

# Derher

A Chassidisher

א חסידישער דערהער

## להחזיר עטרה ליושנה

THE STORY OF THE  
CHABAD COMMUNITY  
IN TZFAS



### Seeing Our Rebbeim—

והיו עיניך ראות את מוריך

A HISTORICAL SKETCH OF THE PORTRAITS  
AND PHOTOGRAPHS OF OUR REBBEIM

### Reality—Tzimtzum Kipshuto?

CHARTING THE GREAT DEBATE OVER  
THE EXTENT AND IMPACT OF TZIMTZUM



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# LETTUCE, CUCUMBERS, AND RADISHES

*The Torah tells us that when Rivka was pregnant with Yaakov and Esav, she was told: “Two nations [goyim] are in your womb.”*

*The Gemara in Avoda Zara interprets:*

*“Rav Yehuda says in the name of Rav: Do not read it as goyim, [nations]; rather read it as geyim, [proud ones]. This was fulfilled [in two prominent individuals who descended from Rivka], Antoninus and Rebbi Yehuda HaNasi, whose tables never lacked for lettuce, nor cucumbers, nor radish, neither in the summer nor in the rainy season, [due to their great wealth—despite the fact that these foods do not grow year round]. It was said: A radish breaks up food, lettuce stirs up food, and cucumbers expand the intestines...”*”

Taking this piece of Gemara at face-value—this seems rather puzzling:

Was this the only way to describe the great wealth of these two individuals? We are talking about Rebbi Yehuda Hanasi, the leader of all the Jewish people of his time! And Antoninus, the emperor of Rome—the superpower of its day, who stood in command of a vast army. Is this really the greatest thing we can say about these two personalities?

More so, were Rebbi and Antoninus really the only two people in the world who had access to these foods throughout all four seasons? One would think that given the great health benefits of these foods described in the Gemara, many others managed to procure these things as well!

The answer is that these three vegetables tell the story behind the relationship of these two men.

Harav Levi Yitzchok explains that Rebbi, who was a descendent of Yaakov Avinu, represents the world of *Tikkun* and Antoninus, a descendant of Eisav, represents the world of *Tohu*.

The Rebbe elaborates:



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



לעבן מיט'ן רבין

TZIVOS HASHEM RALLY

8 TSVI FREDIN VIA JEM 267903

טור 'לעבן מיט'ן רבין' הוקדש לזכרון ולעילוי נשמת  
ר' שמואל ב"ר יהושע אליהו ז"ל  
ואשתו מרת שרה ע"ה בת ר' יקותיאל ומרת לאה הי"ד  
ת"נ צ"ב'ה

ע"י בנם  
ר' יקותיאל יהודה  
וזוגתו מרת פעסל לאה ומשפחתם שיחיו  
רוהר

# Tanya in Gan Yisroel

MENACHEM-AV 5741\*



5741\* was a year that is a significant period in the history of Chabad, witnessing a major growth and expansion in the Rebbe's activities; from the establishment of Tzivos Hashem to the launching of the worldwide campaign of *Os B'Sefer Torah*—this was the beginning of a new era in the history of *dor hashvi'i*.

Based on the diary of a *bochur* learning in 770 at the time, the following pages offer the reader a taste of a summer month in the Rebbe's presence.

SHABBOS PARSHAS MASEI,  
ROSH CHODESH MENACHEM-AV

As every week, the Rebbe was called up for *maftir*. When it came to the Haftarah, the Rebbe began reading *דברי ירמיה*—the Haftarah for Parshas Matos! When the *gabbai* tried to give the Rebbe a Chumash opened up to the Haftarah for Parshas Masei (שמעו דבר ה'), the Rebbe gave him a piercing look and continued to read the Haftarah he had started.<sup>1</sup>

The Rebbe's whole demeanor was different than usual while he read the Haftarah of Parshas Matos. Only once he was done did the Rebbe continue with the Haftarah for Parshas Masei.

During the third *sicha* of the farbrengen<sup>2</sup>, the Rebbe addressed this, explaining that the appropriate Haftarah was indeed the one for Masei (שמיני), and that he recited the previous week's Haftarah due to a *shakla v'tarya* regarding Shabbos Rosh Chodesh during the "Three Weeks."

As the Rebbe was going home after Maariv, the *bochurim* started to sing, but the Rebbe did not encourage the singing as he normally did. The next day, the Rebbe remarked that these days (the month of Av) are not an appropriate time for singing and instructed that a rav should be consulted regarding the children's rally taking place on Monday, whether singing is allowed, etc.

#### MONDAY, GIMMEL MENACHEM-AV

At 2:00 p.m., a children's rally was held in the big shul downstairs of 770. Before the Rebbe came in, the emcee made an announcement: In accordance with the Rebbe's instructions, there will be no

singing; neither by davening, nor by the rally. The Tzivos Hashem Anthem ("We Want Moshiach Now!") will be said—not sung—by everyone together after the 12 Pesukim. He also gave over the Rebbe's instructions to say the first and last *possuk* of Eicha after the 12 Pesukim.

The Rebbe joined the children in shul for Mincha. After Mincha, the 12 Pesukim, as well as the first and last *possuk* of Eicha were recited, after which the whole crowd chanted together the words "We want Moshiach now!" over and over again.

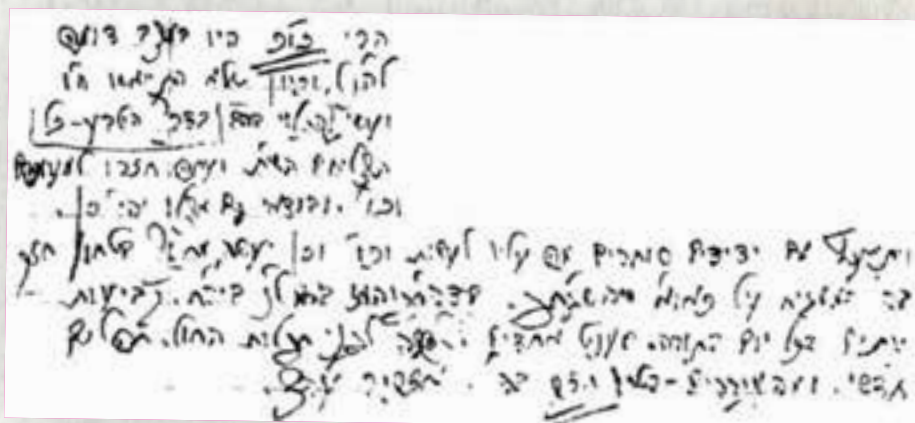
At the end of the rally, the Rebbe gave the *madrichim* and *madrichos* coins to give to the children; three coins per child—two coins to give to tzedakah, and one to do with as they see fit.

The Rebbe then asked that all the children say together three times the *possuk* 'עוצו עצה וגו' one time the *possuk* 'השיבנו ה' אליך וגו' and one time the *possuk* 'אך צדיקים וגו'.

As the Rebbe walked out of the shul, the children started to chant again the words, "We want Moshiach now!" The Rebbe encouraged them with his hand, encouraging the pure and heartfelt cries of the young boys and girls.



ולזכות  
 החתן הרה"ת ר' שלום דובער  
 והכלה המהוללה מרת שרה רחל (ווילהעלם)  
 שיחיו שור  
 לרגל חתונתם ר"ח סיון ה'תש"פ  
 ולזכות  
 החתן הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל  
 והכלה המהוללה מרת אסתר ברכה (שפערלין)  
 שיחיו קארפ  
 לרגל חתונתם ג' סיון ה'תש"פ  
 ולזכות  
 החתן הרה"ת ר' ישעיהו  
 והכלה המהוללה מרת ח' מושקא (פעלדמאן)  
 שיחיו נפרסטק  
 לרגל חתונתם ח"י סיון ה'תש"פ



**Many** people have found themselves in a similar situation to the one you describe. Because they did not give up, *chas v'shalom*, and they did whatever was in their power in the natural course of things, Hashem granted them success, and they now returned to their previous state. The same can certainly be true for you.

You should seek the counsel of friends who are in business, asking them what to do, etc. and follow their advice; [along] with unwavering trust in Hashem, who watches over each and every individual with *hashgacha pratis*.

Check your tefillin and mezuzos, if they haven't been checked in the past twelve months. Set aside fixed times for Torah study every day. Give a few cents to tzedakah before davening each weekday. Recite the Tehillim [as divided] for the days of the month. And one of the most important things: have unwavering trust in Hashem.

I will mention this at the Tziyun.

הרי כו"כ היו במצב דומה להנ"ל, וכיון שלא התייאשו ח"ו ועשו בדרך הטבע - כל התלוי בהם הצליחם השי"ת ועתה חזרו למעמדם וכו'. ובודאי גם אצלו יה' כן. ויתיעץ עם ידידים סוחרים מה עליו לעשות וכו' וכן יעשה, מתוך בטחון חזק בה' המשיגה על כאו"א בהשגח"פ.

בדהתפורהמ"ז באם ל"נ ביב"ח [בדיקת התפילין והמזוזות באם לא נבדקו בי"ב חודש]. קביעות עתים בכל יום בתורה. סענט אחדים לצדקה לפני תפלות החול. תהלים חדשי. ומהעיקרים - בטחון חזק בה'.

אזכיר עה"צ.

(Igros Kodesh vol. 26, p. 499)



# Rea



**Charting the great  
debate over the extent  
and impact of tzimtzum**

Original illustrations by **Mussi Sharfstein** for A Chassidisher Derher.

לעילוי נשמת דודינו הרבנים החשובים  
שנספו בנגיף הידוע

הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' ישראל יצחק  
בן ר' יעקב ע"ה פרידמאן  
גלב"ע ז' ניסן ה'תש"פ

הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' שלום  
בן ר' ארי' דוב ע"ה איידלמאן  
גלב"ע ט"ז ניסן ה'תש"פ  
תנ"צ'ה'

נדפס ע"י

הרה"ת ר' חיים שניאור זלמן  
וזוגתו מרת מלכה ומשפחתם שיחיו  
גורקאוו

# ility

In the early days of Chassidus, there was tremendous opposition to its new approach to *avodas Hashem*, to the extent that there were burnings of the *sefer* of the Baal Shem Tov's teachings, the *Tzavaas Harivash*.

Why did they decide to burn the *sefer*? The *misnagdim* claimed that it was due to the following teaching: *If [a non-Jew] is speaking while you are davening, you should say to yourself, 'Why did Hashem bring about that he should speak to me during my davening? It must be*

*b'hashgacha pratis. The very words he is saying are from the Shechina, which resides in his mouth in order to motivate me to strengthen my service of Hashem.'*

What's so controversial about this statement? Why would they burn a *sefer* over this? And it didn't stop there: Although the Alter Rebbe explained this statement at length in a letter, the Vilna Gaon brought it up again in a letter in 5657\*. What about this statement was worthy to be repeated again and again by the opponents of Chassidus?

It goes to the heart of the famous argument in Kabbalah about the meaning of the *tzimtzum*, known as *tzimtzum kipshuto*—the *tzimtzum* is literal, or *tzimtzum shelo kipshuto*—the *tzimtzum* is non-literal.

## The Tzimtzum

One of the great innovations of the Kabbalah of the Arizal, as was revealed to him from above, is the concept of the *tzimtzum*.

*...Before anything physical or spiritual was created, the simple infinite light of Hashem filled everything, and there was no empty place. When Hashem decided with his abstract will to create creations, he contracted the light... right in the middle of it... and there remained an empty space.<sup>1</sup>*

What does this mean? The early *mekubalim* in the generations following the Arizal were split in their understanding: Some held that the *tzimtzum* is *kipshuto*, that the *tzimtzum* should be understood literally, that Hashem actually removed his light. Others held that the *tzimtzum* is *shelo kipshuto*, that it shouldn't be understood literally. *Tzimtzum* means only that *we* (from *our* perspective) simply don't *feel* Hashem's light.

### Tzimtzum Kipshuto

*Hashem actually contracted his light, and it is no longer revealed in the world.*

The Mishnas Chassidim  
Reb Yonasan Eibeshitz  
The Vilna Gaon

### Tzimtzum Shelo Kipshuto

*Hashem never actually contracted his light, and everything remained the same. We feel that it's contracted, meaning that **we** don't realize that it is revealed.*

Shaar Hashamayim  
Shomer Emunim

Chassidus *paskens* that the reality is that *tzimtzum shelo kipshuto*, for *tzimtzum kipshuto* would be a limitation in Hashem. As the Alter Rebbe puts it, *tzimtzum kipshuto* is "*mikrei haguf*," something that could apply only to physical, bodily matters.

## What's the argument?

A casual reader might think that those who held *tzimtzum kipshuto* believed that Hashem literally moved his light away, he literally

contracted his light, whereas those who hold that it's *shelo kipshuto* believe that it's not literal.

But the truth is that this is obviously not what they meant; Hashem's light is not a physical thing, *chas veshalom*, that can be moved. Even spiritual things in our physical world, like ideas, cannot literally be moved, so of course Hashem's light cannot be moved. And considering that this was an argument among *gedolei Yisroel*, it obviously wasn't about such a simple concept.

The argument is in the spiritual realm and is a nuanced difference in understanding:

When Hashem's *or ein sof* is utterly revealed, when the ultimate truth of Hashem is fully expressed, there can be nothing else—the concept of a separate world makes no sense. That's why there needs to be a *tzimtzum*, so that this ultimate truth is not expressed in a revealed manner, and the worlds are able to be created.

But here comes the argument. Some say that, in a spiritual sense, this actually happened, and Hashem's *or ein sof* is actually not revealed in the worlds. Others say that it is *shelo kipshuto*, that the *or ein sof* was never removed from the world; it's only that Hashem made it so that the *world* does not feel the *or ein sof*.

For a clearer understanding of their argument, see below.



## Deep read

In order to gain some clarity on this profound issue, we will be discussing the following points:

- Tzimtzum as a contraction in order to make “space” for the creation of the world: What is the definition of “contraction” and “space” in spirituality?
- The logic of tzimtzum kipshuto.
- Why we do not accept this viewpoint.
- What tzimtzum shelo kipshuto means.
- How to understand tzimtzum shelo kipshuto.

This explanation and presentation is adapted from the shiurim of Reb Yoel Kahn on Shaar Hayichud Veba'emuna, especially as they are written in “Shaar Hayichud Veba'emuna” by Maaynosecha p. 265ff. For a clearer understanding of the topics, see there.

### The meaning of “contraction” and “space” in spirituality

Let us explore the following question: Are spiritual things limited to a specific location or space, or are they everywhere?

For example, the logic that 2 plus 2 equals 4—is that idea everywhere?

Well, it's certainly not limited to a specific location; the same way it's true in one place, it's true in another. You cannot talk about it using physical terms—like north, south, east and west—and you cannot touch it. It's beyond the limitations of time and space: whenever and wherever you have two and two, you will have four.

So in a certain sense, one might think that spiritual things are everywhere too. (One might even think that this is what we mean when we say that Hashem is everywhere: He is spiritual, and therefore he isn't limited in physical location.)

But if you think into it a bit more, you will discover the problem with this perspective. Is this idea really everywhere, meaning in *every single place*? Does this idea have any *connection* with *this place*? Is it actually *here* more than anywhere



else? Of course not. It is *beyond* space, it is *beyond* location, since it exists in a higher realm, the world of intellect. So, on the one hand, it's not limited to a *specific* location.

But it's not actually in the physical realm. Try to use an idea to move a table. It won't work, because the idea isn't *in* this physical space. Ideas are not limited to one location, but not because they are *everywhere*—because they are *nowhere*, they do not inhabit the physical world. The only place that an idea can be is in the brain because the brain is able to think about and process ideas. They are not limited to a specific *physical* location but they are limited to a specific realm—the spiritual realm.

**Key point:** *The definition of something “existing” in a particular realm or space—as we naturally understand it—is that it is **there**, that it has some actual connection to, and effect on, the space. If it has no actual connection to this space, then in its world, it does not exist. Just as physical beings exist only in one specific location, spiritual things only inhabit their own specific realm.*

### Everything has its place - the logic of Tzimtzum Kipshuto

The truth is that every existence in this world has a realm, a “place” where it exists.



# Buy It!



**Rabbi Yosef Biston**

Parkland, Florida

”נשיא דורנו האט  
אויפגעטאן און  
אנגעזאגט צו כל  
אנשי ונשי הדור  
אז מצוות הדור  
איז אין דעם ענין  
השליחות...”

“The Rebbe nesi doreinu established  
and mandated each and every man  
and woman in this generation that the  
‘mitzvah of our generation’ is *shlichus*...”  
(ש"פ וישלח תשמ"ז)

I was born on the morning of 9 Shevat 5710, just one day before the *histalkus* of the Frierdiker Rebbe on Yud Shevat. My father called 770 right away and notified the Rebbe who brought the news to the Frierdiker Rebbe. Later he found out that I was the last birth to be reported to the Frierdiker Rebbe before the *histalkus*.

Fast forward 25 years...

I had always had a strong passion to be the Rebbe's shliach and in Kislev 5735\* my wife and I had the great fortune to be sent by the Rebbe to South Florida.

At the time, not many couples were moving on shlichus and there were lots of places and options. We received a number of offers, one of them from Rabbi Avraham Korf, the head shliach to Florida, and I wrote the options to the Rebbe. The Rebbe circled the opportunity in Florida and

wrote in his holy handwriting that we should obtain the advice of *ידידים מבינים* (wise friends) and also ensure that there is no *hasagas gvul* (infringing on another's territory) involved.

In our *yeichidus* before we moved out, the Rebbe blessed us that we should be *נרות להאיר* in our new location. The Rebbe instructed us to move right away.

At the time, Miami Beach was the hub of the Jewish community. There were many Yidden living there and that is where Rabbi Korf's Chabad House and the yeshiva were. We immediately got involved in the many opportunities with children, seniors and everyone in between.

Starting the following year, I began making trips to many cities across the state of Florida. I would arrange Shabbatons for the local Jewish communities with the help of other *yungeleit* and *bochurim* from the Yeshiva Gedola. People were eager to learn about Lubavitch and we were well received. Of course, I wrote long *duchos* about these trips. I would pass them on to Rabbi Korf and he would send them to the Rebbe.

At one Shabbaton in West Palm Beach, I met a Yid who connected with us. Shortly after, he moved to Ft. Lauderdale and asked us to open a Chabad House there. Rabbi Korf wrote the idea to the Rebbe and received the Rebbe's *bracha*. I served as the rabbi at the new shul and we would spend Shabbos there each week for the next two years.

I would travel to the Rebbe for Simchas Torah and I had a great place near the "*ches*" (square-shaped table arrangement) where the Rebbe conducted his *hakafos*. On Simchas Torah 5739\*, as the Rebbe was coming to the center of the shul for his *hakafa*, I asked the Rebbe that we should be blessed in the near future with "בני חיי - healthy children." With a broad smile, the Rebbe answered me, "ומזוני רויחא. Abundance in parnasa too. Amen!" That year, our first daughter was born.

After two years of going back and forth to Ft. Lauderdale every Shabbos, the community wrote to the Rebbe asking if I should take on the position as a full time rabbi there but they received no answer. When I wrote to the Rebbe about this, the Rebbe told me to continue what I was doing until now, connecting with many communities as opposed to taking the new Chabad House as my full occupation.

Over the following years, I had the great *zechus* of bringing out many shlichim to new cities throughout South Florida. I would check out the places, study the demographics, and with Rabbi Korf's approval, hire new couples to open Chabad Houses in these places. Each time I took on a new place, I merited to see unbelievable *brachos* from the Rebbe, making it possible financially. It felt like



the Rebbe sent me new supporters for these projects out of the blue each time. Over the years, I brought out 25-30 Shluchim throughout the state.

At one point, we found a city that was in need of a shliach, however, there was an Orthodox shul one mile away. I was instructed by the Rebbe not to go ahead with the plan as the shul was too close. Meanwhile, the *baalei batim* approached the rav of the shul and asked him how he felt about a new Chabad House one mile away. He agreed to the idea and even offered to give us taleisim and siddurim. When I reported this to the Rebbe, I received approval to go ahead with the plan.

When the Hebrew Academy School in Broward County started to grow, we purchased a building for the school but we encountered a lot of difficulty in getting zoning permits from the city. Around that time (5748\*), I went with a *baal habos* to *yechidus* for members of the Machane Yisrael Development Fund. In his brief conversation with the Rebbe, the *baal habos* mentioned the situation with the

school. The Rebbe responded with an astonishing answer: Make the building even bigger than planned! I really did not know what the Rebbe meant.

Three days later when we attended the hearing at the City Hall for the school zoning, they told me that in order to receive the permit I would need to purchase a property adjacent to the school with some extra parking spaces. They were sure we would be unable to do this. In a miraculous turn of events, we managed to purchase the additional property immediately and we received the zoning approval.


A couple years later, we outgrew the space and needed to find a bigger building. We searched all around to find a space that would be convenient for the many families travelling from all four directions. There was one building in an industrial area that I was very skeptical about. It was far from everything and the only advantage was the easy permitting process. I wrote all this to the Rebbe, yet the Rebbe answered with me with one word: "לקנות—buy it."

Another project that I have administered since 5738\* is Camp Gan Yisrael of Florida. In 5742\* we found grounds that seemed to work well for the camp. The only problem was that there were many mosquitos in the area. I wrote to the Rebbe asking if we should purchase it and the Rebbe responded by circling "יתושים"—mosquitoes—in my letter and negated the idea. The Rebbe added that we should look for grounds that are already built up.

For many years we searched for the right grounds and finally, a number of years after Gimmel Tammuz, in 5773\*, we found the perfect space. As it was about to fall out of our hands, I made an urgent trip to the Ohel and we were *zoche* to witness incredible *brachos* from the Rebbe, making the purchase possible. I have shared this story with the Derher in greater detail. (See "The Elusive Property," Derher Av 5776, Issue 47 (124).)

For many years we lived among *anash* in Miami Beach. After 27 Adar I 5752\*, when the Rebbe had a stroke, I felt that it would be the right thing for us to open a new shul/Chabad House in a city that didn't have one yet and spend Shabbosim there. I thought about the city of Parkland. I was uncertain about the idea as it was a city with a very small population and it would also mean driving two hours each week to spend Shabbos there.

On the day we received the Rebbe's approval, three different people (!) approached me and asked me to open a Chabad center in Parkland!

We continue to see the rebbe's *brachos* in our shlichus to Parkland each and every day! 

# RESTORING THE CROWN

The Chabad  
community  
of Tzfas



LIBRARY OF AGUDAS CHASSIDEI CHABAD

KIRYAT CHABAD.



CONSTRUCTION OF THE KIRYA.

## THE TZEMACH TZEDEK SHUL

“1 Menachem-Av 5730. K”K  
Admu”r Shlit”a.”

Reb Efroim Wolff, the head of  
Agudas Chassidei Chabad in Eretz  
Yisrael, wrote a short bulletin to the  
Rebbe.

“The city-council of Tzfas reached  
out to us regarding their local Chabad  
shul. The structure is about to collapse

and they want to know if we are  
interested in renovating it together  
with them. If not, they will be forced  
to demolish it. We requested they send  
us a detailed plan and budget, etc.”<sup>1</sup>

The shul seemed insignificant.  
Tzfas had little to no Lubavitcher  
Chassidim, and the shul was attended  
primarily by Sephardic Jews.

However, the Rebbe instructed  
them to oppose the demolition and

to see what could be done to rebuild  
it. In a series of meetings, the city-  
council made it clear that they didn’t  
want to invest money. In fact, when a  
Chabad delegation arrived in Tzfas to  
deal with the issue, they discovered a  
worker in the midst of demolishing  
the structure. They quickly demanded  
that he suspend his work.

“The mayor claims that there is no  
historic significance to the structure,”

לזכות  
הנערה עטא תח' ויגלר

לרגל הגיעה לגיל שנים עשרה  
היא עונת בת מצוה  
ה' תמוז ה'תש"פ

נדפס ע"י הוריה  
הרה"ת ר' דוד צבי  
וזוגתו מרת חנה ומשפחתם שיחיו  
ויגלר  
פאלם ביטש גארדענס, פלארידא



LIBRARY OF AGUDAS CHASIDEI CHABAD



LIBRARY OF AGUDAS CHASIDEI CHABAD

PARTIALLY DEMOLISHED TZEMACH TZEDEK SHUL.



LIBRARY OF AGUDAS CHASIDEI CHABAD

THE TZEMACH TZEDEK SHUL IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE INITIAL RENOVATION, 5733.

Rabbi Wolff reported to the Rebbe. "He said that a family lived in the building before it was turned into a shul in 5696\*.

"We spoke to Reb Ezriel Zelig Slonim [the head of Colel Chabad which had actually supported the upkeep of the shul], and he insisted that he recalled it as a Chabad shul already in the year 5666\*. Reb Tuvia Blau also says that according to the

reports he collected, a Chabad shul in Tzfas has existed since the time of the Tzemach Tzedek and there is no documentation of a Chabad shul in a different location."

The Chassidic community of Tzfas actually dates back even earlier than the Tzemach Tzedek. It was established by the first *aliyah* of Chassidim to the Holy Land, led by Reb Mendel Horodoker. However,

due to strife with the local rulers and the existing Sefardic community, Reb Mendel soon moved to Teverya. Some years later, the Chassidic community of Tzfas was established once again, but then disagreements arose between Chabad Chassidim and the followers of Reb Avraham Kalisker. The Mittlerer Rebbe soon instructed his Chassidim to move to Chevron, where they were joined by a new group of Chabad

Chassidim, led by his daughter Rebbetzin Menucha Rochel and her husband Reb Yaakov Culi Slonim.

In the days of the Tzemach Tzedek, the Chabad community of Tzfas was established once again. It was made up primarily of Romanian Chassidim, students of Reb Yitzchak Moshe of Yas (Iași), Romania, a Chossid of the Alter Rebbe. The Tzemach Tzedek also sent his niece, Rebbetzin Beila Horowitz,<sup>2</sup> to settle there with her five sons after her husband passed away.

“A short time after they arrived in Tzfas,” recounted Rebbetzin Beila’s grandson, “my grandmother wrote to the Tzemach Tzedek that the Chabad Chassidim of Tzfas were suffering from harassment from the other Chassidim in the city and needed their own shul. The Tzemach Tzedek supported the idea. He sent 100 ruble towards the cost of the building and asked a local kolel to contribute as well.”<sup>3</sup> According to a *reshima* of the Frierdiker Rebbe<sup>4</sup> this took place in 5601\*.

The Rebbe made it clear that the shul should be preserved at all costs, instructing Reb Efroim to argue that it is a historic site which must not be demolished. Reb Efroim dispatched Reb Ezriel Zelig Slonim and Reb Tuvia Blau to speak to the mayor.

“He repeated his claim that there is no historic significance,” Reb Efroim reported to the Rebbe, “but Reb Ezriel Zelig argued and said that he met with the mayor’s own father-in-law, who had confirmed that the shul had stood even before he was born. Reb Yeshaya Hurvitz also confirmed that the building was erected in 5605\*.

“The mayor agreed to contribute 20,000 *lirot*, but he was mainly worried about filling the shul—currently, there aren’t many congregants. Reb Ezriel Zelig promised to bring new residents to Tzfas, and the mayor said that in that case he would definitely help.”

## THE RIGHT PLACE, THE RIGHT MAN

Reb Ezriel Zelig promised to bring more residents to Tzfas, but it’s not clear if he was speaking on the Rebbe’s behalf or on his own. Tzfas of those days was a sleepy town, far from the center of Eretz Yisroel. It had a weak economy; the bad conditions of the roads made it a long trip, and moving to Tzfas was considered like moving to the moon.

Some 20 years earlier, after World War II, dozens of *anash* families were immigrating from Europe, and Zalman Shazar had actually proposed to settle them in Tzfas—due to its close proximity to Meron, the cradle of *p’nimius hatorah*.<sup>5</sup> However, as Reb Leibel Motchkin related, they quickly dissuaded him of the idea:

“The older Chassidim at the meeting were tempted to accept his offer, but I couldn’t agree with it. The situation in the north of Eretz Yisrael was very bad and I couldn’t imagine settling the new families of *anash* there, so far from the center of Chabad which at the time was in Tel Aviv.

“I was sitting next to Reb Pinye Althaus. I whispered to him that we needed to do something quickly. He immediately understood, and quickly persuaded Shazar that the idea wasn’t practical. Instead, Shazar suggested Safaria, which later became Kfar Chabad.”<sup>6</sup>

Shazar, apparently, never gave up on the idea. In 5724\*, he wrote to

the Rebbe suggesting that Chabad Chassidim settle in the Tzfas-Meron area, and he received an encouraging reply from the Rebbe.

“Obviously, I was generally excited by the proposal for a Chabad settlement in the Tzfas-Meron area, but I still do not have all the details of the matter. Primarily: What type of people are suited to settle there—perhaps Russian immigrants? Moreover, Mr. Shlomo Madainchik is utilizing his visit here for the benefit of the current Chabad village, *‘vèin m’arvin simcha b’simcha*.’ [Lit.: we don’t mix one celebration with another.] I hope to correspond with you further on this topic in the near future.”<sup>7</sup>

The suggestion seems to have remained on the ‘back-burner’ until a proposal arose while the Tzemach Tzedek Shul was being renovated. A piece of real estate next to the shul was offered to Chabad for purchase. Reb Efroim Wolff, unsure if it was a worthy investment, asked the Rebbe if he should purchase it.

The Rebbe sent a surprising response through *mazkirus*: “Why should you let it slip away? ...We need to make a Chabad center with a big *farnem*; a shul, *yungerleit*, immigrants, and perhaps something for tourists; there is potential for impact on the entire Tzfas.”

As it soon became apparent to Chabad in Eretz Yisroel, the Rebbe wanted a large scale project to take shape. Tzfas was to become a major



THE AREA SLATED FOR CONSTRUCTION OF APARTMENT BUILDINGS, 5734.

LIBRARY OF AGUDAS CHASIDET CHABAD



# Journey of the Fish



"We have arrived at the village. That is the home we need to go to."

It was an unexpected early morning journey for the few Chassidim of the Alter Rebbe who were woken to travel with their Rebbe. Not sure of what to expect, they followed the Alter Rebbe into the home of a local *mashke*-vendor whose clientele was the local peasants.

"Please show us to a room in which we can

daven," asked the Alter Rebbe.

"I don't have any available," he replied, "But following the local law, I have a room designated for the alcohol barrels which you can use."

As the owner of the home began removing the barrels from the room in preparation for davening, the Alter Rebbe asked him to prepare a meal of fish for them to eat.

"With my deepest regrets, I can't do this for

you. We don't live near the river and there are no fish to be bought here," he explained.

While the Alter Rebbe and his Chassidim davened Shacharis, there was a knock on the door, which the owner of the home quickly responded to.

Shocked, he saw a gentle man holding a pail of water with a large fish inside. "Would you like to purchase this," he said pointing at his lucky catch. Without any hesitation at all, the owner

paid for the fish and quickly informed the Alter Rebbe that a fish had been found.

The Alter Rebbe insisted on being present in the kitchen throughout the entire time the fish was being prepared and cooked. He then turned to the surprised Chassidim and explained, "Do you remember so-and-so who recently passed away? His soul was reincarnated in a fish and now when you eat it he will receive the elevation he needs." **T**

לזכות  
הת' זלמן יודא שיחי' וולבובסקי  
והת' מנחם מענדל שיחי' וולבובסקי  
לרגל הגיעם לעול מצוות



”והיו עיניך רואות את מוריך”

# SEEING OUR REBBEIM

A historical sketch of the portraits and  
photographs of our Rebbeim

”אמר רבי, האי דמחדדנא מחבראי, דחזית’ לרבי מאיר מאחורי, ואילו חזית’ מקמי’, הוה מחדדנא טפי, דכתיב  
והיו עיניך רואות את מוריך.” (עירובין יג. ב.)

*“Rebbi said, I am sharper than my colleagues because I merited to see the back of Rebbi Meir. Had I merited to see his face, I would have been even sharper. As the novi Yeshaya states, “Your eyes shall behold your teacher.” (Eruvin 13b)*

The best way to learn Torah is through hearing it directly from one’s Rebbe while seeing him in person. Afterwards, while reviewing or repeating the Torah, it is crucial to envision the Rebbe’s holy face, to remain connected to the source in order to succeed in understanding the Torah more deeply.

This is true with regard to every Torah from every Rebbe to every *talmid* in every generation. Even if one is learning Torah from a Rebbe he has never seen, the Rebbe’s essence is invested in his Torah and through proper study and meditation one can achieve this level of attachment and understanding.

In more recent times, as accurate portraits have become more common and especially with the advent of photography, we have been granted the gift of experiencing the benefits of “envisioning the face of the *baal hashmuah*,” even generations later. The Rebbe explained on several occasions that through an “accurate portrait” one can access these benefits in a more practical way.

When the Rebbe was preparing the set of S’dei Chemed for publication in 5709\* he sought to publish a photo of the author in the *sefarim*.<sup>1</sup> Years later, the Rebbe instructed that the photo of the Rebbe Rashab be published in the *sefer* of Hemshech Samach Vov, a photo of the Friediker Rebbe in some of his Sifrei Hasichos<sup>2</sup>, and that the photo of his father Harav Levi Yitzchok be published in the *sefer* Likkutei Levi Yitzchok.

Following is a historical sketch of the portraits and photographs of Rabboseinu Nesieinu.

# Baal Shem Tov and Mezritcher Maggid

There is a tradition from the Rebbeim that there is no portrait of the Baal Shem Tov.

Several times people asked the Rebbe about the famous portrait that is popularly presented as the Baal Shem Tov and the idea was firmly rejected. On Sukkos 5726\*, during the Yom Tov meal in the Frierdiker Rebbe's sukkah, Reb Yankel Katz from Chicago mentioned that he recently saw portraits of several *tzaddikim* including one purported to be of the Baal Shem Tov, and he asked the Rebbe if it is real. The Rebbe responded that the portrait is of a different "Baal Shem" who lived in Germany, and there is certainly no portrait of the Mezritcher Maggid.

In the winter of 5742\* Reb Yisroel Mordechai Kozominsky wrote to the Rebbe that the Encyclopedia Judaica claims the alleged portrait of the Baal Shem Tov is actually a "Baal Shem" that lived in London. In response the Rebbe verified that it was certainly not the Baal Shem Tov since according to tradition there were 13 (or 12) noticeable strands of hair (ג' תיקוני) in the Baal Shem Tov's beard.<sup>3</sup>

## Alter Rebbe

The portrait of the Alter Rebbe was featured on the fifth page of the second edition of *Hatomim*, published in honor of Yud-Tes Kislev 5696\*. It was the first time this photo was published in a Lubavitch publication and many Chassidim wondered where it originated from and if it was accurate. Two years later, in the eighth edition of *Hatomim* published in honor of Yud-Tes Kislev 5698\*, the editors responded to the many inquiries by publicizing segments of the Frierdiker Rebbe's diary relating to the history and tradition of this portrait. Following is a synopsis of *Hatomim* vol. 2 pages 379 - 382:

During the winter of 5615\* the Tzemach Tzedek received a message from the authorities that in six weeks time the Ministry of Interior will host a conference on the issue of publishing Hebrew books translated into Yiddish for Jewish children. Since the Tzemach Tzedek was a prominent participant of the famous conference of 5603\*, they requested that the Tzemach Tzedek attend this conference as well, as it pertained to the same topics as the previous one.

The Tzemach Tzedek did not wish to attend and he was not in the best of health at the time. Dr. Heibenthal happened to be visiting the area and he was called to the Tzemach Tzedek. When he saw the invitation to the conference, Dr. Heibenthal immediately composed an official letter explaining that the Tzemach Tzedek could not leave home until the spring and was in no condition to travel to S. Petersburg at the time.

The Rebbe Maharash and the Chossid Reb Aharon Bilinitcher were appointed to represent the Tzemach Tzedek at the conference and they were guided on how to fulfill this mission properly.

"One of the assistants to the Deputy Interior Minister," related Reb Aharon, "was a young nobleman approximately 30-years-old. During the meetings he was very respectful to the Rebbe Maharash and it was obvious that he was intrigued by him.

"Between the fourth and fifth meetings there was a five day break and the nobleman requested an audience with the Rebbe Maharash. He came to the hotel and they were in the room for over two hours. Later the Rebbe Maharash told me that he was an artist and wanted to draw a portrait of the Rebbe Maharash."

His artistic talent was hereditary since his grandfather had a unique appreciation for art and had accumulated a massive private art collection. He continued sharing that there was a portrait in the collection of a grand rabbi who had been arrested on charges of high treason and his grandfather, who was one of the main interrogators, commissioned an artist to draw a portrait of the rabbi and after the case was closed he added the portrait in his private collection.

The Rebbe Maharash was intrigued by this information and asked him for permission to peruse through the art collection and see the portrait of the rabbi. He readily agreed and two days later, the Rebbe Maharash and Reb Aharon paid a visit to his home.



לזכות  
הת' ישראל משה שיחי'  
לרגל הגיעו לעול מצוות  
י"א מנחם אב ה'תש"פ

נדפס ע"י הוריו  
הרה"ת ר' יוסף יעקב  
וזוגתו מרת מלכה בינה  
ומשפחתם שיחיו

מאראס

שלוחי כ"ק אדמו"ר ס. אנטוניה, טקסס

5750



25 SHEVAT 5750

LEVAYA OF DR. AVROHOM ABBA SELIGSON.

## מנחם משיב נפשי

In the early years of the *nesius* the Rebbe would attend every *levaya* that passed by 770. Over time this changed and the Rebbe only attended on unique occasions (such as *beis harav*, heads of *mosdos*, as well as if the passing was connected with a unique tragedy *r"l*).

The Rebbe would exit 770 as the *aron* approached and would follow the car from behind.



27 SIVAN 5737, YOSSEI MELAMED VIA JEM 1130821

15 ELUL 5751, CB HALBERSTAM VIA JEM 83831





15 ELUL 5751, CB HALBERSTAM VIA JEM 83829