

A Chassidisher **Derher**

א חסידישער דערהער



Of Heart and Quill

REB ELIYAHU
CHAIM ALTHAUS

ויעקב

הלך לדרכו

FROM TISHREI
TO EVERYDAY

ממנה גדלה

THE STORY OF THE
REBBE'S UNWAVERING
EFFORT TO UPHOLD THE
NEIGHBORHOOD OF NESSI
DOREINU—CROWN HEIGHTS



CHESHVAN 5777
ISSUE 50 (127)

Derher**Contents**

CHESHVAN 5777 ISSUE 50 (127)



About the Cover:

This month's issue features the saga of the Crown Heights Jewish community and the Rebbe's insistence on taking action to retain its Jewish character. Pictured is a banner overlooking Kingston Avenue based on the *possuk* שם צוה ה' את הברכה - the place where Hashem has commanded the blessing. This phrase was applied by the Rebbe to the neighborhood of nessi doreinu - Crown Heights.

Photo: Tishrei 5741, Levi Freidin via JEM, 191581

- 04** *Save the World*
DVAR MALCHUS
- 06** *Quite after the Storm*
YOMAN, CHESHVAN 5743
- 13** *Help from Above*
KSAV YAD KODESH
- 14** *Days of Meaning*
CHESHVAN
- 16** *Death of Billionaire Howard Hughes*
THE WORLD REVISITED
- 18** *Of Heart and Quill*
REB ELIYAHU CHAIM ALTHAUS
- 30** *On the Way*
DARKEI HACHASSIDUS

Derher**Editorial**

The month of Cheshvan begins our journey into everyday life. "The quiet after the storm," if you will.

Now is the time to "unpack" everything we acquired during the month of Tishrei and put it to good use in our everyday *avodas Hashem*.

One of the articles in this issue highlights the Rebbe's effort to save the Jewish nature of the Crown Heights neighborhood. The Rebbe asked each person to get involved and do everything possible to help the situation.

On Purim 5731 the Rebbe told the well known story of the wagon driver and the *gvir* who stopped at a town for Shabbos. The wagon got stuck in the mud and the *gvir*, looking to do a mitzvah, jumped in the ditch in order to help the wagon driver. Meanwhile the wagon driver left to shul and invited the local paupers to join him for the Shabbos meal.

This story embodies a confusion of *neshamos* (נשמות), where each one should have been occupied with what the other was doing.

Similarly, the Rebbe said, when he spoke about purchasing shares (which cost \$500 each, quite an exorbitant sum then), the first to get involved were the *bochurim*, whereas many of the *baalei batim* sufficed with saying Tehillim and giving "eitzos."

In fact just the opposite should have taken place!

The *bochurim* should have sufficed with giving 18 cents, and increased in saying Tehillim, while the *baalei batim* should have been actively working toward getting the *zechus* of purchasing a share.

Each of us need to focus on our specific *shlichus* and *avodah* in this world. In this manner, we will all have the collective success, together creating a *dirah b'tachtonim*.



Coming off of the month of Tishrei and the yom tov of Simchas Torah, the Rebbe asks (Shabbos Bereishis 5712):

How can we last through a whole year until next Simchas Torah? It will be half a year until another yom tov, and an

36 **A Job for the Chassidim**

A CHASSIDISHER MAISE

38 **Crown Heights**

THE REBBE'S EFFORT TO
UPHOLD THE COMMUNITY

54 **No Fish for the Ill**

MOSHIACH UGEULAH

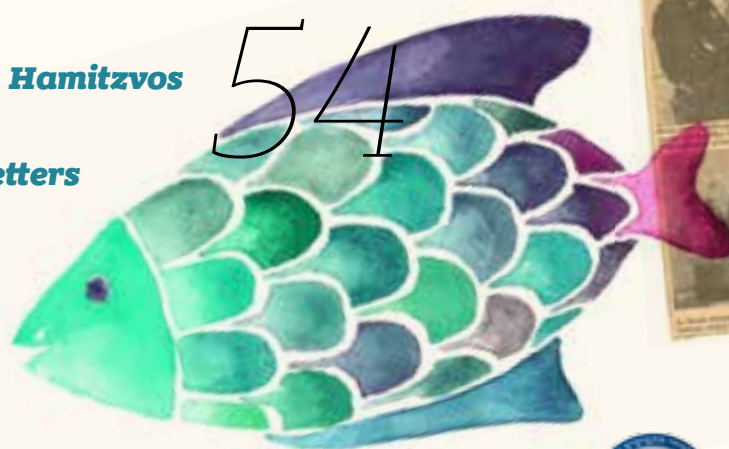
58 **Our Special Connection**

A STORY

60 **Mechiras Hamitzvos**

MOMENTS

62 **Derher Letters**



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נא לשמור על קדושת הגליון.

entire year until Simchas Torah, when we'll finally be able to experience the joy and vitality again.

The answer is:

Reexamine the content of the *possuk* "ויעקב הלך לדרכו"; true, Yaakov was going on his way, but he was actually standing at the border of Eretz Yisroel, about to enter the Holy Land. With just one turn and in just one moment, he could have been in Eretz Yisroel.

The same applies to us:

Each and every Yid stands right at the opportunity to bring Moshiach. With just one gesture and in just one moment ("בשעתא חדא" וברגעא חדא), we can each reveal the spark of Moshiach within our souls. And when all the Yidden will do their part, Moshiach will indeed be revealed.

May it be *teikef umiyad Mammosh!*

The Editors

שלהי תשרי ה'תשע"ז

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



The Living Archive



SAVE THE WORLD

There is a fascinating Rashi regarding the arrival of the animals to the *teivah*. Rashi tells us that they came on their own, and that the *teivah* would “absorb” only some animals, accepting those that had remained “pure,” while rejecting those that had become corrupted by cohabiting with other species.

This helps us understand how Noach managed to gather all the animals single-handedly, and how he knew which were corrupt and which were “pure.”

Likewise, we can infer that if the animals came on their own to the *teivah*, following Hashem’s command, they would not hurt other animals on the way, although this may seem unusual. For the nature of animals is that when they sense a danger to their

existence—a fire, for instance—they all run away from it in the same direction without hurting one another. Hashem had commanded them to enter the *teivah* in order to perpetuate the life of all species in the world; certainly they would not kill another animal.

However a question still remains: How is it that the animals lived with each other in peace for an entire year in the *teivah*? After entering the *teivah*, they had already fulfilled Hashem’s direct command, and they should seemingly revert to their natural tendencies.

This is a question according to the simple understanding of the *possuk*. Why then does Rashi make no mention of the issue?

The answer lies in a Rashi earlier in the *parsha*. Hashem told Noach

to “make the *teivah* with *kinim*,” the common translation of *kinim* is “nests,” a temporary, flimsy dwelling for birds. However Rashi translates it as “separate dwellings for each of the animals.” A dwelling has the connotation of much more than a nest, or even a cage; a dwelling is a place where an animal can live in its natural habitat. Having already mentioned these separate compartments, Rashi was not bothered by the question of how the animals co-existed, because they didn’t need to. They each had their own compartments.

This teaches us an important lesson: Noach saved all the animals in the world, yet he didn’t suffice with that, he built dwellings for each one. He could have built one-room cages in order to keep the animals apart;



לזכות החיילים בצבאות ה'
התאומים
שניאור זלמן
ולוי
לרגל הולדתם ביום
כ"א מנחם-אב ה'תשע"ו - שנת הקהל
נדפס ע"י
הוריהם הרה"ת ר' שרגא פייוול
וזוגתו מרת דבורה לאה ומשפחתם
שיחיו
מאן



*It is the
responsibility
of each of
us to do
everything
in our power
to save
another from
drowning.*

instead he built them dwellings, where they had all that they needed to live comfortably.


If that is how Noach treated animals, then we must treat other people, and especially Yidden with at least the same amount of care and compassion.

Just as there was a physical flood in the times of Noach, there is a spiritual “*mabul*” in the world today. Just as Noach was tasked with saving all living beings from the *mabul*, it is the responsibility of each of us to do everything in our power to save another from drowning.

However, we learn from Noach that it is not enough that we have simply saved another from drowning. Once we have saved them, we need to “build them a dwelling,” ensuring that

they have all that they need for their continued survival and comfort.

True, this may require hard work and a sustained effort, but nevertheless this is our responsibility, just as Noach spent 120 years building the *teivah*.

In the merit of this, Hashem will surely bless each of us with all that we need physically and spiritually in order to fulfil this shlichus. Very soon we will merit the ultimate “flood,” with the coming of Moshiach, when “the earth will be filled with the knowledge of Hashem, as the waters cover the sea.” 

*(Adapted from the sicha of
Shabbos parshas Noach 5741)*



לעבן מיט'ן רבי'ן

לזכות
הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' חיים דוד
וזוגתו מרת העניא שיחיו
ליין
נדפס ע"י משפחתם



4 CHESHVAN 5743, LEVIFREDIN via JEM, 200902

Quiet After the Storm

YOMAN - THE MONTH OF CHESHVAN 5743 (תשמ"ג)

MONDAY, SECOND DAY OF ROSH CHODESH CHESHVAN

At 3:15 the Rebbe came out for *mincha*, after which he gave a *bracha* in the hallway to some of the Tishrei guests who would be returning home shortly. This was followed by a *bracha* in *Gan Eden Hatachton* for the *talmidim hashluchim* heading to Milan and Brunoy. At the end of the *bracha*, the Rebbe gave each of them a booklet of the *michtovim kloyim* from Tishrei of this year, along with a dollar. As they were leaving, the *bochurim* sang "*Sheyiboneh*" and the *yechidus niggun* (known as

מחול היחידות - a joyous niggun traditionally sung after emerging from *yechidus*¹). When the Rebbe heard the singing, he encouraged it with a wave of his arm, and then entered his room.

Later in the afternoon, the Rebbe came down to the main shul and spoke a *sicha* to the ladies² for around an hour, followed by a distribution of dollars.

TUESDAY, 2 CHESHVAN

A rally was held for children of Tzivos Hashem and the Rebbe participated. Relative to the previous

rallies, the Rebbe was more serious this time. At the conclusion of the rally, the Rebbe distributed three dimes (through the *madrichim*) to all the children.

As on the day before, when the Rebbe returned to his room there was a group waiting in the hallway, on their way home from Tishrei. The Rebbe gave them a short *bracha*, and continued inside.

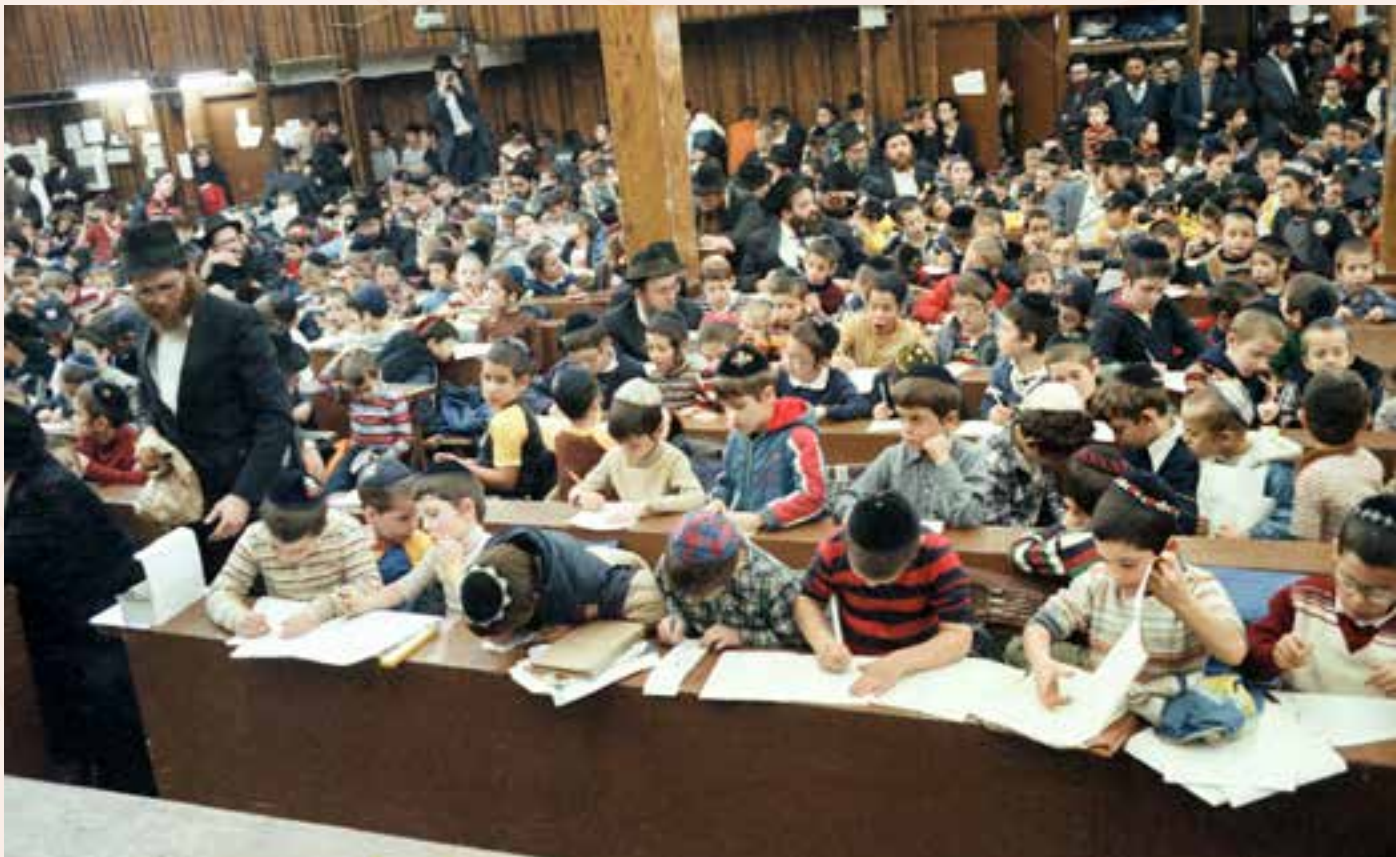
FRIDAY, EREV SHABBOS NOACH, 5 CHESHVAN

As the Rebbe returned to his room from the library (where he would stay for Shabbos), Rabbi Shlomo Cunin was standing there, and told the Rebbe of the meeting he and another six shluchim (Rabbi Avrohom Shemtov, among others) had with the President of the United States, Ronald Reagan. Rabbi Cunin said that it was well organized, the President greeted them warmly, and that at the end they sang "*Lechatchila Ariber*." The Rebbe inquired what this means [at an official meeting, to start singing?!] Rabbi Cunin answered, "We sang quietly." The Rebbe smiled broadly, and blessed him with success.



LEVI FREIDIN via JEM, 208991

THE REBBE ADDRESSES THE CHILDREN'S RALLY, 2 CHESHVAN 5743.



LEVI FREIDIN via JEM, 208988

CHILDREN TRANSCRIBE THE SICHA, 2 CHESHVAN 5743.



כתב יד קודש

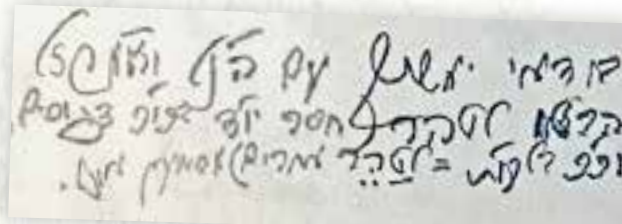
לזכות
בנינו ובנותינו שיחיו
ובהלל ותשבחות להשי"ת
על שזכינו להיות נמנה
בין שלוחי כ"ק אדמו"ר
אבער דער עיקר איז אז עס זאל זיין
חסידישע נחת פון דער קינדער
נדפס ע"י הרה"ת ר' יואל גרשון
וזוגתו מרת רבקה שיחיו
קאראליין



Help from Above

(Teshura Goldman-Mundshine 5776)

In honor of the Kinus Hashluchim, we present the following note in the Rebbe's ksav yad kodesh, written in response to a report of activities bringing Yidden closer to Yiddishkeit:



You will most certainly continue with the above mentioned [activities].

Chazal say, one who comes to purify (in many versions, the word לטהר is written without a "yud," this is also how it is printed in Likutei Torah; the implication is that it means to purify others [as opposed to the common understanding of the phrase - with a yud - meaning to purify oneself]) is assisted [from Above].

בודאי ימשיך עם הנ"ל
ואמרז"ל [ואמרז"ל]
הבא לטהר (חסר יו"ד בכ"כ
[בכמה וכמה] דפוסים וכ"כ
[וכך כתוב] בלקוטי תורה =
לטהר אחרים) מסייעין אותו.

EXPLANATION:

There are two ways to read the statement of Chazal "הבא לטהר מסייעין אותו"—When one comes to be purified he is assisted [from Above]."

Either it can read לטהר—with a yud—meaning to purify himself; or it can read לטהר—without a yud—meaning, to purify others.

The Rebbe is showing preference for the second version and notes that in Likutei Torah it is also written as such (see Likutei Torah Shmini Atzeres 89d).

DAYS OF MEANING

EXPLORING SPECIAL DATES
ON OUR CALENDAR

CHESHVAN 20

Birthday of the Rebbe Rashab

The Rebbe Rashab was born in Lubavitch on Chof Cheshvan, 5621.

{IN THE REBBE'S PRESENCE}

Chof Cheshvan 5735 was the first time the Rebbe held a farbrengen on this day during the week. The Rebbe spoke at length about the new *mitvza* of *neshek* (lighting Shabbos candles), which had been launched two months earlier.

Over the years that followed the Rebbe held a farbrengen almost every year on this day. Every Chof Cheshvan farbrengen came with its special highlighted lesson. Following are some of them:

5741: Although the Rebbe Rashab was born 120 years ago in Russia, and we are sitting in Brooklyn, it is in everyone's power to reflect on the meaning of Chof Cheshvan. Everyone can, and must, take a few moments out of the day to connect to the *baal yom huledes*.¹

5745: There is a famous *sicha* of the Rebbe Rashab explaining the Gemara, "*Kol hayotze l'milchemes beis dovid, kosev get krisus l'ishto*"—One who goes out in the war of the house of Dovid, must first write a *get* to his wife." The Rebbe Rashab applied this saying as an instruction to the *bochurim* studying in Tomchei Temimim regarding the need to completely separate themselves from all worldly matters.

At this farbrengen, the Rebbe added that although the Rebbe Rashab said this specifically for *temimim*, in this final generation of *golus*, it applies to everyone.²

On a few occasions, the Rebbe held a distribution on Chof Cheshvan:

- In 5748 the Rebbe handed to each and every person over the age of bar or bas mitzvah, the "Kuntres Hechaltzu" of the Rebbe rashab (which is about *ahavas Yisroel*). While distributing the *kuntres*, the Rebbe wished each person "*ah hatzlochedike Chof Cheshvan*—have a successful Chof Cheshvan."³
- In 5751 the Rebbe distributed the *kuntres* "Eitz Hachayim" from the Rebbe Rashab (about Tomchei Temimim) to each and every one of the thousands of men, women and children who passed by. A few days later, at the Shabbos farbrengen, the Rebbe added that since a new *maamor* of the Rebbe Rashab was recently discovered, it will now be printed and distributed to all. On Monday, 25 Cheshvan, the Rebbe distributed the *kuntres* אנכי מגן לך - to thousands of men, women, and children. The date signed on the preface to the *kuntres* was "Chof Mar-Cheshvan, 5751".
- In 5752, the Rebbe distributed the "Kuntres Chof Mar-Cheshvan 5752" to thousands of men, women, and children while standing at the door of his room on the main floor of 770. The *kuntres* contained the *maamor* that the Rebbe edited for that day, ד"ה ויהיו חיי שרה תש"ל, said by the Rebbe twenty-two years earlier.

אברהם יצחק

ישראל יצחק

נחמן יצחק

נחמן יצחק

נ

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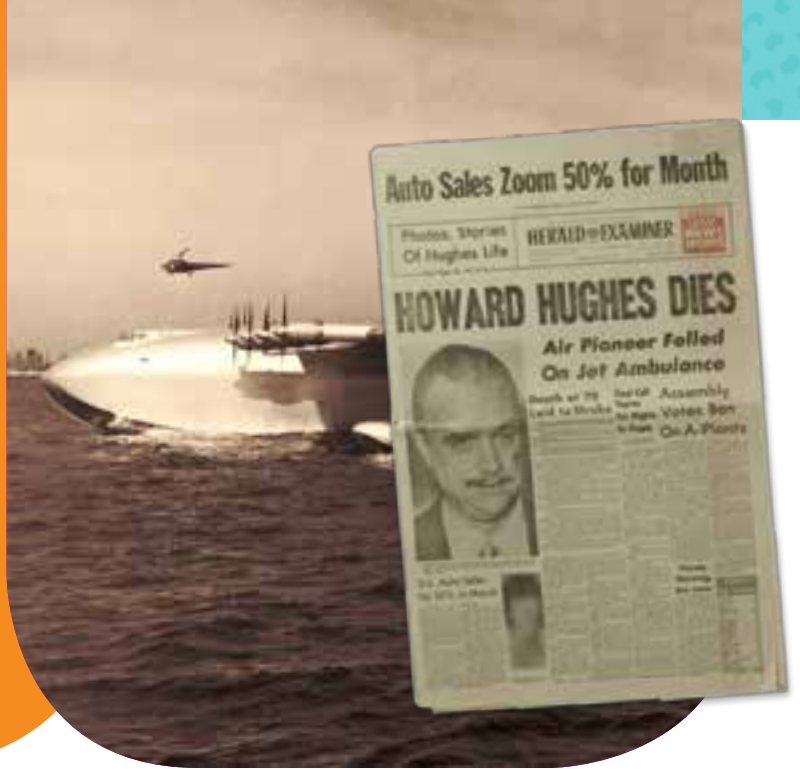


Event:

DEATH OF BILLIONAIRE HOWARD HUGHES

Date:

NISSAN 5, 5736
(APRIL 5, 1976)



The Rebbe spoke about him at the major Yud-Aleph Nissan farbrengen a few days after he died:

“The newspapers are all abuzz with this story. Someone even tried bothering me with this as well. A very wealthy man named Hughes passed away a few days ago. He was indeed quite wealthy; even by the United States’ standards.

“I asked the Yid who told me this story so excitedly, ‘What about this story moves you so much? You had nothing from the 2 billion dollars owned by Mr. Hughes!’

“But then I thought to myself: What lesson can we learn from this occurrence; specifically something connected with the month of Nissan—*Zman Cheiruseinu...*”

The bars of a prison are defined not by the material that makes them but by the meaning behind their existence. Someone in a self-imposed prison is actually a free man, armed with the knowledge that the only force imprisoning him is his own free will. And sometimes gold is more powerful than chains of iron clamped around a wrist.

Howard Hughes was an eccentric billionaire who made his money in the aviation and entertainment industry. Worth over \$6.24 billion in today’s dollars, he had nations doing business with him, purchasing military equipment and airplanes. And yet,

through it all, he was worried that someone was out to get him, poison him, kidnap him and to steal his money.

This paranoia only grew as he became more wealthy. As the years went on, a few plane accidents and head injuries led him to be in constant pain and on pain medication. His fear of other people grew and his neurosis got worse. At one point he moved into a theater for a year, living in the windowless screening room, eating chocolate and chicken.

When he died in 1976 he had been out of public sight for over 10 years, moving between hotels and resorts.

He purchased a hotel after living in it for a few months so the owners would not be able to evict him. In some of those hotels he wouldn’t even open his window drapes for years at a time. He weighed barely 90 pounds when he died, and the autopsy concluded that he had died from kidney failure, coming from dehydration, and malnutrition. Essentially he starved himself to death.

His paranoia prevented him from living like a normal human being. He feared for his life, for his money, didn’t trust his friendships, all because of a few dollars. A child can roam freely, but a billionaire? Not exactly.

A walk on the boardwalk? No. Eating at a restaurant? No. Relaxing with friends? Nope. What if they want to ask for half a million dollars for a project?

His billions of dollars granted him no freedom whatsoever; it made him the most miserable slave imaginable. The government listened to him, he owned everything from hotels to TV stations to airplane factories, and yet he couldn’t sleep at night.



On the other hand, there were people who lived in the concentration camps under the worst of conditions. But because they were connected to the “eternal”—to Torah and mitzvos—they felt themselves as free men.

Hashem did not create anything without purpose, to not have a use. If there is money, it must be used for good, not just sit in a bank. We tell Yidden, true, this non-Jew has 2 billion dollars but he is the slave of slaves. You might only have one million, nothing compared to his two billion, but you have the opportunity to use it for the good. Not drop it into a bank account, hire guards, crawl under a bed and begin trembling. Do good, bring the world closer to a *dira*

for Hashem, with the little money you have!

When a Yid decides that with the money Hashem gives him he will work to spread good, Hashem will send him another million, and when he uses it correctly, yet a third million. And he knows that with the wealth he can unlock many doors and open many listening ears; the purpose of his riches is to fulfill Hashem's shlichus.

Who is a free, truly liberated person? Not the wealthy individual in his own right, but someone who is not restrained by the *gashmiyus* of the world. This does not only include wealth; it includes addictions as well, for *taavos* do not shrink the more they are fed. The opposite is true¹, and one who has 100 wants 200, and

he who has 200 wants 400, until he is completely enslaved to his *taavos*.

It is entirely in the hands of the Yid. No matter how dark the *golus* that he finds himself in is, when he decides that he is preparing for the freedom of *Zman Cheiruseinu*² Hashem will intervene and his challenges will shrink until he is a completely free individual.

1. Sukkah daf 52b

2. This *sicha* was spoken right before Pesach 5736.



JEM, 287464

FARBRENGEN 11 NISSAN 5736.



TO READ THE ORIGINAL:

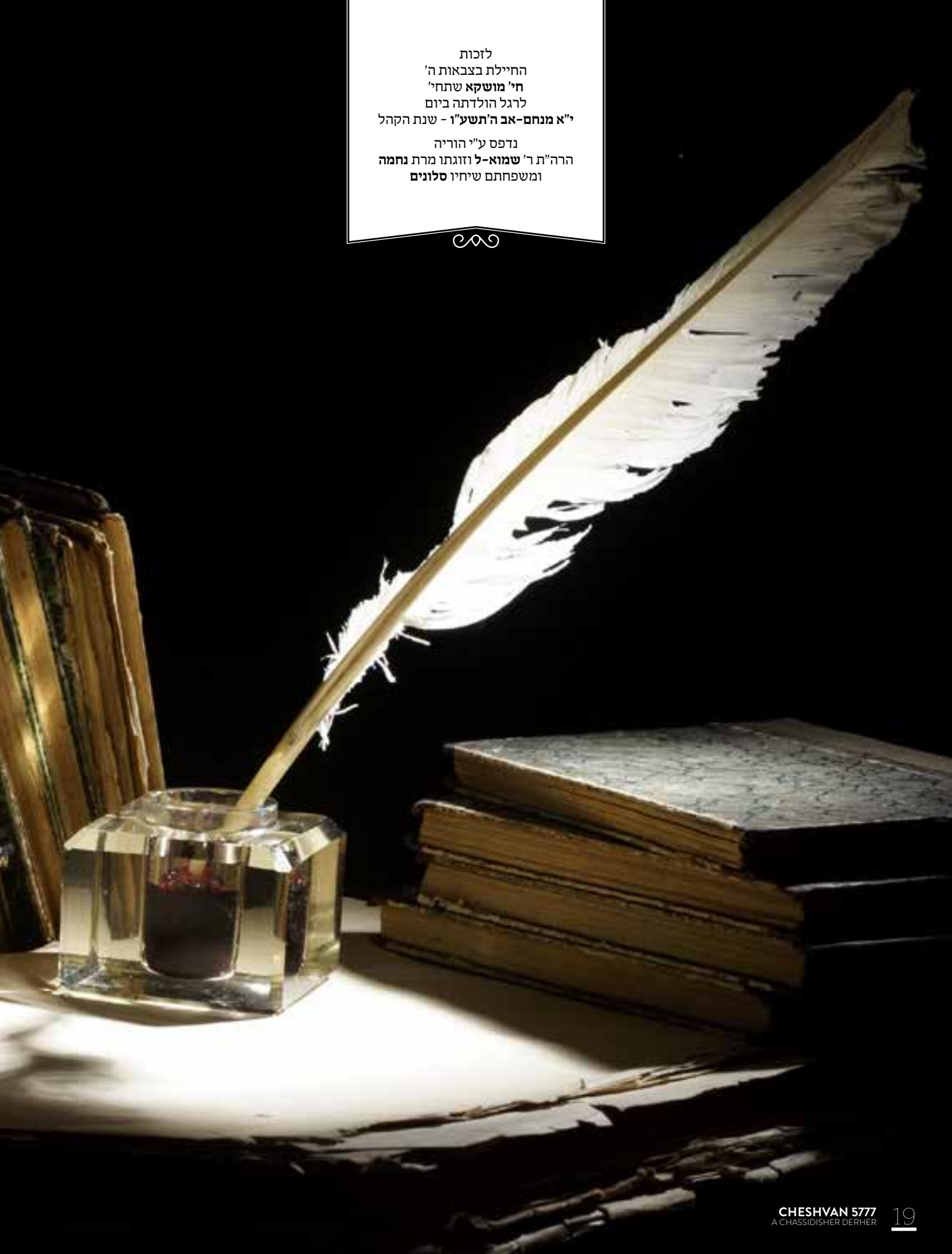
Yud Aleph Nissan 5736 - Sichos Kodesh 5736 vol. 2 p. 33
Living Torah Program #234

OF HEART AND QUILL



REB
ELIYAHU CHAIM
ALTHAUS

לזכות
החיילת בצבאות ה'
ח' מושקא שתחי'
לרגל הולדתה ביום
י"א מנחם-אב ה'תשע"ו - שנת הקהל
נדפס ע"י הוריה
הרה"ת ר' שמואל-ל וזוגתו מרת נחמה
ומשפחתם שיחיו סלוגים



**“MY BEST OF FRIENDS,”
“A YEDID OF OUR
HOUSEHOLD,” IS HOW THIS
CHOSSID IS DESCRIBED BY THE
FRIERDIKER REBBE. THE REBBE
REFERRED TO HIM AS “YEDID
BEIS REBBE, THE WELL KNOWN
CHOSSID.”¹**

While there were many illustrious Chassidim who lived during his time, Reb Eliyahu Chaim Althaus—known as Reb Elye Chaim—stood out as unique. Blessed with an endearing *breitkeit*, his character personified the complete dedication and heartfelt love of a Chossid to his Rebbe. His love was reciprocated by the Frierdiker Rebbe, and the entire *beis harav*; he merited an unusual closeness and was entrusted to carry out the most intimate and complex of tasks on the Frierdiker Rebbe’s behalf.

A combination of a wide heart and a flowing quill, the prolific letters of Reb Elye Chaim have allowed us a glimpse into the world of the Frierdiker Rebbe during the fateful periods of his leadership, when Lubavitch was straddling between worlds—weathering hardships and celebrating rebuilding—giving us a backdoor entrance to the events that so altered the future of Chabad Lubavitch forever.

As we will see in the coming pages...

JEM, 2708



THE REBBE, IN THE PERIOD OF THE REBBE AND REBBETZIN'S CHASUNA.

THE SECRET NODAH B'YEHUDAH

Reb Elye Chaim was once visiting a town for Shabbos, when he heard that a traveling *misnagdisher maggid* would be delivering a sermon on Shabbos afternoon. Arriving at the shul some time before the *drasha*, Reb Elye Chaim asked the *shamash* if the sefer *Nodah B'yehuda* was available. The *shamash* searched for it on the bookshelves, but was unable to locate it.

Meanwhile, the shul filled up, the speech commenced, and then, at the height of the *pilpul*, with the *maggid*

soaring in his *gaavah* and pride, Reb Elye Chaim cut in.

"The *Nodah B'yehudah* says otherwise..."

The *Maggid* was flustered; the shul was thrown into a tumult. Needless to say, Reb Elye Chaim had no factual basis for his statement and had simply wanted to break into the unbearable *gaavah* and *chitzonius* of the *Maggid*, accomplishing it in his bold and humorous way.

This *breitkeit* and boldness was Reb Elye Chaim's trademark approach to everything he would do and everyone he would meet.

DEEP ROOTS

Born to the prominent Althaus family of Nikolaev, Reb Elye Chaim was raised in a setting that gravitated strongly to Lubavitch and the Rabbeim. His father, Reb Pinchas, was a Chossid of the Rebbe Maharash, and his entire extended family was well known for their warmth, *chassidishkeit*, and dedication to the Rebbe.

After learning in Tomchei Temimim in Lubavitch for a number of years, Reb Elye Chaim was sent by the Rebbe Rashab to strengthen Yiddishkeit in the town of Dobranka, near Gomel, in 5678 (תרע"ח). In that distant town, when the news of the Rebbe Rashab's *histalkus* reached him, he is reported to have fainted [see sidebar]. Three years later, he traveled to join the Frierdiker Rebbe in Leningrad, and from that day, until the Frierdiker Rebbe moved to Poland, he remained part and parcel of the scene in Lubavitch.

For Chassidim coming to the Rebbe, Reb Elye Chaim was the embodiment of *hiskashrus* and dedication. When Reb Yisrael Jacobson arrived at the home of the Frierdiker Rebbe on Erev Rosh Hashanah 5685 (תרפ"ה), and noted—to his consternation—that not a single bench was to be found in the room where the *tefillos* were scheduled to take place, he turned to Reb Elye Chaim questioningly, and exclaimed, "Reb Elye Chaim, it's Erev Rosh Hashanah, and there is nothing for the shul." Reb Elye Chaim looked at him, and replied with the same words, just in a factual tone; "Yisrael, it's Erev Rosh Hashanah, and there is nothing for the shul."

Reb Yisrael related that Reb Elye Chaim's no-nonsense reply opened his eyes, and matured him by ten years.

"He had meant to say, 'From whom are you demanding? One should demand only from himself...' In my



לזכות
ח' מושקא בת גילה עלקא
ואחותה
מנוחה רחל בת גילה עלקא
לרפואה שלימה וקרובה
נדפס ע"י הוריהם
הרה"ת ר' יוסף אליהו
וזוגתו מרת גילה עלקא שיחיו
אנדרוסיער



On the Way

ויעקב הלך לדרכו

וכן הי' גוהג הוד כ"ק אאמו"ר הרה"ק זצוקללה"ה
נבג"מ זי"ע בהיותו בארצנו ליובאוויץ בקרב אחינו
התמימים... אחרי הסעודה הגדולה הי' מתחיל לאמר,
הנה עתה הגיע עת ויעקב הלך לדרכו, דאחרי העבודה
חדש השביעי, הנה יעקב יו"ד עקב, הולך לדרכו
בעבודה דתורה ומצוות דכל השנה...

...My father, the holy Rebbe [Rashab], when he
was in our city of Lubavitch in the presence of our
brethren, the *temimim*, after the grand *seudah* [on
Simchas Torah], he began to say:

Now is the time of יעקב הלך לדרכו—Yaakov goes
on his way.

After the *avodah* of the [festive] month of Tishrei,
now Yaakov [the name corresponding to the lower
level of our *neshamah*, as expressed in the name
Yaakov], meaning "heel" must go on his way,
serving Hashem with Torah and mitzvos through
everyday life throughout the year...

(Igros Kodesh RaYyaTZ vol. 1 p. 194)

The month of Tishrei, chock-full of joy and
inspiration, is now behind us. It is time for us to
begin our everyday *avodah*.

It is now that the incredible feelings of elevation
will be put to good use in carrying out our mission
in this world, creating a *dira b'tachtonim*.

The Frierdiker Rebbe compared this notion to
a businessman laying out his recently purchased
merchandise:

"V'Yaakov *halach l'darko*; we must be sure that all
the merchandise we acquired over the last fifty-odd
days [since Rosh Chodesh Elul] should be unpacked
and sold. From the *pesukim* on Rosh Hashanah and
Aseres Yemei Teshuvah and the fasting on Yom
Kippur; we all acquired this merchandise. Much like
a businessman who purchases wares at the market
and immediately sells them..."¹

The Announcement

"In Lubavitch on Motzei Simchas Torah, they
used to announce 'V'Yaakov *halach l'darko*..."

A fact repeated by the Rebbe many, many times towards the end of the month of Tishrei.

On one occasion the Rebbe even specified that the announcement was specifically made loudly and for all to hear.²

Likewise, the Rebbe often made a similar announcement at the conclusion of the month of Tishrei, either on his own, or by having someone else do it.³

Over the years, the Rebbe expounded on the meaning of this quote and its application to the post-Yom Tov *avodah* for each of us. The Rebbe even explained each word of the quote and how they are specifically connected to this *avodah*:

עקב—The name Yaakov, from the word עקב (heel), symbolizes the lower level of our *neshamah*. It is our connection with the physical world and how we refine it. But, a “*yud*” is added at the beginning of the name, symbolizing our connection to Hashem’s name and our ability to connect the highest levels of *Elokus* with the physical world.

הלך—The word means “going,” symbolizing that we must continually progress in our *avodah* and not remain stagnant.

לדרכו—*Derech* is a “road” that connects two separate places; it can even connect the furthest corners of a country with the palace of the king himself. In our instance, after the *yomim tovim* of Tishrei, we connect our everyday lives in the mundane world to Hashem Himself, making a true *dira b’tachtonim*.⁴

כ"ק מו"ח אדמו"ר יעורר רחמים

ידוע המנהג שבמוצאי שמח"ת מכריזים: "ויעקב הלך לדרכו" - לעבודה דכל השנה כולה, ובפרט לעבודה דימי החורף כו', וכהמשך הכתוב: "ויפגעו בו מלאכי אלקים", והיינו, שהמלאכים עוזרים ומסייעים ליהודי בעבודתו (אף שמקנאים בו כו').

וכדי שתהי' העבודה בשמחה, שאז היא בנקל ובמהירות יותר - הנה בשעת חלוקת "כוס של ברכה", יחלקו גם "משקה" מהתועודות זו לכל האורחים השבים למקומותיהם, וכל אחד יזכיר את מקום עבודתו, כדי ש"ק מו"ח אדמו"ר יעורר עליו רחמים רבים, שתהי' עבודתו בשמחה ובטוב לבב, ובאופן דמוסיף והולך ואור.

(ש"פ בראשית - התועודות ב' - ה'תשכ"א)

Stages

The original source for connecting the *possuk* of ויעקב הלך לדרכו with the post-*yomim tovim avodah* is in the famous *maamar* by the Rebbe Maharash known as *תרל"ז*.⁵ There, the Rebbe Maharash applies the *possuk* to the *avodah* following the *teshuvah* of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

In Lubavitch, this *possuk* was applied to the *avodah* of after Simchas Torah.

The Rebbe explains that there are several stages in the *avodah* of ויעקב הלך לדרכו.

One level is right after Yom Kippur. The *Yomim Nora'im* are a time when the unity of all the Jewish people shines. Rosh Hashanah is the day when אתם נצבים היום כולכם—all the Jewish people stand together before Hashem. Yom Kippur is known as “אחת בשנה” the one, singular day of the year, when all external elements melt away and the internal unity surfaces.

After Yom Kippur, we each start doing *avodah* on our own; building our own sukkah, acquiring our own lulav, and so on. That’s why we say ויעקב הלך לדרכו—each on our own way.

But in a deeper sense, the unity of the Jewish people is still apparent through Sukkos and Simchas Torah. That’s why another level of this *avodah* of ויעקב הלך לדרכו is attained immediately following Simchas Torah.

And in an even deeper sense, since the festive mood is still apparent until Shabbos Bereishis and the end of the month of Tishrei, we can apply yet another level of ויעקב הלך לדרכו to the beginning of the month of Cheshvan.⁶

At times, the Rebbe kept the theme of ויעקב הלך לדרכו going even further into the month of Cheshvan.

Most notably, the Rebbe dedicated many of the *sichos* in early 5738 to this theme, expounding each week on another level and another take on this special *avodah*.

[These *sichos* were delivered from the Rebbe’s room on Motzei Shabbos, transmitted live by speakers to the main shul, after the Rebbe had a heart attack on Shmini Atzeres. Later, they were *mugah* by the Rebbe and printed (along with the *maamarim*), in *Likutei Sichos* vol. 20. This collection comprises a unique step-by-step build up of the Rebbe’s take on the subject of ויעקב הלך לדרכו.]



A Job for the Chassidim

Jealousy, hatred and misdirected anger is what caused the Russian peasants to turn on their Jewish neighbors.

The summer of 5639 (תרל"ט) saw great unrest as the successful Jewish lumber merchants were being attacked and abused by the locals. It was no great surprise that the government did not come to their rescue.

Throughout the following winter, the Rebbe Maharash made a number of trips to Petersburg and Moscow in order to resolve these communal matters.

When he realized that the officials were not interested in helping, the

Rebbe Maharash decided to take drastic measures, and right after Shavuot he travelled to Germany and France to rally help from abroad. Upon his return to Russia, he went directly to Petersburg to meet with many influential ministers.

However, he soon realized that something had changed. In the past he had always been welcomed warmly and graciously, but this time they were being openly hostile and very uncooperative.

Not quite ready to give up, the Rebbe Maharash called an urgent meeting of the influential and wealthy Jews in Petersburg and suggested that two

people should volunteer to join him in approaching the interior minister and request that he arrange a meeting with the Czar.

The plan was unanimously accepted by everyone but it fell short because there were no two people ready to volunteer themselves.

Slowly, one by one, the truth started coming out. The Russian government was furious at the Rebbe Maharash because he had the nerve to involve foreign nations in their private business and embarrass them in so disgraceful a manner.

One of those present at the meeting repeated what he had heard from reliable sources. Apparently the assistant minister of foreign affairs had said to the finance minister that, "Ever since the 'tzaddik' Schneerson from Lubavitch visited Germany and France

and met with some of the most influential bankers and investors there, they threatened to halt all business dealings with Russia until the Jews were treated fairly."

The Rebbe Maharash was unnerved when hearing this and he calmly replied, "I am already aware of this because Professor Bertonson told me about this. He also told me that there are those who felt I should be punished for my actions. To this I replied, 'Am I any better than my holy predecessors? At a time like this I don't think about myself.'"

In reality, the Rebbe Maharash realized that his trip had indeed been successful and with a bit of pressure things started moving.

He concluded the meeting by saying, "We now have to meet with the interior minister himself

**IF YOU WEALTHY GENTLEMAN
ARE MORE CONCERNED ABOUT
YOUR OWN MONEY AND
SKIN, I WILL TAKE TWO OF MY
CHASSIDIM ALONG WITH ME**

לע"נ
הרה"ת ר' רפאל משה הכהן ע"ה
שפערלין
גלב"ע י"א מר-חשוון ה'תשנ"ה
ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.
נדפס ע"י משפחתו שיחיו



DOES THE GOVERNMENT REALLY THINK WE WILL WATCH THE BLOOD OF OUR SONS AND DAUGHTERS BEING SPILLED FREELY, OUR POSSESSIONS LOOTED AND THEN BOW DOWN AND KISS THE HANDS OF THE PERPETRATORS?!

and request an audience with the Czar. If you wealthy gentleman are more concerned about your own money and skin, I will take two of my Chassidim along with me."

It took about a week for the Rebbe Maharash to receive an appointment to meet with the minister. The two Chassidim who were to accompany him were Reb Chaim Masseyev and Reb Nochum Hermant, and they later relayed what had occurred.

When the Rebbe Maharash walked into the meeting, the minister greeted him with honor and one could tell that he was visibly impacted by the Rebbe's presence. Despite the respectful reception, the minister rebuked him for taking internal matters to foreigners and scolded him that he was deserving

of punishment as severe as those who rebel and revolt. The government was very displeased that he was mixing into their affairs and trying to manipulate them.

The Rebbe Maharash didn't flinch in the face of the harsh remarks and he replied:

"Does the government really think we will watch the blood of our sons and daughters being spilled freely, our possessions looted and then bow down and kiss the hands of the perpetrators?!

"No! We are upstanding citizens of this land and we have fulfilled our obligation to the government both with our bodies and money like all the other inhabitants. The degradation and humiliation that we are forced into ghettos and prohibited from settling

wherever we want is more than enough, and now the authorities are supporting the activities of criminals that are out to harm our wives, sons, daughters and ourselves, like a nation without any protection. We, like all residents, demand protection and safety.


"The reason I came here was to inform you, in my name and in the name of all the Jews, residents of this land, that I want an audience with the King, to relay to His Majesty our situation and to hear from His Excellency if we have been sentenced to death at the hands of these bandits. The promises and assurances of the ministers are worthless in our eyes and in the name of justice and righteousness we are turning to you to make this happen."

The minister was visibly affected and shocked by the passionate words he had just heard from the Rebbe; words that were coming from the depths of his heart. The minister could not

talk and simply ended the meeting by saying that he will have an answer in the next few days and he hopes it will end well.

About ten days passed and word came from the minister of the interior that he should come back. The minister told the Rebbe Maharash that to arrange an audience with the Czar was very difficult. Regarding the situation of the Yidden, however, the government was stating with certainty that from here and on no evil shall befall any of them, anywhere they might live.

Sure enough an edict was passed on to the officials in each district. It warned that if they found anyone stirring up the peace or inflicting physical damage on any citizen that individual would be punished severely.

For the Yidden, they were able to breathe a sigh of relief! 

1. Adapted from Sefer Hamaamorim of the Frierdiker Rebbe, 5710 pages 198-199.

נדפס לזכות
ר' יצחק בנימין וזוגתו מרת ח' רחל
קאמען
לאות הוקרה על ההכנסת אורחים
וביתם הפתוח לרווחה

נדפס ע"י
הרה"ת ר' צבי הירש
וזוגתו מרת חנה רחל שיחיו
נאוואק
Chabad on Campus
Rohr Center for Jewish Life at
Washington University in S. Louis



The story of the
Rebbe's unwavering
effort to uphold
the neighborhood
of nessi doreinu—
Crown Heights. The
place where Hashem
commands his
blessing.

In preparing this
article we were
greatly assisted by
Rabbis Michoel
Seligson, Yosef
Katzman, and Yossel
Bar-Chaim





שם צוה ה'
את הברכה



THE "FARBAND" BUILDING, LATER PURCHASED BY TZACH.

"Thousands of Yidden lined Eastern Parkway as far as the eye could see on Rosh Hashanah afternoon" recounts Rabbi Menachem Wolff in his diary of Tishrei 5725 with the Rebbe. "Relaxing in front of their homes after finishing their Yom Tov meals."

Although these Crown Heights residents were not Lubavitcher Chassidim, many fondly looked forward to the yearly *tashlich* procession that the Rebbe would lead down Eastern Parkway toward the Botanical Gardens.

Dressed in their Yom Tov finery, they rose in respect when the Rebbe drew near, many wishing the Rebbe "Ah gut Yom Tov!"

For those who did not experience it, it is hard to imagine how diverse and expansive the Jewish community of Crown Heights once was.

THE COMMUNITY THAT WAS

"All my neighbors were *frumme* Yidden of assorted backgrounds," muses Rabbi Yossel Katzman, who grew up in Crown Heights in the early 5720s.

Although a few Lubavitchers lived in Crown Heights to be in close proximity to the Rebbe, the

surrounding areas was once shared with many different *kehilos*.

From the 5700s through the 5720s the borders of the Jewish community of Crown Heights ranged from Rochester Avenue to the east until Washington Avenue to the west, and extended as far south as Linden Boulevard and as far north as Atlantic Avenue.

Over 40 shuls of all types dotted the flourishing neighborhood. These included shuls as large as the impressive Young Israel congregation on Eastern Parkway and Albany Ave. (subsequently replaced with condos) and Chassidishe *shtibelach* like Viznitz (now Beis Binyomin) and Satmar (now "Shain's Shul").

Belz, Gur, Sadigur, Skver, Skulen, Sosnowic, Spinka and many others had shuls in Crown Heights for their members who resided there, and even a few Chassidishe rebbes were settled in Crown Heights at the time.

A number of Litvishe Shuls were also located in Crown Heights, including the Agudas Yisroel Shul on Crown Street, the Novominsker Beis Medrash on Carroll St. and Schenectady Avenue (now Kehal Chassidim), and others.

The building that now houses Oholei Torah Elementary and *yeshiva gedola* once served as a Conservative temple, the largest in all of Brooklyn. Alongside these shuls were tens of yeshivos and *mikvaos*. Bobov for example, had a large campus housing a yeshiva, shul and *mikveh* on S. Marks Place.

Kosher grocery stores and other Jewish businesses were found throughout Crown Heights, some in areas you would least expect these days. Utica Avenue was home to a kosher pizza store, Meal Mart, candy store, Flohr's Judaica and much more.

FEARFUL FLIGHT

The Crown Heights of then, which was calm and *heimish*, was abruptly shaken up around the end of 5725. What was perhaps the scheme of some self-serving real estate brokers, caused the majority of the neighborhood's Jewish residents to flee, and quickly changing it to a predominantly low-income African-American neighborhood.

Initially, just a handful of Yidden sold their homes to non-Jews, acting on the rumor that a low-income populace would soon dominate the neighborhood and cause a rise in crime and the price of real-estate to drop. Taking the advice of the brokers, these Yidden sold their homes to African Americans. Almost overnight, this became a negative trend.

In droves, Yidden sold their homes to the first buyer and rushed to move elsewhere. The *frumme* Yidden moved to neighborhoods such as Boro Park and Williamsburg, whereas the less religious Jews moved further out to Queens and Long Island.

This story was nothing new for Jewish communities in North America. In many metropolitan areas, Jewish communities would settle in part of a city for a span of 30-40 years,

and invest heavily in building a Jewish infrastructure.

This wouldn't last long, and soon enough the Jewish community would collectively decide that it was no longer safe to remain in this neighborhood, they would swiftly move out, often leaving behind huge structures, the elderly, the sick and the poor.

Closer to Crown Heights, this had just taken place in the Brownsville and East Flatbush sections of Brooklyn, and many of those residents moved to Crown Heights.

Now the table had turned and Crown Heights was rapidly being emptied of its Jewish residents. Taking their places were multitudes of non-Jewish immigrants, many of whom were uneducated and unemployed. Shuls were abandoned and soon turned into churches, and crime abounded in the area.

BRAVING THE STORM

By 5729 (1969) almost all other Jews outside of Lubavitch had left the neighborhood. Even a number of Lubavitch families had moved to Boro Park, under the impression that Lubavitch would soon follow suit.

Those remaining in Crown Heights were subject to harassment and often violence from their new "neighbors."

The young children playing in the yard of Lubavitcher Yeshiva at Bedford Avenue and Dean Street were often attacked during recess by lawless punks who plagued the streets. At Oholei Torah, located on Eastern Parkway and Buffalo Avenue, the children were being tormented as well.

Business owners were afraid to open their businesses too early in the morning. After dark, the streets of Crown Heights became inhospitable. Few wanted to take the chance of running into the criminals and gangs that roamed the neighborhood.

The police did little to stop the danger for their Lubavitch constituents, and the cries of help to local politicians fell mostly on deaf ears.

Only one voice rose to address the gloomy circumstances, and only one individual insisted that a completely different approach be taken.

NO NEED TO PANIC

Years before the Rebbe's campaign to save the Crown Heights neighborhood, the Rebbe addressed the issue in a letter. In response to a private inquiry of a family who wished to sell their home on New York Avenue, reasoning that "a colored family has moved in nearby..." the Rebbe advised that they may sell their house, but was sure to bring an important matter to their attention:

"You must tell your mother that she has no need to panic from the fact that a colored family moved in nearby. They too are people with whom one can share a neighborhood. On the contrary: there are also white people that are not of the best nature..."

(Igros Kodesh vol. 6 p. 298)

DEADLY DISEASE

The Rebbe publicly addressed this saga of Jews fleeing their communities at the farbrengen of Acharon Shel Pesach 5729. Later, the Rebbe was *magiha* that portion of the farbrengen and requested that it be published:¹

"There is a phenomenon that has recently become widespread, similar to a disease, among bnei Yisroel, to abandon Jewish neighborhoods. As a result, the homes are being sold to non-Jews. More so, the shuls and batei midrash are being sold, etc. By extension this brings into doubt and is in fact destroying the parnassah of many Yidden."

The Rebbe continued:

Truthfully, this matter should have been solved through the community askanim and the rabbonim. It is not my role to give rulings in these areas... however at this point I must announce my stance publicly and its basis in a clear ruling in Shulchan Aruch.

Here the Rebbe went on to discuss at length, through a collection of *halachos* and *maamarei Chazal*, why according to *halacha* it is forbidden for a Jew to sell his home to a non-Jew when the sale brings inevitable



LEVI FREIDIN v/s JEW, 140816

negative effect, especially on the poor, sick and elderly.

All the more so, when every home in a Jewish community that is sold to a non-Jew will impact all other Yidden in the surrounding neighborhoods!

“Only through maintaining and building up the neighborhood,” stated the Rebbe, “can we avoid the danger of the damage that has been done.” The Rebbe emphasized how one could see a clear example from the communities of Williamsburg and Washington Heights, which remained steadfast in this strategy and did not allow their neighborhoods to be taken over, and they were in fact successful!

IS IT DANGEROUS?

The Rebbe continued in the *sicha* to refute the claim that if a Jewish neighborhood becomes a dangerous area, people needed to leave and the above mentioned *halachos* did not apply:

1. It is obvious that through every additional house that a Jew sells, the strength of the Yidden in the area is weakened, causing greater vulnerability. Essentially, one who sells his home is creating the danger.
2. It is also clear that only a small percentage can move out to another neighborhood, however the majority, and especially the poor, sick and elderly will not be able to move.
3. The only matter that is questionable is whether they will be helped through moving to another neighborhood. Even that is not guaranteed, and in fact it has happened on many occasions that people who abandoned the previous neighborhood, moved to a new one, only to be met by the same form of danger and terror. (Among other examples,



it seems that the Rebbe was referring to those who had left Crown Heights and moved to Canarsie, which shortly thereafter also became a crime-ridden neighborhood.)

THE BOTTOM LINE

The Rebbe ended the *sicha* with the following conclusions:

1. Those who move from Jewish communities like Crown Heights are damaging the neighborhood as a whole, and are impacting all other Jewish communities across the globe, where people will realize that this is a way to take advantage of a weakness among Yidden.
2. Aside for being prohibited by *halacha*, it is also foolish to move away from an established

community. Instead, the focus is to be on building and expanding the community.

3. Those who focus on maintaining these communities will be rewarded with abundant *schar*.

The Rebbe followed these conclusions by saying:

“If after all that has been stated, one is ready to disregard all of these concerns and still sell his home, he should take a moment to imagine that he was an individual residing in a community of tens of thousands of Yidden, and that he was told that his neighbor was selling his home under the above mentioned circumstances. Think to yourself honestly, whether you would like this decision or not. When you have made your earnest decision, be sure to follow the Torah’s rule (and not just a rule but “כל התורה כולה”): Do not do unto your fellow that which you dislike...



7 CHESHVAN 5748, LEVI FREIDIN 1/4 JEM, 2020



No Fish for the Ill

Two Spiritual Ailments

What seems to be a rather bizarre description of the end-time before Moshiach is illuminated by the Rebbe in a special reshima. Written by the Rebbe in Lisbon, Portugal just before embarking on the ship to the United States in 5701.

THERE WILL BE NO MORE FISH

A number of extraordinary events will have to transpire before Moshiach arrives to transform the world completely. The Gemara tells us about one particular astonishing event: “[Moshiach] Ben Dovid will not arrive until a quest will be made in the pursuit of fish for a sick patient, yet no fish will be found.”

When reading this passage, the question immediately arises: what could possibly be the connection between the disappearance of fish and the arrival of Moshiach?

MOSHIACH’S TWO CONTRARY NAMES

To better understand the connection between these two events, we must first examine the diverse names of Moshiach, specifically the name “Ben Dovid” used in this passage.

There are various names used in reference to Moshiach. The superior of them all is the most frequently used term “Moshiach,” which means “anointed one.” From time immemorial, Jewish kings were anointed for leadership with a special “anointing oil.” By definition, the term “anointed” alludes to someone selected for greatness. In addition, kings were anointed only if they were elected to a position of leadership by virtue of their personal greatness alone. Hence, if a king would pass away and his son succeeded him by default, he would not be anointed with the special oil, since he was chosen by virtue of his father’s leadership, not by his own qualities. If however there was a competitor to the throne, and only after extensive dialog and deep scrutiny

לעילוי נשמת
אבינו הרה"ת ר' צבי הירש ע"ה
בהרה"ת ר' משה דובער ע"ה
נפטר כ"ג מר-חשוון, ה'תשס"ז
גאנזבורג
ת.נ.צ. ב.ה.

נדפס על ידי ולזכות
צאצאיהם שיחיו לאורך ימים
ושנים טובות ובריאות

What could possibly be the connection between the disappearance of fish and the arrival of Moshiach?

was the son restored to the throne, the son *would* then be anointed with the special oil, since he was reinstated on the merit of his personal reputation and importance.

Hence, the term “anointed” or in Hebrew “Moshiach” connotes personal prestige and prominence of the highest order.

The least prestigious of titles used in reference to Moshiach is the term “Ben Dovid,” or “Son of Dovid.” This term was used in the above quoted passage from Gemara describing the vanishing of fish prior to the coming of Moshiach.

The term “Son of Dovid” is the precise contrary to the term Moshiach. Moshiach alludes to personal prominence, whereas “Ben Dovid” demonstrates that Moshiach was selected not by virtue of his own qualities, but by virtue of the greatness of his ancestor, Dovid Hamelech. He is therefore referred to not by his own name but by his ancestor’s name—that he is the descendant of Dovid, by virtue of whom he was selected.

In that same vein, in the Gemara we find a number of young pupils who were yet to obtain Rabbinic ordination, who were called not by their own names, but by their fathers’ names, such as “Ben Zakkai,” “Ben Zoma,” or “Ben Azai,” since they were not yet personally prominent but were recognized for the prestige of their

fathers. Therefore, the term “Son of Dovid” is not quite the most honorable title with which to refer to Moshiach.

However, aside from the above mentioned translation of “Son (or descendant) of Dovid, the title “Ben Dovid” can also be translated in an alternate manner. A “*Ben Chorin*,” literally meaning a “son of the free,” isn’t the “son of a free individual,” but rather it means that he subscribes to and lives in the style of the liberated populace and that he himself is a free individual.

Likewise, not only does the term “Ben Dovid” imply that he is a descendant of Dovid, but moreover that his personality resembles Dovid and he lives in the style of Dovid.

What is Dovid’s style? Dovid was humble, small and insignificant in his own eyes; like he says in Tehillim, “And I am [like] a worm, not a man.” At times he was seen so by others as well, as we see when he was referred to as “Dovid the small one.” So the term used for Moshiach “Ben Dovid”—meaning someone like Dovid who was small and unassuming, alluding to the concept of *bittul* and *mesiras nefesh*—is in direct contrast of the esteemed title “Moshiach,” anointed one, selected for prominence.

Interestingly, it is specifically when foretelling the tragic heartbreaking events that will occur prior to the advent of Moshiach that we find the low-profile title “Ben Dovid” being used.

These two names used to describe Moshiach express the two extremes that Moshiach will possess—greatness and esteem on the one hand, as well as humility and self-nullification on the other.

MOSHIACH: TWO DIVERSE POSSIBILITIES

Just as in the case with the extreme contrast in Moshiach’s names, the concepts and events pertaining to the

final redemption can transpire in one of two very diverse methods. Which path the *geulah* will take is dependent on the situation of the Jewish people and the world at the time of Moshiach’s arrival.

If the Jewish people will be at their lowest point and entirely undeserving of salvation to the extreme, Hashem will feel forced to send Moshiach to His unworthy people because of how catastrophic the situation has become. Because the world is undeserving, Moshiach will be revealed in the form of his lesser name, “Ben Dovid.” His revelation will therefore be on low key, on a lower spiritual level and with less pomp and splendor.

However, if Jewish people will be exceptionally meritorious and will be rightfully deserving of Moshiach, Hashem will send Moshiach to His people with joy, and he will be revealed in the form of his greater name, “Moshiach.” He will redeem the Jewish people with great spiritual revelations and with much pomp and glory.

With these guidelines we will be able to understand this passage of the Gemara in two alternate ways, depending on the situation of the Jewish people prior to Moshiach’s coming.

FISH: THE ATONEMENT FOR SIN

If the Jewish people will be at their lowermost point, forcing Hashem to redeem them, the generation will certainly not be on a high spiritual level full of intense love, fear and yearning for Hashem. Rather they will be at a much more inferior level, merely trying to fulfill Hashem’s will and overpower their evil inclination.

In that case, the “patient” of which the Gemara speaks is an allusion to someone who has transgressed, causing ailment to his soul. The patient will have to do *teshuvah* in



דער רבי וועט געפינען א וועג...

Dedicated By
Chabad Lubavitch of Westport

A Clean Bill

AS TOLD BY PHILLIP (PINCHAS) ELIJAH (CHICAGO, IL)

I was born in Iraq to a Jewish mother and non-Jewish father. I have lived in many countries and cities before coming to Chicago, but it is really my spiritual journey that has been long and winded, up until a couple years ago when I reconnected with Yiddishkeit.

I have grown close with many in the Jewish community here, particularly with Chabad Rabbis Boruch Epstein and Shalom Gurewicz.

This particular story begins seven years ago. I was visiting a friend when my abdomen was suddenly wracked with a terrible pain that had me convulsing on the floor. My friend rushed me to the hospital where they ran some tests and, not finding anything, I was sent home with a suggestion that I go for a more thorough checkup. The pain soon subsided and I never looked into it any further. My life moved on and the incident was soon forgotten.

Early last year a strange thing began to occur. My spleen became extremely enlarged over a period of a few months and was causing me terrible pain. The idea of going to a hospital terrified me so I continued to push it off despite the persistent urgings of Rabbi Shalom and others. One Shabbos, as I was leaving my house for shul, I collapsed in tremendous pain. Struggling to breathe, I dragged myself to bed with great difficulty, certain that I was undergoing a heart attack. After a while my situation improved considerably but I knew something was terribly wrong.

On Motzei Shabbos I received many messages from concerned friends who hadn't seen me in shul that day. When I told them what had happened they declared that there was no more pushing off going to the hospital. The very next morning my good friend, Chananya Ehrenreich, drove me to the emergency room at Evanston Hospital



where the doctors ran many tests on me. When they were finished we were left to wait as they examined to pictures and results for a diagnosis. The wait dragged on for hours, filling me with a sense of foreboding.

The grim look on the doctor's face when he finally appeared gripped me with fear. He said he has good news and bad news. The bad news was that I had cancer. The good news, he informed me, was that I had a 1% chance to live...

It seems the cancer had slowly been growing for seven years and it had spread throughout my entire body. With cancer at stage 4.3 I had 6-12 months to live.

I was sent to more doctors and specialists and more tests were run to determine the cause and its effect. Everyone came to the same conclusion. The last doctor I spoke to was a man by the name of Dr. Greenblatt. After examining the x-rays and all the previous test results, he decided to take me under his care.

I was devastated. For two weeks I stayed home wallowing in despair, not even leaving the house to attend shul on Shabbos. I couldn't understand why now that I had found Yiddishkeit and every day of my life had become a blessing, Hashem was doing this to me. Together with the decline of my physical health, my emotional well-being was in tatters.

I had been diagnosed for about a month when I was suddenly hit by an idea like a bolt from the blue. Half a year prior, Rabbi Epstein had taken a group of us to the Ohel and it was like nothing I had ever experienced before; I decided I would return someday. Recalling that experience, I was filled with an intense longing to visit the Ohel and pour out my heart before the Rebbe and request his holy blessing. I wasn't sure how I would make the trip but I was determined to find a way.

A short time passed and one day my friend Chananya called me with an offer. He was planning to drive to New York for his niece's wedding and he thought it would be good for me to get out and enjoy myself a little, so

he proposed that I come along. Realizing the divine providence, I immediately seized on the opportunity. I told Chananya that I was willing to come on condition that we first stop at the Ohel on our way into New York. Chananya was very skeptical about such things, aside for the fact that it would add much travel time, so at first he resisted. When he realized I was adamant though, he relented.

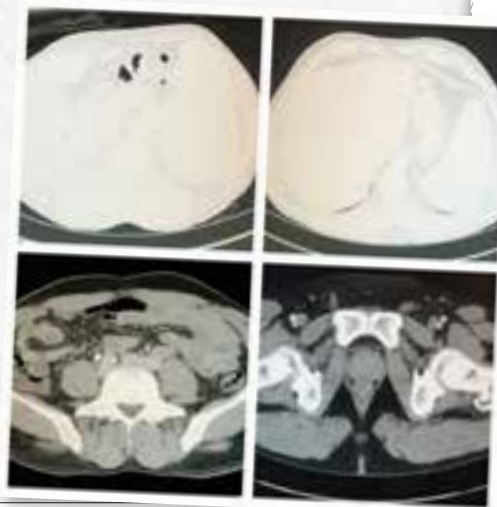
We drove for most of the night and arrived at the Ohel at four o'clock in the morning. I was euphoric. With mounting excitement I prepared myself to enter the Ohel. I prepared my *siddur* and removed my shoes in the tent and went out to the path leading to the Ohel. I noticed two people entering the Ohel and as I wanted to be alone with the Rebbe, I waited for them to leave.

Finally the moment came when I entered the Ohel alone. I cannot adequately describe the feeling that washed over me as I never prayed like never before. I left the Ohel completely shaken and filed with a strange sense of transformation. For the remainder of the ride I didn't utter a word but I was certain everything would somehow work out.

Upon returning from New York my chemotherapy treatments began. I also went back to work and started going to shul again and in general I tried to make the most of each day.

By the fourth session of chemotherapy in June of last year, they decided to run more scans and tests. Dr. Greenblatt spent some time studying the results and returned incredulous. He announced that the scans show that my body had entirely rid itself of the cancer. Not a shadow of the illness remained! Additional scans and supervision, which concluded in August, confirmed that I was completely healthy.

I will never forget those moments with the Rebbe and the certainty of his blessing that continued to accompany me until the day I received a clean bill of health and beyond. **T**



YOUR STORY

Share your story with A Chassidisher Derher by emailing derherstories@gmail.com.



MECHIRAS HAMITZVOS

Motzei Shabbos Bereishis, 5740

It was customary each year at the farbrengen of Shabbos Bereishis that the *gabbai* of the shul would 'sell' the *kibbudim* for the upcoming year, known as "*mechiras hamitzvos*." The proceeds of the sale went towards the upkeep of the shul, as is traditionally done in many communities.¹

As per the Rebbe's request, the *gabbai* would don a *shtreimel* for the occasion. It was one of the rare times that the Rebbe publicly leaned back in his chair, and usually looked in *sefarim*.

In the earlier years, the *gabbai* was Reb Yochanan Gordon. Following his passing, Reb Shea Pinson, pictured here, filled the position.

Being that the Shabbos Bereishis farbrengen typically took place on Shabbos afternoon, no photographs or video recordings ever captured these moments. But in 5740, the farbrengen was held on Motzei Shabbos, which gave photographer Levi Freidin the opportunity to capture this rare event.

As he was about to begin, announcing "The first thing that we will sell..." the Rebbe interrupted Reb Shea saying: "The first thing will be a *dvar Torah!*" which he indeed delivered.

Following the sale, the *gabbai* approached the Rebbe for a *l'chaim*.



LEVI FREIDIN via JEM, 192987

1. See Otzar Minhagei Chabad p. 397 on this age-old *minhag* and how it was carried out in 770 throughout the years.



In memory of our loving uncle
Stuart (Shmuel Yisroel)
Ben Hersh Leib a"h

Dedicated by
Shaya and Miriam Rochester



LEVI FREIDIN via JEM, 192992



LEVI FREIDIN via JEM, 13024

Derher**Letters**

A forum for readers to send their feedback, add to, or ask any questions about articles. Submit your letter to feedback@derher.org.

Submissions may be slightly modified by our editorial staff before publishing.



“How is everything going?”

Dear Editors,

First of all, the article about my father [“Dr. Yaakov Hanoka” Derher 48 (129) Elul 5776] is very powerful and I received nice feedback.

1) There is an incident that I would like to share: My father told me that during the year he was learning in 770, once while he was on the corner of Eastern Parkway and Brooklyn (same side as 770) he was talking to a few other *bochurim* when the Rebbe was walking home. The Rebbe stopped and asked my father, “How is everything going?”

My father was *zoche* to the personal fatherly care of the Rebbe.

2) Another anecdote that I heard from my father during the last week of his life.

My father said that when he was in college he made a lifelong decision to “view all of life trials and tribulations and struggles as challenges to be overcome rather than as problems to be endured.”

My father said that subsequently when he met the Rebbe, “I felt the

Rebbe saw this approach in me and the Rebbe liked it very much.”

I think this is a universal message that can benefit fellow Chassidim and with this in mind I share it with you.

3) Boston is known in secular society as “the Athens of America” due to all the prestigious universities based there.

Upon my father’s career change an opportunity arose for my father to get a job in the Boston area and the Rebbe told my father to take it, so our family moved to Boston (as mentioned in the article).

Once, in the midst of a heated *chassidisher* farbrengen amongst the local Chassidim in Boston, and after a few *l’chaims*, my father got up and said, “The Rebbe sent חנוכה תנוכה!”

Yitzchok Hanoka
Brooklyn, NY

”

Named After Reb Meir Shlomo

Dear Editors,

Thank you for the article in the Elul magazine [“בית הרב” Derher 48

(129) Elul 5776] about the Rebbe's grandparents.

In the article you write about the *sicha* that the Rebbe said on 23 Elul 5746, the *yahrtzeit* of his maternal grandfather, Reb Meir Shlomo Yanovsky. There's also an interesting story there from Reb Meir Shlomo Junik שיח' about how he wrote to the Rebbe in connection with the *yahrtzeit*, and that this was the first time the Rebbe mentioned Reb Meir Shlomo at a farbrengen.

I would like to share my story and the story of the first time I came to the Rebbe, also related to the *sicha* mentioned above.

I was born three months earlier, on 15 Sivan 5746. My parents chose to give me the name Meir Shlomo, after the Rebbe's grandfather; something that was not so common at the time. Of course, my parents wrote to the Rebbe with my name, Meir Shlomo, and received a letter in response wishing them Mazal Tov, as was customary with the birth of a child.

When Elul came around, my father, Reb Mendel Lubetzki שיח' won the raffle between Anash in Paris to fly to New York and spend Tishrei with the Rebbe. Shabbos, 23 Elul, was also Shabbos Selichos and my father traveled to New York beforehand, so he could be at the Shabbos farbrengen and recital of *selichos* with the Rebbe.

At the farbrengen, the Rebbe said the aforementioned *sicha*, speaking about his grandfather Reb Meir Shlomo for the first time. After the *sicha*, the Rebbe turned to my father, signalled that he should say *l'chaim*, and then the Rebbe waved both his hands, encouraging my father.

My father felt that this was clearly connected to the fact that he had named me Meir Shlomo. Here, the Rebbe had spoken about the original Meir Shlomo for the first time! After receiving such a *kiruv* from the Rebbe, my father immediately called home and asked my mother to come to New York and bring me and my siblings along too.

Despite the fact that I was just three months old, my brother one year old, and we were seven young children all together, my mother straight away bought tickets and a few days later, we all boarded the plane to New York. On Erev Rosh Hashana 5747 I saw the Rebbe for the first time and received a dollar.

As we mark ויהי בשלושים שנה—thirty years since the Rebbe said the *sicha* about Reb Meir Shlomo, may we merit to be united once again with the Rebbe and all the Rebbe's family, with the coming of Moshiach Now!

Meir Shlomo Lubetzki

Paris, France



The First Rochel

Dear Editors,

Thank you very much for another amazing issue. *B'hasgcha pratis* it arrived on Shabbos instead of Friday, *mistameh* so I would actually take care of *hachanos* for shabbos...

A comment regarding the Rebbe's request that Reb Moshe Yitzchok Hecht give his daughter the name Rochel after his maternal grandmother, Rebbetzin Rochel Yanovsky [“בית הרב” Derher 48 (129) Elul 5776 p. 24]. When my daughter

Rochel was born I was told—I don’t recall by whom but by someone in the family—that the way it came about was as follows: Reb Moshe Yitzchok Hecht called the Rebbe to inform the Friediker Rebbe that his wife gave birth. It was then, or in continuation to that conversation, that the Rebbe asked “Would you consider naming...?” since there was no one named after Rebbetzin Rochel at the time, and how much it would mean to his mother, Rebbetzin Chana.

Yosef Yitzchok Hodakov
Coral Springs, Florida



Yechidus for Australia Shluchim 5742

Dear Editors,

In the Tammuz Derher [Issue #46 (123) “Bchatzros Kodsheinu”] page 38, you write: “... the *kiruvim* that the Rebbe gave to the *talmidim hashluchim* to Australia particularly. It was mentioned, that all the previous groups had merited going in for *yechidus* with the Rebbe, either inside the Rebbe’s room or in *Gan Eden Hatachton*, before their departure. However, when the last group left in 5742, there was no *yechidus* at all—not even a *yechidus klolis* (public *yechidus*) and we had also heard from *mazkirus* that no *yechidus klolis* has been scheduled yet for Purim, and there may not be one.” The article concludes that, however, in the merit of their initiative they merited to enter *Gan Eden Hatachton* (the hallway before the Rebbe’s room).

Reading the article I realized that the facts about the *kvutza* going to Australia in 5742 are inaccurate.

I B”H merited being part of the *kvutza* of 5742. To set the record straight, we did merit the same that Rabbi Alperowitz’s *kvutza* merited.

I will quote from a diary of the 26th of Nissan 5742:

“On Monday 26th of Nissan, after *krias haTorah*, all the *talmidim* traveling on shlichus to Morocco, **Australia**, Miami, Seattle and Montreal entered the Gan Eden Hatachton. The Rebbe benched us on the shlichus and explained the concept of the shlichus and related it to the *parsha* of the week. Then the Rebbe distributed to everyone a *likut* that consisted of the Rebbe’s Pesach messages for that year, a dollar for *tzedakah*, and *benched* us with a good trip and that we should have good news.

Monday evening, a *yechidus klolis* took place in the Rebbe’s room for many groups of guests that had come in honor of Yud-Alef Nissan marking the Rebbe’s 80th *yom holedes*. To two of the groups the Rebbe spoke in Yiddish, to three more groups he spoke in Hebrew, French and English. In addition there were also groups of *chassanim* and *kallahs* before their weddings, as well as bar mitzvahs.”

[On a side note, when I entered with the French *kvutza* (I think it was due to lack of room in the prior ones), I recall standing near the *chassidim*, Rabbi Mendel Futerfas, and יבדל לחיים טובים וארוכים Rabbi YY Gansbourg from Nachalas Har Chabad. During the entire *sicha*, Reb Mendel stood with his eyes closed concentrating on every word the Rebbe said, although he did not understand French.

When the Rebbe concluded the *sicha*, I asked the abovementioned

chassidim if I should take a dollar from the Rebbe for *shlichus mitzvah*, since I had already received one earlier that morning. They responded, “When the Rebbe gives, one takes.”]

It is interesting to note, that our *kvutza* in 5742 originally was supposed to leave after Purim, but we yearned to remain here for Yud-Alef Nissan, the Rebbe’s 80th *yom holedes*. We decided to ask the Rebbe. We were delighted (and we felt a special *kiruv*) that the Rebbe answered that we should remain for Yud-Alef Nissan.

The Rebbe’s response to us became known and Chassidim understood that something special is going to take

place on Yud-Alef Nissan. Indeed, from after the farbrengen until the morning, the Rebbe distributed a Tanya, printed exclusively for this occasion, to thousands of people—men, women and children.

Wishing you all much hatzlacha in your work.

On behalf of the entire *kvutza*,

Sholom Dovid Geisinsky
Brooklyn, NY

Editors’ note: We would like to note that Rabbi Alperowitz has already sent in the above correction regarding the yechidus in 5742, and it was published in Derher Elul 5776.

CORRECTION

It has been brought to our attention that in the article “בית הרב” [Derher Elul 5776], there is a typographical error on page 21. It says that Reb Avrohom Dovid Lavut passed away on 18 Iyar. He passed away on 18 Adar (as can be seen in the image of the Rebbe’s handwritten *hagahos* on his biography in the article.)

It has also been brought to our attention that in the article about Dr. Yaakov Hanoka [Derher Elul 5776], on page 53. It says that when Yaakov was married on 11 Tishrei 5725, “the Rebbe was sitting *shiva* for his mother, Rebbetzin Chana.” This is a mistake as the Rebbe got up from *shiva* on Erev Yom Kippur.

We apologize for the errors.

—The Editors

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