

Dear Educator (= parent, teacher, or other) שי,

Following please find some brief “conversation points,” designed to facilitate discussions with your child or student about the Rebbe and their relationship with him today – and particularly, in connection with the special *yomim tovim* and *mitzvos* of Tishrei.

This project is intended to accompany the *Tishrei in Lubavitch* photo book, which has sparked many meaningful conversations between children and parents, students and teachers, but these ideas can also be used independently of the book.

The goals of these materials are:

- a. To help you present the events with the Rebbe in a way that is interesting and meaningful to the child, on their individual level.
- b. To do so in a way that is not nostalgia or “history,” ח"ו, but in a way that is relevant and uplifting to him or her *today*. This tool should help you share the information and inspiration in such a way that the child feels, “*I am special*,” “*I can connect with the Rebbe*,” and “*I am empowered*.”

Wishing you a כתיבה וחתימה טובה לשנה טובה ומתוקה,

Jewish Educational Media
25 Elul, 5776

Please check back at JEMedia.org/TIL for supplementary materials, updates and corrections to this document.

Tishrei with the Rebbe Overview

Objectives.

Children will:

- Appreciate how the *yomim tovim* of Tishrei are a gift from Hashem to help them have a good and meaningful life.
 - Appreciate that Hashem gave them a special gift: the opportunity to have a personal and deep connection with the Rebbe.
 - Appreciate that, by taking advantage of their special opportunity to have the Tishrei experiences connected to, and guided by, the Rebbe, they can “fill their suitcases” with strength and spiritual energy to be better, kinder, stronger, and happier.
-
- **Hashem loves us and wants us to have a relationship with Him, and for us to lead meaningful lives** through being good person, and having an effect on the people around us. Hashem gave us Torah and *mitzvos* as His instruction for how to achieve this.
 - **Hashem gave us *yomim tovim* throughout the year so we can take a break from our busy lives, think about Him, and connect to Him in a special way.** The rich experiences of each Yom Tov – the different *mitzvos*, *tefillos* and *minhagim* – are tools to fortify us and give us strength in different areas. Some are solemn and some are joyous. There are times to celebrate being a Jew, times to think about how we want our lives to be, and times to strengthen our resolve to live as Hashem wants us to. Each *yom tov* helps us focus on different parts of our relationship with Hashem, and of our own character.
 - **These special *yomim tovim* and *mitzvos* throughout give us strength and *chayus* for the rest of the year.** During Tishrei we “pack our suitcases” with special experiences and *chayus*, which we unpack during the course of the year.
 - **Beginning in Elul, the Rebbe dedicates himself to teaching, guiding, and inspiring Klal Yisroel, helping us pack our suitcases with lots of *chayus*:** Farbrengens, where he teaches and advises; Giving *lekach* and *kos shel bracha*; encouraging *simchas beis hashoeva*; rallies for children on *chol hamoed*; sharing his *lulav* and *esrog*; leading *Hakofos* on Simchas Torah; Directing *tahalucha* to bring joy and inspiration to Jews in other

communities; Encouraging us to go on *Mivtzoyim* to share the Mitzvah of *lulav* and *esrog* with other Jews.

- **The Rebbe loves Hashem deeply, and he loves every single Jew. He wants to help each one of us to experience that special connection with Hashem.** When we take full advantage of the opportunity to experience the special moments and *mitzvos* of Tishrei connected to, and emulating the example of, the Rebbe, we embark on our journey through the year with our suitcases brimming: Empowered, uplifted and fulfilled!

Erev Rosh Hashana – פדיון נפש

Objectives.

Children will:

- Understand how the Erev Rosh Hashana פ"נ is unique.
- Appreciate that the Rebbe cares every Jew, about the child and their unique concerns individually, and that they can turn to the Rebbe with whatever is on their mind.
- Take advantage of the once-a-year opportunity and write a personal פ"נ with seriousness and preparation.

- **A פ"נ (פדיון נפש) is the term used amongst *chasidim* for a written request for *brochos* given to the Rebbe.**
- **Like the brain which feels the pain of the entire body, the Rebbe – being a נשמה כללית – feels our pains and needs as his own.** Being very dear to Hashem, his prayers are readily accepted and answered by Hashem.
- **Hashem gives every individual unique challenges** such as relationships with friends or parents, moving to new community, medical conditions – perhaps a family issue of *parnasah*. Every person also more personal spiritual challenges of their own: Perhaps to have more Ahavas Yisroel, to perform *mitzvos* better, to be even better in our learning. Erev Rosh Hashana is a time to request the Rebbe's *bracha* in these areas.
- **A פ"נ is different from a letter to the Rebbe or a "דו"ח" (report).** A פ"נ consists of requests for *brochos* only, unlike a letter where one might also report information or request advice. In a פ"נ, one requests *brochos* for the mundane and the spiritual. Whatever we need help with is important to

Hashem. Though we may think we're small, the Rebbe cares about us and each of our concerns, and asks Hashem to help us.

- **Writing a פ"נ to the Rebbe also builds our *hiskashrus* – connection, to him.** As we approach Rosh Hashana – the head of the year, we strengthen our *hiskashrus* with the Rosh Bnei Yisroel. This, in turn, helps us even more to be better, happier, stronger, people, who are more connected to Hashem and more dedicated to fulfilling His will.

In 770

- **Through the year, the Rebbe received thousands of letters by mail from people around the world.** But during these days before Rosh Hashanah the Rebbe personally received the פ"נ from each and every individual with his own hand.
- **Some people would travel from out of town to personally hand their פ"נ to the Rebbe and be blessed with a sweet new year.** (In later years, there were so many people that the Rebbe would receive פ"נים several times in the days leading up to Rosh Hashana.)
- **The Rebbe stood in his doorway and received the פ"נ in his right hand,** adding it to the stack which he was holding in his left hand. He looked at each individual, wishing them a טובה ומתוקה לשנה טובה ורחימה טובה. When the pile of פ"נים accumulated in his hand, the Rebbe placed it on a small desk just inside his room.
- **The Rebbe, as a great *tzaddik*, could have chosen to spend the day in his own *avodah*, preparing for Rosh Hashana.** But he chose to be with *chasidim* on this day.

Personalize it (discussion):

What might you write this year?

פ"נ כללי

- In addition to the individual letters and requests there was a communal pan, signed by *chasidim* asking the Rebbe, as the ראש בני ישראל, to bless the family of *chasidim* and of *klal yisrael*, with a sweet new year.
- On Erev Rosh Hashana (and the days leading up to it) the פ"נ כללי was available to be signed in the large *shul* of 770. *Chasidim* young and old were able to sign their names on. Each would add a small sum of money for Tzedaka, called דמי פ"נ, to go along with the Pan.

- This פ"נ was presented in person to the Rebbe in person on Erev Rosh Hashana, after the individual *chasidim* would finish giving their פנים to the Rebbe. A group of senior *chasidim* would represent all of the *chasidim* to present the פ"נ to the Rebbe. The Rebbe would read the Pan at the door to his office and respond with a *bracha*. This was a very special and emotional moment. Several hours before the start of the new year, the Rebbe would shower *klal yisrael* with *brochos* for a שנה טובה ומתוקה.
- The פ"נ was composed by *eltere chasidim* on behalf of all *chasidim* and all of *klal yisrael*. They deliberated about what to include and the wording. In addition to asking Hashem to bless the entire Jewish people with a good year, there were specific requests, such as: The Jews living in Eretz Yisrael should be safe and secure; the Jews living in Russia should be able to leave and serve Hashem without fear; the Rebbe's *shluchim* should be successful in their *shlichus* amidst health and prosperity; all Jews and *chasidim* should have abundant livelihood; that the Rebbe and the Rebbe's wives themselves should be healthy and that Hashem should fulfill the Rebbe's desires for all of Klal Yisrael.
- After receiving the פ"נ, the Rebbe set out for the Ohel of his Rebbe – the Friediker Rebbe, bringing along the פ"נ that had been handed and sent to him.
- The Rebbe would also read the פ"נ during the break between Musaf and Mincha on Yom Kippur, and on Hoshana Raba.

Personalize it (discussion):

- What might be included this year – for your local community, Chabad as a whole, the entire Jewish people, the world?
- “What might you think about during *tekiyos*. Write it down, put it into an envelope. Read before going to shul, or take it with you to shul.

See below for further reading.

Vov Tishrei, Rebbetzin Chana's Yahrzeit

Objectives.

Children will:

- Appreciate that Vov Tishrei is special to the Rebbe, and why it is special to them, as well.
- Appreciate the personage of Rebbetzin Chana.
- Appreciate the Rebbe's deep love and reverence for his mother.
- Appreciate the Rebbe's appreciation and empowerment of women and their role in the world and Yiddishkeit.
- See the Rebbe as a devoted son, and understand how they can emulate him.

About Rebbetzin Chana

- The Rebbe left Russia in 1927, at the age of 25, after an emotional parting from his parents. They couldn't attend his wedding the next year, and they were able to communicate only through letters. In 1939 Rabbi Levi Yitzchak, the Rebbe's father, was exiled. He passed away five years later, in Kazakhstan, the farthest part of the Soviet Union.
- Rebbetzin Chana finally got out of Russia in 1946. Immediately when she arrived in Paris, France (in 1947) the Rebbe flew from the USA to greet her – after 20 long years having not seen one-another! They travelled back to the US together, by ship.
- For the next seventeen years, the Rebbe took care of his mother, seeing to her every need. He visited her every single day, even if only for a few precious minutes! Besides for Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka – the Rebbe's wife – Rebbetzin Chana was the Rebbe's only immediate relative in New York.
- During nice weather, one would sometimes see the Rebbe speaking with his mother outside of her apartment at the corner of Kingston Avenue and President Street, or as mother and son walked up Kingston Avenue, with the Rebbe supporting her and holding her hand.
- Rebbetzin Chana sat in a special chair, similar to the Rebbe's, in the front of the women's section of the shul. After davening on Yom Tov, before everyone went home for the Yom Tov *se'uda*, men, women and children would gather in front of 770 to see Rebbe escorting his mother on her way home.

- The Rebbe would walk Rebbetzin Chana to the front door of 770. Outside the doorway, the Rebbe would stop and watch as Rabbi Berel Junik would escort her down the front steps and walkway of 770, turn right, and walk toward Kingston Avenue. The crowd observed the beautiful scene of the Rebbe seeing his mother off. As Rebbetzin Chana would turn up Kingston Avenue, the Rebbe leaned forward to catch just one more glimpse of his mother as she left his view. The Rebbe would return to his room, and only then did the assembled begin walking home.
- On Shabbos Shuva, the sixth of Tishrei 5725 (1964) Rebbetzin Chana took ill and passed away. After the Shiva finished, throughout the year he said Kaddish after his mother, the Rebbe *farbrenge*d every single Shabbos to honor his mother, something which he never did before!
- The Rebbe introduced an entire new method of learning Rashi in Rebbetzin Chana's honor. Each week, he explained a Rashi on the Parsha. In fact, he would go on to explain hundreds of Rashis on the Torah using the special approach to Rashi which he shared in Rebbetzin Chana's memory.
- Each year on her *yahrzeit*, the Rebbe would mark the date by observing the special customs of a *yahrzeit*, such as, leading davening as the *chazan*. He would hold a *farbrengen*, often focusing on the special responsibilities of Jewish women. Every year, he would also present a siyum (special explanation on the conclusion a mesechta of gemara) in Rebbetzin Chana's memory. After receiving the פ"ני"ם, the Rebbe set out for the Ohel of *his* Rebbe – the Frierdiker Rebbe, bringing along the פ"ני"ם that had been handed and sent to him.
- Each year, Vov Tishrei would give *chasidim* a glimpse – a small peek at the precious personal relationship between the Rebbe and his mother.

A Note

Parents and teachers have been requesting ideas, language and tools to assist them in discussing the Rebbe with their children.

Videos and photos alone are not enough to engender *hiskashrus*. Obviously, one needs lots of **סייעתא דשמיא** in the *chinuch* of a child, but the role of the parent and the teacher in discussing the sensitive and vital issues of *hiskashrus* – framing the beautiful relationship between Rebbe and *chasid* – is irreplaceable.

These points were composed in an effort to assist *every* parent and teacher in some way. However, there is a large continuum in children's familiarity with *hiskashrus* and *chasidische* experiences. Some children will need to begin from *alef*, while others are familiar with many concepts. We hope that some of these ideas, developed with the input of talented *chasidische* educators, will be relevant and helpful to every child.

The insights and perspectives from those in the real classrooms of school and home are integral as we continue to build and expand this project. Please help us to learn and improve by sharing your experiences, observations and suggestions with us at **TishreiInLubavitch@jemedi.org**.

Please check back at JEMedia.org/TIL for supplementary materials, updates and corrections to this document.