

Derher

A Chassidisher

א חסידישער דערהער

Who's Running My Life Here?

AN INTERVIEW WITH RABBI BORUCH OBERLANDER

ה'תש"ג
יט סבת
חומש : שמות, פרשה ראשונה עם פירש"י.
תהלים : צצו.
תניא : פרק יב. והבינוני . . . "32" כל
יסיו.
כ"י חסיד חב"ד אין מקובל סדר דור, דעם אלטע
רבי'ס א תקנה, אז אלע טאג זאל מען לערנען א פרשה
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אזכר שיעור של מצוות ז' שפ"ה
א"כ : 22:17 ח"א י"ט

TRACING THE
DEVELOPMENT OF CHITAS

Strength IN THE Daily



SIVAN 5786
ISSUE 167 (244)
JUNE 2026



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Tracing the
development of Chitas



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Rabbi Tzvi Altein

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Rabbi Yossi Kamman

Editor in Chief
Rabbi Mendel Jacobs

Director of Operations
Rabbi Levi Kesselman

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Derher for Kids
Mrs. Chanie Kamman
Circulation and Marketing
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Photo Research/Editing
Rabbi Avremi Browd

Editors
Rabbi Mendel Alperowitz
Rabbi David Olidort

Design
Rabbi Mendel Bergstein

Contributors

Rabbi Yanky Bell • Rabbi Yossi Bendet • Rabbi Koppel Chaiton • Rabbi Avrohom Moshe Dyce • Rabbi Tzemach Feller
Rabbi Mendy Goldberg • Rabbi Levi Gourarie • Rabbi Levi Greenberg • Rabbi Menachem M. Greenberg
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ON THE DAILY

As we prepare to celebrate the Yom Tov of Shavuos, we are reminded of the vital commitment to the daily study of Chitas, as the Rebbe would emphasize at each Shavuos farbrengen.

“Although Shavuos and Matan Torah occur only once a year, our daily Torah study should be infused with the same excitement, as if the Torah were given on that very day (‘כחדשים’). In fact, the Zohar teaches that ‘When one studies Torah, it is as if he is standing at Har Sinai every day, receiving the Torah...’”¹

Studying Chitas is a daily commitment which, as the Rebbe reiterated many times, should ideally be completed on its designated day and not deferred. Doing so serves as a channel for manifesting infinite *brachos* in our daily lives, both materially and spiritually.

In honor of Shavuos, we’ve included an overview of the history and development of Chitas, in the hope to inspire our readers to strengthen their daily commitment. Commitment

to Torah study, commitment to *darkei haChassidus*, and genuine commitment to the Rebbe.

On that note, we will also continue the story of the courageous group of young *bochurim* who traveled from the United States to spend a mere few weeks in the Frierdiker Rebbe’s presence in Poland. And another fascinating tale of how a young *bochur* from Williamsburg undertook a challenging journey, demonstrating steadfast commitment to the Rebbe, his teachings, and his shlichus.

Let us all strengthen ourselves this year in all of the above, until we will experience the “*Torah chadasha*” of Moshiach, may it be *teikef umiyad mamash*.

בברכת קבלת התורה בשמחה ובפנימיות,

The Editors
יג אייר ה'תשפ"ו

1. Shavuos 5743; Hisvaaduyos 5743 vol. 3, p. 1580.

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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 Chasadam...”

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

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הרה"ת ר' חיים משה ע"ה אלפרוביץ
גלב"ע ד' סיון ה'תשע"ה

ולע"נ
הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' נחמן בן
ר' פנחס ע"ה סודאק
גלב"ע י"ז סיון ה'תשע"ד
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נדפס ע"י
הרה"ת ר' יוסף יצחק וזוגתו מרת חנה שרה
ומשפחתם שיחיו אלפרוביץ

כ"ה סיון

Nations Sue Jews

(Circa 3448*)

COMPILED BY: RABBI MENDEL VOGEL

Egyptian representatives appeared before the court of Alexander the Great, demanding that the Jews pay restitution for all the Egyptian gold and silver they had taken with them during yetzias Mitzrayim. Geviha Ben Pesisa, a simple but wise Jew, requested the Chachamim's permission to present a defense. Geviha asked the Egyptians for evidence that the Jews fled with their wealth. "The crime is clearly recorded in your Torah," the Egyptians gleefully responded. "In that case," Geviha said, "the Torah also says that 600,000 Jews were unjustly enslaved by the Egyptians for many, many years. So first let us calculate how much you owe us..." The court granted the Egyptians three days in which to prepare a response. When they were unable to do so, they fled on the following day and never returned. In Talmudic times, that day—25 Sivan—was celebrated as a mini-Yom Tov.

There is a sefer entitled "*D'var Yom B'yomo*," which compiles material from various passages in Tanach and *midrashei Chazal* concerning events that occurred on each day of the calendar. In the section for the month of Sivan, he cites an account from Megillas Ta'anis (see also Sanhedrin 91a and Rashi *ad loc.*) regarding the 25th of Sivan:

When the descendants of Yishmael—together with the Canaanites and the Egyptians—came before Alexander the Great to incite him against the Yidden concerning their right to Eretz Yisroel, the Chachamim asked: "Who will go and refute them?"

Geviha ben Pesisa, the gatekeeper, said to them, "I will go and refute them."

They said to him, "Be careful lest you cause harm to the Yidden. If you are defeated, it could endanger us."

He replied, "I will go and refute them. And if they defeat me, you can say to them: 'You have defeated only a layman ("*hedyot*") from among us.'"

The Yishmaelim argued: "It is written in the Torah: 'On that day, Hashem made a covenant with Avraham, saying: To your descendants I have given this land...' (Bereishis 15:18). We are descendants of Avraham—Yishmael is the son of Avraham—so we, too, are entitled to a share in Eretz Yisroel."

Geviha ben Pesisa answered them:

"It is also written in the Torah: 'Avraham gave to the sons of [Hagar], the concubine whom Avraham had taken, [all the material] gifts [he had received from others]...' (Ibid. 25:6), while 'Avraham gave all that he owned to Yitzchok' (Ibid. 25:5)."

The Yishmaelim immediately fled in shame.



The Canaanites then claimed: “The Land of Canaan is ours, for it is written in the Torah: ‘[The Land of] Canaan according to its borders’ (Bamidbar 34:2).”

Geviha ben Pesisa said to them:

“Is there such a thing as a decree that is partially valid and partially invalid? Certainly not. It is written in the Torah: He (Noach) said, “Cursed be Kena’an! [He will] be a servant to servants [—a servant] to his [father’s] brothers [Shem and Yafes]!” (Bereishis 9:25).

“Now consider: When a servant acquires property, who owns the servant? The master. And who owns the property? The master as well.

Not only that, but many years have passed in which you did not serve us at all as servants.”

Alexander said to the Canaanites:

“He has given you a decisive answer. If you can respond, do so. If not, you will become his servants.”

They asked for three days’ time. They searched for a response but found none. They immediately abandoned their fully stocked homes, their sown fields, and their planted vineyards, and fled in disgrace.

(This detail is stated specifically regarding the Canaanites, since the principle of “what a servant acquires belongs to his master” applies uniquely to them.)

The Egyptians then came and said: “From their own Torah we shall bring proof against them. It is written: ‘Every woman shall request from her neighbor objects of silver and gold, and garments...’ (Shemos 3:22).

Six hundred thousand men left Egypt, all laden with silver and gold, as it is written: ‘...they thus drained Egypt’ (Shemos 11:36).

They must return all our silver and gold!”

Geviha ben Pesisa replied: “Is the Torah your only authority? It is also written in the Torah: ‘The length of time that the Yidden had lived in Egypt [and other locales] was 430 years’ (Shemos 12:40).

Six hundred thousand men were enslaved, forced to work “with mortar and bricks—as well as with all kinds of work” (Shemos 1:14), without pay.

Let us calculate the wages owed if each man were paid even one *sela* per day.”

The philosophers gathered to calculate. Before reaching even one hundred years of labor, they realized that the entire land of Egypt would belong to the Yidden as payment.

The Egyptian delegation departed in shame.



There is no need to explain the relevance of this story to our times, for it is the very same event that is unfolding again today.

From this we must learn a lesson regarding how we should conduct ourselves in response to the claims of the nations of the world concerning Eretz Yisroel. This lesson, which the Torah teaches as eternal and applicable in all times, is emphasized with even greater strength each year when the 25th of Sivan arrives (“הימים האלה נזכרים ונעשים”):

We must stand firm and declare that all matters pertaining to Eretz Yisroel belong to the people of Eretz Yisroel—not because “Kissinger” or “Marx” said so, and not because Eretz Yisroel possesses this or that political leverage or military strength, but because the Torah states so.

And when a Yid tells a non-Jew that this is what the Torah says, these very words penetrate him (דאָס דערנעמט “אים”), and he is impressed by them—to the point that he withdraws. This is something that does not occur when other arguments are presented.

Although this may seem incomprehensible—after all, the non-Jew could respond that it is written in your Torah and does not obligate him—nevertheless, this is the observable reality. When a Yid says that something is written in the Torah, and says it with truth and conviction, it is accepted by the non-Jew and has an effect upon him.

Takeaway:

When Yidden speak from the Torah itself, calmly and confidently, false claims collapse on their own, and even the strongest opponents are left without an answer.

(Adapted from Shabbos Parshas Shelach 5734; Toras Menachem vol. 76, p. 351)



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

Compiled By: Rabbi Levi Greenberg (OH)

Written By: Rabbi Mendel Jacobs

Equal Rites?

In a *sicha* to the graduating girls of Beis Rivkah in 5742, the Rebbe spoke about the special qualities of Jewish women and the advantages they have over men.

The Midrash says that when Hashem told Moshe to prepare the Jewish people for *Matan Torah*, He instructed him to speak with the women first. This teaches us that the women are the ones entrusted with ensuring that their home—and all the members of their household, men included—live in the proper Torah manner.

The Torah also tells us that the women in the desert were eager to go into Eretz Yisroel and inhabit the land (unlike the men, who did not want to go). Likewise, in our generation, the women stand firm that very soon we will once again go up to Eretz Yisroel and inhabit the land, and they do all they can to make it happen sooner.

The Rebbe concluded that the above should serve as a response to those who are calling for “equal rights” between men and women:

On the contrary, in Torah’s view, women are, in many respects, even greater than men. And in general, true “equality” according to Torah can only be achieved by each individual living up to his or her G-d-given potential; not by trying to copy or outdo members of a different gender.¹

Who Is Greater?

After the *sicha* was delivered, Rabbi Leibel Groner wrote a note to the Rebbe, asking the following question:

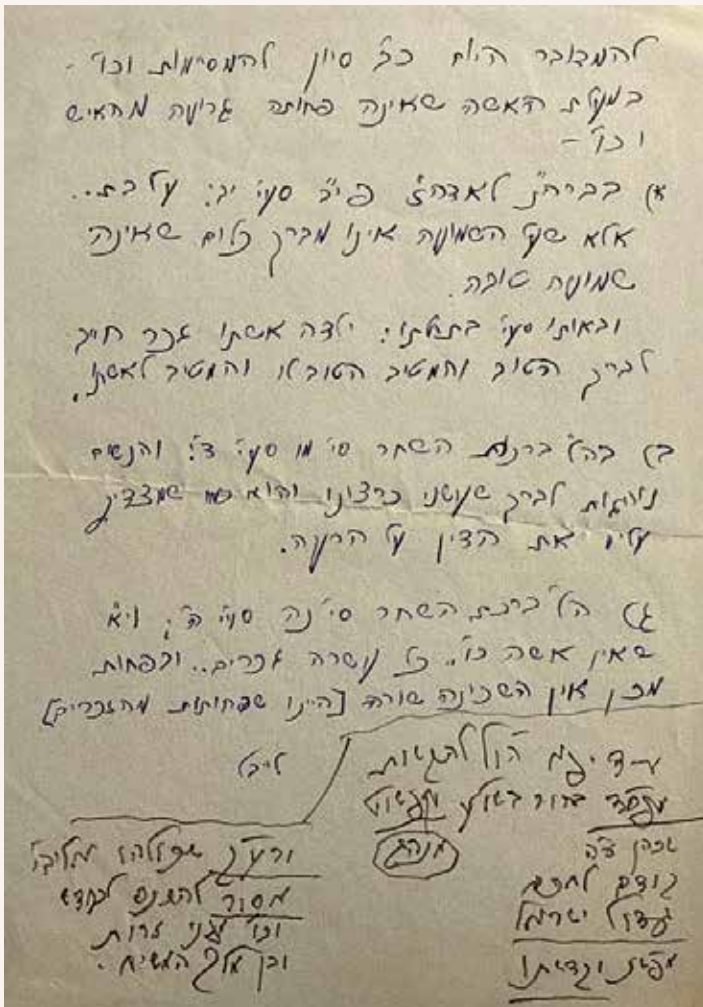
We find several instances in *halacha* where it seems that Torah’s view indeed places the status of men above women:

When a person hears that his wife has given birth to a baby boy, he is obligated to recite the special bracha of “*Hatov v’hameitiv*.” He does not make this bracha when his wife gives birth to a girl.²

Additionally, the Alter Rebbe writes in Shulchan Aruch³ that many women have the custom to say the bracha of “*She’asani kirtzono*” each morning, indicating that they accept upon themselves Hashem’s decision to create them as women.

Furthermore, the Alter Rebbe rules⁴ that women are not counted for a *minyan* in any instance, since the ability to draw down the *Shechina* only applies where there are ten Jewish males present.

Based on all of the above, how is it possible to still assert that in Torah’s view, women are on a higher level than men are?



[I.e., you could have asked a much more glaring question on why the Torah attributes certain qualities to some people and not others, from the fact that a Kohen enjoys special privileges only because he was born as such, even if he never studied Torah.

Rebbi Akiva, and even Moshiach himself, who in so many ways are obviously greater than all other Jews, are nevertheless not afforded the same privileges as a Kohen.

It is thus clear that while the Torah grants these extra privileges only to a Kohen and no one else, this does not detract from the greatness of other Jews.

Similarly, the fact that men have certain qualities that women do not possess does not indicate that they are of lesser spiritual stature than men.]

Comparison of Stature?

The Rebbe replied:⁵

עדיפא הו"ל להקשות מפס"ד ברור בשו"ע מנהג פשוט שכהן ע"ה קודם
לחכם גדול ישראל מפש"נ וקדשתו

ורע"ק שכולהו אליבי אסור להכנס לקודש וכו' מפני זרות וכן מלך המשיח.

You could have asked a stronger question from the clear **ruling** stated in Shulchan Aruch,⁶ that the **prevailing** custom is that a Kohen [even if he's an] ignoramus has precedence [to be called to the Torah] over a scholar who is **great [among] the Jewish people**, because the *possuk* says⁷ "And you shall sanctify him."

[Even] **Rebbi Akiva**, to whom all [of Torah Shebaal Peh] is attributed, is **forbidden** from entering the *kodesh* [section of the Beis Hamikdash, as well as the *kodesh hakodashim*] etc., because he is not a Kohen, and so is the Melech Hamoshiach.

1. *Hisvaaduyos* 5742 vol. 3, pp. 1656–1662. For more on this subject, see "The Greatest Job In The World," Derher Kislev 5786.

2. *Seder Birchos Hanehenin* 12:12.

3. *Orach Chayim* 46:4. For a discussion about the Chabad *minhag* regarding making this *bracha*, see *Shulchan Menachem* vol. 1, p. 21.

4. *Orach Chayim* 55:5.

5. Published in *B'chadrei Torasecha* vol. 3, pp. 23, 99–102.

6. *Orach Chayim* 135:4.

7. *Emor* 21:8.





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

ע"י בנם
ר' יקותיאל יהודה
וזוגתו מרת פעסל לאה ומשפחתם
שיחיו
רוהר



A Special Yom Tov With the Rebbe

SIVAN 5751

Among all the remarkable months of this Year of Wonders, Sivan stands out as one of the most eventful.

The Yom Tov of Shavuot is obviously a highlight. But the real surprise came on the following Shabbos—Parshas Nasso, as we shall soon explore.

Then, toward the month's end, Chassidim celebrated 50 years since the Rebbe and Rebbetzin's arrival in the United States. Joy and excitement abound.

Let's start from the beginning...

COMPILED BY: RABBI YANKY BELL

WRITTEN BY: RABBI MENDEL JACOBS

THE REBBE TURNS THE
SIDUR TO V'YITEN
LECHA, MOTZEI
SHABBOS PARSHAS
NASSO, 12 SIVAN.

Shavuos With Moshiach

Erev Shavuos occurred this year on a Shabbos, and the Rebbe held the usual Shabbos farbrengen.

Three important calls to action were discussed:

As this is the last Shabbos before Shavuos, everyone should remember the custom of saying a *perek* of Pirkei Avos each week throughout the entire summer.

With Shavuos coming up, everyone should make sure to come to shul for the reading of Aseres Hadibros—men, women, and children. Even though we did the same thing in previous years, this year is special because we hope that Moshiach will actually be here!

Everyone should try to recite the whole Tikkun Leil Shavuos on the first night of Shavuos. Even though there were special individuals who recited the whole Tikkun twice, like Reb Hillel Paritcher and others, for most of us, it's important to recite it at least once. Some people might be accustomed to studying more in-depth subjects of Torah, but they should still be careful to recite the Tikkun in its entirety. "I myself saw," the Rebbe added, "as did many others, how my father-in-law, the Rebbe, carefully recited every word of Tikkun..."



BETWEEN THE 16TH AND 18TH CENTURIES, THE POLISH-LITHUANIAN COMMONWEALTH WAS ONE OF THE LARGEST OF JEWISH LIFE. REGARDED AS A "GOLDEN AGE," THE PERIOD SAW JEWS ENJOY SIGNIFICANT AUTONOMY, RELIGIOUS FREEDOM, AND ROYAL PROTECTION.

The Significance of Poland

On Shabbos Parshas Behaalosecha, 19 Sivan, the Rebbe mentioned an interesting historical fact: Many Jewish communities, especially those originating in the Polish Commonwealth, had the custom to fast on the 20th of Sivan, due to the tragedies that struck their communities on this day.

"Our Rabbeim did not keep this custom," the Rebbe added. "My father-in-law, who lived for a time in Poland, did not fast on this day—even while in Poland!"

Then the Rebbe pointed out that when Jews first arrived in Poland, they took the name of the region as a sign. "Poh-lin" means "here we can stay overnight" in *Lashon Hakodesh*. "Night" refers to *galus*, meaning that Poland would be a place to spend time during our *galus*. Even though the non-Jews didn't know about this when they gave the region its name, their "*mazal*" above did know, and this informed their actions down here on earth. Similarly, many non-Jews in that area would rent their properties to Jews, whom they commonly referred to as "Moshkes." This, too, has spiritual significance, since every Jew possesses a spark of Moshe Rabbeinu. Again, the non-Jews didn't know of this, but they used this expression as a result of their *mazal* above.

Every Inch

On the final Shabbos of the month, Parshas Shelach, the Rebbe spoke about the 12 spies sent by Moshe to scout out the land, as a prelude to conquering the land of Eretz Yisroel.

"We too can draw lessons from the story of conquering Eretz Yisroel," the Rebbe explained. "Each and every one of us has an individual portion in the land, both in the spiritual sense, as well as practically.

"It is therefore important to remember that no one has any permission to give away even one inch of the land to non-Jews. We have seen very clearly how every portion of the land is vital for securing the rest of the land, and must not be compromised. Not only that, but we should try to conquer even more areas—albeit in a manner that is permissible according to Shulchan Aruch, and that won't provoke and anger the other nations..."

We The Children!

On the first morning of Shavuos, children packed into the big shul at 770 for a special rally before davening. When the Rebbe arrived for Shacharis, the children cried



out that “*Baneinu areivim baadeinu*”—the children are the guarantors of the Torah, and as such, “We demand that Moshiach must come immediately!” With that, the children began singing “*Ad mosai*” and the Rebbe encouraged them strongly.

In the late afternoon, the Rebbe appeared at the front door of 770 to see off the march on *Tahalucha*. When all the participants returned—at around 11:25 p.m.—the Rebbe came out once again to greet them. The crowd sang a joyous *niggun*, and the Rebbe clapped along, but then suddenly the Rebbe stopped.

People had speculated that the Rebbe might deliver a *sicha*, as he did on the last night of Pesach—and lo and behold, as the crowd quieted down, the Rebbe indeed began to speak.

The Rebbe mentioned a *vort* cited in *Polisher seforim* that the phrase “נמי לכם” (that one is obligated to have physical pleasure on Yom Tov) said of Shavuos, has the same *gematria* as the word “קץ”—highlighting the connection to Moshiach.

Farbrengen

Towards the end of Yom Tov on the second day of Shavuos, the Rebbe entered the shul for a farbrengen.

After sitting down, the Rebbe washed his hands for Challah, and the farbrengen was underway.

One of the very interesting points the Rebbe spoke about was the fact that at the tail-end of our *galus*, we have to listen to those who scoff at the idea of Moshiach. “It’s not his fault,” the Rebbe explained. “We’re in *galus* close to two-thousand years. That’s the only reason why a Yid could speak in such a manner!”

This individual who makes *leitzanus* about the idea of Moshiach will certainly do teshuvah, the Rebbe assured.

The Rebbe also spoke about the connection between Shavuos and the daily study of Chitas, as he does every year: Chumash was given to us by Moshe Rabbeinu on Shavuos, Tehillim was written by Dovid Hamelech, who was born and passed away on Shavuos, and Tanya is the Torah Shebiksav of Chassidus, revealed by the Baal Shem Tov who passed away on Shavuos as well.

As such, Shavuos is an opportune time to strengthen ourselves in the study of Chitas.

A day dedicated to Torah, the Rebbe also used this Shavuos farbrengen to encourage everyone to write their own *chiddushei Torah* and publish them in the various *kovtzim*.

“There’s no need to worry,” the Rebbe said, “the writer

can add a note at the end that his intention is not to issue a halachic ruling. This way, the people will want to read his ideas even more, because they'll see how humble he is!"

The Rebbe concluded: "*Yasher-koach* to all those who print these *kovtzim*; fortunate is their lot..."

At the end of the farbrengen, the Rebbe led the ben-tching over a cup of wine, and after Maariv, he used the cup to recite Havdala and distribute *kos shel bracha*. With the huge crowd that came to receive wine from the Rebbe, the distribution did not finish until well past 2:00 in the morning.

Unprecedented Farbrengen

One of the greatest surprises of the year occurred on the Shabbos after Shavuos—Parshas Nasso, 12 Sivan.

The Rebbe held the usual Shabbos afternoon farbrengen at 1:45 p.m., concluding at 3:55. Mincha was davened right after the farbrengen, and Maariv was announced for 9:05.

It was a long summer Shabbos. The shul at 770 emptied out as many went home to eat their Shabbos meals, while others went out to share words of Torah in nearby neighborhoods (as the Rebbe instructed many times).

As evening approached, only a handful of people were in the shul when suddenly—at 8:05 p.m.—the Rebbe appeared, holding a *kvort* full of water, with a towel draped over his arm.

As the Rebbe neared the *aron kodesh*, he asked the

people standing there, "Is there a *shissel*?"

Someone ran and brought a *shissel* for the Rebbe to wash his hands, and the Rebbe waited for a challah to be brought. Rabbi Binyomin Klein was immediately called, and he was able to have a challah brought to the Rebbe. The Rebbe sat down on his chair near the *aron kodesh*, made Hamotzi, and then asked that his chair be brought up onto the davening platform. "We should be able to see," the Rebbe said.

As the Rebbe sat down on the platform, he placed his siddur on the edge of the banister and instructed that *B'nei Heichala* should be sung.

During the singing, the Rebbe motioned to people standing around to get down from the tables and benches.

Then the Rebbe delivered a *sicha*:

"We are now at the end of the *yemei tashlumin* of Shavuos," the Rebbe began.

It is difficult to describe how shocking this scene was. The Rebbe appeared in the shul completely unexpectedly. The crowd was very small. The Rebbe's chair was placed at the edge of his davening platform facing the crowd, with no table or *shtender* in front of him. The sight and the atmosphere were unprecedented.

As the Rebbe continued the *sicha*, rumors circulated throughout the neighborhood that the Rebbe was farbrengen, and the shul quickly filled up. By the time the farbrengen concluded, the shul was packed, and the pushing had become unbearable.

During the *sicha*, the Rebbe asked that the *niggunim* of all the Rabbeim be sung (mentioning each one by name), and that this should lead us to sing the song of the *geulah* with the coming of Moshiach.

As the Chassidim sang each *niggun*, the Rebbe sang along in an undertone, and occasionally encouraged the singing by waving his hands very strongly.

Towards the end of the farbrengen the Rebbe said that he would conclude with *Birkas Hamazon* and distribute *kos shel bracha* to all, allowing even those who were outside of the *techum Shabbos* to join.

The farbrengen concluded at around 10:10 p.m.

The Rebbe recited Havdala while still on his davening platform, in the same place where he had sat during the farbrengen, then went down to the main floor to distribute *kos shel bracha*. Throughout the distribution, the Rebbe was in high spirits, smiling at many individuals and encouraging the singing.

The distribution ended at 12:10 a.m., and shortly afterward, the Rebbe came outside to recite Kiddush Levana.



BRACHA ACHRONA AT THE CONCLUSION OF
KOS SHEL BRACHA, MOTZEI SHAVUOS.



THE REBBE DISTRIBUTES KOS SHEL BRACHA
NEAR HIS DAVENING PLATFORM FOLLOWING
THE FARBRENGEN, SHABBOS PARSHAS NASSO.



Celebration 50

A major milestone celebrated this month took place on Chof-Ches Sivan—marking 50 years since the Rebbe and Rebbetzin's arrival in the United States.

A special booklet was prepared in honor of the occasion titled "Kovetz Chof-Ches Sivan," containing: The story of the Rebbe and Rebbetzin's miraculous escape from war-torn Europe, points from the Rebbe's first farbrengen with Chassidim upon arriving in the United States, a list of the Rebbe's activities from the time he arrived in the United States until the year 5750 (first published in Hayom Yom), and *sichos* and *maamarim* delivered or published in honor of Chof-Ches Sivan over the years.

The Rebbe was consulted and offered guidance on each stage while the booklet was being prepared. When it was finally published on the morning of Chof-Ches Sivan, the Rebbe notified that he would distribute copies of the booklet that evening after Maariv.



THE REBBE EXITS THE SHUL AFTER DISTRIBUTING KOS SHEL BRACHA.



THE REBBE DISTRIBUTES
KOVETZ CHOF-CHES SIVAN.



CHASSIDIM DANCE AFTER THE REBBE EXITS THE SHUL.



THE REBBE RESPONDS TO THE BRACHA FROM
CHASSIDIM ON THE NIGHT OF 28 SIVAN.

That afternoon, the Rebbe went to the Ohel and returned at 8:10 p.m.

After Mincha, the Rebbe came down from his platform and stood near the table where he would usually give out dollars. Reb Zalman Gurary gave the Rebbe a long, heartfelt *bracha* in honor of this milestone, describing the incredible revolution of Torah and Chassidus spurred by the Rebbe's arrival in the United States, and wishing the Rebbe many more years of health, success, and *nachas*.

Throughout the *bracha*, the Rebbe's face was very serious, and his holy eyes were closed. When Reb Zalman concluded, the Rebbe asked that a Kohen should offer *Birkas Kohanim*, and Rabbi Yosef Gutnick gave the *bracha*.

Then the Rebbe delivered a *sicha*, speaking about the immense spiritual qualities of this special day, referring to the day as a "*yom zakkai*."

The Rebbe also spoke about the breakthrough of *hafatzas hamaayanos* that occurred only after the Frierdiker Rebbe arrived in the "lower hemisphere"—here in the United States, establishing his headquarters at 770 (which is the *gematria* of "פרצת"). It is here at 770, the Rebbe said, that the third *Beis Hamikdash* will be revealed, with the coming of Moshiach.

After the *sicha*, the Rebbe davened Maariv, and an announcement was made on behalf of the Rebbe's *mazkirus* that, since the booklets had not yet arrived from the printer, there would now be a short break, after which the Rebbe would distribute them.

The Rebbe smiled and said, "An announcement was made about a break—but this is a waste of time. Instead of a break ("*hefsek*"), we will make a continuation ("*hemshech*")."

The Rebbe continued the *sicha* for another ten minutes, and then distributed thousands of booklets to men, women, and children, continuing until shortly after midnight.

Dollars

“DIAMOND ANNIVERSARY”

On Sunday, 13 Sivan, an individual told the Rebbe that he and his wife were celebrating their “golden anniversary”—50 years. The Rebbe responded: “You should start thinking about your ‘diamond anniversary’ as well”.



Mr. Zalmon Jaffe from Manchester came by the Rebbe with his wife, and the Rebbe gave them extra dollars to be given to *tzedakah* back home. Mr. Jaffe then pointed to the camera behind the Rebbe (hoping to get a photo of the Rebbe from the front). The Rebbe turned towards the camera and then said, “You need another photograph? You most probably already have 22 photos; you already published 22 books!”



Rabbi Yosef Gutnick came by the Rebbe, and the Rebbe gave him an additional dollar “in order to find precious stones and pearls.”

Rabbi Gutnick told the Rebbe that it was his birthday, and the Rebbe gave him another dollar, saying, “Give this to *tzedakah* as my addition—then add more from your own money.”

He asked the Rebbe for a *bracha* to be able to report good news, and the Rebbe said: “May you report good news. That’s why I mentioned precious stones and pearls. You should have both of these and gold as well. May it be in a good manner, with good news.”

I WILL NOT ABANDON THE JEWS HERE

On Sunday, 20 Sivan, an individual told the Rebbe that he would soon be receiving *semicha*, and the Rebbe said: “May you be a *lamdan* as well; not only with *semicha*. Sometimes a person can get *semicha* without being a *lamdan*—but you should have *semicha* and be a *lamdan*!”



An individual told the Rebbe that he had been married for many years without having children, and asked for the Rebbe’s *bracha*.

The Rebbe said, “Give this to *tzedakah* to have blessings and success for your whole family, and may you have healthy children.”

The individual insisted that it should happen “now *mamash!*” and the Rebbe responded with a smile:

“Amen. Right now is not possible, because you have to wait nine months. Either way, may it be with much success.”



Rabbi Moshe Oirechman, shliach in Kiryat Motzkin, Eretz Yisroel, introduced a supporter of his organization, Mr. Yosef Yakir.

Mr. Yakir told the Rebbe that about a year earlier, he had asked the Rebbe whether to open a factory in the United States to produce military equipment, and the Rebbe had told him to wait. It turned out that the Rebbe’s advice was very helpful, and he was now seeing much more success because of the wait.

The Rebbe asked whether he had since opened the factory, and Mr. Yakir said that he had indeed opened in Baltimore, where he was seeing great success.

Then Mr. Yakir asked the Rebbe to use his influence on



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DURING THE DISTRIBUTION OF ‘DOLLARS’ ON 13 SIVAN, THE REBBE TURNS TOWARD THE CAMERA AT THE REQUEST OF MR. ZALMON JAFFE.



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MR. YOSEF YAKIR SPEAKS WITH THE REBBE, 20 SIVAN.



AT THE CONCLUSION
OF THE YECHIDUS
KLOLIS FOR SHAUVOS
GUESTS, 9 SIVAN.

the Israeli government to help employ the thousands of immigrants from the former Soviet Union. If they don't find suitable work, they are bound to leave the country and seek better opportunities elsewhere.

The Rebbe replied that they are dealing with many new arrivals from Ethiopia, the United States, and Russia, and that it's hard for him to offer advice from overseas.

Mr. Yakir then asked the Rebbe: "*Kvod Harav*, I ask you personally, in the name of all the Jews in the Land of Israel—come to visit us. Even if only for a week or two, I ask you sincerely. It will help to bring us all to complete *teshuvah*, complete redemption, and perhaps hasten the coming of Moshiach."

The Rebbe replied:

"If you would give me a halachically sound answer, whether I would be permitted to afterward return to the United States, not to abandon the Jews here, then I would evaluate the validity of the argument to see if it is indeed a proper conclusion according to halacha. But to abandon all the Jews here, more than three million people! And it's not just the American Jews. Some of the Russian Jews

are settling here now in the United States, and when they come here, the ground must be prepared so they can continue in their Judaism. And this will be much more difficult to solve if I am in one place and they are in a different place.

"*Halevai* that people would listen to me when I am close by. But if I were to be in a different land—even in Eretz Yisroel—they would not listen to my voice... [Also, seeing me return from such a trip, people] would say to themselves that living in the United States is better for them, and 'proof' is that I left the United States and I regretted it... It will not interest them that I 'regret' it because there are still [more than] three million Jews here who request help in all things possible..."



An individual told the Rebbe that he would like to travel to Yemen to build a mikvah there, and asked if this was a good idea.

"Do you have a legal visa?" the Rebbe asked.

The man said that he did.

"Then you should go, but only if everything is legal," the Rebbe continued. The Rebbe then gave him an additional dollar, instructing him to exchange it for the local currency in Yemen according to Yemenite law and give it to tzedakah.

WHAT IS MONEY FOR?

On Sunday, 27 Sivan, Rabbi Shmuel Butman told the Rebbe that he was heading to the Senate for an invocation, and the Rebbe said:

"Bring a tzedakah pushka with you, and let everyone see that you brought it, this way you will show them what money is really for..."



An individual from Eretz Yisroel brought the Rebbe a basket of fruit, saying he had brought "*Bikkurim*" to the Rebbe, assuring that he had taken all the necessary *maasros*, and the Rebbe thanked him and offered a *bracha*.



An individual came to the Rebbe and said that young people in the community don't have *parnassa*.

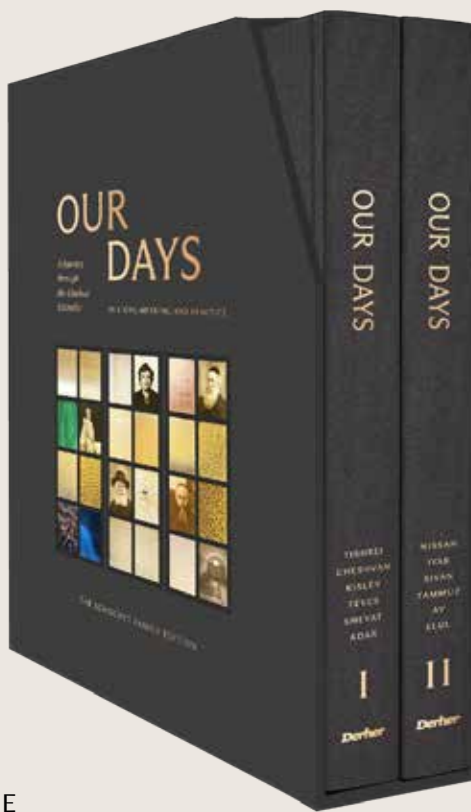
The Rebbe said, "This is something people convince themselves of. Hashem sustains everyone. Why do you say they have no *parnassa*?" ❶

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גרינברג

יום ראשון
שיעורים.
חומש: שמות. פרשה ראשונה עם פ
תהלים: צצו.
תניא: פרק יב. והבינוני . . .
יסיו.
ב"י חסיד חב"ד איז מקובל מדור דור, דעם
רבי'ס א תקנה, אז אלע טאג זאל מען לערנען א
חומש מיט פירש"י פון דער וואך סדרה. אזוי
זיך אויך נוהג געווען די רבי'ס נשיאי חסיד

Indeed, the daily study of **Chitas**, as it came to be known, is one of the most recognizable hallmarks of a Chabad chossid. Even the sefer printed for this study, the *Chitas* volume containing Chumash, Tehillim, and Tanya, has become something of an icon of the Lubavitcher chossid.

The reason for this is not a lack of knowledge. Rather, Chitas was not instituted all at once, but developed gradually over time. Some of its roots trace back to the Alter Rebbe, while other elements began later, after Chabad had taken root in America. To properly reconstruct a timeline, therefore, requires careful study.

Chumash: Living With the Time

The roots of Chitas, or at least one of its components, can be traced back to the era of the Alter Rebbe. In *Hayom Yom* for 19 Teves, the Rebbe writes:

“Chabad Chassidim have a tradition, passed down through generations and instituted by the Alter Rebbe, that every day we study a parsha of Chumash of that week’s *sedra* with Rashi. This was practiced by the Rabbeim as well.”

The source for this entry is a *sicha* of the Frierdiker Rebbe, delivered on Shabbos Parshas Shemos, 5702. In that *sicha*, the Frierdiker Rebbe elaborates on the depth and richness of Minhagei Chabad:

“Minhagei Lubavitch are founded not only on *halacha* or *hidur mitzvah*, but also on spiritual matters that affect the soul. They establish, as a foundation of *avoda*, the overall inner orientation of a Yid, so that he and his household become illuminated with the spirit of *tahara* that these customs bring.”²

The Frierdiker Rebbe then distinguishes between *minhagim* that apply broadly to all Chassidim and those that were practiced specifically by the Rabbeim. As he elaborates on the customs surrounding Shnayim Mikra and the study of Chumash, he mentions the above practice of daily Chumash study, a detail later recorded in *Hayom Yom*.

Continuing in the *sicha*, the Frierdiker Rebbe relates a conversation he had with his father, the Rebbe Rashab. This passage, too, was later condensed and published in *Hayom Yom*, under the entry for 2 Cheshvan:

“Once, in his early years as Rebbe, the Alter Rebbe declared publicly: ‘We must live with the times.’ Through

his brother, R. Yehudah Leib, the elder Chassidim came to understand his intent: that one must live with the Torah portion of the week and, more specifically, with the portion for the current day. It is not enough to study a segment of the weekly parsha each day; one must live with it.”

In the original *sicha*, the account appears at greater length, and again makes explicit reference to the daily study of Chumash:

“In those days, the [Alter] Rebbe’s Chassidim and *mekusharim*, both the elder and the younger, would study each day the portion of Chumash corresponding to that day, together with Rashi’s commentary. The Rebbe was saying: One must live with the times, meaning, not only to learn the weekly parsha, but to truly live with the time of the weekly parsha.”³

In this *sicha*, we see some of the earliest roots of what would later become Chitas. At the same time, it leaves open an important question: did this practice continue consistently across subsequent generations, and, if so, to what extent?

As Chabad expanded, particularly during the era of the Tzemach Tzedek, tens of thousands of Yidden identified as Chabad Chassidim. Yet their level of connection and commitment varied widely.

This variation was reflected even more strongly in the realm of *minhagim*. Many Chabad customs familiar today were only formalized and widely disseminated after the Second World War. Earlier generations saw a far broader and less uniform range of practice among those who identified as Chabad Chassidim. It is therefore entirely plausible that this daily study of Chumash remained the practice of a more select group, those closely attuned to the directives of the Rabbeim. The lack of broader documentation seems to support this possibility.

On the other hand, one could argue the opposite: the practice may have been so widespread that it did not require special mention. In those times, a fixed daily regimen of Torah study was taken for granted. Depending on the individual, this might range from a simple *Ein Yaakov* shiur to many hours of in-depth learning, but some form of daily study was universal. Indeed, *Hayom Yom* itself notes that Chassidim would regularly study Tanach and Mishnayos each day.⁴ In such a context, learning Chumash with Rashi may not have been seen as a distinctively Chabad practice, and therefore was not singled out for special mention.

In the absence of clear records from later generations, this remains largely a matter of conjecture. However, the



IN THIS POSTSCRIPT TO A LETTER, THE REBBE REMINDS THE RECIPIENT ABOUT THE STUDY OF CHITAS.

very fact that the Frierdiker Rebbe spoke about this *min-hag* in 5702, alongside others, suggests that it was among those practices that had faded over time, and that he sought to revive as part of a broader effort to restore and reestablish Minhagei Lubavitch.

Tehillim: For the Public Good

The Frierdiker Rebbe's *takana* of daily Tehillim began several years before the *sicha* of 5702, and under far more dramatic circumstances.

Late Tuesday night, on the eve of Tes-Vov Sivan, 5687, just past midnight, a forceful ring of the doorbell signaled the arrival of the Soviet secret police, then known as the G.P.U. After thoroughly searching the house, they arrested the Frierdiker Rebbe and took him to the infamous Spalarka prison.

In the immediate aftermath, a handwritten note was discovered on the Frierdiker Rebbe's desk in his holy room. It read:⁵

"Listen, Chassidim, and all Jews who hope for Moshiach: Convey in my name to all Chassidim throughout the world that I have instructed that in all chassidish shuls, after Shacharis every day—including Shabbos—a portion of Tehillim should be recited, as divided according to the days of the month, with a *minyan*. Afterward, *kaddish* should be recited."

Additional instructions followed, urging businessmen to attend shul for davening and to participate in *Ein Yaakov* shiurim. The note concluded:

"Tell the Chassidim that this is my directive, and tell all Jews that out of *ahavas Yisroel* and concern for the welfare of our people, I ask them to fulfill this."

Chassidim immediately began spreading and implementing this directive, alongside intense efforts to pressure governments and secure the Frierdiker Rebbe's release. Those efforts ultimately succeeded: the death sentence initially sought by the Soviet authorities was commuted to exile, and finally to full release on Yud-Beis Tammuz.

In truth, however, the institution of daily Tehillim predates the arrest. In a letter written on the first anniversary of those events, the Frierdiker Rebbe recalls:⁶

"At the beginning of the year 5687, I requested of all *anash* that they establish the following practice: that in every *minyan*, after Shacharis, a daily portion of Tehillim, as divided according to the days of the month, be recited, followed by *kaddish*, as is customary. This

יום ראשון	ב חשון	ה'תש"ב
שיעורים. חומש: לך לך, פרשה ראשונה עם פירש"י. תהלים: י"ז.	חומש: לך לך, פרשה ראשונה עם פירש"י. תהלים: י"ז.	חומש: לך לך, פרשה ראשונה עם פירש"י. תהלים: י"ז.
תנאי: ואחר. . . יסמא טובא.	תנאי: ואחר. . . יסמא טובא.	תנאי: ואחר. . . יסמא טובא.
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יום ראשון	יס סבת	ה'תש"ב
שיעורים. חומש: שמות, פרשה ראשונה עם פירש"י. תהלים: צ"ו.	חומש: שמות, פרשה ראשונה עם פירש"י. תהלים: צ"ו.	חומש: שמות, פרשה ראשונה עם פירש"י. תהלים: צ"ו.
תנאי: פרק יב. והבינוני. . . 32 כל יסיון.	תנאי: פרק יב. והבינוני. . . 32 כל יסיון.	תנאי: פרק יב. והבינוני. . . 32 כל יסיון.
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IN THE REBBE'S COPY OF HAYOM YOM, HE NOTED THE SOURCE FOR EACH DAY'S QUOTATION. NEAR THE HAYOM YOMS FOR 2 CHESHVAN AND 19 TEVES, HE WROTE [ש"פ] שמות תש"ב.

request remains in full force, for the merit of the public.

"It is fitting that this be done in every shul, for it is not a private matter pertaining specifically to the chassidic community. Through this, they will be blessed from the Source of blessings with all good things, both spiritual and material."

When the Rebbe later published this letter in *Kovetz Michtovim*, the collection of the Frierdiker Rebbe's letters and *sichos* on Tehillim, now printed at the back of *Tehillim Ohel Yosef Yitzchok*, he added a footnote with the background of the request.⁷

"For clarity of the sequence of events, the following passage is reproduced from the notes of the well-known chossid, a close associate of the Rebbe's household, Rabbi Eliyahu Chaim, son of Rabbi Pinchas Todros Althaus, *hy"*d, regarding the arrest and release of our Rebbe in the year 5687. He writes as follows:

"From the beginning of that fateful year, a great fear fell upon all those who were close to the Rebbe's court. The fear reached even the Rebbe himself, as we heard explicitly, I, together with our friend Rabbi Michael Dvorkin, from his holy mouth in his place of exile in Kostroma, in these exact words:

"I was very much afraid about the year 5687. It was not myself I was anxious about; I was thinking about the Chassidim. I experienced great difficulty in finally issuing the directive that people should start reciting Tehillim."

"I asked: when was this directive given? And I was



RIGA, 5689.

answered: on Simchas Torah. Then I recalled that on that Simchas Torah, at the Kiddush that was held in the room of his mother, the Rebbetzin [Shterna Sarah], he repeatedly and strongly urged *anash* that they accept upon themselves, *bli neder*, to recite every day a portion of Tehillim as divided according to the days of the month; to say it in all *minyanim* after Shacharis; and to recite *kaddish* afterward.

“I remember that I then asked him whether I fulfill my obligation with the Tehillim that I say every day before *davening*. The Rebbe answered me as follows: ‘The Tehillim that are said before *davening* is connected to *Tikun Chatzos*.’

“In general, all of the Rebbe’s talks on that Simchas Torah, until the evening, were delivered with great bitterness and with a broken and crushed heart.

“I have no doubt that the well-known note which we found in the Rebbe’s room on the day of the arrest,

regarding the recitation of Tehillim, had likewise been written in the months of Elul 5686 or Tishrei 5687. The note was written in his own handwriting, in pencil, and the date was not recorded. At its conclusion, he blesses with ‘a happy year,’ and such a *bracha* is generally given either at the end of the year or at the beginning of the year.”

In *Reshimas Hama’asar*,⁸ the Friediker Rebbe’s account of his arrest, he notes the spread of this *takana* even before the arrest.

“The *tefillos* were scheduled for three fixed times during the course of the day. After Shacharis, we would recite a segment of Tehillim, divided by the days of the month. I had established this recitation on the basis of an undisclosed reason and had requested *anash* in all places to adopt this practice in their respective shuls, to recite a portion of Tehillim after davening, such that over the course of the month, the entire Tehillim would be

completed, followed by the Mourner's Kaddish.

"Praise G-d, this was accepted in many places, and fortunate is their lot, both spiritually and materially."

Writing this *reshima* a year after the arrest, the Frierdiker Rebbe continues: "This request of mine, that this be established as a fixed custom in every place, remains in full force even today."

Interestingly, he also includes another request, one mentioned in the note found on his desk:

"Afterward, there should be a fixed study session of Mishnah; between Mincha and Maariv, a study of Aggadah; and after the evening prayer, a *shiur Gemara*."

In the years that followed, the Frierdiker Rebbe continued to strongly encourage the daily recital of Tehillim. In one well-known example, he wrote to a chossid who asked how true *hiskashrus* is possible if he does not even know the Rebbe personally:⁹

"True *hiskashrus* is attained by Torah study. When you study my *maamarei Chassidus*, read the *sichos*, and associate with those dear to me—*anash* and the *Temimim*—in their studies and in their farbrengens, and fulfill my request regarding saying Tehillim and maintaining a regular study schedule, this is what constitutes *hiskashrus*."

This letter was quoted numerous times by the Rebbe, most notably in *Hayom Yom*. The Rebbe also cited it in the introduction to *Kuntres Purim 5710*, the first *maamar* published after the *histalkus* of the Frierdiker Rebbe, which contains the continuation of the *hemshech Basi Legani*.

There, the Rebbe adds a significant footnote: "At the time this letter was written, the *takana* of studying Chumash with Rashi and learning Tanya according to the yearly cycle had not yet been publicized."¹⁰

Tanya: "Baalshe'm'ske Matters"

The third component of Chitas is the daily study of Tanya, divided over the course of the year so that all five sections are completed from Yud-Tes Kislev to Yud-Ches Kislev.

This division differs fundamentally from those of Chumash and Tehillim. The division of Chumash into seven portions dates back to ancient times and is aligned with the weekly *krias Hatorah* and its seven *aliyos*. The division of Tehillim into thirty daily sections is also centuries old, likely dating to the era of the Rishonim, though

its exact origin remains uncertain.

Tanya, however, had no established system of annual study. While many Chassidim maintained regular learning schedules in Tanya, with numerous sources noting the practice of studying a *perek* each day, this was never formally structured. Nor was it designed to complete Tanya within a defined cycle; the focus was simply on consistent daily study.

The division of Tanya into a daily cycle was created specifically for Chitas, and was arranged by the Frierdiker Rebbe himself in preparation for the Rebbe's publication of *Hayom Yom* in 5703.

The daily study of Tanya, together with Chumash and Tehillim, was an integral part of *Hayom Yom* from the outset. In a letter to the Rebbe, commissioning him to compile the *Hayom Yom*, the Frierdiker Rebbe explicitly outlines this. Addressing him with as, "My dear son-in-law, scion of illustrious lineage, *harav hagaon, vosik v'chossid, ish yirei Elokim*," he writes:

"Based on the holy letter of my revered father, the



THE FIRST MOREH SHIUR FOR THE DAILY SHIURIM OF CHITAS PRINTED FOR THE YEAR 5704-5705.

THE MOREH SHIUR AS PRINTED IN THE BACK OF THE TANYA FROM 5714.

Rebbe, regarding the *chag hachagim* Yud-Tes Kislev, which is the Rosh Hashana of Chabad Chassidus, I hereby request that you arrange a yearly calendar, beginning from this Yud-Tes Kislev until Yud-Tes Kislev of the coming year.

“It should include, in particular:

“A) Fixed daily study portions that are equal for every person, aside from each individual’s personal level of study, namely: a) Chumash with Rashi. b) Tehillim, after Shacharis, as divided according to the days of the month. c) A daily portion of Tanya, according to how I have divided it for this year.

“B) The customs of Chabad Chassidim.

“C) Selected sayings from the teachings of Chassidus and the ways of Chassidim, short passages for each day of the year.”

In accordance with these instructions, when *Hayom Yom* was published later that year, each day’s entry began with the daily *shiurim* of Chumash, Tehillim, and Tanya, formally uniting the three into a single, structured program of daily study.

In addition to its appearance in *Hayom Yom*, the Tanya study schedule was also published as a standalone booklet titled *Moreh Shiur*.

Since 5703 was a leap year and 5704 was not, a new division had to be prepared for the following year. The Rebbe began working on a second volume of *Hayom Yom* for 5704, though it was never completed. Nevertheless, a *Moreh Shiur* booklet was published, containing the adjusted Tanya schedule for that year.

In the years that followed, *Moreh Shiur* continued to be issued annually. It came to be regarded as one of the Frierdiker Rebbe’s own *seforim*, and is listed as such in his biographical summary, printed in *Hayom Yom* and other places, under the title *Moreh Shiur*.

A significant development came in 5714, when the Tanya was printed in America for the first time. From that edition onward, *Moreh Shiur* was included at the back of the *sefer*, and has been included in every subsequent printing.

In a *sicha* delivered nine months after the Frierdiker Rebbe’s *histalkus*, the Rebbe pointed to a remarkable detail within this division. Discussing the significance of the nine-month period, he noted that it may be counted as 271, 272, or 273 days, depending on the method of calculation. He then observed:¹¹

“In general, one can see *Baalshemske inyonim* here. The Rebbe divided the Tanya so that it could be completed

over the course of a year. There is a division for a regular year and a division for a leap year. The *biur* in Chapter 27 [of *Igeres Hakodesh*, which discusses the *histalkus* of a *tzaddik*] is divided into three parts.

“The Rebbe had arranged this division of Tanya several years earlier, and here too one sees a *Baalshemske inyan*: according to the division he established seven years prior, the study of Chapter 27, which is the source for the explanation of the concept of *histalkus*, falls out precisely on days 271, 272, and 273 following the *histalkus*.”

Another noteworthy point appears in *Sefer Haminhagim*. There, the daily practice of learning Chitas is recorded, and under each of its three components, the compilers add brief notes offering background and context. Regarding Tanya, they cite a *sicha* of the Frierdiker Rebbe from 5705:¹²

“In the daily study portion of Tanya, the primary focus is not necessarily on deep understanding, but on saying and learning the actual words of the assigned portion. In addition, one should take a few words from that day’s Tanya and carry them with him throughout the day, whether he is a businessman or one who sits and studies.”

“It is Appropriate”

In 5740, after decades of Chassidim observing the daily study of Chitas, Rabbi Zev Dov Slonim, one of the Lubavitcher *rabbanim* of Yerushalayim, together with his wife, had the idea to publish a single volume containing Chumash, Tehillim, and Tanya, making the daily study more accessible.



REB ZEV DOV SLONIM.

At the time, such an undertaking would not be pursued without explicit approval from the Rebbe. Rabbi Slonim, therefore, wrote to request permission. The Rebbe responded in a letter dated 15 Av, 5740:

“Regarding Chitas in one volume: since the Chumash portion varies from year to year, perhaps the intent is to include them all together as they are (with separate sections); if so, that is indeed appropriate.

“A collection [of teachings] concerning Chitas and its importance should be placed at the end, in a separate section.

“In any case, there must be printed (also at the end of the Tanya) the *moreh shiur*, etc. At the beginning of the volume, there should be a brief introduction that explains the purpose of the publication, as mentioned above.

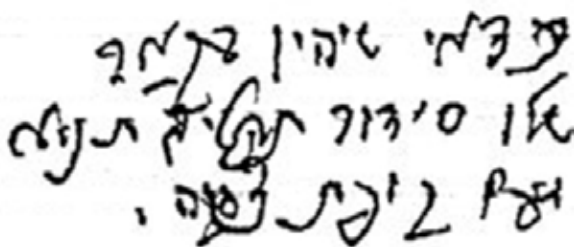
“The Chumash should, of course, include Targum Onkelos, Rashi’s commentary, and the Haftaros.”

The following year, the first Chitas volume was published, and it quickly became one of the most widely used and recognizable *seforim* in Lubavitch and beyond.

In keeping with the Rebbe’s guidance, Rabbi Slonim included a brief introduction:

“The Chitas volume (Chumash, Tehillim, Tanya) is published in accordance with the approval of the Rebbe, who indicated that this is indeed proper... Since the daily Chitas portions are equal for every person, care must be taken not to postpone them, even to the night following, and certainly not to defer them from one day to the next. Therefore, this volume, in which Chumash, Tehillim, and Tanya are bound together, will surely encourage, inspire, and motivate each individual to observe the Chitas schedule more carefully and to study the portions at their proper time...

“May the blessing of the *tzaddikim* be fulfilled in us: that through observing the established practice of studying Chitas day by day, all concealments and obstructions will be broken, and we will draw down our righteous Moshiach speedily in our days.”



כדאי שיהיו בקאר שלו סידור תהילים תניא וגם קופת צדקה.

The early editions of *Sefer Chitas* contained only the three core sections, Chumash, Tehillim, and Tanya, along with Rabbi Slonim’s compilation on the importance of the daily study. In that section, he gathered teachings from *gedolei Yisroel* on the general significance of studying each of the three, and then on the added importance of learning them specifically according to the Chitas schedule. Later editions expanded the volume to include a Siddur and *Hayom Yom*, for added convenience.

It is noteworthy that, on at least one occasion, the Rebbe referred explicitly to the *Sefer Chitas* itself. This was in response to a letter from business owners whose employees had been involved in two accidents. While the Rebbe would often advise that a Siddur, Tehillim, Tanya, and a pushka be kept in a car, with many opting for a Chitas volume simply because it included these *seforim* together, in this case, he mentioned it directly:

“Our custom is that in every vehicle there should be a Chitas and a tzedakah pushka, and this is spreading and shining with the light of ‘a mitzvah is a lamp and Torah is light.’ I will mention it at the *tziyun*.”¹³

The Segula of Chitas

In the years following the establishment of the *takana* of Chitas, the Frierdiker Rebbe returned to it repeatedly, urging Chassidim to uphold it with consistency. Often, however, this came not as a standalone directive, but within a broader call to live in the spirit of *darkei hachassidus*, recalling how earlier generations of Chassidim maintained fixed *shiurim* in Tanach, Tanya, *Ein Yaakov*, and more.

One well-known story he related, frequently cited in connection with Chitas and its unique power, illustrates this theme:

“In the year 5616, there was, may Hashem spare us, a time of distress for the Jews of Russia, materially, and especially spiritually, as the Maskilim had gained influence and were compelling Jews to study the books they had printed.

“At that time, the Tzemach Tzedek asked his son, the Rebbe Maharash, whether he was fluent in Tanya by heart, word for word.

“Yes,” the Rebbe Maharash replied.

“His father then asked whether his mastery of Tanya was on the same level as his mastery of Chumash, for he was known for his command of Tanach.

“Yes,” he answered, ‘I am as fluent in Tanya as in the

Chamisha Chumshei Torah.’

“At the beginning of 5617, the Tzemach Tzedek sent him to Petersburg on communal matters. Before his departure, he told him:

“‘In the year 5603, when I was summoned to a rabbinical conference in Petersburg, I went to the resting place of my mother in Liozna. She appeared to me and said that, through her *mesirus nefesh* for Chassidim and Chassidus, she had merited to be in the chamber of the Baal Shem Tov, and to arouse mercy on my behalf. She asked the Baal Shem Tov for a *segula* so that I would be able to stand firm against those opposing Chassidus.

“‘The Baal Shem Tov answered her: Your son is fluent in Chumash, Tehillim, and Tanya, word for word. And it is written, “*Vayehi chitas Elokim...*” (the fear of Hashem was upon them) — “chitas” is an acronym for Chumash, Tehillim, and Tanya. One who is fluent in them breaks all concealments and barriers.’

“‘Wherever you go,’ the Tzemach Tzedek instructed him, ‘whether before ministers or in government offices, recite a portion of Chumash, a chapter of Tehillim, and a chapter of Tanya.’

“The Rebbe Maharash later related to his son, the Rebbe Rashab: ‘It was a precious remedy. With three portions of Chumash, three chapters of Tehillim, and three chapters of Tanya, all the plans of the Maskilim were nullified, and the Jewish people, together with the Torah, emerged with strength. The leader of the Maskilim fled abroad in shame and fear.’”

Notably, this account was recorded by the Frierdiker Rebbe in 5698, well before the formal institution of the *takana* of Chitas, as part of a broader letter on the importance of Tanya.

It is in the Rebbe’s Torah that Chitas begins to emerge as self-standing, emphasized not only as a practice, but as one endowed with unique significance and far-reaching *segulos*. The Rebbe associates it with a wide range of *brachos*, including health, *parnassa*, *emuna*, children, *shidduchim*, and more, and in one letter refers to it as “a *segula* for a great many matters.”¹⁴

It is also in the Rebbe’s Torah that we find clear and practical *hora’os* regarding its observance: questions of priority when time is limited, whether it may be learned at night, and how to make up missed portions.

(Many of these *hora’os*, along with additional letters of the Rebbe regarding Chitas, were compiled in *The Conduit for Blessings: A Closer Look at the Takanah of Chitas*, published in *Derher*, Iyar 5782, available at Derher.org.)

The Rebbe also returned to Chitas frequently in his *farbrengens*, particularly on occasions tied to its themes: Simchas Torah and Shabbos Bereishis, when the new cycle of Chumash begins, and Shavuos, with its connection to Chumash (Torah given on Shavuos), to Tehillim authored by Dovid Hamelech (whose *yahrtzeit* is on Shavuos), and to Tanya through the Baal Shem Tov (founder of Chassidus, whose *yahrtzeit* is also on Shavuos).

The Rebbe was also the first to explicitly connect the above story to the structured daily study of Chitas, rather than to a general familiarity with the three *seforim*, teaching that:

“When one studies each day a portion of Chumash with Rashi—Sunday until Sheini, Monday until Shelishi, and so on; and one studies each day the allotted portion of Tanya as it was divided for the days of the year by my father-in-law, the Rebbe; and one recites each day, after davening, the daily portion of Tehillim as divided according to the days of the month—“then ‘*vayehi chitas Elokim al he’arim*’ will be fulfilled, and there will be ‘*vayisa’u*’—that we will travel in a state of calm and tranquility to Eretz Yisroel, with the complete and true *geulah*...”¹⁵

May it happen speedily in our days! **י**

1. Igros Kodesh vol. 14, p. 87, et. al.

1. *Sefer Hasichos* 5702, p. 27.

2. Ibid., p. 30.

3. Hayom Yom 19 Adar I.

4. *Igros Kodesh Admur Harayatz*, letter 328, vol. 1, p. 599.

5. Ibid., letter 386, vol. 2, p. 80.

6. Ibid.

7. *Sefer Hasichos* 5680–5687, p. 179.

8. *Hayom Yom* 24 Sivan. *Igros Kodesh Admur Harayatz*, letter 1207, vol. 5, p. 93.

9. *Sefer Hamamarim* 5710, p. 130.

10. *Likkutei Sichos* vol. 2, p. 450.

11. *Sefer Haminhagim Chabad*, p. 20; *Sefer Hasichos* 5705, p. 97.

12. *Likkut Maanos Kodesh* 5752, #331, p. 107.

13. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 16, letter 6036.

14. *Likkutei Sichos* vol. 2, p. 570.

The American Bochurim to Otwock - Part II

By: Rabbi Mendy Greenberg (Twinsburg, OH)

לע"נ
הרה"ת ר' שלום דובער בן הרה"ת
ר' יעקב יוסף ע"ה ראסקין
גלב"ע ח' חשון ה'תשע"ד
וזוגתו מרת רבקה בת הרה"ת ר' אברהם
ישעי"ע"ה גלב"ע י"א סיון ה'תשע"ד
תנצ"ב

נדבת משפחתם שיחיו

In Part I, we followed the remarkable journey of a small group of American bochurim who traveled toward Europe in the tense days before World War II, determined to come learn near the Friediker Rebbe. With the Friediker Rebbe's bracha, they crossed the Atlantic, met the Rebbe in Paris, and finally reached Otwock¹—on the eve of the German invasion.

We rejoin the four bochurim—Rabbi Mordechai Fisher, Rabbi Avraham Hecht, Rabbi Meir Greenberg, and Rabbi Mordechai Altein—as they settle in Otwock, spend two weeks near the Friediker Rebbe, and then escape the war—ultimately becoming the nucleus of Tomchei Temimim on American soil.

First Days in Otwock

Rabbi Hecht: We had finally reached Otwock.

It was a small town, about half an hour outside Warsaw. We were greeted by a group of Chassidim and transported to the Yeshivah in a series of *drushkes*—little horse wagons you might see in Central Park.

We were “big shots”—Americans—so they gave us our own *stantzye*, our own lodgings in the home of a very kind widow. That, however, was my first introduction to “European comfort.” We slept on straw mattresses—and the straw was full of tiny black creatures that bite. Even halacha mentions the issue—that you should be careful not to kill lice when removing your clothing on Shabbos. They made it into the holy books—but now they made it into our holy bodies, and that was another story. I still remember the itching. For a bunch of young American boys, it was quite the shock.



REB MORDECHAI ALTEIN.



REB MEIR GREENBERG.



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BOCHURIM OF TOMCHEI TEMIMIM, OTWOCK, AV 5669.

She gave us breakfast and dinner, while lunch we would purchase on our own, like everyone else. A man with a pushcart would sell food, and the very courageous among us would buy a piece of cheese from him—a real old piece of cheese. We usually preferred to stick to a tomato or some fruit. Everyone was extremely poor; it was worse than what we had seen in America during the Depression.

Then it was time for us to be tested.

The Yeshiva was a very strong institution, with many real *talmidei chachamim*—but I had an advantage. My rebbi in Torah Vodaas had been Rabbi Berel Rivkin, a tremendous *gaon* and Lubavitcher chossid—who had been the teacher of Reb Yudel Eber, the Rosh Yeshivah in Otwock! Before I left, he had told me, “You’re going to be tested by my *talmid*; he’s going to ask you to repeat something I taught you—prepare well.” He told me exactly which *sugyos* to go over.

Baruch Hashem, the test went very well. They placed me in the Beis Midrash, among bochurim who had been learning full-time their entire lives, not bad for a seventeen-year-old American boy. I was very happy.

Now we were truly part of the Yeshiva.

Our First Yechidus

Rabbi Fisher: We didn’t see the Frierdiker Rebbe right away; they gave us time to rest from the exhausting journey. But after several days, a time was set for us to enter *yechidus*. We didn’t come with questions; the Frierdiker Rebbe wanted to become acquainted with the boys who had arrived.

It was a very special moment. As I walked in, I was deeply overwhelmed, and I began to cry uncontrollably. The Rebbe didn’t say a word; he simply sat quietly as I cried, and eventually I collected myself.

Later, Rabbi Jacobson told us the Frierdiker Rebbe had been very impressed by the group. The Frierdiker Rebbe said to him, “Reb Yisroel, what you accomplished with these boys—you should go out into the street and dance from joy.”

Rabbi Hecht: Before *yechidus*, we first had to go to the mikvah. That was when I learned about European mikvahs. The Board of Health would have shut it down immediately. It wasn’t exactly hygienic; it had a thick “upper crust” across the top of the water, and when you went under, you thanked G-d when you came back up. Thank G-d, nobody fell ill.

As the youngest in the group, my *yechidus* was last. When my turn finally came, I asked the Frierdiker Rebbe for a

bracha for my father, who wasn't well at the time, and then I asked the Frierdiker Rebbe for a *bracha* for my older and younger brothers who were hoping to follow me to Otwock in the winter.

Today, I think to myself: *What a dunce you were.* Walking into the Frierdiker Rebbe for the very first time—you could have asked to become a *talmid chacham*, a chossid, a *yerei shamayim*. But no. I came in with my whole list of *brachos*. But that's what I did.

Friday Night with the Rebbe

Rabbi Hecht: On the very first Friday night after we arrived, we were granted permission to attend the *maamar*.

The Frierdiker Rebbe had a majestic look. He came from his room—a very large study with every wall covered in *seforim*—into a smaller room, where he would say the *maamar*. He sat at the table, holding a red handkerchief in his left hand, rolling it slowly as he spoke.

Rabbi Altein: At the time, the Rebbe would say a *maamar* every Friday night after Kabbalas Shabbos, before *Barchu*. The whole Shabbos was spent *chazering* the *maamar*, and by Shalosh Seudos, we knew it well.

We heard two *maamarim* from the Frierdiker Rebbe. One was *Shoftim v'Shotrim* on Parshas Shoftim, and the second was on Parshas Ki Seitzei—the *maamar* that begins *U'Teshuvah, U'Tefillah, U'Tzedakah Ma'avirin Es Ro'a HaGezeira*.

When the Rebbe said that *maamar*, it puzzled us. After all, we weren't expecting a war. Yet he spoke about *Teshuvah, Tefillah, and Tzedakah* removing a harsh decree.

But by Parshas Ki Savo the war had actually begun.

The Outbreak of War

Rabbi Hecht: At 8:15 in the morning on September 1st (17 Elul), as we prepared to go learn, the sound of planes suddenly filled the air. Six of them appeared overhead in a crisscross formation. It was a bright, clear morning, and you could see astonishingly high—high enough to see the bombs dropping from each plane. Two minutes later, the explosions reached us. We soon heard that this first attack had already cost close to fifty lives—mostly elderly residents of the old-age home—and several young children.

One humorous moment I remember from that terrible morning: Reb Meir Greenberg was very into science. He told us, "As soon as there is an explosion, everyone should grab one of the pillars, to keep the structure standing"—as if our actions would make a difference.

Our first instinct was to run to the Frierdiker Rebbe.

When we arrived at his home, we saw a very unusual sight. The door to his room was slightly ajar, and we were able to see him sitting inside, looking very serious. He wore a yarmulke, and we were able to see how his long blondish *peyos* were gathered together in one large clump.

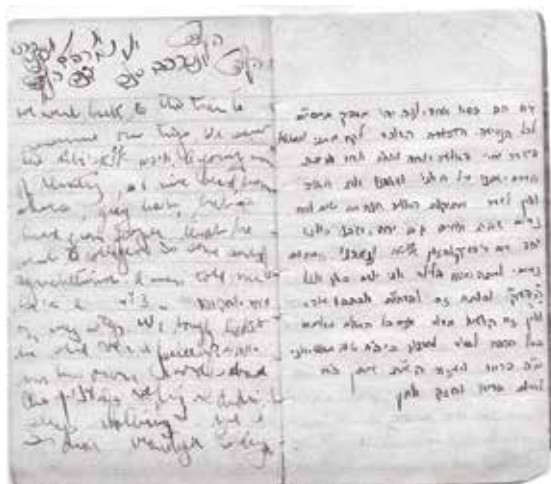
I was standing there with Berel Levy when the Frierdiker Rebbe sent us instructions. We were to go to the home of his mother, Rebbetzin Shterna Sara, and reassure her that there was nothing to worry about.

We ran straight there. My brother Reb Shlomo Zalman lived in the same house. When we arrived, we found a crater nearly fifty feet deep—every window had been blown out, and the trees around the property were uprooted. Still, we delivered the Rebbe's message. She was a very special woman—and if her son, the Rebbe, said there was nothing to worry about, she accepted it completely.

Meanwhile, the Frierdiker Rebbe had ten American boys on his hands in the middle of Hitler's Europe. He had to find a way to get us out. It was Friday afternoon, around twelve o'clock, when we were called in for a *yechidus*.

Rabbi Greenberg: He began by giving us *brachos*, "*Ksiva vachasima tova*," and more, and then he told us, very simply, "*Hut nisht kayn morah*"—don't be afraid. Bombs were falling, but he explained it in the way only the Rebbe could: "*Yeder bombe gayt oif an address*"—every bomb has its designated address. "*Nisht eich maynt men*"—these bombs are not meant for you. He told us that we would go to Latvia for a short time, and that we should not be afraid of anything.

Rabbi Hecht: During the *yechidus*, one fellow piped up and asked, "Rebbe, what if we have to be *mechalel Shabbos*?" The Frierdiker Rebbe became very earnest. He turned toward him, wearing his *shtreimel* for Shabbos, and said,



TESHURA SHEMTOV-HECHT

EXCERPT FROM THE DIARY OF REB AVRAHAM HECHT DETAILING THE TRIP TO POLAND, WRITTEN ON THE SHIP BACK HOME.



“Tonight is Chai Elul—the birthday of the Baal Shem Tov and the Alter Rebbe. The *zechus* is so great you will not have to desecrate Shabbos.”

Transportation to Warsaw was arranged for the first leg of the journey, and the whole Yeshiva came out to say goodbye. It was heartbreaking: four hundred boys, many of them feeling they would never see us again—and some were right.

Out of the Inferno

Rabbi Altein: We traveled to Warsaw and headed straight to the American Consulate, but the moment the consul saw us, he threw us out. “Get out of here! I told you not to come! Go back to where you came from!” he yelled. There was no one to speak to. He was an anti-Semite, and you felt that if he could, he’d harm any Jew he came across. He drove us out into the street.

Rabbi Greenberg: By then, Shabbos had arrived—and we had no place to sleep. The law in Warsaw required that anyone entering the city had to register and sign their name in their place of lodging, but it being Shabbos, we couldn’t sign. We were stuck.

Mordechai Altein and I went to consult with the Gaon Reb Menachem Zemba: could we sign on Shabbos to avoid danger? He told us very calmly, “Don’t sign until it reaches eleven o’clock at night. If by then you still don’t have a place to stay, you may sign.”²

As we wandered the streets, we met a man from the American Joint Distribution Committee, and he stepped in to help. He understood how urgent the situation was and tried to help us find a place before eleven o’clock. That was the curfew deadline—after that, anyone found in the street could be shot.

Exactly at eleven, we found a place.

Rabbi Altein: On Motzei Shabbos, we headed for the train station. There were scenes you can’t begin to imagine. Trains bringing back the dead were arriving from the front lines. Crowds desperate to flee, not knowing where to run.



REB MENACHEM ZEMBA.

In the morning, we were finally able to board a train. We were surrounded by Poles, and we had to put on tefillin and daven like that, but Baruch Hashem, nobody bothered us. Then the Germans tried to bomb us. During the attacks, many jumped off the train and ran, and many were killed. But then, miraculously, a Polish plane actually managed to shoot down the German plane. The train continued until we reached the border between Poland and Latvia.

Before we crossed the border, the Polish officials took everything from us—every penny, anything of value. We arrived in Latvia *béyrum u'v'choser kol*—I arrived with nothing.

But the community in Latvia was extraordinary. They graciously took us in, and we got to spend time with special Chassidim like Reb Yitzchak Masmid, Reb Refoel Kahn, Reb Mordechai Chafetz, and a whole *olam* of Chassidim.

After Tishrei, we went to Stockholm and ultimately made our way up to northern Norway, where we boarded a small freighter to cross the Atlantic.

Throughout the trip, the ship rose and fell with the waves. Up and down, up and down—for two and a half weeks straight. You can imagine what that was like.

We sailed as far north as possible to avoid German U-boats and submarines, but at one point, we were stopped by a German submarine anyway. They searched everyone, and they knew that we were Jews, but as American citizens, they didn't dare touch us. After several weeks, we finally reached American shores.



THE BOCHURIM WITH OTHERS FROM THE PREVIOUS GROUPS. TOP ROW, RIGHT TO LEFT: MEIR GREENBERG, MORDECHAI ALTEIN, ZERACH GORDON.

BOTTOM ROW, RIGHT TO LEFT: AVRAHAM HECHT, MOTTEL FISHER, YITZCHOK KOLODNY.

Opening Tomchei Temimim

Rabbi Altein: One of the first things the Frieddiker Rebbe said when he arrived in America, in the Greystone Hotel, was, “*Ich bin nisht gekumen far mir alein. Ich bin gekumen tzu machen America a Makom Torah*”—I didn’t come for myself. I came here to help make America into a place of Torah. He was going to open a yeshiva.³

Rabbi Hecht: About a week later, the Frieddiker Rebbe called about ten of us together and said that he wanted to make us the basis of Tomchei Temimim. There were Rabbi Altein, Rabbi Greenberg, Rabbi Kolodny, Rabbi Levy, myself, Zorach Gordon, and a few others, and the yeshiva soon opened in a little shul called Oneg Shabbos.

Some *shtusim* you never forget: the food wasn’t very good, and we were starving. Rabbi Mentlick said to the Frieddiker Rebbe, “I don’t understand these American kids—they want juice, they want cereal, they want eggs, they want coffee, bread, and butter... *vus iz dos*, a hotel?”

In the beginning, it was very hard, but the yeshiva constantly grew, and soon it had thirty, forty *bochurim*.

Postscript

Rabbi Hecht: Shortly before the war broke out, we heard the *maamar*: “*U’Teshuvah, U’Tefillah, U’Tzedakah Ma’avirin Es Ro’a HaGezeira*.”

In that *maamar*, the Frieddiker Rebbe spoke about Avraham Avinu living among idolaters, and explained that he was like a bottle of perfume that nobody can smell. Imagine a bottle of Chanel #5 in a cemetery—if people are dead, they can’t smell anything. No one benefits. So Hashem told Avraham, *lech lecha*—pick yourself up and leave your environment, and then the aroma of that perfume will fill and elevate the entire surroundings.⁴

It felt like the Frieddiker Rebbe was talking to us. He was telling us, “Boys, I brought you out of your environment, so you can spread something precious.”

The Rebbe was trying to lift us up.

“You boys—there are only ten of you—but I am going to work with you.

“And soon you’ll see what will come from it.” **1**

1. In Polish, a “w” is an American “v,” and a “c” is an American “tz,” thus the pronunciation is “Otvotzk.”

2. In other accounts, he instructed them to sign with a *shinui*.

3. See Sefer Hasichos Kayitz 5700 p. 5.

4. Sefer Hamaamarim 5699 p. 252.

By: Rabbi Mendy Greenberg (Twinsburg, OH)

“WHO’S RUNNING MY LIFE HERE?”

An Interview with
Rabbi Boruch Oberlander



Rabbi Boruch Oberlander is the Rebbe's shliach and Chief Rabbi of Hungary, and is a widely consulted posek for many shluchim. Raised in Pupa, one of Williamsburg's chassidishe kehillas, he became a Lubavitcher chossid while still a bochur. In this interview with A Chassidisher Derher, he shares the story of his journey—from the "Hungarian" community in Williamsburg to serving as the Hungarian shliach of the Rebbe.

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

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

•

ולזכות הורינו
מרת רבקה מירל תחי' שפאלטר
מרת שרה תחי' גיפמן

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

A Strange Type of Rebbe

I was a young *bochur* learning at the Pupa Yeshivah in Williamsburg when someone walked in with unexpected news.

“You heard? The Lubavitcher Rebbe published a *sefer* on *nigleh!*”

This was very interesting information.

It was the early 5740s. We all knew of the Lubavitcher Rebbe. His *farbrengens* were broadcast on the radio several times a year. In earlier times, his Chassidim would march through Williamsburg on *Shvi'i shel Pesach*, stopping by shuls and dancing in the streets. I myself had once attended a Yud-Tes Kislev *farbrengen*, when I was about thirteen.

But to us, this was a very atypical kind of rebbe.

The Rebbe didn't speak the “*heimishe*” Yiddish we were used to. He didn't wear a *shtreimel* like our rebbes. He sent his Chassidim out on all sorts of “campaigns,” and he was always making pronouncements about what the military in Eretz Yisroel should or shouldn't do. It was all very foreign to us. But a *sefer* on *nigleh*—that was a language I understood.

I went out and bought the newly published *Chiddushim U'Biuirim B'Shas*, and began learning it with my friends.

We were amazed. I remember learning the *siyum* on Niddah, where the Gemara discusses whether Lot's wife is *tamei* and *metamei*. This was real *nigleh*—with Rogatchovers quoted and *chiddushim* unfolding one after another. We couldn't stop talking about it. We still didn't quite know what Lubavitch was, but the Lubavitcher Rebbe was clearly a *baal nigleh* of the highest caliber.

I began paying closer attention to the Rebbe's Torah.

The Pupa Ruv (known as the *Vayechi Yosef*) would receive Likkutei Sichos each week in the mail, and after he was done perusing it, his *gabbai* would leave it in a certain corner of the shul. I began picking it up. It had the characteristic Lubavitch strangeness (who publishes *chiddushei Torah* in Yiddish?), but the content was amazing.

I loved the Rashi sichos—the pure logic, the fresh insights, the wide breadth of fascinating *meforshim*. I was sorely disappointed when the *sicha* was on Chassidus. What a waste, I would say to myself.

But my introduction to Chassidus wasn't long in coming.

Does Hashem Care About Flat Tires?

Our *maggidei shiurim* would leave yeshiva every day at four in the afternoon. (The official seder began very early—six in the morning.) After that, we all stayed in the Beis Midrash until nine at night, with a *shoel u'meishiv* or two, learning on our own.

Our *shoel u'meishiv* was the famous author of *Nitei Gavriel*, Reb Gavriel Zinner. One day in 5742, a friend of his—Reb Mendel Vechter—approached him with an idea: perhaps he could give a *shiur* in Chassidus to the Pupa bochurim.

Satmar had already shut down Rabbi Vechter's yeshiva for teaching Chabad Chassidus to his boys, so this was definitely controversial, but Rabbi Zinner loved the idea. Rabbi Zinner has a broad grasp of many streams of Torah thought and always taught us to keep an open mind in our learning. He felt that the yeshiva was missing a certain chassidishe “vibe.” He didn't need anyone's permission—for all intents and purposes, he was in charge of the yeshiva during the evening hours. And so, one night, Reb Mendel Vechter showed up.

He spoke for an hour and a half, and we went crazy.

“Everyone knows,” he began, “that according to



THE PUPA RUV (THE VAYECHI YOSEF).

Chassidus, everything that happens is *hashgacha pratis*.” We nodded. We were a chassidishe yeshiva too; this was familiar territory.

“But what *is hashgacha pratis*?” he continued. “Does everything really come from the *Aibershter*? When I’m driving on the highway, and I get a flat tire—was that the *Aibershter*? Does Hashem really care about my flat tire?”

“The answer,” he said, “comes from another question: Which is closer to infinity—one, or one thousand?”

He introduced us to *bli gevul*. If Hashem is infinite, we cannot logically say that one detail of our finite lives is less significant than another. With vivid descriptions, he pulled us into an entire universe of ideas we had never encountered before—*bli gevul*, *peshitus*, how Hashem creates the world, and the nature of His relationship with it. Suddenly, we discovered an entire world of ideas behind the concepts we had accepted with simple faith.

For the next week, there were no *devarim beteilim* in the yeshiva. Standing in line for supper, we debated *bli gevul*, *gevul*, and *hashgacha pratis*. Years later, I would think back and say to myself, *If only I learned Chassidus with the same koch as that one week in Pupa*. We were thrilled.

Rabbi Zinner told us that Reb Mendel would be coming back. This was going to be a weekly shiur.

We Are Not Satmar

Our excitement didn’t last long.

We were soon informed that the *Vaad HaChinuch* of Pupa was deeply upset with the *shiur* and that it was being categorically shut down.

We knew where this was coming from. Satmar had warned Pupa that if they weren’t careful, Reb Mendel Vechter would kidnap their youth and brainwash them into becoming Lubavitchers.

But we weren’t afraid of Lubavitch at all.

The Pupa Rav was known to be fluent in Tanya. His father (known as the *Vayaged Yaakov*) was known to learn a *perek* Tanya every day before davening. He had met the Frieddiker Rebbe in Austria. Back in the *alte heim*, *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* was considered the *posek acharon* among Hungarian Chassidim; in certain areas of halacha, some of them actually followed the Alter Rebbe more closely than the Lubavitchers in Russia did. We were convinced that we could learn Chabad Chassidus and remain perfectly good Pupa Chassidim. Let Satmar keep its conflict with Lubavitch to itself.

During *Shalosh Seudos*—which was only lightly supervised—we quietly brought Reb Mendel back into the shul of the *bochurim*.



RABBI MENDEL VECHTER IN LINE TO RECEIVE KOS SHEL BRACHA FROM THE REBBE.

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He gave us another shiur, just as gripping as the first, this time on the difference between the *avoda* of the Avos and the *avoda* that began after Matan Torah. He knew this *shiur* would never be repeated. And so, almost in passing, he dropped hints about other areas of Torah that Chassidus sheds light on.

It worked. Before long, I had purchased the newly released Yiddish version of *Shiurim B'Sefer HaTanya*, and, along with some friends, began learning it with gusto.

KGB Evasion Tactics

As 5742 became 5743, my Lubavitch 'obsession' slowly grew.

We discovered the *hanachos* of the farbrengens. The Rebbe's Torah came alive; something could be discussed one week and then continued the next. In the summer of 5742, I avidly followed the Rebbe's *sichos* regarding the shape of the menorah.

Then we discovered the *ha'aros hatmimim*. This was even more interesting. In Lubavitch, you were able to pose questions on anything the Rebbe said—and the Rebbe might even answer you at the farbrengen! In the *frum velt*, there was no such thing as writing a *tzarich iyun* on the Torah of the rebbe or *ruv*. That would have been considered disrespectful.

I even began reading Kfar Chabad magazines (a brand new publication at the time), which introduced me to the world of Shlichus and *Hafatzas Hamaayanos*.

As Pesach 5743 approached, my cousin and chavrusa, Reb Nochum Grunwald (today Rav and Mashpia of Kehilas Chabad in Lakewood) and I, began quietly slipping into Crown Heights to catch Mincha with the Rebbe.

But all of this was top secret. We knew that our parents would not approve in the slightest, and if we were discovered, our Lubavitch connection would come to a quick end. To protect ourselves, we adopted KGB-level evasion tactics. The most important one was that we never discussed Chabad indoors, where someone could be eavesdropping; instead, we would stand outside and talk about what we were learning. I spent many an evening discussing and debating the matters on a Williamsburg corner.

My cousin Reb Nochum was already convinced—he wanted to become a Lubavitcher. I wasn't as ready. I argued that I could be a good Pupa chossid and learn Tanya, Chassidus, and the Rebbe's *sichos*. There was no contradiction. We argued a lot over the topic, and it was in that state of mind that I left after Pesach for Eretz Yisroel, to learn in Slabodka.

Becoming "In"

One day, in the summer of 5743, I was talking to my brother through the yeshiva payphone about the news from New York that Reb Pinye Korf and Reb Mendel Vechter had been attacked in Williamsburg and their beards shorn off. A Slabodka *bochur* overheard the conversation, and soon approached me and said, "I noticed from your conversation that you have an interest in Chabad. Rav Landau's *einikel* is giving a *shiur* Tanya. Would you like to join?"

The *shiur* with Zalman Landau began once a week, but that soon became twice a week, then three, and then four. The *mashpia*, Reb Mendel Futerfas, would tell him that it was forbidden for him to remain in Yeshiva in Kfar Chabad at night. "*Dayn tafkid is lernen Tanya mit bochurim*, your job is to learn Tanya with bochurim."

We became very close. He was a very warm person who would tell stories and bring excitement to the *shiur*. Soon, I was spending Shabbosim in Kfar Chabad and in Nachalas Har Chabad.

As Pesach 5744 approached and my first year in Slabodka came to a close, I had already become convinced that I was a Lubavitcher. I davened *Nusach Ari*, I learned Chassidus, I was a regular visitor at Nachalas Har Chabad, I went on *mitvtzoim*, and I was up-to-date on the Rebbe's *sichos*. It was all still a secret, but a plan began to percolate in my mind: after Pesach, I would abandon Slabodka and enroll in Kfar Chabad.

On my last Sunday in Kfar Chabad before leaving for home, I heard Reb Yoel's hookup-*chazara* of the Rebbe's



REB ZALMAN LANDAU, SITTING TO THE LEFT OF REB MENDEL FUTERFAS AT A FARBRENGEN IN YESHIVAS TOMCHEI TMIMIM, KFAR CHABAD.

sicha about *kam rabah v'shachatei l'rebbi zeira*, the Gemara that says that Rabbah *shechted* Rabbi Zeira on Purim. The next week, in New York, I heard the continuation from the Rebbe himself, at the Shabbos farbrengen in 770.

I felt like I was part of the club—but now my parents were about to find out.

My Father Discovers

At about noon on my first Shabbos back in New York, I left my home in Williamsburg and headed for Crown Heights. It was a walk through the very dangerous Bedford Stuyvesant neighborhood, and I had only walked two or three blocks when someone ran up behind me and snatched my nice shabbos hat. There was nothing I could do; I was happy he didn't hurt me, so I just continued on my way and arrived hatless at 770.

It was my first farbrengen since my transformation. I got on a bench, listened to all the *sichos*, and even said *l'chaim* to the Rebbe. People thought I was trying to be 'cool' without a hat, but I ignored the stares and enjoyed every moment of the farbrengen.

When I arrived home on Motzei Shabbos, I realized that my parents had been looking for me. You could cut the tension in the home with a knife. "Where were you?! Where is your hat?!"

In my enthusiasm, I had totally failed to prepare a cover story. I *eked* and *beked*, and soon the secret was out. I was hanging out in Lubavitch.

My father was very upset and made it clear in no uncertain terms: either I severed my connection to Lubavitch,

or I could not return to Eretz Yisroel after Pesach. We had a long argument, and I was feeling a lot of pressure.

For the first time, I sat down and wrote a long letter to the Rebbe. I wrote about my entire journey, my friendships with the *mashpi'im* and *bochurim* in Kfar Chabad, and the situation with my parents. I asked for the Rebbe's *bracha* to be able to enroll in the Yeshiva in Kfar Chabad and successfully navigate the situation with my parents, whom I very much loved and admired.

I soon received the Rebbe's answer. I don't remember the exact wording, but the Rebbe wrote that I should have *hatzlacha* "*bakol*"—in everything. I took it as a *bracha* for the situation with my parents, and as an approval for my enrollment in Kfar Chabad. So, I stopped fighting with my parents. I didn't mention the issue again, and I didn't go to 770. They thought my Lubavitch fad was over, and after Pesach, I headed back to Slabodka.

Who Controls My Life

Two days after returning to Slabodka, I "jumped ship" and escaped to Kfar Chabad. When my parents heard, they got very upset.

My mother flew to Eretz Yisroel and shlepped me back to America, where they brought in "expert" after "expert" to try and "deprogram" me from my Lubavitch obsession. I spent hours and hours with people who explained to me that it was foolhardy to leave Pupa, that Lubavitch wasn't a good place for me, and so on and so forth. At one point, I couldn't handle the pressure, and I escaped back to Eretz Yisroel using money I had saved up.

For a long time afterward, my father refused to speak with me. It was incredibly stressful. I respected my parents and loved them dearly. They were Holocaust survivors. My father was a strong personality. He was the family patriarch; nobody disobeyed him. Until that point, I had never in my life behaved *chutzpadik* toward my father, and here I was defying his will.

Still, I had utter conviction that it was the right choice. I vividly remember standing in my dorm room in Slabodka shortly before leaving, caught in a storm of emotion, and telling myself: Am I in control of my life, or are others going to make my decisions for me? I know that Chassidus is critical for my *ruchnius*. I know my heart lies in Lubavitch. Will I let obstacles stand in my way?

Soon it was Tishrei. I bought a ticket and arrived in New York.



RABBI BORUCH OBERLANDER'S
FATHER, REB MORDCHE ARON.



TISHREI 5745.

The First Bed Off The Stairs

Tishrei was like nothing I had ever experienced before. It was a Tishrei of three-day *yomim tovim*, and it seemed as if the Rebbe went from farbrengen straight to the next farbrengen, pouring out Torah endlessly.

There was an incredible ‘energy’ in the air. The Rebbe carried us to a higher level. The experience was very powerful—especially for the first time, when it was all so new and fresh to me.

One farbrengen followed the other. Hakafos. Tefillos in the Rebbe’s presence. Panim, Lekach, benching on the Rebbe’s *lulav* and *esrog*, or even watching the Rebbe going and coming, and in between, keeping up with the *hanachos* of *sichos* the Rebbe had just spoken. It was like an avalanche.

But leaving *ruchnius* aside for a moment, arriving in 770 was like arriving in the jungle. In Kfar Chabad, I had people looking out for me, but 770 was the wild west. When we arrived, everyone ran off to secure themselves a bed or mattress at friends or relatives, while I—the newcomer—was left sitting on a bench in 770, utterly forlorn.

Someone took pity on me and connected me with Reb Pinye Korf, who had an available bed for the night. I spent a few nights on a floor in Hadar HaTorah. Then, finally, Reb Moshe Yeruslavsky gave me a thin mattress and told me to set it down in the basement of FREE.

Wonderful. I headed over to FREE, relieved that my wanderings were over, only to discover that every inch of the basement was taken. The only available space was the landing at the stairs. Every person coming down the stairs would step directly onto me.

It was better than nothing, so I ‘settled’ in. (I woke up the next morning with my glasses utterly bent out of shape. That’s when I discovered a unique Tishrei-perk: Fishel Bronstein from the glasses store on Kingston would fix all “Tishrei-bent-glasses” free of charge.)

That’s how I spent my first Tishrei with the Rebbe. Coming from a very *balebatishe* home, it was quite a humbling experience. My friends would later tease me at farbrengens, “Boruch, it was those nights in FREE that made you a ‘*shtickel*’ *chossid*. Whatever Chassidus you got, came in the merit of those uncomfortable nights that you spent during your first Tishrei by the Rebbe.”

Food was another *parsha*.

The official *hachnasas orchim* meals were very uncomfortable, and on Sukkos, when the meals were irregularly served in the 770 sukkah, there wasn’t even a reason to bother going.

On Motzei Yom Tov of Sukkos, my friends and I were starving. We decided to take the easiest route—to sneak into the Yeshiva cafeteria sukkah at 1414. They were known to expel any *orchim* who tried to sneak in, but how



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RABBI BORUCH OBERLANDER RECEIVES KOS SHE'EL BRACHA FROM THE REBBE AS A BOCHUR, 5748.

could they tell the difference between the newly arrived *kevutza* bochorim and those visiting just for Tishrei? It was easy enough to get in.

We walked into the 1414 sukkah, filled our plates, and I went to wash. As I said *al netilas yadayim*, I felt a heavy hand clamp down on my shoulder. It was the *bochor*-manager.

“What are you doing here?” he wanted to know.

“*Nu-oh nu-oh*,” I responded.

He wasn’t impressed. He handed me a piece of bread, waited for me to make *hamotzi*, and then asked again, “What are you doing here?”

With my long *peyos* and strange hat, I was a clear outsider. I was going to be his *korban*: “Out!” he told me.

I begged him to let me stay. “I’m starving—let me have a little challah, something!”

“Out!” was the only response.

Over my shoulder, I saw my friends digging into a real meal. They didn’t notice what was happening, and even if they had, there was nothing they could do—they were “illegal” themselves. In a modern-day reenactment of *Kamtza and Bar Kamtza*, the manager grabbed me and threw me out onto the street like a dog.

I hit an absolute low. Everything crashed together at once: the stressful break with my parents, the struggle to acclimate in Lubavitch, the impossible conditions of

Tishrei, and my real, acute hunger. I felt tears welling up. I ducked into a quiet side street and began to sob.

After several minutes, my tears ran out. I wiped my face and told myself resolutely, “It doesn’t matter. Nothing will stop me. *Ashreinu az ich bin in Lubavitch*.”

This was a very difficult experience, but there were also moments of great *ahavas yisroel*. During *hakafos*, for example, a complete stranger saw me stuck behind the bleachers and decided to give me his place during the Rebbe’s *hakafa*, out of the pure goodness of his heart. It was good to know that my experience on Sukkos was the exception, not the rule.

The Resolution

Thankfully, my family situation improved. My father told me that he consulted with the Pupa Ruv, and he told him to stop fighting with me. Although he still didn’t approve, the conflict was over.

A half a year later, I came to learn in 770.

It was an amazing period in my life. The Rebbe far-brought almost every Shabbos, as well as many weekdays. These were long, *geshmake* farbrengens with hours of *sichos*, overflowing with *nigleh*, Chassidus, and everything in between. It felt like it was raining Torah.

I took a place right across from the Rebbe, on the floor behind the benches where the *balebatim* sat. A few older

bochurim and *yungeleit* stood in front of me, but as time passed, they all moved out on shlichus, and I ended up right across from the Rebbe with a direct line of sight, able to see and hear perfectly. The only price to pay was during the Kinus Hashluchim, when all my former “place-mates” would reappear and take up their places, pushing me back.

I was also able to understand far more than before. During the *maamar* on my first Rosh Hashanah, I remember watching Rabbi Ephraim Piekarski listening animatedly to the *maamar* while I couldn’t understand a word. Now that I had become much more familiar with Chassidus, it was becoming far easier.

The biggest challenge was understanding the Rebbe’s explanation of his father’s Torah, which was always very *kabbalah’dik*. To overcome that problem, some of the *bochurim* would open Likkutei Levi Yitzchak each week and learn the sections of the Zohar that he cited. His own Torah was very complex, but if we learned the Zohar itself, we would have some familiarity with the Rebbe’s *sicha*.

It was a time of pure *ruchnius*. We lived from farbrengen to farbrengen, as if the world didn’t exist.

One future thing was cemented during those years. The Rebbe would speak incessantly about shlichus; at every farbrengen, week after week, the Rebbe would say

that everyone should go on shlichus. Indeed, almost all the *bochurim* standing at those farbrengens ended up doing so.

But that was still in the future. Meanwhile, my parents began to wonder: Does this *bochur* ever plan to get married?

“Tell Me About It”

During my ‘deprogramming stage,’ my parents had introduced me to a well-known Hungarian *rav*. He sat with me for many hours, telling me that although the Rebbe is a big *tzaddik*, the Chassidim are far from it. “I once came into 770 and saw two *bochurim* learning Ayin-Beis—the deepest secrets of the Torah—without even wearing a hat or jacket!”

Seeing I wasn’t convinced, he asked me for at least one promise: that I would only do a shidduch with a girl from a frum, *Ungarische* home. Not a Russian, not a *baal teshuva*—only from “*unzere*.”

I was noncommittal. “I will only do a shidduch with the Rebbe’s approval,” I told him. If the Rebbe approves, it’s good enough for me, regardless of background.

A few years passed. My parents were pestering me to get married (I was already at the ripe old age of 21), and



RABBI BORUCH OBERLANDER (SITTING IN THE CENTER WEARING A SHTREIMEL), FARBRENGS WITH FRIENDS AT HIS WEDDING.

my father even wrote to the Rebbe about it. The Rebbe responded (approximately), “*yedaber imo*,” that he should discuss it with me directly. We discussed it, and I said, “Not yet.” When I finally was ready, a shidduch was suggested with Batsheva Lazar from Milan, and with the Rebbe’s *bracha*, we were soon engaged.

My parents had been very nervous about my shidduch, but when they met with my wife’s family, their fears were assuaged. Both of my wife’s parents were Hungarian-born, and my mother even remembered her Bubbe, who had been a well-known character in Williamsburg. When we met after our engagement, they all sat together and shmoozed in Hungarian, and everyone was very happy.

As we walked out, my wife’s grandfather, Reb Tzvi Meir (known as the poet Tzvi Ya’ir) Steinmetz, looked at me and said, “Why didn’t you tell me that your father was in *yechidus* by the Rebbe?!”

I was shocked. My father—the same father who had fought tooth and nail against my connection to Lubavitch—had been in *yechidus*? At the next opportunity, I asked him about it, and he told me the story.

He had arrived in America after Pesach 5710. He was considering going into the penny vending machine business—those little machines on street corners that would deliver a toy for a coin—but he was concerned about having such machines on the streets operational on Shabbos. He wanted guidance from someone who was both a halachic authority and familiar with America, and someone suggested he go to the Rebbe.

He told me that when he came into the Rebbe’s room and introduced himself, the Rebbe was incredibly warm. The Rebbe said, “*Du host doch ibergelebt di milchome. Dertzeil mir vegem dem.* You are a survivor of the war [i.e. the Holocaust]; tell me about it!” and the Rebbe listened closely as he retold his story. In the end, the Rebbe advised him not to enter a business that had such halachic complications, even if it may be technically permissible.

I tried to pin down exactly when this *yechidus* took place. My father said it was in Elul—and that shortly afterward he had attended the Rebbe’s Simchas Beis Hashoeivah farbrengen. He remembered the Rebbe speaking about the idea of *chomah*—“*Om ani chomah*”—explaining that in earlier generations we needed a wall, a *chomah*, to protect ourselves from outside influences, but now the task is to go beyond the walls and spread Yiddishkeit outward. (As an *Ungarischer*, this *sicha* was very difficult for him to handle.)

I ran to my Sichos Kodesh and started going through the farbrengens. I found the *hanacha* almost

immediately—in the year 5711, even before the Rebbe had formally accepted the *nesius*. It was amazing to me that there were Lubavitchers then who weren’t yet Chassidim—and yet my father had already been there.

A Shlichus In My Ancestral Lands

We got married on 23 Adar II 5749. Our Shabbos Sheva Brachos celebration took place in Crown Heights, after the Rebbe’s farbrengen. My friends, the 770 *bochurim*, all sat with my father and farbrenged all afternoon. “*Uchaim*,” they told him again and again, half-teasingly, “your son should become the Rebbe’s shliach to Hungary!”

My friends had always teased me about going on shlichus back to my parents’ hometown, but I would laugh. My parents spoke fluent Hungarian, but mine was broken at best. At the Sheva Brachos, my father definitely didn’t know how to swallow it; he knew we were planning to move on shlichus, but Hungary was, spiritually speaking, a barren desert. He took solace in the fact that before my wedding, I had promised him to spend a full year in kollel. At least that was confirmed.

But things started to move much faster than planned.

We traveled to Milan for the last Sheva Brachos, and I received a call from the nearby Shliach in Vienna, Rabbi Yaakov Biderman, asking us to visit Budapest as a potential shlichus. Apparently, the news had quickly spread that I had gotten married in front of 770 wearing a shtreimel (in deference to my father), and now I had become famous as a ‘Hungarian-speaking’ Lubavitcher.

We traveled to Budapest, and it made a positive impression on us. I even found a Jew and put Tefillin on him; afterwards, Rabbi Biderman looked at me and said, “With this mitzvah, you have just been *koneh* Hungary. The country is yours.”

When we arrived back in New York, we wrote to the Rebbe that “מציעים לנו לצאת לשליחות בהונגריה,” we were offered to go on shlichus to Hungary,” and after including all the relevant details, we asked the Rebbe “באם להתעניין,” should we look into it.

To me, this was a long-term idea. Hungary was part of the communist bloc, and I assumed it would take many months to obtain a visa, as it did for my brother-in-law, Rabbi Berel Lazar, when he traveled to the Soviet Union as a *bochur*.

Within fifteen minutes, I received an answer. The Rebbe didn’t say that we should look into it. The Rebbe circled the words “לצאת לשליחות,” to go out to shlichus.”

It was final and confirmed—the Rebbe approved of our going there *immediately*. The only caveat the Rebbe added was, “באם יש שם מקוה כשירה, if there is a kosher mikvah there.”

Wow. I reached out to the Hungarian embassy in New York and asked for a visa. “We have a regular visa for \$25 and an expedited visa for \$35,” they told me. “The regular visa will be ready tomorrow, but the expedited visa could be ready today”...

It was just weeks after our wedding, and we basically had our shlichus. The only problem was that I had promised my father a year in kollel!

For the time being, I decided to keep it a secret. When we received the Rebbe’s answer, I sat with my brother-in-law Berel Lazar (then still a *bochur* in 770) and quietly said *l’chaim*. Nobody knew about our plans. I needed to figure out how to break the news to my parents.

Shock of His Life

We still needed to check the mikvah. Rabbi Avraham Yitzchak Glick in London, who was the Rebbe’s “wandering shliach” to many countries of Europe, contacted Rabbi Meir Posen (a famous mikvah expert) and scheduled a trip to Budapest to check the local mikvah. I also faxed him our passports so he could inquire about our residency permits during his visit.

I emphasized the importance of secrecy. My parents couldn’t find out, so nobody was allowed to know about

our Shlichus yet. When he gave an interview during that period to Kfar Chabad Magazine about his activities, the headline read, “News is Coming Soon About a New Country in Europe.” He wouldn’t even tell them which country, lest my parents catch wind and suspect something.

A few weeks later, he and the mikvah expert headed to Budapest.

They checked the mikvah and found it in good condition. As they emerged from the building, they happened to encounter a frum couple walking down the street. They began chatting, and the couple—seeing that he was a Lubavitcher—began asking, “*Nu*, when is Lubavitch going to send a shliach to Hungary?”

“Actually,” Rabbi Glick told them, “there are plans cooking right now, but the news isn’t official yet.”

“Who is it?” the frum visitors pressed him. “Who is willing to travel so far from home?”

What harm could come from sharing the secret with one solitary couple, many thousands of miles away from my parents in New York? “Actually,” he told them, “I have their passport pictures here in my pocket.”

He showed them our passport pictures. The couple looked at the pictures and looked back at Rabbi Glick, and gave him the shock of his life.

“That young man in the passport picture,” said the wife, “is my son, and the woman is my daughter-in-law...”

My parents had embarked on a visit to *kivrei avos* in Hungary, and Rabbi Glick had divulged the world-class



EARLY DAYS OF SHLICHUS IN BUDAPEST.



TO THE LEFT OF RABBI OBERLANDER IS RABBI AVRAHAM YITZCHAK GLICK; SECOND TO THE LEFT IS RABBI YAAKOV BIDERMAN.



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RABBI OBERLANDER RECEIVES A DOLLAR FROM THE REBBE THREE MONTHS AFTER BEGINNING HIS SHLICHUS.

secret to the very people he was supposed to hide it from.

To his *mazal*, they had actually found out from us a short time earlier.

My wife had been nudging me for a while to tell my

parents. We slowly began preparing the groundwork—we first told them that we were looking into options, then we told them about Hungary, and right before their trip, as I accompanied them to the airport, I had told them that we had received the Rebbe's *bracha*. We would be going on shlichus to Hungary.

(At first, he thought we were absolutely crazy, but years later, my parents came to visit us, and my father saw firsthand the tremendous effect our shlichus was having on his hometown—and he finally appreciated my decision to become a chossid of the Rebbe and move on shlichus).

Well, the secret was out, the mikvah was kosher, and we had the Rebbe's approval. There was nothing holding us back.

The day after Chof Av, I stood in front of 770 as the Rebbe came out of the car. We received the Rebbe's farewell *bracha*, and on 22 Av, we had already landed in Hungary—on the Rebbe's shlichus. **T**



RABBI BORUCH AND BATSHEVA OBERLANDER SOON AFTER ARRIVING ON SHLICHUS IN BUDAPEST.

BLESSINGS IN DISGUISE

THE MERIT AND MITZVAH OF WEARING A SHEITEL

Compiled By: Rabbi Levi Greenberg (OH)

Written By: Rabbi Shneur Itzinger

לזכות
הת' לוי יצחק שיחי'
לרגל הגיעו לעול מצוות
כ' סיון ה'תשפ"ו

נדפס ע"י הוריו
הרה"ת ר' מרדכי
וזוגתו מרת ח' מושקא
ומשפחתם שיחיו
גראסבוים
סטאני ברוק, ניו יארק

Mrs. Chana Arnold related the following story:

When I got engaged to my husband, Rabbi Yitzchok Arnold, he asked me to wear a sheitel. He told me how wearing a sheitel in particular was something the Rebbe had encouraged. I said, "I'm not wearing a sheitel. None of my friends wear one. I'm embarrassed. Everyone is going to make fun of me."

I was living in Eretz Yisroel at the time. I agreed to write a letter to the Rebbe detailing all the reasons why I didn't want to wear a sheitel. "I promise I'll cover my hair and you'll see the Rebbe will agree with me," I said. "I will do whatever the Rebbe wants me to do."

My father worked as a censor at the Israeli post office, and letters from the United States would pass through his hands. One day, he saw a letter for me. He woke me up at the end of his shift, at about 3:30 a.m., and told me, "Go wash *negel vasser*. There's a letter for you." It was from the Rebbe. I still remember that night. I was shaking as I read the letter.

The Rebbe wrote about how important it was to wear a sheitel, and asked how it was possible that even now, when the youth in the United States were becoming more

committed to Yiddishkeit, and there was an awakening about wearing a sheitel, I was still embarrassed of people and not of Hashem.

That line was the clincher.

The next day, I went to order a sheitel.

Six years later, we had yet to be blessed with children. I recalled that in his letter to me years earlier, the Rebbe had quoted the Zohar that gives *brachos* to women who cover their hair, saying they will be blessed with "children and grandchildren."

I was in constant correspondence with the Rebbe, and at one point, I asked to go in for *yechidus*. While this was not usually granted at the time, I was given permission. I took along the Rebbe's letter from six years earlier and held it up during the *yechidus*, saying, "Rebbe, I have a promise, black on white, that I'm going to be blessed with children. I did my part. I'm wearing a sheitel. I want the Rebbe to give me a *bracha* that, *im yirtze Hashem*, I should have children."

The Rebbe smiled at me and said, "You shouldn't say '*im yirtze Hashem*.' You should say '*b'ezras Hashem*,' because Hashem wants, and Hashem will help."

Baruch Hashem, I merited to raise a large family.¹

נשי
ובנות
חב"ד
N'SHEI
U'BNOS
CHABAD

“I’LL SEE IT THROUGH WITH MESIRUS NEFESH”

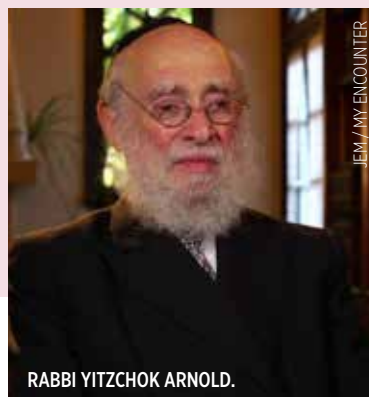
When the Rebbe began his *nesius*, observance of the halachos of *kisui rosh* was in serious decline in many communities, even among otherwise observant Jews. This weakening can be traced in part to the decrees issued by Czar Nicholas in 5614, which targeted various forms of traditional Jewish dress.

Some one hundred years later, in the 5710s, the Rebbe set out to restore widespread and careful observance of this mitzvah, with a particular emphasis on fulfilling it in the most *mehudar* manner, through wearing a sheitel.

With great patience and sensitivity, the Rebbe encouraged and guided a new generation of American Jewish women to come to cherish this beautiful Mitzvah, once expressing himself on the topic that he “*vet durchfiren mit mesirus*

nefesh”—will see it through with *mesirus nefesh*.²

The benefits of keeping this special Mitzvah are also emphasized by the Rebbe in many conversations, letters, and *sichos*. “From the great reward [promised] for adhering to this commandment correctly, one can understand its great importance,” the Rebbe wrote in 5720.³ “As the holy Zohar states: ‘[Her children will enjoy increased stature over other children; moreover, her husband shall be blessed with all blessings], blessings of above and blessings of below, with wealth, with children and grandchildren.’”⁴



In a yechidus on Rosh Chodesh Elul 5714, the Rebbe spoke passionately on this topic. The Rebbe later edited the transcript of his words, and the yechidus is printed in Likkutei Sichos.⁵ What follows is an adaptation.⁶

DON'T LOOK AT YOUR NEIGHBOR

Wearing a sheitel has a beneficial impact on children and grandchildren, and brings sustenance and health—*banei chayei umzonei*, as stated in the Zohar.

Some say, “I know of a woman who does not wear a sheitel and still things go well for her regarding *banei chayei umzonei*, as well as life in general.” But this way of thinking is flawed on several levels. Firstly, we never truly know what is taking place in another person’s life, or what challenges he or she may be facing. People do not publicize all that occurs behind closed doors. Secondly, what relevance does another person’s conduct have to our own? We are obligated to do what Hashem commands us to do.

Following this reasoning would also lead one to argue that since there are more non-Jews than Jews in

the world, and things seem to be going well for them, perhaps we should imitate their ways. Were we to act in such a manner, the Jewish people would have ceased to exist long ago, *Rachmana litzlan*.

When a Jewish woman walks in the street without a sheitel, there is no discernible difference between her and others. When she wears a sheitel, it is recognizable that she is a Jewish, *frumme* woman.

True, it is not necessary to loudly proclaim in the streets, “I am religious.” But why the shame? In front of whom is one embarrassed? One’s friend? If someone were to say, “Here goes a religious Jew,” is that a disgrace?

Does such “embarrassment” constitute such a great level of *mesirus nefesh*? If *Rachmana litzlan* a person has little food in their home and the children are hungry, it takes tremendous *mesirus nefesh* to close one’s business for Shabbos. Yet, without question, everyone would keep Shabbos in that instance!

HOW BEFORE WHY

What about those who insist on understanding the reasoning behind this requirement before they are prepared to fulfill it? The following analogy offers a response.

When one visits a doctor for treatment, one relies on the doctor's instructions even without fully understanding why a particular medicine or course of treatment was prescribed.

Or consider another example. If an infant is not digesting its milk and the doctor changes the formula, would a mother say that she will wait until she completes five years of medical study in college so that she can understand the doctor's reasoning, and only then follow his advice?

Following this line of thought can lead down a dangerous path. A college student once came to me and said he does not put on tefillin or wear tzitzis because he does not understand why he should!

If the objection to wearing a sheitel is that one does not intellectually grasp the reason for it, why not simply rely on Hashem?

In business, if one were offered the opportunity to invest a dollar with the promise of a return of one hundred thousand dollars, one would seize the opportunity, even if there were some element of risk. We can certainly rely on the investment of a sheitel, and trust Hashem to provide the reward.

In previous generations, the custom among Jewish women was to cut all their hair at the time of marriage. Later, the *minhag* of wearing a sheitel became widespread. Wearing a sheitel is especially appropriate in our times, when they are easily attainable in various shades and colors, which can look even nicer than one's real hair.

WHY THE SHEITEL SPECIFICALLY?

The difference between a sheitel and a *tichel* is straightforward. A *tichel* can easily be removed. But a sheitel? Even if President Eisenhower were to walk into the room, a sheitel is not coming off!

With a bit of reflection, every woman can recognize this truth. Why does she prefer to wear a kerchief rather than a sheitel? Because she knows that a sheitel cannot be casually removed when walking in the street or attending

a public gathering, whereas a *tichel* can be shifted back, adjusted, or even removed entirely, as is often seen.

It is possible that a woman will say that she will wear a *tichel* properly. If she were to indeed do so then surely that would be fine, but experience has shown that this is not the case.

Wearing a *tichel* can place a person in a position of temptation. Why deliberately enter such a situation? We pray daily, “*v'al t'vi'emu lo lidei nisayon*—do not lead us to temptation.” Even Dovid Hamelech, who had eradicated his *yetzer hara*, was not immune to every *nisayon*!

OVERTURNING A CITY

Even Reform Jews do not claim that a sheitel contradicts morality or violates ethics. Their only argument is that it is “old-fashioned.” So what is there to fear? Let someone say, “Here goes a Jewish girl.”

The Frierdiker Rebbe related that the city of Frankfurt, Germany, was renowned throughout the country as a model of *frumkeit*. Yet this had not always been so. At one time, Frankfurt was a stronghold of *haskala*, and Yiddishkeit was in decline. What transformed the city from one extreme to the other?

Three Jewish women took a stand. Three women resolved to lead by example by wearing a sheitel, observing *taharas hamishpacha*, and providing their children with a proper Jewish education. Their example inspired many others, women and men alike, until an entire community turned around and became a shining example for the entire country. **1**



THE REBBE'S EDITS ON THE TRANSCRIPT OF THE YECHIDUS REGARDING THE IMPORTANCE OF A SHEITEL, ROSH CHODESH ELUL 5714.

ADDITIONAL INSIGHT

- » The Gemara tells of Kimchis, a woman who lived in the time of *bayis sheini*, who merited that all seven of her sons served as Kohen Gadol. When asked what brought her this merit, she explained that “the walls of my home never saw the hair on my head.”⁷ A woman’s conduct, even when she is alone in her home, acting with *tznius* when no one is there to see it, can have a profound effect on the *ruchniyus* of her children even decades later. This also highlights how careful one must be with matters of *tznius* even when no one else is present in the home. Habits become second nature, and if one is not careful about *tznius* when alone, one may come to forget and act the same way when others are present. — *Sicha, Chai Elul 5742*.⁸
- » “In connection with the Shatel, one of the reasons (but by no means the only one) is that it makes the marriage between a man and his wife a holier union, and the two of them become like one. This brings them G-d’s additional blessings making it a happy marriage, and that the children should also be well and happy, and well provided for in all their needs.” — *English letter of the Rebbe to a seven year old girl*.⁹
- » “Not only does the Shaitel show the true Jewish spirit of adherence to our laws and customs, but it also shows strength of character and will and the power of conviction, not being swayed by external influences and the opinions of people who are rather devoid of content inwardly and even outwardly are of no consequence.” — *English letter of the Rebbe to a woman who wrote that she recently bought a sheitel*.¹⁰

- » Regarding what you wrote about covering your hair: there can be no question at all: since Hashem clearly stated that **for the benefit of the woman, her husband, and her children**, her hair should not be uncovered — it is **definitely** so. It is impossible that headaches, or anything of the sort, are a result of fulfilling Hashem’s commandment [of wearing a sheitel]!

For example, when you write that when you wear a sheitel, the abovementioned pain arrives, it is possible:

- a) this is a **falsehood** [suggested by] the Yetzer Hara, who does not want *mitzvos* to be fulfilled and does not wish for blessings to come to the Jewish people; b) if it is indeed true, then this is proof that for your good, you should cut your hair so that it will be shorter. When you do so, there surely won’t be pain when wearing a sheitel.

Especially since you have already seen Hashem’s **revealed brachos** and miracles with the birth of your son, I am surprised that you are still asking about the matter! — *Adapted from a letter by the Rebbe*.¹¹

- » You asked my opinion regarding a woman covering her hair. I was taken aback by the very question, especially since you wrote that she would cover her hair with a sheitel, except for two fingers’ width at the front. Who do you think you can fool with this? You certainly cannot fool Hashem, nor the entire world. The only one you can successfully fool is yourself—and what purpose does that serve? — *Adapted from a letter by the Rebbe*.¹²

1. *Living Torah*, Program 507, “I Did My Part”. *Derher*, Tammuz 5783, “Stories of the Rebbe.”

2. *Mekadesh Yisrael*, p. 134.

3. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 19, p. 428.

4. *Zohar* vol. 3, 126a.

5. *Likkutei Sichos* vol. 13, pp. 188–190.

6. Sections of this translation were adapted from *Sichos In English* (SIE.org/2312425).

7. *Yoma* 47a.

8. *Hisvaaduyos 5742*, vol. 4, pp. 2190–2191.

9. English letter dated 30th of Tishrei, 5718.

10. English letter dated 19 Cheshvan, 5715.

11. *Likkutei Sichos* vol. 33, p. 264.

12. *Ibid*.



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וואשינגטאן די. סי.

By: Rabbi Shneur Itzinger

Step Inside

Farbrengen with the Rebbe — A Companion

A guide to the Farbrengen of
Erev Shavuos 5742



Hisvaaduyos 5742
vol. 3, pp. 1531-1549

This guide is designed to help
you experience the farbrengen
on video or audio. Timestamps
correspond to the video of the
farbrengen, linked above.



Beginning in 5732, the Rebbe would frequently farbreng on Erev Shavuos. At these relatively short farbrengens, held on the eve of Yom Tov, the Rebbe would usually deliver a *maamar* as well as a *hadran* on Maseches Sotah, the study of which we conclude on Erev Shavuos.

Maseches Sotah closes with a curious statement of the Amora Rav Yosef, in which he attests to his own humility. This line is explained by the Rebbe in a number of *hadranim*. In this 5742 farbrengen, the Rebbe connects the conclusion of the Bavli with that of the Yerushalmi, showing how the theme of *anava* appears in both, each with its own unique emphasis.

1. Open Joy

[0:40]

- A farbrengen is always for a joyous occasion,
- in this case a revealed joy: concluding Maseches Sotah.

2. Why Sotah?

[1:56]

The name of the Masechta does not seem positive. Let's examine the connection between Sotah and Sefiras Ha'omer to understand its lesson.

- By counting seven weeks, the Jews removed the impurities of Egypt,
- just as a woman counts seven days to become *tehora* [connected to the theme of Sotah].
- On the fiftieth day, they reached the highest level of *kedusha*.

The husband-wife metaphor in today's Chumash:

- “*B'yom kalos moshe*” – the Mishkan's **completion** – hints at **Kallah**.
- It was the completion of the wedding between Hashem and us, which began at Mattan Torah.

The same metaphor in today's Daf of Sotah:

- The Gemara describes the lowly state of *galus*,
- when “husband” and “wife” are separated (we are distant from Hashem).
- This separation comes from Hashem's love:
- Just as a man is obligated to warn his wife, as explained at the opening of Sotah, as an expression of love,
- Hashem's strictness with us comes from love—He does not act so with other nations.
 - We count not seven but seven times seven, to purify our whole selves for Mattan Torah.

3. The End-of-Galus Demand

[7:13]

Regarding galus and ending it, the end of the Masechta is mentioned

- The Mishna in Sotah concludes: *ein lanu l'hisha'en elah al avinu she'bashamayim*—we have no one to rely upon except our Father in Heaven.
- This places responsibility on us to demand an end to *galus*.
- When challenged, “Who are you to demand from Hashem?” we point to this Mishna.
 - Besides, we are commanded to ask for **all** our needs in *davening*,
 - and have a specific right to demand Moshiach, since Hashem “started the mitzvah” with Yetzias Mitzrayim and must complete it.
- We cannot turn elsewhere, nor be told we are undeserving.
- If something is lacking in Torah or *mitzvos*, Hashem Himself should fix it.
- Just as He provides our physical needs, at a level befitting kings.

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4. Bavli vs. Yerushalmi

[10:15]

Here begins the actual Hadran on Sotah, on both Bavli and Yerushalmi.

- We will examine the difference between the conclusions of Sotah in Bavli and Yerushalmi.

- [While other Masechtos in Yerushalmi conclude with Mishnah only, Sotah includes Gemara as well.]

When Rebbi (Rebbi Yehudah Hanassi) passed, humility and fear of sin ceased.

סיום מסכת סוטה, משנה
...משמות רבי, בטלה עננה ויראת חטא...

The Elders once gathered in an attic in Yericho. A heavenly voice proclaimed: "There are among you two who would be worthy that the Divine Spirit should rest on them, and one is Hillel the Elder." They all looked toward Shmuel Hakatan [as the second].

Again, it happened that the Elders gathered in an attic in Yavne, and a heavenly voice proclaimed: "Among you are two worthy of the Divine Spirit resting upon them, and one is Shmuel Hakatan." They all looked toward Rebbi Eliezer ben Hurkanus [as the second].

They rejoiced that their interpretation [of the voice] aligned with that of Hashem.

סיום מסכת סוטה, תלמוד ירושלמי

מעשה שנכנסו זקנים לעליית בית גדיא ביריחו. ויצאת בת קול ואמרה להן: יש ביניכם שנים ראויין לרוח הקודש והלל הזקן אחד מהן. ונתנו עיניהן בשמואל הקטן. ושוב נכנסו זקנים לעלי' ביבנה ויצאת בת קול ואמרה להן: יש ביניכם שנים ראויין לרוח הקודש ושמואל הקטן אחד מהן. ונתנו עיניהן ברבי אליעזר בן הורקנוס. והיו שמיחין שהסכימה דעתן לדעת המקום.

Rav Yosef said: do not teach that humility ceased, for I am still here. Rav Nachman said: do not teach that fear of sin ceased, for I am still here.

סיום מסכת סוטה, תלמוד בבלי

אמר לי רב יוסף לתנא: לא תיתגי עננה דאיכא אנא. אמר לי רב נחמן לתנא: לא תיתגי יראת חטא דאיכא אנא.

- Generally, Bavli and Yerushalmi are **different** but need not be **contradictory**.
 - Our approach is always to reconcile them.
- Here, **both speak about anava—humility**. How do they **differ**?

Firstly, what is the general difference between Bavli and Yerushalmi?

- Yerushalmi** was taught in Eretz Yisroel (not strictly Yerushalayim), **Bavli** in *galus*.

- Yerushalmi** was concluded about **one hundred years** earlier.
- Bavli** therefore includes another **hundred years of learning**,
- along with *yeridas hadoros* of those generations.

Expressed in *anava*;

- The expectation for humility** in the time of **Bavli** was **lower**,
 - relative to the diminished level of the generation.

5. Three *anavim*

[18:53]

The Rebbe begins to explain the *anava* of those mentioned in the conclusions of Bavli and Yerushalmi.

- **Hillel:** The Gemara specifically praises his humility.
- **Shmuel Hakatan:** called *katan* because a) he “made himself small.”
- b) *katan* relative to the “great Shmuel”—Shmuel Hanavi.

- These ideas are connected: although comparable to Shmuel Hanavi, he still humbled himself.
- **R. Eliezer Hagadol:** “he never said something he had not heard from his teacher,” showing his *anava*.
- When asked a question on a matter he had not directly received, he redirected the conversation,
- even though he certainly knew the answer.

Section 7 below will pick up from this point.

6.1 Who can Withhold?

[22:17]

A question on R. Eliezer's conduct:

R. Yochanan described his student R. Eliezer ben Hurkanus as “a well that does not lose a drop” (meaning he never forgot anything he learnt).

אבות ב:ח
חמשה תלמידים היו לו לרבן יוחנן בן זכאי...הוא ה' מונה שבחן...רבי אליעזר בן הורקנוס, בור סוד שאינו מאבד טפה.

R. Yochanan would say that R. Eliezer's greatness outweighs that of all the other Chachamim.

Abba Shaul said in R. Yochanan's name that R. Elazar ben Arach outweighs all the other Chachamim, including R. Eliezer.

Bartenura

There is no argument here about who is greater; R. Eliezer excelled in breadth and retention, R. Elazar in depth and sharpness.

אבות ב:ח
[רבן יוחנן בן זכאי] ה' אומר, אם יהיו כל חכמי ישראל בכף מאזנים, ואליעזר בן הורקנוס בכף שני, מכריע את כלם. אבא שאול אומר משמו, אם יהיו כל חכמי ישראל בכף מאזנים ורבי אליעזר בן הורקנוס אף עמהם, ורבי אלעזר בן ערר בכף שני, מכריע את כלם:

ברטנורא

אבא שאול לא נחלק...דלענין הבקיות והזכרון ה' רבי אליעזר מכריע, ולענין החריפות והפלפול ה' רבי אלעזר בן ערר מכריע:

R. Yochanan said: R. Eliezer [is like Sinai]; he can say more Torah than was said at Har Sinai.

פרקי דרבי אליעזר ב'
אמר לו: “אמשל לך משל... כה אתה יכל לומר דברי תורה יותר ממה שקבלו מסיני.”

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- **How could he be *mone'a bar***—withholding Torah?
 - The Alter Rebbe warns against this in Tanya.
 - The Gemara presents it as negative.

- He was “a well that never loses a drop”, never forgetting anything,
- yet deflected questions he had not heard directly from his teacher. **How was this allowed?**

6.2 R. Eliezer's Virtue

[24:03]

Here we see his anivus, as follows:

- R. Eliezer was aware of his *ma'alos* —
 - R. Yochanan, in his presence, called him “a well that does not lose a drop,”
 - and said he outweighed all the other Chachamim,

- including R. Elazar ben Arach; they had two different virtues.

- — Yet, despite this awareness, he was so humble that he would not answer a question he had not heard from his teacher.

How was this not considered *mone'a bar*?

6.3 R. Eliezer the Absorber

[26:33]

...the meat absorbs milk, but it does not expel it.

Rashi

...while it is absorbing, it is not expelling; for as long as it remains in its state of bubbling heat, it does not release what it has absorbed.

חולין, קח:

מבֿלֿע בֿלֿע, מִפֿלֿט לֹא פֿלֿט...

רש"י

...דמה שבולע אינו פולט שכל זמן שאינו נח מרתיחותיו

אינו פולט:

- When one uses the *yud-gimmel middos* to derive a new Halacha, extrapolating a detail from a general *klal*, it is considered a *chiddush*,
 - even though the Halacha had already been taught by Moshe in general terms.
- So too with R. Eliezer: although he was called **Sinai** and knew the entire Torah,
 - (similar to R. Yosi mentioned at the conclusion of Sotah in Bavli)
- he still did not answer questions, and this was **not considered *mone'a bar***,
- because he had heard **only the *klalim*** from his teacher and **did not extrapolate the *pratim***.
- **Why did he not extrapolate** and answer?

- This can be compared to the Halacha: while something is *bole'a* (absorbing), it cannot also be *palit* (expelling).
- **R. Eliezer absorbed** from his teacher **and transmitted** it exactly as he had absorbed it.
- **He was not *palit***: he did not issue new formulations.
- This is the clearest expression of humility:
 - not only in physical or spiritual matters, but in Torah itself.
- He was so *tarid* (occupied) with absorbing his teacher's words,
- despite knowing the greatness of Torah,
- he would still not be *polet* anything his teacher had not explicitly said, because of his humility.

7. Humility in Levels

[31:00]

- Among the **three Tannaim** in the Yerushalmi, there was a **generational progression** —
 - **Shmuel** and **Hillel** were contemporaries.
 - **Hillel** taught **R. Yochanan**,
 - who taught **R. Eliezer**.
- Shmuel and Hillel were together when the *bas kol* spoke of Hillel.
- At the latter *bas kol*, Shmuel was mentioned, while R. Eliezer was not.
- — and their ***anava*** was also on **varying levels**, each lower than the next, as follows:

7.1 Hillel's Humility

[32:14]

Three stories of Hillel noticing what Shammai did not, revealing his humility.

- The Gemara highlights Hillel's humility in three specific stories,
 - chosen from many,
- each demonstrating his humility **even toward non-Jews**.
- In all three cases, a potential convert first approached Shammai, who dismissed him, and was then accepted by Hillel.
 - Shammai and Hillel were contemporaries with similar worldviews.
 - Had the convert's potential been obvious, both would have recognized it.
- As the *diyuk* is: a *ger* who converts, not a *goy* who converts, meaning the *ger* has already stood at Har Sinai, with hidden Jewish potential.
- Yet even the great **Shammai did not perceive this potential** — it was clearly buried deep.
- **Hillel did perceive it**, and converted him.
- Why? **The loftier a person is, the more capable he is of humbling himself** to uncover hidden *nitzutzos*.
 - Just as Hashem lowers Himself to the *daka u'shfal ruach*.
- **Hillel's humility** enabled him each time to see the concealed good within the *ger*.

7.2 Shmuel's Humility

[37:45]

Shmuel's *anava* is one level below Hillel's.

- **Shmuel made himself small**, but we do not find stories of him doing so toward non-Jews.
- **Among great Jews**, he minimized himself, teaching, “Do not rejoice in your enemy's downfall,” referring to fellow Jews.
- His companions were Jews. He authored *ve'lamalshinim* regarding the downfall of non-Jews.
 - He was called *hakatan* relative to *Shmuel haRamasi*, called so —
 - not only because he came from Ramah but
 - — from the term ***romemus*** — greatness.
- Despite being compared to such loftiness, Shmuel humbled himself.
- This shows real humility—but **only with regard to Jews**, and therefore a **lower level than Hillel's *anava***.

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7.3 R. Eliezer's Humility

[40:43]

Another generation later, another descent in *anava*.

- As discussed above, his humility is expressed in his refusal to teach anything he had not heard from his teacher.
 - We explained how, despite his greatness, he refrained from teaching, and why this was not considered withholding Torah.
- He acted so even though he was called *hagadol*.
- His humility was therefore expressed only **before his students**,
- a step lower than Shmuel's and Hillel's *anava*.

8. Humility in Bavli

[42:10]

Having shown the levels of *anava* among the Tannaim in the Yerushalmi, the Rebbe turns to the Bavli.

The Bavli, a hundred years later, reflects yet a lower *anava*.

- R. Yosef said, “I am still humble” —
 - [this does not contradict humility. It reflects the difference between *shafal* and *anav*: a **shafal** is truly low, the *anav* has advantages, yet **humbles himself**.
 - Moshe's humility is thus even greater than Hillel's, because he was **humble before kol ha'adam**—even non-Jews without potential for conversion.]
 - — **his humility was not obvious**; he had to state it explicitly — “there is still me.”
 - Unlike Shmuel and Hillel whose *anava* was a known fact.
- To summarize: Tannaim in Eretz Yisroel had a higher level of *anava* than those in Bavel.

9. Hashem's Humility

[47:00]

Expressions of humility connected with *geulah*.

- Hashem's humility is found in the very place of His greatness.
- His greatness was revealed at Yetzias Mitzrayim, and the future *geulah* continues that revelation.
- Even now, at the end of *galus*, His greatness is expressed through Torah and *mitzvos*.
- We will be redeemed with Hashem's *yad ramah* – raised hand, on clouds from *marom* – above.
- All Masechtos are interconnected; concluding one brings *shleimus haTorah*.
- We leave *galus* as one entity; recognizing one another's *ma'alos* and **humble before each other**.
- The small nation becomes great; “small” Shmuel becomes Shmuel HaRamasi,
- whose Haftorah concludes with a prophecy of Moshiach.
- The wedding between Hashem and the Jewish people will be complete.
- Moshiach embodies greatness and humility combined.



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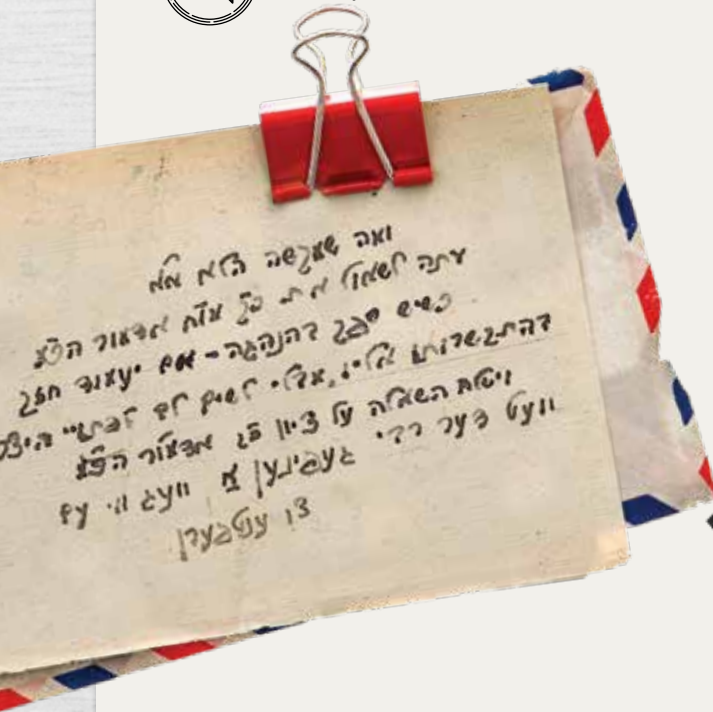


Story

לזכות

דוד בן שיינא וזוגתו מרת
פערל גאלדא בת לאה שיחיו
לרגל יום נישואיהם י"א סיון

להצלחה רבה ומופלגה
בשליחותם הק' ובכל המצטרף
בטוב הנראה והנגלה ורוב נחת
מכל יוצאי חלציהם שיחיו



דער רבי וועט געפינען א וועג...

WRITTEN BY: RABBI LEVI GREENBERG (TX)

The Panim Were Received



AS TOLD BY

RABBI YOSEF Y. RAICHIK

(West Boynton, Florida)

During our first year on Shlichus, on the Shabbos before Yud Shevat, I shared with my community that I was traveling to New York to visit the Ohel and encouraged them to give me letters and panim to bring on their behalf. This was something very important to me as my grandfather and father A"H, had always encouraged people to send letters to the Rebbe. Now it was my turn to bring letters from my community.

By the time I was ready to travel, I had a nice collection of letters.

When I returned home, I was shocked to realize I had forgotten to take the letters with me. I was disappointed with myself and resolved to bring the letters to the Ohel during my next trip for Yud-Aleph Nissan.

We traveled to the Rebbe for Yud-Aleph Nissan (it was my son's Upsherenish as well). We went to the Ohel and to 770, but somehow I forgot to place the letters at the Ohel. This disturbed me very much. How could I forget them a second time?

As you can imagine, it was a very busy and exciting

time for us. We were getting ready to host our first Pesach Sedarim. I placed the letters in a safe spot and figured I'd send them to the Ohel after Pesach.

Then, something extraordinary happened. During the Kiddush on the Shabbos after Pesach, Mr. Clem (Rachamim) Sofer, who had recently moved to our area, asked permission to share a story.

He related that on the Sunday after I invited everyone to give me letters to bring to the Rebbe at the Ohel, he was speaking with a former neighbor. She told him that her son was married to a non-Jewish woman and did not yet have children. For some time, she had been urging him to divorce his wife and marry a Jewish woman. The last time she spoke to him about this, he became very angry and threatened to cut off all contact with her if she ever mentioned it again.

Clem told her that his rabbi was traveling to the Ohel and advised her to use the opportunity to ask the Rebbe for a blessing for her son. He also explained the importance of committing to doing another mitzvah to create a conduit for the blessings. She resolved to light Shabbos candles every Friday and to bring Clem a letter for Rabbi Raichik to take to the Ohel.

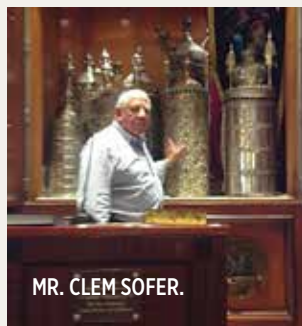
Two weeks later, she called him to report her son had had a huge fallout with his wife and was now separated. Clem explained to her that the Rebbe's *bracha* was clearly materializing, and it was certainly in the merit of her lighting Shabbos candles. She should continue to have *emuna* and *bitachon* and keep lighting Shabbos candles.

A few weeks later, she called to tell him that her son was filing for divorce. He encouraged her again that it's all the Rebbe's *brachos* and to keep on lighting Shabbos candles.

On Erev Pesach, her son arrived at her home for the Seder with a Jewish woman whom he started dating. After the initial introductions, this woman handed her a gift in honor of Pesach: a set of Shabbos candlesticks! She was shocked and started sobbing. She knew that this was all in the merit of her lighting Shabbos candles.

"And this all happened because Rabbi Raichik brought our letters to the Rebbe's Ohel a few months ago," Clem concluded his amazing story.

As I sat there absorbing Clem's story, my thoughts were racing. On the one hand, I felt great that I had a part in this amazing miracle, but I also felt deep shame that I had missed two opportunities to place the letters



I received from these wonderful Yidden at the Ohel.

For the rest of Shabbos, I thought deeply about what all this meant for me, and on Motzei Shabbos, I stood in front of a picture of the Rebbe and poured my heart out. I shared with the Rebbe the miracle that had happened as a result of a letter a local Jewish woman had written to the Rebbe, but I had been excluded from the process since I had not merited to deliver her letter to the Ohel, and I felt it was due to a deficiency in my *hiskashrus*. I made a thorough *cheshbon hanefesh*, and made several concrete *hachlatos*, and I asked the Rebbe for a *bracha* for a stronger connection.

I then decided that instead of the pile of letters sitting on my dresser until my next trip to the Ohel, I would put them in one of the Rebbe's *seforim*. I approached the bookshelf, pulled out a volume of Igros Kodesh, and opened it up to place the letters inside. As I did so, my heart skipped a beat when I saw this line on the page: *I received the letters from the people in your community.*

To me, this was a sign that the Rebbe felt my pain, heard my yearning for *hiskashrus*, and showed me that he's with me in my Shlichus.

As an epilogue, it is worth noting that we had an amazing year of Shlichus, and on the following Yud-Aleph Nissan, we closed on our 5-acre property. It was a huge miracle, and I believe that *bracha* was a direct result of this story and the *hachlatos* I took that night. **T**

YOUR STORY

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

BY: RABBI MENDEL JACOBS

לזכות
הרה"ת ר' מנחם מאניס
הכהן וזוגתו מרת חנה
הנקא ומשפחתם שיחיו
פרידמאן

נדפס ע"י
משפחתם שיחיו

DEDICATION TO EDUCATION MIVTZA CHINUCH



TAKING ACTION

THE TEN MIVTZOIM REVISITED



MIVTZA CHINUCH

TAKING ACTION
THE TEN MIVTZOIM REVISITED

There's a practice prevalent in America of designating and proclaiming a year as dedicated to a specific theme.

Though this may seem like an "American custom," nevertheless, we find that *tzaddikim* often adopt elements of local customs and utilize them for matters of *avodas Hashem*. Our Rabbeim have, at times, proclaimed specific years to be dedicated to a particular cause—like a "year of Torah" or the like.

The Yom Kippur Machzor also includes a similar tone—when we pray for "a year of light, a year of blessing," and so on.

Hence, now is the time and here is the place—in a holy space of Torah and Tefillah—to proclaim this year as "**Shnas Hachinuch—A Year of Education.**"

Great efforts should be made in the realm of education of young boys and girls—whether they are young in years, or young in their knowledge of Torah and Yiddishkeit. We must ensure that every one of the "four children"—from the wise one to the one who knows not how to ask, should receive an appropriate education as soon as possible. Every moment is crucial, since these early years will set the tone for their entire lives.

The Midrash says that when one arrives in a place, he should adopt its customs. Here in America, everything is done with noise and tumult; with notices in newspapers and by forming committees, etc. This approach should be adopted for Shnas Hachinuch as well; not because it's the "American way" but because that's the way Torah expects us to do it!¹

With that, the Rebbe launched "Shnas Hachinuch"—which would eventually be incorporated as one of the *mivtzoim*.

In truth, the idea of *chinuch*—Torah education—is baked into the very DNA of Chabad from its earliest days. All the Rabbeim saw educating Jewish children in the ways of Torah as a most important pillar of their work—to the point of *mesirus nefesh*.²

Now, the Rebbe was bringing this campaign to the whole world.

Children Educate

Chassidim around the world immediately sprang into action.

The office of Tzeirei Agudas Chabad sent out an open letter to *anash* around the globe, detailing the Rebbe's instructions for this new campaign.

With summer approaching, the letter called upon everyone to place special emphasis on enrolling as many children as possible in Torah-true summer camps and in Jewish day schools for the upcoming school year and beyond.

An interesting point highlighted in the letter was the Rebbe's insistence that children themselves also join the effort and help educate other children.

"Children—both boys and girls—have a natural tendency to befriend other children their age, and to boast about being 'in the know' with regard to new developments that others aren't yet aware of. We must harness this natural tendency for Mivtza Chinuch, encouraging the children to influence their friends about Torah education..."

The letter then suggested that all children should be given three coins: two to be used for whatever they wish (while also reminding them to participate in this new campaign), and the third for tzedakah.

In addition to the coins, the children should also be promised prizes and allowances to encourage greater involvement.

The letter concludes with the Rebbe's recent call on educational institutions to ensure that even children whose parents could not afford a Torah education should not be deprived of one. Chazal say that one must "guard carefully over the children of the poor, for from them Torah will emerge..." As such, at least 10% of students at every institution should be allowed to join tuition-free.³

"I Was Especially Gratified"

In letters to children during that period, the Rebbe emphasized the importance of joining in the efforts of



TZACH ARCHIVES

COINS FROM THE REBBE SENT TO ALL JEWISH CHILDREN IN MOROCCO IN HONOR OF SHNAS HACHINUCH; ONE COIN FOR TZEDAKAH, AND THE OTHER TWO TO BE KEPT AS A CONSTANT REMINDER TO INFLUENCE OTHERS IN TORAH AND MITZVOS.



THE REBBE AT THE LAG B'OMER PARADE, 5736. ON THE FACADE OF 788 EASTERN PARKWAY ARE THE FIRST SIX PESSUKIM.



AFTER THE REBBE INTRODUCED THE NEXT SIX PESSUKIM AT THE PARADE, THEY WERE ADDED.

Shnas Hachinuch and spreading Torah and Yiddishkeit in their surroundings.

"I was glad to receive your letter," the Rebbe wrote to many children, "that you heard about what was recently discussed; how Jewish children can have such a great effect on their parents, relatives, and all fellow Jews, by studying Torah diligently and enthusiastically, and acting properly in accordance with Torah and *mitzvos*. I was especially gratified to read in your letter that you are acting on this sentiment in practice..."⁴

In *sichos*, the Rebbe invoked the story of Rav Chiya, who, the Gemara says, "ensured that the Torah would not be forgotten by the Jewish people."

Rav Chiya wrote the five Chumashim of the Torah on five separate parchments. Then he went to a town with no teachers and taught the five Chumashim to five different children, one Chumash to each child, and the six Sedarim of the Mishnah (which were learned by heart at that time) to six children, one seder each. He told the children, "Until I return, teach each other the Chumash and the Mishnah." I.e., each child should teach his friends the section that he had learned from Chumash or Mishnah.

From this story, the Rebbe said we see that when a child is five years old, the age of learning Chumash, it is already time to make him into an educator! And not only an educator for one other person; as soon as he knows Chumash Bereishis, while four other children don't know it yet, he should immediately begin teaching them!⁵

The Twelve Pessukim

At a special farbrengen on the first night of Rosh Chodesh Iyar, the Rebbe introduced six fundamental "Pessukim and Maamarei Chazal" for all children to study.

A few days later, the Rebbe was asked if—given the extraordinary circumstances—he would agree to participate in a Lag B’Omer parade occurring on a Tuesday, though parades were usually only held on Sundays.

The Rebbe replied:

“If it’s possible to reach a great number of children,⁶ it would be worthwhile.”⁷

Indeed, the Rebbe participated in the Lag B’Omer parade, where he added another six Pessukim and Maamarei Chazal to the first set of six. Thus, the “Twelve Pessukim” were born.

Global Campaign

Not satisfied with the activities of major Lubavitch centers, Rabbi Hodakov sent letters from the Rebbe’s *Mazkirus* to various international contacts, including shluchim and other Chassidim, urging them not to forget about countries in their areas.

To Rabbi Ezriel Chaikin, a shliach in Belgium at the time, he wrote: “Surely you have already begun energetically working in the activities of *shnas hachinuch* in your country... In years past, you have laid a foundation of Yiddishkeit in the Scandinavian countries [Rabbi Chaikin was a shliach in Denmark years earlier]...it is therefore your responsibility, and great merit, to quickly concern yourself with spreading the activities of *chinuch* in those countries as well, including Denmark...”

To Rabbi Nachman Sudak, shliach to England: “Do not forget about Ireland; find someone there who will get involved in the activities.”

Businessmen with connections in far-flung Jewish communities also received such letters, like Rabbi Hirshel Chitrik (Japan) and Rabbi Mendel Shemtov (Taiwan and Hong Kong), and others. They were urged to find out about the situation of *chinuch* in those countries and see what could be done to improve it.⁸

Breaking the Boundaries of Galus

The Rebbe often called upon educational institutions to open their doors to as many students as possible, and in fact, to even more students than seemed possible.

“There should be so many students joining the institution,” the Rebbe insisted, “that everyone will say ‘*tzar li hamakom*’—the space is too cramped!”

When we do so, the Rebbe continued, then we can rightfully come to Hashem and complain that “*Gevald! Tzar li makom hagalus!*” This *galus* is stifling!

With that, Hashem will take us up to Yerushalayim—the place where, as the Mishnah says, no one was ever too crowded. The Jewish people will settle in Yerushalayim with plenty of space, comfortably and with pleasure.

By doing our *avoda* now in a manner of *Ufaratzta*—breaking all boundaries and constraints, we will indeed merit to dance together with Moshiach to the final *geulah!*⁹

PRECISION IN THE NAME

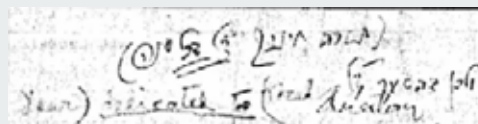
Shortly after the Rebbe selected the Twelve Pessukim, Tzach prepared a small booklet to help children learn them. The Rebbe made several corrections, including one on the booklet’s cover.

Where it had stated “A Year of Torah Education,” the Rebbe commented:

(תורה חינוך—צ”ל בכל שנה)
ולכן בהשער צ”ל

(Torah education is required **every** year.)

Hence, on the cover it should state: Year “**dedicated to**” (Torah education.



TZACH ARCHIVES



MIVTZA CHINUCH

TAKING ACTION

THE TEN MIVTZOIM REVISITED

BUILDING MINDS, BUILDING SOULS



An interview with
Rabbi Eli Smith

Miami, Florida

By: Rabbi Bentzion Pearson

Hello Rabbi Smith, thank you for taking the time to share with us about your shlichus in the field of *chinuch*.

Can you please share your background in *chinuch* and your current job?

I've had the *zechus* to be teaching in various classrooms for more than 20 years now, *baruch Hashem*.

Currently, I'm the *Rosh Mesivta* of the Miami Lubavitch Mesivta together with the *Menahel*, Rabbi Motti Schurder.

Can you discuss a bit what brought you into this field of *chinuch*?

From a very early age, I knew I wanted to be a teacher. I myself had excellent teachers, *baruch Hashem*, almost without exception; I was enamored by them.

What do you see as your role in the field of *chinuch*?

In a regular school setting, my intention is to teach them the subject at hand.

But you can't do that without a relationship. All

teaching has to be based on a relationship. At the lower levels, though, it doesn't work like that. At the lower levels, your intention is the relationship, you're trying to bring them in, and all of that, and to get them involved.

What do you mean by the relationship? Can you elaborate on that? How does that bond happen between the *mechanech* and the *talmid*?

A teacher needs to develop an appreciation for their student as an individual, their personality. You let them know that you value them, that you're interested in what they're saying, what their life is about. Show an interest in the way they think.

And what do you find most gratifying about teaching?

Well, there's nothing like walking out of a classroom when the students understand what you've taught them, ask good questions, and walk away with a real appreciation for what you've conveyed. You can hear them whispering to each other, "That was great."

That's thrilling. But you don't get that regularly.

A lot of teaching is about the textbook and the skills, and it can be monotonous. But overall, you hear from your students about what they're doing in the next year, and they go from year to year, and there's a lot of gratification. When a student calls you and says, "I'm teaching the things I learned from you. Can you share your worksheets?"

It's like, okay, apparently you like the subject.

And your teaching experience... you've been teaching close to 20 years now. Do you have any advice that you can give teachers? Of course, a *Mechanech* does more than just giving a lesson.

In a certain sense, I feel like a salesman, selling values more precious than life. I want them to buy into what I'm selling. I have to sell it well and get them to appreciate it. Sometimes you sell the sizzle, not the steak; sometimes it's the thing itself, and sometimes it's just the excitement that you have about it. When they pursue learning as a hobby, then I know they've bought into it.

Additionally, when they feel successful and accomplished, even with small, baby-step successes, their interest in learning will continue.

Another important point is that parents must realize how important their role is, not just as a parent, but as the primary *mechanech* of their children. And of course, the most effective way of being *mechanech* is by showing the children a *dugma chaya*.

In my experience, the best way to impart the values you cherish to your children is to do them with happiness and enjoyment. You could be a *dugma chaya* of every value you wish, but if you're miserable about it, what kind of message does that send?

We all know that children see right through a teacher or parent.

Is there any guidance from the Rebbe on the subject of *chinuch* you



personally take to heart, or that has had an impact on your approach to the field of *chinuch*?

There's a *sicha* that I think about a lot, which is in Likkutei Sichos, Parshas Yisro, Chelek Vov. The Rebbe discusses the two opinions of how the Yidden responded to the Aseres Hadibros: Rebbe Yishmael says that they responded "*Hein*" (yes) to positive *mitzvos*, and "*Lav*" (no) to the negative *mitzvos*. Rebbe Akiva says that they responded "*Hein*" (yes) to both positive and negative *mitzvos*.

The Rebbe explains that Rashi, in his commentary, addressing the young children studying Chumash, understands that children are completely engrossed in their learning and they appreciate the importance of Torah and *mitzvos*. Yet at the same time, they are not yet necessarily capable of disregarding the world around them. Yes, they have *Elokus b'pshitus*. But they also have *olamos b'pshitus*.¹⁰ Just because the child is into sports doesn't mean he doesn't take the *Eibershter* as seriously as the person sitting right next to him. When it comes to *ruchnius*, they both take it seriously.

Keeping this in mind, you should never underestimate how much a student will value something in *kedusha*. I've seen time and again that children grow in ways we never could have imagined.



MIVTZA CHINUCH

**TAKING
ACTION**

THE TEN
MIVTZOIM
REVISITED

Another point:

A very important idea that the Rebbe often conveys to *mechanchim* in letters and in *sichos*, is that a teacher must utilize his influence over his students to encourage meticulous observance of *mitzvos maasiyos*.¹¹

We need to help them implement the behaviors of *halacha*, whether they're in the classroom, in yeshiva, or elsewhere. More than conveying the material in the text at hand, we need to instill a sense of *yiras shamayim* within our students.

Is there anything that you can share from your own *mechanchim* that had a deep impact on you as you were growing up? Perhaps something that you carry on to your *talmidim* today?

The most impactful thing I remember from my childhood *chinuch* is that my teachers spoke to me seriously. They spoke to me like an adult. They took me seriously.

I wasn't put down; I was built up. If I wasn't doing well, the message wasn't, "Why aren't you doing well?" It was, "I know you know. You could do better than that."

A teacher should always remember to talk to the "*mensch*" in the 10-year-old child, because at the end of the day, that's who you're trying to reach.

How does a teacher develop care and concern for a *talmid's* growth? And even once they do, a teacher can often feel that they care, but the *talmid* might not pick up on that feeling. Is there an effective way to convey the fact that you actually care for their growth?



In *chinuch*, there's teaching the material at hand, and there's building a relationship with your student that comes before the learning.

The Gemara famously says that Rava would share a "*milsa d'bidichusa*"—a lighthearted idea, before beginning his lesson. I've found that starting the day by talking with the students about something other than the subject you're teaching that day goes a long way toward making them feel comfortable. They feel like you appreciate them as regular people, too.

There are many things a teacher can do outside of text-based learning to convey a sense of relationship, care, and concern.

And then, the *talmid* is bought in, and the learning will go much more smoothly. He's more prone to appreciate what you're telling him in the lesson, too.

May Hashem help that we should all be successful in this most important task, and that we should all see *nachas* from our children.

1. Shabbos Parshas Acharei 5736; Sichos Kodesh 5736 vol. 2, p. 118.

2. See Likkutei Sichos vol. 11, p. 197; et. al.

3. Hiskashrus, issue 978.

4. Igros Kodesh vol. 31, p. 215.

5. 13 Tammuz 5736; Sichos Kodesh 5736 vol. 2, p. 428.

6. I.e., considering the fact that it's a school day for most children.

7. Igros Kodesh vol. 31, p. 208.

8. Ibid. pp. 192–196. For an in-depth overview of Mivtza Chinuch, see "Children Educate," Derher Iyar 5776.

9. Shabbos Parshas Kedoshim 5736; Likkutei Sichos vol. 14, p. 334.

10. Likkutei Sichos vol. 6, p. 127.

11. See Igros Kodesh vol. 15, p. 132.