



Buy It!



Rabbi Yosef Biston

Parkland, Florida

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

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

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

Fast forward 25 years...

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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