

\$2.00 US

A חסידישער דער הער CHASSIDISHER DERHER

AV 5774
ISSUE 22 (99)



שבעים שנה להסתלקות
כ"ק הרב הגאון והחסיד
והמקובל וכו'
ר' לוי יצחק ז"ל
שניאורסאהן



STRENGTH
in the face of **Tyranny**
IN THE REBBE'S WORDS



INTERVIEW
WITH RABBI
SHLOMO CUNIN

A CHASSIDISHER DERHER

ISSUE 22 (99) • Av 5774

בס"ד

A Chassidisher Derher magazine is published and copyrighted by **Vaad Talmidei Hatmimim Haolomi**.

All articles in this publication are original content written by the staff of A Chassidisher Derher.

Vaad Talmidei Hatmimim
Rabbi Tzvi Altein, Director

Contributing Editors
Rabbi Srolic Barber
Rabbi Yosef Boruch Friedman
Rabbi Moshe Zaklikovsky

Design
Rabbi Mendy Weg

Special thanks to
Rabbi Yoel Adelson
Rabbi Chaim Shaul Brook
Rabbi Chaim Nochum Cunin
Rabbi Shlomo Cunin
Rabbi Shalom Dov Ber Cunin
Rabbi Dovid Dubov
Rabbi Mendel Gourarie
Rabbi Sholom Ber Hurwitz
Rabbi Shalom Ber Levin
Rabbi Zalman Levin
Rabbi Hirshel Raskin
Rabbi Michael Seligson
Rabbi Elkana Shmotkin
Rabbi Eliezer Zaklikovsky

Printed by
The Print House

Submit your questions and comments:
Call: (970) 680-3370
Email: feedback@Derher.org

To subscribe, order a copy, or access back issues please visit us at www.Derher.org



3 EDITORIAL

4 AGAINST ALL ODDS

Chof Av

5 A MODERN DAY MIKDASH

A Chassidisher Maase

6 ULTIMATE DEVOTION

Ksav Yad Kodesh

7 CHOF AV - ARBA'IM SHANA

Leben Mitten Rebbe

13 DEALING WITH LONELINESS

Igros Kodesh

16 PRECIOUS LITTLE OF A VAST TREASURE

Innovation in Torah

26 STRENGTH IN THE FACE OF TYRANNY

As told by the Rebbe

30 MIKDASH IN MITZRAYIM

L'hovi L'yimos HaMoshiach

32 CONQUERING CALIFORNIA

Interview with Rabbi Shlomo Cunin

45 GONE!

A Story

46 CHILDREN ONLY - NO KUNTZEN!

Behind the Picture

A Chassidisher Derher is honored to feature unique and historic photos from Jewish Educational Media's Living Archive photo collection. The Living Archive is a project to preserve, and provide access to the video, audio, and photographic recordings of the Rebbe. These photos are copyright by JEM and are available at TheLivingArchive.org.


The Living Archive



Editorial

“הפכו ימים אלו לששון ולשמחה, ולמועדים טובים”

This current issue of the Derher Magazine is released in a somber time-period; the three weeks of mourning the *churban Beis Hamikdash*.

Nevertheless, the Rebbe teaches us to focus on the positive aspects. Especially in our time, as we approach the imminent *Geulah shleima*, even the fast of Tisha B'Av itself can be seen in a different light. The Rebbe stressed many times, as early as 5688, in a letter addressed to his future mother-in-law, “ערב ת”ב [=תשעה באב] שבו נולד משיח - צדקנו” - the day that Moshiach was born, and in effect, the day paving the course for the long-awaited *Geulah*.

To us as Chassidim, this month comes with a major highlight – on Chof Av, we will mark 70 years since the *histalkus* of HoRav Levi Yitzchok Schneerson, the Rebbe's father.

Similar to the above sentiment, the Rebbe finds optimistic and even encouraging points in the more difficult times of his life. Despite the terrible suffering he endured in his struggle for keeping Yiddishkeit alive, eventually paying the ultimate cost of *mesirus nefesh al kiddush Hashem* with a tragic, untimely passing, the Rebbe refuses to accept that his story was merely a tragic one.

In one Chof Av farbrengen, the Rebbe explains:

“Speaking of a *tzaddik* whose passing was a result of his *mesirus nefesh* for the Jewish community, and in fact, he gave up his very life *al kiddush Hashem*, begs the question: How can Hashem allow such a thing, bringing about an abrupt stop to all his activities in spreading Yiddishkeit?

“Certainly then, we must ascertain that with his passing, he reached an even higher level than that of his being here on earth and continuing with work... By passing away in exile with *mesirus nefesh* to strengthen Yiddishkeit, he was able to reach new heights not only for himself, that his own *neshoma* was elevated, but all his activities for Yiddishkeit were also raised up to a higher level. In other

words: only because of his *histalkus*, his work to strengthen Yiddishkeit grew immensely here on earth...” (Sichas Chof Av, 5745 – Hisvaaduyos 5745 vol. 5 p. 2716. A similar approach can be found in numerous Chof Av farbrengens throughout the years).



Last year, as we entered the 70th year since the *histalkus*, our magazine highlighted many incredible points in the life of Rav Levi Yitzchok, especially the story of his final years in exile when he suffered at the hand of the oppressors of Torah and Yiddishkeit with an unconquerable strength of spirit.

In this current issue, we again revisit the life of this giant of a leader, emphasizing his scholarly Torah innovations, with an essay outlining “Toras Levi Yitzchok” – from the days he sat in relative tranquility, through the hardships of writing *chiddushei Torah* in the direst of circumstances, to the perilous smuggling of these priceless manuscripts to free soil, and their eventual publishing by the Rebbe many years later.

A full-on overview of the Rebbe's innovations done in commemoration of the 40th *yortzeit* is also included, going back thirty years –to the year 5744– when the Rebbe asked that this day should be utilized to perpetuate the work he started, strengthening Yiddishkeit today and studying from the Torah he left us.

This, in addition to the usual wealth of chassidishe content in each issue, including sichos, letters, and stories, will surely be enjoyed by all.

We hope that with Hashem's help, this year we will celebrate Tisha B'Av, as it says in the *possuk*, “... וצום החמישי. יהי לבית יהודה לששון ולשמחה ולמועדים טובים, והאמת והשלום אהבו...”

The Editors

Erev Rosh Chodesh Menachem-Av, 5774



Against all Odds

In honor of Chof Av, we present the following short excerpt of the Rebbe's sicha from Vov Tishrei, 5750, in which the Rebbe discusses his father's incredible mesiras nefesh and courage in standing up to the Communist government, emphasizing one particular instance when he stood steadfast, ensuring the availability of Kosher L'Pesach Matzos to Jews all across Russia:

IMMENSE COURAGE

The city of Yekatrinoslav- Dnipropetrovsk [where my father served as Rov] was considered to be the *de-facto* capital of southern Russia (the Ukraine), in particular regarding matters pertaining to *Yiddishkeit*.

It is well known regarding the terrible persecution which took place in those days against anything even remotely connected to *Yiddishkeit*; as a result, a delegation was sent by the *rabbonim*, pleading with the government to stop its attacks. However, instead of receiving some form of assistance or help, they were told that the government will not change its stance, and they [the *rabbonim*] must publicize a letter to the world declaring that there is complete "freedom of religion" in Russia, including for Jews!

My father announced that he would not sign such a letter under any circumstances; in fact, he'd publicize that, as a result of the ongoing persecutions, he refused to put his name to such a blatant lie.

In general, although people knew about the hardships and problems that were going on, they were afraid to talk about it publicly; but if they would hear that my father did not sign the letter because of the government-sponsored persecution, other *rabbonim* would also muster the courage and refuse to sign, and there would be an outcry throughout the country!

When the government heard this threat from my father, they caved in and yielded to many of the *Rabbonim's* demands.

"MATZOS"

One of the requests the *rabbonim* made was for a permit to grind *Kosher L'Pesach* flour for Matzos (as kosher as was then possible, under the circumstances). Yekatrinoslav-Dnipropetrovsk was situated near vast grain-producing areas, so it turned out that my father would be the one who would take care of all the arrangements for this flour.

He fearlessly traveled to Moscow and met President Kalinin [head of the Com-

munist government at the time] in person. He managed to convince Kalinin to issue an order to all the government officials of Yekatrinoslav, that under no circumstances were they allowed to make any decisions regarding the making of flour for matzos. If a *mashgiach* appointed by Rabbi Schneerson would say a specific batch of flour was not *Kosher L'Pesach* and should not be used, they must follow the *mashgiach's* directives and not use it. My father managed to accomplish this despite the fact that this would seem to be an attack on Russia: if the flour could not be sold at *Kosher L'Pesach* prices it would have a deprecatory effect on the entire Russian economy, since that region produced flour for the entire country!

Although there was a very real fear that the government would take my father's demands as an assault on them, he was not intimidated. He publicized beforehand that he was planning to travel to Moscow to demand this accommodation from the government; because of



CREDITS: JEM/THE LIVING ARCHIVE / 104485

The Modern Day Mikdash

that publicity beforehand, Kalinin was forced to meet with him and give the permit. And, as mentioned, the permit came together with an order to the local government that no one had the right to appoint any *mashgichim* or command them to do anything; nor did the *mashgichim* have to report back to anyone else aside from Rabbi Schneerson, and if Rabbi Schneerson would decide that a certain batch of flour is not *Kosher L'Pesach*, he must be obeyed (although the flour would have to be returned or sold for a cheaper price).

“HOME BASE”

This was all only possible because in my father's immediate surroundings; in his home, the atmosphere was conducive to this. My mother would constantly ensure that the atmosphere at home was such that my father would be encouraged to withstand any risk and danger, and continue on with his work, despite the very real possibility that the government would accuse not only my father but all those who were close to him, and specifically my mother, with “counter-revolutionary” activities and attempting to destroy the entire country's economy. In fact, there were government officials who had made threats of such nature, and my father was warned by close friends who had connections with the “*Cheka*” (the secret police) of the grave danger he was in (although coming to warn him of the planned punishment was in and of itself a “crime”). ■

(*Hisvaaduyos* 5750 vol. 1 p. 62)

Reb Avraham Ber Bobroisker, born in 5586 was a chassid of the Tzemach Tzedek, the Rebbe Maharash, and the Rebbe Rashab. An exceptional Oved and Maskil, as a child his father hired the best Melamdim of Homel for him. Although generally reticent by nature, when speaking about chassidus or stories he would open up, and would be more talkative.

When I reached the age of six, my father took me to Lubavitch for Shavuot, before enrolling me in the cheder. I was informed of this after Pesach, and preparations for the trip began by Lag B'omer.

I remember well how I went in to the Rebbe with my father for yechidus. My father entered the Rebbe's inner room, and I followed him, holding tightly to the corner of his coat. When we approached the place where the Rebbe sat, he raised his eyes and gazed into Tattes's face, and into mine. My father started trembling, and I also became flustered and commenced weeping silently.

The Rebbe stretched out his holy hand to take the pidyon from my father, who stood in his place, paralyzed with fear and at a loss for what to do next. He remained standing in silence, head bowed, eyes flowing with tears. At first he managed to control himself, crying silently; within a few moments he broke into loud weeping. When I saw my father crying like that, my heart fell to pieces and I too began to cry in earnest as I looked into the Rebbe's holy face.

The Rebbe read the pidyon that my father had handed him, and studied it for some time. As he read it, he looked up into father's face, and into mine, from time to time. Then he spoke to my father. As soon as the Rebbe started speaking, Tattat stopped crying. When the Rebbe finished speaking, my father said, “Here is my son,” as he pointed to me and moved me closer to the Rebbe. “I am about to enroll him in the cheder, and I request that the Rebbe bentch him.”

The Rebbe studied me for a moment, then closed his holy eyes. After a few moments he opened them again, looked directly at me, and said, “Study diligently, and do not waste any time. May Hashem help you to become a lamdan and a chassid.” “Amen!” we both exclaimed.

As soon as we emerged from the Rebbe's holy presence we went to the small Shul. My father lifted me onto his shoulders and joined into the

dancing with the chassidim who were already there, rejoicing in song and dance. After having the zechus to go into the Rebbe for yechidus, chassidim would inevitably launch into joyous dancing.

Being accustomed to lively farbrengens in our home, I was not surprised by the vigorous dancing of the chassidim in the little shul. But why did they dance specifically after they emerged from the Rebbe's holy presence? Furthermore, why was such an audience in the Rebbe's private chamber called yechidus?

My mind became totally preoccupied with these two questions. When I noticed that my father was in such a good mood, I asked him my questions.

He replied with a question of his own. "Do you know about the Mishkan that Hashem told Moshe to build in the desert? Do you know about the special chamber that was there, in which the Aron HaKodesh and Luchos stood? Do you know that once a year, on Yom Kippur, Aharon the Kohen Gadol would enter that room to light the Ketores and to daven for all of Klal Yisrael?"

Being eager to show off my knowledge to my father, I quickly recited everything I knew about the Beis Hamikdash that Shlomo Hamelech built, about the Kodosh Hakodoshim, with the Aron and the Luchos, the Avoda performed by the Kohen Gadol on Yom Kippur, and especially his entry into this Kodosh Hakodoshim. When the Kohen Gadol pronounced the Shem Hameforash, all the people in the Azara would kneel and bow, touching their faces to the ground.

"Who went into the Kodosh Hakodoshim together with the Kohen Gadol on Yom Kippur?" my father tested me further.

"Only the Kohen Gadol, no one else!" I replied.

"And what did the Kohen Gadol do after he completed the Avoda of Yom Kippur?"

**My father lifted me
onto his shoulders
and joined into the
dancing with the
chassidim who were
already there,
rejoicing in song
and dance**

"Our teacher, Reb Elimelech, told us that the Kohen Gadol was very wealthy, for he wore golden garments, made from his own personal gold. When he finished the Avoda in the Beis HaMikdash, he would go home accompanied by all the Yidden, with song and melody. When they arrived at his home, there were tables filled with all sorts of food and drink. Everyone joined in the most joyful celebration, for their sins were forgiven."

"And now," asked Father, "do we have a Beis HaMikdash and a Kodosh Hakodoshim?"

"No," I replied with a sigh, "Now we have neither a Beis HaMikdash nor a Kodosh Hakodoshim."

I looked up at my father, waiting to hear what he would say next about all of this. But before I could regain my voice, a new group of people arrived to the shul singing, and another dance broke out. When father realized that most of the men in this group were our townspeople

from Homel, he suddenly sprang up from his bench with outspread hands and joined their dancing.

I was startled by this, and didn't know what to do. My first impulse was to follow my father, but I was afraid I might be trampled under their feet. I retreated, and climbed up to stand on one of the benches. I noticed the wagon driver Reb Avraham Meir among the dancers, but when I called his name he didn't answer.

I stood on the bench and watched, as father danced in the middle of the circle. All around him were several of the Homeler Chassidim, among them Reb Avraham Meir the wagon driver and Reb Shlomo Peshe's. Each one danced with closed eyes, his right arm on his neighbor's shoulder, his left arm waving to the beat of the nigun issuing from his mouth. An indescribable aura of holiness surrounded the dancers' faces. The love and brotherhood, the bliss and the ecstasy, are unimaginable. Each one held his neighbor tightly, in friendship and harmony. I nearly burst apart with desire to join the dance.

Reb Avraham Meir passed me by a second time, and then a third. Each time, I called to him, but he didn't respond. But suddenly, someone grabbed me from behind. I felt myself flying through the air, and there I was riding on the shoulders of one of the dancers. Bending my head forward, I discovered that Reb Shlomo Peshe's was carrying me on his shoulders. My delight knew no bounds!

In a thunderous voice, the chassid Reb Zalman Yaakov Esther-Disha's (a leading citizen of Homel, he was the gabbai of the shul and was intimately involved in all affairs of the community and its insti-



tutions) suddenly cried out, “Here ends the first hakkafah! Now it’s time to daven Minchah.” Within seconds of this announcement the dancing ceased and everyone got ready for Minchah.

Father’s words about the Beis HaMikdash, the Kodesh Hakodoshim, the Aron, and especially his last question, “And now, do we have a Beis HaMikdash and a Kodesh Hakodoshim?” had left me somewhat sad and dejected. In my mind, a new question began to take shape: why was everyone so joyful, if the Beis HaMikdash remains destroyed and goats run around in the place where the Kodesh Hakodoshim once stood?

The men in the shul davened Minchah in melodious tones, each one showing off his vocal talents; they davened loudly, with the Simchas Torah nusach. Meanwhile, my thoughts were busy with my new question why are they so happy while the Beis HaMikdash remains destroyed? At the same time, I recalled all the stories [about the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash] our teacher Reb Elimelech had told us on the previous Tishah B’Av. I therefore decided to ask my father to explain it to me after he finished Minchah.

When the davening ended, Reb Zalman Yaakov Esther-Disha’s announced that Lchaim and cake were being served. I then turned to my father and said, “You asked me whether we still have a Beis HaMikdash and a Kodesh Hakodoshim. Well, nowadays we have neither, so why is everyone dancing so joyfully? After all, the Beis HaMikdash is destroyed, and goats run free in the holiest of places!”

When my father heard this question he replied, “You are right, my son, you are

very right. The Beis HaMikdash that stood in Yerushalayim is now destroyed. When the Yidden will do teshuvah, then Hashem will send us Moshiach, who will gather us from the four corners of the earth and take us together with our houses and our furniture to Eretz Yisrael, where he will rebuild Yerushalayim and the Beis HaMikdash. Until that time, we have neither the Beis HaMikdash nor the Kodesh Hakodoshim. In the meanwhile, Lubavitch is our Yerushalayim, the shul where the Rebbe davens is our Beis HaMikdash, and the room where the Rebbe sits is our Kodesh Hakodoshim. The Rebbe himself is our Aron HaKodesh, containing the Luchos.”

**“Well, nowadays we
have neither, so
why is everyone
dancing so
joyfully?
After all, the Beis
HaMikdash is
destroyed...”**

Father’s solemn expression as he said these words made an awesome impression on me. Then, the realization struck me: my father and I had just been inside the Kodesh Hakodoshim, and we now found ourselves in the Beis HaMikdash. What a wondrous idea! Very awesome indeed!

As these thoughts about the Beis HaMikdash and the Kodesh Hakodoshim went through my mind, I heard my father speaking to me again. “Are you

aware, my son, that after Moshe deposited the Aron and the Luchos in the Kodesh Hakodoshim, he was able to hear Hashem speaking to him from between the K’ruvim on top of the Aron?”

“Yes,” I replied, “I heard Mother reading about this to my aunt.”

“The words that the Rebbe speaks to each chassid entering his room for yechidus, are the word of the Aibershter,” father continued. “Just as when the Kohen Gadol would go into the Kodesh Hakodoshim, he would be alone, so too, whoever enters the Rebbe’s room (which is now our Kodesh Hakodoshim) does so all alone. That’s why the audience is called yechidus. And just as the Kohen Gadol and all of Klal Yisrael rejoiced when he emerged from the Kodesh Hakodoshim, so too, we chassidim all rejoice and celebrate the great kindness that the Aibershter has shown us by giving us the privilege of entering our Kodesh Hakodoshim and receiving our Rebbe’s holy brachos. Remember well the words of the blessing the Rebbe gave you,” my father cautioned me. “Im yirtze Hashem, when we get home, you can tell Mother all the details.”

Before I could reassure my father that I remembered the Rebbe’s blessing, and was able to repeat it word-for-word, Reb Zalman Yaakov Esther-Disha’s approached us. He made my father go to the table and partake of the liquor and cake. He gave me a sweet cookie with some jam on it; I recited the blessing of Mezonos out loud, upon which my father and the others who were near enough to hear my blessing answered “Amen.” ■

Hatomim vol. 1 p. 214



Ultimate Devotion

Di Yiddishe Heim was a quarterly magazine, published by the International N'shei Chabad. Until 5751 the Rebbe saw every English article before it appeared; occasionally he made changes and/or additions. Here we have an article that was given in to the Rebbe about his father, Harav Levi Yitzchok, prepared in honor of his yartzeit on Chof Av. The Rebbe made a number of corrections and clarifications, enumerated below. We extend our appreciation to Rabbi Eliezer Zaklikovsky for making this available.

The author wrote "he was also active in many areas affecting the Jewish community." The Rebbe exchanged "also" for "very", to read "he was **very** active in many areas affecting the Jewish community."

The original article stated "attending many Rabbinical conferences called by the Lubavitcher Rebbe of that day, the Rebbe Rashab, נ"ע, with whom Reb Levi Yitzchok had very close ties". After the words "the Rebbe Rashab, נ"ע," the Rebbe added "שהררלי"צה" of whom Reb Levi Yitzchok was a most devoted chossid, and that..". In between "close" and "ties", the Rebbe added "personal", to read "close personal ties".

HORAV LEVI YITZCHOK SCHNEERSOHN

The twentieth day in the month of Av marks the yahrzeit of Rabbi Levi Yitzchok Schneersohn (may his merits protect us), the illustrious father of the contemporary Lubavitcher Rebbe, Shlite. Reb Levi Yitzchok was born in 5638 (1878) in Russia. His father, Reb Boruch Shalom o.b.m., was a direct descendant of the Tzemach Tzedek, the third Chabad Rebbe, ר"י, Reb Levi Yitzchok's unusual intellectual genius and an exceptional personality was ~~recognized~~ ^{we apparent} when he was still quite young. He was accepted as a student by some of the greatest Torah and Chassidic scholars of his day, and received smichah from such Torah authorities as Reb Chaim Brisker and Reb Elya Chaim Meislish ר"י, among others. In 5669 (1909) Reb Levi Yitzchok was appointed Rabbi of the city Yekaterinaslav (Dniepepetrosk) in the Ukraine, a position he graced till he was exiled by the government (for his religious activism) to the remote city of Alma Ata in Kazakhstan. There he suffered together with his remarkable, devoted wife, the Rebitzen Chana o.b.m., till his health failed, and on the 20th of Av, 5704 (1944) he went to his eternal reward.

Although Reb Levi Yitzchok is best remembered for his Torah scholarship -- both in Talmud, ^{very} Chassidus and Kabbalah, to which his writings attest, he was ~~also~~ ^{very} active in many areas affecting the Jewish community, attending many Rabbinical conferences called by the Lubavitcher Rebbe of that day, the Rebbe Rashab, ר"י, ^{אשר היה חסידו הכי מסור ואשר} with whom Reb Levi Itzhok has very close ties, and in whose ^{personal}



THE REBBE SPEAKS AT A GATHERING FOR KOLLEL TIFERES Z'KEINIM LEVI YITZCHOK.
PHOTO: JEM/THE LIVING ARCHIVE / 14752

לעבן מיט'ן רבי'ן

ARBA'IM SHANA

With this year marking 70 years since the histalkus of the Rebbe's father, we present the following essay, highlighting some of the endeavors the Rebbe undertook 30 years ago, during the summer of 5744, marking 40 years since the histalkus.

MY OBLIGATION AND PRIVILEGE

In a *michtav kloli-proti* dated *Motzoei Tisha B'Av*, the Rebbe called on many Chabad activists around the world to utilize the day of Chof-Av to arrange farbrengens and increase in *tzedoka* in his father's memory. The postscript reads as follows:

The Shabbos following Tu B'Av is Chof-Av, the *yortzeit* and *hilula* of my father, Rav Levi Yitzchak ben Boruch Schneur z"l – forty years now.

I feel a responsibility as well as a great privilege to suggest and request that everyone should learn together from his teachings, and to contribute [*tzedoka*] on this day in his memory; For he gave up his life to spread Yiddishkeit to Jews behind the Iron Curtain, resulting in his imprisonment and sentence to exile, where he perished and is now interred.

May his merit protect us, amongst all of the Jewish people, *Shlita*.¹

TOLDOS LEVI YITZCHOK

During that month, Rabbi N. Gottlieb asked the Rebbe whether a third, revised

edition of *Toldos Levi Yitzchok* (a biography of the Rebbe's father) should be printed. The Rebbe's response was:

"אין לעבן כלל. וי"ל [ויוציא לאור] בהקדם כפשוט. ות"ח מקול"ע [תשואת חן מקרב ולב עמוק] מראש. אזעה"צ [אזכיר על הציון]."

"Do not postpone this at all. It should be published immediately, obviously. Many thanks in advance from the depth of my heart. I will mention this at the Ohel."

The Rebbe also enclosed \$100 as his personal contribution towards the costs.

IN HIS LIFETIME AND THEREAFTER

On Shabbos Parshas Vo'eschanan, 13 Av, the annual Yarchei Kallah event took place in Gan Yisroel, Parksville, in commemoration of Chof-Av.²

Many members of Anash traveled to spend Shabbos there and participate in the event (rumor has it that the Rebbe notified beforehand that on this Shabbos he would not hold a farbrengen).

On Friday morning, 12 Av, the Rebbe met Rabbi Avrohom Hershberg, Chief Rabbi of Mexico, at the entrance of 770, who told the Rebbe that he has come to

CHOF AV
40 YEARS
SUMMER, 5744



PHOTO: JEM/THE LIVING ARCHIVE / 23411

"It conforms to my obligation to honor my father (during his lifetime and) in the afterlife... by Torah study..."

participate in the Yarchei Kallah event. The Rebbe thanked him for his effort and commented: "In general, I have much affection for that initiative. It conforms to my obligation to honor my father (during his lifetime and) in the afterlife, and the best way to show honor is by Torah study."

The Rebbe then quoted the Zohar, at the end of Parshas Bechukosai, where it talks about Rashbi's son, Rabbi Elazar, who would honor his father through Torah study both in this world and in the world-to-come. (The Rebbe had expounded upon this section of the Zohar and his father's *ha'ora* on it a few weeks earlier, at the Shabbos Parshas Bechukosai farbrengen).

The Rebbe continued: "Just contemplate on these words of the Zohar and you will surely have plenty to speak about!"

On Motzoei Shabbos, Rabbis Hodakov and Groner went in to the Rebbe's room, and the Rebbe handed them a bottle of *mashke* from Russia and a bottle of wine to be distributed at the Yarchei Kallah. He also asked that they should notify the public of free transportation being provided for those who wished to join the event happening in camp later that night.

"ARBA'IM SHANA"

The Rebbe also mentioned to Rabbi Hodakov that during the mincha *kriah* of Parshas Eikev earlier that day, he thought about the fact that the words "*Arba'im shana*" appear twice in this Parsha; a timely message in connection with the fortieth *yortzeit* of his father.

On Sunday night, Tes Vav Av, the Rebbe held a farbrengen. Rabbi Hershberg approached the Rebbe in between the sichos and spoke about the great suc-

cess of the Yarchei Kallah:

Rabbi Hershberg: Boruch Hashem, I really enjoyed the Yarchei Kallah. It was very pleasant. It's been forty years since the passing of your father z"l. [Chazal say] "After forty years one fully understands his teacher" – this is the fortieth year. I said there that a *sefer* of *chidushei Torah* should be published in his honor – in connection with forty years.

Rebbe: Indeed [it is] a very appropriate idea. I also said that yesterday during mincha, we read the words "*Zeh arba'im shana*" twice!

Rabbi Hershberg: In fact, a very great event occurred yesterday. We gathered and studied Torah, including Rambam. Three times, I spoke about the importance of learning Rambam. What a wonderful campaign the Rebbe has initiated!

Rebbe: *Yehi ratzon* it should be accepted by all!

[Rabbi Hershberg then went on to discuss with the Rebbe about printing the Tanya all over the world...]

Rebbe: I was told last night and this morning about the events from this

Shabbos until this morning. I heard the farbrengen continued the entire night as well.

Rabbi Hershberg: Until five o'clock this morning, Boruch Hashem!

Rebbe: May it be a good beginning!³

Towards the end of the farbrengen, the Rebbe instructed that a new initiative should commence in honor of Chof-Av: the compilation of a *sefer* with sources for the entire Rambam.⁴

SHABBOS, CHOF-AV

That Shabbos, scores of guests arrived in Crown Heights; Chassidim flew in from all over the world to be with the Rebbe for this special day during *tefillos* and the farbrengen. Especially noticeable was the entire Camp Gan Yisroel from Parkville, who also came to spend Chof Av with the Rebbe.

Just before candle-lighting time, when the Rebbe went from the library (where he would be staying for Shabbos) to 770, all the children formed two rows on the sidewalk outside and sang "*Sheyibone*," with the Rebbe joyously encouraging them.

The Rebbe led all of the day's *tefillos*, as he would on every *yortzeit*, while Chassi-

dim stood all around in specially arranged bleachers.

FARBRENGEN

Naturally, much of the Shabbos afternoon farbrengen was dedicated to the *yortzeit* of the day.

"The mere fact that it's Shabbos is enough reason to farbreng," the Rebbe began. "Nevertheless, for various reasons, we do not hold a farbrengen every Shabbos, only when there is a special occurrence; this week, the reason is Chof Av, my father's *yortzeit*."

The Rebbe explained that although it would seem that the *yortzeit* is a personal matter, in this instance it is not so; his father's premature passing came as a result of spreading Yiddishkeit for all the Jewish people, hence it is very much pertinent to the public.

Extolling his father's accomplishments, the Rebbe explained: Although his years were diminished due to the suffering he endured, nevertheless, there was no deduction in his accomplishments. In other words, he succeeded in doing more in the shorter time he had, than what would have normally been accomplished in many more years.

In the second *sicha*, the Rebbe addressed the presence of the children, the campers of Gan Yisroel, illustrating in great detail how the children are the ones who sincerely demand the *geulah*, instructing that they say *Le'chaim* and sing one of the camp songs.

After the children finished their lively song, the Rebbe gave an in-depth explanation of the significance of forty years and the meaning of Chazal's statement "Until forty years, one does not fully understand his teacher."

Interestingly, the *sichos* on all the subjects regularly discussed at a Shabbos farbrengen (Rashi, Zohar, Rambam and Pirkei Avos) were also connected with "Arba'im shana."

The Rebbe also mentioned the Kinus Hashluchim which was taking place in Eretz Yisroel that Shabbos in connection with Chof Av.

Towards the end of the farbrengen, the Rebbe asked all those who were privileged to assist his father to come forward and receive *mashke* from a bottle used at a farbrengen behind the Iron Curtain.

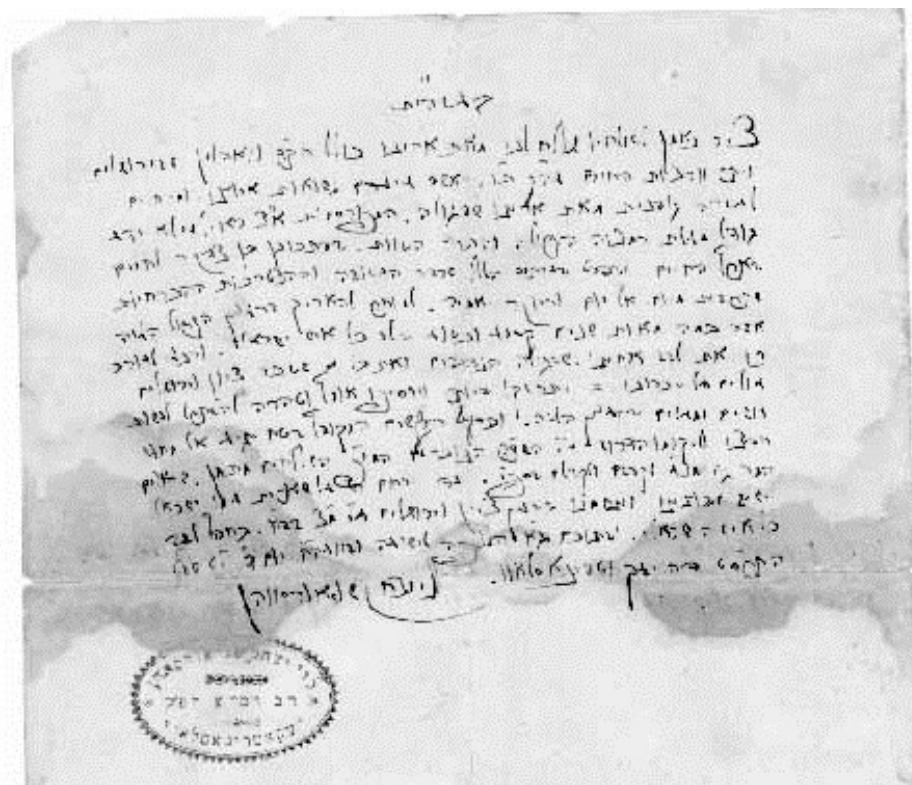
The Rebbe explained: "I will now give *mashke* to all those who were privileged to serve my father; in truth the obligation to assist him was mine, but the actual service was carried out by others. Let them now approach to receive *mashke*, without acting humble and hiding themselves..." Reb M. Dubravsky, Reb G.M. Garelik, Reb Y. Niumoiten, and Reb Y.Y. Raskin and his sons then approached the Rebbe to receive the *mashke*.

At the end of the farbrengen, the Rebbe began his father's *Hakofos nigun* and encouraged the singing intensely.

That night, Chassidim farbrenged through the night in 770, led by Shluchim Reb Leibel Raskin and Reb Gershon Mendel Garelik.

SURPRISE FARBRENGEN

On Sunday evening, 21 Av, after returning from the Ohel quite late, the Rebbe notified Rabbi Groner that an additional, surprise farbrengen would take place that evening, in continuation with Chof-Av.



A HANDWRITTEN LETTER BY HORAV LEVI YITZCHOK.

The Rebbe began with the usual Chof-Av appeal (which was not yet done this year, as the *yortzeit* was on Shabbos), adding that this year an additional amount must be added to the usual contribution, in multiples of forty (at least forty cents).

The Rebbe also spoke again about establishing Kollelim for the elderly,⁵ reinstating his old pledge of ten dollars for all those who would establish one, and \$100 if they would name the Kollel “Levi Yitzchok” after his father. In a special gesture for that year, the Rebbe added an additional \$40 for those who would usually receive ten, giving them a total of a \$50 contribution.

In honor of the fortieth *yortzeit*, the Rebbe also wished to announce a special 40% discount on all Kehos publications. “However, I don’t want to fight with the administration of Kehos” the Rebbe remarked. “They always complain that we cause them financial loss and that they can’t deal with any more discounts... Therefore, for the time being we’ll only announce a twenty percent discount, equivalent to the number ‘Chof’; hopefully we’ll find a donor to sponsor the other twenty percent as well.”

During the *nigun* following this *sicha*, Reb Zalman Gourarie approached the Rebbe and handed him a note, which the Rebbe placed into his *siddur*.

“...In truth the obligation was mine, but the actual service was carried out by others. Let them now approach to receive mashke, without acting humble and hiding themselves...”

In the last *sicha*, the Rebbe again mentioned the Kinus Hashluchim that was taking place in Eretz Yisroel, and while on the subject of Shlichus, the Rebbe added, in very strong terms, that each and every one of us must see ourselves as Shluchim of the [Frierdiker] Rebbe to spread Yiddishkeit.

“Let the so-called ‘Shpitz-Chabad’ not attempt to interpret my words to their liking,” the Rebbe remarked. “I mean precisely what I say and I do not need their advice. Let me be very clear: **each and every one is a Shliach of nessi doreinu!** The only difference is that there are those who realized this right away and therefore act accordingly, while for others it’ll take a bit longer until they too understand this fact...”

DVAR MALCHUS

On Tuesday, 23 Av, a *kinus* was held in 770 for the elderly members of “Kollel Tiferes Z’keinim Levi Yitzchok” and “Chochmas Noshim.”

When the Rebbe received a copy of the schedule, he handed it back to the organizers with a correction. Where they had written “Opening words,” the Rebbe added: “Dvar Malchus from [the Rebbe drew an arrow to stationary at the top of the page, pointing to his father’s name] which can be understood by the assembled crowd...” In other words, the Rebbe wanted the gathering to begin with a *vort* of his father.

The Rebbe joined the *kinus* for Mincha and addressed the crowd afterwards, concluding by distributing dollars for *tzedoka*. ■

1. Lekutei Sichos vol. 39 p. 231
2. Being that that year Chof Av was a Shabbos, the Yarchei Kallah was held a week earlier, on the preceding Shabbos.
3. Video of this conversation is featured on Living Torah disc 104 program 113.
4. At the farbrengen on 21 Av, the Rebbe addressed this subject again, at greater length. See comprehensive overview on this entire project in Derher Newsletter – Shmini 5771. The final sefer is called “Marei Mekomos Le’Sefer Mishne Torah” and was printed in several editions over the ensuing months.
5. The Rebbe initially spoke about this project four years earlier, in 5740. In time for Chof Av that year, the *sicha* of 5740 was edited and published by the Rebbe (printed in Likutei Sichos vol. 29 p. 263).



PHOTO: JEWETTIE LIVING ARCHIVE / 129087

DEALING WITH LONELINESS

The following is a collection of letters by the Rebbe addressing the issue of how to cope with (and rid oneself of) feelings of loneliness. It is not intended to give a full overview on the Rebbe's approach to this subject; for more comprehensive study it is imperative to learn the many igros and sichos of the Rebbe on this matter.

① In the following letter, the Rebbe addresses an introvert, explaining how every person has a natural need for social contact, and that the only way for one who struggles socially to attain the gains of contact is through creating a situation in which it is absolutely unavoidable, rather than contemplating “from the outside” how to succeed socially.

I would like to confirm receipt of your letter - undated - in which you write about your emotional state etc.

I believe that I have previously written a few times, that in my opinion -and this is what I have clearly seen in actuality- every person, without exception, has a natural need for social contact, though obviously the level of dependency varies from person to person. When one tries to ignore this natural need it understandably brings to “complications” and the like. For those who for some reason have difficulty connecting with others, their only solution is as in the case of learning how to swim, which is impossible before entering the water, even when standing close to the edge of the river. Rather, one must first jump into the water. Automatically, the process of gaining swimming skills begins and eventually one masters them. Contemplating whilst standing at the edge of the river how, what, and in which manner he will learn to swim, is useless; as it is impossible to learn how to swim unless one is in water.

Pardon me for saying so, but this is the case in your regard. In your letter you argue whether or not to accept a job which will involve being in the presence and company of others, all whilst sitting in your own room or “daled amos”.

Obviously I do not intend to rebuke, rather to try once more; possibly, this time my words will be effective and you will “jump in” to a situation in which you will be forced (at least for the first few days) to be amongst people outside of your own home, and I strongly hope that within a short amount of time it will no longer be a strain and you will see the great importance and gain, also for others in society, as it is not for naught that man was created with a natural need for social contact.

How amazing are the words of our sages, which are a practical guide for day to day life, that any matter of holiness should be conducted in the presence of ten people, not only publicly but the complete form of public. There is also a known Chassidic saying repeated in the name of great Chassidic masters, that it is worse in Gan Eden all alone then to be in... with the company of other Jews.

...May it be the will of Hashem that there be drastic development for the good and that you will have good news in this area.

With blessings for good news...¹

② The Rebbe encourages a loner to abandon their loneliness using his own strengths, in the following letter, rather than seeking help from others. The Rebbe also suggests a method: help others in need.

In one of our prayers we ask “Do not make us dependent on the generosity of flesh and blood”.

Hashem has certainly given you (as well as your friends in the same situation) the strength and vigor to overcome your difficulties, including – withdrawal from loneliness (as you expresses in your letter), not in a manner of “the generosity of flesh and blood”, rather, using your own strengths. One method is – through encouraging and helping (either spiritually or physically) those who are in need (of which there are many such people in each city and sect, though some are embarrassed to talk about it – and they specifically are in a more pitiful situation).²

③ In a letter to a lonely Bochor far from home, the Rebbe advises to substitute – to a degree – friends for family. The Rebbe also suggests that he involve himself in helping others, thereby increasing his awareness of the connection

between Jews. Additionally, being involved in Chassidus itself creates a feeling of closeness.

In response to your letter dated Friday, in which you write that since your youth you have been alone and that you experience great difficulty due to your loneliness.

It is understandable that for a young man who finds himself in Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim in a class of numerous boys his age, it is largely up to him to befriend them. Although, understandably, this cannot be a full-fledged substitute for his parents' home, it is of much and substantial help to get through this period until one settles down with Hashem's help into family life. Another helpful technique in situations such as these is taking action for the benefit of others, for by doing so, one feels in the depths of his heart the connection of Jews with one-another. Even if in the beginning this emotion is not fully felt, eventually it will carry out its function. If the above is said regarding all Jews, all the more so concerning one who finds himself in a Chassidisher environment, participating in activity for the benefit of Chassidus. May Hashem make you successful in increasing persistence and diligence in our Torah, which all its ways are "pleasant ways", infused with Chassidic light and vitality. Then, you will actually feel the authenticity of the anecdote we heard my father-in-law, the Rebbe, "Chassidus brings about that one does not feel alone" and additionally, another, higher level, that one also feels closeness and friendship.

With blessings for good news in all of the above...³

④ **To a Shliach in a remote location, the Rebbe explains how there is no basis for feelings of loneliness, as one is always in the presence of the Rebbeim.**

Regarding that which you write that you feel isolated and lonely, and that it greatly weakens all areas of your spiritual service:

The latter part of your statement [i.e. your weakened spiritual service] proves that the former [feelings of loneliness] is

the trap of the *Yetzer Hora* who tries to weaken each person from fulfilling his mission, using words that match the personality of the individual.

The saying of my father-in-law, the Rebbe *haka"m*, is well-known that "Chassidus brought about that one is not alone. Wherever one finds himself, the Rebbeim are there". Specifically regarding my father-in-law, the Rebbe *haka"m*, who himself wrote in reference to the passing of his father, the Rebbe [Rashab] *n"e* that "the shepherds of Israel will not forsake their flock". As is expounded upon in *Igeres Hakodesh Siman Chof-Zayin* and its explanation, the limitations of physicality have now been removed. They find themselves with each and every one of those who belong and are connected to them wherever they are, specifically in places to which they were sent by the Rebbeim to fulfill a mission, and more specifically in a case where the mission is to spread the wellsprings of the Ba'al Shem Tov to the outside world, which is a preparation and introduction to the coming of Moshiach and *techiyas hameisim*, "and those who are situated in the dust will awaken and rejoice", and he amongst them.

See also the *Sicha* of the 13 Tammuz, 5709, printed in *Kuntres Yud-Beis Tammuz* 5710. From there you will be able to draw much vitality, inspiration, and strength to fulfill your task in the place where you currently find yourself. From there, you will recognize that even common sense agrees that there is no reason to think that you are alone, Heaven forbid, and that it is obvious that there is no basis for weakness in your spiritual service.

If only *Ana"sh*, and Temimim specifically, would study the words of my father in law, the Rebbe, with precision, even his *sichos*, specifically those of the year 5710 and the preceding year.⁴

1. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 18 p. 534

2. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 27 p. 99

3. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 17 p. 9

4. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 4 p. 23



Throughout the ages the Jewish Nation has always possessed great personalities who learnt and taught the masses both the revealed and hidden aspects of the Torah. Usually these teachings were transcribed, printed and passed down through the generations, further enriching the voluminous and ever-growing library of Jewish literature.

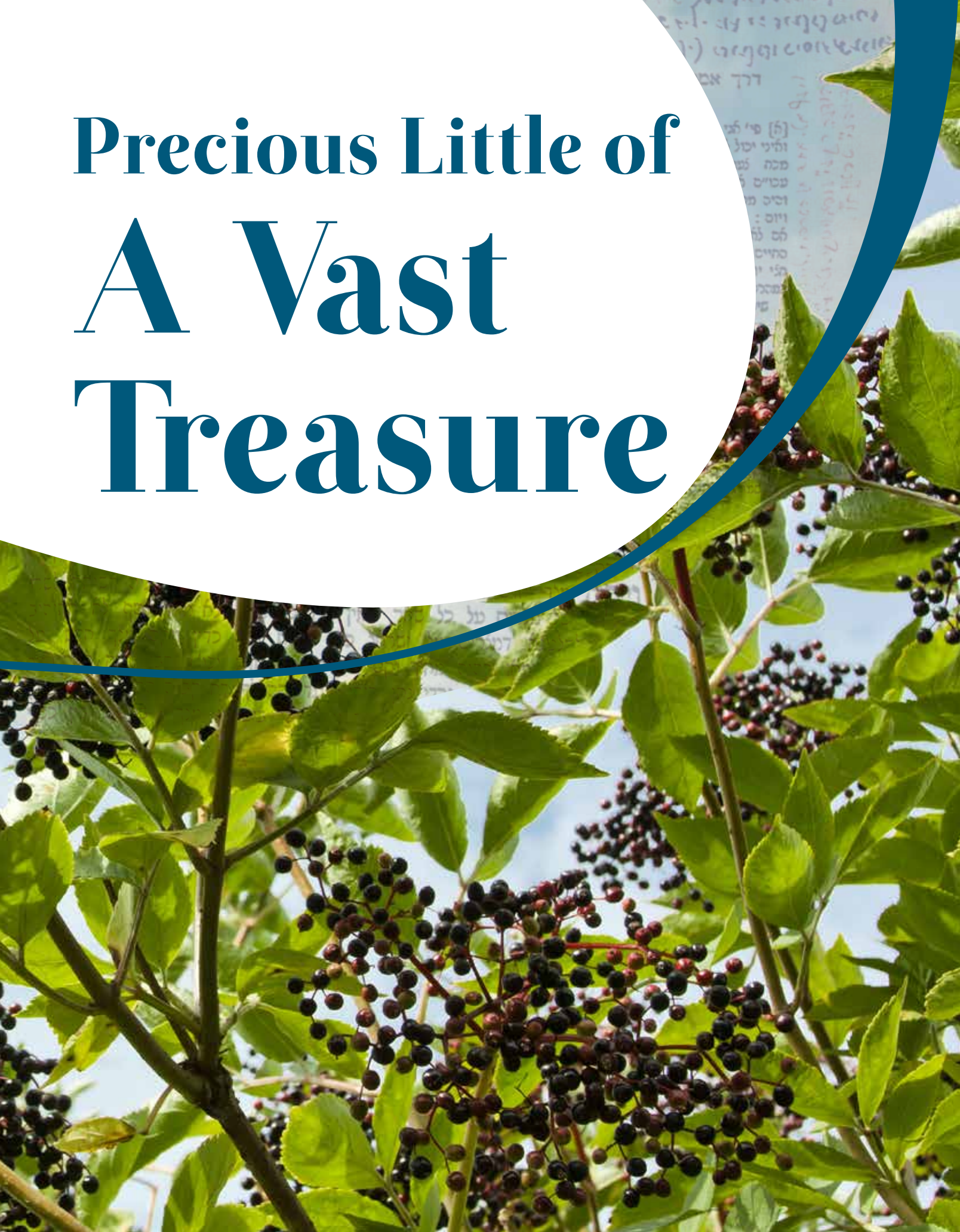
Few, though, can be attributed with a work that has left an indelible mark on all future generations. Fewer, still, are those who can be considered innovators of an entirely novel and unprecedented approach to understanding Torah, be it nigleh or nistar.

The Rebbe's father, Horav Hagaon Reb Levi Yitzchak opened a new gateway to understanding the depths of pnimiyus hatorah, combining the aspects of "Remez" and "Sod" in a way not known until his time.

The following article does not serve as an attempt at analyzing Rav Levi Yitchak's contribution to the study of Sod. Rather, it is the story of how his Torah which we have today was written and of these writings' miraculous journey from Khazakhstan to New York.

*Special Thanks to **Rabbi Chaim Shaul Brook** for his assistance in obtaining the information, some of which has never-before been published; and to **Rabbi Dovid Dubov** and **Rabbi Michael Seligson** for their assistance as well.*

Precious Little of A Vast Treasure



ISH HATORAH

As the Rov of Yekatrinsk, Rav Levi Yitzchak regularly delivered *shiurim* and talks on various occasions. On Shabbos afternoons following *mincha*, large crowds would gather to hear his lengthy discourses usually based on *Midrashim* from the weekly *parsha*. He would elaborate using terms and concepts from Kabala and often expounded on various pieces from Zohar, leaving the listeners amazed at the lofty ideas being presented to them.

It is told that on one occasion, when the large crowd became a bit oppressive, Rav Levi Yitzchak expressed his wonder: "Why do you all push if there is only so much of what is being said that one can possibly hope to understand?!"

One of those present replied by quoting from the Haggada: "If He had only brought us before Har Sinai, but had not given us the Torah, *Dayeinu* – it would be sufficient!"

Reb Chaim Leib Itkin, a nephew of Rav Levi Yitzchak, visited Yekatrinsk quite often and gives us the following description:

"My uncle, Rav Levi Yitzchak, had a large house which was always open to the public. A large hall spanned the entire length of the house, and many farbrengens and other gatherings were held there. A large library was also on premises where he would spend many hours of his day studying and writing.

"There was one shul in which he customarily davened as Rov of the city but on the second day of Yom Tov, out of deference to the rest of the community, he would go daven in the other shul.

"One Shabbos I came to shul to daven and upon entering, before I had a chance to sit down, the entire shul suddenly sprang to their feet. Unsure of what was going on, I suddenly noticed Rav Levi Yitzchak standing at my side and handing me a siddur. I was astounded at both his humility and the congregation's

The Rov's Library

Mrs. Dina Shirinov grew up in Yekatrinsk during the 5690's and she recounts some of her memories from those times. From her account we have some idea of what transpired with Rav Levi Yitzchak's vast library during the time of his arrest:

"My father, Reb Menachem Ganzburg, davened in Rav Levi Yitzchak's shul and was devoted to him heart and soul. As a child, I would often visit the Rov's house where the Rebbe's mother, Rebbetzin Chana, would receive me warmly. I remember her as a very aristocratic woman who was constantly visited by neighbors who loved to spend time with her, though she almost never visited others in their homes; she was on another level.

"Sometimes Rebbetzin Chana would offer us stamps for our stamp collection. She received letters from her sons and she allowed us to tear the stamps off the envelopes. She would show us these letters, often saying with more than a touch of pride 'This is from my son; he excels in his studies...'

"One day in 5699 a messenger from the Rov showed up at our door with a summons for my father. I ran to the electrical factory where my father was working and let him know the Rov wanted to see him right away.

"The Rov told my father that the police had already been by him and he knew that he would be arrested any day. He told my father to watch over his library, entrusting him as well with specific items which the Rov deemed precious, among them a pair of candlesticks.

"Soon after, the Rov was arrested. During the nights that followed, boxes upon boxes of *seforim* were brought over from the Rov's library and stored in a special room in our house. I distinctly remember that some of the *seforim* were beautifully bound in leather and had a very royal look. The precious items with which my father was entrusted were buried under a tall tree behind our house.

"Following the war we returned to Yekatrinsk but we found no remnants of the library. In addition we weren't able to uncover the items my father had buried before the war."



tremendous respect and honor with which they accorded him.

“On special days such as Yud-Tes Kislev, Purim, Simchas Torah, and the like, hundreds of people would throng his house and a joyous farbrengen would take place. Words of Torah flowed continuously and at hour intervals, l’chayim would be distributed and niggunim would be sung. These farbrengens would often last for up to five hours.”

Rav Levi Yitzchak would often sit and write for hours at a time, filling pages upon pages with profound Chiddushei Torah. He would also write short notes in the margins of his *seforim*. These notes were lost during the war together with the rest of his library (see sidebar). In addition he spent much time penning answers to questions in Halacha, Kabala and Chassidus.

Hundreds of people would throng his house and a joyous farbrengen would take place; words of Torah flowed continuously...

In an article written anonymously by the Frierdiker Rebbe¹ in which he describes Rav Levi Yitzchak’s “great genius” in *nigleh*, “wondrous proficiency” in Kabala and “deep intellectual understanding” in Chassidus, the Frierdiker Rebbe also makes note of Reb Levik’s “vast writings in *nigleh* and *nistar*”.

Tragically, these writings were lost during the war. In addition many of these manuscripts were confiscated during his arrest and till today their whereabouts are unknown. The only writings from Rav Levi Yitzchak which survived the pre-war years are the many letters written to his son, the Rebbe.



THE HOME OF
RAV LEVI YITZCHOK
AND REBBETZIN CHANA
IN NIKOLAYEV, UKRAINE.

HARDSHIPS OF EXILE

On 9 Nissan 5699, Rav Levi Yitzchak was arrested and after nine months of imprisonment he was tried in Moscow and sentenced to five years of exile in Central Asia. Before Pesach of 5700, Rebbetzin Chana travelled to Chile and joined her husband in his place of exile bringing together a Zohar, Medrash Rabbah and a few other basic *seforim*. This was in addition to a few *seforim* she had managed to send him beforehand.

The following is an excerpt from Rebbetzin Chana’s memoirs:

2 Nissan 5708

Today, 2 Nissan, reminded me of the first time that I travelled to my husband’s place of exile for Passover. The year was 5700. Physically, my husband was not well on this day. It was only two months after the grueling trip to exile, and the living conditions there were worse than I had imagined they would be. Yet on this day, he forgot about everything.

“Today is Beis Nissan,” he stated. “It would be proper to deliver a Chasidic discourse—but there aren’t too many listeners. I would like to pen a dissertation but, alas, there is no paper on which to write. Contemplation will need to suffice may Hashem grant me the strength to think.”

A week before Pesach I travelled to the city of Kzyl-Orda and brought back two notebooks, powder with which to prepare ink, and a small bottle to serve as an inkwell. This gave my husband indescribable joy, and he immediately began writing. He took to the writing with more enthusiasm than to eating the bread that I had brought for him after such a long and arduous hunger period.



PHOTO: JEM/THE LIVING ARCHIVE / 112724

"...There aren't too many listeners. I would like to pen a dissertation but, alas, there is no paper on which to write. Contemplation will need to suffice; may Hashem grant me the strength to think..."

Taking her husband's reaction to heart, Rebbetzin Chana went out to gather special herbs and roots that grew nearby. These she later ground by hand and soaked them in water until she produced homemade ink. Thanks to her dedicated efforts, Rav Levi Yitzchak was able to jot down his Torah insights within the margins of the few *seforim* that Rebbetzin Chana had brought him, thereby committing, albeit in brief, his thoughts for posterity.

From that day on, whenever paper and ink were available, Rav Levi Yitzchak could always be found writing. Immersed almost constantly in thought, Rav Levi Yitzchak yearned to share his thoughts with others – something which was virtually impossible in that forsaken village. He contented himself instead with recording his Torah novella on paper.

Once as Rebbetzin Chana was conversing with a neighbor, she suddenly heard Rav Levi Yitzchak exclaim: "Ah! What I just wrote now is truly incredible!"

On a different occasion, Rebbetzin Chana ventured to ask her husband why he did not transcribe the varied events of his vibrant life – his communal work, his lectures and talks, his tribulations in jail and exile, and more. Rav Levi Yitzchak replied, "It would be a shame to waste a single second of my time on such matters. They are trivial things, truly insignificant."

In the sicha of Vov Tishrei 5750, in depicting the vital role Rebbetzin Chana played

in the holy work of Rav Levi Yitzchak, the Rebbe describes:

"Even while exiled to a place far removed and remote from Yidden and Yiddishkeit, even in a hard situation physically speaking, without the means of acquiring any 'luxuries', most importantly when there was no ink or paper, she herself went and collected various grasses and produced from them ink and found small scraps of paper and as she herself related later, this was something that entailed self-sacrifice on her part.

"Because paper was very scarce and hard to come by, my father wrote his chidushei Torah in the margins of the few seforim in his possession and from these writings, Likuttei Levi Yitzchak was printed."

In the sicha of Chof Av, 5729 the Rebbe describes at greater length the hardships entailed in writing chidushei Torah while in golus:

"It has been told over many a time that the *baal-hahilulo* was sent into exile as a consequence for his efforts in strengthening and spreading Yiddishkeit everywhere within his reach. In his place of exile there were no Yidden and definitely no way of receiving *seforim*. The place was so forsaken that there wasn't even a possibility of procuring ink and paper with which to write and one had to come up with different ways to make homemade ink. Indeed this is what my mother did, as told many times.

"Because he had no paper, he wrote his chidushei Torah within the margins of the *seforim*. He himself was not able to bring any *seforim* with him because he was sent as a prisoner and was permitted to bring with him only his most necessary belongings. Obviously the idea that *seforim* were most necessary was not really accepted by those who sent him into golus. He therefore only had in

THE TZIYON OF
HORAV LEVI
YITZCHOK.



IN A SICHA ON CHOF-AV, 5723

THE REBBE RELATES:

As told once before, when my father was in golus he did not initially possess any *seforim*. After a while he did receive a few *seforim*, among them a Zohar. Paper was not to be found nor ink, so my mother [*shetichye*] prepared ink for him. Being that she didn't specialize in making ink, we therefore find that the color in which the *ha'aros* are written (in the margins of the Zohar) varies.



his possession a few *seforim* which my mother had managed to bring him and due to the lack of *seforim* he was forced to rely on his own memory when quoting sources for the possibility of going to a library, as is customary here, or using one's own *seforim* to check the original was impossible for him in his situation.

"It is true that the Gemara in Makkos states that when one goes into exile, his teacher is sent with him in order to provide him with the ability to study Torah. The golus which my father was in however, was a golus within a golus and he was not able to conduct himself in any way similar to those exiled to the *ir miklat*.

"Due to his situation, he was forced to write in the margins of the few *seforim* he had which greatly limited the amount he was able to write. Also he was limited to the small amounts of ink my mother managed to produce herself, or with what they were able to procure from elsewhere. In addition, there were further difficulties with not being able to check up sources, as mentioned.

"Miraculously some of these *seforim* and papers containing these *ha'aros* eventually made their way here."

HISTALKUS

In 5704, as the five years of Rav Levi Yitzchok's term of exile were nearing completion, his physical condition began to deteriorate. Though unaware of this, a serious illness was spreading through his body, severely weakening him. The Rov, with the Rebbetzin Chana, eagerly looked forward to the day they would be free again. But then a distressing report reached them: no prisoner would be freed until after the war ended, and even then, they would be permitted to settle only in cities and towns that did not have sizeable populations.

The Chassidim convened an emergency meeting of all the Rov's admirers in Alma-Ata, wherein it was decided immediately to begin intensive efforts to secure the Rov's release. Acquiring all of the necessary papers cost a fortune.

Rav Levi Yitzchok and Rebbetzin Chana had assumed that the entire process would be finished in just a few weeks, enabling

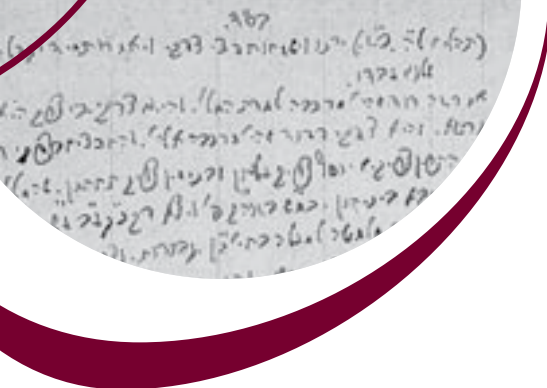
them to celebrate Pesach in Alma-Ata. However, this was not to be. Owing to a series of complex obstacles, the matter dragged on for more than six weeks.

On the Thursday after Pesach, the Rov and Rebbetzin finally arrived in Alma-Ata. The community in Alma-Ata provided for the Rov and Rebbetzin's physical and financial needs in a generous and honorable manner.

Rav Levi Yitzchok's condition worsened steadily.

"It is time to prepare for the journey to the other side..." Those were his last audible words.

On Tuesday night, the eve of 20 Menachem-Av, the Rov lay with his eyes closed, his lips moving incessantly, yet silently. Suddenly Rav Levi Yitzchak opened his eyes, asked for some water to wash his hands, and said: "It is time to prepare for the journey to the other side..."



Those were his last audible words.

The next morning, his condition became critical.

In the late afternoon, when his condition deteriorated further, a doctor was summoned and he prescribed several medicines to ease Rav Levi Yitzchak's suffering. Rav Levi Yitzchak did, in fact, take some of the medicine.

As the hours went by, Rebbetzin Chana felt overcome by exhaustion. Knowing that friends would not leave the Rov's bedside for a moment, she went to take a short rest, hoping to conserve some energy to resume her watch at the Rov's side. When she arose a half-hour later, the house was filled with mourners...

Reb Bentzion didn't say a word, nor did he ask about any of us; rather his faced changed colors and he retreated

Thursday at noon, the funeral procession began from the Rov's house. The mourners walked in brooding silence. A tower of supreme spiritual strength was gone; a leader's voice was silenced.

REDEEMING THE KSAVIM

Upon leaving Alma-Ata following Rav Levi Yitzchok's *histalkus*, Rebbetzin Chana managed to take some of the *seforim* in which he had written his *ha'aros* together with her to Moscow. Bringing the *seforim* out of Kazakhstan entailed tremendous *mesiras nefesh*.

When it came time for her to leave Russia in 5707, she feared the *seforim* would be confiscated at the border and she was forced to leave them with a relative by the name of Reb Bentzion Yanovsky. In a letter to Reb Yaakov Landau in the year 5709, the Rebbe makes mention of this: "My mother did not manage to bring here any *ksavim* of my father."

For years, the whereabouts of these *seforim* remained unknown.



REB PINYE ALTHAUS

Reb Pinye Althaus was a chossid from Eretz Yisrael who grew up in Nikolayev and thus had a very special connection with Rebbetzin Chana. During one of his visits with her in 5718, Rebbetzin Chana brought up more than once in conversation how pained she was at the fact that her husband's *ksavim* were still in Russia and how worried she was as to their whereabouts. She also mentioned in passing the name of the person, Reb Bentzion Klugvant, with whom she had left the *seforim*. Reb Pinye assured Rebbetzin Chana that he would do all he could to recover the *seforim*.

Reb Pinye began intense efforts to have the *seforim* brought to New York.

Towards the end of 5719, Reb Pinye heard of a man by the name of Reb Moshe Shub who was planning a trip to Moscow. He contacted him and told him about the three volumes of the Zohar which Rebbetzin Chana had left in the possession of Reb Bentzion. Reb Pinye requested that Reb Moshe meet this man in the Marina Roschtza shul in Moscow and receive the *seforim* from him.

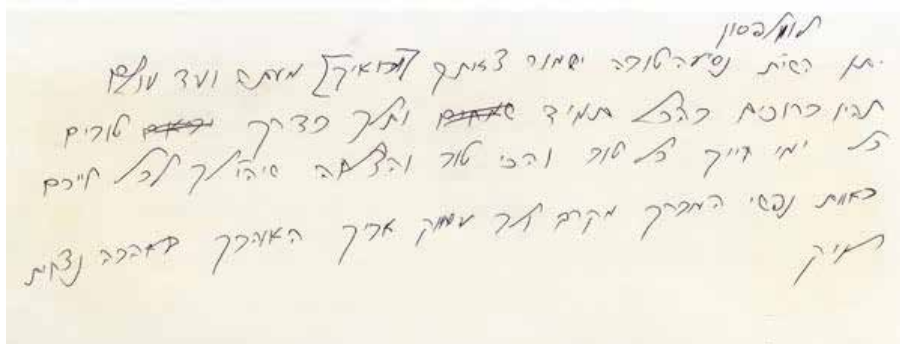
In a rare letter from Reb Pinye to Rebbetzin Chana dated Rosh Chodesh Cheshvan (presumably in the year 5720) we are offered a clear account of what transpired:

"Two years ago, during my visit with you, you spoke of the *sifrei haZohar* containing marginal notes from your husband that were left behind in Moscow. You said that these manuscripts serve as the only remembrance of his vast writings.

"I must admit that I was very much affected by your words and I decided that I would not rest until I managed to extricate the *seforim*.

"At the time I contacted the Israeli foreign ministry to try working through their people but your son, the Rebbe shlit"a felt that such avenues of action may negatively affect the keeper of the *seforim*, namely Reb Bentzion Klugvant.

"I have recently received word that my efforts in this matter have been crowned with success. An acquaintance of mine travelled to Russia for the Yomim Tovim and I told him the entire story and



A HANDWRITTEN NOTE OF HORAV LEVI YITZCHOK.

requested that he do all he can in the matter. It was very hard; it's quite difficult to describe the fear in which *Anash* live in Russia.

"Indeed my acquaintance managed to locate Reb Bentzion and requested the *seforim* in my name. Reb Bentzion didn't say a word, nor did he ask about any of us; rather his face changed colors and he retreated.

"The following day he came to shul and managed to whisper to my acquaintance in passing that he had left the *seforim* in one of the rooms of the building. Out of fear of trying to smuggle out the *seforim* himself, my acquaintance left the bundle in the Israeli Consulate and they will arrange for them to be transported to Eretz Yisrael. I, on my part, will do all I can to hasten the process.

"I am overjoyed that the great *zechus* of redeeming your husband's manuscripts has been my lot".

After the *seforim* were finally brought to Eretz Yisrael, new complications arose. Apparently there were those who said the *seforim* belonged to the Israeli Government and that they belonged in the national museum. Only after Reb Moshe threatened to bring the case before the Israeli Supreme Court were the *seforim* finally turned over to Lubavitch. Reb Pinye brought the *seforim* to the Rebbe in 5720.

In a letter dated 3 Teves, 5720, the Rebbe thanks Reb Moshe profusely for his tireless efforts:

"I hereby wish to express from the depth of my heart my gratitude to him for his efforts and actions regarding the salvation of the volumes of Zohar containing the notes of my father which have just reached me.

"In addition to the greatness of saving divrei Torah in and of itself, understandably with regard to myself there is a personal aspect as well, as with all things pertaining to ancestral inheritance; especially when I conjure in my memory the toil and effort, together

with the great enthusiasm, with which my father involved himself in the above-said."

The Rebbe ends off the letter with abundant *brachos*.

The first time the Rebbe publicly mentioned the arrival of the *seforim* was during the Shabbos farbrengen of Beshalach, on Tu B'Shevat, 5720, at least a month and a half after their arrival. At that farbrengen, the Rebbe also expounded on a *ha'ara* from his father on the Zohar pertaining to that week's parsha. It should be noted that this day marked exactly twenty years since Reb Levik was sent into golus.

Before Chof Av, 5725, additional *ksavim* from Rav Levi Yitzchak reached the Rebbe. During the farbrengen on Chof Av that year, the Rebbe said the following:

"On 15 Av of this year, a few old manuscripts of Chassidus arrived here; among the manuscripts were a few pages and notebooks, including notebooks from my father, the *baal hayortzeit*.

"I do not know if the person who sent them knew what they were or to whom they are accredited. From what I have managed to see, they are mainly Kabbalistic explanations on Mishna, Gemara and Zohar. In addition, there is also a separate page in which he explains his name and his imprisonment and exile according to Kabala." (During the farbrengen the Rebbe expounded on this *reshima*.)

THE TANYA

That same year, a woman by the name of Doba Rivka Shaykevitz emigrated from Russia to Eretz Yisrael, bringing with her a Tanya in which there were *ha'aros* from Rav Levi Yitzchak. This Tanya only reached the Rebbe in 5727, and in the *maamar* of Chof Av that year, "Vehaya Eikev", the Rebbe quoted an explanation from one of these *ha'aros* and made note

of the fact that the Tanya had arrived recently.

The Tanya itself was held for many years by a staunch admirer and dedicated *talmid* of Rav Levi Yitzchok, Reb Hirshel Rabinowitz. Reb Hirshel, along with his younger brother, Reb Mendel, joined Rav Levi Yitzchok in his final years and assisted the Rov and his Rebbetzin immensely in various ways (see Rebbetzin Chana's memoirs part 4, 23). Rav Levi Yitzchok bequeathed some of his precious belongings to Reb Hirshel, including his walking-stick, which Reb Hirshel treasured as his most prized possession for the rest of his life. Reb Hirshel also obtained the Rov's Tanya which included many *ha'oros* on the margins, keeping it safely with him at all times.



THE SHUL HORAV
LEVI YITZCHOK WAS THE ROV IN.
THIS BUILDING NOW SERVES AS A JEWISH
ORPHANAGE UNDER THE AUSPICES OF CHABAD LUBAVITCH.

Years later, Reb Hirshel was approached by a Chossid, Reb Moshe Katzanelenboigen, who requested that he give him the Tanya so that it could be brought to the Rebbe in the United States, and Reb Hirshel readily agreed.

Reb Moshe later related (Kfar Chabad Magazine issue 774) that after his release from prison, he heard about the Tanya

of Rav Levi Yitzchok in Reb Hirshel's possession. Reb Moshe, then living in Moscow, took a flight to Chernovich, Ukraine, where Reb Hirshel was at the time, and told him that Mrs. Doba Shaykevitz would soon be leaving the Soviet Union. This could serve as a rare opportunity to finally transfer the Tanya to the Rebbe in New York, as exit-visas from behind the Iron Curtain were very uncommon in those days.

With the Tanya in hand, Reb Moshe traveled to Riga where Mrs. Shaykevitz lived, who in turn smuggled the Tanya out to the other side of the Curtain at great risk. When the officials at customs-control found the Tanya hidden in her clothing and asked her about the priceless book, Mrs. Shaykevitz pleaded with them to allow her to keep it with her, explaining that this was her personal prayer-book.

When she reached Kfar Chabad, Israel with the prized possession in hand, her son-in-law immediately wrote to the Rebbe who instructed that they send it over to the United States with a certain individual.

A short while later, Mrs. Shaykevitz herself was privileged to travel to New York and meet the Rebbe in yechidus, and she asked the Rebbe if the precious sefer indeed reached him. "What?" the Rebbe replied in surprise, "They didn't tell you already?"

PUBLISHING THE TREASURE

The sweat and toil of Rav Levi Yitzchok and his dedicated Rebbetzin to commit his chiddushei Torah to paper with the greatest *mesirus nefesh* did not go unrewarded. Years later, their son, our Rebbe, would publish these great works, making them available for all to study and enjoy for generations to come.

On Chof Av, 5729 the Rebbe called Rabbi Groner into his room with a special request. Rabbi Groner records in his diary:

"When I entered [the Rebbe] asked me if Schusterman's printing press is working today. I answered 'yes', and [the Rebbe] said, 'If so, please give this [the Zohar containing his father's notes on the margins] to them and ask that they begin working on [preparing] it today...'"

Later that evening during the farbrengen, the Rebbe expounded upon one of his father's *ha'aros* on Zohar, Bereishis.

Over the next few days, the Rebbe would periodically ask Rabbi Groner for an update on the progress of the work. On Rosh Chodesh Elul, the Rebbe also gave his father's Tanya with *ha'aros* in order to be prepared for publishing.

"Thank G-d, I was privileged to have the great, wondrous zechus, in receiving some of the writings of my father, as well as a few seforim..."

"MY GREAT WONDROUS ZECHUS"

Approximately one year later, on Rosh Chodesh Av, two *seforim* of Rav Levi Yitzchok were published under the title "Likutei Levi Yitzchok", in time for his twenty-sixth *yortzeit*. The first one contained his *ha'aros* on Tanya, and the second had his *ha'aros* on Zohar, Bereishis.

Although in those years the Rebbe no longer personally wrote and signed the introductions to Kehos *seforim*, here the Rebbe made an exception.

In a rare display of affection, the Rebbe begins:

"Thank G-d, I was privileged to have the great, wondrous *zechus*, in receiving some of the writings of my father, as well as a few *seforim* which my mother, Rebbetzin Chana bas HoRav Meir Shlomo brought to him when she received permission to travel and join him in his place of exile – in some of which he wrote brief notes on

the margins..."

As a preface to the above *seforim*, there appeared a *reshima* written by Rav Levi Yitzchok in which he offers a mystical explanation on each of the details of his imprisonment and exile, and how they all connect with his name. In addition, his photograph was also published; the only known photograph of his at the time, taken after his long, tormenting exile. (Upon seeing this photograph, the Rebbe commented "אאמו"ר ז' לך?"; indicating disbelief at the extent of his suffering and the obvious toll it took on his health).

One year later, in 5731, another two *seforim* were published: the second volume of Likutei Levi Yitzchok on Zohar, Shemos-Devarim; and Toras Levi Yitzchok – explanations on Shas; Mishna and Gemora. The latter was from his works written in notebooks (as opposed to all the previous *seforim* which were collected from the margins of the *seforim* he used).

In time for Chof Av, 5732, another volume of Likutei Levi Yitzchok was published including explanations on *pesukim* in Tanach and *maamarei Chazal*, as well as a collection of letters written to the Rebbe spanning a wide array of subjects in *nigleh* and *nistar*.

In 5733, Rabbi Yehoshua Mondshine compiled a comprehensive *mafteach* to Rav Levi Yitzchok's *seforim*. Considering the number of entrees included in this index, one gets a small glimpse into the breadth and depth of Rav Levi Yitzchok's vast knowledge, covering close to two thousand subjects and more than one thousand *pesukim* and *maamarei Chazal*.





One
will also
stand struck
considering his
phenomenal memory, while

he cites hundreds of sources to *seforim* he did not have with him in exile, and nevertheless, the quotation is usually one-hundred percent accurate.

In a Ksav Yad Kodesh written to Rabbi Mondshine, the Rebbe personally thanked him for his efforts:

ת"ח על עריכת מפתח הענינים ללקלוי"צ וכו'
ועל הזריזות בזה וכו'.

"Thanks for compiling the *mafteach* to Likutei Levi Yitzchok etc.; and for doing so swiftly etc."

The Rebbe also gave him *meshke* at the Chof Av farbrengen, 5733.

Some years later, in 5739, the librarian in the Rebbe's library found a Yalkut Shimoini containing Rav Levi Yitzchok's *ha'aros* on the margins, as well as a paper with a handwritten essay on Gemara Gittin. The Rebbe instructed that they both be immediately published as a booklet.

Two years later, an addition to the dissertation on Gittin was found, and

the Rebbe instructed that it also be published in a booklet, along with the "*Luach Hatikun*"

– corrections to the previous *seforim* of Rav

Levi Yitzchok. The Rebbe also brought a few letters from his home that were to be added to the booklet as well.

Still two years later, a few more of Rav Levi Yitzchok's writings were found including a discourse on Purim, and the Rebbe instructed that they be published in a booklet in time for Purim, 5743.

Finally, in 5748, a new edition of all Rav Levi Yitzchok's *seforim* was published, including the content of all the booklets which had been published since the first printing.

NEW LIGHT

From the time these *seforim* were printed, the Rebbe frequently quoted from them at farbrengens, casting light on the scholarly words of his father, which were otherwise difficult for the average person to properly understand, considering the condense style of writing he was forced to use. In fact, each Shabbos, the Rebbe would sit at the farbrengen with the Likutei Levi Yitzchok placed on the table before him.

In honor of forty years of the Rebbe's *nesius* – Yud Shevat, 5750, the staff of Vaad Hanochos B'Lahak compiled a *sefer* collecting all the Rebbe's *sichos* where he expounds upon his father's *ha'aros* on Zohar, Bereishis. The name of the *sefer*, approved by the Rebbe, is *Toras Menachem* – Tiferes Levi Yitzchok. At the beginning of the *sefer*, there is an interesting preface with an overview of Rav Levi Yitzchok's Torah and the Rebbe's explanation on it.

When it came time to print the second volume on Shemos, a new photograph of Rav Levi Yitzchok had been recovered from the former Soviet Union, taken at

the time of his arrest, where he appears in much better health. The Rebbe agreed to have the two photographs published at the beginning of the *sefer* (see full story in Derher Magazine, Av 5773).

YET TO COME

Unfortunately, the writings of Rav Levi Yitzchok that reached the shores of the United States and were subsequently published are a mere fraction of his written works. In one instance, the Rebbe mentioned that he had written thousands of pages while serving as Rov of Yekatrinskav!

On Vov Tishrei, 5750, the Rebbe spoke a lengthy *sicha* recounting the story of his father's arrest and the *mesiras nefesh* of his mother in assisting him with writing down his Torah-thoughts.

The Rebbe concluded:

It is a real pity that the remainder of his writings have not yet reached us. There were many more writings of his (aside for those he wrote on the margins of his *seforim* which my mother herself fearlessly brought to Moscow, from where they were subsequently sent here).

In fact, there was one individual, a "Tomim" who learned in Tomchei Tmimim, who had many of the writings in his possession, but he did not hold on to them in fear of the danger it entailed. Until today, tens, perhaps hundreds, of pages of my father's writings are still at some unknown location in Russia.

Yehi ratzon that we will soon merit the fulfillment of "*Uva'u ha'ovdim be'erez Ashur*" – very soon these writings will be found and we will be able to study from them. In fact, our *hachlota* that we will study from them in due time actually hastens the time when we will be able to search for these writings and eventually find them! **D**

1. Kovetz Lubavitch vol. 4 page 62. The Rebbe revealed that the Frierdiker Rebbe had written it, a few years after the Histalkus of the Frierdiker Rebbe.

STRENGTH

in the face of **Tyranny**

The following collection, unique in style, captures an interesting theme related to Chof Av: Although the Rebbe generally avoided discussing personal matters during sichos, there were a quite few occasions where the Rebbe did speak of his illustrious father. Aside for the Torah-writings of his father which were discussed at almost every Shabbos farbrengen, there were those times when the Rebbe related a story or anecdote from him, casting light on the immense reverence and esteem the Rebbe accorded him with.

A YORTZEIT FOR ALL

We'll begin with the Rebbe's explanation of the nature of Chof Av, Rav Levi Yitzchok's yortzeit, and its relevance to all:

My father's yortzeit is seemingly a personal matter; one of relevance only to me. But, when taking into account the sequence of events in the years leading up to his passing, we find that the natural reason for his shortened life was due to the pain and suffering he endured in exile, itself a result of his efforts in the realm of spreading Yiddishkeit to all Jews with mesirus nefesh. Hence, his passing is indeed pertinent to all of the Jewish people.¹

EDUCATION FROM AN EARLY AGE

On a number of occasions throughout the years, the Rebbe made mention of the special chinuch he received in his father's

home, including the bravery to stand up for true Yiddishkeit even in the most fearsome times:

In my youth, my father hired a teacher for my two brothers and me. He lived in our home, and my father set aside a special room for him. The reason why my father wished that he reside in our home was in order that the children learn from his way of life and personal conduct as well; not just the subject matter that he taught us. Once, I walked into my teacher's room on Tisha B'Av and I found him sitting and studying Torah! When I asked him, in a respectful manner, "How can you do this?" he replied: "When I reach the next world, I know that they will punish me either way. I would be much happier if the punishment will be on account of learning Torah on Tisha B'Av!"²

In a response to those who expressed opposition and fought against the Rebbe's mivtzoim, the Rebbe mentioned:

I was raised during the time of the Yevsektzia and was educated that one need not be afraid of them. Despite the fact that they were capable of bestowing harsh threats, and even carrying out those threats; including sending you to Siberia!³

Once, while speaking about the dangerous situation in Eretz Yisroel, the Rebbe commented:

Hashem helped me that (although not by my choice) I was the firstborn son to my father, who later became the Chief Rabbi of Yekaterinoslav. In those days there were arguments and quarrels that arose which needed combat, and in order to do so one needed to know Russian. I was charged with the task of responding to



THE REBBE WHILE DAVENING AT
THE OMUD ON CHOF AV 5746.

PHOTO: JEM/THE LIVING ARCHIVE / 147583

these quarrels, as the eldest son of the chief rabbi... And so, for some 60-65 years now, I am already accustomed to the fact that one need not wait until he is adorned with honorary titles; sitting quietly on the side is unacceptable and is not the way I was raised! I hold steadfast to the education I received at home that when it comes to matters of life-and-death, one must act!⁴

In another instance, the Rebbe responded to threats he received to his efforts in Mihu Yehudi:

Their harassing me will be of no use, for I will not let up. This is not the first time I've been subject to harassment; I was born in a communist country and my father was the chief rabbi of Yekatrinoslav. Being the eldest in the family and fluent in Russian, I was sent to the Yevsektzia where I was

questioned about matters of religion and they harassed and annoyed me. No matter what these people want to do to me now, they will not surpass the [annoyance I endured with the] members of the Yevesktzia! I am not intimidated by their threats, and I will not give up [my stand] on anything so central to the continuity of Am Yisroel.⁵

I was charged with the task of responding to these quarrels, as the eldest son of the Chief Rabbi...

YUD-TES KISLEV CELEBRATION

The following story was related by the Rebbe more than once, in which he

fondly recalls his father's lively Yud-Tes Kislev farbrengen:

In the city where my father served as Rov he had many opponents, because he used to teach Chassidus and instituted various halachic stringencies in the city.

Once, an opponent of his informed on him to the governor of the region, claiming that the community has chosen a Rov who drinks excessively and tears off people's garments!

The Chief of Police was quite surprised to hear that the majority of the Jewish community would choose such a person as Rov, and he sent one of his agents to my father's home to investigate the matter.

When the agent reached my father's home, he found the Rov sitting and learning; no alcohol in sight and



PHOTO: JEM/THE LIVING ARCHIVE / 23871

THE REBBE DISTRIBUTES A KUNTRES ON VOV TISHREI 5750.

all looked just fine! The agent was completely confused and asked my father about the entire episode, but my father replied that he had no inkling of what he was speaking.

Later on the truth came to light; there was indeed some basis to the story:

On Yud-Tes Kislev there was a farbrengen, and the participants really farbrenged well ("gut farbracht"). In good, high spirit, my father repeated words of Chassidus and the farbrengen went on till the late hours of the night. In those days, Chassidim had the custom that as morning neared, at the end of a farbrengen, they would remove their jackets and break out in a dance. On that particular Yud-Tes Kislev, it seems that one of the participants refused to remove his jacket, so my father attempted to "help" him. (My father was in good spirits; he wasn't yet troubled about parnosa and

had recently returned from a trip to Lubavitch.) The end result was that the sleeve turned up in my father's hand, and the remainder of the sirtuk in the other Chossid's hand...⁶

MOTZOEI YOM KIPPUR

During a Yom Tov meal in the Frierdiker Rebbe's apartment, the Rebbe was asked whether his father got involved in building a sukka on Motzoei Yom Kippur, and the Rebbe responded:

It seems that he did not, because my father was preoccupied with farbrenging on Motzoei Yom Kippur.⁷

In Rebbetzin Chana's diary, she vividly describes her husband's special, joyous mood on Motzoei Yom Kippur, in contrast to the solemn feeling earlier that day:

When my husband would return home after Yom Kippur, he couldn't easily settle back into the everyday

The agent was completely confused and asked my father about the entire episode, but my father replied that he had no inkling of what he was speaking

[illegible]

**THE HAGODA WITH RAV LEVI YITZCHOK'S
HASKOMA PRINTED IN THE YEAR 5683**

While explaining the passages of the Haggada on the second night of Pesach, 5718, the Rebbe remarked:

Just before Pesach, I was given a Haggada which bears a letter of approbation (haskama) from my father. In that Haggada, the author explains this passage...¹⁰


In the following sicha, the Rebbe uses exceptional terms to display the reverence and high esteem that Rav Levi Yitzchok deserved, almost putting his status equal with that of all the Rabbeim:

*My father sacrificed his life to spread Yiddishkeit in Russia. After the [Friediker] Rebbe left Russia, he was the only descendant of the Alter Rebbe, the Mittler Rebbe, and the Tzemach Tzedek remaining in that country. Thus, he was the leader of Jewry there, and for this reason, many people turned to him for advice. Eventually, he was arrested for his efforts in spreading Yiddishkeit and passed away in exile...*¹¹

On many occasions, the Rebbe recounted how his father, while in exile, painstakingly transcribed his *Torah*

It's interesting to note that by hashgocha protis [of all my father's writings], it is largely the Torah he wrote while in exile that was published and made available to study. Most of his writings (spanning thousands of pages!) from the time he served as Rov of his city have not yet reached us.¹²

Rav Levi Yitzchok's everlasting impact on Russian Jewry continues even after his physical life here on earth, by way of his *Tziyun*:

We can now clearly see that many Yidden were infused with chayus in their Yiddishkeit by his presence there in exile with them, [as well as his continued presence there] now with his Tziyun being there. It caused a great arousal of yiras shomayim, learning Torah and fulfillment of mitzvos. If not for [his being exiled there] it's hard to know how the presence of Yiddishkeit would look...¹³ 

Speaking of his father's phenomenal memory, the Rebbe once commented:

1. Hisvaaduyos 5744 vol. 4 p. 2389. Similar sentiment was expressed by the Rebbe in other Chof Av farbrengens.
2. The Rebbe in Yechidus to the Belzer Rebbe; Sichos Kodesh 5733 vol. 1 p 456. Varying details in Sefer “B’tzel HaChochma” p. 29.
3. Sichos Kodesh 5735 vol. 1 p. 378.
4. Sichos Kodesh 5739 vol. 3 p. 565.
5. Sichos Kodesh 5732 vol. 1 p. 593.
6. Toras Menachem vol. 11 p. 146. The Rebbe related this story on several other occasions as well; see Hisvaaduyos 5745 vol. 3 p. 1482.
7. Shmini Atzeres 5730; HaMelech B’mesiboi vol. 2 p. 53.
8. Memoirs of Rebbetzin Chana – part 26; copyright by Kehos.
9. Sichos Kodesh 5725, v. 2 p. 349.
10. Likkutei Sichos vol. 3 p. 1016.
11. Sefer Hasichos 5748 vol. 2 p. 588.
12. Sefer Hasichos 5750 vol. 2 p. 621.
13. Sichos Kodesh 5736 vol. 2 p. 622.

להביא לימות המשיח

MIKDASH
IN MITZRAYIM

Winter, 5752. In a year in which Chassidim have already seen so many unexpected giluyim from the Rebbe, perhaps the sequence of almost nightly “surprise” sichos is not actually such a surprise after all.

But on Wednesday, Motzoei Rosh-Chodesh Adar I, the Rebbe offered unprecedented insight to an age-old issue; in a surprising twist, he brought this story into new light against the backdrop of its classical explanation.

Speaking of all the stages in revealing G-dliness in our world, beginning with the Mishkan and culminating in the Mikdash HaShlishi, the Rebbe also counted the “Mikdash Chonyo” of Egypt as a noteworthy step in this process.

Who was Chonyo? And why is it indeed so novel an idea to ascertain that he takes part in this holy chain?

THE STORY OF CHONYO

The Navi Yeshaya describes “ביום ההוא יהי מזבח לה' בארץ מצרים.” In fact, the Mishna records an instance in which a mikdash was built outside of Eretz Yisroel, in Alexandria, Egypt.

The events leading up to the construction of this Mikdash, as well as its halachic definition, are basis for a fascinating Torah discussion.

The Gemara describes² the drama that unfolded in the aftermath of the passing of Shimon Hatzaddik, who served as Kohen Gadol for eighty years. At the time of his passing, he instructed that his younger son, Chonyo, replace him as Kohen Gadol. However, the changeover did not run smoothly, as Chonyo's older brother by two and a half years, Shimi, was jealous and sought out ways to disrupt the new heir to the position of Kohen Gadol.

Posing as having righteous intentions, Shimi approached Chonyo and offered to teach him all the skills required for the

job. Subsequently, he instructed Chonyo to wear woman's leather clothing and a woman's belt, and to stand on the Mizbeach in this manner. Shimi then reported to his other brothers that the Kohen Gadol had donned his wife's clothing on the occasion of his new appointment, as he had promised her to do so. As a result of Chonyo's alleged misconduct and the disgrace it caused to the family name, his brothers sought to kill him. Scared for his life, he was forced to flee Eretz Yisroel altogether, relocating to Alexandria, Egypt. At the time, Alexandria was home to tens of thousands of Jews.

In his new home, he built a replica of the Mikdash in Yerushalayim, replete with a Mizbe'ach and Korbanos. He attracted a crowd of followers, known as the “Kavatzter”³ whom he mentored in carrying out avoda. He was so successful that his Kavatzter group appointed him a Kohen of Hashem, and his replica Mikdash became a landmark. Even the local non-Jewish Egyptian population served

Hashem at the Mikdash and offered Korbanos there.

The Alexandrian replica Mikdash, under the administration of the former Yerushalmi Kohen Gadol Chonyo, was in use for two hundred years.

CHONYO'S STATUS IN JEWISH HISTORY

Halachically, such practice is strictly forbidden, as from the time that the Mikdash was permanently established in Yerushalayim, Korbanos may only be offered there. At any other location, sacrificing Korbanos is strictly prohibited by halacha.

Notwithstanding the halachic prohibition, an argument ensued between the Tana'im of the Mishna, as to the intentions of Chonyo himself. R' Yehudah argued that though Chonyo's actions were prohibited, he personally was a righteous man, and his intentions were pure. Animals sacrificed at his Mikdash were offered to Hashem alone. R' Meir disagreed, stating that Chonyo's intentions were evil and that he offered sacrifices at his replica Mikdash to other gods.

Holy intentions or not, an Egyptian Mikdash is certainly beyond halachic boundaries, to the point that a “Kohen” who had served in Alexandria at Chonyo's place was no longer eligible to serve Hashem in Yerushalayim, and was forbidden from doing any form of avoda. Similarly, utensils used at Chonyo's Mikdash were considered unfit for use at the house of Hashem in Eretz Yisroel.

In the view of halacha, Chonyo, the former *Kohen Gadol* in Yerushalayim, was shunned from his roots, his landmark institution considered a breakaway of sorts, and any form of supplies, human or vessel, banished from the Chosen House of Hashem.

THE REBBE'S APPROACH

When the Rebbe addressed the subject in the *sicha*, referring to the abovementioned saga of “*Mikdash Chonyo*”, the Rebbe’s take on the issue is in sharp contrast to the classic approach.

Instead of stressing the negative aspect of this breakaway institution from the *Mikdash* in Yerushalayim, the Rebbe views the “Chonyo” narrative in a very positive light, explaining how the function of the *Mikdash* in Egypt is very much in line with that of the *Mikdash* in Yerushalayim, the divinely chosen home of Hashem. For just as Hashem chose a dwelling place in Yerushalayim, the Egyptian *Mikdash* serves the same function, drawing down G-dlines into this world.⁴ In fact, the construction of the replica Alexandrian *Mikdash* is, in the spiritual sense, a fulfilment of the *Mitzvah* to build a *Mikdash* – “*Ve’asu li mikdash veshachanti besocham*”, the very same commandment which refers to the building of the *Mikdash* in Yerushalayim; first, second and third.

Moreover, the construction of a home for Hashem in the land of Egypt is a beginning and preview of the final *Geulah*. At that time, as the *Navi Yeshaya* states:



“*Uv’au ha’ovdim be’ertz Ashur vehanidachim be’eretz Mitzrayim*”. Hence, beginning the process of revealing G-dliness in Egypt specifically through erecting a home in which Hashem lives (in accordance with the abovementioned opinion of R’ Yehudah that animals were sacrificed at Chonyo with the sole intent of serving Hashem) is very much the function of the third and final *Geulah*, as the *possuk* clearly connects *Geulah* with the redemption of Egypt.

Regarding the negative view of Chonyo as a halachicly unacceptable breakaway, the Rebbe focuses on its positive aspects. The function of the Alexandrian replica, though halachicly unacceptable, was very much the same as that of its look-alike in *Yerushalayim*, namely, a house of Hashem in which *Korbanos*

are sacrificed to Him, to the point that its construction is in the spiritual sense a *Mitzvah*, just as the construction of its *Yerushalmi* counterpart. Moreover, says the Rebbe, its construction began the process and provides a taste of the third and final *Geulah*, spreading Divine light in the land of Egypt. ■

1. Sichos Kodesh 5752 vol. 2 p. 698.

1. See Menachos 109B. See there for an additional, different version of the story.

3. See Rambam Pirush Hamishnayos ibid.

4. See the farbrengen of Shabbos Parshas Pekudei 5741. The Rebbe explains that the Yerushalayim and Egyptian *Mikdash* differ in location only. The revelation of G-dliness at both *Mikdashos*, however, is identical. See Or Hatorah Parshas Chukas (quoted in the above *Sicha*), that the difference of location is of great significance, as drawing down G-dliness into Chonyo’s *Mikdash* creates “*Chayus Eloki*” in a place of Kelipa.

CONQUERING CALIFORNIA

איינעמען גאנץ קאליפארניא!

Interview with
RABBI SHLOMO CUNIN





Chassidisher Derher: Good afternoon Rabbi Cunin, thank you for giving us from your time today.

Rabbi Cunin: It is my pleasure to dedicate time toward a magazine geared for bochurim. Being just a short while after Gimmel Tammuz, it is vital that bochurim bear in mind that the Rebbe is with every one of us, giving us the strength to persevere until the end.

The Rebbe gave us tools to help internalize this energy, namely: the shiurim of Chitas, Rambam and going on Mivtzoim. Following these *hora'os* enables us to feel the Rebbe's *koach*, even when we are not physically near the Ohel.

You may ask: how can I be so confident in these words?

I will share with you a story that took place with me just a few hours ago that shows how vividly we can witness the Rebbe's influence in everything we do, so long as we adhere to the Rebbe's *takanos* and *hora'os*:

I had the opportunity to visit a group of lawyers on the 32nd floor of an office building in Los Angeles this morning. Upon arrival, I turned to one of the lawyers who was Jewish, yet very secular, and I asked him to put on Tefillin. To my surprise, he replied: "Rabbi Cunin, ever since you first met me a few months ago and asked me to put on Tefillin, something stirred within me. Shortly thereafter I found my old pair of Tefillin and began putting them on every day."

Instead of being bashful the first time I met him, I had pushed myself to immediately ask him about the Rebbe's Mivtza Tefillin. I saw the Rebbe's *kochos* vividly, for the man was totally transformed - *nishapech l'ish acher!*

Every bochur receives endless care from the Rebbe, he must merely tap into it by learning Chitas and Rambam, amongst the other things the Rebbe has instructed us to do.

cd: This *hartzike* message will undoubtedly have an impact on the bochurim reading this publication. Can



PHOTO: JEM/THE LIVING ARCHIVE / 16574

RABBI CUNIN RECEIVES KOS SHEL BROCHA FROM THE REBBE ON 24 TISHREI 5748.

you tell us about your childhood, and the interactions with the Rebbe you had during those years?

rc: Boruch Hashem, I was fortunate to have been raised in the Bronx, which was relatively close to Crown Heights. Though it was quite rare to see a Chossid with a beard in America during those days, I was fortunate that both of my Zeides were fiery Chassidim, who were also very involved in my Chinuch.

When my brother and I were old enough to go to Cheder, my Zeides visited a Yeshiva nearby to see whether we should attend. After witnessing less than desirable character traits displayed by one of the teachers, they concluded that it would be better for my Yiddishkeit to not attend the school. Instead, they arranged for Rabbi Sholom Mendel Simpson – a bochur at the time – to teach us privately. When I turned eleven, my family had a Yechidus with the Rebbe. During that

Yechidus, the Rebbe told my parents that it was time for my brother and me to join the Lubavitcher Yeshiva on Bedford and Dean. Upon hearing the suggestion, my mother began to weep. The Rebbe soothed her, explaining that we would not be away for the entire week; we would come home every Shabbos. At the start of *shnas halimudim* of 5712, my brother Pinchos and I joined the Lubavitcher Yeshiva.

Many years later, I found a trove of letters between the Rebbe and my mother, which I had no clue about until then. I learned from them that the Rebbe had guided my mother like a *tatte* after her family had perished in the Holocaust. The Rebbe directed her in all sorts of situations, even things as minor as us having a cold!

We also visited the Yeshiva in advance, as per the Rebbe's instruction. The Yeshiva was exceedingly clean, and appealing. Later on I found out that the Rebbe had instructed the Yeshiva to make sure they

go out of their way to make sure my mother was comfortable with every detail of the conditions, so as not to give her any additional worries!

There is a lifelong message I learned from my parents. While other Chassidim were very focused on taking in as much as they could from the Rebbe, my father would go to extreme lengths to make sure that the Rebbe's needs were taken care of. He would constantly give of his resources to make sure the Rebbe had *harchova* in all matters.

cd: Can you tell us about some of the interactions you had with the Rebbe as a bochur?

rc: Throughout my years as a bochur in 770, I was privileged to have many, many encounters with the Rebbe. I will share a few of them with you.

Perhaps the first Shlichus I received from the Rebbe, was as a young bochur. It was erev Pesach, and the Rebbe would

distribute Matza to the Chassidim. Being that I had an hour train ride from Crown Heights to the Bronx, I was able to be one of the first to receive Matza from the Rebbe.

When I came by the Rebbe, the Rebbe gave me Matza, and then the Rebbe asked me whether I lived in the Bronx, and I confirmed that I did. The Rebbe then gave me another large piece of Matza and asked me to please deliver it to an address in the Bronx that the Mazkirus would supply me with.

I was elated! I was overjoyed to be trusted with the Rebbe's Shlichus.

I hurried to the Mazkirus and got the address, and realized that it was on the opposite side of the Bronx, meaning that it would take a lot longer than I had planned. So I stopped to call my mother and let her know that she should not get worried if I don't make it home in time for Yomtov.

To make matters worse, my train was delayed, so upon arrival in that part of the Bronx I emptied the muktze from my pockets in the subway station, and asked a passerby how I could get to that address. They explained to me that it was a very long walk.

At last, I arrived at the address, and realized it was located in a community for the blind. I climbed up to the third floor apartment and knocked on the door. "Who's there?" shouted a voice from behind the door. "An emissary of the Lubavitcher Rebbe," I replied.

A shirtless, tattooed, heavysset man opened the door, bringing the smell of *treife* food wafting to my nose. It was definitely not your average Pesach scene! I wondered why the Rebbe sent me there...

"So the Rebbe sent you to me? I'm so excited!" exclaimed the man.

He invited me into the apartment and asked me why I had come. I explained to him that I had a special delivery from the Rebbe from him. But first, I asked him to take a tablecloth and cover the *treife* food on the table.

I had him take out brand new cups, and filled them with water. I asked him to gather his wife and children and we sat together in the living room. I realized that both of the children were blind.

Over four cups of water, I told the story of Yetzi'as Mitzrayim, and then had them wash for Motzi-Matza. Then they all had a piece of the Rebbe's Matza, the first time eating Matza in their lifetime!

After spending a while there, I hesitantly asked him if he could share his story with me, so I could share it with the Rebbe.

The man obliged and filled me in on his connection with the Rebbe.

A shirtless, tattooed, heavysset man opened the door, bringing the smell of *treife* food wafting to my nose.

He was a tanner who worked in a kosher slaughter house, run by a group of Lubavitcher Chassidim. Recently they had noticed that he had seemed very depressed. They pressed him to share his problem with them. He explained that after his first two children were born blind, the doctors warned him not to have any more children, because chances were that they too would be blind.

But alas, his wife was now expecting another child, and he was at a complete loss what to do. The doctors felt strongly that the baby should be aborted, because statistics suggested that the baby would be blind. However he felt that since there was a chance that the baby would be able to see, it would be heinous for him not to have brought this life into the world. He felt terribly confused as how to behave.

Upon hearing his story the Chassidim urged that he write to the Rebbe and ask for a brocha. He resisted, claiming that he was completely secular. Eventually the Chassidim prevailed upon him and he wrote a letter to the Rebbe, pouring out his woes.

He was delighted when shortly thereafter he received a reply from the Rebbe. The Rebbe's answer was clear: "Don't have an abortion! I bless you that the baby will be able to see, and you will have much nachas from this child, as well as the other children." The Rebbe also encouraged him to strengthen his involvement in Torah and Mitzvos. The Rebbe concluded that he would send an emissary to help them along this path.

You can well understand that I was astounded upon hearing this story. At this point the man had tears streaming down his face. I told him that this Matza was

"bread of healing" and it would bring great brocha to his entire family.

A short while later I was informed that the baby was in fact born, with both eyes functioning!

The shoachim

whom he worked with arranged a Bris Mila for the little boy.

For years I stayed in touch with the children, and many years down the line they grew closer to their Yiddishkeit.

Another *kiruv* I received from the Rebbe took place after an interesting sequence of events. It was a regular day in 770, and I was sitting and learning in the zal on the first floor of 770. Suddenly Rabbi Hodakov entered the Zal and came over to where I was sitting.

He explained that a group of wealthy and influential individuals had come to have a Yechidus with the Rebbe en route to visit the sites of concentration camps in Europe. Arriving at the same time as them was a young "hippie," searching for counsel.

The first question that I recall, was “How did G-d let the Holocaust happen?”

The Rebbe had chosen to give a Yechidus to the young “hippie” first and the other group was waiting for a while. Rabbi Hodakov asked if I could spend time with the group while they waited for the Rebbe, as I was a born and bred American who spoke fluent English.

I readily agreed, and led them to the library, where I *schmoozed* with them on a variety of Jewish subjects. After over an hour the Rebbe buzzed Rabbi Hodakov to inform him that he was ready for the group. The Rebbe then told Rabbi Hodakov:

“מ'דאָרף עס געבען א שוכר, ער האט דאך
געזעצן מיט זיי די גאנצען צייט. זאל ער אויכעט
אריינגייען מיט זיי.”

“We need to give him [Shlomo Cunin] a reward, as he sat with them the entire time. He should enter [the Yechidus] with them.”

I was ecstatic that I had merited this incredible *zechus*. During the Yechidus the group posed a number of questions to the Rebbe, particularly regarding the Holocaust. Throughout the entire Yechidus the Rebbe spoke only in English.

The first question that I recall, was “How did G-d let the Holocaust happen?”

The Rebbe replied: “I cannot rationalize why G-d allowed things to happen. The only thing I can be sure of, is that Hitler *yemach shemo*, as well as any other evil person, cannot destroy our people. Only we can destroy ourselves.

“You must educate your children about Shabbos and the commandments of

the Almighty. Through educating your children as Jews, and educating yourself the same way, you can ensure that the Jewish people will never be destroyed.”

ed: You mentioned earlier how your father would be very worried about the Rebbe's material state of affairs. I heard that as a bochur, you also were involved in similar matters. Can you share some of those with us?

rc: It bothered me greatly if something wasn't ideal with the Rebbe's *gashmiyus*. I decided to make sure to be there whenever the Rebbe would come in and out of 770, so I could hold the door open. The Rebbe, who cares for the entire *Klal Yisroel* shouldn't need to hold the door open for himself! After a while, it caught on and others began to do the same.

Until the year 5725, the Rebbe would almost always walk to and from his home to 770. Crown Heights wasn't such a safe place and the Rebbe would walk alone, often at late hours of the night. I decided, together with another few other bochurim, to make a rotation of following the Rebbe to and from his home. Reb Berel Lipsker, Reb Avremel Lipsker, Reb Shmerel Roitblat and Reb Zisel Piekarski were from the first ones to take part in this.

We armed ourselves with clubs during the week, and for Shabbos we wore specially sharpened garrison belts (commonly used by police officers). We kept a distance between ourselves with the Rebbe, and we hoped that the Rebbe was happy with what we were doing.

To our great surprise, one day one of us got a call on the payphone in 770, and the lady on the line introduced herself simply as “Schneerson from President St.” It was the Rebbetzin calling! She thanked us for walking behind the Rebbe and then she finished:

“איך בעט איר זאלט נישט זיין אזעלכע גרויסע
חסידים, איר זאלט שטייען א ביסעל נענטער.”

“I ask of you that [in this matter] you shouldn't be such “great Chassidim,” [and] please stand a little closer [to the Rebbe].”

We were stunned by the realization of how dearly the Rebbetzin held this. Understandably we stepped up our efforts greatly after that phone call.

When the winter came, I didn't want the Rebbe to have to walk in the snow and ice, so I got a group of friends together and we would shovel a path from the Rebbe's house, all the way to 770! After a while, my *chaver* Berel Baumgarten a”h, and I put together enough money to buy an electric snow blower, and we would plow the areas where the Rebbe would walk.

One night there was a terrible snowstorm and I was plowing the area right in front of 770, however it kept getting full of snow because the snow was coming down hard. Suddenly the lights in the Rebbe's room turned off, which meant that the Rebbe would be coming outside in just a few moments.

Not wanting the Rebbe to see me, I pushed the snow blower in the direction of the *chotzer*,¹ and jumped into the one of the snowbanks near the door. A moment later the Rebbe exited 770 and realized exactly what had happened. This I will never forget – the Rebbe looked down at me in the snowbank and gave me a broad smile, one that resounds within me till now.

In the earlier years, no one was printing the Rebbe's *bilti-mugah*² maamorim, and therefore few were *chazzering* these maamorim in the Shuls. At first I procured a typewriter and onion paper,³ which would produce 22 copies. Reb Boruch Shalom Kahn (today of New Haven, CT) would type out the maamorim and I would take care of the distribution.

Later on I upgraded to a mimeograph machine, and then to a spirit duplicator, which used alcohol to print multiple copies. After amassing enough funds I even invested in a proper copy machine which enabled many more copies to be printed and spread. Eventually Reb Dovid Raskin took charge of this, taking the *hafotza* to greater heights.

I was quite involved in secretly⁴ recording the Rebbe's farbrengens, and Boruch Hashem those recordings bring *chizuk* to the Chassidim nowadays.

cd: Speaking of the Rebbe during the winter, I have heard that you were involved in the building of a structure for the Rebbe to stand in when he visited the Ohel. Can you tell us about it?

rc: This was an intense saga that I was involved in as a bochur.

In the early 5710's the Rebbe would bring small packages of *tzetlach* that people had sent in with him to the Ohel. The Rebbe would rest these bags on the partition that surrounded the Frierdiker Rebbes tzityon. However, the wall was only about eight inches wide.

As the packages the Rebbe brought grew bigger, I felt that something had to be done to make it more convenient for the Rebbe. I was caught in a struggle, because

doing something inside the Ohel is like playing with fire! For a chossid to begin doing things inside the Ohel, seemed totally out of place.

Eventually I could not take the Rebbe's discomfort any longer, and together with my friend Avremel Lipsker, I cut out a board of wood for the Rebbe to put things down on while at the Ohel. We clamped it onto the wall, and placed hooks in front of it for the Rebbe to hang bags of *tzetlach*. We felt like we were taking our lives into our hands!

With great nervousness, we watched from afar the next time the Rebbe came to the Ohel. We were thrilled when the Rebbe came in and made use of the board and the hooks, as if they had always been there!

When the need arose, we replaced the board with a bigger one, to give more space for whatever the Rebbe wanted to put down.

A short while later I had an opportunity to be at the Ohel when the Rebbe was there. It was a freezing day and I noticed that the Rebbe's feet were surrounded by ice water. For hours on end the Rebbe stood at the Ohel totally exposed to the elements.

My friend Avremel Lipsker and I decided that we could handle this no more. Out of pieces of wood, we built a platform for the Rebbe to stand on. With trepidation we brought the platform to the Ohel, and hoped that we were doing the proper thing.

This time when the Rebbe arrived at the Ohel, we looked on as the Rebbe approached the platform, and stepped up onto it without hesitation. We felt relieved.

Realizing that the Rebbe had accepted our efforts, I got more daring and brought in a "construction stove" on the right side of the platform, which was connected to a

Rabbi Cunin relates:

"The Rebbe's Mazkir Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky, who now also serves as the Chairman of Merkos L'yonei Chinuch, would usually drive the Rebbe to and from the Ohel.

One wintry day, Rabbi Krinsky was not able to drive the Rebbe, so another individual drove instead. I had also come to the Ohel that day, in order to make sure that the propane tank was connected correctly to the stove.

The Rebbe stood inside the Ohel, but snow began to come down very strong. Although the driver had opened an umbrella for the Rebbe (as Rabbi Krinsky often would in similar situations), this time the Rebbe chose to instead stand under the overhang which protrudes over the left side of the Ohel.

However, because the Rebbe was no longer standing on the board, ice water began to gather around the Rebbe's feet. My heart raced as I debated what to do. I couldn't handle the *tzaar* that the Rebbe was no-doubt experiencing.

Cautiously I stepped into the Ohel and passed behind the Rebbe. The Rebbe remained fixed to his spot, as if he hadn't noticed me. My heart pounding, I asked the Rebbe:

"דער רבי שטייט אין אייז-וואסער, און איך וויל צושטעלען דעם ברעטעל?"

"The Rebbe is standing in ice-water, I would like to set up the board?"

Suddenly the Rebbe stepped back, as if noticing me for the first time, and moved as if to allow me to bring the board. Swiftly, I lifted the board from where it usually stood and moved it to where the Rebbe was standing."





RABBI CUNIN PRESENTS THE REBBE WITH A KEY TO A NEW CHABAD HOUSE IN CALIFORNIA.



RABBI CUNIN AT THE FIRST TELETHON.

propane tank. The stove emitted warmth, and was designed for outdoor use. When the Rebbe came to the Ohel the following time, the Rebbe stepped up onto the platform and stood very close to the oven, which provided me with a distinct sense of relief.

With time, we built a booth to protect the Rebbe from the rain and snow, and eventually a full structure was built for the Rebbe.

Shortly after Chof Zayin Adar 5752, the entire structure mysteriously burst into flames and almost nothing survived the *sreifa*!

cd: Were you involved in Shlichus in other areas besides California?

rc: I was sent on Shlichus, even before my chasuna!

As an older bochur in 770, I was once called in by Rabbi Hodakov and he asked me whether the Bronx could have a Shliach. I answered, that if the Rebbe wants, surely there can be a Shliach there.

Persistently he asked, do I think a bochur could be successful in such a Shlichus, to which I replied that if it's the Rebbe's desire he surely can.

He concluded, that if so he suggests that I begin to get involved in Shlichus in the Bronx. I answered, that if the Rebbe wants then I am ready to go. Rabbi Hodakov instructed me to ask *reshus* from the Hanhala, which I immediately set about doing.

Rabbi Mentlik's⁵ answer was clear: if the Rebbe wanted, then the Hanhala gives full *reshus*.

Once I had relayed the message to Rabbi Hodakov, he outlined to me, that the Rebbe wanted me to be in Yeshiva during the week and to be involved in Shlichus in the Bronx from Friday until Sunday.

I acquired an army surplus bus for \$100 and installed shelves and furniture inside. I called it the "Merkaz Bus," but essentially this was the first Mitzvah Tank.

Each Friday morning I would park outside the Reform and Conservative temples, and hold book fairs inside this bus, so people would have the opportunity to taste authentic Yiddishkeit. I would spend Shabbos in the Bronx, and then continue holding book fairs all Sunday. On Monday morning I would immediately return to regular *seider hayeshiva*.

cd: When did you begin your Shlichus in California?

rc: That began a few months after my wedding. I got married to Rebbetzin Sheindel Cunin on Yud Daled Kislev, 5725.

Following my chasuna I received a *hora'ò* from the Rebbe to learn in Kollel for the first half of the day, and for the second half to continue my Shlichus in the Bronx.

After Pesach I had the tremendous *zechus* of being sent by the Rebbe to California as the fifth Shliach of the Rebbe in the USA.⁶

My wife and I had a special Yechidus

with the Rebbe prior to our departure to California. During that Yechidus the Rebbe gave me a Tanya, and my wife a Siddur. One of the things the Rebbe told me during that Yechidus was:

"זאלסטו איינעמען גאנץ קליפורניה!"

"You should conquer the entire California!"

This has been our motto in every matter, and Boruch Hashem today our headquarters at 741 Gayley Ave. has become the "command center" for the over 240 Chabad Houses!

Boruch Hashem, we were *zoche* to pioneer many things throughout my shlichus, including the first Sukkah Mobile, the first Chabad day camp and the first Chabad House, amongst many other firsts.

Despite being physically distanced from the Rebbe, I learned from my mentor Reb Gershon Mendel Garelick, that traveling to the Rebbe – *es iz nisht do farvos tzu moire hoben*. Every Shabbos Mevorchim I would fly – and continue to do so – to New York to spend Shabbos with the Rebbe, and often on other days as well.

cd: Did you receive *hora'òs* from the Rebbe regarding Shlichus matters?

rc: Oh yes! I was *zoche* to receive many, many *hora'òs* from the Rebbe throughout all the years of my Shlichus, and I will try to share some of them with you.

As a matter of fact one of the first *hora'òs* on Shlichus was regarding *Shliach ose Shliach* [bringing down a new Shliach]. Boruch Hashem, our Shlichus started off with a roar, and I saw much *hatzlocha*. I realized that I needed to bring down another Shliach to work together with me.

The next time I was in Yechidus, I included in my *tzetel* an inquiry about bringing down a new Shliach. I also included three suggestions of possible candidates.

The first was a personal friend of mine Reb Hirshel Hecht. He was originally from Chicago and was stationed in Tzfas, Eretz Yisroel at the time.

The Rebbe read through my *tzettel*, and when it came to the first candidate the Rebbe questioned; “Harry?” “Hirshel,” I replied. “Doesn’t he live in Eretz Yisroel?” asked the Rebbe. I realized immediately that the Rebbe was hinting that if he lived in Eretz Yisroel already, then he shouldn’t leave.

The Rebbe then addressed the second individual I had mentioned, Rabbi Avrohom Levitansky a”h:

“איך וויל דיר זאגן ווי מ’דארף קלייבען א שליח.
די ערשטע זאך דארף מען וויסען צי ער פלעגט
פארן אויף מ’יטוואך שעה.
ער פלעגט גייען.

שפעטער דארף מען וויסען צי בשעת ס’האט
ג’ענדיקט זיך די לערנען מיט די קינדער, צי ער
איז געבליבען רעדען מיט די קינדער און זייערע
עלטערן.

ער פלעגט בלייבען.

מען דארף וויסען זיין ווער ער איז, מען דארף
וויסען זיין ווער איז די ווייב, און ווער זיינען די
עלטערען.

און מ’דארף וויסען זיין אז קיינער טוט אונז קיין
טובות נישט.”

*“I want to tell you how you must choose
a Shliach. The first thing you should look
into, is whether he would participate in
‘Wednesday hour [Released Time].’”*

*“[The Rebbe answered his own question]
He would.”*

“Afterward, you need to know whether
after [the Wednesday hour] had ended,
he would leave right away, or he would
stay late to speak with the children and
their parents.

“[The Rebbe answered his own question]
He would stay.

“You need to find out who he is, who is
wife is, and who are their parents.

“And you need to know, that we don’t
need people to do us favors [in regard to
going on Shlichus].”

Shortly thereafter the Rebbe gave me a
brocha to bring down Rabbi Levitansky,
who dedicated himself to his Shlichus
until his last days.

The summer after Rabbi Levitansky

arrived we opened the first Chabad
day camp. We designed a brochure and
submitted it to the Rebbe.

We were startled when we saw the Rebbe’s
one word reply: תערוכות?

On the cover was a picture of boys and
girls jumping rope together. The Rebbe’s
reply made it clear that not only was the
illustration not proper, but that we should
have separate divisions for boys and girls.

This reminds me of another occasion when
and ad was made about *Mivtza Taharas
Hamishpocha* by one of the Shluchim in
California. At around three o’clock in the
morning my phone began ringing (bear
in mind that this is 6 a.m. in New York).
Rabbi Hodakov was on the line!

Rabbi Hodakov told me that he saw the
ad, and because a certain kind of wording
was used in the ad, it was not proper for
us to run it. Not being used to receiving
calls from Rabbi Hodakov,⁸ I began
to explain to him that the reason that
kind of language was used was because
“Californians” would better receive it.

After a while of arguing, Rabbi Hodakov
exclaimed:

“You might think that I am telling you
this because I am an old fashioned Jew.
However, I want you to know that I had
the *zechus* of being with the Rebbe today
and this is what the Rebbe says.”

Stunned, I immediately saw to it that the
ad cease circulation.

cd: Did the Rebbe give any *hora’os*
regarding the opening of the first
Chabad House?

rc: Absolutely! But first you must know
the background behind its opening.

Soon after I had arrived in California,
I set my eyes on procuring a facility for
our activities. My first idea was to buy a
Shul, especially because there was one
that was available for sale, ran by Rabbi
Tarshish. When I asked the Rebbe about
purchasing the Shul, the Rebbe asked me:
How will it support itself?

Now, when the Rebbe says no, that’s
because the Rebbe has his own reasons.

Often, however the Rebbe tries to give us
something in *darchei hateva* that can help
us understand. So when the Rebbe asked
that question, I realized that it was merely
a hint that the Rebbe didn’t want us to
open a Shul at that point.

A short while later I came back to the
Rebbe with another idea. There was a
building with a pool that was available
for just \$100,000. We would then offer
“Talmud Torah and Swimming.” Parents
would drop off their children each day for
a few hours, part of which the children
could swim in the pool, and the rest of
the time would be dedicated to learning
Torah.

This venture could also be financially
stable, since the parents would pay to
enroll their children into the program.

This time the Rebbe answered me:

“שלמה, וואס וועלן זיי זאגן, ס’איז געקומען א
יונגער שליח דא אין קליפורניה, קאמ דא אזויפיל
חדשים, און אויסגעגעבען הונדערט טויזענט
דולר?!”

*“Shlomo, what will they say, a young
Shliach arrived in California, merely here
for a couple of months, and he has already
spend \$100,000?!”*

I understood that the Rebbe was not
happy with the idea. In the meantime
I threw myself in to expanding the
activities of Chabad on the West Coast.

A great focus of my Shlichus was with
Jewish college students at UCLA in
Westwood, California. After realizing that
their children were developing a strong
connection, the parents of these students
approached me and offered to help
purchase a facility.

Here again I approached the Rebbe with
the idea. Since this would be a place for
the Jewish students on campus to “come
home” to, we would call it Chabad House.

I was ecstatic when the Rebbe gave me a
brocha to pursue this idea.

cd: When was the building completed?

rc: The completion of the building took
place shortly before Yud Alef Nissan
5730. I made a special trip to New York



AFTER THE ORIGINAL CHABAD HOUSE SUFFERED THROUGH A TERRIBLE BLAZE, THIS EVENT WAS HELD RIGHT IN FRONT OF IT.



RABBI CUNIN LIGHTS THE MENORAH AT AN EVENT TOGETHER WITH GOVERNOR ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER.

with the key in order to present it to the Rebbe in Yechidus, together with some supporters.

In advance of my Yechidus, Rabbi Hodakov informed me that the Rebbe had instructed to bring a photographer to capture the moment of the presentation of the key to the first Chabad House.

Hastily, I arranged for a photographer to be present.

A glow of *nachas ruach* emanated from the Rebbe's face when we presented the key. Then the Rebbe asked me: "Which Chabad House is this the key to?"

Speechless, I realized that the Rebbe was clearly implying that this Chabad House should be the first of many.

Similarly, with the opening of every subsequent Chabad House, I would have a Yechidus together with the Shliach in that location and present the Rebbe with the key.

When we opened the Chabad House in S. Diego together with Rabbi Yonah Fradkin, we presented a key to the city, framed in a gift box adorned with a plaque.

We entered the Rebbe's room and presented it to the Rebbe. The Rebbe responded to me:

"איך קען עס ביי דיר ניט נעמען שלמה... דו האסט געשריבען סאן דיעגו."

"I can't take it from you Shlomo... you wrote San Diego."

I cringed inside, grasping that I had made a big mistake.

The Rebbe turned to Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky who was in the room at the time as well, and asked him to bring scotch tape. The Rebbe tore little bits of paper and, with the scotch tape, covered over the letters "a" and "n."

"Now, I can accept it from you," concluded the Rebbe, smiling broadly.

From that day forward, any location in California that begins with that word, is spelled out by the Shluchim and Anash simply as S., e.g. S. Diego, S. Francisco etc.

This reminds me about the time just two years later that propelled a major leap forward for Chabad of California.

Lubavitch was buzzing with excitement in anticipation of the Rebbe's seventieth birthday on Yud Alef Nissan 5732. I myself brought a few supporters of Chabad of California to the Rebbe's Farbrengen that Yud Alef Nissan.

The Rebbe expressed during that Farbrengen that if someone wanted to give a present, what he desired was that seventy new institutions of Chabad-Lubavitch should be opened throughout that year. Relative to the amount of Chabad Lubavitch institutions that

existed until then, that was a mammoth undertaking, especially if it was to be done within the year!

As soon as the Sicha had ended I wrote a *tzetel* to the Rebbe, stating that I take upon myself to open 10% of the seventy new organizations. We ended up opening twelve of them! Almost all of them were new Shluchim, or independent organizations.

That night, I met a *yungerman* named Chaim Itche Drizin who was already serving as a Cheder teacher in Northern California. I offered him to become a Shliach that night! Sure enough he agreed, and the next day I entered Yechidus together with him, in which I told the Rebbe that this would be the first of the seventy new organizations in regards to the Rebbe's request!

That year, I left no stone unturned in order to create new *mosdos*. When Yud Alef Nissan arrived the following year, we compiled an album of all the new mosdos. We made a special version of that album for the Rebbe, with a gold-plated cover. We presented it to the Rebbe alongside a brand new silver *kesser* for the "Rebbe's Sefer Torah."¹⁰

The glow on the Rebbe's face when I presented the newest Shliach to California, sent me a clear message that the Rebbe had derived great *nachas ruach* from this.

cd: The finances needed, in order to open 12 new *mosdos* in one year, must have been enormous! Were you able to handle that easily?

rc: The funds needed for this initiative were gigantic, but that could not stand in the way of fulfilling the Rebbe's *hora'os*. I borrowed a lot of money, and worked frantically to pay them off.

At the end of the year, I was still \$200,000 in debt, and I felt terrible about it. Nevertheless, I didn't want to burden the Rebbe with my problems, and I only wrote in the good news.

The next time I was in Yechidus, the Rebbe read through my *tzetel*, but like a *tatte* who gauges his child's problems even when they don't openly express it, the Rebbe asked me:

וואס איז, שלמה? דארפסט האבען געלט? וויפל
דארפסט דו?"

"What is the matter, Shlomo? You are in need of money? How much do you need?"

My lips froze, and I didn't utter a word. But the Rebbe repeated the question: How much to you need? Eventually the Rebbe asked: "\$200,000?" I still stood quietly.

"When are you leaving?" asked the Rebbe. "Whenever the Rebbe suggests," I responded. "When were you planning on leaving?" continued the Rebbe. "Tomorrow morning," was my reply.

The Rebbe opened his drawer, and began counting a large amount of \$100 bills. I thought I would collapse with an overload of emotions.

With a broad smile, the Rebbe said:

דא איז נאר א טויזענט, וועסט דו גייען
פארקויפען יעדער שטר פאר צוואנציק טויזענט
דולר."

"Here you have only \$1000, now you should go and sell each bill for \$20,000."

Selling a dollar of the Rebbe was something I would never consider! Yet, here the Rebbe was pulling me out of my doom, without me even lifting a finger.

With renewed vigor, I landed in California and headed straight to the

office of a potential supporter. He, and the nineteen individuals I visited afterward, each paid the full price for these bills. A number of them experienced great *nissim* after having done so, but we will leave those stories for another time.

As soon as Rabbi Krinsky returned to the line, I exclaimed: "I will repair the list right away and resend it!"

What I could never have fathomed, was the Rebbe's repeating of this "business deal" a year or two later, when I was now \$250,000 in debt.

Once again, the Rebbe asked me, without me mentioning a word about my financial woes. In this instance the Rebbe instructed me to receive these dollars from Rabbi Hodakov, and to sell them for \$25,000 each!

The Rebbe cares for each of his *kinderlach* like a *tatte*, and truthfully, even in a more powerful way than that.

There was another occasion when the Rebbe showered me with unconditional *libshaft*.

When a fire consumed the original Chabad House, in 5740, my financial straits were dire. Aside from the usual expenses involved with running a region full of Shluchim, I was suddenly saddled with millions of dollars more that I needed to come up with!

One day, I received a call from Rabbi Krinsky, who explained that the Rebbe wanted to pay the payroll of Chabad of California for the month of Tishrei. Dumbfounded, I answered that I would put together a list, and send it in right away.

I compiled the list, and left out anyone who held positions in institutions that were partially government funded, for example the Drug Rehabilitation Center, and others.

Just a few hours later, Rabbi Krinsky called me again, and told me that the Rebbe had said that it is not a full list. I explained that I had left out those who got paid by the government. The line was silent, which meant that the Rebbe had been listening into the conversation, and had buzzed Rabbi Krinsky, to come to the Rebbe's office.

As soon as Rabbi Krinsky returned to the line, I exclaimed: "I will repair the list right away and resend it!"

Rabbi Krinsky was satisfied with my response and I promptly did so.

Hosha'ana Rabbah came a few weeks later, and I flew into New York in order to be with the Rebbe until the end of Simchas Torah.

As soon as I arrived, I got onto the line for *lekach*, which the Rebbe would distribute on *Hosha'ana Rabbah*. Almost every year, the Rebbe was enveloped by a certain seriousness on *Hosha'ana Rabbah*, but to me the Rebbe would smile.

This time the Rebbe didn't smile to me. Instead the Rebbe asked:

דו ביסט באקאנט מיט אלע עובדים אין
קליפורניה? דו ביסט באקאנט מיט איימעצען
וואס הייסט שלמה קונין? פארוואס איז ער נישט
געווען אף דער רשימה?"



RABBI CUNIN CONVERSES WITH AN HONOREE AT ONE OF HIS FIRST DINNERS.

“Are you familiar with all your workers in California? Do you know someone by the name of Shlomo Cunin? Why were you not on the list?”

Despite my shock, I managed to tell the Rebbe that because I receive a monthly check of \$300 from the Rebbe each month since the beginning of my Shlichus, I didn't add myself to the list.

The Rebbe replied:

”אפילו די גרעסטע גבירים וואס
ארבעטען פאר די מוסדות נעמען
אויכעט עפעס, אכצין דולר לחודש
אדער לשנה וכו'.”

“Even the greatest gvirim which work for organizations take something, \$18 a month, or a year etc. [meaning that Rabbi Cunin is to be on his payroll, regardless of any other funds he receives].”

Aside from receiving a paycheck from the Rebbe for that month, I made sure to add myself to the payroll from that moment forward, as per the Rebbe's hora'o.

I will tell you one last story which took place with me during a difficult financial period:

In the year 5728, I received a special instruction to be in New York on Yud Tes Tammuz, as did Rabbi Moshe Feller and Rabbi Yitzchok Dovid Groner.¹¹ After a surprise Farbrengen, which is a story in its own right, the three of us merited to have a special private Yechidus with the Rebbe.

I will never, ever forget this Yechidus:

As soon as I walked in, the Rebbe began to speak in a louder voice than usual:

”שלמה, איך האב געהערט אז ביי דיר דער מצב
אין שטוב איז א מצב פון עניות ודחקות און
נאך ערגער. רחמנא ליצלן, איך וויל דאס ניט
ארויסריידען. שלמה, איך וויל ניט ליידען אז דו
זאלסט זיין איינג.

וועסט אריינגייען צו הרב חדקוב, איך האב מיט
עם שוין גערעדט, דו זאלסט אויסרעכענען וויפל
עס קאסט צום לעבן. וויפל קאסט צוויי פאר
שיך, צוויי פאר הויזען, צוויי קפאטעס, און צוויי

היטלאך א יאר. דאס וועט ער דיר געבען און ווען
ס'וועט ווערען מער וועט ער דיר געבען מער.”

“Shlomo, I have heard that that situation in your house is destitute, difficult and worse. Rachmona Litzlan, I don't want to verbalize [the nature of the situation]. Shlomo, I don't want to be in pain because things are tight for you.



THIS VERY FIRST PUBLIC MENORAH, IN LOS ANGELES, CA.

Go into Rabbi Hodakov, I have already notified him [that you will come], and make a calculation how much it costs to live. How much is two pairs of shoes, two pairs of pants, two kapotes, and two hats a year. He will give you that [amount], and when the amount increases, he will give you more.”

Not a month went by until Chof Zayin Adar 5752, that I did not receive that extra stipend from the Rebbe. Like a shepherd to his sheep, the Rebbe showers us with his care and brochos.

cd: Earlier you related some hora'os that the Rebbe gave when you appointed

the first Shliach. Were there any more hora'os you received on this matter on other occasions?

rc: The Rebbe gave me many guidelines regarding hiring new Shluchim. Because of time constraints I can't share all of them here, however I will recount one incredible episode that is related to this matter:

On an Erev Shabbos Mevorchim at the end of 5749, I was standing in 770 when I was startled to hear that Rabbi Hodakov, who was very elderly at the time, was looking for me. I ran to meet him, upon which he told me that the Rebbe had given out a ma'ane which was addressed to me.

I immediately put on my gartel, as Rabbi Hodakov explained the background behind the ma'ane.

Rabbi Moshe Kotlarsky had been working tirelessly to open Chabad Houses in a number of new locations around the globe. Numerous times he had proposed the launching of a Chabad House in Los Vegas, NV; each time the Rebbe vetoed the idea for one reason or another.

Certain details had unfolded, which gave Rabbi Kotlarsky the hope that perhaps the time was now ripe for a Chabad House in Las Vegas. Once again he submitted the idea to the Rebbe. The Rebbe instructed that I be given a copy of the ma'ane on this suggestion as well. The wording of the ma'ane was as follows:

”כמו דשאר הענינים דקלפרניה - למסור עדכ”
להרר”ש שי' קונין, ובטח יחקור להמצב שם וכו'
ויחליט האם בכלל לעשות שם א”ל [או לא], ואם
לעשות מה ואיך וכו' ובכל אופן באחריותו כשאר
הענינים שם.”

“Like all other matters of California – Rabbi Shlomo Cunin should be informed about all this, and surely he will research the situation there etc. and decide whether to do this or not, and if yes, what and in which way etc. Regardless, this is under his

responsibility like all other matters there.”

My next step upon receiving the *ma'ane* was to search out a suitable candidate for this Shlichus. I soon met Rabbi Shea Harlig, who eventually became the first Shliach to Los Vegas and leads a large group of Shluchim in that area.

I set firm guidelines in place to ensure that the *ruach tahara* that Chassidim possess should be preserved even in such an unholy place as Los Vegas.

Today, I am proud to observe that the most Chassidishe group of Shluchim in my area, are the Shluchim in Nevada!

cd: Rabbi Cunin, the wealth of *zichroinois* and *hisoirerus* you shared today, carries great power. Is there something you would like to share in closing?

re: The point I would like to conclude with is one which I received numerous *hora'os* from the Rebbe about.

The first story connected with this idea, happened shortly before the first dinner for Chabad of the West Coast.

We had managed to obtain a very prestigious honoree by the name of Al Lazeroff. A large crowd of his friends and admirers were expected at the dinner.

Rabbi Hodakov called me four days before the dinner, and hinted to me that the Rebbe was on the line as well. Rabbi Hodakov told me:

”איך האב געהאט דעם זכות זיין ביים רבי'ן היינט,
און זיכער וועט מען זיצען באזונדער מענער און
פרויען.”

“I had the zchus to be with the Rebbe today, and surely you [will see to it that] men and women should be seated seperatly [at the dinner].”

I understood that this was coming directly from the Rebbe.

When it came to the dinner, I was firm in fulfilling the Rebbe's *hora'ò*. I was met with fierce opposition from all sides, and in particular from the *gvir's* family and none one less than the *gvir* himself! With the Rebbe's brochos, Al had a sudden

CELEBRATION 70

At the culmination of Shnas Hashivi'im since the Rebbe's birth, Chabad of California published an album depicting the new initiatives that were done in California in honor of Shnas Hashivi'im.

There was a total of 71 organizations and the like at the years conclusion.



change of heart during the dinner and asked to speak:

“This Rabbi is something special, I will never question this Rabbi again!”

A few years after I had arrived on Shlichus I received an unexpected call from Rabbi Hodakov:

“Firstly, the Rebbe asked me to tell you, that you did nothing wrong,” he preempted. “However the Rebbe wants you to know that since the matters of Chabad in Los Angeles are being publicized, you must be extra scrupulous that everything is done according to halacha, as guided by the Lubavitcher Rabbonim.”

The message was clear. Everything a Shliach and a Chossid does, needs to be in exact fulfillment of Halacha! But that is not all. After asking a Rov, one must make sure to ask the Rebbe as well.

This following story illustrates this point very well:

In my earlier years on Shlichus, feminism was very strong in California. One day a woman that had become involved in our Chabad House approached me and asked if it would be ok to coordinate an “all-woman minyan.”

I explained to her, that according to halacha that wouldn't be possible. After hearing me out, she offered a different idea: to hold a woman's mediation service.

A group of women would get together and meditate. They would also read Tehillim and other *tefillos*. But not in the style of a minyan at all.

I told her I would look into it. I called up Rabbi Dworkin, and we went through each detail of the proposition. Once he had thought it through, he determined that this would be completely *mutar*.

Like everything else I did in my Shlichus, I made sure to write to the Rebbe about it soon after. That night, my phone rang. Rabbi Hodakov was on the line.

He went over the idea of the lady that I had written about and made sure he had

understood all the details. Then it was quiet. He was talking to the Rebbe, who had been listening to the entire call! A few moments later he returned to the phone, and told me:

“The Rebbe wants me to tell you that you have to explain to them [the women] that *minhag avoseinu b'yodeinu*, and that every Chabad House is like a mini Beis Hamikdash. Therefore our services are held like they were done in the Beis Hamikdash. The ladies *daven* from the *Ezras Noshim*, and not anywhere else.

Then suddenly I heard the Rebbe's voice on the line! The Rebbe spoke to Rabbi Hodakov as if I wasn't there:

“עם זאל מען זאגען אז אזוי האט זיך אנגעפאנגען די קאנסערוועטיווע מובמענט.”

“You should tell him that this is the way the Conservative movement started.”

It wasn't enough that I had conferred with a Rov. The Rebbe had decided against the idea, despite that it might be permissible according to halacha.

Today, it is vital for every bochur to bear in mind, that on any matter, he should make sure to ask a Rov how to behave, and find out if the Rebbe ever gave *hora'os* to people in similar situations. Finally, every Chossid should ask the Rebbe for a *haskoma* and *brocha*, through writing to the Ohel, *un der Rebbe vet gefinen a veg vi tzu entfernen!* **D**

1. The area that today stands between 770 and the Library of Agudas Chasidei Chabad.
2. Maamorim which were transcribed the way the Rebbe had said them, but not checked over by the Rebbe. Maamorim that the Rebbe had checked over were called Muga.
3. In the days before computers, printers and even photocopiers, everything was typed on a manual typewriter, taking much time and effort. Onion paper was thin, almost translucent paper that would enable the ink to transfer on to 22 copies a time, so that when typing once, instead of only getting one copy, many more were made.
4. At that time the Rebbe did not want the Farbrengens to be recorded.
5. The Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim Lubavitch Hamerkozis at the time.
6. Rabbi Cunin was preceded by Rabbis Moshe Feller Avrohom Korf, Avrohom Shemtov and Shalom Dovber Shemtov.
7. “Released Time” was launched during the early years of Lubavitch in America, and used out the free hour that public school children have every Wednesday in order to teach them about Yiddishkeit. Bochurim learning in 770 would take off seder each Wednesday in order to run these programs. An article about this incredible campaign will *iy”h* be featured in a coming edition of A Chassidisher Derher magazine.
8. Rabbi Cunin fondly recalls how Rabbi Hodakov told him that he [Rabbi Cunin] works through his own “channels.” Unlike most other Shluchim at the time, Rabbi Cunin corresponded directly with the Rebbe in most instances.
9. S. Diego is named after a non-Jewish “saint.” San is Spanish for Saint.
10. This was especially unique, because of the Sefer Torah's small size.
11. See Interview with Rabbi Moshe Feller in Derher Expanded Tammuz Edition 5773 for the full story.



RABBI CUNIN RECEIVES A DOLLAR FROM THE REBBE ON 23 NISSAN 5751.

PHOTO: JEM/THE LIVING ARCHIVE / 71152

GONE!

In an interview with A Chassidisher Derher, Rabbi Sholom Ber Hurwitz of Crown Heights told the following story:

For a number of years I suffered from migraines. Severe migraines. Migraines so severe I would occasionally faint as a result of them. At first they arrived only occasionally so I didn't think much of them and did not see a doctor. But gradually the migraines occurred more frequently. At the very worst point I was getting the migraines once every few months.

The tipping point for me was the night I traveled from my Flatbush home to a wedding hosted in Oholei Torah. While driving I was stricken with another such migraine and I was in deep pain by the time I arrived in Crown Heights. As I exited my car I recognized the harsh reality: I could barely function. Even the headlight of passing cars brought along searing pain. I sat down, hoping the rest will alleviate my agony. It didn't. After resting for close to an hour, I informed my wife I would be returning home without attending the wedding.

After relating this incident to my sister she persuaded me to seek medical attention. "If the migraines are this severe," she said, "you have to be crazy not to see a doctor!"

At the next opportunity I had, I went to visit my family doctor. After conducting a few simple tests, he determined I had something unwanted directly affecting my brain. "What!?" I responded in disbelief. "Yes," he said, and continued "though I'm unsure the exact nature of it." The doctor then proceeded to give me the name and contact information of a specialist based in Long Island.

After a short visit with the specialist and a handful of tests, one thing became evident.

Whatever was causing the migraines, it most certainly was not a virus, but rather something far more substantial. The exact



PHOTO: JEM/THE LIVING ARCHIVE / 25630

course of action still remained unclear. "What now?" I asked. "Now you must go to a foremost expert of the field; Dr. Hausman of Beth Israel Hospital".

The arrangement of an appointment with Dr. Hausman took much patience and required a steady stream of requests and referrals by my doctor and the specialist from Long Island. In the end an appointment was secured.

Dr. Hausman studied my previous tests and confirmed the existence of a growth. The realization that something so harsh that we refrain from using its medical term was on my brain, sent me to a state of confusion and despair. I did not even know which questions to ask. Will they have to cut my head open...?

Dr. Hausman suggested two MRIs, one basic and the second utilizing a dye which allows a computer to survey the minutest parts of the area.

The MRIs were scheduled a week prior to

Gimmel Tammuz. On the day preceding the MRIs and on the day of the MRI's I visited the Ohel. I described the situation, poured out my heart and begged the Rebbe for a Brocha.

The basic MRI took 45 minutes and immediately the technician brought great results. Next was the more intricate MRI. Once the MRI was through, the results were not forthcoming. This worried me greatly. "Why couldn't he bring the second's results as quickly as the first's?" I thought.

Finally, after fifteen minutes which felt like fifteen years, the results were in. Boruch Hashem these too displayed nothing unusual. My happiness was so great that I had to restrain myself from hugging the technician!

The next day I returned to the Ohel to thank the Rebbe for the Brocha that saved my life. No such migraines have appeared ever since. ■



BEHIND THE PICTURE

CHILDREN ONLY

- No Kuntzen! -

WHEN EASTERN PARKWAY SWELLED WITH SCHOOL KIDS

It is safe to say that nearly every Jew alive today has heard of the famous “dollars” lines. Many of them have even had the privilege of actually standing on one such line, whilst others have only heard stories repeated from mouth to mouth.¹

Beyond the universal lines, where anybody and everybody was welcome to participate, there were occasional *chalukos* which on the Rebbe’s behest were reserved for a specific crowd, be it shluchim, tankistin etc.

One such special distribution took place on the morrow of Yom Kippur 5752, known as *B’shem Hashem- g-tts’ nomen*.

A Tishrei that had already begun in all but an ordinary fashion and promised more and more exceptional *giluyim* with each passing day, took yet another interesting turn when on Thursday 11 Tishrei, the Rebbe made it known through his secretaries, that there would be a distribution of dollars after his return from the mikva and prior his departure to the ohel. But not a ‘simple’ distribution at that – rather this was



geared to children, under the ages of Bar and Bas Mitzvah and children only! The Rebbe even mentioned that adults shouldn’t make *kuntzen*, and try getting a dollar themselves.

The announcement of course caught chassidim by surprise, since it marked

a significant break from ‘protocol’, as on this day the Rebbe was poised only to go to the ohel. No soon was it announced and the news spread like wildfire; boys’ as well as girls’ schools scrambled to make arrangements so that their pupils be able to attend, mother with young babies,

86127

entire families from throughout Crown Heights and beyond - all determined not to let their little ones miss this amazing opportunity.

Light rain showers were falling on that morning, yet parents of all ages could be seen rushing to 770 with a child in each hand and often more walking beside them.

Quickly a long line formed in 770, so that before the Rebbe had even returned from the nearby mikva, hundreds of children were already gathered. Around two in the afternoon the windy lines began moving, while children passed in front of the Rebbe at the usual dollar- distribution place, in the hallway outside the Rebbe's room. Entire preschool classes, cheder classes with their melamdim, and mothers with their babies, and older children strode proudly by with their teachers, as the Rebbe handed each child a dollar bill, accompanied by a wish to 'A gut yohr'.

Over the two hours that followed, thousands of children had the zechus to receive a dollar from the Rebbe, while more arrived at 770 as time passed.

As the Rebbe made his exit from 770 onto the front pathway, another huge crowd had gathered around to receive a dollar from the Rebbe's holy hand. Blue construction boards stood on the right of the Rebbe, surrounding the expansion of 770 that was being done at the time.

Soon, as the line only grew, the Rebbe's shtender was brought so the Rebbe could lean on it. The Rebbe then again distributed dollars to all the children present; something that lasted for another few minutes, and finally departed for the ohel.

To the average passerby, it must have seemed like Eastern Parkway had suddenly turned into a playground as it swelled with children, each proudly holding onto his precious shlichus mitzvah! **D**

1. See "A Chassidisher Derher" issue 21 (98) p. 70.



86160



86142



86158

מוקדש לחיזוק ההתקשרות
לכ"ק אדמו"ר זצוקללה"ה נבג"מ זי"ע

נדפס ע"י ולזכות
השליח הרה"ת ר' שניאור זלמן וזוגתו מרת רחל
ויוצאי חלציהם
שיינא, דבורה לאה, מנחם מענדל,
שלום דוב בער, שמואל, לוי יצחק, ושטערנא שרה
שיחיו
צירקינד

נדפס בקשר עם
כ' אב
שבעים שנה להסתלקות
כ"ק הרב הגאון והחסיד והמקובל וכו' ר' לוי יצחק ז"ל שניאורסאהן
ע"י הרוצה בעילום שמו
לזכותו ולזכות משפחתו

לע"נ
הרה"ח ר' דוד הלוי שטאקהאמער ע"ה
לרגל יום היאהרצייט שלו
י"ט מנחם-אב
נדפס ע"י משפחתו

לעילוי נשמת
הו"ח אי"א רב פעלים תמים ואיש אמת
ר' ישעי' ארי' ב"ר מנשה ע"ה
טרייטעל
נפטר ליל ש"ק פ' וישלח
י"ג כסלו ה' תשע"ד

מוקדש לזכות
הרה"ת ר' לייביש משה וזוגתו מרת רינה
וילדיהם
קיילא באשא, בנציון דוד, אליהו איסר, רבקה שיינדל אלטא
שיחיו
גולדהירש



A Chassidisher Derher • Vaad Talmidei Hatmimim • 770 Eastern Parkway Brooklyn, NY 11213