



A MATTER OF TIME

In a conversation with A Chassidisher Derher Magazine, Rabbi Shalom Greenberg related the following story:

I was fortunate to become a Shliach of the Rebbe in the year 5758, to the city of Shanghai, China. While there had been Yidden who had lived in Shanghai over 150 years before, and it was also a place where many Yidden fleeing the war came through on the way to safety, nevertheless the Yiddisher kehilla was practically in shambles.

In fact, many bochurim from Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim ended up in Shanghai on their way to America. There, they resumed studies, and even printed numerous *sifrei Chassidus*.

Because of the rich Yiddishe community that Shanghai had, many elaborate Shuls and Mikvas had been built. With the demise of the Yiddishe community, all these buildings were repossessed by the government, leaving not a single active Shul when we arrived in Shanghai.

The Shlichus quickly grew in leaps

and bounds as we became the epicenter of Yiddishkeit in a place so devoid of it. Both locals and tourists were drawn to our *peulos*, looking to grow in their Yiddishkeit.

The location where our events would happen, was an entirely different story. Although we rented a number of nice locations through which to do our *peulos*, we were presented with a great obstacle. Because we were renting the premises, it was impossible for us to build a mikva.

Instead, anyone from Shanghai who wished to use the Mikva needed to fly to the nearest Mikva in Hong Kong, a two hour flight each way! This was a great hassle, and was putting a strain on our Shlichus.

I began doing research throughout the various surrounding neighborhoods for a befitting property. Soon enough I came across a property with a building which seemed just right. The setup and location

was especially attractive for our Beis Chabad.

Once we owned a property of our own we would be able to build a Mikva, in addition to having a permanent home for Chabad of Shanghai.

With time, the challenge grew stronger and we decided that although our funds were minimal, to begin a building fund, for this property.

Only one obstacle stood in the way:

The price of the building was \$1,800,000.00!

As the Rebbe's Shliach, I wrote a *tzetel* explaining the situation and the decision to begin a building fund, and faxed it to the Ohel.

A few months went by, and the only money in the building fund was the first \$50.00 that I myself had donated. I wondered whether we would be able to accomplish this giant goal.

In Elul of 5763 we were privileged to host a special guest during his visit to Shanghai. Mr. Mel Waxman, whom was a generous benefactor of the Lubavitch *mosdos* in Cleveland, Ohio spent a



RABBI SHOLOM GREENBERG



THE BUILDING THAT HOUSES CHABAD OF SHANGHAI AND A BEAUTIFUL MIKVA.

Shabbos in our Chabad House. During the Friday night meal he heard about our challenges and soon informed me that he would like to speak about it in Shul the next day.

During Davening that Shabbos morning, Mr. Waxman mounted the podium and spoke passionately about what the Rebbe's Shlichus around the world, and brought across firmly that having a permanent home for a Beis Chabad in Shanghai was vital.

As he finished up his remarks, he exclaimed: "I will match every dollar that is pledged from this community toward the building fund!"

A voice piped up from one of the congregants sitting there, asking Mr. Waxman up to how much he would match. Mr. Waxman answered that he would match the first \$100,000.00. To my delight, the congregant responded that he would give the first \$100,000.00 bringing us to a grand total of \$200,000.00!

The Rebbe's Brochos were clear. Totally out of the blue, we suddenly had a very substantial amount of money.

However, a large amount still remained to be fundraised. I was now especially driven to complete this goal. I began coordinating brochures and materials to publicize the campaign.

In anticipation of the Kinus Hashluchim, I resolved to come in a while earlier and reach out to businessman in America who do business in Shanghai.

I arrived in New York on a Thursday night and immediately went to the Ohel. I wrote out all that had transpired and explained the reason for my extended visit.

I asked the Rebbe for a Brocha that this dream should somehow become a reality. By the time I finished at the Ohel, Shabbos had already begun in China.

Over Shabbos I farbrenged with many of my fellow Shluchim, rejuvenating my spirits tremendously.

On Motzei Shabbos, I called my wife who had remained in Shanghai. To my surprise she began to tell me a shocking occurrence that I could never have foreseen.

On Friday afternoon in Shanghai, which was exactly the time I had been davening at the Rebbe's Ohel in New York where it was still Thursday night, she had received an unexpected phone call.

George Buchbot a wealthy business man from Hong Kong had reached out to us, wanting to donate something in memory of his father Reb Yisroel z"l. After having a conversation with my wife he decided that he is donating \$1,000,000.00 to our building fund!

I could not believe the words my ears were hearing! Aside from the fact that the sudden amount was something completely beyond what I had ever received, I barely knew this donor!

For him to suddenly reach out to us and make such a large contribution could only be attributed to the Rebbe's brochos, while davening at the Ohel.

Fundraising the remaining amounts became much easier, being that I had the main sum taken care of, and today Boruch Hashem we have a beautiful Beis Chabad that services the Yidden of Shanghai, China. **D**