



# A *Chassidisher* PRECIOUS PEARL

לזכות הילדה חי' מושקא תחי' לרגל הולדתה למז"ט ביום י"ב טבת ה'תשע"ה  
שתגדל לתורה חופה ומעש"ט לנח"ר כ"ק אדמו"ר  
נדפס ע"י ולזכות הורי'  
הרה"ת בן ציון וזוגתו חנה שיחיו אלפרוביץ



*In connection with Chof-Beis Shevat, we present the following collection of short stories and anecdotes about the Rebbetzin. Even after moving to the United States and eventually assuming the royal title of “The Rebbetzin” when the Rebbe assumed the nesius, the Rebbetzin remained a very private person, shunning all publicity. Hence, little is known about the Rebbetzin, even from her later years; and even less then is known about her early years, when she and the Rebbe were still in Europe. Nevertheless, as time goes on, more facts come to light, telling the story of her giant personality. In this essay we have collected some of the facts that tell the story of her life, including much information that has only recently become known.*

## At the Forefront

In the year 5678 a revolution overtook Russia and Yiddishkeit was in grave danger. The Frierdiker Rebbe famously stood at the forefront of the fight to keep Torah alive, fiercely battling all those who wished to eradicate it.

Less known is the fact that the Rebbetzin stood at his side in those trying years, assisting in many important tasks and even coming along with the Frierdiker Rebbe to his *galus* in Kostroma.

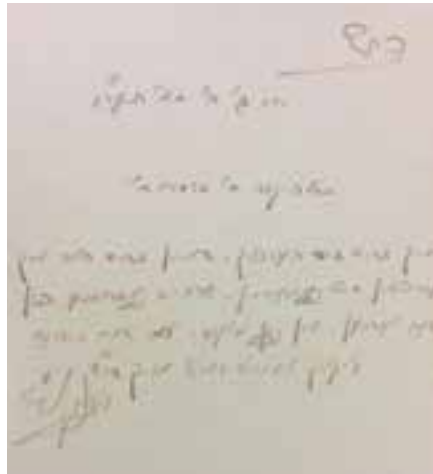
Throughout those years, the Rebbetzin carried out dangerous missions on her father's behalf, assisting in his work to establish and strengthen *yeshivos*, *chadorim*, and *mikvaos*.

In the Frierdiker Rebbe's *Igros Kodesh*, a very telling document is published, written by the Frierdiker Rebbe in 5685, in which he legally authorizes the Rebbetzin to engage in all monetary transactions on his behalf, to accept and transfer payments, and the like.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, in many of the letters to the Rebbetzin, we read of instructions on how to adequately transfer all the necessary funds to their proper destinations.<sup>2</sup>

When the Frierdiker Rebbe was sent into *galus* after his imprisonment, he asked the Rebbetzin to join him for the trip. When he was notified of his complete release two weeks later, on Yud Beis Tammuz, she was the one to call her

home in Leningrad to notify the family that the Frierdiker Rebbe would be coming home for Shabbos, adding that the matter should be kept secret—“*bli pirsum*.”

Later that summer, the Rebbetzin accompanied the Frierdiker Rebbe on a trip to Rostov to visit the Rebbe Rashab's Ohel, before her marriage to the Rebbe, which was to take place after the family would leave Russia.<sup>3</sup>



A LETTER FROM THE FRIERDIKER REBBE TO THE REBBETZIN AT THE AGE OF 12; 2 AV 5673

## Son of Reb Levi Yitzchok

From the time the Rebbetzin was a young girl, the Rebbe Rashab kept her *shidduch* with the Rebbe in mind. Chassidim relate that the Rebbe Rashab told his wife Rebbetzin Shterna Sara, מ'דארף טראכטן "וועגן דעם זון פון לוי'ק" ("We should consider



the son of Reb Levi Yitzchok [the Rebbe's father] as a suitable proposal").

The Frierdiker Rebbe also wished for this *shidduch* to come to fruition. When someone suggested the idea, the Frierdiker Rebbe is said to have remarked that he hopes it would indeed happen.

For whatever reason, it took quite a few years until the matter was pursued. Reb Elchonon Dov ("Chonye") Marozov is said to have received a letter from Rebbetzin Shterna Sara, stating that she is anguished over the fact that her esteemed husband's wish is not being fulfilled. She added that she often visit's his Ohel to daven that the *shidduch* should advance.

## Hilchos Mendel Sheyichye

For Sukkos 5683, the Rebbe traveled to Rostov to meet the Frierdiker Rebbe, his future father-in-law, for the first time. Later that year, the Rebbe and Rebbetzin met for the first time while the Frierdiker Rebbe and his family were in the "datche" city of Kislovodsk, in the Caucasus region of Russia. Later, the Rebbe and the Frierdiker Rebbe traveled to Rostov, where they spent a week or two together. The Frierdiker Rebbe then wrote a letter to his daughter, the Rebbetzin, saying:

*My daughter, this week I thoroughly studied "hilchos Mendel" sheyichye [i.e.*

## Secret Revealed

During her deposition in 5746, as part of the trial over the *seforim*, the Rebbetzin was asked if she had told her sister that books may be taken, but that the matter should be kept secret—“*bli pirsum*.” She responded:

“The last time I used the phrase ‘*bli pirsum*’ was in 5687, when my father was exiled in Kostroma. I had called my sister, who was at our home in Leningrad, and notified her that we were coming home for Shabbos, adding that the matter should be kept quiet—*bli pirsum*.”

Interestingly, at the Yud-Beis Tammuz farbrengen in 5739, the Rebbe based some of the *sichos* on the statement that was made in connection with the Frierdiker Rebbe's release: “*bli pirsum*.” At the farbrengen, no one realized that the Rebbe was actually quoting a statement from the Rebbetzin!



THE FRIERDIKER REBBE AND THE REBBE IN PURKERSDORF, AUSTRIA, FOR THE FRIERDIKER REBBE TO REST. 25 ADAR I 5695.

*the Frierdiker Rebbe studied the Rebbe's character and personality etc.], almost every day until last night, for a few hours each day. On Sunday, the three of us [the Rebbe, the Frierdiker Rebbe, and Rashag] spent the entire day together, and it was quite pleasant. He [the Rebbe] remained here for Shabbos and will most probably leave for home on Sunday. He feels very different [after this visit] than the first time he was here...*

*I can say that I got to know him a bit...<sup>4</sup>*

In the year 5686, the Frierdiker Rebbe resided in Leningrad. The Rebbe's mother, Rebbetzin Chana, came to meet her future daughter-in-law, where she was received by the Frierdiker Rebbe and spent some time in his presence.

After the Frierdiker Rebbe's release from prison in 5687, he resided for a while in Malakhovka, where he was visited by the Rebbe. An interesting detail is found in a letter from the Frierdiker Rebbe to the Rebbetzin:

*My dear daughter; you most certainly received my heartfelt regards through our esteemed relative [i.e. the Rebbe]. I anticipate your response and detailed writing...<sup>5</sup>*

### *Thank You for the Food!*

After the wedding on Yud-Daled Kislev, 5689, the Rebbe and Rebbetzin moved to Berlin. In the summer of that year,

*When I approached the Rebbe with the idea, he said: "I don't have time to rest. I am a shliach, and the Gemora says that a shliach is trusted that he'll fulfill his mission!"*

the Frierdiker Rebbe set out for a year of travels; first to Eretz Yisroel, and then to the United States. On the way out of Europe, the Frierdiker Rebbe stopped in Berlin and visited with the Rebbe and Rebbetzin. Upon returning, he visited there again.

When the Frierdiker Rebbe was in Berlin on his way out of Europe, the Rebbetzin gave him some food for the trip. In a letter written to the Rebbetzin from Egypt on Erev Rosh Chodesh Av, the Frierdiker Rebbe thanks her for this gesture:

*[About] the food stuffs that you gave us: the biscuits are still of use [to us] and the three challos, we used for lechem mishneh; as there is no Jewish bread [pas yisroel] even in Trieste [Italy]. Thank you very much for supplying us with the challos; we spent Shabbos with challah...<sup>6</sup>*

Throughout his year of travels, the Frierdiker Rebbe kept a close correspondence with the Rebbe and Rebbetzin. Interestingly, when reading

the Frierdiker Rebbe's diaries from that period, the Rebbe and Rebbetzin are mentioned in various contexts. For example, recording his visit in Meron, the Frierdiker Rebbe writes:

*Monday, 6 Menachem-Av: At 5:03, after kindling a light [in merit] of my esteemed mother... Our daughter C.M. and her husband M.M...*

### Not to Worry!

At the end of his visit to Eretz Yisroel, when the Frierdiker Rebbe was notified of the deadly riots that plagued the Jewish community in Chevron, he fell gravely ill. Describing a telephone conversation with the Rebbetzin that took place around that time, he writes in his diary:

*Sunday, 3 Elul: 9:00, I spoke with my daughter C.M. who was informed that I was not in good health. I assured her that now, thank G-d, I am well...*

### For the Kallah

In Sivan 5692 the Rebbetzin's younger sister, Rebbetzin Sheina, was married to Reb Mendel Horenstein in Landrov, Poland. In the Rebbe's *Reshimos*, he records a detailed account of the wedding, including the Frierdiker Rebbe's special instructions to the Rebbetzin:

*He instructed the Kallah—through Mussia tichye—that she should recite Tehillim...<sup>7</sup>*

### Paris

As the Nazi Party came to power in Germany in 5693 and anti-Semitism was rampant in the country,

the Rebbe and Rebbetzin moved to Paris, France.

Reb Yehuda Aryeh ("Leibish") Haber, who lived in Paris at the time recounted:

*When the Rebbe and Rebbetzin arrived in Paris, they rented a modest, one room apartment in an unsound location. I was already well-established in Paris at the time, and I could not bear to see them living in this manner, so I rented a beautiful fully-furnished apartment, and notified the Rebbetzin that their new living quarters were available for them as soon as they wished to move in.*

*The Rebbetzin replied that she would need to discuss the matter with the Rebbe, and after a week of not hearing from them, I paid the Rebbetzin a visit. When I brought up the subject of the new apartment, she raised her hand as if to say, "What can I do about it?" and remarked, "What can I tell you; my husband is not interested!"*

Another interesting encounter related by Reb Leibish:

*At one point, I noticed that the Rebbe seemed very weak. I told the Rebbetzin that it looked like the Rebbe was overly-exerting himself with his learning and perhaps it would be a good idea that he take a vacation. The Rebbetzin replied: "If you think you will be able to persuade my husband, perhaps you should speak to him on your own."*

*When I approached the Rebbe with the idea, he said: "I don't have time to rest. I am a shliach, and the Gemora says that a shliach is trusted that he'll fulfill his mission!"*

[It should be noted that when speaking of the spiritual

revolution that transformed France for the good, the Rebbe mentioned that the Frierdiker Rebbe was the one to facilitate this change. That "in addition to visiting France on a few occasions and delivering *maamorim* and *sichos* there; he sent shluchim from his own family who lived there for a few years, doing *avoda*, learning *Nigleh* and *Chassidus*..."<sup>8</sup>]

### No More Bread!

When the Rebbe and Rebbetzin lived in Paris, life as Torah-observant Jew was often accompanied by great difficulty, especially with the Rebbe's high standards in keeping Torah and mitzvos. The Rebbetzin always stood at his side and assisted, while the Rebbe trusted only her with many of his requirements.

When the Rebbe was notified that the local butcher sold already koshered meat, he went there with the Rebbetzin to observe the process and see if it was indeed efficient. Only when the Rebbetzin was comfortable with the kashrus standards, did the Rebbe agree to buy meat from the shop.

At one point, the Rebbetzin would travel a few miles to the outskirts of Paris in order to supervise milking for the Rebbe, ensuring that it was cholov Yisroel. Once, when visited by a Reb Eliyahu Reichman from Hungary, the Rebbetzin was seen sifting flour and preparing her own matzah for Pesach. When he asked for the meaning of this stringency, the Rebbetzin replied: "My husband does not eat anything that was prepared outside of our home!"

Once, when the Rebbe was in the bakery where he usually bought bread, a





THE REBBE AT THE TIME OF HIS WEDDING, 5689.

certain individual commented, “What? A *yorei shomayim* like you eats the bread baked here?” (Implying that there was something questionable about the kashrus of that establishment.) From then on, the Rebbe would not eat the bread from that bakery, despite that this rumor eventually proved to be false.

When relating this story many years later, the Rebbetzin added: “*Hut der Aibershter geholfin*; Hashem helped and from then on we had no bread either!”

### *I gave it to Mussia*

In one rare instance, we learn of the Rebbetzin’s opinion on a book she asserts

is written “in passionate Chassidic spirit.”

In 5695, the Frierdiker Rebbe was collecting books for his library, and his *mazkir* took to the task of purchasing various books. In a letter dated Purim 5695, the *mazkir* writes:

*“I chanced upon a German book entitled ‘Der Rav,’ printed in Frankfurt. It is a variation of ‘Beis Rebbe’ in German. I gave it to Mussia, tichye, to read and she says it was a pleasurable read, written in the spirit of a passionate Chossid. She says her husband [the Rebbe who was then with the Frierdiker Rebbe in Marienbad] wrote to her that the author is Dr. Ehrman... If*

“The precious pearl  
which Hashem  
has given you is  
my daughter, your  
esteemed wife,  
tichye...”

*the Rebbe so wishes, I will purchase it for the library...”*

### *We Have Sown*

As a summation of this period through which the Rebbe and Rebbetzin lived in Paris, the Rebbetzin once told the shlucha, Mrs. Basya Azimov, OBM:

“מיר האבן געאקערט און געזייט, און איר דארפט שניידן...”

(“We plowed and sowed, and now you must reap [the results]”).<sup>10</sup>

### *Special Connection*

Throughout her youth and all through the ensuing years, the Rebbetzin held a steadfast and deep bond with her father, the Frierdiker Rebbe. Much of the nature of this bond was unknown until the release of a recent volume of the Frierdiker Rebbe’s *Igros Kodesh*, volume 15, which consists of letters sent to the Rebbe and Rebbetzin throughout the years.

The first letter that appears in the *sefer* was written to the Rebbetzin when she was all but 12 years old, while the Frierdiker Rebbe was away in Switzerland in the summer of 5673:

*I received your regards with pleasure. Write in detail about your learning and about everything...<sup>11</sup>*

### *Margolis Toiva*

While traveling to the United States in Elul 5689, the Frierdiker Rebbe wrote a letter to the Rebbe detailing some aspects of his trip, and then he wrote as a postscript:



THE REBBE LEAVES HIS HOME AT 1304 PRESIDENT STREET, TISHREI 5746.

*Contemplate deeply into the precious pearl Hashem has given you, may it be for many long years with all good. May Hashem grant you the chochama, bina, and daas to properly and truly understand this concept.<sup>12</sup>*

Four months later, the Frierdiker Rebbe mentioned the pearl again in a letter written to the Rebbe from Baltimore, Maryland:

*Regarding the great gift, the precious pearl; do you still not understand my intention, or have you already picked up on my metaphor?<sup>13</sup>*

In a response written by the Rebbe on 18 Shevat, the Rebbe confides that “I still have not understood the nature of the precious pearl; what is it?” And the Frierdiker Rebbe finally clarifies in a letter dated 25 Adar, the Rebbetzin’s birthday:

*The precious pearl which Hashem has given you is my daughter, your esteemed wife, tichye...*

### *It’s all His Work!*

In the year 5695, the publishing of the “HaTomim” periodical began. These publications included much information and vintage manuscripts of Chabad Chassidus and history. The Rebbe was placed in charge of compiling and editing the text. In one letter to the Rebbetzin, the Frierdiker Rebbe praises the Rebbe’s work:

*With Hashem’s help, through the efforts and dedication of your esteemed husband, my dear and precious son-in-law, we will soon release a very prestigious journal called “HaTomim”. On paper, the editors’ names will be others, but [in truth] the entire work is his...<sup>14</sup>*

### *Rov in Paris*

While the Rebbe and Rebbetzin lived in Paris, some of the locals realized that the Rebbe was a great tzaddik and thought perhaps he would agree to accept a position as a Rov. In the one letter, the Frierdiker Rebbe beseeches of the Rebbe and Rebbetzin to seriously consider this proposal:



“...Through the efforts and dedication of your esteemed husband we will soon release a very prestigious journal called “HaTomim”. On paper, the editors’ names will be others, but [in truth] the entire work is his...”

...My beloved children, I have no words to describe the joy that this proposal brought me, and how happy I would be if you would accept it, and with Hashem’s help, this matter would come to be... I turn to you, my beloved children, with a heartfelt plea to both of you, strongly consider this idea and contemplate it...<sup>15</sup>

### The Sweet, Luminous Day

Another very telling collection of letters in this volume of Igros Kodesh are the ones sent to the Rebbetzin (and at times to the Rebbe as well) in honor of her birthday, on Chof-Hei Adar.

The Frierdiker Rebbe used expressions like the “lichtiken zissen tog”—the luminous and sweet day for all of us, and “libben zissen gliklechin geburts-tog”—your beloved, sweet, joyous birthday.<sup>16</sup>

### In Nazi Germany

At one point while the Rebbe and Rebbetzin lived in Paris, the Rebbe’s

younger brother, Reb Yisroel Arye Leib, needed to obtain certain papers from the Nazi government in Germany. The Rebbe himself wanted to go, but the Rebbetzin explained that it would be more beneficial if she went to take care of it. Indeed, the Rebbetzin traveled to Germany and succeeded in obtaining the necessary documents.

### On the Run

With time, the Nazis advanced into France. The Rebbe and Rebbetzin were forced to flee Paris and relocate to Vichy, and from there to Nice. In her later years the Rebbetzin herself related many of the stories that occurred during those turbulent times. She told of the Rebbe’s *mesirus nefesh* to observe even the minutest details of Halacha, and to assist other refugees as much as possible. In one instance the Rebbetzin related that the Rebbe was even particular about observing the Frierdiker Rebbe’s

instruction to hold a farbrengen on Shabbos *mevorchim*, gathering with other refugees to fulfill this special *minhag* each month.

### Ish U’beisoi

When the Rebbe and Rebbetzin finally escaped war-torn Europe, they arrived in the United States on Chof-Ches Sivan, 5701.

Many years later during the Rebbe’s farbrengen in 770, an announcement was made about a special farbrengen to take place, marking Chof Ches Sivan, the day that the Rebbe arrived in the United States. Hearing the announcement, the Rebbe interrupted the *gabbai* and added with a smile, “*Ish u’beisoi!*” [I.e. the day also marks the fact that the Rebbetzin arrived here as well!]

### Our Children

A family once visited the Rebbetzin in her home and asked her “Where are your children?”

The Rebbetzin pointed at each of the children and then out the window toward the street and replied, “Each of you, and each them out there; you are all our children!” D

1. Igros Kodesh Admur HaRaYYaTZ vol. 15 p. 34
2. Ibid. p. 34, 36
3. Shmuos Ve’sipurim vol. 1 p. 134
4. Igros Kodesh Ibid. p. 31
5. Ibid. p. 44
6. Ibid. p. 44
7. Reshimos installment 57
8. Sefer Hasichos 5752 vol. 1 p. 181
9. Sifriyas Lubavitch p. 104
10. Quoted in Sefer Hasichos 5752 vol. 1 p. 182, footnote 43
11. Igros Kodesh ibid. p. 1
12. Ibid. p. 59
13. Ibid. p. 74
14. Ibid. p. 208
15. Ibid. p. 212
16. Ibid. p. 82, 202