

# LUBAVITCH AT THE WORLD'S FAIR

**HAFATZA  
ON THE  
BIG  
STAGE**



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## UNITED STATES WORLD TRADE FAIR

When the Rebbe arrived in the United States on Chof-Ches Sivan 5701\* and was appointed by the Frierdiker Rebbe to lead Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch, the stated goal was to bring Yiddishkeit and Chassidus to every single Yid wherever he or she may be on the globe. Publication was an important department of Merkos and over the years vast amounts of literature in various languages were published to aid Yidden in learning about Yiddishkeit and Chassidus, each on their own level and at their own pace.

In the early years, selling the books, newsletters and pamphlets published by Kehos and Merkos were an integral element of *hafatza*, and *bochurim* and *yungerleit* would sell them by visiting Yidden in their homes and shuls throughout New York City and other major Jewish communities. When *bochurim* went out on Merkos Shlichus during the summer they brought with them cases of these publications and sold them to the Yidden they met all over the world.

But in 5720\*, Lubavitch broadened its horizons and its reach by displaying its uniquely Jewish and Chassidic literature on an entirely new platform.

"I had seen an advertisement about the United States World Trade Fair being held at the New York Coliseum," Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky relates. "The Trade Fair was a venue for large corporations and over 60 countries to display their innovations and big ideas, and there was room for cultural displays as well. I thought it would be a proper space to display Merkos publications and the work of Lubavitch in general."

He discussed the idea with Rabbi Hodakov and after asking the Rebbe it was agreed upon that Merkos would



BOCHURIM AT 770 PACK BOXES WITH MERKOS AND KEHOS PUBLICATIONS.

rent a space for a pavilion at the trade fair.

"We needed to build special furniture for the pavilion," recalls Rabbi Krinsky. "There were some book shelves and display racks. In addition to publications and records, we displayed photos of the Rebbeim and photos of Chabad's work around the world."

The fair ran for close to a week during the spring and there were two *bochurim* manning the pavilion the entire time. Thousands of visitors passed by, being exposed to Lubavitch for the first time and having the opportunity to peruse through the literature and purchase some as well.

In addition, the fact that a Jewish organization had rented space at the Trade Fair made a big splash in the Jewish media and beyond, receiving a lot of publicity, especially in light of the fact that it was the only Jewish organization represented at the fair.

The *peulah* was so successful that the next year, LNS (Lubavitch New Service) sent out a press release announcing that Merkos "will again display a large assortment of its publications at the United States World Trade Fair, which will take place from May 3 till May 13, at the Coliseum in New York City.

"The exhibit of Merkos publications, some appearing now in seven languages, was quite an attraction to tens of thousands of Jewish visitors at the Fair last year, and it is anticipated that this year's exhibit will even surpass that of last year.

"The Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch, in line with its wide range expansion program to offer its services to a larger number of Jewish people, is the first, and thus far the only Jewish organization to utilize the facilities offered by the World Trade Fair."

Indeed, during the week-long World Trade Fair in 5721\* the Merkos pavilion engaged many more people



and when Rabbi Krinsky submitted a *duch* of both years for comparison the Rebbe responded:

כיון שהיה הנ"ל בהצלחה רבה (וכמובן - שזכות הוא לכל המתעסקים בזה, ובפרט להעומדים בראש), כדאי לה[ת]ענין ע"ד עוד תערוכות כהנ"ל.

[כמדומה, ישנו משרד מיוחד ע"ז בהנהלת העיר].

ויה"ר שג"ז יהא בהצלחה, ובגו"ר.

Since these were very successful (and understandably - it is a merit for all who were involved with it, especially those heading [the project]), it is worthwhile to explore the possibility of [doing this] at other similar exhibitions.

*(I believe there is a dedicated office for this at City Hall).*

Rabbi Moshe Feller was one of the *bochurim* who manned the Merkos pavilion at the World Trade Fair in 5721\*. One day the Rebbetzin came to visit the booth together with Rabbi Krinsky. The *bochurim* stood at the side while Rabbi Krinsky explained the various displays.

In the spring of 5722\*, for the third consecutive year there was a Lubavitch presence at the United States World Trade Fair and, as in the previous years, there was a financial deficit; the sales did not cover the money Merkos

invested in the project. The Rebbe addressed this point on a note that Rabbi Krinsky submitted detailing the expenses and the income:

הריח העיקרי - הפרסום בכלל, וברוחניות בפרט.  
ובודאי עוד יתקבלו.

*The main profit [is]—the general publicity, and especially the spiritual [benefits].*

*Certainly more will be received.*

Several months later, LNS announced that Merkos “will exhibit a large assortment of its educational literature at the Chicago International Trade Fair, this summer.

*“The Fair will take place from July 25 through August 12 and will be held at Chicago’s huge McCormick Place. Aside from its pavillion in the regular exhibiting area, the Merkos will maintain exhibition space in the World Marketing Section of the Chicago Fair where it will display an array of its multilingual publications printed through its regional divisions in foreign countries, such as Eretz Israel, England, France, Italy and Denmark, among others.*

*“The Merkos decision to take part in the Chicago Fair came in recognition of the popular acceptance its exposition received during three successive years of*

MEMORANDUM FOR  
United States World Trade Fair - 1962

stand 150-A	\$400.00
lumber	11.28
salary for Spielman (98 hours)	137.00
book case	50.00
electrical fixtures	16.90
electrical rental and install.	60.00
carpenter	12.85
table	7.19
signs	11.00
plastic flowers	13.00
hardware, tools, parking, tips, carfare & miscellaneous	61.10
	\$770.36

Telephone  
loading & unloading at cellarem

income  
cash  
orders

participation in the U.S. World Trade Fair in New York City.”

One month later LNS sent out a press release about the exhibit in Chicago highlighting the fact that the work of Lubavitch around the world is on display.

*“The Jewish “Peace Corps,” an organization inaugurated more than ten years ago by the world renowned Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, known as the Lubavitcher Rebbe, embraces a wide range of ramified educational and rehabilitation activities in Jewish communities around the globe.*

*“This group... maintains regional offices in more than a dozen countries*

# I WAS THERE...

Mrs. Pesha Razel Lieberman relates:

I was at the US World Trade Fair in the early 5720s\*. My friends and I went there to see the Flowers Exhibition from Holland and elsewhere. After being enthralled by the Israeli Exhibit, I happened to notice four large pictures of holy-looking rabbis attached to the front of a table with young bearded men wearing black coats and hats, standing behind it.

As a teen-age college student, I was a “truth-seeker” looking for more spirituality and mysticism than I enjoyed during my Orthodox upbringing. Some of my friends talked about their saints and their gurus, I wondered if there were any Jewish holy men. Though I knew of shul rabbis, I had never heard of Rebbes.

Since missionary groups were rampant in New York at the time I hesitated approaching the table because I was not sure if it was a Jewish display. However, I was especially attracted by the picture of the holy Tzemach Tzedek dressed all in white and wondered if he could be a Jewish saint.

Most importantly, I noticed that the men behind the table looked like Rabbi Dovid Edelman from my hometown Springfield, MA, whom I had met briefly a few times. Though our Modern Orthodox community did not identify with the European dress style of Rabbi and Rebbetzin Edelman, my family regarded them as among the nicest people in town and supported them financially as well.

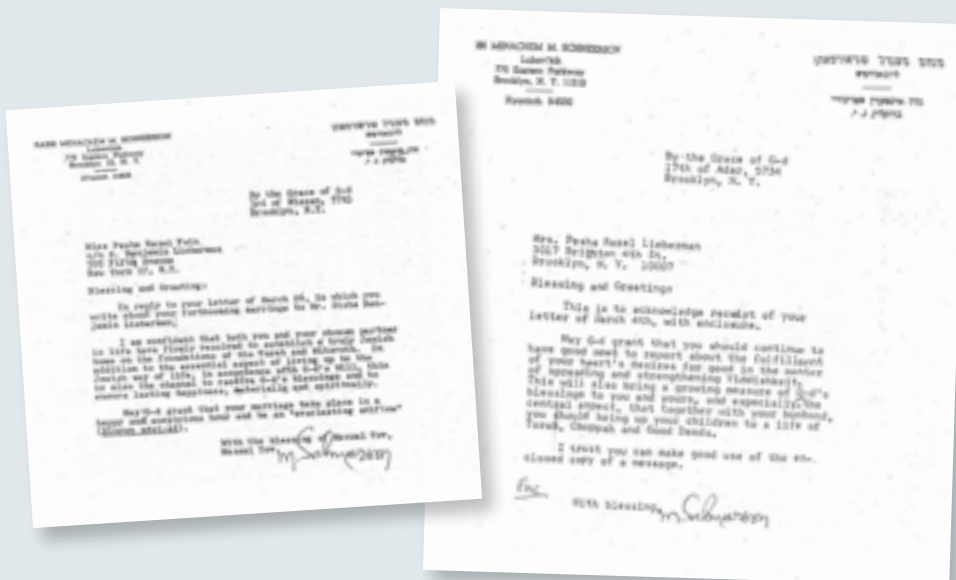
It was these shluchim’s genuine friendship that compelled me to approach the stand with the photos and to ask questions. I bought the four large photos of the Rebbeim for \$1 each, which I have until today.

The young man enthusiastically told me about the current Lubavitcher Rebbe and how much he cares about every single Jew everywhere. I was thrilled to buy the books and pamphlets about various mitzvos for 10, 15 or 50 cents each.

They respectfully answered all my questions and pointed out the number on the back of the pamphlets saying that if I had any further questions I can call that number at any time. It was the phone number to the Merkos office and I had many conversations with Rabbi Binyomin Klein, the Rebbe’s secretary, who patiently answered my many questions.

Eventually Rabbi Klein suggested that I spend a Shabbos in Crown Heights at the home of Rabbi Moshe and Esther Goldman. He said I would have the opportunity to see the Rebbe, daven in 770 and have all my questions answered by the wonderful Goldmans.

I excitedly accepted the invitation and the rest is history. The Rebbe sent a letter of blessing for my wedding two years later and my husband and I merited to be in *yeichidus* several times and to receive many letters over the years.





RABBIS HODAKOV AND KRINSKY CONVERSING AT THE MERKOS BOOTH.



and has more than 300 capable volunteers stationed in Jewish communities in Europe, Israel, Africa, Australia and South America. Their purpose is to facilitate the education of what is now more than 30,000 children and young adults.

*“In underprivileged areas in the world they have not only established educational facilities, schools, books and instruction, but have also had to clothe thousands of individuals and afford them with food, shelter and medical needs.*

*“The “Peace Corps” term has been borrowed by the group from that of President Kennedy, but has actually been in operation since 1951\*.”*

The Chicago exhibition garnered tremendous media attention as did the previous three exhibitions in New York City.

## THE WORLD FAIR

In the spring and summer of 5724\* and 5725\* respectively, New York City hosted two six-month long World Fairs that attracted over 50

million visitors and showcased the achievements of over 80 nations and all the major up and coming corporations in the US. Hailing itself as a “universal and international” exposition, the fair’s theme was “Peace Through Understanding.” The fair is noted to have been the showcase of mid-20th-century American culture and technology.

In addition to the huge pavilions built in numerous structures covering over 600 acres in Queens by major companies such as General Motors, IBM, Ford and Westinghouse, there was a Hall of Education where over 50 groups, mostly businesses involved in education, showcased their ideas for the future of education.

Following the enormous success of the Lubavitch exhibits at the three US World Trade Fairs, Merkos contracted space in the Hall of Education and set up two separate exhibits, notwithstanding the enormous cost.

“After we set up our main pavilion before the start of the World’s Fair, I saw an advertisement that a space in

the Hall of Education was available for rent at a very reasonable price,” recalls Rabbi Krinsky. “I asked the Rebbe if we should contract the second space as well and the Rebbe said we should do it.”

An LNS press release explained that the *“Lubavitcher exhibit will portray the history, development and growth of the Chabad-Lubavitch movement since its inception nearly 200 years ago, with emphasis on its current world wide activities. Its publications department, the largest among all existing Jewish organizations, will exhibit its educational literature which will also be available on the Fair premises.*

*“The pavilion will be located opposite the Fountain of Planets between the IBM and Bell Telephone buildings. An estimated 40,000,000 visitors will view the Lubavitcher exposition.*

*“A unique aspect of the exhibit is that it will be closed on Saturdays and Jewish holidays.*

*“The spokesman also stated that the group is planning a wide range of activities to highlight its participation at the Fair.”*

On the second floor, opposite the escalator there was a large exhibit of Merkos and Kehos publications, records and various

**“One day the Rebbezin came to visit the booth together with Rabbi Krinsky.”**



other paraphernalia, manned by two *bochurim* all the time. There was a guestbook at this exhibit which was signed by hundreds of visitors.

On the main floor there was an exhibit of slides with photos of Lubavitcher *mosdos* and *peulos* around the world projected on several screens. It was an elaborate technological system at the time which timed the slides to alternate on the screens.

Next to the screens there were photographs of all the Rabbeim. Initially Rabbi Krinsky planned on displaying a portrait painting of the Rebbe Rashab. When he submitted the photo to the Rebbe, the Rebbe

said that anyone who knew the Rebbe Rashab can tell right away that the eyes are not portrayed accurately. (It is important to note that Rebbe had never seen the Rebbe Rashab before the *histalkus* on Beis Nissan 5680\*). A copy of the Rebbe Rashab's passport photo was used instead.

In a note to the Rebbe, Rabbi Krinsky wrote that with regard to the Rebbeim that we do not have photos of he is thinking of displaying images of their holy handwriting and asked (a) if it was appropriate to use ones that were already published, (b) if there was a preference to a specific *ksav yad*,

and (c) if it would be appropriate to enlarge them to 11 X 12.

The Rebbe responded (see photo):

בנוגע לתוכן - כשיבחרו באחדים מהם  
מקום לחו"ד שלי מי קודם.  
בנוגע לגודל, הרושם על המבקרים וכו' -  
יתייעץ עם אנ"ש דארצה"ב.

*Regarding the content—after you will choose some I will express my opinion as to which take preference.*

*Regarding enlargement, to make an impression on the visitors etc. consult with anash of the United States.*

Many thousands of visitors streamed by both Merkos exhibitions and the exposure of Yiddishkeit and Chassidus was tremendous.

There was a missionary group that set up their exhibit close to the Merkos pavilion and decorated it deceptively as to attract unassuming young Yidden. The *bochurim* and *yungerleit* manning the Merkos exhibit frequently warned the youngsters about the missionaries and at one point Rabbi Krinsky asked the Rebbe what should be done about it. The Rebbe responded that a lawyer should be consulted.

The long duration of the two World's Fair exhibits and the great investment of money and resources was unprecedented in Lubavitch

כ"ק ארטו"ר שלי"א

בעד התקדוּת חנני חושב לאפשר בפאקסימיליות של כ"ק של  
בנשיאים שאין סהם סכונה חואר פני קרעם.

י'חנני שואל אם יכולים לאפשר ליה סאפאקסימיליות סנרסו  
בכר. ואם יש קריטות באיות סהם, ואם יכולים להגדילם שי"ח"ו  
בגודל 12 X 11 לערך.

חיים יהודא

הנהגת אגודת חסידות חב"ד  
בני ברק

אגודת חסידות חב"ד  
בני ברק

אגודת חסידות חב"ד  
בני ברק

אגודת חסידות חב"ד  
בני ברק

אגודת חסידות חב"ד  
בני ברק



**“They should submit a calculation of all the money they ever donated to Merkos and they will be fully reimbursed.”**

history and it came as a culture shock to several members of *anash*, some who even complained about it. During the month of Cheshvan 5726\*, approximately two months after the conclusion of the second World's Fair, Rabbi Hodakov called a public meeting on behalf of Merkos for all *anash* in the main shul of 770. At the meeting Rabbi Hodakov spoke about

the importance of supporting the work of Merkos and announced that if there are those who have complaints that Merkos spent too much money on extravagant projects they should submit a calculation of all the money they ever donated to Merkos and they will be fully reimbursed. The message was clear: The work of *hafatza* had

entered an entirely new stage and would only grow.

In 5727\* Merkos sponsored exhibits at the International and Universal Exposition (known as Expo 67) in Montreal and at the Jerusalem Book Fair in Eretz Yisroel, which were visited by many dignitaries as well.

Rabbi Krinsky summarized all of these exhibitions as follows: “There is no question that all these exhibits were very valuable in a spiritual sense. No other Jewish organizations at the time had the concept or worldview of doing such a thing. It was very pleasurable and the Rebbe had tremendous *nachas* from it.” **T**