

A Chassidisher **Derher**

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להחזיר עטרה ליושנה

THE STORY OF THE
CHABAD COMMUNITY
IN TZFAS



Seeing Our Rebbeim—

והיו עיניך ראות את מוריך

A HISTORICAL SKETCH OF THE PORTRAITS
AND PHOTOGRAPHS OF OUR REBBEIM

Reality—Tzimtzum Kipshuto?

CHARTING THE GREAT DEBATE OVER
THE EXTENT AND IMPACT OF TZIMTZUM



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

בקשר עם כ"ף מנחם אב
יום הסתלקות כ"ק הרה"ג הרה"ח המקובל וכו' ר' לוי יצחק ז"ל שניאורסאהן
אביו של כ"ק אדמו"ר

ולע"נ זקנינו הרה"ת והחסיד בעל מריץ למופת ר' יעקב יהודה בר' יהושע ע"ה העכט

Derher **Editorial**

Many of us are accustomed to thinking of our time as one when we don't need to live with actual mesiras nefesh. It's easy to forget that for a large percentage of the Jewish nation throughout the twentieth century, mesiras nefesh for Yiddishkeit was an everyday reality. Time and again at farbrengens throughout the years, the Rebbe spoke about the plight of the Yidden trapped behind the Iron Curtain in the former Soviet Union, extolling their mesiras nefesh and calling on Yidden in the free world to emulate their determination for Yiddishkeit, Torah and mitzvos in our own lives. In this particular farbrengen, the Rebbe cried profusely over and over, pouring out his heart about the plight of Russian Jewry:

With Hashem's great kindness, we are blessed to live in a free country, filled with abundance, and with plenty of time to study Torah and no one stopping us from fulfilling all the mitzvos meticulously. However, there are those who don't make good use of this opportunity and instead spend all their time thinking about how to make more money. They need to think about how to do this trick or the other game and earn a few more dollars. Why? So they can purchase a carpet that covers the floor from wall-to-wall!

The Rebbe Rashab once told a Chossid who was a bit too preoccupied with his galoshes business: "I've seen feet in galoshes; but I've never seen a head in galoshes!"

Yet our friend has put his head into something even lower than galoshes: he's thinking about the carpet that is stepped on by galoshes!

Why are you thinking about a wall-to-wall carpet? You've been blessed to live in a land of much bounty; you have all you need. Better use your time to study Torah! But no, he still needs this that and the other thing.

Then there is a Yid in Moscow. All he wants to do is put on tefillin, but he can't. He doesn't enjoy this bounty of material matters. And he certainly doesn't have it easy in his spiritual life. Every mitzvah is a challenge of *mesiras nefesh*. And yet all he wants is to figure out how to do another mitzvah!

He wishes he could put on tefillin, but he doesn't own a pair! When he finally gets his hands on a pair of tefillin, he is afraid to go to shul to put them on, so he needs to find a private room in his home (that itself is a rarity in Russia), and closes the door to put on tefillin secretly.

Despite all these challenges, putting on tefillin brings him the greatest *simcha*, more than the joy of a Yid celebrating Simchas Torah here in Brooklyn!

I was once asked by a group of Yidden here in New York: Why don't we see wonders and miracles, the likes of which they saw at *yetzias Mitzrayim* and *krias yam suf*? If Hashem would perform those kinds of miracles for us, we would definitely keep the Torah and mitzvos without fail. But look at the Yidden in Moscow: they don't demand any of these miracles! All they want is to be able to do another mitzvah without hardship!

...When it comes to Yidden here in the land of the free, we ask them to go out and subscribe another Yid for a letter in the *Sefer Torah Haklali*, they "do us a big favor" and exert their "effort" in this area, only after they're done eating, drinking, and going for a pleasant walk. And then when they do sign up two or three Yidden, they feel like the greatest people in the world.

The Yidden in Moscow don't need any recognition. All they want is to be able to put on tefillin or eat a *kezayis* of matzah...

The point with all these words is not to merely to disparage anyone, *chas v'sholom*. Hashem should finally take away the *galus* of the Yidden in Russia—a *galus* within the *galus* that we already find ourselves in—and allow them the freedom to do Torah and mitzvos without fear. In the meantime, us Yidden on this side of the curtain should increase in Torah study and do mitzvos, in an ever growing manner...

(*Shabbos Parshas Shemini, 5742*)

Over the past half-year, the easy life that we've been accustomed to has changed drastically. The truth is that over the past few decades we've experienced unprecedented material abundance. As the Rebbe pointed out many times: in the final moments of this *galus* we experience a taste of the times of Moshiach. Just like in *Mitzrayim* where even before the actual *geula*, the Torah tells us that "לכל בני ישראל ה' אור במושבותם"—For all the Yidden there was light in their dwellings."

But in the recent past, we've dealt with difficulties that are less expected in our day and age. Many people ask "Why?" and instead demand wonders and miracles.

Indeed, Hashem should bless everyone with health and happiness and give every Yid the abundance they need, and even more. However, it's important to remember that the *Eibershter* put us in this situation.

Yes, the Rebbe teaches us to demand that every Yid should have only revealed good. (Even in this *farbrengen*, the Rebbe demands that the Yidden in Russia should be relieved of all their hardships and be able to practice Yiddishkeit freely.)

On the other hand however, the way we face these challenges is by increasing in Torah and mitzvos and doubling and redoubling our efforts in *hafatzas hamaayanos*.

This is how we as Chassidim do it in trying times. We soldier on, doing what the Rebbe wants us to do, no matter the situation.

Let us all daven to Hashem we should indeed have "לכל בני ישראל ה' אור במושבותם," open and revealed good. And the ultimate good, of course, is the *geula ha'mitis v'hashleima*, when these days of mourning will be transformed לששון ולשמחה ולמועדים טובים.

תיכף ומיד ממש!

A Chassidisher Derher

י"ג תמוז ה'תש"פ

שבעים שנה לנשיאות כ"ק אדמו"ר

LETTUCE, CUCUMBERS, AND RADISHES

The Torah tells us that when Rivka was pregnant with Yaakov and Esav, she was told: “Two nations [goyim] are in your womb.”

The Gemara in Avoda Zara interprets:

“Rav Yehuda says in the name of Rav: Do not read it as goyim, [nations]; rather read it as geyim, [proud ones]. This was fulfilled [in two prominent individuals who descended from Rivka], Antoninus and Rebbi Yehuda HaNasi, whose tables never lacked for lettuce, nor cucumbers, nor radish, neither in the summer nor in the rainy season, [due to their great wealth—despite the fact that these foods do not grow year round]. It was said: A radish breaks up food, lettuce stirs up food, and cucumbers expand the intestines...””

Taking this piece of Gemara at face value—this seems rather puzzling:

Was this the only way to describe the great wealth of these two individuals? We are talking about Rebbi Yehuda Hanasi, the leader of all the Jewish people of his time! And Antoninus, the emperor of Rome—the superpower of its day, who stood in command of a vast army. Is this really the greatest thing we can say about these two personalities?

More so, were Rebbi and Antoninus really the only two people in the world who had access to these foods throughout all four seasons? One would think that given the great health benefits of these foods described in the Gemara, many others managed to procure these things as well!

The answer is that these three vegetables tell the story behind the relationship of these two men.

Harav Levi Yizchok explains that Rebbi, who was a descendent of Yaakov Avinu, represents the world of *Tikkun* and Antoninus, a descendant of Eisav, represents the world of *Tohu*.

The Rebbe elaborates:



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

Tohu is a world that received more light than it could handle, and thus its containers shattered. The world of *Tikkun* works with *Tohu* so that it can repair itself and eventually be able to handle the immense light.

For this reason, Rebbi was in constant contact with Antoninus and had a tremendous influence on his life, to the extent that after many years he chose to convert and become a Yid. This was a result of *Tikkun's* influence on *Tohu*.

Now we'll understand why these three foods are an important part of the relationship of these two men.

The three vegetables mentioned in the Gemara are symbolic of the three stages of the relationship between a teacher and his student; the process of *Tikkun* working with *Tohu*.

The first step is how the Rebbe/teacher decides that he wants to give over something or that he wants to work with a particular person. Turning his attention to this person is the first step towards making him into the student; acknowledging him and his needs.

However, this plan of working with the student is all in the mind of the teacher; the student is still unaware of it at this point. In order for the student to be receptive to the idea and agree to become a student, the teacher needs to present the idea properly.

This is where the “radish” comes in. Just like the radish that “breaks up” the food, the teacher must break up the idea into small pieces, presenting it bit-by-bit.

The next step is “lettuce”: Just like lettuce stirs the food, the teacher must “stir” the idea, turning it over and over. This is the process of turning around the teacher's *approach*; instead of thinking about the idea in his own terms, he takes the vantage point of the student. While the teacher has the clarity of the entire idea in his mind, the student needs to first be exposed to the smaller parts, one bit at a time, until the entire idea is comprehensible.

The third step is the “cucumber”: Just like a cucumber expands the intestines, it is now the job of the teacher to work with the student, giving him the tools so that he is

properly prepared to handle the depth of the idea being taught.

This is the process of all of our *avoda* in this world:

It is our job to find and elevate all the sparks of *kedusha* that fell from *Tohu*, refining the physical world and revealing *Elokus*.

The task of influencing and refining the great Roman emperor is something only Rebbi could do, however, this does not exempt us from this type of work. We are all tasked with repairing the part of the world that we have influence over; in our sphere of influence we are all like Rebbi, and must do the work of *Tikkun* with the world. When there are things that seem extremely “distant” and “out of reach,” they are really powerful sparks of *kedusha* that have fallen so far. The higher the spark, the harder the fall. With the right approach and the correct effort, as elaborated above, we can reach and elevate even the most remote sparks of *kedusha* and ultimately perfect the entire world. **T**

(Adapted from *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Re'eh*, 5732)

1. Avoda Zara 11a.

נדפס ע"י ולזכות
הרה"ת ר' נחום וזוגתו מרת צבי
ומשפחתם שיחיו
שפירא



לעבן מיט'ן רבין



TZIVOS HASHEM RALLY

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ע"י בנם
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 וזוגתו מרת פעסל לאה ומשפחתם שיחיו
 רוהר

טור 'לעבן מיט'ן 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

Tanya in Gan Yisroel

MENACHEM-AV 5741*



5741* was a year that is a significant period in the history of Chabad, witnessing a major growth and expansion in the Rebbe's activities; from the establishment of Tzivos Hashem to the launching of the worldwide campaign of *Os B'Sefer Torah*—this was the beginning of a new era in the history of *dor hashvi'i*.

Based on the diary of a *bochur* learning in 770 at the time, the following pages offer the reader a taste of a summer month in the Rebbe's presence.

SHABBOS PARSHAS MASEI, ROSH CHODESH MENACHEM-AV

As every week, the Rebbe was called up for *maftir*. When it came to the Haftarah, the Rebbe began reading *דברי ירמי*—the Haftarah for Parshas Matos! When the *gabbai* tried to give the Rebbe a Chumash opened up to the Haftarah for Parshas Masei (שמעו דבר ה'), the Rebbe gave him a piercing look and continued to read the Haftarah he had started.¹

The Rebbe's whole demeanor was different than usual while he read the Haftarah of Parshas Matos. Only once he was done did the Rebbe continue with the Haftarah for Parshas Masei.

During the third *sicha* of the farbrengen², the Rebbe addressed this, explaining that the appropriate Haftarah was indeed the one for Masei (שמיני), and that he recited the previous week's Haftarah due to a *shakla v'tarya* regarding Shabbos Rosh Chodesh during the "Three Weeks."

As the Rebbe was going home after Maariv, the *bochurim* started to sing, but the Rebbe did not encourage the singing as he normally did. The next day, the Rebbe remarked that these days (the month of Av) are not an appropriate time for singing and instructed that a rav should be consulted regarding the children's rally taking place on Monday, whether singing is allowed, etc.

MONDAY, GIMMEL MENACHEM-AV

At 2:00 p.m., a children's rally was held in the big shul downstairs of 770. Before the Rebbe came in, the emcee made an announcement: In accordance with the Rebbe's instructions, there will be no

singing; neither by davening, nor by the rally. The Tzivos Hashem Anthem ("We Want Moshiach Now!") will be said—not sung—by everyone together after the 12 Pesukim. He also gave over the Rebbe's instructions to say the first and last *possuk* of Eicha after the 12 Pesukim.

The Rebbe joined the children in shul for Mincha. After Mincha, the 12 Pesukim, as well as the first and last *possuk* of Eicha were recited, after which the whole crowd chanted together the words "We want Moshiach now!" over and over again.

At the end of the rally, the Rebbe gave the *madrichim* and *madrichos* coins to give to the children; three coins per child—two coins to give to tzedakah, and one to do with as they see fit.

The Rebbe then asked that all the children say together three times the *possuk* עוצו עצה וגו' one time the *possuk* אלקיך וגו' והשיבנו ה' אליך וגו'; and one time the *possuk* אך צדיקים וגו'.

As the Rebbe walked out of the shul, the children started to chant again the words, "We want Moshiach now!" The Rebbe encouraged them with his hand, encouraging the pure and heartfelt cries of the young boys and girls.



SHABBOS (CHAZON) PARSHAS DEVARIM, CHES MENACHEM-AV

When the Rebbe arrived at 770 this morning, the Chassidim were notified that there will be a farbrengen today!—a welcoming surprise for the smaller than usual crowd.

While reading the Haftarah, the Rebbe cried profusely, pausing almost every few words during the second half.

At the farbrengen later that day, the Rebbe said a *maamar* on the words ציון במשפט תפודה ושביל בצדקה. Before saying the *maamar*, the Rebbe related that the Rebbe Rashab once said a *maamar* on this *possuk* (on which the Rebbe's *maamar* is based). The *maamar* was said on a Shabbos that was also Erev Tisha B'Av (same *kvius* as this year), and *chazara* of the *maamer*—which had begun on Shabbos—continued into the night...

Before saying a *biur* on a Mishna in Pirkei Avos (*perek gimmel*), the Rebbe mentioned that there is a *shakla v'tarya* whether to learn Pirkei Avos after Mincha on Shabbos Erev Tisha B'Av or not (one is generally not supposed to learn Torah after *chatzos* on Erev Tisha B'Av), adding, that it is not his *inyan* to determine who is right in this matter... Therefore, Pirkei Avos will not be said (officially) after Mincha. The Rebbe said that when he returns to his room he will do as he sees fit.

(The next Shabbos at the farbrengen, the Rebbe said that in order not to make differences between those who learnt *perek gimmel* the previous week and those who did not, everyone should therefore learn the *perek* from last week (*perek gimmel*), and those people who already learnt it will learn it a second time.)

At the conclusion of the farbrengen, the Rebbe turned to the children and began to sing "We want Moshiach now!"

MOTZEI SHABBOS CHAZON, TISHA B'AV

The Rebbe entered the shul for Maariv a few minutes after Shabbos ended. The Rebbe's chair was moved to the side and a wooden crate covered in cloth was used instead. (In the Rebbe's car, a wooden board was placed on the seat upon which the Rebbe sat while going home.)

Word has spread that the first *siyum* and *hachnosas sefer Torah* for the *yaldei Yisroel* will take place on Chof Menachem-Av in Yerushalayim *ir hakodesh*, and that Rabbi Zalman Shimon Dvorkin



9 AV 5750, JEM 10-4059



RABBI DWORKIN SPEAKS AT THE SIYUM SEFER TORAH.

will be the Rebbe's personal representative to the celebration.

FRIDAY, YUD-DALED MENACHEM-AV

When the Rebbe arrived in 770, he distributed coins for tzedakah to the children as usual. One of the children was wearing a Tzivos Hashem hat, as well as a shirt depicting a popular children's character. The Rebbe asked the child if he is in Tzivos Hashem. When the boy replied affirmatively, the Rebbe asked him, if so, why is he wearing such a shirt...?

SUNDAY, YUD-ZAYIN MENACHEM-AV

After *krias haTorah*, Rabbi Dvorkin went into the Rebbe's room. The Rebbe instructed that he should finish the writing of the first *sefer Torah* and immediately begin the writing of a second one; all of this as the Rebbe's *shliach* and that of all *anash*. The Rebbe explained that this is by virtue of him being the *mara d'asra* of Crown Heights, and therefore—of all of Chabad. The Rebbe gave him a bottle of *mashke* which had been brought from



a farbrengen in Russia and some bills in Israeli currency.

Rabbi Hodakov, as well as many of the *bochurim* and *anash* accompanied Rabbi Dvorkin to the airport.

The campers from Gan Yisroel came to 770 today; upon their request the Rebbe davened Mincha in the big shul downstairs.

THURSDAY, CHOF MENACHEM-AV

At 9:30 in the evening, the farbrengen was held to mark the yahrtzeit of Harav Levi Yitzchok, the Rebbe's father. There was quite a large crowd in attendance, including rabbonim and other public figures. This farbrengen was broadcast live on television.

In the second *sicha*, the Rebbe said that he will make a *siyum* on four different *mesechtos* (Brachos, Nazir, Yevamos, and Kerisos) which all conclude with the same *possuk* וכל בניך לימודי ה' ורב שלום בניך. The Rebbe noted that this *possuk* highlights the connection that the *yaldei Yisroel* have with Torah.

During the *sicha*, the Rebbe observed that there are three characteristics that are distinct

by children: 1. They are constantly active and on the move (sign of a healthy child). 2. A child is constantly asking questions; never satisfied with the answer, "When you get older you will understand." 3. A child has *kabbalas ol*.

The Rebbe explained that every *Yid* must learn from and apply these three qualities by constantly growing מחיל אל חיל; to contemplate on all that he sees and recognize the ultimate source of all things; and of course, to have *kabbalas ol*.

Later on in the farbrengen, the Rebbe encouraged everyone to participate in the *taanis shaos* the rabbonim had scheduled for Thursday, Chof-Zayin Menachem-Av (in connection with the situation in Eretz Hakodesh).

Between the *sichos*, the Rebbe conversed with a number of people. Amongst them was Rabbi Avraham Shapira, a member of the Knesset representing the political party "Agudas Yisroel." When he asked the Rebbe if he could have a private *yechidus*, the Rebbe told him to speak to Rabbi Hodakov.

Another person who approached the Rebbe was Reb Yosef Nimotin. He had come out of Russia



20 AV 5739, YOSSI MELAMED VIA JEM 23114



just two and a half years earlier, and while there he had the *zechus* of taking care of the Rebbe's father's *tziyun*. During the farbrengen, he took the opportunity to receive the Rebbe's *bracha* for both himself and for a friend of his still in Russia (who had since assumed the responsibility of taking care of the *tziyun*). The Rebbe gave a *bracha*, adding that there should be a *refuah shleima*.

Reb Yosef later related that at first, he wondered what the Rebbe was referring to with the "*refuah shleima*," and concluded that the Rebbe must have meant him. It was only the next day—when he received a letter from his friend in Russia—that he understood the Rebbe's intention: In the letter, his friend had written that he had not been feeling well recently, and had gone to visit the *tziyun* of the Rebbe's father to ask for a *bracha* to be able to leave Russia, as well as a *bracha* for a *refuah shleima*...

SHABBOS PARSHAS EIKEV, CHOF-BEIS MENACHAM-AV

Many of *anash* were away for Shabbos because of the Yarchei Kallah which was held on the campgrounds of Gan Yisroel. (In honor of the event, a special *kovetz* was printed in which the Rebbe participated by including a *sicha* that he edited especially for the occasion.)

At the farbrengen, the Rebbe spoke about Camp Gan Yisroel and instructed that wine and *mezonos* from the farbrengen be brought to camp after Shabbos, and a *melave malka* should be arranged. As part of the program, there should be a *chazara* of that which was spoken here on Shabbos, as well as a celebration with singing and dancing.

The Rebbe also instructed that wine and *mezonos* should be sent to the Tzemach Tzedek Shul in the Old City of Yerushalayim (in which the *siyum sefer*



MAYOR ABRAHAM BEAME APPROACHES THE REBBE DURING THE FARBRENGEN, 20 AV 5741.

Torah for *yaldei Yisroel* took place), and they should arrange a *farbrenge* there on Motzei Shabbos. The Rebbe added that *Tanyas* should be printed in both locations.

At the end of the *farbrenge*, the Rebbe repeated the above instructions, adding that the *vaad hamesader* should make sure that buses are ready right after Shabbos to transport to camp all those who would like to take part in the festivities. Regarding the *Tanyas*, the Rebbe said that copies should be sent to all the major capitals around the globe. The Rebbe added that they should ensure that the stamp of the camp's post office is prominently displayed on the envelope.

The Rebbe gave bottles of *mashke*, wine, and *mezonos* to Reb Yaakov Yosef Raskin and Reb Yosef Nimotin for the *melave malka* in camp. The Rebbe gave the same to Reb Yehoshua Yuzevitch for a *farbrenge* in Yerushalayim. (Mixed in with these

bottles was the *mashke* that was brought to the Rebbe from a *farbrenge* in Russia.)

Right after Shabbos, a large delegation of *anash* and *bochurim* made their way to Camp Gan Yisroel where a *seudas melave malka* took place as per the Rebbe's instructions, followed by a joyous *farbrenge* which lasted until the morning. That same night, a printer was transported to camp and preparations for the printing of the *Tanya* began. The next day, the Rebbe instructed that they should print a *Tehillim* there as well.

TUESDAY, CHOF-HEI MENACHEM-AV

At 8:00 p.m., Rabbi Avraham Shapira went into the Rebbe's room and was there for more than 3 hours! When he came out, he would not repeat what was spoken about, only commenting that "it was a deep conversation."



20 AV 5746, MORDECHAI BARON VIA JEM 147592

WEDNESDAY, CHOF-VOV MENACHEM-AV

The Rebbe went to the Ohel today. When he returned, Rabbi Zalman Shimon Dvorkin (who returned today from Eretz Yisroel) entered the Rebbe's room and delivered a report from the *siyum sefer Torah*.

THURSDAY, CHOF-ZAYIN MENACHEM-AV, (TAANIS SHAOS)

After Mincha, the Rebbe said a *sicha* in connection with the fast. During the *sicha* the Rebbe spoke at length about the Yidden who are leaving Russia. The Rebbe opposed the fact that specific conditions are being made for them to force them to go to Eretz Yisroel. The Rebbe fasted all day and davened Maariv at 8:30 p.m. (instead of the usual time 9:30) with a small *minyan* in Gan Eden Hatachton. Following Maariv, the Rebbe went home.

SHABBOS PARSHAS RE'EH, CHOF-TES MENACHEM-AV, EREV ROSH CHODESH ELUL

At the Shabbos farbrengen, the Rebbe spoke about Gan Yisroel and of the speed in which the Tanya was printed (the Rebbe brought a copy of the Tanya with him to the farbrengen).

Once again, the Rebbe instructed that *mezonos* and wine from the farbrengen be sent to camp, and that a rally should be organized for the campers during which they should learn about the idea of "מלך בשדה". The Rebbe also suggested that the campers send postcards to their friends who are at home wishing them a *shana tova*, as well as some additional words connected to Torah and mitzvos. The Rebbe instructed that the postcards should be sent while they are still in camp in order that the card should bear the stamp of the camp's post office.

Amongst other things, the Rebbe related that he received a letter from a child in which he writes how he is a high ranking member in Tzivos Hashem, but he is worried because soon he will become bar mitzvah and be stripped of all his ranks... The Rebbe went on to explain how Tzivos Hashem is for every single Yid, even for those after bar mitzvah.

Before the farbrengen concluded, the Rebbe mentioned that there are those who are disturbed by a surprising phenomenon: From where does one acquire the *balebateshkeit* to demand from the



THE TANYA AND KOVETZ YARCHEI KALLAH PRINTED IN GAN YISROEL.

Aibershter that he must bring Moshiach?! And when someone points out to them, that in fact, we do *exactly* that during *Shemoneh Esreh*, they respond that davening is different; that is a time when a Yid rises above nature...

The Rebbe countered this argument by pointing out how three times a day—*after* we finish *Shemoneh Esreh*—we say a prayer in which we request from Hashem that the *Beis Hamikdash* be rebuilt speedily in our days...!

After reminding everyone to make a *bracha acharona*, the Rebbe gave Rabbi Avraham Shemtov (director of Camp Gan Yisroel) *mashke* and *mezonos* for the campers of Gan Yisroel.

SUNDAY, LAMED MENACHEM-AV, ROSH CHODESH ELUL

Following the Rebbe's instructions at the Shabbos farbrengen, a rally was held today in camp. Present at this rally was Rabbi Dvorkin, whom the Rebbe had sent to tell the children about what took place at the *siyum* and *hachnasas sefer Torah* in Eretz Yisroel. **T**

1. In his yoman, Rabbi Michoel Seligson writes that Rabbi Groner whispered something to the Rebbe but the Rebbe took no notice.
2. Sichos Kodesh 5741 vol. 4, pgs. 283-289.



כתב יד
קודש

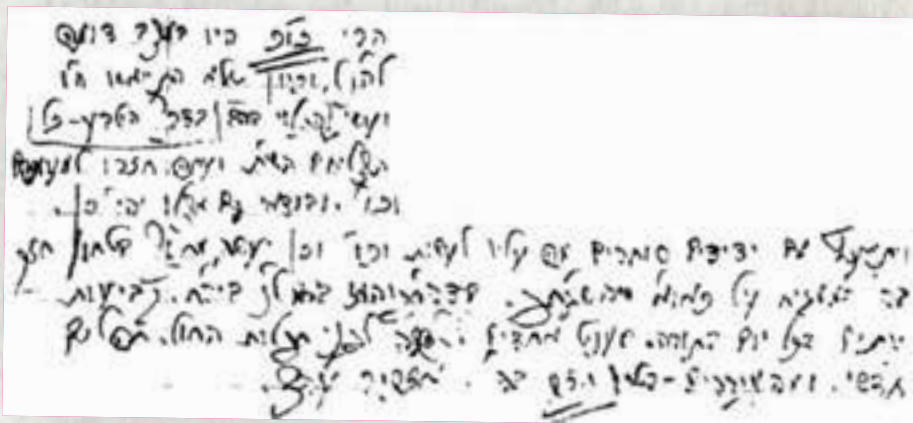
When Business is Down...

A brief but powerful response from the Rebbe to an individual who wrote that he was facing severe difficulties in his business (circa 5730*):

לזכות
 החתן הרה"ת ר' שלום דובער
 והכלה המהוללה מרת שרה רחל (ווילהעלם)
 שיחיו שור
 לרגל חתונתם ר"ח סיון ה'תש"פ

ולזכות
 החתן הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל
 והכלה המהוללה מרת אסתר ברכה (שפערלין)
 שיחיו קארפ
 לרגל חתונתם ג' סיון ה'תש"פ

ולזכות
 החתן הרה"ת ר' ישעיהו
 והכלה המהוללה מרת חי' מושקא (פעלדמאן)
 שיחיו נפרסטק
 לרגל חתונתם ח"י סיון ה'תש"פ



Many people have found themselves in a similar situation to the one you describe. Because they did not give up, *chas v'shalom*, and they did whatever was in their power in the natural course of things, Hashem granted them success, and they now returned to their previous state. The same can certainly be true for you.

You should seek the counsel of friends who are in business, asking them what to do, etc. and follow their advice; [along] with unwavering trust in Hashem, who watches over each and every individual with *hashgacha pratis*.

Check your tefillin and mezuzos, if they haven't been checked in the past twelve months. Set aside fixed times for Torah study every day. Give a few cents to tzedakah before davening each weekday. Recite the Tehillim [as divided] for the days of the month. And one of the most important things: have unwavering trust in Hashem.

I will mention this at the Tziyun.

הרי כו"כ היו במצב דומה להנ"ל, וכיון שלא התייאשו ח"ו ועשו בדרך הטבע - כל התלוי בהם הצליחם השי"ת ועתה חזרו למעמדם וכו'. ובודאי גם אצלו יהי' כן. ויתיעץ עם ידידים סוחרים מה עליו לעשות וכו' וכן יעשה, מתוך בטחון חזק בה' המשגיח על כאו"א בהשגח"פ.

בדהתפורהמ"ז באם ל"נ ביב"ח [בדיקת התפילין והמזוזות באם לא נבדקו בי"ב חודש]. קביעות עתים בכל יום בתורה. סענט אחדים לצדקה לפני תפלות החול. תהלים חדשי. ומהעיקרים - בטחון חזק בה'.

אזכיר עה"צ.

(Igros Kodesh vol. 26, p. 499)



Rea



**Charting the great
debate over the extent
and impact of tzimtzum**

Original illustrations by **Mussi Sharfstein** for A Chassidisher Derher.

לעילוי נשמת דודינו הרבנים החשובים
שנספו בנגיף הידוע

הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' ישראל יצחק
בן ר' יעקב ע"ה פרידמאן
נלב"ע ז' ניסן ה'תש"פ

הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' שלום
בן ר' ארי' דוב ע"ה איידלמאן
נלב"ע ט"ז ניסן ה'תש"פ
תנ"צ'ה'

נדפס ע"י

הרה"ת ר' חיים שניאור זלמן
וזוגתו מרת מלכה ומשפחתם שיחיו
גורקאוו

ility

In the early days of Chassidus, there was tremendous opposition to its new approach to *avodas Hashem*, to the extent that there were burnings of the *sefer* of the Baal Shem Tov's teachings, the *Tzavaas Harivash*.

Why did they decide to burn the *sefer*? The *misnagdim* claimed that it was due to the following teaching: *If [a non-Jew] is speaking while you are davening, you should say to yourself, 'Why did Hashem bring about that he should speak to me during my davening? It must be b'hashgacha pratis. The very words he is saying are from the Shechina, which resides in his mouth in order to motivate me to strengthen my service of Hashem.'*

What's so controversial about this statement? Why would they burn a *sefer* over this? And it didn't stop there: Although the Alter Rebbe explained this statement at length in a letter, the Vilna Gaon brought it up again in a letter in 5657*. What about this statement was worthy to be repeated again and again by the opponents of Chassidus?

It goes to the heart of the famous argument in Kabbalah about the meaning of the *tzimtzum*, known as *tzimtzum kipshuto*—the *tzimtzum* is literal, or *tzimtzum shelo kipshuto*—the *tzimtzum* is non-literal.

The Tzimtzum

One of the great innovations of the Kabbalah of the Arizal, as was revealed to him from above, is the concept of the *tzimtzum*.

...Before anything physical or spiritual was created, the simple infinite light of Hashem filled everything, and there was no empty place. When Hashem decided with his abstract will to create creations, he contracted the light... right in the middle of it... and there remained an empty space.¹

What does this mean? The early *mekubalim* in the generations following the Arizal were split in their understanding: Some held that the *tzimtzum* is *kipshuto*, that the *tzimtzum* should be understood literally, that Hashem actually removed his light. Others held that the *tzimtzum* is *shelo kipshuto*, that it shouldn't be understood literally. *Tzimtzum* means only that *we* (from *our* perspective) simply don't *feel* Hashem's light.

Tzimtzum Kipshuto

Hashem actually contracted his light, and it is no longer revealed in the world.

The Mishnas Chassidim
Reb Yonasan Eibeshitz
The Vilna Gaon

Tzimtzum Shelo Kipshuto

*Hashem never actually contracted his light, and everything remained the same. We feel that it's contracted, meaning that **we** don't realize that it is revealed.*

Shaar Hashamayim
Shomer Emunim

Chassidus *paskens* that the reality is that *tzimtzum shelo kipshuto*, for *tzimtzum kipshuto* would be a limitation in Hashem. As the Alter Rebbe puts it, *tzimtzum kipshuto* is "*mikrei haguf*," something that could apply only to physical, bodily matters.

What's the argument?

A casual reader might think that those who held *tzimtzum kipshuto* believed that Hashem literally moved his light away, he literally

contracted his light, whereas those who hold that it's *shelo kipshuto* believe that it's not literal.

But the truth is that this is obviously not what they meant; Hashem's light is not a physical thing, *chas veshalom*, that can be moved. Even spiritual things in our physical world, like ideas, cannot literally be moved, so of course Hashem's light cannot be moved. And considering that this was an argument among *gedolei Yisroel*, it obviously wasn't about such a simple concept.

The argument is in the spiritual realm and is a nuanced difference in understanding:

When Hashem's *or ein sof* is utterly revealed, when the ultimate truth of Hashem is fully expressed, there can be nothing else—the concept of a separate world makes no sense. That's why there needs to be a *tzimtzum*, so that this ultimate truth is not expressed in a revealed manner, and the worlds are able to be created.

But here comes the argument. Some say that, in a spiritual sense, this actually happened, and Hashem's *or ein sof* is actually not revealed in the worlds. Others say that it is *shelo kipshuto*, that the *or ein sof* was never removed from the world; it's only that Hashem made it so that the *world* does not feel the *or ein sof*.

For a clearer understanding of their argument, see below.



Deep read

In order to gain some clarity on this profound issue, we will be discussing the following points:

- Tzimtzum as a contraction in order to make “space” for the creation of the world: What is the definition of “contraction” and “space” in spirituality?
- The logic of tzimtzum kipshuto.
- Why we do not accept this viewpoint.
- What tzimtzum shelo kipshuto means.
- How to understand tzimtzum shelo kipshuto.

This explanation and presentation is adapted from the shiurim of Reb Yoel Kahn on Shaar Hayichud Veha'emuna, especially as they are written in “Shaar Hayichud Veha'emuna” by Maaynosecha p. 265ff. For a clearer understanding of the topics, see there.

The meaning of “contraction” and “space” in spirituality

Let us explore the following question: Are spiritual things limited to a specific location or space, or are they everywhere?

For example, the logic that 2 plus 2 equals 4—is that idea everywhere?

Well, it's certainly not limited to a specific location; the same way it's true in one place, it's true in another. You cannot talk about it using physical terms—like north, south, east and west—and you cannot touch it. It's beyond the limitations of time and space: whenever and wherever you have two and two, you will have four.

So in a certain sense, one might think that spiritual things are everywhere too. (One might even think that this is what we mean when we say that Hashem is everywhere: He is spiritual, and therefore he isn't limited in physical location.)

But if you think into it a bit more, you will discover the problem with this perspective. Is this idea really everywhere, meaning in every single place? Does this idea have any connection with this place? Is it actually here more than anywhere



else? Of course not. It is *beyond* space, it is *beyond* location, since it exists in a higher realm, the world of intellect. So, on the one hand, it's not limited to a *specific* location.

But it's not actually in the physical realm. Try to use an idea to move a table. It won't work, because the idea isn't *in* this physical space. Ideas are not limited to one location, but not because they are *everywhere*—because they are *nowhere*, they do not inhabit the physical world. The only place that an idea can be is in the brain because the brain is able to think about and process ideas. They are not limited to a specific *physical* location but they are limited to a specific realm—the spiritual realm.

Key point: *The definition of something “existing” in a particular realm or space—as we naturally understand it—is that it is **there**, that it has some actual connection to, and effect on, the space. If it has no actual connection to this space, then in its world, it does not exist. Just as physical beings exist only in one specific location, spiritual things only inhabit their own specific realm.*

Everything has its place - the logic of Tzimtzum Kipshuto

The truth is that every existence in this world has a realm, a “place” where it exists.

A person has many different parts of himself, beginning with his mind all the way down to his feet; and every part has a different function: the brain processes ideas, the feet walk. Ideas exist in the brain because the brain can think about ideas, whereas there are no ideas in the feet because feet cannot understand ideas. You wouldn't say that the feet *have* ideas, they just don't know about it—feet don't have ideas!

The same is true in the general world. There are four general types of creations: *domem*, *tzomeach*, *chai* and *medaber*—inanimate, vegetative, animal, and human. Each one of them has a different type of spiritual energy. The power to grow exists in the plant and not in the rock. The animal soul exists in animals and not in plants, and the human soul exists only in humans. Each of these exist in a separate realm and it has no connection to the lower levels. A rock does not have the energy to grow, plants do not have a living soul and animals do not have human souls. Everything exists in its own realm.

Beyond this physical world, there are higher levels of life in the spiritual worlds. These spiritual worlds do not inhabit our physical world, they are beyond us.

These spiritual worlds also each have their own realm, and each one of them has its own spiritual energy that is tailored for it—not higher and not lower.

Let's go even higher. Is there *ein sof* in the spiritual worlds? Looking at it from a logical perspective, there is not. A rock cannot grow, for then it would no longer be a rock; feet cannot think, for they would no longer be feet; then there certainly cannot be *or ein sof* in the world, for then it would be unlimited, it would not be a world. If one limited being doesn't exist in another limited being, unlimited certainly doesn't exist in the limited. The unlimited *or ein sof* is everywhere—since it is unlimited—but it is *higher* than the limited worlds.

This is how the *tzimtzum kipshuto* camp thought: In order to create the universe, Hashem removed the *or ein sof*, and created a limited type

of *chayus*, and that's what he put into the worlds. The unlimited light of Hashem is not in the limited worlds. The unlimited light of Hashem is *not* felt and it's *not* revealed—which means that it's not here.

Just as ideas do not populate physical spaces, Hashem's *or ein sof* is removed and beyond the limited worlds—and much more so.

Key point: *Tzimtzum kipshuto* is a way of saying something very simple: The unlimited or *ein sof* is not revealed in the limited worlds—it is higher than them. When we say that Hashem contracted his light, all we're saying is that Hashem created a level where his unlimited light is not revealed.



Why Tzimtzum Kipshuto cannot be true: Hashem cannot be somewhere

However, in refuting their opinion, the Alter Rebbe writes that this would be considered “*mikrei haguf*,” something that only applies to physical beings. What does he mean? Based on how we explained it, the *tzimtzum kipshuto* camp was also referring to a non-literal *tzimtzum*, so why is this *mikrei haguf*?

But if you think about it, their understanding of *tzimtzum* is a “physical” limitation as well.

To explain: The most obvious difference between physical things and spiritual things is that physical things are utterly defined by time and space. They are here and not somewhere else, and if you would take away their space they would cease to exist. Physical things are limited in a very tangible way. Spiritual beings, on the other hand, are not limited by time and space. In the example above, two plus two is not limited to any time or location.

But, as explained, spiritual beings also have a “space,” a place where they belong; namely, in the spiritual realm and not in the physical realm. An idea does not inhabit the physical realm—it cannot move a table—and it is also limited to the specific scenarios where it applies, where the laws of logic dictate that it belongs. So although an idea is not as limited as a physical being which is literally confined to a single space, it, too, is limited to a specific “place,” a specific realm of existence.

Similarly, according to the opinion that *tzimtzum kipshuto*—the *or ein sof* of Hashem is higher than the worlds, but it does not inhabit them (and what does inhabit the world is a limited *chayus* that comes from Hashem).

But, the Alter Rebbe says, that itself is *mikrei haguf*, that itself constitutes a limitation! If you’re saying that there’s a realm in which Hashem *does not fully exist, chas veshalom*, because he’s too high to be there—that, too, is a limitation!

True *bli gvul*, true unlimited-ness means that He fully exists in every realm and every



scenario—regardless of how high or low it is. When we say Hashem is everywhere, we mean that he's *everywhere*, including that he's fully *here* in our physical world.

Thus, Chassidus rejects the opinion that *tzimtzum kipshuto*.

Key point: *Tzimtzum Kipshuto cannot be true because Hashem cannot be limited to a specific realm—even above the world—for he cannot be limited in any way.*

Tzimtzum shelo kipshuto: He exists in the world yet we do not feel it

Then what does *tzimtzum* mean?

The answer is that it was *shelo kipshuto*: Hashem did not actually contract himself at all. He exists in the limited worlds just as he did before the *tzimtzum*: He is not higher than the worlds but *within* them—yet we somehow

don't feel it, and thus continue to exist. In fact, Chassidus explains, the world is primarily created from Hashem's *or ein sof* and it is fully present in the innermost of every being.

But how? As we explained earlier, if something has no connection to a realm, it does not exist there: Ideas have no connection to feet—and they do not exist there; a rock cannot grow—and it doesn't have a soul. How can we say that *or ein sof* is in the world—not only higher than it—yet, at the same time, the world does not feel it?!

Hashem can be somewhere no matter what - the logic of *tzimtzum shelo kipshuto*

In order to understand this, we must examine the difference between the way things exist in the world, and how it works above:

In the world, the definition of something being in a place is that the place feels it. If the place does not realize it, then it is actually not there, *in the reality of that place*. For example:

- If light comes into a room, then the room will light up—it “realizes” that there is light. If there's a curtain, and the room does not light up—that's because the light did not enter. Can light exist in a room without lighting it up? It cannot.
- Ideas exist in the brain because brains understand ideas. Feet, on the other hand, do not understand ideas. Do ideas exist in feet without them realizing it? Obviously not, feet don't understand anything.

In the world, you cannot disconnect these two things: If something exists in a place, by definition that means that the place “feels” it; if the place does not feel it, then it never fully came to that place. A physical thing will be felt in a physical way—if light enters a room, by definition the room will be lit up. Spiritual things will be felt in a spiritual way: if an idea enters the brain, that means that the brain understood it.

In other words—the location must be the type of location that can accept it. An idea cannot enter a foot—because ideas are limited to the

spiritual realm, and feet are not the type of things that receive ideas. By the same token, feet cannot kick ideas, because feet are limited to the physical realm, and ideas are not the type of things that take physical movement.

But by Hashem, it doesn't work that way. (The following is a difficult concept that a human being cannot fully understand—just as we cannot understand Hashem Himself—but we will present it very briefly.)

Hashem is everywhere—not because He happens to be there, but because He's fundamentally unlimited; the fact that He is everywhere stems from His unlimited-ness. He's everywhere not because the world is the type of thing that can accept Him—but because He is so unlimited that He's there too.

Therefore, even though we cannot feel Hashem's *or ein sof*—because of the *tzimtzum*—it's still fully present within us, just as it was before the *tzimtzum*. This means that *tzimtzum* is not *kipshuto*.

As the Alter Rebbe says in perek 48 of Tanya: “The light which is *ein sof*...and is called *sovev kol almin*... encompasses each and every created being from its beginning to its end, and its inside and very core, all in actual reality.” (*For more on this topic, see perek 48 of Tanya.*)

Key point: *Tzimtzum shelo kipshuto can make sense because Hashem exists in a different manner than anything else we know of. He exists fundamentally, because He exists, and He exists everywhere even when the location does not feel Him at all.*

The furor of the misnagdim

From the very beginning, the war against Chassidus was officially about certain key beliefs. The Alter Rebbe and Reb Mendel Horodoker famously traveled to the Vilna Goan to attempt to resolve these issues with him face to face but he refused to meet them. Later, too, the Alter Rebbe attempted to resolve this in public and private discussions to no avail. The leaders of the fight did not want to even talk, out of fear they would

be swayed (although many, many prominent *misnagdim* did become Chassidim over time).

One of the central issues was a certain passage in the then-published collection of the Baal Shem Tov's teachings, the *Tzavaas Harivash*, quoted above, which says that if someone—meaning a non-Jew—is bothering you during davening, you should realize that it's the Shechina within him that is bothering you, motivating you to concentrate harder.

This makes sense according to Chassidus, being that the *tzimtzum* is not literal and Hashem is within every single aspect of creation, including the lowest of the low. But the *misnagdim* argued that this notion was an offense to Hashem's honor. How can you say that Hashem exists even in “the garbage?!”

The Alter Rebbe answered in a long letter (printed in Tanya Iggeres Hakodesh Siman 25), where he explains the concept of constant creation and how Hashem exists within every being. In the letter, he emphasizes that this belief is based on a simple reading of the *possuk*: הלא את השמים ואת הארץ אני מלא נאום ה'—Do I not fill the heavens and the earth, says Hashem. Furthermore, this was the belief handed down through the generations, from our saintly ancestors—until “new ones have come to examine the problem” based on philosophy, who decided that Hashem cannot truly fill the earth, *chas veshalom*, but they lacked the true understanding.

The *misnagdim*, however, did not accept this answer. Many of them believed that Hashem Himself truly does not fill the earth, *chas veshalom*—rather He watches over everything, like a king sitting in a palace and looking out his window, but He does not fill every aspect of the world. They burned the *Tzavaas Harivash* with the burning of the *chametz* on Erev Pesach of 5566*. In a letter the following year, the Vilna Gaon wrote another letter against the Chassidim, writing: On every tree and stone, they say “This is your G-d;” and they distort the meaning of *pesukim* ברוך כבוד ואתה מחי את כולם and ה' ממקומו.

Subsequently, there was another attempt to set up a debate with the *misnagdim*. In a fascinating letter, the Alter Rebbe describes his multiple attempts to speak with the Vilna Gaon and debate the *misnagdim*—to no avail. (He puts forth an interesting offer: To debate them in writing, with the judges being neutral rabbonim from other countries who would not be biased either way. However, the Vilna Gaon passed away shortly thereafter and it never came to fruition.)

And yet, the viewpoint of Chassidus swept the Jewish world, to the extent that the Vilna Gaon's primary student, Reb Chaim Volozhiner, in his philosophical *sefer* Nefesh Hachaim, writes clearly like the opinion of the Alter Rebbe—without even mentioning that his teacher held differently!

Is there even an argument?

Rav Eliyahu Dessler was a prominent rav and leader of the Mussar movement. At one point in the late 5690s*, he spent much time together with Reb Itche Der Masmid in London and they had lengthy discussions in Kabbalah and Chassidus. (He would later describe this as the happiest time of his life.)

One of the subjects he focused on was this argument between the Vilna Gaon and the Alter Rebbe regarding the *tzimtzum*. Based on his understanding of the Nefesh Hachayim, he could not clearly understand the difference between the Vilna Gaon and the Alter Rebbe, as he writes in a letter to the Frierdiker Rebbe: “I discussed this many times with the great Chassidim of the Rebbe, if they could explain the difference between the Baal Hatanya and the Gr”a, but no-one answers me clearly.”

He asked Reb Itche der Masmid as well but it seems that at some point, the Frierdiker Rebbe asked the Rebbe to address this query. In a letter dated 19 Shevat 5699*, the Rebbe wrote the following answer (through Reb Yerachmiel Binyominson who served as an intermediary for the correspondence):

“I was amazed to hear such a proposition, particularly since you describe that person as

one who has studied Kabbalistic texts. Obviously, that is absolutely not correct. Even in the first generation after the Arizal—the one who revealed the secret of the *tzimtzum*—there were radical differences in opinion among his disciples with regard to the *tzimtzum*. These are obvious from the texts they composed and these differences were perpetuated [in the subsequent generations].” The Rebbe goes on to explain the difference

between the opinion of the Alter Rebbe, the Vilna Gaon, Reb Chaim Volozhiner, and others.

In a letter to Rabbi Binyaminson a few years later, the Rebbe follows up on the previous letter, and describes in vivid terms what *tzimtzum shelo kipshuto* actually means: “You certainly remember your letter to me about the *tzimtzum*. Now, consider this: Imagine if at this moment, right here, you were with your Rebbe, the Alter

The validity of Tzimtzum Kipshuto: Hashem can do anything

In general, Chassidus explains at length how *tzimtzum* is not *kipshuto*—but it does not provide much explanation into the opinions that *tzimtzum* is *kipshuto*. The Rebbe discussed it on several occasions, with profound insights to explain the validity of the opinions that held *tzimtzum kipshuto*. The full depth of these insights require much explanation but we will suffice with bringing the general idea:

One point the Rebbe made on several occasions is that the Alter Rebbe cannot truly depend on logical proofs—that Hashem cannot be limited, and that you cannot divide between Hashem’s sight (*hashgacha*) and Himself—because when we talk about Hashem Himself, *there are no rules of logic*.

In a fascinating conversation with Rashag during a Yom Tov meal,³ the Rebbe spoke about it at length:

Rashag: It was always difficult for me to understand the opinion that the *tzimtzum* is literal. [He went on to quote an explanation that he had once heard.]

The Rebbe: I don’t know why one needs that explanation—that opinion makes sense to me.

Rashag: Is the Rebbe referring to the opinion of the *to'im* [“those who were mistaken”], who believed that the *tzimtzum* is literal?

The Rebbe: You call them *to'im*? I don’t want to argue with the Alter Rebbe, but it’s somewhat difficult to refer to them as such, considering that *gedolei Yisroel* held this opinion to be true, including Harav Immanuel Chai Reiki, the author of *Mishnas Chassidim*...

Rashag: Then what is, in fact, the explanation of their opinion?

The Rebbe: The explanation is: The proof [of the Alter Rebbe against them] is that we cannot logically say that Hashem limited Himself.

Now, in the levels after the *tzimtzum*—in *hishatalshelus*—logical proofs hold sway (*sechel* is the “*baal habos*”), because Hashem created *hishatalshelus* in a way that it can be understood. But before the *tzimtzum*, logic has no place, so the questions make no difference.

In the language of Chassidus: There’s a famous argument between the philosophers and the Rashba. The philosophers held that one cannot say that Hashem can do *nimna hanimnaos*, limitation and unlimitedness at the same time. But the Rashba writes in his famous *teshuva*

Rebbe, the Baal Shem Tov, the Arizal, the Rashbi at the time of the Idra, Rabbi Akiva when he was discussing *maaseh merkava*, the *kohen gadol* in the *kodesh hakadashim*, all the way to Moshe Rabbeinu at the moment of *matan Torah*—you would be completely and utterly nullified! Now, Chassidus made the final ruling that the *tzimtzum* is only in the *or*, and not in the *maor*, *chas veshalom*, and the *maor* is here with us exactly as He is in the *kodesh*

hakadashim of the world of *asiyah*; [exactly as He was] on Har Sinai at the moment of *matan Torah*; as he is in the world of *atzilus* and the infinite worlds; and as He is before the first *tzimtzum* when the *or ein sof* filled everything!” **T**

1. Eitz Chaim Shaar 1, Anaf 2.
2. Iggeres Hakodesh, Siman 25.
3. Shemini Atzeres 5731, *Hamelech B'Mesibo* vol. 2, p. 217.

that Hashem can do anything, even *nimna hanimnaos*. [In the famous example, the *aron* can both take up space in the *kodesh hakadashim* and not take up space at the same time.]

If one can say that there is limitation and unlimitedness in the same place, why can't you say that the *tzimtzum* literally happened, and it's still somehow not an *chisaron*, a deficiency in Hashem?... Hashem can limit Himself, and it's still not a defect. He doesn't want to be there, and it's not a question, because Hashem can limit Himself and there still wouldn't be a question... Thus, the opinion of *tzimtzum kipshtuo* makes eminent sense, and there can be no question.

Rashag: Then why did the Alter Rebbe ask questions on this opinion?

The Rebbe: The truth is, if the Mishnas Chassidim had written that [*tzimtzum kipshuto*] is the truth even though it doesn't make sense, and it's beyond logic—then the Alter Rebbe wouldn't ask questions. What bothers the Alter Rebbe is that the Mishnas Chassidim is trying to explain his approach according to *logic*—bringing the parable of a king looking [from his chamber] at the garbage—and the Alter Rebbe says that this explanation can only apply to a physical king, but you cannot separate the watching of Hashem from His essence.

In other words: The question of the Alter Rebbe is on *the logical explanation* that they give for their opinion. But as far as the actual issue [whether the *tzimtzum* is *kipshuto* or not] one cannot bring logical proofs.

But the Alter Rebbe knew, based on the revelations of Chassidus, that the *tzimtzum* is not *kipshuto*... This is also what he received from the Maggid and the Baal Shem Tov. The *shita* of the Baal Shem Tov is that “Hashem's word stands forever,” meaning that every single particle of time and space is filled with *Elokus*, and just as there is *Elokus* in the *kodesh hakadashim*, there is *Elokus* in every single particle of space. Based on this, the Alter Rebbe knew that we must say that *tzimtzum* is not *kipshuto*—and once he knew this to be true, he proved it logically as well. But I don't believe that the Alter Rebbe would have rejected their opinion based on logic alone, since questions do not apply there...

(Another point the Rebbe made several times is that the question of how Hashem Himself can exist in garbage—meaning a place of *avoda zara*—is a very difficult question, and that he couldn't find anyone to explain it logically. See the *farbrengen* of *Shabbos Parshas Nasso 5743**; and the conversation above in *Hamelech Bimesibo*.)

Igros Kodesh vol. 1 p. 20-21



The argument about Tzimtzum

Proof that Tzimtzum Kipshuto

Hashem must have contracted His light, and He remains above the world but not in it. Otherwise, you would have to say that He exists even in the dirty parts of the world, in the garbage—meaning in places of *avoda zara*. How can you say that the King Himself is in such places!

We therefore must say that it's like a King sitting in His palace *watching* the world: He knows what's going on in the world, but He's not in it.

Proofs for Tzimtzum Shelo Kipshuto

Logical proof 1: Hashem cannot be limited

As explained at length above, to say that Hashem's *or ein sof* is *above* the world and not within it would be a limitation on Hashem.

Logical proof 2: Hashem cannot be divided into different parts:

This is a difficult concept, but in short: Those who held that *tzimtzum kipshuto* believed that Hashem is watching over the world, like a King sitting in His chambers looking out the window; meaning that although He isn't within the world, He's watching over it from above.

Now, Hashem is unlimited and utterly one, as the Rambam says: הוא היודע, והוא הידוע, והוא הדעה עצמה. He is the knower, the knowledge, and the known. If He is watching over the world, that itself means that He is in the world!

Proof from sources and tradition:

The Alter Rebbe explains that this is not only based on logic. It is based on:

- The simple reading of the *possuk*: ה'לא את השמים ואת הארץ אני מלא נאום ה'—*Do I not fill the heavens and the earth, says Hashem*. Clearly, Hashem is everywhere.
- The Zohar says this as well: "There is no place devoid of Him, not in the upper worlds nor in the lower worlds" (Tikkunim, Tikkun 57); and, 'He grasps all and none can grasp Him... He encompasses all worlds... and no one goes out from His domain; He fills all worlds... as He is within them.'
- The tradition of Yidden. "It is a simple article of faith among the general totality of Yidden, handed down to them by their saintly ancestors who walked in wholeness with Hashem, without searching the concept of Divinity by means of the human intellect."²

The tzimtzum kipshuto camp would have to stretch the simple meaning of these pesukim and passages, explaining that this all refers to the fact that Hashem watches over everything, and His hashgacha fills it all.



Four possibilities of explaining tzimtzum

Until now, we have discussed the general question of *tzimtzum kipshuto* or *lo kipshuto*. But in a letter to Rav Dessler, the Rebbe explains that there are, in fact, four possible ways of explaining the *tzimtzum*. The explanation of these four possibilities is beyond the scope of this article, but we would be remiss to not mention it at least in brief.

The Rebbe explains that in addition to the question whether the *tzimtzum* is literal or not, there's the question of which "level" in Hashem was affected by the *tzimtzum*:

1. The *or ein sof*, the light of Hashem.
2. The *maor*, the source of light—Hashem Himself.

Thus, the Rebbe writes, it is possible to outline four different approaches:

1

The *tzimtzum* should be interpreted literally, and moreover, it affected Hashem's essence. *This is the opinion of the misnagdim at the time of the Alter Rebbe. They held that one cannot say that Hashem's essence is everywhere, for He cannot be "in a place of garbage."*

3

The *tzimtzum* should not be interpreted literally, but it affected Hashem's essence as well. *This was the opinion of the Reb Chaim Volozhiner in Nefesh Hachayim.*

2

The *tzimtzum* should be interpreted literally, but that it affected only His light.

4

The *tzimtzum* should not be interpreted literally, and it affected only His light. *This is the true explanation, as revealed in Chassidus.*



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 shlichim 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! 

RESTORING THE CROWN

The Chabad
community
of Tzfas



THE TZEMACH TZEDEK SHUL

“1 Menachem-Av 5730. K”K
Admu”r Shlit”a.”

Reb Efroim Wolff, the head of
Agudas Chassidei Chabad in Eretz
Yisrael, wrote a short bulletin to the
Rebbe.

“The city-council of Tzfas reached
out to us regarding their local Chabad
shul. The structure is about to collapse

and they want to know if we are
interested in renovating it together
with them. If not, they will be forced
to demolish it. We requested they send
us a detailed plan and budget, etc.”¹

The shul seemed insignificant.
Tzfas had little to no Lubavitcher
Chassidim, and the shul was attended
primarily by Sephardic Jews.

However, the Rebbe instructed
them to oppose the demolition and

to see what could be done to rebuild
it. In a series of meetings, the city-
council made it clear that they didn’t
want to invest money. In fact, when a
Chabad delegation arrived in Tzfas to
deal with the issue, they discovered a
worker in the midst of demolishing
the structure. They quickly demanded
that he suspend his work.

“The mayor claims that there is no
historic significance to the structure,”

לזכות
הנערה עטא תחיל' ויגלר

לרגל הגיעה לגיל שנים עשרה
היא עונת בת מצוה
ה' תמוז ה'תש"פ

נדפס ע"י הוריה
הרה"ת ר' דוד צבי
זווגתו מרת חנה ומשפחתם שיחיו
ויגלר
פאלם ביטש גארדענס, פלארידא



LIBRARY OF AGUDAS CHASIDEI CHABAD



LIBRARY OF AGUDAS CHASIDEI CHABAD

PARTIALLY DEMOLISHED TZEMACH TZEDEK SHUL.



LIBRARY OF AGUDAS CHASIDEI CHABAD

THE TZEMACH TZEDEK SHUL IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE INITIAL RENOVATION, 5733.

Rabbi Wolff reported to the Rebbe. "He said that a family lived in the building before it was turned into a shul in 5696*.

"We spoke to Reb Ezriel Zelig Slonim [the head of Colel Chabad which had actually supported the upkeep of the shul], and he insisted that he recalled it as a Chabad shul already in the year 5666*. Reb Tuvia Blau also says that according to the

reports he collected, a Chabad shul in Tzfas has existed since the time of the Tzemach Tzedek and there is no documentation of a Chabad shul in a different location."

The Chassidic community of Tzfas actually dates back even earlier than the Tzemach Tzedek. It was established by the first *aliyah* of Chassidim to the Holy Land, led by Reb Mendel Horodoker. However,

due to strife with the local rulers and the existing Sefardic community, Reb Mendel soon moved to Teverya. Some years later, the Chassidic community of Tzfas was established once again, but then disagreements arose between Chabad Chassidim and the followers of Reb Avraham Kalisker. The Mittlerer Rebbe soon instructed his Chassidim to move to Chevron, where they were joined by a new group of Chabad

Chassidim, led by his daughter Rebbetzin Menucha Rochel and her husband Reb Yaakov Culi Slonim.

In the days of the Tzemach Tzedek, the Chabad community of Tzfas was established once again. It was made up primarily of Romanian Chassidim, students of Reb Yitzchak Moshe of Yas (Iași), Romania, a Chossid of the Alter Rebbe. The Tzemach Tzedek also sent his niece, Rebbetzin Beila Horowitz,² to settle there with her five sons after her husband passed away.

“A short time after they arrived in Tzfas,” recounted Rebbetzin Beila’s grandson, “my grandmother wrote to the Tzemach Tzedek that the Chabad Chassidim of Tzfas were suffering from harassment from the other Chassidim in the city and needed their own shul. The Tzemach Tzedek supported the idea. He sent 100 ruble towards the cost of the building and asked a local kolel to contribute as well.”³ According to a *reshima* of the Frieddiker Rebbe⁴ this took place in 5601*.

The Rebbe made it clear that the shul should be preserved at all costs, instructing Reb Efroim to argue that it is a historic site which must not be demolished. Reb Efroim dispatched Reb Ezriel Zelig Slonim and Reb Tuvia Blau to speak to the mayor.

“He repeated his claim that there is no historic significance,” Reb Efroim reported to the Rebbe, “but Reb Ezriel Zelig argued and said that he met with the mayor’s own father-in-law, who had confirmed that the shul had stood even before he was born. Reb Yeshaya Hurvitz also confirmed that the building was erected in 5605*.

“The mayor agreed to contribute 20,000 *lirot*, but he was mainly worried about filling the shul—currently, there aren’t many congregants. Reb Ezriel Zelig promised to bring new residents to Tzfas, and the mayor said that in that case he would definitely help.”

THE RIGHT PLACE, THE RIGHT MAN

Reb Ezriel Zelig promised to bring more residents to Tzfas, but it’s not clear if he was speaking on the Rebbe’s behalf or on his own. Tzfas of those days was a sleepy town, far from the center of Eretz Yisroel. It had a weak economy; the bad conditions of the roads made it a long trip, and moving to Tzfas was considered like moving to the moon.

Some 20 years earlier, after World War II, dozens of *anash* families were immigrating from Europe, and Zalman Shazar had actually proposed to settle them in Tzfas—due to its close proximity to Meron, the cradle of *p’nimius hatorah*.⁵ However, as Reb Leibel Motchkin related, they quickly dissuaded him of the idea:

“The older Chassidim at the meeting were tempted to accept his offer, but I couldn’t agree with it. The situation in the north of Eretz Yisrael was very bad and I couldn’t imagine settling the new families of *anash* there, so far from the center of Chabad which at the time was in Tel Aviv.

“I was sitting next to Reb Pinye Althaus. I whispered to him that we needed to do something quickly. He immediately understood, and quickly persuaded Shazar that the idea wasn’t practical. Instead, Shazar suggested Safaria, which later became Kfar Chabad.”⁶

Shazar, apparently, never gave up on the idea. In 5724*, he wrote to

the Rebbe suggesting that Chabad Chassidim settle in the Tzfas-Meron area, and he received an encouraging reply from the Rebbe.

“Obviously, I was generally excited by the proposal for a Chabad settlement in the Tzfas-Meron area, but I still do not have all the details of the matter. Primarily: What type of people are suited to settle there—perhaps Russian immigrants? Moreover, Mr. Shlomo Madainchik is utilizing his visit here for the benefit of the current Chabad village, *‘vein marvin simcha b’simcha*.’ [Lit.: we don’t mix one celebration with another.] I hope to correspond with you further on this topic in the near future.”⁷

The suggestion seems to have remained on the ‘back-burner’ until a proposal arose while the Tzemach Tzedek Shul was being renovated. A piece of real estate next to the shul was offered to Chabad for purchase. Reb Efroim Wolff, unsure if it was a worthy investment, asked the Rebbe if he should purchase it.

The Rebbe sent a surprising response through *mazkirus*: “Why should you let it slip away? ...We need to make a Chabad center with a big *farnem*; a shul, *yungerleit*, immigrants, and perhaps something for tourists; there is potential for impact on the entire Tzfas.”

As it soon became apparent to Chabad in Eretz Yisroel, the Rebbe wanted a large scale project to take shape. Tzfas was to become a major



THE AREA SLATED FOR CONSTRUCTION OF APARTMENT BUILDINGS, 5734.

center for Chabad Chassidim, a second Nachalas Har Chabad.

A young and energetic *askan* was needed to spearhead the effort. They began searching for the appropriate individual in Eretz Yisrael, but then the Rebbe informed them that a choice had been made.

Rabbi Leibel Kaplan was a newly married yungerman learning in the kolel of Crown Heights. A bright

learner and talented *askan*, he had been chosen to lead the first group of shluchim to Australia several years earlier. Rabbi Cunin of California asked the Rebbe to send Rabbi Kaplan as a shliach to the West Coast, but the Rebbe responded, “I am holding him for myself.”

“After a year-and-a-half in kolel, according to the Rebbe’s instructions,” relates Mrs. Kaplan, “the Rebbe

directed us to look for shlichus opportunities in a new location. We wrote several suggestions to the Rebbe, but the Rebbe’s answers were either no, or maybe.

“One day, after Pesach 5733*, Rabbi Hodakov called my husband to the office and said that the Rebbe wants to know if we were willing to go to Tzfas. Of course, we immediately agreed. But then the Rebbe asked, *Hahisbiru*

THE FRIEDIKER REBBE’S VISIT

During the Friediker Rebbe’s visit to Eretz Yisrael in 5689*, he also visited Tzfas. The following account is printed in Sefer Hasichos:

In honor of the Arizal’s *yahrzeit* on 5 Av, the Rebbe decided to visit his gravesite in Tzfas, accompanied by the *hanhala* of Toras Emes, his entourage, and many of *anash*, Chabad Chassidim.

At 2:00 p.m., they arrived in Shechem. At 3:00, they reached Afulah, where he was greeted at the central hotel by Tel Aviv Chief Rabbi Shlomo Aharonson, who was spending time in Haifa for health reasons. They spoke for a while about communal affairs, especially on the topic of Russian Jewry whose welfare is the focus of the Rebbe’s work. They parted warmly.

At 5:30, the Rebbe arrived in Tzfas. It was a surprise visit; the Tzfas residents were notified only a half hour earlier via a telephone call from Teverya, when the Rebbe had passed through, yet they nevertheless managed to pull together a honorable reception in the central hotel where the Rebbe was to stay.

All the elders, rabbis and dignitaries of Tzfas came to greet him, led by Chief Rabbi A. Y. Zilberman. The Rebbe only had enough time to greet them briefly. He davened Mincha and at 6:15 departed for the cemetery.

A massive crowd had gathered there and when the Rebbe arrived, the area was packed with onlookers. He approached the Arizal’s resting place and recited a prayer from a *siddur*, and then lifted his eyes to the heavens and remained still with wondrous *dveikus*. Only his heart-rending cries were heard by the participants.

He read the *pidyonos* he had brought along and then walked around the *kevarim* of the Arizal, the Ramak and Reb Shlomo Alkabetz, who are buried near each other.

He was also *mishtateach* at the resting place of the Beis Yosef, where he remained for some time, and then

he walked alone to the resting place of Reb Moshe Alshich, “where I spoke *baal peh* and cried profusely,” remaining there for some time as well.

Late at night, with superhuman power, the Rebbe climbed the mountain—a trek that is difficult even for a young healthy individual, no less after the tiring journey. Nonetheless, he climbed with measured steps, with strength and a holiness which surprised everyone present.

He paused to rest for a moment on a chair that had been brought from the city and he said to those around him: “My first visit in these holy places is very meaningful; *Olam Ha’asiyah* has totally disappeared.”

At the gate of the cemetery, the Sefardic *chachamim* welcomed the Rebbe. He asked whether the Sefardic shuls have public Torah classes. They answered in the affirmative and the Rebbe was very pleased. He warmly and lovingly encouraged them and gave them his blessing.

When he arrived at the hotel, a large crowd had gathered. He received them graciously, greeted them all and gave them his blessing.

He then went to rest. As per his request, he was brought a small table on the porch where he sat for three hours and wrote until 11:00 p.m. He left a certain amount of money for the Torah institutions of the city, and at 4:15 in the morning he proceeded to Meron with his escort.



NEWSPAPER AD WELCOMING THE FRIEDIKER REBBE BY REB SHOLOM SHACHNE HOROWITZ, A GREAT NEPHEW OF THE TZEMACH TZEDEK.

lahem hakshayim hakruchim bikach— were they explained the difficulties it would entail?

“Rabbi Hodakov explained to my husband that his task would be to build a new neighborhood for Chabad, a ‘Kfar Chabad’ — a very daunting task indeed.

“He wrote back to the Rebbe that we understood the difficulties involved. But then we didn’t hear from the Rebbe. Rabbi Hodakov told us that we would probably be sent off after Tishrei.

“As the summer approached, we planned a trip to Detroit to visit my parents. A day before we were supposed to leave, on 16 Tammuz, Rabbi Groner suddenly called my husband and informed him that the Rebbe wanted to see him. He was instructed to simply knock on the Rebbe’s door and wait for the Rebbe’s call to enter. Needless to say, he was tremulous with fear and awe.”

During this *yechidus*, the Rebbe explained to him the basic points of his mission, and then asked him,

“Do you speak Hebrew?”

“A little,” Rabbi Kaplan responded.

“With Sefardic pronunciation?”

“A little.”

“Have you ever spoken it before?”

“Yes, to the Sefardim in Montreal.”

“How did it go?”

Rabbi Kaplan motioned that it had been so-so.

The Rebbe smiled and said, “If so, that is a good thing. Speaking a completely good Hebrew isn’t necessarily a positive thing, because they will suspect you are Israeli. I don’t know why it is, but many people totally lose themselves to Americans, so it won’t be so bad if you’ll speak with an Ashkenazic pronunciation. Obviously, grammatically correct, but the accent is not so bad, so they’ll know you are American.”

The Rebbe didn’t give him a departure date, but the *yechidus* did

give him a hint. The Rebbe instructed him to begin packing his suitcases before *shkiah*, thus beginning his travels before the Three Weeks ensued.

A day or two later, Rabbi Kaplan asked Rabbi Hodakov when he was to embark on his journey. Rabbi Hodakov asked the Rebbe, who responded, “Why is he waiting?”

With that *hora’ah* in hand, Rabbi Kaplan quickly finished his preparations and headed off to the Holy Land on Erev Rosh Chodesh Av (his family would join 10 days later). The Rebbe came out to see him off, and gave each family member a *michtav klali* and a dollar. Baby Mendel Kaplan too, received a letter and a coin. The Rebbe explained that he too was going on shlichus and he should be explained its significance when he gets older.

THE KOLEL

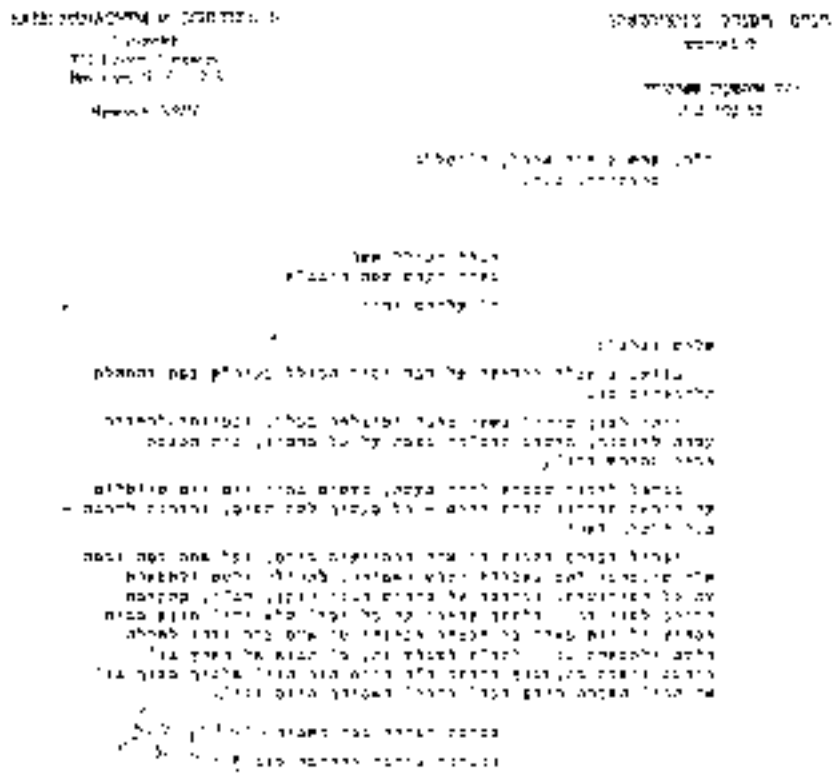
In his *yechidus*, the Rebbe explained to Rabbi Kaplan that his mission was

to spearhead the building of a Chabad neighborhood. However, it would take a while to get done so the Rebbe instructed that he begin with opening a kolel.

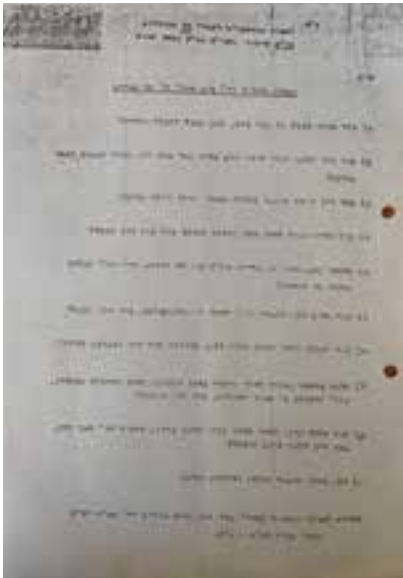
Ten kolel *yungerleit* were quickly recruited. Within a short time, apartments were rented, jobs were procured for the women, and a temporary location was found for the kolel—which was to be in the Tzemach Tzedek Shul when it was ready.

Renovations were quickly underway in the shul because the Rebbe had given a due-date for the completion of the renovations: *Selichos* were to be recited in the newly renovated structure.

“The situation in Tzfas was far from ideal,” Mrs. Kaplan relates, “even in comparison to the rest of Eretz Yisroel, which was light-years behind the United States. Even Israelis thought it was like moving to the moon.



THE REBBE'S LETTER ON ESTABLISHING THE KOLEL



QUESTIONS THE REBBE SENT TO ALL THE KOLLELS.



LEARNING AT THE KOLLEL, 5734

“During the initial period after our arrival, we lived in a studio apartment in Kfar Chabad. Then one day, my husband arrived from Tzfas and said that he had rented a home for us, one that was better than our current place.

“I soon discovered that he was being overly optimistic. Granted, the Tzfas apartment was larger, but the kitchen and bathroom were separate from the bedroom and living room, and to go from one section to the other you needed to go outdoors—sometimes in the rain and cold—and down and up stairs. Obviously, there was no telephone line.”

The material situation slowly improved. The *yungerleit* settled into their learning and the women became active in *hafatzas hamaayanos*.

At some point Rabbi Kaplan felt that the kollel’s learning was somewhat lacking and he assumed the position of *rosh kolel*. This was a position which the Rebbe never allowed him to give up, even as his responsibilities grew extensively.

With the Rebbe’s encouragement, the kollel took on the responsibilities of publishing some elements of the Rebbe’s own Torah: Two sets, *Biurim*

L’pirush Rashi and *Biurim L’pirkei Avos*, were produced by its members.

One interesting episode sheds some light on the Rebbe’s attitude to the kollel:

One day in 5734*, all Chabad kollels throughout the world received a list of questions on Yoreh Deah from *mazkirus* with instructions that the kollel *yungerleit* send back their answers within a week’s time.

Rabbi Kaplan heard about the challenge but was surprised that his own kollel hadn’t been sent the questions. The puzzle was soon cleared. The list of questions had been written by Rabbi Kaplan himself for the Kollel of Tzfas...

THE KIRYAH

The ultimate goal in Tzfas was to build a full-fledged Chabad community to resemble the community of Nachalas Har Chabad which had been built several years earlier.

Obtaining the necessary funding and land was no easy task in the bureaucratic Israel of those days. Rabbi Kaplan began working on the plan shortly after the Yom Kippur War in 5734* and somehow, by Chol Hamoed

Pesach 5735*, the groundbreaking was held with great fanfare. In fact, the work was already significantly underway, so the event was called, “*Tekes gemar hayesodot*—ceremonial foundation laying completion.”

“Ten buses came to participate in the celebration,” Rabbi Kaplan wrote in his report to the Rebbe. “Five buses from Kfar Chabad, two from Nachalas Har Chabad, one from Yerushalayim and another from Bnei Brak . . . Altogether, some 700-800 people participated.

“...Everyone was very impressed. Several people told me that Tzfas hasn’t had such a celebration for many years. Reporters were here from all the newspapers. The main success was a three-four minute report on the 8:30 p.m. news. There is only one television station in Israel, so the entire country saw it. I became aware the next day that this indeed had been the best form of publicizing it.”

Right after the celebration, Rabbi Kaplan telephoned *mazkirus* and gave an initial report to Rabbi Hodakov as the Rebbe listened on the line. When he mentioned that Chief Rabbi Kaplan (no relation) of Tzfas had delivered



TEKES G'MAR HAYESODOT.

חסידי חגגו בצפת גמר בניית היסודות לקרית חב"ד בכנען

מאת יעקירי קטנר, סופר, רבני-בצפת

המסעדה קבעה את התקופה המבואה ביותר לביטוי ועד
החול של העתה, אלא בזמנים כאלה, כדרכה, בחירה ובמקרה שליש
המבנית מוכנה לנילו, כי אפרי ירושלים, המולד וצפת הם שני
המרכזים והיהדות הם הרמו לוי את העשנה והמחזורי מלל כמבין
קודם, שיעורו את העם במצות העשנה, בתוך בנין המליל סיום
היחיד לצפת, כי יש גם מהיחודי והמיוחד – אפרי אמבול קרי
היחידק וצפתים עמרי הלקס המעניי לזמן בנין יסודות המבין
אל קייחובידי עמרי בנין כמפת.

העיר העולה על כל את מילס על חסידו הכיר כמרי, אשר
עוד ראשונים לכניס כלל חב"ד בפרטו העיר, קייחוביאקי, והנה
הם ראשונים מבין העליל, בצפת הובנה קייל חב"ד קולטת וכבר
השנה יחול מבין ילול כי מבניה ברוחניות ובעקב, ילכו כל
מסורות העיבור ולב ירוקת היום – אשר העיר – וזונה לחסד
את התייה בל 500 ירוחנת ריח.

העיר מבין העולה, כי להנחת התייה יבוא המעבורי מלי
בבין מילס מגיל מייאוסות, את המבניה על המעבורי מלמבין
הקירא מניול חב"ד בצפת חרב אריות קלות, כי נאמר בירושלים
כי בצפת תחול המסרה לירושל.

אחרי חמישים, רחוק העירייה, ברוך בעם מנעם ירוחנת צפת
במניח המעמקו מאלו חסידו כמר חב"ד, קייחוביאקי
ירושלית, ודבר חב"ד, ריב רב חולק אשר לי, כי בסעודה חרבי
מלמבין, ירושלים בצפת על כל מסורות מניול העיר, מניול
על 15-מסעדות חסדו ירוקת היום.

NEWSPAPERS REPORT ON THE EVENT.

remarks, he overheard the Rebbe chuckle and say, “We are switching this Kaplan with another...”

In a *yechidus* with Reb Yankel Katz of Chicago that same Chol Hamoed, the Rebbe shared his pleasure about the good news.

“I had *nachas* today,” the Rebbe said. “They called from Tzfas and Rabbi Kaplan related that the *hanachas even hapinah* was very successful. *Anash* from Kfar Chabad, Nachalash Har Chabad and Yerushalayim participated; people came from the entire country and many local residents participated as well.

“It was a warm celebration. Many government officials participated and they all spoke warmly about Lubavitch. The Minister of Housing said that he is sure of the project’s success because when Lubavitch takes on a project they are always successful. But he also warned that if Chabad doesn’t manage to fill all the homes he will be forced to give them to others.”

The Rebbe smiled and added, “In truth, all this should have been done by the other Kaplan who’s been in Tzfas for a long time but in the end it was accomplished by the Kaplan that I sent.”

REINFORCEMENTS

The first phase of the Kiryah contained 109 apartments, with space for education, a *mikveh*, stores and— as per the Rebbe’s instructions—a very large shul.

At the time, it wasn’t clear who would live in the apartments. Tzfas had only 10 Chabad families. The other Chabad communities were in the process of expansion as well; 300 new homes were expected to be ready in Kfar Chabad, Nachlas Har Chabad, and other settlements, over the same period of time. And in those days, there were only 20-30 Chabad weddings in Eretz Yisroel each year.

But then a surprise took place right as the first phase of building was finished.

At the end of the Yud-Tes Kislev farbrengen in 5736*, the Rebbe made a surprising announcement: A group of 10 people would be sent as the Rebbe’s shlichim to Yerushalayim and another group of 10 to Tzfas. They would spend their time learning Torah *b’tahara*, fulfilling mitzvos (especially those unique to Eretz Yisroel), and influencing those around them. Those who were interested could sign up through the *mazkirus*.⁸



CONSTRUCTION OF THE KIRYA.



THE REBBE DISTRIBUTES SIDURIM AND TANYAS TO THE SHLUCHIM AND THEIR FAMILIES.



THE SPECIAL GROUP OF SHLUCHIM SAY L'CHAIM WITH ISRAELI PRESIDENT EFRAIM KATZIR UPON THEIR ARRIVAL (AT A RECEPTION IN THEIR HONOR).

At the Yud Shevat farbrengen, the Rebbe spoke about their shlichus and they received a *yechidus* before their departure the next day. The Rebbe stood at the door to his room and gave each man a Likkutei Sichos volume 11, the weekly *likkut* on Beshalach, and a number of different denominations of money in American and Israeli currency. Each woman received a *siddur*, a Tanya, and also the various bills. Children received a Tanya, in which the Rebbe put money for tzedakah.

Soon after, the Rebbe personally saw them off from the steps of 770 and busloads of Chassidim went to the airport as well. Upon their arrival in Israel, the crowd at Ben Gurion welcoming them was in the thousands.

The shluchim to Tzfas joined the kolel, doing *mitvzoim* between the *sedarim*. At night they would take a mitzvah tank which had come with them from America, and drive around to different *moshavim* to visit people, give *shiurim* and do *mitvzoim*.

One major effect of the shluchim was an added *chayus* and energy in the Rebbe's *inyanim*—after all, these were *bochurim* and *yungerleit* who had spent years in 770 at the Rebbe's farbrengens, an opportunity not available to many Chassidim in Eretz Yisroel—and they brought the live hook-ups (*shiddurim*) of the farbrengens to a new level—farbrengens that wouldn't even begin until 4:30 a.m. in Eretz Yisroel.

“From when we came,” Rabbi Greisman says, “we immediately initiated the hook-ups in Tzfas. You have to remember that there were very few phones in the old city of Tzfas so I would *schlep* wires over rooftops to the shuls in order to get a line... Any time there was a possibility that there might be a farbrengen—these were years when surprise farbrengens were not an unusual occurrence—I would stand by a public phone in the middle of the night calling different people and waiting to see if there would be any developments: now the Rebbe is at the Ohel; now the Rebbe is coming back; now the farbrengen was announced... As soon as there was definitive news, I would call up Reb Mulik Rivkin, who had the central hook-up in Kfar Chabad, and we would hear the farbrengen in Tzfas through Kfar Chabad. This encouraged the Kfar Chabad *shiddur* as well...”

Over the next two years, two more groups of shluchim were chosen to join the first. Over the ensuing years, these special groups of shluchim were instructed by the Rebbe to take up posts in *hafatzas hamaayanos* all over Eretz Yisrael. A number of them left Tzfas over the years but the large influx of families over those few years helped establish the Chabad neighborhood and indeed made an indelible impact on the entire city and entire region. Until today, much of the leadership of Chabad in Tzfas—and throughout Eretz Yisrael—is made up of those families.



BUILDING THE KIRYA, 5738



THE YESHIVA, CIRCA 5739.

WHY TZFAS?

In the letter for the opening of the kolel, the Rebbe used the term “*lehachzir atarah liyoshnah*—to restore the crown to its former glory.” The establishment of the community was significant in the fact that it restored a Chabad community that had existed for over 100 years.

But there was more to it.

Hundreds of years ago, Tzfas was just a little sleepy town in Eretz Yisroel, which was seen as just another far-flung corner of the Ottoman Empire. But then a new immigrant arrived there from Egypt. His name was Rabbi Yitzchak Luria, known as the Ari Hakadosh.

From then on, Tzfas became famous as the home of *pnimius haTorah*, transmitted from the Ari to his student Reb Chaim Vital and others, and on to the following generations. The Rebbe pointed out that the location wasn’t by chance: The Zohar states that the revelation of Moshiach himself—the culmination of *pnimius haTtorah*—will be in the Galil, the region that Tzfas is located.

“This is the significance,” the Rebbe explained, “of rebuilding the Jewish communities of the Galil and Tzfas... To once again reveal—and with even greater strength—Torah study and the study of the inner dimension of Torah close to the resting place of the Arizal,

FURTHER MEANING

In 5741*, a *melaveh malkah* benefitting the institutions of Tzfas was held in New York and the organizers reprinted the Rebbe’s *sicha* on this topic (from 5738*). At the Shabbos farbrengen, the Rebbe mentioned it and used a very interesting expression:

“In honor of the *melaveh malkah*, a *sicha* about the significance of Tzfas was republished.

“However, I think I once spoke an additional talk about the significance of Tzfas—or I intended to speak it, but it remained in my thoughts — and I’m surprised that it was not reprinted as well.

“The idea was as follows:

“Tzfas is one of the four unique cities in the Holy Land—Yerushalayim, Chevron, Teveria and Tzfas, as explained at length in a book called *Tov Haaretz*, which was written by Rabbi Nosson Shapiro . . . who is often cited in Chassidus.

“He lists several unique elements about Tzfas: It is one of the *arei miklat*. It is *mukaf choma*, surrounded by a wall. Its *gematria* (in *mispar katan* with the *kolel*) is 22—the 22 letters of Torah, hinting to the fact that Tzfas is ‘ready and prepared for the proper understanding of the secrets of the Torah, and there is no pure air like the air of Tzfas.’ It also represents *sefiras hakeser*, the source of the *yud-gimmel middos harachamim*...”¹⁰

and in a manner that it will from there spread to the entire Holy Land and to the entire world.”

With the Rebbe’s *menschen* in Tzfas, we are a step closer to the coming of Moshiach. **T**

1. Rabbi Wolff’s correspondence with the Rebbe cited here is published in the series *Yemei Temimim*.

2. She was the daughter of Rebbetzin Devorah, the Tzemach Tzedek’s half sister, the child of Reb Sholom Shachne’s second

marriage to the daughter of Reb Aharon Karliner.

3. *Zichronos Shilo - Migdal Oz* chapter 46.

4. *Tzemach Tzedek Vitnuas Hahaskala* pg. 22

5. See *Derher*, Iyar 5779.

6. *Nossi Vechossid* pg. 94.

7. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 23 pg. 27

8. For the full story of the shlichim, see “Historic Mission,” *Derher* Adar 5778.

9. *Sichos Kodesh* 5738 vol. 2 pg. 571

10. *Sichos Kodesh* 5741 vol. 2 pg. 768

THE TZFAS CEMETERY

The cemetery in Tzfas is ancient, dating back at least to Hoshea Hanavi. Many famous individuals are buried there—Chana and her seven sons, the Arizal, the Beis Yosef and many others.

In the years when Har Hazeisim was controlled by Jordan, the Tzfas cemetery became a sought out location for burial. Two members of *beis harav* were buried there during those years, under the Rebbe's guidance.

THE REBBE'S BROTHER, REB YISRAEL ARYEH LEIB.

At the time of his passing, on 13 Iyar 5712*, Reb Leib was living in Liverpool, England. The Rebbe asked the Chassidim in England—Reb Yitzchok Dubov, Reb Benzion Shemtov and others—to handle the funeral arrangements. The Rebbe appointed Reb Yitzchok Dubov to take care of the *tahara*. “*Zolst firen mit di tahara vi a benan shel kedoshim*—you should conduct the *tahara* as befitting a person of holy lineage,” the Rebbe told them.

“We were *bochurim* learning in Manchester at the time,” Reb Berel Futerfas relates, “and Rabbi Dubov asked Avremel Shemtov, Sholom Ber Gurkov and myself to take part in the *tahara*.”

Reb Moshe Gurary of Tel Aviv was asked by the Rebbe to travel to London and bring Reb Yisroel Aryeh Leib's *aron* to be buried in Tzfas. The Rebbe told him that “the *chelek haruchni*, the spiritual part, has been accomplished and all that's left to be done in Eretz Yisroel is the *chelek hagashmi*, the physical element.”

Over the years, Chassidim began to visit his resting place, especially with the establishment of the Chabad community in Tzfas, and they merited many beautiful answers from the Rebbe thanking them for their reports.

REB MENACHEM MENDEL, BROTHER OF THE REBBE RASHAB.

In his final years, Reb Mendel lived in Corsica, an island off of France, and was buried there upon his passing in 5702*.

The island law states that graves are plowed through and reused after 20 years, so the Rebbe instructed Rabbi Binyomin Gorodetzky in 5715* to transfer his body to Tzfas. For various reasons, this needed to be done secretly.

Under complete secrecy, the body was removed from the cemetery and transported to Eretz Yisrael, where Rabbi Efroim Wolff arranged its interment in Tzfas. No *matzeiva* was set up; instead, some cement was poured over the spot.

In 5739*, Reb Levi Bistritzky—one of the Shluchei Kodesh and the rav of the Chabad community—was told of the secret. He was bothered by the situation, so he wrote to the Rebbe asking if the time had come to put up a *matzeiva*.

The Rebbe agreed and instructed them to find the proper titles for him in the *sichos* of the Frieddiker Rebbe. The Rebbe also instructed them to hold a public stone setting as customary.

When Rabbi Bistritzky arrived in New York with a report and pictures, the Rebbe repaid him the cost in full.



MATZEIVA OF REB MENACHEM MENDEL,
SON OF THE REBBE MAHARASH.

THE OLD MATZEIVA OF REB YISROEL ARYEH LEIB, WHICH
INCORRECTLY LISTED HIS YAHRTZEIT AS 12 IYAR. IT WAS
LATER REPLACED WITH A NEW MATZEIVA WITH THE
CORRECT YAHRTZEIT OF 13 IYAR.



Dedicated by

Tzvi and Chana Morantz

In honor of their

50th wedding anniversary

And in honor of their children

Rabbi **Menachem Mendel** and

Shoshana Scheiner and family

Boruch and Rochel Ahava

Waldman and family



On youth *aliyah* and peace in the Middle East Stories

B”H, 25 Teves 5729.

To the students of the Youth Village—Be’er Yaakov, in our Holy Land, may it be rebuilt, may you live and be well,
Greetings and blessings,

I was pleased to receive regards from your teacher, the educator and principal, Mr. Chaim Yitzchok Glaser, and I was particularly pleased to hear about your progress in learning and behavior. This is the task of every single Jewish adult, and all the more so of the youth and those who are even younger—to go from strength to strength, not only in the size and development of your bodies but also, and primarily, growth and elevation in your spiritual lives.

Mr. Glaser submitted your following questions:

[What is] my opinion 1) regarding the *aliya* of American youth to Eretz Yisroel, 2) regarding the anticipated peace with [Eretz Yisroel’s] Arab neighbors.

Regarding the first question, my opinion is as follows—but first a preface:

A person’s lifetime is split generally into two periods: the first, when the person is primarily a passive recipient, and the second, in which the hope is that, at least primarily, the person will be a *mashpia* and influence the lives of those around him—his family and his surroundings in the broadest sense of the word, affecting them in the right way.

It is self-understood that first of all, a person is expected to be an influence to strengthen that which is good; to establish it and expand it, and to eradicate the evil. This is like repaying a debt, for the person was given the power and wisdom to determine what is good and the will to affect it. This is what he received from those around him during the first period of his life. Therefore, first of all, it is incumbent upon him to be grateful and repay his debt by having a positive effect on everything he can influence, including influencing others to follow this way along with him, and after him as well.

This is similar to someone who wishes to give tzedakah to someone whom he is not obligated to—it is a great thing to do, but repaying a debt comes before giving tzedakah.

It is also obvious that if, in addition to repaying the debt, the creditor needs help, to the extent that his life is in danger, then in repaying the debt, the debtor is also considered to be giving life to the creditor and his family.

My opinion, in answer to your question, is based on the above.



Regarding youth, who have untapped energy, and who have yet to enter real life and become an influence on their fellows and surroundings, the priority must be given to the using of all their resources for the benefit of the place where they were born and were given their capabilities. All of this would apply when everything is as it should be, even if their fellows don’t need their help much, and they only have to establish and expand [the existing good]. All the more so [does it apply] when their fellows are in a bad situation and their foundation is weak; then it is clear that it is absolutely necessary [to influence them for the good]. Only then, after they have repaid their debt, can they consider affecting people somewhere else or in a different country.

From this a practical *halacha* can be inferred: Youth in every city, when they are close to reaching adulthood, must first use their capabilities in the countries where they are. This is especially true in our countries where sadly, the spiritual state, the moral state, and the connection to the values of Judaism are not strong and well-established. Anyone who can have an influence on this, is literally saving lives and saving souls from tasting [that which is forbidden]. Only after the youth have repaid their debt to the places where they were raised and educated, should they consider what to do for Jews living elsewhere.

It is clear that the above is not contradicted by the fact that sometimes, and perhaps often, youth have to visit a different area or place. In our case, they have to be in Eretz Yisroel for some time, to ready themselves to have a more powerful and successful effect on the surroundings and the country in which they must first put in work to repay their moral and spiritual debts, as mentioned above.

It is also clear that it can often happen that [people of] the place itself may choose to send one of the youth to a different country, in our case to Eretz Yisroel, to work there for some time or even to stay there. In that case, that is part of effecting the greater good of the place the person was educated and raised in.

In summary, my opinion is that youth must use their capabilities and their opportunities first of all in their hometowns; to use them to expand that which is good—more precisely, to spread Judaism and its values among the youth, many of whom always need to be influenced and educated in this, not just once a year or from time to time. The chances of success in this [form of] education are greater when the educator is a native of the country of the students that need guidance and influence, and [the educator] knows their character because he was raised and educated among them. None of this would apply to an educator who is sent from a different country.

I certainly don't have to emphasize that my opinion on this is in regard to the general issue, which was raised in the question. However, with regards to specific individuals, their unique circumstances personally, of their family, their health, their livelihood and so on, must be taken into account.

I could go on at length about the above problem, but I hope that these lines, few in comparison to the importance of the matter, will be enough to clarify my opinion.

Regarding your second question, about peace:

True peace can only exist if it is based upon the goodwill of both sides. I don't see a reason that the Arab neighbors of our Holy Land would want to create true peace, which would include on their end the complete surrender of many territories that were recently conquered [by the Jewish people], all the more so territories that were conquered 20 years ago, as well as the acknowledgement that the Jewish nation in Eretz Yisroel has every right to live there without being dependent on anyone else, etc. On the other hand, the situation of belligerence and war has all the benefits for the Arabs. What's more, it gives them the ability to ask for help from numerous powers outside the region. By stirring up competition between one power and the other as to who is more important to a certain Arab country's rulers, they can increase the aid and grants they receive. None of this would apply if the tensions in the region dissipate, and everything is taken care of and life goes back to normal.

In addition—and perhaps this is another crucial point—many of the powers outside the region, especially the larger ones, seem to be interested in there being tension in the region, and that it be split up between many nations and armies and kingdoms, for this situation opens the door for them to be influential, or even that one or the other of the powers should exert rule over the region, by helping one of the sides in the region. On the other hand, if peace were to reign among the nations in the region, and if they worked together, that would decrease the possibility of rule by a foreign power, and its influence would be weakened.

Having said all this, it is obvious that not a single Israeli man or woman should despair of peace, for the very existence of the Jewish People through the generations, including their existence now in our Holy Land, is entirely higher than what is natural. According to all the economic and political schools of thought, such a small and impoverished nation cannot survive; especially not when they have to face a situation like the one they are in now—at the center of a clash of interests between enormous governments—and not when they find themselves on the crossroads of several continents and the strongest blocs in the international arena.

Amazingly, throughout all of history, as far back as ancient times, the territory of Eretz Yisroel was the site of agitation and conflict among all the nations and governments who ruled the globe in their eras: Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Greece, Rome and so on. [Eretz Yisroel] did not enjoy peace and quiet except for a few years here and there and for short periods of time during which the Yidden were faithful to Hashem and followed in His ways, the way of Torah and *mitzvos*—such as in the days of Dovid and Shlomo, etc.

Since Eretz Yisroel is “the land upon which Hashem your G-d's eyes are upon from the beginning of the year until the end of the year,” it is certain that the “Guardian of Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps,” and just as until now, so too in the future He will guard the Jewish People from every sorrow and trouble. The more that the **foundation** of the survival of the Jewish people—**one** nation in the Land—is established, meaning a daily lifestyle in accordance with Torah's teachings, the **one** Torah for us all, given by the one **G-d**, the more the security of our Holy Land will increase, until the guarantee will be fulfilled that “You shall dwell securely in your land and I will grant peace upon the land and you shall lie down and there shall be none that terrify you.”

In this too, the youth have a special task, for they are unafraid of the truth the way it is; they do not seek compromises, they are full of strength, and they aren't ashamed of scoffers and by what others might say, etc. [The youth] have the responsibility to be the pioneers who go before the Jewish people wherever they are—in Eretz Yisroel and also in Chutz Laaretz—to follow in Hashem's way as Hashem has taught us in His Torah, to walk confidently in that path.

May you have success and go from strength to strength in the way of Torah, the Torah of life, and the mitzvos, about which it is said, “And you shall live by them.”¹ **T**

1. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 26, letter number 9638.



לזכות
הרה"ת ר' משה
וזוגתו מרת שרה חנה
ומשפחתם שיחיו
גורארי'
טאמס ריווער, ניו ג'רסי

Journey of the Fish



“We have arrived at the village. That is the home we need to go to.”

It was an unexpected early morning journey for the few Chassidim of the Alter Rebbe who were woken to travel with their Rebbe. Not sure of what to expect, they followed the Alter Rebbe into the home of a local *mashke*-vendor whose clientele was the local peasants.

“Please show us to a room in which we can

daven,” asked the Alter Rebbe.

“I don’t have any available,” he replied, “But following the local law, I have a room designated for the alcohol barrels which you can use.”

As the owner of the home began removing the barrels from the room in preparation for davening, the Alter Rebbe asked him to prepare a meal of fish for them to eat.

“With my deepest regrets, I can’t do this for

you. We don’t live near the river and there are no fish to be bought here,” he explained.

While the Alter Rebbe and his Chassidim davened Shacharis, there was a knock on the door, which the owner of the home quickly responded to.

Shocked, he saw a gentile man holding a pail of water with a large fish inside. “Would you like to purchase this,” he said pointing at his lucky catch. Without any hesitation at all, the owner

paid for the fish and quickly informed the Alter Rebbe that a fish had been found.

The Alter Rebbe insisted on being present in the kitchen throughout the entire time the fish was being prepared and cooked. He then turned to the surprised Chassidim and explained, “Do you remember so-and-so who recently passed away? His soul was reincarnated in a fish and now when you eat it he will receive the elevation he needs.” **T**

לזכות
הת' זלמן יודא שיח' וולבובסקי
והת' מנחם מענדל שיח' וולבובסקי
לרגל הגיעם לעול מצוות



"והיו עיניך רואות את מוריך" SEEING OUR REBBEIM

A historical sketch of the portraits and photographs of our Rebbeim

"אמר רבי, האי דמחדדנא מחבראי, דחזית' לרבי מאיר מאחורי, ואילו חזית' מקמי', הוה מחדדנא טפי, דכתיב והיו עיניך רואות את מוריך." (עירובין יג. ב.)

"Rebbi said, I am sharper than my colleagues because I merited to see the back of Rebbi Meir. Had I merited to see his face, I would have been even sharper. As the novi Yeshaya states, "Your eyes shall behold your teacher." (Eruvin 13b)

The best way to learn Torah is through hearing it directly from one's Rebbe while seeing him in person. Afterwards, while reviewing or repeating the Torah, it is crucial to envision the Rebbe's holy face, to remain connected to the source in order to succeed in understanding the Torah more deeply.

This is true with regard to every Torah from every Rebbe to every *talmid* in every generation. Even if one is learning Torah from a Rebbe he has never seen, the Rebbe's essence is invested in his Torah and through proper study and meditation one can achieve this level of attachment and understanding.

In more recent times, as accurate portraits have become more common and especially with the advent of photography, we have been granted the gift of experiencing the benefits of "envisioning the face of the *baal hashmuah*," even generations later. The Rebbe explained on several occasions that through an "accurate portrait" one can access these benefits in a more practical way.

When the Rebbe was preparing the set of S'dei Chemed for publication in 5709* he sought to publish a photo of the author in the *sefarim*.¹ Years later, the Rebbe instructed that the photo of the Rebbe Rashab be published in the *sefer* of Hemshech Samach Vov, a photo of the Friediker Rebbe in some of his Sifrei Hasichos², and that the photo of his father Harav Levi Yitzchok be published in the *sefer* Likkutei Levi Yitzchok.

Following is a historical sketch of the portraits and photographs of Rabboseinu Nesieinu.

Baal Shem Tov and Mezritcher Maggid

There is a tradition from the Rebbeim that there is no portrait of the Baal Shem Tov.

Several times people asked the Rebbe about the famous portrait that is popularly presented as the Baal Shem Tov and the idea was firmly rejected. On Sukkos 5726*, during the Yom Tov meal in the Frierdiker Rebbe's sukkah, Reb Yankel Katz from Chicago mentioned that he recently saw portraits of several *tzaddikim* including one purported to be of the Baal Shem Tov, and he asked the Rebbe if it is real. The Rebbe responded that the portrait is of a different "Baal Shem" who lived in Germany, and there is certainly no portrait of the Mezritcher Maggid.

In the winter of 5742* Reb Yisroel Mordechai Kozominsky wrote to the Rebbe that the Encyclopedia Judaica claims the alleged portrait of the Baal Shem Tov is actually a "Baal Shem" that lived in London. In response the Rebbe verified that it was certainly not the Baal Shem Tov since according to tradition there were 13 (or 12) noticeable strands of hair (ג' תיקוני) in the Baal Shem Tov's beard.³

Alter Rebbe

The portrait of the Alter Rebbe was featured on the fifth page of the second edition of *Hatomim*, published in honor of Yud-Tes Kislev 5696*. It was the first time this photo was published in a Lubavitch publication and many Chassidim wondered where it originated from and if it was accurate. Two years later, in the eighth edition of *Hatomim* published in honor of Yud-Tes Kislev 5698*, the editors responded to the many inquiries by publicizing segments of the Frierdiker Rebbe's diary relating to the history and tradition of this portrait. Following is a synopsis of *Hatomim* vol. 2 pages 379 - 382:

During the winter of 5615* the Tzemach Tzedek received a message from the authorities that in six weeks time the Ministry of Interior will host a conference on the issue of publishing Hebrew books translated into Yiddish for Jewish children. Since the Tzemach Tzedek was a prominent participant of the famous conference of 5603*, they requested that the Tzemach Tzedek attend this conference as well, as it pertained to the same topics as the previous one.

The Tzemach Tzedek did not wish to attend and he was not in the best of health at the time. Dr. Heibenthal happened to be visiting the area and he was called to the Tzemach Tzedek. When he saw the invitation to the conference, Dr. Heibenthal immediately composed an official letter explaining that the Tzemach Tzedek could not leave home until the spring and was in no condition to travel to S. Petersburg at the time.

The Rebbe Maharash and the Chossid Reb Aharon Bilinitcher were appointed to represent the Tzemach Tzedek at the conference and they were guided on how to fulfill this mission properly.

"One of the assistants to the Deputy Interior Minister," related Reb Aharon, "was a young nobleman approximately 30-years-old. During the meetings he was very respectful to the Rebbe Maharash and it was obvious that he was intrigued by him.

"Between the fourth and fifth meetings there was a five day break and the nobleman requested an audience with the Rebbe Maharash. He came to the hotel and they were in the room for over two hours. Later the Rebbe Maharash told me that he was an artist and wanted to draw a portrait of the Rebbe Maharash."

His artistic talent was hereditary since his grandfather had a unique appreciation for art and had accumulated a massive private art collection. He continued sharing that there was a portrait in the collection of a grand rabbi who had been arrested on charges of high treason and his grandfather, who was one of the main interrogators, commissioned an artist to draw a portrait of the rabbi and after the case was closed he added the portrait in his private collection.

The Rebbe Maharash was intrigued by this information and asked him for permission to peruse through the art collection and see the portrait of the rabbi. He readily agreed and two days later, the Rebbe Maharash and Reb Aharon paid a visit to his home.

They were shocked to discover that the portrait of the rabbi was that of a saintly man, and the Alter Rebbe's name and father's name (from Liozna) were clearly written in Russian under the portrait! The date of the portrait was 1798, which was the year the Alter Rebbe was imprisoned in S. Petersburg at the Petroplavosky fortress.

The Friediker Rebbe heard this story from the Chossid Reb Avrohom Dov Babroisker (who heard it directly from Reb Aharon Bilinitcher) together with his teacher the Rashbatz on Monday, 20 Teves 5656* and on Friday night during the Shabbos meal by the Rebbe Rashab the discussion was all about the Alter Rebbe's portrait and its history.

Reb Chanoch Hendel commented that the Alter Rebbe's portrait can be found in Tanya⁴ and the Rebbe Rashab greatly appreciated this heartfelt *Chassidisher* expression. There was much discussion between the elder Chassidim at the table how the Alter Rebbe's second son Reb Chaim Avrohom bore a striking resemblance to the Alter Rebbe, as was evident in the similarities between the portrait and how they remember him before his illness.

On a different occasion, the Rebbe Rashab said that he heard from the Rebbe Maharash that the Tzemach Tzedek would often say, "When I look at my uncle Reb Chaim Avrohom I see the Zeide (the Alter Rebbe). His face is almost identical to the Zeide's face."

The next day during the *kiddush* at the home of Rebbetzin Rivka, the Rebbe Rashab asked her if she remembered the episode of the Alter Rebbe's portrait when the Maharash brought it to Lubavitch and what the Tzemach Tzedek said about it.

"Yes," she replied. "I clearly remember all the details as if it happened yesterday. I can envision the entire episode as if it were happening now."

"If it is not a bother, please relate the story to Yosef Yitzchok (the Friediker Rebbe)," the Rebbe Rashab requested. "I want him to know the story first hand."

She happily agreed and at a later date shared the details with the Friediker Rebbe.

When the Rebbe Maharash returned from his trip to S. Petersburg, he reported his discovery of the portrait and the Tzemach Tzedek expressed his sincere wish to see the portrait.

In 5619* as the Rebbe Maharash prepared for a trip to S. Petersburg, the Tzemach Tzedek asked him to find the nobleman and either purchase the portrait for even a thousand ruble or at least to arrange for an expert artist to copy it.

The Rebbe Maharash was in S. Petersburg for a month but the nobleman had disappeared and the Tzemach tzedek was painfully disappointed.



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During 5621* the Rebbe Maharash was again in S. Petersburg and shared with Professor Berthenson that he was searching for a nobleman with a large art collection who used to live at a certain address. Months later Professor Berthenson notified the Rebbe Maharash that he tracked down the nobleman and in the summer of 5622* the Rebbe Maharash paid him a visit. After much difficult negotiations, the nobleman agreed to lend the portrait to the Rebbe Maharash for a month only after he gave him a deposit of ten thousand ruble.

Reb Yisroel Chaiken traveled back to Lubavitch with the Rebbe Maharash with the sole purpose of handling the valuable package. One day the Rebbe Maharash shared the details of the story with Rebbetzin Rivka and said that the Tzemach Tzedek allowed him to show her the photo on condition it was kept secret.

The portrait was in the Tzemach Tzedek's home for two weeks. Every day, except for Shabbos, the Rebbe Maharash would lock the door of the Tzemach Tzedek's room and place the portrait on the table. The Tzemach Tzedek would wear his Shabbos clothing, hat and gartel and gaze at the photo for a long while.

"When the portrait of the Alter Rebbe was published I recognized it well," concluded Rebbetzin Rivka. "I could tell that it was a copy of the original I had seen years earlier, but I shared this information only with your father (the Rebbe Rashab). And now I am sharing it with you."

Mitteler Rebbe

During the above mentioned Yom Tov *seuda* in the Frierdiker Rebbe's sukkah on Sukkos 5726*, the Rebbe said: "We have portraits of the Alter Rebbe and of the Tzemach Tzedek. A portrait of the Mitteler Rebbe doesn't exist even in fantasy."

At the farbrengen of Yud Kislev 5744* the Rebbe addressed in a fascinating way the fact that the Mitteler Rebbe is the only Rebbe of Chabad for which we have no portrait nor accurate likeness to compare to.

The Yerushalmi states יהא רואה בשם אומרה יהא רואה—*When quoting a Torah teaching one should envision the Torah teacher standing before him.*

Although it is impossible to do so in a physical sense when learning the Chassidus of the Mitteler Rebbe since we have no portraits of him, nevertheless there is certainly a way to fulfill this instruction of Chazal as well.

The Tzemach Tzedek

A certain non-Jewish artist wished to draw a portrait of the Tzemach Tzedek but knew that the Rebbe would never allow it to happen in a standard fashion since he was opposed to having portraits of himself being drawn.

It was in the later years of the Tzemach Tzedek's life that this artist arrived in Lubavitch for Shabbos and when the Tzemach Tzedek was saying a *maamar* to the Chassidim, he positioned himself at a vantage point where he could gaze upon the Rebbe's face and commit his holy figure to memory.

At the conclusion of the *maamar* he rushed back to his lodgings with his eyes mostly shut so that he would not forget even one detail of the Tzemach Tzedek's face and immediately set to work on his canvas.

The fact that the portrait is a rendition of the artist's view of the Tzemach Tzedek on Shabbos, explains why the robe, gartel and hat are all white, since that was how the Tzemach Tzedek dressed on Shabbos.

When the Tzemach Tzedek saw the portrait and was told how it came to be, he was pained that it was done on Shabbos but found consolation in the fact that the artist made several errors.

1. The left side of the Tzemach Tzedek's robe overlaps the right side, when in truth he always wore it in the opposite fashion as is customary in Chassidish circles.
2. The Tzemach Tzedek is portrayed as holding a *sefer* in his right hand. But in the original portrait the *sefer* is drawn in a way that clearly opens left to right when a *sefer* written in Lashon Hakodesh obviously opens from right to left.

(In the portrait that was published by Kehos in 5713* these errors were corrected.)

The Rebbe once referenced this story at a farbrengen and said, "The portrait of the Tzemach Tzedek, which according to some accounts was allegedly drawn without his knowledge."⁵

This original portrait served as the basis for many other portraits and was first published in Russia in 5647*. In the winter of 5698* the Frierdiker Rebbe received a photo of the Tzemach Tzedek from his grandmother Rebbetzin Rivka as a gift and she told him that that specific copy is the most accurate depiction of the Tzemach Tzedek. (M²Beis Hagnazim page 260).



PHOTOGRAPH OF THE TZEMACH TZEDEK REVERSED SO THE KAPOTA IS CLOSED RIGHT-OVER-LEFT, PUBLISHED BY KEHOT IN 5713.



ORIGINAL PAINTING OF THE TZEMACH TZEDEK.

The Rebbe Maharash

Since he was unable to visit the *Ohalim* of the Rebbeim in Russia after being banished from there two years earlier, the Frierdiker Rebbe visited Eretz Yisrael on his way to the United States in the summer of 5689* in order to visit the *mekomos hakdoshim*.

During the ten day historic visit, the Frierdiker Rebbe made an indelible impression on the Jewish community of Eretz Yisroel, greatly strengthening the Lubavitch community there and laying the groundwork for elevating the level of *hafatzas hamaayanos* there as well.

A Chossid of the Rebbe Maharash who had immigrated to Eretz Yisroel from Russia decades earlier entered the Frierdiker Rebbe's room for *yechidus* and immediately fainted. When he recovered somewhat he explained that the Frierdiker Rebbe was identical to his grandfather the Rebbe Maharash.

The Rebbe repeated this story, with great emotion, several times at farbrengens and once concluded that although there is no known portrait or photograph of the Rebbe Maharash (although some claim one does exist but it has never been publicized), we can imagine his appearance based on the similarity to the Frierdiker Rebbe.⁶

The Rebbe Rashab

Although photography became somewhat available to the masses during the time period of his *nesius*, the Rebbe Rashab was very particular not to have his photograph taken.

One Rosh Hashanah, when the Rebbe Rashab would lead an entire parade of Chassidim to the river for *tashlich*, two non-Jews from a nearby town who had seen the impressive event in a previous year, brought a camera the next year and photographed the Rebbe Rashab. The Rebbe Rashab was pained by this and, from then on, instead of going to the river for *tashlich* other arrangements were made in the *chatzer*.

When the Frierdiker Rebbe recorded this incident he expressed, "I will not deny that I would be very happy if the photograph came out nice..."

However, there was one time that the Rebbe Rashab did pose for a photograph.⁷ It was in Rostov in the year 5680*. Due to the revolution, the entire Georgian government was headquartered in a hotel in Rostov and one of the employees, a Jew named Mr. Schreiber, davened in the Rebbe Rashab's *minyan* on Rosh Hashanah. He told the Chassidim that the entire Georgian government planned on fleeing Russia by ship to Turkey. Several wealthy Chassidim considered joining the escape to Turkey and suggested that the Rebbe Rashab and *beis harav* join.

At first the Rebbe Rashab agreed to the idea and in order to prepare a visa a photograph was needed. The Rebbe Rashab posed for this photograph in his *yechidus* room, and it was later widely published many times.



A short while later the plan was canceled without explanation and everyone stayed in Russia.

Although this was a real photograph of the Rebbe Rashab, Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka always expressed her disappointment that since the photograph was taken at a very difficult time period it does not properly reflect the way the Rebbe Rashab looked. In 5746* Rabbi Nochum Kaplan drew a portrait of the Rebbe Rashab wearing a *spodik* based on the descriptions of Reb Avrohom Mayor. The Rebbetzin corrected certain details of it and was very satisfied with the finished product.

The Frierdiker Rebbe

Reb Moshe Groner was an avid collector of photos of the Frierdiker Rebbe. Whenever he found a new photo, from private collections or newspaper archives, he would bring it to the Rebbe and the Rebbe would look intently at the photo, inquire about all of the details of it and write them on the back of the photo.

In the summer of 5751* a Chossid sent a rare photo of the Frierdiker Rebbe to the Rebbe and speculated that the photo was taken in 5680*. The Rebbe responded:

נת' ות"ח ת"ח. ובפרט שע"ע לא ראיתי דוגמתה. לכאורה (פוטו מ) ציור ביד (ע"פ זכרון) ולכן ריבוי השערות מצד ימין למעלה).

I received it and many thanks, many thanks. Especially since I have not seen anything similar. It is probably a (photograph of) a painting (that was done based on memory). (This explains the abundance of hair on the top right side).

The Frierdiker Rebbe is the first of our Rebbeim that we have a large collection of photos of. Aside from the fact that photography had become widely available

and photographs were taken at public events with great frequency, one of his family members owned a camera and was able to photograph frequently. We therefore have a wealth of photographs of the Frierdiker Rebbe in many different settings.

During the Frierdiker Rebbe's imprisonment in Shpalerka he would daven at great length every day. One Shabbos morning the prison guards wanted to take his photograph, as was standard procedure for every prisoner. When they entered the cell, the Frierdiker Rebbe was in middle of davening with the tallis covering his face and all their efforts to catch his attention failed.

When they returned some time later, the Frierdiker Rebbe was still in middle of davening but his tallis was not covering his face. When he saw them enter with a camera he waved them away and they left in great fright. Afterwards they returned and tried to explain that he was obligated to have his photo taken right away, but he vehemently refused to be photographed on Shabbos.

After Shabbos the Frierdiker Rebbe allowed them to photograph him, but first he put on his *rabbonishe* hat and made his tzitzis very visible. They tried to convince him that this will all not show in the photograph but the Frierdiker Rebbe insisted that if they want a photo of him, they will have a photo of who he truly is...

There are also various videos of the Frierdiker Rebbe that were recorded in America during his first visit in 5689*-5690* and later on as well.

On 16 Adar 5709* the Frierdiker Rebbe became a naturalized American citizen in 770. The Rebbe arranged all of the details of the historic event and hired two professional photographers and a videographer to document the proceedings. When the photographers arrived, the Rebbe escorted them into the Frierdiker Rebbe's *yechidus* room and set one up on each side of the Frierdiker Rebbe's table so that the photos would be taken from both angles.

As they set up their equipment and lights, the Rebbe requested that the lights be dimmed as much as possible so as not to bother the Frierdiker Rebbe.

The Rebbe chose 20 photographs from that event to be published in a special album and they became the most widely publicized photos of the Frierdiker Rebbe that we have today. About one of these photos the Rebbe said, "Dos iz der Rebbe..." - "This is the Rebbe"⁸

Photos of the Frierdiker Rebbe were disseminated in various ways to Chassidim around the world and there were some photos behind the Iron Curtain which Chassidim cherished and held dear for many years. When large groups of Chassidim managed to escape Communist Russia after World War II the Rebbe sent them photos of the Frierdiker Rebbe as well.



THIS PHOTO WAS COPIED AND SHARED BY MANY CHASSIDIM WHO REMAINED IN RUSSIA.



THE PICTURE ABOUT WHICH THE REBBE SAID, "DOS IZ DER REBBE."

The Rebbe

Photography in the era of *dor hashvi'i* may seem to many as routine, but in truth, for many years the Rebbe did not allow it on a large scale. When the Rebbe arrived in the United States and started participating in *simchos* of *anash* he typically avoided the eye of the camera, at times turning to the other direction or raising his hand to cover his face.

The first known photo of the Rebbe after the formal *kabbalas hanesius* on Yud Shevat 5711* is from the wedding of Rabbi Leibel Posner and it became the only official photo of the Rebbe available to the media and was used in all Chabad publications. In the early 5720s* the Rebbe chose an updated photo which was the only one officially available for the next 10 years.

In the capacity of his work with Lubavitch News Service, Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky once asked the Rebbe which photo to provide to the media. The Rebbe said it does not matter as long as it is a photo with a smile.

In the early years Mr. Harry Trainer was essentially the official photographer of the entire New York *frum* community. He was hired to photograph almost every wedding and was granted permission to photograph the Rebbe since he made a *parnassa* by selling those photos.

Once while the Rebbe was saying a *sicha* at a wedding in Gold Manor, Mr. Trainer took a photo and some Chassidim gestured to him that he should take many more. After three flashes from his camera, the Rebbe paused the *sicha* and said, "I think three is enough..."

When the Rebbe started to be *mesader kiddushin* only at *chuppos* that were held in the courtyard of 770, Mr. Trainer was notified by *mazkirus* that he may snap only one photo, but over time he requested permission for more and was allowed to take three photos each time.

Anash yearned to have more photos of the Rebbe. *Bochurim* once handed a camera to a young boy and asked him to snap a photo as the Rebbe walked out of the small *zal* after one of the *tefillos* on the way to his room. Before the child was able to take the photo, the Rebbe had already confiscated the camera and handed it to the child's father. Another time when a child



THE PHOTO USED BY LUBAVITCH NEWS SERVICE IN THE 5720S.

COURTESY OF KEHOT PUBLICATION SOCIETY



A PHOTO USED BY LUBAVITCH NEWS SERVICE IN THE 5730S.

COURTESY OF KEHOT PUBLICATION SOCIETY



THE REBBE ASKS A PHOTOGRAPHER IF HE HAD STUDIED TANYA THAT DAY.

YOSSI MELAMED VIA JEM 125381

stood in the front hallway of 770 and snapped a photo of the Rebbe as he returned from a *chuppa*, the Rebbe instructed that the camera be confiscated until he was tested in learning by his principal.

The first time the Rebbe officially allowed a photographer to document an event in 770 was during the festivities of Yud Shevat 5730*, at the *siyum* of Moshiach's Sefer Torah on Erev Shabbos, as well as the *farbrengen* on Motzei Shabbos. The photographer produced 120 photos of the events and the Rebbe commented, "I thought he would take just a few pictures..."

As the years progressed it became clear that while those who made a living from photography were welcome to take photos in 770, the Rebbe strongly disapproved of *bochurim*, children and *anash* doing so. Several times the Rebbe asked *bochurim* or non-professional photographers that were holding cameras if they had learned *Chitas* that day.

During the *farbrengen* of Chai Elul 5739* the Rebbe asked Reb Yoel Kahan to ask a Yid standing nearby taking pictures if he learns Tanya. Even after he responded that he does, the Rebbe took out a pocket size booklet of *Iggeres Hateshuva* from his breast pocket and handed it to Reb Yoel to learn a few lines with the Yid and then allowed him to continue snapping photos.⁹



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Harav Levi Yitzchok

In a previous edition, we featured the story of the two photographs of the Rebbe's father, Harav Levi Yitzchak.

For many years, the only known photo of Harav Levi Yitzchok was the one taken shortly before his *histalkus*. The Rebbe noted that his father's face in this photo is hardly recognizable, after enduring so much pain and suffering.

After the Iron Curtain fell, a new photograph was discovered in the KGB file of Harav Levi Yitzchok taken shortly after his arrest. The Rebbe instructed that the two photos be published side by side in the *sefer Toras Menachem—Tiferes Levi Yitzchok*, demonstrating the extent of his father's suffering and *mesirus nefesh*, and his ever-flowing wellspring of Torah that never ceased, despite it all.¹⁰ **T**

9 SHEVAT 5730. YITZCHOK BARASH VIA JEM 109664



REB YOEL KAHAN RECEIVES THE IGGERES HATESHUVA FROM THE REBBE.

1. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 3, #512.

2. *Sefer Hasichos* 5700 and 5701

3. *Likkutei Sichos* vol. 19 page 531.

4. See the Rebbe's explanation about the *Mittler Rebbe* from Yud Kislev 5744.

5. *Sefer Hasichos* 5750 vol. 1 page 193.

6. *Hisvaaduyos* 5744 vol. 1, p. 539 see note.

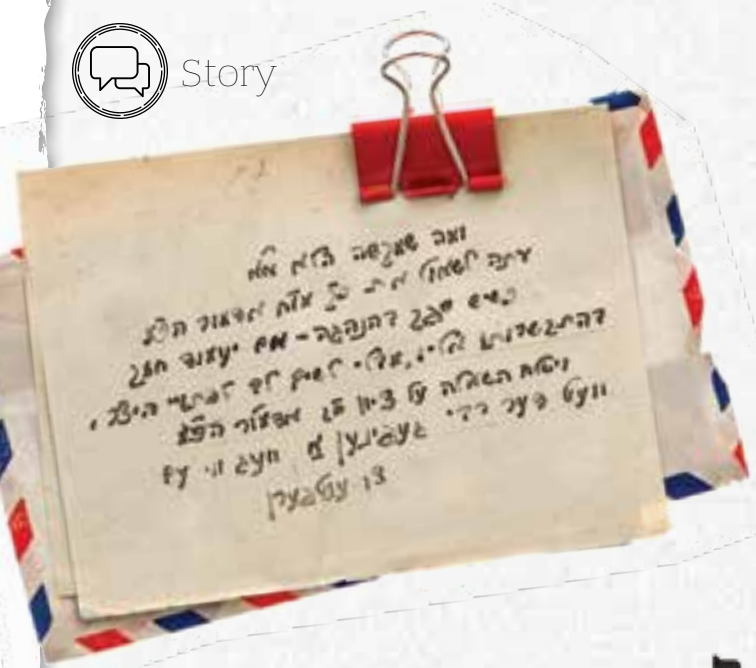
7. *Ibid.* 5750 vol. 2 page 50 note 67.

8. *Album America Iz Nit Andersh* page 71.

9. Published on *Living Torah Disc* 41,

Program 162; chabad.org/574975.

10. *The Telling Picture*, *Derher* magazine, *Menachem-Av* 5773.



דער רבי וועט געפינען א וועג...

לזכות
 החייל בצבאות ה'
 לוי בן התמים ר' מנחם יצחק
 וזוגתו מרת רינה פריידל שיחיו
 טרקסלער
 לרגל הולדתו י"א ניסן ה'תש"פ
 נדפס ע"י זקניהם
 הרה"ת ר' משה גדול וזוגתו מרת שושנה
 שיחיו טרקסלר

Beyond Our Imagination!

AS TOLD BY RABBI MENDY GREENBERG (PALMER, AK)

Two years after moving out on shlichus to the Mat-Su Valley, Alaska we decided to invest in buying a home for our Chabad House until we would have the ability to purchase a large building for a proper Beis Chabad.

For the greater part of 5778 we searched for a home in a central location that was between 3,500 - 5,000 square feet, with one room large enough to host approximately 80 people and of course within a specific price range that

we felt we could handle. We toured over 50 homes and we could not find the perfect one.

In Alaska all home leases expire in the summer because it's not practical to move houses during the Alaskan winter. As the summer of 5778 rolled around we were under pressure to find a new home because we really did not want to spend the money on a rental which we felt was unwise. After some discussion, our landlord graciously agreed to



extend our lease until the middle of Tishrei and gave us the option of remaining there for the winter if nothing turned up before then.

It was 5 Tishrei 5779 and I wrote a *duch* to the Rebbe about the *peulos* of Rosh Hashanah. As I shared in the Chassidisher Derher last year, I wanted to arrange a minyan for Yom Kippur and asked the Rebbe for a *bracha* that I find bochurim to join us for Yom Kippur.

In addition I wrote about our dilemma about purchasing a new home. We had two options at the moment, both of which we were unsatisfied with and were very expensive. In addition, we were under pressure to answer our landlord about remaining in our current home for the winter.

I begged the Rebbe to show us clearly what we should do. Should we buy a new home; if yes, which one should we buy? Or should we remain in our current home for the rest of the winter?

After a very successful and uplifting Yom Kippur (with the many miracles that led to two bochurim joining us) our family traveled to the Rebbe for Sukkos and Simchas Torah. In the terminal waiting to board our flight I received a text message from Mrs. Traighli Hardy. Before sharing the text message I need to preface who this woman is.

In honor of Yud-Alef Nissan 5778 we arranged several Education Day proclamations in towns throughout the state and in the capitol. The People's Paper (a local monthly

newspaper) ran a front page article about the Rebbe and a photojournalist named Michael Hardy covered the events.

His parents, Traighli and Dan Hardy are the well to-do owners of Hardy Heating and involved in many community causes. They recently traveled to Israel together with the most prominent philanthropists in Palmer, Richard and Colleen Stryken and visited the Shiloh Israel Children's Fund (SICF). This organization is dedicated to healing the trauma of children who have been victims of terrorist attacks, R"l, owned and directed by David Rubin, the former mayor of Shiloh.

They were so impressed with SICF, and they invited David Rubin to Palmer and co-hosted a fundraiser for the SICF at the Stryken's home during Sivan. Michael Hardy knew about me from Education Day and suggested his mother invite me to the fundraiser for the Israeli organization as the local rabbi. We attended the fundraiser and started a friendly relationship with Mrs. Hardy and the Strykens.

I wished to develop the connection so in the beginning of the summer I extended an invitation to Mrs. Hardy to join us for Shabbos dinner together with the Strykens, but it never panned out.

On the day after Yom Kippur, as I prepared to board a flight to New York, Mrs. Hardy texted me "I just spoke with the Strykens. We will be happy to join your family



WITH MR STRYKEN (R) AND HIS LAWYER AT THE NEW CHABAD HOUSE.



LOCAL MAYOR SPEAKS AT THE CHABAD HOUSE OPENING.

for Friday night dinner on the first weekend of October.” That would be Shabbos Bereishis and we were scheduled to return to Wasilla a day before so it would work out for us as well.

They joined us for Shabbos dinner and it was a very pleasant evening. After Shabbos I emailed Mr. Stryken to thank him for joining us. He responded in kind and wrote that he would like to meet me for coffee.

We met a few days later and he shared with me all about himself and his new business venture. After a while he finally said to me “So tell me rabbi, what is going on with you?”

I shared with him our struggles about finding a proper home for our family and Chabad activities. He listened with great interest to what we were looking for and then asked me, “Why do you need a room to fit 80 people?”

“Because our public seder last year had 60 guests and we plan to grow it to 80.”

“Such a small vision? You need to aim for bigger and better! Listen, real estate was my career before I retired. I bought my first home when I was 16 and I know the real estate in this area very well. Let me see what I can do for you.”

A few days later Mr. Stryken sent an email notifying me that he searched 800 properties in the area online and sent me three links of homes he felt were good values with large square footage. “About the price - I’ll help you deal with that.”

After touring both properties we settled on a home that is 7,000 square feet with an additional garage that is 2,000 square feet. It was in a prime location but the price was well over our budget.

Mr. Stryken and another mutual friend of ours, Ken Kincaid, participated in all of our meetings with the real estate agent and guided us through each step of the process. Their presence was invaluable. Mr. Stryken even bargained down the price within range of our budget and donated a large sum of money as well. With the assistance of Rabbi Moshe Kotlarsky we received a generous grant from Mr. and Mrs. George and Pamela Rohr and launched a capital campaign to fundraise the down payment. On 8 Adar, two weeks before the lease on our home was up, we signed the contract on our brand new home and Chabad House.

When I asked the Rebbe in Tishrei to show us clearly what to do, we clearly needed to stay in our rented home for the winter and not buy either of the two homes we were contemplating at the time. And within a week, on the day after Yom Kippur, my first real encounter with the Strykens was confirmed which set off an amazing series of events leading up to the purchase of our new home. It is a structure which can serve as our Chabad House for the long term, in the best possible location we could wish for, with options for expansion as well.

Once again we saw clearly how our success on shlichus has nothing to do with us and our plans. When we decided to buy a house we were looking for a short term solution and when we left the decision to the Rebbe we merited to achieve something we had never dreamed of just months earlier. **1**

YOUR STORY

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



לזכות
הת' ישראל משה שיחי'
לרגל הגיעו לעול מצוות
י"א מנחם אב ה'תש"פ

נדפס ע"י הוריו
הרה"ת ר' יוסף יעקב
וזוגתו מרת מלכה בינה
ומשפחתם שיחיו
מאראס
שלוחי כ"ק אדמו"ר ס. אנטוניה, טקסס



25 SHEVAT 5750

LEVAYA OF DR. AVROHOM ABBA SELIGSON.

מנחם משיב נפשי

In the early years of the *nesius* the Rebbe would attend every *levaya* that passed by 770. Over time this changed and the Rebbe only attended on unique occasions (such as *beis harav*, heads of *mosdos*, as well as if the passing was connected with a unique tragedy *r"l*).



The Rebbe would exit 770 as the *aron* approached and would follow the car from behind.

27 SIVAN 5737, YOSSIE MELAMED VIA JEM 1130821



15 ELUL 5751, CB HALBERSTAM VIA JEM 83831



15 ELUL 5751, CB HALBERSTAM VIA JEM 83829

The Rebbe would usually recite something quietly while following the *aron*. At times the Rebbe gazed at the family members in a very unique way.



29 KISLEV, 5737.



27 SIVAN 5737, YOSSI MELAMED VIA JEM 130830



LEVAYA OF RABBI ELIYAHU SIMPSON.



JEM 109173

The Rebbe followed the procession until it crossed the intersection of Kingston Avenue and Eastern Parkway (on rare occasions the Rebbe continued walking further), and then continued with his gaze till the aron was no longer in sight.





30 KISLEV, 5750.



30 KISLEV, 5750.

LEVAYA OF RABBI NISSAN GORDON.



Upon returning to 770, the Rebbe washed three times on both hands with a kvort that was prepared at the entrance.



15 ELUL 5751, CB HALBERSTAM VIA JEM 83846



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.



I Was There

Dear Editors,

In continuation to your article about Chabad's activities at the World Fair [Issue 94 (171), Sivan 5780], this is an open letter of appreciation and blessings to the former *bochurim* (and their families), who worked the Merkos *mitvzoim* exhibit tables at the old N.Y. Coliseum's 1961 U.S. World's Trade Fair. With dedication and patience, they carried out the idea of Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky, which the Rebbe encouraged.

There, I discovered the Rebbe and Lubavitch, as Derher's Sivan issue describes!

Thanks to Rabbi Yosef Minkowitz's tireless research, Derher was able to print behind the scenes details and insight. This important, epic Derher article should encourage all shluchim who may sometimes wonder what they are accomplishing. They should know that it is their genuine caring and friendship that plants seeds — sooner or later to blossom in one way or another!

Maybe they inspire a Jew to do another Jew a favor. Or to give charity to help support shluchim's good projects. Or the shluchim are remembered later, at the right time for someone, etc.

What shluchim are and do matters more than anyone could know!

With appreciation and blessings,
Sincerely,

Mrs. Peshah Razel Lieberman
Brooklyn NY



Reb Shimshon Stock

Dear Editors,

It has come to my attention that in Issue 93, the story of "He Will Outlive The Doctor," shows a picture of someone by the Rebbe with crutches, which suggests it is a picture of Rabbi Yechiel Ziskind, whom the story is about. However, the person in the picture is my great-grandfather, Reb Shimshon Stock. Although they were good friends, it is not Rabbi Yechiel Ziskind.



Matti Geisinsky



Landow Yeshiva

Dear Editors,

Yasher koach for the wonderful publication which certainly enhances our *hiskashrus* to our Rebbe the *nossi hador* and to Chabad Chassidus.

In the recent Sivan issue [Issue 94 (171)] I found two articles very meaningful. The first one with the feature of Rabbi Lipskar of Bal Harbour ["*Ich For Doch Mit Eich*"]. One time when meeting him on Kingston Avenue, I introduced myself and said, "You sent me to prison!" He in turn said back, "I hear that from a lot of people!"

The most poignant part was the section about Mel Landow. I had the opportunity to meet him here in S. Diego and I introduced myself with the following story:

I was a kid traveling to visit my bubby in Miami Beach, landing in the middle of Purim day. I was anxious to hear the Megillah as it was getting late in the day and I did not know what to do. My Bubby said the Lubavitch Yeshiva is down the street, maybe you can find someone there. I ran and found a couple of *bochurim*. One of them was able to read the Megillah for me and I felt very grateful.

I then told Mr. Landow that years later “as payback” the Rebbe sent me as a shliach to that same yeshiva, Landow Yeshiva, bearing his name. I felt I had a very good year of learning and was able to share with the community many outreach activities including sharing the joy and mitzvahs of Purim, that I was a beneficiary of as a kid.

He was extremely touched, clapping his hands together and grinning from ear to ear he screamed out “Yes!”

Reading what the Rebbe told him about Landow Yeshiva validated my appreciation of the *nachas* he felt at hearing my experience.

The second article dealt with the cover story of the Merkos *peulos* at the World’s Fair [“Lubavitch At The World’s Fair”]. My wife’s parents, Reuvain and Sorah Brenenson, had a very impactful experience there.

As recent college graduates and engaged to be married they were going on a date to visit the World’s Fair. They intended to visit an exhibit on the first floor. The way the fair was organized in that exhibit hall, one needed to go up to the top floor first and work their way down the stairs.

The Merkos booth was directly opposite the elevator on the top floor.

When my in-laws came out of the elevator, Yosef Spielman immediately recognized my father-in-law and greeted him warmly by name. By *hashgacha pratis* he had come across my father-in-law’s name in his wallet moments earlier. Spielman had written it down during a previous

encounter at a Shabbaton for college students in upstate New York, in which he had been involved.

The encounter at the World’s Fair had far reaching effects. This led to invitations to come to Crown Heights and my in-laws eventually chose to move to Crown Heights after their marriage.

They set up a beautiful home and were active in strengthening the Crown Heights community at a time when Jews were leaving, such as maintaining Frankel’s Shul on President Street near Utica Avenue, and the mikvah there, which is currently named Taharas Reuvain after my father-in-law.

They were involved with a number of community projects and initiatives and hosted many Shabbos guests over the years. A number of *frum* people I have met have told me that their first Shabbos was at my in-laws home. In his line of work in the computer industry, Reuvain was involved in *hafatza* with the Jews in his company, giving out *shmura* matzah and even creating his own big stage for public menorah lightings he organized at various business conventions.

They raised a beautiful family with children and grandchildren as shluchim of the Rebbe, members of *anash*, *mekusharim* to the Rebbe and active in *frum* communities. This includes influencing Reuvain’s brother, Abba Brenenson, who followed in his brother’s path raising a family of shluchim and *mekusharim* to the Rebbe as well.

My mother-in-law, may she be well, continues to be active in the Lubavitch community in North Miami Beach.

Hoping the experiences noted in this letter add to the impactful messages of the above mentioned articles.

Yisroel Dinerman
S. Diego California