

# Derher

A Chassidisher

א חסידישער דערהער

## The Reunion

THE REBBE'S VISIT TO FRANCE  
IN 5707, REUNITING WITH HIS  
MOTHER, REBBETZIN CHANA

## Wondrous Cure

A CLOSER LOOK AT THE MOST RECENT  
SEFER OF THE REBBE'S TORAH  
PUBLISHED חלק ל"ג קודש - אגרות

# The GREAT Escape

THE STORY OF THE "ESHALONS"



ADAR 2 5782  
ISSUE 116 (193)  
MARCH 2022

# WE ASK

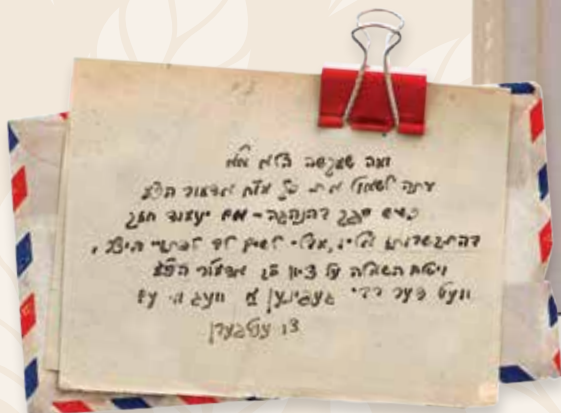
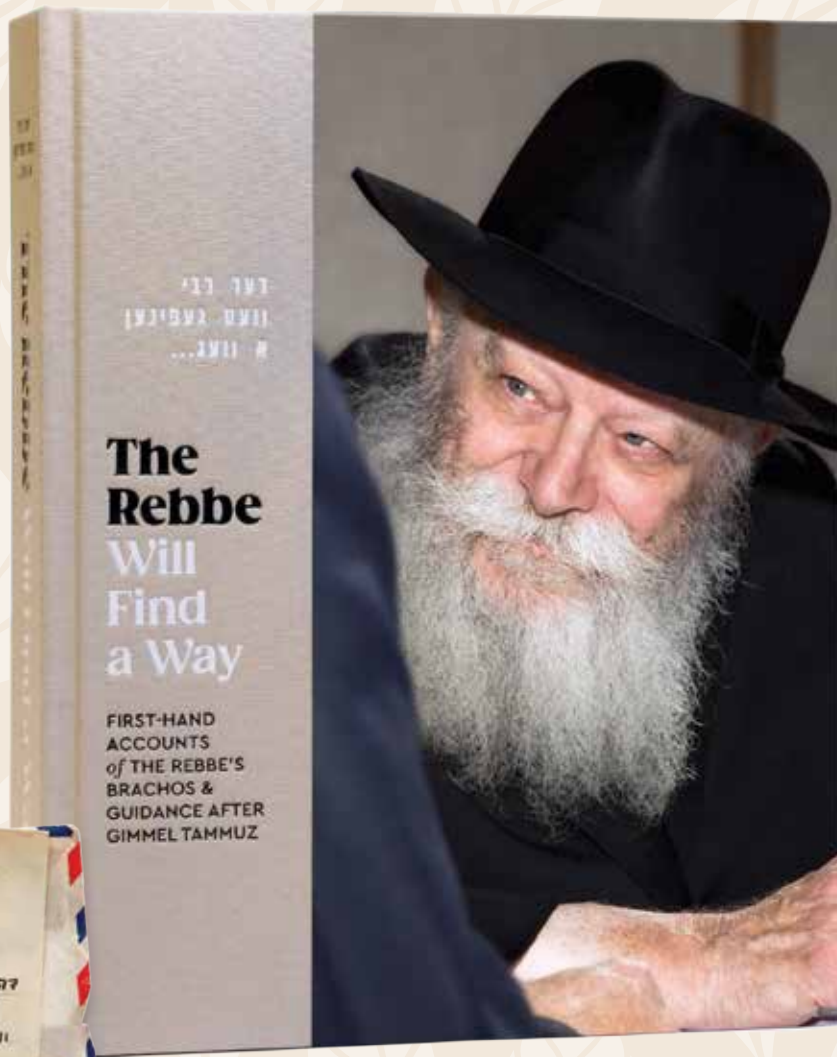
## *And the Rebbe answers*

Today as always, when in doubt we write to the Rebbe. And today as always, the Rebbe finds a way to answer.

THE REBBE WILL FIND A WAY is a collection of such stories.

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- ◆ Topics include: Health, Parnasah, Shlichus, Children, Encouragement and General Guidance
- ◆ Unique imagery, historic photos, and visual documentation from the JEM Living Archive and personal collections.



"...send the question to the resting place of my father-in-law, the Rebbe haka"m, vet der Rebbe gefinen a veg vi em tzu entferin, [the Rebbe will find a way to answer you]."

—Igros Kodesh vol. 3 pg. 266

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Published אגרות קודש - חלק לג



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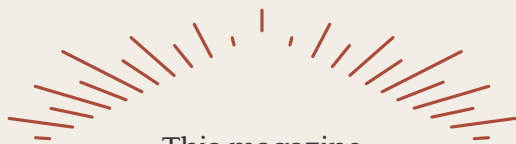
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This magazine  
has been made possible

לזכות

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

בקשר עם יום הבהיר כ"ה אדר, יום הולדת  
הרבנית הצדקנית נ"ע זי"ע



### The Rebbetzin—A Model of Hiskashrus

**I**n our generation, everyone celebrates their birthdays. In fact it was something the Rebbe instituted specifically in honor of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka's birthday, which we mark this month on Chof-Hei Adar.

In honor of this date, and especially given its close proximity to Yud-Aleph Nissan, which this year celebrates the Rebbe's 120th *yom huledes*, it seems appropriate to focus on the story of the Rebbetzin herself. More specifically, her uncompromised devotion and *hiskashrus* to the Rebbe.

Some stories that serve as an example of her *hiskashrus*:

Reb Chanina Sperlin relates that when he got married in the summer of 5747\*, he was asked by the Rebbetzin which *maamar* he planned to recite at the wedding. When he said that he planned to recite the *maamar* that the Frierdiker Rebbe delivered at her wedding, she immediately responded: "There aren't any from my husband?" I.e., are there no *maamarim* from our Rebbe that can be recited at a wedding?

Similarly, there is a well known story about Simchas Torah 5746\*, when the Rebbe had spoken at the farbrengen about turning all the cups and bottles in the room upside-down, explaining that the symbol of an overturned cup reminds us of our obligation to influence others around us. When the *meshamshim bakodesh* came to see the Rebbetzin a short while later, they told her of what had happened at the farbrengen and about the Rebbe's explanation about the overturned cups. "Did my husband do this as well?" she asked. When they told her that the Rebbe too held his cup upside-down, the Rebbetzin immediately (somewhat inconspicuously) turned over a small bottle on the table.

On one occasion, the Rebbetzin taught someone how to properly educate their children with a true *Chassidishe chinuch*:

Mrs. Esther Sternberg had given birth on 17 Av 5741\*, just a few days before Chof Av, and she was scheduled to still be in the hospital at the time of the Rebbe's farbrengen. From her hospital room, Mrs. Sternberg was in touch by phone with the Rebbetzin on a regular basis and the Rebbetzin asked her if she would be able to call in and hear the Rebbe's Chof Av farbrengen. When Mrs. Sternberg told the Rebbetzin that she would indeed, the Rebbetzin offered the following advice: "If that's the case, it would be a good idea to bring your baby into your bed and place the receiver near her ear allowing her to hear the farbrengen too. It's very important for a child to hear words of Chassidus."

It is fascinating that at that very farbrengen, the Rebbe spoke about the importance of educating children in the ways of holiness, even from the youngest of ages. Even modern science agrees, noted the Rebbe, that what a child is surrounded by from the youngest age has a profound and real impact on their life.

Perhaps the most fascinating story of the Rebbetzin's *hiskashrus* was related by Rabbi Shemi Rokeach, whose family enjoyed a close and special relationship with the Rebbetzin:

"In her later years, my grandmother, Rebbetzin Klingberg, lived in my parents house. One day I was standing outside the house and I saw a car pull up, and the driver asked me, 'Excuse me,

does Rebbetzin Klingberg live here?' When I told him that she does, he took out a large box and said, 'This is for her, from the Rebbetzin.'

"When my grandmother opened the box she found a beautiful picture of the Rebbe in a gold wooden frame. My grandmother was taken aback. She immediately called the Rebbetzin and asked 'What's this about?!'

"The Rebbetzin responded, 'Believe me, I examined some 200 pictures of my husband until I found one that I thought would make you happy!' The Rebbetzin knew that my grandmother had been feeling a bit down and wanted to cheer her up. From then on, every night my grandmother would look up at the picture of the Rebbe and say *Ah gutte nacht Rebbe!*'"

Amazingly, the Rebbetzin found a way to make another Yid feel better by connecting her with the Rebbe.

The stories can go on and on (and will perhaps be indeed explored with a full article in a future magazine).

The important takeaway as we celebrate Chof-Hei Adar is that each of us should, as the Rebbe said, learn from her and emulate her ways, strengthening our own *hiskashrus* to the Rebbe. Especially as we prepare for Yud-Aleph Nissan, the Rebbe's 120th *yom huledes*.

May we indeed be *zoche* to celebrate this Yud-Aleph Nissan with the Rebbe, physically and with our own eyes, with the coming of Moshiach, *teikef umiyad Mammosh!*

**The Editors**

פורים קטן ה'תשפ"ב  
שנת המאה ועשרים להולדת כ"ק אדמו"ר



לעילוי נשמת  
הרה"ת ר' אברהם ברוך  
בן הרה"ת ר' דובער ע"ה  
יוניק  
מקושר לכ"ק אדמו"ר נשיא דורינו  
וזכה לשמשו  
נלב"ע ביום ועש"ק בעלות המנחה  
י"ט אדר ה'תשע"ז  
ת'נצ'ה'  
נדפס ע"י משפחתו שיחיו



# Shemilah with Moshiach



In the beginning of Parshas Behar the Torah says: “When you enter into the land you should leave it fallow [in the *Shemitah* year].”

The obvious question arises: since *Shemitah* comes after six years of working the land, how can there be a *Shemitah* year immediately upon entering Eretz Yisroel? The answer is, that immediately upon their entering the Holy Land the Jewish people have to know that their main goal is to acknowledge that the land belongs to Hashem. With that in mind, even during a non-*Shemitah* year, the people will

realize that the entire purpose in working the six regular years is to prepare for the *Shemitah* year. In other words, to recognize at all times that everything belongs to Hashem.

On those same lines, concerning the matter of entering Eretz Yisroel at the time of the redemption, we won't have to conquer the land like the first time. Rather the entering of the land will be in a peaceful way, and immediately. We also won't need to wait the “six years of planting.” The laws of nature will change, since everything will be miraculous. As the Gemara says in

*Shabbos* (30b), that “A woman will give birth every day.” The Tzemach Tzedek explains (in Yahel Ohr) that it won't take nine months, but since a gestation period is required, it will be a period of nine hours. Whereas regarding delicacies, being that preparation is not needed, we will not have to wait nine hours or even nine seconds, rather these delicacies will be immediately available. **1**

(Adapted from *Shabbos Parshas Emor* 5747, [sie.org/2508094](http://sie.org/2508094))



מעבן מיטן רבי'ן



10 SHEVAT 5716, JEM 3057

טור 'לעבן מיטן רבי'ן' הוקדש לזכרון ולעילוי נשמת  
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ואשתו מרת שרה ע"ה בת ר' יקותיאל ומרת לאה הי"ד  
ת"נ'צ'ב'ה

ע"י בנם  
ר' יקותיאל יהודה  
וזוגתו מרת פעסל לאה ומשפחתם שיחיו  
רוהר

# The Most Memorable Purim

PURIM 5716\*



Remembered as one of the most joyous farbrengens of the Rebbe's *nesius*, the memories of the farbrengen of Purim 5716\* are especially vivid. Held in a rented hall on the corner of Nostrand Avenue and Eastern Parkway, this farbrengen left an indelible impression on those who were fortunate to attend. Presented is a collection of accounts and descriptions of what transpired during this exceptional farbrengen.

## NUSACH LUBAVITCH

The uniqueness of this Purim was best described by Reb Uriel Zimmer<sup>1</sup> in his writeup for *Bitaon Chabad*:

“Purim 5716\* - Nusach Lubavitch

*The bus driver, who went about his route on Monday at 5:00 a.m. to pick up his usual early morning commuters, surely did not anticipate the unseemingly large influx of passengers who packed onto the bus from the stop at the corner of Nostrand and Eastern Parkway in Brooklyn. A group of travelers this size was rather out of place for an otherwise regular workday.*

*He certainly did not imagine that this large group, who had almost filled up the entire bus, was but a fraction of the crowd that experienced an unforgettable event that night.*

*These were no ordinary passengers. They were Yidden who had come to the Rebbe for his Motzei Purim farbrengen, which was held in a large hall rented specially for the occasion.*

*Purim is not a new festival. The joy that is unique to Purim — a fusion of utmost joy and utmost solemnity without compromising a hairsbreadth on either of them—such a joy, even the way it is “nusach Chabad,” was not quite unknown.*

*However, even those who had lived within the daled amos of Lubavitch and were familiar with its customs, lifestyle, spiritual environment, and brotherly camaraderie, found this farbrengen to be particularly exceptional, one that would remain in their hearts forever.*

*Why was this farbrengen any different? How exactly was it unique? It would be difficult to single out any one particular factor and decide that “this is what made the farbrengen outstanding.” It couldn’t be because of the vast multitude of guests, nor because the farbrengen lasted until dawn, and certainly not because of the great quantities of l’chaim—as none of*



*these were new to Lubavitch. Lubavitch has long been accustomed to large crowds; in fact, it was precisely for this reason that halls had to be rented in order to host the winter farbrengens. The concept of being “above the limits of time” wasn’t particularly novel either. As for the l’chaim, especially on Purim, that too was surely nothing new, especially for the Russian Jews.*

*It wasn’t this, that, or any of the above. Rather it was the spirit, the energy that surged through the giant rented hall, that raised the myriads of attendees and carried them to a loftier plane.*

## JUMP RIGHT IN

The Rebbe began the farbrengen with an explanation of the uniqueness of Purim over all other Yomim Tovim, in that it was entirely miraculous. The miracle of Purim did not come about through a gradual buildup, but in one moment “*nahpoch hu*,” our fate pivoted from the lowest depths to the greatest heights, from the worst catastrophe to the greatest salvation.

Such is the joy of Purim. It is not an experience that we need to warm up to in order to appreciate. On the contrary, we must jump right in enthusiastically.

The Rebbe exclaimed, “Therefore, everyone here must say *l’chaim* with *varemkait*, and sing a *freiliche niggun* with a *shturem* so that the beginning of the farbrengen will have the *koch* and energy of the climax. He then added, “Since we are speaking about skipping *hachanos*, there is no need to wait until after the *niggun* to say *l’chaim*, they can be done simultaneously.”



## PRIORITIES IN CHINUCH

Another *sicha* discussed what had brought about the Purim miracle. In those times the Yidden had many connections in the palace. Esther was queen and Mordechai had an important position in the king’s court. But when the evil decree was announced, their political sway was irrelevant. Mordechai and Esther understood that the way to salvation was through learning Torah with Jewish children. To annul the decree they had to gather the children and teach them how to be Jews. Only after that would it be possible to pursue other avenues.

The Rebbe used this as a springboard to address the state of *Yiddishe chinuch* and sharply condemned certain changes to educational standards that were then being implemented by modern elements.

“This is an important lesson for the *chinuch* of our *Yiddishe* children. Our first priority must be to instill a proper understanding of the correct attitude towards learning Torah.

“The Friediker Rebbe outlined the correct way to teach the Alef Beis, namely; the “*kamatz alef uh kamatz beis buh*” method; this emphasizes the *kedushah* of the individual letters. Today they want to skip the lessons about the *kedushah* of the letters and instead only strive to get the children to parrot the letters perfectly. Don’t think that by utilizing modern innovative educational tools you will save time and teach children how to read much faster. Time belongs to Hashem, and if one takes the time to teach children properly, Hashem will pay back the lost time with *arichus yamim*.

“More important than the quantity of Torah that is studied is the quality and the emphasis that is placed on it. The Gemara<sup>2</sup> relates a story of an *Amora* who lived a great distance from a *beis midrash*, and he had to travel six months there and six months back for only one day of learning. All of that time spent was worth the *kedushah* of one day of learning. We must instill this approach in our children. Students must realize that Torah is unlike all other academic studies, as it is holy and pure. They should be able to clearly differentiate between their classes of *kedushah* and the classes where they learn the ways of the world. When they understand that those classes are required only in order to further their purposes in *avodas Hashem*, they will not accord them any more interest than absolutely necessary.

“It is thus of absolute importance that the children be sent to schools and institutions that have these priorities, and not, *chas veshalom*, a place that gives precedence to *limudei chol*, and only after a child is tired from a day’s work when he no longer has any energy to even play, do they throw in a token hour of *limudei kodesh*... Even if he were to learn the same quantity, but the schedule would be modified to have the Torah learning in the first hour of the day, garnering more attention and focus, that would already be an accomplishment. And if there would be more hours dedicated to Torah learning and less

to secular studies, that would be even better.

“The first message that must be imparted to a child is *yiras Shamayim*, and that will only happen if the teacher is also a *yarei Shamayim*. The same care must be taken with the curriculum, to ensure that it was crafted by someone who only has pure intentions. A teacher here, in America, teaching a child Alef Beis, *siddur*, *halacha*, etc, has to impart to the children an understanding and feeling that he is here to deliver a message from Hashem.

“With our energies directed towards the proper *chinuch* of our children, just like Mordechai, we will overturn any harsh decree, and we Yidden will be victorious over our enemies—the *yetzer hara*.”

## L’CHAIM!

Throughout the *farbrengen*, the Rebbe asked many of those assembled to say *l’chaim*, some even multiple times. Notably amongst them were Rav Hershel Schachter and Reb Avrohom Mordechai Gil-Friedman (a descendant of the Alter Rebbe). Reb Yehuda Weinstock, who was visiting from Toronto, was asked to say *l’chaim* multiple times. In many of the instances when the Rebbe called someone by name and asked him to say *l’chaim*, he asked, “*S’iz a fuleh?*” (Is that a full cup?) When an individual answered in the negative, the Rebbe remarked disappointedly, “*Vemen narstu up?*” (Who are you fooling?)

After the *maamar*, the Rebbe requested that someone volunteer to say *l’chaim* to the point of “*ad delo yada*” and to stand on a table where





everyone can see and learn from him.

"In America, it is customary that candidates are elected, let someone be elected." After the Rebbe personally asked several people and they declined the invitation, he said, "If no one will volunteer, I will be forced to do it myself, and I will stop keeping track of the time and thus no one will be able to go to sleep on time!"

At other points, the Rebbe singled out several individuals and encouraged them to say *l'chaim*.

To a *shochet*: "Are you so reluctant to be *ad delo yada* because you are worried that you need to go to work tomorrow to *shecht*? Is there anyone over here who doesn't have to *shecht* their *nefesh habehamis* tomorrow?"

To Reb Yehudah Weinstock from Toronto: "Did you say *l'chaim*? You seem so down, say *l'chaim*—you're going back to Toronto, nobody will know about this *bizayon*."

To Reb Chaim Osher Kahanov: "Reb Chaim Osher, *nemt a keli!* (Take a cup/receptacle!)

To someone else, the Rebbe instructed to say *l'chaim* on a full cup, as "*kli shares ein mekadshin ela mele'in*" (a receptacle in the *Beis Hamikdash* is only sanctified when full).

To another: "*Daloy tzimtzum, harchev picha* (Enough with the narrow

## "THE PRINTING PRESS"

(While the Rebbe was instructing individuals to say *l'chaim*, he told an individual who worked with a printing press and had said *l'chaim* on a small cup: "Enough with these *tzimtzumim* that you've been subjecting me to in printing, take a big cup of *l'chaim*!"

Later in the farbrengen, the Rebbe told this individual, "You should have *harchava* in *mochin* and *midos* (broaden your personal horizon, both in mind and in heart), and in business too, and to stop being miserly with Merkos L'inyonei Chinuch regarding anything in print, as Lubavitch wants to expand."

The Rebbe said, "The reason for this stinginess is the concern that perhaps he will lose money, and thus he is constantly depressed. As the son of Radatz Chernigover quipped: This is the sentiment of the *nachash hakadmoni*, who is constantly worried about where it will find food once it has finished eating all the dust of the earth... This should not be your worry, you should arrange that all printing matters be done with a generous attitude. Stop the penny-pinching negotiations with Merkos about how to distribute the money as there will be plenty of money, enough for both the *yetzer hara* and *yetzer tov*, for your wife and children and all other workers in the printing press."

The Rebbe concluded: "Since we are now in a time of '*ad delo yada*,' Hashem will ensure that the printing press is successful and you will be able to also include the offset. You will then be able to hire more employees and provide them with a livelihood without concern of detracting from the salaries of the other workers. Most importantly, you shall do your utmost to further the influence of Chassidus in your environment in a way that it becomes an everyday reality."

When the employees of the publishing house answered "*amen*," the Rebbe commented, "Misnagdim usually say '*U'va l'Tziyon goel*' first and only afterward do they answer *amen*."

THE HALL WHERE THIS FARBRENGEN TOOK PLACE (ON THE SECOND FLOOR), ON THE CORNER OF NOSTRAND AVE. AND EASTERN PARKWAY.

mindedness, open your mouth wide).

To a member of *hanhalas hayeshiva* the Rebbe told to say *l'chaim* on a big cup as it will help expand things related to the yeshiva.

When someone approached the Rebbe and informed him that Reb Yisroel Gordon was already in a state of “*ad delo yada*,” the Rebbe responded contentedly: “*Ye? Er ligt shoin...*” (He’s already asleep).

## THE JEALOUSY OF A GADOL

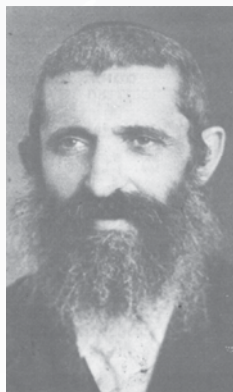
In the middle of the farbrengen, the Rebbe expressed that he would like to get in the habit of discussing an additional concept of *nigleh* at every farbrengen. “*Es shatd nisht* (it doesn’t hurt) to learn some *nigleh* from time to time, and *halevai* this should inspire a surge in motivation to learn *nigleh*.”

Thus, the Rebbe began a *sicha* on the topic of rolling up the Megillah after it is read. He introduced the opinion of the Magen Avraham who holds that it should be done after the last *bracha*, and the Gr”a who emphatically rejects this opinion and says that it should be rolled **before** the last *bracha*.

The Rebbe continued, “While it seems from the Alter Rebbe that we follow the opinion of the Magen Avraham, considering that the Friediker Rebbe didn’t provide a definite ruling we must still give some credence to the opinion that the Gr”a discredits.”

Once the Rebbe mentioned the Gr”a, he interrupted the *sicha* to relate a story about Reb Foleh Kahn and one of the leaders of the Litvishe community. (The Rebbe then turned to Reb Foleh’s son, Reb Yoel Kahn, and instructed him to say *l'chaim*.)

The story: At a Yud Shevat farbrengen in Eretz Yisroel, Reb Foleh got up and proclaimed that even “*ploni ben ploni*” is jealous of a young student in Tomchei Temimim who is fortunate to have the opportunity to learn Chassidus for now that he is in the *olam ha’emes*, he has finally come to realize the importance of learning Chassidus.



REB FOLEH KAHAN



JEM103065

“As a result of this radical statement, the Israeli post was overwhelmed with mail and must have made a lot of money off of stamps from the many letters that flooded in. Everyone wrote in asking how this could be. How can he say such a thing? This individual was a *posek* and a *lamdan* who always learned with diligence! How could he be jealous of a mere child who learns Tanya?”

The Rebbe explained that in truth, there is a basis to this “radical” statement in Gemara Bava Basra,<sup>3</sup> where it says that *talmidei chachamim* will be “scalded” by each other’s learning in Gan Eden.

## K’PURIM

At midnight the manager of the hall showed up to see that everything was under control. At the Rebbe’s suggestion, he was given a cup of mashke, “a cocktail” as the Rebbe said, and he left happily. Thus, the farbrengen continued undisturbed throughout the night.

Towards the end of the farbrengen the Rebbe sang several *niggunim*. After singing *Vehi She’amda* by himself and the crowd not joining in, the Rebbe remarked, “*Ir farhert mir oif chazzanus?* (Are you assessing my *chazzanus*?)

The exaltation of the Chassidim reached its peak during the Alter Rebbe’s *niggun* of *Daled Bavos*. At that emotional crescendo, the famous teaching of the Tikkunei Zohar finally resonated with some, that Yom HakiPurim is only *k’Purim* (like Purim).

Upon the farbrengen’s conclusion, the Rebbe inquired if anyone knew the earliest time it would be possible to say the morning *Krias Shema*. **T**

1. See *Devoted Chossid, Man of the World*, Derher Sivan 5778.

2. Chagigah 5b.

3. 75a.



## Sometimes It Takes 50 Years

*Rabbi Zalman Wolowik, shliach in the Five Towns, was invited to the bar mitzvah of the son of a mekurav. During the celebration, he was approached by someone who told him this story:*

“In 5725\*, I was on the board of a national Jewish organization. I considered myself Modern Orthodox, and had never had anything to do with Lubavitch or the Rebbe.

“But out of the blue, one day I received a call, and the caller identified himself as Rabbi Hodakov, the Rebbe’s secretary. ‘The Rebbe wishes to meet with you,’ he told me. I didn’t know why the Rebbe wanted to meet with me, but I figured that there was no reason not to go and so I agreed.

“As soon as I entered the Rebbe’s room, the Rebbe told me, ‘I heard you’re traveling to Russia. I was shocked that the Rebbe knew — I was indeed planning to travel to Russia, but the trip was a closely-kept secret, and I hadn’t even told my acquaintances about it. I have no idea — until today — how the Rebbe knew about it.

“The Rebbe went on, ‘There are *Yidden* there — there’s an underground — and I’d like you to bring *tashmishei kedushah* — tefillin, mezuzos, *siddurim*, etc.’<sup>1</sup>

“I had come to this meeting out of respect for the Rebbe, but now the Rebbe was asking me to risk my life smuggling contraband religious items into the Soviet Union. That was something I was not willing to do, and I told the Rebbe as much.

“The Rebbe replied, ‘I hear what you’re saying, but still, I’m asking you to do this.’ The Rebbe was insistent. I finally told the Rebbe, ‘I have no connection to Lubavitch; my family has no connection with Lubavitch, I have nothing to do with Lubavitch, and I can’t do this.’

“The Rebbe suddenly became very serious and told me — I’m paraphrasing — ‘Sometimes it takes 50 years until one’s family will have a connection to Lubavitch.’”

“I’m telling you this story, Rabbi Wolowik,” the man continued, “because my grandson and his family now attend Chabad of the Five Towns, and his son — my great-grandson, just became bar mitzvah. And exactly 50 years after my meeting with the Rebbe, this is the first connection with Lubavitch that my family has had.” **T**

1. This type of request was not uncommon — the Rebbe often asked people who were traveling to Russia to bring *tashmishei kedushah* there.



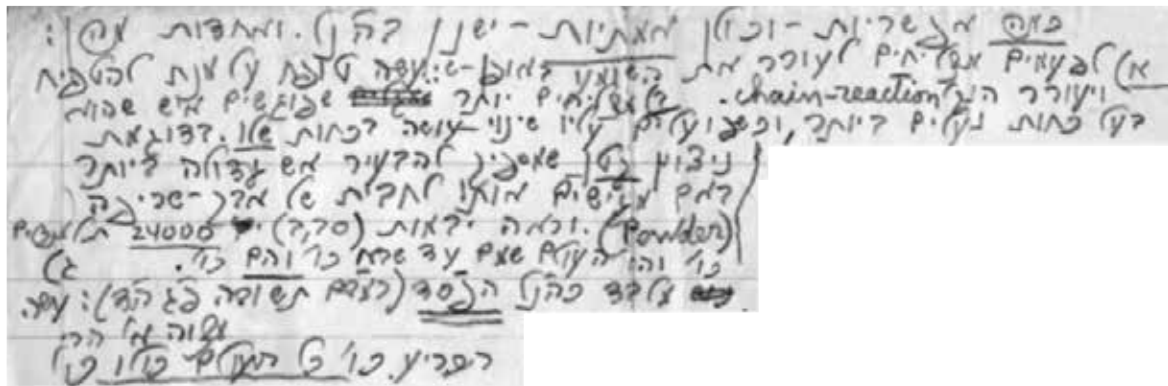
## כתב יד קודש

לזכות  
הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל וזוגתו מרת  
חי' מושקא  
בניהם ובנותיהם  
חנה, לוי, פערל, שלום דובער,  
שיינא, סטרנא שיחיו  
לברטוב



# Like a Spark to a Barrel

In 5719\*, a *bochur* who went out on Merkos Shlichus to bring *Yiddishkeit* to a remote community, complained to the Rebbe in a letter that he feels like his work is futile, since there are so few people engaged in this type of work, and therefore the number of people being reached remains quite small. The Rebbe encouraged him to realize that in addition to the fact that every mitzvah has infinite value in and of itself, the potential of reaching out to even one person has the ability to create much larger waves than anticipated:



1) Sometimes you succeed at inspiring the listener to in turn inspire others with your message, spurring what is called a “chain reaction.”

2) You will see more success by meeting with a person who possesses more than average capabilities. When you influence him to change—he will in turn [influence others] according to his abilities [which may have a much greater reach than you do on your own]. This is analogous to a small spark having the ability to ignite a very big fire, if you place it near a barrel of gunpowder. See Yevamos (62b): [Rebbi Akiva had] 24,000 [pairs of] students [and they all passed away, making the world] void [of Torah study] until he came [to the Rabbis of the south and taught them Torah] and they [i.e. this small number of only five students, restored Torah to the entire world] etc.

3) Aside from all of the above, there is a clear ruling (of the Rambam in Hilchos Teshuva 3:3): “If a person does one mitzvah, he [may have] tipped the scale of the whole entire world [to the side of merit]...”

כמה אפשרויות - וכולן אמיתיות - ישנן בהנ”ל. ואחדות מהן:

א) לפעמים מצליחים לעורר את השומע באופן - שיעשה טופח על מנת להטפיע ויעורר הנק' Chain Reaction.

ב) מצליחים יותר שפוגשים איש שהוא בעל כוחות נעלים ביותר, וכשפועלים עליו שינוי - עושה בכוחות שלו. בדוגמת ניצוץ קטן שמספיק להבעיר אש גדולה ביותר באם מגישים אותו לחבית של אבק- שריפה (Powder). וראה יבמות (סב,ב): 24,000 תלמידים כו' היה העולם שמם עד שבא כו' והם כו'.

ג) מלבד כהנ”ל הפסק-דין (רמב”ם תשובה פ”ג ה”ד): עשה מצווה אחת הרי הכריע כו' כל העולם כולו כו'.

(Teshura Hodakov 5761. Vaad Hanachos B’Lahak.)

# WOND

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Lubavitch  
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BROOKLYN 13, N. Y.

## אגרות-קודש

מאת

כ"ק אדמו"ר זי"ע

לג

ונשל"ח

לחיזוק ההתקשרות לכ"ק אדמו"ר

נדפס ע"י הרה"ת ר' שלום דובער  
וזוגתו מרת ח' מושקא ומשפחתם  
שיחיו  
שוחאט



# ROUS CURE

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## A Closer Look at the Most Recently Published Sefer of the Rebbe's Igros Kodesh

אגרות קודש - חלק ל"ג

"When a new *sefer*, *kuntres* or *maamar* is published, **each and every** individual must learn from it, with the emphasis - that it's not enough to rely on the fact that there are others who are learning it, rather, just as everyone is commanded to say "*bishvili nivra haolam*" (it is for me alone that the world was created), so too here '*bishvili nidfas sefer, kuntres or maamar zeh!*'" (Shabbos Parshas Vayechi 5747)

Each time a new *maamar*, *kuntres*, or *sefer* came out, the Rebbe treasured it greatly; sometimes reciting *maamarim* based on the new publication, and urging Chassidim to purchase and learn it. At times the Rebbe even brought the new *sefarim* to farbrengens.

A few months ago, we were *zocheh* to the printing by Kehot of a new volume of the Rebbe's Igros Kodesh. The *sefer* contains 434 letters and *maanos* from the year 5738\*, diligently culled from various sources.

A mere glance through this volume and one is immediately struck by the wide array of topics touched upon, as well as the astounding variety of recipients. Once again, the Rebbe's attentiveness and devotion to every individual and issue, material or spiritual, significant or seemingly "trivial," stands out. Particularly, because it is 5738\*.

\* 5738-1978

# A Critical Point in Time

When you hear the year 5738\*, the first thing that comes to mind is unquestionably the events of Shemini Atzeres and Rosh Chodesh Kislev. As is widely known, during *hakafos* on Shemini Atzeres the Rebbe suffered a severe heart attack. For the next few weeks, the Rebbe remained in his room, while Yidden the world over hoped and prayed for the Rebbe's recovery.

One of the oft-related details of the Rosh Chodesh Kislev story is that shortly after Yom Tov, while in his room under doctors' supervision, the Rebbe requested that the mail that had arrived over the past few days be brought in, for him to begin to respond to the many letters. Naturally, the doctors didn't want

the Rebbe to go right back into his regular schedule, and suggested that the Rebbe rest for two weeks and then go back to his regular work. The Rebbe rejected the idea, explaining that he is accustomed to constantly receiving questions and answering letters, and if he will stop it could negatively affect his health, like the hazard of trying to pry someone too quickly off an addiction. Yet trying to lighten the Rebbe's load, the doctors came up with another suggestion: "The secretaries should read the letters, and they will give a synopsis to the Rebbe." The Rebbe rejected this idea as well. "Imagine if a doctor would get a general synopsis of the patient's condition, without actually doing an examination," the Rebbe told them.

This new volume of the Rebbe's *Igros* gives us a window through which we can better understand



THE REBBE'S LETTER TO REB REUVEN DUNIN.

## AN OUTPOUR OF LOVE

During this time period, the concern and love for the Rebbe held deeply in the hearts of Chassidim poured forth in many ways. Chassidim were busy looking for whatever way possible to improve the Rebbe's *gezunt*, by taking resolutions in Torah, *tefillah* and *tzedakah*.

In Shevat of that year, Reb Reuven Dunin traveled to the Rebbe with the intention of bringing the Rebbe additional *nachas*, thereby improving the Rebbe's health. In a letter, he wrote to the Rebbe that he wants to stay in New York for an extended period. The Rebbe responded:

*Your letters have been received.*

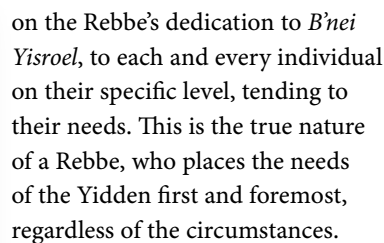
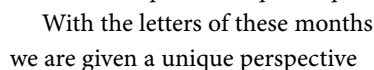
*As my answer [to you] always was — your shlichus is spreading Yiddishkeit in Eretz Hakodesh... Therefore, after we have seen each other joyously... you should return to fulfill your shlichus in Eretz Hakodesh, and this is what will be beneficial for my health.*



THE REBBE RECEIVING PANIM ON EREV ROSH HASHANAH 5738\*.

Additionally, most of the Rebbe's Shabbos farbrengens throughout this year were held on Motzei Shabbos, allowing for them to be recorded on tape. The Rebbe makes note of this in a *maaneh* to Reb Lipa Kurtzveil from Nachlas Har Chabad:

As the Rebbe's health began to improve, it became anticipated that the Rebbe would soon return to his regular schedule. Around Rosh Chodesh Kislev, someone wrote a letter to the Rebbe requesting a *yechidus*. The Rebbe responded:

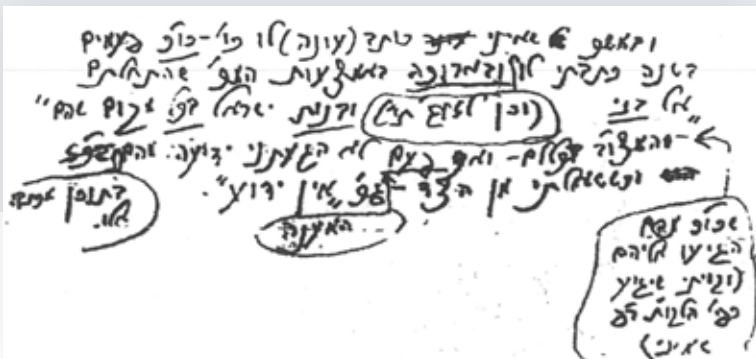


“Some time following the Yom Kippur War, I received an architectural job at the home of the Shaani family in Ashkelon. The father of the family, Uri, was a fighter pilot who was tragically killed in combat during the war. During the first three days of the war he managed to make several attacks in Egyptian territory, but on the third day, while his plane was attacking a bridge over the Suez Canal, it suffered a direct hit. Uri left behind a widow and four young orphans.

## I HAVEN'T ANSWERED YOU?!

In a most telling letter, the Rebbe gives us clarity on the correct approach we are to have to a *michtav kloli*, the letters the Rebbe would address to *B'nei U'bnos Yisroel Bechol Makom Sh'hem*. To an individual who complained that he had written to the Rebbe, and hadn't received any answer, the Rebbe responded:

*...With regards to what you have written that I do not write (in response) to you etc.; many times during the year have I written to you (as well as to your wife) and at length by way of the letter which begin with "to the sons and daughters of Israel in all places they find themselves" — many of which have reached you... and never have I received any response from them in connection with the content of these letters. And when I asked [about this] through another source — the response was as well "unknown".*<sup>6</sup>



"Ahead of Tishrei 5738\* I was preparing to travel to the Rebbe. I had informed Mrs. Shaani that I would be traveling, and if she wanted to write a letter asking for a *bracha* for the upcoming year, I would be able to deliver it to the Rebbe. She sat down with her children and they each wrote their own letter. Together with her letter, she attached a gift for the Rebbe. Uri, her late husband, loved photography. While flying, he would use the opportunity to take pictures. From his collection, she chose a picture of Har Sinai taken by Uri a few years earlier, to send to the Rebbe. As well, each of her children sent a gift of their own to the Rebbe.

"When I arrived at 770, I gave the letters and the gifts to *mazkirus*, and I wrote a short note with some details about who the family is.

"While I was still in New York the

events of Shemini Atzeres transpired, thus, I didn't expect any answer to the widow to be forthcoming. Therefore, when I returned to the Holy Land, I didn't exactly hurry to call the Shaani family, for I had returned to Eretz Yisroel empty handed.



THE PHOTOGRAPH OF HAR SINAI ON WHICH THE REBBE WROTE WHEN AND FROM WHOM HE RECEIVED IT.

"One day, I received a phone call from Mrs. Shaani who requested that I immediately come over to her home. When I arrived she told me about the 5 letters from the Rebbe she and her children received. She was overwhelmed with emotion. Crying, she said to me, "The Rebbe has read deep into my thoughts. All hesitations and doubts I had have now gained clarity. A true prophet!"

These letters were dated Aseres Yemei Teshuvah, a time when usually the Rebbe would write very few letters, yet as the *Rosh Bnei Yisroel*, for the Rebbe, this woman's plight was of overriding importance.

Mrs. Shulamit Shaani

Ashkelon

Bracha V'shalom!

Mr. Mordechai Menashe Gorelick gave me the letters and gifts along with regards from you and your family, and what you have been through, and that even with everything that had transpired, nevertheless, you fulfill your precious and most important role — educating your children...

*...It is my hope, that you will react kindly to what I will continue writing in this letter although it is ostensibly mixing into someone's privacy, but since everything is by hashgacha pratis, I have the impulse,*

and also responsibility, to not hide my thoughts on this matter, and it is:

The pain and agony, and much more, that is felt as a result of the loss of your husband, the father of your family, are self understood. Yet, together with this it is necessary to live in a regular lifestyle, a lifestyle that the world calls normal, in all aspects. In particular because you were blessed by Hashem with children, and as stated earlier you were entrusted with the holy and pleasant mission, and at times also a very challenging mission — the children's education. My intention, simply, is to live a married life. Unlike the common mistake that remarrying causes pain to the soul of the late dear one, on the contrary, the soul is now in the world of truth and sees every matter for its absolute truth. If for the memory of the soul, even while the memory is still fresh, one is refraining from doing something that is necessary and healthy for the children and for oneself, this causes great sorrow for the soul of the deceased, which I do not want to extend further about. The opposite is true, when the soul in the world of truth sees that the living are leading their life in accordance with Toras Emes, which is also Toras Chesed, for all its directives are true and kind, this causes true gratification to the soul.

It is unnecessary to expand on something that is connected with an emotional struggle, a struggle which isn't easy, etc., but it is certain that Hashem, the Creator of man, does not leave him even in a situation that requires extra effort and unique emotional strengths, and that before bringing him to such a situation gives man all the strength needed to overcome his situation. With a firm resolution it comes easier than previously thought.

Another factor here is regarding the children. The sooner this will take place, while they are still at a young age, the easier it will be for them to acclimate to the new face at home and the role he plays, which he will



THE ISRAELI NEWSPAPERS PUBLISH THE REBBE'S WORDS FROM THE SICHA ON MOTZEI SHABBOS PARSHAS LECH LECHA 5738\*.

surely fulfill in the finest manner...

It is difficult for me to elaborate on this because you are not known to me on a personal level, but given the importance of the matter, and the importance of it happening sooner, I cannot help but write to you about this, at least the few lines above, and I hope you will see the reality as it is including all of the details mentioned above...

P.S. A special thanks for making a point to send me the valuable gift, a photograph captured by your husband z"l, a photo from the Sinai Desert of the mountain called "Har Sinai," which demonstrates not only a unique talent in photography, rather also attentiveness to a subject which has an emotional connection to every Jew...<sup>7</sup>

Aside from the letter to her, the Rebbe wrote a personal letter to each of her children, with a unique bracha, as well as a thank you for their gift.

Interestingly, on the photo the Rebbe wrote הר סיני - אורי ע"ה שעני, אשקלון, קיץ תשכ"ז (Har Sinai — Uri Shani, Ashkelon, Summer 5726)

## A Unique Debate

Among the many fascinating discussions which come up in this sefer, is a discussion about the stones of the Kosel. Rabbi Meir Yehuda Getz, the rabbi of the Kosel, wrote a letter to the Rebbe about an idea that had come up. A Jewish businessman suggested coating the stones of the

### PLEASANT SURPRISE

Another unique anecdote comes as a P.S. written at the end of a standard letter of bracha to a bar mitzvah bochur:

It was a pleasant surprise for me when I noticed in the copy of your drasha that you study the Likkutei Sichos and are successful in giving over the ideas in a manner that is understood to the public. May Hashem fulfill all your heart's desires for the good.<sup>12</sup>



18 CHESHVAN 5735, JEM 139540

Kosel with a material that would aid their preservation. In his initial response, Rabbi Getz wrote adamantly against even the consideration of this, but later on he became ready to discuss the idea and various conditions for it. The Rebbe responded to his letter with a few points:

*In our times — when a 'small crack' in the 'wall' of Torah and mitzvos is opened (even with the best of intentions), the decision-making is thereby given over also to causes called 'chiloni'im' — and afterwards it is very challenging*

*to close the opening (and instead, the opening continues to get wider)...*

*A discussion of this nature will awaken demands to hold discussions for ideas about the Kosel **from all sects** and who can predict where it will end.*

*It is almost certain that such discussions will stir a new intense argument among Yidden...*

*It may cause for certain circles of gentiles to make a commotion; saying 'this too is a proof that the **current** Israeli leadership disrespects what is holy to them, even on the sole*

*remnant of the Beis Hamikdash they lay hand,' causing the opposite of a kiddush Hashem on a global scale...*

*There is a known teaching of gedolei Yisroel on the order of the possuk לא תוסיפו ולא תגרעו, for the suggestion to decrease (from Torah and mitzvos) is preceded by a suggestion to increase...<sup>8</sup>*



Another fascinating insight into the Rebbe's approach becomes apparent in the following letters. On Motzei Shabbos Parshas Lech Lecha 5738\*, the Rebbe said a *sicha* from his room. Among the topics the Rebbe spoke of was the necessity to swiftly settle all of Yehuda and Shomron, and that the created pressure by foreign governments is only formal, therefore it doesn't need to be taken seriously. When Yidden will stand up with courage, all the pressures would subside. Instead, the Israeli policy is inviting pressure onto itself by only settling five settlements.

In Israel, Reb Berke Wolff was instructed by *mazkirus* to see to it that the Rebbe's words should be published in the Israeli press. Besides for the *sicha*, the Rebbe wanted another few points to be included in the papers. On Sunday morning, the Rebbe wrote a note to be sent to Reb Berke to be given over to the press:

*It is astonishing and a [source of] **great pain** that this wasn't completely done until now... for this can now be done **entirely in accordance with the law**.*

*...1) The commotion and pressure stirred by the establishment of five new settlements wouldn't have been any greater had they established settlements along **the entire** length of the border.*

*2) Clear support of this: It is known **by all** (including Washington, Moscow, and the Arab capitals) about Israel advancing nuclear weaponry... At first they tried to apply pressure that these actions stop, but when they were given the **firm** answer that these activities*

## YOU ARE NOT SECULAR

There's a beautiful *ksav yad kodesh* written by the Rebbe as a postscript to a standard bar-mitzvah letter, sent to a boy in Israel who noted in his letter to the Rebbe that he belongs to a "secular" family.

The Rebbe responds to this comment (p. 33):

נ.ב. לכתבו אשר "מוציא ממשפחה חילונית" - ודאי אשר  
ה"חילוניות" היא תופעת לוי ו"לבוש" חיצוני המכסה את  
העיקר והעצם הנמצא בו - שהרי כל אחד (ואחת) ממשפחתו  
ש' - בן אברהם יצחק ויעקב (ובת שרה רבקה רחל ולאה)  
ולאחריהם - עשריות דורות שומרי תורה ומצוות.  
אלא שנתן השם הבחירה לאדם בנוגע להנהגתו, אבל אין  
כלל ביכולתו לשנות את העצם, העיקר והפנימיות שלו.

P.S. About which you write that "I come from a secular family"—obviously, the "secularism" is only a secondary attachment and an external "disguise" hiding the most important and innermost part of you. For each and every member of your family

is a son of Avraham, Yitzchok, and Yaakov (and a daughter of Sarah, Rivka, Rochel, and Leah), and their descendants—for **tens** of generations to follow, who were all Torah and mitzvah observant.

It's only that Hashem gave the human the ability to choose his course of **action**, but that has absolutely no bearing on the essence, the most important, and the innermost part of the person.

Reb Yoel Kahn *a"h* often pointed out that when you take a look at this manuscript, it's hard to believe that the Rebbe was writing this barely a week after suffering a major heart attack. Notice the meticulous corrections and underlining etc. that the Rebbe was so adamant to add, just to inspire a young Jewish boy at the other end of the world and make him feel proud to be part of the Jewish people!



THE REBBE'S UNIQUE POSTSCRIPT IN A LETTER TO A BAR MITZVAH BOY.

will continue — those placing pressure sufficed with an official 'renunciation' denying the existence of these activities, and with that **the pressure was gone...**<sup>9</sup>

(Subsequently, the last paragraph was initially omitted by the Israeli government censorship, and it took much effort until they agreed to have it published in the newspapers. The specifics of this episode are beyond the scope of this article).

Naturally, after learning the Rebbe's staunch approach to the settlements in Yehuda and Shomron, a group of *anash* in Kfar Chabad wrote a letter to the Rebbe, stating that they were ready to move and settle in the settlements of Yehuda and Shomron. The Rebbe responded:

*Each one of them has been "recruited in Tzivos Hashem" — in their current location — to spread Torah and mitzvos in his individual location and surroundings. Through these activities they are also shielding the entirety of land and its borders — and if they want to increase in [the protection of the land] — they should increase their activities in their respective locations.*<sup>10</sup>

A similar answer was given to others who wrote to the Rebbe on this matter:

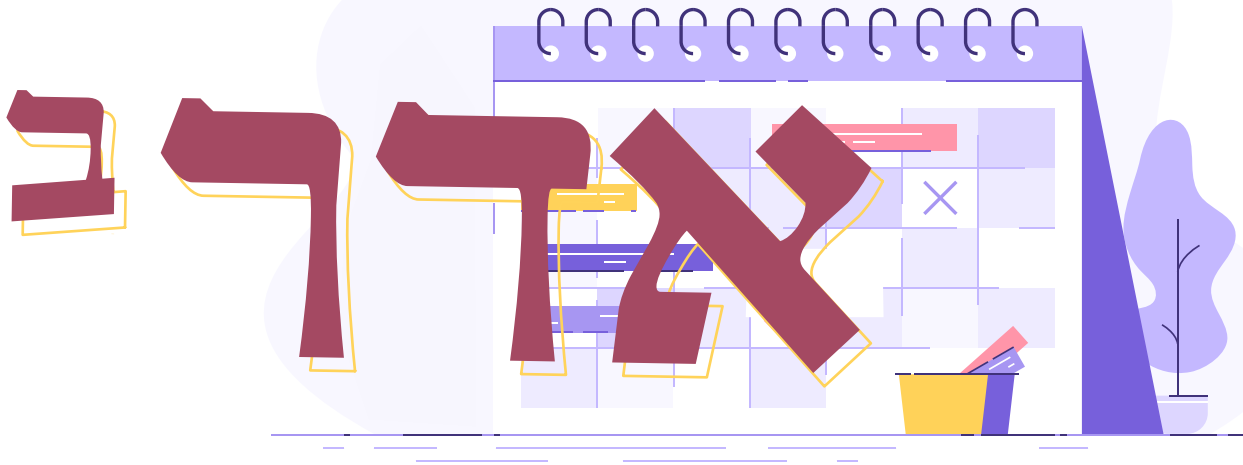
!?! - This is entirely not their concern — any position on the matter taken by them will hinder the influence they are having on some of those moving to Eretz Yisroel, to bring them closer to Torah and mitzvos. It is of wonder that they considered this.<sup>11</sup>

Clearly, from the Rebbe's perspective, every individual has their distinct role, and is to keep to it only.

The letters quoted herein are a mere few of the vast treasure this *sefer* contains, and the wide array of topics they discuss. Everyone is able to draw direction and inspiration from this *sefer*. All one needs to do is open it and learn.

הפך בה והפך בה דכולא בה! **T**

1. Pg. 24.
2. Pg. 27.
3. Pg. 120.
4. Pg. 54.
5. Pg. 150.
6. Pg. 93.
7. Pg. 15.
8. Pg. 122.
9. Pg. 37.
10. Pg. 189.
11. Pg. 417.
12. Pg. 208.



## TES ADAR – THE FRIERDIKER REBBE ARRIVED IN THE UNITED STATES

The Frierdiker Rebbe's arrival on American soil marked the start of a new intensity in spreading Yiddishkeit and Chassidus. On this date, we should therefore focus on the spreading of Yiddishkeit, and specifically Chassidus.

To boost these new initiatives, Chassidim should arrange farbrengens on this day in every community, especially in the Frierdiker Rebbe's 'capital' — New York.<sup>1</sup>

## PURIM

On Purim 5713\*, the Rebbe reinstated the *minhag* that the Rebbe Rashab initiated, to make a *magbis*, an appeal, to collect money "for his own needs (i.e. for a tzedakah of his choice)."<sup>2</sup> The Rebbe once said that the money collected on Purim is used to support those that learn Torah *lishmah*.<sup>3</sup>

In 5722\*, the Rebbe launched *Mivtza Purim*, with the goal to reach out to all Yidden and help them fulfill the four mitzvot of Purim.<sup>4</sup>

The Rebbe encouraged Chassidim to prepare even before Purim arrived, to ensure that not a single Jew would be overlooked, wherever they may be.<sup>5</sup>

One important part of Purim includes having the

required *simcha*. Therefore, advance preparation for Purim includes increasing *simcha* with a truly unlimited, Purim joy, for all Yidden that we come in contact with.<sup>6</sup>

The Rebbe also instructed Chassidim to reach out to Yidden that are in prison and help them perform the mitzvot of Purim.

Being that prisoners cannot receive money from outside the prison, and there are no poor people in prison, the solution is to bring a tzedakah *pushka*, give them coins which will completely belong to them, and then have them put it in the *pushka*.<sup>7</sup>

The same effort should be made to reach out to individuals in old age homes, and in the military (specifically, those protecting Eretz Yisroel)<sup>8</sup> and to bring a *pushka* for those in hospitals, being that there are no poor people around.<sup>9</sup>

The Rebbe added that *Mivtza Purim* is especially pertinent to women, even more than other *mivtzoim*, as they have an integral role in the mitzvot of Purim.<sup>10</sup>

The same is true for children; we see that children are the most eager to celebrate the joy of Purim.<sup>11</sup>

The Rebbe also derived a lesson from the fact that Mordechai gathered Yidden together in order to do away with Haman's decree, that Purim is a

לזכות  
הרה"ת ר' שניאור זלמן שיחי'  
ליפסקער  
בקשר עם יום הולדתו  
ח"י אדר שני  
נדפס ע"י משפחתו שיחיו

time for all of us to add in *ahavas Yisroel*.<sup>12</sup>

Even though it is a whole month before Pesach, it is now the time to begin preparations for Pesach, by contributing to מעות חסידים funds, making sure that every Yid has all that they need for Pesach.<sup>13</sup>

## 25 ADAR – The Rebbetzin's Birthday

There is an opinion in the Gemara that the 25th of Adar is when Hashem began creating the world. Chassidus clarifies that this is referring to the creation as it was in *machshavah*, in thought (before it came into actuality, *maaseh*, which was in Tishrei). Such a monumental day serves as a lesson for all of us, to intensify the good resolutions we have made, that they should translate to action.<sup>14</sup>

Being that today is connected to the world's creation, a birthday on this day is applicable to every one of us. Therefore an appropriate initiative in connection to the Rebbetzin's birthday would be to spread awareness of the *minhagim* one is to observe on their birthday, and the significance of a Jewish birthday.<sup>15</sup>

The following is a list of *minhagim* one should do on their birthday, as it was later published by the Rebbe:<sup>16</sup>

**Receiving an *aliyah*** on the Shabbos before one's birthday, and on the birthday itself if possible.

**Adding in *tzedakah*** before Shacharis and Mincha. (If on Shabbos or Yom Tov, it should be given the day before and after).

**Adding in *tefillah***, both in *kavanah* before davening as well as saying at least one *sefer* of Tehillim after davening.

**Learning the new *perek* Tehillim** that corresponds to one's age.

**Adding an additional *shiur* of learning Torah**, both in *nigleh* and Chassidus, in addition to one's daily learning.

**Learn and say over a *maamar* Chassidus** (either all or a part of it) in public, on the birthday, or at the soonest opportunity, preferably at *seudah shlishis* on Shabbos.

**Adding in *ahavas Yisroel*** by spreading Yiddishkeit and Chassidus.

**Think back on the past year**, to evaluate what one has done, to fix his ways, and resolve to do better.

**Take a *hachlatah*** to be extra meticulous in one area of Torah and mitzvot (of course, according to one's capabilities), specifically a new learning session in Chassidus.

**Host a *farbrengen*** with friends and family, expressing the joy of Hashem's Torah and mitzvot, and gratitude and praise towards Him. If possible, at the *farbrengen* make a *Shehecheyanu*, on new clothing or a new fruit.<sup>17</sup> **T**

1. Sefer Hasichos 5750 vol. 1 p. 326.
2. Likkutei Sichos vol. 2 p. 538.
3. Hisvaaduyos 5745 vol. 3 p. 1454
4. Likkutei Sichos vol. 2 p. 537. For an overview of *Mivtza Purim*, see *Derher*, Adar 5775, "Mivtza Purim – Spreading the Light and Joy."
5. Sefer Hasichos 5751 vol. 1 p. 350.
6. Sefer Hasichos 5749 vol. 1 p. 303.
7. Sichos Kodesh 5736 vol. 1 p. 525-526.
8. Sichos Kodesh 5741 vol. 2 p. 652.
9. Sichos Kodesh 5736 vol. 1 p. 546.
10. Sichos Kodesh 5735 vol. 1 p. 546.
11. Toras Menachem 5749 vol. 2 p. 437-438.
12. Toras Menachem 5750 vol. 2 p. 391.
13. Toras Menachem 5750 vol. 3 p. 51.
14. Toras Menachem 5750 vol. 2 p. 444.
15. Sefer Hasichos 5748 vol. 1 p. 331-333. For a comprehensive article on *Mivtza Yom Huledes*, see *Derher*, Adar 5778.
16. Sefer Hasichos 5748 vol. 2 p. 406. Published together with the Acharon Shel Pesach *farbrengen* of that year.
17. Sefer Hasichos 5748 vol. 2 p. 406.

לע"נ  
הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' אברהם יעקב  
ב"ר חיים מרדכי ע"ה  
נלב"ע כ"ה תשרי ה'תשנ"ו

ולע"נ זוגתו האשה החשובה  
מרת פריידא ראצא  
בת הרב יחיאל אפרים פישל ע"ה  
נלב"ע ט"ז אדר-שני ה'תשע"ו  
תנ"צ'ב'ה'

נדפס ע"י בנם  
הרה"ת ר' משה מאיר שמואל  
וזוגתו מרת רבקה לאה ומשפחתם  
שיחיו  
גלוצאווסקי





RABBI SHOLOM BER BUTMAN

# The Reunion

*The Rebbe's historic visit to Paris in 5707, where he reunited with his mother, Rebbetzin Chana*

Winter, 5707\*. Communism is dominating the Soviet Union, making it ever-hard for *frum Yidden*, and especially Chassidim, to conduct their lives in a proper Torah manner. Escape was crucial. Following World War II, a means of escape developed: In an attempt to conceal their barbarous actions, Russia allowed Polish citizens to return to their home country, Poland. With the *brachos* of the Friediker Rebbe, many hundreds of Chassidim took the opportunity and successfully obtained forged documents, managing to escape the clutches of the Soviets.<sup>1</sup>

Rebbetzin Chana too was trapped in Russia. Thankfully, she too was able to obtain a passport and after a few months, arrived safely in Paris, to the home of a relative, Reb Schneur Zalman Schneerson<sup>2</sup>. Now, after being separated from his mother for close to 20 years, an opportunity arose for

the Rebbe to reunite with Rebbetzin Chana. Indeed, in late Adar, 5707\*, the Rebbe took off from New York and landed in Paris, for a nearly three-month visit.

During this visit, Chassidim were privy to many *farbrengens*, experiences and *giluyim* with the Rebbe, a rarity for the years preceding the *nesius*.

Although many details of this visit were never properly documented, a sizable amount of information has been documented by Chassidim who were there and were *zocheh* to spend time in the Rebbe's presence then. Rabbi Sholom Ber Butman, nephew of Reb Zalman Schneerson, was a child at the time living in Paris. He resided in the same home as Rebbetzin Chana.

As we mark 75 years since the Rebbe's visit in 5707\*, Rabbi Butman graciously shared with **A Chassidisher Derher** his memories of that unique visit.

## Arrival in Paris

My family escaped Russia in the beginning of the month of Cheshvan 5707\* on the famous train ride together with many other Chassidim. After crossing the Polish border, we traveled to Czechoslovakia, Austria, until finally reaching the displaced-persons (“DP”) camp in Wegscheid, Germany.

We stayed in the DP camp for a few months. On Rosh Chodesh Nissan, we



REB SCHNEUR ZALMAN SCHNEERSON AT HIS HOME IN PARIS AFTER THE WAR.

left the DP camp and began making our way to Paris, France. Out of a large group of *anash* families, spread across several DP camps throughout Germany, we were the first to make our way from the pitiful conditions of the camps, to the “new world” that seemed so distant just a short time ago, epitomized by Paris.

Our miraculous arrival in Paris was credit to the ceaseless and relentless efforts of our uncle (my mother’s brother), Reb Schneur Zalman Schneerson.

Our uncle was an *askan* of the highest order. Originally from Russia, he had moved to Eretz Yisroel for some time. On the Frierdiker Rebbe’s instruction, he moved to Paris, where he was appointed as a *rav* in the community. Throughout World War II, he arranged for many Jewish children to be hidden in secret locations (such as monasteries) and took care of their *ruchniyusdike* needs there as well. After the war, with the help of several other Chassidim, he opened a network of institutions for the surviving children. He had also helped with the rescue of Rebbetzin Chana and her eventual arrival to Paris.

We safely arrived in Paris on a



10 RUE DIEU 75010 PARIS. THE HOME OF REB SCHNEUR ZALMAN SCHNEERSON WHERE REBBETZIN CHANA STAYED THROUGHOUT HER VISIT.

Sunday or Monday; a few days into the month of Nissan 5707\*. The Rebbe had arrived in Paris just a few days before our arrival. I don’t remember the exact date of our arrival, but I recall Chassidim saying that the prior night the Rebbe had *farbrenge*d in honor of Beis Nissan, the *yom hilula* of the Rebbe Rashab.

We also heard that on the day of the Rebbe’s arrival, a telegram from the Frierdiker Rebbe arrived at the house of Reb Zalman Schneerson with the words “*Baruch atah b’voecha.*” Plans quickly developed among the Chassidim to greet the Rebbe at the airport. Ultimately however, the Rebbe arrived later that night via taxi to

### TIDBITS

*Rabbi Butman shared with us several small anecdotes from day-to-day life in the Rebbe’s presence in Paris:*

I once overheard a phone conversation between the Rebbe and Reb Isser Kluwgant.<sup>7</sup> He told the Rebbe that he gives a *shiur* in Tanya beginning from the *haskomos* prefacing the *sefer*. The Rebbe spoke with him about a seemingly puzzling part of the *haskomos*: In the signatures of the “*b’nei hamechaber*” — children of the Alter Rebbe, the author — the Mittlerer Rebbe signs off as the son of the Alter Rebbe and refers to the Alter Rebbe as “*K’dosh Yisroel marana v’rabbana.*” Reb Chaim Avraham signs off the same yet omits

the words “*Kedosh Yisroel,*” whereas Reb Moshe ommits the words “*marana v’rabbana*” as well!<sup>8</sup>

It happened once that the Rebbe was in a deep, quiet discussion with my father in the shul in my uncle’s residence. I don’t remember why, but I somehow ran into the shul in the middle of the conversation. The Rebbe looked at me sharply without saying a word. My father immediately signaled for me to leave.

The Rebbe once sent me to deliver a letter to Reb Shmuel Betzalel Althaus. The Rebbe gave me the envelope when it was still open and told me: “*Oib du vilst, kenstu farklepen*—If you wish you can seal it.” I obviously sealed it immediately.



REB ZALMAN BUTMAN WITH HIS FAMILY IN PARIS. SHOLOM BER BUTMAN IS SEEN ON THE FAR RIGHT.

the house of Reb Zalman. Following the initial reunion with Rebbetzin Chana, the Rebbe farbrenged with the Chassidim for about an hour. During this farbrengen the Rebbe spoke of Yosef, who had not seen his father for 22 years. While speaking of this, the Rebbe wept.

When we arrived in Paris, we made our way to the home of our uncle, Reb Zalman, with whom we would be staying for the time being. The building was owned and managed by the Rabbinical Council of Paris, an institution founded and managed by my uncle. The building had some historic significance to it as well: In 5696\* the Friediker Rebbe visited the building and said a *maamar*<sup>3</sup> there.

Rebbetzin Chana was staying in this home as well. In the afternoon, the Rebbe arrived for a visit. Seeing my father, the Rebbe smilingly told him: "It seems that this is Reb Zalman Butman." My father jokingly responded, "It seems that this is the Rebbe's son-in-law." I approached the Rebbe and gave "*shalom*."

The Rebbe asked me: "What are you learning?" I told the Rebbe I was learning the *perek Hazahav* of

*Bava Metzia*. The Rebbe asked me a question based on the very first line of the *perek*: Is gold *koneh* silver? And is silver *koneh* gold?<sup>4</sup>

The Rebbe took up residence at a first-class hotel on Avenue De L'Opera. I recall that a Chossid was once refused entry into the hotel for not wearing a tie!

## Pesach

In those days, kosher wine was sparse in Paris. Many Chassidim would soak raisins to make wine<sup>5</sup>. As Pesach was approaching, my father presented the Rebbe wine he had made out of raisins, with an amount of sugar deemed permissible by the Tzemach Tzedek. The Rebbe declined to use the wine over Pesach (possibly because of the *minhag* of the Rabbeim not to eat sugar on Pesach<sup>6</sup>). Instead, Reb Yankel Lipsker obtained grapes to squeeze into wine for the Rebbe to use.

The Pesach *sedarim* were held around a large table. The Rebbe sat at the head of the table. On his right sat Rebbetzin Chana and the women, and on his left, my father sat followed by the men. As I was one of the youngest participants, I found myself sitting at the end of the table.

The Rebbe's matzos were in a box

## PRIMA

After Pesach, a group of Chassidim arrived in Paris from Austria. They were staying at the Prima hotel in the suburbs of Paris. The Rebbe visited them on Lag B'omer and spoke for them.

On the way to the hotel, the Rebbe stopped off to visit a relative, Yitzchak Schneerson.

on a small chair next to his place. The fork and spoon the Rebbe used were tied together with a string as not to mix with the other cutlery.

## From Day-to-Day

My uncle's residence had three floors: The first floor was for storage, the middle floor hosted a workspace, his expansive library, offices, a large room for events, an additional large room (where the Rebbe farbrenged before his departure), and a kitchen. The top floor was split into two apartments and a shul.

Rebbetzin Chana stayed in a room on the third floor of the building. Every day, the Rebbe would visit his mother twice.

On Shabbos mornings the Rebbe



THE REBBE AT THE REUNION WITH REBBETZIN CHANA AT THE HOME OF REB SCHNEUR ZALMAN SCHNEERSON, 26 ADAR 5707\*.

## LAG B'OMER IN THE "PLETZEL"

Rabbi Nochum Aharon Yaakovovitz related:

Following the Rebbe's address in the shul, the congregants requested of the Rebbe to continue on with a farbrengen. He responded: "Today is not a good time, as we find ourselves in the days of *sefiras haomer*." Instead, the Rebbe committed to farbrengen on Lag B'omer.

Indeed, on Lag B'omer, the shul once again filled with people craving to hear the Rebbe's words. The Rebbe arrived and took his place at the head of the table, surrounded by important rabbonim from across the spectrum.

As the end of the farbrengen drew near, the Rebbe spoke for a while about the Friediker Rebbe, lamenting the current situation. Tears welled up in the Rebbe's eyes as he said with emotion: "The Alter Rebbe lived in Liozna, the Mittlerer Rebbe lived in Lubavitch" — the Rebbe listed all the Rabbeim — "they all had Chassidim who were substantial *ovdim* with a deep understanding in Chassidus. My father-in-law however, tore himself away from his personal preoccupations — *yichuda ila'ah* and *yichuda tata'ah*—and teaches children *aleph-beis* in America."

would arrive earlier in the morning to visit Rebbetzin Chana. When the *minyán* would reach *chazaras hashatz*, I would enter to inform the Rebbe. The Rebbe would then take his tallis (he would bring his tallis in a white paper bag on Friday), enter the shul, take off his hat and put on the tallis. The Rebbe would stand by the *mizrach* wall, on the right of the *aron kodesh*. At *krias haTorah*, the Rebbe would stand on the side of the *amud*, facing the Torah, while following along with a *chumash*. He would remain in the shul until after davening, and would then begin davening; word for word out loud.

The Rebbe would receive an *aliyah* every Shabbos. After every *aliyah* the Rebbe would pledge 300 francs to the shul. Several times the Rebbe was asked to speak. I remember once, as the Rebbe was speaking from the *amud*, he burst into tears, covering his face with his tallis.

The Rebbe often spoke at the *shalosh seudos*. I recall once

the Rebbe spoke about the *mishnah* in *Pirkei Avos*: "*Rebbi omer eizehu derech yeshara* — What is the right path man should choose for himself?" The Rebbe asked: Why doesn't the *mishnah* use the terminology "*Rebbi Rebbi*," which is generally used when there is no argument on the matter, instead of using the words "*Rebbi omer*" which is principally used in the context of an argument. The Rebbe answered that when a Rebbe says something, the entire world may have an opposing opinion. However, although the entire world may argue with him, what a Rebbe says is nonetheless the true path in *avodas Hashem*.

One Shabbos when we were studying the fifth chapter of *Pirkei Avos*, the Rebbe turned to me with a smile and said: "You too say *Pirkei Avos*?! You must **learn** *Pirkei Avos* as well!" The Rebbe then told me: "Next week I will ask you to repeat the 48 ways the Torah is acquired (discussed in the sixth chapter of *Pirkei Avos*)." Needless to say, I immediately got to work memorizing. Ultimately however, the Rebbe did not ask me further on this.

At the Shabbos meals the Rebbe would sit at the table with our family, at times with the addition of guests (for example: Reb Bentzion Shemtov, who was in Paris at the time). On Shabbos Mevarchim additional Chassidim would join.

At the meals my cousin, Reb Sholom Ber Schneerson, would begin *niggunim*. Once when he was not present, the Rebbe turned to me and said: "Nu! Today you are going to have to sing!"

I had a handkerchief I would use and for some reason, I was obsessed with folding it meticulously. I noticed that whenever I would begin folding the handkerchief the Rebbe would begin looking at my hands with a penetrating gaze. Feeling uncomfortable, I began folding the



THE REBBE LEADS A FARBRENGEN AT THE SHUL, LAG B'OMER 5707\*.



A KABBALAS PANIM FOR THE REBBE IN YESHIVAS ACHEI TEMIMIM. (THE REBBE IS NOT SEEN IN THE PICTURE).

handkerchief under the table. Years later I realized that it's possible that the Rebbe had not wanted to embarrass me by telling me aloud that it is forbidden to fold a handkerchief on Shabbos. So the Rebbe attempted to get my attention by staring at me. Clearly, I had not gotten the hint.

## Shavuos

Shavuos 5707\* occurred on a Sunday and Monday. As I mentioned earlier, kosher wine in Paris was scarce. As such, on the Shabbos before Shavuos, Chassidim made *kiddush* on *mashke*. Naturally, the meal that followed was extremely joyous, and as an indirect result of the festivities, a china plate was accidentally shattered.

On the first day of Shavuos, before *kiddush*, the Rebbe began speaking about the potentially negative effect *mashke* can bring. Following the Rebbe's words, silence reigned in the room. No one dared to make *kiddush* on *mashke* following what the Rebbe had just spoken. When the Rebbe saw that my father was hesitating to make *kiddush*, the Rebbe told him in wonder: "Nu?!" The

Rebbe then explained that he had not prohibited making *kiddush* on *mashke* in the current situation, but rather he had wanted to lay down guidelines in order to maintain order.

On the first night of Shavuos the lights in the shul had been turned off and candles were brought to light up the room, enabling people to recite *Tikkun Leil Shavuos*. The Rebbe recited the *Tikkun* out loud.

After concluding *Tikkun*, the Rebbe set out to leave. The weather outside was extremely hot, yet the Rebbe began putting on a coat on top of his *sirtuk*! My father approached the Rebbe and commented that the weather outside is exceptionally hot. The Rebbe answered simply that he doesn't want to go in the street with just a silk *sirtuk*.<sup>9</sup>

As a young boy, I was unable to hold myself in. I exclaimed: "I see many French men going around in silk garments" (it was in style then to wear such clothing). The Rebbe answered, "But they also wear 'Cotélac' (a hard hat with a brim)". The Rebbe then related that when he was in Vienna with the Frierdiker Rebbe, he entered the Frierdiker

## VISITING THE SURVIVING CHILDREN

During the Rebbe's stay, the Rebbe visited the institutions run by my uncle, Reb Zalman. I remember hearing (although I did not take part in the visit), that when the Rebbe visited the Yeshiva Achei Temimim, one of the students asked the Rebbe: "Why is it that when one forgets *Ya'aleh V'yavo* during *birkas hamazon* he makes an additional *bracha*, yet if one forgets *Ya'aleh V'yavo* during davening he does not?" The Rebbe answered that the first three *brachos* of *bentching* are *midoiraisa*. Following them comes another *bracha*, as a *takanas Chazal*. However all 18 *brachos* of *Shemoneh Esrei* are *takanos Chazal* and the *Chachamim* would not add an additional *bracha* to what they had instituted.

The Rebbe asked the students questions as well. One question I remember was to describe a scenario where one does not have to make a *bracha acharona*, even if he ate the *shiur*.

Obviously, being that I wasn't present during the Rebbe's visit, I cannot take responsibility for the Rebbe's words.

Rebbe's room with just a *sirtuk*, and the Frierdiker Rebbe was not happy.

## The "Pletzel"

Throughout Paris there were many *Chassidishe* and *heimishe* shuls. Noteworthy was the shul in the "Pletzel" area at Rue des Rosiers 25. The shul was referred to by its address: "25." The attendees of the shul were *Poishner Chassidim*. In

\* 5707-1947

## A SHABBOS IN PARIS

Rabbi Nachum Aharon Yaakovovitz related:

It was a Shabbos before Shavuos. On Friday the Rebbe had received a new *sefer Chassidus* (I believe it was the famous *hemshech "Vekacha"* of the Rebbe Maharash). The temperatures on Shabbos were extremely high, bringing to unbearable conditions in the shul. Following Shacharis, the crowd immediately dispersed. The Rebbe however, went to a corner of the shul with the new *sefer*, and remained learning with his *sirtuk* and *gartel* for six to seven hours straight; all in the seemingly unbearable heat!

this shul there was a Yid named Reb Yosef Goldstein who was an alum of Tomchei Temimim in Poland. He would give a *shiur* in the Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch and Tanya.

They once invited the Rebbe to speak to the community. The day

the Rebbe was scheduled to address the shul, the room filled to capacity with men of all backgrounds filling the shul to its rafters. Important rabbonim, *admorim*, Chassidim and common folk all streamed to hear the Rebbe's words.

When the Rebbe arrived, everyone stood up in their places. The Rebbe was shown to a prestigious place in the *mizrach* of the shul. The Rebbe first davened Mincha with the crowd, and then approached the *bima* to begin speaking. The Rebbe began by inquiring as to what the shul is currently learning.

The crowd responded that they were learning Ein Yaakov. The Rebbe took the *sefer*, opened it for a moment, and began addressing the topic at hand.

For over an hour the Rebbe wove together an elaborate tapestry, drawn from *nigleh*, Chassidus, Kabbalah and *aggadah*, as all the participants listened in amazement. Following the Rebbe's address, he davened Maariv. Following Maariv they asked the Rebbe to speak yet again. The Rebbe initially refused. Yet after much exhorting, he acquiesced. The Rebbe once again asked what the attendees were learning. They responded they were studying *hilchos tefillin* in the Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch. The Rebbe asked where they were holding, and after they showed the Rebbe the place, the Rebbe began teaching the following two *se'ifim*.

Once again the crowd listened in astonishment as the Rebbe brought down *poskim*, *rishonim* and *acharonim*, and after a lengthy explanation the Rebbe began explaining the topic according to Chassidus as well!

As the Rebbe concluded his second address, the *gabbaim* told the Rebbe that the local *shiur* in Tanya was up to *perek mem-aleph*. The Rebbe began speaking on the *perek* as well and to the amazement of

all those present, the Rebbe drew a connection between the *perek* Tanya discussed, to what he had spoken about earlier in Shulchan Aruch and Ein Yaakov! The enthralled crowd hung on to every word, spellbound!

The Rebbe concluded with a *bracha* that everyone should be *zocheh* to greet Moshiach with their Rebbe, and we will go with our Rebbe — here the Rebbe burst into tears for a moment — *b'meheira b'yomeinu amen*.

I had the privilege of accompanying the Rebbe from the shul to the home of my uncle, to visit Rebbetzin Chana.

Initially, the Rebbe planned on taking a taxi. However due to lack of availability the Rebbe took the Metro train. As we waited in the station the Rebbe said: "You certainly know where the exit is located at our destination. Being that we're waiting anyway, let's try to get as close as possible to the exit." I replied that I didn't know exactly where the exit was located, but going to the middle of the train would make the most sense. To my luck, when we reached our destination, the exit was directly across our train car, in the middle of the station.

## "Like a Bar Mitzvah Boy!"

Once, when the Rebbe was honored with reading the *haftarah*, he recited it loudly, in a high-pitched voice. A *Polisher* Chossid (who was accustomed to hearing the *haftarah* read quietly) came over and said: "You read the *haftarah* like a bar mitzvah boy!" The Rebbe responded with a smile: "A bar mitzvah boy is a *groise ma'ala* (a great position to hold)!"

## Parting Gifts

On the Shabbos before the Rebbe left, he had with him a part of the Frierdiker Rebbe's diary for us to read. This portion described



"ZIBETZEN" (17 RUE DES ROSIERS), THE HISTORIC CHABAD SHUL WHERE THE REBBE USUALLY DAVENED DURING HIS TIME IN PARIS BEFORE AND AFTER THE WAR.



THE REBBE IS MESADER KIDDUSHIN AT THE WEDDING OF REB YOEL KAHN IN THE YEAR 5714\*. REB SHOLOM BER BUTMAN (REB YOEL'S BROTHER IN LAW) IS SEEN ON THE LEFT.

his imprisonment under the Communists<sup>10</sup>. The Rebbe warned us sternly not to copy it. He turned to me and said with a smile: "Must you be warned as well not to copy it?" The typewritten, folio sized papers were divided among the Chassidim; when one person finished reading he passed his few pages on to the next. It worked out that throughout Shabbos everyone managed to read through the entire diary.

Before the Rebbe left he distributed gifts to my family members.

To my father the Rebbe gave a Siddur Torah Ohr with a Machzor, two booklets of *Hatomim*, and several pamphlets of *maamarim* and the like that had been published in Poland. To my aunt Sara, as well as to my mother, the Rebbe gifted a set of porcelain dishes. Some of those dishes have stayed with the family until today. To my sister Leah the Rebbe gifted an album of stamps (interestingly, whenever the Rebbe received a letter from the United States during his visit he would give

my sister the stamps). To my cousin, Sholom Ber, the Rebbe gifted a Chumash bound in one volume and the four volumes of Shulchan Aruch, all published by Chorev. To me the Rebbe gave a Sefer Hammamarim Yiddish from the Frierdiker Rebbe. To my brother Shmuel the Rebbe gave a bike. My younger sister Miriam received an oversized spinning top suitable for her age.

The Rebbe returned to the United States after Shavuot with his mother, Rebbetzin Chana. As per the instructions of the Frierdiker Rebbe, they traveled via boat and not by plane, as the Rebbe did when he came.

## "Ich Gedenk Aich!"

Following the Rebbe's departure, my father and the Rebbe continued to exchange letters.

In the first letter written after the Rebbe's return to the United States, the Rebbe writes<sup>11</sup> — amongst other things — about the Frierdiker Rebbe's recent Yud-Beis Tammuz farbrengen. The Rebbe writes that he mentioned the name of an individual to the Frierdiker Rebbe as my father requested. Then the Rebbe continues: "Obviously, I said that this was your idea, with my intention being that your name should also be mentioned."

In many letters, the Rebbe would conclude: "Can you also be kind to send regards to the *gabbaim* and *mispalelim*,"<sup>12</sup> or a similar note.

Usually the Rebbe would enclose letters printed in the *kuntreisim* being published then of the Frierdiker Rebbe's *maamarim*.

Only years later, on Tuesday, 13 Adar I 5714\* did my family finally arrive on the shores of the United States. We got off the boat in the morning, and merited to be received that very night for *yechidus*.

We were the first group the Rebbe received that night, at 8:00 p.m.

The Rebbe received us warmly and asked: "*Kinder, ihr gedenkt mir?* (Children, do you remember me?)" and without waiting for an answer the Rebbe continued, "*Ich gedenk aich!* (I remember you!)"

What a *zechus* we had, to constantly be in the memory of the Rebbe! ❶

1. See *The Great Escape* in this issue for a detailed account.
2. A cousin, a descendant of the Tzemach Tzedek (the son of Harav Menachem Mendel, son of Harav Levi Yitzchack, son of Harav Baruch Shalom, eldest son of the Tzemach Tzedek).
3. *Ani Lidodi* 5696.
4. The Rebbe was asking the young Rabbi Butman on this *halacha* stated in the first *mishnah* of *perek Hazahav*, about when is the exact moment of transaction when exchanging silver and gold.
5. See Shulchan Aruch Admur Hazaken 272 *seif* 7.
6. See Sefer Hasichos *Kayitz* 5700, p. 37. See also *Hamelech Bemisibo* Volume I, p. 307.
7. Shliach of the Frierdiker Rebbe to Australia, and a relative of the Rebbe.
8. See the Rebbe's explanation in Shiurim B'Sefer HaTanya. See also *sichas Shabbos Parshas Naso* 5742.
9. This is a practice sourced in Kabbalah that the Rebbe held for many years to come.
10. Later published in *Likkutei Dibburim* (booklets 34, 35, 36).
11. *Igros Kodesh*, vol. 3 p. 209, letter #273.
12. *Ibid.* p. 327 letter #352. Vol. 3 p. 52, letter #443.

# Farbrengens during the visit

During the Rebbe's three-month stay in Paris, he farbrenged with the local Chassidim quite a few times. These farbrengens are remembered for their rich flavor and special style; full of unique expressions about *hiskashrus* to the Frierdiker Rebbe.

We present a taste of these farbrengens, mostly culled from the memories of Rabbi Nochum Aharon Yaakovovitz.<sup>13</sup>

## Beis Nissan

On Beis Nissan, a farbrengen took place in the shul located in the residence of Reb Zalman Schneerson. The Rebbe began the farbrengen saying: "Since one of the things instituted by the Rebbe Rashab was bringing *neginah* to Chassidim, as well as the establishment of a *kapelye* (ensemble), it would be fitting to start off with a *niggun*."

During this farbrengen the Rebbe explained the term "*zechuso yagein aleinu*" [may his (–the *tzaddik's*) merit protect us] to mean, that what the *tzaddik* accomplished in **refining** the world (an additional definition of *zechus*) — may that merit protect us.<sup>14</sup>

As morning drew closer, and it seemed the farbrengen was about to conclude, one of the participants poured some more *l'chaim* for the Rebbe. The Rebbe

commented: "If you wish to tire me out, I surmise you will get tired first." The Rebbe then began to explain the *mishnah* "*Shlosa trissin heim*"<sup>15</sup> in great depth.

## Yud-Aleph Nissan

On Yud-Aleph Nissan, several Chassidim were standing in the Schneerson residence, when Rebbetzin Chana suddenly appeared, and said: "Did you know that today is Yud-Aleph Nissan? Yud-Aleph Nissan is my son's birthday." The Chassidim stood silently, not knowing what to respond. "Ask him to farbreng," Rebbetzin Chana said. The Chassidim approached the Rebbe, and requested from him to farbreng. The Rebbe responded: "*Avadeh, a gleiche zach* (Certainly. It's a good idea)."

During the farbrengen, the Rebbe spoke about the idea of a birthday, noting that the first place in Torah where a birthday is discussed is by Pharaoh. The Rebbe connected this to the level of Pharaoh in *kedushah*, and to the idea of *yetzias Mitzrayim*.<sup>16</sup>

The Rebbe also spoke about a picture of himself playing chess with the Frierdiker Rebbe. He explained that the doctors had recommended that the Frierdiker Rebbe abstain from involving himself in responsibilities that demand extra concentration, so the Rebbe was summoned to play chess with him. The Rebbe related, that at a certain point the Frierdiker Rebbe presumed that the Rebbe was allowing the Frierdiker Rebbe to win, so the Frierdiker Rebbe asked to play one more round. That game resulted in the Rebbe winning.

## Pesach Sheini

The Rebbe spoke at length about "*es iz nishta kein farfallen*,"<sup>17</sup> both according to *nigleh* and Chassidus.

During the farbrengens in Paris, the Rebbe spoke time and again, about the importance of "*foren tzum Rebbe*" — going to the Rebbe. "To travel then to New York was the equivalent of traveling to the moon," related Rabbi Yaakovovitz. "Both the financial barrier and the



THE PHOTO OF THE REBBE AND THE FRIERDIKER REBBE PLAYING CHESS (IN 5697\*) THAT THE REBBE SPOKE ABOUT AT THE FARBRENGEN IN PARIS ON 11 NISSAN 5707\*.

lack of necessary documents made traveling to the Rebbe extremely difficult. Yet the Rebbe demanded so vigorously from the Chassidim that they must travel to the Rebbe.”

“A *bochur* must be by the Rebbe,” the Rebbe told Reb Refoel Wilschansky, a *bochur* at the time. “Although closeness to the Rebbe is mainly *b’ruchniyus*, we see nonetheless that physical distance still separates, thus, one must be in close physical proximity to the Rebbe as well.”

When the time came for the Rebbe’s bi-daily visit to his mother, the Rebbe ended the *farbrengen* promptly.

## Farewell Farbrengen

The final *farbrengen* before the Rebbe’s departure from Paris began at around 8:00 in the evening. The Rebbe began by standing at a podium, as an official event. Then, at around 10:00, when mostly *anash* remained, the Rebbe gave a *klap* on the table and announced: “Now will begin the *Chassidishe farbrengen*!”

The Rebbe spoke many *sichos* with *niggunim* interspersed throughout. Most of what the Rebbe spoke was connected to the names of the participants. For example: The Rebbe spoke of the name Isser (referring to the Chossid Reb Isser Kluwgant), repeating a *maamar chazal* that mentioned איסר. The Rebbe connected the name of Reb Refoel Wilschansky with his work in the European “Lishkah,”<sup>18</sup> and more. The Rebbe also connected each person’s name with his personality; the Chassidim listened in amazement, as the Rebbe’s description matched perfectly with the respective person.

After the Rebbe finished explaining the names of the participants, the crowd began announcing more names for the Rebbe to interpret. Some people began saying their second names as well! The crowd was amazed how the Rebbe’s interpretation matched perfectly to the respective individual, all explained in a simple, concise manner, yet evoking utmost depth.

Unlike the *farbrengens* in later years, when the Rebbe’s tone would vary and *niggunim* would be sung throughout the *farbrengen*, in these Paris *farbrengens* the Rebbe would speak in the same tone for hours non-stop, delivering deep treasures in all parts of Torah, in a way that would enlighten the simplest of men. It was a literal illustration of “*Shechinah medaberes mitoch grono shel Moshe*!”

Rabbi Aharon Morderchai Zilberstrom related: In preparation for this *farbrengen*, Reb Michoel Lipsker had toiled the entire day to obtain food and arrange the event. When the Rebbe arrived at the *farbrengen*, he spoke briefly of how beautiful it is to be able to join together. The Rebbe then turned to Reb Michoel and said: “You deserve a *yasher koach* for your hard work in preparing the *farbrengen*.”



A SERIES OF TELEGRAMS SENT TO REB BINYOMIN GORODETZKY AFTER REBBETZIN CHANA ARRIVED IN PARIS.

During the *farbrengen*, Reb Zalman Butman mustered the courage and told the Rebbe that he had heard from the Rebbe’s father, Harav Levi Yitzchok, “*az er macht besser fun mir* — He [referring to the Rebbe] does better than me.” Silence reigned in the room for a moment. The Rebbe replied: “Nu, parents speak this way about their children.” Reb Zalman responded: “Nu, a son speaks this way of his father as well.”

This *farbrengen*, which lasted for over ten hours, concluded at 8:00 the next morning!

13. Published in the Kfar Chabad magazine 11 Nissan 5767.

14. See Sefer Hasichos 5704, p. 124, et. al.

15. Keilim 24, 1. See Igros Kodesh vol. 2, p. 271.

16. See also Chof Cheshvan 5737, Sichos Kodesh 5737 vol. 1, p. 225.

17. Hayom Yom, 14 Iyar (Pesach Sheini).

18. Bureau to arrange assistance for refugees who had just escaped the Soviet Union. The Bureau was founded by the Frieddiker Rebbe following the escape of many Chassidim in 5706.



# A Hidden Miracle

In the times of the Rebbe Maharash, in a small Russian village lived a successful Jewish innkeeper. All the gentiles of the town would come to drink and party at his inn.

In the same village lived an antisemitic priest who always looked for a chance to oppress the Yidden of the village. He was especially jealous of this Jewish innkeeper and devised a scheme to eliminate the Jewish innkeeper's business.

The priest opened an inn of his own, and that Sunday when all the gentiles gathered to pray, he preached that they must stop supporting the Jewish innkeeper, and instead come to his new inn to party there.

But his words fell on deaf ears. The non-Jews enjoyed the Jewish inn, and were also embarrassed to get drunk in front of their priest.

After failing at his first attempt, the priest formed another plan. One

morning he warmly approached the Jew and told him, "This town is too small for both our inns to have an income. Let's make peace. One of us should pay the other to close his inn."

"You know good and well that I had my inn here way before you!" the Jew replied. "Besides, my inn is my only source of income, unlike you. You get money from being a priest and all your other businesses!"

"You are right," agreed the priest. "I will close my inn and let you have the full business back."

The Jew was extremely happy with this deal.

"Now in honor of this historic peace treaty let us have a toast!" said the priest. The Jew went and got a bottle of vodka from inside his inn.

A crowd had gathered and they all cheered and gave a toast for the "peace agreement" between the two bar owners.

But the evil priest came prepared,

and this was the moment. When no one was looking, the priest switched the bottle of vodka that the Jew had served, with a poisoned bottle of vodka that the priest had brought with him. He then poured a shot for one of the bystanders. Upon drinking the man immediately fell to the floor in pain and moments later he died.

Panic struck and word spread that the Jew poisoned someone to death. Police were immediately summoned and they declared the Jew at fault for killing the innocent man. His fate would be judged at a trial a few weeks later.

The evil priest went home that night a happy man, seeing that his plot worked exactly as planned. The inn would close down and the Jew would go to jail.

In complete despair, the Yid rushed to Lubavitch to receive advice and a *bracha* from the Rebbe Maharash.

לזכות  
הת' השליח שניאור זלמן שיחי'  
לרגל יום הולדתו י"א אדר שני  
לשנת הצלחה בכל מכל כל, לנח"ר  
כ"ק אדמו"ר

נדפס ע"י הוריו  
הרה"ת ר' דוד וזוגתו מרת פערל  
גאלדא ומשפחתם שיחיו  
טייכטל



When the *gabbai* requested an urgent *yechidus* for the man, the Rebbe pushed it off saying that there were guests that were here before him and were still waiting to be received. The same occurred the next day, and the next.

Suddenly on the third day the Rebbe called for the man to come immediately. Upon entering *yechidus*, the Rebbe directed him to travel back home immediately in the first class cabin of the train, and the Rebbe gave him money for the additional expense. When giving him the money the Rebbe told him again, "But travel now, and specifically in first class!"

While donned in tallis and tefillin in his first class cabin, the Yid started pondering his situation. "I spent a whole week on this trip, and now I am traveling back home with no advice and no *bracha* from the Rebbe!" From the pain

and agony of his situation, the Jew started weeping. Before long, he was sobbing so loudly that a crowd of passengers gathered outside his cabin. They opened the door and asked him what was wrong? He went on to tell the whole story of his inn and the libel against him. The gentile passengers saw how earnest this Jew was and advised him to keep his story quiet and to just show up to court.

Little did he know that these passengers were the judges of his trial and they were making their way to his village for the court case which was now only days away.

Once the judges arrived in the village they came up with a plan on how to get the evil priest to admit to his misdeeds. They met up with the priest and requested that he host them. Seeing these were esteemed people he gladly agreed, unaware of their true identity.

One night they sat and feasted with the priest. Under the influence of much alcohol, the priest related the true story of how he had poisoned the vodka in order to get rid of the Jew and his inn.

Days later, the date of the trial arrived. A worried Jew and a confident priest arrived at the court. Many people had gathered for the trial. The judges entered and both the Jew and priest were shocked. Needless to say, the priest was sentenced to many years in prison and hard labor, and the Jew was free to go. Now the Yid saw the tremendous miracle of the Rebbe Maharash. **1**

(*Likkutei Sippurim*—  
Perlow, p. 238)



לע"נ מרת רבקה ח' הינדא ע"ה  
בת הרה"ת ר' אשר הלוי ע"ה  
ברבר  
נלב"ע י"ט אדר שני ה'תשע"ד  
ת"נ צ"ב

נדפס ע"י בתה וחתנה  
הרה"ת ר' לוי יצחק  
וזוגתו מרת שפרינצא פערל  
ומשפחתם שיחיו  
שמוטקין

# Shabbos Mevarchim In Lubavitch With the New Rebbe



RABBI YAAKOV YITZCHOK HOMNICK

*Presented here is a letter written by Rabbi Yaakov Yitzchok Homnick to his kallah at the time, describing his impression from a visit with Lubavitch at 770 shortly after the Rebbe accepted the nesius. Rabbi Homnick was a student of Yeshivas Rabbeinu Yitzchak Elchanan. As he describes in his letter, his family had Chassidishe roots, and he therefore always took an interest in Chassidus.<sup>1</sup>*

*The letter is a real treasure, offering an authentic and very vivid description of what life around the Rebbe was like in those early years.*

## Tuesday Parshas Pekudei, 28 Adar I, 5711\*

I would like to describe to you what I did this past Shabbos.

Every Shabbos Mevarchim, the Lubavitcher Rebbe recites a "maamar."

Amongst Lubavitcher Chassidim, Shabbos Mevarchim, when the new month is blessed, is considered a joyous time, because then the Rebbe comes out to the crowd of hundreds of Chassidim gathered to hear his words of Torah and blessing. So on this past Shabbos, Shabbos Mevarchim Adar II, I went to Lubavitch to hear the words of the "Rebbe."

How do I end up in Lubavitch?

Firstly, when I lived on the East Side, my father attended the Chabad (Lubavitch) shul for many years, where they

davened Nusach Ari. While there, I heard much about the Lubavitcher Rebbe and about the philosophy of Chabad. They told me all about the wondrous deeds of the Lubavitcher Chassidim in Russia, who, despite the [persecution of the] Russian government, were able to save thousands of Jews from assimilation. With real *mesiras nefesh*, they taught Torah and kept mitzvos in hiding.

I also heard about their successful operation to evacuate thousands of Jews from Russia to America and Eretz Yisroel; Jews who had lived for 25 years under the Bolsheviks, yet they remained Torah-true. I had also read about these stories in the papers.

And in America too, I heard how they go around to small towns and build Jewish schools with *mesiras nefesh*, bringing the youth closer to Hashem. I heard about the

“Merkos L’Inyonei Chinuch” and the organization they have to fight assimilation.

Learning about all of the above really piqued my interest, and I decided to go and see for myself, who and what exactly are these people. I also heard about their beards and *peios*.

Most importantly, a few years ago I attended the summer camp of Mesivta Torah Vodaath. Every summer, the Lubavitcher yeshiva sends students to this camp, and while there I met some of them. There was one *bochur* in particular<sup>2</sup> who paid close attention to me. I heard that he is an exceptional student, both in his regular Torah studies, as well as in the teachings of Chabad.

Chabad Chassidus consists of a very well-built philosophy. Their first Rebbe, Reb Shneur Zalman of Liadi, was a student of the Baal Shem Tov. He was able to blend the teachings of Chassidus from the Baal Shem Tov with the teachings of the “*misnagdim*” and the Vilna Gaon. He wrote a *sefer* called “Tanya,” based on the school of thought of Chabad—*chochmah, binah, daas*.

Like the other Chassidim, he extolled the importance of emotional feelings and the role they play in the life [of a Jew]. But like the *misnagdim*, he also stressed the importance of studying Torah.

The Tanya lays out a whole philosophy for life. They say that Rabbi Soloveichik has said that the Tanya contains the deepest philosophy in the world.

The *bochur* that I met wanted to learn Tanya with me. In the Lubavitcher yeshiva they learn it every day. Because it contains many terms and concepts from Kabbalah, you need a teacher to introduce them to you.

This *bochur* was thin with his back hunched over. His eyes shined brightly, almost with a spiritual bearing; he looked to me like a *tzaddik*. He learned some Tanya with me and I enjoyed it immensely. Unfortunately, soon thereafter I had to leave back to the city.

When I was learning in Spring Valley, Rabbi Mendlowitz started teaching classes in Tanya. His classes were amazing. Rabbi Mendlowitz was well versed in the teachings of Chassidus in general, and the teachings of Chabad in particular. He was able to bring down the concepts of the Tanya into a clear, modern language.



REB PERETZ HECHT, WHO STUDIED TANYA WITH RABBI HOMNICK

But unfortunately, we only heard about five classes from him, and then he got sick and passed away.

After his passing, I kept reading Tanya on my own. I always felt that there are very vital concepts to be found in the Tanya, things we all need to know.

In general, I always had a deep interest in Chassidus. My family stems from Chassidim and we inherited that Chassidishe spirit. But as far as the teachings of Chassidus, even though Chassidus is such a well-written philosophy, with thousands of *sefarim* discussing it, I was never able to learn it thoroughly, because I never had a teacher to learn it with me.

Taking all of the above into account, I was extremely interested to go and see what is happening at 770 Eastern Parkway. Lubavitch is the only Chassidus which is strong and active even in America, so I decided to go to Lubavitch.

This is what their Shabbos Mevarchim looks like: At 8:00 in the morning, they all come to shul. First they go to the *mikveh*, then they recite the entire Tehillim. By 10:00, they’re ready to start davening.

Anyone who walks into that shul is immediately awestruck by what he sees. When you walk into the impressive building, you will suddenly see more beards than you’ve ever seen in your life: Long beards, short beards, white beards, red beards, full beards, and “goatees.” Elderly Chassidim with covered faces and younger ones with a few “grass hairs” on their chins.

The atmosphere is completely different than the one out in the street. Everyone converses in Yiddish. They all understand Yiddish.

There are people who were in Shanghai, people who escaped from Russia, *bochurim* who arrived from Eretz Yisroel to learn there, *bochurim* who came from South America, and from every corner of the world. You can tell from their faces where they come from. Most of them however, are Americans. Some are also *baalei teshuvah*.

They daven with great intensity. Others stand about in the halls and talk, but even their idle talk is made of a “different kind.” Like Chazal say about the “idle talk” of *talmidei chachamim*; their mundane conversations have the “Chabad spirit” to them.

The room that they daven in is fairly small; not more than



RABBI SHRAGA FEIVEL MENDLOWITZ, THE ROSH YESHIVA WHO ALSO GAVE SHIURIM IN TANYA AT THE YESHIVA OF SPRING VALLEY, NY, IN THE 5700S\*.



CHOL-HAMODE PESACH 5772, JEM 103439

40 ft. x 20 ft. At the center of the room is a *bimah*.

Immediately upon entering the room, I observed a very strange thing: On one side of the room there are some 150 people crammed together, while on the other side there are only ten people.

Then I looked closer and I understood: On one side of the room, the Rebbe is there. Because they want him to be able to see the *amud* and hear the *chazzan* well, they leave a huge empty space for only the Rebbe and some elder Chassidim, so he won't be disturbed by the large crowd.

There was no place to sit; everyone davened while standing. Amongst them are some very distinguished individuals: one person is a writer in the Yiddish newspapers, another is a doctor. The doctor also stands in the middle of the crowd of Chassidim and davens like all the rest of them.

The chief rabbi of Shanghai from before the war is also present amongst the Chassidim who are here for Shabbos Mevarchim. Everyone stood and davened together.

I tried getting closer to the Rebbe to look at his face. The Rebbe is tall with a round black beard. They say he learned in Berlin and completed his studies as an engineer.

I can immediately see that he is a calm, orderly person. He never picked his eyes up from out of the *siddur*; he was completely focused on his prayers.

Some of the students here daven with immense concentration; you can see their full hearts go out with every word of prayer. Someone explains to me that they are still mourning. They are mourning the passing of the [previous] Rebbe, the father-in-law of the current Rebbe.

The late Rebbe who passed away about a year ago was a great activist. He built the Lubavitcher yeshiva in America and had a great influence on the other *yeshivos*. In addition to that, he was a wise man and a Torah scholar. (I am currently reading some of his *maamarim* and I see how he was a person who literally fought for the ideals he believed in.) Standing here in the shul, I thought to myself what a pity it is that I never saw the elder Rebbe.

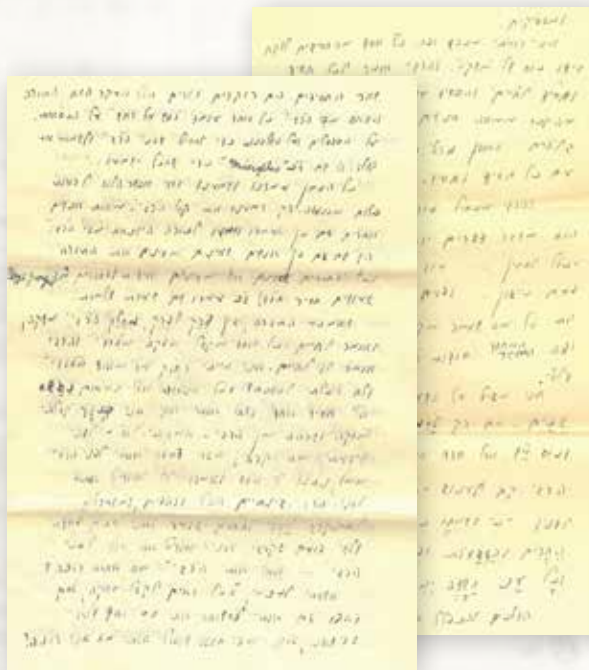
When the davening was over—their *nusach* is a little different than Ashkenaz or Sefard (their first Rebbe established to daven with the *nusach* of the Arizal, the great Kabbalist Reb Yitzchak Luria. It's a very meticulous *nusach* based on the secrets of the Kabbalah)—all the Chassidim started running towards the other half of the room where the Rebbe was, because he was going to speak and everyone wanted to be closer to him.

Everyone wanted to hear his holy words, without missing even one word.

A few minutes later, the Rebbe started talking. The Rebbe speaks in a low voice. His words flow like a forceful spring of water; he never stops to find the right word.

He speaks with a distinct accent. The Chabad Chassidim speak with a very distinct Yiddish. They speak like the Lithuanian Jews, but their "*reish*" is like that of the Hungarians. Also the words are a little different. While they speak, some words of Hebrew will get mixed in, as well as some concepts from Chabad teachings.

The Rebbe speaks quickly and with a sing-song. The Chassidim stand around the table with closed eyes, trying to concentrate and hear every



EXCERPTS FROM THE LETTER



24 TEVES 5712, JEM 104216

word. He speaks of the secrets of the Torah.

I felt like I was in a new world; a world where the only interest is in living a wholesome Jewish life. A world that is still interested in *avodas Hashem* and the secrets of the Torah.

The Rebbe speaks for a while and then takes a break, and the Chassidim sing a *niggun*. Even the *niggunim* of Chabad Chassidim are different from those of other Chassidim. They are very deep and heartrending *niggunim*.

In the teachings of Chabad there is a full section about *niggunim*—how to listen to *niggunim* and how to really be impacted by them.

They sing the *niggun* higher and higher, and then they stop. Then I observed a beautiful thing: Each one of the Chassidim raises a cup of *mashke*, and the Rebbe wishes each and every Chossid “*l’chaim!*” and they respond “*l’chaim.*”

Each and every one of the more than 100 people is blessed with a personal *l’chaim* from the Rebbe, thereby fostering a personal connection with each Chossid.

Then the Rebbe starts speaking again, this time talking about simpler concepts that everyone can understand. Then he takes another break, and there’s another *niggun*. Then this repeats itself a third time. The Rebbe connects everything with what he spoke about earlier, and a beautiful tapestry emerges, bringing together the secrets of the Torah with the revealed parts of Torah.

I glance at the clock. It’s already after 2:00, and most of them only tasted a little *kiddush*, some cake,

and a little *mashke*. But the day is not yet over.

The Rebbe gets up to leave. Everyone stands up and sings “*Ki V’simcha...*” and they all go to daven Mincha.

After Mincha, some people finally go home. But the real Chassidim stay longer and review the Rebbe’s words. One person tries to repeat everything the Rebbe said exactly; if he errs, the others will correct him. In this manner, they maintain exactly what the Rebbe said.

On Motzei Shabbos, the Rebbe’s *maamar* will be written down and printed. There’s no word that comes out of the Rebbe’s mouth that will not eventually be printed.

After this *chazzara*, they daven Maariv, and then they go to one Chossid’s house for *melaveh malka*. They spent their entire day immersed in Torah and *avodas Hashem*. This is how they prepare themselves for the new month.

When I left the Lubavticher court, I felt so elated. I felt like over there you can find the true spirit of Shabbos and the true spirit of *kedushah*.

I don’t know what the future holds for Lubavitch, but I know that they have a very rich past, and an interesting present.

Lubavitch and Chabad hold a special place in the story of our people. **1**

1. This letter was published, along with one more about Purim 5711, by his nephew Rabbi Shraga Dovid Homnick and the author of Yememi Bereshis Rabbi Yosef Greenberg, in a Teshura from the Hertz-Greenberg wedding, 5781.

2. Reb Peretz Hecht.

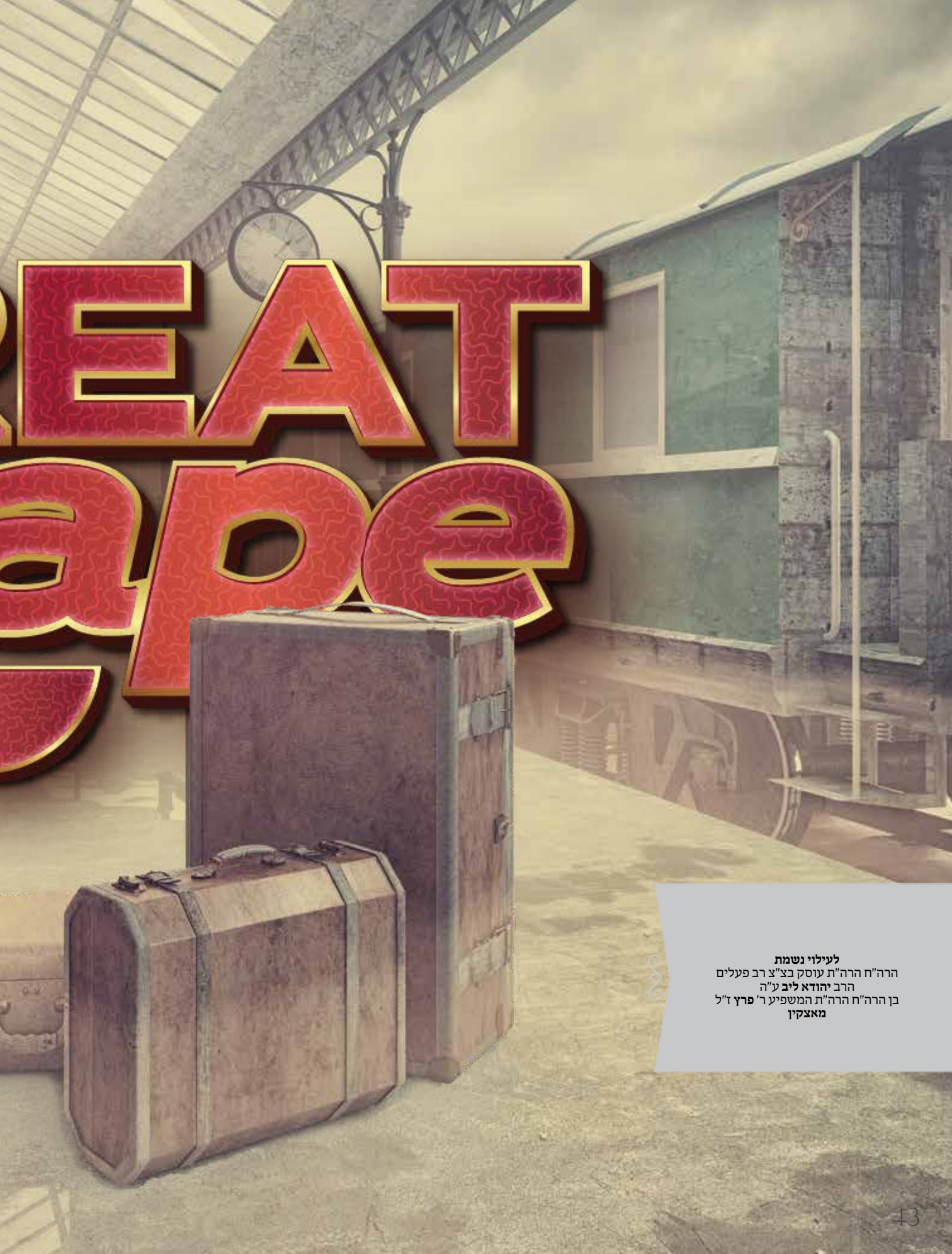


# The GR ESCALADE

## THE STORY OF THE “ESHALONS”

THIS AMAZING STORY HAS BEEN CHRONICLED IN MANY (HEBREW) PUBLICATIONS FROM COUNTLESS PERSPECTIVES. THIS ARTICLE IS BASED PRIMARILY ON THE ACCOUNTS CITED IN PE'ILUT CHOTZAH GVULOT, THE MEMOIRS OF REB BINYAMIN GORODETZKY, THE MEMOIRS OF MRS. YOCHAVED ZALMANOV, AND SEVERAL DERHER INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED OVER THE YEARS. WE MADE EVERY ATTEMPT TO PORTRAY THE EVENTS ACCURATELY;

COMMENTS AND CORRECTIONS ARE WELCOMED, AND CAN BE SENT TO [FEEDBACK@DERHER.ORG](mailto:FEEDBACK@DERHER.ORG).



# GREAT appears



לעילוי נשמת  
הרה"ח הרה"ת עוסק בצ"צ רב פעלים  
הרב יהודא ליב ע"ה  
בן הרה"ח הרה"ת המשפיע ר' פרץ ז"ל  
מאצקין

## To Stay or to Go?

At the close of World War II, many Chassidim in Russia were at a crossroads.

The invasion of the Germans had sent them fleeing from their homes and towns into the far recesses of the Russian interior, many of them reaching all the way to Samarkand and Tashkent in faraway Uzbekistan. They were left bereft of their homes and belongings.

Life in the Soviet Union before the war had been unbearable. Just a year before the outbreak of the war (in the year known as *Tirtzach*—תרט"ח) Stalin had cracked down on the masses, killing millions in the cellars of the KGB. Untold numbers of Chassidim were among them. The situation had been dire.

However, the years of war brought some respite to the persecuted Chassidim. The KGB was no longer as active, and Yidden were able to maintain a semblance of Jewish life.

But now the war was over. What to do? Where should they settle? What would the future hold?

## The Big Three

Meanwhile, the three most powerful men in the world had convened to decide the new world order: President Harry Truman of the United States, Prime Minister Winston Churchill of the United Kingdom, and Joseph Stalin *ym's* of the USSR. One decision issued at the conference was that Polish citizens who had fled into Russia during the war would be permitted to return to their homes.

For the Yidden of Russia, this seemed to be a golden opportunity. Documents could be forged or swapped with a Polish citizen, and one suddenly had a ticket to freedom. This gave rise to a



massive black-market operation; if a Polish citizen died or chose to remain in Russia, his documents could be sold for a hefty price.

Many Chassidim were unsure. Cheating one's way through the border was a major crime and many Chassidim were already 'repeat-offenders' for their work in spreading Yiddishkeit. There was no doubt that heavy punishments would be meted out on anyone caught. On the other hand, the freedom of the outside world beckoned. It was too good of an opportunity to miss.

The question was posed to the Frierdiker Rebbe. However, that was difficult in itself. The Frierdiker Rebbe's answers were sent from America to Europe, and then translated into vague codes and sent to Russia. It was often difficult for the Chassidim in Russia to decipher the Frierdiker Rebbe's true intent.

The first answer was sent to Reb Binyomin Gorodetzky on 8 Teves 5706\*. "Whether the question pertains to him or to everyone, due to the current situation they should wait until matters clear up. And Hashem will help them, physically and spiritually." By the time the message reached Russia, it read, "Grandfather says to remain in place."

Sometime later, another answer arrived: "It is not good to live in a place which lacks *shalom bayis*. It would be better to remain in a place with *shalom bayis*, and to wait for another opportunity."

This was a reference to the rampant antisemitism in Poland at the time. Despite the persecution at the hand of the Communist government, the Jews in Russia lived in peace with their Russian neighbors. If the alternative was settling in Poland, the Frierdiker Rebbe opposed the idea.

Sometime later, it became clear that it would be possible to leave Poland and continue into other countries.



REB BINYOMIN GORODETZKY

The question was posed once again, and this time, the Frierdiker Rebbe seemed to approve. Some were instructed to look into the option, while families with young children were to wait until matters cleared up.

Reb Binyomin Gorodetzky was one of the first Chassidim to make the trip. Somehow, he procured documents for his family and joined one of the trains filled with Polish citizens. One bright day after Shavuot he found himself — unbelievably — standing on the other side of the Russian border.

Immediately, he dispatched a letter to the Frierdiker Rebbe describing his experience and the various options available to Chassidim. Three days later, an urgent telegram arrived from New York: the Frierdiker Rebbe approved of the plan.

Reb Binyomin immediately wrote letters back to Russia informing them of the Frierdiker Rebbe's decision. The news began to spread far and wide, and Chassidim began packing their bags. There was no time to waste; it became apparent that the KGB was once again paying attention to the movements of Chassidim. The slight relief of the war years was clearly over, and it was time to hit the road.

## Lvov

In order to leave the country, every Chossid needed to follow the same process: Polish documents were to be procured or forged, they were to be submitted to the OVIR — the Russian immigration office — for an exit-visa, and tickets were to be obtained for the train ride over the border. Trains left from all over Russia, including from Samarkand, but most Chassidim preferred to travel to the border on their own, to avoid spending too much time among Polish citizens who might uncover their ruse.

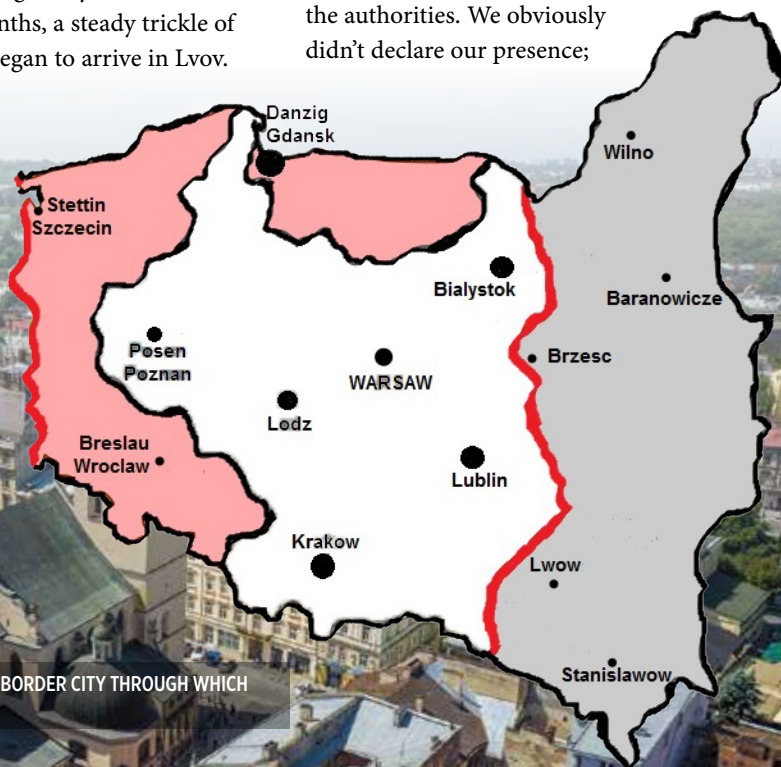
Lvov, a city right at the border of Poland, became a central gathering place — and for good reason. The city had formerly been a part of Poland, but Stalin decided to keep it as part of the USSR. In his magnanimity, the residents — all Polish citizens — were given the right to leave the city and immigrate to Poland proper. This gave way to a massive black market of Polish passports; every citizen could easily obtain documentation to leave and then sell it on to eager buyers. Over the summer months, a steady trickle of Chassidim began to arrive in Lvov.



REB LEBEL ALEVSKY AS A CHILD

“We knew nothing about the whole escape,” relates Rabbi Leibel Alevsky, a child at the time, “until my aunt in Moscow got wind of the operation. She wrote that she would be getting married in Lvov and invited us to the wedding. My family got the hint and we made our way to Lvov.

“At the time, the law stipulated that one was forbidden to remain in a city for more than twenty-four hours without reporting his presence to the authorities. We obviously didn't declare our presence;



LVOV (WHICH WAS PART OF POLAND BEFORE THE WAR), BECAME THE BORDER CITY THROUGH WHICH MANY CHASSIDIM ESCAPED FROM THE SOVIET UNION INTO POLAND.



but that meant that we couldn't remain in one house for more than twenty-hours; otherwise the host would be liable if he didn't turn us in. Therefore, I vividly remember being constantly on the move; dragging our suitcases from one house to the next."

It was a very tense time. The increasing numbers of bearded Jews

began to attract attention and all the men made a conscious effort not to be seen in public. Prohibitive sums were paid to homeowners for providing living spaces to the illegal aliens. Chassidim lived in constant fear, always expecting a knock on the door from the KGB.

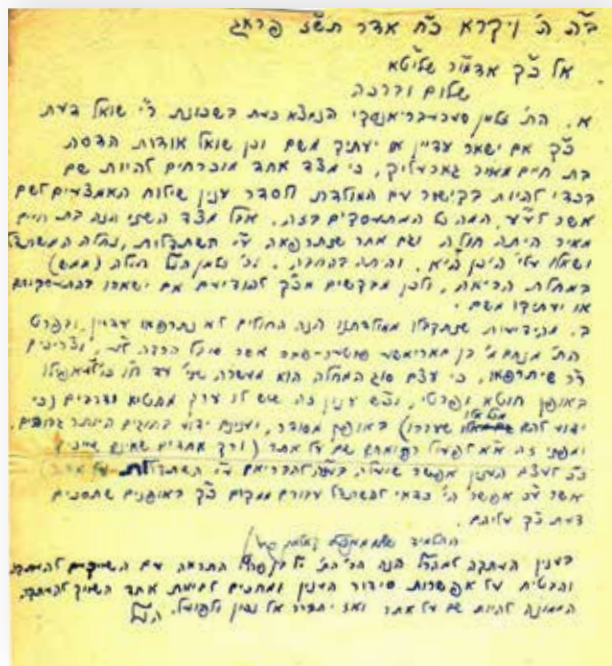
In the beginning, people arranged everything for themselves. But as more and more Chassidim arrived, a *vaad* was created, led by Reb Mendel Futerfas, Reb Shmerel Sasonkin, Reb Yonah Kagan and others. The lead activist was Leibel Motchkin; still a *bochur*, he was a shrewd activist with a knack for creating friendships in the right places. He led the effort, exploring the various options for obtaining passports, making sure to bribe all the pertinent individuals, and keeping track of the arriving families and train schedules.

Many others were involved. Reb Moshe Chaim Dubravsky assisted Leibel Motchkin and was also responsible for distributing money to *anash*

families for basic needs. Reb Mendel Futerfas and Reb Yonah Kagan were responsible for obtaining funds and taking care of the *yeshivos* and *chadarim*. Reb Shmerel Sasonkin was the 'senior advisor' of the operation. Reb Mendel Gorelik was a professional forger. Reb Dovid Kok and Reb Zalman Serebryansky obtained additional passports. Reb Yisroel Noach Belinitzky was the accountant. Mrs. Sarah Katzenelenboigen, famously remembered as "Mume Sarah," was a key activist, obtaining documents, transferring money, and solving the various problems that arose. Mrs. Tzipa Kozliner was the contact with the government, obtaining the necessary OVIR approvals. The list goes on and on.

At immense risk to their lives, these heroic individuals spared no effort to help their fellow Chassidim escape the border. Many of them sent their own families ahead, pushing off their own exits until the end of the operation.

Outside Russia, a similar network of Chassidim was established. Reb Yitzchak Goldin was stationed in



A LETTER TO THE FRIEDIKER REBBE WITH UPDATES ON THE ONGOING RESCUE EFFORTS WRITTEN BY REB LEBEL MOCHKIN.

PELIOS CHOTZE GEVULOS

Krakow to welcome the immigrants and help them plan the continuation of their journey. Reb Sholom Mendel Kalmenson was stationed in Prague, which was uniquely situated to be easily contacted from Russia, Poland, Germany, and the United States. He was the central office for the efforts. Reb Binyomin Gorodetzky was stationed in Paris, where the Frierdiker Rebbe soon appointed him to be responsible for all Chabad activities in Europe and North Africa. Reb Yisrael Jacobson was a contact in New York, bringing questions to the Frierdiker Rebbe and doing various activities on their behalf.

## The Royal Escape

Over the summer months of 5706\*, a steady stream of passports were obtained and families began to cross the border. Some traveled as individuals, hoping to blend in among the Polish passengers without attracting too much attention, and some traveled as groups, relying on their ability to bribe guards who noticed something was amiss. After all, these “Polish citizens” could not speak a word of Polish.

Mrs. Yocheved (nee Garelik) Zalmanov was a teenager at the time, and she had the privilege to accompany Rebbetzin Chana on the second organized group. In her memoirs, she described the events.

“One day in Lvov, we received word that the next train would

leave within a few hours. The train was already at the station...

“We rushed to the station, but then Leibke [Motchkín] approached my sister and me and asked us to go bring a certain woman from a specific address; the train was being held up for her. When we entered, we saw a refined, middle-aged woman sitting on a chair, while a tall woman stood next to her.”

Rebbetzin Chana was unsure whether to take the train. She hoped to obtain a legitimate release via family reunification policies. The woman next to her — Mume Sarah — was encouraging her to take the risk.

“When she saw us, she asked us in a very refined manner, ‘Who are you?’ We responded: ‘We are the daughters of Reb Chaim Meir Garelik, the Rebbe’s shliach to Crimea.’ Her face immediately lit up; she stood up and said, ‘With these children, I will go!’

“We all jumped into a taxi and rushed back to the train station. Later, I discovered that the refined-looking woman was none other than Rebbetzin Chana. As soon as we arrived, Leibke and his helpers made sure that she found a place to sit.

“The day turned to night, as if to give some rest to the worried passengers, sitting on the floor of a freight train like sardines. Families, with packages and bundles, children



REB LEIBKE MOTCHKIN

young and old, freezing from the cold and terrified by the possession of fake passports, with nobody remembering their names and exactly which family they belonged to — it was all fake. At the same time, we felt joy: with Hashem’s help, we would be exiting the cursed borders of Stalin’s paradise.

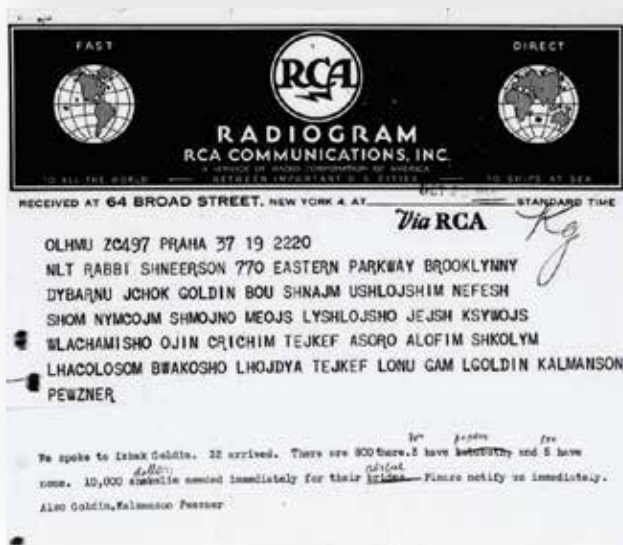
“As the chaos and crying of the children began to quiet down, my father asked me to bring the blanket that we owned to the woman I had accompanied to the train. I climbed over heads and feet until I got to her seat. ‘My child,’ she looked at me, glowing with an unusual radiance. ‘You’ve enlivened me... May this merit remain with you in everything you do!’”<sup>1</sup>

Rabbi Avremel Korf was on the train as well:



THE JOURNEY OF HUNDREDS OF CHASSIDIC FAMILIES FROM LVOV THROUGH POCKING.

\* 5706-1946



A TELEGRAM SENT TO THE FRIERDIKER REBBE FROM THE CHASSIDIM LEADING THE RESCUE EFFORTS, REQUESTING ADDITIONAL FUNDS. THE TELEGRAM IS WORDED IN CODES.



A LETTER SENT BY THE FRIERDIKER REBBE TO THE "JOINT" (AMERICAN JEWISH JOINT DISTRIBUTION COMMITTEE) URGENTLY REQUESTING FUNDS FOR THE REFUGEES.

"When we came to the border, we were all literally shaking with fear. There had already been a few arrests in the past, and we had no way of knowing what was in store for us. With us in our wagon were Reb Avrohom Mayorer and Reb Yisroel Neveler. Reb Avrohom had a two-liter bottle of *marshke*. When the officer came on to the train, Reb Avrohom offered him a cup, but the officer initially refused. However, Reb Avrohom insisted, and handed a full glass of *marshke*, which the officer ultimately drank in its entirety. His eyes began rolling, and he walked off the train.

"The wagons didn't have a roof, so we were able to see how the officer got off and told his friend that there is good vodka in the wagon; not wanting to miss out, the second officer came and drank a full cup as well.

"They then ordered all of us to get off the wagon so they could check our documents. By the time we got off, they were both drunk, and one of them simply stated that it's late and we should

therefore continue on our way...

"We later came to the conclusion that we merited such a miracle only because the Rebbe's mother was with us on the train..."

## Impasse

By Elul time, some 500 souls had quietly made their way to freedom. Meanwhile, the news continued to spread: passports were available in the "City of the *Taz*," as it was referred to in code (Reb Dovid Segal, author of *Turei Zahav* on Shulchan Aruch, had been the Av Beis Din in Lvov). Chassidim from all over the Soviet Union began streaming to the border city, hoping to begin their lives anew in a free land. The trickle soon became an avalanche, and soon, there were 700 Chassidim waiting for salvation in Lvov.

But there was a problem.

The repatriation agreement had been signed in the summer of 5705\*, over a year earlier. By now, most legitimate Polish citizens had left the country. The trains didn't travel

as regularly, and it was no longer possible to 'disappear' among a large group of Polish speaking passengers. The cost of passports had tripled. The Chassidim had arrived with a general *gemach* fund of over \$34,000 for those who couldn't afford to purchase their own way out, but the money was quickly running out. They seemed to arrive at an impasse.

During Elul, there seemed to be a breakthrough. Leibel Motchkin succeeded in arranging passports for 33 families — over three hundred people — and they planned to take the next train. But suddenly, Leibel's contact informed him that the government knew of their plans and intended to arrest them all. It seemed that the 'fun' was over.

In a letter, Reb Shmerel Sasonkin described the impact of the information:

"Leibke was shocked by the information and spread the news late at night. Everybody was terrified and remained home. For four days, the train stood and waited for us, while the contact continued to warn

us... that whoever traveled would suffer a bitter end. He told us that the government had a list of all the *anash*; he warned that if we were seen on the streets we would be arrested.

“Everybody remained closeted at home until Rosh Hashanah, feeling terrible about the circumstances. All their money had been lost [with the purchase of the now-useless passports]; with no sources of employment, they would all die of hunger. We cried and recited Tehillim. Such an Elul we never experienced; everyone davened alone, and most people didn’t even recite Selichos, instead reciting Tehillim. A message went out that we were to daven at home even on Rosh Hashanah.

“Erev Rosh Hashanah arrived, and we were extremely disheartened. How could Rosh Hashanah come without *mikveh*? Without any coordination, all *anash* decided that come what may, they would go to *mikveh*... At dawn, the *mikveh* was packed. Meeting each other once again, our spirits were somewhat lifted. We decided to arrange *minyanim* in the homes and hoped that our prayers would be answered.”

On Erev Sukkos, matters hadn’t improved. Leibel Motchkin smuggled a *note/pan* to Reb Sholom

## “AL KIDDUSH HASHEM”

In the course of the operation, three Chassidim were arrested: Reb Berke Chein was arrested right before he got onto a train, Mrs. Tzipa Kozliner was arrested with the documents (as described in the article), and Reb Berel Gurevitch was arrested at the border for lack of proper documentation.

Through many open miracles, they were all released within the next two years. Reb Berel Gurevitch was even lucky enough to be allowed over the border into Poland. Reb Berke and Mrs. Kozliner needed to wait many more years until being allowed to leave Russia.

These three arrests were made by the local authorities, who could easily be bribed. However, much larger problems awaited. At the close of the operation, the higher-ups in Moscow got involved, beginning a five-year chase of any activists who remained behind. Other arrests were made when a small group of *bochurim* attempted to make an escape on their own. Those Chassidim weren’t as lucky.

Reb Mendel Futerfas, Mume Sarah, Reb Yonah Kagan and many others were slowly but surely arrested and put through terrible tortures and interrogations. Reb Mendel languished in prison for eight years. A number of Chassidim remained imprisoned until the death of Stalin, in 5713\*.

And several, among them Reb Yonah and Mume Sarah, perished under the terrible circumstances of their imprisonment. They didn’t even receive the dignity of *kever Yisrael*; they have no known burial place. But the people they saved — 1000 souls and their countless descendants — is in and of itself the greatest monument to their memory.

*Hashem yinkom damam.*

Mendel Kalmenson in Prague:

“The situation cannot continue. All *anash* have gathered here, and there are no options of traveling to you, because they [the Russians] know everything. We need Heavenly

mercy. We are all left penniless...

May Hashem, who hears the cry of orphans, widows, and children, have mercy on all of us very soon.”



№	Имя	Фамилия	Возраст	Пол	Родина	Условия
1	Иван	Иванов	35	М	Москва	Хорошо
2	Петр	Петров	42	М	Псков	Хорошо
3	Александр	Александров	28	М	Владимир	Хорошо
4	Сергей	Сергеев	31	М	Ярославль	Хорошо
5	Михаил	Михайлов	25	М	Тверь	Хорошо
6	Дмитрий	Дмитриев	38	М	Калужская	Хорошо
7	Андрей	Андреев	22	М	Рязань	Хорошо
8	Василий	Васильев	45	М	Суздаль	Хорошо
9	Григорий	Григорьев	33	М	Владимир	Хорошо
10	Илья	Ильин	27	М	Ярославль	Хорошо
11	Евгений	Евгеньев	30	М	Тверь	Хорошо
12	Антон	Антонин	24	М	Калужская	Хорошо
13	Виктор	Викторов	36	М	Рязань	Хорошо
14	Константин	Константинов	29	М	Суздаль	Хорошо
15	Лев	Левин	32	М	Владимир	Хорошо
16	Марк	Марков	26	М	Ярославль	Хорошо
17	Израиль	Израилов	40	М	Тверь	Хорошо
18	Исаак	Исааков	34	М	Калужская	Хорошо
19	Исидор	Исидоров	28	М	Рязань	Хорошо
20	Иуда	Иудин	37	М	Суздаль	Хорошо
21	Исак	Исак	23	М	Владимир	Хорошо
22	Исидор	Исидор	39	М	Ярославль	Хорошо
23	Исидор	Исидор	21	М	Тверь	Хорошо
24	Исидор	Исидор	35	М	Калужская	Хорошо
25	Исидор	Исидор	29	М	Рязань	Хорошо
26	Исидор	Исидор	33	М	Суздаль	Хорошо
27	Исидор	Исидор	27	М	Владимир	Хорошо
28	Исидор	Исидор	31	М	Ярославль	Хорошо
29	Исидор	Исидор	25	М	Тверь	Хорошо
30	Исидор	Исидор	38	М	Калужская	Хорошо
31	Исидор	Исидор	22	М	Рязань	Хорошо
32	Исидор	Исидор	36	М	Суздаль	Хорошо
33	Исидор	Исидор	30	М	Владимир	Хорошо
34	Исидор	Исидор	24	М	Ярославль	Хорошо
35	Исидор	Исидор	32	М	Тверь	Хорошо
36	Исидор	Исидор	26	М	Калужская	Хорошо
37	Исидор	Исидор	34	М	Рязань	Хорошо
38	Исидор	Исидор	28	М	Суздаль	Хорошо
39	Исидор	Исидор	37	М	Владимир	Хорошо
40	Исидор	Исидор	21	М	Ярославль	Хорошо
41	Исидор	Исидор	35	М	Тверь	Хорошо
42	Исидор	Исидор	29	М	Калужская	Хорошо
43	Исидор	Исидор	33	М	Рязань	Хорошо
44	Исидор	Исидор	27	М	Суздаль	Хорошо
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47	Исидор	Исидор	32	М	Тверь	Хорошо
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53	Исидор	Исидор	35	М	Тверь	Хорошо
54	Исидор	Исидор	29	М	Калужская	Хорошо
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56	Исидор	Исидор	27	М	Суздаль	Хорошо
57	Исидор	Исидор	31	М	Владимир	Хорошо
58	Исидор	Исидор	25	М	Ярославль	Хорошо
59	Исидор	Исидор	32	М	Тверь	Хорошо
60	Исидор	Исидор	26	М	Калужская	Хорошо
61	Исидор	Исидор	34	М	Рязань	Хорошо
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64	Исидор	Исидор	21	М	Ярославль	Хорошо
65	Исидор	Исидор	35	М	Тверь	Хорошо
66	Исидор	Исидор	29	М	Калужская	Хорошо
67	Исидор	Исидор	33	М	Рязань	Хорошо
68	Исидор	Исидор	27	М	Суздаль	Хорошо
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71	Исидор	Исидор	32	М	Тверь	Хорошо
72	Исидор	Исидор	26	М	Калужская	Хорошо
73	Исидор	Исидор	34	М	Рязань	Хорошо
74	Исидор	Исидор	28	М	Суздаль	Хорошо
75	Исидор	Исидор	37	М	Владимир	Хорошо
76	Исидор	Исидор	21	М	Ярославль	Хорошо
77	Исидор	Исидор	35	М	Тверь	Хорошо
78	Исидор	Исидор	29	М	Калужская	Хорошо
79	Исидор	Исидор	33	М	Рязань	Хорошо
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81	Исидор	Исидор	31	М	Владимир	Хорошо
82	Исидор	Исидор	25	М	Ярославль	Хорошо
83	Исидор	Исидор	32	М	Тверь	Хорошо
84	Исидор	Исидор	26	М	Калужская	Хорошо
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88	Исидор	Исидор	21	М	Ярославль	Хорошо
89	Исидор	Исидор	35	М	Тверь	Хорошо
90	Исидор	Исидор	29	М	Калужская	Хорошо
91	Исидор	Исидор	33	М	Рязань	Хорошо
92	Исидор	Исидор	27	М	Суздаль	Хорошо
93	Исидор	Исидор	31	М	Владимир	Хорошо
94	Исидор	Исидор	25	М	Ярославль	Хорошо
95	Исидор	Исидор	32	М	Тверь	Хорошо
96	Исидор	Исидор	26	М	Калужская	Хорошо
97	Исидор	Исидор	34	М	Рязань	Хорошо
98	Исидор	Исидор	28	М	Суздаль	Хорошо
99	Исидор	Исидор	37	М	Владимир	Хорошо
100	Исидор	Исидор	21	М	Ярославль	Хорошо

EXCERPT OF A LIST WITH DETAILS OF THE FAMILIES OF CHASSIDIM DEPARTING ON THE TRAINS.





16 ADAR 5709, JEM 2886

## Another 'Try

With everyone sitting on their suitcases, a group of thirty-two people decided to use their passports and try their luck. They had almost nothing to lose. When a train was scheduled for the first days of Sukkos, they decided to join. Obviously, it was a situation of *pikuach nefesh*.

Reb Shmerel described the scene: "When they departed, it felt as if we were bidding goodbye to people who were going to their death. There was intense sobbing and wailing... But Hashem heard their prayers and they were successful. When we heard that they had crossed the border, our spirits lifted."

The *vaad* reconvened after Simchas Torah. The Chassidim made a pact to do everything in their power to save all the *anash* and help them get over the border; the pact would be in effect until Yud-Tes Kislev, and then they

would be free of their obligation.

In light of the dire financial situation, it was decided that all money must be given into a central account to fund the entire operation. This decision was made by a "Beis Din of 23 Rabbanim," and all the Chassidim were expected to comply, under threat of *cherem*.

"My father, Reb Uziel Chazanov," related Mrs. Basya Kalmanson, "had already purchased the necessary documents for our family. He emptied his pockets and gave whatever money he had — including all the proceeds from the home we had just sold. My brother-in-law Reb Avraham Aharon Rubashkin was a talented businessman who had amassed quite a fortune in Samarkand, but he handed everything over to Reb Mendel Futerfas.

"My mother tried to keep a few pennies to buy a winter coat for my brother, but Reb Mendel argued that he could wear *shmattes* — and

meanwhile another Jew would be able to leave. Outside Russia — he told us his assumption — there's plenty of money, and you will have as much clothing as you need. My mother even gave over her jewelry, keeping only her wedding ring."

In Cheshvan, there was more encouraging news. A group of 57 people took the next train and crossed the border successfully. It didn't resolve all the issues; some 600 people were still waiting in Lvov, but it seemed that a *yeshuah* might be at hand. However, they waited. A large transport needed to be arranged to bring out as many Chassidim as possible in one shot, but that was a major and dangerous endeavor. They had asked for the Frierdiker Rebbe's *bracha*, but a response had not been forthcoming. The proposal was sent to 770 during Tishrei, but, as Rabbi Yisrael Jacobson reported, "the entire month, the Rebbe has been *b'hisbodedus*, more *upgetragen* [to himself]. The question was relayed in writing, but he hasn't yet answered."

During a *yechidus*, Reb Yisrael raised the question again, and the Frierdiker Rebbe didn't answer. "I gave over all the letters to the Rebbe *shlita*," he writes, "...but nudging the Rebbe [for an answer] is obviously out of the question." Chassidim were puzzled but proceeding with such a dangerous endeavor was out of the question without a *bracha*.

There was another issue at hand. The project would cost many thousands of dollars — money that the Chassidim simply didn't have. Loans were being taken on by Reb Yitzchak Goldin who was sneaking the money into Russia, but a better resolution was necessary. Furthermore: where would the Chassidim go after leaving Russia? Who would pay for their basic needs?

In the middle of Cheshvan, the Frierdiker Rebbe's *bracha* finally arrived. Around the same time,

the Joint Distribution Committee agreed to support the Chassidim as refugees upon their arrival. With those assurances in hand, the wheels began to move on a final resolution.

## They Know Everything

Reb Shmerel Sasonkin describes what followed:

“After Tishrei, the government officials suddenly seemed kinder; they agreed to approve the documents, obviously for a hefty sum of money. The sum was collected, and on Friday, 28 Cheshvan, Mrs. Tzipa Kozliner was scheduled to visit the OVIR offices with the documents to receive their approval.”

Expecting an easy transaction, a transport was arranged for that very day. Three hundred people were expected to join, and a message was sent to Reb Sholom Mendel Kalmenson to expect them. Everyone waited anxiously for the approval.

“At exactly 1:00 p.m., Tzipa approached the offices with 60 family passports... Reb Chaim Ber Wilschansky followed her from behind. As she entered the building, Chaim Ber noticed armed soldiers standing next to a car and paying close attention to them. A moment later, Tzipa emerged from the building looking disturbed. Something was amiss; they had refused to touch the passports. Moments later, Chaim Ber saw the soldiers approach Tzipa and order her into the car — with all the passports still in her possession...”

All the *anash* in Lvov were gripped with fright. The authorities clearly had a list of the Chassidim and even knew their locations — within a few hours, her brother Mendel Gorelick and her son Mottel Kozliner were arrested as well. Everyone expected swift retaliation; the entire effort



A GROUP OF CHASSIDIM WHO ESCAPED ON TES KISLEV 5707\*.

had gone to waste, mass arrests were sure to follow, and the families were destined to a dark future in the Soviet Union. All seemed lost.

But none of that occurred. Strangely, no further arrests were made. Mendel Gorelick and Mottel Kozliner were released shortly after Shabbos. Tzipa remained in prison (where she spent a year-and-a-half) but it seemed that a major crisis had been averted.

Confused, the *vaad* decided to try their luck again. Heavy bribes were once again submitted to the OVIR officials and, to their shock and delight, the approvals were delivered. It seemed that there was hope after all. (One possible explanation is that the local authorities orchestrated the arrests to squeeze more money out of the Chassidim; either way, it seemed to be an open miracle.)

The preparations went into high gear. Reb Sholom Mendel was informed, and he in turn wrote to Reb Yisrael Jacobson in New York. “I was told that in these days, some 3-400 will come, and it is hoped that the entire affair will conclude this month, with Hashem’s help.”

The train was arranged. Tes Kislev was zero hour.

## Meanwhile, in New York...

On the morning of Tes Kislev, the nurse tending to the Frierdiker Rebbe’s medical needs knocked on the door of the *yechidus* room to administer a vaccine but heard no response. She opened the door and approached the Frierdiker Rebbe, but the Frierdiker Rebbe did not respond to her at all.

Frightened that something was wrong, she ran to call Rebbetzin Nechama Dina, who rushed into the room and was met with the same result. She immediately called several *bochurim* from the yeshiva; her son-in-law [the Rebbe] was not far away, she told them: “Call him immediately.”

The Rebbe rushed into the room and noticed that the Frierdiker Rebbe’s mouth was moving silently. The Rebbe leaned over, listened closely, and told everyone that they could calm down. The Frierdiker Rebbe was reciting the words of *Az yashir*. It wasn’t a medical emergency — it was clearly a spiritual matter.

Meanwhile, half-a-world away, dramatic events were playing out.

In Russia of those days, nothing was on-time or planned in advance. Trains could be arranged on a moment’s notice. When, on Tes Kislev, the train was ready to move,

it was necessary to rush the news to all the Chassidim, giving them only a few short hours to grab all their belongings and make their way to the train station. The stream of hundreds of people to the train station, many of them bearded Chassidim, attracted attention. The fact that none of them spoke Polish — the language of their “homeland” — didn’t help the situation. For the most part, the families did their best to remain silent throughout the trip to the train and the processing.

Fifty *anash* families — 240 souls — gathered on the train, creating the largest such group by far. The tension was palpable. Every single passenger was committing a serious crime which could bring on the worst possible punishment. Freedom — if achieved — would end some 25 years of terrible suffering and persecution. Their very lives hung in the balance.

The train began to move and soon reached the border. All the men were asked to step outside into the freezing cold, where their documents were checked one by one. The women’s documents were inspected on the train.

One Chossid, Reb Berel Gurevitch, didn’t have proper documentation and



SEVERAL MEMBERS OF THE SASONKIN FAMILY WHO SUCCEEDED IN CROSSING THE BORDER, PHOTOGRAPHED SOON AFTER THEIR ESCAPE FROM THE SOVIET UNION.

LIBRARY OF AGUDAS CHASSIDEI CHABAD

was placed under arrest. Reb Zalman Sudakevitch, whose papers weren’t in order either, hid under a massive pile of luggage for several hours; for good measure, several people sat down on the pile. It took him several days to recover from the ordeal.

After several hours and plenty of bribes, the guards at the border came to the conclusion that all was in order and allowed the train to continue. Everyone remained absolutely silent as the train inched forward.

Then, the long-awaited moment: the train crossed the border. The

relief was palpable. Spontaneously, the Chassidim on the train began to sing, “*Padah beshalom...*”

Back in New York, the Rebbe listened as the Frierdiker Rebbe recited *Az Yashir*. After concluding, he began reciting it again from the beginning. Suddenly, he stopped and said, “*Baruch Hashem, m’iz durchgegangen, durchgegangen genug*— they have passed through, they have passed through enough.”

Several hours later, a telegram arrived in 770; the Chassidim had crossed the border safely.



[This story about the Frierdiker Rebbe in New York was told over by the Rebbe during his visit to Paris in 5707\*. The story is told in various versions and presented here according to the account of Reb Zalman Sudakevitch.]

## Freedom!

This group was the largest and most significant. While small groups left earlier and several more followed, this train contained the largest by far — 240 Lubavitcher Chassidim, saved from under the noses of the Soviets. The Frierdiker Rebbe sent an emotional letter to the Chassidim:

“To those who are dear and beloved to me and close to my heart, the students of my holy father; may his merit, alongside the merit of all our holy Rabbeim, hover over you and your families...”

“*Baruch Hashem Elokeinu v'Elokei avoseinu v'raboseinu*, who has saved you and your families, and has brought us to this day... We all hope that we will be able to, very soon,

meet with each other, and we will all do everything in our power to help you settle down with good *parnassah* and schools for the children.

“May Hashem see our broken and mourning hearts over our beloved brothers and sisters, Temimim, Chassidim *v'yesharim*, who were killed, slaughtered, and burned in sanctification of His name. May He avenge their revenge, and take us with our righteous Moshiach to our Holy Land...”<sup>2</sup>

In a second letter, the Frierdiker Rebbe expressed his wish to receive photographs of all the newly arrived Chassidim, with lists of their names.

“My next memory from those years,” says Rabbi Alevsky, “is from right after we crossed the border. We were all gathered in a big hall in Krakow on Friday night, a short time after we arrived. Everyone was in very high spirits; a grand *farbrengen* took place, and lots of *l'chaim* was passed around.

“After two weeks in Poland, the Bricha smuggled us over the border into Czechoslovakia and then to the American Zone in Austria, where we were set up in a Displaced Persons Camp in Wegscheid. Other Chassidim were in Peking.

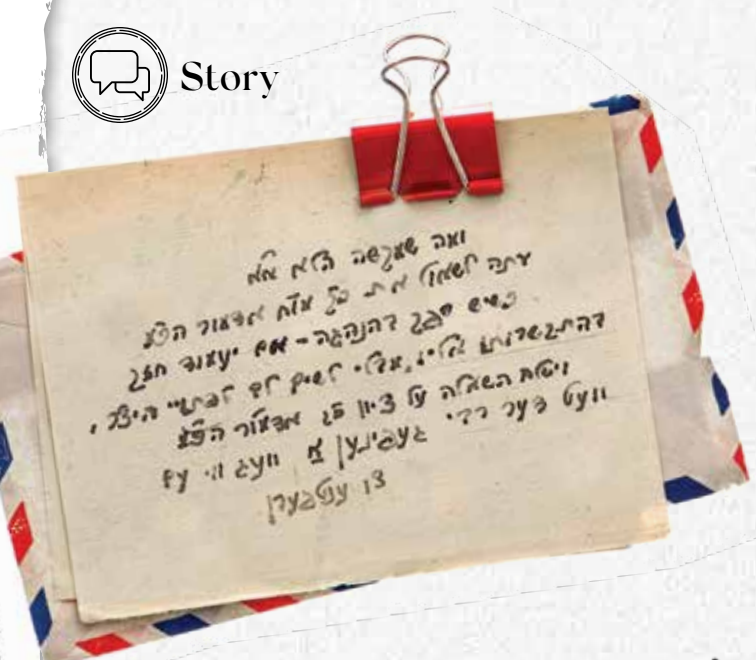
“We were part of a large Lubavitch group in Wegscheid; Reb Shlomo Chaim Kesselman, Reb Saadia Liberow and other prominent Chassidim were with us, and they set up a *cheder* and *yeshiva* where we were able to finally begin learning Torah without fear.”

For the Chassidim it was without exaggeration a modern-day *yetzias Mitzrayim*. They would finally have the ability to live normal lives. They would be able to raise their children as Yidden without fear. And, most importantly, they would be able to reunite with the Rebbe. 1

1. Teshura Veisfish-Zalmanov — Iyar 18, 5769
2. Igros Kodesh vol. 9, p. 187.

A PARTIAL LIST OF CHASSIDIM RESIDING IN POKING. NOTE REBBETZIN CHANA'S NAME AT THE VERY TOP OF THE LIST.

1900	1901	1902	1903	1904	1905	1906	1907	1908	1909	1910	1911	1912	1913	1914	1915	1916	1917	1918	1919	1920	1921	1922	1923	1924	1925	1926	1927	1928	1929	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036	2037	2038	2039	2040	2041	2042	2043	2044	2045	2046	2047	2048	2049	2050	2051	2052	2053	2054	2055	2056	2057	2058	2059	2060	2061	2062	2063	2064	2065	2066	2067	2068	2069	2070	2071	2072	2073	2074	2075	2076	2077	2078	2079	2080	2081	2082	2083	2084	2085	2086	2087	2088	2089	2090	2091	2092	2093	2094	2095	2096	2097	2098	2099	2100	2101	2102	2103	2104	2105	2106	2107	2108	2109	2110	2111	2112	2113	2114	2115	2116	2117	2118	2119	2120	2121	2122	2123	2124	2125	2126	2127	2128	2129	2130	2131	2132	2133	2134	2135	2136	2137	2138	2139	2140	2141	2142	2143	2144	2145	2146	2147	2148	2149	2150	2151	2152	2153	2154	2155	2156	2157	2158	2159	2160	2161	2162	2163	2164	2165	2166	2167	2168	2169	2170	2171	2172	2173	2174	2175	2176	2177	2178	2179	2180	2181	2182	2183	2184	2185	2186	2187	2188	2189	2190	2191	2192	2193	2194	2195	2196	2197	2198	2199	2200	2201	2202	2203	2204	2205	2206	2207	2208	2209	2210	2211	2212	2213	2214	2215	2216	2217	2218	2219	2220	2221	2222	2223	2224	2225	2226	2227	2228	2229	2230	2231	2232	2233	2234	2235	2236	2237	2238	2239	2240	2241	2242	2243	2244	2245	2246	2247	2248	2249	2250	2251	2252	2253	2254	2255	2256	2257	2258	2259	2260	2261	2262	2263	2264	2265	2266	2267	2268	2269	2270	2271	2272	2273	2274	2275	2276	2277	2278	2279	2280	2281	2282	2283	2284	2285	2286	2287	2288	2289	2290	2291	2292	2293	2294	2295	2296	2297	2298	2299	2300	2301	2302	2303	2304	2305	2306	2307	2308	2309	2310	2311	2312	2313	2314	2315	2316	2317	2318	2319	2320	2321	2322	2323	2324	2325	2326	2327	2328	2329	2330	2331	2332	2333	2334	2335	2336	2337	2338	2339	2340	2341	2342	2343	2344	2345	2346	2347	2348	2349	2350	2351	2352	2353	2354	2355	2356	2357	2358	2359	2360	2361	2362	2363	2364	2365	2366	2367	2368	2369	2370	2371	2372	2373	2374	2375	2376	2377	2378	2379	2380	2381	2382	2383	2384	2385	2386	2387	2388	2389	2390	2391	2392	2393	2394	2395	2396	2397	2398	2399	2400
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# דער רבי וועט געפינען אַ וועג...

לזכות  
כל נכדינו שיחיו  
שיגדלו לתורה לחופה ולמעשים טובים  
לנח"ר כ"ק אדמו"ר

נדפס ע"י  
הרה"ת ר' יצחק מאיר וזוגתו מרת לאה  
שיחיו  
שפאלטר

## The Perfect Home

AS TOLD BY RABBI YANKY BELL (EL CERRITO, CA)

Two-and-a-half years after we moved on shlichus to El Cerrito, California we *baruch Hashem* outgrew our second home. The *peulos* were blossoming and we were determined to expand our brand new preschool, but with a tiny home with bedrooms right off the living room and a growing family, we began looking for a more suitable home to grow our shlichus.

Our town of 25,000 residents in the San Francisco Bay area has no standard code for home building. The homes are small and every one is built in its own unique way. During the month of Adar 5779 we set out on an intense search for a home that would suit

our needs, but after visiting over 25 houses—over a period of six months—we were drained. Even the one home we initially thought would work, remained out of reach as the owners refused to rent it to us since we planned on running a preschool on the premises. The fact that the local real estate market is very tough, with so few homes on the market and many potential renters and buyers, did not make our search any easier.

Tishrei came and went. On Motzei Simchas Torah my wife and I reflected on the many *peulos* we were forced to have in such cramped quarters and we came to the concrete conclusion that the current format was untenable.



I was scheduled to fly to New York the next evening together with a *mekurav* to bring him to the Ohel for the first time, and we decided that on this trip I would write everything to the Rebbe and ask for a *bracha* that we find the right home so we can move on to the next stage in our shlichus.

We caught the red-eye flight from San Francisco and landed at JFK early in the morning of 25 Tishrei. Arriving at the Ohel we learned Chassidus, davened Shacharis, and I explained to my friend how to write a *pan*. I then sat down to write my own letter to the Rebbe in great detail. I specified every reason why we needed to move and how exhaustive the search had been until now. Aside from the challenge of finding the right space, there was the issue of finding owners that would agree to rent their homes to us even though we had a preschool.

I poured out my heart to the Rebbe in that letter begging for a *bracha* that the right house should come up quickly and that we should manage to either secure the rental or perhaps manage to buy.

Upon leaving the Ohel we caught an Uber to Crown Heights to spend the time until our flight back to California. As soon as we arrived, my wife called me with some exciting news. A house had just come up on Craigslist the night before and she went to see it while I was in the Ohel.

Lo and behold, the home was a dream come true! The ground floor has a large open space for our preschool and *peulos* and the family living space is on

a separate floor with its own entrance, and it even has a large backyard and adequate parking on site. Finding such a property in El Cerrito is absolutely unheard of!

The news was exhilarating but we knew that there was a long road ahead of us. The cost of rent was almost double what we were paying for our current home, but we understood that the increase in the budget was necessary for us to continue our shlichus.

In our past experience with renting homes in the area, it had been easier to be approved as renters when the owners met with us directly, but this home was being managed and rented by realtors which we worried would lessen our chances. However, with the fact that the home came to our attention in a way in which we felt the Rebbe's direct *bracha*, we confidently contacted the realtors with an offer to rent the home.

To our surprise and relief, the realtors, who we discovered were Jewish, guided us through the process and ensured that we were able to sign the lease in a very short time. We would have never managed to do it without them.

On Erev Shabbos 17 Cheshvan 5780 we signed the lease and on 17 Kislev we moved into the new home of Chabad Lubavitch of El Cerrito—a move that has brought much growth and *bracha* to our shlichus. ①

## YOUR STORY

Share your story with A Chassidisher Derher by emailing [stories@derher.org](mailto:stories@derher.org).



JEM 14574

לע"נ  
ר' יצחק בן ר' יעקב ע"ה  
חנוכה  
גלב"ע ט' אדר שני ה'תשס"ה  
ת"נ צ"ב

נדפס ע"י נכדו  
הרה"ת ר' חיים צבי וזוגתו מרת חנה  
ומשפחתם שיחיו  
חנוכה



# מרבִּים בשמחה! Joyous moments with Rebbe

In honor of the month of Adar II, in the spirit of מרבִּים בשמחה, we present a beautiful photo gallery of various joyous moments with the Rebbe throughout the years, along with some background information. Through living with these precious moments and increasing in simcha, may we merit the ultimate simcha, שמחת עולם על ראשם, with Moshiach now.

## THE REBBE WANTS TO SEE HER!

Mr. Jeffrey Kimball was an early supporter and close friend of Lubavitch in Springfield, MA, led by Rabbi Yisroel and Vivi Deren. He merited to attend many Machane Yisroel *yechidusen* as a member of the fund.

At one *yechidus*, the Rebbe asked why he hadn't mentioned his daughter. Mr. Kimball responded briefly that thank G-d his daughter was doing well and all was fine. Six months later at the next meeting, the Rebbe once again enquired about his daughter to which he replied the same. Six months after that the Rebbe asked once more, this time inquiring if he had brought her with him. Kimball replied that he had not because she was currently in college.

At that point, Rabbi Deren pointed out that the Rebbe had already asked about her three times. "Don't you realize?" he asked. "The Rebbe wants to see her!" So at the next Machane Yisroel Development Fund meeting on 23 Adar 5750\*, he returned, this time with his daughter beside him. As they approached and the Rebbe saw her, they were greeted with a warm and radiant smile.

## THE REBBE'S DEAL

In Elul 5748\* the Rebbe spoke constantly about building, buying and renovating Jewish institutions around the world. Inspired by this, plans began for an expansion of 770 starting with a groundbreaking on 17 Elul.

Mr. David Chase, who funded the initiative, had personally informed the Rebbe about the ceremony and kindly requested that the Rebbe participate. Surprisingly the Rebbe agreed, but on the condition that Mr. Chase in return deliver a few words in his *mamme-lashon*, in Yiddish.

At the joyous event, the Rebbe said a *sicha* expounding on the significance and lesson of a groundbreaking. Afterwards, he turned to Mr. Chase to fulfill his part of the “deal.” Chase spoke briefly and concluded by saying,

“To all of you who listen to me, I can tell you in the truth that no one in my life had a greater and more profound effect on me than our great rabbi whom we all love, Rabbi Schneerson. Rebbe, I know I promised you to speak in Yiddish, but what can I do... I’ve nearly entirely forgotten this language. But one thing I’ll say: *Rebbe! Ich libbe dir zayer zayer asach*. Next time we get together, I promise to speak a little more *mamme-lashon*...”

The Rebbe’s holy eyes were fixed on Chase and as he concluded with this genuine expression of love, the Rebbe’s face lit up with a broad smile, lasting quite a long time.





## SHEVA BRACHOS AT THE FARBRENGEN

Upon their engagement in 5743\*, Menachem and Devorah Emanuel—both baalei teshuva studying in Crown Heights—sent in to the Rebbe two possible wedding dates. The Rebbe advised them to choose the earlier one, 12 Tishrei.

On the day of the wedding they received a surprising call from Rabbi Klein letting them know that for spiritual reasons the Rebbe is going to farbreng that night for 13 Tishrei (instead of the night after). For their benefit, the Rebbe asked that they start on time and to inform the guests to have in mind when washing that they will do *sheva brachos* at the farbrengen in 770.

After the wedding, they arrived with all the guests to 770. The Rebbe began to speak of *simchas chosson v'kallah*, saying that since some people may have not made it to the wedding because of the farbrengen, *sheva brachos* should be said to ensure nothing is lacking.

As the guests bentched, the Rebbe joyously announced with a cheerful smile and a wave of his holy hand, “Now everybody can say l’chaim, ולחיים ולברכה!” As some began raising their cups, the Rebbe continued, “Earlier, people said l’chaim as a favor to me, now say l’chaim for real.” Gradually the sound of l’chaim resounded through the room with the Rebbe responding audibly to each one. After the *sheva brachos*, wedding niggunim were sung.



## FIRST ENCOUNTER

Ahead of Tishrei 5736\*, Israeli photographer Levi Freidin arrived in New York just in time to experience the special month with the Rebbe for the first time. Immediately upon arrival he began photographing in 770, unafraid to get up close to take the photos he wanted. Being a novelty at the time, his efforts were met with challenges and criticism by many who deemed it disrespectful. On Motzei Rosh Hashanah he photographed *Kos Shel Bracha* from the side.

As it concluded, the Rebbe was about to leave and noticed Freidin, perhaps a bit overwhelmed by the situation. To put him at ease the Rebbe sat back down and said, “*Nu? Ich gei shoin bald avek* (Nu? I’m leaving soon),” and with a big smile, posed for a picture. After he snapped a set of photos, the Rebbe stood to leave and wished him a *shana tovah u’mesukah*.

This would be one of the first of his many special experiences, returning annually for nearly 20 years, meriting a unique relationship with the Rebbe.





JEM 1410

JEM 103153

## A MOST JOYOUS PURIM

After Mincha in the downstairs shul of 770 on Purim 5749\*, the Rebbe distributed dollars to men, women, and children. A very special simcha was noticeable on the Rebbe's holy face, smiling to many, especially children who went by in costume. The surrounding crowd of Chassidim sang joyously.

Later that night, word spread that Maariv would also take place in the main shul. Many flocked to 770 and festive dancing broke out. After Maariv the Rebbe said a *sicha* encouraging the fulfilment of עד דלא ידע, and then proceeded to distribute dollars for the second time. The singing, dancing and farbrenging intensified and continued through the night.





## UPLIFTED!

Shortly before the Lag B'omer parade in 5747, organizer Rabbi J.J. Hecht had written to the Rebbe mentioning that the preparations weren't going so well and that he was worried about the outcome.

At the end of the greatly successful parade, Rabbi Hecht said to the Rebbe that he hopes he received nachas ruach. The Rebbe answered "Very [much so]. What about your marah shechorah [melancholy]?" Rabbi Hecht responded, "The Rebbe schlepped me out of it," to which the Rebbe responded, with a swift raise of his hand, "Aroisegeshlept? Oifgehoiben! — Schlepped you out of it? [I] lifted [you] up!"



## HERE TO SEE THE REBBE

On Erev Shabbos, 4 Sivan 5751\* Mr. Zalman Jaffe, who had arrived in Crown Heights for Shavuos, ran to 770 after hearing that the Rebbe would be going to the Ohel.

Mr. Zalmon Jaffe related:

The Rebbe emerged from the door of 770. I wished him a Good Erev Shabbos and a warm “Thank You” for everything.

The Rebbe asked, “What are you doing here?” To which he replied, “I have come to see the Rebbe Shlita.” The Rebbe gave me a lovely smile, and two cameras clicked at the same time.

The Rebbe was very happy and gave me a nickel. He then inquired, “Where is Mrs. Jaffe?” I said that she was at the apartment preparing the meals. The Rebbe added, “Very well, and hand her this (nickel) from me.”

# Letters

A forum for readers to send their feedback, add to, or ask any questions about articles. Submit your letter to [feedback@derher.org](mailto:feedback@derher.org).

Submissions may be slightly modified by our editorial staff before publishing.

## Dealing with Loss

Dear Derher Editors,

I really love your magazine and all of its amazing content. I would just like to share a personal story connected with the Shevat issue. The magazine featured an article about the Rebbe's perspective on dealing with the loss of a loved one. Just recently, before I got the *Derher* I suffered the loss of a very close friend named Jerry. I had met him recently and shortly after I met him he passed away. On the Shabbos after his passing I was feeling really down. When I got to shul I saw the *Derher* and it had a really powerful effect on me and I would like to thank you for your amazing magazine.

Bourch Martin

## The Early Years of Beis Rivkah

Dear Editors,

As per your Bais Rivkah article [A School With a Mission, *Derher*, Shevat 5782], a bit more research would have led you to who the principal in those early years was; namely, my father Reb Elye Gross.

Many ladies of that era often stop me in the street and comment on how

he influenced them in the early years. Rebbetzin Rivka Eisenbach of Montreal recently told me how Rebbetzin Chana used to call our house and inquire about the girls individually, and inquire about the institution as well.

*Hatzlacha* on your future research,

Noochie Gross  
BROOKLYN, NY

## Correction

In the Kislev 5782 magazine (page 28), we incorrectly stated that the Tzemach Tzedek was *nistalek* 200 years before 5749\*. That is incorrect. The year 5749\* was 200 years from the Tzemach Tzedek's birth.



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