

a Chassidisher DERHER

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ערש"ק פרשת כי תשא יט' אדר תשע"ג

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Yud Aleph Nissan 5742

FROM THE DIARIES OF ZALMON JAFFE

Yud Aleph Nissan Arrangements

The Rebbe's birthday this year took on an added significance for the Rebbe would be 80 years old, till 120. A really special occasion. "Ben Shmonim Ligvurah" - at 80 years one receives extra strength.

Everyone was anxious to fly to New York to be present at the Rebbe's special Farbraingen on Yud Aleph Nissen. I was told that special charter flights and group travel were being organised from all over the world.

The Rebbe's 'Prohibition' For Yud Aleph Nissan

Every Lubavitcher from all over the world - from young Yeshiva boys to elder statesmen - intended to be present at 770, on the happy and joyous occasion of the Rebbe's 80th Birthday - and to pay homage and to give honour to our beloved Leader and Revered Rebbe.

Each person considered it vital and necessary that he should attend the Rebbe's Simcha.

Therefore, special charter flights and cheap individual tickets were being arranged from all over the world. Eight hundred people were expected to travel from France alone.

A few days later the Rebbe addressed a Children's Rally at 770, which was broadcast, live, to all the world.

At the end of the Rally, it was announced that the Rebbe was going to make a very important statement which would concern everyone

who was listening - and others, too. We all waited expectantly as the Rebbe addressed us in Manchester; those in London, Israel, all over the U.S.A.; and so forth.

What the Rebbe said, briefly and concisely, and which could be expressed in one sentence was "I do not want anyone to come to see me at 770 on the occasion of my Birthday". It was quite straight-forward with no ambiguity.

The Rebbe added that he could not prohibit anybody from coming to 770 for Yud Tess Kislev - that was the Alter Rebbe's Simcha - nor could he prevent people from visiting Crown Heights on Yud Beth Tamuz - that was the Previous Rebbe's Simcha, but the Rebbe emphasised - "Yud Aleph Nissan was MY Simcha and I do not want anyone to come specially, to 770, for my Simcha!"

Furthermore, the Rebbe continued - "All those who had intended to travel to New York should give half of the money, which would now be saved on the fare, to Tzedoka, and the balance, the other half should be spend on Hiddur Pesach - to make the Yom Tov much brighter and nicer - even by buying a new dress for one's wife".

One can imagine the turmoil, the excitement, the arguments and the stories that were flying around the world within minutes. I do know that Shmuel had received telephone calls from South Africa, the U.S.A. and other countries. Everyone wanted to know what the others intended to do. One would have thought that the Rebbe's statement was a simple and straightforward directive to all his Chassidim to stay at home on Yud Aleph Nissen - but No - each Lubavitcher chossid had his own interpretation.

I know that in Manchester, some of our members played over the tape of the address of the Rebbe - five times - to try and discover a loophole to this Isur - this prohibition. [They were so insistant on joining the Rebbe in his Simcha.]

Personally, I was myself in a dilemma. I didn't know what to do. I had already received a report that a certain Lubavitch worker from South America had arrived at 770. The Rebbe had shown his displeasure and enquired of him whether he had listened to the (now famous) Sicho.

I did not wish to embarrass the Rebbe nor myself by travelling to Crown Heights without

לזכות
החתן הרה"ת

משה אהרן צבי שי' סקרדר

וב"ג מרת מאטל תחי' פלאטקין

לרגל חתונתם באור ליום הבהיר

כ"ה אדר הבע"ל



נדפס ע"י אבי הכלה ומשפחתו

שיחיו

Toras Sholom

YEARS-LONG PROJECT OF REVEALING A TRUE TREASURE

“איך גיי אין הימעל

און די כתבים לאז איך אייך”

(“I am going to heaven and I leave my writings with you”). These famous words were of the last ones uttered by the Rebbe Rashab shortly before his passing on Beis Nissan, 5680. Quoted tens of times by the Rebbe throughout the years¹, this statement almost served as the Rebbe’s Rashab’s “will” in a sense, instructing the Chassidim to keep their connection to him alive even after his *Histalkus* by living with his holy writings.

Shortly after the *Histalkus*, the Rebbe Rashab’s only son and successor, the Frierdiker Rebbe wished to publish all of his father’s writings and avail them to the general public.

This would be no simple task to carry out, given the particularly difficult period in which Lubavitch found itself at the time. The Bolshevik revolution was on the rise and Yiddishkeit in general, and Chassidus in particular were not in the most preferred state.

Realizing the inevitable difficulties such an endeavor would entail at home in Russia, the Frierdiker Rebbe decided to attempt to conduct the project in Warsaw, Poland. In a letter addressed to Reb Leib Raskin of Warsaw dated 27 Mar-Chesvan, 5682 (just a year and a half following the *Histalkus*), he writes of his intention to publish his illustrious father’s works:

“I intend, with Hashem’s help, to copy my father’s *Ma’amorim* so they are available for *Anash* in all locations to study from. As doing so in our country is a very difficult task due to the lack of paper and ink here, I resolved to have it done in your place...”²

The Frierdiker Rebbe goes on specifying the method with which he intended to have the writings made public. Rather than properly printing them, they were to be handwritten and copied, then bound in large volumes as such.

It remains unclear what exactly was the outcome of that correspondence with Reb Leib and whether the writings were actually published in that manner. In the meantime, the Second World War broke out, and the Frierdiker Rebbe was forced to flee Europe and resettle in the United States in the year 5700.

“The Yellow Chest”

Throughout all the turmoil and in all his weary travels, the Frierdiker Rebbe constantly held his father’s precious writings close by, never allowing it to wander out of his sight. Referring to the priceless collection a letter, he writes: “...The yellow chest containing the writings of my father... which I have always taken along with me in all my travels...”³

But it would take our Rebbe’s arrival in the United States in 5701 and the subsequent establishing of the “Kehos” publishing house which he headed, to actually bring the idea of publishing these writings to fruition.

A quick glance through the Rebbe’s letters in that period tells of his insatiable desire to publish more and more books of Chassidus and make them accessible to the broader public. As soon as there was a go-ahead from the Frierdiker Rebbe allowing specific writings of the *Rabbeim* to be printed, the Rebbe spearheaded major campaigns to ensure that books would be published immediately.

In a letter to a Chabad activist in which the Rebbe encourages him to get involved in these projects, asking him to form a committee and establish a fund for this purpose the Rebbe writes: “It is my hope that the project of publishing the Chassidus of our *Rabbeim* should not be stopped due merely to a lack of means, since my father-in-law,

the Rebbe, has already given permission to publicize them...”⁴

Keren Sholom – Toras Sholom

In his introduction to “*Kuntres Uma’ayon*”, the Rebbe writes of a special meeting that took place on Beis Nissan, 5702 (shortly after “Kehos” was founded) during which it was decided to establish a new fund dedicated to

printing the Rebbe Rashab’s writings by the name of “*Keren Sholom*”. The plan was, at it seems, to print all of the letters, *Sichos*, and *Ma’amorim* of the Rebbe Rashab in one series.

The first *Sefer* chosen to commence the new series was “*Toras Sholom – Sefer Hasichos*”. (It is presumable that according to this initial plan, all of the *Seforim* in this series would have carried the general title of “*Toras Sholom*”).

Three Farbrengens per Year

This *Sefer* is very unique in character as well as content.

The Rebbe Rashab only farbrenged with Chassidim (and actually said *Sichos*) three times throughout the entire year: on Simchas Torah, Yud Tes Kislev, and Purim. These farbrengens were filled with profound explanations for the deepest concepts of Chassidus, as well as many stories that had been passed down from one Rebbe to next, generation after generation. Perhaps above all, the Rebbe Rashab added most interesting and telling anecdotes about the preceding *Rabbeim* and their specific contributions in the chain of transmission of Chassidus.

Unlike his *Ma’amorim* however, which were all transcribed by the Rebbe Rashab himself (and subsequently published from his own holy handwriting), the *Sichos* were never officially recorded. The only remnants of these precious talks were the journals and



¹ See *Lekutei Sichos* Vol. 17 p. 423, and numerous other places.

² *Igros Kodesh of the Frierdiker Rebbe* Vol. 13 p. 83.

³ *Igros Kodesh of the Frierdiker Rebbe* Vol. 3 p. 36.

⁴ *Igros Kodesh* Vol. 2 p. 190.



History of the Oved and Tamim: R' Avraham Dovid Posner of Klimovitch

Mashpia

In תרע"ג, R' Avraham Dovid settled in Lubavitch and was appointed as a mashpia in chassidus, a position he held until תרע"ח. During one particular Farbrengen, while he was addressing the many things expected from a tomim, he remarked: "don't make the mistake of thinking that I fulfill everything I demand from others. I am only like an arrow on a street sign by a crossroads; although the sign directs a person toward the right direction, nevertheless, the sign is but a mere piece of wood."

In another Farbrengen he related a story he had read as a child, using it as a moshol to describe the chidush of toras hachassidus:

The wind and the sun engaged in a contest to prove their might. The wind began to blow, causing people's clothing to flap about. But as the wind began to grow stronger, the people wrapped their clothes tighter around themselves, and the wind failed. The sun appeared and the air warmed. Slowly, people began removing their coats - the sun had won the contest.

R' Avraham Dovid explained that sifrei mussar demonstrate the horrible punishments the neshama will receive if it does aveiros, but as a result, the yetzer hara intensifies its efforts and usually succeeds. Chassidus, on the other hand, expounds ideas and concepts that increase light and warmth by a person, automatically ridding him of any negativity.

Beinoni

Dr. Yisrael Gutin shares his memories from the time he spent in Lubavitch:

It was said that there were two bochurim in Tomchei Temimim that reached the level of Beinoni - Avraham Dovid from Klimovitch and Itche Der Masmid. R' Avraham Dovid's face bespoke restraint; not only not committing an aveira bepoiel, but even restraining from a machshava zarah. He was never seen sitting idle; his every spare moment was used for learning, and he only spoke about yiras shomayim and ahavas hashem.

"Once, feeling very sick, I lay on one of the shul benches, groaning softly. The room was empty, besides for R' Avraham Dovid who was davening in a corner (he davened for six hours every day). 'Will he miss the mitzvah of bikur choilim?' I wondered. He finished daven-

ing, wrapped his tallis and tefillin, and immediately approached me, asking what was bothering me. "My stomach hurts," I told him.

"Those born in mazal hayareach suffer yisurim," he said. "Did you eat yet?"

"My friends will bring some food for me," I replied.

"Hashem should send you a refuah shleima," he said and left the shul.

Yiras Shomayim

The Rebbe Rashab once sent R' Avraham Dovid to the city of Zhembin to serve as a shochet, but after a short while he left his position. Months later, someone from Zhembin visited Lubavitch and, upon entering yechidus, the Rebbe Rashab asked him how R' Avraham Dovid was faring. The chossid answered that that he had long left, adding in derision, "he was scared of the animals."

The Rebbe Rashab turned very serious and said, "I don't know if he fears the animals but he certainly fears Hashem."

R' Avraham Dovid's yiras shomayim was evident in everything he did and he was a mehader b'mitzvos down to the last detail. For example, on Purim, he would repeatedly hear the megillah (by day and night) just in case he missed a word. When he would see a new and mehudar pair of tefillin he would quietly put them on and recite krias shema, thus putting on tefillin a few times a day. And, when washing for a seudah, he would wash over and over to ensure that it was done correctly. The same was by every mitzvah.

His Last Days

R' Avraham Dovid's last years were spent in the city of Rahmen. In those years he suffered great yesurim, but, despite the pain, he never complained. He would often repeat the same line: "One who says 'oy' has separated himself from the aybershter [for he has made himself out to be a metzius]."

In Cheshvan of תרפ"א, R' Avraham Dovid was niftar at the young age of forty. R' Peretz Mochkin once said that the reason why R' Avraham Dovid suffered so much at the end of his life was so that when he would come lemayla, he would be able to go directly to the heichal of the Rebbe Rashab to hear chassidus.

Toras Sholom continued from 2

transcripts of lone Chassidim who had jotted down the Rebbe Rashab's words from their own memory shortly after the Farbrengens. These were scattered about in possession of private Chassidim, and the Rebbe had to take to the task of searching out whatever was available in various locations.

There was a substantial amount of transcriptions written by the Frierdiker Rebbe himself which served as a basis for the collection, but most of the Sefer was compiled from the writings

of the elder Chassidim. The largest collection of all was received from Reb Eliyahu (*Yaichel*) Simpson who handed the Rebbe his own notebook full of transcriptions he had written between the years 5662-5666 while studying in Lubavitch.

For the fascinating story of how the book was actually published as well as some of the most interesting snippets from the Rebbe Rashab's Farbrengens, stay tuned until next week...

To be continued...

permission. Well, Thank G-d I had a very royal and close friend in Brooklyn who might use her good graces and best efforts on my behalf and discover whether the Rebbe would object to my participation in his Simcha.

I therefore telephoned to the Rebbetzen and put the following points to her as my reasons for wishing to travel (1) I considered that I might be in a special category; (2) I was seeking more material for writing my book; (3) I would do my utmost to make the Rebbe happy and cheerful; (4) I had written a letter to the Rebbe last week, therefore the Rebbe knew that I was coming for Yud Aleph Nissen, and yet in the Rebbe's reply to me, he did not say "NO"; (5) I did not want people to say that Zalmon Jaffe is a Baal Chutzpah - a cheeky fellow, who went to 770, in spite of the Rebbe's prohibition; (6) Before the Isur, matters were different - everybody was going to 770 - how could I stay at home? (7) I would be away from home for only four days; (8) I would still pay my Tzedoka which would be half the amount of the fare; and (9) I did not want people to say, that because Zalmon Jaffe was going to the Rebbe's Birthday Farbraingen then that would give them all an excuse to travel.

The Rebbetzen intimated to me that "surely you cannot compare yourself to all the groups of people who want to travel. The Rebbe does not want these groups of hundreds of people, but - I am sure that the Rebbe does not mean you".

I promised to telephone again on the following day to discover what reply the Rebbe had given. When I spoke to the Rebbetzen again, she stated that the Rebbe had given no answer whatsoever.

I still had not solved my dilemma. I was receiving advice from friends, most of them expressed good reasons why I ought to fly to Crown Heights. Shmuel had a brilliant idea. Why not phone Rabbi Dvorkin in Brooklyn? and he would give me an immediate and authoritative answer to my question.

I therefore rang up Rabbi Dvorkin and asked him whether I could come to Crown Heights for the Rebbe's Birthday. He replied - with no hesitation - "NO - definitely NO". "Did you not hear the Sicho?" "You must not come". I commenced to put my nine reasons to him, and he, in turn, proceeded to demolish my nine points, one by one.

I was still not satisfied. There remained a strong doubt in my mind whether I was doing the correct thing. I deliberated, consid-

ered, pondered and brooded over all these points of view - and then I decided to talk to the Rebbetzen again.

The Rebbetzen again reiterated that the Rebbe did not answer her query, because, in her opinion, if the Rebbe agreed that I should travel, then others would also want this privilege.

I intimated to the Rebbetzen that I wanted her to advise me - as a friend. The Rebbetzen answered that in her opinion the Rebbe did not refer to me - or to any personal friends - only to groups of people. She continued that "You cannot compare yourself to all the groups of hundreds of people who want to travel to 770 for Yud Aleph Nissen. The Rebbe does not want these hundreds of people. I am certain that the Rebbe did not refer to you". But, she concluded - "Do not blame me if you should become embarrassed by the Rebbe . . . "

That decided me! and I phoned Rabbi Dvorkin to tell him of my decision. In any case, I had to inform him of my intended arrival - he was my agent - and he had to tell Mrs Itkin of my contemplated visit to the apartment.

At last, I was on my way to New York - alone. I travelled with British Airways from London. I arrived at my apartment, next door but one to 770, at 6 p.m.

It was now about 7 p.m. and I had ascertained that the Rebbe would be davening Maariv at just this time. I gathered together all the letters which many friends had entrusted to me - for the Rebbe - and I flew into 770. I was just in time to greet the Rebbe in the Hallway on his way to take the lift down to the Shool, where Maariv and all subsequent services were to be held.

I wished the Rebbe a heartfelt and warm "Sholom Aleichem", and in return received a most glorious smile and welcome from the Rebbe. He said something in reply to my greetings (probably "Aleichem Sholom"), but I could not quite make out exactly what the Rebbe had said.

After Maariv, the Rebbe commenced the nigun "We Want Moshiach NOW" and he turned to me with a heartwarming and beaming smile, and signalled that I should join in.

In view of the Rebbe's prohibition on travelling to Crown Heights and all the different viewpoints which I have enumerated above, I was actually uncertain and unsure of what kind of a welcome I would even receive this time from the Rebbe.

The Rebbe's first smile, therefore, absolutely overwhelmed me, and completely reassured me by confirming that I had done the right thing in coming to 770 for Yud Aleph Nissen. I considered that this was an excellent opportunity to show to the Rebbetzen, the tribute that I had brought along for the Rebbe, on behalf of Manchester Lubavitch, before I handed it into the office.

I therefore telephoned the Rebbetzen and explained that I wanted her to have a preview of our tribute to the Rebbe. It was 2.30 p.m. on Friday afternoon, and the Rebbetzen intimated that she would like to see me - at any time, when it was convenient to me. I replied that "Now is a very convenient time". "Alright", she declared, "Come along now". So I went along at once.

I thanked the Rebbetzen for giving me the pleasure, honour and privilege of seeing her for just a few minutes before Shabbos. I had brought our special Birthday Greetings tribute to the Rebbe, to show the Rebbetzen. She greatly admired the whole production and in particular she loved the poem. She kept repeating, how beautiful it was. I also handed to her a letter which my daughter-in-law, Susan, had asked me to deliver.

The Rebbetzen told me that she was delighted that she had the courage to tell me to come to New York for the Rebbe's birthday.

Yud Aleph Nissan

770 was overcrowded. There were more people present than at any time before. I trembled to think how 770 could have coped with, or accommodated the many more thousands of Chassidim who had been ordered by the Rebbe to stay at home.

Many, very many did ask me why I came to 770, after the Isur. Well, I told them, I had a legitimate excuse. I explained that every year for the past fifteen years or so we held a Goyrell - a lottery, for one person to travel to 770 on our behalf, to wish the Rebbe Mazel Tov and hopefully to bring back some of the Rebbe's matzo for the Manchester Anash. This year was no exception. We had a Chazoka, a tradition, and we held this lottery as we usually do.

Most were well satisfied with this reply, but one or two cheeky fellows did ask me point blank whether I, personally, had won this lottery. To be truthful, I had to answer "No, I did not win this Goyrell!" oy, a Chutzpah.

