

Derher

A Chassidisher

א חסידישער דערהער

Fondest Memories

AN INTERVIEW WITH
RABBI ASHER ZEILINGOLD

Crossing the Line

SHAVUOS AND THE
INTERNATIONAL
DATELINE

America's Matan Torah

80 YEARS IN THE UNITED
STATES—A FARBRENGEN
FOR CHOF-CHES SIVAN



SIVAN 5781
ISSUE 106 (183)
JULY 2021

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A Chassidisher Derher (ISSN 26411059) (USPS 21880) is published monthly by A Chassidisher Derher Inc, 784 Eastern Pkwy. Brooklyn, NY 11213.

Subscription price \$71 a year. Periodicals postage paid at Brooklyn, NY.

POSTMASTER: Please send address changes to A Chassidisher Derher, 784 Eastern Pkwy. Brooklyn, NY 11213.



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The Ability to Exist

רמב"ם הלכות מלכים פ"א הי"ב

A son who succeeds his father as king is not anointed unless he assumes his position amid a dispute over the inheritance or during a civil war. Under these circumstances, he should be anointed in order to remove all disagreement.

Therefore, they anointed Shlomo because of the claim of Adoniyahu; Yehoash, because of the usurpation of Atalyah; and Yehoachaz, because of the claim of his brother, Yehoyakim.

ואין מושחין מלך בן מלך. אלא אם כן היתה שם מחלוקת או מלחמה מושחין אותו כדי לסלק המחלוקת. לפיכך מושחו שלמה מפני אדניהו. ויואש מפני עתליה. ומשחו יהואחז מפני יהויקים אחיו:

רמב"ם הלכות מלכים פ"ג ה"ח

Anyone who rebels against a king of Israel may be executed by the king. Even if the king orders one of the people to go to a particular place and the latter refuses, or he orders him not to leave his house and he goes out, the offender is liable to be put to death. The king may execute him if he desires, as stated: "Whoever rebels against your command ... shall be put to death."

כל המורד במלך ישראל יש למלך רשות להרגו. אפלו גזר על אחד משאר העם שיילך למקום פלוני ולא הלך או שלא יצא מביתו ויצא חייב מיתה. ואם רצה להרגו ירג. שנאמר (יהושע א יח) "כל איש אשר ימרד את פירי".



מחזור הארבעים 40 CYCLES OF LEARNING RAMBAM

מוקדש לחיזוק ההתקשרות לכ"ק אדמו"ר
לרגל יום הבהיר כ"ח סיון
-שמונים שנה-
נדפס ע"י
הרה"ת ר' לוי יצחק וזוגתו מרת שיינא חי'
ומשפחתם שיחיו
גרינברג

A KING AND HIS PEOPLE

The bond between a king and his subjects is different from other relationships, such as the relationship between student and teacher. The connection a student shares with his teacher concerns only the teachings he receives from him. The connection between subjects and their king, by contrast, involves the totality of their being; their entire existence is dependent on the king.

For this reason, "anyone who rebels against a king of Israel... the king may execute him if he desires." According to Torah law, punishments are meted out according to the nature of the blemish caused by the unbefitting

deed.¹ The death penalty is given because kingship (and the rebellion against it) affects the very essence of a subject's existence.

The third king of Beis Dovid was king Rechavam. Soon after he became king, Yeravam ben Nevat, followed by ten tribes, contested his sovereignty.

A king who is the son of a king must be anointed when there is a controversy over his succession. But there is no mention of Rechavam being anointed, despite the fact that Yeravam contested his sovereignty.

Why indeed wasn't Rechavam anointed?

The reason is that Yeravam's challenge came after Rechavam

had already assumed the throne, at which point he no longer required anointment. With the assumption of his throne, a king acquires the essence of all of his subjects ("בכל עצמותם"). The people can no longer call the king's rule into question, as their very existence is already completely dependent on the king. Therefore, any revolt that happens from that point on does not impede on his rulership over their essence, but rather involves only their external faculties. At their core they are still very much connected to the king.

(Likkutei Sichos vol. 4, p. 1050)

1. Tanya, ch. 24.

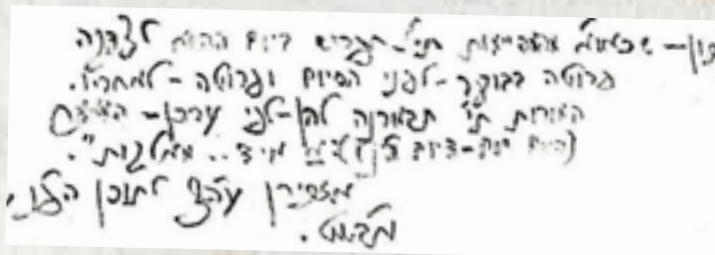


כתב יד קודש

לזכות
החתן הרה"ת ר' צבי לייב שיחי'
והכלה המהוללה מרת שטערנא שרה תחי'
לרגל חתונתם בשעטומ"צ
כ"א סיון ה'תשפ"א
נדפס ע"י הוריהם
הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל
וזוגתו מרת נחמה דינה ומשפחתם שיחיו
בלום
הרה"ת ר' צבי יוסף
וזוגתו מרת חנה ומשפחתם שיחיו
שפאלטר

Train Them Young

The Rebbe's response to a report by the first grade teachers at Beis Rivkah about their students' "graduation" ceremony, which was to take place on 21 Sivan, 5730*:



It would be appropriate for each of the graduates, *tichyu*, to set aside for tzedakah on that day, one coin in the morning before the ceremony, and one coin afterwards.

The teachers, *tichyu*, should explain to the children, in a manner that they can understand (the content of the Hayom Yom for that date):
"A Yid [...does not desire, nor is he capable of being separated from]
Elokus.

I will mention them at the *Tziyun* for [the fulfillment of the blessings requested in] the *pa"n*. May you bear good news.

נכון - שכאו"א מהמסיימות תי' -
תפריש ביום ההוא לצדקה פרוטה
בבוקר - לפני הסיום ופרוטה -
לאחריו.

המורות תי' תבארנה להן - לפי
ערכן - המאמר (היום יום - דיום
הנ"ל) "א איד .. מאלקות".

אזכירן עה"צ לתוכן הפ"ג, ותבש"ט.

America's Matan Torah

AGE-OLD VALUES
REPURPOSED



לע"נ
הרה"ת ר' שלום דובער ע"ה
בן הרה"ת ר' יעקב יוסף ע"ה
ראסקין
נלב"ע ח"י חשון ה'תשע"ד
וזוגתו מרת רבקה ע"ה
בת הרה"ת ר' אברהם ישעי' ע"ה
נלב"ע י"א סיון ה'תשע"ד
תנ"צ'ה'
נדבת משפחתם שיחיו



This month, we mark a historic date.

This Chof-Ches Sivan¹ marks 80 years since the arrival of the Rebbe and Rebbetzin to the shores of the United States. The Rebbe explained that this day commemorates much more than the Rebbe and Rebbetzin's personal deliverance from the hands of the Nazis. It marks the beginning of a new era and a new stage in *hafatzas hamaayanos*.

To get a better grasp on what that means and to understand how it is relevant to us, we sat down for a farbrengen with Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Gourarie of Yeshivas Lubavitch Detroit, and noted author, lecturer and Chabad.org editor, Rabbi Tzvi Freeman.



The New Mission

Rabbi Gourarie: There is an interesting saying that was once popular among Chassidim about the state of spirituality in America:

“*Matan Torah* didn’t occur in *Chatzi Kadur Hatachton*, in the lower hemisphere of the world” (Eretz Yisroel being the center of the upper hemisphere).

The Rebbe repeated this concept on a number of occasions, including in the famous *sicha* of Chof-Ches Sivan 5751.² Among the Rabbeim, it seems to have been first mentioned by the Rebbe Rashab.³

What exactly does this mean? Obviously this is not about the literal location of *Matan Torah*; it clearly means something more than that. It also doesn’t mean that Torah does not reach the Americas and that we are somehow not obligated to fulfill Torah and mitzvos once we cross the Atlantic Ocean. Clearly, there is something far deeper meant.

First, let us examine what *Matan Torah* is all about.

Chassidus tells us that *Matan Torah* is not just the moment we received the Torah. After all, the *Avos* observed Torah as well. Rather, *Matan Torah* was the moment of connection between spirituality and physicality. It was the moment we received the power to draw *Elokus* into this world. To use the most common *mashal*, it gave us the ability to bring holiness into the animal’s skin that is tefillin. This was *Matan Torah*’s accomplishment.

However, there seems to be a caveat: Did *Matan Torah* actually bring *Elokus* everywhere? Did the world reach a state where all the nations serve Hashem? Clearly

not! Had that been the case, Moshiach would have been here long ago.

Obviously, even after the great effect of *Matan Torah*, there is something it did not accomplish. Even though we received the power to draw holiness into this world, it does not compare to the final stage: the actual coming of Moshiach.

To use Kabbalistic terms: At the time of *Matan Torah*, we had elevated 202 *nitzutzos* of the total 288 that we are obligated to collect. In the elapsed time since then, our job has been to finish that process in its entirety and bring *Elokus* everywhere, to every place in the world, and to every person’s state of being — thereby collecting the final 86.

In the millennia since *Matan Torah*, we have had new revelations that brought us closer to that goal. The revelations of Kabbalah by the Arizal, Chassidus by the Baal Shem Tov and Chassidus Chabad by the Alter Rebbe, were all stages in the final revelation — the coming of Moshiach.

The final stage, the Rebbe explained in Basi Legani 5711, is our generation, *Dor Hashvi’i*. Our mission is to complete the *avoda*, to bring the *Shechina* down to the lowest level, and thereby bring Moshiach.

But what exactly is different about our generation’s mission?

Weren’t Chassidim of all generations aware of the goal, as told to the Baal Shem Tov himself — to bring the wellsprings of Chassidus to the furthest *chutza*, and bring Moshiach?

The Final Stage

Interestingly, Chassidim did not always understand *chutza* the way we understand it today.

In the Rebbe Rashab’s *sichos*, *chutza* refers to *sechel enoshi*, the human intellect. The concept of *hafatzas hamaayanos* was seen in terms of the human experience. A person’s heart might be warm to Yiddishkeit but his cold and dry intellect can be very distant, and the goal of Chassidus Chabad is to infiltrate this last stand in the human being and conquer it for *Elokus*.⁴

In describing the new stage that began upon his arrival, the Rebbe used the words “tenufah chadasha.” These words indicate that an entirely new stage had begun.

From that perspective, even a G-d-fearing Jew who doesn't learn Chassidus is the greatest *chutza* possible! But from the beginning of the Rebbe's *nesius*, he demanded that we reach a much farther *chutza*, bringing *Elokus* to every corner of the world, to Jew and non-Jew alike.

America, especially 80 years ago, was not only distant from Yiddishkeit due to its location. America had a unique *kelipa*; the state of Yiddishkeit was far worse than in the old country. So, the *chiddush* of our generation is that we, in the final stage before Moshiach, bring the *Shechina* into the lower hemisphere, both in concept and in location.

The connection between this *avoda* and the coming of Moshiach is quite obvious. The idea of Moshiach, as Chassidus explains, is to make the world a dwelling place for Hashem. As the Navi says, וראו כל בשר יחדיו⁵, all people of the world will serve Hashem in unison.

In the first *maamar*, Basi Legani, the Rebbe made it very clear that this was exactly our mission. Until that moment, while much of the work had been done, *Elokus* still had not reached the lowest level, the lowly *aretz*. This was the unique mission of *Dor Hashvi'i*.

But this did not exactly begin on Yud Shevat.

The Revolution

If we go back to *Matan Torah* for a moment, you will see that it also took place in stages.

Before *Matan Torah*, the early *tzaddikim* mentioned in Basi Legani brought *Elokus* "*lemata*," closer and closer to the world. True, it remained in spiritual form — Yaakov's *maklos* didn't become holy like *tefillin* — but they did bring down the *Shechina* to a certain extent. At the same time, after *Matan Torah* the Yidden still lived in the desert and there were a variety of mitzvos that they could not fulfill until they reached Eretz Yisroel. In other words, the main event of *Matan Torah* did not take place in a vacuum; it was accompanied by 'before' and 'after' stages.

It is fair to say that the same is true for the *Matan Torah* of the lower hemisphere. There were many significant moments throughout the generations of Chassidus and in *Dor Hashvi'i* in particular, but they were all parts of the process. The main event was Chof-Ches Sivan.

In describing the new stage that began upon his arrival, the Rebbe used the words "*tenufah chadasha*."⁶ These words indicate that an entirely new stage had begun. Indeed, shortly after the Rebbe's arrival, the Frierdiker Rebbe instructed him to lead the three new institutions, Merkos, Machane Yisrael and Kehos, which revolutionized the way *hafatzas hamaayanos* is viewed.

Until that day, the focus was limited to establishing yeshivos to draw in Jewish children. But the Rebbe initiated activities that reached much further. The Rebbe's initiatives were directed towards Jewish children who were not going to attend Jewish day schools. Talks & Tales⁷ and Mesibos Shabbos⁸ were among many activities directed to individuals who were much further from Yiddishkeit. As the years progressed, the Rebbe began more and more initiatives that reached beyond the Jewish world. Examples like Sheva Mitzvos,⁹ Moment of Silence, and many other initiatives, focused on the furthest *chutza* imaginable. And that all began on Chof-Ches Sivan.

In the Lion's Mouth

Rabbi Freeman: There was once a lion who had a thorn stuck in his throat. Knowing that the animals of the jungle feared him, he announced that whoever pulled it out would be handsomely rewarded. A bird with a long beak plucked up the courage, stuck her head into the lion's throat and pulled it out.

"What is my reward?" she asked the lion.

"Go tell all the other animals," the lion replied, "that you stuck your head into the throat of the lion and came out alive. That will be your reward."¹⁰

This is a famous parable about the various exiles the Jewish people have undergone. Despite the persecutions, we've



Stand Tall!

גאון יעקב – שלא ליבוש מפני המלעיגים



Rabbi Zalman Posner related:

I was a young boy when the Rebbe arrived in the United States in 5701. I remember one of the first things we observed of the Rebbe's conduct that made us realize he was of a different caliber than anyone else.*

On the Rebbe's first Rosh Hashanah, a few months after his arrival, the crowd at 770 was getting ready to leave for tashlich, when suddenly the Rebbe stopped them and said: "This is not how we go to tashlich. We need to walk in rows of two, and we should be singing!"

I remember how embarrassed I felt at the time. Eastern Parkway was lined with apartments and homes, all filled with non-frum Yidden. I was so uncomfortable at the thought of parading in front of them while singing in the street...

One year later, I was walking a little further behind the rest of the crowd because I was assisting one of the elder Chassidim. Suddenly, we were stopped by a finely dressed man, who grabbed my elbow and asked, "Why are

they singing?" I started stammering, not knowing what to answer, and he continued, "You should know that deep down inside me I have a spark. When I heard those people singing 'Hurray, I'm a Jew; hurray, I'm a Jew,' that spark burst into a flame!"



This may have been one of the first instances where the Rebbe demonstrated his approach to Yiddishkeit in the United States, an approach which only got stronger and more intense as time passed.

However, this is not an American phenomenon. True, the Rebbe did point out that America is unique in its innate tolerance of Yidden and Yiddishkeit, and thus it presents an opportunity for us to celebrate our heritage openly and unabated. But one of the most important elements of Yiddishkeit has always been, שלא ליבוש מפני בני אדם המלעיגים—never to be ashamed by those who scoff.

Furthermore, the Rebbe asserts that this is the most important challenge

of our time. Whereas in previous generations, Yidden often had to put themselves in real physical danger to keep Torah and mitzvos, today we are mostly not faced with that sort of oppression. Instead, we are tasked with living as proud Jews even in the face of ridicule.

This is our *mesiras nefesh*. Moshe Rabbeinu is said to have humbled himself especially before the Yidden in the last generation before the coming of Moshiach—and it was this *mesiras nefesh* that awed him.¹

It is important to keep in mind at all times that the Shulchan Aruch opens with this ruling—not to be ashamed of scoffers and to always do what is right.

True, there is no *mitzvah d'oraisa* to ignore scoffers. Even Shulchan Aruch doesn't state it as a specific rule which a person is obligated to follow in a certain way — in fact, if someone performs mitzvos while still being ashamed, he most certainly fulfills his obligation. Rather, it is more of a

לע"נ
הרה"ח הרה"ת שמואל דוד
בן הרה"ח הרה"ת יעקב יוסף ע"ה
תנ"צ'ב'ה
נדפס ע"י בנו
הרה"ת מיכאל יצחק וזוגתו מרת חנה
ומשפחתם שיחיו
גורקאוו

general approach to how a person is expected to behave.

This is because it has only become more relevant with the passage of time, and it is most relevant today, at the end of the *galus* as we near the time of Moshiach.²

The Rebbe explains why specifically this point of ignoring scoffers is so important:

If someone presents intellectual arguments to dissuade you from doing something, you can at least have an intelligent conversation and respond with an explanation for why what we are doing is special and important. But if all they can level against you is ridicule, that can be very difficult to combat.

That's why the *first* thing the Shulchan Aruch tells us to do, before we can get into the details of all the other mitzvos and *halachos* we keep throughout the day, is to dismiss anyone who scoffs. This is because if you're not vigilant at dismissing these people, their words might actually have a negative effect.³

But when we stand our ground and maintain our pride of being Jewish and following Hashem's ways, not only will we ourselves be fortified; we will actually have the power to transform the scoffers into admirers who offer assistance. As the *possuk* says, "והי' מלכים אומניך ושרותיהם מניקתיך"—Kings shall be your nursing fathers and princesses your wet nurses.

The Gemara relates a story of Huna Bar Nassan who was once standing in front of Izgadar, the Persian king. The king noticed that the *amora's* belt was a bit higher than where it belonged,

How to Gain Respect

In this letter, written in response to criticism leveled against Chabad for placing menorahs on public property, the Rebbe offers a perspective about what it means to display Jewish pride in America today:

Why is it so important for Jews to have a Chanukah menorah displayed publicly? The answer is that experience has shown that the Chanukah menorah displayed publicly during the eight days of Chanukah has been an inspiration to many, many Jews and evoked in them a spirit of identity with their Jewish people and the Jewish way of life. To many others, it has brought a sense of pride in their Yiddishkeit and the realization that there is no reason really in this free country to hide one's Jewishness, as if it were contrary or inimical to American life and culture. On the contrary, it is fully in keeping with the American national slogan "*e pluribus unum*" and the fact that American culture has been enriched by the thriving ethnic cultures which contributed very much, each in its own way, to American life both materially and spiritually.

Certainly, Jews are not in the proselytizing business. The Chanukah menorah is not intended to, and can in no way, bring us converts to Judaism. But it can, and does bring many Jews back to their Jewish roots. I personally know of scores of such Jewish returnees, and I have good reason to believe that in recent years, hundreds, even thousands, of Jews experience a kindling of their inner Jewish spark by the public kindling of the Chanukah menorah in their particular city and in the Nation's capital, etc., as publicized by the media.

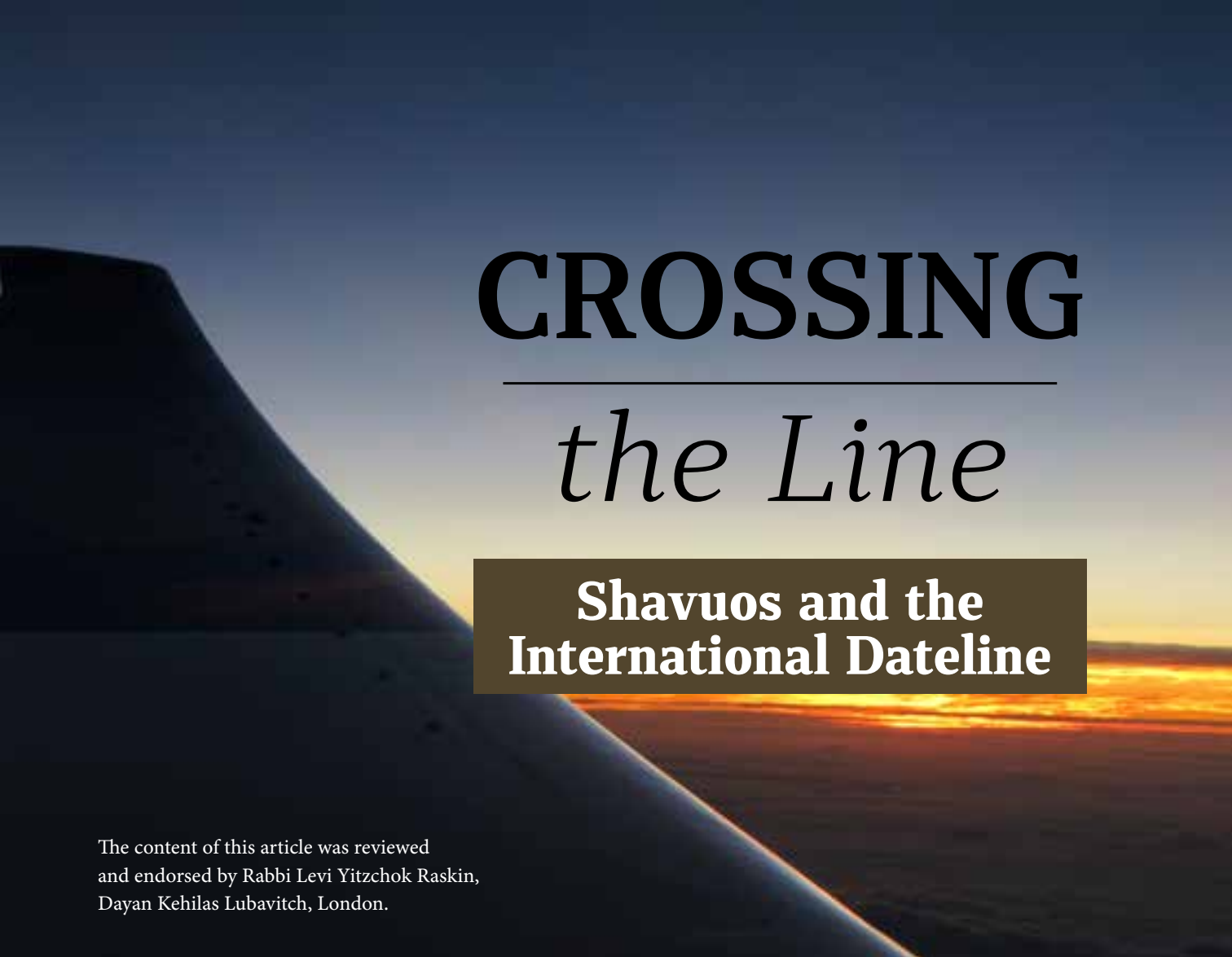
In summary, Jews, either individually or communally, should not create the impression that they are ashamed to show their Jewishness, or that they wish to gain their neighbors' respect by covering up their Jewishness. Nor will this attitude insure their rights to which they are entitled, including the privilege of publicly lighting a Chanukah menorah, a practice which has been sanctioned by precedent and custom, as to become a tradition.

(Letter dated 3 Teves 5742)

so he himself approached Huna bar Nassan and readjusted it. "The Torah says that you are a kingdom of priests," the king explained, and therefore you must be dressed appropriately.

The Rebbe points out the irony: Izgadar was king over a superpower

empire, while Huna bar Nassan was a Yid who was exiled in a foreign land. Nevertheless, when the king saw a person dressed proudly like a Yid, he did everything in his power to make sure that this Yid looks the part, as befitting his illustrious heritage!



CROSSING

the Line

Shavuos and the International Dateline

The content of this article was reviewed and endorsed by Rabbi Levi Yitzchok Raskin, Dayan Kehilas Lubavitch, London.

On Monday night at 10:40 p.m., a flight takes off from Los Angeles International Airport bound for Sydney, Australia. The passengers settle in for the overnight flight and as they prepare for landing approximately 14 hours later, the pilot announces over the intercom: “Local time in Sydney is Wednesday 8:20 a.m.”

Everyone on the plane just missed a Tuesday of their lives.

On Monday morning at 10:20 a.m., a flight takes off from Sydney Airport bound for Los Angeles. 13 hours later, as the flight prepares for landing, the pilot announces over the intercom:

“Local time in Los Angeles is Monday 6:10 a.m.”

Everyone on the plane will experience the longest Monday of their lives. Literally.

For many passengers this anomaly is just another memento of the trans-Pacific travel experience and may cause extra jetlag, but for Yidden this can have serious halachic ramifications. So much of Yiddishkeit revolves around time, and defining time in *halacha* is a big deal.

Since our calendar is defined by days and seasons governed by the sun’s and moon’s rotations, there is no scientific way of determining where

the rotations begin. For thousands of years the issue was purely theoretical, until improved transportation methods brought people to further vistas as civilizations blossomed in newly discovered continents and trade lines formed across the globe.

At the International Meridian Conference in 1884 in Washington, D.C. with the participation of 26 countries, Greenwich, England, was chosen as the central point for time and date calculations (the prime meridian), and the International Date Line was set at exactly 180° longitude from there. By using Greenwich as the prime meridian, the International

לזכות
החייל בצבאות ה'
מנחם מענדל בן מנוחה מינדל שיחי
נדפס ע"י
משפחתו שיחי

Date Line falls conveniently in the Pacific Ocean. In those few areas where it should traverse a landmass, the line was slightly bent to avoid dividing countries.

The dateline is not governed by international law, and it is up to individual countries to choose which side of the line they wish to be on. To illustrate how imaginary this line is, the Samoan Islands shifted back to the west side of the dateline by removing Friday, December 30 2011 from its calendar, to better facilitate trade with nearby New Zealand, approximately 1,600 miles away.

The Kav Hataarich

At a time when most civilizations believed the earth was flat, Torah clearly taught that the earth is a sphere.¹ But before our modern age this had no practical ramifications, other than the knowledge that as the sun was rising, people living further to the east were then experiencing midday, and at an even further point of the globe to the west it was then the middle of the night.

At least two Rishonim, the Baal Hamaor² and R. Yehuda Halevi³ give definitive positions of this imaginary dateline, called the *kav hataarich* in Torah literature. But the issue had no practical halachic ramifications, and was therefore not dealt with seriously by *poskim*⁴ until over 700 years later when Yidden fleeing the Nazis during World War II found themselves in the Far East. While there most definitely is a dateline,⁵ they were unsure where the dateline is according to *halacha* and on which side of it they stood. The question was sent to Eretz Yisroel by telegram, and two major conflicting opinions emerged — opinions that severely impacted their daily lives by determining which day to keep as Shabbos and on which day to mark the fast of Yom Kippur.

Although it is a complicated issue, by now all established Jewish communities have come to a halachic consensus as to how they observe Shabbos and Yom Tov, the details of which are beyond the scope of this article. We will focus on a novel and fascinating halachic issue impacted by crossing the dateline (wherever it is) which was clarified by the Rebbe himself.

Initial Inquiry

In the spring of 5709* Reb Betzalel Wilshansky immigrated from France to Australia as per the directives of the Frierdiker Rebbe in order to strengthen the work of Lubavitch in the country. In his first letter to the Rebbe reporting on his safe arrival and the beginning of his activities, he mentioned that on the way he skipped a day, and asked for an explanation for this and specifically how he should have dealt with *sefiras haomer* in such a situation.

In a letter dated 16 Sivan 5709*⁶ the Rebbe describes in detail the realities of the international dateline, how *halacha* deals with this “quandary,” and concludes that Australia is to the west of the dateline according to most *poskim*, and Shabbos should be observed in accordance with the reckoning of the days followed by the non-Jews living there, as Yidden have been doing since they arrived there.

This only applies to *dinim* that depend on the days of the week or days of the month. The issue with *sefiras haomer* is the fact that it is the counting of the days that a person

experiences, and this leads to a very unique question.

Regarding *sefiras haomer* the Torah states (Emor 23:15):

וּסְפַרְתֶּם לָכֶם מִמּוֹחֶרֶת הַשַּׁבָּת מִיּוֹם הַבִּיאְכֶם
אֶת-עֹמֶר הַתְּנוּפָה שִׁבְעַת יָמִים וְתָמִיתָ תְּהִינָה:

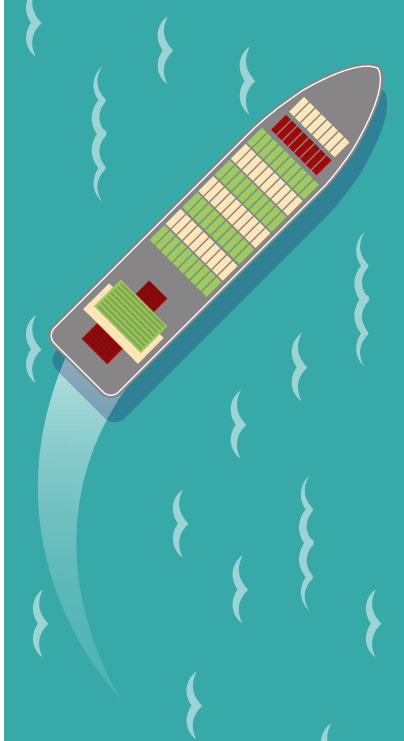
And you shall count for yourselves, from the morrow of the rest day, from the day you bring the omer as a wave offering, seven weeks; they shall be complete.

Unique to *sefiras haomer* is the necessity for the counting of seven weeks to be “*temimos*” —complete.

Imagine someone travels to Australia from the United States on Tuesday the ninth day of the *omer* and crosses the dateline at 3:30 p.m. (wherever the dateline actually is), thereby jumping ahead one day and is now following the local calendar where it is Wednesday. That night at Maariv, local Yidden will be counting 11 days to the *omer* but the traveler has not yet counted 10 days to the *omer*. Can he in good conscience make a *bracha* and declare, “Today is 11 days to the *omer*?”

Even more complex is the fact that the Yom Tov of Shavuot has no defined date on the calendar and depends solely on the completion of 49 days—seven complete weeks—of *sefiras haomer* from 16 Nissan. The traveler’s *omer* counting is one day behind the local Yidden’s and when the locals will conclude their counting of 49 days—reaching the point of “*temimos*”—and start observing the Yom Tov Shavuot, he will have not yet completed 49 days from 16 Nissan, and should begin observing Shavuot a day later, when he will have finally reached the point of “*temimos*!”

A similar issue would arise for someone traveling from Australia to the United States during *sefira*, but in reverse. He crosses the dateline on Tuesday, the ninth day of the Omer at 3:30 p.m. and now follows the local time to set his calendar back to



Monday. When the local Yidden count 9 days to the *omer* that evening, could he in good conscience make a *bracha* and declare, “Today is 9 days to the *omer*,” when he already said that last night?

Since Shavuot happens automatically after counting and experiencing 49 days—seven complete weeks—from 16 Nissan, the traveler from Australia will reach the point of “*temimos*” a day earlier than the local Yidden, and will need to observe Shavuot a day before everyone else has reached the point of “*temimos*!”

In his letter, the Rebbe writes that since he has not seen any *poskim* who deal with this specific question of *sefiras haomer* and Shavuot when crossing the dateline, he will present various perspectives on the matter and different options how to behave “*l’pilpula b’alma*”—for discussion’s sake alone—and in no way to be viewed as a *psak din*.

One of the main points the discussion boils down to is this: Is *sefiras haomer* considered a personal obligation upon every individual Yid or is it a general experience for *klal Yisroel*?

The Rebbe evaluates the different approaches and proposes different results based on them, but clarifies that the question is relevant exclusively to *sefiras haomer* and Shavuot, not to Shabbos and Yom Tov.

There is no necessity to experience six weekdays in order to have Shabbos, and conversely Shabbos does not automatically happen to a person who experienced six weekdays. Therefore, one who traveled from the United States to Australia on Monday, thereby skipping Tuesday, observes Shabbos with the rest of the Australian Jews, even though he experienced only five weekdays. And one who traveled from Australia to the United States on a Monday and now fell back to Sunday will observe Shabbos on the same day as all American Jews even though he is now experiencing seven weekdays in a row.

Regarding Yom Tov, one who travels from the United States to Australia on the first day of Chol Hamoed and skips the second day of Chol Hamoed, because when he landed in Australia it was already the third day of Chol Hamoed, will observe Shevi’i Shel Pesach together with all Australian Jews. This is because the Torah clearly designates the final day of Yom Tov to the 21st of Nissan, and the calendar date is defined by the local reality, and mainly because the idea of “*temimos*” is never used to describe the days of Pesach.

Clearly, with respect to the question of *sefiras haomer* and Shavuot the Rebbe did not arrive at a conclusion at that time.

Clear Conclusion

During the farbrengen of Shavuot 5717*,⁷ the Rebbe explained the issue at length and came to a definitive conclusion.

Here are several important details about *sefiras haomer* and Shavuot that must be emphasized.

↪ The Gemara states that there is no such thing as a communal counting of *sefiras haomer*. Every individual has the obligation to count 49 days from 16 Nissan, and this “*temimos*” triggers the Yom Tov of Shavuot on the next day.

↪ Even if one did not actually count *sefiras haomer*, Shavuot will begin for them 50 days after 16 Nissan.

Whereas many *poskim* rule that the mitzvah of *sefiras haomer* nowadays is only *mid’rabanan*, there is no question that the Yom Tov of Shavuot is *min HaTorah*! Clearly, the “*temimos*” that triggers the Yom Tov of Shavuot is determined by the fact that the individual lived through 49 days—seven complete weeks—from 16 Nissan, irrespective of the actual counting.

Consequently, a person who converts to Yiddishkeit during *sefira* will observe Shavuot 50 days after 16 Nissan, even though he or she did not have the mitzvah of counting a complete 49 days of *sefiras haomer*.

↪ The fact that the Torah does not provide a calendar date for the Yom Tov of Shavuot means that during the era when the Sanhedrin was *mekadesh hachodesh al pi hare’iya*—and Rosh Chodesh could either be on the 30th day or the 31st day—it was possible for Shavuot to be observed either on Hei, Vov or Zayin Sivan.

If both Nissan and Iyar have 30 days, Shavuot is observed on Hei Sivan. If both Nissan and Iyar have 29 days, Shavuot is observed on Zayin Sivan. When one of the months has 29 days and the other has 30 days, Shavuot is observed on Vov Sivan. Today, with our set calendar, Nissan is always 30 days and Iyar is always 29 days, so Shavuot is observed on Vov Sivan, coinciding with the anniversary of *Matan Torah* which happened on Vov Sivan 2448.

לזכות
החתן הרה"ת ר' שמואל יוסף מנחם מענדל שיחי'
והכלה המהוללה מרת יהודית ברכה תחי'
לרגל חתונתם בשעטומ"צ
י"ג סיון ה'תשפ"א
נדפס ע"י הוריהם
הרה"ת ר' לוי יצחק
וזוגתו מרת נחמה ברוריה גיטל ומשפחתם שיחי'
טענענבוים
הרה"ת ר' חיים ברוך
וזוגתו מרת שטערנא שרה ומשפחתם שיחי'
אלבסקי

As Long As I Remember

The following story was related by Rabbi Mottel Schusterman, the Rebbe's ba'al koreh.

Like all members of *anash*, I would usually go into *yechidus* for my birthday, which was on Erev Rosh Chodesh Elul. In 5735*, we had the opportunity to go into *yechidus* on the occasion of the wedding of my daughter Zissel to Elozor Gurevitch.

As this was not a birthday *yechidus*—as those were no longer taking place in 5735*—but rather a family *yechidus* on the occasion of the wedding, I was uncertain whether it would be appropriate for me to include mention of my birthday in my *pan*.

As I waited my turn in the *mazkirus* office, I asked one of the *mazkirim*, “When I’m standing before the Rebbe, should I mention my birthday?”

“No,” came the response.

I entered *yechidus*, and placed my *pan* before the Rebbe. The Rebbe asked why I hadn’t mentioned my birthday.

“The *mazkirim* instructed me not to mention it,” I answered.

The Rebbe replied,

“זיי דארפן טאקע ... אבער אבי איך געדיינק!”

“Indeed, they have to [do their job] ... but at least I remember!”

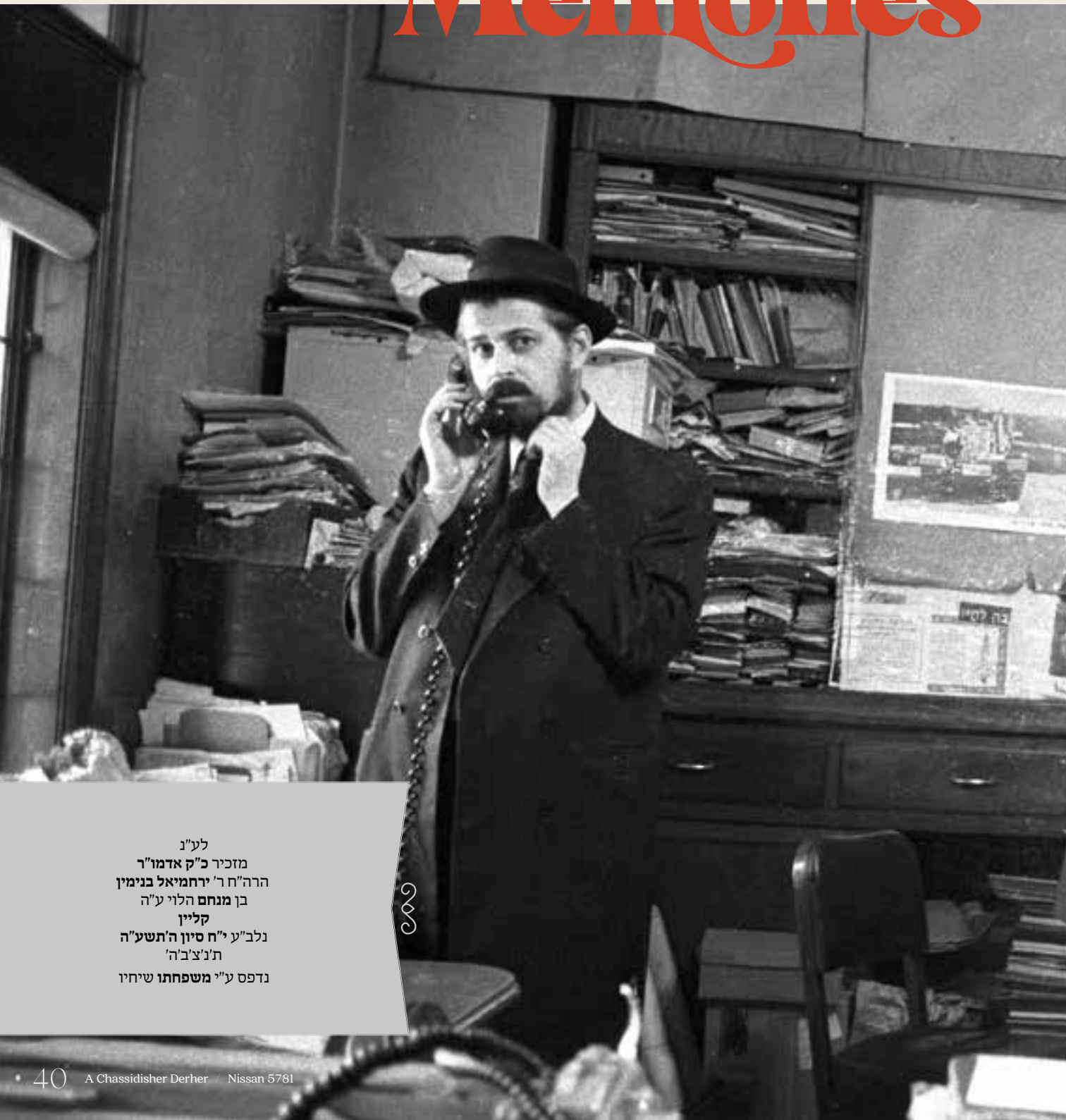
Reb Mottel may have thought that he wouldn’t be able to receive the brachos for his birthday that year, but the Rebbe remembered his birthday. Whether we remind the Rebbe or not, the Rebbe remembers each and every one of us. 1



14 ADAR II, 5722. GERSHON SCHUSTERMAN VIA JEM 303/49

Fondest Memories

An Interview with
RABBI ASHER ZEILINGOLD



לע"ג
מזכיר כ"ק אדמו"ר
הרה"ח ר' ירחמיאל בנימין
בן מנחם הלוי ע"ה
קליין
גלב"ע י"ח סיון ה'תשע"ה
תנ"צ'ב'ה'
גדפס ע"י משפחתו שיחיו



Rabbi Zeilinggold has served as a shliach of the Rebbe and rabbi of the Adath Israel Shul in S. Paul, Minnesota for over five decades.

In an exclusive interview with A Chassidisher Derher, Rabbi Zeilinggold tells us about the early years of his life

when he became a Lubavitcher Chossid and later when he was a *bochur* learning at 770. He shares with us some of his personal stories and recollections, many of which give us a glimpse of what it was like in the Rebbe's presence during the early 5720s* and the close relationship a *bochur* felt with the Rebbe at that time.



MAZKIRUS OFFICE 5736

LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 141250

My Background

My father was from Warsaw, Poland, where he was raised as a Stoliner Chosid. He married my mother in Eretz Yisroel and they settled in London, England, several years later, where I was born in Elul of 5700 (1940). Growing up, we lived in a very Yiddishe neighborhood and my father sent me to study at the famous yeshiva known as Gateshead Talmudical College. For various reasons, my parents wanted to move to America but in those times this wasn't a simple task. The main issue was that you needed to provide proof that you had a steady source of income, after which it could take a long time to obtain visas. My father went alone to try to establish himself first, and we followed about a year or so later. Although he did not have any prior connection to Lubavitch, while he was in New York he went to the Rebbe on a few occasions and spoke to the Rebbe on various matters.

My First Encounter

On a wintery morning in 5714*, my mother and her children, including me, the youngest in the family, came off the boat from England. We joined my father in the United States and settled in New York. It so happened, *b'hashgacha pratis*, that the apartment my father rented for the family was just a few blocks north of 770 Eastern Parkway. An uncle of mine had a store on Kingston Avenue, and as soon as we came I wanted to go visit him, so I walked over with my father. As we were walking on Eastern Parkway, across the street from 770, my father said to me, "Look! You see the man coming towards us? He's the Lubavitcher Rebbe!" I remember very distinctly the manner in which he was walking. The Rebbe then approached us, looking at us very closely. In hindsight, although we

didn't say anything, it seems to me that that moment was the beginning of my "Coming to Lubavitch." On the same day I arrived in America, barely six hours after I got off the boat, I saw the Rebbe for the first time.

Initial Guidance

While living in New York, I went to Yeshiva Torah Vodaath in Brooklyn and didn't have much to do with Lubavitch. My father davened at the Agudah Shul on Crown Street so we would see the Rebbe on occasion but that was the extent of our connection.

When I graduated Torah Vodaath in 5717*, I had no idea what I was going to do. I hadn't made any plans for the future and for whatever reason I didn't feel like I had anyone with whom to discuss it. I spent that summer at Gan Yisroel, where a friend suggested that I write to the Rebbe asking for guidance on what to do next. That's exactly what I did. Little did I know, this would change my life forever. I wrote a letter to the Rebbe that I'm thinking of going to university but I don't know



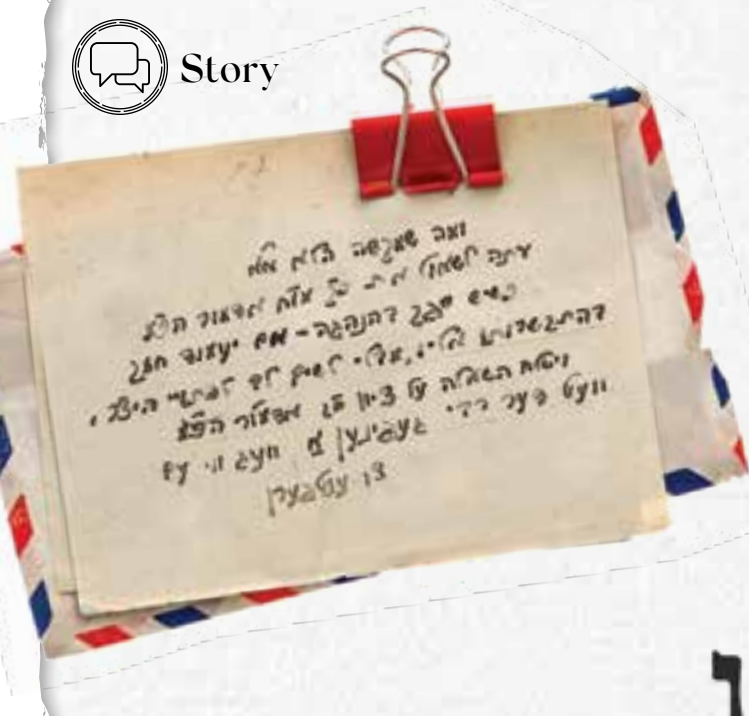
THE REBBE ENTERS 770 AFTER VISITING GAN YISROEL IN 5717. REB ASHER IS ON THE FAR LEFT.

The Rebbe's Neighbor

While in Torah Vodaath, I had a teacher whose name was Rabbi Isbee. He wasn't a Lubavitcher but he lived at 346 New York Avenue, apartment 3D, which was directly under the Rebbe's apartment, 4D. He would see the Rebbe regularly walking in and out but nothing more than that.

I recall that he once told us with great admiration, "Last night I heard the Lubavitcher Rebbe learning Torah the whole night long!"

On another occasion, he told us something he witnessed. One day he was standing in the lobby of his apartment building where he noticed the Rebbe waiting for the elevator to go upstairs. Just as the elevator came to the lobby, a woman walked over to enter. The Rebbe opened the door and held it open for her and she walked in, then he turned around and walked up the four flights of stairs (to avoid an issue of *yichud*).



דער רבי וועט געפינען א וועג...

לזכות הורינו
הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' משה
וזוגתו מרת פערל שיחיו הערסאן
הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' אברהם
וזוגתו מרת ח' בלומא שיחיו אזדאבא
לכבוד ימי הולדתם ולהצלחה רבה ומופלגה
בשליחותם הק' לאורך ימים ושנים טובות
מתוך נחת חסידותי אמיתי, בריאות הנכונה,
ומתוך שמחה והרחבה!
נדפס ע"י בנם ובתם
הרה"ת ר' אשר זעליג
וזוגתו מרת שרה - ומשפחתם - שיחיו
הערסאן

The Much Needed Wake Up Call

AS TOLD BY RABBI YITZIE MAGALNIC (PALOS VERDES, CA)

My wife and I got married in 5750* and we were blessed with twins, a boy and a girl, on 18 Adar II 5760*. Needless to say it was a tremendous *simcha* for us. That summer was our first opportunity to bring our twins to the Ohel.

The night before we visited the Ohel, I received a call from a member of our community with whom I had just recently begun to develop a close relationship. "Rabbi, my daughter is turning twelve in November and we would like you to help prepare her for her bas mitzvah and officiate at

the celebration." As his wife had not done a proper *giyur*, I knew it was impossible for me to grant his request.

When we first met, they had wanted to enroll their kids in our Hebrew school. As with all parents in that situation, I try to be as transparent as possible. I told them that I could not do any bar or bas mitzvah for their children as his wife did not have a proper *giyur* and therefore their children are not Jewish. At that time, it seemed to me that they were very understanding of our decision and they did not

enroll their children in our Hebrew school. The issue was never raised again. Therefore, I was quite surprised when I received this call. I realized I was being tested, especially as he had recently given a substantial contribution to our Chabad House.

I was at a loss of how to respond to him.

I needed to figure out how to respond without distancing him from Yiddishkeit. I explained to him that I was traveling and that I would call him the next day. This would hopefully buy me some time.

That night I hardly slept, thinking that once I spoke with him, I would most likely be losing a big supporter. At this point I did not discuss this with anyone. I hoped I would find the right words to keep up the friendship and maintain his involvement in Yiddishkeit without causing any hard feelings.

The *yetzer hara* always has a way to create doubts and rationalizations. I came up with what I thought might be a solution and decided that I would ignore that this was a bas mitzvah and would consider it a twelfth birthday party and nothing more. Obviously I knew this was a very bad idea and it was completely wrong on every level, but nevertheless I hoped for a resolution.

The next morning we left for the Ohel. It was a hot and muggy summer day. We wrote our *panim* and entered the Ohel. As we entered the *Tziyun* my wife realized that she forgot the babies' hats which she had prepared to protect them from the extremely hot sun. My wife asked if I could go back to the car to retrieve the hats and of course I did so. When I returned, I used the entrance of the house which welcomes all visitors to the Ohel. In the first room there is a big screen where videos of the Rebbe are continuously playing. Typically I don't stop to watch the videos. Especially now, as I was in a hurry to get back to the *Tziyun* to bring the hats for the babies and to read my *pan*. As I was getting ready to leave the first room to go into the tent, I heard the Rebbe speaking very passionately. The Rebbe seemed to be very pained by what he was saying. This of course caught my attention and I wanted to hear what the Rebbe was talking about in this unusual manner.

I returned to the screen to listen to the *sicha*. I was shocked to the core! I heard the Rebbe saying, "You are fooling them, their children and grandchildren for all eternity." It felt as though the Rebbe was speaking directly to me. The Rebbe was speaking about *Mihu Yehudi*, addressing rabbis who tell people who aren't Jewish that they are Jews, misleading and thus harming them for all generations.

I could not believe my ears! Here I was, entertaining foolish thoughts of putting up a charade of a bas mitzvah



and the Rebbe was sending me a direct wake-up call. What was I even thinking?!

When I walked into the Ohel moments later, I was on an entirely different plane. I had never felt such a strong *hiskashrus* to the Rebbe and I tearfully thanked the Rebbe for the much needed clarity.

That evening, I phoned my *baal habos* to clarify and boldly tell him the truth. In a nice but firm way I told him I could not have any part in the so-called bas mitzvah celebration. I explained to him that since his wife is not Jewish, neither is his daughter. I was expecting him to hang up the phone and sever his ties with me. Of course I had made peace with that, were that to be the case. Yet after I finished explaining everything, he said in a polite way, "Then why don't you call my wife and please explain it to her." Of course, I took the time to call her and explained everything in a most compassionate way. I wasn't sure how she would react so I again expected the worst. To my surprise, she said, "Rabbi you are absolutely correct. When I completed my conversion I never really did anything to be Jewish, I knew it was not a real conversion."

A few months later after the party, which I was not a part of, the family started taking very big steps towards accepting more mitzvos including *kashrus* and Shabbos. We explored the possibility of doing *giyur kehalacha*!

Baruch Hashem we have remained close. Together with his family, our friend continues to be instrumental in the success of our shlichus. I am forever grateful that I was able to summon the courage to overcome this *nisayon* with the Rebbe's direct intervention. ❶

YOUR STORY

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



תורה צוה לנו משה

A common scene in 770 over the years were the weekday *sichos* the Rebbe spoke at rallies, special occasions, and דברי כיבושין on fast days. We present a beautiful photo collection from these special moments of the Rebbe speaking to his Chassidim over the years.



לע"נ
הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' שלום דובער
בן הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' חיים משה ע"ה
אלפרוביץ
נלב"ע ד' סיון ה'תשע"ה
ולע"נ
הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' נחמן
בן ר' פנחס ע"ה
סודאק
נלב"ע י"ז סיון ה'תשע"ד
ת"נ צ"ב
נדפס ע"י
הרה"ת ר' יוסף יצחק
וזוגתו מרת חנה שרה
ומשפחתם שיחיו
אלפרוביץ



