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MAGA



**WHEN THE REBBE
"INTERFERED"
WITH RABBI ADIN
STEINSALTZ**

**THE REBBEIM'S
RESPONSE
TO INTERMARRIAGE**

**Conversations with
Seforim Specialists**

SICHOS IN ENGLISH PUBLISHER	RABBI SHMUEL ZAJAC AUTHOR	SEFORIM DEALS VENDOR
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The Rebbe Said 'I Don't Like to Interfere' And Then Told Him What to Do

BY RABBI MENI EVEN-ISRAEL

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE STEINSALTZ CENTER - YERUSHALAYIM

Much has been written about Rabbi Adin Even-Israel (Steinsaltz)'s life and multifaceted scholarliness. In honor of Hey Teves, his son told Anash Magazine about another aspect of his life: His deep-seated connection to the Rebbe, and and the Rebbe's involvement in his works.



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One of the most iconic images that we have in the Steinsaltz Center, is of the Rebbe talking with my father - Rabbi Adin Even-Israel (Steinsaltz) - while handing him the Tanya.

Hey Teves, the “celebration of books,” goes hand in hand with the Rebbe’s call for a house full of *seforim*. In many ways, the Rebbe’s *nesius* was surrounded by *seforim* - the creation of *seforim*, encouraging people to learn from them, and celebrating new publications.

In the year 1990, the Rebbe gave out what I call the ‘Green Tanya.’ There are many photos of individuals receiving this special edition. One of the most iconic images that we have in the Steinsaltz Center, is of the Rebbe talking with my father - Rabbi Adin Even-Israel (Steinsaltz) - while handing him the Tanya. This photo also graces the cover of my father’s

book “My Rebbe.” It is fitting that this iconic image of my father with the Rebbe is associated with receiving the Tanya, which my father translated and explained in his seminal work on Chassidus.

Throughout his career of writing and publishing books, the Rebbe guided my father. He was in many ways like a partner to my father’s endeavors in writing and beyond. The Rebbe would often tell him, ‘I don’t like to interfere,’ and then tell him what he should do...

My father began his work on translating and typesetting the Gemara. We are talking about a time when typesetting was done physically by hand, using stamps made from clay or other materials, long before the advent of computers. It was an old-fashioned process, not quite 16th century, but certainly traditional. One major challenge was the tremendous amount of information on each page, including commentary, translation, images, and notes.

At that time, two options emerged for page layout. One was to expand the page throughout the process so

that one page might take up three or four pages with commentary, of which we have a few samples. The Rebbe’s instructions were interesting; he suggested that each page should be divided in two. This approach led to the creation of the iconic big brown books. Although my father suffered criticism for this move, he believed the Rebbe was correct and followed his directives.

The second notable instance was when the Rebbe requested my father to create ‘Sefer HaKen,’ which was to be published for the Alter Rebbe’s 150th *yurtzeit*. He gave specific instructions about what he wanted in the book and insisted on not being part of it, asking my father to collaborate with then President of Israel, Zalman Shazar. This project was delayed for various reasons, leading to the Rebbe inquiring about its progress. This book eventually was released in a first edition in 1969. We had the *zchus* to republish the Sefer Haken in honor of my oldest son’s bar mitzvah.

The third instance involved the three small books ‘Women in the Talmud,’ ‘Men in the Talmud,’ and

‘Biblical Images.’ Two peculiar things about the Rebbe’s response to these: firstly, his address to my father changed from Harav Hachassid (‘the Chassidic Rabbi’) to Harav Hagaon (‘the great Rabbi’). Secondly, he commented on one of the cover images, which depicted the Luchos as round instead of square.

The fourth time the Rebbe “interfered” was when my father had the idea to create a new commentary on the Tanya, making it more accessible. The Rebbe’s response was quite stern, insisting that the words of the Tanya must remain intact and that any commentary should not alter the original text.

The fifth and last time the Rebbe commented on my father’s work was after a challenging period with certain groups who set out to damage his reputation. My father was disheartened, but the Rebbe encouraged him with the saying, לַפּוֹם צַעֲרָא אַגְרָא – according to the pain is the reward.

The idea of Torah study in Chabad has always been taken seriously. No other Rebbe published as much as our Rebbe, and the impact on our learning is tremendous. The continuous demand for learning was embedded in all of us. He instilled in us the need for continuous learning, not just in theory or the spiritual realm, but in actual, constant study, whether it be Sichos, Maamorim or daily study. The Rebbe insisted on creating a movement in which owning a library of Jewish books and studying them are paramount to Jewish life. 🕎

←

Rabbi Meni with his father Rabbi Adin Even-Israel (Steinsaltz)





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Navigating the World of Seforim: A Decade-Long Journey of Holy Commerce

ANASH.ORG INTERVIEW WITH
SHLOMO GOLDMAN OF SEFORIMDEALS.COM

Hey Teves will see chassidim everywhere heading to their bookstores to shop for their favorite titles or new publications. In this interview, we explore the other side of the coin: The world of the seforim seller, as experienced by Shlomo Goldman, founder of SeforimDeals.com.

SeforimDeals.com is a unique store. Although they have a large warehouse in the heart of Crown Heights - they don't actually have a brick-and-mortar store. All orders are received online and are shipped out across the USA. Hei Teves is the only time that their warehouse is open to the public for people to come in and browse.

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WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO START A SEFORIM BUSINESS?

Nearly ten years ago, I found myself grappling with financial challenges while immersed in Kollel. Fueled by the necessity of parnassa, I ventured into the world of Seforim. This journey, initially a personal pursuit, evolved into a significant enterprise within our community, bridging the gap between holy and parnassa.

HOW DO YOU CHOOSE THE SELECTION OF SEFORIM FOR YOUR STORE?

The Seforim selection process is a delicate balance between classic texts and new releases. We always try to focus on the new releases of both Chassidus and Nigleh, with a keen emphasis on staying current to



Running a Seforim business isn't without its hurdles. Managing inventory, particularly with titles that see only a single printing emerges as a recurring challenge.





↑ *Customer inquiries play a pivotal role, often serving as an early indicator for books not yet available in the American market.*

meet customers' interests and the newest releases. This commitment to offering a diverse range ensures that the Seforim store is not just a repository of tradition but a dynamic hub of intellectual exploration. While there are certain Seforim that become classics and continue to sell over the years, the majority of sales tend to be the new releases.

WHAT CHALLENGES HAVE YOU FACED IN RUNNING A SEFORIM BUSINESS, AND HOW HAVE YOU OVERCOME THEM?

Running a Seforim business isn't without its hurdles. Managing inventory, particularly with titles that see only a single printing emerges as a recurring challenge. While we aren't able to control the number of books printing, when something comes back into print we try our best to anticipate our customers' needs and alert them when a title comes back into print that they have been looking for.

HOW DO YOU STAY UPDATED ON NEW RELEASES AND TRENDS IN SEFORIM?

Generally all the book/seforim publishers and distributors send out emails on a frequent basis with all the new and back-in-print Seforim. However, customer inquiries play

a pivotal role, often serving as an early indicator for books not yet available in the American market. This symbiotic relationship between store and customer highlights the interconnectedness that defines the Seforim market.

IN WHAT WAYS DO YOU ENGAGE WITH THE LOCAL COMMUNITY AND SUPPORT THEIR NEEDS FOR SEFORIM?

While physically located in Crown Heights, we largely operate outside of Crown Heights. The annual Hey Teves sale is really the only time that we engage face to face with the local Crown Heights community, an aspect that I would love to have throughout the year as well. Although currently we do offer pick up and free delivery in Crown Heights for orders over \$67, we don't have the retail traffic coming in to browse."

Editor's Note: See more of this below in the last question.

HOW DO YOU HANDLE INVENTORY MANAGEMENT TO ENSURE A DIVERSE AND WELL-STOCKED COLLECTION?

Our main clientele are Anash all around America, that being said we definitely do have customers in many other communities, such as

Lakewood and others, and we cater to their particular interest as well. Of course, many customers from other communities are also looking to purchase Chassidus, something which isn't so easy for them to get there or they don't want to be seen purchasing there. But we try to carry a selection that everyone can find something for their needs, be it Chassidus, children's books, Nigleh, Shaalos U'Teshuvos, practical Halacha seforim, and so on.

SHOPPING FOR SEFORIM ONLINE CAN BE DIFFICULT, NOT BEING ABLE TO PERUSE THROUGH THE SEFER. HOW TO HELP YOUR CUSTOMERS WITH THIS?

We endeavor to bring the whole Seforim store experience online, by uploading pages from each sefer so customers can sample and by providing real-time recommendations for customers via live chat. We also take the time talking to customers on the phone helping them choose exactly what they need, and coordinating the shipping details so everything runs as smoothly as possible. While we are a digital business, we place great importance on customer interaction and work hard to ensure each customer's experience has a personal touch.

DO YOU SEE THE BUSINESS AS A SORT OF SHLICHUS?

Certainly! While it is a business, it is an Avodas Hakodesh of supplying our customers with seforim to learn more Torah. I always remind myself of this.

WHAT PLANS DO YOU HAVE GOING FORWARD?

Looking ahead, we're looking at the possibility of establishing a permanent retail location, providing the Crown Heights community with year-round access to the world of SeforimDeals.com beyond the Hei Teves sale. Perhaps it might be opening up the warehouse showroom to the public. The future will tell. @



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Bringing Chassidus to the American Boy

A CONVERSATION WITH 'SICHOS IN ENGLISH'



↑

One of the more recent revolutions of the Rebbe was making even the deepest Chassidus available in English. Standing at the forefront of that effort was Rabbi Yonah Avtzon and his mosad Sichos in English. His son, Rabbi Shmuly Avtzon, who currently directs SIE, gives an inside look at its past, present and future.

RABBI AVTZON, EVERY ENGLISH-SPEAKING LUBAVITCHER CHOSSID HAS HEARD OF SICHOS IN ENGLISH AND HAS USED ITS BOOKS. CAN YOU SHARE WITH US HOW IT STARTED AND WHEN YOU GOT INVOLVED?

SIE - Sichos in English - was began in 1977/5738 by a group of bochurim including my father, Rabbi Yonah Avtzon a”h. At that time, they began transcribing the Rebbe’s farbrengens in English and giving it out for English readers.

The Rebbe was very involved; there were many *mainos* to SIE and a lot of kiruvim. And the Rebbe’s involvement is not just something of the past - we constantly see the Rebbe’s *brachos* and guidance in what we do.

As far as my involvement: Sometimes you choose the job, and sometimes the job is given to you.

In 5779, my father passed away suddenly. Interestingly, during the last few months of my father’s life, he spoke to me about SIE and gave me more and more responsibility. He asked me to help him out in his final editing, which was very personal for him. In fact, his very last message to me was about reviewing edits he made on the new Likutei Sichos translation.

After he passed away, the responsibility fell upon me. And here we are 5 years later.

SIE IS INVOLVED IN SO MANY PROJECTS - HALACHA, CHASSIDUS, TRANSLATION, AND ADAPTATION. WHAT WOULD YOU SAY IS THE OVERARCHING GOAL OF SIE?

Rabbi Avtzon: SIE started as its name “Sichos in English” implies, to translating the Rebbe’s farbrengens

into English. As things progressed, with the Rebbe’s bracha and approval, it expanded and went into translating other materials, including the words of previous Rebbeim and Chassidus in general.

Today, we see our *moisad* as a *shlichus* to bring as much Chassidus as possible to the English language. A real challenge today is to bring real, authentic Chassidus to the average American boy and girl, in relatable language.

Like in any growing *moisad*, the challenge is to stay true to your core mission and values, while at the same time constantly growing and branching out into new pathways.

WHAT DO YOU WISH THE AVERAGE CHOSSID KNEW ABOUT SIE?

As far as what goes into each book, I think people should recognize the amount of effort, manpower, creative energy, time, and tremendous expense that goes into producing every book. Most books reach way over the \$100,000 range. But there’s more than that.

We’re living in a world where everything is arbitrary and anything can mean anything. This has affected Chassidus as well, with people pulling Chassidus in all kinds of directions...

As translators of Chassidus, it is our job to ensure that the “*pach shemen tahor*,” that pure jug of oil is sealed with the ‘Kohen Gadol’s seal.’ We try to do everything with a sense of loyalty and connection to the source, staying true to the *kavana* and the message. Our mission is to bring the truth to people in a way that resonates



with them, while at the same time holding on to its authenticity.

We all face this tension and dynamic to some degree in our lives. But when you're doing it on this kind of scale - publishing many books which and people take as the Rebbe's word, then the *achrayus* and the tension, and hopefully the resolution, are very strong.

HOW DO YOU IN FACT TRANSLATE THE REBBE'S WORDS ACCURATELY WHILE MAKING IT READABLE AT THE SAME TIME?

That is the big question in translation!

We mentioned the Rebbe's special relationship to SIE. Besides all the *brachos* and the encouragement to do more, we were *zocheh* that the Rebbe edited some of our work. I think it's worth mentioning that some of the Rebbe editing wasn't in the typical sense of editing, which is readying something for publishing, but rather it was an education for the writers. The Rebbe would sometimes edit part of a sicha or essay, and return it without editing the rest, meaning to say: now go figure out from here what I want.

Something that we saw throughout was the Rebbe advocating for a balance of being true to the source and, at the same time, making it readable and not being too literal. Whenever we veered off in either of the two directions, we got it over the

head. At times, we would receive a *maaneh* response one way, and then run in the other direction, only to have to be pulled back.

So, is there a perfect balance? That's a good question. There will be times when people complain that we're going too much in one direction or another. But we have the sense of *achrayus* that we have to achieve the right balance. And we're constantly going further and deeper, and it's getting better and better, with more writers and editors joining the team.

Language is also something that constantly changes, so what was authentic and readable once may not be today and needs an update. But at the same time, we have to ensure that with all the changes made over time, we don't lose sight of the core message. That's the journey we have.

WHO INFLUENCES THE DECISIONS MADE AT SIE? AND WHO DO YOU CONSULT FOR BIGGER QUESTIONS?

So, first and foremost, I grew up around my father, who worked for the Rebbe for so many years. His motto was always making sure that the Rebbe's *kavanah* was being carried out. Although sadly we don't have him here in person, his guidance, ideas, and general approach continue to guide us.

We also have the big *zechus* of having a team of those who worked for

the Rebbe as writers and editors for many years. Among them are:

Rabbi **Eliyahu Touger**, a man who, for so many years, has brought a vast amount of Torah, both nigleh and Chassidus, to the English-speaking world - the years spent working with the original Sichos in English, with some of his work edited by the Rebbe. More recently, he produced the set on Rambam, the Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch, Selections from Likkutei Sichos, Lessons in Maamarim, and more.

R' **Uri Kaploun** is a master translator who has worked on Likkutei Dibburim, sichos of 5711, and many more projects. **Meir Prager**, a good friend of my father, has been involved in the *moisad* for many years. I also consult often with my older brother, Rabbi **Levi Avtzon** and all of my family. Also, Rabbi **Hertzel Pewzner** has joined the team in the past few years and has brought great value to many projects besides his own series "The Basics of Chassidus."

In addition, we reach out to many people outside our *moisad*, such as the team at Kehos and others in the field of publishing. Most importantly, there's the feedback from the readers - from Anash and Nshei Chabad, Shluchim, *mekuravim*, non-Lubavitch crowds, and *bochurim*. We constantly get feedback and try to integrate it.

WHAT DIRECTION DO YOU SEE SIE TAKING GOING FORWARD?

I would say our vision is bringing authentic Chassidus - "*yafutzu mayanosecha chutzah*," which Moshiach told the Baal Shem Tov was a prerequisite for his arrival.

The Rebbe would explain the significance of each word: "*mayanosecha*," the actual wellspring, not just the water that comes out of it, "*yafutzu*," should be spread out everywhere, "*chutzah*," even in the furthest of places. This describes our

vision: to bring as much Chassidus as possible to the widest possible audience.

Baruch Hashem, over the last few years, the moisad has been growing exponentially - with new staff and new projects. We would love to expand to create content for multiple different readers - the more frum crowd, the less frum crowd, and obviously the Lubavitch community. To sum up: the idea is to constantly grow and put more and more content out there, on multiple platforms.

CAN YOU SHARE WITH US SOME EXCITING PROJECTS THAT ARE COMING UP?

Baruch Hashem, this Hei Teves, we're debuting the complete set of **Selections from Likkutei Sichos** on the five *chumashim*. This has probably been our top project over the last few years, spearheaded by Rabbi Eliyahu Touger. Bez"V this will be followed by a 2-volume set on *moadim*.

We recently started the **Basics of Chassidus** series, which has been a major success and is up to its third printing of Vol. 1. A spinoff of this series is **Life of a Jewish Child** on the 12 Pesukim, which will be coming out in the next few months.

Over the next year, we will also be finishing the **Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch**. We also have a multi-volume series of contemporary halachah for women in the works, called **Chachmas Nashim**.

Lessons in Maamarim series is also being substantially expanded. It will include volumes featuring maamarim

from **Torah Or and Likkutei Torah**, as well as **Siddur Im Dach**, which had a very successful debut this past Rosh HaShanah. The first few volumes will "H be going to print in the next few months. Lessons in **Basi Legani** will also soon be making its appearance, following the release of several excerpts over the past few years.

The new **The Rebbe's Perspective** series has also been steadily expanding, giving some of the classics a full revamp and receiving glowing feedback on the way. Over the next year, another few volumes will be coming out. And there are many other projects in the works as well.

AS DIRECTOR OF SIE, WHAT DOES HEI TEVES MEAN TO YOU?

In connection with Hei Teves, the Rebbe emphasized the idea that a Rebbe is *nitzchi*, eternal, and the Rebbe's words and *seforim* are also *nitzchi*, and that the Rebbe's *seforim* are part of his life. It follows that we must realize that publishing a sefer of the Rebbeim is not just another book on the market, but rather it is part of the Rebbe's life!

On the practical side, Hei Teves is naturally our biggest sale of the year. It's the Rebbe's yom tov, and the Rebbe transformed it into a day of seforim. What's been happening on Hei Teves in the past few years is unbelievable; the day has literally turned into an international 'book festival.' We hope to have something for everybody and we hope to be there for you every time Hei Teves comes around. א

An exciting endnote: During the Kinus, the Touger Family Foundation generously subsidized Selections from Likkutei Sichos set for shluchim, for only \$99, down from \$200. Since then, many reached out, requesting that this special deal be opened to the general public. SIE thanks the Foundation for hearing the masses and generously offering another 800 sets at this unbelievable price. Make sure to chap arein this Hey Teves!



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How a Mashpia's Question Inspired a Series on the Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch

A CONVERSTION WITH RABBI SHMUEL ZAJAC

MAGGID SHIUR IN MORRISTOWN YESHIVA



↑ *There's an inherent depth that always struck (and continues to strike) me - a profound layer beyond the superficial. No matter how much you explore on the surface, there are always deeper layers of profound significance to be found.*

“I began to discern a pattern: the Alter Rebbe introduces novel and groundbreaking ideas that permeate and transform the entire landscape of his work on a given subject, fundamentally altering the entire perspective.”

Rabbi **Shmuel Zajac** (pronounced Zayentz), is a veteran *maggid shiur* in Rabbinical College of America in Morristown, NJ. In recent years, he published multiple seforim on topics in the Alter Rebbe’s Shulchan Aruch. In a discussion with Anash Magazine, he relates how that came about, and the incredible depth he sees in the Shulchan Aruch.



RABBI ZAJAC, YOU SERVE AS A MAGGID SHIUR IN A YESHIVA GEDOLA. IT IS NOT VERY COMMON TO SEE A MAGGID SHIUR PUBLISH SEFORIM ON HALACHA, YET YOU HAVE PUBLISHED THREE LARGE SEFORIM ON TOPICS IN THE ALTER REBBE’S SHULCHAN ARUCH. CAN YOU SHARE WHEN AND HOW YOU BECAME INTERESTED IN LEARNING AND EXPLAINING THE ALTER REBBE?

Thankfully, I’ve been blessed by Hashem with the opportunity to both learn and impart Torah to talmidim for several decades. Whether in personal study or as a Maggid Shiur, I’ve often engaged with and delved into the writings of the Alter Rebbe in his Shulchan Aruch.

There’s an inherent depth that always struck (and continues to strike) me - a profound layer beyond the superficial. No matter how much you explore on the surface, there are always deeper layers of profound significance to be found. Alongside the knowledge conveyed and imparted to us by the Alter Rebbe - characterized by his distinctive style and precise definitions that redefine and revolutionize our

grasp of concepts - there persists an unmistakable sense and palpable feeling that there’s a deeper layer beyond what meets the eye.

While I’ve consistently delved into and occasionally analyzed various parts of the Alter Rebbe’s halachic works extensively in a broader scope, in the past decade I’ve felt compelled to venture even further, endeavoring to uncover underlying patterns and guiding principles within the Shulchan Aruch.

Once, during a staff meeting at Yeshiva, our beloved mashpia Harav Elimelech Zwiebel *a”h* raised a question about a specific *halacha* of the Alter Rebbe on the topic of Amiroh Lenchri, asking a *goy* to do *melacha* on Shabbos. I took it upon myself to explore and find an answer to his inquiry, a journey that led me to an in-depth exploration of the topic of Amiroh Lenchri, revealing previously undiscovered aspects of the Alter Rebbe’s work.

The Alter Rebbe’s treatment of Amiroh Lenchri stands as an outstanding example, unveiling concepts and ideas unlike any before. As a friend astutely remarked, that in this particular subject, the Alter Rebbe stands as the—אבן דכּוּלָּהּ—the foremost authority—forging new paths and shaping our comprehension of this discourse.

More broadly, I began to discern a pattern: the Alter Rebbe introduces novel and groundbreaking ideas that permeate and transform the entire landscape of his work on a given subject, fundamentally altering the entire perspective. Moreover, his meticulous approach to individual

cases stands out.

In the Alter Rebbe’s Kuntres Acharon (lengthy comments added later on), I observed a distinct approach and unique method of deriving his rulings, in which he draws his rulings from various Rishonim, diverging from how other Achronim had previously articulated them. Specifically, concerning Amiroh Lenchri, he introduces the notion of ‘shlichus’—the empowerment to designate a messenger—and ties this idea to the fundamental reasoning behind the prohibition of Amiroh Lenchri. This understanding supplements its general classification as also being a *din d’rabbonon*, similar to other *issurim d’rabbonon*.

This realization is an eye-opener, revealing how our understanding barely scratches the surface of the foundations upon which the Alter Rebbe arrived at his conclusions, leaving the core concepts insufficiently comprehended.

This was the motivation and inspiration that led to the inception of my first sefer “Yesoday Hashulchon,” focusing on Amiroh Lenchri, as well as his rulings concerning rabbinical prohibitions on Shabbos and more.

FASCINATING! WHAT OTHER TOPICS HAVE YOU WRITTEN ON?

In my second Sefer, I focused on comprehending his rulings within the first two chapters and a substantial part of chapter 18 of Hilchos Shechitah. Although they pertain to the *halachos* of shechita, these sections primarily explore the fundamental principles of Ne’emanus B’issurim—trustworthiness and



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credibility associated with matters concerning prohibitions in Torah laws (such as relying on someone’s assertion about *kashrus*). Here too, the Alter Rebbe provides detailed rulings in various cases, while also establishing overarching guiding principles in dealing with uncertainties (*safeik*) and other guiding rules used to determine the status of an item (such as its kosher or non-kosher classification).

In my latest Sefer, the third installment in this series, I undertook an extensive exploration and deep dive into significant aspects of the laws of Yom Tov. Within these intricate *halachos*, I grappled with numerous fundamental principles and definitions, uncovering essential principles and definitions. For example, I examined concepts like “Ochel Nefesh” and “Machsherei Ochel Nefesh,” wherein the Alter Rebbe initially defines these *halachos* in the “*pnim*” (main text) and then follows a detailed exploration through Rishonim in the Kuntres Acharon. This led to the establishment of two approaches in determining the accepted Halachic position.

For example, at the outset of Hilchos Yom Tov, the Alter Rebbe presents a concise Kuntress Achron where he defines the *melacha* of

Hav’ara as ‘the creation and expansion of fire,’ as opposed to ‘the burning of material consumed by fire.’ Brief proofs supporting this stance are also provided. I elaborate and expand on these points, addressing many questions raised by various Talmidei Chachomim on the Alter Rebbe’s approach. The sefer elucidates how these queries are resolved, solidifies and clarifies these explanations, and affirms the strength and validity of the Alter Rebbe’s proofs.

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY SETS THE ALTER REBBE’S SHULCHAN ARUCH APART FROM OTHER HALACHIC COMPENDIUMS?

Much has been discussed about the Alter Rebbe and his Shulchan Aruch (a work he was tasked with by his teacher, the Mezritcher Maggid). Ultimately, the Alter Rebbe gained widespread acceptance as the authority, guiding thousands who adhere to his Halachic rulings in their daily lives. His influence extends not only among his Chassidim, but also among numerous devout Jews. Even those who don’t always follow his final Halachic decisions often seek his perspective to complement or guide their own.

Clearly, despite all that’s been said, there’s still much more to uncover about the exceptional nature of this

remarkable and magnificent work.

While the Shulchan Aruch of Alter Rebbe can be approached at varying depths by individuals of different knowledge levels and time constraints (as articulated in the Mittler Rebbe’s preface to the Alter Rebbe’s Shulchan Aruch), there seems to exist a standard encapsulated in his introduction to the work. There’s a higher level of understanding that emerges when learning it alongside the Talmudic discussions upon which the Alter Rebbe based his decisions, delving into the likes of Tosfos, the Beis Yosef, and more. This method offers a more precise grasp of the Alter Rebbe’s intentions, a unified approach that threads through his entire work.

Based on the guidance of the Mittler Rebbe and drawing from various rulings by the Alter Rebbe in different spheres, I propose a cohesive approach that threads through his entire body of work.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE APPROACH YOU TAKE IN EXPLAINING THE ALTER REBBE’S STATEMENTS?

Upon diving into this material and exploring certain sections, I’ve sensed and strongly believe in the magnificent fusion of the following two contrasting pillars (with which I have named the *sefer*):

“**Yesodei HaShulchan**”: The Alter Rebbe’s Shulchan Aruch is meticulously and methodically crafted in which it is traced and adheres to the roots of the Halacha, starting from the Mishna and Gemara, continuing through the classical Rishonim like Rashi, Tosefos, Ran,

Rosh, among others, leading to the Tur and Beis Yosef, and culminating in the codification of the Shulchan Aruch of the Mechaber and Rema. The Alter Rebbe frequently references subsequent commentators like the Magen Avraham, Taz, and at times, others such as the Levush. This approach vividly illustrates the development of the Halacha across generations, firmly rooted in tradition, as most of his rulings directly quote these esteemed sources.

“Zikukai Orosav”: Simultaneously, within each citation, the Alter Rebbe not only sheds light but also illuminates these sources in a manner that appears “new” and “fresh” to someone who hadn’t perceived this depth. These beams of light, akin to dazzling fireworks, brilliantly illuminate the sources, and offer a fresh perspective to those who might have overlooked or missed this radiance initially. In this way, the Alter Rebbe innovates and sheds transformative light on the very *Halachos* and statements penned by predecessors, infusing them with new insight and perspective.

This, coupled with his systematic structuring of these *Halachos* and his deliberate arrangement of predecessors’ statements, renders the Halacha luminous, providing answers to questions that might have lingered from the Gemara, to Rashi, to the Magen Avraham and on. His impromptu comments, additional or supplementary explanations, and framing of ideas play a pivotal role in this, serving as a response to these questions.

The references in the margins of the original print of the Alter Rebbe’s Shulchan Aruch (written mostly by the Alter Rebbe himself) further showcase this process. The systematic arrangement and structuring of the codified *Halachos*, combined with his deliberate organization of his predecessors’ statements,

illuminate the Halacha in a manner that effectively addresses numerous questions that might have arisen from the Gemara, Rashi, and Magen Avraham.

By piecing this all together, with the citations from the Gemara and earlier commentators, one can decipher the Alter Rebbe’s intended method and grasp the underlying concepts, elucidating and addressing queries that might have surfaced regarding these *Halachos*. As a result, these inquiries dissolve, leaving us with a lucid comprehension of the foundational concepts behind these *Halachos*. These inquiries find resolution through his comments, additional explanations, and the method he employs to synthesize his ideas.

I’ve frequently found great value



Sefer “Yesodei HaShulchan”: The Alter Rebbe’s Shulchan Aruch is meticulously and methodically crafted in which it is traced and adheres to the roots of the Halacha, starting from the Mishna and Gemara, continuing through the classical Rishonim leading to the Tur and Beis Yosef, and culminating in the codification of the Shulchan Aruch of the Mechaber and Rema and subsequent commentators. This approach vividly illustrates the development of the Halacha across generations, firmly rooted in tradition, as most of his rulings directly quote these esteemed sources.

in delving into the foundational *sugyos* which are the foundational discussions of a specific *halacha*. This approach has enabled me to grasp the essence of what the Alter Rebbe intends to communicate, thereby illuminating and enhancing my understanding of the *sugya* itself and leading to a clearer understanding of the discussions at hand.

HOW SHOULD ONE WHO WANTS TO LEARN THE ALTER REBBE’S SHULCHAN ARUCH IN-DEPTH GO ABOUT THIS?

If one follows the format provided in “Yesodai HaShulchan Vezikukei Orosav” - learning the sources attributed in the Alter Rebbe’s Shulchan Aruch and the Kuntres Acharons, and subsequently delving into the “*pnim*” of the Shulchan Aruch, one will inherently discern the perspective of the Alter Rebbe. This comprehensive approach allows for the synthesis of various sources, revealing the Alter Rebbe’s connections and innovations.

Through this process, the reader can attain a comprehensive understanding of the Halachic conclusions לאסוקי שמעתתא אליבא דהלכתא.

WHAT ARE THE NEXT TOPICS THAT ARE YOU WORKING ON?

I daven to Hashem that he grant me the strength, to successfully edit, finalize, and publish the next three seforim that are in the editing stage. These *seforim* encompass the topics related to Bedikas Chometz, the Pesach Seder, Hilchos Choshen Mishpot, and Ribbis. Additionally, I daven to Hashem, that He grant me the ability to complete the seventh Sefer covering various aspects of Hilchos Shabbos, and IYH further topics from the Alter Rebbe.

Yasher koiach Rabbi Zajac for your time. May Hashem grant you the strength and ability to publish many more seforim to elucidate the depth in the Alter Rebbe’s teachings! 🕯

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Changing Hanachas Tefillin Date?

QUESTION:

In Lubavitch, a boy begins putting on *tefillin* two months before his *bar mitzvah*. How rigid must we be with this two-month timeframe; can we schedule it earlier, to start on a more convenient or auspicious day?

ANSWER:

Different communities have different *minhagim* regarding when to start putting on tefillin. In some communities (e.g. some chassidim), they begin only from the day of the *bar mitzvah*. This is due to the concern that the child under *bar mitzvah* won't be particular enough with their proper bodily state while wearing the tefillin (whereas after bar mitzvah one is obligated).

Minhag Chabad on record, however, is to begin two months before the day of bar mitzvah (Hayom Yom, 2 Av). The basis for this is in the Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch (#37:3), where he writes that a boy should start "about two or three months before."

In a recently published letter (in the weekly Lahak pamphlet) written by the Rebbe to Harav Hershel Shusterman, *rov* of the Bnei Reuven shul in Chicago, the Rebbe expresses his surprise that he did not mention his son's *hanachas Tefillin*, which had taken place on the day before the Rebbe's writing this letter.

The notes in the said pamphlet fill in the interesting background story which is necessary to appreciate the Rebbe's letter:

The eldest Shusterman boy's name is Shmaryahu. His mother, Mrs. Shusterman, is a sister of R' Yudel Krinsky, one of the Rebbe's secretaries. At that time, young Shmaryahu Shusterman was learning in New York, in the Lubavitcher Yeshiva on Bedford and Dean.

His birthday and *bar mitzvah* would be on 23 Shvat, and thus his date for putting on *tefillin* would be two months earlier - on 23 Kislev. However, the boy decided to start putting on

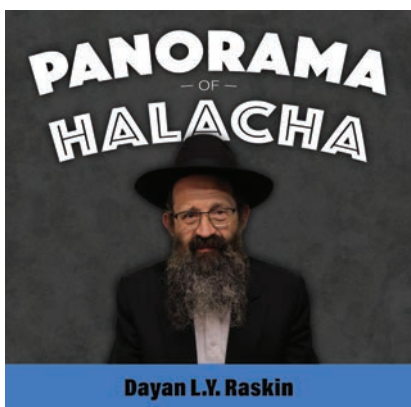
tefillin a few days earlier - on the special day of Yud Tes Kislev. He informed his uncle Rabbi Krinsky, who in turn told the Rebbe that his nephew started to put on *tefillin* that day.

Towards the end of the Yud Tes Kislev *fabrengen*, which was on Motzai Yud Tes Kislev, the Rebbe called for the boy and then told him to say *lechaim* for his having starting to put on *Tefillin* that morning. The next day, 20 Kislev, the Rebbe wrote the above-mentioned letter to the boy's father, Harav Shusterman. The clear impression is that the Rebbe was pleased with his son's choice to start putting on *Tefillin* on Yud Tes Kislev.

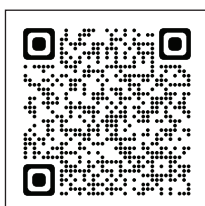
Last week, I was informed of perhaps an even stronger account of putting on tefillin prior to the two months before turning Barmitzva. Rabbi Mendel Gurary from Antwerp told me he was born on 10 Av, which would mean his *hanachas tefillin* would be on 10 Sivan. When his father asked the Rebbe when to start, the Rebbe told him he can start putting on *tefillin* on Erev Shavuot (5 Sivan).

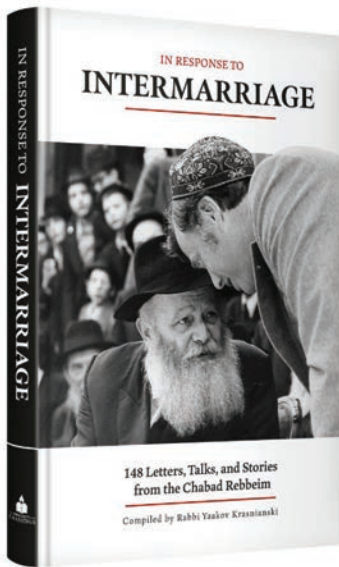
Many years earlier, his uncle, R' Nosson Gurary had a similar story with his *hanachas Tefillin*. R' Nosson's birthday is on Purim, and since the year he turned *bar mitzvah* was a leap year, he would have started putting on *tefillin* on 14 Shevat. Yet, the Rebbe encouraged his father that he start on Yud Shevat, because of the specialness of the day.

While it's not clear that these stories are meant as a *horaah l'rabim*, yet if there is a pre-Barmitzva boy who has a good reason to start putting on *tefillin* a few days earlier, there is certainly a strong precedent to do so. 🕒



TO LISTEN TO
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“In Response To Intermarriage” is a newly released book presenting the view of the Chabad Rebbeim on intermarriage. The creation of this work was spearheaded by Rabbi Yaakov Krasnianski, who granted Anash.org an exclusive interview about the project.

The book is available for purchase at Crown Heights bookstores and online.

New Books Explores Rebbeim's Response to Intermarriage

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH
RABBI YAAKOV KRASNIANSKI

IN YOUR OWN WORDS, BRIEFLY DESCRIBE THE BOOK. WHAT IS IT EXACTLY AND WHAT SHOULD A POTENTIAL READER EXPECT TO FIND INSIDE?

“In Response To Intermarriage” is a comprehensive compilation encompassing all of the material available from the Chabad Rebbeim on the topic of intermarriage, bringing together all of the many letters, Sichos, and stories directly related to this subject. All of the content in the book is sourced, and has been translated into readable English alongside the original text.

WHAT WAS THE INSPIRATION FOR YOU TO UNDERTAKE SUCH A PROJECT?

Aside from feeling that something had to be done to help combat the alarming and ever-growing rate of intermarriage—well above 60%—and beyond the Rebbe’s urgent and earnest words on the topic—for a long time now I have felt personally connected to this issue, bearing an individual burden of responsibility to help turn the tide.

I had the privilege of being born and raised on Shlichus on the Upper East Side of Manhattan. And growing up in such a secular and unaffiliated community, where intermarriage is rampant, I have seen up close

and witnessed firsthand, time and again, the unavoidable devastation, pain, and heartbreak caused by intermarriage. It is difficult to see such things and then continue to look the other way, when you know that through your efforts and actions you might be able to prevent another similar tragedy from occurring.

CAN YOU SHARE WITH US SOME REAL-LIFE EXPERIENCES?

Absolutely. Here is just a brief sample of some of the situations that have come through our doors in the last year or two (every Shliach today is being confronted with similar or nearly identical cases on a constant basis):

A mother, heartbroken and devastated at the fact that her son intends to marry a non-Jewish woman and end the Jewish family line, when she herself is intermarried.

- A young and successful Israeli man, who has only recently been introduced to and fell in love with Yiddishkeit for the first time, but who has been married for more than a decade to a non-Jewish woman, who is not the least bit interested in pursuing any form of conversion. The couple has two children together, further complicating the situation.

- He has repeatedly told me that the kibbutz he was raised in was so secular, that not a single person in his entire family or community had even warned him of the complications and heartache that would inevitably result from choosing to intermarry.
- An offended grandfather, yelling at my sister for not accepting his non-Jewish grandchild into our summer camp, when another Chabad camp readily accepted them last summer.

WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO ACHIEVE WITH THE BOOK?

First and foremost, the book is intended to serve as an authoritative guide and go-to resource for Shluchim, as well as anyone in a position to combat and prevent intermarriage in all of its many forms. Unfortunately, there is today so much confusion and misinformation surrounding the official stance of our Rebbeim and of Halacha on the topics of intermarriage, conversion, and the acceptance of non-Jewish children into Jewish institutions.

This book is intended to serve as a wake-up call and bring much needed clarity to these subjects. Anyone who reads the powerful and eye-opening content contained in this book will walk away with a sense of clarity, feeling more empowered, confident, and equipped to navigate the tough conversations surrounding this issue, and to confront intermarriage head-on.

HOW LONG DID IT TAKE YOU TO PRODUCE THIS SEFER?

There were obviously various different stages to the process, but all in all it took just a little over a year-and-a-half of work to create a book that met our standards, and which we felt was ready for print.

DID YOU NOT FEEL THAT PERHAPS THERE WERE OTHERS MORE EXPERIENCED AND QUALIFIED THAN YOURSELF TO UNDERTAKE THIS PROJECT?

It's honestly quite surprising that in all the years since these letters were first published, no one seized the opportunity to put together such a book earlier. However, I took much encouragement from the story of Pinchas, where the Torah teaches us that the issue of intermarriage is not something which will necessarily be rectified by the efforts of Beis Din or by the central leadership of Am Yisroel, but by individuals acting on their own accord, men and women who are ready to take up the spear of Pinchas and execute the Rebbe's words. 🕊

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Son Of Soldier Killed In Gaza Sings Father's Song At Farbrengen

Be'eri Hershkovitz joined the Flatbush community for a Yud Tes Kislev Farbrengen, and sang a song his father composed before he was killed in Gaza.



Defense Chiefs Light Menorah With Shliach

Defense Minister Yoav Gallant lit the Chanuka candles at the IDF headquarters in Tel Aviv with shlichim to the Israeli security forces, Rabbi Menachem Ofen.



PA Senator John Fetterman Lights Menorah In Pittsburgh

Hundreds of Jews gathered at the annual Chanukah Festival hosted by Rabbi Yitzi Goldwasser of Chabad of Greenfield, Pennsylvania where U.S. senator John Fetterman lit the menorah's shamesh on night number four.



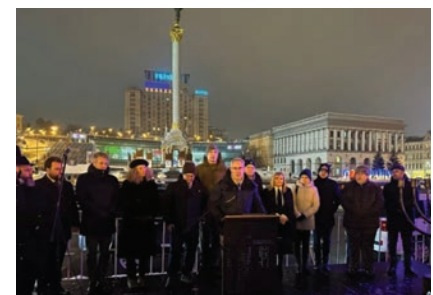
New Podcast Explores Chassidim And Their Niggunim

A new podcast by Rabbi Moshe Weinfeld from Toronto, Canada explores the rich history and deep meaning of Chassidim and their niggunim.



Mayor Adams Demands Hostage Release At Chanuka Party

New York City Mayor Eric Adams hosted Jewish community leaders for a Chanuka celebration at Gracie Mansion on Tuesday night, including family members of Israelis held hostage by Hamas, since October 7th.



Ukrainians See Message Of Hope In Chanuka Miracle

Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko took part in a public Menorah lighting ceremony on Independence Square in the center of Kyiv bringing the Chanuka miracle to the attention of thousand of Jews.

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