

א חסיד'ישער דערהער...

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 16

ערב שבועות, ה' סיון, תשע"א

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------|---|
| Thirty Days— A Chossid's Cry | 1 |
| Leben Miten Rebben - Shavuot 5744 | 2 |
| Q&A - Chassidus and Mussar | 3 |
| Bikkurim | 3 |
| The Mission - A Story of the Baal Shem Tov | 4 |
| Niggun — Ana Avda | 5 |
| Maamor Mattan Torah | 6 |
| Biography - Reb Berke Chein -3 | 7 |

A Chossid's Cry

Gimmel Tammuz. The date sends a chill down the spine. Thirty days before a special day we are meant to stop and reflect, to prepare ourselves for the upcoming day. As Chassidim we must never lose our focus, never allow ourselves to become complacent, never resign ourselves to this dark reality.

By Rabbi Yossi Lew

Raboisai, we are within thirty days of another Gimmel Tammuz. Once again, for the seventeenth time, we are reminded about a reality over which, due to lack of answers, we prefer to tend to overlook. The reality is: we are stuck in an incredible darkness. The Golus, of which we were sure we would have long been out of, seems to be getting thicker and stronger. And it also seems to be getting more dangerous.

This is not our Rotzon; it is not that we chose this 'Finsternish'. We were dragged into this situation for whatever reason. At a time like Gimmel Tammuz, every Chossid feels as though he is hit, smacked in the face, with the terrible black hole we are burrowed in. Try as we may, we cannot see the light at the end of this tunnel, despite the fact that we were told and we know about the light.

All we can do is dream - and we don't even know what we're dreaming about...

The Rebbe once mentioned a Vort of the Frierdiker Rebbe regarding a statement of Chazal at the end of Sota. While discussing the trouble at the end of the time of Golus, right before the Geula the Gemorah says: "Ein Lonu Le'hishoein Eloh Al Ovinu Shebashomayim" - we have only our Father in Heaven to rely upon.

The Frierdiker Rebbe asked, what is so bad about that? We have Hashem to rely upon!

And the answer is that this is a Kloloh, for it implies that this would be ALL we have; we would not have anyone else to turn to, no physical presence of a Rebbe who we could turn to for comfort and inspiration in our times of need.

By now we certainly all know, understand and feel what a Kloloh this really is.

Gimmel Tammuz is a day of such devastation, such a Tzoroh, such a Tisha B'av, such a Churban, such an incredibly unbelievable *choshech*.

And because of this, this time is also a day of 'Benkenish' (longing). A day we SO yearn for 'Chadesh Yomeinu K'kedem'. A day that we think back to, and reflect upon, (the Oir P'nei Melech Chayim), the holy countenance of the Rebbe, which is like seeing a G-dly countenance (Kir'os P'nei Elokim), that we once had the Zechus to be able to see with our own physical eyes.

And we yearn; we crave; we long; we thirst; and we ache.

Gimmel Tammuz has assumed a sort of Kinnus Hashluchim atmosphere. Thousands upon thousands are in Crown Heights. The stores are filled with people going shopping, meeting friends and there is a carnival kind of atmosphere.

While it is beneficial to be with others at such a difficult time, to share the pain and the hurt, the whole focus of Gimmel Tammuz and Chadesh Yomeinu K'kedem must not be left behind. We must BRING THE REBBE BACK DOWN IN A GUF GASHMI.

Try as we may, we cannot see the light at the end of this tunnel, despite the fact that we were told and we know about the light.

All we can do is dream - and we don't even know what we're dreaming about...

קבלת התורה

* די וואס היטן אפ די שיעורים פון היום יום קענען אנדערש גיין צו קבלת התורה: מ'האט דאך נעכטען מסיים געווען דעם ערשטן חלק פון תניא (ספר השיחות תש"ג ע' 121)

* בשעת משיח וועט קומען, וועט ער ניט וויסן קיינע קונצן, נאר ער וועט מאנען: "אלה פקודי המשכן"? שרייב אן אויף א צעטיל ... וויפל אידן האסטו געמאכט זיי זאלן לערנען חת"ת? ! ...

(משיחת ש"פ פקודי תשכ"ז)

"הכל מודים בעצרת דבעינין נמי לכם"
ראה לקוטי שיהות חלק ב"ג
הג השבועות שיהיה ב'

ווא ווא להשתדל הוא וכל חבורתו תי' בכבוש של החוצה, ואם חסר לפי שעה די מוט ע"ז יתבוננו אז דאס האלט אפ די גאולה, תחה"מ און צו זעהן זיך מיטן רבי'ן דעם שווער מיטן רבי'ן זיין פאטער וכו' וכו' האומנם ביינקט זיך אייך ניט? והיש השתדלות שתקשה בעיניהם ובלבד שיגיעו לזה (ממכתב טו טבת תשי"א)



Shavuos - 5744

Erev Shavuos

Abe Sacks

After Maariv, the Rebbe held a Farbrengen (as usual). When the Rebbe arrived at 770 in the morning he met Mr. Abe Sacks, the basketball coach from Harlem¹, and asked him, "Were you at the Farbrengen last night?" Abe told the Rebbe that he was not notified about the Farbrengen, but he did intend on spending Yom Tov here in the neighborhood.

Later, the Rebbe went to the Ohel. At candle-lighting time, the Rebbe left for the Library next-door to 770 where he was to remain for Yom Tov with the Rebbetzin.

First day Shavuos

Tahalucha

This year, a superbly organized Tahalucha was arranged before Yom Tov and a detailed list specifying the placement of each of the Bochorim in the respective Borough Park Shuls they were to visit was hanging on the wall before Yom Tov.

Just a few minutes following Mincha, the Rebbe appeared at the main entrance of 770 to see off the crowds as they prepared to leave for the Tahalucha. While occasionally clapping his hands to their song, the Rebbe waited until the last of the groups was out of sight and then returned to his room.

Despite the stinging hot weather, throngs of determined Chassidim, young and old alike, marched proudly towards Borough Park, escorted by police-cars and helicopters.

At 10:00 p.m. the Chassidim made their way back to Crown Heights. With time, a substantially large group that had returned and gathered in front of the library (where the Rebbe was staying at the time) and broke out in song and dance. The Rebbe soon appeared on the porch and encouraged their song by clapping his hands.

Later on, after the Rebbe returned to the library, one of the "*Mashbakim*"² told the Rebbe that only some of the participants in the Tahalucha had managed to return, while others were still on their way and missed out on the special "greeting". The Rebbe answered that he would "compensate" tomorrow, during the Farbrengen. (It has also been told that a bit earlier, when the Rebbe had heard singing coming from outside, he sent someone to find out if everyone had returned).

Second day Shavuos

Farbrengen

When the Rebbe entered the Shul for the Farbrengen at 8:10 p.m., he held his Siddur and an unbound version of the Tanya in hand.

The "smart boy"

The second Sicha drew a lesson from the daily portion of Chumash which discusses the Jews' taking leave of *Midbar Sinai* where they had received the Torah. This would

seemingly be an appropriate lesson for the day of Shavuos when we celebrate just that. But in truth this symbolizes the very aim for which we were given the Torah in the first place: to bring it into the lowly world, transforming the mundane into holiness.

A precise illustration of the above is the idea of Tahalucha: When a Jew leaves the Shul where he regularly davens and feels most comfortable to bring the joy of Yom Tov to others at Shuls in a different area, he is experiencing somewhat parting from "*Har Sinai*". He definitely will be unable to study Torah with the same diligence and tranquility as he would back at home.

The Rebbe continued: "True, I myself did not participate in the Tahalucha, but I could just imagine that while there may have been some who spoke amongst themselves in Torah-learning as they walked, many others were most probably preoccupied with other matters. For instance, watching the police-cars, or keeping tabs on their fellow goers to see if they'll try to sneak into a closer Shul and avoid further walking... Nevertheless, they followed the Rebbe's instructions and went out to bring the joy of Yom Tov to their fellow Jews!

"There are also those who seek to avoid themselves of unnecessary troubles by finding a closer Shul to go to. They'd rather that their friend goes to the further destination while he, being a "smart boy" will head out somewhere close by and return home early enough to have a festive meal... *Oy Vey* to intelligence of such kind! If only he would utilize his skills for Torah learning, rather than attempting to avoid a Shlichus from the Rebbe...

"At the same time, there are others who feel it below their dignity to participate in the Tahalucha. They stem from prominent Chassidische families who resided in a well-known city in the old country; how would the participation in something like Tahalucha benefit them?!

"In conclusion: All those who took part in the Tahalucha should say *Lechayim* joyfully and with a genuine *Shturem*, and as "*Simcha poiretz geder*" (joy breaks through all boundaries) their joy will even penetrate the minds of those who for whatever odd reason did not participate in the Tahalucha, effecting them for the better. Then we can anticipate better conduct from them in the future..."

The crowd said *Lechayim* and began to sing Napoleon's March while the Rebbe waved his hand in encouragement with extraordinary enthusiasm!

In the following Sichos, the Rebbe spoke about the printing of Tanyas all over the world (mentioning the most recently arrived copy printed in a city in Israel which was brought to the Farbrengen and was now on the table, as well as a Tanya printed in Cairo, the capital of Egypt!) and the

newly-initiated Rambam campaign. In addition, the Rebbe delivered a concept in *Nigleh* to be repeated at the *Kinus-Torah* tomorrow.

After Bentching, Maariv, and Havdala, the Rebbe distributed Kos Shel Brocha for a few hours. When Abe Sacks turned up on the line, the Rebbe waved his hand towards him as encouragement and graced him with a broad, warm smile!

1. Abe maintained a unique relationship with the Rebbe and will be spotted at many of the weekday Farbrengens, especially during the Niggunim when he can be seen clapping along quite vigorously. See Derher -Emor, Issue #12.

2. The Mashbakim were the bochrin and yungerleit who attended the Rebbe. They were also responsible for the seder in 770.

“Bikkurim”

One year before Shavuot, a large group of chassidim traveled on foot to the Alter Rebbe to spend Yom Tov with their Rebbe. As they passed through village after village, many more chassidim joined them, swelling the ranks - some say the number of chassidim reached over 1300 strong. They took an ox and covered its horns with gold in the same way the Yidden in the time of the Beis Hamikdash would cover the horns of an ox with gold when they brought Bikkurim. This is how they approached the city.

When the Alter Rebbe saw them from his window, he went into his room and tumbled on the floor in *dveikus* saying “What do they want from me?” His Rebbetzin answered “They want to hear what you heard from you teacher the Maggid.”

“If so” said the Alter Rebbe, “I will speak and speak”. And he went out to greet them, saying for them the *ma'amar* “*החליל מכה לפניהם.*”

(*Toras Menachem Chelek 8, p. 215*)

We can bring an example from the *midda* of anger. Anger, or having a temper, is a very low *midda* that is usually a result of an uncontrolled personality. The Gemara says about one who becomes angry, that it is as if he served *avoda zara*. In this vein the Seforim will attack the *midda* from every possible angle until the learner fully understands what this *midda* truly is.

This will many times make the person learning the Mussar a little defensive, making it harder for him to let go of this bad character trait. And this is speaking about someone who is learning the Mussar with the goal of self-improvement, what of the person who has no such aspirations?

Chassidus on the other hand, will focus on the beauty of the Yiddishe Neshama, the richness of *mitzvos* and the importance of the mission the Yid has in changing the world. It will describe for the Chossid how very high his *neshamah* is, how it came from under the *Kisei Hakavod* and came down to this lowly world to elevate it. And how this is only a *yerida letzorech aliya* and Hashem will not give a person a job that he is not capable of doing, this means we have the koichos that we need to be *Chassidische, Erlliche yidden*.

Chassidus warms the person to the point where he feels no need for his coat; he **wants** to take it off, he **wants** to get rid of those disgusting *middos*.



Q & A:

What is the difference between Chassidus and Mussar?

There are many ways and methods of serving Hashem, our goal here is to bring out the beauty and unrivaled ruchniyus'dike loftiness of Chassidus.

The Sun vs. The Wind

The sun and the wind once had an argument over who was the more powerful of the two. Each claimed superiority with neither able to convince the other. They soon spotted a man walking along. The sun suggested that they use him as a test of their strength. Whoever would be able to force the man to remove his coat and scarf would be crowned as stronger and more powerful.

The wind took the first turn in attempting to provoke the man to remove his coat and scarf. The wind began to blow into the man's face. All he did was bend his head forward and hunch his shoulders. The wind tried harder, yet the more he blew the harder the man held on to his scarf and the tighter he wrapped his coat. The wind even threw itself at the buttons and zippers of the coat, trying with all his might to pop the coat open and rip it off by force. Finally, the wind threw itself in frustration at the man, tossing him head-over-heels high in the air and bruising him on the hard ground below.

Now the sun took his try. He slowly turned up the heat, shining stronger and brighter, raising the temperature until the man removed his coat and scarf himself.

Obviously, the sun was the victor.

Chassidus and Mussar work with a person, toiling to remove his '*Middos Gassos*' מדות גסות and his '*Middos Raos*' מדות רעות. Mussar acts like the wind, attacking the person and attacking the *midda*, arousing awareness of the evils of that character trait. It will explain *b'tuvo taam* how low the *midda* is and how low a person who has such a *midda* falls, bringing many quotes from Midrash and Gemara to support the point.

True, the goal is to encourage him to let go of that *midda*, but he will automatically be consciously thinking about it, just as the man wrapped his coat tighter when attacked by the gusts of wind.

Continued on page 8



The Mission

A Story of the Baal Shem Tov

1.

In the year 5519 our master the Baal Shem Tov dispatched one of his young talmid, R. Moshe Meshel from the village of Bezenke, with a letter to be delivered to another of his talmidim, an eminent scholar called R. Chaim Rapaport. In this letter the Baal Shem Tov instructed him to leave town on a certain day for the forest which was about eight *parsas* to the east. There he was to study intensively the first four perokim of *Hilchos Berachos* in *Rambam*, and any innovative interpretation that came to mind he was immediately to jot down in brief in order that it should not be forgotten. He was to begin his day by *davening* at daybreak, eating breakfast and setting out, making sure that nothing blocked his way. When he will have arrived at the forest he will see [a vision of] the Baal Shem Tov standing there, that was [the indication of] the place where he was to sit and study as prescribed. Finally, after *Minchah*, he was to safely make his way home.

The Baal Shem Tov also sent a letter through his young talmid, R. Moshe Meshel, to a resident of Lvov called R. ChaimYisrael. He made it clear that no one was to know of this mission, and once the letter was delivered the messenger was to have no further contact with its recipient.

Moreover, the Baal Shem Tov instructed him that throughout the night preceding the visit to the forest he

should be on the alert that R. Chaim should daven Shacharis no later than at daybreak; though R. Chaim

was accustomed to rise at midnight for *Tikkun Chatzos*, his fatigue from the scholarly exertions of the previous day might cause him to go to sleep again. He was also to see to it that R. Chaim ate breakfast before they set out, and he was to take along a cup in case R. Chaim would later be thirsty. While accompanying him on their journey, the messenger was instructed to recite from memory the opening Pessukim of *Bereishis*, the *Song of Az yashir*, and the *Song of Haazinu*. Throughout the entire time that the elder scholar spent in the forest, the messenger was to recite *Tehillim*; if he completed the *Sefer* he was to repeat it, and if he completed it again he was to read it a third time. Furthermore, from the morning before the journey he was to speak to no man.

The day that the Baal Shem Tov had determined for R. Chaim's journey to the forest was a certain Wednesday in the month of Tammuz.

2.

This is how R. Moshe Meshel of Bezenke later told the story.

* * *

At midday on Thursday I arrived in Lvov, and found the room of the Beis Din over which R. Chaim usually presided. It was filled with people, and the sage was engaged in an important consultation with the elders of the community.

When I asked one of the dayonim, R. Moshe YosefYisrael, to allow me to meet him he asked me in surprise: "Don't you know about the terrible decree that the Deputy Archbishop Mikolski has just published? In the course of the coming week, until next Thursday, they will tear out '*Aleinu L'shabeiach*' from all the Siddurim, and from this Sunday and on we will not be allowed to read this tefillah in any Shul! Right now they are discussing what can be done."

Realizing that I would not be able to see R. Chaim, I went off to fulfill my second mission — to deliver the Baal Shem Tov's letter to R. ChaimYisrael the Potter. By the time I returned to the courtroom R. Chaim had gone home, so I handed him his letter there.

Seeing the envelope he stood up, and when he heard that I had been sent to him by the Baal Shem Tov his holy face lit up and he read the letter with reverent awe. Finally, he sighed and said: "The entire Jewish

community of Lvov and its surrounding townships needs heaven's mercies, on account of (*Chas Veshalom!*) the dreadful decree that '*Aleinu L'shabeiach*' should no longer be recited in our Shuls."

The sage did not breathe a word about the letter that he had received. The members of his household and the talmidim of his *yeshivah*, however, noting that R. Chaim was in high spirits, concluded that the visitor was no doubt an emissary who had brought word, orally or in writing, from the Baal Shem Tov. They recalled that whenever an oral message reached him from the Baal Shem Tov, and even more so, whenever a written message reached him, he treated that day as a *Yom-Tov*: Tachnun was not said and he held a festive meal, a *seudas mitzvah*. Sometimes he shared with them the content of his message and sometimes he withheld it, but in the course of his Torah teachings at the table he always expounded the spiritual path of the Baal Shem Tov.

On this occasion, too, R. Chaim arranged for a festive meal to be prepared. In no time word of this reached his associates and disciples. All the elders and worthies of the community also arrived, as well as many members of the public, for all the townsmen were deeply distressed by the decree. In the middle of the festive meal the decision of the earlier consultation was announced: they would ignore the decree. At the risk of their lives, the whole community would recite '*Aleinu L'shabeiach*' three times every day exactly as in the past. The coming Sunday was declared a public fast, and the *Shofar* would then be sounded.

On Friday morning R. ChaimYisrael the Potter called on Deputy Archbishop Mikolski and warned him that if he did not annul the decree he would be severely punished. Mikolski drove him out angrily. On Sunday morning, however, as he stepped down from his pulpit, he stumbled and broke his right leg and arm. He fainted from pain and was carried home. There, still suffering, he remembered that Jewish visitor on Friday. Not only that, but he recalled that he had seen that same Jew once before, in Kamenitz-Podolsk: this was the very Jew who had then warned the late Archbishop Demboski that if he did not annul his decree to burn the holy books of the Jews, he would die....

On the spot, Deputy Archbishop Mikolski ordered one of his senior priests to notify the local rabbi and his congregation that the decree was annulled forthwith: The Jews could continue to pray as they were accustomed to doing.

The glad tidings spread through the city in a moment, and for the Jews of Lvov this was a time of light and joy. They quickly sent messengers throughout the neighboring provinces, and the learned R. Chaim gave out orders: The townsmen were to complete the daylong fast; at nightfall, in time for *Maariv*, they should light many candles in all the synagogues as they usually did for *Yom-Tov*; the prayers should be sung to the festive melodies reserved for *Yom-Tov*; and '*Aleinu L'shabeiach*' was to be sung to the solemn melody handed down from the saintly Maharal of Prague, as on the Days of Awe, though on this occasion the worshipers were not to prostrate themselves on the floor.

3.

It transpires that R. ChaimYisrael the Potter was one of the hidden *tzaddikim* of the time. No one knew of his comings and goings and no one took particular notice of him. After all, didn't Lvov have hundreds of good simple craftsmen who — to all external appearances — looked just like him?

He had been the emissary of the Baal Shem Tov to warn Archbishop Demboski in Kamenitz-Podolsk that if he did not rescind the decree for the burning of the *Talmud* and other holy books, and if did not cancel the tax that had been imposed on the Jews for the renovation of the local



שערי אגונה

Ana Avda

This lively Niggun is to the words originally from the Zohar, quoted in the lines we recite after opening the Aron Hakodesh:

אנא עבדא דקודשא בריך-הוא -
I am the servant of Hashem
דסגידנא קמיה ומקמיה דיקר אורייתיה -
I bow before Him, and before the glory of His Torah

בכל עידן ועידן -

At all times.

The Niggun originates in the city of Niezhyn where the Chassidim of the Mitteler Rebbe are said to have composed it. (Niezhyn also contains the site of the Mitteler Rebbe's Ohel). It was introduced to today's Chassidim of *Dor Hashvi'i* and popularized by a Chossid named Reb Zalman Teibel in a most interesting episode:

Reb Zalman Teibel

On the first night of Shavuos, 5729, Reb Zalman was invited to join the meal in the Friediker Rebbe's apartment. When the Rebbe suggested that he begin a Niggun, he hesitated at first and then said, "I shall teach a Niggun that is related to Shavuos on the words of Ana Avda. I heard it from Reb Shimon Klaffer of Nikolayev". "Yes; I knew him," the Rebbe commented, "He was a Chassidische Yid". Reb Zalman then sang the Niggun for those present.

The next night during the meal the Rebbe requested that the Niggun be sung again, adding that it should be taught to the entire crowd and the Bochorim will sing it more vibrantly.

Ana Avda - Tahalucha Goers

Indeed, the next day during the Farbrengen, after a lengthy explanation tying the idea of sincere *Bittul* to Hashem, as that of a servant to his master, to the receiving of the Torah, the Rebbe instructed that Reb Zalman sing his Niggun for the entire crowd. When he concluded, the Rebbe continued by explaining that true *Bittul* expresses itself in the foot of the man with its readiness to carry out his needs without question. This can be seen very well by the participants in the Tahalucha, who travel by foot to very distant locations to bring the joy of Yom Tov to others.

The Rebbe concluded: "All those who participated in the Tahalucha should say Lechayim along with the Niggun of Ana Avda!"

While the Rebbe distributed Kos Shel Brocha that night following the Farbrengen, the Niggun was sung a few additional times.

From that time on, this niggun was sung quite often in the Rebbe's presence; whether at Farbrengens or other occasions, and especially on Yom Tov and Chol Hamoad while reciting *Brich Shmei* upon the opening of the Aron Hakodesh. One time, the Rebbe encouraged the singing while clapping his hands so enthusiastically, that sides of his

Tallis came off of his shoulders!

In one particular instance in the 5730s, the Rebbe began the Niggun at the opening of the Aron and encouraged the Chassidim to sing along. Naturally, the Chassidim all turned their gaze towards the Rebbe, but the Rebbe pointed with his finger towards the Aron Hakodesh...

Ana Avda with Moshiach!

When Reb Zalman passed by in line to receive Kos Shel Brocha from the Rebbe on Motzoei Rosh Hashanah, 5741, a most incredible scene formulated: The Rebbe interrupted the distribution for a while and took hold of Reb Zalman by both his hands, and began to sing Ana Avda together with him!

When they concluded, the Rebbe said: "The implication (of Ana Avda - to serve Hashem selflessly) is for Motzoei Rosh Hashanah, *Tzom Gedalia*, *Aseres Yemei Teshuvah*, and so on - all through the entire year until the coming of Moshiach; and then we'll sing it together with him!"

cathedral, he would die a sudden death. Deputy Archbishop Mikolski had been there to hear Demboski's retort: "Go and tell your master that I scorn him and his threats." Demboski had then instructed the head priest to urge his colleagues to make haste and collect all the holy books of the Jews and to build a platform in the city square for the public burning. Furthermore, they were to send out couriers to summon the provincial population to witness and celebrate the vengeance that was to be wrought on the Torah of the Jews, who were hated by the religion of their countrymen. In addition, if by Tuesday, the appointed day, the Jews did not deliver the cathedral tax, Demboski authorized all the gentiles to break into the Jews' houses and stores and to rob and pillage to their hearts' desire.

His orders were immediately obeyed. Dozens of willing workers robbed the synagogues and Houses of Study and the Jewish homes of their libraries; others built an imposing platform in the city square; and yet others galloped off to spread their gleeful news in the surrounding provinces. The Jews of Kamenitz, terrified, held public fasts and davened to Hashem for deliverance.

For the next two days, thousands of gentile men and women, young and old, streamed into town, excited by the prospect of a public burning and unrestrained pillage. On Tuesday morning the bells rang out from the steeple. Demboski gave orders for the preparation of the woodpile, and with all due pomp led the ceremonial procession that headed there from the cathedral. Halfway there he suddenly dropped dead. His colleagues, struck by consternation, arrived at the conclusion that "The G-d of Israel had intervened to protect His Torah from their burning"

4.

During the two days preceding the Wednesday of his journey to the forest, R. Chaim had been far busier than usual. He was so weary that if [R. Moshe Meshel] had not been vigilant, as the Baal Shem Tov had told me to be, he would have woken up late for his midnight devotions of Tikkun Chatzos. Wednesday morning's sky was clouded and there were heavy torrents of rain. As soon as he stepped into the wagon that was to take him to the forest as he had been directed to do, the heavens burst with such fearful thunder and lightning that the horses, petrified, ignored the wagon driver's whip. R. Chaim urged the driver to make progress, but nothing changed until the skies came to rest. The mere eight parsas took us long hours, because in addition to the mud and mire, things went wrong at every turn: The reins came loose, the saddle-straps tore, a wheel fell off, the shaft between the horses broke, and so on and

Continued next page

Maamor Mattan Torah

Every year on the first morning of Shavuos at 3:00 am, the Rebbe said a Maamar. In those years, the Rebbe ate on Yom Tov in the Frierdiker Rebbe's apartment (which is on the second floor of 770), after which the Rebbe returned to his room. Meanwhile, the Chassidim would gather in the Shul to say Tikun Leil Shavuos. Close to 3:00a.m., the Chassidim would prepare for the Maamar. There were no benches in the Shul as usual, all would stand for the entire duration of the Maamar.

At precisely 3:00, the Shul became absolutely silent as the Rebbe walked in and sat down at his place. The Rebbe always had a handkerchief wrapped around his hand and immediately began to recite the Maamar (usually without an introductory Niggun). The Maamar generally lasted around forty minutes, and immediately at its conclusion, the Rebbe would stand and leave the Shul with the handkerchief still wrapped around his hand. This Maamar was always known amongst Chassidim as the "Maamar Matan Torah", due to the time and awesome setting in which it would take place.

This custom began in the year 5712 (1952). That year, the Rebbe returned from the Mikvah to 770 at 4:15 am and entered the Shul, finding only around fifteen people present at the time. Upon the Rebbe's questioning as to where everyone was, they answered that all were in the Mikvah. The Rebbe asked, "And where is Yoel (R' Yoel Kahan), also in the Mikvah?" They responded that he was. The Rebbe made a motion with his hand as if to dismiss the whole thing. The Rebbe then took off his coat, sat down and instructed those present to begin singing an introductory Niggun, after which he began reciting the Maamar of "Chamisha Kinyonim".

Meanwhile, someone ran to the Mikvah to notify the Chassidim about the pleasant surprise and of course, everyone ran quickly to 770. This resulted in a congregation of around thirty people towards the end of the Maamar. After the Rebbe finished, the Chassidim sat down to review the Maamar. At 5:40, the Rebbe left for home. Before Shachris, R' Yoel reviewed the Maamar again, and then once more before Maariv that night.

On the day after Shavuos, the Rebbe asked one of those who came in for Yechidus, "Whatever happened to the Maamar that was said early in the morning; was it reviewed?" He answered that it was. When the Rebbe asked who had reviewed it, he answered, "Yoel did". The Rebbe said surprisingly, "Yoel wasn't there when we started!" He told the Rebbe that he had arrived immediately afterward.

The Rebbe continued to ask, "When was it reviewed?" The Chassid told the Rebbe that it was reviewed right after it was said. The Rebbe laughed and said, "It was already morning, when did everyone sleep?" The Rebbe asked about the people who

weren't present, "When did they hear the Maamar?" The Chassid answered that it was reviewed later two additional times. The Rebbe responded very satisfied, "No one tells me good news. A Maamar was reviewed three times and no one let me know!"

The custom of saying these Maamorim continued until 5731 (1971). That year on 10 Teves, the Frierdiker Rebbe's Rebbetzin passed away and from then on, the Rebbe no longer ate the Yom Tov meals in the Frierdiker Rebbe's apartment. Therefore, on Shavuos night the Rebbe went home and remained there through the night.

In 5731 (1971) Erev Shavuos was on Shabbos, so the Rebbe said that the Maamar of the Shabbos day Farbrengen would include the usual Shavuos morning Maamar.

From 5732 (1972) and on, the Rebbe Farbrenged every year on the night of Erev Shavuos (Sivan 4 by night), when a special Shavuos-related Maamar was always recited.

on, each crisis with its own delay. Exhausted and distressed, the wagon-drive was unable to steer his horses any longer. I took his place on the driver's stand, but within twenty paces the whole wagon lurched off the road into a ditch. There we were stranded for a long time, until we finally managed to extract the wagon. It was already two o'clock in the afternoon when we arrived at the spot in the forest that the Baal Shem Tov had indicated in his letter.

No sooner did R. Chaim step down from the wagon than a fierce outburst of thunder and lightning made the horses bolt. Man and beast were frightened out of breath. In the sudden darkness the wagon-driver wept bitterly: "Rebbe! I'm terrified! I'm afraid!" R. Chaim replied: "G-d has acted thus so that He should be feared." With that he went and found the place in which he was to sit, and as soon as he delved into the depths of his studies the sky cleared and the sun shone forth.

The place indicated was an open space of a few hundred cubits, about fifty cubits from the road. Here and there, among the ordered rows of old trees and at the edges of the open space, decayed foundations and remnants of diggings indicated that buildings had stood there long ago. We also saw the derelict walls of what had once been a very deep well, though now it was dry.

For about four hours the sage sat engrossed in his books. He grew so thirsty that the wagon-driver and I set out in search of water, and in a nearby thicket we found a spring.

After Minchah we returned to Lvov. The sage wanted me to stay with him over Shabbos, but I did as the Baal Shem Tov had instructed me and left town after Maariv on that Wednesday. A wagon was there waiting to be hired, I took my seat without speaking a word to the driver nor to anyone else, and on Thursday morning the wagon took me the three parasas to Mezhibuzh. There, as soon as I set foot in the

courtyard of the Baal Shem Tov, he beckoned to me from his window. He told me to read the entire Book of Tehillim three times, once before morning prayers and twice after. Until this was completed I was not to utter a word, not even to respond to a greeting. I was then to read 'Az yashir' once, and Haazinu twice. He also instructed me not to smoke my water-pipe until after Maariv that evening.

The background behind the trip to the forest is another story in itself and can be found in Lekutei Dibburim Chelek 4 or in English Vol. 4 p. 104. To summarize, the ruins were of a house that had belonged to a brilliant illuy that had gone off the path of Torah. Although he followed the desires of his heart he continued to learn Torah. Eventually he was brought to Teshuva by his great-nephew, a Chossid, on the direction of the Baal Shem Tov. Reb Chaim went to the forest to elevate his neshama and the Torah he had studied while still an apikores.

Reb Berke Chein Part 3

א ציור פון א חסיד

His sacrifice for a Mitzvah knew no limits. Even great Chassidim were amazed by R' Berke's dedication. We certainly cannot list everything, but we will mention here several of his deeds.

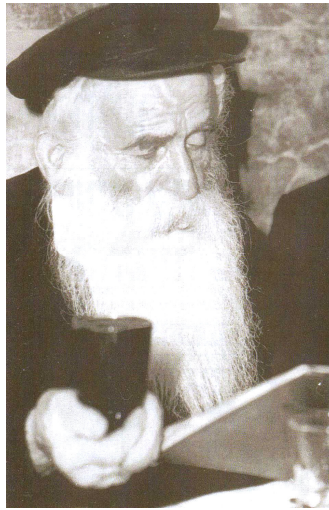
Most of his life was spent in hiding. He was on the KGB's "most wanted" list. People who were interrogated by the police always related that among the questions asked were the whereabouts of Berke Chein.

Yet he never changed any detail of his routine. Before dawn, he went to the Mikvah, which would also serve as a temporary hiding place. Near his house there was a Mikvah that was heated only twice a week. The person in charge refused to give Reb Berke the key on those days that it was not heated because it was freezing cold and he was afraid Berke would become ill. Reb Berke did not argue. On those days that he could not get the keys, he immersed in the river at the end of town.

But in order to get to the river, he had to pass a big factory which was watched by armed guards day and night. It was a matter of life or death to pass by that factory before dawn several times a week. Walking the streets without an identity card was dangerous, and these armed guards would surely notice a person strolling. If they asked him to identify himself, he would surely be doomed, and might jeopardize the family that was hiding him. Yet every day, at the crack of dawn, Reb Berke made his way towards the river, immersed himself and returned to his hiding place. To him this was a normal thing to do and he didn't consider it Messirus Nefesh.

After a while, when the police asked the neighbors if there were any "uninvited guests" in the house, Reb Berke was forced to leave and move into the house of the person in charge of the Mikvah.

On Sukkos he was very careful to make a Brocha on an Esrog from Kalabre. But such an Esrog was only available at the other end of the city. So what can be done? Simple. You rise two hours before dawn, walk several miles to the place of the Esrog, make a Brocha over it as soon as the sun rises, and then return home.



Not only did Reb Berke sacrifice himself for his own Mitzvah, but also for the sake of another person, even if it wasn't asked for. Once when he was hiding in the home of a friend in a Moscow suburb, a visitor came and asked to spend the night there. He was *frum* but not too meticulous. As they were talking, Reb Berke noticed that the guest had a penknife which he used to cut bread and vegetables when traveling. During their conversation, Reb Berke realized that the penknife was not *toiveled* as required for new food utensils.

Reb Berke asked to 'borrow' the penknife until the next morning. When the guest went to sleep, Reb Berke began searching all over the house for some thread or string. In the middle of the night, when everyone was sleeping, Reb Berke went outside and walked over to a well, tied the penknife to the rope and dropped it down, immersing it, and returned home full of joy. A family member who saw this asked him, "If a policeman would have stopped you and asked for identification, you could get hurt!" Reb Berke said, "Do you think that to give a Jew a Kosher knife to use is nothing?!"

Once during the week between Rosh Hashonah and Yom Kippur, he met a Jew who didn't perform the Kaporos ceremony. Reb Berke finally persuaded him, but when he went to buy a chicken, all the chickens were sold out. After much effort they found a chicken in a nearby village, but the color of the chicken was pitch black. The man refused, claiming, "Everyone does it with white chickens. I'm afraid that black is a bad omen." Reb Berke tried to disclaim his argument, but when he saw that it wouldn't help, he took his own white chicken and traded it for the person's black one.

During those days he would try to wash for the third Shabbos meal. They hadn't yet installed a plumbing system in his area, the water was often rationed, and many times they had no water on Shabbos. Other people would make do by eating fruit to avoid washing, but not Reb Berke. He would go out into the street and wait for a gentile who agreed to bring a pitcher of water from his home so that he would be able to wash for the meal.

To be continued...

א חסידישער דערהער

The Chassidische Derher celebrates 16 Issues!

Are you are an informed and educated bochur? Peruse your copy of the Chasidische Derher.

Over 20 Yeshivos world-wide receive the Derher weekly, make sure your friends are not missing out. Tell them about the Derher!

A Skira Ktzara

- Dovid Hamelech and the Baal Shem Tov were both *nistalek* on Shavuot. According to the Chabad tradition the Baa' Shem Tov's Hatalkus was on the first day of Shavuot.
- The Maggid accepted the Nesius on Shavuot 5521, one year after the Histalkus of the Baal Shem Tov. (See *Hatomim Vol 2 p. 140-142; Branches of the Chassidic Menorah Vol. 1 p. 15*)
- The Tzemach Tzedek fully accepted the Nesius in on Shavuot 5591.



Q & A:

What is the difference between Chassidus and Mussar? (Continued from page 3)

Mussar attacks the bad in the person while Chassidus lifts him up to a higher level.

In a similar fashion, it is told that someone once asked the Alter Rebbe to explain the difference between Mussar and Chassidus. He answered with a parable: If a *ganev* is constantly threatening your house, there are two ways of protecting yourself. Either you scream and shout every time he comes near, or you lay in wait quietly until he enters, and then you grab him and haul him off to the police.

With Mussar you constantly shout and chase the Yetzer Hora away, yet you never got him. Chassidus transforms the *Nefesh Habahamis* and makes him into a cooperative partner.

Find the Root of the Problem

A story is told of a garden that had a weed in it, a strong, tough weed. The way this weed grew, it had one thick stem that lay under the surface of the ground, with large shoots sprouting up every few feet. The gardener came with a weed killer to remove the unsightly plant that was ruining the beauty of his garden. He began by attacking the first weed, sawing through the width of it. Then he attacked the second weed, and so on across the whole of the garden.

Not much later he returned to find the weeds had re-grown, ruining the garden yet again. This time he took a powerful chemical and doused the thick, tough stem in it. Every day he would come and pour more of this chemical, until he killed the root of the entire plant.

When a person wishes to fix his *middos* he has multiple ways of doing so. Mussar devotes time and effort to explain why each *midda* is bad and disgusting. It will spend a few pages on the evils of lying, another few on anger, and many more on laziness; hacking away at each of these bad *middos* until they are no more.

Chassidus searches out the root to all problems: *Yeshus*. (This is not specifically 'ga'ava' or pride, rather the feeling of being a different existence separate and distinct from Hashem) When one believes that he is a separate existence from Hashem, this does not allow *Elokus* into his life and he will spend his entire life combating the offshoots of this *yeshus*. As it says about a *ba'al ga'ava* "He and I cannot live in the same *daled amos*". By attacking the root of the problem the Chossid will be guarded from all types of *middos megunos* – disgusting, derogatory character traits.

On the other hand, there is a vort from *Eltere Chassidim* that goes like this: Although you can use Chassidus to clean out your bad *middos*, that is nevertheless demeaning for it. A king's treasure house has many vessels made out of gold, even a golden shovel. If you wanted to shovel manure with the golden shovel, it would do the job, but for this you need a golden shovel! Any shovel would do the trick. Similarly, a Mussar is specifically designed to clean out the bad *middos*, סור מרע, while Chassidus brings light and *lebedikeit* into the *avoda* of a Chossid, עשה טוב.

Chassidus has the Ma'ale of Mussar As Well

(An excerpt from *Likkutei Dibburim, Yiddish Vol. 4 p. 1482; in English Vol. 5 p.112*)

[At this point one of those present asked the Rebbe Rayatz:] "If it sometimes happens that there is no time for [the extensive study of *Chassidus* and before and the subsequent measured meditation during the course of *davening* that is called] 'the service of the heart' through prayer, can one discharge this obligation by studying one of the classic works of *Mussar* such as *Reishis Chochmah*?"

The Rebbe's reply follows:

There are all kinds of ways of making a living. One man applies for a license and launches a business; another decides that since things are slow he'll beg for pennies. Now, both of them have created vessels for making a living, and Hashem will help them both. Yet there is a difference. When Hashem helps the first, he will end up prosperous – fish and meat, a comfortable home, fine clothes – and able to help others too. The other fellow, meanwhile, is collecting pennies for bread and herring.

In a word, then, *Chassidus* picks up a chassid and stations him in a spot that is incomparably higher than where he was.

Chassidim of former years used to approach their study of *Chassidus* and their *avodah* methodically, just as one approaches the study of *nigleh*, the revealed plane of the Torah: one day he studies the discussion of a subject in the *Gemara*, and the next day he studies the resultant law in *Choshen Mishpat*. With the classic topics of *Chassidus* likewise: an old timer would know that on a certain day the subject of his meditation during *davenen* was to be the exalted state of the *Ein Sof*; the next day he might meditate on the infinite *Ein Sof*-light that is vested in the created worlds; the next day, on the infinite worlds preceding the *Tzimtzum*; the next day, on the divine lights that are emanated as "direct light"; on another occasion he might meditate on the lights that are emanated as "reflected light"; and on another occasion, on what it means to have an "elevated heart in the ways of Hashem."

Today, however, even if someone more or less does do something in this direction, is this real *avodah*? It's only imagined. So if one day he comes to the conclusion that on that particular day, for whatever reasons, he can't seriously relate to the *avodah* of meditative *davening*, that means that he has come to the conclusion that he can't seriously relate even to an *imagined* endeavor.

And that thought itself will surely chasten him as effectively as the most effective reprimand of *Mussar*.

| פרק א' ליום | ג' פרקים ליום | מורה שיעור ללימוד הרמב"ם |
|----------------------|------------------|--------------------------|
| הל' גזלה ואבידה פ' א | הל' אישות פ' ב-ד | ה' סיון |
| פרק ב' | פ' ה-ז | ו' סיון |
| פרק ג' | פ' ח-י | ז' סיון |
| פרק ד' | פ' יא-יג | ח' סיון |
| פרק ה' | פ' יד-טז | ט' סיון |
| פרק ו' | פ' יז-יט | י' סיון |
| פרק ז' | פ' כ-כב | יא' סיון |

For questions and/or comments please call: (347) 541-4770.

All content is copyright © by A Chassidische Derher and/or authors and previous publishers as applicable.