

A Chassidisher **Derher**

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The Great Exodus

RELIVING THE INCREDIBLE KIRUVIM THE REBBE
SHOWED RUSSIAN CHASSIDIM 50 YEARS AGO

Expressions of the Heart

ALL ABOUT SAYING TEHILLIM

"לבנין עדי עד"

THE REBBE'S PARTICIPATION AT
THE WEDDINGS OF CHASSIDIM



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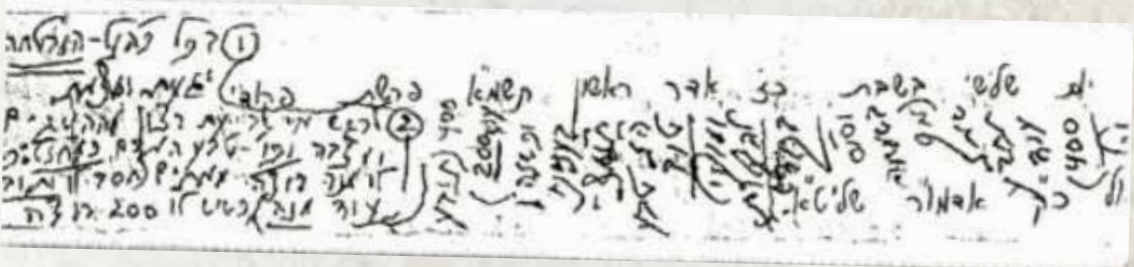


כתב יד
קודש

You're Not Happy?

In response to a woman who wrote about her
status of *avodas Hashem*, the Rebbe writes:

מוקדש לחיזוק ההתקשרות
לכ"ק אדמו"ר
נדפס ע"י
הרה"ת ר' יצחק מאיר וזוגתו מרת לאה
ומשפחתם שיחיו
שפאלטר



1) With regards to all of the above, you were **guaranteed** that if you work hard, you will succeed.

2) About the fact that you do not feel content from your accomplishments and from your overall situation, **etc.**—the nature of a person is, as **Chazal say**: One who has 100 wants 200 (i.e. he feels like he is lacking and **demand**s the additional **100**); one who has 200 wants 400 (i.e. he demands an additional **200**). When it comes to Torah and mitzvos, this nature is **good** and useful, prompting **growth** in matters of holiness. And eventually [it will lead to doing so with] happiness as well (even though, [after you reach the next level] you will demand **400**). This is simple to understand.

(1) בכל כהנ"ל - **הובטחה** יגעת ומצאת

(2) לרגש אי שביעת רצון מההישגים ומצבה וכו' - טבע האדם **כמחז"ל**: כשיש לו מנה רוצה מאתים (חסר לו **ותובע עוד מנה**), כשיש לו 200 רוצה 400 (תובע עוד **200**). וכשזהו בעיני תומ"צ - ה"ז טבע **טוב** ומועיל **להעלות** בקודש. וסו"ס בשמחה (אף שאז תתבע עוד **400**) וק"ל.

לזכות
החייל בצבאות ה' מאיר שלמה שיחי' ניו
שיגדל להיות חי"ל לנח"ר כ"ק אדמו"ר
נדפס ע"י
משפחתו שיחיו

A painting of a bearded man with a long, flowing beard, wearing a red robe, playing a large harp. The background is a mix of yellow and red, suggesting a sunset or a dramatic scene. The man's face is expressive, with his eyes closed in a state of devotion or emotion. The harp is dark wood with many strings. The overall style is expressive and somewhat abstract, with visible brushstrokes.

EXPRESSIONS OF THE HEART TEHILLIM

There is hardly another book in all of Jewish history replete with so much meaning, embedded in the heart of the Jewish people like Dovid Hamelech's Sefer Tehillim. While the Chumash might be more fundamental, it could likely be said that there were far more Jews who occupied their time with the recital of Tehillim than those who studied Chumash.

In times of distress, it is Tehillim more than anything else that soothes the souls of the Jewish people, reinforcing our *bitachon* in Hashem's ever present hand in our lives. And likewise in times of joy, it is Tehillim that we recite to express our gratitude for His constant guidance, blessings, and salvation.

The *Hallel* that Chazal instituted to be recited on the joyous milestones throughout our history is taken entirely from Tehillim. So is the chapter of Ashrei ("*Tehilla L'Dovid*"), the recital of which Chazal promised can bring anyone into *olam haba*. The famous "*Mizmor L'Dovid*" that soothes our souls with *bitachon* comes from Tehillim (23), as does "*Lamnatzeiach Yaancha*," which we recite in times of distress. Chapters of Tehillim are woven through every part of davening, from *Pessukei D'Zimra*, to *Tikkun Chatzos*, to *Kabbalas Shabbos*.

With the revelation of Chassidus, a major theme that the Baal Shem Tov taught was the potency of the davening and mitzvos of the simple Yidden, done with wholehearted sincerity and love of Hashem. Once during a Shabbos meal with his closest disciples, the members of the "*chevraya kadisha*," the Baal Shem Tov had them close their eyes and suddenly they heard the most beautiful sublime recitation of Tehillim, said with heartrending emotion. The members of the group were moved to immediate tears.

"Hearing those words of Tehillim," the Maggid later related to the Alter



DOVID HAMELECH'S KEVER IN YERUSHALAYIM

Rebbe, "my heart was filled with such intense longing and love for Hashem, such that I had never experienced before. My shoes were soaking with a mixture of sweat and tears, emerging from the deepest *teshuvah* from the core of my soul..."

After the *talmidim* opened their eyes, the Baal Shem Tov revealed to them that those words of Tehillim were coming from the simple Yidden, who recited Tehillim with utmost sincerity from the bottom of their hearts, with genuine *emunah*.

The Maggid later related that he spent years after that trying to gain a *tikkun* for having previously dismissed the simple Yidden as being less worthy.¹

The Tzemach Tzedek summed up the power of reciting Tehillim in these famous words, cited by the Rebbe in Hayom Yom:

"If you only knew the power of *pesukim* of Tehillim and their effect in the highest Heavens, you would recite them constantly. Know that the chapters of Tehillim shatter all barriers, they ascend higher and still higher with no interference; they prostrate themselves in supplication

before the Master of all worlds, and they effect and accomplish with kindness and compassion..."²

In recent generations, the Rabbeim placed even more emphasis on the importance of constant Tehillim recital, including a daily section of Tehillim after davening, and the entire Sefer Tehillim every month on Shabbos Mevarchim.

The Rebbe often told people to recite extra *kapitelach* of Tehillim as a *segulah* in many instances, including: Help with making the proper decision,³ finding a *shidduch*,⁴ having a healthy pregnancy,⁵ having a successful surgery,⁶ being healed from various ailments,⁷ being saved from troubles and distress.⁸

The Rebbe once wrote to an individual who was undergoing surgery: "It would be a good thing if you could keep with you in the hospital a kosher mezuzah, and take upon yourself that as soon as you leave the hospital, you will give something to tzedakah in the name of Rabbi Meir Baal Haness, and to recite every day a chapter of Tehillim in *Lashon Hakodesh* or, if this is too difficult for you, in English..."⁹



LETTERS FROM THE REBBE REGARDING THE “CHEVRAS TEHILLIM”.

To individuals who wrote to the Rebbe that they had a longstanding custom of reciting the entire Tehillim every day, but they wished to discontinue this practice because it takes away from their learning, the Rebbe told them unequivocally that they should keep at it.

“Even though it seems to you that the reason why you took on this practice no longer applies,” the Rebbe writes to one individual, “you must still continue anyways. Who knows what is more precious to Hashem [your Tehillim or learning deeper subjects in Torah like Gemara]...”¹⁰

Oftentimes, the Rebbe advised people to keep *sefarim* in their cars as a means of protection, usually specifying a *siddur*, Tanya, and Tehillim.

The Rebbe also encouraged children to have their own *sefarim* in their rooms, including a personal Sefer Tehillim belonging to the child.¹¹

During the trying times of World War II and the ravaging Holocaust, the Frieddiker Rebbe founded an international “Chevras Tehillim”—a fellowship of people who would recite Tehillim. The flagship group was based

in Yerushalayim, and they would recite the entire Tehillim every day at the site of Dovid Hamelech’s burial.

The Frieddiker Rebbe entrusted the newly founded Machne Yisroel organization, headed by the Rebbe, to lead this initiative. In many of the Rebbe’s letters from that period, he encourages individuals and community leaders to join this program.¹²

When the Rebbe was invited to address the conference of Agudas Harabbonim, he asked the rabbonim to encourage their communities to join the program and he also gave a scholarly explanation as to the importance of everyone reciting Tehillim.¹³

DAILY TEHILLIM

The author of the *Tzeida LaDerech*, Reb Menachem ben Zerach of Spain, divided the Tehillim for recital on two tracks: one with seven parts, to be recited daily over a week, and one with thirty parts, to be recited daily over a month.

The Rabbeim generally followed the thirty-day track, thus completing the entire Tehillim every month. In times of distress, they recited an extra *shiur* of Tehillim adding the one for the day of the week. Most famously, the Alter Rebbe added this *shiur* during his time in prison, which is why he was reciting the *possuk* of “*Pada B’shalom*” on Yud-Tes Kislev, which that year occurred on a Tuesday.¹⁴

This method of saying Tehillim daily was not so widespread until the year 5687*, when the Frieddiker Rebbe declared that this practice should be adopted by everyone. Later in the year, the Frieddiker Rebbe was arrested, imprisoned, and then sent to exile in Kostroma.

While in Kostroma, the Frieddiker Rebbe had a discussion with two Chassidim, Reb Elya Chaim Althaus and Reb Michoel Dvorkin. Reb Elya Chaim later recorded in his diary:

“The Rebbe told us as follows, verbatim:

“Before the year 5687*, I was frightened. I wasn’t thinking about myself, I was worried about the Chassidim. Before I gave the instruction about reciting Tehillim, things were very difficult for me...”

“I asked [the Rebbe], ‘When was the instruction about Tehillim given?’ He answered, ‘On Simchas Torah.’

“Then I recalled: On the day of Simchas Torah, the Rebbe kept asking all of *anash* to accept upon themselves to recite the daily section of Tehillim after davening...

“I have no doubt that the note we found in the Rebbe’s room on the day of his arrest about reciting Tehillim was also written in Elul 5686* or Tishrei 5687*.

“This is what was written in the note found on the Rebbe’s holy table after his arrest on 15 Sivan 5687* in Leningrad:

“Attention Chassidim and all Jews who are waiting for Moshiach. Please



לע"נ
ר' יהודה ע"ה
בן ר' משה יעקב ע"ה
ביסטאן
גלב"ע ר"ח כסלו ה'תשנ"ט
תנ"צ'ה'

נדפס ע"י בנו
הרה"ת השליח ר' יוסף יצחק
וזוגתו מרת ביילא רחל ומשפחתם שיחיו
ביסטאן

When You'll Finish Your Shlichus

*Rabbi Gershon Jacobson was the founder and editor of Der Algemeiner Journal.
His son, Rabbi Simon Jacobson, shared this story.*

The Rebbe gave my father many *kiruvim*. In 5750*, my father was ill, and ended up being in the hospital for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. In those years, the Rebbe would begin giving *lekach* to everyone a few days before Yom Kippur, so on Erev Yom Kippur itself only select people received. I was summoned to receive a piece of *lekach*, which the Rebbe wanted to give me for my father.

So I stood in *Gan Eden Hatachton*¹ and the Rebbe gave me *lekach*—two pieces of honey cake—and the Rebbe said, “*Dos is faren tatten. Er zol hoben a zissen un gezunten yahr* — This is for your father. He should have a sweet and healthy year.” Then the Rebbe smiled, and said to me, “*Un zog em, az er vet farendiken zein shlichus dorten, vet men em fun dorten aroislozen* — Tell him that when he completes his *shlichus* there [in the hospital], they’ll discharge him from there.”

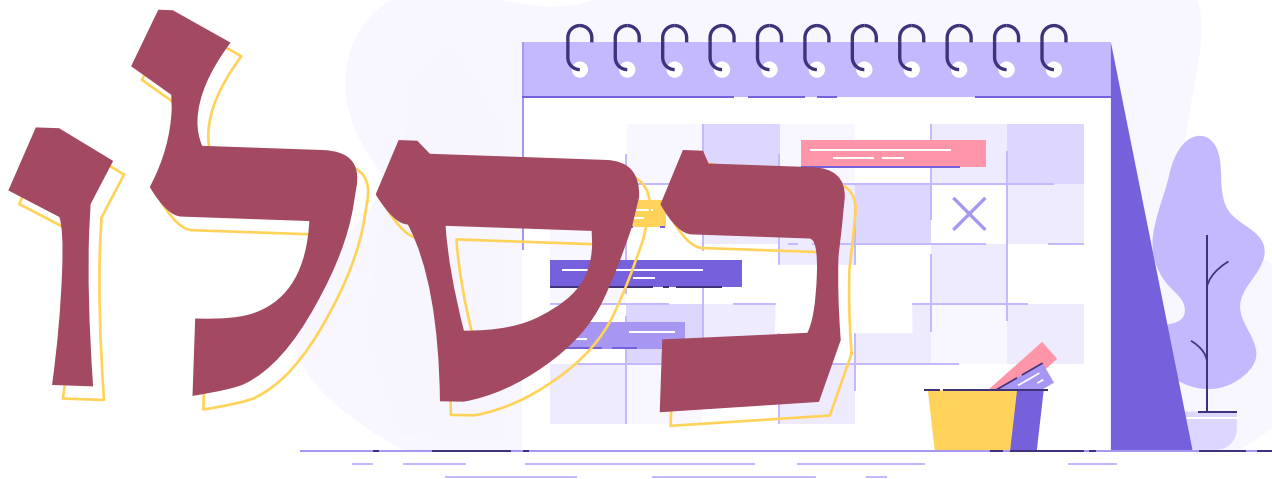
I went straight to the hospital that day—Erev Yom Kippur—and I brought my father the honey cake and told him exactly what the Rebbe had said. Just to show you that this wasn’t just a nice line that the Rebbe had said, on Motzei Yom Kippur, Rabbi

Hodakov, the head of *mazkirus*, came to see my father. Rabbi Hodakov himself was already ailing and aging—it wasn’t easy for him to travel—but he came to see my father and said to him, “The Rebbe wants to know if you already finished your *shlichus* in the hospital.”

Now my father wasn’t in the hospital for a sightseeing tour—he was sick. He had no choice. But the Rebbe didn’t see it that way. There has to be a *shlichus* there. He was there for a reason. Hashem, in His mysterious ways, decided that the only way to get him there was through an illness.

My father spoke to some of the doctors and other attendants and patients. We don’t know what exactly he spoke about, but my father, in general, was very charismatic and made a strong impact on people. So I’m assuming that he fulfilled his *shlichus* there by having *hashpa’ah* on some of the people he came into contact with in the hospital. And the Rebbe was confident that by telling my father about his *shlichus*, my father would know what to do. **T**

1. The Rebbe’s antechamber.



The Month of Kislev

- The month of Kislev has many special aspects to it. It is commonly referred to by Yiddish as “*chodesh hageulah*.”¹ The Rebbe once noted that due to the many Yomim Tovim in this month, the entire month is considered one Yom Tov, to the extent that the month of Cheshvan can be called Erev Yom Tov (even though Cheshvan doesn’t even contain one Yom Tov).²

- Since the month of Kislev is the third month from Tishrei, the beginning of the year, it is especially connected to Torah (which was given in Chodesh Sivan—the third month from Nissan). In light of this, the Rebbe instructed Chassidim to increase their study of Torah—*nigleh* and Chassidus—quantitatively and qualitatively.³ The Rebbe also wanted Chassidim to learn at least one thing from the Torah of each of the first three Rabbeim every day of the month, and if possible from every Rebbe.⁴

The year 5749* marked 200 years since the passing of the Tzemach Tzedek. The Rebbe instructed that the learning of Chassidus in Chodesh Kislev be in a way clearly paralleled with *nigleh*, which was the Tzemach Tzedek’s unique form of learning.

- The month of Kislev is also called a Chassidisher month. Therefore there should be an increase of:

1. Farbrengens for men, women, and children throughout

the month (especially on special occasions, like on Chassidishe Yomim Tovim and Chanukah) with the purpose of taking upon oneself to increase in the learning of *nigleh* and Chassidus, as well as *hafatzas hamaayanos*. In order for the farbrengens to be most effective, the Rebbe instructed Chassidim to prepare well for the farbrengens in advance.

2. Learning Chassidus during this month, as well as influencing others—both men and women—to learn Chassidus.⁵

The Days of Tes and Yud Kislev - The Mittler Rebbe is born, passed away, and freed from prison

- Today, the Rebbe explained, is especially befitting to increase one’s learning the Chassidus of the *ba’al hageulah* and to make a farbrengen.⁶ The Rebbe specifically encouraged the learning of the Mittler Rebbe’s *maamar Padah Beshalom* (in Shaarei Teshuva).⁷

- The Midrash connects the *possuk* פדה בשלום נפשי with the importance of Torah, *gemilus chassadim*, and davening with a *minyán*. Therefore a day connected to this *possuk* (as it is part of the daily Tehillim) is an opportune time to add in these three things. This includes one’s

מוקדש לחיזוק ההתקשרות לכ"ק אדמו"ר
ולזכרון הרבנית הצדקנית
לרגל יום הבהיר י"ד כסלו
נדפס ע"י
הרה"ת ר' לוי יצחק הלוי
וזוגתו מרת חנה ומשפחתם שיחיו
רייטיק



personal *avodah* in davening, to be invested to the extent that the body is dripping sweat, as was said about the *avodah* of the Mitteler Rebbe.⁸

- This does not detract from the main theme we consistently saw by the Mitteler Rebbe—revealing the spiritual within the physical, which is the final step in bringing about the *geulah*. As the Tzemach Tzedek said about the Mitteler Rebbe, “If his finger would be cut, Chassidus would spout from it (in the spiritual sense).”⁹

- In 5749*, the Rebbe instructed Chassidim to arrange farbrengens every day from Yud Kislev through Yud-Tes Kislev.¹⁰

Yud-Daled Kislev - The wedding anniversary of the Rebbe and Rebbetzin

- During the farbrengen marking the Rebbe and Rebbetzin's 50th wedding anniversary, the Rebbe instituted a new initiative—that every *chosson* should be given, in addition to a Shas, also a tzedakah *pushka*.

- The Rebbe also instructed women and girls to form groups wherever there is a Jewish community,

focusing on their involvement in spreading Yiddishkeit, primarily mitzvos unique to women; married women should teach others about the mitzvah of family purity (*taharas hamishpacha*).¹¹

Yud-Tes and Chof Kislev - The Alter Rebbe is freed from prison

- In the days prior to Yud-Tes Kislev, the Rebbe would instruct Chassidim to expand the printing of *sefarim* of *Torah Shebaal Peh*, and to increase the learning of Chassidus, specifically in newly printed *sefarim*.¹²

- As was the case in 5558*, the first anniversary of Yud-Tes Kislev, there should be farbrengens from Yud-Tes Kislev until Chanukah.¹³ For a farbrengen to be most effective, and in order for there to be the most participation possible, all necessary preparations should be done in advance. It is also advisable to ask the advice of multiple people, in order for the farbrengens to be at its best (without any personal agendas, etc.).¹⁴

- On Yud-Tes Kislev, the Rosh Hashanah for Chassidus, each person should *bentch* one another with “לשנה טובה בלימוד החסידות ובדרכי החסידות תכתב ותחתם”, specifically in the singular (as we do on Rosh Hashanah).¹⁵

- In the Hayom Yom for Yud-Tes Kislev, the Rebbe describes the day as a "...a day for farbrengen and taking *hachlatos* to establish times for study of *nigleh* and Chassidus publicly, and to strengthen the *darkei haChassidim* in true friendship." Additionally, the Rebbe encouraged the utilization of the day to add in the three things about which Hashem says לי כאילו פדאני ("they are tantamount to redeeming me"): Torah, *tefillah* and *tzedakah*. The Rebbe also stressed that the farbrengens should occur in every home, to further highlight how every person can be a good influence on another.¹⁶

- When the Alter Rebbe was freed, he wrote a letter to Chassidim where he explained that the *geulah* was really for all Yidden. The Rebbe would thus instruct Chassidim to make Yud-Tes Kislev a time of increased *ahavas Yisroel*, especially through teaching Chassidus to another Yid.¹⁷

- In the days after Yud-Tes Kislev, the Rebbe strongly encouraged Chassidim to add in learning *maamarim* of the Alter Rebbe.¹⁸ The Rebbe would also instruct Chassidim at this time to start preparing for Chanukah, in the practical preparations and also to learn the appropriate *halachos*.¹⁹

- The Alter Rebbe requested that there should be a *chalukas hashas* each year in every *minyán* of Yidden. From the year 5663*, the *chalukah* in Lubavitch took place on Chof-Daled Teves. (When the Rebbe asked the Friediker Rebbe why this was so, he said that there was no time on Yud-Tes Kislev.²⁰) In 5713*, The Rebbe reinstituted the *chalukas hashas* on Yud-Tes Kislev itself.²¹

- To bring the learning of the whole Shas to fruition, the Rebbe would write his own *masechte*-pledge on paper and encouraged Chassidim to do so as well, in order to make it a tangible concept. He also suggested that the written pledge be entrusted with someone else, thus inclining one to have more of a responsibility to fulfil it.²²

- The Rebbe made it very clear that *tachanun* is not said on Yud-Tes Kislev, and moreover, that saying *tachanun* is wrong.²³

- The Rebbe noted that in the letter written by the Alter Rebbe about his release, he specifically mentions the impact that the story had on the "nations and officers of the world." This is an indication for us to increase our influence on the nations of the world, by teaching them Torah-based morality and *Sheva Mitzvos B'nei Noach*.

Chanukah

- In the days prior to Chanukah, as with every Yom Tov, there should be an increase in *tzedakah*, both physically (that every Yid should have all they need for Chanukah), and spiritually (by increasing one's learning Chassidus connected to Chanukah).²⁴ Of course, as mentioned in *halacha* one should increase *tzedakah* during the days of Chanukah itself.²⁵

- If at every Yom Tov we wish each other with "A *Gut Yom Tov*," how much more so on a day like Chanukah which is themed on spreading light, we should certainly wish each other with "A *Gut Yom Tov*."²⁶

- The Rambam refers to the days of Chanukah as "days of joy." And although there are differences with regards to the *halachos* of *simcha* on this Yom Tov compared to other Yomim Tovim, being that on Chanukah we act with *mehadrin min hamehadrin*, we must do the same in increasing as much *simcha* as possible during Chanukah.²⁷

- With regards to the menorah, there should be specific emphasis on the aesthetics of the mitzvah, to have a beautiful menorah.²⁸

- The Rebbe would instruct Chassidim to also have a menorah in shul lit throughout the whole day (as long as it is in a place that there is no risk of danger for children).²⁹

- The Rebbe explains that the days of Chanukah are a special time to increase in *chinuch*, which in many ways is the theme of Chanukah.³⁰

- On Yud-Tes Kislev 5712*, the Rebbe told the *bochurim* to be involved in spreading Chassidus, however it shouldn't be at the expense of *seder*. The Rebbe then said that in ten days he will be asking for the list of *talmidim* that

come on time, “in relation to a certain matter.” On the fifth night of Chanukah, the Rebbe gave *Chanukah gelt* to the *bochurim*. This occurred every year until 5720*.

- The Rebbe distributed *Chanukah gelt* a few more times throughout the *nesius*, including when Mivtza Chanukah was launched, when he gave *Chanukah gelt* to those who were involved in the *mivtzoim*.

- The Rebbe instructed that *Chanukah gelt* should be given from parents to their children and grandchildren, before and after marriage. And it should be given on every day of Chanukah.³¹ The Rebbe also told Chassidim to give to soldiers they were going to visit for Mivtza Chanukah.³²

- The Rebbe also asked that children should give Chanukah *gelt* amongst themselves.³³

- The Rebbe encouraged Chassidim to make gatherings with children over Chanukah and to speak to them about the story of Chanukah, with lessons that are applicable for their daily lives.³⁴

- In 5748*, the Rebbe said that young children should be educated to have a menorah of their own, lit by the door to their room, their *mikdash me'at*.³⁵

- On Yud-Tes Kislev 5734*, the Rebbe launched the international Mivtza Chanukah campaign, in relation to the Yom Kippur War, focusing on visits to Israeli soldiers on Chanukah, as well as the widows and orphans of those who had fallen in battle.

“On Chanukah one has to ensure that Chanukah candles will be lit in every place where Jewish people live, both in public areas for *pirsumei nisa*, and in private homes, at least one menorah per house. If you meet anyone who doesn’t have a menorah, you should give one to them, and it would also be fitting that every child light their own menorah.”³⁶

- *Mivtzoim* on Chanukah is not only meant to reach Yidden. The Rebbe explained that since the menorah is lit in the front of the house for all to see, the goal should be to influence non-Jews too, to increase in the observance of their commandments, which contain the theme of illuminating the world.³⁷

1 Sefer Hasichos 5752 vol. 1 page 125.

2 Sefer Hasichos 5749 vol. 1 page 78 fn. 1.

3 Toras Menachem 5751 vol. 1 page 354-356.

4 Toras Menachem 5749 vol. 1 page 374.

5 Toras Menachem 5749 vol. 1, pages 383-385, 404-405.

6 Toras Menachem 5749 pages vol. 1, 404-405.

7 Toras Menachem 5749 vol. 1, page 407.

8 Toras Menachem 5748 vol. 1, pages 579-582.

9 Sefer Hasichos 5752 pages 149 and 152.

10 Toras Menachem 5749 vol. 1, page 404.

11 14 Kislev 5739 sicha 5.

12 Sefer Hasichos 5748 vol. 1, page 131.

13 Toras Menachem 5750 vol. 2, page 12-13.

14 Sefer Hasichos 5751 vol. 1, page 178.

15 Toras Menachem 5749 vol. 2, page 4.

16 Toras Menachem 5752 vol. 1, page 368.

17 Toras Menachem 5749 vol. 2 page 12.

18 Toras Menachem 5749 vol. 2 page 7.

19 Toras Menachem 5750 vol. 2 page 11.

20 Hayom Yom 19 Kislev.

21 Toras Menachem 5713 vol. 1 page 216.

See Sefer Hasichos 5752 vol. 2 page 476 for the explanation.

22 Sefer Hasichos 5752 vol. 2 page 490.

23 Igros Kodesh vol. 7 page 125. See Derher Kislev 5774 page 24 for the full letter in English.

24 Toras Menachem 5750 vol. 2 page 32 - 34.

25 Toras Menachem 5748 vol. 2 page 102.

26 Ibid. Page 65.

27 Toras Menachem 5749 vol. 2, page 30, page 34 fn. 79.

28 Toras Menachem 5750 vol. 2, page 86 fn.

69.

29 Toras Menachem 5750 vol. 2, page 51 fn.

69.

30 Toras Menachem 5748 vol. 2 page 58.

31 Sichos Kodesh 5737 vol. 1 page 358

32 Sichos Kodesh 5734 vol. 1 page 196

33 Likkutei Sichos vol. 20 page 450 - 451.

See Derher Kislev 5779 for details about giving *Chanukah gelt*.

34 Sichos Kodesh 5733 Parshas Vayeishev page 209.

35 Toras Menachem 5748 vol. 2 page 64.

36 Sichos Kodesh 5734 vol. 1 pages 195-200.

37 Toras Menachem 5750 vol. 2 page 52.



נדפס ע"י ולזכות
הרה"ת ר' ברוך יהודה וזוגתו מרת איטא
ומשפחתם שיחיו
גאנץ

"לבנין עצדי עצד"

THE REBBE'S PARTICIPATION AT THE WEDDINGS OF CHASSIDIM

It didn't take long after the Rebbe's arrival on the shores of the United States in 5701* and his work at the helm of the Lubavitch movement, that *bochurim and anash* gravitated towards him, many developing a close relationship with the Rebbe in those early years. As a result, Chassidim would share with the Rebbe their joyous moments as well as their personal anguish. This closeness only intensified once the Rebbe accepted the *nesius*. The father-like love the Rebbe showered upon his Chassidim knew no bounds. There is one area where this was uniquely expressed—the Rebbe's participation in the family *simchahs* of Chassidim.

Beginning in his early days in America, Chassidim would invite the Rebbe to join in their *tenaim* and weddings. The Rebbe participated as the son-in-law of the Rebbe, and later as the Rebbe. Before the Rebbe's *nesius*, he would usually be honored with reciting some of the *sheva brachos* under the *chupah*, occasionally being the *mesader kiddushin* as well. After assuming the *nesius*, the Rebbe continued to be *mesader kiddushin* at *chupahs* for over ten years.

In an earlier edition of Derher, we published a general overview of the Rebbe's practice of being *mesader kiddushin* (see Derher, Kislev 5773).

In connection with Yud-Daled Kislev, the date of the Rebbe and Rebbetzin's *chasunah*, we present the following article. This compilation is not intended to serve as a broader overview of this unique practice of the Rebbe, rather we intend to bring before the reader a more nuanced understanding of the Rebbe's involvement in the Chassidim's personal *simchahs*, by underlining various particular stories which offer us a window into the Rebbe's joining in *simchahs* and his involvement in every step of the way leading up to their weddings.

Most of the material for this article was culled from the *sefer* "*Mekadesh Yisroel*" by Kehos.

EARLY YEARS

During the years prior to the Frierdiker Rebbe's *histalkus*, the Rebbe would often attend weddings of *anash* that took place in the greater New York City area. Usually, the Rebbe recited one of the *brachos* under the *chupah*, and in some cases he was *mesader kiddushin* as well. In various instances, the Rebbe also addressed the crowd during the *seudah*.

Though very uncommon today, in those days there would regularly be a ceremony held for the *tenaim* at the time of the couple's engagement. Generally, the Rebbe would not attend the *tenaim*, yet families who enjoyed a close relationship with *beis harav* would often insist for the Rebbe to attend.

In Elul of 5703*, the *tenaim* ceremony of Rabbi Mordechai Altein, who was engaged to the daughter of Rabbi Yisroel Jacobson, took place in a shul in East New York. Both the Rebbe and Rebbetzin participated. When the *mechutanim* began to write the *nusach* of the *tenaim*, the Rebbe commented that the *nusach* prepared is different from the *nusach* traditionally written by *beis harav*. Being that no one present had the *nusach* of *beis harav* handy, the Rebbe took a taxi to his home, returning with a *tenaim* document, which had in it handwritten notations from the Tzemach Tzedek.

A few months later, on 22 Kislev 5704*, their wedding took place. This would be the first wedding in America at which the Rebbe addressed the crowd.

Following the wedding, a fascinating article was written by Rabbi Hodakov for one of the local Yiddish newspapers, in which he describes the events of the wedding, including the Rebbe's address. The article was edited by the Rebbe before being published.



THE REBBE SPEAKS AT A WEDDING ON 4 TAMMUZ, 5704*

KEHOT PUBLICATION SOCIETY

The article reads:

"A Beautiful Chassidische Wedding in Brownsville. On Sunday, 22 Kislev, the well-known Rabbi Yisroel Jacobson married off his daughter... Siddur kiddushin and sheva brachos were recited by the sons-in-law of the Lubavitcher Rebbe...

"A great impact was left on the crowd from the address delivered by Harav M. Schneerson, in which he expressed that through the very fact that the Jewish people serve one G-d and have one Torah, they are a unified nation, wherever they may be spread out [throughout the world]. A result of which, the joy of one Jew can uplift the mood of all other Jews.

"The Jewish people are distinct in their steadfast trust in Hashem,

to the point that even in the most bitter circumstances, we are sure of our ultimate victory. Yet, it is always necessary for Yidden to be dedicated to Yiddishkeit with mesiras nefesh; just like Matisyahu and his children, Yiddishe children must be protected with their Yiddishkait... Just as the jug of oil was protected from the unclean Greek hands and therefore shone brightly..."

This address was later discovered in the Rebbe's Reshimos, where the Rebbe recorded brief notes of what he was going to say. Aside from this address, another ten addresses for weddings are recorded in the Reshimos, including instances where although the Rebbe had prepared an address, he did not end up delivering it. On these Reshimos the Rebbe noted

FOR WHAT DID YOU COME?

At the wedding of Elya Chaim Carlebach, the Rebbe was honored with the first two *brachos* at the *chupah*. Following the *chupah*, the Rebbe returned to the hall, where he had a conversation with Rabbi Eliezer Silver. When the dancing began the Rebbe commented to a few *bochurim* instructing them to join the dancing, saying, “For what purpose did you come? Was it in order to eat or to add in *simchas chosson v’kallah?*”

TIME THE REBBE CHERISHED

The last wedding the Rebbe attended before the Frierdiker Rebbe’s *histalkus* was that of Reb Leibel Dubov, which took place only three days before Yud Shvat. Following the *chupah*, the *chosson*’s father, Reb Yitzchok Dubov, approached the Rebbe requesting that he remain at the wedding for the *seudah*.

The Rebbe replied by saying that each Thursday night, as well as *leil Shabbos* he learns with the Frierdiker Rebbe in private, concluding: “Never, will I give up this privilege!”

next to the title לא נאמר, indicating that it wasn’t delivered.

PARTICIPATION AS REBBE

During the year of *aveilus* for the Frierdiker Rebbe, the Rebbe refrained



ADAR 5706*. THE REBBE PARTICIPATES IN A TENOIM CELEBRATION. NOTE THE PICTURE OF THE FRIERDIKER REBBE.



THE REBBE SITS AT THE HEAD TABLE OF THE WEDDING SEUDA ON 23 ADAR II, 5706*

from participating in any weddings. When the period of *aveilus* came to an end and the Rebbe accepted the *nesius*, the Rebbe’s responsibilities grew, leaving less time available to participate in all weddings of Chassidim. It was at this point that the Rebbe laid out specific conditions for his participation at weddings: The *chosson* must agree to grow a beard, and the *kallah* to wear a *sheitel* after the wedding.

The first wedding the Rebbe attended following the *histalkus* of the Frierdiker Rebbe, was that of Reb Leibel Posner, which took place just two weeks after the Rebbe accepted the *nesius*. As opposed to the weddings the Rebbe attended earlier, now it

was the ‘Lubavitcher Rebbe’ who was *mesader kiddushin*.

On his wedding day, Reb Leibel entered the Rebbe’s room requesting the Rebbe to participate in his wedding, explaining that he wished to honor the Rebbe with *siddur kiddushin*. The Rebbe responded that the honor of *siddur kiddushin* belongs to the *kallah*’s side¹, to which Reb Leibel replied that he is indeed speaking on their behalf as well. The Rebbe agreed, and asked to be notified when they are ready to proceed with the *chupah*.

The Rebbe arrived at the hall during the *kabbalas ponim* and sat down near the *chosson* at the head of the table.

The Great Exodus



5732 and the Russian Chassidim*





This year marks 50 years since a fascinating period in Chabad: *The exodus of Russian Jewry.*

For close to 50 years, the Iron Curtain had been sealed shut. A small crack had opened for a short time after World War II, but afterwards almost no one had been able to leave. Millions of Jews lived there with no hope of ever reaching a free land.

For the hundreds of *anash* families that remained in Russia, the suffering was ten-fold. They desperately wanted to raise their children in the ways of Chassidus—but the government persecution continued without letup. The large network of underground *chinuch* institutions was not as strong as it had previously been. The thought of leaving Russia and uniting with the Rebbe seemed like a distant dream.

In 770, the plight of Russian Jews remained a constant presence. At every farbrengen, the Rebbe would mention the Russian Jews. Letters and instructions from “*Dyedushka*—grandfather” would secretly make their way into Russia.

And then, the unthinkable happened. The government began allowing families to leave. Beginning with a small trickle in 5726*, the doors began opening even wider in 5730*-5731*. Soon, hundreds of *anash* families began arriving in Eretz Yisroel.

The Rebbe personally invited each immigrant to visit 770 at the Rebbe's expense. Each Tishrei, a large group of new immigrants would arrive.

They became a feature of 770 life in those years. The Rebbe would exhibit great *kiruvim* towards them; at farbrengens the Rebbe would speak about their self-sacrifice and Russian *niggunim*—like *Ech Ti Ziemlak*—became a staple of farbrengens, led by the new immigrants.

The year 5732* brought perhaps the largest such group of new immigrants, and the Rebbe showered them with attention.

A *Chassidisher Derher* sat with two of the Rebbe's shluchim, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Zaltzman (Toronto) and Rabbi Moshe Chaim Levin (Kensington, NY). Both arrived to the Rebbe from the Soviet Union during that year as young *bochurim*—Rabbi Zaltzman for Tishrei and Rabbi Levin before Pesach—and they merited to live through those special times in 770.

We thank them for their fascinating interviews.

לע"נ
הרה"ח השליח ר' חיים ב"ר שמואל גרשון ניסן ע"ה
גורביץ

נפטר ביום ג' פ' ויקרא בעיצומו של "מבצע מצה"
ג' ניסן ה'תשפ"א

נתרם ע"י בנו
הרה"ת ר' רפאל דובער
וזוגתו מרת רבקה ומשפחתם שיחיו
גורביץ

Before we begin discussing your time with the Rebbe, please tell us about your years in Russia.

Rabbi Zaltzman: I was born in 5716* and grew up in Samarkand. We were an old Lubavitch family—my grandfather, Reb Avrohom, was a *Tomim* in Lubavitch. However, my father never saw the Rabbeim. He was born five years after the Friediker Rebbe left Russia.

Samarkand was unique in that it boasted a decent number of such *chassidishe* families. We had a warm, *chassidishe* culture that was unparalleled throughout the Soviet Union. My mother was from Moscow but when my parents got married my father insisted on bringing her to Samarkand because no place could possibly compete with its *chassidishe* environment.

Most children in *chassidishe* families were forced to attend the Russian public schools but my parents were adamant that their children would not attend, come what may. The authorities were told that I lived with my grandparents in Moscow, but that meant that I couldn't be seen in Samarkand. For the nine months of the school year, I would not venture out of my house at all; I couldn't even go close to the windows.

One of the elder Chassidim once berated my father for keeping me locked up at home. "He is going to go crazy!" But my father answered with a straight face, "Better a *kranker* (not healthy) *Yid* than a *gezunter* (healthy) *goy*."

I learned together with a small group of children for several hours a day. During the rest of the time, my mother would have to occupy me with cooking cholent and gefilte fish and all sorts of activities to ensure that I



REB MOSHE CHAIM (SECOND FROM THE RIGHT) AS A BOY IN MOSCOW IN 5725*.

didn't begin climbing the walls out of boredom.

When I reached middle school age, it became easier to avoid enrollment and I was finally able to be in the sunlight. We had a small yeshiva—housed in the storage shed at the far end of our backyard—where we learned Torah and grew into genuine *chassidishe bochurim*. Some teachers were elder Chassidim who had seen the Rebbe Rashab, while others were simply *bochurim* a few years older than us.

What was your level of connection to the Rebbe?

Rabbi Levin: I grew up in Moscow and Riga. We knew that there was a Rebbe in America, and in spirit, we were fully dedicated to the Rebbe's *inyanim*. Everything revolved around the Rebbe; every farbrengen was about our desire to see the Rebbe. However, we had very little knowledge about the Rebbe. There was one picture—the full portrait image of the Rebbe at a doorway holding a *siddur*, on his way to *siddur kiddushin*. It was carefully hidden away.

From the mid 5720s*, Jewish tourists would occasionally arrive from America. It was dangerous to speak to them, but sometimes we would endanger ourselves to send messages to the Rebbe through them. I was once arrested for a short time while making contact with such a tourist.

We would ask them to send regards to the Rebbe, and sometimes we would send a bottle of *mashke* with them, upon which we would transcribe our names and mother's names. Many of these tourists ended up seeing the Rebbe and developing a connection to the Rebbe through us. If the tourist had seen the Rebbe, we would milk every piece of information from him.

We had an abundance of Chassidus *sefarim* which had been printed before the revolution; there were *genizos* full of them. But new material was hard to come by. Sometimes, relatives from America would send *maamarim* disguised within personal family letters—the letter would begin with regular pleasantries, and then randomly transition into a *maamar*.

At some point, a copy of Hayom Yom arrived in Russia. It was passed

from city to city, and we all copied the entire thing by hand. At some point we also received the first four volumes of Likkutei Sichos, and copied them by hand too. We also received two Nichoach records.

When I became a *bochur*, I traveled to learn in the yeshiva in Samarkand. There, we always farbrenged about our hope to one day see the Rebbe. However, it was not something that seemed possible.

Rabbi Zaltzman: When we would write to our cousins in America, we would sneak in questions for the Rebbe. When my father needed an operation and when my mother was expecting a child, they made sure to receive the Rebbe's *bracha*.

One Simchas Torah at our private *hakafos*, someone came over to me and told me secretly that he had *mashke* from the Rebbe. He gave me a sip on condition I didn't breathe a word about it to anyone.

When the first shliach—Reb Binyamin Katz—came to Russia, my father and uncle made a special trip to see him in Tashkent, and they brought back the niggun *Hoshia Es Amecha*.

We never imagined that we would actually manage to leave; we used to *bentch* each other that Moshiach should come and we should leave Russia—in that order. But I heard that the Rebbe said the opposite: A Chossid once said that “Moshiach should come so that the Russian Jews will be able to leave,” and the Rebbe responded that the opposite order would be more correct.

But by the time of my bar mitzvah in 5729*, things started to change. My bar mitzvah farbrengen actually revolved around the fact that our neighbor Itche Mishulovin had received permission to leave. We were all very excited—and quite envious—that he would soon see the Rebbe.

When did you leave Russia? What happened when you arrived in Eretz Yisroel?

Rabbi Levin: I remember three shluchim of the Rebbe coming to Russia: Rabbi Nissan Mindel, Rabbi Binyomin Katz, and Reb Gershon Ber Jacobson.

Rabbi Mindel's shlichus was top secret, and only a few Chassidim met with him against his will. Binyomin Katz, on the other hand, traveled throughout Russia and connected with a number of Chassidim¹. But Reb Gershon Ber's visit was very special for our family. He brought the Rebbe's *bracha* which got us out of Russia, with open miracles.

We arrived in Eretz Yisroel on Rosh Chodesh Kislev 5732*. Shortly after our arrival, my father took me on a visit to his old friend, Reb Velvel Zalmanov, and he had a special treat for us: He put on a record player and played a recording of the Rebbe's farbrengen. This was the first time I heard the Rebbe's voice.

Rabbi Zaltzman: We left Russia for Eretz Yisroel on 12 Av 5731*, and settled in Nachlas Har Chabad.

I vividly remember the first time I heard the Rebbe's voice. It was Chof Av 5731*. We woke up in the middle of the night, went to *mikveh* in Nachlah, and then traveled by bus to Kfar Chabad to hear the 3:30 a.m. hookup. The yeshiva was packed with *anash* from all over Eretz Yisroel.

Several weeks later, I heard that my father would be going to the Rebbe for Tishrei. I understood the prices were prohibitive, but I couldn't withhold myself from asking to go along; after all, we had wished all our lives to go to the Rebbe, and now I finally had the opportunity! In the end, Rabbi Hodakov called us all in after Simchas Torah and reimbursed us for the full cost of the trip.

How was the experience of arriving at 770 and seeing the Rebbe?

Rabbi Levin: It was a very special moment—we had waited our entire lives for it!



REB YOSEF YITZCHAK ZALTZMAN WITH HIS FAMILY SHORTLY BEFORE LEAVING RUSSIA IN THE SUMMER OF 5731*.

ZALTZMAN FAMILY



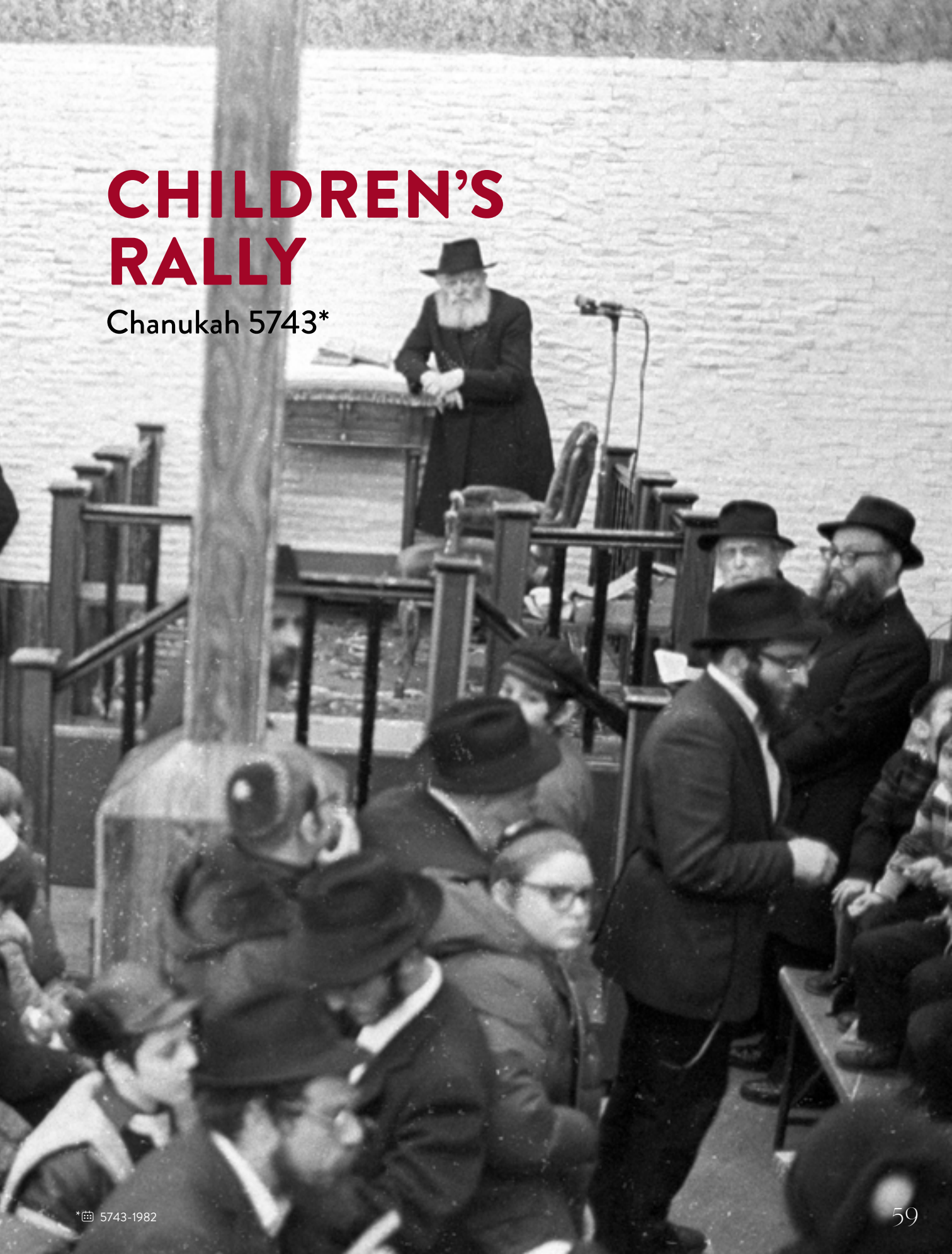
In memory of our loving uncle
Stuart (Shmuel Yisroel)
ben Hersh Leib a"v

Dedicated by
Shaya and Miriam Rochester



CHILDREN'S RALLY

Chanukah 5743*



The Rebbe davens Mincha with the children followed by *hadlakas neiros*.







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