

BEIS MOSHIACH

• • • Special Rosh Hashanah Edition • • •

27 Elul 5782 / September 23, 2022 / Number 1329



ה' תהא שנת פלאות גדולות

Rosh Hashana In Bomb Shelters

The Rebbe Rayatz in Burning Warsaw of Tishrei 5700 (1939)

Born & Bred in 770

Veteran Crown Heightsers Share Tishrei Memories

Hakhel: A Day That Lasts A Year

Interview with Rabbi Yosef Karasik

"We Hosted Rebbetzin Chana"

Personal Memories by Rabbi Zalman Chanin

SIGN LANGUAGE Behind the Rosh Hashana "Simanim" / **THE SECRET OF NEW YEAR** Resolutions That Last a Full Year / **THE QUEEN** That Couldn't Die

יחי אדוננו מורנו ורבינו מלך המשיח לעולם ועד



{ 10 }

From the Rebbe

{ 6 } The Only Role Of A Chazan

From the Rebbe's pen

{ 56 } Receiving Panim Erev Rosh Hashana

Moments With The Rebbe

Features

^ { 10 } Our Tishrei With the Rebbe As Kids in Crown Heights

Rabbi Sholom Yaakov Chazan and Avrohom Rainitz farbreng with Rabbi Sholom Ber Brod, Rabbi Chaim Levi Goldstein, and Rabbi Yosef Reizes

✓ { 20 } Hakhel: A Day That Lasts A Year (And Six More...)

Interview with Rabbi Yosef Karasik, on how the Rebbe "revolutionized" the mitzva of Hakhel in theory and in practice



{ 40 }



{ 20 }

^ { 40 } A Miracle That Began On Rosh Hashana Called Rivka Kaduri

A moving story of faith, devotion and miracles as told by Rivka's father, Reb Shlomi Kaduri from Elad, Eretz Yisrael

Columns



{ 8 } Pruzbul: What? How? Who? When?

By Horav Yosef Yeshaya Braun



{ 62 } Hakhel Lessons For Education

By Rabbi Gershon Avtzon



{ 64 } Preparing To Receive A New Heart With The Coming Of Moshiach

Rabbi Nissim Lagziel with a Moshiach thought on the Parsha

In This Issue

{ 39 } Halachic Times And Daily Shiurim

{ 60 } Burying Sefarim In The Cellar

Memoirs of Reb Dovid A"H Mishulovin

{ 87 } The Suitcase Full Of Kosher Sandwiches

Story for children

{ 91 } The March

Yossi and Mendy Discover

{ 94 } The Search For The Traveling Beis HaMikdash

Comics

Wishing a kesiva v'chasima
tova to all.
(The next issue will, G-d
willing, be Parshas Haazinu)



Published by:

Chabad World Center to Greet Moshiach

744 Eastern Parkway
Brooklyn, NY 11213

BMoshiach.org

info@BMoshiach.org

718.778.8000

editor@BeisMoshiach.org

Editor: **Levi Liberow** • Managing Editor: **Shraga Crombie**
Director: **Rabbi M.M. Hendel** • Rabbinical Advisor: **Rabbi Yaakov Chazan**

Beis Moshiach (USPS 542-012) ISSN 0272-1082 is published weekly, except Jewish holidays (only once in April and October) for \$180.00 in Crown Heights, USA \$217.00. All other places for \$240.00 per year (45 issues), by Beis Moshiach, 744 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, NY 3409-11213. Periodicals postage paid at Brooklyn, NY and additional offices. Postmaster: send address changes to Beis Moshiach 744 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, NY 3409-11213. Copyright 2020 by Beis Moshiach, Inc.

RABBI MENACHEM M. SCHNEERSON
Lubavitch
770 Eastern Parkway
Brooklyn, N. Y. 11213
493-9250

מזמם מנוגדל שני'אורטאון
ליובאוויטש
770 איסטערן פארקווי
ברוקלין, נ.י.

By the Grace of G-d
Erev Shabbos-kodesh, 18 Elul
Sedra: "Come into the land"
Haphtorah: "Arise, shine, for your
light is come"
"The Seventh Year, a Shabbos unto G-d."
5740. [August 30, 1980] Brooklyn, N. Y.

To The Sons and Daughters of our
People Israel, Everywhere,
G d bless you all.

Heartfelt Shalom and Blessing:

As the year 5740 draws to its conclusion, and in these last days of preparation for the New Year-may it bring goodness and blessing to us and all our Jewish people, it is fitting to reflect on a point which, though mentioned on previous occasions, is particularly timely and relevant now; relevant also in terms of action, which is the essential thing.

We are referring to the fact that the outgoing year is a year of Shemittah, and the incoming year is a year of Hakhel.

The Mitzvah of Hakhel, as ordained in the Torah, is that at the end of every seven years, immediately after the year of Shemittah, when Jews make their pilgrimage to the Beis Hamikdosh (Temple), during the festival of Succos, all Jews had to be gathered (hakhel)-the men, and the women, and the children, even babies, and the king read to them sections from the Torah, selected for their content to stimulate Jews in the observance of Mitzvos and strengthen them in their faith and in Yiddishkeit; and it made a profound impression on them, as if they heard it from G-d Himself.

One of the reasons why the mitzvah of Hakhel has been reserved for this particular time is the following: Inasmuch as the year of Shemittah is a "Shabbos unto G-d," when the time that was released from work in the field and orchard (the principal occupation in those days) was dedicated to increased Torah study, and to prayer and Mitzvos, in the fullest measure, it was the proper and fitting preparation to make their pilgrimage, all as one nation, and to make the people most receptive to the Torah reading, "as if they heard it from G-d," so that it evoked in them a profound soulful experience, as when the Torah was given at Sinai; and the impression was so deeply engraved upon their hearts and minds that it was subsequently reflected in the everyday life throughout all the years ahead.

Although the Mitzvah of Hakhel, in its concrete and plain form, is connected with the time of the Beis Hamikdosh, there is the well-known principle that all matters that are connected with the Beis Hamikdosh, such as sacrifices and the like, are in their spiritual content relevant at all times. This is why the daily prayers, which have been enacted in

in the place of the sacrifices, substitute for them. A Jew prays with all his heart, offers himself completely in submission to his Creator, and is ready to sacrifice the best of his possessions and his most passionate interests (the "fat and the blood") to the will of G-d and it is acceptable to G-d as a "burnt offering" in the Beis Hamikdash. Indeed, also during the times when Jews had a central Sanctuary and Mikdosh and actually offered sacrifices there, it was the Jewish heart that He desired most, in accordance with His imperative, request, and promise: "Let them make Me a Sanctuary, and I will dwell within them"-in their innermost Jewish hearts.

The same is true of Shemittah. For although the commandment to work the soil for six years and rest during the seventh year is confined to the Land of Israel (where the soil, too, is sacred) and not anywhere else, yet the spiritual content of Shemittah as a "Shabbos unto G-d," in the sense of the holiness of Shabbos, is enduring and relevant everywhere and at all times, and is bound up with the holiness of the "Holy Nation"; and this holiness transcends the limitations of time and space.

In light of the above, and since we are at the threshold of the year of Hakhel, it behooves everyone of us to reflect earnestly on the content and purpose of this Mitzvah, which is, as the Torah declares: ". . . in order that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear G-d, your G-d, and observe to do all the words of this Torah; and that their children, who know not (as yet), should hear and learn to fear G-d, your G-d."

It is also obvious how strongly the Mitzvah of Hakhel emphasizes the Torah-education of our children. It follows that also those who are grown in years but still "children" in Yiddishkeit, all those "who know not," who for one reason or another, did not get the proper Jewish education; and even those who belong to the category of "one who knows not to ask," namely, those who do not know, and do not feel, that they miss something and should ask and seek help-these also must be assembled to let them hear and learn what Torah is, what a Mitzvah is, in a manner of learning that would imbue them with fear of G-d, and, most importantly, that they should "observe and do all the words of this Torah," the Torah from Sinai that shall never be changed - all of the above with such impact, "as if they heard it from G-d Himself."

May G-d grant that everyone, man, woman and child in the midst of all our people should act in all the above mentioned matters, to strengthen, deepen, and disseminate Yiddishkeit in the everyday life, both in themselves and their families as well as in their surroundings, in the fullest measure, and this will bring still more blessings with the kesivo vachasimo toivo in all respects, materially and spiritually.

And all Jews-the men, and the women, and the young children-should very soon indeed merit the true and complete Geulo through our righteous Mashiach, through realizing and acting accordingly and from now on while still in Golus: "We are Your people and sheep of Your pasture, we will thank You for ever; we will tell Your praise to generation and generation."

With esteem and blessing for a
Kesivo vachasimo toivo for a
Good and Sweet Year, and for
Hatzlocho in all above,

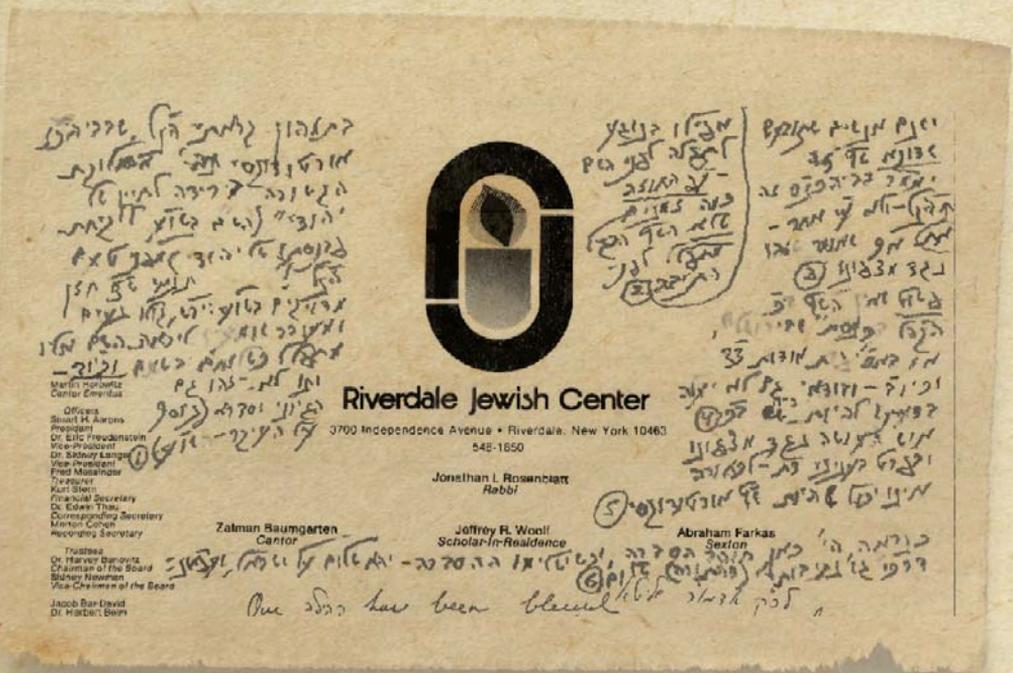
/Signed: Menachem Schneerson/

From The Rebbe's Pen



The Only Role of a Chazan

At the end of Nissan 5746 (1986) **Chazan Zalman Baumgarten** who served at the Riverdale Jewish Center refused to take part in an event planned in the community center in conjunction with Israeli Independence Day by singing "Hatikva" since its core message negates Torah values. Some board members demanded that if he refuses to do so he should be dismissed from his position. **Rabbi Jonathan Rosenblatt**, the rabbi of the shul wrote to the Rebbe of the matter and the Rebbe replied thus:



בתמהון קראתי הנ"ל, שבביהכ"נ [= שבבית הכנסת] אורטודוקסי תהי' מחלוקת הקשורה ב"ירידה לחייו של יהודי" (השם בשו"ע [בשולחן-ערוך] ללקיחת פרנסתו של יהודי) מפני טעם הנ"ל!
 תנאי ש"צ [= שליח ציבור] חזן מדויקים בשו"ע: יר"ש [= ירא שמים], קולו נעים ומעורר שומעיו ליראת השם אליו מתפלל כשלוחם בשמם וכיו"ב - ותו לא. - זהו גם הגיוני וסברא (נוסף על העיקר - השו"ע) (1)
 אפילו בנוגע לתפלה לפני השם - ע"פ [= על פי] החוזה כמה זמנים שלא הש"ץ הרגיל מתפלל לפני התיבה (2)
 ישנם אנשים שתובעים שדוקא ש"ץ זה יאמר בביהכנ"ס זה את הנ"ל - ולא ע"י [= על ידי] אחר - אף שאומר שזהו נגד מצפוננו (3)
 פשוט שאין הש"ץ ב"כ [= השליח-ציבור בא-כוח] הקהל ב"כנסת" שבירושלים, או באסיפות אודות צ"צ [= צרכי-ציבור] וכיו"ב ובודאי גם לא יעלה בדעתו להיות שם ב"כ [בא-כוח] (4)
 איש העושה נגד מצפוננו ובפרט בעניני דת - לכאורה אינו יכול להיות ש"ץ אורטודוקסי (5)
 כנראה הי' כאן חוסר הסברה, וכשישלימו ההסברה - יהא שלום על ישראל, ועפמש"נ [= ועל פי מה שנאמר]: דרכי' גו' נתיבותי' (דהתורה) שלום (6)

I was surprised to read the above, namely that an orthodox *Beis Haknesses* should be embroiled in a *machlokes* relating to "undermining a Jew's living" - (the name used by the Shulchan Aruch for taking away the livelihood of a Jew for the said reason - refusing to sing "Hatikva"!

(1) The conditions of a Shliach Tzibbur and Chazan are precisely laid out in the Shulchan Aruch: He ought to have a pleasant voice; he ought to rouse his listeners to fear Hashem to whom he's praying as their agent and in their name and other such requirements -- and nothing else. This is also a logical (besides for the main thing, that so is written in the Shulchan Aruch).

(2) Even as regards praying before Hashem, the contract stipulates several times when not the regular Chazan davens at the *amud*.

(3) There are some people that are demanding of *this* Chazan to recite *this* at the shul and not someone else, even though he says that it conflicts with his conscience.

(4) It is plainly obvious that the Chazzan is not the representative of the congregation at the *Knesset* in Yerushalayim or of meetings regarding communal matters and the like, and certainly it wouldn't occur to him to be such.

(5) It would seem that person who acts against his conscience, especially in matters of religion, cannot serve as an Orthodox Chazzan.

(6) Explanation was probably lacking in this matter, and when the explanation will be filled in, "peace will reign upon Israel" in accordance to what is said of the Torah: "Its ways are pleasant and its routes are of peace." ■

PRUZBUL: WHAT? HOW? WHO? WHEN?

Although according to the Alter Rebbe and many other poskim the *pruzbul* should be done before the shemitta year, he brings opinions (Choshen Mishpat, Laws of Loans, seif 36) that it can be done also at the end of shemitta. We therefore present these halachos of a *pruzbul* from

AskTheRav.com by HaRav **Yosef Yeshaya Braun** shlita,
Mara D'Asra and member of the Badatz of Crown Heights.

WHAT?

The annulment of all debts in the *shemitta* year applies also nowadays, rabbinically, both in Eretz Yisrael and in *chutz la'aretz*. When our Sages saw that people were not lending money when shemitta approached, thereby transgressing the prohibition of, “Beware, lest there be in your heart an unfaithful thought, saying, ‘The seventh year, the year of release has approached,’ and you will begrudge your needy brother and not give him . . . and it will be a sin to you”, they enacted the *pruzbul*.

Pruzbul is a legal mechanism through which one gives over the debts they are owed to the Beis Din, who can then collect them on the lender’s behalf at any time.

In this legal protocol, the lender transfers his debts to a Beis Din, by declaring to them before shemitta, “I hereby transmit my debts to you, so I may collect them whenever I want.” When he says this, it is considered as if he handed over his documents to the Beis Din and asked the Beis Din to collect the debts for him. Therefore his debts do not become annulled with the onset of shemitta by law.

HOW?

How is the *pruzbul* performed? This is done by gathering three men, who serve as a Beis Din, and telling them,

“I hereby transmit my debts to you, so I may collect them whenever I want.”

הֲרִינִי מוֹסֵר לְכֶם כָּל חוֹבוֹת שֵׁישׁ לִי שְׁאֲנֶנָּה אוֹתָם
 כָּל זְמַן שְׁאֲרָצָה

WHO?

Every G-d-fearing person should be stringent to make a *pruzbul*, since it involves no expenditure, and is easy to do. The Rebbe adds that nowadays this is applicable to all individuals. Furthermore, from the Alter Rebbe’s words, we can infer that this is the correct mode of conduct.

The *pruzbul* can function only if the borrower has some real estate, even if it’s a tiny parcel of land, even if the real estate is his only temporarily, and even if it’s only rented or lent to him.

The annulment of debts applies to **women** as well [who have their own money]. Some are of

the opinion that it also applies to **children** who have a personal bank account.

WHEN?

The Alter Rebbe rules that the correct time for making the *pruzbul* is at the end of the sixth year, before Rosh Hashana of shemitta. It is a mitzva to publicize this matter. In order not to forget this important edict, the best time to do the *pruzbul* is right after Hataras Nedarim, because at that time there are three men present who serve as a Beis Din, and you could then say the phrase for the *pruzbul*.

If you forgot to make a *pruzbul* by Hataras Nedarim, it can be done later in the day, up until *shkiyah*.

Husbands may make a *pruzbul* on behalf of their wives and fathers on behalf of their daughters, but they should inform them of the fact that a *pruzbul* was made on their behalf.

PRUZBUL AT THE END OF SHEMITAH

The Alter Rebbe writes that if someone didn't make a *pruzbul* at the end of sixth year, he should do so at the end of the seventh, as according to some opinions loans are collectable until the end of shemitta. In 5748, after Hataras Nedarim the Rebbe said: "Since this year is a shemitta year, we will be *yotze* also according to the opinion that one should make a *pruzbul* at the end of the seventh year (as "Shemitta annuls debts at its end") and we will therefore do it once more now at the end of the year." The Rebbe then proceeded to recite the *pruzbul*. (**Sichos Kodesh 5748 p. 5; see Shalsheles Hayachas, end of the entry for the year 5747**)

THE PRUZBUL DOCUMENT:

If a woman can't gather three men, nor does she have the ability to make someone else a *shlich* for her, a *pruzbul* document may be written and handed to the Beis Din. The *pruzbul* form is available from the Badatz (on the AskTheRav website) and should be filled out and sub-

mitted to the Beis Din before Rosh Hashana. The forms can be placed in the mailbox at the door of the Badatz office: 390a Kingston Ave. (between Crown & Montgomery St.), or faxed to: 718-771-6000. They may also be emailed to: shtarpruzbul@gmail.com.

The Rebbe writes that even those who are sure that they have no collectable debts, and thus have no need for a *pruzbul*, should nonetheless attempt to fulfill this edict. This can be achieved through lending a small sum of money to someone else in order to be able to observe the rabbinical institution of *pruzbul*. Writing a *pruzbul* is a means to express our affinity to rabbinic rulings. In this case, we use this opportunity as well to express our affinity for following the ruling of the Alter Rebbe to make a *pruzbul* at the end of the sixth year of shemitta.

For the spiritual significance of debt annulment and the connection with Rosh Hashana, see the sichah of 24 Elul 5725. On Erev Rosh Hashana 5726 after Hataras Nedarim and the recital of the *pruzbul* formula, the Rebbe said, "May you be inscribed and sealed for a good and sweet year," and then added with a smile, "because we already made a *pruzbul* here below, there will not be a *pruzbul* above."

LAWS OF GEULA:

The source for the annulment of monetary debts during shemitta throughout galus is by Rabbinic law, so the Sages were able to override its effect with the enactment of *pruzbul*. However, in the time of the Beis HaMikdash (and therefore in the era of Redemption) we will once again have shemitta (of all types, including for money) by Torah decree, and the *pruzbul* enactment will be nullified. It is disputed among poskim whether a *pruzbul* instituted on monies lent while still in galus will continue to be effective in the era of Redemption. ■



BORN & BRED IN 770:

Our Tishrei With the Rebbe
As Kids in Crown Heights

Rabbi Sholom Yaakov Chazan and Avrohom Rainitz
farbreng with Rabbi Sholom Ber Brod, Rabbi Chaim
Levi Goldstein, and Rabbi Yosef Reizes

There are Chassidim who saw the Rebbe for the first time when they went on Kevutza. There are Chassidim who saw the Rebbe for the first time a year or two after their bar mitzva when they went for Tishrei. There are Chassidim who saw the Rebbe at younger ages, when their parents took them along for a visit to the Rebbe. And there are Chassidim, like the three with whom we sat and farbrenged, who grew up with the Rebbe from when they were babies.

Part I - Rosh Hashana to Yom Kippur

**THERE ARE
CHASSIDIM
WHO SAW**

the Rebbe for the first time when they went on Kevutza. There are Chassidim who saw the Rebbe for the first time a year or two after their bar mitzva when they went for Tishrei. There are Chassidim who saw the Rebbe at younger ages, when their parents took them along for a visit to the Rebbe. And there are Chassidim, like the three with whom we sat and farbrenged, who grew up with the Rebbe from when they were babies.

For these Chassidim, the Rebbe's presence, without pictures or videos, is an inseparable part of their childhood memories. Imagine that ever since you can remember, you've davened nearly every Shabbos with the Rebbe, you "hung around" at farbrengens from a very young age, and were regularly present at all the major events of the year. Nearly every childhood memory is associated, in some way or another, with Beis Chayeinu and the Rebbe.

When I asked them to farbreng together and tell their memories, they themselves didn't appreciate the treasure they had stored away. "What can I tell you already?" asked one of them. Another one said, "I'll come because you asked, but I'm letting you know that I may not have anything to say."

After we said l'chaim and sat for nearly two hours, the memories began to flow. At the end of the farbrengen, when I thanked them, they said they need to thank me because the farbrengen together extracted memories that had been dormant for many decades.



In one of the sichos, the Rebbe Rayatz said that the Alter Rebbe received from his Rebbe, the Maggid, who received it from his Rebbe, the Baal Shem Tov, the saying "What

do you remember?" The Rebbe Rayatz said that this revived the Chassidim throughout the generations in a manner of "resurrection of the dead."

That is why we gathered here, to farbreng, to respond to the question, "What do you remember?" with an emphasis on Tishrei. Before we get to Tishrei though, I'll ask, "What is your first memory of the Rebbe?"

Rabbi Yosef Reizes: At first we lived in Brownsville, about a half hour's walk from 770. That is where most of Anash lived in those days. As a little boy I did not go to the Rebbe every Shabbos which is perhaps why I remember Rosh Hashana with the Rebbe. My father would take us with him for shacharis on Rosh Hashana so we could hear the shofar by the Rebbe. Since I was a little boy, my memories are vague and I only remember that in those days, the tefillos of the Yomim Noraim were in the small zal.

Rabbi Chaim Levi Goldstein: My first clear memory is of a farbrengen from motzoei Simchas Torah 5719/1958. The day before, at the Simchas Torah farbrengen toward morning, the Rebbe taught the niggun "Shamil." At the farbrengen when Yom Tov was over, it was the second time that the Chassidim sang it together with the Rebbe. I was five and they hadn't taken me to the farbrengen in the middle of the night, but my mother told me that the Rebbe taught a new niggun and now everyone was singing it. That sight, of Chassidim standing and singing this yearning tune with the Rebbe, is etched in my memory.

Another moment that I remember which although it's not my first memory it is special, is when the Rebbe came in for hakafos. In those moments there was a feeling of a heavenly joy and as a boy I felt that we are the most fortunate people in the world!



R' YOSEF REIZES

R' Reizes: The first time I was present at a farbrengen when the Rebbe taught niggunim was Simchas Torah 5721/1960. The Rebbe taught “Ata Vechartanu.” At the time, they had finished building the “shalash” (the open area that had been between 770 and the adjacent apartment building) and for some reason, the Rebbe did not sit on the farbrengen bima as usual. Rather, they put some tables together with a bench in front of it and when the Rebbe arrived he went up on the bench and from there to the improvised bima which had a folding chair on it. The Rebbe sat without a table in front of him. Everyone stood around those tables and the Rebbe began to teach the niggun.

My mother a’h told me that the crowd was so small that she could bring me, in the carriage, into the small zal and she stood on the side during the hakafos.

Rabbi Sholom Ber Brod: I was in 770 from a very early age because when I was two we moved to Eastern Parkway, a few blocks from 770. On regular Shabbosos I would walk to 770 too, though I have a special memory from the

tefillos of Rosh Hashana. They would open the Rebbe Rayatz’s apartment and in those years, even the Rebbe Rayatz’s yechidus room was open. As children, we enjoyed going up to the Rebbe Rayatz’s apartment and absorbing the special atmosphere there.

The next scene I want to describe is not my first memory but it is etched in my mind as something exceptional. 770 was first enlarged for Rosh Hashana 5728. After they bought the adjacent building they broke the wall and enlarged the shul that until then was merely in the area between two buildings (known as the “shalash”). They did not complete the building until after Tishrei 5728 but before Rosh Hashana they had already broken the upper part of the wall of the building which created an interesting situation that in the front of the shul (“mizrach”) there was an entire area which wasn’t suitable for seating but as bachurim, of course, we had no problem standing there. For the first time in my life I could stand very close to the Rebbe. We stood in the area behind the



R' CHAIM LEVI GOLDSTEIN

aron kodesh, on ladders and boxes and saw the Rebbe throughout the davening.

R' Reizes: I stood there too, and it was very special to see the Rebbe's face so clearly during tekios. I stood on the other side of the wall and the Rebbe stood a few feet away.

The previous time that I was so close was when I was a little boy, when the davening took place in the small zal. My father put me on a chair next to Rashag and I could see the Rebbe from up close.

MOTZOEI SHABBOS SELICHOS – 770 WAS FULL

Tishrei with the Rebbe. Let's begin with motzoei Shabbos Selichos. Can you describe it?

R' Reizes: You began with the hardest part to describe, not because I don't know how to describe what I saw but mainly because Selichos with the Rebbe was the least "picturesque" of the things that one could describe.

When I was a boy, my parents and teachers told me that the Rebbe is like the Baal

Shem Tov who sees what is happening in all the worlds and he can speak with Hashem on behalf of the Jewish people. Since, in the Baal Shem Tov stories, when they described his tefilla, they would describe the "fire" and his special intensity I expected to see this with the Rebbe.

I particularly recall the first Selichos when I came to the Rebbe, as a little boy, and I was sure I would see the Rebbe saying Selichos in a flame of fire, a burning flame. I was plenty surprised to see the simplicity with which the Rebbe came in for Selichos. He put his sefer on the shtender and began to read, word for word, from the sefer. When I grew older, I realized that this is how the Rebbe davens all year, and over the years I understood and was amazed specifically by the fact that the Rebbe was able to hold back and hide the great fire that surely sparked within him during the davening. Like the idea that "Tzaddikim are similar to their Creator," and "Just as He has power in the infinite, He has power in the finite."

R' Brod: Someone once said that the Rebbe is one of the 36 hidden tzaddikim. It is known that during the times for davening,

the Rebbeim would review in their thoughts all of the Chassidim who are mekushar and do wonders on their behalf. Despite this, we saw the Rebbe come in and go out from the davening with such simplicity that it was impossible to imagine that in those moments the Rebbe was overturning worlds.

As for Selichos, I can add that Selichos on motzoei Shabbos was one of the most crowded events in 770. Aside from the local residents and guests that began coming for Tishrei, many of Anash and mekuravim who lived out of town and could not come for Tishrei, would come for Selichos. 770 was packed from wall to wall.

GOING TO THE OHEL – SHROUDED IN MYSTERY

Erev Rosh Hashana, the Rebbe went to the Ohel. When you were young, the Rebbe did not yet have a small room at the Ohel so you could see the Rebbe from up close. What do you remember of the trip to the Ohel?

R' Reizes: It was one of the few times a year that the Rebbe went to the Ohel and everyone went in with him. Aside from erev Rosh Hashana, Anash went to the Ohel on Yud Shevat and Yud-Beis Tammuz.

R' Goldstein: In continuation to what was mentioned previously, that the Rebbe generally hid himself, at the Ohel it was possible to openly see “Rebbishe inyanim.” The Rebbe stood facing the tziyun of the Rebbe Rayatz, leaning on his arm as he made various movements and one could see how he would bend his head down very low. Then, the Rebbe read the pidyonei nefesh with his lips constantly moving. Some of the panim he tore and put in an envelope and some he put in another envelope. Others he threw towards the tziyun. During the entire process, how the Rebbe read the panim, although of course we did not understand anything, it was possible to sense that the Rebbe was effecting heavenly matters there.

I once said to my brother, Sholom Ber, that he must make a movie of the Rebbe’s *avodas ha’kodesh* at the Ohel, which he did. It wasn’t simple because there were always Chassidim who did not approve. My father, R’ Yosef, got it over the head more than once for filming the Rebbe. However, thanks to them, we can have an idea today of what occurred there.

R’ Brod: After the Rebbe returned from the Ohel and davened mincha in 770, he went home, as was the custom of the Rebbeim on erev Rosh Hashana, to speak to their wives. The Rebbe returned to 770 after Yom Tov began, walking from his home on President Street. There was usually a rotation as far as who would accompany the Rebbe but for some reason, the night of Rosh Hashana everyone was occupied at 770 and it happened that for several years I, together with my friend, R’ Yosef Yitzchok Vilenkin, escorted the Rebbe at this special time.

R’ Reizes: By the way, speaking about the Rebbe walking from his home to 770, I remember that one Friday night, the Rebbe stopped on his way right near this house, 744 Eastern Parkway, where *Beis Moshiach’s* office is now. That was unusual because the Rebbe usually walked quickly, without stopping. On that occasion, I don’t remember precisely when it occurred, the Rebbe stopped for a while, looked at the house, and then went on.

TEKIOS – FIERY MOMENTS

Okay, let’s move on to the main event of the day of Rosh Hashana. What do you remember of those lofty moments of the tekios?

R’ Reizes: Unlike Selichos, the tekios were definitely a time when you could see a burning fire on the Rebbe’s face, and even people like ourselves could see and understand that all his actions were directed towards heavenly matters. We saw G-dly fire.

Before the tekios there was another moving and chilling event, the reciting of the haftarah.

There was utter silence in the shul and you could hear the Rebbe clearly. The Rebbe cried a lot as he read the haftorah on the first day, about Chana the mother of Shmuel. The Rebbe began in a quiet voice and then you suddenly heard a strong crying voice that intermingled with the words of the haftorah, “Chana, why do you cry... am I not better for you than ten children... this is the boy I prayed for.”

I remember in particular how the Rebbe raised his voice for the brachos of the haftorah, as he said the words, “And your word, our King, is true and everlasting.”

After the haftorah were the tekios. To the Rebbe, it was a complete “seder avoda.” First, he arranged the bundles of panim which the secretary brought up earlier. The Rebbe spread his tallis over the bundles and then raised the tallis in such a way that there remained a sort of square “window,” through which he could see the siddur.

After the Rebbe said “La’menatzeiach Livnei Korach” in a special tone, and the verses of “Min Ha’metzar,” he covered his face and the bundles again with the tallis. At this point, there was an entire order of arranging the shofars (mainly on the second day of Rosh Hashana but also a bit on the first day), with the Rebbe arranging the black shofar in a certain way and the lighter shofars and placing a red handkerchief and a white handkerchief over them. Nobody understood the significance of any of this but it was enough to watch the Rebbe’s gravity to understand that this was something G-dly.

The Rebbe’s face throughout the tekios process from the end of the recitation of the haftorah until the end of the tekios and the verses that follow them, “Ashrei Ha’Am Yode’i Serua,” etc. was terrifying, fraught. It was scary to look at him.

R’ Brod: One year, the Rebbe spent about 40-45 minutes on the last tekia. Those who stood closest to the bima knew they would be

in the “pressure cooker” but that usually ended within a short time. That year, many felt that they were about to faint and had to go outside. At the end of the tekios, the most desirable spot in 770 was nearly empty.

R’ Reizes: It’s interesting to note what I heard from my father, who heard from Chassidim in Beis Chayeinu before the nesius, that in those years when the Rebbe blew the shofar (perhaps in Elul the year he davened for the amud after the passing of his father or perhaps when he blew for himself in his room) the tekios were smooth. It was only after the nesius that it sometimes seemed there were difficulties with the tekios.

R’ Brod: I stood between the Torah reading table and the farbrengen platform from where I could see well. On the other side there were bundles of panim that blocked the view but on this side the Rebbe placed just shofars, and it was possible to see the Rebbe’s face clearly during the tekios.

There were times that Rashag would come in to stand on the side of the bima and then we couldn’t see that well. One year, someone put a box so nobody could stand there but when the Rebbe came for the tekios he wanted Rashag to stand on the side of the bima and when he saw there was no place to stand, the Rebbe himself began to pull the bima towards him. Obviously, a few of us bachurim immediately jumped and pushed the bima so the Rebbe wouldn’t exert himself.

TASHLICH – PROCESSION ON EASTERN PARKWAY

Rosh Hashana afternoon is when Tashlich takes place. In the early years, when this was done in the Botanic Garden, all the Chassidim, led by the Rebbe, walked on Eastern Parkway. Did you see this?

R’ Goldstein: Certainly. This occurred until the mid-chofs (sixties). I remember how the



הרבי בדרכו לאוהל בערב ראש השנה תשד"מ

Rebbe would lead the way. Next to him was the secretary, R' Chodakov, then a group of ziknei Anash, then the children followed by all of Anash.

R' Brod: Living on Eastern Parkway, I remember this procession from a very young age, even before I could join. I would watch from the window.

In later years, I participated in the procession. As R' Goldstein said, children had a place of honor in the middle of the procession and it was all very orderly.

The way back wasn't via Eastern Parkway but President Street. Since in the park itself the participants dispersed, the walk back wasn't orderly. The Rebbe walked quickly, followed by Anash in no particular order.

At the end of the chofs, they began to do Tashlich in the yard behind 770.

VOV TISHREI – VAGUE MEMORIES

Rebbetzin Chana, mother of the Rebbe, passed away on Shabbos, 6 Tishrei 5725 at

mincha time. Do you remember anything of that time?

R' Goldstein: We were young boys and our memories about this are vague. What I remember is that during the burial the Rebbe looked for something and he went about among the graves until they finally found what the Rebbe was looking for. In general, there was pushing and the Rebbe was not pleased by the chaos there. My father filmed some of the funeral.

R' Reizes: I was learning in the yeshiva on Bedford and they took us by bus from the yeshiva. When we got to the cemetery, the principal did not want us to get off and he stood in the doorway of the bus so we couldn't get off. In the end, one of boys opened the emergency exit in the back of the bus and a moment later the bus was empty.

BIRKAS HA'BANIM – FRONT ROW

One of the most moving moments in the life of a tamim was "Birkas HaBanim" on erev Yom Kippur, when the Rebbe blessed



הרבי נותן צדקה בערב יום כיפור תשל"ה

the talmidim. When did you first participate in this?

R' Brod: In the first two decades of the *nesius*, this occurred in the Rebbe's room. In the early years, the bachurim also stood in the room but when the number of bachurim grew, things changed. At first the Rebbe stood in the doorway and all the bachurim stood in gan eden ha'tachton, on the steps leading up to the second floor and in the entrance hall to 770. Then the entire event was moved to the small zal.

When we were tmimim, it still took place near the Rebbe's room. The older bachurim were in gan eden ha'tachton and we barely managed to push into the entrance hall.

The first time I was actually inside was when the event took place in the small zal. I stood close by, in the first row next to the table that the Rebbe stood on. Those were somber moments, standing below and seeing the Rebbe's face right over you; it was awe-inspiring.

R' Reizes: During the bracha, the Rebbe held his tallis in a way that was reminiscent of the tekios.

YOM KIPPUR - LIKE THE SEDER AVODA

Yom Kippur is the day of the year when Chassidim spent the most time with the Rebbe, throughout all the lengthy tefillos until the crescendo of Napoleon's March. What special memories do you have of this holy day?

R' Brod: One could say that the happiest day of the year was Yom Kippur. It was one long consecutive pleasure to be with the Rebbe in one room for another tefilla and another tefilla, for hours. Simply a spiritual delight. As a bachur, I would get to 770 an hour before Birkas HaBanim and leave motzoei Yom Kippur for Kiddush Levana ... Who thought of going home?

At the davening Yom Kippur night there are some particularly inspiring niggunim, Yaaleh ... Today, they speed through the niggunim

somewhat but they used to sing them slowly; it was a pleasure. Even if I don't recall the details, the image of "Yom Kippur with the Rebbe" is engraved in my memory as a G-dly delight.

R' Reizes: One year, when we were still children, we stood next to the Rebbe's bima and some bachurim tried to hurry the chazan in Neila. At a certain point, the chazan gave in and began davening more quickly. Then the Rebbe turned around and called for the secretary, R' Leibel Groner, and said something to him. R' Groner went down immediately to the chazan and told him not to rush. From that point on, it was as though time had stopped. The chazan took his time and of course, nobody urged him to speed up.

At Neila in 5737 (1976), before "Avinu Malkeinu," the Rebbe turned to R' Dovid Raskin and instructed that all children in the shul should go up on the Rebbe's platform. It was chaos until all the children got there. When they began to sing "Avinu Malkeinu," the Rebbe began to sob. It was terrible to see the Rebbe shaking as he cried and it went on and on.

When it was time for Napoleon's March, the Rebbe got up on a chair as he cried and began to encourage the singing with both hands, as he cried. Only then, did he slowly stop crying and the encouraging of the singing increased.

R' Brod: I remember another moment, from the nineties. Usually, when we were up to the shofar blowing after the March it was very noisy in 770 and hard to hear. One year, after the March, the Rebbe turned to the crowd and looked straight ahead at the crowd and everyone was silent. They thought the Rebbe wanted to say something and then, when it was absolutely silent, they could clearly hear the tekia.



R' SHOLOM BER BROD

I'd like to share a thought that occurred to me over the years. In the avoda of the kohen gadol on Yom Kippur in the Beis HaMikdash, it says clearly that it wasn't possible for every person to see everything. That was the feeling on Yom Kippur in 770. If you stood in a place where you could see and hear Maftir Yona, you couldn't see the March well.

In general, when we experienced the Yomim Noraim with the Rebbe with the numerous events – the farbrengen of erev Rosh Hashana, giving panim, going to the Ohel, tekios, Tashlich, farbrengen and kos shel bracha, Vav Tishrei, kapparos, Birkas HaBanim, the tefillos of Yom Kippur and Napoleon's March – our feeling was like being in the Beis HaMikdash as the kohen gadol, the Rebbe, did the seder avoda. ■

HAKHEL

A Day That Lasts A Year
(and six more...)





**Interview with Rabbi Yosef Karasik,
rav in Emek Chefer and author of the
popular series The Jewish Home on how
the Rebbe "revolutionized" the mitzva
of Hakhel in theory and in practice**

**RABBI
YOSEF
KARASIK**

has been serving in rabbanus for over 30 years, first as a rav and shliach in the Central Arava region of the country and then in Bat Chefer-Emek Chefer. In both areas he has made the name of Heaven beloved among his flock, who look up to him not only as their Rav but also as someone pleasant to deal with, someone whose door is always open for them.

He has successfully been mekarev Jews of many backgrounds and communities, who were so far from the path of Torah and mitzvos. In his gentle way he broke down barriers and reached people's hearts. Whoever has seen the magnificent shul he established in Sapir in the Central Arava area, as well as the numerous people who regularly frequent it, will understand what a "something from nothing" feat this was. Beforehand, there were no shuls in the area – and nobody who asked for one either.

He is well known for his clear writing style which suits a broad array of people from the Chassidic to the not-yet-religious. His major literary accomplishment is HaBayis HaYehudi B'mishnas HaKabbala V'HaChassidus, in which he explains the topic of the Jewish home from various angles (translated by SIE). He wrote and edited another book in the same style, HaShabbos B' Kabbala U'B'Chasidus (two volumes). He also published a book on tzedaka and the laws of interest from a Chassidic perspective, which was even published in Russian. He is invited by shluchim throughout the country to speak.

For a few years, R' Karasik was the chozer in 770. After the farbrengens, he would sit and review the sichos the Rebbe had said, translating them into Lashon HaKodesh for his friends, and explaining them as well. I still remember

hundreds of guests crowding around him after a farbrengen.

R' Karasik spent two Hakhel years in Crown Heights, and I asked him to share his memories of those years with us.

WHAT IS SPECIAL ABOUT HAKHEL

First of all, as we begin the Shnas Hakhel, please give us a description of Hakhel during the Temple times.

Once in seven years, after the *shemitta* year, on the first day of Chol HaMoed Sukkos, all the Jewish people gathered – men, women, and children – in the courtyard of the Beis HaMikdash, in the Ezras Nashim. A special wooden platform was built, upon which the king sat and read sections from the book of Devarim which urged the nation to observe the mitzvos.

After reading from the Torah, the king prayed to Hashem on behalf of the nation, that they be blessed with success in all matters, both material and spiritual. He concluded with seven blessings for the nation, the malchus, the Kohanim and the Beis HaMikdash.

The Torah reading was from a Torah that was used only once in seven years, and from several sources it sounds like it was the Torah that Moshe wrote himself, on his final day.

The Hakhel gathering was preceded by the blowing of trumpets. On the morning of that day, Kohanim scattered throughout Yerushalayim and blew golden trumpets, in order to remind the people that the special day had arrived and they had to go to the Temple Mount.

What else took place then?

There were no speeches by distinguished rabbis, not even by the High Priest. It was only



RABBI YOSEF KARASIK

the king who read most of Devarim from the Torah scroll. We can assume that it took at least an hour or more.

The main topics the king read about were: the mitzva of belief in G-d, accepting the yoke of Heaven and the yoke of mitzvos, about the mitzvos dependent on the Land – the section about *truma* and *maaser* for the priests and levites, the mitzva of gifts to the poor, and the curses and blessings.

Why was this gathering regarded with such importance when there was nothing new in what the king read?

Indeed, the king did not impart anything new. He read verses that everybody knew. Yet everybody was commanded to come and stand silently and reverently, with “great kavana,” because the goal was not to acquire new information. The goal was to strengthen the nation’s

belief in Hashem, and urge them to go in the ways of the Torah.

By the king reading those passages, he implanted a *dveikus* (cleaving) to the path of uprightness and truth. There is an expression in one of the Rishonim (the Chinuch, mitzva #612) which says, “This mitzva is a strong pillar and great glory in our religion.”

I assume millions of Jews assembled to listen to the king. How did they all hear him?

It was an enormous crowd of millions of Jews; but more than hearing, the main thing was to see and experience. Just being present and seeing the king and all the people gathered together at the Beis HaMikdash, had a tremendous spiritual effect on everyone.

The entire event was an outstandingly uplifting one, which left an indelible impression

for at least seven years, until the next Hakhel gathering.

THE HAKHEL GATHERING WAS LIKE MATTAN TORAH

The Rebbe made an issue of the topic of Hakhel. What's the Rebbe's approach to it?

At the farbrengen Erev Shnas Hakhel, 5734, the Rebbe explained something amazing about Hakhel – that it was actually a sort of Mattan Torah at Sinai experience revisited. The Rebbe said: In order to arouse and strengthen the nation to cleave to Torah and mitzvos, Hashem established that once in seven years there would be something like Mattan Torah at Har Sinai. This was Hakhel, when the king read from the Torah so that the nation could, as it were, relive Mattan Torah.

This idea is based on Rambam (Hilchos Chagiga) which says that the participants in Hakhel have to listen with awe like at the event of Mattan Torah, and when the king read from the Torah, the Jew had to consider it “as though he was just commanded and that he heard it from Hashem.” So the Rambam compares Hakhel to Mattan Torah at Sinai!

So you can imagine the great excitement people felt at this once in-seven-years event, which was reminiscent of Mattan Torah, when all the Jewish people heard the Ten Commandments.

In the Rebbe's sichos, the expression “Shnas Hakhel” appears, not “Mitzvas Hakhel.” The mitzva ended after an hour or two yet the Rebbe extended the idea to the entire year. Why?

The term “Shnas Hakhel” that the Rebbe used countless times is not self understood. It's one thing to call the seventh year “Shnas Shemitta,” because the mitzva of shemitta applies to the entire year when the land must not be worked, but Hakhel was done on the second day of Sukkos only. So why did the Rebbe refer

to the entire year as Shnas Hakhel? Why would a mitzva that applied at the beginning of the year provide a name for the entire year?

It's the Rebbe's chiddush. Since the event was exceedingly dramatic, with the uniting of all Jews around the king, it affected the entire year.

How does Chassidus view the mitzva of Hakhel?

The mitzva of Hakhel gives a Jew the strength to prevail in the mundane world and preserve that spiritual atmosphere during the next six years (until the next shemitta).

In the year before Hakhel, the shemitta year, the Jew was cut off from mundane work in the field and his time was dedicated to Hashem and His service. At the end of the shemitta year he went back to work – plowing, planting, harvesting and other mundane activities. In order that his daily work would not weaken his fear of Heaven, the Torah commands him to go to the king and hear words of inspiration from him.

From this we see how powerful Hakhel was. It was an event that took just a few hours, yet it left such an imprint that it enabled the Jew to serve Hashem in the six years to come!

How did such a short event educate people to dveikus to the ways of Torah?

The Rebbe once explained this as follows: The shemitta year was actually a year of Shabbos. Just as on Shabbos, a Jew transcends his weekday affairs and hovers in more elevated realms, so too, in a way, throughout the shemitta year a Jew transcended daily life by being forbidden to work the land.

When the shemitta year was over, he had to return to the daily grind by descending from his spiritual high. This is inherently dangerous, because in the transition from the rarified atmosphere of “Shabbos” to the weekday, a person can lose his bearings. This is why we were commanded to go to the king, who confers

the strength to transmit the holiness into the mundane world.

The mitzva of Hakhel was like a havdala ceremony that the king did for the people at the end of Shabbos- the year of shemitta.

In the Rebbe's letters and sichos he emphasizes the children in the mitzva of Hakhel. Why is there an emphasis on children when in other mitzvos they are exempt?

The Torah says explicitly to gather everyone, men, women and children. In tractate Chagiga, Chazal ask why the children have to be brought, "The men come to listen; the women come to see; but why do the children come?" Rabbi Elozor ben Azaria answers, "To give a reward to those who bring them."

On such an occasion, it would only be proper if there was utter silence so people could concentrate on hearing the king, that even a bird would not fly or chirp like at Mattan Torah. But when you think of millions of children being present, who are bored being there for so long, what do you think they did? They cried, played and generally caused chaos. You would think that this would adversely affect the ceremony. How could people pay attention to the Torah reading with millions of children distracting them?

Furthermore, the Aliya L'regel, especially for those who lived far from Yerushalayim, was a difficult trip involving walking for days and weeks. They were told to bring the children so they would have a greater reward. What does this mean – to endanger a child in order that the parents have a better seat in Gan Eden?

The words of the Tanna, "to give reward to those who bring them" has a deeper meaning:

There is no greater reward for parents than children who are raised to Torah and fear of Heaven, to faith and connection to the king. The assemblage of the nation at the Mikdash with the king would be engraved in their tender

souls and pave the way for a lifetime of Torah and mitzvos.

This is the great reward that the parents, who brought their children to Hakhel, received. The trip may have been difficult, but it resulted in years of nachas and peace of mind.

This is also true for our trip to the Rebbe in galus. We need to bring the children to Beis Rabbeinu She'b'Bavel. This will positively affect them, and educate them to Torah and Chassidus with dveikus and hiskashrus to the Rebbe.

THE REBBE'S CONDUCT IN A HAKHEL YEAR

What was special about a Hakhel year in Beis Chayeinu?

Hakhel years in 770 were special. To a certain extent, those who spent a Shnas Hakhel in 770 felt that it was something like the actual Hakhel, as people gathered around the Rebbe, our king and leader of the generation, as he stood on the nights of Sukkos and taught us Torah.

In the Hakhel year of 5741, the Rebbe began to say sichos each night of Sukkos. He also announced Mivtza Simchas Beis HaShoeiva, namely that every night of Sukkos we should go out and dance in the street and rejoice.

Hakhel emphasizes children, whereas other mitzvos in the Torah do not address children directly. Indeed, at the hakafos of Hakhel 5741, something unusual took place for children:

The established custom was that at the hakafos the rabbanim, distinguished members of Anash, and honored guests were honored, but before the fifth hakafa there was an enormous surprise when the Rebbe called up all the children (and their educators) for the hakafa. The Rebbe himself went to the hakafa with the children, and he held the Torah for about ten minutes. He danced vigorously and with great joy that cannot be described in words. That hakafa was like the great Hakhel when the king



and he participated in many Tzivos Hashem children's rallies.

As was previously mentioned, starting from Hakhel 5741 the Rebbe began to say a sicha every night of Sukkos. That year, the Rebbe even farbrenge on two very unusual occasions, which he had never done before:

Purim afternoon, which was a Friday that year, the Rebbe entered the zal upstairs and held a brief farbrenge. He said a maamar, they sang a niggun etc.

read from the Torah before the people, including the children.

Since then, in many shuls of Anash the custom is that fifth hakafa is dedicated to the children and their teachers, especially in a Hakhel year.

I should add that the Rebbe also founded the Tzivos Hashem organization that Sukkos.

Can you tell us more about what the Rebbe did in a Hakhel year?

In many farbrengens and sichos, the Rebbe mentioned the mitzva of Hakhel and explained that with every mitzva and holy action that you do during the year, you have to feel that it is part of Shnas Hakhel. There were years when, in nearly every sicha and farbrenge, the Rebbe mentioned the significance of the year and connected the inyan of the day to Hakhel.

In the Hakhel years of 5741 and 5748, there were many additional "Hakhels", which the Rebbe himself made. The Rebbe farbrenge or said a sicha on nearly every possible occasion,

On Shabbos HaGadol of that year, which fell on 14 Nissan, Erev Pesach, the Rebbe held a farbrenge (the refreshments were water and bananas since on Erev Pesach we don't eat food that is used Pesach night). I remember that the tmimim connected these unusual events with the fact that it was a Shnas Hakhel.

In earlier years, the Rebbe would farbrenge only on Shabbos Mevarchim or on Shabbosas that were close to some special date, but from Shnas Hakhel 5748, the Rebbe farbrenge every Shabbos, not only when there was a reason to do so because of the date.

Something that stood out in those Hakhel years was the tremendous simcha, especially during Sukkos. That's the way it was in 5741 when the Rebbe announced Mivtza Simchas Beis HaShoeiva, and all the nights of Sukkos they danced till dawn. That's when the dancing on Kingston and Montgomery began.

In 5748 there was also tremendous and special joy at the Simchas Torah hakafos. They were longer, and the simcha was unusually great. Many interpreted this as being associated

with a Shnas Hakhel (in addition to it being ten years since the Rebbe's heart attack and recovery in 5738).

You were present that Sukkos 5741, when they started the Simchas Beis HaShoeiva dancing every night. What do you remember?

The sicha of the first night of Sukkos was a surprise; nobody expected it. I was a young boy and I was unable to find a place close to the Rebbe during farbrengens, and it was hard for me to hear the Rebbe on Shabbos when there was no microphone. During that particular sicha I was close to the Rebbe and was able to hear him, which made me elated.

In my mind's eye I can see that special moment when the Rebbe suddenly began to speak. A tumult erupted as people pushed to get close to be able to hear the sicha. In the first seconds this created a lot of noise, so the Rebbe paused and waited until the crowd more or less settled down, and then he continued speaking. For me personally it was very special, since I finally got to hear a sicha from the Rebbe on Yom Tov.

After the sicha, in which the Rebbe said we should dance and rejoice, the tmimim in 770 felt that they had to do something. Spontaneously, the simcha and dancing burst out and over to that famous corner, at Kingston and Montgomery. Till this day, I remember the second night of Yom Tov, when the tmimim and Anash began dancing in the street. I believe this was the first time that they blocked the street with their dancing.

Close to dawn, they all danced their way back to 770. On the way, they passed by the Rebbe's house on President Street, where the simcha exploded. From there they continued with song and dance towards 770, and most people dispersed and went home. A handful of tmimim continued to dance in the zal upstairs.

I was just a little past my bar mitzva and I fell, exhausted, on to the Rebbe's upholstered

bench, where he sat during Mincha and Maariv in the upstairs zal. But the older tmimim did not let me rest. They picked me up on their shoulders and for a long time they sang and danced with tremendous joy, "Ashreinu she'anu Chassidim."

The sweet taste of that simcha and brotherly, Chassidische love, and tremendous love for the Rebbe, are engraved in my heart forever.

The second night of Sukkos of that year, 5741, it wasn't clear whether the Rebbe would say a sicha. People didn't know whether the sicha of the first night was a one-time thing, or the Rebbe had started a new practice. Together with another two friends from yeshiva, we decided it was worth coming early to reserve a place so we could hear a sicha if one was said.

By three in the afternoon we had already taken places and indeed, the Rebbe said a sicha and I was able to hear him. I was the happiest person on earth.

You had a yechidus with the Rebbe in a Shnas Hakhel ...

I had yechidus in Tishrei of that year but it was a general-yechidus. I remember the moment we entered the Rebbe's room, and it is one of the most moving scenes I experienced that Tishrei 5741.

A group of us tmimim from Tomchei Tmimim in Lud stood in Gan Eden HaTachton for personal yechidus, when it was suddenly suggested that all the Tmimim from the yeshivos in Lud and Kfar Chabad enter together. All the tmimim and the hanhala agreed to the suggestion, and we all entered the Rebbe's room, where we stood in a semi-circle and received the Rebbe's bracha.

In that yechidus there were about thirty bachurim. That was, more or less, the number of bachurim who had come to the Rebbe that Tishrei. Most bachurim remained in Eretz Yisrael. Chabad has expanded tremendously in Eretz Yisrael, and the unbelievable number

of tmimim who travel every year from Eretz Yisrael to 770 is now in the thousands! Is there a bigger miracle than this?

TRAVELING TO THE KING, IN OUR GENERATION

It seems the Rebbe wanted to create a revolution through the mitzva of Hakhel.

At some farbrengens and in some sichos, mainly in 5748, the Rebbe explained that in a Hakhel year we must have gatherings at every opportunity, and use them to inspire people to fear Hashem. This is reminiscent of the great Hakhel gathering which the king addressed in the Beis HaMikdash. The gatherings should take place all year long, and not just on Sukkos.

How should every one of us prepare himself for this special avoda that the Rebbe gave us for a Shnas Hakhel?

Just as we learn the laws of each holiday from Shulchan Aruch, so too we must learn and know the Rebbe's horaos for a Shnas Hakhel from the sichos of the last Shnas Hakhel we had with the Rebbe, 5748. They are printed and available in various anthologies. In addition, every Chassid and Tamim should study and review the rest of the sichos in which the Rebbe explains what Hakhel is all about (a partial list is provided).

Many people want to travel to the Rebbe at some point this year. They also want to take their families. What do you think about this?

The Hakhel gathering is about hiskashrus to the king, with the emphasis on the entire nation coming before the king, seeing him, and listening while he davened and read from the Torah. From this experience one drew strength for the next six years. When we are in galus and we don't have the Beis HaMikdash or a king, the best place to hold a similar event is in 770.

In 5748, after Tishrei, the Rebbe thanked all those who came to him, and it appears from

that sicha that the Rebbe very much wants us to go to 770 in a Shnas Hakhel.

It is important to stress another point. Since the Rebbe coined the phrase, "Shnas Hakhel," and he said many times that throughout the entire year gatherings should be made that are like the original Hakhel, someone who was unable to go to 770 for Sukkos, or in Tishrei at all, should at least see it as his obligation and privilege to go to 770 at some point during the year.

Prices of tickets from Eretz Yisrael and other places have gone up significantly, which makes it challenging to travel, but this is an attempt by the Evil Inclination to prevent people from going. There is no doubt that being in Beis Rabbeinu in a Shnas Hakhel has a tremendous spiritual power for the coming years, so people should try to overcome all obstacles and do what they can to go to Beis Rabbeinu at least once during Hakhel.

Since the mitzva of Hakhel is also for the children, even in our day, in galus, children should be brought to 770. This will touch their hearts, and educate them to Torah and Chassidus with dveikus and hiskashrus to the Rebbe.

ACHDUS

Aside from gatherings, what other significance is there to Hakhel?

Firstly, it's important to emphasize the Rebbe's hora'ah, that in a Shnas Hakhel there ought to be gatherings in every community, city and country – and this was said, first and foremost, to Lubavitcher communities around the world. According to the Rebbe's hora'ah, there should be Hakhel gatherings for all of Anash and the tmimim in every location.

Secondly, these gatherings have an additional purpose, especially nowadays:

It's no secret that there are people outside of Lubavitch who think that there is a lack of

unity among us. We need to show them that the truth is that we are all brothers and are united.

We are all Chabad Chassidim and the Rebbe's talmidim. We all strive to fulfill the Rebbe's horaos and to learn his teachings. True, there are differences of opinion in how to understand various sichos and what the Rebbe meant about how the Besuras HaGeula should be spread, but Chabad was, and will remain, one united entity forever. Nothing will cancel our love and Chassidic fraternity, as it was from the day Chabad Chassidus was founded by the Alter Rebbe over 230 years ago. It will continue further, with Hashem's help, until the hisgalus of Moshiach, may that be now!

It is vital that we preserve a united front and don't splinter. The bottom line is that we all want to educate our children in the way of Chassidus and in 99% of things we are on the same page. We are all Lubavitchers and the differences between us are merely trivial in nature.

Everybody knows that the Rebbe spoke nonstop about Ahavas Yisrael and Achdus Yisrael. At the last farbrengen we had, on Parshas Vayakhel, 5752, the Rebbe focused on the topic of Ahavas Yisrael and being careful with our words so as not to hurt another person, even if he holds differently than us.

Speaking negatively about someone presents an enormous spiritual danger, for chinuch as well:

When a child hears his father or teacher speaking derogatorily about a rav or mashpia, or any Chassid, the message the child absorbs is the fact that his father or teacher can criticize a rav or mashpia etc. Who, then, will guarantee that when the child grows older, he won't also speak derogatorily about a rav or mashpia?

But if the child is taught that we cannot speak negatively about any Chassid, rav or

LEARNING AND BEING PREPARED

The following is a partial list of five fundamental sichos about Hakhel, which teach what the mitzva is and the ramifications for nowadays:

*Likkutei Sichos, volume 14, for Parshas Vayeilech (the role of the Kohanim in blowing the golden trumpets on the day of Hakhel)

*Likkutei Sichos, volume 19, for Sukkos (about bringing little children to Hakhel)

*Likkutei Sichos, volume 24, for Parshas Vayeilech (the mitzva of Hakhel at the end of Shemitta, the verses that the king read at Hakhel)

*Likkutei Sichos, volume 34, for Parshas Vayeilech (Hakhel in the Mikdash like Mattan Torah at Har Sinai)

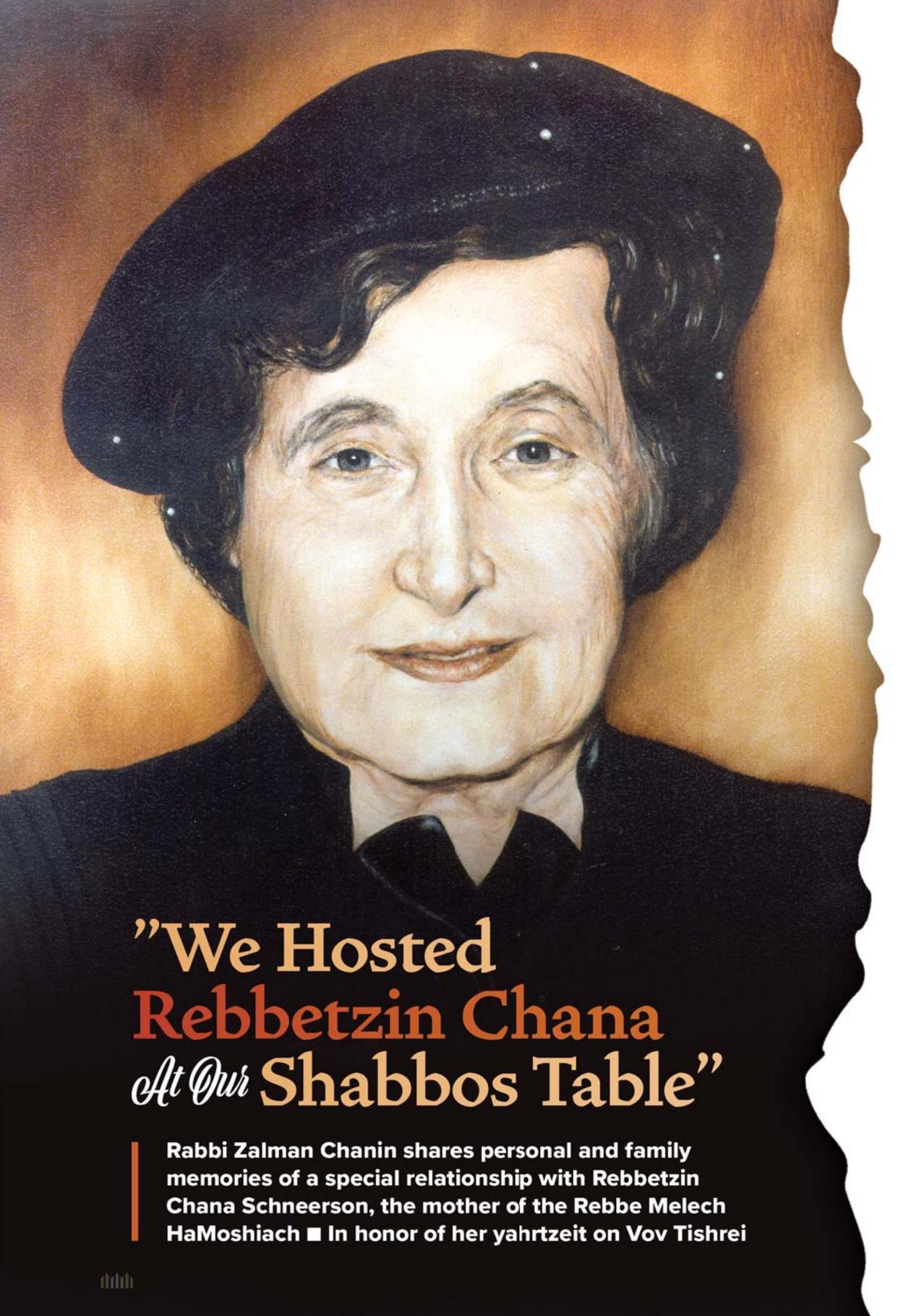
*Likkutei Sichos, volume 34 for Sukkos (fulfilling the mitzva when in galus)

mashpia, that will remain with him forever, and it will be a protective wall for his continued education in the way of Torah and mitzvos.

The only way to stop the machlokes is through learning Chassidus, which refines the middos and subdues the trait of arrogance, so that each of us looks at another from the bottom-up, and accepts every Chassid with love and not with criticism.

Hakhel gatherings in all Lubavitcher communities, cities and countries are mandatory in order to fulfill the Rebbe's horaa and to show the world that we are "one man, with one heart."

The "Order of the Day" is to bring Moshiach. Ahavas Yisrael and Achdus Yisrael at Hakhel gatherings is the way to hasten the hisgalus. ■



**"We Hosted
Rebbetzin Chana
At Our Shabbos Table"**

Rabbi Zalman Chanin shares personal and family memories of a special relationship with Rebbetzin Chana Schneerson, the mother of the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach ■ In honor of her yahrtzeit on Vov Tishrei

AN ACCOUNT OF MY PARENTS'

*first visit to the home of
Rebbetzin Chana a'h in Crown
Heights.*

My parents, R' and Mrs. Chaikel and Leah, got to know Rebbetzin Chana, mother of the Rebbe MHTM. This was when she was in the DP camp in Poking, Germany after leaving Russia. Rebbetzin Chana arrived in Poking with the second group of Chabad Chassidim who left Russia, a few weeks after my parents had arrived there. She was given a room together with my aunt, Mrs. Mussia Nimotin, in a barrack next to my parents.

SHABBOS MEALS WITH THE REBBETZIN

My parents invited the Rebbetzin to eat the Shabbos meals with them. When she agreed, they were delighted. After that, the Rebbetzin graced their room on a regular basis throughout her stay in Poking and illuminated their Shabbos table with her presence.

My sisters say that they were warned to sit nicely and behave but the Rebbetzin always spoke to them as equals and wanted them to take an active part in the meal. Throughout the Shabbos meal, the Rebbetzin spoke about her husband, R' Levi Yitzchok, and about her holy ancestors. My sisters sensed tangibly how the Rebbetzin, with her characteristic warmth, her aristocratic manner, pleasant character, bright eyes and luminous countenance, brought into the small room the atmosphere of the Shabbos Queen and “yom shekulo Shabbos.”

MEETING HER SON AFTER ALMOST 20 YEARS

I heard from my mother that when the Rebbetzin planned on traveling to Paris to meet her son, she spoke openly with my mother and said she was very worried about the trip and the meeting with her son. All she had was old,

worn-out clothes and how could she appear to her son in these clothes?

My mother wanted to help the Rebbetzin who wished for a new dress and she asked my father that on his next trip to Munich, the big city, to try and get some nice fabric for the Rebbetzin. Although it wasn't easy in those days after the war to find luxuries such as this, my father managed to bring beautiful fabric that both the Rebbetzin and my mother liked. My mother had good taste and really knew how to discern the quality of the merchandise.

In order not to inconvenience the Rebbetzin, my mother brought a gentile seamstress to her home. After the garment was ready and the Rebbetzin tried it on, she asked my mother in her Ukrainian accent, “*Vi halt ir, ich vel gefeln veren mein zun?*” (What do you think, will I be pleasing to my son?).

The way I remember it, I heard from my father than when the time came and the Rebbetzin had to travel to Paris, the Chassidim paid for a car and a driver to take her to the train station and all of Anash, from great to small, the rabbanim, mashpiim and roshei yeshiva, the older and younger talmidim, and all the wives and girls, went to escort her and receive her parting blessing. When she got into the car she looked like a queen in her chariot.

THE REBBETZIN'S NACHAS

The Rebbetzin traveled from Paris with her son and they arrived in New York on 28 Sivan 5707/1947. My parents remained in Paris for a long time and emigrated to New York in the sixties. However, even before that, in 5718, they came on their first visit to the Rebbe and took the opportunity to visit his mother.

Rebbetzin Chana lived in a building on the corner of Kingston and President, where the

Tomchei Tmimim dormitory is today. At that time, it was an apartment building and the Rebbetzin lived in a small, modest apartment on the first floor.

The Rebbetzin was very happy to see them and as soon as they went in she wanted to show them something special. She pointed at a picture that hung on the wall which had all the Chabad Admorim, i.e. a painting of the Alter Rebbe, an image of the handwriting of the Mittler Rebbe, a painting of the Tzemach Tzedek, an image of the handwriting of the Rebbe Maharash, a photograph of the Rebbe Rashab and the Rebbe Rayatz, and in the center – a photo of the Rebbe MH”M.

As the Rebbetzin pointed at the picture, she said: I just got this picture (with the nice frame) as a gift.

The picture was in a very nice frame and as I remember it, it added beauty to the entire room. In general, the apartment was simple and modest and the picture added majesty and an ambience of life and joy and a lot of light.

My father felt that the Rebbetzin was so happy with the gift that she showed it to them as soon as they walked in, as though she meant to say: Don’t look at the simple appearance of this apartment; I have a very distinguished piece of furnishing in the home...

My father said: Rebbetzin, you need to derive *nachas* from such a picture!

Pointing at the picture he said: Boruch Hashem, you merited such a son. Around him all the Rebbeim and your son, our Rebbe, is in the center!

Hearing this, the Rebbetzin stood up, and standing while leaning both hands on the arm of the chair, she said gravely: Not because he is my son. Do you know who my son is? A *kadosh v’tahor!*

On that occasion, the Rebbetzin shared with my parents some of the chilling moments when

she told her son about events that occurred with his father in exile, the high point being when she gave the Rebbe his father’s gartel and yarmulke. Then she discerned how great his *hiskashrus* was to his father-in-law, the Rebbe Rayatz and she said:

When I met with my son for the first time in Paris in 5707, after nearly twenty years in which we did not see one another, and after all the things we went through, and the arrest and exile and passing of my husband, I told my son everything that happened during those years and my son wanted to know everything in detail, from the day he traveled with the Rebbe (Rayatz) to Riga at the end of Tishrei 5688 until the passing of my husband.

I told my son that I brought him a gift from what I could salvage and take out of Russia, my husband’s gartel and yarmulke which he had as an inheritance from his grandfather, the Rebbe, the Tzemach Tzedek.

My son is very smart, I don’t have to tell you, and he conducts himself with particular modesty, and how careful he is and protective of our honor – I don’t have to describe. He is exceedingly careful not to breach even in the slightest degree, G-d forbid, my honor or the honor of my husband a’h. If he felt the need to hide some *hergesh* (spiritual feeling or sensibility) so that there not be even the most infinitesimal lack of respect, he always did so with the greatest care.

When I gave him the gift, the yarmulke and gartel of my husband a’h that he received as an inheritance from the Tzemach Tzedek, and to save these two precious items cost me great hardships, and I had to endanger myself for them, first when I was in Silka and then in Almaty, and throughout World War II, and throughout all the adventures that I went through at the time of my husband’s passing and until I left Russia, I noticed – and all his being careful didn’t help him – that he “belongs” more to his father-in-law than to his father. ■

Kupas Rabbeinu
Lubavitch

קופת רבינו
תחת נשיאות כ"ק אדמו"ר מלך המשיח

917-913-6724
P.O.B. 288 Brooklyn, New York 11225

**URGENT
REQUEST!**

Boruch Hashem, Elul 5782

HUNDREDS OF FAMILIES ANXIOUSLY LOOKING FORWARD FOR YOUR GENEROUS ASSISTANCE!

To every member of the Lubavitcher community:

During this month of preparation for Rosh Hashonoh, the "head" of the New Year, we fondly recall our Rebbe's words that this is an especially auspicious time for strengthening our deep bond of Hiskashrus with the "Rosh Bnei Yisroel," the "head" of the Jewish people and leader of the generation.

Our Rebbeim explain that **an important way to strengthen Hiskashrus is by participating in the Rebbe's activities and concerns, consequently, by supporting an organization that brings together a number of these activities, the Hiskashrus is greater and stronger**. Such an organization is Kupas Rabbeinu, which seeks to continue many of the Rebbe's activities and concerns without change from the way he would conduct them himself.

Every year at this time, the Rebbe would call upon us to contribute generously to help needy families with their extra expenses for the coming month's many Yomim Tovim. This also coincides with the special emphasis during this month of giving extra Tzedokah, (indicated in the Hebrew letters of the word "Elul," as explained in many Sichos etc.), as a vital way of preparing ourselves for the new year and arousing Divine mercy upon us. See sicho in the Hebrew text of this letter.

We therefore appeal to every individual man and woman to contribute generously to Kup as Rabbeinu, enabling us to fulfill the Rebbe's desire to help all those who anxiously await our help. The greater your contribution, the more we can accomplish. Please do not forsake them!

Your generous contribution to Kupas Rabbeinu will be the appropriate vessel for receiving the abundant blessings of the Rebbe, who is its Nasi, that you may be blessed with a Ksiva Vachasima Tova for a good and sweet year, materially and spiritually. May it help to bring the full revelation of Moshiach - our Rebbe - immediately now!

Wishing you a Ksiva Vachasima Tova for a good and sweet year,

On behalf of Kupas Rabbeinu,

R' Yosef Boruch Spielman

Groner family

R' Samuel Malamud

P.S. Of course, you may send to Kupas Rabbeinu all contributions that you would send to the Rebbe; all will be devoted to the activities to which the Rebbe would devote them. You may also send Maimad, Keren-Hashono (this coming year 5783 - 355 days), Vov Tishrei, Yud Gimmel Tishrei Magbis etc. to Kupas Rabbeinu

Important Note:

Please make all checks out to "Kupas Rabbeinu" and send only to the following address:

Kupas Rabbeinu, P.O.B. 288, Brooklyn, New York 11225

Via Zelle: kupasrabbeinu@gmail.com

www.kupasrabbeinu.org



Rosh Hashana Under Fire *In* Warsaw

When WWII broke out in Elul 5699 (1939), the Rebbe Rayatz was living in Otvotsk, a suburb of Poland's capital. The intense bombardment by the Luftwaffe (the Nazi air force) prompted the Rebbe and his family to flee to Warsaw in the hope that it might be safer there. The Rosh Hashana of that first year of the new century was a fateful one and was observed in between running from one bomb shelter to another ■
A detailed account of Rosh Hashana 5700 in Lubavitch

OTVOTSK.

FRIDAY,
17 ELUL

5699/1939. The talmidim of Yeshivas Tomchei Tmimim in Otvotsk (a resort town near Warsaw, capital of Poland) woke up to the terrifying sound of bombing.

Only a few hours passed when they learned that Germany had invaded Poland without warning. That was the outbreak of World War II, a war which engulfed the lives of the entire Europe in intense chaos. Fear and worry reigned. The thought, “Who knows what tomorrow will bring?” raced through minds unceasingly.

A short time after the German occupation of Poland, the yeshiva was closed and the talmidim dispersed as the hanhala told them to do.

The frightened talmidim asked the Rebbe Rayatz, who was in Otvotsk at the time what to do. He said whoever could leave Poland should do so. The Rebbe told the six talmidim who had American citizenship to go to nearby Latvia and continue homeward from there. He advised other talmidim to try and reach Vilna in Lithuania.

THE REBBE FLEES TO WARSAW

The Rebbe left Otvotsk for Warsaw for the purpose of continuing from there to Latvia. The road to Warsaw was difficult as it was strewn with dead horses and charred houses. The German air force bombed the highway leading to the burning capital, attempting to hit civilians who were trying to flee.

The Rebbe miraculously arrived in Warsaw where he stayed in the home of one of distinguished Chassidim, R' Shneur Zalman Shmotkin. From there he helped other talmidim to escape to neutral countries.

Many talmidim left the city on foot after the train station was bombed unceasingly by the Germans. Interestingly, the border with Lithuania was closed only at the beginning of 5700. Before then, many tmimim were able to escape to Vilna. The Rebbe Rayatz, who found it hard to walk long distances, remained in Warsaw.

On 28 Elul, two days before Rosh Hashana, there was a heavy bombing raid over the area where the Rebbe lived and the Rebbe went down into the bomb shelter. It was a small alcove meant for barely twenty people and yet forty people squeezed in; the crush was intolerable. They were all frantic with worry and they tried to draw consolation and bitachon from the Rebbe.

It was under these circumstances that they began preparing for Rosh Hashana 5700/1939.

TREACHEROUS JOURNEY TO THE REBBE

R' Yosef Wineberg was a talmid in the yeshiva in Otvotsk. He too returned home.

“After a few days at my parents’ home, I told my mother that this wasn’t for me. I wanted to be with the Rebbe.”

The young tamim left, somehow, in the direction of Warsaw. It was a real challenge considering the nonstop bombing by the Germans but the young man’s powerful desire to see the Rebbe, who was his entire life, was the image he kept in his mind’s eye and which helped him overcome all the difficulties and danger.

On Rosh Hashana 5700, he found himself with the Rebbe.

That Rosh Hashana, there were hardly any Chassidim with the Rebbe. Despite this, the Rebbe Rayatz conducted himself as he did every year, and even asked the Chassidim who

crowded into his apartment to daven from the depths of the heart and with a lot of feeling.

R' Wineberg described what he experienced at the Rebbe that fateful Rosh Hashana, as the tefillos took place under fire:

“The Nazis ym’s, knew this wasn’t an ordinary day for the Jews and looked for ways to torment them in any way possible. Among other things, they dropped bombs in areas where the Jews lived in Warsaw.”

“WHO WILL LIVE AND WHO WILL DIE”

“In the middle of the davening, as we were immersed in davening with deep feeling, massive bombing of the Jewish area began. From every side the bombing could be heard and the danger was palpable. The words, “who will live and who will die, who at his designated time and who not at his designated time” were real to us.

“The gabbai asked the Rebbe that they leave that place and look for somewhere to hide until the bombing stopped. At first the Rebbe refused and wanted to continue the davening as usual but the bombing intensified until there was no choice. We left the building with the Rebbe and hid until the bombing stopped.

“I remember that when we returned with the Rebbe to the apartment where we had been davening, a frightening sight met our eyes. The building across from it had collapsed. That sight was enough to demonstrate to us the big miracle that occurred for us. The truth is that it was only after some time that we were able to make that observation while at the time, fear overcame us. We didn’t even have the time to think about it.

“At that time, everything was murky and it was before we realized the horrors that were about to occur in this war. But the Rebbe saw what we did not know and already then he urged us to use every moment to recite Tehillim and to ask for the salvation of the klal.

“It was was a historic Rosh Hashana. The great inspiration and warmth of tefilla with the Rebbe were special. There was no lack of what to pray for, but what was missing was *yishuv ha’daaas* (tranquility of mind). It was hard to impossible to maintain one’s concentration and calmness during those difficult, uncertain times.

“The amazing thing is that everything stopped at the Rebbe’s threshold. With the Rebbe there was a different feeling, as though the war was taking place elsewhere. The feeling was that of the days of light in Lubavitch. Although the number of Chassidim was very small, since most of them were not able to come and even those who lived close by had to remain with their families, the inspiration was very great.

“The Rebbe’s tefilla which was said slowly and movingly, and the Rebbe’s fiery face, infused all of us with a burning holy passion. Even that Rosh Hashana, despite the great fright, the Rebbe stood in his place and his davening took three hours with awesome weeping and tremendous inspiration. This sight is unforgettable to me even more than seventy years later.”

R' Wineberg said that the following Rosh Hashana, 5701, he was unable to be with the Rebbe Rayatz, since the Rebbe was already in America and davening in the new Beis Medrash at 770 Eastern Parkway. However, in Vilna where he was at the time, he felt the Rebbe’s holy image accompanying him ever since those tefillos of Rosh Hashana, until he was able to leave, from darkness to light, and be saved from the terrors of war.

ONLY A SMALL PART OF THE TRAVAILS

Five months later, Purim 5700/1940, the Rebbe Rayatz described a bit of the events of those terrifying days:

“The twenty-seven terrifying days of war in Warsaw – 17 Elul 5799 – 12 Tishrei 5700; and



SHELLING BY THE GERMANS

the eighty-one – 14 Tishrei – 4 Teves 5700 – days of cruelty and fear of death that followed, do not allow me to return to myself. The bitter plight of our brothers and sisters and the terrible fear that envelopes me as I contemplate the horrors of the plot of Haman, give me no rest and I cry out: Jews of America of all groups and factions, save your brothers and sisters immediately!

“... As I sit now at the Purim meal, I live in spirit together with Jews and Anash and especially the talmidim of Tomchei Tmimim who remained there, and the essence of my soul calls out to you and to every Jew: Save them, save them!

“Knowing the strength of simple faith, bitachon and hope that Jews and Anash in general have, and bnei Torah and talmidim of Tomchei Tmimim in particular, I am sure that even those who dwell in the land of the shadow of death, who hide in cellars and ruins, also want to rejoice with the joy of Purim but under their circumstances this is not at all realistic.

May Hashem have mercy and bestow salvation on Klal Yisrael.”

The Rebbe went on to describe the great difficulty that he experienced during those Yomim Noraim:

“In the present war in Poland, the situation is different. Children, women, old and sick people are all on the front lines, since the front was within the cities. The city where women, children, aged and the sick were bombed by high explosive and incendiary bombs. Thousands of people were buried under their collapsed homes within seconds.

“Jewish poverty in Poland was tremendous and felt in in every aspect of life, and above all the question of housing as all the Jewish areas in Warsaw were crowded. During the critical days of the war it happened that within a few seconds a building of several stories collapsed and all who lived in it, including children, women, old and sick, were burned or buried alive under the rubble. After the bombing they

found in the streets of the city the bodies of people blown to bits mingled with the dead bodies of, *l'havdil*, horses and dogs. Human limbs were strewn in the streets. That was only a small part of the bitter fate that we endured during the war in Poland.”

GERMAN SOLDIERS SEARCH FOR THE REBBE

Getting back to Rosh Hashana 5700. Starting from the bombing on Rosh Hashana until after the holy day of Yom Kippur, the Rebbe went with a handful of Chassidim from house to house and from courtyard to courtyard, fleeing the nonstop bombing. Danger was close and palpable.

“Concurrently, during those days, German intelligence officers combed the streets of Warsaw looking for the Rebbe. The Chassidim, who feared what the Germans might do, realized they had to hide the Rebbe and so, hardly anyone knew where the Rebbe was which is why I also barely saw the Rebbe again,” said R’ Wineberg.

At a certain point, German soldiers knocked at the door of the Gurary family where the Rebbe was staying and asked to see the Lubavitcher Rebbe. They replied, “We don’t know who the Rebbe is.” A terrible fear took hold of the Rebbe’s family and the Gurarys; they thought the Nazis had discovered where the Rebbe was staying and wanted to harm him, G-d forbid.

But no. They were soldiers of the officer Ernst Bloch who wanted to save the Rebbe Rayatz. It was Admiral Wilhelm Canaris of German military intelligence who led the rescue campaign. A message arriving from the United States to the Rebbe’s household clarified that the purpose of the search was to rescue the Rebbe. The Rebbe’s household was relieved.

The Rebbe made his going conditional on twenty Chassidim joining him. Having no choice, the German soldiers agreed.

‘‘ DURING THOSE DAYS, GERMAN INTELLIGENCE OFFICERS COMBED THE STREETS OF WARSAW LOOKING FOR THE REBBE. THE CHASSIDIM TRIED TO HIDE THE REBBE

The Rebbe traveled with Officer Bloch until Berlin where the group was given over to the Latvian embassy. From there, the Rebbe continued to Riga where he arrived on 5 Teves 5700. The Rebbe sailed from Riga via Stockholm until New York.

THE REBBE’S TEARS

As mentioned, by Rosh Hashana 5701 the Rebbe was in New York. That was the Rebbe’s first Rosh Hashana in the United States. The Rebbe davened Rosh Hashana night in the small zal on the first floor of 770.

The Rebbe davened maariv for four hours, the first prayer of the new year. His tefillos were suffused with tears. Around him stood people who were constantly saying chapters of Tehillim. Many of those present heard the Rebbe’s crying and couldn’t restrain themselves and joined in the tears. Indeed, there was much to cry about ...

After the davening, the cloth on the Rebbe’s sttender was drenched with tears.

“Over the years,” recalled R’ Wineberg,” I had the privilege of being the shliach tzibbur on Rosh Hashana in 770, when I would repeat those sections of the tefillos of Rosh Hashana of 5700 with the Rebbe in besieged Warsaw that were burned into my memory, sections which reminded me of those Yomim Noraim, with both meanings (i.e. Days of Awe, terrible days)”. ■

SHABBOS

09/24

כ"ח אלול

CANDLE LIGHTING	SUNRISE	LATEST SHEMA	MIDDAY	SUNSET	SHABBOS ENDS
6:33	6:45	9:46	12:47	6:49	7:30

ג' פרקים: הלכות תרומות פרקים י-יב פרק אחד: הלכות מכירה פרק כא
ספר המצוות: מל"ת קלה. קלו

SUNDAY

09/25

כ"ט אלול

SUNRISE	LATEST SHEMA	SUNSET
6:46	9:46	6:47

ג' פרקים: הלכות תרומות פרקים יג-טו
פרק אחד: הלכות מכירה פרק כב
ספר המצוות: מל"ת קלד

MONDAY

09/26

א' תשרי

SUNRISE	LATEST SHEMA	SUNSET
6:47	9:46	6:46

ג' פרקים: הלכות מעשר פרקים א-ג
פרק אחד: הלכות מכירה פרק כג
ספר המצוות: מ"ע קכד

TUESDAY

09/27

ב' תשרי

SUNRISE	LATEST SHEMA	SUNSET
6:48	9:47	6:44

ג' פרקים: הלכות מעשר פרקים ד-ו
פרק אחד: הלכות מכירה פרק כד
ספר המצוות: מ"ע קכד

WEDNESDAY

09/28

ג' תשרי

SUNRISE	LATEST SHEMA	SUNSET
6:49	9:47	6:42

ג' פרקים: הלכות מעשר פרקים ז-ט
פרק אחד: הלכות מכירה פרק כה
ספר המצוות: מ"ע קכד

THURSDAY

09/29

ד' תשרי

SUNRISE	LATEST SHEMA	SUNSET
6:50	9:47	6:41

ג' פרקים: הלכות מעשר פרקים י-יב
פרק אחד: הלכות מכירה פרק כו
ספר המצוות: מ"ע קכד

FRIDAY

09/30

ה' תשרי

SUNRISE	LATEST SHEMA	SUNSET
6:48	9:48	6:39

ג' פרקים: הלכות מעשר פי' יג-יד, הלכות מעשר שני ונסע רבעי פי' א
פרק אחד: הלכות מכירה פרק כז
ספר המצוות: מ"ע קכד. קכח. מל"ת קנב

THE TIMES ON THIS PAGE ARE FOR BROOKLYN, NY

A MIRACLE

That Began On Rosh Hashana
Called Rivka Kaduri

A moving story of faith, devotion and miracles as told by Rivka's father, Reb Shlomi Kaduri from Elad, Eretz Yisrael



לבי חלל בקרבי
מירי ניו

- I -

I heard the following moving story from R' Shlomi Kaduri of Elad which is told in the first-person:

It was exactly nine years ago, erev Rosh Hashana 5773. In the final hours of the year, I was driving north toward Laniado Hospital in Netanya with my wife and her mother for the third birth in our family. After an exam, they said “not yet” and we went to our parents’ house.

In the middle of the first night of Rosh Hashana we went to the hospital again where my wife was put under observation. Another day passed and our daughter was born the second night of Yom Tov.

I excitedly took my newborn daughter to the nursery. One of the nurses agreed to my request to hang a picture of the Rebbe along with chapter 121 of Tehillim, as is customary.

I left my daughter in the care of the nurses and went to my wife to see how she was and what she needed. I felt euphoric. A new neshama had come down to the world and she was ours.

We knew her name would be either Rivka or Leah since our other daughters had the names of the Imahos. In the end, we decided on Rivka.

That year, the two days of Rosh Hashana were followed by Shabbos and so we couldn’t inform our families of the simcha.

Friday night, after kiddush, we sat with our baby in one of the sitting areas and rejoiced in the joy of Shabbos as well as with our new daughter who was celebrating her first Shabbos in the world.

After eating together, I put the baby back in the bassinet, said goodbye to my wife, and walked to the home of a relative who lives near the hospital.

- II -

At five in the morning, when the babies are brought to their mothers for feeding, my wife noticed that Rikva’le wasn’t there. The neighbor’s baby was brought and another one, and where was our baby?

As time passed, my wife got up and walked quickly to the nursery. Something was amiss!

“Where is my baby?” she asked one of the nurses.

“What is your name?”

When she said her name, she could tell from the nurses’ expressions that something was wrong. It turned out that an alert nurse had noticed our daughter’s distress in the middle of the night. She saw that the baby was having trouble breathing and was turning blue. The nurse immediately called the medical team who stabilized the baby.

Our Rivka was taken to the NICU where she fought for her life over the next hours. When my wife arrived there, she saw the baby, who had peacefully spent the Shabbos meal with us just a few hours before, attached to many machines.

I wasn’t at the hospital at the time and my wife had to handle things herself. I returned to the hospital at two in the afternoon. As soon as I walked in, I saw my wife waiting for me and the look on her face did not bode well.

“What happened?” I asked.

Then came the news that no parent of an infant wants to hear: The baby is on a ventilator

after being diagnosed with a serious heart condition.

I took a deep breath and asked, “Where is she now? What is her condition?”

When she told me she was in the NICU under the watch of the doctor on duty we went over there. That was when I began to choke up but I tried to stay strong and focused. I looked into the incubator and saw my daughter with numerous tubes attached to her tiny body.

I asked the doctor about her, hoping to hear good news but that’s not what he said. He said, “The child has a heart defect, one of the most difficult and rare ones.”

Although I was stunned, I peppered him with questions: What can be done? Is there a solution? What’s her prognosis? How will this affect her life?

“Calm down, take a deep breath,” he said. “Senior doctors will come in the evening, there will be a meeting, and you are invited and will find out everything. I’m just the on-call doctor.”

I had so hoped for a reassuring answer, for a crumb of information that would let me breathe easier, but I didn’t get it. I knew it was time for me to speak to the “Doctor of all flesh who does wonders” - the Creator. I told my wife I was going out for a bit.

That Shabbos afternoon, I went outside to try and digest the difficult news. I sat on a small hill overlooking the sea and thought. Facing the waves, with the sun beginning to set, I spoke to G-d and the tears began to come. “Father in heaven, you have never abandoned me. I need You now more than ever. Watch over my daughter.”

I felt bitachon begin to fill my heart. I could feel how my prayer had been accepted, like the request the son makes of a compassionate father. It was with this feeling that I went to daven mincha in the hospital’s shul.

- III -

Shabbos was over and news about the birth of our daughter began to spread but along with the mazal tovs that began to come in, there was also the difficult feeling, along the lines of “joy implanted in the heart from this side and crying implanted in the heart from the other side.”

Our dear relatives who heard about the situation rushed to the hospital. We all sat on one of the benches in the hallway. On the face of one was a consoling look, on the other a confused look; trying to figure out how to respond to the situation.

Late at night, after everyone dispersed, my wife and I remained, suddenly feeling the weight of the responsibility upon us. We supported one another with strong faith. We felt confident in Hashem and His providence.

I went to my in-laws’ home late at night; my two older daughters were staying there. I went to my big girls and kissed them, having not seen them in three days. I suddenly felt how good and compassionate Hashem is for their having been born healthy. There are no givens.

- IV -

The next morning, I got up early and after shacharis I went to the hospital. A medical team had met to discuss our baby, how to treat her, and they were waiting for us.

We were brought into the office of the director of the NICU department and we spoke with him. He is a special man who spoke gently and made us feel good.

There was an air of seriousness and even strain among the team of experts. We all listened closely as the seriousness of the situation was described; one of the top specialists called it a “life and death” situation. He even added, without any attempt to sugarcoat the situation, “it could be a matter of days, maybe hours.” The doctors recommended an operation that

they described as “extremely critical.” They said she should be taken by ambulance to another hospital where they would be able to do this operation properly.

We began asking questions about the recommended hospital; what was their experience and who was the surgeon. We questioned them in order to find out what was best for her.

I considered Schneider Children Medical Center in Petach Tikva the best children’s hospital in Israel. I found out that it has a cardiac department with experts in conditions like my daughter had. But, unexpectedly, the answer we got from there was negative. They could not accept her. I don’t know whether it was because of lack of room or other reasons.

We took a deep breath as we found ourselves facing off against a large and powerful bureaucracy, wanting the best for our daughter.

The day after the meeting, my cell phone rang. It was the secretary from the hospital who said the baby would be transferred to another hospital and an ambulance was already coming to get her. I did not like this decision the doctors had made contrary to my view, and knew how this moment was critical in deciding the fate of my daughter.

I quickly went to the hospital, calling my wife as I went and updating her. I asked her that until I arrived she should stand guard and not allow anyone to take our daughter.

When I arrived, I went straight to the director of the NICU and firmly said I did not want my daughter transferred to that hospital. As the father of the child, I did not give my consent.

At this point they began to apply extraordinary pressure. A few minutes later there was another meeting of the doctors. They said they had understood from me at the previous meeting that I was willing to have her brought to that hospital. Furthermore,

they claimed, this delay I was causing would endanger her life and time was not in her favor.

A terrible feeling came over me. It was hard for me to think that I was the one who was endangering our daughter’s life; we only wanted the best for her.

I left the room lost in thought and my heart felt like it would explode. Maybe I should consent to the transfer. After all, the doctors knew what they were doing and if they decided on hospital X, they knew this was good enough for her. Furthermore, they were emissaries of the Creator who gives them permission and the ability to heal.

On the other hand, my intuition did not allow me to give my approval. I knew that Schneider’s was the best for her. I don’t know where I got this confidence from, but I felt it strongly.

I spoke to Hashem, “I need You. Don’t hide from me now. Give me a sign, direction or a path.”

The phone rang and it was a relative who wanted to help guide us as he and his wife had had a similar experience. He showered me with words of chizuk along with a warning that I not allow them to take Rivka’le to that hospital. He said that heart operations there were done only by a certain doctor and he was the one who was negligent in their daughter’s operation and she suffers till this day because of his negligence.

I didn’t need any greater sign than this. I was amazed by the intensity of the revelation. Hashem was with me! I had just prayed and asked for direction and the answer came quickly. My heart filled with an amazing feeling like I had just received a heavenly hug. All my doubts vanished.

I got a boost for my decision from one of the distinguished rabbanim with whom I consulted. He also insisted, and even helped on his end to make it happen, that Rivka go to Schneider’s.

When the medical team saw our determination, they acceded to our request to use their connections so we could go to the hospital we requested. The transfer to Schneider was a big achievement for us and made a strong impression on us. We felt confident; we little people up against this giant system. Faith in Hashem strengthened us.

- V -

Our baby was in the NICU at Schneider and the waiting room for parents served as our home. The late hours of the night with repeated beeps from the medical equipment become our background music. The alertness of the staff makes the place feel like midday.

Now and then we jumped up to see what was happening with our Rivka'le, a brief conversation with one of the nurses and from there to hallways of the hospital with other parents who were also worried about their children, then a nap in the waiting room. That's how the long nighttime hours passed in our new residence, the special hospital for children.

The next day, we went to the office of the director of the cardiac department. How good is Hashem in His kindness to us. Just the day before, there were so many obstacles and it was almost impossible to reach her, even by phone. Now, with no prior arrangement, we went to her office and she immediately agreed to speak with us.



R' SHLOMO KADURI, RIVKA'S FATHER

She was used to speaking to parents who were trying to navigate difficult situations like these. She was also aware of the possible reactions. Thank G-d, we displayed our trust in Hashem and spoke with her about the problem as though it was a special mission for which we were sent with tremendous powers to execute.

She spoke to us openly. It was the first time that I understood what Rivka's problem was and how serious it was. The doctor explained things using explanatory slides, and she also summed up the situation as "life-threatening."

She turned off the slide machine, collected her notes and her face took on a grave look. "The tests show that in this case we must completely



THE SEDER TABLE AT SCHNEIDER READY BEFORE YOM TOV

forgo the left side of the heart which means a body with half a heart ...”

We didn’t need additional explanations to understand the significance and how intricate and complicated the situation was, if at all resolvable.

The following sentences she said were hard to hear:

“Now, as long as we have done nothing, it is possible to let nature take its course ... As long as we have decided not to operate, we have the option to ‘sit and not act,’ meaning that we do nothing and there will be no prolonging of

life; but if you decide to operate, there is no going back.”

I’m sure I turned white. She immediately said, “But for people like yourselves who believe in the Creator, that does not apply at all.”

I said, “G-d will help us and we will do what we can.”

“Since you are optimistic people, I will show you a picture of a mother with three daughters who is dealing with the very same problem.”

“You call it optimism, while Judaism calls it emuna,” I said.

It was this emuna which kept us going endless days and nights with Rivka’le, befriending the devoted medical staff and graduating to medical expertise without any prior medical studies.

- VI -

The operation was scheduled for the day after Yom Kippur which was on a Shabbos that year, at seven in the morning. Those were Yomim Noraim in the full sense of the words.

One day, I wrote to the Rebbe about everything we had been through, about the tension and worry, and asked for his blessing for speedy good health. The answer I opened to (Igros Kodesh volume 8, page 111) said:

I am in receipt of your letter in which you write about your health situation which has caused you to become dispirited. G-d is the Healer of all flesh and does wonders and although we do not know to any extent the intention of the Creator, and as a result sometimes the yetzer hara raises questions and thoughts that distract a person from spiritual health, you must always know that it is only the tricks of the yetzer. And you need to be strong in trust in G-d who will, over time, send healing for what you need and even before the healing comes you are part of G-d's world and therefore His emissary to spread light in your surroundings by illuminating your own nefesh, the G-dly nefesh and the animal one, with matters of Torah and mitzvos and light up your part of your surroundings and world by spreading the light of Torah and Judaism. In order for all this to be effective, the action needs to be done with joy, as it says, "serve G-d with joy." When you strengthen yourself in all this, surely you will be helped from Above that the matter will come to fruition...

Every word of the Rebbe was on the mark and gave us tremendous strength!

The tension continued to mount. Our Rivka, just ten days old, would be undergoing a complicated operation with a low chance of success. Preparations for the operation entailed discussions with the surgeon and anesthesiologists.

Divine providence helped us in choosing the surgeon, one of the two top surgeons in the hospital even though we hadn't demanded or even asked for him. His renown preceded him in the entire hospital and even to the outside. In fact, he was recorded as having the highest success rate in Israel and the world especially for problems like Rivka had. In our first conversation with him we were amazed by his personality, his patience and equanimity, which are not always the traits of top doctors.

I could tell that I was standing before G-d's emissary who received permission to heal.

The surgery began and we, along with other family members, sat and emotionally said Tehillim. At a certain point, someone took out a bottle of mashke and said, "Come, let's say l'chaim for the refuah of Rivka," referring to the saying, "What a Chassidishe farbrengen accomplishes, even angels cannot accomplish."

We were able to see Rivka only much later. The ten-day-old baby was fighting for her life while swollen and bandaged, attached to many tubes.

The surgical team summed up the results of the operation for us, where we now stood and what was forecast for the future. They noted that Rivka seemed stable and thus far, the operation went well. They stressed that the operation hadn't ended yet and the danger had not yet passed.

I didn't understand what they meant when Rivka was already out of the operating room. The doctors explained that Rivka would remain sedated for some time as her condition was still ripe for all sorts of developments, which is why they hadn't closed the surgical site. They said that babies of this age needed constant monitoring and immediate care. If she would need care, the doctors would be able to immediately access the right places without the delay of reopening the surgical site.

I suddenly felt what it means when we say a person's life hangs by a thread. Sitting next to my daughter in her condition, hovering between life and the opposite, was something I had never experienced before and never thought I would ever have to face in my life.

- VII -

She was released from the hospital earlier than expected, thank G-d. We were first given numerous instructions for her treatment and care at home. Additionally, we also had to take

her frequently for check-ups at the hospital. Each such visit entailed an exhausting day of hospitalization. Still, we rejoiced over her astonishing progress and hoped to finally return home from this journey.

The joy at home was tremendous. This was the first time as a family that we could enjoy the magical moments of a new birth in the family. Seeing the enthusiasm of the big girls and their innocence I couldn't hold back the tears. I asked Hashem to continue to protect us.

The return to routine was almost smooth. The girls went back to preschool but my wife had to stay with Rivka'le at home and had to leave her job. I had to leave kollel to support my family and found a good job.

Rivky underwent another two operations. The last one was five years ago after which she was hospitalized for two months.

- VIII -

Around the time of the second operation we had an astonishing story with a dollar from the Rebbe. It was when we lived in Rechovot and my wife took a course given by Machon Puah where she met a woman who lives not far from us.

One of the times they returned together, my wife told her about Rivka's health. The woman said that she was also dealing with a medical problem with her son, as a result of which he could not talk. The doctors told her that his chances of speaking are low.

She went for brachos from rabbanim and one time, she went to one of the Rebbe's shluchos and poured out her heart. The shlucha thought for a moment and then brought her a dollar from the Rebbe.

"The Rebbe blessed me with a refuah with this dollar and said I should give the dollar to whoever needed a bracha. Put this dollar under your son's pillow and you will surely see a salvation soon," said the shlucha.

'' TODAY, RIVKY FEELS WELL, THANK G-D, AND GOES TO THE CHABAD SCHOOL IN ELAD. SHE IS UNDER REGULAR OBSERVATION AND CARE BY THE MEDICAL STAFF. TODAY (ED. THIS INTERVIEW TOOK PLACE DURING A COVID LOCKDOWN), LIKE THE REST OF HER FRIENDS, SHE ATTENDS SCHOOL FROM HOME VIA TECHNOLOGY.

The mother went home and that night she placed the dollar under her son's pillow. As she did every night, she said the Shema with her son and, as always, she read and her son looked at her but didn't say a word. He wasn't able to.

After several days, the miracle occurred. As she read the Shema, she heard her son repeating it word by word.

"After seeing this open miracle," said the woman to my wife, "and divine providence arranged for us to meet, I am sure that the Rebbe wants me to give the dollar to you, especially when the second operation is coming up."

We had the dollar for several years and we made sure it was under our daughter's head at every operation. I mentioned the dollar which is a segula for refuah at various farbrengens after which I got phone calls from people who wanted to borrow it. Today, we no longer have the dollar. We were asked to return it but I have no doubt that the Rebbe continues to bestow his blessing and who knows where the dollar is now ...

To us, this was a hug and a very big kiruv.

- IX -

Around the time of the third operation, discussions were held by the doctors about whether to operate or to wait. There were differing opinions and we felt helpless. Each choice had fateful ramifications. As a Chassid I wrote to the Rebbe and the answer left us with no doubts (volume 9, p. 272):

In response to your letter ... in which you write about your health. I've already written to several questioners in such cases, although, on the one hand, one needs to follow doctors' orders ... on the other hand, that is only regarding the poel mamash. However, regarding the faculty of thought, it is not at all a person's business to think deeply into the state of this physical health etc. since this isn't his field, i.e. he is not the doctor of this individual and no benefit will come to this individual. Consequently, it is in the category of thought which is pointless and therefore it is confusing because it distracts the power of thought from investing itself into what it does need to think, and anything superfluous is like it is missing entirely. The same applies in regard to you that you need to fulfill the directions of the doctors as regards to the poel mamash and to place your trust in Hashem that He will send his Word and heal you.

We went to the third operation with this blessing, trusting in Hashem. During the operation and afterward we saw open miracles so that there was no choice for the medical team but to admit that Hashem was involved and He is the doctor of all flesh and does wonders.

Since the operation was done close to Pesach, we held a public seder in Schneider along with another Lubavitcher family from Kitzrin who was there. The seder was attended

by parents and recovering children as well as volunteers who were in the hospital.

On Shevii shel Pesach, the day [in Eretz Yisrael which is also Acharon shel Pesach] when the light of Moshiach shines, Rivky woke up in intensive care after two weeks of being sedated and intubated. We saw a direct connection to the auspicious time of Moshiach's seuda!

After a long recovery period, she was sent home. More months of rehabilitation and endless exertion passed and she got back on her feet, thank G-d!

Today, Rivky feels well, thank G-d, and goes to the Chabad school in Elad. She is under regular observation and care by the medical staff. Today (Ed. this interview took place during a covid lockdown), like the rest of her friends, she attends school from home via technology.

I must say that every letter in the Igros Kodesh that we opened to, without exception, mentioned publishing a book. This surprised me tremendously.

One of the strong answers I got from the Rebbe spoke about the great merit in writing a book and disseminating it to the public (Igros Kodesh, volume 15, p. 6).

In light of those answers, I wrote up our story about the extraordinary divine providence and called it *Libi Chalal B'kirbi* (my heart had died within me) based on what it says in Tanya on these words of Dovid HaMelech which is the level of tzaddikim who eradicated the evil within them. Here is an amazing depiction of the idea that one can live a full life in the physical sense with only half a heart, without the left side...

Most importantly, we should merit the fulfillment of the promise, "and I will provide you with a new heart and a new spirit." ■



What the **Alter** **Rebbe** Learned *From* **Moshe Rabbeinu**

Short Stories of Tekios With with Rabbosenu Nesieinu

THE BAAL SHEM TOV ONCE

told his disciple, R' Zev Kitzes, to study the kavanos (mystical intentions) of the tekios, since he would be the designated baal tokeia (shofar blower) on Rosh Hashana.

R' Zev learned the kavanos and even wrote them down on a paper that he put in his pocket so he could refer to it during the tekios. The Baal Shem Tov did not like this and the note mysteriously vanished.

When it came time for the tekios, R' Zev began looking for his paper with the kavanos and when he didn't find it, he didn't know what to do. He was so upset by this that he wept bitterly and blew the shofar without any kavanos.

After the davening, the Baal Shem Tov said to him, "In the king's palace there are many rooms and there are different keys for each door. Yet, there is one tool that can open all the locks and that is an ax. The kavanos are keys to the heavenly gates, with each gate having a different kavana. However, a broken heart can open all the gates and chambers."

HE PICTURED THE BAAL SHEM TOV

The Mezritcher Maggid was not the baal tokeia in his shul. We know this from the Rebbe Rashab who said, "Everything was mesudar (organized) by the Mezritcher Maggid. On Rosh Hashana there were regular baalei tefilla and a regular baal tokeia, etc."

In another source it says that R' Menachem Mendel of Horodok blew the shofar for many years. In that source it tells about one year when R' Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev took his place:

"For many years, R' Menachem Mendel was the baal tokeia in the Maggid's Beis Medrash. At that exalted time, as all around the talmidim pierced the heavens, the Maggid

and his distinguished talmid would stand on the bima, R' Mendele blowing the shofar and the Maggid serving as "announcer" by pointing in the machzor to the next shofar sound.

"One year, R' Menachem Mendel was not in Mezritch. He was on a mission for the Maggid. Before Rosh Hashana, the Maggid asked R' Levi Yitzchok his talmid to blow the shofar. R' Levi Yitzchok happily agreed, and immediately began preparing for the awesome moment.

"When the time came, the Maggid and R' Levi Yitzchok stood on the bima. The Maggid's face looked serious to the point of fearfulness. He recited the brachos, and when R' Levi Yitzchok put the shofar to his mouth, he fell in a faint. His colleagues labored a long time to revive him.

"Afterward, the Maggid declaimed with a smile, 'I don't know what's wrong with him; Mendele sees a lot more every year, and yet he doesn't faint.'"

In addition to the Maggid's lofty kavanos during the tekios, he was instructed by the Baal Shem Tov to picture the face of his Rebbe. This is what the Baal Shem Tov wrote him in a letter that was found in the Charson geniza:

"On the two holy days of Rosh Hashanah, before the tekios, you should also picture my image as well as the holy image of my master [the prophet Achiya HaShiloni] whom you merited to see."

From here we learn to picture the Rebbe as part of our kavanos during the tekios. More pointedly, the mashpia, R' Shlomo Chaim Kesselman (apparently in the name of the Rebbe Rayatz) said that the words, "yisvadeh b'lachash," meaning to confess silently, that appears between the series of tekios, refers to picturing the Rebbe!

THE ALTER REBBE DID NOT KNOW HOW TO BLOW THE SHOFAR

The Alter Rebbe did not know how to blow the shofar. On a certain occasion he explained that it was because a person learns to blow in his childhood, “But I was never a child.”

However, the Alter Rebbe surely knew the kavanos of the tekios as illustrated by the following story. Once, before the Yomim Noraim, the Maggid called his disciple the Alter Rebbe, and said, “Since on Rosh Hashana the regular baal tokeia won’t be here, I want you to be the baal tokeia.”

The Alter Rebbe replied, “I agree on condition that you give me the kavanos.”

The Maggid agreed and arranged a time for him to come and learn the kavanos with him. Only after the study session did the Alter Rebbe say, “But I can’t blow ...”

The Maggid asked, “So why did you fool me and have me teach you the kavanos?”

The Alter Rebbe replied, “I learned from Moshe Rabbeinu. When Hashem appeared to him at the burning bush and told him to go to Egypt and redeem the Jewish people, he asked Hashem what His name is. After Hashem revealed His name to him, Moshe said he couldn’t speak well and he did not want to go.”



The Alter Rebbe would take the Tzemach Tzedek under his tallis during the tekios until he was nine years old.



We do not have other information about the Alter Rebbe and tekios except that the teruos were comprised of 63 short notes. They would extend longer than the shevarim and the first tekia combined. This is according to what it says in Shulchan Aruch HaRav, that unlike the shevarim, which are limited in the number of

notes, one may extend the terua for as long as he wishes.



As for the Mittlerer Rebbe, there was a brief conversation on Rosh Hashana in the year 5720/1959, as the Rebbeim were generally very careful to greatly minimize speech on Rosh Hashana. In a response to one of the Chassidim who said, “Regarding the tekios, it is known that one of the Rebbeim did not know how to blow,” the Rebbe responded, “It was probably the Mittlerer Rebbe.”

“FORTUNATE IS THE NATION WHO KNOWS THE TERUA”

The Tzemach Tzedek blew the shofar on the Yomim Noraim in his Beis Medrash. One year, he could not blow, and he called over someone whom he knew could blow and asked him whether he would be willing to serve as the baal tokeia in his place. The person agreed.

The Rebbe asked him whether he knew the kavanos and the man said, “Rebbe, I only know this – Hashem commanded us to blow the shofar.”

The Rebbe said, “If so, you shall blow.”

Another story is told about R’ Chaim Avrohom, the son of the Alter Rebbe. He was very great in Torah, Chassidus and middos. His appearance was similar to his father’s, and he would daven at great length with tremendous fervor. Despite his greatness, he was supremely humble and modest in his ways and was a man of truth who hated falsehood.

R’ Chaim Avrohom accepted upon himself the leadership of his nephew the Tzemach Tzedek, and after the passing of his brother the Mittlerer Rebbe, he was amongst those who urged the Tzemach Tzedek to accept the Chabad leadership. R’ Chaim Avrohom would always go to hear Chassidus from the Tzemach Tzedek despite his own greatness and genius, and he acted as one of his talmidim.

Towards the end of his life, R' Chaim Avrohom suffered pain in his feet, and he could not go to the Rebbe to hear Chassidus and to daven in his minyan. He had a minyan of his own in his house.

One time, on Rosh Hashanah, after finishing the tekios in his minyan, he walked slowly to the Tzemach Tzedek's shul to hear the tekios from him too. Walking was extremely difficult for him, and one of the Tzemach Tzedek's sons asked him why he went to so much trouble when he had already blown the shofar himself.

R' Chaim Avrohom answered in great humility, "It does not say, 'Fortunate is the nation that blows the terua' but 'fortunate is the nation that knows the terua,' and that is why I have come to the Rebbe to hear the tekios."

A LONG BREATH

We have no information about the tekios by the Rebbe Maharash aside from the number of teruos he would blow: "The Rebbe Maharash would blow a terua of 72 notes and the tekia after the shevarim/terua was as long as the shevarim, teruos and the first tekia combined."

R' Yitzchok Yoel Rafaelowitz, the rav of Kremenchug, was present when the Rebbe blew the shofar. During the tekios, he could not fathom why the Rebbe blew as he did, and he decided to ask him.

When he had yechidus, the Rebbe Maharash told him before he could even pose the question, "What do you think – that extraneous thoughts just consist of nonsense? When you think about that which is unnecessary, even in kedusha, those are also machshavos zaros."

Even when the Rebbe was absorbed in the supernal realms, he knew the thoughts of every person.



It is interesting to note that in Sefer HaSichos 5698, the Rebbe Rayatz writes that the Rebbe Maharash had a "long breath in song" so that he was able to blow 53 teruos with the shofar of the Maharal. This shofar was hard to blow and therefore, it was quite a feat that he was capable of blowing 53 teruos with it.

OY GEVALD!

The Rebbe Rashab began blowing shofar only after 5660. In the early years of his nesius he was the mesad-er tekios, which meant he would say the pesukim before and after the tekios, and he would be the announcer.

For the two prior years, from 5658-5660, his son (later to be the Rebbe Rayatz) blew the shofar while his father announced the notes. That the Chabad Nasi did not blow the shofar in the first years of his nesius is something that repeated itself with the Rebbe Rayatz and the Rebbe MH" M.

Beginning with the Rebbe Rashab we already have a detailed description of the awe-inspiring event of tekias shofar, which applies to the later Rebbeim as well:

"After saying the Haftorah, the Rebbe prepared himself for the tekios, his face and head wrapped in his tallis. A low voice could be heard from under the tallis humming a fragment of a well-known Chabad niggun with great dveikus. Then, there would burst forth from deep within his holy heart the call 'La'menatzeiach.' Similarly, the Rebbe would



recite each of the verses said before the tekios in a hoarsened voice suffused with deep sighs and terrible sobbing.

“The Rebbe would say the pesukim before and after the tekios with a special niggun and once, they heard after the words, ‘arov avdecha l’tov’ that he said, ‘oy gevald’ - ‘al yaashkuni zeidim.’

“After the tekios, when the Rebbe Rashab removed the tallis from his face and sat down to rest a little, he gazed upon the congregation who gazed back at him. Afterwards, I found out that gazing at the people after the tekios has kabbalistic significance. His holy countenance shone like that of an angel ...” (Otzar Minhagei Chabad)

A FEARSOME EXPERIENCE

On Rosh Hashana 5681, while the Rebbe Rayatz was in mourning, he did not want to blow the shofar. In general, that year he avoided any signs of being the Nasi. However, his mother, Rebbetzin Shterna Sarah told him, “I want to hear the shofar blown by you.” Since his mother asked him, he recited the brachos and blew one tekia and then gave the shofar to R’ Y. Rafaelowitz so he could continue the order of the tekios.

Ishkavta d’Rebbi describes that year in very moving terms: “Tishrei passed with all the rituals like those of the Rebbe Rashab. The dveikus and terrible sobbing of the Rebbe [Rayatz] during the tefillos on the Yomim Noraim, especially during the Haftorah readings and the tekios, were very frightening. It melted the hearts of the congregants ...”

TEKIOS WITH THE REBBE MH”M

770 was packed with Jews of all ages who stood throughout the lengthy davening, hours upon hours, under very uncomfortable conditions. Yet they did not feel hungry and they were not bothered by the crowding because their hearts and minds were focused on something else entirely, on being with the Rebbe.

The Rebbe entered the Beis Medrash for Shacharis holding the shofars and two or three Siddurim. He was followed by the secretaries who held three or four bags of panim. The Rebbe’s holy face looked very somber and tense. He walked to his place, put the shofars on the lectern and the bags of panim were placed next to him or on a small table set up especially for that purpose.

As the time for Maftir approached, the tension in the room rose. Anash came from shuls all over the neighborhood, which added to the already packed room. The pushing created pulsating waves of humanity that swayed to and fro. What a dilemma – the Rebbe’s regular place was in the front and people wanted to stand as closely as possible to him; but then the Rebbe would stand at the bima (Torah reading table) for the tekios.

The Rebbe was called up for Maftir and he took the shofars and Siddurim and turned towards the bima. He looked grim and as he walked to the bima, people froze in their places. It looked as though the Rebbe was not present, as though he was unaware of what was going on around him. The pushing stopped, as the crowd’s eyes and hearts were fixed on the Rebbe. Nobody gave a thought to their personal comfort for close to an hour. The tension in the room was palpable.

The Rebbe read the Haftorah about the birth of Shmuel HaNavi. Many years, he cried as he read it. R’ Yoel Kahan wrote in his diary from one of the early years that he remembered that the Rebbe cried unceasingly at the verse, “I [Chana] am a woman of a sorrowful spirit, etc. and have poured out my soul before G-d.”

Someone else related:

“A bachur told me a frightening thing. He said that his father was once honored with haggba’ah on Rosh Hashana. His father lifted the Torah and then remained standing there near the bima for the tekios. Suddenly, in the middle of the Rebbe’s reading of the Haftorah, he felt a hand grasping the eitz hachayim (wooden

handle) of the Torah and he heard the Rebbe cry out, 'Oy Tatte,' though not loudly, but in a cry from the heart."

On the Rebbe's table were the Siddur "Torah Ohr" and the "Siddur im Dach," and sometimes the Rebbe would also take the Arizal's Siddur (composed by Reb Shabsi Rashkov). Two of Anash held the sifrei Torah.

On the reading table were the bags of pidyonos and in the center of the table were the shofars. Generally, the Rebbe had three shofars, one from the Rebbe Maharash, a black shofar from the Tzemach Tzedek, and a third shofar. There were also about three white handkerchiefs and one red one, and another (red) torn one that had apparently belonged to the Alter Rebbe, and one could only see the edge. The Rebbe would spread out one of the handkerchiefs (usually a white one), put another one on top of it, place the shofar on them, and cover it all with another handkerchief. All this could take five minutes!

Then the Rebbe in an abrupt motion "threw" his tallis over his face covering his face together with the pidyonos and the shofars. In 770 a tense silence reigned, as the congregation closely followed the Rebbe's every move.

"One could see that the Rebbe was crying a lot, the tallis was completely wet, I don't know whether from sweat or tears; maybe both," wrote R' Yoel Kahan in his description of the tekios in 5712. "In the middle, I heard a quiet niggun in the midst of the tears as he was covered by his tallis, but I could not discern which tune fragment and those who stood nearby said that it was a Rosh Hashana'dike tune that they sang on Parshas Nitzavim. This took a long time. I did not look at the clock but it was a long time."

R' M. M. Groner, son of the Rebbe's secretary, relates: "I heard from my father that during those awe-inspiring moments, the Rebbe would silently sing a few niggunim. He always sang the "Three Tenuos" and then some other niggunim, as he cried a lot. Those

moments felt like an eternity. Picture it: utter silence in the huge room, with everybody following every move of the Rebbe. During this time, people did not think of themselves. The feeling was that the Rebbe was elevating everyone together with him to another world. People suddenly cried; nobody paid attention to those around them; you did not even know who was standing next to you."

From R' Yoel Kahan, 5712:

The tense silence was broken when the Rebbe lifted his tallis till his eyes and began the familiar tune for La'menatzeiach. Then he threw the tallis over his face again. There was something entirely different with that La'menatzeiach. On a weekday, the Rebbe would daven in an ordinary fashion and his inner feeling was not externally expressed. However, when the Rebbe began reciting La'menatzeiach with the special tune, you could clearly hear the emotion bursting forth. The same was true afterward, when the Rebbe said the pesukim with great emotion.

There were years that the tekios were blown easily and years that they weren't, and the shofar was exchanged for another one. When the Rebbe tried to blow and it didn't "go," the crowd tensely followed the proceedings, realizing that a heavenly war was being waged and the difficulty was not a technical matter but had its source up above. One of the men who helped out at the Rebbe's house said that the Rebbe blew the shofar later on for the Rebbetzin and never had any difficulty blowing it.

A tekia ... shevarim ... terua ... tekia ... and once again, the Rebbe threw the tallis over his face and from among its folds one could hear dreadful crying, and then another tekia ... shevarim ... tekia, and so on, until the tekia gedola.

A silent sigh of relief is felt in the crowd. The King has been crowned once again. Surely the Rebbe effectuated a good year for the Jewish people. ■

MOMENTS With The Rebbe

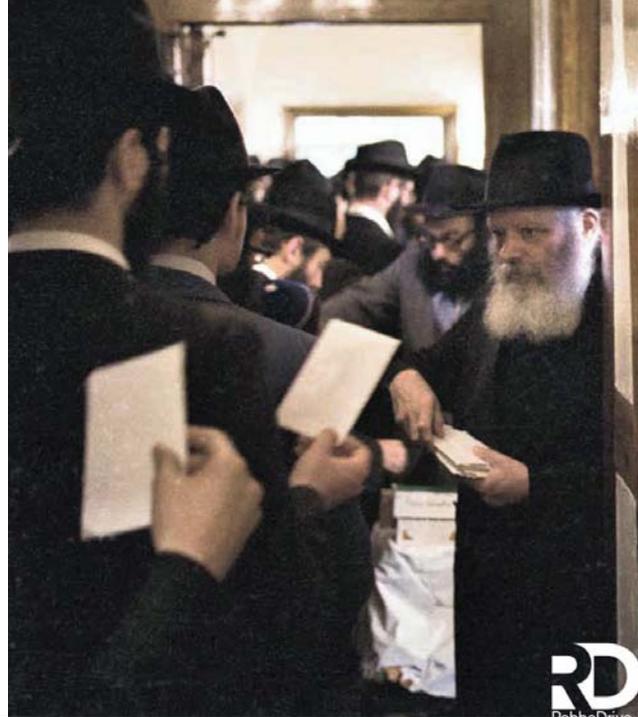
RECEIVING PANIM EREV ROSH HASHANA

1. A pidyon nefesh is a written mention to arouse mercy with the writer noting his name and his mother's name, and the names of family members and their mother's name. These names are placed before the Rebbe on Rosh Hashana and he mentions, prays and beseeches on behalf of each one.





2. Chassidim have always had the custom to go past their Rebbe on erev Rosh Hashana, giving him a pidyon nefesh for themselves and their family members. When the Rebbe takes the pidyon nefesh he blesses the person with “kesiva v’chasima tova.” Even Chassidim who lived far away and couldn’t come would send their pidyon nefesh so it would reach the Rebbe before Rosh Hashana. Even Chassidim behind the Iron Curtain who were afraid to correspond with the Rebbe Rayatz would send pidyonei nefesh before Rosh Hashana due to the importance in doing so.





EREV ROSH HASHANA 5737. ELDER CHASSIDIM GIVING A PIDYON NEFESH KLALI TO THE REBBE.

EREV ROSH HASHANA 5743. ELDER CHASSIDIM GIVING A PIDYON NEFESH KLALI TO THE REBBE.

EREV ROSH HASHANA 5749. GIVING THE PIDYON NEFESH KLALI TO THE REBBE.



3. The matters of a pidyon nefesh are known only to the Rebbe, yet this expresses a soul bond between Rebbe and Chassid. One year, the Rebbe Rayatz described his father's avoda in receiving panim on erev Rosh Hashana. He said that his father did not receive them all in the same way. From one, he would receive it in his hand, from another – between his fingers. This wasn't by chance; it was deliberate and exact. One who is not a Rebbe wouldn't understand.

4. Every year, the Rebbe stood in the doorway to his office and received hundreds and thousands of Chassidim who came to give him panim. The Rebbe took the pidyon nefesh with his right hand as he blessed the giver and transferred the pidyon nefesh to his left hand.

Now and then, when he was holding many pidyonos, he entered his office and put them down there and then went back out to receive more pidyonos.



ערב ראש השנה תש"ג

5. Starting in 5738, due to the many Chassidim, the Rebbe started receiving panim a few days before Rosh Hashana. Each time, the event took a few hours multiplied by the thousands of people moving past him quickly.

NOT AS A SECRETARY BUT AS A CHASSID, RABBI YEHUDA LEIB GRONER GIVING THE REBBE A PIDYON NEFESH ON EREV ROSH HASHANA 5740.

6. Pidyon Nefesh Klali. Chassidim would give a pidyon nefesh for the Rebbe, his family and Klal Yisrael. This pidyon nefesh was called "pidyon nefesh klali." Thousands of Chassidim signed it and the elder Chassidim and rabbanim would give it to the Rebbe.

In 5717, for example, this pidyon nefesh asked for an arousal of mercy for Beis Chayeinu in general and the Admor shlita in particular, that G-d grant him outstanding success to carry out the divine intention in spreading Torah and spreading the wellsprings of the teachings of Chassidus with expansiveness, materially and spiritually, and that the Rebbe lead us, among Klal Yisrael, to receive Moshiach Tzidkeinu, speedily in our days.

In response, the Rebbe blessed Klal Yisrael with a blessing that took several minutes. ■



-- * --
Memoirs of
Reb Dovid A"H
Mishulovin
-- * --

iron jems

-- * --
Chapter II
-- * --

Chapter II

Burying Sefarim In the Cellar

Last time: The undercover Yom Kippur minyan needs to move places. But What will be with the Sefer Torah?

The answer came in the form of the gentile maid who worked for R' Yosef Schiff, who, having worked in a Jewish home, was somewhat familiar with the Jews' peculiarities. R' Yosef vouched for her reliability, so we considered asking her to carry the Sefer Torah. Actually, we asked her daughter, a little girl, as we thought it would arouse less suspicion.

The woman agreed very reluctantly, and insisted on trailing her daughter through the streets. Despite having worked for Jews, who knows what was really going on in her mind? Perhaps she was afraid we would murder her Christian child and use her blood in our matzos?

After Yom Kippur, we learned that all our fears had been groundless. No one had observed us davening, and the whole episode was nothing but a bad case of nerves. But the experience remains deeply etched in my memory as an outstanding example of the intensity of our anxiety.



In those tension-filled years there was more to fear: keeping sefarim in the home. The most dangerous to have were Gemaras, Chumashim, or siddurim without a shaar

blatt, or other sefarim that had a relatively recent date of publication. (If the date was old enough, we could claim that the sefarim were an inheritance from our grandparents.)

We packed up all of the most “suspicious” sefarim with the intention of bringing them to shul, but this in itself was dangerous. Whenever we walked to shul, we made sure to avoid any indication that we were heading in that direction until the last minute. Every step we took was suspect.

Most of the *sifrei Chassidus* in our possession were old handwritten manuscripts, in addition to copies of Likkutei Torah and Derech Mitzvosecha. The manuscripts, of course, were undated; we could claim these as antiques kept for their historical value. But it was so dangerous to be associated with Chabad in any way (we even heard that there was a special division of the KGB to deal with Lubavitchers!) that we decided to hide these, too.

It was very difficult for us to part with all our Chassidic texts and *reshimos*. Ultimately, we put them in a huge earthenware urn, which we buried in our cellar.

A few years later, when the situation had improved somewhat, we dug the urn out of its grave and opened it. We were wretchedly disappointed — everything had rotted away to such an extent that it was completely unusable. It was truly an indescribable loss. So much interesting material, written over so many years! Chassidic manuscripts, *reshimos* and stories of Chassidim, many of which were the only copies that existed in the world. And all of it gone.

Rumor had it that some people were burning their incriminating material. When R' Moshe Niselevitch heard this, he went to people's homes, and at great risk, brought the writings to the *shul*.



Yet, throughout this time of harsh decrees, the cheder continued to operate. Some of the people involved were my brother Eliyahu, R' Moshe Niselevitch, and R' Hillel Zaltzman. Everything was done with the utmost secrecy, even among Anash. The guiding principle was “ignorance is bliss,” as a person was better off unacquainted with some matters. That way, if you were ever arrested, G-d forbid, you could never reveal what you didn't know. It was just safer that way.

I remember one young man who had a flourishing shoe repair shop in the central marketplace of Samarkand. Then one day he just disappeared. Years later, after I had emigrated to Eretz Yisrael, I met him on the street. I asked him what had happened, why he left such a lucrative business, and where had he gone? His answer surprised me. He told me that he had been offered a job as a *melamed* by some Lubavitcher *yungeleit* for the same salary he was making repairing shoes! All he had to do was teach Jewish children the *Alef-Beis*.

The man didn't really know how to learn, not even Chumash. But he could read Hebrew, and had a natural rapport with children. The “mystery Lubavitchers” even rented an apartment for him across the street from the public school, so that the Jewish children who went there wouldn't have far to walk in the afternoons.

I knew absolutely nothing about this at the time. And the most astounding thing was that my own brother Eliyahu was one of the “mystery Lubavitchers.”

R' Yosef Wolowik, who later moved to New York, was one of the children who learned in our cellar. Even his mother, a good friend of my wife, never knew where the cheder was located. ■

To be Continued

THE REBBE On Chinuch

RABBI GERSHON AVTZON



HAKHEL LESSONS FOR EDUCATION

QUESTION: I am a teacher in a local non-Chabad day-school. I was invited to give a lecture on education in my community. As 5783 is a “Year of Hakhel,” I would like to incorporate the theme of Hakhel into my lecture. What are the aspects of Hakhel which are connected to chinuch?

ANSWER: Firstly, I commend you for having the mindset to connect everything that you are involved with to “Hakhel.”

As this is the “theme of the year,” everything should be connected to this special idea. Secondly, in the sichos and letters of the Rebbe, one of the main themes of Hakhel - besides the fundamental idea of unity - is education.

Before we quote some of the sichos and letters, let us begin with two central quotes concerning the mitzva of Hakhel:

1) THE PESUKIM OF HAKHEL

“At the end of [every] seven years, at an appointed time, in the Festival of Sukkos Assemble the people: the men, the women, and the children, and your stranger in your cities, *in order that they hear, and in order that they learn and fear Hashem, your G-d, and they will observe to do all the words of this Torah.*” (Devarim 31:10-13):

2) THE GEMARA’S EXPLANATION AS TO WHY WE BRING THE CHILDREN

“Assemble the people, the men and the women and the little ones”. This verse is puzzling: If men come to learn, and women, who might not understand, come at least to hear, why do the little ones come? They come in order to give a reward to those who bring them, [I.e., [Hashem credits those who bring their children to the assembly.](Chagiga 3a)

WHAT IS THE REWARD OF HAKHEL?

[There is actually a beautiful explanation of the Sfas Emes regarding the reward that parents receive for bringing their children to “Hakhel”. It is not only the reward in the World-to-Come, rather it is the reward of seeing Chassidish *nachas* from their children in this world!

Parents who make the effort to expose their children to positive experiences in life, despite the fact that the child ostensibly does not gain anything concrete from the experience at the



time, will be rewarded. Merely making the effort to expose them to a positive environment will allow the parents to reap rewards in the future.]

The Rebbe learns many lessons about the importance of chinuch from this mitzva. The following are a few themes that you can discuss with your community:

(1) THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION

“The mitzva of Hakhel shows the value the Torah puts into educating young children. We see that the reward of the parents’ personal learning from the king of the Jewish people is not enough, rather in order to receive the ultimate reward, it is by bringing the children (as a form of chinuch) to the Beis HaMikdash.” (Likkutei Sichos Vol. 15 p. 133; fn 58).

The Rebbe continues to quote from commentaries that learn from the mitzva of Hakhel that it is a mitzva to bring your children to Yeshiva and Shul to receive a Torah-true education.

(2) EDUCATION: NOT JUST FOR CHILDREN

“It is clear that the mitzva of Hakhel stresses the importance of educating young children. This does not only teach us the importance of teaching people who are young in years, but it also includes those adults who are “children”

when it comes to their knowledge of Yiddishkeit and they do not even know to ask about Judaism. We must work hard to go out and gather them together and teach them what the Torah is and what mitzvos are. The learning should be permeated with the fear of Hashem, in a way that it will impress on them to actually follow the ways of the Torah.” (Igros, Vol. 32 page 197; #11,303).

(3) SUPPORTING JEWISH EDUCATION

“It is my hope that those gathered at the dinner of the Yeshiva will act in the ‘spirit of Hakhel’ in a practical way. This is expressed by strengthening and expanding our commitments to the educational institutions which teach Torah in your community.” (Likkutei Sichos vol. 9 p. 378)

THE MOSHIACH CONNECTION

Every mitzva has its physical application and spiritual application. While the actual, biblical, mitzva of Hakhel took place in the Beis HaMikdash, we are expected to learn practical lessons from this mitzva in our service to Hashem in the time of galus. In the merit of incorporating the lessons of Hakhel in our service of Hashem in these final days of exile, we should merit to be able to fulfill the mitzva literally in the third Beis HaMikdash! ■

PARASHA Of The Future

RABBI NISSIM LAGZIEL

PREPARING TO RECEIVE A NEW HEART WITH THE COMING OF MOSHIACH

BEGIN WITH A GRIN

A rabbi was talking to a close friend of his, “Yesterday I married off three couples. It was an amazing feeling to bring such joy to seven people.”

His friend asked, “Don’t you mean six people?”

“No, I said what I meant. Do you think I work for free?”

A BLOCKED HEART

Bris mila is one of the fundamental mitzvos in the Torah. It is also likely the most observed mitzva. Many Jews (who, as of now, are not religiously observant) circumcise their sons. In our parsha, Nitzavim, we find a special reference to circumcision in a different context, the Jewish heart!

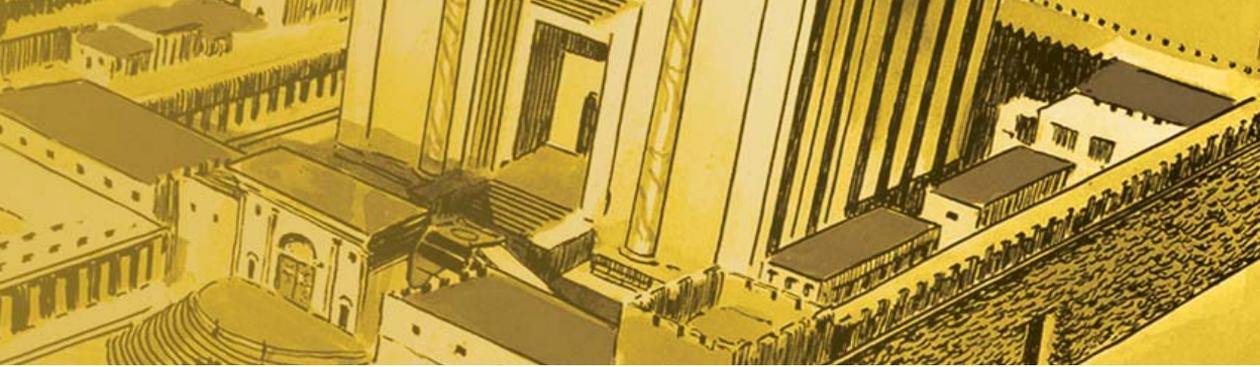
It says (30:6), “And the Lord, your G-d, will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your children, to love the Lord, your G-d, with all your hearts and all your soul.” In parshas Eikev, which we read a few weeks ago, there is a similar verse about the heart of the Jewish people but there it says (10:16), “And you shall circumcise the foreskin of your heart ...”

The difference between the two verses is quite obvious. In Eikev, the obligation to circumcise the heart lies upon us, man. In this week’s parsha, it says G-d is the one doing the circumcising, an act from Above. G-d will remove the foreskin of the heart and replace it with a pure heart that loves G-d.

Ramban, in his commentary on this verse, says this prophecy will take place in Yemos HaMoshiach. At the time of the Geula, G-d will circumcise the foreskin of the heart of every Jew and remove cravings and desires for worldly matters from us until love for G-d will become our default nature from birth.

Nitzavim is always read before Rosh Hashana. This connection is not happenstance, G-d forbid, but directed from Above. At the beginning of the parsha, Moshe informs the Jewish people, “You are all standing today before the Lord, your G-d ... so that you enter the covenant ...” G-d makes a covenant with the Jewish people about fulfilling Torah and mitzvos. When? Today!

The Alter Rebbe (Likkutei Torah) explains that the word “today” refers to Rosh Hashana. This is the day when we and G-d enter a new, strong covenant that we will not leave nor ne-



glect G-d, His Torah and mitzvos, and G-d, in exchange, will not abandon us. The day on which every Jew accepts G-d's absolute reign and obedience to His commands. This means that the covenant we are talking about in our parsha was not a one-time event that occurred three thousand years ago, but a current, ongoing covenant, a covenant which we made last year and which we will renew in a few days.

Making a covenant means infinite loyalty, loyalty which is above reason. This loyalty is sourced in unlimited, essential love, the place within the soul where love and connection to G-d become our core essence. Therefore, we make this covenant specifically on Rosh Hashana since on Rosh Hashana the essential love that G-d has for the Jewish people is revealed.

Ramban connects the circumcision of the heart of the Jewish people in the future Geula with the famous prophecy of Yirmiyahu (31:30), "Behold, days are coming, says the Lord, and I will form a covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, a new covenant." He says that the circumcising of the heart of the Jewish people is the most significant manifestation of the new covenant between us and G-d, because then, in the Geula, we will have a new heart, a soft heart, one that is sensitive to G-d, which is why the covenant made then will be a "new covenant," a covenant that will never be broken!

If we would sum up the history of the covenants between us and G-d, we could say it thus: In Nitzavim we made a covenant with G-d which we broke. Therefore, every Rosh

Hashana, we need to renew it. But in the future we will have a new heart and a new covenant, a covenant that will never be broken!

A FEELING HEART

But what does it mean to circumcise the heart? And what is meant by a new heart? Will G-d be a surgeon? A cardiac surgeon? And why, in the Geula, will we need a heart transplant?

The Tzemach Tzedek (in Ohr HaTorah) explains a distinct and deep difference between the two verses about circumcising the heart. While the verse in Eikev talks about circumcising the foreskin of the heart, the verse in our parsha is about circumcising the heart itself! What's the difference between the two and what does it come to teach us?

The foreskin of the heart means the foolishness of the heart, the part that stuffs up the heart and blocks it from seeing and feeling G-dly things. The *yetzer hara* uses every form of blockage of the heart valves so that instead of a sensitive, feeling heart a person has a closed, cold heart, a "heart of stone" which he is required to remove himself!

The circumcising of the heart in our parsha is something else entirely. It's not about removing the *yetzer hara* but about revealing the innermost part of the heart, that which is most sensitive to G-dliness, that level of the soul known in Chassidus as the *pintele Yid* and the essence of the soul. In Yemos HaMoshiach, that inner point, that essence of the soul, will be revealed, and it will be revealed here, in this world. Therefore, man won't have any desire

to sin. The bond with G-d will be so open and deep that there won't even be a thought of doing something contrary to G-d's will.

However, a heart transplant doesn't happen on its own. We need to want it and pursue it. We need to do all we can (and beyond) to attain it. The same is true spiritually, especially now when we are on the threshold of the Geula. Surely we need to expend every effort to achieve this.

How? (Tehillim 27:8) "On Your behalf, my heart says, 'Seek My face.' Your face, O Lord, I will seek."

When a Jew seeks Hashem's "panim/face" referring to the innermost (pnimiyus) aspect of G-d, i.e. he doesn't seek to connect with G-d as He manifests through His external levels but as He is on the inside, he merits that his own "panim/face" referring to the innermost (pnimiyus) point of his heart also connects to G-d.

The way to connect with the pnimiyus of Hashem is through learning the inner part of Torah, Chassidus. When a person learns Nigleh of Torah, he connects with the external aspect of the divine. With the study of Chassidus, we learn about G-d Himself, the sefiros up Above, His holy middos, the creation of the world, tzimtzumim, and more. Through this, we connect to His pnimiyus along with the highest levels and sefiros.

So, this year, before Rosh Hashana, let us commit to try and transplant our heart with a "new heart," a G-dly heart, by seeking out the inner aspect of G-dliness, by adding in learning Chassidus, its directives and ways. Along with this, we need to remove the foreskin of the heart, the undesirable part of our animal soul. The Rebbe revealed to R' Leibel Raskin in his first yechidus after going on shlichus to Casablanca, Morocco in 5721, one of the potent ways of doing this. In this yechidus, the Rebbe told him that stories of tzaddikim and stories

**// HOWEVER, A HEART
TRANSPLANT DOESN'T HAPPEN
ON ITS OWN. WE NEED TO WANT
IT AND PURSUE IT. WE NEED TO
DO ALL WE CAN (AND BEYOND)
TO ATTAIN IT.**

of Chassidim have a special power to open and reveal a Jew's heart.

TO CONCLUDE WITH A STORY

We will end with the famous story about how controlling the heart saved a life. During Napoleon's war in Russia, there was a Chassid, R' Moshe Meizlich, who spied among the French on behalf of the Russians. He did this as an emissary of the Alter Rebbe who wanted Russia to win since he was afraid of the French spirit of liberalism and what this would do to Russian Jews.

R' Moshe served as a translator for the French army since he knew several languages. One time, as he was in the room with the French generals as they planned their strategy for war against Vilna, Napoleon suddenly walked in. He went over to R' Moshe and said to him in French, "You're a spy for Russia!" and he immediately placed his hand on R' Moshe's heart to see whether it reacted as someone would when being caught. But the "mind rules the heart" of Chassidus, the "alef-beis" that he learned from the Alter Rebbe, stood by R' Moshe and he remained calm. He coolly replied that he was merely a translator and his life was saved. ■

Good Shabbos and a Kesiva V'chasima Tova!