



Dedicated In honor of
my wife
תחי' Rivka
And my children
Menachem & Rosie, Mendel & Laya,
Bayla, Devori,
Nechama, and Yossi שיחי
By Danny Fishman שיחי'



The Rebbe's CHILDREN

HOW THE REBBE RAISED A NEW
GENERATION OF CHASSIDIM IN AMERICA

At the last Simchas Torah farbrengen before *hakafos* in 5752*, the Rebbe asked all the children present, along with their teachers and educators, to say a special *l'chaim*, explaining that children are referred to as “משיחי—My anointed ones.” The reason is, said the Rebbe, that when you look at a Jewish child in our day and age, what do you see? Moshiach! Children’s education should be saturated with an awareness of the reality of Moshiach; a reality where there is nothing else other than the truth of *Elokus*.

Of course, it was the Rebbe that implanted this education into the hearts and minds of the children throughout the preceding years. With so many hours of attention and scores of *sichos* addressed directly to the children, the Rebbe raised a new generation of youngsters, *Tzivos Hashem*, ready to greet Moshiach.

Let’s go back to the earliest years of the Rebbe’s *nesius* and learn how already from the first day, the Rebbe showed special affection for the children in the Lubavitcher court, and in his unique way, started them on the path of becoming true Chassidim.

ARE YOU A LUBAVITCHER?

The following story is related by Rabbi Itche Meir Gurary, mashpia of Tomchei Temimim in Montreal:

In those early years of the Rebbe’s *nesius*, there were very few children around 770.

At the time of the Frierdiker Rebbe’s *histalkus* in 5710* I was nine years old.

In order to explain the impact the Rebbe’s *nesius* had on us, I will preface with what was going on in the years before that.

Even though I grew up in



Crown Heights, I was never at the Frierdiker Rebbe’s farbrengens. There was one time that I merited to see the Frierdiker Rebbe at a Rosh Hashanah davening, by standing on the ledge near a window and looking from far. My father, Reb Zalman Gurary, was a very devoted Chossid, but he never thought to bring me in to be at the Frierdiker Rebbe’s farbrengen or davening.

There was one time when I was almost able to come in, but then something happened:

It was the last Simchas Torah farbrengen with the Frierdiker Rebbe, in 5710*.

In general, whenever there was a farbrengen upstairs in the Frierdiker Rebbe’s apartment, people would pack onto the stairway right outside, waiting by the door for hours, hoping and praying that they might be let in for a short time.

I was standing outside at this farbrengen when suddenly, during *kos shel bracha*, the Frierdiker Rebbe announced that everyone standing outside should be let in!

Immediately, everyone rushed in. The Frierdiker Rebbe’s wife, Rebbetzin Nechama Dina, was standing in the hallway right by the door of the dining room watching as people poured in. When she saw me, a small child

trying to get in, she said, “*Itche Meir vil oich kumen shteren mein man? Gei fun danet!*” (Itche Meir also wants to come in and disturb my husband? Get away!) She knew me by name and I felt like I wouldn’t be able to face her again if I didn’t listen, so I had to run away. The one chance that I almost had to be at a farbrengen thus vanished. There were two times that my father brought me to the Frierdiker Rebbe to give *pidyonos* on Erev Rosh Hashanah, but other than that I was almost never in the Frierdiker Rebbe’s presence.

Why was it this way?

It could be said that the *chinuch* offered to the children at that time was different. Firstly, until 5707*, when



RABBI YITZCHOK MEIR GURARY AS A CHILD TOGETHER WITH THE FAMED CHOSSID, REB MICHAEL DVORKIN.

some Russian families were able to come to the United States, there were a total of three Lubavitcher children in Crown Heights that I can remember: Yossel Zalmanov, Asher Heber ע"ה, and יבלה"ט me. The rest of *anash* lived in different neighborhoods and they didn't daven in 770 on Shabbos.

In the *cheder* there was only one Lubavitcher *melamed*: Reb Avraham Barnetzky. Later Reb Avraham Popack joined, and Reb Yitzchak Kolodny. I remember the younger class at the *cheder* being taught by a fellow who didn't even have a beard. Then there was the *mesivta*, where one of the teachers was Reb Lashinsky, a Litvisher Yid and a great *talmid chacham*, but he was far from a Chossid. Another teacher was Reb Pesachovich; he was a very *geshmaker Yid* and a Gerrer Chossid, and only farbrenged about Kotzk and Ger. Rabbi Kastel joined eventually as well.

The younger divisions of the school had no teaching of Chassidus. The out-of-town boys who lived in the dorm had a *seder* at night where they learned Chassidus, but for us locals—there was nothing. Later on, when Reb Dovid Raskin came from France, he started teaching some of us Chassidus.

You have to also understand that the crowd in 770 was tiny in those years, the crowd was very small at farbrengens.

There were almost no Lubavitchers davening with the main minyan, there was not even a men's Mikvah in close proximity at the time (it was quite a walk)!

It was mostly "*balebatishe*" Yidden, nice people, but not necessarily a *dugma chaya* of what a Chossid should be.

What kind of Shabbos was there for us children to see? We almost never saw the (Frieddiker) Rebbe, and no one in the yeshiva taught us about the Rebbe. Where would we get our *chinuch* and *yiras Shamayim*?

It was the Rebbe who started to change things, getting involved in the *chinuch* of the children.

In those early years, the Rebbe would come into the small *zal* and sit where he would later daven Mincha on Shabbos; the same place where the farbrengen was (under the window in between the two rooms of the *zal*). On that table where the Rebbe davened, I would also sit.

We developed a relationship with the Rebbe. Many people don't realize this, but the Rebbe dedicated of his time and paid attention to the children.

There were times that the Rebbe would even kid around with me. My maternal grandfather was the Kapishnitzer Rebbe, and I would spend Shabbos with him in the Lower East Side. When I came back to 770, the Rebbe would ask me, "Are you a Lubavitcher or a Kapishnitzer?"

Then my involvement with the Rebbe intensified, due to this fascinating incident:

It was during the final year before the Frieddiker Rebbe's *histlakus*, and I was told that the Frieddiker Rebbe told Rabbi Hodakov that he should take me out of class at the yeshiva on Bedford and Dean and spend some time with me. He wanted Rabbi Hodakov to

farbreng with me, talk about *yiras Shamayim* and so on. When I finished my session with Rabbi Hodakov, he would take me into the Rebbe's room, and I had to repeat to the Rebbe what I learned. As a prize, the Rebbe would give me the most recent issue of Talks and Tales. This happened three or four times over the course of that year. It was amazing! The Rebbe gave us incredible attention.

As I grew up, I came to realize that everything I have in my life I got from the Rebbe.

Then, after the Frieddiker Rebbe's *histalkus*, Chassidim were asking the Rebbe to accept the *nesius* but he refused. Many Chassidim stopped giving their hand to the Rebbe, even when he would try to give them "*shalom aleichem*," as a symbol of reverence to the Rebbe. I was still a child at that time, and one Shabbos, when I passed by the Rebbe, he gave me his hand to say good Shabbos but I refused it. The Rebbe said, "*Bist shoin a Lubavitcher Chossid? (So now you're already a Lubavitcher?)*"

I said yes, and he smiled.

YUD SHEVAT 5711

I vividly remember Yud Shevat 5711*, when the Rebbe accepted



THE REBBE IN CONVERSATION WITH THE KOPSHINITZER REBBE, REB AVRAHAM YEHOASHUA HESCHEL.

the *nesius*. There was tremendous excitement in Lubavitch.

Even though I was only 10 years old, I knew something big was happening. There was chatter that the Rebbe is going to accept the *nesius* and I was very excited.

I was able to sense the feelings in the air: First the *histalkus* of the Frierdiker Rebbe and the hopelessness that it brought, and then the emergence of a new Rebbe and the start of a new era in history. For me personally, I knew that now I would have a Rebbe that I could see and relate to, and it was a very special feeling.

I also knew that something was going to happen, because my father was very involved in ensuring that the Rebbe should take on the *nesius*.

I remember the night of Yud Shevat 5711*. The small shul was packed. I was standing outside in the hallway and couldn't get into the *zal*.

I remember the famous Chossid Reb Sender Nemtsov speaking. I didn't know it was him, but I remember an elderly Chossid getting up and

saying something. Now I know that he was asking the Rebbe to accept the *nesius*. He said, "The *sichos* are good and fine, but we want Chassidus," and indeed the Rebbe responded by reciting the *maamar Basi L'Gani*.

From that night and on, everything changed.

The Rebbe made sure that the children would receive a proper *Chassidisher chinuch*, even from the youngest age.

One year later, during Chanukah 5712*, the Rebbe started giving out *Chanukah gelt* to the *yeshiva bochurim* in 770 who learned Chassidus. At that time, I couldn't be included in that group because I was a young boy. Then the Rebbe called my father into his room.

He told my father, "I want to give Itche Meir *Chanukah gelt*, but I only give to those who learn Chassidus. Start learning Chassidus with him, and then you can give it to him."

My father asked the Rebbe, "What could I learn with an 11-year-old child?" The Rebbe said, "It was customary by Chassidim

to start with the *maamar* 'Adam Ki Yakriv' from Likkutei Torah; you should start from there."

Indeed, my father learned that *maamar* with me. It is not necessarily an easy *maamar*. It talks about *malachim*, *nefesh haEloki*, and *nefesh habahamis*. It could be difficult for an 11-year-old child to understand. But the Rebbe felt that even small children should be taught these concepts at a beginning stage. This was the *chinuch* that the Rebbe wanted to implement.

The Rebbe worked very hard to get people to learn Chassidus; whether a *perek* of Tanya, a *vort*, whatever it is. The words of Chassidus have the power to change a person for the better. The Rebbe constantly pushed this; that everyone should learn Chassidus.

Before my bar mitzvah I was in *yechidus*. Often in those years, when in *yechidus* with a bar mitzvah boy, the Rebbe would say a *vort* on the *parsha*.

My *yechidus* was in Parshas Shemos, and the Rebbe expounded on the words of the *possuk*, "ואלה שמות" . . . ואלה שמות בני ישראל. . . And these are

SPIN FOR ME

Rabbi Ephraim Piekarski relates:

At the time of the *histalkus* of the Frierdiker Rebbe, I was five years old and I have many fond memories of the time spent as a child growing up in the Rebbe's presence. My family came to the United States in 5707* and we moved to Crown Heights in 5712*. There were very few children in the community at the time and we saw the Rebbe often.

Whenever the Rebbe left the shul for his room after a *farbrengen*, we used to stand by the door of his room and sing "*Ki Vesimcha*," and the Rebbe would encourage our singing with a wave of his hands.

Even so, we were always taught that when the Rebbe approaches we should run away. We don't need to stick our faces in front of the Rebbe. I remember one Friday night, we were very young and didn't understand what we were doing, but we went over

to the door of the Rebbe's room and knocked. The Rebbe answered the door, his face a fiery red. We got so frightened that we ran away instantly.

There were quite a few instances when the Rebbe saw us playing ball outside.

But one game that we played was special for a different reason.

It must have been during Chanukah, 5715* or 5716*. My brother Abba and I were playing dreidel at a table that was situated right outside the Rebbe's room in *Gan Eden Hatachton*. Suddenly the Rebbe walked by and asked if he could play with us. Of course, we said yes and the Rebbe put down a dime on the table. The Rebbe then told my brother to spin the dreidel for him, and it landed on a Hei. The Rebbe said, "So we take half!" And he told my brother he can keep it.



RABBI GURARY AND HIS FAMILY GO BY THE REBBE ON EREV ROSH HASHANAH 5741*

the names of *B'nei Yisroel*... Reuven and Shimon." The Rebbe quoted the Midrash that says, "Reuven and Shimon went down [to Mitzrayim], and the same Reuven and Shimon came up," i.e. that the Yidden in Mitzrayim didn't change their names.

The Rebbe asked: Why does the Midrash mention these two names specifically? Reuven means "*re'iya*"—seeing *Elokus*, and Shimon means "*shemia*"—hearing *Elokus*. Only through *re'iya* and *shemia* of *Elokus*, can we pick ourselves up and go out of our own Mitzrayim. The Rebbe explained: "You're living in America, you're learning *limudei chol*. The only way to uplift yourself from Mitzrayim is through learning Chassidus!"

With my friend Yossel Zalmanov, the Rebbe did a similar thing. On the day of his bar mitzvah, the Rebbe gave Yossel's father a *ksav yad kodesh*, an original manuscript of the Tzemach Tzedek's handwriting from *Shores Mitzvas Hatefilla*, and said: "Since the Tzemach Tzedek wrote this when he was young, you should learn this with your son, then bring it back tomorrow..."

There was no one else giving us a Chassidishe *chinuch*. No Chassidishe storybooks, not in any language. What did we have? The Rebbe himself took care of us. He

gave us his time and attention.

A few years later, when I was 16 years old, the Rebbe told me that every day before davening I should give *tzedakah*, and learn a *vort* of Chassidus. I should never daven without learning something. The quantity is not important, but I should learn it with a "*tzugetrugenkeit*"—with dedication and close attention. Until today, I am still very meticulous to learn Chassidus every single day because of what the Rebbe told me. If not for that, who knows where I would be. Probably just another Brooklyn Dodgers fan, if not worse...

Years later, my father once asked the Rebbe why Chassidim aren't seeing open miracles from the Rebbe; Chassidim need *mofsim*. The Rebbe responded, "What about your own health? And your wife's health? The fact that all is in order is not a *mofes*?" Then the Rebbe mentioned to my father about me, saying, "If not for what I've invested in him, what would have become of him?"

The Rebbe made me. And with care, attention, and devotion, the Rebbe raised a full generation of Chassidim in America.

L'Chaim Yidden! 1

KNOW WHAT TO ASK

Rabbi Gurary Relates:

I believe this story occurred in 5719*: My father was approached by the Rebbe's brother-in-law, Rashag, and asked if he would accompany Rashag on a fundraising trip to South America and introduce him to some of his wealthy business contacts. My father agreed with one condition: At the time, my father was going through a crisis in his business and was in dire need of the Rebbe's *bracha*. If Rashag would ask the Rebbe to give him a special *bracha*, my father was willing to go along on the trip. The Rebbe agreed to the deal, and the two of them indeed had a very successful trip.

Upon their return my father asked Rashag to go to the Rebbe and complete the deal, and the Rebbe in turn invited my father to come into his room.

When my father came in, he told the Rebbe that he was dealing with a serious crisis in his business that could result in a big financial loss, and that he was in dire need of a *yeshua*.

The Rebbe responded, "Reb Zalman, I thought you are a smart person! Given the chance to ask for an extraordinary *bracha*, the first thing you ask for is money? The first thing you should ask for is for *nachas* from your children, that they grow up to be *frumme* children and *Chassidishe* children!"

My father was taken aback. He immediately told the Rebbe, "Yes! That's what I want!"

This may have been one of the things the Rebbe had in mind when he told my father that the fact that I turned out alright was thanks to a *mofes* from the Rebbe.