

Elated!

Yom Kippur and Simchas Torah 5690

The following are excerpts of a letter by Reb Elyeh Chaim Althoiz to the Frierdiker Rebbe, who was visiting the United States of America at the time. As is described in the letter, the Rebbe's family and the chassidim who he left behind were distraught at the prospect of Tishrei without the Rebbe. They were, however, consoled by the presence of the Rebbe's younger son-in-law, our Rebbe.

[Free Translation]

The Yom Kippur davening finished later this year in the Rebbe's minyan than ever before, for the Rebbe's son-in-law ["Ramash"] became totally absorbed in his *tefillos* and oblivious to anything else during *Neilah*. A nice while passed before he managed to climb out of his reverie. All of us were filled with pleasure from this very pleasing wait. And as is well known, after *Neilah* the enthusiasm and ability of every *Neshoma* to serve Hashem is renewed like the strength of a young eagle.

Before *Maariv* we concluded with

"Napoleon's March" like every year, but in every strain we sensed that everything we do without the Rebbe is as though we are only imitating - as Chaim Meir [the Rebbe's aid] says - "artificial". The element of truth and the lively enthusiasm, is somehow lacking. Why? I do not know. But certainly it is so...

As the morning dawned on the day proceeding Yom Kippur, at 4:30am, I came to the rooms of the Rebbe. I found that the Rebbitzin [Nechomah Dina] was already seated in the dining room as though it were the middle of the day, and the Rebbe's son-in-law ["Ramash"] was

watching intently as our friend Reb Mordechai Cheifetz *shechted* the *Kapparos*.

Already the previous evening I had been commanded by the Rebbitzin to come and "*Shlog Kapparos*", for she had prepared a white cockerel for me. I *Shlogged Kapparos*, Reb Mordechai Cheifetz *shechted* it and *Ramash* covered the blood. Afterwards the three of us, the Rebbitzin, her son-in-law and myself, stayed in the dining room, all of us thinking the same thing... of the dispersion of close souls and the distance between those who are bound together, where are we? Where is the Rebbe? Why



did it have to be so? What will be in the future?

I wanted to be the valiant one and attempted to distract the Rebbitzen from the many thoughts in her heart, I asked her why she rose so early in the morning, and suggested that she should retire to her room to rest. She answered with a simplicity both unpretentious and refined, saying “for more than thirty years I have accustomed myself to this. I was unable to sleep”. And then, despite herself, tears began to pour from her eyes... and we too cried with her, reliving somewhat the intensity of our emotion. She poured tea for us from the thermos and also for herself, and we drank and began to talk.

Mendel [*Ramash*] opened a *Tehilim* and began to read in a tone that was *geshmak* to hear... I waited a while and realized that he intended to read the entire *Tehilim* without interruption, for I spoke to him and he did not reply. So I too took a *Tehilim* and was forced to do likewise (in front of the Rebbitzen I could do nothing else). We finished at 7:00am.

We went to the *Mikveh*, and then we set ourselves to daven with the Minyan, the davening flowed *geshmak*...

Such is the short account of those few hours when a thread of kindness prevails throughout the world... May it be His will that this year my wife and children should see that kindness, as the *Barditch-ever* stressed “and your treasury that is good for *us*, open...”



Simchas Torah

The following is a free translation of a letter by Reb Elyeh Chaim Althoiz to the Frierdiker Rebbe describing the tremendous impression made by the Rebbe on all the Chassidim who gathered at the Rebbe's court in Riga for the festivities of Simchas Torah, while the Rebbe was absent on a visit to the United States.

Though I have not yet returned to my full strength after the strain of the last two days of Yom Tov [Shmini Atzeres and Simchas Torah], and from all the dancing I am still shattered, there is not a whole limb in my body... I am unable to withhold the good, the gratification and true pleasure from the Rebbe [Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn], who is beloved and dear, for even one moment. I must give satisfaction at the earliest opportunity, while I still stand in a state of great feeling of joy and pleasure; that I

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merited to see the rising glory of the Rebbe's household with my own eyes, exalted in spirituality and holiness, may we only merit that it should not cease till the coming of the redeemer.

I thank Hashem for his kindness that he did for me, paying me in accordance with my deeds. I was the first who merited undeservingly that the Rebbe should reveal to me, in a private audience during the summer of 5683, that which was hidden in his pure heart, his early intention – that it was his desire to give his precious and beloved daughter that she should be the wife of this man [our Rebbe] about whom I will now speak.

I am the only individual from amongst all of the closest Chassidim, who saw his toil, his pain, how he spilled his blood like water, his tremendous humility – unintentional and intentional, his tremendous patience – revealed and hidden, throughout the five years during which his head, the leader and prince of Israel [a reference to the Frierdiker Rebbe] was constantly between two mountains of burning fire [presumably a reference to his prosecution at the hands of the communists in the USSR]. I was the first representative [of the Rebbe in this endeavor] and I was chosen then to make the first step and bring him from Yakotrenislav to Kislovodashk [regarding this meeting see the letter dated Friday of Parshas Pinchos 5683 (1923), printed in Frierdiker Rebbe's Igros Kodesh vol. 15, page 30-2].

And now too, I am the one who merited to see the building of this everlasting edifice. And now too I saw – wonders that I never imagined nor aspired to, Hashem has shown me on this occasion. For that which I will now relate, not only do I not exaggerate, but I only reveal a very small portion of the abundant good that we merited to enjoy, I and all the

Chassidim here during this Yom Tov...

One night of *Simchas Beis Hashe'aveh* the Chassidim gathered in the Rebbe's Sukka and *Ramash* sat with us and we heard many beautiful things from his mouth and it was very pleasurable for all of us... On the night of Shmini Atzeres there was a grand Kiddush in the



REB ELYE CHAIM ALTZHOIZ

Rebbe's Sukka, to which all the Chassidim came, till late into the night, and *Ramash*, with overwhelming humility and without in any way making himself noticeable, drank a lot and spoke for a few hours without pause – words of Chassidus combined with *Medroshim*, *Kabbalah* and *Gematriah*, in the fashion that he received from his father. His words were sweet and appealing for my ears to hear and all of those gathered where tremendously impressed.

The next day the news spread throughout the city of all that he spoke and is wonderful abilities, as is the way of the world there was much exaggeration, but for the good, such that all the questions and veils [that had obscured our Rebbe's true character and provoked speculation] were removed. Each man commented to his fellow “you see, the Rebbe took a son-in-law befitting to him” and even the critics were forced to concur against their

will.

In the wake of these reports, many more people gathered the next day for *Hakofes*, before which the older Rebbitzin [Shterna Soreh, wife of the Rebbe Rashab and mother of the Frierdiker Rebbe] made a Kiddush in the room of Reb Chatche Feigin. *Ramash* sat at the head and spoke for four hours straight!

I sat everyone at the table very orderly, Rabbis on one side wealthy laymen on the other, and gave each individual a place befitting to him. The brothers *Valshanik*, the brothers *Chefetz*, *Vekslir* – the father of the young *Veksilir* – very quiet like his son, a great critic and he considers himself to be a great intellectual. He came the first night to hear with his own ears, what he heard from Berlin of the greatness of the Rebbe's son-in-law, and he stayed until 2am with all the Chassidim. He left very impressed and told me, “In my entire life I never saw or heard of such a thing! Happy is the one who bore him!” and I heard similar statements from everyone.

The *Hakofes* were executed with much dancing and joy, with singing and gladness of heart.

Similarly, the next day approximately a hundred men gathered by about 11am and we left three hours after midnight. In other words 3am. The Yom Tov meal was set up in various rooms, we sat down to eat at about 4pm and we *Bentched* at about midnight. For all those eight hours *Ramash* did not move from his place, and the entire time he spoke warm words, arousing *Teshuva* and *Avodas Hashem*. He often mentioned the Rebbe's name with great respect “I heard from the Rebbe, may he be well...” “the Rebbe, may he be well said...” How good and how pleasurable it was for me to hear all this! Happy are we that we merited this. ■