

SHOVUOS 5736

CHAPTER 1

WE FLY TO MEET THE REBBE

Shovuos this year was on Friday and Saturday, the 4th and 5th of June. Three flights had been arranged from England.

Group No. 1 - consisted of Roselyn, Samuel Portnoy and I. We left Manchester on a direct flight to New York on Monday, May 31st.

Group No. 2 - was a party of **ten** from London, which left on the following day. This included **five Lews** - Hilary and some of her children - Yenta Chaya, Golda Rivka, Sholom Dov Ber (one and a half years) and Tova Gittel (6 months.)

Group No. 3 - was originally a part of Group No. 2, but two girls and a boy got parted. They went shopping for Duty Free drinks and probably sampled their wares too well. The plane left without them, and they followed on the next flight.

I have often heard of passengers arriving without their luggage. This is the first time I have beheld luggage arriving without the passengers.

It was 6p.m. when Roselyn and I arrived at 770, too late for the Rebbe's Mincha - or so we thought. But the Rebbe had gone to the Ohel (of the previous Rebbe) and Mincha was now scheduled for 9.00pm. Very fortunate - for us!

All my regular 'customers' were clamoring for my latest edition of "My Encounter with the Rebbe Shlita." Rabbi Chodakov repeated that "this is history" and I should provide all libraries with copies. I sent one to the Rebbetzen - it was one way of informing her that we had arrived.

In the Rebbe's post-box in the office there were already about one hundred and fifty letters. The twenty-three which I had brought with me from Manchester, together with my diary and a covering letter - I placed on top of the pile. I had written to the Rebbe amongst other things, that I hoped he would enjoy my diary and I made known to him that Roselyn was also with me.

After Maariv at 10.00pm, I once again received proof of the Rebbe's amazing vitality, energy and speed with which he copes with his huge mail.

Within one hour Rabbi Binyamin Klein called me into the office and gave me the following reply from the Rebbe to my letter:

1. *Re Hilary's flight to New York on the morrow:* **"All that is mentioned should take place in a good and auspicious time in all details."**
2. *Re the diary:* **"Based on the past, surely I will enjoy the diary."**
3. *We have now arrived for Yom Tov:* **"To receive the Torah with *Simcha* and inwardness."**
4. *Roselyn is with me, of course:* **"See Rashi, in connection with *Matan Torah*, the first time - *Yisro 19:3* - that Moishe was instructed to speak to the women first."**

All the answers - short, sweet and to the point. I would have preferred however, to have received the Rebbe's comments on my diary **after** he had perused it.

ANOTHER 'FLAT' STORY

With the Rebbe's permission, we again stayed at the apartment above the Kolel, adjacent to 770. Yenta Chaya and Golda Rivka, two of our granddaughters, were lodging with us too. Rabbi Slavin had enrolled ten bochurim into a working party to tidy up and clean the flat. They did quite well - for boys - for volunteers.

One thing they forgot was to switch on the boiler to enable us to have hot water. I descended to the cellar and turned on the switch. After thirty minutes, the water was still cold, so I went downstairs to investigate.

The boiler was banging, shaking and trembling, almost ready to blow up. It was going chug-chug-chug, and belching forth thick blue smoke which completely filled the basement. The lights were on, and peering through the fog of blue smoke, I noticed half-a-dozen shadowy figures in shirtsleeves.

They were brandishing gleaming razor-sharp knives. They screamed at me to turn off the switch. Not wishing to argue or become involved with well-armed, aggressive and hysterical madmen - I hastened to comply with this order.

When the smoke and haze had abated, I realized that this was the *Shechita* class of the Kolel. They had been sharpening their knives, when the pall of smoke descended and enveloped them.

Anyway, Binyamin Klein soon fixed the trouble. All that was required was five hundred gallons of oil.

CHAPTER 2

A JUNIOR CORRESPONDENCE COURSE

“Zaidi,” said Yenta Chaya to me a couple of mornings later. “It is my ninth birthday on the ninth day of Sivan, and I would like you to help me to write a letter to the Rebbe, asking for a *brocha*.”

“I am very sorry,” I replied, “but I cannot and will not help you. You must write in your own words exactly what you feel and what you want from the Rebbe. Even if it is not such a good letter, I am sure that the Rebbe will appreciate it all the more when he realises that it is all your own composition.”

It is interesting to note how the mind of a young girl of nine works.

All the Hebrew and Yiddish words in the correspondence which follows were actually written in Hebrew and with pointed vowels. As the Rebbe laughingly remarked to me at Yechidus - she wanted to make sure “that I could read the Hebrew.”

Instead of **B.H.** she wrote the Aramaic equivalent, **B.S.D.** (one can even learn from a little girl). “Why not **B.H.**?” “That is G-d’s name and we do not wish to destroy it or tread on it.

Then followed, “**Leadmur Shlito, k.k.**” (**k.k.** stands for , **Kevod Kedushas** - To our honoured saintly - master and Rabbi). This **k.k.** should actually **precede** the **Leadmur Shlito**.

The final words in the “address” were: to Rebbe Shlito, **adm’vesh**. (**adm’vesh** is the abbreviation for “till 120 years”)

This is what she wrote:

My birthday is on the 9th Sivan I would like to ask for a Brocha.

Successful in my 10th year to learn well have *Midos Tovos* and to be well and healthy and learn Torah and do Mitzvahs.

Mrs. Krausz asked me to tell you that we heard you on Lag B’Omer speak about the Torah secrets. There are 12 of them. I have learned them off by heart. Also regards from all the girls in Lubavitch Foundation London.

Zai Gezunt,

Yenta Chaya Bas Hindy Malka Lew

Early next morning there was already a reply from the Rebbe. He thanked her for her letter, noted that it was her birthday and was delighted that she knew the “secrets of the Torah” by heart. The Rebbe also sent her a bright shiny silver dollar, which Yenta Chaya had to donate to Tzedoka. It was dated 1882 but was in mint condition.

The Rebbe also indicated that she could keep this silver dollar, as long as she redeemed it by its cash value, at least.

One can imagine the great excitement that this caused. Yenta Chaya was a very lucky girl. I pointed out to her that after receiving such a unique and wonderful gift from the Rebbe, she should write a letter of thanks.

So she wrote the following:

B.S.D 4 Sivan 5736 Leadmur Shlito k.k.

To Rebbe Shlita asm’vesh.

I hope you are well.

Thank you very much for the silver dollar. I have never seen one in my life before. I think it is a very nice thing to answer a letter with.

Zai Gezunt,

Yenta Chaya Bas Hindy Malka Lew

Every Yom Tov, we have always managed to send some flowers to the Rebbe and our Rebbetzen. The Rebbe once remarked to me “You say it with flowers.”

We all trooped into Gil Hersh's flower shop. Roselyn and I chose the roses, which we knew from experience that the Rebbetzen liked and we wrote the card with our best wishes for Yom Tov. I suggested to Yenta Chaya and to Golda Rivka who were accompanying us, that they should each send a rose to the Rebbetzen.

They jumped at the opportunity with alacrity. I handed to each a card and told them to write a short message.

Yenta Chaya's card read:

B.S.D. 4 Sivan 5756 Leadmur Shlito k.k. Ve-isha (Here Yenta Chaya has included the Rebbe's wife).

To the Rebbe Shlita and Rebbetzen,

I hope you are well, as on Shovuos we are told to have greens in our house because of *har Sinai*, so here are a few roses.

Wishing you a happy Shovuos.

Yenta Chaya Bas Hindy Malka Lew

Golda Rivkah's card read:

B.S.D. 4 Sivan

Golda Rivka

To the Rebbe Shlita and Rebbetzen

I wish you a happy Shovuos and many returns.

Love

Golda Rivka Lew

The Rebbetzen was more thrilled with these cards than with all the flowers and told us that she was keeping them as a permanent memento.

The final letter in this saga was the one Yenta Chaya sent to the Rebbe prior to her Yechidus - as requested by the new system.

She wrote the usual heading, and then,

To the Lubavitcher Rebbe Shlita, adm'vesh.

I hope you are well.

Tonight we are going into Yechidus so I want an answer to this question.

How come for about 10 Sichos you were so lively and *Lebedik*? Also in case you will ask me to say the 12 Secrets in order to remember them, Zaidi and I made an 'abriviation' which is *beshovtecho yezakhe olov*.

Wishing to have a nice Yechidus.

Yenta Chaya Bas Hindy Malka Lew

Leadmur Shlito k.k.

As one can very well see from the above, the Rebbe adores children and loves to receive letters from them. He always encourages the future mothers and fathers of our nation.

CHAPTER 3

GOOD YOM TOV

There was a short Farbrengen on the night before Erev Shovuos from 9.50pm until midnight.

The Rebbe takes this opportunity to deliver the Yom Tov Maamar. In years gone by, this Maamar was given over at 3.00am on the first 'night' of Shovuos. This new arrangement seems to be a much better idea.

This Yom Tov I was given the Mitzvah of *gellila*- tying the band around the Sefer Torah and putting on the cover, the *mantle*. I appreciated this honour because it allowed me to stay on the Bimah almost touching the Rebbe, and I could follow, very easily, the *Haftorah* which the Rebbe recites in a low, quiet voice. Then again, as long as I follow the Rebbe's footsteps, I can regain my place without any undue exertion and trouble.

During the davening, we sang the usual songs - with a silly minority again, actually heckling.

We also 'sang out' the Rebbe when he left the Shul. On one occasion I sang "*Nyet, nyet nikavo.*" The Rebbe smiled and said, "Oh, you know how to speak Russian!"

CHAPTER 4

SOLDIERS ON THE MARCH

The first day of Yom Tov was Friday. The march to Boro Park was scheduled to leave at 6.00pm. Recalling vividly last year's event in which I had joined in and the Rebbe's tremendous send off to the marchers, I went along again with keen anticipation and excitement.

Straight away I received a letdown. I was told that this year the Rebbe would not 'take the salute.' Rabbi Chodakov would deputize for the Rebbe. It was not Rabbi Chadakov's fault, but –well-, there was a big difference. It was not 'soldiers on the march,' it was more like 'soldiers in retreat.' They just slouched off, like a ragamuffin army of bedraggled troops slinking and skulking away. No singing and no discipline.

I wish the organisers of the march could have heard what Rabbi Chodakov told me afterwards. He explained that the Rebbe, occasionally, did not stand outside to see his 'troops' march off in formation. He wants to test them, like a teacher who wishes to see whether the children in his class are behaving themselves in his absence. I am told that the Rebbe was looking through the window of his study. He could not have been very impressed. The organisers let the Rebbe down.

Anyone can move forward at the head of a procession - erect and smart - if the Rebbe is watching and giving encouragement. The time to show true leadership is when they are carrying out the Rebbe's orders in the Rebbe's absence.

But if the march organizers were not up to standard, the 'troops' themselves made a very good show indeed, on arrival at Boro Park. The police cordoned off two blocks and everyone danced in the square. The main speaker in the largest Shul (the Sephardi) was Professor Branover, a Russian and now a professor of water-energy in Israel. The Shul was crowded out - over 1,000 people present. They were attracted by the 'energetic' professor who was going to address them instead of the usual Rabbi.

CHAPTER 5

A GREAT RUSSIAN PROFESSOR CHASSIDISM

To digress a little.

Professor Herman Branover's early life was spent in a secular atmosphere. But even as a youth in Riga, his scientific curiosity prompted him to seek answers to questions on the existence of the universe and the relationship between mind and matter. His disillusionment with official Russian philosophy set him searching for more complete answers to his increasingly more profound questions. This search eventually led him to the Chassidim of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, who obviously studied and learned in complete secrecy. Professor Branover recounts that "we studied together secretly, in small groups in private homes. As I learned more of Judaism and Yiddishkeit I realised that I must reach Israel and begin life there as a free Jew."

After completing his university studies and obtaining his Ph.D. in electro-hydrodynamics he taught at the Latvian Academy of Sciences and gained an international reputation in this field. In 1971 he applied for an exit visa for himself, his wife and son. He was immediately sacked from the university, and his wife was dismissed from her position as a lecturer in a medical school. With nothing more to lose, he wrote letters and sent telegrams to public figures in the United States and Israel. He led hunger strikes and demonstrations and was arrested several times and imprisoned on many occasions.

Suddenly in 1972 he was told that he could leave with his family - on payment of £20,000! Obviously he had no money, he had even borrowed from friends in order to live. But somehow the money was found. "It was like a miracle," he said.

He had always wanted to live in the Negev, and with his highly specialised knowledge and skill in hydrodynamics he knew he could play an important role in the development of the barren and desert-like areas of southern Israel. When the offer arrived from Ben-Gurion University of Be'er-Sheva, he gladly accepted it.

His arrival in Israel was the culmination of a 15-year struggle. During all this time, he had been constantly in touch with the Rebbe, who had uplifted him when he was depressed, and guided him both spiritually and materially, and given him the answers to all his questions and problems.

In Israel, in addition to his scientific activities, Professor Branover does the Rebbe's work for Judaism with keenness, alacrity and devotion, and his flowing beard and brown beret have become a familiar sight around many a University Campus.

This then, was the man who was giving over the Rebbe's message to the Chassidim of Boro Park.

He told them, amongst other things, that Hydrology was the science of water and water energy. All sciences needed to have practicable application, otherwise they would not be of any use to anyone. Water is compared to Torah, the Rebbe always emphasises that learning Torah agrees without practical application is also of no use to anyone, least of all to those who are learning.

Actions and deeds are what count and matter. Learning and study are vital and important, but the main purpose is the fulfilment of the Mitzvahs.

The Rebbe had proclaimed this year as a *Shnas haChinuch*, a 'Year of Education,' especially of the young. One had to learn and understand some Torah before one could carry out the Mitzvahs with devotion and energy.

A friend of mine from Manchester said it was worth walking the twelve miles and suffering terribly-blistered and sore feet for a few days, just to see and hear Professor Branover, a stocky man with beard and brown beret, addressing over 1,000 people in the Rebbe's name.

Yom Tov concluded on Saturday night with a Farbrengen which commenced at 8.30 p.m.

INTERLUDE FOR TORAH STUDY

From among the various Sichos which the Rebbe gave, I have chosen the following. I am indebted to Shmuel, my son-in-law, for his help in formulating them.

Each Yom Tov has its own distinct quality and special Mitzvos. Therefore it is difficult to say which is the best, since each is the highest in its own special sphere or merit.

On the other hand, if we examine the virtue of each festival, we will then comprehend which one is the greatest.

At first glance, it would seem that Pesach is the main Yom Tov, since it is the 'head of all festivals.' This is especially so when comparing Pesach with Shovuos. For Shovuos is the only Yom Tov which the Torah does not designate with any definite date, and merely commands us to "Keep Shovuos, seven weeks after Pesach." The name Shovuos means 'weeks.'

Nevertheless, we find two qualities in Shovuos, as a Yom Tov, which we do not find in any other.

1. With every other Yom Tov there is an opinion that one may dedicate the whole day to spiritual activity. On Shovuos, however, all agree that there must be a material celebration as well - honouring Yom Tov by eating and drinking etc., in order to indicate our physical pleasure for having been given the Torah on Shovuos.
2. The virtue of every Yom Tov, including that of Pesach, stems from Shovuos when we received the Torah. Similarly, the virtue of Succos which contains extra *simcha* that stems direct from the Torah.

What is the deeper meaning why Torah is associated with material enjoyment? The Gemora tells the story that when G-d wanted to give the Torah to the Jewish people, the angels argued that such a precious treasure should not be given to earthly creatures.

Moshe *Rabbeinu* then countered with the argument, "What is written in the Torah? 'I am your G-d who took you out of Egypt.' Were the Angels kept in bondage, in slavery in Egypt? 'Honour your father and your mother.' Have Angels parents? 'Do not steal, do not covet.' Have Angels an evil inclination?"

The Torah is needed to elevate the world below and that is why on Shovuos, the "day of the giving of the Torah," we should celebrate with worldly matters.

In the Zohar, too, the virtue of Shovuos is extolled - although Pesach has seven days, and Succos has an eighth (*Atzeres*) day, - yet Shovuos is no less important even though it has only one day.

The Zohar explains that Torah stands higher than time. Therefore Shovuos which is connected with *Mattan Torah*, also transcends time, and its blessings do not have to be divided into a whole cycle of time - a week of seven days, but can be concentrated into the one day.

The Torah also stands higher than space. That is why it was given in the wilderness, a place which is "*hefker*" - free for all, belonging to no-one in particular. This is to show us that Torah is free for all who want to acquire it.

The above teaches us how precious the Torah is. A treasure must not be hidden away and forgotten, it has to be appreciated and used. Similarly, we should utilise the Torah and the day of Shovuos to resolve to acquire the Torah with dedication, so that it becomes a true acquisition. Then it will become our very own.

A STUDY IN EDUCATION

The Rebbe gave a lengthy Sicha upon the subject of *Chinuch* (education), and of our obligation to provide a Torah *chinuch* for every child, however removed he is from Judaism.

In fact, education also applies to adults, for every person who progresses to any higher sphere - as for example, an ordinary *Cohen* who becomes the *Cohen Godol* - must undergo *chinuch*. So, said the Rebbe, every one of us must study every day, because each day we must rise to a higher level of holiness.

When educating a child, King Solomon tells us to "Educate the child according to his way," that is, one must labour to bring the Torah's idea down to the child's level, so that it will be palatable and easily assimilated by him.

On the other hand, we must never bend the Torah or change it to suit anyone's convenience.

A vital rule of education is to keep every promise made to the child. For if one does not keep his word, one loses the child's trust and cannot expect him to retain the teaching.

In the same way, when we approach a Jew, we must never say that the Torah contains 612 Mitzvahs only, - just because the 613th is difficult to keep. For when the *talmid* (student) finds out that something was missing, he will not feel obligated to keep any of them. He will feel that it all depends on his own reasoning and attitude.

The correct approach is to give the person as much as he can take - 'according to his way' - but at the same time to make it clear that there is much more to Torah. Since, however, he cannot do it all, he should do what he can for the moment, and eventually to add Mitzvahs. But we may never exclude any Jew from the Mitzvahs, no matter how far from them he seems.

The Rambam tells us that King Jeroboam Ben Nevot, who was one who "sinned himself and also caused others to sin" - a most terrible and wicked fault - will also be judged by the heavenly court for not fulfilling the Mitzvah of *Eruv Tavshilin* - a rabbinical enactment, which allows one to cook on Yom Tov for the Shabbos when it occurs on the next day. Because no matter how low one's level is with regards to other mitzvahs, he must be made to do the mitzvahs which is already at hand at any given moment. "He sinned and caused others to sin," but this does not free him from the obligation to perform even 'small' Mitzvahs, nor does it free us from our obligation to bring those commandments to him.

Again, by fulfilling a mitzvah - **any** mitzvah, one gets the power and the inclination to fulfill more precepts and to do Teshuva (repentance) for one's 'big' sins.

When one encounters a child, one must not approach him on the basis of his parents religious commitment or otherwise, or his own present standard, whether he wears *Tzitzis*, or even whether he is circumcised. Our job is to bring him to Torah - that is to the mitzvah 'of the moment,' at hand, and it must **not** be delayed for any reason at all, even in order to first bring him to do a different mitzvah.

Education must begin as soon as possible. If we provide a good teacher, he will have a good education; a bad teacher - his Chinuch will suffer. But **no** teacher, will mean that his upbringing and Chinuch will come from his environment and he will have no Jewish education at all. If we don't seize the opportunity of the moment in *chinuch*, we may not get another chance.

On Shovuos G-d took the whole Jewish people into '*cheder*.' When Moishe asked Hashem what Zechus do the Jews have to deserve the miracle of being taken out of Egypt (Rashi: shemos 3:11), G-d replied, "the *zechus* of the Torah which they will receive on this mountain." That is, even though there is no Zechus, at present, to warrant redemption, one deserves to be brought nearer on account of the Torah which will be studied and practiced in the **future** as a result of our efforts. Take the child and give it Chinuch even if no *zechus* is yet apparent.

G-d told Moshe to leave the desert where he was living a serene and peaceful life withdrawn from the hustle and bustle of the world, and go to Egypt with all its problems and distractions in order to redeem the Jews and to **give them** the *zechus*, the merit of Torah in the **future**.

We must all follow the example of Moshe *Rabbeinu*.

The Farbrengen ended at 1.30am. We davened Maariv, the Rebbe made Havdola and personally gave to each and every one of the many thousands gathered in 770, a small portion of wine from his silver becher, until 4.00am. This goblet was continuously filled when it was half empty so that it always contained some wine over which the Rebbe had made the *brocha*.

CHAPTER 6

A VISIT TO THE DOCTOR

On the day after Yom Tov, both Roselyn and Hilary had developed sore throats. They were feeling tired, depressed and rather poorly. It was advisable and necessary to consult a doctor.

Hilary was told that the doctor was very busy and that it was impossible to make an appointment to see the doctor even at his surgery. The doctor's wife suggested that it would be a good idea if Hilary would call at 770 at about 10.00am. There she would find Dr. Seligson who would be davening. He might be persuaded to examine her at 770, and save Hilary the long trek to the surgery.

Dr. Seligson is the Rebbe's own personal doctor. He has his own little eccentricities - as everyone has - but he has a brilliant medical mind and excellent reputation.

At 10.30 a.m. Hilary came up to the apartment. She had just seen Dr. Seligson. She told Roselyn that if she hurried, she might catch the doctor before he left 770.

Roselyn got out of bed, dressed quickly and rushed to 770, where she found Dr. Seligson in the hallway. The doctor invited her into his temporary surgery which was actually in the 'waiting room' outside the Rebbe's study. The doctor was still dressed in his Tallis and Tefillin. His medical bag, which has the appearance of a ladies' handbag, was hanging onto the doorknob. There were no chairs nor benches available in that 'waiting room' that morning, so Roselyn was asked to make herself comfortable - on the bottom step of the stairway leading to the upper floor. He did not take her temperature. He always dealt with Jewish people - he knew they took their own.

He diagnosed tonsillitis - the same illness as Hilary had. As Roselyn was fully insured for all medical expenses, he was quite in order to charge her \$10 as his fee. Roselyn paid and was given a prescription for some medicine.

Later on that day I was reinstated as the Rebbe's commissionaire. When the Rebbe's car drew up, I opened the door. I told the Rebbe that Roselyn and Hilary had tonsillitis. The Rebbe was startled and amazed, and exclaimed - "are **both** not well?" He asked me whether the doctor had given them an injection, medicine or pills. I told the Rebbe that the doctor's first choice was always medicine; his second choice was an injection. Pills were given only as a last resort. Dr. Seligson explained that sometimes the coating on these pills was not 100% kosher and whilst one was allowed to take them "according to the Halacha," he always prescribed the remedies in the order mentioned above. The Rebbe then wished both Roselyn and Hilary a "*refuah shlema bekorov*" - a complete recovery very soon.

Three days later, there was another patient. Yenta Chaya also developed the symptoms of tonsillitis. So, off we went again to see Dr. Seligson at 770.

We waited a little while, as there was already a patient in his 'surgery.' It was now our turn, so Roselyn and I, and the patient entered. This time, the doctor first took off his Tallis and Tefillin and invited us to sit on a bench, which had been left over from the previous night's Yechidus.

He took out a torch from his bag which was hanging on the doorknob, and confirmed that Yenta Chaya did have tonsillitis. The prescription and the \$10 were again exchanged.

His parting words were "*zai gezunt*" (be well). I remarked to him that if his blessings would be fulfilled and everyone kept in good health, then he would soon be out of business.

He then reminded me of the Rebbe's Sichah last year, which emphasised that when a Jew parted from another Jew, a word of Torah should be said. When this Torah was recalled, one would then remember this friend.

The Perek mentioned in Chapter 5, Mishna 23, "Judah son of Tema, said, 'be strong as a leopard, light as an eagle, fleet as a hart, and mighty as a lion.'" In other words, be well and healthy in order to study Torah.

He also pointed out that in the room in which we were standing - the Rebbe's waiting room - there were four doors leading to the north, the south, the east and the west, and an open space above - right

to the glass roof lights - to the heaven above. Dr. Seligson added, "Just like the abode of our Father Avrohom, where his home was open to visitors from the four sides of the compass."

Dr. Seligson again put on his Tallis and Teffillin, and we took our leave.

We noticed that he wrote the name of every patient on a little slip of paper. We were speculating as to what he does with these small bits of paper. It was concluded that he sent these to the Rebbe, and asked the Rebbe for a *brocha* to ensure that the patient recovered.

We went to a local chemist to obtain the medicines on the prescriptions. He told us the following story:

A Rabbi was not feeling well. He went to his doctor and paid him \$10 for his diagnosis and prescription. He took this to the chemist and handed him \$8 for the medicine. The Rabbi received the bottle, took out the stopper (or cork) and immediately emptied the contents down the drain. The chemist was taken aback and wanted an explanation. The Rabbi answered, "I went to the doctor and paid him \$10. Well, *er darf leben* (he has to live). I came here and paid you \$8 for the medicine - you also have to live. I spilled the medicine down the drain – *nu, ich darf aich leben* (I also have to live)!"

CHAPTER 7

DAYAN FISHER JOINS THE 'CLUB'

I had the pleasure of meeting Dayan Fisher at 770. He is the head of the Beth Din of the London Federation of Synagogues.

He rhapsodized and enthused continuously about the Rebbe and declared that **every** Rabbi in Great Britain should come and spend a few days at 770. It was a wonderful experience. He was now a devoted Lubavitcher Chossid.

He wanted to know what was the secret of my success with the Rebbe, and does the Rebbe have a sense of humour. I replied that the secret of my success was **because** the Rebbe did have a sense of humour!

The Dayan was shown around many of the Lubavitch institutions, spoke to the students, and gave Shiurim - notably at the Kolel. He was very much impressed. He enjoys addressing and speaking to people. He informed me that he likes to listen to a speaker for five minutes and thereafter to do **all** the talking himself!

He was amazed that at the Farbrengen he actually sat and listened - entranced and spellbound - to the Rebbe for more than six hours at one session, and he enjoyed it! He was astounded that the Rebbe could speak for a total of fourteen hours, and without any notes whatsoever - small wonder that he remained speechless!

At his Yechidus, which lasted for an hour and ten minutes, the Rebbe asked him what his first name was. "Michoel" replied the Dayan. "Then," said the Rebbe, "you were born on the Sedra of Tetzave." "That is quite correct," affirmed Dayan Fisher, "but how do you know?" The Rebbe replied that this Sedra contained one hundred and one verses, and the name Michoel (in Hebrew) was the equivalent of one hundred and one(!).

Every learned person takes a delight in asking the Rebbe to answer some difficult and obtuse problem.

The Dayan asked the Rebbe a question. He said he had searched both the Jerusalem and the Babylonian Talmud (Gemora) and could not find the answer. The Rebbe did not reply. But at the next Farbrengen, the Rebbe spoke for one and a half hours on this one question. Afterwards he turned around to Dayan Fisher and said that he had "paid back his debt."

CHAPTER 8

KINUS HATORAH

Mincha should have taken place at 3.15pm. The Rebbe informed us at about 2 o'clock that he would be five minutes late, and he was, exactly five minutes!

We may learn two lessons from this:

1. If one is going to be late for an appointment - even as little as a few minutes, then one should advise those who are waiting.
2. Always keep to your time.

The *Kinus haTorah* commenced at 3.45pm. I usually speak at about 6.00pm - some light entertainment, after the 'heavy stuff.' When I arrived at that time Dayan Fisher had just started to address the boys and did not conclude until 7.15pm.

As soon as he had finished, there was a large exodus from the hall. After all, boys needed food, and although a couple of hundred or more still remained, many complained to me afterwards that they had come especially to hear my discourse, and it was unfair that I should speak at such an awkward time. One must remember that this *Kinus haTorah* continued non-stop until the time of Maariv at 9.50pm and thereafter until about 11.30pm.

There was a continual flow of boys coming and going all the time.

Another matter which upset me a little was a group of about fifty men and boys who stood at the rear of the hall talking non-stop, whilst I was actually speaking. I was most annoyed especially as my audience begged them to keep quiet. I discovered afterwards that they were Israelis and could not understand a word of English, so they chattered and chattered. Too bad for me!

As I always attend this *Kinus haTorah* during the time of Shovuos, I have the option of quoting from two Sedras only, Naso and Behaaloscho. After so many years I find that my themes are becoming limited. This year I found something in the latter Sedra.

In Chapter 9, verses 6 and 10, we learn that the men who were carrying the bones of Yoseph *Hatzadik* complained to Moshe that they were unclean because of this mitzvah which they were performing, and so were prohibited from partaking of the *Korban Pesach*.

They suggested that some *Kohanim* should '*shecht*' the *Korban* (sacrifice) and sprinkle the blood on their behalf. Later on at night, when they would become clean, they could then eat this Pesach offering.

Moshe told them to "wait a moment," whilst he would enquire of the Almighty what the procedure should be.

Rashi comments, "Moshe said this with confidence, like a *talmid* who is certain that he will get a reply from his Rebbe at any time."

The Teacher of Moses was the Almighty Himself and yet, Moshe expected an immediate reply to his questions. Rashi adds, "How fortunate is this human being who can approach the *Shechina* - his Rebbe - at any time and receive an answer to his problems at once."

Our Rabbis, of blessed memory, tell us that every generation has its own Moshe *Rabbeinu*. We are fortunate and should be happy that:

1. Our own Moshe *Rabbeinu* can be approached at any time for advice and help, and
2. That our Rebbe can contact **his** own Rebbe to decide on important matters and obtain an immediate reply.

I concluded with my usual appeal to the boys to make the Rebbe happy. Do not be a *tzorris* Chossid. Do not only write in trouble. Children have a habit of taking their parents and their Rebbe so much for granted. The Rebbe also likes to be shown some appreciation occasionally.

I then spent about half an hour reading excerpts from my diary. I think I enjoyed it!

CHAPTER 9

A SPECIAL TEHILLIM

Shmuel telephoned to Hilary from London and informed her that as Yossi's birthday was on Shabbos, the 14th of Sivan, he wanted me to place a Tehillim on the Rebbe's stand on that day. At the end of the morning service when the daily Shiur is recited, the Rebbe would use this *sefer*. Yossi would then own a treasured Tehillim which the Rebbe had actually used on Yossi's 12th birthday.

I have explained in a previous edition the difficulties confronting one when intent upon a similar mission. Competition is terribly severe. In the 17 years I have been visiting 770 I have never yet been successful.

Avrohom who studied at Lubavitch for 5 years, did manage to obtain one, and Tzvi Fisher, who resides almost next door to 770, also got one for me. They, however, were not tied down to a definite day or even week. They could bide their own time.

Anyway, I had received my orders. I would not have been forgiven if I had failed. Success was imperative.

Binyomin Klein referred me to Tzvi Fisher as being an old campaigner and one who had some practice of how to be a step ahead of the rest.

We held a conference and decided upon 'tactics.' It had to be planned with military precision.

The first task was to purchase a Tehillim. As usual, they were out of stock at 770. Zally Unsdofer, my nephew, bought one at the Merkos offices across the road. He then wrote Yossi's full name and the date of his birthday on the first and last blank pages of the *sefer*.

Everything would be ready to hand on Thursday night, when Tzvi would personally take over the command of 'Project Special Psalms.'

On Friday night I arrived at the shul at 770 at 8.45pm, half an hour before Shabbos Maariv, in order to confirm that Tzvi had everything under control.

Tzvi was greatly perturbed, upset and annoyed. He had been through a traumatic experience. He had placed our Tehillim on the Rebbe's stand a couple of hours previously. When he came back after Mincha, at 8.15pm, it had disappeared. Somebody had removed it.

Fortunately, after a very exhaustive search, he had found it. He held it in his hand and we had to decide when it was considered safe to place it, again, on the Rebbe's stand. We were dealing with a clever opponent who would go to great lengths to beat us. Our Tehillim had to be on the Rebbe's stand immediately after the Rebbe left after Maariv.

Tzvi gave me the *Sefer*. I opened it and nearly fell over with shock. Instead of Yossi's name and birthday it had the inscription "In loving memory of Chaim Boruch." I was speechless! I just handed it back to Tzvi. He went livid and was trembling with anger and frustration.

The Shul was now crowded. In a few more minutes the Rebbe would arrive. Action had to be taken at once. Tzvi proposed a rather complicated routine. We would place this Tehillim in position. After Shabbos we would take out the page with the "Soul of Chaim Boruch" and place this leaf in a brand new Tehillim which we would purchase after Shabbos. We could then claim the original Tehillim of Chaim Boruch, which the Rebbe would have used on Yossi's birthday.

I did not like this idea - not at all.

I was standing pensively, in great thought, my eyes automatically roaming about here and there, when suddenly they alighted upon a brand new Tehillim half hidden under a seat. I made a dash for it and couldn't believe my luck. Yes, it was Yossi's all right.

Just then the Rebbe arrived and we davened Maariv. We were saying *Oleinu* (the last paragraph of the service). I was standing a few feet behind the Rebbe clutching Yossi's Tehillim which, in about sixty seconds I hoped to place on the Rebbe's stand.

I happened to glance sideways to my left. There, two yards away, stood my rival also clutching a Tehillim, and giving me very black looks. He was a very little boy, about nine years of age, with long *payos* and very long *tzitzis*. He wore a small Yarmulke.

I hissed, low and vibrantly, that he should clear off; I had a Tehillim for my grandson's birthday. He stood his ground - arrogantly, stubbornly and obstinately - his tummy stretched out to the limit. He retorted - in Yiddish - that I should come **next** Shabbos. The seconds were ticking away, and the Rebbe would be turning around to wish me and everyone a good Shabbos. It would look a little undignified to be seen struggling and fighting with a little boy over a Tehillim.

So, feeling very mean and a bit of a bully, I glared at him with one of my most ferocious stares and told him, also in Yiddish, that I was leaving New York in a few days time, and that U-N-D-E-R N-O C-I-R-C-U-M-S-T-A-N-C-E-S would I allow his Tehillim to remain in position on the Rebbe's stand.

Just in time! He retreated gracefully and indicated that he would try again on Monday. The Rebbe left and with great relief, I placed Yossi's Tehillim on the stand and commenced a Nigun. Tzvi proclaimed it a great victory. Personally, I was still not quite satisfied. I suggested to Tzvi that he should remain in Shul all night to guard our Tehillim. He refused point-blank!

Next morning, Shabbos, I passed 770 at 8 o'clock and popped in. I was glad to see Yossi's Tehillim safe and sound, tucked nicely away on the Rebbe's stand all prepared and ready to be used by the Rebbe.

I would never consider or dream of going through all this for myself, but for a grandson - **nu nu!**

CHAPTER 10

OUR ENCOUNTER WITH THE REBBE

The climax of our visit to Crown Heights had now arrived; our actual, direct, encounter with the Rebbe. We did realise, of course, that we were fortunate and greatly honoured to be granted this special privilege of a private interview. It was at a comparatively early hour - 10.15pm and we stayed until 11.00pm.

When we entered the Rebbe's study, he said "*Sholom Aleichem*, Mr. Jaffe."

The Rebbe then wished Roselyn a "*Refuah Shleimo*" (complete recovery) and asked her to be seated. (The Rebbe did not ask me to sit down. He well remembers that at our very first Yechidus he told me to take a chair. When I remonstrated with the Rebbe, he indicated that it would be quite in order for me to sit in the Rebbe's presence for my first three visits. That was a very long time ago - seventeen years to be exact.)

I signified that I had not taken advantage of the Rebbe's offer made last year, that it was permissible to bring a tape recorder to a Yechidus. I told the Rebbe that I had definitely not brought one. He retorted, "It is very suspicious in that case!"

I remarked that my 'readers' complained that there was too much Torah in my diary. The Rebbe replied, "By the time you write Volume 20, they will be used to it!" It was not a bad Brocha for a start.

As usual, I had presented the Rebbe with five bottles of vodka and as usual the Rebbe asked if I wanted them for "someone special." I once again replied that they were for the "Rebbe's pleasure."

The Rebbe stated that it would give him a great deal of pleasure and satisfaction if I would take, on the Rebbe's behalf, a bottle of vodka for Arthur Hubert and family. We should drink Le'chaim with them for their good health. I suggested that this would put Arthur in a good mood. The Rebbe answered that Arthur Hubert will be in a good mood **before** he drinks the vodka.

Walter Hubert, Arthur's distinguished son and heir who has also visited the Rebbe privately at Yechidus, once told me, "If the Rebbe gives advice, and you do not take it, then you are a fool, and if you **do** take it then you have a h*ll of a job!"

The Rebbe was pleased with the letters from Yenta Chaya. He remarked that she knew all the twelve 'Secrets of the Torah' including the one quoted in the Tanya!

The Rebbe was particularly impressed and pleased with Alice Peerce (Jan's wife) who was performing a marvelous job of propoganda for Lubavitch. He said that "Alice is a wonderful example to all of us - energetic, sincere and vigorous." The Rebbe also revealed that when Jan (Peerce) was told by Toscamimi that he (Jan) had a 'native' Italian diction, "that was the time he became a Lubavitcher."

I told the Rebbe that Alice and Jan were numbered amongst my most esteemed and valued readers. I have always forwarded them a copy of my diary and I invariably received a heart warming and encouraging acknowledgment.

We discussed family, communal and Lubavitch matters for quite a while. The Rebbe was delighted that Dayonim Golditch and Schneebalg attend our affairs. He was gratified that someone spoke so nicely about us.

I then informed the Rebbe that we would be leaving New York on Monday next. I suggested that we might see the Rebbe after Mincha on that day to say our farewells. The Rebbe said, that surely he would see us before then. "Of course," I rejoined, "I will see the Rebbe at a Farbrengen." I was then accused of trying to smuggle in a Farbrengen!

I showed the Rebbe the certificate from the shul appointing me a life-President. The Rebbe asked me to leave this for him as I could get another one when I returned home.

The Rebbe was glad that I had spoken to the boys at the *Kinus haTorah*. I mentioned that I had already received my payment - Rabbi Mentalik had handed to me good rations of fruit, wine, soda,

bread and cake - all from the Rebbe. We then received a lovely *brocha* and we took our leave, after a memorable forty-five minutes of private conversation with the Rebbe.

A TECHNICAL PROBLEM

Mr. & Mrs. Baram and baby came out from their Yechidus with the Rebbe. They looked thunderstruck and dazed (not the baby).

Mr. Baram explained to me that he had been a student at Sheffield University, England. There was a Hillel House attached to the university, but Sheffield had a Jewish population of only a few thousand.

Mr. Baram had now graduated and was an electronic engineer. He was seeking a job and asked the Rebbe for advice and guidance. He wished to reside and work at a place where there was a good Jewish environment and atmosphere. He surmised and was hoping that the Rebbe would tell him to find work in Manchester or return to Israel where his parents were living. The Rebbe asked him to be his 'Shaliach' in Sheffield, and ensure that Hillel House was well looked after and used by the Jewish students. He would "certainly find a job in Sheffield."

Mr. Baram remonstrated with the Rebbe. He considered this an impossibility. A friend of his, in a similar field, had been searching for work for over twelve months. He was still unemployed. The Rebbe interferred and said, "but **you** have not been looking for work. I suggest you see your Professor."

Mr. Baram returned home and approached his Professor who found him the ideal job straight away. A certain firm had been advertising this vacancy for nearly five months without success. It seems they were only waiting for Mr. Baram. Anyway, it was exactly the job which he wanted!

CHAPTER 11

DAILY NEWS AND ANECDOTES

“ZILLY ZALLIES”

Zalmon Unsdorfer, my nephew, has been studying at ‘770’ for two years. He has not yet been privileged to have a Yechidus with the Rebbe. He has been told that if he wishes to see the Rebbe at a private interview, then he will have to become a *Choson* first. So he is busy looking for a Kalah.

I asked Zally to help me with the singing during the davening on Yom Tov. He replied that he often arrived **after** “*Hu elokainu.*” I thought that he meant “*Ain kelokainu.*” “No,” rejoined Zally, “I **leave** shul that time!”

One day Roselyn invited him for lunch at 12 noon. Zally refused, because he had not yet davened.

Zally told me that Yankel, the Mikvah ‘manager’ had gone for a long vacation to Israel last year. “Oh,” I said, “that was bad – no one to clean the Mikvah.” “No,” retorted Zally, “that was good - it cost no money!”

HOPEFUL BRIDEGROOMS

Fourteen *Chasanim* desired to be ‘called up’ at the Rebbe’s Minyan on Shabbos (which was also Yom Tov) and they drew lots for the honour. (I realised how lucky I was to even get *gellila*).

Therefore, every night during the week after Shovuos, there was a Chuppah outside ‘770.’ On some nights more than one.

I imagine that it would be extremely difficult for the Rebbe to work in his study with orchestras blaring and Chazonim bellowing, just outside his window.

But ever since Shmuel and Hilary had the rare *zechus* of having the Rebbe being *Mesader Kedushin* for them fourteen years ago, most weddings now take place outside 770. Each participant believes and hopes that maybe on the occasion of their marriage the Rebbe will find the time to come along and be *Mesader Kedushin* for them. ‘Hope springs eternal,’ but the Rebbe is much too occupied, busy and preoccupied!

AN UNUSUAL AND RARE COLLECTOR

770 has a new collector - a book collector! He gathers together all the Sidurim and Chumoshim from all over the Shul and puts them away, nice and tidily. He uses a supermarket trolley, in which he can place about sixty or seventy books. It should not be a long nor a difficult job. However, it takes him from 7.30am until after 12 noon.

There are two reasons for this:

- (a) He is an avid collector of *Borchus*, *Kedushas* and *Kadeshim*. This necessitates him stopping for minutes at a time to collect these mitzvahs with the right and correct *kavonah* and devotion.

And,

- (b) By the time he has put away one load, the seforim have been taken away again by other ‘customers.’

I don't know if he is well paid, but he certainly receives much spiritual reward.

A GOOD FLOW OF LIQUID CAPITAL

Yankel of the Mikvah is still extending his business. In addition to the General Stores, he now has opened a Banking Department.

He changes my travelers cheques and hundred dollar bills with alacrity. He is keen for the business and there are no long queues waiting to be served.

I fell in love with the silver dollar which the Rebbe gave to Yenta Chaya. Yankel maintained that he could get me a dozen at the cost price of just one dollar each. Within a few days I received them. They

were very nice indeed. I spent half an hour trying to remove a red mark which surrounded the entire edge of every coin. I used a scrubbing brush. I used sandpaper. I realised, belatedly but sadly, that these were **bronze** dollars, which were only coated with silver and impossible to be compared to the Rebbe's pure silver dollars, which are at a premium and invaluable.

I indicated to Rabbi Chodakov that Yankel had the right idea. He had heard on the radio the stories of two boys, one used to sell newspapers and the other ran errands for small tips. Both were now millionaires. Rabbi Chodakov pointed out that Yankel's department store would be unique. It would be the only one with its own Mikvah!

THE OFFICE IS 'BUSY'

I went into the main office at 770 one morning. Twenty other men had the same idea. A partition, about three and a half feet high divided the 'customers' from the staff. All the men were leaning on this counter and upon each other. They were watching with keen interest the personal secretaries of the Rebbe going about their work.

Rabbi Label Groner and Rabbi Binyomin Klein were busily answering the four telephones which never stopped ringing.

All one could hear from our side of the 'fence' was Label and Binyomin saying, "no, no, I am sorry, the Rebbe does **not** speak on the telephone, please write in... No, no I am so sorry, no appointments till next year, please write... Sorry, no Yechidus, write in... Write in... What is your mother's Hebrew name? ...Oh, Mazel Tov, I will tell the Rebbe, please write in... No, no, what is his Hebrew name? ...No, the Rebbe will not speak to you on the telephone... Sorry, no, no, please write in... No, no, no Yechidus, no appointments... No appointments... No answer yet... Yes - hurrah - here is a reply... Mazel Tov, Mazel Tov!

Label then picked up a few hundred letters which had just arrived by post, and with a sigh of relief, departed with the bundles, to see the Rebbe. Poor Binyomin was left in complete charge of all the four ringing, shrieking telephones.

Actually, one or two of the bystanders did wish to discuss some matters with either Label or Binyomin - they had an almost impossible task!

A LESSON IN CHARITY

On quite a number of occasions, Hilary would be waiting in the corridor with her children to catch a glimpse of the Rebbe when he walked from his office to the Beis Hamedrash to daven Mincha. The Rebbe would invariably stop and hand over some coins to Yenta Chaya, Golda Rivka and Sholom Dov Ber, and other children who were present. The Rebbe would wait, whilst the children put the coins into the charity box which was placed on the wall. The Rebbe then gave Hilary a glorious smile and said "thank you." He even said "thank you" to each child individually for accepting the money to put into the box. Before we left for home, the Rebbe handed each of us some cash and also again thanked each of us very warmly for taking the money. This is certainly a lesson in how to give charity and shows very clearly the humbleness of the Rebbe.

A DEDICATED AND ZEALOUS LIBRARIAN

I went into the beautiful and new "Levi Yitzchok Library" at 305 Kingston Avenue and left a copy of my diary with Mr. Waxman, the librarian. He demanded two copies, otherwise, he explained, he could not allow anyone to take this one out. I promised to see what I could do about it. A few hours later on, I met him walking home, with my diary tucked underneath his arm! Maybe he wished to check whether the contents were fit to be read by the borrowers.

PROPHETIC

Whilst we were leaving our apartment one day, we met Rabbi Chodakov. He remarked that he was pleased to see that Sholom Dov Ber (not yet two years old) is "already davening and learning in the Kolel!"

A REVEALING SECRET

Dayan Golditch disclosed to me that the Rebbe had related to him the following:

It states that Ezra would not return to Israel from Babylon until he was certain and assured that those whom he would leave behind, could carry on with their Jewish way of life without his help and guidance. When that moment did arrive, Ezra returned to Eretz Yisroel.

The Rebbe implied that without his presence and help, then American Jewry might disintegrate more quickly and become completely assimilated. His duty and obligations came before his personal desire and longing to go to Israel. Furthermore, it was also understood, that once the Rebbe did set foot on the soil of Eretz Yisroel, it was forbidden that he should ever leave.

THEY SAT ENTHRALLED DURING YECHIDUS. IT WAS NO HANDICAP

I heard this story from Shmuel. One hundred handicapped Israelis, mostly young boy and girl soldiers who had been injured in battle, had competed with remarkable success at the Paraplegic Olympics held in Toronto. Every one of them was in a wheel chair. They had expressed the wish to have Yechidus with the Rebbe. They needed the Rebbe's inspiration and spiritual guidance to give them that confidence in themselves and in their future.

Many people can be accommodated in the Rebbe's private office at one time, but one hundred?! And all in wheel chairs!

The Rebbe instructed that Yechidus would be held in the large shul. It would be partitioned off, temporarily. In addition, special ramps were to be fixed so that the wheel chairs would be able to negotiate the dozen or so steps leading down to the hall.

They all came and it was a most impressive, emotional and inspiring Yechidus.

THE SOCIAL HIGHLIGHT OF OUR HOLIDAY

We were again privileged to be honoured with an invitation to visit our Rebbetzen at her home in President Street. We were also asked to bring the children.

From past experience, we told Hilary to come along a little later. This would enable us to enjoy an hour or so alone with the Rebbetzen.

Our Rebbetzen thank G-d looked very well, *kein ayin horah*. She divulged to us that the Rebbe would be taking a few days vacation during the coming week and then he would be able to catch up on his reading, including my diary. I asked the Rebbetzen, "where will the Rebbe be going for this vacation?" "Oh," she replied, "he is not going anywhere, it just means that instead of retiring to bed every night at three or four in the morning, he will go at one!"

Both Yenta Chaya and Golda Rivka were really great. Chaya sang to the Rebbe's Nigun loud, shrill and shrieking, especially the middle part. They were all well rewarded with sweets - even Sholom Dov Ber who mumbled something and made a funny face, and Tova Gittel who just laughed. Golda sang 'Modeh Anni,' lively and rhythmical. The Rebbetzen declared that she was keeping the girls cards sent with the flowers, as a memento. She wondered whether Hilary might have helped them with the wording - I denied that categorically. I did not assist them either - I could not have done half as well!

We handed over a letter which Susan, our daughter-in-law, had given us to deliver and after having spent a wonderful and outstanding two and a half hours, we all took our leave of the Rebbetzen.

A HISTORICAL FARBRENGEN

On the last Shabbos of our stay in Brooklyn we had a historical Farbraingen. It took almost six hours and it was the longest ever Farbrengen to be held on a Shabbos afternoon. *Kein ayin horah*, the Rebbe is marvelous. Years ago we used to have a twenty minute sicha followed by a twenty minute nigun. Now, thank G-d, the Rebbe has so much Torah to give over to us that he begrudges and cannot afford the time for the singing. So we have a sicha for an hour and a Nigun for three minutes. Then another sicha for an hour and a half followed by a longer Nigun for three and a half minutes!

I must admire the Rebbe. When I addressed the boys at the *Kinus haTorah* for forty-five minutes I was feeling tired. The Rebbe speaks for six hours and more at a time - with no notes and no repetition - and he seems as fresh at the end as when he commenced the Farbrengen.

The last sicha took the form of a strong reproach against a certain Israeli Cabinet minister who officially represents the Religious Party.

The gist of the Rebbe's remarks was that not only did this minister in his official capacity accept gentiles as Jews, but he now refuses to allow Jewish people to settle in our ancient Old City of Jerusalem. The Arab population had increased from 141,000 to 170,000. The total number of Jews is less than a hundred. If a Jew desires to settle in the Old City then every barrier and obstacle is placed in his way. It took one family eight years to obtain permission.

The Arabs, on the other hand, are encouraged, welcomed and tempted by Jewish money to settle - to show the world how well the Jews and the Arabs live together.

So what happened? The PLO and anti-Jewish gangsters have all settled there. They realise that this is the safest place in Israel - for them. The army will not shoot at them in this holy city.

A few weeks ago there was the farce of the elections in the West Bank. Who got elected? The PLO! The Government was warned not to hold these elections. But our friend the Cabinet Minister, who was only concerned about keeping his job and his 'perks' said, "we must be democratic."

The Rebbe added, "There will soon be a cry for elections in East Jerusalem. We have to be democratic. So once again our enemies will be elected to all key posts. The position will become intolerable and untenable."

The Rebbe continued, "G-d gave us the Torah. He also gave the Holy Land - all Eretz Yisroel - to the Jewish People. Neither Lord Balfour nor the *goyim* gave this land to us. It was not theirs to give. It was ours - always - by divine ordinance.

Suddenly we are frightened of what the *goyim* will say or do. If we have faith and trust in G-d then we shall have nothing to fear - just as we saw in the Six Day War when G-d showed His mighty hand, and we prevailed over all our enemies."

The Farbrengen concluded at 7.15pm. We davened Mincha straight away. Shabbos ended at 9.15pm.

AN INSPECTION TOUR

Rabbi Yudel Krinsky maintained that it would not be possible for us to use the apartment above the Kolel in the future. It had deteriorated, it was not looked after and it was just disintegrating.

However, he had some good news for us. The whole building above the Shul - adjoining '770' - had been completely renovated and modernised. He took us around the premises. They were beautiful. Large halls and meeting rooms, rooms for printing works and for technological expertise, and so on.

But, from our point of view the best thing we saw were two brand new, clean, modern apartments which had never been used and, said Rabbi Krinsky, you will have full permission to rent one of these lovely flats when you come for next Shovuos, please G-d. This was really delightful news which we very much appreciated. We promised to keep in touch.

MORE CHARITY FROM THE REBBE

The time of our departure was drawing near. I talked to Alice Peerce on the telephone. She was flattered that the Rebbe had spoken so highly about her. She told me that "Jan is O.K. now and his sight is normal. It is a miracle."

The Rebbe kept his promise. After Mincha on Monday, the Rebbe called us into the 'waiting room.' He wished us all a happy summer and winter and for all good things. "*Zai Gezunt - a gezunter zummer.*"

The Rebbe then handed to each of us, personally, even to Sholom Dov Ber and Tova Gittel, a £5 note which we had to give to *Tzedokah*. We could add our own cash to it too - without limitations. The

Rebbe also gave me £5 notes for Arthur and Martha Hubert, and for Walter and Rebecca Hubert with similar instructions regarding *Tzedokah*.

To our great astonishment, the Rebbe again thanked each of us for accepting the cash. He only uttered the one word “thanks,” but it was said with such expression and feeling. Only a little word, which could mean so much, especially when accompanied by eyes which were actually more ‘eloquent’ than the spoken-word.

And so with the Rebbe's cash in our pockets and his wonderful words in our brain and the picture of our Rebbe in our minds, we said farewell to our beloved Leader.

CHAPTER 12

A CUT UP

On September 1st I quite suddenly became unwell. I had all the symptoms of jaundice and the doctor diagnosed Hepatitis, a very serious illness which could take twelve months to heal. We informed the Rebbe who remarked to Binyomin that “it was no such thing.” The Rebbe was quite correct. Within a week this jaundiced look had completely disappeared.

Unfortunately, I was still running a high temperature every night - 103 degrees. A consultant was called in. He informed me that I had an infected gall bladder which had to be cut out at once. We again telephoned the Rebbe who replied that if my brother, the doctor, says that the operation was necessary, then it should be done straight away.

This statement was a little surprising because, generally, in these cases the Rebbe always advises the patient to seek a second opinion before further action is taken. The operation took place on October 7th. Fortunately the eruption was contained by a layer of fat which prevented the infection from spreading all over my body.

I received the following telegram from the Rebbe in New York.

TELEGRAM

11 TISHREI, 5737 OCT. 5 1976

**SCHNEUR ZALMAN JAFFE
105 CAVENDISH ROAD
SALFORD 7 LANCS (England)**

WITH GMAR CHASIMO TOIVO ALREADY SEALED AND DELIVERED, INCLUDING OF COURSE YOU AND FAMILY, IN TERMS OF REVEALED OBVIOUS GOOD, I SEND YOU PRAYERFUL WISHES FOR A GOOD DECISION ON THE PROPER MEDICAL TREATMENT AT PROPER TIME AND THAT EVERYTHING IN THIS CONNECTION SHOULD BE OBVIOUSLY GOOD, AND TO CELEBRATE THE FESTIVAL OF OUR REJOICING IN THE FULLEST MEASURE.

WITH BLESSING

MENACHEM SCHNEERSON

Within a couple of weeks I had recovered from the operation and was back at home. The surgeon revealed to me that the gall bladder had actually burst and that the operation was performed “just in time.” A few weeks later I was back at work. I then received the following letter from the Rebbe.

**Mr. Shneur Zalman Jaffe
105 Cavendish Road
Salford, Lancs.
England**

**By the Grace of G-d
11th of Cheshvan, 5737
Brooklyn, N. Y.**

Greeting and Blessing:

This is to acknowledge receipt of your correspondence.

I trust that by the time this letter reaches you, you will have been discharged from your job as a patient requiring care and attention, and instead of this, I can now offer you ten other jobs, as enumerated in the enclosed general message – needless to say, with the approval of your physician friend.

May G-d grant that you should have good news to report in all above. (the Rebbe then enumerated the Ten Mitzvahs Campaign)

The three last ‘jobs’ in the letter are, of course, more pertinent to Mrs. Jaffe, but also in these you can have a share, by encouraging her and others through her.

Wishing you and Mrs. Jaffe good health to carry out the above tasks in a way that inspires the whole community to do likewise, based on the mitzvah of *V'Ohavto L'Reacho Komocho*, and to enjoy true Yiddish *Chasidish* Nachas from all your children and grandchildren.

With blessing,

M. Schneerson (signed)

CHAPTER 13

A SENIOR CORRESPONDENCE COURSE

I wrote to the Rebbe on the occasion of Yud Shevat. I apologized for not being able to celebrate this Yom Tov at 770. I looked forward to seeing the Rebbe as was our usual custom, on Shovuos. I reminded the Rebbe that last year Rabbi Yudel Krinsky had indicated to us that the apartment over the Kolel has deteriorated to a very great extent, and that we might be fortunate this Shovuos to obtain the use of one of those two new flats which we had been shown last year. I now asked the Rebbe for his formal permission.

Almost immediately I received the following letter:

B.H.

Erev Shabbos Mevorchim Adar 5737

Brooklyn, N.Y.

**Mr. Schneur Zalmon Jaffe
105 Cavendish Road,
Salford, Lancs.**

Shalom uBrocho!

No doubt you received my regards through the returning visitors, and also heard a report of what has been said and done here - at any rate in capsule form. I hope the message was delivered in a manner of "words that come from the heart, enter (into) the heart, and accomplish their aim," so that the response was in kind, in actual deed, on the part of all the recipients, including, above all 'Mr. Manchester' himself, and will be reflected in the good tidings to which I am looking forward.

All the more so as we are on the threshold of Adar, the month when all good things should be on the increase and beyond all expectations - 'higher than reason and rational.'

May G-d grant that you and your co-workers and all of us individually and collectively, should pursue all the above with growing vigor, in good health, and with joy and gladness of heart, especially as doing things with joy and inspiration is an important ingredient of greater *Hatzlocho* which is also why taking care of one's health is an essential part of *Avodas Hashem*. As the Rambam ruled, "that one's body should be healthy and well is part of one's service to Hashem."

Wishing you and Mrs., Jaffe consistent good health and much true *Yiddish Chasidish Nachas* from each and all of your children and grandchildren, and

With blessing for a good and joyful month of Adar,

M. Schneerson (signed)

P.S. For obvious reasons, what follows comes as a separate P.S., and is in reference to your mentioning about the problems of staying in Crown Heights in light of the difficulties you and Mrs. Jaffe experienced on previous visits.

Since it is necessary to book in advance, it is not too soon to examine the prospects of ensuring the amenities that you expect and are surely entitled to.

Regretfully, one cannot expect of another human being to deliver more than he is capable, and Rabbi Y.K. - with all his willingness to take the responsibility - is limited in his capacity. For we have to reckon with the fact that we live in a free and democratic society, and the principles of "freedom" and "equality" have established themselves in many aspects of life in Crown Heights and 770, where, moreover, everyone who has a connection to 770 considers himself a rightful *Balebos*, etc.

Hence, I doubt very much whether, with all good intentions and best efforts, it would be possible to ensure the amenities which you envisage.

Needless to say, I would like to see that your visit would be pleasant in every respect, and not merely pleasant in some and unpleasant in others.

A further consideration is the weather, which is, of course, quite unpredictable so far ahead, and there could be other unforeseen factors.

With all the above in view, it would seem proper to take recourse in the saying of our Sages to the effect that, where Jews are concerned, "a good thought is deemed as a deed." And since you have to take a little extra care of your health, as you indicate in your letter, there is every reason for you to be "yotze" with the good thought, and perhaps carry out a "hatoras-neder," as in the case of a practice that had been done three times.

Thus if, G-d forbid, Moshiach does not come before Shovuos, each of us will celebrate *Kabolas HaTorah* in his place, in Brooklyn and in Manchester respectively, as those in Yerusholayim *Ir haKodesh*, with the profound feeling and conviction that Jews can be separated only physically and geographically, but in thought and spirit and purpose and practice all Jews are united by the same Torah and the same Yom Tov - and this is the essential thing.

Of course, it would not be right to pressure Mrs. Jaffe to forgo her having a completely enjoyable Yom Tov by spending it here, even if you personally were prepared to "rough it." Nor would it be right that you and your "second half" should be separated geographically, especially on Yom Tov.

The only point left to be settled is your Diary. Well, in regard to your latest visit, you are surely bringing your diary up to date and will, hopefully, send me a copy before Shovuos. And as for next Shovuos - a Jew's diary can be summed up by the daily expectation of the arrival of Moshiach (*b'chol yom achakeh lo sheyovo*). So we hope and pray that he will come before Shovuos, or at any rate soon after, and bring the true and complete *Geuloh*.

I wrote an answer to this, and herewith are **some** of the points which I made.

"...I would like to thank the Rebbe Shlita for such a wonderful and heartwarming letter. But - once again I have reason to be upset by the P.S. (postscript). I am perplexed, bewildered, worried and despondent. It seems that somehow, I have displeased the Rebbe Shlita and I have suffered much 'Agmas nefesh.'

"I am perplexed and bewildered that the Rebbe Shlita should tell us in such strong terms to stay at home for Shovuos. The Rebbe Shlita confirmed that I must **always** come to Brooklyn for Shovuos **with** my wife.

"This makes me worried because the Rebbe Shlita says, "and there could be some unforeseen factors" (which I suppose, would make it better and safer for us to stay at home).

"The Rebbe Shlita also has a *Chazoka* to allow us the use of some of his premises for our stay in Crown Heights. I would not like the Rebbe Shlita to give up this *Chazoka*. Nor will I go to a Beth Din to 'Mattir Neder' **my** *Chazoka* because it would be no fault of mine if I did not visit the Rebbe Shlita this Shovuos.

"For many years we have used the flat above the Kolel. The condition of this apartment has deteriorated every year, and Y.K. informs me that it is not usable or suitable this year, and regarding cleanliness, security and safety - definitely not habitable.

"I would willingly pay whatever price I am asked for a safe, secure apartment near to 770.

"I admit that "regretfully, one cannot expect of another human being to deliver more than he is capable," but in this case I am relying on the Rebbe Shlita.

"To sum up - If the Rebbe Shlita, with his prophetic vision, maintains that we dare not and must not come to Brooklyn, ('for ever' - as far as I can read between the lines) then I must accept the inevitable with despondency and despair...

"P.S. I hope the Rebbe Shlita enjoyed a happy Purim. It was my birthday on 7th Adar. I hope it is not too late for a good *brocha*.

“Today we have a *Siyum* for a new Sefer Torah. Next week I have an ‘*Opsher*’ (hair cutting) for Sholom Dov Ber Lew.

“I have meanwhile booked the flights for Roselyn and me - also Hilary, Shmuel and some of the children - as outlined in my previous letter.

“Reb Schneur Zalmon”

I received very quickly another letter in answer to mine.

**B.H. 20 Adar 5737
Brooklyn, N.Y.**

**Mr. Schneur Zalmon Jaffe
105 Cavendish Road,
Salford, Lancs. M7 ONB**

Shalom uBrocho,

I just received your letter of Adar 16.

To begin with good things, I was very gratified to read that our health is in good order and that you had an enjoyable Purim. I was also pleased to read about the other *Simchas*, your birthday, the *Siyum* of the Sefer Torah, and the *Opsherenish* of Sholom Dov Ber Lew. May there always be many happy celebrations in the family and in the community, in good health and happy circumstances, atonally and spiritually.

Now, in regard to your reaction to my letter about Shovuos, I am more than surprised at your attempt to “read between the lines” - not only what is not there, but even what is at variance with what is clearly written in the lines, and, moreover, coming up with totally unwarranted unhappy inferences.

I explained quite clearly that the ‘joy of Yom Tov’ (mo’adim l’simchah) is a “must” and *Mitzvas-asseh* of the Torah, and therefore anything that might jeopardise it, is contrary to Torah; especially as the past experience has demonstrated that this is not just within the realm of possibility, but has actually happened.

Needless to say, it had not occurred to me in wildest dreams that you will misunderstand the plain statement as anything personal, not to mention such an absurd suspicion as implying a prohibition of further visits to New York.

Obviously, the whole matter referred solely to Yom Tov, when the factor of *mo'adim l'simcha* is a factor. But there are other happy occasions occurring during weekdays, such as Yud-Beis Tammuz, Yud-Shevat, Yud-Tes Kislev and Purim, when - I need hardly assure you - you and Mrs. Jaffe will be more than welcome. During any of these times you can reserve the most convenient hotel in NYC, and there will be no problem of transportation on weekdays.

If you have a tendency to read between the lines, here you have not merely an implied invitation, but an explicit one. I trust that after discussing it with your wife, you will indeed make your visit on one of the special occasions mentioned above that you will find most convenient.

Incidentally, this will resolve also the matter of your diary, for all that will be required is to change the date from Shovuos to the appropriate occasion.

With all good wishes to you and Mrs. Jaffe and all yours, including especially to have much true *Yiddishe Chasidish Nachas* from each and all of your children and grandchildren, with joy and gladness of heart.

With blessing,

M. Schneerson

I wrote the following reply, which I hoped to forward with Bernard Perrin who was going to 770 for the Rebbe's birthday.

“...Roselyn and I hasten to extend to our Rebbe Shlita, our sincere good wishes on the occasion of his 75th birthday, *Admu”sh*.

“I thank the Rebbe Shlita for the letter of the 20th of Adar. It is a beautiful letter, but many questions still remain unanswered.

“However - at the outset I would express a dogmatic and unequivocal statement that P.G. and all being well, both Roselyn and I intend to spend Shovuos with the Rebbe at Crown Heights.

“Shovuos is our Yom Tov with the Rebbe Shlita and there would be no *moadim l'simcha* if we were not all together in 770. Roselyn and I would never enjoy a Shovuos anywhere else except in Brooklyn.

“So, that is quite definite and explicit! We shall be P.G. with the Rebbe Shlita just as we have been for the past 15 years and more.

“The only outstanding problem is the matter of our sleeping quarters. Our *Chachomim Zal* tell us that at the time of the Beth Hamikdash in Jerusalem, no one was ever left without lodgings.

“We are confident and assured that even if the Rebbe Shlita cannot assist us this year, we shall find a place somewhere in Crown Heights for Shovuos.

“Once again, we wish you a happy birthday, a happy year, and many more birthdays till your 121st.

“Fondest love and regards,

“Reb Schneur Zalmon”

RABBI MENACHEM M. SCHNEERSON

Lubavitch
770 Eastern Parkway
Brooklyn, N. Y. 11213

Hyacinth 3-9250

מנחם מענדל שניאורסאהן
ליובאוויטש

770 איסטערן פארקוויי
ברוקלין, נ. י.

B. H.
Erev Shabbos Mevorchim Adar
5737
Brooklyn, N. Y.

Mr. Shneur Zalman Jaffe
105 Cavendish Road
Salford, Lancs.

Sholom uBrach:

No doubt you received my regards through the returning visitors, and also heard a report of what has been said and done here - at any rate in capsule form. I hope the message was delivered in a manner of

דברים היוצאים מן הלב נכנסים אל הלב ופועלים פעולתם
so that the response was in kind, in מעשה בפועל, on the part
of all the recipients, including, above all, "Mr. Manchester" himself,
and will be reflected in the good tidings to which I am looking forward.

All the more so as we are on the threshold of Adar, the month when all good things should be on the increase and beyond all expectations -- (למעלה מטעם ודעה)

May G-d grant that you and your co-workers and all of us - individually and collectively, should pursue all the above with growing vigor, in good health, and with joy and gladness of heart, especially as doing things with joy and inspiration is an important ingredient of greater Hatzlocho. Which is also why taking care of one's health is an essential part of Avodas HaShem, as the Rambam ruled:

היות הגוף בריא ושלם מדרכי ה' הוא (הל' דעות ר"פ ד').

Wishing you and Mrs Jaffe consistent good health and much true Yiddish-Chasidish Nachas from each and all of your children and grandchildren, and

With blessing for a good and
joyful month of Adar

M. Schneerson

CHAPTER 14

YUD ALEF NISSAN

A FLIGHT I “FANCY”

I had recently been toying with the idea of flying to New York to see the Rebbe on the momentous occasion of his 75th Birthday.

Well-foreseen circumstances plus a guilty conscience about leaving Roselyn with all the pre-Pesach heavy housework - decided me against traveling to Brooklyn. In addition, Roselyn's reactions to my leaving her were 'slightly discouraging.'

On Friday morning, the 6th day of Nissan, Bernard Perrin telephoned me with the good news that the two-volume bilingual Tanya had actually been delivered to Lubavitch London. He begged me to accompany him and Rabbi Nachman Sudak to Brooklyn, to present seventy-five copies and a specially bound set to the Rebbe as a birthday gift.

This took me very much aback. For over twelve months I had been told that these Tanyas would be ready “within a few weeks,” but to be presented with a ‘fait accompli’ only five days before Yud Alef Nissan put me in a dilemma. Only momentarily, however, because this was just the impetus I needed to ratify my decision to fly to New York after all.

Yud Alef Nissan was on the Wednesday. Pesach was due on Saturday night. To all intents and purposes Passover had to be inaugurated, unofficially on Friday morning. Therefore, to make quite sure that we would arrive home in time, it would be necessary to leave New York on Thursday morning - leaving us just one day to spend with the Rebbe.

A (TWO) ‘PIECE’ OFFERING

At 9.00am on Tuesday morning, I received a telephone call from Freddy Hagar. He had just returned from the U.S.A. and from 770. The Rebbe had handed to him two parcels of Matzos. One for England, and the other - a slightly smaller packet - for Mr. Zalmon Jaffe of Manchester, “for him alone separately.”

Coming so soon after the Rebbe's firm and uncompromising correspondence, Roselyn remarked that this was a **Peace** Offering. I pointed out that she was incorrect, because it was a *Korban Pesach*, a **Passover** Offering. However, when it did arrive, there were two Matzos - a two-piece offering.

The Rebbe always foresees the future. Shmuel ensured that our packet arrived safely and in time, but the rest of the Manchester consignment arrived on the first day of Chol Hamoed. I had the Zechus of providing for all those who were in need.

A WEIGHTY DECISION

Bernard and I traveled to London airport by train. Hilda had provided a flask of coffee and some cake for us. Roselyn made sandwiches. I ate my share on the train. Bernard was not hungry and said that he would eat his on the plane - which he did - on the plane coming home! He gave his kosher food to a ‘deserving party.’ My word - how Bernard relished those stale sandwiches!

The parcels of Tanya weighed 240 pounds. It was decided that we should all check in at the airline counter together, so that the parcels could be divided between us.

Nachman had warned us not to bring much luggage. We carried most of our belongings as hand baggage. Their weight was almost unbearable! At the airport we met Rabbi Chaim ‘Tashkent,’ who was also booked onto our flight. This was splendid news and we co-opted him into our group. 240 pounds weight of Tanya divided between four people was 60 pounds each - about 80 pounds overweight already. Our almost empty suitcases did weigh a few pounds too.

There were five check-in counters and a supervisor was in overall control. We waited patiently for the ideal moment to check in - the supervisor was also waiting patiently.

Soon there were no more passengers - we were the last. We rushed to counter number 2 and so did the supervisor. We discussed our kosher food, the seating arrangements, the weather and other topics. Meanwhile, the baggage was being weighed and sent forward.

We were handed our boarding cards and a demand for £250 for excess weight and they had not weighed our hand luggage. After some rather heated argument this was reduced to £104.

We held a conference and refused to pay. We would take a different flight to New York. The supervisor took back our boarding cards, cancelled our kosher food, retrieved our baggage and we were left standing.

The plane was due to leave in twenty minutes, and the next flight was on the next day. So, *nebach*, very sheepishly we returned to counter 2, paid the £104, our seats were reinstated, the kosher food and our luggage were put on board again, and we were off to see the Rebbe.

WELCOME HOME

We arrived at 770 at 8.30pm. The Rebbe, who had been to the Ohel during that day, had returned, davened Maariv, and had departed for home for dinner. The office was closed and 770 was completely deserted - except for the usual few hundred Yeshiva boys who were hovering about waiting for something to happen!

I was very lucky that Avrohom had arranged that I could stay with Raizel and Mayer Minkowitz. One could not find nicer or more friendly people. They gave me a very warm welcome and installed me into a beautiful and well-furnished room with its own private facilities and amenities.

They and their sweet children made me very much at home. They could not do enough for me!

BRIGHTER AND BETTER

There was a remarkable and dramatic change in the weather on the eleventh day of Nissan. For many weeks New York had been in the grip of freezing wintry conditions. Now, overnight - Zalmon Jaffe had brought his Shovuos weather with him! Lovely, hot, brilliant sunshine. Bernard reported that it was 80 degrees in Times Square!

I had twenty-five letters for the Rebbe, which I took to the Office. I added these to the three piles of correspondence already lying on the table. I noticed also about 150 cablegrams from all over the world.

I predicted that it would take the Rebbe about four or five hours to wade through all this correspondence. The Rebbe had also to prepare many Sichos and the Maamar for that evenings' Farbrengen. When does the Rebbe prepare, is really a mystery!!! I accepted the inevitable, that I would not receive a reply to my letter whilst I was in Brooklyn.

To my utter amazement but most welcome surprise, Binyomin Klein handed me a note from the Rebbe - within two hours. This stated:

- 1) The Rebbe extends thanks for my letters and enclosures.**
- 2) Everything that comes in its correct time is good, e.g. Yud Alef Nissan.**
- 3) It is the month of redemption. Just as in the days when we left Egypt, G-d showed us great wonders, so we look forward to the fulfillment of G-d's promises very soon, and**
- 4) The Rebbe concludes that he will remember and mention me at the Ohel**

I maintain that the greatest miracle of all was to receive an answer to my letter!

The Rebbe entered the Beth Hamedrash, promptly at 3.15pm looking K.H. remarkably fit and well. He is T.G. growing younger every day - that is another miracle.

The Rebbe glanced around and briefly looked at - and through - everyone. In that split second he knew exactly who were present - a rather unique talent.

The Rebbe very seldom acknowledges any one particular individual. He wishes to avoid favouritism. However, I also have a unique talent - or maybe it is just my expression, but I make the Rebbe smile.

The Rebbe turned to me and did just that. It was a rather unusual smile which indicated a mixture of pleasure and amusement. This already made my visit worth while.

I RE(PRESENT) HER MAJESTY

Before I left England, Roselyn had spoken to our Rebbetzen on the telephone. She asked the Rebbetzen if she was busy for Pesach and received the reply, “**and how!**”

Roselyn advised her that I would be in Crown Heights for the one day only and that I would appreciate it very much if she could spare me a few moments to say “hello” and wish the Rebbetzen all the best for Yom Tov.

I now therefore telephoned to ascertain the time of my appointment. I explained, too, that a small delegation representing the Anash of England wished to hand over to her a specially bound set of the two-volume bilingual Tanya. The Rebbetzen declared that after a hard day, preparing and working for Pesach, she preferred to sit down, relax and enjoy a few minutes rest in my company only.

But - ‘noblesse oblige’ - rank has its obligations - so she would be pleased to receive the delegation at 8.00pm.

As Mincha was at 7.00pm, and the Farbrengen at 9.00pm, we could just about fit in the appointment.

Nachman, however, deduced that the Rebbetzen would be too tired at that time of the evening to receive an official delegation. Furthermore it might prove difficult to obtain a seat or even a place for standing at the hall, after 8.00pm.

It was therefore suggested, and agreed, that I alone should represent the Anash of England on this occasion.

BIRTHDAY BLESSINGS

After Maariv, a number of senior Rabbonim congregated outside the Rebbe's study. They extended to the Rebbe a Brocha on behalf of **all** Lubavitchers, everywhere, on this happy occasion. The Rebbe reciprocated these blessings in a few well-chosen words. The Rabbonim afterwards repeated these sentences over and over again, until they were absolutely word perfect.

Myer Harlig promised to reserve my usual seat at the Farbrengen.

I met Rabbi Krinsky, who still maintained that the flats next door were ideal. I asked if the hot water was working. He replied, “oh dear, I forgot that there was no water available at all!”

I returned to my new ‘temporary home’ for a wash-up. I was confronted with a seven course meal, which Raizel herself had prepared and cooked. It needed an hour to do full justice to this wonderful repast. I had to manage it in half the time - I did and I enjoyed it immensely. Fortunately, Myer drove me to the home of the Rebbetzen where I arrived on the stroke of 8.00pm. They were wonderful people these Minkowitz's.

TEA FOR TWO

I was delighted to see that our Rebbetzen K.H. looked remarkably well too, and T.G. younger and more radiant than when we met last Shovuos, in spite of the heavy pre-Pesach work and the annoying ‘Satmar’ business. The Rebbetzen had been the recipient of many terrible and horrible ‘practical jokes,’ and I extended to her my heartfelt sympathy. She declared - “I am not worried, it is nothing, nothing at all.” (Would we expect our Rebbetzen to make any other comment on this deplorable situation?!)

I showed her the correspondence which I had received from the Rebbe, intimating that I should stay at home for Shovuos. I divulged to the Rebbetzen that I had already written to the Rebbe and informed him, that P.G. and all being well, I would be definitely coming, as usual, to spend Shovuos at Brooklyn.

“Well done, well done!” exclaimed the Rebbetzen joyfully. She wished to thank the Anash for their thoughtfulness in presenting her with the new ‘two-volume’ Tanya. She liked it tremendously and was most impressed.

We were enjoying tea and cake together, and having a pleasant chat - when my chauffer, Myer, arrived to take me to 770. It was 8.40. The forty minutes had passed like a flash.

I thanked our dear Rebbetzen for receiving me, told her how we were all looking forward to Shovuos, and said farewell - for the time being.

CHAPTER 15

THE REBBE' S BIRTHDAY FARBRENGEN

The hall at 770 was packed tightly with people from one extreme end to the other - from corner to corner. Tier upon tier of boys reached to the ceiling. It was a very impressive and imposing sight. I presumed that the women's section was also filled to capacity. This section, upstairs, was partitioned off by special glass panels, which enabled the ladies and girls to see everything, but not to be seen.

About six thousand people were present inside the hall. The whole world of Lubavitch was listening to the Farbrengen by telephonic communication, to forty-five cities around the globe. The local radio station also relayed it. This enabled the Rebbetzen and many thousands of other women - and men and boys, as well, to hear the Farbrengen in the comfort of their homes. I have known of cases where some, even Rabbonim, have listened to the '*Shidur*' (the broadcast) whilst lying in bed.

Last year, Shmuel was holidaying in the seaside town of Torquay. He took a flask of coffee, a stool, a pad of paper and a pen, and listened to the Farbrengen whilst seated in a telephone kiosk. The broadcast was relayed from London. I have often been with Avrohom in his car on the day after the Farbrengen and listened to the tapes of the broadcast whilst driving along the countryside.

In the hall I knew that my seat was reserved, so I fought my way along the benches and tables and finally reached my destination at the small cost of a rip down my trousers.

Label Groner was announcing the order of precedence regarding the offering of birthday gifts.

The representatives of the American states would have priority. They should mount the platform on the right, present their gifts, and continue on their way and leave the dais on the left. Very sensible, as the platform ran down almost the whole length of the large Shul (hall).

THE U.S. SENATE GIVES HONOUR

A couple of days previously, a special birthday party was held in honour of the Rebbe at the United States Senate in Washington. Amongst those who were present were fifty-two Senators and a hundred Congressmen together with other notable dignitaries. Ex Vice President Humphrey was the Chairman. Hanging on the wall was a large poster which read: "**Celebration 75.**" Underneath this was a plaque with the seal of the USA. Below this was a large photograph of the Rebbe. Many words of praise and blessings were bestowed upon him. The guest of honour, the Rebbe, however was not present personally to hear them. Of course, birthday parties for a King are often celebrated by loyal and devoted subjects even in the absence of His Majesty. It is amazing to see the reverence and the honour given to the Rebbe, even by gentiles. Everyone respects and appreciates greatness. The Rebbe's Shiluchim (agents) from thirty-five of the fifty American States who were present, all basked in his glory.

THE CELEBRATIONS COMMENCE

At 9.00pm the Rebbe arrived. He very much appreciated the fact that so many Jews had arrived from all over the world to give honour to **one** individual.

The Rebbe's first task was to thank all those who were in attendance in the hall, and those who had sent messages of Mazel Tov, congratulations and blessings. G-d says, "I will bless those who bless you." The Rebbe extended thanks to all workers from the 'top to the bottom.' There were no distinctions between "your heads, your judges or your hewers of wood and drawers of water." The Rebbe was quite certain that G-d would repay everyone for their sincere blessings.

The Rebbe explained that on the very first Pesach in Egypt, each individual sacrificed his own Korban Pesach as an individual and sprinkled the blood on the doorpost.

The second Pesach was celebrated in the desert, after the *Mishkon* was erected. It also happened to fall on the Shabbos. No individual sacrifices were allowed on this day, except those that **had** to be made at a specific time - such as the Korban Pesach. Therefore, these personal offerings became a *Korban Tzibur* - part of the Communal sacrifice, to show that every individual was a member of the

community. A person is an individual, yet he is also a part of the congregation. By his efforts he can uplift and make a wonderful impact upon the whole community.

As I listened to this, I thought, what an extraordinary and beneficial impact the Rebbe himself is making upon all world Jewry.

One individual, one human being, admittedly a great personality - who is held in such love, reverence and awe - is speaking in New York, surrounded by thousands of his disciples and followers. His words are being relayed to the four corners of the earth where countless thousands of Jews are listening intently and raptly to his every utterance.

What a great power for good - for *Yiddishkeit* - is our Rebbe. What a tremendous influence he wields over so many tens of thousands - for their own betterment and benefit.

FURTHER GREETINGS AND BLESSINGS

Abraham Beame, the Mayor of New York, arrived with greetings from the city. President Carter had sent a representative, as had some thirty-five states from all over the country. They brought certificates, letters, plaques, keys and testimonials. One man wore a 'ten gallon hat' and looked like a cowboy. I learned that he came from Buffalo - probably Buffalo Bill!

Rabbi Dr. Nissan Mindel, one of the Rebbe's personal secretaries was doing some groaning. He writes the Rebbe's letters in English, and all these scores of letters and greetings from non-Jewish organisations and personalities had to be acknowledged straight away. Chassidim would have to wait for a 'little longer' - but we were used to this!

Label Groner signaled to us to make our way to the platform - with the Tanya. It took us over fifteen minutes of hard work to get within twenty feet of the Rebbe, on the dais.

Mayor Beame had not heard Label's instructions. He was pushing his way out - to the right - the same way as he had come in. Others were following his example. It was an Impasse.

We decided to take to the Heights and travel 'overland.' We thought it would be easier. We walked along one of the tiers at the rear of the platform - and it was very peculiar and funny to see Abraham Beame, only a small fellow, but the Mayor of that great city of New York - just below us trying to push his way through a solid mass of humanity.

SPRING TIME

One Lubavitcher boy wished to join a friend. Within seconds, he had spanned the whole length of the platform. ZIP - ZIP - ZIP - and he was away. An officer of the Israeli Intelligence Service remarked to a colleague that this Lubavitcher should be signed up immediately for Nahal - and appointed as a tank commander. "He could get himself anywhere - this fellow!"

Actually this boy had just heard the Rebbe's Sichah about the lesson of Passover. Pesach means to 'spring' - higher and higher to a more lofty '*madreigah*' (level). One needs extra strength to spring **over** a few levels and to make quicker progress.

We also attempted to push our way ahead. We were told to wait - "States only." Well we represented three states, the states of confusion, uncertainty and happiness!!! We still had to wait.

A MICRO YECHIDUS

At long last, we eventually did find ourselves at the Rebbe's side. Nachman gave him the Tanyas. Bernard showed the inscription - I just showed my face.

The Rebbe laughed and said "No hard feelings! It is Zeman Chayrusainu (the time of our freedom). Is Mrs. Jaffe looking after her diet? Is Mr. Jaffe looking after Mrs. Jaffe?"

Label poured me a glass of wine. I wished the Rebbe LeChaim and he replied "Lechaim VeLivrocho."

I assured the Rebbe that P.G. I would be spending Shovuos at Crown Heights. The Rebbe seemed quite pleased and thus concluded another mini - sorry - **micro**-Yechidus.

RABBI J. J.'S COMMENTARY

During the whole Farbrengen, and unbeknown to me, Rabbi J.J. (Hecht) was giving a running commentary on the proceedings, which were being broadcast all over the world, and by the local radio station.

When we arrived at the Rebbe's side, J. J. reported "Now here come Rabbis Nachman Sudak, Bernard Perrin and Zalmon Jaffe from England. They have brought the two-volume bilingual Tanya as a gift for the Rebbe's birthday. They have come here for only two days.

"Now here is Zalmon Jaffe - the jolly old fellow who always makes the Rebbe smile and keeps the Rebbe happy. There - he has done it again and the Rebbe is laughing!"

Since then, all my friends in New York, London and Manchester have been repeating this to me. Some have stressed the word "old" - some the word "jolly." I did not mind a bit. I pretended that I did not know anything about it. So - I heard it again and again - very nice indeed.

Meanwhile, we had returned to our seats and were enjoying the Farbrengen. A very nice intimate birthday party.

Although there are thousands of people present, one gets the feeling that the Farbrengen is only for you, - and the Rebbe - alone. All the rest are just 'extras' to create atmosphere. I suppose that each and every one of us feels the same way. The Rebbe has often repeated it - more so recently - that he speaks to everyone individually at a Farbrengen. His Yechidus is really a luxury.

Gifts were still being delivered. One unusual present was a bilingual Tanya printed in Casablanca, Morocco. The Hebrew had been translated into **Arabic**.

At the conclusion of the presentations there was a three-foot high pile of gifts on the table, in front of the Rebbe - who was barely visible.

Label obtained some paper sacks and packed up all the gifts. It needed four sacks to clear the pile, and Label and Yudel carted them away.

FURTHER ELABORATION OF THE 10 MITZVAHS CAMPAIGN

The Rebbe went through the *Ten Mivtzoim* - the Mitzvah campaigns - and their connection with Pesach.

1. **AHAVAS YISROEL:** As Hillel said, "love thy neighbour as thyself" is the foundation of the Torah. All the rest is commentary. There are many cases in the Torah where Moses showed great love for his brethren. He also shared his *Korban Pesach* with those who had none.
 2. **CHINUCH:** education. The Jews became a nation on Pesach. The four days before Passover were taken up with education and preparation.
 3. **TORAH STUDY:** Before G-d gave the Jews their first Mitzvah as a Nation, viz, the *Korban Pesach*, he instructed them regarding the New Moon (Rosh Chodesh) of this month of Nissan. One needs Torah study to understand the Mitzvahs.
 4. **TEFILLIN:** Before the Jews left Egypt, they were told about the Mitzvah of Tefillin.
 5. **MEZUZZAS:** We learn that on Pesach the Jews had to put the blood of the Passover Offering on the door posts - the Mezuzahs - as a sign and as a protection.
 6. **TZEDOKA:** Moishe gave from his own *Korban Pesach* to poor people who had none.
 7. **HOUSE FULL OF HEBREW BOOKS:** These were needed for Torah Study.
- Numbers 8, 9 and 10 all concerned our Jewish women. It states in the Torah that the Jews were redeemed from Egypt because of the merit of our righteous women, who
8. Continued to light the **SHABBOS CANDLES** as taught by our Mothers Sarah and Rivkah.
 9. **KASHRUS:** We learn that the Egyptians refused to sit and eat food with the Hebrews - our food was different, and

10. **FAMILY PURITY:** The Egyptians closed down the Mikvahs. They knew that our righteous women would not then be able to procreate.

Afterwards an artist brought along a huge painting of the Rebbe. It showed the Rebbe, wearing his Teffillin, having an Aliya, and making a Brocha over the Sefer Torah. It was extremely lifelike and impressive.

A photographer presented two large coloured portraits of the Rebbe. These, too, were exceptionally good.

A Russian singer sang “*Shlushba Nasha*” (“Who knows one, who knows two?” and so on), in Russian, of course. It is a rather catchy tune and everyone joined in the chorus and sang with gusto.

At 1.00am the Rebbe recited a 30-minute Maamar. We ended the Farbrengen with a crescendo of singing. The Rebbe standing up once or twice and egging us all on - faster and faster - very exciting.

The Rebbe reminded us to make the *Brocha Achraino* - after the wine, and at 2.00am the Rebbe stood up and took his leave to the tune of ‘*Ki Besimcho Taitzai*’ - (You will go out with joy).

A very happy and cheerful five hours birthday party.

THE REBBE DECLARES A DIVIDEND

Immediately after the Rebbe had left the hall, I made a dash for the exits. I wanted to be at the Rebbe's door when he left his study, so I could say “farewell.”

Jumping over tables, benches and people, I fought my way upstairs. I was just in time. The study door was opened and the Rebbe stepped outside. We all commenced clapping our hands and sang ‘*Ki Besimcho*.’ The Rebbe joined in - saw me - and stopped. The singing also stopped - so that everyone would be able to overhear any private conversation.

The Rebbe told me that he had left \$100 for Manchester. I should collect these from Rabbi Chodakov straight away.

I thanked the Rebbe and the singing re-commenced. The Rebbe walked crisply to his car and I walked to Rabbi Chodakov's office.

There were quite a lot of us waiting to collect dollars. Representatives from all over the world. Rabbi Sudak received \$100 for London. Others got as little as \$15. So - I did quite well. Those who would receive these dollars were instructed to donate them to Tzedoka. The dollars, however, could be redeemed by the recipients by an equivalent (or more) cash payment.

CHAPTER 16
JOURNEY'S END

It was 3.30pm when I retired to bed. Our plane left at 9.00am and Avrohom Gluck promised to collect us outside 770 at 7.15am to take us to the airport.

I had two hours sleep, and at 7.10 Nachman and I were waiting for the car. 7.15a.m whilst waiting, I managed to squeeze in an Aliya and 'benched GomeI' - a good thing too. I might have had to bench twice on my return to England?! For the outward **and** the return journeys, together.

Half an hour late, Mr. Gluck arrived to inform us that his car was full and there was no room for us.

Fortunately, Myer (Minkowitz) again came to our rescue and drove us to the airport. He had saved the situation, and we had saved \$15.

After an uneventful journey, Bernard and I arrived back in Manchester at 2.30am on Friday morning.

It was just sixty hours since we had left our homes. It had been an exciting, memorable and unforgettable two and a half days!