

A Chassidisher **Derher**

א חסידישער דערהער

**איצטער געפינט
ער זיך דא פונקט
ווי אמאל ..
במילא פירט ער דורך
אלע זיינע ענינים.**

—משיחת ש"פ תבוא ה'תשל"ג



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לזכות
הרה"ת ר' שלום וזוגתו מרת שרה
וילדיהם ישראל, ריסא, חי' מושקא, אמונה מלכה, ויעקב יהודה שיחי
איזיקוביץ
בקשר עם יום ההילולא ג' תמוז

Derher **Editorial**

Chassidim are the Rebbe's children.

The Gemara says: "כל המלמד את בן חברו תורה מעלה עליו הכתוב כאילו ילדו"—one who teaches Torah to another, it is as if he gave birth to him." The Rebbe not only teaches us Torah, but he also teaches us *pnimius haTorah*, Chassidus, allowing us to have a taste of his own *emuna*, *yira*, and *ahava* (faith, fear, and love of Hashem). Having a taste of this truth enables us to rid ourselves of the externalities of *olam hazeh*. Thus it is not only "as if" we are children of the Rebbe, but we are real true children.

This then is the meaning of the Rebbe's *yom hilula*:

The literal meaning of "*hilula*" is a wedding day, a time when the potential to bear children starts. It is on this day that we draw the potential strength and recommit ourselves to being the Rebbe's children, by following in his ways—until the end of time.

When can we be sure that the children born will indeed be everlasting? The Gemara tells us that it is only with the third generation. One who is a *talmid chacham*, his son is a *talmid chacham*, and his grandson is a *talmid chacham*, does not need to worry about future generations. The Torah will stay in his family permanently, because the three generations form a "triple-twined rope" ("חוט המשולש") that can never be unbroken.

The Tosefta likewise says that a real *rav* has students who have students of their own.

In our instance:

As long as the Rebbe is alive in the physical sense, there is no room for real "continuation" (so-to-speak). Even when his Torah is taught by others, he is still here teaching his Torah, and everything that is learned is still the same as though it came directly from the Rebbe.

However, once the Rebbe is *nistalek* from this physical world, even though he is still here "in this world more than before" (as the Zohar teaches), nevertheless, we can now say that there is somewhat of a "gap" between the Rebbe and his *talmidim*. Only now can we actually see that his teachings have the special advantage of the "triple-twined rope," one that is everlasting and will remain unbroken for all of time...

(Adapted from *Sichas Motzei Shabbos, Yud-Aleph Shevat 5718*)

In the long and painful years since Gimmel Tammuz, the Rebbe's work has increased in a manner that is incomparable to anything seen in earlier years. The Rebbe's reach has

>>>

gone to unprecedented lengths, and the Rebbe's Chassidim, even the very young who were never in his presence physically, are stronger than ever.

Though this *galus* is dark and unfortunate—not where Yidden in general, and Chassidim in particular, are supposed to be; nevertheless it is only in times like these that the “*emmes*”—the unrelenting and everlasting truth of the Rebbe, his Torah, and his message, shine for all to see.

Drawing on a similar point in our history, when Chassidim were trapped behind the Iron Curtain with no physical contact to the Rebbe, there is a fascinating letter from the Rebbe (quoted in an article on the subject in this magazine). The writer had complained that Chassidim “are incapable of making their own decisions, and are entirely dependant on others [i.e. the Rebbe].”

The Rebbe explains:

“...The truth is not so, as experience had demonstrated. Case in point are the Chassidim behind the Iron Curtain, who were separated from their leaders for over 30 years, and the younger generation has never even seen their leaders, and certainly could not have relied on the latter's leadership and decisions to shape their lives. Yet these Chassidim have turned out to be the strongest element of Jewish life behind the Iron Curtain, an element which retained its independence and way of life, in the face of the most terrible persecution, under circumstances constantly demanding decisions of an extraordinarily vital character, frequently decisions in matters of life and death, while others were indeed unable to make their own decisions and drifted with the stream, taking the line of least resistance. This extraordinary inner strength of the Chassidim came to light, for all to see, when the Iron Curtain was temporarily pierced soon after the last war, and numerous Chassidic families with their children and grandchildren escaped from behind the Iron Curtain...”

Specifically in times like today, the Rebbe sees the “extraordinary inner strength of Chassidim,” in being able to carry on with the life and work in the way the Rebbe taught them. This is when the *emmes* and *nitzchiyus* of the Rebbe shines its brightest.

Specifically in times like these, Yidden and (להבדיל) *goyim*, from all walks of life flock to the Rebbe and seek his advice and *brachos*.

In times like these, the whole world seeks to hear what the Rebbe says on every given issue; personal and global.

In times like these, the Rebbe's shlichim and *mosdos* are recognized as the number one address for Yiddishkeit all over the world, as they spread the message of the *nossi hador* to every person on the planet.

This allows us to, in turn, draw further strength and inspiration, bringing the Rebbe's Torah even further, both within ourselves and to the world around us, until we will be reunited with the coming of Moshiach.

ונזכה זעהן זיך מיטן רב'ן דא למטה אין א גוף ולמטה מעשרה טפחים והוא יגאלנו.

The Editors

י"ג סיון ה'תשע"ט

שנת השבעים לנשיאות כ"ק אדמו"ר



THREE REACTIONS

After being imprisoned in the Shpalerke, the Frierdiker Rebbe was released on 3 Tammuz and sent to exile in Kastrama. On 12 Tammuz, he was notified that he was completely freed.

When the Frierdiker Rebbe was informed—at the offices of the Russian NKVD—that he was free, the news reached the home of his host, the *shochet* of Kastrama, before the Frierdiker Rebbe returned from the office. Reb Michoel Dvorkin was there, and in his great shock and joy over the unexpected good news, he grabbed a *sotke*,¹ a bottle of *mashke*. He did not drink it, of course, but held it and danced throughout the house singing a Russian song whose words mean, “There is no-one besides Hashem.”

Reb Michoel worked with non-Jews for many years, and would often use Russian expressions. That’s why he sang this *niggun* in Russian too: “*Nyet, nyet nikava krome*—and here one would say Hashem’s name—*adnavo*.”² Since the *halacha* is that Hashem’s name cannot be mentioned in any language (not just Hebrew), we cannot say the Russian word for “Hashem,” and so instead, we say “*krome yivo*,” which means, “besides Him,” and the meaning is clear.

We know of the reactions of three different people to the news of the Frierdiker Rebbe’s release:

Reb Elye Chaim’s [Althoiz] face changed colors—half red, half white, to the point that the Frierdiker Rebbe feared for his well-being and calmed him by patting his shoulders, so that he should calmly absorb the news.

Reb Michoel—as detailed above.

In addition: in the home of the *shochet* from Kastrama there also lived a young boy of around nine-years-old, who was not particularly intelligent. When he saw the commotion, he wanted to show how he, too, was excited. He did a handstand on the fence, and proceeded to do several cartwheels on the fence.

Even a young boy, who had been raised in a different atmosphere, was affected and showed it in his own way.

In our own lives, each of us goes through a similar three stages of childhood, adulthood, and old age. We experience these stages—in a way—every year and every day. There are times that our minds think small—like a child, there are times that our minds think with the maturity of an adult, and there are times when the mind is like that of an elderly person, whose mind is calm and settled.

The *geula* must permeate all of these mindsets, and cause them to go beyond their typical limitations, each in its own way.

(*Yud-Beis Tammuz 5725*)

1. From the Russian word *сотый* meaning a hundredth. This was a bottle 1/100 the size of a larger standard measure.

2. In Russian: Нет, нет никого кроме Б-га одного.



לע"נ

התינוק ישראל נח ע"ה

בן יבלחט"א

הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל שי

נלב"ע אדר"ח תמוז ה'תשס"ה

ת'נ'צ'ב'ה'

נדפס ע"י הוריו

הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל

וזוגתו מרת חנה ומשפחתם שיחיו

קארנפעלד



Third Visit to Gan Yisroel

15 TAMMUZ 5720*



Camp Gan Yisroel was established at the Rebbe's behest. Before its inaugural summer, the Rebbe visited the campgrounds in Ellenville, New York on 16 Tammuz 5716*. After touring the property, the Rebbe held a farbrengen. The following year, the Rebbe again paid a visit to camp, this time located in the newly-purchased grounds in Swan Lake, New York, and held a *chanukas habayis* farbrengen. (For more on its founding, as well as a description of the first visit,

see *In the Rebbe's Reshus*, Derher Av 5775.) This article about the third visit is based on the account published in *Sefer B'Neos Deshe*.

SHNAS HAMASAYIM

Gan Yisroel was expanding from year to year, becoming known as "the best camp in the mountains" because of its excellence both *b'gashmius ub'ruchnius*. Each year, the number of campers grew, reaching several hundred in 5720*.

The Rebbe's last visit to camp had taken place three years earlier, in honor of the *chanukas habayis*, in 5717*. Since then, the Rebbe had not visited.

On 15 Sivan 5720*, only days before camp's commencement, Rabbi Avraham Shemtov had a *yechidus* with the Rebbe (for a personal matter). During the *yechidus*, the Rebbe intimated his wish to visit camp this year, saying: "I was thinking of traveling to camp. This is connected with the *shnas hamasayim* of the Baal Shem Tov [200th anniversary of his *histalkus*, on Shavuos 5520*]."

When Avraham Levitansky and his parents were in *yechidus* several days before Yud- Beis Tammuz, they too were informed of the upcoming trip. The Rebbe inquired as to their son's summer plans, to which his father answered that he would be travelling home to Chicago to rest. Upon hearing this, the Rebbe revealed: "I'm not sure if he knows that I'm thinking of traveling to camp. He'll be upset if he misses it." Obviously, they decided right then and there that their son would attend Gan Yisroel.

Similarly, on Erev Shabbos, 13 Tammuz, when Reb Avraham Parshan of Toronto was in *yechidus*, the Rebbe inquired as to his return trip. When he replied that he was leaving that same day, the Rebbe suggested that he stay until after Shabbos, because "something" may happen on Sunday.

Indeed, on Motzei Shabbos, 14 Tammuz, the Rebbe officially announced that the following day he would be visiting camps Gan Yisroel and Emunah. Many Chassidim organized that very night and traveled to Gan Yisroel in Swan Lake.

THE TRIP AND KABBOLAS PONIM

In the afternoon hours of Sunday, 15 Tammuz, the Rebbe left 770 to visit the two summer camps. Seated in the car were also Rabbis Kazarnovsky and Hodakov, Reb Shmuel Levitin, Rabbi Leibel Groner, and Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky who drove.

A short time after leaving, they stopped for *tefillas haderech* on the New York State Thruway, after the Tappan Zee Bridge. The Rebbe got out of the car and washed his hands (with a faucet that was there). Reb Shmuel Levitin approached the Rebbe and offered him to eat something (a candy), but the Rebbe declined, saying that "it is unnecessary."¹ The Rebbe proceeded to recite *tefillas haderech* while standing.

During the two and a half hour ride, the Rebbe read the *sefer* "Reb Yisroel Baal Shem Tov" [Kehos

5720*], which was recently printed in honor of *shnas hamasayim*.

Upon their arrival at 4:00 p.m., the entire camp, as well as the large crowd that had come especially for the occasion, came out to greet the Rebbe. The grounds were adorned with signs proclaiming "ברוך הבא" and "יחי המלך אדונינו מורינו ורבינו שליט"א." The children were lined up in orderly fashion by bunks.

The Rebbe exited the car, stood up on the running board, and vigorously encouraged the singing of "Ufaratzta" with the wave of his hand.

TOUR OF CAMP

The Rebbe then walked through the entire campgrounds, visiting the buildings and sports fields, escorted by the camp directorship—Rabbi Yossi Weinbaum (director); Moshe Lazar (head counselor); Asher Heber; Simcha Bunim Piekarski (assistant head counselor), and Rabbi Avraham Shemtov (general director).

The Rebbe had requested for all the doors to be open, so that he could get into each room. Indeed,



GOLDSTEIN FAMILY



GOLDSTEIN FAMILY



the Rebbe visited every single room without exception! When they got to the bunkhouses, each camper stood at attention by his bed. The Rebbe mentioned the need for sinks in each area, for *netilas yadayim*.

Upon reaching one bunkhouse's corridor after passing through all the rooms, the Rebbe noted that three rooms did not have mezuzos, and pointed out each door.

All the bunks were clean and organized, and this pleased the Rebbe very much. Upon reaching the watchman's room, however, the Rebbe was surprised to find a closed door, and said he'd like to take a peek. The walls were splotted with paint, and the words "*zecher lechurban*" were painted on the ceiling. Upon seeing the lettering the Rebbe smiled and remarked: "Why '*zecher lechurban*?!' '*Zecher lemikdash*!'"

When the Rebbe expressed his wish to go down to the basement of one of the buildings, the staff explained that no one goes down there. Nonetheless, the Rebbe persisted. After going down the Rebbe reasoned that because a child may wander down there, it's important that everything is safe, including the stairs which needed repair.

All throughout the visit, the Rebbe showed much interest in every detail. Upon reaching the monkey bars, the Rebbe asked what exactly they were for.

The Rebbe showed a special interest in everything related to the children's comfort and

wellbeing. Upon seeing the swings and slides, the Rebbe mentioned that it may be a good idea to add more such playgrounds.

After proceeding to the lake, the Rebbe pointed out the need for proper safety precautions, including competent lifeguards.

When passing the canteen, the Rebbe glanced at its managers, Rabbis Shmuel Marmulsteyn and Menachem Lipszyc. On the door hung a sign that read "Money is the root of all evil, so leave your evil here." When the Rebbe read it, he smiled, but then remarked that it is not appropriate.

The Rebbe inspected every area, even those not designated for use, and exuded a pleased expression throughout the visit. While there, the Rebbe asserted that although he never leaves Brooklyn, he visited camp because it is a part of 770!

FARBRENGEN

After touring the campgrounds, the Rebbe entered the shul and proceeded to its side room, where he changed into a silk *kapota*. The Rebbe then sat down at the center of the table on the stage and washed his hands for a *seuda*. The campers sat in the middle of the shul while the rest of the crowd stood on the sides.

The Rebbe said *l'chaim*, and requested that bottles of soda be brought for the campers so they could say *l'chaim* as well. A joyous *niggun* was sung,

during which the campers said *l'chaim*. The Rebbe then began the special farbrengen.

At the beginning of the *sicha*, after noting that someone would probably repeat it in English, the Rebbe stressed that his words are really intended for all Jewish children, wherever they may be, and said: "I will owe thanks to those who relay this to Jewish children wherever they are."

The Rebbe addressed camp's name, "Gan Yisroel," explaining that one of the reasons behind choosing this name was that it's the name of the Baal Shem Tov, and connected this with *shnas hamasayim* from his *histalkus*. "And being that a *manhig Yisroel's neshama* remains with his students," the Rebbe continued, "when we mention a Torah that the Baal Shem tov taught, and we follow in his ways, he is with each and every one of us, and assists everyone in adhering to the path he set forth, until the coming of Moshiach."

The Rebbe paused for a moment, turned to the camp directors, and said: "Perhaps you should give them something, they should say *l'chaim*. It's too much talk for them at one time." A moment later the Rebbe asked: "Can I continue? It's not too much for one time?" When someone answered in the affirmative, the Rebbe smiled and said "I'm not addressing you, I'm addressing them [the campers]!"

The Rebbe continued farbrenging, relating at great length a story about each of the Rabbeim, starting from the Baal Shem Tov. Each story was connected to a saying or event from the life of the Baal Shem Tov, and the Rebbe also explained, in simple terms, the lessons to be learned from these in *avodas Hashem*.

After this portion of the *sicha* there was a short break, during which the assembled sang "Ufaratzta," while the Rebbe energetically encouraged the singing with the

wave of his hand. The Rebbe then continued the *sicha*.

At the conclusion of this lengthy *sicha*, the Rebbe requested of the campers to sing a *niggun*, saying: "They should sing a *niggun* now, then they should be allowed to leave." The children sang a joyous *niggun* (the one sung today to the words "We Want Moshiach Now"), in middle of which the Rebbe began encouraging the singing, moving both of his hands in rapid motion. Moments later, the Rebbe stood up and began dancing in his place with great joy. The campers then left the farbrengen.

FARBRENGEN'S CONCLUSION AND BIRKAS HAMAZON

The next *sicha* began with an explanation on a *possuk* from the *parsha* "אראנו ולא עתה אשורנו ולא קרוב" דרך כוכב מיעקב וקם שבט מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל.²⁴ The assembled, who seem to have assumed that it was a *maamar kein sicha*, rose to their feet. Seeing this, the Rebbe paused and said: "You can sit, it's not a *maamar*."

After the crowd was seated, the Rebbe continued the *sicha*, describing fascinating things about the Melech HaMoshiach (who is alluded to in the word "שבט," as the Targum explains), who will rise ("קם") by means of spreading the wellsprings of "ישראל"—the Baal Shem Tov. The Rebbe said that this is "because the Baal Shem Tov's *inyan* was the beginning of revealing Moshiach's אור, this being



GOLDSTEIN FAMILY

'יפוצו מעיינותיך חוצה', which brings Moshiach *lemata me'asara tefachim*."

Following the *sicha*, the assembled sang a *niggun hisvaadus*. The Rebbe then requested for the *niggun hachana* to be sung, after which he recited the *maamar* "זהה בזמן הזה," a continuation of the *maamar* said on Yud-Beis Tammuz.

After the *maamar*, "Shalosh Tenuos" was sung, after which the Rebbe began singing "Lchatchila Aribet." At the *niggun's* end, the campers had rejoined the *farbrenge*, and the Rebbe asked if they know the *niggun* "Ani Maamin." They began singing it in unison, with the Rebbe encouraging the singing with his hand motions.

The Rebbe then asked if there was a *minyán* who had washed for a *seuda*, in order to *bentch* with a *minyán*. When they began counting, the Rebbe again asked: "Are there ten?" and added with a smile: "Six and a half?"

The Rebbe then announced: "Who here washed? Someone must find out!" He then smiled and said, "They probably won't be *machshil* me with the *zimun*..."

After it was confirmed that ten had indeed washed, the Rebbe led the *bentching*. At each *bracha's* conclusion, the campers loudly chanted "Baruch Hu U'varuch Shemo" and "Amen."

DISTRIBUTION OF KOS SHEL BRACHA AND KUNTRES

At the end of *bentching*, after the Rebbe had drunk the cup of wine, he announced that he would be distributing *kos shel bracha* to all the children, and pointed out exactly where the line should be formed and that it should be in an orderly fashion. The campers all passed before the Rebbe as he poured a bit of wine into each of their cups. After each child received his wine, he made a "*Hagafen*"—while still standing before the Rebbe—tasted a bit of the wine and said *lchaim*, to which the Rebbe responded "*lchaim v'livracha*."

During the *chaluka*, which included the camp's counselors and administration as well as the rest of the crowd, and lasted about half an hour, "Keili Ata" was sung. Later on, the campers began singing several camp songs.

The Rebbe then distributed "Mincha Maariv" booklets to every camper and counselor. (This was its second edition, and the words "שנת המאתיים"

להסתלקות הבעש"ט ז"ל" were printed in blue on the cover.)

Mincha then took place, with the Rebbe davening in the place he sat in at the *farbrenge*.

After Mincha, the Rebbe handed dollar bills to the administrators to be distributed to the staff. The Rebbe then left camp, and continued to Camp Emunah.



THE MINCHA-MAARIV DISTRIBUTED BY THE REBBE DURING THE VISIT TO CAMP, 5720*.

CAMP EMUNAH

Following a short drive, the Rebbe arrived at Camp Emunah. Despite the late hour, the Rebbe held a short visit in the camp, inspecting only one bunkhouse. The Rebbe also spoke to the campers.

Standing on the porch of the main building, with all the girls present, lined up by bunk, the Rebbe said: "Today is the *yahrtzeit* of the Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh, Rabbi Chaim ibn Attar. This has a special connection to Jewish girls, for as is known, he wrote his commentary on Chumash based on the lessons he gave his daughters (he only had daughters) every Friday night. He would then transcribe his commentary, from which the Pirush Ohr Hachaim al haTorah was published. Each of you must learn from this that it's not enough to educate yourselves in the proper way, rather, you should also try and influence others."

At the visit's end, the Rebbe left a stack of dollar bills with the camp's director, Rabbi Yaakov Yehuda Hecht, in order to distribute them to the head staff.

A short while later, the Rebbe left camp, and traveled back to Brooklyn, arriving in 770 at about 2:00 a.m. **T**

1. See Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 110:6.
2. Balak 24:17.

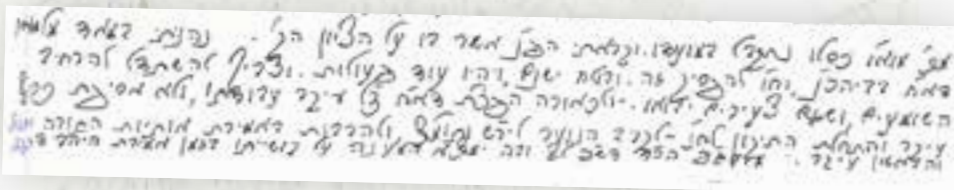


כתב יד קודש

ולזכות
 החיילת בצבאות ה'
 שרה תחי'
 לרגל הולדתה ג' ניסן ה'תשע"ט
 ולזכות הוריה הרה"ת ר' אברהם יונה
 וזוגתו מרת זעלדא שיחיו קאראליין
 ולזכות
 חנה תחי' קאראליין
 לרגל הגיעה לגיל שנים עשרה
 היא עונת בת מצוה ג' סיון ה'תשע"ט
 שיגרמו א סאך חסידישע נחת
 לכל משפחתם ולכ"ק אדמו"ר

Bring the Young

The following is a postscript to a letter from the Rebbe dated 9 Teves 5711* (the day that reciting *kaddish* for the Frierdiker Rebbe concluded), in which the Rebbe guides a Chossid in several personal and communal matters (published in *Igros Kodesh* vol. 4, p. 109):



Your letter from 6 Kislev was duly received. I read the *pan* at the holy *Tziyun* [of the Frierdiker Rebbe].

I was very pleased that you teach Chassidus in the shul. You should not, *chas v'shalom*, stop this practice. There certainly are, and will be more, activities. You must try to broaden the scope of listeners—and that a younger crowd should join as well.

It would seem that your main job should be spreading Chassidus—not raising funds.

The most important way to start rectifying the sin of נעורים is by bringing the younger crowd closer to *yiras shamayim*, Torah and mitzvos, and to recite words of Torah and *tefilla* in abundance. The former being the more important method.

Enclosed is the transcript of [the *sicha*] of Shabbos Parshas Lech Lecha, where you'll find an answer to your question about the proper time to recite the "*Yehi Ratzon*" on the apple [on Rosh Hashanah].

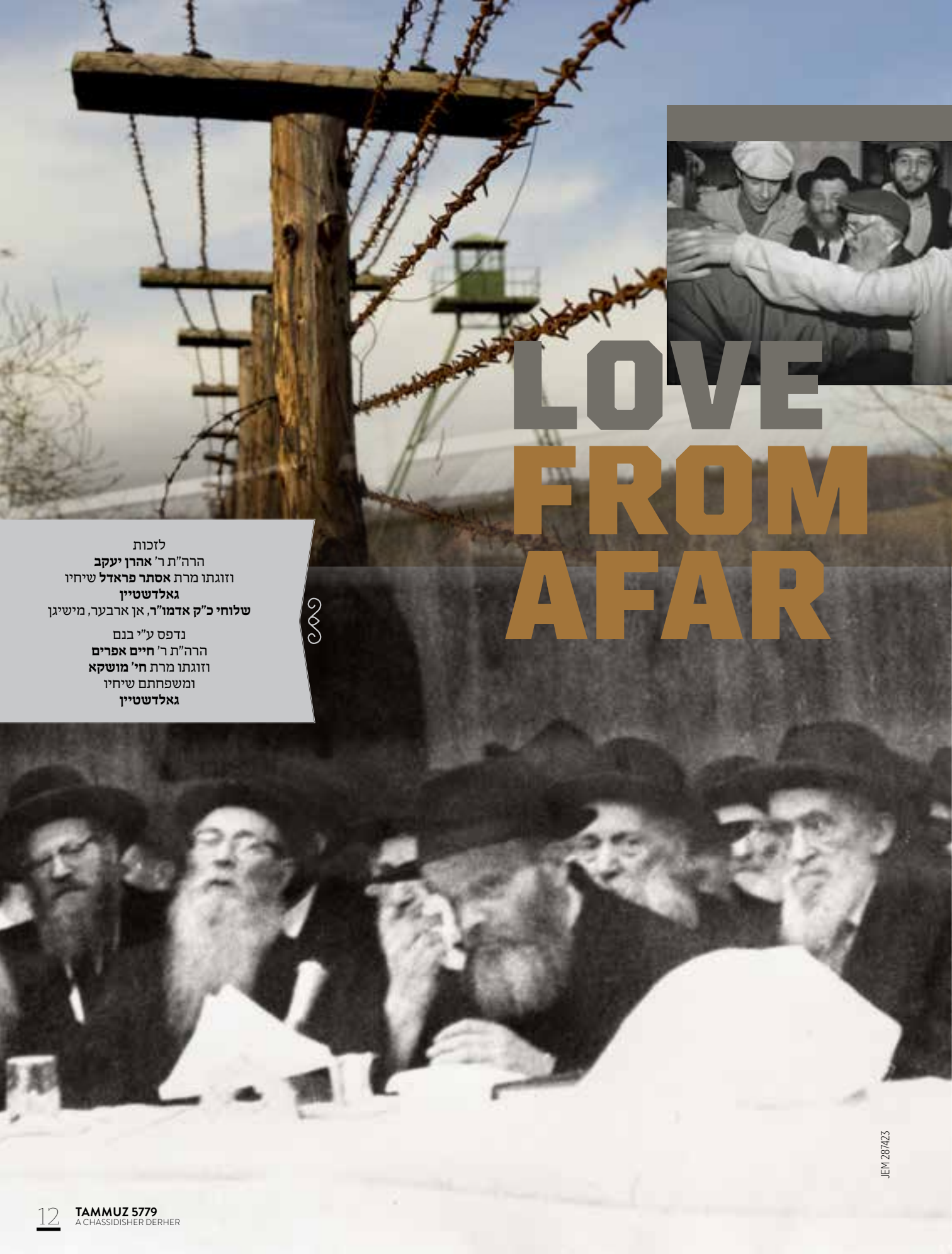
מכ' מוא"ו כסלו נתקבל במועדו. וקראתי הפ"נ אשר בו על הציון הק'.

נהניתי במאד מלימודו דא"ח בביהכ"נ. וחו"ו להפסיק זה. ובטח ישנם, ויהיו עוד פעולות. וצריך להשתדל להרחיב חוג השומעים, ושגם צעירים יבואו.

- ולכאורה הפצת דא"ח צ"ל עיקר עבודתו, ולא אסיפת כסף.

עיקר והתחלת התיקון - לח"נ - לקרב הנוער ליר"ש ותומו"צ ולהרבות באמירת אותיות התורה והתפלה והראשון עיקר...

מוסג"פ הר"ד דש"פ לך ובה ימצא המענה על קושייתו בזמן אמירת היה"ר דתפוח.



LOVE FROM AFAR

לזכות
הרה"ת ר' אהרן יעקב
וזוגתו מרת אסתר פראדל שיחיו
גאלדשטיין
שלוחי כ"ק אדמו"ר, אן ארבער, מישיגן

נדפס ע"י בנם
הרה"ת ר' חיים אפרים
וזוגתו מרת חי' מושקא
ומשפחתם שיחיו
גאלדשטיין



JEM 287423



MOSCOW 5740S / NATHAN BRUSOVANI



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“The Chassidim behind the Iron Curtain were separated from their leaders for over 30 years, and the younger generation has never even seen their leaders, and certainly could not have relied on the latter’s leadership and decisions to shape their lives. Yet these Chassidim turned out to be the strongest element of Jewish life behind the Iron Curtain.”

When we read these words today, written by the Rebbe in 5720*, almost 60 years ago, we can’t help but see the parallels to our situation today (for full quote see sidebar).

It has been so many years since we saw the Rebbe. Yet Lubavitch is bigger than ever and is thriving. The Rebbe has more shluchim today than ever before, and more people, from all backgrounds, are connected to the Rebbe than ever before.

The secret behind the success of Chabad behind the Iron Curtain was the connection between the Chassidim there and the Rebbe. For many long decades, the Rebbe worked tirelessly to encourage and help the Chassidim there. Whenever the Rebbe mentioned them by farbrengens his usual stoic voice would choke with tears.

When Chassidim were finally allowed to leave Russia, they merited unprecedented *kiruvim* from the Rebbe, even the children.

The love that the Rebbe showed for his Russian Chassidim, most of whom he had never seen, is surely something that we are experiencing today as well, a time when the younger generation of Chassidim has never seen the Rebbe.

As we approach Gimmel Tammuz, when this is at the forefront of our minds, we can draw some inspiration from stories that demonstrate the

Rebbe’s deep connection with his Chassidim stuck behind the Iron Curtain.

A REBBE’S THOUGHT

“*Machshava moeles*”—thought helps—these are the first words of Likkutei Dibburim, the Frierdiker Rebbe’s *sichos* edited by the Rebbe.

NEVER SEEN THEIR LEADERS

Incidentally, you mention in a previous paragraph that one of the aspects of Chassidic life is that the Chassidim are relieved from the responsibility of making decisions. You infer that the reason is that they are incapable of making their own decisions, and are entirely dependant on others. However, the truth is not so, as experience had demonstrated. A case in point are the Chassidim behind the Iron Curtain, who were separated from their leaders for over 30 years, and the younger generation has never even seen their leaders, and certainly could not have relied on the latter’s leadership and decisions to shape their lives. Yet these Chassidim turned out to be the strongest element of Jewish life behind the Iron Curtain, an element which retained its independence and way of life, in the face of the most terrible persecution, under circumstances constantly demanding decisions of an extraordinarily vital character, frequently decisions in matters of life and death, while others were indeed unable to make their own decisions and drifted with the stream, taking the line of least resistance. This extraordinary inner strength of the Chassidim came to light, for all to see, when the Iron Curtain was temporarily pierced soon after the last war, and numerous Chassidic families with their children and grandchildren escaped from behind the Iron Curtain.

The Letter and the Spirit volume two page 220

*📅 5720-1960

The discussion by that farbrengen in the sukkah, on the night of Shemini Atzeres 5693*, was about the Jews in Russia. “Thought has no boundaries,” the Frierdiker Rebbe continued, “and there is nothing that can hold it back, and at every moment it reaches its destination.”

“But what does the other person [the one being thought about] gain?” asked one of the Chassidim.

“A lot.”

Later at the farbrengen, the Frierdiker Rebbe said to him, “Where were you last Sukkos?” In other words, last Sukkos you were trapped in Russia, and this Sukkos you are free. So you see how my thinking about you had an affect.

The same idea was expressed by the Rebbe, in a letter to Reb Nissan Nemenov in 5712*:

“I had the special pleasure of receiving the names of *anash* in Russia, which demonstrates two important points.

“1) The *ahavas Yisroel* and the unbreakable bond between you and

our brethren in Russia. 2) It is most certain that by keeping a connection with them, at least in our thoughts, it strengthens the idea that כל ישראל כולו. Consequently, just as that country has no power on those outside its borders, a connection with those still stuck there will give them added energy to stand up and strengthen their situation and will weaken the power over them from the enemy... But for this we must be as one body, and this is the idea of the power of thought, and especially the power of imagination (כח הציור).

“Surely you will maintain this connection going forward, and doubtlessly it will greatly help those who are there and also those who are here.”

DIEDUSHKA

Reb Bentzion Vishedsky merited to see firsthand the Rebbe’s care for Russian Jews. He related:

“In 5718*, my father’s uncle, Reb Yaakov Yosef Raskin, left

Russia. My father sent with him a letter to the Rebbe, asking if he should submit a request for exit visas. He did not receive a reply.

“A few years later, in 5725*, our friend Reb Zalman Viniarsky was preparing to leave Russia. Seeing his friend about to leave, my father once again decided to ask the Rebbe if he should submit a request. Zalman was hesitant to take the letter, because if it was seen by the border guards it might put his whole trip in jeopardy. But my father insisted that he wanted to send the Rebbe an actual letter in his handwriting, not just a message.

“In the end Reb Zalman agreed, and my father wrote a letter on cigarette paper, which is very thin and easy to hide. Zalman sewed the cigarette paper into the lining of his coat, and that’s how my father’s letter got to the Rebbe.

“A while later we received a letter from my uncle Reb Yaakov Yosef Raskin. Between the pages of the letter was a slip of paper with the Rebbe’s handwriting on it. It’s an absolute miracle that this message was not taken by the censors who looked at every piece of mail.

“The message said to submit requests for the family, and at the end the Rebbe wrote in his handwriting, “Do svidanya, Diedushka”—We will see each other, Zeide.

“We knew then that we would be seeing the Rebbe shortly, and indeed our visas were approved and soon we were out of Russia.²

“Our joy was incomplete however, because my older sister Dvonia, who was married to Mottel, the son of Reb Simcha Gorodetzky, had been in Tashkent and was still stuck there.

“Reb Simcha had left Russia even before us, in 5724*, and he thought that he would finally be able to relax a little after so many hard decades. Yet he immediately fell very ill, and was in the hospital. His children were all



11.SHEVAT 5724, JEM 104272

נ.ב. ז"ע נחקבל מכתבו סיום ד' חסודו... (אין) וואס טענה וואס - ובריי יאג וודלי נאון האט זיך געזאגט, וואסער אעקע איד יאג זעה זיך!

still in Russia, and his wife had already passed away. He was all alone in Eretz Yisroel.

“My brother and I used to visit him every day to bring him food and try to cheer him up. But he was very depressed and down, always slouching in his chair silently, a shell of his former self.

“One Friday, my father came with me to visit him, and before we even got to his bed, he started shouting from across the hall *“Di kinder kumen!”*—the children are coming!

“Shocked, we asked him to explain. He said that a while ago he wrote a letter to the Rebbe asking for a *bracha* for health, and did not receive a response.

“When one is deathly ill, and the Rebbe doesn’t respond to your letter, it is not a good sign... So shortly after he wrote another letter, telling the Rebbe that it seems he will not be *zoche* to a response and a cure.

“Today a letter came from the Rebbe. It was a *michtav klali-prati*, and at the end there were a few lines in the Rebbe’s handwriting:

“Your letter from 4 Tammuz and the later *pan* were just received. It is surprising that you write that you are not worthy ו”ח and was not answered. Your children just got an exit visa from there, etc. Can there be a better answer than this?”

“We were shocked. Our sister was coming! A few months later, Mottel Gorodetzky and his family arrived in Eretz Yisroel. When he saw the Rebbe’s letter to his father, he looked at the date his visa was issued, and it was 10 days after the Rebbe’s letter was sent. Who knew that a visa was going



RABBI BEREL LEVY IN LENINGRAD, 5741*.

LEVY FAMILY

to be issued? The KGB officials in Tashkent, and the Rebbe...³”

DOES ANYBODY CARE?

Shavuos 5724*. The Rebbe had just said *l’chaim* on a full *becher* following a *sicha* addressing the plight of the Russian Jews trapped behind the Iron Curtain. 770 was silent. Suddenly the quiet was pierced by the Rebbe’s call; “*Nu, Nu...*!” The Rebbe paused for a moment and then, making a hand motion which seemed to express immense dissatisfaction, he said: “*When dealing with a brother or a relative there would be no need to wait for my directive (to say l’chaim), but now, when speaking of a broader group of Yidden, nobody is moved!*”

Immediately a few Chassidim raised their cups to say *l’chaim* but the Rebbe didn’t even glance in their direction. Instead he said, “*You make kiddush on a full cup of mashke, but when it comes to saying l’chaim for the*

Russian Jews, a small cup suffices...?!” Needless to say, the Chassidim were speechless. Someone began to sing “*Hoshia es amecha,*” but the Rebbe made a hand motion similar to before and began singing alone the *niggun* “*Essen est zich.*” When the Chassidim tried joining in, the Rebbe motioned with his hand once more and said: “*Tomorrow they will come with requests about sending visas to their relatives. But they should know that earlier, it was an auspicious time where a heartfelt l’chaim was to be said sincerely, with ‘an emmes,’ and a good word spoken while it’s still Yom Tov. Great things can be accomplished through this for all the Jews of Russia and they can be redeemed in the blink of an eye. Yet nobody is moved to take action! The fact that there are millions of Jews suffering does not bother them in the least! They think that they will accomplish something with their money...*” Afterwards, the Rebbe

requested for a child under the age of bar mitzvah to begin the *niggun* of “*Hoshia es amecha*,” saying “The children cannot be blamed for this.”

Indeed, it is not a stretch to say that only one person truly cared, to the depths of his heart, about Russian Jews. In a letter from the Frierdiker Rebbe, we find the same frustration with this apathetic attitude.

To my future son-in-law,

The purpose and content of this letter is to send you regards of many blessings.

Regarding my travels, it will be lengthy to write so I will leave them to be spoken about when we meet soon.

The Russian issue is very popular by people to talk about, yet I have not found someone whom this issue touches their heart and inspires them to action. But I hope that my trip now will be beneficial with G-d's help, and with complete clarity I must say, that our brothers who find themselves in the cauldron of misfortune and the kettle of troubles, are orphans.⁴

At every opportunity the Rebbe talked about the plight of the Yidden in Russia. On Simchas Torah 5724*, at the farbrengen before *hakafos*, the Rebbe said: “We are standing before *hakafos* and we have to remember those who are stuck in captivity. The [Frierdiker] Rebbe said when he was leaving there in 5687*, that by learning Torah in our countries, it will help them over there.”

Later, the Rebbe established the custom of saying the *possuk* “הנני מבריא אותם” before *hakafos*, as a way of davening for the Russian Jews.

A MATTER OF TIME

We know how precious the Rebbe's time was; every moment was carefully allocated. Yet when it came to the Russian Jews, the Rebbe spent an enormous amount of time caring for them.

Mr. Liova Eliav was the First Secretary of the Israeli Embassy in

Moscow in the late 1950s and was very involved with Chabad there. He would bring them *siddurim*, *sefarim*, *tefillin*, and anything else they needed.

After his posting there concluded, he came to New York and had a *yechidus* with the Rebbe.

The Rebbe spent an unprecedented **seven** hours talking to him, discussing every single detail about Jewish life in Russia. He related that by the time he left 770 it was already light outside.

Rabbi Berel Levy traveled to Russia many times as the Rebbe's shliach. Wherever he went he would take a small handheld video camera, and take videos of Chassidim.

In every city he visited, the local Chassidim would all gather at a house, and one by one they would present themselves for the camera. The men would not appear on camera unless they had gone to *mikveh* that day, and the women were all dressed in their Shabbos best.

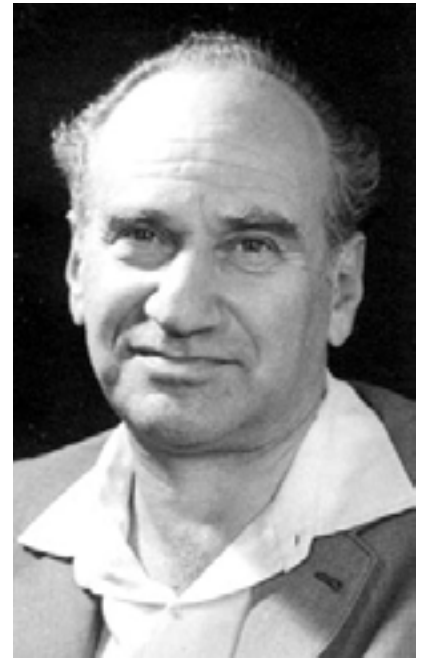
They would introduce themselves to the video, and then ask for a *bracha* for anything they needed, be it *parnassa*, *shidduchim*, questions about which job to take, whether to apply for a visa, etc. Incredibly, these films were never confiscated at the border.

In the earlier years, Rabbi Levy used to bring the video reels to the Rebbe's house, and the Rebbetzin would watch the videos. One time she asked him why doesn't he also show them to the Rebbe.

He replied that he didn't think the Rebbe had time to watch them. The Rebbetzin responded that she thinks the Rebbe would be very interested to see them. Reb Berel said, if so, he would like to be the one to bring it up with the Rebbe.

The next time he was in *yechidus*, the Rebbe had already spoken to the Rebbetzin about it and said that he wanted to see the videos.

From then on, upon returning from Russia, he would take a projector into



MR. LIOVA ELIAV, SECRETARY OF THE ISRAELI EMBASSY IN MOSCOW IN THE 1950S.

the Rebbe's room, set it on the Rebbe's desk, and the Rebbe would watch the videos. Sometimes they were over two hours long.

On one trip he was accompanied by his son Reb Don Yoel, and he joined him in the *yechidus* as well.

He recalls how his father would stand with a notepad, and the Rebbe would answer the questions as they were asked, while his father would write down the answers to send back to Russia.

TRULY ALONE

The majority of Russian Chassidim left in the great exodus of 5706-7*. Most remaining Chassidim had left by the early 5730s*. Those who were there after that, were truly alone. Yet in every major city, there were pockets of Chassidim who kept the flame of Yiddishkeit alive.

Visitors to Russia in those years were always shocked by the great devotion these stranded Chassidim had for the Rebbe. Most of them had never seen the Rebbe in their life, yet the Rebbe was all they cared about.



RABBI BINYOMIN KATZ

Mr. Dovid Rivlin worked for the Israeli foreign ministry and was the Israeli consul general in New York.

While working at the consulate he met with the Rebbe many times and developed a close relationship. Sometime after that he arranged a visit to the Soviet Union. One of the places he visited was the Marina Roscha shul in Moscow.

For a Russian Jew to go to shul was dangerous enough, and to talk with a representative of the Israeli government was out of the question. He later recalled:

“To my shock, when the people in shul heard that I knew the Rebbe, and that I was even in the Rebbe’s presence for Simchas Torah, their eyes popped out. They surrounded me and bombarded me with questions, and didn’t let me rest for hours as they begged me to tell them more and more; nothing else interested them, only the Rebbe.”⁵

SHAMAATI

In the mid 5720s*, Reb Binyomin Katz was sent by the Rebbe to Russia. While there he had the chance to

meet the Chossid Reb Mottel Lifshitz, known as “Mottel der Shochet.”

They couldn’t talk openly because informants were everywhere, yet when Reb Mottel passed him he whispered, “*Anash?*” Binyomin nodded. The only thing that he asked was “How is the Rebbe?” More than that, they simply did not exchange a word...

One morning while visiting Tashkent, Reb Binyomin was brought to the Bukharian shul which was jammed with Chassidim, young and old, and for two hours he sang all the Rebbe’s *niggunim* while the crowd listened rapturously.

One of the *sefarim* he brought along was a small book containing the Rebbe’s *maamarim* from the year 5715*. Seeing how thirsty these Chassidim were for something from the Rebbe, he decided to leave it with them in Tashkent. Years later, when these families managed to leave Russia and some of the *bochurim* came to New York, he found that they were so well versed in these *maamarim*; they could repeat them almost word for word.

While walking in the street, he was accosted by a couple on the street. The husband’s name was Reb Yankel Lepkivker (known in Tashkent as “Yankele der Shvartzer”). After searching with great difficulty to find employment that would not require him to work on Shabbos, he finally found a job in a laundromat. After a while the exposure to the chemicals that were used in the cleaning process had a serious effect on Reb Yaakov’s health and he became critically ill. Having no other choice, they took the risk of sending a telegram directly to the Rebbe and they received a one word answer: “*Shamaati!*” (I heard). Shortly thereafter, Reb Yaakov miraculously began to heal until his health was completely restored. Now, as a way of saying thank you, they wished to send a large sum of money

with Reb Binyomin to the Rebbe as a *pidyon nefesh*.

This was a time when the main work of Russian activists in America was to send money to Russia, and this Chossid wanted to give the little money that he had to the Rebbe.

TO SEE THE REBBE

Rabbi Shmuel Lew visited Russia many times in the 5740s*. While there, he met the above mentioned Mottel der Shochet, who for many years was the only *shochet* in Moscow. He had been able to leave Russia, but the Rebbe told him to stay because he couldn’t leave Moscow bereft of a *shochet*.

He expressed to Rabbi Lew that his only desire is *צו זען דעם רבי'נס הייליגע אויגן* (to see the Rebbe’s holy eyes) and then he’ll go back to Russia. This is indeed what he did a few years later.

Rabbi Lew also told of visiting the shul in Leningrad on Hoshana Rabbah. There was an old Chossid named Rabbi Chidekel who had been by the Rebbe Rashab as a young *bochur*, and by then was already very sick and bedridden.

Although he almost never left his bed, when he heard the Rebbe’s shlichim were coming, with great difficulty he dragged himself out of bed and came to the community sukkah just to see them.

The deep love that the Rebbe had for his Russian Chassidim, who had never seen him, kept them going through the long *galus*. Indeed many of them were more ardent Chassidim in Russia than after they left.

The same is surely true about today’s Chassidim.

1. Igros Kodesh #1564
2. Diedushka page 437.
3. JEM Living Torah, My Encounter With The Rebbe, Bentzion Vishedsky, disc 121 program 484.
4. Diedushka page 350
5. Diedushka page 373.

The Life of a Chossid

Reb Boruch Mordechai Babruysker

Born: 5521*

Passed away: 14 Elul 5612*

Chossid of: The Alter Rebbe, the
Mitteler Rebbe, and the Tzemach

Reb Boruch Mordechai Babruysker was born in 5521* in a town near Shventzian (Švenčionys), Lithuania, some 50 miles north of Vilna. He studied under the tutelage of the famed Chossid Reb Michel Apotzker, eventually learning Chassidus with him. As he grew older, he traveled to study in the famed yeshivos of the time in Vilna, Slutsk, and Minsk. In recognition of his brilliance, he became known by his peers as the *Baal Higayon*, the “Master of Logic” from Shventzian. He married the daughter of Reb Shmuel, the *av beis din* of Vilna, circa 5541*, and was then appointed to head a major yeshiva in Vilna.

Reb Boruch Mordechai was one of the leaders of the Chassidim in Vilna, marching at the head of the protest to disrupt the *cherem* placed on them by the city’s *misnagdim*. Reb Boruch Mordechai also played a key role in exposing Shimon Hakofer, an infamous member of the Haskalah—the Enlightenment movement—who attempted to infiltrate *frum* communities in the guise of a *melamed*.

He was a prominent Chossid of the Alter Rebbe, from whom he received *semicha*, and he was one of the Chassidim who were arrested when the Alter Rebbe was arrested. After the Alter Rebbe’s *histalkus*, he became a Chossid of the Mitteler Rebbe, with whom he would learn when he visited Lubavitch, and then of the Tzemach Tzedek, who appointed him to the Communal Affairs Committee charged with combating the Haskalah and the anti-semitic Czarist regime.

He was appointed rav of the city of Babruysk, in modern-day Belarus, circa 5561*, and tens of Chassidim made the move with him from Vilna.

After serving as rav for 50 years, he moved to Eretz Yisroel in 5611*, where he lived in Yerushalayim until his passing.¹

Reb Boruch Mordechai’s halachic erudition and brilliance were often put to use in resolving legal disputes, and even forewarning them.

Two business partners once came before the Alter Rebbe with a disagreement, asking for an adjudication. The Alter Rebbe asked whether they had a contract formulating their partnership. They did, and the Alter Rebbe found a clause detailing precisely what the course of action should be if they found themselves in exactly the situation in which they were. Satisfied, the partners went on their way.

Some time later, again they disagreed, again they came before the Alter Rebbe, and again the Alter Rebbe found a clause in their contract that mapped out precisely what they should do. This happened several times. Eventually, the Alter Rebbe asked them, “Who wrote your contract?” “Reb Boruch Mordechai Babruysker,” was the reply.

During one of Reb Boruch Mordechai’s visits to the Alter Rebbe, the Alter Rebbe asked him in indignation: “Is this the extent to which you immerse yourself in business, considering all of the claims that can come to light?”²

Two women came before Reb Boruch Mordechai with a *din Torah*. After careful consideration, he ruled in the favor of one of them. The woman who had been ruled against became furious, hurling insults at the rav. “Why don’t you throw her out?” asked Reb Boruch Mordechai’s wife? “She doesn’t really mean what she’s saying,” he responded. Hearing that, the woman’s curses increased in their intensity. Reb Boruch Mordechai asked her, “Tell me please: would you like your sons to be like me?” “Of course,” replied the woman. “If only they would be!” “You see?” smiled Reb Boruch Mordechai to his wife. “She doesn’t really mean it.”³

There was always a puddle in front of Reb Boruch Mordechai’s home, and visitors would have to walk through it on their way in. He once explained: “Our sages tell us that ‘Hashem showed Adam Harishon each generation and its teachers; each generation and its judges.’ When Adam Harishon saw Boruch Mordechai playing the part of rav in Babruysk, he spat and said ‘פע! אויך מיר א רב’ ‘Feh! Even *he* is a *rav*!’ This spittle created the puddle in front of my house, which never dries up.”⁴

לעילוי נשמת
הרה"ת ר' זלמן יודא
בן הרה"ת ר' שלום ישעי' ע"ה
דייטש
גלב"ע כ"ט תמוז ה'תשס"ו
תנ"צ'ה'
נדפס ע"י
משפחתו שיחיו

Chassidim would often ask Reb Boruch Mordechai to say over Chassidus, and he would always refuse. Once, however, he was visiting a city and the Chassidim would not cease their entreaties that he say Chassidus. Finally, he asked them, “Would you prefer to hear Chassidus, or to hear a Chassidishe *maaseh* that you’ll be sure to appreciate properly?”

Seizing the rare opportunity, they clamored for a story. He began: “Once, Reb Nochum of Chernobyl visited the Alter Rebbe on Sukkos, and they entered the *sukkah* to talk. Reb Nochum made a precondition that no one was to listen to their conversation. The Mittler Rebbe, and an individual named Reb Boruch Mordechai (referring to himself in the third person, as he wouldn’t refer to himself as “I”) longed to hear the conversation, and climbed onto the roof of the *sukkah*. Listening intently, they heard Reb Nochum ask the Alter Rebbe, ‘What was the special ability of Reb Mendel Horodoker?’ ‘He could read everyone’s minds,’ said the Alter Rebbe. Reb Nochum asked, ‘What’s the big deal about that?’ The Alter Rebbe added: ‘He knew everything a person had thought about his entire life.’ Reb Nochum asked again, ‘What’s the big deal?’ The Alter Rebbe responded: ‘When Reb Mendel entered a house, he knew everything that had been thought in that house from the time it was built, and everything that would be thought inside that house in the future.’ The Alter Rebbe concluded and said, ‘This is the difference between a *merkava* for *Atzilus* and a *merkava* for A”K, which is the general world.’ Reb Nochum was extremely impressed by this. Suddenly, he called out, “Didn’t we agree that no one would listen to our conversation!?” Upon hearing this,—Reb Boruch Mordechai concluded—“we jumped off the roof of the *sukkah*, and did not merit to hear the rest of their conversation...”⁵

A Chossid name Reb Zalman Leib lived in Babruysk. A simple, unlearned man, he was known as Zalman Leib the Whipster, as he had previously worked as a wagon driver. He now worked as a vegetable farmer, and his business was successful, enabling him to hire himself a *melamed* to finally teach him Torah each day. Whenever he had the time, he would daven at length.

Reb Boruch Mordechai’s brother-in-law Reb Avigdor, who was a *misnagdishe rosh yeshiva*, once visited Babruysk. When he arrived, he was escorted with great honor by a delegation of Torah scholars, who led him to one of the largest shuls in town to give a *pilpul*. To give him a chance to rest, he was brought to the side room, the *Chabadnitze*, where Reb Zalman Leib was davening. Reb Avigdor was so moved by the soulful tones that he asked, “Who is this Chossid davening so late?” “That’s Zalman Leib the Whipster,” answered Reb Boruch Mordechai. Reb Avigdor reacted scornfully: “Zalman Leib the Whipster! That’s what you call a davener? Him?! He’s barely the heel of a davener!” Reb Boruch Mordechai remained silent. Again, after the *pilpul*, Reb Avigdor scornfully, and publicly, called Reb Zalman Leib the “heel davener.” Now, Reb Boruch Mordechai responded: “The heel of a davener is highly esteemed in the Torah and is of benefit in three areas. The Mishna in Pirkei Avos says, “Akavya ben Mahalalel, the heel [Akavya related to the Hebrew word for heel—*eikev*] of a *davener* [Mahalalel meaning “one who praises Hashem”] says: Reflect intently upon three things and then you will not come to sin.” He then went on to explain the Mishna, and how it saves people from arrogance and sin.⁶

[After the Frierdiker Rebbe related this story at a *farbrengen*, some individuals ridiculed this “*Chassidishe pshat*” on the Mishna. In response, the Rebbe explained the significance of this teaching in a lengthy letter, showing how, far from being a “humorous” take, the notion of explaining the meaning of names has a storied history in Tanach and *divrei Chazal*, and that a person’s name represents—and guides—their very essence and that of their children. Akavya ben Mahalalel’s own name, and father’s name, are intrinsically tied with his teachings.⁷ ①

1. Toldos Boruch Mordechai

2. Ibid p. 106

3. Ibid p. 107

4. Ibid p. 115

5. Ibid p. 131

6. Sefer Hasichos 5702 Shemos sicha #2. English translation courtesy of SIE via Chabad.org/4062574.

7. Igros Kodesh vol. 1, letter 154.



DON'T GET CAUGHT IN VANITY



**REB
NISSAN NEMANOV**

5719*

*While in yechidus, the Rebbe asked Reb Nissan Nemanov
to convey the following message to the public:*

I am unhappy about the way the Chassidim lead their lives here in America. In days gone by, Chassidim would organize their weddings in a home-style fashion and on a relatively smaller scale. All the friends of the family would gather to take part in preparing the wedding meal, consequently they all felt that they were truly part of the celebration, as it was they who toiled to make it happen.

Here everything has drastically changed. In America it is an accepted fact that weddings *must* be held in a lavish hall which costs a fortune. This leaves the *baalei simcha* in huge debt which will then take them an enormous amount of time to repay. As a result of this excessive spending, all the guests who attend the wedding are expected to give checks with large amounts of money in order to help cover the expenses. Even if a *chassidisher yungerman* works on himself to the point that he feels that even if he cannot give such an outrageous sum, he still wants to attend the wedding simply to share in his friend's *simcha*, under no circumstances would his wife allow him to go empty handed, for what will her friends say?! Inevitably, one of two things will happen: either the *yungerman* will not even go to rejoice at the *chasuna* of his own friend, or he will coerce himself into writing out a check for an exorbitant sum that he cannot possibly afford, causing him to sink into debt as well.

These weddings take place in a magnificent hall, with each of the honored guests seated at a place designated specially for him. The burden of the seating arrangements lies on the shoulders of the *baal hasimcha*, who has to take the time and worry if each guest is indeed receiving a seat befitting his prestige, for if he will *chas veshalom* fail to arrange a seat honorable enough for any particular guest, that guest will then be greatly offended. The *baal hasimcha's* hassle of organizing the seating arrangements is seen as part and parcel of "preparing the mitzvah..." When the guests are seated in this manner and are occupied with these trivialities, what kind of *chassidische farbrengen* could possibly come out of such a *chasuna*?!

In days bygone Chassidim would use their own *simchos* as an opportunity to hold a real *chassidische farbrengen* and to raise the spirit of Chassidus from every angle. That's the way a *chassidische farbrengen* used to look like years ago on any given day; how much more so when the *farbrengen* was in conjunction with a festive occasion such as a *simcha* when people's spirits are uplifted. What good results can possibly come out of organizing weddings in this extravagant style? One thing is for certain, there are no *chassidische farbrengens* taking place at these weddings...

לזכות
הרה"ת ר' שלום דוב בער
וזוגתו מרת חי' מושקא
ובנותיהם ברכה ליפשא,
עליזה ושיינדל שיחיו
שוחאט



What is indeed the result of these types of weddings? That the *yungeleit* are worried about one thing: How can they possibly repay the debts which they have accumulated as a result of holding weddings in this manner? It's not only the average *yungeleit* who are consumed with worry over this, even those (*chassidische*) *yungeleit* who have a certain "tziyur," who are involved in learning Chassidus and even davening at length are worried about this as well. Even these people are going about things in this way.

It would be very difficult to tell an individual not to make his wedding extravagant, since you can't just go and tell one person, that "you must be different than everyone else."

This is but one example of something that at a first glance seems to be a mitzvah, a *chasuna*, whereas in reality people are deeply involved with matters that are "permissible," even "folly."



The Rebbe told Reb Nissan that there are numerous other customs that Lubavitcher *yungeleit* have adopted upon their immigrating to America which involve luxurious lifestyle and stem from *chitzoniyus* (meticulousness with vain and external matters) and "*hanachos haolam*" (following whatever value system the general public has instituted). The Rebbe gave him the following example:

In America there is a concept called a "living room." This means that one room in the house is selected for this

purpose and then it is furnished lavishly. Do you think anyone is allowed to go into this stunning room? Absolutely not! This is a room specially made so that no one is ever allowed to enter... In America there are specified rules regarding how this room must look, and people spend tremendous amounts of money just so that their living room will be decorated precisely in accordance with the American tradition. The result is that people sink into debt and become filled with toil and worry.

There are two deficiencies with this form of behavior: Firstly, the amount of energy wasted on this kind of a project is a great loss. Secondly, each person only has so much time and energy, and when so much of it is wasted on these trivial matters, there is far from enough time and strength left to learn Chassidus.

This is yet another example of the American way of life: in America it is a custom to read the newspaper. People can't even envision living life otherwise, for they cannot be different than everyone else. What do they need to read the paper for? Even if only five minutes are spent reading the paper, it is a waste of time nonetheless. How much more so if more time is wasted, and who is to say that people will not spend more than five minutes.

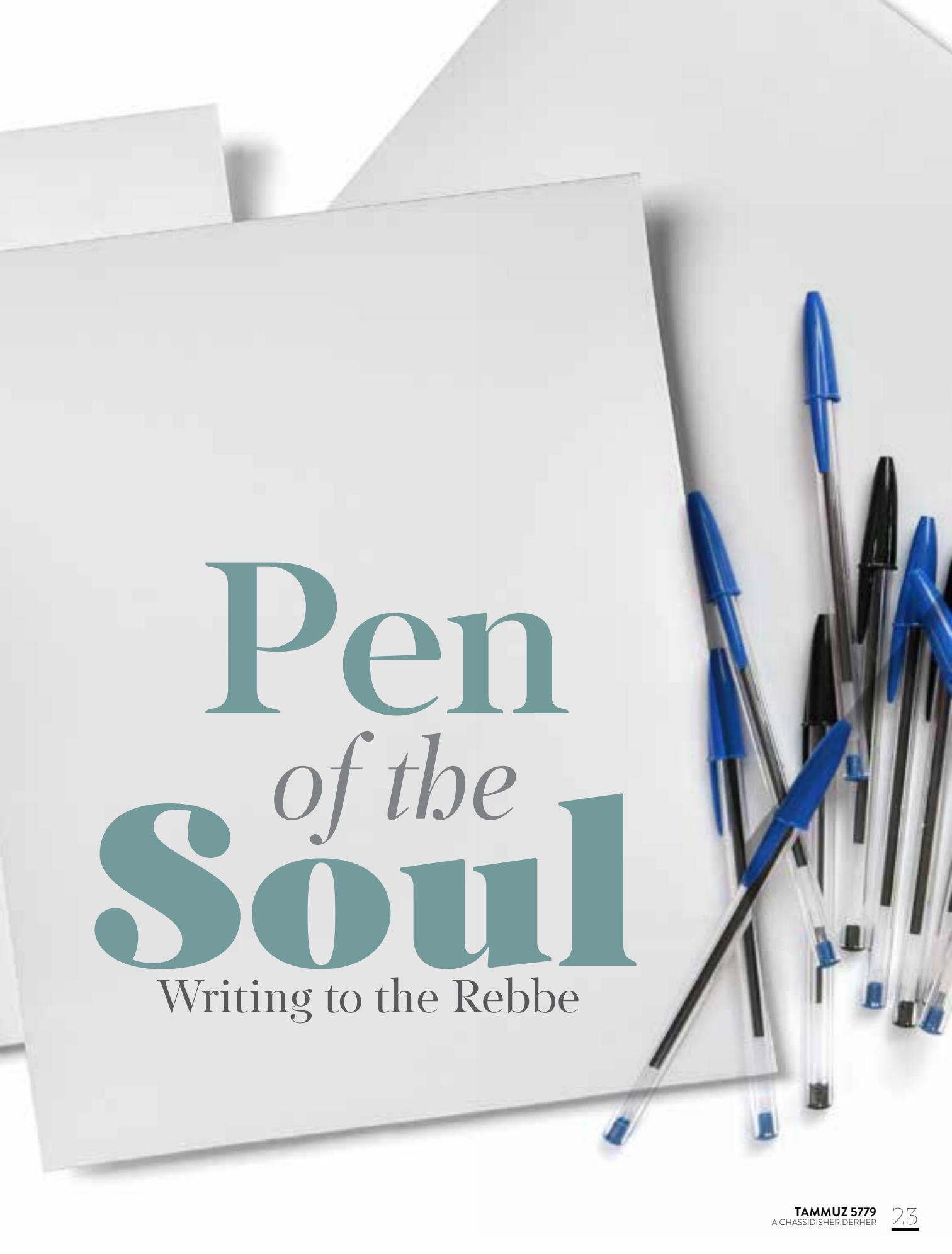
All these things are merely examples of the way of life here in America, from which you can surely understand how they conduct themselves in other aspects. **T**

לזכות
שלוחי כ"ק אדמו"ר בכל אתר ואתר
להצלחה רבה ומופלאה בגו"ר

נדפס ע"י
הרה"ת ר' משה זלמן
וזוגתו מרת רבקה מרים
ומשפחתם שיחיו
גרינוולד
בית חב"ד, דאוונטאון לאס אנג'עלעס



13 ADAR 5791, V. SCHILDKRAUT VIA JEM 108395



Pen *of the* Soul

Writing to the Rebbe

Throughout

Throughout the Rebbe's *nesius*, the primary avenue with which a person could personally communicate with the Rebbe was written correspondence. Even when *yechidus* was available, people were encouraged to keep their notes short and their conversations brief; additionally, opportunity for *yechidus* was reserved for rare occasions. And whereas *yechidus* was held in person and limited to people who could visit New York, people held long written correspondences with the Rebbe before ever meeting him even once.

So an individual's primary personal communication with the Rebbe would typically be through writing. When there was a concern, you would write a *tzetel* describing the issue and ask for a *bracha*; when you completed a project and wanted to report it to the Rebbe, you would write it up and send it in.

Anyone and everyone was welcome—and encouraged—to write to the Rebbe. The Rebbe read and answered letters from all over the world, and from people of all ages and lifestyles. As the years went on, the sacks of mail coming into 770 on a daily basis kept on growing and growing. It continues even more so today, as letters, emails, and faxes come in to the Ohel from around the world at all hours of the day and night.

One of the most important aspects of *hafatzas hamaayanos*, spreading the wellsprings of Chassidus, is to connect people to the source itself—to the Rebbe.

In 5709*, prior to the *histalkus* of the Frieddiker Rebbe, the Rebbe penned a fascinating letter to the legendary *mashpia* Rabbi Shlomo Chaim Kesselman, where he writes to him on the topic of encouraging others to write to the Frieddiker Rebbe.

“...It is clear to you based on everything that you have seen, that the Rebbe's words and *brachos* are true... Your experience, and the experience of others, has shown that when one listened to the Rebbe it was good, and when one didn't listen, he had it bad... Someone who believes with complete faith—a faith that directs his entire being—that the outlook and *brachos* of a certain individual [i.e. the Rebbe] govern everything, and knows that his friend must make an important decision in any area in life, even a life threatening issue—if there is even the slightest chance that his friend will listen to him, then out of basic decency, *ahavas Yisroel*, *pikuach nefesh*, etc. he would chase after him and tell him: ‘Have mercy on yourself, your family, and all that is yours! Do not rely on your own judgement! Learn Chassidus, connect with the Rebbe, do as he says, and then you will succeed!’”

A Chossid knows that the Rebbe is the first and final address for everything he needs physically and spiritually; the one who shares our pain and who cares the most for our joy. Writing isn't only a means of requesting the Rebbe's *bracha* or giving him a report. Through the pen, a person connects his soul with the Rebbe. A Chossid understand that when the Rebbe receives his letter, the Rebbe will not only read what is written within the lines, but also what is written between the lines, what is really taking place in the heart and mind of the sender.



I Haven't Received Your Report!

In addition to asking for *brachos* when something is needed—which comes naturally for anyone who is aware of the tremendous power of turning to the Rebbe—a fundamental part of writing to the Rebbe is to report to him, in a detailed manner, on what one is doing.

In countless letters, the Rebbe asks for people to write about how they fared in *limmud haTorah*, *nigleh* and Chassidus, davening, and activities to influence their surroundings with the light of Chassidus. Just as well, the Rebbe asked for reports of good news in health, *parnasa*, and all material areas of life.

As the Rebbe explained it, there are several elements to this. The first is for the benefit of the writer himself: accountability. If people make it a practice of giving detailed reports to the Rebbe of what they learned and accomplished, this would motivate them to work to have things to report, and avoid having embarrassingly empty reports. The Rebbe told this to shlichim and public activists, and also to young *bochurim* in their teens. (If you think about it, this is astounding: The Rebbe's time was infinitely precious; yet he wanted to read about the nitty gritty of individuals' lives, simply as a method of motivation for Chassidim!)

In order for this to be effective, however, the reports need to be detailed. As the Rebbe wrote to an activist,

“When you write in a general manner, it doesn't add in your motivation, for when you suffice with a general description, the description need not change if the activities grow much greater, nor need it change if they become much smaller. On the other hand, when you know that you will need to write a detailed report... your entire approach is different.”¹

In addition to the benefit that the *writer* receives, the Rebbe also expressed many times that by reporting to him about their lives, Chassidim were fulfilling the precept of *ahavas Yisroel* to... the Rebbe himself. “Of all the letters I receive, very few of them contain information that brings me pleasure,” the Rebbe writes in a letter. “Hence, any letter in this vein is very precious to me...”² This is especially true about good news; but even if there isn't anything good to report, the very connection established through the letter is important.

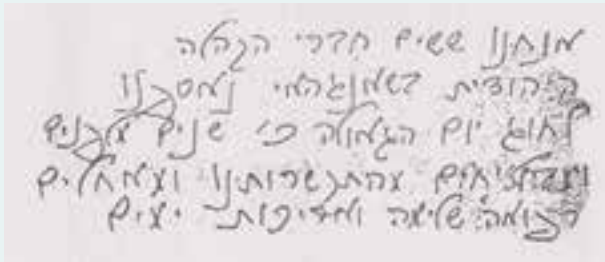
Don't Make My Mistake...

Rabbi Yehoshua Hadad, who was a shliach in Milan, Italy until his recent passing, studied as a *bochur* in Brunoy, France. He related:

“One year, as part of the celebration of Lag Ba'omer, we rented buses and brought about 200 Sephardic children to spend a whole day in the yeshiva in Brunoy. The children

Chassidim relate: In the year 5707*, the Frieddiker Rebbe commemorated 20 years since his release from prison on Yud-Beis Tammuz, 5687*. Being that he was not in the best of health at the time, our Rebbe orchestrated a campaign encouraging Chassidim from all over the world to send good wishes along with *besuros tovos* to the Frieddiker Rebbe to strengthen his health. Many of the telegrams that arrived in English and French were rewritten by the Rebbe in Lashon Hakodesh for the Frieddiker Rebbe to read and enjoy. (Some of these manuscripts can be found in "Tzaddik La'Melech" vol. 3 pg. 118.)

A telegram the Rebbe transcribed for the Frieddiker Rebbe:



אנחנו ששים חברי הקהלה היהודים בשאנגהאי נאספנו לחוג יום הגאולה כ' שנים מלפנים ומבטיחים מהתקשרותינו ומאחלים רפואה שלימה ואריכות ימים

We, sixty members of the Jewish community in Shanghai, gathered to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the *yom hageula*. We pledge our *hiskashrus* and we wish you a *refua sheleima* and long life.

davened with us, ate with us and soaked up the spirit of the yeshiva.

“The *mashpia* and director of the yeshiva, Reb Nissan Nemanov, reported to the Rebbe about this event, and he shared with me the Rebbe’s response. As I recall, the Rebbe implied that he regularly receives so much bad news—people constantly writing about problems with family, health or with livelihood—that he craved good news. And he chastised Reb Nissan for waiting an entire week before writing: ‘It is a shame that you delayed so much when you have good news...’

“When Reb Nissan finished reading the Rebbe’s letter to me, he said: ‘One day you will be the Rebbe’s shliach, and you will need to notify him about various events. Don’t make my mistake. When you have something good to report, you must write immediately and let the Rebbe know.’

“I didn’t take his instruction sufficiently to heart. There came a time, when I was the Rebbe’s shliach in Milan,

“I stole a glance at the Rebbe’s face and saw pure joy shining from his face. ‘Why didn’t I know about any of this until today?’”

that I created a special album about my Torah programs in five different places within the Sephardi community. I wrote down the names of all the children—193 in all—along with their mothers’ names, teachers’ names and the courses of study. When I presented this album to the Rebbe, he looked at it for a long while, reading every single name. As he was reading, I stole a glance at the Rebbe’s face and saw pure joy shining from his face. When he finished, he asked me, ‘Why didn’t I know about any of this until today?’

“I tried to correct my error and send a monthly report to the Rebbe about my activities, but sometimes it happened that I got delayed. I then got a letter from the Rebbe: ‘Your letter was received after a long break... and if your excuse is that you didn’t write because there wasn’t anything to write about, then that should suggest to you that... you have to work to have something to write about.’”

Lamenting the fact that people only realize the need to write letters when they’re in distress and in need of a bracha, the Rebbe often referred to the quote of the Frieddiker Rebbe about “צרות-חסידים”—Chassidim who are only in touch when they have *tzaros*.

In fact, the Rebbe wrote on several occasions that if Chassidim would write when they had good news to report, Hashem would minimize the need to write letters in more desperate times. “I believe I’ve already told you or written in the past: If only *anash* would be accustomed to notifying [me] when there is good news to report. This way, Hashem would minimize the need to report other things like the one in your letter [i.e. sad news]. To be sure, even in the times of the Alter Rebbe there were complaints about people refraining from reporting good news. But let that not serve as an indicator of behavior for ensuing generations. For as we have seen, already then the Rabbeim vehemently protested this practice...”³

Keep On Writing... But Keep In Mind Who You're Writing To

The Rebbe always urged people to continue writing and reporting their activities, whether or not they received answers (due to the extreme shortage of the Rebbe’s time). When rumors were going around that the Rebbe had said

to stop writing, the Rebbe made sure to correct them. The Rebbe always assured Chassidim that their letters are not a burden on him, and the Rebbe's Igros are full of expressions indicating that he expected letters more often: "After a long intermission, I received your letter..."

Following the heart attack on Shemini Atzeres 5738*, immediately after Yom Tov the Rebbe insisted that all the sacks of mail that had arrived for him over the past few days be brought to him, so that he could begin reading and answering them—disregarding the doctors' directives to rest...

Although there was such an emphasis to continue writing frequently, when some people began to mistake writing to the Rebbe as the main objective and wrote things that were insignificant or even untrue—so long as they had what to write to the Rebbe—the Rebbe admonished this sort of behavior:

"There are those who believe that first and foremost, they must write letters to me, the more the merrier, without taking into account who is writing, what they have done, the subject about which they write, and so on. They are so desperate that at times they must tire themselves until they actually come up with something,

and worse—they think up what to write about, even if it's not a real thing, as long as they have what to write...

"Therefore, it is important that we be clear on this subject: Before writing a letter (regardless of to whom it is addressed), think twice if it is really necessary that it be written, or if it is merely a waste of time; both the time of the sender, as well as the time of the recipient..."⁴

Reports From Shluchim

There was a specific emphasis that shluchim report on their activities, just as any messenger would report back to their employer as a basic duty. When the Rebbe later sent "*bochurim shluchim*" in the 5730s*, he specifically asked them to appoint one *bochur* who would be tasked with reporting back monthly about their activities and studies.

Shluchim throughout the years were expected to send in regular reports to the Rebbe's secretariat, and some were told to give in detailed reports of their daily schedules, hour by hour!

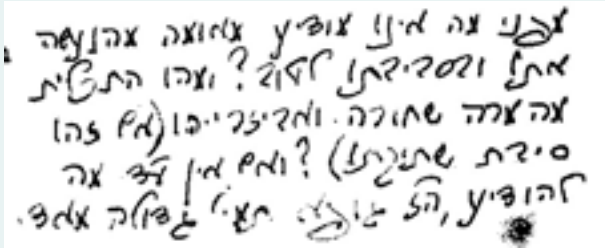


YOSSI MELAMED VIA JEM113402

THE REBBE RECEIVES PA" NIM, EREV ROSH HASHANAH 5748*.

Where Is The Good News?

This powerful message in *ksav yad kodesh* was written as a postscript to a *michtav klali-prati* sent to Reb Sholom Posner on 25 Adar, 5710* (the full letter appears in *Igros Kodesh* vol. 3 p. 258):



מפני מה אינו מודיע מאומה מהנעשה אתו ובסביבתו לטוב? ומהו התכלית מהמרה שחורה ואביזרייהו (אם זהו סיבת שתיקתו)? ואם אין ע"ד מה להודיע, ה"ז גופא תמיל גדולה מאד.

Why don't you notify [the Rebbe] at all about the good that goes on with you and in your surroundings? What is the purpose of all this despondent behavior, or a fraction thereof (if this is the reason for your silence)? And if you don't have what to write about at all, that, in its own right, is a very puzzling matter!



CHASSIDIM WAIT IN LINE TO GIVE THEIR PA"N TO THE REBBE, 24 ELUL 5741*.



LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 223475

THE REBBE STANDS AT THE DOOR OF HIS ROOM TO RECEIVE PA"NIM, EREV ROSH HASHANAH 5749*.

What About An Answer?

Today, we don't have the merit to receive written answers from the Rebbe in the way we once did. But even before Gimmel Tammuz, the Rebbe would not always give written answers to the reports that were sent to him. In fact, as the years went on and Lubavitch grew, it was quite unusual to receive a personal response from the Rebbe.

When people complained about the fact that the Rebbe hadn't given a written response to their requests for *brachos*, the Rebbe pointed out that they were missing the point: the actual fulfillment of the *bracha* (see sidebar).

The same is true today. As the Rebbe famously wrote in a letter shortly after the Friediker Rebbe's *hiskalkus*, "If you will stand strong in your *hiskashrus* to him without paying attention to the arguments of the *yetzer hara*, and you will send your question to the Ohel, רבי, וועט דער רבי, געפינען א וועג ווי עם צו ענטפערן, the Rebbe will find a way to answer you..."⁵ During other times that Chassidim couldn't physically reach the Rebbe—e.g. in times of war and behind the Iron Curtain—they would write to the Rebbe with the certainty that he would find a way to come to their aid.



LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 199509

Rabbi Asher Heber was a child during World War II, when the Rebbe lived in Paris. He relates:

“It was apparent that the Nazis might soon invade France, and my father was still undecided as to whether he should leave Paris. He had established a good business and was making a lot of money. He had to make a choice: to remain in Paris or emigrate to the United States with the entire family.

“As usual, whenever he had a problem and didn’t know what to do, he went to the Rebbe and asked the Rebbe’s opinion.

“The Rebbe said, ‘You are a Chossid. Send a letter or a telegram to my father-in-law.’ So my father said, ‘But there’s a war going on now! No letters are crossing the border, and I doubt there are any telegrams or telephone calls that can be made.’

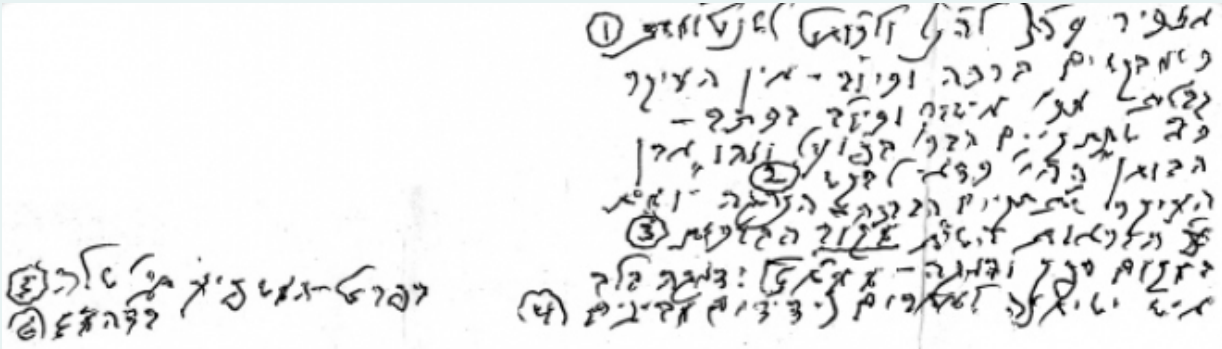
“As a Chossid,’ the Rebbe continued, ‘you should know that the Rebbe does not necessarily have to receive a telegram or a letter or a telephone call to know the question that you are asking, and you don’t necessarily have to receive a telegram or a letter or a telephone call from the Rebbe to know what the answer is.’

“As a Chossid you should know...you don’t necessarily have to receive a telegram or a letter or a telephone call from the Rebbe to know what the answer is.”

“Hearing that, my father went down to the local Western Union office and he announced that he wanted to send a telegram to Otwock, where the Frierdiker Rebbe was residing.

“The agent sitting behind the desk started laughing. He said, ‘Are you crazy? You can’t do that! It’s impossible! There’s a war going on. There’s no communication between Poland and France.’

“But my father insisted. The agent looked askance at my father, as if to say: ‘If you’re crazy enough and you want to try, we’ll attempt it.’ So my father formulated the letter, and he said, ‘This is what I want you to send.’



1) אזכיר עה"צ להנ"ל ולכוח"ט לשנטומ"ת [= על הציון להנזכר לעיל ולכתיבה וחתימה טובה לשנה טובה ומתוקה] 2) כשמבקשים ברכה וכיו"ב (= וכיוצא בזה) - אין העיקר קבלת מכ"תב] אישור, וכיו"ב בכתב - כ"א [= כי אם] שתתקיים הבר"כה] בפועל וזהו "אבן הבוחן" ההי' כדאי לבקש 3) העיקר שתתקיים הברכה - הנהגה יומית ע"פ [= על פי] הוראות השי"ת [= השם יתברך] מקור הברכות 4) במקום ספק ודאגה - אמחז"ל [= אמרו חכמינו ז"ל]: דאגה בלב איש ישיחנה לאחרים [ידידים מבינים] 5) בפרט - המשפיע תל' שלה 6) בדהמ"ז [= בדיקת המזוזות]

1) I will mention the said request by the Tziyun [of the Frieddiker Rebbe], and a *bracha* for a *ksiva vachasima tovah leshana tovah umesukah*. 2) When one asks for a *bracha* and the like, the main point is not to receive a receipt of confirmation [etc.] in writing, rather that the *bracha* actually be fulfilled, and this determines if it was beneficial to make the request [in the first place]. 3) The fulfillment of the *bracha* comes primarily by conducting yourself each day according to the directives of Hashem, the source of *brachos*. 4) In a place of doubt and worry, Chazal say: "If one's heart worries, he should speak of it to others"—[meaning] knowledgeable acquaintances. 5. And specifically your *mashpia*. 6. You should check your *mezuzos*.

"As he awaited the answer, he continued to be very much in doubt whether he should go to a strange country and start all over again. Here he was established and successful. He really preferred to remain in Paris.

"The next morning he woke up with a clarity—although the day before he had been completely in doubt, completely in the dark as to what to do, he woke up with the clear realization and with no doubt in his mind whatsoever that the family must leave Paris and go to the United States. And that's exactly what we did. Our lives were saved because of that."⁶

It should be noted that regarding guidance on specific issues, the Rebbe gave us several avenues by which to receive our answer. (This applied even before Gimmel Tammuz, once the Rebbe started having less time to answer every specific question.)

With issues regarding *avodas Hashem*, the Mishnah says "*Asei lecha rav*;" medical concerns should be directed to a doctor (or more than one doctor); business advice should be discussed with close acquaintances who are well-versed in the subject ("*yedidim mevinim*"), and so on.⁷

The Rebbe also repeated time and again, that all the letters he receives are brought to the Ohel, the source of all blessings, and there is therefore no need to wait for an individual response each time for the *brachos* come regardless. (This was said publicly at farbrengens, as well as to many individuals who came to the Rebbe for "Dollars.")

In Your Own Language

There were no age limits as to who could write to the Rebbe. Rabbi Chaim Shlomo Diskin relates: "The one time of the year when people would join the Rebbe at the Ohel was the day before Rosh Hashanah and, in 5742*, I decided to go as well.

"I got there early in the morning, just before the Rebbe arrived, and I picked a good spot to stand—as close as possible to the Tziyun—from where I could see the Rebbe clearly.

"First he davened; then he opened the huge sack that he had brought with him and started pulling out letters one by one. He would read each letter very quickly, tear it and let it fall onto the Tziyun. He read hundreds of letters—one after the other, one after the other, reading each one,

tearing it and letting it fall. After a while, it seemed as if a cascade of paper was falling, falling, falling onto the Tziyun.

“Here he was, in his 80s, standing for hours on end, reading an endless stream of letters that contained all the troubles of so many Jews, letter after letter.

“As I was watching him, he pulled out a packet of papers—not white like the other letters, but colorful, like drawing paper—and started reading these colorful letters just as he did the others. When he tore them and they were falling before my eyes, I recognized from the big square letters and fanciful decorations that they were from children in kindergarten. A teacher somewhere must have told the kids to request blessings for the new year, and then sent all their scribblings in one packet.

“At that moment it occurred to me that just a second ago, the Rebbe might have been reading a letter from a poor person asking for livelihood, or another asking for recovery from a terrible illness, or a CEO asking for success in a business deal, and now he was reading a child’s letter and giving it the same treatment as the rest. He had such a feeling for children that their little hopes, wishes and requests mattered to him just as much as those of any person of stature.

“My wife was a teacher at the Yavne Chabad School in Kiryat Tivon. While she worked there, the teachers decided that the children should write letters to the Rebbe, knowing how seriously the Rebbe took these letters.

“One of the boys was especially interested, and he asked his teacher many questions. “Where does the Rebbe live?” She told him in the United States. “Does he sometimes come to Israel?” She replied that he never had.

“This boy decided, therefore, to send some of the land of Israel to the Rebbe. So, in his envelope, he included a handful of sand from the land.

“The teacher saw that this one letter was thicker than the rest, and she asked the boy what was inside. He replied that it was sand, a gift to the Rebbe. She was uncertain whether to mail it or not. She imagined the Rebbe opening the letter and the sand falling out, making a mess on his desk. But then she decided that it was not her place to scrap this boy’s gift, so she sent his letter along with the others.

“A short while later, the Rebbe’s answer arrived. This boy got the same blessing as all the other kids, but his letter also contained a postscript. The Rebbe had written, “P.S. Thank you very much for your thoughtfulness in sending me sand from the Holy Land.”⁸

Sometimes, people don’t even express what was on their minds in their letters, yet the Rebbe reads in between the lines and into their hearts. In *reshimos*, the Rebbe



IVAR 5730, MEMKEH SCHUKLER

relates in wondrous terms the story of the Rashbatz and the Tzemach Tzedek: On his first trip to Lubavitch, Reb Michel Apotzker gave him a *pa”n* to deliver to the Tzemach Tzedek, with the condition that he not read it. He could not hold himself in and took a peek—and both sides were completely empty. When he eventually gave the letter to the Tzemach Tzedek, the Tzemach Tzedek read the *pa”n*!

In our generation there are many such stories. “I had a student at Ohel Chana who was struggling with her personal issues,” Rabbi Raphael Aron of Melbourne, Australia, relates. “I encouraged her to write to the Rebbe, which she did. She wrote a very short, two-sentence letter



YAR 5730, MEMKEH SCHMUKLER

“He had such a feeling for children that their little hopes, wishes and requests mattered to him just as much as those of any person of stature...”

Therefore, you have to nurture the relationship you have with each of them and dismiss the thought that your family is not the way you would like it to be.

“This girl was just amazed by this letter, and she took his advice to heart. Her parents were feuding and fighting, and she was feeling very much compromised. And then the Rebbe showed her that despite of all that was going on she could continue to maintain a separate relationship with each of them. But what blew her away more than anything else was that she never confided with the Rebbe on any of this, so how did he know?”⁹

Stronger and Stronger

“The shepherds of Yisroel will not forsake their flock,” the Rebbe says. “They remain connected with them now exactly the way they were at the very moment, the very day following the *histalkus*.”

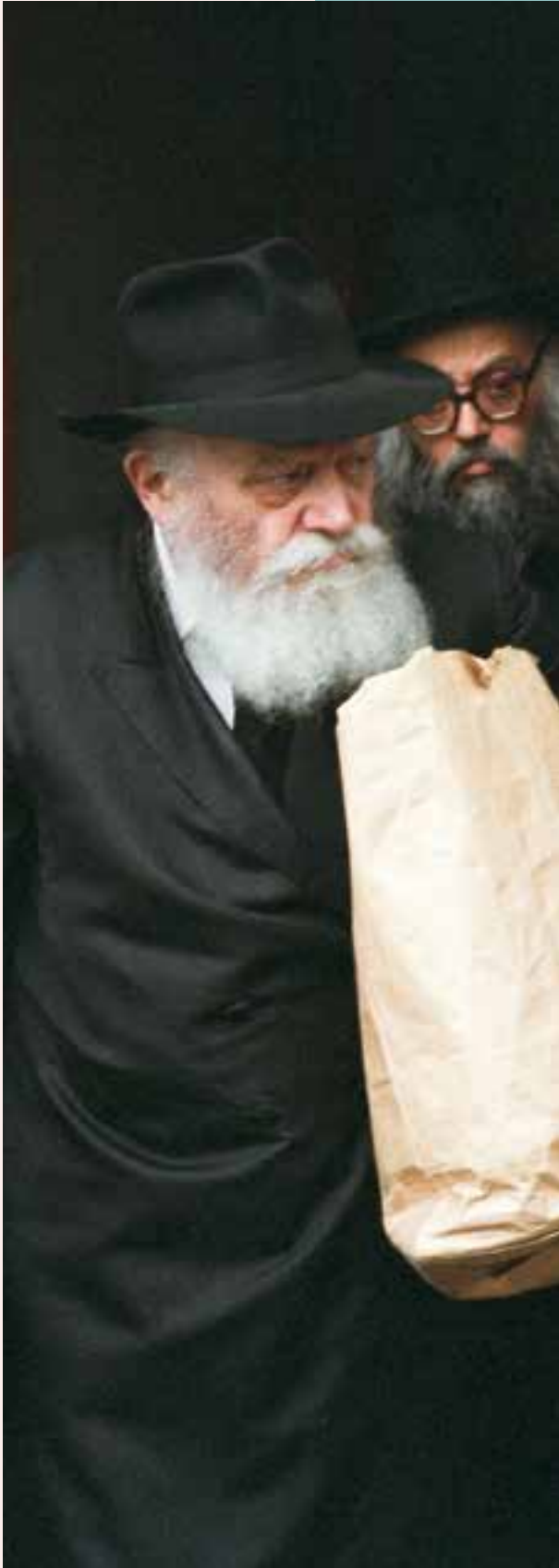
“Therefore, we must hold steadfast onto the Rebbe’s ‘*kliamke*’ (doorknob); we must hold onto the open door. We go to the Ohel with our requests, we write *pidyonos*, we ask for *brachos*, and that the Rebbe should also give us the appropriate vessels to receive the *brachos* with.”¹⁰

Indeed, the numbers of people turning to the Rebbe for *brachos* and guidance continues to grow greater and greater. “This includes the idea of growth... as is emphasized in the *panim*: The Baal Hatziyun sees that the number of *panim* continue to grow year after year, and all of the matters that are written in the *panim* continue to grow, as well as the fulfillment of the *hachlatos*.”¹¹

which read something like, ‘Dear Rebbe, I’m having a very hard time. I don’t know if I want to stay here.’

“The Rebbe responded with a detailed, three-page letter! It was amazing—phenomenal really—because he wrote to her about things that she never mentioned in her letter, like for example, the divorce of her parents. He advised her to develop a separate relationship with each parent and not to get involved in their fight with each other. ‘You have a father and you have a mother,’ the Rebbe wrote. ‘They were your father and your mother before they were divorced, and they always will be.

1. Igros Kodesh, letter 4,785.
2. Igros Kodesh vol. 13, p. 164.
3. Igros Kodesh vol. 14 p. 52
4. 27 Mar-Cheshvan, 5749
5. Igros Kodesh vol. 3 pg. 266.
6. My Encounter with the Rebbe, Living Torah disc 43, program 170.
7. See *sichas* Shabbos Parshas Beshalach and Motzei Shabbos Teruma, 5748.
8. *Here’s My Story*, “A Child’s Gift,” Erev Shabbos Vayechi 5776.
9. *Here’s My Story*, “Quantity or Quality,” Erev Shabbos Vayera 5777.
10. Shabbos Parshas Yisro, 5740.
11. 16 Shevat 5749.



LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 4739

THE REBBE EXITS 770 FOR THE OHEL, HOLDING LETTERS TO BE BROUGHT TO THE OHEL, IYAR 5747*.

How To Write To The Rebbe

Preparations:

Before writing to the Rebbe, men go to the *mikveh* (see sidebar).

In the widely known letter the Rebbe issued ahead of the Frierdiker Rebbe's first *yahrtzeit*, he solicits those who had the merit of beholding the [Frierdiker] Rebbe's holy countenance, to dedicate time before they embark on the actual formulation of the words, to remember the times when they saw him, and relive those golden moments to the best of their ability.¹

There are certain accepted traditions among Chassidim when writing: To wash *negel vasser* before beginning to write; to wear a hat and jacket; to wear a gartel if married; and to write on a paper that doesn't have lines.



JEM 271283

Beginning To Write

The *pan*: *Pan* is an abbreviation for *pidyon nefesh*, “redemption of the soul,” and is given only to a Rebbe. When the Rabbeim would begin accepting *panim* in the early stages of their leadership, this was seen as a sign that they had taken the mantle of *nesius*. It is given together with money, referred to as *dmei pan*, which is given as the redemption of the soul.

Traditionally, the *pan* is written briefly and succinctly, with words that are chosen carefully. One should not describe outright one’s deficiencies; instead, ask for the correction of that area.² When you ask for a *bracha*, don’t ask halfway: ask for open and revealed *brachos*. Don’t ask for negative things for yourself,³ and certainly not for others. Two people who are writing to the Rebbe on the same day should not write about the same person.⁴

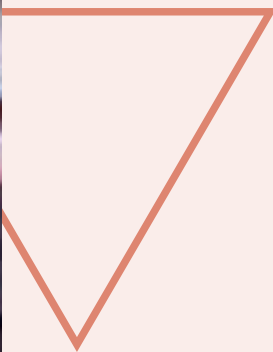
Panim are traditionally given on very special occasions: on a birthday, on Erev Rosh Hashanah, etc. and usually written by hand.

Then there are the regular letters and reports to the Rebbe. These are written as a typical letter with a date on top—something that the Rebbe was particular about—and over the years, they were often typed. This is the typical means by which people communicate with the Rebbe: sending reports, delineating situations and asking for advice, and so on. (People would often write letters to the Rebbe and enclose within it a separate page of their *pan*.)

There are a few directives to keep in mind when writing:

- The handwriting should be clear. The Rebbe said that as everything holy must be nice and beautiful, the same is true with this. Some Chassidim would spend hours rewriting their letter until it was completely clear.⁵
- People should generally write for themselves, as they are more comfortable to fully express themselves directly to the Rebbe, and things can be gleaned from between the lines.⁶
- When people asked for *brachos*, the Rebbe would often tell them that they should include their level and situation in Torah and mitzvos.
- When one has an issue that needs to be solved, he should create “vessels” to receive the *brachos*; namely, increasing in Torah and mitzvos.
- If one isn’t by the Ohel, the letter can be placed in one of the Rebbe’s *sefarim* with the intent of sending it to be read at the Ohel when possible.⁷
- There were several times that the Rebbe told people to look back at the copies of their previous letters to the Rebbe (where they could see how their lives had changed so drastically), indicating that Chassidim should keep a copy of their letters in their possession.

The Rebbe always encouraged people to write in the language they were most comfortable with. This refers to both to the actual language—the Rebbe encouraged them to write in their native language (though the answers would be limited to the languages of the secretariat)—and



to the writing style. “Continue writing in the style of your own and not of others,” the Rebbe writes to one woman.⁸



“I will read your *pan* at the Tziyun. But I was shocked to read in one of your *panim*, ‘The informers should have no hope!’ Is this what you must use [a *pan*] for? Furthermore: for this the Rebbe my father-in-law should tear himself away from Gan Eden, and go to the Beis Din above to ask that... *Gevald* Reb....!”⁹



The Nusach

Traditionally, the *panim* would begin with the following words:

אנא לעורר רחמים רבים ממקור הרחמים והחסדים האמיתיים ע"ד
מכניסי רחמים כמבואר בתשובת מהרי"ב ז"ל בעבור

“I am hereby asking to arouse great mercies from the source of true mercies and kindnesses, like the [angels who] bring our request for mercy [before Hashem], as is explained in the responsa of the Maharib.”

This is the version quoted in the Rebbe’s *reshimos*.¹⁰ The Maharib’s responsa is referenced because he discusses the appropriateness of asking one’s requests through a *tzadik*, and why it is allowed.

However, in a *sicha* from 5710*, the Rebbe said that if it were up to him, he would change this practice. The *pan* is not the appropriate place to be justifying why we can write to the Rebbe—“as is explained in the responsa of the Maharib”—and that it was also inappropriate to tell

the Rebbe where to arouse great mercies from—”from the source of mercies and kindnesses.”¹¹



Mikveh

“When was the last time you went to *mikveh*?” asked Rabbi Hodakov of the *bochur* standing in front of him. This was no random question to a random *bochur*. It turns out that the Rebbe had received a letter from this *bochur*, and the Rebbe had asked Rabbi Hodakov to hastily find out about this *bochur*’s “observance” of going to *mikveh*. As it turned out, he had not been to the *mikveh* in quite some time...

1. Igros Kodesh vol. 4, p. 143.
2. Igros Kodesh Admu”r Harashab p. 154.
3. Igros Kodesh letter 1,067, to a person wrote in his *pan* that he was ready to accept suffering instead of his son. After explaining that this was a terrible thin-g to write in *pan*, the Rebbe wrote that he would skip those lines when reading it.
4. See Igros Kodesh Admur Harashab p. 205.
5. Likutei Sichos vol. 39, p. 367.
6. See yechidus from 5734, published in *Hiskashrus*, issue 516.
7. Igros Kodesh vol. 4, p. 143.
8. Mikdash Melech vol. 3, p. 188.
9. Igros Kodesh letter 1,144.
10. Choveres 156.
11. Toras Menachem vol. 1, p. 39.

מוקדש לחיזוק ההתקשרות
לכ"ק אדמו"ר
נדפס ע"י
הרה"ח ר' עמרם ומשפחתו שיחיו
מארגענשטערן

One by One

THE RO'EH NE'EMAN OF OUR GENERATION

Halacha teaches us that a “*tzibur*”—a community cannot disappear.

On an individual scale: there are *nashamos* that are “private” and there are *neshamos* that are “*tzibur*”—the *neshama klalis* of each generation.

What is the meaning of a “*tzibur*” *neshama*?

Various sources explain that the word צבור contains the *roshei teivos* צדיקים בינונים ורשעים. In other words, the *neshama klalis* of the generation includes within itself each and every type of Yid: *tzaddikim*, *beinonim*, and those who are (for the time being) considered *resha'im*. (The *neshama klalis*, however, sees them for who they truly are, which is their potential to do *teshuva* and return to Hashem.)

Connecting with each and every Yid in his generation at their level is actually the trademark quality of the *nossi*. As the Midrash tells us about the first *nossi*, Moshe Rabbeinu, as well as Dovid Hamelech: Hashem tested their

capability as leaders by first having them care for sheep.

“What did he [Dovid] do? He would first allow the very young to graze on the soft grass, then the elderly sheep who would eat the average grass, and only then would he let out the middle-aged sheep to graze on the hardest type... Hashem then said, ‘If someone can care so deeply about sheep, tending to each one at their level, he should tend to my people as well...’

This is what makes someone a true *nossi*: His ability to tend to each and every Yid individually, whether a *tzaddik*, a *beinoni*, or a *rasha*; all the components of a *tzibur*.

In accordance with the abovementioned *halacha*, the life of a *tzibbur* is everlasting. In the same vein, the life of a “*tzibbur-neshama*,” a *neshama klalis*, is also everlasting...

(Sichas Motzei Shabbos Parshas Beshalach, Yud Shevat 5717)

One of the important ways of connecting to the Rebbe is by

contemplating how connected the Rebbe is to us.

Reading the Rebbe’s letters and *sichos*, we often find how the Rebbe instructs Chassidim to think deeply about the Rebbe’s connection to them, until it is etched in their minds.

To a Chossid who wasn’t well and as a result fell into depression, the Rebbe wrote:

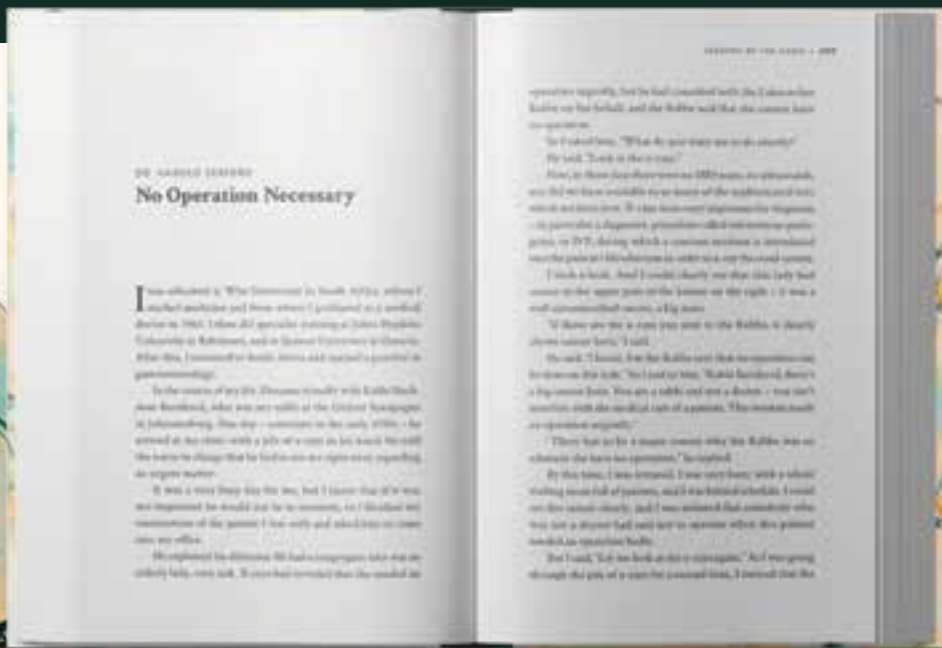
“To think about your own situation, there are specific times. But for the remainder of your time, it is more appropriate to think about the Rebbe; how he is always with his *mekusharim* and guides their each and every step...”¹

In a letter about the day of Beis Nissan, the day the Frierdiker Rebbe became *nossi*, the Rebbe instructs:

“Each and every one must contemplate, and affirm in his mind and heart (ולבהתבונן ולקבוע במוחו ולבו), that our shepherd did not forsake his flock, *chas v’shalom*...”²

In another letter the Rebbe uses similar exceptional terms:





the *ro'eh ne'eman*, the faithful shepherd of our generation.

This in turn, will solidify our conviction that *רועי ישראל לא יפרדו מעל צאן מרעיתם*—the Rebbe is with us now more than ever, until the coming of Moshiach speedily.



To this end, JEM has released a brand-new book with sixty-six beautiful stories of the Rebbe, as related by the people with whom these stories occurred. These represent the best of all the popular “Here’s My Story” weekly publications in book-form.

We all know about the Rebbe’s complete and total devotion to the wellbeing of the Yidden in our generation, both on the global scale and—perhaps more importantly— with each and every individual. There is nothing that drives this message home more than hearing and reading these first-hand encounters.

“Each and every one of us must know and contemplate deeply, and fixate his thought on this (להעמיק דעתו ולתקוע בזה, מחשבתו בזה), that the Rebbe is the *nossi* and the *rosh*, and through him we receive all *hashpa'as*, material and spiritual...”³

This is one of the reasons why hearing and telling stories of the Rebbe is so important. In addition to the many lessons in *avodas Hashem* that we can glean from these stories and the important guidance they give for our own lives, the stories have value in and of themselves. It is with these stories that we can better understand and appreciate the Rebbe’s love and care for each and every Yid, and to feel the truth of the Rebbe as

Not surprisingly, many of these stories often grace the pages of the monthly *Derher* magazines, as you, our readers know very well. It is precisely these stories that help us understand and teach what the Rebbe means to all of us, and they strengthen our *hiskashrus* in a real and meaningful way.

One by One is a collection of more than 300 pages, where the stories are brought to life; an opportunity to bring the Rebbe to ourselves, our families, *baalei-batim*, and acquaintances.

As we approach Gimmel Tammuz, what better way could there be to “contemplate and affirm in the mind and heart (להתבונן ולקבוע במוחו ולבו), that our shepherd did not forsake his flock, *chas v'shalom*...”

Available now at www.jemstore.com.

Email orders@jemedia.org for bulk discounts.

1. Igros Kodesh vol. 3 p. 419.
2. Ibid. p. 256
3. Ibid. p. 332



Far, Near and Expensive

A distraught Reb Mordechai Lepler was traveling to Petersburg. Next to him in his carriage sat his son, withering in pain. Perhaps the doctors in the big city would be able to help him and find a cure to his ailment.

After a thorough checkup, they came to the grim conclusion that the disease had penetrated into the boy's bones and there was absolutely nothing they could do.

Hearing the diagnosis, Reb Mordechai sent a letter to his Rebbe, the Mittler Rebbe. In it he detailed the situation and what the doctors had said.

He estimated that the letter would take about five days to reach Lubavitch and then another five days to receive the response.

Ten days passed and an anxious Reb Mordechai waited outside to see when the mailman would come

by. On the first day, his hopes were dashed when he was informed that there was no mail for him. The same thing happened on the second day. Finally, to his great relief, on the third day the postman told him that a letter had arrived but he had no time to search for it and give it to him.

Reb Mordechai was not ready to accept that answer and so he ran after the mailman, took hold of his mail bag and began searching for the letter himself. As he was rummaging through all the letters he asked the man why he was in such a rush that day.

He replied, "A member of the royal family, who is related to the Czar, is very sick and they called the royal doctor of the Austrian king to the house to treat the boy. Today he is returning to the capital city of Vienna and I was charged

with the job of finding a horse and carriage for the trip."

As he was listening to the story, Reb Mordechai found the letter and began reading it.

"I received your letter..." it stated, "and I saw that the salvation is soon to come from near and far." It concluded, "Do not spare any money."

Trying to digest the message, Reb Mordechai realized that he had to do whatever he could to see this doctor from Vienna, so he asked the mailman for the address.

When he arrived, there was chaos outside as tens of people were trying to push their way in for the slim possibility that this famous doctor would help them.

Reb Mordechai was a respected and well known figure, so when he arrived he was able to inch his way closer and closer, until



לזכות
 החתן התמים
משה יעקב קאפל הכהן שיחי'
 והכלה המהוללה מרת חי' מושקא תחי'
כצמאן
 יום חתונתם
 ט"ו סיון - יום התחלת גאולת
 כ"ק אדמו"ר מהורי"צ זצוקלה"ה
 נבג"מ ז"ע - ה'תשע"ט
 נדפס ע"י הורי החתן
 הרה"ת ר' יוסף יצחק הכהן
 וזוגתו מרת תמרה ומשפחתם שיחיו
כצמאן



finally he was inside the house, close enough to talk to the doctor.

“Please come check on my son,” he begged.

But the doctor refused to leave, stating that he was the king’s personal physician and he had to get back.

Determined to find a way to convince the doctor to visit his son he offered him one thousand rubles, a staggering sum of money!

In the face of this offer the doctor could not refuse.

“There is no remedy in all of Russia for this illness,” declared the doctor after his initial checkup. “However, if I do find a certain remedy in my bag then I will be able to give it to your son and he will certainly be healed.”

He quickly sent someone to bring his medical bag and sure enough it did contain some of the necessary medicine.

Being that administering this medication required

unique medical capabilities, the Viennese doctor decided that he would find a physician in Petersburg and teach him how to administer it.

After the initial application, the doctor let them know that the healing had already begun and that the cause had been a tooth ailment.

The Mittlerer Rebbe’s words were fulfilled in their entirety. The salvation came from afar in the form of the doctor from Vienna and it was also nearby as the medicine was with him in his medical bag. Additionally, if he had not agreed to spend any amount of money, the doctor would not have agreed to see his son. **T**

(Reshimos Devorim vol. 1, p. 96)



LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 27000

RABBI ABRAHAMS RECEIVES KOS
SHEL BROCHA FROM THE REBBE,
MOTZEI SIMCHAS TORAH 5746*.

לחיזוק ההתקשרות
לכ"ק אדמו"ר זי"ע
נדפס ע"י
החבר הצעיר בשליחות המל"ח
קיצ ה'תשי"ט



“Wherever You Will Be... *The Rebbe Will Be With You*”

*Exclusive interview with Rabbi Yosef Abrahams
Mashpia, Yeshivah Gedola Lubavitch of Greater Miami*

Rabbi Yosef Yeshaya Abrahams is the senior *mashpia* of Yeshivas Lubavitch of Miami. He merited to spend his years as a *bochur* in the Rebbe's presence, during the years of *kabbalas hanesius* and after. We thank him for sharing his story. We also thank Rabbi Bentche Korf, *mashgiach* in the yeshiva, for conducting the interview on our behalf.

אברהם, יוסף

My First Connections

I was born in Philadelphia in 5697* (תרצ"ז).

My family wasn't associated with Lubavitch. The first time I encountered Chabad was as a seven-year-old student in Yeshivas Achei Temimim. The school was run by a Chossid from Nevel named Rabbi Schneiderman, who also served as the rabbi of a Nusach Ari shul across the street.

My first teacher was Reb Yitzchak Dovid Groner,¹ who taught there for a short period of time. Rabbi Mendel Tenenbaum was also a teacher there. Although it was officially a Chabad-run school, many teachers weren't Lubavitch, and I didn't learn much about Lubavitch during my four years there. I was, however, an avid reader of Talks and Tales.

When I was eleven-years-old, my family moved to Chicago, and we were members of the Chabad Bnei Reuven Shul, which still exists today. Only one month after our arrival, my father tragically passed away, and towards the end of the year, my mother returned to Philadelphia.

I was already twelve-years-old, and my classmates from the *olam'she* school I attended were enrolled in the Telz Yeshiva in Cleveland for the upcoming school year. However, the rabbi of Bnei Reuven, Rabbi Dovid Moshe Lieberman (today the rabbi of Shomrei Hadas in Antwerp) suggested to my mother that I enroll in Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim in New York on Bedford and Dean, which was much closer to Philadelphia. We thought it was a good idea, and so, Reb Dovid Moshe brought me along on his trip

to the Frierdiker Rebbe for Rosh Hashanah 5710*.

Seeing The Frierdiker Rebbe

I began learning in Tomchei Temimim, and naturally I participated in many of the events in 770.

In those days, the Frierdiker Rebbe made minimal public appearances. When he did hold *farbrengens* on Yomim Tovim and *yomi d'pagra*, children my age and *bochurim* were not allowed to attend due to space constraints.

I recall waiting on the steps to the Frierdiker Rebbe's apartment on Simchas Torah along with other youngsters hoping to be allowed upstairs, but it was not to be.

The same occurred once again several months later, on Yud-Tes Kislev. We waited on the stairs hoping to catch a glimpse of the Frierdiker Rebbe, again to no avail. Suddenly, towards the end of the *farbrengen*, the door opened. The Frierdiker Rebbe had specifically requested that everyone outside be allowed in.

I was a short child and the room was packed with people, but one *bochur* kindly held me up and I was able to catch a glimpse the Frierdiker Rebbe for a moment. He was sitting at the head of the table wearing his *spodik*, and his holy face was a fiery red.

As it turned out, that was the Frierdiker Rebbe's last *farbrengen*.

Early Memories Of The Rebbe

My first recollection of the Rebbe is from the Simchas Beis Hashoeva *farbrengen* the Rebbe held each year for yeshiva students. Many *bochurim* from non-Lubavitch *yeshivos* would come for the evening and I recall participating in that *farbrengen* in 5710*, before the Frierdiker Rebbe's *histalkus*.²

Suddenly, towards the end of the farbrengen, the door opened.



RABBI ABRAHAMS, AGE 15, OUTSIDE LUBAVITCHER YESHIVA AT BEDFORD AND DEAN.

I recall another event which took place a few days later, on Simchas Torah.

The Frierdiker Rebbe's *hakafos* were held in his *yechidus* room which could only contain so many people. All those who couldn't participate joined a separate *minyán* in the *zal*. Understandably, they wished they could be participating in the Frierdiker Rebbe's *hakafos*, and the spirit in the *zal* wasn't fully *Simchas Torah'dik*.

But then the Rebbe came down from the Frierdiker Rebbe's *hakafos* to dance with us. That brought new life to the dancing. The Rebbe danced with us for quite some time, and because of the strong *hadras kavod* we felt towards the Ramash, "*Der Rebbe's Eidim*," nobody left the circle as long as he was present.

The Year Of Kabbalas Hanesius

Although I was still quite young, I clearly remember the atmosphere in Lubavitch at the time. There was a constant push for the Rebbe to accept the *nesius*, but no one knew how long it would take or how it would play out.

Throughout the year of *aveilus*, davening took place in the Frierdiker Rebbe's *yechidus* room. I wasn't usually present, being in yeshiva in Bedford and Dean, but I do recall, from the times I did participate on Shabbos, that the Rebbe always approached the Frierdiker Rebbe's desk after davening. I don't know if he recited anything or the like.

The first farbrengen I attended after the Frierdiker Rebbe's *histalkus* was, if I recall correctly, Acharon Shel Pesach 5710*. A few days later, on Shabbos Mevorchim Iyar, the Rebbe farbrenged once again, and then again for the *bochurim* on Beis Iyar.

The older *bochurim* in 770 would make sure to involve us and keep us informed of what was going on, so



THE REBBE FARBRENGS IN THE EARLY YEARS OF THE NESIUS.

PINNY LEW

although the Beis Iyar farbrengen wasn't officially publicized anywhere, we were aware that it was to take place and made sure to be there.

Although the Rebbe's *sichos* are usually difficult for a 12-year-old, the Rebbe spoke many *sichos* about *hiskashrus* that year, and those *sichos* were easier to understand. I clearly remember, for example, the *sicha* on Acharon Shel Pesach where the Rebbe cited the story about Rabbi Yehudah Hanasi visiting his family on Friday nights even following his passing.³ The Rebbe also continued on this topic on Shabbos Mevorchim.

Before the official *kabbalas hanesius* on Yud Shevat, the Rebbe's place during farbrengens was at the back wall of the *zal*, near where the door to the yard is today. He would sit at the center of the table, older Chassidim would sit and the *bochurim* would stand around. There was a small area

open between the Rebbe and the wall behind him, and sometimes I stood directly behind the Rebbe.

On Yud-Tes Kislev 5711*, there was a very large crowd at the farbrengen and I stood right behind the Rebbe. In middle of a *sicha*, I noticed the Rebbe's *gartel*, and in my childish mind, I was gripped by a desire to touch it. I surreptitiously reached out and touched it very gently. A few minutes later, the Rebbe finished the *sicha*, and turned around to those standing behind him with a big smile, "People are hiding behind me and not saying *l'chaim!*"

"Who Told You To Come?"

In Tammuz 5710*, I celebrated my bar mitzvah. Some days beforehand, a *bochur* told me that I should go to *yechidus* before my bar mitzvah, so I went to 770 and after Mincha, he directed me to simply knock on the



Rabbi Mentlick said loudly to Rabbi Katz, “The Ramash asked to be notified when the operation begins.”

One suggested that the Rebbe will take on the *nesius* at that point, but another claimed that I had probably misunderstood... However, I recently discovered a letter from the same month, where the Rebbe writes an identical directive to someone else.⁵

My Appendix

On Erev Sukkos 5711*, I suddenly developed appendicitis and was taken to the hospital for emergency surgery. My mother wasn't present, so I was accompanied by the *rosh yeshiva*, Rabbi Mordechai Mentlick, who signed consent for the surgery, and his brother-in-law, Rabbi Moshe Pinchas Katz, who worked in the office in the yeshiva. Needless to say, I was quite nervous. As I was being wheeled into surgery, Rabbi Mentlick said loudly to Rabbi Katz, “The Ramash asked to be notified when the operation begins.” The thought that the Rebbe was thinking about me calmed me considerably.

In those days, the surgery was no simple matter and I was released from the hospital only on Hoshana Rabbah. That night, a few friends arranged *hakafos* in the *zal* in Bedford and Dean, but the next day I managed to make it to 770. In the evening, the Rebbe *farbrenge*d in the sukkah in the *shalash* (the *farbrenge*n began before *shkia*), and then *hakafos* were held in the Friediker Rebbe's room upstairs (where only the older Chassidim were granted entry). I wasn't up to being at the *farbrenge*n, so I stood with another *bochur* in the foyer of 770.

As we were talking, Rebbetzin Chana arrived in 770 and opened the door to *Gan Eden Hatachton* with her personal key.

Looking at us with a smile, she said, “*Mistame vet ir velen aroifgein*—you'll probably want to go up.” She opened the door wide and we went in after her.

The *farbrenge*n was soon over, and people started to come upstairs. Immediately, the entrances were tightly supervised, and when Rabbi Mentlick saw me, he couldn't believe I had made it in. Rabbi Jacobson told us to hide in the sukkah which was right next to the Friediker Rebbe's *yechidus* room, and that's how I was able to participate in those *hakafos*.

After davening, Rabbi Mentlick brought me over to the Rebbe, saying that I was the child who had been in the hospital, and the Rebbe said, “*Nu, er vet zein a gezunter Yid*—he will be a healthy Jew.” The Rebbe repeated this three times.

The next day, there was a *farbrenge*n in the *zal*. At some point, the Rebbe began giving out *l'chaim* to everyone. One *bochur* asked the Rebbe for *l'chaim* for me but the Rebbe refused to give him and said, “*Zol er alein tzugein*—he should come himself.”

That's what I did.

There was a short postscript to the story of my appendix:

At my next birthday *yechidus*, in Tammuz 5711*, the Rebbe asked as I walked in, “*Nu, bist shoim gezunt*—are you healthy already?”

Witness From The Window

As Yud Shevat drew closer, more and more pressure was placed on the Rebbe to accept the *nesius*. I recall the *farbrenge*n of Chof-Daled Teves; Reb Meir Ashkenazi publicly requested of the Rebbe, “*Az der Rebbe zol kumen*

Rebbe's door and ask for the Rebbe's *bracha*. This was before the official *yechidus* schedule was established in Elul 5710*.

I followed his instruction, and Rabbi Nissan Mindel answered my knock. He understood that I wanted to speak to the Rebbe so he left the room. I approached the Rebbe's desk, and said that I would soon be celebrating my bar mitzvah and that I ask for the Rebbe's *bracha*.

The Rebbe asked, “Who told you to come here?”

I answered, “A *bochur*.”

“Which *bochur*?”

I said the name (which I no longer remember).

The Rebbe put on his hat, took out a paper, and asked me for my name and mother's name. He asked about my family, and he also told me to continue reciting *kapitel* 71 every day for the Friediker Rebbe (this was after Yud-Beis Tammuz, when the Rebbe had addressed the question of saying the *kapitel* even after the *histalkus*).⁴ The Rebbe said I should continue at least until Rosh Hashanah, “*Un vu du vest zein, vet der Rebbe zein mit dir*—wherever you will be, the Rebbe will be with you.”

After I reported the Rebbe's instructions, the *bochurim* debated the significance of the Rebbe's instruction to say the *kapitel* until Rosh Hashanah.

tzum ratzon—the Rebbe should acquiesce to our request.”

For the Yud Shevat farbrengen, a massive crowd gathered in 770. It was unbearable, and at one point, after leaving the room for a moment, I simply couldn't push my way back inside. Instead, I got onto a bench at the window of the *cheder sheini* where I stood together with Reb Shmuel Zalmanov and Reb Berel Rivkin. At that moment, the Rebbe began the *maamar* Basi Legani.

Throughout the year of *aveilus*, the Rebbe would receive his regular *aliya* of *shishi*, while Reb Shmuel Levitin would receive *maftir*. On the first Shabbos after the *kabbalas hanesius*, on Yud-Gimmel Shevat, they planned to give *maftir* to the Rebbe, so Reb Shmuel was called up for *levi*. However, when they reached *shishi*, the Rebbe asked to receive the *aliya*, and instructed that Reb Shmuel receive *maftir*, because he was observing the *yahrtzeit* of Rebbetzin Shterna Sarah as was his custom, at the behest of the Frierdiker Rebbe.

However, from the following week and onward, the Rebbe always received *maftir*.

Significant Farbrengens

Those early years of the Rebbe's *nesius* were extremely special. The Rebbe was *mekarev* us all in ways that weren't possible later on. I have many precious memories from that period.

On the night of Simchas Torah 5712*, when the Rebbe came down from the *seudas Yom Tov* in the Frierdiker Rebbe's apartment, he walked into the *zal*, and said that whoever hadn't yet received a *hakafah* should do so then. We began *hakafos* all over again; the Rebbe stood there and honored the *bochurim* with *pesukim*, and then we all had an opportunity to dance with the Torah, all in the Rebbe's presence.

One really historic farbrengen was on Shabbos Mevorchim Iyar 5712*. The Rebbe said *l'chaim* many, many times, and farbrenged in a very special manner. At one point, he began instructing certain individuals to turn over their hats. Soon, he told everyone to do so, and then he did so himself as well. Rabbi Mentlick held onto it to ensure that it wouldn't fall.

During the farbrengen, one of the elder Chassidim spoke to the Rebbe about “the Rebbe *nishmaso eden*,” referring to the Frierdiker Rebbe.

The Rebbe responded very sharply. “*Vos shikt ir dem Rebbe'n... Why are you sending the Rebbe away? We need the Rebbe here physically, lemata masarah tefachim...*”⁶

In between the *sichos*, the Rebbe spoke to someone and mentioned a certain Gemara. The Rebbe asked for a Gemara to be able to see it inside, and after using it, it remained sitting

on his knee. Someone offered to hold it, saying to the Rebbe, “*Efsher iz der Rebbe shver*—perhaps it's heavy for the Rebbe...”

The Rebbe answered, “*A Rebbe iz Torah nit shver*—Torah is not heavy for a Rebbe.”⁷

Towards the end of the farbrengen, the Rebbe announced, “The [Frierdiker] Rebbe said regarding Moshiach, הנה זה עומד אחר כותלינו, משגיח מן החלונות, מציץ מן החרכים He stands behind our wall, watches from the windows, and peers in through the cracks.”⁸

Pointing toward the wall, the Rebbe continued:

“*Ut shteit er hinter'n vant*—he is standing behind the wall and looking at us through the window, wondering, ‘Why are we delaying his coming?’”⁹

Towards *shkia* time, one of the elder Chassidim was asked to approach the Rebbe and request that



THE REBBE ENCOURAGES THE SINGING DURING A SIMCHAS BEIS HASHOEVA FARBRENGEN ON CHOL HAMOED SUKKOS, 18 TISHREI 5715*.

The Rebbe answered, “Torah is not heavy for a Rebbe.”

he conclude the farbrengen, because they were worried about the Rebbe’s health. When he spoke to the Rebbe, the Rebbe replied, “*Ba dem maamar zeit ir nisht gevezzen*—you weren’t by the *maamar*, nor by the *sichos*. *Itzter kumt ir zogen deyos vegen Mincha*—now you’re coming to offer an opinion about Mincha?”

In those days, there were two versions of the *niggun Shalosh Tenuos*. One of them was Reb Zelig Katzman’s version; he had learned it from Reb Dovid Leib Marosov, who heard it from his father, Reb Chonye Marozov.

During that farbrengen, the Rebbe chose his version and we sang the *niggun* many times. When the Rebbe came in for Maariv, he asked that we sing it again, and I saw how he joined in the singing, even snapping his fingers along with the tune. That was a sight I never saw at any other time.

During the farbrengen, the Rebbe was in a state of *giluyim*, but that night, after the farbrengen was over, he even held *yechidus*. Reb Mottel Kalmenson had a *yechidus* that night for his bar mitzvah, and he reported afterwards that the Rebbe had spoken in his regular manner and no changes were evident.

Even A Gartel Wouldn’t Help

During the farbrengen of Yud-Beis Tammuz 5712*, everyone filed by the Rebbe to receive *l’chaim* and the Rebbe spoke a few words to each person. The Rebbe blessed me with, “*Lernen nigleh un Chassidus, b’shkida uv’hasmada*—to learn *nigleh* and Chassidus diligently.”

On Simchas Torah 5715*, the Rebbe spoke about a certain *yungerman* who wasn’t behaving appropriately regarding a certain

matter, and the Frierdiker Rebbe had even visited him in a dream, without effect.

The Rebbe repeated the story of Reb Zalman Zlatopolsky, who had an intense desire to see his Rebbe, the Rebbe Maharash, after his *histalkus*. The Rebbe Rashab advised him on a specific mode of conduct, one of which was to wear a *gartel* at night, and ultimately, the Rebbe Maharash appeared to him in a dream.¹⁰

I recall that the Rebbe continued—this part isn’t published in the *hanacha*—that this *yungerman* didn’t deserve such a revelation even with a *gartel*...

In this regard, the Rebbe repeated the story of the Ruzhiner:

A Jew complained to him that he did *gilgulei sheleg* (rolling in the snow) but still didn’t merit a vision of Eliyahu Hanavi. In response, the Ruzhiner took him outside, and pointed to the horse rolling in the snow.

“He also does *gilgulei sheleg*,” the Ruzhiner said, “and hasn’t had a *giluy Eliyahu* either...”

Shlichus

When we graduated Bedford and Dean in 5715*, the Rebbe sent our group of *bochurim* to Montreal (instead of 770).

During the farbrengen on Shabbos Mevorchim Teves, before we left, the Rebbe called out, “Abrahams, *zog l’chaim*.” Afterwards, the Rebbe told Rabbi Mentlick that the others should say *l’chaim* too.

The Rebbe added, “*Oib zei veisen nisht vegen vos dos iz, zollen zei zich farlozen oif mir*—if they don’t know what this is about, they should rely on me.”

In fact, we had already been informed that we would be going to Montreal.

Before leaving, we also had a short *yechidus*. We were there until Pesach 5716* when we returned to 770. I lived

in Reb Peretz Mochkin’s home, and we became very close.

During that year, I corresponded with the Rebbe a few times. On one of those occasions, I asked about thinking Chassidus before davening; I asked whether I should think Chassidus *b’oisios harav*, in the Rebbe’s words, or in my own words. The Rebbe answered,

“לפעמים תכופות, כשחושבים הענין באותיות שלו, טראגט מען זיך צו מער, און מען קריגט מערער חיות.”

Often, when you think something over with your own words, you focus on it more, and you become more enthusiastic.”

In 5717*, they established the yeshiva in Newark with the oldest class of students from Bedford and Dean, and Reb Zelig Katzman was the *mashgiach*. The Rebbe instructed Rabbi Mentlick to send two *bochurim* from 770 to be *mechazek* the *bochurim*, and he asked me and Mottel Kalmenson if we would agree to go.

When we responded in the affirmative, he reported it to the Rebbe, and within the hour the Rebbe answered, “*Mahir, sheyihye b’hatzlacha muflaga*. [Deliver the message] quickly. May it be with great success.”

We went to Newark the next morning.

This was during the month of Kislev. A week later, at the Yud-Tes Kislev farbrengen, the Rebbe asked the entire yeshiva to come onto the *bima*, poured *l’chaim* for all of us and blessed everyone with *hatzlacha muflaga*.

We were there for one year.

Yom Tov Seuda

In those years, the Rebbe was involved in our lives in very intimate ways. The Rebbe essentially took the place of my birth father, who, as mentioned, had passed away when I was a child. This was also the case with material matters, like health and so on.

Seven Branches

During the farbrengen of Yud-Tes Kislev 5718*, the Rebbe made a *magbis* for Kfar Chabad and said that everyone should donate generously. When the Rebbe began collecting the papers with the pledges, he began calling out names of people and telling them to increase their sum. The Rebbe told some people to double their donations, others to triple it, and some even to add a zero. There were even individuals who were told to add two zeros.¹¹

This was also the case with the *bochurim*. Hilkeh Katzman was a *bochur* with no parents or means, and the Rebbe told him to give 10 times more than his original pledge.

On Yud-Beis Tammuz 5718*, the Rebbe spoke about the concept of “*Ufaratzta*” for the first time. The Rebbe first mentioned it briefly in the *maamar*, and then spoke about it in several *sichos*. Afterwards, he directed the *bochurim* to call out “*Ufaratzta!*”¹²

At the time, we didn’t understand that the Rebbe was beginning an entirely new campaign. During the next period, the Rebbe spoke about the need to spread out, *ufaratzta*, on a constant basis. For *bochurim*, the Rebbe often spoke about *ufaratzta* in *limmud haTorah*.

The following Kislev, the Rebbe instituted a project called *Shivas K’nei Hamenorah*.¹³

It began with a suggestion of Rabbi Mentlick to appoint seven *bochurim* who would volunteer to put extra effort in learning *nigleh*, thus bringing in a new *chayus* in the yeshiva. The Rebbe agreed, and also instructed to appoint a parallel seven *bochurim* for Chassidus. The Rebbe called it the *Shivas K’nei Hamenorah*, the seven branches of the menorah.

I was one of the *kanim* in *nigleh*. Some of the other *kanim* in *nigleh* were Yitzchak Raitport, Yisroel Friedman,



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RABBI ABRAHAMSON RECEIVES A DOLLAR FROM THE REBBE.

I remember on Shvi’i Shel Pesach 5717*, the Rebbe noticed me walking to the dining room to eat *seudas Yom Tov* at a very late hour. The Rebbe asked, “*S’iz noch doh seudas Yom Tov dorten?* Is there still food for the Yom Tov meal left?”

I said, “Probably.”

“*Mistame, uder bist zicher?* Probably, or are you sure?”

I answered, “For sure.”

At *kos shel bracha* the following night, the Rebbe asked, “*Nu, hostu gehat seudas Yom Tov?* Did you have *seudas yom tov?*”

The following summer in *yechidus*, the Rebbe spoke to me about eating properly, and asked if I have *mezonos* before davening. I replied that I do, but then the Rebbe noted that he heard there was no *mezonos* before davening in Newark (the *bochurim* were young, and they would daven first thing in the morning). I answered that indeed, they didn’t provide regular *mezonos*, but instead I would eat cornflakes. I felt a bit sheepish telling the Rebbe details like my eating cornflakes, and hearing it, the Rebbe smiled.

Avrohom Shemtov and Moshe Bogomilsky. The *kanim* in Chassidus that I recall were Mottel Chein, Leibel Alevsky, Shmerel Roitblat and Zalman Lipsker. Later, we were informed that the Rebbe asked that we deliver *pilpulim* to the yeshiva on a weekly basis. That was followed with a *hora'a* that we give the *bochurim marei mekomos* before the *shiur* so they would be able to prepare, and later the Rebbe instructed us further to publish the *pilpulim*.

As *kanim*, we would spend an extra hour and a half after *seider* learning our respective topics, and Rabbi Piekarsky would deliver a *shiur* several times a week in the afternoon in *Kodshim*. Overall, that was the strongest year of learning in yeshiva.

During Sefiras Haomer that year, the Rebbe farbrenged every single Shabbos, in honor of the *ufaratzta* in Torah learning (besides for Shabbos Parshas Emor, when the Rebbe didn't farbreng because a *bris* was taking place).

The following Erev Rosh Hashanah we were all called in for a *yechidus* with the Rebbe. The Rebbe spoke to us quite sharply, and said that although he had been *shtureming* regarding *ufaratzta* for quite some time, there hadn't been any true *hazaza*. He cited the saying of the Frierdiker Rebbe, that some people, instead of taking *perel* (pearls), they get confused and grab the *perel-grupen* (soup croutons). Needless to say, although they have similar names, they have a vastly different meaning.

The Rebbe suggested that as a *tikun*, we should hold *mishmaros*, learning Torah and davening for the entire 24 hours of every day of Aseres Yemei Teshuvah.¹⁴

The First Talmidim Hashluchim

In 5722*, I merited to be among the first group that the Rebbe sent

as *talmidim hashluchim*, to Tomchei Temimim in Lod, Eretz Yisroel.

It seems that our shlichus came about together with the advent of the first *kvutza* from Eretz Yisroel. Reb Shlomo Chaim Kesselman, the *mashpia* in Lod, had written to the Rebbe that the yeshiva would be weakened if the older and *chassidische bochurim* would leave to New York. You have to remember that the entire yeshiva numbered around 30 *bochurim* at the time.

In response, the Rebbe suggested that he would send a group of American *bochurim* to Eretz Yisroel.

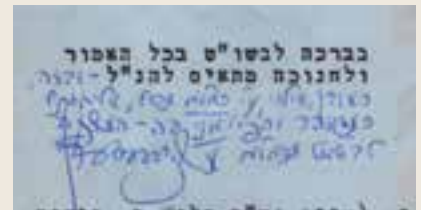
As *bochurim* who had learned by the Rebbe, we came with a sense of shlichus that we were to "bring the Rebbe" to the *bochurim* of Eretz Yisroel. One of our first projects was to institute *seider* on Friday mornings, as the Rebbe had done in 770 (until then, *bochurim* would normally remain awake all Thursday night, and then go to sleep).

At Reb Shlomo Chaim's first farbrengen with us, he said a significant amount of *l'chaim*, and started telling us that the true reason we were sent to Eretz Yisroel wasn't to be *mashpia* on the *bochurim*, but for

our own growth—because there were insufficient *mashpi'im* in the United States.

Among our group, I was appointed to write to the Rebbe about our shlichus (the Rebbe's first letter was actually addressed to me). However, I obviously never mentioned the occurrence at that farbrengen with Reb Shlomo Chaim to the Rebbe; I didn't feel that it was "newsworthy" in any form.

However, in the next letter we received, the Rebbe wrote in *ksav yad* at the end,



RABBI Y ABRAHAMS / YOSSE FELLER

ברכה לבשו"ט . . מילוי, ע"י כאו"א מהם, שליחותם כמדובר וכפ"ל אני בה...

"With blessings for good news... [including] that each one of you is fulfilling their shlichus, in the way that I interpret it."

We thought it was a clear sign of *ruach hakodesh*, but later we



A LETTER FROM THE REBBE TO RABBI ABRAHAMS WHILE A SHLIACH IN LOD, SENT VIA EXPRESS AIR MAIL.

discovered that one of our fellow shluchim had written to the Rebbe about Reb Shlomo Chaim's farbrengen.

We definitely brought a *chayus* about the Rebbe to Eretz Yisroel. I recall that on Yud Shevat, Reb Shlomo Chaim had kidney stones and wasn't up to farbrenging himself, so we Americans led the farbrengen.

We retold the Rebbe's *sichos* from 5710* and we also emphasized that our celebration on Yud Shevat was the Rebbe's *kabbalas hanesius*.

One of our activities in Lod was to arrange a *tahalucha* for Shvi'i Shel Pesach. We reported about it to the Rebbe afterwards, and the Rebbe responded,

"Yasher koach al godel hanachas ruach—thank you for bringing me great gratification."

Marriage And Settling Down

During my last *yechidus* before going to Eretz Yisroel, the Rebbe blessed me with *"Histadrus tovah b'itah ubizmanah—to settle down in the proper time."* In other words, this meant that I would be getting married sooner or later.

Before Yud Shevat, Reb Shlomo Chaim showed me a letter he received from the Rebbe. It was a *michtav klali proti*, and at the end, the Rebbe had written,

"לדאוג ונכבדות עבור התמים אברהם—find a shidduch for Hatamim Abrahams."

Reb Shlomo Chaim asked Reb Meir ("Munke") Gruzman to be my *shadchan*, and I became a *chossan* at the end of the year.

When we were ready to move forward with the *shidduch*, we wrote to the Rebbe separately, and my wife received a letter with the Rebbe's *bracha*. She began to share the news but I felt that I still wasn't a *chossan*, so Reb Munke wrote to the Rebbe that there is news of the *shidduch*



RABBI ABRAHAMS' CHASUNA. TO HIS LEFT IS REB SHLOMO CHAIM KESSELMAN.

but I still haven't received an answer from the Rebbe. We soon received a telegram from New York that read, *"Nechonah hahatz'aa, viyaaleh lo yafeh, chag sameach—the suggestion is appropriate, may the shidduch be a successful one, and chag sameach [Sukkos]."*

I returned to New York before Pesach, where I remained until my wedding, which took place after Shavuot (this was before the Rebbe asked that engagements be shortened). The Rebbe instructed that we live in Eretz Yisroel, and agreed that I should continue teaching in Reb Chaim Shaul Bruk's yeshiva in Rishon Litziyon, where I had begun teaching several months earlier.

In Eretz Yisroel, we were looking to buy an apartment. Reb Chaim Shaul had built several apartments, and he was looking to rent them for a down payment and then a small sum each month, but the Rebbe said I should only take it if he will sell it to me, not rent.

Later, I was the *mashpia* in the *mechina* in Lod, and when our *rosh yeshiva* left to Yerushalayim, I was

recommended for the job. The Rebbe said that I should accept the job, but only temporarily:

"באופן זמני, כי בדר"צ"ל שונה הציור—והנהגה דמשפיע—temporarily, because normally, the image and behavior of a mashpia is different."

1. For more about Rabbi Groner, see "Conquering a Continent," *A Chassidisher Derher*, Av 5778.
2. For more about those early Simchas Beis Hashoeva farbrengens, see "The Street Will Dance," *A Chassidisher Derher*, Tishrei 5777 pg. 61.
3. *Toras Menachem Hisva'aduyos* vol. 1 pg. 26.
4. See *Toras Menachem* vol. 1, p. 149.
5. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 3, p. 350.
6. *Toras Menachem Hisva'aduyos* 5712 vol. 2 pg. 183.
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Shir Hashirim* 2:9.
9. *Toras Menachem Hisva'aduyos* 5712 vol. 2 pg. 184.
10. *Toras Menachem* 5715 vol. 1 pg. 76.
11. *Toras Menachem Hisva'aduyos* vol. 21 pg. 238.
12. *Toras Menachem Hisva'aduyos* vol. 23 pg. 151.
13. See also *A Chassidisher Derher*, Iyar 5778, pg. 48.
14. *Toras Menachem Hisva'aduyos* vol. 26 pg. 239.

Farbrengen

In connection with Gimmel Tammuz, we asked Rabbi Abrahams to share a few words of inspiration for the benefit of our readers. The following is a short synopsis of Rabbi Abrahams's farbrengen.

A connection to the Rebbe can be divided into two categories: *chitzoni* and *pnimius*. Sometimes people, especially *bochurim*, ask, "How can we have a connection to the Rebbe?"

This question is based on an assumption that by simply being in the Rebbe's presence, one had a real connection with him, but today, when we don't see the Rebbe physically, we can't be properly connected.

That assumption is inherently wrong.

A physical relationship with the Rebbe is also very important, but that is totally unrelated to whether a person can be called a *mekushar*, and—more specifically—whether he fulfills his purpose in the world.

From a perusal of *perek beis* in Tanya, we see that *hiskashrus* doesn't just mean "relationship." It means a *dveikus* of your *neschama* with the *neschama* of the *tzaddik*, which allows you to tap into your *shoresh u'makor*. In other words, one's connection to the Rebbe allows him to find his inner purpose, his true place and mission in the world.

In my years in 770, when we had *yechidus* each year and the Rebbe showered us with personal attention, one needed to *kuch* in Chassidus and the Rebbe's activities, and to work hard on oneself to be *mekushar*. Being in the Rebbe's presence was uplifting, but it wasn't automatically transformative; it had a long term effect if *you* chose to dedicate yourself to the Rebbe.

Today's generation has different types of *nisyonos*, to

a certain extent. What we once called "the street" has managed to infiltrate our pockets and homes. However, none of it is inherently new. The goal of a Chossid is to immerse himself totally in *avodas Hashem*, in learning and davening, *hafatza* and so on. It isn't beyond your reach; you just need the resolve to immerse yourself within it.

Being a *mekushar* means choosing to dedicate oneself to the Rebbe. That is then spelled out in every facet of your life; you learn Chassidus and *nigleh*, engage in *avodas hatefillah*, learn the Rebbe's *sichos* and *maamarim*, and involve yourself in the Rebbe's activities. That is how you create a true *hiskashrus* within yourself.

Ultimately, this genuine *hiskashrus* also brings with it the *chitzoni* trappings of a Chossid. I often see the *bochurim* arriving at 770 or coming to the Ohel with the same *chayus* and excitement that we had, when we were able to see the Rebbe; this feeling comes directly as a result of their true relationship, their *pnimiusdiker* connection to the Rebbe.

The same applies to the question people sometimes ask: It's been so long since we saw the Rebbe. Doesn't that affect the strength of our connection with him?

The answer is of course not!

If a Chossid was present by the Rebbe's farbrengens before Gimmel Tammuz but never made an effort to continue learning the Rebbe's *sichos* afterwards, his connection to the Rebbe will obviously become dulled with time.

But that is purely *his* decision. Our connection to the Rebbe is not a relic of the past which gets

rusty *chas v'shalom* as time goes on. *Hiskashrus* is totally in the present: It means being a Chossid at this very moment! That doesn't change whether it is five or 25 years after Gimmel Tammuz, or even before Gimmel Tammuz for that matter. We must constantly be developing and strengthening our *hiskashrus*.

A genuine connection to the Rebbe is a deed of the individual, not a deed of the Rebbe. The Rebbe doesn't make you a *mekushar*; it's something you need to bring out of yourself. Therefore, the numbers of years since Gimmel Tammuz is irrelevant; the question we need to ask ourselves is: *Currently*, am I fulfilling my *avoda*? Am I involved in doing the Rebbe's will?

There is actually a precedent to our situation. Chassidim in Russia had no contact with the Frierdiker Rebbe—and very little contact with the Rebbe—for close to 70 years. Nonetheless, it didn't impact the growth of generations of Chassidim who were dedicated to the Rebbe in the fullest sense of the word.

In our day, we have a major advantage over their situation. We have countless hours of videos and recordings of the Rebbe and thousands of pages of *hanachos*. There is no precedent in Jewish history of a Rebbe or leader who gave us the opportunity to be so accessible to him after his *histalkus*.

The Rebbe's *sichos* and *horaos* were said with each one of us in mind. The Rebbe spoke for us today equally as he spoke to those present at the *farbrengens*. Being proficient in the Rebbe's Torah, and hearing it directly from the Rebbe himself through videos and recordings, is the best *hiskashrus* that you could ever have.

Moreover:

We have the opportunity to visit the Ohel and write to the Rebbe today, receiving his *brachos* just

as we could then. We see the miracles and stories of *brachos* that Yidden of all walks of life are privy to each day at the Ohel. It is clearer than ever that the Rebbe is leading and guiding us.

Indeed, we don't have the opportunity that we once did, to correspond and receive direct instructions from the Rebbe. That will always be *me'orer* a yearning within the heart of a Chossid. We live in a dark *galus*, in an ארץ ציה וצלמות. Proclaiming “*Ad Mosai*” and awakening the yearning inside of us is also a part of our *avoda*. We await the imminent arrival of Moshiach every day.

Still, we need to keep our eyes on the goal. The longing to see the Rebbe isn't *hiskashrus* in itself. The Rebbe's demand of a Chossid wasn't to physically stand at *farbrengens*. It wasn't to physically receive direction from the Rebbe. The Rebbe gave us one singular purpose—to bring the *Shechinah* into the world, to bring about the גאולה האמיתית והשלימה.

That mission, my friends, is eternal.

May we merit to once again see the Rebbe very soon.



THE REBBE RETURNS TO HIS ROOM AFTER SHACHARIS AS CHILDREN FILL GAN EDEN HATACHTON.

YUD SHEVAT 5724

What We're All About

*Discovering Moshiach
in every detail of
the Rebbe's nesius*

Part 6: Rashi, Rambam, Pirkei Avos
& Likkutei Levi Yitzchok

The farbrengen was the Rebbe's primary platform for teaching Torah and leading *klal Yisroel*. During the thousands of hours of farbrengens, the Rebbe illuminated all areas of Torah in so many revolutionary ways, thereby transforming the Jewish world forever. Foundational themes now universally accepted and applied—such as the eternal and absolute relevance of Torah, the preciousness of a Yid, the importance of even one mitzvah and the imminence of *geula*—came to the world through the Torah the Rebbe taught at farbrengens and later disseminated through various mediums.

A thorough analysis of the Rebbe's Torah is impossible, and certainly comparing and contrasting it to the Torah of previous Rabbeim is beyond us; nevertheless we have chosen to focus on four permanent fixtures of the Rebbe's *sichos* at the Shabbos farbrengens: Rashi, Rambam, Pirkei Avos & Likkutei Levi Yitzchok.

Although all *Raboseinu Nesieinu* taught Torah and Chassidus publicly, never before had a Rebbe taught a revolutionary approach to entire elements of Torah in a routine fashion. Over the years a pattern emerged and (for many years) Chassidim would come to the Shabbos farbrengen knowing what to expect on a general level. After the *maamar*, there were always *sichos* with explanations on a Rashi, a *biur* from Likkutei Levi Yitzchok, and (in the summer) a Mishna in Pirkei Avos. After the Rebbe instituted the *takana* of *limmud haRambam*, there was an explanation on a *halacha* from the daily *shiur* as well.

Far from just being novel *chiddushei Torah*, these *sichos* introduced an entirely new dimension to the way we learn Rashi, Rambam and Pirkei Avos and made the groundbreaking Torah of Harav Levi Yitzchok accessible to all.

In this article we endeavor to discover how these four areas of *limmud haTorah* are connected to Moshiach and *geula*.

לזכות
החיילים בצבאות ה'

ישראל ארי' לייב
בן הרה"ת ר' מענדל יעקב
וזוגתו מרת רחל שיחיו טראקסלער
לרגל הולדתו ט"ו אייר ה'תשע"ח

לוי
בן הרה"ת ר' יהודה ארי'
וזוגתו מרת רבקה מרים שיחיו מאן
לרגל הולדתו ו' אלול ה'תשע"ח

אליהו
בן הרה"ת זלמן שמעון אברהם
וזוגתו מרת חנה שיחיו טראקסלער
לרגל הולדתו כ"ה כסלו יום א' דחנוכה ה'תשע"ט

נדפס ע"י זקניהם
הרה"ת ר' משה גדול
וזוגתו מרת שושנה שיחיו
טראקסלער





CIRCA EARLY 5720S*

Rashi

The Simple Meaning - פשוטו של מקרא

On Shabbos Parshas Noach 5725*, several weeks after the passing of the Rebbe's mother, Rebbetzin Chana, the Rebbe explained the first and last Rashi on the *parsha*. Thus began a new era of the Shabbos farbrengens and a new world opened in the study of Rashi. At every Shabbos farbrengen for the next 23 years, the Rebbe routinely explained a Rashi and charted out a new path in understanding this essential *pirush* that has been an inseparable part of Chumash learning for over 800 years.

Hundreds of commentaries have been written on Rashi over the years and yet the Rebbe's unique approach is unprecedented. Rashi describes the genre of his *pirush* in Parshas Bereishis "ואני לא באתי אלא - I have only come to explain the simple meaning of the *possuk* [as understood by the five year old starting to learn Chumash]."

The Rebbe takes this statement literally (more than any previous commentator on Rashi) and reveals how every word and nuance, every source or name quoted and even the *dibbur hamaschil* is integral to explaining the simple meaning of the *possuk* to a five year old child.

So groundbreaking is this approach to Rashi, that an entire *sefer* of *Klalei Rashi* - Principles of Rashi was compiled from these *sichos*.

In addition, based on the statement of the Alter Rebbe that *pirush Rashi* contains within it "ינה של תורה" - the secrets of Torah," the Rebbe revealed how through clarifying the "simple meaning of the *possuk*" one can uncover deep mystical ideas of Kabbalah and Chassidus in these *pirushim*. Discovering wondrous concepts

of *halacha* is also part and parcel of the Rebbe's phenomenal approach to Rashi.

The Rashi *sichos* are a breathtaking tapestry of basic Chumash understanding, fascinating halachic insights, deep explanations in Kabbalah and profound lessons in *avodas Hashem* - intertwined and inseparable - all stemming from the "simple meaning of the *possuk*."¹

Many wondered why the Rebbe started to *koch* so strongly in Rashi. After all, the purpose of Rashi is to explain the simple meaning of Chumash to beginners, and does not seem to be a topic worthy of such deep analysis.

On Shabbos Parshas Shemos 5725*, there was a *Pegisha*² in Crown Heights and all of the visiting students were present at the farbrengen. Since there was a "new crowd," (certainly unaccustomed to the idea of analyzing a Rashi - ed.) the Rebbe prefaced by explaining the purpose of learning Rashi with such focus and care.

In the current era of עקבתא דמשיחא there is a greater emphasis on discovering the common denominator in all reality. The fact that modern scientific research strives to uncover the unifying factor in numerous disparate particles is a reflection of the fact that we are on the threshold of *geula* when the oneness of Hashem and creation will be revealed.

The same is true with Torah. The vast sea of Torah scholarship in all of its diverse formats all originates in one essential point; hence, every layer of Torah can be derived from the most simple meaning of the original text, the Chumash.

Revealing the true simple meaning of a *possuk* and illustrating how every layer of Torah, even the deepest mystical secrets, can be derived from it, is a taste of *geula*, when *achdus Hashem* will be revealed in everything.³

What We're All About

Rambam

It's About Halacha - הלכות הלכות

On Acharon Shel Pesach 5744* the Rebbe established the *takana* of *limmud haRambam*, calling upon all Yidden, men women and children to unite in learning Rambam in one of three cycles, primarily to learn three chapters of Mishneh Torah every day. (Much has been written about this *takana* and its relevance to Moshiach⁴.)

Since learning three chapters of Rambam every day requires one to suffice with understanding the *halachos* on a basic level, the Rebbe specifically suggested that everyone learn one *halacha* (at least one detail of a *halacha*) every day in greater depth.

From then on, at every farbrengen and in many *sichos* the Rebbe focused on one or more *halachos* in the daily Rambam, providing a novel approach to understanding the Rambam's style, the precision of every detail in the *sefer* and gleaning important lessons in *avodas Hashem* in all areas of life.

There are many elements to the Rebbe's *derech* in learning Rambam, but perhaps most unique about it is the fact that every word in the *sefer* must be relevant in *halacha*. In his introduction to Mishneh Torah the Rambam states that this is a "*sefer of halachos... available to everyone, big and small.*" Taking these words literally, the Rebbe insisted that *everything* in Mishneh Torah (even the rare instances that the Rambam mentions history or other seemingly non-halachic related items) is *halacha*.

There are diverse areas of *limmud haTorah*, including many that have no practical application in our lives. *Halacha* is unique in the fact that its entire purpose is to ensure that every detail of our



THE REBBE ENTERS FOR A FARBRENGEN, CIRCA 5730S*.

physical world functions in accordance with the will of Hashem in a practical way. This goal will be realized in its entirety only in the era of *geula*, when the entire universe will reflect *Elokus* in every way. Therefore the Rambam in Mishneh Torah - the only halachic work which encompasses *all of halacha* - concludes with a detailed description of the times of Moshiach, since it is the epitome of the purpose of *halacha*.

Pirkei Avos

Being a Chossid - מילי דחסידותא

It is customary for all of *klal Yisroel* to learn Pirkei Avos after Mincha on the Shabbosim between Pesach and Shavuos. Even though the Alter Rebbe writes in the *siddur* that there are those who continue to do so until Rosh Hashanah, for generations it was not the prevailing *minhag* in Chabad. On the Shabbos following Shavuos of 5738*, following Mincha, the Rebbe sat down at his place and started learning Pirkei Avos in public, thus confirming Chabad *minhag* to learn Pirkei Avos throughout the summer.

In 5712*, the Rebbe started explaining a Mishna of the weekly Pirkei Avos at the Shabbos farbrengens during that time of year, and in 5734* the Rebbe started to do so on the Shabbosim throughout the summer (even though *minhag Chabad* was still unclear, as described above). Many of these *sichos* were edited by the Rebbe and published as weekly *likkutim* (published later in *Likkutei Sichos* vol. 4 and 17).

These *sichos* were not merely novel explanations to difficult *mishnayos*. They provided a fresh new outlook on Pirkei Avos in general. The main element of the Rebbe's unique approach to Pirkei Avos is based on the statement of Chazal "לקיים... למהוי חסידא... לקיים" - "מילי דאבות" - One who wants to be a Chossid... should observe the teachings of Meseches Avos.

This statement reveals that (a) all of the lessons in Avos are not *halacha*, rather behaviors in the category of לפנים משורת הדין - beyond the letter of the law, and (b) every single word in Avos is a lesson in *midas Chassidus*. Even stories, such as the order of the tradition of Torah described in the first Mishna, is a lesson in how a Yid must serve Hashem in a way that transcends his halachic obligations. And since every Yid is obligated to learn Pirkei Avos several times a year, its lessons of *midas Chassidus* apply to everyone, regardless of their current level in *avodas Hashem*.

An example of this approach is clearly evident in the Rebbe's explanation⁵ to this *Mishna*:

גלות בא לעולם על עבודה זרה, ועל גלוי עריות, ועל שפיכות דמים, ועל שמיטת הארץ.⁶

How does this statement, enumerating four severe sins that cause *galus*, fit into the genre of *midas Chassidus*? Clearly the Mishna is referring to the fact that these four sins represent four elements of the coarseness of *olam hazeh*, which at their most radical level translate into the severe sins of *avoda zara* and the like, but are expressed in more refined ways as well.

Chassidus explains that the root of *avoda zara* is the feeling of self sufficiency and that success is the result of one's own hard work. Such an attitude can cause one to make a business phone call before going to shul and davening and learning. While certainly not a blatant violation of halacha, if one were permeated with the idea of *achdus Hashem* - the opposite of *avoda zara* - such a behavior would be unthinkable and downright silly.

Living our lives in a way that fits this high bar of *middas Chassidus* is the antidote to *galus*.

In a more general sense, Pirkei Avos is connected to *geula* in three ways.⁷

We begin learning Pirkei Avos in the month of Nissan which is the month of *geula*, and the chapters we learn for those six Shabbosim are a preparation for *matan Torah*. This represents the refinement of the six *middos*, making us worthy of attaining the level of *mochin* we will merit in the era of *geula*.

Pirkei Avos begins with Moshe Rabbeinu, the first redeemer of *am Yisroel*, who is connected to the ultimate redeemer, Moshiach: הוא גואל אחרון.

Many of the *mishnayos* in Pirkei Avos are composed in three stanzas, and even when a Mishna contains more ideas, the ideas can regularly be defined in three categories (as the Rebbe explains on numerous occasions). This emphasizes the connection to the imminent *geula* when we will merit the *third* Beis Hamikdash.

What We're All About

Likkutei Levi Yitzchok

Mesiras Nefesh Torah - תורה מתוך מסירות נפש

When Harav Levi Yitzchok, the Rebbe's father was exiled by the vile Communists to the remote region of Chile, Kazakhstan, his wife, Rebbetzin Chana joined him for much of the time. She brought along a Tanya, a Zohar and a Midrash Rabba, and when she saw his great thirst to express his deep *chiddushim*, she resolved to do something about it.

With great *mesiras nefesh* she gathered herbs and grasses and produced ink, enabling her husband to write his *chiddushim* on the margins of the few *sefarim* she had brought. After the *histalkus* of Harav Levi Yitzchok, Rebbetzin Chana exerted superhuman efforts to preserve the *sefarim*, entrusting them for safekeeping with Chassidim in Russia with the hope that one day they will be delivered to the Rebbe.

Over the years and through the courageous efforts of many individuals, these *sefarim* reached the Rebbe during the 5720s* and on Rosh Chodesh Menachem



Av 5730* two volumes entitled Likkutei Levi Yitzchok were published.

Since Harav Levi Yitzchok wrote these lofty *chiddushim* on the margins of *sefarim* with a shortage of ink, they were in shorthand and very difficult to understand, even for outstanding *lamdanim*. On Shabbos Parshas Eikev of that year, the Rebbe started to explain his father's notes on Iggeres Hateshuva and from Shabbos Parshas Tzav 5731*, at every Shabbos farbrengen the Rebbe would explain an entry of Likkutei Levi Yitzchok on Zohar connected to the *parsha*.

Contemplating the context in which these *chiddushei Torah* were written and became available for *klal Yisroel* to learn, it is amazing how Rebbetzin Chana overextended herself in so many ways to procure the



4 SIVAN 5747, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 5735

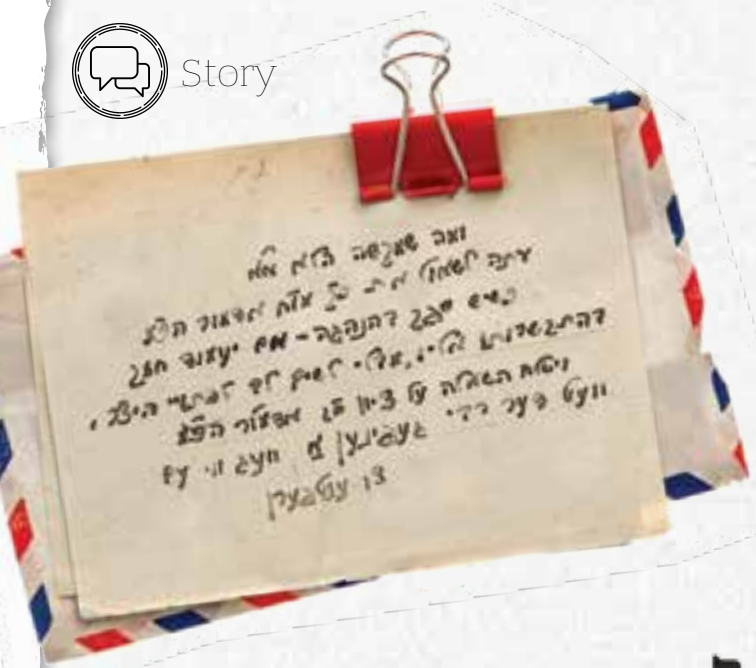
ink. She had no background in the vocation and it was very difficult under the circumstances, which certainly entailed great *mesiras nefesh*.

Not only did she voluntarily join her husband in *galus* to support him and enable his continued Torah learning, she felt the need to ensure his *chiddushim* and *biurim* in *pnimius haTorah* reached *klal Yisroel* because this will be a major step in הפצת המעיינות חוצה - the ultimate way to bring Moshiach!⁸

Thousands of pages of Harav Levi Yitzchok's writings were left behind the Iron Curtain and have yet to be discovered. From the few volumes we have from his notes on the margins of *sefarim* we understand the immense treasure of Torah the lost writings contain. *Yehi ratzon*, we should imminently experience the realization of the *Novi Yeshaya* "ובאו האובדים בארץ אשור"

with the coming of Moshiach, when we will merit to the ultimate *chiddushim* in *pnimius haTorah* - and certainly the discovery of the *chiddushim* that have been written already.⁹ **i**

1. For a thorough description of the Rashi *sichos* see "Revolution in Rashi," Derher Shevat 5775.
2. See "The Weekend that Changed Lives," Derher Adar II 5779.
3. *Sichos Kodesh* 5725 vol. 1 page 262. *Toras Menachem* vol. 42 page 107.
4. See "Every Yid. Every Halacha. Every Day." Derher Tishrei 5777.
5. *Hisvaaduyos* 5744 vol. 3, p. 2112.
6. *Pirkei Avos* 5:9
7. *Hisvaaduyos* 5746 vol. 3, p. 202.
8. *Hisvaaduyos* 5746 vol. 1, p. 66.
9. *Ibid* 5750 page 64.



דער רבי וועט געפינען א וועג...

Without Fear!

AS TOLD BY RABBI BEREL LEVERTOV (SANTA FE, NM)

After several years of shlichus in Santa Fe, the time had come to replace the current building of our Chabad House with a larger and more modern structure. We were happy with the location and a friendly couple pledged a substantial amount of money to sponsor half of the project.

We invested a lot of time, energy and money in creating the new blueprints but we encountered many complications. The price kept climbing and I was having my doubts if demolishing the old building and constructing a brand new building in its place was the proper route to take. The entire process was becoming very uncomfortable and I was plagued with a lot of indecision. We felt we were stuck.

On Shabbos Yud Shevat 5774* I was at the Ohel. Before traveling back home on Sunday I wrote a letter to the Rebbe begging for clarity in the building project. Standing in the Ohel I fervently davened that I make the proper decisions and that everything should work out for the best.

The next Shabbos was my daughter's bas mitzvah and on Friday I wanted to give her something from the Rebbe as a gift.

Baruch Hashem I was *zoche* to grow up near the Rebbe and I had a substantial collection of coins, dollars and *kuntreisim* I had received from the Rebbe, as well as other objects I had managed to collect over the years. In addition,

לע"נ
 הרה"ח הרה"ת יעקב שלמה
 בן הרה"ח ר' דוד ע"ה
 גולדברג
 נלב"ע ט"ז טבת ה'תשע"ט
 תנ"צ'בה'
 נדפס ע"י בתו וחתנו
 הרה"ת ר' דובער זוזגתו מרת דבורה לאה
 ומשפחתם שיחיו
 לברטוב
 שלוחי כ"ק אדמו"ר,
 סאנטא פיי, ניו מעקסיקא



after my father, Rabbi Moshe Levertov's passing eight years earlier I inherited a portion of his own collection.

As I opened the safe, a small piece of paper 2.5 X 3 inches that I had never noticed fell out. Apparently it was a part of my father's collection and I have no idea what it was from. An original *ksav yad kodesh* from the Rebbe with four words:

במרץ והתפשטות לבלי חת

With energy and expansion without fear.

We were dumbfounded.

The Rebbe was clearly responding to my question. I should throw away my insecurities and move forward with the plans with a *shturem!*



Before moving forward I discussed the situation with three shluchim and they all advised me to go ahead with it despite the major financial responsibility it entailed.

We got to work immediately and with great enthusiasm we moved out of the building, rented a temporary space a 15 minute walk away and hosted a grand groundbreaking ceremony before Pesach. Many dignitaries participated, there was much positive media attention and the community was very excited about the new developments.

When we approached the bank to secure a construction loan, which I claimed was going to be paid off when the building was completed, they said that in order to consider it, I needed to provide a legally binding letter of commitment from the donors for their substantial pledge.

When we contacted the couple to request the letter they responded that since we were moving ahead with the project with such speed and enthusiasm they will just give the money up front. No need for a letter.

Sure enough, a week later I walked into the abandoned Chabad House and found a FedEx envelope on the floor with a check of the full amount of their pledge!

Time went on and just before Tishrei we met with the contractor to pick up the final plans and permits from the city. To our chagrin he told us that the final price was going to be an additional \$500,000 and for the original price we would only be able to build 6,000 square feet.

We were very upset. I told him that I was not moving ahead with either of the plans.

"So what are you going to do?" he asked.

"I will buy a building," I said.

My wife immediately started searching online and found a 16,000 square foot building for sale in downtown Santa Fe, a 25-minute walk from our house. Although we had originally never considered purchasing in that area because we were accustomed to having the Chabad House near our home, the past six months of walking 15 minutes to our temporary place had changed our attitude.

Since we miraculously had the cash in the bank we were able to make a good offer on the building and the owner—who was a Holocaust survivor—decided to sell it to us with a good deal.

This development was enormous! The entire community was amazed that we managed to secure such a large building at such a prime location in our small town. Two blocks away from the world famous Santa Fe Plaza and a stone's throw away from the New Mexico State Capitol.



It was a tremendous *kiddush Hashem* and cause for great Jewish pride for the local Yidden to have a Chabad House at a landmark location in our beautiful historic town.

Besides, the original location was in a residential area and the zoning laws were very tight. Aside for having a shul, we could not have a kosher deli, a museum, or anything of the sort on premises. But now we had a building in the perfect location for everything we wished to do.

The building needed major renovations and the miracles did not stop there.

One Friday, I was on *mitvoim* and struck up a conversation with a tourist visiting a store and gave him a challa. His name is Mr. Scott Seligman, who was originally from Santa Fe, currently living in San Francisco but visited quite often.

Turns out he was a successful businessman who the store owner had solicited for a donation to Chabad several years before. We had never met or spoken. He was impressed with Chabad and we developed a long distance relationship.

One day I was speaking with Scott and he told me, "Rabbi, I will help you whenever you need."

"I have a building down the block and I need you to name it," I said.

Scott laughed good heartedly and left it at that.

Some time later I decided to visit him in California to make the official pitch. After schmoozing for a while he

asked how much I was asking for and when I said \$900,000 he laughed in my face.

"Rabbi, I don't give such amounts!"

I persisted and continued sharing with him all the wonderful things Chabad was accomplishing in Santa Fe, and after a lengthy conversation Scott decided he was going to name the new Chabad House for the amount I requested!

I have spoken to Mr. Seligman many times and he still can't figure out what motivated him to make such a sizable gift to one organization. But he's very happy he did!

We are now in the midst of renovations and very soon will open the doors of the Santa Fe Jewish Center Chabad (Seligman Building).

Although our plans changed drastically from what we envisioned during Shevat 5774*, the enthusiasm and excitement with which we moved forward caused the major donation to come in ahead of schedule, giving us the confidence and flexibility we needed, and changed our attitude to purchasing in a more central location. All because of the four worded message the Rebbe sent us on that Friday afternoon. **1**

YOUR STORY

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



לזכות
הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל
וזוגתו מרת רחל ומשפחתם שיחיו
שמערינג



TI: SWAN 5747, LEVIFREDIN VIA JEM 6605

לחיים ולברכה!

The Midrash¹ tells us about Moshe Rabbeinu, our first Rebbe, that Hashem chose him to be the shepherd of His people after seeing Moshe's care for one young runaway sheep.

The Rebbe truly exemplified this dichotomy. On the one hand, tirelessly caring and laboring on behalf of *klal Yisroel* as a whole; and at the very same time, never losing sight of the every individual and their personal needs and concerns.

One example where we see this are by the farbrengens. The Rebbe was addressing the hundreds or thousands of people present, and sometimes an even wider audience watching live on television. This was when the Rebbe taught Torah, addressed pressing matters, and launched new initiatives. And yet, the Rebbe personally would seek out every person in the room to wish them "*Lchaim v'livracha.*"

In this installment of the *Moments* column, we give you a pictorial overview of these special moments with the Rebbe.

1. Shemos Rabbah, 2:2.



During the *niggunim* sung between the *sichos*, everyone at the *farbrengen* had the opportunity to hold up a little cup with wine or *mashke*. The Rebbe would continuously survey the room, looking at each person and nodding his head. In many recording you can hear the Rebbe saying in an undertone “*L’chaim v’livracha*,” sometimes to the tune of the *niggun* being sung.

The Rebbe turns around fully in both directions, to say *l'chaim* to those on the dais behind him.



13 TISHREI 5736, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM143490

JEM 102954



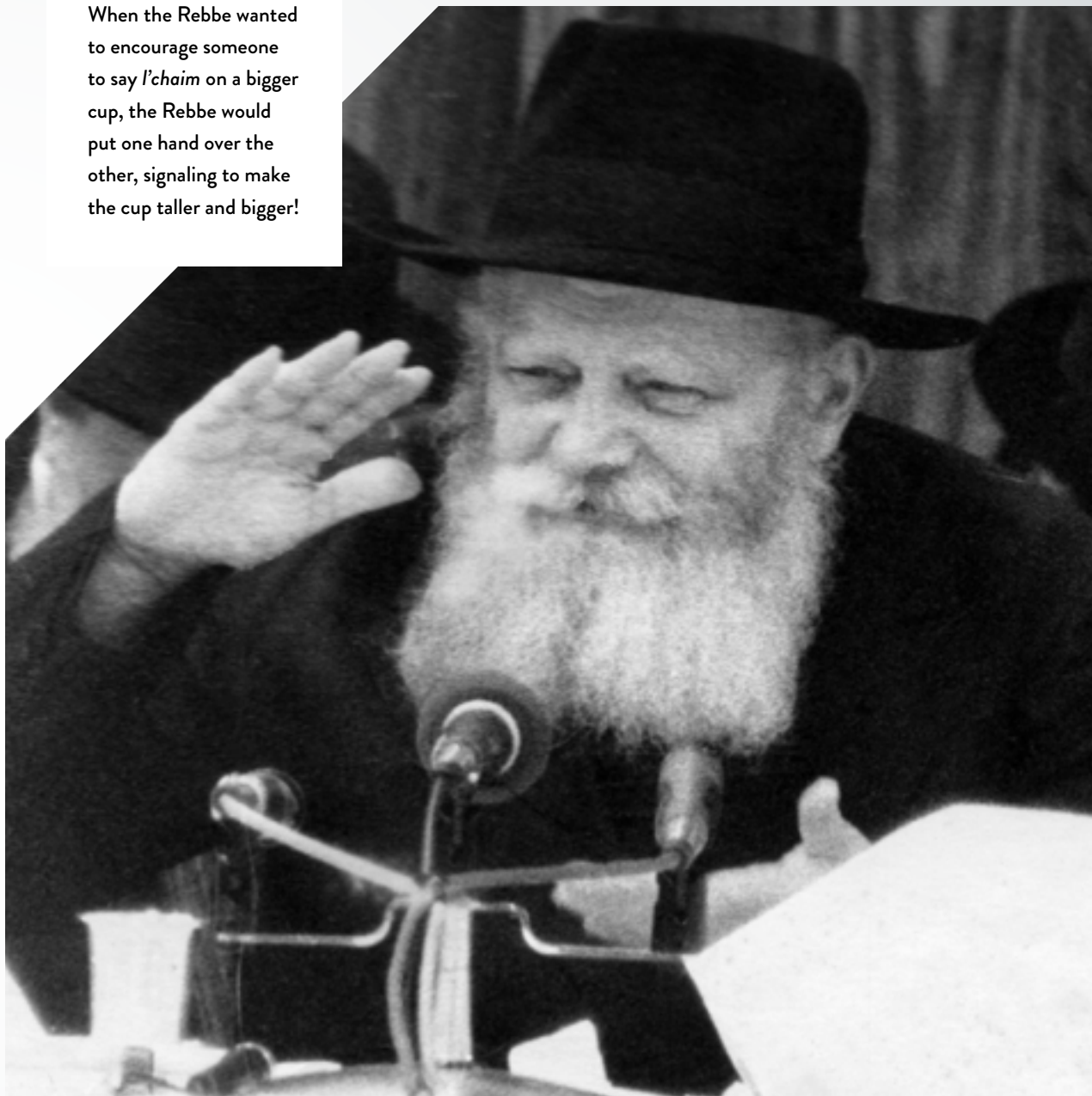
Usually the Rebbe responded to Chassidim holding up their cups, waiting for the Rebbe's response. But many times the Rebbe initiated the *l'chaim*, by holding out his hand towards someone, signaling for him to get a cup and say *l'chaim*.

Other times the Rebbe would signal by making a drinking gesture, encouraging to drink the cup of *l'chaim*.



JEM 287041

When the Rebbe wanted to encourage someone to say *l'chaim* on a bigger cup, the Rebbe would put one hand over the other, signaling to make the cup taller and bigger!





10 NISSAN 5739, YOSSI MELAMED VIA JEM 127850

These moments were cherished by Chassidim. There are countless stories of how the Rebbe communicated with Chassidim, either responding to a question that was bothering them, or calling upon them to say *l'chaim* at the right moment.



18 KISLEV 5744, YOSSI MELAMED VIA JEM 23483

When the farbrengens were being broadcast live on television, the Rebbe would turn to the camera operators, signaling them join in and say *l'chaim* as well.

When people would come over to the Rebbe between the *sichos*, the Rebbe would conclude by asking them to say *l'chaim*.



CHAI ELUL 5736, LEV FREIDIN VIA JEM 203281



JEM 110891

In the earlier years, those who had a *simcha* or an event would come over to the Rebbe after the *maamar*. The Rebbe would pour for them a *l'chaim* from a new bottle of *mashke*, say *l'chaim*, and give the bottle to be distributed at the *simcha* or function.

Derher**Letters**



A forum for readers to send their feedback, add to, or ask any questions about articles. Submit your letter to feedback@derher.org.

Submissions may be slightly modified by our editorial staff before publishing.

Tes Adar Miraculous Rescue

Dear Editors,

Thank you again for another wonderful, inspiring issue of Derher. After reading the article about the Rebbe Rayatz's miraculous rescue from Poland ["*The Miraculous Rescue*", Adar II 5779] (in which he himself wrote that the sufferings he endured in the Russian prison do not compare to the torments of those 12 weeks), it made me wonder why that rescue never became an annual festival in Chabad like Yud-Beis Tammuz did. Do you have any insight into this?

Thank you so much,

Adam Leventhal
Denver, Colorado



Hi Adam,

Thank you for reaching out and for the great feedback!

You raise a good question. We haven't seen anything clearly from the Rabbeim on this subject. However, we might suggest:

When we celebrate Yud-Beis Tammuz, we are marking the victory of Torah and Yiddishkeit over the scheme of the evil Soviet regime. As the Frieddiker Rebbe noted in his letter for the first anniversary of Yud-Beis Tammuz, this day marks victory for every person who holds Torah and Yiddishkeit dear. The physical danger that

was averted is apparently of less significance. (In addition to the fact that Yud-Beis Tammuz is also the Frieddiker Rebbe's birthday.)

It should be noted that whenever the Rebbe did mention the date of 9 Adar, the significance was always about the fact that Chassidus was finally brought to this hemisphere, paving the way for Moshiach. The fact that the Frieddiker Rebbe was saved from certain danger and brought to safe shores was almost not mentioned.

Perhaps this can be attributed to a basic premise of Chassidus of holding the "spirit" (the *neshama*, Torah, and mitzvos) as most important, and the "body" (materialism, etc.) secondary. The Rebbe always taught us to get to the root of every issue and to view them from beyond the surface. The externalities are far less important.

Thanks again for taking interest and reaching out. We hope that you continue to enjoy the Derher.

The Editors



The Rebbe's Haggadah

Dear Editors,

Thank you for the article about the Rebbe's Haggadah ["*Concision. Precision. Depth.*", Nissan 5779].

I just wanted to point out two corrections:

1) The article states that the Haggadah was first printed as an appendix to the Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch.

This is incorrect as the Haggadah was first printed as a booklet on its own in 5706*, and was subsequently reprinted in that format a few more times.

The Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch was first printed by Kehos about two decades later, and then indeed the Haggadah of the Rebbe was reprinted there as an appendix to volume 3 which entails Hilchos Pesach.

2) The article includes a picture of the Rebbe's handwritten response to Rabbi Zevin regarding his comments on the Haggadah. The caption states that this letter was written on Tzom Gedalya 5706*.

This is obviously a mistake as the Haggadah had not been printed yet at that point. The correct date for that response to Rav Zevin is Tzom Gedalya 5708*.

Thank you again for a wonderful article, and magazine overall. *Hatzlachah rabbah* in continuing to publish these monthly beams of light.

Pesach Schmerling
Far Rockaway, New York



“Haleluka On The Beam”

Dear Editors,

What a beautiful, educational article about davening [“*Avodas Hatefila in Dor Hashvi'i*”, Iyar 5779]. It was an amazing read and gave me many things to think about.

In continuation to the article, and for the benefit of the readership, let me share two stories that I came across recently about the topic of davening:

In Sefer Hasichos 5707* (p. 82), the Friediker Rebbe recalls:

My father [the Rebbe Rashab] and his brother Raz”a learned together with their teacher Reb

Sholom. My father would daven for longer so he would start davening earlier. The *melamed* complained to his mother [Rebbetzin Rivka] that after davening he is completely exhausted.

She reported this to her husband the Rebbe Maharash, who answered, “We’ll see.”

One day, during the week, my father was davening with his tallis over his head and with a *niggun*. The Rebbe Maharash lifted the tallis and saw that his eyes were glassy, and in such deep concentration that he didn’t even notice what was happening.

Said the Rebbe Maharash to the Rebbetzin: “Nu, how can I have the heart to stop him? Out of *kibud av* he will obey, and then it will be a double *rachmanus*; on him that I’m stopping him, and a *rachmanus* on the Aibershter that I’m taking away the *nachas-ruach* that his davening causes on high.

Another story brought down in Otzar Sippurei Chabad (Vol 18 page 13):

A Chossid from Nevel, who was known as a *talmid chacham*, once asked the Rebbe Maharash in *yechidus* for a *sefer avoda*. The Rebbe Maharash said to him that during davening, he should hold a *siddur* and read all the words inside.

This Chossid was quite surprised by this “simple” advice. He told the Rebbe Maharash that in his opinion, if he covers his head with the tallis and closes his eyes he can have more *kavana* than by reading from a *siddur*.

“Fool!” answered the Rebbe Maharash. “What will then be your *kavana*—*haleluka* on the beam?”

The Chossid was confused by the meaning of this. What does “*haleluka* on the beam” mean?

After many hours of thinking, he remembered that one time, while pacing back and forth across the shul during Shacharis, he noticed a beam that went from one side of the room to the other. As he was in middle of *pesukei d’zimra*, he decided that each *haleluka* he would begin on one side of the beam and finish by the other.

Then he understood the cryptic words of the Rebbe Maharash. Without davening from the *siddur*, you can end up davening *haleluka* to the beam.

Keep up the great work,

M.M. Haberman
Brooklyn, NY



Sefer Hatoldos Admur Maharash

Dear Editors,

I enjoy reading the Derher magazine each month.

In the past magazine you included a comprehensive article about the Rebbe's Haggadah [“Concision. Precision. Depth.”,

Nissan 5779]. At the beginning of the article you write that the Haggadah and Hayom Yom were the only *sefarim* that the Rebbe wrote and published himself.

I am surprised that you didn't make mention of a third *sefer* that the Rebbe made himself: Sefer Hatoldos of the Rebbe Maharash. It includes a collection of *sichos* and letters from the Frierdiker Rebbe about the life of the Rebbe Maharash. This compilation was published by the Rebbe in 5707* (תש”ז).

Reb Shmuel Karkovsky was the one that paid for the publishing. There is a letter where the Rebbe writes to him that “you certainly don't need explanation about the great merit of publicizing the Sefer [Hatoldos].”

Shmuel Drimmer
Bal Harbor, Florida

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