uncertainty, the *bochurim* set out in high spirits—over the past few months, they had received astonishing news. The Friediker Rebbe’s relentless efforts had paid off: the United States had approved visas for all of them, to be delivered at the U.S. embassy in Moscow or Japan. If all went according to plan, they would soon be reunited with the Rebbe.

Traveling through Russia, the *bochurim* immediately felt the suffocating atmosphere of the Soviet Union. People spoke cautiously, always aware of the ever-present secret police. These penniless refugees were riding in comfortable train cars and staying in Moscow’s finest hotels where lavish meals were served—while just outside, long bread lines stretched down the freezing streets. You can imagine the horror on the waiters’ faces when their new guests ignored the platters of chicken and fish,

LIST OF SELECTED BEST STUDENTS OF THE "TOMCHEI TEMIMIM" YERUSHOV IN EUROPE WHOSE U.S.A. VISAS HAVE BEEN ISSUED.

A. At present in Riga (Latvia)		
Address: Marinas Iela #25-13.		
	Date & Place of Birth	
1. KVASA Abrams	1918	Sov. Union
2. GURKOV Sholim Bar	1920	Riga
3. FINKOVICH Faive	1917	"
4. GERSHON Sholim	1920	Soviet Union
5. GERSHON Simcha	1922	do.
6. BLINKER Jakobs	1922	do.
7. BLINKER Sholim Bar	1924	do.
8. KAGANS Hirsch	1928	do.
9. KAGANS Sholim	1924	do.
10. GURVICH Samuël	1919	do.
11. GURVICH Eliezer	1914	do.
12. GURVICH Melechman	1917	Riga
13. GERSHON Mendel		
14. BAUMANN Nathan	1923	Latvia
15. KURCS Bar	1923	do.
16. FRASS Zelik	1924	do.
17. KRAVICH Abrams	1923	do.
18. KAGAN Israel	1927	Sov. Union
19. TROTSKY Moses	1927	do.
B. At present in Vilnius (Lithuania)		
Address: Vilnius #21a Vilnius.		
	Date & Place of Birth	
20. HENDEL Ischak	1917	Poland
21. WATKINS Josef	1917	do.
22. TERNERMAN Mendel	1917	do.
23. GRYNGLAS Mendel Wolf	1917	do.
24. GELFAND Moishe Eliazar	1915	do.
25. LEHMAN Samuel Moshe	1920	do.
26. GEFINKEL Abram Isak	1921	do.
27. SUTIN Samul	1914	do.
28. SOKINE Chaim Meir	1919	do.
29. NODAL Josef	1914	do.
30. ROSENBERG Josef	1914	do.
31. FROTH Mojse	1920	do.
32. KOTLARSKI Hirsch Josef	1915	do.
33. HOGELMAN Saloma	1920	do.
34. KRAMER Leib	1918	do.
35. LARJE Mordechai	1917	do.
36. FURS Samuila Hirsch	1921	do.
37. BRONSTEIN Sayja	1919	do.
38. FORTOWICZ Josef	1920	do.
39. RUBIN Morris	1919	do.
40. RUBIN Hirsch	1921	do.
41. SHWARTZ Sholim	1922	do.
42. RABINOWICZ Feleach	1919	do.
43. RABINOWICZ Sholim	1920	Poland
44. FROTH Nachin	1921	do.
45. GRAMOWICZ Gersson	1919	do.
46. KAC Sayja Boruch	1923	do.
47. GLAS Zelik	1913	do.
48. PROP Chaim Leizman	1916	do.
49. ROSENBERG Israel David	1919	do.
50. FUCHSMAN Abram Josef		do.
51. LEVITIN Sholim	1922	Lithuania
52. RAJCZYK Samul David	1918	Poland

A LIST SENT FROM THE STATE DEPARTMENT TO THE FRIEDIKER REBBE OF THE BOCHURIM WHO WERE ISSUED U.S. VISAS. THE BOCHURIM WERE TOLD THAT THEY WOULD BE ABLE TO RECEIVE THE VISAS UPON THEIR ARRIVAL IN JAPAN.

instead ordering raw eggs and dunking them into boiling water until they were somewhat edible.

Eager to connect with local Chassidim, the *bochurim* made their way to the Marina Roshcha shul to daven and use the *mikvah*. They knew they were being watched, so they kept their heads down and davened quietly. But soon, they noticed a pattern—Chassidim were pacing past them, seemingly by chance, again and again. That was the signal. As one would pass, the *bochurim* would slip in a few words of encouragement from the Friediker Rebbe, blending them into their davening with a singsong tune.

The Chassidim looked at them with longing. For them, escaping the Soviet Union was a distant dream. The *bochurim* left with heavy hearts.

A HICCUP IN THE JOURNEY

When close to forty *bochurim* appeared at the door of the American embassy in Moscow, the ambassador was shocked. He couldn't possibly process so many visas during their short stay—he was accustomed to doing it one at a time, if at all. "Go to the embassy in Japan," he told them, "they will issue the visas there."

The train ride continued across the vast expanse of Russia, all the way to Vladivostok, where the entire group boarded a ship bound for Japan. But they weren't free just yet—Russian officials remained on board, keeping close watch until the ship left Soviet territorial waters.

Everyone held their breath. Finally, a small patrol boat approached, and the officers disembarked. Only when the Soviet officials were off the ship did the tension break. A collective sigh of relief swept through the group.

They had made it. They had escaped the Nazis. They had escaped the Soviets. Now, all that remained was reaching America and reuniting with the Rebbe.

They arrived at the American embassy in Tokyo, where the staff welcomed them and handed out forms to fill in—basic details like names, places of origin, and family whereabouts. The *bochurim* casually completed the paperwork, unaware that they were walking into a trap.

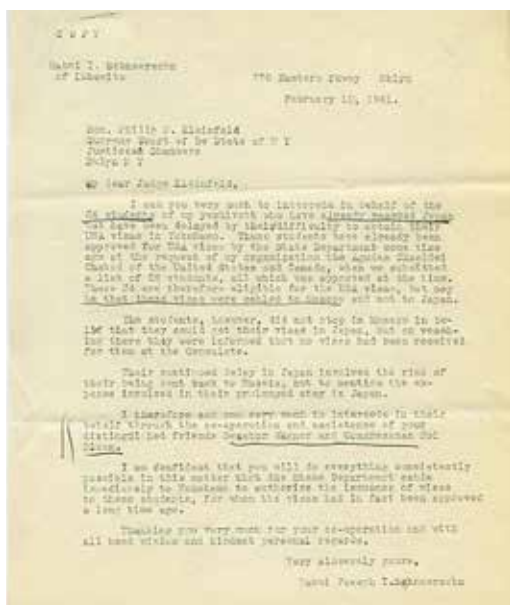
The officials collected the forms, reviewed them briefly, and then delivered the devastating news: "We're sorry, but your visas have been invalidated."

The U.S. State Department had recently ruled that no visas could be issued to anyone with family in Nazi-occupied territory, fearing they might be blackmailed into espionage. With just a few innocent strokes of the pen, the *bochurim* had unknowingly sealed their own fate. Their visas were revoked.

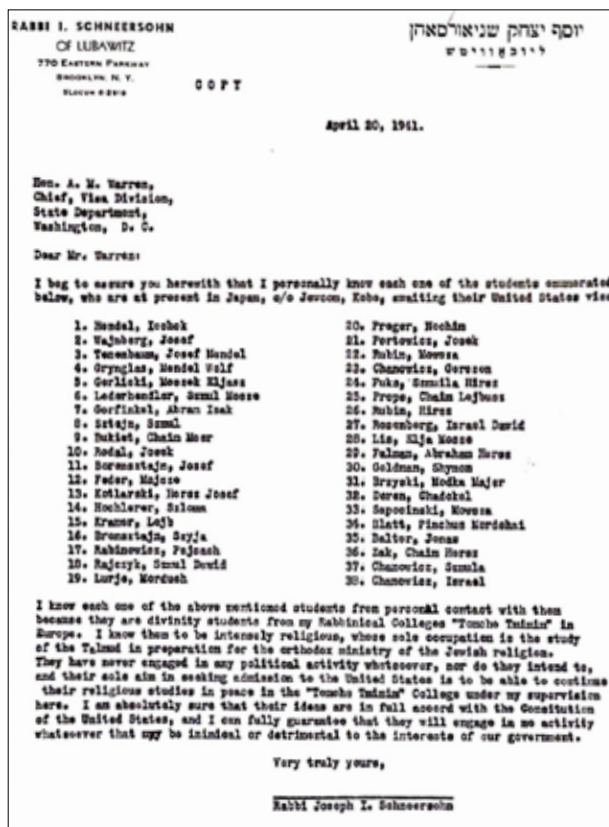
SETTLING IN JAPAN

With nowhere else to turn, the *bochurim* settled in Kobe, Japan, hoping for the best.

The city had a tiny Jewish community, just a few dozen families, but now thousands of refugees were arriving,



LETTERS FROM THE FRIEDIKER REBBE TO VARIOUS U.S. OFFICIALS, PLEADING WITH THEM TO INTERCEDE ON BEHALF OF THE BOCHURIM IN JAPAN. IN THE FIRST LETTER HE ASKS THAT THE VISAS BE RECEIVED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. THE SECOND LETTER WAS WRITTEN AFTER THE STATE DEPARTMENT RULED THAT NO VISAS COULD BE ISSUED TO ANYONE WITH FAMILY IN NAZI-OCCUPIED TERRITORY IN CASE OF ESPIONAGE. THE FRIEDIKER REBBE ASSURES THE STATE DEPARTMENT THAT THE SOLE INTEREST OF THE BOCHURIM WAS IN TORAH.



overwhelming its resources. Despite the challenges, the local Jews went out of their way to welcome and assist the newcomers. Support also came from the American Joint Distribution Committee, which had been assisting the refugees since their escape from Nazi-occupied Poland. Though their future remained uncertain, for now, they had a safe place to stay.

Japan was unlike anything the *bochurim* had ever experienced. The streets were spotless, food was abundant, and crime was virtually nonexistent. Storeowners left their cash registers open while chatting with customers, and everything operated with precise efficiency.

One Friday, the Amshinover Rebbe and a group of refugees were scheduled to take a train to their next destination. But as the train prepared to depart, the Amshinover refused to board—there was no way to guarantee they would arrive in time for Shabbos. And if he wasn't going, neither was anyone else.

The interpreters pleaded with him, assuring him that Japan wasn't Poland—here, trains actually ran on time, but the Amshinover remained put until he saw the train begin moving precisely on schedule. Then, finally convinced, he stepped aboard; the rest of the refugees scrambled in behind him.

Tomchei Temimim settled into a large house. There were cots for sleeping, and for the *zal*, they even managed to secure chairs and tables—despite the local custom of sitting on the floor. The Amshinover Rebbe lived in the attic with his family but would come downstairs to hear *kedusha* and *leining*. (Once, he came down and asked a *bochur* where the *minyan* was holding. The *bochur* replied, “The chazan just said *melech meimis*.” The Amshinover Rebbe immediately responded, “*umechaye!*”)

Food was a constant challenge. With no *shechita* in Kobe, no refrigeration, and no cook, the *bochurim* had to figure it all out on their own. Their diet consisted mainly of rice, rice bread, vegetables, and fish.

One night, a *bochur* estimated that one cup of raw rice per person would be the perfect portion for dinner. Let's just say, there was more than enough to go around. On another occasion, they left fish outside overnight for the Shabbos day meal, assuming the cool air would keep it fresh. What they didn't realize was that it had been rained on and had spoiled. That night, the entire yeshiva lay groaning in pain on their cots, clutching their stomachs and laughing—after surviving the Nazis and the Soviets, they had been felled by Japanese fish.

Everything around them was foreign, but one thing

remained constant: the *sidrei hayeshiva*. They continued learning *nigleh* and *Chassidus*. The older *bochurim*, like Reb Volf Greenglass, taught the younger ones, while the others learned on their own. Yud-Beis Tammuz was celebrated publicly, joined by many other refugee *bochurim*. The light of Tomchei Temimim remained strong, and the hope to be reunited with the Friediker Rebbe helped them carry on to the next day.

WHEN SUNDAY IS SHABBOS AND SHABBOS IS SUNDAY

One of the more intriguing halachic dilemmas in Japan was determining when to observe Shabbos. The Chassidim—including students of Tomchei Temimim, Chachmei Lublin, and others—followed the lead of the Amshinover Rebbe and kept Shabbos on the local Saturday. However, the Mirrer Yeshiva *bochurim* and many *misnagdim* observed it on Sunday. Many in both camps took the cautious approach of refraining from *melacha* on both days.

The issue stemmed from the challenge of determining the *kav hataarich*, the halachic dateline. Most *poskim* held that it resembled the international dateline, deep in the Pacific Ocean, far beyond Japan. However, based on several *Rishonim*, the Chazon Ish ruled that the halachic dateline was at the coast of Asia. Since Japan is an island beyond that point, he held that Shabbos should be observed on Sunday.

The question took on greater urgency as summer gave way to fall and Yom Kippur approached. Telegrams flew back and forth between Japan and leading *Rabbonim*, seeking clarity on what to do. But before a final resolution could be reached, new developments rendered the question irrelevant.

The refugees had managed to extend their Japanese transit visas multiple times, but the Japanese authorities were growing increasingly impatient. As allies of Nazi Germany, their hospitality toward Jewish refugees was politically complicated. Culturally, Japan was wary of outsiders settling in its midst.

But there was another, more pressing reason behind their decision—one that was still a secret to the world. Japan was preparing for its attack on Pearl Harbor. With war against the United States on the horizon, they wanted

all foreigners off the mainland.

After seven months in Kobe and nearly two years since the war began, it was time to move again. With no other options, they decided to go to Shanghai.

THE INTERNATIONAL SETTLEMENT

A heartwarming sight greeted the *bochurim* as their ship pulled into Shanghai's harbor. Waiting for them was a Yid with a long beard, flanked by his two young daughters. It was Reb Meir Ashkenazi, a *Tomim* from Lubavitch and *rav* of Shanghai's Ashkenazi community. His presence was a welcome taste of home.

Shanghai was a city of stark contrasts. On one street, immense wealth stood side by side with crushing poverty. Some boulevards, to one observer, resembled President Street in Crown Heights, while others were the very picture of squalor.

Mainland China was largely undeveloped, desperately poor, and embroiled in a war with Japan. But certain port cities—Shanghai among them—had been shaped by foreign colonial powers like England and France. Decades earlier, these nations had established the International Settlement, a unique district that was technically not part of China—or any country at all. The result? A rare loophole: no visa was required to enter.

During those perilous times, Shanghai was the only place in the world where Jews could enter freely. As a result, despite being thousands of miles from any established Jewish community, it had become a refuge for thousands of Jews fleeing war and persecution.

The *bochurim* were welcomed with open arms. Reb Meir Ashkenazi was overjoyed to have *chassidische bochurim* in his midst and *farbrenged* with them several times that month, speaking late into the night and sharing stories from Lubavitch. For the *bochurim*, it was the first time in over a year that they had a true *mashpia* with whom to *farbreng*.

Reb Meir did everything in his power to make them feel at home, and the local Jewish community rallied to help. Reb Meir was held in the highest regard by refugees and locals alike—including government officials—and his requests rarely went unanswered. Thanks to his efforts, the yeshiva was given a beautiful space in the French Quarter, settling in alongside the *bochurim* of Chachmei Lublin.



REB MEIR ASHKENAZI DURING HIS TIME AS RABBI OF SHANGHAI.

THE DECISION

After the Yomim Tovim, the *bochurim* gathered for a critical meeting. A very exciting development had occurred, which both exhilarated and worried them. The nine oldest *bochurim* had received visas to Canada. After a special farewell *farbrengen* with Reb Meir Ashkenazi, they had just left on a ship for Canada. They would go on to settle in Montreal and establish Tomchei Temimim there. But the younger *bochurim* were left behind. Until then, the *eltere bochurim* had served as *maggidei shiur* and *mashpiim*, but now the yeshiva was truly on its own.

They made a firm *hachlata*: the Rebbe's yeshiva would continue, stronger than ever. Full *sedorim* would be maintained. Learning would remain at the highest standard. Tomchei Temimim would not change, no matter what.

The results were remarkable. A small group of *bochurim*, far from family, without *Roshei Yeshiva* or *mashpiim*, learning, davening, and *farbrenging* just like in Lubavitch. Many other *bochurim* and refugees were drawn in, stopping by for a *shiur Tanya*, a *chassidisher* davening, or a *farbrengen*. The third year in exile began

on a high note.

On Yud-Tes Kislev, the *bochurim* held a grand farbrengen. Reb Meir Ashkenazi led the gathering, joined by the Amshinover Rebbe, the Mirrer Rosh Yeshiva Reb Chaim Shmuelevitz, and many local Jews and refugees. For those from Chabad families back in Russia, the night was filled with nostalgia, bringing back memories of the Yud-Tes Kislev farbrengens they had once attended in their hometowns.

The next morning, the mood shifted dramatically. The newspapers carried shocking headlines—Japan had attacked Pearl Harbor. The United States was now at war.

Overnight, all communication with America was severed. The Japanese, already in control of much of China, marched into the International Settlement and took over. Life became significantly harder—food supplies dwindled, restrictions tightened, and movement grew increasingly difficult.

But the *bochurim* pressed on. A letter had just reached them—a copy of one sent to the nine older *bochurim* who had arrived in Montreal. In it, the Friediker Rebbe emphasized the importance of Tomchei Temimim and urged them to use their new surroundings to strengthen Yiddishkeit.

The *bochurim* took it as a personal directive. They

redoubled their efforts in learning and began focusing more on the broader refugee community. Under the leadership of Reb Moshe Yitzchak Lis, a married *Tomim* who had escaped with them to Shanghai, they opened an afternoon Talmud Torah, as well as a *yeshiva ketana*. Hundreds of students enrolled.

The *bochurim* threw themselves into the effort. Together with the *bochurim* of Chachmei Lublin, each took a student under his wing, learning with him and strengthening his connection to Yiddishkeit.

When a large group of *talmidim* showed exceptional progress in their learning, an arrangement was made with the Mirrer Yeshiva to open special classes for them, with Reb Chaim Shmuelevitz personally taking them under his wing. In that distant corner of the world, the spirit of Yiddishkeit began to flourish.

That summer, the sweltering heat and humidity of summer made maintaining regular *sedorim* nearly impossible, but when Tishrei 5703 arrived, the yeshiva regrouped with renewed strength. Once again, they made a firm *hachlata* to carry on. That *zman*, they learned *Gittin* and *Hemshech Ranat*.

It was now their fourth year in exile. And, as winter drew to a close, a new surprise was around the corner.

THE MIRRER YESHIVA IN SHANGHAI.
REB CHAIM SHMUELEVITZ IS IN THE
FRONT ROW, SECOND FROM RIGHT.



STUDENTS AND FACULTY OF THE
'TALMUD TORAH' IN SHANGHAI, 5706.

THE GHETTO

On Tes Adar II, tragic news reached the *bochurim*. Shmuel Avraham Chanowitz, their fellow *talmid*, had passed away after several months in the hospital, suffering from typhus. Along with the difficult personal news came concerning news about the plight of the refugees.

Japan made a sudden and alarming decision: all Jews were to be confined to a ghetto. The Jewish refugees were stunned. Despite Japan's alliance with Nazi Germany, they had never experienced direct hostility from the Japanese authorities. But now, under increasing German pressure, Japan was being urged to take harsher measures against its Jewish population. Rumors swirled—talk of a ghetto, and even chilling whispers of a plan to load Jews onto ships and abandon them at sea.

Jewish leaders scrambled to negotiate with Japanese officials, holding urgent meetings to plead their case. In one such meeting with a high-ranking official, the Amshinover Rebbe was in attendance. His dignified presence commanded respect.

The Japanese official turned to him and asked, "Tell me, why do the Germans hate you so much?"

"Because we are Asians," the Amshinover Rebbe replied, shrewdly hinting to the Japanese—you shouldn't trust the Germans either.

The official was taken aback by the unexpected answer.

Thankfully, the worst fears never materialized. But the Japanese did go through with the ghetto; they forced the Jewish refugees into the poorest section of the city, although the established Russian and Sephardic Jewish communities were allowed to remain free. The yeshivos were crammed into tight quarters, their students forced to sleep in a government-issued building plagued by mosquitoes and unbearable summer heat.

After months of hardship, the *bochurim* were finally granted permission to rent private residences and reestablish the yeshiva. With that, the ghetto became less of an obstacle. Though they were required to wear Jewish identification pins and forbidden from leaving the ghetto in the evening, the authorities largely left them alone.

But life in the ghetto still had its absurdities. The Japanese officer in charge, a man named Goya, was short, ugly, and deeply resentful of the tall, fair-skinned Europeans under his command. Before granting an exit pass from the ghetto, he would often climb onto a chair and slap the applicant across the face.

Reb Shmuel Dovid Raichik, the *de facto menahel* of



A SIGN HUNG DURING THE WAR AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE GHETTO IN SHANGHAI.

the yeshiva, had to regularly endure this humiliation, as he frequently left the ghetto to meet with Reb Meir Ashkenazi regarding the yeshiva's needs. But he never made a fuss. It wasn't life-threatening, so he simply accepted it and moved on.

After the Yomim Tovim of 5704, the *bochurim* once again gathered with firm *hachlatos* for the future, and the winter was spent productively. They learned *Bava Metzia* and *Hemshech Samach Tesamach* 5657, hoping that the war would finally come to an end.

Month after month passed, and the war dragged on. Winter turned to summer. *Tof Shin Daled* became *Tof Shin Hei*. From *Bava Metzia*, they moved on to *Bava Basra*. But there was still no end in sight.

For over three years, the *bochurim* were completely cut off from the outside world. They had no contact with their families in Europe and no word from the Friediker Rebbe in New York. Whatever little money they received had to be carefully smuggled through neutral third-party countries. They waited, they learned, and they hoped.

The *bochurim* immersed themselves in their learning with remarkable *hasmada*. Among all the yeshivos in Shanghai, there was a shared feeling that they had been granted a unique protection from Hashem. They sensed a Divine hand guiding them; they were saved and brought to their corner of the world to keep Torah learning alive. That awareness fueled their devotion to learn even more.

In the summer of 5705, as the *bochurim* delved into the second half of *Bava Basra* and *Hemshech Ayin Beis*, the skies over Shanghai suddenly filled with planes. This time, they weren't German or Russian, but American. The U.S. military had begun bombing Japanese military installations in the city. The *bochurim*, who had miraculously escaped the Nazis and the Soviets, now had to find shelter from American air raids.

The Japanese allowed the Chinese locals to evacuate,



A LETTER FROM REB MEIR ASHKENAZI REQUESTING PERMISSION FOR REB SHMUEL DOVID RAICHIK TO EXIT THE GHETTO ON BEHALF OF THE YESHIVA.

but the Jews in the ghetto were locked in. Their buildings were too weak to withstand the bombings, and hastily built shelters became their only protection. Night after night, they would scatter at the sound of approaching planes, bracing for the next round of destruction.

After weeks of chaos, the *bochurim* held a meeting. They needed a solution. If the war continued, they had to find a safe, sturdy building where they could maintain their *sedorim*. The current situation was simply unsustainable.

It was Rosh Chodesh Elul 5705. That night, everything changed. The Japanese surrendered. The war was over.

THE FIRST SIGN OF LIFE

On Motzei Yom Kippur 5706, the *bochurim* danced with uncontainable joy. The day before, a telegram had arrived from New York—the first sign of life from the Frierdiker Rebbe in three years. In it, the Frierdiker Rebbe instructed them to apply for visas to come to America. After six years of wandering, it seemed like the end of their odyssey was finally in sight.

But they knew the process wouldn't be quick or simple. So, as they had done throughout the war, they pressed



THE BOCHURIM IN SHANGHAI AT THE WAR'S END.

forward, throwing themselves into learning. That winter *zman*, they chose to study *Kesubos* and *Hemshech Tik'u* 5694.

Then, the full weight of the news from Europe hit. Their worst fears were confirmed. Nearly all their families had been murdered. For most, there were no known survivors.

One *bochur*, Reb Gershon Chanowitz, wrote a poignant letter to his uncle, Reb Moshe Leib Rodshtein:

"I'm afraid to look out at the world. I'm afraid to open the window of my *teivah* and breathe the fresh air after the *mabul*... I'm still in shock.

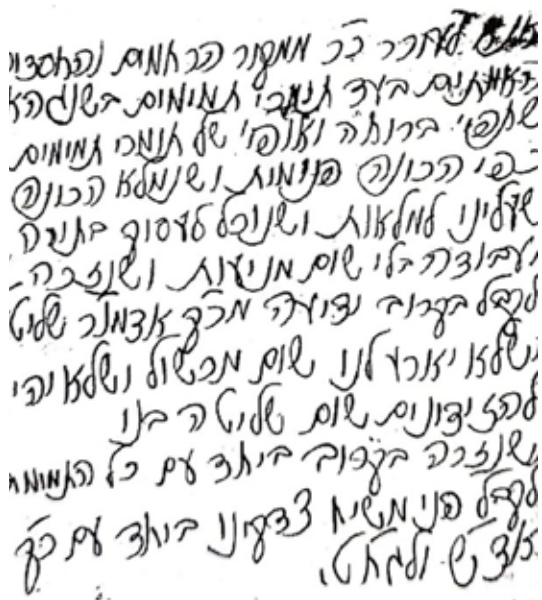
"You received the news little by little, and you had the presence of the Rebbe *shlita* to give you perspective. But we got it all in one shot.

"I remember a story I once heard from a *badchan* at a *Rebbishe chasuna*. He said that during the last war, he saw a Cossack fleeing on his horse at full speed when his enemy came from the other side and struck him down, cutting off his head. The Cossack was riding so fast that he didn't even realize what had happened—until he finally stopped to rest and reached into his pocket for a pinch of tobacco. When he couldn't find his nose, he suddenly understood. His head was gone. He was dead.

"For six years, we've been running. I'm afraid of what will happen when I finally stop to think..."⁴

As the visa process dragged on, the *bochurim* received a request from the Rebbe—who was serving as the director of Kehos—to print Kehos *seforim* in China, taking advantage of the inexpensive and efficient publishing methods available there (see *Pinpoints* in this issue).

Finally, in Tammuz, their long wait was over. Visas



A PAN SENT BY THE BOCHURIM TO THE FRIERDIKER REBBE DURING THE WAR YEARS. AS THERE WAS NO WAY TO SEND IT TO NEW YORK, THE BOCHURIM PLACED THE PAN BETWEEN THE PAGES OF A TANYA.

were procured, and the *bochurim* secured passage on a military ship—regular shipping lines had yet to resume—and without so much as a glance back at Shanghai, they boarded.

They were on their way to the Rebbe.

COMING HOME

“Words cannot express the immense joy in the court of the Lubavitcher Rebbe *shlita*,” reported the HaPardes journal, “with the arrival of Lubavitch yeshiva students from Shanghai in New York. A *Shehecheyanu* is certainly in order...

“These devoted *talmidei chachomim* established a true Chabad yeshiva in Shanghai, spreading light to the heartbroken Jewish refugees exiled there. The esteemed Reb Meir Ashkenazi, a treasure of Torah and Yirah, who leads the Shanghai community and is a Chabad Chossid, delivered *shiurim* and guided them in Torah and *Yiras Shamayim*.

“Before the war, they learned in Otwock. When the conflict erupted, they fled to Vilna, then to Japan, and eventually to Shanghai. Boruch Hashem, they were saved. Communities in California and Chicago are preparing a warm welcome, ready to embrace the light they bring with heartfelt blessings.”

This was one of the first groups of survivors to arrive



A NEWSPAPER IN S. FRANCISCO ANNOUNCES THE ARRIVAL OF THE GROUP FROM SHANGHAI.

in America after the war. The Frierdiker Rebbe requested that special receptions be arranged for them in Los Angeles, S. Francisco, and Chicago as they made their way to New York. The *bochurim* were divided into groups, speaking in each city about their experiences and serving as living models of what true *Temimim* looked like. They were treated like celebrities, with people flocking to them, even asking for their *brachos*.

Then, they finally arrived in New York. They would now finally be able to see the Friediker Rebbe.

Due to the Frierdiker Rebbe's frail health, their *yechidus* was repeatedly postponed. Finally, on Monday, 27 Elul 5706, they were ushered into the Frierdiker Rebbe's holy chamber.

After seven years on the run, they had finally come home.

This account is based on Toldos Chabad B'Polin, Lita V'Latvia by Rabbi Sholom Ber Levine, From Shedlitz to Safety by Rabbi Shimon Goldman, Shadar by Dovid Zaklikovsky, The Otvotzkers by Dovid Zaklikovsky, and the Chanowitz Family Archives. Special thanks to Rabbi Nuchum Zajac and Mrs. Simi Schtrocks.

1. Regarding the Frieddiker Rebbe's rescue, see "The Miraculous Rescue," *Derher Adar* II 5779.
2. For the full story, listen to Jewish History Soundbites, "The Great Escape to Shanghai."
3. Shadar pg. 60.
4. Chanowitz Family Archives.

לזכות החיילים בצבאות ה'
שמעון בן חי' מושקא
לרגל יום הולדתו ל"ג בעומר
שיינא בת חי' מושקא
לרגל יום הולדתה י"ב אייר
אליהו שמואל בן חי' מושקא
לרגל יום הולדתו ה' סיון

מנחם מענדל בן חי' מושקא
אסתר הגי' רחל בת חי' מושקא
שיחיו

יה"ר שיגדלו חי'לים בצבא כ"ק אדמו"ר
מתוך שמחה, בריאות והרחבה

Let's Talk About Eretz Yisroel

THROUGH THE LENS
OF THE REBBE'S TORAH

PART 8 Land is Vital

COMPILED BY:
RABBI MENDEL MISHOLOVIN

WRITTEN BY:
RABBI LEVI GREENBERG (TX)

When Dovid Hamelech was fleeing the wrath of Shaul Hamelech, he was told one Shabbos that the Pelishtim had attacked the border town of Ke'ilah to steal grain from their granaries. Dovid Hamelech asked Hashem through the Urim Vetumim whether he should go out to battle to save Ke'ilah, and was told he would be victorious. (Shmuel 1 23:1-5)


The Gemara in Eruvin (45a) teaches that although under regular circumstances, Shabbos is violated only to save life and not to protect financial assets, Ke'ilah was different since it was on the border the territory of Yehudah shared with the land of the Pelishtim. Had Dovid Hamelech not defended Ke'ilah from the Pelishtim who were only coming for grain, it would have posed a grave danger to the entire region in the future. The Pelishtim could have gained a foothold in the land and used it as a launching pad for future invasion. Dovid Hamelech did not inquire through the Urim Vetumim whether he was allowed to desecrate Shabbos to go to war in Ke'ilah, because this was a clear halacha he knew from the Beis Din of Shmuel Hanavi. He asked only whether or not he would be victorious.

Rav Yosef Bar Minyumei taught in the name of Rav Nachman that the city of Neherda'a in Bavel, located on the Euphrates River bordering the predominantly Jewish section of the Persian Empire, was considered a "border city" that would warrant the desecration of Shabbos against any invaders since many Jewish towns and villages lay beyond it.

All of the above is the background for the din in Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim, Siman 329:

נְכָרִים שֶׁצָרוּ עַל עִירוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל, אִם בָּאוּ עַל עֶסְקֵי מָמוֹן - אֵין מְחַלְלִין עֲלֵיהֶם אֶת הַשָּׁבָת. וְאִם בָּאוּ עַל עֶסְקֵי נַפְשׁוֹת, וְאֶפְלוּ בָּאוּ סֶתֶם וְיָשׁ לְחוּשׁ שְׂמָא בָּאוּ עַל עֶסְקֵי נַפְשׁוֹת, וְאֶפְלוּ עֲדִין לֹא בָּאוּ אֶלָּא מִמְשָׁמִשִּׁים לְבֹא - יוֹצְאִים עֲלֵיהֶם בְּכָלִי זֵין וּמְחַלְלִין עֲלֵיהֶם אֶת הַשָּׁבָת. וּבְעִיר הַסְמוּכָה לְסֹפֶר, אֶפְלוּ אֵינָן רוֹצִים לְבֹא אֶלָּא עַל עֶסְקֵי תְבוּ וְקֶשׁ - מְחַלְלִין עֲלֵיהֶם אֶת הַשָּׁבָת, שְׂמָא יִלְכְּדוּ הָעִיר וּמִשֶּׁם תִּהְיֶה הָאֶרֶץ נוֹחָה לְכַבֵּשׁ לַפְּנִיָּהִם:

When non-Jews take up arms against Jewish towns: If they come [to attack the towns] for financial gain, Shabbos may not be desecrated because of them. If they come to kill, and even if they come with no expressed intent, but there is concern that perhaps they come to kill, one should confront them while armed and desecrate the Shabbos because of them. [Indeed, these steps may be taken] not only when their arrival is imminent, but even if they are merely threatening to come.



In a town that is near the border, even if they only seek to come for matters concerning hay and straw, Shabbos may be desecrated because of them, lest they capture the town, and from there, the [entire] land will be easier for them to conquer.

This halacha provides the parameters for wartime Shabbos observance, defining what is considered *pikuach nefesh* and warrants doing acts ordinarily forbidden on Shabbos. Even if there is no immediate threat to life on this Shabbos, surrendering strategic territory to an enemy is considered *pikuach nefesh* because it may make it easier for enemies to attack in the future.

Territory holds incalculable strategic military value. Consider this recent painful illustration of this fact. When Iran launched hundreds of ballistic missiles against Israel on two separate occasions it did no substantial damage on the ground. However, several thousand terrorists in gliders, pickup trucks, and motorcycles were able to unleash the most horrifying attack against Jews since the Holocaust. Iran with all of its modern-day sophistication does not share a border with Israel, hence its nefarious attacks can be more easily managed. The terrorists in Gaza, on the other hand, are next door.

As illustrated in the background of this halacha, this is unrelated to the sanctity of Eretz Yisroel. *Wherever* Jews live, whether it is in Eretz Yisroel, in Nahardaa in Bavel, or anywhere else in the world, this halacha obligates us to defend every inch of land that could allow non-Jews, even if they are not enemies, to gain a foothold in Jewish territory and jeopardize our security. This law is based exclusively on concerns of *pikuach nefesh*.

The Whole Land is a Border

In the case of Eretz Yisroel, every single inch of land liberated during the miraculous Six-Day War is considered a “border town.” The borders of Eretz Yisroel before the Six-Day War were universally and objectively

considered “indefensible.” Before the miracles of the Six-Day War, every inch of the land was considered a border, since the “official borders” could not be defended according to rational military calculations. Once Hashem gifted us the divine gift of defensible borders, every inch of those liberated territories is integral to the defense of Israel’s millions of inhabitants. Giving up any of the territory is a grievous risk of *pikuach nefesh*.

When the proposals to trade “land for peace” became a matter of public debate, some argued that *pikuach nefesh* considerations demanded that Israel give up territory to secure a peace treaty, as this would ultimately save lives. However, many of the supporters of the “deal” insisted that giving up the liberated territories of Yerushalayim, including the Kosel Hamaaravi, was unacceptable. This approach was flawed for multiple reasons.

Firstly, halacha forbids giving up “border territory” for any reason. Even just the possibility of outsiders coming and plundering the granaries of a border town obligates us to wage war—an act which endangers Jewish life (!)—on Shabbos. Clearly halacha does not consider giving away such land to be a method of enhancing security.

On the other hand, if there were even the remotest possibility that trading “land for peace” would indeed secure a lasting peace deal with the neighboring Arab nations and therefore save many lives—there would be no difference between the dunes of the Sinai Desert, Tel Aviv or the Kosel Hamaaravi. The Arab nations demand the entire city of Yerushalayim, and if giving it to them would prevent bloodshed, there is no justification for keeping it. Considering certain territories off-limits to such negotiations is intellectually inconsistent.

Most importantly, the neighboring Arab nations’ “peace” offers were transparently false. They demanded the liberated territories be given to them, and threatened to wage war a fifth time to take them by force if their demands were not met! Considering the other



ISRAEL'S BORDERS BEFORE THE SIX-DAY WAR, KNOWN AS THE 1949 ARMISTICE LINE (OR THE GREEN LINE), WERE OBJECTIVELY INDEFENSIBLE. TO ISRAEL'S EAST, JORDAN CONTROLLED THE WEST BANK, AND AT THE NARROWEST POINT, BARELY NINE MILES SEPARATED THE JORDANIAN FORCES FROM THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA. THIS MEANT THAT IN A WAR, JORDAN COULD CUT ISRAEL IN HALF IN LESS THAN HALF AN HOUR. TO THE NORTH, THE SYRIANS REGULARLY BOMBED CIVILIAN TOWNS AND VILLAGES FROM THE GOLAN HEIGHTS, MAKING LIFE UNBEARABLE. IN THE SOUTH, THE VAST SINAI DESERT PROVIDED AMPLE OPPORTUNITY FOR EGYPT TO ATTACK ISRAEL AND DISRUPT ALL SHIPPING COMING TO AND FROM THE PORT OF EILAT.

side as a genuine peace partner is a blatant lie. Until the era of Moshiach, when we will merit to the realization of the prophecy “the wolf will lie with the lamb” and all the nations of the world will live in peace with the Jewish people, approaching the gravest security questions of millions in Eretz Yisroel with wishful thinking that our mortal enemies truly want peace is entirely unjustified.

There are others who argue that political and economic concerns are also valid *pikuach nefesh* considerations,

since international isolation or trade wars can have a devastating effect on the economy, cause starvation, etc. Consider this fact: giving away land definitely endangers the inhabitants of Eretz Yisroel and is an irreversible act. The diplomatic and economic climates, however, are unpredictable and can change drastically. Hence these considerations pale in comparison to the military concerns of giving liberated territories to the enemy.

In summation, the “land for peace” issue in Eretz Yisroel exceeds all the criteria listed in the halacha in Siman 329 to make it a question of *pikuach nefesh*. The halacha describes a scenario where (1) non-Jews plan on approaching the border town, but we are unsure whether they will come, (2) they are only demanding insignificant “hay and straw” and will probably leave once they receive it, and (3) even if they want to conquer the border town, there is no certainty they will succeed. In this scenario of multiple uncertainties, halacha obligates us to wage war to stop them from potentially placing the rest of the Yidden in the region in a state of *pikuach nefesh*.

Certainly, when (1) our enemies openly threaten to attack, as they have done multiple times in the past, and continue to with terrorist attacks, and (2) they are demanding territories that would make the rest of Eretz Yisroel indefensible to future attacks according to all objective considerations (not “hay and straw”), and (3) our enemies would certainly succeed in obtaining them since the territories would be handed over to them—halacha unequivocally forbids considering such a reckless plan, even discussing it, exclusively on the grounds of *pikuach nefesh*. **1**

NEXT MONTH:

What must be done in the liberated territories to enhance the security of Eretz Yisroel?

Primary Sources: *Sichos Kodesh* 5740 vol. 1, p. 252; *Ibid.* vol. 2, p. 351; *Ibid.* vol. 4, p. 1139; *Letters to Mr. Peter Kalms 3rd Light of Chanukah and 13 Shevat 5741*; *Daas Torah* chapter 6.

לעילוי נשמת הורינו
 ר' שמואל דוד בן ר'
 אברהם משה ע"ה
 ואשתו מרת הענטשא
 בת ר' אליעזר ע"ה
 ר' אברהם לייב בן ר' יוסף ע"ה
 ואשתו מרת ליבא חיה
 בת ר' מרדכי ע"ה
 תנ"צ'ה

נשי
 ובנות
 חב"ד

IYAR

N'SHEI
 U'BNOS
 CHABAD

COMPILED BY:
 RABBI LEVI GREENBERG (OH)

WRITTEN BY:
 MOTTI WILHELM

SEFIRAS HAOMER— THE WOMEN'S PART

The month of Iyar is most closely associated with the mitzvah of Sefiras HaOmer, which is observed daily throughout the entire month. Halachically, women are not obligated in this mitzvah, as it is a mitzvas asheh shehazman grama—a time-bound mitzvah. Nevertheless, the mitzvah holds significance for them as well. The Alter Rebbe records in his Shulchan Aruch that historically, some women accepted the mitzvah upon themselves as a full obligation; but even those who don't count Sefiras HaOmer themselves, can most definitely support the men in their families by reminding them to fulfill their obligation. More broadly, women can fully connect to the essence of the mitzvah—the anticipation and spiritual preparation for Matan Torah.

For the seven weeks leading up to *Shavuos*, the Yom Tov of *Kabbalas HaTorah*, we prepare through the mitzvah of *Sefiras HaOmer*, counting each day from one to forty-nine.

To understand how *Sefiras HaOmer* serves as a preparation for *Matan Torah*, we must first explore the deeper significance of the *sefirah*—the counting itself.

Typically, counting serves a practical purpose—we count money to know our balance, or ingredients to follow a recipe precisely. But counting days seems fundamentally different. We cannot alter the days themselves, nor does their enumeration change our actions within them. What can be gained by counting something beyond our control?

This very idea holds the key to our question. When we count, we do not count the actions performed during these days—days surely filled with Torah and mitzvos—for it is no novelty that Yidden are constantly involved in Torah study and mitzvah observance. Rather, we specifically count the seemingly mundane passage of time

LIFELONG INFLUENCE

Another significant aspect of the month of Iyar is Lag B'Omer, observed on the 18th of the month. This day holds a special connection to Jewish women as well.

One of the reasons we pause the mourning of the *Sefirah* days on Lag B'Omer is that it marks the cessation of the tragic deaths of Rebbi Akiva's students. It was then that he gathered new disciples, whom the Gemara describes in glowing terms.

From these descriptions, as well as how the Gemara and Kabbalah portray Rebbi Akiva himself, we gain a glimpse of his immense greatness. Yet, despite his towering stature, Rebbi Akiva famously declared, "*Sheli v'shelachem shelah hu*"—all that is mine and all that is yours (his students') belong to her—his wife, Rochel.

This episode teaches a powerful lesson for every Jewish woman. A mother's influence on her child is undeniable from a young age, but her impact does not end there. Even in relation to her brothers or her husband, a Jewish woman is granted immense abilities by Hashem to inspire and guide them toward goodness.

More than just a capability, this is her *shlichus*—her divine mission—to help draw out and reveal the potential within the men in her family, encouraging their growth in Torah and mitzvos. And if Hashem has entrusted her with this sacred task, there is no doubt that He has also given her the full strength and ability to fulfill it.

(Adapted from the sicha addressing the N'shei U'bnos Chabad convention on 23 Iyar 5736 - Sichos Kodesh 5736 vol. 2, pp. 209-10.)

itself. When Hashem chose the Yidden, He granted them the power to transform time itself into something holy. Each day, in and of itself, becomes a mitzvah—worthy of being counted.

This idea applies especially to Jewish women. Her unique role as the "foundation of the home" is not only expressed in the mitzvos she performs or helps her family fulfill, but most importantly, in transforming the entire home—even its most mundane aspects—into a place of holiness.

Where is this idea most strongly expressed? Specifically in the mitzvos uniquely associated with women.

Take lighting Shabbos candles, for example. The glow of the candles isn't confined to just one corner of the home—it spreads throughout, transforming the entire house into one illuminated with the light and sanctity of Shabbos or Yom Tov.

The same is true for the mitzvah of *kashrus*. The food she prepares nourishes her family physically, providing them with strength and vitality—but it does so in a way that is entirely holy, in accordance with the Torah's command. Beyond that, her food can also become an act of tzedakah, given to those in need for their Shabbos or Yom Tov meals. In doing so, she fulfills one of the highest forms of tzedakah—providing not just money, but ready sustenance—elevating the seemingly mundane act of cooking into a holy endeavor.


And it's not just the food that becomes holy—the kitchen

itself can become a vessel of *kedusha*. By placing a *tzedakah pushka* in the kitchen and giving tzedakah daily before cooking, the act of preparing food is infused with a higher purpose.

In today's world, another layer is added to this idea. Many women are not only the foundation of their homes but also share in providing for them financially. When she receives her paycheck and sets aside the first portion for tzedakah before using the rest for household expenses, she elevates the entire sum with *kedusha*. This adds yet another dimension to transforming the mundane into holiness, infusing even her earnings with a higher purpose.

This transformation—the elevation of the mundane to the holy, most strongly expressed by the Jewish woman—is the true message of *Matan Torah*, when Hashem chose the Yidden as His people. His choice was not limited to their spiritual pursuits or what is traditionally associated with holiness. Rather, it extended to—and is even more powerfully expressed in—their ability to elevate the mundane itself to *kedusha*. Since *Sefiras Haomer* is the preparation for *Matan Torah*, this idea lies at the heart of that journey, leading up to the revelation of this profound message. **T**

(Adapted from the sicha addressing the N'shei U'bnos Chabad convention on 28 Iyar 5751; Hisvaaduyos 5751 vol. 3, pp. 244-7.)



We Are All *One*. Really?

EXAMINING A
FASCINATING
LAG B'OMER
ADDRESS BY
THE REBBE

BY: RABBI MENDEL JACOBS

לעילוי נשמת
מרת חנה לאה בת הרה"ת ר'
שמעון ע"ה
ברוק
נלב"ע ז' טבת ה'תשע"א
תנ"צ'ה'
נדפס על ידי ולזכות
משפחתה שיחיו
משפחות ברוק, באנון, דייטש
ניו יארק. פלארידא.
מאנטאנא. מאנטרעאל.



Look outside your window. *What do you see?*

When we look at the world around us, we often see a collage of so many different things. Every area, every item, every plant, and every creature is so different from every other. When it comes to individual people, no person is the same as another. In fact, our differences are often a source of animosity or strife. The same is true with collective peoples—no two nations are the same; each has a distinct culture, customs, and traditions. This too, often leads to strife and hostilities among nations.

The truth is that this is the way Hashem intended the world to be.

By contemplating how many different creations Hashem has made, we appreciate His infinite greatness all the more, as the *possuk* says, “מִה רַבּוֹ מַעֲשֵׂיךָ” —ה' כָּלֶם בְּחֻמָּה עֲשִׂיתָ וְגו' Hashem, You created them all with wisdom.”¹

At the same time that we appreciate the variety and diversity of Hashem's world, seeing *only* the differences can lead to misconception and worse.

The Rebbe teaches us that it is our job to look beyond the surface and to recognize that at its core, everything and everyone in the world is truly part of one single existence, created by one Creator for one singular purpose: to reveal His glory in the world.

The *sicha* of the Lag B'Omer parade in 5750 is foundational, even revolutionary in this regard.

Below, we will explore some of the key ideas the Rebbe conveyed, as well as several extraordinary expressions and mentions that make this *sicha* especially interesting.²

Naturally, a major theme of Lag B'Omer is the lessons from the life and teachings of Rebbi Shimon Bar Yochai, whose *yom hahilula* we mark. As we shall see, a common denominator of those lessons is the importance of unity; first unity within the Jewish people themselves, the unity of all nations with one another, and ultimately a unity that can be revealed throughout the entirety of Hashem's creation.

The Golden Menorah

Before we discuss Lag B'Omer itself, there's a general lesson in the fact that this day is part of *Sefiras Ha'Omer*. *Sefira* is comprised of seven weeks, connected with the seven branches of the Menorah in the Beis Hamikdash. Immediately, a sense of Jewish unity is apparent:

The *navi* Zecharia describes a vision that he saw of a Menorah made of pure gold. Its seven branches, Chassidus teaches, represent seven types of Jews, each with a distinctive path to serving Hashem. Every Jew specializes in serving Hashem through one of the seven *middos* (emotional faculties).

We first find this phenomenon in our forefathers, Avraham, Yitzchok, and Yaakov. Each served Hashem with their entire being—their whole existence was a *merkava*, a vehicle, for carrying out Hashem's will. Yet their methods differed greatly from one another: Avraham's primary approach was *Chessed* and *ahava*, love for Hashem, while Yitzchok's was *Gevura* and *yira*, awe of Hashem. Yaakov represents *Tiferes*, beauty, combining and harmonizing the two approaches.

The same is true of the Jewish people as a whole: We all serve Hashem with our hearts, as the Torah says, "*B'chol livav'cha*—with all your heart." But within our hearts, we each have a unique approach as to how we best serve Hashem. Nevertheless, the seven branches all come together to form one single golden Menorah.

Difference need not lead to division. On the contrary, true unity comes from a synthesis of different—and even opposite—approaches.

To the World

As we stand here at a Lag B'Omer parade, we also take a lesson from Rebbi Shimon Bar Yochai's focus on the *possuk*, "*Hinei mah tov umah na'im, sheves achim gam yachad*—How good and how pleasant it is when brothers dwell together."

A parade is a symbol of unity. Firstly, it's about the Jewish children gathered here at this parade. Each and every one of us are truly brothers, and we must develop and feel love for one another.

Rebbi Shimon's teacher, from whom he acquired all of his knowledge as well as his character traits, was Rebbi Akiva. He taught us that the mitzvah of loving your fellow as yourself is a "great principle of the Torah." This love should extend to every Jew, and also to everything

Jewish—including the mitzvah of tzedakah.

The mitzvah of tzedakah includes non-Jews as well. It is our job to influence non-Jews to serve Hashem properly, and to teach them about tzedakah, to help another individual in need, to the point that the other person should, in turn, be able to give tzedakah himself!

The goal is for every nation to recognize that we all have One Creator. Not only did he create the world many years ago, He constantly *recreates* the world, as the Baal Shem Tov taught, every day, and every second.

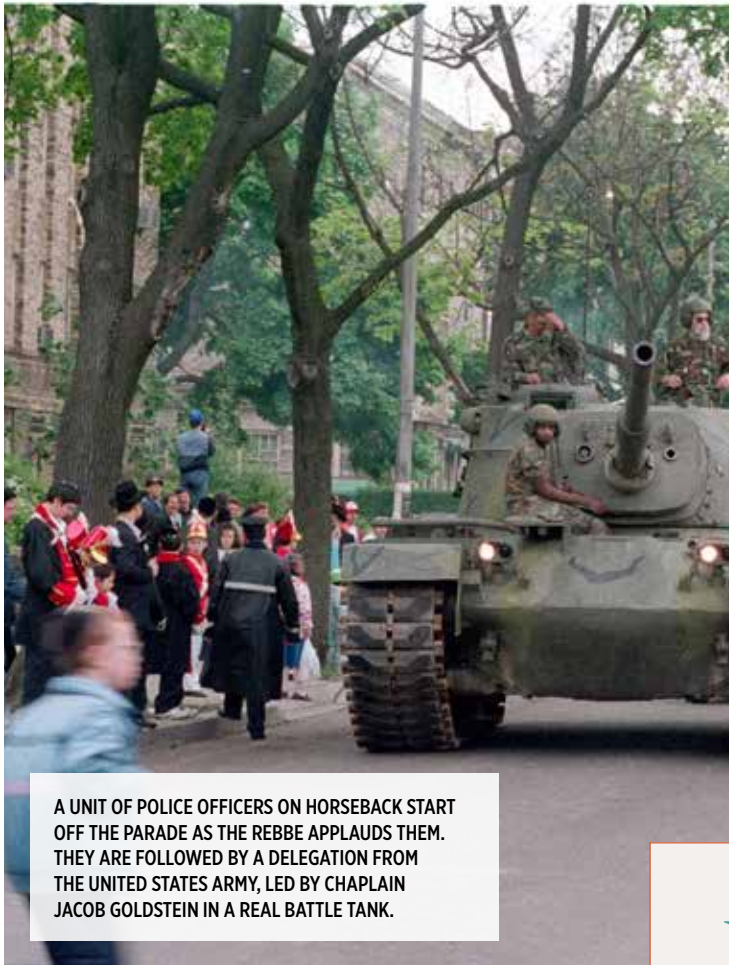
With this recognition, we should be able to spread goodness and kindness between nations. Instead of fearing one another, as has so often been the case throughout history, we should all get along and cooperate with one another. In fact, if we observe another nation acting badly, instead of fighting, we should use our influence to get them to change their ways. Free them from their bad traits and habits, and instead teach them to practice tzedakah as well.

Hashem has given us so many resources. He sustains the whole world with grace, with kindness, and with mercy (as we say in *Birkas Hamazon*). One of the most important ways that each person and nation can serve Hashem is by using those resources for tzedakah; helping other individuals and other nations in need.

Once the nations of the world are taken care of and people are getting along, a new era of progress will be ushered in: A healthy sense of competition. Each nation will strive to go higher, and the world at large will progress from one level to the next. This will serve as a preparation for the time when the whole world will be so filled with G-dliness that we will recognize Hashem in everything around us. Every element in this world will demonstrate that it was created by Hashem and must be used for good, proper, and holy purposes.

Within Nature

When all of this is accomplished, we can be sure that no part of the world will stand in our way. On the contrary; we will find that the world is helping us towards our goal of making it a better place. There are so many good things in the world, because ultimately everything was created by Hashem. All we have to do is increase positive influences and free the world of the negative forces. Then we will see the good in everything. The *navi* says that in future times, the wolf and the lamb will live together in harmony. We can make this come true in a very literal



A UNIT OF POLICE OFFICERS ON HORSEBACK START OFF THE PARADE AS THE REBBE APPLAUDS THEM. THEY ARE FOLLOWED BY A DELEGATION FROM THE UNITED STATES ARMY, LED BY CHAPLAIN JACOB GOLDSTEIN IN A REAL BATTLE TANK.



sense! By doing the right thing, we push the world in the right direction, until the prophecies of the *Geulah* will be fulfilled in our time.

This will usher in a time of peace, when Hashem's kingship will be felt all over the world. There will be no need for punishments to stir the people and remind them about Hashem; the world will be filled with good.

Instead of being afraid of earthquakes, for example, we can be calm because we know that everything that happens in this world is from Hashem. The only reason why we have earthquakes every once in a while is to remind those who may have forgotten that Hashem is in charge. The earthquake serves to wake them up from this mistake. But once everyone in the world already knows that, there will be only goodness and kindness revealed throughout the world and all negativity will be annihilated.

Peaceful Parade

The Rebbe made special mention of the military and police presence at this parade, highlighting their part in ensuring that the parade is peaceful and without disruption.

It should be noted that just a few weeks earlier, the Rebbe delivered a *sicha* in response to active threats by the PLO, when attacks were planned on Jewish interests around the world. (See the *Leben Mitten Rebbe'n* column in last month's magazine.)

It's possible that the Rebbe was addressing the increased measures of security needed to ensure that no threats were carried out on such a large and public Jewish gathering.

Family—and Family of Nations—Unity

When unity permeates the whole world, it manifests within the family unit as well. It will ensure that each and every person, Jewish or not, will have *nachas* from their children and grandchildren. People think that there must be a “gap” [the Rebbe used the English word] between children and their parents, and certainly their grandparents, who are even further removed. But the Torah says no. Hashem created the whole world, including each member of the family, and every one of them can get along with the others.

Today everyone recognizes that a philosophy of education through kindness is much more effective. We see it in the children: by showing them love instead of scaring children into obedience, we are much more successful at producing the results we want to see. This allows the children to grow up as healthy adults, with the peace of mind needed to serve Hashem properly and with joy.

This will also bring peace between nations. Recently, we have seen that even some of those countries that frequently waged wars are now changing regimes; ones with a philosophy and approach of peace and kindness.

The Meaning of the Parade

This gathering today is a parade. Children get together, not to stay in one place, but to parade and move from one place to another, symbolizing the ever-growing quest to strive toward greater heights.

It's true that marching in the parade are primarily Jewish children from Jewish schools. However, who leads the parade before everyone else? Members of the military, which includes both Jewish and non-Jewish soldiers. These representatives of the Federal, state, and local governments are here to ensure that the parade can be carried out in a peaceful manner, without worrying about any disruptions.

(In fact, we don't even have to worry about rain disrupting the good mood.)

The members of the military also play musical instruments, which further creates unity between people—as we see clearly, music has the power to bring people together in joy and song.



DEVASTATION FROM THE EARTHQUAKE IN MANJIL, IRAN, SEVERAL WEEKS AFTER THE REBBE'S ADDRESS.

This is the aim of our gathering: strengthening the pursuit of peace around the world. When Hashem sees our effort in increasing peace around the world, He considers it done and brings the ultimate peace with the coming of Moshiach, when His sovereignty will be recognized around the world.

We conclude every prayer with “*Sim Shalom*”—a prayer for peace and stability. The world will not “shake;” there will be peace between people, between nations, and even between animals. There will be “wholesomeness” throughout the world.

May Moshiach come very soon. [Here the Rebbe used the English expressions] soon, sooner, and even sooner, “**immediately.**”

We will all live to see that moment. And we will thank Hashem for keeping us alive, with souls in our bodies, saying, “*Shehechyanu... Lzman hazeh!*” A time to be seen and enjoyed by everyone, all people of the world, as the *novi* says of the Beis Hamikdash, “My house is a house of prayer for all the nations...”

Smart Children

Towards the end of his address, the Rebbe mentioned that he would like to keep it short.

“It's a *rachmanus* to keep you here,” the Rebbe said. “You didn't have school or yeshiva today, but we're keeping you here for so long.”

The Rebbe explained that since we're talking about smart children, “Chabad” children who use their *chochma*, *bina* and *daas*, even the few words will suffice for them to derive all the lessons they need to learn.



The children will take these lessons, especially the lessons from the 12 *Pessukim* and *Maamarei Chazal*, and progress from level to level. This is especially true this year—5750—which has been dubbed “Shnas Nissim”—a year of miracles, indicating a supernatural progression from level to level, until the ultimate miracle of the *Geulah*.

The Rebbe concluded with an announcement that in addition to the usual distribution of *tzedakah* to all participants, this year each child present (and in their honor, also the adults present) would receive a specially minted coin made of silver.

In the Beis Hamikdash and in its service, silver and other material goods were used to create a dwelling for Hashem. In a larger sense, the totality of our involvement in the material world should be dedicated to this purpose. This coin will serve as a memento of this occasion and inspire us to use money, and all other material objects likewise, for good purposes, and, in particular, for *tzedakah*.

Let the coin be a reminder to do everything you can to bring Moshiach sooner. May the *Geulah* come now, while we’re still giving out the coins, and perhaps even at the beginning of the distribution! And we will all go to the Beis Hamikdash, with the children at our lead, *teikef umiyad mammash!*

The Rebbe later edited this sicha in English for wide dissemination, available today at: chabad.org/2499844

1. Tehillim 104:24, Ibn Ezra.

2. The notes in this essay are based on the audio recording of the Rebbe’s talk.

When the World Shakes

One of the interesting things the Rebbe mentioned in this *sicha* is about the meaning of earthquakes.

The reason Hashem causes the earth to shake every so often, the Rebbe explained, is to remind people who may have forgotten that Hashem is in total control of the world.

It is fascinating that even with all the testing that modern science offers, one of the only natural disasters that is still impossible to predict is an earthquake. Even if scientists can predict when a quake might happen, it still remains impossible to determine whether the earthquake will be inconsequential or a major source of destruction.

The Rebbe sees this as a clear indication that no matter how much mastery humans wish to have over the world, ultimately everything is orchestrated by Hashem.

There’s an interesting note from the Rebbe written in response to someone who asked whether he should leave the city of Tzfas, since scientists predicted that there will soon be an earthquake there:

כולם אומרים שאי אפשר לדעת כ"א (שעות או)

רגעים לפני זה. מהו שם המדען האומר אחרת?

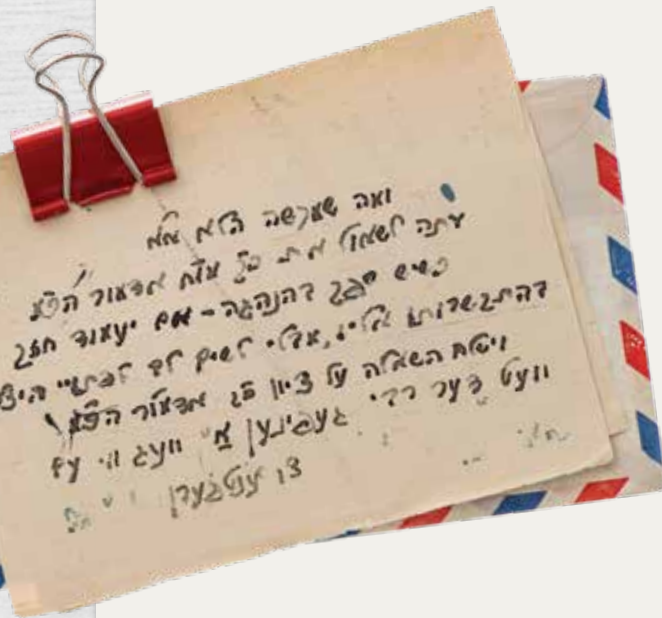
Everyone says that it’s impossible to know until (hours or) minutes before [an earthquake occurs]. What is the name of the scientist who says differently?



It should be noted that 1990 was considered a catastrophic year for earthquake casualties. Several weeks after the Rebbe spoke on Lag B’Omer, there was a major earthquake in the cities of Manjil and Rudbar in Iran, with more than 50,000 casualties. It was the most devastating earthquake since 1976.



Story



לזכות

השלוחה מרת פערל גאלדא שתחיל
לרגל יום הולדתה א' אייר,
הבחור הת' השליח גבריאל נח שיחיל
לרגל יום הולדתו ט' אייר
הבחור הת' השליח לוי שיחיל
לרגל יום הולדתו י"ב אייר,
הבחור הת' השליח מאיר שיחיל
לרגל יום הולדתו כ"ט אייר,

נדפס ע"י

הרה"ת ר' דוד ומשפחתו שיחיו טייכטל

דער רבי וועט געפינען א וועג...

WRITTEN BY: RABBI LEVI GREENBERG (TX)

The Conspiracy was Uncovered



AS TOLD BY
BENNY COHEN
(Brooklyn, NY)

Ten years ago, my marketing company landed a six-month project with a cell phone company, and we hired a team of 30 marketing professionals to help us fulfill the contract. After six months, the company decided not to renew the contract, so we notified the hired team that their services were no longer needed.

Since this is standard industry practice, we were shocked when the team sued us for tens of millions of

dollars, claiming we fired them due to discrimination. There was no truth to their claim, and we understood they were lying to force us to settle, which would win them a lot of money but put our company out of business.

One morning, I approached a successful businessman who had recently had a similar problem and asked for his advice. "Benny, you must settle with them," he said emphatically. "Once they start with you, you will never

hear the end of it. Make them an offer and be done with it!”

While I appreciated his honesty, his answer only made me more nervous and uncertain about the future.

After Shacharis, another wealthy businessman approached me and said, “Benny, I overheard you speaking about a lawsuit. Do you have time tomorrow? I’d like to take you somewhere.”

I readily agreed, and the next morning, at the appointed time, he picked me up in his car and drove with me to the Ohel. I had never been there before, and he explained what I needed to do. First, he told me to write the entire problem on a white paper. When I finished writing all the details, he explained that even though I am a Kohen, I was allowed to walk along the pathway to the Ohel since it was properly fenced to allow Kohanim to pass through.

We lit a candle in the Ohel antechamber and then entered and read some Tehillim. I read my note, ripped it up into many pieces, and threw it into the space with many torn papers, exactly as I had been told. When we were done, I returned to my office and did not think much of the unusual trip.

Two weeks later, one of the marketing professionals who was part of the team suing our company, walked into my office and asked to speak with me.

“Benny, I have been very uneasy and nervous for the last two weeks,” he said. “You were such a good boss, and I feel terrible about what we are doing to you. I can’t sleep for nights already!”

“What happened?” I asked.

“One of the women on our team convinced us to sue you. She explained how successful these lawsuits could be, since the defendants typically agree to settle for huge

amounts to save them from going to court. If we would just claim you fired us because of discrimination, we could walk away with huge payouts.”

While I was elated to hear his confession, I was unsure how it would play out against the claims of the other 29 plaintiffs.

“Benny, I recorded all these meetings, and I can give you all the recordings!” the man concluded.

To my shock, he pulled out his phone and started playing snippets of their meetings, where you can hear this woman encouraging her colleagues to lie to make money off me! “It works every time; they always settle,” she said in the recordings.

Immediately, I sent the recordings to our lawyer, and at the next court hearing, our lawyer requested a meeting in the judge’s chambers and played the recording for the judge. The judge was furious when he discovered such blatant corruption.

The case was immediately dropped, and our company survived its greatest crisis yet, with the help of Hashem—weeks after my first visit to the Ohel.

Since then, I go to the Rebbe at the Ohel all the time, whenever I have a problem or whenever I have good news to share. I know the Rebbe answered us then and continues to answer us now. **T**

YOUR STORY

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



The Honorary Member of Beis Harav

PART 2

The story of the devoted chossid, brilliant talmid chochom, beloved *rav*, and famous polemicist:

Harav Avraham Chaim Na'eh

By: Rabbi Mendy Greenberg (Twinsburg, OH)

לעילוי נשמת
הרה"ח הרה"ת רב פעלים וכו' ר' דוד ז"ל
בן הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' יעקב יוסף שו"ב ז"ל
ראסקין
יו"ר צאגו"ח העולמית ומנהל ישיבת תות"ל
המרכזית - 770 למעלה מיובל שנים

נלב"ע ז' אייר ה'תשע"א
תנ"צ'ה'
נדבת משפחתו שיחיו

Warsaw, Lubavitch, Kalisk, Eretz Yisroel

When he was twenty years old, Reb Chaim Na'eh left Yerushalayim for a Shlichus in Samarkand.

Seeing the sorry state of local halachic knowledge, he soon headed for Warsaw to publish Chanoch Lanaar—a guide for Hilchos Tefillin—in the local language, and shipped it back to Samarkand. Then, Reb Chaim had the opportunity of a lifetime.

Chassidim in Eretz Yisroel lived very far from Lubavitch, and contact with the Rebbe Rashab was sporadic. The young Chassidim heard from their elders about the previous Rebbeim, but never had the experience for themselves. Now, Reb Chaim headed for Lubavitch.

He arrived in time for Pesach 5672, and remained in the Rebbe Rashab's presence for over a half a year, through the following Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Despite being only 22 years old, Reb Itche Masmid held a *kabalas ponim* for him upon his arrival, and the two farbrenged with a large crowd late into the night.

In *yechidus*, the Rebbe Rashab asked Reb Chaim to take on the role of Maggid Shiur in Tomchei Temimim, but when his father heard of the suggestion, he wrote to the Rebbe

Rashab that he could not imagine not having his son at his side—and so the offer was shelved. He continued to Kalisk to meet his grandfather, Reb Moshe Tzvi Na'eh, who served as the *rav* of the town, and then returned to Eretz Yisroel where he married his wife, Devorah Fenigstein, in Shevat of 5674.

Elevating Egypt

29 Kislev 5675 is remembered as the infamous “Black Thursday.” World War I had erupted and the Ottoman Empire was now at war with Russia. On that day, all Russian citizens living in Eretz Yisroel were declared enemies.

The Jews were given a choice: accept Ottoman citizenship and enlist in the military (practically a death sentence), or be deported. Over ten thousand Jews were told to report to the port at Yaffo, where they would be loaded on a ship to Egypt.

When Reb Chaim and his pregnant wife arrived at the port, they were met with total bedlam. Thousands were trying to get onto the ship, and Ottoman soldiers were pushing and whipping those not moving fast enough. Being that Reb Chaim's wife was in her ninth month of pregnancy, he decided to go ahead and find a place on the boat for them both.

Suddenly, the soldiers decided that the ship had reached capacity. Ignoring the cries and screams of many separated families, they raised the gangplank and left the harbor. Reb



REB AVRAHAM CHAIM IN YERUSHALAYIM, AROUND THE TIME OF HIS WEDDING.

Chaim was on his way to Egypt and his wife was left behind.

She proceeded to her father's house in Yaffo, where, two weeks later, she gave birth to their oldest son, Boruch. She managed to rejoin her husband in Egypt three weeks later.

The family was settled into a refugee camp in a decrepit corner of Alexandria. Thousands of Jews were stuffed into a small neighborhood of warehouses that were now being converted into makeshift living spaces. Businessmen, merchants, long-term Torah students and Jews of all walks of life were now penniless refugees with nothing to do and no way of bettering their plight.

Reb Chaim didn't rest for a moment. With the small sum of money he had, he requisitioned an old theater and established a Yeshiva. He called it Yeshivas Eretz Yisroel, and immediately got to work inviting all the refugees, young and old. Over two hundred people spent the following four years ensconced in Torah learning, supported by Reb Chaim Na'eh.

To support the Yeshiva, Reb Chaim would make occasional trips to wealthy Egyptian Jews. He quickly became fluent in Arabic, and soon—as in Samarkand—became widely revered. After one specific event, he became known as a miracle worker:

A local merchant once asked Reb Chaim to daven for his wife, who would soon give birth. As he continued on his travels some time later, Reb Chaim recalled the request



SOME OF THE FIRST 'LUCHOS' CREATED BY REB AVRAHAM CHAIM BASED ON MINHAGEI CHABAD AND THE ALTER REBBE'S RULINGS.



LIBRARY OF AGUDAS CHASSIDEI CHABAD

and decided to dispatch a telegram wishing the merchant Mazal Tov.

The next time he appeared in that town, the merchant greeted him excitedly. His wife had been hospitalized, he said, and the doctors hadn't given much hope for the survival of the mother or the baby. As he sat in his store despondently reciting Tehillim, he received Reb Chaim's telegram wishing him Mazal Tov—and moments later, someone came running to inform him that his wife had given birth, and mother and baby were healthy.

News of the story spread far and wide, and the happy father worked hard to help Reb Chaim's fundraising efforts. He even published pictures of Reb Chaim which were distributed and hung in many homes.

During his years in Egypt, Reb Chaim noticed the severe lack of practical halachic guides in the local language. Again, he immediately set out to correct the situation, and authored

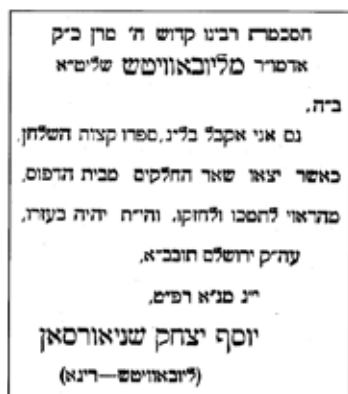


FIRST VOLUME OF 'KETZOS HASHULCHAN'
PUBLISHED IN 5686.

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A RECENT EDITION OF THE ENTIRE
SET OF KETZOS HASHULCHAN.



THE FRIEDDIKER REBBE'S LETTER OF APPROBATION
FOR THE THIRD VOLUME OF KETZOS HASHULCHAN.

Shnos Chaim, a year-round guide to halacha and minhag written entirely in Arabic. It became so popular that the Jewish community of Egypt republished it a second time, thirty years later.

Restoring the Crown

One day, back in Eretz Yisroel, Reb Chaim walked into the offices of Colel Chabad where he noticed a worker preparing a package with 'Rabbi Tucazinsky's Luach.'

"Where are you sending that?" Reb Chaim inquired. The worker replied that one Colel Chabad donor was a Gabbai and had asked for the *luach* to hang up in his shul.

Reb Chaim was upset. "The Alter Rebbe's rulings are being forgotten about in shuls everywhere, and you want to bring that situation into the Chabad shuls too?"

At the time, the 'Luach Eretz Yisroel' authored by Rabbi Yechiel Michel Tucazinsky was the only one of its kind, going through the *minhagim* of the year and guiding communities and individuals through the days and seasons on the Jewish calendar. It hung in many Chassidische shuls, despite the fact that it followed Nusach Ashkenaz and didn't take *minhag Chabad* into account. Chassidim used the *luach* while always remembering that it was not reliable—"the *luach* is a *misnaged*."¹

From a very young age, Reb Chaim had been deeply pained by the widespread ignorance of the Alter Rebbe's Torah. His greatest passion was the Alter Rebbe's rulings in the Shulchan Aruch and Siddur, and yet they were so often neglected and forgotten.

As always, when faced with a problem—he set out to fix it.

Reb Chaim set out to write his own *luach*, based on *Minhagei Chabad* and the Alter Rebbe's rulings. After researching in *seforim* and consulting with many Chabad Rabbanim, the first *luach* appeared in the mid 5680s.

It became popular very quickly. Finally, there was a resource for Chabad *minhagim*, clear, easy to use, and detailed down to every *piyut* and *haftorah*. At a time when there wasn't even a Lubavitcher Machzor, the *luach* was a very welcome development.

During those same years, Reb Chaim published the first volume of his magnum opus, *Ketzos Hashulchan* on the Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch.

His work was divided into two sections. The *Ketzos Hashulchan* was a shortened version of the Shulchan Aruch in the style of the *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch*, while *Badei Hashulchan* contained explanations, delving into the Alter Rebbe's rulings and discussing how they applied in various situations.

The *sefer* was received incredibly well. One of the greatest proponents of the work was Reb Dovid Tzvi (Radatz) Chein, the Chernigover Rav, who had just immigrated to Eretz Yisroel from Russia. Radatz had numerous traditions about *piskei halacha* he had received from the Rabbeim and from previous generations of Chabad Rabbanim,

and he shared many of those with the young Reb Chaim Na'eh throughout the short time he lived in Eretz Yisroel before his passing.

Reb Chaim continued to release volume after volume, and *Ketzos Hashulchan* became a major focus of his life.

The third volume of *Ketzos Hashulchan* was being prepared for print during the Frieddiker Rebbe's visit to Eretz Yisroel, and Reb Chaim merited to receive a short letter from him, despite the fact that the Rabbeim didn't write letters of approbation for *seforim*. When the seventh volume went to print after the Frieddiker Rebbe's *histalkus*, the Rebbe's name was featured prominently as one of the donors who had enabled the project.

There were also other works pertaining to the Alter Rebbe's Torah.

The *Piskei Hasiddur* presented the rulings in the Alter Rebbe's Siddur according to the order of the Shulchan Aruch, so that differing rulings could be referenced easily. Until then, one might have learned a halacha in the Shulchan Aruch without knowing that the Alter Rebbe rules otherwise in his siddur, which is what we generally follow (as *mishnah acharona*). When the Rebbe republished the Shulchan Aruch in 5720, Reb Chaim's *Piskei HaSiddur* were included in the new edition.

Another two volumes were released pertaining to errors that had crept into the Alter Rebbe's Torah. Throughout the decades delving into Shulchan Aruch and the Alter Rebbe's Siddur, Reb Chaim compiled a long list of mistakes that had crept into the editions of the previous century, and published them in two *kuntreisim* called "*Kuntres HaSiddur*" and "*Kuntres Hashulchan*."

The Rebbe Gave Me A Good Yom Tov

On Chai Elul 5710, Anash of Yerushalayim gathered for a momentous occasion. It was a few months after the *histalkus* of the Frieddiker Rebbe, and they were preparing to sign a *Ksav Hiskashrus* to the Rebbe.

Rabbi Shlomo Yosef Zevin wrote an emotional appeal, asking 'the Rebbe's son-in-law' to accept the *nesius*, highlighting how deserving he was and the need to continue the chain of leadership going back to the Alter Rebbe. In his draft, the Rebbe's name appeared with several formal titles.

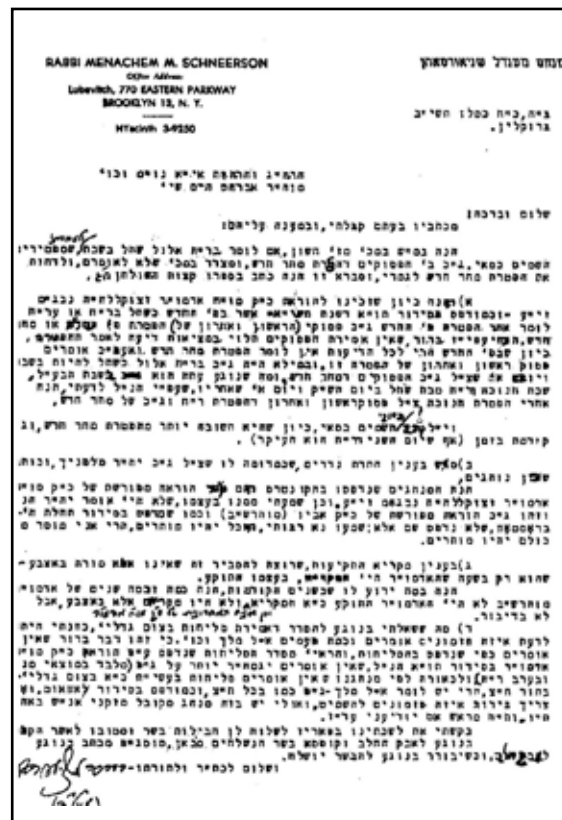
Reb Chaim Na'eh protested. He said the letter should start like any letter to a Rebbe: "*Kvod Kedushas Admur Shl-*

ita," making it clear that the *nesius* was already accepted, without needing to ask for approval. His suggestion was adopted, and everyone signed the final version.

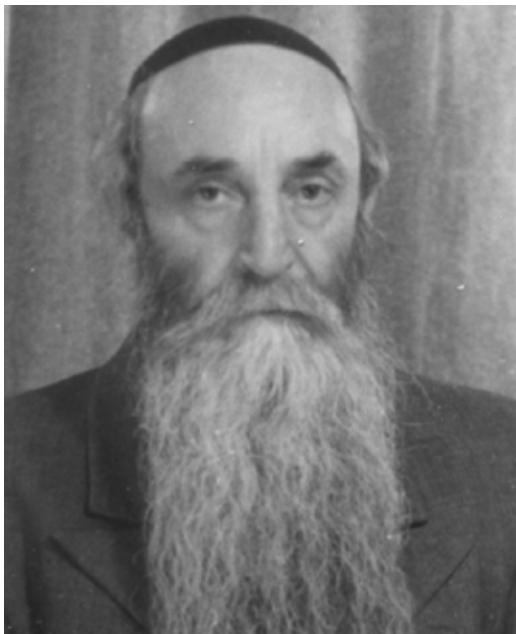
From the moment of Yud Shevat 5710, when the Frieddiker Rebbe was *nistalek*, Reb Chaim had been adamant that the Rebbe needed to accept the *nesius*. Most Chasidim in Yerushalayim, and had only heard of the Rebbe from afar, but Reb Chaim was convinced that the Rebbe was the right choice. For years, he had already been telling people that the Rebbe was "one of a kind," and throughout the year following Yud Shevat, he would make sure to mention it at every farbrengen.

Reb Chaim never saw the Rebbe in person, but a written correspondence had developed throughout the Rebbe's years in America.

Most of the letters pertained to the Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch and *Minhagei Chabad*. The Rebbe sent him comments and corrections for the Luach Colel Chabad, and asked for his edits on the Siddur and Machzor that were being published. Reb Chaim asked the Rebbe ques-



ONE OF THE REBBE'S LETTERS TO REB AVRAHAM CHAIM PERTAINING TO MINHAGEI CHABAD.



REB AVRAHAM CHAIM IN HIS LATER YEARS.

On Rosh Hashanah 5752, the Rebbe said the following at the farbrengen:

It's important to emphasize the need to properly prepare for the upcoming days—learning and becoming familiar with the halachos relevant to this time...

It's now easier than ever, as many halachos for these times are printed in the *luchos*. This is particularly helpful for those who, for whatever reason, don't have access to *seforim*, or who have them but lack the time or knowledge to look things up. By simply glancing at these calendars—like the “Luach Colel Chabad” (whether it's hanging on the wall or in a small booklet format), which presents numerous daily customs and relevant halachos—it becomes much easier to find and remember the necessary halachos.

tions regarding the *minhagim* in Hayom Yom, and asked the Rebbe to assist him in converting the measurements in his *seforim* from the metric system to the American system for the benefit of an American audience.

Shortly after assuming the *nesius*, the Rebbe wrote to Reb Chaim that Kehos was preparing a Selichos according to *Minhag Chabad*, and asked for his comments and corrections. Before Tishrei 5713, the Rebbe sent a draft with his edits for approval, and on Simchas Torah, Reb Chaim danced at *hakafos* holding the draft close to his heart. “The Rebbe wanted me to have a joyful Yom Tov,” he said, “so he sent me the draft.”

The Rebbe would send Reb Chaim money for the publication of his *seforim*, and even food packages for his special diet during the years of austerity in Eretz Yisroel. Throughout the years, the Rebbe regularly referred to his *seforim* in *sichos* and letters and called Reb Chaim “our *posek acharon*.” Many *minhagim* commonly observed today were published by the Rebbe based on the correspondence with Reb Chaim.

In fact, the one sefer that always remained on the Rebbe's desk, often noticed by visitors in *yechidus*, was the *Luach Colel Chabad*, authored by Reb Chaim Na'eh.



One Sunday morning in the summer of 5714, Reb Chaim suffered a massive heart attack. He passed away two days later, on 20 Tammuz, at the age of sixty-four. Thousands of people crowded the streets around his home, Lubavitchers, Bukharians, Yerushalmim, people of all stripes who all felt bereft by the loss.

“When I was first told about Reb Chaim's passing,” related his close colleague, Rabbi Zevin, “I couldn't believe it. I went to his house and saw him lying there, and I just couldn't understand how Reb Chaim wasn't rushing to the mikvah or rushing to daven. But at his funeral, when his students carried him and ran with his *aron* all the way to Har HaMenuchos, that's when I finally accepted it. This was Reb Chaim—always running for a mitzvah, even to his own burial.”

In a letter to Rabbi Zevin, the Rebbe wrote about his shock about Reb Chaim's untimely passing, and asked that he ensure that the writings—the next volume of *Ketzos Hashulchan*, and so on—be carefully preserved and published.

Many years later, a unique sefer called *Sefer Hatze'etza'im* was published at the Rebbe's request. It was an *ilan yuchsin*, a family tree, including the names of thousands of the Alter Rebbe's descendants.

One name stood out. One individual whose name and picture appeared prominently in the book's pages was not a grandchild of the Alter Rebbe at all!

He was included at the Rebbe's personal behest, as an “honorary grandson”—Harav Avraham Chaim Na'eh. ①

This article is based on Nodah Bashiurim, a comprehensive work chronicling the life of Reb Chaim Na'eh by Rabbi Shneur Zalman Berger.

1. As termed by Rabbi Shlomo Yosef Zevin.

לעילוי נשמת
הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' משה בהרה"ח דוד העניך ע"ה
זאקליקובסקי
נפטר בשם טוב ליל ש"ק פ' תזר"מ
בדר"ח אייר, גבורה שבתפארת, ה'תש"פ
תנ"צ'ב'ה

COMPILED BY: RABBI LEVI GREENBERG (OH)
WRITTEN BY: RABBI TZEMACH FELLER

P I N P O I N T S

STORIES OF THE RABBEIM'S
REACH AND IMPACT AROUND THE GLOBE

CHINA



For well over a century, the Rabbeim have cared for the Yidden in China — whether they lived there, traveled for business, or were transported there in wartime.

MATZAH FOR THE CZAR'S SOLDIERS

In the mid 5660s, hundreds of thousands of Russian soldiers — many of them Jewish conscripts — were transported east on the Trans-Siberian Railway. Their destination was Manchuria (which today is mostly part of China) and the front lines of the Russo-Japanese War on the Pacific coast, thousands of miles from home.

But as far as they were in body, they were never distant from the *nossi's* thoughts.

In 5664, as the crisis escalated and soldiers were sent east, the Rebbe Rashab initiated the first campaign to have the government distribute matzah to the soldiers. It was met with some success, but not at the necessary scales.

In 5665, as the war raged, the Rebbe Rashab launched a massive campaign to galvanize the Jewish world with the goal of obtaining matzah for the Jewish soldiers at the front, spending almost a month in S. Petersburg convincing the government to allow the project—which they ultimately did, reaching out to other Jewish leaders to lend

their influence to the campaign, and asking every Jew in the Russian Empire to contribute.

In a letter to Reb Yeshayahu Berlin on the sixth day of Chanukah, 5665, the very beginning of the campaign, the Rebbe Rashab wrote:

“We must concern ourselves with [the provision of] matzah for our brothers on the war front while there is still time. As there are now many of our brothers there—perhaps up to forty thousand—it is impossible to achieve this through the donations of individuals alone; rather we must gather funds from all the townlets, so that even small contributions will add up and amount to a fitting sum...”¹

In a highly impactful letter circulated throughout Russia, the Rebbe Rashab wrote:

“Brothers! We must feel the hearts of our brethren at the war front, who are placed in a difficult [situation] and great danger, *Rachmana l'tzlan*. They are forfeiting their lives and jeopardizing their lives to die on behalf of our king and the land of our birth. It is as though they have been separated from life (may Hashem in His great kindness guard them from all sorrow and hardship, and bring them peacefully to their homes), especially those of the reserves, who have left their homes, their children and their possessions, and only to Hashem do they lift their eyes. We know how precious and how beloved the mitzvah of eating matzah is to each one of our brethren, and conversely *chas v'shalom*, if one of our brothers is forced—even under the greatest duress—to eat chametz



JEWISH SOLDIERS WITH THEIR MATZOS ON PESACH 5665.

on Pesach, *Rachmana l'tzlan*, how much his heart will be pained within him, and it will touch him to the very depths of his soul. (There are indeed many of our soldierly brethren who will not eat chametz on Pesach so long as their soul is yet within [their body], but one cannot survive eight days without eating).

“... The fulfillment of the mitzvah of eating matzah on Pesach will strengthen the hearts of our brethren, and give them strength and fortitude to stand firm in war and to overcome the enemy with might ...”

“Certainly, each of us has relatives who are soldiers in the war zone. We are obligated to save them and give them the strength and ability—with Hashem’s help—to stand in battle, and bestow upon them this lofty and exalted mitzvah, which will guard them and strengthen them ...”²

On Yud-Aleph Nissan, the Rebbe Rashab received a telegram from Harbin notifying him that the freight cars had arrived with the matzah. On the following day he received a telegram from the committee in S. Petersburg, confirming that all the arrangements had been brought to timely fruition. On 13 Nissan, a telegram from Harbin notified the Rebbe Rashab that not all the wagons had arrived as planned. Consequently, there was a shortage of matzah, not at the front, but in Harbin itself. At the last minute, 10,000 rubles were wired to Harbin, so that additional matzos could be baked regardless of expense.

All in all, the mission was a success, and the Rebbe Rashab’s holy wish was fulfilled to his satisfaction.³

THE YIDDEN IN SHANGHAI

In the 5680-90s, Shanghai, China was a major international hub, including British, American, and French enclaves. An established Sephardic community consisted of many Jewish businessmen and others. Later, it became the home of many Yidden fleeing the Nazis, including many *bochurim* of Tomchei Temimim.⁴ The Frierdiker Rebbe showed special concern for the Yidden in Shanghai.

On 16 Cheshvan, 5689, the Rebbe and Rebbetzin’s *chasuna* date was set for 14 Kislev, and invitations to the *chasuna* were sent out. For the next month, the Frierdiker Rebbe was very busy with the wedding and wrote very few letters: for the remainder of that month, only two letters were written. In Kislev, only 28 letters. (In contrast, the first half of Cheshvan that year saw 113 letters, and 165 were sent in Teves). And yet, during this incredibly busy period, the Frierdiker Rebbe wrote seven letters⁵ to the Jewish communities in Shanghai and Harbin, China, and to Rabbi Meir Ashkenazi, who served as the *rav* of the *Ashkenazi kehilla* in Shanghai, and later the Rosh Yeshiva of Tomchei Temimim in the city.

KEHOS IN CHINA

In 5706, following the end of World War II, a sizable contingent of Lubavitchers were still in Shanghai. With the reopening of commercial shipping between Asia and the United States, it became financially viable to print





A COLLECTION OF SIFREI CHASSIDUS PRINTED BY THE TEMIMIM IN SHANGHAI BEFORE THE COLLABORATION WITH KEHOS.



seforim in Asia, where prices were much lower than in the United States. The Rebbe directed that Kehos print *seforim* in Shanghai.

The *Temimim*, in fact, had printed a number of essential *seforim* in Shanghai during the war years, but this was not done in coordination with Kehos. After the war, the Rebbe wrote to Reb Volf Greenglass expressing surprise that the *Temimim* hadn't sent any of these *seforim* to the Frieddiker Rebbe,⁶ and requesting the printing of a large number of *seforim*. "If they will agree to our proposal, we can hope for the revelation of much good light," the Rebbe wrote.⁷

The *Temimim* agreed to take on the work of printing *seforim* as an official branch of Kehos, printing *maamarim*, *kuntreisim*, and *seforim*. In a letter dated 27 Nissan, 5706, the Rebbe wrote to "the *Temimim*, Shanghai," describing the *seforim* that had been received and writing,

"You spoke well when you wrote that setting up a branch of Kehos in your place of residence is the will of my father-in-law, the Rebbe ..."

The Rebbe asked about inventory and requested additional printings, specifying:

"The paper and the binding must be from the best ..."

In another letter, the Rebbe reiterated the Frieddiker Rebbe's directive that nothing published by any of his *mosdos* should be printed—in any language—without prior authorization.⁹

On 5 Tammuz, 5706, the Rebbe wrote to Rabbi Ashkenazi, who had been fundraising for the printing of *seforim*,

"You've certainly received my telegram requesting [that you] try and find the means to publish etc., and I will reiterate my request for this, [that you should be from



those who] bring merit to many, a merit that never ceases for all time. I spoke to my father-in-law, the Rebbe, about this, and the matter is fitting in his eyes. May Hashem bring you success.”¹⁰

Towards the end of that year, the Frierdiker Rebbe’s ongoing efforts to secure the needed paperwork were successful, and the *Temimim* finally traveled to America. Rabbi Ashkenazi, *rav* of Shanghai, remained behind, and continued the work of printing *seforim*. The Rebbe wrote to Rabbi Ashkenazi and Reb Chaim Plotkin,

“...The greatness of the *zechus* involved needs no explanation... I only want to emphasize that your reward is great, to protect and to illuminate in the World to Come and in this world, in soul and in body.”¹¹

VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Mr. Freddy Ezekiel was born in Shanghai, China, where he lived until 5708, when he moved to Hong Kong, before eventually moving to the U.S. In 5722, while visiting a friend in Brooklyn, he received a message that the Rebbe wished to meet with him.

“During most of our conversation, I was answering his questions, relating the history of the various Jewish communities in the Far East—in India, Singapore, China, etc. He was very interested in the history of the Sephardim who came from Baghdad and established various communities in Asia. He also wished to know the history of the Ashkenazim who fled there from the Nazis.

“He wanted to know all the details. He asked me many questions about how the various communities got along, about their traditions, about the existing infrastructures—the shuls, the schools, the *mikvaos* etc.

“I recall telling him how Shanghai changed with the outbreak of the Pacific War in 1941. Up to then, Shanghai was in Japanese hands, and it was a thriving city, with a prosperous Jewish community which looked after the thousands of refugees who fled from Nazi-occupied Europe. But the Pacific War disturbed everything. When it ended, and the Chinese Communists came to Shanghai, all the Jews left so that, by the time I was speaking with the Rebbe, the Jewish community there was nearly extinct.

“And yet he still asked so many questions about Shanghai. He also asked about Tokyo and Kobe and Manila. I recall thinking: Why is he so interested in the fifty families living in Hong Kong? Why is he so interested in the few Jews left over in Japan? Why do the ones in the Philippines matter so much to him?

“Obviously, he had a far-reaching vision of how things

would change in the coming decades, and he was thinking ahead. I have to say that it never occurred to me to wonder what the future would hold for Yiddishkeit in the Far East. The thought didn’t cross my mind. Clearly, though, it had been on the Rebbe’s mind. He was already anticipating how the world would change, and he must have been thinking not just how to preserve some of the dwindling Jewish communities in Asia but how to develop them.”¹²

Indeed, in the coming decades, the Rebbe sent *shluchim* to Asia, fortifying the Jewish community across the continent.

CHABAD IN HONG KONG

In 5745, Rabbi Mordechai Avtzon began serving as a *shliach* in Hong Kong. The 100-year-old community had sent letters asking for a rabbi, and Rabbi Moshe Kotlarsky traveled to the city to assess the situation. As the community was reluctant to hire a full-time rabbi, it was agreed that two *bochurim* would come for a short while. Rabbi Avtzon was one of them, and the community asked him to stay on.

Rabbi Avtzon, still a *bochur*, was instructed by the Rebbe to follow the advice of the *rabbanim*, who told him to take the position. When a *shidduch* subsequently came up, the Rebbe instructed,

“It is not worthwhile to interrupt the *shlichus* at this point.”

“This was a turning point as it had not been clear to me whether my employment was deemed as a full-fledged *shlichus*,” Rabbi Avtzon later related. “Here, the Rebbe clearly referred to this position as a *shlichus*!”

A month later, the *shidduch* came up again, and this time the Rebbe responded in the affirmative, and Rabbi Avtzon got engaged to Goldie Shemtov, daughter of Rabbi



MR. FREDDY EZEKIEL

Avrohom and Bat Sheva Shemtov from Philadelphia. They traveled back to Hong Kong three weeks after their wedding.

After the community reneged on its offer to Rabbi Avtzon to continue on as rabbi the following year, Rabbi Kotlarsky was instructed to travel to Hong Kong and work things out with the community, but they did not budge. On a phone call with Rabbi Hodakov, the Rebbe came on the line and said:

“We will not allow those who are sent from here to be sent away.”

The Rebbe’s position was clear; Chabad would open independently. “At that point, I asked Rabbi Hodakov if this meant that we should be the *shluchim*, or perhaps in light of the embroiled community environment, a fresh couple should be selected for this position,” Rabbi Avtzon related. “Again, the Rebbe made it clear by saying that it is “*nogea b’nefesh*” (absolutely essential) that we be the *shluchim*!”

On Rosh Chodesh Elul, 5746, the Avtzons launched Chabad of Hong Kong, and soon afterwards they founded “L.I.F.E.”—Lubavitch in the Far East. As the only *shliach* in the area at the time, Rabbi Avtzon made many trips to Thailand, Japan, Singapore, Korea, Vietnam, and China, to work with individuals and communities in these places. Today, each of these countries has its own *shluchim*.


When the Avtzons were concerned about *chinuch* for their young children, and Mrs. Avtzon asked if they could relocate, the Rebbe replied,

“You have succeeded until now, and beyond expectations. I will mention at the *Tziyun* that going forward you should succeed even more than you did until now, and with joy and good hearts; may you share good news.”

The Avtzons opened a school which has become home to close to 400 children.¹³

SEFORIM IN CHINESE

Rabbi Fishel Katz, a traveling gemstone dealer, fulfilled many missions for the Rebbe during his travels, printing Tanyas in Africa and Asia (including several in China) and organizing Jewish events in far-flung communities. After a professor wrote to the Rebbe, describing how he’d met with descendants of Yidden in China who wanted to learn more about Yiddishkeit, the Rebbe instructed Rabbi Katz to come up with a list of *seforim* to be translated to Chinese.

This he did, and the Rebbe approved his choices, *The Divine Commandments* and *My Prayer*, both by Nissan Mindel. In 5749, *The Divine Commandments* was published in Chinese, but as of the early 5750s, only 86 pages of *My Prayer* had been translated and sent to the Rebbe. Decades later, in 5785, the complete book was translated and published by Kehos. Today it is also available online at Chabad.org.¹⁴ 



THE RECENTLY PUBLISHED ‘MY PRAYER’ IN CHINESE

1. Igros Kodesh of the Rebbe Rashab vol. 4, p. 75. Translation from chabad.org/2174130.
2. Ibid. vol. 1, p. 321. Translation (with slight variations) from chabad.org/2174130.
3. For a detailed account of this story, see the Frierdiker Rebbe’s *reshimos* published in Sefer Hama’amarim 5665 p. 354-60, and in Sefer Hasichos 5696 p. 130-3, as well as “Pesach with the Rabbeim” - Derher Nissan 5784. Additional sources consulted were Admorei Chabad V’yahadus Tzorfas, and an article by Eli Rubin on chabad.org cited above.
4. See “Escape to Shanghai” in this issue.
5. Most can be found in Igros Kodesh of the Frierdiker Rebbe, vols. 2 and 16.
6. Igros Kodesh vol. 2 p. 89.
7. Ibid. p. 100.
8. Ibid. p. 126.
9. Ibid. p. 134.
10. Ibid. p. 214.
11. Ibid. no. 276.
12. Published by JEM — Here’s My Story issue 393.
13. Excerpted from “Mitzvas Hador,” Derher Nissan 5779.
14. See chabad.org/6794782.

Letters

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

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

The Rebbe's Message to Jewish Women

I want to thank Derher for the new column “N’shei U’bnos Chabad” with a compilation of *sichos* and letters of the Rebbe regarding our special mission as Jewish women and N’shei U’bnos Chabad.

In these days when people look far and near for perspective and advice, I feel that we should first and foremost learn the guidance and meaningful lessons that the Rebbe taught us, which really empower Jewish women and address so many things that so many struggle with.

From the earliest years of the *nesius*, the Rebbe put such emphasis on the women by establishing the N’shei U’bnos Chabad organization, dedicating a full *sicha* at every major farbrengen to talk about the special mission of the Jewish women. Twice a year, the main shul at 770 would be cleared for a women-only audience, with the Rebbe giving us a special *sicha* before Rosh Hashanah and Shavuot.

(In addition, at the beginning of the summer, the Rebbe would give a special *sicha* in the main shul especially for the graduating class of Beis Rivkah, and for the *madrichos* who were going to be counselors in camp.)

While as Yidden we should try to learn all parts of Torah, as Chassidim all parts of Chassidus and the Rebbe’s Torah, every person has a special mission that is entrusted especially to them, and they must particularly concentrate on the Torah that will help them fulfill it.

In regards to the Rebbe’s Torah, this would mean that, when it comes to children, we should emphasize teaching the *sichos* the Rebbe said

specifically to children at Tzivos Hashem rallies; for women, this means the *sichos* and letters that the Rebbe addressed to women.

I also want to mention that recently, JEM has fully translated two of the Rebbe’s addresses to women, at the conventions of Iyar 5744 and 5745. They are very powerful and pertinent, and can be viewed at Jem.tv.

Yasher koach,

Chana Wolfe

BORO PARK

Shabbos: A Time for Family

The Tammuz 5783 Derher (Issue 124) published a very important article entitled “Shabbos: A Time for Family,” quoting a number of *sichos* about the importance of families having the Shabbos meal together.

At the farbrengen of Yud Shevat 5734, the Rebbe dedicated a long *sicha* to this topic, pointing out that in the Torah the Jewish people are counted “למשפחותיהם”—as family units.

The Rebbe bemoaned the fact that even if everyone in a family goes to shul, it’s possible that the father goes to one shul, the mother to another, the son and daughter to other shuls. They’re learning Torah and doing mitzvos, but not as a family. This cannot compare to the heights they could reach as a family unit.

This is true even when everyone in the family is doing the right thing. But when not everyone is on the same page in terms of *ruchnius*—when different generations have different perspectives—this is even more pressing.

In past generations, the Rebbe explained, it happened all too often that the parents were busy working for a living or involved in communal activism, not setting aside sufficient time to guide their children. The children were therefore left to fend for themselves, groping in the dark, and many were lost. We cannot allow that to happen. Instead, the family unit must be strengthened and must be a focus.

The Rebbe therefore proposed as an antidote to this problem, that all members of the family should endeavor to eat *Seudas Shabbos* together on Friday night. The meal being held in the spirit of Shabbos with holiness will bring a sense of unity and closeness to the family, and this will spill over and also affect the closeness in the family throughout the week, causing also that during the week the entire family will sit down to meals together.

I would like to share a story in which the Rebbe advised this personally to a family and the positive results that it yielded, as recounted by Rabbi Mendel Gluckovsky of Rechovot, in Kfar Chabad magazine issue 2056:

There was a family in Crown Heights whose oldest son had a disagreement with his parents, and left the house in anger. Unfortunately, the son had moved to Manhattan, and only once a month would he call home. Of course, the family members were broken and full of worry about his state. Some time later, the mother was able to go to the Rebbe for *yechidus*, and shared the difficult situation. Upon hearing the situation, the Rebbe instructed her to invest in making a nice and meaningful Shabbos meal. The mother didn't understand how this could help, being that her son was not living at home in any case, but she made sure to fulfill the Rebbe's instruction and invest in the Shabbos *seudos*.

The mother asked all the children what food they liked best. That Friday night when they came back from shul, the family found the table set in a special way, next to each child's place was their favorite food, and the atmosphere at the Shabbos table was a very beautiful one.

When a few weeks later, the oldest son called

home, his siblings told him about how the *Shabbos seuda* was being celebrated at home in a beautiful new way. The oldest son was moved to hear this and decided he wanted to come for a Shabbos to experience it himself. Experiencing one such Shabbos at home had a profound effect on the boy, who soon made up with his parents and came back to live at home.

In a similar instance, we also find the Rebbe suggesting to invite a child to participate in his parents' Pesach Seder, in order to bring the child closer to his family and Yiddishkeit.

In *Here's My Story* issue 588, Mr. Yoni Nierenberg shared that his brother, Binyamin, had forged his own path in life, different from the *frum derech* of his family, and his father had shared this with the Rebbe in *yechidus*, and asked for advice on how to maintain a close relationship with him.

The advice that the Rebbe gave was to invite him to join their family Pesach Seder, which they did; they saw clearly how the Rebbe's advice proved itself, and how their family bonded in the holy atmosphere of the Seder.

Mr. Neirenberg concludes the story saying:

"This experience resonated so strongly with my brother that ten or fifteen years later, it was one of the core elements that brought him to re-embrace Jewish observance. To this day, Passover continues to be very important to him and to our entire family."

Shlomo Horowitz

BROOKLYN, NY

