

Derher

A Chassidisher

א חסידישער דערהער

The Making of a Chossid

RABBI IMMANUEL
SCHOCHET - PART II

"My Rebbe is Victorious!"

RABBI YITZCHOK GOLDSMID SHARES
HIS EXPERIENCE OF HEI TEVES

Secrecy, Stealth and Inspiration

THE STORY OF EZRAS ACHIM - CHASSIDIM'S CLANDESTINE
OPERATIONS BEHIND THE IRON CURTAIN



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Rabbi Tzvi Altein

Publisher

Rabbi Yossi Kamman

Editor in Chief

Rabbi Mendel Jacobs

Administration/Development

Rabbi Levi Kesselman

Rabbi Mendel Treitel

Editors

Rabbi Moshe Zaklikovsky

Rabbi Eliezer Zalmanov

Advisory Committee

Rabbi Mendel Alperowitz

Rabbi David Olidort

Design

Rabbi Mendy Weg

Contributors

Rabbi Yanky Bell • Rabbi Yossi Bendet • Rabbi Koppel Chaiton • Rabbi Levi Dubov • Rabbi Tzemach Feller • Rabbi Levi Greenberg • Rabbi Menachem Mendel Greenberg • Rabbi Mendy Greenberg • Rabbi Zevi Kaplan • Rabbi Levi Katz • Rabbi Levi Levertov • Rabbi Shmuly Levertov • Rabbi Mendel Misholovin • Rabbi Levi Raichik • Rabbi Mendy Shemtov • Schabse Soffer

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(718) 305 6859, Feedback@Derher.org

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לזכות
הרה"ת ר' שלום וזוגתו מרת שרה
וילדיהם ישראל, ריסא, חי' מושקא,
אמונה מלכה, יעקב יהודה, ולאה שיחיו
אייזיקוביץ

Derher **Editorial**

Jubilation was in the air.

After a long and painful trial, the Rebbe and Chassidim emerged victorious in the dispute over the *sefarim* in the library of Agudas Chassidei Chabad, and the mantra of “*Didan Notzach!*” was finally realized.

Amid the joy and celebration, the Rebbe addressed the occasion with several *sichos*, shedding light on the potency of the moment, drawing lessons and calls to action to be taken from the whole incident.

A few days after Hei Teves, at the farbrengen of Shabbos Parshas Vayigash, the Rebbe implied that what was happening was indeed something truly historic:

In the earlier generations, *pnimius haTorah* was concealed from most people, only taught to a select few, and even then it was done in secret. Then, in the times of the Arizal it became permissible and a mitzvah to reveal these teachings.

As time went on, the revelation of *pnimius haTorah* increased with the revelation of *Toras haChassidus*, and especially Chabad Chassidus, allowing for these concepts to be intellectually appreciated, and spread to the *chutza*.

With each generation of *nesiei Chabad*, the work of *hafatzas hamaayanos* grew stronger and stronger, until the Rebbe, my father-in-law, who brought the wellsprings of Chassidus to **literally** every corner of the globe. This he accomplished through his *talmidim*, his shlichim, the *chayalei beis Dovid* who wage the war against those [forces of evil] who “disgraced the ends of your Moshiach.”

...After six generations of our Rabbeim engaging in *hafatzas hamaayanos*—[like the Torah says of the] “six years you plant your field, six years you harvest your vineyard”—six generations of caring and tending to the “Tree of Life,” *Toras haChassidus*, allowing it to bear its fruit... It is now the seventh generation, *dor hashvi'i*, and all sevenths are cherished. All that remains is for us to actually bring down the third *Beis Hamikdash* with the ultimate and complete *geula*, with *Moshiach tzidkeinu!*

Interestingly, the Rebbe points to the *avoda* of *dor hashvi'i*, echoing what he famously said in the first *maamar* on Yud Shevat 5711*: It is our task to finally complete the mission and bring Moshiach in actuality.

As has been discussed many times, by perusing the Rebbe's *sichos* from the time of the trial it becomes clear that the trial in the earthly court was a mirror of a heavenly saga. Much like the Alter Rebbe at the time of his imprisonment, a *kitrug* had developed on the Rebbe's revolution in spreading Yiddishkeit and Chassidus all over the world.

In the days leading up to the trial, the Rebbe intimated that the battle was not merely over precious books, but over “*dem beinkel*” [lit. the seat, i.e. the Rebbe's *nesius* and *dor hashvi'i*].

With the victory of Hei Teves, vindication was granted.

As the Rebbe said in the *sicha* on that afternoon: Although the work of Chabad in spreading Yiddishkeit and Chassidus is vast, now these efforts are to be increased many times fold, in a manner that is incomparable (“באין ערוך”) to anything that was done up until this point.

The Rebbe was reinstating our commitment to the mission of *dor hashvi'i* and feverishly intensifying the efforts to bring Moshiach now ***mammash!***



This Teves edition of the Derher magazine is published as Chassidim around the world prepare for a major milestone: **Yud Shevat—70 Years.**

It is an appropriate time to draw on the lessons and inspiration that the Rebbe illuminated from the story of Hei Teves and recommit ourselves to the *avoda* of *dor hashvi'i*, doing all we can to bring the *geula*.

And as the Rebbe concludes the *maamar Basi Lgani* 5711*:

ונזכה זעהן זיך מיט'ן רבי'ן דא למטה אין א גוף ולמטה מעשרה טפחים,

והוא יגאלנו.

The Editors

יום הבהיר י"ד כסלו ה'תש"פ

שנת השבעים לנשיאות כ"ק אדמו"ר

TZITZIS: IN OR OUT?

The Zohar tells the following episode:

Rebbi Chiyah and Rebbi Yosi were traveling and on their journey they noticed a man wrapped in tzitzis and armed with weapons.

Rebbi Yosi turned to Rebbi Chiyah and said, "This man is either wholly righteous or a fraud."

Rebbi Chiyah replied, "Our sages have taught to judge a man favorably.

"A man who travels, we are taught, should be equipped for prayer, be bearing gifts, and be prepared for battle. We know this from Yaakov, who readied himself to meet Esav with prayer, gifts, and battle. This man has two out of three," said Rebbi Chiyah. "He is wearing tzitzis for prayer and has weapons for battle; if he came this far you don't need to investigate anymore about the third item, gifts."

When the man neared them, they greeted him with "Shalom" but he did not respond.

Rebbi Chiya said, "He is missing one of three, because responding with 'Shalom' is a form of gift."

Rebbi Yosi replied, "Maybe he was in the middle of davening, or reviewing his study."

They continued walking silently in the same direction, until Rebbi Chiya and Rebbi Yosi parted

from the man. Once apart they began talking in learning.

The man then approached them and said, "Shalom."

"What did you think when I did not answer your greeting?" he challenged.

Rebbi Yosi answered, "We thought you were busy with either prayer or study."

The man said, "Hashem should judge you with mercy. I always used to greet people before they greeted me but once it backfired. The man I greeted was a bandit and he attacked me, and I barely escaped. Since then I have vowed never to greet a man unless I am certain of his character.

"When you greeted me, I could not attest to your stature because I did not see any sign of a mitzvah [i.e. I didn't see your tzitzis from the outside]. Only when you began discussing Torah did the road open for me to approach."

The man then delivered a discourse on the verse, "Mizmor l'Asaf, ach tov l'Yisroel."

Harav Levi Yitzchok, in his notes to the Zohar, explains the multiple levels of "shalom" mentioned here (the one of Rebbi Chiya, the one of Rebbi Yosi, and the one they expected to hear from the other traveler).



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



CUSTOM VS. PRINCIPLE

This story teaches us a lesson regarding the Chabad custom to wear our tzitzis hanging out rather than tucked in.

There are two conflicting viewpoints and practices regarding the origin of this custom. My father-in-law, the Rebbe, conducted himself in two different ways at different occasions.

In Kisvei HaArizal, it says tzitzis should be worn inside.

Neither practice is the only absolute correct one, because there are *gedolei Yisroel* on either side of the argument.

There are those who are of the opinion that tzitzis worn outside gives a false pretence of greatness, while others claim that “*ure’isem oso*” means tzitzis need to always be visible.

This story is about *tanaim* and it is proof that even in their time there were already two modes of conduct and both were equally correct. It is only a matter of the situation and conditions that determine the actual behaviour.

DEPENDS ON CONTEXT

Rebbi Chiyah and Rebbi Yosi bore “no sign of a mitzvah” because they held that tzitzis should be inside, and that is why the man suspected them.

The man on the other hand was wrapped in tzitzis, visible to all.

Even when the man explained why he did not trust them, they felt no need to defend themselves for not wearing tzitzis out, like other stories in Zohar where, when challenged, the challenged party explains his position. This is because they did not feel guilty, and quite the opposite, they still maintained that their position was correct.

(Some commentaries say that this episode in Zohar is in conflict with the Arizal, but there is really no need to go that route, because as we explained, each mode of conduct is acceptable on its own. It is the time, place, and custom that causes the change.

The Arizal lived in an entirely different era than the story in Zohar and therefore he could have held differently than “the travelling man.” The time, place, and custom where he was, demanded wearing tzitzis tucked in.)

There is an opinion that Rebbi Chiyah and Rebbi Yosi weren’t wearing any tzitzis at all, because they weren’t wearing any clothing that had four corners on it.

This would still mean that Rebbi Chiyah and Rebbi Yosi did not subscribe to the opinion that tzitzis must always be seen, because they did not have tzitzis at all, and if you are not wearing them, they are certainly

not visible. Therefore they must have held that tzitzis, when worn, should be tucked inside.

HOW WAS IT DONE IN LUBAVITCH?

An illustrative example of how certain practices are encouraged or discouraged depending on circumstances:

There was a *shochet* in Lubavitch who started wearing *kaloshin* (Russian style boots) and was ousted from his position due to the modernity of these boots. We find however that years later the Rebbeim themselves wore *kaloshin*!

The reason is that in the time when the *shochet* wore the *kaloshin*, no G-d fearing Jews wore them. Years later, however, it became the practice of the G-d fearing Jews to wear them and henceforth it became appropriate.

The same thing can be said about how tzitzis should be worn. Everything we mentioned before was only to stimulate Torah discussion, but from a practical perspective, since G-d fearing Jews today wear their tzitzis out, it is not debatable what should be done. In fact one who leaves his tzitzis tucked in, demonstrates that he does not want to be included among the G-d fearing Jews of today. Today Tzitzis should be worn for everyone to see. **T**



לזכות
הת' לוי יצחק שיחי'
לרגל הגיעו לעול מצוות י' טבת התש"פ
נדפס ע"י הוריו
הרה"ת ר' דובער וזוגתו מרת רחל
ומשפחתם שיחי'
גרינבערג
שלוחי כ"ק אדמו"ר,
אוניברסיטת סטנפורד, קאליפורניא



לעבן מיטן רבין



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

טור 'לעבן מיטן 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'

Royal Visit

TEVES 5714*



The following is an excerpt from the diaries of Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky. In an entry from the month of Teves in the year 5714*, he describes a visit the Rebbe made to the Novominsker Rebbe, Harav Yehuda Arye Perlov, to be *menachem avel* him after the passing of his wife.



This past week, on Tuesday, 9 Teves, something interesting happened. It was about four in the afternoon, and I was sitting in the *zal* learning. All of a sudden, Rabbi Hodakov walked in, and told me

that I should follow him. He explained to me that the Rebbe needs to go somewhere, and that I am needed to drive the car. Reb Shmuel Aizik Popack was notified so that he'd have a car ready for me to pick up.

Meanwhile, I had already found out where it was that the Rebbe wanted to go. The wife of the Novominsker Rebbe had just passed away, and the Rebbe wanted to go be *menachem avel*.

I did not really know how to get there, and as I was asking someone for directions, the Rebbe suddenly came out of his room and was ready to leave.

KEHOT PUBLICATION SOCIETY

I had a basic idea of the directions but I didn't know exactly, but the Rebbe was already on his way out of 770 and by now I needed to show the Rebbe which car we were going in. Reb Zalman Gurary, who was going to be coming along, reassured me that he will give me directions.

I opened the door to the front of the car where I thought the Rebbe would sit, but instead, the Rebbe opened the rear door of the car himself, taking a seat in the back.¹

When Reb Zalman arrived, the Rebbe asked that he sit in the back next to him.

Reb Shmuel Levitin who also came along with us, also sat in the back at the Rebbe's request.

Rabbi Hodakov sat next to me in the front seat.

During the ride, Reb Zalman gave the Rebbe a report on a gathering that took place that day in Newark. Apparently, Rashag together with some other Chassidim had attended this meeting as well. It was hard for me to follow the whole conversation, but from what I picked up, the meeting revolved around funding for Kfar Chabad, to buy cows there. In the course of the discussion, names of big philanthropists, such as Mazor and Schlafer came up, and huge sums of money in the range of \$50,000 were mentioned. The Rebbe asked about various details.

(When we arrived back in 770, Rabbi Hodakov told me to forget about everything I had heard in the car...)

When we arrived to the shiva house, I saw Reb Dovid Raskin together with someone else standing on the steps, waiting for us.

The Rebbe asked, "Is this it?"

There was no place to park, so I went out and opened the door for the Rebbe, and after everyone was inside the house I went to park the car somewhere else until we would need it again for the return trip.

After I parked, I came into the house. The Rebbe was sitting opposite the Novominsker Rebbe, conversing and asking him various questions.

The Rebbe inquired about his Rebbetzin's age and her history. When the Novominsker said that she had come to America 30 years earlier because of the pogroms that plagued her town, the Rebbe noted that in general, the climate in Europe at that time was pretty good for the Yidden, in terms of their relationship with many of the local non-Jews, but we see that at the end of the day, Yidden emigrating to America was actually a good thing,

like Yosef said about his exile to Egypt, that it was לפליטה גדולה.

When the Rebbe asked the Novominsker if there are any *chiddushei Torah* of his father (Rabbi Yaakov Perlov) that were printed, he answered that only handwritten copies exist. The Rebbe responded that it would be worthwhile to print them, for then all Yidden, including those who were not present when the *chiddushim* were said, would be able to drink from these fountains.

The Rebbe added that even if there was a specific instruction to not print his *chiddushim*, there is room to say that one shouldn't listen!

The Rebbe continued and explained that it is worth it to print 1,000 *sefarim*, even if only 10 copies will be used!

Afterwards, the Rebbe asked if he has any *sefarim* of his own. When answering that he had already published two *sefarim* "Kol Yehudah" and "Lev Ari," the Rebbe said that he would be glad to receive them, adding that in his hands, the *sefarim* will definitely come to good use.

When it came time for Maariv, they asked the Rebbe if he will daven together with them. The Rebbe responded that he will stay but not daven, saying, "*Ba mir iz andere sedarim*" (meaning that this does not fit with his regular routine - Ed).

After Maariv, the Novominsker asked the Rebbe how an *avel* should conduct himself regarding saying words of Torah in davening, for example "*Eizehu Mekoman*."²

The Rebbe answered him that when the Friediker Rebbe was an *avel*, he would say all those parts of davening which are parts of Torah, such as "*Pitum Haketores*," "*Eizehu Mekoman*," "*Tana Devei Eliyahu*," etc. but quietly. And then someone else would finish off those sections out loud.³

On a side note, when the Rebbe mentioned that he would like to receive the *sefarim*, the *gabbai* of the Novominsker Rebbe commented that קיחה—receiving has to be with money. The Rebbe looked at him with a look of surprise, but continued speaking with the Novominsker. Afterwards, as everyone was leaving to another room for Maariv, the Rebbe turned to the *gabbai* and told him, "You mentioned earlier that buying must be with money. Certainly you know that Efron said the same thing, and he received a punishment for that. A *vov* was taken out of his name in Torah..."⁴ The *gabbai*, regretting his comment earlier, approached the

Rebbe after Maariv, and asked for *mechila* from the Rebbe.

The Rebbe asked for his name and his mother's name, and afterwards started to be *melamed zechus* on him, saying that this is the preciousness of a Yid: Whenever he has a chance to quote a Gemara, he can't hold himself back, and even interrupts a conversation in order to do so.

At the end of the visit, when we went outside, I showed the Rebbe the car. Reb Zalman tried to squeeze himself into the front of the car, between me and Rabbi Hodakov but the Rebbe stopped him, "The driver won't be able to turn the wheel..." the Rebbe said. Reb Zalman went to the back of the car, and the Rebbe said with a smile, "He [Reb Zalman] probably wants to be the driver himself..."

During the ride back, the Rebbe commented, "Ah! 30 years in America..." The Rebbe also said about the Novominsker Rebbe, "It is apparent on him that he's 'a varemer Yid' [a warm Jew]." The

Rebbe then turned to Reb Zalman and asked him if this that the Novominsker was wearing a silk coat was only because he's in *aveilus*. Reb Zalman answered that there's a *minhag* of many Admorim to wear silk the whole year round, without a *chashash* of *shaatnez*.

The conversation then turned to the obligation to wear tzitzis on a silk garment.⁵

When we arrived back in 770, the Rebbe left the car and said to me in Yiddish, "A *dank* [thank you]," and then repeated, "A *dank*, Krinsky." **T**

1. The Rebbe would only sit in the front of the car when driving to and from the Ohel.
2. An *avel* is not allowed to learn words of Torah during the week of *shiva*.
3. See Reshimas Hayoman p. 413. Toras Menachem v. 41 p. 44.
4. Rashi Chayei Sara, 23:16.
5. Many years later, in 5750, the Rebbe began wearing silk all year.



8 ADAR 5715, JEM 103314

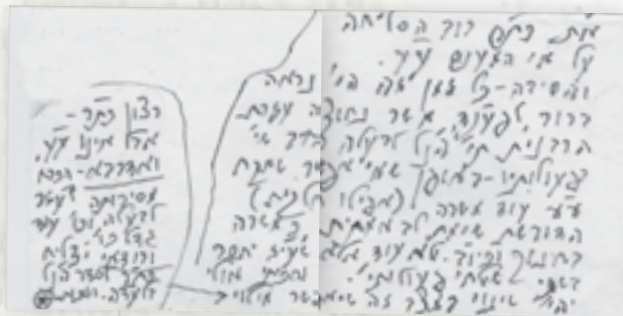


כתב יד קודש

לע"נ
אבינו הרה"ח הרה"ת
ר' יוסף מנחם מענדל ב"ר יצחק ע"ה
ואמנו מרת זיסל דבורה
בת ר' אלי' הכהן ע"ה
טענענבוים
ת'נ'צ'ב'ה'

Fully Engaged

In the following note, the Rebbe responds to a rabbi (not a Lubavitcher) who asked for the shlucha in his city to take a position in the local Jewish school:



My profuse apologies for not responding until now.

The reason [for the delayed response] was: All this while it seemed clear, in my humble opinion, that the Rebbetzin's assistance was needed by her husband, the rabbi, in his activities. It was impossible for her to take on another job (even part-time) which would require her utmost attention, like a job in the field of education and the like. More so, doing this would cause deficiency in both areas of her work.

I waited to see if perhaps there would be a change in the situation, allowing her to do what you requested [i.e. take the job in the educational institution], but alas it has not happened until now. On the contrary, her full commitment to assisting her husband became even more integral over time, etc.

You will certainly be successful in taking care of this [filling the position] without her assistance. The *zechus* of the community will stand in your good stead. The Torah clearly states about a Kohen: "He brought back many from sin, Torah they shall seek from his mouth..."

את כת"ר [= כבוד תורתו] רוב הסליחה
על אי המענה ע"ע [= עד עתה].

והסיבה - כל זמן זה ה' נראה ברור,
לפענ"ד, אשר נחוצה עזרת הרבנית תי
הנ"ל לבעלה הרב ש' בפעולותיו - באופן
שאי אפשר שתקח ע"ע [= על עצמה] עוד
משרה (אפילו חלקית) הדורשת שימת לב
אמתית, כמשרה בחינוך וכיו"ב. ולא עוד
אלא שע"ז [= שעל ידי זה] יחסר בשני
שטחי פעולותי. וחכיתי אולי יה' שינוי
במצב זה שיאפשר מילוי רצון כת"ר -
אבל אינו ע"ע, ואדברבא - הכרח מסירותה
בעזר לבעלה וכו' עוד גדל כו'. ובודאי
יצליח כת"ר לסדר הנ"ל בלעדה. וזכות
הרבים מסייעתו. ומקרא מלא נאמר בכהן:
ורבים השיב מעון ותורה יבקשו מפיהו גו'.

(Teshura Mochkin-Simpson 5779)



THE MAKING OF A CHOSSID PART II

לעילוי נשמת
יעקב בן אייזיק ע"ה
גלב"ע ח' טבת ה'תשע"ז
תנ"צ'ב'ה'

נדפס ע"י בנו
הרה"ת ר' אלכסנדר
וזוגתו מרת חנה ומשפחתם שיחיו
קאלער



Rabbi Yaakov Immanuel Schochet was a unique figure in *dor hashvi*; 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 began 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.

MARRIAGE

After Immanuel completed his studies in yeshiva, he moved to Toronto and became a teacher.

After a few years, the Rebbe began pushing Immanuel and his parents to look into *shidduchim*. When he ultimately decided to travel to England to meet his future wife, he wrote to the Rebbe about it. The *mazkirus* called him with the Rebbe's *bracha*, and he also received a letter from the Rebbe encouraging him to utilize his time in London to meet with various people for the benefit of Lubavitch. On the way to London, he stopped off in New York, where the Rebbe spoke to him about those meetings, and added, with a smile, "you will surely send me a postcard from there."

He met his *kalla* in London, and they decided to get engaged. Immanuel sent a telegram to the Rebbe, and in reply he received a telegram from the Rebbe wishing him mazel tov for the *tnaim*.

In the airport on the way out of London, he suddenly remembered the Rebbe's request to get a postcard. He bought a postcard, together with two bottles of *mashke*, and sent it to the Rebbe. The following week, the Rebbe sent him a lengthy letter giving him *brachos* again for the *shidduch*, thanking him for the postcard and gift, and also adding some notes on articles that he wrote that year.

Rabbi Schochet later related: "At the time, my mother was in the hospital following a heart attack. The Rebbe gave a whole *bracha* for my mother, and wrote very strongly that doctors have permission to *heal*—as it says ורפא ירפא—but they have no permission to predict, and do not mind what they say.

"That year, 5722, I had five or six *yechidusen* and probably a dozen letters—the Rebbe showered me from every direction.

THE REBBE'S LETTER
WISHES MAZAL TOV
TO IMMANUEL ON HIS
ENGAGEMENT, 9 MAR-
CHESHVAN 5722.



A TELEGRAPH FROM THE REBBE WISHING IMMANUEL MAZAL TOV UPON HIS ENGAGEMENT.

"Around Purim, my *kalla* came to visit from London, and we went in to *yechidus* together. On the way to London for the wedding, I stopped off in New York for yet another *yechidus*, which took place on Rosh Chodesh Sivan, right after Mincha. I brought the bottle of *mashke* from my *ufruf*. In the middle of the *yechidus*, the Rebbe asked me to be *mochel* and open a little cabinet in the back of the room and take out his *kos*. He took the cup, filled it up to the top with the *mashke* I brought, and gave it back to me. 'יעצט איז דאס מייןע, דאס הייסט השתתפות'—Now it's mine, and I'm giving it to you for the wedding.' [This

was the Rebbe's participation in his wedding.]

"(Rabbi Leibel Groner later told me that now he understood something that had occurred on Shavuot: The Rebbe had brought a bottle of *mashke* into the farbrengen, and in the middle of the farbrengen he filled up his cup and drank it. That was the *mashke* from that *yechidus*.)"

The Rebbe also opened his drawer and gave Immanuel some bills as a *drasha geshank* for his wedding, as well as a few five dollar bills towards a farbrengen in London.

Now, before the *yechidus*, Immanuel had written to the Rebbe

THE REBBE ADDED, WITH A SMILE, "YOU WILL SURELY SEND ME A POSTCARD FROM THERE."

about the following dilemma: He really wanted the Alter Rebbe's *niggun* to be played by his wedding (especially since it was a *niggun* he had always loved), but no-one would know it there. A recording wouldn't be the same...In fact, the Rebbe told him that it shouldn't be recorded, but instead suggested that he send the notes to the choir and *chazzan* in London, and they can learn it that way; and that's what they did.

Then there was another issue that he was dealing with: A *chosson* would usually daven with the Rebbe's *siddur* before the wedding, but his wedding was overseas. The Rebbe paused for a moment, took out a small *siddur*, and gave it to him. Then he took out another one, for the *kalla*, and blessed him with the traditional *bracha* אויסבעטן אלעס גוט.

The wedding took place on 3 Sivan, and on the way back to Toronto the couple stopped off in New York—two *yechidusen* within a week! The Rebbe gave them many *brachos*.

Immanuel's sisters had been planning to make his *sheva brachos* in New York, but Rabbi Hodakov suggested that he make one in 770. He arranged a simple, short *sheva brachos*; Immanuel *chazzered* from the *maamar* of Shavuot, Reb Yoel Kahn *chazzered* some of the *sichos*, and there was singing.

The Rebbe asked Rabbi Hodakov about the singing—why was there singing before Mincha?—and he told the Rebbe about my *sheva brachos*. The Rebbe remarked that Rabbi Hodakov was "מכוון לדעת גדולים" (his thinking was in line with that of great people) in suggesting that the *sheva brachos* should take place at 770.

THE WRITING CAREER

Several years prior, Immanuel had embarked on what would become a distinguished writing career. It started in 5720, which marked 200 years since the Baal Shem Tov's *histalkus*. He decided to write a biographical sketch about the Baal Shem Tov in the *Yiddishe Journal*, a daily publication in Toronto that had an English section. What he had planned to be a small project encompassing two or three articles turned into twenty.

As the Rebbe received the articles, he sent Immanuel letters encouraging him to keep it up and giving his *haaros* and feedback on them. The Rebbe ultimately told him to publish it in a book, and "Rabbi Israel Baal Shemtov" was published by Merkos in 5721.

After Immanuel got engaged, he began thinking about how he would support his family. At the time, he was teaching in the morning and afternoon, but now a proposition arose in the business of vending machines.

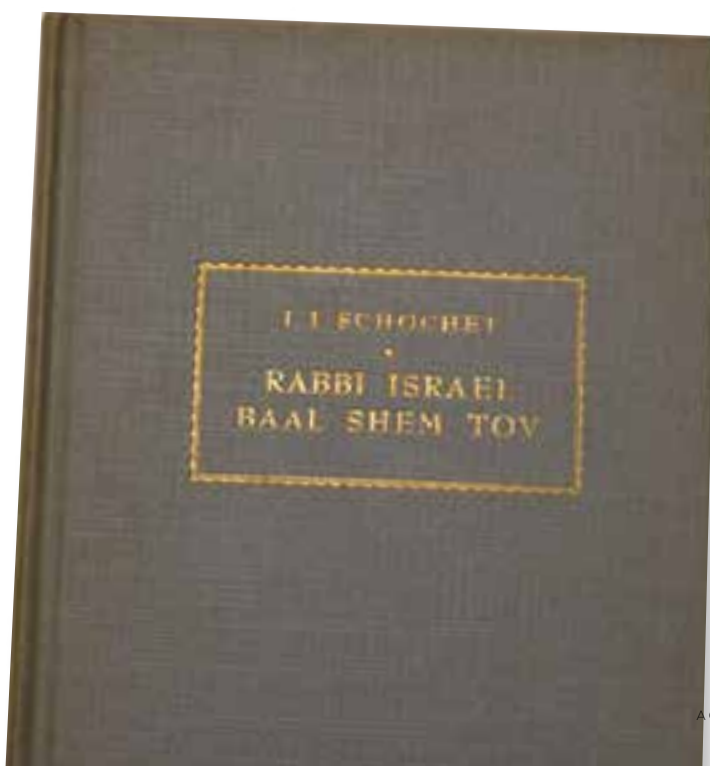
He was thinking about getting involved in this with his brother, and he wrote to the Rebbe asking if this was something he should consider.

"Rabbi Hodakov called me with the Rebbe's answer, and I wrote it down word for word. It was a very long, detailed answer, and it filled over a page. The Rebbe went into the vending machine business in detail—that one must be careful because the mafia is often involved, and other things to look out for—a whole long letter.

"At the bottom, the Rebbe wrote: כל הנ"ל בנוגע לאחי. בנוגע אליו, מהנכון שיקדיש כל זמנו ומרצו לתורה ולמדע, ועל זה בכתב.

This is all regarding your brother. In regards to yourself, you should dedicate all your time and energy towards Torah and science, and [you will receive detailed instructions regarding] all of this in writing.

"Until that point I had perhaps wanted to go to college because I would make double the salary from teaching, but once I got engaged and needed to make a living I no longer *wanted* to go to years of college. But now the Rebbe was instructing me to go. When I *wanted* to go, the Rebbe



IMMANUEL'S FIRST BOOK, A COLLECTION OF HIS ARTICLES ABOUT THE BAAL SHEM TOV THAT APPEARED AS A NEWSPAPER COLUMN.

didn't allow it; now that I *didn't* want to go, the Rebbe was instructing me to.

"But what about making a living? The Rebbe asked me to start working for Merkos—to compose the news bulletins that they would send out; to translate things; to write articles, and more. He gave me a whole list of things. This went on for three years, until I got my B.A."

"THE REBBE REPLIED THAT I MUST TRANSLATE EVERY WORD. YOU CAN NEVER KNOW HOW THE PERSON EXPRESSES HIMSELF AND WHAT'S BOTHERING HIM..."

ON THE REBBE'S SECRETARIAT

A few months later, Rabbi Uriel Tzimmer passed away. In addition to his work as a writer and activist,¹ he had worked on the Rebbe's secretariat translating letters in several languages—incoming letters from people, and the Rebbe's reply to them.

The Rebbe asked Rabbi Schochet to take over this job, even though he would have to work remotely from Toronto.

"I received a whole pack of letters that had piled up since Rabbi Tzimmer had stopped working, and I started reading them. I soon discovered that many of the things people would write to the Rebbe about seemed like irrelevant information, and I asked the Rebbe whether I should write summaries of those parts of those letters instead of translating the whole thing.

"The Rebbe replied that I must translate every word. You can never know how the person expresses himself and what's bothering him, so the entire letter must be translated in detail."

Rabbi Schochet continued in this capacity for several years.

TRANSLATING IGGERES HAKODESH

Throughout this time, the Rebbe was encouraging him to write. Around the year 5724 he was in *yechidus* with his wife, when the Rebbe asked him to translate Iggeres Hakodesh of Tanya.

He related: "I didn't feel like I could do it. Shaar Hayichud—okay. Iggeres Hatshuva—I could handle. But Iggeres Hakodesh, with all its Kabbalistic concepts, is practically impossible to translate. [In several letters of the Iggeres Hakodesh, the Alter Rebbe discusses difficult passages and contradictions in Kabbalistic works. –Ed.] I might sometimes *think* I understand what it's talking about when I learn it in *Chitas*, but there's no way I can articulate it, especially in a translation. For example, *siman chof, Ihu Vichayohi Chad*—try translating such a thing!

"The Rebbe said that nevertheless, I should do it. When I suggested Shaar Hayichud or Iggeres Hatshuva, the Rebbe thought for a minute and said,



JULY 1976, MIKE SLAUHTER/TORONTO STAR

RABBI MENACHEM M. SCHNEERSON
Lubavitch
770 Eastern Parkway
Brooklyn 13, N. Y.
NY 11213-39250

נוחם מענדל שניאורסאהן
ליובאוויטש
770 איסטערן פארקוויי
ברוקלין, נ.י.

ב"ה, ר"ח סיון ה'תשנ"ו
ברוקלין, נ.י.

הו"ח אי"א נו"נ עוסק בצ"צ
כו' הרב יעקב עסנואל שי'

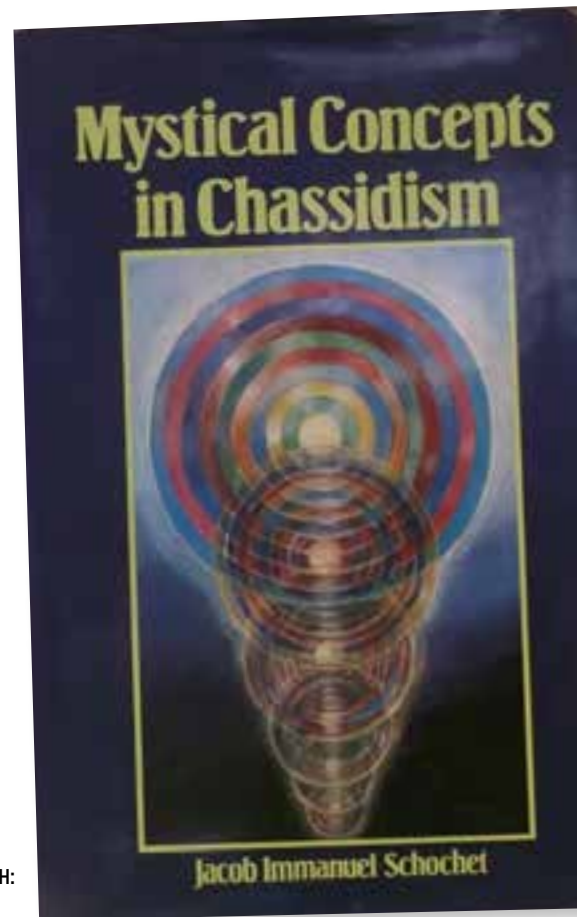
שלום וברכה!
מאשר הנני קבלת מכתבו פיוס ג' והפצו"ב.
ולקראתה חג הטבועות, זמן מתן תורתנו,
הבא עלינו ועל כל ישראל לטובה, הנני בזה
להגיש ברכתי בלשון הרב הוא, כ"ק סו"ח
אדמו"ר זטוקללה"ה נבג"מ זי"ע:

לקבלת התורה בשמחה ובפנימיות.

דעתו של סיון יתכן להגות
בברכה זמג

[Handwritten signature]

IN A LETTER IN WITH SHAVUOS WISHES, 5726, TO REB IMMANUEL, THE REBBE ADDS IN KSAV YAD KODESH:
בברכה שיבוא סיון אגה"ק בשטומ"צ
HAKODESH [TRANSLATION PROJECT] SHOULD BE COMPLETED IN A GOOD AND AUSPICIOUS HOUR.



no, for that he had someone else in mind. I kept arguing—even my wife was shocked that I would argue with the Rebbe. But I really felt that the Rebbe had asked for the impossible, and that I couldn't undertake something that I was unable to do.

"The Rebbe said, חזקה על חבר שאינו (roughly translated: a pious scholar won't cause others to err).

"First one must be a *chaver*!" I protested.

"The Rebbe laughed and said: אז מ'ג'ט א טיטול איז איינס פון צוויי זאכן. אדער מ'איז דאס שוין, אדער מ'האט בכח צו זיין. If you are given a title, that either means you are already holding there, or you have the potential to be at that level.

"Finally, I agreed to try.

"I started working on it. I cannot translate something unless

I understand it—and I cannot understand it without looking up the sources—so I began studying the Kabbalistic sources. Don't ask me how, but somehow I had *durchgekruchen* through the Kisvei HaArizal, and the Pardes, and then I began translating. I got *all involved*—to the extent that I couldn't let it go, sometimes working literally through the night. I couldn't take myself away from it.

"For the first time, I started learning Chassidus. In all my years in yeshiva, I didn't learn even five percent of what I started now.

"I had many questions, and I wrote them to the Rebbe. In reply to my first question, the Rebbe asked me whether I had asked others first. So I asked other people, and quite a few of the questions were resolved, and the rest I asked the Rebbe.

"Now, I realized that instead of explaining the Kabbalistic concepts in the footnotes every time they came up, I needed to write an introduction with the basic explanations of terms. The Rebbe suggested that it should come out as a separate book as well, and he gave it the title, 'Mystical Concepts In Chassidism.'

"The project took me a good two and a half years."

THE MITTELER REBBE'S CHASSIDUS

"Then the Rebbe gave me another project, to write about the Mittlerer Rebbe, and the difference between the Chassidus of the Mittlerer Rebbe and the Alter Rebbe. Now, to write a book like that, you have to learn through all the Mittlerer Rebbe's Chassidus plus all



LEVI FREDIN VIA JEM 6884

IMMANUEL PRESENTS A NEW BOOK TO THE REBBE AFTER A YECHIDUS KLOLIS, 13 SIVAN 5747.

the Alter Rebbe's Chassidus—and to know all the nuances.

"I said that I would try, and the Rebbe told me to ask other Chassidim for help. I approached prominent Chassidim, who were well-versed in Chassidus, but they all said that they didn't know.

"At the next yechidus, I told the Rebbe that no-one knows. The Rebbe laughed and said, *zei veisen takke nisht*, they truly don't know—they aren't trying to avoid you, they actually don't know.

"It was a very interesting *yeichidus*; the Rebbe spoke at length about the Mittler Rebbe, how none of the other Rabbeim published as much as he did in their lifetimes.

"The Rebbe said that there are two incredible things ("*pelles*") about the Mittler Rebbe: The first is that he hardly mentions the Tanya. He discusses all the concepts that are in the Tanya, but he hardly quotes it. The second thing is that his Chassidus is practically not studied—even though he published so much in his lifetime."

That project never came to fruition, but the Rebbe continued giving Rabbi Schochet projects.

THE MAFTEICHOS?

In 5736, the Rebbe told him to put together footnotes and indexes on the *sefarim* of the Baal Shem Tov and the Maggid.

"I didn't enjoy making these indexes, it's mechanical work. It's not my cup of tea. Some people make *mafteichos* by just choosing words that match, but to make a true *mafteach* requires total immersion to know the material and choose what belongs and what doesn't.

"The Baal Shem Tov was relatively easy, they are short *toros*. But the Maggid's *toros* are more extensive and difficult. I started working on the Maggid's *mafteach* in 5736, but it wasn't going well.

"For an entire year I tried—I learned through the Maggid's *sefarim* and all the *sefarim* before—and I was making no progress. But the Rebbe didn't let go. In every letter, every note, every contact from 770, the Rebbe

kept asking about the *mafteichos* for the Maggid.

"Two years passed and the Rebbe kept pushing, but it wasn't going. The Rebbe once wrote me a sharp note: למה זה נוגע אליו אינני יודע, ולמאי נפקא מיני. *Why it's your job—I don't know. But what difference does it make?*

"At one point I called Rabbi Hadakov and told him that if this project has a (spiritual) connection to me, I'm willing to sponsor someone else who's talented in these areas to make it. The answer came back: No. Yet I still couldn't manage to get it done.

At the farbrengen of Shabbos Mevorchim Elul 5737, the Rebbe began talking about the idea that Shabbos Mevorchim Iyar and Shabbos Mevorchim Elul are the two crucial Shabbos Mevorchims of the year: Shabbos Mevorchim Iyar is for the whole summer, and Shabbos Mevorchim Elul is when we *bentch* Elul, which includes Tishrei and the following year. And then he went into a third month, Shabbos Bereishis.



IN PASSIONATE DEBATE WITH MISSIONARIES ON A COLLEGE CAMPUS.

TAKING THE STRAIGHT APPROACH

Rabbi Schochet is famous for debating missionaries and bringing Yidden back to teshuva. He had one yechidus with the Rebbe on the topic, but he refused to reveal what was said. When asked about his perspective of the Rebbe's views on philosophy, he said:

The Rebbe was very straightforward. Even his responses to the so-called contradictions between Torah and science are fairly based on common sense. People sometimes think that by getting involved in sophisticated arguments, you prove your status as a genius; by raising earth-shattering issues.

What could be called revolutionary about the Rebbe's approach was the simplicity; the fact that he avoided the hair splitting and philosophizing, and instead dealt with the issue directly: Let's take things at face value. What does it say and what are you after?

It's a simple approach, but profound in its simplicity. The Rebbe looked at things in a way that answered the question without resorting to complex philosophical arguments that would confuse. That's not to say that the Rebbe was unable to go into these things; there are letters where the Rebbe does go into these sophisticated arguments—but as a response, and sometimes to show the fallacy thereof.

"I felt that the Rebbe was talking to me: Shabbos Mevorchim Iyar and Elul were the two Shabbosim that I would come to the Rebbe every year, religiously. (Shabbos Mevorchim Iyar was around the first time I came to Lubavitch, 26 Nissan, and Shabbos Mevorchim Elul was around my birthday). Being that the Rebbe was

talking about Shabbos Bereishis, I made up my mind on the spot to come to the Rebbe for Shabbos Bereishis as well.

"Then, on Shemini Atzeres 5738, the Rebbe had a heart attack. I was in a dilemma—what's the point of going Shabbos Bereishis if there will be no farbrengen? But I had made up my

mind to go, which is like a *neder*—so I went for Shabbos Bereishis.

"Now, the instructions at the time were that people should continue writing their *duchos* and reports regularly as before. At the time, my practice was to write a *duch* to the Rebbe once a month, so I handed in my *duch* on Friday, Erev Shabbos Bereishis.

"This was a few days after the heart attack, and there were almost no answers from the Rebbe at the time. You couldn't even go into 770 upstairs, the doors were locked! But of the three *maanos* that came from the Rebbe that week, one of them was to me.

"Within an hour I received the answer. It contained a single word: המפתחות? *The mafteichos?*

"At a time like this, that's what the Rebbe was thinking about! That shook me up. I decided that I have to try again. And somehow, after that it suddenly *worked*; what I couldn't complete in three years was done within two months. It came out Yud-Daled Kislev that year, dedicated to the Rebbe's fiftieth wedding anniversary. (Even then, I wasn't happy about it completely, and later, after I had edited all the Maggid's *sefarim*, I reworked it completely, and from a 30 page *mafteach* I made a 200 page *mafteach*. Over time I developed a system in my mind of how to go about it.) I got a big thank you from the Rebbe for that one...

From then on, I added Shabbos Bereishis as a date that I would come in every year.

"The Rebbe always kept on urging me: keep writing, keep writing. He demanded it every time I went by dollars. When a new book came out and I sent it in—he'd give me one dollar for the current *sefer*, and another dollar for the next one. The Rebbe never let off, never let go—always pushing me to keep writing.

“One time, I told all my children, ‘We’re going to the Rebbe, and the Rebbe will *bentch* you.’ Now, at home we *bentch* our children on Friday night, so when my son, who was just before his third birthday, heard the word *bentching*, that’s how he understood it.

“By the *yechidus*, the Rebbe gave a *bracha* to everybody, we were ready to go out and suddenly my son sat down on the floor crying. I didn’t understand what was going on. My wife tried calming him down, and when I asked her what was happening, she said, ‘He says the Rebbe didn’t *bentch* him.’ He expected the Rebbe to put his hands on his head and say ‘*Yevarechecha*’—the way we do it at home. Obviously, that hadn’t happened. The Rebbe asked what was going on, so I told him. I felt embarrassed.

“The Rebbe says דו ווילסט איינפירן—נייע מנהגים אין חב״ד—You want to introduce new *minhagim* in Chabad?’ He called him over, put his hand on his head, and gave him the *bracha* with ‘*Yevarechecha*.’ (The rest of the family had already left the room, and the Rebbe told me not to tell them so that it shouldn’t cause jealousy.) My son was happy, he had received a *bracha meshuleshes* with the Rebbe’s hands on his head...”

EVERY SINGLE CHILD

“I once went by dollars on Sunday holding my grandson Levi. The Rebbe gave him a dollar, looked at me, and said, פארוואס האב איך עס נעכטן נישט געזען, באם פארבריינגען—Why didn’t I see him at the farbrengen yesterday?

“He was less than three years old. I thought the Rebbe was making conversation, so I looked at the Rebbe with a smile. But the Rebbe looked at me again and repeated, איך האב עס נעכטן נישט געזען באם פארבריינגען. I didn’t know what to answer.

“As we went home, I mentioned it to my children. My daughter told me, that’s funny. Normally she would bring him to the farbrengen every shabbos, but that Shabbos he wasn’t feeling well or something, and she didn’t bring him...”

“Can you imagine, you have a few thousand people at the farbrengen, of all ages—a packed house, with so many children. My grandson was a small child. That the Rebbe should know and remember who he sees and who he didn’t...? And it was, in fact, the one Shabbos he wasn’t there.”

A NEW WORLD

Reflecting on the Rebbe’s affect throughout the entire Jewish world,

and indeed the whole world, Rabbi Schochet once shared:

“Throughout the generations, there have been *tzadikim* who had the power to bring the entire world to *teshuva*. Many people came by the Rebbe for dollars without having any connection to or an understanding in Chassidus or the Rebbe. Yet, when these people came into 770 and saw the Rebbe, even before their turn, they often burst out crying—just being in the presence of the *tzadik* had an effect, even on a subconscious level. They *felt* the *kedusha*. Who knows what the aftereffects were, just from being in the presence of the Rebbe.


“The Rebbe quotes in Hayom Yom that every movement of a *tzadik* has an impact. The Shpoler Zeide said that



IMMANUEL RECEIVES KOS SHEL BROCHO WITH ONE OF HIS GRANDCHILDREN, MOTZOEI SHAVUOS 5748.

when he was a child, the Baal Shem Tov once put his hand on his heart—and from then it's still warm. Every movement of a *tzadik* has an impact, and how much more so when he *looks* at you, how much more so when he *speaks* to you—he's focusing on you.

“Thousands of people walked by the Rebbe, but each one felt as if the entire world dissolved around them—it was just the Rebbe and you. The Rebbe concentrated everything on you.

“The Rebbe's impact on the entire world is immense. But it's up to us to finally complete the job and bring the *geula* in actuality.” 

1. See “*Devoted Chossid, Man of the World*,” Derher Sivan 5778.

THE REBBE GAVE HIM A DOLLAR, LOOKED AT ME, AND SAID, “WHY DIDN'T I SEE HIM AT THE FARBRENGEN YESTERDAY?”



YOSSI MELAMED VIA JEM 135018

The Life of a Chossid

Reb Shmuel Michel Treinin

Chossid of: The Rebbe Maharash and the Rebbe Rashab



KEHOT PUBLICATION SOCIETY

REB SHMUEL MICHEL TREININ.

Reb Shmuel Michel Treinin was a wealthy Chossid of the Rebbe Maharash and later, the Rebbe Rashab. He lived in Petersburg, Russia's capital city and was an activist, dealing with government officials.¹ He owned a foundry which produced railroad ties, and employed many thousands of people. The government had granted him permission to build his factory in the environs of Petersburg, and he became one of three noted activists—the others were Reb Menachem Manis Mozheson and Reb Chaim Mashiaev—who used their time, money and influence on behalf of Russia's Yidden.²

He was wise, insightful and determined. Being called a Chossid meant a lot to him: even when among the secular Jewish elite he would unabashedly identify himself as a Chossid, the son of a Chossid. Among non-Jewish officials as well, he was a proud Yid, always ready with a quick-witted reply about anything regarding the Jewish people.³

He was a supporter of all of the Rebbeim's projects, such as the *yeshivos* Tomchei Temimim and Toras Emes. Reb Zalman Havlin asked that a letter be sent to him detailing the positive effect his support had in Yeshivas Toras Emes.⁴

The Frierdiker Rebbe related that Reb Shmuel was very put-together, and had a serious disposition. As a result, he would always ensure that all of his clothing was perfectly buttoned.

Reb Michoel "Der Alter" Bliner once traveled to Petersburg to lobby for a deferral on behalf of a *bochur* who had been conscripted to the Russian army, so that the *bochur* would be able to learn instead. As a polished and well-connected activist, Reb Shmuel Michel accompanied him to his meeting with an official who held sway in this matter.

Their route led them down Petersburg's main thoroughfare, and Reb Michoel's appearance in Petersburg was exactly the same as in Lubavitch—he had just completed one of the preparations for davening mentioned

in Shulchan Aruch, and some of his buttons were undone. Reb Shmuel Michel turned to him and—trying to maintain the other's dignity—said, "Reb Michoel, we're going down the main road—Nevsky Prospect—perhaps you should button your clothing." Reb Michoel turned his gaze to him and said, "*Gevald*, Reb Shmuel Michel, what are you focused on?" (עוואלד ר' שמואל מיכל, אין וואס איר ליגט?)⁵)

The Rebbe Rashab once asked Reb Michoel Der Alter, "What are the needs of a Yid?" Reb Michoel replied, "A plate of soup and some vegetables." The Rebbe then went to Reb Shmuel Michel and asked the same question. Reb Shmuel Michel took out a list and began reading, "A house with ten rooms, a granary, a hay barn, six horses, a winter carriage, a summer carriage," and on and on. The Rebbe Rashab then said to Reb Michoel, "*Petach petach* (fool), listen to what the needs of a Yid are."⁶

During the famous rabbinical conference of 5670* called by the Czarist government in Petersburg, the Rebbe Rashab took a principled stand, calling for *mesiras nefesh* to uphold Torah, mitzvos and *Yiddishe minhagim*, and would not back down. This was despite the fact that the conference had been convened by the government with the intent of weakening traditional Jewish life. For this, the Czarist government immediately arrested the Rebbe Rashab. The efforts of several Chassidim brought about the Rebbe's freedom: Reb Shmuel Gourarie and Reb Shmuel Michel Treinin posted bail, and a certain Mr. Levin, a man of means, pledged his wealth and household as guarantees.⁷

On one of the Rebbe Rashab's visits to Petersburg, Reb Shmuel Michel requested that the Rebbe visit his factory, which the Rebbe agreed to do. They toured the entire factory together, and the Rebbe paid careful attention to every detail. When they had concluded the tour, and the

Rebbe was about to enter the carriage to travel back to the hotel where he was staying, Reb Shmuel Michel asked the Rebbe, "What did you think of the factory and all of its facilities?" The Rebbe answered, "What do you think—why does all of this belong to you? Because I think about you during davening on Rosh Hashanah in Lubavitch."

One of Reb Shmuel Michel's grandchildren once fell ill, and Reb Shmuel Michel wrote a *pan* to the Rebbe Rashab, sending it by post to Lubavitch. He soon received a telegram from the Rebbe asking that he immediately come to Lubavitch for a certain reason. When he arrived and met with the Rebbe, he told the Rebbe about his grandchild's illness, calculating that the letter hadn't yet arrived. The Rebbe answered, "When one sends a *pan*, one is immediately helped."⁸

During one of his *yechidusen* with the Rebbe, Reb Shmuel Michel mentioned that he was spending a lot of money on Lubavitch. The Rebbe replied, "Because of this, I have you in mind."

In general, Reb Shmuel was always punctual in his travels, to the point that instead of waiting for the coach from Lubavitch to fill with passengers, he would pay the coachman for the entire coach so that it would leave on time. Despite this, he once arrived at the train station to find that the train had departed moments before. Trains would only come twice a day, and this meant a considerable delay at the station. Reb Shmuel Michel was quite perturbed, until he later found out that the train he had missed was in a terrible accident, in which there were numerous fatalities. He then understood the Rebbe's words.⁹

During the difficult years of World War I, Reb Shmuel Michel headed a committee that was formed to help the many Jewish refugees, and he was often involved in obtaining draft deferrals for *rabbonim* and *shochtim*.¹⁰ He was one of five Chassidim that Rebbetzin Shterna Sarah consulted with as to whether the Rebbe Rashab should leave Lubavitch during the war.¹¹

Reb Shmuel Michel was very wealthy during the rule of the Czar. When the Communist revolution broke out and

the government nationalized everybody's property, they seized his factories and businesses and he was left poverty-stricken and alone, as his children had fled to France. It was only thanks to Reb Shmuel Nimoytin that he managed to save a large quantity of gold, hidden in the Nimoytins' home.

He was old, broken, and alone, and he asked Reb Shmuel for a corner of the house where he could rest his head. Thus, he lived with them until the end of his life. When the Frieddiker Rebbe would travel to Petersburg for matters relevant to the Jewish community at large, at first as his father's emissary and then as the acting *menahel* of Tomchei Tmimim and as Rebbe, he would go to the Nimoytins' to visit Reb Shmuel Michel. He would say, "I came to visit my grandfather's Chossid."

One time, when the Frieddiker Rebbe visited Reb Shmuel Michel, the children took all the chairs in the house and lined them up and played "train." Some children took pots and banged on them to indicate that the train was leaving. The children had a wonderful time and the noise increased by the minute. Reb Shmuel Michel was an old man and he couldn't bear the racket. He yelled at the children to stop the noise, but the children, being typical children, continued to play noisily. When the Rebbe visited him, Reb Shmuel Michel couldn't concentrate and he got up, went over to the children, and said angrily, "You *shkatzim*! Calm down! The Rebbe is here, have some respect!"

When the Rebbe heard this, he said to Reb Shmuel Michel, "You are my grandfather's Chossid and it is not befitting for you to call Jewish children "*shkatzim*." The Rebbe took candies out of his pocket for each child."¹² **7**

1. Toras Menachem vol. 14 p. 193.
2. Toldos Chabad B'Peterburg p. 33.
3. Otzar Sippurei Chabad vol. 7 p. 308.
4. Hamashpia Havlin p. 76.
5. Toras Menachem vol. 14 p. 193.
6. Teshurah of the Bar Mitzvah of Yehudah Prus p. 50.
7. Otzar Sippurei Chabad vol. 9 p. 302.
8. Shmuos Vesippurim vol. 1 p. 116.
9. Likkutei Sippurim - Chaim Mordechai Perlow p. 283.
10. Toldos Chabad B'Peterburg pp. 91-92.
11. Reshimos Devarim (New Edition) p. 366.
12. Toldos Chabad B'Peterburg p.106.



KFAR CHABAD MAGAZINE

לזכות שלוחי כ"ק אדמו"ר
למדינת אריזאנא, ובכל אתר ואתר

נדפס ע"י
הרה"ת ר' חיים שניאור זלמן
וזוגתו מרת צפורה חי'
ומשפחתם שיחיו
לברטוב



The Rebbe Is Victorious!

An interview with
Rabbi Yitzchok
Goldsmid

Valley Stream, NY

The yom tov of Hei Teves marks a defining moment in dor hashvi'i and has been joyously celebrated by Chassidim around the world for 33 years. The Federal court's ruling in favor of the Rebbe and Agudas Chassidei Chabad was, as the Rebbe explained, indicative of the removal of a heavenly kitrug on the Chabad movement and the Rebbe's work in spreading Yiddishkeit and Chassidus around the world.

In previous issues the historical and spiritual meaning of the yom tov was covered extensively, along with its relevance in our lives as Chassidim.

In honor of Hei Teves this year, we sat down for a "farbrengen" interview with one of the shluchim who experienced the entire saga as a bochur learning in 770 at the time, sharing with us a feeling of what it was like to live some of these historic moments in the Rebbe's presence.



Let's start from the beginning. The public only found out about the theft of the *sefarim* when the Rebbe spoke about it during the farbrengen of Yud-Beis Tammuz, summer 5745*. Where were you at the time?

When the story broke, I was still in Eretz Yisroel. Of course we heard the Rebbe's words on live hookup, but I can't say I really understood the situation in all its details until later on.

A few months later, I came to New York with the "Kvutza" in Elul 5745*. There was some talk of what was going on, and I began to learn more of the details of the story.

The first time I experienced anything that had to do with the story of the *sefarim* was on 4 Tishrei 5746*. That evening, the Rebbe met

with the lawyers in preparation for the court case. A while later, on 28 Cheshvan, the Rebbe had a *yechidus* with the members of Agudas Chabad. The Rebbe vehemently dismissed the idea of any compromise whatsoever with the opposing side and instead asked them if they were saying Tehillim and fasting to avert this terrible situation. Slowly but surely we began to understand that the issue at hand was not merely a dispute over precious *sefarim* but a heavenly *gezeira* that the Rebbe was confronting.

The first time that I saw how much the whole issue bothered the Rebbe was on Shabbos, Yud Kislev at the farbrengen. In between the *sichos*, Rashag approached the Rebbe and asked about something related to the court case. Although I couldn't hear any part of the conversation, I was able to see very well. The Rebbe was talking passionately and moving his hands up and down. The pain on



the Rebbe's face was so obvious; it hit me then how much this really means to the Rebbe. I never saw the Rebbe as serious as he was during that conversation. Generally, when the Rebbe spoke at farbrengens his hands were under the table. To see the Rebbe so animated and so terribly pained with such intense hand motions made a strong impression on me, and allowed us a glimpse of how critical this issue is.

Then, throughout the month of Kislev, the Rebbe started to push for an increase in *simcha* to combat the "darkness." The Rebbe's call was so forceful and strong, and alongside the pain, the Rebbe exuded an immense sense of *simcha*. We all understood that it was part of the battle against evil.

The truth is, it was a bit difficult to bring ourselves to rejoice. The atmosphere in 770 was raw and at times even somewhat frightening. When we heard that the Rebbe might have to testify in court, everyone realized how serious the situation is and we davened and fasted that such a *chilul Hashem* should not come to be, *chas v'shalom*.

For a full week, we woke up every day at 6:00 in the morning and recited the entire Tehillim. The situation was serious.



A NOTE DATED WINTER 5746 CIRCULATED AMONG THE BOCHURIM ENCOURAGING THEM TO UNDERTAKE HACHLATOS TOVOS IN CONNECTION WITH THE COURT CASE.

But at the same time, we were increasing in *simcha* in every possible way. We farbrenged often. We started singing every time the Rebbe came in and out of shul—something that was not done at all before that time.

When the Rebbe used to go home after Maariv, we often continued the dancing



outside 770 for a while. The Rebbe wanted *simcha* and we were determined to fulfill his wish.

One of the people who had a great impact on us and helped us understand what was going on was our *mashpia*, Reb Shlomo Zarchi. Later, when the court case began, he would go to the court house every day to see and hear the proceedings. He sat with us and had long conversations, explaining how important this is to the Rebbe and how critical the situation is.

Looking back, it feels as though throughout that time, we developed a personal connection with the Rebbe. Living through a period of time watching the Rebbe go to the Ohel every day, and staying there for so long, hours at a time, and coming back so late; all these things made a great impact on us. All we wanted was that whatever the Rebbe wished should be fulfilled and that the Rebbe should be happy with no more pain and *agmas nefesh*.

I remember how anxious we felt on the morning of Yud-Gimmel Kislev, when the court was going to determine whether the Rebbe would have to testify. It felt like Tisha B'Av. The atmosphere was so serious. Then, all of a sudden we received the news that "*Didan*

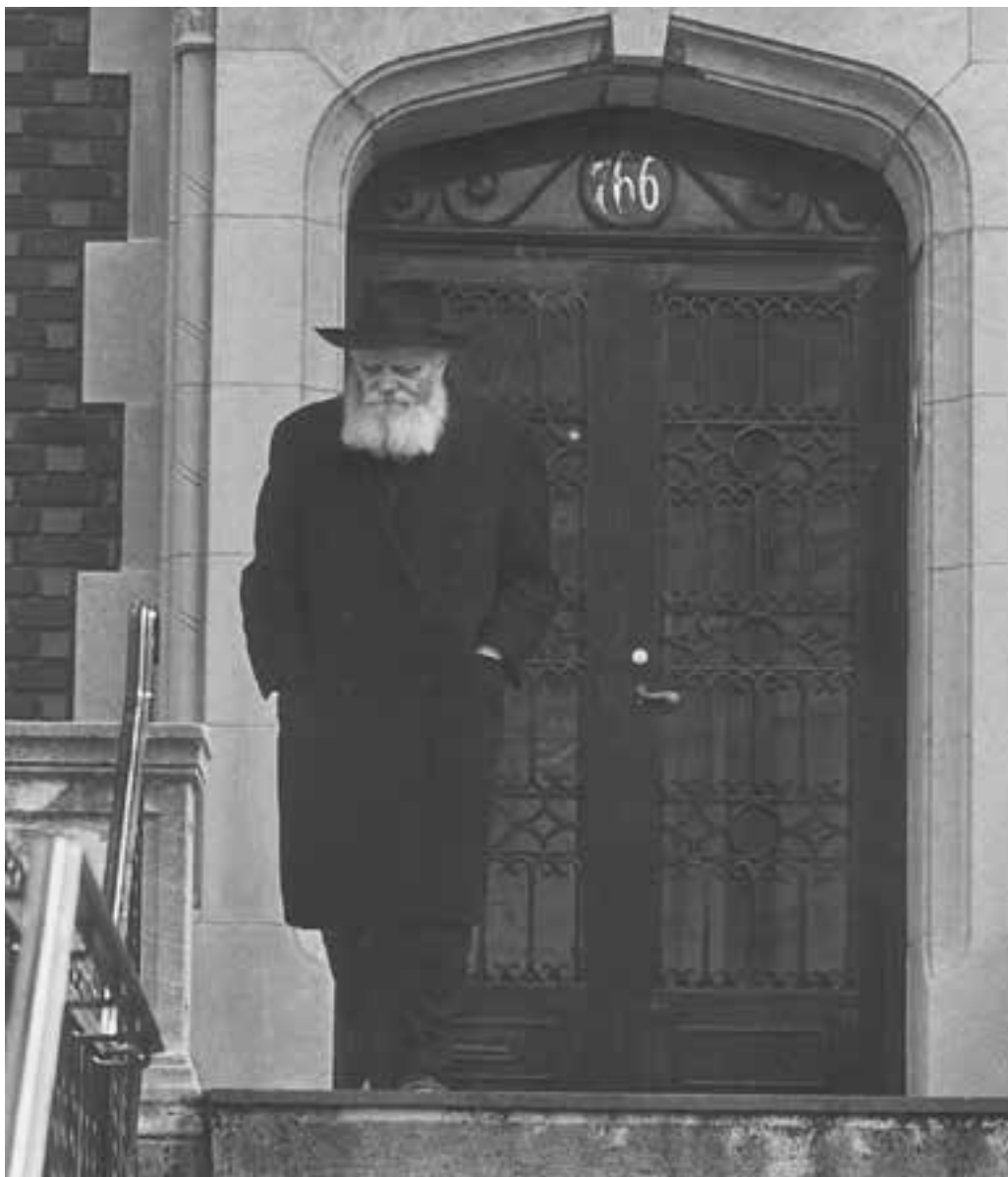
notzach!" The Rebbe would not have to testify! The *simcha* was out of this world!

Then the trial itself began. I went to the court house many times. I didn't understand a word of English, all I could do was sit there and say Tehillim. I knew that it's "*dem Rebbe's a zach*," something very important to the Rebbe. I would watch the venerated Chossid, Rabbi Mentlik standing there with his legendary *kabbalas ol*. It had a deep impression on us.

This is all just my own perspective, a young *bochur* at the time.

As mentioned, that winter the Rebbe was very serious. The Rebbe visited the Ohel every day of the court case and spent many long hours there; much longer than he usually would in the past. But at the same time, the Rebbe demanded an increase in *simcha*. And the Rebbe was the one leading the charge!

On Chanukah, there was a rally for both the children of Tzivos Hashem as well as the elderly members of Kollel Tiferes Zkeinim. The Rebbe repeatedly demanded more *simcha* and then, during the singing of "*Ufaratzta*," the Rebbe started encouraging the singing like we'd never seen before! It was unbelievable! I remember thinking to myself, "*Simchas Torah* has appeared in the middle of Chanukah!"



THE REBBE ON THE STEPS OF THE LIBRARY.

So much so that many years after Gimmel Tammuz, when a lot of the videos of the Rebbe became available, I saw the video of that “*Ufaratzta*” and without knowing what it was, I immediately identified it as the Chanukah rally of 5746*. It was more than 20 years later, but the image was so vivid in my mind; it was incredible!

But nothing could have prepared us for the last two days of Chanukah.

On Shabbos, the seventh day of Chanukah, the Rebbe held a farbrengen, and at the end of the farbrengen he announced that

tonight, on Motzei Shabbos, there would be another farbrengen! Even though it was already arranged that the *mashpi'im* would farbreng, the Rebbe said he’s not freeing them from their obligation; they should farbreng tomorrow morning.

That night, the Rebbe farbrenged for a long time and spoke about the claim of the opposing side that Lubavitch is not active. Although this is completely false, the Rebbe said, we should take it as an indicator to do even more than until now!

The farbrengen ended late, then we sat down for *chazara*, and farbrenged a little bit ourselves.

Then next morning I came to 770, remembering that the Rebbe said there should be a farbrengen. Slowly the crowd started to fill up.

Everyone was in a great *hisorerus*. We all understood that the Rebbe was fighting the evil forces with all these farbrengens and wanted us to be *b'simcha*. All we wanted was for all this pain and *agmas nefesh* of the Rebbe to go away completely with a full *nitzachon*. I remember how the *mashpi'im* Reb Avram Mayorer, Reb Shlomo Zarchi, and others were farbrenging very *shtark*.

In the evening, when the Rebbe came in for Mincha and Maariv, we were singing the *hakafos niggun* very loudly and with great excitement. No one expected anything drastic to happen. Then, all of a sudden, after Maariv, Rabbi Groner announced there would be another farbrengen!

We were shocked.

We were all after a full day of farbrenging, and then this news comes! I remember running to my room to rest a little bit just to be able to concentrate through the Rebbe's *sichos*.

Throughout Chanukah the Rebbe had said that we need to increase in *mitzvot*, and that shlichim should send in photographs of their Chanukah activities. One of the *bochurim* took a public menorah folded up in a bag and traveled to Ellis Island, where he erected the menorah in front of the Statue of Liberty! He just put it up without asking anyone and took photos. It was a natural response to the Rebbe's call. The *bochurim* felt like we just "gotta" do it! The Rebbe wants big things, let's do it big!

The tension must have been intense. Can you tell us what it felt like to finally experience the *nitzachon*?

From when the court case started, all we could think about every day was: When will the *nitzachon* be? We would sing "*Didan Notzach*" and wait for the day.



LIBRARY OF AGUDAS CHASIDEI CHABAD



LIBRARY OF AGUDAS CHASIDEI CHABAD

BOCHURIM ASSEMBLE A MENORAH AT THE STATUE OF LIBERTY.

For me personally, on my own journey, these events had such a great impact. I came to 770 at an interesting time. It was a serious time and one of distress. But it taught me how important the Rebbe's *ratzon* is and how all a Chossid wants is for the Rebbe's wish to be fulfilled.

We waited for a long time. Almost an entire year went by and there was still no word on the verdict.

It so happened that I had to go back to Eretz Yisroel during the month of Tishrei 5747* to rearrange my visa, and I was so afraid that I'd miss being with the Rebbe on the day of the *nitzachon*. I rushed back to New York immediately, as soon as I was able.



KEAR CHABAD MAGAZINE

THE REBBE SAYS A SICHA FOLLOWING MINCHA, HEI TEVES 5747*.

Then it happened.

Hei Teves 5747*, we received the news:
“*Didan Notzach!*”

I remember some of the *bochurim* going around singing “*Rebbe notzach*,” the Rebbe was victorious. That’s the way we felt. We were so happy that the pain and *agmas nefesh* of the Rebbe was finally over and that the Rebbe was happy now. That’s all we had to think about and we were automatically happy.

Then the Rebbe came into the big shul for Mincha and said a *sicha* afterwards.

Many of us were so excited about all the goings on that we didn’t even realize that the Rebbe spoke clearly about the story during the *sicha*. It took time for the concept to sink in.

The Rebbe explained that just like the story of Yosef in that day’s Chumash, who was sent to a terrible place (Mitzrayim) in order to accomplish great things, we too were to utilize the terrible “*tzaar*” that we experienced as an impetus for further growth. Drawing on the story of the Alter Rebbe on Yud-Tes Kislev, the Rebbe said that we should learn from the claim of the opposing side that Chabad is “not-active,” as an indicator that we need to double and redouble our efforts in *hafatzas hamaayanos*, until the results are incomparably greater.

The Rebbe concluded with the *possuk* “וְחַיִּי רוּחַ יַעֲקֹב אֲבִיהֶם”—Yaakov Avinu’s spirit was revived. That was the whole thing! That line summed up what we were all feeling at the time: The Rebbe is happy now. This is what the Yom Tov of Hei Teves is all about.

But I think the most amazing thing happened the next day, when the Rebbe invited everyone to write down their names and send in their petitions for *brachos*. When you think about it now, this is an amazing phenomenon! These were “*osios*” and expressions that we never heard from the Rebbe before. Now we understood that something big is really happening in the spiritual realms! I remember how Reb Yoel Kahn was so excited when he heard this *sicha*, he immediately began saying *l’chaim* and *farbrenging*.

A friend of mine was on the phone with his father, who is not a Lubavitcher, trying to convince him that it’s important to write to the Rebbe now. I told him, “Let me speak to your father...” I took the phone and said, “The Rebbe said now it’s an *eis ratzon*! This is the opportunity of a lifetime! Write to the Rebbe whatever you want, don’t be foolish and pass up on this opportunity!” He said, “Of course I’m going to write!”

The next year, in 5748*, Hei Teves was officially established by the Rebbe as a Yom Tov. Can you tell us a little bit about that?

Indeed. A month before Hei Teves, on Beis Kislev 5748*, the *sefarim* were finally brought back home to 770—after another long struggle in the court of appeals. Unfortunately, many *bochurim* and *anash* were standing outside waiting for the *sefarim* instead of making better use of their time, and when the Rebbe came out to leave for the Ohel he expressed his disappointment. It was extremely painful to see the Rebbe having *agmas nefesh* on a day that should have been a real *simcha*.

After that, many people weren't sure if the Rebbe would want to establish Hei Teves as a Yom Tov or just keep it quiet.

But for us, the *bochurim*, it was certain that Hei Teves needed to be a great Yom Tov.



THE LARGE SIGN POSTED IN CELEBRATION OF THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF HEI TEVES.

That year, Hei Teves fell out on a Shabbos. Just before Shabbos, we hung up a large sign in the big shul at 770, reading: "התועודות חסידים לכבוד. לרגל יום הבהיר ה' טבת-דידן נצח." Many of the elder Chassidim were very upset at us, saying that the Rebbe would not approve of such a thing and that we had made a big mistake.

On Friday night, when the Rebbe left the shul after Maariv, I remember distinctly how the Rebbe looked at the sign on the back wall for a short while.

The next day, when the Rebbe started the *farbrengen* I was quite scared. The Rebbe began by talking about how they were *mefarsem* "didan notzach." I wasn't sure what the Rebbe would say next. I got down from the box I was standing on and started shaking.

But it took only a few moments until I realized that the Rebbe appreciated it. Not only that—no one could have expected it, but almost the entire *farbrengen* was dedicated to the subject of "didan notzach," and the Rebbe even mentioned the *possuk* והימים האלה נזכרים "ונעשים," how this date is recalled and acted upon each and every year, turning it into a real Yom Tov.

The Rebbe explained that the *sefarim* were victorious and we therefore have to look into the *sefarim* to see how to celebrate this day.

In the early *sichos* the Rebbe said just when the story broke, he explained that the *sefarim* are a part of the life of the Rebbe, and that the Chassidim who learn the *sefarim* are an indication that "hu ba'chaim"—the Rebbe himself lives and gives life to all of us.

This is what Hei Teves is all about.

May Hashem help that we will celebrate Hei Teves with the Rebbe, "hu ba'chaim" in a tangible manner as well, *b'gashmiyus l'mata me'asara tefachim*. ①



לזכות
החיילים בצבאות ה'
ישראל זאב שיחי' ניו
אפרים פישל שיחי' בראפמאן
לרגל ה'אפשרעניש'

נדפס ע"י
הרה"ת ר' איסר וזוגתו מרת חי' מושקא
ומשפחתם שיחיו
ניו



Be Grateful!



B”H. 4 Shevat, 5716*.

...In reply to your letter dated in the month of Kislev, the month of *geula*, in which you write about your present situation, and that throughout your entire life you’ve never experienced any goodness, and you ask for a *bracha* for yourself, your wife and your children:

It seems that you don’t realize the contradiction inherent in your letter.

That a man who Hashem has brought together with his wife, and blessed them with children—may they live and be well—should say that he has never experienced goodness in his life: this is the height of ingratitude.

Certainly these words will not negatively impact—G-d forbid—the *brachos* that Hashem has given you until now. But that Hashem is continuing to give you *brachos*—and increasing them—is no reason to continue being an ingrate.

Hundreds and thousands of people *daven* every day to be blessed with children, and they would give everything they have for just one son or daughter; and yet, they have not yet merited to have one—may Hashem bless them with the fulfillment of their hearts’ desires for good, speedily—and you, who have received this *bracha*, and apparently without any extra *davening* for it—don’t recognize the fortune and joy inherent in this, since you write [otherwise] twice in your letter! What’s more, you conclude by saying that you don’t believe that Hashem will help you, for it has been decreed that you will be destitute and downtrodden your entire life.

Obviously, my intention is not to say that your *parnassah* must be minimal and your health poor. Instead, I am bringing to your attention that perhaps the reason for your poverty and ill health is because you don’t recognize at all Hashem’s *bracha* in something much more essential than health or wealth¹: the *bracha* of children that follow in the ways of Hashem. When you don’t appreciate the open and revealed good that Hashem gave you, especially when the ingratitude is to such a shocking extent—to the point where you use the sharp expressions that you wrote in your letter—why is it surprising that Hashem isn’t giving you *brachos* in other areas?

I hope that these few lines of mine will be enough to open your eyes to perceive the situation for what it truly is. When you begin to serve Hashem with true, internal joy, Hashem’s *bracha* will also increase in the areas of health and *parnassah*, as is clear from many sources in Torah, including Zohar, part 2, page 184b.

You certainly have a set time to learn Torah—both *nigleh* and Chassidus. In any case, you should do so going forward. It would also be proper to check your tefillin and the mezuzos in your home. Every weekday, you should give some money to tzedakah.²

[Signed] on behalf of the Rebbe shlita,

Secretary

1. See Hayom Yom 9 Nissan. See also “How to Plan a Family,” Derher Kislev 5780, sections “Why Should We Have Children” and “Olam Haba In Your Lifetime.”

2. Igros Kodesh vol. 12 no. 4090. Likkutei Sichos vol. 11 p. 523.



More Than a Blessing

Reb Gavriel Cagan, surrounded by some other visitors, had come to visit Reb Dovid Tzvi Chein in Chernigov. As they sat around in conversation, Reb Dovid Tzvi turned to one of the visitors and said, "Nu, tell us the story of how your life was saved and the special promise you received from the Rebbe."

The individual began his story:

I live in the city of Darmaluvka, near Nezhin, where I operate a very successful business with many customers and earn a handsome profit. On one occasion I got into a quarrel with a group of non-Jews. The dispute got so heated that they threatened to kill me.

I was too scared to sleep at home that night so I went to a friend's house with the hope that the fire of their anger would cool off by morning. How wrong I was! The rumors that my life was in real danger only got stronger the next day and thus began a harrowing period in my life in which I didn't sleep at home on any

given night. Fear gripped me completely and I fled to Lubavitch to receive a *bracha* from the Rebbe Rashab that I should be saved from my enemies.

This was the first time I was in Lubavitch and it so happened that there were many other guests there as well. When I inquired about having an audience with the Rebbe, Reb Nachman the *gabbai* informed me that there was a long line and I would have to wait my turn. This would be a couple of days. I was slightly uncomfortable about this prospect because I was a complete stranger in town, not knowing anyone. Suddenly I saw a familiar face. It was Reb Menachem Mendel Chein, the rav of

Nezhin. After explaining to him my predicament, he told me not to worry and scurried off.

Just a few moments later, Reb Nachman called me in for a *yechidus* with the Rebbe. It seems that Reb Menachem Mendel had gone directly to Rebbetzin Shterna Sarah to plead my case, and it worked! I shared the details of my situation with the Rebbe and listened carefully as he blessed me that no harm should come my way. This *bracha* was not enough for me so I replied, "Rebbe, I don't want a *bracha*, I need an assurance!" With a smile on his lips, the Rebbe looked at me and exclaimed, "What, you want all your enemies in your town to die?!"

לזכות
הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל
וזוגתו מרת מושקא שיחיו
רפפורט
לרגל יום נישואיהם י"א טבת ה'תשע"פ
נדפס ע"י משפחתם
הרה"ת ר' אברהם שמואל
וזוגתו מרת חי' צפורה
בניהם ובנותיהם
מנחם מענדל, נעכא, יוסף שיחיו
מאן



REB DOVID TZVI CHEIN

At that moment the Rebbe's attendant began ushering me out of the room and when I stood my

ground he began to tug at me to leave. I did not budge. I was scared for my life and was not able to return

home in that state. The Rebbe turned to me again and said, "And if I give you a promise that you will be safe then you won't be afraid anymore?"

"Yes," I replied.

"If so," he continued, "I assure you that you will be spared from your enemies."

A wave of calm tranquility took over my body the moment I heard those words from the Rebbe's holy mouth; I was finally comfortable to return home.

When I arrived back in Darmaluvka, I quickly heard the news about what had befallen my enemies. One individual had been riding his horse along the river bank and he fell into the river and drowned.

Another had died from a different cause. The final group of four ruffians had been caught trying to set the *poritz's* property on fire and were sent to Siberia for eight years for the attempted arson. I was finally able to let out a sigh of relief.

When the eight years were up my fears started to return but I soon realized that those four individuals no longer hated me and they became frequent customers of mine. The Rebbe's promise had indeed been fulfilled to its fullest. ①

(Adapted from *Shmuos V'Sippurim* vol. 1, p. 85)



לזכות
הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' גדלי' שיחי' קארף
לרגל יום הולדתו התשעים
יום א' דחנוכה כ"ה כסלו ה'תש"פ
נדפס ע"י בניו ובנותיו וצאצאיהם שיחיו



SECRECY, STEALTH AND INSPIRATION THE STORY OF EZRAS ACHIM

This is a partial history of Ezras Achim, the institution created to support and enable the existence of Yiddishkeit in the Soviet Union from 5724* until the complete collapse of the Communist regime in the early 5750s*.

A Chassidisher Derher extends a special thank you to the many individuals who were interviewed for this article: Rabbi Zalman Aharon Grossbaum, Rabbi Nosson Gurary, Rabbi Meir Gutnick, Rabbi Shmulik Heber, Rabbi Gedalia Korf, Rabbi Zalman Levertov, Rabbi Yosef Levertov, Rabbi Berel Levertov, Rabbi Shlomo Zuntz and Mrs. Bracha Levertov.



“As soon as he arrived, he called a meeting in our home for a group of men. He rebuked us for living in luxury at a time when our brethren in Russia starved.”

CONTACT THEM?

“A short time after we left the Soviet Union *a”h*,” related Rabbi Moishe Levertov, “we received a letter from my sister asking us to stop writing letters. ‘Father has fallen ill,’ she wrote, hinting that he had been arrested. From that point on, we completely lost contact.”

A large segment of Lubavitcher Chassidim had left Russia on the famous “*eshalons*,” posing as Polish refugees after World War II. However, many of them left behind friends and family members who weren’t as lucky.

For those that remained in Russia, maintaining contact with foreigners was a grave danger. To the Soviet government, any contact with the free world was considered suspicious, and it was even more dangerous for religious Jews who were already under close scrutiny.

“The single communication that we had over several years,” said Reb Moishe, “was in the form of an anonymous note we received in 5710*. ‘Nochum Zalman’s father-in-law [=my father] died on 7 Elul.’ We never found out how that note made it to us.”

The relatives left behind were always at the front of the minds of Chassidim. At each large *farbrengen*, the Rebbe would conclude with a *sicha* about Russian Jewry; *anash* frequently asked the Rebbe for *brachos* and advice on getting their relatives out. But, living on the other side of the world, there was virtually nothing they could do.

Then, a crack opened. In 5724*, Reb Mendel Futerfas was granted an exit visa in a special gesture of the Soviet government, and he arrived in New York to see the Rebbe for Yud-Tes Kislev.

“As soon as he arrived,” Reb Moishe’s wife, Mrs. Bracha Levertov, related to *A Chassidisher Derher*, “he called a meeting in our home for a group of men. He rebuked us for living in luxury at a time when our brethren in Russia starved. I remember looking around at my collection of used furniture, thinking to myself, ‘You call this luxury?’ But compared to the situation in Russia, it was luxurious indeed.”

“Reb Mendel suggested that *anash* in New York send care-packages to the Jews in the Soviet Union,” Reb Moishe related. I recall being very surprised about his suggestion. When we had lived in Russia, even a letter from a foreign country terrified us. But evidently, the situation had changed a bit.”

A small group of *yungeleit* gathered and decided to take action. A *vaad* was formed, including Harav Zalman Shimon Dvorkin, Reb Leibel Motchkin, Reb Moshe Morosow, Reb Moishe Levertov and *ybchl”ch* Reb Gedalia Korf. They named their start-up organization Lishkas Ezras Achim.

The office was housed in Reb Moishe’s basement, and was initially run entirely as a volunteer organization. When operations began to pick up, Reb Shlomo Zuntz was hired to run the day-to-day activities. Later, more people joined the *vaad*. These included: Reb Yisroel Duchman, Reb Shea Pinson, Reb Zelig Katzman, Reb Hirsh Meilach Spalter, Reb Moshe Slonim and others.



Ezras Achim would later grow to be a significant organization, organizing shluchim's entry into Russia and undertaking other dangerous projects. At the outset, however, the goal was very simple: To send packages to the Jews of the Soviet Union so that they could survive another day while maintaining their Yiddishkeit.

"Russia was still a very dangerous place," recalls Reb Gedalia Korf, "and there was a great need for secrecy. Specifically, the Rebbe's involvement needed to stay secret. Therefore, Ezras Achim was never directly or officially associated with the Rebbe, and the Rebbe's constant emphasis was on the importance of secrecy."

"It was easy to find addresses to people in Russia," explained Reb Moishe. "It was actually more difficult to find out who *really* needed help. From the very beginning, we focused on sending packages to the more Torah-observant families, because we knew those families were much more in need. First of all, keeping Shabbos meant to be basically unemployed, because Shabbos was a regular workday. Secondly, kosher food was difficult to come by, and thirdly, those families had many more mouths to feed. Within a short few years, our lists became very extensive, and we had addresses from Samarkand all the way to the region of the Carpathian Mountains."

A BLACK MARKET OPERATION

Sending a single package to a family once every few months seems limited in scope and impact.



LEFT TO RIGHT: RABBI GEDALYA KORF, RABBI LEIBEL MOCHKIN, AND RABBI MOSHE LEVERTOV, THREE OF THE FOUNDING MEMBERS OF EZRAS ACHIM.

However, in Ezras Achim they soon hit upon an idea.

"They would make investigations," explains Rabbi Yosef Levertov, Reb Moishe's son, "about the Russian black market. Instead of sending basic items, they would send items that would fetch a high price on the Russian street, and the proceeds would enable a family to survive for considerable periods of time.

"Parker pens, for example, were a high commodity in Russia. Colorful pens and colorful bed sheets were quite expensive, and in later years, jeans fetched a very high price (foreigners in Russia were often attacked in the street and their jeans jackets robbed from them).

"For every item that was sent into Russia, a 100% tax was levied by the Russian government. Obviously, Ezras Achim footed the bill, so if every package cost about \$60, an additional \$60 was paid to the Communists. The return address would usually be an address with a similar name, so the package would seem to be coming from family."

"In our house, we had an extension to the basement phone which received calls from Russia," says Mrs. Levertov, "and when calls would arrive in the middle of the night, I would often be the one

to pick up. One night, we received a call from one of the Ezras Achim shluchim visiting Russia. He asked me to send him an underwater camera, 'because I like taking pictures during my laps.' At the time, I didn't know what laps were, but once we clarified that issue, I understood that underground cameras would fetch a good price on the market."

"The Rebbe very much approved of the technique of packages," says Rabbi Zuntz. "Sending money directly was illegal, as were some other ideas we had, and could get the Jews in Russia into more trouble, and so the Rebbe always rejected them. The package, on the other hand, was presented as an innocent parcel from a relative, so the receiver wouldn't have any problems from the Russian government.

"In our fundraising too, the Rebbe wanted limited publicity. Even though we were a public organization that conducted public appeals, the Rebbe always ensured that we would be extra careful. We once wanted to obtain a list of addresses in New York and do a massive mailing for a fundraising drive, but the Rebbe rejected the idea, saying, 'כל ספק בכגון דא ישי'—whenever in doubt in

17 SVAN 5746, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEW 272034



BAKING MATZOS IN RUSSIA.



A MIKVEH BEHIND THE IRON CURTAIN.



THE REBBE POURS L'CHAIM FOR REB MENDEL FUTERFAS, SHORTLY AFTER HIS ARRIVAL FROM RUSSIA, CIRCA 5724.

these situations it is preferable to be extra cautious.”

When the Sefer Hashluchim was printed in 5752*, the shluchim

of Ezras Achim (even those already living in Russia) were listed simply as “Ezras Achim - Brooklyn.”

Correspondence with the Rebbe was usually done in writing and through the *mazkirus*. However, there were occasions, Mrs. Levertov relates, where more inconspicuous channels were needed.

“My husband once needed an answer on a delicate topic, on a day that the Rebbe happened to go to *mikveh*. I was the *mikveh* attendant in those years, and I would normally prepare for the Rebbe’s visit. On that occasion, my husband went instead of me and used the opportunity to receive the Rebbe’s answer when he arrived.”

THIS TAKES PRECEDENCE

The costs associated with running the organization were quite extensive, and fundraising was essential to the *mosad’s* survival.

The earliest fundraising attempts were simple appeals in shuls. Members of the *vaad*, such

ARCHIVES OF EZRAS ACHIM

RABBI AHARON GOLDSTEIN

He welcomed us very kindly and gave us his own Mussar hour to launch the campaign, and the Rebbe was very pleased about this.

טובה פעולה אחת מאלף אנחות

Rabbi Berel Levertov relates: "On Ezras Achim stationary, there was a famous quote from the Rebbe Rashab "טובה פעולה אחת מאלף אנחות" - One action is better than a thousand sighs." The idea was that although many people are demonstrating for Russia and expressing their discomfort to the way the Yidden are being treated there, they are not accomplishing much, whereas Ezras Achim is actually doing work to help the Russian Yidden. One time, members of Ezras Achim wrote a duch in which they wrote about how various things were not working out. The Rebbe responded by circling the quote and marked an arrow to where the complaints were."

ARCHIVES OF EZRAS ACHIM

as Reb Gedalia Korf and Reb Moishe Levertov, would walk long distances each Shabbos to speak in a shul, and the simple shul-goers would pledge small donations, such as two-times-*chai* and the like. Later, parlor meetings were arranged, and more sophisticated methods were applied to the fundraising efforts.

"Our work," relates Rabbi Zuntz, "began much before the movement for Soviet Jews became popular in the wider Jewish world in the 5730s* and 40s*. However, we were welcomed in many frum communities outside of Lubavitch. Many religious Jews from Poland had spent time in Russia during World War II, and knew firsthand about the suffering of Jews there and the *mesiras nefesh* of Lubavitcher Chassidim. They always welcomed us with open arms."

One notable story took place in Lakewood's Beis Medrash

Govoha. In addition to the regular parlor meetings that were held in Lakewood as part of the campaigns in schools, Ezras Achim approached the Lakewood Yeshiva itself. Rabbi Zuntz recalls what happened:

"The *mashgiach* there was Reb Nosson Meir Wachtfogel, who was a very *varemer* Yid. He welcomed us very kindly and gave us his own *musar* hour to launch the campaign, and the Rebbe was very pleased about this."

As more and more Yidden started coming out of Russia, they would often help us in the fundraising efforts, joining our meetings with *baalei batim* and sharing firsthand how the packages helped them and their families tremendously when they were still living there. The Rebbe encouraged the new Russian immigrants to take part in these efforts, increasing the reach of Ezras Achim through their very personal accounts. Chassidim like Reb Dovid Okunov and Reb Yosef Nimoytin, who had previously been beneficiaries of Ezras Achim,

were very influential in the fundraising efforts.

The Rebbe saw the work of Ezras Achim as extremely important, as expressed in the following anecdote related by Rabbi Zuntz:

"Two elderly Chassidim, Reb Elya Simpson and Reb Kaddish Romanoff, once planned to make their yearly trip to Chicago, where they would fundraise for *maamad*. When they informed the Rebbe of their plans, the Rebbe instructed them to hold off their trip until Ezras Achim members would return from Chicago, where they were launching a campaign for Russian Jewry.

"The Rebbe said that our work was *pidyon shvuyim mid'oraysa*, and therefore should take precedence. We heard about this *hora'a* at the time, and to us, it was very heartening."

SHOE POLISH

Following the Six-Day War, there was a major awakening among Russian Jewry. The news about the Jewish victory raised the

dormant spark that had flickered for so many years, and soon small study groups were springing up all over the country where young Jews would study Hebrew, learn about Yiddishkeit, and express their hope to move to Eretz Yisrael.

As the years passed, the authorities slightly weakened their grip on the country, allowing for some more contact to take place. Travel between the continents became more common, and members of Ezras Achim decided to make use of the opportunity to send young Chassidim disguised as tourists with items that they so desperately needed.

Reb Gedalia Korf shares:

“We always chose *yungeleit* who could deliver nice *shiurim* and be an inspiration to the local Jews. For this reason, many of our ‘tourists’ were actually shluchim or rabbis who were already established in their cities, such as Rabbi Grunblatt of Argentina, who traveled to Russia twice. Sometimes, the shluchim would travel with their wives, and other times, we would send them with one of our supporters.

“Besides for the regular pairs of shluchim and occasional couples, we periodically sent individuals who specialized in a certain field. For example, we once sent a certain Dr. Kenneth Prager to go deal with the state of medicine in the Jewish community in Russia. Because of his prominent standing, he later became a popular speaker at our parlor meetings with supporters.”



RABBI TZVI GRUNBLATT FARBRENGS WITH LOCALS IN MOSCOW

LIBRARY OF AGUDAS CHASIDEI CHABAD



RABBI HIRSHEL FOGELMAN FARBRENGS AND DANCES WITH YIDDEN IN LENINGRAD, 5742.

LIBRARY OF AGUDAS CHASIDEI CHABAD

In addition to personal messengers, Ezras Achim would send parcels with other individuals traveling to Russia.

As Reb Zalman Aharon Grossbaum, shliach to Ontario, relates:

“When I traveled with Reb Leibel Kaplan to Russia, we brought along a number of *tashmishei kedusha*. Each item seemed innocuous. For example, we had a *milah* knife nestled innocently next to a block of cheese. Besides for the *tashmishei kedusha*, we also brought a 35mm

camera, which was very expensive in those days, and we left it in Russia to be sold on the black market (its proceeds were enough to support a family for a year!). That was the only thing that they paid real attention to; they always took inventory of all the ‘foreign’ items that weren’t available in Russia, and made sure you left the country with them, so on our way out, we claimed that we had lost it.”

Mrs. Levertov shared with us some other examples:

“*Safrus* ink was always stored in a shoe polish container, after one individual had his ink confiscated when he showed up at the border with no fountain-pen to go along with it. One couple once brought a large *chalaf* with a long block of salami, and the wife explained that she liked cutting her salami ‘the long way.’ We would get *tallis katan* material directly from the factories, cut into large pieces that could later be cut into four *tallis katans*, so they looked like tablecloths.

“At the beginning, many of the new *sefarim* we sent were immediately confiscated, so we began to ensure the books looked

old. I would pour coffee and ketchup on the edges, scrunch the pages a bit, and let my babies fool around with them. One fellow told the border guards that his many books were for his university studies, and he needed all of them throughout his trip. The guards allowed them through, but they wrote down how many books he came with, and warned him that he better bring them all back out. He happened to be in Russia over Tisha B’av, so he replaced all his books with the leftover Kinos in shul, and the border guards didn’t pick up on his ruse.

“When the first group of shluchim came to Russia, the

Russian Chassidim asked them to leave behind their tefillin. They obviously did so, and during their return trip, they needed to rush to find tefillin at stopovers. Later, we began sending several pairs with each group. When Reb Hirshel Fogelman and his wife traveled to Russia, for example, we sent them with four pairs of tefillin. Rabbi Fogelman had a whole speech prepared explaining why he needed each pair, but the border guard was having difficulty understanding him and called over his superior. Looking at the four pairs, his superior didn’t see any issue at all. He said, ‘It’s easy,

RABBI SHMUEL HEBER ON SHLICHUS IN RUSSIA, 5744.



IT'S A BOMBEH!

Before their departure, the shluchim would often receive a *maaneh* from the Rebbe about the need for caution, and a clear instruction to exchange the Rebbe’s *shlichus mitzvah* dollars only through legal channels.

“The Rebbe *always* instructed people to exchange money legally,” explains Reb Shmuel Heber, who traveled to Russia several times as a shliach of Ezras Achim. “This was especially important, because the official exchange rate was pegged by the authorities to be 30 kopeks to the dollar, but in reality, a single dollar could fetch one hundred rubles on the black market. Tourists would often try their luck on the street, so the government would set up undercover policemen posing as money changers to lure tourists. It was only because of the Rebbe’s clear-cut instructions that we never attempted to do so.”

Rabbi Heber remembers an instance where he learned how much the Rebbe valued the secrecy. Rabbi Heber’s travel companion wrote up a list of addresses of Russian Jews, making only 3-4 copies, for himself, Ezras Achim, Rabbi Heber (who was due to travel there again) and the Rebbe. To their utter surprise, the Rebbe spoke very sharply about the matter at the next farbrengen, saying that the list endangered all the Yidden there and that it was a *bombeh*, no less. “I was so frightened,” says Rabbi Heber. “As soon as the Rebbe ended the farbrengen I raced home and incinerated my copy.”

Every word was recorded and listened to, and searches were often conducted when visitors were outside of their rooms.

two pairs for the husband and two pairs for his wife...'

"We also acquired a machine to preserve and can meat, and we were thereby able to send kosher meat into Russia as well."

MAGIC SLATE

The shluchim who traveled to Russia had a singular mission: To enliven the spirits of the Jews who were suffering under the oppression of the Communist regime. Beyond this general description, there were a variety of things to be done. Some shluchim delivered *shiurim*, others held farbrengens, and others fulfilled various rabbinic roles, like *siddur kiddushin*.

No matter what their official job was, extreme measures needed to be taken to ensure complete secrecy around their activities. The shluchim always presented themselves as religious Jews and frequented the local shul; after all, being observant wasn't forbidden under Russian law. However, anyone caught teaching or contacting a local group of observant Jews would be placing that entire group in jeopardy (the shluchim themselves, as American citizens, were considered relatively safe; the most the Russian authorities could do was to expel them from the country after interrogating them).

To ensure that tourists wouldn't have too much contact with the locals, they created an extensive system to control them.

"Most shluchim only went to Moscow and Leningrad," relates Rabbi Heber, "because the

Ministry of Tourism didn't allow tourists to visit most cities. There was a system called Intourist, which controlled everything a tourist did. They booked your hotels, they arranged your trips, and they provided the visas which you needed for each individual city. This considerably hampered your ability to do things. As soon as you arrived in the airport, the Intourist guide would meet you and take you to your hotel."

The Intourist hotels were also thoroughly bugged. Every word was recorded and listened to, and searches were often conducted when visitors were outside of their rooms. Whenever they needed to discuss delicate issues, the shluchim would make use of a "magic slate," a children's toy where you can write things down and then immediately erase them by raising the sheet of paper off the board.

In earlier years, visiting private homes wasn't common, because of the consequences the family would

suffer. As the regime lightened its control, shluchim began visiting local families in secret, but always made sure to give a different address to the taxi drivers—several buildings ahead or behind—to cover their trails.

THE DISHWASHER

The shluchim would normally make their presence known by visiting the local shul, such as Marina Roscha in Moscow. But they couldn't just approach anyone.

"On the first day we arrived in 5742*," relates Reb Zalman Levertov, today shliach in Arizona, "someone walked up behind us and whispered a warning not to talk to anyone in shul. It was Reb Mottel der Shochet, one of the legendary members of the Chabad underground in Moscow. A few minutes later, when apparently no informants were present, he returned and asked us, 'How is the Rebbetzin?'"



THE MORE YOU GIVE, THE MORE YOU GET

The following is an excerpt from the Rebbe's *sicha*, at a farbrengen before an Ezras Achim *melaveh malkah*:³

The help that the Yidden here provide for their brethren behind the Iron Curtain pales in comparison to the *hashpa'a* they receive through the *mesiras nefesh* of the Jews there.

Every deed of Torah and mitzvos done by the Yidden there entails *mesiras nefesh*; this situation has lasted over 50 years, and nevertheless, they persevere! The Gemara says⁴ that had Chananya, Mishael and Azarya been tortured for a length of time, who knows if they would have withstood the pressure, yet the Jews in Russia have withstood the pressure for over 50 years!

Moreover: Chananya, Mishael and Azarya were fully knowledgeable in Torah and mitzvos, yet the Jews behind the Iron Curtain did not receive a Jewish education—not them nor their parents... Some of them don't know what a *sefer Torah* is! When someone mentions a *sefer Torah*, they ask, “*Shto takoy sefer Torah*—what is a *sefer Torah*?”

All they know is that their grandmother told them that they are Jewish, and that they need to circumcise their children... And because of this knowledge, that they are Jews, they risk everything they have...

In reality, we receive help from them, because their *mesiras nefesh* is a lesson and *nesinas koach* for us. However, to ensure that this *hashpa'a* isn't “*nahama d'chisufa*, free bread,” we must also help them...

“This was right after the Rebbe's wife had broken her foot, but we hadn't heard about it at all. Somehow, the Jews in Moscow were better informed than us, and that was the most important thing they had on their minds. We were simply blown away when that happened.”

Every encounter with local Yidden was weighed down with the knowledge of a potential run-in with the KGB.

“There was one occasion,” relates Rabbi Heber, “where I gave a class in the home of a *baal*

teshuva who was already under the scrutiny of the KGB. During the class, there was a knock on the door, so they immediately directed me to go into the kitchen and wash the dishes, to make my presence seem innocent. As it turned out, it was the superintendent of the building (who was also an agent of the government, but still not as frightening as an actual KGB visit).”

There were occasions when the shluchim were arrested and sent out of the country. When Reb Yisroel Deren traveled to

Russia with Reb Levi Yitzchak Raskin, he was ‘invited’ into the hotel basement where he was interrogated by a panel of KGB officers who demonstrated that they knew everything he had done throughout his trip. For two days, they were locked in their hotel room, until the American embassy got involved and they were summarily expelled from the country.²

Sometimes, the trips seemed to go well, but the implications didn't end there. When Reb Zalman Levertov and Reb Nosson Gurary's trip to Russia came to a close, their baggage seemed to have gotten lost. In it was also a camera with pictures of their journey and it was delivered only several days later. The Rebbe was informed of this development and about the trip in general, and he said that they should not worry. Several months later, Rabbi Levertov relates, “The Rebbe told Rabbi Yaakov Yehuda Hecht that he was still worried about the implications of our trip...”

One of the most poignant moments of the trips would be when the shluchim would record audio or videos of the Russian Jews speaking directly to the Rebbe. The speakers would go to *mikveh* beforehand, preparing themselves as if they were going into *yechidus*, and they would have an opportunity to say a few words. The video would be recorded at the middle of a cassette, so that if the authorities would watch the beginning of the film, it would seem to be an empty video.

He had lived all his life in locations with a strong Chabad presence. Where did he find his connection? In a lonely fifth floor apartment behind the Iron Curtain

(WLCC would also send videos of the Rebbe to Russia, packaged as brand-new, empty video cassettes.) Back in New York, the Rebbe would personally watch the films.

JOHANNESBURG - PHILADELPHIA - LENINGRAD

In later years, Ezras Achim's activities continued to grow. They paid for the passage of Jews out of Russia at times when it was prohibitively expensive, because the Russian government would charge each individual retroactively for the university education he received in the Soviet Union. For college graduates like

Professor Yirmiyahu Branover, the cost was many thousands of dollars.

"We also built *mikvaos* in the Soviet Union," says Reb Gedalia Korf. "Our first *mikveh* was in Marina Roscha; it took real ingenious efforts to obtain cement to build, but by the time it was finished, the authorities discovered it, and they closed it down. The news reached Washington and it created a diplomatic crisis for them. Eventually they allowed it to be reopened."

As the Soviet Union began to fall, Ezras Achim set the foundation for shlichus in Russia,

sending and supporting the first group of couples to move there in the late 5740s* and early 5750s*. These included Rabbi Berel Lazar, Rabbi Shmuel Kaminetzki and others. Many *bochurim* also traveled all across Russia on behalf of Ezras Achim to assist communities, direct camps and other activities.

With all of their accomplishments, it always paled in their eyes to the stature of the Jews they were assisting. The *mesiras nefesh* of the Russian Jews continued to astound them, even after decades of involvement.



RABBI MOSHE LEVERTOV (CENTER) AND RABBI GEDALYA KORF (LEFT), DIRECTORS OF EZRAS ACHIM, RECEIVE DOLLARS FROM THE REBBE, 3 SIVAN 5750.



“When I traveled to Russia,” relates Reb Nosson Gurary, “I was amazed at the willpower of the Jews we met. The people we met were unbelievably *derhoiben*.

“There was an unbelievable yearning and desire among the Russian Jews to learn and find out what was going on near the Rebbe. Many of these individuals were already being followed by the secret police; we were often warned not to speak out loud and to write instead, because the walls of their homes were bugged. But in the face of all their hardships, they persevered.

“The experience was so powerful, that although we thought we had come to give to them, in the end we received much more.” [The Rebbe himself emphasized this point at a farbrengen before an Ezras Achim fundraiser. [See sidebar]].

On this note, Reb Zalman Aharon Grossbaum shared a fascinating experience from his visit:

“Before Rabbi Kaplan and I traveled to Russia, the Rebbe gave us a bottle of *mashke* at

the farbrengen, and said ‘*S’zol zein bichashai*,’ meaning that we shouldn’t announce the purpose of the *mashkeh* as was customary at the farbrengen.

“After *kriah* on the Monday before we left, we stood near the Rebbe’s door, and he gave Rabbi Kaplan and myself a crisp \$100 bill, instructing us to change it in a legal manner and distribute it as *Chanukah gelt* (it was right before Chanukah). He blessed us that we be able to distribute it in an appropriate manner (it was difficult to know how much to give to each individual, as we never knew who we would meet the next day...).

“We traveled to Moscow, Kiev, and Leningrad. One main point of our mission was to inspect the *mikveh* in Kiev, but what I remember most is the unbelievable *mesiras nefesh* of the Chassidim of Russia. They didn’t just care for their own Yiddishkeit; there was a considerable contingency of Chassidim who actively encouraged other Jews to strengthen their Yiddishkeit, despite the potential repercussions.

“We spent a Shabbos with Reb Yitzchok Kogan in Leningrad.

He had a secret *minyan* in his fifth floor apartment every Friday night, and the participants would enter and leave discreetly, one by one, so as not to attract attention.

“I noticed a young man there, and approached him to open a conversation. I opened in Hebrew, but he didn’t understand. He didn’t understand my Yiddish either. To my shock, he began speaking to me in perfect English! As it turned out, he was a South African who lived in Philadelphia, and he had arrived in the Soviet Union as an exchange student majoring in languages.

“So you found Yiddishkeit through Chabad in South Africa?” I asked.

“No,” he replied.

“So it must have been in Philadelphia,” I said.

“Not there either,” he answered. “In Leningrad, I met Rabbi Kogan, and he brought me to Yiddishkeit.”

“I was floored. He had lived all his life in locations with a strong Chabad presence, and yet no one had reached him there. Where did he find his connection? In a lonely fifth floor apartment behind the Iron Curtain, in a secret *minyan*, where the participants had to quietly enter one by one to ensure nobody noticed...” **1**

1. This was the basic gist of the response. The words may have been slightly different.

2. See *Dyedushkah* pg. 494.

3. Shabbos Tetzaveh 5745.

4. Kesubos 32b.

SAFRUS YESHIVA

Rabbi Meir Hakohen Gutnick relates the following:

In 5746*, I was asked by Ezras Achim to travel to Russia in my capacity as a *shochet* and *sofer*.

There hadn't been a *sofer* in Russia for many years and there was a dire need for various *safrus* issues, including several couples that needed a *get* written for them, and the lack of a *sofer* made it impossible.

However, there was a more audacious mission planned. Ezras Achim wanted me to educate a group of Russian *bochurim* in *safrus*, so they would no longer need to rely on visitors from the free world. I was also to test several youngsters who had studied *shechita*, and give them *kabbalah*.

Before my trip, I received several dollars from the Rebbe together with a *bracha* for the trip. I was briefed by Reb Gedalia Korf about all the necessary precautions and prepared all the necessary things I needed for my mission. I wrapped the parchment around some glass jars of food, and when asked at the airport what it was for, I told them it was to protect the glass from breaking. The ink I told them was for shoe-polish. The *gidin* to sew up tefillin, I said was string, and my *chalaf* to *shecht* chickens was to cut cheese.

When my partner Reb Chaim Dovid Wichnin from Morristown and I arrived at the Moscow airport, the excuses that we gave at the airport control miraculously seemed plausible to them and they didn't see anything amiss with those items, but they confiscated some of the *sefarim* and tapes we had brought.

They then ushered us into a large room in the airport where we were surrounded by a group of soldiers who stood in a circle all around the room. We waited there for many hours. At about 2:00 a.m., a high-ranking official finally walked in, and we were separated into individual rooms to be interrogated. Amongst many questions, they wanted to know the reason for our visit, who sent us and whom we would be visiting. They also asked why we brought cassette tapes, and what were they for. (I had brought a number of Nichoach music cassette tapes and recordings of *shiurim*). They also wanted to know why my partner had some forms which were intended for Jews who wanted to immigrate to Israel. He seemed quite bothered about it. I told him that they can't expect me to know what was in someone else's suitcase.

At the close of the interrogation, we were informed that a decision would be made the next day as to whether or not to send us back to New York. Meanwhile, they took us by car to a building next to the airport where we were placed in a room overnight, with no door handle on the inside of the door, and a small inconspicuous listening device on the ceiling. The next morning, they took us back to the airport, where we met another KGB officer who informed us that we would be allowed to remain as long as we did not do anything "illegal."

After leaving our things in the Metropol hotel, we traveled to the Moscow shul where we met our contact. In a long roundabout manner, I was brought to a house with drawn curtains where a large group of *bochurim*, who had already started

to learn some of the laws of *safrus* weeks before, awaited my arrival. For several weeks, from early morning until late at night, I sat and taught them all the different laws of *safrus*. They had prepared a mountain of old pairs of tefillin and mezuzos, and we went through them together and discussed the various problems found and repaired them when possible. There were some very beautiful *parshius*, a number with the Alter Rebbe's *ksav*. Rabbi Wichnin meanwhile separately gave *shiurim* to the older men on different topics.

We spent several weeks in Moscow and Leningrad, and our unique trip was *baruch Hashem* a success without being bothered by the authorities during our stay. In addition to teaching *safrus*, we arranged the necessary *gitin* for several couples, and gave *kabbalah* for *shechita*.

Upon our return, I gave Reb Binyomin Klein a report and several photographs of our makeshift yeshiva, and he showed them to the Rebbe. Afterwards, he reported to me that the Rebbe was clearly elated and expressed his delight at what he saw, and had spent time inspecting the photos and commenting on them.

This endeavor had been very unique, in that we gave the Russian boys tools to be able to do *safrus* and *shechita* on their own, instead of relying on outside help, and the Rebbe was obviously very pleased about it. Following my trip, other *sofrim* were sent to continue the *safrus* classes.

Some of my students, including the Tamarin brothers and others, are still practicing *sofrim* and *shochtim*.



RABBI MEIR HACHOEN GUTNIK TEACHES SAFRUS TO A GROUP OF RUSSIAN BOCHURIM, 5746.



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

I discussed our circumstance with Rabbi Yisrael Deren, the shliach in Stamford. Empathetic to our pain, he encouraged me to continue having *emunah* and *bitachon* in Hashem that we will certainly have children.

“Hashem wants all of his children to have more children and multiply the Jewish nation,” Rabbi Deren said. “But sometimes it is just not meant to be right now.

“The Rebbe would often explain that great light is preceded by darkness. Right now might feel very dark and scary, but it will all work out.

“Remember, this is not a ‘No’ forever. It is just ‘No’ for now. Hashem wants you to have a beautiful family so you should continue davening for a family.”

We were greatly encouraged by Rabbi Deren’s passionate message and instead of pursuing scientific avenues we started increasing our attention on spiritual methods through davening. As Rosh Hashanah approached we decided that we would only daven for children. Nothing else.

A few days before Rosh Hashanah, Rabbi Deren suggested I go to the Ohel on Erev Rosh Hashanah and daven to Hashem for the blessing of children.

I followed his advice and on Erev Rosh Hashanah, 29 Elul 5778*, I drove to the Ohel. It was packed with thousands of people and I met up with some Lubavitch friends from Stamford.

I walked into the Ohel and poured out my heart in prayer, begging to be blessed with a child this year.

On 3 Sivan 5779*, a little over nine months after I was at the Ohel davening for a healthy child—without any medical

intervention—

it happened. With immense joy and gratitude to Hashem, we were able to announce the birth of a healthy baby boy.

We learned a tremendous amount from our ordeal and have grown in our *emunah* and *bitachon* as a result. We feel compelled to share our experience with others. If there is anyone out there facing similar challenges and would like to speak with us about it, please contact A Chassidisher Derher. **T**

1. For the Rebbe’s view on this treatment, see Shulchan Menachem vol. 6, p. 55.

YOUR STORY

Share your story with A Chassidisher Derher by emailing stories@derher.org.





לע"נ
מרת רחל לאה
בת הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' ניסן ע"ה
נלב"ע כ"ו טבת ה'תשע"ג
ת"נ צ'ב"ה'
נדפס ע"י
משפחתה שיחיו





KIDDUSH LEVANA

It is Motzei Shabbos, shortly after Maariv. The Rebbe washed his hands and left 770 with his *siddur* to the Eastern Parkway service road for Kiddush Levana.

The Rebbe was generally careful to say Kiddush Levana on Motzei Shabbos (even if it was many days after the earliest opportunity in the month to say the *bracha*), and that it should be done in the presence of a *minyan*.





6 CHESHVAN 5740, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 195206



10 TISHREI 5737, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 204423



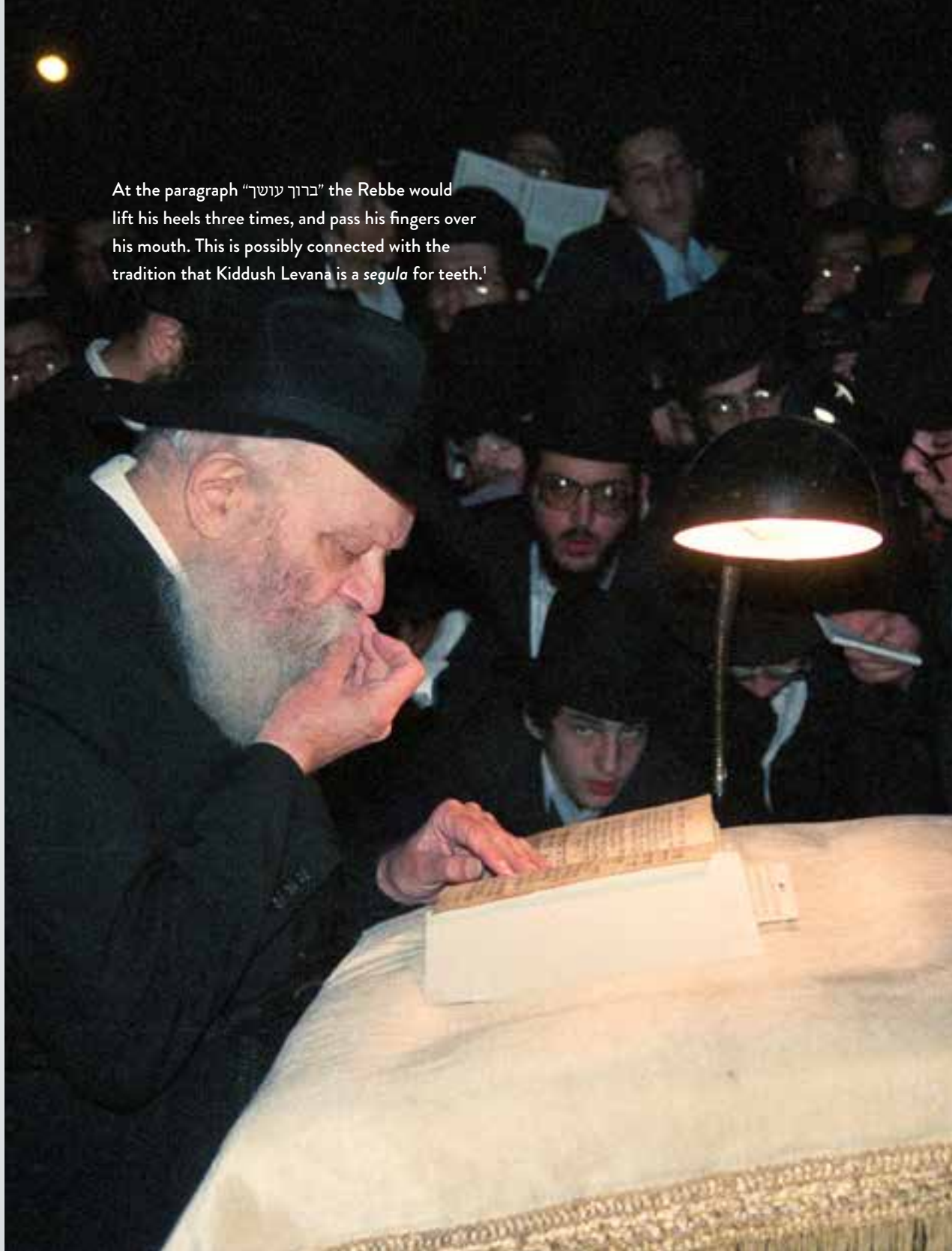
IT TISHREI 5748, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 14959

Before starting, the Rebbe would look up at the moon. After saying “הללוי-ה,” before the *bracha*, the Rebbe would again look up at the moon.

For many years, the Rebbe would stand holding his *siddur* in his hands for Kiddush Levana. Only beginning in 5743* were a *shtender* and lamp set up in advance.



At the paragraph “ברוך עושך” the Rebbe would lift his heels three times, and pass his fingers over his mouth. This is possibly connected with the tradition that Kiddush Levana is a *segula* for teeth.¹



11 TISHREI 5749, LEVI FREDIN VIA JEM 255417

1. See Igros Kodesh vol. 11 p. 150.

For “*Shalom Aleichem*,” the Rebbe would turn to the *mazkirim* and *mashbakim* standing nearby. The Rebbe would first turn to his right, then to his left, and then again to his right.



11 TISHREI 5748, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 10964



8 CHESHVAN 5748, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 20230

The Rebbe recited עלינו at the conclusion of Kiddush Levana.



At the conclusion of Kiddush Levana, the Rebbe reached for the *tallis katan*, and holding the *tzitzis* by the knots would shake them a few times.



11 TAMMUZ 5751, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 184603



Returning to 770, the Rebbe would wish those nearby “A gut voch” (if it was Motzei Shabbos) and “A gut chodesh.”

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.



Can't find 46 beds in the whole New York?

Dear Editors,

In your recent Elul magazine, you published an article about *kvutza* ["A Year with the Rebbe", Issue 85 (162), Elul 5779]. You write about a sharp *sicha* that the Rebbe spoke in 5730*, reprimanding the *hanhala* of the yeshiva in New York for not showing enough interest in the *bochurim*'s well being. It is important to note that this *sicha* was actually said before most of the *bochurim* arrived.

I was one of the *bochurim* in the *kvutza* of 5730*. Until that year, only *bochurim* from the yeshiva in Kfar Chabad were in the *kvutza*, and every year there were maximum 20-25 *bochurim* who came.

That year, for the first time, Toras Emes in Yerushalayim and Tomchei Tmimim in Kiryat Gat also applied to send *bochurim*. All in all, there were 47 *bochurim* who wanted to go.

When the *hanhala* of 770 heard about the amount of *bochurim* that wanted to join the *kvutza*, double the amount that came until then, they let the *hanhala* in Israel know that they cannot accept so many *bochurim*, because they did not have enough room.

The *hanhala* in Israel notified the Rebbe, and the next Shabbos, at the farbrengen of Shabos Mevorchim Nissan, the Rebbe spoke about it very sharply, and said what you printed: That the minister of defense, Moshe Dayan, understands that a *bochur* has to spend a year in the *daled*

amos of *nesi doreinu*, but the only problem is, that in all of New York, enough beds for 46 *bochurim* cannot be found!

The Rebbe also added, that the *hanhala* claims that they are wild *bochurim*, and they can't handle them. The Rebbe continued and said: "If so, the question arises regarding the functioning of the *hanhala* who has *talmidim* for 12 months and they have no *hashpaah* on them!

On Shabbos, after the farbrengen, I met Rabbi Dovid Raskin, who told me that the Rebbe had removed my name from the list of *bochurim* seeking to join the *kvutza*, since I was already in New York and had a bed. Therefore, the Rebbe said at the farbrengen 46 *bochurim*, and not 47!

Right after Shabbos, the *hanhala* of 770 sent a telegram to the *hanhala* in Israel, that all the *bochurim* were accepted and they can come!

Rabbi Yisroel Yosef Hendel
Migdal Ha'emek, Israel



א געהויבענע ענין

Dear Editors,

In the Adar magazine, you published an article about *tzedakah* ["The Power of Money", issue 78 (155)]. In it, you write about the Rebbe's initiative that every home should have a *tzedakah* box.

I have the *zechus* that my *shlichus* revolves around Mivtza Tzedakah for close to fifty years now.

When I started this shlichus, I was in *yechidus* and in my *tzetel*, I wrote to the Rebbe about the work I was doing.

The Rebbe responded (as I wrote down then):

בענין פון פושקעס, עס איז א געהויענע ענין אנגעפאנגען
פון דעם אלטן רבי'ן

”ממשיך זיין אין הפצה פון פושקעס.”

Regarding *pushkas*, it is a great *inyan*, started by the Alter Rebbe. You should continue circulating *pushkas*.”

Yitzchak Mann
Oak Park, Michigan



First Day of Sukkos 5752

Dear Editors,

Thank you so much for your monthly magazines. Every month I look forward to receiving the Derher in the mail.

In the Tishrei magazine, in the article about Sukkos by the Rebbe [Issue 86 (163)] where you write about how the Rebbe watched all the Chassidim shake lulav in 5752*, it says that the line started at 8:15 and ended at 3:15.

In the Sefer Yemei Brachah, which is a *yoman* of the month of Tishrei in 5752* compiled by Eliezer Zaklikovsky, he writes that the line ended at 2:32 and was for 6 hours and 20 minutes. Meaning the line started at 8:12 am. Shacharis began at 3:00.

Rachamim Gopin
Baltimore, Maryland



Kolel in Melbourne

To the editor,

I enjoyed the article about Kolel in the Cheshvan edition [Issue 87 (164)].

In addition to the Rebbe's Kolel established in Crown Heights and the Kolelim established in Eretz Yisroel, I think that it would be worthy to mention the Kolel established by the Rebbe in Melbourne in 5739*.

In the back of Hayom Yom, in the section that enumerates the Rebbe's initiatives and accomplishments in each year, the single entry in the year 5739* is the establishment of the Kolel Avreichim in Melbourne.

When the Rebbe's shliach to Melbourne, Rabbi Yitzchok Dovid Groner, first raised the possibility of opening a Kolel, the Rebbe responded *b'chsav yad kadsho* using the terms from “*Emes veyatziv venachon*,” to describe how important it is to bring this idea to fruition.

In a *yechidus* (which was edited by the Rebbe and printed in the *hosafos* of Likutei Sichos Chelek 21), the Rebbe addressed the first shluchim travelling to start the Kolel. Rabbi Groner, whom the Rebbe described as the living spirit (“*ruach hachaim*”) behind the initiative, was also present together with his rebbetzin. The Rebbe explained the unique shlichus of the Kolel, which he described as the *tafkid hachi naaleh*. The Rebbe also gave a personal *hishtatfus* to each of the families.

Unlike other Kolelim where the focus of the *yungeleit* is to learn for themselves, the Rebbe explained that the Kolel *yungeleit* in Melbourne should also be active as shluchim in spreading *nigleh* and Chassidus to all Jews, connecting the word Kolel to “*kol*”—that it reach and include *kol beis Yisroel*.

When the Kolel commenced with the arrival of the shluchim on Purim, the Rebbe spoke about the establishment of the Kolel in Australia at the Purim farbrengen and connected it with a discussion on the Talmudic concept of *issur kolel*.

The Rebbe's vision in 5739* was far-reaching. To this day, the Kolel has been pivotal in growing the Chabad community and impacting the wider community. In addition to the *shiurei Torah* and *hafatzas hamaayanos* of the Kolel, many of the *yungeleit* became shluchim, rabbonim, *mechanchim* and other *klei kodesh*, as well as producing many *chassidishe baalei batim*.

Since then, the Kolel has been and remains the center of Chassidus and *chassidishe chayus* in Melbourne.

Rabbi Yonason Johnson
Rosh HaKolel of Kolel Menachem
Melbourne, Australia

לזכות
החתן הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל שיחי' חן
והכלה המהוללה מ' רבקה תחי' שטרנברג
לרגל נישואיהם בשעתומ"צ יום א' פרשת ויחי ח' טבת ה'תש"פ
נדפס ע"י
משפחתם שיחיו

לע"נ
הרה"ת ר' צבי הירש ע"ה בן הרה"ת הרה"ח ר' יהודא ע"ה
חיטריק
נלב"ע ב' טבת ה'תשע"ג
נדפס ע"י חתנו ובתו הרה"ת ר' אליעזר גרשון
וזוגתו מרת קיילא רחל שיחיו
שם טוב

לזכות
הת' לוי יצחק שיחי'
לרגל הגיעו לעול מצוות כ"ב כסלו ה'תש"פ
נדפס ע"י הוריו
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לזרוב

לזכות
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להצלחה רבה ומופלגה במילוי שליחותם הק'

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החיילת בצבאות ה'
שיינא תחי'
לרגל יום הולדתה ג' טבת
נדפס ע"י הוריה
הרה"ת ר' חיים אפרים וזוגתו מרת ח' מושקא ומשפחתם שיחיו
גאלדשטיין

נדפס ע"י
הרה"ת ר' יואל וזוגתו מרת ריקל ומשפחתם שיחיו ניו
לרגל הולדת בנם שיחי'
ח"י מר חשון ה'תש"פ

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לוי יצחק, ישראל ארי' לייב שיחיו
שם טוב
שיגדלו להיות חסידים ומקושרים לכ"ק אדמו"ר
נדפס ע"י הוריהם
הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל וזוגתו מרת רבקה שיחיו
שם טוב

לזכות
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הדסה רחל, דוד יעקב, מנחם מענדל,
יוסף יצחק, חנה אדל, דובער, ישראל שיחיו
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לזכות
הרה"ת ר' משה וזוגתו מרת יהודית
ומשפחתם שיחיו
שטיינער

מוקדש לזכות
שלוחי כ"ק אדמו"ר זי"ע
בכל אתר ואתר ובני ביתם שיחיו
ע"י
הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל וזוגתו מרת רבקה
בנם ובנותיהם
מאיר שלמה, ח' מושקא, זעלדא רחל שיחיו
מינקאוויץ

לע"נ
הת' מאיר יעקב יוסף ע"ה
בן יבלחט"א ר' מנחם מענדל שי' הלל
נלב"ע כ"ז טבת ה'תשע"ז
ת"נ צ"ב ה'

נדפס ע"י אחיו ומשפחתו
הרה"ת ר' חיים ליב וזוגתו מרת חנה מיכלא ומשפחתם שיחיו
הלל

מוקדש לזכות
חי' מושקא, אסתר מרים, חנה, ישראל ארי' לייב שיחיו
להצלחה מרובה בכל,
ולחיוזוק התקשרותם לכ"ק אדמו"ר
נדפס ע"י הוריהם
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טרקסלער

לזכות
השלוחים, החיילים בצבאות ה'
בלומא, חיים נתן נטע, מירל, חי' מושקא, חנה שיחיו
נדפס ע"י הוריהם
הרה"ת ר' משה דוד וזוגתו מרת רחל לאה שיחיו

נדפס ע"י ולזכות
הרה"ת ר' דוד משה
וזוגתו מרת מושקא
ובניהם אליהו גבריאל, ויהודה לייב, שיחיו
חזן

MAZAL TOV TO
BELLA SANDMAN AND SHNEUR CHRIQI
ON THEIR UPCOMING WEDDING.
MAY THEY BE A SOURCE OF NACHAS TO
THE **REBBE** AND THEIR FAMILIES.

לעילוי נשמות
ר' מרדכי בן הרה"ח ר' אשר ע"ה קרביצקי
נלב"ע ב' דר"ח חשוון ה'תשע"ט
תנ"צ'ב'ה'
נדפס ע"י משפחתו שיחיו

לזכות
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לרגל יום הולדתו כ"ח כסלו
ולזכות בנו הת' יעקב יצחק הלוי שיחי'
לרגל יום הולדתו ב' טבת
ולע"נ
הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' זאב יוסף ע"ה בן יבלחט"א ר' שלום שיחי'
וזוגתו מרת רחל בת ר' מרדכי ע"ה סיימאנס
נלב"ע יא טבת ה'תשס"ח
תנ"צ'ב'ה'
נדפס ע"י משפחתם שיחיו

לזכות
הרה"ת ר' יוסף מנחם וזוגתו מרת חנה
בניהם ובתם
מענדל, לוי יצחק, מושקא
שיחיו
קאמנע
נדפס ע"י הוריהם
הרה"ת ר' טוביה וזוגתו מרת חי' ליבא שיחיו
טעלדאן

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

בקשר עם יום הבהיר ה' טבת

נדפס על ידי ולזכות

הרה"ת ר' ירחמיאל זוגתו מרת רבקה לאה
ויוצאי חלציהם

הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל זוגתו מרת שרה עטא
מרת חנה העניא ובעלה הרה"ת ר' אליהו יעקב שיחיו אנדרוסיער
שיחיו לאריכות ימים ושנים טובות ובריאות
יעקבסאן

לע"נ

הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' שרגא פייוול ע"ה
בן הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' רפאל אליעזר ז"ל שו"ב
נלב"ע י"ב ניסן ה'תשס"א
ואשתו מרת יהודית ע"ה
בת הרה"ג הרה"ת ר' אברהם ברוך ז"ל
נלב"ע ה' טבת ה'תשע"ו, דידן נצח
ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

נדפס ע"י בנם הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל
וזוגתו מרת חנה שיחיו
ראקסין

לע"נ

הילדה התמימה אלטא מינא ע"ה
בת יבלחט"א הרה"ח הרה"ת
ר' ישכר שלמה ומרת שיינא שיחיו
טייכטל
תלמידת בית רבקה חברה בצבאות ה'
זכתה לקירוב מיוחד מכ"ק אדמו"ר נשיא דורנו
נקטפה בדמי ימיה ביום ש"ק,
פרשת ואלה שמות כ"ג טבת ה'תש"נ
ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

נדפס ע"י משפחתה שיחיו

לזכות

החיילים בצבאות ה'
מרדכי זאב שיחי'

לרגל ה'אפשרעניש' שלו יום הבהיר ה' טבת ה'תש"פ
ולזכות אחיו

מנחם מענדל שיחי'
לרגל יום הולדתו י"ג טבת

נדפס ע"י הוריהם
הרה"ת ר' יצחק דובער
וזוגתו מרת שיינא מושקא ומשפחתם שיחיו
גלאסנער

IN HONOR OF
THE DEVOTED STAFF OF
A CHASSIDISHER DERHER
BY THE LOYAL READERS AT
CHABAD OF GREATER HARTFORD
WEST HARTFORD, CT

מוקדש לחיזוק ההתקשרות לכ"ק אדמו"ר נשיא דורנו

נדפס ע"י ולזכות

הרה"ת ר' לייביש משה זוגתו מרת רינה
ילדיהם קיילא באשא, בנציון דוד, אליהו איסר, רבקה שיינדל אלטא שיחיו
גולדהירש

A Chassidisher Derher
Vaad Talmidei Hatmimim



770 Eastern Parkway
Brooklyn, New York 11213