

## ENCOUNTERS - SHOVIUOUS 5731/1971

(Includes the rebbe's 70<sup>th</sup> birthday)

Just after Pesach I received a lovely long letter from the Rebbe full of profound words of Torah and wishing me and my wife Mazel Tov on the birth of our grandchildren, "on the side of your son and daughter respectively, and wishing you and Mrs Jaffe true Yiddish Chassidish nachas from all your offspring, in good health and happy circumstances."

Very, very nice indeed - but then I found enclosed an extremely long Post Script. From my past experiences I have become rather wary of the Rebbe's P.S's. I certainly was not 'disappointed' in this instance. (I subsequently wrote to the Rebbe that I always looked forward to his most welcome and lovely letters, but I did wish that he would omit those Post Scripts! I did not relish those at all.)

Herewith is the full text:

**P.S. "I refer to the subject of accommodation in our area, which you mention in your recent letters, as experienced last Shovuos when you were here, and the inconveniences connected with it. I have, of course, kept in touch with the situation to see if there has been any improvement. I cannot say that I am quite satisfied, all the more so that it is difficult to speak for another person, especially if that person is also not very certain. On the other hand, it is certain that no Jew should have inconveniences at any time of the year, least of all during Yom Tov, when all aspects have to be with joy, and especially such a Yom Tov as Shovuos, the Yom Tov of Mattan Torah, when all the Yomim Tovim were instituted.**

**In addition to the above, there is another factor to be considered, namely that in line with the various changes which took place lately, and as was also the case this past Purim, there does not appear a likelihood for joint seudos on Yom Tov, at which I could join you and other Chasidim (except Motzei Yom Tov).**

**In the light of all that has been said above, and although it would have been a real pleasure to see you here on Yom Tov during the davenning and Farbrengen, there are the overriding considerations of the physical inconveniences mentioned above, especially during the days of Yom Tov and Shabbos (adding also the fact that the (newborn) grandchildren could not accompany you), and also the fact that there would be no mutual Yom-Tovdike Seudos, it would seem advisable to defer the pleasure of your visit. Moreover, it appears from your letter that there is also a serious doubt whether there would be sufficient co-travelers to reduce the financial cost.**

**All this adds up to the conclusion that it would be best at this time to take the thought for the deed, and defer the pleasure for a more suitable time. Consequently, this letter is sent to you by special delivery, in order to halt registration for the flight and avoid further inconveniences.**

This seemed to me a definite invitation to 'stay at home.'

I then recalled that four years previously I had decided to spend Shovuos in Manchester, when two days before the Lubavitch charter was due to leave I received the following cable from Brooklyn.

**"Very surprised your writing about changing long standing good custom spending Shovuos here (STOP) Confident your presence here Shovuos as previous years BSIMCHO V'TUV LEVOV Blessing all Family - Menachem Schneerson."**

I had plenty of reasons and arguments for not wishing to travel to Brooklyn that year, but there was just **not** the time to write or contact the Rebbe. The flight was due to leave almost the following day. (The Rebbe told me afterwards that this was the whole idea why he had not **written** to me earlier to this effect.) So, having no option, I went. Since then the Rebbe had repeated to me more than once that my time for visiting '770' was Shovuos and that I must always come with my wife.

Last year at our final Yechidus, the Rebbe told me that “next year you should speak at the Kinus HaTorah in Yiddish,” we agreed half Yiddish and half English. The Rebbe then said that he would see me “next year.”

So why had the Rebbe now ordered me to stay at home?!

The answer is simple, and so typical of the Rebbe. Knowing full well the difficulties and inconveniences which we had experienced in the Union Street apartment the previous year, and realizing that matters had still not improved, the Rebbe was giving us a loophole, an excuse, for not coming this Shovuos.

I know quite well that the Rebbe was only thinking of us, of our comfort and of our convenience. He considered it most unfair to ask us to stay again at that apartment. Well, we were thinking of the Rebbe too and therefore **we** would certainly not break this *chazoko* after ten years. I wrote immediately to the Rebbe to this effect and pointed out that for many years we had stayed with Mendel and Sarah Shemtov who had always made us extremely welcome and comfortable. Although, thank G-d, their family had now increased and it might not be so easy for them as in the past, we knew that they would be delighted to put us up for a week or so.

Naturally, we would rather not impose on others and we preferred to stay at our own apartment. So, I decided to phone Brooklyn and ascertain the exact position.

I dialed ‘770’ and within seconds Binyamin Klein answered the phone. I asked for Rabbi Chodakov and was told to try again in half an hour. At my next attempt I was very lucky, for Yudel Krinsky answered this time and he was the very person I wanted, because he was in charge of the Rebbe’s apartment. “Am I asking a *Shaalah* whether to come to New York or not,” Yudel enquired. “Not at all,” I replied. “No question about our coming, just simply to find out where we may stay - either with friends or on our own.” Yudel rather liked that reply and informed me that the Rebbe’s usual apartment in Union Street had been re-decorated, painted and made fully self-contained. New doors and locks were fitted all over and the place was made 100% secure. We were very happy to hear this, and begged Yudel to please reserve this for us. He replied that he would be delighted to do so and would expect to see us at ‘770’ in a few days time, at 4.00p.m., on the Wednesday before Shovuos, May 26<sup>th</sup>, in order to give us the keys and further information.

We had arranged to travel by way of London as Hershel Gorman had a large pile of papers with technical details regarding the printing of the new Hebrew/English Tanya, which I was to take the Rebbe for his consideration and decision.

We duly arrived at London Airport, met Hershel Gorman and were introduced to an unexpected traveling companion, non other than our friend Menachem Mendel Katch.

Our hand luggage was searched and we were frisked by policemen and were ready to board, when we were informed that a bomb had been planted on our plane. There would now be a delay whilst the aircraft was thoroughly searched and meanwhile every passenger should come forward and identify their own suitcases and luggage, which had been unloaded from the plane. All this took an hour, and leaving three suitcases on the tarmac which had been left unclaimed (??) we all stepped into our jumbo jet, the very latest model to be delivered to TWA.

What a pleasant surprise! Like entering a large and beautiful hotel lounge and very high and roomy. There were two large gangways - what a wonderful time our charter passengers would have had walking around and around **two** gangways. After luncheon the blinds were drawn and a film was shown free to everyone, **but**, if one wished to **hear** what was being said, one had to pay £1. Mendel Katch refused to pay and sat watching the film. He laughed uproariously at all the wrong places.

Incidentally, Mr. Katch wanted to see the Rebbe very urgently. He **always** asks the Rebbe for advice on what furs to buy. The Rebbe had told him what to purchase and he had bought those lots. In addition he bought some other lots, which he rather fancied himself. Well, he had sold all the Rebbe's 'goods,' but could **not**, on any account, sell his own. He now needed a good *brochah* to find a customer for these furs.

Lounging in my comfortable seat, with barely a shudder from the plane it was difficult to believe that we were 40,000 ft. above the sea and travelling at 600mph in a 350 ton plane with accommodation for 344 passengers (only 112 on this trip). The journey to New York would take less than 7 hours, where we ultimately touched down like a feather.

I could not help recalling and comparing our first Lubavitcher charter trip ten years ago. That flight took 19 hours, including stops at Shannon and Gander. The forklift loading the baggage at Manchester crashed into our 'Flying Tiger Constellation' and damaged the air conditioning apparatus. They tried to repair this at Shannon. They worked on it for two hours to no avail. Meanwhile, of course, we davened a *Mincha Gedolah*.

(The following year we were delayed in Manchester for six hours, the plane had arrived with insufficient seats and we had to wait for 18 seats to be brought from Madrid. Those then had to be bolted to the floor of the plane.)

Our 118 passengers (it was nearly 117 because I was at first refused permission to board as my passport was out of date - what a job I had!) certainly knew they were on a plane, packed tight and no room to walk about, but everyone did. The captain sent repeated messages, **sit** down and keep away from the rear of the plane where everyone had congregated for a chat. "The plane is dragging and we are losing height and speed."

As the air conditioning was broken it soon became hot and very hot. All the water had long since been used up and all one could see were rows and rows of red perspiring faces.

There were twelve rabbonim on board and they all vied with one another to provide us with words of Torah - Teffilas Haderoach, Chumash, Rashi, Tanya, and Tehillim. Sichos and just plain sermons. Someone said it was worse than Yom Kippur, when at least one could leave the shul for a short time. In the 19 hours we had plenty of time to listen to everyone. In addition, we sang nigunim and 'Uforatzto' became 'Top of the Pops.'

In brief, it was the most enjoyable and memorable trip in which we have ever participated. All for £35 (\$100) return, including meals and all tips and so forth. We shall never again be able to recapture the wonderful atmosphere, excitement and friendliness of that first flight, even with all its trials and tribulations. Everyone bentching together after their meals. On the return journey, **everyone**, yes every male, put on Teffilin and davened in the gangway. Some cried as it was their first time for years or since their Bar Mitzvah that they had put on Teffilin. One of the passengers, an old man, said, "Mr. Jaffe, you deserve a treat for all the wonderful work you are doing and I am going to give you one." "No, No" said I, "Yes, yes" said he. "OK then." "Right, I shall **sing** you a song through the microphone entitled the '*Tallissel*.'" My mazel! However, I did receive a most wonderful gift from the passengers in appreciation - a set of Shas (gemorah) in one of which the Rebbe and every passenger signed their names.

Then we arrived at Kennedy Airport. The doors of our plane were opened and a 'heavenly' choir of hundreds of boys who had come to meet us and were standing on the roof of the terminal building, were 'lustily' singing Uforatzto. The stewardess's burst into tears, "they are singing our song" they said. (They had refused a very large, handsome tip from us - they said "Give it to your church.")

It was a very stirring, sentimental and heart moving experience. But then came the most wonderful climax of all, when our beloved and reverend Rebbe met us in '770' at 3.30a.m and held a Farbrengen

for all the 118 passengers who had gone directly to Brooklyn to meet the Rebbe. The Sicha, which the Rebbe gave to us “Shalom Aleichem to you all”, was translated into English, published in a small booklet and distributed amongst all the passengers.

Now, what a contrast when we arrived today. Roselyn, Mr Katch and I made our own unheralded and unobtrusive way to ‘770.’ We arrived at 5.15pm, the place was almost deserted but with one great exception, our dear Rebbe was still in his office, still working.

We decided to wait and greet him with *Shalom Aleichem*. An hour later we had our opportunity. The Rebbe emerged at 6.15pm and saw us standing at the door, but before we could say a word he wished us *Shalom Aleichem* and accompanied those words with a glorious smile that lit up his whole face and the whole room. What a wonderful smile has our Rebbe!

He seemed really pleased to see us and asked how were our children and our Ainiklech. “How is business?” He remarked that we must have closed the business already for Yom Tov and if I have any ‘*daagos*’ (worries). I replied that as the Rebbe gave me once a brocha that I should have **only** Lubavitcher ‘*daagos*,’ I was now glad to say that thank G-d I had plenty of those, but boruch Hashem, not any others. The Rebbe wished us all a freilecher Yom Tov and then left.

I then asked Rabbi Chodakov if it would be possible to see the Rebbe before Shovuos, as I usually have the merit of a short Yechidus immediately on our arrival. Rabbi Chodakov replied that normally we arrive from England much earlier than two days before Yom Tov, and as the Rebbe was extremely busy and under great pressure, he would see me after *Kabolas HaTorah*. He added that if the Rebbe wanted me, “he knows your address.” I was a little disappointed because I wanted to make arrangements about singing in Shul on Shabbos and Yom Tov. I therefore wrote the Rebbe a letter asking if we may sing ‘Hu Eloikeinu,’ ‘HoAderess Vohemuna,’ and ‘Kailee Atoh.’ I also enclosed my diary of the previous year and awaited developments.

Rabbi Chodakov and Rabbis Simpson and Mentilik and all my friends whom I met afterwards seemed surprised indeed to see me. They had heard on the Lubavitch grapevine that I was not coming this year. They were all delighted and said they were now assured a very *freilech* Yom Tov. Very nice of them to say so, indeed it was! Especially as they and everyone was now so certain that there would be a Farbrengen on Shabbos.

Yudel Krinsky then arrived with the keys of our apartment and took us on a guided and conducted tour. I will admit that they had done a grand job. The whole staircase was now blocked in, the doors locked and there was absolutely no possibility of any unauthorized person trespassing or forcing an entry. This was excellent and my wife’s fears and worries were completely allayed.

We enjoyed our stay at this flat, it was quite satisfactory and Roselyn wrote a letter to the Rebbe thanking him for all the trouble he had taken to save us inconveniences and worry.

The next morning, Thursday, I had an aliyah and bentedched *Goimel*. It always reminds me of the time when Rabbi Dubov had an aliyah and before bentsching *goimel* he stated that he would “*yotzai zein*” everyone else who was a *chiyuv* to Bentsch. The Rebbe turned around, looked surprised and exclaimed “*far vos?*”

That evening the Rebbe did not return from the Ohel until a quarter to nine. It seemed to be already dark, but Rabbi Chodakov pointed out that this was a Belzer Minyan.

Although Maariv was at 9.10p.m., the Rebbe was still at ‘770’ when I left at 10.30 pm. He had not yet been home and was still fasting.

A very noticeable improvement this year was the very nice gardens bordering ‘770.’ Neat, tidy green grass and beautiful flowers. Our friend Gershon Lawrence deserves every credit for achieving such

notable results. Another outstanding feature was the new *Oron HaKodesh*. It was very cleverly made by Yankel Lipsker. This new *Oron HaKodesh* was built completely around the old one and so solved the problem of the disposal of this old one.

I had not been as yet criticized or reprimanded by the Rebbe about my diary, so I took a chance and distributed copies to our Rebbetzen, to Rabbi Chodakov, Label Groner, Yudel Krinsky and two friends. I was extremely gratified to receive the following complimentary comments - "It was wonderful, so easy to read and it paints such a vivid picture." "Marvellous *zichronos*, keep writing." "I have learnt quite a lot which I did not know before." "It's history." "Don't wait till next year, but send it to us straight away." "I must have a copy for the library." "How can you write so much about such a short stay?" And "Ha, ha, the train didn't stop at the station. How very funny."

Actually, the main reason for writing these diaries is so that our grandchildren and great-grandchildren will, in 120 years time be able to read how their Bobbie and Zaide spent their time with the Rebbe Shlita in Brooklyn, and learn of the great humility, humor and humanness of our most wonderful Rebbe. (The whole world knows already, of course, of his renowned and extraordinary scholarship and learning.)

We met our friend, Rabbi Shem Tov. He looked fine, and was busy printing the Rebbe's Sichos. He is a typical and ideal chosid of the Rebbe, and has only good to say about people. I have a film of Rabbi Shem Tov and Dayan Golditch on a seesaw at an American Lubavitch summer camp. I laughed, it was so very comical. But Rabbi Shem Tov remarked that one should learn a lesson from everything and everyone. In this instance of the see-saw we are taught that if one wishes to elevate another person, one must first lower oneself.

Well, it was now Friday evening and I took my usual place behind the Rebbe's chair. After the Service, the Rebbe gave us all a nice smile and wished us a "*gut Shabbos*." I then immediately commenced singing a nigun. As usual **no one**, except Rabbi Shem Tov and Tzvi Fisher helped me. We concluded with a joyful 'dance.' During *Kesser* on Shabbos morning we all sang *Hu Eloikeinu*, with the Rebbe beating time with his fist. So I thought, well, the Rebbe has accepted the suggestions as outlined in my letter and we will be singing *Hoaderness* and *Kailee Atoh* on *Yom Tov*!

On Shovuous night we were informed that the Rebbe had now discontinued the practice of saying a *Mamer* at 3.30a.m so, officially no one had any excuse for being late for the Rebbe's *Minyan* at 10.00a.m.. Before we commenced *Shacharis*, I approached the *chazan* and informed him that we would be singing *Hoaderness* *Vohemuna*.

Well, the moment had now arrived. The Rebbe was leaning against his stender with his arms folded and was seemingly engrossed in a *sefer*. The *chazan* was waiting and turned around and looked questioningly at me. I took a deep breath - and a deep plunge. (I can well now realize and understand how *Nachshon* felt, when he leaped into the *Yam-Suf*.) The first two lines I sang alone, amidst complete silence and wonderment. The Rebbe still studying his *sefer*, arms *akimbo* and body slightly inclined away from us all. It seems that I had made a bad blunder and had just decided to retire gracefully and end my solo, when I heard a deep croaking behind me. I suddenly realized that Tzvi Fisher had joined me and it was now a duet. Good old Tzvi! He had not let me down! And what wonderful croaking this was! I felt a lot better, and in spite of the Rebbe's seemingly literal cold shoulder, we concluded to the last verse with quite a number of men and boys joining us in the singing. My ego was slightly restored, and so we also sang *Kailee Atoh*. Once again the Rebbe seemed to show his disapproval. And, of course, in that case, so did all the congregation.

The following day I was in a dilemma. Why should I push myself forward and be made to look foolish. The Rebbe had shown in no uncertain terms that he was not interested. Really, I suppose it was a *chutzpah* on my part. Tzvi Fisher had almost persuaded me that I was doing the correct thing, that the Rebbe was really pleased, but I could not see that.

By the time the chazzan (a different one this time) had reached Hoaderes, I still was not convinced that we should again sing. Then, without warning, without giving me a chance of even saying "No" - the Chazzan started dashing off the Hoaderes v'heomuno. He was a quarter of the way through when I suddenly jerked to life. I am normally a stubborn and obstinate fellow, and here was another fellow - the Chazzan - ignoring me completely and treating me with every contempt. A Chutzpah! So, off we go, Hoaderes v'heomuno in a strong purposeful voice and Tzvi and many others joining in with gusto! At Keili Atoh I did not even hesitate. We all sang again. During both these 'repertoires' the Rebbe had once again completely ignored us and his arms were kept folded just as the previous day. After the davening I received a good telling off by the Chazan. He emphasized that **no one** had the right to sing when the Rebbe has his arms folded.

Subsequently, at my first Yechidus, after about 15 minutes conversation, I complained that the Rebbe had not yet asked me his usual question of how I had enjoyed Yom Tov.

"Ah," said the Rebbe "how did you enjoy Yom Tov?" "It was terrible," said I. I explained to the Rebbe that if a person was *moser nefesh* for something and he was literally on the floor, and - all it required was for the Rebbe to raise his little finger, to raise an eyebrow, or nod his head and this fellow would be lifted to the greatest heights, then why did not the Rebbe help me in my dire distress when I sang in shul.

The Rebbe rebuked me very sternly. He said he considered that it was a "*graise avleh*" for me to ask. He was deeply offended by my asking (by letter) whether I should sing or not. I looked up and saw the little twinkle in the Rebbe's eyes and I felt relieved, indeed. The Rebbe continued. "It is a *glaiachie zach* to sing." We sang last year and the previous years and he is "putting it down in his book that we must sing every year and for **always** - '*eibick*.'" I should also tell this Chazzan, that the Rebbe wants to know why he fails to do what the Rebbe tells **him** to do. The Rebbe and I can manage our business OK and without outside interference!

Incidentally, Roselyn and I were with the Rebbe for over two and a half hours at this Yechidus and we discussed **mostly** communal and Lubavitch problems. We had applied for two consecutive years for a grant from the Salford City Council to enable us to extend Lubavitch House in Manchester. The figure arranged was £20,000. The first year, the grant was rejected by the ministry in London because of a shortage of money. The following year, the new government had decentralized all these matters, and this time the Salford Council refused the grant for the same reason.

The Rebbe had said that we should **now** apply for double that amount, that is for £40,000. To my mind this was **too** ambitious and had no real foundation in fact or reasoning because, the original figure of £20,000 was arrived at by careful calculation of the site area and the number of **extra** people we expected to join our Youth Club, £20,000 was the limit! However, I had once told the Rebbe after a certain experience, that a person should always do what the Rebbe tells him, no matter how far-fetched it seems to be. I added, "I believe it is important to do what the Rebbe says." The Rebbe nodded and retorted, "So do I." So, we formally applied for a £40,000 grant! I am delighted to state that at the time of this writing (February '72) we have been officially given a grant of 75% of the £40,000. It seems that new laws and rules were promulgated only a month or two ago which has removed the 'ceiling' on new ventures, and so we can now reap the benefits and advantages of having to wait nearly three years for this grant.

In my office I have a very remarkable list of the many people whom the Rebbe has helped with advice and brochas.

Friends of mine, a couple who had been married for eight years without being blessed with children, had now a lovely family of two boys and two girls (K.A.H.). Another couple, after seven years of childless marriage, have also been blessed with a family. Practiced advice on medical cases and instructions regarding Shiduchim are being given constantly by the Rebbe to the extreme benefit and amazement of their recipients. Unfortunately, the Rebbe only hears from most of these people when

he is needed. They do not even pay the Rebbe the courtesy of informing him if and when matters have reached a successful conclusion.

Another constant source of irritation (my words!) is when people take a certain course of action - on their own initiative - and then beg the Rebbe for a brocha.

A case in point - a certain shochet, who had, without discussing the matter even with his own friends, resigned from his job, without even telling the Rebbe. He now wanted a brocha for parnoso or for a return to his old job! When I am asked to write for a brocha to the Rebbe, for 'Reuben' who is ill it is only fair and correct that the Rebbe should be given a full report of his symptom, what the doctors have diagnosed, and the proposed treatment. I know personally, of many cases where the Rebbe has advised a certain treatment in direct contrast to the advice given by the doctors and furthermore the Rebbe has always been proven right.

At this Yechidus, I had a question to ask on behalf of a friend of mine who had failed an exam. He had, thank G-d, good parnoso and he wanted to know whether it was worth his while to take this exam again.

The Rebbe's answer was that he must take this exam once more, but he must study really hard for it and then, he will be successful. **On no account** must he rely solely on the Rebbe's Brocha.

In point of fact, the Rebbe asked me whether Avrohom gave a sermon every Shabbos in shul and whether he spoke well. I replied that he spoke nearly every Shabbos and if he prepared it, then he did speak well, otherwise he was not too good. The Rebbe could not emphasise the importance of preparation. (I suppose, then, that the Rebbe himself does prepare his material when he has to speak for six and seven hours at a time. I did ask the Rebbetzen - but, although agreeing with me, she admitted that she had not actually seen the Rebbe do his preparation.)

The Rebbe then told me a story about his father-in-law, of blessed memory. He was traveling and stopped over Shabbos at a strange town. In the shul he was called up for Maftir and Haftorah. He told them that he would accept this Mitzvah only if he could retire into an anti-room and look over the Haftorah first. It was a definite ruling that no man should perform in public a service, whether preaching or laying and so forth unless he had previously prepared it - all this in spite of the fact that he had read the Haftorah every week for 20 years.

We had now opened a Gemilas Chesed fund in Manchester Lubavitch because the Rebbe had said that Lubavitch organisations in every town should have a Gemilas Chesed fund. When these were started the Rebbe would donate \$200. I told the Rebbe that we had not received this donation. "Have you asked for it?" he replied. "I had understood that this would be sent automatically." The Rebbe retorted, "Nothing is automatic - the least you can do if you want something is to ask for it." He advised me to write officially to Rabbi Chodakov and we would receive this \$200 by return. I did and we did!

I explained to the Rebbe that I had been invited by Rabbi Menilik to speak again, as usual at the Kinus HaTorah and I had spoken half in Yiddish and half in English as I had promised the Rebbe to do so. The Rebbe had also told me I should speak the following year wholly in Yiddish. "Ah well," the Rebbe interposed, "you can mix in a few English words." The Rebbe informed me that President Shazar had spoken only recently, at a huge public function, and he had spoken in Yiddish. Everyone had loved it, although quite a large proportion could not understand one word!

My brother, Moishe, once asked President Shazar when we were together with him at his home in Israel (Roselyn was showing him the photographs of Hindy and Shmuel's wedding - when the Rebbe was 'Mesadir Kidushin') - why didn't the Rebbe, who had so many scores of thousands of Chassidim, as well as Yeshivos, Schools and three villages in Israel, not come himself to see the country even just once? Shazar replied, "Moishe, the Rebbe is a much **more** clever man than you or me - and he will

come in his own time.” The Rebbe also remarked to Moishe recently, “Don’t you realize that my heart aches just to daven even a small Mincha at the Kosel.”

We then discussed the ‘misunderstanding’ which had arisen regarding the Rebbe’s recent letters to me. I told the Rebbe that I love and looked forward to his letters. It was the PS’s (the postscripts) which I did not like.

The Rebbe repeated that he wanted me to be comfortable and happy on Yom Tov. I had hinted in **my** letters that it just was not possible in Union Street as the apartment was not secure nor safe. I reiterated that I was only concerned about making the Rebbe happy! “Even if you are not comfortable on Yom Tov?” questioned the Rebbe. “Yes” I countered, “if Union Street would not have been ready we would have stayed with friends.” “But would you have been comfortable?” I said “No” and the Rebbe gave a hearty chuckle. He emphatically denied that his letters had suggested that we stayed at home on Yom Tov, but he could not offer us ‘Buckingham Palace.’”

Incidentally, the Rebbe told us that when he received the letter from Roselyn, thanking him for going to all the trouble to make the apartment so much nicer and secure, he showed it to his Rebbetzen who was extremely pleased. She had been rather worried, too, about Roselyn’s comfort and peace of mind.

We discussed the Manchester Shechita Board. I had served as an Honorary Officer for the past 16 years including four years as President. The Rebbe had said that I should always keep my connections with this Board. So I was now serving another four-year term as Honorary Treasurer. At one time the Manchester Beth Din together with other North of England Botei Din had decided that we should deprive the Reform Jews of kosher food, especially at their simchas. The Rebbe had written to me a strong letter at that time pointing out that even if one Jew wished to keep the Mitzvah of eating kosher food, than it was our duty to supply this. It was a mitzvah of the Torah, and the fact that he did not keep many other mitzvahs did not make any difference to his keeping this important one.

Various aspects of Lubavitch work were discussed. One worker, following the Rebbe’s instructions, was having great difficulty in keeping to his timetable. The Rebbe replied that as he had himself given these instructions to this man then he, himself could change these orders.

I then asked the Rebbe, on behalf of Shlomo Levine of South Africa, who was shortly to be married to Linda Rosen, also of that country, if he would give me a bottle of mashke to take to them to be drunk at their wedding and distributed amongst the guests. The Rebbe replied that he does not give mashke to everybody who requests it. But in this instance, as long as Shmuel would “keep an eye” on them, he was prepared to send a special bottle of mashke to them through me.

One of our workers was a very bad timekeeper. I wanted the Rebbe to state categorically that this fellow should daven with the Minyan. The Rebbe answered that it was impossible to order or even to tell a man to daven with the Minyan. The person should know himself the importance of davening ‘*betzibur*,’ and if he has work to do he should force himself to be ready. On the other hand, some men required longer preparation for davening than others, and if they were not yet ready to daven, then the Rebbe could not and would not tell him that they must be ready.

Another worker had made ‘secret’ donations to our funds of as much as £120 recently. I maintained that this fact should be made public, in order that our members should look upon him with greater esteem. The Rebbe said that if this fact became known then the members would want him to work for nothing.

I showed the Rebbe the sample pages of the new English/Hebrew Tanya, and asked for his decisions on the various technical matters still outstanding. The Rebbe then gave me a list of requirements and instructions regarding the ‘copyrights’: two marketing tags; types of paper; covers; dust covers; numbering of the English pages; how the English and Hebrew pages should be arranged; single

edition; double edition; proof reading; and so on and so forth. I should ask Hershel Gorman to check that everything was in order.

The Rebbe concluded that the words 'Made In England' should be prominently displayed, "as everybody will want to buy 'the best.'" If the publication would be ready for Yom Tov, the Rebbe would be very happy indeed, and at that time there would be a great demand for them as gifts.

Incidentally, the Rebbe had pointed out to me that he considered it most important that the Chassidim of each country should publish the Tanya. Obviously it was much cheaper and easier to get copies direct from Brooklyn, but it was a wonderful achievement, especially in regards to ruchnius, when the Tanya was printed in each country especially in Djerba, Tunisia where all the typesetting was done by hand.

Our Yeichidus ended at 3.05am. As usual everyone wanted to know "what did the Rebbe tell you?" This reminds me of the story I heard. When a certain gentleman was asked this question he answered that the Rebbe told him not to tell anyone what the Rebbe had said "Ah," replied the other, with a knowing look and nodding his head, "now I know what the Rebbe told you!"

The farbrengen on Shabbos was most enjoyable. The Rebbe had given a moshul the previous week that the darkest places in a room were directly under the lamp. (Confirming what I always say, that the people in '770' are too near the Rebbe to appreciate his terrific greatness. We, from afar, can and do appreciate the Rebbe much more.)

I had a good practical example of this. My seat is normally right at the front, below the dais where the Rebbe sits. This year, for some unknown reason, they had widened the Rebbe's table and so from where I sat I could see absolutely nothing. I immediately changed my seat to a more central position.

The Rebbe was in good form. I cannot think of any famous conductor who could get the same spontaneous reactions from his musicians, as the Rebbe does from his vast audience and with a barely perceptible movement of his head. The sheer ecstasy, the jumping and dancing whilst roaring the Nigunim when the Rebbe waved his arms, was unbelievable. When the Rebbe actually stood up and urged on everybody to sing - well this scene was beyond any description!

The Rebbe handed to me and to Mr. Katch a bottle of vodka each to distribute at this Farbrengen but warned us that there should be "no competition" between London and Manchester. At one point, the Rebbe paused a little to allow a fellow to finish yawning. The Rebbe is always considerate - he also remarked that a few people were sleeping and he did not want to awaken them!

As usual these days, the Rebbe is very perturbed about the "Who is a Jew?" law enacted by the Israeli government. He speaks very strongly against it at every possible occasion! All the Rebbe wants is that the words '**al pi halachah**' should be inserted in that law. I mentioned to the Rebbe that we had a Sheva Brochas at the home of Mr. Warhaftig in Jerusalem. I had mentioned the 'Mehu Yehudi' problem to him, and Warhaftig said that he would now be afraid to visit the Rebbe as he usually does when he is in the USA. The Rebbe said that Warhaftig is a Cabinet minister and the 'Mihu Yehudi' problem is not now in his department and he could not speak against his colleagues in the Israeli Cabinet. Incidentally, at a Farbrengen the Rebbe stated that in England, the leader of Her Majesty's opposition in Parliament actually received a large salary for **opposing** the Government. "We have an Englishman here who can confirm this," the Rebbe said in a loud voice and looking at me.

On Shabbos I had an Aliya in the shul. The best one, 'shevi'ee.' Not only does one remain on the bimah when the Rebbe reads the Haftorah and can follow the Rebbe's finger in the Chumash and can hear well too, but one ensures a safe and speedy return to one's place by following immediately, literally in the Rebbe's footsteps.

We were again privileged and honoured to be received by our dear Rebbetzen at the Rebbe's home in President Street. We spent over two and a half hours with the Rebbetzen. The Rebbe is generally at '770' at that time. The Rebbetzen (K.A.H.) seems to gain in stature and charm every year. She receives regular letters from Susan (our daughter-in-law). She says Susan is a very wonderful, wonderful girl. She once referred to her as a "wonderful kid," and explained to me that this is an American term, which means she is an exceptional girl! I told the Rebbetzen how disappointed I was that the Rebbe had discontinued having his Yom Tov meals with his Chassidim. I missed these "private and homely gatherings." On the other hand, I was extremely delighted for the Rebbetzen's sake. After all these years she, at long last, had her husband with her for Yom Tov. It had been a real mesiras nefesh for her all these years, all alone without her Rebbe at her table.

The Rebbetzen always asks about our grandchildren. Susan had sent photographs for her too, which were very much appreciated. She also was pleased that Roselyn had written such a nice letter to the Rebbe about the apartment. The time passed so very quickly but we had the pleasure of visiting her again for another hour or so before we left for home.

Just before Shabbos, there was a knock on the downstairs door of our apartment. When I opened the door there was Mr. Halbershtam holding a large parcel. He said he had been knocking for quite a while and he had even tried to gain access into our flat. This was a real test of security. If Mr. Halbershtam could not get in, then **no one** could. However, there he stood with this parcel. It was a Shabbos gift from the Rebbetzen. A lovely cream cake. It looked delicious and as sweet as our dear Rebbetzen. It was very gratifying to be reminded that someone was thinking of us. It really made our Shabbos perfect. We did think of taking this cake home for our grandchildren, but we could just imagine little Pinchos, aged one and a half years, welcoming us with open palms and face and our other grandchildren going around their houses with their little fingers and faces full of creamy and sticky cake. We would surely get no thanks from Hindy and Shmuel nor from Avrohom and Susan. So, we had a good time and ate it all by ourselves. It was lovely.

On Shabbos we were again fortunate to have a Farbrengen. Shmuel, my son-in-law, has impressed on me the importance of quoting at least some of the Rebbe's words of Torah in my Diary. So, the Rebbe always stresses the importance of the role of women in Judaism. They are really much more important than the men folk. The husband is out working all day, making a living. But the wife had to look after her household and the children, Kashrus and Chinuch - education. The A'mighty at the giving of the Torah addressed the women first and afterwards the men – Ko So'mar Le'veisi Yaakov - that is first say to the woman, and Ko Sagid Livnei Yisroel means then the men.

The Rebbe **also** appealed to the ladies, first, to insist that their husbands learn an extra hour a day - **and** they should study like yeshiva bochorim - that is concentrated learning for this extra hour and it should be during business hours. If the telephone rings - do not answer. If it is important, they will phone again. In any case, people always phone to suit **their** own convenience and no loss of trade will ensue. The men, however, need the selfless inspiration, prompting and encouragement of the women. The Rebbe relies implicitly and confidently on our Neshei Chabad to provide this stimulus, so that the men-folk will learn more and better.

Shovuos is the time when we read the story of Ruth. There are many reasons why we read this: Her grandson King David was born (and died) on Shovuos; this is the period of harvesting and the story of Ruth is about the harvest time.

But the Rebbe added that this "Story" is also a lesson for today, about the ideals and the methods of Gairus. Incidentally, all the Jews received the Torah on Shovuos – this is also Gairus. Now at that time, just as today, we had two gentile girls, who had married Jewish boys, outside Israel. After a period of ten years, their husbands died and the girls proposed to their Jewish mother-in-law Naomi, that they should all go and live in Eretz Yisroel – What could be more straight-forward! They were, in their own opinion – Jewesses. But, Naomi replied that the matter was not as simple as all that. They had to be converted according to the Halachah. Naomi's other daughter-in-law, Orpah, refused. She

just could not be bothered to learn all our laws and Mitzvahs. She expected that Naomi should hand her a certificate confirming that she was Jewish. Naomi refused, and so Orpah returned to Moab. Ruth did accept Naomi's offer. She did not however say, "Your G-d is my G-d and your people are my people." No, first she said "where you will go I will go, and where you will sleep there I will sleep." In other words, Ruth was prepared to live and work as a Jewess, learn and keep the 613 Mitzvahs and then after all that, she was entitled to say, "Your people are my people and your G-d is my G-d." The result was that Ruth has a grandson who became our great King David, whereas Orpah married a Moabite and her grandson was Goliath, the wicked enemy of the Jewish People.

When people like Orpah enter Israel with meaningless certificate, which states that they are Jews, then their children and children's children become a Fifth Column and enemies of the Jewish People.

The main essential is that all Gairim must be converted according to Halachah – then we will be assured of peace and plenty in the Land of Israel.

The following day was the Kinus HaTorah. Rabbi Mentlik had again informed me that he expected me to speak to the boys, as I have been addressing the boys every year for the past five years at the Rebbe's instigation. I could not think of a reasonably good excuse for not speaking this time. Except the usual one, that I cannot see how I fit in with all the Roshei HaYashivos and great Talmidei Chachomim who gave such interesting pilpulim and droshos. Still, the boys always seem to appreciate my little funny stories and it certainly gives them a little light relief from the "Heavy Stuff."

I enumerated to them quite a long list of men who were doing the Rebbe's work all over the world, and who only a short time ago were studying in 770, just like you are doing today. This was Uforatzp in the true sense of the word. Thank G-d, every year scores of boys leaving Brooklyn and spreading Lubavitch doctrines everywhere.

The Japanese had invented a system of self-defense. They called it Ju Jitsu – or Judo. If they were attacked by someone they were so well trained that they could throw their assailants by means of a flip of their hand. To show their proficiency they were given colored bolts. The highest standard that they could achieve was marked by presenting them with a Black Belt. Well, a Chassid had worn a Black Belt or Gartel for hundreds of years. This gartel is a sign that he had given himself over entirely to the A'mighty, and G-d will look after him. This is the best form of self-defense.

I concluded with the hope, which I always express, that all the boys will never be Tzrorris Chassidim but will write regularly to our Rebbe, always good news.

The day for our departure had now arrived. I had told the Rebbe that we would be leaving from 770 at about 6.20pm. The Rebbe had graciously honored us, by telling us that we may call and see him, to say farewell at 6pm.

At about five minutes to six, Rabbi Chodakov phoned the Rebbe and told him that we were here and waiting to see him. The Rebbe said that the appointment was for 6pm and it is only three minutes to six now. In any case we could now come along. We again discussed communal matters, and again the Rebbe asked about various people in Manchester and even Israel. The Rebbe thanked me for traveling to Israel at his behest, for my nephews wedding. He has "spies" in Jerusalem, who informed the Rebbe that I had fulfilled my shlichus and made everyone *freilich* at the wedding and at the Sheva Brochos on the following days.

The Rebbe had heard that at a recent concert in England, a Jewish opera star had sung a piece which the Rebbe considered to be not in good taste. "Ah, yes" Said I, "but he wore a yarmulki." "Yes," retorted the Rebbe, "and so does, *lehavdil*, the Pope wear a yarmulki!"

The Rebbe then handed me 3 notes of £5 each. One for Manchester Tzach, one for Galsgow and one for the Neshei in Manchester. The Rebbe said I should give this one to Roselyn. I said it was unusual

to take English money from America to England. “Oh”, interjected the Rebbe, “you can have Five Dollar bills instead.” Serves me right!

Roselyn then interposed and said to the Rebbe that we have thank G-d spoken to the Rebbe for nearly three hours altogether and we have discussed everything and everyone, but we have not asked for a brocha for ourselves. She added we would like a borchta for health, and *parnosos* and so forth for us and for our children and grandchildren. The Rebbe said, “*iber dem kop*” and at the same time raised his hand over his head showing us literally what he meant.

This was a nice brocha, a nice gesture, and with full and happy hearts we took our leave of our dear Rebbe Shlita.

During the following winter, the ensuing events took place and are worth putting on record:

Just by chance, by accident, it came to the notice of some of my colleagues that one of our main financial supporters, a millionaire, was going for a holiday to Bermuda with his wife in a few days time. They were traveling by way of New York where they would be staying overnight. We all made ourselves busy. My colleagues persuaded our friends to visit the Rebbe and I cabled and phoned Rabbi Chodakov. After a good few days of international telephone calls between Manchester and Brooklyn, I ultimately had read to me over the telephone, by Rabbi Chodakov a four page reply from the Rebbe. By a very fortunate chance, Shmuel was at our home and he wrote out the reply, which was in Hebrew.

In brief the Rebbe stated: Once and for all – that **no** one should be pressed to go and see the Rebbe. In this case it was even worse because we insisted upon a man and wife changing their arrangements and asked them to come along to Brooklyn at 2am in the morning (which is equivalent to 8am English time – so they were awake for over 25 hours) to see the Rebbe for maybe just a few minutes. It was not fair to ask a man, never mind a woman to do this. About 60 Russians Jews has appointments with the Rebbe during that night. They had arranged Yechidus many, many weeks before and these could not be cancelled at short notice.

If any friends of ours asked especially for the honor of seeing the Rebbe and know at least four weeks before they were due in New York, then the Rebbe could and would see them at a convenient time and for a length of time commensurable to their importance.

So now we know! It is no Mitzvah to push people to see the Rebbe. One should ask the Rebbe first. In fact, we even tried to arrange Yechidus for our friends on the Sunday on their way back from Bermuda. The Rebbe said no. It was again unfair to ask people who had spent two weeks in the tropics to stay over in the New York snow and ice. Suddenly, they returned home 3 days earlier than expected and so could **not** have kept this Sunday appointment, even if it **had** been made for them. So, once again the Rebbe was proved right.

The desire to see the Rebbe had to come direct from the person concerned. They should not be influenced or persuaded by the Rebbe’s “friends.” It was a very strong letter. I have the consolation of being referred to as a “friend,” and a colleague of mine was actually envious – “I would have even welcomed a letter like that” he said.

#### THE REBBE’S 70<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY YUD ALEPH NISSAN 5732

Thousands of Chassidim were converging on 770 Eastern Parkway to be present on that important and historical occasion of the 70<sup>th</sup> birthday (till 120) of **our** Rebbe and leader, in order to pay their respects and homage. Contrary to usual practice and custom, most of these travellers had not even asked for the Rebbe’s permission this time but spontaneously decided that they had to be present at this unique event. The Rebbe had sensed what was happening and had issued a general directive and

order - that all men who were coming for these celebrations, and were not accompanied by their wives, must return home in time for Pesach, so that all parents and families should be together for Yom Tov.

Bernard Perrin and I left Manchester for London and New York on the Thursday before the Sunday (Yud Aleph Nissan) and were booked to return on the Monday morning after **the** Farbrengen - a visit of just over three days. Rabbi Farro, his wife and two daughters also accompanied us from Manchester. They intended staying in Brooklyn till after Pesach

This Manchester delegation was joined by the London contingent of Mendel Katch, Mr. Solomon, Bobby Vogel (London), Rabbonim - Yankel Ghurkov (and his wife) Katzenallenbogen (a new arrival from Russia) and Shmuel Lew. Faivish Vogel and Mendel Futterfass were already in Brooklyn together with Mr. Weingarten and his son Simon. Rabbonim Benzi Shemtov and Nachman Sudak were travelling on a later plane. I would emphatically state that this was the strongest and most impressive delegation of Lubavitch leaders ever to travel to see the Rebbe from this country, all at once.

We arrived at '770' at 4.15pm (on the Thursday) and found that the Rebbe was at the Ohel. **But**, Rabbi Zussie Williamofsky and 100 others from Israel seemed to be waiting just for "Zalmon Jaffe to arrive" and lead them in singing and dancing. They had been in Brooklyn for a fortnight already, and just needed **me** to get them started - a wonderful compliment, to be sure.

Lubavitch leaders and busloads of chassidim had arrived (and were due to arrive) from Montreal and Toronto, Chicago, Detroit, Miami, California, Antwerp, Paris, Milan and Amsterdam, South America, South Africa, Israel and Russia, Scandinavia and all countries and cities where Lubavitch were established were represented by their leaders. For instance, Rabbi Drizin, the only Lubavitcher in San Francisco, came along himself.

The Rebbe arrived from the Ohel in time for a late Mincha. He looked very tired indeed. Yet he managed his usual lovely smile for me and the 'Englishmen' waiting in the hall for the Rebbe. After Mincha I handed to Rabbi Chodakov a pile of 30 letters from various local people extending greetings to the Rebbe on the occasion of his birthday. The senders included the Lord Mayor of Manchester and the Mayor of Salford, the Manchester and the North of England Botei Din, Communal Council, Shechita Board, President of the Board of Deputies and innumerable shuls, organisations and Lubavitch supporters. There was also a very considerable amount of money included for the Rebbe's special fund. I delivered too, a hand written and signed Parchment Scroll, extending loyal and warm greetings with Brochas for good health and long years till 120 years from Manchester Lubavitch, including the hundreds of members of our Youth Club and the thousands of people who had cause to be forever grateful to the Rebbe.

Many hundreds of letters and cables had been received by the Rebbe from Presidents and leaders from all over the world including President Nixon of the USA, President Shazar of Israel, and the President of Italy. (I was informed, unofficially, that the Pope had also sent greetings?!)

Many hundreds of people had already arrived and it was decided to daven Maariv downstairs in the Shul. It was crowded like Yom Tov and everyone took their usual Yom Tov places or seats. I stood, as usual, behind the Rebbe. After Ma'ariv (and by arrangement with Reb Zussie (Williamofsky) and his Israeli friends) I started Napoleon's March. The Rebbe smiled, swung his arms - and we were off! It was terrific. We followed the Rebbe upstairs and sang and danced outside his room for half an hour until the Rebbe came out again. He again swung his arms and the singing and dancing welled up to a huge crescendo until the Rebbe entered his car. What a climax that was! And what a different Rebbe this was - full of vim and fire, like a young man - in complete contrast to the very tired Rebbe who came into '770' from the Ohel a short time previously.

Tzvi Fisher, who had been standing on the Bimah during and after Maariv, reported to me that it was really wonderful to see the Rebbe's face when he left the shul beaming with pleasure. I overheard another fellow tell his friend afterwards that - "*es hot zich geshturemt.*"

Next day Binyomin Klein called me. He had a reply for me from the Rebbe. This took me completely aback because I had not asked the Rebbe any questions, nor did I expect any reply. Still, even a few words from the Rebbe were always more than welcome. I hurried to the office in great excitement to find out what the Rebbe had written to me, **and** what a lovely surprise - just a few words but well worth coming all the way from England to read them. This is the literal English rendering as translated from the Hebrew by my son-in law Rabbi Shmuel Lew:

**"Everything was received and double thanks. Herewith 3 receipts. And thank you for coming here for these days out of joy and a good heart. And as is your custom, make others rejoice as well out of amplex in all."**

I felt very proud indeed and was determined to do my best to make my presence felt, in a happy and constructive way.

I was staying with my friends, Mendel and Sarah Shem Tov. They had given me a nice room with two beds - the other one was for Shmuel. It was very sweet and hospitable of Sarah, especially being only a few days before Pesach! Subsequently on the Sunday when I looked around '770' and saw many thousands of visitors and wondered - wherever are all these people staying?! There are no hotels at '770' at all.

Well, at least Sarah Shemtov did her share - Shmuel did not take advantage of this other bed. He stayed up for two whole nights, talking and socialising at '770.' The other two nights he stayed with old friends of his. I cannot vouch for it that he slept in a bed. However, there was no shortage of clients for 'my' spare bed - 'customers' were arriving at all hours of the day and night. In addition to the Shemtov's (including K.A.H 3 boys and 2 girls) there were Rabbis Benzion Shemtov, Nacham Sudak, Avrohom Shemtov and his two sons, Rabbi Berel Shem Tov - plus a guest from Detroit who only ate his meals at Sarah's because all the beds, armchairs, couches and floor space were taken up already - so he slept next door. Well, 8 guests in one medium sized apartment is not bad at all! We certainly did not make it any easier for Sarah to prepare the home for Pesach. No wonder they do not need hotels in Crown Heights, Brooklyn.

On Friday, Shmuel and I went to Rabbi Korf's Matzo Bakery, to order some matzo to take home with us to England. About 25 women and 10 men were all busy, rolling and mixing, mixing and rolling. Every few moments groups of schoolchildren arrived with their leader who explained the whole process to them. Rabbi Korf seemed absolutely dazed and flustered by all the commotion and wanted only to sell me 'broken' matzo. This cost 35 cents less than the perfect pieces for which he charged \$4.10 a pound. I told him I could break my own matzo.

Mrs Korf - although a small, petite lady, was the only calm and steadying influence in this flurry and frenzy of excitement.

Shabbos morning the shul was packed out, even more than Rosh Hashanah I was told. Just before 10.00a.m. Yossi Liberov approached me and remarked that "I suppose you will sing 'HoAderes Vehemuna' because you always sing this when you come to '770.' I had never thought of that - it was only on Yom Tov that we sang this - was it a Yom Tov today? Shabbos Hagadol? The Rebbe's birthday? I asked Rabbi Sudak, he replied without any hesitation, "of course it is Yom Tov and of course you must sing." So I started HoAderes - the Rebbe encouraged me by banging his fist on the stand and everyone joined in - it was very, very good indeed.

I wrote in a previous diary that the boys at '770' gave me Semichah. They referred to me as Rabbi Jaffe. I had another example of this title when I was approached by a number of Israelis who asked for

my ruling and permission to *duchen* on Shabbos. I had to inform them of my ruling that they could not *duchen* at the Rebbe's minyan at '770' on a normal Shabbos. I really felt very sorry for those Cohanim.

The Shabbos Farbrengen ended at 5.40. Mincha was again downstairs in the shul. When the Sefer Torah was being brought out, the Rebbe commenced singing *Ano Avdo*, one can imagine how everyone joined in this nigun. My voice was becoming a bit hoarse by now and the main Farbrengen was yet to come. After Mincha at 6.15 I went 'home' for Shabbos lunch. As Maariv was at 7.00p.m. I had no time to dawdle over my food.

Two weeks ago, Rabbi Nachman Sudak was told by the Rebbe that he would like a Tanya "printed in England" as a birthday present. So, a Rebbe's miracle! In 10 days this was printed. A special leather bound presentation copy was made too and also a plastic covered one. When he arrived, Rabbi Sudak gave this leather bound copy to the Rebbe. The Rebbe was extremely pleased and thanked him for this. He then said "will you please give my Rebbetzen the plastic covered Tanya and after Ma'ariv on Motzei Shabbos bring the English delegation into my room and present me with the other leather bound copy!"

Rabbi Sudak was dumbfounded. By chance, the bookbinder had made two copies "just in case one was spoilt." He had brought both with him, but, and he is absolutely adamant about this, he never told anyone, especially not the Rebbe. Remarkable!

Except for the 'old Rabbonim' of '770' who regularly, every year, went in to see the Rebbe and give him a brocha on the occasion of his birthday, the English delegation was the only group, in fact the only people to have the Zechus, the merit, to see the Rebbe privately before his birthday.

We all trooped in and the Rebbe gave us a nice welcoming smile. There was quite a large pile of Seforim, letters and/or other material on the Rebbe's table, but it was all covered up neatly and tidily. The only object to be actually seen on the table was the parchment scroll presented by Manchester Lubavitch. Knowing the Rebbe, this was obviously put there by design and not by accident. Rabbi Sudak presented the Tanya and the Rebbe, in thanking him and us, said that we should "spread out Lubavitch work from London and all England. It is a good start and we should be blessed with Nachas from sons and daughters and with money. Moshiach will arrive soon.

The Rebbe then asked each one of us to come forward to be presented with a pocket Tanya by him. One condition - we must not leave it on the shelf, we had to learn in it. I was also honoured to receive a pocket Tanya from the Rebbe's hand and withdrew to the same spot where I had been standing previously. I then found to my utter consternation that the cover of my copy was torn, right down the back. I spent a terrible few moments debating with myself what I should do. After all, even a torn Tanya from the Rebbe's own hands was invaluable. I even thought that this could actually be a 'collectors prize,' a scoop! - For how many torn Tanya's has the Rebbe given out! On the other hand, the Rebbe said we should learn in it - and that means every day and for life. I concluded that it would be better to ask the Rebbe to exchange this one for a better one.

Fearfully I approached the Rebbe with the Tanya in my hand, and told the Rebbe my 'story.' He was very annoyed. "With the right hand," he said indignantly. I was holding the Tanya in my **left** hand and handing it to the Rebbe, and unforgivable offence. Everything should be given with the right hand, this applies to everyone. I quickly obeyed and the Rebbe gave me another copy. He then handed me a further Tanya - "for Avrohom." So, thank G-d, it came up for me.

Seventy editions of the Tanya had now been published and another two were being prepared - the Melbourne Edition and the Hebrew/English Soncino one.

Sunday morning at '770' was like Shabbos. Packed with more people than ever. The only difference was that on this day there were long queues of *meshulachim*, all wanting money "lekovud the Rebbe's birthday."

On Shabbos the Rebbe had announced that all heads of Lubavitch branches should call at Rabbi Chodakov's office on Sunday where they would receive \$71 from the Rebbe. The heads, only, would be given this money and the size of the branch did not entitle them to more. Lubavitch London, with all their huge staff and ramifications would get the same as say, Glasgow, which had a very small number of workers. I had arranged to go with Rabbi Chaim Farro and Bernard Perrin. At 12.30, as Bernard had not yet arrived, we decided to go without him. Rabbi Chodakov wanted to know why two of us had come. I explained that I was here on behalf of Manchester Lubavitch and Chaim had opened his own account for students and publications. Rabbi Chodakov remarked that he could see that I was a 'soicher' (businessman) and after a pleasant conversation he handed to each of us a \$50, \$20 and \$1 bill. When we left his room, we found a huge crowd had congregated outside, waiting their turn to enter and collect their \$71.

I hurriedly went searching for Shmuel and told him to get his 'rations' for his students department. He ultimately went in - and was 'thrown out.' Rabbi Sudak's \$71 covered his department, too. Bernard Perrin was more fortunate. He collected on behalf of Glasgow!! (He helps Chaim Jacobs quite a lot.)

The busiest place in Brooklyn these few days was the milchig restaurant. If one wanted lunch one had to claim a table after breakfast, give one's order straight away, and in three hours time one would be lucky to receive the lunch - that was **not** ordered.

The Farbrengen was due to commence at 8.30pm. Mendel Katch said that he was not going to crush and struggle for a seat. He would arrive at 8.00pm and stand at the back. If the Rebbe wanted him, he would call him forward. We did arrange to meet for dinner at 6.00pm.

I arrived at '770' at 6.00pm and found the place transformed. Instead of using just over half the hall as for normal Farbrengens, the whole hall was now full of benches and tables and stands reaching to the roof. It looked, *lehavdil* like a football stadium. Television cameras were everywhere. Eight television companies, including one from Israel and one from France were there. Closed circuit TV sets were arranged for the women's department and one was placed outside in the courtyard. The 'technical room' was full of TV monitor sets and telephones and already hundreds of people were seated and reserving their seats or place. Even at 6.00pm there was great excitement. And the Rebbe was still at the Ohel. **And** there was Mr. Katch also already seated at a very good spot. Shmuel was also standing at his favourite place. He had been there since 5.00. I went to the restaurant and purchased corn beef sandwiches for all of us, and we all claimed our seats and sat down. At 7.00 Mr. Katch went out and obtained further supplies of refreshments.

We sat near Rabbi Gerlitsky of Montreal, who told us about the Canadian girl who wished to study at a girls Seminary. The Rebbe asked her to submit a list of those seminaries in which she was interested and the Rebbe would choose one. When the Rebbe received the list he **added** Gateshead to it and told her to go there. At Yechidus the Rebbe asked her whether she had any problems. She answered "No." The Rebbe remarked that it was unusual for a girl of 19 to have no problems in this day and age. He hoped she would always have none. Incidentally she is at Gateshead for a second year on the Rebbe's advice.

At 8.00 over 2000 people were present. The atmosphere was electric. Everyone happy but tense.

"Von, two, tree, testing. Von, two, tree, testing," and then we all commenced singing the new nigun which we had learnt the day before. 'Becho Hashem,' the first sentence of the Rebbe's daily Tehillim - number 71. This went on non-stop and with gusto until 8.30 prompt, when the Rebbe walked in. The usual shushing and shushing went on ordering the boys to stop, until the Rebbe was seated and the singing almost died away.

Normally the Rebbe enters in complete silence but I considered that on this one occasion at least the Rebbe should be sung in. I like to think that my little contribution (a little more hoarse, maybe) did help to revive the nigun and keep it going until the Rebbe had sat down.

The Rebbe was in a very happy mood smiling and laughing, particularly at some young boys who had just left Russia. Quite a few score Russians were present from Nachlas Har Chabad in Israel. The place was now jammed tight, with crowds outside too. I reckon 3,000 people were present. After the first sicha, we again sang the Rebbe's Nigun. I jumped up, pulled up Katch and Perrin and soon everyone was singing and dancing. The place looked like a huge yo-yo, up and down, up and down. It was terrific and very impressive. Especially when the Rebbe increased the tempo. I will frankly admit that when the Rebbe started the next sicha, I was relieved and very thankful to sit down. I had nearly reached my limit. It was good though. It was really excellent.

The Rebbe spoke of the importance of the age 70 – quoting Tehilim, Tefila l'Moishe and other sources. He remarked that one did not have to look at one's passport to realise one's age. Some people seemed always young whilst others aged more quickly. Thank G-d, the Rebbe looks and acts young. We hope that he will live to 120 years.

The Rebbe compared the natural, human birth to the Exodus from Egypt. In the first instance, a human body was taken from inside another human body - the mother. In the second case, a whole small nation was taken complete from out of another, but larger, nation. He also mentioned the birth of Adam and thus of all mankind.

As usual the Rebbe pointed out the vital role that Jewish women play and have played in the life of the Jewish nation.

When Pharaoh brought in his evil decrees that all Jewish male babies must be thrown into the river Nile, the parents of Amram and Miriam decided to set an example to the rest of the Jews by getting divorced and so ensure no more Jewish children were born. Miriam was only 5 years old at the time and she pleaded with her father Amram, who was the leader of the bnei Yisroel, not to take such drastic action and play into the hands of Pharaoh. His decree was against the boys only, whereas Amram's ruling was against the girls too. This was a policy of despair and lack of faith. Miriam spoke directly to her parents and prevailed. She and all Israel were thereafter blessed with the birth of Moses.

The Rebbe suggested that every woman today, should show her husband a bentcher after a meal and point out to him the words he has been uttering - their translation into a language that he understands. He should know and realize that it is not because of the good work of his strong arms or the result of his clever brainwork that he has achieved success, but that everything comes from our Heavenly Father.

At one point, the Rebbe had a little fun about papers or groups who nominated the 'Man of the Year.' **If** he was a man last year, and **will** be a man next year, they why is he a **man** for this year **only**. **And**, if he was **not** a man last year, and will **not** be a man next year, then this year he is also "*nisht kein mentch!*"

The Rebbe also gave instructions that every Lubavitcher branch should establish another 'Mosad' this year. The Rebbe wanted at least another 71 foundations this year.

It was a real freilecher Farbrengen - with lots of ecstatic singing, and dancing for joy and with happiness. The Rebbe ended the Farbrengen at about 2.00am and walked out to the nigun of Becho Hashem. Hundreds of boys literally fell upon our poor Rebbe, a barricade had given way in the crush. There was a sudden hush. But thank G-d, one can not keep a good man down (as we say in England) and the Rebbe immediately jumped up and waved on the singing again.

We all escorted the Rebbe to his car singing as usual but he stopped suddenly and asked for someone by name. The Rebbe wanted to give him a lift home - that is typical of our Rebbe.

I got home at 3.00am. Needless to say most of the other Englishmen who had arranged a Shacharis service at 6.30am did not retire to bed at all, as our flight to London was scheduled for 10.00am.

At the airport we started to explain to the security officer what was in the large box we were carrying. He interrupted us saying he knew what Shmura Matzo was, and Shmuel let him have some for his Seder.

On the plane there were 3 meals for eleven of us. They found us an apple or pear each. We were told that they had to find 160 kosher meals on the previous day at short notice - '*kane yirbu!*' However, I did very well. I had also Perrin's apple, Faivish's pear, Shmuel's Pepsi-cola, Katch's chocolate and Weingarten's biscuits.

Yossi Liberov was an *ovel* and we had a Minyan for Mincha and Ma'ariv.

One non-Jewish traveler asked us if we were on a pilgrimage. We explained to him our reason for going to New York and showed him the full-page article and photograph of the Rebbe in the morning's edition of the New York Times. He kept repeating "what a memorable trip this is for me."

Well I agree with him. It **was** memorable - for all of us.

To be continued ... be'ezras Hashem