



HIEI TENVES

The Trial *and*
The Eternal Victory



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On the cover: The joyous dancing of the
Shivas Yemei Hamishte that followed Hei Teves 5747.

"ויהי בשלשים שנה"

This year, we mark thirty years since the first celebration of Hei Teves 5747.

Chassidus explains, based on the Chida's pirush on the *possuk* והימים האלה נזכרים ונעשים, that each time we celebrate a yom tov, we are actually experiencing the same spiritual energy that shined on the original date of the occurrence.

Based on the *possuk* in Yechezkel "ויהי בשלשים שנה" the Rebbe explains that a period of thirty years includes every type of *avodah* possible. Each year consists of all the different seasons, and three sets of ten years correspond to the three-point formation of *sefer hishtalshilus*.

Therefore, when we reach thirty years since a special occurrence, the spiritual energy is rejuvenated in a manner never experienced before.¹



The yom tov of Hei Teves celebrates the victory of Agudas Chassidei Chabad in a trial over *sefarim* stolen from the library. But as we shall explore in the pages of this magazine, the significance carried in this episode was much more than met the eye.

In those early *sichos* first spoken by the Rebbe in the summer of 5745, it was clear that it wasn't at all a monetary loss that the Rebbe feared, or even the sentimental and spiritual value of the *sefarim*. The Rebbe spoke about the *sefarim* as "a part of the life of *nessi doreinu*," and that tearing them away from their home was essentially breaching upon this life, *chas v'shalom*.

"There is no such thing as *yerushah* in this instance," the Rebbe exclaimed. "The Rebbe's life continues to this day. In fact, he is more alive now than during his physical lifetime on earth!"²

The Rebbe insisted that we still remain connected to the [Frierdiker] Rebbe, despite the fact that we stand decades after the *histalkus*. "*Rachmana l'tzlan* to think that because so many years have passed since then and therefore something has changed. On the contrary! Each and every year, our connection with the [Frierdiker] Rebbe only intensifies...

To say that it has been thirty-five years that the [Frierdiker] Rebbe is not here is an *utter lie* (שקר גמור)! Each and every year, the Rebbe becomes more alive and more active in our midst..."³

Studying the *sichos* and reexamining the Rebbe's approach to the entire *sefarim* saga makes it quite clear that a "spiritual" battle ensued, one that the Rebbe combatted with a passionate call for increased "light" and "*simcha*" and intensifying efforts in *hafatzas hamaayanos chutza*.

But perhaps above all else, what is most significant especially for us Chassidim today is the Rebbe's insistence that the *nesius* of the [Frierdiker] Rebbe grows stronger and stronger, even years after his *histalkus*. Those powerful *sichos* spoken in the early days of the story's breaking stand truer today than ever.

Facts that today can be considered as a given—that the Rebbe lives on in this world with all of us Chassidim—were first discussed and explained at length by the Rebbe in those *sichos*. And as the Rebbe pointed out, they were later solidified even through the *psak* of a non-Jewish judge.⁴

As such, for us Chassidim today, the yom tov of Hei Teves is especially relevant to our everyday *avoda* and *hiskashrus* with the Rebbe.

In this spirit, we present this supplementary edition of the Derher magazine, revisiting the story of Hei Teves through the view of the Rebbe's *sichos*, shedding new light on the meaning of the day. This issue collects some of the articles that have appeared in previous monthly issues of the Derher and contains new material as well.

The Rebbe himself established the date of Hei Teves as a *yom segulah* and *eis ratzon*,⁵ and even thanked the guests and well-wishers who celebrated during that first year in 5747.⁶ We can be certain that our partaking in this day of celebration brings the Rebbe much *nachas*; we hope that our humble contribution in this regard will do so as well.

To quote the Rebbe's words on the afternoon of Hei Teves 5747:

May all of our efforts hasten the time when we will truly say, עוד יוסף ("Yosef still lives"), and ותחי רוח יעקב אביהם ("the spirit of Yaakov *avinu* was rejuvenated")—for we will experience the fulfillment of ורננו הקיצו including Yaakov and Yosef, and the Yosef of our generation, the Rebbe *nessi doreinu*, with the coming of Moshiach now!

A gutten yom tov,

The Editors

1. Farbrengen Shabbos mevorchim Tammuz and Yud-Beis Tammuz 5717

2. Farbrengen 15 Tammuz 5745

3. Yechidus Klolis 15 Tammuz 5745

4. Sicha Motzoei Shabbos Teruma 5748

5. Farbrengen Shabbos Hei Teves 5748

6. Sicha Asara B'Teves 5747



Hei Teve **Timeline**

Yud Shevat - Shavuot 5745

The Theft

Around Yud Shevat, the librarians began noticing that *sefarim* were being stolen. A few months went by, during which the library staff attempted to catch the thief with various security installations. Ultimately, a video surveillance camera identified the burglar.

The Rebbetzin and then the Rebbe were notified, and quiet negotiations were held in an attempt to come to an understanding, but to no avail.

Rosh Chodesh Tammuz 5745

The Yechidus

The Rebbe called a meeting with the members of Agudas Chassidei Chabad, and spoke with them about the recent events, stating clearly that all of the *sefarim*, *kesavim*, and the building of 770 belong to Agudas Chassidei Chabad, and that he planned to discuss this issue in public at the upcoming Yud-Beis Tammuz farbrengen.

Yud Beis Tammuz 5745

Going Public

Towards the end of the farbrengen, the Rebbe revealed the story to the Chassidim, speaking with intensity, and declaring that “*hu bachayim*.”

Over the next period of time, the Rebbe spoke about the *sefarim* a total of five times: at the Yud-Beis Tammuz farbrengen, at the *yechidus klolis* on 14 Tammuz, at the farbrengen of 15 Tammuz, at the farbrengen on Shabbos Parshas Balak, and then for the last time on Shabbos Parshas Pinchas.

The Rebbe expressed deep anguish over the situation, and decried the removal of the *sefarim*—and the claims that the Friediker Rebbe’s belongings are subject to *yerusha*—in the strongest possible terms.

Av 5745

Legal Preparations

Agudas Chassidei Chabad filed for a restraining order to bar them from selling more *sefarim*. With the other side refusing to settle the matter in a *Beis Din*, preparations began for a lawsuit.

Throughout the fall, the librarians sifted through the voluminous correspondence of the Friediker Rebbe, putting together a collection of over ten thousand letters which point towards Agudas Chassidei Chabad as the legitimate owners of the

library. The Rebbe met with the lawyers, and pointed out the letter to Dr. Alexander Marx as the one worth focusing on.

26 Cheshvan 5746

The Rebbetzins Testimony

As the case was being prepared, the various parties were called upon to give testimony. Chassidim were hoping that the Rebbetzin would not need to give a deposition, as they tend to be very tiring, but the Rebbe told Rabbi Krinsky not to try avoiding it, because she would do very well. What ultimately became a most decisive moment of her testimony was when the Rebbetzin proclaimed that “my father and the sefarim belonged to the Chassidim...” The Rebbe later pointed out that these words had a profound impact on the judge, persuading him to make the right decision.

Yud-Gimmel Kislev 5746

המלך אינו מעיד

The preliminary court proceedings began, and with it, the discussion regarding whether the Rebbe would be compelled to testify.

Chassidim gathered that day in 770 to fast and say Tehillim. Sometime before *mincha*, the news broke: the Rebbe would not have to testify.

The serious atmosphere was taken over by a joyous one, and the dancing and farbrengens lasted late into the night.

Yud-Tes Kislev 5746

Court

The final documents were submitted, and on Chof Kislev, the trial began.

Every day throughout the trial, the Rebbe traveled to the Ohel, while hordes of Chassidim would file into the courtroom to watch the proceedings.

Chanukah 5746

שמחה פורצת גבולות

As the proceedings were drawing to a close, the Rebbe encouraged that Chassidim fight the battle against darkness by adding in *simcha*.

The Rebbe himself held three farbrengens in quick succession (Shabbos Chanukah, Motzei Shabbos-Zos Chanukah, and Sunday night-Motzoei Zos Chanukah), during which he addressed the claim of the other side, namely, that

Lubavitch is not active. The Rebbe explained that although the claim is baseless, it must encourage us to double our efforts in *hafatzas hamaayanos*, drawing comparisons to the *kitrug* on the Alter Rebbe before Yud-Tes Kislev.

Hei Teves 5747

Didan Notzach!

After a full year of anxious waiting, the judge published his ruling: The library was the exclusive property of Agudas Chassidei Chabad.

A seven-day celebration took off, and the Rebbe addressed Chassidim each day and once again emphasized that the case must bring about increased activity in *hafatzas hamaayanos*. The Rebbe also proclaimed this as a time when everyone should write to the Rebbe (for the letters to be placed at the Tziyun) and request whatever they wish.

The other side appealed the courts decision.

Chof-Hei Cheshvan-Beis Kislev 5748

The Return of the sefarim

On Tuesday, Chof-Hei Cheshvan, the appeal was overruled, and two days later the judge formally ordered that the *sefarim* be returned to 770.

The long awaited homecoming was scheduled for Beis Kislev. (It should be noted that this was the week of the first Kinus Hashluchim Ha'olami, an historic event in its own right.)

The Rebbe instructed that the proceedings be quiet, without the presence of media. Nevertheless, hundreds of *bochurim* lined the driveway, awaiting the Rebbe's appearance as he left for the Ohel. Upon coming out, the Rebbe sharply reprimanded the *bochurim*, noting that the true way to celebrate the victory was through studying in *sefarim*.

Hei Teves 5748

לשנה אחרת קבעום

Chassidim were still unsure whether the Rebbe would sanction the celebration of the victory on a yearly basis. Their doubts were cleared when—during the Shabbos farbrengen—the Rebbe spoke about the victory. He explained that each year, when we remember the occurrences that took place, it must lead to additions in Torah and mitzvos, which are the true test to see if we have properly incorporated its lessons into our lives.

Chof-Vov Tishrei 5750**II המלך אינו מעיד**

In a final attempt, the other side filed another lawsuit, this time of more personal nature, involving the Rebbe himself.

On this day, the judge ruled that the Rebbe will not need to testify.

When the Rebbe heard the news, he asked the secretary “if they are saying *l’chaim* downstairs.”

Then the Rebbe added, that “even though it’s *shnas nissim*, it should be with *hagbalos*.”

Yud-Tes Teves 5750**Didan Notzach!**

The judge ruled that this case was dismissed.

The Rebbe had prepared to travel to the Ohel and had already gone to the *mikveh* that morning, but when he was informed of the news, he remained in 770.

Chof-Ches Elul 5750**The last sefarim return**

On this day, the last *sefarim*—the thirteen volumes that were on the Frierdiker Rebbe’s desk on the day of his *histalkus*, were returned to their place.

When Rabbi Krinsky informed the Rebbe of the news, it seemed as if a load had been removed from the Rebbe’s shoulders. The Rebbe straightened up, and asked him, “*Dos iz dos*—So that’s it?”

When Rabbi Krinsky confirmed that the case was over, the Rebbe paused for a moment, and said, “*Nu, yetzt ken men zogen divrei Torah*—Now we can say *divrei Torah*.”



A sepia-toned photograph of a building entrance. A person in a dark coat stands in the doorway on the right. In the foreground, a set of stairs with a wooden railing leads up towards the entrance. The left side of the image is partially obscured by dark foliage.

HIEI TEVES

*FROM A HIGHER
PERSPECTIVE*



The Yom Tov of Hei Teves

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

In a similar vein, when analyzing the Rebbe's words about the entire story of the *sefarim*, which culminated on Hei Teves, we discover a sentiment very much parallel to that of Yud-Tes Kislev.

In some instances, the Rebbe clearly mentioned the parallel between this story and that of the Alter Rebbe, stating that we must take the

lesson from the *kitrug* in the Alter Rebbe's time.

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

The following essay revisits the entire story of Hei Teves, focusing on this *ruchniyus'dike* aspect of the events. Beginning with the seriousness with which the Rebbe approached the situation and the *sichos* explaining that the Frierdiker Rebbe lives on, through the allusions to the *kitrug*, which culminated with sweeping new campaigns, bringing shlichus and the establishment of Chabad Houses to greater heights than ever before.

Reading and understanding these concepts, an entirely new story emerges.

First Response

In the winter of 5745, the librarians at the Library of Agudas Chassidei Chabad noticed that *sefarim* were missing, and after a few attempts, they finally caught the thief on a surveillance camera.

Shortly thereafter, the Rebbe called a meeting

with the members of Agudas Chassidei Chabad, most of whom were elderly Chassidim, inviting also an additional two younger Chassidim, Rabbi Avraham Shemtov and Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky.

The Rebbe spoke with the group about the recent events, stating clearly that all of the *sefarim*, *k'sovim*, and the building of 770 belong to Agudas Chassidei Chabad, and that he plans to discuss this issue in public at the upcoming Yud-Beis Tammuz farbrengen. (It's important to bear in mind that in those years, the Rebbe's major weekday farbrengens were broadcast live via satellite around the world. Meaning, the Rebbe intended to bring the issue to the attention of a massive audience!)

During the initial period, right after the theft was discovered in the early summer of 5745, the Rebbe openly discussed the issue of the *sefarim* a total of five times: at the Yud-Beis Tammuz farbrengen, at the *yechidus klolis* with the guests on 14 Tammuz, and at the farbrengens of 15 Tammuz, Shabbos parshas Balak, and Pinchas.



8 TISHREI 5746, LEVI FREDIN via JEM, 267910

“BUT THIS IS ABSOLUTELY FALSE!
FOR THIRTY-FIVE YEARS, THE
FRIERDIKER REBBE IS BECOMING
MORE AND MORE ALIVE IN THIS
WORLD...”

Perusing the *sichos*, it is clear that the Rebbe’s primary concern with regard to the story of the *sefarim* was not merely the loss of part of the library. Plainly put, the opposing side refused to admit that the Lubavitch movement continues after the Frierdiker Rebbe’s *histalkus*, *chas v’shalom*.

35 Years and Growing

By removing the *sefarim*, a message had been spelled out; the *sefarim* and belongings of the Frierdiker Rebbe are subject to regular laws of inheritance; for, in their opinion, his spirit is no longer present.

In the Rebbe’s words:

“They say about the Frierdiker Rebbe that he is in *olam haemes* for already thirty-five years!

“‘What are you talking about’ they ask. ‘Each year he goes higher in Gan

Eden. Why do you suddenly mention him in *olam hazeh hagashmi*?’

“But this is absolutely false! For thirty-five years, the Frierdiker Rebbe is becoming more and more alive in this world...”

The Life of a Tzaddik

The Rebbe emphasized that “*ma zar’o bachayim*” does not just mean that he lives on in the actions of Chassidim. The *nossi* himself lives on independently, and that is what gives his children the strength to carry on in his ways.

Being that the *nossi*’s spirit is still present, his belongings are still invested with his life and character.

“This is especially the case with regard to his *sefarim*:

“The life of a *tzaddik*—the Alter Rebbe writes—is not a physical one; his sustenance

consists of *emunah*, *ahavah*, and *yirah*. The studying of these concepts, the basis for his entire *avodas Hashem*, is done through *sefarim*. Therefore, the *sefarim* of the *tzaddik* are his very life!”

The Rebbe explained that while this concept is most notable in regards to his *sefarim*, it applies to the physical belongings of the Frierdiker Rebbe as well. For a Yid, serving the Aibershter is the focal point of his life. All of the mundane actions that he does are all secondary, only to supplement his service of the Aibershter. If this is the case in the life of a simple Jew, how much more so in the case of a *nossi* (“a *nossi*, while drinking, eating or sleeping, is sleeping as a *nossi*, eating as a *nossi*, drinking as a *nossi*, and when he goes for a stroll he is doing so as a *nossi*”). The same *chayim ruchni’im* invested into the *sefarim* is essentially present in all of the belongings that assisted him in his *avodas Hashem*. Therefore, even the physical belongings of the Frierdiker

Rebbe are invested with his spiritual life, which continues to live on to this very day.

Consequently, the demand for an inheritance is fundamentally mistaken. His *sefarim* and belongings must remain in their proper place, just as they were during his lifetime.

“Taking a *sefer* from the possession of the Frierdiker Rebbe means taking a part of his life, *rachmana litzlan*. Anyone who takes a *sefer* without the permission of the Frierdiker Rebbe—for every moment in which he does not return it, he causes an *inyan* of a *levaya r”l*!”

The main point

The Rebbe strongly upheld the notion that the library was not a private asset. It was the public property of Chabad Lubavitch, owned by Agudas Chassidei Chabad of the United States and Canada.

As a basis for this, the Rebbe pointed towards the unique characteristics of the library.

“In Leningrad there was a Chossid, a *kanoi*, who chanced upon a certain book in the library, which, in his opinion, didn’t belong

there... Without asking questions, he did an act of *kana’us*, and threw it into the fire.

“When the Frierdiker Rebbe heard about it, he was displeased by the actions of this “*chossid shoite*,” and the Chossid was sharply reprimanded.”

As expressed in this story, the library was home to many books on a wide range of topics, many of which were of no personal use to the Frierdiker Rebbe, and would—in normal circumstances—not find entry in the home of any observant Jew. The Rebbe explained that the Frierdiker Rebbe acquired them for the library so that it would also be a center of research for topics in general, not necessarily connected to Torah.

What use was a research center for the Frierdiker Rebbe?

The Rebbe explained:

“Naturally, such a library makes an impression, and arouses admiration by anyone who visits it for research.

“This was what the Frierdiker Rebbe wanted: in addition to being a source of Torah learning, he

wanted the very existence of the library to be something that will be a *kiddush Hashem*, and a *kiddush shem Lubavitch*, for the entire world, Yidden and—*leha-vdil*—non-Jews.

“The feeling of admiration generated by the library would in turn bring people closer to Lubavitch, and thus feel encouraged to add in their own observance.”

These, and many other facts point clearly towards the Rebbe’s position; the library was clearly not the Frierdiker Rebbe’s personal property; rather, it was designated for the use of the world at large, as property of the movement.

However, as the main point of defense, the Rebbe pointed to one letter written by the Frierdiker Rebbe to Dr. Alexander Marx, an influential Jewish librarian in the United States, written after the war had ended. In it the Frierdiker Rebbe asks Dr. Marx for assistance in locating the library that had been confiscated by the Nazis and bringing it to the United States. The Frierdiker Rebbe states in the clearest of terms that the books are the property of





Agudas Chassidei Chabad, and concludes:

“Therefore, I turn to you with a great request, that as a renowned authority on the subject, you should please write a letter to the State Department to testify on the great value of these manuscripts and books for the Jewish people in general and particularly for the Jewish community of the United States to whom this great possession belongs...”

When speaking with the lawyers of Agudas Chabad, the Rebbe referred to this letter as “the key document” to influence the case in the proper direction.

Man of Truth

Making their own case, the thief and his cohorts wished to claim that the Frieddiker Rebbe only wrote that the *sefarim* belonged to Agudas Chassidei Chabad as a tactic to help bring them out of war-torn Europe. In truth however, they claimed, he never really meant that they belonged to the community. In other words, they intimated that the Frieddiker Rebbe was capable of saying one thing and meaning something else, *chas v'shalom*.

The Rebbe decried this notion in the strongest possible terms, painfully protesting against the great *chilul Hashem* that comes along with making such a statement. (See the Rebbe's handwritten note in this regard.)

Another fact that the Rebbe pointed to, showing the low regard of the other side for the Frieddiker Rebbe, was the fact that these *sefarim* were taken to be sold on the market, as if they had no value to the current owner. Even when the Rabbeim's *sefarim* were divided for *yerusha*, as was the case after the *histalkus* of the Tzemach Tzedek and the Rebbe Maharash, the inheritors brought the *sefarim* home and studied in them and cherished them. Now, the Rebbe cried out, the *sefarim* are being passed from hand to hand, and there is no knowing where they might end up.

Dem Beinkel

When the thief refused to settle his claim in a Din Torah before a Beis Din, some suggested that perhaps it would be better to compensate the thief with a sum

other, he added some new major initiatives.

The Rebbe ceased to recite *maamarim* in their usual tune. After Tishrei, 5746, all the *maamarim* were “*ke’ein sicha*” (with the exception of two occasions in

5749). On the other hand, the Rebbe began to frequently be *magiha maamarim* in honor of Yomim Tovim, a project initiated by the Rebbe himself.

The court case itself began on Yud-Tes Kislev 5746.

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

“כבכל אדמו”רי חב”ד-היסוד הראשון: ביטול היש (מתחיל בעצמו) באמיתית. היותו אדמו”ר ה”ז שליחותו נפשית ועיקרית, לנהלם ולעודדם בתומ”צ בכלל (מתחיל באמונת ה’, שמירת השו”ע וכו’) ולהראותם דוגמא ח”י בזה (עד כדי מסירות נפש בפועל) ופשיטא לשלול כל פעולה שיוכלו לטעות לפרשה להיפך. לאחר זה באים חיי בתור פרטי וגם בזה יסוד שלא לנגוע כלל בתפקידו הכללי והעיקרי...”

“הראי’ העיקרית והשוללת כל הטענות שכנגד: מכתב המוריש רשמית דשייך לאגודת חסידי חב”ד. הקס”ד אולי כתב רק לפני (היינו טיפשות) והאומר כך זהו חילול השם הכי גדול ועד כדי כך שהאומר כך (במזיד) צריך להיות ברמ”ח ר”ל. ובסגנון אחר (ועיקר): כל התעודות רשמיות, מכתבים וכו’ כותבים מפורש דשייך לאגודת חסידי חב”ד - הטענות שכנגד הם דברים שבע”פ סתם.”

“As with all Chabad Rebbes, the first foundation is: truthfully nullifying one’s own existence (starting with himself). Being a Rebbe, it is his integral and primary mission, to guide and strengthen [the Chassidim] in Torah and mitzvos in general (beginning with belief in Hashem, keeping [the laws of] Shulchan Aruch, etc.) and to show them a living example of this (even when it requires the extent of actual *mesirus nefesh*). It is self understood that a Rebbe must also withhold all actions that may mistakenly be explained contrary [to the above]. [Only] after this comes the Rebbe’s private life, and in this aspect as well, the foundation is not to interfere at all with his general and primary purpose.

“The primary proof that overcomes all the arguments of the opposition: the letter from the inheritor [the Frierdiker Rebbe] which officially declares that [the library] belongs to Agudas Chassidei Chabad.

“To think that he wrote the letter only to deceive [the European governments], (is foolish, and) one who says so creates a great *Chillul Hashem*. One who says this (intentionally) deserves excommunication, G-d forbid.

“In other words (and the main point), all the legal certificates, letters, etc., clearly express that [the *sefarim*] belong to Agudas Chassidei Chabad; the opposing views are merely words transmitted orally [without any written proofs].”



From the Chassidim however, the Rebbe demanded the opposite. Although in past generations it was customary to call for a fast-day when tragedy struck, in our time, the Rebbe explained, when people are physically weaker, we can certainly avert all harm by way of *simcha*. Therefore, in a *sicha* on Chanukah, the Rebbe asked that joyous farbrengens be held throughout the remain-

ing days of the holiday. The increase in light and joy will dispel all the darkness, and all those who stand in the way of *hafotzas hamaayanos* will not be successful. The entire issue will then vanish without a trace!¹

When the Chassidim heard the Rebbe's call for an outbreak of such joy with "*mesibos shel simcha*"—joyous gatherings and farbrengens, and observed

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

That Shabbos, the seventh day of Chanukah,

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

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

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

And then came another surprise. The Rebbe farbrenged again that night, Motzei Zos Chanukah—the

third farbrengen in a span of two days!

Kitrug

During the Motzei Shabbos farbrengen the Rebbe discussed the *kitrug* on the Alter Rebbe that brought about his imprisonment and concluded with the establishment of the yom tov of Yud-Tes Kislev. Although a similar *kitrug* already arose and was dismissed during the lifetime of the Maggid, the Alter Rebbe's increase in teaching and spreading Chassidus prompted yet another *kitrug*.

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

contrary; we shall continually expand, more and more!

The direction of our response to the current allegations can be culled from the story of Yud-Tes Kislev as well:

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

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

Nevertheless, the mere fact that such an allegation can be conceived means that

“DID YOU SAY TEHILLIM FOR THIS ISSUE? DID YOU FAST? YOU SPEAK OF SETTLING FOR FOR A COMPROMISE? IT IS A *MILCHOMO OIFN BEINKEL!*”

there must be a seed of truth involved. Thus, we must use this as a clear indication for us to do even more than we have done until now! From now on, more emphasis should be placed on establishing new Batei-Chabad, both by expanding the existing centers, and establishing new ones as needed.

In addition, throughout those three farbrengens, the Rebbe spoke about printing Chassidus that had until then been hidden away as precious treasures, and also encouraged the continued campaign of printing Tanya's throughout the world. After stressing the importance that everyone must learn the newly printed Chassidus, the Rebbe concluded: "But even if people won't learn from them, I am not intimidated, I will continue printing more and more, in the spirit of 'כאשר יענו אותי, כן ירבה וכן יפרץ' ("As much as they [the Yidden in Mitzrayim] were

inflicted upon, so did they grow and strengthen").

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

The Rebbe continually drew upon the story of the Alter Rebbe and applied its lessons to the situation at hand, calling for a major increase in *hafotzas hamaayanos*. Just as the Alter Rebbe was told to exponentially increase his teaching and spreading Chassidus, the Rebbe repeatedly issued a call to use this affair as an indication and an opportunity to expand Chabad's activities, and to bring them to the greatest heights.

WHEN WE SPREAD CHASSIDUS,
SOME PEOPLE THINK IT'S TOO
MUCH. THEY SAY, "ENOUGH! THE
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THE LESSON WE LEARN FROM THE
ALTER REBBE IS THAT THERE IS...
WE SHALL CONTINUALLY EXPAND,
MORE AND MORE!

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

"ותחי רוח יעקב אביהם"

The joy and celebration in Lubavitch that met the verdict on Hei Teves is well known and beyond the scope of this article. We will suffice with mentioning that the Rebbe, in his *sicha* on Hei Teves after *mincha*,

elaborated on the topic of the *kitrug*, once again making reference to the story of Yud-Tes Kislev and drawing a lesson to our day. Since the claim against us, the Rebbe said, was that we are not sufficiently active and don't use the *sefarim* and *kesavim* in the proper manner, we must take that as a call to intensify our efforts in *hafotzas hamaayanos*.

The Rebbe also elaborated on the *possuk* of "ותחי רוח" "עקב אביהם shiur Chumash. Chassidim understood that the Rebbe's spirit had been revived, so to speak, as we had finally emerged victorious.

The next day, Vov Teves, the Rebbe spoke and again mentioned that *possuk*. It was then that the Rebbe encouraged everyone to write requests for *brachos* in whatever they needed. If it wasn't clear enough yet, the Rebbe indicated unambiguously that indeed the *sefarim* saga was a heavenly ordeal and the positive ending marked a true yom tov.

Hei Teves

From all the above we can discern that the story of Hei Teves was far from a simple battle over a library,

but a real spiritual issue which the Rebbe perceived as very serious, with weighty consequences. The

way the Rebbe spoke about the issue with such passion, as well as the unprecedented expansion of Chabad

FOR ALL THE NATIONS TO SEE

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

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

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

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

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

activity that the Rebbe prompted in its wake, all attest to that.

The way the Rebbe regarded the days of the *nitzachon*, saying a *sicha* each day, and alluding to the *kitrug* and its positive outcome, point in the same direction. One year later, on Hei Teves 5748, the Rebbe established Hei Teves as a *yom segula* and an *eis ratzon*. In fact, when speaking on Hei Teves in the following years, the Rebbe even asserted that this yom tov commands a special practice: buying and repairing *sefarim*.

As Chassidim in *dor hashvi'i*, every event or *yom segula* connected to the Rebbe carries special significance. Considering the Rebbe's words about the *parsha* of the *sefarim*, it is clear that Hei Teves is of special prominence. The *kitrug* on the Rebbe's leadership, along with the increase in *hafotzas hamaayonos* it brought, provides us with the true meaning of the yom tov of Hei Teves. Simply put: Hei Teves is the Yud-Tes Kislev of *dor hashvi'i*! T

1. Sicha fifth night of Chanukah 5746







THE REBBE LEAVES THE LIBRARY BUILDING.
7 CHESHVAN 5748, LEVI FREIDIN *via* JEM, 209393

A Challenging Time An Eternal Victory

Hei Teves through the eyes of the Bochurim

In honor of the yom tov of Hei Teves, the day we celebrate the Rebbe's victory in the sefarim case and the day the Rebbe established as a *yom segula* and *eis ratzon*, we present the following exclusive interview.



A Chassidisher Derher brought together three shluchim who lived through the story as *bochurim* at the time, to recount their own recollections of how Chassidim experienced these events in the Rebbe's presence. **Rabbi Mordechai Glazman** of Riga, Latvia; **Rabbi Yosef Greenberg** of Anchorage, Alaska; and **Rabbi Avrohom Sternberg** of New London, Connecticut.

PART I

A Challenging Time

Let's start from the beginning. The first time the Rebbe mentioned the issue of the *sefarim* was during the farbrengen of Yud-Beis Tammuz 5745. What are your recollections from that occasion?

Rabbi Greenberg:

To give some context to the story, let me say a few words about the change that we felt and the difference in the atmosphere that

occurred with the onset of the *mishpat*.

I came to the Rebbe from Eretz Yisroel in 5742. In my mind, 5742, '43, '44, and '45 were one period of time; and from Yud-Beis Tammuz 5745 on, it was as if there was an entirely new Lubavitch.

The early years of the "*Mems*" (5740s) were exceptionally *geshmake* years. The Rebbe's farbrengens were long and beautiful, and they were held much more often than before—almost every Shabbos.

The Rebbe's reach was global. The weekday farbrengens were broadcast live on television and the Rebbe spoke openly to the

non-Jewish world about *sheva mitzvos b'nei Noach*.

The campaigns that the Rebbe initiated were of global proportions—Tzivos Hashem, *sifrei Torah haklali'im*, Rambam, etc.

On the one hand, Chassidim, and especially the *bochurim*, felt less of a personal connection with the Rebbe. There was no more personal *yeichidus*, 'dollars' had not yet begun, and the only time one could come in close contact with the Rebbe was by *panim* Erev Rosh Hashanah, *lekach*, or *kos shel brocha*. But on the other, the Rebbe's *nesius* reached an entirely new page, impacting the whole world, quite literally. That

was the feeling until Yud-Beis Tammuz.

With the onset of the court case, we began to feel a personal connection with the Rebbe again. Firstly, the Rebbe began the regular distribution of dollars, which was an opportunity to approach the Rebbe. Additionally, the entire experience brought about a sense of closeness between Chassidim and the Rebbe, as we shall explain later on.

Rabbi Sternberg:

In the days preceding the farbrengen of Yud-Beis

Tammuz 5745, I became aware that Agudas Chassidei Chabad had been called in to the Rebbe for a *yeichidus*. At the time we didn't know that it was Agudas Chassidei Chabad; rather we knew that a select group of Chassidim were called into the Rebbe's room on Rosh Chodesh Tammuz.

The reason I knew about it was not because it was the talk of town, at least not among my age-group of friends—I was fifteen at the time—but rather because my grandfather, Rabbi

Zalman Gurary, was among those who were called in. He didn't speak to us about the *yeichidus*; he just said that the Rebbe was going to talk about the subject discussed in the *yeichidus* at the Yud-Beis Tammuz farbrengen.

While the *yeichidus* wasn't public knowledge and there were various layers to what people knew, there was an awareness amongst some Chassidim that something major was going to happen during the Yud-Beis Tammuz farbrengen.

When the Rebbe spoke at the farbrengen, I immediately understood what the Rebbe was referring to. Even those who didn't grasp the meaning initially, understood within a day or two, after hearing the Rebbe speak about it at the *yeichidus klolis* on the eve of 15 Tammuz, and then again at the farbrengen the next day.

Rabbi Glazman:

As an example of the type of shock it was, many bochurim didn't go to sleep the night after the Yud-Beis Tammuz farbrengen. First it was decided that we have to watch over the library, so



BEZAGUI

THE FRIERDIKER REBBE'S YECHIDUS ROOM.

that no one comes to steal—the Rebbe had just spoken about the library, and technically the perpetrator could return that very night and continue removing books!

We didn't know the details of the story yet, which *sefarim* had been stolen and from where. The Rebbe had mentioned the Baal Shem Tov's *siddur*, which we knew was located in the Frierdiker Rebbe's yechidus room, so we watched over the library located in the Frierdiker Rebbe's room. We would sit for full nights, learning *b'chavrusa*, in the hallway above *Gan Eden Hatachton*.

This went on for a few weeks.

During the *yechidus klolis* to the guests that had come to spend Yud-Beis Tammuz with the Rebbe, the Rebbe asked that a property should be bought and a building should be built in Kfar Chabad, which will bear the name of the Frierdiker Rebbe.

The next day, on Tes-Vov Tammuz, the Rebbe held another farbrengen, during which he spoke at length about the issue, and used terms that he hadn't during the farbrengen of Yud-Beis Tammuz.

However, even after these three *sichos*, the sharpest of all had yet to come:

On Shabbos Parshas Pinchas there was a very long farbrengen. The Rebbe would usually speak while looking directly forward, but during the *sicha* about the *sefarim*, he turned his head to his left side. I stood to the far right of the Rebbe's farbrengen place, so when the Rebbe turned toward his left and spoke quietly, I wasn't able to hear well. Additionally, the Rebbe sat completely back on his chair, which was very unusual, and his hand was on top of the table—also unusual for a farbrengen—banging at times, while speaking about the *sefarim*.

Rabbi Greenberg:

That Shabbos 770 was relatively empty, since many *bochurim* had left to camp. During the farbrengen, when the Rebbe once again spoke about the *sefarim*, it was in a most extraordinary and heartfelt way. The feeling we had was that we are sitting in the Rebbe's dining room, *un er gist ois di hartz* to his children about a deep and painful issue that was confronting Lubavitch.

THE REBBE HAD MENTIONED THE BAAL SHEM TOV'S *SIDDUR*, WHICH WE KNEW WAS LOCATED IN THE FRIERDIKER REBBE'S YECHIDUS ROOM, SO WE WATCHED OVER THE LIBRARY LOCATED IN THE FRIERDIKER REBBE'S ROOM. WE WOULD SIT FOR FULL NIGHTS, LEARNING *B'CHAVRUSA*, IN THE HALLWAY ABOVE *GAN EDEN HATACHTON*.



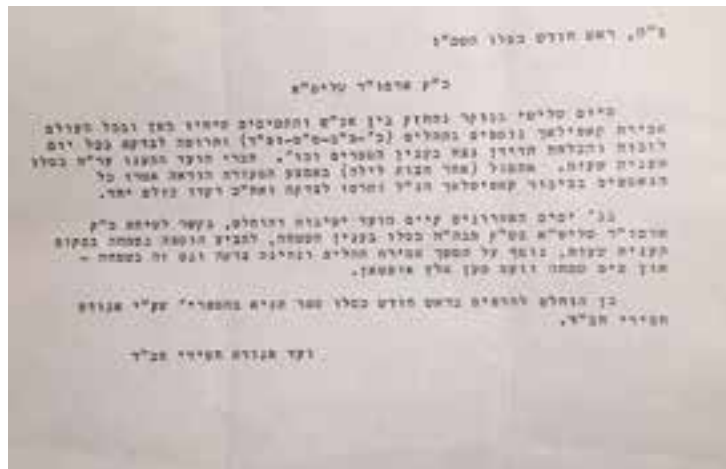
The sight of the Rebbe's pain at that farbrengen is too difficult to describe. The Rebbe spoke out with an expression that spelled sadness and disbelief, that "I try to prepare a Rashi, but I can't concentrate because I'm thinking what's going to be with the *binyan* [770]!"

Since the Rebbe was going through a very difficult time, and we saw how it affected the Rebbe with personal *agmas nefesh*, many of the *bochurim* who were in 770 during those years developed a special feeling of closeness to the Rebbe; something that the *bochurim* in 770 in the years before probably didn't experience, since in their years everything was relatively calm, and there were no extraordinary issues.

The *agmas nefesh* and the pain that we saw during those farbrengens was something that we never saw before. We all knew that it was about the essence of the Rebbe's *nesius*. It wasn't about *mihi Yehudi* or *shtachim*, or some other issue which we knew that the Rebbe, as *manhig Yisrael*, was dealing with.

This issue was so personal, and about the Rebbe himself, that it had a profound effect on us. It pained us terribly that the Rebbe, who dedicates day and night to strengthening and spreading Yiddishkeit

and taking care of people from all corners of the world, is suddenly being disturbed so terribly by this issue that he feels unable to prepare a *sicha* on Rashi, and must turn to



A LETTER FROM MEMBERS OF AGUCH TO THE REBBE DETAILING SOME OF THE HACHLOTOS TOVOS TAKEN ON BY CHASSIDIM, ROSH CHODESH KISLEV 5746.



RABBI S.B. LEVINE (L) AND RABBI YITZCHOK WILHELM PORE OVER COURT DOCUMENTS.

THEY RECOUNTED HOW THE REBBE HAD BANGED HIS HAND ON THE WALL AND EMPHASIZED THAT THIS WASN'T JUST ABOUT THE *SEFARIM* FROM THE LIBRARY, BUT A *MILCHAMAH* AGAINST THE FRIERDIKER REBBE, THE REBBE RASHAB, AND WENT ON AND NAMED ALL THE RABBEIM UNTIL THE BAAL SHEM TOV.

the Chassidim and pour his heart out about it.

We were also able to notice how this entire *parsha* negatively impacted the Rebbe's health.

During the months following Yud-Beis Tammuz, there were nonstop farbrengens in 770 continuously discussing the situation.

We felt that there was a fire burning in 770; a fire of a struggle for the Rebbe, and a fire of deep profound feeling for the Rebbe's pain. Everyone felt that this was a *milchama* of *Amalek* and *klipah*; *es hut gebrent!*

What do you remember from the period between Yud-Beis Tammuz and the onset of the trial?

Rabbi Sternberg:

At the time, as young *bochurim*, we didn't know what we could do. Beyond

seeing the major *agmas nefesh* that the Rebbe was going through and saying Tehillim, we didn't know very much about what was going on during the summer months following Yud-Beis Tammuz.

If I remember correctly, I became aware that there is an imminent court case, perhaps shortly after Tishrei. As Kislev came, we became more and more aware of the situation.

During that Tishrei (5746), we saw that things were beginning to change in the Rebbe's *hanhaga*. Throughout Tishrei, the Rebbe said a number of *maamarim*, the last one taking place on Shabbos Bereishis. During the Shabbos farbrengens in following weeks, however, the Rebbe only recited *maamarim k'ein sicha* (the

content of a *maamar* but in a tone similar to a *sicha*).

We didn't think much of it, since during those years, the *maamarim* during Shabbos farbrengens would be *k'ein sicha* more often than not.

When the farbrengen of Yud-Tes Kislev came around, and then too, the Rebbe did not say a *maamar* with a *niggun* prior, it came as a big shock; we understood that something serious was going on.

At the same time, we witnessed special *giluyim*. In the end of Cheshvan the Rebbe was *magiha* the *maamar* "*V'avraham Zaken*," which came as a total surprise¹.

I remember during the Rosh Chodesh Kislev *seudas hoda'ah* that Rabbi Meir Harlig organized, a few of the members of Agudas Chassidei Chabad—Rabbi



Moshe Pinchas Katz, and perhaps Rabbi Mordechai Mentlick too—shared with the Chassidim what had happened during the *yechidus* that had taken place a few days earlier. They recounted how the Rebbe had banged his hand on the wall and emphasized that this wasn't just about the *sefarim* from the library, but a *milchamah* against the Frieddiker Rebbe, the Rebbe Rashab, and went on and named all the Rabbeim until the Baal Shem Tov.

This was the first time that I heard it spoken about in public, in such an open forum, in front of a packed shul. Up until then, there had been quiet meetings and discussions, but never in such a public way. The

words spoken that night had a tremendous effect on the audience.

During the days leading up to the court case, there was a possibility that the Rebbe would be asked to give testimony for the court. What can you tell us about that period?

Rabbi Greenberg:

In the days leading up to the ruling on this issue, we felt a terrible fright; we felt as if we were going back to the days of the Alter Rebbe. It seemed, in our imagination at least, that the fact that the Rebbe, who is the *nasi hador*, will be forced to testify, was almost akin to arrest, *r"l*; the thought was incomprehensible.

Therefore, when the news came on Yud-Gimmel Kislev that the Rebbe is not going to testify, the *simcha* was out of this world. In my mind it was much more than the entire *simcha* of Hei Teves. As much as the *simcha* on Hei Teves was bigger and more established, the *simcha* on Yud-Gimmel Kislev was in a way much stronger, due to the terrible foreboding of a bad outcome that we had felt beforehand.

We danced and said *l'chaim* that entire day and night, and on the next night, Rabbi Avraham Shemtov, who was very involved in the preparation and presentation of the case, came to farbreng with us. It was only during that farbrengen that the realization of what had happened began to sink in, and we farbrenged joyously through the night.

Rabbi Sternberg:

When we heard that the court would rule on the issue of the Rebbe's testimony on Yud-Gimmel Kislev, the Chassidim accepted a half-day fast upon themselves.

At 11 o'clock in the morning, we heard that



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ALL DAY.

the Rebbe would not have to testify. We immediately began dancing and a whole string of celebrations began. First, that night there was a farbrengen in Oholei Torah, then the next night Rabbi Avraham Shemtov farbrenged in the small *zal*.

Even after Rabbi Shemtov left the farbrengen—at two or three in the morning—we continued sitting for the rest of the night. Farbrengens were also held every night throughout the following week.

Rabbi Greenberg:

When I think about the events of Yud-Gimmel Kislev, followed by three weeks of the court case—beginning with the farbrengen of Yud-Tes Kislev—culminating with the events of Zos Chanukah, those three weeks of the *mishpat* had an immense impact on us. We really became connected to the Rebbe by living through this entire period of time in his presence.

Almost every day of the court case the Rebbe went to the Ohel. When the Rebbe would go to the Ohel, he would fast until

he got back, usually in the evening, which meant that the Rebbe fasted for most of the days during those three weeks. Meanwhile we, the *bochurim*, would go to court, where we would sit quietly and with discipline, listening closely to the proceedings. Of course, many older Chassidim would also come to the court, like Rabbi Mordechai Mentlick, who would sit during the entire proceeding with a *kapota* and *gartel*. Those *bochurim* who understood English would jot down notes, which they would pass on to us foreigners. The courtroom was set up almost like a shul, filled mostly with Lubavitchers; men—who were the majority of the crowd—on one side, and woman on the other.

We filled up the room to the point that there was almost no space left for anyone else, and the opposing side requested that the judge ban us from attending. The judge responded that he has no reason to do so; on the contrary, he said, they are sitting so respectfully...

Each night the *bochurim* would farbreng, and overall, there was an immense feeling that each and every one of us is on the front lines for the Rebbe, our father.

Then came Chanukah; Zos Chanukah was a milestone, it was history *mamash*.

That year Zos Chanukah was on a Sunday. Earlier during Chanukah, the Rebbe asked that the Chassidim should farbreng, so a farbrengen was arranged for Motzoei Shabbos, the eve of Zos Chanukah. On Shabbos afternoon, the Rebbe held a farbrengen.

Then, towards the end of the farbrengen, the Rebbe surprised everyone and said that he is going to farbreng on Motzoei Shabbos and that the Chassidim should farbreng instead on Sunday morning. That was unheard of; it never happened in 770 before, that a farbrengen should start in the morning and go on all day.

The next morning we began farbrenging, and we continued throughout the day until the Rebbe returned from the Ohel and came in for *mincha* and *maariv*. After *maariv* we

heard that the Rebbe would soon come in for yet another farbrengen.

That night 770 looked as it usually did after a whole night of farbrenging. When the Rebbe came in, there was such excitement in the room; the crowd was after *l'chaim*, it was like Simchas Torah.

Then, during the farbrengen, the Rebbe compared the situation to Yud-Tes Kislev, and spoke about the *taanos limaalah*. In our eyes it took the *mishpat* to a much higher level².

There was a full year in between the trial and the verdict on Hei Teves. Can you share with us what exactly took place during that period?

Rabbi Sternberg:

Throughout the long wait, the *sefarim* were constantly on our minds. We were always imagining to ourselves what the celebration would look like, when we finally arrived at *didan notzach*.

On Shabbos Mevorchim Adar II, when the Rebbe came down to shul on Friday night, we saw that he was in terrible pain. Before the end of *maariv*, the *bochurim*

set up tables along the *shvil* so the Rebbe would be able to lean on them on his way out. The next morning it was decided that *shacharis* would take place in the small *zal*.

But despite the pain, the Rebbe came down to farbreng, and said an unusually long and profound *hadran* on Rambam—for about an hour and a half—in honor of the *siyum haRambam* of the second cycle, which took place during that period.

Rabbi Greenberg:

That year was a very stressful period; we constantly farbrenged, sitting for entire nights discussing what will be, when is it going to be, will it be a full victory, etc. The judge had said it will take three months for a verdict to come out, then he postponed it for another month and then another month. Meanwhile we were losing our patience; we didn't know what was going on.

During this same period, the Rebbe spoke at farbrengen after farbrengen, with the biggest *shturem*, about the importance of going on





shlichus and building *Batei Chabad*. The Rebbe spoke, most significantly on Zos Chanukah 5746 and on Hei Teves 5747, that the claim of the opposing side that Chabad is not active should be answered by adding and doing more activities of *hafotzas hamaayanos*, to the point that it will be incomparably more—באין ערוך—than before. It was at that period that the book recording the Chanukah menorah lightings of Chanukah 5746—*Let There Be Light*—was published at the Rebbe's request, and many other new initiatives were started as well.

Rabbi Glazman:

For that entire year we lived with it. At every *chasunah* that took place then, the *chosson* would speak about it; there was even a *bochur* that was constantly collecting *mashke* for when the *didan notzach* would happen; and there were others who said Tehillim every day. Everyone was anxiously awaiting the outcome.

The Rebbe's *sichos* during that period, in which he spoke time and again about shlichus, had a tremendous

effect on the *bochurim*. It is safe to say that ninety percent of the *bochurim* my age that were in 770 during this period went on shlichus.

Rabbi Greenberg:

It wasn't just because of the Rebbe's talk; it was because of the personal feeling that people felt for the Rebbe, so what the Rebbe said affected them in such a deep way. The Rebbe had spoken many times about shlichus, but nevertheless some people still felt that shlichus was not necessarily a way of life for every Chossid. During the years of the *mishpat*, however, *the oilam hot zich ufgehoiben*—we were uplifted—specifically as a result of the way the Rebbe shared this struggle with us. We developed that deep connection; we connected so strongly with the Rebbe that even the 'regular' guys felt the need to go on shlichus.

On Yud-Aleph Nissan that year, the Rebbe didn't farbreng as he usually did. Instead, when he came back from the Ohel, he started distributing dollars. There had been a number of

occasions during the winter that the Rebbe had suddenly began giving out dollars, and whoever was in 770 then had merited to receive them; but this is when the Rebbe started giving out dollars on a weekly basis.

It was a long year of waiting and waiting. Yud-Tes Kislev 5747 came closer and we were sure that by then the victory would be sealed, for that had been the day—*b'hashgacha pratis*—that the court case had begun the previous year, and it was a day of *nitzachon* for Chassidim in general. However, we were sorely disappointed. At the time, the new rabbonim had been installed in Crown Heights. One of their first actions was to sign a *kol koreh* encouraging all *anash* to come and say the whole Tehillim on Yud-Tes Kislev morning.

That year Yud-Tes Kislev fell out on a Sunday, and the whole Crown Heights came to 770. The shul was packed, and everyone recited the entire Tehillim together.

Then, by the farbrengen, we saw from the Rebbe that *didan notzach* was imminent. At the end of the

farbrengen, the Rebbe urged the building of more and more *Batei Chabad*, saying that it should be in a manner of “*Didan notzach, holech v’kovesh*, to the last corners of the world.” That gave us a feeling that victory isn’t too far away.

PART II

An Eternal Victory

Let’s move on to Hei Teves itself...

Rabbi Glazman:

On Hei Teves I was in the dining room of the yeshiva,

and there was a rumor that there was a ruling from the judge, and it was *didan notzach*. We ran to 770, some other *bochurim* and I, and we went straight to the *mazkirus* office and asked Rabbi Binyomin Klein if it was true. He looked at us as if he didn’t know anything; I think he knew already, but he didn’t want to say.

Outside people already started dancing. It was a very small crowd but it was very *lebedik*; as time passed more and more people came, and the *olam* grew bigger. Never in my life Have I experienced such *simcha*; it is very hard to describe the feeling of happiness

and the *simcha* that we experienced on that day.

Later, we danced days and nights, and while there were many other days of *didan notzach* victories, the *simcha* of that day was just extraordinary; it was out of this world.

Rabbi Sternberg:

On the morning of Hei Teves we were in yeshiva, preparing for a test. The Rebbe had spoken on Shabbos Chazon about the importance of *aseh lecha rav*, and the need to be tested from time to time on what you learned. Therefore our *hanhala* at Oholei Torah had introduced tests to *zal* age *bochurim*; for *mesivta* it



was already quite common, but in *zal* it was previously unheard of. That morning, we sat down, received a paper, and before we had a chance to write anything, someone ran in shouting “*Didan notzach*.” We immediately ran out of the room and started racing towards 770. As we passed the store of WLCC, we heard the blasting music, and then we knew it was for sure true. (Earlier there had been a number of false alarms, so we were initially in doubt as to whether this time it was true or not.) When we arrived at 770, people were already dancing outside, and before we knew it there was live music and *mashke* on sight.

At *mincha* the Rebbe came downstairs to daven in the big shul. We assumed something would happen, although we didn’t know exactly what. We were singing *Ashrei*, but many people thought that perhaps it wasn’t appropriate, and that the Rebbe didn’t approve, so they began ‘shushing’ the singing. All of a sudden, the Rebbe turned to Rabbi Groner and asked him for a Chumash, which

basically confirmed that there would be a *sicha*. After that, the singing continued unabated.

Chazaras hashatz was said with a *yom-tov’diker* tune, and afterwards the Rebbe said a *sicha*.

Rabbi Greenberg:

Right after the *sicha*, a few friends and I went on *mitzaim*. Because in the *sicha* the Rebbe had said clearly that he wants there to be *taparu da plachu*—actual *maaseh b’poel*—we took a taxi to the public library on Eastern Parkway to put on tefillin with Yidden. We were there until *shkiah* and then returned to 770 to start farbrenging.

Rabbi Sternberg:

We danced all night, and the next day there was no *seder hayeshiva*. However, it wasn’t clear yet that the celebration would continue. They had announced that on Thursday night there would be a full *seudah*, but that day it looked like things were back to normal.

Then, on that Wednesday afternoon, the Rebbe came back from the Ohel, and as usual davened *mincha* upstairs in the small *zal*. Suddenly, after davening,

the Rebbe started talking. Due to the fact that the *sicha* was a surprise, there was no microphone on site for the first few minutes. In that *sicha*, the Rebbe spoke about the time being an *eis ratzon*, and that everyone should write and bring in *panim* which he will bring to the Ohel. So many people from all over the world sent in *tzetzlach*, that when the Rebbe went to the Ohel the next day, he took fourteen full sacks with him. After such a special *sicha*, the dancing and farbrenging obviously continued that entire night as well.

The events of Thursday night had already been planned, and by then, many guests had arrived from Eretz Yisroel and other places. At the farbrengen on Shabbos, the Rebbe made a somewhat veiled reference to the victory, and on Motzoei Shabbos there was also singing and dancing all night.

What stood out in my mind was the fact that in middle of the *sicha* on Sunday, which was Asarah B’Teves, the Rebbe thanked all those who had come to join in the Rebbe’s *simcha*.



SINGING AND DANCING OUTSIDE 770 FOLLOWING THE NEWS OF "DIDAN NOTZACH", HEI TEVES 5747.

That to us was an indication that the *simcha* isn't over yet, so immediately after the fast we danced again through the night.

Then came Monday night.

In the *sicha* on Monday night, the Rebbe said that with a month left to Yud Shevat, everyone should begin the preparations and proper *hachanah*; every *bochur* must take three tests, which would be submitted to the Rebbe. That whole week leading up to that *sicha*, the Rebbe said a *sicha* each day, and all the energy behind the great rejoicing had been with the Rebbe's



THE REBBE DELIVERS A SICHA AFTER MINCHA, HEI TEVES 5747.

encouragement. Then on Monday the Rebbe told us it was now time to continue back on our regular schedule.

During those few weeks, the *shemiras hasedarim* was unbelievable. *Bochurim* were learning like they never learnt before, and the general atmosphere was very serious and special.

Meanwhile, we found out that an appeal was being filed. During the entire following year, there was tension in the air. Although we were not nearly as involved or worried as before, people were still nervous about what would happen.

There were a few times over that period that the Rebbe spoke about the *mishpat*; sometimes just hinting to it, and on other occasions more clearly. On Shabbos Parshas Vayikra, in Nissan 5747, was the main occasion that the Rebbe spoke very strongly about the issue, and then the Rebbe gave it over to the shluchim. After that Shabbos, the Vaad Hashluchim got involved, and started dealing with the

WHAT STOOD OUT IN MY MIND WAS THE FACT THAT IN MIDDLE OF THE *SICHA* ON SUNDAY, WHICH WAS ASARAH B'TEVES, THE REBBE THANKED ALL THOSE WHO HAD COME TO JOIN IN THE REBBE'S *SIMCHA*. THAT TO US WAS AN INDICATION THAT THE *SIMCHA* ISN'T YET OVER, SO IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE FAST WE DANCED AGAIN THROUGH THE NIGHT.

issues that the Rebbe had spoken about.

At the time, I remember that the Rebbe sent out a bottle of *mashke* with Rabbi Krinsky, saying that since the shluchim are here, they will probably farbreng.

One of the ideas that the shluchim came up with was to print a book about Lubavitch and its accomplishments around the world, to be able to present to the judge, and to show the world in general.

It was right after Pesach, and a lot of *bochurim* got involved with the preparations for the Lag B'omer parade. The *bochurim* that weren't

involved in that, got involved in preparing the book.

When the shluchim wrote to the Rebbe about their plan, the Rebbe wrote to them that such a book would take a very long time to publish, and in the meantime something should come out within *yomim achadim*—a few days—so that by the time the professional book comes out, in a year or two, there will already be something.

The shluchim received many instructions from the Rebbe regarding the book. At one point, Rabbi Berel Shemtov, who was involved in the Vaad, had us call every shliach in the



world to create a database of statistics—how many shluchim there are, how many children he reaches, how many institutions he has, etc. We also calculated how many *sefarim* Kehos printed throughout the years. We were planning to include all the statistics in the book, along with a worldwide total.

By the time we had finished, we had gathered what we thought was an extremely impressive list of Lubavitch *mosdos* and a great number of people who participated in the *peulos*. But when we submitted it to the Rebbe, we received an answer stating that basically there is nothing worth publishing. The Rebbe said that there are so many more Jewish children in the world; the numbers need to be much greater, being that there are so many more Jewish children who do not yet receive a Jewish education. There was still a lot more work that needed to be accomplished.

All in all, that “*yomim achadim*” book took over a year to be published, and was called ‘Lamplighters.’



HEI TEVES 5748, FARBRENGEN MARKING FIRST YEAR.

Tishrei 5748 passed, and then, on Thursday, Chof Cheshvan, the Rebbe distributed the Kuntres Heichaltzu of the Rebbe Rashab. The next Tuesday, we suddenly heard that there was another *didan notzach*—the appeal had been won and the *sefarim* would be coming back. Unlike the doubt and uncertainty we felt the first time around, this time it was clear that this is going to be a celebration. We danced the whole night Tuesday,

and the celebration went all the way to Shabbos, which also happened to be the first Kinus Hashluchim Haolami.

The scene of that Shabbos is something I will never forget. First, the look on the Rebbe's face on Friday night when he entered the shul for Kabbalas Shabbos. Then the farbrengen the next day, during which the Rebbe spoke in beautiful terms about the shlichus of our generation, and he also said that he will give money

towards the debt of all of the shluchim. When the Rebbe left the shul after *maariv*, the crowd didn't want to leave. For an hour and a half we were standing in our places dancing to the *Rosh Chodesh Kislev Niggun*. It was an unbelievable *gehoibener* atmosphere; it is difficult to describe the feeling and the electricity in the room on that evening.

The next day, the Rebbe handed the Kuntres Rosh Chodesh Kislev to all of the shluchim. By then we were

already thinking about the return of the *sefarim*, which was scheduled to take place the next day.

At some point, we heard that Agudas Chassidei Chabad had wanted to hold a parade and a massive event with the *sefarim*'s return. But the Rebbe had stated that the returning of the *sefarim* should be done quietly.

Nevertheless, we were still anticipating a big farbrengen that night, and Reb Berel Lipsker was collecting money for *mashke*; there was much excitement in the air.

In the morning, we were all standing around waiting for the *sefarim* to arrive, and for the Rebbe to leave to the Ohel. Reb Michoel Teitelboim was running around in 770, trying to send anyone he recognized from Oholei Torah back to *seder*. But we didn't listen; who wanted go to *seder* when the *sefarim* are about to return...

Rabbi Greenberg:

Since the Rebbe had written that the return should be quiet, Reb Dovid Raskin was also going around telling the 770 *bochurim* to go inside

and learn. He obviously understood that the Rebbe did not want us standing around when he came out to leave to the Ohel. However, we couldn't contain ourselves. In addition, all the yeshivos had come in for the occasion, and those who hadn't yet arrived were in the process of doing so as quickly as possible.

Rabbi Glazman:

The Rebbe came out, and began giving out tzedakah to the children there. Suddenly, we saw the Rebbe walk passed the open car

door, towards the *bochurim* gathered around, and he began to speak in very strong terms about the fact that we had been waiting outside for so long and how this is so different than the true meaning of *didan notzach*. The pain on the Rebbe's face was evident; the Rebbe had never, throughout all the years of the *nesius*, expressed himself this way to the *bochurim*.

In fact, as soon as we realized what was going on, most *bochurim* made it

THE REBBE WAS TEACHING US THAT A REBBE IS *NITZCHI*, EVERLASTING, AND THAT HIS *HASHPA'AH* CONTINUES EVEN MANY YEARS AFTER THE *HISTALKUS*. HE WAS TELLING US THAT THE FUTURE OF LUBAVITCH AND 770, AND ALL THAT COMES WITH IT, IS STILL IN THE REBBE'S HANDS, AND CAN CONTINUE TO GROW AND BECOME *B'EIN AROCH* TO WHAT IT WAS BEFORE, EVEN THOUGH TODAY WE CANNOT SEE THE REBBE PHYSICALLY.

their business to disappear from the scene as soon as possible, scattering in all directions to be out of the Rebbe's line of sight.

(The next Shabbos the Rebbe referred to this occurrence, saying that he had been asked why he had to express himself so harshly.)

Needless to say, no one was around when the *sefarim* came back. I happened to be passing by on my way back from lunch

at 1414 President Street to 770, and the entire area was empty of people.

All the celebrations that came afterwards were on a much smaller scale. This was due to the Rebbe's words on Beis Kislev, as well as the fact that the appeal that took place wasn't publicized, and the majority of the Chassidim didn't even know about them while they were going on.

The main day of celebration, which became

etched in the calendar of the Chassidim, was Hei Teves. This was actually established by the Rebbe himself, both through the *sichos* that day and in the days following, as well as the next year, when the Rebbe mentioned it by the *farbrengen*.

(Right before Shabbos, Hei Teves 5748, a few *bochurim* had put up a large sign on the back wall of 770, marking the celebration of the *yom tov* of Hei Teves.



2 KISLEV 5748, THE SEFARIM FINALLY RETURN HOME.

Some of the elder Chassidim were unsure if the Rebbe would appreciate it due to what had happened on Beis Kislev. In the end, during the farbrengen the Rebbe spoke about the *nitzachon*, and from then on Hei Teves has been engraved in the calendar of every Chossid).

Rabbi Greenberg:

In truth, even the strong tone in which the Rebbe expressed himself to us on Beis Kislev gave us a certain sense of closeness.

The fact that the Rebbe expressed himself to us in that way gave us a feeling that we have a close bond, like a father who corrects the way of his child. “I told you this morning not to do this,” the Rebbe was almost explaining to us. “Tell me, do you think this is the meaning of *didan notzach*? Does this really make sense to you?”

Looking back at those years, how do you think the story of Hei Teves affects us after Gimmel Tammuz?

Rabbi Greenberg:

Looking back at the years of the *mishpat*, it is clear that the essence of the court case was about the future.

Now after Gimmel Tammuz, we can have a better understanding of what the Rebbe was speaking about during the entire case.

At the time, the Rebbe was constantly emphasizing that “*hu bachayim*,” the Frierdiker Rebbe is here with us and still guiding



us. It was not understood why the Rebbe went to such great lengths to explain this concept in so heartfelt a manner, emphasizing it again and again. When the Rebbe spoke of the *sefarim*, he spoke about this point of “*hu bachayim*” more than anything else, when in fact this explanation wasn’t even used in court.

Now we are able to understand what this was all about.

The Rebbe was teaching us that a Rebbe is *nitzchi*, everlasting, and that his *hashpa’ah* continues even many years after the *histalkus*. He was telling us that the future of Lubavitch and 770, and all that comes with it, is still in the Rebbe’s hands, and can continue to grow and become *b’ein aroch*

to what it was before, even though today we cannot see the Rebbe physically.

In other words, it was like a שטר שיצא עליו ערעור (a document that has its validity put into question), which is ever stronger after it is confirmed. We received guidance on how to carry on that *hiskashrus* to times and situations that we had never imagined would exist.

The concepts of *nitzchiyus* and *hu bachayim* were established and made clear during *didan notzach*, to the point that even a non-Jewish judge established—within *olam hazeh hagashmi*—that the Rebbe *lebt*. That is what is so important and special about Hei Teves.

The Rebbe taught us then, and in numerous *sichos* in the following years, that Lubavitch will continue, and that every Chossid has the opportunity to be an extension of the Rebbe. The Rebbe explained that since there are those that do not believe in “*hu bachayim*,” the Aibershter places, within *olam hazeh*, representatives of the Rebbe, who act as hands and feet in his stead.

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The responsibility for this issue lies on all the Chassidim, since a *sefer* of a Yid, and even more so, a *nosi*, is a part of his life! His life does not consist of the bread he eats or the water he drinks, etc. but his spiritual life. For this is what the Alter Rebbe rules in *Igeres Hakodesh*, explaining that his life is the *emunah*, *ahavah*, and *yirah*. From where does the *tzaddik* take the *hisbonenus* for *emunah*, or *ahavah* and *yirah*? He takes them from the *sefarim* he studies!

And here all is silent; people are taking walks, learning Chassidus, learning the Chassidus of the Frierdiker Rebbe. They see what is going on but no one says anything!

...I give it over to every Chossid and all of the Chassidim *ad sof kol hadoros*! As I said before, I have done my part; I have spoken in this regard three times, and I have said privately that they should know that they are bothering—*zei tschepenen zich*—with the Frierdiker Rebbe, the *nosi hador*, and with every Chossid and all of the Chassidim *ad sof kol hadoros*!


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All those that have just declared *didan notzach* surely had in mind that the ‘*didan*’ is the [Frierdiker] Rebbe *nessi doreinu*. Therefore they must remember that everything that comes as a continuation to *didan notzach* is the *nitzachon* of the *nossi hador*.

...And this is the *hora'ah* from the words of the Midrash:

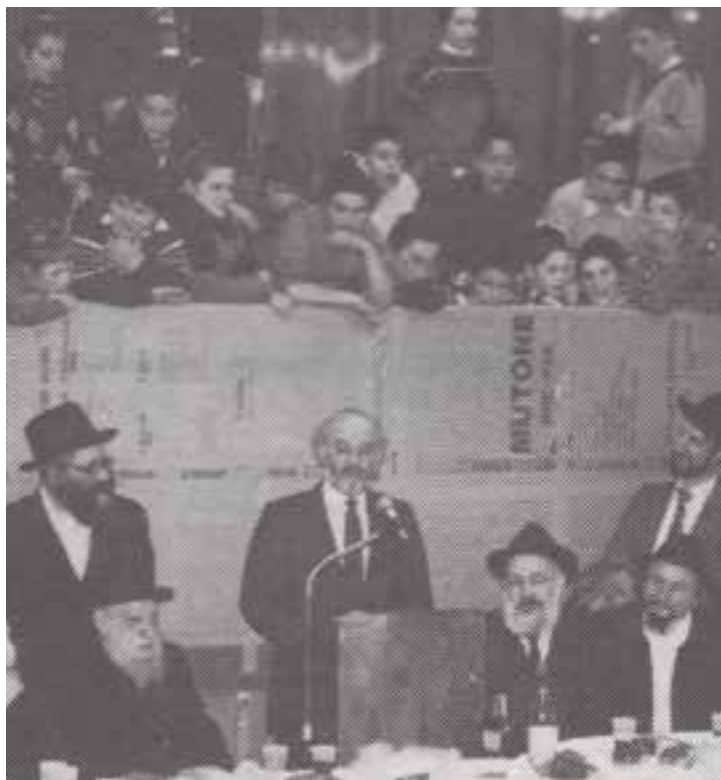
How can we be victorious over, and eliminate the evil spirit? When Yidden gather together to help each other...and shout *didan notzach*. For without this, they may have not won over the evil *ruach*. But through declaring “*didan notzach, didan notzach*,” as per the will of the *nossi hador*, we are able to overcome and completely eradicate the *ruach*.

This concept is quite simple, and does not need to be elaborated upon. Especially due to the fact that the celebration is a result of everyone’s feeling that the [Frierdiker] Rebbe, the *nossi hador*, has been victorious in his battle, and they must therefore dedicate themselves even more to fulfill his directives.

Those *sichos* tell us that the Rebbe lives on through his *sefarim*, his *chafeitzim*, and his Chassidim. When a Chossid learns the Rebbe’s Torah, and lives with the Rebbe’s *hora’os*, the Rebbe lives within him—in the Rebbe’s words—“*ad sof kol hadoros!*” 

1. During the following years, the Rebbe would often edit a *maamar* on the occasion of yom tov and *yomei d’pagra*; however, at the time it was totally out of the ordinary.

2. To see more on the Rebbe’s comparison between Yud-Tes Kislev and Hei Teves, see *A Chassidisher Derher Magazine* Teves 5775.



K'savim, Sefarim, Chafatzim

The Chabad Library Through the Generations



At the center of the Chabad court lie the “Crown Jewels” of Chabad: the priceless manuscripts, the *kisvei yad kodesh* of the Rabbeim. This, along with hundreds of thousands of *sefarim*, is the library of Agudas Chassidei Chabad, around which the events leading up to Hei Teves were centered. Although the complete telling of its 200-year story would fill a whole book, here we attempt to give an outline of its history.





The Tzemach Tzedek

The history of the Chabad Library begins with the Tzemach Tzedek, who began collecting and cataloging *kesavim* already during the Alter Rebbe's lifetime.

In the year 5561 (תקס"א) the Alter Rebbe was arrested and taken to Petersburg for the second time. With the Alter Rebbe not saying *maamarim*, the Tzemach Tzedek began collecting and copying transcripts of *maamarim* from the early years of the Alter Rebbe's *nesius*.

By the time the Alter Rebbe returned to Liadi almost a year later, the Tzemach Tzedek had amassed a collection of over 1,100 pamphlets. When the Alter Rebbe resumed saying *maamarim*, the Tzemach Tzedek continued finding and writing all the *maamarim*, and he also added the new ones. By the time the Alter Rebbe was *nistalek* 11 years later, the collection of handwritten manuscripts numbered over 10,000.

This collection received a major boost when the Tzemach Tzedek's second son, the Maharil, got married. The father-in-law of the Maharil was Reb Shlome Freidas of Shklov, one of the foremost Chassidim of the Alter Rebbe, and he had thousands of *maamarim* of the Alter Rebbe, that he himself had heard and written. When his daughter married the son of the Tzemach Tzedek he gave his whole collection to the Tzemach Tzedek, around forty volumes. The Tzemach Tzedek edited these manuscripts and added many notes.

The Tzemach Tzedek was also a very prolific author on his own, writing answers in *halacha* (*teshuvos*) *chiddushim* in *nigleh*

and Kabbalah, and *maamarim*. The Rebbe Maharash said that his father wrote 60,000 booklets!

From all of the above there remains today in the Chabad library close to 80 volumes of the Tzemach Tzedek's holy writings and the writings of his personal scribe.

The Tzemach Tzedek's Chassidim used to copy his *maamarim*. Today, the library contains close to one thousand volumes of handwritten *maamarim*. Most of these are *mammarim* of the Tzemach Tzedek.

The Tzemach Tzedek also started the collection of *sefarim* in the Chabad Library. He collected about 11 bookcases of *sefarim* before the great fire of Lubavitch.

Fire!

The city of Lubavitch was built mainly out of wood. This meant a constant fear of fire, which could easily spread from house to house burning down the whole city.

Indeed, around the year 5617 (תר"ז) a fire broke out in Lubavitch. Many of the Tzemach Tzedek's manuscripts were not in his home at the time, as Chassidim used to borrow them to copy or study. This did not help the situation though, because the fire spread throughout the whole city, and most of these did not survive.

At that time, the Tzemach Tzedek was under surveillance by the Russian secret police, and he feared for the safety of the *kesavim*. So he divided most of them between the home of his *meshores*, Avrohom Michel; and the rov of Lubavitch, Reb Avrohom.



When the fire broke out, the Tzemach Tzedek was sure that the rov would appreciate the value of the *kesavim* and rescue them from the fire. But he feared that the *meshores* would not. So the Tzemach Tzedek personally ran to the house of Avrohom Michel to ensure the *kesavim* were rescued, and dispatched an assistant to the house of the Rov.

The Tzemach Tzedek arrived as Avrohom Michel was dragging the box of *kesavim* out of the house. When he saw the Tzemach Tzedek he said “Rebbe, I saved them!”

The assistant who was sent to the rov’s house, arrived and saw that the rov had completely forgotten about the *kesavim*, and was busy saving a sack of feathers and a

honeycomb. He ran into the burning house to rescue the crate of *kesavim*, but on his way out he got caught in the door, and barely managed to escape with his life.

When the Tzemach Tzedek heard that the rov saved honey and feathers instead of the *kesavim*, he said “I would have given him all of my silver...”

The fire took a heavy toll. The Tzemach Tzedek wrote a work on *nigleh*, which at the time of the fire was 2,000 pages long. Every five years he would write a new version. By 5617 there were five editions already, and they were all burned.

The Tzemach Tzedek had written a Shulchan Aruch to fill in the *simanim* missing in the Alter Rebbe’s. This was also lost.¹

In addition, the entire library of *sefarim* was burned. After the fire the Tzemach Tzedek was left with barely a *sefer*.

Although a lot was lost in the fire, a substantial amount of *kesavim* did survive. These, along with *sefarim* the Tzemach Tzedek bought in the years after the fire, were the Chabad library at the time of his *histalkus*.

The Rebbe Maharash

The Rebbe Maharash started collecting *sefarim* when he was still a young child, as the following story, written by the Frierdiker Rebbe, shows:

“Once a month, the Tzemach Tzedek would test the children of the *cheder*, including the Rebbe Maharash. After the test he would give the children money. The Rebbe Maharash would save this money, and together with the one ruble allowance he received every Friday, he would buy *sefarim*.

“In Elul
5605 (ת”ה)
[he was then
11 years old],
a *sefarim*
merchant



THE STAMP OF THE REBBE
MAHARASH IN HIS SEFARIM.

came to Lubavitch. The Rebbe Maharash went to his father, who held all his money for safekeeping, and asked for 30 rubles. The Tzemach Tzedek asked why he needed such a large sum of money, and he replied that he wanted to buy *sefarim*. The Tzemach Tzedek said, “First be fluent in the *sefarim* that you already have...” In the end the Tzemach Tzedek gave him the thirty rubles

he asked for, plus a 10 ruble gift, and he bought many *sefarim*.”²

After the *histalkus* of the Tzemach Tzedek, his *sefarim* were divided between his six sons. The original plan was to divide the collection of *kisvei yad* as well, but that did not materialize, and they all remained, besides for a handful, in Lubavitch with the Rebbe Maharash.

The Rebbe Maharash had special stickers that he affixed to the volumes of *kisvei yad*, describing the contents of each volume. The stickers are still on many of these volumes until this day, and have helped the staff of the library identify the year, date, and author of each manuscript.

The Rebbe Rashab

With the *histalkus* of the Rebbe Maharash, a similar arrangement was made: the *sefarim* were divided between the sons, whereas the *kisvei yad* remained in Lubavitch with the Rebbe Rashab.³

In a fascinating letter, the Rebbe Rashab describes how he received the *kisvei yad*:

“It is known that I took my father’s collection of *kisvei yad* about four years ago. I am no different than my father who took almost all of the *kisvei yad* of my grandfather [the Tzemach Tzedek]. These holy manuscripts are literally my life force.”

Rescuing lost manuscripts

The Rebbe Rashab expressed his great love for the manuscripts many times. In a letter to the famous *mashpia*, Rashbatz, he writes:

“Please let me know what is happening with the holy manuscripts of the Alter

Rebbe, if the matter is nearing its conclusion. If you would only know my intense longing and great pleasure from these things, you surely would not withhold from me this true favor.”⁴

By then, there were also many *kisvei yad* that had ended up in Eretz Yisroel. The Rebbe Rashab enlisted the help of his cousin, Reb Shneur Zalman Slonim, to locate and purchase these lost *kesavim*. There are many letters in the Igros Kodesh of the Rebbe Rashab to Reb Shneur Zalman, which show the deep love that the Rebbe Rashab had to any *ksav yad* of our holy Rabbeim.

Storage and safekeeping

Tremendous care was placed on guarding the priceless *kisvei yad*. The collection was always with the Rebbe Rashab, and when he left Lubavitch, he appointed the Frierdiker Rebbe to guard them. Once, the Frierdiker Rebbe had to travel to Moscow while his father was away, and the Rebbe Rashab wrote to him:

“Regarding your trip to Moscow, my main concern is about the *kesavim*, because I am afraid to entrust them with anyone else.”⁵

For the summer, when the Rebbe Rashab would leave for a few months, the entire collection would be packed in crates and travel with him.

Added to the collection were letters that the Rebbe Rashab had written himself. These were collected and organized by the Frierdiker Rebbe, and in the end, numbered 2,000 letters.

Expanding the collection

Besides for *kisvei yad* of Chassidus, the Rebbe Rashab had an interest in old manuscripts in general.

In a catalog of antique valuable manuscripts, some written on parchment, the Rebbe Rashab marked which ones he wished to purchase, along with some descriptions of the manuscript. Some of them also have in the handwriting of the Frierdiker Rebbe the words “זה קנינו” – this one we bought.

Throughout all the years of his *nesius*, the Rebbe Rashab purchased a huge amount of *sefarim*. He would collect catalogs and make lists of the *sefarim* he was interested in buying, along with the listed price. This way, when he was offered to buy a *sefer* by a merchant, he could consult this list to see what the price should be.

The library of *sefarim* of the Rebbe Rashab eventually numbered 5,400 sets, totaling 12,000 volumes.

World war I brought an end to over a century of Chabad history in the town of Lubavitch. In the year 5676, the Rebbe Rashab was forced to flee to Rostov. The invaluable collection of *kesavim* accompanied him on the journey into the



THE REBBE RASHAB'S HANDWRITING ON A CATALOGUE OF SEFARIM, DETAILING WHICH WERE NEEDED FOR THE LIBRARY AND WHICH WERE ALREADY BOUGHT.

THE RUSSIAN LIBRARY

Over the month of Tishrei 5676 (תרע"ז), the 12,000 *sefarim* of the Rebbe Rashab, along with the sizable library of the Frierdiker Rebbe, were packed in crates and sent for safekeeping to a fireproof warehouse in Moscow.

The plan was to retrieve the *sefarim* from the warehouse when the war ended. But at the end of the war, the Communist revolution plunged Russia into chaos. There was widespread hunger and anarchy, and in these tumultuous times, the precious library of Lubavitch was confiscated by the Communists, and made part of the Lenin Library in Moscow.

In 5686 (תרפ"ו), members of "Agudas Hatmimim" in the United States, wrote to the Frierdiker Rebbe asking how they can help rescue the library from the Russian government.

The Frierdiker Rebbe responded with a detailed plan of action. The plan was to have many Jewish academics write to the Russian government that the library was essential for research. And the government must therefore make the library available to the Frierdiker Rebbe to study and use.⁷

He also instructed them to influence Dr. Rosen (referred to by his codename "Shushan"), the Joint representative in Russia, help in the rescue efforts.

In the end though, the library remained in the Lenin Library in Moscow.

In 5692 (תרצ"ב), the Frierdiker Rebbe enlisted the Rebbe's help in rescuing the library, writing:

"I have a request to make of you. You are aware that my *sefarim*, the Lubavitch library, are still in Moscow, and as I told you a few times, on account of my activities on behalf

Russian interior, but there was no way to transport the library of 12,000 *sefarim* all the way to Rostov.⁶

The Frierdiker Rebbe

The Frierdiker Rebbe writes in a letter: "I have always been a collector of *sefarim*, there are those who learn *sefarim*, those who read *sefarim*, and those who collect *sefarim*."⁹

In his youth, while his father, the Rebbe Rashab, was expanding the library of Lubavitch, the Frierdiker Rebbe was building his own library.

In Russia itself, it was hard to find valuable *sefarim* for reasonable prices. So they were mainly purchased from merchants elsewhere in Europe, Eretz Yisroel, or North Africa.

The Frierdiker Rebbe also did as his father had done, and enlisted the help of

of Russian Jews, I did not want to use my connections to ask for favors regarding the *sefarim*.

“However, the matter pains me greatly, and I am confident that with Hashem’s help we can work to resolve it.”

The Frierdiker Rebbe then went on to list a number of people who can be called upon to help, and discusses the pros and cons of approaching each person. Finally settling on the right one to ask, he finishes:

“It would be a good idea if you can visit him a few times, and tell him that I am in much pain on account of the *sefarim*.”⁸

The letter ends with more details of what to discuss with this individual. However, these efforts also did not bear fruit.

For many years, the fate of the library was unknown. There was fear that it was transferred to the Jewish library in Kiev, which was destroyed by the Nazis, or that it was scattered all over Russia.

In the year 5740, after the *kesavim* from Poland were brought back (see below for more about this), efforts began to locate the “Schneerson Library” in Russia.

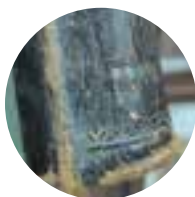
The Rebbe instructed Rabbi Shlomo Cunin to speak with two of his supporters who had connections in Russia, to try and get the government to allow Chabad scholars to visit Moscow and look for the collection.

These efforts succeeded, and three representatives from Chabad were allowed to travel to Moscow.

The rest of the painful saga is too lengthy for this article, but the library was eventually located, complete and intact, in Moscow, and all efforts to bring it back to 770 have until this day been unsuccessful.

Reb Shneur Zaman Slonim to find and buy *kesavim*. He also worked with Reb Shneur Zalman’s son, Reb Yaakov Yosef Slonim, to buy valuable *sefarim* in Eretz Yisroel.

Today, we can identify some of the *sefarim* that belonged to the Frierdiker Rebbe based on the following: *sefarim* that were damaged, or published without a cover, were sent to

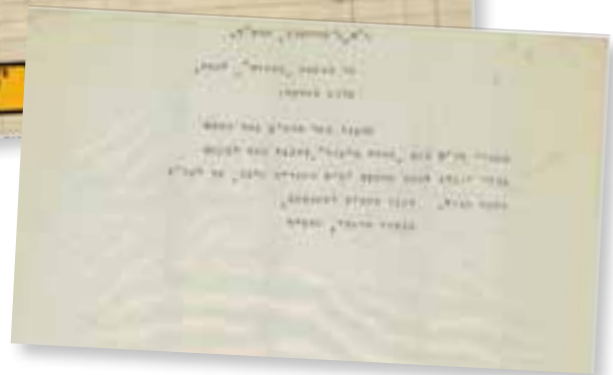
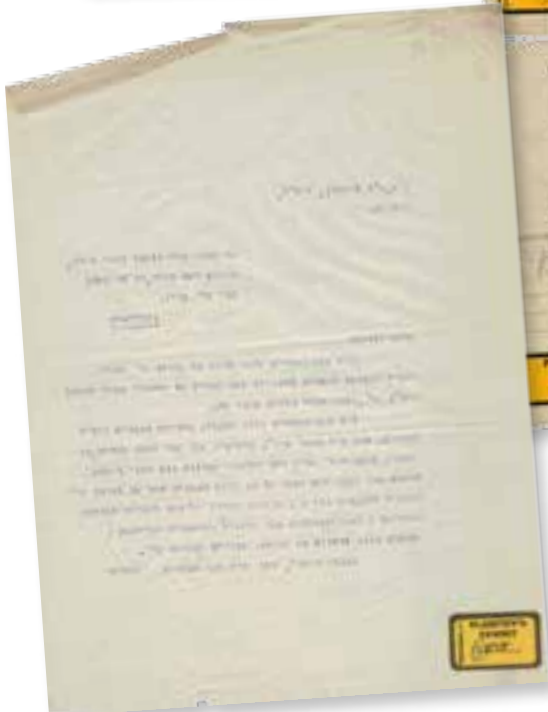


a bookbinder. The Frierdiker Rebbe instructed the bookbinder to engrave װ, his initials, on *sefarim* that belonged to him. In some *sefarim* there is also a decorative label (ex libris) that says “*Sefarim* collection of Yosef Yitzchok Schneerson, Lubavitch.”

When the Rebbe Rashab’s *sefarim* were sent for safekeeping to Moscow, the Frierdiker Rebbe’s collection was packed and sent along with it.



THE STAMP OF THE LIBRARY WHILST IN RIGA, LATVIA.



VARIOUS LETTERS FROM THE FRIERDIKER REBBE, ASKING AUTHORS AND PUBLISHERS TO SEND NEWLY PRINTED SEFARIM FOR THE LIBRARY. MANY OF THESE DOCUMENTS WERE USED IN THE COURT CASE OF HEI TEVES.

In the year of *aveilus* after the *histalkus* of the Rebbe Rashab, the Frierdiker Rebbe organized his father's *kesavim*. The *maamarim* of each year were put in separate volumes, with a sticker indicating the year and other bibliographical data. The Rebbe Rashab's letters were also organized in the same fashion.

To this collection of *kesavim* the Frierdiker Rebbe added his own writings: his diaries, *hanachos* that he wrote of his

father's *maamarim*, and explanations in Chassidus.

A new Chabad Library

With the library of Lubavitch lost in Russia, the Frierdiker Rebbe decided to purchase a new library, which would be the seed of a new Lubavitch library.

In 5685 (תרפ"ה) he finalized an agreement with Reb Shmuel Weiner, a well-known *sefarim* collector, to buy his entire

EMERGENCY MEASURES

When the Frierdiker Rebbe was arrested in 5687 (תרפ"ז), there was a great fear that the priceless *kesavim* were in danger. In his diary of the events surrounding his arrest, the Frierdiker Rebbe writes:

“What is happening now at home? What is happening with my son-in-law to be, Menachem, who went to the home of my secretary Chaim Liberman? Was he *chas veshalom* caught? These thoughts overcame me, and a stream of tears burst from my eyes. Hot tears poured down my face, my heart trembled and my whole body shook: who knows, is it possible that the *kesavim* were *chas veshalom* taken?!”¹⁰

The Rebbe, who as mentioned, was on his way to Chaim Liberman's home to alert him of the arrest, was also concerned for the *kesavim*. The Rebbe rushed to distribute the *kesavim* to various members of *anash* for safekeeping. All of these *kesavim* were returned after the release of the Frierdiker Rebbe.

Years later, the Rebbe wrote to Reb Zalman Duchman: “I seem to recall that at the arrest of my father-in-law, in Petersburg, you were one of the people to whom I gave *kesavim* to hide.”

Reb Zalman responded with an interesting anecdote: “You gave me a big carton of *kesavim*. On Tuesday, 12 Tammuz, around 1:00 or 1:30 I brought it back, and you were sitting in the big *zal*. You said to me, “I will repay you for your efforts, by informing you that the Rebbe will be back for Shabbos.”

When Reb S.B. Levine went to Moscow in 5748 to look for the “Schneerson Library” he asked the Rebbe if it's possible that some of the *kesavim* were not returned then, and if so, should he look for them now. The Rebbe responded: “They were returned immediately!!”



STICKERS IN THE FRIERDIKER REBBE'S HANDWRITING, DETAILING THE CONTENTS OF SEFARIM IN THE LIBRARY.

collection. Payments were to be made monthly, over the course of many years.

This was a completely new direction for the Chabad library. The library in Lubavitch, which was confiscated by the Communists, was a massive collection of “standard *sefarim*.” This new library however, was more of a collector’s item. For example, it contained 400 different editions of the Hagada Shel Pesach, 140 editions of *kinos* for Tisha B’av, and 140 editions of *selichos*, along with many other books on various topics.

The library was expanded in another way as well:

For over 100 years in Czarist Russia, there was a censorship of books. Before anything was printed, two copies had to be sent to the censor’s office for review. The

main office was in Petersburg, where a copy of every single printed publication was sent.

After a hundred years, there were millions of books and pamphlets in this office. When the Communists came to power, they needed money more than books, so they sold all the Jewish pamphlets in the collection. Many of these were bought for the Chabad library.

These pamphlets have great academic value for bibliographers, and along with the Weiner collection, they were the beginning of the new Chabad Library.

Leaving Russia

When the Frierdiker Rebbe was given permission to leave Russia, in 5687 (תרפ”ז), the government did not allow him to take the library with him. In Elul of that year, while in Rostov visiting the Ohel of his father, he asked Reb Mordechai Dubin, a Chabad Chossid who was a member of the Latvian Parliament, to arrange permission from the government to take the library, saying: “Tell them, that if even one book is left behind I will refuse to leave!”

Reb Mordechai replied: “Rebbe, it’s the Soviet Union, with them one must speak a little softer.” To which the Frierdiker Rebbe

WHEN GIVEN PERMISSION TO LEAVE RUSSIA, THE FRIERDIKER REBBE ASKED TO ARRANGE PERMISSION FROM THE GOVERNMENT TO TAKE THE LIBRARY, SAYING: “TELL THEM, THAT IF EVEN ONE BOOK IS LEFT BEHIND I WILL REFUSE TO LEAVE!”

answered: “צו שפעט מיין קינד האסטו מיר—My child, you started teaching me too late...”

Red Mordechai, through various means, arranged a special stamp for the boxes of *sefarim*, which allowed them to cross the border without incident, and the entire Lubavitch Library left Russia intact.¹¹

Expansion

We get a glimpse of how precious the library was to the Frierdiker Rebbe, by seeing the state of affairs of Lubavitch in 5688 (תרפ"ח). The cost of moving from Russia to Riga, Latvia, was astronomical. To pay for the trip, the Frierdiker Rebbe borrowed a lot of money. In addition, for a while he did not have a proper place to live in Riga.

Yet immediately upon arriving in Riga, the Frierdiker Rebbe began working to expand the library. He wrote many letters to Chassidim in Eretz Yisroel and the United States, instructing them to collect *sefarim* and send them to Riga. He turned to many *sefarim* dealers, asking for catalogs to choose *sefarim* to buy.

The Frierdiker Rebbe wanted the library to become a research facility. Where any researcher could come and find books on every subject. He asked Chassidim to send not only *sifrei kodesh*, but any book which would be of interest to an academic. These books he nicknamed “the left side of the library.”¹²

A GREAT TREASURE

When the Frierdiker Rebbe was still in Riga, a journalist from the “*Yiddishe Shtime*” in Kovno, visited the library. His impressions were printed in a Jewish journal in London:

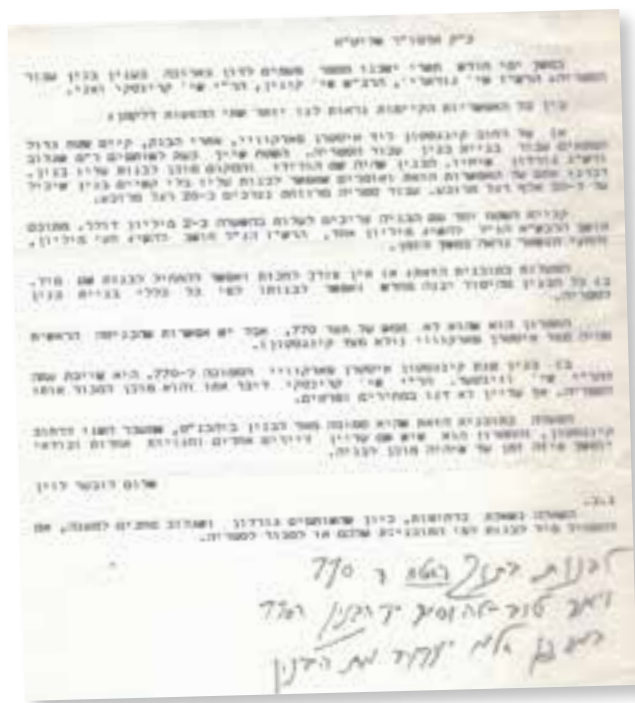
The library is a great treasure of Jewish artifacts. For example, there is a letter from the author of “Tzror Hamor,” written 440 years ago. There is also one of the oldest *siddurim* in existence, printed in Venice in 1475, just 30 years after the invention of the printing press.

Among notable manuscripts, there is the “dictionary of Lashon Hakodesh, Chaldean, Syrian, and Aramaic,” written by an unknown author in 1600. There is a “Pirush Hatorah” by the Ralbag, printed in 1476, and a *sefer* by the Ramban, printed in Lisbon in 1489.

The library has 950 editions of the “Hagada Shel Pesach,” in every language, 900 *selichos*, from many countries and periods, “Tzena U’renah,” *shaalos u’teshuvos*, etc.

The *sefarim* are discolored by age, but they are all in good condition and readable, making them a valuable resource for research in Jewish history.

In the Rebbe’s house there are manuscripts of the Baal Shem Tov, the Maggid, and others, but it is forbidden to see these before immersing in a *mikveh*.



He also placed advertisements in newspapers and journals in the United States and Poland, requesting that every publisher should send any publication to the "Lubavitch Library."

In the summer of 5693 (תרצ"ג), the Frierdiker Rebbe's health took a turn for the worse, and he was advised by his doctors that it was essential to visit a health resort.

The cost of doctors, medication, and the health resort, were tremendous, and there was little money to be found. Vital support from Chassidim in America was also not forthcoming because of the great depression.

Still, while in the health resort in Marienbad, the Frierdiker Rebbe wrote to his librarian about buying more *sefarim*.¹³

This was at a time when there wasn't even enough money to buy much needed medicine! That's how precious the library was to the Frierdiker Rebbe.

Transfer to Poland

In 5693, after spending the summer in Marienbad, the Frierdiker Rebbe moved from Riga, to Warsaw Poland. The library of course accompanied him. Advertisements were printed in Jewish newspapers, informing publishers that the library had moved to Warsaw, and all *sefarim* should now be sent to a new address.

Two years later, the Frierdiker Rebbe moved from Warsaw to Otwock. Accommodations there were more cramped, as the Frierdiker Rebbe wrote to a Chossid in Boston:

"Me and my *sefarim* are in a *golus* of poverty and shortage, with no proper home. Boruch Hashem I have *sefarim*, today numbering 13,000 volumes, *kein yirbu*, besides for a few thousand biographies and the like. Only a small portion of them are in bookcases, the rest are packed in boxes. One with feeling can appreciate the pain this causes."¹⁴

The Rebbe was very involved in the efforts to expand the library. There are many letters from the Frierdiker Rebbe, asking the Rebbe, who was then in Germany, to find catalogs, *sefarim*, and copies of old manuscripts for the library. Here is one example, from 5692 (תרצ"ב):

"I heard, or maybe I read in a book or newspaper, that when Baron Shimon Rothschild of Frankfurt was born, his father contracted a *sofer* to write a Tanach

on parchment with wide margins. A world famous artist was then hired to illustrate in the margins the stories of Tanach. The writing and drawing took 20 years, and I believe the Tanach is now in the library of Frankfurt.”¹⁵

The Rebbe was also involved in expanding the library. In 5696 (תרצ"ו) he wrote to Reb Eliyahu Simpson, in New York:

“I am writing to you although we have never met, but I heard your praises, that you are one of the oldest and most accomplished *temimim*, *mekushar* to the [Frierdiker] Rebbe, and bringing *nachas* to the Rebbe is very important to you.

“[My father-in-law] the Rebbe is very interested in acquiring *sefarim* for his library, and *anash* should be sending him *sefarim*, meaning arranging that authors

and publishers should send their *sefarim* as a gift to the Rebbe's library.

“It will bring the Rebbe great pleasure to have old *sefarim* that were printed in America, regardless of the type.

Chumashim, *siddurim*, *hagados*, *selichos*, *kinos*, *machzorim*, etc. Or *halacha sefarim*, *chidushim*, *derushim*. Even old calendars, or *seder hoshaanos* and *sefiras haomer*, would be appreciated.”¹⁶

World War II

With the outbreak of World War II, the Frierdiker Rebbe was forced to leave Otwock for Warsaw. With the war raging, it was impossible to pack the thousands of *sefarim* and bring them to Warsaw, so they were left behind in Otwock.

These *sefarim*, filling a total of 117 crates, remained in Otwock

“I AM WRITING TO YOU ALTHOUGH WE HAVE NEVER MET, BUT I HEARD YOUR PRAISES, THAT YOU ARE ONE OF THE OLDEST AND MOST ACCOMPLISHED *TEMIMIM*, *MEKUSHAR* TO THE [FRIERDIKER] REBBE, AND BRINGING *NACHAS* TO THE REBBE IS VERY IMPORTANT TO YOU...”



ONE OF THE CRATES CARRYING THE SEFARIM FROM POLAND TO NEW YORK.

while the Frierdiker Rebbe eventually made it to America. In 5701, Reb Mendel Horenstein, the Frierdiker Rebbe's youngest son-in-law, shipped one hundred of these crates to 770.

In 5708, a *tomim* who survived the war in Poland found a few boxes of *sefarim* in Warsaw which may have been part of the remaining 17 crates. While these *sefarim* were shipped to 770, and today reside in the library, it is unclear if they are indeed the missing *sefarim*. At any rate, the fate of the 17 crates of *sefarim* is unknown.

The *kesavim* though, the “crown jewels” of the Chabad Library, were too precious to leave behind and the Frierdiker Rebbe took them with him to Warsaw. They remained with him until the Germans conquered Poland. Remaining in Warsaw was no longer an option, and the Frierdiker Rebbe was forced to flee Poland.

Travelling with the *kesavim* was too dangerous, and for the first time, the Frierdiker Rebbe parted from them. Since the *kesavim* belonged to Agudas Chassidei

Chabad, the Frierdiker Rebbe had them deposited at the American embassy, registered as belonging to Agudas Chassidei Chabad of America.

With the *sefarim* being left in Otwock, and the *kesavim* in the American embassy, the Frierdiker Rebbe arrived in the United States in Adar 5700 with only one suitcase of priceless *kesavim*. This suitcase, engraved with the Frierdiker Rebbe's initials, contained mainly *kesavim* of the Rebbe Rashab.

The plan was to retrieve the *kesavim* from the embassy after the war ended, but with the entry of the United States into the war in 5701, the embassy was invaded, and all communication broke down.

From the moment the war ended, the Frierdiker Rebbe spared no effort to learn the fate of the *kesavim*. He involved lawyers and politicians in Washington, but to no avail.

In 5707, the Frierdiker Rebbe wrote to the *mazkir* Reb Moshe Leib Rodshtein:

“Please speak with my son-in-law, Ramash. Maybe he can write to [Reb Yitzchok Goldin, who was then in Poland, asking] him to search the cellars in Warsaw near the embassy, and other places where archives are stored.”¹⁷

It was not until 5738 that the *kesavim* were finally located in a Polish museum and brought to 770.

For the complete story of how the Polish library was found and returned to its rightful place, see “Rescued from Poland” in Derher Adar II 5774, Issue 17 (94).



When the *kesavim* arrived, the Rebbe was still living in 770, recovering from the heart attack on Shemini Atzeres. They were brought to the library on Erev Rosh Chodesh Kislev, more than a month after Shemini Atzeres.

All that long month, the Rebbe had not left 770, but when the *kesavim* arrived, the Rebbe went to the library to inspect the newly arrived crates. For two hours the Rebbe sat and looked over the *kesavim*, volume after volume. This was the first time the Rebbe had left 770 since Shemini Atzeres.

It is not hard to imagine that the great pleasure at seeing the *kesavim* returned to the Chabad library greatly improved the Rebbe's health. The next day, Rosh Chodesh Kislev, the Rebbe went home for the first time since the heart attack.

Over the years, until 5738, some of the *kesavim* from the Polish collection ended up in various places, mainly in Eretz Yisroel. Most of these were eventually purchased by Chabad Chassidim and returned to the library. From a catalog of *kesavim* that the Rebbe made in Riga, we know that there are still some lost *kesavim*, and hopefully they too will soon make their way back to the Chabad Library.

Besides for *kesavim*, the Frierdiker Rebbe deposited his archive in the embassy as well. These were documents, letters, and the like. When the Nazis invaded the embassy, this archive was separated from the rest of the *kesavim*. The Germans planned on using these documents as part of their "Jewish Museum."



When Poland was made part of the Soviet Union after the war, the archive was transferred to the Russian military archive, where it resides until today.

The Merkos Library

A small collection of *sefarim* was housed in the Rebbe's room in 770. This was known as the "Merkos Library" and is first mentioned by the Rebbe in a letter from 5709.¹⁸

These *sefarim* were for the staff of Merkos and Kehos to use for researching and preparing publications. The Rebbe would also frequently borrow *sefarim* from the Aguch library, as we know from library cards that the Rebbe wrote, or were written on his behalf.

After the *histalkus* of the Frierdiker Rebbe, the Rebbe encouraged Chassidim all over the world to send *sefarim* to the Merkos library. Since Kehos was a branch of Merkos, many authors who sent *sefarim* were compensated with newly released Kehos *sefarim*.

The library experienced tremendous growth, starting with just a handful of bookcases in 5709. Today the library of Lubavitch comprises over a quarter of a million volumes.

Over the years, the collection of *kesavim* grew as well. The Rebbe was constantly looking for new *kesavim*, manuscripts of *maamarim* written by Chassidim, either copied from the *kesavim* of the Rabbeim, or their own *hanachos*. The Rebbe wanted these in order to publish previously unseen *maamarim*.

Many *kesavim* were added to the library by Chassidim who left Russia and brought *kesavim* with them to give to the Rebbe. Complete collections were also given to the library. Among them was the collection the Babroisker Rebbe, given by his grandson Reb Binyomin Gorodetzky, the collection of Radatz Chein, and others.

Besides for *sefarim* and *kesavim*, the library also houses a collection of artifacts, holy *chafeitzim* that belonged to the Rabbeim. Gifts that were given to the Rebbe, proclamations, keys to cities, pictures of Chassidim, were also all sent to the library.

A New Home

The library was growing at a rapid pace, and soon the few rooms in 770 that housed it became too cramped. New *sefarim* that were sent in had to be placed in a warehouse for storage, until a more permanent solution could be found.

In 5722, Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky was notified that the house next door to 770, 766 Eastern Parkway, was for sale.

With the financial help of Long Island philanthropist Mr. Yaakov Shwadron, the three story house was purchased by Merkos L'inyonei Chinuch.

The entire library was moved to the new house, along with the offices of Rabbis Krinsky and Groner.

In 5737 the offices were moved to the other side of 770, to 784 Eastern Parkway. Shortly afterwards, after the Rebbe had a heart attack on Shemini Atzeres 5738, it was decided that due to the Rebbe's health, an apartment would be built in the library building for the Rebbe to stay on Shabbos, so he wouldn't have to walk home.

By 5745 even the new library building was becoming too cramped. Construction was soon underway to expand the Rebbe's apartment on the second floor, and create adequate shelf space for the ever growing library.

One year after Hei Teves 5747, the Rebbe indicated that the two libraries should be merged, creating one large Library of Agudas Chassidei Chabad—Ohel Yosef Yitzchak Lubavitch.

Organization and catalog

In 5737, Rabbi S.B. Levine was appointed by the Rebbe as the Chabad librarian. His first task was a daunting one: to make a catalog of the hundreds of thousands of *sefarim*.

Due to the enormity of the job, he thought it would be best to catalog just the name of every *sefer*, a task he estimated he could complete in a year. When he had a list of the first 500 *sefarim*, he submitted it to the Rebbe.

The Rebbe responded that the list was missing bibliographical information, the size of the *sefer*, how many copies were in the library, etc., and that he should consult with experts in bibliography to teach him how to make a proper catalog.

For this new, much bigger task, Rabbi Levine hired four people to help, and together they completed the catalog in two and a half years.



Mivtza sefarim

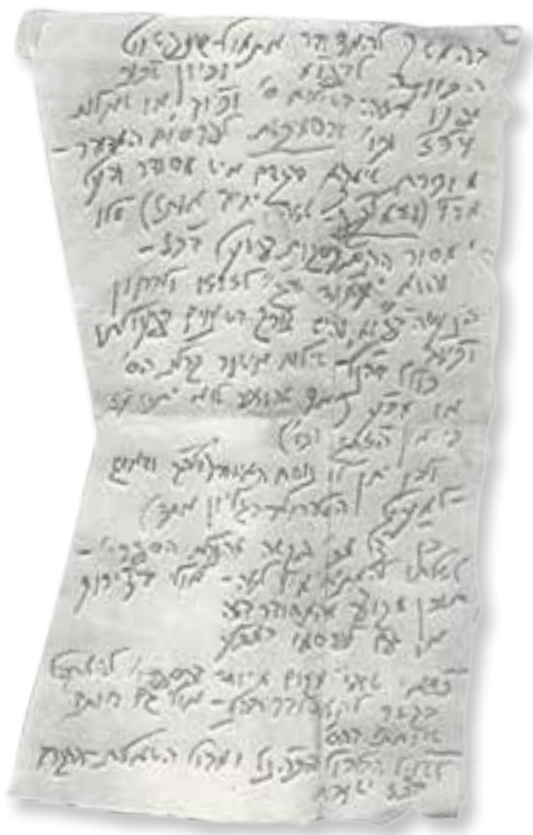
On the first anniversary of the victory of the *sefarim*, on Shabbos Hei Teves 5748, the Rebbe announced a new initiative:

"This brings us to another point which directly relates to the library of Agudas Chassidei Chabad—to expand and add to the library.

"This call to action was first publicized by the founder of the library, the [Frierdiker] Rebbe, upon the arrival of the library in this country. He requested from rabbis, authors, and publishers, to send any publications to the great library of Agudas Chassidei Chabad.

"We are also asking any *sefarim* collectors that have rare *sefarim*, or families that have an inherited collection of *sefarim* (if they are not needed for learning), to donate them to the library of Agudas Chassidei Chabad, for the benefit of the community."¹⁹

The next day, Rabbi S.B. Levine received a note from the Rebbe with detailed instructions (see *ksav yad kodesh*):



בהמשך להמדובר אתמול - שכפשוט הכוונה לבפ"מ [=לבפועל ממש], וכיון שכו"כ יפנו בזה: בשילוח ס' וכיו"ב, או שאלות עד"ז וכו', ובסמיכות לפרסום המדובר מוכרח שימצא בהקדם איש מסודר ובעל מרץ (ועמלק"פ [=ועל מנת לקבל פרס] - שזה יחייב אותו), שלו ימסור ההתעסקות בפועל דכ"ז [=דכל זה], והוא "יעמוד ע"ג" [=על גביו] לורזו ולבחון הנעשה בפ"מ [=בפועל ממש], והיש צורך בשינויים בפעולתו וכיו"ב.

כולל בהנ"ל - שילוח אישור קבלת הס' או מכ"ע (אף שהוזכר שלא יחכו ע"ז כי אין הזמ"ג וכו') ולכן יתן לו נוסח האישור (בלה"ק ובאנג' - למעט הטרחה - בגליון אחד).

כן צ"ל מכ' בקשה מהנהלת הספרי' - לשלחו להתמאימים לזה - אולי בצירוף תוכן מקוצר מהמדובר בזה. או גם לפרסמו במכ"ע.



TISHREI 5741, LEVI FREIDIN via JEM, 190849

RABBI SHALOM BER LEVINEE AT WORK.

כדאי שיהי' מקום מיוחד בהספרי' להתקבל בקשר
להמדובר בהנ"ל. - אולי גם חותם שיוחתם בהס'.
לשלול הבלבול דכהנ"ל ומבול השאלות - ההקדם
בכ"ז ישובח.

"Regarding what was spoken yesterday, which was obviously meant literally, and since many people will be sending *sefarim* or asking you questions, shortly after this idea gets publicized:

"It is essential to hire an energetic and organized person (for compensation—which will hold him accountable) who will oversee the *mitvza*, and you will oversee and encourage him, ensuring that it actually gets done, and if there need to be changes in his work etc.

"A receipt must be sent for every book (even though we spoke [in the sicha] that people should not wait for one, since there

isn't enough time), so you should give him the text for the receipt (in Hebrew and English on one page—to make things easier).

"A letter must be drafted asking for *sefarim*, to send where appropriate, maybe also containing a summary of what was spoken yesterday, and maybe also a newspaper advertisement.

"There should be a separate place in the library for *sefarim* received [as part of *mitvza sefarim*], and maybe also a special stamp.

"To ensure there is no confusion, all the above should be completed as soon as possible."

Rabbi Levine was not sure what should be written on the stamp, after asking the Rebbe, he received this response:

“Its purpose is to estimate the results of the *mitvza*, therefore the main thing is that it should say ‘*mitvza sefarim*,’ or the like.”

In the subsequent days, a newspaper advertisement announcing the *mitvza* was drafted. The Rebbe edited this draft a number of times.

The result of the *mitvza* was the addition of 6,000 *sefarim* to the library, all stamped “*Mitvza Sefarim—Shnas Hakhel 5748*.”

Expansion

About half a year later, Rabbi Levine reported the success of the *mitvza* to the Rebbe. The Rebbe responded:

“Speak with Aguch regarding a building for the library, or expanding the current building.”

There had been a pressing need for an expansion of the library building for a few

years already, and a number of suggestions were presented to the Rebbe, but they were all rejected.

Finally, in 5750, the Rebbe wrote to Rabbi Levine (see *ksav yad kodesh*):

“לבנות בתוך השטח ד770 ויותר טוב - להוסיף

בהבנין ד770 באופן שלא יערער את הבנין”

“Build on the property of 770, and even better, expand the building of 770 in a way which will not jeopardize the structural integrity.”

Following this, he submitted to the Rebbe a plan to remodel the top two floors of 770 to house the valuable *sefarim*, *kesavim*, and office space to work on publishing the *kesavim*. In addition to this, a warehouse would be built under the courtyard of 770, which would connect 770 and 766.

He finished: “If the Rebbe approves, we will contract an engineer to begin working.”



THE EXPANSION OF THE LIBRARY IS UNDERWAY, CIRCA 5750.

In response, the Rebbe underlined the words “The Rebbe approves.”

A few months passed and Rabbi Levine reported to the Rebbe that a contract was signed with an architect to make a blueprint. In response the Rebbe wrote:

“An unprecedented procrastination. Do you remember when you first started discussing the project? (Parenthetically, the beginning was with great excitement etc.)”

He understood, and less than two weeks later construction commenced. The Rebbe greatly encouraged the swift completion of the building. Every time Rabbi Levine passed for dollars, the Rebbe would add a dollar and say, “This is for the building, it should be with great success and quickly.”

The entire project was finally finished in the winter of 5751.²⁰



As we celebrate the yom tov of Hei Teves, at the core of which stood the holy *k’savim*, *sefarim*, and *chafatzim* of the Rabbeim, we are reminded of the Rebbe’s words in the *sichos* before the trial, these are “a part of the [Frierdiker] Rebbe’s very life...”

In the Rebbe’s words to Mr. J. Shestack after his successful efforts in procuring the release of the *k’savim* from Poland in 5738:

“There is surely no need to elaborate on what these manuscripts and books meant to him [the Frierdiker Rebbe], as to all the Lubavitcher Rebbes before him. He had a very special, profound and soulful attachment to them, over and above his attachment to books and manuscripts of similar sacred content. And many of them represent the heart and soul of the sacred Chabad literature...” T

1. Toras Shalom p. 81.
2. Sefer Hatoldos Admur Maharash p. 7.
3. See sichas Shabbos parshas Pinchas 5745; the Rebbe explains that even in that instance, the recipients of the sefarim would never have sold them on the market. In any event, the Frierdiker Rebbe specifically said that the library belongs to Agudas Chabad, so inheritance is out of the question.
4. Igros Kodesh of the Rebbe Rashab vol. 3 p. 6.
5. Igros Kodesh of the Rebbe Rashab vol. 1 p. 259.
6. It is worth noting, that the division of the library was not exact, especially considering the urgency and danger. Therefore some *kesavim* were mixed in with the *sefarim* and ended up in Moscow. The same applies to all later divisions as well.
7. Igros Kodesh of the Rebbe Rayatz vol. 1 p. 537.
8. Igros Kodesh of the Rebbe Rayatz vol. 15 p. 117.
9. Igros Kodesh of the Rebbe Rayatz vol. 11 p. 131.
10. Lekutei Dibburim vol. 4 p. 1246.
11. See Lekutei Sichos vol. 4 p. 1066.
12. Igros Kodesh of the Rebbe Rayatz vol. 2 p. 61.
13. Igros Kodesh of the Rebbe Rayatz vol. 3 p. 32.
14. Igros Kodesh of the Rebbe Rayatz vol. 4 p. 372.
15. Igros Kodesh of the Rebbe Rayatz vol. 15 p. 123.
16. Igros Kodesh vol. 21 p. 9.
17. Igros Kodesh of the Rebbe Rayatz vol. 13 p. 436.
18. Igros Kodesh vol. 3 p. 22.
19. Hisvaaduyos 5748 vol. 2 p. 164.
20. Much of the material here is based on *Sifriyas Lubavitch* and *Avodas Hakodesh* by Rabbi S.B. Levine.





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



לזכות
הת' אליהו שמואל הלוי שיחי' לוין

נדפס ע"י
הרוצה בעילום שמו

A Chassidisher Derher
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