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TEVES 5775
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HEI TEVES ESTABLISHED

לְהַקְבֵּעַ ל"יום סגולה" ו"עֶרַת רִצּוֹן"

MEIN MOTTEL'E

The Rosh Yeshiva HoRav Mordechi Mentlik

TWO SURPRISES

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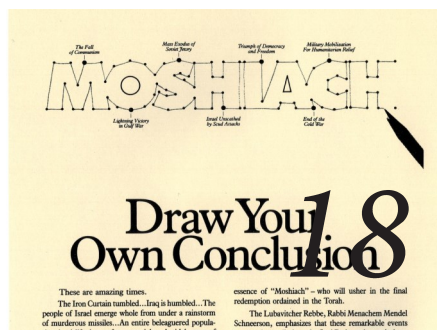
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Behind the Picture



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Editorial

It is with pleasure that we present our readership with this month's magazine for Chodesh Teves. Marking the special yom tov of Hei Teves, we have highlighted a very important aspect of the significance the Rebbe attributed to this day.

Contemplating upon the history of this yom tov, we take note of the great celebration that occurred with the victory of the *seforim* case, in which the Rebbe joined by delivering sichos explaining the meaning of the victory and how we must apply its lessons to our own *avoda*. The Rebbe went so far as to thank all those who came to New York to join the celebration:

דא דארף מען באווארענען, אע"פ וואס לכאורה איז דאס אן ענין פרטי:

ס'איז דאך געווען כו"כ וואס האב'ן אויסגעדריקט זייערע ברכות בכמה אופנים, ביז טלטולא דגברא וטלטולא דנשי, כדי אויף מבשר זיין א בשורה טובה אדער מתבשר ווערן בבשורה טובה; און פרייען זיך צוזאמען... איז כאן המקום להוסיף נאך א דיבור טוב: א נתינת תודה צו די אלע וואס האב'ן משתתף געווען בבשורות טובות, און אין מעשים טובים, און אין משתתף תמיד, און אין התוועדות צוזאמען... (משיחת עשרה בטבת תשמ"ז)

Last year we included an article highlighting the Rebbe's words on the spiritual meaning of the *seforim* case from a higher perspective. In this

edition, we have included an essay on the parallel the Rebbe drew throughout the entire story between the story of the Alter Rebbe's imprisonment and release on Yud Tes Kislev and the trial and victory of the *seforim* on Hei Teves, as clearly understood from the Rebbe's *sichos* throughout.

Towards the end of the month, we mark the day of Chof Daled Teves, the Alter Rebbe's *yom hilula*. In a gesture accepted by many of the yeshivos around the world, many bochurim will participate in viewings of the Rebbe's *farbrengen*; Chof Daled Teves, 5741. Hence, we have included a sicha with background to a story mentioned by the Rebbe at that *farbrengen*, in an attempt to encourage our readers to join and experience this *farbrengen* as well.

We conclude with the Rebbe's words marking Hei Teves, 5752:

"Hei Teves is a day connected with *geulah* – the *geulah* of the *seforim* of *Rabbosinu Nesi'einu*. In immediate sequence to this *geulah*, we pray for the *geulah* of the remainder of the *seforim* which still await their turn for redemption [in Russia], and more so, we pray for the general redemption [of the world] with the *geulah ho'amitis ve'hashleima...*" May it be *teikef umiyad Mammosh!*

The Editors

Erev Chanukah, 5775



PHOTO: JEM/THE LIVING ARCHIVE / 104489

A Certain Path

*This year on **Chof Daled Teves**, yeshivos around the world will join to watch and experience the Rebbe's farbrengen of **Chof Daled Teves 5741**.*

During the second sicha, the Rebbe speaks of the famous story told about the Mittler Rebbe's dream, where he observed the Alter Rebbe and another individual crossing a river, and the interpretation given later by the Alter Rebbe.

In this spirit, we bring the following excerpt of a sicha from 5718, where the Rebbe tells this story with additional details and explanation, complementing the sicha of 5741.

We hope that this will inspire and encourage everyone to join in these viewings, to learn and internalize Torah directly from the Rebbe.

In 5667 the Rebbe Rashab farbrenged on the *Motzoei Shabbos* before Chof Daled Teves. He spoke again on the night of Chof Daled Teves itself and told the story of the Mittler Rebbe's dream.

I will not repeat the story in all its details, as it had already been published, but the following is the basic idea:

The Mittler Rebbe dreamed of a wooden board spanning the width of a river. When the Mezritcher Maggid crossed the river on top of the board, the current shook it violently. But when his father, the Alter Rebbe, crossed over afterwards, although the waters raged as before, the board stood still.

When the Mittler Rebbe related the dream to his father, the Alter Rebbe

responded: "Why are you so surprised? The Rebbe [the Mezritcher Maggid] created *tzadikim*, but I, *boruch Hashem*, have succeeded in creating many *ba'alei teshuvah* as well."

[The reasoning behind the Alter Rebbe's interpretation is not readily apparent, but] perhaps we can explain it as follows:

Chazal tell us, "When davening, one should turn his eyes earthward, but direct his heart towards Heaven."

Even while davening, one needs to maintain awareness of the physical world as well; one needs to work on uniting the physical world with *Elokus*.

If someone were not to do so, he would run the very real danger of becoming

overwhelmed by the world's lowliness and coarseness, and he would end up losing whatever heights he managed to achieve through davening. But maintaining awareness of *gashmius*, even while davening, allows one to bring the impact of davening to affect the rest of the world.

The difference between *tzaddikim* and *ba'alei teshuvah* can be explained in somewhat similar terms.

A *tzadik*, by definition, is someone who never has done evil; he has never been tempted to do evil, and has no relationship with anything evil. The downside of this is that if the *tzadik* encounters evil, there's no telling how he will react; he may very well be

overwhelmed by its vastness, for which he is unprepared.

On the other hand, a *ba'al teshuva* has nothing to fear of evil, no matter the circumstances. He has already dealt with evil in the past and he has overcome it; he possesses the strength of unlimited scope and nature--“*lima'ala meihishtalshelus*”.

When the Alter Rebbe crossed on the board, it remained calm no matter the strength of the raging water, since he possessed the [merit and spiritual] quality of a *ba'al teshuva*; never fazed by any obstacle.



This *Shabbos* we bless the new month of *Shevat*. We've mentioned many times

in the past that *Shabbos Mevorchim* contains within itself the [qualities of] entire upcoming month. For us, the highlight of the upcoming month is the Tenth of *Shevat*--*yom hilula* of the Rebbe, *nessi doreinu*.

Just as the Alter Rebbe before him, the [Friediker] Rebbe's lifework centered on creating *ba'alei teshuva*.

Although he was involved in many different causes, the central focus of his *avoda*--what the *Gemora* refers to as “*zahir t'fei*”--was creating *ba'alei teshuva*. This was true both in the deeper sense of *teshuva*, similar to how *Moshiach* will cause *tzadikim* to do *teshuva* as well, and also on a simpler, more basic level. He

dedicated himself to this idea in Russia and in Poland, and continued with it when he arrived in the United States.

On the *yom hilula* of a *tzadik* all of his Torah and accomplishments are elevated on High, and it also elevates anyone that is connected to the *tzadik*. Therefore, we must remember that we are to follow in his ways and continue on the path he has shown us, and that nothing will disturb us, not even “turbulent waters.”

Even walking blindly, unsure of where we are headed, doesn't change a thing, since we are on the Rebbe's “board” and following the path that he mapped out. We can move forward confidently! **D**

(Based on *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Va'era*, 5718)



Not Only Menorah

פרסום ראשון

Presented here are two letters written by the administration of Tzach in New York. The first letter is addressed to all Anash, urging them to follow the Rebbe's directive to continue the activities of Chanukah throughout the whole year.

The second letter was written to the Rebbe informing that the Rebbe's *michtov kloli* issued by the Rebbe for Chanukah 5734 (published later in Likutei Sichos vol. 10 p. 282) was taught by Rabbi Mordechai Mentlik at the monthly Tzach gathering. A copy of the letter addressed to Anash was also sent to the Rebbe, along with the names of those who composed it.

Published here for the first time are comments the Rebbe wrote on both letters. On the letter to Anash the Rebbe corrected a mistake; and on the other letter he replied with a comment expressing his surprise that such a mistake had been made.

[Note that only a part of the letter is printed here.]

In the letter to Anash it was written that the only real mitzvah instituted for the Yom Tov of Chanukah, is kindling the menorah. The term **הוקבע**--established--was used. In other words, only kindling the menorah was established as the mitzvah of Chanukah. The Rebbe pointed out that, firstly, there are other mitzvos of Chanukah besides for menorah, and second, the word **הוקבע** appears in *Gemara* and *halacha* only regarding the other mitzvos, and never referring to menorah.

[In the following translation, only the emphasized words are from the Rebbe's response while the regular text is clarification added by the editors.]

It is obvious that this is not so. On the contrary, the term **קבעו** refers only to **להודות ולהלל** [to give praise and thanks], **(and there are even opinions¹ that saying הלל on Chanukah is מן (התורה). And only in Chassidus (ת"א מקץ לבב) does the term קבעו refer to the mitzvah of Chanukah candles.**

And Rashi in Maseches Shabbos infers that Chanukah was established [קבעו] on account of the miracle of the candles [=oil], but the *Gemara* there discusses only הללוהודאה, not menorah.

In addition to להודות ולהלל **it is also forbidden to deliver eulogies or fast** on Chanukah.

What I did say, and this is obvious, is that the only mitzvah that is exclusive to Chanukah, (=distinguishing it) over Purim and other yomim tovim, is the mitzvah of Chanukah candles.

(It is not the same as the mitzvah to light candles for **Shabbos and yom tov**, as those **are connected to sholom bayis**)

פשוט שאינו. **ולהיפך** - קבעו **להודות ולהלל** (וי"א דההלל הוא **מה"ת**) - ורק בחסידות נא' קבעו בנוגע לנ"ח וברש"י **מדייק** שקבעו **חנוכה על הנס** דגרות ונוסף ע"ז - אסורים בהספד ותענית.

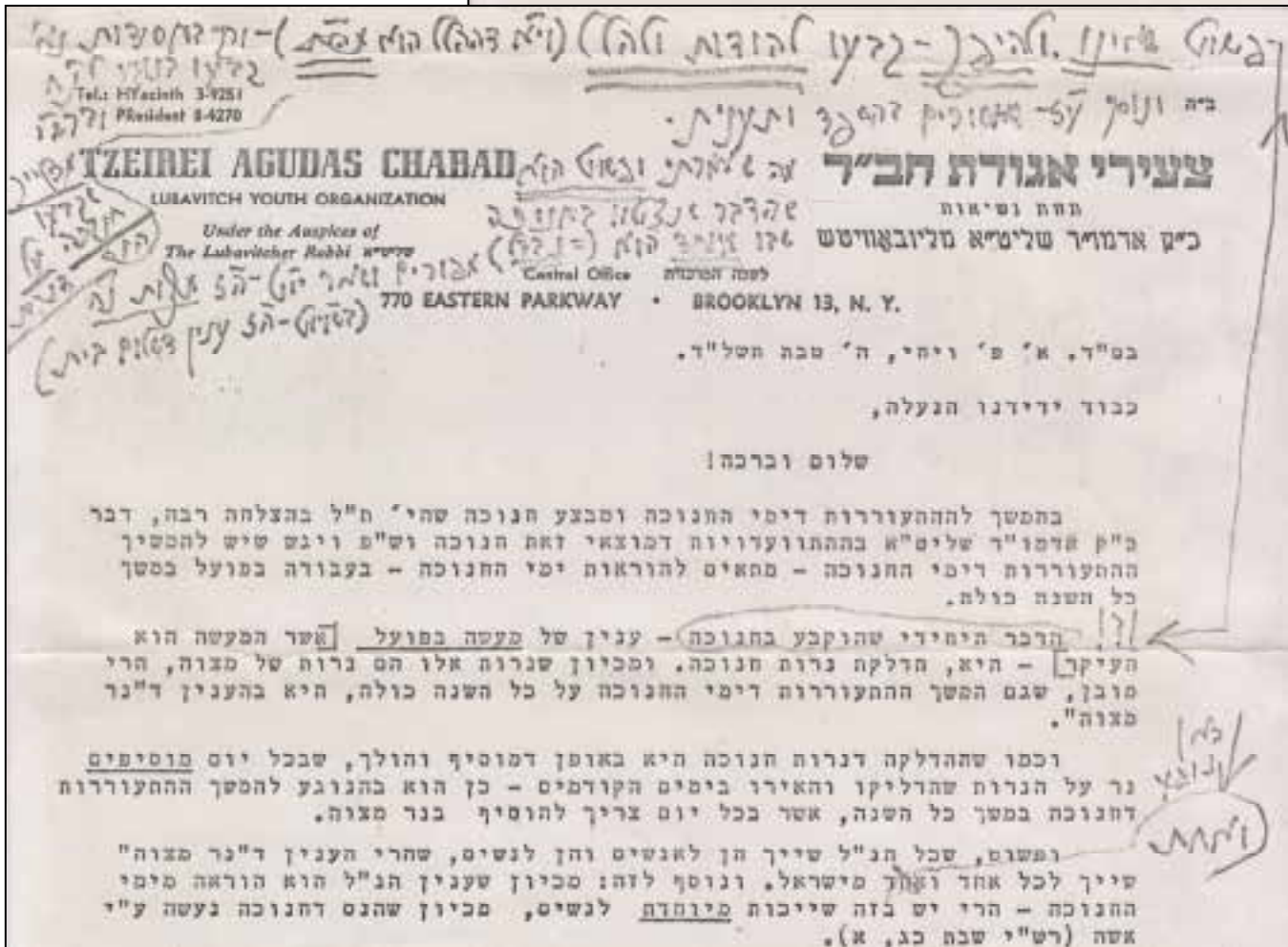
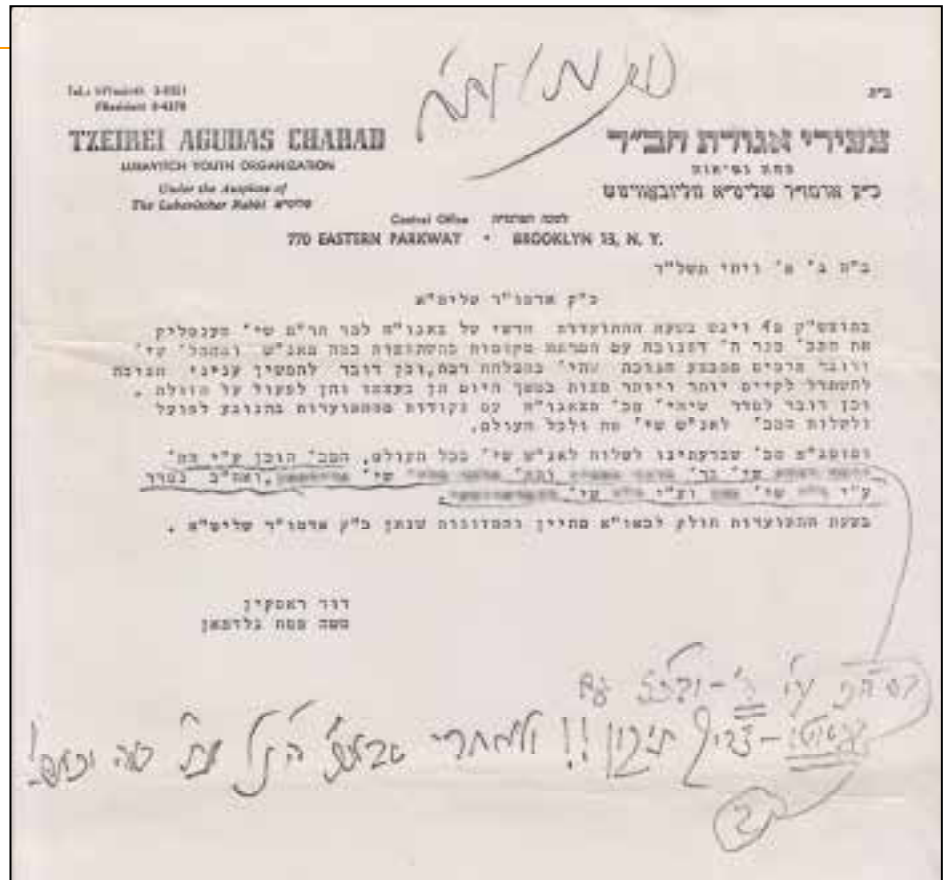
מה שאמרתי **ופשוט הוא** שהדבר שנצטוו בחנוכה שבו **מיוחד הוא (=גבדל)** מפורים ושאר יו"ט - ה"ז **מצות נ"ח** (בשוי"ט - ה"ז ענין דשלום בית)

1. ראה אנציקלופדיה תלמודית ערך הלל וערך חנוכה.

To the list of those who participated in the preparation of the letter, the Rebbe responded:

בסה"כ ע"י ד' - ובכ"ז גם בפשוטו - צריך תיקון!! ולאחרי שבמכ' הנ"ל נת' כמה וכמה!

In total the letter was prepared by four people--and still--even in its basic point, it needs correction. Even though the above mentioned letter [the *michtov kloli*] mentions many things that we do on Chanukah, and they still wrote that the only *mtzva* of chanuka is the menorah.



מוקדש ע"י

הרה"ת משה הלוי וזוגתו מרת קריינדל ומשפחתם שי' קליין

Establishing *a* Yom Tov

ה' טבת

ATTORNEY MR. NAT
LEWIN JOINS THE
FESTIVITIES IN 770
FOLLOWING THE
VICTORY OF HEI
TEVES.

**"זה היום יוקבע למועד תמידי בישראל, אשר בו יתגדל
ויתקדש שמיא רבא, ויתעוררו אלפי לבבות בישראל
בתשובה ועבודה שבלב..."**

מענה אדמו"ר הזקן בקשר עם היום-טוב י"ט כסלו

**"בבוא יום זה בשנה שלאח"ז ועד"ז מדי שנה בשנה, "נזכרים"
ועי"ז "נעשים" אותם הענינים שהיו בפעם הראשונה - להקבע
ל"יום סגולה" ו"עת רצון" בכל הקשור לנצחונם של הספרים..."**

משיחת כ"ק אדמו"ר בקשר עם היום-טוב ה' טבת



The Yom Tov of Yud Tes Kislev is well-known and is celebrated throughout the Jewish world. Our Rabbeim have taught us to recognize the underlying points of the episode that brought about these events, more than just the story of the Alter Rebbe's release from prison. As we are told, a *kitrug* had erupted in heaven against the Alter Rebbe for teaching and spreading Chassidus so freely, and it resulted in his physical arrest as well. The Alter Rebbe's release signified his victory in the heavenly court, that he was justified in spreading Chassidus. Thus, the Yom Tov of Yud Tes Kislev constitutes a unique spiritually significant day. In the Alter Rebbe's own words, "Established as an everlasting Yom Tov... It will arouse thousands of Jewish hearts to *teshuvah*..."

In a similar vein, when analyzing the Rebbe's words about the entire *seforim* saga, which culminated on Hei Teves, we discover a sentiment very much parallel to that of Yud Tes Kislev. As the court case was in progress, the Rebbe mentioned on several occasions that the claim of the opposing side that Chabad is not "active" must serve as an impetus for us to step-up all of our activities in spreading Yiddishkeit and *hafotzas hamaayonos*. In some instances, the Rebbe clearly mentioned the parallel between this story and that of the Alter Rebbe, stating that we must take the lesson from the *kitrug* in the Alter Rebbe's time.

Indeed during this period, the Rebbe launched new sweeping campaigns, bringing shlichus and the establishment of Chabad Houses to greater heights than ever before.

It is no wonder then, that the Rebbe spoke of Hei Teves as a spiritually significant day, a "*yom segula*" and an "*eis ratzon*," considering the spiritual side of the story.¹

The Allegation

The court case itself began on Yud Tes Kislev 5746.

While the trial endured, the Rebbe went to the Ohel five days a week, as opposed to the usual twice a month, which was the Rebbe's custom in those years. This meant that the Rebbe fasted most of the week!

Throughout Chanukah of that year, the Rebbe addressed the issue publically; at times only alluding to the ongoing story in general terms, and sometimes actually spelling it out clearly.

The first time the Rebbe mentioned this was at a joint gathering in 770 for the children of Tzivos Hashem and the elderly members of Kolel Tiferes Z'keinim Levi Yitzchok, on the fifth night of Chanukah.

In the second to last sicha, the Rebbe explained that Chanukah and Yud Tes Kislev are connected, for the Alter Rebbe's release was completed on Chanukah. Thus, Chanukah is an opportune time to increase *hafotzas hamaayonos*, by learning more Chassidus and also printing more *sifrei chassidus*. To that end, the Rebbe called on all those who possess manuscripts of Chassidus that had not yet been published, to immediately send them to Kehos for printing.

The Rebbe also announced that he would send financial assistance to shluchim everywhere, to help them with expanding existing *Batei-Chabad* and to establish new centers in places where none existed yet.

Another important point that the Rebbe stressed during that time was the necessity for an increase in *simcha*.

"We see the thickening of darkness all around us increasing daily," the Rebbe explained. "The way to fight all these unwanted things is by increasing in *simcha*. This will foil all evil plots – *utzu eitza ve'sufar!*"

Although in past generations it was customary to call for a fast-day when tragedy struck, in our time, the Rebbe explained, when people are physically weaker, we can certainly avert all harm by way of *simcha*.

[It should be noted that a few weeks earlier, the Rebbe spoke to the members of Agudas Chassidei Chabad in *yechidus* about the upcoming trial. With an anguished voice, the Rebbe asked them, "How much *Tehillim* did so-and-so say [to pray for this issue]? How much *tzeddaka* did so-and-so give?!" The Rebbe also mentioned another sect of Chassidim that proclaimed a fast-day in their community in wake of a similar tragedy. But in our community, the Rebbe noted with sorrow, there was no such response.^{2]}

All those who stand in the way of hafotzas hamaayonos will not be successful, and the entire issue will vanish without a trace!

In conclusion, the Rebbe asked that joyous farbrengens be held throughout the remaining days of Chanukah. The increase in light and joy will dispel all the darkness, and all those who stand in the way of *hafotzas hamaayonos* will not be successful, and the entire issue will vanish without a trace! The only remnants will be an increase in *hafotzas hamaayonos* even more than until now! Just as the story of the Alter Rebbe, who was told by his Rabbeim that following his imprisonment and release he was to increase in disseminating the teachings of Chassidus.³

At the end of the gathering, the Rebbe encouraged the singing of "*Uforatzta*" strongly for a very long time, something Chassidim had not seen in some time.

When the Chassidim heard the Rebbe's call for an outbreak of such joy with "*mesibos shel simcha*"--joyous gatherings

and farbrengens--and observed how the Rebbe was leading the way in this regard, they quickly realized that the Rebbe was engaged in a real fight against evil and that he sought to bring about victory by pure and immense joy. Immediately, arrangements were made for a grand *hisvaadus-Chassidim* to take place on the upcoming Motzaei Shabbos in 770.

Farbrengens

On the following Shabbos, the seventh day of Chanukah, the Rebbe held a farbrengen, once again alluding to some of the underlying points of the case.

Before beginning the *maamor*, the Rebbe mentioned that this *maamor* would be based on a *maamor* of the Rebbe Rashab from 90 years ago, which was recently printed for the first time.

The Rebbe continued on a side-note:

When a *maamor* is printed for the first time, it prompts added interest, and as a result many more people study it. This is one of the reasons that lately we have printed many never-before published *maamorim*, with the hope that this will increase the study of Chassidus.

One may ask, the Rebbe continued, how can we take the liberty to print these *maamorim* so freely, when for so many generations, these manuscripts were guarded in secrecy and never released to the public? True, we know the *moshol* by the Alter Rebbe about the need to grind the most precious stone of the king's crown in an attempt to save the life of his ill child; but there are already so many *maamorim* available in print. Why the need to "grind" more precious stones [and print even more *maamorim*]?

The answer is: There are some who will only learn a *maamor* if it is a newly-published one. It is therefore worth-while to "grind" more precious stones in the hope that they, too, will learn Chassidus!

The Rebbe concluded:

"It is therefore vital for everyone to learn these new *maamorim* and not just leave them on the shelf. This way the

When we hear a claim that Chassidim are not active, the first thing to know is that this is utterly false! Nevertheless... we must use this as a clear indication for us to do even more than we have until now! From now on, more emphasis should be placed on establishing new Batei-Chabad.

printing will be justified. But, even if there will be some who will not learn these *maamot*, this will not stop us from printing more. On the contrary; the printing will only increase, in the spirit of ⁴“וכאשר יענו אותו כן ירבה וכן יפרוץ.”

Towards the end of the farbrengen, the Rebbe announced a pleasant surprise:

Since we have called for more joyous farbrengens in the recent past, I will lead the charge on my own and hold another farbrengen tonight! And although arrangements have already been made for the *mashpi'im* to farbreng tonight, I'm not freeing them from their obligation. They should farbreng tomorrow morning and throughout the day of Zos Chanukah.

Not Active?

That night, as promised, the Rebbe farbrenged again. This time he spoke clearly about the court case and the alleged claim that Agudas Chabad is not an active organization.

Quoting a letter from the Alter Rebbe about the fallacy of the *misnagdim's* allegations against him, the Rebbe explained that although the actual claims were false, they had some roots in reality.

The same is true in our situation, said the Rebbe. When we hear a claim that Chassidim are not active and not spreading Yiddishkeit as much as they should, the first thing to know is that this is *utterly false!* Ever since the first Yud Tes Kislev, we have been engaged in *hafotzas*

hamaayonos, and we have already accomplished wonders in this regard!

Nevertheless, the mere fact that such an allegation can be conceived means that there must be a seed of truth involved. Thus, we must use this as a clear indication for us to do even more than we have until now! From now on, more emphasis should be placed on establishing new *Batei-Chabad*, both by expanding the existing centers, and establishing new ones as needed.

The Rebbe concluded with a request that all those who coordinate activities in Chabad Houses around the world should send in reports along with photographs, so that it can be published in an album for all to see.⁵



PHOTO: JEM/THE LIVING ARCHIVE / 9478

Later on during the farbrengen the Rebbe discussed the *kitrug* on the Alter Rebbe that brought about his imprisonment. Although a similar *kitrug* already arose and was dismissed during the lifetime of the Maggid, the Alter Rebbe's increase in teaching and spreading Chassidus prompted another *kitrug*.

The lesson is clear, concluded the Rebbe. When we spread Chassidus, some people think it's too much. They say, "Enough! The world cannot handle this; you are destroying the world!" But the lesson we learn from the Alter Rebbe is that there is no reason to decrease our efforts in *hafotzas hamaayonos*. On the contrary; we shall continually expand, more and more!

The Rebbe used the opportunity to again ask of all those who have unpublished manuscripts of Chassidus to send them to Kehos for printing.⁶ He also reminded everyone to send in their reports and photographs for the new album before Asara B'Teves so that it could be printed in time for Yud Shevat.⁷

Immediately following the Farbrengen, the Rebbe asked Rabbi Krinsky to send out a message to all the shluchim, instructing them to hold public menorah lightings on the final day of Chanukah and send in pictures of these events as soon as possible.

[During the sichos and farbrengens after Chanukah, the Rebbe repeatedly urged the hastening of the preparation of the album, reminding that it should be completed by Yud Shevat. Indeed, in honor of Yud Shevat, the album "Let There be Light" was published.]

More Farbrengens!

The next morning, according to the Rebbe's instructions, all the Chassidim gathered in 770 for a joyous farbrengen which lasted throughout the day, until the Rebbe returned from the Ohel in the evening.

And then came another surprise. The Rebbe farbrenged again that night,

Motzoei Zos Chanukah! This would be the third farbrengen over the span two days.) The Rebbe spoke again about the *kitrug* on the Alter Rebbe, and drew the lesson that we must increase in *hafotzas hamaayonos*, reiterating all the points he had discussed throughout Chanukah—expanding and establishing *Batei-Chabad*, printing Tanyas in cities across the globe, and more.⁸

In Conclusion

From all the Rebbe's words over Chanukah, we clearly discern that the Rebbe saw the *seforim* saga was a heavenly affair similar to Yud Tes Kislev.

The Rebbe continually drew upon the story of the Alter Rebbe and applied

its lessons to the situation at hand, calling for a major increase in *hafotzas hamaayonos* and a stepping-up in all the activities of Chabad and Chabad Houses. Just as the Alter Rebbe was told to exponentially increase his teaching and spreading Chassidus, the Rebbe repeatedly issued a call to use this affair as an indication and an opportunity to expand Chabad's activities, and to bring them to the greatest heights.⁹

In what seemed to be a spiritual battle against evil, the Rebbe continuously mentioned that due to the dense darkness of *galus* and the painful negative occurrences in the recent past, we must increase in joy; for joy will break through boundaries and bring about salvation. Clearly, the Rebbe was orchestrating an



PHOTO: JEM/THE LIVING ARCHIVE / 2021

Just like the Alter Rebbe understood where to improve by drawing upon the allegations against him, we too must draw a similar conclusion. We were presented with these claims *be'hashgocha protis*, in order that we step-up our activities even more than until now...

array of spiritual “warfare” to bring about a good ending.

Hei Teves

Hei Teves 5747. *Didan Notzach!* The news spread like wildfire across the Lubavitch world and streams of Chassidim headed to New York to be with the Rebbe for this special occasion.

The Rebbe himself joined in the celebration, davening mincha in the big shul downstairs and saying a sicha on each of the seven days that followed.

Interestingly, in the first sicha after mincha on Hei Teves, the Rebbe again mentioned the story of the Alter Rebbe's imprisonment, applying its lesson to the story of Hei Teves as well.

Just like the Alter Rebbe understood where to improve by drawing upon the allegations against him, we too must draw a similar conclusion. We have been accused of being “inactive” and not using the seforim and manuscripts of Chassidus. This claim obviously does not make any sense; as in fact, we have accomplished so much in these areas over the past decades. Ever since the Frierdiker Rebbe arrived in the United States, *hafotzas hamaayonos* and spreading Yiddishkeit were brought to the greatest heights. Nevertheless, we were presented with these claims *be'hashgocha protis*, in order that we step-up our activities even more than until now.¹⁰

Speaking of the increase in *hafotzas hamaayonos* that is expected of us now, after the victory, the Rebbe used terms as שלא בערך מערער--incomparably more and greater than before.

Just as the Alter Rebbe's teaching and

dissemination of Chassidus changed and grew dramatically after his release, marking the beginning of a new period known as “נאך פעטערבורג”, the Rebbe was not just calling for an increase in *hafotzas hamaayonos* after the victory, but for the start of an entirely new period in this regard.

For All the Nations to See

A key factor in the story of the victory of Hei Teves was the famous words said by the Rebbetzin in her testimony; that her father, the Frierdiker Rebbe, and everything he possessed, belonged to Chassidim.

Shortly after the *shiva* for the Rebbetzin in 5748, the Rebbe spoke of her contribution to the victory of the court case. In a sicha on 2 Adar 5748 the Rebbe said:

“Regarding the story of Yud Tes Kislev, the Alter Rebbe emphasized in his letter that his release was great and wondrous in the eyes of nations of the world... Similarly, the *nifteres* [the Rebbetzin] responded in a manner that impressed even non-Jews, saying that her father, the [Frierdiker] Rebbe, along with all his *seforim*, belong to the Chassidim. This brought about that the non-Jews included it in their verdict as well...”¹¹


This sentiment also parallels a key factor in the story of Yud Tes Kislev:

In the letter referenced in the sicha, written shortly after his release, the Alter Rebbe emphasized that the greatness of the miracle was the fact that it occurred before the eyes of the ministers of the nations, bringing thereby a great *kiddush Hashem*.¹²

Established Yom Tov

As mentioned, all of the above culminated in the establishing of Hei Teves as a Yom Tov by the Rebbe; a *yom segula* and an *eis ratzon*.

In fact, when speaking on Hei Teves in the following years, the Rebbe even asserted that this Yom Tov commands a special practice: buying and repairing *seforim*.¹³

Considering all of the Rebbe's words during the court case, especially during Chanukah 5746, and how the Rebbe constantly compared this story with Yud Tes Kislev, and that he continued to speak in this manner even after the victory on Hei Teves, as well as the call to action prompted in its wake, we gather new appreciation for the true meaning of the Yom Tov of Hei Teves. Simply put--Hei Teves is the Yud Tes Kislev of *dor hasvi'i!* 

A gutten Yom Tov!

1. See “The story of Hei Teves from a higher perspective” in A Chassidisher Derher Magazine; Teves, 5774, for a comprehensive essay on this subject.
2. As a result, daily minyanim for Tehillim were indeed instituted in 770.
3. Hisvaaduyos 5746 vol. 2 p. 130
4. Ibid. p. 152
5. Ibid. p. 190
6. Ibid. p. 199
7. Ibid. p. 209
8. Ibid. p. 215, 238
9. It should be noted that in the early years of the Rebbe's *nesius*, Rabbi Hodakov was heard saying that the goal of Lubavitch activities is to send a representative and open a branch in each and every one of the fifty of the United States. During the period of the court case in 5746, the Rebbe began to speak of opening more and more Chabad Houses, and eventually called for a Chabad House to be opened in every single place that there are Yidden!
10. Hisvaaduyos 5747 vol. 2 p. 172
11. As heard on the audio-recording of the sicha. It should be noted that in subsequent years, in the introduction to the *maamorim* edited and published by the Rebbe in honor of Hei Teves, mention is made of the fact that the victory was “apparent before the eyes of the nations...”
12. Igros Kodesh Admur Hazaken vol. 1 p. 97
13. See Hisvaaduyos 5749 vol. 2 p. 103-104

A Question of What and Why

Reb Shmuel Pinchas Levin usually woke up at the rooster's crow. He enjoyed being up then, as the streets of Homil were always quiet and empty at that time. Walking to the stream for mikveh in such a setting was conducive to thinking Chassidus, something this great chossid of the Tzemach Tzedek craved. "There isn't much opportunity for *avoda* in a busy work day," he once remarked.

One morning, while the stars were still out, Reb Shmuel Pinchas peeked through the window, and his mind gravitated to thoughts of his business. "I need to collect that debt from Peshovsky this week being that the new shipment is due to arrive next week." Reb Pinchas Shmuel stroked his short black beard. "I wonder if the day of collection has even come." But then he caught himself, "Oy! I'm putting my own needs before the I do as the Aibershter demands of me! For what purpose do I study Chassidus?"

It was only after davening that Reb Shmuel Pinchas allowed himself to examine his loan documents. The old chest where he kept those papers was in the attic, up the rickety ladder and through the trap door. Dust covered

everything like the *mon* from heaven, aside for a path created by his previous visits. This scene reminded Reb Shmuel Pinchas of *krias Yam Suf*. The hinges squealed as he opened the ancient oak case and he blanched. Red Shmuel Pinchas was staring at the bottom of an empty box.

"What?! They were here yesterday!" He exclaimed. "What should I do? Go to the police?" His hands were shaking. "Nah, they'll give me trouble. They'll accuse me of tax evasion or whatever. You never know with those fiends." The confident Reb Shmuel Pinchas was replaced by his bewildered double.



A frenzied knock rings through the door at the home of Reb Isaac, begging for a reply.

"Who's there?" a kind voice responds.

"It's, it's me, Levin from Niezgarim Street. Is Reb Isaac there?"

"Yes. Just a moment."

An old and wise face appears at the door. "What is it Reb yid?"

"I need to speak with you! Something terrible has occurred..."

It took time for the episode to be

related. Reb Shmuel Pinchas, after all, wasn't in the best of states. Reb Isaac Homiler advised him to travel to Lubavitch. "The Rebbe will know what to do," he reasoned.

The coach fare was expensive but well worth the money. And so, it was early the next morning, when the moon still hung over the snow covered houses, that the buggy carrying a drowsy Reb Shmuel Pinchas, squelched into the quiet town of Lubavitch.

"Ah, Reb Shmuel Pinchas. Is that you?" Reb Chaim Ber, the Rebbe's secretary, was trudging through the frost on his way to open the shul.

"Yes. Oy! It's so good that we met. Is the Rebbe able to receive me for *yechidus* today? Something terrible has happened!" Little puffs of steam issued from the hot tears rolling down his face.

"I can see that you're in pain. *Der Aibershter vet helf'n*. Yes, yes, come inside and warm yourself by the fire, have a hot glass of tea and I'll see to it that you have a *yechidus*. But never despair! The Aibershter always provides a *yeshua*."

The two must have looked odd together. A downcast young man of large

physical stature, yet stooped as though he carried the weight of hardship on his broad back, walking slowly behind an upbeat older man, small in size but confident in disposition. Troubled eyes were the only things they shared; one man suffered and the other was known for his empathy.

"How sweet it is to be back in Lubavitch," Reb Pinchas Shmuel sighed. "If only it were for a more joyous occasion."

"What?! They were here yesterday!" He exclaimed. "What should I do? Go to the police? Nah, they'll give me trouble..."

The pair entered Reb Chaim Ber's office. A simple desk stood in the middle of the room filling a third of the cramped space. A fire burned in the hearth, defying the frigid weather outside the paneled wooden walls. Over the crackling flames, Reb Shmuel Pinchas heard a voice from the nearby room.

"The Rebbe begins his day by reading a portion of Tehillim and his holy chamber is adjacent to this room," Reb Chaim Ber whispered in explanation. "I'm going to request of the Rebbe that he permit your entrance as soon as possible."

Oh, how wonderful it was to listen to the Rebbe's sweet recitation of Tehillim! Reb Shmuel Pinchas began to cry softly, the tears already accustomed to their trail down his cheeks.

After immersing in the mikva and davening fervently, Reb Shmuel Pesach was allowed into the Rebbe's room. He poured out his dreadful plight with tears in his eyes, and the Rebbe acknowledged the hurt expressed on his face and sighed.

"Sometimes," the Rebbe began, "when tragedies of this nature occur we must stop asking 'what' and begin asking 'why.' Heaven may be sending us a message to remind us of our obligations.

"Now I will instruct you on how to proceed," the Rebbe said, and Reb Shmuel Pinchas listened intently to his holy guidance.



Snow fell incessantly and it was hard to maneuver the carriage. Tall pines hugged the small path and their needles sagged under the weight of the white deluge. The blizzard intensified; the branches couldn't handle the burden and a tree unloaded onto the ornate coach driving below.

Thump!

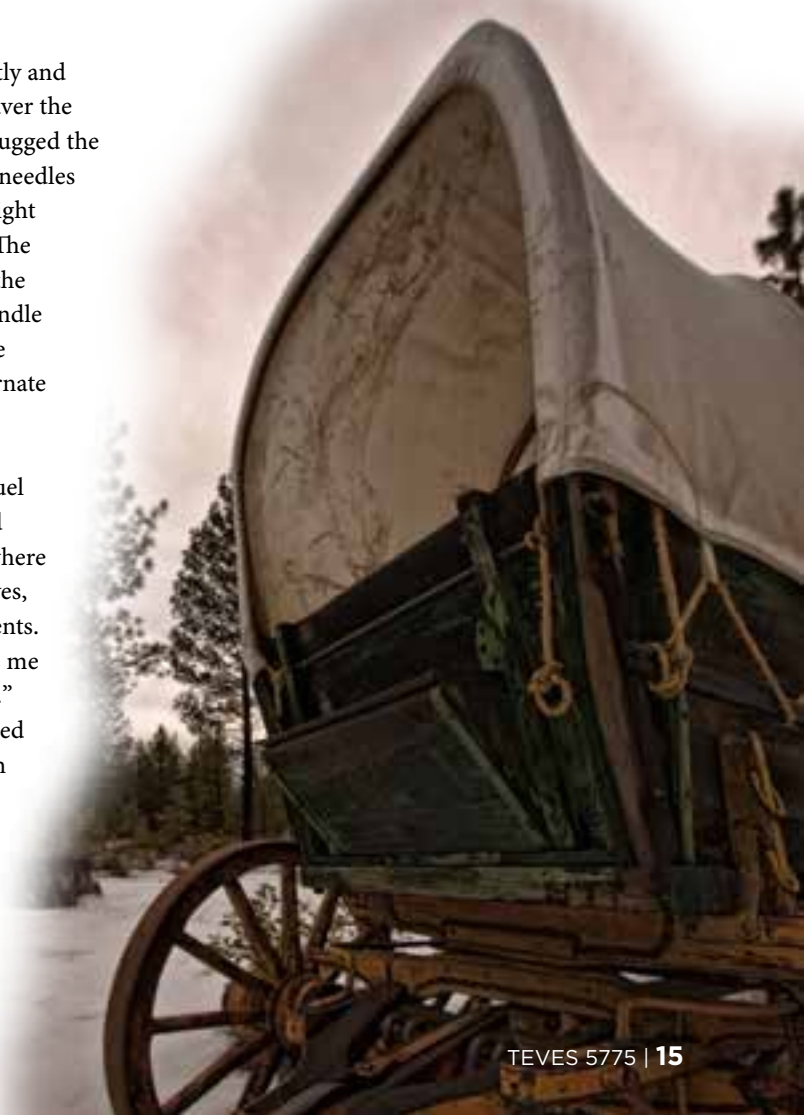
Startled, Reb Shmuel Pinchas woke up and attempted to recall where he was. "Yawn! Ah, yes, yes, the loan documents. The Rebbe. He wants me to travel to Bobruisk."

His legs felt cramped and he rose to stretch them. "I remember. That wasn't the only command he gave. The Rebbe also mentioned an inn near Bobruisk.

What inspiration can I possibly receive there? I must spend Shabbos amongst peasants, he said."

Reb Shmuel Pinchas looked outside. "I wonder what time it is."

The vehicle halted suddenly, flinging its standing passenger onto the thick wooden floor. Reb Shmuel Pinchas tasted blood. The wagon driver entered the cabin dressed in a



Raucous peasants, drunken singing, clanking glasses, smoke, and the stale smell of spirits and broiled meat overwhelmed him; but his new attitude gave him comfort despite all.

heavy wool parka with matching gloves. Icicles hung from his blonde mustache. “My good sir, *mne zhal*, I’m sorry.”

Reb Shmuel Pinchas wiped the dust off his short black jacket. “What happened?”

“Sir, we’ve arrived at the inn. Sunset approaches.”

“An arrival indeed,” Reb Shmuel Pinchas muttered as he pulled his trunk through the snow. “An arrival indeed.”

The small log cabin looked cozy enough to him; smoke billowed from the red brick chimney, testifying that a warm room awaited. Timing was what bothered the chossid. “Quite a mundane place to spend a holy day,” he thought.

But as Reb Shmuel Pinchas tugged at his beard, he concluded, “Actually, the destination becomes sanctified by the Rebbe’s designation.”

All of his senses were engaged when he entered the inn. Raucous peasants, drunken singing, clanking glasses, smoke, and the stale smell of spirits and broiled meat overwhelmed him; but his new attitude gave him comfort despite all.



Solitude was Reb Shmuel Pinchas’s companion during Shabbos, and he had half the mind to invite some gentiles to dine with him, but thought the better of it. The little food that he brought with him combined with the vodka he acquired, satisfied his frugal appetite, and

before long the sun set, bringing Shabbos to an end. For the first time that he could call to mind, Reb Shmuel Pinchas was actually glad that it had. “I have yet to discover the purpose of my trip here; although I of course have faith that it will eventually become evident.”

The men at the inn weren’t at all courteous and sleep wouldn’t come to him then. As he paced his tiny quarters, he thought, “In any event, I will leave at first light tomorrow. Bobruisk proper will be the last phase of this taxing journey.”

At dawn, an exhausted Reb Shmuel Pinchas left the inn and its memories behind. He climbed the iron steps to his wagon, and promptly fell into a slumber. Suddenly, after what felt like a mere moment, Reb Shmuel Pinchas was roused by relentless knocking. “Who is it?” he called while rubbing his bleary eyes.

A familiar looking heavy-set man entered. It was one of the peasants he had spent Shabbos with in the inn.

“My esteemed friend! How is the good sir?” His chin wobbled as he spoke and his cheeks quivered. His bulbous nose, filled with broken veins, sat awkwardly on his face.

“Good, thank G-d. What do you want?”

“As you can see, my dearest acquaintance, I am a merchant, and I assume that you are too.” His breath

reeked of stale alcohol, and although he wore the usual green tunic and black caftan, one couldn’t help but notice the frayed sleeves and the haggard look about him. He definitely did not play the part of the merchant that well.

Reb Shmuel Pinchas took pains not to reveal his suspicion. “How may I be of service?”

“My friends and I deal with jewels and we’re going to Bobruisk to obtain more of those precious stones.”

“Okay, so what have I got to do with this?”

The man smiled. “Well, we only have unpaid loan documents as barter and we want you to establish the trust between us and potential vendors.”

Reb Shmuel Pinchas suspected that these documents were the ones stolen from his attic. His mind flooded with the Rebbe’s instructions, and he found himself agreeing to accompany the peasants. “I believe we have a deal, sir.” The luxurious cart, previously carrying one man, now carried four.

Reb Shmuel Pinchas sat between the window and a skinny, tall fellow with glasses. “I’m almost certain that I’ve found my documents; I lack only the certainty attained by sight.”

This precisely was what he demanded when they arrived at the bustling city and parked at the house of his fellow chossid,



Reb Moshe Meshl. "I feel it is only right that I be shown the objects I'm to vouch for."

"Of course, sir," agreed the heavy one, who proceeded to immediately pull a bundle out of his sack. "My friend," he said with a flourish, "the parchments."

Had Reb Shmuel Pinchas not suspected them already, he would have screamed. He could recognize that handwriting anywhere. "May I analyze these privately?"

Reb Shmuel Pinchas flipped through the documents. "Hmm... a Prezewska, two Stefanovitchs. It seems they're all here!"

He sidled up to Reb Moshe Meshl and whispered of his discovery. "Loan documents were stolen from me last week and I'm certain these are they."

A troubled look registered on Reb Moshe Meshl's face. "We have found the mouse but have not any poison!"

He looked up thoughtfully. "Hashem always provides a solution. Let us call the boys..."



Besides the large oak tree and duck pond, a passerby on Nikolai Avenue that morning would have noticed that the street was recently the scene of a struggle. Indeed, Reb Moshe Meshl gathered his sons and nephews, all strong youth, and told them what had occurred,



encouraging them to take action. The confrontation was brutal with a few teeth lost and a broken arm, but the younger men prevailed over their grayer opponents, and before long they had them trussed up in a cellar. Reb Shmuel Pinchas was relieved at last. "Thank you my dear friend. I'm forever indebted to your courage and wits."

"Don't thank me for I am but a messenger. Offer gratitude to the Rebbe who guided you in the endeavor."

One additional thing had to then be accomplished. "We must summon the police and have these men imprisoned."

"A fine idea, Reb Shmuel Pinchas, but on Sunday the station is closed," explained Reb Moshe Meshl, the Bobruisk native.

"Tomorrow will bring the same results as today. At least, boruch Hashem, I've recovered my property!"

A fate other than the one planned by the aforementioned mortals awaited the thieves; Reb Moshe Meshl's son came in later that day with a police officer. "The name is Borisohn. I heard you men found some robbers. What happened?"

After the details were related to the law enforcer by cacophony of eager voices, the crowd learned that this wasn't the crooks' first incident. "We've been searching for these criminals for months now," Borisohn related.

Armed men arrived soon after and everyone headed home. Reb Moshe Meshl to his quaint cottage, Reb Shmuel Pinchas to Homil, and the criminals to prison, for isn't that an outlaw's true abode? **D**

(This story is based on a letter by the Frierdiker Rebbe; Igros Kodesh vol. 8. p. 491)

להביא לימות המשיח

CONNECT THE DOTS

Moshiach in the News

A CHANGING WORLD

By the end of the 1980s drastic changes were coming about in the world. One after another, events that seemed completely unrealistic in the recent past suddenly became part of the constantly changing present.

In the Soviet Union, the Iron Curtain fell. The walls which had oppressed millions of Yidden for seventy years came crumbling down, giving way to a mass-exodus of Yidden, along with an amazing revival of Yiddishkeit, which had been almost nonexistent beforehand. It also brought an end to the Cold War between Russia and the West.

The Gulf War, bringing with it a scare of ominous clouds of danger and destruction for the Yidden of Eretz Yisrael, had unbelievable results. The war had been won in the Persian Gulf, and the Scud missiles fired towards Eretz Yisrael did not manage to wreak the predicted havoc.

Countless nations turned toward democracy, and for the first time, militaries were being used for humanitarian purposes. Under the auspices of the two superpowers, the United States and Russia, many countries adopted resolutions to lessen the amount of ammunition and weapons they produced.

The Rebbe maintained that these amazing events were not by chance, rather that they are signs of a new era dawning upon the world and that we are seeing a preview of the effect of Moshiach. Hashem had begun affecting the hearts

and minds of world leaders to bring about changes in world order.

Quoting the *possuk* וְכָתְבוּ חֶרְבוֹתָם לְאֵתִים ("and they shall turn their swords into plowshares") the Rebbe pointed toward the resolutions to lessen production of weaponry¹. Regarding the Gulf War, the Rebbe quoted the Medrash, which speaks of the Persian king attacking an Arabian king, concluding with the statement of *Melech Hamoshiach* standing on the roof of the *Beis Hamikdosh* declaring² עֲנוּמִים הִגִּיעַ זְמַן גְּאוּלְתָּכֶם.

NEW YORK TIMES AD

In³ an attempt to bring this message of the Rebbe to the world, Rabbi Yosef Gutnick, along with Hatomim Shlomo Uminer joined forces with Rabbi Yehoshua Metzger of The Chai Foundation (Chabad Advertising International), arranging for an ad to be placed in the New York Times, which would portray the Rebbe's view, namely, that the recent world events are leading us to Moshiach.

It was agreed that the ad would begin with a description of the recent world events. The incredible phenomenon of regimes and dictatorships being overthrown peacefully, along with a general gravitation towards world peace and anti-aggression, were items that every person followed in the news and were able to relate to. The ad contained the theme of 'connect the dots,' bringing the readers to understand on their own that these occurrences cannot simply be coincidental; and to conclude that a hidden hand is leading the world in a

very specific direction, towards an era of goodness and kindness.

The ad went on to explain: The Lubavitcher Rebbe emphasizes that all of these events are a prelude to the era of the ultimate redemption of Moshiach, which is a cornerstone of the Jewish faith. We are standing before an era that will drastically change the world order. However, we cannot just sit back and enjoy the spectacle; each and every one of us must take an active part in furthering the changing times through bettering his and her personal surroundings. Every act of goodness, every additional commitment to Torah and mitzvos, can accelerate the dawn of this era.⁴ [Note that in the ad, the end of the word 'Moshiach' is left unwritten, for the reader to 'conclude' with his or her own actions.]

Countless weeks were spent, together with the advertisement agency of Mr. J.J. Gross, writing and perfecting a script which would be based on the Rebbe's own words, in a very simple and comprehensible way.

When the final version was ready in the beginning of Elul, it was brought to Rabbi Leibel Groner for the Rebbe, to obtain his consent and *brocha*. Over the next few days, nothing was heard from *mazkirus*.

THE REBBE RESPONDS

On Monday, 9 Elul, the Rebbe visited the Ohel, and upon his return, gave the response to the proposed ad. The Rebbe wrote a very encouraging reply, in which he emphasized that the benefit of the ad is very evident and concrete:

In preparing this article we were assisted by Rabbi Yehoshua Metzger and Rabbi Shlomo Uminer.

נתקבל ות"ח ודבר בעתו מה טוב - ובג"ד
[ובגדון דידן] הנראה דוקא בעיני בשר ובאופן
דממש, ומתחיל ב"אני" ואח"כ ו"דודי" - ויה"ר
שיה' (ודודי) כפליים (ובמילא לתושי') דכפל ה"ז
ישועה. אזכיר על הציון

The Rebbe instructed that the ad be translated into Hebrew and Yiddish, and be printed in the *Algemeiner Journal*, as well as in the Hebrew press, directing them to hurry in order that it be printed in the next possible issue. Although initially Rabbi Yosef Gutnick had undertaken to cover the expenses of the ad, the Rebbe informed them that he would cover the costs of the Hebrew and Yiddish ads himself; adding a message for Rabbi Gutnick: "מ'זאל ניט מאכן קיין קונצ'ן" ["He shouldn't play around with this"].

Upon receiving the answer, the organizers were filled with excitement; it was not uncommon for the Rebbe to reject proposed ads regarding Moshiach topics, especially in such public and widely read media outlets. However, their ad was not only accepted, it was actually embraced by the Rebbe, not only instructing that it be disseminated much further than originally planned, but even insisting on personally covering the additional expenses. They immediately fulfilled the Rebbe's instructions and had the ad translated. They also forwarded the original version to shlichim around the USA to have it placed in their local newspapers.

QUESTIONS

That night, riots broke out in Crown Heights. An African-American child

THE NEW YORK TIMES THURSDAY, AUGUST 26, 1981

AB

77

Draw Your Own Conclusion

These are amazing times.

The Iron Curtain tumbled...Iraq is humbled...The people of Israel emerge whole from under a rainstorm of murderous missiles...An entire beleaguered population is airlifted to safety overnight...A tidal wave of Russian Jews reaches Israel...Truth and justice take center stage, with America emerging as the leading global power...Nations around the world turn to democracy...Plus countless other amazing developments that are taking place in front of our eyes.

Any one of these phenomena by itself is enough to boggle the mind. Connect them all together, and a pattern emerges that cannot be ignored.

Yes, we are living in the most extraordinary times - as our world evolves toward a state of peace, and mankind thrives toward a state of perfection. The times are changing - not just for the better, but truly for the best.

A cornerstone of Jewish faith is the belief that, ultimately, good and peace must triumph. This is the essence of "Moshiach" - who will usher in the final redemption ordained in the Torah.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, emphasizes that these remarkable events are merely a prelude to the final Redemption, culminating in unity among people, domestic harmony, and cessation of hostilities between races, neighbors and nations.

And these developments can be accelerated through the small but important acts of goodness and charity that are within the reach of every man, woman and child. It is our job to lift ourselves, our communities and our societies toward the great dawn we are all witnessing. And it doesn't take much to move forward - a kind word, a gift to the needy, treating others with respect, strengthening one's commitment to the Torah and its directives.

The Era of Moshiach is upon us. Learn about it. Be a part of it. All you have to do is open your eyes. Inevitably, you'll draw your own conclusion.

MOSHIACH

Be a Part of it!

For information call **FRIENDS OF CHABAD LUBAVITCH** (212) 464-4421
or contact your local Chabad Lubavitch Center.

A public service message from Chabad Lubavitch, sponsored by Joseph C. Glick, Baltimore, Maryland.

They received the Rebbe's unequivocal disapproval. The ad was to be printed exactly the way it had initially been drafted.

had been struck by a car driven by a Lubavitcher, later dying from his wounds. The tension in the area exploded into mass rioting and looting, and later that night Yankel Rosenbaum ז"ל was murdered in cold blood as he was innocently walking down President Street. The chaos continued for three days with wild pillaging and destruction throughout the neighborhood.

But that was not all. That morning troubling news had arrived from the Soviet Union. The vice-president of the new government was trying to usurp the presidency from Mikhail Gorbachev, placing him under house arrest in his summer home in Crimea. Less than a year after the Iron Curtain had fallen, it seemed that the wheel was turning backward, and that the new age of Russia would return to an abyss of Communist dictatorship, from whose shackles the country had only recently been released.

As a result of these perturbing incidents, the validity of the ad was now being thrown into doubt. A large emphasis had been placed on events in the Soviet Union as one of the major signs of the upcoming redemption. But in light of the current situation, it would seem ludicrous for readers to believe that it was the prelude for an era of peace, all the while the news reported ominous winds blowing the USSR in the opposite direction.

NO NEED TO WORRY!

The events in Russia concerned Chassidim in particular. A significant group of shlichim had moved to Russia in recent years, and scores of bochorim were presently in the country, running

the many camps opened to serve the Jewish children swarming in droves to learn about Yiddishkeit. Relatives and friends around the world worried deeply for their safety, suggesting that they evacuate the country until the politics calmed down. The shlichim wrote to the Rebbe, and everyone waited anxiously to hear what the Rebbe would say.

The Rebbe's answer was not long in coming; *mazkirus* very quickly issued the following response:

בתמהון הכי גדול קיבלתי השאלה - כפשוט
ימשיכו בכל התכניות שלהם, כולל הקייטנות עד
גמירא כמתוכנן. זה יצליחם ויבשרו טוב. אזכיר
על הציון.

"With **very great** surprise I received the **question**. Obviously they should continue with all of their plans, including the summer camps, all the way through as planned. Hashem will grant them success and may they herald good news. I will mention [this] at the Ohel."

The Rebbe's words were immediately publicized in all cities of the USSR, spreading encouragement and calm to all of the Chassidim, who in turn brought the Rebbe's words to their thousands of *mekuravim* throughout Russia⁵.

Hearing of the Rebbe's encouraging response, the organizers of the New York Times ad felt that perhaps a line should be added, addressing the apparent inconsistency between a time of goodness and kindness, and the current world events; conveying the Rebbe's assurance, that the situation in Russia will turn out well.

They conveyed the question to the Rebbe, outlining their new plan and asking for the Rebbe's consent. A short while later

they received the Rebbe's unequivocal disapproval. The ad was to be printed exactly the way it had initially been drafted.

Upon receiving the reply, the organizers immediately completed the final touches to the design, and forwarded it to the New York Times, as per the Rebbe's instruction.

On Thursday, 12 Elul, the full page ad was finally featured, in its full appeal and splendor. To the surprise and delight of the organizers, the same newspaper also published wonderful news from Russia; the coup had been defeated peacefully, and the previous government regained control over the country, just as the Rebbe had predicted.

The news caused people all over to heave a sigh of relief, while simultaneously reading--in the ad--that the era of the *geulah* is upon the world; and that the recent events (of that very day!) are all a prelude to the coming of Moshiach, encouraging them to join in the preparations as well. **D**

1. Hisva'aduyos 5752 vol. 2 pg. 267

2. Hisva'aduyos 5751 vol. 1 pg. 203

3. The following is based on an interview by A Chassidisher Derher with two activists involved in this project; Rabbi Shlomo Uminer as well as Rabbi Yehoshua Metzger, director of the Chai Foundation.

4. Rabbi Uminer notes that when crew members of CNN asked the Rebbe what is his message to the world (12 Cheshvan, 5752), the Rebbe stated this exact idea, saying: "It was printed in all the press of all the countries; Moshiach is ready to come now, it is only from our part to do something additional in the realm of goodness and kindness".

5. See *Dyedushka*; *harabi milubavitch viyahadut Russia* p. 618 and further, for more details.



THE REBBE WISHES L'CHAIM TO THE ASSEMBLED AT THE FARBRENGEN, ZOS CHANUKAH 5738.

לעבן
מיט'ן
רבי'ן

SEUDAS HODA'A

Everyone knows that the Yom Tov of Rosh Chodesh Kislev marks the day that the Rebbe left 770 for home for the first time since his heart attack on Shemini Atzeres, 5738. A lesser known fact is that the Rebbe chose the day of Zos Chanukah to celebrate this miraculous recovery. In an interesting chain of events, the Rebbe held a special surprise farbrengen in the midst of a seemingly ordinary winter afternoon.

Zos Chanukah
5738

On Rosh Chodesh Kislev, the doctors decided that the Rebbe had recovered satisfactorily enough from his heart attack, and that it was now safe for him to return home for the first time since Shemini Atzeres. Nineteen days later, on Yud-Tes Kislev, the Rebbe held the first farbrengen in the downstairs shul—as opposed to speaking from his room—since the occurrence, with thousands of Chassidim in attendance.

But just as things seemed to be back to normal, the upcoming Chanukah was full of surprises. On the first night, the Rebbe davened Mincha and participated in the kindling of the menorah downstairs. On the third night, the Rebbe surprised

all of the assembled by saying a sicha, concluding with the announcement that he would now give Chanukah gelt to everyone present. The Rebbe then walked to the back of the shul, where, standing near the door, he handed everyone a dollar bill from the packet that he had brought down with him before Mincha. When the line was done, all the men exited the shul and the women entered in order to receive dollars as well.

Thursday, Fifth Night

Upon returning from the Ohel, the Rebbe entered the overcrowded downstairs shul for Mincha. During the singing of “Haneiros Halolu” the Rebbe surprisingly

signaled to start a circular dance in the center of the shul, motioning to the many individuals on the bleachers to join in as well. An atmosphere of Simchas Torah reigned in the shul as all present joyously sang and danced vigorously. In the midst of the singing, everyone slowly stopped dancing in order to watch the Rebbe as he clapped and danced in the front. But the Rebbe instructed the circle to continue and went on to clap his hands fiercely, in a manner normally reserved for Simchas Torah!

On his way out, the Rebbe picked up and returned the fallen cane of an elderly individual standing alongside the *shvil*.

Sunday, Seventh Day of Chanukah

During the morning hours, the service lane in front of 770 was filled with buses transporting children who attend the “Wednesday Hour” Release Time program, and who came to join a special Chanukah rally with the Rebbe.

The rally began with a skit acted out by the children, followed by some words about Chanukah from the emcee, Rabbi Yaakov Yehuda (J.J.) Hecht.

At 3:15, the band struck up “*Nodah Biyehuda*,” with the children singing along enthusiastically. The Rebbe entered the shul and walked up to the special *bima* constructed in honor of the occasion, all along the way encouraging the children singing.

After Mincha and menorah lighting, the Rebbe asked Rabbi Hecht what was next, to which he replied that the Rebbe will distribute dimes and then go back upstairs. The Rebbe smiled and asked “You want to be relieved from my presence already?” Rabbi Hecht quickly answered “*Chas v’shalom!*” The Rebbe informed him that he would like to say a sicha, but first the children should recite the 12 Pesukim.

After the sicha, the Rebbe asked Rabbi Hecht to translate the words for the children, as was his custom. When a second microphone could not be obtained, the Rebbe offered him to come onto the *bima* and use his microphone. Naturally, however, Rabbi Hecht was hesitant to go up, but the Rebbe insisted and he had no choice.

Monday, Zos Chanukah

At 12:30 p.m. the Rebbe called Rabbi Hecht into his room. The Rebbe thanked him for the great *nachas* that yesterday’s rally caused, and that if Rabbi Hecht wishes, the Rebbe would edit the translation of the sicha. But if not, “I have enough work without it!” the Rebbe said, pointing to all the letters on his desk.

The Rebbe then brought up a different topic:



“I’m looking for a ‘*bal-meretz*’ and a ‘*bal-sod*’ [loosely translated: a determined and capable individual, and someone who can keep a secret] and I have found you!”

The Rebbe continued to say that he would like to hold a farbrengen after Mincha, during which he would wash and have *challah*, and distribute *kos shel brocha* to all present, along with *mashke* to all of the shluchim.

The reason it should not be public knowledge in advance, the Rebbe explained, was so that it wouldn’t disturb people in middle of their workday.

When Rabbi Hecht inquired whether he should tell the members of *mazkirus*, the Rebbe answered that he should not. The next question was whether to notify WLCC (World Lubavitch Communications Center), and the Rebbe responded in the negative, reasoning that although they will not be able to prepare a hook-up in advance, an audio-recording of the farbrengen will surely be made available afterwards.

Rabbi Hecht continued to ask if he may tell the *bochurim* in 770, and the Rebbe responded, “If you tell the *bochurim*, it’s like telling the whole world, until Australia!”

He then asked if he could let Morristown yeshiva know (his son Shimon was

learning there at the time). The Rebbe responded, “You have institutions here in New York, and there are always things happening. Just tell him to come to Crown Heights without mentioning anything about a farbrengen!” The Rebbe did agree, however, that Rabbi Hecht could let his brothers know about the farbrengen in advance.

The Rebbe ended the conversation with an anecdote from the Frierdiker Rebbe: “When it comes to keeping a secret, there are three types of people: The first is the one who lets it out right away. Then there’s one who doesn’t let others know, yet his expression discloses that he is holding a secret. But the third person hides it so well that it is not even noticeable that he is withholding something. Surely, you’ll choose the right category!”

A few minutes before Mincha, a rumor spread that there was to be a surprise farbrengen. However, this was not confirmed by *mazkirus*, as they themselves had not been informed about the upcoming event. But as it turned out, immediately after Mincha, *challah* and microphones appeared near the Rebbe’s farbrengen seat, not leaving much room for doubt. There was a subsequent rush to the telephones, as everyone wished to inform their friends and relatives of the

latest developments, so that they too can take part in the farbrengen.

At 3:35, the Rebbe entered the shul and sat down in his place, and the farbrengen was underway. The first sicha began with the Rebbe saying that since Chanukah is a time of joy, he is going to wash, and that anyone else who washes along with him will be blessed through *kos shel brocha*, which, in turn, will extend to those who don't wash as well.

After washing, the Rebbe noticed the two large wedding-like challos, which were prepared by Rabbi Hecht, and he glanced at him with a broad smile.

[The Rebbe later commented to him that in the future, only one challah should be used, lest someone mistakenly think that *lechem mishneh* is obligatory during weekdays as well.]

Then the Rebbe announced that anyone who has already washed or was going

wash should come up to receive a piece of challah. This caused great chaos, as all of the Chassidim instantaneously crowded around the Rebbe's table. "I didn't mean all at once!" the Rebbe said, giving one-and-a-half challos to be divided among the assembled.

During the farbrengen, the Rebbe strongly encouraged the singing of the Simchas Torah *hakafos nigun*, as he had

“WHEN IT COMES TO KEEPING A SECRET, THERE ARE THREE TYPES OF PEOPLE... SURELY, YOU’LL CHOOSE THE RIGHT CATEGORY!”

done on the fifth night of Chanukah. This was understood by Chassidim to

be a substitute for the Rebbe's absence at *hakafos* earlier that year.

Throughout the sichos, there were many hints that this farbrengen was indeed a replacement for the Simchas Torah farbrengen. The Rebbe spoke passionately about the importance of rejoicing on Chanukah, explaining that the days of Chanukah are equivalent to those of Sukkos, and that the eighth day is like Shemini Atzeres.

The Rebbe also mentioned the importance of the daily study of Chitas, something usually discussed at the Simchas Torah farbrengen.

The Rebbe went on to explain that essentially there should have been a ninth day of Chanukah, just as every Yom Tov is celebrated one day longer in the Diaspora. And although this has not been established with regard to Chanukah, but because the issue is brought up in various



PHOTO: JEM/THE LIVING ARCHIVE / 129244

THE REBBE ENCOURAGES THE SINGING OF A FREILECHE NIGUN AT THE FARBRENGEN, ZOS CHANUKAH 5738.



PHOTO: JEW/THE LIVING ARCHIVE / 22764

CHASSIDIM WAIT OUTSIDE 770 MOTZAEI SIMCHAS TORAH 5738, HOPING TO HEAR SOME NEWS ON THE REBBE'S HEALTH.

ESSENTIALLY THERE SHOULD HAVE BEEN A NINTH DAY OF CHANUKAH, JUST AS EVERY YOM TOV IS CELEBRATED ONE DAY LONGER IN THE DIASPORA.

Torah sources, it must in fact have some significance. Therefore everyone is to increase in *mitzvot* on this “ninth” day as well; and joyfully so!

Towards the end of the farbrengen, the Rebbe said that due to the fact that on Simchas Torah he was unable to distribute *kos shel brocha*, he will do so now.

The Rebbe led the *bentching* in a special tune, and distributed *kos shel brocha* afterwards to all present, giving *mashke* to communal activists, leaders of institutions, shlichim, and the relatives of shlichim who weren't present.

Before taking leave, the Rebbe blessed everyone that we should soon merit greeting Moshiach with much joy. He then began singing “*Ki V'Simcha*” while leaving shul. The Chassidim broke out in a lively dance which continued for a long time, as if it were Simchas Torah!

Tuesday, 3 Teves

The Rebbe called Rabbi Hecht into his room and began by saying that he had really wanted to thank him yesterday for

arranging everything so well, but he had not done so during the distribution of *kos shel brocha* due to the many people standing nearby.

The Rebbe then asked, “How did Reb Berel Junik find out about the farbrengen?”

Rabbi Hecht replied that he had notified him a bit earlier than everyone else, so that he can serve the Rebbe as usual. The Rebbe nodded in agreement.

He then told the Rebbe that his brother, Rabbi Avrohom Hecht had spoiled the secret! He had come to 770, and in response to Rabbi Groner's inquiry as to why he had come, he said, “To get a seat”. It was then that people sensed that something special was happening. (The Rebbe smiled.)

The Rebbe gave Rabbi Hecht twenty dollars as reimbursement for the expenses of the farbrengen, and then he asked what was doing with the translation of the sicha, adding that he should urge Reb Nissan Mindel to prepare it.

Friday, 6 Teves

The Rebbe called Rabbi Hecht in again, asking for a full account of exactly how much money was spent on the farbrengen. The Rebbe added that if he refuses to reveal the sum, then the next time such a thing has to happen, “I'll tell someone else about it instead!”

The Rebbe asked how much the *mashke* cost. Rabbi Hecht answered that he had gotten it for free; explaining that there was a man who was close to Chabad that owned a liquor store nearby, and he had donated a few cases. The Rebbe then inquired about the cost of the challos, to which Rabbi Hecht replied that the total was \$65. The Rebbe gave him \$25 and said “I have already given you \$20 yesterday, here's another \$25, and as for the last \$20, I'll give you a bargain--I'll allow you to chip in!”

Rabbi Hecht was still reluctant to accept the money, saying that he was only taking it because he must listen (“*kabbolas ol*”), but the Rebbe told him to take the money happily and wished him a “Good Shabbos.” **D**

1. See Toras Menachem vol. 2 p. 65



mein MOTTLE'E

The rosh yeshiva and staunchly devoted chossid

H A G A O N R' M O R D E C H A I M E N T L I K

Upon arriving in the United States, the Frierdiker Rebbe set about to establish the first Tomchei Tmimim on American soil. In the quest for a befitting rosh yeshiva, many prominent names were suggested, but the Frierdiker Rebbe chose Horav Mordechai Mentlik for the position, referring to him affectionately as “mein Mottel’e”.

This title may best describe the very essence of Reb Mordechai; a chossid dedicated to his Rebbe with every fiber of his being.¹



SHEVA BROCHOS CELEBRATION OF REB MORDECHAI MENTLIK.

YOUNG PRODIGY

Born in 5673 in the city of Minsk to exceptionally G-d fearing parents, Reb Mordechai Mentlik was sent off at the young age of twelve to study in the renowned Yeshivas Tomchei Tmimim of Warsaw. Young Mordechai quickly became known throughout the yeshiva for his genius, studious diligence, and sterling character traits. His *yiras shomayim* and *middos tovos* were extraordinary.

In 5693, the Frierdiker Rebbe was searching for a *tomim* to travel to the city of Krakow and be able to mingle with the young talmudic prodigies and speak with them in learning. The purpose would be to draw them closer to the study of Chassidus and to perhaps join Tomchei Tmimim.

The Frierdiker Rebbe penned a letter to the Rosh Yeshiva in Otwock, Reb Yehuda Eber, stating his preference for Reb Mordechai, then still a relatively young

bochur. The letter finishes: “Please be *mekarev* our dear *talmid*, Reb Mordechai, on his travels, for he possesses many *chushim* (=talents).”²

A year later Reb Moerdechai was appointed to serve as a *rosh mesivta* for the prep-class in Tomchei Tmimim in Warsaw. Eventually he moved to the yeshiva in Otwock to be near the Frierdiker Rebbe and to take up a position there as a *mashgiach*.

In Otwock, Reb Mordechai became a *chozer* of the Frierdiker Rebbe’s *maamorim*. He would often sit for hours with the well-known *mashpia*, Reb Yechezkel (“Chatche”) Feigin, to review a *maamar*, after which they would enter the Frierdiker Rebbe’s room together to repeat the *maamar* before the Rebbe. It is known that when the Rebbe Rashab would recite a *maamar*, he would cast his gaze upon the Frierdiker Rebbe during the entire recitation. The Frierdiker Rebbe had this practice as well and it is said that in Otwock, the Frierdiker Rebbe would focus on one of two people while reciting a *maamar*: Reb Shmuel Zalmanov or Reb Mordechai.

THE SHIDDUCH

Reb Dovid Stockholmer was a Galician Jew who arrived with his family on American soil circa 5680. Despite the sweeping secularist culture pervading American Jewry at the time, Reb Dovid and his family held on tightly to the values with which they had led their lives back in Poland.

A number of years later, when it came time to find a match for his eldest daughter, he was in a quandary. In those days it was virtually impossible to find a beard-wearing, G-d fearing young man in all of the United States. Reb Dovid turned to the Frierdiker Rebbe who directed him to speak to Reb Zalman Havlin, then on a trip in the United States. Reb Zalman arranged a *shidduch* with one of the most outstanding bochurim studying in the Toras Emes yeshiva in Yerushalayim at the time.

Years passed, and in 5698 it came time for Reb Dovid to find *shidduchum* for his two remaining daughters. He decided to send them both across the ocean to Riga with the hope that the Frierdiker Rebbe would take care of them.

*“Please be mekarev
our dear talmid,
Reb Mordechai,
on his travels, for
he possesses many
chushim...”*

Indeed the Frierdiker Rebbe chose two of the best *talmidim*. The first was Reb Mordechai; the second was Reb Moshe Pinchas Katz. The weddings took place a week apart from one another in the Frierdiker Rebbe’s courtyard in Riga. A few months later Reb Dovid’s daughters returned to the United States and immediately began to arrange visas for their new husbands to join them in the States.

THE TRIP TO AMERICA

The Frierdiker Rebbe wrote letters to Reb Yisroel Jacobson in America, directing him to assist Reb Dovid in his efforts to obtain visas for his sons-in-law so that they should be able to reside near him. Reb Moshe Pinchas arrived in Iyar of 5699 while Reb Mordechai's visa was delayed further and further. Finally Reb Mordechai received the much awaited documents and he made his way to England from where the ship would carry him to America.

The plan was to stay over in London for a few days, including Shabbos, and before he left the Frierdiker Rebbe directed him to *chazzer* Chassidus in the local shul sometime over Shabbos.

Upon his arrival in England, WWII broke out and the captain of Reb Mordechai's ship to America let it be known that they would set sail immediately. Reb Mordechai, who had received a command from the Frierdiker Rebbe to *chazzer* Chassidus on Shabbos adamantly refused to board the ship, despite the persistent urgings of his acquaintances

and warnings from the captain that this would be the last ship to sail. Instead he decided to stay over Shabbos in order to fulfill his Rebbe's *shlichus*.

After Shabbos it became known that the boat originally meant to carry Reb Mordechai to safer shores, which he had so stubbornly refused to board, had been sunk by German U-boats...

A few days later, Reb Mordechai managed to board another ship, which took him across the ocean to the United States, arriving safe and sound.

MEIN MOTTEL'E

Approximately a half year later, on Tes Adar Sheini 5700, the Frierdiker Rebbe arrived on American soil. Immediately upon his arrival, the Frierdiker Rebbe established the first Tomchei Tmimim in the United States.

Many names were suggested as to who should serve as the rosh yeshiva, but the Frierdiker Rebbe specifically chose Reb Morechai, saying "איך וויל אז מיין מאטעל'ע" – I want my Mottel'e to serve as the rosh yeshiva!"

As a devoted chossid of the Frierdiker Rebbe, Reb Mordechai was charged

with many tasks. For example, in 5705 the Frierdiker Rebbe founded a group named עדינו which was geared towards "b'nei Torah," not necessarily from Lubavitch. The idea was to gather from time to time and hold *Kinnusei Torah* and to subsequently publish *chiddushei Torah* culled from these gatherings. The Frierdiker Rebbe appointed Reb Mordechai to direct this project, which lasted until the end of that year.

In addition to his other duties, in a letter dated Yud Tes Teves 5708, the Frierdiker Rebbe charged Reb Mordechai with appointing bochorim to take responsibility for every shul in the greater New York area without a Rov.³

Again, on Erev Sukkos 5710, the Frierdiker Rebbe charged Reb Mordechai with a similar task: "I hereby request of him to ensure that during the *hakafos* of Shemini Atzeres and Simchas Torah, the *talmidei hatmimim* should be present in those shuls that lack in people so that they infuse the congregants with the vitality and joy of Simchas Torah. It would be a good thing for each shul to have two bochorim and may Hashem grant them success and He shall grant us all a *chag sameach*."⁴

It seems that these were the seeds for what would later be developed in *dor hashvi'i* as "Tahalucha".

DOR HASHVI'I

Immediately following the *histalkus* of the Frierdiker Rebbe, to whom Reb Mordechai was attached with unbreakable bonds of love, Reb Mordechai became a devoted chossid and *mekushar* to the Rebbe, *nessi doreinu*.

In addition to his general enthusiasm and passion for the Rebbe's sichos and farbrengens, he helped with *chazzara* and transcription the Rebbe's first sichos.

Reb Mordechai was of the most active in entreating the Rebbe to accept the



REB MORDECHAI STANDS NEAR THE REBBE AS THE REBBE LEADS THE BENTCHING AT THE FARBRENGEN, 19 KISLEV 5712.

nesius. In Iyar of 5710, Reb Mordechai and several other chassidim entered the Rebbe's room and declared their readiness to give themselves over to the Rebbe, heart and soul.

The Rebbe replied: "I will give whatever I have, and that which I don't possess, I am forbidden to give."

When they continued to implore that the Rebbe begin reciting *maamorim* or, to the very least, recite *maamorim* from the Friediker Rebbe, the Rebbe refused, saying that it would constitute a change in his conduct up until then.⁵

But they did not give up. One day that summer, Reb Mordechai entered the Rebbe's room. He requested the Rebbe to accept a *pan* from him, with the intent that this be considered *yechidus*. The Rebbe took the *pan* and upon reading the opening "לכ"ק אדמו"ר שליט"א", the Rebbe stood up and said "Rabbi Mentlik, to a yungerman wearing a short jacket [until Yud Shvat 5711 the Rebbe did not wear a *sirtuk* during the week] you write such titles?!"

"...I was told that this man was Rabbi Mentlik. His feelings towards the Rebbe were so strong that he had reached a level of complete self-nullification."

Reb Mordechai gathered the courage to say "For me, a Rebbe is not about the clothing he wears; rather it's his essence that is important to me..."

Upon hearing this, the Rebbe sat back down and resumed reading the *pan*, thereby officially accepting him for *yechidus*.

During this period, bochurim would often ask the Rebbe questions regarding their *limud hatorah* and *avodas hashem*; and many times, particularly in areas



REB MORDECHAI STANDS BEHIND THE REBBE AS THE REBBE SPEAKS AT A KABOLAS PONIM. CIRCA 5714.

pertaining to learning, the Rebbe would direct them to Reb Mordechai. One bochur asked the Rebbe about learning *Yoreh Deah*. The Rebbe directed him to speak to Reb Mordechai, and within a few days the Rebbe will let the bochur know whether or not he should begin learning these halachos. The bochur approached Reb Mordechai and spoke with him in learning for over two hours. A few days later the Rebbe directed him to continue learning *Gemara* in depth for another year or year and a half, and only then to begin studying for *semicha*.⁶

During the farbrengen of Purim 5711, the Rebbe began distributing *mashke* to everyone present. Understandably, much jostling and shoving broke out in the crowd. One participant couldn't be bothered to push his way up to receive

mashke from the Rebbe, and upon noticing this, Reb Mordechai threw him a sharp line. The Rebbe overheard the exchange and noted "If Mottel says such *vort*, he is probably already in a state of 'ad d'lo yada'..."

IN THE REBBE'S COURT

Beginning from Yud Shvat 5710, Reb Mordechai was near the Rebbe almost constantly, something that is apparent from one *yoman* from Rosh Hashana 5711: "Even during Rosh Hashana, Rabbi Mentlik stood near the Rebbe the entire time."

SHLUCHOI SHE' ADAM

In the year 5736, the Rebbe sent a group of shluchim to Eretz Yisrael to settle in Tzfas and Yerushalayim. Together with the group, the Rebbe sent Reb Mordechai to act as the initial leader of the group and to accompany them around Eretz Yisrael for the first ten days.

Before the trip, Reb Mordechai entered the Rebbe's room for what turned out to be a forty-five minute *yechidus*. The Rebbe told him to give over the following message in Eretz Yisrael: "The purpose of this shlichus is to build Eretz Yisrael both *begashmiyus*--through building new homes in the Holy Land--and *beruchniyus*, by spreading Yiddishkeit and Chassidus, and by way of the *mivtzoim* [at this point the Rebbe specified the name of each *mivtza*]." The Rebbe concluded by saying: "If the shluchim will be content with you and you will be happy with them, more shluchim will be sent in the future, *iy"h*."

The Rebbe also told him that if at some point a question should arise pertaining to the shlichus, he should turn to Reb Ephraim Wolf for guidance.

In that *yechidus*, the Rebbe gave him the newly printed *Likkutei Sichos, chelek Yud-Aleph*, which the Rebbe distributed to all the shluchim as well. The Rebbe also gave him a bottle of *mashke* to take along, which he constantly carried around in an attaché case during his entire shlichus.

Upon arriving in Eretz Yisrael a large *kabolas ponim* awaited them at the airport, where Reb Mordechai spoke and gave over the Rebbe's message to the people of the Land. Later on, a huge gathering with thousands of people was held in Yerushalayim, and once again, Reb

Mordechai repeated the Rebbe's message. He spoke with great passion of the task everyone has on this world, to strengthen their own Yiddishkeit as well as the Yiddishkeit of those around them.

Wherever he went over the next ten days he repeated the Rebbe's message.

Later that week, as per the Rebbe's instructions, the shluchim travelled to Yerushalayim to meet the Prime Minister Rabin and President Katzir. Reb Mordechai handed the prime minister a check from the Rebbe for ten thousand lira to be used for the building of the land *begashmiyus*. He also gave over a personal message from the Rebbe to the prime minister, that everything they had discussed in *yechidus* in 5732 [while he served as ambassador] regarding the *possuk* "*Am levadad yishkon*," holds greater meaning now that he was prime minister.

During the entire shlichus, Reb Mordechai wore his *gartel*, even while he slept, explaining that the Rebbe's shlichus is in effect twenty four hours a day. Every moment on the Rebbe's shlichus is holy and should not be used for anything else, not even to visit any of the holy sites spread across the Eretz Yisrael. On the last day of his visit, he spoke to Rabbi Hodakov and requested special permission to visit the *Kosel*. When he arrived he stood in before the wall and once again, repeated the Rebbe's words to him in *yechidus*.

For the group of fresh shluchim with whom he was travelling, Reb Mordechai served as the prime example of the dedication a shliach must show towards his shlichus. Every single moment is precious and must be maximized to the fullest extent.



REB MORDECHAI ON HIS SHLICHUS TO ERETZ YISROEL IN 5736, BRINGING THE REBBE'S MESSAGE TO ALL HE CAME IN CONTACT WITH.



PHOTO: JEM/THE LIVING ARCHIVE / 103876

The Rebbe said: "I have the zechus that my sar hamashkim is also a rosh yeshiva..."

THE REBBE ENCOURAGES THE CROWD DURING KOS SHEL BROCHO, WHILE REB MORDECHAI REFILLS THE REBBE'S CUP.

His set place during the Rebbe's farbrengens was to the Rebbe's right, where he would stand with complete *bittul*, barely moving a muscle as the Rebbe spoke. The only exception to this was when he would pour wine for the Rebbe, as the Rebbe's official "*sar hamashkim*" (a position he held until the end of his life). Also, when the Rebbe would turn in his direction to tell him something, Reb Mordechai would immediately bend down all the way so the Rebbe would not have to raise his head even an inch.

The following is an outsider's description (from a newspaper article) of Reb Mordechai's presence during the Rebbe's farbrengen:

"Only one man in the entire crowd did not sing. He was a rabbi with a red beard standing to the Rebbe's right. He stood unmoving with his gaze fixed upon the table before the Rebbe. I was told that this man was Rabbi Mentlik. His feelings towards the Rebbe were so strong that he had reached a level of complete self-nullification."

In addition to his task as the "*sar hamashkim*"--a position the Rebbe gave him during one of the farbrengens in 5711--the Rebbe charged him with many other important duties; such as directing the *Kinus Torahs* on *Isru Chag* of Sukkos and Shavuot, and later on of Pesach as well. The Rebbe would always tell him to make an announcement regarding these *kinusim* during the Yom Tov farbrengens.

He was also in charge of baking the Rebbe's matzos, an enormous responsibility.

In addition to that, he was part of the administration of the "*Vaad Hamesader*" in 770.

Throughout the years, Reb Mordechai's profound *hiskashrus* to the Rebbe became legendary. Despite the fact that his entire conduct was extremely modest and unassertive, nevertheless it was impossible not to notice his tremendous devotion and inner *hiskashrus* to his Rebbe. The following are just a few episodes which accentuate this extraordinary connection:

Until 5731, the Rebbe would eat *seudas* Yom Tov in the Frierdiker Rebbe's



PHOTO: JEM/THE LIVING ARCHIVE / 21688

REB MORDECHAI ENTHUSIASTICALLY TEACHES THE REBBE'S MIGHTAV-KLOLI FOR TISHREI 5738, IN THE UPSTAIRS ZAL OF 770.

apartment. The custom was that the Frierdiker Rebbe's place at the head of the table remained empty and the Rebbe would sit on the first chair to the left.

Tmimim and Anash would quickly finish their Yom Tov meals and then make their way to 770 to witness these unusual *seudos*, and to listen in to the Rebbe's conversations with the elder chassidim at the table.

Reb Mordechai was surprisingly never present at these *seudos* and he never revealed the reason for this until one time after being nagged persistently, he finally admitted: "I cannot bear to be in a place where the Rebbe is not sitting at the head..."

TAKEN TO HEART

In 5717, following a certain incident with the bochurim in 770, the Rebbe called in the ones involved, along with some members of the *hanhala*, and spoke words of rebuke.

One of the bochurim recalls:

"Reb Mordechai was present as a member of *hanhala*, and I noticed that after exiting the Rebbe's room, he quickly made his way to the *hanhala* office and, burying his face in his hands, he began to weep bitterly. At five in the afternoon I entered the office and found him in the same position, still choking on his sobs."

THE REBBE'S WORD

Reb Mordechai once met Reb Reuven Dunin in the hallway of 770 and they began to talk. During the conversation Reb Mordechai mentioned a certain *hora'a* the Rebbe had recently given, which he felt wasn't being fulfilled to the fullest extent. Although usually very soft spoken, he was extremely agitated and spoke very loudly. Reb Reuven just stood there and smiled. Reb Mordechai asked what was so amusing in his words, to which Reb Reuven replied, "I simply derive so much pleasure to see a Jew that cares so deeply for the Rebbe's words."

This was true of every single thing the Rebbe said. At one farbrengen, the Rebbe mentioned in jest the custom of some roshei yeshiva to wear ties. Immediately following the sicha, Reb Mordechai turned to the side and quickly removed his tie. That was the last time he was ever seen wearing a tie.

Reb Mordechai displayed an immense *koch* in the Rebbe's Torah, particularly the Rebbe's *nichtavim-klohim*. Scores of bochurim and guests who would spend Tishrei with the Rebbe will fondly recall the famed *shiurim* he delivered on these letters, carefully and meticulously examining each and every reference note, and explaining it to the best of his ability.

Often, when faced with a difficulty understanding the Rebbe's words, he would pen a note to the Rebbe with his queries and he would receive a reply from the Rebbe with clarification.

STANDING LIKE A SOLDIER

During the Purim farbrengen of 5726 the Rebbe said: "I have the *zechus* that my

sar hamashkim is also a rosh yeshiva," whereupon the Rebbe turned in his direction and called out, "Mordechai Mentlik, *zog lechaim!*" Immediately, Reb Mordechai began to uncharacteristically consume large amounts of *mashke*, though he was quite unused to it.

At one point during the farbrengen the Rebbe looked down at his *becher* and noticed that it was empty. Immediately Reb Mordechai approached the Rebbe, who was in middle of speaking with someone privately. Reb Mordechai waited at the Rebbe's side until the conversation was finished and then, at the Rebbe's behest, he filled the entire *becher* to the brim. The Rebbe drank the entire cup and then turned to Reb Mordechai with a wide smile and said, "*Nemt mashke!*" The Rebbe poured him a full cup of *zeks un neintziger* and he drank the cup instantly.

Amazingly, Reb Mordechai stood the entire farbrengen, as he customarily did, although he had consumed a lot of *mashke*. But the moment the Rebbe left the farbrengen, Reb Mordechai's feet gave way and he collapsed onto the floor!

It was apparent that during the entire time the Rebbe was in the room, the only thing that kept him on his feet was the very thought that he was standing before the Rebbe.

DEM REBBEN'S AN INYAN

When it came to taking part in a *mivtza* or *peula* of the Rebbe, Reb Mordechai would enthusiastically throw himself into the activities, heart and soul.

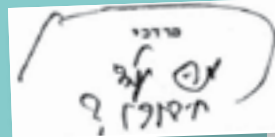
Reb Zalman Gopin relates that following the Lag B'omer parade of 5726 with the Rebbe, all the children made their way to a nearby park to continue the celebration. Suddenly he noticed Reb Mordechai among the crowd rushing towards the park, wearing his *gartel*.

It was an incredible scene. A chossid, who has nothing in his world other than Torah and Chassidus and who doesn't know a word of English, is marching with

The Rebbe writes to Reb Mordechai:

"מה ע"ד [=על-דבר] חיבורו?"

"What's [happening] with your sefer?"



As per the Rebbe's *hora'a*, Reb Mordechai published a *sefer* with his *shiurim* on *Bava Basra*. The name of the *sefer*, "*Imrei Mordechai*," was chosen by the Rebbe from among three names suggested by Reb Mordechai.

When Reb Nissen Nemanov came to New York, the Rebbe gave him this *sefer* in *yechidus* to take back with him to Brunoy.

Over the years, with the Rebbe's encouragement, Reb Mordechai published additional *kuntreisim* on various topics.



THE REBBE SPEAKS WITH REB MORDECHAI DURING THE FARBRENGEN, 11 NISSAN 5737.

REB MORDECHAI SPEAKS DURING A MEETING WITH THE HANHOLO AND BOCHURIM OF THE YESHIVA IN 770.



PHOTO: JEM/THE LIVING ARCHIVE / 109310

NO DOUBT

In the days following Hei Teves, 5747, a meeting took place between some of the Lubavitcher *roshei yeshiva* and *mashpi'im* to discuss whether bochurim in yeshivos outside of New York should be allowed to come and be with near the Rebbe in this special celebration.

In the middle of the discussion, Reb Mordechai stood up and announced excitedly:

“Imagine if we were now celebrating the Alter Rebbe’s release on the original Yud Tes Kislev, 5559; would we be in doubt as to whether we should allow the bochurim to come and join?”

“The reality is that we are now celebrating a yom tov even greater than Yud Tes Kislev! Of course we must allow the bochurim to come and join!”

a crowd of American children wearing his *gartel*. And for what purpose? Simply because this is the Rebbe’s *inyan*; so at that moment there is nothing in the world more holy and more important!

TEHILLIM IN THE COURT ROOM

During the court case preceding the great victory on Hey Teves, Reb Mordechai made it a point to attend every court hearing. Because he didn’t understand English, he would simply sit and recite Tehillim for the duration of the day. During the breaks between sessions, he would exit the courtroom and ask “Nu, how did it go today?” And if he heard that it was a particularly difficult session, tears would fall from his eyes.

SOLDIER COMPLETES HIS MISSION

In middle of the 5740s, following one Simchas Torah, Reb Mordechai felt a



REB MORDECHAI STANDS BY FOLLOWING HIS PREPARATIONS FOR MAYIM SHELANU TO BE USED IN THE REBBE’S MATZOS.

PHOTO: JEM/THE LIVING ARCHIVE / 109148

terrible pain in his stomach. He was taken to the hospital and one of the doctors recommended surgery. The matter was brought before the Rebbe who wrote an unusually long response consisting of seven or eight lines, detailing the reasons why the operation should not be done, even adding some words in English for the benefit of the doctor. To everyone's amazement, Reb Mordechai regained his health without any surgery being performed.

At the end of 5747 Reb Mordechai once again became very sick. From then on he was in and out of the hospital. During one of his visits in Elul, he telephoned Reb Binyomin Klein and requested that he come visit him in the hospital. When Reb Binyomin arrived, Reb Mordechai asked that everyone clear the room so that he can be left alone with the *mazkir*.

He then asked Reb Binyomin to write a letter to the Rebbe in his name, stating that he feels his days are numbered and that as a soldier of the Rebbe, he would like to write the Rebbe a *duch* (report).

Reb Binyomin delivered the letter to the Rebbe, and a few days later the Rebbe

replied: "He writes that he is a soldier; a soldier must be happy."

Before Rosh Hashanah 5748 the Rebbe asked that the following be conveyed to Reb Mordechai: Being that he is the "*sar hamashkim*"—and *kos shel brocha* "is his *inyan*"—he should therefore decide whether, despite his illness, he would like to continue with his special task on Motzaei Rosh Hashanah, or if he will pass it on to someone else. Another option was that he could start doing it, and in middle someone else can take over.

Reb Mordechai chose to begin himself and after a bit of time he passed on the *zechus* to Reb Berel Junik.

On Erev Yom Kippur he passed before the Rebbe to receive *lekach*. Upon handing him the piece of honey cake, the Rebbe said "להחיותם ברעב"...

On Chol Hamoed Sukkos Reb Mordechai was hospitalized for the last time. When his nephew, Reb Zev Katz came to the Rebbe for *kos shel brocha* on Motzaei Simchas Torah, the Rebbe handed him a bottle of wine to bring to Reb Mordechai in the hospital. Reb Zev went

immediately to the hospital and when he arrived, Reb Mordechai was not conscious, so he placed the bottle in his hand and left. A few hours later, while *kos shel brocha* was still taking place in 770, Reb Mordechai returned his soul to his Maker.

Reb Mordechai was from the most central personalities in Beis Chayeinu for tens of years. He served in many positions and filled many responsibilities, all with a steadfast and unwavering dedication to the Rebbe. Thousands of bochorim who learned in 770 throughout the years will remember him as a rosh yeshiva that cared for the welfare of each and every talmid. He considered them like his very own sons, in the place of the flesh and blood children that he never had. **D**

1. Much of the material in this article is based on information from the booklet *ושמו מרדכי* published Vaad Hatmimim; Tishrei, 5775.

2. Igros Kodesh vol. 3 p. 38

3. Ibid. vol. 9 p. 379

4. Ibid. vol. 10 p. 261

5. Yemei Bereishis p. 147

6. Ibid. p. 158



WHY SPECIFICALLY CHABAD?

The following is a collection of letters from the Rebbe articulating in great detail why everyone must study Chabad Chassidus, especially in our day and age.

CHASSIDUS AND KABBALA

In this letter, the Rebbe explains the importance of studying Chassidus Chabad in general, including the reason why it is needed despite the fact that Zohar and Kisvei Ho'Arizal are also considered pnimiyus HaTorah:

I am responding to your letter from Tuesday, replying to your question whether “one perek of Tanya per day is sufficient to fulfill the obligation of learning *pnimiyus HaTorah*.”

Your question about this is rather surprising, since there is a general rule about all the mitzvos of the Torah that one must fulfill them according to his own capabilities. You can certainly learn and understand more *seforim* of Chassidus. Particularly considering the explanation in my father-in-law, the Rebbe's notes (printed in the sefer *Kitzurim VeHa'oros* on Tanya), that the Tanya, compared to other *seforim* of Chassidus, is like the Written Torah compared to the Oral Torah. One of the elements of this comparison, as the Alter Rebbe explains in *Iggeres HaKodesh*, is that the details of the Written Torah, and even of the mitzvos, are only fully understood through their explanation in the Oral Torah (see *Iggeres HaKodesh siman 29*). The same holds true for *Toras HaChassidus*, as is self-evident.

In regards to what you write about the [lack of] availability of *seforim*: You live among *Anash* in the holy city of Yerushalayim;

[they will certainly lend you *seforim*] as the well-known the saying of *Chazal*, extolling the virtues of those who have *seforim* and lend them to others.

In regards to what you write at the end of his letter, [asking]: The Zohar and writings of the Arizal are also *pnimiyus HaTorah*, so why do we emphasize that *pnimiyus HaTorah* was revealed specifically through Chassidus?

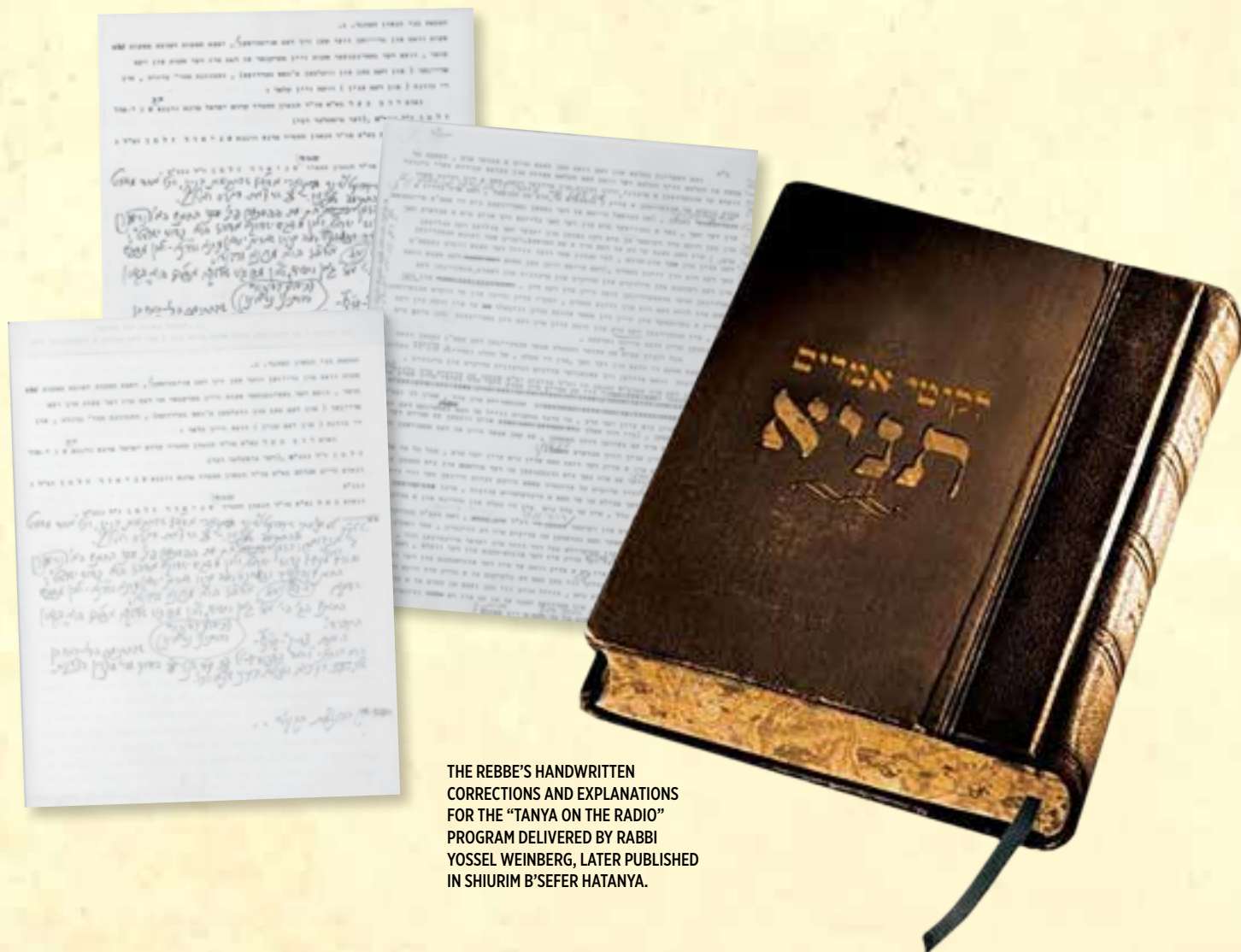
This question is also surprising, for that which is obvious does not need any explanation. Namely, comparing the comprehension of a concept as explained in the Zohar to the comprehension of that same concept as it is explained in Chassidus [for example, you can learn something in Zohar itself and then learn how it is explained in [Chassidus in the] *Biurei HaZohar*], is similar to one learning the Mishnah without the explanation of the *Gemara* and its commentaries. The same holds true for the writings of the Arizal. There is no need to elaborate on something so simple.

I hope that, although you didn't mention it in your letter, you participated in the farbrengen of Yud Shevat, the yahrtzeit of my father-in-law, the Rebbe, who risked his life to disseminate the aforementioned study.

With a blessing for good news...¹



אגרות קודש



THE REBBE'S HANDWRITTEN CORRECTIONS AND EXPLANATIONS FOR THE "TANYA ON THE RADIO" PROGRAM DELIVERED BY RABBI YOSSEL WEINBERG, LATER PUBLISHED IN SHIURIM B'SEFER HATANYA.

CHASSIDUS CHABAD AND OTHER SCHOOLS OF CHASSIDUS

Here the Rebbe explains the importance of studying specifically Chabad Chassidus, in addition to the teachings of other schools of Chassidus:

In response to your letter in which you write that you have a nightly Chassidus study session, but you do not disclose any details; i.e. what you learn, how long you learn for, and how long this session has been going on. [All of these points are important because] depending on these factors is how well you grasp what you are learning, which may define the way to best answer the question you raised in this letter. [Let me preface that] this is not the way to go about learning any area in Torah, beginning with questions on the subject before you possess a sufficient amount of knowledge of it.

But, being that *Chazal* tell us to judge everyone favorably, I hope that you had only good intentions. As to your questions:

Why must we learn specifically Chassidus Chabad? Why not suffice with learning the Polish-style of Chassidus? After all, they all "drank from the same fountain"--[stemming off of] the Baal Shem Tov and the Mezricher Maagid.

The gist of the answer is similar to the answer to another question:

Why must we learn Gemara, in addition to the study of Mishnah? After all, for the most part, the Gemara is merely an explanation on the Mishnah, so why not suffice with studying only Mishnah. Didn't they [i.e. the *Tanna'im* and *Amora'im*] all "drink from one fountain"?

The same holds true with learning Chassidus:

The words of the students of the Baal Shem Tov are written as short, concise pointers. Someone learning them on his own, even with lengthy explanations, will not necessarily reach the correct understanding--for not every mind is so capable. Chassidus Chabad, on the other hand, true to its name ["Chabad" meaning intellectual capabilities] succeeds in elucidating these short points in the "Mishnah" of Chassidus.

In the Gemara, many additional points come to light by elaborating and discussing the hidden details in the words of the Mishnah, and many original concepts are also generated from the discussion (as *Chazal* say – *כל מה שתלמיד ותיק עתיד – לחדש*). So the same holds true with Chassidus Chabad as well. To be sure, the words of the Baal Shem Tov are also quoted within Chassidus Chabad, so you have both the "Mishnah" along with explanation; it is all included.

Needless to say, the aforementioned does not invalidate, even in the slightest manner [the study of other Chassidus-works], *chas ve'sholom*. [My intention is] only that it should only serve as a lesson. Just as one must learn Gemara in addition to the Mishnah, in our day and age, one must study Chassidus Chabad in addition to studying the "Mishnah" of Chassidus, as is now self-evident.

(See also the *moshol* by Rashbatz, along with my father-in-law's explanation, published in HaTomim vol. 2 p. 56 and on).²



CHASSIDUS AND MUSSAR

In this letter, the Rebbe underlines the need to institute thorough study of Chassidus in yeshivos, especially when considering the deteriorating spiritual state of society today:

...I will utilize this opportunity, relying on the saying of *Chazal* that "we only urge enthusiasm on the enthusiastic," to encourage you regarding something that is well-known and obvious: the necessity for every yeshiva and educational institution to exercise immense effort to instill *yiras shomayim* in their students; not only by means of supervising their behavior, but also through appropriate studies. Being that the nature of a yeshiva student is to seek an explanation for everything and not just accept it as a command, they must be taught appropriately in this regard. In fact, all yeshivos have agreed to institute the study of either Mussar or Chassidus.

One of the differences between the study of Mussar and Chassidus (with regards to the abovementioned issue) is: Mussar, in general, subordinates and therefore constricts [the spirit of] the student, whereas Chassidus elevates the person and causes expansiveness in him (although there are obviously some aspects of Mussar that lead to joy and expansiveness, and some aspects of Chassidus that lead to submission and constriction).

Another advantage that Chassidus has is that it is more likely to lead a person to love and fear of Hashem. As is explained in Rambam, *hilchos Yesodei HaTorah*, that the way to achieve love and fear of Hashem is through meditating [upon His greatness], etc.

As one upon whom Heaven has granted the merit of being a *rosh mesivta*, influential over many young men and yeshiva students, you were certainly also given the ability to carry this out, in accordance with current needs, to influence those who are under your wing; to draw them towards the study of Chassidus.

It is certainly unnecessary to explain to someone like you that although some generations ago it was possible for a yeshiva to suffice without any study of Mussar--since even the streets were G-d-fearing--yes the situation has changed in the last two generations. Undesirable "winds" blow around the world and have penetrated the walls of the yeshiva as well. As a result, the study of Mussar was introduced into the yeshiva curriculum. And our generation is even more different, in that there is a doubled and redoubled darkness, deeming the study of Mussar alone insufficient. Every Torah scholar is now required to learn *pnimiyus HaTorah*, which is referred to in the Zohar as the "soul" of the Torah, in order to protect his study of *nigleh d'Torah*. This will enable the youth of this generation to achieve love and fear of Hashem, as explained above. As the famous statement of the Arizal asserts, that specifically in our generation it's a mitzvah to reveal this wisdom (referring to *pnimiyus HaTorah*).

With esteem, and with blessing for a speedy recovery.³

1. Igros Kodesh vol. 22 p. 150

2. Ibid. vol. 14 p. 406

3. Ibid. vol. 8 p. 177

A DOUBLE PORTION

*In a conversation with A Chassidisher Derher,
Rabbi Yosef Katzman of Crown Heights related the following story:*

During Iyar of 5759 I was *zoche* to receive clear and unmistakable guidance from the Rebbe, notwithstanding the fact that a number of years had already passed since Gimmel Tammuz.

Two issues were on my mind when I visited the Rebbe's Ohel on Sunday, 16 Iyar. I penned a *tzetel* detailing the problems, asking for the Rebbe's *brocha* that they be resolved easily and speedily.

The first issue involved our then two-year-old daughter, who suddenly began stuttering terribly a few days earlier. We could not understand what had caused it.

My second request was regarding financial difficulties that were plaguing the home I owned in Crown Heights.

I wrote my *tzetel* and I went to the Ohel. I asked the Rebbe for guidance and a *brocha* and I returned to Crown Heights.

The next day I was in 770 for *maariv* and while waiting for the *chazzan* to start, I picked up a volume of the Rebbe's *Igros Kodesh*, which happened to be lying nearby, and I opened it to a random page.

In general I enjoy reading the Rebbe's letters, and make a point of doing so

whenever I have an opportunity. To my surprise, the letter I opened up to on page 189 of volume six. It began as follows:

“במענה על מכתבו מ' תמוז בו כתב ע"ד בתו הצעירה ... תח' שהתחילה פתאום לגמגום:

הנה בטח שאלו עצת רופא מומחה למקצוע זה, אף שבכלל אין מה להתפעל ויש לחקור כי קרוב הדבר שאירע לה איזה פחד פתאומי וכאשר יבררו סיבת הפחד ויבארו לה שאין לזה מקור הנה לאט לאט יעבור הגמגום...”

“In response to your letter... in which you write about your young daughter... who suddenly started stuttering.

“Surely you consulted an expert doctor in this field, although there is really no reason to become anxious, it is necessary to investigate the likely possibility that she experienced a sudden fright, and when you will determine the reason for this fear and you will explain to her that there is no reason to be afraid, then slowly the stuttering will fade.”

I was floored, the wording of the letter directly addresses an identical case to that for which I had asked a *brocha* from the Rebbe only yesterday!



How incredible that precisely on the page I had opened up to, the Rebbe was addressing my daughter's condition! After *maariv* I went home and checked the *mafteiach* of Igros Kodesh. I found that there are only four letters addressing the issue of stuttering in all of the volumes that were printed at the time.¹

The chance of me opening to this particular letter was extraordinary. It was clear to me that the Rebbe was pointing me to this letter in order for me to know that he heard my requests for his *brocha*.

I discussed what had taken place with my wife, and she too was amazed at the clear sign from the Rebbe. But she had no recollection of anything that may have triggered a fright within our daughter that would resemble any similarity to the Rebbe's letter, so we just held out to see how things would unfold.

The following day, which was Lag Baomer, I received a call from a Lubavitcher, Reb Dovid Kohn from Kensington, who worked for a company in Boro Park. He asked me if I had ever received a \$100 bill from the Rebbe. I answered that in fact I had, many years earlier during Cheshvan 5746. To my surprise he announced that his employer, Mr. Rise, had found it and that I should come by to pick it up.

At my earliest opportunity I traveled to Boro Park to meet his employer. Although he comes from a Satmar background, he actually knew my grandfather, Reb Chaikel Chanin, from the time they were neighbors in Paris. We reminisced about the time they had spent together in Paris.

He explained that he had recently withdrawn money from the bank and upon inspecting one of the \$100 bills he realized that it had Hebrew writing on it. The inscription read that it had been received from the Rebbe *כינוס השלוחים* תשמ"ז, by Yosef Katzman. He insisted that instead of reimbursing him for the

money, I should take it for free and give the money to a *tzeddaka* my grandfather was collecting for.

The following is the story of how I got this \$100:

On Shabbos Mevorchim Kislev 5746, the third Kinus Hashluchim was held for shluchim in the USA.²

THE REBBE SAID THAT HE WILL GIVE \$200 TO EVERY SHLIACH... BUT HE SAID THAT HE WANTED THAT THEY SHOULD SPEND THE TWO \$100 BILLS.

At that time, the Shluchim from abroad and those that worked in the central mosdos in Crown Heights were not officially part of the Kinus, however, those working in the central mosdos were able to take part in the sessions. Being that I was working for Tzivos Hashem at the time, I participated in the sessions only.

On Sunday night of the Kinus, when Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky was driving the Rebbe home, the Rebbe remarked that he was very glad about the success of the Kinus, and that he would like to participate with the Shluchim.

The Rebbe said that he will give \$100 to every Shliach to cover the registration fee they needed to pay to join the Kinus, and another \$100 towards their travel expenses. The Rebbe then added that surely the Shluchim would not want to use the bills that they receive from the Rebbe, so therefore he will give an additional \$1 bill for the Shluchim to keep, but he said that he wanted that they should spend the two \$100 bills.

Initially, it was very clear that we the locals will not receive this money,

because we were not officially registered for the Kinus. You can imagine the great surprise and delight we all felt when shortly after the Kinus, when Rabbi Krinsky notified all those from the local central mosdos that the Rebbe instructed that we should also receive this gift.

After hearing the Rebbe's clear instructions that the money he is giving should be spent, and that only the \$1 bill could be held onto, I could not bring myself to keep the two hundred dollar bills, despite my great desire to keep it within my possession.

On the other hand, being that I had not officially registered, nor did I have any travel expenses, I was not able to spend the money for the purposes the Rebbe had designated.

After much contemplation, I decided that I would take one of the hundred dollar bills and use it for a mortgage payment, as a source of *brocha* for a house that I had recently bought in Crown Heights.

[I had decided to buy the house half a year before that, around Purim 5745, despite it being in a considerably dangerous part of Crown Heights at the time. I had firm belief in the Rebbe's guarantee that Crown Heights would remain a Jewish neighborhood and will regain its old glory. The Rebbe answered my *tzetel* about buying the house on Yud Aleph Nissan, about a month after I had submitted it, with the words:

“ויהא בשעה טובה ומוצלחת”

“May it be in a good and auspicious hour”]

Now, 13 years later the Rebbe sent me the \$100 bill once again, just days after I had asked the Rebbe for a *brocha* for that same house! For the bill to have remained in the area where I had originally deposited it, and for so many years, is almost inconceivable.

Indeed this clear indication from the Rebbe became a turning point for the

financial difficulties I was experiencing with the house. Until this day the house remains a source of many *brochos* for me and my family.

One *brocha* led to the next.

A couple of days later my two year old daughter was sitting with my wife, when she suddenly started crying to my wife that she is scared of a "*ketzele*" [a kitten]. My wife suddenly recalled an episode that had occurred a few days earlier.

She had been shopping in Raskin's Fruit Store, and our daughter was sitting in the stroller. A cat that the store had bought in order to chase away mice was strolling around nearby, and suddenly the cat jumped into the stroller with our daughter.

The cat was quickly removed, but it seemed that our daughter was traumatized by this event, and that she was still in fear of that cat. My wife immediately made the connection to the Rebbe's answer in the letter, that the stuttering was most

probably caused because of a sudden fear, and now we knew exactly what our daughter was afraid of, and what was causing her to stutter!

My wife calmed our daughter down, and she explained to her that a cat is a gentle animal, and that she has no reason to be afraid. My daughter slowly accepted my wife's explanation, and in a matter of only a few short days, the stuttering completely disappeared!

I had come to the Ohel with two problems weighing on my heart, and within a few days the Rebbe had provided me with clear guidance and open *brochos* on both matters, in the most unique and separate ways, *brochos* that remain with me in full strength till this very day.

In the Rebbe's words: "אם יעמוד חזק בהתקשרותו אליו... וישלח השאלה על ציון כ"ק מו"ח אדמו"ר ה"כ"מ - וועט דער רבי געפינען א וועג ווי עס צו ענטפערן..." **D**

1. Rabbi Katzman notes: In general, it is not my practice to open the Igros Kodesh after writing to the Rebbe in search for an answer, because I firmly believe that it is not the place of a Chossid to define how the Rebbe should give him his answer, as the Rebbe clearly wrote - "*der Rebbe vet gefinen a veg vi tzu enferen*" [=the Rebbe will find a way how to answer] (Igros Kodesh vol. 3 p. 266). I don't know whether opening an Igros Kodesh randomly to receive your answer is the proper way to look for the Rebbe's answer or not, but I don't do it. In this case I picked up the Igros Kodesh simply out of desire to learn the Rebbe's letters. What unfolded made it clear to me that the Rebbe was choosing this letter to answer me, on this occasion.

2. See Kinus Hashluchim Overview in A Chassidisher Derher Magazine, Kislev 5775.



כך אבדנו שאלה
דיוטין לבקש צדק כן אדמו"ר שליט"א
השטוב המחר הוא קדוש
כדי לאפשר לקבל תשובה מרובה וצדק
אשר מבינה וזה איך ואיך צדק איזן אדמו"ר שליט"א
באשר מחר דיוטין צדק איזן אדמו"ר שליט"א
קדוש איזן קדוש ה' אבדנו
דיוטין קדוש ודיוטין כן אדמו"ר שליט"א כן כן
י.א. צדק חזק כן שרה ודיוטין
צדק

בית. כיח אייר, חתשניש

כ"ק אדמו"ר

בלב מלא בטחון אנן רוצה לחזות לשני תשובות שקבלתי מכ"ק בימים חגי אחרונים. אי בקשר לעניני פרנסה וחגולות בענינים כספיים שקבלתי מאח דולר מכ"ק שנתן לי לפני שלש עשרה שנים בכינוס השלוחים עבור חוצאות ואז השתמשתי בזה עבור חבית ועכשיו מצאנו יחודי שדורזים לי ולדעתי תשובה ברורה מלאה ברכות שיקוימו מיד. אנן
השני הוא בקשר לבתי הקסנה
אגרות קודש חיד ושם ראית מכתב המדבר בחוצאות מוח לעשות בגשמייות וברוחניות וכנראה שעיני
הפסיקה כבר למגנס וחלואי ווייטער. ואנן ועדה על זה כפשוטו.
שחתיילה למגנס לפני שבועיים ונבחרנו עדיין ופתחתי



BEHIND THE PICTURE

TWO SURPRISES

Chanukah Gelt – 5737

Pictures courtesy of Jewish Educational Media

In the pictures here, we behold a scene that has become so synonymous with the Rebbe, the distribution of money for *tzedaka*, that it would be difficult to imagine that in the time it occurred it was quite rare. Everyone knows of “Sunday dollars”, or of the nickels and dimes to children on the way to the *tefillos*; this distribution however is all but ordinary. In previous years the Rebbe hardly ever distributed Chanukah gelt to anyone¹, and even on those rare occasions, it was with restrictions.

In truth this extraordinary *chalukah* took place on two occasions, mere days apart from one another. The first time was during a traditional Chanukah rally on the third night of Chanukah, 27 Kislev 5737, for children participating in NCFJE’s “Released Time” program.

Following the program, which began with Mincha and continued with lighting the Menorah, singing Haneros Halalu, a dvar Torah and the recital of the 12 pesukim, the Rebbe surprisingly communicated that he will distribute Chanukah Gelt to all the kids assembled.

The Rebbe then went to the back door of 770 and gave out a coin to each child,

and after all the children had filed by, the Rebbe gave their counselors as well.

THE OTHER STORY

Five days later, the Rebbe held another *chalukah* – this time distributing Chanukah gelt to everyone.

Whilst nobody can profess to know the reason for any of the Rebbe’s holy *hanhogos*, many chassidim who were present at the time, assert that this *chalukah* may have been related to something that was taking place beyond the walls of Lubavitch, but that would



In preparing this article we were assisted by Rabbi Menachem Gerlitzky, Col. Rabbi Yaakov Goldstein, Rabbi Yosef Kessler, Rabbi Yosef Kalmanson, Rabbi Reuven Witkes, and the yoman of Rabbi Lipa Brennan.



have great impact on them –quite literally.

This was the redrawing of “district lines”, a procedure where the government divides the smaller areas of larger cities, allowing the people of each particular area to be better represented in the political arena, meeting their specific and unique needs.

When this process was taking place in 5737, the Lubavitch community pushed strongly to split Crown Heights into two distinct districts. Originally, Crown Heights was part of one huge district, with several other neighborhoods, and therefore, only a small percentage of the population in the district was Jewish - which meant that the Jewish vote was weak. By splitting it into two smaller districts, the Jewish population would all be in one smaller district, and Lubavitch would gain a much stronger voice in the city. (Beginning from 5729, the Rebbe spoke very much about strengthening the Jewish community of Crown Heights, which had begun to deteriorate this gesture of the government could be used as a great opportunity in line with this goal.)

However, the initiative was met by strong opposition, so the city set a hearing in

front of the “Board of Estimate” to decide the issue.

A *hora'a* came out from *mazkirus*, that everyone - men women and children, should go to the hearing in display of support, and that even the schools should interrupt their schedule to go. Yomanim from that time record rumors circulating that the Rebbe had asked that this take precedence over everything else, even Mivtza Chanukah!

When communal activists wrote to the Rebbe that the bochorim would not agree to come to the hearing so as not to miss davening mincha with the Rebbe, the Rebbe assured them that he would daven later on that account.

A sign was posted in 770 with guidelines from *mazkirus*: 1) the busses going to the hearing in-house the Municipal building of Brooklyn should not leave from 770, but from different places in Crown Heights; 2) the positive verdict should not be met with any public celebration and should be “toned-down”.

On the day of the hearing, time came to a standstill.

Busloads of Lubavitchers, from the elder chasidim all the way down to bochorim and schoolchildren, both boys and girls (separately), including many of

the institutions in Crown Heights and beyond; Tomchei Tmimim Hamerkozis, Beis Rivka, Machon Chana, and as far as Morristown, New Jersey pulled up to the hearing in the Municipal building of Brooklyn.

The New York Times reported on the scene as: “More than 50 Hasidic Jews lined up to pray for a victory. As the prayers were offered, the 850 seats of the auditorium were filled mostly by other Hasidim...”

They sat through twelve hours (!) of dissertations and speeches - from 2pm until 2am. Most of the bochorim hardly understood what went on. Participants remember seeing elder Chassidim, including Reb Avrohom Drizin (“Mayor”) - who didn’t understand a word of English - sitting through all the proceedings. Yet Lubavitchers of all ages, including little children, were all there in accordance the Rebbe’s *hora'a*.

The final day of hearings was on Zos Chanukah, and the Jewish community attended for another six hours of speeches and deliberations. Finally, the meeting was concluded with a victory for Lubavitch.

(Rabbi Menachem Gerlitzky relates: Due to the Rebbe’s *hora'a* through *mazkirus* that the victory be toned down, when the board decided in favor of the Jewish community, all the hundreds of Lubavitchers in the room hardly reacted. There was no big applause or cheering, as one would expect after such a difficultly-won victory. The opposition was completely confused and unsure - did they win? Did the Jewish side win? - and because of that, a big commotion was avoided.)

All the chassidim who had gone to the meeting joyfully returned to 770 just in time to join the Rebbe for mincha and kindling the Menorah. After Mincha, the Rebbe suddenly told Rabbi Hodakov that he would distribute Chanukah gelt. A mere five days since the ‘Released Time Program’ rally, the Rebbe again distributed Chanukah Gelt, and this time,

it was open to all, not only children.

The yomanim from that time record:

Immediately after Mincha on 2 Teves 5737, Zos Chanukah, Rabbi Hodakov announced: “As per the Rebbe’s directive we hereby announce three things: Firstly, although a Magbis- appeal wasn’t officially made at the Yud Tes Kislev farbrengen (as is the norm), it is self-understood that anyone can bring their contribution and leave it with the secretariat, and those who wish can give their name along with their mother’s [for the Rebbe to bring to the Ohel]. The next point is that now the Rebbe will distribute Chanukah gelt, the third thing is that after all the men have received, the Rebbe will give women as well.”

Following the announcement, the Rebbe went to the back door of shul and gave out Chanukah gelt while wishing each one “A freilicher Chanukah, un a gliklicher yor”.

Another rather unique aspect of this was the fact that the Rebbe gave out dollar-bills, as opposed to coins.

Rabbi Yosef Kalmanson of New Haven, Connecticut relates that a very festive air prevailed in 770 at the time, and the Rebbe was very “*ufgeleigt*”.

The outcome of this victory was indeed quite beneficial for the Crown Heights Jewish community, with a member of the community, Rabbi Yaakov Goldstein serving as chairman of the board for the new district.

It should be noted as well, that the then Mayor of New York City, Mr. Abraham Beame, had voted in favor of this resolution and took a strong position in favor of Lubavitch. Mr. Beame had attended a farbrengen of the Rebbe on Yud Shvat 5735, and had since developed a very warm relationship with Chabad. **D**

1. In the earlier years, the Rebbe distributed Chanukah gelt each year only for the yeshiva bochurim. In 5734, the Rebbe said that anyone who had gone on mivtzoim could receive Chanukah Gelt, but only with a written note from *Tzach*, Lubavitch Youth Organization, that attested to his participation.



מוקדש לחיזוק ההתקשרות לנשיא דורנו
כ"ק אדמו"ר זצוקללה"ה נבג"מ זי"ע
ולזכרון הרבנית הצדקנית מרת ח' מושקא נ"ע

ולעילוי נשמת

ראש ישיבת תומכי תמימים ליובאוויטש המרכזית
חבר אגודת חסידי חב"ד, ושר המשקים של כ"ק אדמו"ר זי"ע
הגה"ח ר' מרדכי בהרה"ח ר' פנחס ז"ל
מענטליק

לע"נ

מרת דבורה ע"ה בת הרה"ח ר' זאב שו"ב
נפטרה יו"ד כסלו תשע"ג
נדפס ע"י בנה
הרה"ח הלל דוד וזוגתו שטערנא שרה ומשפחתם שיחיו
קרינסקי

לזכות

רחל פייגא, מנחם מענדל, מושקא, אברהם גבריאל נח, וחנה
שיחיו
נדפס ע"י הוריהם
הרה"ח ר' יהושע פישעל וזוגתו מרת שטערנא שרה
ראזענשטיין

לזכות

הרה"ח ר' לייביש משה וזוגתו מרת רינה
וילדיהם
קיילא באשא, בנציון דוד, אליהו איסר, רבקה שיינדל אלתא
שיחיו
גולדהירש

לע"נ

האשה החשובה
מרת אסתר ע"ה
גאלדמאן

בת הרה"ח ר' יוחנן שו"ב גארדאן ע"ה
נלב"ע ביום הש"ק טו"ב תשרי תשע"ד
ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

לע"נ

הרה"ח "ספרא דמלכא"
ר' אליעזר צבי זאב בן ר' מרדכי שכנא ז"ל
צירקינד

נדפס ע"י אחיו

הרה"ח שמחה ירחמיאל וזוגתו מרת פריידא חנה ומשפחתם שי'
צירקינד



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