

A Chassidisher **Derher**

א חסידישער דערהער

Spiritual Defiance

THE REBBE'S RESPONSE
TO THE HOLOCAUST

"In My Room, In 770!"

RABBI MOSHE YITZCHOK HECHT

A **TOWERING GIANT**

THE STORY OF THE REBBE'S FATHER,
HARAV LEVI YITZCHOK, AND HIS RISE TO
LEADERSHIP IN A SPIRITUALLY DARK TIME.



MENACHEM AV 5782

ISSUE 121 (198)

AUGUST 2022



לעילוי נשמת
הרה"ח התמים ר' יחיא'ל דב בן ר' אברהם מנחם ע"ה
נעלקען
נלב"ע כ' אב ה'תשפ"א
תנ"צ'ב'ה'

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

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



In the early years of the Rebbe's *nesius*, he often received groups of students for *yechidus* and the students were given the opportunity to ask questions. In one such instance, a student asked if the Rebbe can perform miracles.

After offering a response from a mystical/Kabbalistic approach, the Rebbe concluded:

Now I want to ask you a question, and at the same time try to perform a miracle.

Everything has a purpose. What was the purpose of our coming together here tonight? Certainly it was not merely to ask questions and receive answers, good or bad. Rather it was to achieve something.

All of us here are young, myself included, and have tens of years yet before us. Since six million of our people in Russia,

Poland and Hungary have been lost to us through Hitler, we have a special task to accomplish — the work that they could have done, at least a major part of it.

Everyone counts. No Jew is expendable. We all must work to the fullest capacity, every one of us. In our day-to-day life we must use our full strength to add to the side of good, and by this we will gain a life of happiness and harmony — and all this can be done only through a life of Torah and mitzvos tested by our 3,500-year history. This obligation lies upon every Jew and G-d has given him the power to carry this through successfully.

And if each of us, beginning tomorrow, should add in his own personal life more Torah and mitzvos and influence the environment in the same direction, if we all will do this, myself included, this indeed will be our miracle.



The current edition of the Derher magazine includes a partial overview of the Rebbe's approach to the Holocaust and what it means for us Yidden today. More than anything else, it is our duty to carry on as proud Jews, teaching and spreading Torah and mitzvos, and paving the way for the *geulah*.

May we indeed merit the fulfillment of “וצום החמישי..” יהיה לבית יהודה לששון ולשמחה ולמעדים טובים והאמת והשלום “אהבו”—with the coming of Moshiach, *teikef umiyad Mammosh*.

The Editors

חג הגאולה י"ב-יג תמוז ה'תשפ"ב
מאה ועשרים שנה



לזכות
הילדה פייגה טאובה
לרגל יום הולדתה
כ"ד מנחם אב
יה"ר שתגדל לתורה לחופה
ולמעשים טובים מתוך
בריאות נכונה ושפע בגו"ר
לנח"ר כ"ק אדמו"ר
והוריה הי"ו

15 Menachem-Av

Torah and Tzedaka

The Gemara tells us¹ that from 15 Menachem Av and on, one must increase in Torah study. Since the summer has drawn to an end and the nights are longer, they should be used for additional study.

If this is true of an ordinary year, all the more so does it apply to a *Shemitah* year which is already devoted to increasing Torah learning, with the extra time created by refraining from working the land.

Although when it comes to working the land, there is no *Shemitah* outside of Eretz Yisroel, the lesson of increasing Torah learning is universal.

(Additionally, there are some laws of *Shemitah* that do apply everywhere, like *shemitas kesafim*, relinquishing of debts.)

It is also important to increase tzedakah on 15 Av, and this too is emphasized in a *Shemitah* year: Tzedakah is a central part of *Shemitah* as we leave all produce

of the land to the poor.

In fact, this is the highest level of tzedakah since the poor don't suffer the humiliation of being on the receiving end. Rather they are getting their portion directly from Hashem, who declared all land public during the *Shemitah* year. ❶

(Adapted from the sicha of 15 Menachem-Av 5747)

1. Taanis 31a.



לעבן מיט'ן רבין



טור 'לעבן מיט'ן רבין' הוקדש לזכרון ולעילוי נשמת
 ר' שמואל ב"ר יהושע אליהו ז"ל
 ואשתו מרת שרה ע"ה בת ר' יקותיאל ומרת לאה הי"ד
 ת'נצ'ב'ה

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

"I Am Also After My Bar Mitzvah"

AV 5742*



Presented here are selected entries from the diary of Aharon Kurant,
 who recorded his observations of what transpired throughout this
 month in 770, including the siyum of the third sefer Torah haklali.

WEDNESDAY - ROSH CHODESH MENACHEM AV

While distributing coins for tzedakah on his way into *krias haTorah*, the Rebbe noticed a little girl in a carriage by the entrance of 770. He approached the stroller and pressed a coin into her hand.

THURSDAY - 2 MENACHEM AV

After *krias haTorah*, the Rebbe waved to a little girl. When he left 770 on the way home, the Rebbe gave tzedakah; upon entering the car, he began to peruse a newspaper that he was carrying. When the Rebbe returned to 770, Rabbi Berel Levy was standing at the entrance to *Gan Eden Hatachton* and informed the Rebbe that he had a photo of the *kever* of the Rebbe Maharash. Rabbi Levy then went into *Gan Eden Hatachton* and spoke to the Rebbe for about 10 minutes.

EREV SHABBOS - 3 MENACHEM AV

The Rebbe came in to 770 after speaking with Rabbi Binyomin Klein in the car. Later, the Rebbe went to the library holding what looked like a copy of “The Jewish Press.”

SHABBOS PARSHAS DEVARIM - CHAZON

On his way into Shacharis, the Rebbe notified that he plans to farbreng in the afternoon.

In the first *sicha* at the farbrengen, the Rebbe discussed the famous teaching of Reb Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev that on this Shabbos everyone is shown a vision of the third Beis Hamikdash. The Rebbe explained that although we don’t personally see it, our *mazal* (*neshamah*) sees it. We see this from the story of Chananya, Mishael, and Azarya, who were *tzaddikim*, but still did not merit to see this vision – yet they nonetheless trembled, as their *neshamah* experienced it.

In the second *sicha*, the Rebbe mentioned that this week (5 Av) is the *yahrzeit* of the Arizal, who was the first to reveal the innermost secrets of the Torah.

Later in the farbrengen the Rebbe discussed this week’s *Pirkei Avos*. One of the lessons explained was that our ideal *avodah* is to submit ourselves completely and ensure that our entire day is full of Torah and mitzvos. Similarly, when we encourage others to grow in Yiddishkeit, our objective is that



THE KEVORIM OF THE TZEMACH TZEDEK (LEFT) AND THE REBBE MAHARASH (RIGHT) AS THEY WERE DISCOVERED IN THE 5740S*, DAMAGED AND UNDER LAYERS OF OVERGROWTH.

they adopt a lifestyle full of Torah and mitzvos, not compromising on anything. Of course, we begin by asking: Did you lay tefillin today? Do you wear a tallis katan? Do you have kosher food? Start with one mitzvah, then the ten *mitvzoim*, until they finally keep all 613 mitzvos.

In a *sicha* about *Hilchos Beis Habechira*, the Rebbe discussed the shape of the menorah. He said that although some *sefarim* describe the shape of the menorah to be a semi-circle, and they even bring a proof from the Rambam, that is only because they did not see the original manuscript of the Rambam, which was only recently discovered. There, the Rambam illustrates the menorah with straight, diagonal branches.

Towards the end of the farbrengen, the Rebbe explained how the *kedushah* of the Beis Hamikdash is eternal. Nowadays, this is expressed in all shuls and *batei midrash*, which will be replanted in Eretz Yisroel when Moshiach comes. This does not only refer to the congregation and occupants of each shul – but even the physical ceiling, walls, and floor of the shul and its materials—wood, bricks, and dirt, will all be replanted in Yerushalayim. This is especially the case regarding the shul in which the Friediker Rebbe learned and davened for many years, which indeed has an eternal holiness. Thus these walls and bricks will soon be attached to the *Beis Hamikdash* in Yerushalayim, including the *ezras nashim*, which will be attached to the *ezras nashim* of the *Beis Hamikdash*. Similarly, all the *hachlatos* made here in this shul will have a greater effect and a special long-lasting power.

When it was announced that the third *sefer Torah haklali* would be completed on Chamisha-Asar b’Av, the Rebbe instructed the person who had



made the announcement, as well as the *sofer*, Rabbi Zirkind, and Rashag, to say *l'chaim*, and then began singing the *hakafos niggun*.

The Rebbe gave Rabbi Mentlik a bottle of *mashke* to distribute to those around him and told him that he should have *hatzlacha* with *hafatzas haTorah*.

After Havdalah, a child under bar mitzvah drank the wine. The Rebbe smiled as the child finished *rov kos*.

SUNDAY - 5 MENACHEM AV

In the afternoon, the Rebbe went to the Ohel. Before the Rebbe went to *mikveh*, he gave some letters to Rabbi Binyomin Klein. After he returned from the *mikveh*, he distributed tzedakah. A little girl took a coin and ran right out. The Rebbe called out after her "*leigt arein in pushka*" (put it in the *pushka*). The Rebbe waited until the girl returned to the lobby, smiled, and entered his room.

MONDAY - 6 MENACHEM AV

Tonight, the basketball coach¹ was present during Maariv, and the Rebbe smiled at him.

WEDNESDAY - 8 MENACHEM AV, EREV TISHA B'AV

When the Rebbe arrived to 770 this morning, he reprimanded all those who were standing and

waiting for him in the corridor: "*In der tzeit voss m'vart do, ken men besser lernen Torah, Hilchos Beis Habechirah, un helfen tzum binyan Beis Hamikdash*" (Instead of loitering here, you can utilize the time productively to learn Torah, *Hilchos Beis Habechirah*, and help rebuild the *Beis Hamikdash*). As the Rebbe headed towards his room, he repeated again in a lower tone, "*Voss vart men do!*" (Why are they lingering here?!)

The Rebbe came down for Maariv with his siddur and *kinos*. He sat at the edge of a wooden crate coated in plastic. During Eicha, the Rebbe read along with the *baal koreh*. He sat on the crate with his head slightly inclined and his arm resting on his thigh. After Eicha and *kinos*, the Rebbe went home with a *sefer* in his hand. (Usually, the Rebbe would take home letters or the like.) The Rebbe walked out rather slowly, and the car's back seat was covered with a board of plywood.

THURSDAY - TISHA B'AV

During Shacharis, the Rebbe had a siddur and an Or Hatorah open on his *shtender*. Throughout davening, the Rebbe read from the Or Hatorah and would periodically turn the pages of his siddur to wherever the *minyan* was up to. When the *chazzan* said Shema, the Rebbe covered his eyes, and during the first half of *chazaras hashatz*, the Rebbe continued to look in the Or Hatorah. When the



THE REBBE RETURNS TO 770 AFTER RECITING KIDDUSH LEVANA.

minyán began *shemoneh esreh*, the Rebbe moved his crate to the side as if he was about to take three steps back, but he didn't step back.

On his way out of Mincha, the Rebbe noticed a tefillin bag on top of a siddur and moved it aside.

Right after Maariv, the Rebbe replaced the bookmark of his siddur to *kiddush levanah*, and as he made his exit, Rabbi Groner told the Rebbe that there was a moon visible. The Rebbe went outside to do *kiddush levanah*, and before facing *mizrach* he glanced at the moon. After *Aleinu*, the Rebbe put his siddur under his arm and shook two strands of his *tzitzis* three or four times. Before departing, the Rebbe wished a *gut chodesh* to those standing near him.

SUNDAY - 12 MENACHEM AV

As the Rebbe entered 770, he waved to those standing on either side of the path. In *Gan Eden Hatachton*, the Rebbe turned towards the children in the corridor and began singing *Sheyibaneh*, encouraging them to sing along.

MONDAY - 13 MENACHEM AV

The Rebbe left his room to go to Mincha, and upon seeing a *chosson* waiting in *Gan Eden Hatachton*, went back into his room to get the siddur. As he gave his siddur to the *chosson*, he told him "*Zolst oisbetten alle bakoshos*," (ask for all your requests successfully).

TUESDAY - 14 MENACHEM AV

Today there was a *farbrengen* in honor of Chamisha-Asar b'Av. At this farbrengen, the Rebbe once again told the *sofer*, Rabbi Zirkind, and Rashag to say *l'chaim*, and told them “*Hatzlacha rabba, l'chaim velivracha*.” The Rebbe then once again instructed that someone announce where the *siyum sefer Torah* will take place. Later during the farbrengen, the *hakafos niggun* was sung.

WEDNESDAY - 15 MENACHEM AV

Today the *siyum sefer Torah* took place. It is the third *sefer Torah haklali* written under the auspices of Tomchei Temimim.²

The procession took place in the wide service lane right outside the yeshiva on 855 Eastern Parkway (Chovevei Torah). On his way to the Ohel, the Rebbe drove past the *siyum sefer Torah*, and the car slowed for the Rebbe to observe what was going on. After that, the Torah was brought to 770.

At Mincha, the Rebbe handed a coin to a child on his father's shoulders. The Rebbe motioned to the child to put the coin into the *pushka*, and he dropped it into the top hole. The Rebbe then gave the child another coin and signaled that he should put this one into the lower hole.

THURSDAY - 16 MENACHEM AV

For *kriah* this morning, the new Sefer Torah was used. After *Yehalelu*, the *sofer* began singing “*Sisu v'simchu*”, and the Rebbe tapped on the *shtender* to encourage the singing. Even after the Torah was returned to the *aron*, the Rebbe continued to encourage the singing for a short while. During all of this, the Rebbe was facing the *aron*.

FRIDAY - 17 MENACHEM AV

The Rebbe went to the library carrying a newspaper with him. As he exited 770, the door was opened by someone coming in from outside. The Rebbe made an about-face and went back to his room for a moment. He was also seen holding a new *likkut* (*sicha*).

The Rebbe noticed a boy and gave him a coin for *tzedakah*. The boy, who had just become Bar Mitzvah but wasn't wearing a hat and jacket, told the Rebbe, “I'm already after my Bar Mitzvah!” as the Rebbe generally gave coins to children. The Rebbe responded, “Even after Bar Mitzvah, one



THE SIYUM SEFER TORAH THAT TOOK PLACE OUTSIDE OF 'CHOVEVEI TORAH.'

may still perform the *mitzvah* of *tzedakah*.” The Rebbe added with a smile, “I am also after my Bar Mitzvah.”

SHABBOS PARSHAS EKEV - 18 MENACHEM AV

On his way out to Mincha, someone informed the Rebbe that his daughter was born today. The Rebbe responded, “*Mazal tov, shetizkeh lgadlah l'Torah, l'chuppa, u'lemaasim tovim*.” Afterward, the Rebbe inquired if he had already discussed the name with his spouse.

THURSDAY - 23 MENACHEM AV

When the Rebbe returned to his place after *Krias haTorah*, he smiled and remarked to Rabbi Herszberg from Mexico, “From our *parsha* we can answer some questions on the Yerushalmi.”³ Rabbi Herszberg related afterwards, that around 40 years prior the Frieddiker Rebbe had sent him to the Rebbe and they had spent a full night discussing a particular Yerushalmi.

Later in the afternoon, a group of children from a nearby Camp Gan Yisroel had arrived. After Mincha, the Rebbe looked at the children and waited for a moment. Someone began to sing “*Sheyibane beis hamikdash*” and the Rebbe waved to encourage the singing. ①

1. See Derher Weekly Newsletter, issue 12-13.

2. See *600,000 Souls - The Sefer Torah Haklali*, Derher Iyar 5780.

3. Others recall that the Rebbe had told him “A *parshah* [*sugya*] in Yerushalmi.”



כתב יד קודש



לע"נ
מרת צוטייל גיטל ע"ה
ביסטאן
נלב"ע כ"ף מנחם אב ה'תשס"ט

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



NEW REMEDIES

*The Rebbe explains why we are required to study Chassidus today,
even though not everyone did so in previous generations:*

כאשר יבא חולי בגוף - שלא
 יאמר בלבוש (ש) חולי בגוף - שלא
 יאמר בלבוש (ש) חולי בגוף - שלא
 יאמר בלבוש (ש) חולי בגוף - שלא

When a new bodily sickness appears—one that was not around in previous generations—this calls for a new remedy. All the more so when it comes to ailments of the soul, [the remedy] must be brought about by **adding on** new [portions of the] Torah (which, regardless, is already **mandated** according to the Zohar,¹ and also according to *halacha*²).

1. Zohar vol. 1, 12b.

2. See Hilchos Talmud Torah L'Admur Hazaken, 1:1.

כשנחחדש ר"ל חולי בגוף - שלא
 ה' בדור שעבר - מוכרחים לרפואה
 חדשה עאכו"כ בחולי הנפש שצ"ל
לאפשה באורייתא (שבלאה"כ
מוכרח ע"פ הזוה"ק וגם ע"פ נגלה)



New Chassidim

These stories were related by Reb Shem Rokeach. His grandmother, Mrs. Devorah Leah Kleinberg, was a descendant of the Tzemach Tzedek and thus the family was related to the Rebbe and Rebbetzin. Mrs. Kleinberg would speak to the Rebbetzin frequently, and the family's unique connection with the Rebbe and Rebbetzin are the subject of these stories.

One summer, I was standing in front of my home—at that time my grandparents lived with my parents—and a car pulled up. A Lubavitcher got out of the car and asked, “Does Rebbetzin Kleinberg live here?” “Yes,” I replied. Upon hearing this, he gave me a big package and said “This is from the Rebbetzin.”

I brought the package into the house, and told my grandmother that this was from the Rebbetzin. My grandmother opened it, and there was a gorgeous picture of the Rebbe

*‘When are your
grandchildren going
to visit my husband
for a farbrengen?’*

in a gold-and-wooden frame. She called up the Rebbetzin—I was still in the room—and asked “What’s this all about?”

The Rebbetzin answered that she knew my grandmother was a bit depressed, and the Rebbetzin wanted to cheer her up. “Believe me,” the Rebbetzin said, “I went

through 200 photos until I found one that I knew you would enjoy.” And my grandmother did enjoy it. Each night, she would turn to the photo and say, “Good night Rebbe.”

~

לזכות
הת' יהושע תנחום שיחי' גייסינסקי
לרגל יום הולדתו החמש עשרה
כ"ט מנחם אב ה'תשפ"ב

נדפס ע"י הוריו
הרה"ת ר' לוי יצחק וזוגתו מרת
יהודית חנה ומשפחתם שיחי'
גייסינסקי



THE PHOTO CHOSEN BY THE REBBETZIN

*'Look how many
people there are.
The Rebbe didn't
smile at you,
specifically; he
smiled at the olam.'*

Another time, when they were talking on the phone, the Rebbetzin asked my grandmother, "When are your grandchildren going to visit my husband for a farbrengen?" So my grandmother called my mother, "Nu, the children have to go to a farbrengen!" and my mother told my father, "Nu! You have to start taking the kids to farbrengens!" Finally, my father listened to my mother, and he took us to the Rebbe's farbrengen.

I was eight years old at the time. When we arrived at 770, they told us to sit right behind the Rebbe, on the left side. The Rebbe said a *maamar*, and then during the *niggun*, many people stood with their glasses of wine to say *l'chaim*. The Rebbe would nod and say *l'chaim velivracha* to each one.

There I was, an eight-year-old child, standing behind the Rebbe, holding up my cup, wanting the Rebbe to say *l'chaim* to me. Then, the Rebbe turned to me, and with a big smile and nod said, "*L'chaim!*"

"Tatty! The Rebbe saw me!" I exclaimed! "The Rebbe smiled at me!" My father replied: "Look how many people there are. The Rebbe didn't smile at you, specifically; he smiled at the *olam*." And of course, I believed my father.

But the next morning, at 8:05 a.m., my grandmother called my mother and said that the Rebbetzin had called, and said that the first thing that the Rebbe said last night upon arriving home from the farbrengen was, "We have two new Chassidim. Our relatives came." **T**

לזכות
החייל בצבאות ה'
מענדל שיחי'
לרגל יום הולדתו ר"ח מנחם אב
שיגדל להיות חי"ל לנח"ר
כ"ק אדמו"ר

ולזכות אחיו ואחותו
לוי יצחק, מושקא, ברוך שניאור,
מאיר שלמה שיחי

נדפס ע"י הוריו
הרה"ת ר' יוסף מנחם וזוגתו
מרת חנה שיחי
קאמען

In My

In

RABBI MOSHE
YITZCHOK HECHT



The life story of Reb Moshe Yitzchok Hecht is very much intertwined with the story of Chabad in America. His entire being was shlichus, starting with his wedding in Boston, being the first real Chabad function in the state of Massachusetts, which made waves about Chabad's presence in the city.

Rabbi Hecht served on the front lines of Chabad's communal work. He served as a rav, built and directed prestigious chinuch institutions, and was a mentor to thousands of students.

He traveled to tens of cities throughout the world in the shlichus of the Frierdiker Rebbe and the Rebbe, strengthening and encouraging Yidden and Yiddishkeit in those locations. With his inherent powerful oratory skills, he touched the hearts of many, and made then-revolutionary breakthroughs in the practices of Yiddishkeit in America.

But above all, Rabbi Hecht was a real living example of a shliach and Chossid that lived with the Rebbe 24 hours a day. He was mekushar and given over to the Rebbe in every aspect of his life. Rabbi Hecht was zoche to receive exceptional kiruvim from the Rebbe, kiruvim of a nature that were rarely seen elsewhere.

LIKE A FATHER TO HIS SON

The recognition that Reb Moshe Yitzchok Hecht received from the Rebbe after his passing is well known. The Rebbe said a lengthy sicha about Reb Moshe Yitzchok and even requested that a *sefer* be printed in his memory. What is less known is the extraordinary closeness and affection which the Rebbe showed him during his lifetime.

In a letter that Rabbi Hecht sent to the Rebbe, he explained the dire financial state of the yeshiva in New Haven. Finishing his letter stating, "I have asked from all my friends for a donation of \$1,000 dollars to benefit the yeshiva." The Rebbe circled the word *friend*, and wrote: "מאחד מהם - פריינט בודאי שלא לקח עדיין ושמו מנחם שניאורסאהן, —...ומצו"ב (ומצורף בזה) שעק השתתפות from one of them you certainly haven't yet taken and his name is Menachem Schneerson, enclosed is my contribution." The Rebbe included with the letter \$1,000, as one of Rabbi Hecht's "friends."

A similar expression is seen in a letter to Rabbi Hecht in response to his questions and concerns. The Rebbe



THE HECHT BOYS WITH THEIR PARENTS, CIRCA 5693*. FROM RIGHT TO LEFT STAND THE BROTHERS: AVROHOM DOV, SHOLOM (SYDNEY), YAAKOV YEHUDA (JJ), MOSHE YITZCHOK AND PERETZ (SHLOMO ZALMAN ISN'T PICTURED).

again refers to Reb Moshe as a friend, something that is extremely rare:

"עצתי פרטית לו כידידו מאז 40 שנה: המוסדות והפעולות שלו בניו הייווען - גדולות ונפלאות הצליח בתור שלוחו של כ"ק מו"ח אדמו"ר שלוחו של השם ומאמין אני באמונה שלימה שהשם "לא שנית", וכ"ק מו"ח אדמו"ר "עומד ומשמש במרום" ומברך ומצליח את שלוחיו כאז כן עתה והמסקנה בנוגע לתוכן מכתבו פשוטה."

"My personal advice as a friend of over 40 years: The *mosdos* and activities in New Haven are great and wondrous. You have been successful as a shliach of my father-in-law the Rebbe, a shliach of Hashem, and I believe with complete faith that Hashem 'is unchanging', and my father-in-law the Rebbe 'stands and leads from above' and blesses and gives success to his shluchim now just as before, so the conclusion in regards to the content of your letter is simple."

In an interview with the *Derher*, Rabbi Hecht's brother-in-law, Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky relates:

"In 5708*, my sister and brother-in-law were blessed with a baby girl. The Rebbe was informed that day that they had a child. Later in the day, the Rebbe called them on the telephone and said that his mother, Rebbetzin Chana does not have anyone named after her mother, Rebbetzin Rochel. He asked if they would consider giving a name after her mother, Rochel. Of course they readily agreed.

"I don't know of any other case where the Rebbe made such a request. Many hundreds of people throughout the years asked the Rebbe about a name for their children. The Rebbe almost never responded to such requests. The Rebbe often responded that the Arizal taught that the name of a child chosen by parents is a matter of *ruach hako-desh*. Yet, here, the Rebbe himself called, wished Mazal Tov and made this special request which obviously brought much *nachas* to the Rebbe and of course to Rebbetzin Chana herself."

THE REBBE LAUGHED

On Monday, 22 Kislev 5727*, Reb Moshe's two daughters were called into *yechidus* together with their *chassanim*; Malki with her *chosson* Binyoman Katz, and Yuta Dreizel with her *chosson* Yaakov Kaploun. The Rebbe gave them instructions for their *chasunah*.

After they left, the parents of the *kallahs*, Reb Moshe and his wife Rivkah went in. During the *yechidus*, those standing outside the Rebbe's room heard the Rebbe laughing loudly. Upon exiting the *yechidus*, Reb Moshe was asked what was the reason for the laughter.

He explained, "When my daughter Yuta Dreizel was three years old, she had an issue with her eyes and the doctors wanted to operate. I told the Rebbe that I told this to the Frierdiker Rebbe in *yechidus*. The Frierdiker Rebbe requested that I bring my daughter around the table, and the Frierdiker Rebbe looked deeply into her eyes. He then said that we should not do the surgery, "and it won't hurt the *shidduch*."

Reb Moshe continued, "When I told the Rebbe that this is the daughter about whom the Frierdiker Rebbe said "it won't hurt the *shidduch*" the Rebbe laughed strongly.

FORMATIVE YEARS AND WEDDING

Reb Moshe Yitzchok Hecht was born in New York. In his youth he



THE YIDDISH NEWSPAPER "BOSTONER NAVES" REPORTS ON THE WEDDING.

learned in Yeshiva Torah Vodaas, one of the only yeshivos in America at the time. During his time learning there, Reb Yisroel Jacobson started teaching *shiurim* in Tanya to students in the yeshiva. Reb Moshe and his brothers connected with it very much and became Chabad Chassidim.

When the Frierdiker Rebbe came to America in 5700*, Reb Moshe was among the first people to greet him.

In Elul of 5701*, Reb Moshe married his wife Rivkah (née Krinsky), who was from Boston. Their wedding was the first Chabad event in the city and in Massachusetts.



REB MOSHE YITZCHOK AT HIS DESK IN WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS.

5700-1940, 5701-1941, 5702-1942

THE FRIEDIKER REBBE'S LETTER TO RABBI SAVITSKY FROM BOSTON IN RESPONSE TO HIS DESCRIPTION OF THE WEDDING.

Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky relates:

"I remember when Moshe Yitzchok married my sister in July of 1941. It was a beautiful wedding at Hotel Bradford in Boston. That hotel was actually the base of the largest radio station in Massachusetts.

"It was the first time that the Jewish community in Boston—home to approximately 120,000 Jews—had a Chabad event. The Frierdiker Rebbe had just arrived in America and there weren't many Chabad Chassidim in Boston at the time. A significant crowd of Chassidim and *bochurim* as well as many locals attended the wedding, and it was very *lebedik* until late at night."

The *mesader kiddushin* was Rabbi Mordechai Savitsky. After the wedding, he wrote a letter to the Frierdiker Rebbe describing the impact of the *simcha* on the hundreds of people who attended the wedding. The Frierdiker Rebbe responded to him with a beautiful letter thanking him for his report.

FIRST SHLICHUS

In 5702*, Reb Moshe and his wife were sent to Worcester, Massachusetts, as one of the first *shluchim* of the Frierdiker Rebbe to establish Jewish schools there.

The Frierdiker Rebbe told the young couple in a *yechidus*: "Until now you

WHAT ABOUT AHAVAS REI'IM

After the wedding, Reb Shmuel Levitin, the *meshpia* in 770 at the time, related to the Frierdiker Rebbe that some of the *bochurim* who had traveled to Boston for the wedding, went without permission from the *hanhalah* and asked what should be done. The Frierdiker Rebbe remarked: און וואס איז מיט אהבת—רעים And what will be with the love of one's fellow?"

ate *lechem min ha'aretz* (bread from the ground), from now on you will eat *lechem min hashamayim* (bread from heaven). Go to Worcester..."

From the day he arrived, Reb Moshe began working on opening a Jewish school as he was instructed, going door to door recruiting students for the school. Once he had a small number of students, he immediately opened Yeshivas Achei Temimim.

Life for the Hechts was not easy, financially and physically. At the time (1942), World War II was at its height and the standards of living in general were rough. Finding a place to live was almost impossible. At times, there was no heat or electricity at home. Basic staples, like milk and butter were limited. One can only imagine what most of the locals thought of the phenomenon of a religious Jewish family living in Worcester. They were looked at as if from a different planet. Unfortunately, Reb Moshe received much verbal harassment and had stones thrown at him more than once.

Nonetheless he was not deterred. Parents began sending their children and one year after moving to Worcester, he opened a second branch of the school on the east side of town because the



HECHT FAMILY ARCHIVES

existing location was not large enough for the amount of students that wanted to enroll.

Rabbi Hecht gained respect in the city, and together with the opening of the new branch of the yeshiva, he was also appointed as the rav of the Knesses Yisroel Shul. Without delay, he established many *shiurei Torah* in the shul, and rapidly became a well known figure to all types of people in town.

Although he was completely immersed in his shlichus, Rabbi Hecht was intimately involved with the happenings at 770. He spearheaded the efforts of printing the *maamarim* of the Frieddiker Rebbe in 5705*. When the first volume of Sefer Hamaamarim was finally printed in 5711* the Rebbe sent him a letter saying that “he deserves a special thanks because the *sefer* came to print under his initiative.”

NEW HAVEN

A new chapter—which turned out to be a major turning point in his life—began in Elul of 5706*, when Reb Moshe was sent to strengthen the yeshiva that had been opened four years earlier in New Haven, Connecticut, and was struggling to grow.

He received the shlichus in a letter

from the Frieddiker Rebbe. That very same day, he bought a train ticket and went to New Haven. His position in Worcester was filled by his good friend, Reb Hirschel Fogelman.

Reb Moshe reopened Yeshivas Achei Temimim in New Haven, now known as the Southern Connecticut Hebrew Academy.

Immediately, he encountered incredible *bracha* and success and within two years of his arrival, the school grew from a few students to 120!

Here again, the community in New Haven picked up on Rabbi Hecht’s talents and unique personality. On the one hand he was a traditional Chassidic rabbi, appearing to be from the old generation of Eastern Europe. On the other hand, he was born and raised in America and spoke a perfect English. The local community offered him a position as rabbi of the Beth Israel/ Orchard Street Shul, which was the largest orthodox Shul in New Haven with over 700 attendees for the Yomim Noraim. With the Frieddiker Rebbe’s *haskama*, he accepted the position.

Although Reb Moshe was responsible spiritually, physically and financially for the schools, he was also very dedicated to the community. He spent many hours each day speaking to community

members individually, teaching, counseling and participating in lifecycle events.

In an interview with the *Derher*, Reb Moshe’s daughter, Mrs. Malki Katz relates:

“Even before the *nesius*, my father was very close with the Rebbe. As the Rebbe was the head of Merkos L’Inyonei Chinuch, my father would often report to him about what was going on in the schools and would receive the Rebbe’s guidance.

Sometimes my siblings and I would come along with him. When we did, the Rebbe would give us special attention. He would give us gifts and make us feel very good.”

GEVALD, REB MOSHE

Two years before the Frieddiker Rebbe’s *histalkus*, in 5708*, the Rebbe writes to him: “געוואלד ר’ משה וואס וועט זיין דער תכלית. משיח האט געזאגט דעם בעל שם טוב אז ער ווארט מיט זיין קומען אף יפוצו מעיינויותיך חוצה, און דאס האט מען שוין געגבן אונז אויספירן און צום סוף וואס טוט מען אין דעם, נאר וואס דען מ’טוט א טובה און מען מאטערט זיך אין גלות. און דער רבי שליש”א אין מאמר וואו ער בריינגט די ווערטער גאולה העתידה דערמאנט ער גלייך לבוא במהרה בימינו אמן.”

“Gevald, Reb Moshe, what will be the end? Moshiach said to the Baal Shem Tov that he is waiting for the wellsprings of Chassidus to be spread outwards, and this task was given to us; but we do a favor and tire ourselves in *galus*. And the Rebbe Shlit”a says in the *maamar* where he cites the words ‘future *geulah*,’ he immediately adds ‘may it come speedily in our days, amen.’”

ונשלח לשם הר"ר משה יצחק העכט

At one point in 5734*, Rabbi Hecht was going through a particularly hard time, and he sent a letter to the Rebbe pouring out his heart. He asked if the Rebbe could send another shliach to help carry the responsibility of the *mosdos*. To that the Rebbe responded:

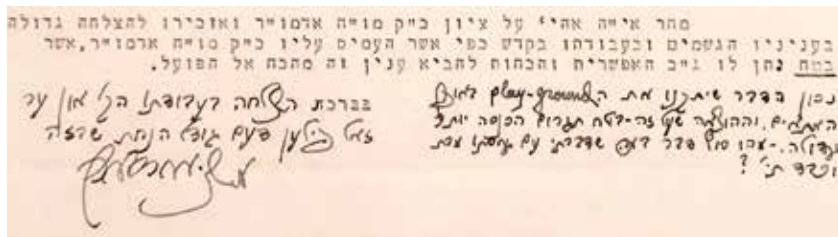
”טרם יקראו ואני אענה עשיתי כעצתו ונשלח לשם הר"ר משה יצחק העכט, וכנראה אינו מכיר ואת הכחות שניתנו לו. ועכ"פ ישתדל להכירו וישתנה הכל”

“Before he called, I answered. I did as you suggested, and Reb Moshe Yitzchok Hecht was sent there, it seems that you do not know him and the capabilities that he was given. You should try to get to know him, and everything will change.”

A LONE YID IN YUGOSLAVIA

In 5723*, a few community members gifted Reb Moshe and his wife a trip to Eretz Yisroel in appreciation of their dedication to the greater New Haven Jewish community. When Reb Moshe asked the Rebbe whether he should take the trip, the Rebbe turned the trip into a shlichus. He was to stop on the way in Greece, Turkey, Yugoslavia, Austria, and Holland, to offer encouragement to the Jewish communities there. Upon his return, he was to give a report of the situation of the Yidden in those areas. In Eretz Yisroel and Europe, Reb Moshe was to visit the government officials and rabbonim as the shliach of the Rebbe.

As planned, this trip was full of activity. Rabbi and Mrs. Hecht found



IN A LETTER TO REB MOSHE YITZCHOK IN 5711*, THE REBBE ADVISES TO BUILD AN APPROPRIATE PLAYGROUND AND THAT THE INITIAL EXPENSE WILL CERTAINLY ATTRACT MORE INCOME. THE REBBE CONCLUDES HIS LETTER WITH THE WISH THAT REB MOSHE YITZCHOK SHOULD “FEEL THE GREAT NACHAS IN THIS (HIS SHLICHUS).”

SPORADIC SHLICHUS:

New Haven was the center of Reb Moshe's activities, but after being sent there in 5706*, it also became the tarmac from which he would leave to different periodic *shlichus*'n. The first shlichus of this nature was in 5707* when he was sent together with Rashag to California to greet the refugees that were arriving from Shanghai, China. He accompanied them as they traveled cross-country, and farbrenged with them along the way.

In 5709*, Reb Moshe was sent to Columbia. The mission was to give *chizuk* to the community in Bogota. The Frierdiker Rebbe encouraged his wife to come along with him and inspire the women in these communities.

On their way back from Columbia, Rabbi and Mrs. Hecht stopped in New

York to report to the Frierdiker Rebbe about the trip. It was about midnight when they came to 770. Only the light in the Rebbe's room was on and they knocked on the door to give a report. They came into the Rebbe's office and the Rebbe said: “*Ah, ir hot shoin gekumen tzurik*—you are already back, I will tell the [Frierdiker] Rebbe right away so that he can take you into *yechidus*.”

The Rebbe came back a few minutes later, telling them that the Frierdiker Rebbe would receive them. Mrs. Hecht recalled, “Between the many things that we related, I mentioned the carefree life that the women in Bogota live. When I was describing the maids that they had, the Frierdiker Rebbe gave a broad smile.”

At the end of that *yechidus*, the Frierdiker Rebbe told them that the following summer, he would like them to travel to Brazil. Between the time that the shlichus was given and the beginning of the shlichus, the *histalkus* of the Frierdiker Rebbe took place on Yud Shevat. Rabbi Hecht asked the Rebbe if he should still travel to Brazil. The Rebbe told him to continue without pushing anything off, and as a *bracha* and *segula* gave him a piece of a garment from the Frierdiker Rebbe to take with him on the trip.

Reb Moshe was from the first people to sign a *ksav hiskashrus* to the Rebbe, and he gave himself over with heart and soul. The love and attention that the Rebbe showered on him throughout the years are unprecedented.



REB MOSHE YITZCHOK WITH HIS FAMILY ON A VISIT TO 770 IN THE EARLY 5710S*.

small and shattered communities, leftovers of what was destroyed during the war. They uplifted hundreds of broken Yidden, encouraged them to connect with larger communities, and created many connections between these Yidden and the Rebbe.

Many years later, in a speech at the Kinus Hashluchim, Reb Moshe recounted:

“The Rebbe once sent me on a shlichus to Zagreb, Yugoslavia [now Croatia]. There was a Jewish old age home there that did not have kosher meat. The Rebbe instructed me to get in touch with a Jewish doctor - who served as the president of the Jewish Community there - to help him arrange kosher meat.

This was a far off city which most people didn't know of its existence, but the Rebbe - a Yaakov Avinu - sits and thinks what can we do to bring a Yid in this town kosher food.”

A BRAVE PERSONALITY:

A major quality that Reb Moshe was known for is his tremendous *breitkeit*, his boldness. He was also a brilliant speaker with a tremendous vocabulary. The Rebbe appreciated his unique style

TEN CHASSIDIM

Rabbi Hecht was chosen by the Rebbe as one of Ten Chassidim to take on the cost of printing the Likkutei Torah. When it was printed, the Rebbe personally gifted him a *sefer*, writing the following personal note in it:

הרב דוד אהרן הכהן, ראשון לציון, ישראל
הרב משה יצחק הכהן, ראשון לציון, ישראל
הרב יצחק הכהן, ראשון לציון, ישראל
הרב אברהם הכהן, ראשון לציון, ישראל
הרב שלמה הכהן, ראשון לציון, ישראל
הרב יוסף הכהן, ראשון לציון, ישראל
הרב יעקב הכהן, ראשון לציון, ישראל
הרב יחזקאל הכהן, ראשון לציון, ישראל
הרב יצחק הכהן, ראשון לציון, ישראל
הרב יוסף הכהן, ראשון לציון, ישראל



WITH THE REBBE'S ENCOURAGEMENT: REB MOSHE YITZCHOK PARTICIPATES IN A CONFERENCE ON EDUCATION HELD IN WASHINGTON IN 5733*.

and encouraged him in this regard.

Mrs. Katz relates:

“A special incident was in 5722*, when my father was invited to two conferences; one was a conference of the United Orthodox congregations and one was of the Young Israel congregations. At that time there was a big debate amongst rabbonim whether to pursue government funding of Jewish parochial schools. The Rebbe strongly held that government funding should indeed be pursued, but most rabbonim and community leaders opposed it. This lasted until after my father's speech at these conventions.

“My father was invited to address *tefillah b'tzibur* but the Rebbe told him to *shturem* about prayer in public schools and government funding for Jewish schools. He was allotted seven minutes to speak, but at the end of his half-hour talk the crowd asked him to continue.

“His words had a strong impact on the rabbis that were there, so much so that at the end of the conference a joint decision was made to pursue government funding for Jewish schools. The story was published in all the papers at the time and the effect that it had was incredible.”

Rabbi Yossi Hecht relates:

“At the next *yechidus* that he had after speaking at these conferences, my father gave over a report to the Rebbe of what he had spoken. He mentioned one of the things that he said: ‘Chassidus is the *neschama yeseira* of Torah.’

“Upon hearing that, the Rebbe's face lit up and he responded: אזוי האט איר געזאגט? —Is that what you said? Is that really what you said?”

At the farbrengen of Yud-Tes Kislev 5723*, the Rebbe referenced this event:

“There is a *yungerman* here that was instructed twice to be *mar'ish*—to make noise—about a certain topic, and was successful. It would be worthwhile for him to be *mar'ish* now about learning Chassidus with a joyous *niggun*.”

The Rebbe then turned to Reb Moshe and called out:

“זאגט א פרייליכן ניגון און זייט מרעיש—Start a joyous *nigun* and be *mar'ish*”

In a letter, the Rebbe expressed pleasure from Reb Moshe's speeches:

“I enjoyed [reading about] the speeches that you wrote and their content, and the main thing is that you are bringing the words into action and physical mitzvos. You should transcribe

STORMY SEAS:

During Reb Moshe's decades of shlichus, there were many obstacles. At times, issues would come up and he would write to the Rebbe about the hardships that he was facing.

Time and again, the Rebbe would encourage Reb Moshe in the work that he was doing. Constantly telling him to be *b'simcha*. Many of these letters are fascinating.

Here are a few examples:

"כמה פעמים ביקשתי ועוררתי שבכלל - ובפרט בזמן הזה - צריך להיות בשמחה וכו'. - מובן שבאם מהשייכים אלי הוא בשמחה - פועל זה גם בי (ובכלל הן - אתה שומע כו'). וכל השייך יותר ובפרט על ידי מעשה בפועל ויום יומיים הרי הנ"ל הוא ביתר שאת וכו'. ולפתע נתבשרתי שהוא אינו בשמחה (כ"כ?) וכו'"

"I have asked and encouraged many times in general—and specifically now—that we need to be *b'simcha*. It is understood that if someone connected to me is *b'simcha*—this affects me as well (and from the positive, the opposite is understood as well). And for those more connected, especially through daily action, the above is even more so applicable. And I was suddenly notified that you are not (so) *b'simcha* etc."

"עשה והצלח, ועד באופן שלמעלה מן הטבע - באחי תמימים... ביטלו כמה וכמה מההתנגדות וכמה מן המנגדים נהפכו למסייעים וכו'... ומה זה לפתע פתאום מרה שחורה הנ"ל? זה שאין לה כל יסוד?! אזכיר עוד הפעם על הציון."

"You worked and were successful, to the point of reaching higher than nature, in Achei Temimim... many of the obstacles were nullified and many of the opposers turned into helpers, etc. What is this sudden aforementioned melancholy?! This which has no base?! I will mention this again at the *Tziyun* of my father-in-law."

Once, Reb Moshe wrote in a note to the Rebbe that there are many difficulties, and added: "אויף מיר איז א גרויסע רחמנות" — It is a great pity on me." The Rebbe responded:

"על שאינו מרגיש כדבעי האושר שנבחר להשליחות הנפלאה שניתנה - במנהג השי"ת בכיו"ב - ביחד עם כל הכוחות הדרושים לכל זה ואין עליו אלא לגלותם בעצמו במילואם וזה אפשרי רק ע"י שמחה - שפורצת הגדרים ולהראות ספ"י (סבר פנים יפות) לעצמו ג"כ - א צופר דנקייט לפעמים."

"Regarding this that you don't properly feel the fortune of being chosen for the incredible shlichus that you were given—through Hashem and so forth—together with the strength that is necessary for this, and all that you need to do is to reveal it fully (the strength), on your own, which is possible only through *simcha*—which breaks through boundaries, and to show yourself too a smile—[allow yourself some] happiness periodically."

In another letter the Rebbe writes:

"Without a doubt, because my father-in-law the Rebbe sent you to New Haven, the energy of the sender is surely with you, and even if you are correct that it is not such a easy place, you will for sure agree that in comparison to the strength of the *meshaleiach* there is nothing to be deterred by, especially since you've seen success in your area by divine providence, in many areas of the yeshiva that don't exist in other places."

Rabbi Hecht once wrote to the Rebbe that he thanks the Rebbe for allowing him to be one of his soldiers - לאזט זיין אחד מחיילי. The Rebbe replied:

First, the Rebbe added the word מבקשו, meaning not only is he allowing him but he is asking him to be one of his soldiers.

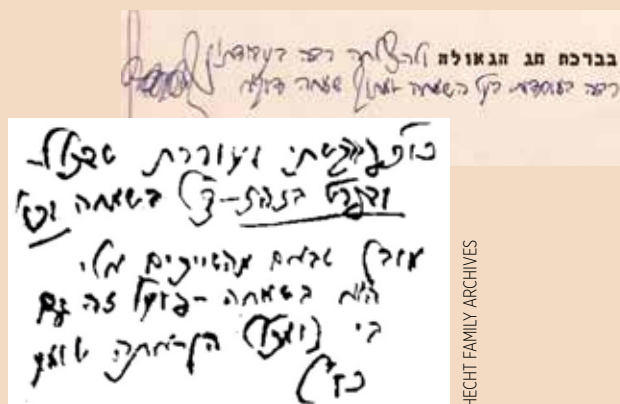
Then, the Rebbe added "מהגענעראלן הראשיים שלכן נוגע כל כך שיהי' במנוה"נ (במנוחת הנפש) והגוף ובשמחה. אזכיר עה"צ"

"[You are] of the leading generals, therefore it is so important that you be in a state of peace of mind and body and *b'simcha*. I will mention this at the *Tziyun* of my father-in-law."

In another letter addressing the lack of staff in a number of Chabad *mosdos* including New Haven, the Rebbe tells Reb Moshe that these *mosdos* are so dear to him—to the extent that it is as if they are in the Rebbe's own room in 770!

"... והרי לכל המוסדות אלה יש לי "קצת שייכות", ולדעת ההנהלה שלהם (ואולי גם לדעתי) המקום אינו מפסיק כלל וכלל, וכאילו המוסד בחדרי אשר ב-770..."

"...And after all, I have a "minor connection" to all of these institutions, and according to their leadership (and maybe also according to me) [physical] space is not a barrier, and it is as if the institution is in my room in 770."



SOME OF THE MANY LETTERS IN WHICH THE REBBE ENCOURAGED REB MOSHE YITZCHOK TO BE B'SIMCHA. IN THE SECOND LETTER, THE REBBE ADDS THAT WHEN THOSE WHO ARE CONNECTED TO HIM ARE B'SIMCHA, IT HAS A DIRECT EFFECT ON HIM AS WELL.

LOOK AT THE PICTURE

Reb Moshe had the responsibility of raising funds for the Chabad institutions in New Haven and one of his prospects would constantly refuse his requests to meet.

When Rabbi Hecht finally managed to meet him, the fellow pledged a handsome donation on condition that Reb Moshe would shave his beard!

Of course, Rabbi Hecht declined. The individual asked him to leave the office through the back door, so that others in the office shouldn't see him, and think that he has any relationships with such "odd creatures."

When he got home, Reb Moshe sent this person a picture of himself. He sent a note along with it saying: "When you'd like to see what a Jew should look like—look at this picture."

the main points of your speeches so that others can use them in other places."

In 5739* Rabbi Hecht asked the Rebbe if he should travel to Eretz Yisroel to take part in a family simcha.

The Rebbe answered that he should, adding that he should make sure to meet Prime Minister Menachem Begin and speak to him about the importance of not giving away parts of land in Eretz Yisroel. In that letter the Rebbe writes the following:

“שידבר שם דוקא באנגלית ודוקא בעזות
דהעכט ובברייטקייט שלהם”
“You should speak there specifically in English, and specifically with the boldness of the Hechts, and with their *breitkeit*.”

Mrs. Katz relates:

“When my father became the rav of the Orchard Street Shul, many of the congregants were refugees from Eastern Europe. When they saw him, they thought: “Here comes another rabbi that will speak to us in Yiddish.” When my father started to speak in perfect English, they were blown away.

“Most people he came in contact with never saw a Yid with a beard that could speak English the way he spoke and he made a very good impression on them.

“My father would be invited to speak for crowds of all types of people. Once, he was invited to a public debate with 1,000 people in attendance. The debate was with a Reform community leader on the topic of intermarriage. The debate finished as the Reform leader was left speechless. The conversation became the talk of town.”

In a note to Reb Moshe in 5733*, the Rebbe wrote: "Participation in the conference in Washington is important and very very good... Surely, you will speak with the others that are joining from *anash*, and afterwards with the others. 'ויכבשו כולם יחד את הקאנפרנס וכו' - And together you will conquer the conference, etc."

On another occasion, when Rabbi Hecht asked the Rebbe if he should speak at a certain local conference on education, the Rebbe wrote to him the following:

“... אינו מכבודו שבענייני חינוך והוא כאילו אין לו מה ללמדם וממילא ידבר ועם ברייטקייט...”

“... It is not befitting for your honor that there is a matter of education (being discussed) and it is as if you don't have what to teach them, and therefore you should speak and with *breitkeit*...”

BUILDING NEW HAVEN

Reb Moshe established numerous other *mosdos* in Connecticut, including a boys high school, preschools, a summer camp, day camp and a yeshiva. The Yeshiva Gedola was the first institution established after the Rebbe announced “Shnas Hachinuch” in 5736*. Over the years, thousands of students of all ages learned in these *mosdos*.



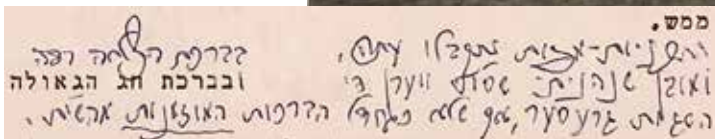
‘ORCHARD STREET SHUL’ WHERE REB MOSHE YITZCHOK SERVED AS RAV FOR DECADES.



REB MOSHE YITZCHOK STANDS ON THE CONSTRUCTION SITE OF THE NEW BUILDING.



THE COMPLETED BUILDING.



IN A LETTER TO REB MOSHE YITZCHOK IN KISLEV 5728*, THE REBBE ADDS IN A POSTSCRIPT: "I HAVE JUST RECEIVED THE BLUEPRINTS, AND NEEDLESS TO SAY I WAS PLEASED THAT 'THE HASAGOS' ARE GROWING, BUT NOT AS GREAT AS THE BRACHOS THAT ARE ALREADY LAID OUT FROM HASHEM."

Only four years after arriving in the city, the school and other programs were overflowing. In 5710* it was already time to expand and Rabbi Hecht rented an additional building to be able to hold classes and programs.

Finally, in 5713*, Rabbi Hecht bought a building to house all of the Chabad activities in New Haven. This building was five times the size of the previous space the *mosad* was housed in.

In 5724*, an opportunity and push was felt to expand the *mosdos* even more. Rabbi Hecht then established a new girls high school.

Shortly after Vov Tishrei 5725*, when the Rebbe's mother Rebbetzin

Chana was *nistalek*, Rabbi Hecht asked the Rebbe for permission to name the new girls high school in Rebbetzin Chana's name. At first, the Rebbe did not respond. After the Rebbe's first visit to the Ohel since the request, he responded with the go ahead. This was the first school to be named after Rebbetzin Chana.

In 5727*, the state decided to build a highway over the exact location where the schools stood. Rabbi Hecht began to look for a new building. But if the *mosdos* were already moving, why not expand?

Rabbi Hecht got to work and had a beautiful and expansive building

designed by an architect from the Yale school of architecture. When the Rebbe saw the plans, the Rebbe said: "Rabbi Hecht has *groiseh hasagos*—broad horizons." Interestingly, when his brother Reb Sholom Hecht went into *yechidus*, he saw the plans laying open on the Rebbe's desk.

The Rebbe also gave Rabbi Hecht 50 five-dollar bills and 50 one-dollar bills to sell and raise funds for the building.

"Enclosed is the partnership in the building fund in new currency, 50 of \$5.00 bills, and 50 of \$1.00 bills and certainly, he will think about how to add through them, more and more.

Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky relates:

"Periodically, the Rebbetzin would ask me to drive her to certain places that she needed to go to. Once, she asked me to come with her to a location in Connecticut. It was about a two-hour drive. We went to a few places that were not far from New Haven.

"Before we turned to go back to

DR. HECHT?

Around 5730*, Rabbi Hecht was awarded an honorary PhD degree. A short while later, the Rebbe received a letter from someone where Rabbi Hecht was referred to with the title Dr. The Rebbe replied with a question mark.

In a follow-up to that, Rabbi Hecht wrote to the Rebbe asking if it was not appropriate to use that title. The Rebbe responded:

"יש מקומות שהזכרת התואר ד"ר - אפשרי שתועיל וכו' ותמיהתי הייתה לא ע"כ כ"א על התואר האמיתי רב..."

"There are situations where using the title "Dr." can be helpful, etc. My wonder was not on that, but rather on [the lack of] the true title; 'rabbi'..."

NOT AN EXAGGERATION

In 5717* the Rebbe wrote to Rabbi Hecht:

I was pleased to receive the telegram regarding the beginning of the new scholastic year... I had additional pleasure to hear... that the goal of 300 students which he set to achieve was already fulfilled, and I was especially happy to hear that he regrets that he set a goal of 300 students, when he should have spoken about 500 students. This gives me the hope that he and his wife will recognize the great potential that was given to them – for the expansion and development of Yeshiva Achei Tmimim in New Haven...

Four years later in 5721*, the Rebbe wrote to Rabbi Hecht with even higher expectations:

"I am still of the firm mindset... that the *mosad* Achei Tmimim under his leadership should have an enrollment of no less than 1,000 students... This number is not an exaggeration; it is a realistic expectation – through using the possibilities and the success which are granted from above... And especially when taken into consideration the great reward and nachas that reach the founder and true leader of Achei Tmimim – my father-in-law, *nessi Yisroel*..."

Crown Heights, I told the Rebbetzin that my brother-in-law Moshe Yitzchok Hecht and my sister Rivkah were nearing completion of a gorgeous new campus for the day school in Orange, Connecticut. Since it was late in the day, I imagined that the workers had

probably left for the day and I asked the Rebbetzin if she would like to see the building. The Rebbetzin said of course.

"We soon drove up to the campus. The building was at the end of a long country road. I had thought that nobody would be there as it was in the afternoon, but my sister happened to be standing right there in front of the building.

"She recognized the Cadillac and realized that there was someone special in the car. As I drove closer to the building, she saw that it was the Rebbetzin. Startled and not knowing what to do, she walked quickly toward the car as we proceeded to drive closer to the building. I told my sister that we were in the area and I had asked the Rebbetzin if she wanted to see the new building and she said yes.

"The Rebbetzin came out of the car and toured the entire building for over 40 minutes. She commented on how beautiful it was and said that she had never seen a school with carpets on the floors and with such colorful classrooms. It is the only time that the Rebbetzin toured the inside of a *mosad*'s building. It was very unique.

"About a half a year later, when

my brother-in-law and sister went into *yechidus*, the Rebbe smiled broadly and told them, 'איך האב פון אייך געהאט א גרוס—I received regards from you.'"

HOW CAN I BRING NACHAS TO THE REBBE?

The backbone of his constant and unwavering efforts was his enormous love and dedication to the Rebbe. He was truly *mekushar* with his heart and soul, and was constantly looking for ways to do more.

In his own words in a speech at the Kinus Hashluchim of 5751*: "*Tzevishin unz geredt*—Between us, did a day ever go by where you didn't think of the Rebbe some thousand times? When you eat, don't you think Rebbe? When you learn, don't you think Rebbe? When you spend time educating children don't you think Rebbe? When you go in the car to meet someone and collect some half a million dollars, don't you think Rebbe?"

This was truly the way Reb Moshe lived; everything he did was in order to fulfill the Rebbe's shlichus. That is what kept him going.



WHEN REB MOSHE YITZCHOK WENT TO THE REBBE, HE VERY OFTEN WOULD RECEIVE AN ENCOURAGING MESSAGE ON BEING B'SIMCHA AND PERSEVERING IN HIS SHLICHUS.

In the words of Mrs. Katz:

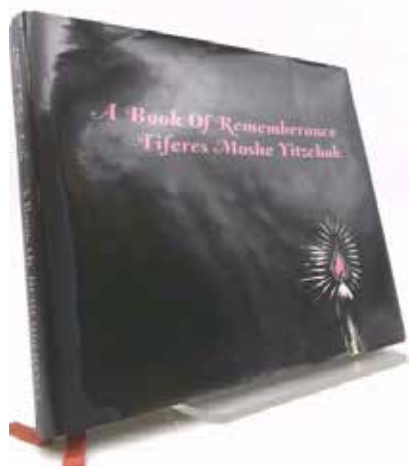
“There was no such thing as a vacation. The *mosdos* and *shlichus* were constantly on my father’s mind, 24/7! He always used to say: ‘This is the Rebbe’s thing, how can we give the Rebbe more *nachas*? What would the Rebbe want in this situation?’ ‘Once, my father went into *yechidus* and at the end of the *yechidus* he saluted the Rebbe. The Rebbe said: ‘I would salute you back, but what can I do, they are watching me from the window.’

SICHOS IN HIS MEMORY

On Erev Shabbos, 27 Teves 5752*, Reb Moshe Yitzchok Hecht passed away and the Rebbe accompanied the *aron* at the *levaya*.

At the Shabbos Vayera farbrengen the next day, the Rebbe dedicated two *sichos* to Reb Moshe in connection with his passing and spoke exceptional words of praise about the *niftar*.

“We are speaking about a Chossid and *mekushar* to the Rebbe *nesi doreinu*, who sent him and entrusted him to establish and direct *mosdos* of *hafatzas haTorah v’haYahadus v’hamaayanos chutzah*. Fulfilling this *shlichus* was his occupation all of his life until his last day... Certainly, we can derive from this



THE BOOK ‘TIFERES MOSHE YITZCHOK’, PRINTED IN HIS MEMORY IN TIME FOR THE SHLOSHIM.



DURING THE KINUS HASHLUCHIM OF 5752*, REB MOSHE YITZCHOK WENT FOR ‘DOLLARS’ AND WAS TAKEN BY SURPRISE WHEN THE REBBE REACHED OUT TO SHAKE HIS HAND, SOMETHING THAT NEVER HAPPENED TO HIM IN ALL THE YEARS OF THE REBBE’S NESIUS. THIS TURNED OUT TO BE THE LAST TIME REB MOSHE YITZCHOK SAW THE REBBE BEFORE HIS PASSING TWO MONTHS LATER.

teaching and direction “והחי יתן אל לבו”. Especially in regards to the continuation of the *avodas hashlichus* of the Rebbe *nesi doreinu* to the entire generation in spreading Torah and Yiddishkeit and the wellsprings outward.”

The Rebbe explained at length the meaning of the names Moshe, Yitzchok, and Hecht, and their connection to his passing on Erev Shabbos. The Rebbe then instructed to print a book in his memory with *chidushei Torah* of his *talmidim* and *talmidos*.

Thirty days later, on 27 Shevat, as the Rebbe entered *Gan Eden Hatachton*, Mrs. Rivkah Hecht went over to the Rebbe, and presented the book “Sefer Zikaron–Tiferes Moshe Yitzchok,” saying: “This is the book that the Rebbe instructed to print for the *shloshim*, tomorrow is the *shloshim*.” The Rebbe replied: “Amen, may there be good news, it should be fulfilled “ומחה דמעה מעל כל פנים” and we should no longer need to experience such things. And it should be “בשמחה ובטוב לבב.”

At the abovementioned farbrengen on the day after the passing of Reb Moshe Yitzchok, the Rebbe said that surely the *b’nai hamishpacha* will

continue the work and *shlichus* of Rabbi Hecht.

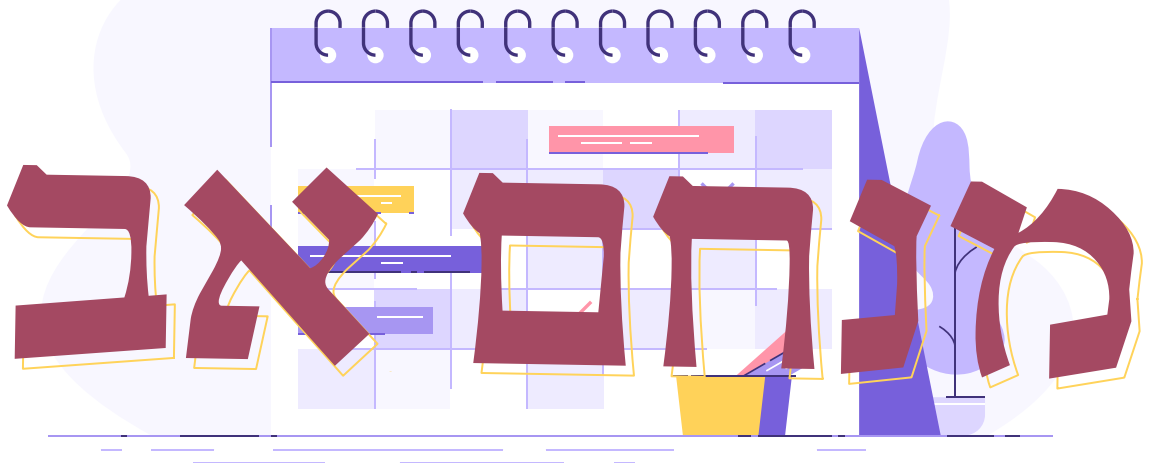
Rabbi Shea Hecht received the Rebbe’s *haskama* and *bracha* to succeed his father, and for the last 30 years has overseen the continued growth and expansion of the *mosdos chinuch* and the addition of eight Chabad Centers throughout the Greater New Haven area.

ובפרט שהקב"ה השתתף בזה

In response to a report written about the Shloshim memorial in memory of Rabbi Hecht that took place in New Haven, the Rebbe wrote:

“גדול זכות כל המשתתפים ובפרט שהקב"ה השתתף בזה וכיבוד כביכול אותו, ומחה ה' דמעה וגו' והקיצו ורננו שוכני עפר. אזכיר עה"צ.”

“Great is the merit of all those who participated, especially since Hashem, so to speak, participated and honored him. ‘And Hashem will erase tears. etc.’ ‘And the deceased will rise and sing.’ I will mention this at the *Tziyun* of my father in-law.” ①



NINE DAYS

- When we find ourselves in a time that marks the start of our *galus*, we should do what we can to bring the *geulah*, as it says in *Yeshaya*, “ציון בצדקה במשפט תפדה ושב” – we must increase tzedakah, and we must learn more Torah, specifically the *halachos* relevant to these days.¹
- The Rebbe encouraged the *minhag* to make a *siyum* during the Nine Days, to initiate *siyumim* where they don't yet happen, and strengthen the ones that already occur. The reason for this is to increase in joy, thereby revealing the hidden purpose of the *galus* we find ourselves in now.²

Best is to make a *siyum* that is acceptable according to all halachic opinions – on a complete *masechta* of Gemara.³

- Because all the days up to the 15th of Av are one continuation, *siyumim* should take place each day until the 15th of Av. The *siyumim* should also include the giving of tzedakah and, when appropriate, to have a *farbrengen*.⁴

- When Chazal say that on the 7th of Av the Romans entered the *heichal*, it is not to cause pain to Yidden *chas veshalom*, rather it is to awaken the yearning and demand for the *geulah*, and to add another action taken with the hope to hasten the coming of the *geulah*.⁵
- Reb Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev says that on Shabbos Chazon, every person is shown the third *Beis Hamikdash*. We must increase our efforts in all the above to bring the third *Beis Hamikdash* closer.⁶

9 AV

- The Rebbe instructed Chassidim to arrange a *siyum*, not only after Tisha B'Av when we can eat and drink, but also on Tisha B'Av itself, not to differentiate from the order of the days prior.⁷ One should utilize the day of Tisha B'Av to increase in the learning of Torah (the sections that are permitted, and after *chatzos*), and giving tzedakah. The Rebbe advised Chassidim that when going to meet another Yid on this day, to bring along a *pushkah*, and to have words of Torah about this day prepared to share.⁸
- Although one is permitted to learn only specific topics in Torah on Tisha B'Av, we can suggest that one must

still increase Torah study today, as we learn from the *possuk* in Eicha⁹ – קומי רוגי בלילה – that one should learn Mishnah at night, which will hasten the *geulah*.¹⁰

15 AV

- Chazal say that “there were no greater Yomim Tovim for Yidden like the 15th of Av (and Yom Kippur).” Because it comes after the low of Tisha B’Av, a significant elevation of holiness is generated in the Yom Tov that follows. One should utilize this day to increase Torah and the giving of Tzedakah, and to take upon himself *hachlatos* for the future.¹¹

To ensure the success of these *hachlatos*, the Rebbe advised that every group of people that take upon themselves *hachlatos* should appoint a committee of three people, and everyone should tell them what their *hachlata* will be. The committee will be tasked with following up on the commitments, in order to encourage and increase its performance.¹²

- The Rebbe asked that Chassidim should arrange farbrengens on this day. There should also be an increase in learning in public, especially with the children that are currently in camps, boys and girls.¹³
- Preparations for the *avodah* of the month of Elul should already begin now; since, as we know, beginning from the 15th of Av many have the custom to start wishing one another a *ksiva v’chasima tova*.¹⁴

20 AV – THE PASSING OF HARAV LEVI YITZCHOK

- Harav Levi Yitzchok performed his *avodah* with absolute *mesiras nefesh*. He wrote his *chiddushim* in Torah in the most challenging circumstances. He was a leader for his congregation and still affects many with his *chiddushim* that are now printed.
- We must live up to his namesake; Levi – ילוי אישי – אלי – we must strengthen our connection with Hashem (who is called “איש”) and we must also intensify our positive influence on others, which is signified by the name Yitzchok – כל השומע יצחק – לי – to affect anyone that can hear our call.¹⁵

- The Rebbe asked that Chassidim learn a part of his father’s Torah at a Chof Av farbrengen and give tzedakah in his honor.¹⁶
- At almost every Shabbos farbrengen, beginning Chof Av 5730*, the Rebbe would elaborate on a part of his father’s Torah.
- When children from nearby camps would join the Chof Av farbrengen, the Rebbe would encourage them to sing his father’s *hakafo niggun*.¹⁷
- When a member of *anash* named his child Levi Yitzchok after the Rebbe’s father, the Rebbe responded, “*Yehi ratzon*, that just as you brought me much pleasure by naming your son after my father, so may Hashem grant you pleasure and *nachas* from your entire household, and from yourself too...”¹⁸
- In 5724*, the Rebbe established a fund called “Keren Levi Yitzchok” in memory of his father, to support Torah-study causes.¹⁹ Every year, the Rebbe would encourage giving generously to this fund. This fund also supported the “Kolel Tiferes Zekeinim” – *kolel* for the elderly.²⁰ **T**

1. Toras Menachem 5748 vol. 4 pg. 108.
2. Toras Menachem 5751 vol. 4 pg. 64.
3. Toras Menachem 5749 vol. 4 pg. 86.
4. Toras Menachem 5751 vol. 4 pg. 96.
5. Toras Menachem 5749 vol. 4 pg. 122.
6. Ibid. pg. 132.
7. Ibid. pg. 94.
8. Toras menachem 5748 vol. 4 pg. 121.
9. 2:19.
10. Toras Menachem 5750 vol. 4 pg. 128.
11. Toras Menachem 5748 vol. 4 pg. 146.
12. Ibid. pg. 180.
13. Toras Menachem 5750 vol. 4 pg. 157.
14. Ibid. pg. 153 and fn. 89.
15. Toras Menachem 5749 vol.4 pg. 170.
16. Likkutei Sichos vol. 39 pg. 231.
17. Toras Menachem 5750 vol. 4 pg. 157 fn. 140.
18. Igros Kodesh vol. 6 pg. 108, letter 1,630.
19. Toras Menachem 5724 vol. 4 pg. 324.
20. Sichos Kodesh 5740 vol. 3 pg. 917.



א חסידישע מעשה

נדפס ע"י ולזכות
הרה"ת ר' אוריאל
וזוגתו מרת שבי ומשפחתם שיחיו
ויגלו



A TWO-FOLD MIRACLE



There once lived a man who provided for himself by buying and selling cattle. He would buy them from various people and then sell them in the big cities. When traveling, he would stop at cities along the way, rent a field and allow his cattle to pasture and eat and then continue on his journey.

On one of his journeys, he stopped at a city and started his search for a field to rent for his herd to pasture, but to no avail. He could not find any fields for rent. If he could not find a field, it would cause him a great loss.

The city happened to be neighboring the city of Berdichev where the famed *tzaddik* Reb Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev lived. Lost and distraught, the businessman went to seek advice from Reb Levi Yitzchak.

After explaining his situation to Reb Levi Yitzchak, the *tzaddik* responded with a startling answer. “Dried *rakviness* [a type of grass]

is a *segula* [remedy] to stop the blood flow by a *bris milah*.”

The Yid was confused by this seemingly completely unrelated answer. He wasn’t even a *mohel*! The next day he decided to try his luck again, and once more questioned the *tzaddik*. Reb Levi Yitzchak’s response remained the same.

The Yid decided that maybe now Hashem would bless him, and he continued his quest for a field.

He entered an inn and asked the innkeeper if he had any leads for a field to rent. The innkeeper seemed worried and at unease and simply didn’t respond. So he asked the innkeeper why he was so troubled. After some pressure, the innkeeper shared: “I was just blessed with a second son and his *bris* will be in two days. At my first son’s *bris* the blood simply would not stop, until the pure boy passed away. I am concerned the same will happen now.”

“Don’t worry!” The Jew assured him, and told the innkeeper his whole story with Reb Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev.

“So go find some *rakviness* grass, dry it, and have it ready for the *bris*,” the Jewish businessman concluded.

Now calmed, the innkeeper asked the Jew to repeat his inquiry which he started asking when he first entered the inn. The Jew told him about his desperate need for a field so that his cattle could eat. Within moments the innkeeper arranged a field for the animals.

Days later at the *bris*, the blood indeed did not stop. They immediately put the dried *rakviness* grass and within moments the blood stopped.

As one can imagine, the festive meal at the *bris* was extremely happy and joyous. T

(*Likkutei Sipurim* p. 403)



SPIRITU DERHAM

THE REBBE'S RESPONSE TO THE HOLOCAUST

לזכות
הח' שלום שיחי'
לרגל הכנסו לעול מצוות
כ"ו מנחם אב ה'תשפ"ב
שיגדל להיות חסיד ירא
שמים ולמדן

נדפס ע"י הוריו
הרה"ת ר' דוד צבי וזוגתו
מרת חנה שיחי
ויגלר

“At the present time of *haras olam*, when the whole world shudders from the birth pangs of Moshiach, when Hashem has set the walls of *galus* aflame... it is the duty of every Jew, man or woman, old and young, to ask themselves this question: **What have I done and what am I doing to ease the birth pangs of Moshiach and to merit the complete redemption through Moshiach Tzidkeinu?**”¹

These words, selected from a letter of the Friediker Rebbe, were chosen by the Rebbe to serve as the opening for the *Hayom Yom* calendar. This calendar was printed for the first time in 5703, at the very height of the terrible slaughter of six million Jews in Europe. In these few lines, the Rebbe encapsulates some of the most important features of his explanation of the meaning of the Holocaust, as well as what our response must be to the horrific events of that era. The Rebbe does not point to a physical or spiritual problem as the cause of the atrocities across the sea. In this letter, the Rebbe portrays the Holocaust as the last gasps of *galus*, to which our response must be to do all we can to bring Moshiach as soon as possible.

In a *reshimah* with notes for a talk that the Rebbe gave in the summer of 5702 to the Agudas Harabbonim, the Rebbe addresses the fire raging in Europe. The Rebbe begins passionately: “Customarily we give an opening greeting, but there is no time now for these kinds of things. It is a ‘time of trouble for Yaakov.’ We must cherish every moment, to do all that we can so that there will be the ‘*achishen-ah* (I will hasten it)’ of ‘from it will he be saved’ (see Yirmiyahu, 30:7).” The Rebbe connects it to the Gemara that says that before Moshiach comes, Hashem will “place a king over the Jewish people whose decrees are as terrible as Haman’s” (Sanhedrin 97b), and then the Yidden will do *teshuvah*.” The rest of the *reshimah* lists a number of areas in which rabbonim can encourage their congregants to improve, as a means of bringing about an end to the horror and meriting the *geulah* immediately (“*le’altar le’geulah*”).² Interestingly, even at this early date, the Rebbe does not talk about why the war is happening, but focuses only on bringing the *geulah* that is to be born from these birth pangs.

WHY DID THE HOLOCAUST HAPPEN?

In 5751 (1991), during the lead up to the first Gulf War, Eretz Yisroel was being threatened by Saddam Hussein with Scud missiles and chemical weapons that were projected to wreak large-scale destruction on the Jewish people there. A certain *rosh yeshiva* made derogatory remarks about swaths of Yidden, and in the midst of his vitriol he claimed that Hashem was about to bring a second Holocaust upon the Yidden because of their many sins. On Asarah B'Teves of that year and again on the following Shabbos, the Rebbe responded to these baseless assertions and vehemently defended *bnei Yisroel*. Reacting to the idea that the Holocaust had been a divine punishment to the Jewish people, the Rebbe said: "The destruction of six million Jews with such great and terrible cruelty, a horrific *sho'ah* that has no precedent throughout history (and will never be repeated), could not have been in the category of a *punishment* for sins, since

even the Satan *himself* could not come up with an *accumulation of sins* in that generation that would be sufficient to *justify* such a harsh punishment!" The Rebbe said that making such a justification was a defamation of the *kedoshim* of the Holocaust, whose deaths were *al kiddush Hashem*.³

In a fascinating footnote, the Rebbe refers to a *maamar* of the Mitteler Rebbe in which he cites a teaching of the Arizal: "The Arizal stated clearly that in his days, all the *shmadot* (decrees of destruction), which had persisted for about 500 years (from *gezeiras tatnu*—the Crusades in the year 4856* in the days of Rashi until the expulsion from Portugal in the era of 5252*), had come to an end. All those who had died *al kiddush Hashem*, the thousands and tens of thousands in each generation... were all souls that had lived in the times of the first *Beis Hamikdash*." These were great people with lofty souls, who served Hashem, but who were afflicted by the terrible sin of *avodah zarah*, and these souls were not repaired until "the time of the philosophers in the days of Rashi and the Rambam down to the Arizal." Because these people had given life to such a powerful *kelipah*, the only way to rectify this was through *mesiras nefesh* to sanctify G-d's name with simple faith. However, the Mitteler Rebbe concludes, "in the time of the

Arizal, who was from the level of *Tikkun*, and to whom the wisdom of the true Kabbalah had been revealed, all *shmadot* ceased and will never again occur!" The Rebbe presents this as evidence that the Holocaust could not have been in the category of punishment or *tikkun*. In effect, the Rebbe rejects the idea that it was a result of actions or events of the past.

Rather, the Rebbe insists that there is no explanation that we could possibly give, and it must be accepted as a Divine decree that is beyond our understanding, in the same way that *galus Mitzrayim* was. The Midrash explains that Moshe's question to Hashem, "*Lamah hare'osah la'am hazeh* – Why have You dealt badly with this people?" (Shemos, 5:22), was asking the following: Moshe was able to understand how the fates of the generations of the *mabul* and of the *haflagah* were commensurate with their sins; but "this people, what have they done for which they are being enslaved more than any other generation?" (Shemos Rabbah, 5:22). Similarly, we must see the Holocaust as something for which the only response can be "*Lamah hare'osah?*"

Although there were many Yidden in pre-war Europe who had strayed from the true Torah path, their sins cannot account for what happened. "All those that were killed during the Holocaust are *kedoshim*... since

JEWIS ARE ROUNDED UP AFTER THE WARSAW
GHETTO UPRISING WAS QUELLED.

they were killed *al kiddush Hashem* (because they were Jews), and Hashem will *avenge their blood* (as every Jew who mentions the victims of the Holocaust invokes)!” As we say in *Av Harachamim*, ‘Make known among the nations *before our eyes* the avenging of the blood of Your servants that has been spilled.’ These are Hashem’s *servants*, whom He promises to avenge, because He does not desire their deaths. Those who died were Hashem’s servants, not sinners.

The fact that the six million died *al kiddush Hashem* is a tremendous *zechus* and indicates their lofty level, as the Gemara says that “no creature can stand in their designated place [in Heaven]” (Pesachim, 50a). We know that the Beis Yosef was told that he would merit to die *al kiddush Hashem*, and that he was later punished by having this merit withdrawn from him (after which he went on to write the Shulchan Aruch and to establish *halacha* for all future generations). This gives us some idea of how far beyond anything else the act of *kiddush Hashem* is, and how unthinkable it is that this occurred as a punishment. All this is aside from the fact that the victims of the Holocaust were “on a great level in fulfilling Torah and *mitzvos*, as it was (primarily) *misaltah u’mishamnah* (the finest) of Torah Judaism that was obliterated in the Holocaust.”⁴

EMUNAH AFTER THE HOLOCAUST

One of the great challenges facing the generation that survived the Holocaust was dealing with the question of “Where was G-d during the Holocaust?” How could Hashem

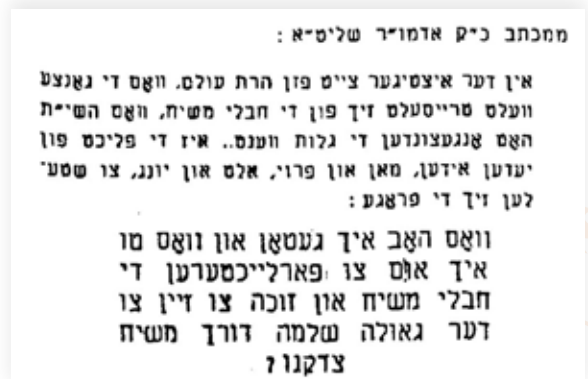
have allowed such a thing to happen? Often these questions were accompanied by a weakening of observance of Torah and *mitzvos*. The Rebbe addressed these issues with compassion yet with forcefulness, emphasizing that not only should one’s *emunah* not be diminished by these questions but that only the greatest faith in Hashem can enable one to ask them. Thus, one can move on from the questions to greater commitment to serving Hashem.

In a long letter to Elie Wiesel, the Rebbe writes:

“I believe that you will agree with me, that it is not a mere coincidence that all those who asked [“where is Hashem’s justice?”] authentically, retained their faith; rather, it could have been no different. Because, if one asks this question sincerely, and it is an expression and result of a true feeling of justice and fairness, then it is understood that such a deep feeling can only come from the conviction that true justice is that which stems from a *superhuman* source, meaning something beyond human understanding and feeling. That is why this question matters to such a person not only emotionally and intellectually, but at the very core of his being.

“But after the first, tumultuous outburst, one must realize that the entire approach of questioning and trying to understand with reason something that transcends reason is inappropriate. Therefore, one must – after an unabated protest and thorough agonizing – ultimately come to the conclusion that – “*im kol zeh ani ma’amin!*” On the contrary – his faith will become even stronger.”⁵

The same understanding, that our



THE QUOTE FROM THE FRIERDIKER REBBE'S LETTER AS IT APPEARS IN THE FIRST EDITION OF THE HAYOM YOM.

inner drive to see justice in the world is based on an innate belief in a cosmic Judge, also shows us that we cannot expect to be able to know why He does what He does. While the Rebbe does not spell out why one’s *emunah* should be “even stronger,” perhaps the Rebbe is saying the following:

When someone is shaken to the core by the horror of the Holocaust and cannot make peace with this at all, they are, paradoxically, exhibiting through their very questioning and challenging, their unshakeable belief that *yesh ba'al habayis lebirah zu*. Thus, even the greatest calamity cannot sever their essential connection to G-dliness, something we would not have known under normal circumstances.

Another angle that the Rebbe elucidated regarding belief after the Holocaust was that we must recognize that we, as limited human beings, only see very little of the story and don’t necessarily have the perspective to understand what we are seeing. The Rebbe exemplified this using a well-known *mashal*: “Imagine a person who never lived in civilization... who is suddenly brought into [an operating room]. He sees ... a person bound to a table such that he can’t move a limb to protect himself or to run away, and he is being cut open and his blood is pouring out. Obviously, if one doesn’t know that these doctors are upstanding ethical



ELIE WIESEL RECEIVES LEKACH FROM THE REBBE.

people, and certainly if one is not familiar with medicine, they will be sure that the people treating the child or the patient must be bandits who only want to cause the utmost pain to those that fall into their hands.

“Were this guest from the desert to have some familiarity with medical treatments, knowing that surgery is sometimes warranted... they would understand that although the pain is very great at the moment, through this the person will be saved from chronic and debilitating suffering and their body will be healthy for many decades to come. Even if this individual does not know about medicine but is assured of the morality and kindness of the dentist or surgeon, although they might feel bad for the patient’s suffering, they would still be certain that the momentary pain is worth the benefit for the years to come.”⁶

Some people took great offense at this *mashal*, prominent among them Haika Grossman, who had fought in the Bialystok Ghetto and later became a prominent figure in Israeli politics. She wrote a critique that appeared in a secular journal of what she understood to be the Rebbe’s explanation of the

Holocaust. In a personal letter to her, the Rebbe went into great length to explain his position. The Rebbe first clarified that there can be no question that every Yid that died then was holy and that Hashem will avenge them and erase the memory of the murderers. It is likewise clear that even in the midst of the destruction, Hashem continued running the world. These ideas are illuminated by the *mashal* of surgery:

“I have never heard anyone say,” writes the Rebbe, “that an operation is a punishment for one who is ill; quite the opposite. It is [also] obvious that when one is operated on, this is primarily for their own benefit, not for the benefit of their family, community, or people... You ask rhetorically, ‘Who is the surgeon?’ Certainly the knife is not the surgeon... At the same time, a person... has the choice whether to be that knife, and is therefore accountable for their actions... An operation is a beneficial matter, first of all for the one operated on, and it is a benefit that is so great that the pain has no value in comparison, like the difference between life and death... Of course, even when the person understands that the operation is for

their benefit, they feel pain and cry out, as do all those that care about them. And if they don’t, *chas veshalom*, they are considered cruel...” In other words, the Rebbe’s *mashal* should not be taken as criticism of those who died, nor as excusing the Nazis.

Ms. Grossman apparently took issue with the idea that Hitler was carrying out G-d’s plan in all this but the Rebbe points out that we find a number of similar instances in the Torah. Nevuchadnetzar is called “My servant” by the *navi*, yet he goes on to say that in the end, Hashem will punish him for what he has done. The Rebbe also emphasized that everything he is saying is in retrospect, to show how belief is still possible afterwards, but that without question during the Holocaust it was completely appropriate for people (like Ms. Grossman herself) to revolt and do what they could to defeat the Nazis.⁷

At times the Rebbe also strongly refuted the idea that Torah and mitzvos no longer made sense after the Holocaust.⁸ Nevertheless, the Rebbe expressed great sensitivity for those who struggled in this area. In a letter to someone who challenged the Rebbe about how G-d could have allowed the Holocaust to happen, the Rebbe noted, after supplying a logical basis for continuing to believe, that “the above may be accepted intellectually, and it may ease the mind, but it cannot assuage the pain and upheaval, especially of one who has been directly victimized by the Holocaust.” The Rebbe wrote to this person that he, too, was “emotionally involved” in the questions raised by this catastrophe, as he had personally lost “very close and dear relatives” during the Holocaust, “such as a grandmother, brother, cousins and others.”⁹

Similarly, in a letter in which the Rebbe argues forcefully that logically the Holocaust does not pose any more difficult questions than any of

the other great tragedies in Jewish history, the Rebbe comments that “even so, Michael the *malach* that oversees the Jewish people will justify [someone that diminishes their observance of the Torah], since after the Holocaust, a person is not responsible for [their actions out of] anguish, when this has affected their own family, and when the numbers [of victims] is shocking...”¹⁰

In the above letter to Ms. Grossman, the Rebbe noted, “As I have heard... you were among the fighters of the ghettos, to which each Jew, myself included, carries a special and unique feeling and attitude [of respect]. When someone like you has criticisms about this matter, I cannot ignore it and must respond...”

THE JEWISH RESPONSE

As the Jewish world sought various ways to memorialize the *kedoshim* of the Holocaust, the Rebbe was particularly concerned that the story of the experiences of the *frum* Jews

who were affected by the Holocaust be told thoroughly and accurately. “I find it appropriate to express an idea here which I have been urging for quite some time, and which, as time passes, my surprise grows ever greater that it has not been implemented,” the Rebbe writes to Rabbi Dr. Isaac Lewin. “Namely, preparing a true-to-life history of the persecutions and massacres with regard to the *frum* Yidden.” Although there had been many publications that had come out about the Holocaust, by and large these were written from a secular perspective and tended to omit or give insufficient attention to the *frum* experience and actions. In some cases, a false narrative was presented about the *frum* Yidden. The Rebbe expressed his concern that without someone to give proper attention to telling this part of the story, other matters would occupy the focus of those who could write about it and important facets of this history would be forgotten. “I would be pleased to know that there are people who are focusing on writing down the events of this period, and that the project is progressing at the necessary pace,” the Rebbe urged him.¹¹

When asked, the Rebbe also encouraged people to get reparation money from Germany so that they not gain through their terrible

NO TIME TO WASTE

The following is a portion of a letter from 5715* to a young Lubavitcher woman who was considering enrolling in college:

“It is surely unnecessary to explain to you at length that every Jewish man and woman, young and old, has a purpose and task to accomplish in his or her life... After so many Jews lost their lives in recent years, among them the best and choicest of our people, the responsibility of those whom G-d in His mercy has spared is increased many-fold. It is therefore more obvious now than ever that no Jew has a right to give of his time, and even more so of his heart and mind, to matters which not only do not help but are very likely to hinder in the fulfillment of his sacred task and purpose. One of these matters would be to spend several years in college...”

actions, echoing the words of the *navi* to Achav when he had Navos killed, “*Haratzachta vegam*



TUVIAH FRIEDMAN, A SURVIVOR WHO HUNTED DOWN NAZIS TO BRING THEM TO JUSTICE.





yarashta—have you murdered and also inherited?!” At the Rebbe’s urging, the Encyclopedia Talmudis, as well as the Sefer Ha’erchim were

financed in part by reparation money. Even further, the Rebbe considered the efforts to hunt down Nazis and bring them to justice to be of great importance. Tuviah Friedman, a survivor who invested much energy into this project, relates how the Rebbe urged him to continue when he felt he could not do it anymore. “Can you really stop?” the Rebbe asked him. “If you abandon this work, the Nazis will rejoice that they’ve won.”

FORWARD

Yet, as in all matters, the Rebbe’s focus was primarily on life going forward and on building an even stronger Jewish world. The Rebbe invested countless hours listening to, comforting, and giving direction to the generation that emerged from the Holocaust. Elie Wiesel relates that when he asked the Rebbe to teach him how to cry, the Rebbe responded, “That’s not enough. I shall teach you to sing.” At the end of a long letter about *emunah* and the Holocaust, the Rebbe asked him “Why aren’t you married yet?” The Rebbe gave countless Jews, whether famous or not, words that comforted them and instructions that helped them see that they could continue to live productive lives filled

with Yiddishkeit even after the war.

Ultimately, there are two major takeaways from the events of the Second World War:

For the world at large, the Holocaust provides irrefutable evidence that science, philosophy, culture, etc. would not prevent people from committing the most heinous acts. “*Everyone who was there at the time*, including myself, saw the enthusiasm with which the [German] nation received [Hitler], while expressing the hope that he would fulfill their deepest wish (of these “ethicists”), to see ‘Germany above all!’ To ensure human behavior based on justice and fairness, the foundation must be - the fulfillment of the will of the Creator and Director of the world!”¹² When Elie Wiesel was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 5747*, the Rebbe wrote to him in a *ma’aneh*, “The most central point is, to utilize this event for publicity that will have practical impact throughout the land... to inculcate the idea of Hashem, who ‘created the entire world to dwell in peace,’ which necessitates education (even for adults) towards this, and most of all through education toward actual fulfillment of the *Sheva Mitzvos Bnei Noach*. And in order that they be kept consistently, it must be because this is the commandment and

RESCUE EFFORTS DURING THE WAR

As soon as the Frierdiker Rebbe arrived on American soil and even earlier, he concerned himself with rescuing Yidden from the Holocaust. In a press release that he issued shortly after coming to America, the Frierdiker Rebbe urged:

“I ... hope that from here I will be better able to organize the help that [the Yidden in Europe] so desperately need... It is my painful duty to relay to you... the agonizing shriek of the community of three-and-a-half million Polish Jews who are on the eve of full-scale annihilation, G-d forbid... You ought to be thankful that you have been spared such a bitter fate... expressed in practical action... by creating a huge rescue fund for the benefit of your Polish brothers and sisters.”

Even as he was making his way to America, the Frierdiker Rebbe sent telegrams from Riga to Reb Yisroel Jacobson to work on getting the Gerrer Rebbe, the *Imrei Emes*, out of Poland, which was successfully accomplished. A few months later, the Frierdiker Rebbe was instrumental in rescuing the Belzer Rebbe. A *mashbak* of the Belzer Rebbe later wrote about the Frierdiker Rebbe:

“He accomplished great and mighty deeds to save the Rebbe from the valley of doom. He raised enormous sums of money and activated a number of different personalities to pressure the Mandate government to issue a visa for the Rebbe. In short, he was one of the pillars of the *askanim* who worked and urged to save the Rebbe, for which the Rebbe showed gratitude to him.”

In addition to the efforts to save great Chassidic Rebbes and members of *beis harav*, numerous *temimim* and other Jews were able to make their way to America through the Frierdiker Rebbe's efforts.



AN ADVERTISEMENT IN AN ISSUE OF 'HAPARDES' FROM SHEVAT 5701 ABOUT THE FRIERDIKER REBBE'S PIDYON SHVUIM FUND, TO SUPPORT HIS EFFORTS IN HELPING THE LUBAVITCHER TEMIMIM COME TO AMERICA.

request of the Creator and Director of the world, the 'Super Power' above all 'Super Powers.'”

As for the Jewish people, we have a duty not to, *chas veshalom*, continue the effect of the Holocaust. Assimilating into secular society and losing our Jewish identity diminishes the Jewish nation more than the Nazis could have accomplished. As the Rebbe explained to a group of young people: “If every one of us has an obligation to fight Hitler, it can be done by letting this thing that Hitler had in mind to annihilate, not only to continue, but to make it on a bigger and a deeper scale.” Hitler wanted to eradicate not just the Jewish body, but primarily the Jewish spirit. When one lives their life as a proud Jew should, “it is his life that defeats the idea of Hitlerism.”¹³

Canadian journalist Sam Kaplan was told by the Rebbe that “there

are assimilationist Jews who place no value in Judaism and who deny their children a Jewish education. These people, by hastening their own Jewish demise, are fulfilling the plan for the 'Final Solution' begun by the Nazis.” Rather, the Rebbe said, Jews must “rededicate themselves to furthering Jewish education, to give their lives new meaning by turning to the spiritual substance that is the inheritance of every Jew... Torah, the Shulchan Aruch and observances of the mitzvos.”¹⁴

In the words of the *sicha* of 5751*¹⁵: “Our generation, the ember rescued from the fire, the surviving remnant from the terrible Holocaust... by their daily conduct according to the 'Torah of life' they continue on the path of life of the generation of *kedoshim*, for many long years, in a manner of *mah zar'o bachayim af hu bachayim*—just as his children are alive, so is he alive.” **†**

1. Hayom Yom, p. 3.
2. Reshimos #52.
3. It is interesting to note that on occasion the Rebbe objected to the terminology of “Holocaust” because it implied that the Jews were victims, rather than those who achieved the highest level of *kiddush Hashem* (Hisvaaduyos 5745, vol. 2, p. 1045).
4. Sefer Hasichos – 5751, 1:233-34.
5. Likkutei Sichos, vol. 33, pp. 256-57.
6. Igros Kodesh, vol. 8, pp. 180-82.
7. Likkutei Sichos, vol. 21, p. 399.
8. 11 Nissan 5731.
9. Chabad.org, “Why Did G-d Allow The Holocaust?”
10. Likkutei Sichos, vol. 33, p. 260.
11. Igros Kodesh, vol. 20, pp. 48-49.
12. 12 Tammuz 5744, p. 2168-69.
13. “Jewish Education and the Holocaust,” chabad.org/354698.
14. “Defeating the Nazis through Jewish Education,” chabad.org/1240760.
15. See above.



Exemplary Report



Presented here is part of a report written after a Merkos Shlichus trip to Toronto and other towns in southern Ontario during the summer of 5729 by Rabbi Daniel Goldberg and Rabbi Binyomin Cohen (now the Rosh Yeshiva in Melbourne, Australia), who were then bochurim studying at 770.*

Rabbi Daniel Goldberg relates:

Before leaving, we had an appointment with Rabbi Hodakov, the Rebbe's head secretary, who gave us guidelines for our trip, and mentioned that we should write up a report (d'uch) after our return. On our return from our three-week trip, the mazkir Rabbi Binyomin Klein again emphasized that we write a report. I wrote a detailed 13-page report in English, describing each community we visited and its situation in Yiddishkeit for Jewish education, mikveh, kashrus, etc., mentioning all the Rabbonim, Jewish communal officials and individuals whom we met and our conversations with them.

A day or two later, Rabbi Binyomin Klein came into the upstairs zal to tell me there was an answer from the Rebbe, who had read my entire *d'uch* and commented as follows:

דו"ח - לדוגמא

וראויים ל"ישר כח" מיוחד ע"ז -

ביחד עם תמי' שכנראה קיצרו ביותר בשקו"ט עם רבנים וכיו"ב בחדו"ת - למרות ההוראה בזה.

"This is an **exemplary** report,

"And they deserve a special yasher koach for this,

"Together with surprise that apparently they **greatly** minimized discussions with Rabbonim and the like on Torah novellae, despite the [general] directive for this."

ה'תת"כ כ"ט תמוז - י"ט מנחם אב, ה'תרס"ב
 9000 של פדוק אנטעריא. קאנאבא, ע' פניאל בוב אלפרד
 ופניאל סדרא סה

TORONTO

8 SMALL COMMUNITIES

[To explain, in a farbrengen at the beginning of the summer, the Rebbe had said that every bochur going on Merkos shlichus should first be tested by the yeshiva's hanhala on some Torah chiddush, and they should try to speak chiddushei Torah to whomever possible while on shlichus. We did try but often those with whom we tried to talk seemed to feel we were trying to test them and did not respond appropriately.]

The Rebbe circled this entire paragraph, and wrote:

Another comment from the Rebbe on the report was on page 8, where we had written:

לזכות מרת חיה מושקא תח"ל
לרגל יום הולדתה י"ט מנחם אב

נדפס ע"י ולזכות בעלה
הרה"ת הרב שלום דוב בער וילדיהם שיחיו
שוחאט

A TOWERING GIANT

THE STORY OF THE REBBE'S FATHER,
HARAV LEVI YITZCHOK, AND HIS RISE TO
LEADERSHIP IN A SPIRITUALLY DARK TIME.

IN HONOR OF THE YOM HAHILUA,
CHOF MENACHEM-AV.¹

152 תר"ד תר"ה

[illegible]

EARLY YEARS

Harav Levi Yitzchok Schneerson was born on Yud-Ches Nissan 5638*, in the town of Podrovnah (near Gomel), to Reb Baruch Shneur, (a great-grandson of the Tzemach Tzedek), and Rebbetzin Zelda Rochel Schneerson. He was the oldest of four children, and was named after his paternal grandfather, who passed away at the young age of 44.

Already as a small child, Harav Levi Yitzchok showed signs of greatness. As the Frierdiker Rebbe would later write, “From a young age, his extraordinary talents were already apparent.” His teacher was his great-uncle, Reb Yoel Chaikin.

On Yud-Gimmel Sivan 5660*, at the age of 22, he married Rebbetzin Chana, the daughter of Reb Meir Shlomo Yanovski, the rav of Nikolayev. By that time, Harav Levi Yitzchok was already known for his vast knowledge in Kabbalah and *halacha*. The Rebbe Rashab was the one to suggest the *shidduch* and gave Harav Levi Yitzchok much personal guidance regarding his preparations for his *chasunah*.

After their *chasunah*, Harav Levi Yitzchok and Rebbetzin Chana remained in Nikolayev for almost a decade. Harav Levi Yitzchok would spend most of his day learning, financially supported by his father-in-law. During those years, Harav Levi Yitzchok received his *semicha* from some of the Torah giants of the day, including Reb Chaim Brisker and Reb Elya Chaim Meizlish of Lodz.

Reb Shmuel Grossman, who learned as a *chavrusa* with Harav Levi Yitzchok at that time, related: “Harav Levi Yitzchok would learn 18 hours a day. At five in the morning, he would finally stop his learning to recite the morning Shema while wearing tefillin, and only then retire for the ‘night.’ By nine o’clock in the morning, he was already davening Shacharis with the *minyán*.”

From 5662*, Harav Levi Yitzchok attended all the conferences arranged by the Rebbe Rashab. One of the initiatives in which he took a large part was “Operation Matzah,” the project to arrange matzah for the Jewish soldiers fighting in the war between Japan and Russia in the years 5664*-5*.



FACSIMILE OF A LETTER FROM THE REBBE RASHAB TO HARAV LEVI YITZCHOK'S FATHER, WISHING MAZEL TOV ON HIS SON'S SHIDDUCH.

RABBANUS

“It was the eighth year that we were living in the home of my parents, who supported us while my husband studied Torah full-time. The time had come to think about seeking a source of livelihood.”

This is how Rebbetzin Chana, in her memoirs, describes her family's situation in 5668*. Harav Levi Yitzchok and Reb-



HARAV MEIR SHLOMO HALEVI YANOVSKI (5620* - 5693*).

betzin Chana were already parents to two young sons, the Rebbe and Reb Dovber. They were all living together in the small home of Rebbetzin Chana's father, Harav Meir Shlomo.

Although they received offers for positions of *rabbanus* in various cities, none seemed to work out, until one day, Harav Levi Yitzchok was offered to become a rav in Yekaterinoslav.

Yekaterinoslav, later called Dnepropetrovsk, was a large city with a colorful range of nationalities. Yidden began moving to the city in the mid 5500s; by the time of Harav Levi Yitzchok's appointment, a bit over 100 years later, they numbered over 40,000 souls — almost 40 percent of the general population — making up the third-largest ethnic group in the city, second only to Ukrainians and Russians.

The general relationship between the Jewish and non-Jewish population was a positive one but that had a dire effect on the Yidden's spiritual condition. Russian culture made deep inroads in the Jewish community, and Russian became the language spoken in many homes, a result of their children attending the non-Jewish public schools. The rich and the middle class assimilated almost entirely, and cases of conversion were not unheard of.

As the years passed, antisemitism took a turn for the worse. The Jews were persecuted at every turn and the authorities hampered the efforts of the Jewish youth to enroll in schools of higher learning. As a result, the phenomenon of conversion began to rise rapidly. It was during this difficult period — when the persecution was worsening and the Yidden were on an extreme spiritual low — that Harav Levi Yitzchok received the offer to become a rav in Yekaterinoslav.

THE CHASSIDIM HAD THEIR EYES SET ON HARAV LEVI YITZCHOK. THE REBBE RASHAB HIMSELF INSTRUCTED HIM TO APPLY FOR THE POSITION AND ACTIVELY WORKED TO CONVINCE THE LEADERS OF THE CITY TO APPOINT HIM.

CONTROVERSY

Those who supported Harav Levi Yitzchok's candidacy knew that he was the only person who would be able to deal with the issues that plagued the city. With his knowledge, Chassidus, strength of character and talents, they recognized that he would be the best choice to captain the Jewish ship that was being shaken to no end.

During the years preceding the appointment of Harav Levi Yitzchok, several well-known and distinguished rabbonim, many of them Chassidim, served the community faithfully.

The city itself was divided into several parts, with different rabbonim for each side of town. One rav was for the center of town, another served the Yidden living in the neighborhoods bordering the Dnieper river, and as the city continued to grow, a brand new Jewish neighborhood was established and a rav was needed there as well.

In the year 5668*, over the course of five months, three of the four Rabbonim fell ill and passed away. Until their passing, peace had reigned in the city. Now that new rabbonim

were to be appointed, major disagreements broke out and the city became divided into different camps: Chassidim, *misnagdim*, and *maskilim*.

The Chassidim had their eyes set on Harav Levi Yitzchok. The Rebbe Rashab himself instructed him to apply for the position and actively worked to convince the leaders of the city to appoint him. The *misnagdim*, *maskilim*, Zionists, and high society, on the other hand, fought to appoint an *olam'she rav*, Rabbi Pinchas Gelman. The opposition to Harav Levi Yitzchok's appointment was not simply out of high regard for Rabbi Gelman; many of the opponents simply could not bear the thought that a Chossid might once again be appointed to lead the city's Jews.

Ultimately, the warring sides reached an agreement; Rabbi Gelman would become rav in the neighborhoods adjacent to the river, and Harav Levi Yitzchok would move to the new neighborhood. This arrangement continued until the passing of the senior rav, Rabbi Zakheim, who served the Jewish community in the center of the city. After his passing, Rabbi Gelman moved to take his place, and Harav Levi Yitzchok transferred to Rabbi Gelman's neighborhood. After the passing of Rabbi Gelman, Harav Levi Yitzchok was called to the center of the city. From then on, he was the only, uncontested rav of Yekaterinoslav and the light of his wisdom and leadership shined far and wide.

FIRST ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Once appointed, Harav Levi Yitzchok began working tirelessly to strengthen Yiddishkeit in the city. The prevailing attitude in the community council and the influential class was one of apathy and indifference to all things Jewish, and Harav Levi Yitzchok had to work extra hard to bring about basic changes in Jewish life.

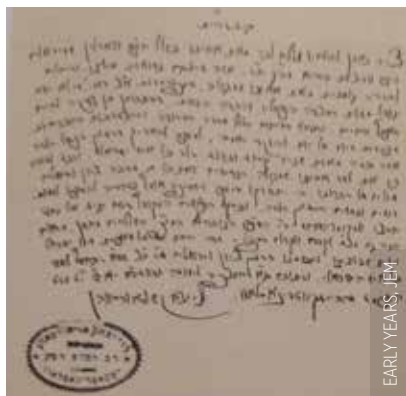


HOME OF REB MEIR SHLOMO WHERE HARAV LEVI YITZCHOK LIVED WITH HIS FAMILY FOR MOST OF THEIR YEARS IN NIKOLAYEV. THE REBBE'S BRIS TOOK PLACE HERE.

HARAV LEVI YITZCHOK TOOK THE PODIUM, AND STATED IN NO UNCER- TAIN TERMS THAT IT WAS FORBIDDEN TO SIGN THE DOCUMENT, WHICH WAS BUILT ENTIRELY ON LIES AND DECEIT.

One of his first endeavors was regarding a basic element of Jewish living: The *mikveh* of Yekaterinoslav had grown old and unfit for use, and Harav Levi Yitzchok made it a priority to correct its sorry state.

He gathered the community leaders and told them about the severity of the issue, but they resisted, claiming that there weren't adequate funds in the community coffers. The new young rabbi stood up to his full height, took off his new cloak which he had just begun wearing in honor of his distinguished appointment, and said: "Here you have this garment which costs a significant sum. With its worth, we can begin building a *mikveh*."



EARLIEST EXTANT LETTER OF HARAV LEVI YITZCHOK AS RAV OF YEKATERINOSLAV.

The formerly apathetic community leaders were impressed with his sincerity, and they immediately committed to correcting the issues with the *mikveh*.

Harav Levi Yitzchok's efforts to influence the Yidden of the

city did not sit well with many of his opponents; some of them looked for every opportunity to challenge him and hinder his activities.

However, as the years passed, support for the new rav began to grow. Little by little, the influential Jews of the city were won over by Harav Levi Yitzchok's sincerity and steadfastness in Yiddishkeit. One would have thought that his fearlessness and steadfastness would have gained him staunch enemies, but the very opposite was true. Many who had opposed his nomination now visited his office, often seeking his guidance and counsel, and his sermons on Yomim Tovim began to draw increasingly large crowds.

COMMUNISM

As World War I came to an end, Russia underwent significant changes. The Czar was deposed, and the Bolsheviks came to power. They lost no time implementing their plans and promoting their way of life. Within a short time, all religions came under intense persecution. A special organization was created specifically to combat Yiddishkeit; run entirely by Yidden, they went about fulfilling their task ferociously, attempting to impede the progress of any religious institution or individual, all in the name of freedom and equality.

It was during these hard years that Harav Levi Yitzchok's strength of character came out in an entirely new light. Until then, he may have had to deal with opposition and annoyances, but now, insisting on principles was a matter of life or death. No imagination was necessary to figure out what the government might do to someone who stood up to them. Many rabbonim were exiled to Siberia and many others were killed outright; no one could know who was next on the black list in the offices of the NKVD.

THE CONFERENCE

An important conference was to take place in Kharkov and Harav Levi Yitzchok's presence was imperative. Global figures had denounced Soviet Russia for its persecution of religion and had awakened a storm of protest from people the world over. The Soviet leadership did not appreciate the tarnished image that the denunciation had generated and was attempting to mend it by publishing declarations by rabbinic leaders stating that there is no religious persecution in Russia.

One such letter had already been published, as a result of a conference of rabbonim in Minsk. Seeing their success, they were now attempting a similar gathering in Kharkov and hoped for the presence of the distinguished rabbis of Ukraine. This conference, they knew, would not be complete without Harav Levi Yitzchok. They were also aware that the rav of Yekaterinoslav was a hard nut to crack, and would need extra



A RECENTLY DISCOVERED PHOTO OF REBBETZIN CHANA. CIRCA 1890*.

“encouragement” for his presence to be secured.

The NKVD called Harav Levi Yitzchok to their headquarters to explain to him how important the meeting was to the government, and they offered him a first-class ticket to Kharkov.

“No, thank you,” Harav Levi Yitzchok told the officer, “I can travel on

my own dime.” The officer stared at him, shell-shocked. These were the offices of the NKVD, where nobody spoke like that. Nonetheless, the officer swallowed the insult and was content with the fact that Harav Levi Yitzchok had agreed to travel there in the first place.

Arriving at the conference, the rabbonim noticed a stranger among them. The NKVD had placed an informer to report on all their conversations, and the rabbonim were obviously not comfortable speaking their minds.

One person stood out. Harav Levi Yitzchok took the podium, and stated in no uncertain terms that it was forbidden to sign the document, which was built entirely on lies and deceit.

Seeing the disaster that the conference would amount to, the minister of education invited Harav Levi Yitzchok for a conversation, where he reminded him of the importance and significance the government saw in the success of the conference, and made him aware of the severity of his actions.

The private talk had no effect. Harav Levi Yitzchok refused to back down; he intensified his efforts to ruin the conference, and even sent a secret message to the international press, making them aware of the government’s actions. The conference was a failure, and the Soviets were once again shamed in the international press when the stories broke.

As Communism began to spread its wings over Russia, those involved in furthering Yiddishkeit throughout the Soviet Union began to be arrested; some of them were sent to Siberia and were never heard from again. In that climate, many rabbonim began to fear for their lives, hoping that dreadful day would never come upon them. One by one, many prominent rabbonim left the country.

By this time, it became clear that Harav Levi Yitzchok was the leader of the Jewish people in the Soviet Union, the

rav and *posek* everyone looked up to and respected. After the Frierdiker Rebbe was forced to leave Russia and was living in Riga, Harav Levi Yitzchok became the sole descendant of the Alter Rebbe and the Tzemach Tzedek leading Russian Jewry.

Harav Levi Yitzchok did not feel that his public support of Torah and mitzvos was something that should be unique to his status as rav. When the Russian government took a census asking citizens if they believe in Hashem, Harav Levi Yitzchok personally went from shul to shul and any gathering place in between, encouraging all Jews to unabashedly declare their belief in Hashem, stating that it is forbidden for a Jew to disconnect himself from Hashem, even for a short moment.

In her memoirs, Rebbetzin Chana wrote about the effect that the *drasha* had on one particular individual:

“His words had such a remarkable impact, that one individual with a position in a government office, whose wife had already written on the form that he was a nonbeliever, went to the statistics office and asked for the erroneous information to be corrected—that he was, in fact, a believer. Very pleased that he had mustered the courage to do this, the fellow came to thank the rav for having influenced him so.”

MATZOS: THE LAST BATTLE

Freedom of religion was one of the mottos of the USSR. As part of the PR campaign to prove this, they would allow the baking of matzah to take place. Since all bakeries—like

In an edit of the Rebbe on the Der Yiddishe Heim newspaper, the Rebbe wrote that Harav Levi Yitzchok was a most devoted Chossid of the Rebbe Rashab with whom he had close personal ties⁴.

Harav Levi Yitzchok would go to Lubavitch every year for Shavuot and sometimes for Tishrei. When he would visit, he was a guest at the Rebbe Rashab’s table, and would test and farbreng with the bochurim of Tomchei Temimim.

The Rebbe Rashab said about Harav Levi Yitzchok, Reb Menachem Mendel Chein, and Reb Chaim Shlomo Zalman Yosef Schneerson: “With these three I will pride myself, in this world and the next.”

Harav Levi Yitzchok was known for his special style in Torah⁵. When asked where he received this way of learning and being *mechadesh* in Torah, he responded that the general style he received from his Rebbe, the Rebbe Rashab, and based on his guidelines built his own edifice.

all businesses—were government-run, they were the ones to actually facilitate the baking and the distribution. This was at the very same time that they were arresting rabbonim and Chassidim, and repressing religion in general.

Baking matzos was not enough. They understood that Yidden will only buy matzos with a proper *hechsher* and being that the Yekaterinoslav region was an outsourcer for wheat throughout the country, they wanted the local rabbi, Harav Levi Yitzchok, to certify that the matzos were baked properly and were kosher for Pesach.

As per their custom, the authorities initially attempted to receive Harav Levi Yitzchok's certification by means of intimidation. It was only when they saw that their efforts bore no fruit that they agreed to Harav Levi Yitzchok's demand: He would be ready to certify the matzah if the government would give him and his *marshgichim* full discretion in running the bakeries. If the government was willing to comply, he would happily give the *hechsher*. If not, he would publicize that the matzos were *chametz* and forbidden for consumption on Pesach.

Surprisingly, they agreed, and on more than one occasion, kosher for Passover matzos were shipped throughout the entire region, giving the oppressed Yidden a chance to properly celebrate the festival of freedom.

In 5699*, Harav Levi Yitzchok once again organized these shipments. Seeing opposition from the government, he decided to travel and obtain an appointment with Mikhail Kalinin, the president of the Soviet Union. As an outcome of their meeting, Mr. Kalinin gave an order that the baking of matzos should continue undisturbed.

Superhuman effort was put into the baking. Obtaining the necessary permits, koshering the bakeries, and dealing with the government bureaucrats throughout the entire process was a backbreaking process, which negatively affected Harav Levi Yitzchok's health. But all that was insignificant in comparison to the spiritual pleasure that he felt. His face shone

from pure happiness, knowing that he gave Yidden the ability to have a kosher and happy Pesach.

This happiness was too much for the government to bear. The final straw had been added to the camel's back, and it was decided that the rav will not be allowed to reap the fruits of his labor.²

FINAL FARBRENGEN

Around Purim time, about a month before Harav Levi Yitzchok's arrest, two young men were noticed spending hours each day around his house, keeping tabs of who came and went, how long they were there for, and where they went afterward.

On Purim that year, there was a big farbrengen held in the rav's home with many in attendance, young and old, including many who were prohibited to be there and were endangering their lives by doing so.

Harav Levi Yitzchok shared many Torah thoughts with great fervor, and the room was filled with an uplifting atmosphere. In the middle of the farbrengen, out of great excitement, the crowd burst into dancing, despite the grave danger it entailed.

As the farbrengen came to a close, the crowd began to leave slowly, a few at a time, trying not to arouse suspicion. At that moment, Rebbetzin Chana noticed those two young fellows there again. There was no doubt in everyone's minds that they were hired by the NKVD to keep an eye on Harav Levi Yitzchok.

THE ARREST

It was three o'clock in the morning on 9 Nissan 5699*; knocks were heard at the Schneerson home on 13 Barikadna Street. Rebbetzin Chana opened the door and was greeted by four agents of the NKVD standing opposite her.



THE SHUL OF HARAV LEVI YITZCHOK, WHERE HE DAVENED UNTIL IT WAS SHUT DOWN BY THE COMMUNISTS IN 5695*, AS IT APPEARED DURING THE SOVIET REGIME AND HOW IT APPEARS TODAY AFTER ITS RESTORATION.



“Where is Rabbi Schneerson?” one of them asked.

As Rebbetzin Chana went to notify her husband of the uninvited guests, the four men entered the house, stationed guards at each door, and began a search. Rifling through the thousands of folios of Harav Levi Yitzchok’s written works on Kabbalah, *halacha*, and rabbinic correspondence, they confiscated his rabbinic ordination certificates and a petition from the community of Yafo in Eretz Yisrael that he emigrate and serve as their chief rabbi sent with visas for the entire family. They also took many rare and priceless artifacts, including *kisvei yad* of the previous Rabbeim.

After three hours of searching through the entire house, one of the guards announced:

“Rabbi Schneersohn, get dressed and come with us.”

As it was right before Pesach, Harav Levi Yitzchok asked if he could take a small package of matzah with him, and they agreed.

It was six o’clock in the morning. Harav Levi Yitzchok was under arrest for his activities on behalf of Judaism in the Soviet Union.

As he was leaving the house, he turned to those who had gathered around and said:

“I am now being taken away, and our sages teach us that ‘one should depart from his friend with a Torah thought.’ I will now share with you one last teaching.” With that, he shared a *dvar Torah* with those standing around.

Mr. Yisroel Adamski, who was a child at the time, recalls the events of the following day:

“The news of the arrest began to slowly spread amongst the Jewish community. The next morning, as everyone came to shul to daven, the public learned about the arrest. Many Jews in the community were terribly angered, and some tried to arrange protests, but the NKVD, armed with heavy weapons, rushed to control the scene.

“I am certain that if a protest would have been arranged, many of the non-Jewish residents of the city would have taken part as well; he was loved by all. But the fear was great...”

NOT INTIMIDATED

Harav Levi Yitzchok was first brought and imprisoned at the NKVD headquarters in Yekaterinoslav. Later, he was transferred to the “Narkumvski” jail in Kiev, where he was placed amongst the worst criminals. It was there that the interrogations began.

Reb Aharon Yaakov Diskin was in the same jail as Harav Levi Yitzchok. He described the torture and suffering Harav Levi Yitzchok went through:

“Who could stand through these hardships? Only very few, one of those was Harav Levi Yitzchok. He wouldn’t admit, he wouldn’t say he was guilty. He was moved to Kiev



THE FINAL RESIDENCE OF HARAV LEVI YITZCHOK IN YEKATERINOSLAV, WHERE HIS ARREST TOOK PLACE.

in the hope that the ‘experts’ would squeeze his signature out of him.

“For the NKVD, he was a prized possession; a famous rav who was a *mechutan* to the Lubavitcher Rebbe — whom they hated with a passion and were forced to banish from the Soviet Union.

“However, no matter what they tried, Harav Levi Yitzchok never gave in and due to his steadfastness many people were saved. He was from the very few to be able to withstand their fire of *Gehinom* and not be broken...”

After many months of failed attempts, not being able to break Harav Levi Yitzchok’s spirit, he was transferred back to Yekaterinoslav where they attempted a new technique: They confronted him with other arrested Chasidim, who confirmed all of Harav Levi Yitzchok’s crimes in front of him, hoping he would give in and admit to the charges against him. However, try as they may, Harav Levi Yitzchok refused to give in.

TRIAL AND SENTENCE

The government wanted to put Harav Levi Yitzchok on a public trial, but because they couldn’t get incriminating evidence out of him and he wouldn’t admit his guilt, it was called off.

Rebbetzin Chana describes in her diary the procedure of the court case against Harav Levi Yitzchok:

“The NKVD tried very hard to find proof of Harav Levi Yitzchok’s crimes against the government, claiming that it’s for this reason that he has so many contacts with various people outside the country, including his *mechutan* the Friediker Rebbe. He should therefore be judged accordingly as someone who is rebelling against the government.

“However, with not enough evidence against him, he couldn’t be charged for such crimes. With no other option they were forced to sentence him to be exiled far away, with

ALTHOUGH HARAV LEVI
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NEVERTHELESS RETAINED
HIS REGAL APPEARANCE.
MANY OF THE LOCALS
NOTICED HIS GREATNESS
AND BEGAN TREATING
HIM WITH RESPECT



A FASCINATING MANUSCRIPT WRITTEN BY HARAV LEVI YITZCHOK AFTER ARRIVING IN CHI'LI, KAZAKHSTAN, ANALYZING HOW EACH ASPECT OF HIS ARREST HAS SPIRITUAL MEANING AND CONNECTS WITH THE SOURCE OF HIS NESHAMAH.

no other Jewish people around, so that he could no longer be of influence on anyone...”

Towards the end of the month of Kislev, Rebbetzin Chana received an order to appear in the NKVD headquarters. On the designated day, she made her way to the NKVD building, with hopes of finally being able to see her husband for the first time since his arrest, almost nine months prior.

After waiting for about an hour, she was summoned to a room where she found four officers sitting behind a table. One of them announced:

“Rabbi Levi Yitzchok Schneerson is sentenced to five years of exile in eastern Asia.”

With tears in her eyes, Rebbetzin Chana began to plead with them. “How can someone as weak as him survive?!”

They replied, “His place of exile isn’t so bad, and he will also be able to keep his citizenship. He just has to move his place of residence there.”

She was also informed that before his departure to his *galus*, she would be granted the opportunity to meet him and say her goodbyes.

Rebbetzin Chana continued to plead with the officer; “He’s old and weak, and the long journey will be hard for him!”

They replied, “Being that he is older, he will receive better treatment for the journey.”

When she asked about preparing food for him, they told her that all this time they had been feeding him, and he had been eating what they gave. However, later on, an officer told her to prepare a package of food, saying, “It’s actually not true; during all these months, not one parcel of food we gave him entered his mouth!”

A day was set for Rebbetzin Chana to meet with Harav Levi Yitzchok for the first time since his arrest.

Rebbetzin Chana made her way to the respective meeting area. Reflecting on his state of health at that meeting, she would later write, “I couldn’t imagine that just a few short months could affect his health and wellbeing so much.”

“Baruch Hashem we can finally meet,” were Harav Levi Yitzchok’s first words. “Please tell me, was Rosh Chodesh Kislev one day or two days this year? I need to know because soon is Chanukah...”

JOURNEY TO GALUS

As much as Rebbetzin Chana tried to find out the exact date Harav Levi Yitzchok would be transferred, she was unsuccessful. A short time later, she was notified that he was in Kharkov. She traveled to Kharkov, and was once again granted permission to see her husband before his long and bitter journey to *galus*.

The month-long journey was hard and tiring for Harav Levi Yitzchok, but he later said that the hardest part of the



THE TYPE OF MUD AND CLAY HOME THAT HARAV LEVI YITZCHOK AND REBBETZIN CHANA LIVED IN DURING THE DIFFICULT YEARS OF EXILE IN CHI'ILI, KAZAKHSTAN.

journey was not being able to wash *negel vasser* in the morning. For 11 days straight, they didn't receive any water. The little they did supply was so minimal that it was barely enough to quench their thirst, but nevertheless, he used what he did receive for *negel vasser*. He would even exchange the little amount of food he had with the guard for just a few more drops of water to wash his hands!

Reb Avraham Baruch Pevzner was arrested a few months before Harav Levi Yitzchok, and was transported to Kazakhstan alongside him. He would later describe his experience:

"On my way to Kazakhstan, I was together with Harav Levi Yitzchok. We were on the same cart on the train, but we weren't allowed to speak to each other; we communicated through head motions and signals. Harav Levi Yitzchok was extremely weak after his many months of torture.

"For part of the journey, we had to walk on foot. There were a few times that Harav Levi Yitzchok collapsed in his place as a result of weakness, and each time the evil guards would send their dogs at him to force him to get up and continue walking."

ARRIVAL IN KAZAKHSTAN

Chi'ili, the name of a remote town in Kazakhstan in far east Asia, brings back bitter memories to many who were there.

In this town, the houses were made of mud and clay and did not protect their inhabitants from the extreme cold, snow, and strong winds. The ground itself was muddy and would never dry up, making it hard to walk. With every step, one's feet would get stuck in the mud and it was difficult to get them out. Mosquitos were everywhere; in the streets, houses, kitchens, closets, food, and drink. During the summer, when the cold abated somewhat, the heat would cause an awful stench to rise from the ground, also being the cause of extreme illness.

This uninhabitable town is where Harav Levi Yitzchok

arrived on 19 Shevat 5700*. It was late at night, totally dark, cold, and pouring rain. Not a single person was outside, besides for another Yid who was also exiled there.

To remain outside for too long would be life-threatening; they needed to find shelter fast. They began knocking on door after door, hoping to find a Jewish home that would take them in.

Eventually, they found a house with a dim light shining. Being left with no other option, they gave it a try and knocked on the door. Seeing their poor condition, the homeowner let them in. He gave them a place to lay down, prepared a hot

BEILIS TRIAL

Not too long after Harav Levi Yitzchok became rav, the Beilis blood libel began.

The body of a young Christian boy was "found" near a factory. A Yid named Mendel Beilis, who worked at the factory, was immediately accused of the crime and arrested.



MENDEL BEILIS

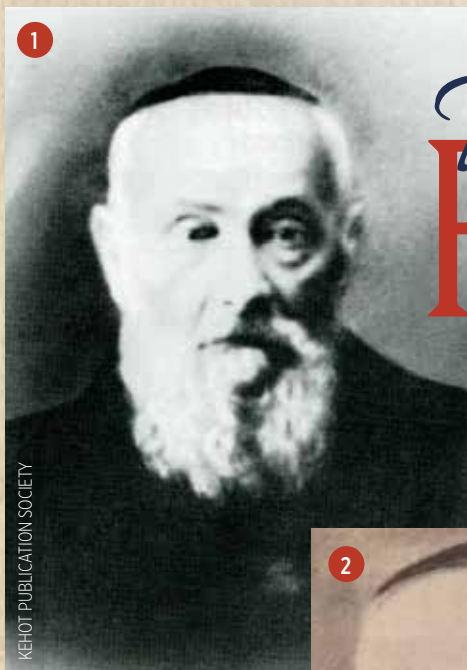
Unlike previous blood libels throughout Jewish history, this libel was specifically against Chassidim and the Rebbe.

It was known to everyone that Torah doesn't require the Jews to use Christian blood in their matzah; but, they claimed, although most Jews don't, there is one group that does: the group called "Chassidim." They have their own rituals according to the teachings of Kabbalah which require them to use blood in their matzah, was the claim.

The Rebbe Rashab got personally involved in the case, appointing the lawyers and pulling connections with the government to disprove this libel.

Since this was a libel specifically targeted at Chassidim, the Rebbe Rashab appointed Harav Levi Yitzchok to join the team as an expert in Kabbalah. Harav Levi Yitzchok did so, explaining and proving the prohibition of using blood according to Kabbalah.

The process of the trial lasted for close to three years. Mendel Beilis was eventually declared innocent and set free, due to the lack of evidence. The crisis was averted.

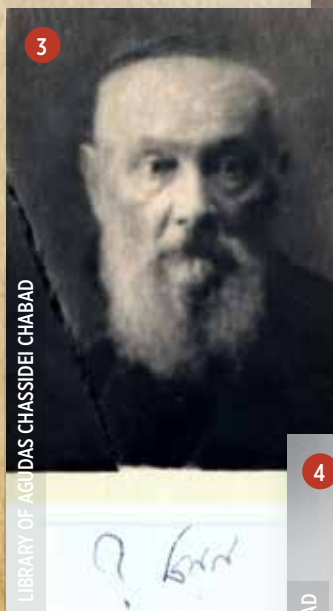


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The PHOTOGRAPHS of HARAV LEVI YITZCHOK



KEHOT PUBLICATION SOCIETY



LIBRARY OF AGUDAS CHASSIDEI CHABAD



LIBRARY OF AGUDAS CHASSIDEI CHABAD

1. IN 5712*, A FEW YEARS AFTER COMING TO AMERICA, REBBETZIN CHANA GAVE REB MOSHE GRONER A PHOTO OF HARAV LEVI YITZCHOK TO BE RESTORED. THE PHOTO WAS LIKELY TAKEN IN CHI'ILI, KAZAKHSTAN, AND WAS TORN, SO THAT ONLY HALF OF HIS FACE WAS VISIBLE.

HARAV LEVI YITZCHOK WAS UNRECOGNIZABLE AFTER UNDERGOING SUCH SUFFERING.

IN 5730*, WHEN THE FIRST VOLUME OF LIKKUTEI LEVI YITZCHOK WAS PRINTED, THE REBBE PROVIDED THE PHOTO AND REQUESTED THAT IT BE PUBLISHED IN THE SEFER.

2. THIS PHOTO OF HARAV LEVI YITZCHOK WAS GIVEN TO THE REBBE IN 5736* AND WAS PUBLISHED IN THE FIRST EDITION OF TOLDOS LEVI YITZCHOK THE FOLLOWING YEAR. IT WAS SUBSEQUENTLY USED IN MANY PUBLICATIONS.

3. THIS PHOTO WAS BROUGHT TO THE REBBE IN 5726* BY REB MOSHE VISHEDSKI. IT SEEMS TO BE THE ORIGINAL PHOTOGRAPH; REB MOSHE GOT IT FROM REB HIRSHEL RABINOVITCH WHO HELPED THE REBBE'S FATHER AND MOTHER DURING THOSE DIFFICULT TIMES IN KAZAKHSTAN. PERHAPS REBBETZIN CHANA HANDED THE PHOTO TO REB HIRSHEL FOR SAFEKEEPING AND PERHAPS THIS IS THE PHOTO ABOUT WHICH REBBETZIN CHANA WRITES IN HER MEMOIRS THAT SHE HAD TO LEAVE BEHIND IN RUSSIA.

REB MOSHE'S SON RECOUNTS THAT ON THIS PHOTO THE REBBE WROTE "וְיִצְחָק?" (- MY FATHER?) THIS PICTURE WAS PUBLISHED IN THE SEFER "MIBEIS HAGENAZIM."

4. THIS PICTURE OF HARAV LEVI YITZCHOK, WHICH BY NOW IS THE MOST FAMOUS, WAS DISCOVERED IN 5751*. PRESENTED HERE IS THE ORIGINAL PHOTO THAT WAS PART OF THE INTERROGATION FILE OF HARAV LEVI YITZCHOK IN 5699*. ON THE PHOTO, THE REBBE INSCRIBED THE WORD "וְיִצְחָק" - WITHOUT THE QUESTION MARK THIS TIME. THE PHOTO WAS RESTORED, WITH THE REBBE'S PERMISSION, IN TIME FOR THE PUBLISHING OF THE NEW SEFER TORAS MENACHEM - TIFERES LEVI YITZCHOK ON SHEMOS, WHICH WAS PUBLISHED IN HONOR OF VOV TISHREI 5752. AT THE REBBE'S BEHEST, THE ORIGINAL PHOTO OF HARAV LEVI YITZCHOK (FIRST PUBLISHED IN LIKKUTEI LEVI YITZCHOK) WAS ALSO PUBLISHED, ILLUSTRATING THE EFFECT THAT THE YEARS OF GALUS HAD ON HIM.

drink for them, and they were able to sleep for a few hours.

The next morning, Harav Levi Yitzchok sent a telegram to Rebbetzin Chana to notify her where he was and to ask for his tallis and tefillin, various *sefarim*, and food. When she received this telegram, she immediately prepared a package and about three weeks later, it finally arrived. Rebbetzin Chana recorded what she heard from her husband: “The excitement of finally being able to put on tefillin for the first time in almost a year was indescribable!”

Rebbetzin Chana herself immediately began making preparations for the long journey to Kazakhstan.

One of the major difficulties for Harav Levi Yitzchok was obtaining food. To receive the small portion of food that was provided by the government, one needed to work. However, due to his poor condition, he was unable to work and only after much effort was he able to receive an exemption.

Although Harav Levi Yitzchok went through much suffering and was physically weak, he nevertheless retained his regal appearance. Many of the locals noticed his greatness and began treating him with respect, allowing him to skip the line where everyone would wait for many hours to receive their portion of food, and helping in other ways as well.

REBBETZIN CHANA’S ARRIVAL

After making all the proper arrangements, Rebbetzin Chana began the long journey to Kazakhstan about a week after Purim. Many Chassidim helped along the way, providing her with whatever she needed and helping to carry her belongings. Towards the end of Adar, she arrived in the town of Chi’ili, finally reunited with her husband.

Once she arrived, she was able to once again help Harav Levi Yitzchok. A week before Pesach, Rebbetzin Chana traveled to a nearby town Kyzylorda to obtain ink and paper for Harav Levi Yitzchok to write his *chidushei Torah*. She later described:

“The excitement he had upon receiving ink was indescribable. The joy of receiving writing utensils brought him more joy than when he received a piece of bread after long months of hunger!”

YIDDISHKEIT IN CHI’ILI

As time went on, more and more Yidden were exiled to these faraway towns. Word began to spread about Harav Levi Yitzchok’s presence and many Yidden began to make their way there from nearby towns, some risking their lives doing so, to help out Harav Levi Yitzchok in any way they could. They would help him physically, and would walk away

uplifted and inspired.

Celebrating Yom Tov alone in this remote town was a unique challenge of its own. To fully appreciate the way Harav Levi Yitzchok would celebrate Yomim Tovim alone, one must read the diaries of Rebbetzin Chana.

However, Tishrei of 5704* was a different experience altogether. As the crowd of Jewish refugees grew, a *minyan* was arranged for the Yomim Tovim.

It was a very diverse crowd, of all ages and different backgrounds. Many of them being simple Yidden, weren’t necessarily so involved with Yiddishkeit, but when Tishrei came around, everyone took part in the celebration.

There was a small crowd, and none of them were able to act as *chazan*, *ba’al Koreh*, or *ba’al tokei’ah*. Although he was weak, Harav Levi Yitzchok filled all these positions with tremendous joy and excitement to once again be able to daven with a *minyan*, despite the harsh times and conditions.

When it came to Sukkos and Simchas Torah they rejoiced, dancing together, completely forgetting about the world around them! Harav Levi Yitzchok himself would lead the *farbrengen* as he had done years before; one wouldn’t be able to imagine he was suffering...

Harav Levi Yitzchok did whatever he could to help and assist his fellow Yidden, whether by teaching them Torah, giving them hope and inspiration, and, whenever needed, he would arrange a proper Jewish burial.

ALMA-ATA

As Harav Levi Yitzchak’s five-year sentence was nearing its end, his physical condition began to deteriorate. Though he was unaware of it, a serious illness was spreading through his body, severely weakening him. Meanwhile, friends in the closest large city, Alma Ata, resolved to secure the rav’s release. Due to the war and his status as a “counterrevolutionary,” returning to Yekaterinoslav was out of the question. They contributed thousands of rubles, giving away most of their own assets, to acquire the proper permits for the relocation. After six weeks fraught with setbacks and obstacles, they were finally able to obtain the release documents.

Immediately after Pesach, Harav Levi Yitzchak and Rebbetzin Chana left Chi’ili and arrived in Alma Ata.

A reception was held at the home of one of the community

Although being a Lubavitcher Chosid in the Soviet Union was the biggest crime, Harav Levi Yitzchok in his first statement of his interrogation, without being asked, declared that he was a member of the Chabad movement.⁶



THE TZIYUN OF HARAV LEVI YITZCHOK AS IT APPEARED BEFORE THE FALL OF THE SOVIET UNION AND TODAY.

leaders. The news of the rav's move to Alma-Ata had spread throughout the city. Fearing that it would attract unwanted attention, certain officials had to be paid off and many precautions were taken.

In this large city, Harav Levi Yitzchak and Rebbetzin Chana's living conditions improved somewhat and they were able to work more vigorously to help others in need, while the community provided the rav with his physical and financial needs in a generous manner.

Many of the non-Jewish leaders of the city held highly of Harav Levi Yitzchok and treated him with great respect, often turning to him for help and guidance.

ILLNESS

After Shavuot, the rav's illness began to take a toll on him and the pain began to worsen. A physician examined the rav and treated him regularly.

Seeing that there was no improvement in the rav's condition, a well-known professor was called. After much pleading and hearing of the rav's condition, he agreed to make the trip to Alma-Ata to treat Harav Levi Yitzchok.

Upon seeing the rav, the professor diagnosed Harav Levi Yitzchok with a very severe disease.

The professor continued to treat Harav Levi Yitzchok for the next few weeks and he later commented that throughout all his years, he had never before encountered such an extraordinary person.

However, the rav's condition continued to worsen to the point where he was bedridden. Additional doctors came and examined him, but they all shook their heads in despair; they had no cure for his ailment.

FINAL MOMENTS

On Tuesday night, the eve of Chof Av, as Harav Levi Yitzchok was laying in bed, he asked for some water to wash

his hands, saying, "It is time to prepare for the journey to the other side..." Those were his last words spoken to those around, but his lips were continuously moving. Reb Hirshel Rabinowitz bent down and heard Harav Levi Yitzchok saying, עקבותיך לא נודעו...א,י, עקבות משיחא...עקבות משיחא

The next morning, his condition became critical, and before sunset his holy soul returned to its creator.

Rebbetzin Chana concludes her memories: "This is how his life ended. His path through life was a difficult one. He was always at war, never compromising his convictions, never going 'fifty-fifty.' It cost him dearly, but he never surrendered. At first this brought him many opponents, but eventually they became his followers and loyal friends."

The *levaya* took place the next day. The wooden chest that was used to hold Harav Levi Yitzchok's *sefarim*, and also served as the table upon which hundreds of pages of *chidushei Torah* were written, was used to build the *aron*.

Although participating in the *levaya* was a great risk, nobody had second thoughts about attending. Questions would have to be answered the next day, but none of that mattered at that moment³.

Harav Levi Yitzchok was laid to rest in the Jewish cemetery in Alma-Ata, Kazakhstan. **T**

1. This article is primarily based on the book "Toldos Levi Yitzchok" For the Rebbe's involvement in this book see "The Rebbe's Peulot in Memory of his Father," Derher Av 5773.

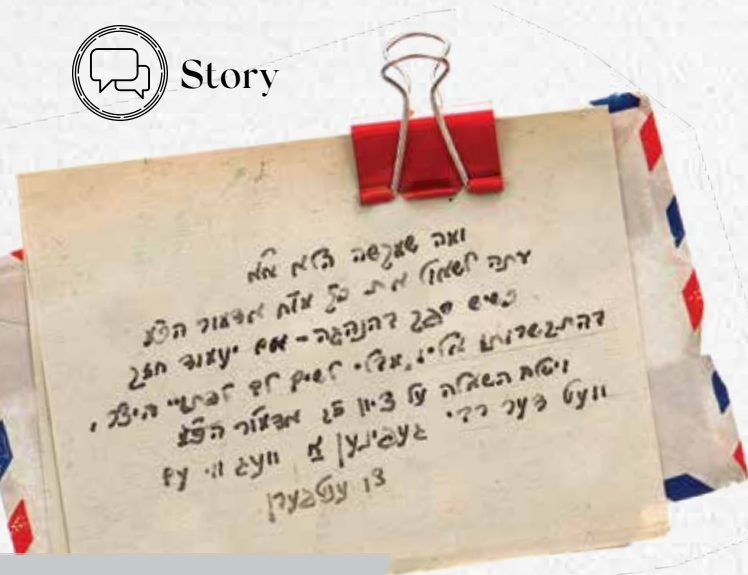
2. For a more comprehensive article about the rabbanus of Harav Levi Yitzchok see, "The Rav of Yekaterinoslav," Derher Av 5776.

3. For a more comprehensive article about the period of Alma Ata and the *histalkus* see, "The Histalkus of Reb Levi Yitzchok" Derher Av 5773.

4. See Derher Av 5774 p. 8.

5. For an article about the Torah of Harav Levi Yitzchok see, "Broad Perception and Meticulous Precision" Derher Av 5777.

6. See Toras Menachem vol. 45 pg. 222.



לזכות
השליח החייל בצבאות ה'
מנחם מענדל שיחי'
לרגל האפשרעניש' שלו
י"ד מנחם אב ה'תשפ"ב

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

דער רבי וועט געפינען א וועג...

The Special Treatment

AS TOLD BY RABBI CHAIM MENTZ (BEL-AIR, CA)

In the summer of 5779* my elderly mother was diagnosed with *yeneh machlah* in her kidneys. Her condition was further complicated by the fact that she had very weak kidneys for quite some time which made any type of treatment fraught with even more danger and less chance for success. As could be expected, the doctors prescribed chemotherapy treatments for her new illness but she rejected it outright. At her advanced age she refused to consider undergoing treatments that would drain her of all her remaining strength when the chances for recovery were so small.

"Ma, you can't just give up like that," I said to her and immediately wrote a letter to the Rebbe asking for a *bracha v'eitza* for my mother.

Determined to find an alternative treatment, my mother started researching online and after a few days discovered that one of the most prestigious specialists in the specific field of her illness had an office in her town in Florida! This was our first sign of the Rebbe's *brachos* coming to fruition.

The receptionist notified her that the doctor was semi-retired, mostly focused on research, and was not accepting

any new patients. My mother asked for the doctor's email address and sent him the details of her diagnosis and her x-rays. To our amazement, the doctor's office reached out to her less than a day later to arrange an appointment with the doctor the following week. I flew to Florida from California to accompany my mother to this appointment.

The doctor reviewed all of her scans, ran some of his own tests and spent considerable time speaking with us about her condition. Finally he made his recommendations.

"You have three options. The first and most standard option is chemotherapy, which you already ruled out. There is another 'star wars' type of treatment that will be less straining but will destroy your weak kidneys, so that's not a great idea. The final option I can offer is an experimental treatment I am working on in the lab with a team of researchers. It's a new pill that has not yet been approved by the FDA."

"What are the chances for success?" I asked.

"We experimented on 17 patients thus far. For nine of them the pill only stopped the tumor from growing and for eight of them it caused the tumor to shrink slightly."

“Ma, you’re number *Chai!*” I said. “You got to give this a chance!”

After some thought she agreed and the doctor indicated that treatments could begin immediately, but there was one complication. Since the pill was still an experiment, no health insurance would cover the treatment and the out-of-pocket cost was \$250,000 per year! Needless to say, we walked out of the office after politely turning down the offer of being the eighteenth patient to experiment with the pill.

I could not accept the fact that we had succeeded in coming so far along, to find a specialist so close by who accepted my mother’s case despite all odds, only to be deterred by financial concerns. So I wrote another letter to the Rebbe reporting on this situation and asking for a sign of how to proceed with my mother’s health.

Two weeks later the specialist reached out to my mother and offered to give her the pills free of charge for life, provided that she would follow his instructions precisely! Since her case was so unique, she was the perfect candidate for their trial. Once again we were overwhelmed with gratitude to Hashem in seeing the fruition of the Rebbe’s *brachos* lead us in the right direction.

My mother started taking the pill in accordance with the doctor’s instructions and every three months would take another x-ray and meet with the doctor to gauge her progress. I accompanied her to all these appointments and for many months the scans indicated that the tumor had stopped growing but was not shrinking. We were cautiously satisfied with this result for the meantime.

In order to appreciate the next part of the story I need to introduce you to Mr. Jerry Weiner. He and his wife were from the earliest supporters of Chabad in Bel-Air and we have been very close for nearly 40 years. In 5750* Jerry experienced a terrible health incident due to tremendous stress he had from his business. He recovered from it through a *bracha* from the Rebbe, and in the summer of 5751* we came together to the Rebbe one Sunday for dollars.

Throughout Jerry’s illness I wrote to the Rebbe using his Hebrew name and mother’s name and never wrote his last name in the letters. When we approached the Rebbe I introduced him as Jerry Weiner who started wearing tefillin five years earlier, and he requested a *bracha* for an important business deal he was currently working on.

The Rebbe gave him an extra dollar and said “You should do so with a happy mind.” With clear *ruach*

hakodesh the Rebbe had referenced his recent health issues due to stress, and instructed him to stop getting stressed from his business.

Fast forward to the summer of 5780*, I was searching through JEM’s online archive of videos from dollars and I discovered the video of the Weiners’ visit to the Rebbe on 3 Av 5751*. After seeing Jerry and his son receive dollars from the Rebbe I was reminded of the fact that my mother had joined us that specific day for dollars. She notified the Rebbe that my brother Yossi just had a baby and then asked for a *bracha* that her upcoming major surgery should be successful.

The Rebbe handed her a second dollar and said: “May G-d A-lmighty bless you that the surgery should be in a good way and in a healthy way. And have a long and healthy life with your husband and all the children.”

Then the Rebbe handed her another dollar and said: “This is for the special treatment... special success in the treatment. May G-d A-lmighty bless you.”

As soon as I saw this I called my mother and asked her if she had to undergo special treatments following her surgery in the summer of 5751*.

“Nothing at all,” she said. “I just needed bed rest.”

Flabbergasted I sent her the clip and when she saw it she too was stunned. “Wow! Apparently the Rebbe was referring to the special treatment I am undergoing now 30 years later!”

We found the video in the summer of 5780*. Fast forward to Shevat of 5782* and as my mother and I were seated in the doctor’s office to hear the results of the latest scan - to our tremendous joy and gratitude to Hashem - the doctor notified us that the *yeneh machla* had shrunk over 25 percent!

The Rebbe’s *bracha* we forgot about over 30 years earlier had materialized in front of our eyes!

Three months later, on Rosh Chodesh Iyar my mother passed away painlessly and peacefully. According to the doctors her passing was natural, unconnected with the *yeneh machla* or any other illnesses. We are so grateful to Hashem for the gift of having her with us for those two years. ①

YOUR STORY

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



VISITING THE REBBE

- 13 AV 5726 -

On his first presidential visit to the United States in 5726*, then president of Israel, Mr. Zalman Shazar, who had a Chabad family history that dates back to the Alter Rebbe and merited a unique relationship with the Rebbe, visited 770.



Just before midnight, the crowd grew outside 770, singing Napoleon's March as Mr. Shazar arrived with his entourage. The Rebbe came outside to greet him with a warm embrace and kiss. "Rebbe, Rebbe!" Shazar announced excitedly as he put his hands on the Rebbe's holy face. The warm interaction was quite a unique scene.



The Rebbe introduces the president to mazkir Rabbi Dr. Nissan Mindel



JEM 103218



JEM 109017

Upon entering, the Rebbe gave the president a tour of the upstairs of 770. For much of the time the Rebbe led him by the arm.



JEM 102915



Before this trip, some Israeli officials gave Mr. Shazar a difficult time about coming to the Rebbe. They felt that it would break protocol for the President to go to the Rebbe. If Mr. Shazar wanted to see the Rebbe—they contended—it would be more appropriate for the Rebbe to visit him. Ultimately Mr. Shazar prevailed and he did indeed visit the Rebbe at 770. During the tour the Rebbe showed him the place where the Frierdiker Rebbe would celebrate Simchas Torah, where he would cry on Tisha B'Av, where he would recite Chassidus, and where his yeshiva was. When reaching the Rebbe's room, he pointed to his desk and said, "From this table the tears of many Jews were heard; this I could not have brought to you."

In the Rebbe's room, Mr. Shazar introduced some members of his entourage to the Rebbe.

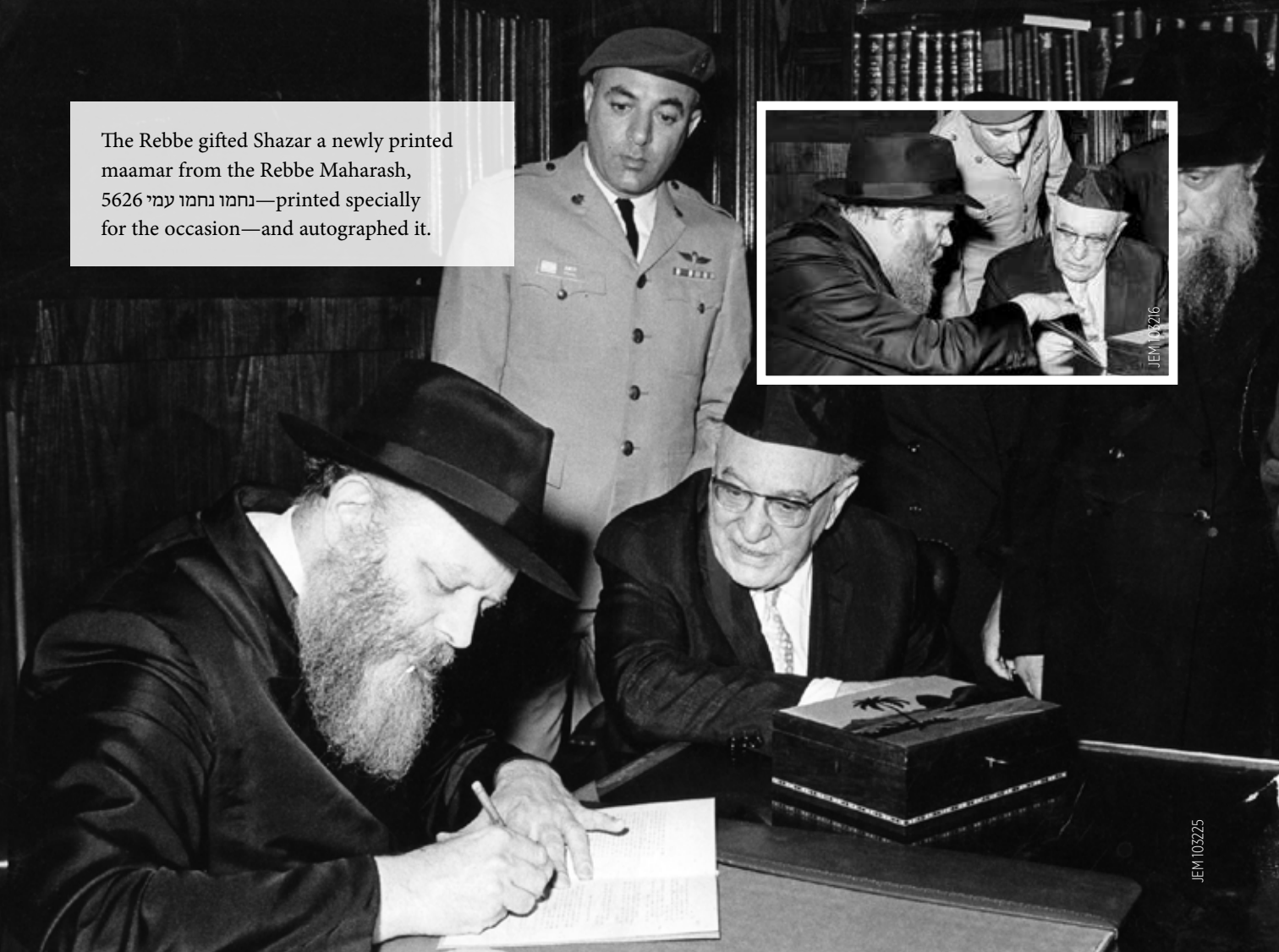


Shazar started the conversation asking about making a bracha Shehecheyanu. The Rebbe explained the different scenarios that may occur between two friends who have not seen each other for a period of 30 days. Shazar went on to notify the Rebbe that he had been keeping the shiurim in nigleh and Chassidus that the Rebbe had suggested during their last meeting. After a few moments, the room emptied for the Rebbe and Shazar—who the Rebbe so warmly referred to as “Reb Zalman”—to continue privately.



Shazar presented the Rebbe with a gift of a special wooden box containing original handwritten letters of the Rebbe Rashab. These letters were originally in the possession of the Frierdiker Rebbe's library but were lost during the war, with a small portion later reaching Mr. Shazar. The Rebbe thanked him profusely, rendering it an act of pidyon shvuyim, and continued to do so in their correspondence for years to come. Mazkirim recalled that the box stayed in the Rebbe's room for a long time.

The Rebbe gifted Shazar a newly printed maamar from the Rebbe Maharash, 5626 נחמו נחמו עמי—printed specially for the occasion—and autographed it.



Letters

A forum for readers to send their feedback, add to, or ask any questions about articles. Submit your letter to feedback@derher.org.

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

Dear Editors,

Thank you for your article titled “The Rebbe and the Press” in the Iyar issue.

To add perspective to this subject, allow me to share from the Rebbe’s *sichos* on the topic. At the farbrengen of Yud Shevat 5714*, the Rebbe said:

“There are many qualities in America, but one of the things that still needs to be corrected is how publicity (‘advertisement’) is the highest priority! Some people have elevated the responsum of the Rashba that ‘It is a mitzvah to publicize those who do mitzvos’ beyond what is appropriate. At times, before they decide whether or not any actual mitzvah will be performed, they have already figured out that it is a mitzvah to generate publicity!

“Even if people don’t get the title or honor for being at the head of a specific effort—the main thing is that it should be accomplished.”

Earlier in the *sicha* the Rebbe laid out general principles:

When publicity about a certain matter can bring a positive benefit, since the publicity can help encourage others to do good—then publicity is required.

When there isn’t a benefit resulting from the publicity, then it should be treated as ‘*Lo yo’il lo yazik*—even if it doesn’t help, it can’t do any harm.’ In other words, there’s nothing to lose.

However, when there is a chance that

publicity about someone doing something good might discourage someone else from participating—then it should be accomplished without any publicity.

There is an additional benefit when activism is performed without any publicity, as it avoids the potential for selfish interests (*pniyos*).

Apparently, there were those who still complained to the Rebbe about this approach. The next month the Rebbe addressed them (Parshas Vayakhel 5714*):

“After the discussion on Yud Shevat there were still those who asked, ‘Why don’t we write in the newspapers about the activities that we do?’ Moreover—they claim—that since these activities are not announced in the press then it must mean that we are not doing them and we are actually opposed to them?”

The Rebbe continued:

“Therefore, I will repeat it again: We don’t seek publicity for its own sake, only to help accomplish a positive result. When the matter is best accomplished without publicity then we do it quietly.

“This is not a new approach; this is what I saw by the [Friediker] Rebbe, and he said that this was the approach of the Rabbeim before him. They followed this approach without being concerned that people might make a mistake and think that they weren’t involved and accomplishing...”

I encourage your readers to review the

sichos in print and from the recordings, as these are short excerpts as I understood them and loosely translated them.

Sincerely,

Hershey Novack

S. LOUIS, MISSOURI

Dear Editors,

A hearty *yasher koach* for yet another substance-filled edition of Derher. Your magazine is not only informative and attractive, but it also serves as a prime medium to relive those cherished moments of *beis chayeinu* throughout the years.

Indeed, when I go through its pages with an elderly close family member who is unfortunately bedridden in a nursing center, the stories, pictures and insights therein bring a smile to his face and help him recall his own experiences with the Rebbe from a half century ago, despite his declining memory. It is the best *chassidische refuah* and *chizuk* for him—and I’m sure for many others too.

On that note I’d like to add to the essay that focused on the *takanah* of Chitas (Iyar 5782).

Though it is impossible to include everything on this subject in the few pages devoted to it, still, we would be remiss not to mention the fascinating story from the Rebbe’s early years of *nesius* that exemplifies how Chitas serves not only as a *tikun* for past spiritual missteps but as a remedy for physical illness.

I am referring to the story about the late Rabbi Chaim Cheikel Miletzky (Rosh Yeshiva of Chayei Olam, Yerushalayim) who became crippled due to the *kepeidah* of the *tzadik-nistar*, Itche der Shikur, when Rabbi Miletzky was a *bochur* in Europe. It was the Rebbe’s directive that he learn Chitas every day and encourage others to do the same, that helped him. (For a complete recounting of this account, see Reb Refoel Kahn’s

Shemuos v’Sipurim vol. 1, who heard this directly from the one who wrote to the Rebbe about Rabbi Miletzky and received the Rebbe’s response.)

I’m not sure if the Derher already published this story in its entirety before but if not I think it could be worthwhile to print it in the “Stories of the Rebbe” column.

Moreover, there is another benefit that Chitas brings that was not mentioned in the essay, namely, that it serves as a *shemirah* (protection) for a vehicle.

In a *maineh* to the owners of a company whose employees had experienced a number of car accidents the Rebbe wrote: “It is our *minhag* — [to have] in every car [a] Chitas and tzedakah box.”

(It should be noted however that in different letters the Rebbe’s *horaos* vary in regards to which things to make sure to have when traveling/have in a car including a siddur, Tehillim, Tanya, tzedakah *pushka*, and even a mezuzah.)

In this way the car and its driver become “vehicles” for mitzvot, which, as the Gemara assures us, “*Shluchei mitzvah einan nizokin*” (messengers of mitzvot are not harmed).

May this noble publication continue serving as a booster for spiritual and even physical wellness!

Baruch Thaler

Boca Raton, FL

Correction:

In a letter to the editor in the Adar I 5782 issue, mention was made about the Gemiluth Chassadim fund of the 770 *bochurim*, to which the Rebbe contributed \$18. We incorrectly named one of the *bochurim* who reopened the fund in 5720. The correct name is Noach Bernstein.



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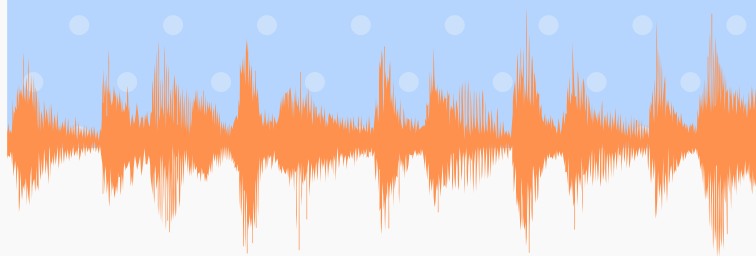
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