

A Chassidisher **Derher**

א חסידישער דערהער

shabbas in *Lubavitch*

PAINTING A VIVID PICTURE
OF LUBAVITCH OF OLD

Reb Leibel Raskin

A CHOSSID OF
FIRE AND PASSION

Not only for Lubavitchers

MOSHIACH U'GEULAH

He'aros and Pilpulim

EVERY JEW'S OBLIGATION



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16 **He'aros and
Pilpulim**
EVERY JEW'S
OBLIGATION



40 **Fire and
Passion**
REB LEIBEL
RASKIN

LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 191328

34 **Shabbos in Lubavitch**

In every issue

4 **Lessons For Cheshvan**
DVAR MALCHUS

6 **A Month With
The Rebbe**
LEBEN MITTEN REBBE'N -
CHESHVAN 5725

13 **When You
Really Need It**
KSAV YAD KODESH

14 **Rabbi Eliyahu Hecht**
MITZVAS HADOR

30 **Just One**
THE REBBE'S VIEW

39 **Who Has Questions?**
A CHASSIDISHER MAISE

54 **Moshiach Now - Not
Only For Lubavitch**
MOSHIACH U'GEULAH

56 **I Received My Sign**
DER REBBE VET GEFINEN A VEG

58 **יעקב הלך לדורו**
MOMENTS

67 **Derher Letters**

> *The Life of a Chossid*
> *Yechidus*



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לזכות
שושנה ריזא בת זעלדא



A Month with the Rebbe

CHESHVAN 5725



These accounts are culled from the diaries of Rabbis Menachem (Menni) Wolf and Yisroel Sosover, two *bochurim* studying in 770 at the time. Keep in mind that Cheshvan 5725 was immediately following the passing of the Rebbe's mother, Rebbetzin Chana, on Vov Tishrei, and the Rebbe therefore davened at the *amud* during this period.

MONDAY, 29 TISHREI

During today's *chazzaras hashatz*, the Rebbe cried repeatedly to the point that he could barely say the words. It occurred to me that during the course of the *Yomim Tovim* one could not detect any sadness on the Rebbe, as *halacha* mandates that one must be joyous on *Yom Tov*, but now that *Yom Tov* has ended and everyday life has set in, the

sadness of the *aveilus* has somewhat returned. The Rebbe slowly finished *shmoneh esreh* in a lower tone.

TUESDAY,
FIRST DAY OF ROSH CHODESH CHESHVAN

We were just notified that *yechidus* will not continue as it has until now. Whereas until now *yechidus* took place three nights a week—Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursdays—from now on there will be no *yechidus* on Tuesday nights; only on Sunday and Thursday nights.

The *bochurim* asked the guests who came from Eretz Yisroel to farbreng prior to their departure. They acquiesced, and on Tuesday night, Reb Avraham Pariz, Reb Asher Sasonkin and other Chassidim sat and farbrenged with the *bochurim*.

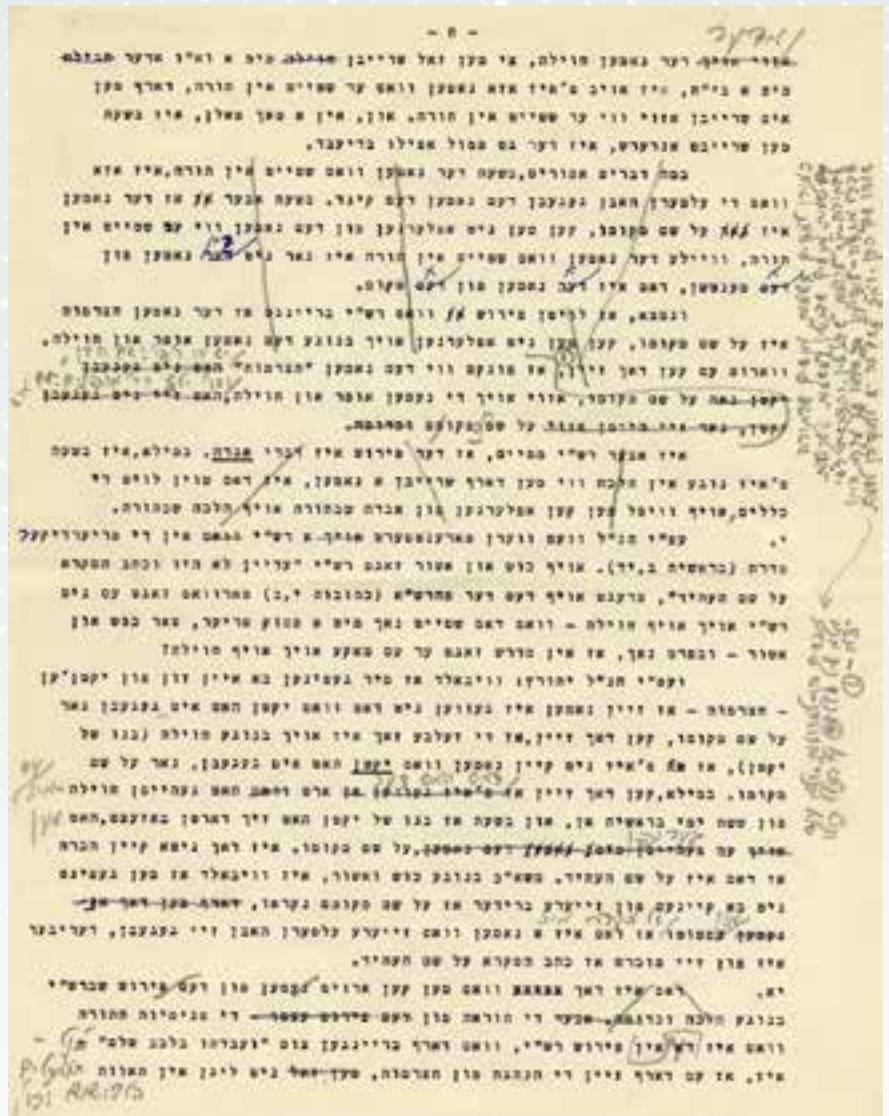
Reb Asher farbrenged about how careful we must be to guard our *machshava, dibbur, and ma'aseh*—our thought, speech, and action—to ensure that everything we think, say and do, should be in line with Hashem's will. Reb Avraham then expounded upon this idea, adding that we must focus on making our thought, speech, and action shine through thinking about the Rebbe, speaking about the Rebbe and following the Rebbe's instructions.

Among other things, Reb Avraham recalled that as a *talmid* in Tomchei Tmimim, he would spend time speaking with both older and younger *bochurim* who came from other cities to learn in Lubavitch. He would sit and listen to the different impressions each of the *bochurim* received from

being by the Rebbe Rashab and hearing him speak. But he received the most from those who didn't say anything at all.

SHABBOS PARSHAS NOACH, 4 CHESHVAN

Word has been going around that the Rebbe will farbreng every Shabbos this year in memory of Rebbetzin Chana. Indeed, the Rebbe came down to farbreng today at 1:30 p.m. Upon the Rebbe's request, a *chumash* was prepared on the Rebbe's table in advance and the Rebbe said a *sicha* on the first Rashi in the *parsha*.¹ The Rebbe also said a *sicha* on Tanya *perek mem aleph*. In this *sicha*, the Rebbe expounded upon the importance of *avodas hatefilah*.



THE REBBE'S HAGAOS ON THE FARBRENGEN OF SHABBOS PARSHAS NOACH 5725.



כתב יד קודש

לזכות
הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל הלוי
וזוגתו מרת שולמית ומשפחתם שיחיו
געריבער
להתברך בכל מילי דמיטב
בגשמיות וברוחניות גם יחד



When You Really Need It

The following is a draft of the the Rebbe's response in *ksav yad kodesh* from 25 Adar II 5727 to a woman who asked whether her husband should keep his set *shiurim* in Torah during a period of financial difficulties (Courtesy of Vaad Hanachos B'Lahak):



[Instruction to the *mazkir*] to add [at the end of the letter]:

להוסיף

Obviously, you are correct in your position that your husband's *shiurim*, and his involvement in spreading Chassidus and Yiddishkeit, should be the priority and routine in his life and in his schedule.

To wit—when a person's *parnassa* is not as it was in the past, the *yetzer hara* tries confusing the person and convincing him to minimize the time he spends on Torah and *mitzvos*.

[In such a case,] one must explain to the *yetzer hara* that he is rightfully called a “fool”; for when a person needs **additional** *brachos* from Hashem, he must **increase** the vessels to receive these *brachos* and everything which brings it about, and not the contrary, *chas veshalom*. This is easy to understand.

מובן שצודקת בדעתה שאצל בעלה שיי צריכים להיות השיעורים שלו וכן עסקנותו בהפצת המעיינות והיהדות עיקר וקבע בנפש וגם בזמן. ואדרבא - כשמצב הפרנסה אינו כמו שהיה בעבר והיצר הרע מנסה לבלבל את האדם ולהסיתו שימעט מזמנו בתורה ומצוות - צריך להסביר להיצר הרע שאכן בצדק נקרא “כסיל” - שהרי כשזקוקים לתוספת ברכה מה צריך להוסיף בהכלים לברכה זו ולגורמיה ולא להיפך, ח"ו, וק"ל.

He'aros and Pilpulim

Every Jew's Obligation





Perhaps ONE OF THE MOST CRITICAL ENDEAVORS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF ONESELF AS A CHOSSID IS TO FOSTER IN ONESELF CHASSIDISHE HANACHOS, A CHASSIDISHE OUTLOOK ON LIFE.

As we grow into adults, we develop a fundamental perspective on life from a variety of influences—parents, friends, teachers, books, experiences—and this determines our approach to everything we do, whether consciously or subconsciously.

Naturally, not all of one's viewpoints can trace their origins to Yiddishkeit, and altering them to become more in line with those of Torah is one of the most difficult, but still worthwhile, accomplishments that one can do. מוח שליט על הלב, the mind governs the heart, and when our head is in the right place, our emotions and actions follow.

Throughout the *nesius*, the Rebbe educated us, shifting our perspective on matters large and small. This shows itself most prominently in extremes; in the (relative) ease with which a Lubavitcher asks someone to put on *tefillin*, in the constant focus on Moshiach, and so on. There are so many areas where we can only wonder how life would be outside the Rebbe's influence.

But then there are areas where the Rebbe's viewpoint is so revolutionary, so different, that although we go through the motions and follow the instructions to the tee, it would almost seem that the Rebbe's fundamental outlook has yet to seep through.

What's the point?

One of the most enduring characters in Chassidic literature is that of the fantastically egotistical Torah scholar from the early time-period of Chassidus: *geonim* who imagined themselves greater than Moshe Rabbeinu (and found themselves questioning Hashem's judgement as a result)¹; hermits who could not comprehend why Eliyahu Hanavi would not appear to them²; and Talmudists who sincerely thought of Rashi as an inferior caliber scholar to themselves.³ Their self-worth was measured by their achievements and innovations in Torah-study, and as much as they studied, a true appreciation for *Elokus* and *avodas Hashem* was nonexistent.

For generations, many Chassidim scorned the notion of focussing on one's own innovations in Torah, viewing it as synonymous with leaving *Elokus* out of the picture, a relic of these self-absorbed scholars.

This attitude is alive and true today, in one form or the other. Many view *chiddushim* as the purview of the elite, of those who “know how to learn,” of *roshei yeshivos* and *rabbonim* (and overconfident youngsters). Why waste time and energy on developing mediocre ideas that might not even be true when there are so many *real* things to learn? Isn't that an exercise of empty vanity?

The Motivational Factor

The Rebbe's attitude was different. His primary argument was simple: people study more when they know that they have to come up with something.

“In earlier generations, the *roshei yeshivos* world infuse their students with energy and gusto in the study of Torah,” the Rebbe said. “Today, unfortunately, the *roshei yeshivos* do not infuse their students with sufficient enthusiasm in Torah, which

is why other ways must be found to do so.

“When a student knows that every once in a while he will need to deliver a *chiddush* in Torah in front of his colleagues, this gives him more energy in his studies so that he won’t be caught in front of his friends not knowing the material... These *chiddushim* should then be written, and *printed* in a special *kovetz*, in order to publicize it everywhere. Thus, these *chiddushim* will not remain in the yeshiva, rather *yagdil Torah v’yaadir*.”⁴

“When the students are infused with the notion that they should discuss Torah among themselves and come up with new ideas, that itself gives them more enthusiasm in their studies: the very fact that they are empowered, and told that ‘the time has come’ for them [to innovate in Torah] gives them more enthusiasm. This is true even though their ideas may not always be fully true... Even if you will say that this is Torah-study for an ulterior motive, *shelo lishma*; *zol zein shelo lishma*, the main thing is that they will live with Torah, and eventually they will arrive at the *lishma*.”⁵

As the Rebbe pointed out, this isn’t a theory: it has been proven true whenever it’s been tried.

Innovation as an Obligation

Beyond the practical considerations, there was also a deeper, philosophical issue at play.

A *bochur* in a non-Chabad yeshiva was once very despondent. He wasn’t intellectually gifted like his friends, and he was beginning to come to the shattering realization that his life-long dream of becoming a *gadol* would never come to fruition, no matter how hard he tried. Broken-hearted, he wrote to the Rebbe.

The Rebbe replied with one line that would change his life: אני נבראתי לשמש את קוני, *I was created to serve*

FOR GENERATIONS, MANY CHASSIDIM SCORNE THE NOTION OF FOCUSING ON ONE’S OWN INNOVATIONS IN TORAH.



my creator.⁶ It’s not about finishing a certain amount of books or reaching a certain level of knowledge; it’s not about what you accomplish—it’s about your obligation to serve Hashem by studying Torah. Just as one must serve Hashem with the hand by performing *mitzvos*, one must serve Hashem with the mind by studying Torah.

The point of innovating in Torah is not to come up with the most brilliant idea, or to give oneself empty accomplishments. It is simply an extension of the obligation to study.⁷ As the Alter Rebbe writes in Tanya, “Every Jewish person has the ability to innovate in both *halacha* and *aggada*, in both *nigleh* and *nistar*—and he is obligated to do so.”⁸ This obligation applies every single day, as the Zohar states: “לאפשא לה בכל יום ויום, [one must] increase in the Torah every single day.”⁹

If a person has the ability to innovate in Torah, the Rebbe says, and instead he chooses to study subjects in Torah that have already been revealed,

it is considered *bittul Torah*! “Even if he has already innovated in Torah today—three times!—he must increase and innovate even more, for every moment that there is an obligation to study Torah, there is an obligation to innovate in Torah.”¹⁰

When one views *chiddushei Torah* in this context, as a selfless extension of our service of Hashem rather than a self-centered ladder of accomplishment, it becomes clear why the Rebbe urged every single person to do so, no matter the quality of their scholarship or brilliance of mind: Every single person has a part in Torah, and every person can be the *talmid vosik* whose innovations were included at Har Sinai.

Innovating in Chassidus

It seems that the first iteration of publishing *he’aros* in the Lubavitch world was in *Hatomim*, a periodical published by the Frierdiker Rebbe in Poland, where people were given the opportunity to ask and

“ON PAPER, THE EDITORS [OF HATOMIM] ARE OTHERS, BUT THE WORK IS ALL HIS [I.E. THE REBBE]...”

answer questions in both *nigleh* and Chassidus. For the first time, some of the most profound issues in Chassidus were being discussed on paper in plain language. [The official editor of *Hatomim* was Reb Shmuel Zalmanov, and for many decades, the Rebbe’s level of involvement was anyone’s guess, although many suspected that he was very involved. Recently, an entire cache of letters from the Frierdiker Rebbe to the Rebbetzin was discovered, and in one he writes, “On paper, the editors [of *Hatomim*] are others, but the work is all his [i.e. the Rebbe].”¹¹]

It would take many years before it would become popular on a broader level. Beyond the general uncomfotability that some had with *chiddushim*, they were particularly perplexed with the notion of people writing *pilpulim* and asking questions in the G-dly discipline of Chassidus.

But in fact, as the Rebbe explained, the only way to truly understand something is if one allows himself to ask questions. In a foundational *sicha* on the occasion of the Rebbe Rashab’s birthday, the Rebbe said:

“A person may think, ‘How can I ask questions on the Rebbe? The Rebbe wrote the *maamar* in his own handwriting (as I can see for myself)—how can I raise (what seem to be) contradictions between this *maamar* and a *maamar* from an earlier Rebbe or a later Rebbe, or between this *maamar* and a passage in *Torah Shebiksav* or *Torah Sheba’al Peh*?!”

“...[But the truth of the matter is that] the study of Torah must be *intellectual*... As long as you’re afraid of contemplating it too deeply, lest you find something that you

don’t understand [you cannot truly comprehend it]... Only through learning the *maamar* to the extent that you have questions, *that* is how you will arrive at the true understanding of the matter.”¹²

How To:

Over the years the Rebbe gave practical guidance on how to write *he’aros* and how to create a *kovetz*.

- **Ensure that the *he’aros* follow the *klalei halimud*:** The Rebbe often spoke about the fact that, unfortunately, *yeshivos* do not study the “rules of study” (*Klolei Hashas* printed at the end of *Mesechta Brachos*), where one finds practical guidance on how to approach study, and thus the *he’aros* sometimes don’t make sense. One rule the Rebbe mentioned a number of times was that when one wishes to ask a question, the question must be strong; but when attempting to resolve a question, it doesn’t have to be as airtight. On a number of occasions, the Rebbe pointed out that the

questions in the *he’aros* weren’t solid enough to pass the test.

- **Be Original!** When the Rebbe fielded questions on Rashi (see below), he would urge people to think of original questions, instead of simply copying the type of questions the Rebbe had developed: why Rashi cites the name of the author or why Rashi provides two explanations, etc.
- **Don’t get lost in technicalities.** The Rebbe’s clearly preferred a question that was a “*klotz kashe*,” the common-sense question that people (and often *meforshim*) don’t even think of asking. He would urge people to focus on these types of questions instead of technical *pilpulim*, and not to get lost in the technicalities of the subject.
- There were two phrases the Rebbe would often use (with variations): און מ’שפאלט א האר און—people are splitting a “hair” and forgetting the “head,” i.e. the subject itself; מקלייבט ווערטער—און פארגעסט אויפ’ן תוכן הענין—people are focussing on the words (and technicalities) and forgetting the content behind them.¹⁶

There are additional reasons one must specifically focus on innovation in Torah:

- **Your part in Torah:** Every *neshama* has a part in Torah that it must reveal to the world, as we say in *davening* every day וותן חלקנו בתורתך, give us *our* part in Torah. Now, in the last generation of *galus*, there is no time to wait for another *gilgul* to do so.¹³
- **Deeper Revelations:** Innovation reveals a level in Torah that is rooted in the *atzmus* of Hashem.¹⁴
- **Bringing of Moshiach:** Through innovating in Torah we bring about the true innovations of Moshiach’s era, when, “A new Torah” will come from Hashem.¹⁵

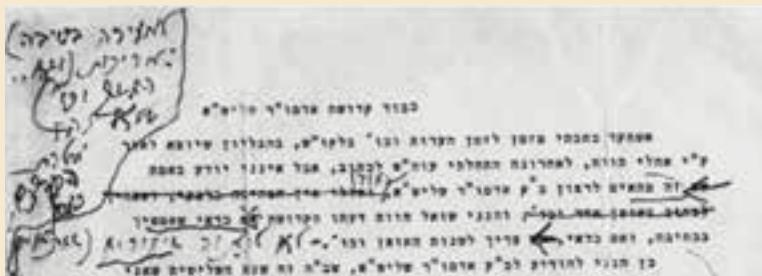
- **Try finding an answer:** In addition to asking questions, one should spend time trying to find answers, and the editors shoulder the responsibility in this matter as well.
- **Don't be afraid to write your name:** There were a number of times when the Rebbe urged people not to hide behind an anonymous title or pen name.¹⁷
- **The responsibility of the editors:** The editors have the responsibility for the content of the *kovetz*, and if there is an obvious answer to the question that is being asked, or if it was addressed by previous *meforshim*, the editors should make note of it in the *kovetz*. They have the responsibility to ensure that everything makes sense.¹⁸
- **What belongs:** The Rebbe said that the *kovtzim* are not a place for publishing *shiurim* (see sidebar).

The Rebbe's Involvement

In the history of Lubavitch, there were occasions when *maamarei Chassidus* were said at the behest of a great Chossid. The Alter Rebbe, for example, delivered certain *maamarim* for Reb Aizik Homiler; the Mittlerer Rebbe wrote entire *seforim* for select disciples; and the Tzemach Tzedek said *maamarim* for Reb Hillel Paritcher. Obviously, the level of the Chossid to whom the *maamar* was directed had a certain effect on the style of the *maamar*.

But this phenomenon was limited to the greatest of the Chassidim, a handful over centuries. In the early years of the Rebbe's *nesius*, too, there was no official channel through which Chassidim could ask questions on the Rebbe's *farbrengens*, with the

When the *kovtzim* began coming out, people started using them to publish their *shiurim* (in addition to *ha'aros*). One of the early writers in the *kovtzim* asked the Rebbe whether he should continue.



“אשתקד כתבתי מזמן לזמן הערות וכו' בלקו"ש, בהגליון ש"ל ע"י אהלי תורה, לאחרונה התחלתי עוה"פ לכתוב, אבל אינני יודע באמת אם זה מתאים לרצון כ"ק אדמו"ר שליט"א ואולי אין הכתיבה כדבעי ושצריך לכתוב באופן אחר וכו', והנני שואל חו"ד הקדושה אם כדאי שאמשיך בכתיבה, ואם כדאי, אם צריך לשנות האופן וכו'.

Last year, I occasionally wrote *ha'aros* on Likkutei Sichos, in the *kovetz* that comes out from Oholei Torah. I recently I began writing again, but I don't know if it is truly what the Rebbe wishes. Perhaps I am not writing as I should, and I should write differently. I am asking the Rebbe's opinion about whether I should continue writing; and if I should continue, should I change the way I'm doing it.”

The Rebbe circled the word “whether” [I should continue writing] and added the word, “כמובן, obviously.”

Then the Rebbe added:

“לא לכתוב שיעורים (שמתאים לאמירה בישיבה): אריכות (וגם . . המשיך וכו') שלא זהו מטרת הקובצים כמובן.

Do not write *shiurim* (which are appropriate for delivery in a yeshiva): Long (and also a series), because that is not the purpose of the *kovetzim*.



shabbos in Lubavitch

לזכות החייל בצבאות ה'
מנחם מענדל שיחי'
לרגל הולדתו
י"ב אדר ה'תשע"ח
ולזכות הוריו
הרה"ת ר' שלמה יוסף וזוגתו אסתר חי'
שיחי
זעלערמאיר

ולזכות החייל בצבאות ה'
מנחם מענדל שיחי'
לרגל הולדתו
ח"י אייר ה'תשע"ח
ולזכות הוריו
הרה"ת ר' משה ארי'
וזוגתו רבקה יהודית שיחי
שריף

נדפס ע"י זקניהם
הרה"ת ר' יצחק יהודה
וזוגתו מרת חנה שיחי
קופפר

עפ"י

Lubavitch.

A town rich in history.

A town filled with holiness.

For more than 102 years, the Rebbeim of Chabad called this town home, and from here Chassidus spread around the world. Chassidim from all over would journey to the town of Lubavitch to spend a few uplifting days, weeks, or months with the Rebbe. In this article, we revisit the incredible experience of Shabbos in Lubavitch after the Rebbe Rashab founded Tomchei Temimim.

Friday Night

The highlight of the week in Lubavitch was the *maamar*. Every Friday night, before *Kabbalas Shabbos*, the Rebbe Rashab would say a *maamar*. The *maamar* was attended by the *temimim*, guests, and some of the local residents.

Every Chossid yearned to be present, but there was a *seder* in Lubavitch. *Mashmaas* (discipline) and *seder* were paramount; and while the younger *talmidim* (and their teachers) would have wished nothing more than to be at the *maamar*, their *seder* rarely afforded them the opportunity, as they would be studying from when Shabbos began. Undeterred by this seemingly insurmountable obstacle, some members of the faculty did all they could to be there. The *mashgiach*, Reb Yechezkel Himmelstein, would sometimes switch duties with another *mashgiach*, so as to afford himself the opportunity to hear the holy words of the Rebbe with his own ears.¹

Niggunim and Hachanos

The Rebbe Rayatz would come to shul earlier, wearing a *shтреimel* and Shabbos clothing. Once everyone found their places, the *bochurim* would sing *niggunim*, including *Yedid Nefesh*. The singing was led by a group of *menagnim*, headed by Nosson Nota Paharer, who had a beautiful voice, was proficient in music, and sang beautifully. Some of the *niggunim* sung had been composed by the holy Rebbeim, while others could be traced to legendary Chassidim.

The singing would go on, sometimes for half an hour and sometimes for an hour or more, until the Rebbe would appear.

As the Rebbe's footsteps were heard approaching the room, the *niggunim* stopped, and everyone turned to face the door.²

The Maamar

A hush fell over the crowd, as a wide path opened, and the Rebbe Rashab entered. It felt as if a *malach* had entered the room. Seeing the Rebbe would leave a deep impression on everyone present. Even a regular person looks different on Shabbos; how much more so the Rebbe. In particular, on Friday night, before saying the *maamar*, the Rebbe's face shone with the G-dly light contained within. The Rebbe Rashab was tall, head and shoulders above the crowd. While during the week the Rebbe Rashab wore a silk hat, on Shabbos he wore a *shтреimel*, as well as a silk coat and a snow-white silk kerchief around his neck.

The Rebbe would walk to the *cheder sheini* and remove the silk coat and scarf. Then he would slowly walk to his place, between the rows of *talmidim* standing like soldiers at attention, and would sit down facing the assembled Chassidim.

The Frierdiker Rebbe would stand across the table facing the Rebbe Rashab. The *temimim* and guests would stand all around, everyone jostling and pushing to catch a glimpse of the Rebbe's holy face or at least to be in the front row. They would soon be dripping with sweat, "*ze'iah shel mitzvah*."

For a moment, the Rebbe Rashab would sit silently, exchanging gazes with the Frierdiker Rebbe.



The Rebbe Rashab would begin the *maamar* in a soft voice, but would steadily grow louder and louder, more and more powerful. Every Chossid in the room, however distant he was standing, could clearly hear the powerful, deep baritone of the Rebbe's voice. The Rebbe's face was flaming red.

The Chassidim would stand silently, absorbing every word. The Friediker Rebbe would stand as well, occasionally nodding his head attentively. From time to time, in middle of the *maamar*, the Rebbe Rashab would pause, and the Rebbe Rashab and the Friediker Rebbe would look into each other's eyes. The *maamar* would generally continue for between an hour and a half to two hours.

The awesome experience would leave a deep impression on young and old, even on those who had never heard Chassidus before. It truly felt like one was standing at the foot of Har Sinai, surrounded by 600,000 fellow Yidden all hearing the word of Hashem.

Upon the conclusion of the *maamar*, the Rebbe Rashab, soaked with sweat, would go to the *cheder sheini* to rest for about five minutes, sometimes longer.

The Rebbe would then enter the small *zal*, the *minyán* would daven *Maariv*, and then most of the people would go home to their *Shabbos seuda*.³

Chazara

A select few *temimim* and guests wouldn't head straight home just yet. Instead, they would gather to *chazzer*—to review the *maamar*.⁴ Among them were individuals with tremendous capacity for remembering things who would recite the *maamar* verbatim. The head *chozer* was Reb Shilem Kuratin, who during the *maamar* would stand away from the



The “Bittul” of the Chassidim

In Lubavitch, it didn't matter who you were in your hometown; here, everyone was equal.

The great Chossid, Reb Shmuel Gurarie of Kremenchug, was a tremendously learned man, in both *nigleh* and Chassidus. He was wealthy and well-connected with the government. It happened many times that in the midst of meeting with a government official, he would ask their pardon to daven *Mincha*, the official acquiescing with respect. Reb Shmuel had a guard at his door who would only allow people in with an appointment, as was customary among the local elite.

This very same Reb Shmuel would leave his honor and prestige behind when he came to Lubavitch. In the *zal* in Lubavitch, Reb Shmuel would be among the people pushing to catch glimpse of the Rebbe. There was no trace of Reb Shmuel the well connected magnate, the sage. He was replaced by Reb Shmuel the Chossid, an equal amongst equals.

He would stand before the Rebbe with complete *bittul*, like a servant before his master.

(*Mareh Kohen* p. 50)

pushing and shoving, with his eyes closed in extreme concentration. While Reb Shilem's natural abilities may not have been as great as some of the other *chozrim*, he succeeded in remembering the *maamar* more precisely than anyone else by way of sheer effort and diligence. He would begin the *chazara*, and the other *chozrim* would assist him.

After much time went by, the entire *maamar* was pieced together from memory. Only after this was completed did the *chozrim* daven *Maariv* and eat *seudas Shabbos*, long after midnight. After eating, they would gather again to go over the *maamar*, lest they forget it, and only then would they go to sleep for a short while.

The Small Zal

The small *zal* was used in the earlier years for the *maamarim*,⁸ and even later on (when the large *zal* was used for the *maamar*) it continued to be used for *tefillos*.⁹

The room was illuminated in the daytime by three large wide windows on the south wall. A water barrel stood in the northwest corner of the room. Another three wide windows were on the north wall. The *aron kodesh* was in middle of the south wall (Lubavitch being nearly due north from Eretz Yisroel -ed.). On the eastern side of the southern wall was the Rebbe Maharash's place. The next seat was empty, and it was followed by the seat of the Rebbe Maharash's son-in-law, Reb Moshe Arye Leib. Near him sat the Rebbe Maharash's sons—Raza, then the Rebbe Rashab, followed by Reb Menachem Mendel. The seventh seat was empty, saved for the future husband of the Rebbe Maharash's daughter Chaya Mushka. On the other side, the first seat was reserved for the Rebbe Maharash. Nearby, was the door to the *yechidus* room. The Rebbe Maharash would daven in the *yechidus* room, and come out to hear *krias haTorah*.

The *bima* was in middle of the room.¹⁰

On the western wall was the door to the *cheder sheini*, which had an *aron kodesh*, a *bima*, and some benches.

When the Rebbe would say a *maamar* in the small *zal*, they would prepare the southeast corner of the room for the Rebbe. They made a *shlos-mem* which consisted of the southern and eastern walls; the west side consisted of the davening benches (which had attached shtenders and compartments) and on the north side was a table. This *shlos-mem* extended until the *amud*, near the *aron kodesh*.¹¹

In 5668 the winter was especially cold, so the fires in the fireplaces had to be roaring with intense heat to combat the bitter cold. One evening, as the *talmidim* were learning, they noticed sparks flying out of the chimney. They told their *mashgiach*, who reproached them:

“Why are you concerning yourself with this? Keep learning!” About half an hour later, the fire spread too large to be ignored.

There was no fire department in Lubavitch, so a bucket line was quickly formed. All of the *talmidim*, as well as the family of the Rebbe, who lived in other buildings in the same courtyard as the *zal*, quickly took to the task, drawing buckets of water from the two wells situated in the courtyard of the yeshiva.

The Rebbe Rashab and the Frierdiker Rebbe came to the *zal* after the flames had been quieted, as the *talmidim* were still busy putting out the remaining fires and tearing down the ceiling as well as the wall of the *ezras nashim*.

For a number of months following the fire, *tefillos* did not take place in the small *zal*.

From then on, the Rebbe Rashab would say Chassidus in the big *zal*.¹² The crowd had also gotten bigger, and using the large *zal* allowed for more people to be present by the *maamarim*.¹³

The Large Zal

As one walked into the large *zal*, he would see long white tables surrounded with *temimim*, learning assiduously, each facing his *chavrusa*. Eighteen tables held a total of about 150 *talmidim* between the ages of 18 and 25.

The door to the room was on the eastern side.

The Rebbe Rashab gave numerous directives to the builders of the *zal*. Among these were that the ceiling should be supported by 13 columns, and each corner of the room should have a “*shin*” shape built into the architecture.

There was a *cheder sheini* in the eastern part of the *zal*, where the *mashpi'im* would learn Chassidus with groups of younger *talmidim*.

Two tables for the *mashgichim* of *nigleh* and Chassidus were situated on a platform.¹⁴

The room would be prepared for the *maamar* right after *Mincha* on Friday, with four long tables set up in a square in the center of the room. The Rebbe's chair was placed inside the square, at the middle of the northern table, facing north.¹⁵

Upon awakening, Reb Shilem and a select five or six of the *chozrim* would go to the Rebbe's house for *chazzara* while the Rebbe would drink tea. The Rebbe would sit, and Reb Shilem would say over the *maamar*. The Rebbe would clarify and connect any points that were unclear and correct anything that needed correction, occasionally explaining a difficult concept in the *maamar*.

Reb Shilem would then go out and recite the *maamar*, which he now knew clearly, and would say it over fluently.⁵

Davening

The Rebbe Rashab would enter the small *zal* at 9:30, davening with the *minyán* from *Ma Tovu* until *Baruch She'amar*. During *krias haTorah*, the Rebbe sat facing the *sefer Torah*. After the *minyán* concluded, the Rebbe would go home and continue *davening* for three hours or more.

After davening he would make *kiddush* on wine, and have a bite of *mezonos*, and then daven *Mincha* with a small *minyán*. After *Mincha*, the Rebbe would eat *seudas Shabbos*, stating beforehand that this did not take the place of *seuda shlishis*.

Meanwhile, after davening, the assistant *chozrim*, such as Reb Moshe the *chozer* from Zemin, would also say over the *maamar*, but everyone wanted to hear it from Reb Shilem, whose precision in repeating the Rebbe's words had no match.

After Shabbos, Reb Shilem would test many of the *talmidim* on the *maamar*, which they had reviewed over and over throughout Shabbos as an integral part of their *seder*.⁶

Publishing the Maamar

The Rebbe Rashab would give a manuscript of the *maamar* in his holy handwriting, to Reb Shmuel "the Writer." Reb Shmuel would hand-write

numerous copies, printing many more, and he would sell them.

However, not every *maamar* was released by the Rebbe Rashab for publication. When the Rebbe Rashab didn't give out a handwritten manuscript, the head *chozrim* would usually prepare a transcript on their own.⁷

This was Shabbos in Lubavitch. A day spent listening, studying, reviewing, and again reviewing the *maamar*. While plentiful *seudos* were provided for the *temimim*, they did not linger over their meals, nor did they sleep much; the holiness of Shabbos was palpable in the heartfelt *tefillos*, soulful *niggunim*, and the *maamar Chassidus*—the highlight of the week. 🕒

1. *Mareh Kohen* p. 49; *Reshimos Devorim* p.

335.

2. *Zikaron Livnei Yisroel* p. 12; *Mareh Kohen* p. 49, 53; *Reshimos Devorim* p. 342.

3. The detailed description of the *maamar* is culled from: *Zikaron Livnei Yisroel* p. 12; *Mareh Kohen* p. 50-54; *Reshimos Devorim* p. 342-343; *Lubavitch V'chayoleha* p. 24; *As I Heard Them* p. 102.

4. See *Retaining Chassidus*, Derher Adar I 5776.

5. *Lubavitch V'chayoleha* p. 24; *Mareh Kohen* p. 54-55.

6. *Reshimos Devorim* p. 343; *Lubavitch V'chayoleha* p. 24.

7. *Lubavitch V'chayoleha* p. 25.

8. *Zikaron Livnei Yisroel* p. 12.

9. *Reshimos Devorim* p. 342-343.

10. *Likkutei Dibburim* part 4. 5672 8.

11. *Zikaron Livnei Yisroel* p. 12.

12. *Ibid.* p. 15.

13. *Mareh Kohen* p. 49.

14. *Reshimos Devorim* p. 332.

15. *Mareh Kohen* p. 50.



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הרה"ת ר' לוי יצחק
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FIRE and PASSION

REB LEIBEL RASKIN

Special thanks to Reb Leibel's sons, Rabbi Yitzchok Raskin of Vermont and Rabbi Hirshel Raskin of Montreal, who assisted in the preparation of this article.

REB LEIBEL ADDRESSES THE
KINUS TZACH, 18 TISHREI 5741.



***A Chossid first,
everything else second.***

As a young bochur in Eretz Yisroel, during his years by the Rebbe, on Shlichus in the distant world of Morocco, and even in the face of significant physical challenges, Reb Leibel Raskin's chayus and dedication to the Rebbe defined his existence.

LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 191328

Reb Leibel Raskin was born in 5693 (תרצ"ג) in Leningrad, Soviet Russia. During the war, his family escaped to Alma-Ata, Kazakhstan. There his father, Reb Yaakov Yosef Raskin, merited to be instrumental in bringing the Rebbe's parents, Horav Levi Yitzchok and Rebbetzin Chana, from their place of exile in Chi'yily to Alma-Ata, where they spent several months in relative comfort. The Raskin brothers had the opportunity to spend time with Horav Levi Yitzchok, and to come to his assistance in many ways before his *histalkus* on Chof Av.

After Reb Levik's *histalkus*, the KGB began harassing Reb Yaakov Yosef, and he was forced to flee the city. The Raskin children spread out to different locations, until they were able to obtain fake Polish passports and leave the country in the "Great Escape" of 5707.¹

His Own Man

After a period of time in the Pocking DP camp and in Paris, the Friediker Rebbe instructed Reb Yaakov Yosef to immigrate to Eretz Yisroel. He

planned on taking his youngest son Leibel with him, while the older boys, Dovid and Sholom Ber, would remain learning in Brunoy, France. Leibel protested. He was already fifteen-years-old, and he deserved to remain with his friends in yeshiva as well. When his father objected, he proposed a bold solution—he would write to the Friediker Rebbe!

In those days, it was unheard of for a young *bochur* to write directly to the Rebbe. Correspondence was always done through mature adults, especially in those years when the Friediker Rebbe's health needed to be taken into account.

Some time later, he received a response. The Friediker Rebbe instructed him to join his parents in Eretz Yisroel, and enroll either in Toras Emes or Tomchei Temimim.

The Telegram

Leibel arrived in Eretz Yisroel after Purim 5709 and enrolled in the yeshiva in Tel Aviv, first under the tutelage of Reb Chaim Shaul Bruk and later under Reb Shlomo Chaim Kesselman. Their

Horav Levi Yitzchok and Rebbetzin Chana

In his JEM interview, Reb Leibel related his memories of Horav Levi Yitzchok [printed in Derher Magazine, Av 5775]:

"Horav Levi Yitzchok would often sit and speak for hours at a time, sometimes taking a person's name and explaining its inner meaning with *gematrios*, etc. As I was a young child, I usually did not understand his words.

"There was one occasion, however, when I did understand his message:

"In Alma-Ata we had a shul located in a cellar, and he came to daven there on Shavuos [5704]. After davening he delivered a *drasha*. It was a speech that even we—young children—were able to understand.

"He spoke about *matan Torah*. His speech was directed primarily to the children, saying that we need to know that we should not be *nispaal* from anything around us, we need to grow in *limmud haTorah* and fulfilling *mitzvos*, and not be afraid of anyone; our will must be the Aibershter's will. He spoke very clearly, elucidating his idea very well. Since I was a young child, I do not remember all the details, but his main message was that we must behave in a way that even our fear of the government will not hinder our activities."

Rebbetzin Chana When Leibel arrived in New York, his brother Reb Dovid Raskin brought him to visit Rebbetzin Chana. Throughout his years in New York and later, he merited to return for visits and to assist Rebbetzin Chana in several ways. (For example, he participated in *bedikas chametz* in the Rebbetzin's home.)

The first time he visited after moving on Shlichus to Morocco, Rebbetzin Chana stood up to greet him. "*Vos mach ihr*," she asked.

The honorific title "*ihr*" surprised Reb Leibel, and he asked the Rebbetzin why she chose to address him so.

"What do you mean," Rebbetzin Chana replied, "*Du bist mein zun, der Rebbe's a Shliach*, you are the Shliach of my son, the Rebbe."

Reb Leibel's brother, Reb Dovid, related that Rebbetzin Chana would often give him "*A grus fun dein bruder—regards from your brother.*" The Rebbe would share stories about Reb Leibel's shlichus in Morocco with Rebbetzin Chana, and she in turn, would share them with Reb Dovid.

material state had what to be desired, but the *bochurim* thrived in a truly *chassidische* atmosphere.

On Motzei Shabbos Parshas Bo the following year, Reb Leibel later related, the *bochurim* fabrenge throughout the night. Their colleague, 20-year-old Yoel Kahan, was to embark the next morning on a voyage to 770, to learn by the Frierdiker Rebbe.

In the morning, when Reb Shlomo Chaim arrived at the yeshiva, a *yungerman* called him into a side room to share some important news. From the *zal*, the *bochurim* overheard Reb Shlomo Chaim cry out, “It can’t be; it’s impossible!”

The media had reported that the Frierdiker Rebbe was *nistalek* on Shabbos in New York. Nevertheless, Reb Shlomo Chaim wasn’t sure of the report’s validity, because no official telegram had been received from 770. As it turned out, the telegram had been addressed to Reb Moshe Gurary, who was away at the port in Chaifa to see off his son Nosson and his friend Yoel on their way to New York.

“In those days,” Reb Leibel related in his JEM interview, “communication with New York wasn’t the best, but we nevertheless heard from the *bochurim* in 770 that they had accepted the Rebbe’s *nesius*. Thank G-d, we were inspired by their *hiskashrus*, and we also got very involved in *hiskashrus*.

“This attitude grew stronger after my brother Dovid wrote to us about the Rebbe’s *farbrenge* with the *bochurim* on Beis Iyar 5710.² We would sit for nights, reading the *sichos* again and again, and saying *lchaim* with the fervent wish that we merit to go to the Rebbe very soon.

“Meanwhile, we had to suffice with letters. The Rebbe would answer our *panim* at special times of the year, like Rosh Hashanah, with a letter with his holy signature, and that only heightened our resolve to travel to the Rebbe some day.”

“We have a Rebbe!”

“Several days after Yud Shevat 5711, a letter arrived from Gedalia Korf, in which he described the events of Yud Shevat; he related that the Rebbe had said a *maamar* ‘Basi Legani.’

“When I read the letter, I immediately ran over to Reb Shlomo Chaim to share the news.

“‘Azoi?’ he said, ‘The Rebbe said a *maamar*? Where is ‘Itche’s’?’



RASKIN FAMILY / MY ENCOUNTER WITH THE REBBE

THE RASKIN FAMILY IN THE DP CAMP IN POKING, GERMANY, CIRCA 1957. A YOUNG REB LEIBEL IS ON THE TOP LEFT.



RASKIN FAMILY / MY ENCOUNTER WITH THE REBBE

REB LEIBEL (L), HIS BROTHER REB DOVID (R), AND THEIR FATHER REB YAAKOV YOSEF (C).

“Reb Leizer Gurevitch, the son of Reb Itche der Masmid, was our *mashgiach* for *nigleh*. Reb Shlomo Chaim gave me five *livot* to buy *mashke*, and instructed us to bang on the table and announce the conclusion of *seder*. Reb Leizer looked quizzically at Reb Shlomo Chaim, and Reb

Shlomo Chaim called out, ‘*Mir hoben a Rebbe*—we have a Rebbe!’

“The farbrengen lasted late into the night. Reb Shlomo Chaim encouraged us to all say *l’chaim*, and the boisterous singing ultimately disturbed the neighbors. When they came to find out what the noise was about, Reb Shlomo Chaim called out to them, ‘*Mir hoben a Rebbe!*’”

Daehak V’niehmas

The *bochurim* received letters from their colleagues in New York about life near the Rebbe, and they desperately wished to join. Several *bochurim* wrote to the Rebbe asking for permission, yet for the most part the Rebbe’s answer was in the negative. The Rebbe wrote that there was much to be achieved in Eretz Yisroel, and the *bochurim* therefore had no justification for weakening the yeshiva and traveling to the United States.

Leibel too, asked for permission, and he received the Rebbe’s permission to apply for a visa. Later, when he wrote to the Rebbe about the various difficulties in obtaining one, he received a unique letter³ in response.

In the letter, the Rebbe repeated his opinion that much can be accomplished in Eretz Yisroel, and that nevertheless Leibel had written to the Rebbe about coming to the United States numerous times, through numerous channels. The Rebbe then wrote the following:

“If, after all of the above, you still desire to travel here, it is well-known that there is a method called ‘*dachak v’niehmas*’ (although it is not always appropriate and not applicable to everyone); you can speak to Aguch who will surely help you in this regard.”

Directly to the Top

Reb Leibel had the Rebbe’s permission to come, but he was of draft age—20 years old—and needed a permit from the Ministry of Defense to absolve him of army-duty. For several months, he tried the regular channels but to no avail. They weren’t willing to allow him to leave the country.

In desperation, he decided on a bold move. He wrote letters to the president, the prime minister, and the defense minister, where he explained that a Rebbe is a spiritual father, and he therefore asked them to personally approve his *petur* so he could visit the Rebbe. When his friends heard about his



RASKIN FAMILY

REB LEIBEL RASKIN, LEFT, WITH RABBI YEHUDA KRINSKY IN JAMAICA ON MERKOS SHLICHUS, SUMMER 1957.

audacious move, they berated him. “Who are you to start messing around with the prime minister? Your actions could have severe implications for the entire Chabad in Eretz Yisroel!”

Truth to be told, as Reb Leibel related, he wasn’t so sure that they were wrong. Nervously, he waited for a response.

It wasn’t long in coming. A letter arrived from Nechemia Argov, the military secretary of the prime minister, inviting him to his office in Yerushalayim.

When he arrived at the meeting, Argov was interested in hearing about his life as a religious Jew in Russia. Reb Leibel told him about the *chinuch* of Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim in Lubavitch, about the Rebbeim, and explained that he wanted to continue that tradition near the Rebbe in New York.

Argov was impressed. He told Leibel that the government was sympathetic to Chabad, because of the encouragement Shazar had received from the Frierdiker Rebbe before the UN vote of 5707, and culminating with the founding of Kfar Chabad in 5709.

“I don’t know how you merited this,” he concluded, “but we decided to give you a *petur* for one year.”

B’Hatzlacha Gedolah

Leibel related the entire story about the *petur* and his upcoming journey in a letter to the Rebbe,⁴ to which the Rebbe responded with a *bracha* that the journey should be “with *hatzlacha*

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האשה החשובה והצנועה הרבנית
מרת מינדל
בת מו"ה ר' דוד ויענטא ע"ה ז"ל
פעלער
זכתה להיות שלוחה של
כ"ק אדמו"ר זצוקלה"ה נבג"מ זי"ע
למעלה מיובל שנים
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נדבת בנה הרה"ת מנחם מענדל ומשפחתו שיחיו
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מרת חי' ברכה בת ר' יצחק ע"ה
נלב"ע כ"ה אדר ה'תש"ע
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הרה"ת ר' יצחק וזוגתו מרת חי' ומשפחתם שיחיו
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לזכות
ר' יצחק בנימין וזוגתו מרת חי' רחל שיחיו
קאמען
לאות הוקרה על ההכנסת אורחים וביתם הפתוח לרווחה
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הרה"ת ר' נועם שמעון הכהן
וזוגתו מרת כוכבה ומשפחתם שיחיו
כהן
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לזכות
הרה"ת ר' דוד
וזוגתו מרת מלכה ומשפחתם שיחיו
סמיטאנא

לזכות
החייל בצבאות ה'
אליעזר שמואל שיחי'
לרגל יום הולדתו י"א מנחם אב
נדפס ע"י הוריו
הרה"ת ר' ישראל פסח וזוגתו מרת שולמית ליבא שיחיו
בעניש

לזכות
החיילת בצבאות ה'
רחל לאה שיחי'
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לרגל הולדתה כ"ו מנחם אב ה'תשע"ח
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ת'נ'צ'ב'ה'

נדפס ע"י

בנו הרה"ת ר' יוסף יצחק וזוגתו מרת חנה שיחיו

צויבל

לזכות

החתן הרה"ת ר' מאיר שלמה שיחי'

והכלה המהוללה מרת אסתר תחי' גארדאן

לרגל חתונתם י"א אלול ה'תשע"ח

נדפס ע"י א' ממשפחות השלוחים שי'

קוראים נאמנים של הגליון

לזכות

החיילת בצבאות ה'

מנוחה רחל תחי' כהן

לרגל הולדתה ג' אלול ה'תשע"ח

נדפס ע"י זקניה

הרה"ת ר' אברהם הכהן וזוגתו מרת רוזה חנה שיחיו כהן

הרה"ת ר' יוסף בנימין וזוגתו מרת חנה שרון שיחיו ציפל

מוקדש לחיזוק ההתקשרות

לכ"ק אדמו"ר נשיא דורנו

נדפס ע"י ולזכות

הרה"ת ר' לייביש משה

וזוגתו מרת רינה

ילדיהם קיילא באשא,

בנציון דוד, אליהו איסר,

רבקה שיינדל אלטא שיחיו

גולדהירש

לזכות

הרה"ת ר' אברהם מיכאל הלוי שיחי'

בן שפרינצא רעכל

לרפואה שלימה וקרובה

בכל רמ"ח איבריו ושם"ה גידיו

נדפס ע"י בתו וחתנו

הרה"ת ר' יעקב יצחק דוב

וזוגתו מרת אסתר מלכה שיחיו

לאנג

לזכות

ישראל עובדי-ה

ועליזה קריינדל

ומשפחתם שיחיו

שחט

A Chassidisher Derher
Vaad Talmidei Hatmimim



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