

Derher

A Chassidisher

א חסידישער דערהער

"אני ה' רופאך"

THE REBBE'S APPROACH TO
PHYSICAL HEALTH AND MEDICINE

Reb Volf Greenglass

CHOSSID, MASHPIA OF
TOMCHEI TEMIMIM, TOMIM

Six Hundred Thousand Souls

THE SEFER TORAH HAKLOLI



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Writing begins for the Sefer Torah for Beis Rivkah, 6 Tishrei 5742.

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

ולע"נ זקנינו הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' ישראל
בן הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' שניאור זלמן ע"ה דוכמאן
נלב"ע ו' אייר ה'תשמ"ט
ת"נ צ"ב ה'

Derher **Editorial**

As Yidden in general, who wish to connect with the *nossi hador* in every possible way, and especially as Chassidim who wish to have a regular connection with the Rebbe, we recite the Rebbe's *kapitel* in Tehillim daily.

Just last month, we began saying a new, famous and special *kapitel* of קיט. Of course, the Rebbe's *kapitel* is something we live with all year. The Rebbe would often include beautiful explanations on the *pesukim* of each year's *kapitel* in the *sichos* and letters throughout the entire year, and the *niggunim* composed for the words of the *kapitel* were sung at almost every farbrengen.

The *minhag* to recite the Rebbe's *kapitel* every day after davening can be found in a note that the Rebbe wrote on the Frierdiker Rebbe's *reshima*, explaining that reciting the *kapitel* (as well as reciting "הרחמן הוא יברך את אדמו"ר" in bentching) is a daily expression of love and connection with the Rebbe.¹

In many letters, the Rebbe instructs that people in need of a *yeshua* should recite the Rebbe's *kapitel* every day as a channel to receive the Rebbe's *bracha* in all that they need.²

Additionally, the Frierdiker Rebbe taught that according to the Baal Shem Tov, a person should learn a section of his *kapitel* every month on Rosh Chodesh.

In this spirit, A Chassidisher Derher is pleased to share a special edition of the Rebbe's *kapitel* with our readers. This booklet is dedicated

לזכות השלוחים
יצחק בן שיינא ואסתר בת רחל ומשפחתם שיחיו
דוד בן שיינא ופערל גאלדא בת לאה ומשפחתם שיחיו

It is appropriate to take a deeper look at one of the *pesukim* in this year's *kapitel*, especially given its special connection to Lag B'Omer, celebrated this month.

It is the *posuk* of "גל עיני ואביטה נפלאות מתורתך"—uncover my eyes and I shall see the hidden parts of your Torah..."

Chassidus explains that the word "גל" shares the same letters as "לג" [בעומר]; alluding to Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai, who taught the secrets of the Torah.



The Zohar relates that Rashbi, whose *yom hilula* we commemorate on Lag B'Omer, was accustomed to receiving extraordinary praise from his students. They said of him that when the Torah states פני האדון השם—the face of the Master, Hashem, this refers to Rashbi.³ Rabbi Yehuda would refer to Rashbi as “Shabbos,” and many other words of praise.

“How is this possible?” the Rebbe asks in a *maamar*. How is this concurrent with the *midda* of *bittul* we expect of great *tzaddikim*?

A similar question could be asked of Moshe Rabbeinu. On one hand, we are told he was the most humble person to have ever lived. But on the other, we find Moshe Rabbeinu saying to Pharaoh, “התפאר עלי, למתי אעתיך”—Boast of your [perceived superiority] over me [that you think I cannot perform this miracle]...” It seems like Moshe Rabbeinu, the most humble of all humans whose very existence was all about *bittul*—is almost bragging in this instance!

The answer, says the Rebbe, is quite simple:

Yes, these *tzaddikim* are totally *bottul* to Hashem. Rashbi himself says, “I am tied to Him with a single knot...” For this reason, the praises showered upon them are not their own. They further glorify and exalt the name of Hashem. All the wonders and miracles that the *tzaddikim* performed, including all of our Rabbeim, were all done as a way of revealing *Elokus* in this world. Great *tzaddikim* and *nesi'im* have no existence of their own—everything about them is revealing *Elokus* and allowing for “יתגדל ויקדש שמי רבא”.

Hence, all these praises said on the *tzaddikim* are merely a way with which to reveal *Elokus*. Likewise, when we retell stories of *mofsim*—wonders and miracles performed by these *tzaddikim*—we ourselves feel closer to *Elokus* as well.

Rashbi was the first person to teach and record *p'nimius haTorah*, and our Rabbeim are a direct continuation in line.

In the *maamar*, the Rebbe actually enumerates all the Rabbeim: the Baal Shem Tov, the Maggid, the Alter Rebbe, the Mittler Rebbe, the Tzemach Tzedek, the Rebbe Maharash, the Rebbe Rashab, and the Friediker Rebbe. All of them did not possess any sense of self whatsoever; their entire existence was *Elokus*.

Our Rabbeim, and especially our Rebbe, never had any agenda other than revealing, teaching, and spreading *Elokus* in this world. The stories of *mofsim* of our Rabbeim actually bring us closer to feeling and living *Elokus* and to Torah and mitzvos in a manner that transcends and breaks through all perceived limitations.⁴

The lesson is clear:

When we connect to our Rabbeim, especially by learning the נפלאות מתורתך—the innermost parts of the Torah as taught in Chassidus—we are able to reach beyond the physical world and connect with Hashem Himself, and we can reveal this G-dliness in the world around us. This will bring us to the ultimate revelation, in the time of Moshiach when: מלאה הארץ דעה את ה' כמים לים מכסים; we'll be reunited with the Rebbe and study the *Torah chadasha* from Moshiach tzidkeinu!

A Chassidisher Derher

יום הבהיר י"א ניסן ה'תש"פ
שבעים שנה לנשיאות כ"ק אדמו"ר

1. Sefer Hamaamorim Kuntreisim vol. 3, p. 23.

2. See Igros Kodesh vol. 3, p. 369, et. al.

3. Zohar, vol. 2, 38a.

4. Maamar Shir Hamaalos, 6 Tishrei 5739; audio recording, 6:40-16:00.

IT'S ABOUT WHO YOU KNOW

Mr. Freddy Hager was a diamond dealer in London, England. In 5739, business was slow, and he came to the Rebbe for advice. The Rebbe told him that he needs to make it his business to seek out positive people. He met a man in England who—as he put it—was “over the top.” Very enthusiastic and extremely positive. They became very close and for the next 24 years he benefited enormously from their relationship. The Rebbe teaches us that even when we think that all the signs are pointing against us, there is a way to rise above the challenges. Sometimes all it takes is a friend that is living with angels.*

The Zohar describes an encounter between Rebbi Abba and Rebbi Elazar. They went together on a trip to visit Rebbi Elazar's father. At some point, Rebbi Abba asked Rebbi Elazar to share a Torah thought. Rebbi Elazar began with the words of Avraham to Sara, “*Imri na achosi at lemaan yitav li bavureich*—Please say you are my sister, so that they will benefit me on your account.”

Rebbi Elazar goes on to question Avraham's motives. How could the man known for his *chesed* ask of Sara to subject herself to this abuse?

The *possuk* doesn't make it any easier when it spells out Avraham's reasoning—“So that they will benefit me.”

How could it be that someone who is both G-d fearing and loved by G-d has such selfish designs? This demands clarification; something else must be happening here.

“Avraham,” Rebbi Elazar explained, “was not trying to exploit his wife and put her at risk.” He was certain nothing would happen to her. This was on account of her own merits, and moreover, he saw a *malach* that was traveling alongside her, protecting her.



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

When Avraham saw the *malach* by Sarah and looked around where he was standing and saw nothing, he understood that only one of them was travelling with a guardian. He immediately became fearful for himself.

He beseeched his wife to say she was his sister, so that no harm will befall him, and that he could become successful and wealthy.

He wasn't thinking of the wealth he will get from Pharaoh and the Egyptians, rather he was only thinking of the benefits he would gain from his wife's *malach*.

[It would appear that being married would have already ensured him the benefits of his wife's *malach*. But the Rebbe explains that this is not necessarily the case, since a husband who "marries up" does **not** automatically enjoy the privileges of his wife's merits, so the *brachos* and angels of Sara did not necessarily roll over to Avraham. However, the relationship of a blood relative would suffice to secure Avraham the rewards of his "sister's" *malach*. In fact, this was the truth since they were from the same family. Therefore

he asked her to point out their blood relationship by saying she is his sister, this way Avraham can count on Sara's *malach* not just as a husband but as a "brother" as well.]

CHACHMAH AND BINA ON A WALK

The Rebbe's father explains that Rebbi Abba and Rebbi Elazar are the physical embodiments of *chachmah* and *bina*, the "father and mother" of *hishtalshelus*. Avraham and Sara are also physical embodiments of *chachmah* and *bina*. They were traveling along the way just as Avraham and Sarah were traveling. Therefore when Rebbi Abba asked Rebbi Elazar for a *vort* of Torah, he immediately started, "*Imri na achosi at.*" He was asking Rebbi Abba to be there for him as a brother, just like Avraham had asked Sarah.

YOU'RE STUCK? BUT HE ISN'T.

What is the message of this story?

At a Shabbos farbrengen in the late 5740s*, the Rebbe explained that his father didn't have the opportunity to write the practical takeaway message,

but the lesson is in fact a "*moridike hora'a*."

There are people that make an honest assessment of their lives and come to a conclusion that they are in a world where there is a "Pharaoh" and there is an "Egypt" and they are not deserving enough that a guardian angel should protect and bless them.

The lesson from the above story is that there is no room for despair. When all else fails, there is always the option to connect with a Jew that is surrounded by *malachim*. (The Rebbe added, "Such Jews certainly exist.") Tell him to look at you like a brother and feel the pain you feel. Then his *malach* will help and you will have the blessings you need, even financially, as in the story of Avraham and Sarah, blessings of gold and silver. **1**

(Adapted from Shabbos Parshas Tazria-Metzora 5747)

לזכרון
הו"ח אי"א נ"מ ובעל מדות
ישראל ארי' ליב
אחיו של כ"ק אדמו"ר זי"ע
בנו של הרה"ג והרה"ח ומקובל
רב פעלים לתורה ולמצוות
ורבים השיב מעון לוי יצחק
דור רביעי לכ"ק אדמו"ר הצמח צדק
נפטר י"ג אייר ה'תשי"ב
ת' נ' צ' ה'
נדפס ע"י
הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל
וזוגתו מרת יוכבד ומשפחתם שיחיו
מישולבין



לעבן מיטן רבין



15 IYAR 5751

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

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

Dvar Malchus

TES-VOV IYAR 5751



The following is an account of the events that transpired on Monday, 15 Iyar 5751, when the Rebbe stood and distributed the *kovetz* Dvar Malchus to thousands of men, women and children. This was one of many unique *chalukos* that took place during the years of 5748-5752.

The readers are encouraged to watch the videos and relive these historical moments.

This morning, a large group of some 150 people *bli ayin hara* (including men, women and children) arrived at 770. These guests came here all the way from Tzfas, and are here to spend an uplifting Lag

B'Omer and Shabbos together with the Rebbe. Leading this contingent is Rabbi Aharon Leizer Zeitlin, shliach of the Rebbe in Tzfas.

As usual, while walking out of the shul at the end of Shacharis, the Rebbe gave *brachos* to those who are traveling, blessing Chassidim standing near *Gan Eden Hatachton* as well.

When the Rebbe came out of his room for Mincha, he handed Rabbi Groner the latest issue of the Dvar Malchus publication, and asked that it be reprinted together with the dedication printed inside (in memory of the Rebbe's brother, Reb Yisroel Aryeh Leib—whose *yahrtzeit* is on 13 Iyar),



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* 5751 - 1991, 5748 - 1988, 5752 - 1992



to be distributed later tonight after Maariv. The Rebbe then entered the elevator to go downstairs.

As the Rebbe entered the shul for Mincha, he paused and turned to Rabbi Groner, informing him that there will be a *sicha* after Mincha.

Unlike usual, after the conclusion of the last *kaddish* the Rebbe remained standing at his *shtender*; since today is one of the fasts of “BaHaB,” the Rebbe was saying the long Avinu Malkeinu (which is recited on fast days by Shacharis and Mincha).

Meanwhile, the *kuntres* that the Rebbe had given Rabbi Groner was sent to the ‘Vaad L’hafotzas Sichos’ so they could arrange a mass printing to be ready for tonight’s distribution.

When the Rebbe finished davening, he turned towards the Chassidim and began a *sicha*, which lasted for about half an hour. It is interesting to note that during this *sicha* the Rebbe’s eyes were more focused on the Chassidim than usual.

In the spirit of the incredible *koch* the Rebbe has shown recently in the whole *inyan* of Moshiach¹, there were some amazing *giluyim* in the *sicha* relating to Moshiach and his imminent arrival.

A few highlights of the *sicha*:

When mentioning the three *avos ha’Chassidus*, the Alter Rebbe, Mittlerer Rebbe, and Tzemach Tzedek, the Rebbe said that the two names “Tzemach” and “Tzedek” are both names of Moshiach Tzidkeinu.

The Rebbe expressed the hope that Moshiach will arrive right now, and while we’re still speaking, we’ll be able to point and say “*Hinei ze ba*”—Moshiach has already come!

The Rebbe spoke about Pesach Sheni and made mention of Yud-Gimmel Iyar, the *yahrtzeit* of

The Dvar Malchus was a weekly publication first published in Shevat of 5751. It was printed in Eretz Yisroel through the ‘Vaad Kfar Chabad’ and was produced by the editorial board of the weekly Kfar Chabad Magazine.

It contained the *sichos* edited by the Rebbe from the previous week’s farbrengen and the *likut* for the upcoming Shabbos. It also contained *sichos* on that week’s *parsha* that were edited by the Rebbe in the past, as well as Igros Kodesh and more.

Originally distributed weekly across Eretz Yisroel, the publication gradually gained more and more publicity until it finally reached 770.

This specific issue was a “special edition” published in connection with the Rebbe’s recent call to increase in studying the subject of Moshiach and *geula*, containing four of the Rebbe’s *sichos* on Rambam, hilchos Melachim, about Moshiach.

The decision for the name, as well as the fact that the cover displays the design used exclusively for the Rebbe’s *sefarim*, was all with the Rebbe’s consent.

his brother, Reb Yisroel Aryeh Leib, delving into the meaning of the name Yisroel Aryeh and how it translates into Yiddish – Leib (Yiddish for Aryeh).

Encouraging the Chassidim to make a great *shturem*, the Rebbe instructed that everyone should get involved in the preparations for Lag B’Omer, ending off the *sicha* with the announcement that dollars will now be distributed, thereby transforming everyone present into a shliach for tzedakah, adding that later a *maamar Chassidus* will be distributed as well.

The *sicha* finished with a heartfelt supplication for Moshiach’s arrival:

! און אן פשעטלאך, נאר גאולה האמיתית והשלימה תיכף
ומיד ממש, און ממש ממש

After the *sicha* concluded, the Rebbe distributed one dollar for tzedakah to everyone that passed by. All throughout, the Rebbe seemed to be in an especially joyful mood, exuding a certain



THE FRONT COVER OF THE KUNTRES.



15 IYAR 5751, THE REBBE DISTRIBUTES THE KUNTRES TO MEN, WOMEN, AND CHILDREN.

lightheartedness, and smiling to many individuals, especially to the children.

A bar mitzvah *bochur* passed by, and the Rebbe blessed him, “[The bar mitzvah should take place] in a good and auspicious hour, [and] all the *brachos* should be fulfilled.”

To children proclaiming, “Moshiach Now!” the Rebbe answered, “Amen,” once even giving a wave of his hand in encouragement. To children who after receiving a dollar said to the Rebbe, “Thank you,” the Rebbe responded, “*Tzu gezunt!* (You’re welcome).”

The *chaluka* lasted for about 20 minutes, and after it was finished the Rebbe placed a dollar (along with a *tzetel* someone had given in the course of the distribution) into the back of his *siddur* and approached the *paroches* while straightening his



gartel. After holding the edge of the *paroches* for a moment (as was the Rebbe’s custom upon entering and leaving the shul), the Rebbe turned to Rabbi Groner and asked that it be announced what time Maariv will begin. The announcement was made that Maariv will start at 8:30.

On the way out, the Rebbe greatly encouraged the singing. After exiting the elevator upstairs, the Rebbe blessed those traveling, “Healthy travels, there should be good news and a *freilichen* Lag B’Omer.”

Meanwhile, downstairs in the shul there was joyous dancing going on. A recording of the *sicha* was also played over the speakers, giving listeners an opportunity to *chazzer* over the words of the Rebbe.

At 8:35 p.m. the Rebbe entered the shul for Maariv.

The room was packed from wall to wall, almost as if it were the night of *hakafos*! Word had spread that the Rebbe would be distributing the Dvar Malchus and 770 was filled to capacity with men, women and children from all over the New York area, with many more coming from further and more distant locations.

The Rebbe's face was radiant as he encouraged the singing while walking to his place, and then once there, he continued to encourage the spirited singing with powerful swings of the hand.

After Maariv, the *gabbai* Rabbi Zev Katz gave over a message from *mazkirus*:

Being that the *kuntreisim* have not yet arrived, there will therefore be a short intermission until about 9:00 p.m. when the distribution will take place. The Rebbe left the shul while again making strong waves of encouragement with his hand in the direction of the Chassidim.

At 9:00 p.m. the boxes of *kuntreisim* were lowered down into the shul through the windows of the *ezras nashim* and were stacked in piles on the Rebbe's *bimah*.

At 9:27 p.m. the Rebbe entered the shul. After the Rebbe stopped by the *paroches*, he went straight to the *shtender* (situated at the foot of his *bimah*) and began handing out the Dvar Malchus together with a dollar placed inside the front cover of the blue and green *kuntres*.

The Dvar Malchus (Issue 12) that the Rebbe distributed tonight contains *chiddushim* and *biurim* in Hilchos Melachim from the Rambam (*perakim yud-aleph* and *yud-beis*) as well as a dedication printed on the last page for the Rebbe's brother, Reb Yisroel Aryeh Leib.

The Rebbe seemed especially happy and in an exalted mood, smiling to many of the people as they walked by to receive a *kuntres* from the Rebbe.

All throughout, the Rebbe gave special attention to the children.

When Rabbi Avraham Hecht passed by, the Rebbe asked him, "*Shoin altz ariber* (Is everything already over)?" After he moved on, the Rebbe called him back and with a big smile asked him, "*Shoin noch'n vacation* (are you already after vacation)?"

Gershon Ber Jacobson, the editor of the popular Yiddish newspaper 'Algemeiner Journal,' received an extra *kuntres*. In the Rebbe's words—"For the newspaper."

To many people the Rebbe motioned to be careful the dollar should not fall out of the *kuntres*. Another interesting thing that was noticeable was that the Rebbe was very insistent the children take the *kuntres* in their own hands.

In the second hour of the *chaluka* the women passed by. The Rebbe *bentched* the more elderly ladies with "*Lange gezunte yoren*" (long and healthy



28 IYAR 5751, CB HALBERSTAM VIA JEM 7427

years). After the women finished, the men's line continued.

Throughout the distribution the Rebbe gave various *brachos* to individuals.

Over a span of three hours—from 9:30 to 12:30—a total of 6,500 *kuntreisim* were distributed!

After making sure that everyone received a *kuntres*, the Rebbe took two *kuntreisim* for himself and walked out of the shul amidst the joyous singing.

When the Rebbe came out of the elevator he gave the two *kuntreisim* he was holding to a couple of people standing near *Gan Eden Hatachton* who had not yet received. After distributing a few more *kuntreisim* the Rebbe encouraged the singing of the small crowd and entered his room.

Tonight, the walls of 770 soaked in the sounds of Chassidim studying the newly distributed *kuntres* and *farbrenging* together until the wee hours of the morning.

Fortunate are those who merited being present by this most memorable occasion!

Tonight, a huge banner was hung up over Kingston Avenue on which is written in English, Hebrew and Yiddish: Hinei Ze Moshiach Ba—Moshiach is on his way! **T**

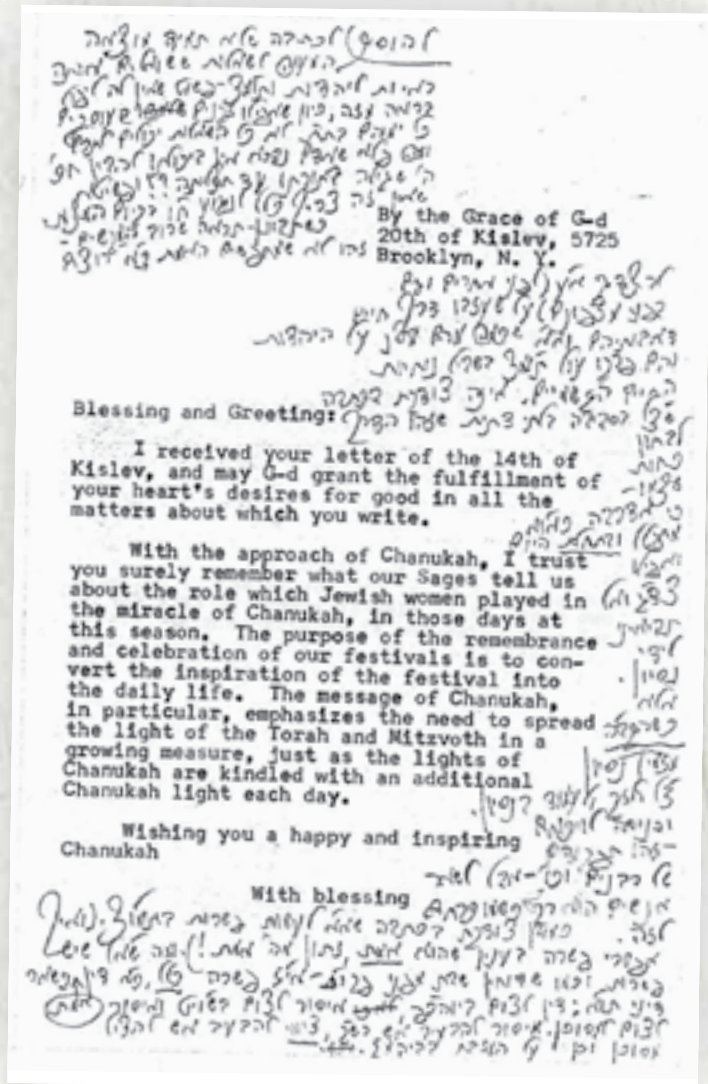
1. Two weeks earlier on 28 Nissan, the Rebbe delivered the famous *sicha* about the urgency in bringing Moshiach.



כתב יד קודש

Where Does This Question Originate?

The following was written in the Rebbe's holy handwriting as a postscript to a typed letter in English, dated 20 Kislev, 5725*. The Rebbe addresses a woman's concerns and guides her in her growth in Yiddishkeit:



[Instruction to the secretary] to add:

About which you write that you are not always able to find answers to the questions others ask you, regarding proof [of the authenticity] of Yiddishkeit, Torah and mitzvos:

It is obvious that you should not be disheartened by this, because even older people who spend all their days in Torah study don't have answers for every single question. Why is it surprising that a created human being is unable to understand the full depth of the wisdom of Hashem, which He revealed in His Torah? Certainly this need not hinder our fulfillment of the mitzvos whatsoever.

If you think about it, you will realize that most of those who are asking these questions are not doing so out of a quest to know the truth. Rather, they wish to justify their own lifestyles (whether for other people or for their own conscience): They rejected the way of life of their ancestors, many of whom gave up their lives for the sake of Yiddishkeit, while they [the questioners] abandoned the yoke of Torah and mitzvos, trading it [merely] for a comfortable material life.

You are incorrect in your writing that one should live in a non-observant community, as a way to test their strength and resolve. On the contrary: every single person, even a *tzaddik gamur*, prays every day **at the beginning** of the day, asking that Hashem should not put us to a test. It is only if Hashem has already placed you in a situation that tests [your faith], that you must stand firm and pass the test. Engaging in debates is a job for rabbonim, etc. For everyone else, it is only when absolutely necessary.

Obviously, you are correct in writing that one cannot make compromises when it comes to Torah and mitzvos.

(How would it even be possible to make a compromise about something which is absolute truth, given by the true G-d!)

Regarding what you've been told about compromises: For example, when we suspend [the laws of] Shabbos when a life is in danger—that is not a compromise at all, rather it is a true ruling just like any other ruling of the Torah of truth. [Just like it is a mitzvah] to fast on Yom Kippur, it is prohibited to fast on Shabbos and Yom Tov, and a prohibition to fast when a life is in danger. [Similarly,] it is prohibited to light a fire on Shabbos, but it is a **mitzvah** to light a fire to save an endangered life, as well as on the *mizbeiach* in the *Beis Hamikdash*.

להוסיף

לכתבה שלא תמיד מוצאה המענה לשאלות ששואלים אותה ראיות ליהדות ותומ"צ - פשוט שאין לה ליפול ברוחה מזה, כיון שאפילו זקנים שעוסקים כל ימיהם בת"ת לא כל השאלות יכולים לתרץ ומה פלא שאדם נברא אין ביכולתו להבין חכ' ה' שגילה בתורתו עד תכליתו?! ופשיטא שאין זה צריך כלל לנגוע ח"ו בקיום המצוות.

כשת[ת]בונן - תראה שרוב המקשים - זהו לא שמחפשים האמת כ"א רוצים להצדיק א"ע [לפני אחרים וגם מצפונם] על שעזבו דרך חיים דאבותיהם וא"א [=אבות אבותיהם] שכמה מהם מס"נ על היהדות והם פרקו עול תומ"צ בשביל נוחיות החיים הגשמיים.

אינה צודקת בכתבה שצ"ל בסביבה בלתי דתית שזהו הדרך לבחון כחות עצמו - כי אדרבה כאו"א מתפלל ו**בתחלת** היום ואפילו צד"ג ואל תביאנו לידי נסיון. אלא כשהקב"ה מזמין נסיון צ"ל חזק ולעמוד בנסיון. וכניסה לויכוחים - זהו תפקידם של רבנים וכו' - אבל לשאר אנשים הוא רק כשמוכרחים לזה.

כמובן צודקת בכתבה שאי אפשר לעשות פשרות בתומ"צ. (ואיך אפשר פשרה בעניין שהוא אמת נתון מה' אמת!). ומה שא"ל שיש פשרות וכמו שדוחין שבת מפני פקו"נ - אי"ז פשרה כלל, כ"א דין אמת כשאר דיני תו"א [=תורת אמת]: דין לצום ביוהכ"פ, איסור לצום בשויו"ט ואיסור לצום למסוכן. איסור להבעיר אש בש"ק, ציווי להבעיר אש להציל מסוכן וכן על המזבח בביהמ"ק.

(Teshura Levin-Simpson 5767)

הרה"ק איציק צבי הלבית

WITHOUT FAIL

REB VOLF GREENGLASS

**Chossid, Mashpia of
Tomchei Temimim, Tomim**

Harav Menachem Zev Halevi Greenglass, a giant in nigleh, Chassidus and an oved, was one of the pioneering founders of the Lubavitch community in Montreal and served in many important roles in the genesis of dor hashvi'i. In Canada he was a Shadar, the official representative of Machane Yisrael, Merkos L'inyonei Chinuch and Colel Chabad, and the chief mashpia of Tomchei Temimim. Known simply as Reb Volf, his sincere dedication, humility and cheerful Chassidishe disposition coupled with his enormous accomplishments, continues to be an inspiration to so many. (This article is based on the sefer "Likkutei Sippurei Hisvaaduyos", which is currently being translated to English)



REB VOLF RECEIVES KOS SHEL BROCHA, MOTZOEI ROSH HASHANAH 5743.

לזכות
הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל הכהן
וזוגתו מרת נחמה דינה
ומשפחתם שיחי
כהן
שלוחי כ"ק אדמו"ר
סאקראמענטא, קאליפארניא



LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 206192

Reb Volf was born in Lodz, Poland in the 5720s. His father was an Alexander Chossid and he received a thoroughly *chassidisher chinuch* throughout his youth. His parents were very poor and in his early teens Reb Volf decided on his own to work in a textile factory manufacturing sweaters to help support his family.

It was during this time that he became very close with the chassidisher rav in Lodz, Harav Shneur Zalman Schneerson (a distant

cousin of the Frierdiker Rebbe). After learning much from him and observing his behavior, he decided to become a Lubavitcher Chossid and wished to join Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim in Otwock.

Since he had started working and was no longer a regular *yeshiva bochur*, Reb Volf was worried that he would not be accepted into the yeshiva. He shared his concerns with the Chossid Reb Berel Kurnitzer who advised him that to be accepted to Tomchei

Temimim one needed to first show up and ask questions later. "Go to Otwock. Once you're there it will be harder for them to turn you away..."

Encouraged by this advice, he traveled to Otwock, he was tested by the *rosh yeshiva* Reb Yehuda Eber and was accepted into Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim.

Reb Volf quickly became one of the exceptional *talmidim* in the yeshiva, deeply involved in *limmud haChassidus* and *darkei haChassidus*. He was an *oved* and would be *misbonen* in Chassidus for many hours and daven at great length.

In general, Reb Volf was always alert to hear and observe as much as he could from all of the Chassidim he encountered and was known to be a reputable *baal shmua*. Once when the legendary Chossid Reb Itche der Masmid was in Otwock, he merited to attend to him and learned a great deal from observing his behavior.

Reb Volf related:

"The *mashpia* Reb Boruch Friedman (known as Reb Boruch Poilisher) once told us that when his *mashpia* in Lubavitch, Reb Shmuel Gronem, would farbreng, he did not always understand everything he said. But he had '*krumeh keshenehs*—crooked pockets' and would 'pocket' everything he heard. Later in life he understood the ideas, each in their own time." (When a pocket is crooked the contents do not fall out easily...)

Reb Volf continued, "I did the same. Everything I heard or observed, even if I did not fully comprehend its depth, was stored away in my memory and became useful and meaningful later in life."

Escaping the War

On Erev Shabbos, 17 Elul 5699, the Nazis invaded Poland, starting World War II, bombing many of the populated cities incessantly. Several days later, the Frierdiker Rebbe and his



THE YESHIVA IN VILNA. REB VOLF IS SEATED SECOND FROM THE BOTTOM RIGHT CORNER.



BOCHURIM IN VILNA, WITH HANHALA MEMBER REB YITZCHOK DOVBER USHPAL, 5700. REB VOLF CAN BE SEEN STANDING ON THE RIGHT.

family moved from Otwock to Warsaw and many of the *bochurim* dispersed to be with their families during this time.

“I remained in the yeshiva together with 15 other *bochurim*. Soon enough my father sent me a letter advising me that I must return to Lodz immediately because I had received a draft notice from the Polish army. Through the *mazkir* Reb Chatche Feigin I asked the Friediker Rebbe if I should return home, and was told not to. Two days later the Germans occupied Lodz and forced all the Jews into the Ghetto.”

One Friday afternoon during Mincha, two German soldiers barged into the room and screamed at the *bochurim* to get out of the building. When the Polish army realized it was losing the war, many divisions buried their weapons, ammunition, and bombs in the ground so that it would not fall into German hands. The *bochurim* were forced to dig up a stockpile on the outskirts of Otwock and then drag the heavy bombs to the German base.

“In Shabbos clothing and terrified, we dug up the bombs and for some reason the soldiers thought I was strong enough to drag two bombs to the base. I collapsed on the way and the soldier allowed me to continue with only one bomb. After a harrowing night we were allowed to return to the yeshiva. I was ill for two weeks after this experience. We were all terribly worried about our families and did not know what the next day would bring.”

At one point Reb Volf was sent to Warsaw to deliver a package of meat for the Friediker Rebbe who was staying at the home of Reb Tzvi Hirsch Gourarie.

After the Germans occupied Poland, the Soviet Union granted Lithuania its independence and it became an unofficial refuge for Polish Jews. The Friediker Rebbe



REB VOLF IN MONTREAL, CIRCA 1910S

instructed all of the *temimim* to escape to Lithuania and provided the travel expenses as well.

On the eve of Yud-Tes Kislev a group of 10 *bochurim* were on their way to Vilna and decided that before embarking on their journey they needed to receive the Friediker Rebbe's *bracha*. Reb Volf and Reb Shmuel Dovid Raichik were chosen to represent the group. Reb Volf was disguised as a gentile as he made his way through German-occupied Warsaw and refused to remove the disguise before entering the Friediker Rebbe's room.

“You can't go in to the Rebbe looking the way you do,” Rashag told him.

“Sometimes the Rebbe needs to see me as I am,” Reb Volf replied.

The Friediker Rebbe smiled broadly when Reb Volf removed his disguise and read the letter from the *bochurim* with much concentration. The Friediker Rebbe blessed them: פארט געזונט, קומט געזונט, און דער אויבערשטער זאל העלפן מ'זאל זיך טרעפען בשמחה—Travel in good health, arrive in good health, and may Hashem help that we should meet with joy.”

After a harrowing journey with many miracles, the entire group of *temimim* arrived safely in Vilna and the Friediker Rebbe instructed them to open a branch of Tomchei Temimim in the city right away. They were also instructed to urgently reach out to all the *temimim* who remained in Poland to strongly encourage them to escape to Vilna.

“I wrote to as many *temimim* as possible and some were able to make it out. Tragically, almost all who remained in Poland were killed in the Holocaust, ה'ד,.”

“We were in Vilna when we heard the joyful news that the Friediker Rebbe and his family arrived safely in the United States. Initially we also had visas to the United States but the Americans eventually revoked our visas on the suspicion that we were German spies.”

After losing their US visas, *anash* in Canada started helping them obtain Canadian visas but in the meantime they faced the urgent challenge of finding a way out of the European inferno.

When the Soviets annexed Lithuania they ordered all foreign consulates to move their offices to Moscow and a scarce few remained open in the country. The Japanese vice-consul Chiune Sugihara defied his government's instructions and issued thousands of Japanese travel visas, saving the lives of over 6,000 Jews.

There was a fierce debate whether it was advisable to escape Lithuania through the Soviet Union, since there was a legitimate risk that the Soviets would send all the refugees to Siberia.

“We were told by the Friediker Rebbe that when it would be impossible to communicate with him, we should consult with the Amshinover Rebbe and heed his advice.” The Amshinover Rebbe instructed all who asked him to take the Japanese visas, and all the



THE YESHIVA IN SHANGHAI. REB VOLF CAN BE SEEN ON THE TOP ROW, SIXTH FROM LEFT.



LETTER THE FRIEDDIKER REBBE SENT EACH OF THE SHLUCHIM UPON ARRIVING TO MONTREAL, 2 CHESHVAN 5703.

bochurim of Tomchei Temimim in Vilna were fortunate to receive these life-saving visas.

Journeying through the vast Soviet Union and reaching Japan, the

bochurim continued on to Shanghai, China where they were greeted by the local Lubavitcher rav, Reb Meir Ashkenazi. Immediately a branch of Tomchei Temimim was established in

Shanghai and Reb Meir was appointed its *menahel*.

A short while later, nine Canadian visas arrived. Nine *temimim*, Reb Volf among them, were selected to journey across the Pacific Ocean to the safety of Montreal, Canada and charged with the mission of establishing a new chapter of Lubavitch in the new world.

Lubavitch in Montreal

When the nine fresh refugees from war-torn Europe arrived in Montreal, the locals suggested they take some time to rest and recuperate from their traumatizing escape. But the Frierdiker Rebbe immediately instructed them to establish a branch of Tomchei Temimim and they all dedicated themselves to the task diligently. The new yeshiva became the nucleus from which the famed Lubavitch community of Montreal blossomed and these nine *temimim* were its pioneering founders. It also served as the headquarters for all Lubavitch activities in Canada.

When the Rebbe and Rebbetzin arrived in the United States on Chof-Ches Sivan 5701 and the Frierdiker Rebbe established Machane Yisroel, Merkos L'inyonei Chinuch and Kehos, the Rebbe appointed Reb Volf to be the official representative of Machane Yisroel and Merkos in Canada. In this capacity he merited to work closely with the Rebbe on many projects pertaining to *hafatzas hamaayanos* and received many letters and instructions from the Frierdiker Rebbe and the Rebbe about this line of work.

In the numerous *igros* he merited to receive during those early years, the Rebbe guided him in every facet of the important mission of spreading Yiddishkeit and Chassidus to the furthest reaches of the Jewish community. Press releases and articles about newly published materials from Kehos and Merkos and the various activities administered by Machane

Working with Philanthropists

Reb Volf served as an intermediary between the Rebbe and several wealthy philanthropists in Montreal. While cultivating these relationships in order to fundraise for the yeshiva and the *peulos* in Montreal, Reb Volf channeled their philanthropy to sponsor many Merkos and Machane Yisrael activities from headquarters, as well as the publication of *kuntreisim* and *sefarim* of Kehos.

Mr. Lehman was a wealthy store owner who wished to grow his business substantially. He requested that Reb Volf send his various options to the Rebbe and to ask that the Rebbe advise him which path to take. A while later the Rebbe responded that he should go along with a certain strategy. Mr. Lehman then requested that the Rebbe become a partner in his business, explaining that as a descendant of Ruziner Chassidim, his ancestors would always ask their Rebbe to be a partner in every business venture. He asked Reb Volf to inquire from the Rebbe what such a partnership would “cost” him.

In a letter to Reb Volf the Rebbe notifies him that he expects Mr. Lehman to give an exorbitant amount of money to tzedakah—half the total amount he was investing in his new business venture. Reb Volf should be sure to explain to Mr. Lehman what Chazal say, that giving tzedakah is a channel for wealth. Half of the money would go to the Rebbe’s *mosdos* and the other half Mr. Lehman should distribute to the *tzedakos* of his choice.

Mr. Lehman agreed and some time later reported that he was seeing the good results of the partnership. When Reb Volf relayed this to the Rebbe, the Rebbe responded “Nu, if he is happy, then I am happy.”

The Dalfon family was also greatly involved in Lubavitch activities in Montreal and sponsored several Kehos publications. Reb Volf was instrumental in facilitating their philanthropy to Lubavitch as well.

Yisrael were all sent to Reb Volf to be published in various Canadian newspapers.

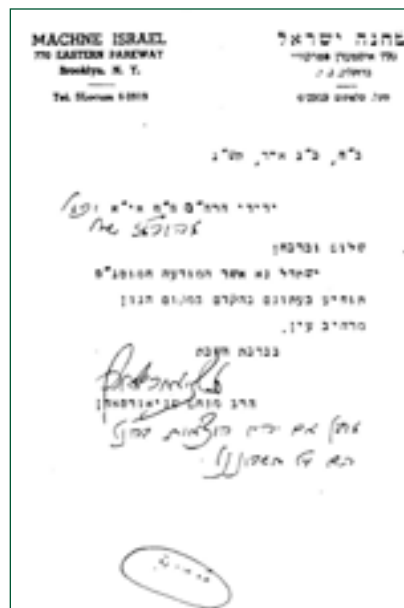
One of the earliest Lubavitch *peulos* in Montreal was the famed *mesibos Shabbos* which the Frierdiker Rebbe and the Rebbe constantly urged all the *temimim* to get involved with. All of this was done under the local direction of Reb Volf.

Another important project that Reb Volf initially undertook on his own was collecting money for the tzedakah of Rabbi Meir Baal Hanes—Colel Chabad. In 5704, the Frierdiker Rebbe appointed him to be the official representative of Colel Chabad in Canada, to administer the

distribution of tzedakah pushkas and the collection of the donated money to be transferred to Colel Chabad.

Ever eager to increase the success of everything he was involved with, Reb Volf suggested to Reb Eliyahu Shkoliyer (the administrator of Colel Chabad in the US) to print on the pushkas in English and Yiddish a reminder that it is customary for women to give tzedakah before lighting Shabbos candles.

One of Reb Volf's most important duties in Montreal was overseeing the collection of *maamed*. The Rebbe once wrote to him that he must be careful that his activities for Machane Yisrael and Merkos should not interfere with



A LETTER DATED 23 IYAR 5703, THE REBBE REFERS TO REB VOLF AS "רבי" - MY FRIEND, AND INCLUDES A NOTICE FOR THE PRESS, ASKING HIM TO HAVE IT PUBLISHED IN A LOCAL FRUM NEWSPAPER.

his ability to collect *maamed*. Later, when the *hanhala* of the yeshiva wanted to appoint him as the chief *mashpia* of the yeshiva, the Rebbe consented on condition it not detract from his involvement with *maamed*.

Reb Volf's work in Montreal was so important that in the year 5703 it was deemed necessary for him to come to New York in order to see the Frierdiker Rebbe and to meet with the Rebbe in person regarding his many activities with Machane Yisrael and Merkos. During the war years it was close to impossible to procure an entry visa for a foreign refugee and the process of arranging his visa dragged on for months. The details of the process were handled personally by the Rebbe.

Finally, Reb Volf was able to visit New York for Pesach 5704. Before his departure, the Frierdiker Rebbe wanted to ensure that the other *temimim* would assume his responsibilities so that there not be a lull in the Lubavitch activities in Montreal. During his stay he worked

The Lavut Family

Harav Avrohom Dovid Lavut, the Rebbe's maternal great-great grandfather, was a Chossid of the Tzemach Tzedek and served as the rav of Nikolayev for 40 years. In his capacity as a noted *posek* in the entire region, he published various *sefarim* in *halacha* and *minhag*, most notably "Kav Noki" on *hilchos gittin* and glosses on the Alter Rebbe's Siddur Torah Ohr.

There was a prominent Lavut family living in Montreal and the Rebbe requested of Reb Volf to contact the family to inquire whether they had any manuscripts from Rav Avrohom Dovid in their possession and if they would be willing to share them with the Rebbe for the purpose of publication.

In 5709 the Frierdiker Rebbe instructed Kehos to publish the sefer Kav Noki and the Rebbe felt that although it was legally unnecessary, it was important to procure official permission from all of the Lavut descendants so that there should not be any complications down the line.

As the Rebbe's official intermediary to the Lavut family of Montreal, Reb Volf was tasked with the

mission of procuring the official permission, which ended up taking several months.

Another interesting interaction with the Lavut family occurred when the Rebbe was in Paris to greet his mother, Rebbetzin Chana. Reb Isser Klugvant, a cousin of the Rebbe, was there as well and asked the Rebbe to help him arrange a visa to Canada. The Rebbe requested Reb Leibel Kramer, the *menahel* of the yeshiva in Montreal, to work with the Lavut brothers to help Reb Isser, and Rabbi Kramer in turn asked that Reb Volf be brought into the project.

This became a protracted project of several months. However, after the visa was finally arranged Reb Isser did not end up using it. When Reb Volf asked the Rebbe why Reb Isser did not use the Canadian visa, the Rebbe responded: מה יכול קליוגאנט לעשות, אם כ"ק אד"ש ציוהו לנסוע ללאוסטרליה?!

"What can Klugvant do, if the [Frierdiker] Rebbe instructed him to travel to Australia?!"

together with the Rebbe in the Rebbe's room which then served as the office of Merkos and he sat at the same desk with the Rebbe. He had multiple speaking engagements in various shuls to inspire the congregants to get more involved with proper *chinuch* and the work of Lubavitch.

"When I arrived in Montreal I noticed the sad reality that many Yidden were completely ignorant in many basic *halachos* in Orach Chayim. I mentioned to the Rebbe my idea to write up some basic *halachos* in Yiddish and print them on a poster to hang in shuls for the benefit of the masses.

"The Rebbe agreed to the general idea but suggested this collection be published as a *kuntres*. I authored an entire *kuntres* of these *halachos* in Yiddish so that it would be more accessible. The Rebbe was involved in every step of the way and even suggested the name קובץ לקוטי דינים.

It was published by Kehos in the summer of 5711 and the Rebbe penned an introduction to the *kovetz*."

Reb Volf's mission in *hafatzas hamaayanos* and *hafatzas hayahadus* in Montreal and in all of Canada can be summed up in this powerful letter the Rebbe sent to him during Aseres Yemei Teshuva 5708:

It is easy to error in determining which mitzvah needs to be your זיהר טפי, which is something that transcends logic, as the yetzer hara works diligently to fool you in this regard. The best recommendation for this problem is when your Rebbe points out to you clearly what your path and mission in life is. Then there is no reason to come with complaints or requests that perhaps the Rebbe will change his mind. All the more so, there is definitely no reason to look to the right or the left to find something else to be busy with.

For example: The [Frierdiker] Rebbe granted you the mission of doing the

work of Machane Yisrael and Merkos in your city (and perhaps your entire country). If so, it is obvious that there is no reason for you to investigate what others need to do and surely not to seek to be involved in things that you do not know for sure are relevant to you—at least until you have accomplished the mission that was clearly given to you, as if to say that this is your pathway to spiritual success.

After several years, it is impossible to fool yourself or others, because the results give a clear picture of the situation: I facilitated this amount of boys and girls to be educated with a kosher chinuch, so-and-so was inspired to start wearing tefillin through my efforts. These families started reading proper books, and so-and-so started learning Chassidus. I disseminated this amount of Kosher books, especially sifrei Chassidus etc.

Mashpia Roshi

With the establishment of Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim in Montreal,



YOSSI MELAMED VIA JEM 130610

REB VOLF ON LINE TO RECEIVE LEKACH, EREV YOM KIPPUR 5739.

Reb Volf served as a *mashpia* for the *talmidim* but was not the official *mashpia roshi* of the yeshiva. His efforts were mainly focused on the numerous activities enumerated above.

In the year 5711, the *hanhala* of the yeshiva wanted to appoint Reb Volf to the executive committee of the *hanhala* but the Rebbe did not allow it. "Since Harav Greenglass was appointed by the [Frierdiker] Rebbe to the special mission of being *mekarev Yidden*, etc. he should forgo his participation in the executive committee, because it would be impossible for him to dedicate himself to both responsibilities..."

However, in the winter of 5712 when the *hanhala* suggested that Reb Volf be appointed as *mashpia ruchni* of the yeshiva the Rebbe accepted, on the condition that his new responsibilities do not detract from his responsibilities regarding *maamed* and being *mekarev Yidden* to Yiddishkeit and Chassidus. In a letter from the year 5719, the

You can't bribe me

It was during the 5700s that one of the *temimim* that was strongly involved with the yeshiva and the *peulos* of Machane Yisroel and Merkos was getting married and invited the Rebbe to the wedding. Initially the Rebbe planned on traveling to Montreal to participate in the wedding and the *chosson* invited many prominent *baalei batim* to the wedding on the assumption that the Rebbe would be there.

In the end the Rebbe canceled his trip for various reasons. On a phone call Reb Volf tried persuading the Rebbe to go ahead with the trip since many prominent guests would be there and insinuated that the Rebbe's absence from the wedding could weaken the *chosson's* involvement with Machane Yisroel and Merkos activities.

The Rebbe replied: "You can't bribe me and threats don't intimidate me. I cannot come."

Rebbe referred to him as the "*mashpia roshi* of Tomchei Temimim of all Canada."

Years before this official appointment and for many years afterwards, Reb Volf received detailed guidance from the Rebbe on how to mentor the *bochurim* and ensure their spiritual growth in every way.

"On the night of Shemini Atzeres 5711, all members of the *hanhala* had a special *yechidus* in the Rebbe's room. One of the things the Rebbe requested was that we should write a *duch* every two weeks and one of the *hanhala* members should accept this responsibility. All the others found a way to excuse themselves from the

responsibility until everyone looked at me standing in the back of the room, expecting that I should accept the responsibility.

"I was ready to do it, but then a thought crossed my mind. The Rebbe had not yet officially accepted the *nesius* and I wasn't sure how everyone in the group addressed their letters to the Rebbe. Since the *duch* would be written on behalf of everyone, I didn't know what to do. As I was thinking about this dilemma the Rebbe understood my thoughts and said, "You might be wondering what is the proper title to write to me. It makes no difference to me. You can start the letter with *shalom u'bracha*."

Reb Volf would write to the Rebbe about each and every *bochur* and would often receive specific guidance about them. Regularly, when *bochurim*

would write letters to the Rebbe with questions in *avodas Hashem* and other matters, in addition to replying to the letters directly, the Rebbe would send a copy of the reply to Reb Volf so that when the *bochur* would come to him for more explanation and guidance he would be familiar with the issue.

"Once when I wrote a *duch* to the Rebbe about the *bochurim*, I did not receive a reply. When I was in *yechidus* after Yud Shevat I mentioned this to the Rebbe. The Rebbe asked me when I sent the *duch* and explained that since it arrived after Rosh Chodesh Shevat he did not reply because 'from Rosh Chodesh Shevat until Yud Shevat I am preoccupied with preparing for Yud Shevat.'"

In many instances after the *bochurim* would come to 770 for a Yom Tov or a *yoma depagra*, the Rebbe

would ask Reb Volf to report how the *bochurim* absorbed what they had heard and seen during their visit. In other instances, the Rebbe guided him in dealing with *talmidim* who were not fully invested in learning in yeshiva and were involved elsewhere as well. The main idea was to be gentle and that pressure would probably backfire.

The Rebbe also instructed that the Chassidus learned in yeshiva should be *maamarim* that were comprehensible in a practical sense and that there should be regular *shiurim* in Tanya. In addition, the Rebbe was adamant that all the vast majority of issues should be dealt with by the *hanhala* and not to pass everything on to the Rebbe.

"One day, one of the *hanhala* members suggested that since my official teaching hours were in the morning and in the evening, I should spend some time during the day calling *baalei batim* to remind them about upcoming *yahrtzeits*. Through this more money would come in to the yeshiva. The Rebbe objected to this saying that my mission was to be *תורתו אומנותו*."

Reb Volf served diligently in the role of *mashpia roshi* for close to 70 years and merited to educate and mentor thousands of *talmidim*. When his wife passed away and the suggested *nusach* of her *matzeiva* was submitted to the Rebbe, the Rebbe added in his own holy handwriting Reb Volf's title: *הרה"ח משפיע בתורת התמים*.

He was dedicated to the physical needs of the *bochurim* as well and would regularly visit the dormitory to ensure that everything was running well. Once when a *bochur* from Eretz Yisroel came to learn in Montreal, he was ill prepared for the vicious winter frost. Reb Volf immediately sent him to the store to buy a proper coat, hat and gloves, on his bill.

He would also pay for doctor's visits and even give *bochurim* pocket money. There was no need to explain

Zichronos

During the war years and immediately afterwards, the Friediker Rebbe requested that Chassidim should record the memories of their youth and the stories they heard from their parents and grandparents. Reb Volf was instructed to reach out to the many descendants of Chassidim living in Montreal and to engage them in sharing with him the stories they heard from their parents, to write them and send them to the Friediker Rebbe. In this way he would also be able to bring them closer to their Chassidic heritage and inspire them to greater observance of Torah and mitzvos.

Reb Volf would also write up stories he had heard during his youth and even merited that the Friediker Rebbe commented on their accuracy.

"The first story is not true, and the second story is true in general but inaccurate. I have it recorded accurately as I heard it from my father [the Rebbe Rashab]."

At the same time, the Rebbe was urging Reb Volf and his friends to record everything they remembered that transpired with the Friediker Rebbe during the terrifying first months of the war in Warsaw and to continue writing *zichronos* in general. In addition to stories, Reb Volf recorded the many *minhagim* he had observed by the Chassidim of the previous generation, which the Rebbe appreciated very much.

In the *sefer* Likkutei Sippurei Hisvaduyis there are hundreds of pages of stories that Reb Volf told or wrote about all the Rebbeim, great *tzaddikim*, early Chassidim and things he himself observed.





REB VOLF SITTING AT THE REBBE'S FARBRENGEN, BEFORE THE REBBE ARRIVES, 12 SIVAN, 5747.



LETTERS FROM THE REBBE TO REB VOLF.

what the money was needed for. Whenever a *bochur* needed money Reb Volf made sure he had it.

He was very friendly, with a cheerful disposition and always greeted everyone warmly. His *talmidim* received regards from him years after they had left the yeshiva and he remembered them by name decades later.

Reb Volf was artistically talented and participated in the late night preparations for the Lag B'Omer parades together with all the *bochurim* by sketching the letters on the many large banners.

Sefer Haminhagim

Throughout Chabad history there was always a tradition of *minhagim* that were transmitted through the generations with many of them originating from the Rebbeim, but there had never been an official

publication of *minhagei Chabad*. On Acharon Shel Pesach 5700 the Frieddiker Rebbe spoke of the necessity to create such a publication and when the Rebbe published Hayom Yom it included for the first time selected *minhagim* for all Chassidim.

More *minhagim* were published in the Rebbe's Haggadah in 5706, and in 5708 the Rebbe would publish entire lists of timely *minhagim* as an appendix to the *kuntreisim* of the Frieddiker Rebbe's *maamarim*.

When Reb Volf was in *yechidus* in 5717, the Rebbe spoke with him about the need to prepare an official *sefer* that would include all the *minhagei Chabad*. In follow up letters, the Rebbe clarified how this should be done and requested that it be done swiftly.

"It was a very difficult time for me. The children were not feeling well for a while and I did not have the presence of mind to focus on such a tedious and difficult task. When I expressed my hesitation, the Rebbe said that if I was not up to it he will find someone else for the job. Upon hearing this I immediately agreed to work on it and despite all the personal pressures I was experiencing I threw myself into the project."

In the summer of 5726, the "Sefer Haminhagim-Chabad" was published, and it remains the foundation of Chabad life to this day.

The Mekubal, Harav Margolis

Aside for the many official positions Reb Volf held and his many activities, he was first and foremost a Chossid who learned *nigleh* and Chassidus with great *hasmada* and was also thoroughly fluent in Kabbalah. There are many letters to him in Igros Kodesh addressing deep questions in Chassidus and Kabbalah.

Harav Yeshaya Margolis was a *gaon* and *mekubal* in Eretz Yisrael who authored 35 *sefarim* in *nigleh*

and *nistar*. Reb Volf asked the Rebbe about Harav Margolis's *sefarim* and the Rebbe showed an interest in procuring as many as possible. Thus began a fascinating relationship between Reb Volf and Harav Margolis, very much orchestrated by the Rebbe.

The Rebbe would send messages to Harav Margolis through Reb Volf and Harav Margolis would address his questions to the Rebbe through the same channel. Early on, the Rebbe guided Reb Volf in encouraging Harav Margolis to learn Chassidus Chabad and to incorporate its teachings in his *sefarim*. Reb Volf would write lengthy letters explaining and defending Chabad positions, and the Rebbe would edit these letters before they were sent to Harav Margolis.

This correspondence bore fruit in many ways, one of which is the fact that Harav Margolis's son learned in Yeshivas Toras Emes.

"In the year 5724, when I was in *yechidus* I mentioned to the Rebbe that Harav Margolis wanted to print a

new *sefer* on Kabbalah and Chassidus and was looking for a loan to cover the expenses of publication. The Rebbe said to me that he would like to participate financially."

Reb Volf himself was a noted *mekubal* and was often the address where people would refer questions in Kabbala. In fact, there's an audio recording of the Rebbe asking for Reb Volf during a *farbrengen*, referring to him as "*der Mekubal*."¹ T

1. 18 Tishrei 5718. <https://ashreinu.page.link/qYQ9>.

Reb Volf wrote a tzavaa early on in life due to his poor health, with detailed instructions regarding his funeral and burial and other instructions to his family and the community. Over the years he updated it and made changes, until finally in 5748 he wrote on it that everything is null and void since we are so close to the geula.



REB VOLF FARBRENGENS IN THE MONTREAL COMMUNITY IN HIS LATER YEARS.

The Life of a Chossid

Reb Zalman Zezmer

Reb Zalman Zezmer was a Chossid of the Alter Rebbe and the Mittler Rebbe. He was born in Vilna circa 5523. He served as a rav in Deneburg and in Krislavvia.¹

He had a tremendous grasp of Chassidus, and his *avoda* was amazing and awe-inspiring. He was *mekarev* Reb Hillel Paritcher to the Mittler Rebbe, and Reb Hillel Paritcher said of him, “Before him, there were none like him, and after him, I have not seen any like him—an *oved Hashem* with mind and heart. His heart was like a lion’s and his knowledge of the depths of G-dly light was wide-reaching.”²

“When I was young,” Reb Zalman Zezmer related, “I learned by the wizened *gaon*, Reb Elimelech Shaul in Polotzk. When I was 16, about four years before he passed away, he revealed to me that he had been to the Baal Shem Tov and the Maggid many times, and learned *b’chavrusa* with the righteous rabbonim, Reb Yisroel and Reb Ezriel of Polotzk. From then on, he taught me the ways of *avodas Hashem* according to the Baal Shem Tov’s Torah.

“In 5543, my teacher Reb Elimelech Shaul passed away, but before he passed away, he instructed me to go to Liozna to the Alter Rebbe, and in 5544 I was accepted into the third *cheder*³ of the Alter Rebbe.

“From time to time, I would see Reb Elimelech Shaul in a dream, and he would tell me words of Torah and give me direction in *avodas Hashem*.

“When the Tanya was published, one night I saw Reb Elimelech Shaul in a dream, and he told me, ‘You should know that the book of Tanya of your Rebbe—with its 53 *perakim*—corresponds to the 53 *parshiyos* of the Torah. Each *perek* corresponds to a *parsha*. And Just as *Parshas Bereishis* is a general *parsha*, so too the introduction to Tanya is general, and corresponds to *Parshas Bereishis*.’ And I awoke.

“From then on, I began learning one *perek* of Tanya each week, on every day of the week, just as one learns the weekly *parsha*.

“When the Alter Rebbe emerged from the danger [i.e. the imprisonment -Ed.] of 5559⁴, a call went out among the elder *chassidim* to study a *perek* of Tanya each week, just like the weekly *parsha*.”⁵

When Reb Zalman wished to bring himself to great emotion to enhance his *avodas Hashem*, he would tell the following story: In his city there lived a Yid who was a tremendous *lamdan* with good *midos*, but he had no knowledge of Chassidus. This Yid once asked him, “What did Chassidus accomplish?” Reb Zalman answered, “Chassidus elevated logic over emotion.”

This *lamdan* then traveled to the Alter Rebbe and asked the same question. The Alter Rebbe replied, “Animals also have emotions, but they are instinctive. A raven is cruel and

לזכות
 מרים מינדל שתח' בת רייזל
 שיקויים בה
 ברכת כ"ק אדמו"ר אליה
 "...ביחד עם בעלה שי' לגדל
 כיו"ח שי' לתחומע"ט מתוך
 שמחה והרחבה...."

“BEFORE HIM THERE WERE NONE LIKE HIM, AND
 AFTER HIM I HAVE NOT SEEN ANY LIKE HIM: AN
 OVED HASHEM WITH MIND AND HEART. HIS HEART
 WAS LIKE A LION’S AND HIS KNOWLEDGE OF THE
 DEPTHS OF G-DLY LIGHT WAS WIDE-REACHING.”

an eagle is merciful. But human emotions are based upon logic. In truth, human emotions should also have been instinctive, but, as Chazal tell us, Hashem wanted to give the Yidden merits, so He increased [Torah and *mitzvos*]. So too, Hashem wanted to give the Yidden “merits” [i.e. opportunity] for *avoda*, therefore the emotions are based upon logic, not part of their nature; they need to be worked on.”

When the Yid heard this, he contemplated it, and realized that with all his *avoda* throughout his life, he had only attained *midos* like those an animal has. This caused him to faint. When he regained consciousness, he asked the Alter Rebbe further, “Nu, and what is Chassidus?” Until then, he had only heard what Chassidus was not. The Alter Rebbe answered, “Chassidus is ‘*Shema Yisroel*.’ ‘*Shema*’ stands for ‘*Se’u marom eineichem*’—‘Lift your eyes On High.’⁶ The word used is ‘*Marom*’—‘On High;’ not ‘*Shamayim*’—‘Heaven.’ As Ibn Ezra explains, ‘*Marom*’ means higher and higher—to reach a level that is higher than logic, and to understand this itself logically, as the *possuk* continues ‘And see who created these.’”

And with this story, Reb Zalman Zezmer would be brought to great emotion.⁷

After the Mitteler Rebbe passed away, a number of elder Chassidim took upon themselves the responsibility of encouraging Chassidim to be *mekusharim*. They split up the areas in which Chassidim lived, and Reb Zalman Zezmer

took responsibility for the Minsk region, as well as Borisov and its surrounding area.

The Rebbe Rashab told the Frierdiker Rebbe that this is true *hiskashrus*—to encourage Chassidim to be *mekusharim* even though the elder *chassidim* knew that they themselves had not yet attained the level of *hiskashrus* that they should have.⁸

There were two classes of Chassidim of the Alter Rebbe, both of which were *maskilim* and *ovdim*. For example, Reb Aizik Homeler and Reb Zalman Zezmer.

Reb Aizik began with *haskalah* and eventually arrived at *avoda*, while Reb Zalman began with *avoda*.

Haskalah is cold; *avoda* is warm. The difference between the two [classes] is that for a *maskil*, the coolness of *haskalah* is felt even during *avoda*. For an *oved*, the overflowing emotions are felt even during *haskalah*.⁹ **T**

1. *Beis Rebbe* part 1 chapter 26 p. 140.

2. *Beis Rebbe* part 1 chapter 26 p. 140.

3. The Alter Rebbe’s *talmidim* were divided according to their talents into several *chadorim*, with the first being the highest.

4. The story of Yud-Tes Kislev.

5. *Reshimos of the Rebbe Rayatz* p. 265.

6. *Yishayahu* 40, 26.

7. *Sefer Hasichos* 5701 p. 34.

8. *Sefer Hasichos* 5688-5691 p. 245.

9. *Sefer Hasichos* 5709 p. 313.

לזכות
הת' מנחם מענדל הכהן שיחי'
לרגל הגיעו לעול מצוות ח' סיון ה'תש"פ
נדפס ע"י הוריו
הרה"ת ר' יוסף ברוך הכהן
וזוגתו מרת מחלה רבקה
ומשפחתם שיחיו
פרידמאן

600,000 SOULS

The Sefer Torah Hakloli

WRITING BEGINS FOR THE FIRST SEFER TORAH
FOR TOMCHEI TEMIMIM, 3 TISHREI 5742.

LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM199333

The following is the story of the Rebbe's mivtza of Sefer Torah Hakloli.

All details not sourced in the footnotes are from the
book *Os Bisefer Torah* by Rabbi Shmuel Greisman.

A USEFUL COMPLAINT

“I received a complaint,” the Rebbe declared, “and in general, that is something I am already accustomed to...”

It was the eve of Erev Rosh Hashanah 5742, and thousands were gathered in 770 to participate in the Rebbe's farbrengen. As usual, the Rebbe brought up the topic of the children's Sefer Torah, a campaign that had begun half-a-year earlier, on Yud-Alef Nissan 5741 [see *Derher Teves* 5776]. And then, he brought up the complaint.

“This complaint I gladly accepted,” the Rebbe said. “For how long will I *shturem* about the *hevel she'ein bo chet*

[the children]? *Aderabe*, we need to find solutions for the *hevel she'yesh bo chet* [the adults]!”

“What, indeed, is the solution?”

“Let's write a Sefer Torah for the adults as well!”¹

IT BEGINS FROM TORAH

On the second day of Rosh Hashanah,² the Rebbe began to spell out more details of this new campaign. Since everything starts with Torah, the new scroll was to be commissioned by those who learn Torah, i.e. Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim, and the letters sold to its students, former students, their families, and students of other yeshivos. And as usual, the Rebbe said there was no time to waste:

“Right after *havdalah*, the *hanhala* of Tomchei Temimim should convene, and create a detailed plan for the project, to immediately arrange a *sofer*, *klaf*, the place of writing, etc. and to begin writing as soon as possible.”

The *hanhala* indeed wasted no time. That evening, Rabbi Eliezer Zirkind was commissioned to write the Torah, and the writing was set to begin the very next day, on Tzom Gedalia (to which the Rebbe responded, “ונכון במאוד מאוד—it is very, very appropriate.”)

“A large crowd gathered at 2:30 p.m. to witness the beginning of the writing,” writes Hatomim Menachem Glitzenshtein in his *yoman*. “The first



6 TISHREI 5742, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 201662

letter was written for the Rebbe and the second for the Rebbetzin [when they informed the Rebbe, he sent \$200 as a participation]. At 3:15, the Rebbe came down for Mincha and then said a *sicha*, and connected the concept to the *shiur* Chumash of that day, 'ועתה' כתבו לכם את השירה הזאת.³

The Rebbe had conditioned the *zechus* to buy a letter to those who had a connection to Tomchei Temimim, and the *hanhala* asked on Motzei Rosh Hashanah whether the girls of Beis Rivkah could pass on the merit to their own families as well.

“הרי מייסדי תו”ת לא עירבו בנות בזה—The founders of Tomchei Temimim didn’t involve girls,” the Rebbe responded that same night. “בית רבקה—Beis Rivkah, etc. [should have] a Sefer Torah of their own.”

Mazkirus quickly passed on the message to Rabbi Leima Minkowitz of Beis Rivkah.

“We asked the Rebbe if we could sell letters to supporters,”

Rabbi Minkowitz related, “or to the *mekuravim* of the girls from their summers in Gan Yisrael and so forth. On Vov Tishrei, the day we began writing the Sefer Torah, the Rebbe responded by circling the word ‘*mesaayim*’ in our letter, intimating that by purchasing a letter, a person becomes an automatic supporter, and is therefore eligible.”

SPECIFICS

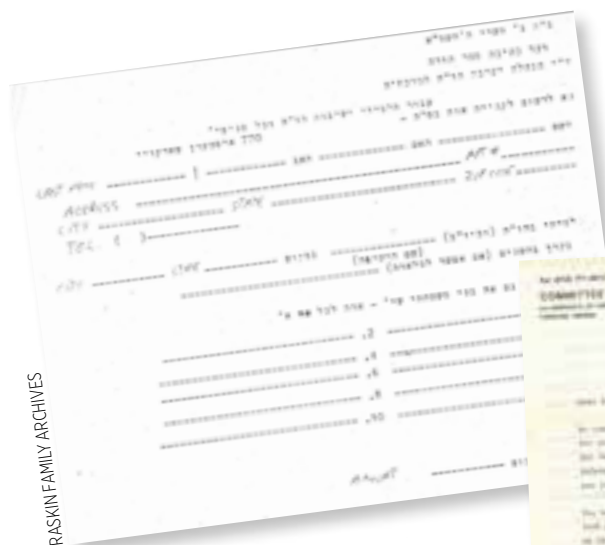
When Reb Dovid Raskin reported to the Rebbe that he had spread the news to Chabad centers all over the world, the Rebbe informed him that there was a misunderstanding. “כנראה (כמה) הבינו מההודעה שלהם שיתבנו ס”ת—Apparently, (some) people have understood from your message that they should write their own Sefer Torah!”

This was not the Rebbe’s intent, as he made clear on several occasions. The goal of the *mitvza* was to unite as many Jewish people as possible in

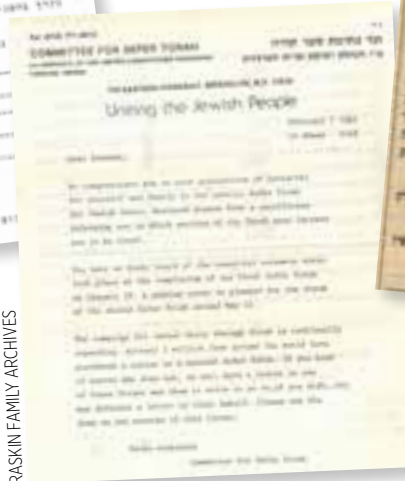
a single Torah, not to promote the general writing of new Sifrei Torah.

But there were several exceptions. Just as Moshe Rabbeinu wrote a Sefer Torah for each *shevet*, the Rebbe did encourage that Sifrei Torah be written according to Sefardi and Ashkenazi traditions (etc.), so that all Jews could participate in a Torah written according to their custom. (One such Torah was commissioned by the Chabad House of Netivot in Eretz Yisrael, home to a large Sefardic population. The Baba Sali, who lived in that town, encouraged locals to participate.) Another unique Sefer Torah written during that period was the one written by the Israeli Defense Forces in merit of its soldiers, coinciding with the first Lebanon War. [For more details, see *Derher* Nissan 5779, “Peace in the Galilee.”]

The price wasn’t set to a dollar, like the children’s Sefer Torah. The Rebbe noted that although children don’t have financial assets, many adults



THE SIGNUP FORM FOR A LETTER IN THE FIRST SEFER TORAH FOR TOMCHEI TEMIMIM.



A LETTER SENT TO ALL WHO PURCHASED A LETTER IN THE FIRST SEFER TORAH, ASKING THEM TO HELP OTHERS BUY A LETTER AS WELL IN THE NEXT SEFER TORAH.



THE MICHNAV KLOLI ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF BUYING A LETTER AS IT APPEARED IN A YIDDISH NEWSPAPER.

participating in these Torahs are capable of paying much more, and the institutions could use this opportunity as a fundraiser.

MOVING QUICKLY

The whole Lubavitch community quickly went into high gear. *Bochurim*, *shluchim*, Beis Rivkah students and everyone in between began reaching out to their families, friends and acquaintances, signing them up for the Torahs.

From the beginning, the Rebbe constantly requested updates and pushed for more to be done.

“After Maariv on the eve of Erev Yom Kippur,” Menachem Glitzenshtein writes, “to everyone’s surprise, the Rebbe turned around as if searching for something. After a moment, he turned to Rabbi Groner and motioned to bring a microphone. He spoke a *sicha* for 20 minutes about the importance of the Sefer Torah campaign and its connection to Yom Kippur, and encouraged everyone to get involved. The Rebbe said that we could even buy letters for friends and family who weren’t able to do so themselves.”

During Lekach the next day, the Rebbe asked Rabbi Minkowitz how many letters had been sold by Beis Rivkah, and requested a response before Kol Nidrei. In the following days, the committees were told to update the Rebbe each Friday about their progress.

The Rebbe continued speaking about the importance and uniqueness of the campaign at each farbrengen, and often during stand-alone *sichos* as well. On the morning after Yom Kippur, a special *michtav klali* from the Rebbe was published (a *michtav klali-prati* on this topic was sent out during that period as well), and during *hakafos* on Shemini Atzeres, in an almost unprecedented fashion, the Rebbe spoke a *sicha* about the

“...TO EVERYONE’S SURPRISE, THE REBBE TURNED AROUND AS IF SEARCHING FOR SOMETHING.”



LEVI FREDIN VIA JEM 200715

THE SICHA FOLLOWING MINCHA ON 8 TISHREI, 5742.

LETTERS & SOULS

“I received a list of 270 *tzadikim* from a Jew in Agadir, Morocco, who is involved in the Sefer Torah campaign,” wrote Reb Leibel Raskin to the Rebbe, “beginning from Adam Harishon, the Avos and Shevatim, Nevi’im, Tana’im, Rabbeim and the *tzadikim* of Morocco. He paid a dollar for each one, and asked that they be included. I figured that it is worthwhile, being that we accept letters *‘iluy nishmas*,’ but I thought to first ask the Rebbe.”

The Rebbe answered in two words: “*Viyimale bakashaso*—fulfill his request.”

A special place was reserved for those killed in the Holocaust, as the Rebbe said in a *sicha*:

“People are memorializing those who perished in the Holocaust—whether it is appropriate or not, whether it needs to be done or not. But uniting Yidden together, especially through a letter in a Sefer Torah, in whatever manner it may be, is surely a positive thing, and is a *klal gadol batorah*: a matter of *ahavas Yisroel*. Therefore, a Torah could be written for those who are already in the World of Truth, and especially for those who—*Hashem yikom damam*—passed during the Holocaust.”

(18 Tishrei 5742. *Ashreinu* Audio min. 49:37.
<https://ashreinu.page.link/1BZX>.)

Sifrei Torah and honored the various committees to lead the sixth *hakafah*.

On one notable occasion, a full farbrengen was held just in honor of the Sifrei Torah:

The last *orchim* had left after Zayin Cheshvan, and everyone thought that Shabbos 10 Cheshvan would be the first quiet Shabbos after a busy month of farbrengens. But then, the Rebbe

informed that he would be holding a farbrengen again.

“When comparing the numbers of this Friday to last Friday,” the Rebbe related at the farbrengen, “and calculating how many new ones were added, my eyes ‘lit’ up—*b’lashon sagi nahor*, [euphemistically].”⁴ The farbrengen was held to encourage and enliven the campaign even more, and the Rebbe asked that every person make a *cheshbon hanefesh* each night, to evaluate his accomplishments of that day in the *mitvza*.

“I was a student in the *yeshiva ketana* of Lod,” relates Rabbi Zushe Greenberg, “when the Rebbe began the campaigns for communal Sifrei Torah for both children and adults. Each Motzei Shabbos, and any other opportunity we had, we would systematically comb through the city, going from building to building offering residents to sign up for a letter. The responses often amazed me.

“This campaign was unique. It didn’t focus on a classic mitzvah, but rather was a novel directive of the

Rebbe, and the response, therefore, was unlike any other *mitvza*. Upon hearing that it was the Rebbe’s request, people of all walks of life immediately agreed to participate. They carefully filled out the brochures and paid for the letters, and sometimes insisted on adding to the official sum.”

Among Chassidim, the campaign was the main topic of every official and unofficial gathering. At the Tzach *kinus* on Sukkos in 770 or at the Chof Cheshvan *kinus* in Eretz Yisrael, the topic remained the same: How could we get more Jews signed up for the Sifrei Torah?

The names continued to stream in. The students of Beis Rivkah in Eretz Yisroel signed up 200,000 names, bringing the Beis Rivkah Torah to completion by Yud Kislev 5742. The actual Torah wasn’t yet ready, and the *siyum* was set to be held in Nissan, but their principal, Reb Shmuel Chefer, asked whether they could begin the second Sefer Torah immediately in Eretz Yisroel, and the Rebbe consented. That Yud-Tes Kislev, amid

great celebration, the second Torah’s writing commenced.

600,000 LETTERS IN TORAH

Before Moshe Rabbeinu passed away, Hashem gave him a command, to write a Sefer Torah. “ועתה כתבו לכם...” This command is relevant to every Jew; we each have a mitzvah to write a Sefer Torah for ourselves. The Rebbe often mentioned the *possuk* and concept when he encouraged the campaign; however, the Rebbe noted that this is not the true purpose of the *mitvza*.

In the *sicha* during *hakafos*, the Rebbe cited a *maamar* of the Frierdiker Rebbe:

“Every Jew has a letter in the Sefer Torah. This letter is the channel through which he receives Hashem’s blessings.”⁵

The concept is based on the idea of Yisroel being a *roshei teivos* of “*Yesh shishim riboi osiyos laTorah*.” Just as a Sefer Torah is *posul* if a single letter is missing, so too, every Jew is an



LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEW 199675

LOCAL NEWS STATIONS REPORT ON THE EVENT.



SOLDIERS IN THE IDF SIGN UP TO BUY A LETTER.

integral part of the Jewish nation. The Rebbe explained that through buying a letter, we reveal our personal channel of blessing, but more importantly, we demonstrate our unity with all the other Jews who take part in the Sefer Torah. This was, in the Rebbe's words, a *yichud nifla v'nitzchi*—a wondrous and eternal unity.

The mitzvah of personally writing a Sefer Torah, the Rebbe explained on Yud-Tes Kislev (dedicating an entire *hadran* to this topic),⁶ is something that could be achieved even through receiving an *aliya*. But through buying a letter, you unite with the entire Jewish people. Indeed, even those who wrote personal Sifrei Torah, fulfilling that mitzvah with the greatest possible *hidur*, were encouraged by the Rebbe to join in Jewish unity and acquire letters in the communal Torahs.

The Rebbe often pointed out that this message of unity was even more important during the final days of *galus*, as the disunity in the world is growing and “מלכיות מתגרות זו בזו”—nations are provoking one another,” (as the Rebbe often mentioned in

the early 5740s). These Sifrei Torah were something that would bring blessings to the world as a whole and to each individual in particular, and were therefore to be made the highest priority.

On Chanukah, the Rebbe brought up another *remez* about the blessings involved in a letter of a Sefer Torah, which he would invoke many times afterwards:⁷

“I received a letter from overseas, and I liked the writer's idea.

“...The beginning of the final *perek* of Daniel states: ‘At that time, the *sar hagadol*, Michael, who stands beside your people, will appear. It will be a time of trouble, the likes of which has never been since the nation came into being. ובעת ההיא ימלט עמך כל הנמצא כתוב בספר—at that time, your people will be rescued, all who are found inscribed in the book.’

“...When you read the *possuk* simplistically, the word ‘*b'sefer*’ refers to the Torah. So the *possuk* clearly refers to those who have a letter in a Sefer Torah, and they will be rescued in a time of trouble!”

**...THE POSSUK
CLEARLY REFERS
TO THOSE WHO
HAVE A LETTER IN
A SEFER TORAH,
AND THEY WILL BE
RESCUED IN A TIME
OF TROUBLE!”**

A GRAND OCCASION

The eve of Rosh Chodesh Shevat was set for the first *siyum*, upon the Rebbe's directive. The organizers thought to host it in 770, but the Rebbe instructed that the event take place “בהאטל גדול או בבנין בתו”ת וכו’”—in a large hotel or in Tomchei Temimim, etc.” The Rebbe wanted it to be much bigger.

It was an event never before seen in the Manhattan Hilton. Thousands of Jews of all walks of life, Chassidim, yeshiva supporters, simple folk and prominent rabbanim, gathered in the large ballroom at 2:00 p.m.

After Mincha, the crowd was addressed by Rabbi Yaakov Yehuda Hecht, Rabbi Yosef Weinberg, Rashag, and Rabbi Yisrael Yitzchak Piekarski, as well as prominent rabbonim from other communities: Rabbi Aharon Soloveitchik and Rabbi Pinchas Teitz. As *shkiah* approached, each of the prominent *rabbanim* were invited to fill in a letter, and then the crowd stood on its feet while the last two letters were written in honor of the Rebbe and Rebbetzin.

The Simchas Torah atmosphere began with the reading of Atah Hareisa. Once the letters dried, lively dancing broke out in the hall led by Eli Lispker's band and a team of *chazanim*, and after a while, the crowds were led out to continue dancing outdoors, in the middle of Sixth Avenue, which the police closed to traffic.



RASKIN FAMILY ARCHIVES



RASKIN FAMILY ARCHIVES

THE FIRST SIYUM, HELD IN THE HILTON HOTEL IN MANHATTAN.

A large caravan of cars soon made its way to Lubavitch Yeshiva of Ocean Parkway, where the dancing lasted late into the night, and then, amid great celebration, Rabbi Zirkind began to write the second Sefer Torah.

The next morning, the Torah was brought to 770 for the Rebbe's *krias haTorah*.

"As the Torah was returned to the Aron Kodesh," writes Hatomim Aharon Kurant in his diary, "we sang 'Sisu Vesimchu,' and the Rebbe, as he recited Tehillim, motioned to continue singing. As the Rebbe finished reciting Tehillim, he looked up at the crowd, and encouraged the song again and again, with a slight smile on his face. Right after he returned to his room, he sent out a bottle of *mashke* and wine to a special farbrengen, which lasted until Mincha.

"After Mincha, we all waited in the foyer to see if there would be any news. Soon enough, Rabbi

BREAKING THROUGH BARRIERS

During the first *siyum* in Manhattan, Rabbi Yosef Weinberg made a startling announcement: Over a thousand letters had been sold to Jews living behind the Iron Curtain, many of them recent *baalei teshuva*. Obviously, he didn't provide any more details.

At the farbrengen the next day, the Rebbe returned to the topic of Russian Jewry, and pointed out that this was an opportunity for every Jew to assist the Jews in the Soviet Union. It was almost impossible for a regular person to come to their aid, the Rebbe explained, but by buying letters on their behalf, we can unite with them in a profound and eternal way—through the eternal Torah, which stands above all barriers. (*Toras Menachem* 5742 vol. 2 pg. 764.)

There were two other instances during that same month, where the Rebbe gave specific guidance regarding the participation of Jews behind the Iron Curtain.

Some time after the farbrengen, a question arrived at the Rebbe's desk. Reb Yisrael Tzvi Heber was involved in aiding the Jews of Communist Romania, and he asked whether letters in the Torah should be purchased in their merit.

The Rebbe replied with an encouraging response:

"כבר מילתי' אמורה וכמה פעמים על דבר גודל וחשיבות ורציניות הענין וכו', ואשר ההקדם ישובח, ובמיוחד בנוגע לאחב' שמאחורי - הנקר' בדברי העולם 'מסך הברזל', וכמדובר עוד הפעם בהתוועדות דעשתי עשר חודש באחד לחודש. אזכיר עה"צ."

"I have already spoken numerous times about the greatness, importance and seriousness of the idea, etc., and how it should be done as soon as possible, especially with regards to our brethren, the Jews behind – what is known as "The Iron Curtain," as mentioned again at the farbrengen of *ashtei asar chodesh bechad lachodesh*. I will mention it at the Tziyun."

What about those who were unable to purchase a letter on their own?

"—You should purchase for those who cannot."

Rabbi Rosen, the Chief Rabbi of Romania, came for a special visit to Nachalas Har Chabad, where the (second) Torah was being written, and he purchased 33,000 letters in the Torah for the symbolic sum of \$2,000, and returned again to participate in the *siyum*.

A second question that arrived on the Rebbe's desk that month was a suggestion of Reb Mendel Futerfas, Reb Mottel Kozliner and Reb Gershon Ber Shif: They asked if a special Sefer Torah can be written in merit of Russian Jewry alone.

שייך להחליט (להחלטת) ועד הרבנים דס"ת שבאה"ק. נת' ות"ח ודבר בעיתו בסמיכות" ליו"ד שבט, העשירי יה' קודש. אזכיר עה"צ. This decision is up to the Vaad Harabanim of the Sefer Torah in Eretz Hakodesh," the Rebbe responded. "I received the suggestion, thank you, and it is especially appropriate being close to Yud Shevat, *Haasiri Yihye Kodesh*. I will mention it at the Tziyun."

Following the *rabbanim's* approval, Reb Mottel Kozliner began the painstaking task of gathering names of Russian Jews from friends, relatives and various lists. The task lasted four years, and hundreds of thousands of names were collected. The *siyum* was held in 5746 in Nachalas Har Chabad, and thousands of Russian immigrants, both local and from around the country, arrived to participate.

Groner emerged from the Rebbe's room with the announcement that the Rebbe will hold a farbrengen at 4:15. Hearing the news, we all broke out into the *hakafos niggun*, and ran down to the big *zal* for the farbrengen."

The Rebbe farbrenged for an hour and a half. That day was עשתי עשר חודש באחד לחודש, the day when Moshe began to translate the Torah into 70 languages. The Rebbe spoke at length about the topic of the Sifrei Torah, reminding the crowd that after so many Jews were given the merit of a letter in a Sefer Torah, it was important to remember the second part of the *possuk* about Moshe—*velamda es b'nei Yisroel*, to learn Torah in actuality... After three *sichos*,

the Rebbe concluded this special farbrengen with the singing of the Alter Rebbe's *niggun*.

THE CONTINUATION

Over the next few years, a significant number of Sifrei Torah were written. *Siyumim* were held in Meron, Kfar Chabad, Nachalas Har Chabad, New York, Morristown, Montreal, Buffalo, and Los Angeles, among many others, and the Rebbe

continued to speak about it at every single farbrengen.

Later, when the *hisorerus* began to cool off, the Rebbe brought up the matter once again, and explained⁸ why he no longer spoke about it as often:

"This *mitvza* is unlike other *mitvzoim*, where the mitzvah can be done the next day again. Regarding the Sifrei Torah, once a Jew has a letter, the task has been finished, and

"THE CURRENT TASK IS TO INFLUENCE THOSE FEW LEFT WHO STILL DON'T HAVE, AS WELL AS NEW CHILDREN WHO ARE BORN."



RASKIN FAMILY ARCHIVES



RASKIN FAMILY ARCHIVES



RASKIN FAMILY ARCHIVES

THE SECOND SIYUM SEFER TORAH FOR TOMCHEI TEMIMIM, LAG B'OMER 5742.



RASKIN FAMILY ARCHIVES

THE SIYUM HELD IN BOSTON.



RASKIN FAMILY ARCHIVES

THE FIRST SIYUM, HELD IN THE HILTON HOTEL IN MANHATTAN.

AN ADVERTISEMENT FOR THE SECOND SIYUM THAT WAS PRINTED IN LOCAL NEWSPAPERS.

the only job that remains is to find another Jew...

"Since in our days, after everything that has been done, *rubam kichulam* of the Jewish people already own a letter in a Sefer Torah, there is no longer a need to repeat the concept so often...

"The current task is to influence those few left who still don't have, as well as new children who are born."

In the same sicha, the Rebbe said that even those that already possess a letter in one of the communal Sifrei Torah can buy an additional letter in a new Sefer Torah Hakloli and undoubtedly this will add in blessing.

Rabbi Yitzchok Pruss of Crown Heights is one of those involved in the communal Sifrei Torah, and continues to encourage and bring awareness to this important *mitvza*. In an interview with *A Chassidisher Derher*, he explained:

"The Rebbe spoke about the *mitvza* in the most urgent terms possible; it was a '*ychud nifla v'nitzchi*'—a wondrous and eternal bond' with other Jews. He encouraged people to be involved in it as a '*hishtadlus nafshis v'einah posekes*—a fervent and unending effort.'¹⁰

"The Rebbe said that it is a source of *brachos* for every person involved,

in *banay, chaya umezona revicha*.¹¹ It is also a project directly associated with the final ending of the *galus*, and he said that every person has a responsibility to be involved until every Jew acquires his own letter in the Torah." **T**

1. *Ashreinu Audio*, 29 Elul Farbrengen 5741, sicha 3, min. 15:10. <https://ashreinu.page.link/f7ir>.
2. *Hisvaaduyos* 5742 vol. 1 pg. 11-12.
3. *Teshurah Glitzenshtein-Althaus*, 15 Elul 5770.
4. *Toras Menachem* 5742 vol. 1 pg. 382.
5. *Simchas Torah* 5706.
6. *Toras Menachem* 5742 vol. 2, pg. 539.
7. *Ibid.* 629.
8. *Bamidbar* 5745. *Toras Menachem* 5745 vol. 4 pg. 2170.
9. *Michtov Kloli-Proti Rosh Chodesh Adar* 5742.
10. *Michtov Kloli-Proti 20 Cheshvan* 5742.
11. *Rosh Chodesh Cheshvan* 5742. *Hisvaaduyos* 5742 vol. 1 pg. 330.



THE SIYUM HELD IN BOSTON.

DO IT YOURSELF



The *Mitvza Sefer Torah Hakloli* is currently overseen by Rabbi Moshe Shmuel Oirechman of Krayot in Eretz Yisroel. Every day new letters, words and columns are added to the eighth Sefer Torah as new names of Yidden come in from around the world.

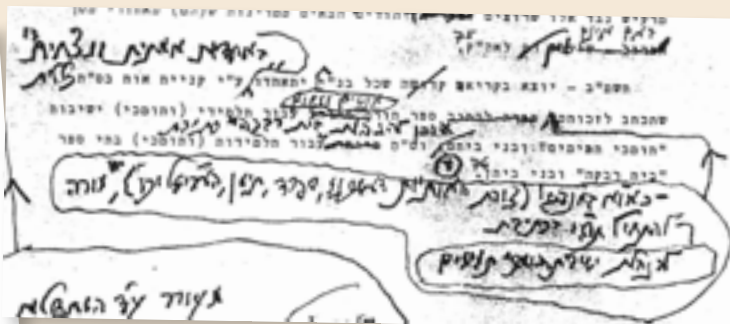
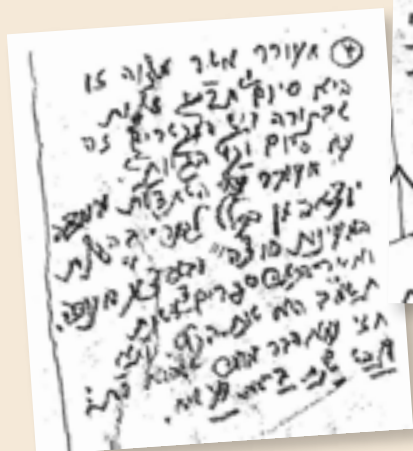
Purchase a letter in the Torah for yourself, your family, friends or *mekuravim* by writing to:

Unity letter
535 Kingston Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11225

For more information contact the New York office at
Info@unityletter.com Or (845) 481-3507

It is also possible to purchase a letter online,
at **www.unityletter.com**

THE REBBE'S HAGAHOS



RABBI MICHAEL SELIGSON

THE REBBE'S EDITS ON THE SHALSHELES HAYACHAS
IN THE INTRODUCTION TO HAYOM YOM.

When a new edition of Hayom Yom was prepared, the Rebbe edited the new additions to Shalsheles Hayachas for 5741-2, and added significant portions regarding the Sifrei Torah (the Rebbe's additions are in bold):

5741: [...] Calls for every Jewish child to unite through (their participation in) writing a special Sefer Torah for them in Yerushalayim *Ir Hakodesh*. **Calls for a special effort to be made regarding children behind the Iron Curtain. And also—to enroll them in “Tzivos Hashem” if possible there. And because the first Sefer Torah has been concluded and the *siyum* was held (near the Kosel Hama’aravi), another Sefer Torah should begin immediately [...]**

5742: Calls for all Jews, **men and women**, to unite “with a true and eternal unity” through purchasing a letter in the communal Sefer Torah written in their merit, **each according to their custom (the letter-format of Ashkenaz, Sefard, Teiman, Arizal etc.)**.

Instructs the *hanhala* of Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim to immediately begin writing Sifrei Torah for the students (and supporters) of Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim and their families, And also to the *hanhala* of Beis Rivkah, to write a Sefer Torah for the students (and supporters) of Beis Rivkah and their families.

Calls attention to the fact that this mitzvah is the *siyum* of the 613 mitzvos in Torah and there are those who connect it to the *siyum* and end of *galus*.

[...] Suggests that a special Communal Sefer Torah be written, which will unite all the soldiers of the “Israeli Defense Forces,” the military personnel of Eretz Hakodesh.

תשמ"א [...] יוצא בקריאה שכל ילד/ילדה
בישראל שלפני גיל בר/בת מצוה יתאחדו ע"י
(השתתפותם ב) כתיבת ספר תורה מיוחדת שתכתב
עבורם בירושלים עיה"ק. מעורר ע"ד השתדלות
מיוחדת בזה בנוגע לילדים/ות הנמצאים מאחורי מסך
הברזל. וכן בנוגע - להכניסם ב"צבאות השם" באופן
האפשרי שם. וכיון שכבר נגמרה ועשו סיום (ע"י כותל
מערבי) דס"ת הראשונה - להתחיל תיכף בכתיבת עוד
ס"ת [...]

תשמ"ב - יוצא בקריאה שכל בנ"י אנשים ונשים
יתאחדו "באחדות אמיתית ונצחית" ע"י קניית אות
בס"ת כללית שתכתב לזכותם - וכאז"א במנהגו (צורת
האותיות דאשכנז, ספרד, תימן, האר"ז וכו').

מורה להנהלת ישיבת תומכי תמימים להתחיל
תומ"י בכתיבת ספרי תורה עבור תלמידי (ותומכי)
ישיבות "תומכי תמימים" ובני ביתם,

וכן להנהלת "בית רבקה" כתיבת ס"ת עבור
תלמידות (ותומכי) בתי ספר "בית רבקה" ובני ביתן.

מעורר אשר מצוה זו היא סיום תרי"ג מצות
שבתורה ויש המקשרים זה עם סיום וקץ הגלות.
[...] מציע שיכתבו ספר תורה כללית מיוחדת,

שתאחד את כל אנשי "צבא הגנה לישראל" - אנשי חיל
דאה"ק.



A Matter of Little Money

Reb Tzvi Gurary was one day a successful businessman with a booming company and the next a criminal facing charges of tax evasion and cheating the government. This was life in Russia in those days, smoldering debris ready to burst into flames at any given moment. And now Reb Tzvi's business and life appeared to be disintegrating into ashes like the very tobacco he sold.

Police officers raided his company and after conducting a thorough search, seized all his accounting books and shut down the factory.

At first, Reb Tzvi was not that concerned, figuring that things would clear up quickly. With

time, however, he realized that the government was taking the accusations very seriously and was in the midst of preparing a strong case against him.

During this nerve-racking time, a member of his family was by the Rebbe Rashab and used the opportunity to share with the Rebbe all that was going on with Reb Tzvi. The Rebbe replied, "It is a shame on the few rubles..!"

This was understood to mean that all would work out but it would cost him a small sum of money.

Following this, Reb Tzvi himself went to Lubavitch.

The Rebbe Rashab urged him strongly to keep the matter out of the courts because if it ended up there it could cost him a considerable fortune and

turn into something much bigger than necessary. "Do your best to reach a settlement," he explained, "as would two litigants."

Reb Tzvi explained to the Rebbe that he was hesitant about taking this approach, because just a year prior, a similar incident had taken place in Petersburg and things did not turn out well for the tobacco merchant. That particular merchant was Turkish and so a Turkish minister had come down to plead to the Russian government on behalf of his fellow citizen, but his request for a settlement was rejected. The Russian official explained that the government had no authority to take money from him without a court case. If the judge found him guilty he would pay;

לע"נ
השלוחה מרת הינדא גיטל אלטע חי'
בת ר' עזריאל ע"ה
שיימאן
נלב"ע כ"ז אייר ה'תשע"ג
תנ"צ'ב'ה'
נדפס ע"י
משפחתה שיחיו



if he was innocent then no money would have to be given.

As soon as Reb Tzvi finished raising his concern, the Rebbe waved it away and said, "This is of no relevance to you. Take the path I have laid out for you, and with Hashem's help we will see what comes from this!"

In need of an accomplished defense attorney, Reb Tzvi traveled to Petersburg and retained the services of a well-known lawyer.

Over the next period of time, he communicated back and forth with the Rebbe. In the letters and telegrams, the Rebbe made it clear that Reb Tzvi himself should appear before the minister and negotiate a settlement.

The lawyer was infuriated with this very notion, knowing full well that Reb Tzvi Gurary was an observant Jew. "Does your Rebbe think that over there in the capital it is like a yeshiva?! If this is the way things will proceed then I will have to remove myself from this case entirely."

Miraculously, a direct meeting was set up between Reb Tzvi and the minister.

Upon his arrival at the appointed date and time, the minister's deputy received him and it was understood that they would move along with a settlement agreement. The minister instructed Reb Tzvi to take the signed document to the minister of his province, Poltava. The minister would then form a commission to look into

the matter and reach an agreement.

Following the initial negotiations and discussions, they let Reb Tzvi know that for a significant sum of money the matter would be closed and not be handed over to the courts.


Without hesitation and finally seeing the light at the end of the dark and painful tunnel, he immediately agreed.

When the Rebbe Rashab heard of this latest development, he instructed Reb Tzvi to go back and let them know that he was not able to pay that amount of money. "When they ask you why you initially agreed," continued the Rebbe, "tell them you only agreed because you had been threatened that if not

they would confiscate the tobacco factory from you."

A short while later, he was notified that nothing more could be done on his behalf because the decision had already been sent to the collection agency. However, the message concluded, the sum was not that great and they would look into it.

In the end, the fine was lowered considerably and with a payment of five-six thousand rubles the matter was closed.

The Rebbe's words rang loud and clear, "It will end with only a small loss of money..." 

*(Adapted from
Likkutei Sippurim Perlow,
p. 253)*



Igros Kodesh

IN HONOR OF
MORDECHAI LEIB BEN YAEI
FOR A FULL AND
SPEEDY RECOVERY
REFUAH SHLEIMA UKROVA



Stress Management



I happen to have found out that lately people are saying about you that you become easily emotional. You have certainly heard from my father-in-law, the Rebbe, *haka”m*¹—and you have learned from his *sichos*, *maamarim*, and letters—that there is no such thing as coincidence in the world—everything happens as a result of *hashgacha pratis*. From our end, we must endeavor to synchronize our actions with the will of Hashem. Now, who am I to know what Hashem’s will is? But since this matter became known to me, perhaps I am able to help, at least a little, and therefore I am writing this letter.

I was not told why you’ve been getting emotional, but it would seem that it is because you are not satisfied with your current situation: your *nefesh haElohis* isn’t satisfied with your spiritual situation, and your *nefesh habehamis* isn’t satisfied with your material situation. As a result, your body along with its nerves are giving way.

It is hard for me to respond with detail to your complaints about your current situation from your perspective, since I haven’t heard the complaints from you.

So I am only giving a general answer, regarding the description of your situation as I see it to be. Since you are less impartial than I according to the Torah, my testimony is more reliable.

And it is the following: My father-in-law, the Rebbe, *haka”m*, placed you in a pillar of light—which is Torah—and did not suffice with this, but he gave to those close to him the luminary contained within Torah—you and the educators who work under you are Chassidim who learn much Chassidus, or some, or at least a little. You plant *yiras Shamayim*—which is the ultimate goal of Torah and *mitzvos*—in those whom you educate.

And my father-in-law, the Rebbe, *haka”m*, did not suffice with this either, but has held your hand and guided you in

all your activities for a long time. You built a home on the foundations of Torah and *mitzvos*. Thank G-d you had, and continue to have, *parnasa* for yourself and your family, and you received the *brachos* of my father-in-law, the Rebbe, *haka”m*, that you will have *parnasa* in the future; and what’s more, that you will be able to give *tzedakah* generously.

This is a general description of your spiritual and physical situation. So, after all this, what is causing you to become emotional? Because you are given gifts and you have to add a bit of effort? Because there’s stress? Because you have to deal with ordinary people?

The Rebbe’s time and energy were certainly valuable. He certainly had more right to demand than others did. And nevertheless he put all of this aside in a big way [and invested time and energy in you].

And who can come and convince himself and claim, “I don’t want this, (and therefore, it seems to me that) I cannot do this. I’m going away, I’m getting emotional, etc.”

Is this the right thing to do, Reb ...?

Regards to your family; may they be blessed with all good things.

I have included a booklet that was just published.²

1. An acronym for הרניי כפרת משכבו — “I am the atonement for his bier,” which is customary to add when referring to one’s parent or teacher in the first year after their passing (Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah 240:9; 242:28). Whenever the Rebbe referred to the Rebbe Rayatz during this period, he would add this acrostic.

2. *Igros Kodesh*, vol. 3, p. 284.

“אני ה' רופאך”

GEZUNT AND BITACHON

The Rebbe's approach to physical health, and the efficiency (and limits) of medical doctors

There are those who have simple ways of living. Some people recognize only the physical, denying any higher power and putting all their energy and efforts into the physical aspect of things. When someone is sick they run to the best doctors; when someone dies, they say it was by chance; if you want to make a living, you've got to work hard and get lucky.

Others believe in a higher power and see everything in this world as a reflection of the above. When they need money, they pray; when someone is sick, they pray; they believe that going to doctors is heresy. When someone passes away, they have left for a better place.

Yiddishkeit doesn't afford us the luxury of simple philosophies. On the one hand, it is a foundation of our belief that everything comes directly from Hashem, who administers every single thing that happens in every area of creation. If you want to change something in your life, you have to daven and strengthen your *bitachon*. At the same time, Hashem wants us to channel everything in the physical world: to watch our health; to go to doctors—the best ones at that; and to go out and work for a living.

The Torah expects us to keep a delicate balance: That we be fully anchored in our belief, but proactive in the world; to see the spiritual in everything that happens, but take responsibility for our actions.

Nowhere is this more crucial than in medicine and healing, where a person's attitude and mindset have such an effect on their approach and wellbeing. Much of the Rebbe's guidance in medicine is about finding the right balance; to understand the place of modern medicine, to approach it with a Jewish attitude, and recognize who our true Healer is.

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



THE ATTITUDE

The fundamental Jewish attitude to health is that nothing is by chance; everything comes from Hashem. As the *possuk* tells us, אני ה' רופאך, I am Hashem your healer. When a person is sick, the ultimate address is Hashem, and the most powerful medicine is to strengthen one's connection to Hashem by davening to Him, strengthening one's *bitachon*, and observing Torah and mitzvos.

But that doesn't mean that one shouldn't go to doctors. It is part of His plan that we use medicine, as the *Beraisa* tells us (and it is cited by Rashi), רפא, Torah granted permission for the doctor to heal (meaning: the Torah mandates that an injured person must be reimbursed for his medical bills, implying that medicine is an authentic method of healing according to Torah)¹. And, the Rebbe adds, this doesn't only mean that a doctor is *allowed* to practice medicine, but even more so, that Hashem gives him the *power* to do so.² Furthermore, when a person is sick, he is *commanded* to go to the doctor, as the *possuk* tells us: ונשמרתם מאוד, guard yourself very carefully.³ The doctor also has a mitzvah, to help his patients as a matter of *pikuach nefesh*, saving lives.⁴

We go to doctors like everyone else, but our attitude couldn't be more different. We don't go to them because we believe that they have the power to affect our lives; we go to them because Hashem *told* us to do so. Hashem is the One who heals us, but He does it through His instruments. And the more *bitachon* we have, the more we see this in a revealed manner.

As the Rebbe writes to a person whose wife was afraid of going to the hospital: "Hashem created the world and He runs it... הוא צוה ויעמוד—nothing in the world happens without Hashem and everything that Hashem wants—happens. It's just that Hashem wants a natural *keli* to be made, meaning that things should happen in a natural way.

"When a Yid, man or woman, feels unwell and a doctor needs to be called, that doesn't mean that the doctor will do as he desires—rather Hashem chooses the doctor to be His shliach to fulfill this shlichus.

"When we have *bitachon* that Hashem runs the world—without any doubt—then we merit to see this with our physical eyes: That at every step of the way, Hashem is holding our hand and leading us for our own benefit, physically and spiritually."⁵

From this perspective, the doctor is both more powerful and less powerful: *Philosophically*, the doctor has no power at all. But *practically*, we must follow his instructions to the letter. (It should be noted; there are guidelines the Rebbe laid out on how to choose your doctor, how many doctors to ask, and what to do in the event of a disagreement among doctors themselves, etc., see below. But ultimately, we are bound to their instructions.)

"In areas regarding physical health," the Rebbe writes, "our holy and living Torah tells us that we must follow the words of the doctor... for he is only a *shliach*. Obviously, you can tell the doctor what your own opinion is, including the one that you wrote to me, but once he hears your opinion, you must follow his decision, whether you agree with it or not. A doctor is no more than a *shliach* who is working with the power and ability that Torah gave him; coming from the Torah, it is for the benefit of your body and soul. If you don't understand it, or if you disagree, there is nothing to be surprised about: Torah is the wisdom and the will of Hashem; it's not surprising that humans do not understand everything in Torah."

The importance of going to doctors when we're ill stems from the fact that we are *commanded* to keep ourselves healthy. As the Rambam says, "For the body to be healthy and complete is from the ways of [serving] Hashem." This is even more important according to Chassidus, which teaches us that the body is not a barrier to our *avodas Hashem* that must be beat down (as was the approach of Mussar), rather it is an important partner in our service of Hashem, and it must be taken care of. As the Maggid said, "A small hole in the body is a great hole in the *neschama*."⁶

The Rebbe writes in another letter: "It shouldn't matter how you fulfill Hashem's will—as long as you do so unconditionally. When Hashem tells you to listen to the doctor, that's what you have to do, and you should be content with the opportunity to listen to Hashem, so you must do it with joy."⁷

As the Rambam says, “For the body to be healthy and complete is from the ways of [serving] Hashem.” The Maggid said, “A small hole in the body is a great hole in the neshama.”

A HALACHIC PERSPECTIVE ON GOING TO DOCTORS

Shulchan Aruch tells us the *halacha* is that “Torah granted permission for the doctor to heal, and it is a mitzvah. It is part of *pikuach nefesh*, and one who [is able to heal and] abstains from doing so is guilty of murder.”

However, there were great Rishonim who held that not always should a person go to a doctor. For example:

The **Ramban**⁸ holds that ideally, a person should depend on Hashem: If he gets sick it is because Hashem decided to punish him, and if he is healed, it is also by Hashem’s will. But when a person seeks out doctors, then Hashem leaves him to the forces of nature.

The **Ibn Ezra**⁹ holds that it depends on the type of illness: *External* illnesses should be treated by doctors; internal illnesses should be left up to Hashem. So when the *possuk* tells us that an injured person must be reimbursed for his medical bills, it’s only referring to external injury.

One of the proofs that has been cited against using doctors is from the fact that Chizkiyahu hid the “Book of Medications.”¹⁰ This book was authored by Shlomo Hamelech and held the secrets to healing every illness, but because eventually people started relying only on the book and not on Hashem, Chizkiyahu buried it.

However, the **Rambam**¹¹ writes strongly against the above approaches to medicine. “According to their warped opinion,” he says, “a person who

is hungry and eats bread, which will certainly heal his horrible illness of hunger, did he not depend on Hashem?! We would obviously dismiss them as fools! Just as we thank Hashem when we eat for providing us with sustenance, we also thank Him for providing us with medicines that heal us.” He goes on to explain that the “Book of Healing” was a book of sorcery or a book of poisons, and that’s why it was hidden.

In practice: The *halacha* follows the Rambam, as the Rebbe says in a letter, “It is the accepted *halacha* by Yidden to follow the Rambam—to use medicines and to put our trust in Hashem that He will send His healing through this person and this medicine...”¹²

DOCTORS HAVE PERMISSION FOR ONE THING

But we only trust doctors for the thing that Torah told us to trust them: to heal. Prognosis and predictions of a person’s chances are not in a doctor’s purview, as the Rebbe often pointed out to people.

Rebbetzin Rivkah, the wife of the Rebbe Maharash, had a serious illness in her kidneys when she was 18-years-old, and the doctor gave up on her getting better. In response, the Tzemach Tzedek, her father-in-law, said that a doctor has permission to heal—but he has no permission to *not* heal, or to give up on the patient.

The Rebbe would often quote this to people who had heard grim predictions from doctors. “The doctors are in charge of nothing else [other than healing]; when you hear something grim from a doctor, you shouldn’t give it any attention. You must take it as a *nisayon*, a test from Hashem—he is testing your and your husband’s *emunah* and *bitachon*. The sooner you strengthen your *emunah* and *bitachon* in Hashem, the sooner you will see your daughter getting better, with your physical eyes.”¹³

(In another letter, the Rebbe explained that this is common sense: “In our day and age, when there are new treatments coming out every day, and there are new medicines discovered, it is against basic logic to make such predictions.”¹⁴)

HE WILL OUTLIVE THE DOCTOR

Rabbi Yechiel Ziskind was a *bochur* in 770 when he was diagnosed with the dreaded disease of polio. It was 5715*, the same year that a vaccine was introduced, but it was too late for him. He caught a bad case of the disease, which started as a cold, but progressed from there.

He was taken to the Kingston Avenue Hospital, and was put into an iron lung (which compressed his paralyzed chest and enabled him to breathe), with only his head sticking out. He was very, very sick.

"There was a doctor there," he related, "who had a very arrogant way of talking. He told my brother and father, 'G-d knows if he'll make it through the next 12 hours.'"

"They went and told the Rebbe. The Rebbe gestured with his hand, and he became very emotional, and said, '*Er vet em iberleben*—he will outlive him [the doctor].'"

He made it through the next 12 hours, but he was still very ill. His friends, Kehos Weiss, Mottel Zajac, and Berel Baumgarten, would visit him every day. They would put tefillin on him and daven with him, because he was too sick to do anything. The doctor told them, "Leave him alone, he's a goner! Let him die in peace." They came to tell the Rebbe what the doctor had said. The Rebbe said the same thing: "He will outlive him."

Tragically, that's exactly what happened. That doctor himself caught polio a few days later and died.

Yechiel stayed in the iron lung through the summer and whenever the Rebbe distributed *kos shel bracha* he would always give some to his father to bring to him.

It took over two years, but eventually he recovered. "It took a while, a long time, but *b'chasdei Hashem*, I'm here today." Afterwards, he had to use a wheelchair for a while, and then he used crutches. One day, while he was still in his wheelchair, his family accompanied



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him to yeshiva. “While we were in the hallway, the Rebbe was heading to the shul for Maariv. When he spotted us, he immediately turned around and invited us into his office.

“During that *yechidus*, he told me, ‘In my opinion, you will become completely healthy.’ Then he asked me, ‘Reb Yechiel, what’s going on with a *shidduch*?’

“‘The Rebbe means now?’ I asked. ‘Not now,’ the Rebbe said, ‘because it’s already a quarter to one in the morning. It’s a bit late. But tomorrow you should start working on it.’

“‘But I have debts,’ I countered, explaining that I had just bought a car, and certainly I didn’t have the income to support a wife and family.

“To this the Rebbe responded, ‘Don’t worry. Hashem sustains two and a half billion people in the world; he’ll sustain a few more.’

“At this juncture, my father asked, ‘The Rebbe means in his current condition?’

“The Rebbe gave me an amazing answer. ‘Your condition is obvious. *Vilstu, iz gut. Vilstu nit...* She can decide if it’s for her or not. But I know of cases where the issues are hidden, and people don’t say... In your situation there’s nothing to reveal, it’s all very clear.’

“Then the Rebbe said to me, ‘*Es vet zain noch a trit in yam*—It will just be another step in your journey. Just as G-d helped you to survive, He will help you to get married, as well.’

“The next day, a woman called my aunt saying she saw me and she thought she had a match for me, a girl who had also recovered from polio. And that was my wife *aleha hashalom*.”⁴⁴

DON'T GET CAUGHT UP

So when we follow doctors, we must remember we are doing so because the Torah instructs us to do so, and we must always remember that doctors are but instruments in the hands of the true healer. “You must fulfill the directives of the doctor, but that’s only on a practical level; your trust should be in Hashem, who will heal you.”

“You must do what Torah commanded you—to fulfill the directives of the doctor. Your mind and heart should be invested in strengthening your *bitachon* in Hashem...”

“It’s a shame that you looked into medical books in the field that you believe you are sick with. In my opinion, you must do what Torah commanded you—to fulfill the directives of the doctor. Your mind and heart—meaning your thoughts—should be invested in strengthening your *bitachon* in Hashem, “who heals all and does wonders.” Don’t get involved in *chochmas harefuah*, that isn’t your job, especially if it affects your mood and depresses you... *Tracht gut vet zain gut*, think good and it will be good.”¹⁵

“You write the opinion of the doctors, and it is shocking that my words are being twisted... I said and wrote that they should *follow* the directives of the specialists, and I also said and wrote many times that they *shouldn’t* be worried about their opinions... and in these two areas *the opposite* is being done: They are not following the directives of the specialists, and on the other hand they are becoming distressed from the doctors’ opinion. What can I do? Their free choice cannot be taken away...”¹⁶

REACHING THE TRUE HEALER: SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

Trust Hashem

Being that the true healing comes from Hashem and His *brachos*, the most important thing we can do is strengthen our *bitachon* in Him, which causes us to see His hand in a revealed way.¹⁷

Sometimes this is the physical solution as well: There were many times when people told the Rebbe that they were nervous about various ailments and pains (especially regarding their heart), and he replied that it was (mostly) caused by their anxiety and

worries; and that if they would only put their trust in Hashem—“that Hashem created the world... and creates it at every moment and runs it as he wishes... and that in your personal life as well, Hashem is the *baal habos* and He will guide you in the correct path”¹⁸—then their issues would go away on their own. (The Rebbe did sometimes tell people to check with specialists to assuage their fears.)¹⁹

Sometimes there is unfortunately nothing medically that can be done. When people would come to the Rebbe depressed and discouraged from a chronic condition they were dealing with, the Rebbe would uplift them and encourage them to live a complete and meaningful life—full of trust in Hashem without being dragged down by their challenges.²⁰

Writing to the Rebbe

It should be self understood that a person in need of anything, especially regarding health, must turn to the *rosh b'nei Yisroel*. In fact, this is not just a Chassidish thing; it is a clear *halacha* in Shulchan Aruch,²¹ that someone who has a sick person in their home should request that the sage of the city daven for him. Indeed, there are thousands of stories of Yidden who have been helped, often in miraculous ways, when writing to the Rebbe before Gimmel Tammuz, as well as after. It is nearly impossible to find a family in Lubavitch that wasn't profoundly touched in some way by the Rebbe's *brachos*, whether it is regarding having children or other health matters. Although the Rabbeim of Chabad were not generally keen on displaying *mofsim*—that was left for the Chagas Chassidim—in our generation we merited that the Rebbe demonstrated miracles on a constant basis, some more revealed than others.

The Rabbeim have given us specific guidance in how to write to the Rebbe in critical situations. In addition to asking for *brachos* in a time of need, the Rebbe very much appreciated when people sent him *besuros tovos*, good news that things had worked out.²²

It should be self understood that a person in need of anything, especially regarding health, must turn to the rosh b'nei Yisroel.

Torah and mitzvos—the conduits for blessings

In order to receive Hashem's *brachos*, we must create good *keilim*—conduits—and these are Torah and mitzvos. As the Rebbe writes to someone, “I hope that *bli neder* you will take upon yourself to strengthen your Torah and mitzvos observance. The stronger and faster that you do so, the more of Hashem's *brachos* you will receive, and faster.”²³

The Rebbe explained that this isn't only a *spiritual* thing; the health of the body is intimately connected with the health and serenity of the *neshama*, and when a Yid's spiritual limbs and organs are healthy and complete—by fulfilling Torah and mitzvos—it translates into physical health.

There are also certain specific mitzvos that are done for healing. The following is a partial list of directives given to many people over the years, but in the Rebbe's letters one can find many others, and for specific issues one should look up in the Rebbe's letters or consult a rabbinic authority.

- **Tehillim and Tzedakah:** The Rebbe writes: “*Heilen heilt der Aibershter*—Hashem is the one who does the actual healing, and he does this partially through a doctor. But He designated that the *primary* medicine for Yidden is tzedakah, *maasim tovim*, and a *kapitel* Tehillim.”²⁴ The Rebbe often told people to give to the tzedakah of Rabbi Meir Baal Hanes, and that women should do so before lighting Shabbos candles.
- **Tefillin and Mezuzos:** The Rebbe would often instruct people to check their tefillin and mezuzos if they had not been checked in the past 12 (or sometimes 10) months. If someone wasn't already putting on tefillin daily, the Rebbe would encourage him to begin doing so. There were even instances where the Rebbe told someone to have a mezuzah by the bedside, in a double casing.²⁵
- **Chitas:** The Rebbe would sometimes tell people to start learning Chitas.²⁶
- **Kashrus:** When there was a health concern, the Rebbe would often tell people to be more diligent in *kashrus*.²⁷

GUIDELINES FOR SEEING DOCTORS

The general directive

In the *sichos* of Shevat 5748*, the Rebbe said that after so many years of leadership, the Rebbe has trained us and given us the power that חושי התלמיד ונעשו כחושי הרב, the talents of the student resemble those of his teacher, and we are able to find answers and guidance for everything in our lives from his teachings.

At that time, the Rebbe gave specific guidelines of how to resolve certain general issues:

“In medical issues, follow the guidance of a specialist (and even better—two specialists; if there’s a difference of opinion, ask a third and follow the majority).”²⁸ In another *sicha* during that period, the Rebbe said that one should be treated by a *rofeh yedid*, “A doctor with whom you are good friends, who will hear everything you say, and will devote himself—as a friend—to healing you.”²⁹

The Rebbe added that with proper *hiskashrus*, we will not even need to go to doctors, for we would merit the ultimate healing—a scenario in which sickness never comes to begin with.

Specific guidelines:

There are certain guidelines that can be gleaned from the Rebbe’s letters and from stories, but their application is inherently limited. First of all, as the Rebbe often reminded Chassidim, a directive to one person cannot be taken as a general rule for others. Furthermore, when dealing with stories of the Rebbe, the natural and the miraculous are often intertwined, and it is sometimes impossible to know what is a natural directive and what is miraculous intervention for this specific individual.

The first two guidelines below are mentioned in the above sicha, but come with more elaboration in the letters.

Go to a specialist: As mentioned above, the Rebbe often told people to consult with specialists in the specifically relevant area.³⁰ “It is surprising that you are consulting with a doctor of internal medicine, not a specialist in your issue. Although *teshua b’rov yoetz*, it is obvious that your primary advisor must

be a specialist.”³¹ (There were also instances where the doctors’ opinions varied, and the Rebbe advised consulting with a family doctor—whom the patient trusted—on how to proceed³².)

Get a second opinion: Very often, especially when people were considering invasive or risky procedures, the Rebbe would tell them to get a second opinion (and sometimes more). If there was a disagreement between the two, a third opinion should be consulted and followed.³³

As the Rebbe explains in one letter: “In everything related to operations—which is something that cannot be undone—one must seek the opinion of specialists in this specific area, at least two, and better yet three... This is also valid according to the directives of our Torah, the living Torah—an opinion of two or three people has exponentially more power than the opinion of one. Common sense agrees with this as well. A human being, no matter who he is, is inherently limited; but through a consultation with two or three people together, *‘teshua b’rov yoetz*.”³⁴

I COULDN'T IMAGINE GOING AGAINST DOCTOR BENDER

Rabbi Zevulun Charlop is an American rav and Dean Emeritus of the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary. In 5718-19* his mother suddenly became very ill, losing her eyesight and having terrible headaches. The doctors realized that she had suffered a stroke: “She was lying on the floor and groped for the telephone. She called her closest friend, whose son was a neurosurgeon. In the meantime, I got in touch with Dr. Bender, who was the world renowned chief of neurology at Mt. Sinai Medical Center. He said, ‘Bring her to my hospital, Mt. Sinai, and I’ll take care of her.’ They brought her in and took all kinds of tests, but they could not find the cause.

“Dr. Bender said that he wanted to take a brain angiogram. That was the beginning of angiograms, and many people had died during the procedure. I had a great *roshi yeshiva* who

was given an angiogram, and he ended up in a coma for a year and a half afterwards. But Dr. Bender insisted on it. He became very upset when my mother said, 'Call Rabbi Putterman!' Rabbi Putterman came, and she says, 'Do me a favor, go to the Rebbe.'

"He went to the Rebbe, and he said this: 'Find a doctor who says you shouldn't take the test.' We went back to Dr. Bender, and he became very angry and started to yell at us, 'Are you crazy?! How could she refuse the angiogram?!"

"My father also thought it was foolish to refuse. At that time the Rebbe was still young... especially in light of Dr. Bender's history!"

Dr. Bender insisted that this angiogram could find things in the brain that they didn't know about and that could be helped, but the family argued that she was very stubborn and there was no changing her mind. Finally, Dr. Bender said that he would only allow one of two very prestigious doctors to check her: Dr. Houston Merrit (a pioneering neurologist whose patients included President Eisenhower), or Dr. Samuel B. Wortis, the dean of the NYU Medical School.

They called Dr. Wortis, and he said he could come in the afternoon. "I can't imagine going against Dr. Bender," he said. "I can't imagine *anybody* going against Dr. Bender."

"He went through the record for about three quarters of an hour and suddenly he started to walk the halls back and forth by himself. We didn't know what he was doing! He said, 'I'm thinking whether I can go against Bender. I have to weigh whether I think that this angiogram would discover anything that really could change her condition. I think the odds that we'll find something we don't know about are minimal, I don't think it's worth doing the angiogram.'"

"We didn't take that test, and a few weeks afterwards, my mother's vision returned."

The less invasive, the better: The Rebbe would often counsel people that, when looking for treatment, they should opt for the less invasive route. The Rebbe himself would sometimes give them ideas

of what to suggest to the doctors as well.³⁵ (It must be emphasized, however, that this doesn't mean that the Rebbe *always* discouraged invasive or risky procedures; in fact, we find instances where the Rebbe did encourage people to do things that were *more* risky or invasive than the doctors themselves were comfortable with.³⁶ Every situation must be addressed on its own merits.)

This was especially true regarding mental health: In the past, it was common for serious mental health issues to be treated with drastic measures, including a surgery that would detach one part of the brain from the rest (a lobotomy), and shock therapy that would place people into comas. Although these were methods that many prominent physicians recommended, the Rebbe would always discourage these methods (sometimes even getting into sticky situations with doctors over it).³⁷ Eventually, these practices were disavowed by the medical community as well.

(It should be noted that the subject of mental health in the Rebbe's teachings is vast and beyond the scope of this article. We will ת"א explore it in a forthcoming issue.)

Don't offend them

The Rebbe bolstered many people's courage to advocate for themselves to their medical providers, whether it was regarding getting a second opinion, suggesting a different approach, or pointing out when something seemed wrong; but he often cautioned people to do so in a way that would not offend the doctor.³⁸

Experimental Care

In letters, we find that the Rebbe cautioned people not to allow themselves to be used for experimental procedures that hadn't been fully proven to work.³⁹ On the other hand, we find many letters where the Rebbe is finding out about the newest developments in the medical world, and he encouraged people to try new approaches that were proven successful. For example, the Rebbe told people to try chiropractic methods (although he added that, "I must say that I'm not excited about this approach"), because it has been proven to help.⁴⁰



Preventative and Positive Care

The Rebbe often spoke about the concept that in an ideal world, a doctor would be busy with preventative medicine, with keeping people healthy. This is, indeed, the hallmark of a true doctor: someone who guides his patients to a lifestyle in which they don't get sick in the first place.⁴¹

The Rebbe also encouraged doctors to emphasize the positivity of things, not the negative. As the Rebbe told Professor Mordechai Shani, director of Tel Hashomer Hospital in Israel, "Don't sanctify illness, sanctify health. Make the hospital a place where an individual goes to improve his health, not a place where he goes because he is sick."⁴² The Rebbe would often say that hospitals should be called *batei refuah*, houses of healing, rather than *batei cholim*, houses of the sick, and gave directors of hospitals practical suggestions to improve the bedside manner of their doctors.⁴³ **T**

THE POWER OF CHITAS

During my early childhood, growing up in London, my father was largely absent. He was very ill and hospitalized most of the time, so my mother had to go to work, while I was looked after by my grandparents. I remember repeatedly asking my mother, "Where is Daddy?" Her answer was always: "He will be home soon." And I kept pressing, "When?" with her responding, "I don't know."

But around the time I turned five, something changed. In the beginning of 1958, my father was released from the hospital, and we went to live in Gateshead. That is where life returned to normal, I went to school and all was well.

Years went by and eventually, when my father was in his late sixties, he developed cancer and passed away. During the week of *shiva* my younger brother Simcha told me and my other brothers a story. He said, "I can't hold myself back any longer. I have to share with you what happened while Daddy was in hospice. I

couldn't tell you before because the person who told me this wanted to keep it a secret."

Simcha then went on to relate that during his last days, my father had a visitor, Reb Yisrael Rudzinski, who had gone through the camps with him during World War II. Reb Yisrael was a Bobover Chossid, a tailor by profession, and he was among my father's closest friends, the survivors who shared every family celebration with us. When he came to visit my father for what turned out to be their final meeting, my brother left the two of them to speak together in private.

Reb Yisrael was a special person, a very deep and caring person, and coming out of my father's room, he saw that my brother looked depressed. So, in trying to give my brother courage for what lay ahead, he told him this story.

"Do you know your father was not well when he was young?" Reb Yisrael asked my brother. My brother said he knew about it but it happened before he was born.

Reb Yisrael continued, "When your father was very sick, I once visited your mother and your grandparents. They showed me a letter which they had just received from the hospital following a doctors' conference about your father. This letter said that the doctors felt the need to operate on him, but there was a chance that, as a result of their interventions, he could fall into a vegetative state."

My grandparents asked Reb Yisrael for his opinion. "Who am I to answer such a question?" he replied, suggesting that this was a matter for a top leader in the Jewish world. He offered to send a letter on their behalf to every major rabbinic figure at the time.

He ended up sending 23 letters, explaining the situation and asking if they should go ahead with the operation or not. He sent out so many letters because he was not sure who might reply. After the war, there was so much sadness and so many questions of loss and heartache that the rabbis constantly had to deal with.

But he did receive one reply; the only one who responded was the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

The Rebbe wrote that his heart pained him to hear about such suffering, but that he felt unable to answer the question. However, he wanted to put forward a suggestion he had heard from his father-in-law, the Previous Rebbe, that a person who studies Chitas daily will see salvation.

Since the Rebbe was the only one who responded, Reb Yisrael decided to call him directly. After much effort—as in those days long-distance calls were not so easy—he got through to the Rebbe’s office and asked the secretary to please tell the Rebbe that his advice could not be followed because my father was simply too ill to study Chitas. “If so,” the answer came back, “let a family member do it on his behalf.”

“But he lost his whole family in the war,” Reb Yisrael said. “He has no one.”

“If that’s the case, the Rebbe recommends that a friend do it,” he was told.

Although he was not a Lubavitcher, Reb Yisrael followed the directive of the Lubavitcher Rebbe and became that friend who studied Chitas for my father. This is what he told my brother.

After six weeks, my father showed a marked improvement, and the doctors began to consider releasing him from the hospital. And after another six weeks, they did release him.

From that point on, until he reached old age, my father was fine; he held down a job, provided for our family and was actively involved in the local Jewish community.

In that momentous conversation, Reb Yisrael told my brother another astonishing thing: “I have not stopped reciting Chitas for the past 40 years. And I certainly intend to continue.”⁴⁵

1. See Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deia *siman* 336 and *nosei keilim*.
2. Likkutei Sichos vol. 36 p. 296.
3. See Hisvaaduyos 5748 vol. 1, p. 240 fn. 127.
4. Shulchan Aruch Ibid.

5. Likkutei Sichos vol. 36 p. 275-6.
6. Igros Kodesh vol. 7 p. 194.
7. Likkutei Sichos vol 36 p. 273
8. Vayikra 26,11.
9. Shemos 21,19
10. Mishnayos Pesachim perek 4 mishnah 9.
11. Mishnayos Pesachim ibid.
12. Likkutei Sichos vol. 36 p. 271. See Likkutei Sichos Ibid p. 272 for another interpretation of the Book of Medications.
13. Likkutei Sichos vol. 36 p. 284.
14. Likkutei Sichos vol. 36 p. 282.
15. Igros Kodesh vol. 3 Igeres 472
16. Likkutei Sichos vol. 36 p. 286
17. Likkutei Sichos vol. 36 p. 281
18. Igros Kodesh vol. 4 p. 599
19. For the above see Igros Kodesh vol. 3 Igeres 700, 730; vol. 11 Igeres 3,492;
20. See e.g. Living Torah program 630 *Path to Success*.
21. Yore Deah *siman* 335 *seif* 10.
22. See Sefer Hasichos 5699 p. 366. Igros Kodesh vol. 3 p. 54. *Good News*, Derher Adar 5775. *Bearer of Good News*, Derher Weekly, Tetzaveh 5771.
23. Likkutei Sichos vol. 36 p. 288.
24. Ibid. p. 289.
25. See e.g. Likkutei Sichos vol. 36 p. 299.
26. Ibid. p. 282.
27. Ibid. p. 322.
28. Sefer Hasichos 5748 vol. 1 p. 240.
29. Toras Menachem 5748 vol. 2 p. 341.
30. Likkutei Sichos vol 36 p. 276-280.
31. Ibid. p. 277.
32. Ibid. p. 278-9.
33. Ibid. p. 318.
34. Likkutei Sichos vol. 36 p. 302-303.
35. See e.g. Likkutei Sichos vol. 36 p. 301; 304.
36. See e.g. Here’s My Story *Your Son will Live*, about a brain injection.
37. See Likkutei Sichos vol. 36 p. 307-309 about lobotomy; p. 330-331 about shock therapy.
38. Ibid. p. 306
39. Ibid. p. 301
40. Ibid. p. 311-312
41. Toras Menachem 5748 vol. 1? p. 345
42. Here’s My Story, *Patient Empowerment*
43. Here’s My Story, *A Holistic Approach*
44. Living Torah program 589 *A Bright Future*; Here’s My Story *The Incredible Midnight Question*.
45. Aharon Denderowitz, Here’s My Story *The Power of Chitas*.

MAINOS

GET BUSY

In this note, the Rebbe responds to a woman who was worried about her complicated health situation:

כנראה עיקר הסיבה למצבה—הוא זה שמתבוננת במצבה בתמידות. וככל שתסיח דעתה יותר מזה—יוטב המצב ויתוסף בהצלחת עניני הרפואה שמתעסקת בהם. ולהקל בהיסח הדעת—ה"ז ע"י שתה"י עסוקה בענין אחר לגמרי—איזה שיהי' (משרה, לימודים, עזר לבחורות ביר"ש וכיו"ב).

ואם תסיח דעת לגמרי—במשך זמן קצר תתרפא. קבלה.

אזכיר עוה"פ עה"צ.

It seems that the principal cause of your situation—is that you ruminate about your situation **constantly**. The more you take your mind **off** of it—the better it will become and the medical avenues you are involved with will be more successful.

In order to make this easier—you should **keep busy** with something completely different—no matter what it is (a job, studies, assisting girls in *yiras shamyaim*, and the like.)

If you take your mind off of it **completely** — within a short time you will be healed.

[Instruction to the secretary to send] a receipt.

I will mention you again at the *tziyun*.

TRUST

התחזקות בבטחון אמיתי בהשם—נוסף על העיקר שזהו מיסודי אמונתנו—ה"ז ג"כ רפואה באופן ישר להנ"ל (וגם הרופאים מודים בזה). חת"ת. אזכיר עה"צ.

By strengthening your **sincere** trust in Hashem—in addition to the fact that this is one of the pillars of our faith [Yiddishkeit]—this would also serve **directly** as a remedy to the [health issue] mentioned above. (The doctors acknowledge this as well).

[Be diligent about the study of] Chitas.

I will mention you at the *tziyun*.

BE HAPPY! (IT HELPS)

In response to a woman who asked, what is the best way for her to recover from an illness—the Rebbe writes:

מענתה מפורש בתוה"ק ורפא ירפא—כעצת רופא(ים) בשטח זה. וכפשוט ועיקר בטחון בהשם הרופא כל בשר ומפליא לעשות.

ע"פ ידיעת - שמחת החולה מועילה לבריאותו

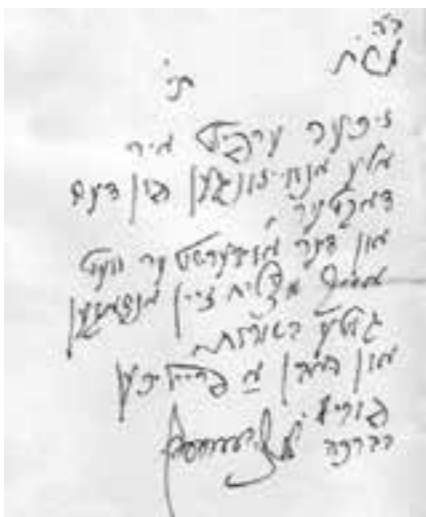
Her answer is clearly stated in our holy Torah—*v'rapo yerapei*—[follow] the advice of the doctor(s) in this field.

It is obvious, and this is the main thing: strengthen your trust in Hashem, who heals all flesh and does wondrous things.

To the best of my knowledge—when a patient is happy it helps them get healthier.

GOOD NEWS

Draft of a letter written in the Rebbe's holy handwriting to a woman who needed a bracha for health:



ב"ה
מרת... תי'

זיכער ערפילט איר אלע אנווייזונגען פון דעם
דאקטער, און דער אויבערשטער וועט אייך מצליח זיין
אנזאגען גוטע בשורות, און האבן אַ פרייליכען פורים.

בברכה
[חי"ק]

B"H. Mrs. . . tichye,

You are certainly following all the instructions of the doctor, and Hashem will help you succeed in bearing good news, and to have a happy Purim.

With blessing,

[The Rebbe's signature]

TEACH TZEDAKA

The Rebbe's handwritten response after being notified that one of anash was hospitalized with a heart attack:

מהיר

כדאי שיביאו לו לשם א צדקה פושקע ופעמיים בימות
החול (לפני שחרית ומנחה) יתרום לתוכה מטבע.
ומה טוב שיעורר שאר הנמצאים שם שיעשו כן גם
הם [זה שייך גם לאינם יהודים] וזכות כהנ"ל תעמוד לו
בכהנ"ל.

אזכיר עה"צ

Urgent

It would be worthwhile that a tzedaka-box should be brought there for him, and twice daily (before Shacharis and Mincha), he should contribute a coin to it.

Even better would be if he would inspire all the others there to do the same as well [this applies to non-Jews too]. The merit of all this [him and others giving tzedaka] will stand in his good stead for all of the abovementioned [health complications].

I will mention this at the tziyun.



דער רבי וועט געפינען א וועג...

מוקדש
לחיוזק ההתקשרות
לכ"ק אדמו"ר

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

Transform the Desert

AS TOLD BY RABBI SHMULI SCHLANGER (BAKERSFIELD, CA)

From when I was a young *bochur* I dreamed of being the Rebbe's shliach. A year after my marriage, I was very much enjoying teaching a Pre-1-A class in Oholei Torah, especially since I was being mentored by my father-in-law, Rabbi Shmaryahu Katzen, a veteran *mechanech*. However, when it came time to renew my contract for 5763* I refused to do so because I was set on going on shlichus.

I had a connection with a Yid in a city in California that did not yet have a shliach and my eyes were set on opening a Chabad House there. Every Shabbos Mevarchim

I approached Rabbi Shlomo Cunin and inquired about moving on shlichus to that location. Each time he advised me to call his office on Monday morning, yet it never materialized.

After a while I approached Rabbi Moshe Kotlarsky, who in turn formally introduced me to Rabbi Cunin who, once again, told me to call his office on Monday morning.

Instead of calling, I was standing in the second floor hallway of the Chabad West Coast Headquarters on Gayley Avenue when Rabbi Cunin arrived on Monday morning



at 8:00 a.m. Surprised to see me, he greeted me with a “Shalom Aleichem” and invited me to wait outside of his office.

After an hour, he sent his son Rabbi Yossi Cunin to tell me to drive to a place called Bakersfield to explore the city and see if I was interested in going on shlichus there.

Although it was not the location I was seeking, I got into my rental car and made the two hour drive to Bakersfield. I spoke with a few people and even met a Jewish fellow who told me about the local rural Jewish community. I noticed grapes growing on both sides of the road and told my wife that we will certainly not go hungry here...

The next morning Rabbi Cunin asked me what I thought of Bakersfield and I replied that I would rather check out the coastal town I had been asking him about for some time.

“Yungerman,” he said with a warm smile, “today I am looking to fill a position in Bakersfield. I think it will be good for you.”

With a firm handshake he bid me farewell and asked me to get back to him after going to the Ohel and asking for the Rebbe’s *bracha*.

My wife, our three-month-old daughter and I went to the Ohel shortly afterwards and wrote to the Rebbe that we are ready to go out on shlichus to the “desert of California.”

After leaving the Ohel, we noticed that on the video screen in the Welcome Center there was a video of a *farbrengen* and these were the words we heard:

“די גאנצע וועלט איז א מדבר און וואו א איד געפינט זיך דארף ער

מאכן פון אן ארץ לא זרועה א מקום זרוע.”

“The whole world is a [spiritual] desert and wherever a Jew goes in the desert, he or she must transform their place in the world from a [spiritually] barren desert into a [spiritually] blossoming place.”

Overjoyed, my wife and I saw this as a clear and direct answer to us and our children to open a Beis Chabad in the spiritual desert of Bakersfield, California.

Six weeks later we moved out.

There is no official census of the Jewish community in Bakersfield. Over these past 18 years, with the Rebbe’s *brachos*, we have experienced much success in our activities, we built a *mikveh* and established a Chabad House which perfectly suits our needs in servicing the community. We are very active with reaching out to Yidden in the surrounding area and in prisons, and thus far have touched the lives of thousands.

We are always mindful that in these last days of *galus* our mission is ואתם תלוקטו לאחד אחד, to reach out to every single Yid, not to rest until we find every Yid and light up their neshama with Torah and mitzvos, preparing the entire world to be מקבל פני משיח צדקנו. ❶

YOUR STORY

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



לזכות
הת' לוי שיחי'
לרגל הגיעו לעול מצוות
כ' ניסן ה'תש"פ
נדפס ע"י
הרה"ת ר' משה פינחס
וזוגתו מרת עלקא ומשפחתם שיחיו
וואלף





KINUS NASHIM

A most unique and unprecedented innovation of the Rebbe was holding a special *yechidus* for women and girls. The Rebbe addressed the women only and specifically, taking to their special role and mission. These events took place twice a year, once before Rosh Hashanah (an outgrowth of the meetings for members of the “Ladies Auxiliary of Tomchei Temimim) and once before Shavuos. In the early years of the Rebbe’s *nesius*, this would take place in his room in 770. As the crowd grew, it moved downstairs to the main shul. We present a pictorial overview of this special scene in 770 over the years.



28 IYAR 5738, YOSHI MELAMED VIA JEM 23205

The Rebbe would enter the downstairs shul after davening Mincha upstairs. Upon reaching his place (set up similar to a *farbrengen*), the Rebbe looked through a report left on the table by the organizers which included material from recent activities or a *duch* with *hachlatos*.



CIRCA 5740, LIBRARY OF AGUDAS CHASIDEI CHABAD



CIRCA 5742

Then the Rebbe addressed the crowd, talking about the time of year and the role of the Jewish woman, elaborating on the special mitzvos given to women and their unique role in the *chinuch* of their children.





16 IYAR, 5735, VELVEL SCHILDKRAUT VIA JEM 108696



28 ELUL, 5737, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 20999

In the early years, this was more of a *bracha* and was generally a short *sicha*; over the years these *sichos* became longer.

After the *sicha*, the women walked by the Rebbe's place for a short *yechidus*. The Rebbe would speak to every person individually answering their notes on the spot. In the later years the Rebbe would distribute dollars.

24 ELUL 5731, Y MINKOWITZ



27 Iyar 5737, YOSSI MELAMED VIA JEM 139964





On the way out, the Rebbe would glance at the various centerpiece items depicting Jewish themes that the organizers prepared for him, sometimes carrying them up to his room himself.



25 IYAR 5747, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 5289



25 IYAR 5747, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 5290



27 ELUL 5740, LEVI FREDIN VIA JEM 188952

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.



Rav Moshe Feinstein Rabbeinu Tam

Dear Editors,

In the Adar issue, there was a well written article about Rabbeinu Tam tefillin [*The Great Debate*, Issue 91 (168)]. In the article you wrote how Harav Moshe Feinstein Z”L restarted to put on Rabbeinu Tam again (after being separated from them and also) as a result of the Rebbe’s campaign. The Rebbe chose the *sofer*, Rabbi Eliezer Zirkind, to write the *parshiyos* for him. Let me share the correct details of this story with you as I heard them from Rabbi Zirkind.

It was late Wednesday night in Adar and the phone rang in the Zirkind home. One of his sons picked up. When Rabbi Zirkind came to the phone, he heard Rabbi Hodakov’s voice: “Are you ready to write tefillin of a *gadol b’Yisrael*?” he asked. Of course, the answer was yes.

Rabbi Hodakov gave him the phone number to Rav Moshe Feinstein’s home and told him to call in the morning to find out more details (he was not summoned to *mazkirus* office). In the morning Rabbi Zirkind went to the home of Rav Moshe to discuss the details and the tefillin.

Rav Moshe had a number of halachic concerns about the Tefillin. The Rebbe assured him that he would send a *sofer* - an expert and *yarei shamayim* who would be able to answer all the concerns he had. The *sofer* the Rebbe chose for this unique mission was Rabbi Eliezer Zirkind

a”h, who also served as the Rebbe’s personal *sofer*.

The Rebbe wanted Rav Moshe to start wearing Rabbeinu Tam three days later, on Sunday, Rosh Chodesh Adar, which was Rav Moshe’s 80th birthday.

The next morning (Friday), Rabbi Zirkind started to write the *parshiyos*. As he was writing, the phone rang. One of the Zirkind children picked up. It was Rav Moshe calling. He asked that the child pass along the phone to his father but Rabbi Zirkind shouldn’t say anything. “*Ein mezarzin ela l’mzurazin*,” said Rav Moshe, “I just want to remind you that you are writing Rabbeinu Tam tefillin. *Zeit matzliach*.” Then Rav Moshe hung up the phone.

Later in the day when Rabbi Zirkind finished writing the *shel rosh*, I picked them up and brought them to Rav Moshe.

He very meticulously checked each line and every letter one at a time. He complimented on various letters having been written as they were written years ago in Europe (not as some are written today in Eretz Yisrael).

Afterwards Rav Moshe told me that ideally the *shel rosh* and *shel yad* are to be written on the same day, “But how can I force a person to do both on the same day when it is Friday and a short one too!”

However, being that the Rebbe wanted him to start wearing them on Sunday, and they needed to be ready by then, he agreed to begin the writing on Friday even though it would

not be possible to finish both the *shel yad* and the *shel rosh* before Shabbos.

The whole story brought about a big *kiddush shem Lubavitch*, as Rav Moshe was very impressed by Rabbi Zirkind and afterwards asked that he should please come back to talk in learning.

On a side note, on the topic of Rabbeinu Tam, when I was 17 I asked the Rebbe if I should start putting on Rabbeinu Tam (this was before Purim 5736*), and the Rebbe agreed, but with two conditions: Firstly, it needed to fit easily into my schedule as I was not in a Lubavitcher Yeshiva then. Secondly, my parents had to be okay with it (my father was not yet wearing Rabbeinu Tam himself at that time).

Yehudah Clapman
Brooklyn, NY



Purim 5713

Dear Editors,

Thank you so much for your monthly articles. I always look forward to receiving them.

In the Adar 5780 issue, at the top of page 35, you published two photographs captioned that they were taken on Purim 5713*. While the picture on the left is indeed from 5713*, the one on the right is actually not from 5713* but rather from the Purim 5719* farbrengen, which took place at the Biltmore hall.

Thank you so much for all you do.

Rachamim Gopin
Baltimore, Maryland