

# THE PROPER DECISION

*In an interview with A Chassidisher Derher, Rabbi Levi Klein, Shliach in Memphis, TN, related the following story.*

We moved on shlichus to Memphis, Tennessee, in 5754. After spending two years in an apartment we purchased a house with an extended garage, which provided us with extra space that we converted into a functional shul and Chabad House. Our plan was that after a few years, we would move the Chabad House to a bigger, better and more permanent location.

We ended up staying in the house for close to twelve years. Much money and effort was exhausted in trying to obtain various properties, but every time we got close, it didn't materialize for reasons beyond our control. It was ten years of disappointment and lost opportunities.

Finally, in 5767, after eight failed attempted projects, something new came up. There was a six-acre property for sale, with a large building and a parking lot, and it seemed to suit our needs perfectly. The building belonged to a non-Jewish

religious establishment that had run into major financial difficulties. They were desperate to sell the property to pay off their debts, which meant that they would give us a great price.

There was just one issue: The location was a bit out of our area.

Every Jewish center or institution in the city is either on the main street of the



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city or just north of it. This property was a full mile south of the main road. My supporters were split, and, of course, I was torn. Everything about it—the property, the building, and the price—was perfect, except for location.

In the midst of all this, I traveled to New York for the Kinus Hashluchim. As I usually do, I planned to take a taxi straight from the airport to the Ohel. Being that the flight would take a few hours, I decided to write my letter to the Rebbe on the plane. I wrote everything that was weighing on my heart and quite uncharacteristically, I poured my heart into the letter.

I began “בקרוב יתמלאו י”ג שנה”—It would soon be thirteen years since our arrival in Memphis and we still have not found a permanent location suitable for our needs. I described everything that had transpired in the previous twelve years, and I added the present opportunity, with all its pros and cons. I was willing to invest all the time, effort, and money necessary for this project, but I first needed to be certain that this was the right course. Too many times I had chased after what seemed like a great opportunity, spending large amounts of money and effort on projects that eventually fell through, and I didn’t want to repeat that process.

I asked for a *brocha* that whatever happens, it should be with *hatzlocha*, and then I concluded the letter in a very unusual fashion. In the past, whenever I wrote about such matters, I had always requested a *brocha* at the end of my letter to the Rebbe. But now, for the first time since Gimmel Tammuz, I finished the letter by asking the Rebbe to show me “a sign” as to whether we should go ahead with this project or not. I ended off the letter with the questioning words: “באם” —Is this the correct thing?”

After visiting the Ohel, I made my way to Crown Heights.

I was in my parents’ home that evening when my father, Rabbi Binyomin Klein, long-time *mazkir* of the Rebbe, suddenly remembered something. He had a *tzetel* containing a handwritten *maane* from the Rebbe that he wanted to present me with. I was surprised because although my father had served as the Rebbe’s personal *mazkir*, it was highly unusual for him to give me something from the Rebbe, even something that pertained to me.

I waited as he went upstairs and after a minute he came down with the *tzetel* and he proceeded to tell me the story behind it.

I was born on Yud-Gimmel Tammuz, the *chag hageula* of the Frierdiker Rebbe, which the Rebbe marked every year with a *farbrengen*. The *farbrengen* usually took place on the night in between Yud-Beis and Yud-Gimmel. My bar-mitzvah took place in 5740, and that year Yud-Gimmel

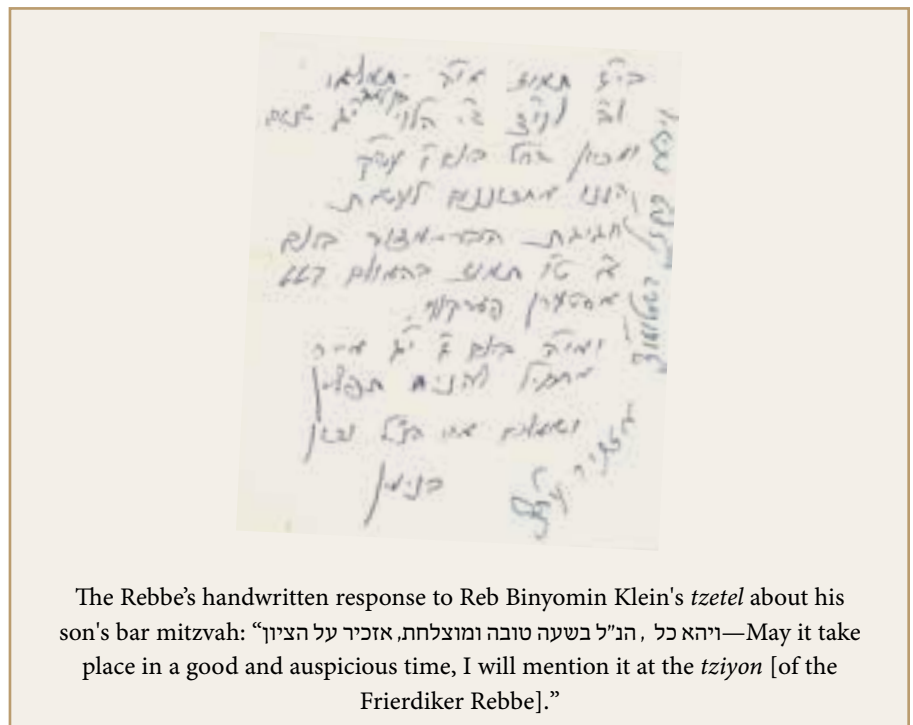
Tammuz fell out on Friday, which meant that the Rebbe was going to hold a *farbrengen* Thursday night.

Although the Rebbe always encouraged that the bar-mitzvah celebration should take place as close to the actual birthday as possible, my parents decided that because of the *farbrengen*, my celebration would be postponed to Sunday. My father wrote a *tzetel* to the Rebbe asking if we should go ahead as planned, ending with the words: “ושואלים אם הנ”ל נכון” - Is this the correct thing?”

The Rebbe’s handwritten answer was on the *tzetel*: The Rebbe added in his holy handwriting “ויהא כל, הנ”ל בשעה טובה” —May it take place in a good and auspicious time, I will mention it at the *tziyon* [of the Frierdiker Rebbe].”

My father handed me the *tzetel* and told me to keep it.

With a pounding heart, I looked closer at the *tzetel*. It struck me immediately that



The Rebbe’s handwritten response to Reb Binyomin Klein’s *tzetel* about his son’s bar mitzvah: “ויהא כל, הנ”ל בשעה טובה ומוצלחת, אזכיר על הציון” —May it take place in a good and auspicious time, I will mention it at the *tziyon* [of the Frierdiker Rebbe].”



the wording in the beginning and end of the *tzetel* was practically identical to the letter I had written to the Rebbe earlier that day; opening with the words “יתמלאו” – לבני לוי יצחק ש” יג שנה reach the thirteen years,” and closing with those questioning words “באם הנ”ל נכון.”

I was stunned. It became instantly clear to me that this was the answer to the question I had written the Rebbe earlier that day.

“זיהא כהנ”ל בשעה טובה ומוצלחת, אזכיר על הציון”...

I now felt that I had received a clear *brocha* and *haskama* from the Rebbe to go ahead with the purchase, and I was confident that the process would be smooth and successful.

When I returned home after the *kinus* we began negotiations with the sellers, and thanks to the Rebbe’s *brochos*, everything fell into place. The building was successfully bought and renovated.

Many times during the entire process, I was astonished at the *hashgacha protis* taking place. Here is one more example:

Several weeks after we purchased the property I received a call from a local attorney, who informed me of something amazing. A 101-year-old woman had just passed away and she bequeathed five million dollars to the establishment we had just bought the building from. If she would have passed just a few weeks earlier, they would never have needed to sell the building and we would have been back to square one!

We have been in the building for eight years to date and all the concerns regarding the location were unfounded. As the city is expanding to the suburbs, this location is better than we were ever able to imagine in the first place. **D**



RABBI LEVI KLEIN, HIS FATHER, REB BINYOMIN, AND RABBI MOSHE KOTLARSKY WITH DONORS AT THE OPENING OF THE CHABAD CENTER IN MEMPHIS, TN

