

Derher

A Chassidisher

א חסידישער דערהער

HISTORIC MISSION

THE REBBE'S SHLUCHIM TO ERETZ YISRAEL
5736-5738



Stretch Out Your Hand

PURIM 5726

Made in the USA

RABBI AVROHOM DOV HECHT



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About the Cover:

This month marks 30 years since the third and final group of shluchim were sent by the Rebbe on a special mission to Eretz Yisroel, broadening and ultimately transforming the scope of Chabad activities throughout the land.

Pictured is the second group of shluchim are greeted at Ben Gurion Airport amidst joyous dancing, Shevat 5737.

Photo: Yemei Temimim archives.



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נא לשמור על קדושת הגליון.

Derher**Editorial**

“A suggestion:

“It would be the greatest zechus for the neshama [of the Rebbetzin]; in connection with her neshama and its elevation, we should institute that all Yidden begin celebrating their birthdays...” (25 Adar 5748).

It was merely a few days after the conclusion of the *shloshim* following the Rebbetzin's passing when the Rebbe asked for this new initiative to be implemented in her *zechus*.

As we commemorated the Rebbetzin's 30th *yahrtzeit* last month, we now mark 30 years since the Rebbe launched the “birthday campaign” in Adar 5748.

A full overview on the beginnings of this custom and how it evolved over the generations is presented in this magazine.

In the *sichos* about the significance of a birthday, the Rebbe also explained that *galus* is compared to pregnancy, and *geulah* to birth. By each and every individual properly celebrating his or her own birthday, we will merit the ultimate “birth” of all of *klal Yisrael*, with the *geulah shleima*.

With blessings for a *freilichen Purim*,

The Editors

ר"ה לאילנות, ט"ו בשבט, ה'תשע"ח



VICTORY IN EXILE

THE MONTH OF ADAR

One of the most famous expressions regarding the month of Adar is, “משנכנס אדר מרבין בשמחה” – When Adar arrives, we increase in joy.” The source of this is the Gemara (*Taanis* 29b). Immediately afterwards, the Gemara gives an example of how this joy is to be expressed: “Therefore, a Jew who has a court case with a gentile... should make himself available in Adar, when his fortune is good.”

Of all the examples of increasing in joy, it seems very out of place for the Gemara to pick this particular one. As a general rule, we try to encourage a Yid to have contact and

interaction with fellow Yidden; with non-Jews, less so. Why then would the Gemara choose the example of a Yid involved with a non-Jew to demonstrate the joy of Adar?



The happiness in Adar is based on its connection to Purim. The *Megillah* refers to “החדש אשר נהפך להם מיגון לשמחה”—the month that was transformed for them from sadness to happiness.” This, in fact, is the source for משנכנס אדר מרבין בשמחה. So, let us explore the celebration of Purim itself:

Unlike most other Yomim Tovim, Purim is not about us conquering our enemies. As the Gemara¹

concludes—“We are still servants of Achashveirosh.” There was no open *geulah*—the return to Eretz Yisrael and the building of the second *Beis Hamikdash* happened several years later. The reason Yidden had been sent to *galus* was because of their *aveiros*, and that had not yet been corrected.

True, throughout almost a full year (from when the decree was published in Nissan until its reversal was carried out in the following Adar) all the Yidden lived with *mesiras nefesh* not to convert. This would seem to be the ultimate *teshuva*, to the extent that even “intentional sins are converted to merits.”



לזכות
החיילת בצבאות ה'
חנה תחל'
לרגל יום הולדתה
כ"ז טבת ה'תשע"ז

נדפס ע"י הוריו
הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל
וזוגתו מרת ברכה שיחיו
טעלדאן



However, the “stolen objects had yet to be returned.” Every Yid has his own part of the world to purify, and there are sparks associated with his individual *neshama* that he must elevate to *kedusha*. In the Purim story, being that the Yidden had not yet elevated the *nitzotzos* that they should have elevated, “and the objects that were stolen” were not yet returned, they remained under Achashveirosh’s rule.



In an ideal setting, Yidden would exclusively deal with other Yidden. As for the sparks trapped in the rest of the world, they will be brought to

us on their own for us to deal with. (As we see in the famous story of the Queen of Sheva bringing gifts to Shlomo Hamelech.) Even when we are not on the level for that to happen, and we must deal with the world, it should ideally be in manner of “conquering”—as Dovid Hamelech put it: “לכו ופשטו ידיכם בגדוד—go and take arms with the troops...” Meaning, we interact by standing far above, and from our vantage point we can elevate the world to *kedusha*.

In the story of Purim, however—and so too now, in the time of *galus*—the Yidden are not strong enough to go out to war. “He who is

afraid [due to his *aveiros*] and faint of heart shall return home from the battlefield.”² In this situation, when *klipa* claims that the *nitzotzos* belong to him, and the Yid is not able to battle openly, he must go to “court” and state his claim. And when Adar comes, we are given extra strength—a guarantee that we’ll be victorious in our mission and refine the world. **1**
(*Shabbos Parshas Mishpatim* 5731)

1. *Megillah* 14a.

2. *Devarim* 20:8.



לעבן מיט'ן רבי'ן

לזכות
הרה"ת ר' יהודה
וזוגתו מרת רבקה
ומשפחתם שיחיו
שטיינער
וואשינגטאן די. סי.



23 TEVES 5723, G. SCHUSTERMAN VIA JEM 303098

Stretch Out Your Hand

PURIM 5726



The following account is based on a number of yomanim written at the time:

It was 8:30 p.m. when the Rebbe entered for the *farbrengen*.¹ After the crowd began singing a *niggun*, the Rebbe wrapped several pieces of cake in a napkin and said *l'chaim* to all those present. The Rebbe then said several *sichos*, including one about the three *pesukim* that the Jewish children told Mordechai—predicting the impending salvation.²

Between *sichos*, the Rebbe encouraged several individuals to say *l'chaim*. At midnight, the Rebbe said a *maamar* based on the *possuk*: "ויבז בעיניו" לשלוח יד במרדכי לבדו," connecting it with the *possuk*: "ויבז עשו את הבכרה." Prior to the *maamar*, the microphone stopped working. After it was briefly fixed, it broke again. Eventually, Reb Leima Minkowitz, who was recording the *farbrengen*, took the microphone from his tape recorder and

placed it under the Rebbe's tablecloth. Following the *maamar*, several individuals approached the Rebbe with *l'chaim*. While they conversed, the Rebbe covered the microphone with his hand.

During the singing, Reb Chaim Nachman Kowalsky presented a container of dates to the Rebbe. The Rebbe smilingly said that he won't eat it, because of the question about *bracha acharona*, and handed it to the *mazkir*, Reb Moshe Leib Rodshtein. The Rebbe then went on to say several additional *sichos*.

At around 2:00 a.m., the Rebbe proclaimed: "Being that it's already after *chatzos*, and therefore closer to the end of the *farbrengen* than the beginning, and being that *ad d'lo yada* must be fulfilled and so far I don't see anyone holding at that stage, someone should be *moser nefesh* and take this upon himself, thereby being *motzi* everyone else."

The elderly Reb Zalman Duchman volunteered, and promptly began pouring himself a cup of *mashke*. Although it seemed as though he was not the one the Rebbe had in mind for this "job," the Rebbe nevertheless gave some *l'chaim* to Reb Zalman, asking him if he is the "*nivchar sheb'am*" [appointee]. The Rebbe also handed him several pieces of cake. Chassidim immediately began to grab them from him.

"Soon he will³ begin making speeches," the Rebbe proclaimed. When Reb Zalman began talking, the Rebbe responded: "I said you'll be making speeches soon." A little later, the Rebbe asked if Reb Zalman is doing his job. "That is why I gave him *mezonos*," the Rebbe said. Again Reb Zalman started to speak, but the Rebbe stopped him: "With speeches you'll accomplish nothing; what's needed is *ad d'lo yada*!"

The Rebbe then called for Reb Chaim Asher Kahanov to come over, saying, "He's a *kohen*, he should come up." When he reached the stage, the Rebbe poured a *l'chaim* of *mashke* with 95% alcohol for him. Turning to the Rebbe, he exclaimed, "*L'chaim!*" The Rebbe *bentched* him to have "a physically abundant year." The Rebbe then encouraged him to continue saying *l'chaim*, mentioning that "the first time I met him was in Paris, when he made *kiddush* on 95%..." The Rebbe then instructed him to have another *l'chaim*, which he immediately did.

In a later *sicha*, the Rebbe spoke about the advantage of recounting *mofsim*, wonder stories of the Rebbeim, over just studying Chassidus. He



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mentioned the claim that an individual⁴ brought to the Frieddiker Rebbe regarding the effectiveness of recounting *mofsim*, despite this not being the ideal Chabad way. After one receives a copy of a *maamar*, the Rebbe explained, it can happen that he'll "go and eat kugel," [i.e. it does not move him very much]. Experiencing *mofsim*, on the other hand, can have a greater effect on many people. This is why there were many *mofsim* by the Frieddiker Rebbe, including the very fact that he lived the last seventeen years of his life, despite the doctors' dire predictions. Today we are witness to an even greater *mofes*—after seeing so many *mofsim*, people go and eat kugel...

(While the Rebbe was saying this, an individual who was somewhat inebriated, was repeating words after the Rebbe. Chassidim wanted to remove him from the *farbrengen*, but the Rebbe gave him smiling glances several times. Later on, he was dancing around and Chassidim tried to take him out again, but he protested. The Rebbe asserted: "Just touch his tie, you'll immediately see that he's aware of everything taking place,"⁵ and then remarked something in Russian.)

Later, the Rebbe asked where Reb Chaim Asher Kahanov is.⁶ When Chassidim answered that he had gone to sleep, the Rebbe exclaimed: "That is the true *ad d'lo yada*—that he's sleeping."

Chassidim sang the *Niggun Hachana*, the Alter Rebbe's *niggun* (repeating the fourth stanza six times), *Nye Zhuritz Chloptzi*, and *Ani Maamin*, all upon the Rebbe's request. The Rebbe then began singing *Tzama L'cha Nafshi*.

The Rebbe opened his *siddur*, and everyone thought that the *farbrengen* was about to end, but the Rebbe had other plans. “If Zevin’s grandson is here, he should come and say *l’chaim* for his *zeide*,” the Rebbe exclaimed. As the grandson (whose name was Nochum) was approaching with a small cup, the Rebbe instructed Reb Moshe Leib Rodshtein to give him a large cup. Nochum drank a bit from the cup and then proceeded to ask for *mashke* for his grandfather. Seeing that he had not finished the *mashke* in his cup, the Rebbe instructed him to finish it, adding, “You shouldn’t mix your *l’chaim* with your *zeide*’s. It must be *tofeiach al m’nas l’hatfiach* (“wet” enough to dampen something else). Therefore, first say *l’chaim* for yourself, and then for your *zeide*.” The Rebbe then poured for him again and handed him some cake. As Nochum was unsure about who the cake was for, the Rebbe remarked: “The *zeide* (in Russia) would make *kiddush* on 95% without needing *farbaisien*.” One of the attendees wanted to give him more *mashke*, which he refused. Seeing this, the Rebbe stated: “[*Ad d’lo yada*] is a *din* in *Shulchan Aruch*.” The Rebbe then began singing *Chutch Mi Chudi* in a very lively fashion.

The Rebbe continued to pour *l’chaim* for many individuals. When Reb Shmuel Levitin asked for *l’chaim*, the Rebbe responded: “With you I’m afraid to start...”

At around 2:30 a.m., the Rebbe drank several full cups of *l’chaim*, after which he rubbed his hand on his forehead, repeating this several times. When he noticed that his cup was empty, Rabbi Mentlik immediately rushed to refill it. At that very moment, the Rebbe began speaking with someone. Rabbi Mentlik waited until the Rebbe instructed him to pour, after which the Rebbe drank the entire cup.

The Rebbe gave wine (not *mashke*) to Rashag, saying, “It’s Purim, and there’s an *inyan* to increase in drinking wine.” The Rebbe then asked, “Where is my director?” referring to Rabbi Hodakov, after which he poured *mashke* for him.

Reb Chaim Asher Kahanov approached the Rebbe again. “Until now, the *bracha* was about *gashmiyus*; now I’m asking for *ruchniyus*, to merit a full *teshuva*.” The Rebbe answered, “*B’simcha uv’tuv leivov*.”

The Rebbe then asked about the *bochurim* who had traveled to read *megillah* at the army bases, inquiring as to their exact number—five, six, or seven. When the *bochurim*, Yitzchok Meir Kagan, Bentzion Shafran, and [יבלחט"א] Sholom Ber Hecht, approached the Rebbe, he asked each one of them if they had also traveled. They brought up *mashke* and oranges from the soldiers, and the Rebbe poured *l’chaim* for each one of them, after which he asked if they had received the telegram he had sent them.



When they replied that they hadn't, the Rebbe gave them a bewildered look. He also threw a glance of surprise at Rabbi Leibel Groner.

When Reb Leibel Mochkin asked the Rebbe for *mashke*, the Rebbe answered that he will give on condition that Reb Leibel takes upon himself to learn the weekly Likkutei Torah/Torah Or. Reb Leibel asked, "Every week?" To which the Rebbe responded, "That's the deal."

The Rebbe then gave *mashke* to Reb Yankel Hecht, quipping, "The girls [in Camp Emunah] won't find out; the counselors won't find out..." The Rebbe also inquired about Reb Moshe Yitzchok Hecht, but he wasn't present.

When a certain Shliach (who had come without permission) said to the Rebbe that he had to travel to spend Purim with the Rebbe, the Rebbe responded: "Who says you must travel? Maybe you ought to stay there. I see how precious the shlichus is to you." At a certain point in the *farbrengen*, the Rebbe remarked, "I give my שרביט הזהב (golden scepter) to those who travel on shlichus."

The Rebbe pointed to the *mashke* and cake on the table, and remarked, "There will probably be a *farbrengen* tomorrow, this should be used for it." The Rebbe then gave Reb Dovid Raskin a large cake he had received for *mishloach manos*, as well as some of his own cake, some *mashke*, and a bottle of soda. "We're about to finish [the *farbrengen*]," the Rebbe announced, and then said to Rabbi Zevin's grandson, "You can finish [the cup]..."

The Rebbe then instructed many of the attendees, including several senior Chassidim, to finish the *mashke* in their cup. Turning to Rabbi Ushpal, the Rebbe said, "*Tut zich ohn a koiach oif nemen mashke*" (roughly translated: gather the strength to drink *mashke*), adding that it be on a full cup—full according to *Shulchan Aruch*. To Rabbi Mentlik the Rebbe smiled and instructed, "*Tut mir a toiva un nem mashke*" (do me a favor and take *mashke*).

A half hour had passed since the Rebbe first opened the *siddur*. All of a sudden, he proclaimed, "All bottles present should be emptied. I don't mean to pour them out—that would be *bal tashchis*, especially as this year is a *shnas hashmita*, when all food must be consumed, not wasted."

The Rebbe immediately began pouring *l'chaim* for several individuals who approached. The Rebbe then exclaimed: "כלים ריקים אל-תמעיטי" (a play on Elisha's instruction not to skimp on empty vessels,



TISHLEVAT 5724

meaning to empty all the bottles). Pandemonium immediately ensued, as everyone began grabbing bottles and emptying them into cups. The Rebbe then asked again "*Keilim reikim*—are all the *keilim* empty?" after which he began singing *Avinu Malkeinu*.

The Rebbe then continued with one more *sicha*, about the *chiyuv* to begin studying *hilchos Pesach*. After the *sicha*, the Rebbe began distributing *mashke* to several more individuals. Suddenly the Rebbe proclaimed, "כל הפושט יד נותנים לו" (We give to all who stretch out their hand.) Hundreds of people began running toward the Rebbe's place, only increasing the mayhem. The tape-recorders and microphone broke, as everyone pushed and jumped toward the Rebbe, who was distributing *mashke* to all. The Rebbe announced that all should proceed in an orderly fashion⁹ in one direction, without pushing. People were extremely overwhelmed from the great *giluyim*, some were inebriated to the point that they jumped onto the table, one on top of another... It was miraculous that the elder Chassidim present managed to get away in time...

All the while, the Rebbe stood and joyously poured *mashke* for each and every individual. When one bottle would finish, another was immediately handed to the Rebbe. Eventually, the Rebbe took his *siddur* and recited the *bracha acharona*. The Rebbe then advanced—ever so slowly, as a path was being cleared—toward the exit, while Chassidim sang *Ki V'Simcha*.

When the Rebbe reached the stairs of the platform, a wall of people suddenly collapsed, Rabbi Hodakov (who had also taken *mashke*) amongst them. Lots of pushing ensued until they all managed to get up and clear the way. The Rebbe left the shul at 3:30 a.m.

As the Rebbe was walking out, one individual shouted: “Rebbe, Rebbe, you were going to give me... Rebbe, don’t forget about me!” To that, the Rebbe smiled.

After witnessing such *giluyim* from the Rebbe at the *farbrengen*, the Chassidim sang and danced with great joy. It was an amazing sight to behold.

The Rebbe entered his room for a brief while, after which he headed toward the front door to leave. Upon exiting his room, the Rebbe noticed Sholom Ber Wolpo standing near the door with a bottle of *mashke*. The Rebbe took it from him and began distributing it. When word reached the downstairs shul that the Rebbe was again distributing *mashke* outside, everyone ran out. The pushing was extremely intense. When someone attempted to halt the pushing, the Rebbe remarked “*Ohn hispailus...*” (calm the excitement). The Rebbe also announced repeatedly that those who already received once won’t gain anything by receiving again.

Upon seeing another individual who was attempting to stop the pushing, the Rebbe asked, “Why are you here? You already received.” When he answered that he was halting the pushing, the Rebbe retorted, “Whether you’re helping prevent the pushing or not I’m not sure; one thing I do know is that you’re taking up space.”

When one person came by, the Rebbe mentioned that he had already given him. When he answered that there was a hole in his cup and it emptied, the Rebbe responded, “What will it help if this cup also has a hole?”¹⁰

Another *bochur* asked the Rebbe for *mashke* for his friend. The Rebbe asked him why his friend hadn’t come to receive the *mashke* himself. The *bochur* answered that he didn’t want to push. To that

the Rebbe replied, “If he doesn’t want to push—he can’t get.” Many individuals utilized the *eis ratzon* to request *brachos* for their personal needs.

The *chalukah* continued near the car in which the Rebbe was going to go home, lasting close to an hour. The Rebbe announced several times that order should be maintained. The Rebbe motioned that the line should go in one direction, and when he saw someone coming from the other direction, the Rebbe instructed him to go to the back of the line. When one person pushed another’s cup, the Rebbe exclaimed that if so, no one will receive; it must proceed in an orderly fashion. Meanwhile, people had climbed onto the Rebbe’s car to ensure that they would receive.

When the Rebbe noticed the flash of a camera, he asked who was taking pictures. Rabbi Groner answered that he had confiscated the camera, but the Rebbe persisted, “Who is it?” Upon hearing his name, the Rebbe asked: “Has he at least received *l’chaim*?” Adding, “We’re distributing *mashke*... [the pictures are] *chitzoniyus mamosh*. (Is this why the *neshama* descended to the world? –according to one diary.)”

Amidst the great pandemonium, the springs on the car busted completely, due to the intense pushing and people jumping onto the car. Part of the roof also caved in, and the door wouldn’t open. Reb Mordechai Rivkin brought his car to take the Rebbe home. When Reb Leibel Mochkin entered the car, people tried getting him out. The Rebbe, however, agreed that he should come along. The Rebbe also told Rabbi Hodakov that he may enter the car, so as not to be pushed. At 4:30, the Rebbe left 770, with Rabbi Krinsky driving. Rabbi Rivkin also rode along.

Many who were present followed the car while singing *Ki V’Simcha*. When the car disappeared from their view, they began dancing in the street.

As the car pulled up to the Rebbe’s house, a crowd of about thirty people was waiting outside. When the Rebbe reached his house they began singing. Others tried to hush them. The Rebbe, however, encouraged the singing with a wave of his hand. The Rebbe ascended the stairs, and rummaged through his pockets for the key. He then opened the door, and immediately continued to encourage the singing with great joy. Reb Leibel Mochkin made a somersault in front of the house, and the Rebbe continued to encourage the crowd, with the singing of *Nyet Nyet Nikavo*.



THE REBBE CONTINUES DISTRIBUTING MASHKE OUTSIDE AFTER THE FARBRENGEN.



When Rabbi Krinsky saw that someone was trying to give the Rebbe a bottle of *mashke*, he attempted to stop it. The Rebbe, however, took the *mashke*, and began distributing. (This was Rabbi Parshan's bottle, which the Rebbe had given him at the *farbrengen* to distribute; half in New York and half in Toronto. He still had half a bottle in his hand at the house. The Rebbe told him that he can still distribute in Toronto, because he will return the remainder.)

Reb Heishke Gansburg *bentched* the Rebbe with *gezunt*, to which the Rebbe responded, "You as well, and all of yours..." Rabbi Parshan wished the Rebbe "*Iber a yohr veiter*" (May you continue next year, and further). The Rebbe answered, "And with an addition."

At the end of the *chalukah*, the Rebbe asked, "Why is there pushing? It's a small crowd..." He also reiterated that people shouldn't take twice, as that won't add anything.

This all lasted around fifteen minutes, after which the Rebbe entered his home. Chassidim continued to sing and celebrate until the morning.

When the Rebbe entered the shul for *krias haTorah* the following day, Nosson Gurary approached the Rebbe, stating that he had not received *mashke* the night before. The Rebbe answered that according to *halacha*, it is forbidden to drink before *krias haTorah*,¹¹ and he should come afterward. Following *krias haTorah*, the Rebbe took a bottle from his room and gave *l'chaim* to Nosson and another individual. As today was the latter's birthday, the Rebbe *bentched* him with "a successful year *b'gashmiyus uv'ruchniyus*."

Following *Mincha*, several people approached the Rebbe with a bottle, saying that they hadn't received *mashke*. The Rebbe replied that they can pour for each other, as Purim is already over, and we don't say *V'al Hanissim*.¹²

When the same individual entered *yechidus* that night, the Rebbe told him, "Forgive me for not distributing *mashke* this afternoon; I was worried that they would turn over the shul..."

When someone wrote a note to the Rebbe saying that he hadn't received, the Rebbe responded that he should learn Torah diligently and persistently, and *talmud Torah k'neged kulam*. **7**

1. Earlier in the day, the Rebbe had given twelve bottles of *mashke* to the organizers to distribute at the *farbrengen*.
2. These were later edited by the Rebbe and included in *Likkutei Sichos* vol. 21, p. 206.
3. Another version: "Soon *you* will begin..."
4. See the Rebbe's letter to the Friediker Rebbe, printed in *Reshimos* booklet 138.
5. Another version: "He'll immediately get worked up..."
6. According to another version, the Rebbe asked about Reb Zalman Duchman as well.
7. *Melachim* 2, 4:3.
8. See Rambam, *Hilchos Megillah v'Chanukah* 2:16, and *Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim* 694:3.
9. Not all at once, paraphrasing the topic of the fourteenth *sicha*—whether all-at once (בבת אחת) works when one-after-another is required.
10. In Yiddish: וואס וועט דאס העלפן אז אויך דער קאפ האט אין זיך א לאך? In Yiddish, the word "*kup*" means head. Another version: A broken vessel won't hold anything.
11. Another version: It has no place before davening.
12. Another version: "It's still Purim, although we don't recite *V'al Hanissim*."





כתב יד קודש

לזכות
הרה"ת ר' שאול אליעזר
וזוגתו מרת ציפה שרה מנוחה
ומשפחתם
מנחם מענדל, שושנה מרים, ישראל,
שמואל, ושניאור זלמן שיחיו
וורטהיימר



Ripple Effect

This *ksav yad kodesh* was written by the Rebbe on the margin of a letter he received, dated 21 Adar 5732, in response to the questions asked.

Presented in honor of the month of Adar, the time of *marbim b'simcha*, increased joy:



I will mention all this [that you wrote in the letter] at the Ohel.

Increasing your trust in Hashem and (true) **joy** on your own part from below—will bring about a similar increase [in positive energy] emanating from Above. As the Zohar teaches: “**Come and see**, if a person is in a state of illumination down here, so too will an illumination shine upon him from above... The joy of a person **draws down upon him** an additional higher sense of joy.”

אזכיר עה"צ לכ"ז.

והוספה בבטחון ושמחה (אמיתית)
מלמטה - מוסיפה בכ"ז מלמעלה
כהוראת הזוה"ק (תצוה קפד, ב): תא חזי
אי איהו קיימא בנהירו דאנפין מתתא
כדין הכי נהרין לי מעילא כו' חדוה דב"נ
משך לגבי' חדוה אחרא עילאה.

מרת רבקה דינה ע"ה מינקאוויטש
נלב"ע כ"א אדר-שני, ה'תשע"ו

נדפס ע"י בתה וחתנה
שלוחי כ"ק אדמו"ר
לבל הרבור, פלורידה
הרה"ת ר' שלום דובער
וזוגתו מרת חנה שיחיו
ליפסקאר



MADE IN T



In preparation of this article, we were greatly assisted by JEM-My Encounter and Rabbi Yechiel Kagan, as well as family members Rabbi Nochum Kaplan, Rabbi Mendel Kaplan, Rabbi Yossi Kaplan, Rabbi Yosef Chaim Kantor, Rabbi Yehudah Leib Kantor, and Rabbi Yaakov Tzvi Kantor.

Additional details were culled from Reb Avraham's autobiography, "My Spiritual Journey."

8 TISHREI 5748, LEVI FREDIN VIA JEM13629

HE USA

Avrohom Dov Hecht
RABBI AVROHOM
DOV HECHT



A RABBINIC PERSONALITY SECOND-TO-NONE; THE CHARISMATIC LEADER OF ONE OF THE MOST INFLUENTIAL CONGREGATIONS IN THE UNITED STATES. RABBI AVRAHAM DOV HECHT WAS A TOWERING FIGURE COMMANDING THE RESPECT AND ADMIRATION OF MANY. YET HE NEVER LOST SIGHT OF HIS ULTIMATE POSITION: A FOOT-SOLDIER IN THE REBBE'S ARMY.

14 TEVES 5737, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 210233

MIKVAH ORIGINS

When the Frierdiker Rebbe visited New York in 5689 (תרפ"ט), he once made use of a *mikvah* located in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn.

Before his visit, the rav who founded and managed the *mikvah* toiled for many hours to prepare it for the honored guest. Fiercely guarding the privilege for himself, he didn't allow anyone to assist him. He cleaned, scrubbed, and even prepared two separate *boros*, one hot and one cold, to suit whatever preferences the Frierdiker Rebbe may have.

Taking note of his effort, the Frierdiker Rebbe handed him ten dollars on his way out—no small sum. But the rav refused the money. He would accept no remuneration for the immense privilege.

Instead, the Frierdiker Rebbe offered him a *bracha*. "I bless you that your grandchildren will one day be my Chassidim."

Such a blessing was a big deal in America of the 1920s. Young Jews were leaving the fold in unprecedented numbers. Religion seemed to be a thing of the past, to be discarded on the boat entering New York Harbor from the "Old World" across the ocean. That Reb Hersh Meilach Hecht's grandchildren would be G-d-fearing, and Chassidim no less? That would truly be a dream come true.

BROWNSVILLE

Avraham Dov Hecht was born in 5682 (תרפ"ב) in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn to his parents, Reb Shea and Sarah Hecht. As a young child, he was enrolled in Yeshivas Chaim Berlin. The school was run by a few poor immigrants who spoke almost no English, and they employed a number of teachers whose dedication to Judaism was questionable. Avraham came from a G-d-fearing home, but the atmosphere on the street, and even in school, was very lacking.

Some time after his bar mitzvah, Avraham joined his older brothers, Shlomo Zalman and Moshe Yitzchok, in Yeshiva Torah Vodaas. The brothers became acquainted with Reb Yisroel Jacobson, who would hold weekly study sessions for *bochurim*, where they would study Chassidus and discuss the depths of Yiddishkeit in a warm and inviting atmosphere. The *bochurim* developed a close relationship with Reb Yisrael; he shared with them his experiences in the town of Lubavitch, and regaled them with stories of the Frierdiker Rebbe.

With time, the Hecht brothers became full-fledged Chassidim. When the oldest Hecht brother, Shlomo Zalman, became engaged in 5698 (תרצ"ח) to Rabbi Jacobson's oldest daughter, he decided to grow a beard, and his neighbors thought he had lost his mind. Then, a short time after he married, he and his wife decided to

AVRAHAM CAME FROM A G-D-FEARING HOME, BUT THE ATMOSPHERE ON THE STREET, AND EVEN IN SCHOOL, WAS VERY LACKING.

take an even more drastic step. After hearing so much about the Frierdiker Rebbe, they decided to move from New York to Otwock, Poland, to live in close proximity to him.

Avraham and a group of friends, also yearning to meet the Frierdiker Rebbe and enroll in Tomchei Temimim, decided—with the Frierdiker Rebbe's encouragement—to follow a few months later. The winds of war were already brewing in Europe and his parents were adamant that their son not make the trip, so Avraham secretly took fifteen dollars from his private savings, obtained a passport and voyage ticket, and broke the news to his parents two days before he was set to embark.

Although they were apprehensive, Avraham's parents were proud that their son so longed to see the Frierdiker Rebbe, and they hesitantly agreed.

IN OTWOCK

On a bright morning at the end of Av 5699 (תרצ"ט), the entire New York Lubavitcher community accompanied the six young *bochurim* who boarded a ship for the long voyage across the Atlantic Ocean, accompanied by their *mashpia*, Reb Yisroel Jacobson. After five days at sea, they arrived in France and continued via train.

While waiting in the Paris train station, they were treated to a surprise. The Rebbe, who was living in Paris at the time, came to greet them. The Rebbe told them that the Frierdiker Rebbe accorded great significance to the fact that they were making the trip notwithstanding the political climate, and spoke to them about the holiness of a Rebbe, impressing upon them the magnitude of their trip.

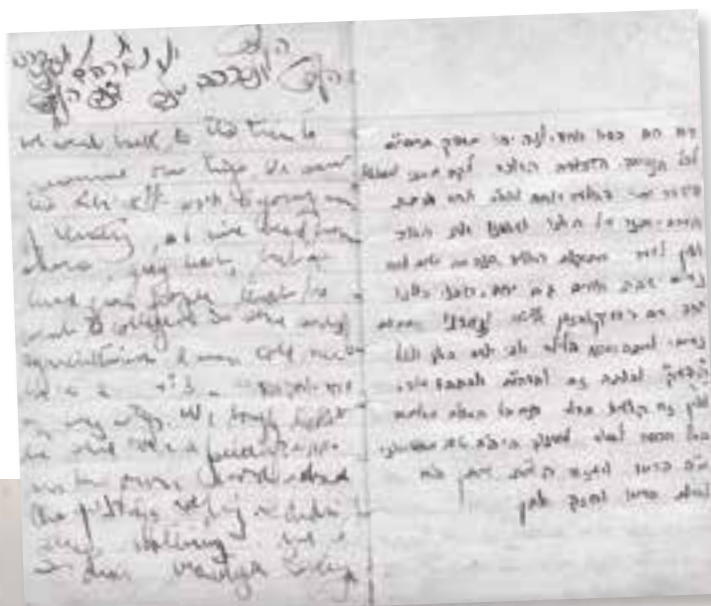
Avraham would later relate that with this brief encounter he was completely taken by the Rebbe's immense stature; his piety, purity, and *kedusha*. It was the beginning of his love for the Rebbe that would later become legendary, and manifest in total devotion and *hiskashrus*.

The small group arrived in Otwock on Rosh Chodesh Elul, one week after departing from American shores. They were welcomed warmly by the yeshiva administration, and were

provided with "high class" lodgings in consideration for their "spoiled" American backgrounds. Nevertheless, it was a far cry from home.

Their first encounter with the Frierdiker Rebbe was that Friday night, when they were part of a select group ushered into the Frierdiker Rebbe's room to hear a *maamar*.¹ Reb Avraham Dov related:

"The impressions of the short half-hour we spent in his room remain engraved in my mind. It is difficult to describe the experience. His words were hard for me to understand, but his shining face, filled with love and holiness, require no explanations. I remember feeling the presence of



REB AVROHOM DOV'S PERSONAL DIARY OF HIS TRIP TO POLAND. HERE HE DESCRIBES MEETING THE REBBE AT THE TRAIN STATION.



ON THE BOAT TO POLAND, ABOUT TO EMBARK. REB AVROHOM DOV IS POSING WITH THE OTHER THREE BOCHURIM, SECOND FROM RIGHT.

IN THE FOREGROUND, HIS FATHER, REB YEHOSHUA HECHT, IS IN DISCUSSION WITH REB SHMUEL LEVITIN AND REB YISROEL JACOBSON.

something far beyond my own limited understanding, and I was awed by its obvious truth and purity. When it was over, I was reluctant to exit the room.”

The days passed, and the *bochurim* immersed themselves in learning. “Day after day passed as my friends and I thirstily absorbed the Torah study and Chassidishe life in Otwock. America seemed more distant than the moon. A full week passed with the speed of light as I immersed myself in the classes with vigor and enthusiasm. When we were informed that we would once again be admitted into the Rebbe’s study on our second Friday night, a full-blown thunderstorm couldn’t have obliterated the boundless sunshine.”

That week, the *dibbur hamaschil* was “*Teshuvah utefillah utzedaka maavirin es ro’a hagezeirah*,”² on the topic of *teshuvah* when facing hard times, possibly a reference to the uncertainties brewing; this *maamar* was a bit more basic and Avraham found it easier to follow. After Shabbos they were also allowed to enter into *yechidus*.

The Polish *bochurim* had a difficult time understanding the culture of the Americans. When the Americans pulled out their bats, balls, and gloves for an impromptu game of baseball during one recess, the Polish *bochurim* looked on in wonder. When the Americans pulled out boxing gloves and began pounding at each other, the wonder turned to shock and consternation. Nevertheless, the *bochurim* settled down well in yeshiva and immersed themselves in learning. The intensity of the learning compared to their American yeshiva, and the

privilege of living near the Frierdiker Rebbe was something they couldn’t take for granted, and they utilized every moment of it.

The dire warnings sent out by the American consul in Warsaw were entirely ignored.

BLITZKRIEG AND FLIGHT

On Friday, Erev Shabbos Selichos, the peace and tranquility came to an abrupt halt. German warplanes flew overhead and dropped their lethal cargo throughout the city, wreaking havoc and destruction.

Seeking guidance in the midst of the mayhem, Avraham Dov raced to the Frierdiker Rebbe’s home, where he joined a multitude of people seeking reassurance. When the Frierdiker Rebbe noticed him and a fellow American *bochur*, he sent a message asking them to run over to Rebbetzin Shterna Sarah’s home to assure her there was nothing to fear.

Returning to their lodgings, the *bochurim* heard the frightening news: Germany had declared war, and it was only a matter of time before they would reach Otwock. The American consul strongly advised them to travel immediately to Warsaw, where the consulate would arrange for their safe passage out of Poland.

They immediately packed their bags, arranged taxis, and ran to obtain a *yechidus* with the Frierdiker Rebbe. They entered the Frierdiker Rebbe’s room at 12:30 p.m.; he was already wearing his Shabbos clothes and adorned with his *shtreimel*, adding to his already regal demeanor.

The Rebbe blessed them, and told them the entire state of affairs was only

a test from Hashem. He directed them to contact the Lubavitcher Chassidim in Riga—Reb Mordechai Chafetz and others—and to grow in their diligent Torah study and fulfillment of mitzvos. The Frierdiker Rebbe’s calm disposition calmed their tense nerves; they now felt equipped to embark on the perilous journey back home.

Before exiting the room, one of the *bochurim* asked the Frierdiker Rebbe, “What will be if we are forced to violate Shabbos?”

The Frierdiker Rebbe answered them, “The *zechus* of the two great *tzaddikim* whose birthdays are on Chai Elul—the Baal Shem Tov and the Alter Rebbe—is sufficient that you will not need to transgress this Shabbos.”

With this comforting message, the *bochurim* boarded the taxis and headed for Warsaw.

Arriving in the big city, the *bochurim* wandered from place to place, seeking help for their predicament. When the anti-Semitic consul turned his back on them, they were forced to wander for hours, late into Shabbos night, seeking lodging and assistance.

At one point, a hotel was ready to admit them with one requirement—that they sign the registration. The *bochurim* began to debate whether *chillul Shabbos* was permitted in their situation, but Reb Shlomo Zalman stopped them. “The Rebbe said we won’t desecrate Shabbos; obviously this isn’t the place for us.” They continued their search, and ultimately found lodging at a Jewish hostel.

On Sunday, they managed to board a train for Latvia, and a few hours later, they finally reached relative safety.

TISHREI IN RIGA

Tishrei was spent with the Chassidim in Riga, in the presence of famous Chassidim such as Reb Itche der Masmid and Reb Mordechai

WHEN THE AMERICANS PULLED OUT BOXING GLOVES AND BEGAN POUNDING AT EACH OTHER, THE WONDER TURNED TO SHOCK AND CONSTERNATION.



THE FRIEDIKER REBBE'S LETTER TO THE BOCHURIM ASKING THEM WHY THEY DID NOT REPORT OF THEIR WELLBEING AND SAFETY, DATED 14 TEVES 5700.

Chafetz, the latter of whom was appointed by the Frierdiker Rebbe to guide the *bochurim* in their learning of *nigleh* and Chassidus.

Avraham related that he watched Reb Itche davening devoutly throughout the entire Yom Kippur. When the fast was finally over, Avraham breathed a sigh of relief; now the Chossid would finally be able to eat a warm, nourishing meal after his rigorous fast and *avoda*. Imagine his shock and consternation when he observed Reb Itche sit down to a “meal” of some bread and stewed fruit...

After the *Yomim Tovim*, the *bochurim's* parents, frantic with

worry, managed to secure their safe passage across the Atlantic, and in the beginning of Cheshvan they finally arrived back in the United States.

Avraham settled back down in Yeshiva Torah Vodaas, and awaited news from Europe. The Frierdiker Rebbe remained trapped in the inferno, and the American Chassidim worked tirelessly to obtain his passage to a safe haven. On Hei Teves, they celebrated with the news that the Frierdiker Rebbe had reached Riga, from where he would proceed on his journey to America.

A few weeks later, the *bochurim* received a letter from the Frierdiker Rebbe:

“To my dear students, Achei Temimim in New York:

“...While under siege, I worried about you, and several times I asked the American consulate in Warsaw if they had any news from you. I hoped that you would surely attempt to notify me via the consulate regarding your safety, to calm me and give encouragement to my broken heart... but you did not do so. This results from lack of feeling—the love and affection that is expected according to the teachings of Chassidus.”³

NO DIFFERENT

When the Frierdiker Rebbe arrived in America on Tes Adar II 5700 (ה'ת"ש), he immediately announced the founding of Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim on American shores. Many close supporters attempted to dissuade the Frierdiker Rebbe; they felt that a yeshiva for *bochurim* who grow beards and learn Chassidus was an exercise in futility. In fact, Reb Avraham Dov recalled, when the Frierdiker Rebbe spoke after his arrival and made his intentions known, a very prominent supporter of the Frierdiker Rebbe had a very hard time digesting the idea.

Within 24 hours, Avraham Dov was called in along with the rest of the Otwock group, and the Frierdiker Rebbe told them they were to be the nucleus for the new yeshiva.

The beginning was difficult on a material level, but on the spiritual level they thrived. Avraham Dov merited to be constantly in close proximity to the Frierdiker Rebbe, and he took part in all of the early steps in *hafatzas hamaayanos* (Avraham related that the Frierdiker Rebbe once said that the American *rabbonim* are fast asleep; he was here to wake them up, and he didn't think they would give him credit for it).

He merited to be present at *fabrengens*, *tefillos*, and the like; he described the Frierdiker Rebbe's cries

during the opening *Maariv* of Rosh Hashanah his first year in America—which took four and a half hours—as something that remained with him throughout his life.

In those years, the Frierdiker Rebbe would *farbreng* in the dining room of his apartment, and only a small group of Chassidim were permitted entry. The young *bochurim* would often stand outside and knock, hoping to be allowed inside. Once, Reb Avraham knocked for so long, the Frierdiker Rebbe said to let him in, commenting “*Es is nikker az er klapt mit an emes*, he is clearly knocking earnestly.”

As the years passed, more and more European *bochurim* arrived in the United States and joined the ranks

of Tomchei Temimim. Although all the *bochurim* were joined in common goals and ideals, there were sometimes clashes and heated arguments between the American Yankees and the grizzled Russians, who came from cultures that couldn’t have been more different.

One day, out of the blue, Avraham Dov was called out of the *zal*. Without any prior warning, he was ushered into the Frierdiker Rebbe’s holy *yechidus* room.

The Frierdiker Rebbe looked at him and said:

“Avraham, *ich vil dir epes zogen*, I want to tell you something. *Vos iz di nafka mina*, what is the difference between an American Chossid and a Russian Chossid?

“A Russian is like a coal; once you ignite it, it holds the heat for a long time. An American is like a piece of wood; it catches fire quickly, but it is also quickly extinguished.”

“When I came downstairs,” Reb Avraham related, “and told over what the Frierdiker Rebbe had said, oh, what an *iberkerenish* there was...”

There was another time when Avraham was called suddenly into the Frierdiker Rebbe’s room, and, upon entering, he asked “*Vos—what?*”

The Frierdiker Rebbe replied, “*Az m’fregt vos, heist nisht gefolgt*, when someone says ‘what,’ it’s a sign he hasn’t followed instructions.”

HAFATZAS HAMAAYANOS

The *bochurim* in 770 were intensely involved in all the new initiatives to bring Yiddishkeit and Chassidus to other Jews. One of the main opportunities for *hafatzas hamaayanos* was on Shabbos, when *bochurim* would go to *shuls* and speak to the congregants. Reb Avraham Dov would relate how, to ensure that they were adequately prepared, they would practice their sermons facing the empty benches of 770. Often, in typical Hecht style, when approaching these *shuls*, Avraham Dov’s younger brother Shalom would act as a “*gabai*” who would introduce the “rabbi,” thus adding to his prominence in the eyes of the listeners.

In 5702, Avraham Dov began traveling around to various cities to establish branches of Tomchei Temimim. (The Frierdiker Rebbe said of Reb Avraham and his brother, Reb Yankel,⁴ “Avraham and Yankel can turn over the whole America.”) He was instrumental in establishing yeshivos in New Haven, Worcester, and Buffalo, working tirelessly day and night to establish a proper place for Torah learning in the city, and he was also

THE FRIERDIKER REBBE SAID OF REB AVRAHAM AND HIS BROTHER, REB YANKEL, “AVRAHAM AND YANKEL CAN TURN OVER THE WHOLE AMERICA.”





REB AVROHOM DOV ACCOMPANIES RABBI YITZCHAK KADURI ON HIS VISIT TO THE REBBE, 24 SIVAN 5750.

the *menahel* of Tomchei Temimim of Newark for a period of time.

The work wasn't easy; parents had to be persuaded to pay tuition, and to send their children to a school that had no reputation at all, but the *bochurim* persevered and each yeshiva ultimately got off the ground.

In 5704 (תש"ד), he married Liba Grunhut, and the young couple settled in Dorchester, Massachusetts, where Reb Avraham Dov planned on opening yet another branch of Tomchei Temimim.

He related what occurred:

"On our first Shabbos in Dorchester, I gave a fiery sermon in shul, announcing that we would be opening a new Jewish day school and inviting everyone to participate.

"The next morning, I dressed and primed myself to begin making the rounds throughout the neighborhood, inviting Jewish parents to register their children. As I approached the first house, I noticed that they had a few young boys, perfect for my yeshiva.

"I knocked on the door, and soon found myself facing the mother of

my future students, a woman in a pajama robe. She took one look at me, and said 'We don't give donations on Sunday,' and slammed the door.

"The enthusiastic speech I had so carefully rehearsed remained unsaid and I dejectedly returned to the security of my own home. Feeling crushed and humiliated, I wrote a letter to the Frierdiker Rebbe, recounting my failed attempts. I outlined my feelings of depression and humiliation and I waited anxiously for an encouraging reply.

"The answer I received changed my entire outlook on a difficult situation. The Rebbe wrote, 'בושה שלא במקומה, יסודה בגסות הרוח—misplaced shame is rooted in haughtiness and pride.'

"My attitude immediately transformed. Why did I think that establishing a yeshiva would be such an easy task? With renewed enthusiasm, I continued working on the project, unconcerned with the public's reactions."

Twelve months of hard work produced the desired results. Approximately one hundred and

twenty students enrolled, a building was purchased in a fine residential area, and a staff of dedicated teachers was employed. Aside from his busy schedule tending to the material and spiritual needs of the school, Reb Avraham Dov served as rabbi of a *Nusach Ari* shul in Dorchester as well.

Family reasons didn't allow Reb Avraham Dov and his wife to remain in Dorchester for long, so as soon as the yeshiva was running smoothly, they moved back to New York, where Reb Avraham Dov began searching for a new job. The job wasn't far off, coming from a quite an unexpected direction.

THE ASHKENAZI/SEFARDI RABBI

The summer of 5705 found Reb Avraham in his in-laws' bungalow colony in Fleischmanns, NY. The colony was populated by Ashkenazim and Sephardim who, for the most part, kept their separate ways. Separate *minyanim*, *sifrei Torah*, and *chazanim* were the norm, not out of animosity, but out of the clear differences in their way of life.

One day, a few members of the Sephardic community asked Reb Avraham Dov to deliver a sermon to their community on Shabbos afternoon. He couldn't have been more flabbergasted by the request. That Shabbos, he delivered a fiery *drasha*, with his natural zest and life, to a crowd of fifty Syrian Jews. After the compliments were finished, a few prominent members of the community came over and offered him a job. He thought they were joking.

One *drasha* led to the next, and before long, the community leaders made it clear they wanted to hire him. Isaac Shalom, the president of the Syrian community, visited the Frierdiker Rebbe, who gave his clear approval and *bracha*, and Reb Avraham Dov was hired as the junior

NO LONGER BEING ABLE TO GIVE IT TO THE FRIERDIKER REBBE, HE BROUGHT THE NOTE TO THE LEVAYA AND HANDED IT TO THE REBBE INSTEAD.



SEVERAL LETTERS REB AVROHOM DOV RECEIVED FROM THE REBBE.

rabbi of the congregation and director of the *Talmud Torah*.

Reb Avraham threw himself into his work with his natural enthusiasm and gusto. Full of confidence and good nature, he engaged the youth of the community to levels of commitment that hadn't been seen in years. He arranged classes and events to fit the style of the youth of those days, and many who were on their way out, *r"l*, did an about face and returned to Yiddishkeit.

Reb Avraham was innovative and creative in his work. When he noticed that bar mitzvahs were only celebrated on Shabbos, which meant that the *mitzvah* of *tefillin* was totally ignored, he instituted a new custom in his shul:

Each bar mitzvah boy would come on a weekday close to his bar mitzvah, together with family and close friends, and they would hold a "*tefillin*

ceremony." The grandfathers and other honored guests would have the opportunity to wrap one circle of the bar mitzvah boy's *tefillin*, and an entire ritual was created around it. This way, the bar mitzvah boy, and by extension, his entire family, would fulfill this important mitzvah.⁵

THE REBBE

Reb Avraham Dov merited a relationship with our Rebbe from his earliest days in America. The Rebbe was very close with the *bochurim*, and especially with those active in spreading Yiddishkeit, as the Hecht brothers were.

In 5704, when Reb Avraham received *semicha*, he approached the Rebbe at *Mincha* time saying that he deserves a *mazal tov*, and shared the good news with him. The Rebbe congratulated him, and then began



REB AVROHOM DOV WITH MR. RUDY GIULIANI.

quizzing him on how the test went; what was he tested on, what questions were asked, and so on, for a full hour. (The Rebbe often corresponded with Reb Avraham on matters of Torah; Reb Avraham would pose his questions on *nigleh* and Chassidus, and the Rebbe would answer at length).

The Rebbe participated in his wedding as well, and remained for the wedding meal (which he didn't regularly do), and even addressed the crowd, something that seems to have happened only three times. A page of preparatory notes that the Rebbe wrote was later discovered.⁶

That relationship came to a head after the passing of the Frierdiker Rebbe, when Reb Avraham immediately dedicated himself as a Chossid of the Rebbe. In fact, on the day of the *levaya*, Mrs. Hecht was overdue, and before Shabbos, Reb Avraham had prepared a *tzetel* to bring to the Frierdiker Rebbe asking for a *bracha* for a healthy and easy birth. After Shabbos, no longer being able to give it to the Frierdiker Rebbe, he brought the note to the *levaya* and handed it to the Rebbe instead.

His love for the Rebbe only grew with the ensuing years, and the Rebbe reciprocated, showing Reb Avraham extraordinary *kiruvim*.



REB AVROHOM DOV WITH THE REBBE DURING THE YECHIDUS FOR THE MEMBERS OF THE MACHNE ISRAEL DEVELOPMENT FUND, 26 ADAR 5751.



7 TISHREI 5751, S SHLAGBAUM VIA JEM 145200

“HE IS A GOOD RABBI!”

Reb Avraham’s special relationship with the Rebbe was evident throughout the years, including the very warm conversations he had and the kiruvim he merited during “dollars.”

Below are a few excerpts:

Rabbi Leibel Groner: Rabbi Hecht is leaving today for Eretz Yisrael.

The Rebbe: *Hatzlacha Rabba*. Have a safe and successful trip. Give this [dollar] to *tzedaka* in Eretz Yisrael. Accomplish even more than you think is possible.

Rabbi Hecht: [The Rebbe should bless me that] I should be healthy.

The Rebbe: *Amein!* Be healthy on the way there and on the way back. You’re surely coming back to *chutz la’aretz*. Don’t leave us here [without you]!

Rabbi Hecht: *Chas v’shalom!*

After Reb Avraham walked away, the Rebbe called him back and said:

The Rebbe: I don’t know if it’s appropriate, but may I suggest that when you meet with your chief rabbi, [Rabbi Mordechai] Eliyahu, he himself should put this [dollar] in a *tzedaka pushka*. I don’t know if he’ll accept it from me.

Rabbi Hecht: He surely will accept it!

The Rebbe: He is probably already accustomed to hearing from me...



Reb Avraham often brought major supporters to the yechidus for members of the Machne Yisroel Development Fund, and they too merited special kiruvim:

The Rebbe (to Rabbi Hecht’s congregant): Thank you very much for bringing your rabbi! He was not well. Now he is healthy?

Congregant: We want you to take care of him; to help him.

The Rebbe: That I’m doing on my own. Especially if the *balebatim* are asking for their rabbi—not only complaints to the rabbi, but also asking a *bracha* for him, that’s a good thing! He is certainly a good rabbi!

One of his grandsons recalls how at one *farbrengen*, the Rebbe was encouraging the singing very heartily and Reb Avraham was moved to clap so hard, his watch broke!

On another occasion, seeing the Rebbe encourage the singing so strongly, Reb Avraham couldn’t contain his emotion and burst into tears.

CHIEF RABBI

With time, Reb Avraham Dov became the senior rabbi of his congregation. This was the central community of Syrian Jews in the United States, so a very bizarre state came to be: the most prominent Sephardic rabbi, the spiritual leader of the Syrian Jewish community in the United States, was an Ashkenazi, and a Lubavitcher Chossid, no less.

Later, Reb Avraham took on additional roles. He began working for the Union of Orthodox congregations, and he joined the Igud Harabbonim, ultimately being appointed as its president in 5737, a position he held until his passing. He was now in one of the most prominent rabbinic positions in the United States, with a major position of authority on all Jewish matters. The Rebbe encouraged





MOTZOEI PESACH 5741, YOSSI MELAMED VIA JEW 127172

him to use it out to the fullest. In one *ma'aneh*, the Rebbe tells him to speak about the issue of *Mihu Yehudi* on the radio “with decisiveness, like a king—‘Who is a king? The *rabbonim*.’”

In his position of influence, he often utilized his connections to various people and organizations, also serving as a semi-liaison between the Sephardic community and the Rebbe. He was, for example, instrumental in arranging the *yechidusen* of the Sephardic Chief Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu.

Reb Avraham merited long and detailed *yechidusen* with the Rebbe over the years, and in public too, the Rebbe would often give him a special *yachas*, always acknowledging his presence and greeting him with a wide smile. During *farbrengens* in the early years, the Rebbe would often tell him to say *l'chaim* (on Simchas Torah 5711, the Rebbe instructed him to say *l'chaim* seven(!) times); and once, in 5727, the Rebbe declared him the “Chief Rabbi of the Sephardim.”

On another occasion, during *kos shel bracha*, the Rebbe told him “The Rambam writes that Avraham is called *eisan*, strong.⁷ Be strong, and get rid of all unwanted influences.” After Pesach 5745, when the first *Siyumei Harambam* were underway, the Rebbe told him during *kos shel bracha*, “Don’t forget to speak tomorrow about Moshe Hasepharadi.”⁸

AT THE FOREFRONT

Over the years, Reb Avraham became a major force of influence in the Jewish world. As the rabbi of a distinguished congregation, he rubbed shoulders with the greatest Jewish philanthropists, politicians, and world

leaders. He exuded a positive energy that commanded the respect and admiration of all he came in contact with, and he had a powerful way with people.

But his personal charisma and talents were only a tool in his work. He remained a steadfast soldier of the Rebbe, carrying out scores of *shlichus’n* and bringing the Rebbe’s message everywhere.

When the Rebbe began to campaign about *Mihu Yehudi* in Eretz Yisrael, Reb Avraham immediately jumped to the forefront of the efforts, and—as per the Rebbe’s instructions—utilized his prominence and connections to promote the halachic viewpoint.

As the president of Igud Harabbonim, he would make the rounds in the United States and in Eretz Yisrael, speaking to crowds and to politicians about the terrible wrong that was being perpetrated. He became one of the most vocal opponents of the law, and was often featured in the Jewish newspapers at the time.

The Rebbe also sent him to Eretz Yisrael to convey to Menachem Begin the Rebbe’s immense pleasure about his efforts on this issue. In a phone conversation with Reb Efraim Wolf, Rabbi Hodakov instructed him to arrange press conferences, radio interviews, and the like, where Rabbi Hecht could speak about the issue. Rabbi Hodakov explained that Rabbi Hecht doesn’t come as a Lubavitcher; he is the representative of a large Sephardic community, and therefore can be influential with Sephardic Chief Rabbi Nissim. He described Reb Avraham Dov as someone who “is

HE BECAME ONE OF THE MOST VOCAL OPPONENTS OF THE LAW, AND WAS OFTEN FEATURED IN THE JEWISH NEWSPAPERS AT THE TIME.

IN THE UNITED STATES SENATE

Alongside his work with Yidden, there are a few notable stories about his work amongst the nations of the world as well, and with their governing bodies.

One encounter with the government was when he was invited to recite an opening prayer at a Senate session. He prepared a draft of the prayer he would recite and submitted it for the Rebbe's *hagaha*.

The Rebbe's edits are utterly fascinating, and teach a great deal about the proper attitude to government, democracy, and other religions.

The following are some of them:

- The Rebbe insisted that the prayer include elements that would make it clear they were being said by an orthodox rabbi, not by a member of a different religion or by a Reform or Conservative rabbi. The Rebbe suggested that he write that G-d "Watcheth and guideth" us at every moment, in order to express the uniquely Jewish concept of *hashgacha pratis*.
- The term "Father in Heaven" was removed, so that it shouldn't be mistaken as a reference to the Trinity.
- Part of the prayer-request was to help us "advance the cause of democracy." The Rebbe wrote, "We cannot idolize democracy either. Replace it with, or add the words, 'justice and peace.'"
- Instead of "Bless this assembly, their wives, their sons and daughters," the Rebbe inserted "their families," explaining, "wives אינו לשון נקי" —isn't exactly appropriate language."
- Instead of a reference to people "of all faiths," the Rebbe wrote "of all colors and races," explaining, "this way you will properly acknowledge civil rights, and at the same time, no one will complain that you mentioned Jews and other faiths in one phrase, without separating them with a *'Thavdil'*."

IN THE UNITED NATIONS

During the Vov Tishrei *farbrengen* in 5748,¹⁰ the Rebbe spoke out against certain Jewish individuals who had met with the Pope. The Rebbe decried their actions in the strongest possible terms, and said that since some Jewish people are misrepresenting Yiddishkeit to the non-Jews, it is incumbent upon us to promote and represent true Yiddishkeit. On that note, the Rebbe suggested that a rav speak before the United Nations about the *sheva mitzvos bnei Noach*.

A few days later, while distributing *lekach*, the Rebbe told Reb Avraham Dov that he had him in mind during that *sicha*; he should be the one to speak.

Reb Avraham immediately got to work, looking for a way to speak from the UN rostrum. Being that you must represent a certain country, the Rebbe advised him not to ask the Israeli delegation for this special favor, but to try and speak in the name of the United States. A speech was prepared and edited by the Rebbe. As it turned out, the speech was not delivered due to technical reasons.

acquainted with the issues, knows how to speak strongly, isn't afraid, and his words make a real impact."

On the Shabbos after Purim 5745, Reb Avraham even merited a portion of a *sicha* directed to him:⁹

The Rebbe had spoken strongly about the fact that some Sephardic *rabbonim* had been opposing the *Mihu Yehudi* campaign. At the end of the *sicha*, the Rebbe mentioned that the rav of the Sephardic community is present, and being that he didn't yet fulfill his obligation for *ad d'lo yada*, he should do so now, and he should also correct the above mentioned situation. After speaking about him for a few minutes, the Rebbe told him to say *l'chaim* twice on a large cup, and then began singing a Sephardic *niggun*: *Mipi Keil*, and encouraged it strongly.

A TRUE CHOSSID

In addition to his *rabbanus* activism and community work, Reb Avraham Dov was a fiery and devoted Chossid of the Rebbe. Whenever in the company of other Chassidim, a lively *chassidisher farbrengen* would develop around him, and he would regale the crowd with his stories and experiences near the Frieddiker Rebbe and the Rebbe. When the Rebbe announced *takanas haRambam*, Reb Avraham Dov enthusiastically joined and never missed a day.

One time, the Rebbe asked Reb Avraham why he doesn't sit on the Rebbe's dais during *farbrengens* together with the other prominent *rabbonim*. Reb Avraham answered by quoting the *possuk*, "והיו עיניך רואות את", מוריד, and your eyes shall behold your master." Hearing that, the Rebbe gave him a wide smile.

Before Rosh Hashana 5752, certain individuals suggested to Reb Avraham that he shouldn't go for *kos shel bracha*, so as not to burden the Rebbe too much. During the Machne

Yisroel *yechidus* several days later, the Rebbe told him, “I was looking for you during *kos shel bracha*...”

When he explained that he didn’t want to burden the Rebbe, the Rebbe answered, “Instead of coming up with explanations, just come.”

One time Reb Avraham wrote to the Rebbe that several of his family members were ill, and asked if it could be the result of an *ayin hara*. The Rebbe answered by quoting a Gemara: “אנן מזרעא דיוסף קאחינא דלא שלטא בי” —we are from the offspring of Yosef [in this case referring to the Frierdiker Rebbe] upon which *ayin haras* have no jurisdiction.”

Reb Avraham passed away on 24 Teves 5773. A life lived to its fullest; a Chossid who proudly spread the Rebbe’s message to the furthest reaches possible; a true *zara d’Yosef*—a true soldier of the Rebbe’s army. **T**

“YOU ARE LIKE REISH LAKISH?”

Once, after a *farbrengen*, Reb Avraham was so inspired by the Rebbe’s Torah that he wrote the Rebbe a letter praising and extolling the Rebbe’s learning. The Rebbe responded with a *mareh makom*: “עיינ ב”מ פד, א.”

The Gemara there describes Reb Yochanan’s sadness after the passing of his colleague Reish Lakish. His students brought Reb Elazar ben Pedas to replace Reish Lakish. During the *shiur*, Reb Elazar began supporting Reb Yochanan’s teachings and bringing proof to his words, and Reb Yochanan wasn’t pleased.

“You are like Reish Lakish?” Reb Yochanan said, “Reish Lakish would ask 24 questions on every teaching of mine... You say, ‘A *braisa* supports your words.’ *Atu lo yadana d’shapir kaamina*—do you think I don’t know that I’m correct?”

1. *Dibbur Hamaschil* “*Shoftim V’shotrim*,” *Sefer Hamaamarim* 5699, p. 242.

2. *Sefer Hamaamarim* 5699, p. 248.

3. *Igros Kodesh Admur HaRayatz* vol. 5, p. 11-12.

4. For more about Reb Yankel (JJ) Hecht, see *A Staunch Soldier*, *Derher* Teves 5778.

5. *Hapardes* year 42 number 8, p. 32.

6. *Mekadesh Yisrael*, p. 6-7.

7. See Rambam *Hilchos Avodas Kochavim* 1:9.

8. In his introduction to *Mishneh Torah*, the Rambam refers to himself as Moshe Ben Maimon Hasepharadi.

9. *Toras Menachem* 5745 vol. 3, p. 1486.

10. *Toras Menachem* 5748 vol. 1, p. 111.



4 SIVAN 5749, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 26099



CHANGING THE COURSE



**MR. MOTTI
EDEN**

Tammuz 5740

On 17 Tammuz 5740, Motti Eden, then a broadcast journalist for Kol Yisrael Radio, had a yechidus with the Rebbe.

[It should be noted that this transcript was not edited by the Rebbe and therefore may not be accurate in all the details.]

The Rebbe began by blessing Mr. Eden, encouraging him to use his unique position and the strength that Hashem has granted him to spread Torah and Yiddishkeit via radio.

When Mr. Eden mentioned that it's difficult to discuss Torah on the radio, because not everything can be turned into news, the Rebbe replied that based on the teaching of Chazal that the Torah must be new to us each day, when you announce that there is "news" and go on to discuss the parsha, etc., you are telling the truth. The words of Torah are applicable to every Yid even in the 20th century, and even to those who speak only English, and even to the members of Kibbutz Hashomer Hatzair.¹

Mr. Eden: Regarding the *mitvza* for children,² people ask me, "The Rebbe made a new *mitvza*; what's going on?" I know that in general, when the Rebbe emphasizes children, the situation is critical.³ Is our situation indeed critical?

The Rebbe: Yes!

Mr. Eden: How do I explain the purpose of the *mitvza* of gathering Jewish children?

The Rebbe: My way, based on the Torah, is not to cause Yidden to be depressed; we are commanded to "serve Hashem with joy!"

From what I hear out of Washington, where news from the entire world is collected, the situation is extremely grave. The gravity of the situation is exacerbated, because the situation has been tense for 32 years, and the world is so "sensitive"⁴ that they don't want to hear that it's grave; they're tired of hearing it.

This apathy, however, doesn't change the facts. It is just an explanation as to why the world doesn't want to hear about the grave situation and would rather hear something amusing or entertaining. But my intent is not

to broadcast the gravity of the situation; my point is to announce a potential remedy. It's alright if the public will not be exposed to the magnitude of the problem. As long as they know how to solve it, the results will have been accomplished regardless. However, if there is no choice, then you'll have to explain how serious the situation is.

The reason the situation is so grave is because the mindset of the Arabs is shifting from day to day.

Thirty or forty years ago, the biggest sheikh of the Arabs could be bribed with a few *lirot* or dollars, and he would do whatever was asked of him, and the younger Arabs would do nothing without his consent. Now, however, the situation has undergone a dramatic reversal—the young generation of Arabs is more fanatic and zealous, striving for independence, etc., much more than their sheikhs and elders. And the younger an Arab is, the more zealous he is, and cannot be bought with money or honor, because he believes that he is sacrificing himself, and that nothing is greater than that.

To our chagrin, the Jewish youth are moving in the opposite direction. Thirty years ago, the pioneering spirit was fundamental. There was no need to explain that we needed pioneers. Everyone came forth and demanded their own piece of land or desert, desolate as it may be, to be able to apply their self-sacrifice. Now, however, they say, "Enough is enough. We're under such pressure for 32 years; we want a more rewarding life."

If you will attempt to give your listeners (on the radio) a full-on education, you'll never reach the desired goal. Education must be step-by-step, and there is no time to wait for the student to get to the point of full comprehension, because the situation, as mentioned, is dire.

There is a weakness [in the Western world], which I didn't want to discuss (and this is the first time I am bringing it up), very much felt by all the nations surrounding Eretz Yisrael. The weakness of London, Washington, Paris, and throughout the United States. They take advantage of the situation, and of the fact that the US government isn't strong; seeking instead the path of least resistance.

The most important thing that needs to be done is that the perspective of the youth towards their connection with Eretz Yisrael must be changed. This connection won't be strengthened by teaching pioneerism, because they have no interest in that right now; they want peace and quiet. They are still idealistic, but they demand—and it's a fair demand—that there must be some occasional relief from the pressure.

We must reinforce in the young men and women the knowledge that they are a link in the chain of 30 generations of Yidden, and that 35 or 40 generations ago, their ancestors entered Eretz Yisrael, which was given to them for all eternity. There is no theft or crime in Yidden living in Eretz Yisrael; the Arabs arrived a thousand years later, and then left, and have no claim to it.

All explanations are understandable, but theory isn't enough for a young boy or girl; they need something tangible—something they can practically have a part in. Tell them that there is a *possuk*, "*Shema Yisrael Hashem Elokeinu Hashem Echad*," which applies just as much to their fellow—Avraham, Moshe and Shlomo living in Tel Aviv on such and such a street and number—as it did to the Yidden who stood at Har Sinai.

Accomplishing this will certainly be conducive to reaching the goal, and the next step is to explain that "From the mouths of infants and sucklings You have established strength to destroy the enemy and avenger." Infants and sucklings are the four or five-year-old Yiddishe boys and girls—not the 70-year-olds who sit in the Knesset.

Mr. Eden: I wish to send regards from a person who works with me: Rav Meir ben Golda Zigman.

The Rebbe: Is he your friend? Do you know him?

Mr. Eden: We are coworkers; I prepare the news, and he works in music.

The Rebbe: Music is also part of our Torah; the Torah is full of musical instruments.

Mr. Eden: I also want to give regards from Berke [Wolf].

The Rebbe: He has already sent many letters here [to tell us] that you are going to be visiting, and that if you agree to broadcast the right things, the conquering of the land will be complete.

Mr. Eden: If I could ask one more small request: Could you sign this Israeli Tanya for me?

The Rebbe: I generally don't sign at all, but I can give you a Tanya, which is also small. If I sign your Tanya, I will get demands from many others tomorrow.

Mr. Eden: I won't tell a single person; I will keep it to myself.

The Rebbe: There are no secrets among Chassidim. When they ask me, I'll tell the truth. In any case, the main thing is that you should learn what is written here. I will give you a dollar as *shlichus mitzvah*. When you return to Eretz Yisrael, convert it to shekels and give them to *tzedaka*. This is in accordance with the custom among Yidden to do a *shlichus mitzvah*, which is in addition to the enormous *mitzvah* you're doing by being *oleh* again to Eretz Yisrael. May this *aliya* be just like it is the first time.

Mr. Eden: May we merit to see you, too, in Eretz Yisrael.

The Rebbe: The main thing is that it should be very soon, together with *Moshiach Tzidkeinu*. ❶

1. A non-religious movement.
2. That year, beginning Pesach time, the Rebbe emphasized the role of the Jewish child, and later announced the initiative that even the very young be brought to shul to hear the *Aseres Hadibros*. See *Children at the Forefront*, Derher Sivan 5774.
3. In the summer of 5733, the Rebbe launched an intense campaign for children to receive a Torah-true education during the summer and called for many children's rallies—all the way through Tishrei. On the following Yom Kippur, the Yom Kippur War broke out.
4. It seems that the Rebbe is saying: People have been so touched by the instability of the past 32 years that they don't want to hear of it anymore.



The Trial that Never Began

In the times when our story takes place, the Russian government would appoint an individual to be in charge of certain legal issues of the Jewish community in each city. This person was called the “burgermeister.”

One of the responsibilities of the burgermeister was to be in charge of all legal records; this included the filing of birth certificates, marriage certificates and death certificates.

Reb Aryeh was a Chosid of the Alter Rebbe, and upon his advice he became the burgermeister for his city.

Being Jewish was certainly not easy, and converting to Judaism during that era was a punishable crime.

There was once a convert in the Jewish community, and Reb Aryeh was

approached for help with a daring plan.

During the same period of time when the conversion was taking place, an individual of similar age had passed away. The community leaders asked Reb Aryeh not to file this person’s death so the new *ger tzedek* could assume his identity.

At great personal risk, Reb Aryeh went along with it.

A short while later, to his great dismay, someone informed on him to the government and he was caught. The government officials scheduled a court case where he would be sentenced to a harsh punishment.

Realizing the great danger he was in, he did what every Chosid does when he needs help, and turned to the Alter Rebbe for guidance.

Reb Aryeh made the journey to the Rebbe and informed him of what was going on.

“When is the court case scheduled?” asked the Alter Rebbe. After hearing the Chosid’s response, he continued, “See what you can do to push it off.”

Reb Aryeh followed this advice and successfully postponed the trial.

This repeated itself a number of times until eventually Reb Aryeh told the Alter Rebbe that he could no longer delay it.

The Alter Rebbe then said, “In the near future I will be celebrating the *chasuna* of my granddaughter, who will be marrying the grandson of Reb Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev. I think you should show up and make an effort to speak with him; I am sure he can help you.”

Reb Aryeh made his way to Zhlobin, the city where

the *chasuna* was scheduled to take place, and he began figuring out a way to meet Reb Levi Yitzchok. This was indeed a difficult feat, as thousands upon thousands of people were also waiting for their chance to speak with the *tzaddik*.

After some deliberation, he came up with a plan. “I will come to the house at midnight,” he said to himself, “And this way I will be first in line in the morning.”

Standing outside the home in which the Berditchever was staying gave him the opportunity to witness an incredible sight.

Looking inside, he saw how Reb Levi Yitzchok was lying in a bed with two attendants standing on either side. One was holding a Mishnayos and the other a Zohar, and they were both reading from their *sefer* simultaneously as the Rebbe appeared to be sleeping.

לזכות יום הולדתם
של ילדינו שי' בחודש אדר
הת' מנחם מענדל בן שרה כ"ו אדר
הת' מאיר בן שרה כ"א אדר שני
חיענא בת שרה כ"א אדר שני
לשנת הצלחה בלימודם
ובדרכי החסידות ולנח"ר נשיא דורנו
נדפס ע"י הוריהם שיחיו



At some point one of them made a mistake and Reb Levi Yitzchak turned to him and said, “Nu! Nu!”

This incredible scene went on for about one hour, after which he got up from his so-called “sleep” and signaled to the attendants that Reb Aryeh could now enter.

“Who sent you here?” asked Reb Levi Yitzchok.

“My Rebbe,” replied Reb Aryeh.

“Who is that?”

“[The Alter Rebbe.]”

“Ah, he is your Rebbe; he is my *mechutan*. He is a holy man; a *tzaddik*.” On and on Reb Levi Yitzchok extolled the praises of the Alter Rebbe.

This conversation repeated itself a number of times, and throughout it all he had a warm and friendly expression on his face.

Finally, he asked Reb Aryeh why had come to him, and he explained his role as burgermeister as well as the whole chain of events that led up to his indictment and pending trial. He also

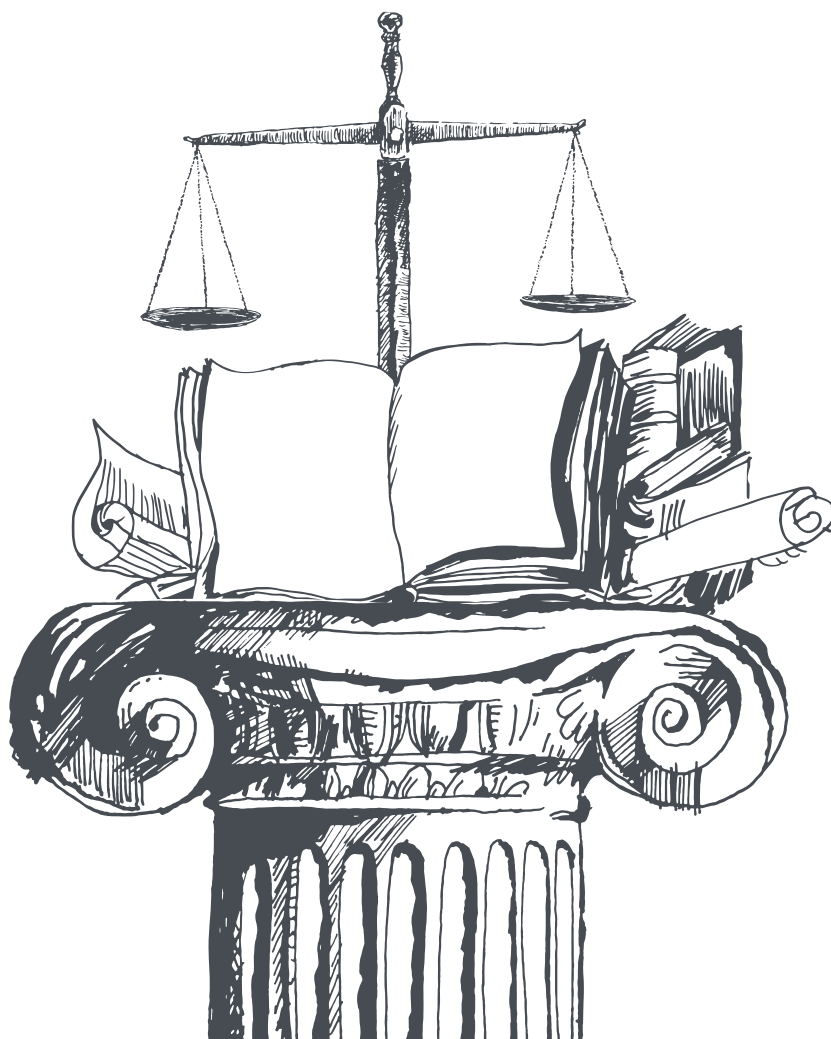
made sure to mention that he had only taken this job upon the instruction of the Alter Rebbe.

Reb Levi Yitzchok sent him off with strong words of encouragement and told him that if his *mechutan*—and once again he went on with lavish praise for the Alter Rebbe—directed him in this way, everything would be well.

When Reb Aryeh went to the Alter Rebbe and related all the details of what happened with Reb Levi Yitzchok, the Rebbe exclaimed to him twice, “Nu! So did I give you good advice?” And then he repeated again, “It was good advice that I gave you, no?”

The day of the court case was rapidly approaching, and then, lo and behold, the night before it was supposed to begin, a terrible fire broke out in the courthouse and along with all the burned documents was the incriminating file against Reb Aryeh. With all the evidence against him burned to a crisp, he was now a free man. **1**

(*Otzar Sippurei Chabad*
vol. 15 p. 179)



לזכות
הרה"ת הרה"ח ר' דוד הלוי שיחי'
לרגל מלאות שלושים שנה להולדתו
כ"ה אדר ה'תשמ"ח - ה'תשע"ח
שיתברך בשנת הצלחה וברכה בגור'
בכל אשר יפנו

ולזכת זוגתו מרת ליפשא ובניהם
ובנותיהם

שמואל הלוי, לוי הלוי, הינדא מאטל,
יוסף הלוי שיחיו
ויסמן



MIVTZA YOM HULEDES

A historically private observance
becomes a minhag for klal Yisrael.

Secrecy

A birthday is a time for reflection, rejoicing, and thanksgiving. It is considered a personal Rosh Hashanah and there are various *minhagim* associated with this special milestone.

This was not always the case throughout Jewish history.

Chazal make various references to the significance of a birthday. The *chanukas hamishkan* was postponed to the month of Nissan to coincide with the birthday of Yitzchak Avinu,¹ and the merit of Moshe Rabbeinu's birthday on 7 Adar caused the miraculous *v'nahafoch hu* of the Purim story.²

There are several recorded instances of *gedolei Yisroel* hosting a *seudas mitzvah* in honor of a milestone birthday, and the idea that one's *mazal* is especially strong on a birthday is sourced in the *Talmud Yerushalmi*.³

Nevertheless, the concept of celebrating a birthday annually, let



THE REBBE CELEBRATES HIS SEVENTIETH YOM HULEDES WITH CHASSIDIM, YUD-ALEF NISSAN 5732.

alone attributing much significance to it, was virtually unheard of for millennia.

Chassidus revealed an entirely new dimension of a *yom huledes*.⁴ The Baal Shem Tov observed the day of Chai Elul as a day of *simcha* with a special *seudas mitzvah* for select *talmidim*.⁵ Although all the Rebbeim observed their birthdays, it was always very private and only known to a select few.

The Rebbe Rashab would say a *maamar* on his birthday, Chof Cheshvan each year. If it was Shabbos, the *maamar* was said publicly (as was customary every Shabbos). On a weekday, the *maamar* was said only in the presence of the Frierdiker Rebbe.⁶

The significance of a *yom huledes* and how unknown it was to Chassidim is evident from the following story:

One year during the Frierdiker Rebbe's youth, on Yud-Beis Tammuz, he mentioned to his teacher, the Rashbatz, that it was his *yom huledes*.

The Rashbatz responded, "Since when is a *yom huledes* so special? The Gemara⁷ states that it would be more pleasant for man had he not been created!"

At dinner that evening, the Frierdiker Rebbe shared this conversation with his father, the Rebbe Rashab. The Rebbe Rashab responded, "He (the Rashbatz) does not know everything. A *yom huledes* is indeed very special."⁸

Minhagei Anash

In the later years of the Frierdiker Rebbe's *nesius*, he revealed that the Rebbeim would observe their birthdays, and encouraged Chassidim to do so as well.

The first time the concept of observing a birthday became an official instruction to Chassidim was with the publication of the Hayom Yom by the Rebbe. The entry for Yud-Alef Nissan (the Rebbe's *yom*

"Since when is a *yom huledes* so special? The Gemara states that it would be more pleasant for man had he not been created!"

huledes—although this was unknown to the public at the time) states: On a birthday, one should spend time in seclusion. He should recall his experiences and think deeply into them. He should then repent and correct those (of his past deeds) that need correction and repentance.

On Yud-Alef Nissan 5709 (the last Yud-Alef Nissan before the Frierdiker Rebbe's *histalkus*), the Frierdiker Rebbe said a short *sicha*, which was published in the *Kuntres Maamarim* of Pesach that year.⁹

During the Rebbe's *nesius*, the Rebbe observed Yud-Alef Nissan (and Chof-Hei Adar—the Rebbetzin's birthday) as a special day every year by going to the Ohel. In 5712 (the Rebbe's fiftieth birthday), the Rebbe said a *maamar* to a group of Chassidim, and in 5722 (the Rebbe's sixtieth birthday) the Rebbe held a special *farbrengen*. From 5731 onwards, the Rebbe held a *farbrengen* or said a *sicha* each year in connection with Yud-Alef Nissan.

With the onset of the Rebbe's *nesius*, it was established that *bochurim* would be admitted for *yechidus* every year in connection with their *yom huledes*, in contrast to previous generations, when *bochurim* rarely merited *yechidus*.¹⁰

The birthday *yechidus* was also for *anash*, and many of the *minhagim* of *yom huledes* were revealed and clarified during these *yechidusen*. Over time it became a regular occurrence for Chassidim to mention their upcoming birthdays in their letters

The Rebbe read through the *tzetel* and wondered aloud “Vov? Zayin?”

to the Rebbe and the Rebbe would respond with special *brachos* and instructions to observe the *minhagim* of *yom huledes*.

It is interesting to note that in many of these letters the Rebbe refers to these observances as “*minhag anash* of recent years.” The *minhagim* include increased *limud haTorah* and *tzedaka*, and receiving an *aliya* the Shabbos before the birthday—as well as on the day of the birthday when applicable. These *minhagim* apply to men and women¹¹ and were published in *Sefer Haminhagim*.¹²

When Rabbi Berel Baumgarten was in *yechidus* for his birthday in the summer of 5714, the Rebbe asked him if he had received an *aliya* on Shabbos. When he answered in the negative, the Rebbe asked, “Why not? I thought everyone was aware of my request [to do so]!”

In later years, Chassidim would come to the Rebbe for dollars in

connection with their *yom huledes*. On such occasions, they would receive an additional dollar and a *bracha* for a *shnas hatzlacha*.”

CHILD'S FIRST BIRTHDAY

On a child's first birthday, it is appropriate for parents to observe the customs of *yom huledes* on behalf of the child, increasing in Torah learning and giving *tzedaka*. Also, and primarily, they are to contemplate on the great merit granted to them by Hashem, entrusting them with a beautiful *neshama* and their obligation to educate the child properly.¹³

Rabbi Alexander Namdar relates: On our son's first birthday, shortly after arriving to Sweden on *shlichus*, we put a pen in his hand and wrote a birthday *pan* to the Rebbe. We sent it together with a letter regarding a timely issue in our *shlichus*.

The Rebbe responded: מנהגי יום – Observe the *minhagim* of a birthday for your son, *sheyichye*.

The Exact Date

Since birthday observance is a fairly new phenomenon in Jewish tradition, many people were unaware of the exact date of their birthday.

Reb Avraham Dunin, *a”h*, was in *yechidus* for his birthday. In his *tzetel* he asked for a *bracha* for his birthday, which would be taking place on Vov Cheshvan. The Rebbe read through the *tzetel* and wondered aloud “Vov? Zayin?” The Rebbe concluded the *yechidus* with a *bracha*. As he was leaving the room, the Rebbe once



A BIRTHDAY BRACHA WRITTEN IN THE REBBE'S KSAV YAD KODESH AS A POSTSCRIPT, CIRCA 5721: בברכת שנת הצלחה – בקשר עם יום הולדתו – ולמילוי משאלות לבבו לטובה בכה”ע [=בכל העניינים] שכותב.

again looked at the *tzetel* and said, “Vov? Zayin?”

Reb Avraham was mystified by this, as the difference between the letters *vov* and *zayin* are quite obvious in the script he had written his note. He called his mother to find out the exact time he was born. To his amazement, she acknowledged that he was born in the evening (*bein hashmashos*) between Vov and Zayin Cheshvan. The exact date was not relevant at the time, because his *bris* had been delayed due to other circumstances.¹⁴

Rabbi Yitzchok Dov Lieberman of Kfar Chabad merited his first *yechidus* on his 19th birthday, Daled Cheshvan, 5734.

“I prepared for *yechidus* to the best of my abilities. In my note I requested a *bracha* for my *yom huledes* on Daled Cheshvan, among other requests. Reading my note, the Rebbe asked ‘When is your *yom huledes*?’ I was shocked, and although I had not prepared to speak to the Rebbe I managed to reply ‘Daled Cheshvan.’

“The Rebbe asked again, ‘When is your *yom huledes*?’ I figured that I had responded too softly the first time, so in a louder voice I said ‘Daled Cheshvan.’ At this point I should have realized that all is not in order, and the Rebbe asked a third time, ‘You are sure your *yom huledes* is Daled Cheshvan?’”

“Flustered, I nervously responded in the affirmative and even added that this was the day I celebrated my bar mitzvah. The Rebbe shrugged and



A LETTER FROM THE REBBE TO A BOCHUR IN HONOR OF HIS BIRTHDAY, DATED 15 ELUL 5710. THE REBBE WISHES HIM “TO BE ZOCHEH THAT THROUGH YOU WILL BE ACHIEVED A PORTION OF WHAT MY FATHER-IN-LAW WANTED TO ACCOMPLISH IN THIS WORLD.”



30 TISHREI 5740, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 194235

THE REBBE INSTITUTED THE PRACTICE OF BOCHURIM GOING INTO YECHIDUS FOR THEIR YOM HULEDES.

proceeded to *bentch* me in connection with my *yom huledes*.”

“Leaving *yechidus* in a daze, I shared the story with my friends, who advised me to speak with Rabbi Hodakov. Upon hearing my strange story, he was angry with me that the Rebbe needed to ask the question so many times. ‘After the first time you should have understood that you need to investigate the matter!’

“Upon finding my birth certificate after a difficult search, we discovered that the date of my birth was **Yud-Daled Cheshvan**! My father recorded our birthdays in a notebook with pencil, and apparently the ‘yud’ of my date of birth was small and therefore overlooked. This is my only explanation for the source of such an error.”¹⁵

The Rebbe instructed those who were born on a date that does not appear on the calendar every year (such as 30 Cheshvan or 30 Kislev) to observe the *minhagim* on both the last day of the previous month and the first day of the new month.¹⁶

BIRTHDAY CAKE

On 15 Kislev 5747, on the way back from the Ohel, the Rebbe remarked to Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky about it being his *yom huledes*.

“Did your family prepare a cake for your birthday?” the Rebbe asked.

Rabbi Krinsky was unsure how to respond, and the Rebbe said, “Nu, you can still make up for it.”

“That night I went home and shared the Rebbe’s instruction with my family. We prepared a cake and had a *chassidishe farbrengen*.”

For Klal Yisrael

Following the *histalkus* of the Rebbetzin on Chof-Beis Shvat 5748, the Rebbe *davened* during the week in his home on President Street throughout the *shnas ha’aveilus*. On Chof-Hei Adar, the Rebbetzin’s 87th birthday, several minutes after the conclusion of *Shacharis*, the Rebbe suddenly descended from the second

floor and approached his *shtender* to say a *sicha*. This came as an absolute surprise to everyone present.

Continuing the theme of “והחי יתן” אל לבו that the Rebbe had emphasized since the *histalkus*, the Rebbe suggested that in connection with the Rebbetzin’s birthday it was appropriate to focus on the *minhagim* of *yom huledes* and to share them with *klal Yisrael*. The Rebbe added that doing so “will be the greatest *zechus* for the *neshama* (of the Rebbetzin).”

The Rebbe then proceeded to introduce two new elements to the *yom huledes* observance:

1. Every individual should host a *farbrengen* in connection with their *yom huledes*. They should gather friends and family, and together they should say “אן אמתן לחיים, א חסידישן לחיים”—a true, *chassidishe l’chaim*. The joyful atmosphere of a *farbrengen* is conducive to taking on new *hachlatos*, ensuring that they will be meaningful and enduring.

The Rebbe added that doing so “will be the greatest zechus for the neshama (of the Rebbetzin).”

- Parents should observe these *minhagim* with their young children, especially hosting *farbrengens* and parties for their friends in connection with their birthdays, thus encouraging them to increase in their excitement in all areas of Yiddishkeit. In turn, they will surely make a *shturem* for their parents to do the same on their birthdays, and especially with regard to *hachlatos tovos*.¹⁷

Shortly thereafter, a detailed list of ten *minhagei yom huledes*, compiled from the Rebbe's *sichos* and letters, was edited by the Rebbe and publicized.¹⁸

Thus *Mivtza Yom Huledes* was born.

While giving out dollars, the Rebbe would remind children and adults to host a party or *farbrengen* in honor of their *yom huledes*.

During Chol Hamoed Pesach, a Yiddish advertisement was prepared for the *Algemeiner Journal* calling upon all to mark their birthday with the significance it deserves. It was entitled “Do not miss out on observing the most important day of your life!” The Rebbe edited the memo and instructed that it be translated into English and Hebrew.¹⁹

Additionally, Tzach published a full-page ad in *The New York Times*, also edited by the Rebbe, titled “Birthdays Matter.” Tzach in Eretz Yisrael launched an ambitious *yom huledes* campaign, reaching tens of thousands of children around the country.

During the *farbrengen* of Acharon Shel Pesach (Moshiach's Seudah) that year, the Rebbe explained the various Torah sources and rationale for publicly celebrating birthdays at length.²⁰ This *sicha* was the Rebbe's participation in the *kinus Torah* customarily held following each Yom Tov.

This campaign was well received by all who were affected by it. Shluchim in their respective cities, as well as teachers in schools and *bochurim* on *mivtzoim*, inspired hundreds of thousands to utilize their special day to increase in Yiddishkeit. The

mere fact that someone was thinking of them on their birthday was very satisfying and heartwarming for many.

A CHOSSID'S BIRTHDAY

In 5751, a Chossid wrote to the Rebbe that a certain date would be the fortieth anniversary from the day he first had the merit to see the Rebbe. The Rebbe responded: “מנהגי יום הולדת. אזכיר – Observe the *minhagim* of a *yom huledes*. I will mention it at the Ohel.” (See Hayom Yom 30 Shevat).

Birthdays Matter

They matter because they mark the day you began your life.
 And that makes birthdays the perfect day for reflection along with celebration. A time to think about your life as a Jew. About good deeds you'd like to perform. About relationships with friends and family. And about the role Torah could be playing in your life.

Your birthday is your day. So get together and celebrate with the people you're close to.
 At the party, say a prayer of thanks to G-d. Give money to charity. Help out someone in need. Celebrate your Jewish identity.

The Talmud says your birthday is a day when good fortune is on your side. Put that good fortune to work. And make your birthday matter.

LUBAVITCH YOUTH ORGANIZATION
 A division of the Worldwide Chabad-Lubavitch Movement
 1770 Eastern Parkway
 Brooklyn, New York 11213

☐ I'd like to make my birthday matter. Please send me a free birthday kit on my next birthday.

Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Birthday _____

We want you to get the most out of your birthday

Sponsored by Tzach Yisroel Ben-Zion

A FULL PAGE ADVERTISEMENT IN THE NEW YORK TIMES, PROMOTING MIVTZA YOM HULEDES.



THE REBBE'S HANDWRITTEN HAGAHOS ON THE PRESS RELEASE IN YIDDISH ANNOUNCING MIVTZA YOM HULEDES.

The Final Birur

For us Chassidim, the *Mivtza Yom Huledes* bears special meaning, as it was initiated by the Rebbe for the *aliya* and *zechus* of the Rebбетzin.

The Rebbe explained the reason this special observance became widely known only in recent years. As the final generation of *galus*, we are tasked to orchestrate the final *birurim*.²¹ Through observing the *yom huledes*, one transforms a regular day into a Yom Tov.²² The lowest levels of reality are elevated to the greatest levels of *bittul*.

This will surely expedite this final phase of *galus* (which is compared to pregnancy²³) and usher in the *geulah shleima* (which is compared to the birth of *am Yisrael*) *teikef umiyad mamash!*²⁴ **T**

STORY

As told by Rabbi Levi Gansburg, Toronto, Canada.

In honor of Purim Katan 5749, my father, Rabbi Yosef Gansburg, arranged a trip for a group of *mekuravim* from Toronto to come to the Rebbe for Shabbos. My older brother and sister were celebrating their birthdays that month, and he took them along so that they could receive a dollar and a *bracha* from the Rebbe for their birthdays. He decided to take me along as well, although my birthday was in the summer.

During the several hours we waited in line, my siblings rehearsed how they would notify the Rebbe of their birthdays. I knew they would receive an extra dollar and I would receive only one—but that's life.

The moment came when we reached the front of the line and my sister and brother both mentioned their birthdays and received a second dollar and *bracha*. I received a dollar from the Rebbe and continued walking silently. The Rebbe suddenly called me back and asked “When is your *yom huledes*?”

As I was not expecting to speak to the Rebbe and surely did not anticipate the question, I was tongue tied. My father responded on my behalf that my birthday is in the month of Av. The Rebbe handed me a second dollar saying, “You should give this to *tzedaka* on your birthday.”

It was very special to me that the Rebbe expressed such sensitivity to ensure that I not feel left out from my other siblings. But the story does not end there.

During that summer, my father arranged another trip to the Rebbe for Shabbos Mevarchim Av. The Rebbe once intimated to my father that this trip should occur annually. Since my birthday is during the month of Av, I naturally joined along so that I could receive the Rebbe's *bracha* for my birthday.

While waiting on line that Sunday, I rehearsed my line numerous times: “My *yom huledes* will be in the month of Av.” I was very excited to receive an extra dollar in honor of my special day.

Approaching the Rebbe and receiving the first dollar, I was sure to recite my line as I had practiced so many times. To my surprise and disappointment, the Rebbe continued giving a dollar to the next one in line and in the rush I found myself outside with only one dollar in my hand.

“I did not receive a second dollar!” I cried to my father.

My father was visibly shaken. “What do you mean?”

As we stood there in shock, my father suddenly remembered what had occurred half a year earlier.

“Don't worry, Levi, You received the dollar and *bracha* for your birthday six months ago in Adar!”

This is one of countless stories emphasizing that every encounter with the Rebbe is a meeting of *neshamos*.

Minhagei Yom Huledes²⁵



VIDEO STILL OF THE SICHA, 25 ADAR 5748.

Aliya

Receive an *aliya* to the Torah on the Shabbos before the birthday, either at *Shacharis* or *Mincha*.²⁶ (There were those who were specifically told to receive an *aliya* at *Mincha*.)²⁷ If the birthday is on a Monday or Thursday, receive an *aliya* then as well.

The Rebbe advised someone with a birthday right after Yom Kippur to at least try to receive *hagbaha* or *gelila*, as receiving an *aliya* on Yom Kippur would be difficult.

To one who had not received an *aliya* the Shabbos before his birthday, the Rebbe instructed him to receive an *aliya* the following Shabbos.²⁸

Tzedaka

Increase in giving *tzedaka* before *Shacharis* and *Mincha*.²⁹ If the birthday is on Shabbos or Yom Tov, give extra *tzedaka* before and after Shabbos or Yom Tov.

To one who had given *tzedaka* in the amount of sixty in connection with his sixtieth birthday, the Rebbe commented: *It is customary with regard to tzedaka to give one extra, corresponding to the coming year.*³⁰

When the birthday occurs on Shabbos, a double portion of *tzedaka* should be given on Friday. As the Rebbe wrote to someone:

ראה פרש"י עה"ת בראשית (ב, ג) ברכו
(הש"ק) במן כו' ובששי כו'.

See Rashi on *Bereishis* (2:3): [Hashem] **blesed (Shabbos Kodesh) with the mann, etc. and on the sixth day, etc.** [a double portion of *mann* was provided to *bnei Yisroel*].³¹

Tefilla

Increase in *kavana* during davening, contemplating the greatness of Hashem.

Recite the entire Tehillim (or at least one *sefer*).

1. *Shemos Rabbah* 52:2.

2. *Megillah* 13b.

3. *Yerushalmi Rosh Hashanah* 3:8. See *Korban Ha'eida*.

4. See *Likkutei Sichos* vol. 24, p. 178-187.

5. *Sefer Hasichos* 5703, p. 451.

6. *Hayom Yom* 20 Cheshvan, *Hatomim* Vol. 1, p. 263

7. *Eruvin* 13b

8. *Reshimos Devarim* (Rabbi Yehudah Chitrik), p. 166.

9. *Sefer Hamaamarim* 5709, p. 142.

10. *Teshura Gourary-Matusof Kislev* 5772.

11. *Sichos Kodesh* 5735 vol. 1, p. 125.

12. P. 81.

13. *Toras Menachem* 5742 vol. 4, p. 2190.

14. As told by his nephew Rabbi Mendel

Dunin. *Kfar Chabad Magazine* #1543.

15. *Kfar Chabad Magazine* #1580.

16. *Heichal Menachem* vol. 2, p. 38.

17. *Sefer Hasichos* 5748, p. 331. Listen to the *sicha* at www.chabad.org/554613.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 406.

19. The manuscript of the Rebbe's corrections in his holy handwriting is published in *Tzaddik LaMelech* vol. 1, p. 143.

Kapitel

In accordance with the instruction of the Baal Shem Tov to recite the chapter of Tehillim connected with your age,³² learn the new chapter thoroughly.

There was a discussion whether on a birthday one should recite the old *kapitel* in addition to the new one. Rabbi Michoel Seligson wrote this question in a note and the Rebbe responded: “מהי שייכותו (ה'ז שן) – What is its connection? (It is the old one).”

Torah

Increase in Torah learning. Add an extra *shiur* in *nigleh* and Chassidus during the birthday, in addition to the established *shiurim* of Chitas and Rambam.

When a birthday occurred on a Friday, the Rebbe instructed several *bochurim* in *yechidus* to be *maavir* the *sedra* (*shnayim mikra*) that week

specifically during the day (and not on Shabbos).³³

Chazaras Dach

Learn a *maamar* by heart (or at least a section), and review it in front of a group of acquaintances on the birthday or at the earliest opportunity, especially on the following Shabbos afternoon. On several occasions the Rebbe specified to learn “the Rebbe’s *maamar*.”³⁴

Hafatza

Increase in influencing others to grow in Yiddishkeit and Chassidus, with an attitude of *ahavas Yisrael*.

The Rebbe told Rabbi Shmuel Lew in *yechidus* that when he will speak with others about Yiddishkeit with “more *chayus*” on his birthday, it will have a greater impact, since on that day “*mazalo gover*.”

Hisbonenus

Spend some time alone to reflect on the past, identify flaws that need to be corrected, and make new *hachlatos* for the coming year.

Hiddur Mitzvah

Accept a new *hiddur* in one area of life, as is customarily done on Rosh Hashanah. Increasing in learning Chassidus is a good start.

Farbrengen

Host a *farbrengen* with family and friends in thanksgiving to Hashem for this special day. It is appropriate to say *Shehecheyanu* on a new fruit or garment.

20. Ibid., p. 398.

21. Sefer Hasichos 5748, p. 380.

22. Ibid., p.343.

23. Torah Ohr, Vaeira.

24. Sefer Hasichos 5748, p. 405.

25. The following is a translation of the list published in Sefer Hasichos 5748, p. 406, as well as various details of each *minhag* compiled from other sources as notated below.

26. Hiskashrus #766.

27. Rabbi Yehoshua Laine (Brooklyn, NY) received this instruction twice in *yechidus*.

28. *Yechidus* with Rabbi Berel Baumgarten, 14 Av 5714. Kfar Chabad Magazine #1543.

29. The Rebbe instructed some *bachurim* to give in numerals of 18 (18 cents or 36 cents, etc.) See Sichos Kodesh 5712, p. 339. Teshura, Bar Mitzvah, Oberlander, 5776.

30. Kfar Chabad Magazine #1543.

31. Kfar Chabad Magazine #706.

32. Igros Kodesh Admu”r HaRayatz vol. 10, p. 53. Kovetz Michtovim published in Tehillim Ohel Yosef Yitzchok. See Toras Menachem vol. 29, p. 269.

33. Sichos Kodesh 5724, p. 563. Kfar Chabad Magazine #1712. Teshura Slonim-Stein 5768.

34. Teshura, Bar Mitzvah, Oberlander, 5776.

1

Ask your question:

What did the Rebbe say about asking him a question on someone else's behalf?

During a *yechidus*, the individual who was speaking with the Rebbe asked a question on a matter pertaining to his friend. The Rebbe's response was that it isn't the appropriate approach. It's much better for each individual to ask his own question. First he should talk to others and assess the pros and cons, and then write them all down. The individual in *yechidus* was surprised to hear this from the Rebbe, and the Rebbe replied with a smile, "Perhaps there are some considerations that he didn't want to share with you." The Rebbe concluded by saying that in general it is better to write one's question and concern, because this way no detail would be left out. However, when a question is posed orally it is possible that the listener will miss a detail.

Where are the letters:

One of the letters that was sent to the Friediker Rebbe as part of the effort to strengthen his health came from a French woman. She did not consider herself a Lubavitcher, but she had been inspired to write to the Rebbe after hearing a young man speak passionately about the Rebbe and how he is not limited by the rules of nature.

In a letter to the Chassidim in Paris, the Rebbe mentions this story and concludes strongly with a call to action: "If one man spoke from the heart and had such an impact, why has the Rebbe not received letters from amongst the thousands of people in Paris for *brachos* and requests...?!"



eight facts WRITING TO THE REBBE

**Details matter:**

Details are very powerful; the more something means to us, the more details we will remember and share. Details also make us accountable; when you know you will have to give a detailed report, you make sure from the outset that the report will be fitting and impressive.

The same applies when writing to the Rebbe.

If you write merely in a general manner, barely scratching the surface of the topic you are relating, it does not add any enthusiasm to what you are doing. On the other hand, when you add details to a description of a *peula*, it will cause you to perform it with more alacrity.

Knowing that you will be writing to the Rebbe in a detailed manner will change your approach from the very beginning and will ensure that you have satisfactory details to share.

At the very least...

Have you ever considered that by writing to the Rebbe you are fulfilling the mitzvah of *ahavas Yisrael*?

In a letter to a *bochur*, the Rebbe encourages him to write about the good and positive things going on in his life and to encourage his friends to do the same. The Rebbe concludes that, "at the very least, you can give me *nachas* and fulfill the mitzvah of *ahavas Yisrael*."



לזכות
הרה"ת ר' שניאור זלמן שיחי'
ליפסקער
בקשר עם יום הולדתו
ח"י אדר
נדפס ע"י משפחתו



Letters for health:

In 5707, the Frierdiker Rebbe's health was not well.

Chassidim around the world were anxious and desperate to do something to help the situation, but they understandably felt limited—after all, they weren't doctors.

The Rebbe responded with a campaign that would be the Chassidim's way of strengthening the Frierdiker Rebbe's health.

He encouraged Chassidim to send letters detailing events and deeds that would bring *nachas* to the Frierdiker Rebbe.

The response was rapid and an influx of letters arrived in a multitude of languages. The Rebbe would translate the foreign ones, such as those written in French and English, into Hebrew and have them read to the Frierdiker Rebbe.



Mikvah:

"When was the last time you went to *mikvah*?" Asked Rabbi Hodakov of the *bochur* standing in front of him.

This was no random question to a random *bochur*. It turns out that the Rebbe had received a letter from this *bochur*, and the Rebbe had asked Rabbi Hodakov to hastily find out about this *bochur's* "observance" of going to *mikvah*.

As it turned out, he had not been to *mikvah* for a long time...



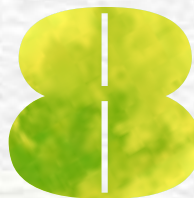
Seek advice:

It was the *Seder* night in the home of the Frierdiker Rebbe. As *shulchan oreich*, the formal meal, came to an end and they were up to *tzafun*, one of the Chassidim present announced that it is now time to *bentch*. Hearing this, the Frierdiker Rebbe replied, "One must look inside the *siddur* and then you will see where we are holding."

Some years later, on the second night of Pesach 5711, the Rebbe related this story and learned an important lesson from it about receiving guidance from a Rebbe:

"When it comes to *tzafun*—referring to hidden and concealed matters—one must ask the Rebbe (this is hinted at by the idea of looking inside the *siddur*). Even though you have heard various directives and words of guidance that were said to others, one must constantly ask the Rebbe.

"Even when it comes to things that are more 'revealed,' it is still better to ask. However, one is always obligated to ask about the 'hidden' matters."



Don't focus on the answer:

On Shabbos Parshas Pinchas 5711, the Rebbe made it very clear that answers are not always to be expected when writing to the Rebbe.

In that *sicha*, the Rebbe explains that even if there is no answer, for whatever reason, the very act of writing to the Rebbe leads to the necessary outcome. When a Chosid turns to the Rebbe with complete devotion, he receives an answer from the Rebbe even if it wasn't said explicitly.

1 | Mikdash Melech vol. 4, p. 429-430.

2 | Igros Kodesh vol. 3, p. 53-58.

3 | Igros Kodesh vol. 14, p. 36.

4 | Dem Rebben's Kinder, p. 176.

5 | Tzadik L'melech vol 3

6 | Toras Menachem vol. 3, p. 26.

7 | Kovetz Yechida B'yochid, Vaad Hatmimim, p. 61.

8 | Shabbos Parshas Pinchas 5711.



להביא לימות המשיח

What More Can We Do?

Tzedaka to bring Moshiach



לזכות
הינדא תחי'
לרגל הגיעה לגיל שנים עשרה שנה
היא עונת בת מצוה
ג' טבת ה'תשע"ח
נדפס ע"י הוריה
הרה"ת ר' ארי' יצחק הכהן בן ח' גולדא
וזוגתו מרת ראשא רוזא בת שטערנא שרה
ומשפחתם שיחיו
וויינשטיין

“What I can still do, for my part, to hasten the coming of Moshiach—is to make each and every one of you a shliach to give *tzedaka*. I have already done all I can to bring Moshiach. From now on, you must do all that *you* can...”¹

It was a frightening moment. One that none of the Chassidim could have predicted. The pain and disappointment was evident in the Rebbe's voice and sent shudders through the crowd and those listening around the world.

“Everything I have done until now to bring Moshiach was for naught. The proof: Moshiach hasn't come yet!”

For decades, Chassidim were accustomed to turn to the Rebbe for direction and guidance. But now, the Rebbe was leaving it up to us. A new period began; a time when the need to hasten the *geulah* took on a previously unfelt sense of urgency.

But amidst all of this, the Rebbe still says there is one more thing he can do: encourage more *tzedaka* giving.

Chazal say גדולה צדקה שמקרבת את—great is *tzedaka*, for it brings the redemption closer.² Often when giving out dollars after a *sicha* or at the end of a *farbrengen*, the Rebbe would quote this *maamar Chazal*, adding that *tzedaka* is also “מזרזת את הגאולה”—hastens the *geulah*.

What is indeed the connection between *tzedaka* and the *geulah*?

The Alter Rebbe explains:

Doing mitzvot in general brings the *geulah*, because through them we reveal Hashem’s presence in this lowly world, transforming the physicality from its attachment to *klipos*, bringing it under the reign of *kedusha*. The more physically involved the mitzvah is, the more *klipos* we can do away with, and the more we can reveal *Elokus* in this world.

In addition to the physical objects used to perform the mitzvah, doing a mitzvah also has an affect on the *nefesh* of the performer. It refines the *nefesh habehamis* and brings it into a world of *kedusha*. The more involved one’s being is in the performance of a mitzvah, the more his *nefesh habehamis* will be refined.

When all the Yidden in the world work to accomplish their part in this process, *Elokus* is gradually revealed more and more, until the whole world is filled with Hashem’s infinite light. Then the world will finally be ready for the *geulah*, and all *klipos* will be done away with for good.

Now we can understand why the mitzvah of *tzedaka* is specifically singled out as the one to bring the *geulah* closer:

The one and only mitzvah that has the most involvement of a person’s

being is *tzedaka*. A person works hard to earn his money; the money he earns includes the *kochos* of his entire *nefesh*. So when he gives that money to *tzedaka*, he is refining all aspects of his *nefesh habehamis* and elevating them to *kedusha*.

Additionally, since this money could have been used to buy basic necessities of life, it contains the very essence of one’s life within it. Therefore, giving this money to *tzedaka* refines all aspects of the *nefesh*; a person’s very life.³

This is why *tzedaka* is especially apt to bring the *geulah*—because it refines so much of the *nefesh habehamis*, making way for the light of the time of Moshiach.



In a similar vein, Chazal also say, “אין ישראל נגאלין אלא בצדקה”—the Jewish people will only be redeemed through *tzedaka*.⁴

The Alter Rebbe explains: Nowadays, at the end of the *golus*, our most important mitzvah is to give *tzedaka*. The reason being that the level of *Malchus*, referred to as “*Sukkas Dovid*” has fallen to the lowest level. It is our job to elevate it by way of acts of *tzedaka*, giving to someone who is in a lower state than you and doesn’t have anything of his own.⁵



So what are Chassidim indeed to do? The Rebbe left it up to us to bring Moshiach, but it seemed like he didn’t specify exactly what we need to do.

After scrambling their minds and trying to come up with specific ideas of what to do, the Rebbe himself addressed the issue at a *farbrengen* two weeks after the original *sicha* of 28 Nissan.

The Rebbe famously called on everyone to increase in the study of Torah on the subject of Moshiach and *geulah*.

Additionally, the Rebbe called for an increase in fulfilling mitzvot, especially the mitzvah of *tzedaka*, which is specifically suitable for bringing the *geulah*.

Interestingly, the Rebbe added:

We can connect our increase in *tzedaka* with our increase in studying the *inyanei geulah*, by **giving *tzedaka* with the specific intention of hastening the coming of Moshiach**. Being that this fact (that *tzedaka* hastens *geulah*) is written in Torah, doing the act (*tzedaka*) and thinking the thought (Torah) will connect the two together.⁶

But the main thing is that the *geulah* should actually come already. As the Rebbe once concluded a *farbrengen*:

“We will now give out dollars through the ‘*tankistim*.’ As we’ve explained in the past, the quantity [of just one dollar] doesn’t matter; the most important thing is to give it to *tzedaka*. This will hasten the coming of Moshiach, as Chazal say, ‘גדולה צדקה שמקרבת את הגאולה’—the literal and actual *geulah*, through Moshiach *Tzidkeinu!*”⁷

1. *Sicha* 28 Nissan 5751, transcribed from the audio recording.

2. *Bava Basra* 10a.

3. *Tanya* Perek 37.

4. *Rambam Hilchos Matnas Aniym* 10:1; see *Gemara Shabbos* 139a.

5. *Iggeres Hakodesh* Siman 9.

6. *Shabbos Parshas Tazria-Metzora* 5751; *Sefer Hasichos* 5751 vol. 2, p. 501.

7. *Yud Shevat* 5747; *Toras Menachem* 5747 vol. 2, p. 412.



HISTORIC MISSION

THE REBBE'S SHLUCHIM TO ERETZ YISRAEL
5736-5738

לע"נ
 הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' אברהם יעקב
 ב"ר חיים מרדכי ע"ה
 נלב"ע כ"ה תשרי ה'תשנ"ו
 ולע"נ זוגתו האשה החשובה
 מרת פריידא ראצא
 בת הרב יחיאל אפרים פישל ע"ה
 נלב"ע ט"ז אדר-שני ה'תשע"ו
 נדפס ע"י בנם
 הרה"ת ר' משה מאיר שמואל
 וזוגתו רבקה לאה ומשפחתם שי'
 גלוצקאוסקי



THE REBBE ESCORTS THE SHLUCHIM FROM THE STEPS OF 770 AS THEY LEAVE TO THE AIRPORT, 11 SHEVAT 5736.

When one of the shluchim's parents asked the Rebbe for matzos on behalf of his son, the Rebbe replied: "ער טוט דאך אין די" מבצעים... זיי זיינען מיינע שלוחים פערזענליך, און איך דארף נישט אנקומען צו קיינע ממוצעים" (He is involved in the *mitzvot*... They are my personal shluchim, and I do not need anyone to be a go-between...)

Such was the extraordinary affection the Rebbe expressed towards the special groups of shluchim sent to Eretz Yisrael.

Imagine the setting: Purim Katan *farbrengen* 5738—forty years ago. The Rebbe was bidding farewell to the third and final group of shluchim to Eretz Yisrael. After he had called up the shluchim to come up to his table to receive dollars and *kuntreisim* in honor of their trip, the Rebbe said that the shluchos, too, should come down from the *vaiber shul* to the *farbrengen*; when they came up to the table, he gave them dollars for their parents as well.

This unusual scene is hardly alone in the extraordinary story of the three groups of shluchim to Eretz Yisrael. This story—the effects of which continue to reverberate in Eretz Yisrael until today—takes us back two years earlier, to Yud-Tes Kislev 5736.

THE ANNOUNCEMENT

It all began at the tail-end of a long night, as the Rebbe's Yud-Tes Kislev *farbrengen* was coming to a close. With closed eyes, the Rebbe began saying a *sicha* on the topic of the Rebbeim's connection to Eretz Yisrael. This was followed by a quite cryptic announcement:

A group of ten Yidden would be sent as the Rebbe's shluchim to the old city of Yerushalayim, and another group of ten to Tzfas. They would spend their time learning Torah *b'tahara*, fulfilling mitzvos (especially those unique to Eretz Yisrael), and influencing those around them. Those who were interested could sign up through the *mazkirus*.²

Rabbi Yitzchok Goldberg, today the *rosh yeshiva* in Migdal Haemek, relates: "The next morning I went into the *mazkirus* to sign up, as the Rebbe had said. Rabbi Binyomin Klein was there, but he told me that he hadn't received any directives from the Rebbe on the matter, so he wasn't quite sure how he could help me. I just wrote my name on a piece of paper and gave it to him. If I remember correctly, another person who had already given his name was [the venerable elder Chossid] Reb Shmuel Dovid Raichik."

No one knew what this shlichus meant—who was supposed to go? For how long? What exactly were they going to do there? But meanwhile, hundreds of Chassidim, young, old, and everyone in between, were stopping in to *mazkirus* to sign up.

Over the next few days, more details began emerging from the *mazkirus*, and two Shabbosim later

(Shabbos Miketz), the Rebbe spoke at the *farbrengen*,³ defining and elaborating on the shlichus, and officially laying out a few conditions:

The Rebbe began by saying that there were those who made the following argument: why are you sending only twenty people—you should send twenty thousand! Send older people!

There is no point for elderly people to go, the Rebbe explained, because this is not an "*aliya*." The intent of the shlichus is for *binyan ha'aretz*, the building of the land—and for that, young people are required; they are there to build the land spiritually as well as physically.

Then the Rebbe defined what the shlichus would be: They would be going for at least a year, preferably two, after which it would be decided whether they should settle there. They were going to work—study *nigleh* and Chassidus with diligence, and do *hafatzas haTorah v'hamaayanos* in their free time.

The Rebbe went on to say who would be considered for this shlichus:

- It was only for couples who were a year after their marriage, or *bochurim* who were not yet contemplating marriage [—within the following year, as *mazkirus* would later explain].
- One must be healthy both physically and spiritually.
- One must go with joy and happiness.

The Rebbe added that being that a period of time had passed since it was first spoken about, an additional one or two people should be added in each group.

"שלוחו של אדם כמותו," the Rebbe declared. "A shliach is like his sender; I am taking the responsibility for them—עלי ועל צוארי, they are on my shoulders."

WHO WILL IT BE?

Tension swirled around 770. It was very rare for the Rebbe to personally choose shluchim for a mission, and there was something very "*himmeldik*" about the fact that they were being sent to the holy cities of Yerushalayim and Tzfas. It is no surprise that Crown Heights was on wheels, with excitement mixing with nervousness as everyone waited to see who would be chosen.

Through the *mazkirus*, a couple of more conditions came out for the shlichus: it was only for those who were not already involved in a *mosad*, and for the *bochurim*, their parents had to give their consent.

Over the next week (Parshas Vayigash), the names of the couples that had been chosen as shluchim to Tzfas started coming out one by one: Rabbis Levi Bistrisky *a"h*, and, יבלחט"א, Alter Eliyahu Friedman, Shmuel Greisman, Yochanan Gurary, Yisrael Yosef Hendel, Yitzchak Goldberg, Yosef Rosenfeld, and Yosef Yitzchak Wilshansky would be going with their wives (and small babies) as the Rebbe's shluchim to Tzfas. Three *bochurim* were also added to the group: Aharon Eliezer Tzeitlin, *a"h*, and, יבלחט"א, Yosef Kramer and Yosef Raitzes, all three having spent two years as *talmidim hashluchim* in Melbourne. [The Rebbe said that since they were already accustomed to being around *baalei batim* in Australia, they could join the married couples.]

The shluchim to Yerushalayim, who would only be *bochurim*, began finding out on Friday. By Shabbos day, everyone in 770 had found out which *bochurim* had the great *zechus* to be chosen. The final list was: Shalom



► No one knew what this shlichus meant—who was supposed to go? For how long? What exactly were they going to do there?



THE SHLUCHIM
DANCE IN THE
TERMINAL BEFORE
DEPARTING.

THE SHLUCHIM
ARRIVE AT
CUSTOMS.



THOUSANDS GREET THE SHLUCHIM AT THE AIRPORT, 12 SHEVAT 5736.

YEMETIMIM ARCHIVES

Dovber Shur, א"ח, and, יבלחט"א, Sholom Duchman, Yehuda Leib Eidelkop, Shneur Zalman Goodman, Yosef Yitzchak Gurewitz, Sholom Ber Labkovsky, Menachem Mendel Lieberman, Chaim Nochum Yonasan Luria, Avrohom Boruch Pewzner, Yitzchak Yaakov Rosenshein, and Zev Avraham Slavin.

GETTING READY TO GO

Up until this point, the Rebbe had not said when the shluchim were supposed to set out, but now that everyone was chosen, they were told that they had a month to prepare for their trip. When asked whether the shluchim would enter *yechidus* before their departure, the Rebbe commented to someone in *yechidus* that "מיועט" געזעגענען מיט זיי י"ד שבט"; implying that the official goodbye would take place at the Yud Shevat *farbrengen*. The trip was officially arranged through the Israeli embassy; they initially planned on putting the shluchim on different flights, but the Rebbe wanted them to all leave together on 11 Shevat.

FAREWELL

Time passed quickly, and soon the trip was around the corner. Yud Shevat, which was when the official goodbye from the Rebbe was to be, was on Monday. The Rebbe made the annual *siyum* (in honor of the *yahrtzeit*) on *Maseches Kesubos*, the end of which discusses the greatness of going to Eretz Yisrael as well as the

► Crown Heights was on wheels, with excitement mixed with nervousness as everyone waited to see who would be chosen.

importance of staying and working in Bavel.

Later in the *farbrengen*, the Rebbe spoke again⁴ about the shlichus, and, among other things, he discussed a novelty in this shlichus: that men, women, and children were being sent as his shluchim. The Rebbe explained that this—working with women and girls, and also with children—was one of the great innovations of the Frierdiker Rebbe, which was why he—the Rebbe—had ensured to choose men, women, and children, representing all three of these segments. [It should be noted that the Rebbe's letters to the shluchim after they left were addressed to, "The Shluchim: men, women, and children, *shlit"a*"]. This *farbrengen* was also the historic occasion when the Rebbe made a *sanhedrin* of the rabbonim present to rule that Eretz Yisrael belongs to the Yidden.⁵

Rabbi Shmuel Greisman, today director of the Children's Sefer Torah, relates: "A few *yungeleit* from Crown



Heights had gotten together at the time to buy a new mitzvah tank and they presented the key to the Rebbe as a gift at the *farbrengen*. When they approached to give the key, the Rebbe instructed them to send it with the shluchim to Eretz Yisrael, and added: אבער גיט זיי א צווייטען שליסל, ווייל מיין שליסל גיב איך נישט אפ. —But give them another key, because I'm not giving up mine..."

Finally, the big day of 11 Shevat arrived—the day the shluchim were scheduled to depart. *Mincha* was held downstairs due to the large crowd that had come to see the shluchim off. After *Mincha*, the shluchim all congregated in *Gan Eden Hatachton*. At about 4:30, Rabbi Mentlik and his wife went into *yechidus* with the Rebbe. A few minutes later, Mrs. Mentlik emerged holding a Tanya and money for *tzedaka*, after which Rabbi Hodakov went in. Meanwhile, the shluchim and their families waited eagerly and nervously right outside.

(Rabbi Mentlik later related that at this *yechidus*, the Rebbe had told him the conditions for future shluchim to follow: "If you [the shluchim] are satisfied with them [the people in Eretz Yisrael], and they are satisfied with you, we will send more." Rabbi Mentlik repeated this numerous times throughout the trip.)

Rabbi Goldberg relates: "At 5:00 the door opened. The Rebbe stood at the door to his room, and the *yungeleit* began walking by together with their wives and children. The Rebbe gave each man a Likkutei Sichos vol. 11, the weekly *likut* on *Beshalach*, and a number of different denominations of money in American and Israeli currency. Each woman received a *siddur*, a Tanya, and also the various bills. Children received a Tanya, in which the Rebbe put money for *tzedaka*. The families were followed by the *bochurim*.

HONORED GUEST



Rabbi Shneur Goodman, today the head shliach of Ashdod, relates: "Rumors started circulating that Rabbi Mentlik, the famed *rosh yeshiva* of 770, would be joining the trip as well, but no one knew whether or not it was true. One day, I went to the passport office in Manhattan to get ready for the trip, and who do I see but Rabbi Mentlik... I came back to 770 and said "Rabbosai, I saw him standing in line at the passport office. He's coming."

“The fact that the Rebbe gave us a volume of Likkutei Sichos was a huge *chiddush*; it was revolutionary! Until then, if the Rebbe ever gave someone a *sefer* in *yechidus* it was a *siddur* or a Tanya, but he never gave out his own *sefer*.

“In fact, volume 10 of Likkutei Sichos had been recently published, but the Vaad Lehafatzas Sichos had not had in mind to publish volume 11 so soon afterwards. Only a few days before our departure, the Rebbe had instructed that volume 11 be published, as he wished to distribute it to the shluchim. Somehow, with miraculous speed, they managed to put it together in time, and it arrived the very day we were leaving. The printer hadn’t even had the time to finish the cover, and the Rebbe gave out the volumes with a handmade cover. It was a great *giluy* and *kiruv* to the shluchim that the Rebbe was giving out his own *sefer* for the first time.”

WITH JOY!

Standing in line, one of the shluchos began crying. The Rebbe said, “Why are you crying? You are going to Eretz Yisrael; you must be joyous!” She proceeded to ask for a *bracha* for children. Nine months later, the couple had a child.

Soon after, the Rebbe went out to the steps of 770 to personally see the shluchim off to their shlichus. Busloads of Chassidim went off to the airport as well, where several of the shluchim and Israeli officials addressed the crowd before boarding the plane—all of which was covered by the media.

WELCOMING THE SHLUCHIM

The Rebbe’s words over the last few weeks made waves throughout Eretz Yisrael, and people from all over the country streamed to the airport to greet the shluchim. The entire arrivals area in Ben Gurion Airport filled up, and the crowd began filling the outside as well. The most prominent Lubavitcher rabbonim and *askanim* were there, and all students in Chabad yeshivos across Eretz Yisrael were present as well—as per the Rebbe’s instruction (via Rabbi Hodakov) to Rabbi Efraim Wolf. The crowd swelled to the thousands. At 5:00 p.m. on 12 Shevat 5736, the shluchim and shluchos along with Rabbi Mentlik emerged. Trumpets were blown to give them a royal welcome, followed by “Napoleon’s March” led by Reb Zushe “the Partisan” Wilmovsky.

Rabbi Mentlik said a few words, followed by Reb Zushe. Reb Zushe completed his speech with the *bracha* and wish that these shluchim would represent “*Es Yehuda shalach l’fanav*”—the first step for when the Rebbe will himself come to Eretz Yisrael with the *geula ha’amitis v’hashleima*. The sound of “*Amein!*” resounded from all directions.

Although the original plan had been that some of the shluchim would stay in lodgings for new immigrants in Kfar Chabad while they were finding places to stay, they now found out that the Rebbe had instructed that they should all go directly to their respective cities. After a short stop for something to eat at the yeshiva in Lod, the shluchim traveled directly to Tzfas and Yerushalayim.

Notwithstanding their long trip, almost immediately after the shluchim to Yerushalayim arrived in Toras Emes—where they would be lodging—they set off with Rabbi Mentlik for the Tzemach Tzedek shul in the old city, where they *chazzered*

sections of a *maamar* and *sicha* (Torah), davened (*avoda*) and gave *tzedaka* (*gemilus chassodim*), as per the Rebbe’s instructions.

A few days later, all the shluchim and their families went to the Knesset, where Rabbi Mentlik and Rabbi Shlomo Maidanchik were scheduled to meet with Prime Minister Yitzchak Rabin, as per the Rebbe’s instructions. In a report to the Rebbe, Rabbi Mentlik described the meeting:

“I went into his room wearing a *gartel*. He welcomed us affectionately and asked us to sit down. Maidanchik told him that I wished to give over a shlichus, which was why I was wearing a *gartel* and had remained standing. I began with giving him regards from the Rebbe, and then I continued: The Rebbe *shlit”a* asked me to tell you: When you visited the Rebbe (for his seventieth birthday, 11 Nissan 5732) the Rebbe spoke to you about הן עם לבדד ישכון ובגוים לא יתחשב, A nation that will dwell alone, and will not be reckoned among the nations.” This was when you were an ambassador; now that you are the prime minister, this must be even stronger.”

Rabbi Mentlik went on to talk about the shlichus, and also gave Rabin a 10,000 *lira* check from the Rebbe, which was for the purpose of “the building of Eretz Yisrael.” After Rabbi Mentlik finished conveying the formal shlichus, he sat down, and they began conversing. Afterwards, Mr. Rabin came out to shake hands with the shluchim, welcoming them to the land and wishing them success in fulfilling their shlichus.

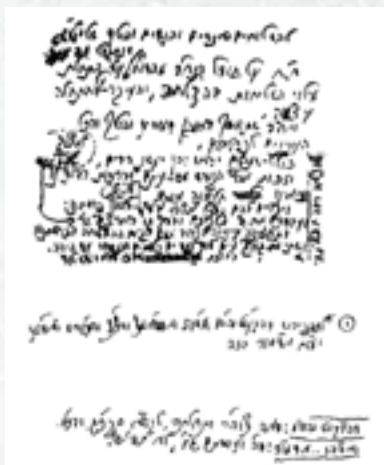
Then they were off to visit the president, Mr. Efraim Katzir, in his home, where they were greeted with great ceremony. A few days later, a huge welcoming event was held in the Binyanei Ha’uma, a hall in Yerushalayim, with the participation of thousands of people.



THE WELCOMING EVENT IN THE BINYANEI HA'UMA HALL IN YERUSHALAYIM.



THE REBBE GREETES THE FAMILIES OF SHLUCHIM BEFORE THEIR DEPARTURE, 11 SHEVAT 5736.



THE FIRST TELEGRAM THE REBBE SENT TO THE SHLUCHIM OF 5736. INTERESTINGLY, ALL OF THE REBBEIM ARE MENTIONED HERE.



THE TZEMACH TZEDEK SHUL IN THE OLD CITY OF YERUSHALAYIM.



A LETTER TO THE SHLUCHIM IN TZFAS DATED 11 NISSAN 5736. THE REBBE ADDRESSES THE LETTER "TO THE SHLUCHIM, MEN, WOMEN, AND CHILDREN - SHLIT"A".

PORTRAIT OF DEVOTION

Throughout the trip, Rabbi Mentlik fulfilled his shlichus with an astonishing level of dedication, and at every stop, he would give over the Rebbe's words with precision, exactly as he had been told. "Rabbi Mentlik demonstrated to us what it means to be a shliach," Rabbi Goodman says. "His entire being was one with the *meshaleiach*—for these weeks, he was nothing on his own. Some of us felt that this may have been why the Rebbe had sent him with us, to give us on-the-job training of what it means to be a shliach..."

"Rabbi Mentlik wore a *gartel* the entire time he was in Eretz Yisrael," Rabbi Sholom Ber Labkowsky, today the *rosh kolel* in Kfar Chabad adds, "and he didn't take a step if he wasn't instructed to do so by the Rebbe. For example, although he had a relative in Tel Aviv, he didn't go to visit her—it wasn't part of his shlichus..."

The Rebbe had given Rabbi Mentlik a bottle of *marshke* for the shlichus, and from when he received it from the Rebbe's hands he didn't let it out of his sight. Wherever he went, he was accompanied by the hand-bag holding the bottle, and when he would go to the *mikvah* he would entrust it with one of the shluchim with the warning not to set it on the ground.



GETTING STARTED

The shluchim quickly settled in. The living conditions in the old city of Tzfas, which was still a primitive village in its earliest stages of development, were not necessarily the best—some of the shluchim did not even have working bathrooms in their apartments!—but the powerful feeling of being on the Rebbe's shlichus overrode any physical difficulties. They would study all day in the Tzemach Tzedek shul, doing *mitvzoim* between the *sedorim*. At night they would take the mitzvah tank, which had come with them from America, and drive around to different *moshavim* to visit people and do *mitvzoim*.

The shluchim in Yerushalayim stayed in Toras Emes, but, as per the Rebbe's instructions, they had their own *seder* separate from the yeshiva, and they would drive back and forth every day to study in the Tzemach Tzedek shul in the old city of Yerushalayim. In addition to the

mitvzoim and activities, they managed to publish a volume of *ha'aros ubiurim* within a few days.

After a couple of weeks, Rabbi Mentlik returned to America, and the shluchim to Yerushalayim accompanied him to the airport. He kissed each one of them, and told them, "You should know that you are no longer *baalei batim* over yourselves—you are the shluchim of the Rebbe. You must be careful in every thought, word, and deed." These words, spoken with quiet sincerity, left a lasting impression on them all.

In New York, Rabbi Mentlik was picked up at the airport by a mitzvah tank and driven directly to 770. He went into *yechidus* with the Rebbe, where he gave a full report on the shlichus, and also the volume of *ha'aros*. [The Rebbe asked him whether a non-Jew had been involved in its publication. Rabbi Mentlik replied that the shluchim had told him that it was printed in a Jewish print house. The Rebbe didn't react, but the shluchim

later realized that although the print house was owned by a Jew, the actual person who had done the printing was not...]

Following the report, the Rebbe sent a telegram to the shluchim, which he wrote by hand. The warmth and directness with which the Rebbe was writing to the shluchim—young couples and *bochurim* who only a few weeks earlier had been regular people going about their lives in Crown Heights—is incredible, and provides some insight into the esteem with which the Rebbe viewed the shluchim, and the level he expected them to live up to.

"To the Shluchim; the men, the women, and the children, *shlit"a*:

"Thank you for the great *nachas* that I received from the report of how you began the shlichus with success... May it be Hashem's will that this continues, in an increasing manner, in all areas, including that others should follow your example. May the merit of the Eretz Hakodesh assist you, and may the *brachos* of *Rabboseinu Nesieinu* accompany you...with true peace and serenity, and very soon, may our eyes witness the promise of our *parsha* [regarding the *geulah*]... Blessings for a good Shabbos, a good month, and great success forever."

Over the years, the Rebbe would often send letters to the two groups of shluchim encouraging their activities and thanking them for their reports.

FULL SPEED AHEAD

One major effect of the shluchim was an added *chayus* and energy in the Rebbe's *inyanim*—after all, these were *bochurim* and *yungeleit* who had spent years in 770 at the Rebbe's *farbrengens*, an opportunity not available to many Chassidim in Eretz Yisrael—and they brought the live hook-ups (*shiddurim*) of the *farbrengens* to a new level—*farbrengens* that wouldn't even begin until 4:30 a.m. in Eretz Yisrael.

► Any time there was a possibility that there might be a *farbrengen*, I would stand by a public phone in the middle of the night calling different people and waiting to see if there would be any developments

“From when we came,” Rabbi Greisman says, “we immediately initiated the hook-ups in Tzfas. You have to remember that there were very few phones in the old city of Tzfas, and I was schlepping wires over rooftops to the shuls in order to get a line... Any time there was a possibility that there might be a *farbrengen*—these were years when surprise *farbrengens* were not an unusual occurrence—I would stand by a public phone in the middle of the night calling different people and waiting to see if there would be any developments: now the Rebbe is at the Ohel; now the Rebbe is coming back; now the *farbrengen* was announced... As soon as there was definitive news, I would call up Reb Mulik Rivkin, who had the central hook-up in Kfar Chabad, and we would hear the *farbrengen* in Tzfas through Kfar Chabad. This encouraged the Kfar Chabad *shiddur* as well...”

The shluchim threw themselves into their work, taking the lead on each of the Rebbe’s *mitvzoim* as they were instituted, and bringing another level of energy to the existing initiatives. On the Purim shortly after they arrived, one of the shluchim famously drove through a dangerous crowd of armed Arabs to reach a military base for *mitvza Purim*, an incident that the Rebbe discussed with great emotion by the *farbrengen*.⁶ When the Rebbe announced *mitvza chinuch*,⁷ he specifically mentioned the shluchim as those who would be leading the *mitvza* and pulling everyone else with them. Indeed, the shluchim and shluchose went around to

schools all over the country to speak to the children and their teachers about education. At a rally for Eretz Yisrael in Yerushalayim held by the Eidah Hachareidis—the central *beis din* of Yerushalayim—they convinced the rabbonim to teach the newly instituted *pesukim* to the tens of thousands of children.

In the lead-up to Yud-Aleph Nissan, the shluchim arranged seven tanks to travel around Eretz Yisrael doing *mitvzoim*. In preparation for Pesach, over ten-thousand matzos were distributed to students in schools. During Chol Hamoed Pesach, the Rebbe asked that the shluchim direct the implementation of Seudas Moshich in Eretz Yisrael—since they had experienced it themselves in 770—and Seudas Moshich meals took place throughout Eretz Yisrael, headlined by a high-profile event at the Kosel.

The Rebbe expressed extraordinary affection for the shluchim on many occasions. One of the shluchim’s parents asked the Rebbe for matzos on behalf of his son. The Rebbe replied: ער טוט דאך אין די מבצעים... זיי זיינען מיינע שלוחים פערזענליך, און איך דארף נישט אנקומען צו קיינע ממוצעים. He is involved in the *mitvzoim*... They are my personal shluchim, and I do not need anyone to be a go-between...”

When Reb Berke Chein visited 770 from Eretz Yisrael around that time, the Rebbe asked him, “וואס מאכען די? שולוחים? How are the shluchim doing?”

Perhaps more than anything else, their impact was felt in the sheer energy they brought with them. The shluchim were fresh from their years

in 770, and wherever they went, they made a *shturem* about the Rebbe’s *inyanim*—about traveling to the Rebbe, writing to the Rebbe, doing the Rebbe’s *mitvzoim* and fulfilling his *hora’os*. And it wasn’t only about *what* they were saying, it was the *koch* and *hiskashrus* that was so clearly evident in them—*anash* in Eretz Yisrael were uplifted in a manner not seen since the shluchim sent by the Rebbe in 5716,⁸ two decades earlier.

THE SECOND GROUP—5737

One year later, on Yud Shevat 5737, the Rebbe announced that he would be sending a second group of shluchim. Unlike the previous time, the group would only consist of *yungeleit* who would be joining the previous group in Tzfas. Of course, many couples signed up.

The group was chosen about a week later: Rabbis Sholom Ber Brod, Yosef Chitrik, Yosef Hecht, Yehuda Yirmiya Shildkraut, Yosef Yitzchak Wolosow, Yosef Yitzchak Piekarski, and their wives, would be moving to Tzfas as the Rebbe’s second group of shluchim. But a surprise was in store for them: they only had one short week to prepare for their flight to Eretz Yisrael—only one week from when they heard that they would be going on this life-changing mission until it began.

On the day of the trip, the shluchim once again had the *zechus* to go into *Gan Eden Hatachton*, and the Rebbe gave each of them a number of gifts similar to the previous group (with an addition, *maalin bakodesh*). The Rebbe also thanked each of the parents for allowing their children to go on the shlichus.

Then there was an astonishing turn of events. The Rebbe said: “Being that ‘*m’galgelin zechus*’ [i.e. one positive thing leads to another], I will also give [dollars] to everyone who is here. This is *tzedaka* in the *zechus* of the shluchim.”

AT THE KOSEL

Rabbi Labkowsky relates: “We would often go to the Kosel to do *mitvtzoim* and so on, and we decided that there needs to be a live hook-up of the Rebbe’s *farbrengens* at the Kosel. Reb Yitzchak Gurevitch, today the *mashpia* in Migdal Haemek, and I approached Rabbi Getz, who was the rav of the Kosel, and he gave us permission. The *farbrengens* would begin at about 4:30 a.m. in Eretz Yisrael (which is 9:30 p.m. in New York), and after it was over we would go up to the office of Rabbi Getz—who didn’t understand Yiddish—to speak to him about the *farbrengen* and about the Rebbe. We had the opportunity to also see him during the night as we were setting up the hook-ups and so on, as he had the custom of reciting *tikkun chatzos* at the Kosel.

“This continued for a while. The Yud-Beis Tammuz *farbrengen* of 5736 was very lengthy, and continued well into the morning in Eretz Yisrael. A certain Israeli politician (who was involved in keeping the terrible *gezeira* of *Mihu Yehudi*) happened to come by during the hook-up and began making trouble for Rabbi Getz for allowing the *shiddurim* to happen.

“We immediately passed this on to the Rebbe, and shortly afterwards, Rabbi Efraim Wolf, who was in charge of Aguch in Eretz Yisrael, received a phone call from Rabbi Hodakov: The Rebbe had written a letter to Rabbi Getz, but being that the letter would take a couple weeks to arrive, Rabbi Hodakov dictated it over the phone to Rabbi Wolf so that it could be immediately delivered to Rabbi Getz by those who were dealing with him—meaning us, the shluchim. The Rebbe wrote that he had been greatly pained to hear that Rabbi Getz had been caused *agmas nefesh* because of something that he—the Rebbe—was connected with, something that was connected with *hafatzas hamaayanos*. The Rebbe then went on to give him many *brachos*. We went to the Kosel and hand-delivered the letter.

“The *shiddurim* at the Kosel continued for a full year, and all of the *farbrengens* were heard at the Kosel. Many people participated. One time, the Rebbe spoke very sharply about the fact they want to put a flag of the PLO on Har Habayis. After the *farbrengen*, the Rebbe asked whether this *sicha* had been heard at the Kosel... These hookups were very important to the Rebbe.

“Over time Rabbi Getz developed a special relationship with the Rebbe, and this gave the Rebbe direct influence on everything happening at the Kosel. At one point, there was a question as to whether the stones of the Kosel should be coated with a certain material that would keep them from deteriorating. On the one hand, the coating was invisible to the eye and would protect the stones, but should the stones of the Kosel be treated after so many centuries? The decision was ultimately left to Rabbi Getz. I happened to be going to New York a couple of weeks later, and I asked the Rebbe on his behalf. The Rebbe’s answer was not to do it—and that’s what happened. From thousands of miles away, the Rebbe was directing what was happening at the Kosel Hama’aravi...

“The Rebbe once wrote to Rabbi Getz that he had received regards from our mutual friends—referring to us shluchim.”

Pandemonium erupted. It was rare in those days for anyone to receive something from the Rebbe’s hand—a special merit reserved for *yechidusen* and other occasions. Now, for the first time ever, the Rebbe was giving dollars to everyone who would come! As the news spread, people from all over Crown Heights came running to 770 to receive a dollar from the Rebbe.

REINFORCEMENTS

The new shluchim joined their fellow shluchim in Tzfas, putting their hearts and souls into the Rebbe’s shlichus. Just like the previous group of shluchim, they had no way of knowing how long they were supposed to be there, or even what their long-term purpose was, but that did not inhibit their enthusiasm.



Rabbi Yossi Hecht, today the shliach and rav of Eilat, had been a *chozer* in New York, and when he came to Eretz Yisrael, he continued in this work. “After Shabbos was over in New York—three or four in the morning in Eretz Yisrael—I would go out to a payphone and call Rabbi Leibel Altein to hear a short *chazara* of the *farbrengen*. I would type it up, and by Sunday morning the entire Eretz Yisrael already had written-up points of the *farbrengen*. It was a big *chiddush* at the time.”

The shluchim continued to receive special missions from the Rebbe. For example, when Rabbi Zevin, a prestigious Chossid and an integral activist on the Rebbe’s behalf in Eretz Yisrael, passed away, it was the young

► Now, for the first time ever, the Rebbe was giving dollars to everyone who would come!

PERFORMING MIVTZA
TEFILLIN UPON ARRIVAL
IN ERETZ YISRAEL.



PRIME MINISTER YITZCHAK RABIN
GREETES THE SHLUCHIM IN THE
KNESSET. RABBI MENTLIK SHARES
THE REBBE'S MESSAGE WITH RABIN
WHILE WEARING A GARTEL.



ISRAELI PRESIDENT EFRAIM KATZIR GREETES THE SHLUCHIM AND RABBI MENTLIK.

shluchim whom the Rebbe asked to go to the *levaya* as his representatives.

“The IDF was fighting in a war in Lebanon at the time,” Rabbi Hecht says, “and at one point we received a letter—completely *mil’mala l’mata*—that we should visit the wounded soldiers in his name. In the letter, addressed “to the shluchim in Tzfas”—keep in mind that the shluchim the Rebbe is referring to are young, recently married *yungeleit*—the Rebbe sends us as his personal representatives: “Surely you will find a fitting opportunity to relay to each and every one of them my wishes for a quick and complete recovery.”

“The events of Shemini Atzeres 5738 occurred a few months after we arrived,” Rabbi Yosef Chitrik, *menahel* of Beis Chana in Tzfas, relates. “The Rebbetzin had asked that someone should go to the *mekomos hakedoshim* to *daven* for the Rebbe’s recovery. Somehow, we found out before Yom Tov was over (I remember that we were in the middle of an exciting *farbrengen* at the time...), and we immediately ran to the Arizal’s *kever*. After Yom Tov ended a few hours later, we piled into cars and taxis and went directly to the Rashbi’s *kever*.”



THE THIRD GROUP

Yud Shevat 5738 marked two years from when the first group of shluchim had departed for Eretz Yisrael. At the *farbrengen* that year, the Rebbe announced that he would be sending yet another group of *bochurim* and *yungeleit* to Eretz Yisrael. As details emerged from *mazkirus*, hundreds of *bochurim* and *yungeleit* submitted their names; the crowd held its collective breath waiting to see who would be chosen. About two weeks later, each person was notified by Rabbi Klein.

► As per the Rebbe’s request, the women came down to the main shul—in the middle of the *farbrengen*!—to receive theirs as well, together with the children.

The eight *yungeleit* going to Tzfas were Rabbis Yehoshua Shlomo Zirkind, *a”h*, and, יבִּחְלִיט, Avrohom Shmuel Bukiet, Yosef Yitzchak Ganzburg, Yosef Gerlitzky, Yaakov Shlomo Lieberman, Gavriel Marzel, Yehuda Leib Popack, and Menachem Mendel Rivkin. The eight *bochurim* to Yerushalayim were Zushe Alperowitz, Yosef Yitzchak Deren, Mordechai Tzvi Dubravsky, Menachem Mendel Gluckowsky, Menachem Mendel Groner, Avrohom Mordechai Kastel, Yosef Yitzchak Liberow, and Yosef Yitzchak Rivkin.

Rabbi Mendel Groner, today the *mashgiach* in Kiryat Gat, relates: “At the time, Rabbi Hodakov told my father, Rabbi Leibel Groner, that the Rebbe had said that he had certain people in mind for the shlichus, and he hopes that they will volunteer and sign up on their own...”



The departure date was set for Wednesday, 15 Adar I. The Rebbe held a special Purim Katan *farbrengen* the day before their scheduled flight in honor of the shluchim (in addition to them having a *yechidus* in *Gan Eden Hatachton* the following day).

At the *farbrengen*, the Rebbe showed tremendous *kiruvim* to the shluchim, asking that they come up to the platform to receive dollars and *kuntreisim* for their trip, and that each one introduce himself. As per the Rebbe’s request, the women came down to the main shul—in the middle of the *farbrengen*!—to receive theirs as well, together with the children. The Rebbe expressed special thanks to the parents of the shluchim, giving

two dollars to each of the shluchim and shluchos for their parents. The following day the Rebbe gave the shluchim the new Likkutei Sichos (vol. 13).

Like the previous groups, the shluchim flew off to Eretz Yisrael with great excitement.

Around this time, the Rebbe opened a new yeshiva in the Tzemach Tzedek shul, where the *shluchim-bochurim* in Yerushalayim would learn, under the leadership of Rabbi Sholom Duchman and Rabbi Avrohom Boruch Pewzner, two members of the first group (who were also given the responsibility for Colel Chabad).⁹

Rabbi Mendel Groner relates: “A few months later, on 23 Elul 5738, Rabbi Hodakov called Rabbis Duchman and Pewzner—with the Rebbe on the line!—to give a special assignment for the shluchim: In a discreet and swift manner, they should print a Tanya in the Tzemach Tzedek shul in Yerushalayim. They should try to get it done by Erev Rosh Hashanah, the Tzemach Tzedek’s birthday.

“During that conversation, Rabbi Hodakov relayed—as a side note—that the Rebbe expects that out of this group of eight *bochurim* in Yerushalayim, there should be rabbonim, *mashpi’im*, and *roshei yeshivos*. This is indeed the case today.”

Although this was a tall order—arranging a printing press and maneuvering it into the shul was no simple matter—they managed to get it done, working twenty-four hours straight, and the first copies were immediately sent to the Rebbe. The Rebbe walked in with the Tanya to the

KINUSEI TORAH

The shluchim brought tremendous energy to the Rebbe's Torah-initiatives as well. In the beginning of Menachem-Av 5736, the shluchim received a telephone call from the *mazkirus* instructing them to go to rabbonim and ask them to give lectures on matters related to the *Beis Hamikdash*—a *mivtza* that the Rebbe had established for the Three Weeks. Following the Rebbe's directive, annual *kinusei Torah* were established, in which many prominent Torah personalities participated, under the leadership of Rabbi Avrohom Boruch Pewzner.¹⁰

A few years later, the third group of shluchim took upon themselves the establishment of another type of *kinus Torah*. Rabbi Mendel Groner relates: "The Rebbe always encouraged people to hold *kinusei Torah* around *Yomim Tovim*, but Chabad in Yerushalayim had never had one yet. We decided to make one for Pesach 5738, a few months after our group arrived. We put up signs all over Yerushalayim, visited *roshei yeshivos* to invite them, and called *yungeleit* to encourage them to participate. It was very difficult work, as it was the first time ever, but it turned out to be a beautiful success.

"Then, a few days before Pesach the following year, 5739, the Rebbe asked my father [Rabbi Leibel Groner], "Will there be a *kinus* again this year in Yerushalayim? I haven't heard anything about it." We hadn't realized that the Rebbe appreciated it so much... Within a few days we managed to put it together for that year as well."

farbrengen of Erev Rosh Hashanah, and he spoke about the printing as well as the new *mivtza* of printing Tanyas throughout the world.

SETTLING DOWN

One of the most unique elements of the shlichus was the fact that the shluchim weren't sent to a specific *mosad* or for a particular job; they were in Eretz Yisrael to be the Rebbe's shluchim! For the first while, they didn't even know how long they would be spending there! About three years after the first shluchim arrived, on Rosh Chodesh Shevat 5739, the Rebbe sent a warm, very unique letter addressed to "the shluchim in Eretz Hakodesh." In it, one sees a clear expression of the Rebbe's personal investment in and responsibility for the shluchim.

The Rebbe gave them a set of guidelines as to how to settle in Eretz Yisrael. "Being that three

years have passed since the first shluchim arrived—three years of *chazaka*—it is very much expected that every person, man and woman, will reflect on themselves and their surroundings—on the opportunities and the needs that they found in Eretz Hakodesh—[to contemplate] how they can utilize the talents that they were blessed with, and the *koach* and *brachos* given to them by the Rebbe, my father-in-law, *nesi doreinu*—for the maximum success. Even if until now they were fulfilling the shlichus in a general manner, the time has come for every family and every person to start having a specific plan."

The Rebbe went on to lay out different levels of priorities in their work: that those who are able should get *semicha* and *dayanus* and become rabbonim. The others should get involved in *mosdos Chabad* or should work in *chinuch*—and so on, a very detailed list.

"Their contemplation in this matter should be with the appropriate patience," the Rebbe wrote, "but without any laziness at all, and *bli neder* we will try to help them as well, especially since the shlichus continues now as well..."

It is impossible to truly measure the impact the shluchim have had—and continue to have—over the years in Eretz Yisrael, but the country is indisputably a different place than it would have been without them.

On the most simple level, some of the most prominent rabbonim, *mashpi'im* and *roshei yeshivos* in Eretz Yisrael today are from this group, as are many of the most prominent *mashpious*, *mechanchos*, and speakers. Many of the educational institutions are directed by them, and the first major Chabad Houses were established by them. The implementation of many of the Rebbe's *mivtzoim* were led by the shluchim, as were many of the big group trips to New York.

But it goes deeper than that. Perhaps more than anything, the shluchim were—and are—shluchim, representatives of the Rebbe, *shluchos shel adam kemoso*. They brought with them a firm pride in being the Rebbe's Chassidim, and unbridled energy in fulfilling his directives. **T**

1. Another version: זיי דארפ'ן ניט קיינע ממוצעים.

2. Sichos Kodesh 5736 vol. 1, p. 272.

3. Ibid., p. 327.

4. Ibid. p. 445.

5. See *A Psak Din for the World*, Derher Iyar 5776.

6. See אורה ושמוחה, Derher Adar 5775 for the full story.

7. See *Children Educate*, Derher Iyar 5776, for an overview of *mivtza chinuch*.

8. See *Transforming Tragedy*, Derher Sivan 5774, for the full story of the 5716 Shluchim.

9. See *Colel Chabad – The Rebbeim's Tzedaka*, Derher Cheshvan 5778.

10. See *Building a New Reality*, Derher Tammuz 5774, for the full story of these *kinusim*.



THE SHLUCHIM OF 5737 ABOUT TO EMBARK.



THE SHLUCHIM OF 5738 ABOUT TO EMBARK.



THE SHLUCHIM GATHER AT THE ANNUAL KINUS HASHLUCHIM. AN ENDEAVOR GREATLY ENCOURAGED BY THE REBBE.



RABBI YISROEL WEINGARTEN



דער רבי וועט געפינען א וועג...

לזכות
הרה"ת ר' אברהם יהודה הלוי
וזוגתו מרת דבורה לאה ומשפחתם
שיחיו
סאסקינד
נובוי, מישיגין

Doing It Right

AS TOLD BY MRS. SHEINIE WEINGARTEN (FLINT, MI)

During a beautiful *bris* celebration we had arranged on the Sunday of *Parshas Lech Lecha*, I received a Whatsapp message from our friend Assia notifying me that her daughter Mor had just given birth to a healthy baby boy. Their family had lived in Flint for many years and we were especially close with them. All their children went through our preschool and Sunday School. I continued studying privately with Mor, in particular, until she was 16. We've arranged and participated in all their family *simchos* and milestone events.

Assia had recently moved back to Israel while Mor remained in the US. She is presently living in the Detroit area—an hour and a half drive away from us.

I was very excited to hear the good news and inquired about Mor and the baby. She responded that everyone was doing well but made no mention of Mor's plans with regard to a *bris* for the child. A few weeks earlier I had discussed with Mor the importance of having a proper *bris* for the child, but she had seemed non-committal.

The possibility of being involved with a *bris* two Sundays in a row was very exciting—especially on the *parshiyos* of *Lech Lecha* and *Vayeira* when we learn of the *bris* of Avrohom and Yitzchok.

The next morning I texted Assia to follow up, and she responded, "All is well. Mor will do the *bris*." I was unsure what to make of the message. Did she mean that Mor would



arrange the *bris* on her own or did she want us to arrange it? I decided to wait another day before pursuing the issue.

On Tuesday we traveled to New York for a family wedding and I figured I would call Mor en route. After deplaning I realized that my pouch with my phone and driver's license was missing. We frantically searched for it, but it was gone. I felt quite lost since I was supposed to call Mor about the *bris* and I had no access to her contact information.

We went to the Ohel, and among the things I wrote in my *tzetel* I specifically requested that "Mor should commit to doing the *bris b'simcha uv'tuv leivav*." I felt much better afterwards and enjoyed the rest of the evening at the wedding.

Back at home on Wednesday, I retrieved Mor's contact info from my iPad and called her right away. After a brief conversation, she was very clear that she wanted us to arrange the *bris* so that it should be done properly. Greatly relieved, I scheduled the *bris* for Sunday at her home in Detroit with a local *mohel*.

On Friday morning I prepared Shabbos delicacies and my husband delivered it to Mor's home after driving the kids to school in Detroit.

At 10:30, my husband called me sounding very distressed. "Sheinie, we failed! We messed up! Last night, Mor made an appointment with a Jewish doctor to do the *bris* at his clinic on Sunday."

I could not believe my ears. How could Mor back out like that?!

"It's impossible," I said. "I requested a *bracha* from the Rebbe that she should do the *bris* properly! I refuse to accept this!"

Time was of the essence and this *bris* had to be done properly, so I decided to call Mor and give it everything I could, despite the extreme discomfort it would entail.

"I am very disappointed," I said to Mor when she answered the phone and asked so casually how I was. "How can we deprive your child from an authentic *bris*?" I explained to her that a *bris* is a covenant with Hashem and not merely a circumcision, and it must be done by a proper *mohel*. For generations Jews sacrificed everything to do it right.

I reminded her that when she moved into her new home she purchased *mezuzos* for all of the doors of the house because she wanted to do the mitzvah correctly. "When you do a mitzvah, you do it the best way possible. How can you not do the same for your child's *bris*?"

After a brief and qualitative explanation of this mitzvah and a heart-to-heart conversation about how this all connects with her, I could sense that she was listening carefully. She concluded the call saying, "Let me speak to Ima. I'll call you back."

I immediately ran downstairs to write a letter to the Rebbe and faxed it to the Ohel. As I pulled the paper out of the fax machine, my phone rang; it was Mor. She said, "We will do the *bris* with your guy!"

My response to Mor was spontaneous yet from the depth of my heart. "Mor, I'm so proud of you! You passed your test!" I showered her with blessings to be able to overcome all challenges in life and to reap *nachas* from her child.

I wasted no time to call the *mohel* who was on call for us. "Rabbi" I said, "In Chabad we have a special Yom Tov called *Didan Notzach*. Today, in Flint, Michigan, we are celebrating our own *Didan Notzach*!" The *mohel* was ecstatic and expressed his respect and admiration for the Rebbe and his Shluchim. **T**

YOUR STORY

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DEDICATED BY
CHABAD LUBAVITCH
OF WESTPORT

הרה"ת ר' יהודה לייב
וזוגתו מרת נחמה דינה
ומשפחתם שיחיו
קאנטאר



PURIM 5749

Purim 5749 is remembered as a particularly special Purim with the Rebbe.

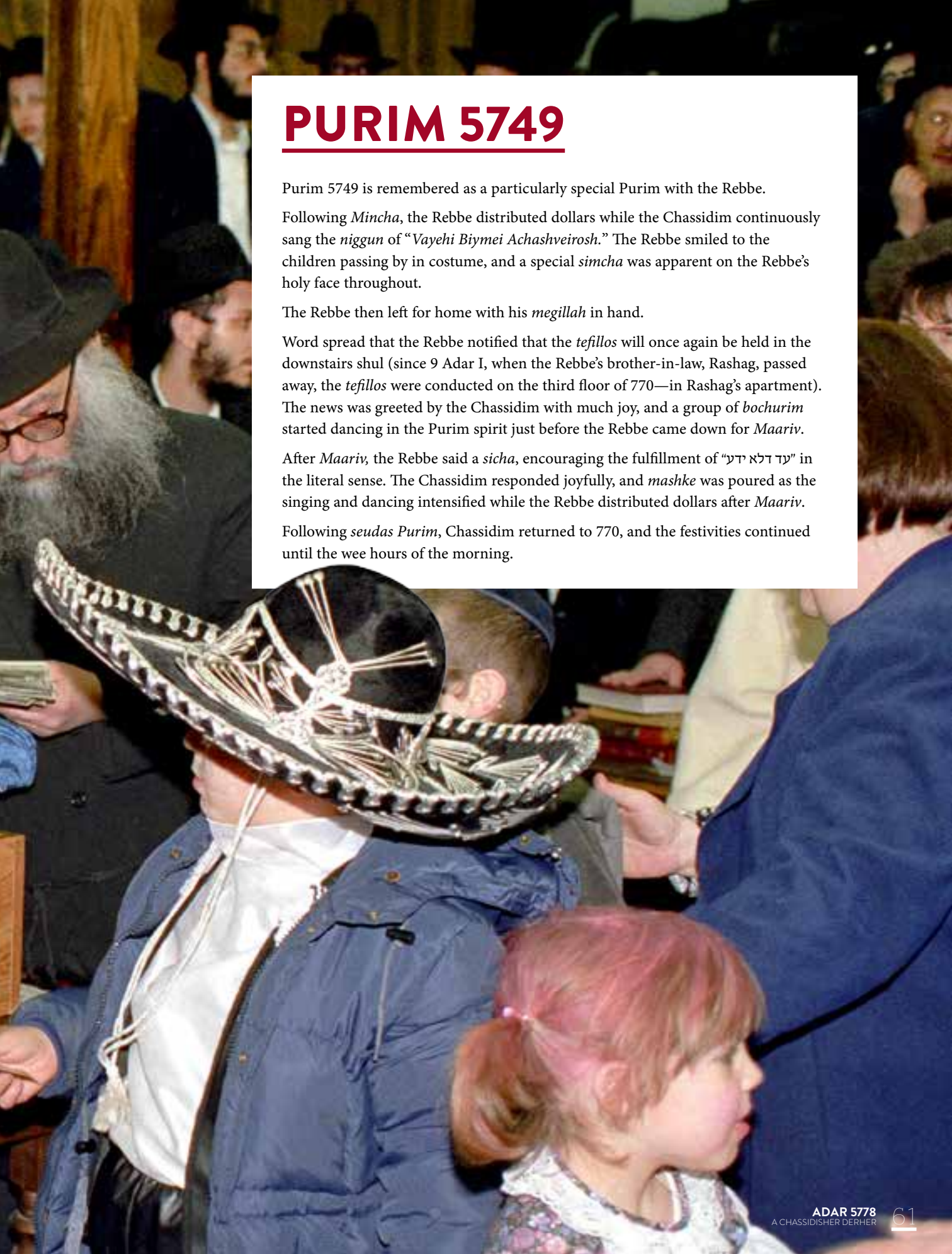
Following *Mincha*, the Rebbe distributed dollars while the Chassidim continuously sang the *niggun* of “*Vayehi Biymeit Achashveirosh*.” The Rebbe smiled to the children passing by in costume, and a special *simcha* was apparent on the Rebbe’s holy face throughout.

The Rebbe then left for home with his *megillah* in hand.

Word spread that the Rebbe notified that the *tefillos* will once again be held in the downstairs shul (since 9 Adar I, when the Rebbe’s brother-in-law, Rashag, passed away, the *tefillos* were conducted on the third floor of 770—in Rashag’s apartment). The news was greeted by the Chassidim with much joy, and a group of *bochurim* started dancing in the Purim spirit just before the Rebbe came down for *Maariv*.

After *Maariv*, the Rebbe said a *sicha*, encouraging the fulfillment of “עד דלא ידע” in the literal sense. The Chassidim responded joyfully, and *mashke* was poured as the singing and dancing intensified while the Rebbe distributed dollars after *Maariv*.

Following *seudas Purim*, Chassidim returned to 770, and the festivities continued until the wee hours of the morning.





PURIM 5749, CH HALBERSTAM VIA JEM 24526



PURIM 5749, CH HALBERSTAM VIA JEM 24529



PURIM 5749, CH HALBERSTAM VIA JEM 2464

Derher**Letters**

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

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



The Rebbe's Shluchim

Dear Editors,

Regarding your article about Batei Chabad [*The Beis Chabad*, Issue 63 (140) Kislev 5778], in which you describe the Rebbe's strong encouragement to open Chabad Houses during the *farbrengens* of 5746-5747, and write how "90 percent of the *bochurim* in 770 moved on shlichus; numbers that were unprecedented in Lubavitch history":

As a *bochur* in 770 during that time period, I would like to point out that it was not just the Rebbe's *sichos* that inspired us to go on shlichus. During that time period, we saw—in the Rebbe's actions—time and time again how much the Rebbe loved and cherished the shluchim.

To name a few examples:

Those were the years of the *sefarim* trial, and we were aware that before that year's Kinus, the Rebbe had told Rabbi Krinsky that he wants the shluchim to be notified of all the goings on of the case.

Later, when the case was appealed, the Rebbe said in a *sicha* one Shabbos that *er git dos iber tzu di shluchim*, he is appointing the shluchim to deal with the issue.

One moment sticks out in my memory:

My first year as a *bochur* in 770 was 5746. I remember the Kinus Hashluchim of that year. The Rebbe usually davened *Maariv* upstairs, but that night the Rebbe davened downstairs in honor of the shluchim who had just arrived.

This Kinus took place right in the middle of the preparations for the court case, which began less than a month later. The unpleasant situation was often evident on the Rebbe's face, and the mood in 770 wasn't a happy one.

That all changed when the Rebbe walked in for *Maariv* that night.

The look on the Rebbe's face was unbelievable! The Rebbe's face was shining! Everyone could see the tremendous pleasure that the Rebbe had in seeing the shluchim.

Seeing the Rebbe's happiness that night, I knew that there is only one way to go: shlichus.

Rabbi Zushe Greenberg
Solon, Ohio

”

On Wheels

Dear Editors,

Following on from the recent article regarding the early Lubavitch centers [*The Beis Chabad*, Issue 63 (140) Kislev 5778] and the comment of the Rebbe to Mr. Peter Kalms that “the proposed new Lubavitch House should not only be a school, but a symbol and a center for as many activities as possible.”

Those involved in the construction of Lubavitch House describe how every detail was consulted with the Rebbe.

For example:

Regarding certain classrooms, the Rebbe advised not to be too particular regarding

their exact size, “since anyway they will later be used as offices” (indeed, in 5776—almost fifty years later—one of those classrooms became a staff office).

Another example, the shluchim were faced with a choice to either build a *mikvah* or a swimming pool, but they could not build both. The Rebbe’s response was that kosher *mikvaos* are already available in the area, but there are no kosher swimming pools yet.

Incidentally, that has not changed. To this day, the only *frum* swimming pool in the area (and perhaps in the entire London) is in Lubavitch House. Many *heimishe* schools bring their kids regularly to use this pool.

Once, the Rebbe commented “*In London iz altz oif reder*—In London everything is on wheels.”

I’ll try to explain this based on what I heard from my *zeide*, Rabbi Nachman Sudak, שליט.

A brief look at the book *Challenge* (a documentary of Lubavitch in Great Britain) shows how much was put into this building:

In addition to housing the nursery, elementary and high school, the building also hosted youth clubs, a swimming pool, a gym, a banqueting hall, a bookshop, a printing press for *sichos* and other publications, weekday and Shabbos shuls, a lounge and

library for adult education, communication center for WLCC, an office for small communities, an office for programs with students in universities, an office for Tzach and more, as well as the head offices for Lubavitch activities around the country.

In order to accommodate so much within the limited space available, rooms were designed to serve multifunction purposes.

For example, the banqueting hall has—to this day—gym equipment secured to the walls, but these are on wheels so that they can be opened to turn the room into a gym.

These can then be wheeled back to their place while the *bima* and *amud* as well as tables and chairs are then rolled out—turning the room into a shul.

Roll back the *bima* and *amud*, rearrange the tables and you have a banqueting hall or a school auditorium, etc. (the Rebbe’s *farbrengens* were broadcasted here).

Similarly, the dining room has a moveable wall. The original tables were also on wheels and would be removed to change the room into a club room or alternatively into a shul with the portable *aron kodesh* and *amud* being wheeled in.

Rabbi Mendel Raskin
London, England

CORRECTION

It has been brought to our attention that the article about the Yud-Tes Kislev *farbrengens* [Issue 63 (140) Teves 5778] mentioned that on Yud-Tes Kislev “the Rebbe would conduct an appeal for ‘Kupas Rabbeinu,’ a *minhag* that originates from the Rebbe Rashab” [p. 72]. Although the Rebbe would usually announce an appeal for various causes (on occasion also for Kupas Rabbeinu) at the *farbrengen* on Yud-Tes Kislev, the official appeal for Kupas Rabbeinu would take place at the Rebbe’s Purim *farbrengen*.

It has also been brought to our attention that the first picture in the article about Rabbi Yaakov Yehuda Hecht [A *Staunch Soldier*, Issue 64 (141) Teves 5778, p. 48] was captioned incorrectly as “Reb Yehoshua Hecht.” The man in the picture is Reb Shea Auster, grandfather of Rabbi Hecht.

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