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# A CHASSIDISHER DERHER

SPECIAL ISSUE

VOV TISHREI 5775

ISSUE 25 (102)



*Special  
Pirsum Rishon*

## ו' תשרי

חמישים שנה להסתלקות  
הרבנית הצדקנית מרת חנה ע"ה ז"ל  
אם כ"ק אדמו"ר זי"ע

COMMEMORATING 50 YEARS FROM  
THE HISTALKUS OF REBBETZIN CHANA - THE REBBE'S MOTHER

# A CHASSIDISHER DERHER

ISSUE 25 (102) • VOV TISHREI 5775

בס"ד

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## Editorial

### MOTHER OF ROYALTY

"I was delighted to see such a large number of young people attending and how great was their interest in all the activities of my son, *shlita*. I observed how they look upon him with such a love that is indescribable. It was apparent from the way they were hurrying, by subway, by car, in groups, each trying to get ahead of the other in order to get a better place so that they should be able to see and hear as much as possible.

"They were from all types of background—non-Chasidim, Chasidim, Polish Chasidim, *Litvish*, old and young, non-religious and Orthodox. The same was true for the women. Everyone tried to find a place where they could not only hear but also see.

"May G-d grant my son good health and success to be able to accomplish his work, to achieve what he desires without hindrance, in physical and emotional tranquility..."

With these words, Rebbetzin Chana records the feelings of *nachas* she derived from attending the Rebbe's *simchas beis hashoeivah* farbrengens, and observing the outpour of love from Chassidim towards the Rebbe.

Indeed, those who enjoyed a close relationship with her recall the pride and affection with which she spoke about the Rebbe, and the great *nachas* they sensed in her words.

Commemorating her fiftieth *yortzeit* on Vov Tishrei this year, we present this special edition – supplementary to the Tishrei Derher, highlighting some of the stories of her life and her *histalkus* in 5725, as well as some of the Rebbe's undertakings in her memory; most notably, the "Rashi Sichos" at the weekly Shabbos farbrengens.

We hope that this humble compilation will serve as an honor to the memory of Rebbetzin Chana as we mark this fiftieth *yortzeit*, and may we merit the fulfillment of the prophecy of the first Chana, oft-quoted by the Rebbe on Vov Tishrei (see *sichas Motzoei Vov Tishrei*, 5750): "וירם קרן משיחו" with the coming of Moshiach, may it be *teikef umiyad Mammosh!*

**The Editors**

Erev Rosh Hashanah, 5775

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



The Living Archive





*The following is from the diary of R.M.W., a bochur learning at 770 in 5725:*

## SHABBOS SHUVA, 6 TISHREI

At 10:00, the Rebbe entered the *shul* for *shacharis*. After the *davening* began, the Rebbe looked as if he was waiting for someone or something, as he kept on looking to the side. Rabbi Groner approached and spoke with the Rebbe for a minute, and then went to Rabbi Hodakov and then back to the Rebbe. As of now, no one knows what exactly is happening, but it seems as if something is wrong.

At 1:30, the Rebbe entered the *shul* for a *farbrengen*. During the *farbrengen*, Dr. Seligson approached the Rebbe and spoke to him for a few minutes. After a few *sichos*, everyone found out

what was happening. Dr. Seligson asked the Rebbe for his mother's name, and called out, "*Chana bas Rochel L'refua Sheleimo*." It was then that the crowd understood the circumstances.

(Now I'll fill in the details of what happened throughout the day, which were disclosed to me only later. Although she was not well lately, Rebbetzin Chana came to 770 on Rosh Hashanah to participate in the *tefillos* and hear *shofar* blowing from the Rebbe. On the second day of Rosh Hashanah, she was feeling much worse. The next day, she told Reb Berel Junik, "I know that going to *shul* yesterday did me harm, but I'm happy that I went. The *tekios* were amazing! Hashem

should bestow upon him much strength. You don't begin to comprehend what you have. I'm not saying this as a mother, but rather because that is the truth!")

On Friday night, the Rebbe visited his mother (as he would on a daily basis). Later, the Rebbe asked Reb Berel to visit his mother, who found her feeling relatively well. At 4:30 in the morning, the nurse noticed that the Rebbetzin was not feeling well. Immediately, she knocked on the door of a neighbor, Reb Avrohom Feller, who called Dr. Seligson. She then ran to 770 and told one of the bochurim about the situation. A few bochurim ran to the Rebbe's house and knocked on

the door, but there was no response until Reb Avrohom Feller arrived and knocked as well.

The Rebbe hurried to his mother's home and remained there until just before 10:00. When Reb Berel arrived he noticed that the Rebbetzin was not aware of her serious condition. When Reb Berel came to report to the Rebbe, the Rebbe asked that there be two women with her at her side. When Rabbi Junik returned, the Rebbe asked him to go back after *davening* and to have Dr. Seligson revisit as well.)

The *farbrengen* continued, and the Rebbe began to explain the teaching of the Baal Shem Tov that the



concealment of G-dliness during the time of *galus* is itself hidden and not noticeable. The Rebbe began to weep, leaning his head on his hands; a frightening sight to behold. Abruptly, the Rebbe passed his hand over his forehead, and the cries immediately ceased.

Later on, while speaking about the fact that non-Jews do not have the power obstruct the *mitzvos* of Hashem, the Rebbe began to cry again.

The farbrengen ended at 4:00. Reb Berel Junik ran to Rebbetzin Chana's house and found her breathing heavily. He came over to her and she grabbed onto his arm, saying, "Help me!" It seemed as if she wanted to fight on, but wasn't able. Reb Berel ran to 770 and told Dr. Seligson that Rebbetzin Chana's conditioned worsened and he hurried out.

After *mincha*, Reb Berel told the Rebbe that his mother had asked if he could come see her. The Rebbe rushed out of *shul* to his room; dropped off the handkerchiefs from his pocket, and continued to his mother's house (the Rebbe encouraged the singing on his way out from the farbrengen as well as on the way out of his room as he left for his mother's house).

Upon arriving there, the Rebbe found his mother in a very critical condition, lying in terrible pain and breathing with great difficulty. The Rebbe approached her bedside and asked Reb Berel to call two more doctors.

Meanwhile, Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka arrived.

At first, the Rebbe was opposed to have his mother taken to the hospital, but after the two doctors, in addition to Dr. Seligson, agreed that it was vital, the Rebbe said, "Since this is the opinion of three doctors, I give my consent." She was immediately placed in an ambulance and the Rebbe sat at her side.

As soon as the news reached 770, everyone began immediately to recite *Tehillim*. Many people began to walk towards the hospital along with a "Shabbos Goy" who carried a meal for the Rebbe.

At the hospital, the doctors did all they can to help the situation, but after a while, they came out and told the Rebbe that they think it's too late for her to recover. The Rebbe suggested a number of medical methods that

# EMMES ALEIN!

The Rebbe's *mazkir*, Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky relates:

During the *shiva*, Rabbi Yosef B. Soloveichik came to the Rebbe to be *manachem avel*, and a scholarly discussion ensued on the topic of "*onan*." The Rebbe mentioned that according to the Rambam, the status of *onan* ends with the burial of the departed relative, but Rabbi Soloveichik argued, "Lubavitcher Rebbe, there is no such Rambam!"

The Rebbe remarked that although in the *Sefer HaYad* the Rambam doesn't rule this way, in his *Pirush HaMishnayos* he does.

Later on, in a letter to Rabbi Soloveichik on Erev Sukkos, the Rebbe followed up on the subject, saying that he has since seen the newer versions of the Rambam's *Pirush HaMishnayos* where he writes that he reconsidered this ruling, and the status of *onan* remains throughout the entire day of the passing.

Upon receiving the letter, Rabbi Soloveichik commented on the Rebbe's insistence to stand corrected (according to this later version of Rambam) – "He is so truthful. He is the epitome of truth! (*Emes alein*)".



might be able to improve the situation, and the doctors promised that they would try. A bit later, the doctors again said that their efforts were to no avail. Once more, the Rebbe proposed ideas, but things didn't get better.

At approximately 6:00 pm, Rebbetzin Chana's soul ascended to heaven in the presence of her illustrious son, the Rebbe. The Rebbe stood facing the window, his eyes heavenward. All was quiet and every so often, the Rebbe let out a cry. Some of the people there realized that the Rebbe had not yet eaten, so they offered him the meal that was brought, but the Rebbe refused to eat it and asked if there was a *Rav* present who can give ruling if it is *halachicly* permissible to eat the meal in such circumstances. Rabbi Groner approached, saying that he is a *Rav* and that the Rebbe should eat, but the Rebbe refused and asked if there was a *Shulchan Aruch* in the area. In the end, the Rebbe didn't eat the meal.

The Rebbe asked if anyone from the Chevra Kadisha were present and then asked for Rabbi Jacobson. Seeing all the pushing, the Rebbe said, "No one should push, only those who have been in the *mikveh* today should enter the room to say *Tehillim*. The bochurim are here totally unnecessarily, and as for everyone else, there's no reason to push; this is not a *farbrengen*."

Reb Yosef Wineberg asked the Rebbe if he should announce the news of the passing on his Motzaei



JEM/THE LIVING ARCHIVE / 110921

Shabbos radio program, and the Rebbe answered affirmatively. Reb Yisroel Jacobson and Reb Elya Simpson of the Chevra Kadisha arrived and asked everyone to leave the room except for some of the elder Chassidim.

After Shabbos went out, the Rebbe asked if anyone present had a *siddur*, but no one did. After *maariv*, the Rebbe recited *Kaddish*. An hour later, Rebbetzin Chana was brought to her home, at 1418 President Street. (Interestingly, the Rebbe asked that before the coffin arrives at the building, the family of Reb Yaakov Moshe Friedman, who lived at 1414 President Street and was

close with the Rebbetzin, be notified of its arrival, and that he and his sons not sleep at home that night since they were Kohanim and were prohibited from being in the adjoining building). Before leaving the Rebbetzin's apartment, the Rebbe asked that a *minyan* remain there for the night.

## 7 TISHREI

At 8:00, the Rebbe arrived at 770 from his home. It was immediately announced that the funeral procession would begin at 11:00. At 9:15, the Rebbe left his room and joined the *minyan* to say *Kaddish* after the *Shir Shel Yom*. During the recitation, the Rebbe cried faintly.

At 11:05, the Rebbe left his room with a bag full of *seforim* in hand and was driven to his mother's house. The funeral began immediately, with the Rebbe following closely behind the coffin. When the Rebbe noticed a photographer videoing the scene, he was very displeased and motioned with his hand that he to stop to do so. The Rebbe continued to gaze at the coffin until it was placed in the car of the Chevra Kadisha. Then the Rebbe asked if anyone knew where the plastic mat was (seemingly, the one which some blood had spilled onto) and a particular piece of wood. When those nearby

answered that all had been arranged, the Rebbe looked quite satisfied.

The procession continued by foot through Kingston Avenue to 770 and from there to the cemetery. On the way to the burial, the Rebbe asked a few times, “Why are the bochurim here?” The Rebbe also asked that the women should not follow after the coffin.

After covering the grave, the Rebbe said some *Tehillim* and *Kaddish*. Due to much crying, the Rebbe was almost unable to finish. The entire crowd, including Rabbonim, Rebbes, and Roshei Yeshivos, all felt a deep sense of mourning at the time.

The “lines” were then formed. The Rebbe removed his shoes and asked that the bochurim not participate in the lines.

While passing by the Ohel, the Rebbe walked inside for two minutes, and after exiting, he entered the car and was driven to his mother’s house.

Throughout the *shiva* days, a lottery was arranged to determine who would participate in the Rebbe’s *minyanim*. After the first *mincha*, *anash* passed by the Rebbe in a line to perform *nichum aveilim*. When the Rebbe noticed bochurim going by as well, he gave them a startling look, as if to ask, “What are they doing here?”

## 8 TISHREI

*Shacharis* began at 10:00 am. Throughout the *davening*, the Rebbe cried occasionally. Reb Zelig Katzman was called to the Torah to name a newborn daughter and he asked the Rebbe if he may name her


after Rebbetzin Chana. The Rebbe agreed and blessed her with a long life (later on, the Rebbe sent him sixty-three dollars, the equivalence of the word “Chana”).

Throughout the day, many distinguished individuals came to visit the Rebbe. After *maariv*, Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka came to the house.

## EREV YOM KIPPUR

The Rebbe did not distribute *lekach* today, but rumour has it that he will do so on Hoshanah Rabba. After *mincha*, at 4:00 pm, the Rebbe got up and asked that a *minyan* take place in the house for at least one *davening* each day through Yom Kippur.

At 6:00 pm, the Rebbe went to the *mikvah* and then entered

his room for a bit, walking out while his face was covered with his *tallis* and blessed the *bochurim* that were standing in *Gan Eden Hatachton*. After a few minutes, the Rebbe went to the shul downstairs, stood up on a table, and said a *brocha* to all present. The relatively small crowd (the *brocha* came unexpected) was not able to hear the Rebbe very well, since he spoke with closed eyes and his words were accompanied with tears. Rabbi Hodakov told the Rebbe that many people weren’t present and even those who were didn’t hear. The Rebbe climbed upon the table a second time and repeated the *brocha* again, word for word. 

# NOT FOR YOU

Rabbi Shmuel Lew relates:

Less than a week before Yom Kippur, 5725, a Jew from Greenland wrote a letter to the Rebbe, asking that he send a *shliach* to lead Yom Kippur services on the Air Force base there.

It was an extremely difficult task to obtain all the necessary papers, as security-checks for such a visit were highly intensive, and travel was slow and costly in those days, but by using the right connections (including contacts in the Pentagon), the matter was duly arranged.

I was summoned by Rabbi Hodakov, who told me: “I have a *shlichus* for you,” laying out some of the details of this mission.

During the farbrengen that Shabbos, Vov Tishrei, the Rebbe announced: “There is a *shliach* here who is heading very far north,” and summoned me to receive a bottle of *mashke*.

After pouring some in my cup, the Rebbe instructed that I distribute a bit here and a bit in Greenland, use some for before the fast – “*far-fastin zich*,” and some for after the fast – “*up-fastin zich*”; and some I should bring back here.

Later on that day, the Rebbe’s mother was taken to the hospital. When we heard about this, we walked to the hospital and went up to the ninth floor, and upon the Rebbe’s request, recited *Tehillim*.

Before sunset, the Rebbe’s mother passed away.

I received a message in the name of Rabbi Hodakov: “Tell Shmuel that for him, there is no funeral tomorrow!” Imagine, what was occupying the Rebbe’s mind at such a moment? That I should not consider delaying my trip and continue with my *shlichus*!

The Rebbe asked that we form a small *minyan* for *maariv* and I was the *chazzan*. Before we began, the Rebbe glanced out the window in attempt to determine which direction was east by the position of the moon, but it was a cloudy night and the moon was not visible, so the Rebbe asked Rabbi Krinsky to find out from the hospital staff instead.

(Featured on My Encounter – Living Torah Disc 40 Program 157-158)



# BAIS CHANA OF NEW HAVEN

A few months after the *histalkus* in 5725, Rabbi and Mrs. Moshe Hecht of New Haven, Connecticut decided to build a high-school for girls bearing the Rebbetzin's name, suggesting that it be called "Chana Schneerson High-School for Girls". The Rebbe responded:

משה סי' התבאר ביקט לשאול אם יש מקנה להבאבן פלני כבד וקריה  
שבו חל אורקם אם יכול לקרוא שם של חיי פקול לנקרם ע"ש  
אם כן חיסר ר' שלום א' וכתב שם אילו חקוקה בזה, חקוקה ח' ח'  
Chana Schneerson High School for Girls וזכור חקוקה ח' ח'  
ענינים פכנים שחזקו ע"י לסיור בזה, שחל אם יש מקנה לזה.

ר"ה קט  
 פסח ה'תשנ"א  
 ד'תשנ"א  
 ח'תשנ"א  
 ט'תשנ"א  
 י'תשנ"א  
 י"א תשנ"א  
 י"ב תשנ"א  
 י"ג תשנ"א  
 י"ד תשנ"א  
 י"ה תשנ"א  
 י"ו תשנ"א  
 י"ז תשנ"א  
 י"ח תשנ"א  
 י"ט תשנ"א  
 כ' תשנ"א  
 כ"א תשנ"א  
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 כ"ז תשנ"א  
 כ"ח תשנ"א  
 כ"ט תשנ"א  
 ל' תשנ"א

Rosh Chodesh Shevat

ר"ח שבט

1) The family-name should not be mentioned in this regard [as seen from the names that my father-in-law, the [Frierdiker] Rebbe chose: Bais Rivka etc.]

(1) שם המשפחתי - אין להזכיר  
בכגון זה [וכנראה מהשמות שקבע  
כ"ק מו"ח אדמו"ר: בית רבקה וכו'].

2) In light of the above it is understood – that it's worthwhile to add the word "Bais"; i.e. "Bais-Chana".

(2) ע"פ הנ"ל מובן - שכדאי הוספת התיבה "בית" היינו "בית-חנה".

3) However you must first ascertain that this name has not already been used by others aside from Chabad.

(3) אלא שצריך לברר מקודם - האם לא תפסו שם זה מחוץ לחב"ד.

May it be in a good and auspicious hour.

ויהא בשטומ"צ.

I will mention [this] at the Ohel for much success.

ואזכיר עה"צ להצלחה רבה.

In a press-release prepared by Lubavitch News Service (LNS) and edited by the Rebbe, Rabbi Hecht is quoted as saying: “This was the first of the numerous Lubavitcher institutions in so many parts of the world which had received the Rebbe’s consent to adopt the name of the Rebbe’s mother. The school will be called ‘Bais Chana High School for Girls...’”

It should be noted that in 5730, Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka visited this mosad while on a trip to New Haven.

## בית חנה

This letter was sent to Rebbetzin Basya Garelik, Shlucha in Milan, Italy with blessings upon the birth of her daughter named Chana, after the Rebbe's mother.

At the end of the letter, the Rebbe added “Mazal Tov” in his holy handwriting, and then wrote in English:

“As described in your letter – the building can be named בית-חנה.”

**RABBI MENACHEM M. SCHNEERSON**  
Lubavitch  
770 Eastern Parkway  
Brooklyn 13, N. Y.  
HYacinth 3-9250

מנחם מענדל שניאורסאהן  
ליובאוויטש  
770 איסטערן פארקרוי  
ברוקלין, נ.י.

By the Grace of G-d  
8th of Marcheshvan, 5726  
Brooklyn, N. Y.

Rebbetzin Basya Garelik  
Via Giulio Uberti 41  
Milano (418) Italy

Blessing and Greeting:

I am in receipt of your letter, and I reiterate my prayerful wishes that you and your husband should bring up your newborn daughter, Chana, together with your other children, to a life of Torah, Chuppah and Good Deeds.

May G-d grant that you should always have good news to report in all matters, both general and personal, materially and spiritually.

Especially as we have now come from the month of Tishrei, the month which is sated with festivals and with a complete variety of deep religious experiences, culminating in a most joyous note, that of Simchas Torah. As explained in our holy sources, the month of Tishrei is a "general" month, the epitome of the whole year, and the source of inspiration and blessing for every day of the year. May G-d grant that it should be so for you, and that all your affairs should be permeated with true joy, the joy of the Torah and Mitzvoth.

With blessing - 2166 M. Schwartz

As described in your letter - the building can be named  $\gamma_1 \mu^2$ .



# I Wanted His Sons, Shlita, to Know...

In honor of Vov Tishrei – 50 years, A Chassidisher Derher is proud to present the following handwritten letter by Rebbetzin Chana, which includes new information pertaining to her famous memoirs.

The correspondence, presented here courtesy of JEM, is one of over 1,000 documents – dozens of them never-before-seen – on the Rebbe's early life, to be presented in the forthcoming book, *The Rebbe's Early Years*, by Rabbis Boruch Oberlander and Elkanah Shmotkin.

Rebbetzin Chana wrote this historic letter to her sister-in-law, Rebbetzin Rochel Schneerson, who was the wife of Rabbi Levi Yitzchok's brother, Rabbi Sholom Shlomo Schneerson,

and the daughter of the renowned Chossid, Reb Dovid Tzvi – “Radatz” Chein. Rebbetzin Rochel's daughter, Zelda Schneerson-Mishkovsky, had requested that Rebbetzin Chana send her some artifact of her esteemed husband, Rabbi Levi Yitzchok.

As she informs her sister-in-law that she plans to send her niece a copy of her memoirs, she reveals the reason why the memoirs were written in the first place:

בתך [זלדה] בקשה אצלי לפני זמן לזכרון מדודה בעלי ז"ל תמונה או איזה דבר לדומה אך גם אצלי אין. אך בבואי הנה לפני ששה שנים רשמתי מה שנשאר בזכרוני מחייו של גלותו והשנים האחרונות עוד בעירנו חפצתי שבניו שליט"א ידעו מזה כי לא היו אתו. זייא צוא ליינגע גוטע יאהר - ויוכל היות כי אשלח לך "קאפיע" מזה. - חיי בשלום וכל טוב בברכת כוח"ט אסיים

גיסתך דו"ש  
חנה שניאורסאהן

Your daughter [Zelda] had requested of me some time ago [that I send her] a picture or some other artifact in order to remember her uncle – my husband – but I also don't have [anything of that sort].

However, when I arrived in the United States six years ago, I wrote what remained in my memory of [my husband's] life in exile and of his final years in our city [Dnepropetrovsk]. I [wrote it down, because I] wanted his sons to know this, since they were not with him – may they live for many good, long years. I might send you a copy of it.

May you live in peace and only good. With the blessing of ksiva vechasima tova, I conclude.

Your sister-in-law who seeks your good,

**Chana Schneerson**

It should be noted that Rebbetzin Chana's memoirs were originally published between 5737 and 5753 in *Toldos Levi Yitzchok*, *Eim Beyisroel* and *Tzadik Lamelech* from this typed copy, which Zelda herself gave to Rabbi Zev Katz.

Rebbetzin Chana maintained a steady correspondence with Rebbetzin Rochel and Zelda until her passing in 5725, and the

Rebbe himself corresponded with them as well throughout the years until 5744, when Zelda passed away.

Special thanks to **Rabbi Levi Greisman**, project manager of the years-long research effort, which is expected to culminate with the publication of *The Rebbe's Early Years* by Kehot Publications in 5775, IY"H.



# פרסום ראשון!

Handwritten text in Hebrew, likely a letter or document, written on aged paper. The text is written in a cursive script and appears to be a personal or official communication.

Handwritten text in Hebrew, likely a letter or document, written on aged paper. The text is written in a cursive script and appears to be a personal or official communication.

ב"ה מוצש"ק ה' אלול תשי"ג

ברוקלין נ.י.

כבוד גיסתי הרבנית הכבודה מ' רחל תחי

שלום וברכה!

מכתבך מכ"ב מ' [נחם] אב קבלתי גם אנכי דאגתי לשתיקתך ות"ל ששלום אתכם. אני דחיתי הכתיבה מיום ליום, מזג האוויר לא כל כך טוב הוא, פה חם ולחלוחית ויש שמזה מרגישים איזה חלישות ובמילא גם אנכי בתוך כל יושבי ניו-יארק. וגם זה היתה הסבה קצת להאי-כתיבה. ת"ל בעד שלומי לפי ערך בריאותי בסדר.

אח של חתנך יחי' לע"ע לא הי' אצלי.

בתך בקשה אצלי לפני זמן לזכרון מדודה בעלי ז"ל תמונה או איזה דבר לדומה אך גם אצלי אין. אך בבואי הנה לפני ששה שנים רשמתי מה שנשאר בזכרוני מחייו של גלותו והשנים האחרונים עוד בעירנו חפצתי שבניו שליט"א ידעו מזה כי לא היו אתו. זייא צוא ליינגע גוטע יאהר - ויוכל היות כי אשלח לך "קאפייע" מזה. -

חיי בשלום וכל טוב, בברכת כוח"ט אסיים

גיסתך דו"ש

חנה שניאורסאהן

ד"ש וכוח"ט לבניך הכבודים יחיו

הנ"ל



# REBBETZIN CHANA



## FIRST-PERSON ENCOUNTERS

She stood on the corner watching. Every Shabbos she was there watching with a pleasant smile on her face. Many people walked by; young couples, children, and she watched them all. Some would walk up to her and wish her a good Shabbos. She greeted everyone, and she watched proudly. These are chassidim of her son; the Rebbe.

The Rebbe's mother, Rebbetzin Chana Schneerson, moved to New York after the *histalkus* of her husband Rav Levi Yitzchok. She traveled through Paris and was escorted by the Rebbe for the long overseas journey to America. Once in New York, she took up residence a few blocks away from the center of Lubavitch. Three years later, she watched her son rise to the *nesius*, becoming the leader of Chabad Lubavitch.

The seventeen years she spent in New York were a bittersweet time for Rebbetzin Chana. The Rebbe and Rebbetzin were her only family; her illustrious husband having passed away in Alma-Ata and of her other sons, one was murdered in the

Holocaust, and the other was living in England. She was very proud of her son, the Rebbe; happily witnessing the Chassidim's love for the Rebbe and the Rebbe's love for them.

*[Rebbetzin Chana wrote many Memoirs during those years. A mix of memories and observances, these memoirs were recently discovered and published. This article is an attempt to collect a few stories and observances from those who came in contact with her during those years. We thank the "My Encounter" staff at JEM for graciously allowing us access to the interviews of key individuals while preparing this article.]*

The pride Rebbetzin had for the Rebbe was evident. She would regularly attend farbrengens in 770, be present for davening, and attend many Lubavitch functions including N'shei Chabad Conventions and Lag Baomer Parades. The many people who knew her would tell of the pride she expressed at the accomplishments of her son, the Rebbe.





## YOUR YOUNGER BROTHER

Some of these stories are told by the Junik Family. Rabbi Berel Junik and his family were very close with Rebbetzin Chana, a relationship that began in Russia. Rabbi Junik merited to serve in *Beis Harav* for many years. Interestingly enough, he and his wife Fruma met Rebbetzin Chana separately many years before their marriage.

After Horav Levi Yitzchok passed away, Rebbetzin Chana was living in Alma-Ata near the Raskin family who assisted her. The decision was made between the leaders of the Chassidic underground to try and help Rebbetzin Chana escape Russia and join her family in New York.

Rebbetzin Chana had to make the long convoluted trip from Alma-Ata to New York. Mrs. Sarah Katzelenbogen (Kazen) – affectionately known as “*Mumme Sarah*”, the sister of Rabbi Yaakov Yosef Raskin, and a leader of the underground escape group, escorted the Rebbetzin on one leg of the trip while in Russia, even going so far as to distract the entire train-car of people so they wouldn’t think to talk to the lady in the corner. (This extra precaution needed to be taken, as the name Schneerson was a very dangerous name to bear).

Once in Levov, the border town, the escape organizers began working on sending the Rebbetzin out of Russia.

This is how they got Chassidim out of Russia during what became known as the ‘great escape of the *eshalonen*’:

After the war, the Soviet government agreed to allow Polish refugees to return to their homeland, also a communist country, and a satellite country of the USSR. Passports at that time did not have pictures and they didn’t stamp them with entry or exit visas. Therefore, the plan was straightforward. Bring used passports back into Russia and reuse them for another group of people. Chassidim were buying passports off the streets in Poland and using them to help train loads of Chassidim escape. (By some estimates each train could hold 500 people or more.)

The organizers would try to match the passports with families that had similar family sizes. If the original bearer of the passport was a father with two sons of certain ages, they would try to use it for an actual father with two sons whose ages matched the ones on the passport. In other instances they would combine or separate families, based on the passports, to maximize the number of people to escape Russia.

For Rebbetzin Chana, they arranged a passport of an elderly woman with a grown son. Looking for a son they chose a *bochur*, Berel Junik, because he was nice and *eidel*, and would be a good companion for the Rebbetzin on this journey. He and his sister, Etta Yurkowitz helped Rebbetzin Chana during the



long train ride. (Etta did not even know who Rebbetzin Chana was, she just saw an elder woman and helped her. Only later did she discover that she had been assisting the Rebbe's mother.)

The train-car was basically an animal transport car which was open to the sky. As they traveled, the smoke of the engines swirled around the passengers; not a very pleasant ride as you can imagine.

Because Rabbi Berel Junik came out of Russia using the passport as if he was the "son" of Rebbetzin Chana, both the Rebbe and Rebbetzin Chana referred to him as the Rebbe's "younger brother". Rebbetzin Chana once asked the Rebbe "*Vos macht dyn yunger bruder* - How is the younger brother doing?"

Mrs. Fruma Junik also met the Rebbetzin before they lived in America.



Once out of Russia, Rebbetzin Chana went to Peking, Germany and resided in a Displaced Persons camp for the refugees of the war, where a large percentage of the camp was Chabad Chassidim. From Peking she continued to Paris where the Rebbe came to escort her back to America. The Rebbe came in Adar 5707 and remained there until the American papers were obtained, which was not long after Shavuot.

While in Paris the Rebbe's mother was always treated with the greatest respect. Mrs. Fruma Junik met her there.

"I used to go to school, Schneerson's school. Like a kindler *Haym* (children's home) for the children of

the war. Some of our girls went there, not too many. Since it was Schneerson's building and Schneerson's school, I don't know why, but they chose me to be the spokesman for the school. So they gave me four pages. I learned them by heart and I delivered it in front of Rebbetzin Chana and the Rebbe.

"So I already had an acquaintance with Rebbetzin Chana over there."

In Paris the Rebbe would meet his mother every day. He would go with her on walks, always holding the door for her as she entered and exited buildings. One could see the great honor the Rebbe had for his mother.

## APPRECIATE WHAT YOU HAVE

Although Rabbi Berel Junik came out of Russia together with Rebbetzin Chana, the papers needed to enter America were very hard to obtain. This is one of the reasons the Rebbe went to Paris, to speed up the process of acquiring papers for his mother. Reb Berel, however stayed and learned in Yeshiva in Brunoy until his papers were arranged and he came to America a few years later, in 5709.

When he arrived, the Rebbe told him that Rebbetzin Chana wanted to see him.

He went to visit her and this started a close relationship with the Rebbetzin. He would stop by to help her when she needed assistance, especially Erev Yom Tov. He would also visit on Friday nights and Yom Tov nights after shul. This continued even after he got married, and when his children were old enough, he would bring them along as well.

Rebbetzin Chana was very, very proud of the Rebbe. She once commented to Reb Berel "איר ווייסט נישט וואס איר פארמאגט; איך זאג דאס נישט ווייל איך בין א מאמע נאר ווייל אזוי איז דאס - You don't know what you have. I am not saying this because I am a mother, but because this is how it is."

## THE BIGGEST NES

Mrs. Fradel Sudak also heard from the Rebbetzin how proud she was of the Rebbe. She first met Rebbetzin Chana as a young girl, when she came to New York from England to learn in seminary. There was a N'shei Chabad convention in Sivan, and the young English girl was chosen to deliver a report from London, thereby sharing the stage with Rebbetzin Chana who was sitting at the dais.

Her report was written for her by her father Rabbi Bentzion Shemtov. Included in the report were a few remarks discussing the Rebbe and the importance for Chassidim to connect him, and so on.

After the speech, Rebbetzin Chana approached her and said how much she enjoyed the speech and how she could "hear who is speaking through your speech". Rebbetzin Chana knew Reb Bentche from her time in Paris, as he had helped her immensely during her few months stay. Reb Bentche's family was still stranded in Russia leaving him available to help the Rebbetzin, and later the Rebbe when he came to join her in Paris.



Mrs. Sudak also had the merit of staying overnight with Rebbetzin Chana. There was another woman who usually stayed with her in her apartment so she wouldn't be alone. One Pesach, she wasn't able to be there for the first days of Yom Tov. Reb Bentche, hearing that Rebbetzin Chana wouldn't have anyone staying with her over Yom Tov, arranged for his daughter to sleep overnight in the apartment. On both *seder* nights, She picked her up from 770 after the *seder*, walked home with her and stayed the night, leaving the next morning.

Later, she visited Rebbetzin Chana as a *Kallah* together with her *Chosson*.

The Sudaks got married in London and stayed on as Shluchim. In those days, Shluchim to countries overseas were not allowed to come back to New York more than once every two years. When they came back to New York they made sure to visit Rebbetzin Chana, bringing their infant son Levi Yitzchak who was named after her husband (see side bar). She was very, very happy to see that they had given him the name, and she played with the child for a while.

During that same visit Rebbetzin Chana made a very interesting comment:

“דער רבי טוט אסאך ניסים, די שידוכים איז די גרעסטע נס”

The Rebbe makes a lot of *nissim*, but the biggest *nissim* are the *shidduchim*. These couples come from totally different backgrounds and the Rebbe makes their *shidduch*, and they are so happy together. That's the biggest *nes*.

## ROYAL VISITS

As is well known the Rebbe would visit his mother every single day. Rebbetzin Chana would prepare herself for the Rebbe's visit by putting on her best dresses and clothes and a beautiful Sheitel. Sometimes the Rebbe would make tea, other times they would just talk.

What is less known is that the Rebbe would visit on Friday nights and they would go out for a walk. Crown Heights at the time was full of Yidden, most of whom were not Lubavitchers. When they would see the Rebbe walking with his mother they would nod 'there goes the Rebbe'. Some would approach the Rebbe for a *brocha*.

REB BEREL JUNIK  
RECEIVES LEKACH  
FROM THE REBBE ON  
EREV YOM KIPPUR.

JEM/THE LIVING ARCHIVE / 132283



## I RELY ON THE REBBE

Reb Berel arrived in America the week of Yud Shvat 5710, and had one of the last *yechidus* with the Frierdiker Rebbe along with a few other *bochurim*.

A few months later, on Vov Iyar he went to the Rebbe's room for *yechidus*. In those days one could walk up to the door of the room, knock, and the Rebbe would open. When he went inside the Rebbe asked him why he came, and he said that he is wished to have *yechidus*. The Rebbe began to cry, stood up, put on a *gartel*, closed the window shade and sat down for *yechidus*.

Berel put his *pan* on the table. The Rebbe told him “*A pan laiyygt nisht afen tishen; A pan (besser) git men in hant*” A *pan* you don't put out on the table, a *pan* you (should better) give by hand.”

This makes Reb Berel one of the first to be granted a *yechidus* by the Rebbe. He considered that day, Vov Iyar, to be his *Chassidishe Yom Huledes* (in accordance with the *minhag* of Chassidim to consider the first time they visited the Rebbe as their Chassidishe birthday, and he considered his first *yechidus* in that way).

Throughout the years, Chassidim would go into *yechidus* for their birthdays, usually in the few weeks before. As the amount of people grew and it was harder to fit everyone in, the one time a year when most people would have *yechidus* was near their birthdays. One time, years later, the Rebbe asked Reb Berel about his birthday as he had not been in *yechidus* for a long time. He answered that he considers Vov Iyar to be his *Chassidishe yom huledes*. The Rebbe responded: “*Zolstu firren k'minhag Yom Huledes* – [if that's the case] you should follow the *minhagim* of *Yom Huledes* [on that day].”

His *eidelkeit*, and his respect for privacy and delicacy earned him the appreciation of *Beis Harav*. The Rebbetzin asked that he be the one to serve the Rebbe at the meals upstairs (in the Frierdiker Rebbe's apartment) and at the *farbrengens*; which he did until 5752.

The first Pesach, 5710, Reb Berel was serving the Rebbe and preparing for the *seder*, when the Rebbe asked him “Where is your *ka'ara*?”

“*Ich farluz zich af dem Rebben's ka'ara* – I am relying on the Rebbe's *ka'ara*” said Reb Berel.

The Rebbe replied, “*Oib men farluzt zich aif altz, ken men aif dos oich farluzzen zich* – If you rely on [me for] everything you can rely on this also”.

Reb Leibel Zisman recounted how he was stopped by the Rebbetzin during one of these walks. He had met her in Poking and had brought a letter from her to the Rebbe in America. Seeing him now, she stopped him and wanted to know how everything is doing, and how learning is going for him. He tried to make the conversation short and quick because he felt a bit uncomfortable as the Rebbe was standing right there and listening.

## YOU'RE MY SON'S SHLIACH!

The pride Rebbetzin Chana took in the Rebbe extended to his shlichim as well. Rabbi Leibel Raskin was sent to Morocco as

one of the first shlichim of the Rebbe. As a faithful shliach, he would send detailed reports of his shlichus to the Rebbe every week.

Interestingly, his brother Reb Dovid began hearing stories of Shlichus in Morocco during his regular visits with Rebbetzin Chana. It seems that the Rebbe would tell her news from Morocco based on the reports that Reb Leibel was sending in.

When Reb Leibel came back to visit for the first time for Tishrei 5722, he went to visit Rebbetzin Chana. When he walked in, she rose from her chair exclaiming “*Vos macht ir* – How are you doing?” and she used the formal, respectful term for “you”. He immediately asked her, why are you using “*ir*” in conversation with a little boy? “*Vos ret ir* – what are you saying,” came the response, “you are a shliach of my son, the Rebbe.”

## IN THE NAME

The Rebbe was very appreciative of those who named their children after members of his family.

When the Sudaks’ first son was born they wanted to name him after the Rebbe’s father, Rav Levi Yitzchak. Rabbi Nachman Sudak asked the Rebbe for permission. In addition to asking for *reshus*, he also wanted to know if it was okay to name the full name “Levi Yitzchak”. All the chassidim of the time named their children after the Frierdiker Rebbe. If he were to give the full name he would be precluding himself from giving the Frierdiker Rebbe’s name, and so he wasn’t sure if he should do so. The Rebbe gave him full permission.

Rabbi Hirshel Fogelman of Worcester, Massachusetts also named his son Levi Yitzchak. When Rabbi Fogelman next visited Crown Heights he saw Rebbetzin Chana in the street and he informed her that he had had a child and his name was Levi Yitzchak. The Rebbetzin smiled, “I know”, she said, “my son told me”.

At the N’shei Chabad Convention later that year Rebbetzin Chana saw Mrs. Rochel Fogelman. “Mazel tov,” she wished her, “how is Lev Itchikel doing?” And at the convention the next year, and the year after, the Rebbetzin again inquired after the little Levi Yitzchak.

Mrs. Fruma Junik had a son shortly after Pesach 5724. Reb Berel, her husband, wanted to give the name Meir Shlomo after Rebbetzin Chana’s father, HoRav Meir Shlomo Yanovsky. No one had portable phones in those days so Mrs. Junik called Rebbetzin Chana from the hospital to ask permission. She was very happy. She mentioned that she didn’t know if there was even someone named after her

father yet, and especially not a child here [in America that survived the war]. Reb Berel also mentioned it to her later that day. The Rebbetzin said she would get back to him the next day. Understandably, she asked the Rebbe in the interim, and the next day she gave her full permission.

When little Meir Shlomo was three months old his parents took him to visit Rebbetzin Chana, two months before she passed away. She was very excited to see them and fussed over the baby. They were heading out to the country and she asked them a few times to make sure that they would be careful to watch over him, keep him safe from the cold, and so on.

Fast forward twenty-three years. Meir Shlomo was getting married in Montreal, and he went into Gan Eden Hatachton on Motzei Shabbos to receive the Rebbe’s *brocha* before leaving. On the way down the side stairs leading to the driveway, the Rebbe mentioned to Rabbi Leibel Groner “*Er veizt az er iz a nomen noch mayn zeyden* – Does he know he is named after my grandfather?”

The Rebbe then continued out to the car. Suddenly, the Rebbe came back in.

Rabbi Groner shouted to Meir Shlomo to come.

He ran down the stairs and stood on the last step. The Rebbe pointed to him with a big smile and said, “*Mistame veizt du, du bist a numen noch mayn zeyden* – most probably you know that you are named after my grandfather.”







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## SUPERSEDING GREATNESS

Rabbi Shmuel Lew also merited meeting Rebbetzin Chana. It was in 5723, when he was given a package for Rebbetzin Chana by Rabbi Bentzion Shemtov in London. When he got to New York he asked Rabbi Dovid Raskin, the contact person for Rebbetzin Chana, if he should give the package to Rebbetzin Chana through him. Reb Dovid informed him that twice a year a group of elder Chassidim would visit the Rebbetzin and hold a small farbrengen, where they exchanged a few stories and a few Lechaims as well as *brochos* for the Rebbe. This would take place on Yud Aleph Nissan and Chof Av. He suggested that Rabbi Lew join them.

When he came to the farbrengen Rebbetzin Chana asked about Rabbi Shemtov, his in-laws, the Jaffes, and the general happenings in England. This developed into a close relationship and he began to visit her with his wife when they were in New York.

On Yud Aleph Nissan 5724 Rebbetzin Chana gave out liquor and everyone said *L'chaim*. She wished "*L'chaim*, it should be good for him, for the Rebbe." One of the elder chassidim said, "I know what you mean. Sometimes when one wants to give a *brocha* but they don't know what to specify they say 'it should be good'."

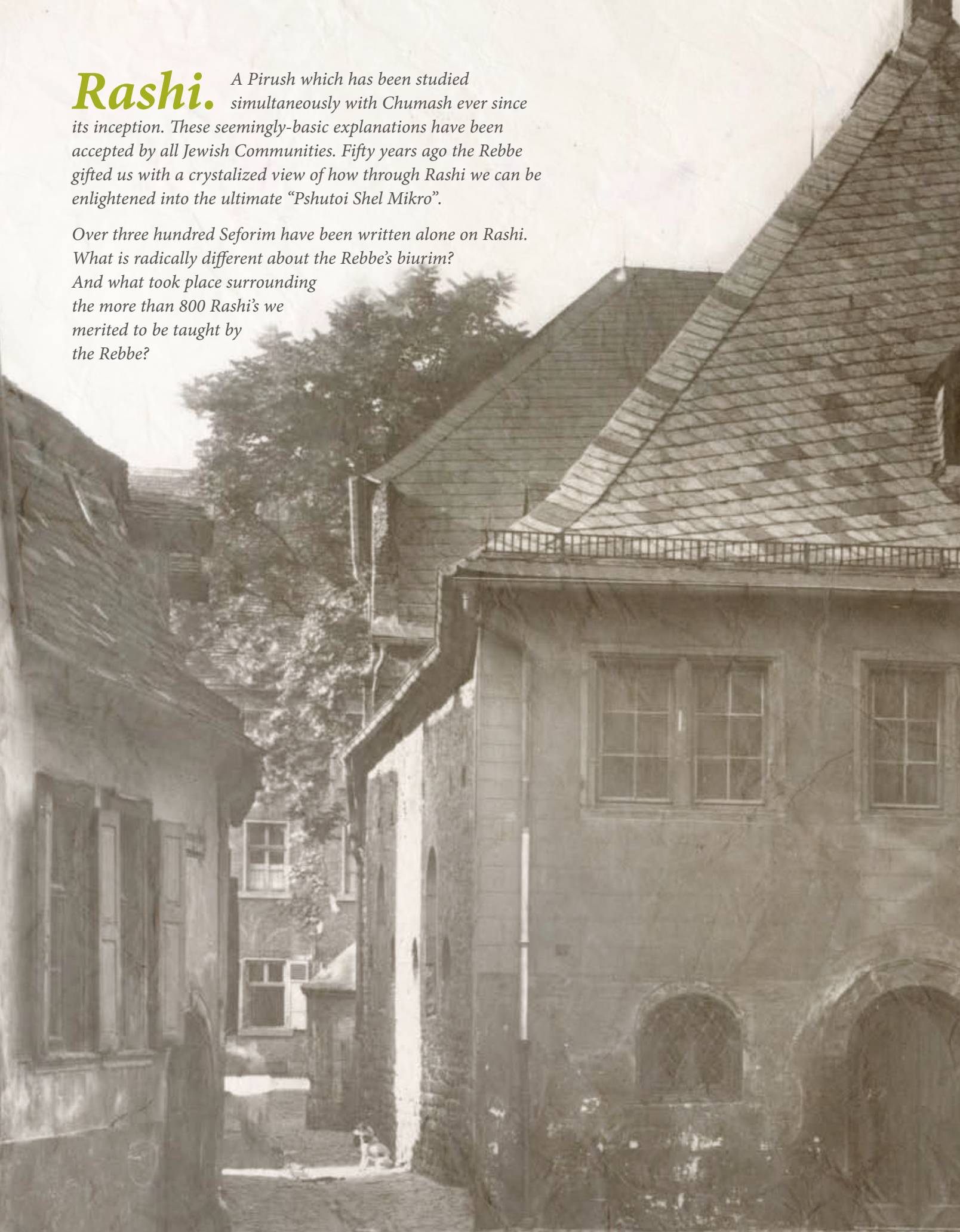
"That's not exactly what I meant," says the Rebbetzin, "I am wishing him a specific *brocha*, it should be good for him, he deserves it."

When Rabbi Lew visited the Rebbetzin on Chof Av of that same year, about seven weeks before Vov Tishrei, Rebbetzin Chana made a comment as they began to leave, "I've seen many great men in my day; my husband, my father. In our home both in my father's home and my husband's home there were many Rabbonim. But I never saw someone as great as my son. The most significant thing about him, is that he carries this greatness with such simplicity." 



**Rashi.** *A Pirush which has been studied simultaneously with Chumash ever since its inception. These seemingly-basic explanations have been accepted by all Jewish Communities. Fifty years ago the Rebbe gifted us with a crystalized view of how through Rashi we can be enlightened into the ultimate "Pshutoi Shel Mikro".*

*Over three hundred Seforim have been written alone on Rashi. What is radically different about the Rebbe's biurim? And what took place surrounding the more than 800 Rashi's we merited to be taught by the Rebbe?*







*revolution in*

שבת

PART I





## THE RASHI SICHA

Perhaps, of all the initiatives that the Rebbe undertook in memory of his mother, Rebbetzin Chana, the most noted was the new, innovative addition of the famous Rashi Sichos to the regular Shabbos farbrengens.

In retrospect, the Rebbe did not only explain a passage of Rashi's commentary each week, rather the Rebbe revolutionized the method to which Rashi is studied. In fact, he formulated an entire new systematical approach to his *pirush*. This resulted in the release of several new *seforim* elucidating this approach.

The following is the story of how this innovation was introduced, and how it evolved through the years. This is not an attempt to analyze the actual Rashi Sichos themselves (which we hope to present in a forthcoming magazine IY"H), rather, it is a glimpse at the history of this remarkable area of the Rebbe's Torah.

Throughout the first year following his mother's passing, the Rebbe farbrenged each and every Shabbos afternoon. Until then, farbrengens were generally only held on Shabbos mevorchim, or on a Shabbos corresponding with a special date.

In response to a letter from Rabbi Yosef Wineberg the Rebbe disclosed his plan to farbrenging each Shabbos. (See Sidebar).

During the Rebbe's farbrengens on Shabbos he always shared insights on the weekly *parsha*. At the farbrengen of Shabbos Parshas Noach, the Rebbe discussed a Rashi on the first *possuk* in the *parsha*. He quoted the Alter Rebbe and the Shaloh both whom praise the depth of each and every word in Rashi. The Rebbe explained how Rashi's careful choice of words portrays the most basic implication of the *possuk*, while at the same time contains layers upon layers of deeper meaning.

Later at the farbrengen, the Rebbe also explained another Rashi on a *possuk* found towards the end of the *parsha*.

Following the inaugural Rashi Sicha of Parshas Noach, this practice continued every week throughout the year of *aveilus*.<sup>1</sup>

The Rebbe's approach to the study of Rashi is based on Rashi's own unequivocal statement:

”אני לא באתי אלא לפשוטו של מקרא, ולאגדה  
המיישבת דברי המקרא דבר דבור על אופניו”

*“I have only come [in order to explain] the basic meaning of the possuk, and to [bring] the Aggados which clarify the Psukim in a way which fits into the words.”*

**“...WHEN THE REBBE  
ENTERED 770 THIS  
MORNING HE CALLED ME  
OVER AND ASKED ME TO  
TELL WALDMAN THAT  
THE RASHI THIS WEEK  
WILL BE...”**

With time, the Shabbos farbrengens began to take on a unique structure. The Rebbe would begin the farbrengen with sichos based on the time of year, after which he would deliver a Ma'amer.

The Rebbe would then pose a host of questions on the Rashi he chose to speak about that Shabbos. He would compare Rashi's comment to its source in the Midrash or Gemara, cite other connecting comments of Rashi elsewhere in Torah, and equate it with *pirushim* given by other *Meforshim* on the same Rashi.

After pausing for a *niggun*, the Rebbe would provide an explanation which often revealed a new “*Klal*” in Rashi's way of explaining *Pshutoi shel Mikro*. The Rebbe would elucidate how every minute detail of that Rashi falls into place.

## NOT SHPITZ CHABAD!

A few weeks before the first yortzeit of his mother, the Rebbe expressed dismay that Chassidim's excitement towards the Rashi Sichos was waning. Therefore, he said that the sichos would shortly come to an end.

One individual found this extremely hard to accept; he couldn't fathom who wouldn't appreciate the greatness gleaned through the Rebbe's Rashi Sichos. He was determined to do what he could to ensure its continuation.

“I didn't even wear a beard and a Kapota at the time,” relates **Rabbi Yosef Waldman** of Crown Heights. “However, when I heard that the Rashi Sichos were coming to an end I was extremely disheartened. Not because I was a Chossid, but because I treasured the Rebbe's incredible way of illuminating Rashi. I was simply ‘*Farkoched*’ in it”.

I penned a letter to the Rebbe in which I expressed my distress. I reasoned that it would only add in the Rebbe's goal of *Hafotzas Hamayanos*, and wondered how the Rebbe sensed any opposition to the continuation of such wonderful Torah!

In the Rebbe's response to me he made an arrow pointing to the word ‘opposition’



# Time for Good News



and remarked: 'Their lies here more than just what I mentioned at the Farbrengen.' Then the Rebbe continued on the side of the page: 'You should speak to the heads of Anash, Vaad Hamesader etc. etc.'

Needless to say I immediately spoke to the individuals mentioned by the Rebbe, and reported that I had done so to the Rebbe. A maxim often repeated by the Rebbe was the response I received: Ha'mayse Hu Hoikar.

I took this reply to mean that despite the efforts of the Chassidim, they were not involving themselves in the sichos adequately. Therefore, the sichos would end one year after its inception as the Rebbe had stated.

Needless to say, I was taken by utter surprise when the Shabbos after Vov Tishrei 5726 the Rebbe began to explain that week's Rashi just as he had done each previous week until then!

What stunned me even more was the Rebbe's introduction to this unforeseen change. The Rebbe stated as follows:

"א' יונגערמאן וואס איז אפילו גיט פון שפיץ חב"ד, ס'ענה'ט ער אז מ'קאכט זיך אין ד' ביאורי רש"י, ס'אז נאך א געשמאקע זאך..."

*'A Yungerman who is not even from the Shpitz Chabad claims that the biurim in Rashi are being Koched in, and moreover it is a Geshmake thing...'*

Thus, the Rebbe concluded that the Rashi Sichos would continue!

My worries quelled, I now encountered a new challenge."

## “TELL WALDMAN THE RASHI IS...”

During 5725 the Rebbe consistently explained the first and last Rashi of each Parsha. With the onset of 5725 the

In the report below, which Rabbi Yosef Wineberg sent to the Rebbe, he details how he dedicated the last shiur on the radio, which included a synopsis of the Rebbe's most recent farbrengen, to the memory of Rebbetzin Chana.

He continues by requesting the Rebbe's permission to add another feature to his weekly shiurim.

Being that Rebbetzin Chana was a great admirer of Rabbi Wineberg's shiurim, especially when he reviewed the Rebbe's sichos in them, perhaps he should give over a point from the Rebbe's sichos each week (in addition to the ones already airing on Motzoei Shabbos Mevorchim). He noted that on those weeks that the Rebbe held a farbrengen he would review points from that day's sichos, and for the rest of the weeks he would give over an idea from Likutei Sichos.

He concluded with remarks about the growing costs of this program, and his intent to cover it out of his own personal money.

On the general report, the Rebbe responded:

ת"ח על הענין ועל ההודעה אודותו, והרי בכ"ע [=בכל עת] מצפה כ"א [כל אחד] לענין של נח"י [=נחת רוח] ובפרט בעת כו'

*Many thanks for the doing so for reporting about it; at any given moment, everyone awaits pleasurable [news], especially at a time of... [mourning].*

Where he proposed his idea of reviewing sichos at his shiurim, the Rebbe responded:

זה מחזק סברתי להתועדות - בל"נ [=בלי נדר] - בש"ק [=בשבת קדש] במשך השנה עכ"פ [=על כל פנים] בקיצור בכמות

*This reinforces my idea to farbreng - bli neder - on Shabbos throughout this year; at least briefly - time-wise.*

Where he had written about the growing costs, the Rebbe noted:

מחצה עלי

*Half [of the costs] on me*



# A DEDICATION IN LIKUTEI SICHOS OF THE REBBE'S FIRST RASHI SICHOS TO THE MEMORY OF REBBETZIN CHANA



Rebbe began to expound on Rashis from throughout the Parsha, so the Rashi that the Rebbe focused on could not be predicted by the Chassidim.

For Rabbi Waldman this change was very difficult. Over the past year he would thoroughly learn the first and last Rashi of each Parsha doing as much surrounding research as possible so that he would be sufficiently prepared for that week's Rashi Sichah. The new development now made it impossible for him to prepare the Rashi before the Farbrengen.

"Ah, how sweet were the days when we would know which Rashi the Rebbe would explain on Shabbos," I moaned to my friend while riding the subway to work one day," related Rabbi Waldman. "My friend suggested something I thought was unfathomable: 'If the Rebbe corresponded with you regarding the continuation of the Rashi Sichos, why don't you write to the Rebbe and request that he let it be known which Rashi he will be speaking about each Shabbos?'"

I thought that it would be incredulous for me to suggest this to the Rebbe! After all, who was I to dictate to the Rebbe how to go about his affairs? Eventually, my thirst to study the *possuk* beforehand got the better of me, and I wrote to the Rebbe in pleading terms, how wonderful it would be if we would know which Rashi would be explained before the farbrengen. This way, I explained, we would be able to prepare in advance, and our internalization of the Rebbe's teachings would be greatly intensified.

The Rebbe responded with the following shortly after receiving my letter: "Generally, it is decided [just] before the Farbrengen, or at the most on Shabbos itself, however this week the Rashi is *'Im kesef talve es ami'*."

I wrote to the Rebbe again, saying that if an exception is ever made, and the Rashi

is known before Shabbos, if he could please let me know. To this I did not receive a written reply.

Instead, what took place that Shabbos took me by surprise.

I was getting ready to leave my home at 899 Montgomery to walk to Shul Shabbos morning, when I heard a knock on the door. On the other side stood Rabbi Sholom Yisroel Hodakov. I was sure he had arrived at the wrong address. "What do you need?" I asked. "Does Rabbi Waldman live here?" he inquired. What could this be about, I wondered. I opened the door and he said: "I don't know the meaning of this, but when the Rebbe entered 770 this morning he called me over and asked me to tell Waldman that the Rashi this week will be... so I ran to find you. I didn't know your address so I asked passersby until I finally found the correct location."

**"WITH A HEAVY HEART  
I TURNED TO THE  
FELLOW STANDING  
NEXT TO ME AND  
REMARKED 'THUS ENDS  
A GOLDEN TEKUFA.'"**

Completely astounded I thanked him and headed to Shul. It occurred to me that although the Rebbe may not necessarily publicize the Rashi before Shabbos, it

could be that the Rebbe would already have chosen it by Shabbos morning and I would have a few hours before the beginning of the Farbrengen to get ready.

Still, it could be that the Rebbe would not always have a messenger to tell me the Rashi. Therefore, I decided from then on that I would wake up early on Shabbos morning and wait for the Rebbe to arrive at 770. I would send a standard note before each Shabbos asking the Rebbe to inform me of the Rashi of the week, and if I didn't receive a response then I would make sure to await the Rebbe's decision Shabbos morning at the door of the small Zal.

Eventually a huge crowd began forming behind me each Shabbos morning. So I instead waited to greet the Rebbe at the entrance of 770. Once I knew the Rashi I would relay it to the Gabboim and Bochorim so everyone could prepare for the Farbrengen. "

**NOT A  
LAUGHING MATTER**

A most painful occurrence took place on Shabbos Parshas Bamidbar 5729. Due to an inadvertent series of events, the gabbai





in 770 announced that the Rebbe would expound on a particular Rashi that week when in fact, the Rebbe had not even intended to Farbreng.

A deep sense of dismay was visible on the Rebbe's face after the gabbai finished the announcement. Those that were in 770 realized that something was terribly amiss.

After davening the Rebbe told the Mazkirus to relay the message that a farbrengen would indeed be held that Shabbos.

At the farbrengen the Rebbe explained the Rashi that had been mistakenly announced, but then the Rebbe said:

*"In truth, we would've needed to end it [the Rashi Sichos] in entirety. For if something like this [that took place this morning] happened, this serves as a hora'a that we should cease explaining the Rashis each week..."*

Rabbi Waldman was especially frightened by the conclusion of the sicha, for it seemed as though the Rebbe was using similar expressions to when the Rebbe had expressed that the Rashi Sichos might come to an end a few years earlier in 5726.

As soon as Shabbos was over Rabbi Waldman penned a heartfelt letter to the Rebbe wording his request in the

expression of the posuk: *"ויחל משה את פני ה' אלוהיו"*. He further reasoned, that if in fact this sad occurrence of events are a hora'a, they should serve as a hora'a to stop the weekly announcement of the Rashi; but not to stop explaining the Rashi altogether.

Emotions flowed through the pages of Rabbi Waldman's letter, in which he implored the Rebbe not to stop the Rashi Sichos.

Rabbi Waldman relates what took place after he submitted his letter to the Rebbe:

"I soon received an answer from the Rebbe:

*"א"כ מהי ההוראה בזה?"*

*"If so, what is the hora'a in this [story]?"*

I understood the Rebbe's reply to mean that the hora'a was not just about the announcement, but about the entire idea of explaining a Rashi every Shabbos. It seemed as if there was nearly no hope.

## A GOLDEN ERA CONTINUES

Despite the Rebbe's response I decided to make one last attempt. I gave in the *tzetel* that I would write to the Rebbe each week, asking which Rashi the Rebbe would explain that Shabbos.

On Friday I didn't receive an answer from the Rebbe, so on Shabbos morning I waited at the door of 770 in the hope that the Rebbe would answer me then. I waited with great anxiety, nervous at what the final outcome would be.

The door soon opened and the Rebbe entered 770 walking past me without even a glance. This was the first time anything of the sort had occurred to me.

Once the Rebbe entered his room I put on my coat and got ready to leave. With a heavy heart I turned to the fellow standing next to me and remarked "thus ends a golden *tekufa*."



Just as I was about to exit 770, the door to Gan Eden Hatachton suddenly opened a small crack and the Rebbe motioned for me to come closer! I immediately moved toward the door, and the Rebbe said to me:

“וישמע משה וייתב בעיניו – ובתנאי שלא יכריז...”

*“Moshe heard and it became good in his eyes – On condition that you shouldn’t announce...”*

I left 770 that morning in a state of elation. The Rashi Sichos would continue!

From that week forward, I continued receiving answers from the Rebbe letting me know which Rashi would be spoken about that week.<sup>3</sup> However, announcements were no longer made in 770 to publicize the Rashi of the week.

If it turned out that I would not be in Crown Heights for Shabbos, I made sure to write to the Rebbe and inform the Rebbe that I would be away for Shabbos.

Each week Rabbi Waldman would use a Nusach with which he would ask the Rebbe if he might share which Rashi the Rebbe would be explaining that Shabbos. Below is the Nusach:

כ”ק אדמו”ר

אולי יואיל בטובו להודיענו, באם אפשר לפני שבת קודש, איזה פירוש רש”י יפרש  
במשך ההתוועדות בשבת קודש הבעל”ט

Translation: Perhaps would [The Rebbe] be as so kind to inform me, if possible before Shabbos Kodesh, which Pirush Rashi will be explained at the Farbrengen of this coming Shabbos.

## THE REBBE POINTED TO THE KOVETZ HAOROS OF OHOLEI TORAH, WHICH UPON CLOSER LOOK WAS OPEN TO THE HAORO THAT I HAD WRITTEN!

I hurried to the phone and sure enough Rabbi Binyomin Klein was on the line!

He told me that the Rebbe had just written a response to my notification that I would be leaving for Shabbos with the *maare makom* of that weeks Rashi.

This only fortified my understanding of the unique affection the Rebbe had toward the Rashi Sichos.”

## HAOROS U’BIURIM

In the 5740s, the Rebbe incorporated an entirely new twist in the Rashi Sichos.<sup>4</sup> At one Shabbos farbrengen the Rebbe expressed disappointment that proper attention was not being given to the Rashi Sichos. In order to infuse a new *chayus* into the Rashi Sichos, the Rebbe would begin a new *seider*; asking a question each week without answering it. People would try to come up with answers throughout the week to be published in the various Kovtzei Haoros



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## איך האב דאך אויך הנאה!

Rabbi Waldman relates:

In the year 5729 I had a Yechidus with the Rebbe during which I asked for Brochos and advice regarding mundane affairs. After about 20 minutes the Yechidus came to a close and I advanced toward the door, when the Rebbe called out to me:

יוסף, טו ווייטער אין די רש"ס, דיר קומט דאך א יישר כח דערפאר, דו האסט דאך  
דאס מעורר געווען!

*Yosef, continue to involve yourself in the Rashis, you deserve a  
Yasher Koach for this, you were the one who encouraged it!*

I froze in surprise and replied:

מיר קומט א יישר כח דערפאר?! איך האב דאך הנאה  
*I deserve a Yaasher Koach?! I enjoy it...*

The Rebbe shrugged his shoulders and smiled:

איך האב דאך אויך הנאה  
*I too enjoy it!*

Ubiurim, and the Rebbe himself would answer the question at the farbrengen the following week.

At a later point, the Rebbe instituted that people should ask questions in the weekly *kovtzim*, and the Rebbe would choose from amongst them, which one to expound upon.

A new excitement and a competitive spirit took hold of the Chassidim. They endeavored to ask questions coinciding with the Rebbe's *kolim* and often offered explanations of their own.

It soon became practice that the Rebbe would enter Kabolas Shabbos with one or more of the Kovtzim. On many occasions the Rebbe would spend some time looking through them during Maariv.

The enthusiasm would come to a climax when the chosen Rashi was heard from the Rebbe at the farbrengen. The Rebbe would often focus on some of the simplest questions posed.

Rabbi Waldman relates:

"I too took pleasure in contributing to the *kovetz* on a weekly basis. I was joined by my brother Rabbi Tzvi Elimelech who had gained a tremendous appreciation to

the Rebbe's *derech* in explaining Rashi, despite his not living in Crown Heights nor being a Lubavitcher. He was familiar with the Rebbe's *biurim* through the *biurim* I had told him over the years.

In the *kovetz* from the week of Parshas Vayera 5748, both my brother and I had written *haoros* relating to Rashis from that week's Parsha.

On that Thursday I submitted my usual request to the Rebbe regarding which Rashi would be spoken about that week. Being that I didn't receive an answer on Friday, I waited Shabbos morning in 770 for the Rebbe to pass by me and let me know.

To my surprise, when the Rebbe opened the door of Gan Eden Hatachton he signaled that I follow him into his room. There, the Rebbe pointed to the Kovetz Oholei Torah, which upon closer look was open to the *haoro* that I had written!

I understood that the Rebbe was signaling that he would be speaking about what I had written.

Taken by surprise, I exclaimed:

"This is my *haoro*!"

The Rebbe answered:

"דערפאר האב איך דאס געקליבן, דו ביסט דאך א  
תושב השכונה."

*"That's why I chose this one, you're a  
resident of this neighborhood."*

Sure enough, the Rebbe expounded on my question during the farbrengen, and showed how the answer I offered was inherently incorrect. Instead, the Rebbe explained the Rashi with uncanny brilliance and clarity.

On another occasion I wrote a *ha'oro* about a Rashi on the Megilla that I had long questioned. That Shabbos morning the Rebbe's notification to me was:

"וועגן דעם וואס דו האסט געשריבן"

*"[I will explain the Rashi] about which  
you wrote."*

It seemed as if the Rebbe had differed from the regular minhag of explaining a Rashi from the weekly Parsha, just because of the questions that were posed in the *Haoros Ubiurim*. **D**

1. Many of those farbrengens with the earliest Rashi Sichos were *mugah* by the Rebbe and appear in *hosafos* of Likkutei Sichos Vol. 5.

2. See Rashi Bereishis Perek 3 Posuk 8. And many times elsewhere in the Torah.

3. After the Rebbe had a heart attack on Simchas Torah 5738, the Rebbe began holding Farbrengens on Shabbos. The first time the Rebbe said a Rashi Sichah was on Parshas Emor 5738. Following that Shabbos Rabbi Waldman continued asking the Rebbe about which Rashi the Rebbe would explain each week.

4. For an in-depth perspective on this, see Sefer Hayovel Haoros Ubiurim – Oholei Torah. More on this topic will appear in a forthcoming magazine IY"H.

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



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נפטר כ"ף אלול ה'תשע"ד

ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.



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