

A Chassidisher **Derher**

טער דערהער



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A new year is upon us, bringing along its new energy. It's time for renewed inspiration and commitment throughout the year ahead.

In this spirit, our current issue features several new columns and articles, in the hope to infuse fresh perspectives, and more importantly, more inspired action in the year 5786.

Chazal tell us that “*Gadol talmud shemeivi lidei maaseh*—study is great, for it leads one to action.”

On both of these fronts, we've included some great new content.

On the learning side: There is no substitute for learning Torah directly from the Rebbe himself, in his own holy words. A special new monthly column called “Step Inside” focuses on one or two *sichos* that are available on video and audio, offering background information and summaries of the core ideas shared by the Rebbe. Think of it as a “viewer's guide” assisting our readers to better understand and learn what the Rebbe says.

The farbrengen selected for this month is **Vov Tishrei 5742**, with an exposition on the meaning of *teshuva* beautifully articulated by the Rebbe. We are certain that this “farbrengen-companion” will come to good use, allowing you to experience the *Aseres Yemei Teshuva* with meaning and joy.

On the action side: We've brought it back to basics. Every Lubavitcher knows how important the Ten

Mivtzoim are—the cornerstone of Lubavitch activity as chosen by the Rebbe himself.

Each month, we will explore another one of the Ten Mivtzoim with a hyper-focus on practical implementation. It is our hope that these explorations of the *mivtzoim* will encourage increased action by all.

A spiritually inspired beginning of the year will certainly ensure that the rest of the year follows suit. As the Rebbe concludes at the Vov Tishrei farbrengen featured in this issue:

“A blessed Rosh Hashanah—the ‘head’ of the year—extends Hashem's blessings throughout the entire year. Much as the ‘head’ of the person spreads its energy and life throughout each limb of the body. With that, the entire year will be a good and healthy year in the spiritual sense, which will automatically manifest in a material sense as well.

“This will lead the entire world towards its most wholesome state, when ‘the world will be perfected under the sovereignty of Hashem’ with the coming of Moshiach.

“The way to accomplish this is by each and every individual fulfilling their personal *shlichus*, the mission given to them by Hashem, with joy and gladness of the heart.”

בברכת כתיבה וחתימה טובה לשנה טובה ומתוקה,

The Editors
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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 Chasadin...”

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

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ה תשרי

Dedication of the First Beis Hamikdash

THROUGHOUT THE YEAR, THE REBBE OFTEN DISCUSSED
DATES WITH SIGNIFICANT OCCURRENCES IN JEWISH
HISTORY, DRAWING LESSONS IN AVODAS HASHEM FROM
THESE STORIES. IN THIS COLUMN, WE WILL HIGHLIGHT ONE
SUCH DATE EACH MONTH, BRINGING EXCERPTS FROM THE
REBBE'S SICHOS ON THIS TOPIC

COMPILED BY: RABBI MENDEL VOGEL

The first Beis Hamikdash was completed on 7 Tishrei 2936 (ב'תתקל"ו). The next day, 8 Tishrei, the Yidden began a week of celebration, which continued for another week with the Yom Tov of Sukkos. Because of the celebration, no one fasted on Yom Kippur that year, the third day of the celebration. The Yidden were concerned that they would be punished for this, but a bas kol announced that on the contrary, all of the Yidden present would merit olam haba.¹

It is common when making a *chanukas habayis* (house-warming) to conduct oneself in a more expansive and generous spirit than usual. Indeed, when relating the events surrounding the dedication of the Mishkan, the Torah describes the large number of *korbanos* which were offered at the dedication. How much more so when discussing the Beis Hamikdash (especially the *first* Beis Hamikdash, which was spiritually superior to the second), a *permanent* home for Hashem; its dedication was on an even greater scale and

was accompanied by tremendous celebration and divine revelations. Being that 8 Tishrei was the opening day for the subsequent two-week-long celebration, the immense level of joy and divine revelation was at its peak.

The Arizal interprets the *possuk* "והימים האלו נזכרים ונעשים" ("These days are remembered and observed") to mean that every year, when a special date arrives, one must *remember* and *act* upon the events of that day. And when there is the proper "*nizkarim*," there will also be the "*v'naasim*"; the same spiritual energy that was first revealed on that date is revealed again. Accordingly, every year on 8 Tishrei, the same revelations that occurred at the first dedication recur, giving us the strength to fulfill the *avoda* of this day. To take this a step further, the Alter Rebbe writes in Iggeres Hakodesh that every year on Rosh Hashanah, a brand-new divine energy is drawn down into the world, an energy that was never revealed previously. Applying the same principle here, each year on



8 Tishrei, we are granted an even *higher* revelation of divine energy than what was revealed the first time!

Therefore, though this is an event which occurred far back in history (“far back” not just in *quantity* of years, but also in quality), we must derive a lesson from it for our personal lives:

Every Yid has a mandate to build a personal Beis Hamikdash in his private life and home, as the *possuk* says, “*V’shachanti b’socham*—I (Hashem) will dwell within them”—within every single Yid.

Just as there was a dedication for the Beis Hamikdash, making it a fixed dwelling place for Hashem, so too every Yid must celebrate the dedication of his personal Beis Hamikdash, bringing Hashem into his life in a permanent fashion.

But a Yid does not suffice with making his personal life into a dwelling place for Hashem. Just as the physical Beis Hamikdash was fashioned from earthly materials, thereby transforming the physical world into a divine entity, every Yid is tasked with the mission to be a beacon of light and transform the world into a divine garden.

The Beis Hamikdash differed from the Mishkan in this aspect: The Mishkan was not allowed to have any windows. So, although it contained the Menorah, which gave light, the light was concealed by the beams and curtains and not visible to the outside. The Beis Hamikdash, on the other hand, did have windows—and not just ordinary ones. The windows of the Beis Hamikdash were specially designed to radiate its light *outward*, opposite of a typical window’s function, which is to let light *in*.

The concept of transforming the physical world is powerfully illustrated by the dedication of the Beis Hamikdash. As mentioned, the joy and celebration accompanying the dedication were so immense that no one fasted on Yom Kippur that year and a *bas kol* announced that Hashem was pleased with their actions. Indeed, their eating and drinking had accomplished even more than fasting would have!

This tells us just how spiritually powerful the dedication of the Beis Hamikdash was, that it was able to infuse physical acts like eating and drinking with such holiness that they led to divine revelations surpassing even those achieved through the five forms of affliction (including fasting) of Yom Kippur. In other words, *Elokus* had so deeply permeated *gashmius* that eating and drinking could accomplish more than what is achieved through fasting!

Takeaway:

The Baal Shem Tov teaches that everything a Yid sees or hears must serve as a lesson in *avodas Hashem*. Every single experience in the life of a Yid, even the most mundane, is an opportunity to infuse the world with *Elokus*. The more mundane the experience, the greater its potential.

(Adapted from *Sichos Kodesh* 5733 vol. 1, p. 34)

1. Moed Katan 9a.



Compiled By: Rabbi Levi Greenberg (OH)

Written By: Rabbi Mendel Jacobs

Special thanks to Rabbi Leima Wilhelm for his
assistance in the preparation of this article.

Whose Shortcomings?

At the farbrengen of Vov Tishrei 5742 (see “Step Inside” column in this issue), the Rebbe mentioned a famous teaching of the Rabbeim:

“אזוי ווי מען דארף וויסן די חסרונות, אזוי דארף מען וויסן די אייגענע מעלות...”

“Just as one must know [one’s] shortcomings, so too must one know one’s own good qualities.”

The Rebbe pointed out that in the original Yiddish quote, the term “*chesronos*” (shortcomings) stands alone, whereas the “*maalos*” (good qualities) are stated as attached to the person (“one’s own good qualities...”). The reason is that the essence of a Jew has only good qualities; the shortcomings are merely external factors that it picks up from the outside world.¹

The next day, Rabbi Sholom Ber Levine wrote a note to the Rebbe attaching a facsimile of a handwritten letter from the Rebbe Rashab² where he uses the term “*chesronei atzmo*” (one’s own shortcomings). The Rebbe replied³:

כבר קדמוהו כו' [Others] have already [asked this question] etc.

אבל הודגש בהמ"מ להמכ'
שהכוונה לה(ה)שינוי -
(ב)הלקו"ד ח"ד

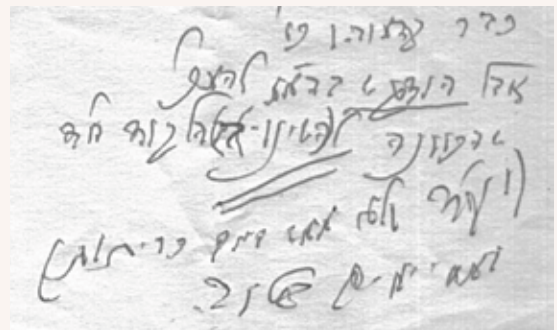
However, it was **emphasized** in the [sources] referenced [in] the letter [i.e. the *michtav kloli*⁴] that the intention was to [quote the Frieddiker Rebbe’s] (**modification** [of this quote, as published] in) Likkutei Dibburim vol. 4.⁵

(וע"ד ולא ממש סיום
כריתות)

(This is similar to, though not exactly like, the ending of Maseches Krisos.)⁶

ומסיימים בטוב.

We conclude on a positive note.⁷



1. Hisvaaduyos 5742 vol. 1, pp. 53–4.

2. Published in Igros Kodesh Admur HaRashab vol. 2, p. 836.

3. Published in Avodas Hakodesh B'Sifriyas Lubavitch, item #119.

4. Dated Chai Elul 5741; Likkutei Sichos vol. 24, p. 601.

5. P. 1125 in the new edition.

6. The final Mishna in Krisos says: The Torah almost always states “lambs” before “goats.” One might have thought that it is due to the fact that sheep are better than goats. Therefore, the Torah states [in one place]: “And he shall bring for his offering a goat” (Vayikra 4:28), and

afterwards, “And if he brings a lamb...” which teaches that both of them are equal. From this Mishna we see that although the Torah reverses the order only one time, we still deduce a general rule from this single statement. Similarly, the Frieddiker Rebbe may have stated this phrase only one time with these exact words, however it is still enough to teach us this important lesson.

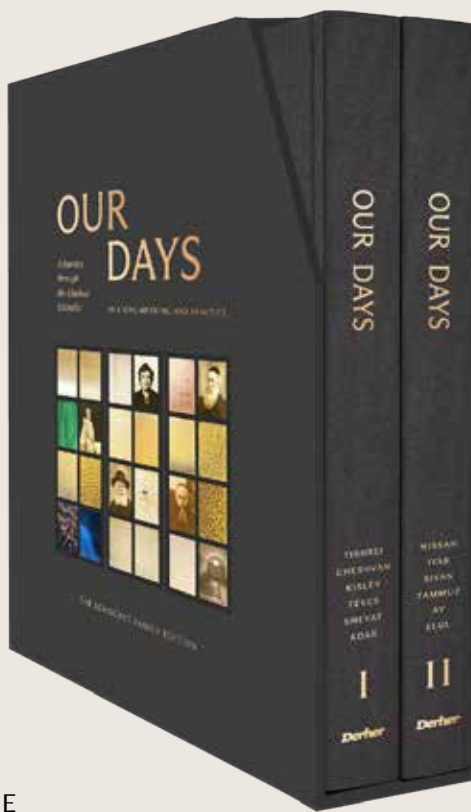
7. The Rebbe added this line presumably so that, rather than the last word of the note reading “Krisos,” referring to something negative (sins that are punished by Koreis), the note concludes with the word “good.”

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A Year of Wonders

The year 5751 is undoubtedly remembered as one of the most unique in the Rebbe's presence. Before the year began, the Rebbe announced that it would be a year of wonders, based on the words of the *possuk* "אראנו נפלאות"—I will show you wonders." The year 5751 is an acronym of "ה' תהא שנת אראנו" ה' תהא שנת אראנו. Following the "year of miracles" that saw the downfall of the oppressive Soviet Union and much more—the year of 5751 was indeed a year of miraculous occurrences, as we shall explore.

We'll begin our story with a wondrous month of Tishrei, 5751...

COMPILED BY: RABBI YANKY BELL

WRITTEN BY: RABBI MENDEL JACOBS

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Rosh Hashanah Eve

The Rebbe entered the shul on the first night of Rosh Hashanah with his Siddur and a Tehillim in hand. The atmosphere was solemn as the Rebbe sat down and recited many chapters of Tehillim for a while. After some time, the Rebbe stood up and motioned for the crowd to begin singing *Avinu Malkeinu*, as the Rebbe tapped along on his *shtender*.

After Maariv, the Rebbe turned around to the crowd and began wishing everyone “*Lshana tova tikasev v’sechasem*,” repeating the phrase many times as he walked out. The Rebbe also gave a broad smile to Dr. Larry Resnick, who was standing nearby.

Tekias Shofar

A high point of the entire year with the Rebbe is, of course, the moment that the Rebbe blows the shofar, ushering in a new year of Hashem’s kingship over the world.

The Rebbe entered the shul for Shacharis on both days of Rosh Hashanah holding three *shofaros* wrapped in a handkerchief. Members of *mazkirus* carried bags filled with *panim*, which the Rebbe would keep alongside him as he blew the shofar, as well as various *siddurim* and *machzorim* (including the *Siddur Im Dach* from the Mittlerer Rebbe, *Siddur HaArizal*, the siddur of Reb Shabsi Rashkover, and a large-format *machzor* and Tehillim).

When the Rebbe was called up to the Torah for Maftir,

he carried his siddur and the *shofaros*, followed by the *mazkirim* who carried the bags of *panim* and other *seforim*. The pushing was quite intense, understandably, as the crowd surged forward to see and hear the Rebbe during these lofty moments.

After reciting the Haftorah, the Rebbe began preparing for shofar blowing. The bags of *panim* were placed on the *bima* near the Rebbe, and the Rebbe covered them with his *tallis* for a few moments. Someone standing near the Rebbe later reported that he heard the Rebbe singing the *niggun Shalosh Tenuos* in an undertone.

The Rebbe lifted his head from under the *tallis* and began saying, in a loud voice and in the traditional tune, “*Lamenatzeiach...*” followed by the *pessukim* of “*Min Hameitzar*,” and so on.

Then the Rebbe recited the *brachos* and blew the first 30 sounds of the shofar. Reb Mendel Tenenbaum acted as “*makri*,” standing at the Rebbe’s side and pointing to the names of the sounds in the *machzor*.

When the Rebbe concluded blowing shofar he went back to his davening platform, and after placing the *shofaros* in the cabinet of his *shtender*, turned around to face the crowd. According to Kabbalah, it’s important to look at the face of the one who sounded the shofar, and the Rebbe allowed everyone in shul the opportunity to do so by scanning the whole crowd from side to side.

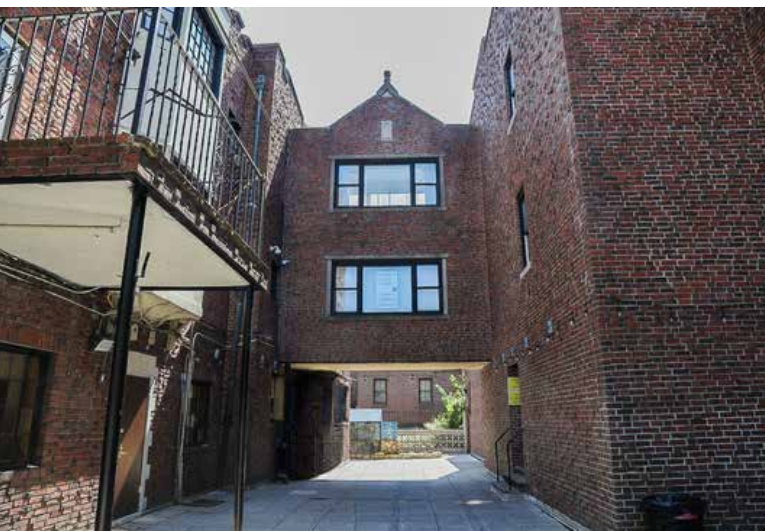
Toward the end of Mussaf, the Rebbe descended from his platform to allow the Kohanim to stand there while delivering *Birkas Kohanim*. A second *shtender* was placed at ground level for the Rebbe to use during this time.

As the Kohanim made their way up the stairs of the Rebbe’s platform, a yarmulke fell off one of the children’s heads and landed on the Rebbe’s *shtender*; the Rebbe returned it to the child.

Tashlich

At 5:00 in the afternoon of the first day of Rosh Hashanah, the Rebbe davened Mincha in the big shul and then went outside for Tashlich.

Construction in the courtyard between 770 and the library building was recently completed, and the Rebbe walked on the new stone floor for the first time. The Rebbe observed the new additions to the structure, including the bridge connecting the two buildings and a new entranceway. Then the Rebbe approached the large, beautiful water fountain used for Tashlich and looked



BRIDGE BETWEEN 770 AND THE LIBRARY, ALONG WITH THE NEW FLOOR OF THE COURTYARD, COMPLETED FOR ROSH HASHANAH 5751.



CONCLUSION OF KOS SHEL
BRACHA, MOTZEI ROSH
HASHANAH AND SHABBOS SHUVA.

inside until he saw some of the fish.

As the Rebbe recited Tashlich, crowds of Chassidim were standing on the bridge, in the windows, and on the rooftops all around the courtyard. It was a beautiful sight to behold as the Rebbe stood below, like a king surrounded by his faithful flock.

Farbrengen?

Following Maariv on the second night of Rosh Hashanah, the Rebbe exited the shul while wishing everyone “*Ah gut yom tov!*” repeating it many times.

Shortly afterward, an announcement was made on behalf of the Rebbe’s *mazkirus* that the Rebbe would not hold the usual farbrengen on the second day of Rosh Hashanah. Instead, there would be two farbrengens on the following day—Shabbos Shuva—the second of which would be considered a continuation of Rosh Hashanah, including washing for challah and distribution of *kos shel bracha*.

Of course, the news was received with disappointment. This would be the first time since the earliest years of the Rebbe’s *nesius* that no farbrengen would be held on Rosh Hashanah itself. Since the Rebbetzin’s *histalkus* in 5748, the Rebbe himself lights Shabbos candles and

is therefore unable to be physically present with the crowd as Yom Tov ends and Shabbos sets in. However, the Chassidim consoled themselves with the knowledge that there would be an additional farbrengen on Shabbos afternoon, during which the Rebbe would certainly fill in whatever was “missed.” (Later in the month, the Rebbe addressed the issue as we shall explore below.)

Shabbos Shuva

The solemn days of Rosh Hashanah led directly into Shabbos Shuva, which immediately took on a joyous tone. During *Lecha Dodi* on Friday night, the Rebbe vigorously encouraged the singing.

The next morning, the Rebbe was called to the Torah for Maftir, and while reciting the Haftarah and *brachos* afterwards, the Rebbe’s voice choked up with tears (especially when he said “*al kiso lo yeshev zar...*”)

Farbrengen #1

At 1:30 in the afternoon, the Rebbe entered the shul for the first farbrengen of the day.

“This is the first public farbrengen of the year,” the Rebbe began, “since the Rosh Hashanah farbrengen was pushed off, for a certain reason, until this Shabbos. Hence,



THE REBBE RECEIVES MAFTIR
DURING MINCHA, TZOM GEDALIA.

this farbrengen includes elements of both Shabbos and Yom Tov together...”

The Rebbe went on to explain the respective advantages of Shabbos and Yom Tov, and how this year they come together with no pause between them.

The Rebbe also spoke about the week’s Parsha, Ha’azinu, at great length.

Towards the end of the farbrengen, the Rebbe gave out bottles of *mashke* to individuals who would be making gatherings over the next few weeks (since the next Shabbos farbrengen was scheduled to be at the end of the month, on Shabbos Bereishis).

The farbrengen concluded at 3:15 p.m.

Farbrengen #2

At 6:30 p.m., the Rebbe entered the shul for a second farbrengen.

During the first *sicha*, the Rebbe showered blessings for the new year, including *brachos* beginning with each of the letters of the Aleph-Beis.

Then the Rebbe spoke about the *minhag* to mention the names of all the Rabbeim on Rosh Hashanah, discussing each one of the Rabbeim, including the Frierdiker Rebbe, whom he referred to as “*Nessi Doreinu, v’hu yol-icheinu komemius l’artzeinu*.”

The Rebbe concluded: “The *nossi* of each generation is the *yechida* of his generation. And in a more general

sense, the *neshama* of Moshiach is the *yechida* of all the generations together...”

In the next *sicha*, the Rebbe asked that the *niggunim* of all the Rabbeim be sung, beginning with the *niggun Shalosh Tenuos* from the Baal Shem Tov, the Mezritcher Maggid, and the Alter Rebbe.

The Rebbe then turned to Reb Yoel Kahn, and he began by announcing the names of the Rabbeim along with their *niggunim*.

Throughout the singing of these *niggunim*, the Rebbe’s face was very serious. At various times, the Rebbe sang along with the crowd, especially during the Alter Rebbe’s *B’nei Heichala*, the Tzemach Tzedek’s *Yemin Hashem*, and the Rebbe’s *Ata V’chartanu*.

At the end of the farbrengen, the Rebbe led the bentching over a cup of wine, which he later used for Havdala, after Maariv.

The Rebbe began distributing *kos shel bracha* at around 8:35 p.m., continuing for some three hours.

Upon concluding the distribution, the Rebbe sat down to recite the *bracha acharona* over the wine, then stood up and said *V’yiten L’cha* from his siddur, as Reb Meir Harlig stood from behind and recited it along with the Rebbe.

Lekach

On Monday, 5 Tishrei, it was announced that the Rebbe would begin distributing *lekach* to men, women,

and children on Tuesday evening after Maariv.

All throughout Tuesday afternoon, a group of *bochurim* prepared thousands of small plastic bags, each containing a piece of *lekach* wrapped in a dollar for *tzedakah*, which the Rebbe would give out that evening.

At 8:40 p.m., the Rebbe began distributing the bags of *lekach*, continuing for more than four hours, until close to 1:00 in the morning. As the distribution continued, it became clear that the 7,000 bags prepared earlier in the day would not be enough, so the *bochurim* prepared an additional batch of 1,000, most of which the Rebbe distributed.

During the distribution, three children passed by and showed the Rebbe a picture of Rebbetzin Chana, whose *yahrtzeit* was that day. The Rebbe took it and said, “Thank you for the picture!”

Over the course of the month, the Rebbe distributed *lekach* another nine times! (On 7 Tishrei, the Rebbe distributed *lekach* to members of the Machne Israel Development Fund; on 8 Tishrei, the Rebbe distributed *lekach* again, then twice on Erev Yom Kippur; on the fourth night of Chol Hamoed Sukkos, on the night of Hoshanah Rabbah, and twice on Hoshanah Rabbah day.)

Machne Israel Development Fund

On Wednesday, 7 Tishrei, the Rebbe met with the members of the Machne Israel Development Fund—major supporters of the Rebbe’s institutions—and the *shluchim* who had brought them.

The big downstairs shul was set up especially for the occasion. At 4:40 p.m., the Rebbe entered the shul and took his seat while smiling at some of the members.

The Rebbe addressed the crowd with a *sicha*, highlighting the special *zechus* that successful businesspeople have, to give *tzedakah* and to utilize all the resources Hashem has given them to make a positive impact. Additionally, the Rebbe offered *brachos* based on each letter of the Aleph-Beis, and told the participants that he would distribute sweet *lekach* to each of them, with the hope that the blessings of the new year would be tangible and sweet as well.

For the next five hours, the Rebbe met with the supporters in private, offering each his blessings, guidance, and advice, concluding by giving each one a piece of *lekach*.



THE REBBE RECEIVES A PHOTO OF REBBETZIN CHANA DURING THE DISTRIBUTION OF LEKACH, 6 TISHREI.



DISTRIBUTING LEKACH FROM THE USUAL PLACE OF 'DOLLARS', 8 TISHREI.

One of the members’ teenage son asked the Rebbe if he should go straight to college after finishing high school this year, to help him make a good living, or if he should attend yeshiva in Morristown. The Rebbe asked him if he’d ever learned in yeshiva before, and when he said that he hadn’t, the Rebbe said, “It is worthwhile, for at least one year, to learn in yeshiva. When you finish high school in June, be in touch with Morristown and find out what preparations you need to make. But it would be good to make an interruption before you go to college by studying Torah for one year.”

One of the members presented his young son to the Rebbe, saying that the boy’s friend had passed away a few months earlier, and ever since then, he had been



THE REBBE ADDRESSES THE MEMBERS OF
THE MACHNE ISRAEL DEVELOPMENT FUND.



ENTERING FOR YECHIDUS WITH MEMBERS OF THE
MACHNE ISRAEL DEVELOPMENT FUND.

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MEETING WITH EACH OF THE MEMBERS AND THE SHLUCHIM.

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inconsolable, constantly worried that he had the same illness as his friend. The Rebbe told the father that he must persuade his son that he is a healthy boy. Instead of worrying about his friend, he should give *tzedakah* from his pocket money in memory of his friend, and this will improve his own health. The father then presented his daughter and her fiancé, who were scheduled to get married around Pesach time. The Rebbe smiled and said, "Why postpone a good thing? It would be better to have the wedding earlier, either in Shevat, or better yet, in Kislev. It's a happy month, full of *yomim tovim* and candle lighting, etc."

Rabbi Akiva Cohen and Mr. Gershon Greenberg of Manchester, UK, came to the Rebbe and asked for a *bracha* to influence all members of *anash* in their community to send their children to the Chabad cheder. The Rebbe responded, "You refer to them as '*anash*', which means 'men of our peace'. That means that they are at peace with me, at peace with you, and at peace with him [Rabbi Cohen]. You should sit down and discuss it in a peaceful manner, and may you have *besuros tovos*, the sooner the better."

An individual asked the Rebbe if he could get a written

response from the Rebbe about his personal questions regarding his spiritual growth, based on the years he's been learning Tanya and Chassidus, and also how to help the Rebbe bring Moshiach sooner. The Rebbe replied that to wait for a written response would take a long time, since Sukkos is coming, when there will be many guests visiting. However, there is no need for a personal response, since the answers to his questions were already given in the Torah: Hashem says that if you follow His *mitzvos*, He will bless you in everything that you need, including the ability to walk upright and proud (“*va'blech eschem komemius*”) about the fact that you're Jewish. “May G-d Almighty bless you to be a living example in all of the above,” the Rebbe concluded.

At 10:15 p.m., the Rebbe concluded meeting with all the supporters and delivered a *sicha* to the shluchim. When the *sicha* finished, the Rebbe stood up, and it looked like he was going to leave, so the shluchim began singing a *niggun*. But the Rebbe instead asked Rabbi Leibel Groner, “Are there dollars?” Immediately, someone went to bring dollars for the Rebbe to distribute, and the Rebbe said, “In the meantime, sing the *niggun*! Why waste time?” The shluchim sang the Rebbe's father's *hakafos niggun* for a few minutes until the dollars arrived.

After distributing dollars for tzedakah to whoever remained in the shul, including two security guards, the Rebbe went back up to his room.

Erev Yom Kippur

It was a long and busy day at 770.

At 8:00 in the morning, the Rebbe emerged from his room out to the front steps of 770 holding a chicken in hand, after having performed *Kapparos*. The Rebbe handed the chicken to the *shochet*, Reb Yisroel Shimon Kalmenson, and watched as the *shechita* was done, then recited the *bracha* and covered the blood. With that, the Rebbe said “*yasher koach*” to the *shochet* and went back into his room.

The Rebbe then went to the *mikvah* and joined the *minyan* in the big shul for Shacharis.

In the early afternoon, the Rebbe again distributed *lekach* in the main lobby of 770, where he usually distributed dollars on Sundays. This continued for about half an hour, upon which the Rebbe asked that they announce that after Mincha, he would distribute *lekach* once more.

Entering the shul for Mincha, the Rebbe held a large



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A *SICHA* TO THE SHLUCHIM AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE YECHIDUS.

manila envelope filled with coins, and he dropped coins into each of the boxes and plates for tzedakah, spread out over two tables.

After Mincha, the Rebbe approached the second *shtender* on the other side of the platform and began delivering a *sicha* with pre-Yom Kippur *brachos* for the crowd. This year, the Rebbe did something unique: Opening the siddur to the page of *Birkas Kohanim*, the Rebbe began by reading these *pessukim* out loud; everyone answered “*Amen*” after each verse.

After the *sicha*, the Rebbe distributed dollars, then went up to his room—only to emerge a few minutes later



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THE REBBE'S CHICKEN IS SHECHTED AFTER KAPPAROS AS CHASSIDIM LOOK ON.



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GIVING TZEDAKA BEFORE MINCHA ON EREV YOM KIPPUR.

and distribute *lekach* again to those who had not yet received.

A few minutes after *licht-bentch'n*, the Rebbe came out of his room, dressed in his *kittel* and *tallis*, and entered the small *zal* to give the *Birkas Habanim* to the *bochurim*. The room itself was packed, while most of the *bochurim* stood outside in the courtyard and looked through the windows. The Rebbe again began with the *pessukim* of *Birkas Kohanim* and continued with a special *bracha* to the *yeshiva bochurim*, that they should have success in their learning, and so on.

After about 15 minutes, the Rebbe went back into his room for a moment and then went downstairs to the big shul for Kol Nidrei.

Yom Kippur

Reaching the platform, the Rebbe recited the customary Tehillim from a large *machzor*, then he descended to

ground level for Kol Nidrei. A second *shtender* was placed near the *chazan*, and the Rebbe stood there throughout Kol Nidrei holding his small *sefer Torah*.

After Maariv, the Rebbe remained in shul and recited Tehillim with the *minyan*, staying an extra half hour after the *chazan* had already concluded, until he had finished the whole Tehillim.

The next day, towards the end of *Ne'ila*, as Yom Kippur drew to a close, the crowd prepared for the singing of Napoleon's March.

During the final Kaddish of *Ne'ila*, the Rebbe ascended the stairs to a small platform near his place. As soon as the singing began, the Rebbe waved his right hand in encouragement. Then the Rebbe covered his holy face with his *tallis* and began swinging his hand higher and higher, faster and faster. The crowd could hardly keep up with the Rebbe's pace. At the conclusion of the singing, everyone called out "*L'Shana haba'a b'Yerushalayim!*" The Rebbe retrieved his hat from the cabinet of the *shtender* for Maariv.

After Maariv, the Rebbe waved his hand and called out, "*Gut Yom Tov!*" three times, and then said:

"There's a ruling in Shulchan Aruch that on Motzei Yom Kippur, we must 'eat our bread joyously'. This is connected with *Zman Simchaseinu...*" and with that, the Rebbe began singing his father's *hakafos niggun* with great joy!

The Rebbe then continued encouraging the singing all the way up to his room; shortly afterward, he came outside for Kiddush Levana.

Sukkos

The atmosphere in 770 shifted as the joyous part of the month set in.

This year, a new and improved private sukkah was built for the Rebbe's personal use by removing a portion of the roof just outside the Rebbe's room. Additionally, the Rebbe's usual sukkah was built outside in the front yard of 770, which the Rebbe would use occasionally, especially in the mornings.

Shortly after Shacharis on Erev Sukkos, the Rebbe selected *lulavim* and *esrogim* from the table outside his room. Representatives from around the world were summoned, and each received a set of *arba minim*; the Rebbe blessed them to be "*mamshich* all the *hamshachos*" (manifest all the spiritual energy revealed by the mitzvah



THE REBBE BLESSES THE CROWD AFTER MINCHA ON EREV YOM KIPPUR WITH BIRKAS KOHANIM FROM AN OPEN SIDDUR.

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WISHING 'GUT YOM TOV' AFTER MAARIV, MOTZEI YOM KIPPUR.



THE REBBE INSPECTS LULAVIM.

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SELECT CHASSIDIM RECEIVE SET OF ARBA'A MINIM FROM THE REBBE.

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GIVING A BRACHA AFTER RECEIVING
ESROGIM FROM ERETZ YISROEL.

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of *arba minim*) for the entire year ahead. A group of Chassidim from Eretz Yisroel presented the Rebbe with *esrogim* grown there, and the Rebbe responded with a *bracha*.

Later that evening, after Maariv, the Rebbe delivered a *sicha*. A small portion was added to the Rebbe's platform so that the Rebbe would be closer to the crowd, allowing for everyone to hear and see the Rebbe.

The Rebbe spoke about the importance of rejoicing on this night in *Simchas Beis Hashoeva* in a real way. The Frieddiker Rebbe set an example for every Yid, the Rebbe said. Although his health was very poor in his later years, the Frieddiker Rebbe hid his suffering and outwardly showed only joy in *avodas Hashem*.

Then the Rebbe went up to the large sukkah in the courtyard of 770 to greet the many *orchim* who had come for Yom Tov. First, the Rebbe greeted the coordinator of *Hachnasas Orchim*, Reb Moshe Yaroslavsky, and motioned for him to go ahead while the Rebbe walked behind him. The Rebbe ascended a previously prepared platform and delivered a short *sicha* to the guests, then returned to his room while vigorously encouraging the singing.

The next morning, and again on each morning of Sukkos, the Rebbe would *bentch* on his own *arba minim*, then give the set to Reb Meir Harlig to allow for everyone else to *bentch* on it as well. Shortly before Hallel, Reb Meir would bring the set back to the Rebbe in shul.

Simchas Beis Hashoeva

On each night of Sukkos, the Rebbe delivered a *sicha* after Maariv, expounding on the various themes of the day, the *Ushpizin*, and the need to increase the joy of *Simchas Beis Hashoeva*.

On the second night of Sukkos, the Rebbe mentioned the Midrash Yalkut Shimoni that he had been speaking about since the summer, discussing the final war before the coming of Moshiach. Chassidim always said that Moshiach's coming will be announced in the newspapers, the Rebbe said. Hopefully tonight, when we ask the policeman standing outside what's the latest news on the radio (as many people have the custom to do), he'll answer that they're talking about Moshiach's imminent arrival!

The third night of Sukkos was Friday night, Shabbos Chol Hamoed, and again the Rebbe delivered a *sicha*



CHILDREN'S RALLY, CHOL HAMOED SUKKOS.



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after Maariv.

On Motzei Shabbos, the Rebbe began by asking that someone who had already heard Havdala should make the appropriate announcement for the current time. Everyone shouted out together, “*Gut Moed!*” three times, and the Rebbe smiled broadly, continuing with the full *sicha*.

On the fifth night of Sukkos, the Rebbe again encouraged everyone to increase the joy of *Simchas Beis Hashoeva*. “There are some elderly Chassidim,” the Rebbe said, “those who learned in Tomchei Tmimim in Lubavitch or here in the United States, with venerable *mashpi'im* who taught them the ways of Chassidus, and even how to hold on to the ‘*kliamke*’ [the Rebbe’s door-knob]. But they haven’t yet participated in the rejoicing of Simchas Beis Hashoeva this year.” The Rebbe said that by adding these new faces (“*panim chadashos*”) to tonight’s dancing, the joy will increase even more.

On the fifth day of Sukkos in the afternoon, the Rebbe held a rally for the children of Tzivos Hashem, addressing them with three *sichos* and distributing coins for *tzedakah* as well.

On the sixth night of Sukkos the Rebbe explained

something special:

Due to the unique *kvius* of this year, when Yom Tov leads directly into Shabbos, we are unable to hold the usual farbrengens on the second day of Rosh Hashanah and on Simchas Torah afternoon. However, all the spiritual elements of the farbrengen are still very much in effect.

Shemini Atzeres

Shemini Atzeres and Simchas Torah brought the joy and celebration to their climax.

On the night of Shemini Atzeres, the Rebbe entered the shul for *hakafos* at 9:00 p.m. The Rebbe’s encouragement of the singing throughout the nights was incredible, especially during the first and seventh *hakafa*, when the Rebbe danced in the middle of the shul. The Rebbe turned around to each side, scanning all the people in the crowd and waving his hands again and again. The singing got louder and louder, as each individual was swept up into the Rebbe’s world. The Rebbe’s face was shining with joy, and the crowd responded accordingly.

An unusual sight took place during one of the middle



4TH DAY OF CHOL HAMOED.

hakafos: While the Rebbe was on his davening platform at the front of the shul, encouraging the singing, Reb Zalmon Jaffe and Dr. Ira Weiss suddenly began dancing right on the platform! The Rebbe moved his chair a bit to the side to make more space for the dancing pair, clapping his hands in their direction for a while.

Simchas Torah

On Simchas Torah night, the Rebbe held a pre-*hakafos* farbrengen.

The Rebbe spoke amazing words about the situation in Eretz Yisroel, discussing the many miraculous occurrences that the Jewish people had experienced in the recent past. The Rebbe also explained the *pessukim* that we recite as an introduction to *hakafos*, beginning with *Ata Horeisa*.

At the conclusion of this *sicha*, the Rebbe said, “Now we will end with a Simchas Torah *niggun*, one of them being...” and with that, the Rebbe began singing his father’s *hakafos niggun*, standing up and dancing in place with great joy.

The farbrengen concluded at 11:00pm, and at midnight the Rebbe returned to the shul for *hakafos*.

While the Rebbe was walking to the middle of the shul for the seventh *hakafa*, he noticed an individual crying, and the Rebbe said, “Why are you crying? Today is Simchas Torah!”

The individual tried approaching the Rebbe, but someone got in his way, and the Rebbe said, “What do you want from him? A Yid needs a *bracha*!”

Hakafos concluded at 1:20 a.m. On the way back to his room, the Rebbe noticed Rabbi Chaim Boruch Halberstam, who oversees the audio hookups of the Rebbe’s *sichos* and the WLCC hotline with announcements and updates for the global Chabad community. The Rebbe told him with a big smile, “You should soon broadcast that Moshiach has already arrived!”

Shabbos Bereishis

The Yom Tov of Simchas Torah led directly into Shabbos Bereishis, making for three days of uninterrupted joy.

On Shabbos Bereishis day, the Rebbe held two farbrengens: one as a regular Shabbos farbrengen, and the other as a continuation of Simchas Torah.

At the second farbrengen, the Rebbe asked that the crowd sing the *niggunim* of all the Rabbeim, beginning with *B’nei Heichala* of the Alter Rebbe.

Later in the farbrengen, the Rebbe mentioned that it had been some time since he had last made a “*shturem*” about learning Rashi, although in previous years there was a custom of explaining a Rashi on the parsha [at



DURING KOS SHEI BRACHA, MOTZEI SIMCHAS TORAH AND SHABBOS BEREISHIS.

each farbrengen]. With that, the Rebbe gave a lengthy explanation on a Rashi to Parshas Noach, then to Parshas Bereishis.

The farbrengen concluded with the Rebbe bentching over a cup of wine, which he later used to recite Havdala and distribute as *kos shel bracha*.

The Rebbe poured wine and *brachos* to thousands of individuals for four and a half hours until 1:20 in the morning, after which he covered the kiddush cup and headed out of the shul while singing “*Ki V’simcha*.”

Thus concluded three days of uplifting joy in the Rebbe’s presence.

Many more special occurrences took place with the

Rebbe throughout this month. Not least of which, the Rebbe’s greeting thousands of visitors on each of the four Sundays throughout the month—despite that they each came directly following a Yom Tov: 4 Tishrei, the day after Rosh Hashanah and Shabbos Shuva Shuva (and Tzom Gedalia); 11 Tishrei, the day after Yom Kippur; 18 Tishrei, the first weekday of Chol Hamoed Sukkos, and 25 Tishrei, the day after Simchas Torah and Shabbos Bereishis. The Rebbe never stopped giving of himself to his precious flock, day after day; teaching, guiding, and blessing them, with the care of a loving father.

May we be *zoche* to celebrate Tishrei with the Rebbe again this year, with the coming of Moshiach, now! **1**

Special Days IN A Special Month



A ROUND-TABLE FARBRENGEN

*About Erev Rosh Hashanah, Vov
Tishrei, and Yud-Gimmel Tishrei
in the Rebbe's Presence*



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

נדפס ע"י משפחתו שיחיו

BY: **RABBI MENDY
GREENBERG**
(TWINSBURG, OH)



When one hears the words “Tishrei with the Rebbe,” one’s thoughts immediately go to the month’s special Yomim Tovim in the Rebbe’s presence. The exalted moments of *Tekias Shofar*, the closeness felt during *Birkas Habonim*, the exhilaration of *Hakafos*.

All those Yomim Tovim have been extensively chronicled in the pages of *A Chassidisher Derher*.¹ However, the period of Tishrei is also host to three chassidishe *Yomei D’Pagra*—the birthday of the Tzemach Tzedek on Erev Rosh Hashanah, the *yahrtzeit* of Rebbetzin Chana on Vov Tishrei, and the Yom Hilula of the Rebbe Maharash on Yud-Gimmel Tishrei. Each of these dates brought a unique flavor and an atmosphere of its own to 770.

We sat down with three Chassidim, Rabbi Michoel Seligson (Mashpia and author, Brooklyn, NY), Rabbi Yossi Lew (Shliach in Peachtree City, GA), and Rabbi Yisroel Noach Vogel (Mashpia of Yeshivas Tomchei Tmimim of Queens), who generously shared their memories about those special days in the Rebbe’s presence. The interviews were conducted individually but are presented here as a single, continuous conversation.

Good Yom Tov!



THE REBBE DELIVERS A MAAMAR AT THE
FARBRENGEN OF EREV ROSH HASHANAH 5737.

PART I:

Erev Rosh Hashanah

The Birthday of the Tzemach Tzedek

The Gained Farbrengen

Rabbi Yossi Lew: Erev Rosh Hashanah would begin with a farbrengen.

The first time was in 5732. Around that year, the Rebbe began to farbreng on every Erev Yom Tov, and it was widely understood that it was meant to replace the Yom Tov farbrengens and *maamarim* which had just ceased.

For example, the Rebbe would farbreng in 770 after conducting the second Seder in the Friediker Rebbe's apartment. When the Seder moved to his home after the passing of Rebbetzin Nechama Dina, the post-Seder farbrengens ceased, and the Yud-Aleph Nissan farbrengens began.

On Shavuot, the Rebbe would say a *maamar* at three in the morning, after spending the night in 770. Again, when the *seudos* upstairs ceased and the Rebbe returned home for the meal, the *maamar* no longer took place—and the Rebbe began farbrenging on Erev Yom Tov instead.

On Sukkos, the Rebbe would farbreng in the Sukkah on the second day of Yom Tov. When the crowding in the Sukkah became life-threatening—in 5730, a table broke and Rabbi Marlow was badly hurt—the Rebbe began farbrenging on the night of Erev Yom Tov instead.

Erev Rosh Hashanah was unique: there was nothing specific on Rosh Hashanah that had ended, but the Rebbe

began to farbreng each year anyway. We gained a new farbrengen.

Rabbi Vogel: In the beginning, the schedule wasn't always certain. In the first year after Rebbetzin Nechama Dina's passing, 28 Elul fell on Shabbos, and that's when the Rebbe held a farbrengen. The following two years featured Erev Rosh Hashanah farbrengens, but at the end of 5734, the Rebbe held a farbrengen on 25 Elul instead. Afterwards, it was consistent. The Rebbe farbrenged on Erev Rosh Hashanah every single year—even if it was Motzei Shabbos and just a few hours after the Shabbos farbrengen—until 5748, when the weekday farbrengens ceased entirely.

Rabbi Seligson: Even when it became regular, there was a slightly irregular aspect to it. Some farbrengens were scheduled long in advance, such as Yud-Tes Kislev or Yud-Beis Tammuz. There were surprise farbrengens when the Rebbe would return from the Ohel and give only short notice prior to the farbrengen. But farbrengens like Erev Rosh Hashanah were still considered semi-official. As far as I remember, they were only officially announced when the Rebbe would inform Rabbi Hodakov about them.

Rosh Hashanah is Here!

Rabbi Lew: Throughout the 5730s and even in the early 5740s, the Rebbe would walk into the farbrengen and—almost immediately—ask to sing the *maamar niggun*. The *maamar* was obviously a Rosh Hashanah'dike *maamar*, and that immediately brought you into the atmosphere of Rosh Hashanah.

It wasn't the same as Selichos. The days of Selichos

brought a serious mood to 770. Despite the custom to farbreng on the first night, everyone knew they were about to give a *pidyon* to the Rebbe. Many *bochurim* didn't go for *lekach* or *kos shel bracha*, but everyone went for *panim*, and we all understood that it was very serious and it necessitated *hachana*.

However, at the farbrengen of Erev Rosh Hashanah, a mood shift occurred. Now, it was Rosh Hashanah in the air, and that was different. That was an uplifting feeling. Almost every single year, the Rebbe would mention the words of the Tur, "*lovshim levanim umis'atfin levanim*,"² that the Jewish people are confident—from the very outset—that Hashem will grant them a happy and sweet new year.

The Rebbe would also give many *brachos* during the farbrengen. In the later years, it would sometimes be *brachos* going through the entire Aleph Beis, "*Shnas orah, shnas bracha, etc.*" and

in the 5730s, I remember the Rebbe's voice loudly declaring, "*A ksiva vachasima tova l'shana tova umesuka...*" It was all the pre-Rosh Hashanah 'lingo' that you 'saw around town,' but here the Rebbe was saying it. It was so uplifting.

At the end of that farbrengen, you felt that *Rosh Hashanah was here*. There was an intensity there. You felt the power, the empowerment. It was very palpable. This was a farbrengen that we really looked forward to.

Sedorim in Peterburg

Rabbi Vogel: Although it was the birthday of the Tzemach Tzedek, that wasn't really the focus of this farbrengen. Yud-Gimmel Nissan was very focused on the Tzemach Tzedek, while this farbrengen focused on Rosh Hashanah. Nonetheless, the Rebbe often dedicated a *sicha* to the Tzemach Tzedek as well.

At the end of 5740, the Rebbe told the story from Hayom Yom:

The Tzemach Tzedek came home from Cheder one day and asked his grandfather, the Alter Rebbe, how it was possible that Yaakov Avinu lived his best years in Mitzrayim?

The Rebbe spoke at length about the Alter Rebbe's answer, that when a Jew lives with Torah, he can live anywhere, because the Torah raises him above any situation, and also derived a lesson from the very fact that the Alter Rebbe bothered to answer a young child in the first place—a lesson in Mivtza Chinuch.³

One year, the Rebbe mentioned that the Tzemach Tzedek would make '*sedorim*' in Peterburg (spiritual workings that influenced the Czarist government) on Rosh Hashanah. That year, the head of the Soviet Union, Brezhnev, died.⁴

The next year, the Rebbe mentioned it again, and sure enough, the new leader—Andropov—died as well.⁵ Andropov was a frightening figure; he had served as the head of the KGB, and many were afraid that he would take a very hardline stance. Well, he didn't survive very long, and a year after his death, Gorbachev took over—the leader who ultimately dismantled the Iron Curtain.

In 5741, the Rebbe said an entire *sicha* in Russian.⁶ It is the only full Russian *sicha* said at a farbrengen; the others were said during rallies.

THE NEW DIBBUR HAMAS'CHIL

Rabbi Lew: There was a special *dibbur hamas'chil* we earned because of these farbrengens: *Yom Tov Shel Rosh Hashanah*. When the first day of Rosh Hashanah fell out on Shabbos, the Rebbe would often say a *maamar* with this *dibbur hamas'chil* the night before.

This was unique to the Erev Rosh Hashanah farbrengens; the Rebbe never said this *dibbur hamas'chil* during the farbrengen of the second day of Rosh Hashanah, presumably because it wasn't Shabbos anymore.

I remember these *maamarim* well from my childhood, because it opens with a question that even a child can understand—how can we cancel a *mitzvah d'oraissa* of Shofar because someone might carry it on Shabbos?



WISHING L'CHAIM TO THE CROWD,
LEIL EREV ROSH HASHANAH 5748.

A few weeks later, I attended a Simchas Beis Hashoeva farbrengen in my hometown of London with Rabbi Shmuel Lew, who had just returned from a trip to the Soviet Union for Rosh Hashanah. He shared that on Rosh Hashanah evening in the home of a Russian chossid, he announced to the crowd, “Let me tell you something the Rebbe said three days ago.” Immediately, someone interrupted him and said, “Let me tell you something the Rebbe said a few hours ago...” Somehow, the *sicha* had been transmitted to Russia.

The Russian Chassidim showed him how careful the Rebbe was to avoid endangering them; the Rebbe had spoken about “the country in which the Tzemach Tzedek was born,” but that was all.

Rabbi Seligson: One special occasion regarding the Tzemach Tzedek took place in 5749, on Leil Erev Rosh Hashanah 5750. It was two hundred years from the Tzemach Tzedek's birth, and the Rebbe distributed the *Kitzurim V'ha'oros* of the Tzemach Tzedek on Tanya. The Rebbe explained the significance of two hundred years in the *sicha* beforehand, based on the *possuk* “*Masayim l'notrim es piryo*.”⁷

In the earlier years, at the farbrengens, the *maamar* was also usually based on a *maamar* of the Tzemach Tzedek.

In general, the Rebbe had a special connection to the

Chassidus of the Tzemach Tzedek. In fact, the Rebbe would personally sponsor the publication of *Or Hatorah*, the set of the Tzemach Tzedek's *maamarim*.

One year, during the Nine Days, the Rebbe requested that the *maamar Binyan Mikdash* of the Tzemach Tzedek be printed. Reb Zalman Gurary, who usually sponsored the publications of *maamarim*, knew that Chassidus of the Tzemach Tzedek the Rebbe kept for himself, so he



THE KITZURIM
V'HA'OROS OF THE
TZEMACH TZEDEK ON
TANYA, DISTRIBUTED
BY THE REBBE.

wrote to the Rebbe asking for special permission to sponsor it. In that instance, the Rebbe agreed.

Someone once mentioned to the Rebbe in *yechidus* that his *maamarim* are a mix of *nigleh* and Chassidus, and the Rebbe responded that this was the manner of the Tzemach Tzedek, and “I try to do the same.”

A Fresh Meaning

Rabbi Vogel: The Erev Rosh Hashanah farbrengen was also the moment we usually received the new *roshei teivos* for the year.

It began in the middle of the year 5742, when Rabbi Seligson submitted his biography of the Rebbe for the preface to Hayom Yom, and the Rebbe added in the content of 5742 that the Rebbe had “raised awareness that 5742 is a year of a *keitz* in *seforim*, and that it has the *roshei teivos* of *Tihye Shnas Bias Moshiach*.”

Afterwards, it became a yearly custom at the farbrengen on Erev Rosh Hashanah. I recall 5744, specifically, because the Hebrew letters for that year had a bad connotation—שנ”ד—and in the *sicha* on Erev Rosh Hashanah the Rebbe said that the *roshei teivos* are in a different order: *Tehi Shnas Divrei Moshiach*.⁸

A Welcome Maamar

Rabbi Lew: There was one Erev Rosh Hashanah farbrengen in the early years.

At the end of 5722, a significant group of guests came for Tishrei to the Rebbe, and the Rebbe held a special Erev Rosh Hashanah farbrengen in their honor. Even the *maamar* was “*Gedola Hachnosas Orchim*.” The Rebbe was then presented with the key to Kiryat Gat, which was an unusual occurrence in those early years, and the *bochurim* of Beis Sefer Limlacha also presented the Rebbe with a *shtender* at that farbrengen.

Rabbi Seligson: Even in the later years, the farbrengen was considered a *kabbalas ponim* for the newcomers. Many guests would arrive right before the farbrengen, and piles of suitcases would be lined up near the entrance. During one farbrengen, the Rebbe asked specifically whether the guests had arrived.

The Rebbe once smiled when he repeated the

maamar chazal that “*gedola hachnosas orchim mei’hakbolas pnei haShechina*,” receiving guests is greater than welcoming the *Shechina*,”⁹ pointing out that there was no *gashmiyus* to offer—this *kabbalas ponim* didn’t have food or any of the regular trappings of receiving guests—but there would be a *maamar chassidus*, and that would be the welcome for the *orchim*.

PART II:

Vov Tishrei

The Yahrtzeit of Rebbetzin Chana

Personal Memories

Rabbi Seligson: I was under Bar Mitzvah in 5725. The phone rang early in the morning to inform my father, Dr. Seligson, that the Rebbe’s mother wasn’t feeling well. (Usually, if the phone rang several times on Shabbos, he would pick up.) He attended to her, and her condition improved.



THE REBBE RECEIVES A SHTENDER BUILT BY THE STUDENTS OF THE BEIS SEFER L'MELACHA.



THE REBBE AT THE AMUD, 6 TISHREI 5727.

The Rebbe visited his mother on Shabbos morning, as usual, and afterwards, went to 770, instructing my father to keep him updated every few hours.

People noticed something was going on when they saw my father talking to the Rebbe before davening, and again during the farbrengen. By that time, her condition began to worsen again, so—with the Rebbe's permission—my father announced her name for a *refuah sheleima*. He asked the elder Chassidim what Rebbetzin Chana's mother's name was, but nobody knew, so he announced "Chana bas..." and the Rebbe said, "Rochel."

After Mincha, my father and two other doctors told the Rebbe that she needed to go to the hospital. The Rebbe said that he would comply because three doctors had said so. An ambulance was called. They offered the Rebbe to sit in the front, but the Rebbe sat in the back and held Rebbetzin Chana's hand for the entire duration of the ride to Brooklyn Jewish Hospital.

After she was *nistalek*, the Rebbe asked to pay my father for his services. At first, he refused, but the Rebbe pointed out that even the contractors who worked for the Sanhedrin would get paid. My father then acquiesced; he said, "*Mesarvin l'katan v'ain mesarvin l'gadol*—one may refuse an ordinary person but not a distinguished person,"¹⁰ so he took the money and made sure to channel it back into the Rebbe's *inyonim*.

Yud-Gimmel Tishrei that year was on Shabbos. At the farbrengen the Rebbe spoke about an interesting dilemma: whose *kaddish* should come first, the *kaddish* he recites for his mother, or the *kaddish* recited for the

Rebbe Maharash?

In those years, Reb Shmuel Levitin would recite *kaddish* on days that the Frierdiker Rebbe would observe *yahrtzeit*; this was something he had done before Yud Shevat, in the years when the Frierdiker Rebbe was weak, and he continued doing so afterward as per the Rebbe's instructions.

Now, whenever the Rebbe recited *kaddish*, the *chiyuvim* in the crowd would wait until the Rebbe concluded, and then recite *kaddish* separately. On this Shabbos, an interesting situation arose in which the Rebbe was first saying *kaddish* for his mother, and Reb Shmuel was then saying *kaddish* for the Rebbe Maharash, one of *Rabboseinu Nesieinu*. In a full *sicha*, the Rebbe spoke about the various sides of the issue, and deliberated what would be the most appropriate way to go about it.¹¹

Moments in Davening

Rabbi Lew: When the Rebbe davened at the *amud*, there was a whole reorganizing of 770. Many *bochurim* had *mekomos kevuim*. I had a place behind the Rebbe, but the really well-connected *bochurim* had places to the Rebbe's left, on the other side of the *aron kodesh*, where it was possible to see and hear even better.

Maariv was always jam-packed; all the *balebatim* of Crown Heights showed up. You needed to arrive early to secure and hold your place. The next day was easier, because Shacharis was at 9:30 and Mincha was at 3:15, so the working *balebatim* weren't able to join.

The Rebbe was always very serious when he entered the shul on a *yahrtzeit*. A *yahrtzeit*, in general, was a serious occasion.

Rabbi Vogel: One year, the seriousness was really noticeable to me. The year 5740 had started out on a very *lebedike* note. The Rebbe had encouraged the singing during *kos shel bracha* in an extraordinary way, almost like *Hakafos*. In the two days after Tzom Gedalia (4 and 5 Tishrei), the Rebbe surprised us after Mincha and began singing *Hu Elokeinu* with half a smile on his face...

But when Vov Tishrei arrived, all of that disappeared. The Rebbe was very serious throughout the day and even during the farbrengen. There was only a slight change at the very end, when the Rebbe told Reb Yoel Kahn to begin *Uveyom Simchas'chem*. After the Rebbe said that, he smiled. We *bochurim* theorized that perhaps the Rebbe smiled because Reb Yoel didn't know the *niggun*! It was a new *niggun* the Rebbe had just asked Chazan Teleshevsky to put to a tune at the recent *kos shel bracha*, but Reb Yoel hadn't been there, because he had been occupied with *chazara*.

In 5742, I was in Kfar Chabad until after Yom Kippur, so I listened to the *tefillos* via hookup. To listen to Mincha, I remember standing in the *machsan*, the small storage that represented the entirety of Kehos in Eretz Yisroel at the time, using Rabbi Meni Wolff's phone to listen. It was just me and Rabbi Shmuel Greisman.

As I was listening, I realized that the tune was different, and I had heard that tune before. The Rebbe was davening with a Shabbos *nusach*, just as he had done several years earlier, on Yud Shevat 5739.

I once heard that the Rebbe said he's 'not good at *nusach*' (i.e., the tune of davening). Even on Shabbos, the Rebbe would daven very simply, often using the weekday tunes. There were some special moments, like *Lecha Dodi*, where the *nusach* was very recognizable, but that was usually not the case. But here, you can hear it on the recording as well—the Rebbe davened softly in the Shabbos *nusach*.

The Special Focus

Rabbi Seligson: The farbrengens of Vov Tishrei had a strong focus on Chana, the mother of Shmuel

IS THERE A MAAMAR?

Rabbi Lew: Vov Tishrei (and Chof Av) almost never had a *maamar*; the *hadran* was the centerpiece of the farbrengen. There was the sense that the Rebbe was farbrenging with the Chassidim as a son who was marking the *yahrtzeit* of his parents; he didn't emphasize the "rebbeistive."

Rabbi Seligson: There was one year, 5730, where the Rebbe said a *hadran* on Menachos, and followed that with a *maamar k'ein sicha* titled "Isa b'sof Menachos."

Rabbi Vogel: In 5737, I was standing next to Yossi Tiefenbrun a"h, and at some point he turned to me and asked, "Is there a *maamar* on Vov Tishrei"? I confidently responded, "No, there isn't." A moment later, I see the Rebbe turn to Reb Yoel Kahn and nod his head, hinting to begin the *maamar niggun*. That year, the Rebbe was *mezakeh* us with a *maamar*.

Hanavi. It was always 'present' by the Rebbe from the Haftorah on the first day of Rosh Hashanah—when the Rebbe would very often break down in tears—through Vov Tishrei. In the 5730s, it was literally every year. One point the Rebbe repeated several times was her decisions about *chinuch*—she gave her child entirely to Hashem, to be raised by the Kohen Gadol in purity. But that's only one *sicha*—there is a wealth of *sichos* about Chana and her story.

Another common theme was N'shei Ubnos Yisroel, and the Rebbe would often speak about his mother, Rebbetzin Chana. One oft-repeated story was about Rebbetzin Chana preparing ink for her husband, Harav Levi Yitzchok, to be able to write down his *Divrei Torah* in exile.

In 5745, a full twenty years after her passing, the Rebbe shared a story he had never before



LEADING THE DAVENING, 6 TISHREI 5742.

told—that Rebbetzin Chana had taken care of the refugees during World War I, and how it had made such an impression on him—the Rebbe—that it remained etched in his memory “*lechol meshech yimei hachayim*,” for the rest of his life.

There would also be *sichos* about the three *mitvzoim* in the name Chana—Challah (Kashrus), Niddah, and Hadlokas Neiros Shabbos Kodosh—as well as many other things pertaining to women.

In 5734, there was a *sicha* addressing women’s obsession with careers; the Rebbe spoke about the special role of women who remain in the home to raise and educate their young children. The *sicha* was so forceful that the

teachers of Beis Rivkah began to doubt their decision to teach! They wrote to the Rebbe about it, but the Rebbe replied that he was referring to careers, not *chinuch* and *avodas hakodesh*.

Rabbi Lew: In 5745, the Rebbe said a surprise *sicha* after Maariv and asked that twenty new *mikvaos* be established in honor of twenty years since Rebbetzin Chana’s passing. There was another surprise *sicha* after Mincha as well.

Rabbi Vogel: I walked into the WLCC office after Maariv, and saw that they were trying to figure out how to get a recording of the beginning of the *sicha*. It had taken about a minute for the microphone to be brought over, so the audio was missing.

When I heard the predicament, I told them to call a place that had listened to davening via hookup. For some reason, it was standard behavior to record the hookup, and the listeners usually didn’t turn off the tape recorder until they were informed that the Rebbe had left the room. I assumed that the small microphone at the *amud* had likely picked up a weak recording of the beginning of the *sicha*, and that being the case, someone likely had a recording. That’s what they did; they called California and got the tape from them.

Rabbi Lew: On Vov Tishrei 5735, the Rebbe marked Rebbetzin Chana’s tenth *yahrtzeit*, and a number of special things happened.

The Rebbe had just announced *Mivtza Neshek* a week earlier, just before Rosh Hashanah, and now the Rebbe



PREPARATIONS FOR THE HOOKUP OF THE FARBRENGEN AT THE OFFICE OF WLCC, 6 TISHREI 5737.

washed for Hamotzi at the farbrengen and gave out *kos shel bracha* at the end. That was completely out of the ordinary.

Then there was the *hadran* on Maseches Sukkah about Miriam bas Bilgah. In my opinion, it is one of the most amazing *sichos* we ever heard from the Rebbe.

The Rebbe opened by asking why he would do a *siyum* on Sukkah right before Yom Kippur, and explained that Sukkah has the “bad luck” of being four days after a different Yom Tov, which means that nobody has time to think about it. “*Vos is Sukkah shuldig?*” the Rebbe asked.

But clearly there was another reason—Sukkah is the Masechta that mentions a woman in the final Mishnah, so it was very appropriate when the Rebbe was marking the *yahrtzeit* of a woman, Rebbetzin Chana.

Rabbi Vogel: The next year, the Rebbe shared two stories—one from England and one from Eretz Yisroel—about how a little girl’s Shabbos candles transformed an entire home.

The story from England was about a family who would light Shabbos candles every Friday evening at six o’clock, summer or winter, until the little girl learned about Shabbos candles in school and came home insisting that they light at the proper time.

The story from Eretz Yisroel was about a little girl who came home with a little candlestick and insisted on lighting it. After a while, the mother felt uncomfortable that she wasn’t lighting as well and began to join in each week. Things snowballed from there—they began turning off the television, they began having a shabbos *seuda*, and soon the entire home was transformed.¹²

Special Moments

Rabbi Vogel: I recently listened to a Vov Tishrei farbrengen from the early years, and in one special moment, I detected the sharpness of Reb Yoel Kahn:

On the recording of 5728, I heard the Rebbe say to Reb Yoel to sing “*Ashrei ziknoseinu, vi iz di haschala dorten...*” (how does that statement begin?) I was confused as to what *niggun* the Rebbe was referring to, but Reb Yoel—without missing a beat—began to sing, “*Eilu V’eilu Omrim.*”¹³

I realized that the Rebbe had referenced the

beginning of the Gemara which leads into *Eilu va’eilu omrim*. The Gemara says that at the Simchas Beis Hashoevah, the ‘Chassidim’ would say אשרי זקנותנו שלא ביישה את זקנותנו, and the *baalei teshuvah* would say, אשרי זקנותנו שכפרה את ילדותנו, and both—*eilu va’eilu*—would say, אשרי מי שלא חטא.¹⁴ That’s what the Rebbe was referring to.

Vov Tishrei—International

Rabbi Vogel: During the farbrengen of Vov Tishrei 5731, the Rebbe asked to hear the Chassidim in Eretz Yisroel say *l’chaim*. It was the beginning of the hook-ups, now people all over the world could call in and listen to the Rebbe’s farbrengen, but this time, the Rebbe asked for the opposite—he wanted those Chassidim to be heard in 770.

Towards the end of the farbrengen, Rabbi Groner told the Rebbe that the hookup was ready. Everyone stopped singing. Rabbi Chaim Boruch Halberstam put a speaker out of the small window between his office and 770, but the audio feedback was terrible, and you couldn’t hear a thing.

The Rebbe said that according to *seforim*, when a shofar doesn’t work, you recite the *possuk*



KOS SHEL BRACHA AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE FARBRENGEN, 6 TISHREI 5735.



FARBRENGEN, 6 TISHREI 5731.

of *Vihi Noam*. For a moment, people laughed, but the Rebbe repeated himself, and Reb Shea Yuzevitch, who was standing next to the speaker, turned and recited the *possuk* into it.

A moment later, the speaker shrieked, and they suddenly heard “*l’chaim, l’chaim!*” It was Reb Folle Kahn, directly from Kfar Chabad.

Rabbi Halberstam later said that the entire thing was a miracle; he had no clue how to make the connection, and he had just been playing with the wires. Somehow, it worked.

Ten years later was another hookup milestone: it was the first farbrengen seen live outside of 770.

At the time, Rabbi Hillel Dovid Krinsky had the idea of doing television broadcasts, and decided to test the idea in California. That Vov Tishrei, the shluchim in California gathered and were able to watch the entire farbrengen live on the screen. It was so earth-shattering that one of them called in middle of the farbrengen and begged that someone go to the Rebbe and tell him that they were watching the farbrengen live. Rabbi Groner didn’t think it was appropriate, so that didn’t happen, but right after the farbrengen, the Rebbe wanted to hear if the broadcast had been successful.

It so happened that at that specific farbrengen, there was something unique that was not captured on audio. Usually, the Rebbe would hold his hands carefully under the table, but during a *sicha*, the Rebbe wanted to describe the *shtreimel* of the Mittlerer Rebbe, so the Rebbe took out his hands, made an upside-down v shape to describe the *shtreimel*, and then pointed to the tip—where the sweat

would pour out during his *avoda*.

Interestingly, the last cable hookup of a farbrengen was also Vov Tishrei, in the year 5748.

Teshuva

Rabbi Lew: In 5742, the Rebbe spoke at length about *teshuva* (see “Step Inside” column in this magazine), and there was an interesting side-story to that farbrengen:

Reb Reuven Dunin was a special chossid in Eretz Yisroel who had become a *baal teshuva* in the 5710s. He had led a very colorful life until then, and after becoming a chossid, he would often ask the Rebbe for a *tikkun*.

At some point, the Rebbe told him to stop asking for the *tikkun*; when the time came, he would know.

That Vov Tishrei, as the Rebbe said *sicha* after uplifting *sicha* about *teshuva*, Reb Reuven Dunin felt that this was his moment. He thought that the Rebbe was talking to him.

In between the *sichos*, he climbed over the tables to the Rebbe’s place and asked the Rebbe if that was his moment, and the Rebbe acknowledged it.

The Rebbe’s focus on *teshuva* at that farbrengen was unique. Even though it was Aseres Yemei Teshuva, the Rebbe usually approached *teshuva* from a different direction. The Rebbe would often quote the end of Yoma, “אמר, רבי עקיבא אשריכם ישראל,” where it speaks about the *maalos* of the Jewish people.

During one Vov Tishrei farbrengen, the Rebbe spoke about the Jew who is not involved in Yiddishkeit and arrives at his office on Yom Kippur; realizing the date, he has a momentary *hirhur teshuva*. That *hirhur teshuva*, the



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AT THE FARBRENGEN OF 6 TISHREI 5741, THE REBBE DEMONSTRATES THE SHAPE OF THE MITTELER REBBE'S HAT.

Rebbe said, can sometimes be more powerful than an entire day spent davening in shul.

PART III:

Yud-Gimmel Tishrei

The Yom Hilula of the Rebbe Maharash

L'chatchila Arib'er!

Rabbi Lew: At the Yud-Gimmel Tishrei farbrengen, *Zman Simchaseinu* was already in the air. It was *moiredik*.

The Rebbe also had a tremendous *koch* in the Rebbe Maharash and his motto of “*l'chatchila ariber*.” The Rebbe quite literally adopted that as a mantra. It's a *pisgam* that the Frierdiker Rebbe mentions once in his own writings in the name of the Rebbe Maharash, but the Rebbe had an amazing *koch* in it. The Rebbe pointed out how every aspect of the Rebbe Maharash's life reflected this motto. The Rebbe even named the *niggun l'chatchila ariber*; until then, it was called *eintz, tzvei, drei, fir*.

Rabbi Seligson: In the early years, we heard *l'chatchila ariber* mentioned by the Rebbe on occasion, but in the later years, the Rebbe really began to *koch zich* in it, especially in 5743, when it was one hundred years since the *histalkus* of the Rebbe

Maharash.

In general, the Rebbe had a special *koch* in the Rebbe Maharash; he personally printed the *Sefer Hatoldos* of the Rebbe Maharash—which he didn't do for any of the other Rabbeim. The Rebbe even connected *tiferes shebitiferes*, from his birthday on Beis Iyar, to Yud-Gimmel Tishrei, because the four days between Yom Kippur and Sukkos represent the four letters of *shem Havaye*, and Yud-Gimmel Tishrei represents the Vov, Tiferes.

Rabbi Vogel: In 5739, the Rebbe spoke a long *sicha* pointing out the *l'chatchila ariber'dike* aspect of everything in the Rebbe Maharash's life—in his *maamarim*, in his *baal shem'ske* behavior, and even in the material wealth in his home. The Rebbe said that someone brought a valuable item as a gift to the Tzemach Tzedek, and the Tzemach Tzedek told him, “I don't need it, give it to my *mezinik*.” For some reason, the Rebbe choked up as he told the story.¹⁵ There was another point, during the *maamar*, where the Rebbe also cried.

There was another story about the Rebbe Maharash the Rebbe told several times, and always choked up:

When the Frierdiker Rebbe visited Eretz Yisroel, he was visited by a chossid of the Rebbe Maharash. As soon as the chossid entered, he fainted. Later, he explained that the Frierdiker Rebbe looked exactly like his grandfather, the Rebbe Maharash.

In 5740, the Rebbe began the farbrengen with that story.¹⁶ A year later, I was in London for



FARBRENGEN, 13 TISHREI 5743.

Sukkos, and on the evening of Yud-Gimmel Tishrei I was waiting for my ride to Lubavitch House for the hookup when I realized I would probably miss the first *sicha*, so I asked them to connect me to the line and I listened to it from my home phone.

As the farbrengen began, I got confused. Was I listening to a recording from the year before? The Rebbe had begun the farbrengen with the exact same story.¹⁷

Years later, I also watched the video of that farbrengen, and I noticed that when the Rebbe asks for *l'hatchila ariber* to be sung, many of the guests didn't know that we would repeat the high note based on the Rebbe's head motions, and they continued the song. The Rebbe looks very uncomfortable for a moment until they catch on.¹⁸

Rabbi Lew: That was a very serious *niggun*. Whenever the Rebbe would ask to sing it, he would become very serious, similar to the Alter Rebbe's *niggun*. The Rebbe would not look around and answer *l'chaim*; he would focus his eyes forward and remain very serious the entire time.

The Signs

Rabbi Lew: Yud-Gimmel Tishrei 5738 was the last farbrengen before the Rebbe had a heart attack on Shmini Atzeres.

When you look back at the farbrengen now—and in general to the farbrengens of that *tekufa*—you can start to see all sorts of interesting hints to what was coming. For example, on Chai Elul, the Rebbe sang *Tzama Lecha Nafshi* and substituted *uz'cha uchevodecha* with the words *nafshi uch'vodi*, and on Rosh Hashanah, the Rebbe spoke about a heart.

I actually got a hint earlier, at my bar mitzvah celebration in Sivan 5737. Rabbi Groner spoke at the *seuda*, and in his speech, he said that we need to protect the Rebbe's *gezunt*. I remember being surprised at the time; the Rebbe seemed quite healthy, and nothing seemed to be wrong. A few months later, the Rebbe suffered the heart attack.

Rabbi Seligson: There was a moment I noticed on Erev Rosh Hashanah that year as well. Usually, when receiving the *pan klali*, the Rebbe would say that Hashem should fulfill all the wishes *that are mentioned in this letter*. That year, however, the Rebbe continued, “*vegen velche m'shreibt duh, un vegen velche m'hot gedarft shreiben, vegen velche der Oibershter veis...* that which is written here, that which should have been written here, and which Hashem knows....”¹⁹

During the farbrengen of Yud-Gimmel Tishrei, the Rebbe also spoke about having *simcha* through Shabbos Bereishis, and the Rebbe also suddenly began speaking

about the Frierdiker Rebbe's health, repeating what the doctors said at the time—that the Frierdiker Rebbe lived through miracles for the last sixteen-seventeen years of his life. As Chassidim noticed after Gimmel Tammuz, it was the same length of time from then until Gimmel Tammuz...

The Rebbe's Voice

Rabbi Lew: Yud-Gimmel Tishrei 5743 marked one hundred years since the passing of the Rebbe Maharash and I was looking forward to a special farbrengen, but as the Rebbe began the first *sicha*, we saw that something was wrong: the Rebbe was completely hoarse. When the Rebbe said the *maamar*, we could barely detect the tune—that's how bad it was. Still, the Rebbe insisted on continuing the entire farbrengen as usual.

Someone actually ran to *es'n'bench* and purchased tea for the Rebbe, but the Rebbe didn't touch it. The styrofoam cup was there when the Rebbe left.

After that farbrengen, we were very concerned about the *sicha* on Yom Tov the next night, when there would be no microphone. *Baruch Hashem*, there was no problem; the Rebbe's voice was entirely healed by the next day.

During that farbrengen, the Rebbe spoke sharply about the fact that the *bochurim* spend the entire davening "looking at a *basar v'dam*," i.e., the Rebbe himself. The Rebbe went on for quite a while against the trend of always staring at the Rebbe when he was coming and going from 770 or during davening.

After the farbrengen, Reb Mendel Futerfas farbrenged with the *bochurim* and rephrased the problem to us: *hayitochen* that we are looking at the Rebbe as if he were a *basar v'dam*!

Rabbi Vogel: After that farbrengen, I heard that the Rebbetzin had asked the Rebbe to limit the farbrengen to two hours. The actual farbrengen was longer, but the *sichos* themselves are approximately two hours in length.

At one point, the Rebbe began the *niggun Ki Anu Amecha*. Usually, the crowd would try to avoid joining in, hoping to catch another line of the Rebbe singing, but this time, everyone jumped in immediately.

After hearing the *sicha* about "looking at a

basar v'dam," I made sure to not be around when the Rebbe came and left 770. If the Rebbe didn't like it, I didn't want to be there. To my good fortune, that meant I wasn't outside on Beis Kislev 5748 either (when the *seforim* were about to come back to 770 and the Rebbe expressed great frustration at those who were standing around and waiting).

Rabbi Vogel: Much of this discussion focused on the Rebbe's farbrengens on *Erev Yom Tov*. The Rebbe would often remind us that we are now at *Erev Shabbos* of the *Geulah*, in the *elef hashishi*, the sixth millennium which precedes the coming of Moshiach, in the very final moments of *galus*.

May Hashem help us that we should merit the *Ge'ulah Ho'amitis V'Hashleima* immediately, and celebrate the upcoming *Erev Yomim Tovim*, and the *Yomim Tovim* themselves, in the Rebbe's presence.

As the Rebbe concludes his first *maamar*, "ונזכה זיעהן זיך מיט'ן רבי'ן דאָ למטה אין אַ גוף... והוא יגאלנו, we should merit to meet the Rebbe here, in our world, in a body...and he will redeem us." ❶

1. "Rosh Hashanah with the Rebbe – Roundtable Discussion" in Tishrei 5777, "Yom Kippur With the Rebbe – Roundtable Discussion" in Tishrei 5779, "Sukkos with the Rebbe – Roundtable Discussion" in Tishrei 5780, and "Simchas Torah with the Rebbe," in Tishrei 5778.
2. Orach Chaim *siman* 581.
3. Sichos Kodesh 5740 vol. 3, p. 1130.
4. Toras Menachem 5742 vol. 4, p. 2297.
5. Toras Menachem 5743 vol. 4, p. 2073.
6. Sichos Kodesh 5741 vol. 3, p. 767.
7. Shir Hashirim 8:12.
8. Toras Menachem 5743 vol. 4, p. 2074.
9. Shabbos 127a.
10. Pesachim 86b.
11. Toras Menachem 5725 vol. 1, p. 63.
12. Sichos Kodesh 5736 vol. 1, p. 25.
13. <https://ashreinu.page.link/XD4r>.
14. Sukkah 53b.
15. Sichos Kodesh 5739 vol. 1, p. 68.
16. Sichos Kodesh 5740 vol. 1, p. 100.
17. Sichos Kodesh 5741 vol. 1, p. 110.
18. Minute 4 of the farbrengen on JEM.tv.
19. Likkutei Sichos vol. 14, p. 367.

לזכות
הת' לוי יצחק, חנה, הת' משה
פנחס, הת' ישראל אריה ליב,
מאיר שלמה, רפאל שיחיו

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

By: Rabbi Shneur Itzinger

Step Inside

Farbrengen with the Rebbe — A Companion

A guide to the Farbrengen of
Vov Tishrei 5742



Hisvaaduyos
5742, vol. 2,
pp. 42–76



Sources

This guide is designed to assist in experiencing the farbrengen on video or audio recording. Timestamps correspond to the video of the farbrengen, linked above.

Over Tishrei, Rebbetzin Chana's *yahrtzeit*, falls during the *Aseres Yemei Teshuva*. In honor of his mother's 17th *yahrtzeit*, the Rebbe dedicated this farbrengen to exploring the unique significance of the days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, drawing lessons from his mother's life, and delivering a *hadran* in her honor.

An influx of Tishrei guests makes for a larger crowd at this farbrengen, and a live television broadcast brings the Rebbe's words to an international audience.

We present a step-by-step guide to the first two *sichos* of this special farbrengen, including a deeper look at the concepts discussed and accompanying *marei mekomos* for further understanding.

Sicha 1 – The Power of Individual Teshuva

The uniqueness of the time, the true definition of *teshuva*, and the immense power each individual has to fulfill our mission.

1. What's Unique About Today?

- During the *Aseres Yemei Teshuva*, Hashem is especially close to every Jew.
- While He is always close to us,¹ and we are always close to Him, there are varying levels of *kiruv*.

For example, Hashem's presence is everywhere, yet *giluy Elokus* varies by time and place.

- **In the Beis Hamikdash**, ten miracles were regularly seen.²
 - » The number ten represents *shleimus*, just as in the *asara ma'amaros* and the *aseres hadibros*.
- **Eretz Yisroel**, both before and after the Beis Hamikdash stood, is holier than the rest of the world.
 - » The rest of the world receives its divine flow *through* Eretz Yisroel.³

So too in our closeness with Hashem: it is constant, but during *Aseres Yemei Teshuva* the closeness is far more powerful.

2. A Matter of Eichus

5:25

Let's take this a step further. When we say Hashem is closer to us, we mean closer in terms of *eichus*—the *quality* of connection.

- The Gemara⁴ compares a *yachid's* connection during *Aseres Yemei Teshuva* to that of a *tzibur* year-round. Hashem always answers the *tzibur*, showing a connection of greater *eichus*.

- During these days, even a *yachid* reaches that level.
- If a *yachid* now has the power of a *tzibur*, certainly the power of a *tzibur* is even stronger! (This point will be explained in Sichah 2.)

This makes *Aseres Yemei Teshuva* an *Eis Ratzon*—an auspicious time, both above and below, because we

The Navi of Redemption

The Rebbe refers to Yeshaya as the *Navi HaGeulah*—the Prophet of Redemption. Although the earlier *perakim* of his *sefer* include strong words of rebuke, the latter half is filled with visions of *Geulah*, Hashem's compassion, and comfort for the Jewish people. The *haftoros* of comfort read after Tisha B'Av all come from this *Navi*.

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reflect Hashem.

3. Today in Aseres Yemei Teshuva

8:01

Within the *Aseres Yemei Teshuva* themselves, each day progresses higher, following the principle of *ma'alin bakodesh*.

» True, we began with Rosh Hashanah, the loftiest day. But *ma'alin bakodesh* continues in the following days.

- **Each day**, we go higher in *teshuva*.
- **Especially after Shabbos Shuva**. *Shabbos* and *tashev*—return—share the same letters.⁵ *Shabbos* is connected to *teshuva*.

Elaborating on the *Shabbos-teshuva* connection, the Rebbe refers back to the previous farbrengen (*Shabbos Shuva*):⁶

- *Shabbos*, when sadness is not permitted, teaches us that *teshuva* must be done joyfully.
- In general, *teshuva* must be done with joy, because:

4. What is teshuva?

11:43

At such an important time, we need to focus on our central mission: making a *dira b'tachtonim*.

- This is accomplished through Torah and *mitzvos*.
- The starting point of this *avoda* is *teshuva*.

Let's explain what *teshuva* is really all about:

What's in a Name

Shabbos and *tashev* sharing the same letters is not by chance. The name of something, the letters that form the word by which the Torah calls it, reflects its true being. Hashem created the world with speech, and the very letters He used are what continuously draw down the *chayus* that gives each creation its existence.

- **Every mitzvah** must be done with joy.⁷
- **Teshuva**, which fixes the wrongdoings in *any* mitzvah, obviously needs joy.
 - » *Teshuva* even fixes a lapse in *tal-mud torah*—the greatest mitzvah.
- After doing *teshuva*, one is not only forgiven and returns to their previous standing, but can rise even higher.⁸
- So today, Sunday following *Shabbos shuva*, is associated with a particularly high level of *teshuva*.

- *Teshuva* is not just about rectifying wrongdoing. Rather, *teshuva* defines our *avoda*.

This explains three points:

- “**Teshuva u'maasim tovim**”—*teshuva* and good deeds:¹⁰ Shouldn't the order be reversed? It would seem that first come good deeds, and

then, if one missed an opportunity, they can fix it through *teshuva*.

- » The answer: *teshuva* comes *before* the mitzvos. Becoming closer to Hashem through *teshuva* empowers the *mitzvos* that follow, making them deeper and more meaningful.¹¹
- **A Tzaddik doing *teshuva*.** Each of the 248 *mitzvos asei* corresponds to one of the body's 248 limbs. A complete person is one who has performed all the mitzvos—including the mitzvah of *teshuva*. Why would a *tzaddik* need to do *teshuva*?
 - » The answer is found in *Likkutei Torah*: *teshuva* is defined as return—the *neshama* returning to its true source.¹²
 - » Since Hashem is *Ein Sof*, there is always room for improvement.
- **“*Kol yamav b'teshuva*—constantly doing *teshuva*.”¹³** If I already did *teshuva* properly yesterday—on Shabbos *Shuva*—why do I need to do it again today?
 - » Again, the answer is based on the above concept in *Likkutei Torah*. *Teshuva* is about returning to Hashem. Since He is *Ein Sof*, returning to Him is endless—a constant ascent *mechayil el chayil*.

5. Don't Underestimate Yourself!

17:27

- *Teshuva* is not a series of gradual steps from level to level; it's a *bli gvul* (unlimited) power.
 - » It can happen in an instant—*b'sha'ata chada*. This has halachic implications as well.
- One may ask, “I’m a limited creation—can I possibly have *unlimited* strength?”
 - » The Gemara¹⁷ discusses whether someone with an extra limb is fit to serve in the Beis Hamikdash! Can I really act beyond the norm?
- The answer: True, we are limited beings. But we possess a *neshama*, a *chelek Elokah mi'maal mamash*—a part of Hashem, literally.
- Our job is to unleash that *neshama*, letting it guide everything we do from “head to toe,” in how we think and act.

What Life is All About

The final Mishnah in *Kidushin* teaches: “*Ani nivreisi l'shamesh es koni*”—I was created to serve my Creator.

An alternate *girsas* reads: “*Ani lo nivreisi ela l'shamesh es koni*” — I was created *only* to serve my Creator. This wording conveys the idea even more powerfully: serving Hashem is the *entire reason* for our existence. The Rebbe often quoted this version as a clear expression of how deeply our service of Hashem is intrinsic to us—it defines the essence of our lives.

When a Jew Sins?!

The Zohar teaches that the *possuk* “נפש כחטאת—*If a soul will sin*” should be read as a question. The Torah and Hashem are astonished: How is it possible that a Jew could sin?

For a Jew, doing an *aveira*, going against Hashem's will, is something rare and unnatural. Our true self is drawn to following Hashem's desire. A sin is not a reflection of who we are, but a moment of disconnection from our real identity.

The Instant Tzadik

The Gemara¹⁴ tells us that if someone is *mekadesh* a woman on the condition that “I am a *tzaddik*,” the *kiddushin* is valid—even if he is, in fact, a *rasha*. Why? Because “perhaps he had thoughts of *teshuva* in his mind.”

Even someone who until one moment prior was a *rasha* can instantly be considered a *tzaddik*. This is the power of *teshuva*: with one sincere and firm resolution, a person can immediately change their spiritual status.

In *halacha*, the Rambam¹⁵ rules that in such a case, the *kiddushin* would be valid *misafek* (out of doubt). The *mefarshim*¹⁶ on the Rambam clarify that the doubt is only whether the individual *actually* had thoughts of *teshuva*—not whether such thoughts are strong enough to change his status.

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- With our *neshama* guiding all we do, we can accomplish anything.
- This is especially so during *Aseres Yemei Teshuva*.
- The *neshama* is also called a *nitzutz*—a spark of Hashem. The Mitteler Rebbe explains that during these days, Hashem’s closeness to us is like a flame nearing its spark—*kiruv hama’or el hanitzutz*.

- This helps us fulfill even the simpler levels of *Teshuva*.
 - » This power of *teshuva* applies equally to everyone—men and women.

So, our *neshama*, always a part of Hashem, has even *more* strength during *Aseres Yemei teshuva*.

6. Using Our Power

22:39

The strength of our *neshama* must be used for our central mission: making a *dira b’tachtonim*.

- Even the most physical parts of the world must become a home for Hashem.
- Adam and Chava were commanded to “fill the world and conquer it.”¹⁸ This means engaging with the world and infusing the mundane with *kedusha*. (This will be elaborated on more in Sich’a 2).
- Through this, Hashem becomes King—*melech*—over the entire earth.
 - » A *moshel* is a dictator, one who rules by force;

a *melech* is accepted willingly, the people *want* him as their king. Hashem’s rule is such that the world itself wants to carry out His will.

- Similar to the first *Rosh Hashanah*, when Adam gathered all of creation to proclaim Hashem’s Kingship.
- When we follow that example, impressing upon all creations Hashem’s rulership, we see the fulfillment of the entire world following Hashem, and the *geulah* comes.

Sicha 2 – Teshuva and the Tzibur

Why *teshuva* as a community is beneficial, and what it can accomplish.

1. Groupthink?

In the previous *sicha*, the Rebbe mentioned the power of a *tzibur* in *teshuva*. This raises an obvious question:

- *Teshuva* seems better when done in *private*.
 - » *Mitzvos bein adam lachaveiro* are naturally fulfilled with others.
 - » But *mitzvos bein adam laMakom*, especially *teshuva*, seem better done

privately—between you and Hashem.

- *Teshuva* involves a *cheshbon hanefesh*—
 - » Not just of your actions, but a recognition of the One to Whom we’re accountable.
 - » In this case, Hashem Himself.
 - » Such reflection is, seemingly, best done alone.

So why would doing *teshuva* with a *tzibur* be beneficial?

2. Ma’aseh Rav

37:36

Whatever the logical explanation, *ma’aseh rav*—real-world behavior—shows there’s benefit in doing *teshuva* with others.

Let’s observe people’s actions:

- They run to do any mitzvah.
- Especially to shul, as required by *Shulchan Aruch*.¹⁹ Running to shul at the start of the day affects the entire day.
- Especially on Yom Kippur—



- » The most fitting time for *teshuva*.²⁰
- —Even those who aren't in shul all year (through no fault of their own) make the effort.
- The *neshama* wants to be in shul among fellow Jews, and the feet follow.

Clearly, *ma'aseh*, which is *rav*, indicates that there's value in *teshuva* among others.

3. So It Is—But Why?

40:33

We see it works. But what's the logic?

- *Teshuva* requires an accurate *cheshbon*, which raises a challenge: how can I overcome self-bias to make an objective and honest accounting?
- That's where the others come in. Together with a friend, you have the power of two *nefesh haElokim*.²³
- Simply, your friend can advise you if your *cheshbon* was properly objective.

Why a whole *tzibur*, not just one friend?

- Each person has their *zahir tfei*—a mitzvah in which they excel.
 - » This could be any mitzvah, helping others in a certain way, etc.

What's the Word on the Street?

There are many examples of the Gemara examining the actions of the *Tannaim* and *Amoraim* to clarify *halacha*. “*Ma'ase Rav*, the act is paramount,” means that we learn from actions more than from teachings. And even when ordinary people consistently do something a certain way, it usually means there's something behind it.

The Schedule of the Day

The Gemara²¹ teaches—and it's brought down in *halacha* as well²²—that a person's daily routine should be to go *mibeis haknesses l'beis hamedrash*—from shul straight to Torah learning. Only after that should one go to work. This ensures that a person's priorities, in the workplace and in life at large, are grounded in the holiness with which he began his day.

What's Your Strong Point?

The Gemara²⁴ records Rav Yosef asking Rav Yosef Bar Rabba, “in what area was your father (Rabba), *zahir tfei*—especially vigilant?”

Of course, Rabba kept all the *mitzvos*. A complete person is one who does everything required of him. But each person has an area in which they demonstrate extra *chayus* and vigilance.

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- Another person can help you in their *zahir tfei* field—but may not be proficient or helpful in other areas.
- A *tzibur*, on the other hand, includes *all types*—a complete entity. Therefore -
 - » A *davar shebikedusha* needs a *tzibur*.

- » All ten levels of Jews are included in a *tzibur*.
- » All various talents and knowledge are present in the *tzibur*.
- Thus, a *tzibur* helps each person be guided in the right direction for *teshuva*.
 - » As long as one is willing to be assisted.

The Happiness Caveat

44:36

Here, the Rebbe addresses an important note:

- *Teshuva* should never lead to despair.
- A *cheshbon hanefesh* includes merits too.
 - » Don't let the *yetzer hara* convince you that all is lost.
- Merits are *yours*, reflecting who you really are. Shortcomings are just that, falling short of who you are at your core.²⁵

- Being in the world necessitates being involved in worldly matters, which may become briefly attached to you. This is nothing more than an external attachment that can be rectified.
- In summary: A *tzibur* can support one another in *teshuva*, with each individual's *shleimus* contributing to the collective *shleimus*.
- This leads to a lasting *teshuva* in thought, speech, and deed.

4. Be Like Adam

47:43

The Rebbe now turns to our ongoing *avoda* after doing *teshuva*.

- Every day brings a new opportunity for growth.
- Growth is expressed by revealing our true identity as Hashem's handiwork, like Adam.
 - » The *Gemara* teaches that Adam's creation influences us all.²⁶

From Adam we learn:

- “*Lavdah ul'shamrah*—to work and guard the garden,”²⁷ referring to *mitzvos aseï and lo saaseh*.²⁸
- Even before that, he influenced creation to proclaim Hashem's Kingship,
- and turned the world into Hashem's garden.
- Now that the stage is set, it's our turn to perfect the world, “*Lavdah ul'shamrah*.”

“Fill the world and conquer it,” also told to Adam, defines our *avoda* as well. “*Milu es haaretz*”—fill the *world*, means

our job extends past the walls of shul or holy settings, even to non-Jews.

- » If our purpose were only in holiness, the *neshama* wouldn't need to descend here.

We must engage the world:

- Influence other Jews, using all our strengths to illuminate the world.
 - » Beginning with leading by example.
- Those in leadership, at any level, must reach everyone in their circle.
 - » Influence non-Jews in their 7 mitzvos, and Jews in all 613.
- Turn the entire world into a *dira b'tachtonim*—a home for Hashem.

(The Rebbe will refer back to all of these levels of influence a few times through the end of the sicha.)

5. You have the Power!

53:34

- The power to succeed comes from Hashem's *levushim*, the tools He gave us, which are the Torah and *mitzvos* that we fulfill on our own.
- We then influence others as His *shluchim*, spreading *tzedek* and *yosher*.
 - » We are not speaking on our own behalf, but on a mission from Hashem.
- It doesn't always happen easily: It can take much effort, even one hundred tries, but you will succeed in this mission.
- Hashem removes all impediments to doing so, including anything you are lacking physically.

The World Is a Garden — Now Fix It

When Adam entered *Gan Eden*, he was immediately given a mission: “to work it and guard it.” Even in its perfect state, the garden wasn't just for pleasure; Adam was meant to cultivate and elevate it. Our mission mirrors his: to refine the world and bring it to its perfect state by filling it with the knowledge of Hashem.

When Our Eyes Will See

The Navi Yeshaya³⁰ prophesies that when Moshiach comes, “the glory of Hashem will be revealed, and all flesh will see it together—for the mouth of Hashem has spoken.” *Elokus* will no longer be something we only learn about, it will be something we see. Our physical eyes will perceive *Elokus* and experience it directly, without losing our physical identity.

- The end result is that the entire world will see Hashem with physical eyes when Moshiach comes.
- This is closer and more attainable than we think, and is brought about through *teshuva*.²⁹
 - » Which means the world returning to its pre-sin state.
- With Hashem's *brachos* at the “head” of the year, we have the strength to fulfill this mission in the best possible way.
- Until the world reaches its ultimate *shleimus* with the coming of Moshiach. **T**

1. See source sheet, sources 1 and 2.

2. Avos 5:5.

3. See source sheet, sources 5 and 6.

4. Rosh Hashanah 18a.

5. Igeres Hateshuva *perek* 10.

6. Toras Menachem 5742 vol. 1, p. 26.

7. Rambam Hilchos Lulav 8:15.

8. See source sheet, sources 9 and 10.

9. Kidushin 4:14.

10. Avos 4:17, and other places.

11. Likkutei Torah Shmini Atzeres, 85a.

12. Likkutei Torah Haazinu, 71c.

13. Shabbos 153a.

14. Kidushin 49b.

15. Hilchos Ishus 8:5.

16. Magid Mishneh.

17. Bechoros 45a.

18. Bereishis 1:28.

19. Shulchan Aruch Orach Chayim 90:13.

20. Rambam Hilchos Teshuva 2:7.

21. Berachos 64a.

22. Shulchan Aruch Orach Chayim 155:1.

23. Hayom Yom 20 Teves. See source sheet sources 15 and 16.

24. Shabbos 118b.

25. Likkutei Diburim vol. 4, p. 591a. See “Ksav Yad Kodesh” column in this issue.

26. See source sheet sources 17 and 18.

27. Bereishis 2:15.

28. Targum Yonasan.

29. See source sheet source 19.

30. Yeshaya perek 40 *possuk* 6.

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with the Rebbe
— A Companion

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הי"ן

WOMEN LEARNING TORAH

WARMTH & WISDOM

Compiled By: Rabbi Levi Greenberg (OH)

Written By: Rabbi Shneur Itzinger

DO THE GLOVES COME OFF?

Three distinguished scholars were walking home from shul on a Shabbos afternoon, one of them carrying several *seforim* under his arm. The city of Pozen's well-established Jewish community had an *eruv* that any *talmid chacham* would be proud of. Reb Baruch *Batlan*, his son Reb Binyamin, and his son-in-law Reb Shneur Zalman made use of it, strolling together as their wives followed behind. These were the illustrious forebears—including the namesake—of the Alter Rebbe; Reb Shneur Zalman and his wife, Rebbetzin Rochel, were the Alter Rebbe's paternal grandparents.

As they walked through the streets, an urgent message spread through the city, causing them to stop in their tracks: the *eruv* had suddenly become *passul*. What now?

The men, all seasoned scholars, be-

gan to deliberate, quoting *Gemara* and *Rishonim* from memory. Reb Binyamin was carrying *seforim*—should he stand in place until Shabbos ended? The women, as was the local custom, were wearing gloves in honor of Shabbos. Were they allowed to continue walking while wearing them?

The discussion continued, scholarly and inconclusive.

Reb Baruch *Batlan*, great-grandfather of the Alter Rebbe, turned to his daughter. "Nu, Rochel, you are clear in *Shulchan Aruch* and know how to *pasken*; what is the *halacha*?"

Her husband, Reb Shneur Zalman, looked up, surprised. It wasn't customary for women in those days to be well-versed in *halacha*, beyond the practical laws passed down from mother to daughter. His wife—a scholar? Issuing a *psak*?! Was his father-in-law serious,

נשי
ובנות
חב"ד
N'SHEI
U'BNOS
CHABAD

or just teasing?

But this was Rochel's well-kept secret. Her father had taught her Torah from a young age: first *Chumash* and *Nach*, then *Mishnah* and *Gemara*. In time, she progressed to *Rambam* and *Shulchan Aruch*, which she studied with particular diligence. Until now, only Reb Baruch, her father and teacher, knew this.

But stranded roadside in the middle of Shabbos, the secret was out. The men could deliberate for hours, but someone had to give a clear ruling so the group could go home and enjoy their Shabbos meal.

Without hesitation, Rochel responded from memory: the gloves should stay on. *B'dieved*, we can rely on the women to remind one another if someone accidentally removes a glove and begins carrying it. As for the *seforim*, they should be passed from man to man, with no individual carrying them more than four *amos* at a time, and a non-Jew should carry them into the *reshus hayachid*.

As soon as they were again within reach of a *Shul-*

chan Aruch, Reb Shneur Zalman and Reb Binyamin checked her ruling and found that Rebbetzin Rochel had indeed *paskened* correctly.¹



Reb Shneur Zalman had good reason to be surprised at his wife's knowledge—and she had good reason to keep it a secret. Women, of course, always meticulously kept *halacha* and knew the laws of the *mitzvos* unique to them. But proficiency in *Shulchan Aruch* and extensive Torah prowess? That was well beyond the norm.

In telling this story, however, the Rebbe points to it as an example of what women today should strive for. “We see today,” the Rebbe said while addressing *N'shei Chabad*, “that from generation to generation, women's Torah studying intensifies—even as unmarried girls. Sometimes, the husband or older brothers will have to ask the women in the family what to do when a new situation arises.”²

A MOTHER'S TOUCH: TEACHING AND STUDYING TORAH

Adapted from *Sicha of Shabbos*
*Parshas Emor 5750*³

FROM SIDELINES TO CENTER

The Rambam and the Alter Rebbe both begin their *Hilchos Talmud Torah* with a father's obligation to teach his children. The woman's role, for generations, has been understood as supportive.

The Gemara⁴ says women receive reward for “bringing their children to learn Torah, sending their husbands to study...and waiting for their husbands to return,” and, as Rashi explains, for giving them permission to travel far to study.

But, the Rebbe emphasized, one of the best ways a woman can actively support her husband's and sons' Torah study is by *studying along with them*.

With their warmth, emotional depth, and gentle approach, women can inspire in their children an even greater excite-

ment for learning Torah. A father customarily sits down on Shabbos to learn with his son, testing him on his studies and making sure he uses his time in *cheder* wisely. But a mother? She can review with her son what he learned in *cheder* in her own warm, nurturing way, cultivating a deeper *geshmak* for Torah that only a mother can instill.

This is not just an educational tool; by teaching their children, women also increase their own Torah study.

HISTORY ON OUR SIDE

“Though she will receive a reward (for learning)...a person should not teach his daughter Torah” writes the Alter Rebbe,⁵ echoing the Gemara, *poskim*, and thousands of years of precedent. Of course, this never applied to *halachos* relevant to women, which comprise large and diverse areas of Torah.

But women as Torah scholars in their own right, studying Torah *lishma*?

Even this, the Rebbe points out, has precedent going all the way back to the times of the Tanna'im. Brurya, wife of Rabbi Meir, is one shining example. The Gemara⁶ teaches that she once studied three hundred *halachos* from three hundred

different teachers in one day. In another incident,⁷ she rebuked a student for reciting his studies quietly, teaching that one who exerts himself in Torah study is guaranteed to retain the knowledge.

What better example than our own Rebbetzins? From the women in the Alter Rebbe's family⁸ to the way Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka was educated by her father, the Frierdiker Rebbe, special *nashim tzidkaniyos* throughout the generations were proficient in Torah study.

SIGN OF THE TIMES

While in generations past such women were the exception, today they have become the norm. The shift is not incidental. Evidence shows that *gedolei Yisroel* established schools for women and girls to learn Torah, beyond the *halachos* relevant to them. The justification is understood; girls are no longer educated solely at home and are subject to influences beyond the holy walls of a Jewish home, including from other subjects that they study. Thus, Torah study, and schools that teach it, are not just permitted for women but have become essential.

Beyond just studying the *what*, women should also learn the *why*; the reasoning behind doing what we do and the discussions surrounding the *halacha*, adding feeling and *geshmak* in their commitment to actualizing what they study.

A TASTE OF THE FUTURE

Although the necessity for women to study may be a byproduct of *yeridas hadoros*, the outcome has been a net gain—an increase in *limud hatorah*.

Why now? It is a sign of Moshiach's imminent arrival, when knowledge of Torah will flourish. Women studying Torah today, and with increased vigor, is more than a trend. It's a sign of the power of the times, and a taste of the *geulah* soon to come. Just as in the days of *Geulas Mitzrayim* the redemption came through the merit of righteous women, so too today, the merit of the righteous women of our generation will bring the *geulah*. **1**

1. Sefer Hazichronos vol. 2, ch. 93. Sefer Hamamarim 5709 p. 42.

2. 28 Iyar 5748. Toras Menachem 5748 vol. 3, p. 368.

3. Sefer Hasichos 5750 vol 2., p. 455ff. The Rebbe edited this portion of the Farbrengen to be printed on its own, under the heading "Regarding The Women's Obligations in Education and Torah Study".

4. Brachos 17a.

5. *Hilchos Talmud Torah* 1, 14.

6. Pesachim 62b.

7. Eruvin 53b.

8. See sources in fn. 1.

ADDITIONAL INSIGHT:

- » "Boys begin studying Chumash with Rashi at five years of age. Girls, however, possess greater mental acuity, as reflected in the fact that they become obligated in mitzvos a full year earlier than boys, and can therefore begin even earlier."⁹
- » "When a husband and wife study Torah together, it is not just the husband learning with his wife—it is possible that the wife teaches her husband as well. This is especially true today, when women possess greater knowledge."¹⁰
- » "According to some opinions, Rashi had no sons. It was his daughters who served as his study partners and transcribed his teachings."¹¹
- » The renowned chossid and friend of *beis harav*, Reb Shlomo Aharon Kazarnovsky, related that "[Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka] is well-versed (*"klohr"*) in the Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch."¹²



A Class of Their Own: The Rebbe's encouragement for women to study Torah.



My Good Fortune to Lead Women to Torah Study.

9. Shabbos Parshas Tzav 5746. Toras Menachem 5746 vol. 2, p. 790.

10. Shabbos Parshas Ekev 5750. Toras Menachem 5750 vol. 4, p. 162.

11. Ibid.

12. Heard by his granddaughter, Mrs. Vivi Deren. As told at an event marking his 40th *yahrtzeit*.

In The Footsteps of a Family

By: Rabbi Mendy Greenberg (Twinsburg, OH)

Several years ago, I received an email through a genealogical website. The sender was a man named Victor, a non-Jew from a remote city in Russia. To my surprise, he identified himself as my relative. He said that my great-great-grandfather, Reb Michoel Katzenelenbogen—a chossid from the times of the Rebbe Rashab and Friediker Rebbe—was a relative of his great-great-grandfather, who was called Reb Chaim Katzenelenbogen, also a chossid from the times of the Rebbe Rashab and Friediker Rebbe!

Victor was doing genealogy research into his ancestry and discovered many legal records that identified his ancestors as having lived in the town of Lubavitch and its environs. They were clearly Lubavitcher Chassidim, so he was searching for someone who could do Hebrew-language research to uncover the story of his family from within Chabad writings.

My interest was piqued.

I knew about my zeide Reb Michoel Katzenelenbogen hy"d. He had been a tomim in Lubavitch, and was killed in Stalin's purges of the year 5698 for the crime of teaching Torah to young children. (His wife was more famous than he; she was the legendary Mumme Sarah who passed away in jail for her role in the 'Great Escape' of Chassidim from Russia after World War II.) However, I didn't know much about Reb Michoel's Katzenelenbogen family ancestry, so I began searching through the Chabad library of Otzar HaChochma.

I discovered a fascinating tale—the story of a family of Chassidim—its growth, its decline, and its ultimate survival.

Rabbi Mendy Greenberg (Twinsburg, OH)



REB CHAIM KATZENELBOGEN.



REB MICHOEL KATZENELBOGEN WITH HIS WIFE AND CHILDREN. THIS PICTURE WAS SENT TO THE FRIEDIKER REBBE IN 5696.

There Once Was a Family

In the days of the Mittlerer Rebbe, a man settled in the town of Lubavitch. His name was Reb Yehoshua Katzenelenbogen. Not much is known about this Reb Yehoshua; he isn't a grandson of the famous Katzenelenbogen family of Poland, but he settled in the town of Lubavitch and raised his family there and his children grew up as Lubavitcher Chassidim.

His sons Avremke, Dovid, and Yossel, likewise raised families of Lubavitcher Chassidim, and the Katzenelenbogens soon branched out throughout Lubavitch and surrounding towns like Liadi, Babinovitch, and Vitebsk—all strongholds of Chabad Chassidim. They became an entire tribe.

Most of them were ordinary Chassidim; they aren't remembered in the annals of Chabad history as famous Chassidim. However, members of the Katzenelenbogen family make appearances in numerous stories recorded by Chassidim throughout the generations, and even in the stories of the Frieddiker Rebbe.

One notable member was Reb Nachman Katzenelenbogen “ben Dovid Yehoshua’s.” Here is the story recorded about him:

“The Tzemach Tzedek thought highly of Reb Nachman, and asked him to make the long journey to become

the head of the Mashgichim in Peterburg, and be responsible for all the *shechita* that took place there.

“Reb Nachman apologized and said to the Tzemach Tzedek that he didn't want to move so far from the Rebbe and from his family, but the Tzemach Tzedek responded, ‘It's known that a shochet needs to have strong *yiras shomayim*, and that is certainly the case for the supervisor of the *shochetim* themselves. Who should I send if not you?’

“When the Rebbe Maharash heard his father's words about Reb Nachman, he hired him—upon his return from Peterburg some years later—to learn Gemara, Rashi, and Tosafos with his three sons (including the Rebbe Rashab) when they were *avreichim*.”

Another notable mention is in the Frieddiker Rebbe's Reshimos:

In 5663, the *maskilim* attempted to establish a school system in the town of Lubavitch, a move that the Rebbe Rashab vehemently opposed. The Frieddiker Rebbe records a meeting between the Rebbe Rashab and the regional inspector general of the Education Department, who wanted to understand the reason for the Rebbe Rashab's opposition. He writes that the *meilitz*, the translator—the Rebbe Rashab did not converse in Russian—was Reb Chaim Katzenelenbogen (the same Reb Chaim mentioned in the introduction to this article).

The Strong Character

The most consistent appearance by a Katzenelenbogen is another grandson of Reb Yehoshua, named Bere Avremke's. He was one of the well-known *balebatim* in the town of Lubavitch, and he was a bit of a character, as expressed in the following story the Frierdiker Rebbe told at a farbrengen:

"When Isser the *chazan* sang *kor'im*," the Frierdiker Rebbe related, "there wasn't a single person in shul who wasn't moved to tears."

Isser the *chazan* was a legendary *chazan* in Lubavitch who received many of his tunes from the Rabbeim themselves. Of all of his *tefillos*, his *Avodah* on Yom Kippur was most memorable, and the pinnacle was *V'hakohanim*. The Rebbe Maharash himself would exit his private room and sit down near the *chazan*, sometimes singing along and other times leading the tune with his hand motions.

"In Lubavitch," the Frierdiker Rebbe continued to relate, "there was a man named Bere Avremke's. He was a strong man, a *takif*. He once declared, 'Enough—I won't cry during Isser's *korim*.' He usually davened in a different *minyán* in town. But one year, he came to the Rebbe's *beis midrash* to hear Isser's *Avodah* on Yom Kippur, and stood near the washing basin."

Bere Katzenelenbogen's confidence didn't last very long. As he stood there listening to the *Avodah*, he found it difficult to contain himself.

"When Isser the *chazan* began to sing '*V'hakohanim*' with immense fervor," the Frierdiker Rebbe continued, "Bere Avremke's began to tremble and weep—so intensely that he had to hold on to the wash basin to keep from collapsing."

Bere Avremke's 'collapse' wasn't just from the power of Isser's voice, the Frierdiker Rebbe explained. It was from the *kavanos* of his grandfather, the Rebbe Maharash.

In later years, Bere Avremke's was already an elder. In the memoirs of Reb Sender Yudasin, he relates that on Chof-Daled Teves 5666, Bere Avremke's was honored to conduct the annual Siyum Hashas in the presence of the Rebbe Rashab. Again, the story has a humorous twist.

"When he finished reciting the final segment of the Gemara," Reb Sender relates, "Reb Bere Avremke's began to stroke his lips and beard and was about to share a *chiddush* of his own to connect with the *Hadran*. Sensing this, the Rebbe Rashab remarked, 'Up until now, we were obligated to listen—but from here on, we are not obligated.'"

Seeing that the Rebbe Rashab was not interested in a *drasha*, Reb Dovber said, "*oib azoi—Hadran alach...*" and finished the *nusach* of the *siyum*.

One final story took place several years later and was recorded in the memoirs of Reb Yisrael Jacobson:

In 5669, the news arrived in Lubavitch that the Rebbe Rashab's brother, the Raza, had suddenly passed away. The decision was made to withhold the news from his elderly mother, the Rebbetzin Rivkah, in order to protect her health.

Rebbetzin Rivkah was accustomed to receiving twice-weekly letters from the Raza, and when a week passed with no word from him, she began to worry. When nobody would tell her what was going on, she decided to visit him on her own. It was a Friday morning; the wagon, the horses, and the wagon driver were ready to go, but nobody had the heart to tell her the news.

Finally, says Reb Yisrael Jacobson, "one of the *choshuve* senior *baalei-batim* of Lubavitch named Bere Avremke's approached the Rebbetzin and told her, '*Nito noch vos tzu foren*, there is nothing to go for.' The wagon driver returned the horses to the stable."

Where Did They All Go?

Today, there is still a large Katzenelenbogen family in Lubavitch. Of the generation of Chassidim that left Russia, there was Reb Shimon Katzenelenbogen of Nachlas Har Chabad, Reb Zalman (Kazen) of Cleveland, Reb Yehoshua (Raskin) and Reb Moshe Katzenelenbogen of London, and Tzivya Goldberg (wife of Reb Yosef Goldberg, the Rosh Yeshiva in Brunoy). These were all scions of the above-mentioned family (despite the different last names).

But there is one strange aspect to this story.

All of the above were siblings. They were all children of Reb Michoel Katzenelenbogen, a *tomim* from Lubavitch mentioned in the introduction to this article. But based on all these stories, they should have all had cousins, second cousins, third cousins and even fourth cousins, all Lubavitcher Chassidim! Where did everyone go?

A short search through a genealogical website reveals the sad reality:

After three, four, and even five generations of their existence as a large chassidishe family came the winds of change.

Russia began to industrialize, and people began moving to the big cities for *parnassa*, leaving behind the close-knit Yiddishe atmosphere of the *shtetlach*. New move-

ments began to spread; Socialism, Zionism, and *haskalah* of various sorts, all with the common denominator of abandoning Torah and Mitzvos. Then, with the Bolshevik revolution, Yiddishkeit was outlawed, and it became almost impossible to give children a Jewish education.

One by one, members of the family fell away. Pictures of chassidishe yidden with long beards give way to their clean-shaven sons, many even named Menachem Mendel (born in the years after the *histalkus* of the Tzemach Tzedek). Their children already have Russian names.

In the course of a few short decades, an entire family disappeared. Every single grandchild who lived in Russia lost touch with Yiddishkeit.

With one exception. Reb Michoel.

“Echod Me’ir, Shnayim Mimishpachah”

When the Rebbe Rashab established Tomchei Temimim, it was with the express purpose of saving the youth. The Rebbe Rashab would personally raise a generation of Chassidim who would be soldiers, who would have a fiery devotion to Yiddishkeit, and would go through fire and water to preserve it.

The hundreds of *bochurim* that streamed through its doors were often *echad me’ir, shnayim mimishpacha*—the single members of their families who ultimately proved to have remained committed to Yiddishkeit.

Reb Michoel was one such example. He came from a long line of Lubavitcher Chassidim; his own father Reb Yehoshua, was the *baal korei* and *makri* of *tekios* by the Rabbeim in Lubavitch (!); but of his entire family, only his descendants remained connected.

He had been taken under the Rebbe Rashab’s wing.

A Second Generation

The fact that his children remained connected to Yiddishkeit could not be taken for granted either.

On Motzei Simchas Torah 5698, Reb Michoel was arrested by the Soviets and was never seen again. His family later discovered that he had been sentenced to death and killed on 15 Kislev that year, for “being an active participant in a counter-revolutionary group, educating youth in an illegal *kheder* in counter-revolutionary spirit, and teaching hatred towards the Soviet system.”

This could have again spelled the end for his family,

but Reb Michoel had already ensured that his children would remain connected to the Frierdiker Rebbe.

In those dangerous days, children would rarely join their fathers on visits to the Frierdiker Rebbe. Most children growing up in Russia never saw the Frierdiker Rebbe, not even once. That was true for Reb Michoel’s children as well. It was simply too dangerous.

Then, on Chol Hamoed Sukkos 5688, notice came to their home that the Frierdiker Rebbe would be leaving Russia. Simchas Torah would be the last opportunity to see the Rebbe, perhaps forever.

Disregarding the danger, Chassidim and their children began streaming to Leningrad. Reb Michoel grabbed his two older sons, Shimon and Zalman, and ran to catch the train to Leningrad. Reb Zalman would often tell about that special visit—watching the Frierdiker Rebbe’s Haftorah, meeting so many other Jewish children for the first time, and the pinnacle: the exalted few minutes when they entered the Frierdiker Rebbe’s holy chamber for *yechidus*, for the first time (and as it turned out, the last time) in his life.

When they were old enough, their father sent them away to join the underground network of *chadarim* and *yeshivos* that dotted the landscape of the Soviet Union. Their father’s disappearance didn’t weaken their resolve in the slightest. With the guidance of the Frierdiker Rebbe through secret letters and codes, the brothers all learned Torah, married, established chassidishe homes, and ultimately emigrated from Russia.

They had been taken under the Frierdiker Rebbe’s wing.

The story continued into the third generation. Hundreds, if not thousands, of the descendants of this family merit to serve as the Rebbe’s Shluchim across the globe. This, too, could not be taken for granted; when Reb Zalman, for example, arrived in America with his family, he told the Rebbe that he planned to sell watches for a living. But the Rebbe took him and his family under his wing, and guided them to a place and position where they would spend the rest of their lives being *mekarev* hundreds of Jews to Yiddishkeit.

These Are The Lachmah Anya

This story brings to mind a unique *sicha* the Rebbe once said at a Yud-Beis Tammuz farbrengen.



THE FOUR SONS OF REB MICHOEL. FROM RIGHT TO LEFT: REB ZALMAN, SHIMON, YEHOSHUA AND MOSHE KATZENELBOGEN.

The Rebbe noted that when we mark a special event or memory, we often place an item on the table—a physical item associated with the day, like Matzah on Pesach—to help us connect to the events of the past. What do we put on the table on Yud-Beis Tammuz? And why indeed do we so publicly mark an occasion which seemingly is only about an individual—the Frierdiker Rebbe’s personal liberation?

But the liberation of the Frierdiker Rebbe is not just a personal moment. The ‘item on the table’ that reminds us of the relevance of the day is right here, the Rebbe said. Around and around—albeit not on the table itself—“are the *lebedike yidden* who learn Torah *now* and do Mitzvos *now* and lead Jewish homes,” because of the *mesiras nefesh* of the Frierdiker Rebbe. Because they were carried on the

wings of the Rabbeim.

The Rebbe called them the “*lachmah anya di achalu avhasana b'ara d'mitzrayim*”—the current-day descendants of those who owe their connection to Yiddishkeit to the Rabbeim are the physical manifestation of the story.

There is also modern-day relevance to the story.

The sight of that *lachmah anya*, the Rebbe said, serves as an inspiration for our own connection to Yiddishkeit.

In the Rebbe’s words:

When we experience our own obstacles in *avodas Hashem*, we are reminded that just as the *Aibershter* stood by our ancestors, “*ka'asher haya im avoseinu*,” so too, Hashem will be with us—“*al ya'azveinu v'al yit'sheinu*”—when we do our part to follow באורחותיו אשר הורנו, in the paths our Rabbeim showed us. ❶

1. MiGeza Lubavitch, p. 18. Recorded by his grandson Reb Menachem Nochum Chanun (a chossid who immigrated to Eretz Yisroel as a child and passed away in 5736), grandfather of the Lubavitch Hertzfel family in Eretz Yisroel.

2. Sefer Hatoldos Admur HaRayatz p. 196.

3. Sefer Hasichos 5704 pp. 26–27.

4. Halekach V'Halibuv p. 212.

5. Zikaron Livnei Yisrael p. 19. He also appears elsewhere in the Frierdiker Rebbe’s *reshimos* and *sichos*. See Shemuos V'Sipurim vol. 3 p. 103, Lubavitch—Ha'Ayarah shel Chabad p. 21, Sefer Hasichos

5708 p. 172, Sefer Hasichos 5688–91 p. 274.

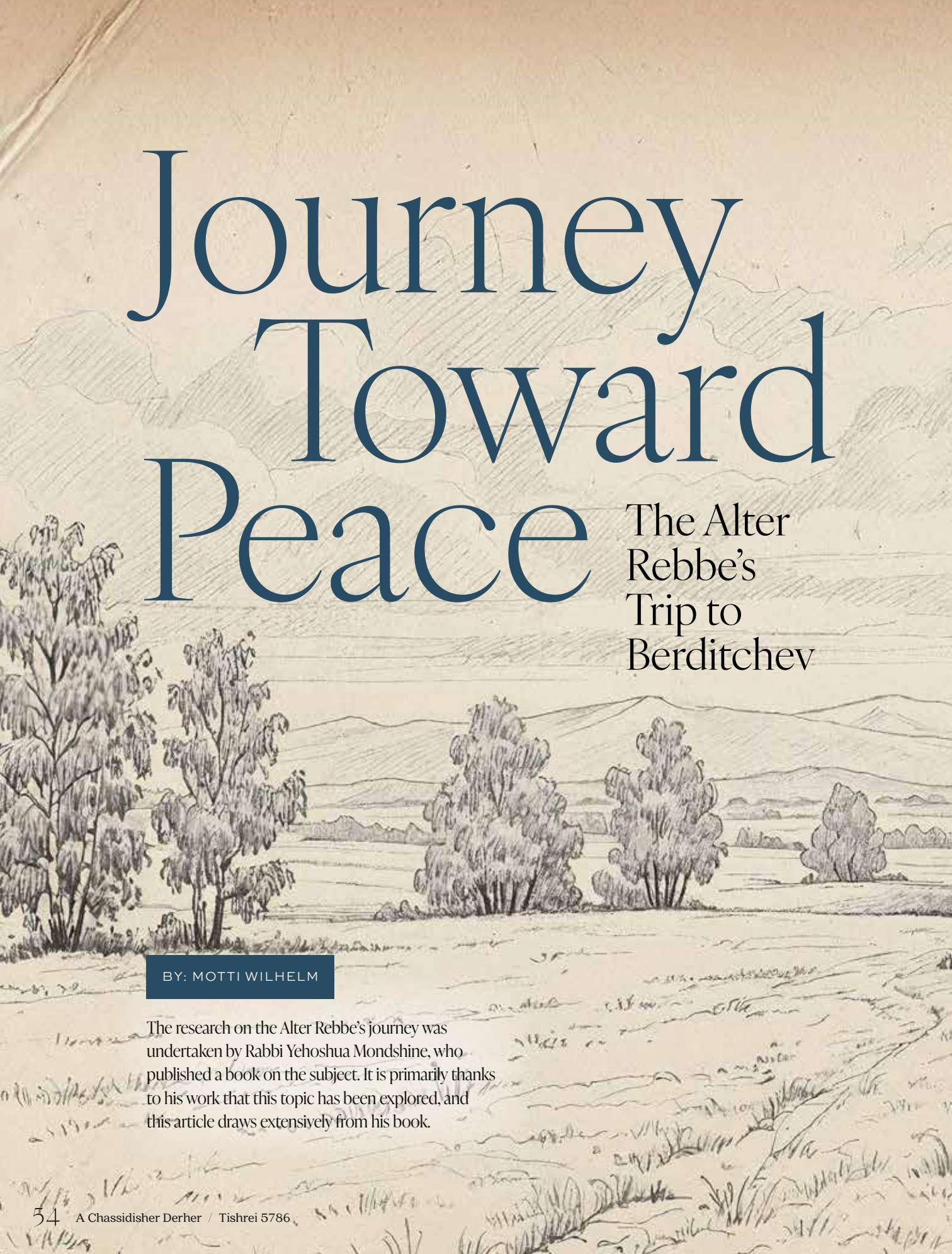
6. Reb Moshe Sarah's (Gruzman Teshurah Elul 5775) p. 8.

7. As heard from Reb Zalman by his great-grandchild, the author of this article. See also Reb Zalman's interview with JEM's My Encounter with the Rebbe.

8. See e.g. Igros Kodesh Admur HaRayatz vol. 11, p. 273.

9. Queen of Cleveland p. 235.

10. 13 Tammuz 5736; Sichos Kodesh 5736 vol. 2, p. 406.

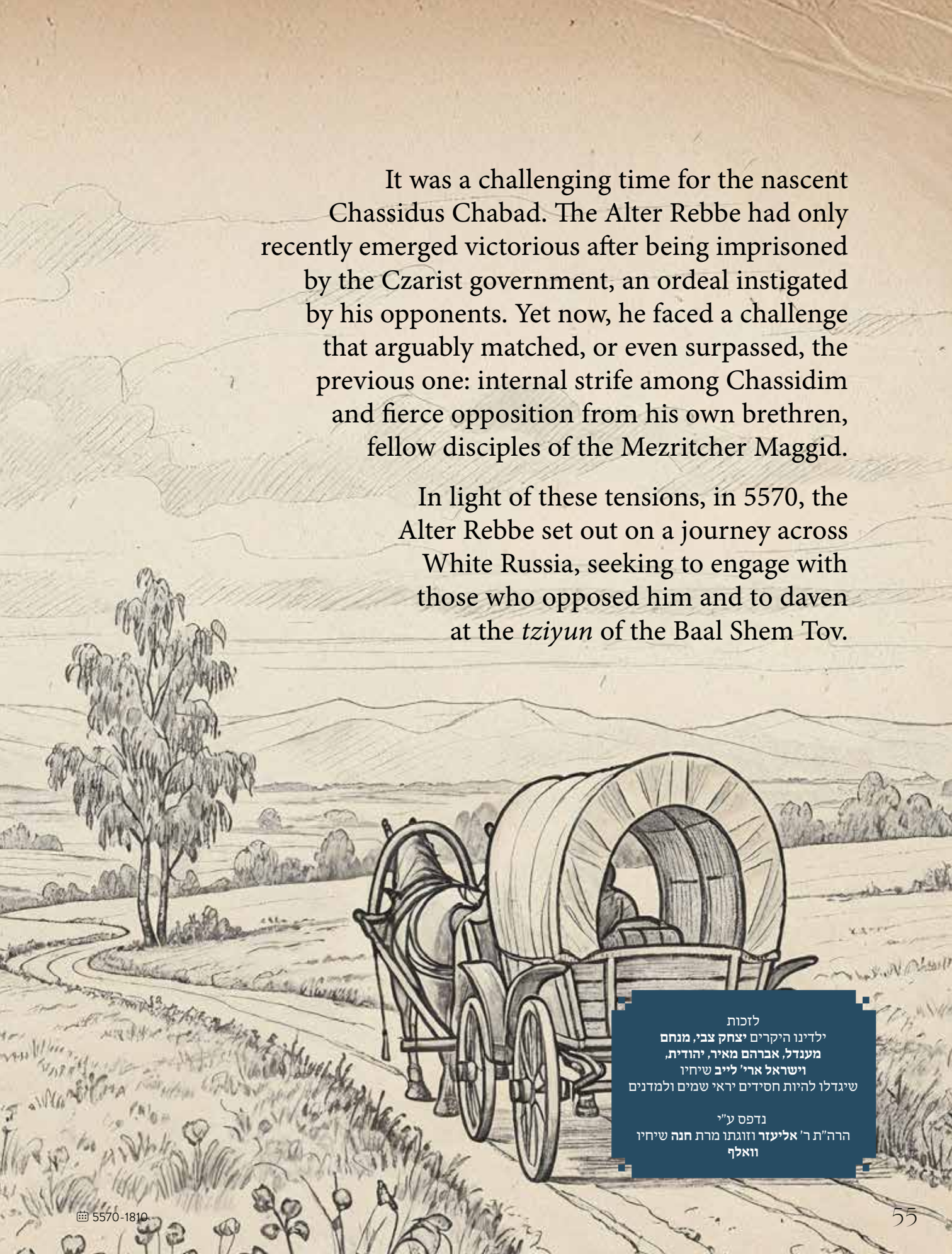


Journey Toward Peace

The Alter
Rebbe's
Trip to
Berditchev

BY: MOTTI WILHELM

The research on the Alter Rebbe's journey was undertaken by Rabbi Yehoshua Mondshine, who published a book on the subject. It is primarily thanks to his work that this topic has been explored, and this article draws extensively from his book.



It was a challenging time for the nascent Chassidus Chabad. The Alter Rebbe had only recently emerged victorious after being imprisoned by the Czarist government, an ordeal instigated by his opponents. Yet now, he faced a challenge that arguably matched, or even surpassed, the previous one: internal strife among Chassidim and fierce opposition from his own brethren, fellow disciples of the Mezritcher Maggid.

In light of these tensions, in 5570, the Alter Rebbe set out on a journey across White Russia, seeking to engage with those who opposed him and to daven at the *tziyun* of the Baal Shem Tov.

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

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

To fully understand the context of the journey, we must go back four decades, to the period immediately following the *histalkus* of the Mezritcher Maggid.

At that time, the Maggid's *talmidim* each returned to their respective cities and began to assume positions of leadership, "illuminating the world with the light of the Maggid's Torah, as transmitted to him by the Baal Shem Tov."¹

The Alter Rebbe, however, initially refused to accept the mantle of *nesius* or take on leadership of the Chassidim. He remained in Anipoli for some time, where he continued to learn Torah from Reb Avrohom HaMalach, the Maggid's son. Even later, after returning to his hometown of Lyozna, he declined any official position of *rabbanus* and counted himself among the *talmidim* of Harav Menachem Mendel of Vitebsk.

(It is interesting to note that in *Beis Rebbe*, the author adds a footnote: "The Alter Rebbe did not require a *rebbe* at that point, but he said, 'B'soch ami anochi yosheves—I dwell among my people.' And since all the Chassidim in our region had accepted R. Menachem Mendel as their *rav*, he too traveled to visit him."²)

In 5537, four years after the Maggid's *histalkus*, Harav Menachem Mendel decided to journey to Eretz Yisroel, driven by the intense persecution the Chassidim were suffering at the hands of the *misnagdim*. The Alter Rebbe accompanied him on the first leg of the journey, and only agreed to remain behind in White Russia to lead the Chassidim there after repeated pleas from *anash* who begged him to stay and assume the mantle of leadership.

At first, the Alter Rebbe accepted only a position of *rabbanus* in Lyozna, firmly refusing to take on the role of *nesius*. It was only after receiving numerous letters from the Maggid's disciples in Eretz Yisroel, whom he referred to as *Rabboseinu she'b'Eretz Yisroel*, urging him to accept the *nesius*, alongside their appeals to the Chassidim to recognize him as their *rebbe*, that he finally agreed.

Once he accepted the role, he began to lead the Chassidim and guide them in their *avodas Hashem*, following the path laid out by the Baal Shem Tov and the Maggid.

One area in which the Alter Rebbe was especially active was raising funds for *Rabboseinu she'b'Eretz Yisroel*, ensuring that the Chassidim consistently contributed to their support, something well-documented in many letters found in *Iggeres HaKodesh* of *Tanya*.

Even after the passing of Harav Menachem Mendel in

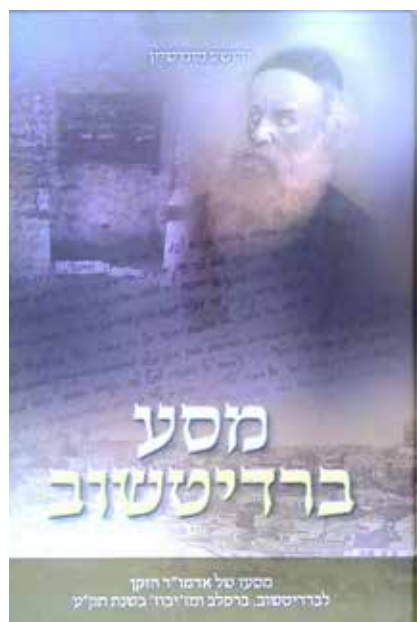
5548, the Alter Rebbe continued to support his successor, Harav Avraham Kalisker. In turn, Harav Avraham wrote to *anash*, urging them to follow the Alter Rebbe's guidance and to direct their contributions for Eretz Yisroel through him.

Winds of Machlokes

The following years were turbulent ones for Chassidus, and especially for the Alter Rebbe. The conflict between the *misnagdim* and Chassidim continued to intensify, ultimately reaching a boiling point with the Alter Rebbe's arrest by the Czarist government, following an accusation from a prominent *misnaged*.

Following his release on Yud-Tes Kislev, and subsequent exoneration from any investigation or government-decreed limitations on his teachings and leadership, the Alter Rebbe visited some of the greatest *rabbanim* of the *misnagdim*, where he was received with much honor. It seemed that the era of opposition had finally come to an end, and that the Alter Rebbe would enjoy a time of peace.

But alas, it was not to be. Shortly thereafter, a new and bitter *machlokes* erupted, this time from within. The Alter Rebbe now faced opposition not from the *misnagdim*, but from three fellow disciples of the Maggid: Harav Avraham Kalisker, Harav Boruch of Mezibuzh, and Harav Mordechai of Lechovitz.



THE SEFER
BY RABBI
YEHOASHUA
MONDSHINE
ON THE
ALTER
REBBE'S
JOURNEY TO
BERDITCHEV.

Beis Rabbi, in his account of the *machlokes*, writes:³

“All of this was merely the work of the Satan, *Rachmana litzlan*, who constantly seeks to confuse the world. When he saw that he could not succeed in obscuring our Rebbe’s path and holy conduct, he toiled to incite even the Rebbe’s longtime companions and loyal friends against him, turning their hearts to wage an aggressive campaign. Perhaps, he thought, in this way he could conceal the Rebbe’s path and holy influence.”

He continues:

“But thanks to Hashem, even this plot failed. Though our Rebbe and those who stood by him endured much suffering and many hardships, none of it succeeded in swaying the Rebbe from his sacred path in the slightest. On the contrary, the Rebbe ultimately prevailed, and it became evident to all that ‘Hashem was with him, and the *halacha* follows his opinion in every area.’”⁴

How did Harav Avraham Kalisker go from being a close companion of the Alter Rebbe to a fierce opponent? *Beis Rabbi* explains:

“Harav Hakadosh R. Avraham, *nishmaso Eden*, was an *ish Elokim kadosh*. However, *hu kadosh v’ein m’sharsav kedoshim*—he himself was holy, but his attendants were not. Some of the individuals he sent as emissaries to our region on matters of the *maamados* (communal contributions) were coarse and difficult people. When they arrived here, they opposed our Rebbe on many matters, and he endured much suffering from them. Yet, in his great humility, he accepted it all with grace.

“But they went further: upon returning to the Holy Land, they submitted numerous slanderous reports about the Rebbe to R. Avraham. *Lashon hara* has a way of taking root in the heart, especially in the hearts of great *tzaddikim*. And so, some of their words were, to a certain degree, accepted by R. Avraham.”

At first, the *machlokes* was limited to differences of opinion regarding how to spread the teachings of Chassidus. Harav Avraham expressed opposition to the Chabad approach, both to its method of study, which emphasized understanding G-dly concepts through natural *sechel*, and to the idea of publicizing Chassidus to the broader public. These early letters were still written in a tone of friendship and respect. However, it was not long before the tone and content became sharper and more confrontational.⁵

The disagreement soon extended to the matter of the *maamados* as well. Harav Avraham’s emissaries began



UNIQUE TRANSCRIPT OF A MAAMAR (TITLED: KSIV V'YADAATA HAYOM) DELIVERED BY THE MITTELER REBBE IN BERDITCHEV DURING HIS VISIT IN 5570 TOGETHER WITH HIS FATHER, THE ALTER REBBE. THE MAAMAR IS IN A SIMPLE STYLE, FOR THOSE NOT YET FAMILIAR WITH CHASSIDUS CHABAD. THE HEADING OF THE MAAMAR READS: “THIS IS A DRUSH THAT THE SON OF THE ADMUR SAID FOR NEW CHASSIDIM IN 5570.”

raising their own funds independently, backed by several of the Maggid’s disciples in Europe who supported his position, chief among them Harav Boruch of Mezibuzh and Harav Mordechai of Lechovitz. Others, including Harav Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev, sided with the Alter Rebbe.

This *machlokes* continued to unfold over the following decade, with many of its details preserved in letters written by the Alter Rebbe and his contemporaries.⁶

Another stage in the escalation of the *machlokes* occurred when the Alter Rebbe traveled through regions that were under the spiritual jurisdiction of other *tzaddikim*. This took place during his efforts to assist the many Jews who had been displaced as a result of a harsh government decree.

In 5565, Czar Alexander I issued a cruel edict prohibiting Jews from leasing inns and taverns. The decree went into effect three years later, uprooting tens of thousands of Jewish families. These Jews were forced to begin their lives anew, finding new places to live, applying for governmental permission to settle, and seeking new means of livelihood.

In response, the Alter Rebbe undertook a series of journeys to support these displaced and resettled communities. He raised funds, convened leaders of Jewish communities, and even traveled to Petersburg to appeal directly to the government.

During these travels, at a time when the *machlokes* was already at its peak, the Alter Rebbe passed through territories overseen by other *tzaddikim*. This further intensified the conflict, deepening the opposition he faced.



MAP OF SEVERAL OF THE PLACES VISITED BY THE ALTER REBBE DURING THE MONTHS-LONG JOURNEY.

The Journey of 5570

In the winter of 5570, the Alter Rebbe set out on a journey through White Russia. Various traditions offer different reasons for this trip: to pay a condolence visit to the family of Harav Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev, who had passed away on 25 Tishrei of that year; to daven at the *tziyun* of the Baal Shem Tov; to continue his efforts on behalf of the displaced Jewish communities; and to visit Harav Baruch in hopes of resolving the *machlokes* between them. It is likely that all of these motivations played a role in the Alter Rebbe's decision to travel.⁷

Accompanying the Alter Rebbe on this journey was the famed chossid Reb Pinchas Reizes, who had joined the Alter Rebbe on many of his travels. During the trip, he recorded several *maamarim* that the Alter Rebbe delivered at various stops, and also shared stories from the journey. Also accompanying them was the chossid Reb Sholom Freidas, who transcribed additional *maamarim* along the way. The Mittler Rebbe joined for part of the journey as well, recording *maamarim* in his own handwriting.

There is no clear record of the exact route the Alter Rebbe took on his journey, but based on known stops, it appears that the first locations he visited were Trepik and Haisyn, towns located in present-day central Ukraine.

A story from the Alter Rebbe's visit to Trepik is preserved in Breslover sources:⁸

"Once, a serious question arose in Trepik concerning an *agunah*. The town's *dayan*, R. Mordechai, wished to permit her to remarry, but refrained from ruling immediately. Instead, he decided to wait for the arrival of the Rebbe, the author of the *Tanya*, to discuss the matter with him.

"When the Rebbe arrived in Trepik, he, Rabbi Mordechai, and an additional local *rav* deliberated the issue together. Their joint conclusion was to permit the woman [to remarry].

"As the Rebbe was leaving the town, he remarked to those accompanying him: 'Trepik has two rabbis. One is worth a fortune, the other a kopek.' That is, Rabbi Mordechai was worth a great deal, while the other, by comparison, was worth but a mere penny."

The next stop was Breslov, home to Harav Nachman, great-grandson of the Baal Shem Tov. As *Beis Rebbe* records:⁹

"When he traveled through the cities of Poland on his way to meet with Harav Boruch, he passed through

the city of Breslov. The holy Rebbe of Breslov came out to greet him beyond the city limits, brought him into his home, and accorded him great honor.”

Breslov sources provide additional details about the visit:¹⁰

“When the [Alter] Rebbe arrived at the home of Harav Nachman, Harav Nachman turned to Reb Moshe Chinkes, a wealthy supporter and close follower, and said to him: ‘Give *tzedakah* to a true *talmid chacham*!’

“Reb Moshe placed a gold coin (*rendl*) on the table for the Alter Rebbe. Harav Nachman looked at him in astonishment and said, ‘That’s what you give to a true *talmid chacham*?!’

“Reb Moshe added another *rendl*, and then a third. Seeing Harav Nachman was still not satisfied, he continued to add coin after coin, until ten gold coins lay on the table. At that point, Harav Nachman swept the coins off the table and placed them into the Alter Rebbe’s hands.

“Then Harav Nachman asked the Alter Rebbe, ‘Is it true that you have eighty thousand Chassidim?’

“The Alter Rebbe responded that it should not come as a surprise. Among his Chassidim were many *melamdim*, and each *melamed* had numerous students. Each of those students gave *tzedakah* to support the Rebbe, and through that act, they were considered his Chassidim.”

For when someone gives *tzedakah* to a *tzaddik*, the Alter Rebbe explained, that spiritual bond ensures he will not become opposed to the *tzaddik*. On the contrary, the merit of the *tzedakah* will protect him and help transform him for the good. In this way, he explained, one can count eighty thousand Chassidim.

For reasons unknown, the Alter Rebbe declined to spend the night in Harav Nachman’s home. Instead, the townspeople of Breslov accompanied him out of the city, the two *tzaddikim* riding together in the same carriage.

As they traveled, Harav Nachman asked the Alter Rebbe about his dispute with Harav Boruch, his own uncle, who had also spoken out harshly against Harav Nachman. Using a play on words, Harav Nachman told him:

“From *Feterburch* you are already *patur*,” using the Yiddish pronunciation for Petersburg, where the Alter Rebbe had been imprisoned. “But from *Feter Boruch*” – Uncle Boruch, “you have not yet become *patur*.”



OUTSKIRTS OF THE CITY OF BRESLOV.

Meeting Reb Boruch of Mezibuzh

From Breslov, the Alter Rebbe continued to Tulchyn, home of Harav Boruch of Mezibuzh. Harav Boruch lived in an attic, and as the Alter Rebbe ascended to meet him, he recited the *possuk*, “*Mi ya’aleh v’har Hashem*”¹¹—“Who may ascend the mountain of Hashem?” Harav Boruch stepped out to greet him and replied with the next *possuk*: “*Neki chapayim u’var levav*”—“He who has clean hands and a pure heart.”¹²

According to other sources, Harav Boruch descended three steps, or perhaps only one, and remarked that he would not descend further, not even for Moshiach himself.¹³

Beis Rabbi writes:¹⁴ “He brought him up to the attic, and they spoke with love and friendship. The Alter Rebbe then related to him the entire story of his imprisonment in Petersburg, from beginning to end.”

What followed was later recorded by the Alter Rebbe himself.¹⁵ This was prompted by a man named Dovid, who circulated a false account of the meeting. In response to requests from *anash*, the Alter Rebbe wrote down the true version of events.

“I received the letter *Shigayon LeDovid*”—a play on words referencing Dovid, the author, and the nature of the letter itself: a falsification—“and my insides trembled. Can there truly be such a person, who so thoroughly distorts the truth, turning everything upside down, from

one extreme to the other?

“On the contrary, I rebuked Reb Boruch to his face: How could he be so ungrateful? After all, both times I traveled to Petersburg [under arrest], it was solely out of honor for his grandfather, the Baal Shem Tov. I could have said, ‘His grandson is alive and well, let him come and respond to the accusations!’ But I did not. And I did not say, ‘Who am I, that the teachings of the Baal Shem Tov should be sanctified through me?’”

Among the other topics recorded by the Alter Rebbe from this meeting was a question posed by Harav Boruch: Why was the Alter Rebbe investing so much effort in helping the displaced Jews?

“Why do you need all this?” Harav Boruch asked. “You can be *mamtik dinim* just by passing your hand over your forehead and face.”

The Alter Rebbe replied, “Yaakov Avinu surely knew how to be *mamtik dinim*, and yet he still sent a gift to appease Eisav.”

Harav Boruch then asked whether it was befitting the Alter Rebbe’s honor to personally undertake such extensive travel. The Alter Rebbe responded with a rhetorical question:

“Am I greater than Rebbe Pinchas ben Yair, who spent his days traveling for *pidyon shevuyim*?”

After asking and receiving confirmation from Harav Boruch that he had indeed spoken in praise of the *Tanya*,

the Alter Rebbe asked, “If so, why are you upset with me?” Harav Boruch responded by asking why the Alter Rebbe had come into their regions, to which the Alter Rebbe offered two answers.

While this exchange was taking place, Reb Pinchas Reizes stood between the two *tzaddikim*, attempting to defuse the intense conversation. Later, the Alter Rebbe rebuked him:

“How did you dare presume to stand between me and the Mezibuzher?! If you weren’t so dear to me, I would have already punished you!”¹⁶

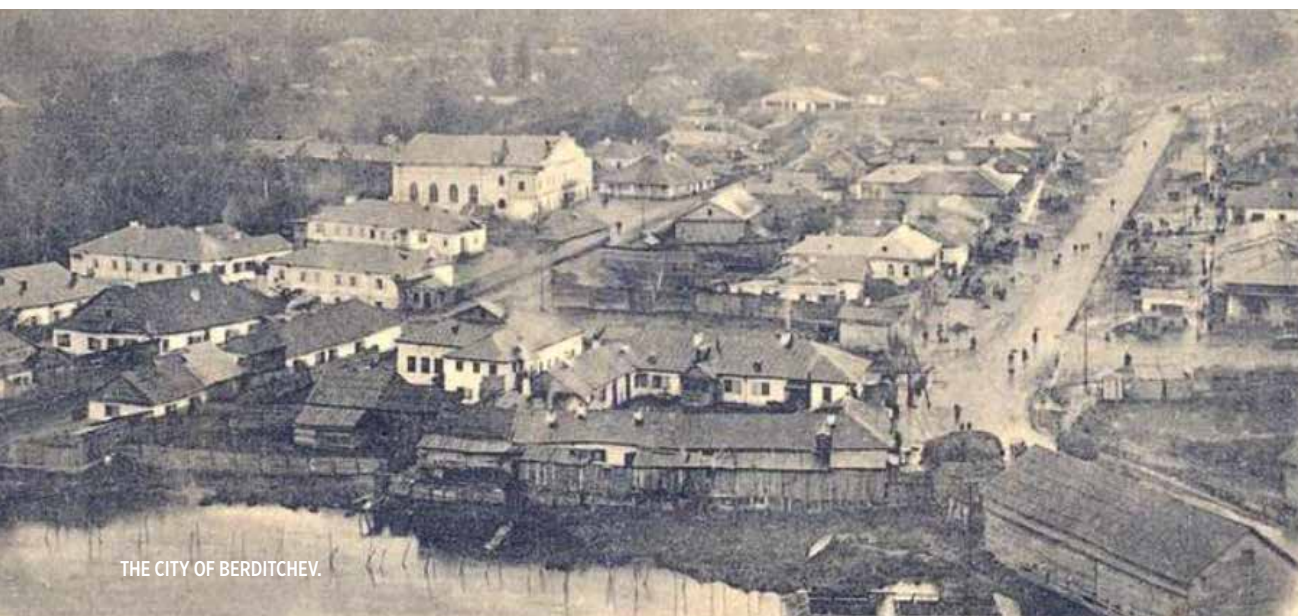
Beis Rebbe concludes his account of the meeting:¹⁷

“But nothing helped, they parted in *machlokes*, and no good came to either side from it.”

In a footnote, he clarifies this statement by citing “printed stories.” Around that time, Harav Boruch’s daughter passed away, and the Alter Rebbe lost a significant portion of his *Shulchan Aruch* manuscript in a fire, an immeasurable loss.

Visiting Berditchev

According to *Beis Rebbe*, the Alter Rebbe’s visit with Reb Boruch took place on Rosh Chodesh Adar 5570. In some handwritten accounts, it is noted that the visit occurred “before Purim.” Since 5570 was a leap year, combining both sources suggests that the Alter Rebbe’s visit



THE CITY OF BERDITCHEV.

likely took place at the beginning of *Adar Sheini*.

Reviewing the *maamarim* delivered by the Alter Rebbe during this period, we find one on *V'yikchu Li Terumah*, presumably said on or around Shabbos Parshas Terumah, 6 Adar Rishon of that year. Following that, additional *maamarim* are recorded in various locations, with more delivered later once again in Berditchev. On Purim, the Alter Rebbe was in Mohyliv-Podilskiy, as recorded by the Tzemach Tzedek.¹⁸ Other sources place the Alter Rebbe in Starokostiantyniv and Sharhorod, other cities in modern-day Ukraine, at other points in his journey. This suggests that over the course of his journey, the Alter Rebbe traveled back and forth to Berditchev multiple times.

This pattern aligns with a story related by Reb Yochanan Gordon about the Alter Rebbe's visit to Berditchev.¹⁹ The Alter Rebbe had traveled there to be *menachem avel* the family of Harav Levi Yitzchok after his passing that Tishrei. Before Purim, the Alter Rebbe considered returning home, but the widow of Harav Levi Yitzchok asked him, "Who will lead the Seder in my home?" Hearing that, the Alter Rebbe instructed that one of the boxes that he had brought with him, which contained *shemura* flour, be opened. They baked matzah for Pesach with it, and the Alter Rebbe remained there for the Yom Tov.

Another fascinating detail is recorded in *Beis Rebbi*, in the section describing the lifelong connection between the Alter Rebbe and Harav Levi Yitzchok. There, it mentions that during the condolence visit after Harav Levi Yitzchok's passing, the Alter Rebbe went to visit his *kever*.

"When the Rebbe left the cemetery, he was quietly singing a *niggun* to himself. Upon arriving at the Rav's home, they brought him coffee and also offered him water to wash his hands. The Rebbe replied, 'I don't need water. The graves of *tzaddikim* do not impart *tumah*.'"²⁰

During this visit to Berditchev, the Alter Rebbe recited several *maamarim*, which were transcribed and later published in *Sefer HaMaamarim Admur Hazaken 5570*. Since these *maamarim* were delivered to audiences unfamiliar with the style and depth of Chassidus Chabad, they reflect a somewhat unique tone and structure, adapted to the listeners' background and understanding.

Another story from that journey recounts a meeting between the Alter Rebbe and the Shpoler Zeide.

"After the *histalkus* of Harav Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev, the Alter Rebbe traveled to console his family and remained there through Pesach.

"During that time, the Shpoler Zeide arrived in

Berditchev. When Harav Levi Yitzchak's grandson heard of his arrival, he informed the Alter Rebbe that the 'Sabba' was in town. The Alter Rebbe asked the grandson to convey that he planned to visit the Sabba.

"The grandson went to the inn where the Sabba was staying and found a crowd of Chassidim crowded around the entrance, many holding *pidyonos*. The Sabba noticed him and asked, 'Did you also come to give a *pidyon*—you, a grandson?' Upon hearing the Alter Rebbe's message, the Sabba stood up and swore that he would not allow the Alter Rebbe to come visit him.

"The grandson returned and found the Alter Rebbe already preparing to head out. Even after hearing of the Sabba's oath, the Alter Rebbe insisted on going, saying he was not exempted from greeting the Sabba even after the oath.

"Before he could set out, the Sabba himself arrived and entered the Alter Rebbe's home. The two great *tzaddikim* went into a room together and remained there for a long time. When they finally emerged, ready to part ways, the grandson intervened. 'If Hashem has granted me two such distinguished guests,' he said, 'I cannot let the moment pass. I ask that you both eat with me.'

"If you give, we will eat,' replied the Sabba.

"They sat down for the meal, and each time the door needed to be opened, the Sabba quickly rose from his seat to do so."²¹

These sources also describe a gathering of *tzaddikim* convened by the Alter Rebbe to address the pressing challenges facing the Jewish people at the time. Some versions of the story include Harav Levi Yitzchok among the participants, but this appears to be an error, as the meeting likely took place during the Alter Rebbe's visit to Berditchev, after Harav Levi Yitzchok's *histalkus*.

Another notable gathering mentioned from that visit was of the *baalei hora'ah*, recorded by the Alter Rebbe himself in a *teshuva* addressed to Harav Aryeh Leib Katzenellenbogen, Av Beis Din of Brisk.²²

In his response, the Alter Rebbe notes that he received the letter, which included a halachic query, while in Berditchev, writing: "And I was very preoccupied with communal matters, *Hashem yerachem*." The *teshuva* dealt with a question regarding *treifos* in an animal, and the Alter Rebbe adds, "While I was [in Berditchev], the local *baalei hora'ah* gathered around me," and they collectively agreed on the *psak*.

Moving to Berditchev?

While the Alter Rebbe was still on his journey, tragedy struck. A fire broke out in Liadi, destroying the home and possessions of the Alter Rebbe and his family, including many priceless manuscripts of Chassidus and *nigleh*, among them the handwritten draft of the Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch.



THE TZIYUN OF REB LEVI YITZCHOK IN BERDITCHEV
AS IT APPEARED FOR MANY YEARS BEFORE ITS
MORE RECENT RENOVATION (BELOW).

The fire is described in a letter penned by the Mittlerer Rebbe to all of *anash*.²³

“We now come to inform you of our sorrow: the hand of Hashem has touched us, as a sudden fire, sparked by a minor cause, broke out in the great house of *kvod adoneinu moreinu v'rabeinu, ateres rosheinu, sheyichye*.

“There was no time whatsoever to save even a single item, for in but a brief moment, the entire roof and the inside of the house were engulfed in a terrifying blaze. All who saw it were stricken with awe and shaken to their core; no one had the strength to respond or act. Nothing at all was saved from the house, not even a thread or a shoelace.”

In the same letter, the Mittlerer Rebbe goes on to describe the great losses and appeals to the Chassidim to support the Alter Rebbe with funds. He also notes that the community of Berditchev was attempting to persuade the Alter Rebbe to relocate there:

“Especially after hearing from trustworthy sources that it is the wish and approval of the dignitaries and leaders of the Berditchev community that [the Alter Rebbe] establish his permanent residence there, to illuminate the land and its inhabitants.”

The Mittlerer Rebbe writes that they have already communicated to Berditchev, “urging that such an idea should not even be entertained, *chas v'shalom*,” expressing confidence that the Alter Rebbe will not “break the bond he shares with the *anash* of our areas, who are truly bound to him with their very souls and have devoted themselves to him wholeheartedly for so many years.” Still, *anash* needed to ensure there was nothing preventing the Alter Rebbe's return by providing him with a house and all necessary items.

In the end, however, it was the fire itself that led the Alter Rebbe to remain in Liadi. In a letter of comfort written to a community that had suffered a fire of their own, the Mittlerer Rebbe shared a powerful insight: specifically in the place where the Divine attribute of *midas hadin* is revealed and brought to completion, the inner *ahava* concealed within it becomes revealed. “For this reason,” he explained, “the Alter Rebbe did not wish to leave Liadi after the fire.”²⁴

And indeed, by Shavuot the Alter Rebbe had returned to Liadi, where he remained until the French invasion of Russia forced him and his family to flee deeper into the country. It was during that journey that the Alter Rebbe was *nistalek*.

Machlokes of Tzaddikim

While the fierce *machlokes* between the Alter Rebbe and other *tzaddikim* may have appeared to stem from ideological or practical disagreements, the Rabbeim explained that, in truth, its roots lay in the loftiest realms of *ruchniyus*.

The Beis Rebbe quotes the following from “One of our rebbes”—namely, the Magen Avos of Kopust.²⁵

“On one occasion, his grandfather, the Rebbe, the Tzemach Tzedek, learned with him a certain *maamar* addressing the dispute between Shaul and Dovid. After concluding the *maamar*, he spoke at length about how this paralleled the disagreement between R. Boruch and the Alter Rebbe. However, the exact nature of the parallel was not explained to us.”

Later, at the end of the chapter describing the *machlokes* between the Alter Rebbe and his contemporaries, the *Beis Rebbe* adds:

“From all that has been written above, it is clear that their disagreement was not a simple one. It dealt with lofty, exalted issues, matters that stand at the pinnacle of the world. Even during the dispute, there was never complete enmity between them. It was only when the matter spread to others, especially to the public, that it became more divisive. But they themselves, even in the midst of disagreement, were careful to preserve one another’s honor.”

“Indeed, we heard from a trustworthy member of *anash* that he personally witnessed a man speaking disrespectfully of the Alter Rebbe in the presence of R. Boruch, referring to him by name without the title ‘Rebbe,’ and so on. R. Boruch trembled and rebuked the man, saying: ‘You are degrading a *talmid chochom*, and the punishment for that is severe and bitter.’

“Realizing that such words from a *tzaddik* would not return empty, the man began to cry bitterly and begged R. Boruch to lift the curse. But R. Boruch replied, ‘I do not have the power to help you. You must travel to him yourself—perhaps he will be able to assist you.’

“At the time, the Alter Rebbe was in Berdichev. The man traveled there and poured out his heart before him. The Alter Rebbe told him: ‘A curse from a *tzaddik* must leave some mark. Still, if you have merit, the punishment may be lessened.’ And so it was, the words of the *tzaddik* were fulfilled, but part of the consequence was eased, just as the Alter Rebbe had said. This story is well known

in the cities of Poland, though this is not the place to recount it in full.”

The *Beis Rebbe* concludes:

“From all this, a discerning person will recognize that their opposition was not born of hatred. On the contrary, they remained respectful even in the midst of disagreement. One can sense that their words were like burning coals, and their rebuke carried the bite of a serpent.

“We also learn that Hashem Himself guards the honor of *tzaddikim* and exacts retribution on their behalf. Therefore, anyone who possesses fear of Heaven should guard his mouth and lips from speaking falsely or disrespectfully about the holy and exalted *tzaddikim*. He should know that his very soul is at stake, and one who values his life will keep far from such speech.”

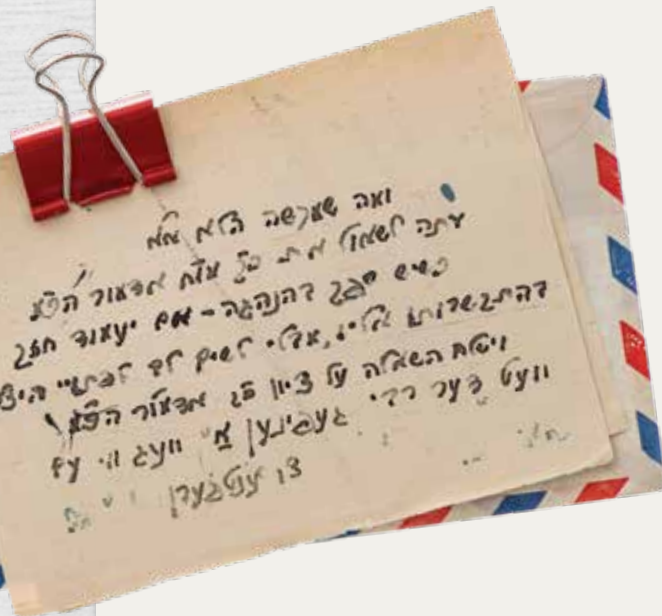
May Hashem help us to follow in the ways of our Rabbeim, upon whose path we all tread until the coming of Moshiach. **1**

1. *Beis Rebbe*, vol. 1, ch. 4.
2. *Ibid.*, fn. 12.
3. *Ibid.*, ch. 21.
4. A quote from Sanhedrin 93b.
5. *Igros Kodesh Admur Hazaken* (Kehos, 2012), letter 89.
6. *Ibid.*, and appendix 34.
7. Yehoshua Mondshine, *Masa Berdichev* (Keramim, 2017), p. 26.
8. *Siach Sarfei Kodesh*, brought in Mondshine, *Masa Berdichev*, p. 31.
9. Vol. 1, ch. 25.
10. *Masa Berdichev* p. 32.
11. *Tehillim*, 24:3.
12. *Beis Rebbe* vol. 1, ch. 21.
13. *Masa Berdichev* p. 39.
14. Vol. 1, ch. 21.
15. *Igros Kodesh* letter 98.
16. *Masa Berdichev* p. 42.
17. Vol. 1, ch. 21.
18. *Ohr Hatorah Megilas Esther*, p. 30.
19. *Masa Berdichev* p. 67.
20. Vol. 1, ch. 25.
21. *Migdal Oz* (Machon Lubavitch, Kfar Chabad, 1980), p. 170.
22. *Sha’alos U’teshuvos Admur Hazaken*, *teshuva* 12.
23. *Igros Kodesh Admur Ha’emtzai* (Kehos, Brooklyn, 2012), letter 3.
24. *Igros Kodesh Admur Ha’emtzai*, letter 76.
25. Vol. 1, ch. 21.



Story

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



דער רבי וועט געפינען א וועג...

WRITTEN BY: RABBI LEVI GREENBERG (TX)

I Had A Purpose There



AS TOLD BY
RABBI SHMUEL LEW
(London, England)

In connection with Yud Shevat 5760, the fiftieth anniversary of the start of the Rebbe's *nesius*, I was invited to spend Shabbos with the Antwerp community. On the morning of Yud Shevat, I returned to London to participate in school activities in my capacity as principal, and had booked a flight to New York for later that afternoon. I scheduled my day so that I could ride the Tube (London's underground train system) for the one-hour and five-minute train ride to the airport to catch my flight.

Several stops before the airport, the train stopped, and it was announced that we would need to wait on the platform for around fifteen minutes for the next train to the airport. This unforeseen delay caused me to arrive late to the terminal, and by the time I approached the check-in

counter, my seat had been given to someone else. I asked for a different seat, and thankfully, got one.

Shortly before takeoff, there was a ruckus a few seats ahead of me. A woman was trying to recline her seat, and the passenger behind her was protesting loudly. To calm the situation, the flight attendant reseated the woman in the seat across the aisle from me. We started speaking, and it turned out she was Jewish, living in Greenwich, CT, but I was saddened to learn during the conversation that in her youth she had converted to a different religion. At that moment, I was reminded of a *yechidus* I merited to have on Thursday evening, 24 Tishrei 5735.

At the time, my role on shlichus was visiting universities around England, meeting with students, arranging



shiurim, Shabbatons, and the like. It was one month after the Rebbe had launched Mivtza Neshek, and at one point during the very long *yechidus*, the Rebbe said:

“You will meet female Jewish students who observe nothing, and you should speak to them about the importance of lighting a candle before Shabbos. However, you must explain to them that it is on condition that they do so before sunset; if they miss the proper time, they should not light after dark at all. They will keep this condition. Not out of religiosity, but out of honesty.”

With this instruction in mind, I shared with her the story of the Rebbe, who had told me that I would meet her and should encourage her to light Shabbos candles each week. After explaining what it was all about, she agreed to commit to the mitzvah. She shared her contact information in Greenwich so I could send her a candlestick and arrange for someone to provide her with candles every week.

Toward the end of the flight, she told me with excitement that she had just learned that South African President Nelson Mandela was on the flight. I replied that there was a far more important presence on the flight, Hashem! Our meeting on the plane was the result of a confluence of events that could only be explained by divine providence. I lost my original seat due to an unforeseen Tube delay, and she was reseated after another passenger caused a disturbance. Hashem surely orchestrated this so I could share the Rebbe’s request that she light Shabbos candles every week. She was very moved to hear this.

When I arrived at the Ohel, I encountered a chossid who was originally from England, currently living in New York. After briefly catching up, he introduced me to his cousin Rina, who was working for the Shluchim in Greenwich, CT.

Amazed at the wonderful *hashgacha pratis*, I told her about my encounter with the woman on the flight. I asked if she would undertake to arrange candles for her every Friday on my behalf, and she was delighted to do so.

A few weeks later, Rina sent me an email. After confirming that she was visiting the woman every week, she shared her side of the story. Upon finishing seminary, she wanted to do something useful and found a job with Chabad of Greenwich. After several months, she had doubts as to whether she was needed specifically in Greenwich. With these troubled thoughts, she came to the Ohel on Yud Shevat and asked the Rebbe for a sign that she was useful, specifically there. Sure enough, five minutes after leaving the Ohel, she received the sign she so desperately needed to know she could achieve something special in Greenwich.

Rina kept in touch with the woman for a while and even invited her to participate in the public seder for the first time in her life. **T**

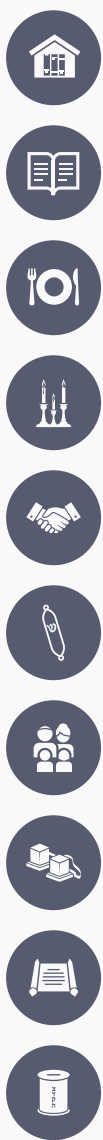
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BY: RABBI MENDEL JACOBS

MIVTZA TEFILLIN



TAKING ACTION

THE TEN
MIVTZOIM
REVISITED

לע"נ
ר' אברהם שמואל בן ר' משה ע"ה שפאלטר
נלב"ע כ"ד ניסן ה'תשפ"ה

ולע"נ
ר' משה חיים בן ר' מאיר הערץ ע"ה
נפ' ר"ח תמוז ה'תשפ"ד
ת"נ צ"ב

•
ולזכות הורינו
מרת רבקה מירל שיחיו שפאלטר
מרת שרה תחיל' גיפן
לאריכות ימים ושנים טובות מתוך בריאות הנכונה
נדפס ע"י הרה"ת ר' יצחק מאיר וזוגתו
מרת לאה ומשפחתם שיחיו
שפאלטר

As the first of the Rebbe's Ten Mivtzoim, and the one that has probably become the most widely associated with Lubavitch activity, Mivtza Tefillin holds a special place in every Chossid's heart.

Whether on an Israeli army base or on an airplane 30,000 feet over the Atlantic Ocean, the iconic image of Chabad Chassidim assisting their fellow Jews with this precious mitzvah is ever present.

The full story of Mivtza Tefillin has been covered in previous Derher magazines.¹ Today, we revisit some of its background story, with additional facts and vignettes, with the goal of inspiring even greater action—in Mivtza Tefillin, and all the *mivtzoim*.

In the days before the outbreak of the Six-Day War, amidst the chaotic and frightening prognosis cast upon the population of Eretz Yisroel, the Rebbe called on everyone to do away with fear; trusting that Hashem would protect His people.

"I am extremely unhappy about the panic and exaggerated [fear being sown]," the Rebbe wrote to a concerned Yid in Eretz Yisroel. "Hashem will watch over all those you mentioned, together with all the Jewish people *shlita*, wherever they are; especially in the location upon which His eyes always are [Eretz Yisroel]..."²

In private responses and in public, the Rebbe reassured all his listeners that there was no reason to be afraid; Hashem would watch over His people, and a miraculous deliverance was at hand.

The Launch

On Shabbos Parshas Bamidbar, two days before the war began, the Rebbe spoke on the theme of war at the farbrengen.

There are two types of war, the Rebbe explained. One way is for us mortals here on earth to fight, as the Torah says, "[Count] all those who go out to fight in battle." A better way is when Hashem fights our battles for us, as it says, "Hashem is the Master of war."

Nevertheless, even as we hope for the second option to materialize when Hashem fights our battles for us, we must take some action on our part to make that a reality. Although we are not supposed to measure the importance of one mitzvah over the other, there are *mitzvos* about which the Torah reveals unique spiritual powers more than all others. For example, the mitzvah of tefillin, we are told, grants a person long life and casts



fear into the hearts of our enemies.

After a lengthy discussion on this subject based on many Torah sources, the Rebbe concluded:

“I’m not here to give *drashos*. I mean practically: Given the current situation in Eretz Yisroel, we must make every effort to put kosher tefillin on the maximum number of Jewish people possible...”³

Now More Than Ever

After the war was over and the entire world had recognized the great miracle that had occurred, the Rebbe said that now was the time to double down on the efforts of this *mivtza*:

Firstly, the main impetus behind the *mivtza* still applies. The mitzvah of “*Hocheach tochiach*” (influencing one’s fellow Jew in the ways of Torah), “*Ve’ahavta l’reiacha kamocho*” (love your fellow as yourself), “*Kol Yisroel areivim*” (all Jews are responsible for one another) apply at all times equally.

Furthermore, the entire Jewish world is currently on a spiritual high due to the great miracles we just witnessed. We therefore have an even greater responsibility than usual to help bring this inspiration to action.

Then the Rebbe quoted an interesting *halacha* in this context:

The Gemara states (and the Shulchan Aruch cites this as a practical ruling) that if tragedy strikes and the Jewish community is unable to fast, they should accept upon themselves the obligation to fast later on. The Shulchan Aruch explains:

“If a city is under siege by non-Jews, the inhabitants should not fast right away, so as not to diminish their physical strength [in case they need to fight a battle]. Instead, they should accept upon themselves to fast after they are saved.”

The Rebbe explained that Hashem, of course, transcends time, and He therefore *retroactively* applies the *teshuva* that they will do after the battle is over.

Similarly, the miracles that Hashem showed us during the Six-Day War were due to the *mitzvos* that would be done even *after* the war was over! We must therefore utilize every opportunity we have to continue with this *mivtza*, laying tefillin on as many Jewish men as possible.⁴



The Scene at a Tel Aviv Bus Station

Following the Rebbe’s encouragement, Chassidim worldwide threw themselves into the *mivtza*. In Eretz Yisroel, tefillin stands were set up throughout the country, in train and bus stations, airports, malls, and central squares in the main cities. Army bases, hospitals, police stations, and homes for the elderly all became regular targets for the *mivtza*.

Soldiers in the IDF, as well as regular travelers, have become accustomed to being offered the opportunity to lay tefillin during their journey. Chassidim began carrying a pair of tefillin in their bags, and others began to utilize breaks in their workday to offer fellow workers the merit to say the quick and simple prayer.

The following is a description of a *mivtzoim* stand, written by an Israeli journalist:

“Friday afternoon, the main bus station in Tel Aviv. The sun is burning in full force; tens of individuals pass you every minute, hurrying on their way. But when you



RABBI SHMUEL DOVID RAICHIK
LAYING TEFFILIN ON A FELLOW
PASSENGER ABOARD AN AIRPLANE.

come close to the ‘station’ of Tze’irei Chabad, it feels as if you have entered a different world; perhaps you have bumped into the Kosel, or perhaps a makeshift synagogue.

“A soldier armed with an Uzi stands crowned with tefillin and reads Shema from a special card. Next to him is a tall Mexican tourist; he has not worn tefillin for the past thirty-five years or so, but when arriving in the Holy Land, he was ‘caught’ by one of the ‘units’ of yeshiva students. The third is a young Moroccan Jew from Dimona, who apologizes that in the army, he ‘cooled off’ a bit, but will now begin to put on tefillin every day. The fourth, a *kibbutznik*, a native Israeli from Givat Berner, is wearing tefillin for the first time in his life.

“The yeshiva students tell us that even in cold and stormy weather, they manage to find a dry corner, and there are always hundreds of Jews willing to roll up their left sleeves and wrap themselves with tefillin. Even in the burning summer days, they travel to do their holy work, and no obstacle manages to deter them.

“They maintain that the power and energy for the work comes from the letters of their Rebbe *shlita*, who constantly wants to know about everything being done in detail, and every so often sends a message to stimulate and encourage the tremendous momentum. The Rebbe once told a visitor, “Two and a half million people were saved from annihilation; two and a half million people should be added to the number of tefillin wearers.”

The Power of One Deed

As expected, the Rebbe’s innovative approach sparked much controversy, even, and especially, in the Torah world. Many people posed questions about whether it was advisable or even permissible to lay tefillin with people who are not yet frum and may not know what the mitzvah is all about.

The Rebbe responded to these questions at length.⁵

One of the most interesting proofs the Rebbe offered for his approach was from the Smag (*Sefer Mitzvos Gadol*, written by one of the Balei HaTosfos). He writes that “There is not a *rasha* [among the Jewish people] who is not worthy of putting on tefillin.” The Smag continues that “I preached in all the Jewish diaspora [in Spain and in other lands] that everyone must observe the mitzvah of tefillin and mezuzos...”

The Rebbe then divulged that “when I launched the campaign, I didn’t want to cite the above words of the Smag,” or the other statement by the Smag that “Hashem desires more for a *rasha* to wear tefillin than a *tzaddik*. For the whole premise of tefillin is to serve as a reminder for the wicked, to get them back on the straight path...”

The Rebbe said that these words don’t really apply in our time, since today, most people who don’t keep *mitzvos* are not at fault, assuming the halachic status of “*tinokos shenishbu*.”

Another question that the Rebbe addressed was: What is the benefit of persuading a person to do just



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MIVTZA TEFFILIN AT THE KOSEL HAMAARAVI.

one single mitzvah with no apparent follow-up?

In explaining this, first and foremost, the Rebbe always quoted the *psak din* of the Rambam: A person must always look at himself as equally balanced between merit and the opposite and the world as equally balanced between merit and the opposite... If he performs one mitzvah, he tips his balance and that of the entire world to the side of merit and brings deliverance and salvation to himself and others. Thus, every mitzvah a person does has infinite significance.⁶

Furthermore, the Rebbe explained: That single action, though it may seem meaningless and empty, *that* is what will cause them to do more *mitzvos*, since *mitzvah goreres mitzvah*, one mitzvah drags another along with it. He may have started with a relatively easy mitzvah, but *hamaase hu ha'ikar*, and this action will eventually lead to many other *mitzvos*.

To illustrate this, the Rebbe related the following story:

"There was a Jew who was accustomed to publicly consuming non-kosher food. They tried to convince him to put on tefillin, but he refused to give in; they spoke to him again and again, until he finally agreed. Afterwards, when dinner time arrived, he announced that they should not give him any non-kosher food..."⁷

The Rebbe added another reason as well, which is specific to tefillin: Through donning tefillin even once in his lifetime, a Yid is taken out of the category of a *karkafta d'lo manach tefillin*—a skull (head) that never donned tefillin, thus enabling the Yid to enter *olam haba* (as the Gemara says). By helping someone put on tefillin even once, you are giving him eternal life!⁸

Tefillin and Moshiach

Ultimately, the goal of Mivtza Tefillin and all of the *mivtzoim* is to bring Moshiach.

Specifically Mivtza Tefillin: The Rebbe cited the Gemara stating that before Moshiach comes, the nations of the world will rebel against Hashem saying, "וְנִתְּקָה אֶת מוֹסְרוֹתֵינוּ וְנִשְׁלִיכָה מִמֶּנּוּ עֲבֵתֵינוּ"—Let us break their bands and cast off their cords from us." The Midrash explains that these words refer to the mitzvah of Tefillin: "their bands" refers to *tefillin shel yad*, and "their cords" refers to *tefillin shel rosh*.

This indicates, said the Rebbe, that before Moshiach comes, we must strengthen our commitment to the mitzvah of tefillin, and this will hasten his coming; may it be *bekarov mamash!*⁹

HE'S WAITING!



Interview with **Rabbi Moishe New**

By: Rabbi Bentzion Pearson

Although I've been on shlichus for over 40 years now B"H, my "*koch*" in Mivtza Tefillin is fairly recent. It was around 5766 when I was in Eretz Yisroel to speak in honor of Yud Shevat. While there, I was in a shopping mall with two of my sons who were in *yeshivos* in Eretz Yisroel, when we were approached by a group of soldiers. One of them turned to us and said: "*Atem Chabad! Anachnu rotzim l'haniach tefillin*—You're Chabad! We want to put on Tefillin!"

My heart sank. *Gevald!* I didn't have Tefillin. Right then and there I resolved that with Hashem's help, such would never happen again.

Back in Montreal at one of our weekly lunch-and-learns, I shared the story. I told the participants that I want to buy a new pair of tefillin dedicated specifically for *mivtzoim*, and offered them the opportunity to take part in the mitzvah.

Now, there's a common misconception that *mivtzoim* tefillin don't have to be as *mehudar* as our own personal ones. I believe this is a mistake. When you put on tefillin with a fellow Yid, this might be one of the few times in his life that he's going to do this mitzvah. It may even be the only time. Even if

he had a Bar Mitzvah or has tefillin of his own, who knows if they are kosher? So if you have the opportunity to put tefillin on him they need to be the most *mehudar* pair possible!

So I told the *baale-batim* at the shiur that I wanted to buy a beautiful pair of tefillin—the Alter Rebbe's *ksav*. B"H one of them volunteered right there to cover the whole expense.

I commissioned a local sofer, Reb Zev Teitelbaum, to write a top-of-the-line pair, in the interim using my own pair for Mivtzoim. Since that time, the new tefillin have gone almost everywhere with me. I haven't kept tally but many, many hundreds of Yidden have donned that pair of tefillin.

And it's all *b'zechus* those soldiers who approached me at the mall. True, I failed



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them, but thanks to them hundreds of their fellow Jews have put on tefillin, and counting!

I'd like to share two points about putting on tefillin with others:

Firstly, it's not always easy. Often it's much easier to be Mr. Nice Guy and not make demands on people. However, we need to think for a moment: this *neshama* is waiting for me to help him put on tefillin. All the discomfort, indeed all the money in the world doesn't come to the value of this single mitzvah—connecting a Yid with *Atzmus u'Mehus!*

Our Chabad house in Montreal—the Montreal Torah Centre—is, *Baruch Hashem*, a bustling community center and *simchos* are frequent. Of course many of these *simchos* take place on a Sunday or weekday. To be honest, there's a part of me that wishes they would be on Shabbos. Why? Because then I don't have to go around approaching every guest to put on tefillin! (I'm not the only one doing

so of course. All the Shluchim in the *moisad* are doing likewise.) It's so much easier to welcome everyone with a warm hug, and to just make an announcement inviting anybody who wants to put on tefillin to do so. But I know I can't do that. These are *neshamos* that have come through our doors, and it's my responsibility to approach each and every one personally, whether I'm comfortable or not!

When I'm *mesader kiddushin* and there's time till *shkiah*, I bring my tefillin, not just for the *chosson*, but the families and friends. What better way is there to go to the *chupah*! Likewise when going to a wedding as a guest, or to a bar mitzvah or *bris*, I always try to help others put on tefillin.

The same is true when going to be *menachem avel*, *r"l*—whether it's for davening or any other time. It's an opportunity to put on Tefillin not merely with the *aveilim* but with everyone present. There have been times when scores of Yidden put on tefillin then and there.

The point is: we need to take out tefillin wherever we go. Shopping. Vacation. Or visiting a doctor or dentist. I say to the doctor afterwards with a smile, "Doctor, I need 35 more seconds of your time. I want to do a mitzvah together. Which hand do you write with?" Rarely does the doctor resist.

Which brings me to a second point: Don't ask the person if he'd like to put on tefillin. If he'd like to, he would have done so without you!

Instead, approach the Yid with a smile, and introduce yourself and ask him his name. After a pleasantry or two say, "Let's do a *mitzvah* together. It'll only take a few seconds."

It's much harder to refuse that. When you do it with a smile and with love, you're much more likely to have success. And then, even if the Yid doesn't want to put on tefillin for whatever reason, the love doesn't change. You've created a moment of genuine *ahavas Yisroel*. Sometimes I'll say to him (still with a smile), "You know, I hope that the next time you're approached with this opportunity, you'll agree to put them on." Often, individuals who were resistant become emotional when they actually



CELEBRATING HOWARD'S PUTTING ON
TEFILLIN FOR THE FIRST TIME.

put on tefillin. I've seen that over and over again. And then they thank you, because the *neshama* opens up.

One more critical point:

We often see photos that people share from *mivtzoim*, and unfortunately, because they're doing it in a hurry, the tefillin are not always placed correctly.

This is so important, it cannot be overstated: Take the time to ensure that the tefillin are placed exactly as they should be. Who knows if this Yid is going to put on tefillin again? This is a G-d given moment. The *Aibishter* wants to connect to this Yid! Take the time and care—attention to every detail—and do it right!

I carry around, together with the tefillin, a small jeweler's plier. It's the perfect tool to easily adjust the straps of the Tefillin—particularly the Shel Rosh, ensuring it's the right size—without cutting into the leather. (Just be sure not to carry it with you in your hand luggage when traveling, airport security will confiscate it.)

Let me conclude with a little story:

Last year on Gimmel Tammuz I was not able to go to the Ohel; I had to be in Los Angeles.

So it's Gimmel Tammuz in the morning, and we went out to eat on Pico Boulevard. Of course, I took my tefillin. My first encounter was a table of young guys sitting and eating. It was outside a kosher pizza store, but none of them were wearing *yarmulkas*. I approached the table and said, "Boys, do you know what today is?" They all knew it was Gimmel Tammuz! Those that hadn't put on tefillin did so happily. Then I went into the next restaurant and moved from table to table. Almost everyone knew it was Gimmel Tammuz, and many put on tefillin in the Rebbe's honor.

If we approach with confidence, and the other Yid feels that we mean it for his own good, *b'gashmiyus uv'ruchniyus*, rarely will a

Jew refuse. In our approach, we need to convey the *emes* that our asking him to put on tefillin is not about him becoming anything. It's about revealing who he truly is!

The heart of the Jewish people is awake. Especially now after October 7th. Every every single chossid without exception; whether a *bochur* or a *yungerman*, whether officially a shliach or not—the *emes* is that the Rebbe declared that each and every one of us is a personal shliach of *nessi doreinu!*—each and every one of us has the responsibility and *zechus* to put on tefillin with every Jew we encounter. Especially now, before Moshiach comes, there's a sense of urgency. *Neshamos* are on fire! The only obstacle is us. Go out there with your tefillin and you will see that Yidden respond!

After the miracles of the Six-Day War, the Rebbe said that the "*shofar gadol*," the call before the coming of Moshiach, had been sounded. The Jewish world was in a state of euphoria. It was the beginning of the great Jewish renaissance and marked the birth of the Teshuva movement.

That was just the beginning. Today, all the more so! The Jewish world is so open, our fellow Jews are searching for connection.

All we need to do is be the conduit and allow the Rebbe to awaken the *neshama* of our fellow Yid.

Hatzlacha Rabba!

1. See "Reconnecting," Derher, Iyar 5777.
2. Igros Kodesh vol. 24, p. 333.
3. Toras Menachem vol. 49, pp. 427–434.
4. Shavuos 5727; Toras Menachem vol. 50, p. 91.
5. See Likkutei Sichos vol. 6, p. 271.
6. Shabbos Parshas Bereishis 5728; Toras Menachem vol. 51, p. 224.
7. Shabbos Parshas Vayishlach 5728; Toras Menachem vol. 51, p. 289.
8. See Shabbos Parshas Bereishis; Toras Menachem vol. 51, p. 224; 11 Nissan 5743.
9. Shabbos Parshas Vayishlach 5728; Toras Menachem vol. 51, p. 298.



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