

Derher

A Chassidisher

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Marking 90 Years from the Rebbe and Rebbetzin's Chasuna

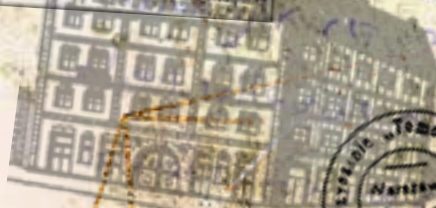
Holy Coins

ON THE MINHAG YISROEL
OF CHANUKAH GELT

The Arrest and Liberation of the Mittler Rebbe

חג הגאולה יר"ד כסלו

דאס
איז
דער
טאג



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CHANUKAH
GELT



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לע"נ
מרת דבורה ע"ה
בת הרה"ת ר' זאב שו"ב
נלב"ע יו"ד כסלו תשע"ג

נדפס ע"י בנה
הרה"ת ר' הלל דוד וזוגתו מרת שטערנא שרה
ומשפחתם שיחיו
קרינסקי

Derher **Editorial**

During the *shiva* after the Rebbetzin's *histalkus*, the Rebbe was visited by Rabbi Leib Zwiack, who mentioned that he was at the Rebbe's *chasuna* in 5689.

The Rebbe explained in response that a wedding is eternal—an ענין נצחי. We refer to marriage as a בנין עדי עד—an everlasting edifice.

Even if something occurs later that seems to “hinder” the eternity of the marriage (i.e. the *histalkus*), nevertheless the Gemara tells us that her presence still lives on and she is not forgotten.

When speaking of the passing of Rochel Imeinu, Yaakov Avinu says, “מחה עלי” —Rochel passed away for *me*. This actually alludes to the *geula*:

We know that the reason why Rochel was buried on the roadside was in order to be available to daven on behalf of her children when they'd be sent into *golus* centuries later. She would beg mercy from Hashem on their behalf and Hashem will ultimately answer her pleas, “ושבו בנים לגבולם”—the children will return home...”

“The children” returning home certainly includes also those who have since passed away, for there will be *techiyas hameisim*, as the *possuk* says, “הקיצו ורננו” —those who lie in the dust will rise and sing...”

We know that *techiyas hameisim* will happen very soon. Hence we can be sure that a wedding is certainly eternal...

(27 Shevat 5748)



This month, Chassidim around the world mark 90 years since the marriage of the Rebbe and Rebbetzin on Yud-Daled Kislev.

The Rebbe famously proclaimed this day as the day that connected us with the Rebbe and the Rebbe with Chassidim. This connection is everlasting; as the Rebbe explained, marriage is eternal, an ענין נצחי—until the coming of Moshiach and beyond.

May we indeed merit the *geula* in this month of Kislev, the *chodesh hageula*, *teikef umiyad mammosh!*

The Editors

ט"ו מ"ח ה'תשע"ט



BREATHING MOSHIACH

Shabbos Parshas Toldos,
2 Kislev 5752

Describing the birth of a child into this world, *Chazal* use the term יצא אור —[when a child] enters the air (“atmosphere”) of this world.

This is symbolic in that it describes the very *avoda* that a person is expected to accomplish when coming into this world: to reveal the “אור” that lies beneath the surface.

What is the meaning of the word אור?

Chassidus explains that אור is made up of אור + י. The word אור means “light,” one of the first words Hashem used when creating the world. The additional letter “*yud*” implies the superiority of “אור”—higher than all creations, even higher than אור, the G-dly light that was created first!

We know that there are four “foundational” types of matter (ד’ יסודות) that make up all of creation:

אש, רוח, מים, עפר—fire, air, water, and earth. Generally, the fire is placed on a higher level than air but in some *seforim* it is explained that air is actually considered to be on a higher level than fire.

A practical example of this: In order for fire to exist, it needs to have oxygen. Like we see with the Chanukah candles: in order for them to burn, they need oxygen. We specifically place them out in the open—in a place where there is a lot of oxygen. The reason for this is because the spiritual source of air is even higher than that of fire.

This teaches us how important the *avoda* of working to reveal the אור in the world really is.

The practical application of this *avoda* is to ensure a [spiritually] healthy atmosphere in one’s own home.

Additionally, it is our job to reveal אור של משיח—the “atmosphere of Moshiach” throughout the entire world, until the whole world is permeated with it, living and breathing the Moshiach atmosphere.¹

CHANUKAH GELT

Shabbos Parshas
Vayeitzei, 9 Kislev 5752

Our Rebbeim, especially the [Friediker] Rebbe, our *nossi* (the leader of everyone in his generation), were known to give *Chanukah gelt* to their children, not merely “spiritual” *Chanukah gelt*, but actual money.

Because this conduct was publicized, it is no doubt an instruction for all of us: Everyone should give *Chanukah gelt* to their children, especially the youngest ones. The time to educate children for their entire lives ahead is when they are young; as the *possuk* says גם כי יקיין לא “יסור ממנה”—this path of education will



לע"נ
ר' יהודה ע"ה
בן ר' משה יעקב ע"ה
נלב"ע ר"ח כסלו התשנ"ט
תנ"צ' בה'

נדפס ע"י בנו
הרה"ת השליח ר' יוסף יצחק
וזוגתו מרת ביילא רחל
ומשפחתם שיחיו
ביסטאן



WONDERS AND MIRACLES

Shabbos Parshas
Vayeshev, 23 Kislev 5752

guide him throughout his entire life, even when he grows old. At that point, the child will certainly use this “path” to educate his own children, who will be born when he is older.

It is important to fulfill this *minhag* properly and give a substantial amount of *Chanukah gelt*. This will create a lasting impression on the receiving child, and on other children as well—even those that have not yet received *Chanukah gelt*.

Increasing in *Chanukah gelt* will also bring about an increase in Torah and *mitzvos* in general, and in all *minhagei Yisroel*, especially the *minhag* of our time—to learn Torah on the subject of the *geula ha'amitis v'hashleima*.¹

It is of utmost importance that we recognize the wonders and miracles Hashem performs for us today.

The Gemara tells us that Hashem wanted Chizkiya to be Moshiach. But the “*middas hadin*” intervened, saying, “*Ribbono Shel Olam*, even Dovid Hamelech—who sang much more praises to you—you did not make Moshiach. Chizkiya has experienced far more wonders and miracles, and yet he did not sing your praises. How

can you make him Moshiach?”

In other words: Chizkiya did not express enough appreciation for the wonders and miracles of Hashem and was therefore barred from bringing the *geula*. Of course, Chizkiya must have thanked Hashem for the miracles but not on the level that was expected of someone like him.

Hence, it is obvious that in order for us to succeed in bringing the *geula* today, we must thank and praise Hashem for all the miracles that He does for us.

Especially considering the fact that it's almost Chanukah, when we are commanded to engage in פרסומי ניסא—publicizing the miracle.³ **1**

1. Sichos Kodesh 5752 vol. 1, p. 360.

2. Ibid. p. 380.

3. Sichos Kodesh 5752 vol. 2, p. 428.



לעבן מיט'ן רבין

In memory of our loving uncle
Stuart (Shmuel Yisroel)
 Ben Hersh Leib a"h
 Dedicated by
Shaya and Miriam Rochester

12 TISHREI 5740, LEVI FREDIN VIA JEM 19257



Added Fast. Added Joy.

KISLEV 5740



This article about the events in 770 during the auspicious days of Yud and Yud-Tes Kislev and Chanukah 5740, is culled from the diary of Rabbi Michael Seligson as well as the letters written by Rabbis Mendel and Hirshel Raskin to their father, Reb Leibel Raskin, shliach in Morocco.

THURSDAY, TES KISLEV

Baruch Hashem we were *zoche* to have the Rebbe farbreng many times over the last few days. This afternoon, after returning from the Ohel, the Rebbe announced that there would be a farbrengen in honor of Yud Kislev, *chag hageula* of the Mitteler

Rebbe. During the farbrengen, the Rebbe explained that we must take a lesson from the Mittler Rebbe's *avodas Hashem* and apply it to our own *avoda*. Just as the Mittler Rebbe's Chassidus is known for being in the style of "*rechovos hanahar*"—explaining the concepts of Chassidus at length and with detailed explanations, so too we must incorporate this approach in our own *avoda*.

The Rebbe also spoke about how much the Mittler Rebbe endeared Eretz Yisroel, and how he collected money and sent it to Eretz Yisroel to support the Yidden living there. This was done with great *mesirus nefesh* and personal expense, to the extent that the Mittler Rebbe was eventually arrested as result of these activities. In addition, we find something unique about the Mittler Rebbe's connection to Eretz Yisroel in the fact that he purchased land in Chevron and sent a group of his Chassidim to settle there. The Chassidim were reluctant to leave Lubavitch and live in a place where they could no longer see their Rebbe or hear the Rebbe's Chassidus. The Mittler Rebbe assured them that he would send them his *maamorim* so that they could remain connected whilst in Eretz Yisroel. This expression of love for Eretz Yisroel and its inhabitants is something unique to the Mittler Rebbe.

Speaking about the ongoing negotiations between the Israelis and the Arabs regarding whether the city of Chevron should be given to the Arabs, the Rebbe protested even the premise of the question. "How could one even claim that Chevron doesn't belong to the Jewish people?! It is written explicitly in *parshas Chayei Sarah* that Avraham Avinu purchased Chevron from the people of Cheis and it therefore rightfully belongs to *bnei Yisroel*. This is written in *Torah Shebiksav*, which even the nations of the world accept as binding. Despite this, people speak as though all this has never occurred, and no one dares to protest!"

SHABBOS PARSHAS VAYEITZEI, 11 KISLEV

On the Rebbe's way from his house to 770, he noticed someone wearing just his *tallis* without a coat covering it. The Rebbe motioned to him that he should be wearing a coat.

When the Rebbe entered 770, he asked Mr. Henry¹ if he said *l'chaim* four times like the Rebbe had instructed him to, and Mr. Henry replied that he did. The Rebbe asked him why he wasn't at

the farbrengen on Thursday, to which Mr. Henry replied that he wasn't around at the time and didn't know about the farbrengen. The Rebbe told him that he could make it up at today's farbrengen and that he should say *l'chaim* four times during the farbrengen.

Today's farbrengen was a surprise to many of us and it made big waves. During the second *sicha* people were in awe as the Rebbe revealed many deep concepts and explanations about the Rebbeim.² The farbrengen ended at 4:30 and was followed by *Mincha*. After davening, the Rebbe started the *niggun* "*Nyet Nyet Nikavo*" and energetically clapped his hands.

SHABBOS PARSHAS VAYISHLACH, 18 KISLEV

The Rebbe notified that there would be a farbrengen this Shabbos. During the farbrengen the Rebbe said, "I will speak about the fact that we currently find ourselves in this long and drawn-out *gulus*. Throughout the generations there were so many Jews who gave up their lives *al kiddush Hashem*, yet after all this the *gulus* still continues. We find ourselves in an unbearably dire situation, as the *gulus* only becomes darker still, physically as well as spiritually.³ Although according to Chassidus there is no need for fasting, nevertheless, since *rabbonim* have called for a *taanis sha'os* (a fast of a few hours) as a response to the current situation, I hereby join them in this.

"This is not an order; rather everyone must conduct himself in accordance with the *rav* of his community, hence I am following the *rav* of my community who ruled that we must fast. Since I will be fasting, the ruling of this community is therefore binding on all those who are connected with me although they live elsewhere. There should be an addition in *tefilla* and *tzedakah*, and I recommend that *kapitlach Chof*, *Chof-Bais* and *Samech-Tes* of Tehillim should be recited."

After concluding this *sicha*, the Rebbe asked that the *rav* of Crown Heights, Rabbi Zalman Shimon Dworkin, announce the details of the fast after *Mincha*. The Rebbe then instructed the Chassidim to sing the *niggun* "*Ki Elokim Yoshi'a Tzion*."

SUNDAY, CHAG HAGEULA YUD-TES KISLEV

Just walking into 770 felt like walking into one gigantic farbrengen. The place was filled with guests from around the world, from *rabbonim* to

dignitaries, from distinguished guests to simple folk, all crowded into 770. The downstairs *zal* was packed even more than during Tishrei. The spirit of *Rosh Hashanah L'Chassidus* was so palpable one could almost touch it.

During the *farbrengen*, in the third *sicha* the Rebbe spoke at length about the current situation in Eretz Yisroel. In addition, the Rebbe spoke about the *rav's* ruling about the “*taanis sha'os*” and asked that Rabbi Dworkin take the microphone and announce the details of the fast. Rabbi Groner approached the Rebbe and told him that Rabbi Dworkin had walked out for a minute. The Rebbe smiled and began the *niggun* “*Becho Bat'chu*.” When Rabbi Dworkin returned the Rebbe instructed him to say *l'chaim*, and then the Rebbe smiled and said, “Don't give him more than a *revi's*, because if he drinks more than a *revi's* he won't be allowed to give a (halachic) ruling!” Rabbi Dworkin announced the details of the fast, following which the Rebbe again began the *niggun* “*Becho Bat'chu*” and clapped his hands to the singing.

MONDAY, CHAG HAGEULA CHOF KISLEV

This evening the Rebbe held *yechidus*. Here are a few interesting snippets from the *yechidusen* that took place tonight:

The Rebbe instructed one of the people who came into *yechidus* to use television as a tool to warn the public about the seriousness of the issue of abortions [in 1980, a pro-abortion law was passed in the US -ed.]. The man told the Rebbe that he doesn't believe the masses will be swayed at all through this measure. The Rebbe replied that if this is the case, a conference of *rabbonim* should be called to discuss what must be done to counter this law.

A Jewish professor from South Africa working in the field of Jewish meditation came to see the Rebbe with his wife. The professor handed the Rebbe his *tzetel*. The Rebbe asked him why his *tzetel* didn't include a report about what's happening in South Africa. When the professor responded “because they told me not to write... I hope I did not ask for too many *brachos*,” the Rebbe replied by telling him that Yaakov Avinu asked for many *brachos* and Hashem gave him even more than he asked for. The Rebbe gave him a *brocha* that all his wishes should be fulfilled, and that he should have influence on others, even psychiatrists, concerning meditation.

The Rebbe concluded, “Since it is close to Chanukah, and it is a custom to give *Chanukah gelt*, I will give you that now.” The Rebbe gave one dollar to the professor and one to his wife.

TUESDAY, 21 KISLEV

There was *yechidus* tonight as well. One person who came for *yechidus* told the Rebbe that he publishes a newspaper, and lately damage has been done to his offices.

The Rebbe instructed him to publish a *dvar Torah* on the *parsha*

every week in the paper, so that the *zechus* of the mitzvah will help him. The Rebbe told him that all the damage has been done in the days prior to Yud-Tes Kislev, but Yud-Tes Kislev brings about “*Pada b'shalom nafshi*”—freedom from troubles, and from now on the troubles in his office will end.

THURSDAY, 23 KISLEV

The *rabbonim* called for a *taanis sha'os* to be observed today. Signs were posted all around 770 quoting different rabbinical assemblies from around the world calling for the *taanis sha'os* and instructing everyone to say *kapitlach Chof, Chof-Beis* and *Samech-Tes* in Tehillim.

The Rebbe came in to shul in the morning for *krias haTorah* holding a Tehillim with the *peirush* “*Yosef Tehillos*” authored by the Chida. During *krias haTorah* the Rebbe's face had a very serious expression. The Rebbe looked repeatedly at the *chazzan* and scanned the crowd.

The Rebbe said a few *kapitlach* Tehillim from the Tehillim of the Chida. The Rebbe then closed that Tehillim and opened the Tehillim that is regularly prepared for him and said *kapitlach Chof, Chof-Beis* and *Samech-Tes*. Unlike his usual practice, the Rebbe stayed in shul until the end of davening and Tehillim. The Rebbe then told Rabbi Groner that he



THE ARTICLE IN THE ALGEMEINER JOURNAL ABOUT THE TAANIS SHA'OS THAT THE REBBE ADDRESSED.

JEM / MY ENCOUNTER





14 ELUL 5740, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 188378

will be joining the *tzibbur* downstairs in the large *zal* at 12:30 to daven *Mincha*.

After *Mincha* the Rebbe unexpectedly turned around, pointed to the microphone that was nearby and signaled that it should be brought closer to his *shtender*. The Rebbe spoke about the fact that it is an *eis ratzon* and mentioned that today's *Chitas* begins with the words "V'Yosef hurad Mitzrayma—and Yosef was brought down to Mitzrayim." The Rebbe said we must take a lesson from Yosef, who was an individual Jew, living alone in Mitzrayim, "*ervas ha'aretz*," and nevertheless he was not influenced nor impressed by his impure surroundings and remained holy.

Today the Rebbe davened *Maariv* in the upstairs *zal* earlier than usual, at 6:00 p.m. and left for home immediately after *Maariv*. This is likely due to the Rebbe fasting the whole day.

FRIDAY, 24 KISLEV, EREV CHANUKAH

During the course of this year's Chanukah, the Rebbe came downstairs for the lighting of the menorah a total of five times! Today we found out ahead of time that the Rebbe would come down for menorah lighting. After the menorah was lit, the Rebbe sang *Haneiros Halalu* together with everyone, the whole time looking at the kindled menorah.

It was a sight to behold. At the end of the *niggun* the Rebbe motioned with his head and hands to encourage the singing.

MOTZO'EI SHABBOS PARSHAS VAYEISHEV, 25 KISLEV, SECOND NIGHT OF CHANUKAH

As the Rebbe walked into shul for tonight's farbrengen, he looked at the menorah to see if the candles were still burning (the Rebbe had been present earlier by the menorah lighting). The farbrengen lasted for over four hours!

The Rebbe started off the first *sicha* by saying, "There are so many things to speak about, but I would like to speak about something that brings forth *simcha*, because '*simcha poretz geder*—joy breaks through boundaries.'" With that the Rebbe began to expound on the *maamar* in Torah Ohr based on the *haftarah* of this week, "*Rani vesimchi bas Tzion*—Sing and rejoice, daughter of Zion."

During the farbrengen, the Rebbe spoke about the *arichus hagolus* and that Moshiach's coming is long overdue. He also spoke about the importance of doing *mitvza Chanukah* and bringing joy to Yidden on Chanukah, placing a special emphasis on the police force and soldiers in Eretz Yisroel, that the *mitvzoim* with them should be done in a way that will bring them an abundance of joy. The joy



of Chanukah will increase the protection of Eretz Yisroel, and will instill fear upon the enemies of the Jewish people.

The Rebbe also made mention of the terrible danger for the Yidden in *Eretz Hakodesh*, both spiritually and physically. In this context, the Rebbe referred to an article that was published in the *Algemeiner Journal* where a columnist called into question the fact that *rabbonim* called for a *taanis sha'os*. The Rebbe countered the opinion of the columnist and pointed out that hundreds of thousands of Jews had done *teshuva*, returning to Hashem as result of this fast. The Rebbe also mentioned the 50,000 Jews currently living under constant danger in Iran (Persia), and that seeing the current situation of the Jewish people it would have been appropriate to say extra Tehillim every day.⁴

SUNDAY, 26 KISLEV, THIRD NIGHT OF CHANUKAH

A Chanukah rally was held downstairs in 770 for the boys and girls who attend the “Wednesday Hour” Released Time program, as well as for *frum* children. The shul was packed with people. The Rebbe came down to the shul at 3:30 for *Mincha* followed by menorah lighting. The singing of *Haneiros Halalu* was accompanied by an orchestra

and when they came to the words “*Al Nisecha*” the Rebbe clapped his hands vigorously to the singing until the whole shul roared with enthusiasm.

After *Aleinu*, the Rebbe instructed Rabbi Yaakov Yehuda Hecht to have the children recite the 12 *pesukim*. During the recital of the *pesukim* the Rebbe called Rabbi Groner over and told him that the girls should also recite *pesukim*. The last *posuk* was recited by a grandson of Rabbi Hecht who said the *posuk* with zest. When he recited “*Yechi Adoneinu Moreinu Verabeinu!*” and “*We Want Moshiach Now!*” the Rebbe smiled. In general the Rebbe seemed satisfied throughout the whole gathering and smiled often. When they began to sing the *niggun Ufaratzta* the Rebbe clapped his hands and motioned with his head to encourage the singing.

Before the *sicha*, the microphone was brought closer to the Rebbe. When Rabbi Hecht asked everyone to please sit down, the Rebbe smiled and told Rabbi Hecht that he should also have a seat. Rabbi Hecht then announced that all the *bochurim* standing next to the *bima* should please move aside *mitzad ahavas Yisroel* (in order not to block others). The Rebbe smiled broadly, made a motion which implied “don’t worry about it,” and again motioned to Rabbi Hecht to have a seat.

The Rebbe spoke three *sichos*, and Rabbi Hecht translated between the *sichos*. The Rebbe then

instructed the children to again recite the *posuk* “*Torah tziva*.” Afterwards the Rebbe gave dimes to the counselors to distribute to the boys and girls as *Chanukah gelt*. At the end of the rally the Rebbe approached the microphone and began singing “*Al Nisecha*.” Immediately thereafter the Rebbe davened *Maariv* and went home.

TUESDAY, 27 KISLEV, FIFTH NIGHT OF CHANUKAH

The Rebbe asked the *mazkirus* to remind the Chassidim that based on the Rebbe’s *sicha* from the previous Shabbos about the importance of *simcha*, the Rebbe expected to see results in “*ma’ase bepoel*,” in an actual increase of *simcha*. Hearing the Rebbe’s directive, the Chassidim began to sing and dance. By the time the Rebbe entered the shul for menorah lighting, it felt like Simchas Torah! The Rebbe turned to face the crowd and clapped his hands vigorously to the *niggun* “*Uv’yom Simchaschem*.” During *Haneiros Halalu*, when they came to the words “*Al Nisecha*” the Rebbe again clapped his hands energetically to encourage the singing.

The Rebbe noticed that Reb Zalman Gourarie was clapping to the *niggunim*. The Rebbe called over Reb Zalman and told him, “Don’t clap because I’m here; clap because of Chanukah, and continue doing so afterwards as well!” and gave him a broad smile. After the Rebbe left the shul, the Chassidim continued to dance and rejoice. At 7:30 the Rebbe sent word that the following night there would be a farbrengen. At this point the joy and dancing reached its pinnacle.

WEDNESDAY, CHOF-TES KISLEV, SIXTH NIGHT OF CHANUKAH

Tonight’s farbrengen was especially joyous. The Rebbe instructed to sing “*Ve’ata Amarta*” and clapped his hands so strongly that the whole 770 was bustling with excitement. During the other *niggunim* as well there was a lot of *simcha*. The Rebbe explained the importance of being joyful, adding that today (Erev Rosh Chodesh) is Yom Kippur Katan, which is usually a fast for *teshuva*. But since we don’t say *tachanun* on Chanukah, the *simcha* of Chanukah replaces the *teshuva* that needs to take place, so that there is no need for fasting. If so, we must increase in *simcha* to cause the necessary effect.



THE REBBE’S HAGAOS ON THE SICHA OF THE FIFTH NIGHT OF CHANUKAH, 29 KISLEV, 5740.

The Rebbe spoke of the importance of learning *nigleh*, Chassidus and giving *tzedakah*. Being that “*Hama’ase hu haikar*,” the farbrengen should not be followed by the usual *chazzara*, but by immediately sitting down to study something in *nigleh* or Chassidus and giving *tzedakah*. Indeed, after the farbrengen ended at 1:00 a.m., the upstairs and downstairs of 770 were filled with people learning. **1**

1. Two weeks earlier, on Motzo’ei Shabbos *parshas Chayei Sara*, the Rebbe met Mr. Henry and asked him, “Why weren’t you at the Chof Cheshvan farbrengen?” When Mr. Henry told the Rebbe that he didn’t feel well, the Rebbe replied, “That’s not a good excuse. At tonight’s farbrengen you should say *l’chaim* twice (to make up for the farbrengen you missed!)” Mr. Henry told the Rebbe “I’d like to live another 50 years.” The Rebbe responded, “So say *l’chaim* four times, but not all at once.” Mr. Henry wished the Rebbe *arichus yomim*, and the Rebbe thanked him.

2. See *Sichos Kodesh* 5740 vol. 1, pp. 478-488.

3. The global political scene had taken a toll for the worse with the radicalization of Iran and its capturing of 50 American hostages. The Rebbe explained that these events could have a precarious effect on the Jewish community in Iran and elsewhere.

4. See *The Israeli Journalist, Iran, and the Rebbe’s Vision*, chabad.org/2608163.



13

חג הגאולה יו"ד כסלו

The Arrest and Liberation *of the Mitteler Rebbe*

On Chol Hamoed Sukkos in the year 5587, a group of Chassidim were farbrenging in Vitebsk. Vitebsk was, and still is, the capital of the Russian region that includes Lubavitch.

Suddenly, Reb Simcha Zelig, one of the prominent Chassidim of Vitebsk, burst into the sukkah and brought shocking news: he had just been in the government offices and overheard a rumor that the Mitteler Rebbe was under investigation.

Nobody wanted to believe it. Besides, it couldn't be true. The Alter Rebbe had helped the Czar in his war with Napoleon by utilizing a network of Chassidim to spy on the French. In appreciation the Czar bestowed on his family the title "Honored Citizen," a title that was passed down from father to son.

Just 13 years earlier, the Mitteler Rebbe moved to Lubavitch from Kremenchug, where he had been since the *histalkus* of the Alter Rebbe. The government in S. Petersburg sent advance notice to all the cities

on the travel route that they should prepare a welcome delegation and help freshen his horses wherever he passed. How could it be that after all that the Mitteler Rebbe was now under investigation? And for what?

By Shemini Atzeres the rumors were confirmed. The secretary of the regional governor met with a delegation of Chassidim. He told them that by the following Thursday the Minister of Justice in S. Petersburg was expected to sign a warrant allowing the police to search and detain the Mitteler Rebbe.



לזכות
הת' מנחם מענדל שיחי'
מאן
לרגל הגיעו לעול מצוות
ט"ז כסלו ה'תשע"ט
נדפס ע"י הוריו
הרה"ת ר' שרגא פייוול
וזוגתו מרת דבורה לאה
ומשפחתם שיחיו
מאן



The minister went even further than just signing the search warrant. He ordered that the Mittler Rebbe be brought from Lubavitch to Vitebsk to be interrogated in person.

At this point nobody knew what the charges were or who had slandered the Rebbe. The Chassidim couldn't start preparing a defense without even knowing the charges. All they could do was to meet with the minister and demand that the Rebbe not be transported by the police like a common criminal. He should be allowed to travel by himself, in his

own wagon. Joining the Chassidim in their meeting with the minister were a handful of non-Jewish landowners, who greatly respected the Mittler Rebbe. The minister agreed, and also gave permission to travel slowly due to the Rebbe's health. The journey would take three days instead of the usual two.

Blackmail

By Sunday, a delegation of officers reached Lubavitch and began searching the Rebbe's house. The story was now becoming clearer.

As we know, the Alter Rebbe was *nistalek* while on the road from Liadi, escaping the advancing armies of Napoleon. All the possessions of the entire family had been left behind in Liadi where they were stolen and their houses burned to the ground.

The Mittler Rebbe was left with nothing and cash that they had was used for the travelling costs. The Chassidim knew this. When the Mittler Rebbe accepted the request of the Chassidim in Lubavitch to settle there, he began making his way there and at every stop, local Chassidim

gave generously to *maamad*—the fund dedicated to the expenses of *beis harav*. Upon arriving in Lubavitch the Rebbe had a few thousand rubles, quite a large sum of money. He decided to divide the money between all the members of *beis harav*, who were all in dire poverty.

To divide the money, the Rebbe appointed Reb Pinchas Reizes, Reb Zalmen Reizes, and Reb Shlome Freides.

Years later, when Reb Pinchas Reizes passed away childless, his possessions were transferred to his nephew who lived in Shklov, and who was not the most pleasant person. This nephew was a known gangster and crook, and he got right to work trying to maximize his new inheritance.

He discovered among Reb Pinchas's papers a letter from the Mittler Rebbe, where he tasked Reb Pinchas with the job of dividing the money he had collected on the way to Lubavitch.

This nephew went to the Mittler Rebbe right away with the letter, and demanded a large amount of money. He said that if his demands weren't met he would use this letter to slander the Rebbe to the Russian government; in other words, blackmail.

Of course, the Mittler Rebbe completely refused his demands. He responded by saying that he had done nothing wrong, and what this nephew decided to do with the letter is his business, but this blackmail was not going to work.

Dejected, this individual tried thinking of another plan. There was nothing he could do on his own because he had no connections with the government. What he needed was a partner; someone with the right connections.

And he found it. The Mittler Rebbe's mother, the Alter Rebbe's Rebbetzin, Rebbetzin Sterna, was from a prominent, wealthy family in Vitebsk. The Segal family was famous

in Vitebsk for having "*Torah u'gedula b'makom echad*."

They were *talmidei chachomim*, wealthy, and big *ba'alei tzedakah*, involved in every charitable endeavor in Vitebsk, but they were also bitter *misnagdim*. Besides for being *misnagdim*, they also had a personal grudge against the Alter Rebbe. For years they had tried marrying into the Alter Rebbe's family but were turned down. Even when they offered large sums of money for a dowry, their offers were politely declined.

As a result, they were always on the lookout for ways to harm the Alter Rebbe and his work, making them perfect partners for this individual from Shklov with the letter.

Most importantly, they had connections with Governor Chavansky, the governor of the Vitebsk region.

The Accusations

How could they use this seemingly innocent letter to slander the Mittler Rebbe?

They made one simple change. Where the Rebbe had written that he had in his possession three or four thousand rubles, "*gimmel o' daled alofim*," they simply added a *kuf*. Now it read "*kuf-gimmel o' kuf-daled alafim*," 103,000 or 104,000 rubles, which was an astronomical sum.

How could the Mittler Rebbe have collected such an astounding amount of money in the relatively short trip from Kremenchug to Lubavitch? There could only be one explanation—they told the minister: he is planning a revolution against the Czar. The trip was really an attempt to rile up the masses to overthrow the Czar.

In addition, they said the Mittler Rebbe was sending money to the Sultan of Turkey, at that time the arch nemesis of the Russian Empire. He was trying to bribe the Sultan to convince him to go to war against Russia.

Alternatively, perhaps the money was to finance the war or payment to the Sultan for the protection of Chassidim during the impending war. They weren't so clear on the details but one thing was obvious: sending money to the Sultan was a red flag.

As further proof for their ridiculous claims, they told the minister to measure the shul in Lubavitch. He would find that it was built in the exact same size as the *Beis Hamikdash*, which surely meant that the Mittler Rebbe was serious about his plans to overthrow the Czar.

Preparations

Word quickly spread that the Mittler Rebbe was going to be brought to Vitebsk for questioning. Even before the officers arrived in Lubavitch on Sunday, hundreds of Chassidim streamed in from the surrounding villages for Shabbos. The Mittler Rebbe did not change his behavior at all that Shabbos, and said Chassidus as he normally would.

Meanwhile, there was a great uproar in the whole region. Jews as well as non-Jews began making preparations to greet the Mittler Rebbe and accompany his carriage in and out of the cities he would be passing. It was clear to the police that this was no simple matter, that the Mittler Rebbe was famous and respected even by the non-Jews of White Russia.

When the police officers arrived in Lubavitch, they went straight to the home of the Mittler Rebbe. They stayed there for about an hour and spoke with great respect and deference. They politely asked the Mittler Rebbe to travel with them to Vitebsk to be questioned by the governor, and said that he can arrange his own transportation and travel at a slower pace due to his health.

The officers preferred to leave that day, Sunday, and travel until Liozna;



THE LIBELOUS LETTER SENT TO THE GOVERNMENT WITH THE ACCUSATIONS AGAINST THE MITTELER REBBE.

stay the night in Liozna and on Monday proceed to Vitebsk. But the Mittler Rebbe's family asked that he travel that day only until Dobromisl, which was much closer; on Monday continue to Liozna, and on Tuesday to reach Vitebsk. The officers asked their superiors who agreed to the itinerary.

After the wagons had left Lubavitch, another four investigators arrived. These were Jews who worked for the government and spoke Yiddish. They mingled with the people in Lubavitch and tried to learn more information about the Mittler Rebbe's behavior. They also interviewed the non-Jewish landlords and *peritzim* from the surrounding areas who all spoke highly about the Mittler Rebbe.

Of course, the officers also searched the Mittler Rebbe's home. They combed through every paper looking for evidence of treason, but the only suspicious thing they found were *cheshbonos* of tzedakah for Eretz Yisroel, which was then part of the Ottoman Empire under the Turkish Sultan. They confiscated these papers in order to translate them into Russian.

They also measured the shul in Lubavitch, and found that it did not resemble the *Beis Hamikdash* in any way.

The huge entourage all began moving at the same time. Many wagons, and hundreds of people on foot, all began the journey.

The Arrest

At 11:00 a.m., the Mittler Rebbe left Lubavitch. The reaction in the Rebbe's *chatzer* was indescribable. People burst into tears, and there was screaming and emotional outbursts. This had been going on since Motzo'e Shabbos; only the Mittler Rebbe himself was perfectly calm and relaxed. He accepted Chassidim for *yechidus*, wrote Chassidim, and early in the morning closeted himself with his son-in-law, the Tzemach Tzedek, for two hours.

When the Mittler Rebbe sat down in the wagon, he had a kind of amused smile on his face. Then the wagon began moving, and it was quite a scene. The huge entourage all began moving at the same time. Many wagons and hundreds of people on foot, all began the journey to Dobromisl, arriving at three o'clock.

That morning, a group of Chassidim had approached the officers asking for permission to accompany the Mittler Rebbe. The officers readily agreed; they enjoyed seeing the Jews

showing proper respect to their rabbi, and even the minister in Vitebsk had ordered them to speak to the Mittler Rebbe with respect.

As the caravan passed Barzuvka, the first village on the road to Dobromisl, the entire village came out to greet them.

The "mayor" of the city, a gentile named Starasta, presented the Mittler Rebbe with bread and salt as a sign of respect. The same happened at the next village, and again at the third one. About a mile outside Dobromisl, the Chassidim were greeted by all the non-Jewish inhabitants of the city led by the city elders. The officers accompanying the caravan were very impressed, seeing with their own eyes the great respect and admiration shown to the Mittler Rebbe by everyone in the entire region.

Upon entering the city of Dobromisl, the Mittler Rebbe's son announced that they would go straight to the main shul.

The Mittler Rebbe went into the *cheder sheini* and told the Chassidim

to daven *Mincha*, after which he said a *maamar*. It was announced that the following morning after *Shacharis* they would continue to Liozna.

All the while, Chassidim sped between the cities on the route to give advance notice of the schedule. Reb Gavriel Yaakov, a Chossid from Vitebsk, made it to Liozna early Monday morning and found the entire city, along with hundreds of Chassidim from neighboring villages, waiting for the arrival of the Mittlerer Rebbe.

He told the assembled crowd everything that had happened until now, how the officers had showed great respect to the Rebbe and that they were allowing him to travel in his own wagon accompanied by all the Chassidim.

Upon hearing this, the Chassidim from Vitebsk, who were waiting in Liozna, immediately sent a messenger

back to Vitebsk. He was to tell the Chassidim there the news, and instruct them to ask the minister to allow the Rebbe to stay in a private house, to have *minyanim* and say Chassidus.

Setback

Suddenly, a new messenger arrived looking confused and worried. Everyone thought something terrible had happened. He said that the Rebbe was fine, but there was an update.

The *misnagdim*, seeing how the trip was turning into a “victory parade” for the Mittlerer Rebbe instead of the humiliating arrest they thought it would be, decided to take action. They went to the minister and accused the Chassidim of bribing the officers. The Mittlerer Rebbe, they told him, was being treated more like a king than a prisoner.

The minister became furious and immediately sent a rider on horseback

with a sealed message. The Rebbe was to stay the night with the officers and nobody was allowed to accompany him except his son and three people of his choice. They would continue the journey in a guarded wagon with the officers, not in his own wagon. Anyone attempting to accompany the Rebbe to Vitebsk would be harshly punished, without exception. In addition, the Rebbe would not be allowed to stay in a private house in Vitebsk. He would be put in prison in a general cell with other prisoners.

This terrible news threw the Chassidim into a panic. Nobody knew what to do or what was happening back in Dobromisl.

Night came and the Mittlerer Rebbe had still not arrived in Liozna, where he had been scheduled to arrive hours earlier.

At 4:00 a.m., the group from Vitebsk gave up on waiting, and hired



[illegible]

a wagon to take them in middle of the night back to Vitebsk.

When they arrived they found thousands of people from Horodok, Nevel, Beshenkovitch, Polotzk and other cities, waiting in Vitebsk. The word had spread that the Mittlerer Rebbe was going to arrive today, accompanied by a huge entourage. Everyone knew that he had said

Thousands of people lined the road from Liozna to Vitebsk; wherever one looked there were Chassidim milling around. All of them were eager to join the procession.

Twice a day Chassidim were allowed to bring food to the station. They would go to the door of the station, whereupon one of the three incarcerated Chassidim would emerge, accompanied by an armed guard. He would take the food and give the person at the door the dishes from the last delivery. Neither of them were

He accuses me of being a liar and a traitor, yet he still addresses me as “Rebbe” because he knows the truth!

allowed to say a word or make any sound.

The Chassidim begged Dr. Heibenthal to do something but there was nothing he could do. The situation was too sensitive.

On Thursday, 16 Cheshvan, Dr. Heibenthal called a meeting of the most prominent Chassidim in town. He said that on Tuesday there had been a party at the home of the minister. Two of the princes who were invited, Lubamirsky and Tzekret, knew the doctor and also heard of the Mitteler Rebbe.

The doctor asked them to speak to the minister about the Rebbe to tell him how beloved he is by everyone, Jews and non-Jews, and that he is a holy and righteous person.

They did so, and on the day before, Wednesday, they went back to the minister to talk about the Rebbe. The minister listened and answered that from now on 20 people would be allowed to go in three times a day for *minyanim*, and twice a week the Rebbe would be allowed to say Chassidus for 50 people.

That morning the doctor was by the minister, who told him—not knowing that it was the doctor’s own initiative—that two princes had vouched for the Mitteler Rebbe and he was allowing the above mentioned things.

The next day, Friday, the office of the interior minister made an announcement that from now on, *minyanim* of 20 people would be allowed in three times a day, and 50 people twice a week to hear Chassidus.

Within an hour there was a raffle, and the 20 winners went into the Mitteler Rebbe’s room for *Shacharis*.

Another 20 went in for *Mincha*, and so on for *Maariv*, *Kabbalas Shabbos*, and *Shacharis*, and then 50 winners for the *maamar* after *Mincha* on Shabbos.

The Trial

The entire case hinged on the papers that had been confiscated from the Mitteler Rebbe’s house, and on the letter to Reb Pinchas Reizes.

The *misnagdim* told the minister that the Chassidim could not be trusted, and whoever was given the job of translating the papers into Russian was certain to be bribed to take out any incriminating lines. Therefore the translating should be done only by one of their own, a leading *misnaged* in Vitebsk.

Chassidim were worried that the translator would purposely add a few suspicious details to his translation, but *baruch Hashem* it was a faithful translation of the Hebrew.

The papers were *cheshbonos* of money sent to Eretz Yisroel to support the Chassidim there. Even though it was perfectly legal, there was concern that it would look suspicious, because Eretz Yisroel was, after all, part of the Ottoman Empire.

A bigger problem was the letter with the forged *kuf*. This was indeed suspicious, and it was the word of the Mitteler Rebbe vs. the *misnagdim*. There was no way to prove that it was forged. First the minister had a private interview with the Mitteler Rebbe, who explained that his father had many Chassidim in Eretz Yisroel, who were all extremely poor, and they survived from the money sent from Russia.

As for the forged letter, the Mitteler Rebbe conceded that he did in fact finish the trip to Lubavitch 12 years



THE TOWN OF LUBAVITCH, AS IT APPEARS TODAY.

ago with a large amount of money, but it was nowhere near 104,000 rubles. The 100 part of the number was fake.

The minister was greatly impressed by the Mitteler Rebbe, and was inclined to believe him. However, before he could make a decision, he ordered that the Mitteler Rebbe should face his accusers in person, and let them state their case.

The Mitteler Rebbe came to the meeting in a royal wagon fit for a king, dressed in all white with his special Shabbos clothes. He looked like a *malach*.

Chassidim were nervous the minister would be angry when he saw this display, but the opposite happened. Upon seeing the Rebbe, he



immediately offered him a chair to sit on and addressed him with respect.

Then the *misnaged* arrived and the Mittler Rebbe immediately went on the offensive, accusing him of fabricating a story because of a personal grudge.

During the course of the discussion, the accuser slipped and addressed the Mittler Rebbe with the word “Rebbe.”

The Mittler Rebbe turned to the minister and said, “You see, he accuses me of being a liar and a traitor, yet he still addresses me as ‘Rebbe’ because he knows the truth and the accusations are all lies.”

The accuser became confused and starting stumbling over his words,

unable to utter a complete sentence, until the minister said to him that he had heard enough.

The Mittler Rebbe left the meeting victorious, with great honor and prestige.

On Shabbos, 9 Kislev, while the Mittler Rebbe was in middle of saying the *maamar* “*Ata Echad*,” he suddenly stopped and said, “Make room, *der Tatte is duh*—the Alter Rebbe is here.”

The next day, 10 Kislev, he sent a letter with his daughters to the governor. When they arrived at his office they burst into tears, begging him to end this saga and allow their father to go home.

After reading the letter, he told the daughters to calm down as their

father was going to be released today. By the time they returned, the guards had already been told to leave and the imprisonment was over.

It is said that the messengers arrived at the house just as the Mittler Rebbe was saying the *possuk* “*Pada b’shalom nafshi*” in that day’s *shiur* Tehillim (*kapitel* 55, for the tenth day of the month).

The guards left and the house filled with Chassidim. The Mittler Rebbe sat down to say a *maamar* in public for the first time in months, and left Vitebsk that same day to go back to Lubavitch.¹ **T**

1. The stories here are adapted from Otzar Sipurei Chabad vol. 5, page 253 onward.

The Life of a Chossid

Reb Shilem Kuratin

Born: Circa 5645

Passed away: Elul 5679

Chossid of: The Rebbe Rashab

Tomim, Chozer, Mashpia

Reb Shilem Kuratin was born in the year 5645, in the city of Disna, White Russia.

His full name was Meshulam Yedidya Gotlieb. However, he was called to the Torah only as Meshulam Yedidya, “Gotlieb” being a nickname of sorts. But it was the name “Shilem” that he would be known by for the entirety of his short life of 35 years and beyond. Famous as a *mashpia*, mentor and great *maskil*, he was a Lubavitcher Chossid for only 19 of those years.

His revered role and prominent position that he carried until his passing, belie the challenges and struggles of his upbringing; it was far from your textbook description of a *bochur* in Tomchei Temimim.

At the time of his birth, his parents were quite advanced in age; his older siblings already having grown up. This enabled his father to dedicate time to his upbringing and firm *Yiddishe* education. So devoted was he that, despite their poverty, he took every measure to pay for his son’s *melamed*, ultimately selling the family cow to secure the necessary funds. Sadly, his father passed away before his *bar mitzvah*. Through the interference of many circumstances, he almost became a prodigy for the Enlightenment movement; however, in 5661, at the age of 16, he finally joined Tomchei Temimim.

Upon ascending the ranks in the refinement of character and study of Chassidus, he progressively became more and more liked by his peers and others around him. Eventually he was appointed as the *mashpia* and *mashgiach* for the *sedorim* of Chassidus in the yeshiva. Even with this honorable title and responsibility, he continued to conduct himself in a humble and unassuming manner. His sincere and deep care for every Yid was apparent in every encounter he had, even when disciplining the *bochurim*.

The Making of A Mashpia

Shilem’s father passed away at a very young age, and under the care of his older brother who was an adherent of the “*Haskala*,” young Shilem was enrolled in a Gymnasium. Eventually though, he was sent to Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim.

With joy and optimism he arrived in Lubavitch but his clothing stuck out like a sore thumb: He was still dressed in the uniform of the secular school he left.

Concerned he may negatively influence his peers, the *mashpia*, Reb Shmuel Gronem met with the boy and made it clear that he was not interested in having a Gymnasium student in the yeshiva.

Now, while Shilem sat crying outside the *mashpia*’s office, someone felt sorry for him and told the Rebbe Rashab what had happened. When the Rebbe Rashab heard the full story, he decided to allow Shilem to enroll at the yeshiva. Suitable clothing was provided for him, as well as somewhere to stay. The young orphan had finally found a home, in more senses than one. Until this point, he had not realized how much his soul had thirsted for the study of Chassidus. He dedicated himself entirely to his studies, integrating everything he learned into his daily conduct. At first he found Chassidus difficult to grasp, but he persevered eventually overcoming his difficulties. Before long, he became known as one of the most diligent students in the yeshiva.

Focused!

Reb Shilem was known for his powerful levels of concentration. He could sit for hours on end without being distracted by anything going on around him.

One winter evening in the year 5668, the small oven heating the *zal* in Lubavitch sent off sparks in all directions starting a terrible fire. Screaming, running and chaos ensued as *bochurim* began pouring bucket after bucket of water to try and battle the flames. The tumultuous noise reached the ears of the Rebbe Rashab and the Frierdiker Rebbe who came to see what the commotion was all about. After the flames died down and they were able to re-enter the *zal*, they saw the most incredible scene. Standing in a corner, completely oblivious to everything that had been

מוקדש לחיזוק ההתקשרות
לכ"ק אדמו"ר
ולזכות תלמידי התמימים
בכל אתר ואתר
המסורים לעניני כ"ק אדמו"ר
באופן ד"יתיר מבחירה" ממש
נדפס ע"י
הרוצה בעילום שמו

going on, was Reb Shilem. When the fire broke out he was in middle of *Shema* of *Maariv* and his concentration didn't break for even a moment. The Rebbe Rashab turned to his son and exclaimed, "It was for such individuals that Tomchei Temimim was formed!"

This was not a one-off display of his concentration and devotion; there are many similar stories that express the same idea.

Shilem used his unusual powers of concentration and memory for a very important function. He became one of the "*chozrim*" who transcribed the *maamrim* and *sichos* of the Rebbe Rashab, a great privilege in Lubavitch. There were 13 *chozrim* who were divided into three groups. So well did he perform his task as *chozer* that in time he became the leading transcriber.

Not only was Tomchei Temimim created for Reb Shilem but so was a dreaded Russian army conscription center.

In 5667,¹ like many young men his age, he was called for military service. That year, during Simchas Torah, the Rebbe Rashab spoke about the function of a Jew in elevating the sparks of *kedusha* buried in profane places. The Rebbe commented on this statement of the Rebbe Rashab: "This refers to being released from military service."

Call-up took place at the beginning of the winter and those who were due to be conscripted would go to the Rebbe [Rashab] on Simchas Torah to receive his blessing. When Shilem was called up, the Rebbe [Rashab] said: "You will eventually be released, but [in order to liberate] the spark that needs to be elevated by you, you will have to pass through the *oblast*." (Each Russian province, or "*oblast*," had its own conscription office.) He added that the local office, where Shilem was the only Jew to present himself, existed just so that Shilem could pass through it."

Teshuva Without a Gun

During the unstable period between the deposing of the Czar and the Communist seizure of power, murderous gangs of criminals organized wholesale pogroms against the Jews.

The war forced the yeshiva to leave Lubavitch and along with it went Reb Shilem. After settling in Kremenchug with his family and a number of other Jews, they were once abducted by one such gang. They were taken to the outskirts of the city where these murderers were about to execute them when suddenly a miracle took place. Before

the criminals managed to fire their guns, they were forced to run away and Reb Shilem and the others were saved. Afterwards, someone who had heard about this miraculous escape from death said to Reb Shilem: "I would love to attain the level of *teshuva* that you must have achieved when those guns were pointed at you!"

Reb Shilem dismissed the man's words with a wave of his hand and remarked, "When you are standing with your family opposite the muzzle of a rifle, it is very difficult to do *teshuva*. The highest levels of *teshuva* can only be achieved when one has a *tallis* over his head."

Roundabout

The tremendous care Reb Shilem had for the physical needs of each and every *bochur* was legendary.

It happened one evening that a certain *bochur* received a *knas* and was not allowed to eat the yeshiva's food that night. This was not an uncommon punishment at the time and most of the *bochurim* in this situation would have to figure out a solution to their hunger on their own. This particular *bochur*, Reb Shilem knew, would not be able to do so and would therefore be left hungry.

When he came home he asked his wife to prepare supper for this *bochur* but cautioned her that it should be "unofficial."

While the yeshiva was in Kremenchug, Reb Shilem and his family moved into the yeshivah building. (It was dangerous to walk outside in the streets, even during the daytime, due to the constant fighting and rioting.)

On Shabbos Parshas Shoftim 5679, Reb Shilem read the *haftorah* in the yeshiva's *minyan* and then continued davening *barichus* long into the day. When he finally finished davening Reb Shilem joined the Shabbos afternoon seder Chassidus as usual. His Shabbos meal was only eaten after *Mincha*.

Unbeknownst to any of the *talmidim*, Reb Shilem was actually suffering from a terrible illness. That night Reb Shilem passed away at the age of 34, leaving behind his wife and children, and many "orphaned" *talmidim*.² **1**

1. Sefer Hasichos Toras Sholom p. 70 fn. 1.

2. For further reading see Derher Weekly Newsletter, Volume 1, Issues 7-10

לזכות
הילדה השלוחה
מושקא שתחי'
לרגל יום הולדתה השלישית
ט"ו חשון ה'תשע"ט
נדפס ע"י הוריה
הרה"ת ר' יוסף יצחק
וזוגתו מרת חי' שצערא
ומשפחתם שיחיו
שפאלטר

Holy Coins

On the minhag Yisroel
of Chanukah Gelt



"In another ten days, I will ask again for the list of bochurim [who came to seder Chassidus], in relation to a certain matter. I'm saying this now so that there won't be any complaints later that if you would have known you would have acted differently..."



27 KISLEV 5777, V SCHILDKRAUT VIA JEN 108598

Why do we give Chanukah Gelt?

The definitive origin for the minhag of Chanukah gelt has always been a mystery, as the Rebbe pointed out a number of times. So why do we do it?



Minhag Yisroel practiced by the Rebbeim: The Rebbe would often emphasize the fact that it is an authentic *minhag* practiced by the Rebbeim, which means that it has the power of a *minhag Yisroel* and is therefore part of Torah. Furthermore: being that this practice was shared with the public, it has the authority of *divrei chachomim*, and by fulfilling it we connect with the Rebbeim.¹

In addition, various hints and antecedents for the practice given by the Rebbe and his father Horav Levi Yitzchak:

- **From Shulchan Aruch:** One early hint is from the Magen Avraham in the beginning of *Hilchos Chanukah*. He cites a *minhag* that the poor youth would go door to door collecting money on Chanukah, which is similar to *Chanukah gelt* (though this isn't a considered a *real* source for *Chanukah gelt*, which is not specifically for the poor).²
- **A hint in the Gemara:** In the laws of Chanukah, the Gemara says that it is forbidden to make use of the candles of Chanukah, and it uses the example of coins—that it is forbidden to count coins to the light of the candle. This implies that already then people were giving *Chanukah gelt*.³
- **Like the beginning of education:** The word Chanukah comes from the word *chinuch*, education. Following the efforts of the *Yevonim* to cause Torah to be forgotten, Chanukah celebrates the renewal of Torah and the beginning of education. Just as we give money to a child at the beginning of his education (to encourage him to learn better), so too on Chanukah we give *Chanukah gelt*.⁴
- **The left:** We light candles on the left side of the door, and the *possuk* says, “בשמאלה עושר וכבוד”—on its left side are riches and honor,” and this is expressed in the “riches” and “honor” (which can also refer to money) of the *Chanukah gelt*.⁵
- **In defiance of the Yevonim:** In describing the persecution of the *Yevonim* leading up to Chanukah, the Rambam says, “ופשטו ידם בממונם,” they reached their hands into the Yidden's money. On



THE REBBE'S HANDWRITTEN RESPONSE TO THE MANICHIM, CLARIFYING THE SOURCES BEHIND GIVING CHANUKAH GELT.



Chanukah we demonstrate that the *Yevonim* did not succeed in contaminating our money; to the contrary, we are utilizing our money to fulfill a *minhag Yisroel*.⁶

- **The significance of luxury:** Just as we give *Chanukah gelt* on Chanukah, we likewise give *matanos la'evyonim* and *mishloach manos* on Purim. But there is a key difference between the gifts of Purim and Chanukah: the *matanos la'evyonim* is for the *needs* of the poor, and even *mishloach manos* is something that can be *consumed and used*. *Chanukah gelt*, on the other hand, is focused on children, who do not need money for their *needs*; instead, it is used on toys and the like—luxuries.

Now, luxuries and riches are something that are essentially higher than the world (as the Gemara says, gold was created merely to be used in the *Beis Hamikdash*).

This is the reason we give *Chanukah gelt*—a luxury—on Chanukah, which signifies a light that is beyond the world, higher than *seder hishtalshelus*; and this is expressed even in the physical world, through the *Chanukah gelt*.⁷

In addition, there are hints for *Chanukah gelt* in Parshas Miktze, which is read during Chanukah:

There are several mentions of money in the *parsha*: the money paid for the food, the double money that was returned to Yosef's brothers, and so on.

There are also several gifts, similar to *Chanukah gelt*: Yosef returned the money to his brothers and he also gave gifts of clothing, especially to his brother Binyomin.⁸



Practical

WHO?

It should be given to sons and daughters, before and after marriage. (The Rebbe would always cite the example of the Frieddiker Rebbe, who gave *Chanukah gelt* to his adult daughters and sons-in-laws, and once commented, “He knew that I would make a *tumel* and *parad* about it...”)⁹ It is also given to grandchildren, even though they already receive *Chanukah gelt* from their parents.¹⁰

In addition to the parents, other members of the family should also give *Chanukah gelt*.¹¹ At least one year, the Rebbe said that children should give amongst themselves as well.¹² The Rebbe himself would give *Chanukah gelt* to children during rallies, and encouraged others to gather children and do the same; and, at least one year, to soldiers being visited on *mivtzoim* as well.¹³



WHEN?

In Hayom Yom, the Rebbe writes that the Tzemach Tzedek (and the earlier Rebbeim) would give *Chanukah gelt* on the fourth or fifth night of Chanukah.¹⁴

In 5748 the Rebbe encouraged that *Chanukah gelt* should be given every night of Chanukah. The Rebbe explained that the reason the Rebbeim only gave once over Chanukah was so that it would retain its novelty and it wouldn't become routine.

However, the Rebbe said, because the darkness of *golus* has intensified, specifically in the area of *chinuch*, we should now give *Chanukah gelt* every night. In order to fulfill the directive of the Rebbeim to give on the fourth or fifth night and to preserve the novelty, one should give extra on the fourth or fifth night—double or triple as much as the other nights.¹⁵ The Rebbe continued encouraging nightly *Chanukah gelt* in the following years, and, at the very least, on two nights of Chanukah.¹⁶

The Rebbe said that one can (and should) complete the giving of *Chanukah gelt* on the last day of Chanukah, even after *Maariv* is over.¹⁷



THE REBBE DISTRIBUTES CHANUKAH GELT TO CHILDREN IN THE BIG SHUL AT 770.



THE REBBE DISTRIBUTES COINS TO BE GIVEN TO THE CHILDREN AT THE CHANUKAH RALLY, 5743.

TZEDAKAH:

The Rebbe spoke many times throughout the years that *Chanukah gelt* should be used as an opportunity to educate children on the importance of giving tzedakah from their own money (especially since Chanukah has a special connection to tzedakah, as the Tzemach Tzedek explains).¹⁸

All of a child's needs are taken care of by his parents, so the primary use of his money is for mitzvos, first and foremost tzedakah. When a child receives more money, especially money that he hadn't expected to receive, it is in order to give more tzedakah.

COINS:

In the later years, the Rebbe would hold rallies for children every Chanukah, during which he would give the chaperones *Chanukah gelt* to distribute to the children. The *Chanukah gelt* that the Rebbe gave was almost always in the form of coins (though this wasn't unique to *Chanukah gelt*, as the Rebbe would distribute coins for the children at other rallies as well). During one Chanukah rally, the Rebbe gave fascinating insight into this practice:

The Rebbe pointed out that, by nature, children value coins more than paper money, and he explained that this is a reflection of Torah: in Torah, too, coins have more value than paper money. In order to effect a halachic transaction (like marriage), one can only use coins which have inherent value, not paper-money which is really only a note from the treasury promising that it is backed by something.

The Rebbe learns a lesson from this: The *avoda* of a Yid is to make the world into a dwelling place for Hashem, to acquire it for Hashem, and he "pays" for it with gold and silver, by dedicating his *ratzon* (will) and *ta'anug* (enjoyment) to Torah and *mitzvos*. But it isn't enough to use paper money; it isn't enough to make a *hachlata* and write down a *promise* that something will be done; one must use coins with inherent value—one must actually do it!¹⁹



TO THE BOCHURIM:

In the farbrengen of Yud-Tes Kislev 5712,²⁰ the Rebbe spoke about the fact that *bochurim* weren't coming to *seder Chassidus* as they should. Then he said, "In another ten days, I will ask again for the list of *bochurim* [who came to Chassidus], in relation to a certain matter. I'm saying this now so that there won't be any complaints later that if you would have known you would have acted differently."

These cryptic words kindled great curiosity among the *bochurim*. What could the Rebbe possibly be referring to? Ten days later, on the fifth night of Chanukah, the Rebbe told the *mashpia* Rabbi Yisroel Jacobson to put together a list of the *bochurim* who had come to Chassidus on time, and said that he would be giving *Chanukah gelt* to those who had attended at least three times since Yud-Tes Kislev.

When the time came, 42 *bochurim* entered the Rebbe's room together with Rabbi Jacobson. The Rebbe scanned through the crowd and commented to Rabbi Jacobson that there were *bochurim* present who didn't belong... Rabbi Jacobson said that they may have come without permission. The Rebbe smiled and said, "If we wish to go with kindness and mercy, that



THE HANOCHO OF THE SICHA THE REBBE SAID TO THE BOCHURIM WHO CAME ON TIME TO SEDORIM, CHANUKAH 5712.



28 KISLEV 5743, YOSSEI MELAMED VIA JEM 140054

would be different. But now is not the time for that. However, we won't throw out those who are already here."

The Rebbe then passed his hand over his forehead and began saying a *sicha*. After the *sicha* concluded, the Rebbe took *Chanukah gelt* out of his drawer and distributed it to the *bochurim*.

The next day, several *bochurim* approached Rabbi Jacobson and said that they had missed the distribution of *Chanukah gelt* because they had attended a wedding (which the Rebbe himself had attended after distributing the *Chanukah gelt*), but since they had come to *seder Chassidus*, they were requesting to receive *Chanukah gelt*.

When the request came to the Rebbe, he asked, "Did they ask permission to go to the wedding?" The *hanhala* of the yeshiva said that they would have given permission if asked. The Rebbe said that there was no such thing as getting permission after the fact, and so they did not receive *Chanukah gelt*.

In subsequent years, the Rebbe would continue giving *Chanukah gelt* to the *bochurim*. In the days before Chanukah, the Rebbe would come to *zal* to see which *bochurim* were present during *seder*, and the distribution itself would usually take place on the fifth night of Chanukah. The Rebbe would deliver a *sicha* to the *bochurim*, after which he would give each of them a silver dollar.

During these years, the Rebbe would also send *Chanukah gelt* to *yeshivos* overseas—to Eretz Yisroel, Morocco, France, and so on—to those *bochurim* who studied Chassidus.

This continued for almost a decade, the final year being 5721. (The Rebbe didn't explain why it stopped, but years later²¹ he mentioned it as one of the initiatives that he had innovated in *dor hashvi'i* but had decided to discontinue because it was underappreciated. Other notable items on this list include: the *maamirim* in the tune of a *maamar*—as opposed to "*kein sicha*" which became more common in the later years; the *niggunim* on Simchas Torah; and more.)

Where is Leima Minkowitz?

In 5716, Rabbi Leima Minkowitz was in a car accident and as a result was homebound during the distribution of *Chanukah gelt*.

During the distribution, the Rebbe asked Rabbi Dovid Raskin, "Where is Leima Minkowitz?" He answered that he was at home in Brownsville.

The Rebbe gave Rabbi Raskin a silver dollar for Leima. The dedicated Chossid that he was, Rabbi Raskin took the bus that very night to Brownsville to deliver the *Chanukah gelt*.

Throughout the years

Although the annual distribution of Chanukah gelt to bochurim stopped in 5721, the Rebbe gave out Chanukah gelt on various occasions throughout the years:

FOR THE NEIGHBORHOOD - 5731:

This was during the period that the Rebbe held a fierce campaign for the Crown Heights neighborhood, urging people not to flee to other neighborhoods and instead to invest in Crown Heights. With the Rebbe's encouragement, a company called Shebra was founded to invest in houses in Crown Heights. At the farbengen of Shabbos Parshas Miketz 5731, the Rebbe spoke sharply about the fact that nothing had been done with it, and said: "I had the idea to connect it with a *segula*. In general, the way of Chabad is more difficult than the way of *Chaga*"; but since we see that people prefer *Polisher* things, we'll connect it with a *segula*: I am going to buy a share in the company, and split the cost of the share into single dollar bills. It should be publicized that every person who buys a share will receive one of my dollars... and being that it is Chanukah, it is connected with *Chanukah gelt* as well."²²



THE REBBE DISTRIBUTES CHANUKAH GELT IN THE BIG SHUL AT 770.

IF YOU HAVE A NOTE FOR MIVTZOIM - 5734:

In 5734, following the Yom Kippur War, the Rebbe launched the international *mivtza Chanukah*. Over that Chanukah, 60,000 menorahs were distributed! On the sixth night of Chanukah, a message came from the Rebbe that he would be distributing *Chanukah gelt* to those who went on *mivtziom*. Those who wanted *Chanukah gelt* were required to submit a note signed by those in charge of the *mivtzoim* stating that they had indeed participated in the *mivtzoim* (for at least two of the days of Chanukah).

As each person stood in line for *Chanukah gelt*, they would first submit the note to the *mazkir* who was standing next to the Rebbe, and they then received *Chanukah gelt* from the Rebbe. Even the *mazkirim* had to submit their own notes in order to get *Chanukah gelt*. When Rabbi Yaakov Yehuda Hecht (who was very involved in arranging the *mivtzoim*) came by to receive his dollar the Rebbe said, "Really you deserve more than one dollar, but when a mother gives to her children she gives them all the same amount." The Rebbe also gave *Chanukah gelt* for the women who went on *mivtzoim*, and sent *Chanukah gelt* to Eretz Yisroel for those who had participated in *mivtzoim* there. (For more on Mivtza Chanukah 5734, see "*Illumination*," A Chassidisher Derher, Kislev 5776.)

CHANUKAH GELT AT THE DOOR - 5738:

On Rosh Chodesh Kislev 5738, the Rebbe returned home for the first time since suffering a heart attack on Shemini Atzeres. Nineteen days later, on Yud-Tes Kislev, the Rebbe held the first farbrengen in the downstairs shul—as opposed to speaking from his room—since the occurrence, with thousands of Chassidim in attendance. Then, a few days later, on the third night of Chanukah, the Rebbe surprised all of the assembled by saying a *sicha*, concluding with the announcement that he will now give *Chanukah gelt* to everyone present: “Being that Chanukah is connected with *al pesach beiso mibachutz*, [lighting candles] on the outside of the door, we will give out *Chanukah gelt* at the door of the *beis haknesses* and *beis hamedrash*, the *daled amos* where the Rebbe the *nossi* lead *am Yisroel*.”

The Rebbe then walked to the back of the shul, where, standing near the door, he handed everyone a dollar bill from the packet he had brought down with him before *Mincha*. When the line was done, all the men exited the shul and the women entered in order to receive dollars as well. [Out of concern for the Rebbe’s health, the *mazkirim* tried stopping people from going by. The Rebbe gave each of the *mazkirim* a dollar, and said, “Tonight the *chaluka* [distribution] will be without limitations.” Later on, when people again tried stopping the line, the Rebbe’s face became very serious, and he said, “Those who are stopping the crowd should know that they are starting up with me!”]

After the entire crowd had received, the Rebbe motioned that the men should move aside so that more women could receive, after which he gave out again to the men who arrived late. All told, the distribution took two hours—hardly two months after Shemini Atzeres!

FOR EVERYONE - 5751/5752:

On the first day of Chanukah, there was a gathering of the Tiferes Zekeinim Levi Yitzchak and Chochmas Nashim. A big crowd was present, and, at the end of the *kinus*, the Rebbe gave the organizers packages of *Chanukah gelt* to distribute to the crowd. They were coins packaged in a plastic case with the words “Chanukah 5751.” The following day the Rebbe personally gave these out to everybody, saying to each person, “*A freilechen Chanukah*.” The following year as well the Rebbe gave out *Chanukah gelt* to the entire crowd.



THE REBBE DISTRIBUTES CHANUKAH GELT TO CHILDREN IN THE BIG SHUL AT 770.

ITTEVES 5752, YOSSI MELAMED VIA IEM 23644

FOR THE REST OF THE CHILDREN TOO:

It was the first night of Chanukah 5728, a cold and snowy night. As usual, the Rebbe davened *Maariv* with the *minyán*, and when it came to the singing of *haneiros halalu*, the Rebbe opened the door of the shul so that the shlucha to Milan, Mrs. Garelik could hear the singing together with her daughter. When the Rebbe came out, he gave a dollar to the girl and said, in Yiddish, “This is *Chanukah gelt* for you.” When their older son, Levi Yitzchak, came out of the *zal*, the Rebbe gave him *Chanukah gelt* as well. Then the Rebbe put his hand in his pocket, took out another four coins, and said, “This is for the rest of the children who are in Pittsburgh [with their grandfather, Rabbi Sholom Posner].”



1 TEVES 5742, YOSHI MELAMED VIA JEM 286584



DREIDEL BY THE REBBE'S DOOR:

In the early 5710s, a few children (including Sholom Yisroel Hodakov and Abba Piekarski) were playing *dreidel* near the Rebbe's room. Suddenly, the Rebbe arrived to 770 from his house. The Rebbe took out a dime, threw it to the children on the floor, and told one of the children to spin the *dreidel*. It fell on the letter *hei*, and the Rebbe asked them what to do in such a case. They replied that you split the pot. After the Rebbe went into his room, the children made a lottery for the dime, and Abba Piekarski won.



M BARON VIA JEM147516

THE REBBE DISTRIBUTES CHANUKAH GELT TO THE MEMBERS OF COLEL TIFERES ZKEINIM LEVI YITZCHOK FOLLOWING A SPECIAL GATHERING FOR THEM, 30 KISLEV 5748.

The lesson from Money

Excerpted from a letter dated the eighth day of Chanukah, 5733;
translated from the original Hebrew:

...In reply to your question: what is the significance of the *minhag*... of giving *Chanukah gelt* to children...

Chanukah [in general] has two basic themes: 1) the dedication of the *Beis Hamikdash* and *mizbe'ach*. 2) Education, namely, educating children. This includes every single Yid, who are all Hashem's children. Just as the *Beis Hamikdash* was cleaned, purified and dedicated, so must every single Yid be a *mishkan* and *mikdash* for Hashem.

Obviously, in addition to the fact that one must educate oneself... for a person must add in Torah and *mitzvos* every day—the education of children is even more emphasized. The parents are especially obligated in this arena, and this education must be *al pi darko*, in a fashion that the child will understand and accept.

Now we come to *Chanukah gelt*: We give it to the children in order to connect the lessons of Chanukah to the lessons that we can learn from money, [which can be learned] with even cursory contemplation. On the one hand, money has great power. Someone who has a lot of money is rich, and even very rich, while someone who does not have money is poor and destitute. On the other hand, money on its own does not bring

benefit—it isn't one of [a person's] three basic needs of food, clothing, and shelter; it's just that a person can use it to acquire all his needs. Furthermore, with money a person can fulfill the *mitzvah* of *tzedakah*, *gemilus chassadim*, and other *mitzvos* but if the money sits in a box, it brings no benefit.

One of the main messages we must impart when educating a child is that he must always remember that Hashem gave him tremendous riches, tremendous energies: his mind, his emotions, and his power of action. But they must be utilized in full; he must use his mind to study Torah until he *toils*, and then he will truly achieve; he must use his emotions to love Hashem, Torah, every Yid, and the other things that should be loved; [he must also use his emotions] to fear and flee from negative things. He must therefore study with devotion, commitment, and obedience, so that he will recognize good from bad.

Unlike physical money, where someone might be poor, in spirituality everyone can be rich, if he uses the energies that were given to him. We were promised *yagaata umatzasa*—if you toil you will succeed but a person is given a choice whether to do so. It

is dependent entirely upon the person and his willpower, and when someone truly wants something, nothing can stand in his way.

When one explains this to a child using the appropriate language and heartfelt words—most importantly, when one shows a good example—then *meir einei shneihem Havaya*, Hashem helps both the giver of the *Chanukah gelt* and the receiver to reach higher and higher in Torah and *mitzvos*, from strength to strength until they become examples for all.

With esteem and blessing... ①



27 KISLEV 5737, V. SCHILDKRAUT VIA JEM 108593

1. Toras Menachem Hisvaaduyos 5752 vol. 1 p. 356.

2. Likkutei Levi Yitzchak Igros Kodesh p. 358.

3. Likkutei Levi Yitzchak Ibid.

4. Likkutei Levi Yitzchak Ibid.

5. Likkutei Levi Yitzchak Ibid.

6. Motzo'ei Shabbos Parshas Vayeshev 5738, Sichos Kodesh 5738 vol. 1, p. 302.

7. Sichos Kodesh 5716 p. 124.

8. Likkutei Levi Yitzchak Ibid.

9. Sichos Kodesh 5737 vol. 1 p. 356; Ibid 5735 vol. 1 p. 174.

10. 5735

11. Toras Menachem Hisvaaduyos 5751 vol. 1 p. 48.

12. Likkutei Sichos vol. 20 p. 450 451.

13. Sichos Kodesh 5734 vol. 1 p. 196.

14. Hayom Yom 28 Kislev.

15. Sefer Hasichos 5748 vol. 2 p. 65-66.

16. 5750.

17. Toras Menachem Hisvaaduyos 5749 vol. 2 p. 96.

18. Toras Menachem Hisvaaduyos 5749 vol. 2 p. 23; see also Toras Menachem Hisvaaduyos 5751 vol. 2 p. 48.

19. Toras Menachem Hisvaaduyos 5748 vol. 2 p. 159.

20. Toras Menachem vol. 4, p. 185.

21. Simchas Torah 5732, Sichos Kodesh 5732 vol. 1, p. 74.

22. Sichos Kodesh 5731 vol. 1 p. 361.



The Need for Travel

When the Alter Rebbe was arrested for the second time,¹ his release was secured through the intervention of Nota Notkin, an influential businessman from Petersburg (who happened to be a *misnaged*).

Nota had contacts in the royal court and was a personal friend of the secretary to Czar Alexander I. He was able to ensure that the request for the Alter Rebbe's freedom should be one of the first three requests on the Czar's table on the day of his installation, guaranteeing clemency. Tradition held that the Czar would immediately grant the first three requests on his table.

But Nota made one condition: Upon his release, the Alter Rebbe would visit with three non-chassidic *rabbanim* and lay out the argument for the ways of Chassidus.

The Alter Rebbe agreed.

The three *rabbanim* were: Reb Moshe Chefetz

of Chouvas, Reb Yehoshua Ceitlin of Shklov, and Reb Yoel of Amtsislov.

When the Alter Rebbe reached Chouvas, he headed for the home of Reb Moshe.

Reb Moshe asked the Alter Rebbe:

"Why must your Chassidim travel to see you?"

The Alter Rebbe explained that there are certain things they need to hear specifically from him.

"But doesn't the travel time cause them to do *bittul Torah*?" asked Reb Moshe.

The Alter Rebbe explained that they are not required to stop learning; they can learn while they travel.

"But the fact of the matter is, they don't learn while traveling," retorted Reb Moshe. "This is *bittul Torah*!"

The Alter Rebbe answered: "Yes, it is *bittul Torah*. And they will have to do *teshuva* for that."

"If so," asked Reb Moshe, "why should they travel in

the first place? Let them stay at home and not interrupt their Torah learning, and there will be no need for them to do *teshuva*!"

The Alter Rebbe replied: "No. They must travel to visit their Rebbe. And even if they transgress and interrupt their Torah learning, they can do *teshuva* afterwards. In fact there is a Gemara that proves my point!"

Reb Moshe was baffled. He was *boki* in the entire *Shas* but he couldn't understand what the Alter Rebbe was referring to.

The Alter Rebbe explained:

The Gemara says² that if someone has a bad dream that necessitates a fast, he is required to fast even on Shabbos. Later, he has to do an additional fast, as a form of *teshuva* for the *aveira* of fasting on Shabbos.

One can ask: Why not prohibit the dreamer from fasting on Shabbos in the first place, and avoid his additional fast afterwards?

The answer is: If a person has a bad dream, it means they did a big *aveira* that needs immediate rectification. For that he must fast, even on Shabbos. For the *aveira* of fasting on Shabbos, he can do *teshuva* later on.

The same can be said of the Chassidim who travel to their Rebbe.

They have strayed from the proper path of *avodas Hashem* and need to rectify that immediately by traveling to the Rebbe and learning the true way to serve Hashem.

If it so happens that they commit the *aveira* of *bittul Torah* while traveling, they can and must do *teshuva* for that afterwards. ①

(Adapted from Otzar Sippurei Chabad vol. 15, p. 138)

1. See HaYom Yom 27 Kislev.

2. Brachos 31b.



“WITH
JOY!”

Reb Reuven Dunin was a devoted, joyful and enthusiastic Chossid of the Rebbe. A ba'al teshuva who lived in the largely secular city of Haifa, he merited many yechidusen and kiruvim from the Rebbe.

The following are several such encounters:

The Rebbe: How are you, Reb Reuven?

Reb Reuven: *Baruch Hashem.*

The Rebbe: What did you accomplish [on this trip]? Did you learn? Did you daven? Did you dance?

Reb Reuven: A bit.

The Rebbe: What about being joyful?

Reb Reuven: That depends on the Rebbe.

The Rebbe: If it depends on me, than you should have already been properly joyful for some time.

The Rebbe: Did you try to raise some money as planned? Is your ticket paid for so that there shouldn't be any complications?

Was there any discord? There shouldn't be any strife between Yidden.

Reb Reuven: The truth is that I didn't realize how much work it is to raise the money. In retrospect, I'm prepared to stay in Eretz Yisroel, but I'm not willing to give up visiting here every few years.

The Rebbe: Your wife needs to agree to this as well.

The Rebbe: Did you buy gifts for your wife and children? What's the explanation—why not? She's all alone for Yom Tov, and it distresses her. Do you have someone else to buy her a gift?

Reb Reuven: I can ask.

The Rebbe: Ask at the Merkos office for someone who understands what kind of gifts to buy for a woman to help you, and he should buy gifts for your wife and children as well.

When you return to Haifa, find a time that works out for the local *anash* to gather—Rosh Chodesh or Shabbos Mevorchim—and give over points from the *maamorim* and *sichos*. Explain and clarify them so that everyone will be able to understand; the youth, the *mushpa'im* and the *mekuravim*.

You probably received the money I gave towards your travel expenses. Use it for good and joyful things. You and your wife should be active in *hafotzas hama'ayanos* and in bringing people closer to Torah and *mitzvos*. From now on, may you have an abundance of *parnasa*.

May you go in peace and arrive in peace.¹



The Rebbe: What about being joyful? Why are you depressed? What's the reason? I told you to be joyful. If you aren't joyful, you're not fulfilling my request; you aren't behaving in your personal affairs as I wish.

I can't be everywhere at once; I can't be in Cholon, in Kfar Chabad, in Tel Aviv, in Yerushalayim, in Eilat, in Paris, in Melbourne, and in Brooklyn all at the same time, so I send shluchim. I appointed you to Haifa, and I want to appoint you to a high rank—to make you a general. You need to be joyful because of this, for the soldier must be like the commander.

What's with being joyful? Have I had no effect on you? You have to work joyful to do what I ask.

לע"נ
הת' יוסף יצחק ע"ה
בן יבלחט"א הרה"ת ר' צבי זאב שיחי'
נלב"ע שביעי של פסח ה'תשנ"ז
ת"נ צ"ב'ה'
בקשר עם יום הולדתו כ"א כסלו
נדפס ע"י אחיו
הרה"ת ר' חיים יהושע
וזוגות ומשפחתם שיחיו
זקלם

You have succeeded in influencing many others in a positive way. But the most important thing is to have a positive influence on your own household!

Regarding *parnasa*, it makes no difference whether you work at a public enterprise or for a private person. The main thing is you should have more *parnasa*. You need to feed and clothe your children properly, as Shulchan Aruch mandates. I am not satisfied if only you and your wife are Chassidim; I need your children to be Chassidim as well. For this to be a reality, all *gashmiyus* needs must be properly attended to.²

Reb Reuven related: After Maariv, a few minutes after 7:00 p.m., I merited to go into yechidus.

I was cognizant that the Rebbe could read my thoughts. I felt an inner urge to once again be near the Rebbe, to be close to the Rebbe. When the Rebbe entered his room, he left the door unlocked. I seized the opportunity and knocked lightly on the door. I heard the Rebbe answer in Yiddish, "Yes." I entered. The Rebbe was holding a stack of letters. The Rebbe asked me:

The Rebbe: How are you, Reb Reuven?

Reb Reuven: I want the Rebbe to let me know how I will know that I am fulfilling the Rebbe's will?

The Rebbe: If you are acting in accordance with Shulchan Aruch, you can be certain that you are acting in accordance with my will. For if it were not so, there would be doubts whether I am fulfilling Shulchan Aruch.

Reb Reuven: How could there be doubts regarding the Rebbe's fulfillment of Shulchan Aruch?

The Rebbe: When my people don't keep Shulchan Aruch, it seems as if I could be suspected of not keeping Shulchan Aruch.

Reb Reuven: Nevertheless, do we stay connected to the Rebbe?

The Rebbe nodded. Reb Reuven, though silent, persisted in thought with the question.

The Rebbe: Why do you have to expound and seek? *The Rebbe took hold of his lapel and said:* For such thoughts, which come from the *yetzer hora*, you must grab the *yetzer*

hora by the sleeve, throw him out, do what you have to do without arguing with *him*, and turn your thoughts to Torah.

If I thought you had something that needed fixing, I wouldn't keep it a secret; if I'm not telling you to fix anything, why are you searching? If I was displeased, I would tell you about it.

You need to take joy from Simchas Torah for the entire year, but instead not even a week has passed since Simchas Torah and already...

You have to learn from how I act.

Reb Reuven: I saw the Rebbe crying.

The Rebbe: That's not a contradiction: the crying is because we're in *golus*; every day, joy is in the heart on one side, and sorrow on the other side. Action, however, must be with joy.

I will deliberate and then speak to you; until then, too, you must be joyous.

The Rebbe then took out a Tanya and pointed to the lines (in Perek 31): "And this will be his avoda all his days—with great joy."³ The Rebbe emphasized that depression over the distance is because of the body and the nefesh hachiyunis therein. The Rebbe then pointed to the lines "And also the joy of the soul."⁴ The Rebbe connected them with what Tanya discusses in the end of Perek 33 about joy.⁵ ①

1. 28 Tishrei 5727. These *yechidusen* are published in *Mikdash Melech* vol. 2, pp. 401-404.

2. 3 Cheshvan 5724.

3. This part of Tanya discusses that the true joy of the *neschama* is achieved when a person is learning Torah and doing *mitzvos*.

4. This part of Tanya explains how a person can lift himself out of depression by considering the fact that he was placed on earth to elevate it through Torah and *mitzvos*.

5. 26 Tishrei 5721. This part of Tanya enumerates many levels of joy a person can attain through considering his purpose and place in Hashem's plan.



REB REUVEN DUNIN RECEIVES LEKACH FROM THE REBBE, HOSHANA RABBA 5749.

לזכות
הרה"ת ר' אברהם שמואל
וזוגתו מרת רבקה מירל שיחיו
שפאלטר

להצלחה רבה בכל עניניהם
לאריכת ימים ושנים טובות

נדפס ע"י בנם
הרה"ת ר' יצחק מאיר
וזוגתו מרת לאה ומשפחתם שיחיו
שפאלטר



THE REBBE AT THE TIME PERIOD AROUND THE CHASUNA.



THE REBBETZIN ON THE WEDDING DAY.

Celebrating Ninety Years



דאס איז דער טאג

THE REBBE AND REBBETZIN'S CHASUNA

It was a mere few weeks after the liberation of the Frierdiker Rebbe on Yud-Beis Tammuz 5687 (תרפ"ז). The Frierdiker Rebbe was to leave the Soviet Union and only his family members were granted the necessary papers to come along. When the Frierdiker Rebbe submitted the list of his household to the Soviet authorities to issues exit visas from Russia, they objected to one name only.

"Do you really need to bring a future son-in-law from here?" they asked.


The Frierdiker Rebbe replied, "Such a son-in-law can't be found elsewhere!"

The Rebbe and Rebbetzin's *shidduch* was already several years in the making. Since the Rebbe's early visits to the Frierdiker Rebbe in Rostov years earlier, talk began regarding the proposed *shidduch*, and as the years progressed, the Rebbe began to be identified by the Frierdiker Rebbe as "*hameyu'ad lihiyos chassano*," the future son-in-law of the Frierdiker Rebbe.

The roots of the *shidduch* go back even earlier, to the Rebbe Rashab. Rebbetzin Shterna Sarah related that she had heard from her husband, "For Mussia, we need to look into the sons of Reb Levik."

However, with the difficult situation in Russia, the wedding never materialized. One year after moving to Riga, the Frierdiker Rebbe decided that the time was ripe.






For the Chassidim in that generation, this was much more than a wedding.

The previous years had brought untold hardship and suffering to the Chassidim and to the Frierdiker Rebbe. The once glorious yeshiva in Lubavitch was now fragmented in underground units spread throughout the country. Many Chassidim languished in prison; Yiddishkeit in the Soviet Union had been all but decimated. Just a year and a half earlier, the Frierdiker Rebbe himself had been imprisoned.

Even though the Frierdiker Rebbe had now immigrated to the free world, he was geographically separated from the vast majority of his Chassidim. The financial situation was precarious. What would the future hold?

It was time to rebuild. This wedding would mark the beginning of a new era.



For Chassidim in our generation, this was also much more than a wedding.

The wedding anniversaries of all the Rebbeim are significant, as the Rebbe explained in *sichos*. However, the day of Yud-Daled Kislev is even more unique: It is the day that marked the beginning of our connection to the Rebbe, the *nossi* of our generation. As the Rebbe said, “*Dos iz der tog vos hot mir farbunden amit eich, un eich mit mir*—this is the day that connected me to you, and you to me.”

In simple terms, this day holds the beginnings of *dor hashvi'i*.

This article is a condensed version of the description of the Rebbe's wedding printed in *Early Years*, by **Jewish Educational Media**. Much of the style has been changed to cater to our readership, but the content and basic flow have remained the same.

We would like to express our thanks to Rabbi **Elkanah Shmotkin** and Rabbi **Boruch Oberlander**, the researchers and authors of the book, for allowing us to reprint their work, as well as to Rabbi **Levi Greisman** and the entire **JEM** team for their kind assistance.

The Announcement

At the end of Tishrei 5689 (תרפ"ט), the news spread that the wedding of the Rebbe and the Rebbetzin would be held during the month of Kislev. Two weeks later, the date was set for Yud-Daled Kislev, and Warsaw, the home of Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim in Poland, was chosen to host the wedding. As the Friediker Rebbe explained, "This will give us satisfaction as if it were in some way similar to Lubavitch."¹

Invitations were sent out dated 16 Cheshvan. A generic printed invitation was sent to hundreds of Chassidim, while special copies of a handwritten invitation were sent to prominent individuals, sometimes with the Friediker Rebbe's personal signature and header.

Later, in Warsaw, the Friediker Rebbe sent personal invitations to the Rebbes of Poland who lived in Warsaw and its suburbs: the Gerrer, Sochatchover, Alexander, Radziner, and Zlotopoler Rebbes, and others.

Chassidim throughout the world celebrated with the joyous news, and began preparing for the occasion. They recognized that this would be no ordinary wedding. One Chossid, Reb Yochanan Gordon,² later related a conversation he had with Reb Leib Sheinen, the *rav* of his town, Dokshitz. Reb Yochanan, having just returned from spending Rosh Hashanah with the Friediker Rebbe, was unsure whether to head out again, and he discussed the matter with Reb Leib. Reb Leib responded incisively:

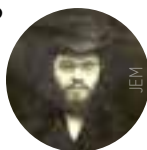
"Imagine, a wedding like this in which all the Rebbes will take part—the Rebbe Rashab, the Rebbe Maharash, the Tzemach Tzedek, the Mittlerer Rebbe and the Alter Rebbe; possibly even the Baal Shem Tov—how can you consider missing an opportunity like that?!"

Upon hearing this, Reb Yochanan later wrote to the Friediker Rebbe, "I went immediately and borrowed money for the trip. I hope to never

forget what I saw and felt at that wedding for the rest of my life."

Such a grand affair was going to cost a great amount of money. The Friediker Rebbe's secretary, Reb Chatshe Feigin, wrote an emotional letter to Reb Yisroel Jacobson in New York requesting help to enable the Friediker Rebbe to host a celebration befitting the occasion.

Following his request, Chassidim in many communities in North America including Montreal, Baltimore, Chicago and New York, as well as in London and Kharkov, assisted by sending funds.



REB YOCHANAN GORDON



THE LETTER FROM REB YOCHANAN GORDON TO THE FRIEDIKER REBBE, DESCRIBING HIS DECISION TO TRAVEL TO THE REBBE AND REBBETZIN'S CHASUNA.

Invitations

During the famous farbrengen marking the Rebbe and Rebbetzin's twenty-fifth wedding anniversary, on Yud-Daled Kislev 5714,³ the Rebbe described the special attention the Friediker Rebbe devoted to the text of the wedding invitations:

“Before the wedding of my sister-in-law [Rebbetzin Sheina], my father-in-law instructed that the text of her wedding invitation be a copy of ours. In response to my question, the Rebbe explained that the text was taken from the invitation to his own wedding.



THE WEDDING INVITATION.



AN INVITATION TO THE WEDDING, WRITTEN IN THE FRIEDIKER REBBE'S KSAV YAD KODESH.

Preparations

In preparation for the wedding, Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka departed for Warsaw together with her mother, Rebbetzin Nechama Dina, around two weeks before the wedding. The rest of the family remained in Riga, where the *tenoim* and *ufruf* were held.

On the eve of 6 Kislev, the *tenoim* were signed in the presence of a small group of people. Two Chassidim were honored to be *eidim*: Reb Mordechai Cheifetz and Reb Chatshe Feigin.

The next day, the Friediker Rebbe wrote a heartfelt letter to the Rebbetzin:

“Mazal tov to you, my dear daughter; mazal tov! Last night we conducted the *tenoim* in an auspicious time in the presence of a few close friends.”

In observance of the custom to donate food for the poor prior to a wedding, the Friediker Rebbe sponsored free lunch in the Riga Jewish soup kitchen in the days leading up to the wedding.

The Ufruf

In a letter to his family and other Chassidim in Russia, Reb Eliyahu Chaim Althaus⁴ records the events of this day (due to the length of his writing, we have condensed certain parts, while preserving the original style):

“The *chosson* was called up to the Torah on Shabbos, Yud-Alef Kislev, with great fanfare. At about one o'clock, the Rebbetzin [Shterna Sara] prepared a *kiddush* in her ground floor apartment for approximately 100 people.



REB ELYE CHAIM ALTHAUS

“As the train began to move, the crowd followed us, dancing alongside. How beautiful and heartfelt was this emotional scene.”

“The *kiddush* lasted about one-and-a-half hours, where we sang many powerful *niggunim*. After *Mincha*, the Shabbos meal took place in the Rebbe’s apartment, with some 70 invited guests.

“The Rebbe delivered a *maamar*, *dibbur hamaschil* ‘*Vechol Banayich*,’ a wondrous *maamar* which included both deep concepts and practical advice in *avodas Hashem*. It lasted about one-and-a-half hours, followed by prolonged dancing. We celebrated greatly—rejoicing and trembling as one: Observing the Rebbe’s great joy, we, his Chassidim, rejoiced along with him. The Rebbe, in turn, sang, danced and rejoiced with us.

“For me personally, the celebration of this special moment surpassed the rejoicing of the days to follow. Why so? I will never know. But I know this is how I feel in my heart. Perhaps because this was the beginning of the festivities, the opening for all the celebration to follow—this elation that contrasted so starkly with the painful events that preceded it not long before.

“After a *sicha*, the Rebbe rose with a cup of wine in his holy hands. His face turned from white to red. His eyes filled with tears, as he looked heavenward:

“Now I would like to say *l’chaim* for my brethren who are exiled in Russia.’ In a powerful voice he delivered a long and deep *brocha*...

“This meal with the Rebbe and his Chassidim continued deep into the night. I have no doubt—were it not for the need to prepare for the next day’s journey, it would not have concluded before midnight, as it did. Such an event has never been seen or heard of before; it was a taste of *Olam Haba*.”

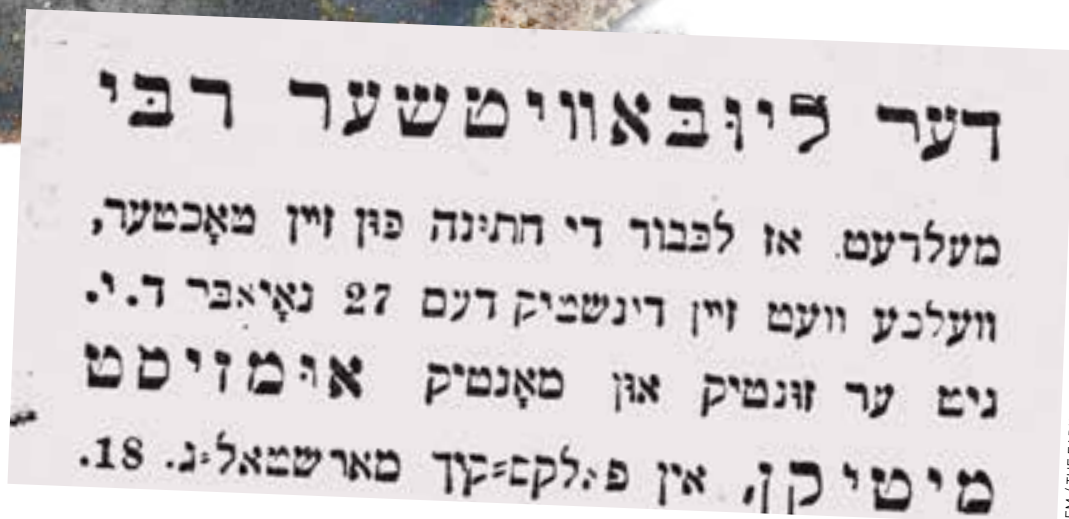
Journey to Warsaw

Reb Eliyahu Chaim describes the journey:

“On Sunday, 12 Kislev, the Rebbe departed Riga for Warsaw with his family. At the train station, he was greeted by thousands of Chassidim, acquaintances, and well-wishers who had come



THE FRIERDIKER REBBE AT THE RIGA TRAIN STATION.



AN ANNOUNCEMENT ABOUT
THE CHASUNA IN THE RIGA
FRIMORGN NEWSPAPER.

JEM / THE EARLY YEARS

to see him off. The crowd of men, women, and children created quite a clamor.

“In a long line, the people stood with tremendous respect, nodding their heads in greeting and blessing. The Rebbe nodded back affectionately, responding to each in a quiet voice, ‘Be well, be well!’

“Suddenly, a great sound arose from the crowd. They broke out in the well-known song, ‘*Ki Vesimcha*’ and ‘*Yivarechicha Hashem V’yishmirecha*.’ As the train began to move, the crowd followed us, dancing alongside. How beautiful and heartfelt was this emotional scene.

“Some 10 Chassidim from Riga went along with the Rebbe, and others, who couldn’t obtain visas to enter Poland, joined us until the border. We sat in the car adjacent to the Rebbe and his family, and the atmosphere was truly joyful. The entire journey reminded us of earlier times, when we would travel together to Lubavitch...

“During the train stops in Dvinsk and Vilna, thousands of Chassidim greeted us at the station, eager to see the Rebbe and wish him *mazal tov*.

“We were overjoyed to witness with our own eyes a blessed generation of offspring from our holy Rebbes—and now, after years, a seventh generation. Despite the double darkness that

covers the world in which we live, during these times of the footsteps of Moshiach, the small light that we have is bright and pure. It illuminates the darkness and nothing can prevent us from seeing its glow. Fortunate is the eye that beheld all this!

“On Monday, 13 Kislev, at 7:00 a.m., the train slowly approached the Warsaw station. Thousands of men, women and children, as well as all the students of Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim, had come out to greet the Rebbe. There was total chaos as everyone pushed forward to be the first to catch a glimpse of him.

“I was told that the Rebbe’s father-in-law, Reb Avraham Schneersohn, arrived at the station from Kishinev with his son at the same time, and the Rebbe approached him, fell on his shoulder, and kissed him.

“Suddenly, the *chosson* appeared in my car, stating that the Rebbe had requested that I proceed with him to the hotel. Of course, I didn’t hesitate for a moment. We set out immediately. We locked our arms together, and only with great difficulty did we push through the throngs.”

The Rebbe’s legal marriage certificate was issued that day by Rabbi Tzvi Yechezkel Michelsohn of the Warsaw Rabbinate.



VARIOUS NEWSPAPER REPORTS OF THE CHASUNA.

The Chosson Mohl

The *chosson mohl* was held the night prior to the wedding, in Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim. Although the Frierdiker Rebbe had declared the event exclusive to the *bochurim* of the yeshiva, other Chassidim and *bochurim* came to participate and many pushed their way into the building. Eventually police officers were summoned, and only with clearance from Reb Alter Simchovitch, the *mashgiach* of the yeshiva, were individuals allowed to enter.

The Frierdiker Rebbe repeated the *maamar* ‘*Vechol Banayich*’ he had said the previous Shabbos in Riga, and many *niggunim* were sung. After *birchas hamazon*, the Frierdiker Rebbe asked to dance with the *bochurim*. A large circle was formed, and the Frierdiker Rebbe danced with the close Chassidim and the *temimim*.

Reb Elye Chaim described his thoughts after the event:

“That night the entire building was illuminated with a great light. The moment we entered the yeshiva hall, my eyes were opened. It had been freshly painted sea-blue, with many other shades. The ceiling, walls, and floor all looked pristine.

Long tables, arranged as three sides of a square, were adorned with white tablecloths. Large electric chandeliers sparkled from the center and corners of the large room.

“The dais ran along the eastern wall. At its center, in a special chair facing the crowd, sat the exalted *chosson*, his face pale and radiant, like a king dressed in silk. At his right, attired in his Shabbos finery with his *gartel*, sat our Rebbe.

“Whoever did not behold this joyous event, with the bright, shining light radiating from the renowned *tzaddikim* sitting at the dais; our Rebbe at their head with the *chosson* at his side; the many *bochurim* standing and watching in awe, their beautiful voices echoing forth as they sang the Alter Rebbe’s *niggun*; the Rebbe’s eyes glistening with silent tears as he held himself back from weeping openly—whoever did not hear the voices of joy in this Heavenly garden, whose soul did not experience this *Gan Eden*—has never heard nor seen true beauty in his lifetime. Fortunate is the eye that beheld all this.

“Everyone finally understood why the Rebbe chose to hold the wedding in Warsaw. Only Warsaw was worthy of this. Warsaw and only Warsaw had been prepared from the time of creation to receive this lofty light.”

The celebration ended at two in the morning, when the *bochurim* joyously escorted the Frierdiker Rebbe to his hotel.

The Day of the Chasuna

Throughout the day of the wedding, telegrams arrived from well-wishers. The Frierdiker Rebbe writes: “Hundreds or thousands of telegrams were received in Warsaw. A number of people were specifically assigned to receive and record them.”⁵

“In the afternoon,” Reb Elye Chaim writes, “the *chosson* stood to pray the final *Mincha* before his wedding and to recite the long *vidui* with deep concentration, pouring out his soul in a quiet voice. It was an awe-inspiring scene: no one was present besides him and me but we were as distant

**“Do I not know that upon the path of this
praised young man are also dependent the
futures of our children and grandchildren?”**

from one another as the east is from the west; his contemplations were entirely beyond my own.

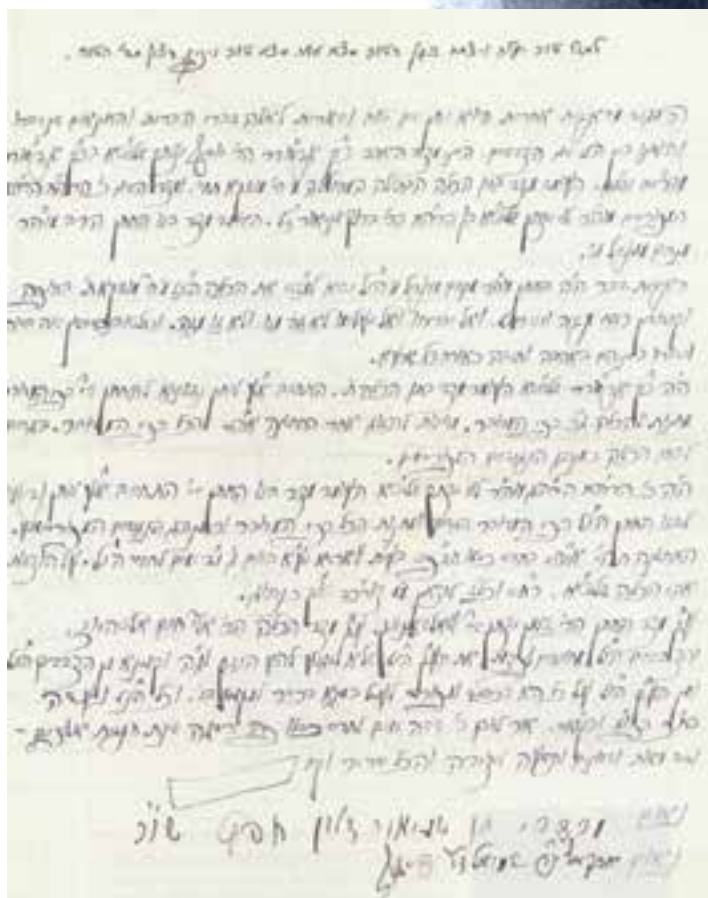
“My beloved ones, can you envision my emotions during this long wait, as I sit in a corner of the large room, watching this young man before me, who, in several hours, will become the son-in-law of our beloved Rebbe? From him he will build a Jewish home, and no secret is hidden from him... Did I not cry along with him? Do I not know that upon the path of this praised young man are also dependent the futures of our children and grandchildren?

“The gates of tears are not closed’—I have no doubt that our prayers were accepted by the Creator. He will have great success on the straight path chosen by his forefathers, our holy Rebbeim, and the *tzaddik*, as well as the Chassidim, will see and rejoice in him.

“I said to myself that I should thank Hashem for everything I was able to see, for before me stands Mendel ben Levik, who, it is well known, was born and raised in purity and holiness and who constantly fears Heaven. As of today, all I see is fear of Heaven. I examined his deeds inside and out and I found not one flaw. He is complete in *nefesh, ruach*, and *neshama*. He possesses his own great learning in addition to the merit of his saintly forebears.

“You know as I do, that he is naturally distant from doing the slightest thing for appearances alone. And though he knows what is outside in the secular world, he also knows well to discern between the holy and the mundane, and his holiness was never tarnished, even the slightest bit.

“As he finished davening *Mincha*, he turned from the wall to me. I studied him—his face white as chalk, his body weakened from the fasting and his intense service all day. My compassion was aroused and I suggested that he rest a bit but he didn’t react. The entire day he exchanged not even one mundane word with me. Perhaps he was commanded so. Instead he opened the Reishis Chochmah to study.



THE TENA'IM OF THE REBBE AND REBBETZIN.

“Eventually, I was called to the telephone and I was asked if the *chosson* was ready for the *kabbalas ponim*. I answered in the affirmative. I passed the information to the *chosson*, adding that he would need to dress quickly for the wedding, as they would soon come to bring us to Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim, where the *kabbalas ponim* would take place.

“How I rejoiced when I saw him in a silk *kapote* with the *gartel* tied over it, as befitting the Rebbe’s child! My joy knows no end.

“I reflected, deeply emotional, as I sat in the car with the *chosson* en route to the yeshiva.

“My thoughts raced. I asked myself incessantly: How is this? Warsaw? Tomchei Temimim?

Lubavitch? Rostov? Leningrad? Shpalerka? Kostroma? Riga? They all passed like a fleeting dream. Finally, I have come to rejoice, but my eyes are pouring forth tears!”

The Chasuna In Yekaterinoslav

At first, the Rebbe’s parents, Harav Levi Yitzchok and Rebbetzin Chana, hoped to attend the wedding. To everyone’s dismay, the Soviet authorities refused to grant them exit visas, and they were forced to remain far away.

To mark the occasion, they held a celebration in their home. Although gathering in a religious setting was illegal, hundreds of people came to celebrate with them and many hundreds more sent congratulatory telegrams from throughout Russia.

The lengthy account of the emotional wedding celebration in Yekaterinoslav has been passed down to us from several sources, primarily Rebbetzin Chana’s memoirs and letters from the Rebbe’s uncle, Reb Shmuel Schneerson. (See *Dancing From a Distance*, Derher Kislev 5772.)

The Kabbalas Panim

The *kabbalas ponim* was held in Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim. The yeshiva hall was decorated beautifully. Several rooms were set aside as a women’s section, while the main *zal* and its adjoining rooms were designated for the men.

“Only those who had an invitation,” writes Reb Elye Chaim, “or a bribe to the policemen of a zloty or a half, were allowed to enter. That is, except for the professional thieves of Warsaw—they came and went as they pleased...”

101 Words

On the day of the wedding, Harav Levi Yitzchak composed a heartfelt telegram to the Rebbe. Rebbetzin Chana later described the scene as Harav Levi Yitzchok poured his heart into his words: “The tablecloth was wet from my husband’s tears as he wrote that telegram.”

In Harav Levi Yitzchak’s letter to the Rebbe after the *chasuna*, he writes:

“Of all the countless telegrams that you received, I truly desire that my own telegram to you—the one consisting of 101 words—should remain with you, because it was written from the depths of my heart and soul... Protect it for many long, pleasant years. I hope to Hashem that He always fulfill all the good wishes contained there.”

The telegram reads:

“Schneerson, Mendel. Warsaw.

“From the deepest essence of my heart, I hereby bless you, my dear beloved son, on this day of your wedding to your intended, Chaya Mushka, in an auspicious time. May Hashem, the G-d of our holy forebears in whose merit we live, spread His shelter of peace over you, and may your edifice be everlasting. ‘*Re’eh chaim im ha’isha asher ahavta*’—both literally, and according to the Midrashic interpretation. ‘*Yehi mekorcha varuch, u’smach mei’eishes ne’urecha*.’

“May the merit of our forebears, the Tzemach Tzedek and his wife—after whom you and your *kallah* are named—protect you all the days of your life, forever—that you walk on the path of Torah and mitzvah and live lives of *nachas*, peace and tranquility, amidst all good, forever. May you both be a source of pride and renown amongst Israel. May you merit ‘a generation of upright offspring’—children and grandchildren occupied in Torah and *mitzvos*.

“Your father, who is literally together with you,

“Levi Yitzchak.”



מברק, ~~אשר~~ יצ פלאו, תרע"ו,
שנא (כסאן ה'ת"ש). ואשרא.

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“The *zal* was packed from end to end—even more than yesterday. Rebbes, rabbis, great world-renowned scholars; the who’s-who of Warsaw; correspondents from all the newspapers, including Hatzfirah, Moment, Haynt, Express, and many others; the chairmen of the rabbinical councils of both Poland and Warsaw; representatives of the Joint Distribution Committee, the orphans’ home and similar institutions; and on and on.”

At six o’clock, the Frieddiker Rebbe arrived at the yeshiva, and was greeted by joyous singing. Several minutes later, the *chosson* arrived. The thousands gathered outside cleared a path from the car to the yeshiva’s entrance.

On the instruction of the Frieddiker Rebbe, the *chosson* was seated at the head of the table. To his right sat the Frieddiker Rebbe, wearing a *shtreimel*. To the *chosson*’s left sat Reb Avraham Schneersohn, the Frieddiker Rebbe’s father-in-law. Around the table sat the distinguished guests—Rebbes, rabbis, relatives and close associates. Surrounding them stood Chassidim and yeshiva students, and all the guests.

Reb Elye Chaim describes what happened next:

“A long silence enveloped the great room. Suddenly, the Rebbe’s face changed from red to white. At that moment he resembled an angel. His eyes shone with a clear, radiant light, shimmering like the morning stars. Awe and trembling gripped everyone present. It is indescribable.

“At that moment, the Rebbe started to speak. His words were uttered with a passionate flame.”

The Frieddiker Rebbe announced: “It is well-known that during a wedding, the *neshamos* of parents come from *olam ha’emes*. Three generations of forebears attend every Jew’s wedding, and for some, more generations attend. There are various degrees in this.

“As an invitation to the souls of the Rebbeim who will come to the *chupa* to bless the couple, we will now deliver a *maamar*. A portion will be from the Alter Rebbe; a portion from the Mittlerer



THE CARDS ALLOWING ACCESS TO THE WEDDING.

Shtreimel

The custom of the Rebbeim was to wear a *shtreimel* every Shabbos and Yom Tov, except for when they left Lubavitch. From the day the Rebbe Rashab and the Frieddiker Rebbe left Lubavitch in 5676 (תרע"ו), they no longer wore their *shtreimels* at all.

In honor of the Rebbe’s wedding, the Frieddiker Rebbe once again donned his *shtreimel*, to the joy of the Chassidim.

In the Rebbe’s Reshimos⁶, the Rebbe records a conversation with the Frieddiker Rebbe shortly after the wedding, where he told the Rebbe that the Rebbe Rashab had appeared to him in a vision and wished him *mazal tov* on the occasion:

“Last night I saw my father... He told me, “*Mazal tov* for the hat”... This is the second time I have seen my father since the wedding. The first time I was also wearing the hat, but that time he didn’t wish me *mazal tov*.”



“A long silence enveloped the great room. Suddenly, the Rebbe’s face changed from red to white.”

Rebbe; a portion from my great-grandfather [the Tzemach Tzedek]; a portion from my grandfather, the *kallah*’s great-grandfather [the Rebbe Maharash]; a portion from the *chosson*’s great-great grandfather [Reb Baruch Shalom, oldest son of the Tzemach Tzedek]; and a portion from my father, the *kallah*’s grandfather [the Rebbe Rashab]. ‘*Kol ha’omer davar b’sheim omro*—whenever someone quotes a saying in the name of its originator, one should consider it as though the originator of the statement is standing before him.’”

Immediately following his awe-inspiring introduction, the Frierdiker Rebbe began to deliver a *maamar*, *dibur hamas’chil* “*Lecha Dodi Likras Kallah*.” It lasted about half an hour.

The Bedeken

Reb Elye Chaim continues his description:

“After the *maamar*, the tables were moved aside and the *chosson* was escorted into the adjoining room, the women’s section. Large, beautiful trees with flowers and roses filled the *kallah*’s reception room. Many electric lamps were within the arrangements, and they looked beautiful.

“I saw the beautiful *kallah* inside the garden, attired in a beautiful dress. Her face was white as chalk, infused with fear of Heaven, shining like the morning light amidst the garden of flowers surrounding her. The Rebbetzin [Nechama Dina] and the *alte Rebbetzin* [Shterna Sara] were at her side. They, in turn, were surrounded by all the distinguished women, as well as dozens of girls who had come to rejoice with her.

“They all waited anxiously for the moment the *chosson* would enter to cover her with the veil. Everyone tried to catch a glimpse of her *chosson*.”

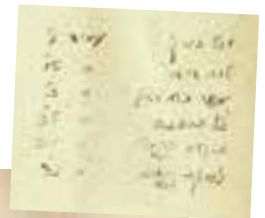
On the way to the *bedeken*, the Frierdiker Rebbe and the *chosson*, alone, entered a small room nearby the *kallah*’s reception. The Frierdiker Rebbe allowed only Reb Zalman Schneerson of Lodz, as a family member, to remain. The Frierdiker Rebbe personally dressed the *chosson* in the *kittel* made from the shirt of the Rebbe Rashab. Then, the Frierdiker Rebbe wrapped the silk *gartel* around

him, and said that he would like to say the *brocha*, “*Ozer Yisroel B’gyurah*,” but since he already did so in the morning, he wouldn’t recite it again. The Frierdiker Rebbe said, “I am tying you to myself, *bazeh u’vebah*, in this world and the next.”

Afterwards, other people were also called into the room. Reb Avraham Schneersohn and each of the Rebbes in attendance were invited to *bentch* the *chosson*. Then, the *bedeken* took place, while the Alter Rebbe’s *niggun* was sung.

The Chupa

“Immediately after the *bedeken*,” Reb Elye Chaim describes, “everyone began rushing out of the yeshiva to the inner courtyard where the *chupa* stood, hastily



THE DRUSHEI CHASUNA BOOKLET, CONTAINING THE MAAMORIM SAID BY THE FRIERDIKER REBBE IN HONOR OF THE WEDDING.

JEM / THE EARLY YEARS

and frantically hoping to grab a spot from which to see the *chupa* up-close.

“I didn’t rush. I waited for the *chosson* and the *mechutanim* to go ahead as is proper, and so did many distinguished guests. We were given candles, and we formed two lines between which the Rebbe and Reb Moshe Horenshtein [son-in-law of the Rebbe Maharash]—they were the *shushvinim*—led the *chosson* to the *chupa*. Everyone standing there heartfully sang the Alter Rebbe’s *niggun* in unison.

“I can’t begin to describe the scene of the pushing, running, screaming and general chaos that filled the area. Men, women and children filled the large courtyard. Many electric lamps hung above it, illuminating it brightly. The *chupa* stood in the corner of the courtyard.

“Once the *shushvinim* brought the *chosson* to the *chupa*, they went back to bring the *kallah*. At her sides were her mother the Rebbetzin, her

grandmother the Rebbetzin, and the Rebbe’s aunt, Rebbetzin Mushka, the younger sister of the Rebbe [Rashab] *nishmaso eden*.

“I heard an announcement from Reb Feivish Zalmanov, that the youngsters should move away from the *chupa* and make way for the elders. Some semblance of calm was restored.

“They then circled around the *chosson*—the *kallah*, the Rebbe, the Rebbetzin, the *alte Rebbetzin*, the Rebbe’s aunt Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka, and her husband, Reb Moshe Horenshtein.

“Suddenly, I heard the first *brocha* being recited. It was the Rebbe. His voice thundered like the rapids, deeply solemn and trembling. As his voice echoed through the courtyard, a deep awe fell upon us all. Instantly, the crowd fell silent. The Rebbe’s clear, sweet voice called out—it was mournful and elated at once, and could be heard even at a distance. Tears flowed like water from



THE BUILDING OF YESHIVAS TOMCHEI TEMIMIM IN WARSAW, WHERE THE FIRST PART OF THE WEDDING WAS HELD.

JEM / THE EARLY YEARS

“When we heard him recite the words, ‘Asher yatzar es ha’adam b’tzalmo,’ we all repented with as true a teshuva as upon hearing the Rebbe cry out ‘arov avdecha letov,’ before the shofar-blowing on Rosh Hashanah.”

every face; everyone’s hearts melted as the Rebbe said that *brocha*.

“Then, the *chosson* was *mekadesh* the *kallah*, and the Radziner Rebbe was honored to read the *kesuba*.”

Witnesses on the *kesuba* were two prominent Chassidim, Rabbi Berel Moshe Shmotkin and Rabbi Mendel Kuperstock, the rabbi of Postavy, Poland.

“The Rebbe began again, reciting the *sheva brachos* in a loud voice emanating from the depths of his heart. Again, joyful trembling fell upon all of us gathered there. It seemed as though we were hearing an angel’s voice from *Gan Eden*. I do not exaggerate when I say this: when we heard him recite the words, ‘Asher yatzar es ha’adam b’tzalmo,’ we all repented with as true a *teshuva* as upon hearing the Rebbe cry out ‘arov avdecha letov,’ before the *shofar*-blowing on Rosh Hashanah.

“How fortunate we were to hear this. May we all together merit to speedily hear ‘Barei Yehudah uv’chutzos Yerushalayim, kol sasson v’kol simcha!’

“After the *brachos* were recited and the *chosson* broke the glass, a massive cry burst forth from the thousands present, ‘Mazal Tov!’ setting forth song and dance and music before the *chosson* and the *kallah*.”

The Wedding Seuda

After the *chupa*, the Frierdiker Rebbe, the *chosson*, *kallah*, and all the relatives retired to the yeshiva building for a short rest.

One of the rooms of the yeshiva served as the *yichud* room. A number of relatives entered together with the *chosson* and *kallah*. On the Frierdiker Rebbe’s directive, they departed one at a time. The Frierdiker Rebbe poured tea for the *chosson* and *kallah* over which they broke their fast, and then he left the room as well.

The guests proceeded to the large hall at 35 Pańska Street, where the wedding meal was held. The Rebbe later noted that the wedding was held in a different location “in the American style,” as “the Frierdiker Rebbe had requested that only

the spiritual part of the wedding be held at the yeshiva.”⁷

At about 10:00 p.m., the Frierdiker Rebbe and the Rebbe and Rebbetzin arrived at the hall, amid much singing and dancing. After some time, the Frierdiker Rebbe asked that all the guests take their seats.

The waiters arrange buffet tables where *l’chaim* and cake were served, and the Frierdiker Rebbe himself walked amongst the tables with a bottle, distributing *l’chaim* to each guest and blessing them.

In a *sicha* in 5747, the Rebbe related:

“During my wedding meal, my father-in-law stood up from his place and walked amongst the guests to distribute *l’chaim*. When I saw this, I couldn’t remain sitting in my place whilst the Rebbe stood and distributed *l’chaim*, so I stood up from my place in order to at least attempt to assist—to hold the bottle, give the cups, etc.—but the Rebbe immediately turned to me and indicated that I should remain sitting at my place. When I nevertheless attempted to insist—Jews are, after all, stubborn—he motioned again, even more explicitly, that I should not stand up. So with no choice, I remained seated—on pins and needles, of course—until the Rebbe returned to his place to continue the meal.”⁸

When he arrived to where the *bochurim* were standing, the Frierdiker Rebbe directed the *mashgiach*, Reb Alter Simchovitch, to distribute *l’chaim* to each of the students. When all the *bochurim* had cups in their hands, the Frierdiker Rebbe himself took a cup, and said *l’chaim* and a short *sicha* to the *bochurim*.

Afterwards, the dancing resumed, with the participation of the Frierdiker Rebbe, who danced with the *chosson* and his father-in-law, Reb Avraham Schneersohn.

After a short interval, the Frierdiker Rebbe delivered the first portion of the *maamar* “Asher Barah Sasson,” which lasted about an hour. At midnight, the Frierdiker Rebbe paused his delivery and the tables were arranged for the meal. A

special table was also arranged for the *bochurim*. Everyone washed their hands for bread and the wedding *seuda* began.

During the meal, the Frierdiker Rebbe instructed one of the *bochurim* to distribute a *teshura* to each of the participants.

After the meal was served, the music began once again and the entire assemblage resumed dancing. The *Polisher Rebbes* in attendance danced in a circle and when they sat down to rest, the Frierdiker Rebbe took the *chosson* and danced with him “in the Russian style,” one hand on the other’s shoulder. The Frierdiker Rebbe danced quickly.

At 3:30 in the morning, the dancing concluded and the *Polisher Rebbes* took their leave. The crowd formed a half-circle around the Frierdiker Rebbe singing *niggunim* for about half an hour.

Then, the Frierdiker Rebbe resumed his delivery of the *maamar* “*Asher Bara Sasson*.” Afterwards, the Amshinover Rebbe (who entered in middle of the *maamar*), was presented with refreshments and fruit. The Frierdiker Rebbe said a *l’chaim* with him, and they sat together for a quarter of an hour, following which the Frierdiker Rebbe left for the hotel.

The *seuda* concluded after 6:00 a.m.

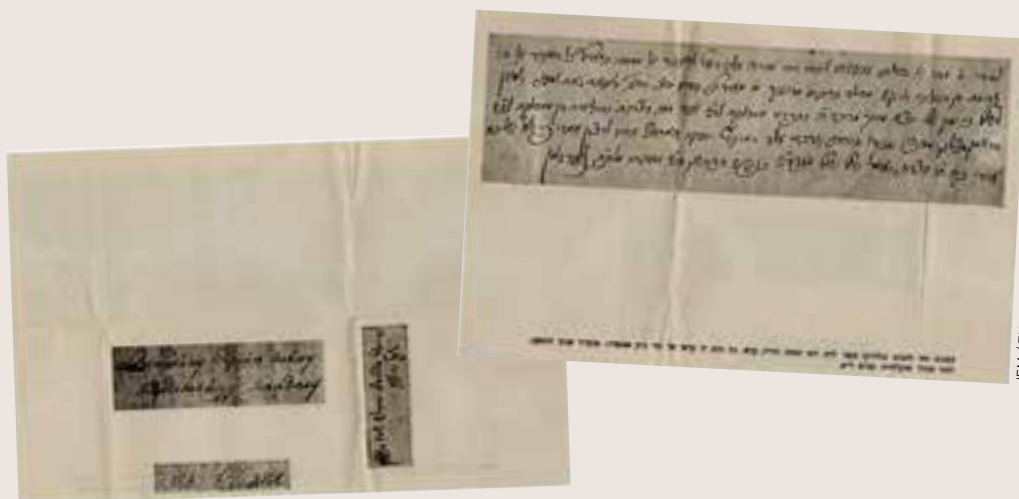
Sheva Brachos

At 6:00 p.m. on the day following the wedding, the first *sheva brachos* took place at 35 Pańska Street, where the wedding was held the previous night. Although only select close Chassidim and distinguished guests were invited, several hundred people attended.

Historic Teshura

At the wedding, a historic memento was distributed—at the time, unprecedented in the history of Lubavitch: A photocopy of a handwritten letter by the Alter Rebbe. The manuscript was accompanied by a detailed description, known as a *ya’ir nesiv*, written by the Frierdiker Rebbe.

After the wedding, the Frierdiker Rebbe mailed copies of the memento to many Chassidim around the world who could not attend.



THE TESHURA DISTRIBUTED AT THE WEDDING.

JEM / THE EARLY YEARS



I Gave My Daughter to a Man!

In a letter to the Rebbe shortly after the wedding, Harav Levi Yitzchak writes:

“You were brief where you should have written at length! I want to know what, specifically, were the words [uttered by your father-in-law (the Frierdiker Rebbe)] when he declared, ‘I can state, “*Es biti nasati l’ish*, I gave my daughter to this man.”’

“You conclude with, ‘*vechulu vechulu*.’ But the meaning of ‘*vechulu vechulu*’ I do not know! Report to me his words as they were. This will not be arrogance on your part, for it was not you who said it!”

What, in fact, were the words the Rebbe’s father is referring to?

During the *chasuna*, an elderly Chossid, Reb Berel Moshe Shmotkin (one of the *eidim* on the *kesuba*) asked the Frierdiker Rebbe, “Tell me about the *chosson*!”

The Frierdiker Rebbe responded:

“I have fulfilled, ‘*Es biti nasati l’ish*, I gave my daughter to a man.’

“He is *baki* in Bavli and Yerushalmi; he knows the Rishonim and Acharonim, as well as Likkutei Torah with all its references, and much, much more.”

Many Rebbes attended this *sheva brachos* and a special table was designated for them. At its head sat the Frierdiker Rebbe; at his sides Reb Avraham Schneersohn and the *chosson*.

During the meal, the Frierdiker Rebbe directed a group of Chassidim to sing the Alter Rebbe’s *niggun* slowly, and he sang along in great ecstasy. The assembled Rebbes joined in.

Following *bentching*, the Frierdiker Rebbe danced with the Rebbes and prestigious rabbis. All the guests—Chassidim and *bochurim*—stood

surrounding them, watching and singing joyfully. A short while later, the Frierdiker Rebbe prepared to deliver a *maamar*. Immediately, everyone gathered around him, and the Rebbe said the *maamar*, “*Kol Haneheneh*.”

With that, the festivities in Warsaw came to an end. The next morning, the Frierdiker Rebbe and the entire family set out by train to return to Riga.

Shabbos Sheva Brachos

After *Shacharis* that Shabbos in Riga, many Chassidim assembled in the apartment of Rebbetzin Shterna Sara for the *sheva brachos seuda*. The Frierdiker Rebbe held a *farbrengen* and delivered a *maamar*, “*Margela Bipumei D’rava*.” The room was packed, and the *farbrengen* lasted until very late.

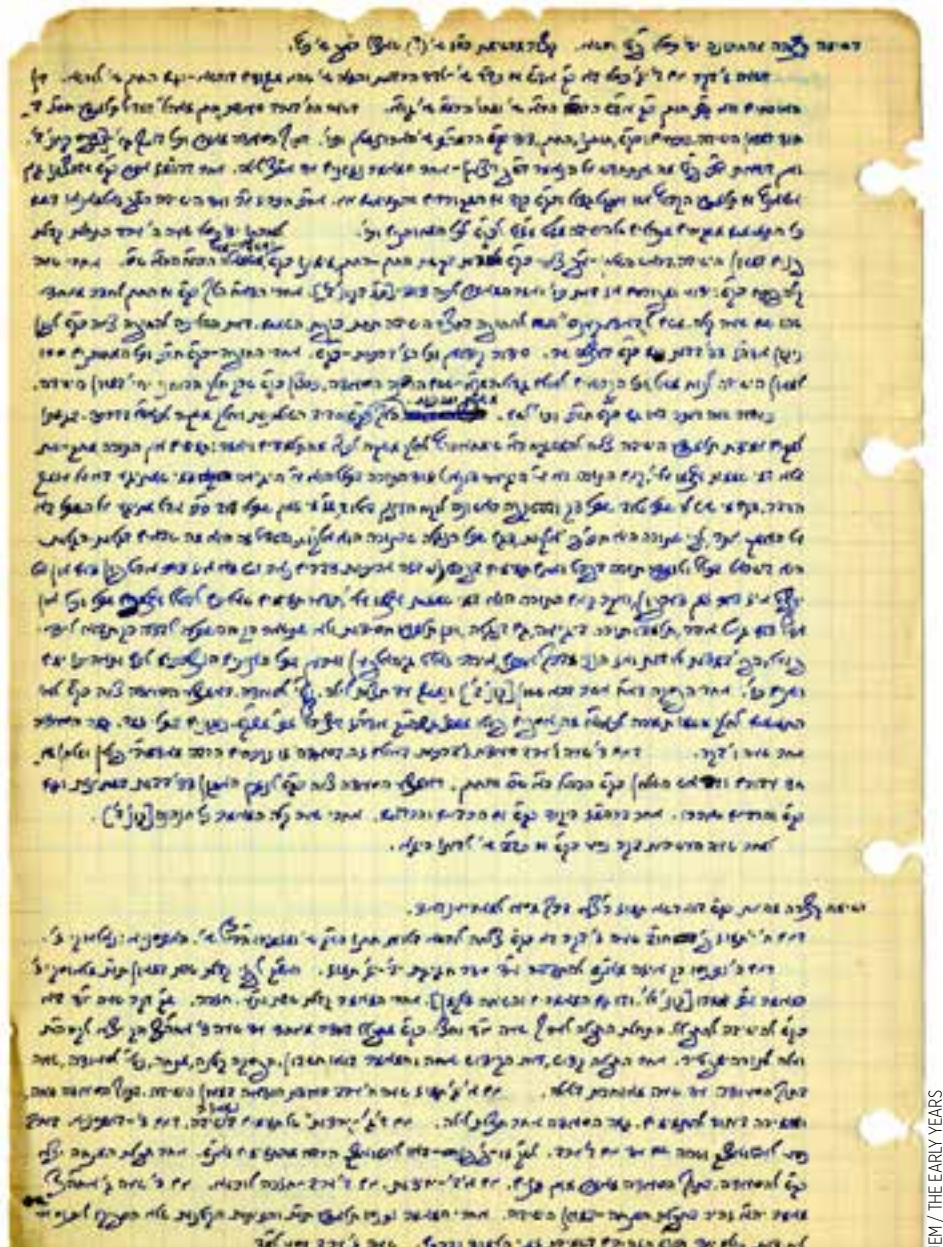
Motzo’ei Shabbos was also Yud-Tes Kislev. The Frierdiker Rebbe held a *farbrengen* throughout the night until morning. During the *farbrengen*, he noted that the day was special not only because of Yud-Tes Kislev, but also because of the *sheva brachos* of the Rebbe.

At the beginning of the *farbrengen*, the Frierdiker Rebbe dictated to his *mazkir*, Reb Chatshe Feigin, a Yiddish text to be sent to the Ohel of the Rebbe Rashab in Rostov: “*Pidyon* to be placed on my father’s resting place: ‘Your will has been fulfilled.’” (Apparently, this is a reference to the fact that the Rebbe Rashab had suggested the *shidduch* between the Rebbe and the Rebbetzin.)

Yud-Tes/Chof Kislev

On the sixth night of *sheva brachos*, the Frierdiker Rebbe held a long *farbrengen* where he spoke about a wide range of topics. The Frierdiker Rebbe challenged many Rigan Jews to personally promote Jewish education, even at the expense of their own livelihood, telling one individual, “Sell everything you have and build a *cheder* with *mesirus nefesh*!”

He also urged the assembled to study *Mishnayos baal peh*, a practice which the Rebbe would later strongly encourage.



A RESHIMA ABOUT THE CHASUNA, WRITTEN BY THE REBBE.

Toward the end of the evening, the Frieddiker Rebbe declared:

“My *mechutan* is a *mekubal* and, accordingly, he explains why the wedding took place in Kislev [according to Kabbalah]. But I explain it this way: Kislev corresponds to the ‘third month’ of *pnimius haTorah* [i.e. just like the month of Sivan, when the Torah was given, is referred to as the third month counting from Nissan].” T

1. Letter to Reb Moshe Horenshtein. Igros Kodesh Admur HaRayatz vol 16, p. 277.
2. See *With Heart and Soul*, Derher Adar I 5776,

3. *Toras Menachem* vol. 10, p. 198.
4. Reb Eliyahu Chaim Althaus was a close Chossid of the Frieddiker Rebbe, who served as the *shadchan* for the Rebbe and Rebbetzin's *shidduch*. His letters describing the Rebbe's *chasuna* are a primary source of information. For more on this unique Chossid and his special writing talents, see *Of Heart and Quill*, Derher Cheshvan 5776.
5. *Igros Kodesh Admur HaRayatz* vol 16, p. 438
6. *Reshimas Hayoman* P. 149-150
7. *Toras Menachem* vol. 10, p. 200.
8. *Hisvaaduyos* 5747 vol. 3, p. 464.
9. *Toras Menachem* vol. 10 pg 206. *Sichos Kodesh* 5714 pg. 119.

”בכלל, א חתונה איז א ענין כללי בא א איש פרטי.
אבער, בא מיר איז דאך דורך דעם בין איך שפעטער
אריינגעצויגן געווארן אין ענינים כללים....

”דאס איז דער טאג וואס מ'האט מיר פארבונדן
מיט אייך און אייך מיט מיר. און צוזאמען וועלן מיר
אויסמאטערן די גאולה האמיתית והשלימה.
”און דער אויבערשטער זאל העלפן מען זאל
זעהן פרי טוב בעמלינו.”

“Generally speaking, a wedding [even] for
a private person, is an “all-encompassing”
event. For me, however, my wedding [was
certainly of broader nature, for it] brought me
into more general and communal affairs...

“This is the day when I was connected with
you, and you were connected with me.
Together, we will successfully toil to bring
about the true and final Geulah.

“May Hashem help [us] that we will see
fruitful results from our labor!”

*(Shabbos Parshas Vayishlach,
Yud-Daled Kislev 5714)⁹*



Dream or Reality?



18 KISLEV 5744, YOSSEI MELAMED VIA JEM 23457

Why does the Rebbe incessantly speak about Moshiach at every possible opportunity?

In this sicha, the Rebbe addresses this question.

There are some who ask:

Why does this Jew [i.e. the Rebbe] incessantly speak publicly at every farbrengen about one subject—the coming of Moshiach? He repeats the [Friediker] Rebbe's call, “לאחר, לגאולה—immediate redemption!” and emphasizes that these aren't merely words, but refer to the actual coming of Moshiach, immediately—today, Shabbos Parshas Pinchas, 5744! Likewise, he instructs that the song, “*Sheyibaneh Beis Hamikdash*” be sung all the time, emphasizing that “במהרה—speedily rebuilt in our days” means today, not tomorrow.

Of course, every Jew believes that Moshiach can come at any moment, as we say: “אחכה לו בכל יום שיבוא—I will wait for him every day that he may come.” Yet, these people wonder, why is it necessary to speak about it repeatedly, to constantly emphasize that Moshiach can come at this very moment? It is very difficult for a person to treat this as being realistic!

It would be understandable if mention of Moshiach's coming were to be made occasionally, for at the end of the day it is one of the basic tenets of our faith. But why speak and get excited about it at every farbrengen, as if the purpose was to forcibly instill the idea into the listeners' heads?!

Furthermore, this Jew who speaks of Moshiach's actual coming, at the same time has a *siddur* on the table so that he shouldn't make a mistake

לזכות החייל בצבאות ה'
 ישראל שיחי'
 לרגל הולדתו ט"ז אלול ה'תשע"ח
 נדפס ע"י הוריו
 הרה"ת ר' שלמה שמחה
 וזוגתו מרת דבורה פנינה ומשפחתם שיחיו
 אלקן



in the text of the *bracha acharona*—in which it speaks of the *geula* in the future tense. Similarly, he uses the *siddur* to say “*Tzidkas’cha Tzedek*” at *Mincha*—a prayer associated with *golus*! Surely this is a paradox.

They therefore conclude that this whole idea of Moshiach’s coming is like a dream. A good dream, a nice dream—but it is not realistic. Why then, they ask, is it necessary to talk about dreams?!

These thoughts do not stem from a lack of *emuna*, *rachmana litzlan*, for every Jew believes that Moshiach can come at any moment. But the knowledge that we are still in *golus*, and that the *geula* from this *golus* is possible only with Hashem’s desire, has caused the *golus* to so permeate a person’s senses, that his faith in the *geula* has become external and superficial, and talk of the *geula* appears to him to be a dream.

The truth is the exact opposite. The Alter Rebbe explains¹ that *golus* is actually the dream, for the true place of a Jew, his true being, is the *geula*, whereas *golus* is a foreign state of being. Thus *golus* is a dream and the *geula* is reality. Why then do people wonder that we repeat the Alter Rebbe’s words that *golus* is a dream, and *geula* is the true reality?

The Alter Rebbe explains further that in a dream two opposites can co-exist. In *golus*, too, a person can synthesize two opposites: He can be in business the whole day, and simultaneously arouse his love to Hashem during davening and cleave to Hashem.

With this the Alter Rebbe explains the positive aspect of the dream of *golus*. Although one may be steeped in worldly matters, he can nevertheless totally change in one moment, and shake free from the illusions of the world, arriving at the true reality: love of and cleaving to Hashem. A Jew can do this for in a dream, two opposites can co-exist.

Our case is similar: Because *golus* is a dream in which opposites can co-exist, the situation can change in a moment: Jews can leave the dream of *golus* and enter reality—the *geula*.

Every single Jew holds the key to the *geula*, as the Alter Rebbe writes: “It is stated in *Tikkunim* that if even one *tzaddik* [and “Your people are all *tzaddikim*”] in a generation returns with complete repentance, Moshiach would come immediately.” The Rambam rules, “When a person does a mitzvah, he tilts himself and the entire world to the meritorious side, bringing redemption and salvation for himself and for them.” And, as noted above, this can be achieved in just a moment’s time, as in the well-known phrase: “I shall wait for him every day that he may come.”

It is true that the Rambam says there is a set order for Moshiach’s coming: “He shall force all Yidden to go [in the way of Torah]... and shall wage Hashem’s wars... etc.” But this order applies only when the *geula* will occur in a regular manner. However, when Jews merit it, and especially since “all the *kitzin* [fixed dates for Moshiach’s coming] have passed,” then the *geula* comes immediately, transcending all limits and order.

Moreover, the [Frierdiker] Rebbe has already announced “לאחר—immediate redemption!” and informed us that the situation is one of “הנה זה עומד אחר כתלינו”—[Moshiach] is standing behind our wall, he looks in at the windows, he peers through the lattice.” Moshiach is waiting, looking—and Moshiach’s looking certainly has an effect. Thus, every Jew can certainly bring the *geula* speedily in our days—not tomorrow or later, but today, Shabbos Parshas Pinchas, 5744; and on this Shabbos itself, before *Mincha*. Simply put, at this moment we open our eyes and see that Moshiach Tzidkeinu is together with us in this shul, flesh and blood, soul in a body!

Yehi ratzon that our incessant talking and begging about the coming of Moshiach will so disturb and vex (“noodge”) Hashem that He will have no choice (so to speak) but to bring the *geula*. This is especially because Hashem Himself strongly wants the *geula*; since the *Shechina* was exiled together with the Yidden, the *geula* of the Jewish people is also a *geula* for Hashem Himself!

The main thing is that the “dream” I have about Moshiach’s coming—which is really your dream too—be translated into reality immediately, today, before *Mincha*. And may the “dream of all dreams” also be realized, that today we go “with the clouds of glory” to our holy land, and daven this Shabbos’ *Mincha* in Yerushalayim, in the third *Beis Hamikdash*. **1**

(Shabbos Parshas Pinchas 5744,
 translation adapted from SIE)

1. Torah Or, Parshas Vayeishev, 28c



דער רבי וועט געפינען א וועג...

Sponsored by
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Stamford, CT

Learn Close to Home

AS TOLD BY MENDEL FEDERMAN (S. THOMAS, VIRGIN ISLANDS)

We are shluchim in the Virgin Islands and there is no Jewish school for my siblings and me to attend close to home. Fortunately, the Shluchim Online School provides us the opportunity to learn Torah with fellow young shluchim in a virtual classroom.

I was a student at SOS since I was four-years-old. Although the learning was good and I was lucky to be able to socialize with boys my age, over time I found it difficult to concentrate while learning on a computer.

In 5776, as I entered the fourth grade, I asked my parents for the opportunity to attend a standard *cheder*. They decided that if I would learn well for the upcoming weeks I would go to Detroit for two weeks to join the *cheder* there.

I was very excited about this opportunity. I worked hard to earn this treat and right after Chanukah I was on my way to Detroit. Those two weeks were amazing. It was so exciting to learn in a real classroom, to see the teacher in



person and to play with boys my age. I made many new friends and was sorely disappointed when the two weeks were over.

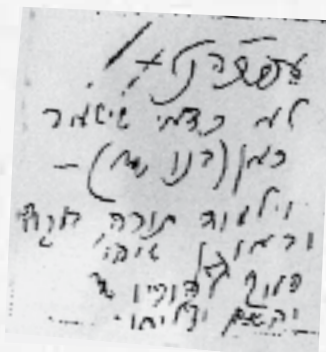
I flew to New York to meet my father, who came from the Virgin Islands to pick me up, and we went to the Ohel before taking the flight back home.

In my *pan* I wrote to the Rebbe how much I enjoyed learning in the *cheder* in Detroit and interacting with friends. I asked the Rebbe for a *brocha* that I should be able to continue learning in Detroit. I did not want to go home and continue learning on the computer because it was so difficult.

Minutes after leaving the Ohel, my father received a WhatsApp message that he shared with me on the way to the airport. It was a *ksav yad kodesh* of the Rebbe which reads as follows:

עפכהנ"ל - לא כדאי שישאר
כאן (בנו ש"י) - וילמוד תורה
במקום ובאופן שיה"י סמוך להוריו
ש"י והשם יצליחו.

Based on the above – it is not worthwhile that (his son ש"י) should remain here – [rather] he should learn Torah in a place and in a way that he will be close to his parents ש"י. And Hashem should grant him success.



When my father read this to me I became very excited. "The Rebbe is answering me on the exact issue I wrote about in my *pan*!"

For the next two years I remained in S. Thomas and continued learning on the Online School. Whenever I was frustrated with the situation I remembered the way the Rebbe addressed my concerns and it gave me a lot of strength.

At the beginning of the 5778 school year, I wrote a letter to the Rebbe asking that I have the opportunity to learn once again in a regular *cheder*.

Unfortunately, several hurricanes ravaged the Virgin Islands that month and my family was forced to move to Detroit for many months. As a result I had the good fortune to learn in *cheder* while still being close to my family.

This year is the first year I am learning away from home, as I remain in *cheder* while my family is, *baruch Hashem*, able to move back home. I feel that the Rebbe ensured that I make that transition at the right time. Only now do I feel ready to be away from home long term.

Although I never saw the Rebbe *b'gashmiyus*, I feel the Rebbe's tremendous *brachos* and attention all the time. **1**

YOUR STORY

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הת' מנחם מענדל שיחי'
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שלוחי כ"ק אדמו"ר זי"ע
למדינת נורווגי'



HADLAKAS NEIROS CHANUKAH

Until 5748, for most of the year the Rebbe would daven *Mincha* and *Maariv* in the small *zal* upstairs in 770. But on Chanukah, as there was a larger crowd in attendance, the Rebbe would daven downstairs in the main shul. (Before 5743, the Rebbe davened downstairs only on certain nights of Chanukah.)



Following *Mincha*, the large menorah was lit as the Rebbe looked on.

1 TEVES 5742, YOSSEI INELAMED VIA JEM 129967



26 KISLEV 5736, V. SCHILDKRAUT VIA JEM108566

When the Rebbe davened downstairs, the *niggun* of *Haneiros Halalu* was sung following the *hadlaka*. Chassidim noticed that the Rebbe would count with his fingers how many times the stanza of “על ניסין” was repeated.

In the later years, a rally for children was held in 770 with the Rebbe in attendance. Beginning from the year 5738, the Rebbe would also address the children. Later on, starting from 5750, the legendary “Chanukah Live” program was held.¹ At these programs, a young *bochur* lit the menorah, and the Rebbe would encourage the singing of the children in attendance, as well as the international audience, during the *freileche* parts of *Haneiros Halalu*.

1 TEVES 5742, YOSSEI MELAMED VIA JEM 129997



The Rebbe joins the “Chanukah Live” program, 5751.



1 TEVES 5751, YOSSEI MELAMED VIA JEM 120573



In 5743, on the fifth night of Chanukah, the famous gold-plated menorah modeled after the menorah in the *Beis Hamikdash* was used in 770 for the first time. During the previous winter the Rebbe said the landmark *sicha* about the menorah in the *Beis Hamikdash* having straight arms, not rounded ones as was the common perception.

As they were lighting the Menorah for the first time, the Rebbe instructed that the *shamash* candle be removed. The next day, the Rebbe mentioned to Rabbi Leibel Groner that while the idea of the new menorah is good, the *shamash* had to be raised so as not to be on the same level as the other candles.



In the later years, on days when the Rebbe returned from the Ohel at a late hour, *Maariv* was davened immediately following *Mincha*. On those days, the menorah was lit after *Maariv*.

1. See *Chanukah Live!* Derher Teves 5774.

CHANUKAH 5734



The Rebbe joins the Minyan downstairs for Mincha, Maariv, and Hadlokas Neiros Chanukah on one of the nights of Chanukah 5734.

These photos are being published here for this first time.



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.



Hagahos on the Michtovim Kloi'im

Dear Editors,

Thank you for a very nice Elul issue of the Derher; we're enjoying it very much.

I'd like to point out a few corrections to the article about *michtovim kloi'im* [Issue 72 (149)]:

1) On Page 25, you write that "a clue for one to tell if it was edited by the Rebbe or not: if it says *targum chofshi*, or *free translation*, that (usually) means that the Rebbe did not review it. But if it simply says *targum* or *translation*, that means it is edited."

This is incorrect. Rabbi Yosef Boruch Friedman of Kehos told me that the English version was always completely *mugah*, regardless of what it said on the top.

We have all the English *michtovim* and they either say "Free Rendition" or "Free Translation," but never just "Translation." I also have in my office copies of *hagahos* on the letters that say "Free Translation," and the end does not have the Rebbe's signature. But they are *mugah*.

In the earlier years (and sometimes later too), the Rebbe actually signed his signature on the English, and those don't say "Free Translation." But the fact is, all the English letters are equally *mugah*.

(Note: Right next to this paragraph in the Elul issue, there is a picture of the

Rebbe's *hagahos* to a letter that says "Free Rendition," and it is not signed!)

2) Page 27, top right image. The caption reads: "A list in the Rebbe's *ksav yad kodesh* of the Torah of the Rebbeim included in a *michtav kloi*." This is surprising, because this note is not connected to the *michtovim*, rather to *Basi Legani*! It even says on it "לסעיף י"ג בהמשך" and it is printed in *Toras Menachem Basi Legani*, vol. 2, p. 448!

True—it is also printed in *Igros Melech* (a compilation of the *michtovim kloi'im*), vol. 1, p. 32, and it does not belong there either, but at least the caption under it doesn't specifically connect it to the *michtovim*... It seems that the Derher mistakenly connected it to the *michtovim* because it is erroneously printed in *Igros Melech*.

Thank you and much success in all your endeavors.

Avraham Dovid Vaisfiche
Kehos Publication Society
Brooklyn, NY



Shofar from the Rebbe Maharash

Dear Editors,

I very much enjoy reading your publication and look forward every month for the arrival of the new issue.

In the Elul issue, I was surprised to read the caption on page 9 below the picture

of the black shofar, “Given to the Rebbe by Reb Berel Chaskind” [“We are His Shluchim”, Issue 72 (149)].

Even though the narrative of the article explains how my *zaide* obtained the *shofar* and returned it to the Rebbe, the caption is misleading, as Reb Berel Chaskind was merely a shliach to deliver the *shofar* to the Rebbe.

The *shofar* is, in fact, from the Rebbe Maharash as per the Rebbe’s library.

Also, in your interview with Reb Zalman Lipsker of Philadelphia you write how it takes about an hour and a half to travel from Brunoy to Marseille by train. I believe it should have read, “about a day and a half,” since even today’s high speed trains take over 3 hours to reach Marseille from Brunoy.

Benny Raskin
Brooklyn, NY

”

Hebrew / Yiddish Letters

Dear Editors,

Thank you for a great article about the *michtovim kloli'im* [Issue 72 (149)]. Reading the article gave me a push to learn a number of these letters from the Rebbe. I began with letters from 5710, when the Rebbe started writing these letters.

In the article you mention how the Rebbe wrote these letters in both *lashon hakodesh* and Yiddish. One very interesting thing that I noticed was that besides the language, there are many differences between the letters in *lashon hakodesh* and Yiddish:

In the *lashon hakodesh* letters there are footnotes while the Yiddish letters were printed without the footnotes. There’s also additional content in the letters in *lashon hakodesh* that don’t appear in the Yiddish.

Yisrolik Shemtov
West Bloomfield, Michigan

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