

Derher

A Chassidisher

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HISTORIC MISSION

THE REBBE'S SHLUCHIM TO ERETZ YISRAEL
5736-5738



Stretch Out Your Hand

PURIM 5726

Made in the USA

RABBI AVROHOM DOV HECHT



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About the Cover:

This month marks 30 years since the third and final group of shluchim were sent by the Rebbe on a special mission to Eretz Yisroel, broadening and ultimately transforming the scope of Chabad activities throughout the land.

Pictured is the second group of shluchim are greeted at Ben Gurion Airport amidst joyous dancing, Shevat 5737.

Photo: Yemei Temimim archives.



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נא לשמור על קדושת הגליון.

Derher**Editorial**

“A suggestion:

“It would be the greatest zechus for the neshama [of the Rebbetzin]; in connection with her neshama and its elevation, we should institute that all Yidden begin celebrating their birthdays...” (25 Adar 5748).

It was merely a few days after the conclusion of the *shloshim* following the Rebbetzin's passing when the Rebbe asked for this new initiative to be implemented in her *zechus*.

As we commemorated the Rebbetzin's 30th *yahrtzeit* last month, we now mark 30 years since the Rebbe launched the “birthday campaign” in Adar 5748.

A full overview on the beginnings of this custom and how it evolved over the generations is presented in this magazine.

In the *sichos* about the significance of a birthday, the Rebbe also explained that *galus* is compared to pregnancy, and *geulah* to birth. By each and every individual properly celebrating his or her own birthday, we will merit the ultimate “birth” of all of *klal Yisrael*, with the *geulah shleima*.

With blessings for a *freilichen Purim*,

The Editors

ר"ה לאילנות, ט"ו בשבט, ה'תשע"ח



VICTORY IN EXILE

THE MONTH OF ADAR

One of the most famous expressions regarding the month of Adar is, “משנכנס אדר מרבין בשמחה” – When Adar arrives, we increase in joy.” The source of this is the Gemara (*Taanis* 29b). Immediately afterwards, the Gemara gives an example of how this joy is to be expressed: “Therefore, a Jew who has a court case with a gentile... should make himself available in Adar, when his fortune is good.”

Of all the examples of increasing in joy, it seems very out of place for the Gemara to pick this particular one. As a general rule, we try to encourage a Yid to have contact and

interaction with fellow Yidden; with non-Jews, less so. Why then would the Gemara choose the example of a Yid involved with a non-Jew to demonstrate the joy of Adar?



The happiness in Adar is based on its connection to Purim. The *Megillah* refers to “החדש אשר נהפך להם מיגון לשמחה”—the month that was transformed for them from sadness to happiness.” This, in fact, is the source for משנכנס אדר מרבין בשמחה. So, let us explore the celebration of Purim itself:

Unlike most other Yomim Tovim, Purim is not about us conquering our enemies. As the Gemara¹

concludes—“We are still servants of Achashveirosh.” There was no open *geulah*—the return to Eretz Yisrael and the building of the second *Beis Hamikdash* happened several years later. The reason Yidden had been sent to *galus* was because of their *aveiros*, and that had not yet been corrected.

True, throughout almost a full year (from when the decree was published in Nissan until its reversal was carried out in the following Adar) all the Yidden lived with *mesiras nefesh* not to convert. This would seem to be the ultimate *teshuva*, to the extent that even “intentional sins are converted to merits.”



לזכות
החיילת בצבאות ה'
חנה תחל'
לרגל יום הולדתה
כ"ז טבת ה'תשע"ז
נדפס ע"י הוריו
הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל
וזוגתו מרת ברכה שיחיו
טעלדאן



However, the “stolen objects had yet to be returned.” Every Yid has his own part of the world to purify, and there are sparks associated with his individual *neshama* that he must elevate to *kedusha*. In the Purim story, being that the Yidden had not yet elevated the *nitzotzos* that they should have elevated, “and the objects that were stolen” were not yet returned, they remained under Achashveirosh’s rule.



In an ideal setting, Yidden would exclusively deal with other Yidden. As for the sparks trapped in the rest of the world, they will be brought to

us on their own for us to deal with. (As we see in the famous story of the Queen of Sheva bringing gifts to Shlomo Hamelech.) Even when we are not on the level for that to happen, and we must deal with the world, it should ideally be in manner of “conquering”—as Dovid Hamelech put it: “לכו ופשטו ידיכם בגדוד—go and take arms with the troops...” Meaning, we interact by standing far above, and from our vantage point we can elevate the world to *kedusha*.

In the story of Purim, however—and so too now, in the time of *galus*—the Yidden are not strong enough to go out to war. “He who is

afraid [due to his *aveiros*] and faint of heart shall return home from the battlefield.”² In this situation, when *klipa* claims that the *nitzotzos* belong to him, and the Yid is not able to battle openly, he must go to “court” and state his claim. And when Adar comes, we are given extra strength—a guarantee that we’ll be victorious in our mission and refine the world. **1**
(*Shabbos Parshas Mishpatim* 5731)

1. *Megillah* 14a.
2. *Devarim* 20:8.



לעבן מיט'ן רבי'ן

לזכות
הרה"ת ר' יהודה
וזוגתו מרת רבקה
ומשפחתם שיחיו
שטיינער
וואשינגטאן די. סי.



23 TEVES 5723, G. SCHUSTERMAN VIA JEM 303098

Stretch Out Your Hand

PURIM 5726



The following account is based on a number of yomanim written at the time:

It was 8:30 p.m. when the Rebbe entered for the *farbrengen*.¹ After the crowd began singing a *niggun*, the Rebbe wrapped several pieces of cake in a napkin and said *l'chaim* to all those present. The Rebbe then said several *sichos*, including one about the three *pesukim* that the Jewish children told Mordechai—predicting the impending salvation.²

Between *sichos*, the Rebbe encouraged several individuals to say *l'chaim*. At midnight, the Rebbe said a *maamar* based on the *possuk*: “ויבז בעיניו” connecting it with the *possuk*: “לשלוח יד במרדכי לבדו,” “ויבז עשו את הבכרה.” Prior to the *maamar*, the microphone stopped working. After it was briefly fixed, it broke again. Eventually, Reb Leima Minkowitz, who was recording the *farbrengen*, took the microphone from his tape recorder and

placed it under the Rebbe's tablecloth. Following the *maamar*, several individuals approached the Rebbe with *l'chaim*. While they conversed, the Rebbe covered the microphone with his hand.

During the singing, Reb Chaim Nachman Kowalsky presented a container of dates to the Rebbe. The Rebbe smilingly said that he won't eat it, because of the question about *bracha acharona*, and handed it to the *mazkir*, Reb Moshe Leib Rodshtein. The Rebbe then went on to say several additional *sichos*.

At around 2:00 a.m., the Rebbe proclaimed: "Being that it's already after *chatzos*, and therefore closer to the end of the *farbrengen* than the beginning, and being that *ad d'lo yada* must be fulfilled and so far I don't see anyone holding at that stage, someone should be *moser nefesh* and take this upon himself, thereby being *motzi* everyone else."

The elderly Reb Zalman Duchman volunteered, and promptly began pouring himself a cup of *mashke*. Although it seemed as though he was not the one the Rebbe had in mind for this "job," the Rebbe nevertheless gave some *l'chaim* to Reb Zalman, asking him if he is the "*nivchar sheb'am*" [appointee]. The Rebbe also handed him several pieces of cake. Chassidim immediately began to grab them from him.

"Soon he will³ begin making speeches," the Rebbe proclaimed. When Reb Zalman began talking, the Rebbe responded: "I said you'll be making speeches soon." A little later, the Rebbe asked if Reb Zalman is doing his job. "That is why I gave him *mezonos*," the Rebbe said. Again Reb Zalman started to speak, but the Rebbe stopped him: "With speeches you'll accomplish nothing; what's needed is *ad d'lo yada*!"

The Rebbe then called for Reb Chaim Asher Kahanov to come over, saying, "He's a *kohen*, he should come up." When he reached the stage, the Rebbe poured a *l'chaim* of *mashke* with 95% alcohol for him. Turning to the Rebbe, he exclaimed, "*L'chaim!*" The Rebbe *bentched* him to have "a physically abundant year." The Rebbe then encouraged him to continue saying *l'chaim*, mentioning that "the first time I met him was in Paris, when he made *kiddush* on 95%..." The Rebbe then instructed him to have another *l'chaim*, which he immediately did.

In a later *sicha*, the Rebbe spoke about the advantage of recounting *mofsim*, wonder stories of the Rebbeim, over just studying Chassidus. He



mentioned the claim that an individual⁴ brought to the Friediker Rebbe regarding the effectiveness of recounting *mofsim*, despite this not being the ideal Chabad way. After one receives a copy of a *maamar*, the Rebbe explained, it can happen that he'll "go and eat kugel," [i.e. it does not move him very much]. Experiencing *mofsim*, on the other hand, can have a greater effect on many people. This is why there were many *mofsim* by the Friediker Rebbe, including the very fact that he lived the last seventeen years of his life, despite the doctors' dire predictions. Today we are witness to an even greater *mofes*—after seeing so many *mofsim*, people go and eat kugel...

(While the Rebbe was saying this, an individual who was somewhat inebriated, was repeating words after the Rebbe. Chassidim wanted to remove him from the *farbrengen*, but the Rebbe gave him smiling glances several times. Later on, he was dancing around and Chassidim tried to take him out again, but he protested. The Rebbe asserted: "Just touch his tie, you'll immediately see that he's aware of everything taking place,"⁵ and then remarked something in Russian.)

Later, the Rebbe asked where Reb Chaim Asher Kahanov is.⁶ When Chassidim answered that he had gone to sleep, the Rebbe exclaimed: "That is the true *ad d'lo yada*—that he's sleeping."

Chassidim sang the *Niggun Hachana*, the Alter Rebbe's *niggun* (repeating the fourth stanza six times), *Nye Zhuritz Chloptzi*, and *Ani Maamin*, all upon the Rebbe's request. The Rebbe then began singing *Tzama L'cha Nafshi*.

מרת רבקה דינה ע"ה מינקאוויטש
נלב"ע כ"א אדר-שני, ה'תשע"ו

נדפס ע"י בתה וחתנה
שלוחי כ"ק אדמו"ר
לבל הרבור, פלורידה
הרה"ת ר' שלום דובער
וזוגתו מרת חנה שיחיו
ליפסקאר



MADE IN T



In preparation of this article, we were greatly assisted by JEM-My Encounter and Rabbi Yechiel Kagan, as well as family members Rabbi Nochum Kaplan, Rabbi Mendel Kaplan, Rabbi Yossi Kaplan, Rabbi Yosef Chaim Kantor, Rabbi Yehudah Leib Kantor, and Rabbi Yaakov Tzvi Kantor.

Additional details were culled from Reb Avraham's autobiography, "My Spiritual Journey."

8 TISHREI 5748, LEVI FREDIN VIA JEM13629

HE USA

Avrohom Dov Hecht
RABBI AVROHOM
DOV HECHT



A RABBINIC PERSONALITY SECOND-TO-NONE; THE CHARISMATIC LEADER OF ONE OF THE MOST INFLUENTIAL CONGREGATIONS IN THE UNITED STATES. RABBI AVRAHAM DOV HECHT WAS A TOWERING FIGURE COMMANDING THE RESPECT AND ADMIRATION OF MANY. YET HE NEVER LOST SIGHT OF HIS ULTIMATE POSITION: A FOOT-SOLDIER IN THE REBBE'S ARMY.

14 TEVES 5737, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 210233

MIKVAH ORIGINS

When the Frierdiker Rebbe visited New York in 5689 (תרפ"ט), he once made use of a *mikvah* located in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn.

Before his visit, the rav who founded and managed the *mikvah* toiled for many hours to prepare it for the honored guest. Fiercely guarding the privilege for himself, he didn't allow anyone to assist him. He cleaned, scrubbed, and even prepared two separate *boros*, one hot and one cold, to suit whatever preferences the Frierdiker Rebbe may have.

Taking note of his effort, the Frierdiker Rebbe handed him ten dollars on his way out—no small sum. But the rav refused the money. He would accept no remuneration for the immense privilege.

Instead, the Frierdiker Rebbe offered him a *bracha*. "I bless you that your grandchildren will one day be my Chassidim."

Such a blessing was a big deal in America of the 1920s. Young Jews were leaving the fold in unprecedented numbers. Religion seemed to be a thing of the past, to be discarded on the boat entering New York Harbor from the "Old World" across the ocean. That Reb Hersh Meilach Hecht's grandchildren would be G-d-fearing, and Chassidim no less? That would truly be a dream come true.

BROWNSVILLE

Avraham Dov Hecht was born in 5682 (תרפ"ב) in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn to his parents, Reb Shea and Sarah Hecht. As a young child, he was enrolled in Yeshivas Chaim Berlin. The school was run by a few poor immigrants who spoke almost no English, and they employed a number of teachers whose dedication to Judaism was questionable. Avraham came from a G-d-fearing home, but the atmosphere on the street, and even in school, was very lacking.

Some time after his bar mitzvah, Avraham joined his older brothers, Shlomo Zalman and Moshe Yitzchok, in Yeshiva Torah Vodaas. The brothers became acquainted with Reb Yisroel Jacobson, who would hold weekly study sessions for *bochurim*, where they would study Chassidus and discuss the depths of Yiddishkeit in a warm and inviting atmosphere. The *bochurim* developed a close relationship with Reb Yisrael; he shared with them his experiences in the town of Lubavitch, and regaled them with stories of the Frierdiker Rebbe.

With time, the Hecht brothers became full-fledged Chassidim. When the oldest Hecht brother, Shlomo Zalman, became engaged in 5698 (תרצ"ח) to Rabbi Jacobson's oldest daughter, he decided to grow a beard, and his neighbors thought he had lost his mind. Then, a short time after he married, he and his wife decided to

AVRAHAM CAME FROM A G-D-FEARING HOME, BUT THE ATMOSPHERE ON THE STREET, AND EVEN IN SCHOOL, WAS VERY LACKING.

take an even more drastic step. After hearing so much about the Frierdiker Rebbe, they decided to move from New York to Otwock, Poland, to live in close proximity to him.

Avraham and a group of friends, also yearning to meet the Frierdiker Rebbe and enroll in Tomchei Temimim, decided—with the Frierdiker Rebbe's encouragement—to follow a few months later. The winds of war were already brewing in Europe and his parents were adamant that their son not make the trip, so Avraham secretly took fifteen dollars from his private savings, obtained a passport and voyage ticket, and broke the news to his parents two days before he was set to embark.

Although they were apprehensive, Avraham's parents were proud that their son so longed to see the Frierdiker Rebbe, and they hesitantly agreed.

IN OTWOCK

On a bright morning at the end of Av 5699 (תרצ"ט), the entire New York Lubavitcher community accompanied the six young *bochurim* who boarded a ship for the long voyage across the Atlantic Ocean, accompanied by their *mashpia*, Reb Yisroel Jacobson. After five days at sea, they arrived in France and continued via train.

While waiting in the Paris train station, they were treated to a surprise. The Rebbe, who was living in Paris at the time, came to greet them. The Rebbe told them that the Frierdiker Rebbe accorded great significance to the fact that they were making the trip notwithstanding the political climate, and spoke to them about the holiness of a Rebbe, impressing upon them the magnitude of their trip.

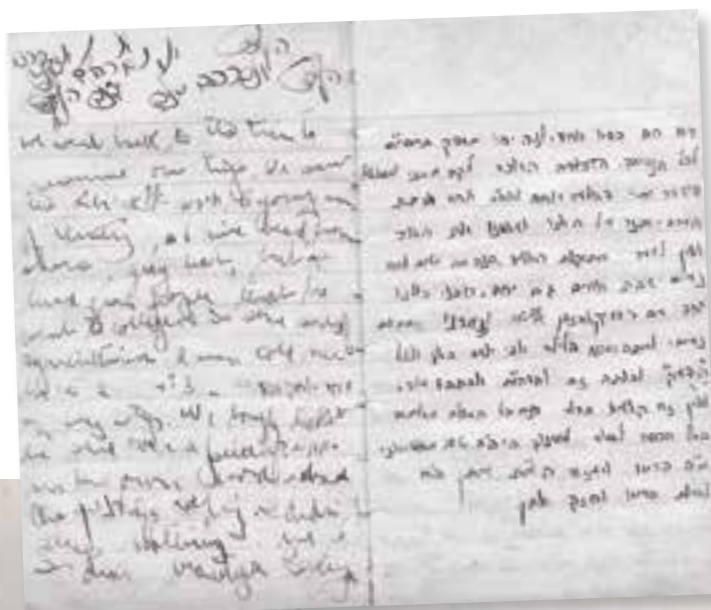
Avraham would later relate that with this brief encounter he was completely taken by the Rebbe's immense stature; his piety, purity, and *kedusha*. It was the beginning of his love for the Rebbe that would later become legendary, and manifest in total devotion and *hiskashrus*.

The small group arrived in Otwock on Rosh Chodesh Elul, one week after departing from American shores. They were welcomed warmly by the yeshiva administration, and were

provided with "high class" lodgings in consideration for their "spoiled" American backgrounds. Nevertheless, it was a far cry from home.

Their first encounter with the Frierdiker Rebbe was that Friday night, when they were part of a select group ushered into the Frierdiker Rebbe's room to hear a *maamar*.¹ Reb Avraham Dov related:

"The impressions of the short half-hour we spent in his room remain engraved in my mind. It is difficult to describe the experience. His words were hard for me to understand, but his shining face, filled with love and holiness, require no explanations. I remember feeling the presence of



REB AVROHOM DOV'S PERSONAL DIARY OF HIS TRIP TO POLAND. HERE HE DESCRIBES MEETING THE REBBE AT THE TRAIN STATION.



ON THE BOAT TO POLAND, ABOUT TO EMBARK. REB AVROHOM DOV IS POSING WITH THE OTHER THREE BOCHURIM, SECOND FROM RIGHT.

IN THE FOREGROUND, HIS FATHER, REB YEHOSHUA HECHT, IS IN DISCUSSION WITH REB SHMUEL LEVITIN AND REB YISROEL JACOBSON.

something far beyond my own limited understanding, and I was awed by its obvious truth and purity. When it was over, I was reluctant to exit the room.”

The days passed, and the *bochurim* immersed themselves in learning. “Day after day passed as my friends and I thirstily absorbed the Torah study and Chassidishe life in Otwock. America seemed more distant than the moon. A full week passed with the speed of light as I immersed myself in the classes with vigor and enthusiasm. When we were informed that we would once again be admitted into the Rebbe’s study on our second Friday night, a full-blown thunderstorm couldn’t have obliterated the boundless sunshine.”

That week, the *dibbur hamaschil* was “*Teshuvah utefillah utzedaka maavirin es ro’a hagezeirah*,”² on the topic of *teshuvah* when facing hard times, possibly a reference to the uncertainties brewing; this *maamar* was a bit more basic and Avraham found it easier to follow. After Shabbos they were also allowed to enter into *yechidus*.

The Polish *bochurim* had a difficult time understanding the culture of the Americans. When the Americans pulled out their bats, balls, and gloves for an impromptu game of baseball during one recess, the Polish *bochurim* looked on in wonder. When the Americans pulled out boxing gloves and began pounding at each other, the wonder turned to shock and consternation. Nevertheless, the *bochurim* settled down well in yeshiva and immersed themselves in learning. The intensity of the learning compared to their American yeshiva, and the

privilege of living near the Frierdiker Rebbe was something they couldn’t take for granted, and they utilized every moment of it.

The dire warnings sent out by the American consul in Warsaw were entirely ignored.

BLITZKRIEG AND FLIGHT

On Friday, Erev Shabbos Selichos, the peace and tranquility came to an abrupt halt. German warplanes flew overhead and dropped their lethal cargo throughout the city, wreaking havoc and destruction.

Seeking guidance in the midst of the mayhem, Avraham Dov raced to the Frierdiker Rebbe’s home, where he joined a multitude of people seeking reassurance. When the Frierdiker Rebbe noticed him and a fellow American *bochur*, he sent a message asking them to run over to Rebbetzin Shterna Sarah’s home to assure her there was nothing to fear.

Returning to their lodgings, the *bochurim* heard the frightening news: Germany had declared war, and it was only a matter of time before they would reach Otwock. The American consul strongly advised them to travel immediately to Warsaw, where the consulate would arrange for their safe passage out of Poland.

They immediately packed their bags, arranged taxis, and ran to obtain a *yechidus* with the Frierdiker Rebbe. They entered the Frierdiker Rebbe’s room at 12:30 p.m.; he was already wearing his Shabbos clothes and adorned with his *shtreimel*, adding to his already regal demeanor.

The Rebbe blessed them, and told them the entire state of affairs was only

a test from Hashem. He directed them to contact the Lubavitcher Chassidim in Riga—Reb Mordechai Chafetz and others—and to grow in their diligent Torah study and fulfillment of mitzvos. The Frierdiker Rebbe’s calm disposition calmed their tense nerves; they now felt equipped to embark on the perilous journey back home.

Before exiting the room, one of the *bochurim* asked the Frierdiker Rebbe, “What will be if we are forced to violate Shabbos?”

The Frierdiker Rebbe answered them, “The *zechus* of the two great *tzaddikim* whose birthdays are on Chai Elul—the Baal Shem Tov and the Alter Rebbe—is sufficient that you will not need to transgress this Shabbos.”

With this comforting message, the *bochurim* boarded the taxis and headed for Warsaw.

Arriving in the big city, the *bochurim* wandered from place to place, seeking help for their predicament. When the anti-Semitic consul turned his back on them, they were forced to wander for hours, late into Shabbos night, seeking lodging and assistance.

At one point, a hotel was ready to admit them with one requirement—that they sign the registration. The *bochurim* began to debate whether *chillul Shabbos* was permitted in their situation, but Reb Shlomo Zalman stopped them. “The Rebbe said we won’t desecrate Shabbos; obviously this isn’t the place for us.” They continued their search, and ultimately found lodging at a Jewish hostel.

On Sunday, they managed to board a train for Latvia, and a few hours later, they finally reached relative safety.

TISHREI IN RIGA

Tishrei was spent with the Chassidim in Riga, in the presence of famous Chassidim such as Reb Itche der Masmid and Reb Mordechai

WHEN THE AMERICANS PULLED OUT BOXING GLOVES AND BEGAN POUNDING AT EACH OTHER, THE WONDER TURNED TO SHOCK AND CONSTERNATION.

לזכות
הרה"ת הרה"ח ר' דוד הלוי שיחי'
לרגל מלאות שלושים שנה להולדתו
כ"ה אדר ה'תשמ"ח - ה'תשע"ח
שיתברך בשנת הצלחה וברכה בגור'
בכל אשר יפנו

ולזכת זוגתו מרת ליפשא ובניהם
ובנותיהם
שמואל הלוי, לוי הלוי, הינדא מאטל,
יוסף הלוי שיחיו
ויסמן



MIVTZA YOM HULEDES

A historically private observance
becomes a minhag for klal Yisrael.

Secrecy

A birthday is a time for reflection, rejoicing, and thanksgiving. It is considered a personal Rosh Hashanah and there are various *minhagim* associated with this special milestone.

This was not always the case throughout Jewish history.

Chazal make various references to the significance of a birthday. The *chanukas hamishkan* was postponed to the month of Nissan to coincide with the birthday of Yitzchak Avinu,¹ and the merit of Moshe Rabbeinu's birthday on 7 Adar caused the miraculous *v'nahafoch hu* of the Purim story.²

There are several recorded instances of *gedolei Yisroel* hosting a *seudas mitzvah* in honor of a milestone birthday, and the idea that one's *mazal* is especially strong on a birthday is sourced in the *Talmud Yerushalmi*.³

Nevertheless, the concept of celebrating a birthday annually, let



THE REBBE CELEBRATES HIS SEVENTIETH YOM HULEDES WITH CHASSIDIM, YUD-ALEF NISSAN 5732.

alone attributing much significance to it, was virtually unheard of for millennia.

Chassidus revealed an entirely new dimension of a *yom huledes*.⁴ The Baal Shem Tov observed the day of Chai Elul as a day of *simcha* with a special *seudas mitzvah* for select *talmidim*.⁵ Although all the Rebbeim observed their birthdays, it was always very private and only known to a select few.

The Rebbe Rashab would say a *maamar* on his birthday, Chof Cheshvan each year. If it was Shabbos, the *maamar* was said publicly (as was customary every Shabbos). On a weekday, the *maamar* was said only in the presence of the Frierdiker Rebbe.⁶

The significance of a *yom huledes* and how unknown it was to Chassidim is evident from the following story:

One year during the Frierdiker Rebbe's youth, on Yud-Beis Tammuz, he mentioned to his teacher, the Rashbatz, that it was his *yom huledes*.

The Rashbatz responded, "Since when is a *yom huledes* so special? The Gemara⁷ states that it would be more pleasant for man had he not been created!"

At dinner that evening, the Frierdiker Rebbe shared this conversation with his father, the Rebbe Rashab. The Rebbe Rashab responded, "He (the Rashbatz) does not know everything. A *yom huledes* is indeed very special."⁸

Minhagei Anash

In the later years of the Frierdiker Rebbe's *nesius*, he revealed that the Rebbeim would observe their birthdays, and encouraged Chassidim to do so as well.

The first time the concept of observing a birthday became an official instruction to Chassidim was with the publication of the Hayom Yom by the Rebbe. The entry for Yud-Alef Nissan (the Rebbe's *yom*

"Since when is a *yom huledes* so special? The Gemara states that it would be more pleasant for man had he not been created!"

huledes—although this was unknown to the public at the time) states: On a birthday, one should spend time in seclusion. He should recall his experiences and think deeply into them. He should then repent and correct those (of his past deeds) that need correction and repentance.

On Yud-Alef Nissan 5709 (the last Yud-Alef Nissan before the Frierdiker Rebbe's *histalkus*), the Frierdiker Rebbe said a short *sicha*, which was published in the *Kuntres Maamarim* of Pesach that year.⁹

During the Rebbe's *nesius*, the Rebbe observed Yud-Alef Nissan (and Chof-Hei Adar—the Rebbetzin's birthday) as a special day every year by going to the Ohel. In 5712 (the Rebbe's fiftieth birthday), the Rebbe said a *maamar* to a group of Chassidim, and in 5722 (the Rebbe's sixtieth birthday) the Rebbe held a special *farbrengen*. From 5731 onwards, the Rebbe held a *farbrengen* or said a *sicha* each year in connection with Yud-Alef Nissan.

With the onset of the Rebbe's *nesius*, it was established that *bochurim* would be admitted for *yechidus* every year in connection with their *yom huledes*, in contrast to previous generations, when *bochurim* rarely merited *yechidus*.¹⁰

The birthday *yechidus* was also for *anash*, and many of the *minhagim* of *yom huledes* were revealed and clarified during these *yechidusen*. Over time it became a regular occurrence for Chassidim to mention their upcoming birthdays in their letters

The Rebbe read through the *tzetel* and wondered aloud “Vov? Zayin?”

to the Rebbe and the Rebbe would respond with special *brachos* and instructions to observe the *minhagim* of *yom huledes*.

It is interesting to note that in many of these letters the Rebbe refers to these observances as “*minhag anash* of recent years.” The *minhagim* include increased *limud haTorah* and *tzedaka*, and receiving an *aliya* the Shabbos before the birthday—as well as on the day of the birthday when applicable. These *minhagim* apply to men and women¹¹ and were published in *Sefer Haminhagim*.¹²

When Rabbi Berel Baumgarten was in *yechidus* for his birthday in the summer of 5714, the Rebbe asked him if he had received an *aliya* on Shabbos. When he answered in the negative, the Rebbe asked, “Why not? I thought everyone was aware of my request [to do so]!”

In later years, Chassidim would come to the Rebbe for dollars in

connection with their *yom huledes*. On such occasions, they would receive an additional dollar and a *bracha* for a *shnas hatzlacha*.”

CHILD'S FIRST BIRTHDAY

On a child's first birthday, it is appropriate for parents to observe the customs of *yom huledes* on behalf of the child, increasing in Torah learning and giving *tzedaka*. Also, and primarily, they are to contemplate on the great merit granted to them by Hashem, entrusting them with a beautiful *neshama* and their obligation to educate the child properly.¹³

Rabbi Alexander Namdar relates: On our son's first birthday, shortly after arriving to Sweden on *shlichus*, we put a pen in his hand and wrote a birthday *pan* to the Rebbe. We sent it together with a letter regarding a timely issue in our *shlichus*.

The Rebbe responded: מנהגי יום – Observe the *minhagim* of a birthday for your son, *sheyichye*.

The Exact Date

Since birthday observance is a fairly new phenomenon in Jewish tradition, many people were unaware of the exact date of their birthday.

Reb Avraham Dunin, *a”h*, was in *yechidus* for his birthday. In his *tzetel* he asked for a *bracha* for his birthday, which would be taking place on Vov Cheshvan. The Rebbe read through the *tzetel* and wondered aloud “Vov? Zayin?” The Rebbe concluded the *yechidus* with a *bracha*. As he was leaving the room, the Rebbe once



A BIRTHDAY BRACHA WRITTEN IN THE REBBE'S KSAV YAD KODESH AS A POSTSCRIPT, CIRCA 5721: בברכת שנת הצלחה - בקשר עם יום הולדתו - ולמילוי משאלות לבנו לטובה בכה"ע - [בכל הענינים] שכותב.

again looked at the *tzetel* and said, “Vov? Zayin?”

Reb Avraham was mystified by this, as the difference between the letters *vov* and *zayin* are quite obvious in the script he had written his note. He called his mother to find out the exact time he was born. To his amazement, she acknowledged that he was born in the evening (*bein hashmashos*) between Vov and Zayin Cheshvan. The exact date was not relevant at the time, because his *bris* had been delayed due to other circumstances.¹⁴

Rabbi Yitzchok Dov Lieberman of Kfar Chabad merited his first *yechidus* on his 19th birthday, Daled Cheshvan, 5734.

“I prepared for *yechidus* to the best of my abilities. In my note I requested a *bracha* for my *yom huledes* on Daled Cheshvan, among other requests. Reading my note, the Rebbe asked ‘When is your *yom huledes*?’ I was shocked, and although I had not prepared to speak to the Rebbe I managed to reply ‘Daled Cheshvan.’

“The Rebbe asked again, ‘When is your *yom huledes*?’ I figured that I had responded too softly the first time, so in a louder voice I said ‘Daled Cheshvan.’ At this point I should have realized that all is not in order, and the Rebbe asked a third time, ‘You are sure your *yom huledes* is Daled Cheshvan?’”

“Flustered, I nervously responded in the affirmative and even added that this was the day I celebrated my bar mitzvah. The Rebbe shrugged and



A LETTER FROM THE REBBE TO A BOCHUR IN HONOR OF HIS BIRTHDAY, DATED 15 ELUL 5710. THE REBBE WISHES HIM “TO BE ZOCHEH THAT THROUGH YOU WILL BE ACHIEVED A PORTION OF WHAT MY FATHER-IN-LAW WANTED TO ACCOMPLISH IN THIS WORLD.”



30 TISHREI 5740, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 194235

THE REBBE INSTITUTED THE PRACTICE OF BOCHURIM GOING INTO YECHIDUS FOR THEIR YOM HULEDES.

proceeded to *bentch* me in connection with my *yom huledes*.”

“Leaving *yechidus* in a daze, I shared the story with my friends, who advised me to speak with Rabbi Hodakov. Upon hearing my strange story, he was angry with me that the Rebbe needed to ask the question so many times. ‘After the first time you should have understood that you need to investigate the matter!’

“Upon finding my birth certificate after a difficult search, we discovered that the date of my birth was **Yud-Daled Cheshvan**! My father recorded our birthdays in a notebook with pencil, and apparently the ‘yud’ of my date of birth was small and therefore overlooked. This is my only explanation for the source of such an error.”¹⁵

The Rebbe instructed those who were born on a date that does not appear on the calendar every year (such as 30 Cheshvan or 30 Kislev) to observe the *minhagim* on both the last day of the previous month and the first day of the new month.¹⁶

BIRTHDAY CAKE

On 15 Kislev 5747, on the way back from the Ohel, the Rebbe remarked to Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky about it being his *yom huledes*.

“Did your family prepare a cake for your birthday?” the Rebbe asked.

Rabbi Krinsky was unsure how to respond, and the Rebbe said, “Nu, you can still make up for it.”

“That night I went home and shared the Rebbe’s instruction with my family. We prepared a cake and had a *chassidishe farbrengen*.”

For Klal Yisrael

Following the *histalkus* of the Rebbetzin on Chof-Beis Shvat 5748, the Rebbe *davened* during the week in his home on President Street throughout the *shnas ha’aveilus*. On Chof-Hei Adar, the Rebbetzin’s 87th birthday, several minutes after the conclusion of *Shacharis*, the Rebbe suddenly descended from the second

floor and approached his *shtender* to say a *sicha*. This came as an absolute surprise to everyone present.

Continuing the theme of “והחי יתן” אל לבו that the Rebbe had emphasized since the *histalkus*, the Rebbe suggested that in connection with the Rebbetzin’s birthday it was appropriate to focus on the *minhagim* of *yom huledes* and to share them with *klal Yisrael*. The Rebbe added that doing so “will be the greatest *zechus* for the *neshama* (of the Rebbetzin).”

The Rebbe then proceeded to introduce two new elements to the *yom huledes* observance:

1. Every individual should host a *farbrengen* in connection with their *yom huledes*. They should gather friends and family, and together they should say “אן אמתן לחיים, א חסידישן לחיים”—a true, *chassidishe l’chaim*. The joyful atmosphere of a *farbrengen* is conducive to taking on new *hachlatos*, ensuring that they will be meaningful and enduring.



HISTORIC MISSION

THE REBBE'S SHLUCHIM TO ERETZ YISRAEL
5736-5738

לע"נ
 הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' אברהם יעקב
 ב"ר חיים מרדכי ע"ה
 נלב"ע כ"ה תשרי ה'תשנ"ו
 ולע"נ זוגתו האשה החשובה
 מרת פריידא ראצא
 בת הרב יחיאל אפרים פישל ע"ה
 נלב"ע ט"ז אדר-שני ה'תשע"ו
 נדפס ע"י בנם
 הרה"ת ר' משה מאיר שמואל
 וזוגתו רבקה לאה ומשפחתם שי'
 גלוצקאוסקי



THE REBBE ESCORTS THE SHLUCHIM FROM THE STEPS OF 770 AS THEY LEAVE TO THE AIRPORT, 11 SHEVAT 5736.

When one of the shluchim's parents asked the Rebbe for matzos on behalf of his son, the Rebbe replied: "ער טוט דאך אין די" מבצעים... זיי זיינען מיינע שלוחים פערזענליך, און איך דארף נישט אנקומען צו קיינע ממוצעים" (He is involved in the *mitzvot*... They are my personal shluchim, and I do not need anyone to be a go-between...)

Such was the extraordinary affection the Rebbe expressed towards the special groups of shluchim sent to Eretz Yisrael.

Imagine the setting: Purim Katan *farbrengen* 5738—forty years ago. The Rebbe was bidding farewell to the third and final group of shluchim to Eretz Yisrael. After he had called up the shluchim to come up to his table to receive dollars and *kuntreisim* in honor of their trip, the Rebbe said that the shluchos, too, should come down from the *vaiber shul* to the *farbrengen*; when they came up to the table, he gave them dollars for their parents as well.

This unusual scene is hardly alone in the extraordinary story of the three groups of shluchim to Eretz Yisrael. This story—the effects of which continue to reverberate in Eretz Yisrael until today—takes us back two years earlier, to Yud-Tes Kislev 5736.

THE ANNOUNCEMENT

It all began at the tail-end of a long night, as the Rebbe's Yud-Tes Kislev *farbrengen* was coming to a close. With closed eyes, the Rebbe began saying a *sicha* on the topic of the Rebbeim's connection to Eretz Yisrael. This was followed by a quite cryptic announcement:

A group of ten Yidden would be sent as the Rebbe's shluchim to the old city of Yerushalayim, and another group of ten to Tzfas. They would spend their time learning Torah *b'tahara*, fulfilling mitzvos (especially those unique to Eretz Yisrael), and influencing those around them. Those who were interested could sign up through the *mazkirus*.²

Rabbi Yitzchok Goldberg, today the *rosh yeshiva* in Migdal Haemek, relates: "The next morning I went into the *mazkirus* to sign up, as the Rebbe had said. Rabbi Binyomin Klein was there, but he told me that he hadn't received any directives from the Rebbe on the matter, so he wasn't quite sure how he could help me. I just wrote my name on a piece of paper and gave it to him. If I remember correctly, another person who had already given his name was [the venerable elder Chossid] Reb Shmuel Dovid Raichik."

No one knew what this shlichus meant—who was supposed to go? For how long? What exactly were they going to do there? But meanwhile, hundreds of Chassidim, young, old, and everyone in between, were stopping in to *mazkirus* to sign up.

Over the next few days, more details began emerging from the *mazkirus*, and two Shabbosim later

(Shabbos Miketz), the Rebbe spoke at the *farbrengen*,³ defining and elaborating on the shlichus, and officially laying out a few conditions:

The Rebbe began by saying that there were those who made the following argument: why are you sending only twenty people—you should send twenty thousand! Send older people!

There is no point for elderly people to go, the Rebbe explained, because this is not an "*aliya*." The intent of the shlichus is for *binyan ha'aretz*, the building of the land—and for that, young people are required; they are there to build the land spiritually as well as physically.

Then the Rebbe defined what the shlichus would be: They would be going for at least a year, preferably two, after which it would be decided whether they should settle there. They were going to work—study *nigleh* and Chassidus with diligence, and do *hafatzas haTorah v'hamaayanos* in their free time.

The Rebbe went on to say who would be considered for this shlichus:

- It was only for couples who were a year after their marriage, or *bochurim* who were not yet contemplating marriage [—within the following year, as *mazkirus* would later explain].
- One must be healthy both physically and spiritually.
- One must go with joy and happiness.

The Rebbe added that being that a period of time had passed since it was first spoken about, an additional one or two people should be added in each group.

"שלוחו של אדם כמותו," the Rebbe declared. "A shliach is like his sender; I am taking the responsibility for them—עלי ועל צוארי, they are on my shoulders."

WHO WILL IT BE?

Tension swirled around 770. It was very rare for the Rebbe to personally choose shluchim for a mission, and there was something very "*himmeldik*" about the fact that they were being sent to the holy cities of Yerushalayim and Tzfas. It is no surprise that Crown Heights was on wheels, with excitement mixing with nervousness as everyone waited to see who would be chosen.

Through the *mazkirus*, a couple of more conditions came out for the shlichus: it was only for those who were not already involved in a *mosad*, and for the *bochurim*, their parents had to give their consent.

Over the next week (Parshas Vayigash), the names of the couples that had been chosen as shluchim to Tzfas started coming out one by one: Rabbis Levi Bistrisky *a"h*, and, יבלחט"א, Alter Eliyahu Friedman, Shmuel Greisman, Yochanan Gurary, Yisrael Yosef Hendel, Yitzchak Goldberg, Yosef Rosenfeld, and Yosef Yitzchak Wilshansky would be going with their wives (and small babies) as the Rebbe's shluchim to Tzfas. Three *bochurim* were also added to the group: Aharon Eliezer Tzeitlin, *a"h*, and, יבלחט"א, Yosef Kramer and Yosef Raitzes, all three having spent two years as *talmidim hashluchim* in Melbourne. [The Rebbe said that since they were already accustomed to being around *baalei batim* in Australia, they could join the married couples.]

The shluchim to Yerushalayim, who would only be *bochurim*, began finding out on Friday. By Shabbos day, everyone in 770 had found out which *bochurim* had the great *zechus* to be chosen. The final list was: Shalom



► No one knew what this shlichus meant—who was supposed to go? For how long? What exactly were they going to do there?



THE SHLUCHIM
DANCE IN THE
TERMINAL BEFORE
DEPARTING.

THE SHLUCHIM
ARRIVE AT
CUSTOMS.



THOUSANDS GREET THE SHLUCHIM AT THE AIRPORT, 12 SHEVAT 5736.

YEMETIMIM ARCHIVES

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The Rebbe's Shluchim

Dear Editors,

Regarding your article about Batei Chabad [*The Beis Chabad*, Issue 63 (140) Kislev 5778], in which you describe the Rebbe's strong encouragement to open Chabad Houses during the *farbrengens* of 5746-5747, and write how "90 percent of the *bochurim* in 770 moved on shlichus; numbers that were unprecedented in Lubavitch history":

As a *bochur* in 770 during that time period, I would like to point out that it was not just the Rebbe's *sichos* that inspired us to go on shlichus. During that time period, we saw—in the Rebbe's actions—time and time again how much the Rebbe loved and cherished the shluchim.

To name a few examples:

Those were the years of the *sefarim* trial, and we were aware that before that year's Kinus, the Rebbe had told Rabbi Krinsky that he wants the shluchim to be notified of all the goings on of the case.

Later, when the case was appealed, the Rebbe said in a *sicha* one Shabbos that *er git dos iber tzu di shluchim*, he is appointing the shluchim to deal with the issue.

One moment sticks out in my memory:

My first year as a *bochur* in 770 was 5746. I remember the Kinus Hashluchim of that year. The Rebbe usually davened *Maariv* upstairs, but that night the Rebbe davened downstairs in honor of the shluchim who had just arrived.

This Kinus took place right in the middle of the preparations for the court case, which began less than a month later. The unpleasant situation was often evident on the Rebbe's face, and the mood in 770 wasn't a happy one.

That all changed when the Rebbe walked in for *Maariv* that night.

The look on the Rebbe's face was unbelievable! The Rebbe's face was shining! Everyone could see the tremendous pleasure that the Rebbe had in seeing the shluchim.

Seeing the Rebbe's happiness that night, I knew that there is only one way to go: shlichus.

Rabbi Zushe Greenberg
Solon, Ohio

”

On Wheels

Dear Editors,

Following on from the recent article regarding the early Lubavitch centers [*The Beis Chabad*, Issue 63 (140) Kislev 5778] and the comment of the Rebbe to Mr. Peter Kalms that “the proposed new Lubavitch House should not only be a school, but a symbol and a center for as many activities as possible.”

Those involved in the construction of Lubavitch House describe how every detail was consulted with the Rebbe.

For example:

Regarding certain classrooms, the Rebbe advised not to be too particular regarding

their exact size, “since anyway they will later be used as offices” (indeed, in 5776—almost fifty years later—one of those classrooms became a staff office).

Another example, the shlichim were faced with a choice to either build a *mikvah* or a swimming pool, but they could not build both. The Rebbe’s response was that kosher *mikvaos* are already available in the area, but there are no kosher swimming pools yet.

Incidentally, that has not changed. To this day, the only *frum* swimming pool in the area (and perhaps in the entire London) is in Lubavitch House. Many *heimishe* schools bring their kids regularly to use this pool.

Once, the Rebbe commented “*In London iz altz oif reder*—In London everything is on wheels.”

I’ll try to explain this based on what I heard from my *zeide*, Rabbi Nachman Sudak, שליט.

A brief look at the book *Challenge* (a documentary of Lubavitch in Great Britain) shows how much was put into this building:

In addition to housing the nursery, elementary and high school, the building also hosted youth clubs, a swimming pool, a gym, a banqueting hall, a bookshop, a printing press for *sichos* and other publications, weekday and Shabbos shuls, a lounge and

library for adult education, communication center for WLCC, an office for small communities, an office for programs with students in universities, an office for Tzach and more, as well as the head offices for Lubavitch activities around the country.

In order to accommodate so much within the limited space available, rooms were designed to serve multifunction purposes.

For example, the banqueting hall has—to this day—gym equipment secured to the walls, but these are on wheels so that they can be opened to turn the room into a gym.

These can then be wheeled back to their place while the *bima* and *amud* as well as tables and chairs are then rolled out—turning the room into a shul.

Roll back the *bima* and *amud*, rearrange the tables and you have a banqueting hall or a school auditorium, etc. (the Rebbe’s *farbrengens* were broadcasted here).

Similarly, the dining room has a moveable wall. The original tables were also on wheels and would be removed to change the room into a club room or alternatively into a shul with the portable *aron kodesh* and *amud* being wheeled in.

Rabbi Mendel Raskin
London, England

CORRECTION

It has been brought to our attention that the article about the Yud-Tes Kislev *farbrengens* [Issue 63 (140) Teves 5778] mentioned that on Yud-Tes Kislev “the Rebbe would conduct an appeal for ‘Kupas Rabbeinu,’ a *minhag* that originates from the Rebbe Rashab” [p. 72]. Although the Rebbe would usually announce an appeal for various causes (on occasion also for Kupas Rabbeinu) at the *farbrengen* on Yud-Tes Kislev, the official appeal for Kupas Rabbeinu would take place at the Rebbe’s Purim *farbrengen*.

It has also been brought to our attention that the first picture in the article about Rabbi Yaakov Yehuda Hecht [A *Staunch Soldier*, Issue 64 (141) Teves 5778, p. 48] was captioned incorrectly as “Reb Yehoshua Hecht.” The man in the picture is Reb Shea Auster, grandfather of Rabbi Hecht.

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ברוך מתיר אסורים

נדפס ע"י

הרה"ת ד"ר בנימין מענדל הלוי וזוגתו מרת שרה רבקה
נימאן

לזכות

הת' מנחם מענדל שיחי'

לרגל הכנסו לעול מצוות ל' שבט ה'תשע"ח

נדפס ע"י הוריו

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לע"נ

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נלב"ע ד' אדר ה'תשע"ב

נדפס ע"י אחיו

הרה"ת ר' שמואל וזוגתו מרת הינדא מלכה שיחיו
לו

לזכות

הרה"ת ר' דוב הלוי וזוגתו מרת חנה טובה שיחיו
מאנדעל

TO THE AMAZING STAFF OF
A CHASSIDISHER DERHER

WE THANK YOU FOR ALL YOUR HARD
WORK AND DEVOTION IN PUTTING
TOGETHER THIS BEAUTIFULLY WRITTEN
AND INSPIRING MAGAZINE!

DR. AND MRS. LEVI A. REITER
THANKS!

לזכרון

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נדפס ע"י

הרה"ת ר' שלום דובער
וזוגתו מרת חנה
ומשפחתם שיחיו
לו

לזכות

חיים לוי יצחק

בן מנחם מענדל

לרגל יום הולדתו ט"ז אדר

שיגדל להיות חי"ל מתוך
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לזכות

הרה"ת ר' יוסף ברוך הכהן
וזוגתו מרת מחלה רבקה

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שיחיו

פרידמאן

מוקדש לחיזוק ההתקשרות לנשיא דורנו כ"ק אדמו"ר זצוקללה"ה נבג"מ זי"ע

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נלב"ע ביום י"ח אדר-שני ה'תשע"ו
וזוגתו מרת רעכיל ע"ה בת ר' עזריאל איכל הי"ד
נלב"ע ביום י"ח אדר-שני ה'תשע"ו
ראפאפארט
טורונטו, קנדה
ת"נצ'ב'ה'
נתרם ע"י בניו בנותיו ומשפחתם שיחיו

לזכות החיילים בצבאות ה'
עמליה חוה, לוי יצחק, רבקה לאה, מנחם מענדל, אהרן אליעזר, וירחמיאל בנימין שיחיו
שיגדלו להיות חי"לים, לנח"ר כ"ק אדמו"ר
נדפס ע"י הוריהם ר' דוד יוסף וזוגתו מרת מלכה שרה
מדינה

IN HONOR OF
RABBI **MENACHEM MENDEL GOPIN**
AND **CHAYA MUSHKA KATZMAN** שיחיו
CELEBRATING THEIR CHASSUNAH
ער"ה אדר ה'תשע"ח
BY **CHABAD OF GREATER HARTFORD**

לזכות
החייל בצבאות ה' השליח ברוך שניאור שיחי'
לרגל הולדתו כ"א חשוון ה'תשע"ח
נדפס ע"י הוריו
הרה"ת ר' דוד וזוגתו מרת חנה ומשפחתם שיחיו
גולדברג

מוקדש לחיזוק ההתקשרות לכ"ק אדמו"ר נשיא דורנו
נדפס ע"י ולזכות הרה"ת ר' לייביש משה וזוגתו מרת רינה
ילדיהם קיילא באשא, בנציון דוד, אליהו איסר, רבקה שיינדל אלטא שיחיו
גולדהירש

A Chassidisher Derher
Vaad Talmidei Hatmimim



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