

א חסידי שער דערהער...

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Leben Miten Rebben - Chof Beis Shvat

Excerpts of a diary written in 5748 right after Chof Beis Shvat.

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* בעת בוא כ"ק מו"ח אדמו"ר לארה"ב, היו טענות עליו, על מה שמנהיג פה פראות, "און מאכט ביליג דעם געגנט". והטענות לא היו על עצם הלימוד, כ"א, על העדר הסדר ומשטר דעולם.

— אחד (ירא שמים דוקא) כתב לכ"ק מו"ח אדמו"ר הצעה, שעצם הלימוד טוב הוא; שילמדו אפילו 20 שעות במעל"ע, אבל, צריך להנהיג איזה סדר - וואָס דארף מען זיך שאקלען? גם מה שכולם צועקים בהלימוד; לכאורה הי' צריך להיות הסדר, אשר כשיש לאחד שאלה, יורה באצבעו מקודם, כנהוג אצל אנשי העולם. אבל האמת היא, כאמור, שצריך להיות באופן של הבדלה מהעולם, למעלה מהגבלה.

(משיחת ב' אייר תש"י)

* עליו להראות דוגמא הי' בסביבתו עתה מהו תלמיד ישיבה בכלל וישיבת תומכי תמימים בפרט, שממנו יראו וכן יעשו.

(מכתב כ"ד מנ"א תשט"ז)



When Shabbos arrived, Shabbos Parshas Mishpatim, Mevorchim Adar, the Rebbe stayed at 770. Before Shabbos, the Rebbe asked Rabbi Y. Piekarski, Rosh Yeshivah of the central Tomchei Temimim, if it would be halachically permissible to hold a Farbrengen, although it was still during the Shiva. Rabbi Piekarski told the Rebbe that being that he is accustomed to farbrengen each month on Shabbos Mevorchim, not doing so would be an indication of mourning in public, which is forbidden on Shabbos.

Indeed, the Rebbe held a Farbrengen that week as he would every month. Chassidim observed that although the Rebbe was still in the midst of the Shiva, he did not show any signs of mourning. To the contrary, the Rebbe encouraged the singing immensely, paying specific attention to a small child present who was clapping in his direction.

An interesting point that the Rebbe made mention of, during one of his talks, was when speaking of the imminent arrival of Moshiach and the return of the souls of the departed to their bodies with Tzitzis Hameisim, he added: Why must they suffer, what have the souls done wrong that they must wait for us to complete our task and bring Moshiach sooner. It is only due to *our* failure to carry out our own duties, that they find themselves awaiting that day for so long a time.

All those present could not help but apply the Rebbe's sorrowful words to the tragedy that had just befallen the Rebbe and his Chassidim, urging them to indeed do all in their ability to hasten the coming of Moshiach.

The Rebbe also dedicated a sicha to discuss the establishment of new institutions that would carry the Rebbetzin's name, offering a few instructions as of how to go about doing so.

[Immediately following Shabbos, the Rebbe edited the sicha for publishing. It's interesting to note that on the following Sunday, a large gath-

ering was held in 770 for all Chassidim in response to recent events, and in the midst of it, Rabbi Krinsky hurried in with a special message from the Rebbe. He was instructed to review the details that the Rebbe had discussed on Shabbos with regard to the establishment of new institutions, and to mention a few additional directives.]

Another interesting episode that took place at this Farbrengen:

It was the custom in 770 each year on Shabbos Parshas Mishpatim to hold a special appeal for the Gemach of Crown Heights. Because this Parsha discusses the laws of loaning money, it was seen as an appropriate opportunity. Rabbi Shimon Goldman would stand up and wear a streimel over his head, and tell a short vort or story in attempt to arouse the hearts of his listeners (all in the presence of the Rebbe...) and conclude with a call to everyone to attend the Melava Malka-Dinner for the benefit of the Gemach, to take place on Motzoei Shabbos. The Rebbe sat on the side and listened in, at times while glancing into a sefer on his table, and, in certain instances, commented on the vort with remarks of his own.

As this week was Parshas Mishpatim, the appeal was conducted as usual. Rabbi Goldman added that this year, the Rebbe contributed more graciously than he normally would, due to the recent passing of the Rebbetzin. When he concluded his telling story of the Tzemach Tzedek he ended with heartfelt prayers for the coming of Moshiach, speaking with great emotion.

At the conclusion of Shabbos, the Rebbe davened Maariv at the Amud in 770 and afterwards he sat down to receive nichum aveilim, enabling the broader public who would not have a chance to perform it while the Rebbe was at home, to do it as well, as mentioned earlier.



Behind the Sefer - A Review

Igros Kodesh of the Frierdiker Rebbe Vol. 15

The close relationship between the Frierdiker Rebbe and the Rebbe is well known. Yet, for a Chassid, every chance he has to increase his knowledge of his Rebbe is eagerly grasped with both hands. A new sefer was printed last summer: **Igros Kodesh of the Frierdiker Rebbe Vol. 15**. In it we find letters written by the Frierdiker Rebbe to the Rebbe and the Rebbetzin while they were in Poland France and Germany. The letters reveal many new stories and special incidents that took place, thereby giving us a deeper appreciation for our Rabbeim.

Much of the Rebbe's early years are unknown. The Rebbe would seldom speak of himself, and never about special incidents that would mark him different from the average person. Some stories slipped out. Rebbetzin Chana, the mother of the Rebbe, told some stories from the Rebbe's youth. Other Chassidim, either from Yaketrineslav or who passed through the city while traveling, also shared their memories that they had of seeing the Rebbe in his earliest years.

Nevertheless, there is a gap from the Rebbe's Chassuna in 5669 until the Rebbe and the Rebbetzin came to New York in 5701. Previously, there had not been much information available aside for a few basic details: the Rebbe and Rebbetzin lived in Berlin until 5693 when they moved to Paris. Then, escaping the Nazi *ym"sh* onslaught, they moved to Vichy and Nice. In addition, it was known that the Rebbe was the personal secretary of the Frierdiker Rebbe during that time.

These new letters now give us a small glimpse of the closeness between the Rebbe and the Frierdiker Rebbe, and how much the Rebbe was involved in everything that was happening in the Lubavitcher *Chotzer* at the time.

The publishers of Kehot write in the Preface that they left out two types of letters: Letters that deal with the *refuos* of the Frierdiker Rebbe and letters that deal with the accounts of Lubavitch.

During his imprisonment in 5667, the Frierdiker Rebbe suffered immensely at the hands of the Soviet KGB. In one

incident recorded in his Diary of the first day in prison, the Frierdiker Rebbe was putting on Tefilin. The guard noticed this and pushed the Frierdiker Rebbe down a flight of iron steps. His belt buckle broke and cut into his skin causing him a great deal of pain and suffering. This later re-surfaced in 5693 when the Frierdiker Rebbe became ill.

All medications, doctors and procedures were coordinated with the Rebbe. Many letters were traded back and forth between Riga (and later Warsaw or Ostvostzk) and Berlin (or Paris) discussing different details of the Frierdiker Rebbe's health. Understandably these personal letters were not published.

From 5666, the economic laws in Poland began to tighten. It became harder to move money in and out of accounts, and therefore the Frierdiker Rebbe handed control of the accounts over to the Rebbe, who lived in Paris at the time, to be managed by the Frierdiker Rebbe's direction. From then on, all those who sent money to Lubavitch were directed to send them through the accounts in Paris. Later, when times became harder and they were worried that the government was searching the mail, the Frierdiker Rebbe wrote to the Rebbe saying that from then on the directives would be through hints and signs in the letters. These detailed letters were not printed in the sefer either.

During those years, the Frierdiker Rebbe launched many different ongoing projects and, understandably, the Rebbe was involved in each of them.

At that time, the Kovetz HaTomim was going to print. Kovetz HaTomim is a kovetz that was printed for the Tmimim in the yeshivas. Included inside are articles about the history of Chassidus Chabad and stories and backgrounds of Elyter Chassidim culled from the letters and diaries of the Frierdiker Rebbe; questions and explanations in Nigla and Chassidus; new letters of the Frierdiker Rebbe; news from the different yeshivos and many other interesting things.

For many years it was unknown that the Rebbe was the one who collected and

prepared most of the material in the kovtzim, and in general set the order of publication: what to be printed, when, and how. In this sefer we get to see the plans and framework the Rebbe created for the kovtzim.

Found between the pages are a quite a few *geshmake inyanim*. To mention a few:

- We find that for many of those years Reb Menachem Mendel Horenshtein, the brother-in-law of the Rebbe, lived near him in Paris and for a time they learned together *bechavrusa*.

- The Frierdiker Rebbe wished to go to Eretz Ysroel for Tishei of 5695 and he wanted the Rebbe to come along with him.

- The Frierdiker Rebbe sent *brochos* to the Rebbe and the Rebbetzin on occasion of their birthdays, Yud Alef Nissan and Chof Hay Adar respectively.

- An unexpected bonus that is included in this *sefer* is letters from the Rebbe to the Frierdiker Rebbe. Many of the letters printed are a response to a letter written by the Rebbe, therefore the Rebbe's letter is included to give background.

- In this sefer is also the famous letter where the Frierdiker Rebbe gives the Rebbetzin (then twenty-five years old) power-of-attorney to withdraw money and receive certified letters in his name.

We should note that the Rebbe and Rebbetzin, and Frierdiker Rebbe only wrote letters when they were in different locations. There are therefore time-periods in which no letters were exchanged simply because the Rebbe was by the Frierdiker Rebbe during that time. Many of the talks the Rebbe had then with the Frierdiker Rebbe are recorded by the Rebbe in Reshimos HaYuman.

Obviously so much is contained in this sefer that it would be an injustice to claim to adequately condense it in these few short paragraphs. A full index can be found at its end, as well as a table of contents at the beginning containing the addressee and subject matter of each letter. A fantastic treasure occupies these pages; the door is open, all you need do is enter.



Background Harmony

Reb Nota Peharer's Voloch

Since the founding of Chassidus, Niggunim have been a very important part of a Chasid's *avodas Hashem*. At farbrengens, by the Shabbos table and in davening, these soul stirring songs have always been heard. However, until Reb Nota Peharer came around it lacked an organized touch. It is thanks to his great effort in arranging the niggunim in an accurate and meticulous fashion, that we have *negina* as we know it today.

This group was established as a result of a *sicha* of Simchas Torah 5660, in which the Rebbe Rashab spoke publicly about *avodas halev*, and how this service of davening b'arichus and contemplation is a personal obligation.

Torah and Tefilla are two entirely separate worlds which were commanded to us by Hashem and given to us by one shepherd.

These two worlds of Torah and Tefilla are not only apart in their times, meaning, that the time for Torah is separate then the time of tefilla, but even their niggunim are different a song for davening is not the same as a song for Torah.

The Rebbe Rashab, then expounded on the saying "*Kol m'orer hakavona*" (Sound arouses concentration) and explained at length the effects of *negina* on one's train of thoughts and ability to delve into a concept, and how it helps to inspire the heart, elevate the spirit and excite the Nefesh...

After Sukkos at the first gathering of the Tmimim, it was decided that they would place an emphasis on learning how to sing niggunim Chasidim. The decision bore fruit within a few weeks they began a Seder Niggunim every Shabbos before the maamer was said and on the afternoons of Shabbos between Mincha.

Over the next two years the group of menagim grew, but 'negina' was still not properly organized or systemized. Both a clear knowledge of the niggunim, and the precision of the notes were missing. This lasted until Hatomim Reb Nota Peharer came in 5662.

Besides for Ht' Nota Peharer's sweet voice, he also had an amazing musical talent. With his singing he would capture hearts, and it was he who organized the group of Menagim and stood at their head.

A number of times the Rebbe Rashab mentioned that he had a lot of gratification from the fact that Nota coordinated the Menagim, because "that's the way of a P'nimi, everything by {about} him is organized and especially in regards to *negina* which is one of the 'keys' to talent and great qualities".

The seder niggunim before the maamer, on Shavuos 5662, was the first time Ht' Nota of Peharer officiated as leader of the group in an organized presentation of niggunim. This arrangement amazed the listeners and specifically HaRav Hachosid Reb Yehuda Leib Hoffman who was a great menagen in his own right.

Yud Tes Kislev Night, 5663- 613 Candles

During the seuda on the second night of Sukkos 5707, the Friediker Rebbe requested of the chazzon Reb Shmuel Kantarof to sing Reb Nota Peharer's Voloch. Afterwards he told the following story:

To celebrate the *Chag Hag'eula* of Yud Tes Kislev 5663, the Chassidim erected a "*Shaar Shel Kavod*" (Arch of Adoration) in the Rebbe Rashab's honor in the courtyard in Lubavitch. The windows of the courtyard were adorned with 613 candles. When the Rebbe Rashab left his house for the Beis Midrash to farbreng, the chassidim lit a fuse which simultaneously set alight all 613 candles. The entire courtyard was bathed in light. Reb Nota sat on top of the gate; in the middle of the courtyard stood Harav Hatomim Reb Shaul Dovber (Zislin) acting as conductor. At Reb Shaul's side was Hatomim Shmuel Katzmen who then signaled to the choir to start singing. At that point, with great musical talent, Reb Nota began singing his famous Voloch.

To be continued...

Portrait of a Chassid

~ Misha Der Decher ~

He was not a Torah giant, nor a community leader. He was not a great philanthropist or a link to government offices. Just a simple Jew, hard at work, replacing aging roofs to earn his modest living. Yet the unassuming "Misha der Decher" ("Misha the roofer") mysteriously had an open-door policy to the Rebbe's room at any given time. It seemed as if he felt towards the Rebbe like a son would to his father; and the Rebbe, from his part, showed him a fatherly affection in return. Whenever Misha appeared in the Rebbe's presence - be it even three or four times through the course of one week, the Rebbe's face suddenly lit up, like that of a father who sees his only son again, after a long while of being apart from him.

The "Old-time" Simple Jew

His real name was Meir Yaffe, but everyone knew him by his nickname "Misha der Decher". He immigrated to the United States from the Soviet Union and resided in East Flatbush, where he met Rabbi J.J. Hecht who introduced him to Lubavitch brought him to meet with the Rebbe for the first time. He was like one of those "simple Jews" that we read about from bygone times; a very warm-hearted, proud Yid, who would bend over backwards to do any favor for his fellow-Jew. Those that knew him were reminded of the simple-folk of the past described in the writings of the Friediker Rebbe; men who would arrive at the Shul in their work-clothes each day to daven with the minyan. Men who traveled to the Rebbe to hear words of Chassidus and were just barely able to catch the meaning of the Possuk that began the Maamor, yet they were the ones to dance fervently at the conclusion of the Maamor. These simple and ignorant Jews, who hardly knew any Chassidus, they were the ones whose hearts glowed with a fiery passion towards the Rebbe and all that he stood for.

This was Misha. The Rebbe held a very unique relationship with Misha, often resulting in the Rebbe's sharing with him thoughts and words that ordinary Chassidim wouldn't hear on a regular basis. For example, the Rebbe once told Misha: "Generally speaking, when I give instructions to a specific Chassid on how he should go about a certain matter, I first consider whether or not he will follow what I say. If I presume that he will not, I don't tell him what to do at all..."

"Batchke"

The style of relationship that Misha had with the Rebbe was that of another caliber. He used to refer to the Rebbe as "Batchke" (or "Father" in Russian). He wouldn't go by the designated nights and hours for Yechidus - he entered the Rebbe's room whenever he felt the need. Whenever something heavy troubled his heart, or whenever any sort of difficulty came up in his life, he immediately made his way to 770, where he could be certain that he'd always find a listening ear. No matter what the hour - it may have been before or after Mincha, as the Rebbe was heading out to the mikvah, or upon his return; the Rebbe's secretaries knew that they must always allow Misha to see the Rebbe.

Once, when Misha complained to the Rebbe that one of the secretaries attempted to stop him from coming at that particular time, the Rebbe explained to him that they have their own duties that they must carry out - but you, on your part, must to continue to do your job and come nonetheless...

To be continued...



Q&A

Why do we go to Mikva every morning?

Mikva is not something new, something instituted in the last century. It is a very old concept in Yiddishkeit. Recent discoveries have revealed many Mikvas from the period of the Second Beis Hamikdosh, scattered throughout the areas of Eretz Yisroel that were inhabited at that time. Mikva is also not exclusively used by Chassidim; in every Jewish community there are *ka"h* a number of Mikvaos. Yet the phrase "Going to Mikva" has a definite Chassidishe ring to it. Why is that so?

The reason behind Mikvah is to remove *Tumah*. The first time a Mikva was put to use was in the time of Noach. Hashem decided that it was time to clean up a world that was ethically, and morally corrupt. So he called in the cleaning crew.

What was the purpose of making such chaotic destruction by bringing about a flood? Not to mention putting Noach through the trouble of building a Teiva and collecting pairs of two of each kind of animal! What was the purpose?

In Chassidus it is explained: the world needed to be spiritually cleansed and Hashem did so by placing the world into a Mikva. Hashem "dipped" the world in a Flood of forty days and forty nights thereby making it *tahor*. In fact, those forty days and nights of the *Mabul* are analogous to the measurement of forty seah required for a Mikva.

Obviously, the reason why we go to Mikva is to become *Tahor*, but why must it be done **every** morning?

Ezra instituted a *takana* that since a *ba'al keris* is *Tamei*, he cannot daven or learn until he has gone to Mikva. Although this *takana* was later removed. [There is a discussion about this, there is large ground to say that this removal only applies to learning and not davening].

The Shulchan Aruch says that on Erev Yom Kippur everyone is required to use a Mikva so they may enter Yom Kippur while in the state of *Taharah*. This is done on account of Tevilas Ezra.

We can now explain why we immerse in a Mikva every day before davening. There are **two reasons**:

1) In Likkutei Torah, the Alter Rebbe specifies three steps of preparation necessary for a proper davening. They are: going to the Mikvah, giving Tzedaka, and learning Chassidus. The Alter Rebbe does mention that going to Mikvah may not necessarily be connected with Takanas Ezra, but rather just as a method of bringing an added measure of kedusha upon oneself before davening.

2) The Rebbe explains in various places that we also go because of the *takana* of Ezra.

What makes the usage of the Mikvah so special?

In Chassidus it is explained that the word *Tevila* has the same letters as the word *Bitul*. When one submerges underwater, all that can be seen is the water, nothing about him seems independent. Under the water, each individual and separate being is totally covered, thereby making them a unified whole. By dipping in the Mikva we are nullifying ourselves as a preparation for Davening.

Additionally, Mikva doesn't just remove *Tuma* and bring to *Tahara*, it also elevates the dipper from one level to the next in

kedusha itself. An example of this would be the multiple (five) *tevilos* of the Kohen Gadol on Yom Kippur. His going to Mikva could not have been due to his becoming *Tamei*, had this been the case the substitute Kohen Gadol would have taken over. Rather, each time he immersed in the Mikva it would raise him to a higher level in *kedusha*.

The Rebbe writes that Mikva not only purifies the body and soul, but it also strengthens one's *Emuna* and causes *G-dliness* to rest upon him (*Hashroas Elokus*).

What should one do if there is *no way* to get to a Mikva?

In the case of an *oines*, he should learn some *Mishnayos* from *Seder Tahara*, preferably from *Maseches Mikvaos*. This only serves a substitute for the aspect in *Tvila* which adds *kedusha* (answer #1 above); however, there is no substitute for the aspect of *Tvila* that removes *Tuma* and brings about *Tahara* (answer #2 above).

It is said about the *Bal Shem Tov*, that he merited all the great revelations and reached very high levels of *kedusha* because he went very frequently to the Mikva.

The *Maggid* of *Mezritch* couldn't use the Mikva because he was very sick and had troubles with his legs. *Chassidim* say that had the *Maggid* gone to Mikva, *Moshiach* would have come.

Chassidim also go to the Mikva before going into *Yechidus* with the Rebbe or visiting the *Ohel*.

- It's interesting to note: there is a letter from the Rebbe where he explains the reason why it is not of *Chabad* custom to visit the *Ohel* on *Tishah B'av*, in contrast to what is stated in various sources and done in many other circles. The Rebbe says that presumably, it is because we cannot use the Mikva that day. Furthermore, we don't visit the cemetery even without stopping at the *Ohel*, because just by seeing the *Ohel* from the outside one connects on some level with the Rebbe, and we therefore must refrain even from looking at the *Ohel* before using the Mikva! -

Some recall that during the years when the Rebbe received people for *Yechidus*, the Mikva on *Kingston* would be opened at around five o'clock in the afternoon to allow people who had not yet used the Mikva that day to have a chance to do so before going to *Yechidus*. The same would happen when the Rebbe held a surprise *Farbrengen*.

פרק א' ליום	ג' פרקים ליום	
ה' פרה אדומה פרק יג	ה' שכנים - פ' ז-ט	כ"ג שבט
פרק יד	פ' י-יב	כ"ד שבט
פרק טו	פ' יג-יד ה' שלוחין ושותפין פ"א	כ"ה שבט
ה' טומאת צרעת פרק א	פ' ב-ד	כ"ו שבט
פרק ב	פ' ה-ז	כ"ז שבט
פרק ג	פ' ח-י	כ"ח שבט
פרק ד	ה' עבדים פ' א-ג	כ"ט שבט