



MOVING – BUT WHERE TO?

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In 5731, Chabad of Minnesota purchased a 13-bedroom mansion in the Highland Park neighborhood of S. Paul, the neighborhood where the majority of the city's Jews resided. This mansion, which was to serve as headquarters for Upper Midwest Merkos-Chabad Lubavitch and for weekly Shabbatons, soon became the facility that housed our Bais Chana Women's Institute. Thousands of women walked through those doors over the years and were positively impacted by the Bais Chana program.

The building, which was known as Lubavitch House, was used heavily for almost 30 years, and the wear and tear took its toll.

A local beer magnate had built the mansion back in 1945, and after so many years, the city building-codes demanded a new roof, new windows and various other costly repairs. Bais Chana's growth also required an even larger facility.

Our numbers had so outgrown our existing facilities that towards the late 5750's, we were conducting Bais Chana courses in different locations — Bed & Breakfasts, college dormitories (while not being in use by the colleges), hotels and the like.

We were in a dilemma. Do we spend

the quarter million dollars necessary in order to renovate our grounds, or do we find a different and larger location? There existed a great deal of emotional connection with Lubavitch House. Thirty years of Shabbatons, Bais Chana, weddings, Brisin, etc., — it had become a real Makom Kodosh, and parting with Lubavitch House would be very hard on an emotional level.

Also even if we were to look for a larger facility, the question was where? Over the few years before we'd been on the lookout for potential locations, but alas, nothing that seemed to suit our needs came along. There were many variables involved in this, since selling a holy site like our own had serious halachic ramifications that needed to be scrupulously analyzed.

The turning point came on Erev Rosh Hashanah 5760 when I went to Lubavitch House to get our mail, and discovered a note stuck in our door. The note read: "I am a contractor and I love this mansion, and I am willing to make you an offer to buy it as is. Call me." And he left me his number.

I called him and said, "I got your note regarding your interest in our building and we are debating whether to sell this

mansion or to renovate it. We have very strong emotional ties with Lubavitch House; it's a very holy place. However, it's not quite like the Holy Temple in Jerusalem so I would like to hear your offer."

He mentioned a figure far above my wildest dreams. I was overwhelmed; it was almost twice the market value of Lubavitch House. I told him I would get back to him.

We agonized over what to do. We were frantically searching for an appropriate venue, in order to be able to move into immediately upon selling Lubavitch House and we still had not found anything. I was anxious to get back to the contractor, so on the first day of Chol Homoed Sukkos 5760 I called a meeting with the senior Shluchim of our region to decide what to do.

We discussed all the advantages and disadvantages of both options and painstakingly dissected every detail of each idea. Still at a loss, we decided to write to the Rebbe. Since we viewed this as a matter of extreme urgency, on the very same day, I wrote a letter to the Rebbe, the gist of the letter being, "Can we sell the current facility of our holy Mossad - Lubavitch House and if yes, where do we go?" I



RABBI MOSHE FELLER AND HIS YOUNG CHILD RECEIVE KOS SHEL BROCHA FROM THE REBBE. CREDIT: JEM/THE LIVING ARCHIVE

faxed the letter to the Ohel to be placed on the Rebbe's Tziyun.

At the conclusion of davening in our Chabad House, a real estate agent who had recently started attending shul and was looking for a suitable building for us, approached me and said, "Rabbi, you won't believe this but a very suitable building has **just now** become available. It's a group home for severely handicapped individuals. It has 20 bedrooms, a large dining room, a huge kitchen, and it's just ten minutes from here—in West S. Paul. The county has decided that it would be better to house these people in spaces with 4 to 6 individuals together rather than concentrating them in a large institution."

Hence, the owners of this Dakota County Nursing Home were now being

forced to sell their facility which obviously meant that we could purchase it for a very good price. We hurried to see the grounds, which consisted of a 23,000 square-foot building on five acres of land, just ten minutes from our existing Lubavitch House.

We took Senator Rudy Boschwitz, Chairman of Friends of Upper Midwest Merkos Lubavitch, along with us to tour the facility and we all decided that it was exactly what we needed!

It was very clear to us that this was the Rebbe's answer to my question I had asked the day before. It didn't escape anyone that this perfect building became available to less than 24 hours after I had written to the Rebbe.

We sold Lubavitch House, and with the money from the sale together with a

sizable contribution from a local benefactor we bought the property from Dakota County Nursing Home without a mortgage.

To put the above story into proper perspective, I want to cite the Rebbe's answer given immediately after the Histalkus of the Friediker Rebbe to people who asked the Rebbe "Where do we go now for direction?" The Rebbe responded to all who asked him this question, "You go for direction to the same one you have been going to until now. Write your question on a Tzetel and take it to the Tziyun, and "Der Rebbe vet gifinen a veg vi tzu enferen"—the Rebbe will find a way to answer you. We faxed our question to the Rebbe at the Ohel and the Rebbe indeed found a way to answer us. ■