

A Chassidisher **Derher**

א חסידישער דערהער

A Mountain of Pride

THE FOUNDING OF
NACHLAS HAR CHABAD

The Making of a Chossid

THE FIRST OF A
TWO-PART SERIES
EXPLORING THE
FASCINATING
STORY OF RABBI
IMMANUEL
SCHOCHET



ושמחת בחגך!

Sukkos with the Rebbe

CHASSIDIM SHARE
THEIR MEMORIES OF
THE DAYS OF JOY
WITH THE REBBE



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The Rebbe distributes Lekach from the door of his Sukkah, Hoshana Rabba 5749.

Cover Photo: Pinny Lew

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תַּנְשִׁית לְרֵאשׁוֹ עֵטָרָת פֶּז

מתוך שמחה הכי גדולה הננו לברך ולאחל את ידידינו הכי נכבד
ראש וראשון לכל דבר שבקדושה, מסור ונתון להפצת המעיינות חוצה בכל לבו ומאודו
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ליין

לרגל השמחה במעונם בהולדת בתם

החיילת בצבאות השם ברכה שתחי'

ביום חמישי לסדר כי ירחיב הוי' אלוקיך את גבולך וגו',

כ"ח לחודש מנחם-אב

יזכו הוריה וזקניה לגדלה לתורה לחופה ולמעשים טובים, מתוך הרחבה גדולה
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ובזכות חיזוק אור וחום ההתקשרות לנשיאנו אצל אלפים ורבבות מבני ובנות ישראל
יזכו לדורות ישרים מבורכים מתוך שמחה וטוב לבב עד ביאת גואל צדק במהרה בימינו

בשמחה בהוקרה ובאהבה

ההנהלה וצוות העורכים והכותבים

א חסידישער דערהער

The Rebbe's father, Harav Levi Yitzchok, wrote many *chiddushei Torah*. Some of these he wrote in exile, on the margins of his Zohar, with the famous ink prepared by Rebbetzin Chana.

Many years later, the Zohar made its way to the Rebbe, and in Tammuz 5730*, the first volumes of ליקוטי לוי יצחק were printed from the notes in the margins.

The first two volumes to be printed included *biurim* on Tanya and on Zohar Bereishis.

A few weeks later, on Chof Av, the *yahrtzeit* of Harav Levi Yitzchok, the Rebbe walked into the farbrengen holding the new *sefer* on Tanya. For the next few months, the Rebbe explained a piece from his father's *biurim* on Iggeres Hateshuva by most Shabbos farbrengens. After that the Rebbe switched to the *biurim* on Zohar.

By almost every Shabbos farbrengen until 5748*, the Rebbe would have a ליקוטי לוי יצחק in front of him, and would say a *sicha* on a *biur* from his father on the Zohar of that week's *parsha*.

Being that Harav Levi Yitzchok wrote these *biurim* on the margins of the Zohar due to lack of paper, they are by necessity quite concise. As the Rebbe explained, since space was so limited, he only wrote the *chiddush*, leaving us to connect the dots.

In addition, he also only wrote the Kabbalah aspect of the *biur*, leaving it to us to figure out the *hora'a* in *avodas Hashem*, how it connects with Chassidus, etc.

This year, in honor of 75 years since the passing of Harav Levi Yitzchok, this column will feature some of these beautiful and fascinating sichos.



In the year 5744*, marking the 40th *yahrtzeit* of Harav Levi Yitzchok, the administration of Kotel Tiferes Zekeinim Levi Yitzchok in Crown Heights planned a special kinus. In the schedule they submitted to the Rebbe, they had started off with “opening words” (as you can see below). The Rebbe added that the opening words should be from the Torah of his father. However, since his Torah is very Kabbalistic and deep, the Rebbe pointed out that they should make sure to teach a section that can be understood by the audience—one consisting of a wide variety of people.

A FOCUSED STORM

Rebbi Yosi began his commentary on parshas Chayei Sara as follows:

"They lifted Yonah and threw him into the sea and the raging sea became calm." (Yonah 1:15.) Here we must understand, why it was specifically the ocean that raged against Yonah and not the dry land [i.e. with an earthquake or the like]. Since he was running away from the Shechina, why did his troubles begin only when he entered the sea?

"Surely it was all proper. For 'The sea reflects the heavens, and the heavens [reflect] the Throne of Glory.' Since he was running from the 'sea' (Hashem), the [physical] sea struck him in its place."

(Zohar Bereishis, page 121:1)

In the commentary of Harav Levi Yitzchok on the Zohar, he explains the mystical meaning of this Zohar, yet doesn't address a basic question!

How can the Zohar not understand why it was specifically the sea that raged against Yonah? It is common knowledge that השטן מקטרג בשעת הסכנה, the *satan* accuses in a time of danger.

Traversing the sea is dangerous, which is why we make *birchas hagomel* upon our safe return. So it would seem quite obvious why Yonah was only in danger once he boarded the ship—when there is natural danger, you must also be protected from spiritually induced danger. So what is the Zohar's question?!

RIGHT AND LEFT

Much of the commentary on *sefer Yonah* comes from Pirkei D'rabbi Eliezer, where the story is explained at length:

Yonah began his flight on Thursday. Why did he run? Because previously Hashem had sent him to prophesize regarding the destruction of Yerushalayim. Once the Yidden did *teshuva* and Hashem decided not to destroy the city, Yonah was accused of being a false prophet!

Knowing that the people of Nineveh were spiritually sensitive and prone to repentance, Yonah said to



A LOOK AT THE TORAH OF
HARAV LEVI YITZCHOK
THROUGH THE REBBE'S SICHOS

A MOUNTAIN OF PRIDE

The founding of Nachalas Har Chabad

Nachalas Har Chabad—called so because of Avraham Avinu, who is associated with “Har” [the mountain of Moriah]. Avraham was an “one-and-only”—he stood on one side, while all the inhabitants of the world stood against him. Nevertheless, he was not intimidated because he was connected to the one and only Hashem, eventually revealing this within the entire world as well.

So, too, are the Yidden who have recently emigrated from behind the Iron Curtain: They held on to [the values and teachings of] Avraham Avinu—the “הר”—and thus they merited that Hashem took them out and brought them to a restful place of inheritance (“אלֵּי־הַמְּנוּחָה וְאֶל־הַנַּחֲלָה”), until they finally reached Nachalas Har Chabad.

May they acclimate well, with joy and gladness of the heart. And may this serve as a good beginning for their brothers and sisters whom they left behind, that they too should experience an exodus from the narrow straits to the ultimate expansion...

(Purim 5729)

לזכות
הרה"ת ר' דניאל זונדל הלוי
וזוגתו מרת ראובנה לאה
ומשפחתם שיחיו
גרודניצקי

Towards the end of the 5720s*, a crack opened up in the Iron Curtain and many Jewish families who had been stranded in the G-dless regime for decades were finally able to emigrate to Eretz Yisroel. This was especially true for the Jewish communities of Georgia and Bukhara (Uzbekistan), both part of the Soviet Union at the time.

Many of these Yidden knew only the basics of Yiddishkeit, yet they were committed heart and soul to Torah and mitzvos with *mesiras nefesh*—under the most dire circumstances. The Rebbe was concerned that when they arrived in Eretz Yisroel, this spirit should not be dampened, *chas v'shalom*. For this reason, the Rebbe wanted as many new emigres as possible to settle in Chabad communities, where they would see authentic Jewish life celebrated out in the open every day.

Many of the new arrivals settled in Kfar Chabad. The Rebbe also commissioned the building of the Shikun Chabad neighborhood in Lod for this purpose.¹ But when it became clear that the limited space in these neighborhoods was running out, the

Rebbe wanted a new neighborhood to be established.

The veteran Chabad activist, Rabbi Binyomin Gorodetzky, was dispatched to Eretz Yisroel to scout out and find a suitable place to establish a new Chabad settlement.

Time was of the essence. Members of the Israeli government made it clear that since there was no more room in the Chabad neighborhoods, the new immigrants from Georgia would be dispersed all over Israel—something that the Rebbe wanted to avoid at all costs.

Finally, a suitable location was found in the city of Kiryat Malachi. A cluster of buildings stood empty with 600 apartments waiting to be inhabited, and Rabbi Gorodetzky saw this as the perfect opportunity.

On 23 Shevat 5729*, the Rebbe agreed that “this suggestion of Kiryat Malachi is appropriate,” and that 10 young families from Kfar Chabad should move there immediately and establish a *kollel*. At Rabbi Gorodetzky’s behest, the government agreed to pay the salaries of these young families from the Department of Education budget—in



THE AREA OF NACHLAS HAR CHABAD AT THE TIME OF ITS ESTABLISHMENT.

* 5720S-1960S, 5729-1969

compensation for their assistance with the new immigrants.

As part of his shlichus to see this matter through, Rabbi Gorodetzky arrived at Kfar Chabad looking for *yungerleit* to move to Kiryat Malachi and help the new immigrants.

“Rabbi Gorodetzky told us that whoever holds the Rebbe’s wish dear should jump at this opportunity,” recalls Rabbi Avraham Alter Heber. “In those days, shlichus was still a novelty and not necessarily the norm. But his words had a strong impact on us. A group of *yungerleit* met together in Reb Efroim Wolff’s office where we decided to ask the Rebbe what to do. Our representative, Rabbi Yitzchok Yeruslavsky [today the *rav* of Nachalas Har Chabad] telephoned the Rebbe’s *mazkirus* and said that he is standing with a group of *yungerleit* that are considering the move to Kiryat Malachi.

“Rabbi Hodakov responded that, ‘From here [i.e. from the Rebbe] there will be no explicit directive asking specific people to move there. Whoever decides to take on this mission has the Rebbe’s *bracha*.’

“Immediately, we all decided to move.”

“Today it seems so simple,” Mrs. Rochel Heber relates. “The Rebbe wants you to go, you take the shlichus. But this concept was still foreign back then. We were just married. My husband came home from *kollel* in Kfar Chabad one day and told me that the Rebbe wants 10 families to move to Kiryat Malachi. Where is that on the map? I had no idea. It was far from everyone and a move like that would certainly bring along many challenges. But the Rebbe wanted it, so we did it. We moved to Nachalas Har Chabad just before Purim 5729*...”

On Erev Shabbos Parshas Zachor, the Rebbe sent a message that a farbrengen should take place in the new neighborhood over Shabbos.



THE TELEGRAM FROM THE REBBE APPROVING THE LOCATION FOR NACHLAS HAR CHABAD.



A GROUP OF THE YUNGERLEIT WHO MOVED TO NACHLAS HAR CHABAD.

The Rebbe especially instructed that the legendary *mashpia*, Reb Shlomo Chaim Kessleman, should lead the farbrengen, along with other elder Chassidim, *rabbonim*, and *askanim*.

With that, Nachalas Har Chabad was founded.

The Name

As mentioned, the Rebbe explained the meaning of the name of the new neighborhood during the farbrengen of Purim 5729*. In many letters to the residents of Nachalas Har Chabad and other *sichos* and *yechidusen*, the Rebbe explained each word of the three-part name, giving it special significance.²

Chassidim also took note of the fact that the *roshei teivos* of the three words “נחלת הר חב”ד are the same letters as the name חנה, a possible reference to the name of the Rebbe’s mother.

How To Establish A Village

A short while later, the Rebbe requested that two *sifrei Torah* from the shul of 770 be chosen and brought upstairs into his room. Meanwhile new *mantelach* were sown for them, with the words in *lashon hakodesh* saying, “ביה”נ חב”ד בנחלת הר חב”ד באה”ק”, “תובא”א, נשלח על ידי כ”ק אדמו”ר שליט”א ((ליובאוויטש)). One of the two *sefarim*

The Life of a Chossid

Reb Nechemya of Dubrovna

Born: 15 Shevat 5548*

Passed away: 15 Shevat, 5612*¹

Married to: The daughter of Reb Chaim Avraham (the Alter Rebbe's son)

Chossid of: The Alter Rebbe, the Mittler Rebbe and the Tzemach Tzedek

Reb Nechemya Halevi lived in the city of Dubrovna (Dubroŭna) on the banks of the Dnieper River in Belarus. He was a star pupil of the Alter Rebbe and indeed, his second wife was the Alter Rebbe's granddaughter.

His erudition and scholarship were legendary, and his *sefer*, *Divrei Nechemya*, was published at the behest of the Tzemach Tzedek.² At the very beginning of the Mittler Rebbe's *nesius*, the Mittler Rebbe appointed the Tzemach Tzedek, Reb Avraham of Kalisk, and Reb Nechemya to respond to halachic queries, a position they held for a time.

The Right Melamed

Even in his youth, Reb Nechemya's brilliance was obvious. Not wishing to waste a single drop of his son's potential for Torah-study, Reb Nechemya's father, Reb Avraham Beirach, who was a Chossid, decided that for his son's advancement in Torah, it would be ideal for him to have a *misnaged* as a tutor. A Chossid—Reb Avraham Beirach reasoned—would spend much of the day preparing for davening and then davening at length, and spend yet more time *farbrenging*, leaving precious little time for studies with his pupil. A *misnaged* was hired and began to teach young Nechemya. Reb Avraham Beirach left town on business for several months, and when he returned home, he heard his son speaking very negatively about the Alter Rebbe. "Where did you learn this?" his father asked.

"From the *melamed*," came the son's reply. Immediately, Reb Avraham Beirach traveled to the Alter Rebbe in Liozna and told the Alter Rebbe what had transpired. The Alter Rebbe told him, "Even though a *melamed* who is a Chossid will spend much time in *chassidisher* things, nevertheless, it would be better if you hired a *chassidisher melamed* for your son."³

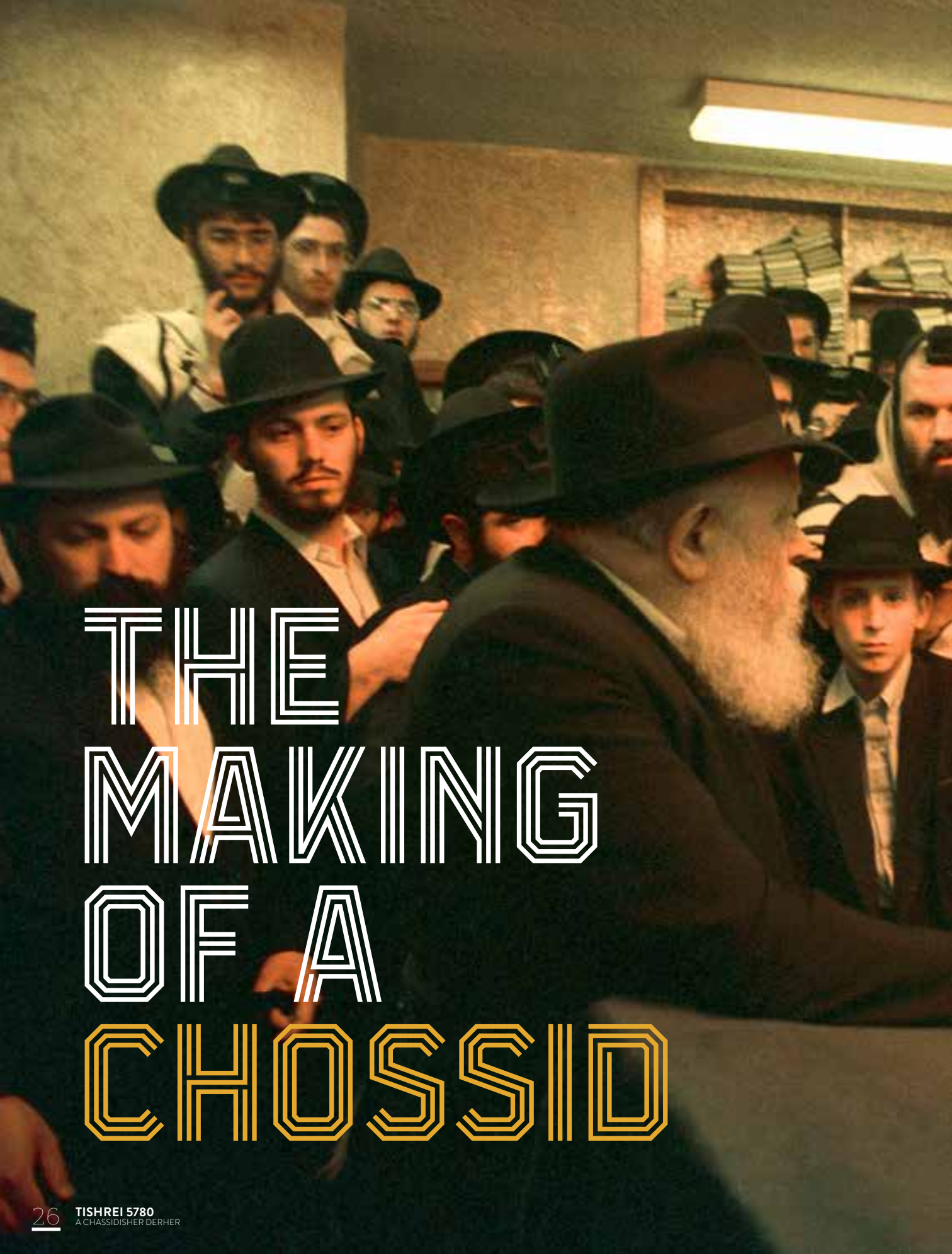
How to Make a Living

The Tzemach Tzedek was determined to be financially self-sufficient, and chose to go into business with Reb Nechemya, making furnaces out of clay. After molding the ovens and baking them in a kiln, they would light a small fire inside the oven. This would expose any cracks and imperfections, which they would then seal. Since they were both Torah-scholars, they passed the time talking in learning, becoming quite engrossed in their conversation. It once happened that one of them was sealing cracks inside the furnace and the other was sealing cracks from the outside, and without realizing it, the furnace door was sealed shut. The fire, meanwhile, grew bigger, unbeknownst to the one outside, who was only brought to the realization that something was wrong when he heard the cries coming from inside. Quickly breaking open the oven door, he saved the other, but the furnace was a total loss.

After seeing that business was not going to be successful, the Tzemach Tzedek reluctantly agreed to earn a living through Torah by becoming a tutor.

Ein Od Milvado

Later on, Reb Nechemya sold *taleisim* (*taleisim* needed to be imported from other regions, so the Tzemach Tzedek had located a new *tallis*-weaving factory in Dubrovna and



THE MAKING OF A CHOSSID

לזכות
ילדינו היקרים
יצחק צבי, מנחם מענדל, אברהם מאיר,
יהודית, וישראל ארי' לייב
שיגדלו להיות חסידים
יראי שמים ולמדנים
נדפס ע"י
הרה"ת ר' אליעזר
וזוגתו מרת חנה שיחיו
וואלף

Rabbi Yaakov Immanuel Schochet was a unique figure in *dor hashvi'i*; handpicked by the Rebbe to work on some of the deepest works of Chassidus and also instructed by the Rebbe to attend college and become a professor at a university. Even without the archetype characteristics of a “typical” Chossid, he was a staunch and ardent Chossid of the Rebbe.

When the Rebbe wanted the Tanya to be translated to English, Rabbi Schochet was the one he chose to translate *Iggeres Hakodesh* (which is arguably the most difficult part); when the Rebbe wanted *mafteichos* to be made of various works—Rabbi Schochet is the one he appointed; when the fate of everything was on the line during the *sefarim* case, Rabbi Schochet was on the witness stand to convey the meaning of a Rebbe. When the Rebbe was fighting for *mihu yehudi*, the purity of the Jewish nation, Rabbi Schochet was at the forefront. As a pioneering lecturer and writer, he traveled the world to speak on Chassidus, Moshiach, and the authenticity of Yiddishkeit.

Rabbi Schochet was a strong Chossid and *mekusher* (and, at one point, he was even a member of the Rebbe's secretariat), but if you met him as a teenager you wouldn't necessarily believe he would end up that way.

In Part I of this article we begin with Rabbi Schochet's early years: when he came to Lubavitch at the age of fourteen with a mind of his own, how the Rebbe was *mekarev* him tremendously, dealing with him patiently and lovingly through his teenage years and all that it entailed. In Part II we will discover how he became involved in the Rebbe's work, as a powerful advocate for Torah and Yiddishkeit.

COMING TO LUBAVITCH

Rabbi Yaakov Immanuel Schochet was born in Switzerland in 5695*. His father, Rabbi Dov Yehuda Shochet, was of German descent, a *yekke*, and studied in the Telz Yeshiva. For many years, Rabbi Schochet (the father) was a *rav* in Switzerland and Holland.

The Schochet family was related to Rabbi Hodakov, who was married to Rabbi Dov Yehuda's sister. Their direct connection to the Rebbe began in 5712*, after they emigrated to Canada, when their youngest daughter suffered severe burns to her body, and it was the Rebbe's miraculous intervention that saved her life.¹

That year, Rabbi Hodakov advised the elder Rabbi Schochet to send his children to a Lubavitcher yeshiva. Rabbi Immanuel Schochet related: "My father was told by my uncle [Rabbi Hodakov] that if you're sending your children to a yeshiva in America, you need someone to keep a good eye on them. Send them to Lubavitch and I'll take care of them." Immanuel was enrolled in Tomchei Temimim at Bedford and Dean, the Lubavitcher yeshiva high school that included secular studies.

Immanuel and his brother Dovid arrived by train from Toronto on 26 Nissan, a Monday. Rabbi Hodakov picked them up from Grand Central Station and drove them directly to 770 for davening. "It wasn't like the later years when people would sit literally right in front of the Rebbe. In those days, when the Rebbe would come into the room, everybody disappeared. Before davening, the *bochurim* would line up to reserve a place around the *bima*, and then they would later come in to hear the Rebbe's *maftir*. The moment *maftir* was over—they were gone again. There's an expression in *Nach* והנערים נחבאים, 'the boys were hiding.' Does the Rebbe have to see my face...?"



RABBI DOV YEHUDA SCHOCHET, IMMANUEL'S FATHER.

"(When I originally came, this concept of hiding from the Rebbe didn't make any sense to me, and I was the only *bochur* who davened with the Rebbe's *minyán* on Shabbos. I sat quite close to the Rebbe during Shabbos davening.)

"When the Rebbe came in on that Monday morning, all the *bochurim* disappeared, and the entire front half of the shul was empty. I didn't understand why, and I remained standing behind Rabbi Hodakov.

"The Rebbe stared at me... and I stared right back. To me, it felt like the eye contact was for a long time, though it was probably just a second. Inside me, things were turning. Don't ask me why: I didn't understand what a Rebbe is, even though this was after the miracle had occurred with my sister. In my mind a Rebbe was like a chief rabbi..."

THE FIRST YECHIDUS

The following day was Tuesday, and Immanuel and his brother Dovid were scheduled to have a *yechidus* with the Rebbe. Reb Dovid Raskin approached Dovid and told him that before *yechidus* one immerses in the mikveh. There was no men's *mikveh* in Crown Heights at the time, and Immanuel did not understand the necessity of immersing in *mikveh*, so he decided to ask Rabbi Hodakov if it was required. Rabbi Hodakov replied that it was



IMMANUEL SCHOCHET AS A YOUNG BOY.

SCHOCHET FAMILY

not—it depends on a person's *hergesh*, and so Immanuel decided not to go to *mivkeh*.

As a result, he entered *yechidus* early in the evening, while his brother, who traveled a half hour to Brownsville to go to *mikveh*, entered much later."

THE FIRST YECHIDUS

"I came into the room," he later related. "To this day I don't understand it, but it looked like the whole room was dark. The only light was coming from two small Shabbos lamps behind the Rebbe. All I could see was the Rebbe's face, nothing else. I began trembling from head to toe. Don't ask me why, it doesn't make sense to me.

"The Rebbe was very friendly, asking 'Shalom Aleichem, how are you? How are things? How are you settling in yeshiva?' Then he began asking about my family: how my parents were doing, how my sister was doing. But I was very nervous and felt like I had to leave.

"Before the *yechidus*, I had been told to write my name and my mother's name on a piece of paper. When I gave it to the Rebbe, he stared at it for a long, long time. I didn't understand, what there was to see. It's three or four words...! The Rebbe went on to ask me a few more questions, and the *yechidus* lasted 5-7 minutes.



A LETTER FROM THE REBBE TO IMMANUEL, DATED 28 MENACHEM-AV 5713.

THE REBBE'S FARBRENGENS ARE WHAT KEPT ME IN LUBAVITCH. MOST OF WHAT I LEARNED IN YESHIVA WAS AT THE FARBRENGENS.

The moment I closed the door behind me, I felt as if a magnet was pulling me back in again. I had to really control myself not to go back in.

“I went to Rabbi Hodakov’s office and he asked me, ‘Nu how was it?’ I described it with a German word (I barely spoke Yiddish at the time)—*unheimlich*, spooky. He was surprised: most people who go into the Rebbe feel so comfortable, the Rebbe makes you feel so at home... But that was the first *yechidus*.”

THE FARBRENGEN

“A few weeks later there was a farbrengen for Shabbos Mevorchim Sivan. I didn’t understand three-quarters of what the Rebbe said. Although I understood most of the Yiddish, the Rebbe speaks with a mix of Yiddish, and Hebrew words,

and technical terms. Yet, there was something about the farbrengens that was a magnet for me, I could not miss a farbrengen. Don’t ask me how. The farbrengens are what kept me in Lubavitch. Most of what I learned in yeshiva was at the farbrengens.

“I stood there and watched what was going on, and towards the end of the farbrengen the Rebbe looked at me and told me to say *l’chaim*. I said, ‘Thank you, א דאנק, איך גלייך דאס נישט’, but I don’t like it.”

“Everyone’s looking at me... such a *chutzpah*! The Rebbe tells you to say *l’chaim* and you say no?! The Rebbe is smiling; Rabbi Hodakov is exploding in laughter because he knows who we’re dealing with... Rabbi Mentlik’s face turned redder than his beard, like Yom Kippur. If looks could have killed

me, I would have died so many times. The Rebbe got a good laugh out of it...

“The Rebbe said, ‘פארט, זאג ל’חיים—Still, say *l’chaim*.’ Again I said that I don’t like it. So, with a smile, he let me go. I didn’t understand what was happening, I had been polite. I felt bad, so I took a drop Slivovitz, and said *l’chaim*.”

“The Rebbe said *l’chaim*, and said, ‘ער וועט זיך שוין צוגעוואוינען צו דעם’—he will eventually get used to it.”

From then on, at almost every farbrengen, the Rebbe would tell Immanuel to say *l’chaim*.

THE SECOND YECHIDUS

The second *yechidus* took place only two months after Immanuel joined the yeshiva. He had been involved with Agudah from his childhood—“I was a fanatic Agudist,” he would later say—and he was in touch with their central New York office from the day he arrived. As the summer approached, they offered him to be a counselor at Camp Agudah, which, at the time, was the only religious summer camp.

“The *rosh yeshiva* Rabbi Mentlik asked me what I’m doing for the summer, and I told him that I’m going to be a counselor at Camp Agudah. ‘How long are you going for?’ I said that the job was for nine weeks. ‘You only have permission from the yeshiva to leave for three weeks,’ he said. ‘And you can’t leave before Yud-Beis Tammuz.’ He told me that the only one who could give me permission was the Rebbe.

“Well, I considered myself as having a close relationship with the Rebbe! So I went to Rabbi Hodakov and told him that I needed a *yechidus*. ‘Is it necessary?’ he asked me. I told him that it was, and he gave me a *yechidus* for the following week, no questions asked.

“I didn’t understand it at the time, but people would wait three or four months for a *yechidus*, and here I



wanted a *yechidus*—no problem! There were only a few books available in Yiddish from Merkos that I could read from cover to cover—and I was given whatever I wanted. It took me years and years to understand that there must have been special instructions from the Rebbe himself to ‘cut this guy some slack.’

“This time I also didn’t go to *mikveh*. The moment I opened the door, I saw that there was a big smile on the Rebbe’s face, and I had to smile back. It was the exact opposite experience of the first *yechidus*.

“‘Reb Immanuel!’ the Rebbe greeted me. ‘How are you?’ We talked for a little bit, *chapt a shmues*. Then

the Rebbe asked, ‘Nu, what brings you here?’ Thinking back now, it’s unbelievable...

“I said that I had gotten a job at Camp Agudah, which was for nine weeks, but the yeshiva only wanted to give me three weeks off. They said that I would need the Rebbe’s permission for more time off. So, I said to the Rebbe, I came to get your permission.

“Now, what would someone else have done in the Rebbe’s position? Three weeks and that’s it!

“But the Rebbe started reasoning with me... You just came to yeshiva, the Rebbe said, you were barely there, and you’re going to leave now? It doesn’t make sense.

“I started arguing, and it was going back and forth. For example, the Rebbe quoted the Mishnah that says that *Shema* precedes *Vehaya im shamoa* because a person must accept upon himself the yoke of Heaven before accepting the yoke of mitzvos. The Rebbe didn’t simply dismiss what I said—he kept reasoning with me!

“The Midrash says that Shlomo Hamelech, who was the wisest person on earth, was even wiser than the fools. What does that mean? Obviously he was smarter than the fools. The explanation is that a fool believes that he’s the smartest person in the world; Shlomo Hamelech was so

לזכות
הת' משה פינחס שיחי'
לרגל הגיעו לעול מצוות יום
ב' דראש השנה ה'תש"פ

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



Sukkos *by* *the* REBBE

One of the Shalosh Regalim—when the entire Jewish nation would gather in the Beis Hamikdash, *liros uliheiraos* (to see and be seen)—was the Yom Tov of Sukkos. Set right after Yom Kippur, when the *Aibershter* promises Yidden a good and sweet year, the joy was boundless.

Over the many years of the Rebbe's *neisus*, the style of Sukkos by the Rebbe changed dramatically, from the Rebbe's *farbrengen* in the Sukkah to the nightly *sichos* and *simchas beis hashoevah*. Nonetheless, the common theme throughout all the years, and throughout all the days of Sukkos, was the boundless joy that the Rebbe exuded and shared with all the Chassidim.

In previous issues, we sat down for roundtable discussions with various Chassidim who shared their recollections of Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, and Simchas Torah with the Rebbe. This year, we again present a roundtable discussion with three Chassidim—of different ages—this time relating their memories from the special Yom Tov of Sukkos.

Our thanks to Rabbi Gavriel Shapiro of Crown Heights, Rabbi Yoske Sassonko of Miami and Rabbi Levi Jacobson of Toronto for sharing their memories for the benefit of the readership. זכות הרבים תלוי בהם.

Take Off Your Coat!

Rabbi Shapiro: The first Tishrei I spent near the Rebbe was in 5721*, when I was a young child living in Cleveland, Ohio. I have had the merit to be present every single Tishrei since.

My earliest Sukkos memory is of the Rebbe *bentching* on the lulav.

Children wouldn't *bentch* on the Rebbe's *daled minim*, but I remember standing on the steps in front of 770 and watching as the Rebbe sat in his sukkah and people walked in, *bentched* on the lulav and esrog, and backed out. The Rebbe Maharash's *maamar* "*Hemshech Vekacha*" (in its original handwritten print) was open on the table in front of the Rebbe. It was a special sight.

Another interesting memory is the Rebbe on the streets of Crown Heights. In those years, Crown Heights was home to a wide range of Jewish communities,¹ and on Yom Tov afternoon, Eastern Parkway was full of Jews strolling on the parkway. I vividly recall the image of the Rebbe walking past hundreds of people on his way to and from 770, all wishing the Rebbe a "*Gut Yom Tov*."

In those early years, the Rebbe also held a farbrengen in the Sukkah on Chol Hamoed. Those farbrengens would normally last about two and a half hours, and the Rebbe always delivered a *sicha*

on *nigleh*. The last time the Rebbe farbrenged on Chol Hamoed was in 5724*.²

However, the farbrengens in the sukkah on the second day of Yom Tov and Shabbos Chol Hamoed were held through 5730*. I remember one farbrengen in particular, on Shabbos Chol Hamoed 5727*. It was pouring rain, but when the Rebbe entered he instructed everyone to take off their coats, and he took off his own coat as well. When Reb Shea Pinson wore a coat to *kos shel bracha*,³ the Rebbe told him to take it off too.

Rabbi Sossonko: Although I was only nine-years-old in 5727*, I remember that farbrengen distinctly. That Tishrei a small contingency of the new Russian immigrants were present; my father Reb Asher Sasonkin, Reb Mendel Futerfas, Reb Berke Chein and perhaps a few others. In the years 5726*-5734*, thousands of Jewish families were granted permission to leave the Soviet Union. Until then it was almost impossible to leave, yet with a *bracha* from the Rebbe and tremendous *nissim*, my family received permission to leave earlier in 5724*. Getting out of Russia was unheard of at the time! The story is an article in itself.

My father traveled to the Rebbe from Eretz Yisroel right away for Tishrei 5725*, and for Tishrei 5727* he brought me along. I was the only Russian



CHASSIDIM WAIT IN LINE BY THE REBBE'S SUKKAH FOR AN OPPORTUNITY TO SHAKE THE REBBE'S LULAV AND ESROG, CHOL HAMOED SUKKOS 5723.

RABBI YOSEF GOLDSTEIN

child present. The Rebbe showered us with amazing *kiruvim*, and he asked that I stand near him at all the farbrengens that Tishrei. In the sukkah as well, I stood very close to the Rebbe, right behind Rabbi Hodakov.

I didn't understand the *sichos*, but I did notice the rain pouring off the Rebbe's hat, especially during the *maamar*. Often, the Rebbe would begin a *maamar* in a slow and deliberate manner, and as it would progress, he would speak more intensely and increasingly move his hands and head. At this farbrengen, I remember watching how the water poured off his hat every time the Rebbe moved his head in a different direction, and was slowly soaking through the *kapote*.

Reb Shlomo Aharon Kazarnovsky was watching from behind, and he placed a towel over the Rebbe's shoulders, doing so very gently hoping the Rebbe wouldn't notice.

A Confirmation For Your Work

Rabbi Shapiro: Shortly before my first Tishrei, the *shalash* was transformed into a permanent structure.⁴ Therefore, the Rebbe's sukkah—which until then had been in the corner of the *shalash*—was moved to the front yard of 770, and the public sukkah was moved to the courtyard on the other

side. It was a simpler sukkah in those days, and was built each year by Reb Shlomo Cunin (a *bochur* at the time) and his brother *ybchl"ch* Reb Pinyeh a"h.

The *sechach* on the Rebbe's sukkah and the public sukkah was always evergreen, which is a significant expense. I recall that they once asked the Rebbe if they could buy bamboo poles for the public sukkah, and the Rebbe refused, because it would take away from another Jew's *parnassa*.

Rabbi Jacobson: I had the merit to take part in building the Rebbe's sukkah in the later years. One year, as I stood on the ladder working on the sukkah, I suddenly realized that all the other *bochurim* had disappeared. When I got off the ladder, I noticed them gathered behind the sukkah. "You got a confirmation for your work," they exclaimed. My *chaverim* explained that the Rebbe had opened his blinds and had been watching me for several minutes. They said that this was actually a yearly occurrence that at some point during the building of the sukkah, the Rebbe would look out of the window and observe the building (although this was the only time I saw it).

In later years, a second sukkah was built for the Rebbe on the driveway, which the Rebbe could reach privately from the hallway in *Gan Eden Hatachton*. In 5751*, that Sukkah was moved into



ERECTING THE REBBE'S SUKKAH IN THE FRONT COURTYARD OF 770, 11 TISHREI 5737.

Rabbi Groner's office, where a retractable roof was installed.

The Rebbe's Daled Minim

Rabbi Shapiro: Rabbi Yisroel Jacobson had the *chazaka* to provide the Rebbe with the *daled minim*. After he passed away, his son-in-law, Rabbi Mordechai Altein, took over. In addition, Rabbi Leibel Bistritzky would bring lulavim, Reb Shalom Hecht would bring esrogim, and visitors from Kfar Chabad would present the Rebbe with esrogim from the Kfar Chabad orchards.

On Erev Sukkos, the Rebbe would have various dignitaries and representatives enter his room, and they would each receive a set of *daled minim* from the Rebbe. I recall that the *mazkirim* would receive two hadassim each. Rabbi Nissan Mindel received a lulav and esrog as well, along with others such as Reb Binyomin Gorodetzky and Reb Shmuel Dovid Raichik. Others present would receive a single hadas from the Rebbe.⁵

Rabbi Jacobson: Reb Dovid Raskin was entrusted by the Rebbe each year with the job of preparing the lulav for the Rebbetzin. In later years, he did so for the Rebbe as well. He would always do it “*b’eimah ubiyirah*,” dressed in his *kapote* and gartel, fully invested in every detail and infinitely care. Some *bochurim* and children, myself included, would crowd around in the sukkah to watch.

Sukkos Farbrengens

Rabbi Shapiro: In the years that the Rebbe would farbreng in the sukkah,⁶ there would be a farbrengen before the end of the first days of Yom Tov. The Rebbe would wash for bread, lead the bentching, and after the farbrengen, the Rebbe would distribute *kos shel bracha*.

The Rebbe's seat at these farbrengens was on the far end of the sukkah, with his back towards Union Street. The *bochurim* would stand along the sides, while the older people would sit in the middle. If you had a *makom kavua* in 770, you attempted to sit in a similar location in the sukkah as well.

The sukkah wasn't very large, and as the crowd grew, the pushing became unbearable. During the farbrengen in 5729*, the Rebbe asked that the *olam* stop pushing, and that otherwise he would end the farbrengen early.

Rabbi Sossonko: The pushing was extremely intense, and children like us weren't able to make it inside. During the Rebbe's last farbrengen in the



REB DOVID RASKIN PREPARES THE LULAV FOR THE REBBETZIN AS REB SHMUEL DOVID RAICHIK LOOKS ON, EREV SUKKOS 5737.

Sukkah, on Shabbos Chol Hamoed 5730*, there were tables and benches collapsing all over. Rabbi Marlow's foot got trapped under one of the heavy tables that collapsed, and the bones shattered from the pressure. The next year before Sukkos, the Rebbe informed Rabbi Hodakov that he would no longer hold farbrengens in the sukkah.

Rabbi Shapiro: When word got out that the Rebbe would no longer farbreng on Sukkos, the Vaad Hamesader—and others—asked the Rebbe several times to reconsider, but the Rebbe responded very sharply that it had become an issue of *pikuach nefesh*.

Then, on Yom Tov, the Rebbe surprised us with an announcement that a farbrengen would be held, but that it would be inside 770 with no food or *l'chaim* (“אויף טרוקען”). That Sukkos (5731*) coincided with the United Nations General Assembly, and it

לזכות
הרה"ת ר' דובער זוגתו מרת שושנה ומשפחתם שיחיו
יוניק
להצלחה מרובה בכל אשר יפנו בגו"ר,
מתוך הרחבה ונחת חסידותי מכל יו"ח

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הרה"ת ר' לוי יצחק זוגתו מרת חנה
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חנינא וישראל שיחיו
לחיזוק ההתקשרות לכ"ק אדמו"ר

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מנחם מענדל, משה אליהו, יצחק, יוסף פריץ שיחיו
לחיזוק ההתקשרותם
לכ"ק אדמו"ר

נדפס ע"י
ר' מיכאל הכהן זוגתו לאה
ומשפחתם שיחיו
כהן
מנשסתר, אנגלי'

מוקדש לחיזוק ההתקשרות לכ"ק אדמו"ר
נדפס ע"י
הרה"ת ר' לוי יצחק שיחי' וואגעל
בקשר עם יום הולדתו ביום ו' תשרי
ולזכות זוגתו מרת חי' פריידא ומשפחתם שיחיו

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הילד ישעיהו בער ב"ר מנחם מענדל
לרגל יום הולדתו ה' תשרי
יה"ר שיגדל לתורה לחופה ולמעשים טובים
מתוך בריאות נכונה ושפע בגו"ר
לנח"ר כ"ק אדמו"ר והוריו הי"ו

לע"נ
הרה"ת ר' ניסן בן הרה"ח ר' יוחנן ע"ה
נלב"ע ביום ל' כסלו ה'תש"נ
ולע"נ זוגתו
מרת שרה רוזא ע"ה בת ר' אהרן ע"ה
נלב"ע כ"ח אדר ה'תשע"ז
גארדאן
ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

DEDICATED BY
MR. & MRS. LARRY GORDON

לזכות
גרשון ליב בן מנוחה שיחי'
לרפואה שלימה וקרובה



לעילוי נשמות
הרה"ח ר' אליהו ארי' ליב ב"ר יוסף ע"ה
גראסס
נלב"ע ליל שמיני עצרת ה'תשנ"ה
ולע"נ זוגתו האשה החשובה והחסודה
מרת שרה פייגא ב"ר נטע זאב ע"ה
גראסס
נלב"ע ביום שבת קודש פ' וילך ו' תשרי ה'תשע"ט

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ולעילוי נשמות
הרה"ח ר' אהרן בן הרה"ח ר' יהודה ע"ה
חיטריק
נלב"ע בכ"ט תשרי ה'תשע"ב
ת'נ'צ'ב'ה'
נדבת משפחתם שיחיו



לזכות
החתן הרה"ח לוי שי'
והכלה מרת חי' מושקא תחי' גרינברג
לרגל נישואיהם בשעתומ"צ
יום ג', כ"ט סיון, ער"ח תמוז ה'תשע"ט
נדפס ע"י הוריהם
הרה"ח ר' יוסף יצחק
וזוגתו מרת אסתר גאלדע שיחיו
גרינברג



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

ולזכרון הצדקנית הרבנית מרת חנה ע"ה שניאורסאהן בת הרה"ג הרה"ח ר' מאיר שלמה ע"ה
אמו של כ"ק אדמו"ר
לרגל היארצייט-הילולא ו' תשרי

לע"נ

הרה"ג הרה"ח הרה"ת מוה"ר שניאור זלמן בן הרה"ח ר' נתן ע"ה
גורארי'

מסור ונתון בכל לבבו בכל נפשו ובכל מאודו לכ"ק אדמו"ר מוהריי"ץ ולכ"ק אדמו"ר נשיא דורנו ומקורב לבית רבי. כל ימיו
פזר מכספו להדפסת הספרים של כל רבוה"ק. הי' חבר בהנהלה הראשית דאגו"ח העולמית וחבר פעיל בהנהלת מל"ח,
קה"ת, תות"ל, ועד המסדר. ציפה בכליון עיניים לביאת המשיח.

נפטר בש"ט ביום השבת א' דר"ה ה'תשס"ד

תנ"צ'ה

נדפס ע"י נכדו נתן וזוגתו גיטל ומשפחתם שיחיו
שטרנברג

לזכות

הרה"ת ר' ישראל עובדי-ה וזוגתו מרת עליזה קריינדל ומשפחתם שיחיו
שחט

לע"נ

מרת בראנא שיינא בת ר' אברהם צבי הלוי ע"ה
דייטש

נלב"ע י"ג תשרי ה'תשע"ה

תנ"צ'ה

נדפס ע"י משפחתה שיחיו

לזכות

הרה"ת ר' מענדי וזוגתו מרת שטערני
ומשפחתם שיחיו
סמיטאנא

מוקדש

לחיזוק ההתקשרות לכ"ק אדמו"ר

נדפס ע"י

הרה"ת ר' יהושע פישל
וזוגתו מרת שטערנא שרה
ומשפחתם שיחיו
ראזענשטיין

מוקדש לחיזוק ההתקשרות
לכ"ק אדמו"ר נשיא דורנו

נדפס ע"י ולזכות

הרה"ת ר' לייביש משה

וזוגתו מרת ריינה

ילדיהם קיילא באשא, בנימין דוד,
אליהו איסר, רבקה שיינדל אלטא שיחיו
גולדהירש

DEDICATED BY CHABAD
LUBAVITCH OF WESTPORT

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

IN HONOR OF MY DEAR FRIENDS
AVRAHAM AND DEVORAH
שיחיו
HAYMAN

DEDICATED BY
YISROEL SCHULMAN

A Chassidisher Derher
Vaad Talmidei Hatmimim



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