



THE REBBE SEES OFF THE GUESTS WHO ARRIVED FROM ERETZ YISROEL FOR TISHREI 5722.

ELUL 5721*

Presented below is part of the diary of Rabbi Efraim Yerachmiel Halperin, who traveled from Eretz Yisroel to be by the Rebbe for the first time.

In those days, traveling all the way to New York was no simple ordeal, and every moment by the Rebbe was especially cherished.

COMPILED BY: RABBI YANKY BELL
WRITTEN BY: RABBI MENACHEM LAZAROFF

<p>ע"י בנם ר' יקותיאל יהודה וזוגתו מרת פעסל לאה ומשפחתם שיחיו רוהר</p>	<p>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 תנ"צ'בה</p>
--	--

Arrival

This year, arrangements were again made for a charter flight¹ to transport Chassidim from Eretz Yisroel to spend Tishrei with the Rebbe, and I was determined not to miss out. On Monday, 23 Elul, after months of meticulous preparation and eager anticipation, the moment had finally arrived. At 3:15 a.m. I departed for the airport, on my way to see the Rebbe for the very first time.

After a brief stopover in Paris, our flight landed in New York at 7:15 p.m. As we approached the terminal, a heartwarming sight met our eyes. Many local Chassidim had come to the airport to greet us, and were standing on a balcony overlooking the terminal.

While we waited for our luggage to arrive, we joyously sang and danced together! After clearing customs, we headed straight to 770. When we finally arrived, we were met by a joyous welcome from Chassidim gathered there to greet us.

Tuesday, 24 Elul

The first time I merited to see the Rebbe was at Mincha on Tuesday, 24 Elul 5721. Mincha with the Rebbe took place in the *zal* at 3:15 p.m. By 3:00, people were already lined up and a path was cleared from the Rebbe's room to his place.

The anticipation in the room was palpable as Chassidim eagerly awaited the Rebbe's arrival. At precisely 3:15, a hush fell upon the room as the Rebbe, wearing his *gartel*, walked briskly into the *beis midrash*, holding his Siddur Torah Ohr.

It is impossible to adequately convey the surreal, otherworldly experience of seeing the Rebbe for the first time. Despite all that I knew and heard about the Rebbe, nothing could prepare me for the feeling of awe and reverence which washed over me as I took in the Rebbe's majestic, holy countenance in person.

The Rebbe stood at the large table near the door, facing the crowd. Rabbi Hodakov closed the door of the *zal*, the Rebbe opened his siddur, leaned his hands on the table, and Mincha began.

For Shemoneh Esrei, the Rebbe turned to face the wall. When he finished Shemoneh Esrei, he took three steps back, and returned to his place as the *chazzan* said the words "Vene'eman Atah." After "HaKel Hakadosh," the Rebbe sat down and put his hand on his forehead in

concentration, following along in the siddur throughout *chazaras hashatz*.

Tachanun was omitted due to a *chosson* being present. During *kaddish yasom*, the Rebbe gazed upon everyone gathered in the *zal*. Then, after davening was complete, the Rebbe left the room for his study.

It was then announced that all of the *orchim* who came for Tishrei would have the opportunity to enter in for *yechidus* on Thursday night, 26 Elul.

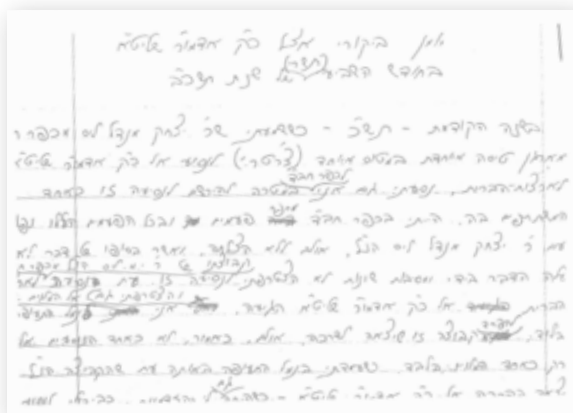
After being in the Rebbe's presence for Mincha, a special energy was felt in the room as the *bochurim* approached their evening studies with increased excitement and vigor. As a guest, this was but a small taste as to what it must be like to study here, in the Rebbe's orbit, fully immersed.

About fifteen minutes before Maariv, the room began to fill up again, packed with Chassidim.

The Rebbe's table was cleared of *sefarim*, and the room waited with the same anticipation as before to hear the sound of the Rebbe's door opening. At 9:30 p.m., the Rebbe walked into the room, this time holding his siddur and a Mishnayos as well. Somehow the Rebbe looked different from Mincha to Maariv. It's difficult to describe this in words.

The Rebbe stood at his place, and put on his *gartel*, making sure that it was even on both sides. The Rebbe then looked up towards the crowd, and opened his siddur. The Rebbe remained standing until after *Borchu*, and then sat down. The Rebbe's davening takes a long time and he looks into the siddur all throughout.

After Shemoneh Esrei, the Rebbe took three steps back, and went back to his place when the *chazzan* said 'Leila min kol birchasa.'



OPENING PAGE OF RABBI EFRAIM YERACHMIEL HALPERIN'S DIARY.



The Rebbe said *kaddish yasom* after Aleinu,² and for the first time, I had the privilege of hearing the Rebbe's voice, the שכינה מדברת from the Moshe Rabbeinu in our generation.

After that, the Rebbe said the Mishnayos and the *kaddish d'rabbanan*. As he left the room to the lobby, he noticed one of the older Chassidim. The Rebbe smiled at him and asked, "What brings you here?" The Rebbe then motioned for the Chossid to follow him into his office.

Thus concludes my first day by the Rebbe.

A Moment In Time

On Wednesday, 25 Elul, Selichos began at 7:00 a.m., and Shacharis was at 8:30. Although the Rebbe does not daven Shacharis with the minyan, today he entered the room during *U'va LeTzion* and remained until the end to recite all of the *kaddeishim*.

After davening concluded, the Rebbe made a brief stop at his office before departing from 770 and heading home.

As I observed the Rebbe simply walk down the street, unaccompanied, a profound sense of excitement overwhelmed me. It struck me that to an uninformed observer from a distance, the Rebbe might appear as an ordinary, unassuming person. Little would they know that they were in the presence of a king, the *nossi hador* from whom

the entire world seeks advice.

Thursday, 26 Elul

On Monday and Thursdays the Rebbe joins the *minyan* for *krias haTorah*.

The Rebbe always gets the third *aliyah*. Before the *bracha*, the Rebbe touches the Torah's *gartel* or his tallis to the spot where the *aliyah* begins, then moves it to where the *aliyah* ends and once more to the beginning, before kissing it.

Afterwards, the Rebbe turns his head slightly to the right, and says the *bracha*. During the *bracha*, the Rebbe lightly lifts up the Torah three times: at the beginning of the *bracha*, in the middle, and at the words *nosein haTorah* at the end.

After the *aliyah*, the Rebbe touches the spot where the *aliyah* ended with the *gartel* or tallis, followed by the beginning, and then again the end of the *aliyah*. Then the Rebbe recites the final *bracha* in the same manner as before.

After *kriah* the Rebbe returns to his place, and on his way back he touches the *paroches*. He then says Tehillim from a Sefer Tehillim which has been previously placed on his table, until the *chazzan* finishes *kaddish tiskabel*, after which he returns to his room.



My First Yechidus

The highlight of a Chossid's trip to the Rebbe is entering for *yechidus*. Much intense preparation goes into this special moment, an opportunity to spill one's heart out to the Rebbe, each person in their own unique manner.

The Rebbe receives people for *yechidus* three times a week; on Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday. *Yechidus* starts in the evening, often continuing into the wee hours of the morning.

In most instances, each *yechidus* lasts for a few brief minutes or less. Occasionally, some prominent individuals merit to be with the Rebbe for longer spans of time, sometimes even a few hours.

Local residents and *yeshiva bochurim* who request a *yechidus* join a lengthy queue. After a considerable waiting period, often several months, they receive a written notification of their audience with the Rebbe. However, those of us who traveled from abroad for limited periods of time were given priority, ensuring that we could have a private audience with the Rebbe during our relatively brief stay.

I had the *zechus* to experience *yechidus* for the first time on Thursday night, 26 Elul 5721*.

As part of the *hachana* for this momentous occasion,

I joined many of the other guests and traveled to the Friediker Rebbe's Ohel. We went right after Shacharis in one of the yeshiva vans.

When my turn arrived at 12:25 a.m., I entered the Rebbe's room and the first thing I did was place my appointment card from *mazkirus* on the desk. This is how I was to introduce myself to the Rebbe.

Then I gave the Rebbe a *pan* which contained my personal requests, along with a *pan* for my father. I also delivered a note on behalf of Reb Yaakov Winkler, and a *pan* on behalf of Reb Mordechai Zalman Segal. I then gave the Rebbe a note in which I requested guidance on how best to involve myself in *hafatzas hamaayanos*.

I also took the opportunity to hand in a letter which mentioned the request of Meir Freiman to join Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim in Lod. Regarding this matter, the Rebbe told me that he already received a letter from Meir, and there are multiple pros and cons.

The Rebbe then remarked that Reb Mordechai Zalman Segal is probably Reb Chaim Shalom's brother.

As for the *panim*, the Rebbe said that he would mention them at the Friediker Rebbe's Ohel.

As for *hafatzas hamaayanos*, the Rebbe answered:

"About which you ask how to involve yourself, it has to be planned. Wherever you will be, convene a gathering

* 5721-1961

with your friends to discuss it.”

Before I left the *yechidus*, the Rebbe gave me a *bracha*:

“May Hashem help that you toil in learning *nigleh*, Chassidus and in *avodas hatefilah*. *Ksivah vachasimah tovah*.”

I remained standing, rooted in place. The Rebbe partially stood up and again wished me a “*Ksivah vachasimah tovah*,” after which I departed.

After emerging from *yechidus*, I was escorted to a lively farbrengen in the *cheder sheini*, with many fellow Chassidim in attendance. This farbrengen lasted until the morning.

Shabbos, 28 Elul

There is nothing like experiencing Shabbos with the Rebbe firsthand, a truly wondrous experience.

For Mincha on Erev Shabbos, the Rebbe arrived by *licht benchen*, at 7:00 p.m. Unlike throughout the week, on Shabbos the Rebbe entered the room from the south side, via the *cheder sheini*, and sat at his *shtender* near the door. After Mincha, the Rebbe returned to his room. Everyone else remained in the *zal*, and a *bochur chazzered* a *maamar*.

Afterwards, everyone went down to the big *beis midrash* (the “*shalash*,” which until last year was the place of the Sukkah), for Kabbalas Shabbos. I was fortunate enough to secure the perfect spot, right near the Rebbe. The Rebbe’s spot for Shabbos and Yom Tov davening was in the southeastern corner of the room. There was a rug spread out, covering the area with the Rebbe’s chair and *shtender*.

The Rebbe entered the room from the staircase to the left of his office. Everyone else used the regular entrance in order not to get in the Rebbe’s way.

At 8:00 p.m., the crowd split as the Rebbe walked through the room to his designated place.

The Rebbe stood throughout the entire davening. From my place, I was clearly able to see the Rebbe as he walked out, nodding and smiling at people, wishing them a “Gut Shabbos.” As the Rebbe left, the crowd began to sing “*Ufaratzta*,” and the Rebbe encouraged the singing with his hands. The singing of the *niggun* continued for long after.

The following morning, at 8:30, the Rebbe arrived in the *beis midrash*, and Tehillim for Shabbos Mevarchim began. At 10:00, the Rebbe briefly went to his office and returned at 10:30 for Shacharis wearing his tallis.



Again today I had a great spot right near the Rebbe. I noticed that during much of the davening, the Rebbe held the strings of his tallis. The Rebbe stood for the entire davening.

On Shabbos and Yom Tov, the Rebbe gets *maftir*. While reading many of the *pesukim* in the *haftarah*, it seemed that the Rebbe was holding himself back, but eventually the Rebbe broke out crying. The second half of the *haftarah* was read in a much lower tone that could only be heard by those in close proximity to the *bimah*.

As the Torah was returned to the *aron*, the Rebbe followed it with his holy gaze. Since today is Shabbos Mevarchim, a farbrengen was scheduled for 1:30 p.m. and many Chassidim remained in shul after davening to secure their spots.

At precisely 1:30 p.m., the Rebbe entered the room, which was packed with people.

The Rebbe proceeded to his place on the farbrengen *bima*, with many of the *eltre Chassidim* behind him. The Rebbe made *kiddush* quietly and the farbrengen commenced.

Throughout the farbrengen, Chassidim joyously sang and danced in their places, and the Rebbe vigorously encouraged the singing with his hands.

The Rebbe said three *sichos*, and a *maamar dibur hamaschil Atem Nitzavim*. When the Rebbe began delivering the *maamar*, everyone stood up and listened intently, eager to catch every word. After the *maamar*, the Rebbe addressed the newly established Chabad neighborhood in Yerushalayim. The Rebbe expressed that from this neighborhood the light of Chassidus would spread throughout Yerushalayim, then extend across Eretz Yisroel, ultimately radiating across the globe.

There was a spectacular sight during the second *niggun*. The Rebbe was encouraging the singing with his right hand when suddenly he stood up, bringing the entire room to their feet.

With great enthusiasm, the Rebbe began clapping and waving both of his hands. As the electric atmosphere spread throughout the room, the singing intensified and grew much louder.

At the end of the farbrengen the Rebbe started the *niggun* “*Ani Maamin*” and then “*Ki vesimcha seitzei’u*.” With this the Rebbe concluded the farbrengen.

As is customary after a farbrengen, the *chozer* Reb Yoel Kahan repeated the *maamar* that the Rebbe said. After *chazzarah*, we went upstairs to the regular *beis midrash*

for Mincha. After Mincha, the Rebbe went to his house. As the Rebbe left 770, many Chassidim gathered outside, and began singing “*Ufaratzta*.” The Rebbe encouraged the singing, and waved to the children that were there.

When Shabbos was over, the Rebbe returned for Maariv, which took place upstairs. After Maariv Reb Yochanon Gordon made *havdalah* and then the Rebbe returned home.

Sunday, Erev Rosh Hashanah

Unlike the previous days, today’s Selichos with the Rebbe was held downstairs and began at 6:30 a.m. instead of 7:00. About an hour later when Selichos concluded, the Rebbe went upstairs to his office.

Shacharis took place in the regular upstairs *zal*, and the Rebbe entered the room wearing his tallis and tefillin. The Rebbe stood throughout the entire davening.

After davening, a *minyán* of *eltre Chassidim* gathered near the Rebbe in a half circle for *hataras nedarim*.

Once it concluded, the Rebbe said: “*Amen, ksivah vachasimah tovah*.”

A group of *eltre Chassidim* went to the Rebbe’s room to present a *pan kloli* on behalf of everyone. Afterwards, the Rebbe stood at the door of his room and all of the Chassidim passed by to deliver their personal *panim*.

Later on, the Rebbe, accompanied by many Chassidim, traveled to the Frierdiker Rebbe’s Ohel.

While I was standing at the *tziyun*, the Rebbe arrived and I quickly took a few steps back as the Rebbe approached. Reb Leibel Groner accompanied the Rebbe, holding paper bags with all of the *panim*, which he then placed on the wall next to the Rebbe.

Rabbi Groner placed a container on the Rebbe’s left and put in a candle which the Rebbe lit. Then the Rebbe began to recite Maaneh Lashon. When he got to the point where the *pan* is usually read, the Rebbe put on his glasses, and began to read the *panim*. After reading each *pan*, the Rebbe ripped it four times, and put it in a paper bag. When we returned to 770, the Rebbe was still in the Ohel, reading through every *pan*. I don’t know when the Rebbe left the Ohel. **T**

1. For the full story of the first charter flight from Eretz Yisroel, see “One Flight To Open The Floodgates,” *Derher* Elul 5774.

2. Yahrzeit of the Rebbe’s grandfather, Harav Meir Shlomo Yanovsky.