

א חסיד ישער דערהער...

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Connected to the Rebbe

Excerpts of a Sicha; Yud Shevat, 5726

When my father-in-law, the Rebbe, departed from Russia he said (as he did on a number of occasions) that it was against his will. As he crossed the border he said: although there is a physical barrier separating myself and the Chassidim who remained behind, one need not be intimidated by it. My bond with them will continue as before.

And indeed it was so, not only in a spiritual sense, but even on a more practical level. There are many well-known incidents related by various people that display the Rebbe's direct involvement from here in activities on the other side of the Iron Curtain, although it would have seemed that in order to orchestrate such thing one would have had to have been "on-scene" at the time.

In other words: even while his soul remained confined to the limitations of a physical body, he was of the ability to determine that the physical barrier should not be of any relevance at all. He was able to maintain the bond with his followers who were acquainted with him prior to his crossing of the border, and in a manner that not only allowed him to connect with them, but that they would be able to reach him as well. This was despite their being people of a much lower spiritual status, to which physical boundaries did have an impact.

Now, just as this applies to his having to leave one country to another against his will, so to it is applicable to his status after his passing which is also against his will. As the Mishna says "Al korchach ata chai..."

If one looks merely with physical, corporal eyes, he may think that there is - G-d forbid - an interruption in the Rebbe's connection to us. But the truth is, as the Gemora says, "Just as until now he has tended to us, now as well he continues to do so."

Much as his departure from one country to the other made no impact in this regard, so to his passing has caused no change either. And as he himself determined, he will continue to stay connected with those who he has educated, and they will continue to follow in his ways.

One may ask: there was an occurrence that took place sixteen years ago, when we ourselves were present at the time, and certain things were done, as required according to Jewish law, which demonstrate that there was an interruption in the Rebbe's connection with us?

The answer can be found in the Gemora: The Gemora says "Yaakov Avinu didn't die". Immediately the Gemora questions this: "But was it for nothing that they eulogized him and embalmed him?" The Gemora answers: "Just as his children are alive, so to he is alive".

Even after this question the Gemora does not recant and explain it in a different way, rather the Gemora remains true to its original statement that "Yaakov Avinu didn't die". Despite the fact that "they eulogized him and embalmed him", and despite that these activities were really performed, as they are recounted in the Torah; nevertheless, as long as "his children are alive", then "he also is alive".

"How can we connect...?"

The following is taken from the diaries of Reb Binyomin Katz, sent by the Rebbe to Communist Russia in 5725:

While in the Shul on one late morning, I was approached by Reb Zalman Leib Estulin who whispered to me that at the present moment, the people in the Shul are only "our-own" and that now would be a safe opportunity to sit together and farbreng.

Truth to be told, I felt very uncomfortable to sit with them. I was just a young American boy; how was I to sit and lecture these Jews of another caliber altogether - one of uncompromised self-sacrifice for Torah and Yiddishkeit, whose mere sitting with me right now was also a hazard to themselves... But nevertheless, I knew that I am a Shliach of the Rebbe and I must do whatever I can to strengthen and uplift their spirits.

I began by teaching them the Nigunim of the Rebbe, and then we went on to farbreng for a while. When we finally drew close to the end, the Chassidim would still not suffice with what we discussed until then and they posed their final question to me: "How, in your opinion, can we connect ourselves to the Rebbe?"

I broke out in tears... I wish I could have told them that they are the most possible connected to the Rebbe, more than any Chassidim anywhere else in the world, but I did not want to dampen their fiery passionate feeling at all, so I said: "Since the passing of his mother during the month of Tishrei this year, the Rebbe farbrengs every Shabbos and expounds upon a Rashi on the Chumash. You, too, farbreng together each week and learn Rashi on the Chumash, and thereby you'll be connected to the Rebbe..."

התקשרות

* דער השואל במה היא ההתקשרות שלו אלי מאחר שאין אני מכירו פנים... ההתקשרות האמתית היא ע"י לימוד התורה, כשהוא לומד המאמרי חסידות שלי, קורא את השיחות ומתחבר עם ידידי אנוש ותלמידי התמימים יחירו בלימודם ובהתוועדותם, ומקיים בקשתי באמירת תהילים ובשמירת זמני הלימודים - הנה בזה היא ההתקשרות. (היום יום כ"ד סיון)

* מ'דארף אלעמאל געדיינקען, אז מען איז דעם רבי'נס מענטשן, און שטעלן זיך אליין די פראגע: איז דער רבי צופרידן מיט מיר וואס איך טו אזוי? האב איך גענוג אתכפיא און אתהפכא ווי עס פאסט פאר דעם רבי'נס מענטש? (אג"ק כ"ק אד"ש ח"ג ע' שלדו.)

בת יתרו מי התירה לך (סנהדרין פב, א) ראה לקוטי שיחות חלק יח פרשת בלק שיחת ג'



Gimmel Tammuz

Gimmel Tammuz is upon us. The date itself sends itself a sacred shudder down a Chossid's spine. A holy day. A day for each one of us to go beyond the outer dimension of histalkus in general, to a deeper introspective of the day and its deeper significance in our personal lives.

On this day in 5687, the Friediker Rebbe stood at the Russian railway station bidding farewell to his Chassidim as he prepared to go into exile in Kostrama after receiving a reprieve from the death sentence. His defiant, inspiring words still ring out. "Only the body of a Yid can be exiled, never his Neshomah!"

And now, over seventy years later, we too, will remember that only the body has been taken from us, but the Neshomah, the essence of the Rebbe, will always be with us. This is something which can be most tangibly experienced on this holy day.

In 5687, Gimmel Tammuz seemed to be a day of separation. A day bidding farewell to the Friediker Rebbe. Chassidim looked on with tears in their eyes as their Rebbe was lead to "exile".

In essence, however, it was a new beginning. The beginning of the Friediker Rebbe's Ge'ulah; the beginning of an unprecedented outpour of Chassidus and hafotzah' and - most of all - the beginning of a deeper connection between Rebbe and Chossid.

Today, too, Gimmel Tammuz is a day of solitude, of loneliness and longing. We cannot see our Rebbe. A day in which we must concentrate on our *hiskashrus* to the Rebbe.

We must remain assured. The Rebbe has not left us alone, he is with us. And although we know this, we must demand from Hashem to send us Moshiach so we can be with our Rebbe once again. We are not complacent with this situation.

Many centuries before, in the days of Yehoshua ben Nun, the famous miracle of the sun stopping in its tracks also occurred on Gimmel Tammuz. For us, in a sense, the sun stopped. And yet, the miracle continues. The sun continues to shine and illuminates the Golus night. How many of us are able to recount personal experiences of the Rebbe's ongoing guidance, brachos and protection long after Gimmel Tammuz 5754. As the Alter Rebbe explains in his famous letter, Iggeres Hakodesh 27, "The tzaddik that has passed on is to be found in all worlds, and especially in this physical, lowly world, more so than in his lifetime."

Indeed, the Rebbe is with us. The question is, are we with the Rebbe, not just spiritually, but on a practical level as well? Are we still in touch with the Rebbe's teachings and outlooks? Are we strengthening out *hiskashrus* by learning his sichos, maamorim...? By living our lives in accordance to the path he has set up for us?

Are we being his Shluchim to bring Yiddishkeit closer to every Yid?

These are just some of the issues Gimmel Tammuz compels us to confront. Let each one of us do it honestly and earnestly and give the Rebbe Nachas Ruach Rav.

א ציור פון א חסיד

Reb Berke Chein Part 6 'Don't worry, they won't chap'

Reb Berke's exodus from the Soviet Union was a story in which the Rebbe was personally involved and which contained obvious miracles.

He tells his story:

"I was persecuted in my homeland for the severe 'crime' of teaching Torah to small children and disseminating Yiddishkeit, Torah, and Chassidus among Jews. I always managed to escape from their cruel hands. But when I made an attempt to leave Soviet Russia, the long hand of the regime caught up with me. After my arrest they interrogated me and tortured me brutally. The verdict was death. I was spared thanks to G-d's mercy and I was ordered to be exiled instead. It would be impossible to describe the suffering that I endured, the affliction that I lived through behind bars. During the time I was in prison my father-in-law and my two children managed to leave Russia and immigrate to Israel.

After my release from prison, I obviously continued my holy work, teaching Torah and Yiras Hashem. The authorities found out about this and sent spies to follow me. I was then forced to flee my residence to another place far away. There, too, I saw that I was being followed wherever I went. I had no choice but to fulfill that which is written, "wait a minute until the wrath will pass." I found a hiding place in one of the apartments and did not go outside, hoping they would think I moved someplace else and stop following me.

This situation continued for a long time and throughout that whole time I did not see the light of the sun. My wife and daughter also did not come to see me during the day for fear of being followed. This lasted for a long time without any end in sight.

My father-in-law begged his daughter, my wife, to request permission to immigrate to Israel; maybe she would succeed in leaving that country with her daughter - his grandchild - and join him. My wife was adamant: without me she will not budge no matter what happens. But, I am considered completely treif and I dare not stick my nose outside, how can I even think of requesting permission to emigrate! We were stuck. We decided to ask the Rebbe's opinion, and follow his instructions. Understandably, all the correspondences between my father-in-law and I were hidden in hints.

One of my children who, meanwhile, had the privilege to study in 770, was told by my father-in-law, to ask the Rebbe whether my wife, should request permission to emigrate

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שערי נגינה

Alter Rebbe's Niggunim - Part 2

It wasn't only Chassidim that the Alter Rebbe effected through his niggunim, he also made Chassidim with his niggunim, as is evident from the following story.

An unusual way of answering a question

Once in the early years of his nesius, the Alter Rebbe came to the city of Shklov. Aware of his immense knowledge and prowess in Torah, all the gaonim of the city turned to him with their questions. However, surprisingly, he did not answer them. So they offered him the opportunity to speak publicly in their beis 'medrash and answer their question's there. To this, the Alter Rebbe agreed. Ascending the bima he exclaimed, "Shall I say Torah? It's better that I sing a niggun, as the mishna states "*kol balei shir ...*" a niggun causes the angel's to arise and descend". The Alter Rebbe then began to sing with much dveikus the niggun 'Daled Bavos'.

The beis 'medrash was silent, not a sound was to be heard, and everyone was deep in his own thoughts, momentarily forgetting where they found themselves. The Rebbe intoned each stanza twice and the fourth stanza even more times. As he progressed through each part, the *gaonim* of Shklov felt more and more connected with the deeper levels of their Neshamos. Each one was suddenly able to remember everything he learnt and slowly their question's just melted away everything became clear, the Alter Rebbe opened up for them the wellsprings of knowledge.

From then on they would refer to this niggun as the 'Mattan Torah' niggun. Many misnagdim were drawn to Chassidus by this awesome spectacle and became ardent followers of the Alter Rebbe.¹

The Alter Rebbe was also an amazing baal koreh. He would usually read from the Torah on Shabbos. It is well known what the Mittlerer Rebbe said: "when my father leines I hear only brachos..." Chassidim knew that when the Alter Rebbe would stop by a certain Possuk, meditate deeply and sing it in a special niggun, this meant that he would say a maamor with that Possuk on Shabbos.

When the Alter Rebbe was escaping from Napoleon in the winter of 5573, he was accompanied (among others) by his great grandson Reb Baruch sholom, the oldest son of the Tzemach Tzedek. During the journey they became very close to each other and despite Reb Baruch's young age, for he was only 7 or 8 at the time, the Alter Rebbe taught him all the different *tamei hakriah* ('trop') for Krias Hatorah, as well as for Haftorah, Megillah and also the special way to lein the *Aseres Hadibros* and the *nusach* in davening for the *Yomim Noraim*.

The Alter Rebbe wanted him to repeat them many times over, telling the young boy that he very much wishes that these niggunim, as sung by "Malchus D'atzilus", (the Alter Rebbe) should not be forgotten. Later on Reb Baruch Sholom regretted forgetting one of the *t'nous* he was taught, for it was from the *Leviem* in the *Beis Hamikdash*. The Rebbe Rashab heard these from him.

with the entire family. When my son asked, the Rebbe said they should apply for a visa and may G-d be at their side.

My son was surprised and shocked. No one even dared to contemplate such a suggestion for I was considered *treif-posul*. The secret police looked after me with seven pairs of eyes, and many who were arrested and interrogated were asked where I was hiding? How could I reveal my whereabouts? When my son mentioned these and other concerns to the Rebbe, the Rebbe with a fatherly smile, dismissed all these fears saying '*zei velen zich nit chapen* (they won't catch on that its him)'

When the Rebbe's instruction reached me, I was gripped with joy and fear at the same time. Although my wife could request an application and return it to the local Ministry of the Interior, with the excuse that I was sick and lying in bed, how could I fill it out and sign it? It contains over 30 questions which I have to answer. Was I ever arrested? For what crime? Did I stand trial? Where did I live all the time? What was my occupation? Etc., etc. It was clear that I had to deny everything about my past and fabricate all kinds of things that never happened. But, oy vey, at the end of the application, a small sentence warned the applicant that for each false statement, the penalty was 3 years in jail.

There was no choice, since the Rebbe instructed that I hand in my application, and even dismissed all the concerns about it, I was confident that everything would be good. Their eyes wouldn't notice, they would not catch on, and it wouldn't occur to them that it was me. I filled out the application in its entirety. There was not a word of truth there except for my name, my wife's name, the family name, and my present address. Everything else I made up, and included several pictures for a passport

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Niggunim take on a new importance

Although this is not the time and place to write about the uniqueness of *niggunei Chabad* and its importance in serving Hashem, it is beneficial to bring out the Alter Rebbe's 'chiddush' in *negginah*:

The reason why niggunim carry such importance by Chassidim is because they can express the very basics of Chassidus. Of the fundamentals of Chassidus, *Simcha* and a yearning to be unified with Hashem - *dveikus*, hold a very important spot. Both of these can be achieved through a niggun for it has the special power to raise a person to great heights.

As it is known, Chassidus Chabad, which is the Alter Rebbe's approach, took the teachings of his predecessors and spread them forth in a way that it could be understood by everyone. He revealed the deepest and most hidden concepts and made them accessible. The same was done to *negginah*. The Baal Shem Tov infused it with life and introduced its powers in serving Hashem, the Alter Rebbe revealed the *soul* of a niggun, explaining how it's a vital tool in serving Hashem. From then on Chabad niggunim, stood out, being different then the niggunim of other groups of Chassidim, for they are deeper and much more profound. This approach began in the year 5533, which is the same time that Chassidus Chabad was begun.

To be continued...

1. For example the chossid Reb Yosef Kolbo



Q & A: The greatness of a Rebbe?

A letter of the Rebbe explaining: what is the greatness of a Rebbe?

The following is a free translation of a letter written by the Rebbe several months after Yud Shvat 5710. The letter was printed as an introduction to a booklet of *maamarim* by the Friediker Rebbe, and is dated "Tammuz 3, 5710."¹

Many seek and propose to explain the qualities and greatness of Chabad Rabbeim in general, and, in particular, the Rebbe of our generation, my father-in-law, *hareini kaporas mishkavo*², in various areas: as a man of Messirus Nefesh, Torah genius, lofty character, prophetic ability, miracle-worker, etc., etc.

These qualities are further magnified when viewed in the light of Chassidic teaching, which explains what is true Messirus Nefesh, true Torah genius, and so on.

And yet, none of this addresses the primary quality of the Rebbe—a quality which is not only primary in essence, but which is most important to us, his chassidim and followers, namely: the fact that he is a Nossi, and particularly a Chabad Nossi.

A Nossi, broadly defined, is a "Rosh Bnei Yisrael— (Rebi)" "Head of the multitudes of Israel."³ He is their "head" and "mind," their source of life and vitality. Through their *Hiskashrus* to him, they are bound and united with their source on high.

There are several types of Nesi'im: those who supply their adherents with "internalized" nurture⁴, and those whose nurture is of a more "encompassing" nature⁵. This is further divisible into the particulars of whether they impart the teaching of the "revealed" part of Torah, its mystical secrets, or both; whether they offer guidance in the service of Hashem and the ways

of Chassidus; whether they draw down material provision; and so on.

There are also nesi'im who are channels in several of these areas, or even in all of them.

Such was the nature of the leadership of the nesi'im of Chabad, from the Alter Rebbe to, and including, my father-in-law, who embraced all these categories and areas: they nurtured their chassidim in both the "internal" and the "encompassing" qualities of their *neshomos*; in Torah, Avodas Hashem and good deeds; in spirit and in body. Thus, their bond with those connected with them was in all 613 limbs and organs of their *neshomos* and bodies.

Each and every one of us must know—that is, dwell upon and implant the awareness in his or her mind—that the Rebbe is our nossi and head: that he is the source and channel for all our material and spiritual needs, and that it is through our *hiskashrus* with him (and he has already instructed us in his letters how and by what means this is achieved) that we are bound and united with our source, and the source of our source, up to our ultimate source on high.

1. Taken from Chabad.org
2. "May I be the atonement of his rest"— added to the mention of one's parent or teacher within a year of his or her passing.
3. Tanya, Perek 2
4. E.g., developing their minds and hearts.
5. E.g., stimulating their faith.

as required. Naturally, if they would have discovered that I made it all up, I would have been sentenced to exile for at least 80 years.

From the day that the application was handed in, I was in a state of fright. I continued not to go outside. Every knock at the door made my heart pound. Any suspicion that "strange types" were walking near the house generated horror and fear.

Months passed and there was no indication of a reply. But the tension did not stop and the suspicions did not end. After a year and a half, I was notified that my request had been granted and I should come pick up my passport and emigration permit. I feared maybe this was a trick to catch me (because everything until now was done by my wife), but I had no choice. I went to the Ministry of the Interior to receive the long awaited permit, and indeed, the clerk handed me the emigration permit with a smile.

When I returned home with the permit, we packed our suitcases in 4 hours and boarded a plane that flew to Moscow. There we had to wait several days for a plane to Vienna. When I handed the papers and documents along with my luggage to the clerk at the airport, he became furious and said the documents were forged. He took all my documents for verification. I almost fainted. I protested vigorously, but there is no one to talk to. I was trembling with fear. After a while,

the satanic clerk returned angrily, telling me, 'you lucky Jewboy, the signature this time is not forged.'

I hurriedly made final arrangements and boarded the plane that was waiting on the runway. Throughout the entire trip I couldn't stop thinking about the Rebbe's holy words, "*zei velen zich nit chapen.*"

The night before takeoff from Moscow to Vienna, he had stayed at his father's house in one of Moscow's suburbs. Although he did not disclose his departure to anyone, it somehow became known to and about ten Jews gathered in his father's succah and farbrenged all night.

To every tune they would sing, Reb Berke would sing the words, "And they believed in G-d and in Moshe his servant," adding, "I never dreamed that I would and be able to walk around in the street without fear. Now I even have an emigration permit. This was only through the Almighty and His servant Moshe of this generation."

For questions and/or comments please call: (347) 541-4770 or email
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| פרק א' ליום | ג' פרקים ליום | מורה שיעור ללימוד הרמב"ם |
|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| ה' חובל ומזיק פ' ז' | ה' איסורי ביאה פ' נא-כב ה' מאכלות אסורות פ' א' | ב"ט סיון |
| פרק ח' | פ' ב-ד | ל' סיון |
| ה' רוצח ושמירת נפש פ' א' | פ' ה-ז | א' תמוז |
| פרק ב' | פ' ח-י | ב' תמוז |
| פרק ג' | פ' יא-יג | ג' תמוז |
| פרק ד' | פ' יד-טז | ד' תמוז |
| פרק ה' | פ' יז ה' שחיטה פ' א'-ב' | ה' תמוז |