

להביא לימות המשיח

SHAKE THE JEWISH WORLD

"לא לתר לתשובה לא לתר לגאולה"

THE STORY OF THE FRIEDIKER REBBE'S CALL FOR TESHUVAH
IN THE JEWISH NATION'S DIREST OF TIMES, ANTICIPATING IMMEDIATE
REDEMPTION, AND ITS EFFECT—THEN AND NOW...

JEWISH WORLD IN TURMOIL

The year was 1941; the Nazis י"ש had already attacked and occupied a number of European countries, as they continued to spread the oppressive reign of Hitler throughout the region. During that year, the Nazis officially began the extermination of Jews, in what they thought would be "the final solution" to the Jewish problem, the systematic eradication of every last one, *rachmona l'tzlon*.

The Nazis went from city to city killing every Jew they could find. They would round up hundreds, even thousands at a time, wiping out entire Jewish towns.

Shuls were burned down and destroyed, homes pillaged. The once thriving and vibrant *shtetels* of Europe were up in flames.

Thousands of miles away, in the United States of America, Yidden were able to go about their lives without persecution. But as the Nazis steadily swept through Europe, a fire of a different nature was burning in the "new world."

For most of American Jewry, a top priority at the time was to integrate into general society as much as possible. Many felt that keeping a business closed on Shabbos was a thing of the past. The children went to non-Jewish schools and

had many non-Jewish friends. They tried their best to live the lifestyle of a non-Jew, attending parties and events of their non-Jewish friends. The general attitude was that in America things are different; Yiddishkiet doesn't apply in the same manner anymore.

In addition, this feeling that Yiddishkiet was a relic of the past belonging to the "old world," caused a lack of *emunah* and *bitachon* in the *Aibershter*. America provided freedom from the oppression prevalent in Europe, but at the same time, its environment was cold to faith and religion. The idea of Yidden being in *golus*, constantly yearning for Moshaich's

לעילוי נשמת

הרה"ח הרה"ת עוסק בצ"צ באמונה ר' עזריאל זעליג ע"ה בן הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' אברהם זאב שו"ב ע"ה שארפשטיין שליח כ"ק אדמו"ר זי"ע בסינסינעטי אהייא למעלה מיובל שנים ושימש שם כמרא דאתרא ומו"צ ורב הראשי דועד העיר במשך כארבעים שנה נפטר בשם טוב ה' אדר ראשון ה'תשס"ח ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

נדפס ע"י משפחתו שיחיו



arrival, was a distant notion to them; not for the current times.

The fire burning in Europe was a physical one, while the fire in America was of a spiritual nature; burning at the souls of the enlightened Jews.

And yet, there was a stir in heart of the American Jew; their brethren were being slaughtered en masse! They looked for answers, and asked themselves what they could possibly do to end the genocide.

It was during this time that the Frierdiker Rebbe decided to take action. In addition to his tireless efforts in rescuing Yidden from Nazi-occupied Europe, he set out to bring clarity to the tumultuous time and give direction as to how to appropriately respond. The Frierdiker Rebbe's approach was twofold: The horrible events occurring in Europe were (part of) the *chevlei Moshiach*—the birth pangs of Moshiach; and the way to go about fighting the war was through each and every Jew arousing themselves

to do *teshuvah*, which would bring to the *geulah*.

The slogan representing the fundamental theme of this campaign was, **לא לתור** - **"Immediate teshuva, to immediate geulah."**

HOLY PRESS

In those days, one of the most powerful means of reaching and affecting the public was through newspapers. At the time, a Yiddish newspaper existed in America called the *Morgen Journal*. It

was read even by so-called non-religious Jews. The Frierdiker Rebbe proceeded to write four declarations (“*kol koirehs*”),¹ publishing them in this and other newspapers.

Through these declarations, the Frierdiker Rebbe established his stance on the war and how to respond to it. The first *kol koireh* started off with a chilling message: “A rampant fire is spreading throughout the ‘old world,’ threatening to destroy/annihilate, Heaven forfend, more than two thirds of the Jewish nation; and who is to be sure that this fire will not spread to here, the ‘new world!’”

As stated above, American Jews felt that something had to be done. This led to many Jewish leaders and rabbonim giving their advice as to how to respond. The Frierdiker Rebbe did not mince his

THE PUBLISHING OF THE NEWSPAPER ITSELF WAS SHROUDED IN MYSTERY... CHASSIDIM SPECULATED THAT A CERTAIN MAN WAS IN CHARGE, AS THEY HAD SEEN HIM COMING TO 770 QUITE OFTEN TO MEET WITH THE FRIEDIEKER REBBE...

words as he chastised those leaders and rabbonim who had voiced their opinion: “The declaration of the spiritual leaders, calling for repentance, prayer, and fasting—even though they in and of themselves are of positive nature—nevertheless, under these current circumstances, they alone are not enough, and are of (exceedingly) minimal value”.

The Frierdiker Rebbe continued to explain that regarding terrible events such as the holocaust, it is stated “When

calamity strikes the world, anticipate the footsteps of Moshiach,” the painful suffering that we are experiencing is the “birth pangs” before the redemption of *Am Yisrael*. Moshiach is “standing right on the other side of the wall,” and all he requests is that we do *teshuvah*, through which we’ll bring “*l’alter l’geulah*”—the immediate redemption.

In addition, the Frierdiker Rebbe wrote, *teshuvah* was needed as a preparation for Moshiach. “We must cleanse ourselves from any impurities, and ‘stock up’ with true holiness.” This message was specifically to the younger generation; we must be in a ready state, as befitting for the coming of Moshiach.

FACING THE OPPOSITION

The Frierdiker Rebbe’s campaign was not met without opposition. In fact, Lubavitch lost quite a few supporters and donors as a result. Some of the *misnagdishe* rabbanim likened the declarations to missionizing, using strong language to convince people not to heed the Frierdiker Rebbe’s holy call. In the second *kol koireh*, their allegations were addressed:

“What has happened to you?! What is your idea of what Yiddishkiet is? In what do you believe? You make a grave and foolish mistake, to be ashamed of! A fundamental principle of our faith, the foremost foundation of Yiddishkiet, is to believe in the coming of Moshiach; yet you relegate it to a non-Jewish practice being that they also preach such ideas within their faith! Would you also



TWO OF THE DECLARATIONS ANNOUNCING L'ALTER LETSHUVA, PRINTED IN VARIOUS NEWSPAPERS.

abandon Shabbos, *taharas hamishpocha*, *tefillin*, *tzitzis*, and other holy Yiddishe practices if the Christian missionaries would start preaching about them as well?! Are you not aware that the belief in the coming of Moshiach is one of the fundamental principles of our holy Torah—the foundation of our holy *Nevi'im* and *Chazal*?!”

In the third *kol koireh*, the Frierdiker Rebbe addressed those who felt that saying Moshiach’s imminent arrival was unfounded, as well as those who simply did not believe in the coming of moshiach. He thoroughly and proficiently explained their errors.

And in the fourth and final *kol koireh*, the Frierdiker Rebbe wrote that the “*chevlei Moshiach*” would immediately pass, and the time of “*sisu v’simchu b’simchas hageulah*” would follow. He reiterated the call for *teshuvah* and asserted that through *teshuvah* “**the chevlei Moshiach would be prevented, or at least alleviated; do not give up during these troubled times.**”

Meanwhile, the Frierdiker Rebbe also launched a new monthly newspaper, calling it *Hakriah V’Hakedusha*. In a letter to HaRav Moshe Shapiro, the Frierdiker Rebbe explained that the name of the newspaper was an indication of its content: *Hakriah*—the call, for *Kedushah*—holiness; holiness being the readiness and preparation for the coming of Moshiach, which come through “repentance and good deeds.”

The publishing of the newspaper itself was shrouded in mystery. Some of the articles were signed with pen names like “Ish Yehudi,” “HaRav Meir,” and “ben Yisrael,” but most had no names at all. The story goes that Chassidim speculated that a certain man was in charge, as they had seen him coming to 770 quite often



THE FIRST ISSUE OF HAKRIAH VEKEDUSHA.

to meet with the Frierdiker Rebbe. One day they decided to follow him; maybe they could glean some information that would shed light on the publication. They attempted to trail him on the subway and through the streets of Manhattan. But realizing that he was being followed, he

finally approached them and said that as long as they were observing him, he would keep wandering. Years later, after the Frierdiker Rebbe’s *Igros Kodesh* were published, it was finally revealed that the man behind *Hakriah V’Hakdushah* was Reb Aharon Hirsh, the editor of the



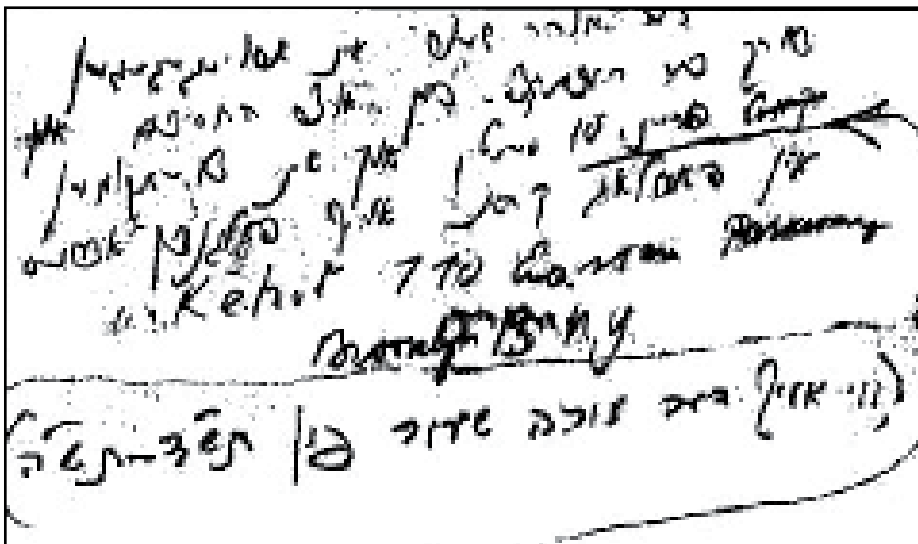
TWO NEVER-BEFORE-SEEN TELEGRAMS SENT BY THE BOCHURIM STUDYING IN SHANGHAI TO THE BOCHURIM LEARNING IN MONTREAL (L) AND TO RASHAG (R), REQUESTING TO BE SENT THE HAKRIAH VEHAJDUSHA, MAAMORIM, AND SICHOS OF THE FRIEDIKER REBBE. CIRCA 5706.

OVERTURN THE STREETS

Reb Avraham Pariz, one of the most active Chassidim assisting with the Frierdiker Rebbe's activities, once told his grandson, Reb Menachem Wolf:

I used to go along with the Rebbe to hand out the Frierdiker Rebbe's *kol koirehs*. On one occasion he said to me: "The sign of our success will be if we accomplish overturning the 'streets'!" (I.e. the awakening of the Yidden in America.)

(Yoman Rosh Hashonah 5725)



THE REBBE'S HANDWRITTEN HAGAOS ON HAKRIAH VEHAJDUSHA.

weekly Yiddish newspaper *Dos Iddishe Licht*.

The Frierdiker Rebbe himself was profoundly involved in guiding the editor; what the content should be and how to write it. Our Rebbe attested² to the fact that the Frierdiker Rebbe usually proofread each issue of *Hakriah V'Hakdushah*, often adding material which he felt was lacking with his own handwriting.

The publication was sponsored by "Agudas Chassidei Chabad." Every issue was replete with articles and ideas connected to Moshiach, it being its underlying theme. The *kol koirehs* were a prominent feature in the newspaper. In addition, there were sections dedicated to the *yahrtziets* of the family of *Raboseinu Nesienu*, explanations on *tefilah*, the happenings in *beis chayenu*, and more. The articles were written primarily in Yiddish, with a section in English as well. In each issue there was a section titled *Osiyos Poirchois*, which included letters written in incomprehensible



combinations and only in a later issue would the editors reveal that they were predicting events taking place during the war.

The Friediker Rebbe saw this monthly newspaper as a pillar of light that would illuminate the dark path of those living the lifestyle of the “new world.” He constantly demanded that it be distributed everywhere possible.

The Chassidim themselves, realizing how important this was to the Friediker Rebbe, involved themselves immensely in the dissemination of the Hakriah V’Hakdushah newspaper and the *kol koirehs*. Particularly, there was special effort in its printing and distribution in Eretz Yisroel. Reb Avrohom Pariz would



ABOVE: THE L’ALTER LETSHUVA STAMP.
BELOW: THE MACHNE YISROEL LOGO.

send copies of each edition to Eretz Yisroel, which were in turn re-printed in large quantities and sent out all over the land. Young and old were involved in translating and printing its content. Some Chassidim even went so far as spending vast amounts of money in order to affect as much of the populace as possible. One wealthy Chossid, Reb Moshe Yeruslavsky, sold a large piece of property he owned, donating all the profits to further this worthy cause. Two Chassidim, Reb Efrayim Wolf and Reb Dovid Chanzin, would travel from city to city throughout Eretz Yisrael, visiting each shul and handing out copies of the *kol korehs*.

It can be said that the preoccupation of Moshach by the Rebbe and Chabad in

general started during those times³, as is illustrated by the following story told by the Rebbe:

“I heard that during the time that the [Frierdiker] Rebbe publicized his declaration of *l’alter l’teshuvah*, *l’alter l’geulah*, two friends were talking when one asked the other: ‘Who are these

Lubavitchers?’ and his friend responded: “Lubavitchers are wild people, who believe that literally tomorrow, Moshiach can come!”⁴

On another occasion, the Rebbe said that he himself had never heard from his father and definitely not from his grandfather of such behavior—walking

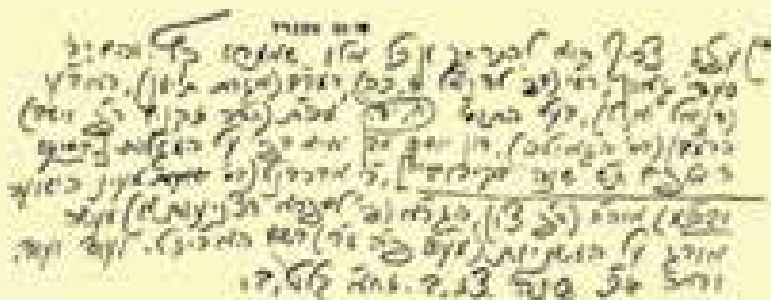
in the streets, or standing in a shul in the middle of the day, and announcing “*Ad mosai?*”

The Rebbe continued, “I did not even ‘tell myself’ about it until I got to America; I don’t know why this is, but this is the fact of the matter. Yet, it is without a doubt that such actions have positive effects, even though it may not fit with certain people’s opinions.”⁵

THE TORAH WAY OF OLD

In the early years of the Rebbe’s *nesius*, he instructed his *mazkir*, Rabbi Sholom Mendel Simpson, to visit a well-known Jewish activist in the United States to ask him about his relationship with Lubavitch. In his report to the Rebbe following this visit, Rabbi Simpson quoted the activist as saying that although he considered himself close to Lubavitch in previous years, even assisting the Frierdiker Rebbe’s endeavors here in the United States, he distanced himself from Lubavitch after the Frierdiker Rebbe proclaimed “*L’alter l’teshuva l’alter l’geulah*,” and then when he commissioned the *Sefer Torah shel Moshiach*. The activist felt, in his own words, that “no one can know when Moshiach is going to come!”

In this handwritten response, the Rebbe counters this argument:



עפ"ז צריך הוא להתרחק מן כל אלו שאמרו קץ, והם:

ר' סעדי' גאון, רש"י (בפ' לדניאל ז, כה, ח, יד), רמב"ם (אגרת תימן), ראב"ע (דניאל יא, ל), בעלי התוס' עה"ת (הדר זקנים ר"פ וישב), הרמב"ן (בס' הגאולה), דון יוסף אבן יחיא בפ' על המגילות ["בסוף ה' אלפים ת"ש שנה בקירוב"], ר"י אברבנאל (ס' מעיני הישועה ובכ"מ), אזה"ח (ר"פ צו), הגר"א (פ' לספרא דצניעותא), מעשה אורג על המשניות (מע"ש פ"ה מ"ב) בשם האריז"ל. ועוד ועוד.

וראה ג"כ סנה' צז, ב. זח"א קלט, ב.

According to this, he would have to distance himself [as well] from all those who predicted a *keitz*, namely: [The Rebbe spells out names of *gedolei Yisroel* throughout all the generations, along with sources stating that they predicted *kitzin*. As a matter of fact, one of them—Don Yosef Ib'n Yechaye—actually predicts a year quite close to the time that the Frierdiker Rebbe issued his *kol korei*: “At the end of the year five thousand, seven hundred, approximately...” The Rebbe concludes:] And many, many more.

MACHNE YISROEL

An additional project initiated by the Frierdiker Rebbe in the spirit of Moshiach was Machne Yisrael. Its official motto was *L’alter l’teshuvah*, *l’alter l’geulah*, and it was inscribed on all its stationary. In the Hayom Yom *luach*, the Rebbe clearly outlines its objective: to create a club-like organization that would “exert influence—through the conduct and activities of its members—on strengthening Yiddishkeit and the fulfillment of Torah and practical mitzvos; to awaken the hearts of Jewish people and draw them into *teshuvah*, into Torah study, and into fulfillment of the practical mitzvos. To publicize the truth—that *l’alter l’teshuvah*, *l’alter l’geulah*—immediate repentance leads to immediate and complete redemption by our righteous Moshiach.”

There was no membership fee for Machne Yisrael; anyone who observed Torah and mitzvos was welcome to join. Their activities were simply to be examples to others of how to behave in the spirit of Torah and mitzvos. Members were to go about their mission without revealing their identity—their membership in Machne Yisrael. In addition, the members were to divide the *Mishnayos* among themselves, learning it by heart, so that wherever they went, they could review *Mishnayos*, thereby “cleansing” the air.

Machne Yisrael began around the time that our Rebbe came to the United States, and he was appointed as the head of Machne Yisrael and chief of operations. The Rebbe encouraged rabbanim and other Jewish leaders to join Machne Yisrael, as well as to incorporate in their talks and sermons to their communities the call for *l'alter l'teshuvah*, *l'alter l'geulah*. During that time, when signing a letter or document, the Rebbe would generally add in that line.

day that over fifty thousand Yidden were taken from the city of Dnepopetrovsk to be killed. *Isru Chag* he requested of his *gabbai*, Reb Eliyahu Simpson, to send out a special proclamation to the whole community, inviting everyone to participate in the writing of the *Sefer Torah shel Moshiach* through buying letters. This call was well received by all who heard it, intensifying the feeling that the

THE REBBE CONTINUED, "I DID NOT EVEN 'TELL MYSELF' ABOUT IT UNTIL I GOT TO AMERICA; I DON'T KNOW WHY THIS IS, BUT THIS IS THE FACT OF THE MATTER..."

To further disseminate the Friediker Rebbe's call, stickers were printed with the words *l'alter l'teshuvah*, *l'alter l'geulah*. Rabbi J. J. Hecht related that he once traveled on the same subway car as the Rebbe, and as the Rebbe got up to leave the train, he noticed that near the Rebbe's seat, where a few moments ago was an empty space, a *l'alter l'teshuvah*, *l'alter l'geulah* sticker was now prominently displayed.

MOSHIACH'S SEFER TORAH

To welcome Moshiach's imminent arrival, the Friediker Rebbe also commenced the famous *Sefer Torah shel Moshiach*. This project increased the excitement felt by the Chassidim, and was seen as a solidification of all the talks and campaigning connected to Moshiach.

The Friediker Rebbe revealed his intention for this special initiative on Simchas Torah 5702, exactly the same

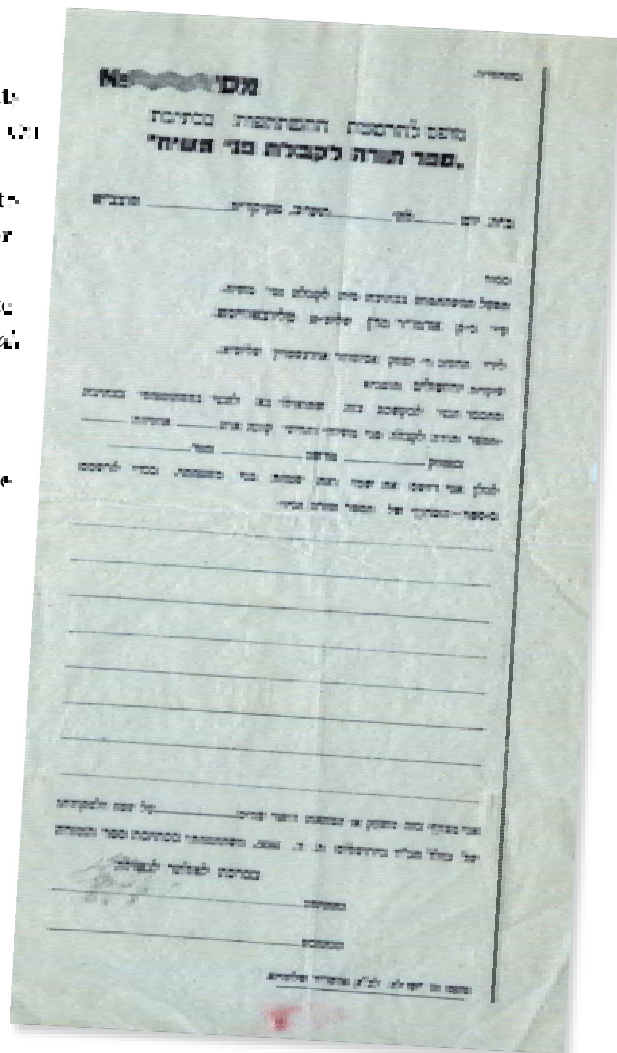
revelation of Moshiach was close at hand.

Many people, Chassidim and non-Chassidim alike, bought letters and the Torah was almost complete. But for unknown reasons, the Friediker Rebbe requested that it be left unfinished.

Twenty eight years later, for Yud Shevat HaGadol, 5730, the Rebbe announced that the Torah would be completed. In a grand ceremony and with thousands in attendance, the *siyum sefer Torah* took place.

THE CALL TODAY

Indeed, the efforts of the Friediker Rebbe were having their effect on American Jewry.⁶ An arousal to do *teshuvah* was felt by thousands of Yidden no matter their affiliation—whether Orthodox, Conservative, or Reform. The topic of Moshiach was now a popular conversation topic; whether pro or



THE FORM FROM 5702 TO PARTICIPATE IN THE MOSHIACH SEFER TORAH.

against. As the Friediker Rebbe himself wrote: "We have *b"h* succeeded in implementing our mission; all the Jewish newspapers, as well as the Jewish leaders, are discussing—whether directly or indirectly—our call of the imminent arrival of the *geulah*." Powerful Jewish organizations made efforts to integrate the call for *teshuvah* of the Friediker Rebbe into their doctrine. Schools dedicated time on their schedule to discuss and act upon his message.


The Rebbe explained that just like during other times in history when *tzaddikim* foretold of the imminent arrival of

Moshiach—Rav Saadia Gaon, Rashi, Rambam, Ramban, and others—the year of 5703 was foreseen by the Frierdiker Rebbe as a *keitz*, and just like the other instances in history, *ilu zochinu*, had we been worthy, Moshiach would have come during that time.⁸ Nonetheless, a spiritual effect of Moshiach has definitely occurred, as was clearly seen through the additional involvement of the masses in Chassidus.⁹

Reb Yisroel Jacobson related that on Erev Rosh Hashanah 5704, he entered into the holy chambers of the Frierdiker Rebbe together with a group of Chassidim to be blessed before the new year. Being that throughout the preceding year the Frierdiker Rebbe had called for *l'alter l'teshuvah*, *l'alter l'geulah*, along with many other forms of strengthening the *emunah* of the coming of Moshiach, Reb Nissan Telushkin (one of elder Chabad rabbonim in the US at the time) asked the Frierdiker Rebbe: “Is the Rebbe truly of the opinion that we find ourselves in the times of Moshiach, and that Moshiach is nearly here?”

The Frierdiker answered: “We say in *shemoneh esreh*: “את צמח דוד עבדך מהרה” “תצמיח”. The nature of a seed when planted is to first have the appearance of a blade of grass; then it grows to be a sapling, until with time it turns into a tree with fruits.” The Frierdiker Rebbe concluded: “A planting [of Moshiach], there definitely is!”

In a farbrengen on Purim 5747 the Rebbe said that the Frierdiker Rebbe’s call for *l'alter l'teshuvah l'alter l'geulah* applies even today. The Rebbe asked: How is it possible that so many years have passed since the Frierdiker Rebbe announced the coming of Moshiach and still he has not arrived?! Answering his own question, the Rebbe said that after searching for an explanation he

determined that until now, being that *hanossi hu hakol*, it was enough to depend on the *nassi hador* to bring the *geulah*. But now the *avoda* of the *nossi* has been *transferred* to us. Being that we stand in the times of *ikvisa d'meshicha*, where the need for the *geulah* is much greater, each and every Jew must make it his personal duty to do all that he can to hasten the arrival of Moshiach. 

1. Printed in Igros Kodesh Admur HaRaYYaTZ vol. 5 p. 361 (see references there).
2. Hisvaaduyos 5745 vol. 5 p. 2640
3. See Hisvaaduyos 5748 vol. 4 p. 267
4. Toras Menachem vol. 51 p. 298
5. Hisvaaduyos 5748 vol. 3 p. 118
6. See the Rebbe’s Igros Kodesh vol. 1 p. 40
7. Igros Kodesh Admur HaRaYYaTZ vol. 5 p. 410
8. Toras Menachem vol. 9 p. 122
9. See Sefer Hasichos 5751 vol. 2 p. 734
10. Zikaron L’Bnei Yisroel p. 161
11. Hisvaaduyos 5747 vol. 2 p. 620; see also *ibid.* 5745 vol. 5 p. 2622

אין אים לעבט נשיא דורנו!

There is a well-known *kol koreh* issued by the [Frierdiker] Rebbe that לאלתר לאתור (immediate *teshuvah* will bring about the immediate redemption). The meaning of “לאתור” is intended to be taken literally; as in right now!

Now, the *Yetzer Hora*, who is referred to as the *kluginker*—the “wise-guy,” may raise an objection: This *kol koreh* was issued by the [Frierdiker] Rebbe many years ago; since then, some forty-two or forty-three years have passed. Who is to say that things will not continue in this manner in the future as well?

But, as we know, arguing with the *Yetzer Hora* is a mere waste of time! The *Yetzer Hora* is referred to as a מלך זקן וכסיל—an old and foolish king. It would be no use to argue with him, or with anyone that carries his message, who attempt to doubt the words of the [Frierdiker] Rebbe that the *geulah* is coming now, and that “לאתור” is to be understood in a literal sense.

The [Frierdiker] Rebbe’s words stand true today as ever, for he clearly published these words under the auspices of *Agudas Chassidei Chabad*, an organization active until this very day. It did not cease to exist in 5710 [with the Frierdiker Rebbe’s *histalkus*]; for just as his children are alive, so too, he is alive!

This is especially so for those individuals who do not need these explanations [about how the Frierdiker Rebbe still lives], for they feel it within themselves! They feel that the [Frierdiker] Rebbe is with them, whether by way of a dream, or by seeing extraordinary success in business, or in other areas.

Others may feel the [Frierdiker] Rebbe’s presence due to the fact that one day, in the midst of nowhere, they feel a sudden arousal to *teshuvah* (הרהור תשובה) when they happen to be occupied with something else, totally non-related. Where would a thought about *teshuvah* suddenly emerge from, seemingly in the midst of nowhere? Why would it enter only his mind and not someone else’s? Very simple: because the [Frierdiker] Rebbe, *nessi doreinu*, is alive and lives within him!

(*Shabbos Parshas Pinchas*, 5745)