

The Rebbe's Brother

REB YISROEL ARYEH LEIB
5666-5712



Reb Yisroel Aryeh Leib was born on 21 Iyar 5666 in Nikolayev, Russia. He was the youngest of three children born to Horav Levi Yitzchok and Rebbetzin Chana. He was named after his uncle, Reb Yisroel Leib Halevi, and his grandfather, Reb Yisroel Leib Halevi Yanovsky.

Even as a young boy he showed incredible talents. He was very sharp and studious. When he was a boy of three years old he had already started learning Mishnayos Baal Peh.

Once, in the year 5672, his father, Reb Levi Yitzchok, invited Reb Nochum Gorlnik to visit his house saying, "I would like you to meet my sons."

When Reb Nochum arrived the older sons were not home, and he noticed a young boy sitting by the table, with his head leaning on his arms, bent over a *sefer*. He did not pick up his head even once to look at him. Amazed at the sight, Reb Nochum mentioned to Horav Levi

Yitzchok that he had never seen a child playing such a game before.

"Game?" Horav Levi Yitzchok exclaimed. He bent down and took the *sefer* and showed Reb Nochum that it was a Mishnayos. He asked the child, "Please tell me what you learned." Reb Yisroel Aryeh Leib proceeded to explain the entire Mishna in depth.

Sometimes his involvement in learning was to such an extent that his mother would have to force him to take care of his physical needs such as eating and sleeping.

In the year 5675, his grandfather, Reb Baruch Shalom, mentioned to the Rebbe Rashab that "Horav Levi Yitzchok has a son who is a prodigy, a *boki* in Gemora and Medrash, and he learns very well." The Rebbe Rashab asked, "How old is he?" and Reb Baruch Shalom answered, "Bez" before Shavuos he will turn nine years old."

Reb Yisroel Aryeh Leib had a photo-

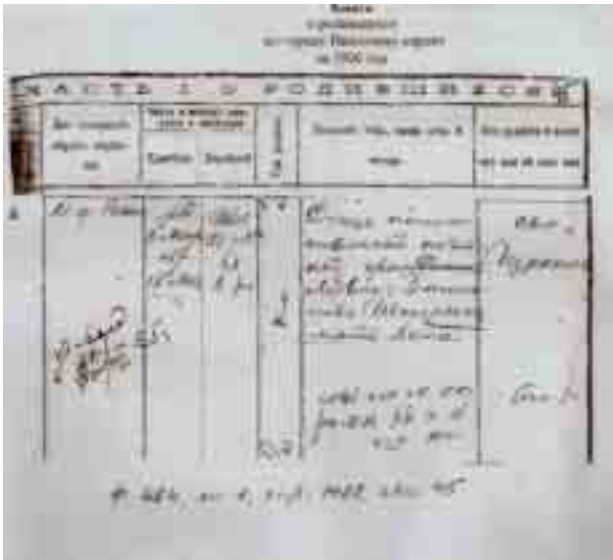
graphic memory; anything he would see once would be engraved in his mind and he would never forget it.

His remarkable intelligence and extraordinary astuteness once caused his father to refer to him as having "the intelligence of the Tzemach Tzedek."

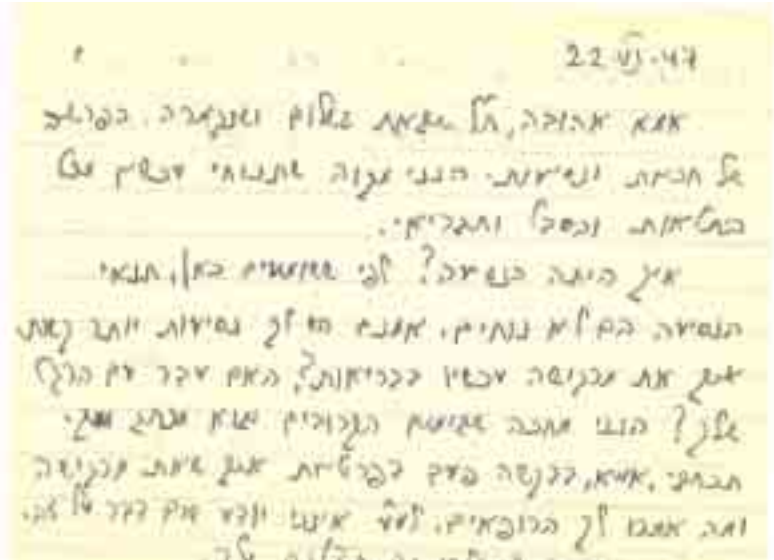
His first few years he learned in the Cheder together with other children. Later on though, Reb Levi Yitzchok hired a personal tutor for his three children.

Over the years in his father's house he absorbed himself in the Chassidische surroundings and the vast knowledge of Torah.

Once, an argument broke out between Reb Levi Yitzchak, his eldest son (the Rebbe) and Reb Yisroel Aryeh Leib on the topic in Chassidus of *mah* and *ban*. The argument went on for many weeks, and every time they sat together this was the main topic of the conversation. Then, after many weeks, Reb Yisroel Aryeh Leib said: "everything that we spoke



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LEFT: THE BIRTH RECORDS OF REB YISROEL ARYEH LEIB. RIGHT: A LETTER FROM REB YISROEL ARYEH LEIB TO HIS MOTHER, REBBETZIN CHANA.

about up until now was regarding the ‘*arum*’ of *mah* and *ban*, so what actually is *mah* and *ban*?!

Rebbetzin Chana describes the scene as follows: “my eldest son was speaking from a ‘Chassidus’ point of view, my husband was speaking from a ‘Kabbala’ point of view, and my youngest son was speaking from a ‘philosophical’ point of view.”

ONE MUST HAVE DAAS

In the summer of 5684, Reb Yisroel Aryeh Leib arrived in Leningrad. The Frierdiker Rebbe and the Rebbe were there at the time as well. He would walk freely in and out of the Frierdiker Rebbe’s residence, and would spend time discussing concepts in Chassidus with the Chassidim. The Temimim were amazed to know that he was a *boki* in the entire *hemshech* of *Samach Vov*.

Many times he would hear Chassidus, alone, from the Frierdiker Rebbe, in his room. Once, he came in to ask for an explanation on a maamor. The Frierdiker Rebbe told him that he could not explain it to him. Reb Leib was heartbroken and he wept the entire night. The next day he returned and the Rebbe then explained to him the entire maamor. Afterwards, the Rebbe explained that since Reb Yisroel Aryeh Leib was heartbroken he had become a proper *k’li* for what the Rebbe had to tell him.

During this period, the Frierdiker Rebbe mentioned in a farbrengen to the Rebbe and his brother “it is too bad that my father (the Rebbe Rashab) has never seen you.”

He would spend long hours in the Frierdiker Rebbe’s library delving into the depths of the seforim at hand. One night he was seen in the library, leaning on a shtender, cigarette in hand, immersed in thought. When the Chassidim came back the next morning, they found him in the same position as the night before, still holding the cigarette in his hand, and still lost in thought.

Reb Moshe Dubinsky relates:

Once, on a Shabbos the Frierdiker Rebbe said a very deep mammor. The Chassidim were overwhelmed. However the face of Reb Leib did not show any sign of puzzlement. The next week the Frierdiker Rebbe said a simpler maamor. To everyone’s surprise, Reb Leib walked out totally befuddled. He said, “After such a maamor one must take *mashke*.”

That night, they sat down to farbreng and Reb Leib took a lot of *mashke*. He said *lechaim* and he cried without saying a word. Only once in a while did the Chassidim hear him say: “What’s the point of “*haskala*”? (philosophy) One must have “*daas*”! (knowledge).”

MAZEL TOV ON THE HAT!

As mentioned, Reb Yisroel Aryeh Leib

received many unique *kiruvim*. This can be seen from the following entry in the Rebbe’s Reshimos in which he records a vision that the Frierdiker Rebbe had of the Rebbe Rashab and Reb Yisroel Aryeh Leib:

“Monday night, 5 Teves 5689.

“Upon being summoned, I entered into the [Frierdiker] Rebbe’s room . He said that he wished to convey regards from my brother Leib (who is currently living in Leningrad). When I asked if he had received a letter from him, he replied: “I listened to a maamor along with him from the Rebbe [Rashab]. And here’s what happened:

Tonight, I saw the Rebbe [Rashab]. He held a silk handkerchief in his hand and his face bore an extraordinary expression of joy. The last time his face was as such was in the year 5668. He then said to me ‘Mazal Tov for the hat! They may enter now.’ I opened the door and a few individuals walked in, among them was your brother. He slowly approached me—or perhaps I approached him, and I embraced him with one hand. My father asked me ‘Who is this young man?’ but then, after a few seconds he said, ‘Ah! I know you.’

He then recited the maamor Shchora Ani ve’Naava... You must ask your brother about this. “After the maamor, I approached my father and asked him something, and the entire vision sudden-

ly escaped me.

I saw him clearly; it was amazing. In which city or place this transpired, I don't know.

Your brother's face I did not see. His hat was tilted a bit to the side, and he was chewing on something, I don't know if it was a cigarette, his fingernail, or something else. This was the second time I've seen my father since the wedding [i.e. the Rebbe's wedding on 14 Kislev].

The first time I was wearing a hat but he did not tell me 'Mazal Tov.' The hat belongs to my grandfather (the Rebbe Maharash). I wanted to wear one belonging to the Rebbe Rashab, but so it was, I wore from the Rebbe Maharash..."

At the time of his passing in 5712, Reb Leib was living in Liverpool, England.

"Early that morning the Rebbetzin had gone to a upscale store on Nostrand Avenue, where she spoke to the family in London by telephone. During the conversation they related the sad news that Reb Yisroel Aryeh Leib had passed away



find out about the news. It is important to point out that Rebbetzin Chana had arrived in America several years earlier after enduring terrible hardships living in exile with her illustrious husband, Reb Levi Yitzchak, and she was in a fragile state of health. The Rebbe made extensive efforts and went to great lengths to ensure that she would not become aware of the tragedy, for fear of the devastating effect it might have on her health.

The Rebbe would customarily visit Rebbetzin Chana daily, at 7:00 or 8:00 o'clock in the evening. In order that she would not suspect anything, the Rebbe continued visiting daily during even the *shivah*. Since the Rebbe was wearing non-leather shoes with rubber souls and their appearance might arouse suspicions, Reb Berel Junik polished them with black shoe polish, thereby making them less conspicuous.

Reb Berel continued:

"Each day, I would find ways to try to keep the Rebbe's visit short. For example, on the first day when the Rebbe went to visit, I waited a bit and went to a public phone and dialed the Rebbetzin's home. When the Rebbe heard the phone ring, he said "*rayd gezunterheit*" and quietly left the house. Each day I would find another ploy. The main thing was that the Rebbe should not have to spend much time in the home which would strengthen Rebbetzin Chana's suspicion that the Rebbe is in *aveilus*.

"The Rebbe also told me to make sure that no one send his mother any letters of *nichumim* and instructed that I bring the mail to him. The Rebbe would look through it and then return it to me to place in the mailbox."

Later, Reb Yisroel Aryeh Leib's wife and daughter would send letters to Rebbetzin Chana in which they would write that her son was very busy with his studies and did not have time to write. After a few months Rebbetzin Chana expressed her concern and anguish to Reb Berel that she was not hearing from her son. She added "I don't want to ask my son [the Rebbe] because he has enough worries, and I generally try to tell him only

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The *mashbak*, Reb Berel Junik, recounts what happened at the time of informing the Rebbe of his passing and the days of *shivah*.

"At that time the Rebbe was living at 346 New York Avenue, corner President Street.

"The morning of Yud Gimmel Iyar, the Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka asked me to come to the Rebbe's house. The Rebbetzin informed me that the situation of her brother-in-law Reb Yisroel Aryeh Leib was not good, and added that she did not know how her mother-in-law, Rebbetzin Chana, would take the news. The truth is that I did not really comprehend the gravity of the situation, and I figured that a heart attack or the like had occurred.

"After a few minutes of thinking the Rebbetzin asked me to call Reb Shmuel Levitin, which I did, and brought him over right away. She spoke with him for about a half hour. Only after that, did it occur to me how grave situation truly was.

from a heart attack. When she returned home the Rebbe was no longer there, as he had already left to 770.

"After davening, Reb Shmuel went into the Rebbe's room and informed him about the passing of his brother. The Rebbe wondered if anyone else knew about it, and asked that anyone who knew about it to enter into the Rebbe's room.

"Reb Leibel Groner was summoned into the Rebbe's room. After tearing *kriah*, the Rebbe wrote a letter in his holy hand writing to his sister-in-law, expressing consolation and encouragement, and asked me to send it to them.

"The Rebbe sat *shivah* in his room in 770. Rabbi Hodakov was the *chazan* for all the *tefillos* with a small minyan present. After the *shivah*, Reb Shneur Zalman Duchman continued davening every *tefillah* for the *amud* until the *yartzeit* the next year."

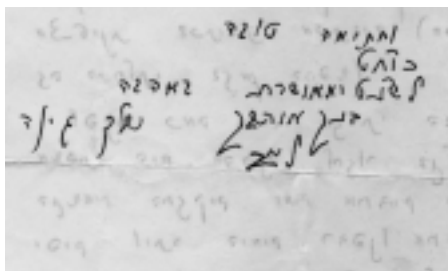
The small minyan was one of the ways to ensure that Rebbetzin Chana did not

happy things.”

Reb Berel relayed to Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka that her mother-in-law was beginning to become suspicious that all was not okay. A week or so later, the Rebbe handed Reb Berel a letter from his sister-in-law in London to give to his mother, in which the Rebbe had added a few lines at the end in his brother's name. That night Rebbetzin Chana told Reb Berel Junik with excitement that she had received a letter from her son in London.

A few days before Shavuos, the Rebbe told Rabbi Junik to send a telegram in the name of his brother to his mother. Seemingly it was the custom of Reb Yis-

roel Aryeh Leib when 13 Iyar came out on Shabbos, the Rebbe would often hold special farbrengens on that day, even while his mother was still living. On 13 Iyar 5745, at the Shabbos farbrengen, the



A NOTE FROM THE REBBE TO HIS MOTHER IN REB YISROEL ARYEH LEIB'S HANDWRITING.

Torah, Reb Yisroel Aryeh Leib also had a wide range of knowledge in secular subjects, specifically mathematics. In his work in this field, he compiled papers on complex mathematical theories. During the farbrengen of Yud Shevat 5735, a conversation between the Rebbe and Professor Paul Rosenblum shed light on the Rebbe's efforts to have the sole surviving work be published in a proper manner.

During the Farbrengen, Mathematics Professor Paul Rosenblum approached the Rebbe and, handing the Rebbe an envelope, proceeded to mention another manuscript that the Rebbe had sent him some time before.

An excerpt of his conversation with the Rebbe:

Rebbe: What is your opinion of the work?

Dr. Rosenblum: It has things which are worth publishing, but it needs work. It needs a foreword and references. It seems that the manuscript is incomplete because it quotes other sections that are not there.

Rebbe: But the author is deceased. That means that someone else will have to complete the work. If someone will be willing to complete it, I'll be very happy to compensate him for his work, and you will only supervise. Because I don't know if you'll have enough time, and more so,

“He then recited the maamor Shchora Ani ve'Naava... You must ask your brother about this.

roel Aryeh Leib to send a telegram to his mother before Yom Tov.

“We acted in this manner every Yom Tov until the passing of Rebbetzin Chana in the year of 5725. It was all done in accordance with the holy will of the Rebbe and Rebbetzin, who wanted to ensure that the news of Yisroel Aryeh Leib's passing should not reach Rebbetzin Chana.”

Regarding this fact that Rebbetzin Chana did not know at all of the passing of her son, Rabbi Yechezkel Besser recounts: “After the passing of the Rebbe's brother I was visiting with Rebbetzin Chana (he would visit often because of his close connection to her son Reb Yisroel Aryeh Leib). The Rebbetzin asked me when I would be traveling to Europe. I answered “in a week.” “Will you be traveling through London?” she asked. I answered “yes,” and then she asked me if I will be able to visit Reb Yisroel Aryeh Leib? Suddenly I realized that she did not know anything...”

On occasions, the Rebbe dedicated a sicha to Reb Yisroel Aryeh Leib. At the end of the *shivah* the Rebbe said a sicha that was later edited by the Rebbe. Dur-

ing years when 13 Iyar came out on Shabbos, the Rebbe would often hold special farbrengens on that day, even while his mother was still living. On 13 Iyar 5745, at the Shabbos farbrengen, the Rebbe said a sicha explaining the significance of the names Yisroel Aryeh Leib and the *hora'ah* from them. In 5747 as well, the Rebbe said a sicha dedicated to Reb Yisroel Aryeh Leib and the *hora'ah* from his name. Numerous maamorim were later reviewed and edited by the Rebbe in honor of Reb Yisroel Aryeh Leib's yahrtzeit.

Besides his immense knowledge in



REB YISROEL ARYEH LEIB'S BURIAL PLACE IN TZFAS.

you're time is valuable. But if someone else will do it and you'll merely supervise his work, I'll be very happy to pay him.

Dr. Rosenblum: Is this all you have left from him?

Rebbe: Yes. This is all there is, and he passed away ten years ago.

Dr. Rosenblum: Then I'll do it myself. I figure it would be beneficial to the author.

Rebbe: But it will be beneficial to me. I didn't want to tell you who the author

was so as not to influence you, but it was written by my brother. I had a brother who was younger than I am, and he passed ten years ago.

Dr. Rosenblum: Ten years ago?

Rebbe: Approximately. This is all that's left from him.

Dr. Rosenblum: Apparently he worked independently and didn't have access to a library. That's clear.

Rebbe: He was of independent character. He would write on his own and only

afterwards would he check in the references to see if anyone else wrote in the same way. He was very zealous about his independence. I'm very eager that it should go to print. If something can be done, I'll be very happy to pay for it.

Dr. Rosenblum: I can do it myself, I'll make the time.

Rebbe (with a big smile): Hashem should bless you! If so, let me thank you again! L'Chaim V'livrocho! ■

Deep Gratitude

Below are two letters from the Rebbe to Professor Rosenblum thanking him for his involvement in publishing Reb Yisroel Aryeh Leib's manuscripts

By the Grace of G-d
7th of Teves 5736
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Greeting and Blessing:

First of all, I want to thank you, dear Dr. Rosenbloom, once again for your effort and attention and love which you put into the work of preparing the manuscript of my late brother of blessed memory, for publication. Although the subject matter is not directly in my field, it is quite obvious to me how much effort and devotion you given to this matter. I want to thank you also in anticipation of your continued efforts in this matter, so as to have it published in the proper manner and medium, since it is in your sphere.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge receipt of Mrs. Rosenbloom's letter of the 3rd of Teves and previous correspondence. I will remember you all in prayer for the fulfillment of your hearts' desires for the good. In accordance with the contents of your letter, above all for good health, physically and spiritually, and to have true Yiddish Nachas from all of your children, and to receive it in happy circumstances.

The Zechus of your activities in general, and especially on behalf of those coming from behind the iron curtain in particular, will surely stand you and all yours in good stead.

With blessing,
(The Rebbe's signature)

P.S. As I do not know if you have retained a copy of the manuscript, I have requested to send it to you.

By the Grace of G-d
4th of Iyar, 5738
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Greeting and Belssing:

To begin with Brocho, I want to convey to you my sincere appreciation of your good wishes for my health and in connection with my birthday.

I prayerfully reciprocate your good wishes by reiterating the Divine Promise to our father Abraham. "I (G-d, the source of all blessings) will bless them that bless you."

Accordingly, my G-d bestow His generous blessings in you and your children and all yours, in all needs, especially to have true Yiddish Chassidish Torah Nachas from each other and from wach of your children, and enjoy it in good health and Hatzlocho in all affairs.

I was particularly pleased that your good wishes were accompanied by your recently concluded work which, I trust, is the forerunner of further accomplishments in this area as well as in related fields, for which I wish you Hatzlocho.

I am particularly appreciative of your devoted and untiring effort to prepare for publication the paper of my late brother, Olov HaSholom. Although is in not my field, I can see clearly that this was not simply a case of editing, but represents almost a total revision and reworking of the paper. In addition to being instrumental in the publication of it as perfectly as possible, it is also a case of Gemilus Chesed for one who is in the World of Truth, which is designated as "Chesed Shel Emes," and is one of the highest forms of Chesed. I appreciate what you have done more that I can express here in words.

Again, wishing you and all yours good health and prosperity, materially and spiritually.

With blessing, (The Rebbe's signature)