



THE PRECIOUS LETTER

A fascinating story of how a letter by the Frierdiker Rebbe gave hope to Chassidim in their darkest hour; and the Rebbe drawing inspiration from its content many years later.

After the release from his arrest in Leningrad on Yud Beis Tammuz 5697, it was clear that the Frierdiker Rebbe could no longer stay in Russia. With each day was born another risk, and it would only be a matter of time until the “Yevseksia” (Jewish Communist Party) build another case against him, *Chas Ve’sholom*.

With the help of Chabad activists (primarily Reb Moshe Dubin of Riga), the Frierdiker Rebbe, along with his family and a few close associates, was finally granted permission to leave the USSR.

The Frierdiker Rebbe’s departure from the land of his ancestors was not going to be an easy matter; for himself as much as for the thousands of Chassidim he would be forced to leave behind.

During the month of Elul the Frierdiker Rebbe went for a final visit to the Ohel of his father in Rostov, about which he writes in a letter:

“Today [Tes-Vov Elul – the day Yeshivas Tomchei Tmimim was founded] I merited to stand in the chamber of my holy father and be near his gravesite, to daven to Hashem and to plea from the servant of Hashem, that he should pray on behalf of his family and his students and their families, to be blessed along with all our Jewish brethren with a good new year...”

The Frierdiker Rebbe spent the festive

month of Tishrei in Leningrad, and many Chassidim from across the country came to see the Rebbe before he would take leave. The month concluded with the Yom Tov of Simchas Torah celebrated by thousands of impassioned Chassidim, saddened that the Rebbe would be leaving the next day but inspired by his comforting words:

*“מען דארף זיך זען, מען מוז זיך זען, מען וועט
“...זיך זען.” (“We need to see one another; we must see one another; we will see one another [again]!”)*

“May Hashem grant that until we will see one another again each will have success in all their endeavors. You must stay strong in your Hiskashrus, learn Chassidus, and work on yourselves with Avoda. Promise this to me, and then my promise to you will also be fulfilled; that we will see one-another in the near future, and in good spirit...”

On the following day, 24 Tishrei (“*Isru Chag*”), thousands gathered at the train station in Leningrad to see the Rebbe off on his way out of Russia. The presence of many Bolshevik spies throughout the station did not deter the throngs of Chassidim from seeing the Rebbe for one final time.

A daring few Chassidim, among them the Chossid Reb Moshe Gourarie, even boarded the train and joined the Rebbe until the border.

While on the train, the Frierdiker Rebbe

penned a very moving letter addressed to the Chassidim left behind and instructed his son-in-law, the *Rashag*, to hand it over to Reb Moshe on his behalf.

In the letter, the Frierdiker Rebbe shared the emotions of the Chassidim; their burning desire to remain connected to him in those most difficult times, and blessed them with the strength to continue in the ways of Chassidus with health and livelihood, and to see their children follow the same path. But perhaps the most poignant part of the letter was the Frierdiker Rebbe’s assurance that the geographical distance between him and the Chassidim would be of no significance at all, and that they would stay connected much as they were in previous times.

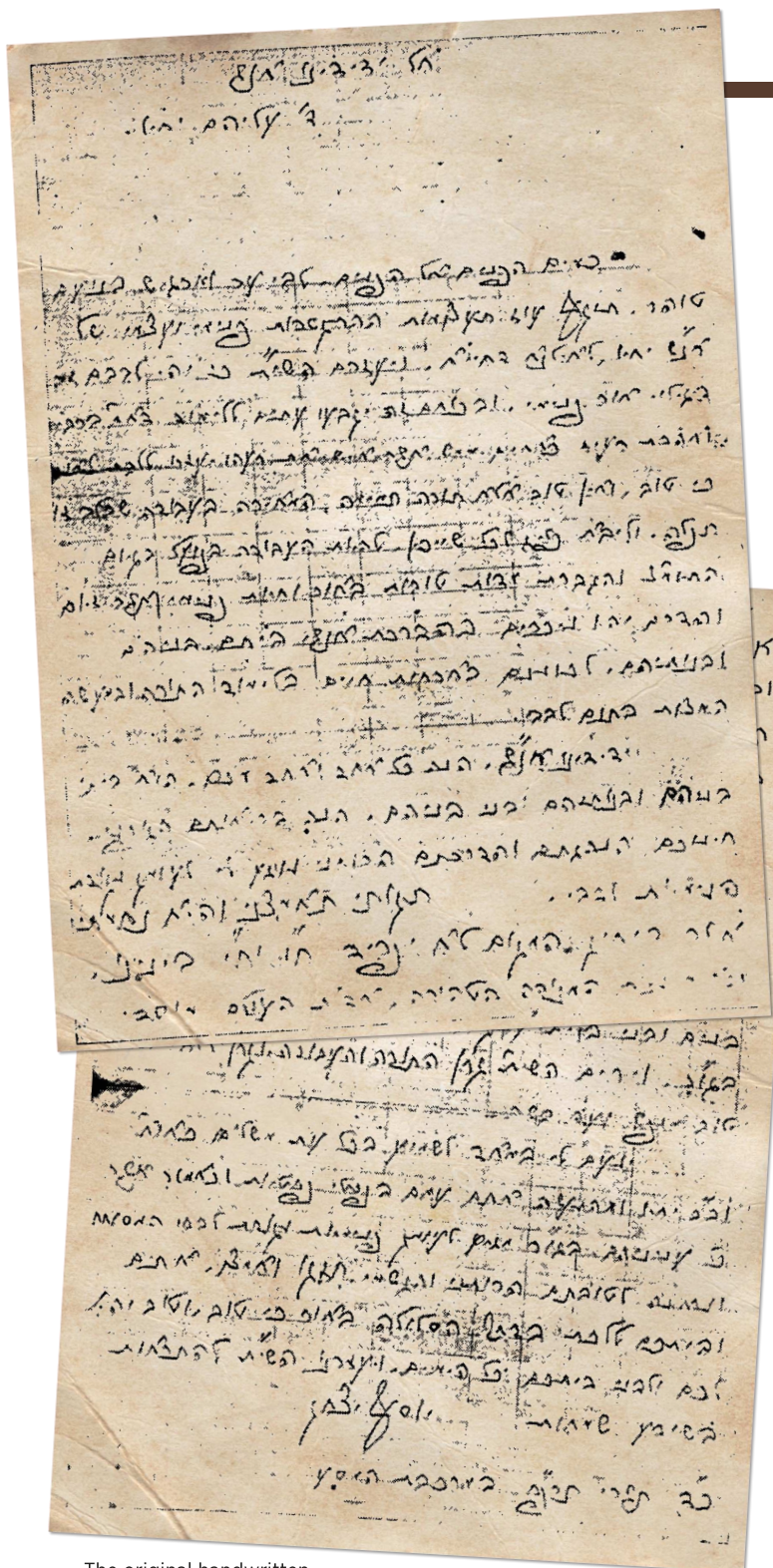
He writes:

...Reflecting the feelings in your own hearts, my heart is well aware and senses the strong, pure, and pleasant Hiskashrus of Anash with the tree of life [the Rabbeim] ...

Each one of you, Anash and your families, sons and daughters; your material health as well as your spiritual education and conduct affect the deepest recesses of my heart.

It is the hope that the distance will not separate between us, Chas Ve’sholom, which strengthens and comforts me... Place your minds and hearts to the task of strengthening the ‘cable’ that connects us,

“Reb Moshe Gourarie suddenly stood up on the table and retrieved the letter from his pocket, and, with tears streaming from his eyes read the letter aloud...”



The original handwritten letter by the Frieddiker Rebbe

ב"ה

אל ידידינו אנ"ש ד' עליהם יחיו

כמים הפנים אל הפנים לבי ער ומרגיש בנועם טוהר תוקף עוז תעצומות ההתקשרות פנימי ועצמי של אנ"ש יחיו לאילנא דחייא ויעזרם השי"ת כי יהי לבבם זה בגילוי אור פנימי ובכחם זה יקבעו עתים ללימוד דא"ח ברבים ואהבת רעים כאחים ממש אשר איש את רעהו יעזרו ללכת לאור כי טוב ואין טוב אלא תורה תמימה המאירה בעבודה שבלב זו תפלה וליבא פליג לכל שייפין להיות העבודה בפועל בקיום התורה ומצות והגברת מדות טובות באור וחיות פנימי אשר זיום והדרם יהיו ניכרים בהדרכת אנשי ביתם בניהם ובנותיהם לכוננם באורות חיים בלימוד התורה ובמעשה המצות בתום לבב.

ידידינו אנ"ש הנה כל אחד ואחד מכם הוא ביתו בניהם ובנותיהם ובני בניהם הנה בריאותם הגופני, חינוכם הנהגתם והדרכתם הרוחני נוגע לי לעומק נקודת פנימיות לבבי.

תקותי תאמצני והיא נחמתי אשר ריחוק המקום לא יפריד ח"ו וח"ו בינינו, ובאור זכות המנורה הטהורה, אבות העולם מוסדי ארץ ברוכה אזכה לראות כי כל אחד ואחד מאנ"ש הוא וביתו, ישימו דעתם ולבם להוסיף אומץ בחוט המקשרינו, היא העבודה, בלימוד בפועל ובחינוך והדרכת בני ביתו יחיו, ככל האמור, אשר בזה יזכו להיות כלי טהורה וראוי אל הברכה האמורה ומסורה מאת קדש הקדשים כי יתן לכם האלקים שפעת חיים וברכה מרובה, איש איש מכם יצליח בעסקו ובכלי פרנסתו בריחוב בכשרות ובמנוחה, למען יוכלו לקיים ככל האמור מתוך הרחבה, וישמח השי"ת לבבי ולבבכם לראות בנים ובני בנים עוסקים בתורה ובמצות מתוך הרחבה בגו"ר, וירים השי"ת קרן התורה והעבודה, וקרן אחב"י יחיו בכל טוב מנפש ועד בשר.

נעם לי במאד לשמוע בכל עת משלום כאו"א וב"ב יחיו ומהנעשה אתם עמם בפרטי פרטיות וכאמור אשר כל עניניהם בגו"ר מגיע לעומק פנימיות נקודת לבבי המסורה ונתונה לטובתם הרוחני והגשמי, חזקו ואמצו, אתם וביתכם ללכת בדרך הסלולה באור כי טוב, וטוב יהי לכם ולבני ביתכם כל הימים, ועזרינו השי"ת להתראות בשובע שמחות

יוסף יצחק

כ"ד תשרי תרפ"ח במרכבת המסע

(אג"ק אדמו"ר הרי"ף ח"א עמ' תרד)

i.e. Avoda, learning [Chassidus] and teaching it to your families...

It would be my pleasure to constantly hear regards of the wellbeing of each of you and your families, for as stated, this affects the very depth of my heart, which is devoted to what's best for you materially and spiritually. Strengthen yourselves and your families; go on the path of light that has been set out for us, and it shall be good for you and your families always. May Hashem help that we will see one-another in happy spirit.

Yosef Yitzchak

24 Tishrei, 5688; on the train.



A TRUE FARBRENGEN

Throughout the ensuing years, Reb Moshe treasured the Rebbe's handwritten letter and held it close at all times, eventually carrying it with him when he was able to leave Russia many years later and settle in Eretz Yisroel. Quite often, Reb Moshe would turn to the letter as a source of inspiration; a constant reminder of the unbreakable bond between the Rebbe and his Chassidim, transcending natural circumstance.

Reb Yoel Kahan relates:

"I recall a beautiful *Farbengen* from the time I was a young *Bochur* growing up in Tel-Aviv. It was one year on Purim and the Chassidim of the city had gathered to celebrate the Yom Tov together. There were no

words spoken throughout the night; just the Chassidim reciting 'Le'chaim' and singing heartfelt *Chassidishe Niggunim*.

"Then, sometime in the early hours of the morning, Reb Moshe Gourarie suddenly stood up on the table and retrieved the letter from his pocket, and, with tears streaming from his eyes, read the letter aloud for all to hear.

"It was an absolutely beautiful sight to behold. A *Chossid* truly living with his Rebbe's words so many years after they were first written to him, certain that as the Rebbe promised; 'the distance of location will not separate between us'.

"This is a true *Chassidishe Farbengen*!"



As mentioned, Reb Moshe Gourarie held onto the handwritten letter as his most precious possession for many long years. When he came to the Rebbe for Pesach in the year 5724, he decided to give it to the Rebbe as a present.

Two years later, at the *Farbengen* of Yud Shevat, 5726, the Rebbe compared the state of a *Chossid* after his Rebbe's *Histalkus* to that of the Chassidim who remained stranded in Russia after the Frierdiker Rebbe was forced to leave and lost almost any means of (physical) interaction. Nevertheless, the Frierdiker Rebbe clearly promised that he would maintain his connection with the Chassidim despite the dire circumstances. (The Rebbe was presumably referring to this letter, in addition to many other letters and *Sichos* said in this regard).

Today as well, the Rebbe concluded, we can connect to the Rebbe much as we did before the *Histalkus*, and he bestows all the blessings upon us without any distinction at all.

An excerpt from this *Sicha*:

When my father-in-law, the (Frierdiker) Rebbe departed from Russia, he said – as he did on a number of occasions – that it was against his will. As he crossed the border, he added, "Although there is a physical barrier separating myself and the Chassidim who remain behind, one need not be intimidated by it. My bond with them will continue as before."

And indeed it was so; not only in a spiritual sense, but even in material terms. There are many well-known

incidents related by various people that display the Rebbe's direct involvement in activities on the other side of the Iron Curtain.

In other words: even while his soul remained confined to the limitations of a physical body, he had the ability to determine that the physical barrier should not be of any relevance. He was able to maintain the bond with his followers in a manner that not only allowed him to connect with them, but that they would be able to reach him as well. This was despite their being people of a much lower spiritual status, upon which physical boundaries did have an impact.

Now, just as this applies to his relocating from one country to another against his will, it is also applicable to his status after his passing, which is also against his will – as the *Mishna* says, "*Al korchach ata chai...*"

If one looks merely with physical sight, he may think that there is – *Chas Ve'sholom* – an interruption in the Rebbe's connection to us. But the truth is, as the *Gemora* says, "Just as until now he has tended to us, now as well he continues to do so."

Much as his departure from one country to the other made no impact in this regard, so too his passing has caused no change either. And as he himself determined, he will continue to stay connected with those who he has educated, and they will continue to follow in his ways.