

## INTRODUCTION

Each and every one of the countless thousands of people who have come into contact with the Rebbe have interesting stories and anecdotes to relate to show the wonderful attributes, the humility and the greatness of the Rebbe Shlita.

This is the 9th Installment of 'My Encounter with the Rebbe Shlita. I should like to point out to my readers that I only write about my own personal experiences with and recollections of the Rebbe.

Occasionally, I might recount a story for which a friend has personally vouched. So, obviously, what I relate is only a very tiny fraction of what could be written about the Rebbe. I spend with the Rebbe just a few days during the year and I manage to fill fifty pages of this diary. One can therefore imagine how many huge volumes could be printed about our Rebbe, if every individual would write down his own impressions.

### DAYAN FISHER GIVES THE REBBE A GOOD WRITE-UP

One such person was Dayan Michael Fisher, the Chief of the Beth Din of the London Federation of Synagogues. Last year I mentioned the fact that he visited '770' and was most impressed.

Well, here is an abridged version of an article which the Dayan wrote in his Quarterly Magazine - dated September 1977 - and was distributed to all the members of the Federation.

#### 'My Visit to the Lubavitcher Rebbe'

Before the Second World War, I visited Warsaw where three and a half million Jews were living. I wanted to see the *Gedolei Hador* (the greatest of our generation). I met the Gerer Rebbe, the Bobover Rebbe, the Belzer Rebbe and the Alexander Rebbe. None attracted me... until after I arrived in England... I met the Lubavitcher Chassidim.

Of all the Chassidic movements none can compare - I say this as a Litvak - none can compare with their indescribable achievements..... Words fail me to express what I have seen at '770' Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, the nerve centre - on a global scale - in constant communication with all the five Continents.

Although Lubavitch has emissaries and missionaries, everywhere, there are still in the Anglo-Jewish community today, those who do not realise the achievements and the good the Lubavitch Movement has brought not only to Anglo Jewry, but also to World Jewry.

I regard the Rebbe as the greatest *Ohev Yisroel* (Lover of the Jewish People) I have ever met. With his great love he sees in every Jew, even those who are immersed in *Mem Tet Shaarei Tumah*, (49th degree of unholiness - the penultimate degree) an uncut diamond. I have seen six, seven-foot tall cowboys from Texas, Dallas, with big cowboy hats, standing in the hall inspired and electrified just by looking at the Rebbe. All types of professional people, with great learning and secular knowledge, *Ba'alei Teshuvah*, great scientists, doctors, lawyers, dentists - divorcing and separating themselves from the past, to start an entirely new life under the influence of Lubavitch.

Thus the idea of *Ahavas Yisroel*, which is practiced by the Rebbe and the Lubavitch movement to such a great extent, is a movement which has borne fruit. Thousands of people have come back to Judaism through his '*Kiruv Rechokim*' - the bringing near of those far away, the determination not to abandon any single Jew, however bad or however low he has sunk. Such love of Israel I have never seen. One of the finest and most noble of the characteristics of the Lubavitcher Rebbe is this *Ahavas Yisroel* without limitations, which you will not find in any other movement.

I have seen the Rebbe in another context, and this I would like people to know. I am not an *Am Ha'aretz*, and I testify that the Lubavitcher Rebbe is one of the greatest *Geonim* of our time in *Nigleh* (Revealed Torah). As far as *Nistar* is concerned (hidden Torah), I did not understand a word of what the Rebbe said. I need a dictionary for the Lubavitch language.

But what I did understand was Halacha. I heard the Rebbe give a *Hadran* on *Meshechta Sota* which lasted more than eight hours and I noted how he tied up the loose ends at the finish. The Rebbe spoke for eight hours without notes, without Gomorrah, without Chumash, and not only did he quote everything perfectly, but if there were two readings in the Gomorrah, he quoted both – exactly.

I can testify that I have rarely met in the last thirty years, since the destruction of Eastern Jewry, a man who can ‘learn’ so well and is ‘*Bokki bechol haTorah kulah,*’ in *Babli, Yerushalmi, Shulchan Aruch, Tosefta, Mechilta, Rishonim* and *Achronim* and in the literature of *Chassidus*.

I was personally amazed at the Rebbe's vast knowledge and particularly in the way the Rebbe built up a subject, as from a single word in a seemingly unnecessary gloss of Rashi at the end of *Mesechta Sota* on a remark by Rav Yosef.

The Rebbe went through the whole of *Shas* wherever Rav Yosef is mentioned and found the connecting links between all the sayings of Rav Yosef... and everything fell into place like a jigsaw in such a masterly way that I have never experienced in my life.

We need in this generation such a man with his energy, with his vision, enthusiasm, sincerity, dedication and commitment to the ideals which animates him.

Some of the Rebbe's Mitzvah Campaigns have aroused criticism, but their true value is not fully realised.

The idea, for example, of *Nerot Shel Shabbat* (lighting of Shabbos candles) is a wonderful idea. I myself did not realise what a good idea it was. Although I am not a Chassid, I advised my daughter that my granddaughter should light a candle every Shabbat. She bought a special candlestick and it is a wonderful thing. It is a *Chinuch* (education), impressive and important and substantiated in Halachah.

What a wonderful idea it is to encourage and insist that people should have a library. Let the children see, not only television, not only the nonsense and the filth in magazines - let there rather be holy books and let our children be inquisitive, ask what it is all about. Gradually this is the way Judaism grows and develops; this is the way it ferments. The Lubavitch movement has also its own publishing house, a worldwide concern....

The Rebbe is very concerned about Eretz Yisroel and the important issues that face it. I could hear the pain in his heart when the Rebbe spoke of the *Matzav* (situation) in Israel.

The Rebbe told me how many *Chadorim* there are in England, how many teachers and of what type. And he knows what is going on in Wales and in Scotland, in the Federation of Synagogues and in Jews' College. It is amazing how a man who is steeped in Torah day and night should have the time and interest to bother himself with Swansea and Cardiff, (two cities in Wales with very small Jewish populations).

In conclusion - there is a saying “Chassidim think they have a Rebbe and Misnagdim think they don't need a Rebbe.” I won't make a comment on the first part, but I will comment on the last - I can assure you we do need a Rebbe.”

## CHAPTER 1

### PREPARATIONS FOR YOM TOV

#### ROSELYN GOES AHEAD

Shovuos this year was on Sunday night. We had arranged to travel to Brooklyn on the previous Monday, but at the last moment I had to attend to some very important business, so Roselyn went alone, on that date. By 'alone' I mean that I was not with her but she did have the company of Hilary, Shmuel and five of their children including Yossi, who, we hoped, would be called up for his Barmitzvah in the presence of the Rebbe.

The Rebbe had often told me that I should not go to Brooklyn without Mrs. Jaffe, but he had never said anything about Mrs. Jaffe going without me!

We do know that our forefather Jacob sent Judah to Egypt to prepare for their spiritual needs before their arrival. Joseph, who was already living in Egypt, was in the ideal position to provide for their material requirements. However, in my case, the Rebbe - living in Brooklyn - was providing for my spiritual needs. Therefore, I sent forth Roselyn to attend to my material requirements so that when I arrived on the Thursday, everything and everyone would be nicely settled in Crown Heights. And so it was. Roselyn spent a hectic few days moving from one apartment to another, but when I did arrive, everything was in good order. Our flat this year - instead of being over the Kolel and the boys looking up to us, was above the girls Machon Channah seminar - just across the road from '770' - and by kind permission of my old friend, Rabbi J.J. Hecht. It was a really good idea sending Roselyn beforehand.

#### THE REBBE FARBRENGS

Tuesday night was Rosh Chodesh Sivan. There was a Farbrengen, which I of course missed.

I arrived at Crown Heights on Thursday afternoon. There was an announcement to the effect that there would be a Farbraingen after Maariv at 9.45pm. Another Farbrengen? And it was only two days since the last one! Well, one has to be lucky sometimes!

At 9.45pm I was seated next to Rabbi Dvorkin. We had come to the conclusion that it would be a short Farbrengen and that there would be no Maamer. However, straightaway when the Rebbe arrived and without any preamble, the Maamer Nigun was started. The Rebbe recited a Maamer for thirty minutes.

Afterwards, during the Sichos, the Rebbe made the following points:

#### WORDS OF TORAH

The days before Shabbos are called Erev Shabbos. Similarly, the days before Shovuos (from Rosh Chodesh Sivan onwards) are referred to as Erev Shovuos.

Just as Erev Shabbos is preparation for Shabbos, so is Erev Shovuos a means of preparing for *Mattan Torah* (the giving of the Torah).

A preparation for a Holy Day is obviously on a much lower level than the actual day itself - it is the ascent to the climax, and obviously cannot compare to the Holy Day. *Mattan Torah* was an outstanding occasion, which we re-live every year, to an even greater extent, but the **preparations** for Shovuos cannot compare to the Yom Tov.

Nevertheless, it is a well-known axiom that the 'cause is stronger than the effect.' For example, to heat up a room up to the temperature of 70 degrees, it is necessary for the heater or the oven to be very much hotter than 70 degrees. Therefore, these preparations for Shovuos must contain some higher quality than even of *Mattan Torah* itself.

At the moment when G-d is giving the Torah to Israel and revealing Himself on Mount Sinai, it is not so very remarkable that the Jew responds with love and submission. The extra-ordinary thing is that when the Jews were notified that the Torah would be given to them shortly – **then** they prepared for it (**before** G-d's revelation) for days beforehand with extreme longing and devotion.

So too, in these days before Shovuos, which are normal working days, it is marvelous that a Jew can tear himself away from his business to get ready to receive the Torah - this is a virtue that even Shovuos itself does not possess.

To use an example that a child can understand. When a Jew arises in the morning it is easy for him to remember to daven *Shacharis* (morning prayers) before he commences work, because he hopes that G-d will grant him a good day.

In the evening, after his work is done, it is simple for him to remember to daven *Maariv* (evening prayers) because he is now relaxed and wants to thank G-d for looking after him.

But to tear himself away from work in the middle of the day and to daven *Mincha*, is not so easy. That is one reason why one who remembers to daven the afternoon service is considered exceedingly praiseworthy.

Three prominent personalities have connections with Shovuos:

Moses – he received the Torah on Shovuos.

King David – he passed away on Shovuos, and the Baal Shem Tov – who also passed away on that day.

Each of these three people had great *Ahavas Yisroel* (love of Israel) and concentrated on Chinuch (education).

It states in Gemora that G-d tested Moshe's capabilities for leadership by the way he looked after and cared for the sheep under his control. He therefore had the merit to teach us G-d's Torah – which is always called the '*Toras Moshe*.'

King David was also a shepherd and his concern for the little lambs is also well known. He had the merit to compose the Psalms, from which we sing the praises of G-d every day. Tehillim is so effective that when a Jew, who may not be so well learned, recites these Psalms with *Kavono* (concentration) then this gives our Creator much *nachas Ruach* (spiritual satisfaction).

The Baal Shem Tov was the founder of 'modern' Chassidism. There are numerous stories of how he spent much of his time teaching young children the *Aleph-Beis*.

We can see, therefore, the great emphasis which is placed on *Ahavas Yisroel* and *Chinuch*.

A Lubavitcher Chossid is obligated to say **CHiTaT** every day. **CH** - stand for Chumash, **T** - stands for Tehillim, and **T** stands for Tanya, so we have our daily connection with Moshe Rabeinu, King David and the Baal Shem Tov.

We should act like a businessman who, when he has \$100 wants \$200 and so on. The same principle should apply to the Mitzvahs, as it states "one Mitzvah leads to another Mitzvah" and so forth. We should always increase our Mitzvahs.

Tomorrow is Erev Shabbos – said the Rebbe – and the Shabbos candles are lit. The whole Jewish house will be illuminated with Jewish lights. Even the food tastes nicer when we can see what we are eating. We rely on our women and on our girls to light up their homes for their men folk. Moreover, on Shovuos the blessing *Shehechiyonu* is added, which automatically raises everything onto a higher plane.

The Rebbe then distributed two one-dollar bills to everyone present. One dollar was to be given to Tzedokah. The other was to do as we wished.

This was vital. If we desired G-d's charity then we had to give our own first.

The Rebbe then instructed that all children at school were to be given a Dollar, which they also had to donate to Tzedokah. Furthermore, immediately the next morning, charity was to be given at the Kotel in Jerusalem.

The Rebbe concluded by saying that all Israel belongs to the Jewish people. G-d said to Abraham, "to your children have I given this whole land." G-d chose Eretz Yisroel. G-d chose the Jewish people

and gave one to the other. We definitely know the borders of the land of Israel. They are enumerated by Joshua in the Torah.

Eretz Yisroel belongs to all Jews – even those living outside Israel - even the little children, and no one is allowed to give away any part of it.

G-d says “I will give peace to your land, but only if you keep my commandments and statutes.”

## CHAPTER 2

### A VERY DIFFERENT SHABBOS

After the Shabbos morning service had concluded an announcement was made from the *Bimah* informing us of the time of *Mincha*. I had been coming to see the Rebbe now for eighteen years. This was the very first time that I had heard such an announcement on Shabbos morning. What did it signify? It meant quite simply that there would be **no** farbrengen on this Shabbos. I was dismayed and terribly disappointed.

I was immediately surrounded by scores of men and boys who demanded that I go **at once** to the Rebbe's study and beg for a farbrengen. They reproached and blamed me. I was personally responsible. I should have pressed the Rebbe beforehand as usual.

I was telling the Rebbe's lieutenants that I couldn't understand the Rebbe. Binyamin Klein retorted that "If one had a Rebbe whom one could understand then he could not be considered suitable as a Rebbe."

Rabbi Chodakov added, "Can you understand why you received the two such wonderful letters from the Rebbe, which you have put in your diary?"

And - as Shmuel told Mr. Nader, "the only predictable thing about the Rebbe is his unpredictability!"

Well - we had a 'free' Shabbos afternoon. We could spend a little longer over luncheon. We could see friends and go for a walk. We could even have a Shabbos sleep.

### WHAT WE MISS WHEN THERE IS NO FARBRENGEN

But what is it all worth to one who had come thousands of miles to hear and see the Rebbe. If there is no farbrengen, then obviously the Rebbe is not present. There is nothing - there is a void - an emptiness.

#### WHEN THERE IS NO FARBRENGEN THERE IS...

No Activity	No Awe
No Blessings	No Bochorim
No Crushing	No Chassidim
No Dancing	No Devotion
No Excitement	No Emotion
No Fervour	No Friendliness
No Glory	No Gladness
No Humour	No Happiness
No Instruction	No Illumination
No Joy	No Jollification
No Kedusha	No Knowledge
No Lechaim	No Learning
No Maamar	No Mishnayus
No Nigun	No Nachas
No Opinions	No Orations
No Pleasure	No Pushing
No Questions	No Quotations
No Rashi	No Rabbonus

No Singing	No Sichos
No Torah	No Teaching
No Uplifting	No Understanding
No Vigour	No Veneration
No Wine	No Wisdom
No X'tasy	No X'ample
No Yearning	No Yawning
No Zechus for Reb Zalmon	

When the Rebbe is not present there is no atmosphere.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE TEFFILIN CAMPAIGN

I read in the 'Jerusalem Post' dated 13th July 1977 an article by Arthur Kemelman. He wrote "I have been in Israel for eight years now and except when I was in the army I have never once been approached by an Orthodox individual with any suggestions - other than to fulfill certain Mitzvahs, such as laying Teffillin at the Western Wall and at the Bus Station.

"Occasionally, a loudspeaker van enters our neighbourhood to proclaim to my wife and to the other women that the time is approaching to light Sabbath candles. Others wanted to examine the Mezuzahs.

"I know these are parts of the Lubavitch (Chabad) Mitzvah campaigns, but what are other religious Jews or organisations doing to spread Judaism?"

He is quite right - no one else seems to be doing very much for the non-orthodox.

Incidentally, just near the Kotel in Jerusalem there is a huge wooden boarding, about 25 feet square - with beautiful paintings of the Ten Mitzvah Campaigns. The wording is in three languages - Hebrew, English and French. On the main road to Tel Aviv another large boarding by the roadside announces the time of lighting the candles for Shabbos.

So at least Lubavitch is making its presence felt - some good must come from all this.

No matter how laudable or splendid is an idea or an action - there are always many detractors and critics.

We are often asked, what benefit there is if we get one person to put on Teffillin, just once.

We reply - "O.K. then put on Teffillin many times with many people."

But: (1) The Gemorrah states that if a person does not put on Teffillin, he is called a severe sinner. So if he puts them on, even only once, this will take him out of this harsh category.

(2) The Mishna states that one Mitzvah leads to another. So - if he does this Mitzvah once, he may be attracted to do it again.

and (3) The Rambam says, that there is a fine balance in this world between good and evil - and this one good deed, this holy act, may tilt the scales to the side of good.

Finally, we are often asked "what is the value of this Teffillin Campaign?" We retort that this question might have been valid **before** our campaign, but not now when we can see that many hundreds of men have become more orthodox and drawn to Yiddishkeit because of our actions and efforts.

Everyone who has taken part in this Teffillin campaign has a story to relate.

It was during the month of Ellul. A man was approached but he couldn't stop even for a second, he was going to visit his late father's graveside. He was in a terrific rush — he probably was expecting 'Techias Hameisim' — the resurrection of the dead at any moment.

A Jewish congressman also declined. His son was surprised and commented - "You won't put on Teffillin and yet you do want me to marry a Jewish girl."

One gentleman accepted our offer with tears in his eyes, He admitted that he had never put on Teffillin - had not even had a Barmitzvah. The man kept in contact with us for years. Subsequently, he bought a pair of Teffillin for himself and puts them on every week-day.

Rabbi Mendel Futterfas was visiting a top security Army Camp in Israel. He was walking along a footpath when he was stopped by a General in a car. The General demanded to know what he was doing in the camp and by what right did he have to walk about without even a guard and without permission.

Mendel Futterfas explained that he was a Lubavitcher Chossid and that he wanted the soldiers to put on Teffillin.

“That’s O.K.” said the General, “Welcome to the camp, and, I will make a start.” With that the General rolled up his sleeve and put on the Tefillin.”

Tzvi Fisher told me that at an army camp - not in Israel - many non-Jewish soldiers wanted to put on Tefillin too! One had to be very careful indeed.”

This reminds me of the time when we took about 150 children on a Lag B’Omer outing to the seaside.

It was time for lunch and we gathered all the children together, so that they could wash their hands before making the Brocha. After each child washed, they were given a parcel of sandwiches, crisps and so forth.

Two small children who had been watching the proceedings, with great and concentrated interest approached me and said, “Sir, we are not Jewish, but we have washed our hands. Can we have our parcels of refreshments now please?” So - what could we do?!

Anyway, back to Tefillin.

One American told me that he was holidaying in London and visiting Hyde Park. He saw the London Lubavitch Tefillin booth. He was so thrilled and delighted - it reminded him of home, in New York, that he immediately entered to take part in the Mitzvah just as he does in New York.

A man, his wife and two children were passing the Mitzvah Tank and ‘dad’ was invited to enter. He refused point-blank. Whereas the children refused to walk with him. His wife remarked that she was also terribly ashamed of him. “Poor dad” had no alternative – he entered the Tank!

One young man who adamantly refused said, “I am a student, thirty three years old (*Nebech*) and have had plenty of time to contemplate and make up my mind about religion (more *Nebech*).”

I had informed the Rebbe that I wanted to write, about the Mitzvah Tank. The Rebbe replied that the main thing is action - not writing... So...

#### **I JOIN THE TANK CORPS – FOR LEFT ARM WARFARE AND ATTACK BY CANDLELIGHT**

I had often heard about Tank Warfare. I had even seen the Rebbe’s tanks leaving ‘770’ upon their ‘raiding mission.’ I decided to enlist.

The tank which is packed tightly with well-armed infantry, descends upon the unsuspecting population and commences mopping-up operations by means of left-arm warfare. Women and girls are captured by candlelight. The objective is to secure the co-operation of the populace and to enable the city to be taken over as soon as possible for Moshiach *Tzidkeinu* (our Righteous Redeemer).

Our tank was a very large ‘Parshon’ type. It carried thirty troops. The registration number was LYO 770. (Much influence was needed to obtain this unique number plate.)

AT 1.45pm precisely, it drew up at a busy intersection on the East Side of the city. The troops disgorged and spread out in all directions. Male prisoners were captured and brought to the tank as hostages. They were released after a short talk and taking part in “Exercise Tefillin” – but only on the understanding that they would try and keep in contact with Yiddishkeit by means of daily Tefillin.

Let me state at the outset that these boys of ours have *Mesiros Nefesh*, (self-sacrifice) for *Yiddishkeit*. I watched little Pinchus Lew (aged 7 ½) holding a handful of leaflets approach young and middle-aged women with the question “are you Dzuiss?” If they were not Jewish he would answer, “Have a good day!” I was surprised that Pinchus never got a punch in the eye. (I did hear that Menachem Mendel Feller (aged 8) asked a gentleman whether he was Jewish and received a slap on the face. Obviously he was Jewish but not a gentleman. Menachem Mendel was very proud of that slap.)

Anyway, I thought it was easy. It looked easy. I took hold of a fellow’s arm and asked him to spare me 30 seconds of his time. He refused and tried to walk away. He couldn’t – I still had hold of his arm. He gave me a ferocious look and tried to pull himself away. I held fast and pulled the other way. He got red in the face. He became purple, then white with anger and rage.

I tried to smile, to laugh it off as a joke. He was in no joking mood. He looked around for a cop, so I let go and said, “have a good day.”

My first success was with a man who was accompanied by his wife and son. He refused at first – they all do. But, they had been to London, so we had something in common. We had a pleasant chat; I enumerated the advantages and wonderful benefits of wearing Teffillin. It sounded so good that the wife prevailed upon her husband to have a try - and she would also like a try as well.

After the operation we left the tank. I told the fellow that if he felt only half as pleased as me, then he should feel marvelous. I remarked that if I had a camera, I would have liked to have taken a photograph of my first success.

His son did have one. So we put our arms around each others shoulders and the picture was taken.

The tank was doing very well indeed. We had ninety Teffillin successes (a good average was 50). We had given out fifty candlesticks and hundreds of brochures. A lady asked me, with tears in her eyes, to send candlesticks to a certain woman. Although she had attended 'Yeshiva' she refused to light Shabbos candles. It was the lady's daughter.

Personally, I had no further successes - until 5.00pm.

There was an ice cream and soft drink vender at our street corner, a pull-along truck affair. A Jewish fellow was in charge - he spoke a wonderful Yiddish. His soul must have been one of the original ones that had left Egypt with Moses and were trekking in the wilderness for forty years. He was a real one of the '*Am keshey oref*' – stiff-necked and stubborn. He would just not come into our tank. Every one of our troops, including the captain and lieutenant had tried. All had failed.

I was ordered to volunteer. "Go on Zalmon, see what you can do!"

I had my lesson before, about using force, so I was more careful this time. Fortunately, he was tied to this spot because of his business, so he could not run away.

I learnt the whole of his life story. He was a learned man. He listened to the Rebbe's Sichos on the radio, "but I soon fall asleep" he said (like one or two at the actual farbrengen). He has a son who will shortly be Barmitzvah - what would he say if knew that his dad refused to put on Teffillin? He made all sorts of excuses which were dealt with systematically.

Finally, he said triumphantly, "ah, it is now too late to put on Teffillin. It is the time of Shekiah." "No" says I, we also put on Teffillin on Tisha B'Av during late afternoon." "That's only once a year" he interrupted. "This is only once a year," I retorted.

After thirty minutes of pleading, cajoling and begging he surrendered and I proudly took my man to the tank. He refused again - there was no water with which to wash his hands.

Our chief tankist gave him a *Heter* (permission) and I gave him my handkerchief on which to rub his hands. The Teffillin were placed in position. He recited the Brocha's and the Shema, and we closed our tank for business for that day.

We arrived back at '770' at 6.30p.m erev Yom Tov. Next morning I met the Rebbe going into '770' at ten minutes to ten - the Rebbe said "Ah, Gevorren a Tankist!" ("You became a tankist!") He knew already – amazing!

## CHAPTER 4

### A GOOD YOM TOV

Shovuos is always a happy and enjoyable Yom Tov especially when we spend it in the company of the Rebbe. It is the time when, once again, we accept the Torah from Hashem. In the presence of the Rebbe the occasion seems more reverend and august.

At the same time, we are told that we should serve the Lord with Simcha, with joy. So even solemn occasions should be intermingled with cheerfulness and gladness.

For that very reason and to make the Rebbe happy, I always sing a Nigun whilst the Rebbe is leaving the shul after a service. A friend confessed that he did not see me in shul, but he knew that I was present. He heard me singing.

I had asked the Chazan who was to daven Shacharis to sing HoAdress VeHoemuna. He was horrified - "*Nisht ich, nisht ich*, Oh, no, no." Well, with the usual help of Lou (Tiffenbrun) and sons, and Tzvi Fisher, we made quite a good job of it. A few of the elite of Anash actually complimented and congratulated me. This was most unusual!

Subsequently, a friend, Mrs. Lipsker, told me how much she enjoyed my singing. It was marvelous. It was wonderful. Besides which, she said, it gave her a chance to catch up on the davening.

The Rebbe himself commenced the *Hu Elokeinu* and thereby saved me a lot of embarrassment.

After Mincha, thousands of men and boys took to the road, and marched to Boro Park to recount the Rebbe's Sichos at the various shuls in the district. The Rebbe "took the salute." It was all very impressive.

On Shabbos there was a smaller procession of about 200 boys who marched the five miles to the East Side. Even that was beyond my capabilities. As I explained to Shmuel "I was no walker, I was no talker and I was no fighter." This last was a reference to a previous march to Williamsburg, when the Satmar Chassidim welcomed the Lubavitch boys with open fists.

I asked the Rebbe whether it would be in order to mention in my diary about the hideous actions of these Satmars whose envy of the Rebbe and of the Lubavitch movement had caused some of them to suffer brain damage and to act like hooligans and animals instead of normal Jewish people.

The Rebbe stipulated that I should not write about their ghastly exploits and added "One should not talk evil about Jewish people, especially about those who daven three times a day and put on Teffilin." A typical remark of our Rebbe.

After the Shovuos farbrengen we davened Maariv and then the Rebbe made *Havdola*. We formed queues (lines) in order to walk past the Rebbe, who poured wine from his "*Koss Shel Brocha*" into cups. Everyone was singing and "dancing," and the Rebbe was in a lively and happy mood.

On a previous occasion I had begged for extra rations for **all** my children and grandchildren, and the Rebbe had acceded to this request. He had filled my cup to overflowing.

On this occasion, I asked for a little extra for Avrohom and family. The Rebbe rejected my plea, and said, "Oh, no - he will be getting some Mashke." The Rebbe never forgets and he handed this to me at a later date.

Meanwhile, I was walking away from the Rebbe, holding my cup with the "*Koss Shel Brocha*" wine, feeling just a teeny bit aggrieved for Avrohom's sake, when a stupid boy crashed right into me causing me to spill some of my precious wine! (It just served me right!)

## CHAPTER 5

### THE CHOSEN PEOPLE

At the Farbrengen which took place on Shovuos afternoon, the Rebbe pointed out that every day before we davenned Shacharis we make a Brocha which reminded G-d that He has chosen us from all the other nations, to accept His Torah and to keep His Mitzvahs.

This is also repeated each morning before we recite the 'Shema.' On every Yom Tov we reiterate this during the *Amidah*, when we utter the paragraph "*Atoh Vechartonu*" (You have chosen us.)

This verse is even more relevant on Shovuos, because this is the day on which G-d actually chose the Jews and the Torah for each other.

There are also many opinions that the Torah was given during the afternoon. Therefore, this time of day in particular is the most apposite moment to remind G-d that He has chosen the Jewish people from all the nations of the world and given them the Torah.

We should all be inspired by this 'Atoh Vechartonu,' especially at this time of the day, and we should all attempt to say this verse with extreme Kavono (concentration).

The Prophet Ezekiel wrote (chapter 36) that in the time of Moshiach "G-d would return the Jews to their land to serve Him with devotion and to keep His commandments. He will give a new heart to the Jewish people. He will remove the heart of stone and replace this with a heart of flesh."

The Rebbe asked why the heart? Why not the brain? The Rebbe answered that a person can change his thoughts and ideas even in exile, but to change a heart was much more difficult. Moshiach could and would achieve this.

### THE TREE OF LIFE

We learn in Pirkei Ovos, Chapter 1, that:

1. Moishe received the Torah from G-d at Sinai.
2. Moishe handed it down to Joshua.
3. Joshua handed it down to the Elders.
4. The Elders to the Prophets. and
5. The Prophets to the men of the Great Assembly.

1. The main attribute of Moishe Rabeinu was modesty – humility. He did not take the Torah! He accepted and received it on behalf of all the Jewish people. He submitted himself completely to the will of G-d to learn the Torah in order to transmit it to others.

He considered himself as nothing. He maintained he was only a vessel for one thing – to accept the Torah and that G-d should fill this vessel with Torah knowledge. Room had to be left for this knowledge. If Moishe's mind was already full of other intelligence and information then nothing more could be added. "One cannot fill up a vessel which is already full."

2. It is said of Joshua, that he never moved from the side of Moishe. He studied and learned continuously from his Rebbe. This is an example to us that nothing should interfere with the business and the time of learning.

3. The Elders and the Judges were well known for their great understanding and concentration of Torah, which they handed down to:

4. The Prophets, who possessed special powers and depended on G-d's assistance in order to pass on their inspired teachings and writings to:

5. The men of the Great Assembly. These led by Ezra, established the foundation of our laws - the Halacha, the practical way of how to live.

The above is the beginning of the unbroken chain, which later on, through the efforts of our Chachomim (Sages), Tannaim, Amoraim, Rabbis and Rebbe's, have brought down to us, to our own generation, the wonderful secrets of the written and oral Torah, given to us by Hashem on Mount Sinai on that very first Shovuos in the desert.

## Chapter 6

### KINUS HATORAH

The Kinus Hatorah was held on the day after Shovuos. On that day from 3.30pm (after Mincha) until about 11.30pm various Rabbonim and Roshei Ha'Yeshivos together with a large number of Yeshiva boys and men from the Kolel bombarded hundreds of boys (and men) with Pilpulim, thesis, Rambam and Tosfos. They each came well armed with about half a dozen Gemorrahs and Seforim. They vied and competed with each other and flaunted their knowledge.

At Rabbi Mentlik's invitation, I have been addressing this assembly for the past ten or twelve years. As Rabbi Mentelik reminds me every year, "the boys do like it but please do not speak too long." It is no small wonder that the "boys like it." I should imagine that it is a very welcome break for them to have twenty minutes of 'light relief' from the hours of heavy discourses.

I told them that there are many examples in the Torah to prove to us that everyone needs a Rebbe.

I quoted a good reason a few years ago from the end of the Sedra Behaalosecho. We learn that Miriam had been punished with leprosy for speaking evil (*Loshon Horah*) against Moses. Aaron, who was also a prophet, besides being an elder brother, appealed to his Rebbe, Moses, to intervene on their behalf and ask the A'mighty for a Brocha for good health.

We also read on the first day of Shovuos, (Shemos, 20,16) "You Moishe, talk to us and we will listen. We do not want that G-d should speak to us direct - we are afraid - we may even die," They wanted and needed their Rebbe.

Moishe Rabeinu was chosen and appointed by G-d Himself. If that happened in America or in England today, the people would stage a revolt – like Korach did - with dire consequences for himself, they would mutter and scream that it was not democratic – that elections must be held. A President, Senators and Members of Parliament had to be elected by the people. These elected people would be empowered to enact new laws, which in their opinion were necessary, just and right. These laws might even be against the natural justice, but the power was theirs - for good or for evil.

The Jewish people are better organised. We have our basic laws, our foundation, our Torah, which is of Divine origin. We live by and are governed by these Torah laws. No one – not even a King is permitted to change or alter these laws. They are here forever and are for our own good and benefit.

In last week's sedra, Bamidbar, we read that G-d told Moishe to count the Children of Israel and to take men to help him with this task. The Torah adds that G-d mentioned these men by name. Similarly, in Shemos, Chapter 31 verse 2, G-d mentioned the name of Bezalel, specifically - to build the Mishcon. To confirm which Bezalel G-d was referring to – we read that his father was Uri, his grandfather was Chur, and he belonged to the tribe of Judah. No ambiguity whatsoever.

G-d mentions by name – appoints the Moishe Rabeinu of every generation.

Can anyone conceive holding an election for a Rebbe!

Our Rebbe has been 'mentioned by name' to carry out the traditions - the task of our first Moishe Rabeinu - to ensure that our heritage and legacy are passed on to our children and to our children's' children until the Revelation of our Righteous Moshiach - may it be very soon.

I then read out extracts from my last years 'Encounter with the Rebbe,' which were greeted with enthusiasm, acclamation and loud applause. I was pleased too!

## Chapter 7

### OUR PRESENCE IS REQUESTED

Hilary and Shmuel were 'residing' in a basement apartment. Space was limited. Therefore, Yossi and Mendel, two of our grandsons, lodged with us in our flat above the Machon Chana – by kind permission of Rabbi J. J. (Hecht).

As usual we were inundated with invitations to come for meals. Most were phrased like this, "Oh, do come and see us sometimes." This meant:

1. Please come, preferably when they were out,
2. They were only being polite,
3. They would personally like me to come — but they must ask the wife first! Hard lines!

One person actually invited us to visit him in Canada. He was most insistent but he forgot to say – when, where, or how. Canada is a very large country and we could not spare the time to search for our 'new friend.'

We did accept some invitations because they were unambiguous, they were insistent, they were genuine and we were persuaded that they really wanted us. For instance:

#### AT MEALS

We spoke to the Rebbetzen on the phone. She said she would like to see us – anytime – to suit our mutual convenience and a time was immediately arranged. At the end of our visit, the Rebbetzen insisted on arranging that we see her on a second occasion.

Mayer and Raizel Minkowitz begged us to dine with them on the first night of Shovuos – or for luncheon - or any time we chose. We confessed that we would have loved to join them but we had our two boys staying with us.

Raizel insisted that we bring the boys too. And we should all come again on Friday night - the boys as well, of course.

Quite straightforward – they wanted us to come – so we went!

For very many years now we have been going to Sarah and Mendel Shem Tov on the first day of Shovuos for luncheon. So we would not refuse this long-standing and welcome invitation.

#### AT A BRIS

Rabbi Chodakov also begged me to do him a favour and join him at the Bris of his new grandson – Rabbi and Mrs. Kramer's baby boy – at 8.30a.m on Friday morning, "and bring Mrs. Jaffe, too." "For a Bris?" I questioned. "Yes, ladies do attend a Bris in Brooklyn," was the reply.

I arrived in good time, but without Roselyn. The table in the large room was set for thirty men. It was groaning under the weight of boiled Gefilte fish, smoked and other kinds of fish, red and white salads, potato puddings, every type of meat, pickles, cake and soda, plus vodka and other drinks.

What a delicious and sumptuous spread! What a gorgeous feast! But not for 9.00am on Friday morning; besides which I had not yet davened.

A similar meal was prepared for ten women in an adjoining room, so - Roselyn could have attended. What a pity I was not forewarned!

#### AT A WEDDING

Another interesting affair which we did attend was the wedding of Bryna Baumgarten to Rabbi Popack. The Chuppah was, as usual, outside 770. Rabbi Label Groner, an uncle of the bride, read the Rebbe's letter. Rabbi Dvorkin was *Mesader Kedushin*, and Rabbi Mentlik read the *Kesuba*. Shmuel was given the honour of reciting one of the Sheva Brochos – he is probably still collecting his Shadchonus from a previous Baumgarten marriage!

The dinner and dance was held at a local hall. Two buses, one for men and the other for women, were hired to shuttle the guests to this venue. It was a jolly, exciting, hectic and enjoyable affair. The orchestra was very lively. One dance went on for over half-an-hour non-stop. The dancers were in direct competition with the band. They sang, clapped their hands and stamped their feet with great vigour and animation. Rabbi Yitzchok Groner, another - but larger - uncle, from Australia, stamped his feet so energetically that it seemed he was trying to take a short cut back to Melbourne.

During the course of the evening I was asked if I would accept the honour of reciting one of the Sheva Brochos. This was indeed a great distinction! I was a little reluctant to accept, but I was finally prevailed upon to do so.

We sat around a special table and I was offered the last Brocha. It was only after we had concluded this service that I noticed the wine was not being given to our Kallah, but to a very different girl. I then realised the Choson was also a different boy!

What a letdown! I learnt that there were another two sets of Brides and Grooms at this affair who had married a few days earlier and they also wanted Sheva Brochos.

After the function was over, Roselyn and I started to walk back down to Eastern Parkway. Taxis were unobtainable. A car pulled up and the driver offered us a lift. His name was Rabbi Slavin, a young man from Israel. The car belonged to Tzach (Lubavitch Youth Organisation) and he was returning it to 770 as someone else wanted to borrow it.

Considering that this was a communal car we were surprised at its good condition, but we were thankful for the pleasant drive home.

Incidentally, I learnt that even when the Chuppah takes place at night, no *Tachanun* is said when the Choson is present at services during the day (including Shacharis). The reason given is because the Kesuba is written on that day.

## Chapter 8

### THE CENTRE OF ATTRACTION

It is almost time for the Maariv Service at 770. The Beis Hamedrash is full of boys sitting around and learning, lounging about and chatting, slouching and lazing, most of them are not wearing their jackets. Their shirtsleeves are rolled up. Some have their feet stretched out, onto the bench opposite. One or two are actually lying on the benches and sleeping. There is a complete lack of order and discipline.

We are then informed that the Rebbe would be entering within a few minutes. Sergeant, first class, (under General 'Blood and Guts' Patton) Tzvi Fisher, takes command of the situation. I do believe that Tzvi gets more aggressive and belligerent every year.

However, within seconds the boys have put on their jackets. The Seforim and Gemorrahs have been removed. The Rebbe's table has been completely covered with a transparent plastic cloth and a small stand placed thereon.

There is a great influx of people who wish to daven with the Rebbe's minyan.

Tzvi is growling and roaring out commands, and orders. A thump here and a bang there help to speed up the operation, until some semblance of order has been achieved.

Everyone is standing up awaiting the Rebbe but the throng of boys reaches almost to the door. There is not much room for the Rebbe to stand or to sit at his table.

Now, here is where Sergeant, First Class, Tzvi Fisher's training under General Patton comes in useful. Taking a flying leap, with arms and legs spread-eagled, he charges into the tight formation of boys. This gives way about a foot, with masses of boys rolling about and struggling to keep their feet. Tzvi repeats this maneuver three or four times until he has gained about four feet of space in front of the Rebbe's table.

Tzvi has achieved his objective! There is now a mass of tightly packed boys jammed right to the walls. The poor Chazan, standing at the Omud cannot move a muscle and is suffering from claustrophobia. Twenty-five people are breathing down his neck and into his face.

Suddenly the lookout boy gives the signal – shush, shush – and the Rebbe enters.

What a transformation! Everyone completely silent is standing to attention, like soldiers. I wonder whether the Rebbe could ever conceive what the place looked like only a few minutes before he made his entrance.

Everybody is looking at, staring at, and studying the Rebbe. Obviously he is the centre of attraction.

The Rebbe has complained on many occasions that the boys (and men) should not spend all their time in Shul looking at the Rebbe. They have to daven and not watch him all the time.

On Shabbos, during all the morning service, the Rebbe stood, over two and a half hours and thousands of eyes were bent upon the Rebbe the whole of the time.

It is interesting to hear the boys discussing the facial expressions and every movement that the Rebbe has made. They discover 'hidden' meanings everywhere.

Yossi Kozminski told me the following: When the Rebbe concludes the *Amida* and takes the three steps backwards he moves his head, 1 - to the left, 2 - to the right and 3 - forward. But, when he has Yohrzeit and concludes the Kaddish he changes the order of his head movements viz, 1 - to the right, 2 - to the left, 3 - forwards and 4 - upwards. It is really marvellous how closely they watch the Rebbe. I wish they would follow the Rebbe's example in other matters - for instance in cleanliness, humility, punctuality and routine.

I had this experience at Lubavitch House, London. At long last, by sheer perseverance and strong pressure by Mr. Shagalov, the morning services commence at 7.00am promptly. I was present one morning and Rabbi L was most annoyed. He maintained that the minyan could have waited for ten

minutes for a 'chiyuv' who had arrived late. I pointed out that in my opinion, Mr. Shagalov was quite right. In any case, I added, one should follow the Rebbe's example and always be punctual.

Whereas, Rabbi L, interrupted and said "But Mr. Shagalov is not a Rebbe!"

## Chapter 9

### ONEG SHABBOS

During my stay in Brooklyn, Tzvi Fisher, Sergeant, First Class, looks after me very well. He was probably a Quarter Master Sergeant in the supplies division, because he always has a large stock of Sidurim, Chumashim and Tehillim stashed away for his many friends. If one is in his good books then one is never short of one.

I entered 770 on this Shabbos morning, very early indeed. I noticed a large stack of Chumashim on a table near the doorway. Ah, I thought, I had discovered the secret of Tzvi's success – if one came early enough there were plenty of Seforim available. I pounced upon the pile – and lo and behold – every one was a book of *Vayikra* (Leviticus), not one single book of *Bamidbar* (Numbers), which we were now currently using. It seemed that Tzvi had secreted the lot.

### HELP! HELP!

There is always an ambulance parked outside 770. It belongs to Lubavitch and is named the Hatzola Ambulance (meaning help).

Suddenly a young man, dressed in a black Kapota (it was Shabbos) with car keys tied around his waist, emerged from 770. He jumped into the driver's seat of the ambulance and with the red roof lights flashing and sirens wailing, rushed off to Crown Street to answer an emergency call. It was a matter of life or death – he had to go.

It seems that a short while ago, a Lubavitch man, aged 42, had a heart attack. An ambulance was called. It took a terrible long time to arrive and the ambulance men were not very competent. (Someone even suggested that they had been drinking).

However, by the time they did arrive on the scene and were in a position and condition to administer first aid - the patient had died.

Therefore, Lubavitch have bought their own ambulance. This is always 'at the ready' manned day and night, seven days a week - in order to save lives.

### NO CALL-UP

We were privileged to enjoy a farbrengen on this first Shabbos after Shovuos. As usual it commenced at 1.30pm promptly. It ended at 5.30pm.

On my arrival in Brooklyn I had handed into the office, as usual, five bottles of vodka "for the Rebbe's pleasure." At this Farbrengen I was fortunate to be the recipient of two of these bottles. The Rebbe gave me one - for all Manchester and the other for the Anash at Lubavitch House, Manchester.

The Rebbe requested all those who had marched to Boro Park to stand up, drink and say Le'chaim to the Rebbe. I had only walked two or three blocks and was debating with myself whether it would be in order for me to say just a 'little' Le'chaim. I did not want to give any false impression so I kept to my seat.

In any case I knew that the Rebbe would soon ask the *Tankisten*, those who had been helping on the Mitzvah Tank, to stand up and say Le'chaim to the Rebbe and receive the Rebbe's reply of "*Le'chaim Velivrocho*".

Well, it seemed that the Rebbe knew more than I did - for I am still awaiting my 'Call-up!'

Shmuel took Yossi to the Rebbe sitting on the dais, and gratefully accepted a bottle of vodka from the Rebbe on Yossi's behalf - to be drunk at the various Barmitzvah celebrations, which would take place during the forthcoming week. The Rebbe also handed to each of them a glass of vodka and extended to them a wonderful brocha.

### RASHI QUESTIONS

During this Shabbos Farbrengen the Rebbe gave over to us many Sichos and words of Torah. Also the following Sicho on Rashi. It needs concentration.

In Numbers, Chapter 6, verse 23, it states, “Thus ye shall bless the Children of Israel saying unto them:

Verse 24 — “The L-rd bless you and protect you.”

Verse 25 — “The L-rd make His face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you.” and

Verse 26 — “The L-rd lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.

On verse 23 - Rashi explains that the Israelites had to hear the blessings in their presence, not in their absence. The word “Emor” (saying) is written full and complete (with the letter Vov) showing that “you shall not bless them hurriedly and hastily, but devoutly and with a whole heart.”

On verse 24 - Rashi’s comments that “L-rd bless thee” means “that your property may increase.” And “and may He protect you” means, “that no robbers should come upon you and take away your property. For a human being who gives a present to his servant cannot guard him against everybody, and if a band of robbers attacks him and takes it away, what pleasure can he, then, derive from this present?! The Holy One, Blessed Be He, however, gives and guards against everybody. Many Midrashic interpretations are given on this verse in the Siphre.”

The Rebbe asserted that there were a number of questions on this Rashi. He asked for a volunteer to count them. Once again it fell to my lot to check the questions.

It was a very interesting Sicha and I wanted to include it in this ‘diary.’ Unfortunately although I did remember that there were thirteen questions, I could not recall more than a few of them. As for the answers – well – these were obviously beyond my recollection. However, I enlisted the services of Shmuel (my son-in-law) who spent no little time in writing out, explaining and teaching me this Sicha (together with some of the other words of Torah mentioned in this edition.) I am very much indebted to him and thank him gratefully – so here goes!

#### PLEASE CONCENTRATE

**Question No 1:** Why is it necessary to explain anything in this verse. Is it not very straightforward – Hashem will bless you and will protect you. What is it that remains unclear that Rashi has to make any comment?

**Question No 2:** Why does Rashi say that Yivorechacho (may He bless you) refers to a blessing on your property, specifically? Is it not an all-encompassing blessing for everything? Moreover, this is a blessing from Hashem, who possesses everything, so why limit it? Furthermore, it is the blessing of Kohanim, whose function was to serve in the *Mishcan*, i.e., a spiritual function. Surely, one would expect the blessing to begin with spiritual matters, and not with material blessings (with the spiritual following in the second section verse 25).

**Question No 3:** Why does Rashi say that Yivorechacho means that there will be a blessing in your property, assuming that the property already exists, should not the blessing be first of all, that you will **have** property?

**Question No 4:** In the Siphre, the comment is made “May He bless you” - with property, i.e., that you should have property. Why then does Rashi change this statement?

**Question No 5:** Rashi then explains “and protect you,” “that a band of robbers should not come and take your money.” Why does Rashi assume that the protection refers to the possessions, and not, obviously that He will protect, **you**, yourself.

**Question No 6:** If “and protect you” indeed does refer to your possessions, it should state “and protect **them**” why does it state “and protect **you**?”

**Question No 7:** Rashi says “that a band of robbers should not come and take your money, for when one gives a present to his servant, he cannot guard it from every person, and if thieves come and take it...” Why does he use three categories: band of robbers, thieves, and every person?

**Question No 8:** Rashi begins, “that robbers should not come and take your property,” implying all your money. Then he continues, “for when one gives a present...” In other words that the protection refers only to the gift and not to all of one's money (property).

**Question No 9:** Why does Rashi need the whole lengthy analogy of one who “gives a present to his servant cannot guard it from every person, and if thieves come and take it what benefit has he from it?” Rashi has already said that G-d will protect you “that robbers should not come and take your money” which is sufficiently clear without any analogy?

**Question No 10:** Rashi continues: “and many explanations were expounded on this in Siphre. Now, since it is necessary to know that there are many explanations, Rashi should have quoted something of them. One cannot wait until the child studying Chumash with Rashi is old enough to learn the Midrashim? Obviously, Rashi deems it necessary only to tell us that there are many explanations, but not the details contained in them. Why is it necessary to know that there are many explanations?”

**Question No 11:** Why does Rashi use the expression “many explanations?”

**Question No 12:** Rashi specifies, “There are many interpretations in Siphre.” This requires elucidation, for there are explanations in Midrash Rabbah and Midrash Tanchumah as well - Midrashim which Rashi quotes in many places, so why does he quote Siphre? Moreover, the lengthy analogy which Rashi quotes, appears mainly in Midrash Rabbah!

Furthermore, the Midrash Rabbah and Midrash Tanchumah mention something which, it would seem are relevant to understand the simple meaning of the verse. They state that “A human king has a servant... to whom he gave one hundred weights of gold. Thieves came and took all he had given to him plus whatever he had. Is it not possible for the king to protect him from the thieves? Therefore... “G-d will protect you” – “from thieves.” (In other words, thieves can come only when the servant is on the road, but not in the king's palace.)

It would appear to be much more apt for Rashi to quote the analogy of a king who gave his servant a gift, for we want to emphasise how G-d's protection surpasses a human's. And when one realised that even a king cannot guard his subject's gift from any eventuality, the power of G-d's protections is underlined! Also, the analogy says that thieves “took **all** he had given to him” not only the gift, but also everything he possessed was taken. In other words, the gift made things worse for him, for it attracted the attention of thieves to him. So when Rashi wants to emphasise the greatness of Hashem's guarding, he should have mentioned the idea that through a human's gift, one can be worse off, whereas Hashem gives **and** protects. Why then does he say that thieves may “come and take it (the present)?”

**Question No 13:** Why does Rashi learn that “and protect you” refers to the same thing as “May Hashem bless you”, thus limiting the blessing? Can't we say that they are two separate ideas, similar to what we find by our father Jacob, (Vayetze. 23:20) who asked Hashem “to protect me in my way...” and then afterwards, separately, a blessing “and give me bread to eat.”

The Rebbe then gave the answers to these questions as follows.

Rashi cannot accept that “may Hashem bless you” refers to a general, all encompassing blessing. For, if this were the case, it would be unsuitable to follow an all-embracing blessing with details, which were already included in the general blessing. And especially as the final section of this blessing is “and may He give you peace.” Rashi has already said (Bechukosai 26:6) that “Peace” is equal to all other blessings, so it was certainly already included in an all-encompassing blessing and could not be repeated. This forces Rashi to the conclusion that “May Hashem bless you” is a blessing regarding a detail and not an all embracing one.

The blessing follows the section about the *Matnos Kehuna* (gifts to the Kohanim) and Rashi explains there (5:10) that he who gives the relevant gifts to the Kohanim will have lots of money, Therefore, he concludes that the addition which comes through *Birchas Kohanim* (Priestly blessing) is that your possessions (which you already have as a result of giving *Matonos Kehuna*) will be blessed, that is - there will be a blessing in them (similar to Bechukosai 26:5) that the food already in your stomachs will have blessing (will be beneficial).

Then, when he comes to the second blessing “and He will protect you,” Rashi cannot interpret it in the literal sense, that Hashem will protect you, yourself; for if that were the case, then the order would have been reversed: first protection, then blessing (as in Yaacov’s prayer, mentioned above). Therefore, Rashi learns that this is a continuation; Hashem will protect the possessions mentioned in the first section of the blessing. It cannot refer to the blessing in the possessions, for that comes directly from Hashem, and can not be stolen. Therefore Rashi says, “that robbers should not come and take your money.” I.e. all your money.

That is why it says, “And He will protect **you**,” and not **them**, for not only do **these** possessions need protection from robbers but **everything** needs this protection.

Now we can understand why in this section Rashi brings the expression “a band of robbers” – because it refers to the taking of all one’s money. “Any person” would only enter when there is an open door and no guard, and even then, would only take one object. Even ‘thieves’ take two, three or more objects, but not all of one’s possessions.

However a “band of robbers” – a whole gang – can take all of one’s things, and since Rashi is talking of the threat to all of “your money” he uses the expression “a band of robbers.” Nevertheless, Rashi uses the other two expressions as well (“any person” and “thieves”) to emphasise that a human cannot protect his gifts from any harm, whereas G-d protects from all possibilities (even a band of robbers).

But, continued the Rebbe, one can ask why can’t one protect one’s gift from “any person” – he need merely stand at the door or window or lock the door and “any person” would have no entry?

In order to understand this, the Rebbe asked a **fourteenth** question. Why does Rashi use the analogy of one who gives a gift to his servant (and not to his friend etc.) The answer is

a) A present is rewarded to one who does more than is required, such as a servant who does something beyond his required duties. Since we are talking here of a blessing in your possessions, above and beyond the possessions themselves, i.e. a supernatural blessing, it obviously comes as a reward for the Jew doing something above and beyond his required duties, like “one who gives a present to his servant.”

b) If it were a present given to one’s friend one could take steps to look after the gift. However, when one gives a present to one’s servant, one can obviously not become preoccupied with looking after the gift without becoming the servant of the servant! (This is why Rashi does not use the analogy of a king who gives a present, because when the servant is in the king’s palace, thieves will not come).

The reason why Rashi does not say that the thieves take (not only the gift but also) all that one had, is because thieves alone haven’t the capacity to do this; only a band of robbers and Rashi has already negated that possibility.

The five-year-old child can still ask a question. Since as it appears from Rashi, the *Birkas Kohanim* (priestly blessing) merely refers to material blessings, why do we make such a fuss over it, that it must be said carefully, slowly with feeling, etc?

Therefore, Rashi says “many explanations are expounded on it in Siphre,” i.e., there are much deeper explanations as well, but in Midrash. In *peshat* – the simple interpretation – I have told you all, and it is only relevant to know that there are Midrashim on it, without going into the details.

Finally, Rashi emphasise that the relevant Midrashim are in Siphre and not in Midrash Rabbah and Tanchuma, because there is one detail in these Midrashim which is actually not fitting with the *peshat*. For there the analogy is of a king in Rome and a servant in Syria; if the servant remains in Rome (denoting in Hebrew a high place) the gift is protected. But when the servant leaves for home, thieves can take what the king gave him and what he had besides and he cannot protect him, but G-d “will protect you” from thieves.

This implies that *Birkas Kohanim* refers to one who is “*Oleh Leregel*” – goes to Jerusalem for the festivals and G-d protects him even when he goes home. But according to the *peshat*, *Birkas Kohanim* applies in all places and throughout the year.

It was a very happy and lively Farbrengen. It concluded at 5.30pm and we davened Mincha immediately afterwards.

Before the Rebbe left the shul after the service, he signalled to me to start a nigun. I commenced my favourite Russian song "*Niet-niet.*"

## Chapter 10

### ANOTHER SPECIAL TEHILLIM

Last year I was involved in a 'near fiasco' when I was 'ordered' to place a Tehillim on the Rebbe's stand on behalf of Yossi on the occasion of his 12th birthday.

Incidentally, I learnt that my right honourable opponent – a young boy – had since emigrated to Israel. He took with him a stock of three special 'Rebbe's Tehillim.' Well, T.G. this year I would not have to go through all that again. Yossi was here at 770, and so could do the job himself. If he wanted a Tehillim and a Chumash that the Rebbe had used on the day of his (Yossi's) Barmitzvah then it was his own responsibility. It was not my problem any more.

However, on the Wednesday night before his calling up on Thursday morning, I asked Yossi whether he had prepared a new Tehillim and a new Chumash for the Rebbe's use for the morrow. He reluctantly replied that he hoped to buy a Tehillim later on from the office at 770 and the Chumash - in time for placing on the Rebbe's stand on the following Monday. This did not make sense to me and I wanted to know the reason – why the postponement. He declared that he did not possess sufficient money.

I was furious. He could have asked me or Shmuel for some cash.

He obtained the Tehillim from the office, but no Chumash. Yossi rushed around to all the local booksellers but all were closed. It was nearly 9.30pm.

Dovid Mandlbaum gave us some sensible practical advice. Place, at once, now, this minute, a Chumash and a Tehillim - any Chumash and any Tehillim on the Rebbe's stand, otherwise it would be too late. In due course, when the new Seforim were obtained, these would be placed in position and the other two removed.

As it was, another boy had just placed a Tehillim on the stand. Shmuel begged and pleaded with the lad to allow Yossi to have the honour, as it was his Barmitzvah and he had come all the way from England. The boy agreed.

Yossi had arranged to be at Drimmers store very early to purchase his Chumash, although it was understood that the shop would not open before about 10.00am.

However, it seemed that although the door was locked, the outer street gates were opened. He almost broke down the door with his banging and kicking. Suddenly a young man appeared in the doorway and demanded to know what was the trouble. Yossi explained his predicament and the urgency of the problem. The young man was Mr. Drimmer's accountant and was examining the ledgers.

He invited Yossi to enter and to help himself.

Yossi was in a dilemma. There were books to his left, books to his right, books everywhere. But where were the Chumoshim?

It reminded me of the story of a fellow who went into a chemist's shop and handed the assistant a prescription.

There were hundreds of bottles filled with every kind of drugs and medicines on shelves behind the counter. The chemist selected a few and poured some of the contents into a large empty bottle.

He next went to the water tap and filled the bottle with water. He handed this to the customer and asked for £1. "One Pound," exclaimed the customer, "for a bottle full of water?" "OK" retorted the chemist, pointing to the huge array of drugs, "help yourself."

Yossi was in a similar quandary.

By accident and luck he did find a Chumash – not quite the type he was seeking – but he was in a great hurry. He took his 'prize' which he priced later on – and rushed back to 770 just in time to place it in position.

## Chapter 11

### OUR BARMITZVAH BOY IS CALLED UP SEVEN TIMES

This year we had an added incentive to be at 770 at this particular time. Yoseph Yitzchok Lew, our eldest grandson, would become Barmitzvah a week after Shovuos. We were extremely anxious that he should be called up to the Torah - for the first time - in the Rebbe's presence.

#### YOSEPH YITZCHOK LEW'S FIRST ALIYA

Yoseph Yitzchok's first Aliya - calling up - was to the dais (the platform) where the Rebbe was seated during the Shabbos farbrengen of Shovuos. This occurred just before Yossi's actual birthday, which was due on the fourteenth day of Sivan.

Yossi was accompanied by Shmuel. The Rebbe poured out for each of them a glass of vodka and extended to them a wonderful Brocha. They drank to the Rebbe's health and wished him L'chaim. The Rebbe then handed a bottle of Mashke to Shmuel. If this had taken place after his birthday Yossi would have received the bottle himself direct from the Rebbe. This was to be distributed at all the various Barmitzvah celebrations.

#### YOSSI'S SECOND ALIYA

Yossi's second Aliya was at the Seudoh on his actual birthday. All Shmuel's family – the American contingent – were present. Father, sisters and brothers, nieces and nephews and cousins and also a few good friends - altogether about fifty people attended.

Hilary did all the catering herself, but was admirably and efficiently helped by the Baumgarten family – especially by the boys. The Seudoh was held in the shul hall next door to the Baumgartens.

Five of us sat at the small top table – Shmuel and his father, Yossi and I – and another very nice gentleman. I did not know this man's name, in fact I had never met him before. I felt sure that he was not a member of the family, but he had made himself very useful setting out the food and the drink, opening bottles and so on.

I learnt afterwards that he was the Shammos of this shul. Shmuel admitted that he was a real *mechuton*. He was so very helpful, that he deserved to sit at the top!

The women and girls were hidden behind the *mechitzah*. From the loud noises and laughter emanating from behind the fence, it seemed that they were thoroughly enjoying themselves.

Every member of Shmuel's family seemed to possess a camera and all were taking photographs. One person, however, was delegated and enjoined by Shmuel officially to take the photographs and to make a recording of Yossi's Barmitzvah Maamer. I became a little doubtful about his capabilities when he pointed the wrong end of the camera at me, and when a few seconds **after** he had taken the picture - there were a couple of blinding flashes. It seemed rather odd to me!

It was now the time for Yossi to say his *Maamer*. Our friend placed the tape recorder on the table directly in front of Yossi. A Nigun was commenced and Yossi wound himself up. The tune was concluded and Yossi un-wound rapidly – so that he started shaking and 'shockling' forward and backwards, faster and faster keeping in tune to the rhythm of the *Maamer*.

Except for the click-click-click-click of the wheels of the tape recorder revolving – there was complete silence in the room. Yossi did very well. It was perfect.

But, when we switched on the machine to listen to the recorded version, all we could hear was the click-click-click-click of the wheels revolving.

If, instead of putting this tape recorder on the table in front of Yossi, he would have placed the microphone he might have achieved much better results.

Yossi was then requested to say his *Pilpul*. He was interrupted after only a few sentences by vociferous singing and cheering. During the course of the next few weeks, Yossi tried many times, but in vein, to give over his *Pilpul*. He had learned it well, but was never allowed to make much progress. The theme was about the ferocious ox which attacked personnel and property.

No action was taken for the first three times. If he attacked a fourth time, he had to be slaughtered – killed because he was proved to be a dangerous animal.

Yossi went on to say that if, afterwards, it was discovered that the witnesses had lied and had given false evidence, then... Well anyway, I never did find out what then happened to the ox.

Shmuel called up some speakers to say a few words. Rabbis J.J. (Hecht) and Moishe Feller in particular spoke well.

Next day, Rabbi Chodakov asked me what was the theme of my speech at the *seudoh*. He could not believe that I was not asked. I quoted the words of Dayan Golditch, Av Beth Din of Manchester, who often said, “it is far better that people should ask why you did **not** speak, rather than why you **did!**”

### **YOSSI’S NEXT ALIYA WAS THE THIRD**

*Shelishi* is always considered to be the most important and praiseworthy Aliya. (I was told about a fellow who, for years, always insisted upon having *Shelishi*. Once by mistake, he was called up for the fourth – *Revii*. “What Brocha” he wanted to know, “does one make for *Revii*?”)

Yossi was now to be called up to the Torah for the very first time.

This was the principal reason why Shmuel and Hilary had traveled to New York together with their sons (and baby girl) – to be present when Yossi would have the first Aliya of his life and make the Brocha on the Torah, in the presence of the Rebbe Shlita.

Shmuel had been to Brooklyn a few months previously on a special assignment. He had then put in his claim to reserve Yossi’s Aliya for his Barmitzvah. This was agreed to, subject to there being no Kohanim present; no fathers wishing to give names to their newly-born daughters; and no husbands who wanted to make a *Mi Shebeirach* for their wives, who had given birth to baby boys.

On this Thursday morning the Gabai had arranged that all the Kohanim should be busy elsewhere. But there were four fathers with baby girls, two with boys, and also another Barmitzvah boy!

After a great deal of unnecessary worrying and fretting by Shmuel, it was decided that **both** Barmitzvah boys should have their Aliyahs. Yossi had the second. The Rebbe, as usual, had the third.

On the previous evening I had asked Lou Tiffenbrun, who always carried his camera with him, if he would kindly take a photograph of Yossi having his Aliya. Lou refused. He said that he wouldn’t dare to do such a thing in front of the Rebbe. Even when I pointed out that this picture would be an everlasting memento – he still refused. He did promise, however, that he would lend me his camera and I could take it myself. I had to accept!

Next morning Lou took some measurements, adjusted the focus and the lens, handed me the camera and told me to stand near the *Aron Hakodesh*. It was now up to me! All I had to do was to press a button. If I was quick I could turn the film and press the button again – and so have two photographs.

Yossi was called up and made his Brocha. His portion was ‘layened’ and he made the second Brocha. Now was my opportunity. I held up the camera and looked through the aperture. Yes, it was a good picture. As quick as lightning I pressed the button – it had no effect, I pressed again – once more nothing seemed to happen. I turned the film, rushed to Lou and asked him for an explanation. The Rebbe was now at the Bimah. I begged Lou to take the photograph. He refused and handed me back the camera and said, “Try again.” The Rebbe was just about to make the second Brocha. I held up the camera. It seemed a lovely picture – the Rebbe, Yossi and Shmuel and the other Barmitzvah boy with his father. I pressed the button and the ensuing resounding click was almost – to me – deafening. “Take another,” said Lou, in a sibilant whisper. I dared not – that one was quite enough for me. A week later when Lou had returned home, the processed films were delivered to him. He had some lovely photographs, but of the one which I had taken there was no sign – none at all!

Lou searched through the negatives and did find it. It seemed quite clear and good – although the colours were not up to the usual high standard, because I had taken this picture from a different angle to that intended and the light was poor. It was sent back for processing and the result, in my opinion –

and as far as Yossi was concerned – was just fantastic! What a wonderful and permanent memento for a Barmitzvah boy.

I have shown this photograph to many people. Their first comment is always about the Rebbe! Their second is “Oh, what a small Sefer Torah!” There is a story about this Sefer. This is my version

It seems that many years ago, there lived in the town of Slavita, Russia, two brothers. They had a printing business. They published and distributed scores of religious Torah books in defiance of the local laws and regulations.

Ultimately, they were convicted and jailed for many years. They were very orthodox, and believed that a Jew should always have with him his own Sefer Torah – even in prison. Their friends got together and wrote this small Torah so that it could be smuggled into their jail, piece by piece.

Subsequently, it came into the possession of the Tzemach Tzedek and this heirloom now belongs to our own Rebbe Shlita.

#### **YOSSI’S FOURTH ALIYA**

This took place downstairs at 770, immediately after his calling up. It was a L’chaim – with the Rebbe’s vodka, cake, herring, cucumbers and so forth. There were no knives with which to cut the cake and no forks for the herring. It was a ‘smash and grab’ – literally! In these chaotic conditions, Yossi was asked to say his Maamer again. There were still a few hundred people davening and scattered all around the shul. Yossi deserves a medal for his concentration and purposeful manner in which he continued right to the very end – in spite of all interruptions and disruptions!

#### **YOSSI’S FIFTH ALIYA**

Yossi’s fifth calling up took place at Lubavitch House London. Actually, it was Haftorah on the Shabbos, eleven days after our return from New York. He recited this very nicely indeed. I also had an Aliya. I was then requested to daven *Musaf*. By the time I had made up my mind to accept, the Sefer Torah was already back in the *Aron Hakodesh*. I missed all the best *chazonishe* (cantoral) pieces. It was hard lines (tough luck)!

As it was to be a whole weekend of festivities – Avrohom, Susan and all their children (*ka”h*) had come especially to London from Manchester on Friday. They all stayed at Hilary’s home, Roselyn and I took the justifiable precaution of sleeping at the Kadimah Hotel nearby.

It is said that pleasures shared are pleasures doubled. This was amply proved – T.G, our sixteen grandchildren *ka”h* made much more noise and turmoil than thirty-two average children.

However, they all had a tremendous and fantastic time together. The best comment and summing up, was made to me by Menachem Mendel Lew, aged nearly twelve, on the Monday. He said that “it was very lonely at home since the Jaffes had left for Manchester.” T.G. Mendy has eight brothers and sisters *Kein Yirbu* - “such loneliness.”

#### **YOSSI’S SIXTH CALLING UP**

This took place on the same Shabbos after Mincha. It was a special Shalosh Seudos to mark the Yohrzeit of our dear friend Rabbi Benzion Shem Tov (O.H.). It is already two years! Over a hundred people sat down to a well-catered meal of gefilte fish, salads and so forth.

The soul of Rabbi Shem Tov must surely have been delighted. The eldest child of the marriage which ‘Shemmi’ had been so keen to arrange was sitting at the top table, saying – once again – his Barmitzvah Maamer. (I would have preferred the Pilpul - I was still interested in the fate of that poor Ox!)

Both Nachman and Shmuel wished to say a Sicha – so they did. They asked each other to speak – and both accepted. There should be a lesson in this for me somewhere.

#### **YOSSI’S SEVENTH ALIYA**

Number seven took place on the Sunday, from 3 to 6pm at home. About three hundred people came along to wish him and all of us a hearty Mazel Tov.

It was a well-catered affair – all home made – blintzes, cheese pies, pizzas, rolls and well-filled sandwiches, cream cake, soft drinks and liqueurs; with of course, the Rebbe's bottle of Mashke still being distributed. It is surprising how many glasses of vodka can be taken out from one ordinary sized bottle – and this was the fifth celebration that this bottle was 'in attendance.' Another Rebbe's miracle!

Incidentally, so much food was prepared that the Lew's were enjoying cream cakes and sandwiches for weeks afterwards.

In addition to the seven Aliyahs mentioned above, Yossi also took part in the calling up of '*Kol HaNeorim*' (all the boys) as on Simchas Torah. This occurred when all the Lew males (accompanied by Hilary and baby Tova Gittel) went into Yechidus with the Rebbe. On this occasion the Rebbe gave Brochas which were extended to all the Lew family and especially to Yossi.

## Chapter 12

### MISTAKEN IDENTITY

I was having a very good time in Crown Heights. After all, I was seeing the Rebbe every day and I was amongst friends. Young children, boys and old men all called me “Zalmon.” Just that – “Zalmon.” I was a very popular fellow!

As a matter of fact wherever I go or travel, I invariably meet people who recognise me.

I was travelling to Israel by plane last year. A fellow with a black hat, black Kapota and a black beard gave me a black look.

I was sitting and resting, minding my own business. When this ‘gentleman’ approached me and said, “Shalom Aleichem, you are Zalmon Jaffe from Manchester. I am a Meshulach from Myner Yeshiva. I called at your home in Manchester many times and you were always out. You owe me a donation.” He was so insistent and forceful that I paid him very quickly for the sake of peace and quietness.

In Israel we were staying at a hotel near the Dead Sea. One early morning I had dived into the swimming pool and was enjoying a swim. The pool was completely empty except for one man standing in the shallow end. I had just reached him when he exclaimed, “Ah, Addon Yaffe!” (Ah, Mr. Jaffe).

I was flabbergasted. I could not believe my own ears. Here I was near the Dead Sea in the very early morning and I am recognised by a fellow, whom I could not recollect having seen before.

Still – he knew my name, so I asked him what his name was. He replied, “Moishe.” Moishe, Moishe, I did not know any Moishe who resembled this fellow. Then I remembered that when I had spoken on the telephone to the representative of Kopul’s Tours, he had told me to ask for Moishe, if I needed help.

“Ah”, I said, “you are Moishe from Kopul’s Tours! He looked at me as if I was mad. He had no connection whatsoever with Kopul’s Tours. Then I asked him “How do you know my name?” He said that he did not know my name – he had never seen me before. But – he could see that I was a good diver and swimmer. He was so impressed that he was impelled to praise me by saying “Ah Addon – Yaffe,” which in English means “Ah, sir, very nice.”

I was pleased with his compliments but my ego was deflated by this ‘mistaken identity.’

## Chapter 13

### THE START OF A CAREER

Everyone knows of the wonderful work which Lubavitch is doing all over the world – even in the vastness of the USA.

Every year we hear, with amazement and astonishment of more and more young couples who get married and ‘live’ at the Kotel for a few months. After which they leave their family environment and their hometown to establish a Lubavitch base and bastion for Judaism at the far outposts of American Jewish life.

I know personally at least two couples who, this year, have become the Rebbe’s trail blazers and pathfinders. Namely:

- 1 - Moishe Kasowitz - who went with his wife and young baby to establish a new Lubavitch territory at the University of Des Moines, Iowa. They have disclosed that they are “all alone and lonely.”
2. - Raizel and Yossi Hecht - who are now living on the campus of one of the largest Universities in the USA - Madison, Wisconsin.

This is the Rebbe’s work. It is interesting to note how one becomes involved in this Lubavitch way of life. I have been watching my nephew Zally Unsorfer’s progress during the past few years. He seems to be a typical example.

He became interested in our groups in Manchester after his Bar Mitzvah and kept in constant touch with the Rebbe. Subsequently, he spent over two years at the Yeshiva at Kfar Chabad, Israel and three years studying at 770. He is hoping to obtain his Semicha very shortly.

About two or three years ago, his roommate, Dovid Haller, joined a non-Lubavitch Summer Camp as a counselor to help them out. Last year, this camp for 200 boys was held in Seattle. They desperately needed assistance. Zally was induced to volunteer.

In Zally’s group of ten boys was a lad, aged 11 years, from Long Island. He told Zally that his family had just become “frum” because of the influence of Lubavitch. He added that three years ago there was no shul nearby their home. Shmuel Mendleson, another young Lubavitcher, had come along and organised a Shabbos Minyan. He even brought some of his friends with him to assist in the founding of this Minyan.

This district now boasts about thirty various groups – for children, discussion, marriage guidance and so forth.

Zally was persuaded to join the ‘workers.’ He stays with a family for Shabbos, sleeping and eating and arranging youth activities.

He also spent Shovuos in Long Island. He and his friend went on their own march. They found a couple of shuls about five or six miles away. They addressed the congregations and made everybody very happy. They arrived at 770 at 10.45pm for the Farbrengen. Zally enjoys this work for the Rebbe. He can already see the excellent results of his efforts.

I expect he will follow the usual trend – obtain his Semicha, find a girl and get married and then wait for the Rebbe’s ‘travelling instructions.’

Already a man has signified that he was interested in Zally for a Shidduch. Zally retorted that he does not want a man – he wants a girl to be interested. ‘Zilly, Zally!’

## Chapter 14

### COMPLIMENTARY AND COMPLEMENTARY

I went along to the Levi Yitzchok Library on Kingston Avenue to deliver a copy of my new edition.

As usual the iron inner gates were locked. The library was too valuable to be left “*hefker*,” open to everyone. I pressed the bell and Mr. Waxman the librarian, opened the gates and bade me welcome.

The library was in a spotless condition; the shelves were becoming quite nicely filled with books. I asked Mr. Waxman whether he still had my previous volume (no. 7). Yes, there it was, beautifully bound too. He then showed me something which absolutely amazed me and highlighted the efficiency of Mr. Waxman and Rabbi Butman. He took me over to a filing cabinet. Every single book was catalogued on a microfilm. For my one little booklet, he had four different ‘cards’ of reference. 1. Author, 2. Title, 3. and 4. Subject matter - under ‘biography’ and under ‘Chassidut Chabad.’ Here is what one card looked like - Mr. Waxman photocopied it for me.

MY ENCOUNTER WITH THE REBBE SHLITA

E746                    JAFFE, ZALMON

JAF.ZAL            My encounter with the (Lubavitcher) Rebbe Shlita. Shovuot 5735-  
5735                    1975. NP, NP, ND

61p 25,5cm

CHASIDUT CHABAD

BIOGRAPHY-INDIVIDUAL-CHASIDIC

NP means - no prints, NP means - no publishers, ND stands for no date. 61 pages and size of book 25.5cm.

I felt really pleased to see my name as author. I was quite proud of myself and immediately presented the library with two copies of my no. 8 edition. I promised to let Mr. Waxman have the whole set as soon as possible.

Mr. Waxman assured me that my booklet is borrowed quite often and regularly, but not taken out of the library, as there was only one copy.

At one period there was a sudden demand for it. I personally knew the reason for that. Bassia Shem Tov’s class was told to prepare and give a talk on any of the Rashi Sichos which the Rebbe had given last year.

Bassia recalled that I had written such a Sicho in last years ‘Encounter.’ She borrowed her mother’s copy and studied it well. She was word perfect. She hoped that the teacher would ask her to relate it to the class. Luckily the teacher did choose her and she (the teacher) and the whole class were astounded that a Rashi Sicho could be explained so succinctly and concisely – so that it could be so easily understood – in English.

All wanted to know from where she had obtained this wonderful Sicho in English. Bassia explained that it was from Zalmon Jaffe’s ‘Encounter’ and there was a copy in the Levi Yitzchok Library. Next day, half a dozen girls went to the library to read my book.

Mr. Goldstein informed me that his mother borrows ‘My Encounter’ from Malka Zuntz very often and reads it over and over again.

Dr Dovid Sholom Pape told me “you cannot imagine what good your diary is doing. I translate your book to my wife whilst she is washing up the dishes” (his wife is an Israeli). That is what I call a good husband.

Rabbi Dvorkin wanted two diaries. He needs them and he wants them. So I gave him two. He thanked me and remarked - “Now, I must learn English.” When I remonstrated with him, he answered that he will get Avrohom to translate it into Yiddish!

Sometimes I do receive a pleasant surprise. For instance, when Mr. Peter Kalms of London wrote:

**Dear Zalmon,**

**“I must just drop you this note to say how much I enjoyed the latest ‘Encounter’ - not only is it fun to read but it contains a good deal of insight and understanding - not to mention the service it does in showing the greatness of the Rebbe Shlito.**

**Thanks again, till 120**

*Peter Kalms*

I appreciate this unsolicited testimonial. I feel amply rewarded.

## **Chapter 15**

### **YANKEL LEAVES A VOID**

Yankel is continuously improving and extending his departmental store. Every day, except Erev Yom Tov and Friday - the Mikvah section is closed from 1.00pm until 5pm.

His shop and warehouse are, however, open for business to the public.

I took my wife shopping there one day at 4.30pm. We already found another lady customer choosing some bargains in the haberdashery department.

Yankel was very courteous to his customers. He served them with ice cold drinks from the fridge, whilst they were examining stocks of shirts, socks, belts and other garments. I purchased various types of soft and hard drinks and also some stamps and airmail letters from his new post office department.

A gentleman entered at 4.55pm. He wished to use the Mikvah. Yankel chased him out of the building. "We don't open until 5.00pm," he shouted, "and how dare you come here when women are present."

Incidentally, when I visited Crown Heights for Yud Shevat, many months later, I found that Yankel had emigrated to Israel.

The shopping precinct was closed down. Only the Mikvah was left.

Yankel was a great character. He has left a real void – literally. I shall miss him.

## Chapter 16

### I TAKE A SHORT CUT

I cannot recall whether I have ever mentioned the Jewish barber who has a hairdressing salon on Kingston Avenue.

It is really pathetic to see him sitting in his shop – all alone, day after day, during the seven weeks doing absolutely nothing at all.

Then on the day before Shovuos he is invaded. Every Yeshiva Bochur in Crown Heights wants his hair cutting – all at the same time.

The shop is crammed tight with people all waiting their turn.

Fortunately, Yeshiva Bochurim do not receive any fancy or sophisticated luxuries, such as shampoos or manicures. All they require is the complete removal of every hair from their heads, leaving only the peyos (sideboards) and beards.

All that is needed is a few good long strokes with the electric cutter. The job takes only a few minutes. They leave the chair looking like a shorn lamb (or goat would be a better description for a goat has a beard).

The barber would make a fortune if he were allowed to charge at so much a yard!

When my turn arrived, I protested to the barber that I did not want all my hair cut off – but he knew better, and carried on with the shearing. After the 'operation' he handed me a clothes brush and said "Here, help yourself with this brush and make sure you remove all the hair from your suit. I am busy."

I said "Thanks for the tip" – and so did he!

## Chapter 17

### YECHIDUS

Once again, we were lucky. We had succeeded in obtaining an appointment for a Yechidus with the Rebbe.

Accordingly, we had previously forwarded to the Rebbe a list of the subjects and particulars of the various problems which we wished to discuss. I also asked for a Brocha for health and *parnosos* for the forthcoming year.

In this 'letter' I had mentioned how disappointed I was that there was no farbrengen on Shabbos, to which the Rebbe had already replied, "No hard feelings."

I had also written that I was very pleased with the lovely apartment which we had secured across the road to 770. The Rebbe wished to know, "Is this the opinion of your wife?"

I was also asked to submit a list of all the names of the members of our family, including our grandchildren.

As we entered the Rebbe's study, we were greeted with a brilliant smile and a nice "*Sholom Aleichem*" from the Rebbe. He signified that I had not mentioned how we were keeping health-wise. The Rebbe intimated that we could "always go higher even in health."

Roselyn admitted that she was keeping well and that her complaint was not bothering her. "It was behaving itself." The Rebbe was glad that she "was keeping to her diet and that it was going along smoothly."

I told the Rebbe how much I had been pestered by those "clever Gemorah keplach" (heads) who proved by grotesque arguments and Pilpulim that because this was the first time in eighteen years that there had been no farbraingen on a Shabbos whilst I was present at 770 – therefore the Rebbe was very angry with me.

That was the reason why I had wished the Rebbe "Good Voch," and added "and no hard feelings." The Rebbe had agreed and added "Yes, on all sides."

The Rebbe did explain that he had searched many Seforim and Lubavitcher documents and could not find any reason for having a farbrengen on Shabbos except on Shabbos Mevorchim. I implied "but what about for Shmuel?" The Rebbe said, "I have hundreds of boys like him."

As one can observe the Rebbe speaks to and writes to us in English. He speaks very many languages. Basically, the Rebbe makes his notes and gives instructions upon our letters in Hebrew. He addresses the farbrengen and conventions in Yiddish. I do know he can converse with our Rebbetzen in Russian.

The Rebbe then wished us Mazel Tov on the occasion of Yossi's Barmitzvah. He remarked "there should be peace between Jews in Manchester, London and Brooklyn."

The Rebbe thanked me for giving him such good publicity in my 'Encounter.' He had noted that I had mentioned the Rebbe "quite a few times."

The Rebbe advised me about some Manchester Lubavitch problems which were ultimately settled on the lines suggested by him.

We discussed family affairs and communal matters. The Rebbe congratulated the ladies on a wonderful Lubavitch European Convention and maintained "as Susan is an extrovert, not an introvert, then why did she not take a more public part in the proceedings – especially when she had done so much of the work."

The Rebbe suggested that an album should be prepared of this convention – to include cables, letters, photographs and so forth. This album should be forwarded to Lubavitch Womens' Organisations all over the world. (I delivered this message to the Ladies concerned.)

Re. my diary. The Rebbe said I should consider about binding them, but "keep on writing." I should send copies of all the previous editions to the Levi Yitzchok (Kingston Avenue) Library, to London,

Leeds and Glasgow. I added, “What about Manchester?” The Rebbe replied that Manchester “has got the author himself.”

The Rebbe then handed me £18 for Tzedoka. The notes were already prepared and clipped together.

We stayed with the Rebbe for forty minutes. The latter part of our Yechidus was accompanied by the “Label Groner background music,” the door being continuously opened and closed – a hint to us to make haste.

The Rebbe asked if this annoyed me. I said, “We have got used to this after eighteen years.

## Chapter 18

### A RIGHT ROYAL WELCOME

Once again it was our pleasure and privilege to be received by our Rebbetzen at her home in President Street.

Once more it was our great fortune to be allowed to bring with us Hilary and Shmuel – together with Yossi, Mendel, Pincus, Sholom Dov-Ber and baby Shandel.

A scrumptious cake decorated the table. We were all served with the ice-cold orange juice, which I, promptly spilled upon my new suit.

The Rebbetzen apologised profusely for her carelessness. She was adamant that the fault was hers. Of course, it was not, decidedly not, the fault of the Rebbetzen – but that is just typical of our gracious and charming First Lady.

I handed over a packet of letters and photographs which Susan had sent. The Rebbetzen put aside the letters and asked for our permission to look at some of the photographs.

She loves photographs of children. Yossi gave us an outline of his Bar Mitzvah Pilpul – In Yiddish. Mendel gave a rendering of a Sicho of the Rebbe – also in Yiddish.

The Rebbetzen sat enchanted and delighted, whilst Shmuel and Hilary surveyed the scene in rapture and with pride. The Rebbetzen was tremendously surprised and impressed, “From where did they learn such good Yiddish? It was wonderful, really marvellous – such perfect Yiddish.”

I then explained to the Rebbetzen about Bassia Shemtov, who borrowed my ‘Encounter’ from the Levi Yitzchok Library in order to study a Rashi Sicho of the Rebbe. The Rebbetzen exclaimed, “So the Rebbe was right when he said that people would read your ‘Encounter’ also for the Torah written therein.”

Roselyn admitted that she does not keep to her diet! “Who does?” rejoined the Rebbetzen.

The Rebbetzen inquired why we did not go anywhere else whilst we were in America. “Mind you” added the Rebbetzen to Roselyn, “you are sun burnt and look well - *umberrufen!*”

We assured her that we came to America only to see the Rebbe and our Rebbetzen. We spent a very pleasant and delightful few hours together. We enjoyed ourselves tremendously. I hope the Rebbetzen enjoyed herself as much as we did.

## Chapter 19

### A NEW DAWN

At 1.00am Shmuel Katz, who was Prime Minister Begin's special and official envoy, went into the Rebbe's study.

Mr. Begin had phoned 770 three times to ensure that this meeting would take place.

Mr. J. Klyne Hendler, a young friend of Shmuel Katz was accompanying him on his rounds. Whilst Mr. Katz was with the Rebbe, Mr. Hendler and I had a very nice chat – together with Mr. Zippel from Milan and Professor Black from Montreal, So, Italy, Israel, America, England and Canada were represented – a proper United Nations!

Mr. Hendler told us that Mr. Begin had met the Rebbe at 770 six months previously – about Chanukah time 5737.

The Rebbe had discussed all the problems besetting Israel with Begin as if he was already the Prime Minister.

Mr. Begin said he was not well and was considering retirement. The Rebbe advised him not to retire because of ill health, and he should look forward to a future as Prime Minister of Israel.

Begin was so excited that he immediately told all his friends – at 6.00am.

Hendler added that Chabad Lubavitch was good for morale. During the war he put on Tefillin (as usual) and everyone wanted him to join **their** tank. Such faith! All were more religious at that moment. "During the 1967 war" he said, "all Israeli Jews were religious, some recited the Shema hundreds of times a day. Succos time – all urgently wanted to bench with Esrog and Lulov."

American Jews, especially reform were complaining and grumbling at Begin that he was too frum! They wanted a Prime Minister – not a Rabbi!

At 2.15am, the Rebbe came out from his study. He saw me and with one of his most glorious smiles, said "It is a new dawn in England, now!" It was well worth waiting for!

## Chapter 20

### OUR FAREWELL

Our flight from New York to England, was due to leave that evening. I had therefore informed the Rebbe that we would like to take our leave of him after Mincha.

After this service, the Rebbe left the Beis Hamedrash and walked towards his office. I followed, and Label Groner advised me to keep on going after the Rebbe.

The Rebbe stopped near his study. Label closed the 'waiting room' door and we had a private mini-Yechidus.

The Rebbe wished me *Besuros Tovos* – we should always hear good news and that we, all the family gathered in the hallway should have a safe journey home.

The Rebbe asked me if I had been able to understand the answers to my Rashi questions which I had submitted. I replied, "It was a very difficult problem." "I have been studying the answer together with Label Groner and with Shmuel and we have not got it clear yet."

The Rebbe suggested that, as we had another three hours before our departure we could carry on studying this problem until we did have it clear.

#### Farewell Rashi Questions

My questions were on Chapter 12, verse 12 at the end of Behaaloscho. This reads that (Aaron said) "Let her (Miriam) be not as one who is dead." Rashi comments, "A leper may be regarded as a dead person." A further comment by Rashi on the same verse states, "Aaron could not examine his sister because he was a near relation." Well – so was Moshe. Also at that time all the Kohanim were relatives, so there was no one available to examine her leprosy.

But Rashi has already said that a "leper is compared to a dead person, and according to the Halacha, even a Kohen is compelled to bury any dead person – if there is no one else to do the burial. Similarly, here too, if there was no one to make the examination, then Aaron should be compelled to make it.

Another question is that eventually, some Kohen did examine her when she was cured.

The Rebbe answered, "This is not necessary, because she did not become unclean yet," and referred me to Tazria Chapter 13, verse 2. This reads, "When a man shall have in the skin of his flesh a rising, a scab ... like leprosy, then he should be brought to Aaron the Priest or to one of his sons, the priests." Rashi's comment on this verse is that "only a Kohen can decide whether a person is unclean or not."

I am still not quite 100% clear, and in any case – Moishe was not a Kohen!

## **Chapter 21**

### **THE FINAL TOUCH**

We had arranged with Lippa Brennan that he would take us to the Airport. We proposed to leave 770 at 7.00pm.

We parked the car on Kingston Avenue, around the corner. At 7.10pm we decided to wait another five minutes and to try and catch another glimpse of the Rebbe before we left. To our great joy and relief, at 7.15pm the Rebbe's car drove up to 770. I rushed towards it and opened the door for the Rebbe. "I cannot tear myself away," I said "but we are leaving now."

The Rebbe said, "This is the final touch" and wished us "a safe journey in a good and auspicious time and we should all hear good news."

Just at that moment it commenced to rain. The Rebbe wanted to know whether we had a car. I told him that Lippa Brennan was taking us to the airport, and that his car was just around the corner.

The Rebbe stood perfectly still on the steps of 770 – in the pouring rain – waited and watched us until we had all disappeared round the corner.

This always puts me in a predicament. It is not fair to keep the Rebbe waiting outside, even if it is not raining. The Rebbe's time is also very valuable. On the other hand we are always tempted to prolong our farewell. In the event, we always end up by rushing away from the Rebbe's presence - which is also wrong, but unavoidable if we wish to save the Rebbe's health and time.

The Rebbe had made this unique gesture – we had to show our appreciation by not delaying our departure.

## Chapter 22

### A PRIME MINISTER AND HIS REBBE

One of the outstanding events of the summer was the visit to the U.S. of Mr. Begin, the Prime Minister of Israel.

Photographs of the Rebbe with Begin were in all English and Jewish newspapers. What a great and exciting time! An Israeli Prime Minister actively and actually supporting and professing Yiddishkeit – and confessing, on coast to coast television in America and in the newspapers – that he had come to seek the guidance, advice and a blessing from his Rebbe and teacher, his spiritual head.

No words of mine can really express our pride and satisfaction in the fact that Mr. Begin so publicly and universally proclaimed his confidence and faith in the Rebbe.

How pleased we all were to learn that Mr. Begin saw the Rebbe for over three hours at Yechidus before he visited President Carter. We were very proud.

I consider that Begin did wonderfully well at his conference in Washington. Even Carter was pleased, I don't quite know why!

Rabbi Mendel Futterfas has told us that at the Annual Bar Mitzvah party for the war orphans, which Lubavitch organise at Kfar Chabad, Israel, Mr. Begin was the 'guest of honour.' Mendel Futterfas was sitting next to Ezer Weizman, who told him that Begin will not do anything without first consulting the Rebbe and that "the Rebbe is ruling the cabinet and Eretz Yisroel."

In that case then, the country is in good hands!

## Chapter 23

### DISTURBING NEWS

At 4.30am, Thursday night/Friday morning of Isru Chag, the day after Simchas Torah (October 6th 1977) we were disturbed from our sleep. The telephone bell was ringing. It was Sholom Weiss who told us that the Rebbe had suffered a heart attack. This had happened on the night of Shemini Atzeres and the Rebbe had been confined to his room at 770 with four doctors in attendance.

“But,” Sholom went on to say, “the Rebbe was going to broadcast to the world in half an hours time and would be speaking for two or three minutes.”

Roselyn and I rushed over to Lubavitch House where we joined many others – all waiting anxiously and worrying, not only what the Rebbe was going to say, but, more important, how the Rebbe would say it – how would be the delivery.

At 5.00am the Rebbe’s voice came across the 3,500 miles – and what a relief it was to all of us. Except for some moments when the Rebbe sounded emotionally upset, the Sicho came over very well. The Rebbe spoke – not for three minutes but for twenty-five minutes.

Although we were a little reassured we were still a little fearful and worried. We were told how the Rebbe had instructed every one to dance on Simchas Torah with even more vigour and Simcha – and they did, for the Rebbe’s sake.

Everyone was singing (in Yiddish) “The Rebbe must be well,” then “the Rebbe will be well,” and finally, “the Rebbe is well.” At that point of time, the Rebbe left his bed for the first time.

Personally, we were faced with the problem of whether we should phone 770. They had enough troubles already. Besides which we did not wish to get others too emotionally involved as well.

We did send a cable to the Rebbetzen “praying that the A’mighty would give her added strength to assist her through this worrying time. We invoked the blessings of the A’mighty for the Rebbe Shlita’s complete and quick recovery. We were thinking of the Rebbe and the Rebbetzen continuously.”

### THE REBBE GETS BETTER AND BETTER

Every few hours we received ‘latest reports.’ The Rebbe was perusing his mail; was giving Brochas to visitors; was having Yechidus; was getting back to normality. Every bulletin gave us fresh hope.

Then, once again we were notified that the Rebbe was going to broadcast. For fifty minutes we heard the Rebbe address the world – firmly and ‘as usual.’ We also heard the doctor warn the Rebbe to let him know if he had a pain.

Every other week and occasionally more often the Rebbe broadcast to the world. The first one took twenty-five minutes. The second time the Rebbe was told by the doctors that he would be allowed to speak for twenty minutes and he carried on non-stop for fifty minutes. On the third and fourth occasions the Rebbe spoke – again non-stop – for one hour and for one and a half hours respectively.

It was now very close to Yud Tes Kislev. I phoned 770 and Binyomin Klein advised us **not** to come over for Yud Tes Kislev. They could not be certain that the Rebbe would be at the farbrengen. He was advising everyone to postpone their visit until Yud Shevat.

Subsequently, we did hear the Rebbe’s farbrengen and he spoke for two and a half hours non-stop – amazing!

I was in London on the last day of Chanukah. Chanukah had ended at 5.00pm and we had davened Maariv. Suddenly, Shmuel telephoned from Lubavitch House to inform us that the Rebbe would be broadcasting in nine minutes time. It was 8.15pm. I rushed to Lubavitch House together with Yossi, Mendel, Pincus and Yenta Chaya. We left a screaming and tearful Golda Rivka at home. She was already in bed and we could not wait for her.

We were the first to arrive. Yenta Chaya brought me a set of earphones so that I could hear the simultaneous English translation which Shmuel would be giving. This was the first time I had

attended a London session. It was impressive. There were eighteen sockets for the earphones and a dozen plugs for tape recorders. Loud speakers were placed all around the hall.

The ladies and girls were in another room with similar facilities. We heard that the Rebbe had washed and made Hamotzie on the bread and lo and behold – it was Chanukah again!

The four Sichos were short, but excellent. I even understood and enjoyed the Maamer. I would never have believed that Shmuel – or anyone – could have translated the Rebbe's words so fluently and kept up with the Rebbe. He was even a little ahead occasionally. It was uncanny! Obviously, if he had been stuck for a word, then, in that split second he would have lost the whole tenor of that sentence – and even the complete trend of the Rebbe's remarks. I suppose this is an art, a great gift!

Hershel Pecker reminded me that I had once complained to the Rebbe that the farbrengen were broadcast at a very late hour for us in England – 2.00am until 7.00am. They should be at a more reasonable time. Well the Rebbe had acceded to this request – 8.30 in the evening was quite convenient.

The Shabbos Mevorchim Farbrengen were now taking place on Motzei Shabbos (Saturday night) instead of during the day. So they were now broadcast. The first one was at 12 midnight, the last commenced at 2.30am Sunday morning! I suppose during the summer months they will start at 3.30am.

T.G, the Rebbe is steadily improving all the time.

Here is a letter of thanks which we have received from the Rebbe.

**By the Grace of G-d**

**In the beginning of**

**Cheshvan, 5738**

**Brooklyn, N.Y.**

**Mr. Shneur Zalman Jaffe & Family  
And all Anash, Manchester**

**Greeting and Blessing:**

**I appreciate very much your thoughtful expression of concern and your good wishes for a speedy and complete recovery.**

**With the help of G-d, the Healer of All Flesh Who Works Wondrously, my health has improved satisfactorily and I am, thank G-d, able to continue my work and activities.**

**In accordance with the Divine promise, "I (G-d, the Source of all blessings) will bless them that bless you,"**

**May G-d bestow His generous blessings on you and yours, materially and spiritually.**

**With esteem**

***M. Schneerson (signed)***

**P. S. Thanks for [your] letter of 28 Tishrei. Am pleased to note you were honored with *Chosson-Torah. Tizku l'Mitzvos rabbois.***

## Chapter 24

### YUD SHEVAT

I had decided to take a day or two off to see the Rebbe for Yud Shevat.

It was not necessary to book one's flight in advance these days; one could turn up at the airport and take a chance that there was a seat available on 'stand-by' terms. I arrived at Heathrow London at 8.30am – I was lucky. There was a seat available. "Kosher food - certainly sir, no problem."

The plane was due to leave at 11.00am but it was 1.00pm before we set off. Why? Because the plane had to de-fuel! Like you, I also had never heard of such a term. What it meant, besides a two-hour delay was that they had filled the tanks with **too much** fuel! This made the load too heavy and the surplus petrol had to be siphoned off. Just my Mazel.

The kosher food was no problem. There was none. I was brought a basket of fruit instead.

I arrived at Kennedy at 3.45pm. Fortunately Avrohom, who had flown to Brooklyn on the day before had hired a car and he met me at the airport.

I was in good time to attend the Rebbe's Maariv at 6.45pm. T.G. the Rebbe looked quite well (KAH) but had lost some weight. However, he had not lost the knack of beaming towards me one of his special glorious smiles. I had brought my usual five bottles of vodka - "for the Rebbe's pleasure." I asked Rabbi Chodakov's advice, whether it would be in order to hand these to the Rebbe. Rabbi Chodakov was very pleased that 1) I had come to spend Yud Shevat at 770, and 2) I had brought the Mashke. It normalized the whole position. He added that psychologically it was excellent.

Avrohom and I were invited to Shaul Cohen's for dinner. We were staying at our good friends Raisie and Myer Menkowitz.

Shacharis next morning - Yud Shevat, was at 9.30am. At 7.30am I was at the Mikvah - no Yankel, no shop, no bank, and **no hot water**.

It took the Rebbe just forty five minutes to daven from Rabbi Yishmoel until the last Kaddish after the Mishnayos. The Rebbe then went to the Ohel. I had breakfast at 1.00pm – soup, beef, plus all the side plates.

Before I left England Roselyn had phoned the Rebbetzen. She had made an appointment for me to call upon her at 2.30pm. I took Avrohom and we stayed until 4.15.

T.G The Rebbetzen looked really well – *Umberrufen!* Funnily enough so did Rabbi Chodakov and Rabbi Label Groner. In fact, I almost did not recognise Rabbi Chodakov. He was standing straight – upright, and he looked twenty years younger. The Rebbetzen gave me the answer and Avrohom expounded it. The Rebbetzen said that the doctors had ordered the Rebbe to retire early to bed at night. So, of course, the Rebbe goes earlier to work. But – there is new no such thing as working all night and all day, or going to bed at 5.00am and back to work at 9.30am. The doctors have ordered a more civilized routine and every one benefits from this.

The Rebbetzen had offered us tea and cake. We offered to wash up afterwards. The Rebbetzen remarked that most Americans use paper plates and yet they all have dishwashers! Amazing!

The farbrengen was at 9.00pm but first of all the Rebbe davened the Maariv service upstairs at 8.40, at which I was present. When I arrived at the hall downstairs, I found that the place was crowded with more people than ever before – everyone who could manage came along to see the Rebbe. I also found that my seat had been taken. There was absolutely no room at all near to where I usually sit.

Rabbi Dvorkin said that I, with all my experience, should not be daunted by the fact, that seemingly there was no room. So, whilst every one was sitting down, I was standing near my place, When the Rebbe walked into the hall, everyone stood up – but I sat down in my seat. Rabbi Dvorkin was right – one does learn from experience.

Tzach (Young Lubavitch) were hiring out short wave radio sets and earphones to enable one to listen to the simultaneous English translation. These were really the last word in telecommunications. No

plugs nor wires were needed. They did a roaring trade by hiring out 350 sets at \$2.50 a time and insisted upon a \$10 deposit.

The translations were good; insofar that one could get a good idea of what the Rebbe was saying. They were definitely not a word for word interpretation such as Shmuel gave in London.

I, of course, could also hear what the Rebbe was saying and there were many occasions when there was complete silence on my radio-set. The translator would ultimately be heard saying, "What the Rebbe was telling us was..." It served its purpose but it was not perfect.

During the farbrengen the Rebbe signalled to me that he had not seen Avrohom. "Avrohom, Avrohom, where is Avrohom?" "He has not said Lechaim." He was soon found.

Next morning a few people wanted to know who was this Avrohom whom the Rebbe was seeking.

The main communication centre at 770 possesses all the latest equipment. In this special room, there are 40 telephones lining the side of one wall.

There are indoor and closed circuit television and the whole room is filled with the latest technical equipment and machinery.

During the farbrengen, the Rebbe related the following Sicho:

### **Do It Yourself, Do Not Rely On Others**

Rabbi Chiya wrote by hand the whole of the Five Books of Moses. First of all he caught a deer in order to get the leather and to make the parchment. He did all this by himself. It was not left to anyone else. He considered that it was more important to write this Torah for youngsters than to sit and learn in the Beis Hamedrash. If something needed to be done, then it was up to him to take action and not to transfer the responsibility to others.

Similarly, the Previous Rebbe (Z.Tz.L) could not trust a Shaliach, an agent; he had to save Jewish souls himself.

Our Rebbe Shlita could not say which were worse – those old days, when the previous Rebbe was involved or these days, in Russia, when so many Jewish souls are being extinguished. This loss is so great today, that it is urgent and vital to salvage even one single soul.

Rabbi Chiya himself prepared the parchment and wrote the Torah so that those children who learnt, would, in their turn, transmit this knowledge to others, thereby saving more Jewish souls.

There is another type of Jew. He waits to be asked to do something. No one offered to help Rabbi Chiya to catch the deer or to write the Chumash. Neither did Rabbi Chiya wait for the children to come to him. He went to them – even to children with gray or white hair, but still only children as far as Jewish knowledge was concerned.

What would have happened in Russia if the previous Rebbe would have waited for help to aid children, to build Chadolim or Mikvah, and so forth.

We see this all through history, from Rabbi Chiya until the previous Rebbe.

It is bad enough, but not too bad, if a child approached him with a request to learn, but unfortunately, there are so many children - in years or knowledge, who did not know that they had to ask for help to learn Yiddishkeit.

We know that the *Kohen Godel* (the High Priest) was compelled to go and help a child - even on Yom Kippur, even during the Avodah on Yom Kippur. *Pikuach Nefesh* in *Ruchniyus* (spiritually) is as vital as *Pikuach Nefesh Begashmiyus* (materially). Especially when unfortunately – the child does not even know how, when or whom to ask.

There were seventy-one members of the Sanhedrin. They were appointed not only to sit together but to go out in seventy-one different ways to save Jewish souls.

The Shulchan Aruch places *Pikuach Nefesh* top of the priority lists. There was no argument and no ambiguity – help had to be given to those who are in great danger, even on the Shabbos, and even though these people do not seek help. One must give immediate assistance, without delay.

Similarly, in Israel today, we Jews cannot afford to lose one Jewish soul. We have to seek the advice of the soldiers and the generals – no other considerations enter into this, neither political nor diplomatic. It was just a straightforward question. Was it a danger to even one Jewish soul?

We cannot accept the decisions of the seventy nations of the world if it is against the Shulchan Aruch, and if it puts the Jewish nation into great danger.

In this week's sedra, we read that G-d hardened the heart of Pharaoh, but finally the Jewish People left Egypt with uplifted hand. Pharaoh actually helped them, by calling upon Moses to get them out of his land. He drove them from exile to freedom. The Jews left Egypt - *chamushim* - armed, but they did not have to use these weapons. Egypt will see today, that the Jews are well armed and prepared. Therefore, Egypt will not touch them.

The Rebbe then again referred to the previous Rebbe and to the Din about helping those who do not request aid when it is a danger to life. Who is to decide whether it is *Pikuach Nefesh*? The best expert in this field is the Judge. If a Rav is asked a *Shaala*, then the Rav must give his judgement irrespective of whether his *Psak* will be obeyed.

The Rebbe continued that he was sending Shluchim to Judea, Jerusalem and the Old City of Safed to strengthen the Jews of Eretz Yisroel, especially regarding education, with emphasis on the Bnos – the daughters, the girls at school.

Here in New York it was impossible to learn *Limudei Kodesh* - Hebrew subjects all day. This was a non-Jewish country and pupils had to study secular subjects. There was no choice. But in Eretz Yisroel, we could and should please ourselves. Officially, pupils should learn *Limudei Kodesh* for half the time. Unfortunately, some schools are worse than in New York and have no Hebrew education at all. Just imagine if 100,000 more children studied Hebrew subjects for just one extra hour – what a big difference that would make for Israel.

Sadat came to Jerusalem and talked peace. Because he came, therefore Israel must do something.

So, they have now commenced to study Arabic – not Yiddishkeit! There is no time for Yidishkeit – but for Arabic, with Arabic teachers, for this, they have found plenty of time. They have found tens of thousands of 'pupils hours' which they could have spent learning *Limudei Kodesh* - to learn Arabic! Poor little children. Besides which, it is against the Shulchan Aruch,

“The hands of Esav are useless, only if the voice is the voice of Jacob.”

The Rebbe warned that he was carefully watching the position to make sure that this 'law' is not smuggled into **all** the schools under the Ministry of Education.

It was a very nice happy farbrengen, after which Avrohom and I retired to the Minkowitz's for food and bed.

## Chapter 25

### BACK HOME

We had already purchased our Pesach Matzo from Rabbi Korf's Bakery. It was tough. When we opened the boxes on Pesach every piece was unbroken and perfect. An axe should have been included with every box.

We were in shul at 7.00am next morning and I got an Aliya. I always seem to be lucky. Avrohom remarked that the reason I was always called up was because I paid – gave a donation for it. "Live and let live," say I.

We caught the 9.00am plane and arrived back in London just over forty-eight hours since I had embarked to New York. It had been a worthwhile trip.

#### THE REBBE'S PLEASURE

On the following Motzei Shabbos I was listening to the broadcast in Manchester of the farbrengen. The Rebbe was giving a Brocha to the Shiluchim who were leaving soon for Israel. The Rebbe was also handing to each of them a bottle of mashke. The Rebbe handed over just five bottles. It might have been coincidental – but I was thrilled and delighted.

During the next farbrengen the Rebbe made the following observations:

All the Jews learnt Torah in the *Botei Midrashim* for twelve months before the first Purim. This vetoed the evil decree of Haman.

Every Jew has a portion in Eretz Yisroel. They also have the choice – to make it a country of Mitzvahs and Torah – or, G-d forbid, a secular, political entity. Israel has to be well armed. Then the *Goyim* will have no say in the matter and all will be peaceful. Just as on Purim, everyone became frightened of the Jews.

Of course, a few Jews are showing fear and they frighten another Jew. No notice must be taken of these people.

Israel is not allowed – according to the Shulchan Aruch - to give any land back if it is needed for the protection of the country.

More settlements should be established – quickly, quickly – without noise or fuss, especially in areas where there are no Arabs – It will be too late afterwards.

This is the Psak Din from the Shulchan Aruch. Then there will be peace in Eretz Yisroel.

I am now looking forward to seeing the Rebbe and our Rebbetzen next Shovuos, P.G.

Meanwhile, I hope you will have enjoyed this Ninth Instalment.

The Rebbe told me once that I could write at least fifty pages on the Sichos which he related on Shovuos.

I have done my best.