

Derher

A Chassidisher

א חסידישער דערהער

Early Glimpses

RABBI YOSEF GOLDSTEIN'S MEMOIRS FROM THE EARLY YEARS IN 770

FROM SHKLOV TO NEW YORK

THE EVOLUTION OF THE CHABAD SIDDUR



KISLEV 5785
ISSUE 150 (227)
DECEMBER 2024

לע"נ
מרת דבורה
בת הרה"ת ר' זאב שו"ב ע"ה
קרינסקי
נלב"ע יו"ד כסלו ה'תשע"ג
ת'נ'צ'ב'ה'

נדפס ע"י בנה
הרה"ת ר' הלל דוד וזוגתו מרת שטערנא שרה
ומשפחתם שיחיו
קרינסקי

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Special Thanks to

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A Chassidisher Derher (ISSN 26411059) (USPS 21880) is published monthly by A Chassidisher Derher Inc, 784 Eastern Pkwy, Brooklyn, NY 11213.

Subscription price \$79.95 a year. Periodicals postage paid at Brooklyn, NY.

POSTMASTER: Please send address changes to A Chassidisher Derher, 784 Eastern Pkwy, Brooklyn, NY 11213.



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has been made possible

לזכות
הרה"ת ר' שלום וזוגתו מרת שרה
וילדיהם ישראל, ריסא, חי' מושקא,
אמונה מלכה, יעקב יהודה, ולאה שיחיו
אייזיקוביץ

לרגל יום הבהיר ר"ח כסלו

ולע"נ
מרת רחל בת הוו"ח ר' שניאור זלמן
יששכר געצל הלוי ע"ה דוכמאן
מנעוועל
נלב"ע יום הבהיר ר"ח כסלו ה'תשפ"ג



EVERY YID CONNECTS

Before the Frierdiker Rebbe relocated the headquarters of Lubavitch to the United States, there were many descendants of Chabad Chassidim scattered throughout the country. Although they had founded numerous “Nusach-Ari” congregations, many of these Chassidim gradually lost touch with their true identity and were in desperate need of an awakening.

Things began to change when several Tomchei Temimim alumni moved to the States, infusing Chassidishe warmth into the existing Chabad community. At the behest of the Frierdiker Rebbe, they founded “Agudas Chassidei Chabad” to organize the disparate factions of the community. The Frierdiker Rebbe also sent “*Shadarim*”—distinguished elder Chassidim who visited communities across the country, raising funds for the Rebbe’s institutions in Europe while teaching Chassidus and farbrenging with the local Jewish communities.

In 5699, the Frierdiker Rebbe sent the venerable mashpia, Reb Shmuel Levitin, as a *shadar*. In addition to visiting scores of communities, Reb Shmuel also sent letters of encouragement, including a telling letter about the Yom Tov Yud-Tes Kislev:

“This coming Monday, Parshas Vayeshev, 19 Kislev, marks 140 years since the release of the Alter Rebbe from prison in Petersburg, where he was arrested due to

GOT FEEDBACK?

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פפ

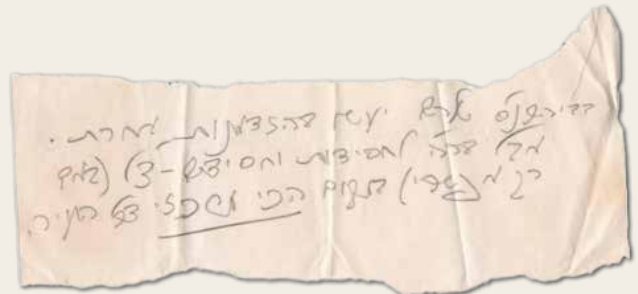
a lack of appreciation for him and the new method of serving Hashem that he introduced. Since then, this day is celebrated as a Yom Tov in all corners of the world, with a special *seuda* where members of Anash gather together for a farbrengen, thanking Hashem that he graced us with this great, luminous approach to Yiddishkeit.

“Thank G-d, since the time he was released, this approach to Yiddishkeit was disseminated further and further, through the work of the dynasty of Lubavitcher Rabbeim in each generation, including the current Rebbe, *Shlita*. All Jews appreciate the great privilege of having been exposed to this immense light, illuminating the entire world...

“...Today, every Jew feels and recognizes that Yud-Tes Kislev is a Yom Tov. It is thus expected that Jews all over, especially Anash in America and Canada, will celebrate the Yom Tov of Yud-Tes Kislev in all the ‘Nusach-Ari’ shuls... Where they will farbreng together and strengthen one another in the ways of Chassidus and *avodas Hashem*, and strengthen their commitment to [raise funds for] the upkeep of the Rebbe Shlita’s household...”¹

Of course, over the years the Rebbe encouraged that Yud-Tes Kislev be properly utilized, bringing as many people as possible to the light of Chassidus.

In the following *ksav yad kodesh*, the Rebbe instructs members of a shul how to conduct the community’s farbrengen in honor of Yud-Tes Kislev:



בביהכנ"ס שלהם יעשו בהזדמנות אחרת. אבל בר"ה לחסידות וחסידיים – צ"ל (באם רק אפשר) במקום הכי מרכזי דכל העיר.

You can make [a farbrengen] at your shul on another occasion. However, on Rosh Hashanah of Chassidus and Chassidim—the event needs to be held (if at all possible) in the **most central** location of the entire city.²

May all of our efforts in *hafatzas hama'ayanos chutza*, spreading Chassidus throughout the world, finally bring the desired result with the coming of Moshiach, now!

The Editors

כ"ף מרחשון ה'תשפ"ה

1. Toldos Chabad B'Arzos Habris, p. 159.

2. Published in *Teshura*, Butler-Lowenthal 5783.



לזכות
החייל בצבאות ה'
מאיר שלמה שיחי'
לרגל האפשרעניש' שלו
כ"ו כסלו גר'ב' דחנוכה ה'תשפ"ה

נדפס ע"י הוריו
הרה"ת ר' לוי זוזגנו מרת
מנוחה מינדל שיחי'
לברטוב

The Grand Departure

IN HONOR OF 60 YEARS SINCE THE REBBE INTRODUCING HIS REVOLUTIONARY APPROACH TO UNDERSTANDING RASHI, 5725—5785, THIS MONTHLY COLUMN WILL FEATURE AN ADAPTATION OF ONE OF THE REBBE'S "RASHI SICHOS."

COMPILED BY: RABBI MENDEL VOGEL

וַיֵּצֵא יַעֲקֹב מִבְּאֵר שֶׁבַע וְגו' (כה, י)

וַיֵּצֵא: לֹא הָיָה צְרִיךְ לִכְתּוֹב אֶלָּא וַיֵּלֶךְ יַעֲקֹב חֲרָנָה, וְלָמָּה הַזְכִּיר יֵצִיאָתוֹ? אֶלָּא מוֹגִיד שֶׁיֵּצִיאָת צְדִיק מִן הַמְּקוֹם עוֹשֶׂה רָשָׁם, שֶׁבְּזִמְנֵן שֶׁהַצְּדִיק בְּעִיר, הוּא הוֹדָה הוּא זִיוָה הוּא הַדְּרָה; יֵצֵא מִשָּׁם, פְּנֵה הוֹדָה פְּנֵה זִיוָה פְּנֵה הַדְּרָה... (רש"י)

“And Yaakov left: The possuk should only have written: ‘And Yaakov went to Charan.’ Why did it mention his departure? But this tells [us] that the departure of a tzaddik from a place makes an impression, for while the tzaddik is in the city, he is its beauty, he is its splendor, he is its majesty. When he departs from there, its beauty has departed, its splendor has departed, its majesty has departed...” (Rashi)

Rashi’s words require explanation: How can we say that with Yaakov’s departure from Charan, its “beauty,” “splendor” and “majesty” departed with him? Yaakov may have left Be’er Sheva, but Yitzchok and Rivka remained behind!

Actually, the Midrash in Bereishis Rabbah—which is the source for Rashi—raises this very question, and answers that “the merit of one *tzaddik* is not the same as that of two *tzaddikim*”; more *tzaddikim* equals more merit, and when one *tzaddik* leaves some of the merit departs with him. Rashi, however, does not make any mention of this answer. Why not?

To clarify this, we must also point out that Rashi differs from the Midrash in another aspect: The Midrash says only “הוא הודה, הוא זיווה,” while Rashi adds “הוא הודה.”

We find something similar in Rashi’s own commentary: On our *possuk* Rashi writes “פנה הודה, פנה זיווה, פנה הדרה”, whereas in Megillas Rus—regarding the departure of No’ami and Rus from the “fields of Moav”—Rashi writes “פנה זיווה, פנה הדרה, פנה שבחה”

The difference between “שבחה” and “הודה” is that “שבחה” means the city is glorified by the very presence of the *tzaddik*; the merit of the *tzaddik* protects the city and its inhabitants



and brings them an abundance of *brachos*. On the other hand, "הודה" means that the saintliness of the *tzaddik* causes a spirit of awe to descend upon the people (as we find with Moshe Rabbeinu, that when the Yidden saw the splendid rays of beauty ("קרני הוד") radiating from his countenance, "they were afraid to come near him"). This, in turn, has a positive impact on people's conduct, for as long as the *tzaddik* is in the city the people feel bashful in his presence and strive to follow his ways.

According to this, we can answer our first question: It is true that Yitzchok and Rivka remained in Be'er Sheva, and their *zechus* definitely gave the city an extra layer of protection. However, with regard to influencing people's *behavior*, they faced limitations: About Yitzchok, Rashi writes (on *posuk* 13) that "his eyes had become dim, and he was confined in the house," and Rivka (in addition to the fact that she was generally in her house, due to "*kol kevuda bas melech penima*—the glory of the daughter of the king is from within"), was probably preoccupied with attending to Yitzchok's needs. Clearly, then, they were limited in their ability to have any influence on the city's affairs.

It was specifically Yaakov who bestowed "הוד" upon the city, effecting a positive change in the conduct of the locals.

The Midrash, on the other hand, does not take into consideration the *tzaddik's* influence on the city's conduct (which is why the Midrash doesn't mention anything about "הודה"), but rather only the blessings which come to the city due to the *tzaddik's* very presence.

We can answer our second question: According to Rashi, the question of the Midrash ("How can we say that Yaakov's departure from Charan caused a void if Yitzchok and Rivka remained behind?") doesn't exist, since Yaakov *did*, in fact, possess a quality which Yitzchok and Rivka did not: "הוד." But according to the Midrash, which does not discuss this concept (as explained above), it is, indeed, a valid question.



The Ohr HaChaim explains that the *possuk* יַעֲקֹב מִצָּרַיִם "ויצא יעקב ממצרים" is also a description of the *neshama's* descent from its Heavenly abode to the Earth below—from "Be'er Sheva" all the way to "Charan." It is precisely because of this great descent that the *neshama* (through its *avoda* on earth) attains the ability to reach the greatest of heights—greater even than where it had been.

According to this, Rashi's question and answer take on a whole new meaning: We know that the primary novel accomplishment of the *neshama* is to be in "Charan"—a materialistic world filled with distractions and disturbances which hide the truth of Torah and *mitzvos*—and, nevertheless, to overcome the challenges, and carry out its mission of making a *dira b'tachtonim*.

Why, then, does the *possuk* mention the *neshama's* departure from "Be'er Sheva"—i.e. its sublime and heavenly source—a feat that seems insignificant compared to its primary accomplishment?

We see from here, Rashi answers, that the departure of the *neshama* from its heavenly source *does* have an impact. The "going out" of the *neshama* from its pristine state of oneness with Hashem is in and of itself a great accomplishment. For the *neshama* to leave a state where it is constantly basking in Hashem's "beauty," "splendor" and "majesty" is *mesirus nefesh*.

Takeaway:

In the *zechus* of this *mesirus nefesh* alone every *Yid* deserves that Hashem should bring him back to his true home, with the *Geula ho'amitis v'hashleima* through Moshiach Tzidkeinu, *teikef umiyad mamash!*

(Likkutei Sichos vol. 35, p. 119)



Compiled By: Rabbi Levi Greenberg (OH)

Written By: Rabbi Mendel Jacobs

A World at Peace

At the farbrengen on Yud-Tes Kislev 5744, the Rebbe discussed the fact that world events had become rather turbulent and called on everyone to undertake a new initiative as a spiritual way to bring about stability. The idea was that even those who do not currently daven with *Nusach Ha'Arizal* should insert two phrases into their daily davening: "*Hareini mekabel...*" at the beginning, and "*Ach tzaddikim...*" at the end. The Rebbe explained that the increase in *ahavas Yisroel* expressed by reciting "*Hareini mekabel*" will stand as a *zechus*, and reciting the *possuk* of "*Ach tzaddikim*," on the theme of stability and peace, will actually bring stability and peace to the world.¹

A short while later, the Rebbe was questioned about his new suggestion, and released a written response to the public. The following is a copy of the Rebbe's final edit before the answers were published.²

(The words the Rebbe added are in **bold** type. For the sake of clarity, in the English translation, we omitted the words that the Rebbe crossed out.)

אמירתו לתפלה (הראשונה דכל יום (היינו שחרית) ופירושה:

כפשוטה שמקבל סתם מקבלה על ושאמירתו זו מספיקה.

לכל היום כולו (ע"ד ברכת התורה לשם

~~חוד קוב"ה ושכנתיה~~)

משא"כ אמירת הפסוק אך צדיקים גו' שייך לכל להתפלה

(ע"ד אל תירא וגו') "יודו לשמך" - ראה ברכות . . הובא

בשו"ע אדה"ז . . . ולכן אמירתה אחר כל תפלה

(ג) ע"ד הדפסת התניא באותם המקומות שע"ע לא נדפס -
האם הכוונה רק למדינות או גם לערים,

המענה:

"שייך גם לערים שם נמצאים בני"ה."

הרי מודפסת רשימת דפוסי התניא (בתניא הוצאת קהת)

ושם בכ"כ ערים במדינה אחת.

במענה על שאלות רבים:

(א) האם בעת כינוס וכיו"ב של אנשים, נשים וטף - כדאי
לומר אתם "הריני מקבל עלי מ"ע של ואהבת לרעך" (בכדי
לזכות את אלו שאולי עוד לא אמרו זה) -

הואיל כ"ק אדמו"ר שליט"א להשיב:

"מובן ושלשוט שנכון במאד".

(ב) למה אין אומרים הריני מקבל וכו' גם לפני תפלת מנחה
וערבית (ע"ד שאומרים אך צדיקים וגו' אחרי כל תפלה):

תשובת כ"ק אדמו"ר שליט"א:

אמירת הריני מקבל עלי כו' לרעך אינו חלק מהתפלה או
שייך לענין תפלה דוקא, אלא ענין בפ"ע, ומכיון ששייך לכל
עניני היום כולו פשוט שכדאי להקדים אמירתו. ומפני כמה
טעמים (כפי שנתבאר במק"א) תקנו לאמרו קודם סמכו

In response to the questions posed by the public:

1) During any gathering or the like of men, women, or children, would it be appropriate to recite with them the phrase “*Hareini mekabel alai mitzvas aseï shel vahavta l’reiacha*” (thereby giving a chance for those who may have not yet recited it to do so)?

The Rebbe Shlita replied:

“It is understood that this is very appropriate.”

2) Why don’t we say “*Hareini mekabel...*”

before Mincha and Maariv as well (much as we say “*Ach tzaddikim...*” after each of these *tefillos*)?

The Rebbe Shlita’s response:

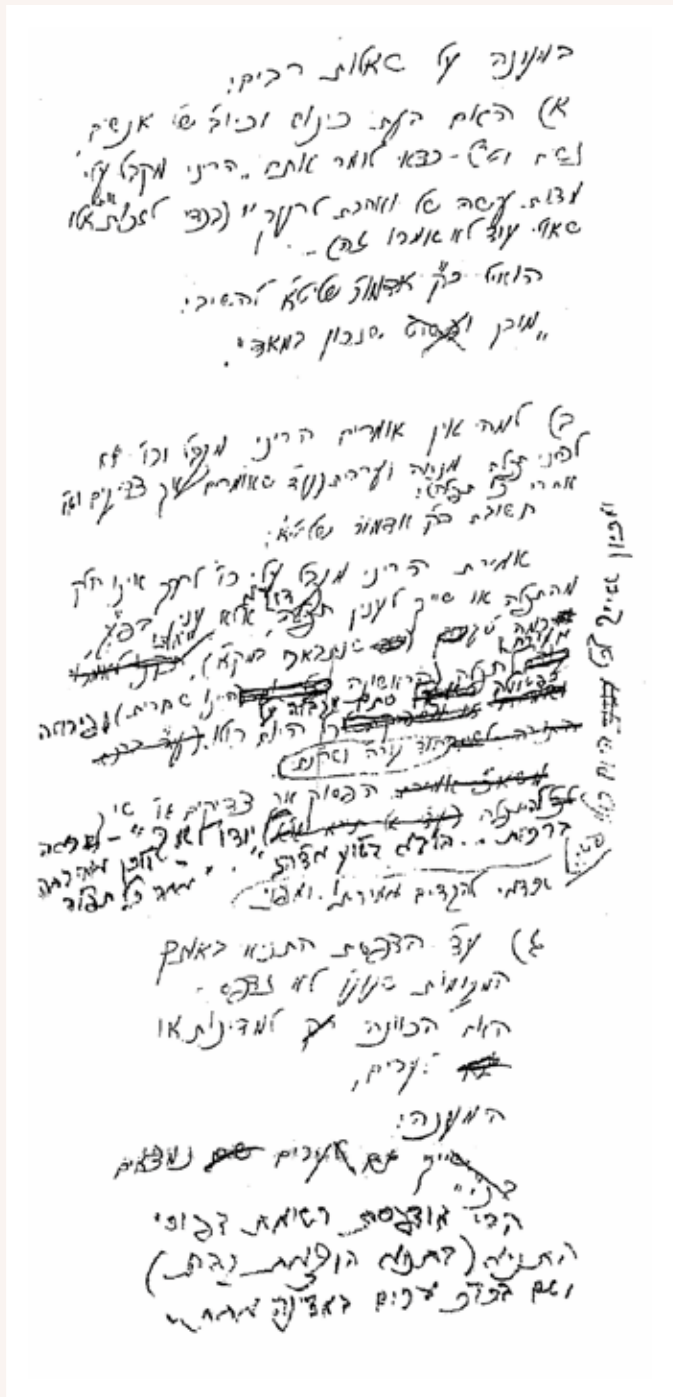
Reciting “*Hareini mekabel alai...l’reiacha...*” (I accept upon myself [the mitzvah to love] your fellow person) is not part of davening and has nothing to do with prayer **specifically**; rather it is a separate issue. **Being that it** [the mitzvah to love your fellow] **applies to the entire day**, **it is obvious that it is best to say it as early** [in the day] **as possible**. For a reason explained elsewhere, **its recitation was inserted right before a tefilla** ([and] the first one, which is Shacharis). **Its most simple implication is that one accepts** [upon himself this mitzvah] **straightforwardly**, for the entire duration of the day.

The *possuk* “*Ach tzaddikim*” is connected [specifically] with prayer, [as it mentions] “*Yodu lishmecha*—They shall give thanks to your Name.” See *Brachos* [32b] cited in the Alter Rebbe’s *Shulchan Aruch* [Orach Chaim 93:1]⁴, which is why it is recited after each *tefilla*.

During that same period, the Rebbe had called for an edition of the Tanya to be printed in every location where there were Jewish people. The question was asked:

3) Regarding printing Tanyas in places where it has not yet been printed—does this apply to countries [and states] or cities? The [Rebbe’s] answer is:

A list of all the printings of Tanya has been printed (in the Tanya published by Kehos), and there [one can see that editions were printed] **in multiple cities within one country** [and state].



1. Published in *Likkutei Sichos* vol. 25, p. 373ff.
2. *Ksav yad kodesh* published in Teshura, Aronov-Sandhaus 5764.
3. It was the Rebbe’s intention to cross out this entire line, but the Rebbe would not put a line through the words referring to Hashem’s name, so he circled them instead.
4. The Gemara and *Shulchan Aruch* cite the *possuk* of “*Ach tzaddikim*” as proof that after concluding a prayer, one must settle down for a while before getting up to leave.

טור 'לעבן מיטן רבי'ן הוקדש לזכרון
ולעילוי נשמת
ר' שמואל ב"ר יהושע אליהו ז"ל
ואשתו מרת שרה ע"ה בת ר'
יקותיאל ומרת לאה הי"ד
תנ"צ'ב'ה

ע"י בנם
ר' יקותיאל יהודה
וזוגתו מרת פעסל לאה ומשפחתם
שיחיו
רוהר



A YEAR OF MIRACLES

Kislev 5750

As “*Shnas Nissim*” progresses, events grow more and more exciting; the Rebbe continues to point out incredible nissim that are already underway and many more that are yet to come. The content and tone of the Rebbe’s words at Shabbos farbrengens and at the weekday sichos truly reflect the wondrous spirit of the year.

COMPILED BY: RABBI YANKY BELL

WRITTEN BY: RABBI MENDEL JACOBS



“CHANUKAH LIVE,” 28 KISLEV 5750



Where's the Excitement?

The farbrengen of Shabbos Parshas Toldos, 4 Kislev, began in a celebratory tone: The Rebbe singled out a group of guests, calling on them to say *l'chaim* together with the one who brought them, instructing that they should sing a Simchas Torah *niggun*.

In the first *sicha*, the Rebbe expressed his surprise at the fact that incredible events are taking place around the globe, yet people don't seem to notice just how extraordinary they are! In Russia, where a brutal Communist dictatorship ruled with an iron fist for 70 years, a total transformation is in the works. The same is true for China, which is also undergoing change and becoming more connected with the rest of the world, in contrast to the way they've been for hundreds of years. India, too, is experiencing positive change, as is Japan and others. These changes have significant positive effects on the lives of millions and billions of people. What is more: anyone who knows a bit of world history understands that in the past, revolutions have always come with bloodshed. But with Hashem's help, these revolutions around the world have been peaceful so far, with almost no bloodshed and even with relative economic stability. This is such a great miracle!

Something even more incredible: the changes that occurred in societies with revolutions in previous generations, even when they came at the cost of terrible war and famine, pale in comparison to the societal transformations happening now with peaceful revolutions. How is it that people are not paying attention to what's going on?!

The Rebbe called on everyone to take a lesson from these world events: First, to recognize and appreciate Hashem's kindness, how the world is moving to a better place so rapidly, and in a peaceful way. Second, to strengthen our belief in the imminent coming of Moshiach indicated by these world occurrences, based on the predictions of Chazal in Gemara Sota.¹

The next week, Shabbos Parshas Vayitzei, the Rebbe continued on the theme of *Geulah*, connecting the *Geulah* experienced by the Mittlerer Rebbe on Yud Kislev, as well as the *Geulah* experienced by the subsequent Rabbeim, including the Frierdiker Rebbe (on Yud-Beis Tammuz) with the *Geulah* of all the Jewish people. "The Rebbe, *Nessi Doreinu*, took responsibility for every member of the generation to bring the *Geulah*," the Rebbe said. "He already proclaimed that Moshiach is ready to come, all

we have to do is 'polish the buttons' of our clothing. In fact [we've already completed that as well;] all we have to do is polish just a little more..."

The Rebbe called for many Chassidische farbrengens to be arranged in the days ahead, coming from the *Chag HaGeulah* of Yud Kislev, continuing to Yud-Daled Kislev, Tes-Vov Kislev, and then Yud-Tes Kislev and Chanukah.²

There were many weekdays when the Rebbe spoke shorter *sichos* from his *shtender* after Mincha and Maariv. On the night following Yud-Daled Kislev, right after davening, the Rebbe began walking away from the *shtender* while speaking (without a microphone), saying that "Today is Tuesday, when Hashem proclaimed double 'Ki-Tov', and it is the night of the 15th of the month, when the moon is at completion, so we will give each person [a dollar] to be given to tzedakah..."

Upon reaching the bottom of the steps, the Rebbe repeated some of his words into the microphone and began distributing dollars.

As the Rebbe Sees Fit

The next Shabbos, Parshas Vayishlach, once again had an eventful farbrengen.

It was 18 Kislev, the day before the Yom Tov of Yud-Tes Kislev, and the Rebbe dedicated much of his talk to



FALL OF THE BERLIN WALL, CHESHVAN 5750, MARKING THE BEGINNING OF THE COLLAPSE OF THE SOVIET UNION.

A RAV FROM
BORO PARK
THANKS THE
REBBE FOR THE
BOCHURIM WHO
CAME TO SPEAK
AT HIS SHUL.



CHAIM BARUCH HALBERSTAM VIA JEM 36287

the theme of Rosh Hashanah L'Chassidus.

After distributing bottles of *marshke* to people who would be making events and farbrengens in the coming week, the Rebbe began singing his father's *hakafof niggun*. Suddenly the Rebbe stood up and danced at his place with great joy, clapping enthusiastically in a way not yet seen since the beginning of Shnas Nissim. The joy in the shul was immense as the Rebbe turned to each side with a big smile on his face, encouraging the singing for a long time.

Toward the end of the farbrengen, a Chossid named Reb Yosef Nemoytin (who had assisted the Rebbe's father, Harav Levi Yitzchok, during his final months in Kazakhstan and had since been privy to a special relationship with the Rebbe) stood up to say *l'chaim*. He first made a loud *bracha* "*Shehecheyanu*," in honor of all the incredible *giluyim* seen from the Rebbe in the recent past, and then he said, "Rebbe, your children [pointing at the crowd] asked me to ask the Rebbe that we should have a farbrengen on Yud-Tes Kislev with the Rebbe.³ Some even asked that the Rebbe should say a *maamar*. I told them that the Rebbe will do as he sees fit; but nevertheless, I'm conveying the message to the Rebbe. And please can I have a piece of *Mezonos*."

The Rebbe gave him a piece of cake and responded,

"You already said the right answer, that I will do as I see fit." Reb Yosef said to the Rebbe, "If so, give me another piece of *Mezonos* for giving them the correct answer!" The Rebbe gave him another two pieces of cake, and the farbrengen concluded soon after.

What To Do During Nittel?

On Shabbos Parshas Vayeshev, the first day of Chanukah, the Rebbe spoke about many interesting subjects, including the fact that the non-Jewish holiday that occurs in the upcoming week. Since public schools are not in session on this day, the Rebbe encouraged everyone to utilize time to gather Jewish public school children and teach them about Yiddishkeit.

This holiday is also the time of "*Nittel*," when many have the custom to refrain from Torah study. The Rebbe encouraged everyone to make sure not to waste time, but to engage in productive activities, like playing chess, which sharpens the mind for Torah study. Additionally, the Rebbe advised that one can use the time to envision the face of the Rebbe Rashab, since we have one extant

photograph of his holy face. This led to an interesting discussion about the photos and paintings of the Rabbeim that we do have, and the fact that no pictures remain of the Rebbe Maharash, the Mittlerer Rebbe, the Mezritcher Maggid, or the Baal Shem Tov.

Of course, the Rebbe spoke extensively about Chanukah; regarding the *minhag* of giving Chanukah gelt to children, and the light of the Menorah, which is clear and evident, even on Shabbos.

At this point, the Rebbe stood up to look at the Menorah standing in the other corner of the shul, and then added: “The *gabboim* forgot to use bigger candles which would stay alight throughout the whole Shabbos. They will surely fix this for next Shabbos [the last day of Chanukah], with candles that will stay lit throughout the entire day, similar to the way it was with the Menorah of the Beis Hamikdash.”

The next Friday after Shacharis, the Rebbe asked to tell the *gabboim* to use regular candles, and to publicize this everywhere

Dollars

As he would every Sunday, the Rebbe spent hours each week greeting thousands of people, offering words of blessing and advice in many areas of life.

On Sunday, 5 Kislev, an individual came to the Rebbe saying that he assists the Chabad Shliach in Arad, Rabbi Bentzion Lipsker. The Rebbe told him to “Keep fighting for all the good things!”

The individual asked the Rebbe if he has anything to convey to the people in Arad, and the Rebbe said, “Give them regards, to all the Jews there, and tell them that Moshiach is coming very soon!”

A child passed by the Rebbe and said, “Moshiach should come right now!” The Rebbe responded, “If you will learn better, Moshiach will come faster!”

On Sunday, 12 Kislev, an individual came to the Rebbe and said that 15 years earlier, he was very sick and the Rebbe blessed him to dance at all his children’s weddings. Now that his last child was getting married, he’s asking the Rebbe for an additional blessing, and the Rebbe said, “Now you have grandchildren. You should be at their weddings too!”

A woman passed by the Rebbe who hadn’t seen him since 5712, and she greeted the Rebbe, saying, “I am the

daughter of [so-and-so],” and the Rebbe said, “I know; and you’re cousins with [so-and-so]. It’s been a long time since you’ve been here last.” The woman asked the Rebbe for a *bracha* and began crying, and the Rebbe said, “There’s no need to cry. Moshiach is coming.”

Gershon Salomon of an organization called “Temple Mount Faithful” was introduced to the Rebbe, and the Rebbe blessed him with *besuros tovos*.

Gershon: “I want to tell the Rebbe about the grave situation at *Har Habayis*. The Arabs are desecrating the place, destroying the remnants of the first and second Batei Mikdash.”

The Rebbe: “Unfortunately, this is nothing new. This situation has been going on for forty years now. This is the fault of the Jewish people for not caring enough about it.”

Gershon: “It’s a weakness on the part of the Jews.”

The Rebbe: “I don’t know if it’s a weakness as much as carelessness. I’m sure they’re all busy with good things, but not with the most important matters of Yiddishkeit for the Jewish people and for Eretz Yisroel. But now is not a good time to speak ill of our fellow Jews. On the contrary, we should be ‘*melamed zechus*’ (seek merits on their behalf); a *zechus* that comes from strengthening Torah and mitzvos.”

Gershon: “Yes, but perhaps it would be a good idea to come out with a proclamation (‘*kol korei*’) that the Jews must not allow this travesty to continue!”

The Rebbe: “There have been many such proclamations. The problem is that there are some people who think that once a proclamation has been issued, with a whole ‘hoo-ha’, they are then free to go about doing more important matters.”

Gershon asked the Rebbe if he can meet with the Rebbe in private to discuss certain important matters, and the Rebbe said:

“You already met with me [now], and I already gave you my main message. If I would meet with you in private, it would show that whatever you said until now was not valid or important. There’s no need to discuss matters in secret; everything should be said publicly, in a loud voice—an actual ‘*kol korei*’, not a written one; one that translates into real action.”

The Rebbe handed Gershon an additional dollar and said:

“This is my symbolic participation in your future writings about matters of Yiddishkeit.”



THE REBBE
PARTICIPATES
IN THE FUNERAL
PROCESSION
OF REB NISSEN
GORDON.

On Sunday, Yud-Tes Kislev, an individual passed by the Rebbe saying, “My wife is a Lubavitcher.” The Rebbe replied, “You too are a Lubavitcher; you just don’t know it yet.”

An individual with an illness passed by asking for a *bracha* to feel better, and the Rebbe asked him, “Perhaps you wrote a note with your name and your mother’s name?” The man was in shock. He had indeed written a note and put it in his pocket, but forgot to give it to the Rebbe.

On Sunday, 26 Kislev, a *rav* from Boro Park passed by the Rebbe and thanked him for sending shluchim to

speak in his shul on Shabbos. (Since the beginning of the year, the Rebbe had been speaking incessantly about the need to gather Jews together every Shabbos and teach them Torah, and many *bochurim* and *yungeleit* followed through with these instructions.)

The *rav* said to the Rebbe: “I asked the *yungerman*, ‘Where do you get the strength to walk all the way to our shul in the freezing rain?’ and he said, ‘The Rebbe gives us the strength.’”

The Rebbe replied, “The *Aibershter* gives the strength. I pass on what comes from Hashem.”



THE REBBE DELIVERS
A SICHA AT
“CHANUKAH LIVE.”



THE REBBE WATCHES THE SCREEN
DISPLAYING THE CHANUKAH GATHERING
IN MOSCOW IN REAL TIME.



Reb Nissen Gordon Z"L

Throughout Kislev, many interesting and extraordinary occurrences took place in the Rebbe's presence. One of them was the *levaya* of the writer, Reb Nissen Gordon. Decades earlier, Reb Nissen had the great *zechus* of publishing a series of interviews with the Rebbe's mother, Rebbetzin Chana, in *Di Yiddische Heim* magazine.

On 30 Kislev at 1:30 p.m., the Rebbe came outside to participate in the funeral procession, following the hearse across Kingston Avenue. After crossing Kingston, the Rebbe stood there and waited until all the cars leaving for the cemetery were gone, and then turned around and went back to 770.

International Chanukah Celebration

Of course, the most memorable event this month with the Rebbe was the first “Chanukah Live”—linking

Chanukah celebrations from across the globe with the Rebbe's menorah lighting in 770.

The most special moment of the night was when the Chanukah celebration in Moscow, Russia, was broadcast live in 770. As soon as the images from Moscow appeared on the screen, the Rebbe's face changed; shining with extraordinary *nachas-ruach*. After more than half a century of persecution and attempts to stamp out Yiddishkeit, the light of Chanukah was shining brightly again in the heart of the Soviet capital, illuminating—quite literally—the entire world!

Live feed also came in from the Kosel in Yerushalayim, where the Sefardic chief rabbi, Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu, lit the menorah and delivered a heartfelt speech in honor of the Rebbe. Additional live broadcasting came from Chanukah events in Paris and London as well.

The Rebbe addressed the children and the crowds around the globe with two *sichos*, and then distributed Chanukah gelt to the children through their chaperones, and dollars for tzedakah to everyone else present through



THOUSANDS OF CHILDREN GATHER AT 770 TO PARTICIPATE IN THE FIRST "CHANUKAH LIVE" CELEBRATION WITH THE REBBE.



CHANUKAH GELT.



the "Tankistim."

Later that evening, the Rebbe asked to watch a replay of Rabbi Eliyahu's speech on video in his room (as there were sound complications during the live feed).

Much Nachas

There were many interesting written responses from the Rebbe throughout the month, including:

Rabbi Pinchas Feldman from Sydney, Australia wrote to the Rebbe that he is in need of encouragement. The Rebbe replied (13 Kislev):

אם התוועדות דשבת זו והר"ד של התוועדות דשבת שלפני"ז אינו מחזקו איני יודע מה מחזקו ובפרט שזה שנת ה"מ."

"If the farbrengen of the past Shabbos and the transcript of the farbrengen of the previous Shabbos doesn't offer you encouragement, I don't know what will; especially considering that it is the 40th year [of the Rebbe's *nesius*]."

A *bochur* wrote to the Rebbe that he studied by heart the Rebbe's newly published *maamar* for Yud-Daled Kislev, hoping to cause *nachas-ruach* to the Rebbe, the Rebbe wrote, "You caused *nachas-ruach*. I will mention it at the *tziyun*."

A mother of one of the bochorim wrote to the Rebbe that due to a family situation, her son will not be able to go on shlichus with the Talmidim Hashluchim, and she asked the Rebbe what to do about it. The Rebbe replied:

השליחות כאן בעש"ק אחר חצות וכיו"ב אזכיר עה"צ.

Shlichus is done here on Erev Shabbos afternoon, and the like. I will mention this at the *tziyun*. **T**

1. Based on the Tochen Katzar transcription of the farbrengen.
2. Ibid.
3. In those years the Rebbe no longer held farbrengens during the week.



לזכות
החתן הרה"ת ר' שלמה זאב הכהן
והכלה המהוללה
מרת סאניא שיחיו
פרידמאן
לרגל חתונתם י"ב סיון ה'תשפ"ד

נדפס ע"י הוריהם
הרה"ת ר' מיכאל יצחק
וזוגתו מרת חנה שי'
גורקאוו



Early Glimpse

Recollections of **Rabbi Yosef Goldstein**
describing life with the Frieddiker
Rebbe and the Rebbe during their
first years in the United States

By: **Rabbi Bentzion Schtroks**

S



Esteemed educator and master storyteller Rabbi Yosef Goldstein, affectionately known as “Uncle Yossi,” was uniquely privileged to reside on the first floor of 770 during his formative years. This unique front-row seat allowed him to experience many exclusive moments with the Frierdiker Rebbe and to develop a close connection with the Rebbe even before the *nesius*. Rabbi Goldstein was well known for an array of roles that he filled in the Rebbe’s sphere including leading Lag B’omer parades and children’s rallies, and recording the Rebbe’s farbrengens. Presented here are excerpts from his memoirs, drawn from treasured personal accounts he shared with his family.

I was born in Providence, Rhode Island in the year 5687, where my parents had settled after the First World War. My father ran a thriving printing business, and we were the only frum family in the city at the time. My father became known as “Moshe the Shomer Shabbos.” When I was three, my parents made the decision to leave Providence and relocate to New York, for our family to be part of a *frum* community and ensure that my siblings and I received a proper Jewish education.

It wasn't an easy feat, as that time was the height of the Depression. The economy was in bad shape, and the currency was severely devalued. Despite the grave financial risks, my father sold his business in Providence, uncertain of how he would support the family once we arrived.

When we arrived in New York, we settled in Boro Park, where there were only two *yeshivos*: the modern Zionist Eitz Chayim and Toras Emes. Initially, my father wanted to enroll my older brothers in Eitz Chayim, but it was too expensive, so they ended up attending Toras Emes instead.

As I grew older, I also attended Toras Emes. At that time, the yeshiva was run by Rabbi Yisroel Jacobson, a prominent Chabad chossid in the U.S., and all Chabad Chassidim in New York sent their children there.



YOSEF GOLDSTEIN AT AGE 3.

RABBI CHAIM LEVI GOLDSTEIN

This was the case for about ten years, until 5701 (1941), a particularly challenging year. The yeshiva administration struggled to pay the teachers on time, and when payments were made, they were only eighteen dollars a week. As a result of the delayed payments, many teachers eventually left.

The high rate of turnover made it difficult for me to connect with my teachers. In addition to this, there was a disconnect in our backgrounds—they were Litvaks, graduates of Mir and Slabodka—while I was entirely American.

New Beginnings

One day, everything changed. That morning, the classroom door opened, and in walked a new teacher. I later learned that he was Reb Shmuel Zalmanov. He was unlike any of the previous teachers. With his appearance reminiscent of a Jew from a bygone era—wearing a long coat, a black hat, and sporting a full, beautiful beard—he had a *hadras panim* I had only seen in history books. As soon as he entered the room, I stood up in awe, feeling an irresistible magnetic pull towards him.

His manner of conduct and speech were warm and gentle, and I could feel that everything he did came from a place of

deep love. Each day, my attachment and affection for him grew stronger. During recess, I often saw him resting his head on the table. Whether he was sleeping or just lost in thought, he usually looked quite frail. I approached him to check if he was feeling okay, and he asked me to get him something to drink. I quickly fetched a cup of water for him. The next day, I brought him a thermos of coffee, and he expressed his gratitude, telling me how much I had rejuvenated him. From then on, I occasionally brought him rolls of bread and other food to keep him sustained.

One day, my beloved teacher disappeared. I took it very hard, as I had grown so attached to him, and I began to investigate what had happened. I learned that Rabbi Zalmanov was a prominent chossid of the Friediker Rebbe and had been appointed as the secretary at Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim. It was the first time I had heard of Tomchei Temimim, and I thought to myself that if this yeshiva was good enough for my esteemed teacher, it must be excellent for me as well!

However, this resolution remained merely a thought, as Reb Shmuel Zalmanov's replacement, Reb Yitzchok Dovber Ushpal, was also a Lubavitcher chossid. I grew just as close to him as I had to my previous teacher, if not more so.



REB YOSEF GOLDSTEIN AROUND THE TIME HE FIRST ARRIVED AT 770.



REB YITZCHOK DOVBER USHPAL (LEFT) AND REB SHMUEL ZALMANOV (RIGHT) IN THE EARLY 5700S.



I saw this as *Hashgacha Pratis*, a sign that Hashem was sending angels to lift me from the muck. Rabbi Ushpal's material circumstances were dire. He would come to class in torn pants and shoes, resembling a war refugee. Despite his appearance, he was always orderly and clean, though his clothes were in tatters because he had no others. When I visited him, I was shocked to find his home completely unfurnished. Instead of chairs, he had crates that doubled as a table. I spoke with some friends, and together we provided him with a mattress, chairs, and a table.

One day, Reb Yitzchok said to me, "Yossel, you're a good boy, and I have a gift for you." He handed me a volume of *maamarim* and began studying it with me at his home. This was my first introduction to Chassidus Chabad.

A few happy months passed until Rabbi Ushpal left for Tomchei Temimim as well. At that point, I thought, why shouldn't I go there too?

First Encounter

At first, my parents didn't agree. Traveling from Boro Park to Crown Heights was complicated and costly, especially for a thirteen-year-old. Only after I insisted with "holy stubbornness," did they allow me to switch to Tomchei Temimim, on the condition that I stay in the dormitory to avoid daily travel.

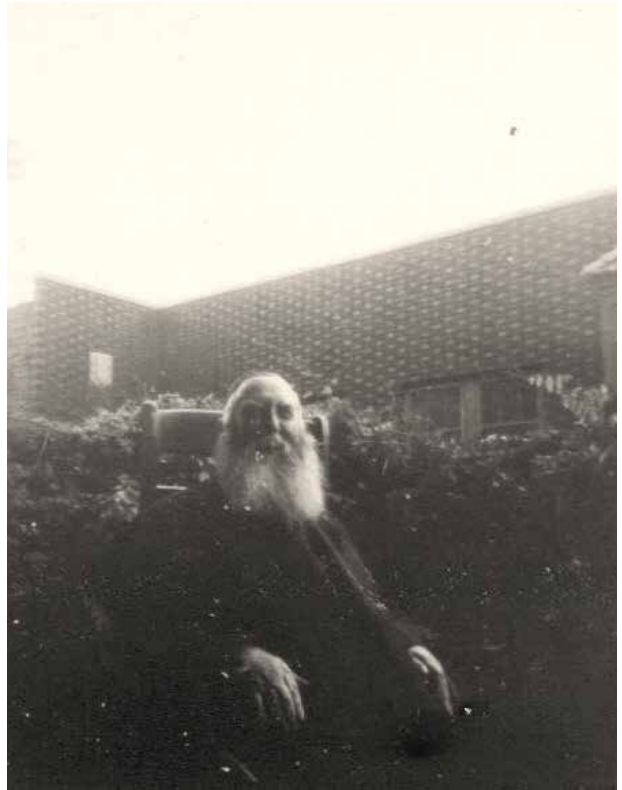
I packed my bags and went off to yeshiva. This was the first time I was traveling by train so I asked someone how to get to Eastern Parkway. The man told me to get off at the Eastern Parkway stop, which was a half-hour walk from 770.

I left the subway and saw an impressive building; I was thrilled, thinking I was going to attend yeshiva in this beautiful facility. I quickly realized my error, discovering this was the Brooklyn Museum. I asked several people how to get to 770, and they told me I needed to walk another twenty blocks. I arrived at 770 and stood in wonder once again. I had expected to see a large shul, yet this was an ordinary house, like all the houses in the neighborhood.

When I walked into 770 a large farbrengen was taking place. Rabbi Zalmanov, my former teacher, noticed me immediately and called me over. He introduced me to Reb Eliyahu Simpson, the Frierdiker Rebbe's secretary at that time, and I was registered in the yeshiva.

Everything is Possible

Later, I learned the significance of this farbrengen. I arrived at 770 in the spring of 5702, during the difficult days of World War II. Amidst the turmoil of the war, the Frierdiker Rebbe urged Chassidim to purify the air by reciting Mishnayos by



THE FRIERDIKER REBBE ON THE PORCH OF THE SECOND FLOOR AT 770. THE FENCE SURROUNDING THE PORCH IS COVERED IN GREENERY FOR PRIVACY.

heart. To further this effort, the Frierdiker Rebbe instructed that every *talmid* in Tomchei Temimim submit a card with their name, to be entered into a raffle dividing the *mesechtos* of Mishnayos, and held a special farbrengen in honor of the occasion. The Frierdiker Rebbe was seated on the dais, the Rebbe on his left and Rashag on his right. It was truly a sight to behold.

I vividly recall seeing the Frierdiker Rebbe sitting on his chair on the small porch on the second floor of 770, reciting Mishnayos. The Rebbe once remarked, "It's a *kal v'chomer* (logical deduction). If the air surrounding the Rebbe, which is akin to Gan Eden (as the *possuk* describes regarding Yaakov Avinu), still requires purification through Mishnayos, how much more so must we, in our environment, take care to review Mishnayos." The Frierdiker Rebbe stated on one occasion that it was in the merit of the Mishnayos recited by heart that America was spared from the war.

These were difficult and tense times, and the Frierdiker Rebbe was in a somber state. Even in America, there were bombings, and the Frierdiker Rebbe's daughter, Rebbetzin



THE DINING ROOM IN THE FRIERDIKER REBBE'S APARTMENT ON THE SECOND FLOOR AT 770 WHERE FARBRENGENS WERE HELD.

“I realized that I was looking at a man who had a direct line of communication on high.”

Shaina, who remained in Europe, was captured by the Germans. I recall attending a Rosh Hashanah farbrengen with the Frierdiker Rebbe in 5703 or 5704. As everyone stood around the table, anticipating the Frierdiker Rebbe's words, he suddenly declared, “Now is not the time to stand here and watch.” He said in Yiddish, “*Men darf bombediren Sefiras HaMalchus mit a millioneh osios fun Torah uteffila,*” meaning, “We need to bombard *Sefiras HaMalchus* with millions of letters of Torah and *teffila*.” Upon hearing this, we immediately went downstairs to the Beis Midrash and began reciting Tehillim.

At one point, the Frierdiker Rebbe asked that a raffle be organized for the broader community, with the goal of dividing Mishnayos to be recited by heart. Upon receiving this instruction, the Rebbe asked me to quickly travel to Boro Park and ask my father to print cards to be mailed out for the raffle.

I said to the Rebbe, “It's already late in the evening; how can I possibly get this done so quickly?” But the Rebbe was insistent, and I agreed. The Rebbe gave me a sample card with the text and layout, which I took home to my father.

When I arrived home, it was late at night, and my father said he would have it ready the next day. I respectfully insisted, “No, it must be done tonight.” My father agreed and quickly completed the task. I then hurried back to 770 with the cards, and when I delivered them to the Merkos

Office, the ink was still wet from the press!

The next day, as I stood in front of 770, the Rebbe came over to thank me and said:

“ר' יוסף, זעסטו! אין לך דבר העומד בפני הרצון, אז מען וויל מיט אן אמת קען מען אלץ אויפטאן!”

”You see Reb Yosef, nothing stands in the way of [a person's] will, when one truly wants to, he can accomplish anything!”

Up Close

During those years, the Frierdiker Rebbe lived on the second floor of 770, while the first floor remained empty at night. Because of this, Rabbi Berel Chaskind asked me to sleep in 770. He chose me because I was an American who spoke English well, so I could effectively communicate with any policemen or mailmen who might come by. He handed me a key to a room on the first floor, directly beneath the Frierdiker Rebbe's *yechidus* room. Thus, I was fortunate to sleep in 770 for an extended period.

In 5702, the year I came to 770, the Frierdiker Rebbe observed *aveilus* after the *histalkus* of his mother, Rebbetzin Shterna Sara. I had the *zechus* to be part of the *minyán* that *davened* upstairs with the Frierdiker Rebbe. Besides myself, there were a few other Chassidim who regularly *davened* in the *minyán*, such as Reb Nachum Sklar, Reb Avraham Pariz,



THE FRIEDIKER REBBE
WRITING IN HIS YECHIDUS
ROOM AT 770.

“Afterward,
Reb Sholom
Ber Eichorn
told me that...
The Rebbe
stood quietly
behind the door
throughout
the maamar,
listening until
I finished”...

and Reb Yisroel Jacobson.

I treasure the special moments I spent in the Friediker Rebbe’s presence. I especially recall how the Rebbe would stand and observe every move the Friediker Rebbe made, keeping his eyes glued the entire time. Noticing this, I realized that I too should try to observe the Friediker Rebbe, so I would stand directly behind his place. One thing that stood out to me was the way the Friediker Rebbe said the word “*echod*” at the end of the Shema. He would prolong the end of the word, and as he said it, the pitch of his voice would rise higher and higher until it could no longer be heard. It was a beautiful and heavenly sound.

In those years, it was difficult for the Friediker Rebbe to walk, and since it was undignified to see him being wheeled in his wheelchair, the Friediker Rebbe would be wheeled into the room before the Chassidim entered and would be wheeled out after everyone had left. When we entered the room, the Friediker Rebbe was already seated, facing the front wall.

One day, after davening, the Friediker Rebbe asked for his chair to be turned around to face the crowd. The Chassidim were shocked and wondered why the Rebbe was turning to view them. This scene has remained engraved in my mind forever. The Friediker Rebbe looked at everyone with a penetrating gaze. This was the first time I saw the Friediker Rebbe in tallis and tefillin, and I suddenly understood the true definition of *ohr* (light). I saw an illuminated countenance, a handsome face, like a king in his crown, in full glory.

The Friediker Rebbe began to speak, saying, “*M’hut mir ibergigeben u’modia geven milmala*” (I was informed from

THE REBBE
IS MESADER
KIDDUSHIN AT
REB YOSEF'S
WEDDING,
ELUL 5706.



on High). He instructed that from now on, on a day when *Tachnun* is not recited, chapter 20 of Tehillim should be recited after davening, not as part of davening, but as *tachanunim* (supplications). I remember standing there, frozen in awe, as the Frierdiker Rebbe uttered these words. I realized that I was looking at a man who had a direct line of communication on high.

Years later, during a *yechidus* with the Rebbe, I wrote about this incident in my note and concluded that, to my great sorrow, despite having seen the Rebbe in such an exalted state, I hadn't changed. After reading the note, the Rebbe gave me a sharp look and said, "*Reb Yossel, af zich tohr men oich nisht reddan lashon hara.*" (It is not permitted to speak *lashon hara* about oneself either).

Another unforgettable moment happened that same year of 5702 on Shavuos. During the *farbrengen*, the Frierdiker Rebbe instructed the Chassidim to sing the *niggun Shalosh Tenuos*. In the middle of the *niggun*, the Frierdiker Rebbe suddenly stood up! Everyone rose and stood rooted to their spots. I was standing next to the Frierdiker Rebbe's table, facing him. The Frierdiker Rebbe stood with his eyes closed, singing along as tears streamed down his face. It was an indescribable sight. A few minutes later, the Frierdiker Rebbe stopped singing and sat down. The room fell into absolute silence, as none of us had ever seen anything like this before. The Frierdiker Rebbe opened his eyes, looked at each of us, and said: "I stood up in the middle of the *niggun* in honor of the three guests" [the Baal Shem Tov, the Maggid, and the Alter Rebbe].

A Glimpse Within

As a *ben-bayis* (a regular) in 770, the Frierdiker Rebbe's Rebbetzin tasked me with bringing food from the kitchen to the Rebbe and Rebbetzin's home, then located on the corner of President Street and New York Avenue. The building number was 346, and the Rebbe referred to it as "*shmo hagadol*" (the word "*shmo*" being numerically equivalent to 346). This responsibility allowed me to develop a special closeness with the Rebbe.

One time, after bringing a delivery to the house, I brought back a few empty milk bottles that the Rebbe and Rebbetzin had used. When I brought them to the kitchen in 770, the Frierdiker Rebbe's Rebbetzin asked me to take them along with some other bottles that were in the front room [where Rebbetzin Shterna Sara used to stay] to be thrown away.

I never imagined that I would be allowed to walk through the front room when the door to the Frierdiker Rebbe's *yechidus* room was open. To my great surprise though, as I walked by and reached for the empty bottles, I saw that the door was wide open, and the Frierdiker Rebbe was sitting and writing, as music played from a record player that sat on the floor. I was fortunate to witness a heavenly and beautiful scene that no photo could ever capture.

As I was leaving, I noticed a maid carrying a plate with leftover soup and bread from the Frierdiker Rebbe. I offered to help her, and took it downstairs to distribute among the *bochurim* present.

In those days, it was customary for the *talmidim* in 770

to take turns reciting *maamarim* by heart at *Shalosh Seudos*. Since I would spend every other Shabbos with my parents in Boro Park, I made the journey to Crown Heights when it was my turn. Upon arriving at 770, I settled in the small *zal* and began reviewing the *maamar*, “*Ki Chelek Hashem Amo*” 5699.

Afterward, Reb Sholom Ber Eichorn told me that while I was there with my eyes closed reciting the *maamar*, the Rebbe had entered, then immediately left and closed the door behind him so as not to be seen. The Rebbe stood quietly behind the door throughout the *maamar*, listening until I finished.

In the Rebbe's room

When the Rebbe arrived in New York, the Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch was established, and one of its initial projects was printing Talks and Tales. I once overheard the Rebbe lament to Reb Sholom Mendel Simpson: “*Ich darf alein leigin di Talks und Tales in di envelops un ich darf alein leigin di stempes. Mistama darf ich leigin in post oich...*” (I have to put the Talks and Tales into envelopes myself and stick the stamps on myself. I'll probably have to take them to the post

office, too.)

Upon hearing this, I immediately approached the Rebbe and offered to handle the task myself, suggesting I could do it in my room so as not to disturb him. The Rebbe accepted my offer but said that I would work in his room. I set up in a corner of the room, where I had the unique opportunity of observing the Rebbe at work. At that time, the Rebbe was editing the *kuntreisim* of the Rebbe Rashab with a pencil. He worked with one leg resting on a chair and the other on the floor.

As a gesture of appreciation for my help, the Rebbe gifted me some of the galley sheets he had used during the editing process, marked with his holy handwriting.

One time, I asked the Rebbe if I could borrow his typewriter to write a letter to someone whom I was bringing closer to the ways of Chassidus. The Rebbe readily agreed and said, “Tonight, I will be with the *shver* [Frieddiker Rebbe] until very late, and I know that you need to be up at 7:30 a.m. for Chassidus, and also open the doors for everyone. So, I'll let you take the typewriter to your room. When you're finished, just leave it by the door, and I'll bring it into my room when I come downstairs.” I agreed, took the typewriter, and typed



1. THE FRIEDDIKER REBBE NOTIFIES REB YOSEF THAT HE PASSED HIS QUESTION ON TO THE REBBE.

2. SEVERAL DAYS LATER, THE REBBE SENDS AN ANSWER TO REB YOSEF.

During the ride, the Rebbe turned to me and asked, “Why haven’t I heard any questions from you in a long time?”

the letter. Afterward, I placed it in front of the Rebbe’s door as instructed.

As I was about to walk away, a thought struck me: “This isn’t right. The Rebbe will have to bend over to pick up the typewriter from the floor, which wouldn’t be respectful.” So I decided to wait. When the Rebbe returned, I planned to take the typewriter and place it on his desk myself. I waited and waited—ten o’clock passed, then eleven, and midnight came and went. By one o’clock, my eyes were growing heavy, and I was concerned that if I fell asleep, the Rebbe might pass by and end up picking up the typewriter himself.

I decided to lie down on the stairs so that the Rebbe would either have to step over me or wake me up. I was sleeping soundly when a door slamming upstairs jolted me awake. Hearing footsteps, I realized it must be the Rebbe. The Rebbe quickly descended the stairs, saw me lying there and the typewriter by the door, and effortlessly jumped over me—his athleticism was impressive. I scrambled to catch up and grabbed one side of the typewriter as he lifted it. I said, “Please

let me return the typewriter. I don’t want to burden you.” The Rebbe replied, “I told you to go to bed and be on time for tomorrow.” In the end, we both carried the typewriter into the office and placed it on the desk.

Early Guidance

This was the very same typewriter that the Rebbe used to type letters to me personally after I received the following response from the Frierdiker Rebbe.

I was accustomed to sending questions in Chassidus to the Frierdiker Rebbe. One time, when I wrote that it seemed there was a contradiction between two *maamarei chassidus*, the Frierdiker Rebbe responded: “I have given your letter with the question to my son-in-law... [the Rebbe’s holy name] *Shlita* and he will certainly answer you, *im yirtzeh Hashem*.” Indeed, a short while later, I received an answer to my question from



REB YOSEF GOLDSTEIN PLAYS HIS ACCORDION FOR THE CHILDREN GATHERED AT THE PARK AFTER THE LAG B’OMER PARADE, 5716. REB YITZCHOK GRONER IS SEEN AT THE MICROPHONE.



THE FRIERDIKER REBBE’S SUKKA ABOVE THE MAIN SUKKA AT 770, TISHREI 5726.

“When the Frierdiker Rebbe looked up, he saw me with the schach, and began to smile broadly, it was a rare and unforgettable sight.”

the Rebbe, written on this very typewriter, and handed to me personally.

I perceived this to be an early indication from the Frierdiker Rebbe that I should become *mekushar* to the Rebbe. He sort of guided me towards the Rebbe, saying I did my part, and he will take care of you from now on, so to speak. I continued to send my questions in Chassidus to the Rebbe on a regular basis, and I merited to receive many beautiful letters in return.

After the Rebbe officially accepted the *nesius* on 10 Shevat 5711, I stopped sending in my questions to the Rebbe. I figured the Rebbe certainly had matters of greater importance to attend to, and I didn't want to take from his precious time with my questions.

When my brother-in-law, Reb Herschel Feigelstock got married, I traveled to the wedding in the same car as the Rebbe who was the *mesader kiddushin*. The Rebbe sat in the front, while Rabbi Hodakov and I sat in the back. During the ride, the Rebbe turned to me and asked, “Why haven't I heard any questions from you in a long time?”

I replied that I assumed the Rebbe had more important matters to attend to. The Rebbe responded, “Nevertheless, write!” Following the Rebbe's directive, I sent a letter with some questions I had at the time. Although I didn't receive a response, I continued to write each week, handing the Rebbe a new letter every Friday with the questions that arose.

For thirteen weeks, I handed in my letters but received no reply. Then, unexpectedly, I received a *michtav kloli-proti* (a letter sent to many individuals), on which the Rebbe had handwritten, “Your letters were received in a timely fashion and will be responded to when time allows, *bli neder*.” Soon after, I received a letter with answers to all the questions from my previous letters.

A Privileged Role

I was responsible for directing rallies for children on Chanukah, Lag B'omer, Purim, and other occasions. As the years passed, *bochurim* with fresh energy took over. For many years, I was the one who would open the rally with a general introduction about the significance of the day and the special place we were in. After a few songs with the children, I would hand the microphone to Reb Yankel (J.J.) Hecht, who continued running the rally. Reb Yankel Hecht was the one who invited the Rebbe to speak and had the exacting task of translating the Rebbe's words.

During a children's rally in the 5740s, Reb Yankel began to feel unwell and sat down to rest. Before stepping away, he signaled for me to come and take over his role of translating the *sicha*. At first, I was flustered and uncertain about how I would convey everything the Rebbe said, and translate it into English on the spot without any preparation. Despite the challenge, I had no choice but to proceed, and, with Hashem's help, I managed to complete the task successfully.

One year, on Lag B'omer, I hired a band to play music at the children's rally. Once their allotted time was up, they packed up and started to leave. *Boruch Hashem*, there was a large group of children, and the festivities were ongoing. The Rebbe turned to me and gestured with his hands that I should play my accordion. I quickly went home, retrieved it, and began to play.

I once received a special mention from the Rebbe at a *farbrengen* on Lag B'omer 5740. The Rebbe said, “The *Rosh Hamedabrim* (lead speaker) should say *l'chaim*.” Reb Meir Harlig pointed to me. I quickly got a cup to say *l'chaim*. The Rebbe looked at me and said, “*Aza kos? Du host geredt mer vi dem*—such a small cup? You spoke more than that.” He then instructed me to fill up a larger cup and say *l'chaim*.



THE FRIERDIKER REBBE'S LETTER REPRIMANDING REB YOSEF GOLDSTEIN AFTER HE LEFT ROCHESTER.

striking scene: the Frierdiker Rebbe sat at his desk in a *yarmulke*, while his secretary stood nearby. The Frierdiker Rebbe's presence illuminated the entire room. On the desk was a glass jar of pencils, and the secretary handed one to the Frierdiker Rebbe. When the Frierdiker Rebbe looked up, he saw me with the *schach*, and began to smile broadly, it was a rare and unforgettable sight.

After a few moments, the Frierdiker Rebbe signaled for me to proceed to the sukkah. I carefully navigated my way out of the room without turning my back to the Frierdiker Rebbe, and once outside, I took a deep breath. I faced a new dilemma: how to leave the sukkah without unintentionally disturbing the Frierdiker Rebbe.

Initially, I considered climbing down the pole alongside the porch but abandoned the idea, fearing I might worry the Frierdiker Rebbe with my sudden disappearance. To avoid causing any concern, I decided to retrace my steps back through the room. I quietly opened the door and tiptoed out.

I went to Reb Sholom Chaskind, hugged and kissed him, and expressed my gratitude for his immense favor. I then added with a smile, "You deserve some *petch* (slaps), too—why didn't you tell me the Rebbe was in there? I would have worn my Shabbos clothes or at least a hat and jacket!"

Following Orders

One day, around the week of Parshas Shemos in 5705, I was sitting in the Beis Midrash at seven in the morning when Rashag entered and informed me that Rabbi Tzvi Shusterman from Chicago was opening a yeshiva in Rochester but had no teachers. "Maybe you can teach there for two weeks?" he asked. I was 18 years old at the time and I didn't think I was capable of teaching, but then Rashag said, "The *shver* (the Frierdiker Rebbe) wants you to go." Upon hearing this I naturally agreed.

I went home to my parents in Boro Park to inform them that I was going to Rochester, an eight-hour train trip away. My mother wasn't happy about it, but my father told me to follow the Rebbe's instructions. I packed my few personal belongings, including some clothing and, most importantly, all the booklets of *maamarim* I had—my greatest treasure!

In Rochester, Rabbi Shusterman rented an old, freezing house with no electric boiler, just a wood-burning oven like in times of old. We gathered children and began teaching. After four weeks and no instructions from the Frierdiker Rebbe, I asked Rabbi Shusterman whether I should remain there. He said, "Do what you think is right." Since my initial two-week period had long passed, I decided it was okay to return to New York.

An Amazing Sight

One year, heavy rains fell during the early days of Tishrei. On Erev Sukkos, Reb Sholom Chaskind came to me in distress, saying, "It's been raining for days, and we don't have *schach* for the Frierdiker Rebbe's sukkah." I suggested that we say Tehillim and hope for a miracle. Just as we were speaking, a horse and wagon turned from Brooklyn Ave. onto Eastern Parkway, and the driver shouted, "*Schach, schach!*" Everyone rushed out, and we finally obtained the *schach* needed for the sukkah.

Reb Sholom then asked me to bring the *schach* up to the Frierdiker Rebbe's sukkah. Naturally, I was thrilled to do so, though I wanted to avoid dirtying my new suit. So, I removed my jacket, slung a bundle of *schach* over my shoulder, and happily climbed the steps to the second floor, heading towards the Frierdiker Rebbe's sukkah.

I was certain that if Reb Sholom had asked me to enter the Frierdiker Rebbe's *yechidus* room, surely the Frierdiker Rebbe was not present at the time. Naively, I knocked softly, opened the door, and walked in. To my astonishment, the Frierdiker Rebbe was there!

I was struck with shock, unable to move or leave. I stood frozen with the *schach* bundles on my shoulder. It was a



Shortly after I arrived back in New York, the Frieddiker Rebbe's secretary came to the small *zal* and gave me a letter from the Frieddiker Rebbe, full of rebuke for leaving Rochester without permission. "Why did you leave Rochester without first getting permission from the *menahel shlita*? Such is not done. A *talmid* in Tomchei Temimim must be devoted to the *hanhala* with utmost discipline." The Frieddiker Rebbe concluded the letter with, "From now on you will listen to whatever they tell you, and travel wherever they send you for the amount of time they will tell you, and Hashem will help you materially and spiritually, and you will succeed in learning and in your conduct with fear of Heaven."

Years later, I showed the letter to the Rebbe, and he told me that it was specifically the sharp words that proved how close I was to the Frieddiker Rebbe. "For whom do you slap? The one who you love."

True to the Frieddiker Rebbe's words, "and from now on

you'll travel," I began to travel doing the Frieddiker Rebbe's work. I was sent with Rabbi Yitzchok Dovid Groner to start a yeshiva in my hometown in Providence, Rhode Island. Later I traveled to Springfield, Massachusetts and New Haven, Connecticut amongst other places.

Final Moments

In his later years, the Frieddiker Rebbe faced significant health challenges. During the winter of 5705, a frightening incident occurred. I was asleep in my room when suddenly, strong knocks at the door woke me. I opened it to find Reb Shmuel Levitin standing there, trembling. He said, "Come upstairs quickly; we need a Yisroel." I realized that something terrible had happened.

In *seforim*, it is written that when a *neshama* leaves the body, it's appropriate to have a Kohen, Levi, and Yisroel



THE REBBE LOOKS ON AS REB YOSEF GOLDSTEIN LEADS THE FESTIVITIES AT THE LAG B'OMER PARADE, 5717.

Seeds of Chassidus

I served as the Principal of Bais Yaakov Girls School in New York for over fifty years, during which time I had the privilege of nurturing the Jewish education of thousands of children. On one occasion, during a *yechidus*, the Rebbe told me: “Do not underestimate the immense merit of being a conduit for the teachings of the Baal Shem Tov, the Mezritcher Maggid, the Alter Rebbe, the Mitteler Rebbe, the Tzemach Tzedek, the Rebbe Maharash, the Rebbe *Nishmaso Eden*, and the Rebbe *der Shver*.” Then after a brief pause the Rebbe’s expression turned serious as he repeated: “the Rebbe *der Shver* and the Tzemach Tzedek.” Indeed, it was a profound privilege to implant seeds of Chassidus to the *talmidos*.

On another occasion, I shared with the Rebbe how, *Boruch Hashem*, I was fortunate to inspire children to point to Hashem just as the Yidden had done after leaving Mitzrayim when they said “*zeh Keili vanvehu*.” I achieved this through composing the song “Hashem is here, Hashem is there,” which became a worldwide staple, and encourages children to point in all directions as they sing. I believe this is a manifestation of the Rebbe’s *bracha* to me.

standing nearby. Reb Shmuel was a *Levi*, Reb Sholom Ber Eichorn was a *Kohen*, and they woke me because I am a *Yisroel*. In great fright, I went up to the second floor. On the way, I saw doctors rushing toward the Frierdiker Rebbe’s room with their equipment. Just as I was about to enter, the Rebbe arrived. He, being a *Yisroel*, motioned for me to leave, as he would take my place.

Later, I learned that the Frierdiker Rebbe had suffered a severe heart attack. Although he ultimately recovered, new decrees were enacted limiting *yechidus* and *farbrengens*, to ease his physical strain. I once heard that the doctors said they had no rational explanation for how the Frierdiker Rebbe continued to live after such a serious heart attack.

The events surrounding the *histalkus* of the Frierdiker Rebbe are deeply engraved within me, and I find it difficult to even speak about them. Our lives were intertwined with the Rebbe—his *farbrengens*, his image, his *spodik*, his beard, and his holy face that always appeared aflame. We were as attached to the Rebbe as bees to honey, and suddenly he was taken from us.

On Shabbos, 10 Shevat 5710, I was in Boro Park with my parents. On *Motzei Shabbos*, after *Havdalah*, Reb Sholom Mendel Simpson called. He could only say, “the Rebbe,” in a tone of despair. Hearing those words, I blanched. My mother, frightened by the look on my face, asked what happened, but I was speechless and could only say, “the Rebbe.” I went with Reb Sholom Mendel to Crown Heights, where the atmosphere was horrendous.

When we arrived at 770, all the doors were open. One could walk into the second floor where the Frierdiker Rebbe lived (which was usually locked), and straight into the *yechidus* room. This alone demonstrated the magnitude of the tragedy that had taken place. I shuddered as I entered “*lifnai velifnim*” [the inner chamber] of the Frierdiker Rebbe’s *yechidus* room. The holy body of the Frierdiker Rebbe, covered with a tallis, lay near the door from east to west.

The Rebbe stood on the side reciting Tehillim, and I joined in saying Tehillim too. When I reached the *posuk*, “*yoshev bashamayim yischak*,” I accidentally said, “Yitzchok,” and the Rebbe gave me a sharp look. His facial features were extremely severe, yet he remained utterly composed, not revealing any sign of emotion. He was on top of everything, taking care of every detail. As people entered, the Rebbe asked if they had been to the *mikvah*, and those who hadn’t were not allowed to come in.

In the hallway, a heated conversation took place. Rabbi Rivkin, who wrote the *sefer Ashkavta D’Rebbi*, which describes the passing of the Rebbe Rashab, remarked, “I saw the first *churban*, and now I’m witnessing the second *churban*. I am certain that the third ‘*bayis*’ will last forever!”

A New Connection

After the *histalkus*, the young Chassidim immediately flocked to our Rebbe. He had always been involved with us, farbrenging and speaking with us. In the later years, it had become difficult to ask questions to the Frierdiker Rebbe, so the young Chassidim would direct their personal questions to the Rebbe instead. We held the Rebbe in great respect not solely for being the son-in-law of the Frierdiker Rebbe but also for his own immense wisdom, profound insight, and giant persona. We had no doubts about what would be in store for the future, and instantly became *mekushar* to the Rebbe. 🕒



Astronomically Impossible!

I once asked the Rebbe for a *bracha* that I should find a way to leave a lasting impact on children. After some reflection, I decided to share the stories my late mother used to tell us. I carefully chose educational tales and turned them into engaging story tapes with music and sound effects. To enhance these tapes, I commissioned Reb Zalman Kleiman to create accompanying artwork. Before publishing each tape, I presented a copy to the Rebbe.

One illustration featured Avraham Avinu looking at the sun, stars, and moon, with a *gartel* around his robe. With a smile, the Rebbe remarked, “Ah! At the young age of three, he’s wearing a *gartel*?” The Rebbe then noted that the moon’s ‘horns’ were facing the sun, which was astronomically impossible since the illuminated side of the moon faces the sun while the other side remains dark.

The Rebbe suggested I have the artist correct the moon’s position and offered to show me how. The Rebbe took a pencil and demonstrated the proper alignment on a piece of paper. After finishing the drawing, the Rebbe was about to hand it to me but noticed that the back of the paper had a list of individuals scheduled for *yechidus* that evening. The Rebbe said he would need to keep the paper, so unfortunately, I did not get to keep it.

מוקדש לחיזוק ההתקשרות
לכ"ק אדמו"ר

נדפס ע"י
הרה"ת ר' אברהם צמח הלוי וזוגתו
מרת דבורה לאה ומשפחתם שיחי
ראזענפעלד

Let's Talk About Eretz Yisroel

THROUGH THE LENS
OF THE REBBE'S TORAH

PART 3:
**Proclaim
The Truth**

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Special thanks to the Enduring Peace
think-tank, JEM and Sichos in English.

The struggle for Eretz Yisroel goes beyond the physical skirmishes, battles, and wars in our homeland. For thousands of years, our connection to the land has been challenged by others, and defending our legitimate claim to it is foundational to our identity as Jews.

As our guide to life, the Torah provides clear direction on this issue: Tell the truth. Eretz Yisroel was given to our forefathers Avraham, Yitzchok, and Yaakov as an eternal inheritance for their descendants. No claims to the contrary can change this.

To appreciate why this approach is a winning strategy when dealing with the nations of the world—and to do so with confidence—we must analyze the relevant sources. The primary source on this issue is the first Rashi in Torah, which we reviewed in last month's article.

As the Torah educator of every Jewish child, Rashi's interpretations must be understood by "the five-year-old Chumash student," and be relevant and applicable to his or her life experience. This makes his opening interpretation of the Torah quite perplexing, as it seems to have no impact on understanding the meaning of the first *posuk* in Torah, nor does it reflect on issues the child is currently facing.

Even before explaining the details of the story of creation, Rashi addresses why the Torah, a guide to how we should act, begins with the story of creation and not with the first mitzvah, Kiddush Hachodesh. The answer:

משום כח מעשיו הגיד לעמו לתת להם נחלת גוים (תהילים קי"א), שאם יאמרו אמות העולם לישראל לטטים אתם, שכבשתם ארצות שבעה גוים, הם אומרים להם כל הארץ של הקדוש ברוך הוא היא, הוא בראה ונתנה לאשר ישר בעיניו, ברצונו נתנה להם, וברצונו נטלה מהם ונתנה לנו:

"Because [as it states in Tehillim 111:6] 'The strength of His works He related to His people, to give them the inheritance of the nations.' For if the nations of the world should say to the



Jews, 'You are robbers, for you conquered by force the lands of the seven nations of Canaan,' they will reply, 'The entire Earth belongs to the Hashem; He created it and gave it to whomever He deemed proper. When He wished, He gave it to them, and when He wished, He took it from them and gave it to us.'

In all probability, five-year-old Jewish children learning in Cheder were never caught up in such debates. However, with this teaching Rashi presents the context in which every Jewish child should be introduced to Torah. This is not merely a book of laws; it is the guide to understanding and navigating reality: Hashem is the creator of the universe and controls everything in it. Every conversation and every interaction should be on the Torah's terms.

Rashi explains to the five-year-old child in medieval France that if you ever encounter non-Jews who taunt you for being Jewish and for claiming a connection to a land you lost over a thousand years ago, this is how to respond. Declare that Hashem is in charge of everything in this world and Hashem determined that Eretz Yisroel belongs to every Jewish man, woman, and child wherever they may be, forever.

This truth is not only relevant in Shul, in Cheder, around your Shabbos table, and among friends. This is the reality everywhere, even when engaging with antagonists.



Will this response convince all the challengers?

First, most people today believe in the Torah and accept it as the word of Hashem, which explains why Eretz Yisroel is referred to as the "Holy Land" in almost every language and why even the most prominent among them acknowledge that the "Holy Land" belongs to the "Holy People." These

challengers are fully aware of the truth, and they are leveling these accusations to see if the Jew believes in the truth as well.

And for those who claim to not believe in the divinity of the Torah, the purpose of vocally and publicly proclaiming our eternal connection to the land is not to convince them, but rather to express to them our conviction, which will certainly elicit their (perhaps begrudging) respect for our position.

It is also important to appreciate the more sinister narrative the challengers seek to create through such accusations. By framing the conversation about primary ownership, they accuse us of being immoral. "*You are robbers, for you conquered by force the lands of the seven nations of Canaan.*" How can Jews, the receivers of Hashem's Torah—the moral guide for humanity—behave so immorally?

In response, we acknowledge that the Canaanites were indeed settled in the land before Avraham Avinu came there and before Yehoshua Bin Nun led the Jewish conquest of the land from them in the year 2488. But we flip the narrative by reframing the conversation. The Canaanites were not there by chance. Hashem, the creator of the universe, who controls everything that happens, gave it to them for a while, and then took it from them and gave it to us. Since Hashem defines morality, challenging Hashem's choice is the most immoral thing you can do.

Having this attitude to the conversation allows us to set the narrative and saves us from engaging in dangerous behaviors such as endangering the lives of millions of people by negotiating to give away land that is crucial to their security. (A topic that will be discussed at length in future articles.)



Our ironclad commitment to keeping every inch doesn't stem from stubbornness. It is the only moral thing one can do with Hashem's eternal gift.



Since this approach is dictated to us by the Torah, it is the only way to ensure divine success in “Jewish diplomacy” and foreign relations, as illustrated by the following two stories.

When Sara Imeinu passed away, Avraham approached the nation of Cheis to purchase the Me'aras Hamachpeila as burial grounds for his family. Here is how he started the conversation: (Chayei Sara 23:4)

גַּר־וְתוֹשֵׁב אֲנִי עִמָּכֶם תְּנוּ לִי אֶחְזוֹת־קֶבֶר עִמָּכֶם וְאֶקְבְּרָה מִתִּי מִלְפָּנֶיךָ:

“I am a stranger and an inhabitant with you. Give me burial property with you, so that I may bury my dead from before me.”

Avraham employed the two contradictory terms of “stranger” and “inhabitant” as he negotiated the first Jewish purchase of land in Eretz Yisroel to explain to the Bnei Cheis how he intended to do business with them. If they cooperated and transferred the property to him, he was willing to behave as a stranger and pay a steep price for the land. However, if they refused to do so, he would behave like an inhabitant and take what was rightfully his due to Hashem's promise to him.

The Gemara (Sanhedrin 91a) relates that in the days of Alexander the Great the Canaanites accused the Jews of stealing the land of their ancestors. Geviha ben Pesisa, a hunchback with no public reputation, volunteered to respond to the accusation.

“The same Torah which states that the land originally belonged to the descendants of Canaan also states that Canaan was cursed to be a slave of Shem,” he said. “What belongs to

the slave belongs to his owner. It follows that the land belongs to us as the descendants of Shem, and all you accusers owe us some work...” Unable to respond, the Canaanites fled.

Avraham Avinu's attitude set the standard for how Jews ought to represent their presence in Eretz Yisroel to the nations of the world. And Geviha ben Pesisa illustrated how to set the tone of the conversation according to the Torah narrative. Notwithstanding the possibility for the accusers to deny the validity of the Torah, when a Jew makes a Torah claim with confidence and pride, it has a real impact.

Unfortunately, the fact remains that for decades diplomats representing the Jews in Eretz Yisroel have accomplished very little by utilizing every other claim to legitimize our presence there aside from the claim set forth in the first entry of Rashi published in every basic Chumash found in millions of Jewish homes. The time has come to embrace our true connection to Eretz Yisroel and proudly proclaim it to the world. **T**

NEXT MONTH:

Why is the Jewish connection to our homeland so different from the connection all other nations have to their homelands?

Primary Sources: *Yud Shevat* 5730; *Toras Menachem* vol. 59 p. 108, *Shabbos Parshas Shelach* 5734; *Toras Menachem* vol. 76 p. 351, *Yud Alef Nissan* 5735; *Toras Menachem* vol. 60 p. 43, *Yud Alef Nissan* 5736; *Sichos Kodesh* 5736 vol. 2 p. 53, *Shabbos Parshas Bereishis* 5738; *Likkutei Sichos* vol. 20 p. 273, *Lag B'Omer* 5738; *Sichos Kodesh* 5738 vol. 2 p. 339, *Shabbos Parshas Bereishis* 5739; *Sichos Kodesh* 5739 vol. 1 p. 220.

IN THE FOOTSTEPS
OF CHASSIDIM

THE STARODUB AFFAIR

A SECRET TALE OF HEROISM

By: **Rabbi Mendy Greenberg**

In the preparation of this article, we were greatly assisted by Rabbi Shmuel Super.

Some one hundred and forty years ago, a tale of immense self-sacrifice and heroism played out in Russia. It rocked the entire Pale of Settlement. All the Jews of Russia were united in fear during the events, and collectively sighed of relief when it was over.

And then, the story disappeared.

Small snippets were told among Chassidim. There were stories of the saintly figure of Reb Zalman Neimark, the Starodub Rav, who languished in jail; there were accounts about the despised figure of Dov Lazarov, the evil informer; and there were whispers about the alleged involvement of the Rebbe Maharash himself. But the full account was never told.

In 1927, an account of the events by Professor Fisher Schneerson, a descendant of the Tzemach Tzedek, was published (posthumously) in a book titled *Kocha Shel Sanegoria*. His father had served as a Rav in Starodub, and he had also interviewed the last surviving people who had memories of the events. In his account, he describes the accusations leveled against the Chassidim, the efforts to release them, and the final ruling of the judges that resolved the affair—all in fascinating detail.

But this account is a work of historical fiction. Professor Schneerson loved to portray fictionalized historical accounts of the old Chabad world he had known in his childhood, and this work was no exception. While based on a true story, it

was greatly embellished, making it impossible to distinguish fact from fiction.

One source that contains reliable information is the account of Rabbi Avraham Yaakov Neimark. A grandson of one of the protagonists, Rabbi Neimark grew up hearing this story in his family. Later, as a Rav in Tel Aviv, Rabbi Neimark recorded the story in the introduction to his sefer, *Eishel Avraham*.

The following is his account in its entirety.

My grandfather, Harav Meshulam Zalman Neimark, was a descendant of the renowned Rav Meshulam Zalman Neimark, the Av Beis Din of *Kehilos Ah"u*—Altona-Hamburg-Wandsbek. My grandfather was a Rav in the towns of Horki, Starodub, Vitebsk, and Nevel, and it was in his home that my education began.

I remember him vividly since I was two years old. My grandfather was one of the eminent and distinguished Chabad *rabbanim* of his time. My first impression of him—which I will never forget—was upon visiting him when I was two years old at the prison in Starodub, where I was sent on a mission to bring him a gift—a snuffbox—from my maternal grandfather, Reb Akiva Posner (a descendant of Reb Baruch of Liozna, the Alter Rebbe's father).

This is, briefly, the story of his imprisonment.

לע"נ
ר' יהודה ע"ה בן ר' משה
יעקב ע"ה ביסטאן
נלב"ע ר"ח כסלו ה'תשנ"ט
ת"נצ"ב"ה

נדפס ע"י בנו
הרה"ת השליח ר' יוסף יצחק וזוגתו
מרת ביילא רחל ומשפחתם שיחיו
ביסטאן



1. BOOK ON THESE EVENTS BY FISHEL SCHNEERSON.
2. RABBI AVRAHAM YAAKOV NEIMARK.

My grandfather was incarcerated with his son, Reb Yechezkel Feivel Neimark, who later succeeded him as the *rav* in Nevel, and another eighty Jews. They were imprisoned for two years in a situation that once shook the Jewish world, but faded with the passing of the great thunderstorm that swept our world in the year 5641 [when terrible pogroms occurred in Russia].

The story began some years earlier when the Russian government introduced mandatory military service. This wasn't warmly welcomed within the Jewish community, for obvious reasons. People clearly remembered the nature of military service in Russia and what it entailed for a Jew, both physically and spiritually, and they were well aware of the limited civil rights afforded to Jews in Russia at that time. As expected, everyone sought ways to avoid this conscription. Given the level of "dedication" and "integrity" among Russian officials, and their corruption, this was not impossible. Such incidents occurred in the city of Starodub as well.

Starodub was home to a wealthy and brazen Jew who was close with the authorities. The Chassidim sensed that he was up to no good, and once, during a meeting at my grandfather's home, they insulted him. He was infuriated, and to get revenge, he informed on them to the government.

To spice up the story, he told the authorities that there was a group within the Jewish community called Chabad Chassidim, numbering in the hundreds of thousands. Their headquarters were in Lubavitch, but they had representatives in every city in the country, and Rabbi Neimark was the most prominent among them. This group made it their goal to undermine the military

service laws, and Rabbi Neimark was the driving force behind this effort, with Starodub becoming a hub for all sorts of schemes to evade conscription.

This accusation was welcomed with open arms, and my grandfather was arrested as a first-class political and criminal offender. He was imprisoned under severe conditions, with no contact allowed with the outside world. After reviewing government records, they found that several hundred Jews had been released from military conscription after an examination in Starodub, and a secret order was issued to track them down and arrest them all. About eighty people were imprisoned, while the rest managed to escape and hide. The matter was assigned to a diligent investigator named Legentsov, who later became Minister of Justice.

Due to the harsh accusations, they refused to release him before the trial, and he remained imprisoned for two years until the trial finally arrived. However, as strict as they were initially, they later relaxed the conditions, as my grandfather made an indelible impression on the prison wardens. They quickly recognized him as a great and holy man, and they soon moved him and his son to a nice, clean room and allowed them to receive kosher food from home and whatever *seforim* they desired. Their prison cell became a Beis Midrash where they devoted themselves day and night to Torah and *avoda*. He even wrote *teshuvos* from his cell.

Essential messages were smuggled in small notes through a special double-layered coffee pot. I have in my possession a note from the Rebbe Maharash that reached him in prison, which said: "Regarding your situation, you have nothing to fear at all, as you heard directly from

my father, the Rebbe [the Tzemach Tzedek]. It would be appropriate to learn Mishnayos of Maseches Brachos and the Gemara of Maseches Brachos throughout the year, and Hashem will bless you with all the best, with whatever your heart desires.” I don’t know what these words refer to, but I know that my grandfather was very dear to the Tzemach Tzedek.

He became so respected in prison that when Sukkos came, they allowed him to build a sukka. His days in prison were spent learning and davening on a very high level, and throughout his life, he would speak longingly of those days.

I heard a remarkable story that took place during his imprisonment. There was a notorious thief and murderer incarcerated in one of the rooms, a man who had killed dozens of people. He was so beastly that when he had encountered a Jewish traveler on the road as he was being led in chains with a large armed guard, he had begged the soldiers to allow him to murder the Jew even while shackled; that’s how depraved he was. Yet, this murderer would be moved to tears when he heard the sounds of my grandfather’s davening and *dveikus*.

His *avoda* was truly extraordinary. I remember being ten years old when my grandfather would lead the first day of Selichos. All the *chazanim* and *baalei tefilla* would come to listen and absorb some of his heartfelt melodies; that’s how enchanting his *tefillos* were. He would lead Tefilas Tal, Geshem, Kol Nidrei and Ne’ila, and even though I heard those tunes nearly fifty years ago, I cannot think of them today without being stirred to the depths of my soul.

It was not only in those moments that he reached such high levels of *avoda*; even on ordinary weekdays, in the middle of davening, you would hear an outpouring of his *neshama*; his voice was so uplifting that they

touched the very depths of your soul, echoing the voices of the *malachim*.

Ultimately, he was acquitted in court and managed to secure the acquittal of all the other defendants as well. Of course, there were great lawyers involved, but the judges remarked that Rabbi Neimark’s broken Russian had a far greater impact on them than the long, eloquent, and polished speeches of the attorneys.

MYSTERIOUS RESOLUTION

Reb Avraham Weingarten transcribed the following story he heard from Reb Shmuel Levitin:

“Once, after Rosh Hashanah, a Chossid came to the Rebbe Maharash because he had a court case coming up. Several Chassidim had already been waiting for a *yechidus* since before Rosh Hashanah, and Reb Levik Meshares was very stubborn and did not easily allow anyone to enter out of turn.

The Chossid, who was from Starodub, was eager to enter because his court case was imminent. Reb Uri Leib, the *rav* of Pahar, was standing near the entrance; when he entered the Rebbe’s room, the Chossid held onto his coat, pushed past Reb Levik, and went in. Reb Levik saw this and caused an uproar, and the Rebbe Maharash saw what happened and sharply told the Chossid to leave immediately.

He began to cry bitterly and left the room totally broken-hearted—and soon won the court case.”



TOWN OF STARODUB AS IT APPEARED AROUND THE TIME THE AFFAIR TOOK PLACE.



It seems that this story—widely known at the time—was purposefully downplayed in the contemporary Jewish newspapers. The reason seems obvious. Spreading the news could have dire consequences on everyone involved in helping Jews evade the unfair draft.

Several letters written between Lubavitch and Starodub are published in *Toldos Chabad B’Russia HaTsaris*. The letters were written carefully with hints and allusions, but it is clear from them that the danger wasn’t just to the Chassidim of Starodub. During the interrogations, Chassidim were asked about their affiliations with the town of Lubavitch and the Rebbe Maharash. The Rebbe himself was in the crosshairs.

In the letters from Starodub written by Reb Heschel Noteh Gnessin, the Rosh Yeshiva of the local Chabad Yeshiva, he writes that the Chassidim hotly denied any connection to the Rebbe Maharash. Their frequent travels to Lubavitch, they told the interrogators, were simply to visit the Ohel of the Tzemach Tzedek who had passed away some fifteen years earlier. They refused to implicate the Rebbe.

In a letter to Rabbi Neimark from Tel Aviv, the Rebbe noted that he had personally heard about the case from the Frierdiker Rebbe, who had said that Reb Zalman had heroically refused to implicate the Rebbe Maharash.

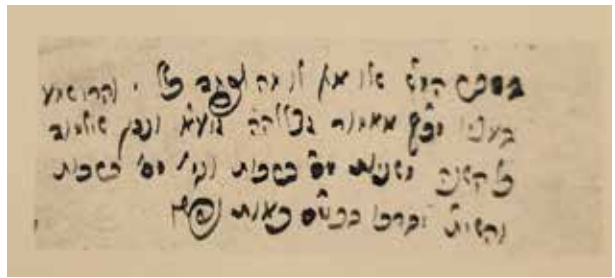
“When they wanted to make the libel about my grandfather [the Rebbe Maharash],” the Frierdiker Rebbe had related, “he took the entire thing on himself, saying, ‘Zeiner a sha’ah, an hour of his...’” To Reb Zalman, an hour for the Rebbe was so precious that he took the entire accusation on himself.¹

There was a high price to pay for Reb Zalman. In the absence of evidence against the Rebbe Maharash, Reb Zalman was the central figure caught in the conspiracy and was at risk of paying a much higher price. Nonetheless, he never said a word. He took responsibility for everything.

From a *sicha* of the Rebbe, it appears that the danger to the Rebbe Maharash was so great that it was as if the Rebbe Maharash himself sat in prison! The Rebbe noted that all the Rabbeim had been imprisoned; the Alter Rebbe, Mittler Rebbe and Frierdiker Rebbe were quite literally arrested; the Tzemach Tzedek and the Rebbe Rashab were placed under house arrest; and imprisonment was associated with the Rebbe Maharash as well, as the Rebbe said, “when he was replaced by someone else, one of the *rabbanim*, who sat in prison in his place...”²

Miraculously, the affair ended with the acquittal of all the Chassidim—but the *mesirus nefesh* of those difficult days was never forgotten. ①

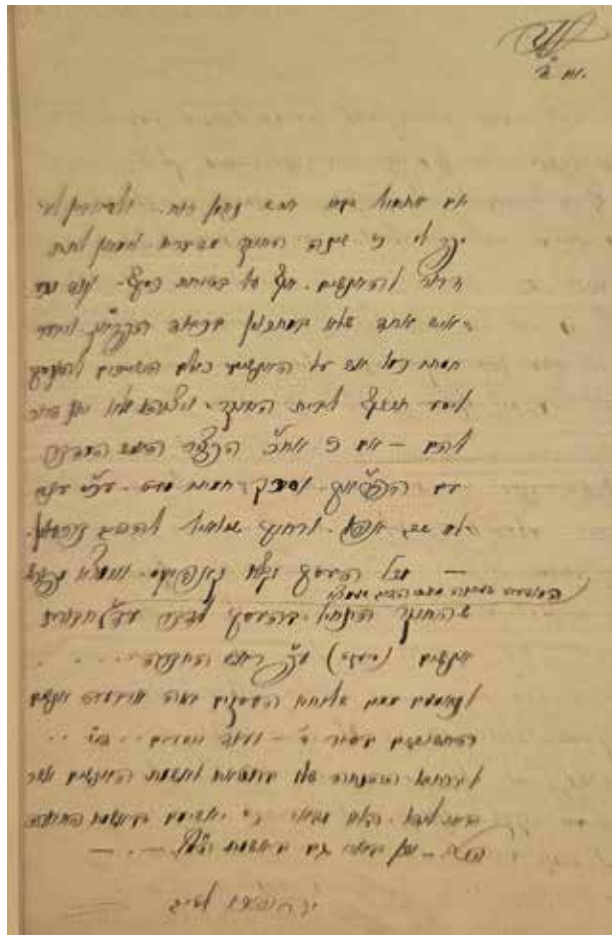
1. Igros Kodesh vol. 6 pg. 198, vol. 11 pg. 329.
2. Shabbos Parshas Shemos 5722, ois 11.



HANDWRITTEN NOTE FROM THE REBBE MAHARASH TO REB ZALMAN NEIMARK THAT WAS SMUGGLED INTO HIS PRISON CELL THROUGH A COFFEE MUG WITH A FALSE BOTTOM (PUBLISHED IN IGROS KODESH ADMUR MAHARASH, P. 23). THE NOTE READS:

בדבר המש[פט] שלו, אין לו מה לפחד כלל. והרי שמע בעצמו מ"ק אמו"ר זצ"ל"ה זיע"א. ונכון שילמוד כל השנה משניות מס' ברכות, וגמ' מסכת ברכות, והשי"ת יברכו בכל טוב סלה כאות נפשו.

HE HAS NOTHING TO FEAR IN REGARDS TO HIS COURT CASE, FOR HE HEARD DIRECTLY FROM MY FATHER THE REBBE [THE TZEMACH TZEDEK]. IT IS APPROPRIATE THAT HE LEARN THIS YEAR MASECHES BRACHOS IN GEMARA AND MISHNAYOS, AND HASHEM WILL BLESS HIM WITH ALL GOOD, ALWAYS, AS HIS HEART DESIRES.



ONE OF THE LETTERS SENT BY REB HESCHEL NOTEH GNESSIN TO LUBAVITCH.

נשי
ובנות
חב"ד

KISLEV

N'SHEI
U'BNOS
CHABAD

COMPILED BY:
RABBI LEVI GREENBERG (OH)

WRITTEN BY:
MENDEL ZAKLIKOVSKY

The festive month of Kislev, with its many special and auspicious days, brings with it valuable lessons. At the climax of the month we celebrate the luminous Yom Tov of Chanukah, which teaches us beautiful lessons to apply in our *avodas Hashem* throughout the year.

The Rebbe often quoted the Gemara's ruling that,¹ "נשים חייבות בנר חנוכה שאף הן היו באותו הנס"—Women are obligated in lighting the Chanukah light, as they too were included in that miracle, and the accompanying Rashi: "ויעל יד אשה נעשה הנס"—the miracle was brought about *through* a woman. In the times of the Chanukah miracles, Jewish women and girls acted with self-sacrifice and dedication. They stand as a shining example for women today, the Rebbe explained.

THREE PRIMARY LESSONS

In a letter to N'shei U'bnos Chabad, the Rebbe addressed three primary lessons of Chanukah and their application with regard to Jewish women and girls.²

1) The Chanukah *licht*, which symbolize "*Ner mitzvah v'Torah ohr*"—the light of Torah and mitzvos, must be kindled after the sun sets and the sky is dark. This teaches us that we must not be affected by spiritual darkness, for even a tiny bit of the light of Torah and mitzvos dispels much darkness; how much more so, *a lot* of light.

2) The Chanukah *licht* must be kindled (as described in the Gemara, though not always practiced today) outside one's home so that the light shines outdoors. This teaches us that we must not be satisfied by the spiritual comfort we may enjoy within our homes, but must also ensure that the outside street and all of our surroundings are illuminated as well.



MIVTZA NESHEK

The luminous lessons of Chanukah, the Rebbe highlighted, are very much connected to the Shabbos Candle campaign, “Mivtza Neshek,” which shares the theme of increasing light. For this reason, the Rebbe said that Chanukah is an appropriate time to add in activities related to “Mivtza Neshek.”⁵

3) The Chanukah *licht* are kindled in increasing number each night of Chanukah. This teaches us that our work in strengthening and disseminating Yiddishkeit must always grow, and that these efforts contain in themselves the assurance of ever-growing success.

These powerful lessons are applicable to Jewish women of today: As the mainstay of the home, the Jewish woman is the foundation of her household. It is largely up to her to ensure the continuity of the very foundations of Yiddishkeit.

“May the Chanukah *lichtelech* which represent Torah and mitzvos,” the Rebbe wrote, “continuously—every day and every moment—shine in you personally and in the members of your family, and as living and shining examples to others.

“May the light of the Torah and mitzvos, infused with *chassidische* warmth and vitality, permeate every niche of your home, and also spill out to the street.”

NEVER DISCOURAGED

In another letter addressed to N’shei U’bnos Chabad, the Rebbe underlines an additional lesson of value:³

“It is emphasized in the *tefilla* of “*Val Hanissim*” that a Yid is never at all discouraged by the fact that the Yidden may be “weaker” (“חלשים”) or “smaller” (“מעטים”) in numbers, facing against the “mighty” (“גבורים”) and the “many” (“רבים”).

“On the contrary, since Yidden are ‘pure, righteous, and are those who occupy themselves with Your Torah,’ they overcome all external and internal obstacles which might make

them forget Hashem’s Torah and mitzvos, until they attain a complete victory and the kindling of the [Chanukah] *licht*.”

CHANUKAH – CHINUCH

The name “Chanukah” is rooted in the word “*chinuch*,” which literally means “inauguration” (celebrating the re-dedication and inauguration of the Beis Hamikdash by the Chashmonaim) and “education.” Chanukah is thus a time to focus on Jewish education.

This is especially relevant to Jewish women: In all things connected to children’s education and upbringing, women take a significant role, especially in the education of very young children. Similarly, when it comes to *chinuch* in the broader sense of the term—spreading Yiddishkeit and Chasidus, even to adults—it is evident that a woman can be highly successful, and in certain areas, even more than a man, by influencing others in matters of Yiddishkeit (obviously, in a *tznius’dike* way).⁴ ❶

1. Shabbos 23a.
2. Igros Kodesh vol. 23, p. 66ff.
3. Ibid vol. 31, p. 44ff.
4. Likkutei Sichos vol. 25, p. 378ff.
5. See Igros Kodesh vol. 31, *ibid*.

BY: MOTTI WILHELM

לזכות
הרה"ת הרב שלום דוב בער זוזגתו
מרת חיה מושקא שיחיו
לרגל יום נישואיהם - יום
הבהיר ראש חודש כסלו
ולזכות ילדיהם ברכה ליפשא, עליזה,
שיינדל, ומנחם מענדל שיחיו
שוחאט

FROM SHKLOV TO NEW YORK

THE EVOLUTION
OF THE
CHABAD SIDDUR

מקומה בשלמות,
דפים בשעת הפלחו.

ברוקלין (13), ג. י.

שש לכריאה

Teh

MERKO



570

תהלת

על פי נוסח הארז

כל תפלה ותפלה באה על
מבלי שיצטרך המתפלל לחפש



חוצאת

המרכז לעניני חנוכה

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שנת חמישה אלפים שבע מאות וחמשה

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Tehillas Hashem

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770 EASTERN PARKWAY
Brooklyn 15, N. Y.

A Tehillas Hashem Siddur is a distinctive sign of any Lubavitcher home or shul. Open one, and you'll find it proclaims that it is “according to the Nusach of the Arizal, as established by the Alter Rebbe.” However, these ubiquitous Siddurim differ significantly from the Siddur originally authored by the Alter Rebbe. How did these changes occur? When did the Tehillas Hashem we know today first appear? This article traces the evolution of this quintessential Chabad text from Shklov in 5563 to New York in 5738 and beyond.

From its inception, one of the defining features of the Chassidic movement was the shift in *Nusach hatefilla* from *Nusach Ashkenaz* to *Nusach Arizal*. This change began in the times of the Baal Shem Tov, the founder of Chassidus, and was strongly advocated by his successor, the Maggid of Mezritch. Yet, it would only be in the third generation of Chassidus that the first Siddur specifically designed for Chassidim was published, compiled by the Alter Rebbe.

The need for a new *Nusach* was explained by the Alter Rebbe himself in a short *maamar*, printed in *Sefer Maamarei Admur Hazaken Haketzarim*.¹ “Regarding the *Nusach hatefilla*: There are twelve gates; each *shevet* has its unique *Nusach* in davening through which our *neshamos* are elevated. The thirteenth gate encompasses all twelve, and every *shevet* can ascend through it. It is said that in the future, the twelve *shevatim* will enter Yerushalayim through twelve gates, each through their own. Just as this will occur physically in the future, so too, during *galus* this takes place in *avoda*. This concept is reflected in the *Nusachaos* in davening, through which *neshamos Yisroel* are elevated. Since all Yidden are intermingled and composed from several *shevatim*, and no one knows which *shevet* they’re from, the Arizal established a *Nusach* that is a compilation from Ashkenaz, Sephard, and other *nuschaos*, in a manner that his *Nusach* is the thirteenth gate, through which all Yidden can ascend.”

Chassidim were not the first to daven according to the *Nusach* of the Arizal. Previously, *mekubalim* had davened with this *Nusach*, incorporating all the *kavanos* prescribed and taught by the Arizal. The *chiddush* of Chassidus was separating the Arizal’s *Nusach* from the *kavanos*, making the *Nusach* suitable for everyone.

But despite the fact that Chassidim changing their *Nusach* was well-established, and even engendered great opposition from *misnagdim*, no official Siddur was published with this *Nusach* for over two generations.

Compiling the Siddur

“When [the Alter Rebbe] sat upon his holy seat [began his *nesius*], he introduced awe-inspiring and innovative ideas...First, he clarified and elucidated the ways of *avoda* in a remarkable manner, based on his tradition from his holy teachers, and the additional wisdom and understanding granted to him by *Hashem Yisboreich*...as is clearly evident in his *derushim* and especially in his holy book *Likkutei Amarim*, known as the *Tanya Kadisha*.

“He also accustomed *anash* to daven in the holy *Nusach* of the Arizal, and some years later, published a special Siddur. This Siddur was meticulously crafted, with careful attention to the number of words, letter count, and precise vowel placement...The Siddur gained widespread acceptance, considered the finest among all versions. Even those accustomed from their youth to other *nuschaos*, came to respect and revere it.”²

With these words, Reb Chaim Meir Hillman, author of *Beis Rebbi*—the foremost comprehensive biography of the first three Rabbeim, describes the start of the development of the Alter Rebbe’s *Nusach*. In a footnote on this section, he records a tradition that when the Alter Rebbe compiled his Siddur, he had before him sixty Siddurim of various *nuschaos*, and “selected the ‘finest flour’ from among them all.” Later in *Beis Rebbi*³, the author quotes this same tradition in the name of the Tzemach Tzedek.

In a *reshima*⁴, the Rebbe Rashab writes that the Alter Rebbe worked on the *Nusach* for twenty years! “Each year

PAGE FROM A SIDDUR
NUSACH HA'ARI PRINTED
IN 5581, SEVERAL YEARS
BEFORE THE ALTER
REBBE'S NUSACH BEGAN
TO BE POPULARIZED.



he would arrange a different *Nusach*, until the twentieth time when it emerged refined, clarified, and purified.”

The new *Nusach* even caught the attention of the Russian authorities. After the Alter Rebbe was arrested, the officials asked him if the new *Nusach* meant that Chassidus constituted a new religion, which would have been forbidden under Czarist laws. The Alter Rebbe responded: “We daven in the *Nusach* that all Yidden daven with, and this forms the foundation of our *tefilla*. We only occasionally add words, *mizmorim*, and *pesukim* from Tehillim based on Kabbalah. This does not constitute a new religion.”⁵

In his *Reshimos*⁶, the Frierdiker Rebbe records that the Alter Rebbe’s *Nusach* had already spread among Chassidim already in 5543, sixteen years prior to this exchange in 5559. However, it wouldn’t be until 5563 that the Alter Rebbe’s Siddur would be published. What did Chassidim do in the interim?

“At that time, the *Nusach hatefilla* of the [Alter] Rebbe had already become widespread among the Chassidim in handwritten form. Some Chassidim incorporated the changes into their copies of the Shelah’s Siddur *Sha’ar HaShamayim*, as its text was more closely aligned with the Alter Rebbe’s *Nusach*.

More often, they would write the Alter Rebbe’s *Nusach* in the margins of their existing *Nusach Ashkenaz Siddurim*, which they continued to use for daily prayers,” the Frierdiker Rebbe writes in another *reshima*.⁷

The Siddur is Printed

In 5563, the Alter Rebbe sent his Siddur to be published in Shklov. In addition to the *Nusach hatefilla*, the Siddur included *halachos*, written by the Alter Rebbe. These *halachos*, though published before the Shulchan Aruch (which was mostly published after the Alter Rebbe’s lifetime), were authored by the Alter Rebbe after he had written the manuscript of the Shulchan Aruch. In a number of places, the Alter Rebbe rules differently in his Siddur than in his Shulchan Aruch, and since it was written later, these *halachos* are seen as *mishna acharona*—the final ruling.

The Siddur also incorporated *Seder Netilas Yodaim L’Seudah* and *Seder Birchos Hanehenin* detailing the *halachos of brachos*. A proper overview of these *halachic* essays is beyond the scope of the current article.

The Alter Rebbe was greatly *medayek* in every detail of the Siddur, even the order in which the *tefillos* were printed.

MAAMAR HAKOL KOL YAAKOV

In 5706, the Rebbe published ‘*Kuntres Toras Hachassidus*’ from the Frierdiker Rebbe, and included “*Shalshelos Kabbalas Toras HaChassidus*”—The chain of transmission of Chassidus, listing the Rabbeim, their family members, and their *seforim*. In the list of the Alter Rebbe’s *seforim*, the date of the Siddur’s publication is listed as 5563, noting Harav Avraham Dovid Lavut as the source. But the Rebbe then added a footnote with a *tzarich iyun*, a question.

The Rebbe notes that the *maamar* “*Hakol Kol Yaakov*” was printed as an introduction to the Siddur, and also printed in the 5566 edition of Tanya. He wrote:

“It is unlikely that this *maamar* was first printed in the Siddur and only later added to the conclusion of the Tanya during the Alter Rebbe’s lifetime (which would have been under his direction), only to be subsequently removed from the Tanya. A more plausible

scenario is that it was initially printed at the end of the Tanya. Later, when the Siddur was being prepared for publication, the Alter Rebbe instructed this *maamar* to be included there as an introduction, since it discusses *Krias Shema* and *tefilla*. Consequently, it was removed from subsequent editions of the Tanya after this point.

“However, this interpretation leads to one of two conclusions: either the Siddur was printed after 5566, or the first edition of the Siddur did not include this introduction (which seems somewhat improbable),” the Rebbe writes.

Nineteen years later, Rabbi Tuvia Blau wrote an article about the Siddur, and included the Rebbe’s *tzarich iyun*. When the Rebbe reviewed the article, he crossed out this paragraph, seemingly indicating that his conclusion was in line with Harav Avraham Dovid Lavut’s writing.

In fact, when a later printer made some changes that seemed minor, such as printing the text of *Ashrei* a second time before *U'va L'tzion* instead of a line noting that *Ashrei* could be found earlier, the Rebbe Rashab expressed great displeasure.

“...The publisher did not act properly by altering these aspects in several places, such as *Ashrei* before *Uva L'Tzion Goel*; *Baruch She'amar*, and *Pesukei D'Zimra* in *Shacharis* of Shabbos; as well as *Ashrei* before *Musaf*, *Kaveh*, *Aleinu*, etc. Although these changes do not affect the essential text of the *Nusach*, nevertheless they should not be changed, similar to the principle of ‘*Chayav adam lomar b'leshon rabbo*’ – one must speak in the language of his teacher. Additionally, there may be some reason behind this, as his [the Alter Rebbe’s] ways are beyond our understanding...”⁸

Another example of the consideration given to the “small details” of the Alter Rebbe’s Siddur can be seen in Likkutei Sichos⁹, where the Rebbe dedicated nearly a full *sicha* (!) to explain why the Alter Rebbe placed *Sefiras Ha'omer* at the conclusion of the Siddur.

Yet, despite the great effort invested by the Alter Rebbe, the printing capabilities of the time meant that every printed Sefer contained numerous mistakes. The Alter Rebbe noted some corrections, which were incorporated in later editions.

Two more editions of the Alter Rebbe’s Siddur were published in his lifetime in Kopust, with some differences between the editions.

Some decades later, Harav Avraham Dovid Lavut, a chosid of the Tzemach Tzedek and *rav* of Nikolayev, compiled the *sefer* Shaar Hakollel, which explains the changes made by the Alter Rebbe in his *Nusach*. In the introduction to his *sefer*, Harav Lavut, who was the Rebbe’s great-great-grandfather, writes about the three editions printed in the Alter Rebbe’s lifetime.

“This siddur was first printed during his lifetime in the year 5563, in Shklov, but it came out with many errors and omissions because it was printed from notes, and there was no properly printed siddur to copy from. It was printed twice during his lifetime in Kopust in an octavo format (a quarter-sized volume). In the first editions from Shklov and Kopust, the sections for *Kabbalas Shabbos*, the *Hilchasa Rabbata L'Shabbata* (an essay on *Hilchos Shabbos*), and ‘*V'Lakachta Solles*,’ as well as the laws of *Havdalah*, were not included. These pages were later printed separately...”¹⁰

These three editions were exceptionally rare, and even in the time of the Rebbe Rashab, hardly any copies still existed. When Harav Lavut was preparing his Shaar Hakollel, he was able to access one of the Kopust editions, but was unable to find any copies of the first, Shklov edition. He wrote to the Rebbe Rashab, asking if he had a copy, and the Rebbe Rashab responded: “Despite extensive efforts, I have been unable to acquire the first printed edition of the Siddur. However, I believe it is likely to be found in the library in Petersburg.”¹¹

Today, only a single copy is known to exist from among the three first editions of the Siddur. This copy is missing its title page, making it difficult to determine with certainty which of the three editions it represents. The Friediker Rebbe annotated its cover with the words, “Evidently the Shklov edition.”

This precious Siddur is currently in captivity in the Russian State Library. Ongoing efforts continue to reclaim it, along with other *seforim*, *ksovim* and *chafetzim*, with the goal of returning them to their rightful place, in the Rebbe’s library in New York.

The next known edition of the Alter Rebbe’s Siddur was published in Kopust in 5576, three years after the Alter Rebbe’s



1

LIBRARY OF AGUDAS CHASSIDEI CHABAD

2

LIBRARY OF AGUDAS CHASSIDEI CHABAD

1. IN THE SHKLOV EDITION AFTER THE WORDS “GADLU L’HASHEM”, A LINE NOTES THAT THE TEXT FROM ASHREI CAN BE FOUND EARLIER.

2. ON THE ONLY EXISTING COPY OF THE ORIGINAL SHKLOV EDITION WHICH IS MISSING ITS TITLE PAGE, THE FRIEDIKER REBBE WROTE: סידור אדמו"ר. כנראה דפוס שקלאוו THE [ALTER] REBBE’S SIDDIR. PRESUMABLY THE SHKLOV EDITION.

histalkus. This Siddur was published not only as a Siddur for daily use, but primarily as a collection of *maamarim* by the Alter Rebbe expounding on the words of davening. Aside from the Tanya, this was the first work of Chabad Chassidus to be published.

Known commonly as “*Siddur Im Dach*” (Siddur with Chassidus), this expanded work was so comprehensive that it required publication in two volumes.

Seventy Editions in Seventy Years

Over the following seven decades, dozens of editions of the Alter Rebbe's Siddur were released by various publishers across Eastern Europe.

The true number of editions is impossible to determine, as Siddurim were used heavily, on a day-to-day basis, and typically until they were worn out, when they were put in *geniza*. Consequently, there are countless editions of Siddurim, across all *nuschaos*, of which no copies remain extant today.

However, based on available information, including the mention of previous editions on later Siddurim's title page, there were at least 71 editions of *Nusach Arizal* Siddurim printed after the 5576 *Siddur Im Dach* until 5647.¹²

Some notable editions include:

Kopust 5582: Printed with the *haskama* of the Alter Rebbe's brother, the Maharil. The *haskama* speaks highly of the printer, stating: “He possesses both wisdom and knowledge. He personally heard numerous teachings from *Kvod Rabbeinu Nishmaso Eden* [the Alter Rebbe]. Moreover, he has in his possession numerous bundles of corrections written in his holy hand.” This statement serves to differentiate this printer from his predecessors, who were less meticulous and prone to making alterations, errors, and omissions. This edition is also mentioned in Beis Rebbi.¹³

Slavita 5587 and 5596: These Siddurim were considered to be accurately arranged for the most part, and the Tzemach

Tzedek used a Slavita Siddur. However, the printers did add to, and change things from, the Alter Rebbe's original *Nusach*. One such example can be found in Shaar Hakollel, where the author writes:

“During the time of the Tzemach Tzedek of Lubavitch, these Siddurim were printed in Slavita. These editions included the *possuk* “וּפְדִיִּי ה' יִשׁוּבוּן” [in *Havdalah*]. The [Tzemach Tzedek] was asked whether this verse should be recited. He responded, “The Alter Rebbe was adamant about not including any references to sorrow or sighing on Motzei Shabbos.”¹⁴

Beis Rebbi mentions other notable editions. “In 5600, Reb Zalman Zelever printed [the Siddurim] with some additions, which he probably heard from our Rebbes. Reb Hillel Paritcher also printed them.” In a footnote, he includes a disclaimer: “All these additions are only in some *chidushei dinim* that they heard from our Rabbeim, but in the body of the *Nusach*, one may not add or subtract...”¹⁵

THE NAMES

Since there was no official title for the Alter Rebbe's Siddur, each printer chose his own title, resulting in a wide variety of names.

Some of these include: Ohr Hame'ir, Ohr Olam, Ohr Hatorah, Beis Yaakov, Geulas Yisroel, Hod V'Hadar, Hameir La'aretz, Zichron Yerushalayim, Chinuch Tefillah, Kesser Tefillah, Siddur im Likkutei Torah, Meah She'arim, Me'orei Ohr, Mo'ed V'Shabbos, Moreh Tzedek, Mincha Chadasha, Minchas Shabbos, Siddur Ha'Ari, Ovrei Orach, Kodesh Hilulim, Kol Yehuda, Siach Kodesh, Sfas Emes, Safah Berurah, Tefilas Yeshurun, Tefilas Kol Peh, and others.

Today, virtually all *Nusach Arizal* Siddurim are printed as ‘Tehillas Hashem,’ with few exceptions, such as the Torah Ohr Siddur, Siddur Shaar Menachem—compiled and edited by Rabbi Levi Bistritzky, Tefilos L'yemei Hashana from Shai Lemorah, and Siddurim with explanations. Two more recent editions are a Siddur for women titled Tehillas Noshim, and a Siddur published by Kehos in Eretz Yisroel titled Tefilah Sedura.



PAGE FROM THE FIRST PRINTING OF SIDDUR IM DACH, 5576.

Among the *seforim* held captive in Moscow is a Siddur printed in Vilna in 5628 that was part of the Rebbe Maharash's personal library. Rav Avraham Dovid Lavut was involved in preparing this edition, long before he published Shaarei Tefillah and its successor, Shaar Hakollel. Although this edition was executed beautifully, it contains many inaccuracies. Indeed, the margins of the Rebbe Maharash's copy contain hundreds of minor corrections.

In a brief overview of the primary editions of the Alter Rebbe's Siddur¹⁶, Rabbi Sholom Ber Levin, Chief Librarian of the Rebbe's Library, notes that "After the Alter Rebbe's *histalkus*, the Siddur was printed many times, but all these Siddurim contained changes, additions, and omissions. While some publishers made more extensive changes than others, the common thread was that they all introduced modifications." The sole exception, he notes, was the 5576 edition of *Siddur Im Dach*.

Siddur Torah Ohr

The year 5647 marked a turning point for the publishing of the Alter Rebbe's Siddur. In that year, Harav Avraham Dovid Lavut first printed his Siddur Torah Ohr, which was seen as revolutionary in clarifying the proper *Nusach* of the Alter Rebbe.

Harav Lavut worked for a number of years to clarify various details and nuances before publishing this Siddur. He first published an earlier edition of the Alter Rebbe's Siddur, titled 'Ohr Hame'ir' in 5644, in the famous Rom Publishing House in Vilna. He then continued editing, researching, and clarifying, authoring his work 'Shaarei Tefilla,' an earlier edition of his 'Shaar Hakollel' mentioned earlier.

In 5647, after completing Shaarei Tefilla, he printed it in Vilna as an addendum to the first edition of Siddur Torah Ohr. The author of Beis Rebbi, which was first printed in 5662, praised this edition for its precision.

"Not long ago, [the Siddur] was printed with great *hiddur* by Harav Hagaon Reb Avraham Dovid Lavut, the *Av Beis Din* of Nikolayev. He carefully edited the Siddur, based on the earlier editions that [the Alter Rebbe] himself had published, as well as from handwritten marginal notes in the Siddur that [the Alter Rebbe] had personally edited. He was very meticulous with every word and with the *nekudos*. He also ensured that the printing was of the highest quality, using large, bright, and clear letters to facilitate easy reading for all users. At the end of the Siddur, he included 'Shaar Hakollel,' in which he elucidates many of the Alter Rebbe's teachings and reveals their sources based on his research."¹⁷

In 5649, Harav Lavut printed the Torah Ohr Siddur again,

with more additions and corrections. Throughout this time, he continued working on authoring Shaar Hakollel, the final edition of his 'Shaarei Tefilla.' He concluded this work in 5650, but passed away a number of years later. It wouldn't be until 5656 that Shaar Hakollel would be printed. In the interim, Siddur Torah Ohr was printed twice more, in 5650 and 5652, due to its popularity.

Other editions of the Alter Rebbe's Siddur continued to be published by various printers in Europe, Eretz Yisroel, and the United States. There are at least 175 editions from before 5705 that we know of.

Der Rostover Siddur

The outbreak of the First World War in 5674 and the subsequent Russian Revolution in 5677 forced many Yidden to escape their homes and villages and become refugees in safer areas. The Rebbe Rashab himself left Lubavitch in 5676 and relocated to Rostov, and during the revolution, many other Yidden found themselves there as well.

The upheaval and chaos created a severe shortage in basic *seforim* such as Siddurim and Chumashim, and the Rebbe Rashab purchased a publishing house and founded the 'Ezra Print House' to assuage the need. He then printed two Siddurim—*Nusach Arizal* and *Nusach Ashkenaz*—for



FIRST PRINTING OF SIDDUR TORAH OHR WITH THE 'SHAAR HAKOLLEL'

the refugees.

The process was described in a letter written to the Rebbe in 5723 by Harav Yaakov Landau, who had served as the *rav* in the Rebbe Rashab's court:

“Initially, the Rebbe *Kodesh Hakadoshim*, had the idea to print the Siddur Torah Ohr. For this purpose, he sent me to Kharkov, where the manager of the Rom printing house, Mr. Berger, was residing at the time. I was to ask him to lend us the matrices for the Siddur Torah Ohr. [Matrices are molds used in printing to cast individual letters or whole pages of text –ed.] However, it turned out that he didn't have the matrices, and from him, I gleaned the idea of zincography [a printing process that involves using zinc plates to transfer images or text onto paper, an alternative to traditional typesetting –ed.]

“This idea found favor in the eyes of the Rebbe [Rashab]. We took a ‘Tefilas Kol Peh’ Vilna edition Siddur [an earlier edition of the Alter Rebbe's Siddur –ed.] and began to make changes by pasting in sections from the Torah Ohr Siddur. The pasting work was done by a man named Zalman Idel *a”h*.”

Reb Zalman Idel was renowned for his exceptional attention to detail. His meticulous approach to editing the Siddur was such that he wouldn't make any changes without first consulting the Rebbe Rashab. Due to Zalman's extraordinary precision, the Siddur became known among *anash* as the ‘*Siddur Hameduyak*,’—the precise Siddur, an expression found in the Rebbe's Igros Kodesh as well.¹⁸

Upon completion, the Siddur was printed in 20,000 copies, and the *Nusach Ashkenaz* edition was printed in 10,000 copies. Both of these Siddurim were given the name ‘Tehillas Hashem.’



THE TWO VARIATIONS OF THE ROSTOV SIDDUR, NUSACH ASHKENAZ AND NUSSACH ARI.

Over the following years, these Siddurim, which were also known as ‘*der Rostover Siddurim*,’ were reprinted several times in both the *Nusach Arizal* and *Nusach Ashkenaz* editions.

In his memoir on his life in Soviet Russia, Reb Meyer Gurkow writes about his saga with one of these editions, the one of Leningrad, 5684.

“At that time, publishers were not being licensed to print *seforim*. The Rebbe, a ‘wise man with an eye to the future,’ was keenly aware that Siddurim tend to get torn and wear out quickly. He had tasked R. Shimon Lazarov with obtaining a license to print a large quantity of siddurim. R. Shimon was the *rav* of one of the largest Chassidic *shuls* in Petersburg, located at 128 Jekobar St. The Rogatchover Gaon used to daven in this shul regularly when he lived in Petersburg. R. Shimon succeeded in printing these Siddurim but now the Siddurim lay packed away in R. Shimon's storage, and he had no one to sell them to. Making matters worse, R. Shimon had borrowed a large sum of money to cover the costs of the printing, and the lenders had already come knocking.”¹⁹

Reb Meyer goes on to describe how almost no one was interested in purchasing them—except for one wholesaler. Few could envision that a day would come when there would be almost no Siddurim to be found in the entire USSR, as predicted by the Frierdiker Rebbe.

Siddurim in America

In 5700, after being rescued from war-torn Europe, the Frierdiker Rebbe arrived on the safe shores of the United States. He immediately set about revitalizing Agudas Chassidei Chabad of America, urging them to expand their efforts in spreading Yiddishkeit and Chassidus.

In a letter dated 25 Adar, 5701, addressed to the office of Agudas Chassidei Chabad, the Frierdiker Rebbe outlined a series of directives for their future activities. One of the key instructions was:

“It is essential for Agudas Chassidei Chabad to establish a system for printing books and writing of Chassidus. The first priority should be to print Siddurim with an accurate *Nusach*, similar to the ‘Tehillas Hashem’ Siddur from Rostov.”²⁰

Three months later, on Chof Ches Sivan, 5701, the Rebbe arrived in America following his own miraculous escape from the Nazis. Upon his arrival, the Frierdiker Rebbe tasked him with leading the effort to reprint the *Rostover Siddur*. The Rebbe began preparing the Siddur for publication, meticulously writing numerous edits and notes to correct typos and other details. (These edits and notes—most of which were not incorporated into the Siddur when it was eventually

published—were released sixty-six years later by Kehos in a booklet entitled ‘Hagahos L’Siddur Rabbeinu HaZaken.’)

However, in the meantime, the Frierdiker Rebbe made the decision to prioritize the printing of the Torah Ohr Siddur instead. This Siddur was printed later that year by Agudas Chassidei Chabad of America. Notably, this edition included a machzor for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, which previous editions had not. While the Siddur itself was a copy of earlier versions of Siddur Torah Ohr, the machzor was copied from the Siddur Meah Shearim, a version of the Alter Rebbe’s *Nusach* that had been printed in Berdichev in 5673.

In their memoirs, the Shulzinger Brothers, who founded a printing company that printed many of the early works that Chabad published in America, recount the speed with which this Siddur was printed.

“When [the Frierdiker Rebbe] arrived in the United States, his secretary, who is now the Rebbe and leader of Chabad-Lubavitch Chassidim... approached us with a question: Could we print and bind within one week the Lubavitch Siddur, using a single copy in his possession? He requested one thousand such prayer books to distribute widely. We replied that we would do everything to fulfill this order by the requested date. I received the prayer book, and within a week, I delivered one thousand printed and bound Siddurim.”²¹

When the Siddur came back from the printer, the Frierdiker Rebbe gave a copy to the Rebbe as a gift. From that point on, the Rebbe used that copy of the Torah Ohr Siddur almost exclusively, and the distinct black siddur became an

indispensable and recognizable part of *tefillos*, *farbrengens*, and other events with the Rebbe.

The Frierdiker Rebbe then issued a letter to *anash* of America and Canada, urging them to use this Siddur.

“*Baruch shehechyanu v’higianu* to fill the great lack for Chabad Chassidim in our countries: a precise Siddur in the *Nusach* of the Alter Rebbe. For many years, the shortage of an accurate Siddur has been deeply felt, and many of *anash* have been distressed at having to daven using inaccurate versions.

“Now, through *chasdei Hashem*, we have succeeded in printing the Torah Ohr Siddur in its precise and original form. I hereby appeal to our friends, *anash* and the *talmidei hatmimim*, may Hashem bless them with life, to daven using this Siddur and to educate their children to do the same.”²²

Six years after Siddur Torah Ohr was printed, in 5707, the *Rostover Siddur* was finally reprinted with a few additions, such as an Alef Beis Chart and *brachos* for children to recite. This Siddur, like its predecessor, was titled Siddur Tehillas Hashem.

The “Other” Tehillas Hashem

Prior to the republishing of the Rostover Siddur, Kehos—founded by the Frierdiker Rebbe in 5702, with the Rebbe appointed to lead it—printed another Siddur. Although this Siddur also bore the name Tehillas Hashem, like the *Rostover Siddur*, it was significantly different from the latter, and bore the name ‘Siddur Tehillas Hashem *Hasholeim*.’

In a letter dated Chof Gimmel Teves, 5705²³, the Rebbe outlined plans for the new Siddur, writing:

“Currently in print... a Siddur is being prepared for the Talmud Torahs and schools (with all the *tefillos* in order, in large letters, etc.). However, due to the current circumstances, I do not know when it will be completed. My hope is that it will be finished within two to three months.”

As the Rebbe described, the Siddur was specifically designed for children, necessitating large, clear lettering and ensuring all the *tefillos* were presented sequentially, avoiding the need to flip back and forth through the pages. For this reason, the *Rostover Siddur* was not reprinted, as it featured small, cramped text and required turning pages to locate parts of the davening. Instead, the Siddur chosen for reprinting was *Siddur Seder Ha’avoda*, originally printed in Vilna in 5671.

Since this Siddur was not as *meduyak* as the *Rostover Siddur*, numerous corrections were made prior to its publication. Nonetheless, this was not a perfect effort. When questioned about certain discrepancies, the Rebbe responded,



FIRST EDITION OF THE ‘TORAH OHR’ SIDDIR PRINTED IN AMERICA. NOTE THE SYMBOL OF THE SHULSINGER BROTHERS AT THE BOTTOM OF THE TITLE PAGE.

“The complete Tehillas Hashem Siddur is a photographic reproduction of an earlier Siddur, and there was not enough time to proofread it properly.”²⁴

This Siddur was later reprinted in Munich, Germany, in 5707, and multiple times in New York after 5711. The *Rostover Siddur* was printed several times in Kfar Chabad over the following decades, but not again in America. With the Torah Ohr Siddur only printed once more in 5706 in Shanghai, and the *Rostover Siddur* no longer available in the USA, the new Tehillas Hashem became the classic Siddur of Chabad Chassidim.

The Rebbe personally distributed the Siddur Tehillas Hashem on a number of occasions, such as *Yimei Hasefira* 5732, when the Rebbe sent a Siddur to children around the world who had offered *brachos* for his 70th birthday; Yud-Aleph Shvat 5736, when the first group of Shluchim²⁵ was sent to Eretz Yisroel—the Rebbe gave each man a Likkutei Sichos Chelek Yud Alef, and each woman a Siddur—and several other occasions. Many individuals, especially children, received a pocket-sized Siddur Tehillas Hashem in *yechidus* over the years. Another notable incident took place during the Yom Kippur War, when the Rebbe instructed to have a Siddur Tehillas Hashem printed in Fayed, Egypt, along with a Tehillim and a Tanya.

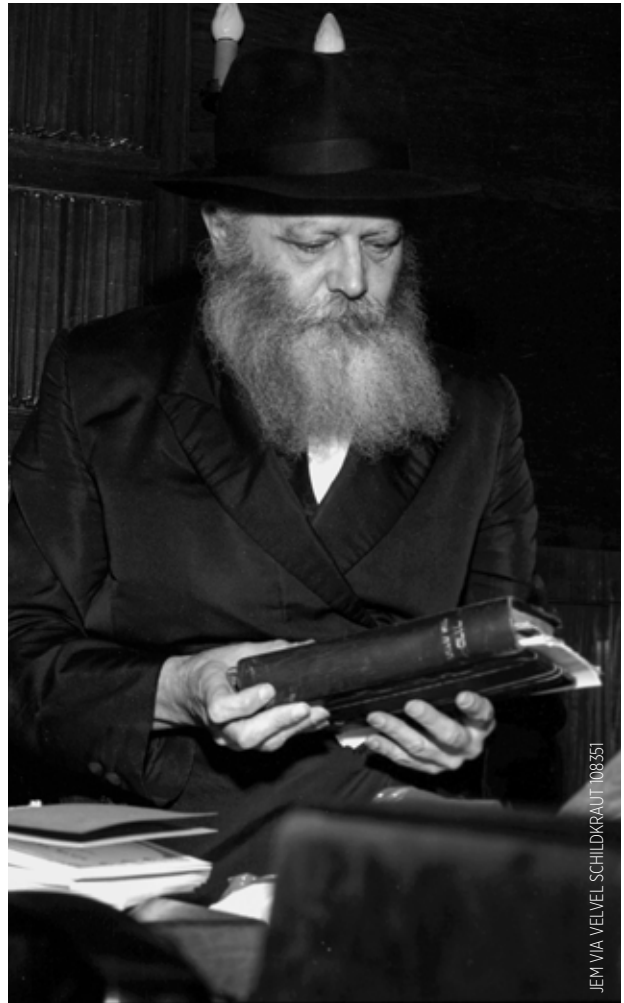
First English, Then Lashon Kodesh

This continued until the late 5730s. During this period, Rabbi Nissan Mangel was working on the first-ever English translation of Siddur Tehillas Hashem. Assisting him with editing the original Hebrew text was Rabbi Tuvia Zilberstrom, who was then a *bochur* in *kvutza*.

The team of two meticulously reviewed the entire Siddur to identify elements that required correction. This included checking words, *nekudos*, *marei mekomos*, *halachos*, and various other aspects. After compiling a list of possible corrections, they approached experts in *dikduk*, *nusach* and *halacha* to clarify what they could. Any questions that remained unanswered were then sent to the Rebbe for his guidance.

Most proposed changes were either accepted or rejected; however there remained a number of unresolved questions. The Siddur with English was printed in 5738, and some time afterward, the Rebbe wrote to Rabbi Mangel, stating that there were many other matters he should be focusing on in his work with Kehos, and advising him to pause his editing of the Siddur.²⁶

In what Rabbi Zilberstrom describes as a “bold” move, the



JEM VIA VELVEL SCHILDKRAUT 008351

WHEN PRESIDENT ZALMAN SHAZAR VISITED THE REBBE ON PURIM 5731, THE REBBE ARRANGED THAT HE AND EACH MEMBER OF HIS ENTOURAGE RECEIVE A SPECIALLY EMBOSSED SIDDUR TEHILLAS HASHEM. AFTER HANDING SHAZAR A SIDDUR, THE REBBE HELD UP HIS OWN SIDDUR AND SAID THAT HE WILL BE USING HIS TORAH OHR SIDDUR, BECAUSE “IT’S BEEN 20 YEARS THAT I DAVEN WITH THE SHVER’S SIDDUR.”



THE FIRST EDITION OF TEHILLAS HASHEM PRINTED IN AMERICA IN 5705.

title page for this Siddur was prepared with the border design used in the Alter Rebbe's other *seforim*, and the page stated "As established by the Alter Rebbe, *Baal Hatanya v'Hashulchan Aruch*." The editors had no idea what the Rebbe's response would be, and they were thrilled when the galleys of the Siddur were sent back by the Rebbe with tacit approval for the new *shaar blatt*.

Before the Siddur was sent to print, the Rebbe requested that it be produced in a beautiful format, suitable to be given as a gift from a *chosson* to a *kallah*, or for similar occasions. To fulfill this request, the Siddur was printed with an elegant faux-leather cover.

After the English Siddur was printed, a new pocket-size edition was prepared by Rabbi Zilberstrom in Lashon Hakodesh as well. It included edited editions of the Alter Rebbe's *Seder Birchos Hanehenin*, the text of Haggadah Shel Pesach, and other additions.

To Rabbi Zilberstom's surprise, after publication, the Siddur remained in the Kehos warehouses, undistributed. He understood why some months later, when the Rebbe requested that pocket-size Siddurim be prepared for distribution to children at the Erev Shavuos farbrengen of 5739. These Siddurim were now ready for that purpose.

For the most part, these Siddurim remained without change for decades. On one occasion, the Rebbe addressed a needed change in a *sicha*:

On Tzom Gedalya, 5749²⁷, the Rebbe noted that in the

Siddur, there was only one *possuk* starting "Romemu" when the Sefer Torah is taken out of the *Aron Kodesh*, when really there should be two such *pesukim*: "רוממו ה' אלקינו והשתחוה לה' אלקינו קדוש הוא" and "רוממו ה' אלקינו והשתחוה לה' קדוש כ"י". Promptly, stickers featuring the second *possuk* were printed and distributed to be added to all existing Siddurim. Subsequently, all new editions have included both *pesukim*.



May all of our *tefillos*, together with those of *Klal Yisroel*, be answered in the best possible way, most importantly our prayers for the *geulah ha'amitis v'hashleima*.

A forthcoming sequel to this article will, with Hashem's help, take a deeper dive into the Alter Rebbe's *Nusach* itself. **T**

1. Page 581.
2. *Beis Rebbi* (Mayanotecha edition, Yerushalayim, 2019), p. 50.
3. *Ibid.*, chapter 27, footnote 14 (p. 243).
4. Printed in *Hasiddur* (Heichal Menachem Monsey, 2003), p. 13.
5. *Igros Kodesh Admur Hazaken* (Kehos, Brooklyn, NY, 2012), p. 220.
6. *Reshimas Vikuach Hagadol B'minsk* (Kehos, Brooklyn, NY, 2009), p. 14.
7. *Reshimas Divrei Yimei Admur Hazaken* (Kehos, Brooklyn, NY, 2010), p. 33.
8. Printed in Siddur Torah Ohr (Kehos, Brooklyn, NY, 2014) p. 498. In earlier editions, it appears on p. 232.
9. *Likkutei Sichos* vol. 22, Parshas Emor (1), p. 114.
10. *Sha'ar Hakollel*, p. 17.
11. *Igros Kodesh Admur Harashab*, Vol 1, p. 19.
12. For further reading on these editions, see *Hasiddur* p. 309.
13. Section 1, Chapter 27. (P. 245 in *Mayanotecha* edition).
14. *Sha'ar Hakollel*, 32;5. (P. 76)
15. *Ibid.*
16. Printed in *Hagahos L'Siddur Rabbeinu Hazaken* (Kehos, Brooklyn, NY, 2006), p. 5.
17. *Ibid.*
18. *Igros Kodesh* volume 13, p. 326.
19. *Sefer Hazichronos Divrei Hayomim* (New York, 1977), p. 34. English edition translated by Rabbi Mendel Super (Brooklyn, NY, 2021).
20. *Igros Kodesh Admur Harayatz* vol. 13, p. 325.
21. The Shulzinger Brothers - The Printing Press and Publishing House (Yerushalayim, 1986).
22. *Igros Kodesh Admur Harayatz* vol. 6, p. 45.
23. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 2, p. 24.
24. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 3, p. 138.
25. Colloquially known as the *Shluchei Kodesh*.
26. *Kuntres Tomid Tehilaso Befi*, printed in *Teshura, Yonah Elimelech v'Esther Malka Zilberstrom* (Kfar Chabad, 2017), p. 38.
27. *Hisvaaduyos* 5749, vol. 1, p. 25.

THE FIRST EDITION OF TEHILLAS HASHEM TRANSLATED BY RABBI NISSEN MANGEL WITH THE ALTER REBBE'S SHAAR ON THE TITLE PAGE.

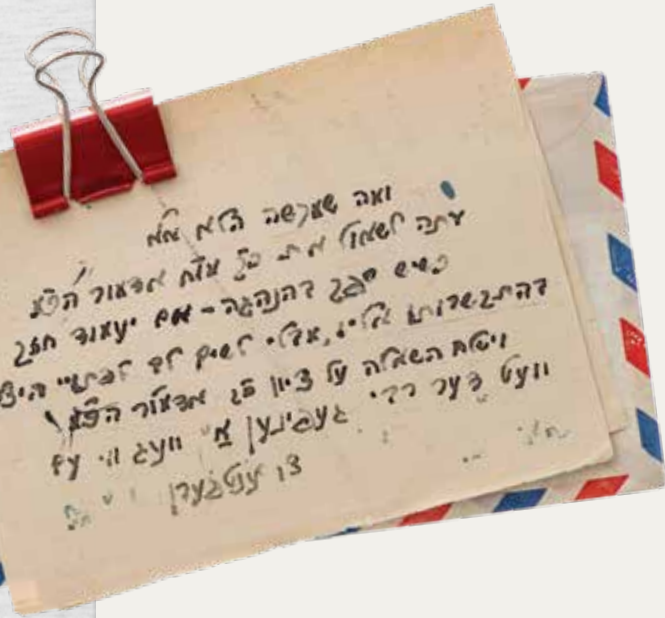




Story

לזכות
הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' יששכר
שלמה שיחי' בן ח'ל' פייגל
טייכטל
לרגל יום הולדתו לאורך
ימים ושנים טובות

נדפס ע"י
הרה"ת ר' דוד חזוגתו מרת פערל
גאלדא ומשפחתם שיחיו
טייכטל
שמפיין אילינוי



דער רבי וועט געפינען א וועג...

WRITTEN BY: RABBI LEVI GREENBERG (TX)

“Not What I Was Expecting”



AS TOLD BY
RABBI ENAN FRANCIS
(Houston, TX)

During the month of Adar I 5784 my twelve-year-old son Shaya started feeling a lot of pain in his leg. For years he had felt pain there, and various medical professionals we consulted explained it was regular growing pains. Still, this time he was taking Advil every day to handle it so we decided to take him to an orthopedist. Our appointment was on Friday, 7 Adar 1.

Reviewing the X-rays the Orthopedist said he was not

comfortable with what he saw and instructed us to take him to the hospital for an MRI as soon as possible. At first, we figured this was nothing too serious; but when I showed the X-rays to a friend of ours who is a radiologist, he said, “Enan, your son needs to get a biopsy in addition to the MRI. This doesn’t look good at all.”

The MRI happened on Monday morning and we were told the results would be in within 24 hours, and when I

received them on Tuesday morning, my heart sank. After researching the meaning of the various medical terms in the report, I understood that it described a frightening growth on the bone of Shaya's leg. However, there was no clear diagnosis that it was malignant.

I called my wife with the news and we both came home and cried bitterly. The orthopedist who had ordered the MRI notified us that an oncology team was being assembled to work on Shaya's medical case and we would meet with them on Wednesday afternoon to discuss a plan.

"Doctor, is the growth malignant?" I asked.

"I refuse to discuss the details until we meet with the oncology team tomorrow afternoon."

That was all we needed to hear to go into panic mode. I reached out to friends who are well-connected in the medical community, and within minutes our case was being handled by Chai Lifeline and the Rofeh Cholim Cancer Society (RCCS). The care, concern, expert advice and tremendous help we received from the wonderful doctors and activists of these organizations greatly encouraged us, but it also confirmed that we were potentially dealing with the worst of the worst.

We decided that Shaya, my wife, and I would fly to New York to come to the Rebbe at the Ohel right away unless the doctors at the oncology meeting said we needed to do medical procedures the next day.

Shaya did not join us at the Wednesday meeting. We decided to only give him the information he needed to know. The oncology team refused to diagnose the growth as malignant until Shaya underwent a bone biopsy which they scheduled for the next Wednesday morning. It is an invasive procedure that would force him to walk on crutches for several weeks. The meeting was not encouraging to say the least, and since there were no medical procedures scheduled for the next day, we immediately booked our flights for early the next morning, Erev Purim Katan. We took all our mezuzos with us to be checked as well.

Throughout the flight, my wife and I cried. There is a well-known Chassidische niggun called "*Fort a Yiddele*" which describes the story of a Jew on a boat that capsizes.

He calls out to both his father and mother to save him, but they cannot help. He finally calls out to the Rebbe and the Rebbe says "You will not drown." We sing this niggun often in our home, and during the flight, I told my wife that we were going to the Rebbe and surely the Rebbe will ensure "we don't drown."

She responded that she always had a problem with that *niggun*. How can a mother not possibly help her child? But now she realizes how helpless she is...

We wrote separate letters to the Rebbe and davened at the Ohel for a long time. At one point I took a copy of Shaya's MRI and X-ray, while tearing it before placing it at the Ohel, I thought, "Rebbe, please make sure Hashem tears up this entire problem and it should just go away!"

One of the Rebbe's instructions regarding medical issues is to get a second opinion. On Friday, Purim Katan, I reached out to Rabbi Lazer Lazaroff who runs the Aishel House, a Chabad House dedicated to catering to the needs of the many Jews who travel to Houston from around the world to receive treatment in Houston's world-renowned hospitals. He has strong connections to the best doctors at the local hospitals, and I asked if he could arrange an appointment with a specific pediatric bone oncologist who had been recommended to us. Although he had no prior connection with this particular doctor, he sent an email requesting an appointment on our behalf.

On Motzei Shabbos Rabbi Lazaroff called my wife. "Mrs. Francis, you won't believe what happened!" On Shabbos one of the couples staying at the Aishel House had an urgent appointment at Texas Children's Hospital. The doctor said to them, "Tell your rabbi I will help his people. Tell the family the doctor will take their case and the office will be in touch with them on Monday."

Our appointment to get a second opinion was scheduled for Tuesday morning and we took Shaya along with us. As we were waiting to meet the doctor, a nurse entered the room and handed Shaya a gown because he would be taking another X-ray. He became very upset and my wife protested that we were just here for a second opinion on the X-ray that was already done a week ago. The nurse explained that the doctor ordered a new X-ray taken, and



RABBI FRANCIS
GAVE HIS SON
SHAYA A COIN
FROM THE REBBE
PRIOR TO HIS
SURGERY.

I started to feel a glimmer of hope. “This is how miracles start happening. We ripped up the other results at the Ohel. They will find new results today,” I said excitedly to my wife, and Shaya went ahead with the X-ray.

Shortly afterward the doctor entered the room and started reviewing the results of the new X-ray in front of us while muttering “very good” “looks good” and such comments. Unable to contain myself I said, “Doctor, the results of the last week’s MRI sounded very bad. Are you sure things are good?”

The doctor explained that notwithstanding last week’s results, the X-ray she was looking at showed that there was a growth on Shaya’s thigh bone, but she was absolutely confident it was benign and there was no need for any biopsy at all. The growth could be removed by surgery that week and Shaya would be fine.

Stunned and overwhelmed with emotion we had no idea how to react. Dancing in an oncology ward of the hospital did not feel appropriate, but that’s exactly what we felt like doing. On our way out to the parking lot the other hospital called to confirm our appointment

for the biopsy the next day, and we happily canceled it on the spot.

On Thursday morning Shaya was wheeled into surgery to remove the growth. The doctor said it should take approximately 3 hours and if she came out earlier that meant there was trouble. Two and a half hours later the doctor walked into the waiting room and said “It wasn’t what I was expecting.”

For a moment my heart dropped but then the doctor explained that the growth was more on the cartilage of the bone than on the bone itself. The surgery was a success and Shaya could go home that day. Four months later Shaya was walking on his own two feet with a clean bill of health! **T**

YOUR STORY

Share your story with A Chassidisher Derher by emailing stories@derher.org.



מוקדש לחיזוק ההתקשרות לכ"ק אדמו"ר

נדפס ע"י

הרה"ת ר' יצחק מאיר וזוגתו מרת

לאה ומשפחתם שיחיו

שפאלטר

COMPILED BY: RABBI YOSSE KATZ
WRITTEN BY: RABBI TZEMACH FELLER

P I N P O I N T S

STORIES OF THE REBBE'S
REACH AND IMPACT AROUND THE GLOBE

OKLAHOMA



Since 5747, Rabbi Yehuda and Etel Weg have served the 5,000 or so Yidden who make up the Jewish community in Oklahoma, from their Chabad House in Tulsa. Today, the families of shluchim in the state continue to serve the Jewish community with dedication.

The Rebbe's care for Yiddishkeit in the state, however, began long before.



RABBI YEHUDA WEG

TALMUD TORAH IN TULSA

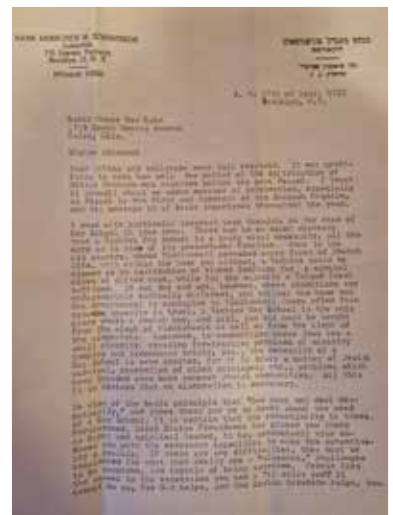
In the mid-20th century, Rabbi Osher Dov (Arthur) Kahn served as the spiritual leader for the Jewish community in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Facing the challenges of life as an observant Jew in this relatively remote location, Rabbi Kahn went in to the Rebbe for *yechidus*, intending to leave his post, citing the lack of *chinuch* locally. During that meeting, the Rebbe made it clear that not only should Rabbi Kahn not leave Tulsa, but that he should found a Jewish school there.

Rabbi Kahn accepted the Rebbe's advice and traveled back to Oklahoma, where he founded a Jewish day school. It did not go smoothly. Rabbi Kahn faced opposition from local community members, to the point where he was ready to throw in the towel. In his poetic way, he wrote to the Rebbe that here in Tulsa, instead of "*Talmud Torah K'neged Kulam*," people are "*Kulam K'neged Talmud Torah*"—all are opposed to the school!

The Rebbe responded with a nearly two-page-long letter in English dated 17th of Iyar 5722. "There can be no doubt whatsoever that a Yeshiva Day School is a truly vital necessity," the Rebbe wrote. "Since Divine Providence has placed you there as Rabbi and spiritual leader, it has undoubtedly also endowed you with the necessary capacities to make the potentiality a reality."

Rabbi Kahn had written about the poor response the school had encountered; how difficult it was to enroll even five children. The Rebbe wrote, "Surely, even one soul is a whole world, and justifies every effort... when the lamp is lit, many will surely gather around it."

The lamp Rabbi Kahn lit remains kindled today, in the form of the Mizel Jewish Community Day School, which continues to provide the locals with an invaluable Jewish connection.



THE REBBE'S LETTER TO RABBI ARTHUR KAHN.

“THE SHLUCHIM ARE HERE!”

Not long after their marriage, in 5747, Rabbi Yehuda and Etel Weg resolved to move out on shlichus. Around that time, the Rebbe approved a plan to open new branches of Merkos in four states, and they were offered the opportunity to open a branch in Oklahoma. Four letters were prepared by Rabbi Moshe Kotlarsky and provided to the Wegs.

The first letter was Rabbi Kotlarsky’s, describing the situation in the suggested city. The second was from the Wegs, who wrote that they were prepared to move to Oklahoma, or anywhere else the Rebbe would send them. The third was from Rabbi Hodakov, who directed Merkos L’Inyonei Chinuch, approving that they be sent on shlichus—this would be a new branch of Merkos, so Rabbi Hodakov gave his authorization. The fourth was from the Rosh Kollel, who wrote that he approved of the prospective shliach and confirmed that he had been keeping the *sedorim* of Kollel. Rabbi Weg, and his friend, Rabbi Moshe Wilansky, sent in their letters Friday afternoon—Rabbi Weg to open a new branch in the state of Oklahoma and Rabbi Wilansky in the state of Maine

Rabbi Weg was scheduled to stop by the *Mazkirus* office that afternoon to see whether the Rebbe had given a *maaneh* to his father-in-law on an unrelated topic. He and Rabbi Wilansky, on their way back from *mitvoim*, stopped

by the office. As they walked in, Rabbi Groner called out, “*Di shluchim zeinen doh!*”—“The shluchim are here!”

“We said to him, ‘You mean there was an answer?’” Rabbi Weg told *Derher*. “He said there was an answer in less than an hour; but he couldn’t tell me the answer because there was a *seder*: The *maaneh* was intended for—and therefore had to go to—Rabbi Hodakov, most likely it would be shared with us after Shabbos. I asked ‘Can you tell me something?’ He said, ‘I said, “the shluchim are here,” what more do you want me to say?’ It was obvious that it was a positive answer.”

Rabbi Moshe Wilansky stopped in Rabbi Moshe Kotlarsky’s house on the way home, and he told him that there was an answer from the Rebbe. Rabbi Kotlarsky used to come to shul early, and Rabbi Weg met him there, asking if there was a way to expedite the process of receiving the Rebbe’s answer.

Rabbi Kotlarsky told Rabbi Weg to wait downstairs after Maariv Friday evening, and Rabbi Kotlarsky spoke to Rabbi Groner, and then came over to Rabbi Weg, “You have received an answer for your shlichus that no-one has yet gotten!” he exclaimed. “The Rebbe wrote, ‘May it be in a good and auspicious time in everything, I’ll mention it at the *tziyun*’ adding the word “*Mahir*” (urgent) in block-letters that the *maaneh* should be brought ‘express’ to Rabbi Hodakov.”

“The Rebbe wrote, ‘*Bakol*’—‘in everything,’—that’s a



bracha for your entire life, wherever you are, for you, your children, whoever you hire!” Rabbi Kotlarsky said. “This is the first of its kind!”

THE REBBE WASHED AWAY HIS LONELINESS

The Wegs arrived in Oklahoma right after Pesach. Etel was expecting their son Mendy at that time, and they wanted to go as soon as possible—after all, the Rebbe had written *mahir* on the answer. But the move from Brooklyn to Tulsa was not easy, and Rabbi Weg was very lonely. The Wegs went back to New York Erev Shavuos, spending Yom Tov with the Rebbe. “On Motzei Shavuos, the Rebbe was giving out *Kos Shel Bracha*, and at that time it was not common for *bochurim* and *yungeleit* to go for *Kos Shel Bracha*—certainly not more than once a year,” Rabbi Weg related. “I had gone already that year, in Tishrei, and I didn’t want to go now, but I felt it was important, because I was very unhappy.”

“Regarding the shlichus, there was no question, because the Rebbe had responded very positively, and had, for example, given me a bottle of *mashke* before we left, but the shlichus has to be *b’simcha uv’tuv levav*—joyously and with goodwill—and so I went for *Kos Shel Bracha*.”


“As I approached the Rebbe, I was thinking in my mind, over and over, that I will say ‘*b’simcha uv’tuv levav*’ — because

often people would become flustered when they got to the Rebbe, and would forget what they wanted to say.”

But as Rabbi Weg held up the cup for *Kos Shel Bracha*, moments away from the Rebbe, Rabbi Groner saw him, and he told him, “Tell the Rebbe, ‘Oklahoma.’” In other words, he should tell the Rebbe that he was a shliach in Oklahoma, and that way the Rebbe would give a bottle of *mashke* for the community.

“Now I had a dilemma—should I say ‘Oklahoma’ or ‘*Bsimcha uv’tuv levav*’? I have *kabbalas ol*, and I was told by *Mazkirus* to say “Oklahoma,”—so I passed by and told the Rebbe, ‘Oklahoma.’” The Rebbe responded, “Amen!” while handing me a bottle of *mashke*, and made an encouraging motion with his holy hands.

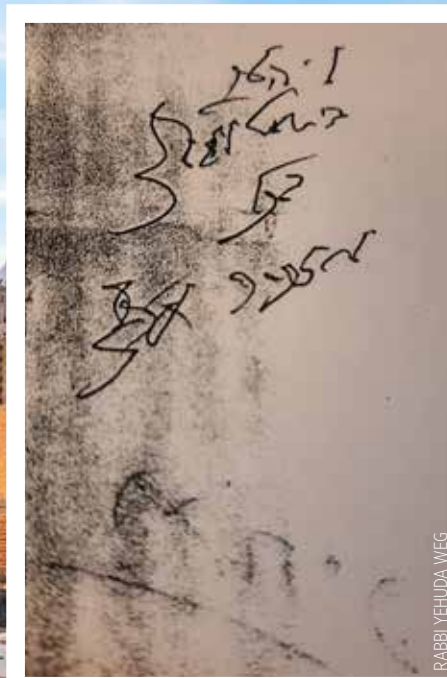
“The Rebbe responded to what was on my heart, not on my lips.”

“The Rebbe washed away the sadness and the loneliness—I haven’t been lonely ever since!” 

RABBI AND MRS. WEG AND THEIR ELDEST SON SEVERAL YEARS AFTER ARRIVING IN TULSA



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THE REBBE’S ANSWER TO RABBI WEG: ויהא בשעה טובה ומוצלחת בכל אזכיר על הציון AND ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE PAGE IS VISIBLE THE REBBE’S HANDWRITING IN BLOCK LETTERS (FLIPPED): מהיר URGENT

RABBI YEHUDA WEG

Letters

A forum for readers to send their feedback, add to, or ask any questions about articles. Submit your letter to feedback@derher.org.

Submissions may be slightly modified by our editorial staff before publishing.

Chazering the Rebbe's Maamar at a Chasuna

A number of years ago, Derher published an interview with Reb Leibel Altein (Issue 117 – Nissan 5782) in which he shared that in honor of the fiftieth anniversary of the *chasuna* of the Rebbe and the Rebbetzin in 5739, he prepared the *maamar* “*Lecho Dodi 5714*” for the Rebbe to edit and the different things the Rebbe added in the *hagaha*.

Rabbi Altein shared that this was a very special *maamar*, because from then on *chassanim* were able to review the Rebbe's *maamar* at their weddings. In earlier years, *chassanim* would deliver the Frierdiker Rebbe's *maamar* while inserting some of the Rebbe's *biurim*.

I thought to share an important point which is not very well known, that the *minhag* of *chassanim* to repeat the Rebbe's *maamar* “*Lecho Dodi 5714*” was something that the Rebbe himself encouraged and asked to be publicized.

In a family *teshura*, Rabbi Leibel Groner shared the following special story:

“A week before my wedding (on 15 Elul 5714) I wrote a letter to the Rebbe, saying that (despite the fact that we would have the great *zechus* of the Rebbe being *mesader kiddushin*) in line with what the Frierdiker Rebbe said

at the *kabbalas ponim* of the Rebbe, that the Rabbeim can be invited to a wedding by repeating words of their Torah, I was asking which words of Torah to *chazer*.

“The Rebbe did not reply to my letter but on the Shabbos before the wedding (Shabbos Parshas Ki Seitzei 5714), after my “*oifruf*,” the Rebbe said the *maamar* “*Lecho Dodi*.”

“Therefore when I said the Frierdiker Rebbe's *maamar* of “*Lecho Dodi 5689*” I added three explanations which the Rebbe had said during his delivery of the *maamar* on the preceding Shabbos.

“The day after my wedding, I was inside the Rebbe's room and the Rebbe then turned to me and asked, ‘Nu, what did you do about the *maamar*?’ And I answered that I repeated the Frierdiker Rebbe's *Lecho Dodi* and added in the Rebbe's explanations throughout.

“The Rebbe asked which of his additions that I had added, and in which places in the Frierdiker Rebbe's *maamar*, and I answered.

“The Rebbe then said: ‘*Zayer a gleiche zach* (a very good thing), certainly people will learn from you and do so as well (*mimenu yiru v'yasu*) and it is worthwhile to publicize this to other *chassanim* that they too should do so.’”

Avrohom Moshe Dyce
GRESHAM, OREGON

The Kedusha of the Chafetzim and Rooms of the Rabbeim

In connection with the article printed in the Derher of Iyar 5784 (Issue 143) about the holy table of the Rebbe Maharash which is in the Rebbe's room, I want to share a special meaningful anecdote that I heard from my father, the *mashbak*, Reb Berl Junik *a"h*:

On one occasion in the early 5710s the Rebbe asked my father to take the table of the Rebbe Maharash to a carpenter to get something fixed. At that time the Rebbe told him to make sure to bring back all of the shavings from the table after the carpentry work.

From this we can see the great *kedusha* of all of the *chafetzim* of the Rabbeim, as the Rebbe explained in the *sicha* of Shabbos Parshas Vayikra 5747 (edited by the Rebbe in Yiddish, published in Sefer Hasichos 5747 vol. 1, p. 370. Also edited by the Rebbe in Hebrew and published in Likkutei Sichos vol. 32, p. 19) how the *kedusha* of a *tzaddik* stays present eternally not only in the *seforim* and holy objects of the *tzaddik* but also in the place where they did their *avoda* and in their table and chair etc., the same way as the *kedusha* was there during their physical lifetimes.

In this *sicha* the Rebbe speaks at length about the first *maamar* the Frierdiker Rebbe said, Reishis Goyim Amalek 5680. He told that the Frierdiker Rebbe saw how his father the Rebbe Rashab went into *yechidus* about five or six years after the *histalkus* of the Rebbe Maharash. The Frierdiker Rebbe revealed that he observed his father enter the Rebbe Maharash's room wearing a *gartel* and stand in front of the table of the Rebbe Maharash, facing his chair, his lips moving like he was talking and crying a lot, in a way that was similar to how he would go in to *yechidus* with the Rebbe Maharash.

This story about the conduct of the Rebbe Rashab in the *yechidus* room of the Rebbe

Maharash is related also to a practice of the Rebbe which I heard from my father:

In the first year after the *histalkus* of the Frierdiker Rebbe, my father would learn throughout the day with his *chavrusa*, Reb Dovid Raskin, at the table of the Frierdiker Rebbe in his *yechidus* room. This was done with the approval of the Rebbe. During that year the Rebbe would often come upstairs from his room and enter the *yechidus* room. At those times, my father and Reb Dovid would leave the room out of respect and the Rebbe would stand in front of the Frierdiker Rebbe's table and read letters that people had given or sent to him.

My father also shared a very interesting story connected with this: On one occasion the Rebbe told someone who had asked for a *bracha* that he had recently mentioned him at the Ohel though actually the Rebbe had not gone to the Ohel at that time and had only read out *tzetlach* while standing in the Frierdiker Rebbe's *yechidus* room.

I want to conclude with the words of this powerful *sicha* which is so applicable today:

ונכנסים שם "לבוש חגורה" ועומדים "אצל השולחן",
באופן של "דע לפני מי אתה עומד", ומדברים. עם
דמעות של שמחה, כבן המדבר עם אביו, בן יחיד להורים
זקנים.....עיי"ש

Shamshi Junik

CROWN HEIGHTS, NY

