

הרה"ק איציק צבי הורוויץ

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 Chassidische 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 FREDIN 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



RAICHIK FAMILY

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



JEM

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 Frierdiker 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 Frierdiker 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 Frierdiker 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 Frierdiker 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 Frierdiker 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 Frierdiker Rebbe smiled broadly when Reb Volf removed his disguise and read the letter from the *bochurim* with much concentration. The Frierdiker 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 Frierdiker 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, ד'ה'”.

“We were in Vilna when we heard the joyful news that the Frierdiker 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 Frierdiker 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 FRIERDIKER 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.

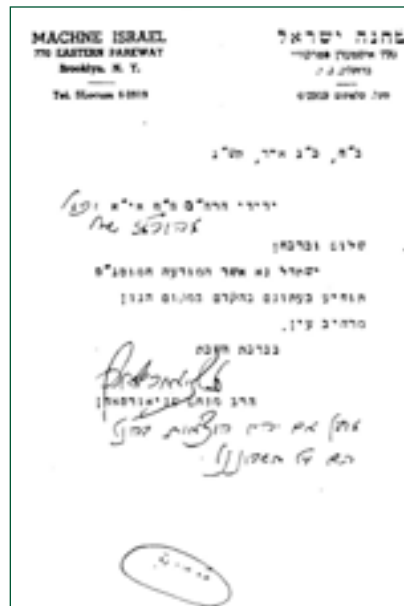
One of the earliest Lubavitch *peulos* in Montreal was the famed *mesibos Shabbos* which the Frierdiker Rebbe and the Rebbe constantly urged all the *temimim* to get involved with. All of this was done under the local direction of Reb Volf.

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 "ר' וולף" - 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? לאוסטרליה?!*

"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 זוהר 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 [Friediker] 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.

26 ELUL, 5747 LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 11281





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 Friediker 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 Friediker 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 Igras 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

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 VOLFF FARBRENGENS IN THE MONTREAL COMMUNITY IN HIS LATER YEARS.