

# אמרי אשכנז

## לעבן מיטן רבין

### THE REASSURING VOICE

IYAR 5727

*The month of Iyar in the year 5727 is a formative period in the history of the Jewish nation. On the one hand, the month began amidst fear and trepidation felt by the Jewish community around the world, with the growing tension between Israel and its surrounding nations. But then, in a miraculous turn of events, it ended with the pride and celebration of what would soon become known as the "Six-Day War".*

*In the following Yoman (based largely on letters penned by Rabbi Avrohom Gerlitzky who was studying as a Bochur in 770 at the time), we bring incredible highlights of the Rebbe's direct involvement in this episode - calming the worries of the Jewish nation both collectively as well as individually, promising before the war's beginning that our people would experience a miraculous salvation.*

*It should be noted that the war itself officially began on Monday, 26 Iyar, just over a week after Lag B'omer.*

#### The Rebbe to ShaZar: Publicize that all will be well!

On Thursday, 15 Iyar the Rebbe sent Rabbi Kazarnovsky and Rabbi Hodakov to see Mr. Zalman ShaZar from Israel on his behalf, who was visiting in Montreal at the time. After the two had set out on their trip, Rabbi Kramer from Montreal called the Mazkirus office and notified that Mr. ShaZar was summoned back to Israel on emergency basis and was to be heading out that evening, and so he had canceled his appointments for the day. Suddenly he heard a voice on the line saying "But this appointment he will accept."

"Who is this?" asked Rabbi Kramer.

"Schneerson..." was the reply (it was the Rebbe who had been listening on the line).

Mr. ShaZar related to the delegates that he had earlier spoken to the Rebbe on the phone and the Rebbe assured him that all would be well in Eretz Yisroel, and asked him to publicize to the people there.

"True," said Mr. ShaZar, "He was merely quoting Pessukim from this week's Parshah ("V'yishavtem lo'vetach...") which we have all heard in the past. But when these words are said by the Rebbe, he breathes

new life on to them and they take up a whole new meaning!"

#### Lag B'omer Parade: the Rebbe Continues to Assure

Lag B'omer, 5727 fell out to be on a Sunday, and a grand parade was organized to march down Eastern Parkway where the Rebbe would join them and address the children.

Towards the end of his ten minute Sicha, the Rebbe spoke briefly of the turbulent situation in Eretz Yisroel and the Yidden living there, stating loudly and clearly in a confident voice that there was no need to worry, for Hashem would carefully watch over them.

Again the Rebbe quoted words from the past week's Parshah, "ויושבתם לבטח בארצכם, ושכבתם ואין מחריד..." "I will grant peace in the Land, and you will lie down with no one to frighten you..."

This entire section of the Sicha was said in a particularly loud tone of voice and the Rebbe's holy face flushed deeply as he spoke.

While still on the Bima outside, the Rebbe turned to Rabbi Hodakov and asked if a transcription of his words had been written up yet, because he wished to edit them for immediate publishing. (Indeed, the Sicha was edited by the Rebbe soon after he returned to his room following the parade).

Later that night a recording of the Rebbe's Lag B'omer Sicha was sent to Eretz Yisroel and (according to the Rebbe's instructions) was played many times over the Israeli radio and published in the major national newspapers.

Rabbi Avrohom Lipskar who was on his way to a Shlichus in Milan, Italy also received interesting instructions from the Rebbe: to bring along an audio recording and a movie from this year's Lag B'omer parade!

#### In Response to Individuals...

On 14 Iyar, the Rebbe sent a telegram to the administrative board of Kfar Chabad instructing them to have no fear at all as they find themselves in the

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ב"ה

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ערש"ק פרשת אמור  
ל"ד אייר ה'תשע"ב

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#### אהבה

האהבה היא רוח החיים בעבודת החסידות. אהבה היא חוט המקשר את החסידים אחד בחבירו, והיא חוט המקשר רבי בחסידים וחסידים ברבי.

אהבה היא הן בדרך אור ישר והן בדרך אור חוזר אין לה מחיצות כלל והיא למעלה מהגבלת מקום וזמן.

אהבתי אתכם אמר הוי', אלקות שלמעלה מזמן ומקום אוהבת את בני, הגם שהם מלובשים בגופים ונפש טבעי ובהמי ונמצאים בעולם המוגדר בהגדרת מקום ומגבל בהגבלת זמן, ויהודים הנמצאים בעולם המוגדר בהגדרת מקום ומגבל בהגבלת זמן, אוהבים אלקות שלמעלה מזמן ומקום.

רואים במוחש, שמי שיש לו אוהב נאמן, אפילו בהיותו בריחוק מקום, ושטח של כמה אלפים פרסאות מפסיק ביניהם אין הנאהב בודד, כי בפני האהבה לא קיימות מחיצות כלל ולא שייך בזה ריחוק מקום...

כ"ק אבותינו רבותינו הקדושים, ע"י מבט של אהבה משכו והוציא [חסידים] מהבוץ הרוחני והעמידו אותם במעמד ומצב, כלומר, שמבט האהבה, לבד זאת שקירוב זה פעל את ה"סור מרע", שיצאו מהבוץ, הנה לבד זאת מבט האהבה הקדוש נתן כח בעבודה, והורה דרך ב"ועשה טוב".

(אג"ק כ"ק אדמו"ר מוהרי"צ ח"ח עמ' תצ"ז)

ביאור דעת הרמב"ם  
שלעת"ל עולם כמנהגו נוהג  
אף שתחית המתים היא  
חידוש במעשה בראשית  
ראה לקו"ש חלק כ"ז  
בחוקותי שיחה א'

# TAKONAS LIOZNA AND THE CHADORIM

## The Alter Rebbe's Organized Command Part -1

*This is an abridged version, the full story can be found as recorded by the Frierdiker Rebbe in Hatomim, Avos Hachassidim or English in "Branches of the Chassidic Menorah" published by SIE. See chapters entitled "Third Generation: the Alter Rebbe" and "The Alter Rebbe's Adherents, and His Opponents".*

In the time after the Maggid of Mezritch passed away [in 5533] the Chassidim needed a new leader. For this purpose, they decided to appoint an Executive Committee and a General Coordinator. At its next general meeting, the Holy Society elected the Alter Rebbe as their General Coordinator and spokesman. He was empowered to set the general agenda for the work of the various centers, and for the campaign throughout the country. From time to time, he was also to visit the places where the Maggid's disciples lived.

The Alter Rebbe's main concern was, however, the young Torah scholars of Lita. During the three to five years that he spent in these travels, he acquired students who came to him in Liozna - after they had completed the course of study he had arranged for them in their own hometowns. It was with these students that he established the first and second chadorim, to be described later.

In 5536, the Alter Rebbe established the first center - in his hometown of Liozna. A proclamation went out that young scholars who were being supported by their parents or their parents-in-law, were invited to visit Liozna for two or three months and receive a program of study. By order of the rav, their room and board would be provided at communal expense.

he Alter Rebbe's proclamation spread like wildfire, and within a short time about four minyonim of young scholars gathered in Liozna; they came from the nearby cities and towns of Vitebsk, Beshenkovitch, Horodok, Yanovitch, Rudnia, Kalisk, Lubavitch, Nevel, and the like.

The young scholars were all under the impression that in Liozna they would find the same system that had prevailed in the previous centers of Lubavitch and Horodok. There each of the young students had been permitted to study independently, whatever Torah subject he chose. Group study was, for the most part, reserved for learning the chassidic teachings of our master the Baal Shem Tov and his disciple the Maggid.

To their surprise, they soon discovered that the Alter Rebbe had instituted a new system:

1. they were now required to study Gemara in depth, whole groups studying a single subject. The groups were organized according to

their abilities, and they were required to study together for no less than four hours a day;

2. sometime during the week they were required to study a predetermined curriculum, which they were to know thoroughly;

3. study of Gemara *Legirsa* was also required - not less than one page per day;

4. twice a week - the days and times to be determined - they must discuss their studies amongst themselves; each would present the difficulties that had arisen during his study, and suggest possible solutions. The administrator of this program was the Alter Rebbe's brother, the gaon and tzaddik Reb Mordechai;

5. they were required to study Halachah in depth, following the above schedule, for no less than two hours per day. Shulchan Aruch was to be studied no less than one chapter per day (a very long chapter could be divided and studied over two days), completing the four sections of the Shulchan Aruch in order. The administrator of this program was the Alter Rebbe's brother, the gaon and tzaddik Reb

Yehudah Leib.

Each week at a specified time, these two brothers would report to the Alter Rebbe about the young scholars' progress in their studies, and whether each one's conduct followed the individual program that the Alter Rebbe himself had assigned him.

My great-grandfather the Tzemach Tzedek told his son, my grandfather the Maharash, all about the abilities and proficiencies of the Alter Rebbe's brothers, Reb Yehudah Leib, Reb Mordechai, and Reb Moshe. They all possessed wonderful talents, and displayed amazing diligence in their studies. Each one had some special ability.

The gaon Reb Yehudah Leib was outstanding at issuing halachic rulings. Whenever he studied a topic, no matter how complex it was, he managed to derive some practical application in Halachah from each logical point of the discussion. He had a marvelous knowledge of the detailed laws found in all four sections of Shulchan Aruch, and their sources in the Talmud Bavli, Yerushalmi, and Rishonim. But beyond all this, he was adept at discovering novel rules of law by means of his ingenious logical deductions.

The gaon Reb Mordechai had a wonderfully incisive mind, employing straightforward, yet very profound, logic. When he studied some topic, he would progress from the simpler to the more complicated aspects of the problem. He would review each topic five or six times. Each time, he would discover ever more penetrating novel ideas, as though ascending a ladder rung by rung. When he discussed *pilpul*, it was a pleasure to listen.

The gaon Reb Moshe had a wonderful talent for explaining things. [When he spoke, it was as if] his mouth spouted precious jewels. When he lectured on a Torah topic - regardless of whether it was revealed Torah or Chassidus - he would give the most wonderful and elevated interpretations.

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\*) There were two separate periods when the chadorim were established. The earlier chadorim were established in 5536, when the Alter Rebbe was appointed the head of the chassidim in Lita. The later ones were established in 5538, when the Alter Rebbe returned from his journey accompanying the holy Reb Mendel on his way to the Holy Land, as you will soon read.

In the city of Nikolayev there lived two great *Baalei Menagnim*, Reb Aharon Charitonov and Reb Asher Nikolayever, both Chassidim of the Frierdiker Rebbe. In addition to their similar talents and parallel beliefs they were also very close friends.

When Reb Aharon composed a niggun he wanted it to be taken to Lubavitch, and taught to the Rebbe. Being that Reb Asher travelled there often, Reb Aharon would teach him his new niggunim, and he in return would teach it when he went to Lubavitch.

After composing the "Beinoni" (it only later got this name, as you will read) Reb Aharon imagined that the same thing would happen this time as well. But after hearing it, Reb Asher told his friend that he didn't like it and therefore would not be taking it to Lubavitch.

Years passed and the Niggun still hadn't been brought to Lubavitch. Eventually, Reb Aharon himself made the trip to the Rebbe and was finally able to teach him the niggun. The Frierdiker Rebbe was greatly pleased with it and proclaimed, "It shall be called 'the Beinoni'". He then continued, "The reason for this name is because the notes and stanzas are very much in line with the level of the Beinoni that the Alter Rebbe describes in Tanya. And even though this niggun does not follow certain musical rules<sup>1</sup>, it is filled with an earnest outpouring of the heart reaching for the unlimited..."

On many occasions the Rebbe spoke about how the Frierdiker Rebbe really cherished this niggun. At one farbrengen the Rebbe instructed the Chassidim to sing the Beinoni and prefaced the singing by announcing that during the singing one should picture in his mind the image of the Frierdiker Rebbe when he would sing this nigggun.

The Frierdiker Rebbe himself showed his appreciation and fondness of this niggun and spoke many times of its greatness. At one farbrengen when requesting for this niggun to be sung he said, "Now we should sing the niggun with which one is able to daven with!" "א ניגון וואס מ'קען דאוונען מיט עים!"

### The Demanding Niggun

Reb Mendel Yanovsky<sup>2</sup> from Nikolayev relates:

"At the famous farbrengen of Simchas Torah 5688<sup>3</sup>, I sang the Beinoni niggun for all those present. When I finished the Frierdiker Rebbe spoke at length about the niggun and gave many deep explanations on its meaning.

"One thing that I recall being said is an insight on the second stanza, in the words of the Rebbe,"The second stanza of this niggun expresses demand, 'Hayitochon' – how can it be that you know all the greatnesses of a Beinoni but yet you are still not on that level!"

(To be continued)

1. This, perhaps, is the reason Reb Asher did not approve of the niggun.

2. He was the Rebbe's cousin from his mother's side. He was also a talented Baal Menagen, who brought many niggunim to Lubavitch and sang them in front of the Frierdiker Rebbe.

3. Famous, for it was a mere two days before the Frierdiker Rebbe was to leave Russia, and this farbrengen was perhaps the last for many Chassidim.

(Continued from page 2)

Reb Yehudah Leib and Reb Moshe concentrated mainly on the study of Chassidus. Reb Mordechai, on the other hand, concentrated mainly on the Talmud and Poskim. Reb Yehudah Leib told my great-grandfather the Tzemach Tzedek that all three brothers had a regularly-scheduled study session together, three times a week: Sunday, Tuesday, and Friday. [Each session lasted] five or six hours, continuously.

The Alter Rebbe created two special classes, called "the first cheder" and "the second cheder." These chadorim were exclusively for the most outstanding students, and the first cheder was higher than the second cheder. The young scholars in the two chadorim studied individually, each according to the program that the Alter Rebbe had set for him. The Alter Rebbe would deliver private chassidic discourses especially for the two chadorim. These teachings that he delivered before them were called by chassidim "private teachings".

In those days, there were three types of lectures on Chassidus:

1. community teachings - delivered mainly on Shabbos and Yom Tov;
2. public teachings - delivered once or twice a month before an assembly of the students of the two chadorim, and the other young scholars who sat there studying;
3. private teachings - delivered twice a month (generally on weekdays) before the two *chadorim*.

During the year 5537, this schedule was interrupted, because the Alter Rebbe desired to join those members of the Holy Society - headed by the holy Reb Menachem Mendel of Vitebsk - who were departing for the Holy Land.

(To be continued)

(Continued from page 1)

Holy Land, and assuring them that all would be well. (This telegram was photocopied and widely distributed across the land, especially to the IDF soldiers).

This was followed by a series of telegrams and written responses to many individuals in *Eretz Yisroel* at the time (especially foreign citizens who were instructed by their local embassies to return to their home-countries for the time being) in which the Rebbe repeated time and again that there was no reason for fear and that all would be just fine with the *Yidden* in the Holy Land. (Many of them are printed in *Igros Kodesh* Vol. 24 pg. 332).

In response to one of the new immigrants who had recently arrived in Israel from behind the Iron Curtain and asked the Rebbe's permission to come to New York, the Rebbe said: "Now is not at all a good time to travel away from the Holy Land. We will meet happily, with Hashem's help, during the upcoming 'happy month' of Tishrei."

A mere few days before the outbreak of the war (on 22 Iyar), the Rebbe told someone in *Yechidus*, "There is no need to worry; with Hashem's help the entire episode will be over in just a few days..."

And the rest is history...

# Why do we learn Maseches Sota?

# Q&A

There is a *Minhag Chabad* to learn *Masechtas Sota* for the 49 dyas of *Sefira*, one daf each day. What is the reason behind this *minhag* and why specifically *Maseches Sota*?

You might say, hey, Sota has forty-nine *dafim* and therefore fits the forty nine days of *Sefira*. This is part of the whole elevating experience of *Sefiras HaOmer*, by learning one *blatt* each day of the *Sefira*.

Unfortunately, its not so simple. There are two problems with this idea:

First of all, Sota doesn't have forty-nine *blatt*, it has forty eight. The first amud is *Daf Beis*. Secondly, Sota is not the only *Masechta* to contain forty-nine paged *dafim*, *Maseches Shevuos* also has forty nine *dafim*.

In fact, the more common *minhag* is to learn Shavuos, not Sota. The Rebbe<sup>1</sup> even connects Shavuos, a *Masechta* that discusses promises and swearing, with *Mattan Torah* and the covenant we made with Hashem. The word Shavuos, implying two promises, can be seen as alluding to the two promises made by *Mattan Torah*. One in which we promise to follow the Torah, as it says "ויעומד מהר סיני מושבע" and the second in which Hashem promises to "never trade the Yidden for another nation". Our *minhag* needs some clarification.

## A Matter of Barley, Weddings and Small Mountains

This *minhag* is first mentioned in Hayom Yom on Zayin Iyar, palced there at the directive of the Frierdiker Rebbe, with no reason given. The Rebbe in later sichos gives a few explanations connecting Sota with *Sefiras HaOmer*.

The *korbon* offered at the beginning of the *Sefira*, the *korbon haOmer* was a barley offering. Likewise, the *korbon* of the Sota was a *korbon* of barley. Why barley? The Gemara says<sup>2</sup> "Because her [the Sota's] actions were animalistic, her *korbon* is the food of an animal." (Barley is a lower form of grain, considered animal fodder.)

We spend the forty-nine days of *Sefira* focusing on our Nefesh Habahamis, elevating and refining it. Therefore the *Sefira korbon* is the food of an animal. The Sota also goes through a refining period, through the drinking of the waters, that brings her back to her husband<sup>3</sup>. Her *korbon* is similar, and her message is similar, to those of the Omer.

Another connection between Sota and the Omer, is related to the first of the two Avodos that we strive to attain during *Sefira*. The first is the *bittul* and rectification of the forty-nine levels of Tuma, the preparation of Bnei Yisroel, divesting themselves of the Tuma they picked-up in before their metaphorical wedding to Hashem. (The second Avoda is the development of the forty-nine middos.)

In a similar way, the Sota is also a purification process for the woman to return to her husband. Non-coincidentally, we read

parshas Nasso, which speaks of the Sota on one of the Shabbosim near Shavuos, some years the Shabbos before, some years the Shabbos after<sup>4</sup>.

A third connection is found in the end of the *Masechta* as it leads into the last days before Shavuos.

The end of the *Masechta* speaks of Rebbi's passing and the many attributes that disappeared with his departure. One of the attributes enumerated is humility. Rav Yosef says "Don't teach 'Humility' for there is still me."<sup>5</sup> This is the same Rav Yosef who earlier taught "One must always learn from the ways of his Maker". Hashem left all the large and grand mountains and rested on Har Sinai, the smallest. Smaller is better in this case, the less self, the more space we leave for Hashem. The preparation for *Mattan Torah* is the acceptance of *Naase* before *Nishma*, humility and *bittul*<sup>6</sup>. Reading about this directly before Shevuos is proper way to set the tone for the Yom Tov.

## What of the missing daf, the missing forty-ninth page?

On the first day of *Sefira* we learn the first page, the *Shaar Blatt* of the *Masechta* and on the second day of *Sefira* we start the first *blatt*. The unique property of the *Shaar Blatt* is not only in that it "guards" the entry to the rest of the *Masechta*, but that it also includes the entire *Masechta* in it. For on this front cover is the name of the *Masechta*, the name containing the essence of the *Masechta* and giving life to it, as stated in the well-known Torah of the Baal Shem Tov. This then, is the connection of the *Shaar Blatt* to the first day of *Sefira*, for both encapsulate the entirety of their respective successions. The *Shaar Blatt* as mentioned, and the first day of *Sefira* as easily understood, for all the other days only come in continuation to the first day of *hakrovas haOmer* and the *korbon* brought on that day<sup>7</sup>.

1. תו"מ תשמ"ז ע' 394
2. סוטה ר"פ ב'
3. תו"מ תשמ"ו ח"ג ע' 253
4. ספה"ש תשמ"ח ח"ב ע' 469

5. This is not the place to explain how he could claim to be humble, seemingly a paradoxical claim.
6. ש"פ במדבר תש"ח
7. ש"פ במדבר תשמ"ה



## ללימוד הרמב"ם

מורה נבוכים

הל' תפלה פרק ח	הל' אישות פרק ב-ד	י"ט אייר	ו'
פרק ט	פרק ה-ז	כ' אייר	ש"ק
פרק י	פרק ח-י	כ"א אייר	א'
פרק יא	פרק יא-יג	כ"ב אייר	ב'
פרק יב	פרק יד-טז	כ"ג אייר	ג'
פרק יג	פרק יז-יט	כ"ד אייר	ד'
פרק יד	פרק כ-כב	כ"ה אייר	ה'

