

## ***Blessing for a Friend***

Due to the preparations for the 5744 (1984) “**Lag b'Omer** Children’s Parade” and the associated heavy activity in front of 770 Eastern Parkway in the Crown Heights section of Brooklyn, the World Headquarters of Chabad, it was decided that the couples who wished to receive blessings for children<sup>1</sup> from the **Lubavitcher Rebbe** should not stand outside 770 as usual. Instead, they should wait at 10:00 am at the door of the Rebbe's house, a few streets away at 1304 President Street, where they would have more quiet and privacy.

Knowing that an enormous crowd would gather there, an organizers committee was established to maintain order, to be enforced by the students of the *Kollel*<sup>2</sup>, of which I – **Alter Bukiet** -- was a member.

As it was not my nature to push or order people around, I had requested to be in charge of the area immediately outside the Rebbe's car door, to open it as soon as the Rebbe arrives, and to close it as soon as the Rebbe is seated to ensure that the Rebbe's driver can depart without any delay.

I will never forget the scene that day. There were many couples. People from Chabad and those who were not from Chabad were waiting for the Rebbe to leave his house.

The Rebbe came out at 10:00 am. It took twenty minutes for the Rebbe to reach his car. People were crying and screaming for the Rebbe’s attention. It was so intense.

The Rebbe got into the car and was seated. I began to close the door, when suddenly someone stuck his head into the car and exclaimed to the Rebbe that he is married already for several years and has no children, then hurriedly stated his name and wife's name to the Rebbe. I happened to notice that this individual was a Satmar Chossid. Meanwhile, the pressure on the door was mounting. I tried with all my might to hold the door open so that he wouldn’t get smashed.

The Rebbe blessed him, and then, before the man could withdraw, I hear the Rebbe add something very unusual. He looked directly at the Satmarer and said something like, "The child will need to have someone to play with."

The guy did not get at all what the Rebbe was trying to say. So the Rebbe said to him, *Zucht Awmain* (Say Amen)!" It finally registered and he responded with a loud shout: " *Awmain!*" and moved away from the vehicle. I closed the door and the Rebbe's car pulled away.

\* \* \*

Years pass. I ‘graduated’ to be the emissary of the Lubavitcher Rebbe to Lexington Massachusetts, near Boston. Life goes on.

Fifteen years after that Lag b’Omer incident, on the 24<sup>th</sup> of the Jewish month of *Menachem Av* 5759 [1999: August 6], on what would have been the 80th birthday of

---

<sup>1</sup> It is a 200-year-old tradition in Chabad that the most propitious time of the year to request a blessing for children from a Lubavitcher Rebbe is on *Lag b'Omer*.

<sup>2</sup> Post-yeshiva center for advanced Torah study by young married men.

my father [Rabbi Chaim-Meir Bukiet] of blessed memory,<sup>3</sup> had he not passed away a year and a half before on the 27<sup>th</sup> of *Tevet*, I decided to visit his grave. As it is located in the Montefiore cemetery in Queens NY, where also is located the "Ohel," the resting place of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, it meant that I would have to leave from home soon after midnight in order to arrive around 4:00 - 5:00 AM. That would give me enough time to visit my father's place as well as the Rebbe's, and still be able to get back by 9:00 am to start my regular work day.

At 5 in the morning I was in the Ohel and reading the *Maaneh Loshon* (the long texts recited by many at the grave of a *tzadik*, based on the Zohar). As I was standing there, I noticed a Satmar chasid enter with two young boys. I thought it strange that they should be here at such an hour. My bewilderment increased when after they all finished reciting the Maaneh Loshon, the father turned to his sons and told them, "take out the *maamar* (chasidic in-depth discourse)."

Each son took out a printed copy of the maamar traditionally recited by Chabad boys who reach the age of Bar Mitzvah. The two Satmar boys proceeded to each read the entire maamar. After leaving the Ohel, I saw them again in the reception area, standing near the coffee stand. I couldn't resist the urge to satisfy my curiosity. I approached the father and asked him in Yiddish what brings him here and at such hour?

He responded: "These are the Rebbe's children, they were born as a result of the Rebbe's blessing." He continued that he had been married several years with no children and so decided to try getting a blessing for a son from 'the Lubavitcher.' "The Rebbe blessed me as I requested and then said to me, "The child will need to have someone to play with." I was speechless, so the Rebbe added, "*Zucht Awmain!*" ('Say Amen'). Three times! Finally I realized what he intended and I responded with a loud 'Amen.' And in the merit of his blessing, my wife gave birth to twins, the boys you see in front of you."

I couldn't believe my ears! I must admit I became emotional. "Tell me, when exactly did this happen? Was it perhaps on Lag b'Omer in 5744? Outside the Rebbe's House?"

"Yes and Yes, on Lag b'Omer in 5744 outside the Rebbe's house on President Street inside the Rebbe's car!" confirmed the Satmarer.

"Wow! Amazing!" I exclaimed. "I am the one who held the door open with all my might that it shouldn't get slammed shut on you. Do you remember me?"

"That's right, of course!" he answered quickly, looking into my eyes to see if he could remember the face from so long ago. "And now you are seeing the happy outcome of the story. These twins were born two years and three months after that Lag b'Omer in the merit of the Rebbe's blessing. They are our only children and today is their Bar Mitzvah. They are the Rebbe's children!"

~~~~~

Source: Adapted by Yerachmiel Tilles from the version on a WhatsApp Chassidic Stories group.

**Rabbi Alter Bukiet** is the emissary of the Lubavitcher Rebbe in Lexington, Massachusetts. He established what became and still is a very popular Chabad House and synagogue, of which he is still the Rabbi and Director.

---

<sup>3</sup> An important and highly respected chasid of the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Lubavitcher Rebbes, and the father and grandfather of many Lubavitcher emissaries around the world today.