

פורים קטן פרז"ת

# The Historic Maamor and its Timeless Message

מוקדש לע"נ שיינא חיה בת רחל לאה



## Adar I, 5687. Times were daring.

The Communist regime was in full swing and Yiddishkeit was being tormented from all sides. With each passing day the situation worsened. Mikvaos were closed and stuffed with cement, Shuls were confiscated and transformed to clubs, and dozens of Rabbonim, Melamdin, and Shochtim were arrested.

In this article we will discover a Maamer that was penned by the Frierdiker Rebbe during these harsh times, and the chain that it started.

# The Historic Maamor

“Now, just as at any distressful moment, I am reminded of my father’s terrifying, holy words to me, said about the newly-rising government and its three leading figures, just three weeks before his *histalkus*:

*‘Dark clouds are descending upon Russia... In the end, Hashem will destroy the Jewish youngsters who hunt down Yiddishkeit. But until then, we will suffer from their wickedness and their libels...’*

I was overtaken with fear when hearing these holy words... I can still picture the scene in my mind that Friday, 8 Adar, 5680, when my father told me those terrifying, holy words, including his statement, ‘Yosef Yitzchak: you must have *mesirus nefesh* to spread Torah in the spirit of *yiras shomayim* – not only potential *mesirus nefesh*, but actually so (מס"נ בפועל; גיט נאר בכח)!

These were the thoughts going through the Frieddiker Rebbe’s mind while riding the train for a fateful visit to Moscow; Adar I, 5687. Times were daring. The Communist regime was in full swing and Yiddishkeit was being tormented from all sides.

Although the Communist party promised freedom of religion for all faiths, the young members of the Yevsektzia (Jewish section of the Communist party) were determined to eradicate any sign of Jewish practice from the face of the USSR, especially Jewish education.

With each passing day the situation worsened. Mikvaos were closed and stuffed with cement, Shuls were confiscated and transformed into clubs, and dozens of Rabbonim, Melamdim, and Shochtim were arrested.

From his home in Leningrad, the Frieddiker Rebbe oversaw a massive network which was set on strengthening Yiddishkeit in any manner possible, particularly by educating Jewish youth in the ways of Torah. In addition to this, the Frieddiker Rebbe coordinated a major

undertaking which assisted Jews throughout the region with means of livelihood. Various equipment and tools were sent to families so they would be able to sustain themselves without working on Shabbos.

With such dangerous activities being his primary occupation, the Frieddiker Rebbe knew that the members of the Yevsektzia had him under their constant watch, and he attempted to evade their surveillance to the best possible extent. Traveling far distances was preferably avoided.

But now, it became clear that the

I emphasized this point greatly, without caring that ‘the walls had ears...’



THE MARINA ROSCHA SHUL IN MOSCOW, RUSSIA.



LUBAVITCH CHILDREN STUDY GEMARA UNDER COMMUNIST RULE.



## ONE MATTER AT A TIME

In honor of "Yud Shevat HaGadol" – 5730, many guests arrived from Eretz Yisroel to spend this special time with the Rebbe, and before their departure, the Rebbe held a farbrengen.

Seeing the anxiety on the faces of the departing Chassidim as they awaited their flight, the Rebbe told the following story about the Frierdiker Rebbe, presumably referring to his 5687 trip to Moscow:

It happened during the height of Soviet persecution and oppression. The Frierdiker Rebbe was in Leningrad and was slated to travel by train that evening to Moscow.

At the time, the secret police knew that even while the Frierdiker Rebbe was sitting in his room, he was continuously working to strengthen Yiddishkeit, and they were therefore watching his every move.

When the Frierdiker Rebbe would travel their surveillance was intensified, because it was clear to them that if the Frierdiker Rebbe felt it important enough to travel, his motives were to work towards strengthening Yiddishkeit. In these instances, they would follow him relentlessly.

In this instance, this was all magnified because the Frierdiker Rebbe's destination was Moscow, the Soviet capital at the time.

Reports had been heard, that the authorities were becoming very irritated with the Frierdiker Rebbe's activities to the point of total intolerance. It seemed that they were on the verge of taking action. Nevertheless, the Frierdiker Rebbe continued to spread Yiddishkeit with ever growing intensity.

In this period, such a journey was perilous. By all means it was a very tense moment.

The Rebbe described the scene:

"A short while before my father-in-law was scheduled to go from his residence on 22 Machavoye to the station, and board the train for Moscow, I entered his room. I saw that he was sitting immersed in whatever it was he was doing, completely calm as if in middle of an ordinary day.

In Tanya, the Alter

Rebbe speaks on the importance of '*Moach Shalit Al Halev*' - the mind ruling over the heart, and even supports this idea with quotes from the Zohar and Raya Mehemna. But nevertheless, to such a degree?!...

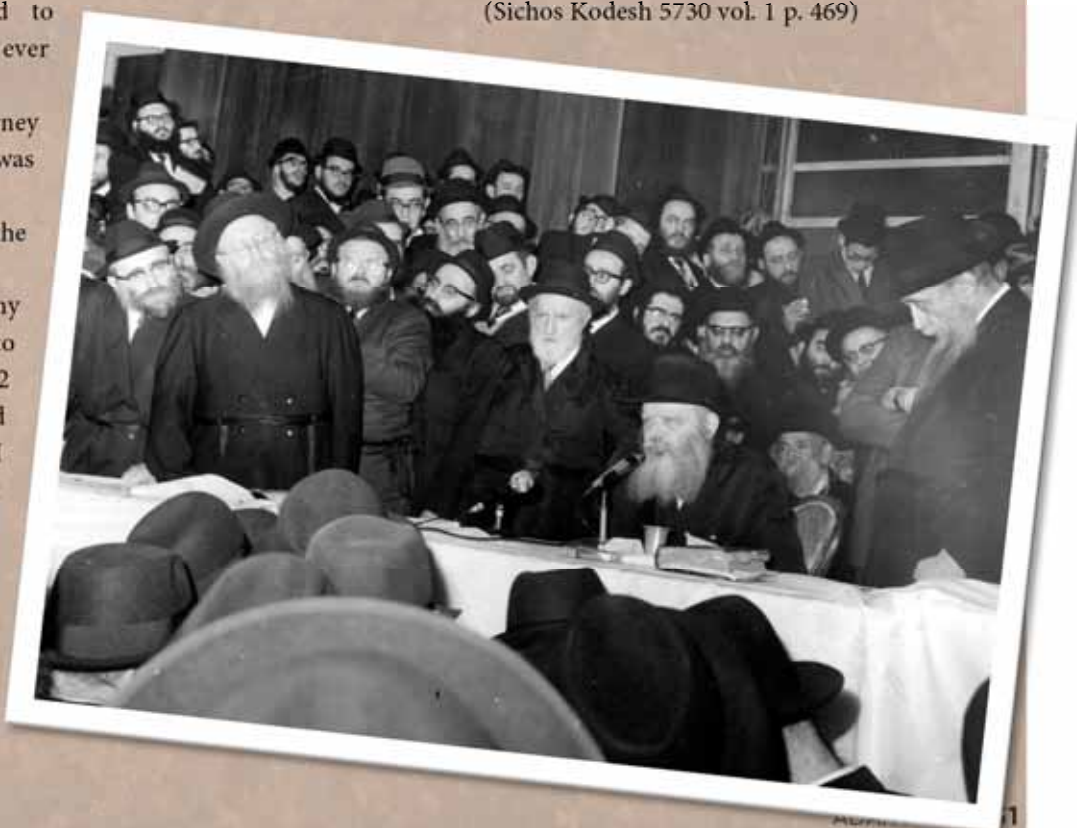
I could not contain myself and expressed my surprise.

In response, my father-in-law related to me what he had heard from his father: The Rebbe Rashab, in the name of the Rebbe Maharash, concerning the concept of *hatzlacha b'zman* – successful time management.

This means that although one cannot add hours to the clock, nevertheless he could and must maximize productivity by utilizing the time that he has to the absolute fullest.

"That was the explanation my father-in-law gave me at the time, but here we have a group of people who are scheduled to fly out in an hour and a quarter from now. Yet, it's difficult to convince them that at the present moment the 'El-Al' airplane doesn't exist! They're busy looking at the clock to see how much time remains until their flight. So, we will try to be brief..."

(Sichos Kodesh 5730 vol. 1 p. 469)



Frierdiker Rebbe would need to be in Moscow for some important meetings. On Motzoei Shabbos Parshas Tetzaveh, 10 Adar I, he boarded the express train for Moscow, while feelings of anxiety overtook his entire household. (See sidebar).

#### PURIM KATAN FARBRENGEN

In his *yoman*, the Frierdiker Rebbe

describes the difficulties he faced on a daily basis throughout his visit as he moved from one hotel to another, in attempt to dodge the Yevsektzia's constant harassment. Nevertheless, he accepted an invitation from representatives of the local "Tiferes Bachurim"<sup>1</sup> program, to farbreng on the afternoon of Purim Katan in the Marina Roscha Shul.

The Frierdiker Rebbe records in his

diaries how he spoke passionately of the need to stay true to Torah and Yiddishkeit without being intimidated by the members of the Yevsektzia, despite the fact that he knew of their presence in the room at the time.

"Many people mistakenly think that the Yevsektzia founded the current government, or has any governmental power. They are merely a small group of maniacs who wish to terrorize and harass Yiddishkeit... The leaders of the Yevsektzia are the scum of society; liars, cheaters, and barbarians. Their true colors are bound to surface soon... But for the time being, we must establish that the Yevsektzia do not represent the government at all and their demands need not be respected..."<sup>2</sup>

The Frierdiker Rebbe concludes his diary that his emotional words inspired all those present, who requested of him that he also say a *Maamor*, and he promised that the following day he would.

#### MAAMOR V'KIBEL HAYEHUDIM

Indeed, on Thursday evening, *Shushan Purim Katan*, a large crowd gathered again at the shul to hear the *Maamor*.

In the spirit of Purim, the *Maamor* began with the *Posuk* from the Megilla, "*V'kibel Hayehudim*" – explaining, based on what *Chazal* say, that at the time of Purim, the Yidden reached a very high level, resulting in their recommitment to the acceptance of the Torah. This was only possible due to the *mesirus nefesh* they performed, which was aroused within each one of them by their Moshe Rabbeinu – Mordechai.

Furthermore, Haman's initial decree specifically targeted the Jewish children. Nevertheless, Mordechai gathered tens of thousands of children and taught them Torah openly, leading the way for true *mesirus nefesh*.

The Frierdiker Rebbe's words were an explicit reference to the situation in Russia at the time, calling upon the Yidden to once again step up with *mesirus nefesh*, especially with regards to educating Jewish children in the path of Torah.

Constantly on the watch, members of

## THE BEST VORT!

On Wednesday, 12 Adar I 5744, the Rebbe was visited by the Oskover Rebbe along with his *Shamash*. He began by telling the Rebbe about the wonderful activities coordinated by the Chabad Chassidim in Be'er Sheva, adding that he often takes part in them in person, or offers his assistance.



CREDIT: JEM/LIVING ARCHIVE

The Oskover Rebbe requested that the Rebbe convey some words of encouragement to take back with him to the Chassidim in Be'er Sheva. The Rebbe replied, that as we approach Purim Katan, we are reminded of the story of the Frierdiker Rebbe on Purim Katan, 5687. The Frierdiker Rebbe had then traveled to Moscow for communal affairs. Although he knew very well that the Yevsektzia was following his every move, keeping a watchful eye behind each of his steps, he nonetheless chose to recite a *Maamor* at the large Chabad Shul in the city.

The *Maamor* began with the *Possuk* "*Ve'Kibel HaYehudim...*" from the Megila, calling fervently upon the listeners to remain strong in the observance of Torah and Mitzvos, and particularly in ensuring a proper Jewish education for their children. The Frierdiker Rebbe spoke in this manner, even while he knew that spies had been implanted within the crowd, to report to the government of all that they were hearing.

Indeed, when the Frierdiker Rebbe was actually arrested in Sivan of that year, his interrogators made mention of the Purim Katan episode.

The Rebbe concluded, "If you wish to bring anyone some words of encouragement ("*Ah Gut vort*") the best words are those mentioned above..."

the Yevsektzia implanted themselves amongst the crowd and heard every word spoken against their scheme. In a letter written by the Frieddiker Rebbe ten years later, he describes what went on at that moment:

"I recited the *Maamor V'Kibel Hayehudim* which discusses *mesirus nefesh* for keeping Torah and Mitzvos. I emphasized this point greatly, without caring that 'the walls had ears...' I wished to

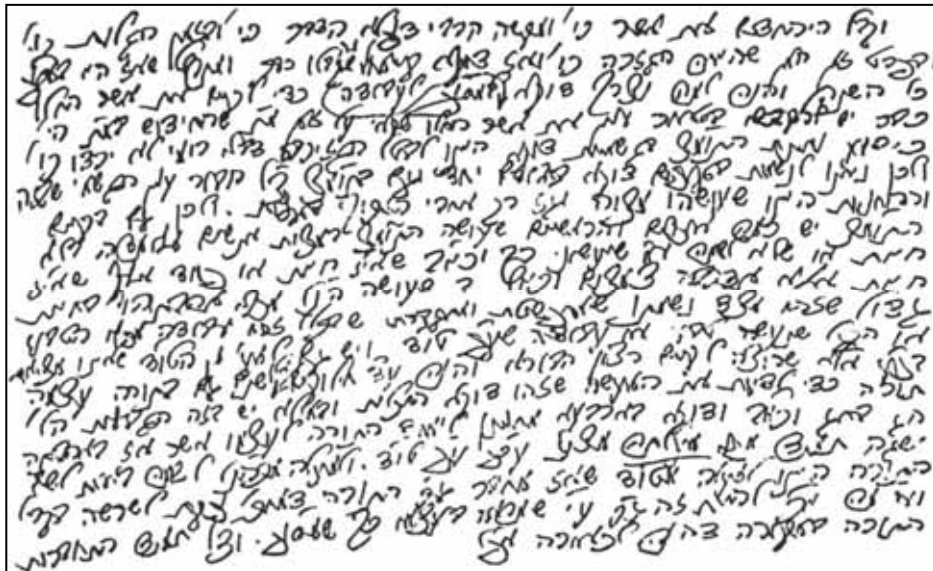
day I met the acquaintance again and asked him, did the Rebbe leave yet? His cold response indicated that my advice had not been followed and I was quite disturbed.

On Thursday evening I was strolling about with my friends, and we noticed that the Lubavitcher Shul was illuminated brightly and full from end to end with a huge crowd, including an overflow in the lobby and on the steps outside. When

give in to the proposal of Achashveirosh to assimilate into his own nation. The source of their strength to withstand this test, was from the twenty-two thousand Jewish children, Mordechai's students, who stood up during a time of decree against Torah study and proclaimed: We are with you Mordechai, in life as in death.

They, the youngsters, defeated the strongest of Ministers, *Haman HoRasha*. This spiritual war lives on in each genera-

"Since tonight is Purim Katan we will distribute this Ma'amor after Maariv."



A TRANSCRIPTION OF THE BEGINNING OF THE MAAMER V'KIBEL HAYEHUDIM 5711 IN THE REBBE'S OWN HANDWRITING. CREDIT: VAAD HANOCHOS B'LAHAK

awaken the hearts [of my listeners]; something so crucial at the time."<sup>3</sup>

[In another letter, the Frieddiker Rebbe mentions that correspondents from the "Emes" (or better put: "Sheker") newspaper were also present.]<sup>4</sup>

#### UNDETERRED!

A detailed description of the events of that Purim Katan are also articulated in a letter by one of the Rabbonim of the USSR, who happened to be visiting Moscow at the time. He tells a story how he was randomly questioned one day by the GPU all about the Lubavitcher Rebbe, after which he realized that the Frieddiker Rebbe was under a serious threat. In his own words:

"I summoned one of the Rebbe's close acquaintances and suggested that the Rebbe must leave the city and return home immediately, that night. The next

we asked what was going on, they explained that the Lubavitcher Rebbe was addressing everyone from the *bima*, and being that today is *Purim Katan*, following the *drosha* there will be a *seuda* as well.

Upon hearing this, a shudder passed through my entire body. I realized right then that as a true grandson, he must have inherited the strength of character from his grandfather [the Rebbe Maharash], who endangered his life, standing fearlessly in front of the wicked noblemen of the old government on behalf of the Jewish people.

[My friend] Mr. Wendel and I entered [the shul] to hear the *drosha*, and I saw the Rebbe sitting on the *bima*, speaking in his booming voice.

The content of his discourse explained the miracle of Purim which was brought about by the Jews' determination not to

tion and in every place. Only with the Torah study of the very young, can we stand strong in its face, as it says עוללים ומתנקם יונוקים יסדת עוז להשביט אויב ומתנקם.

I cannot deny that the content of the discourse, and especially the passion of the orator, clearly undeterred by the great danger potentially posed by his words, as well as the attention he received from his audience, all left a mighty impression upon me. I would have wished to hear more, but I suddenly noticed a few suspicious individuals whom I thought might be spies, so we left the shul..."<sup>5</sup>

It should be noted: the Frieddiker Rebbe records in his *yoman* that while on the train to Moscow, he was writing the *Maamor V'Ata Te'tzave*. Eventually, this *Maamor* was published as a part of the *Maamor V'Kibel HaYehudim*, and is not a *Maamer* for itself.



# and its Timeless Message

Throughout the years, the Rebbe constantly spoke of this special *Maamor* and its timeless message, especially around the time of Purim and Purim Katan.

## גודל הזכות .. ואשרם ועשרם

In 5727, forty years from when the *Maamor* was delivered, the Rebbe had it reprinted in a special *kuntres* and disseminated around the world, along with a *michtav kloli-proti* in which the Rebbe encouraged everyone to study the *Maamor* and apply its message to our lives today.

To one particular educator who had complained to the Rebbe of her difficulties in teaching her very young pupils, the Rebbe added the following line:

כדאי שתתבונן בהעמקה במ[ה] שכ[תוב]  
בהמאמר ע[ל] ד[בר] מפ[י] עוללים גו',  
ותסיק מסקנא בנוגע לערך החינוך שלהם  
וגודל הזכות דאלו שהשגחה העליונה  
מסרה זה לידם ואשרם ועשרם וכו'. וד[י]  
ל[מבין]."

It would be worthwhile that you contemplate upon the *Maamor's* words on the *Posuk 'Mipi ollelim'*, and draw the conclusion about the importance of educating them [your students]; as well as the great *z'chus*, fortune, and riches of those with whom the Heavenly providence entrusted it.

(אגרות-קודש כד עמ' דש-שו)

## HANDWRITTEN MAAMOR

In the earlier years after the Rebbe's arrival in America, the Rebbe, as editor-in-chief of *Kehos*, would publish a *Maamor* from the Frierdiker Rebbe in time for each Yom Tov. For Purim 5711, it was "*V'Kibel HaYehudim*". (The *Maamor* was also published previously in "*HaTomim*", in honor of the ten-year anniversary of the Frierdiker Rebbe's *Chag Hageulah* – Yud Beis Tammuz, 5697).

At the Purim farbrengen, the Rebbe recited a *Maamor* based on the Frierdiker Rebbe's "*V'Kibel HaYehudim*," beginning also with the same *dibur hamaschil*. Listening to the audio recording of the *Maamor*, one can notice that the Rebbe begins the first sentence and breaks into tears, and then begins again from the beginning.

The Rebbe also transcribed the beginning of the *Maamor* in his own holy handwriting (see *Ksav Yad Kodesh*).

## PURIM KATAN 5752 MAAMOR V'ATA TETZAVEH

On Sunday, 12 Adar I 5752, at 8:00 p.m. the *Ma'amor* of "*V'Atah Tetzaveh*" was brought to the Rebbe for editing, in order that it be distributed for Purim Katan.<sup>6</sup> Outside the Rebbe's room was a small table where the *Mazkirim* would put important papers and faxes that were received throughout the night. Every so often, the Rebbe came out of his room and left the written answers on the table so they could be passed on.

On Monday morning at 2:15 a.m. the Rebbe came out of his room to drop off the edited version of the *Maamor* on the table. Immediately, Rabbi Chaim Shaul Brook was called, and he rushed to 770 in order to re-edit the *Maamer*. Hastily he fixed all the corrections in their proper places, as per the Rebbe's instructions. The *Maamor* was then printed and faxed to hundreds of locations around the world.

At 5:50 a.m. the printed version of the *Maamor* was on the table, and alongside it was a written report listing all the locations where it had already been sent to. Ten minutes later the Rebbe came out



again, took the *Maamor*, and wrote an encouraging response on the report: "ייהי רצון שיפעל הפעולה הרצויה והזמן גרמא וברי ("May it be his will to bring about a positive effect; as it is also an auspicious time... I shall mention it at the Ohel.")

When the Rebbe was leaving 770 to the Mikva on Monday morning Erev Purim Katan, he was carrying the new *Maamor* in his hand. The Rebbe turned to his secretary and said, "Since tonight is Purim Katan we will distribute this *Maamor* after Maariv." The Rebbe continued a few more steps towards his car, then turned again and said, "With a dollar". The Rebbe took a few more steps and said, "With *Lekach* also."<sup>7</sup>

On that night, upon the Rebbe's return from the Ohel, thousands of Chassidim; men, women and children, passed by the Rebbe to receive the *Maamor* "*Ve'ata Tetzaveh*" as it appeared in the "*Kuntres Purim Katan 5752*".

## KE'MOISHE B'DOROI

The *Maamor* itself is based on the Frierdiker Rebbe's *Maamor* of "*V'kibel Hayehudim*". (As mentioned, the Frierdiker Rebbe had written a *Maamor*

“V’Ata Tetzaveh” while on the train and later incorporated it within the *Maamor* “Ve’kibel Hayehudim”).

It expounds at length about the charge of Moshe Rabbeinu to connect all the Jewish people with their Creator, and how this in turn brings Moshe Rabbeinu himself to attain greater heights. And just as Moshe Rabbeinu did so with the Yidden in his time, the same is true about the Moshe Rabbeinu of each generation up until -and including- our Moshe Rabbeinu the [Frierdiker] Rebbe.

It speaks of two forms of self-sacrifice that are expected of a Jew during two sorts of time-periods. The first is when the Jewish people are in troubling times, as was the case at the time when the Frierdiker Rebbe said his *Maamor*.

The power that the Yidden have to practice this *mesiras nefesh* is generated by the Moshe Rabbeinu in each generation, as Chazal say “Mordechai b’doiroi k’Moshe b’doiroi...”

The second time-period that the *Maamor* discusses is under comfortable circumstances, when the Jews are not being persecuted and are free to practice the observance of Torah. However, the mere fact that they find themselves in exile, when G-dliness is not visible throughout the world, must shake them

## “דארטן האט ער אלץ באווארענט”

As it turned out this *Maamor* was the last one that we were privileged to have received from the Rebbe’s holy hands. Less than two weeks later, on Chof Zayin Adar Rishon, while at the Ohel, the Rebbe had a stroke and was not *magia* *Maamorim* afterwards.

Regarding the last *Maamor* given by the Frierdiker Rebbe, Basi L’gani 5710, the Rebbe said that one can find answers to the difficulties that arise, since “Dort’n hut er altz Ba’vornt...” (i.e. in the *Maamor*, the Rebbe hinted to our present situation and implanted answers within its words – see *Toras Menachem* vol. 1 p. 20).

While we anticipate a new *Maamor* from the Rebbe, Chassidim look towards the last *Ma’amor* of “Ve’ata Tetzaveh” as a source of direction. May it be *Teikef Umiyad Mamosh!*

to the core (as the Posuk says about the preparation of the oil for the Menorah in the Beis Hamikdash “kasis” – pressed) and give them no rest until they succeed in bringing about the final Geulah. ■

1. “Tiferes Bachurim” provided after-hours Torah shiurim for young students who were either engaged in vocational work or secular studies and did not attend a Yeshivah. See *Toldos Chabad B’Russiya HaSovietis* p. 51.
2. *Sefer Hasichos* 5687 p. 154
3. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 4 p. 16
4. *Ibid.* vol. 1 p. 631

5. The letter appeared originally in *HaTomim* (vol. 2 p. 712); reprinted in *Sefer HaMaamorim* 5687 p. 288
6. In honor of each Yom Tov beginning from Shavuos, 5746, the Rebbe edited a *Ma’amor* that was said in an earlier year regarding that particular Yom Tov, in order to be published.
7. Although the Rebbe distributed a *Maamor* for each Yom Tov, it was unusual that he should personally hand it out to each one.



THE REBBE AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE CHALUKAH OF THE MAAMOR “V’ATA TETZAVEH” – PURIM KATAN 5752.  
RIGHT: KUNTRES PURIM KOTON 5752.

