

A Chassidisher **Derher**

א חסידישער דערהער

WE WANT TO SEE *The Rebbe!*

The Tzemach Tzedek and the Cantonists

Moment of Silence

CONSCIOUSNESSES OF
HASHEM IN EVERY CHILD

Unique – Even in Previous generations

THE ICONIC CHOSSID
REB SHMUEL LEVITIN



CHESHVAN 5782
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This magazine
has been made possible

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

Whose Shlichus Is It?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

This is our job!

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

The Rebbe then concluded with a real call to action:

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

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

A Chassidisher Derher

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

1. Chof Mar-Cheshvan 5745, sicha 2.



לע"נ
מרת חנה לאה
בת הרה"ת ר' שמעון ע"ה
ברוק
נלב"ע ז' טבת, ה'תשע"א
תנ"צ'ב'ה'

נדפס על ידי ולזכות משפחתה שיחיו
משפחת ברוק, באנון, דייטש
ניו יארק. פלארידא.
מאנטאנא. מאנטרעאל.



Six Years of Preparation



In the *Shemitah* year, those who have spent the previous six years working the land suddenly change their occupation and become full-time Torah scholars.

This serves as preparation for the year of *Hakhel*, which follows the *Shemitah* year, when all Yidden will listen to the king read the Torah in the *Beis Hamikdash*. Having spent a whole year learning, they are in a much better position to internalize and follow through on the message of

Hakhel, to heed and learn all it says in the Torah.

The plowing and sowing of the previous six years also offer insight as to how a Yid should “work” on Torah during the *Shemitah* year: With the same effort and toil he spent working the land.

But what about a full-time Torah scholar, who never works the land, and *Shemitah* in general is not much of a change for him?

He should take a lesson from the land worker: Just as the land worker has completely broken his routine for *Shemitah*, to a point of transcending logic—abandoning his fields for a full year—so too the Torah scholar must break out of his current Torah routine and be even more involved and immersed in Torah, in a super-rational way.

(Adapted from *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Vayera, Chof Cheshvan 5747*)



IN CONVERSATION WITH SENATOR HENRY JACKSON AND CONGRESSMAN HUGH CARRIE, 18 CHESHVAN 5735.

טור 'לעבן מיט'ן רבי'ן' 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"נ צ"ב'ה

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

“I’m Not Running for Senate”

CHESHVAN 5735*



The following is an account of what transpired during the month of Cheshvan 5735*. A consistent overarching theme in the occurrences of this month is the Rebbe’s push that girls should light Shabbos candles from the young age of three years old. This was coming off the heels of the launch of a new *mitvza*, “*Mivtza Neshek*,” one month prior on 25 Elul 5734*. Collected from various *yomanim* of *bochurim* who were in 770 at the time.

FAREWELL TO VISITORS

As the Tishrei crowds began to disperse, the stage upon which the Rebbe stood during davening throughout the month of Tishrei was dismantled.

On **Motzei Shabbos Parshas Noach**, three *bochurim* who were traveling the next day (one to Eretz Yisroel and the others to Paris) stood outside 770 as the Rebbe left for his home. The Rebbe turned and nodded to them, wishing them a safe journey.

The *talmidim hashluchim* submitted a request for a *yeichidus klolis*. The Rebbe responded to Rabbi Hodakov that they had heard and received enough at the *farbrengens*.

Over the next few days, after Mincha, the Rebbe wished the *bochurim* (who were returning to yeshivos in Eretz Yisroel) safe travels and that they should go from strength to strength, succeeding in their learning, and that they should share *besuros tovos*.

On **Tuesday, 6 Cheshvan**, the Rebbe left 770 for home just as a group of *bochurim* was about to depart to Eretz Yisroel. They began to sing and the Rebbe made a gesture of encouragement as he entered the car.

After Maariv, a group of *talmidim hashluchim* returning to Eretz Yisroel assembled, along with Reb Zushe Wilmovsky. The Rebbe turned to Reb Zushe and said, “Since you are my sole “Partisan,” you will fulfill my shlichus. I heard that in Eretz Yisroel the five *mivtzoim* are being done in an unenthusiastic manner. Therefore, this week’s *mivtzoim* should be done with a *shturem*, including the *mivtza* of *hadlakas neiros*, which although it may not apply to *bochurim* personally, they should nonetheless encourage their grandmothers, sisters, and aunts to participate.”

The Rebbe continued, “Considering you are traveling in the week of the *parshah* “*Lech lecha me’artzecha u’memoladetcha*”—to Eretz Yisroel—it should be “*veheyei bracha*” [as the *possuk* concludes].

Afterwards, the Rebbe went into his room, then promptly returned to *Gan Eden Hatachton* and began to distribute dollars to all the shluchim. Also present was another visitor who was traveling that day, but the Rebbe merely glanced at him. The Rebbe told Reb Zushe that he should take a dollar for himself, as well as a bundle of dollars to distribute to the shluchim who had already departed to Eretz Yisroel before this group. The Rebbe added that he chose Reb Zushe to distribute the dollars as he is “the Partisan,” and thus there will therefore be no *machlokes*.

Several other individuals then approached to receive dollars, the first being Reb Yisroel Leibov, director of Tzach in Eretz Yisroel. Upon receiving his dollar he said something to the Rebbe. The Rebbe then called him back and gave him another dollar for Mrs. Shifra Marozov-Golombowitz from Kfar Chabad (who had lost her husband in the



THE REBBE SEEING OFF GUESTS, CIRCA 5730S.

Six Day War²), while reminding him to increase his efforts in the area of *hadlakas neiros* and that it should be with much *hatzlacha*. Three *bochurim* who had missed out previously then came in. The Rebbe came out again to *Gan Eden Hatachton* and gave them each a dollar.

The Rebbe then escorted the shluchim out of 770, observed them as they boarded the bus, and clapped his hands in farewell. The Rebbe waited and watched until the bus was out of sight.

“A THOUSAND TIMES GREATER”

On his way into Mincha on **Wednesday, 7 Cheshvan**, the Rebbe gave a coin to a child to give to tzedakah. Reb Leibel Groner picked up the child and let him drop the coin in a *pushka* and the Rebbe gave the child a *yasher koach*.

Thursday evening the Rebbe left 770 appearing very solemn. On his way out the Rebbe gave tzedakah and said something to Reb Binyomin Klein.

The following **Sunday, 11 Cheshvan**, the Rebbe went home unusually early after Mincha. Consequently, *mazkirus* was unprepared. Reb Binyomin Klein was hurriedly informed and he rushed to the car to open the door for the Rebbe and drove him home.

That night *yechidus* took place. Hatomim Yisroel Glitzenstein (who was returning to Eretz Yisroel where he worked in Tzach) related that as he entered, the Rebbe exclaimed to him (presumably in response to his dilemma whether or not to return to Eretz Yisroel), “You are from Eretz Yisroel, and specifically Yerushalayim.”

Throughout the *yechidus* the Rebbe urged him to focus his efforts in the areas of *hafatzas hamaayanos* and *hafatzas hayahadus*, particularly *chinuch*—as it includes both of the above.

The Rebbe emphasized the value of teaching others and promised that the quality of his learning would be a thousand times greater as a result. Meaning, that one hour of toiling in learning will enable him to understand what someone else would require 1,000 hours of study for. The Rebbe gave the example of one who due to his being preoccupied with *mivtza tefillin*, suffices with a mere moment of *hisbonenus* before tefillin, but accomplishes what would take another person a thousand times longer to accomplish.

The Rebbe also mentioned how Chabad does not approve of the approach of those who choose to spend their entire lives dedicated solely to their personal learning in kollel, as the spirit of Chassidus Chabad is to make *chinuch* a priority. The Rebbe added that he is not compelling him per se to work in *chinuch*, rather giving a suggestion.

Towards the end of the *yechidus*, the Rebbe said, “Certainly upon your arrival, you will spend the first week relaying the regards and news from here and repeating the *sichos* from Yom Tov. After that, however, you will begin your activities in *hafatzas hamaayanos* and *hafatzas hayahadus*, especially *mivtza tefillin*.”

The next person to enter *yechidus* was Reb Naftali Gottlieb.

Several years earlier, Reb Naftali wrote to the Rebbe, saying that he planned on publishing a book of stories about the Rebbe’s father, Harav Levi Yitzchok. During *kos shel bracha* on Motzei Simchas Torah, the Rebbe asked him why he had not done so yet. Reb Naftali answered that he had refrained from publishing it as he hadn’t received an

affirmative response from the Rebbe, to which the Rebbe replied, “Consider this your response”.

Now, during *yechidus*, the Rebbe gave him addresses of people with whom he could verify details of the stories.

YECHIDUS WITH SENATORS

During the *tefilos* and *krias haTorah* on **Shabbos Vayeira**, the Rebbe perused the *sefer*, “Likut Pirushim” on Tanya by Reb Aharon Chitrik.

Sunday, 18 Cheshvan, was a night of *yechidus*, along with visits from several senators and other politicians. Senator Jacob Javits spent 20 minutes inside the Rebbe’s room, together with members of *mazkirus*. Afterward came former Attorney General Ramsey Clark, who was now running against Javits, followed by Judge Lawrence Cooke who was running for a position on the New York Court of Appeals. The Rebbe stood up, received him with a wide smile and they sat down.

They were followed by two other politicians, Senator Henry Jackson and Congressman Hugh Carrie (who was running for governor of New York). They were accompanied by Rabbis Hodakov, Groner, Klein, and Mindel as well as several reporters and photographers. They spoke amongst themselves throughout the visit while the Rebbe sat and smiled. Jackson began to lavish praises on the Rebbe to which the Rebbe answered back, “I’m not running for senate.”

CHOF CHESHVAN

Tuesday was Chof Cheshvan, the birthday of the Rebbe Rashab. At noon the Rebbe departed to the Ohel, holding a copy of *Hemshech Samach Vov*. When the Rebbe returned to 770, he put down his bag in *Gan Eden Hatachton* and hurried down the hallway to wash *negel vasser*. As he was walking to the sink, the Rebbe took out some money, and on the way back, he handed it to a poor person.

The Rebbe came to Mincha at 6:15 wearing a regular (not silk) *kapota*³. After Mincha, the Rebbe summoned Rabbi Hodakov and told him to announce that a farbrengen will take place at 7:00 p.m. preceded by Maariv at 6:45. Rabbi Hodakov added that until then the time should be spent learning.

(It is assumed that this message came from the Rebbe who had recently walked into the *zal* at a time when many *bochurim* were absent. The

Rebbe asked Rabbi Groner which Yom Tov it is and instructed him to ensure that the *bochurim* got back to their yeshiva learning⁴. The Rebbe also expressed disappointment that there was very little activity in *mitvza hadlakas neiros*.)

At 7:00 p.m. the Rebbe came down to the *farbrengen* and instructed the crowd to begin the *Niggun Hachana* and then said the *maamar* “*V’Avraham Zaken*.” The first *sicha* was on the theme of *Yavneh v’hachameha*, the importance of establishing yeshivos and enhancing the quantity and quality of learning in existing yeshivos, and its impact on the safety and security of Yidden.

The topic of *hadlakas neiros* continued through the second and third *sicha*, where the Rebbe explained that it is a special *koach* that was specifically granted to women. This was tied into the *parshah*, which relates how Rivkah Imeinu lit Shabbos candles since she was three years old. This also served as a platform for *mitvza hadlakas neiros*.

Between *sichos*, the Rebbe asked Rabbi Groner to bring him a bottle of wine. The Rebbe poured some wine into his cup and then poured Reb Shea Pinson some wine from the bottle. The Rebbe also gave a piece of cake to Reb Itche Churgin.

The fourth *sicha* dealt with the current events in Eretz Yisroel. The Rebbe bemoaned the fact that several Knesset members were more worried about retaining their seats for the upcoming elections than doing what *halacha* demanded regarding *Mihu Yehudi*.

At the end of the *farbrengen*, the Rebbe encouraged the singing with his hands, and as the Rebbe left his room for home he smiled and waved his hands once again.

RIVKAH’S SHABBOS CANDLES

During *krias haTorah* on **Thursday**, a *Mi Sheberach L’cholim* was made, and the Rebbe signaled that they should mention Reb Avrohom Mayorer (Drizin) who was undergoing an operation that day. The Rebbe inquired if there was any son or grandchild present who would know Reb Avrohom’s mother’s name. Reb Dovid Raskin approached and the Rebbe said: “Avrohom Drizin,” to which Reb Dovid replied “Avrohom ben Yehudis.”

After *kriah*, the Rebbe went back to *Gan Eden Hatachton* with Rav Krieger and turned around to motion that the door should be closed. Half an hour later, Rav Krieger came out looking very excited.



SENATOR JACOB JAVITS IN CONVERSATION WITH THE REBBE, 18 CHESHVAN 5735.



THE REBBE GREETS CONGRESSMAN HUGH CARRIE, 18 CHESHVAN 5735.

He related that he informed the Rebbe that today was the Belzer Rebbe’s *yahrzeit* and many don’t say *tachanun*. He asked the Rebbe why Chabad does say *tachanun* on the day of a *yahrtzeit* of a *tzaddik*, and the Rebbe replied that the Friediker Rebbe once asked the Rebbe Rashab this question, and he responded, “Where else do we find such a day [like a *yahrtzeit*] that one can ask for everything?”

Afterwards, they spoke in learning.

The Rebbe also spoke with him about the novel concept of unmarried girls lighting Shabbos candles. He told the Rebbe that a grandchild of the Belzer Rebbe told him that in Belz it was customary for unmarried girls to light Shabbos candles. They



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continued to speak about the Rashi in *parshas Chayei Sarah*⁵ and calculated that Avrohom's lighting Shabbos candles for all those years after Sarah's passing did not accomplish what Rivkah achieved at three years old.

"WORSE THAN A THIEF"

As usual, on **Shabbos Mevarchim Kislev**, **Parshas Chayei Sarah** there was a farbrengen. The Rebbe raised the classic question, "Why is the title of the parsha about Sarah's life when the rest of the *parshah* is about the opposite (her passing)?" and explained the lessons one can learn from it.

The second *sicha* was long and harsh. The Rebbe was very pained about certain situations in Eretz Yisroel regarding Yidden not being as they are supposed to be, the UN, *Mihu Yehudi*, and *shtachim*. The raw agony that heard in the Rebbe's voice was very difficult to listen to.

Later in the farbrengen, the Rebbe said a *maamar kein sicha* which was a *hemshech* to the *maamar* "V'Avraham Zaken" that was said at the farbrengen of Chof Cheshvan.

Towards the end of the farbrengen, the Rebbe spoke some sharp words about those who scheme their way ("*men nart op*") into *yechidus*. He was referring to the recent rule⁶ that people should not enter *yechidus* for their birthday, which some had

attempted to circumvent by seeking other excuses to have a *yechidus* and scheduling it on their birthday. The Rebbe exclaimed that this is worse than a thief who, when about to break and enter, cries out to Hashem to help him commit his robbery. This is because over here, he is attempting to deceive the one who gives *brachos* and then asks him for a *bracha*.

The Rebbe continued, that perhaps this sentiment is a distant reflection ("*in my daled amos*") of the foolish attitude expressed regarding *Mihu Yehudi*, where some people deluded themselves into doing harmful things for their personal gain.

The farbrengen concluded at 4:45 with Mincha, after which the Rebbe walked home. The *bochurim* sang the *niggun* "*Ki Elokim Yoshia Tzion*" as the Rebbe departed 770. **1**

1. See "*Ah Lichtiken Shturem*," Derher Tishrei 5775.

2. See *Keep Your Camp Holy*, Derher Tishrei 5782.

3. At the Ohel, the Rebbe wore his silk *kapota*, as well as at the farbrengen later that evening.

4. According to another version the Rebbe said "*Yavneh v'chachameha*."

5. Which the Rebbe had spoken about at the farbrengen of Chof Cheshvan.

6. Announced at the farbrengen of Shabbos Breishis 5735.



כתב יד קודש

Celebrating in Mourning

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



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



WE WANT TO SEE *The Rebbe!*

*The Tzemach Tzedek
and the Cantonists*

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

places and delivered them to the authorities.

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

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

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



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

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



PHOTO OF CANTONIST SOLDIERS.

the decree of the Cantonists was implemented.³

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

The Village Rebbe From Lubavitch

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

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

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

to make sure that the kidnappers received the appropriate punishment.

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

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

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



TWO YOUNG JEWISH SOLDIERS IN THE CZAR'S ARMY.



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

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

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

A New Approach

Eventually, the government officials and members of the Haskalah realized

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



THE KONSTANTINOVSKY
ARTILLERY SCHOOL IN S.
PETERSBURG, WHERE MANY
YOUNG CANTONISTS WERE
TAKEN FOR YEARS OF BRUTAL
TRAINING.

Kronstadt

This following story was witnessed by Reb Yitzchok Rubashov, a young man from Nevel who assisted the Tzemach Tzedek on his travels. He lived to his nineties, when he met the Frieddiker Rebbe and related what he had seen as a young man. He added that after the Tzemach Tzedek returned to Lubavitch, he thanked Reb Yitzchok for all the help, and blessed him with two brachos: “זאלסט האבן אריכות ימים, און דיר זאל קיין”—*You should have many long years, and you should never be missing anything.*”

Reb Yitzchok concluded his story to the Frieddiker Rebbe: “Indeed, these two brachos were fulfilled. I’m already 89 years old, and I am not missing anything...”⁶

On an army base in the city of Kronstadt, right near Petersburg, there was a group of hundreds of Jewish soldiers who had heard that the Tzemach Tzedek was nearby. They petitioned their superiors to allow them to meet with the great Rebbe who was stationed nearby, and the government agreed. Perhaps they hoped that by granting this to the

Tzemach Tzedek, he would be quicker to give in to their demands on other things.

Some 300 Jewish soldiers gathered to meet the Tzemach Tzedek as he visited them at their army base.

Seeing the holy Rebbe, they said with tears in their eyes, “Rebbe, we worked so hard to polish and shine the buttons of our uniforms in honor of this visit. Now it’s your turn to polish and shine our dilapidated *neshamos*.”

The Tzemach Tzedek responded with a *maamar* on the *posuk* “מחיתי כעב פשעך—I wiped away your sins like a cloud...” speaking in Yiddish using a simple vocabulary that the uneducated Cantonists would understand. After the *maamar*, the Tzemach Tzedek added words of encouragement to the soldiers, calling on them to strengthen their connection to Yiddishkeit even if it takes *mesiras nefesh*. Then he said: “You polished your buttons with sand and water; your *neshamos* should also be polished with sand and water. Sand is the words of Tehillim that you say, and water is the tears that you say them with...”

One of the soldiers called out: “Rebbe! When we go out to conquer a city, we can’t do it with tears. We sing a victory march!”

The Tzemach Tzedek agreed with the soldier and explained that indeed, *avodas Hashem* should be done with joy.

[Interestingly, the Rebbe notes that those words of the unassuming soldier caused all the Rabbeim to choose this path of *simcha* in *avodas Hashem*.]

In the Plaza

The Tzemach Tzedek’s visit made a big impression on the soldiers and lifted their spirits significantly. Many of them began coming closer to Yiddishkeit and demanded that their superiors allow them to join the Tzemach Tzedek in Petersburg.

After much pressure mounted from hundreds of soldiers at different bases, the officers of the army had to allow for another opportunity for the Cantonists to see the Tzemach Tzedek.

A few weeks later, permission was granted and all the Jewish soldiers who wanted to, were able to come and see the Tzemach Tzedek in Petersburg. More than 600 soldiers gathered in the



ILLUSTRATION OF THE CANTONIST MILITARY, PUBLISHED IN 1913.

plaza of the Peter and Paul Fortress in Petersburg, and the Tzemach Tzedek delivered the *maamar* “*Shema Yisroel*” for them, again in Yiddish using a simple vocabulary.

After the *maamar*, about 15 soldiers came over to the Tzemach Tzedek and said, “Rebbe! We are tormented and oppressed Jews. We don’t know how to learn, we don’t know anything. All we have is our *emunah*. We know the words of the davening, bentching, and a few chapters of Tehillim; but we don’t understand their meaning.”

The Tzemach Tzedek responded: “A Yid who believes in Hashem—the creator and sustainer of the world and all its inhabitants, who watches over them with *hashgacha pratis*—that He gave them the holy Torah and mitzvos, who knows the words of davening and some chapters of Tehillim and recites them, and says Shema and Tehillim;

this Yid is a very healthy Yid, both in body and soul. May Hashem indeed bring you all home safely.”⁸

Coming back to his room after meeting with the soldiers, the Tzemach Tzedek spoke with great emotion to the other rabbonim about how precious these *Yiddishe neshamos* are. “When Moshiach comes,” he said, “there will be a special section just for these simple Jews of *mesiras nefesh*, and all the great minds of the Jewish people will be immensely jealous of them. No one can be considered greater than the Rambam, who reached an understanding of *Elokus* based on his own brilliant intellect. Yet, he too will be humbled before these soldiers, for they can feel and sense *Elokus* in a way that no one else can.”

Seeing the great respect and admiration that the soldiers had

towards the Tzemach Tzedek and the profound spiritual impact he had on them, the Russian authorities decided it was best to send the Tzemach Tzedek back home to Lubavitch.

The Tzemach Tzedek’s words had a lasting effect on the soldiers. The story is told that one day the Czar himself came to check up on the soldiers at their base, and he was quite impressed with their performance. When he asked the soldiers for their names and they responded with Jewish names, he was immediately disheartened. Czar Nicholas told them that they must convert to Christianity right away and he will promote them to the highest ranks of his army.

One of the soldiers responded: “Five years ago, we were visited by the great Rebbe, the Tzemach Tzedek. He told us that even if the Czar himself will tell us to convert, we should be



YOUNG JEWISH CANTONIST SOLDIERS-IN-TRAINING, (SOURCE UNKNOWN).

ready to give up our lives and not comply.” With that, all the soldiers jumped into the river and drowned themselves.

I Am a Jew!

In a fascinating discovery, old government files from the time of the Cantonists were recently made available and we indeed read of a major awakening of Yiddishkeit among the soldiers.

One of the reports states: “According to a report submitted to his great majesty Alexander II, 92 Jewish Cantonists who arrived at the naval base in Kronstadt have proclaimed that their previous conversion to Christianity was forced upon them, and they now want to return to their Jewish roots. Now another 11 soldiers joined them, making the total 103.”

In the documented testimony of one of these Cantonists, we read excruciating details of the suffering and *mesiras nefesh* that the Cantonists were put through:

“They forced me to convert. I was in terrible stress. I tried committing suicide but my friends wouldn’t allow me to. I remain a Jew and I

don’t want to be Christian under any circumstances. I had with me a siddur, tefillin, and tzitzis which I took from my home, and now they were confiscated. I hid the holy articles in the last stop on our way to Arkhangelsk, where my friend and I dug a hole in the forest, and on our way back to active duty, we retrieved them.”

In My Domain

Despite the harassment and persecution by the government, the Tzemach Tzedek’s efforts on behalf of the Cantonists (and the potential Cantonists) did not wane. One of his Chassidim, Reb Chaim Yehoshua, succeeded in saving a few children from the hands of the “chappers,” and the Tzemach Tzedek instructed him to

Today’s Cantonists

The Rebbe once related this story of the Tzemach Tzedek and the Cantonists at a farbrengen, adding a fascinating *hora’a*:

The most unique part of the story is that although the Russian government tried so hard to eradicate any sense of Yiddishkeit from the hearts of these children, nevertheless, they begged and demanded that they be allowed to meet with the Tzemach Tzedek!

The lesson is clear: There are people today who are just like the Cantonists of old. True, we live in a free society and we are not exposed to the same *nisyonos* as the Cantonists. But there are Jews who are in spiritual captivity. They know very little about Yiddishkeit, not even the Aleph-Beis.

Nevertheless, deep in their hearts these Yidden really thirst for Yiddishkeit. In fact they demand it! It is only up to us to reveal this to them, and to provide them with the knowledge to allow these deep hidden sparks to shine in everyday life.

(13 Nissan 5745, sicha 2)



CERTIFICATE OF RELEASE FOR A CANTONIST SOLDIER AFTER 25 YEARS OF MILITARY SERVICE.

THE "SOLDATSKAYA" (SOLDIERS) SHUL IN RIGA, LATVIA. UPON RELEASE FROM SERVICE, THE CANTONIST SOLDIERS FOUND IT DIFFICULT TO INTEGRATE INTO THE EXISTING JEWISH POPULATION AND BUILT THEIR OWN SHUL. IT WAS DESTROYED BY THE NAZIS IN 1941.

make it his life's mission to save Jewish children. He sent him around to various towns and villages to ransom back children who were already kidnapped, and to help them hide and escape. Eventually, Reb Chaim

Yehoshua was arrested and almost sentenced to capital punishment.

The Tzemach Tzedek did everything in his power to secure Reb Chaim Yehoshua's release, employing government connections wherever he

could. Indeed, with the help of some of the distinguished Chassidim, they were able to secure his release and Reb Chaim Yehoshua returned to Lubavitch for a *yechidus*. The Tzemach Tzedek told him, "For this *mesiras*

A Change of Heart

Once, a young boy was kidnapped by the "chappers," and his parents could not afford to bribe their son's way back.

The child had a wealthy uncle who made frequent trips to Moscow, and he started making inquiries until he learned that the child was at a training camp in Moscow. The uncle traveled to Moscow and offered a hefty bribe, and he was allowed to go in and visit his nephew at the camp. The child was placed in the tailors' ward, learning to sew uniforms, happy and content. It seemed that he was assimilating into the Russian culture, and the uncle was very distraught.

The uncle went to the Tzemach Tzedek and poured out his heart in pain. The Tzemach Tzedek replied, "Try to bring him to Lubavitch, even if for a very short visit."

After much effort, the uncle succeeded in bringing the child to Lubavitch, even though he had no interest in Yiddishkeit anymore and was happy to stay in the army.

They came to Lubavitch for Shabbos. The *zal* was packed to capacity, and when the Tzemach Tzedek came in to recite a *maamar*, a pathway opened up, with the uncle and nephew standing in the front row. When the Tzemach Tzedek saw them, he gave the boy a penetrating stare, and he began to tremble. Suddenly, the boy began feeling a sharp pain in his stomach to the point that it was unbearable. On Sunday, he was eagerly awaiting to be able to leave and he was furious at his uncle for bringing him to such a place. But soon, the pair entered into *yechidus* and the Tzemach Tzedek turned to the boy: "Do you want to stay here?" he asked. In an instant, the boy had a change of heart and he answered that he indeed wishes to stay.

The Tzemach Tzedek gave the child instructions as to how to conduct himself from then on, and the child eventually grew up and married, building a nice Jewish family.

(*Shmuos V'Sippurim* vol. 1, p. 55)



CZAR NICHOLAS I MADE MANY HARSH DECREES AGAINST THE JEWISH PEOPLE IN RUSSIA, INCLUDING THE CANTONIST DECREE.



CZAR ALEXANDER II, WHO ABOLISHED THE CANTONIST DECREE.

nefesh on behalf of Jewish children, you will merit to be together with me in my domain in the world to come.”

Your Neshamah Is Here For This

In the year 5616*, the decree was finally overturned. The soldiers who had finished their terms were allowed to live anywhere in the Russian Empire (as opposed to most Jewish people who were restricted to the Pale of Settlement). Thus formed communities of these ex-Cantonists who strongly identified as Yidden but knew very little about Yiddishkeit. The Tzemach Tzedek and later the Rebbe Maharash worked hard to help these Yidden, sending Chassidim to their communities to guide and teach them about Yiddishkeit.

The Frierdiker Rebbe relates in a letter that his grandfather, the Rebbe Maharash, had a Chossid, a silversmith and watchmaker by trade, who moved from the Chassidishe city of Polotzk to Vladimir, deep in Russia, in order to make a living. The Rebbe Maharash asked him if he had a set time to teach Torah in his community. He responded that he learns Torah


on his own and he also spends time preparing *krias haTorah* because no one else in the city knows how to do it. In the whole community, there are only two other people who even know how to daven at the *amud*. The Chossid continued that the people of Vladimir are simple folk, most of them from the Cantonists, who act like their Russian neighbors and don't know how to daven—they just answer *amen* and barely recite the *bracha* on the Torah.

The Rebbe Maharash explained to the Chossid that the real reason he had to move to this city was not just for *parnasah*.

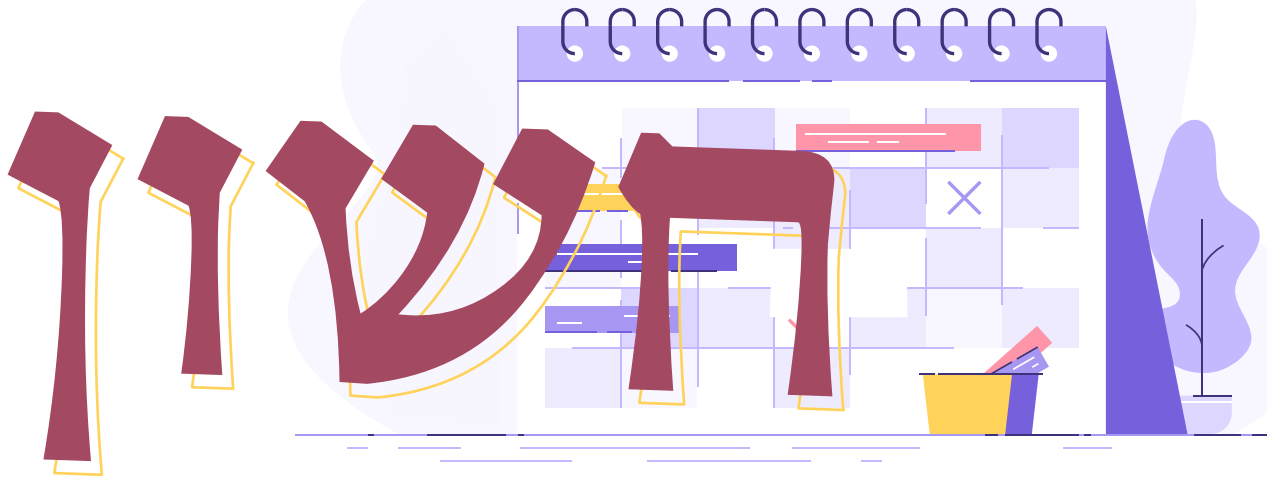
“You are making a mistake,” the Rebbe Maharash said. “Not for material *parnasah* did Hashem bring you to Vladimir. One who believes in Hashem and His Torah and in *hashgacha pratis*, knows that just for material *parnasah*, Hashem would not make a Jew and his entire family move away from a Yiddishe city to a barren desert, to live with simple and ignorant people...”

“...The problem is, you think that your job is cleaning gold and fixing watches. Your real job is Torah and

avodas Hashem. Hashem made you move from Polotzk to Vladimir so that you can be with these Cantonists, Nicholas's soldiers, and teach them about Yiddishkeit.

“The Baal Shem Tov taught that a *neshamah* comes down to this world for 70-80 years, just to do a favor for another Yid, materially, and especially spiritually. To say that Hashem *must* give you *parnasah* in only one city stems from a lack of faith. Hashem can provide for you anywhere, whether in Polotzk or in Vladimir...” 

1. I.e. against the Jews, *b'lashon sagi nahor*.
2. The Mitteler Rebbe in the *maamar*, “*Lehavin inyan lekichas anshei chayil...*” Maamarei Admur Haemtzei—Kuntreisim.
3. Igros Kodesh Admur Hazaken (5772), p. 397.
4. Maamarei Admur Haemtzei—Kuntreisim, p. 263.
5. See Admur HaTzemach Tzedek U'tnuas HaHaskalah, from the Frierdiker Rebbe.
6. Igros Kodesh Admur HaRayyatz, vol. 2, p. 106.
7. Simchas Torah Night 5727.
8. Igros Kodesh Admur HaRayyatz, vol. 4, p. 147.
9. Igros Kodesh Admur HaRayyatz vol. 7, p. 20. Some of the material in this article is culled from *Ba'keseh Lyom Chageinu*, Vaad Chayolei Beis Dovid, 5777.



Cheshvan

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

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

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

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

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

Chof Cheshvan - Birthday of the Rebbe Rashab

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

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



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

■ Shabbos Mevarchim Kislev

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

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

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

1. Hisvaaduyos 5743 vol. 1 page 360.

2. Motzei Zayin Cheshvan 5722.

3. Zayin Cheshvan 5746.

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

5. Hisvaaduyos 5751 vol. 1 page 318.

6. Hisvaaduyos 5749 vol. 1 page 54.

7. Sefer Hasichos 5749 vol. 1 page 56.

8. Hisvaaduyos 5743 vol. 1 page 514.

9. Hisvaaduyos 5748 vol. 4 page 156.

10. Sichos Kodesh 5752 page 111.



Moment of Silence

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

School Prayer

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Supreme Court of the United States

OCTOBER TERM, 1961

No. 468

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION

of

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

Petitioners,

against

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

Respondents,

directing them to discontinue a certain school practice

and

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

Interveners-Respondents.

BRIEF OF RESPONDENTS

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WILFORD E. NEIER,
Of Counsel.

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

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

The Call of the Hour

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

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

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

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

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

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

How can you silence them?!

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

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

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

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

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

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

Socialist Influence

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

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

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

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

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

In a letter² addressing the convention of Agudas Harabbonim in 5723*, the Rebbe declared that the “call of the hour” was to ensure that hundreds of thousands of Jewish children be afforded the opportunity to recite a legitimate *tefilla* every day.

In a letter to Rabbi Nissen Telushkin³ the Rebbe emphasized that there was no more important matter of concern for rabbonim at the present moment. The pain is compounded, the Rebbe said, by the fact that all the mainstream Jewish organizations remained silent on the issue. Aside from giving off the impression that they agree to the terrible *gzeira*, their silence allows for other organizations who have the *chutzpah* to present themselves as legitimate representatives of Yiddishkeit to set the tone of the Jewish perspective to the policy, causing a tremendous *chillul Hashem*.

As the social battle raged in America, the Rebbe explained that his position was not only out of concern for the Jewish children learning in public schools, but also out of concern that canceling the prayer would have a devastating impact on American society in general.

When children grow up unaware of a Supreme Being that sees and hears everything, and to whom they are ultimately accountable to, society will deteriorate rapidly.

In a letter⁴ dated 26 Nissan 5724* the Rebbe laid out the fundamental principles for how a society must educate their children in order to function properly.

“In my opinion, this acknowledgment is absolutely necessary in order to impress upon the minds of our growing-up generation that the world in which they live is not a jungle, where brute force, cunning and unbridled passion rule supreme, but that it has a Master Who is not an abstraction, but a personal G-d; that this Supreme Being takes a “personal interest” in the affairs of each and every individual, and to Him everyone is accountable for one’s daily conduct...”

“It will not suffice to tell the juvenile delinquent that crime does not pay, and that he will eventually land in jail (if he is not smart enough?). Nor will he be particularly impressed if he is admonished that law-breaking is an offense against society. It is necessary to engrave upon the child’s mind the idea that any wrongdoing is an offense against the Divine authority and order...”

“Children have to be ‘trained’ from their earliest youth to be constantly aware of ‘the Eye that seeth and the Ear that heareth.’⁵ We cannot leave it to the law-enforcing agencies to be the keepers of the ethics and morals of our young generation.”

Keeping the Message Clear

A similar case came before the US Supreme Court the following year. Pennsylvania state law required that “at least ten verses from the Holy Bible [be] read, without comment,



at the opening of each public school on each school day.” Four other states mandated the daily Bible readings while it was optional in 25 others.

Edward Schempp of Pennsylvania sued his school district, claiming that this practice violated his rights. In the landmark decision of *Abington School District v. Schempp*, the US Supreme Court disallowed Bible readings in public schools for similar reasons to their ban on school prayer.

Much of the country mistakenly lumped these two issues together, rationalizing that prayer and Bible study went hand in hand.

The Rebbe went to great lengths to clarify that this specific Supreme Court ruling was appropriate and had nothing to do with the ban on prayer.

“On the other hand, as I have emphasized on more than one occasion, only a strictly non-denominational prayer, and no other, should be introduced into the public schools. Any denominational prayer or religious exercise in the public schools must be resolutely opposed on various grounds, including also the fact that these would create divisiveness and ill-feeling. Likewise must Bible reading in the public schools be



FARBRENGEN YUD SHEVAT 5743.

*resolutely opposed for various reasons, including the obvious reason that the reading of the Koran and the New Testament will arouse dissension and strife.”**

A National Crisis

Over the ensuing decades American society, specifically the youth, deteriorated in many ways, and crime rates exploded. The Rebbe addressed the terrible reality on numerous occasions and encouraged political leaders, educators and activists to emphasize moral and ethical education to save American youth, instead of focusing on policing and punishment.

Yud Shevat 5741* marked a new era in the Rebbe’s public involvement with addressing the need for changes in public education. It was the first farbrengen broadcast live on cable television and the Rebbe emphasized the importance of reintroducing prayer into the public schools. It could be simply the words “In G-d We Trust” so that children verbalize this important message every day.¹⁰

Two weeks before Yud-Alef Nissan 5741*, a young man named John Hinckley Jr. shot and almost killed President Ronald Reagan in Washington. At the farbrengen the Rebbe pointed out that the would-be assassin was raised in relative wealth and privilege and the fact that he was able to attempt such a thing is an indictment on the education of the youth. The fact that G-d had been taken out of the schools was the cause for this horrible situation.¹¹

On 12 Tammuz 5741* the Rebbe recounted speaking to the attorney general of New York, referring to Louis J. Lefkowitz, the longest-serving attorney general of New York in history. Lefkowitz’s time in office stretched from the end of the School Prayer era through New York’s record-setting crime rates of the late 1970s.

“So I asked him: ‘You’ve been the attorney general for decades now. What is the explanation for the fact that when you began your career, the crime rate was far lower, there were far fewer incidents, but from year to year, under your leadership—after you did everything in your power to prevent crime, and you introduced harsher sentences as a deterrent—not only has crime not declined, it has increased, and it has increased dramatically and inexplicably?’ So he smiled at me and that’s where the subject ended. What do I mean, ‘the subject ended?’ That from then on—this happened several years ago—the situation continues to deteriorate. I said to him, ‘Why must we look for mysterious, strange causes? Let’s investigate: Perhaps there’s been a change in the children’s education?’”¹²

It’s Not A Compromise

When it became clear that the courts would not reverse the ban on school prayer, hundreds of attempts were made

to overturn these decisions by introducing amendments to the law in Congress. In 5742* President Ronald Reagan formally proposed a constitutional amendment permitting organized prayer in public schools. “Nothing in this Constitution shall be construed to prohibit individual or group prayer in public schools or other public institutions. No person shall be required by the United States or by any state to participate in prayer.”

In a message to Congress, Mr. Reagan said that the amendment would “restore the simple freedom of our citizens to offer prayer in public schools and institutions.” This marked a turning point in the national debate, since the president himself was enthusiastically promoting the idea.

However, due to the tremendous opposition to verbal prayer, the concept of introducing a “moment of silence” for children to spend a minute at the beginning of the school day in silent contemplation and silent voluntary prayer was gaining momentum.

In the winter of 5743* the State of New Jersey voted to require a daily “moment of silence” in public schools. The governor vetoed the bill and the legislature voted to override the veto. The concept of “moment of silence” was becoming as controversial as school prayer.

“This bill is a compromise,” one New Jersey senator said. “The courts won’t let us do what the people want, and this is a compromise we have reached. A moment of silence is certainly not prayer.”

Others argued that the “moment of silence” was a way to smuggle prayer back into the school system, and were therefore vehemently opposed.

During the farbrengen of Yud Shevat 5743*, a little over a month after the New Jersey debacle, the Rebbe mentioned the concept of “moment of silence” for the first time. But unlike most of its proponents, the Rebbe did not view the “moment of silence” as an unenthusiastic compromise. The Rebbe explained over the next several years in numerous televised farbrengens, and on many other occasions, that “silence” was better than “prayer” in the context of public education.

Here is why:

1. The best way to determine whether a course of action is correct is by analyzing its results. If it leads to polarization and conflict, then clearly it is wrong. Promoting verbal prayer in public schools in the current political and social climate is useless. Silence is benign and there is no rational argument against it - since the moment of silence is genuinely not intended to smuggle prayer back into the schools.¹³

2. Educators are human, with their own religious beliefs and convictions. Even if the non-denominational verbal

* 5743-1983, 5741-1981, 5742-1982, 5743-1983



prayer is composed by the government and educators are trained to not express their own beliefs in the context of the prayer, this places them in a tremendous test. People cannot be expected to keep their religious convictions in check all the time. Hence, a “moment of silence” is the safest way for children to think about Hashem without fear of their teacher imposing foreign beliefs on them.¹⁴

3. The purpose of daily prayer is to impress upon the child to focus on a higher purpose. Private contemplation at times has a greater impact on a child than parroting the same words together with everyone else.¹⁵

4. The child can contemplate freely without being intimidated by anyone else around him.¹⁶

5. It retains the value of a prayer, since Hashem hears thoughts just like the spoken word.¹⁷

6. Since the teacher will not instruct the children what to think about during that minute, the children will need direction from their parents. Just as their parents pack them lunch to take to school, they should pack them “spiritual” or “meaningful” food for thought by instructing them what to think about during the “moment of silence.” This will cause the parents to start focusing on a higher purpose themselves, and these conversations will bring parents (who are increasingly absent from their children’s lives because they are so busy) closer to their children. It will also remind them that educating their children to be proper human beings is their primary mission in life.¹⁸

It’s important for the “moment of silence” to happen at the beginning of the school day when the child’s mind is fresh and not preoccupied with the previous lessons or other thoughts. This will have a much greater impact on the child and inform how he or she utilizes the knowledge acquired in school. Before learning the subjects that will help them achieve success with a career and the like, he or she must remember that they cannot steal or hurt others because of their accountability to a Higher Power.¹⁹ Starting the school day with the “moment of silence” also emphasizes to the children how important it is.²⁰

Despite the neutrality of the “moment of silence” the anti-prayer activists vigorously opposed it on various grounds and the Rebbe publicly responded to these arguments in detail when addressing the topic on a number of occasions.

1. It violates the Constitution:

a. Interpreting the First Amendment to mean that children are not allowed a moment of quiet contemplation at the beginning of their school day because they might think about G-d in public school is preposterous. The First Amendment was meant to protect religion from the government—not to give the government an opportunity to ban religion from children’s minds during the time that they are in a public institution!²¹

b. Even if one can somehow deduce this misguided interpretation from the literal words of the law, it is certainly not consistent with the spirit of the law, which was authored by the founding fathers of this country who were known believers. They would be shocked to hear such a convoluted interpretation of their words.²²

c. In the far-fetched possibility that the law does indeed prohibit a “moment of silence”—the Constitution is neither divine nor dogma. It was written “by the people, for the people.” The authors of the Constitution knew that circumstances would inevitably change and framed the Constitution in a way that it could be changed by amendment. In earlier times every child in America was exposed to the concept of a Higher Power or Super Being they are accountable to. Before eating breakfast their parents taught them to say a prayer, a practice which has decreased dramatically in the last several decades for various reasons. Today there are millions of American children who are never exposed to the concept of a Higher Power throughout their youth. Having a “moment of silence” in schools today is necessary to save America from spiraling out of control, so the law must be changed to allow it and even mandate it.²³

2. Children may be exposed to opposing religious ideas:

How can silence go wrong? Only the parents instruct their children on what to think about then, and they certainly have the right to educate their children with their religious beliefs.

3. This will open the door for school prayer and Bible study:

The proposed law for mandating a “moment of silence” should be authored in a way that would clearly prohibit verbal prayer and Bible study. And even if there is a slight possibility that this may happen, how can such a concern deprive millions of children from the opportunity to begin their day with a meaningful moment of silence which will allow them to grow up as proper human beings

Senator Rudy Boschwitz, a proud and warm hearted Yid from S. Paul, Minnesota served as US Senator for 12 years. Long before entering politics, he developed a close relationship with the Rebbe's shliach Rabbi Moshe Feller and was a staunch supporter of Chabad activities in the state. Following are the carbon copies of two letters the Rebbe addressed to Senator Boschwitz regarding the importance of legislating a federal law mandating a "moment of silence" in all American public schools.

Notice that in the fifth paragraph of the first letter the Rebbe noted with an asterisk at the words “non-denominational prayer” in his holy handwriting “in present situation a moment of silence.”

44-38861-101
 May 27, 1964
 New York, New York

Mr. J. Edgar Hoover
 U. S. Bureau
 Federal Bureau of Investigation
 Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Director:

After reading the affidavits of my two informants, I am of the opinion that M. J. Long is capable of carrying out the assignment of my informant. I have some doubts as to Long's loyalty and his ability to carry out the assignment of my informant. However, I am of the opinion that Long is capable of carrying out the assignment of my informant.

I am, Sir, very respectfully,
 Yours very truly,
 J. Edgar Hoover

Enclosed for the Bureau are two copies of a letterhead memorandum dated and captioned as above.

Very truly yours,
 J. Edgar Hoover

Enclosure

J. Edgar Hoover

[illegible][illegible]

Rabbi Yaakov Yehuda Hecht took a leadership role in the “moment of silence” petition writing campaign. Following are several questions he presented to the Rebbe immediately after Acharon Shel Pesach and the Rebbe’s responses.

כ”ק אדמו”ר שליט”א

בקשר לה”פעטישאנס” ה’ לנו אסיפה עריו”ט, והי’ לנו שאלות אחדות אבל כמעט כולם נתיישובו לנו בהתוועדות היום. אבל עדיין נשאר שאלות אחדות:

(א) איפיו יהי’ הכתובת למי יפנו אלו שיש להם שאלות, צריכים חיזוק, עצות וכו’. ז”א האם יהי’ מרכז CENTRAL, שיארגן א”א או כ”א יעבוד לעצמו?

(ב) האם ישלחו כל המקומות החתימות ישיר לבית הלבן, או אפשר יתאספו כולם למקום אחד ואח”כ להביא “הר גדול” של חתימות לבית הלבן וכו’.

(ג) באיזו אופן להתקשר עם בתי ספר ממשלתיים עד”ז? ובאיזו אופן להתקשר עם הגויים? ז”א אם לילך ע”י הדייאסיס וכו’?

(ד) האם יש בודזשעט ע”י. ואם לאו מהיכן ירק זה חי? האם צריכים לעשות מגבית ע”י?

(ה) עד כמה ללכת עם MEDIA, ז”א רדיא, T.V. העיתונים, ובכלל הפרסומות?

יעקב יהודה בן שרה העכט

כ”ק אדמו”ר שליט”א

On Erev Yom Tov we had a meeting in connection with the “petitions” and several questions arose, but almost all of them were answered in today’s farbrengen. There are some remaining questions:

1. To which address should people turn to with questions, encouragement or advice etc. Meaning, will there be a central [organization working on this project] or should everyone work individually?

2. Should the petitions be sent to the White House by every respective organization or should they be gathered together so that “a large mountain” of signatures will be delivered to the White House?

3. How should we connect with public schools and in general with the non-Jewish population? Should we work with the diocese etc.?

4. Is there a budget for [this project]? If not, from “where will this vegetable live?” Should an appeal be made?

5. How much should we engage the media? Radio, TV, newspapers, and in general advertisements.

Yaakov Yehudah Ben Sara Hecht

מענת כ”ק אדמו”ר:

Central:

= יברר מי עוד עוסק בזה ויתדברו ביניהם עד”ז (בחילוקי דעות יבקשו ב”ד רבני אנש שיח’ שיתווך ביניהם)

אני לא אמנה ראשים כי אז תיכף ומיד יהפכו הענין שזהו בנשיאותי וכל שאינו רוצה בזה לא ישתתף וכו’ (היפך מהדגשתי בזה)...

Budget:

יאמרו “אהא” מקבצין הון תועפות.

Media:

עיקר ההשפעה ע”י קשרים אשים יודתיים, וכו’, עם מנהלי ארגוני החינוך וכו’... כנ’ נוטה שאני מנהל בכל דבר הכי פשוט וכו’, ולהרבות בצעטלין זהו היפך כל ענין כלל וכלל..

The Rebbe’s response:

CENTRAL: Find out who else is working on this [project] and talk it over between each other. (In a case of disagreement, request a Beis Din of Rabbonei Anash to mediate.)

I will not appoint leaders [to the project] because then it will immediately become something under my leadership and those who do not want this, will not participate etc. (contrary to my emphasis about all this).

BUDGET: People will say “aha” they are collecting a fortune.

MEDIA: The main influence must be through personal friendly connections etc. with directors of educational organizations etc.

Apparently it is common for me to organize even simple matters etc... Sending many notes [of questions to me] is completely the opposite of this whole project...

imbued with the awareness of “an eye that sees and ear that hears?”

4. There are families who are not religious or who do not believe in G-d: “It is a moment of silence: When it comes to your child, instruct them to think about justice and honesty. Your little boy or girl will ask you what to think for those sixty seconds, tell them to think about ‘Do not steal’ and ‘Do not lie,’ to be peaceful, considerate, and

so on. He must learn that he can’t take what belongs to another child, nor cheat another child, not because he’s afraid of punishment, but because he began his day on that note.”²⁴

Sending In The Troops

In matters of American law the Rebbe would typically call upon leaders and activists to lobby Congress to take action. But the urgency of getting “moment of silence” done

was such that at the Kinus Tzivos Hashem of Chol Hamoed Pesach 5743* the Rebbe gave this mission to the soldiers in Tzivos Hashem.

The Rebbe instructed the children to send petitions to the president and to their respective representatives in Congress, addressing two important policy issues:

1. Every child in America should begin their day with a moment of silence.
2. There should be more government funding to private schools so that their parents should not be punished by paying taxes as well as private school tuition.

The petitions were to be identical but signed by as many children as possible. When the leaders of this country sense the popularity of the issue as well as the uniqueness of the campaign that is dominated by children, it will certainly move them to action. Since Chol Hamoed is not a time for writing, this campaign would begin immediately after Yom Tov.

“And if the *yetzer hara* will discourage you by saying ‘What can you accomplish as a little child?’ you should respond that firstly children can accomplish many great things. In addition, the Torah states “מפי עוללים ויונקים יסדת עוז להשביית אויב ומתנקם”—when it comes to education in accordance with Torah the children have the power to neutralize all opposition!”²⁵

At the conclusion of the *kinus*, the Rebbe also called upon rabbonim to speak in the shuls about the importance of “moment of silence” during their Yizkor speeches on Acharon Shel Pesach.

During the farbrengen of *Seudas Moshiaich* the Rebbe spoke a lengthy and powerful *sicha* about the importance of the children’s petition campaign and demanded major action.²⁶

The next Shabbos the Rebbe spoke during the farbrengen that after Yom Tov he received a flurry of questions about the campaign, some on the practical end of things and others from a halachic perspective. The Rebbe patiently addressed all the halachic questions and concluded that people had a hard time with this campaign and were able to propose such silly questions because they are worried that Lubavitch is taking an unpopular public stand on a controversial issue. In simple terms the Rebbe explained that the topic does not need to be framed as controversial and if the basic facts are presented in a coherent fashion, there is nothing to worry about.²⁷

During the Shavuot farbrengen the Rebbe instructed that all the halachic questions that were raised in connection with the “moment of silence” should be collected and presented at the *kinus Torah* traditionally held after Yom Tov together with the Rebbe’s answers from the recent farbrengens.²⁸ This was subsequently edited by the

Rebbe and published the following year in the weekly *likkut* of Likkutei Sichos for Parshas Yisro.²⁹

The Alabama Case

In 1978 the State of Alabama passed a law that created a minute of silence for meditation in public schools. A second law in 1981 added the option of voluntary prayer and a third law in 1982 authorized teachers to recite a prayer with “willing students.”

A parent in Alabama sued, and in *Wallace v. Jaffree* the US Supreme Court ruled that the laws from 1981 and 1982 violated the US Constitution, but upheld the law from 1978 that enabled a minute of silence for meditation in Alabama public schools.

On Simchas Torah 5746* the Rebbe referred to the Supreme Court ruling stating that it was good that this particular law was overturned - and it is in fact cause for rejoicing - for it “might create a scenario where a teacher or supervisor could impose his particular form of prayer, or his religion’s version of prayer on the students—something which would be wholly unacceptable.”³⁰

In a powerful *sicha* on Yud-Tes Kislev 5747 the Rebbe explained that the national holiday of Thanksgiving is another expression of the unique character of America as a nation founded on the principles of faith in Hashem. However these ideas cannot be limited to the theories of America’s foundation but must be incorporated in the daily lives of its citizens and especially in the education of the youth, which is only currently possible through a “moment of silence.”

Attending³¹ to the education of our children we must not deny them the only true resource for goodness and morality in their lives. They must be aware of the Eye that sees and the Ear that hears who judges the world justly and kindly. Even a child understands that one cannot deceive Hashem. Rather, wanting to receive Hashem’s blessing, he/she will impress upon other children to act according to the Sheva Mitzvos, laying the foundation for a just society.

This is the only way to raise children properly. Only in this way will the national epidemic of rebelliousness against the law in the land cease. Neither money nor special teachers, policemen nor threats will help. You can hide from a policeman but not from Hashem.

It is however necessary that the child incorporate this knowledge into his daily thoughts and lifestyle.


When these truths cannot be transmitted directly to the children within the existing educational setting, they must be emphasized and meditated on in a “moment of silence” at the beginning of the school day. The child should be prepared for the moment of contemplation by the parents who have the

* 5743-1983, 5746-1985, 5747-1986

right and responsibility to raise and train their children to be productive humans and not barbaric rebels against society.

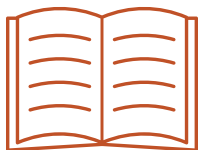
These good efforts will bring good health to all who encourage and support these activities and when these efforts are increased with joy and gladness, with the proper publicity, it will bring blessings all over the land, and throughout the world.

And it will speed the fulfillment of the ruling of the Rambam: He (Moshiach) will prepare the whole world to serve Hashem with one accord, as it is written: "For then will I give to the peoples a pure language, that they may call upon the Name of Hashem to serve him with one consent."

This idea is clearly represented by the American motto: "In G-d we trust!" 

1. Toras Menachem Hisvaaduyos vol. 34 page 151.
2. Igros Kodesh vol. 22 page 474.
3. Igros Kodesh vol. 22 page 482.
4. chabad.org/2051611
5. Pirkei Avos Perec 2 Mishna 1.
6. chabad.org/2051611
7. chabad.org/1274011
8. Igros Kodesh vol 23 page 494.
9. Ibid. vol 24 page 1.
10. Sichos Kodesh 5741 vol 2 page 177-8.

11. Sichos Kodesh 5741 vol 3 page 109-115.
12. Sichos Kodesh 5741 vol 4 page 150.
13. Toras Menachem Hisvaaduyos 5744 vol. 4 page 2174. 5746 vol. 1 page 408-9.
14. Toras Menachem Hisvaaduyos 5743 vol. 4 page 1750-1, 5744 vol. 3 page 1432-3, 5744 vol. 4 page 2173-4, 5745 vol. 1 page 137, 5746 vol. 1 page 408-9.
15. Toras Menachem Hisvaaduyos 5744 vol. 3 page 1433.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. Toras Menachem Hisvaaduyos 5744 vol. 3 page 1434, 5744 vol. 4 page 2174-5, 5745 vol. 1 page 137.
19. Toras Menachem Hisvaaduyos 5744 vol 2 page 622.
20. Toras Menachem Hisvaaduyos 5746 vol 1 page 408.
21. Toras Menachem Hisvaaduyos 5743 vol. 2 page 901-2, vol. 3 page 1389, vol. 4 page 1748
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid. 5744 vol 4 page 2175-6.
24. Toras Menachem Hisvaaduyos 5744 vol 2 page 621.
25. Toras Menachem Hisvaaduyos 5743 vol. 3 page 1299.
26. Ibid. pages 1326-1335.
27. Ibid. page 1385.
28. Ibid. page 1576.
29. Likkutei Sichos vol. 26 pages 132-144.
30. Toras Menachem Hisvaaduyos 5746 vol. 1 page 409.
31. Toras Menachem Hisvaaduyos 5747 vol. 2 pages 53-57.



Read More:

The school prayer and "moment of silence" campaigns are connected to the overall obligation to influence all humanity to observe the Sheva Mitzvos Bnei Noach and the Rebbe's general approach to education for all youth. See A Chassidisher Derher Magazine (53) Shevat 5777: A Light Unto the Nations and A Chassidisher Derher Magazine (67) Nissan 5778: Education Day U.S.A. for more on these topics.



Listen:

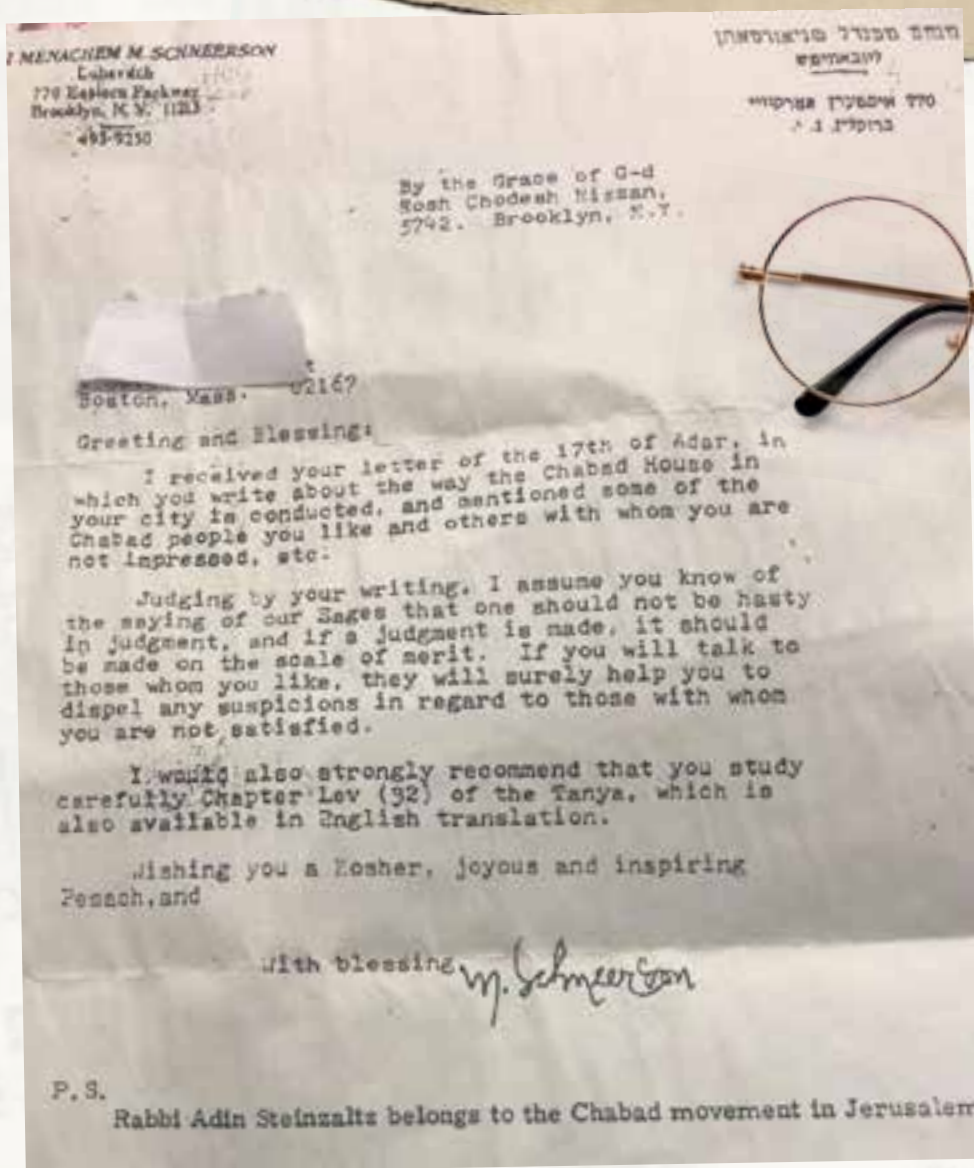
To properly understand the Rebbe's approach to a "moment of silence" we suggest listening to the recordings of the following sichos.

Yud-Beis Tammuz 5743 sicha 3, Yud-Tes Kislev 5744 sicha 2, Yud-Beis Tammuz 5744 sicha 3 and Yud-Tes Kislev 5745 sicha 3.



Why Judge?

A fascinating letter from the Rebbe with invaluable lessons about ahavas Yisroel:





On My Shoulders

This story was related by Rabbi Mordechai Einbinder, a shliach in Tarzana, California, where he is the Associate Director of Chabad of the Valley. He grew up in New Haven, Connecticut.

Our thanks to JEM and the My Encounter team for this story.

Sometime after my bar mitzvah — I think I was about thirteen — I was in *yechidus* with my family. One of the major questions that were posed to the Rebbe was where I should continue my Jewish education: Should I continue in New Haven, Connecticut for another year, as we were about to enter *mesivta*, or should I go to the main Lubavitch Yeshiva on Ocean Parkway in Brooklyn, New York.

The Rebbe went around the room, asking each person their opinion. First the Rebbe asked my father. My father was a very easy-going person, the consummate Chossid, and he said, “Whatever the Rebbe says, I’m very happy with — it’s all good.”

Then the Rebbe asked my mother and she gave her typical dramatic answer, which went something

like this: “Rebbe, Brooklyn is a jungle, and he’s still very young! Let him stay with me another year.”

The Rebbe smiled and then asked me what I thought. I told the Rebbe that honestly I’m comfortable in both places but I would prefer going to New York because the environment would be more conducive for my spiritual growth.

I remember it like today. The Rebbe turned to my mother, placed his holy hands on his shoulders, smiled, and said, “*Ich nem dos oif meineh pleitzes*—I take this on my shoulders,” meaning that I should go to New York and will be fine there.

That’s the way the story unfolded. The next year I was in the big yeshiva on Ocean Parkway and everything was fine. I had a very successful year.

לזכות
בנינו ובנותינו ומשפחתם שיחיו
להצלחה רבה בכל הענינים
נדפס ע"י
הרה"ת ר' יוסף יעקב
וזוגתו מרת מלכה בינה שיחיו
מאראס
ס. אנטוניה, טקסס



That year, I recall, I was in Rabbi Marlow's class, and my brother-in-law, Rabbi Zalman Lipsker, who is a *shliach* in Philadelphia, popped in all of a sudden in the middle of the year to visit me. He asked me how I was and spoke to my friends about how I was doing. He spoke to Rabbi Tenenbaum, the principal. He spoke to Rabbi Marlow. He checked out my dormitory room.

I asked him, "What are you doing here?" He said, "I care for you. I was on my way to Philadelphia, and I stopped off to see how you're doing." I said, "That's great." And that was that.

Twenty years later, I was sitting *shiva* for my father, and my brother-in-law and I were talking. He told me, "You don't really think I like you *that* much. Do you remember when I visited you on

Ocean Parkway?" I said, "Sure I remember. You were dropping by, you were on the way ..."

He said, "That's not the real story."

"What do you mean," I asked. He said, "Remember I came to check you out. I checked out your dormitory. I checked out with your teacher how you were doing. I saw how this was and how that was. You think I have nothing better to do than to go visit you in yeshiva?"

"What do you mean? What's the scoop, Zalman?" I asked.

He said, "I received a call from Rabbi Hodakov, and he said, 'The Rebbe wants to know what's happening with your brother-in-law Einbinder. Is he happy? Is he doing okay? I want you to go down to the yeshiva and check out the situation, and you should write a very clear and precise report of how your young brother-in-law is doing away from home.'"

And so he did.

The point of this story is an awesome one. The Rebbe was involved with the macro; with global issues. And yet he didn't forget about the sensitivity to a Jewish mother: "*Ich nem dos oif meineh pleitzes*—I take it upon my shoulders." He'll be okay.¹ ①

1. *Living Torah*, Disc 130 Program 517.


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

Shmuel

Reb Shmuel Levitin



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



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

JEM 109323

Even in Previous Generations

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

THE PREEMINENT TZIYUR

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

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

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

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

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

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

EVERYTHING WENT THROUGH REB SHMUEL

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

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



REB SHMUEL’S AMERICAN PASSPORT PICTURE, 5707.

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

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

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

“REB SHMUEL’S AH VORT”

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



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

A POWERFUL IMPACT

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

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

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

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

The Frierdiker Rebbe responded:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Reb Shmuel to the Chassidim of America:

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

WITH EVERY FIBER OF HIS BEING

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

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

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

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

(and his tallis and tefillin). Years later, he asked the Frierdiker Rebbe for a *tikkun* for carrying a *sefer* on Shabbos, and the Frierdiker Rebbe instructed him to learn Maseches Shabbos.

His *geshmak* in Chassidus earned him his *shidduch* and first *rabbanus* as well.

When Reb Shmuel was around 24 years old, he happened to pass through the *Chassidishe* town of Rakshik in Lithuania for Shabbos. He repeated a *maamar* in shul, and the *baalei batim* loved it. He spoke well, explaining deep concepts in simple terms, allowing everyone to understand.

After Shabbos, the *baalei batim* asked the rav, Reb Asher Margalios, to find a way to keep the young man around. Reb Asher had an idea — he had a daughter of marriageable age, and he thought it would be a perfect *shidduch*. With the Rebbe Rashab's *bracha*, the *shidduch* materialized.⁵ Not long afterward, Reb Shmuel's father-in-law passed away, and he was appointed as his successor.

THE REBBE'S RAV

"My grandfather," says Rabbi Levitin, "was considered the Rebbe's rav. The Rebbe would sell his *chometz* to him and direct his *shaalos* in *halacha* to him as well. He would often say, 'In the Rebbe's shul, the Rebbe is the Shulchan Aruch.' Although the Rebbe usually didn't *pasken* himself, my grandfather would always try to get a sense of the Rebbe's feeling about the matter before offering his own *psak*."

"I remember one occasion in particular. My grandfather would daven at the *amud* on the *yom hillula* of the Rebbe Rashab, Rebbe Maharash, and Tzemach Tzedek, upon instructions of the Frierdiker Rebbe. On Beis Nissan 5723*, the Rebbe was at the Ohel, and Mincha was expected to be close to *shkiah*. The Rebbe would also be drawing *mayim shelanu* that

ORIGINS

Reb Shmuel was born in the town of Pahar in the beginning of 5643* (תרמ"ג). It was during the *shloshim* of the Rebbe Maharash, and he was therefore given the name Shmuel.

He was born into a family with deep Chabad roots. His maternal grandfather, Reb Gershon Ber of Pahar, was a famous Chossid of the Tzemach Tzedek, and his father, Rev Zev Volf Levitin, would later be a *mashgiach* in Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim.

In his early childhood, his family was so desperately poor that his father would split matches into two to save money.⁸ There were obviously no funds for tuition. A local *melamed* had pity on the young boy and allowed him to sit in his classes, but did not permit him to ask questions, so as not to steal time from the children whose parents were paying.

Despite the difficult circumstances, Reb Shmuel made strides in his learning. He later related that his grandfather, Reb Gershon Ber, once visited his home when he was eight or nine years old, and as they walked together to shul, Reb Shmuel proudly told his grandfather that he knew full pages of Gemara by heart, hoping he would test him. To his surprise, his grandfather said, "*M'darf kenen ineveinig*—you need to know the Gemara inside," teaching him a lesson in *bittul*.

As a 16-year-old, already very proficient in Gemara and *poskim*, he joined the yeshiva in Lubavitch. It was only two years after Tomchei Temimim had opened its doors, and the main group studied in the town of Zhembin, under the tutelage of Reb Shmuel Gronem Esterman. Nonetheless, the Rebbe Rashab determined that this new *bochur* would remain in Lubavitch, in his close proximity.

Being a talented and sharp *bochur*, the *mashpi'im* and elder Chassidim quickly took a liking to him. Rashbatz — who taught him Chassidus — liked to share his thoughts and *chiddushim* with Reb Shmuel. Reb Shmuel Gronem had a relationship with him as well. The senior Chossid Reb Chanoch Hendel taught him a lesson in *ahavas Yisroel*: He once noticed that Reb Shmuel's shoes were torn and promptly exchanged them with his own.

evening for the matzah sent to Eretz Yisroel. I noticed something unusual that day: My grandfather was sitting in the *zal* waiting for the Rebbe to arrive. He remained there for an hour and a half.

"The Rebbe finally arrived close to *shkiah* and walked very quickly into 770, with Rabbi Groner close behind him. I soon understood that my grandfather had been anticipating a question: Rabbi Groner made a beeline for him and said, 'The Rebbe asks:

Should we daven Mincha or do *mayim shelanu* first?'

"My grandfather said that before answering, he needed to speak to the Rebbe. He entered the Rebbe's room and emerged a very short time later saying '*Ashrei yoshvei veisecha...*' with the Rebbe close behind him. I don't know what he asked, but in those few seconds he had gotten a sense of the Rebbe's opinion."⁶

Reb Shmuel began his 'career' in *rabbanus* from a young age. At age 11 he already learned Yoreh Deah, and at

14 he learned Choshen Mishpat. But he didn't take the position lightly. "He often wanted to abandon his post in Rakshik," one *bochur* later transcribed hearing from Reb Shmuel. "When approached with *kashrus* questions about a chicken — if he said it was kosher, he wouldn't be able to sleep at night because it may have been *treif*. If he ruled that it was *treif*, he wouldn't be able to sleep because he had caused the butcher financial harm."

Despite his personal misgivings, he was very popular in his town for his wisdom and character. After he was forced to leave at the beginning of World War I (see next section), the townspeople didn't hire a new rav for a full 20 years. When Reb Shmuel finally returned in the late 5690s*, they welcomed him back with open arms.

HOW TO LOOK AT A YID

Reb Shmuel had a special *chush* in *ahavas Yisroel*, and always knew when to speak at the right moment. On numerous occasions, Reb Shmuel was *melamed zchus* to the Rabbeim in a way that only he could.

One year, he visited Rostov for Simchas Torah, and at the farbrengen, the Rebbe Rashab began a sharp *sicha* about the *chilul Shabbos* that had been commonplace during World War I. Hearing the Rebbe Rashab's words, Reb Shmuel gathered courage, said *l'chaim* and asked for permission to speak.

When the war broke out, the Jews of Rakshik — near the battlefield between Russia and Germany — were considered "untrustworthy" and were forced by the Czar to abandon their homes and travel deeper into Russia.

Reb Shmuel related to the Rebbe Rashab that a townsman had asked him whether he could transport his physical belongings out of the city on Shabbos to protect them from the invading armies. Reb Shmuel ruled that it was forbidden. The individual



REB SHMUEL (CENTER) STANDS NEXT TO THE REBBE AS RABBI HODAKOV READS THE KESUBA AT THE CHUPA OF REB TZVI AND MENUCHA LERMAN, 4 ELUL 5715.

followed his instructions despite the heavy loss he incurred. When they later met up in Dvinsk, he actually thanked Reb Shmuel for saving him from violating Shabbos.

When he finished his account, the Rebbe Rashab smiled at him and no longer pursued the topic. The Frieddiker Rebbe, who was standing nearby, enjoyed the exchange, and exclaimed, "Rakshiker rav, say *l'chaim!*"⁷

NEW FRONTIERS

Reb Shmuel was famously known as "Reb Shmuel Kutaiser," for his years spent strengthening Yiddishkeit in Kutais, Georgia (Gruzia) as one of the first "modern-day shluchim."

How did that unique shlichus come to be?

One day, as Mincha drew to a close in the Rebbe Rashab's home in Rostov, Chassidim noticed a suspicious group of cossacks approaching the front door. Worried, they rushed to lock all the windows and doors to the premises. However, the Rebbe Rashab said, "Why are you locking the doors? Those aren't cossacks, they are Yidden! Let them in!"

The door was opened, and the 'cossacks' approached and kissed the mezuzah. "*Hakol kol Yaakov, v'hayodayim yidei Eisav*," the Rebbe Rashab said to them in amusement.

They were a group of Jewish merchants from Georgia. They had heard about the famous tzaddik living in Rostov, and had come with a request: Send us a rabbi to strengthen Yiddishkeit in our area.⁹

KEHOT PUBLICATION SOCIETY

The Rebbe Rashab decided to send Reb Shmuel who had been displaced from his original *rabbanus* in Rakshik. Despite their reservations about traveling to a land with a different language and culture, Reb Shmuel and his family packed their bags and began the long journey eastward.

The Jews in Central Asia were warm and committed to Yiddishkeit. However, they were extremely uneducated. When writing about Reb Shmuel's influence, the Frierdiker Rebbe described their initial state:

"There is no land with such dire ignorance of Torah like Georgia. Even the devout can barely translate a verse in Chumash, and surely not a Mishnah or Gemara or *halacha* from a *posek*. Even the local *chachamim* have difficulty understanding Shulchan Aruch..."¹⁰

Reb Shmuel quickly got to work. Speaking in *Lashon Hakodesh*, he began teaching Torah to the local Jews. He gathered the *chachamim*, learned *halacha* and Tanya with them, and helped them prepare classes for the youth. Select *bochurim* who understood *Lashon Hakodesh* received personal classes from Reb Shmuel as well. Each Shabbos, he would speak from the pulpit with a translator, teaching the locals about Shabbos, *kashrus* and *taharah* and inspiring them to bolster their Yiddishkeit.

The project was a phenomenal success. Many hundreds of children joined the *talmud Torahs*, and Reb Shmuel brought down another 10 Temimim to help him. When Reb Shmerel Sasonkin arrived, he wrote to the Frierdiker Rebbe that "when he first walked into the shul of the older *bochurim*, he thought for a moment that he had entered the small *zal* in Lubavitch..."

The Rebbe himself used the story of Reb Shmuel to encourage a new shlucha to Australia, Mrs. Devorah

Groner, when she was experiencing hardship:

"When the father of my father-in-law," the Rebbe wrote to her in English, "sent two Jews to Gruzia (Caucasia), a remote and neglected region, the two emissaries so transformed Jewish life there that even now, 45 years later, we find the grandchildren of those native Jews in New York who are strictly religious and devoted Chassidim."¹¹

Reb Shmuel was forced to flee after several years, but his influence was long lasting.

"I once met a Georgian Jew," says Rabbi Sholom Ber Levitin, "and when he heard that Reb Shmuel was my grandfather, he began hugging and kissing me! That was how much they loved him." Until today, a shul in Nachlas Har Chabad founded by Georgian Jews is called Beis Shmuel.

For Tishrei 5728*, three newly immigrated Michalashvili brothers, the sons of one of Reb Shmuel's early students, came to the Rebbe for Tishrei, where they reunited with Reb Shmuel. Reb Shmuel told them that a year earlier, during a farbrengen, the Rebbe had turned around to him and declared, "Next year, Georgian Jews will be here!"

Not long afterwards, on Rosh Hashanah, the Rebbe said a *maamar* "*Vehaya bayom hahu*," and then, as the crowd sang, the Rebbe turned around to Reb Shmuel and said, "Nu, have they come from Gruzia?"

THE LAST YESHIVA IN THE SOVIET UNION

After fleeing Georgia, Reb Shmuel came to Leningrad and asked the Frierdiker Rebbe how to proceed.

The Frierdiker Rebbe had just decided to open a Beis Midrash for rabbanim in Nevel, due to the severe shortage of competent rabbanim. The Frierdiker Rebbe appointed Reb Shmuel to lead the new institution, which drew Chassidim and *misnagdim* from all over the country. Several well-known families entered Chabad through this yeshiva. Despite the Yevsektzia cracking down all over the country, this *beis midrash* managed to escape scrutiny for a while; it was an island of calm during the wild times of the first decade of Communism in Russia.

One day, the Yiddish Communist newspaper (ironically called) *Emes* published a shocking "expose."

"In the corner of Nevel, a group of Lubavitchers has settled down. These

As for what can actually be accomplished, I mentioned to your husband the experience in a somewhat similar situation, when the father of my father-in-law sent two Jews to Gruzia (Caucasia), a remote and neglected region, the two emissaries so transformed Jewish life there that even now, 45 years later, we find grandchildren of those native Jews in New York who are strictly religious and devoted Chassidim. There is this difference,

Mrs. Devorah Groner

11th of Cheshvan, 5721

however, that those two Jews who revitalized Jewish life in that remote region, were the only pioneers and had no helpers. They had to start from scratch, whereas you and your husband came to Australia, finding there a group of Anash who have, to a considerable extent, already prepared the ground, except that many phases of the work have still to be accomplished and could best be done by people who have an English background, since, basically, the Australian society is similar to that of the American society.

THE REBBE'S LETTER TO THE AUSTRALIAN SHLUCHA MRS. DEVORAH GRONER, DATED 11 CHESHVAN 5721, DESCRIBING REB SHMUEL'S UNIQUE SHLICHUS TO GRUZIA.

are Chassids, hypocritical fanatics, who have opened a yeshiva.

“The yeshiva attracts followers of the ‘holy’ Rebbe of Lubavitch, *meshulachim*, G-d’s cossacks and other religious clerics from various places. They collect money for *mikvehs* and distribute propaganda against the local Jewish government school. They say, ‘It’s better to send your children to a non-Jewish school; at least they don’t indoctrinate your children against Judaism!’ There was even one occurrence where hysterical religious men accosted Jewish children and yelled at them, ‘Why are you going to school on Shabbos!?’

“Rumor has it that this yeshiva and the entire gang of religious people are supported financially by the Lubavitcher himself...”¹²

After such publicity, it was clear that their days were numbered. They began planning a move to a different location, but the Yevsektzia caught up with them before they had a chance. In Kislev of 5689* (תרפ"ט), Reb Shmuel was arrested and the *beis midrash* was shuttered.

The Friediker Rebbe, living in Riga at the time, gave an interview to the Morgan Journal not long afterwards. “The shuttering of the yeshiva,” the journalist wrote, “is, in his eyes, the greatest tragedy to befall Orthodox Jewry in Russia in the past few years. Nevel was the only *makom Torah* and *emunah* in Soviet Russia in the past few years.”

A MAN OF THE PEOPLE

One of Reb Shmuel’s many qualities was his *pikchus* and his way with people. In every situation, Reb Shmuel attracted friends from the most unlikely of places.

“When he was in jail awaiting trial, his situation was very difficult,” related his son, Reb Binyomin. “He was in a prison with the worst criminals. But among them was a Jewish thief, a

MAKING THE DIFFERENCE

Rabbi Zarchi relates:

When President Zalman Shazar wanted to come for a *yechidus* with the Rebbe, the Israeli government pressured him against it (see *Leben Mitten Rebbe’n*, *Derher Av* 5781). People in 770 were saying that it was important to the Rebbe that he indeed come to 770. Reb Shmuel approached Rabbi Hodakov and asked him, “Is it true that the Rebbe wants Shazar to come here?” Rabbi Hodakov confirmed the rumor. Reb Shmuel said, “Let me speak to the Rebbe.”

He went into the Rebbe’s room and said, “I will bring him over.”

The Rebbe agreed, and Reb Shmuel led a delegation to Shazar’s hotel. Shazar welcomed them warmly. He was having difficulty overcoming the pressure from people in Israel not to go to 770, but with the visit of the delegation, he made the decision to go immediately, and came with them back to the Rebbe.



REB SHMUEL LEADS A DELEGATION TO MEET ISRAELI PRESIDENT ZALMAN SHAZAR AT HIS HOTEL ROOM AND ESCORT HIM TO HIS MEETING WITH THE REBBE, 13 AV 5726.



SHOLOM YISROEL HODAKOV



YUD SHEVAT 5721, YOSHI GOLDSTEIN VIA JEM 307946

THE REBBE SPEAKS WITH REB SHMUEL DURING A FARBRENGEN IN THE FRIERDIKER REBBE'S APARTMENT, YUD-TES KISLEV 5724.

violent criminal who was considered the leader of the prisoners. My father developed a positive relationship with him, and he protected him. He etched a line on the floor with his stick and informed the prisoners that he would kill anyone who passed over the line and entered my father's private space."¹³

In Siberia, too, he found an opportunity to make a connection. Sentenced to three years in exile, he found himself totally alone, a solitary Jew among gentiles. But he met an old Jew named Avraham, who kept some semblance of Jewish practice; he cooked a cholent each Friday, for example, with non-kosher meat. Avraham became Reb Shmuel's devoted friend. Reb Shmuel would teach him the basics of Yiddishkeit, and he — being a free man — would help in whatever way he could.

One day, shortly before Rosh Hashanah, Reb Shmuel received word that a package had arrived for him. Suspecting that it contained a shofar, he asked Avraham to immediately make the arduous trip to pick it up for him. "There is a lot of good stuff," he said, "and I'll split it with you."

When Avraham returned with the package, he watched curiously as Reb Shmuel opened it. To Reb Shmuel's delight, there was a shofar inside, and his face lit up with joy.

Avraham saw that this was no "physical goody," but he wasn't disappointed. "I knew that when you said 'good stuff,' you had something more spiritual in mind, and that's actually why I went out of my way to get it for you."¹⁴

THREE SPECIAL MENTIONS

There are countless stories and sayings to repeat about Reb Shmuel — far too many to be covered in one article. However, there are three stories that stand out: not many people had the merit to become a part of the Torah of three Rabbeim.

The first story is about the Rebbe Rashab.

In 5664* (תרס"ד), Reb Shmuel was drafted to the army and had no choice but to serve. Only after much petitioning, he was given a reprieve due to "weak constitution."

Before entering the army, he took along several deep *sefarim* of

Chassidus, including Imrei Binah, with the hope that he would find time to delve into them. But when he was finally released from his army base, he told his father that learning had been almost impossible. "It was impossible even to think!"

His father repeated the comment to the Rebbe Rashab. That Shabbos, during the *maamar*, the Rebbe Rashab commented, "*A neshamah in galus, afilu di machshava, trachten lozt men oich nisht*—When a *neshamah* is in exile, it isn't even allowed to think (about *Elokus*)."

The second story is about the Frierdiker Rebbe.

After Reb Shmuel's return from Siberia, the Frierdiker Rebbe made great efforts to obtain his release from the Soviet Union, and in Shevat 5697*, he succeeded in crossing the border. Twenty years had passed since he had left Rakshik (which was now part of independent Lithuania), but the community welcomed him back with open arms. However, the Frierdiker Rebbe soon appointed him to be a *shadar*.

"On his way to America," relates his grandson Rabbi Levitin, "he

REB SHMUEL STANDS TO
THE REBBE'S RIGHT AT THE
CONCLUSION OF A CHUPA,
CIRCA EARLY 5720S.



“YOUR SHINING LIGHT”

Reb Shmuel had an immense *zechus* that each and every year before Rosh Hashanah, the Rebbe wrote to him a special note with brachos for the upcoming year. It is fascinating to read each one of these notes and recognize the specific nuances the Rebbe made each year in his *bracha*.

For example one year, in his titles addressing Reb Shmuel, the Rebbe added: “מלאכתו מלאכת שמים בהפצת” —המעינות והדה”נ להאיר תל”ת ת”ת—He does the work of heaven, spreading the wellsprings of Chassidus and kindling the illuminating lamps—the students of Tomchei Temimim...”

The Rebbe always added a special *bracha*, in addition to a good year in his own personal and family life, for success in his holy work as a *mashpia* in the yeshiva. One year, the Rebbe writes: “ולהצליח במיוחד במצוה דצ”ל זהיר בה טפי,” —בזוהר ואור מוסיף והולך, השפעת דא”ח בתו”ת וסביבותי ומתוך שמחה וט”ל—May you be successful especially in the mitzvah about which you are the most meticulous (*‘zahir’*), the one that shines (*zohar*) with ever increasing light: your teaching Chassidus in Tomchei Temimim and its surroundings...”

(For photocopies of all the original notes, see Teshura Rivkin-Farkash 5775)



REB SHMUEL STANDS BEHIND THE REBBE AS THE REBBE DELIVERS A MAAMAR, PURIM 5723.



REB SHMUEL SITS TO THE LEFT OF THE CHOSSAN AS THE REBBE SPEAKS AT THE KABOLAS PONIM OF REB MOTTEL AND SARA DUBINSKY, 2 ELUL 5713.

A PERSONAL STORY:

Whenever Reb Shmuel would reprimand a *bochur*, he would do it with a smile and a sense of humor. “*Mimah nafshach*,” he would often say. “If I am right, you’ve just gained. If I’m wrong — that’s even better...”

To lighten the atmosphere, he would often retell a story about a failing of his own.

One such story was the following: During a *farbrengen*, the Frierdiker Rebbe explained that a Rebbe’s *bracha* can only work if the person makes his own *keili* and trusts in the Rebbe’s *bracha*. The Frierdiker Rebbe told a long story about Reb Zev Volf of Zhitomir, who promised a woman a blessing for a child if she would only trust him unquestioningly.

At the end of the story, Reb Shmuel commented to the Frierdiker Rebbe, “Nu, for that you need to be Reb Zev Volf.”

The Frierdiker Rebbe didn’t respond.

The next day, Reb Shmuel was called to the Frierdiker Rebbe.

“There was a Jew in the audience who needed to understand that my *bracha* is reliant on him just as much as me,” the Frierdiker Rebbe said, “and that’s why I told the story, but then you stuck in your, ‘Nu, for that you need to be Reb Zev Volf.’”¹⁵

got a special pass to travel through Poland to see the Frierdiker Rebbe, despite Lithuania and Poland’s lack of diplomatic relations. It had been 10 years since he had last been in *yechidus*. Before the *yechidus*, the Frierdiker Rebbe’s family asked him to focus on uplifting matters, because the difficult situation of the Jewish people

was weighing down on the Frierdiker Rebbe and affecting his health.

“In the *yechidus*, my grandfather cited the *possuk* about Moshiach’s times: ברגע קטן עזבתיך וברחמים גדלים אקבצך¹⁶—I left you for a short moment, and with great compassion I will gather you. He told the Frierdiker Rebbe, ‘When Moshiach comes, we

will look at all the suffering like it was just one short moment, *nor a rega...*’ The Frierdiker Rebbe turned and said, ‘Yuh, a *rega*, *uber a bitere rega*—yes, a moment, but a bitter moment.’

“A year and a half later, the Frierdiker Rebbe himself arrived in the United States after escaping the Nazi occupation of Poland. At the conclusion of the first *maamar*, ‘*Balayla Hahu*’ on Purim, the Frierdiker Rebbe said very similar words: ‘ברגע קטן עזבתיך וברחמים גדלים אקבצך: How could the entire *galus* be called a short moment? But when Moshiach comes and Hashem’s ‘great compassion’ is revealed, we will realize that the entire *galus* was one short moment.’¹⁷

“My grandfather told me that at that moment, the Frierdiker Rebbe looked directly at him across the table. It was as if to say, now do you understand what I meant? Only then, when the entire Europe was on fire, did my grandfather finally understand just how bitter it would be.”

And the third story, from the Rebbe:

Reb Shmuel passed away on 11 Elul 5734*, and at the Chai Elul *farbrengen*, the Rebbe said the following:

“I heard a story from Reb Shmuel Levitin. Today was the conclusion of the *shiva*, and now the *shver* is taking care of him with everything he needs — from the moment the soul departed the body and surely with the *shleimus* of the *shiva*.

“When I came to him once, he spoke about his imprisonment and exile in Siberia. What stood out in his memory? When he told me the story, nobody else was in that room in 770. What did he recall? That he couldn’t remember whether to recite in *birchos hashachar*, “*Hanosen laya’ef koach*” or, “*Hanosen la’ayef koach*.”

“What was the most disturbing element of the exile and the suffering and the lack of any basic necessities in

Siberia? What really mattered to him? The uncertainty whether to say *la'ayef* or *laya'ef*.

“This is a demonstration of the level that can be achieved by the Rabbeim in those who are *mekushar* to them.”¹⁸

UNIQUE – EVEN IN EARLIER GENERATIONS

“When my grandfather was ill,” says Rabbi Levitin, “the Rebbe personally came to visit him in the hospital. I also remember that my grandfather once fell in a snowstorm and dislocated his arm, and the Rebbetzin called our home very often to see how he was doing.

“When he passed away, the Rebbe participated in the *levaya* all the way

to the cemetery, although he remained behind the gate. The Rebbetzin’s car followed the hearse all the way to the cemetery as well. Later, she told my father that ‘*Reb Shmuel iz geven unique*’ — using the English term. She said that, ‘He would have been considered unique even in previous generations.’” **T**

1. *Derher* Tammuz 5775 pg. 18.
2. *Devarim* 23:6
3. *Kfar Chabad Magazine*, issue 530 pg. 20
4. See story in *Kfar Chabad Magazine*, issue 530 pg. 20. Letter in *Igros Kodesh Admur Harayatz* vol. 4 pg. 515.
5. *Kfar Chabad Magazine* issue 530 pg. 14.
6. This is not to imply that Reb Shmuel gave halachic rulings simply based on the Rebbe’s inclination. Rather, as the Mishnah states (*Negaim* 9), חכם גדול אתה שקיימת דבריו, חכמים. Reb Shmuel was able to see the Rebbe’s

inclination through a halachic lense, and rule accordingly — obviously with the proper halachic guidelines.

7. *Kfar Chabad Magazine* issue 870 pg. 26.
8. *Kfar Chabad Magazine* issue 870 pg. 25.
9. *Admorei Chabad V’Yahadut Gruzia* pg. 16
10. *Igros Kodesh Admur Harayatz* vol. 1 pg. 227
11. English letter dated 11 Cheshvan 5721. Telsner-Swerdlov Teshura, 29 Shevat 5757 pg.
20. The second shliach may be a reference to Reb Shmerel Sasonkin (the Rebbe identified the first as Reb Shmuel during a *yechidus* with Mrs. Groner).
12. *Kfar Chabad Magazine*, issue 530 pg. 16.
13. *Kfar Chabad Magazine*, issue 585, pg. 21.
14. *Kfar Chabad Magazine* issue 530 pg. 18
15. *Kfar Chabad Magazine* issue 530 pg. 20
16. *Yeshayahu* 54:7.
17. *Sefer Hamaamarim* 5700 pg. 10.
18. *Ashreinu* Audio, Chai Elul 5734, Sichah 3 min. 6:06-8:29, condensed for clarity.



THE REBBE ATTENDS THE LEVAYA OF REB SHMUEL, 12 ELUL 5734.



A Better Arrangement

"Strange, very strange," thought Reb Naftali to himself as he stood on the station's platform, preparing to board a train. "That appears to be the [Friediker] Rebbe staring out the window from the public area of the train."

Naftali, on his way to Moscow, entered the train car and made himself comfortable in his cabin.

Along the way, the train made another stop during which the continuing passengers were allowed

to disembark for a few minutes to stretch their legs and buy something at the concession stands. The trip was long and Naftali took full advantage of this opportunity.

As he glanced at the train, he was once again surprised to see the Rebbe still standing and staring out the window. He then decided to find out what was going on.

"Rebbe, why are you standing by the window the whole time? Do you not

have a room in the shared cabin area?"

"I do have a joint room," replied the Rebbe, "but my ticket landed me in a room with a woman actress and I can't be in there because of *yichud*. Therefore, I am standing out here in the corridor."

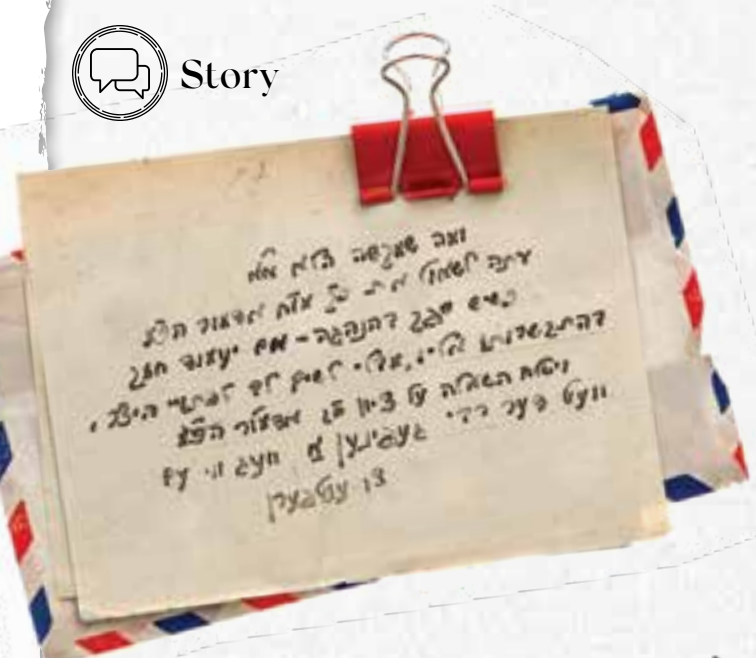
Naftali was determined to help and devised a creative solution.

He shared his cabin with a decorated military personality so he approached him and said,

"In the other cabin there is an actress who is sharing the room with a religious man. The two have nothing in common. Would you care to switch rooms with him? You will have a lot to talk about and this Jew will be happy as well."

Without hesitation, the soldier accepted Naftali's proposal and the Rebbe comfortably continued his journey. ¹

(Reshimos Dvorim p. 191)



דער רבי וועט געפינען א וועג...

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

The Rain Held Up

AS TOLD BY RABBI LEVI PLOTKIN (PARKLAND, FL)

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

YOUR STORY

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



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

MOTZEI SHABBOS PARSHAS NOACH

5740

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





**KIDDUSH
LEVANAH**



LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM193209





LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 193211

THE FARBRENGEN



LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 193219

This is one of the final times that the Rebbe held his usual Shabbos farbrengen on Motzei Shabbos, following the events of Shemini Atzeres 5738* (when the Rebbe had a heart attack). The Rebbe recites the *maamar* on the *possuk* וירח הוי' את ריח הגניחוח. While reciting this *maamar*, the Rebbe cries about the *mesiras nefesh* of Yidden in *galus*, presumably referring to the recent murder of an elder Chossid in Crown Heights.



LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 193217





LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 193215



LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 194414



After the farbrengen,
the Rebbe heads home.

LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 193214

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.

Mincha and Maariv Everyday

Dear Editors,

Thank you for the beautiful pictures of the Rebbe on Erev Rosh Hashanah in the Moments column of the Elul magazine.

The caption on p. 64 reads, "Before the Rebbe started davening with the *minyan* everyday in 5748, Erev Rosh Hashanah was one of the few special times a year that the Rebbe would daven with the Chassidim on a weekday."

It is important to note that the Rebbe davened Mincha and Maariv with the *minyan* everyday throughout the years.

Erev Rosh Hashanah was one of the few times a year when the Rebbe davened **Shacharis** with the *minyan*. What made this extra special was that Chassidim would see the Rebbe wearing tefillin in public.

Mendy Greenberg
WASILLA, ALASKA

"Are there other *chassanim* who are Kohanim here?"

Dear Editors,

I read the article in the Elul magazine about my grandfather, Reb Avrohom Hersh Cohen a"h [A Soldier in Yerushalayim].

I will add one point regarding the fact that the Rebbe always made a strong point to put Kohanim first.

My parents, Rabbi Chaim Shlomo and Rivka Cohen's *chasunah* took place shortly after Shavuot 5736 in Montreal. Since the wedding was out of town, my father and grandparents (Reb Avrohom Hersh and his wife) went into Gan Eden Hatachton a day before the wedding to receive the Rebbe's *bracha* and *siddur* for my father, the *chosson* to daven Mincha, as was the custom before one's *chasunah*.

When there was more than one *chosson* present, the Rebbe would generally hand the *siddur* to the one who's *chasunah* was set to take place that day. After he finished davening, that *chosson* would then pass it on to the others.

That day, there was another *chosson* whose wedding was set to take place later that day.

When the Rebbe came out of his room with the *siddur*, someone pointed to the other *chosson*, saying that he was getting married today. The Rebbe did not respond, and handed the *siddur* to my father.

As the Rebbe was still holding the *siddur* and my father was holding it as well, my father said again to the Rebbe that the other *chosson* was getting married that day.

The Rebbe then asked, “Are there other *chassanim* who are Kohanim here?”

My father said again that the other *chosson* was getting married today.

The Rebbe then turned to my grandparents and said that this will not affect the way the *tefilos* will be *niskabel*, implying that receiving the *siddur* second has the same value as receiving it directly from the Rebbe.

Only then, did he give the *siddur* to the *chosson* who was getting married that day.

Rabbi Mendel Cohen

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

Likkutei Levi Yitzchok

Dear Editors,

Thank you for your article about the Rebbe’s teachings on his father’s Torah [*Interpreting the Depth*, Derher Av 5781].

On p. 35, Rabbi Asher Farkash implies that the Rebbe would walk into the farbrengen each week holding the sefer Likkutei Levi Yitzchok in hand. This is inaccurate, as the *mazkir* would leave the *sefer* at the Rebbe’s place before the farbrengen began.

Thank you for all your beautiful magazines.

Yossi Konig

RAMAT BEIT SHEMESH, ISRAEL

