

A Chassidisher **Derher**

א חסידישער דערהער

WE WANT TO SEE *The Rebbe!*

The Tzemach Tzedek and the Cantonists

Moment of Silence

CONSCIOUSNESSES OF
HASHEM IN EVERY CHILD

Unique – Even in Previous generations

THE ICONIC CHOSSID
REB SHMUEL LEVITIN



CHESHVAN 5782
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This magazine
has been made possible

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

Whose Shlichus Is It?

There are two important highlights in the month of Cheshvan: The birthday of the Rebbe Rashab on Chof Cheshvan and the International Kinus Hashluchim, which takes place during the last Shabbos of the month.

The Rebbe always teaches us that nothing in the world occurs by happenstance; the fact that two things come together in the same month and in close proximity to each other is obviously *b'hashgacha pratis*.

What is the connection between Chof Cheshvan and the Kinus Hashluchim?

We don't have to look very far. The Rebbe often spoke about the goal of the Rebbe Rashab when he founded Tomchei Temimim as raising students who will be "*neiros le'hair*," illuminating lamps that will spread the light of Yiddishkeit and the *maayanos* of Chassidus to the whole world. In a sense, the seeds for the concept of shlichus were really planted with the founding of Tomchei Temimim.

During one Chof Cheshvan farbrengen, the Rebbe elaborated on the famous *sicha* that the Rebbe Rashab said, based on the words "כל היוצא למלחמת בית דוד"—All who go out and fight in the armies of Dovid Hamelech... The *Temimim* are charged with fighting a war—not in the negative sense of war; all their actions should be peaceful and pleasant. But they are expected to stand up unabashedly and with war-like strength to fight off the *golus* and prepare the world for the coming of Moshiach.

Then the Rebbe explained that these words of the Rebbe Rashab may have been said many decades ago, addressed to a crowd of elite "*Temimim*," nevertheless

they are applicable to each and every one of us today more than ever. In fact, the Rebbe Rashab spoke of the generation who fight against “אשר חרפו עקבות משיח” — those who scoff at the concept of Moshiach,” during the time of “*ikvisa d’meshicha*”—the final generation before the coming of Moshiach, which is where we find ourselves today!

How is it possible that words spoken to an elite group of people so long ago could actually be relevant and meaningful to people like us?

The Rebbe explains this with an example from another mitzvah in the Torah: *korbanos*. During the time of the *Beis Hamikdash*, the *korbanos* were brought only by a select group of people. The ceremony itself was only attended by the serving *Kohanim*, the choir made up of *Levi'im*, and a select number of *Yisraelim* representing the rest of the people. Nevertheless, today each and every one of us offers a substitute for the *avodah* of *korbanos* by davening daily. As the generations deteriorate spiritually and the *golus* intensifies, Hashem gives us tools to combat it, accessible and available to all.

In a similar vein, the teaching and spreading of Chassidus also went through this type of evolution. In the Baal Shem Tov’s times, only a select group of elite students actually taught Chassidus to the masses. One generation later, the number of the Maggid’s *talmidim* doubled in size, and so the number of people teaching Chassidus grew. With each passing generation, teaching and spreading Chassidus became more and more widespread. With the advent of Tomchei Temimim, the Rebbe Rashab empowered his students to spread

Chassidus and illuminate the outside world with its great light. Then, with each passing year, as the impact of Tomchei Temimim became greater and greater, more people continue to assume this responsibility and join the fight as well.

Today, says the Rebbe, not only are *Temimim* and *yeshiva bochurim* tasked with this shlichus; every person listening to this farbrengen, including everyone listening on the hook-up (most of whom are *baalei batim*) are also included in the “troops of Dovid Hamelech.” They are all expected to act as *neiros l’hoir* and illuminate the world for the *geula*.

This is our job!

The *yetzer hara* might come and say, “Well, it’s a nice *pshetel*, a nice *vort*; but it’s not supposed to be taken as a real call to action...” You should know that this is not even coming from the *yetzer hara* himself. It’s your own self instigating the *yetzer hara* to say such things!

The Rebbe then concluded with a real call to action:

Whenever you meet another Yid, no matter what you think the reason might be, you should realize that the true purpose of the encounter is to spread Chassidus further and influence a fellow Jew in the teachings and the ways of Chassidus.

With that, we will merit the coming of Moshiach speedily, winning the war of *Beis Dovid*, and we will be taken out of golus by *Dovid Malka Meshicha*.¹

A Chassidisher Derher

שלהי תשרי ה'תשפ"ב
שנת המאה ועשרים להולדת כ"ק אדמו"ר

1. Chof Mar-Cheshvan 5745, sicha 2.



כתב יד קודש

Celebrating in Mourning

In this note written in Sivan 5742*, the Rebbe advises a chosson how to comfort his kallah and encourage her to feel joyful at their wedding, when her mother's mother suddenly passed away in the week before the wedding:



"TRUMPETER AND
CANTONIST OF THE
LIFE GUARDS CAVALRY
REGIMENT (1845 - 1848)."



WE WANT TO SEE *The Rebbe!*

*The Tzemach Tzedek
and the Cantonists*

לזכות
הרה"ת ר' מרדכי שיחי' ומשפחתו שיחיו
וולבובסקי
לרגל יום הולדתו טו"ב חשון
לבשורות טובות ורוב נחת חסידותי
מכל יו"ח שליט"א



JEWISH SOLDIERS IN THE CZAR'S ARMY GATHER TO EAT KOSHER FOOD.

"I knew about this seven years before it happened. When I was at the Ohel of my father [the Alter Rebbe], I saw that there was a terrible Heavenly prosecution against the Jew-hating young men¹, and my spirit was broken within me. I knew that at some point this decree would come to fruition. Then at my daughter's wedding, when so many people gathered around, young and old, in order to hear words of Chassidus, I was so elated, I thought the decree had passed. But then as morning drew near, when I started falling asleep my father came to me and asked, 'Why are you so happy, rejoicing with these young men gathered here? Don't you know about the prosecution that is currently going on and getting progressively worse?' Immediately, my spirit was broken. I knew it had to do with taking Jewish children away to the battlefield..."²

The Mittler Rebbe gave this frightening description in a *maamar* dedicated to the terrible decree of the "Cantonists," said shortly before his *histalkus*.

It was a decree issued by Czar Nicholas I, primarily targeting Jewish communities, with forced conscription

of young Jewish children into the Russian army for 25 years, beginning at the age of 12. It was a deliberate attempt to tear Jewish children away from Yiddishkeit and forcibly assimilate them into the Russian religion and culture.

Implementation began in the year 5587*, one year before the Mittler Rebbe's *histalkus*.

According to the law, every community had to supply four recruits per thousand members. The dreadful task of selecting the recruits was left to the heads of the *kehilla*, and every community struggled to deal with this terrible reality. Many communities refused to send their children, and armed soldiers would arrive in the towns to search and capture the children instead. Eyewitnesses recounted the heartrending scenes of screaming mothers running after their small sons as they were snatched away.

Many children tried to hide in caves and forests while the soldiers searched their communities. This brought about the sad phenomenon of Jewish kidnapers, "*chappers*," who found the children in their hiding

places and delivered them to the authorities.

The children were taken to "Canton" schools, where they were "deprogrammed" from their Jewish upbringing.

The terrible decree was finally abolished by Czar Alexander II, in the year 5616*, after he witnessed the unbreakable spirit of the Jewish children, seeing how even a very young boy preferred to take his own life rather than convert.

In this article we will focus on some of the activities of our Rabbeim, especially the Tzemach Tzedek, attempting to help these Jewish children in their difficult plight, and pulling strings to have the decree averted.



"This is your sign," the Alter Rebbe writes in a letter. "The time will come when the apple of your eye will be taken from you, and they will begin taking soldiers from our Jewish brethren..." This was an instance of open *ruach hakodesh*. The Alter Rebbe was presumably alluding to the *histalkus* of the Mittler Rebbe, which took place just half a year after

THE MITTELER REBBE'S MAAMAR "להבין ענין לקיחת אנשי חיל מ"שראל", TO UNDERSTAND THE PHENOMENON OF CONSCRIPTING JEWS FOR THE ARMY, SAID SHORTLY BEFORE THE CANTONIST DECREE.



PHOTO OF CANTONIST SOLDIERS.

the decree of the Cantonists was implemented.³

In the wake of the decree, the Mittler Rebbe traveled from his home in Lubavitch to daven at the Ohel of his father in Haditch. On the way back, the Mittler Rebbe took ill and had to stop in Nezhin, where he was eventually *nistalek* and buried. It was there that he delivered the *maamar*, "להבין ענין לקיחת אנשי חיל מ"שראל ביד"—To understand why the Jewish soldiers are being taken by the non-Jews... The Mittler Rebbe explains that Hashem craves the Yidden's *mesiras nefesh* awakened within their hearts during difficult times of *gezeiros*. The pain that the Yidden feel from not being able to keep the mitzvot is enough of a *zechus* to keep the whole world in existence, and it will eventually lead to the decree being annulled.⁴

The Village Rebbe From Lubavitch

The Tzemach Tzedek assumed the *nesius* of Chabad at the height of this decree, and much of his time was dedicated to easing the resulting plight of the Jewish people. In addition to his efforts on this front, the Jewish community was also plagued by severe attacks from the Haskalah movement, and the Tzemach Tzedek exerted much effort fighting against this too.⁵ (At times these two issues actually crossed paths.)

Some of the Tzemach Tzedek's work in the wake of the Cantonist decree included:

1) Sending messengers to all the affected communities to meet with the heads of the communities and see how they could reduce the number of children actually being sent, and

to make sure that the kidnappers received the appropriate punishment.

2) Arranging groups of people who would save the children already taken for conscription, by bribing the kidnappers with exorbitant sums, who would in turn report to the authorities that the children died.

3) Sending groups of Chassidim to the army bases where Jewish children were held to offer encouragement and assistance.

These activities had to be carried out in utmost secrecy. Unfortunately, members of the Jewish community who had joined the newly founded Haskalah movement began informing on the Tzemach Tzedek and his Chassidim to the Czar's government, saying that the Rebbe and his associates were disrupting law and order with their activities.



TWO YOUNG JEWISH SOLDIERS IN THE CZAR'S ARMY.



A PAMPHLET BEARING THE TITLE "דער שמע ישראל" RECORDING THE TZEMACH TZEDEK'S TALK TO THE CANTONIST SOLDIERS, WHO WERE TORN FROM THE ENVIRONMENT OF YIDDISHKEIT IN THEIR YOUTH.

The government officials were outraged that a rabbi in a small village called Lubavitch wielded so much power over their schemes, and they immediately set out to remove this disruption. The Tzemach Tzedek was placed under strict surveillance and much of his everyday activities were reported in detail to the authorities. Of course, the harassment by the government officials and the members of the Haskalah did not succeed in stopping the Tzemach Tzedek; on the contrary, his efforts were redoubled in helping his fellow Yidden.

At that time, the Tzemach Tzedek had opened a yeshiva in Lubavitch, and one day two *chappers* showed up there, discovering that 30 runaway Cantonists were hiding there! The Czar's police officers were immediately notified, but even after careful examination, they were unable to find any discrepancies in the identification papers of the yeshiva boys, and they all left in shame.

A New Approach

Eventually, the government officials and members of the Haskalah realized

that there was no way to deter the Tzemach Tzedek and his Chassidim from their activities to save *klal Yisroel*. Their hopes to forcibly assimilate the Jewish community into their culture were quickly fading. So they decided to take a new approach; a more "inclusive" one.

They called for a grand conference of all rabbis, representing the full spectrum of the Jewish community in the Russian Empire: Chassidim, *misnagdim*, and even the less Orthodox. The official charter of the conference was to hear from the members of the Jewish community themselves about the issues of the day. But the real reason was that the Haskalah people hoped to be able to persuade, or coerce, the rabbis to accept their plan for the future of Russian Jewry and to stop all their activities to the contrary.

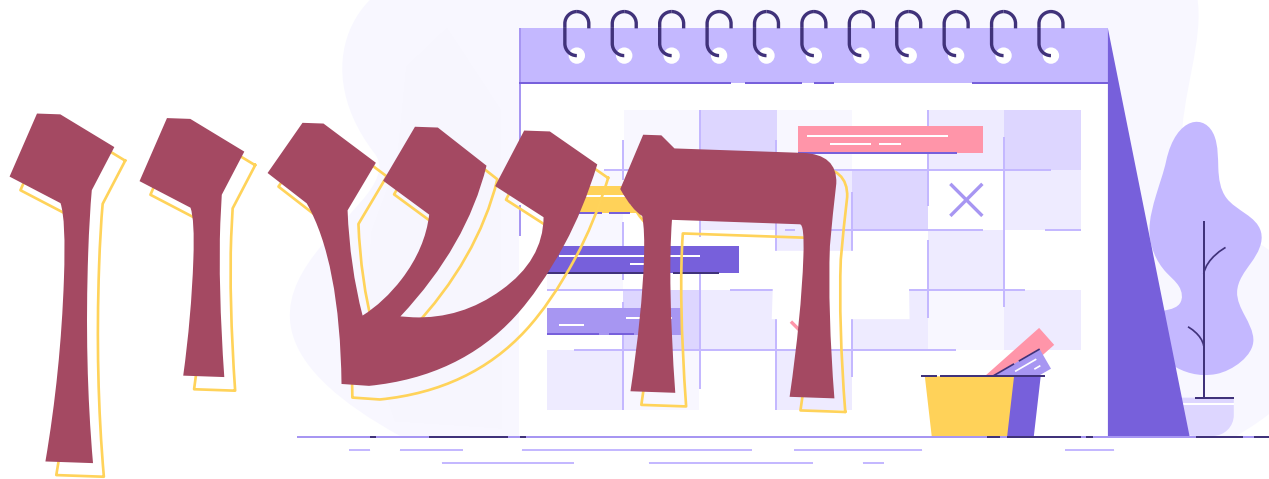
The Tzemach Tzedek was invited as the representative of the Chassidishe community, Reb Yitzchok ("Itchele") Volozhiner (son of the famous Reb Chaim Volozhiner) was invited as the representative of the *misnagdishe* community, the philanthropist Reb

Yisroel Halperin as the representative of the business community, and Mr. Bezalel Stern as the representative of the Haskalah community.

By bringing the Tzemach Tzedek to Petersburg, the Russian government was hoping that they would be able to force him to stay there and not return to his home in Lubavitch, thereby lessening his influence significantly. For this reason they tried to give the Tzemach Tzedek as comfortable a stay as possible, offering him a good place to lodge, allowing for Chassidim to join him for *minyanim*, and so on. They hoped that this non-aggressive approach would let them finally have their way.

But the Tzemach Tzedek stood strong and would not budge one iota when it came to matters of Yiddishkeit. The Tzemach Tzedek's firm resolve and his refusal to relent to any demands caused him to be arrested some 22 times! He told the authorities that "even the harshest punishments will not scare me..."

It was during this time that the Tzemach Tzedek was able to meet with a group of Cantonists for the first time.



Cheshvan

- As we take leave from the festive month of Tishrei and head into the rest of the year, the Rebbe instructed Chassidim to arrange farbrengens, to take upon themselves *hachlotos* for the coming year.

Since *hachlotos* are different for men, women, and children, there should be special gatherings for women and children as well.¹

7 Cheshvan - The Day the Last of the Yidden Returned Home From the Beis Hamikdash

- On this day, we should remind ourselves that as we begin our journey through our regular mundane lives, everything we do should be permeated with the feeling that we just returned from the holy atmosphere of the Beis Hamikdash.²
- On this day we begin asking for rain in Eretz Yisroel, since the final Yid has reached his home

and is longer on the road. This day serves as an important lesson in *ahavas Yisroel*, since we refrain from asking Hashem for rain, even if we really need it, in order not to cause trouble to another.³

Chof Cheshvan - Birthday of the Rebbe Rashab

- Just like on the birthday of any *nossi*, Chassidim should spend the day following his *horaos*, learning the Rebbe Rashab's Torah, and giving tzedakah to the Rebbe Rashab's *mosdos*.⁴
- On Chof Cheshvan 5748*, the 127th birthday of the Rebbe Rashab, the Rebbe distributed *Kuntres Heichaltzu* (the famous *maamar* of the Rebbe Rashab about *ahavas Yisroel*) to men, women, boys over the age of 12 and girls over the age of 11. On Chof Cheshvan 5751*, the Rebbe distributed *Kuntres Eitz Hachayim* of the Rebbe Rashab, and five days later he gave out *Kuntres 'Anochi Magein Lach*, a *maamar* of the Rebbe Rashab.⁵

לע"נ
הרה"ח הרה"ת שמואל דוד
בן הרה"ח הרה"ת יעקב יוסף ע"ה
תנ"צ'ב'ה
נדפס ע"י בנו
הרה"ת מיכאל יצחק וזוגתו מרת חנה
ומשפחתם שיחיו
גורקאוו



- The year 5749* was known as “*Shnas Habinyan*,” when the Rebbe encouraged the expansion of buildings to strengthen Torah and mitzvos.⁶ On Chof Cheshvan that year, the Rebbe instructed Chassidim to enter a building that houses the Rebbe Rashab’s *mosdos* (like Tomchei Temimim), and when inside they should perform acts of Torah (learn from the Rebbe Rashab’s Chassidus), *tefillah* (say the Rebbe Rashab’s *kapitel*) and tzedakah.⁷

■ Shabbos Mevarchim Kislev

- As the day of Shabbos includes all the days of the following week including Rosh Chodesh, the preparations for the month ahead, including *mitvza Chanukah*, should already start on Shabbos Mevarchim.⁸
- This Shabbos is also the date of the International Kinus Hashluchim. The Rebbe instructed that during the Kinus, the shluchim should utilize their time together to make *hachlatos* in increasing the spreading of Chassidus. The Rebbe also stressed

that the *hachlatos* should be taken together by many people, making their impact much stronger.⁹

- In 5752*, the Rebbe requested that it be announced to all the shluchim: Our shlichus now is to prepare the world for Moshiach. Meaning, every action that is done to spread Yiddishkeit and Chassidus, must be with the proper focus, with the goal of bringing Moshiach closer.¹⁰

1. Hisvaaduyos 5743 vol. 1 page 360.

2. Motzei Zayin Cheshvan 5722.

3. Zayin Cheshvan 5746.

4. Hisvaaduyos ibid. page 462. See footnote 5.

5. Hisvaaduyos 5751 vol. 1 page 318.

6. Hisvaaduyos 5749 vol. 1 page 54.

7. Sefer Hasichos 5749 vol. 1 page 56.

8. Hisvaaduyos 5743 vol. 1 page 514.

9. Hisvaaduyos 5748 vol. 4 page 156.

10. Sichos Kodesh 5752 page 111.



Moment of Silence

As the nossi of the generation tasked with bringing Moshiach, the Rebbe educated us to focus not only on strengthening the global Jewish community, but empowered us to meaningfully engage every human being in the world.

We conclude the three daily tefillos with Aleinu—historically this often demanded great mesiras nefesh—in which we declare our mission to bring awareness of Hashem to every person, לתקן עולם במלכות ש-די. For generations this was impossible to achieve explicitly and overtly, but standing now on the threshold of geulah—moments before the dira betachtoinim is realized in its entirety—we are empowered to ensure that this crucial message inspires society at large.

Clearly the most effective way to elevate society is through the youth, and the tone set in the education system plays a major role in shaping the future. Throughout the Rebbe's nesius, the crucial need for elevating the standard of moral and ethical education for all people was an important theme, and the Rebbe's advocacy of how to accomplish this often coincided with the realities on the ground.

In the 5720s the Rebbe vigorously campaigned for school prayer. In the 5740s the Rebbe promoted the advantage of instituting a “moment of silence”—not prayer—at the start of each school day. This article explores the various sichos and igros about this crucial topic and their historical backdrop.

Rabbi Dovid Margolin assisted in the preparation of this article. וזכות הרבים תלוי בו.

לזכות הילד ישראל שלום נ"י
לרגל יום ההולדת י"ז חשוון

יה"ר שייגדל לתורה לחופה ולמעשים טובים
מתוך בריאות נכונה ושפע בגו"ר
לנח"ר כ"ק אדמו"ר והוריו הי"ו

School Prayer

School prayer was a common feature of the educational system in America dating back to colonial times. The pilgrims who initially settled in North America, the founding fathers of this country, and the vast majority of American citizens were religious and most schools included regular prayer and Bible study in their curriculums.

In 1955 the New York Board of Regents composed a voluntary prayer to be recited in public schools at the beginning of the school day after the Pledge of Allegiance:

“Almighty G-d, we acknowledge our dependence on Thee, and we beg Thy blessings upon us, our parents, our teachers and our country.”

Notice this prayer is non-denominational and neutral, with no religious references whatsoever. In addition, the law allowed students to absent themselves from this activity if they found it objectionable.

In 1962 a group of families of public school students (mostly Jews) in Long Island sued the school board president William J. Vitale, Jr. They claimed that the government-authored Regents Prayer violated their religious beliefs and they challenged the constitutionality of the prayer being recited in government-run public schools.

The First Amendment of the United States Constitution reads as follows: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.” They argued that this text prohibits the government from directing and encouraging children to recite prayers in government schools.

The case, known as *Engel v. Vitale* went all the way up to the US Supreme Court and caused tremendous national controversy. Many government officials and educators argued against this misguided interpretation of the First Amendment, but unfortunately there were many, including prominent Jewish organizations, that supported the lawsuit and vigorously argued against the constitutionality of the prayer.



Supreme Court of the United States

OCTOBER TERM, 1961

No. 468

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION

of

STEVEN I. ENGEL, DANIEL LICHTENSTEIN, MONROE LERNER, LENORE LYONS and LAWRENCE ROTH,

Petitioners,

against

WILLIAM J. VITALE, Jr., PHILIP J. FREED, MARY HARTE, ANNE BIRCH and RICHARD SAUNDERS, constituting the Board of Education of Union Free School District Number Nine, New Hyde Park, New York,

Respondents,

directing them to discontinue a certain school practice

and

HENRY HOLLENBERG, ROSE LEVINE, MARTIN ABRAMS, HELEN SWANSON, WALTER F. GIBB, JANE EHLEN, RALPH B. WEBB, VIRGINIA ZIMMERMAN, VIRGINIA DAVIS, VIOLET S. COX, EVELYN KOSTER, IRENE O'Rourke, ROSEMARIE PETELENTZ, DANIEL J. REE-HIL, THOMAS DELANEY and EDWARD L. MacFARLANE,

Interveners-Respondents.

BRIEF OF RESPONDENTS

BERTRAM B. DAIKER,
Attorney for Respondents,
49 Main Street,
Port Washington, New York.

WILFORD E. NEIER,
Of Counsel.

In a 6-1 landmark decision, the US Supreme Court ruled that official organization, sponsorship, or endorsement of school prayer in public schools is forbidden by the First Amendment to the United States Constitution. Teachers and school officials may not lead classes in prayer, but prayer is permitted at voluntary religious clubs, and students are not prohibited from praying themselves.

The decision sent shockwaves throughout the nation and the debate raged in every corner of American society. Within the Orthodox Jewish world the Rebbe stood out as a lone voice encouraging rabbanim, leaders and activists to make this issue a top priority—from a halachic perspective as well as a moral obligation to advocate for the good of our country.

The Call of the Hour

During the farbrengen of 12 Tammuz 5722*, less than a month after the court decision was announced, the Rebbe explained how this was a travesty for the hundreds of

thousands of Jewish children as well as millions of non-Jewish children enrolled in public school that would be educated without daily prayer.

“Hundreds of thousands of Jewish children are not educated to daven every weekday and many of them do not go to shul even on Shabbos and Yom Tov. Hashem had mercy on them and the government composed a tefilla that has all the main components of a legitimate tefilla: requesting their needs from

Hashem. As a result they were all observing the mitzvah of davening daily.”

“The obligation to believe in Hashem applies to every human being as well and this tefilla brought this awareness to millions of non-Jewish children on a daily basis.”¹

The tragedy was compounded by the fact that the opponents to the Regents Prayer were Jews and it was crucial for every Jew with any measure of influence to do everything possible to overturn this terrible ruling.

How can you silence them?!

In a letter⁷ dated 24 Cheshvan 5723*, after a lengthy halachic explanation explaining his position on the Supreme Court's ban of prayer in schools, the Rebbe concluded:

I venture, however, to address myself also to the sentiments and imagination of everyone whose heart is alert to what is happening around him, and is especially sensitive to the problems of the growing generation, to view the problem as an image projected against the background of our critical time.

In our present day and age of rising tension and insecurity under the threat of a nuclear war; of the steadily growing might of communism making ever greater encroachments upon the free world, steadily extending its influence not only over newly captured territories, but also over the minds of people living in the free democracies; of mounting juvenile delinquency —

America has been blessed with hundreds of thousands of children, boys and girls, Jewish and gentile, throughout the width and breadth of these United States, who daily raise their youthful voices in prayer to G-d, acknowledging that He is the Master of the Universe, invoking His blessings upon their country and all who are dear to them, and expressing their confidence in His benevolence.

With this image in mind, can anyone raise his hand to silence this vast body of American youth, saying: “Stop praising G-d! Stop praying to Him! It is forbidden to do so in the American Public School!”

What would be the effect of such an order on all these youths? Can anything explain away to their young minds, far removed from Constitutional Law, the impact of such a prohibition in this country, where the free exercise of religion is one of its most cherished values?

Socialist Influence

Shalom Levin was an Israeli teacher and politician who served as a member of the Knesset as a member of the Mapai party. Earlier in his career he served as the secretary of the Teachers' Union in Israel and in the summer of 5723* was elected chairman of the International Federation of Free Teachers' Unions (IFFTU).

On 2 Elul 5723*⁸ the Rebbe wrote a long letter to Mr. Levin describing the deplorable reality of public education in most developed countries in the world, specifically in the area of morals and ethics. While children are growing in their knowledge and social skills, their ability to control their urges and desires is deteriorating rapidly.

After encouraging him to utilize his new position of leadership in an organization that deals with education on an international level to influence schools to include more religious education in their curriculums, the Rebbe deals with the irony of requesting this from someone who is not religious.

“Perhaps it may seem strange that I am sending this request to a member of a political party that is not religious; on the contrary, a socialist party etc. etc. However there is no need to elaborate on the fact that the current situation is very different than when socialism started. Especially in light of the fact that the premise that socialism is against religion is unjustified, especially now.”

In a follow up letter from Aseres Yemei Teshuva 5724*, the Rebbe suggested that Mr. Levin bravely call upon educators around the world to acknowledge that morals and ethics can only truly endure when based on faith in a living, ever watching G-d who commanded us to live by them. “Not only will this have the impact of an “atomic explosion,” it will have far reaching positive effects. Perhaps this was the reason you were appointed to this position.”⁹


לזכות
הרה"ת שלום דוב בער שיחי' שוחאט
לרגל יום הולדתו י"ז מרחשון
לשנת הצלחה בגו"ר

Shmuel

Reb Shmuel Levitin



REB SHMUEL STANDS BEHIND THE REBBE AS
THE REBBE DELIVERS A MAAMAR, PURIM 5725.



REB SHMUEL IN HIS
LATER YEARS IN
DISCUSSION WITH
BOCHURIM IN THE SMALL
ZAL, UPSTAIRS 770.
CIRCA EARLY 5730S.

JEM 109323

Even in Previous Generations

Special thanks to Rabbi Shlomo Zarchi, mashpia of Tomchei Temimim-770 and Rabbi Sholom Ber Levitin, shliach in Seattle, Washington, for their interviews. All other information in this article is culled from the comprehensive overview of Reb Shmuel's life published in the Rivkin-Farkash Teshurah, 21 Sivan 5775, unless indicated otherwise in the footnotes.

THE PREEMINENT TZIYUR

“When I was a child and *bochur*,” relates Rabbi Shlomo Zarchi, “Reb Shmuel was the preeminent figure among the Chassidim in 770. There were a number of Temimim from Lubavitch that lived in New York, but Reb Shmuel was always considered something special. He was one of the earliest Temimim in Lubavitch and a famous *baal mesiras nefesh* in Russia. In America, he was the head *mashpia* of the yeshiva and the rav of *beis harav*. He had a tremendous *tziyur*.”

“In earlier years, he would teach Chassidus regularly, and even in his old age, he taught Tanya once a week. At some point, he stopped because the late evenings were too difficult for him, but it was important to the Rebbe that he continue; the Rebbe suggested that he give his class in the afternoon.

“He had a very special *yachas* with the Rebbe. In his capacity as rav, he would often *pasken shaalos* for the Rebbe. One time, he had a fever that wouldn’t go away and the doctors didn’t know what to do. When the Rebbe sent him a *ksav* of a *maamar* about healing, he got better.

“He loved to tell over a *geshmake Chassidishe* story. He was a master teacher and storyteller, always ready with an insightful comment or story.

Even at his advanced age, he liked to stop at my table in yeshiva — to our delight — and share stories and sayings. Every *yoma d’pagra*, he would hold a *farbrengen*, which would also attract many non-Lubavitchers. As an aside, he would always instruct me to say *l’chaim* at these *farbrengens* because I am *Kohen* — so that afterwards he would be able to tell his grandson, Rabbi Sholom Ber Levitin, a *Levi*, to say *l’chaim* as well.

“He also had a very important role in 5710*. Being that he was one of the most prominent Chassidim in America and had a special *yachas* with the Frierdiker Rebbe, many people looked to see what Reb Shmuel would do when the Frierdiker Rebbe was *nistalek*. To Reb Shmuel, it was clear that the Rebbe should become the new Rebbe immediately, and it was the force of his personality that helped make it happen sooner.”

EVERYTHING WENT THROUGH REB SHMUEL

“His relationship as a Chossid to the Rebbe after Yud Shevat 5710* began immediately,” says Reb Shmuel’s grandson, Rabbi Sholom Ber Levitin.

Rabbi Levitin drew our attention to an amazing story retold in *Yemei Bereishis* (page 71): Avrohom Weingarten, a close student of Reb



REB SHMUEL’S AMERICAN PASSPORT PICTURE, 5707.

Shmuel, was supposed to celebrate his *tenaim* on Motzei Shabbos Yud Shevat 5710*. He came to ask Reb Shmuel what to do, but Reb Shmuel didn’t give him advice. Instead, he sent him to ask the Rebbe.

“I find it amazing,” says Rabbi Levitin, “that this was his immediate response — only hours after the Frierdiker Rebbe’s *histalkus*. It is clear that there was no question in his mind about the future.

“In general, many *hora’os* of the Frierdiker Rebbe to *talmidim* and *anash* in those years went through my grandfather. He arrived in America almost a year-and-a-half before the Frierdiker Rebbe, as a *shadar*. The Frierdiker Rebbe chose three *shadarim*

“REB SHMUEL’S AH VORT”

- Reb Shmuel would say that you have to remember every word that the Rebbe tells you in *yechidus*. If you don’t see what it means now, at some point down the line you will realize what it meant. It may take 10 or even 20 years, but at some point, you will understand everything the Rebbe told you.¹
- “What’s the difference between a Rebbe and a *chochom*? A smart person says what will happen. A Rebbe — what he says, will happen.”
- “2” — ולא אבה ה' לשמוע אל בלעם — that is the level of Reb Zushe Anipoli, who didn’t see bad in anything. “ויהפך ה' את הקללה לברכה” — that is the level of Reb Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev, who saw the good in everything. But the Baal Shem Tov’s *darga* was “כי אהב ה' אלקיך” — he saw the *Nefesh Elohis* in every person.
- Chassidus doesn’t like ignorance, he would often say. However, with a little less of our own *sechel*, we will be able to come closer to the *emes*.³



REB SHMUEL STANDS BEHIND THE REBBE ON THE BALCONY OVERLOOKING THE "SHALASH" COURTYARD DURING A CHILDREN'S GATHERING, CHOL HAMOEED SUKKOS, 5718.

A POWERFUL IMPACT

During one farbrengen with Chassidim in America during his period as a *shadar*, several individuals began pouring out their hearts to Reb Shmuel, telling him about their difficult material circumstances.

Hearing their distress, Reb Shmuel decided to do something out of the ordinary. He stood up and announced:

"I am a shliach of the Rebbe, and *shlucho shel adam kimoso*. With that power I bless you that Hashem should fulfill all your heart's desires."

Afterward, he quickly reported the incident to the Frierdiker Rebbe and asked if he had acted correctly.

The Frierdiker Rebbe responded:

"I agree with you — may Hashem fulfill the blessings very soon, and give each of them and their families whatever they need, physically and spiritually."⁴

in the 5690s* to visit the United States: Reb Itche Masmid, Reb Mordechai Chefetz and my grandfather.

"Rabbi Zalman Gurary told me that when the Frierdiker Rebbe was shown the building of 770 for the first time, he designated the various rooms in the building, and when he reached the two rooms at the end of the hallway, he said: 'These are going to be for Reb Shmuel' [his family was stranded in Europe at the time].

"For the next 15 years, my grandfather literally lived in 770. The inner room was his private dwelling,

and in the outer room he taught Chassidus. Each Shabbos, he would dine at the Frierdiker Rebbe's table. The Frierdiker Rebbe himself would usually not join due to his health, but my grandfather would eat there together with the Rebbe. When my father, Reb Binyomin, was a *bochur*, he would be the server."

We asked Rabbi Levitin to describe his grandfather's personality. Instead of giving his own opinion, he directed us to a letter about Reb Shmuel written by Reb Chatche Feigin, introducing

Reb Shmuel to the Chassidim of America:

"He is from the earliest Temimim," Reb Chatche writes, "a *pnimi betzem mehuso*. He has a profound understanding of Chassidus, he is an *oved*, and a wise person..."

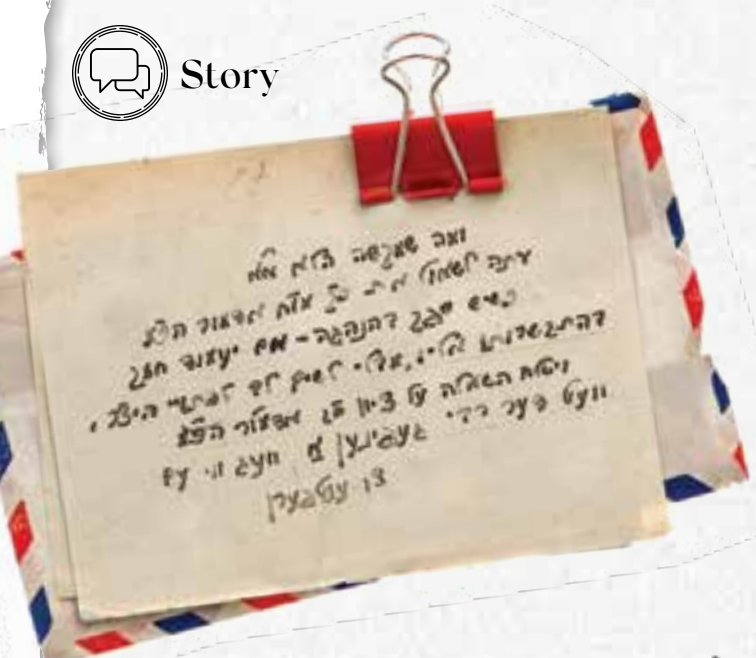
WITH EVERY FIBER OF HIS BEING

Rabbi Tzvi Shusterman was a student in Torah Vodaas when, one day, he heard about a new *shadar* that had arrived. "They called him Reb Shmuel Rakshiker," he said. "When we saw him, we were tremendously impressed by his character. He was a true Chossid, who lived Chassidus with every fiber of his being. He began teaching us Chassidus in depth, showing us the richness of Chassidus."

Chassidus was an inseparable part of his life. Once, while holding a farbrengen for *bochurim* in New York, Reb Shmuel listed from memory every single *maamar* he heard from the Rebbe Rashab during his years in Tomchei Temimim. When the Rebbe compiled a list of the Rebbe Rashab's Chassidus, many of the missing *maamarim* were included based on Reb Shmuel's recollections.

Despite the Temimim being awake learning the entire *leil shishi*, Reb Shmuel recalled, the highlight of the week was hearing the new *maamar* from the Rebbe Rashab on Friday night. They would swallow every word. On one occasion in 770, he related that during a *maamar* in 5663* (תרס"ג), the Rebbe Rashab said the words, "*Vesamcheinu bemitzvoscha*—give us joy in Your mitzvos," — "and the way the Rebbe said it still rings in my ears and gives me *chayus*..."

Even when he was imprisoned (see below), he could not fathom living without Chassidus. He was taken to Siberia on a Shabbos, but he nevertheless took along a Torah Or



דער רבי וועט געפינען א וועג...

לזכות השלוחה
חי' מושקא בת פערל גאלדא תחי'
לרגל יום הולדתה ד' מר חשון
ולזכות השלוחה
מינא עטל בת פערל גאלדא תחי'
טייכטל
לרגל יום הולדתה י"ב מר חשון
נדפס ע"י
משפחתה שיחיו

The Rain Held Up

AS TOLD BY RABBI LEVI PLOTKIN (PARKLAND, FL)

Three years ago we launched "Connection Point," a project of JEM in collaboration with Tzivos Hashem and I have the great merit of running this program successfully ever since its inception.

Throughout the *nesius*, and especially after the establishment of Tzivos Hashem, the Rebbe spent hundreds of hours speaking directly to children, guiding them in their *avodas Hashem* and in preparing the world for Moshiach. Connection Point is a program for schools that helps children watch and understand Sichos directly from

the Rebbe, giving them the tools, as well as motivation and excitement, to experience and understand these sichos.

Several times a year JEM prepares a video of a full rally with the Rebbe and to date over 4,000 Lubavitcher boys and girls throughout the world participate in this tremendous program. For 3 weeks the children watch segments of the sichos culminating in a grand viewing of the entire rally.

Since there are multiple schools in Crown Heights that participate in the program we arrange the grand viewing for them in or in front of 770. On a day that the Rebbe would



traditionally have a rally for children, such as Chanukah or Lag B'Omer, local children who excelled in the 3 smaller viewings gather in 770 or on the service lane of Eastern Parkway and watch the Rebbe's *sicha* together, in the actual place where it happened.

This past year we organized a Real Rally for Lag B'Omer to be held on Thursday evening on the service lane in front of 770. Since I recently moved on shlichus to Florida to run CKids Gan Israel - a new overnight camp for non frum children - I was coordinating the preparations with the JEM team and the local *mosdos* remotely, and a week before Lag B'Omer we still had not found a sponsor to cover the expenses of the event.

I wrote a letter to the Rebbe asking for a *bracha* that we find a sponsor, and minutes after faxing my letter to the Ohel, Reb Osher Karnowsky confirmed that he will sponsor the entire event in memory of his son Shmuel ע"ה.

With the financials squared away, I was able to focus all my energy into ensuring the event was a major success, but a major question that dominated the various Zoom prep meetings was about the weather. The forecasts showed that there would be a thunderstorm throughout Thursday and especially in the evening. Gathering children outdoors in the rain is never a good idea, in addition to the entire concept of Connection Point being impossible to carry out if the children were not able to concentrate on the *sichos* and write notes, etc. We decided to move forward with the preparations regardless, hoping for the best.

Thursday morning I flew into New York for the rally and as I landed, the overcast skies and the grim forecast did not bode well. I went to the Ohel from the airport and wrote a brief but urgent letter to the Rebbe asking for a *bracha* that the rain should hold up and that the rally should be a success.

With confidence, I drove to Crown Heights and joined Rabbi Chaim Loschak, who coordinated the entire program on the ground, with the final preparations for the rally.

Towards evening, boys and girls from all the *mosdos* descended onto the service lane, filling the 1,000 seats we had prepared for them, despite the overcast sky and the real possibility of a significant downpour. At the appointed time, the screens lit up with images of the Lag B'Omer parade of 5744 and the Rebbe's voice could be heard all along the parkway speaking to the children about Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai.

It was such a *mechayeh* to see so many children listening intently to the Rebbe.

By a miracle of miracles, a slight drizzle began in the last minute of the program and after the service lane emptied the skies opened up with a massive rain storm. **1**

YOUR STORY

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



לזכות
הרה"ת ר' לוי יצחק
ומרת אסתר ביילא
ומשפחתם שיחיו
חאנאוויטש

MOTZEI SHABBOS PARSHAS NOACH

5740

In this month's "Moments" we present a rare set of photos from Kiddush Levanah and the farbrengen on Motzei Shabbos Parshas Noach 5740*.



