



In the preparation of this map, we were greatly assisted by the wealth of information and documents about the Rebbe and Rebbetzin's journey made available in JEM's soon-to-be published book "The Rebbe's Early Years", as well as their film "The Early Years" vol. IV. Our deepest appreciation is extended to the entire JEM team, and in particular to Rabbi Levi Greisman for his personal assistance.

The importance and relevance of a miracle is expounded in halacha. A miracle that happened to an individual holds little, if any, significance to others. But a miracle that occurred to one's father, and even more so to oneself, is of great importance.

Chassidus however, adds yet an additional level, which surpasses the others in importance: A miracle that occurred to one's Rebbe. A *nossi* is as one with all in his generation, as the Rambam writes<sup>1</sup>, that the king is the heart of all Yidden. Hence, a miracle that occurred to a *nossi* is of significant importance, surpassing a miracle of one's father.<sup>2</sup>



In the past, little was said of the Rebbe and Rebbetzin's miraculous escape from war-torn Europe. Even the exact date was not known until the fifth volume of the Frierdiker Rebbe's *Igros Kodesh* was published, in 5743, in which the Frierdiker Rebbe informs of the good news, in a letter dated "Chof-Ches Sivan 5701."

Even so, Chassidim only started commemorating the day three years later, in 5746, as the date coincided with Shabbos and a *melave malka/farbrenge* was planned. On Shabbos afternoon the Rebbe held the usual *Shabbos Mevorchim* farbrenge, in which he spoke of the day publicly for the first time, calling it the dawn of a new era in *hafotzas hamayonos*.

In between the sichos, Reb Meir Harlig approached to notify the

Rebbe of the farbrenge in honor of the Rebbe's rescue. With a glowing smile, the Rebbe corrected Reb Meir, adding "איש וביתו", implying that the Rebbe *and Rebbetzin's* escape. With this, the Rebbe gave Reb Meir a bottle of *meshke* for the farbrenge.

From then on, Chof-Ches Sivan was marked by Chassidim worldwide as a day of celebration, with farbrenge and *hachlotos tovot* relating to *hafotzos hamayonos*. From 5747 on, the Rebbe was *magia* a maamor in honor of the day, and in 5751, distributed to men, women, and children the "Kuntres Chof-Ches Sivan 5751," which was published in honor of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Rebbe and Rebbetzin's escape.<sup>3</sup>



Only recently were the precise details of the Rebbe and Rebbetzin's miraculous journey discovered. They display the magnitude of the continuous miracles resulting in the Rebbe and Rebbetzin's ultimate escape.

Presented here is a map, outlining their travels as they escaped the Nazis י"ט, always remaining one step ahead of danger, eventually reaching the shores of the United States, generating an unprecedented thrust in *hafotzos hamaayonos*.

1. Hilchos Melachim 3:6.

2. See the sicha of Yud-Beis Tammuz 5710 (*Toras Menachem* vol. 1 p. 127).

3. See *A Chassidisher Derher* magazine issue 4 (Tammuz 5772) for an essay on this topic.



# 1. PARIS, FRANCE

**KISLEV 5700:** As the efforts to rescue the Frierdiker Rebbe were being completed, focus shifted to his family. Intense efforts were headed by the Frierdiker Rebbe to lobby the US State Department to grant the Rebbe and Rebbetzin visas to enter America. But the State Department was hesitant to supply them, delaying the process for months, and time was running out...

**2 IYAR 5700:** The Nazis defeated the French army and invaded France. It was only a question of time before their troops would march upon Paris. But escape was almost impossible; the train stations were flooded with tens of thousands of people seeking to flee, with insufficient transportation for the multitudes. In a stroke of good fortune, an army official supplied the Rebbe with the prized train tickets out of Paris.



# 7. BROOKLYN, NEW YORK

**28 SIVAN 5701:** After a perilous 12 days at sea, The *Serpa Pinto* finally arrived on US soil, docking at Pier 8 in Staten Island. From there, the Rebbe and Rebbetzin boarded a ferry to Manhattan, where they were greeted by a large delegation of Bochorim and Chassidim, sent at the behest of the Frierdiker Rebbe. From there, they were taken to their final destination, 770 Eastern Parkway; the new seat of the Lubavitch movement.

Within no time, a fresh aura was felt. New programs were coordinated to teach and spread Yiddishkeit to American Jewry. In the ensuing months, the Rebbe assumed leadership of the three organizations *Merkos Linyonei Chinuch*, *Machne Israel*, and *Kehos Publication Society*. These new efforts propelled the revolution in *hafotzas hamaayonos* embodied by *dor hashvi'i*. The revolution that began on Chof Ches Sivan.

# 6. THE SERPA PINTO SHIP

**17 SIVAN 5701:** The Rebbe and Rebbetzin boarded the *Serpa Pinto*, for a perilous journey to New York.

Even once on the boat, they were not completely safe yet. Danger was lurking throughout the 12 day journey, as Nazi submarines lie in ambush awaiting escaping boats, torpedoing the ships on sight. Upon leaving European waters, the Rebbe sent a telegram to the Frierdiker Rebbe, informing that the primary danger has passed.



## 2. VICHY, FRANCE

**EREV SHAVUOS, 5 SIVAN 5700:** The Rebbe and Rebbetzin escaped Paris on one of the last trains out of the station, just three days before the Nazi troops arrived in Paris. By then it would have been too late to escape. Vichy served as a safe-haven, as it was still formally neutral territory, not controlled by the Nazis.

With time however, it slowly became apparent that the Vichy government was just as anti-Semitic as the Nazis themselves, acting as a puppet-government for the Nazis. After just twelve weeks, the Rebbe and Rebbetzin were compelled to be on the run again.



## 5. LISBON, PORTUGAL

**SIVAN 5701:** Few passenger ships were making the voyage between Europe and America, and only three from Portugal, a greatly insufficient number to accommodate the hundreds of thousands seeking refuge. The Rebbe and Rebbetzin's tickets came from an unexpected source. Rabbi Mordechai Bistritsky, who was living in America, bought tickets for his parents-in-law in Europe, but they were unable to obtain the necessary papers to escape. Hearing of the Rebbe and Rebbetzin's plight, and with extra tickets in hand, he passed them on to the Rebbe and Rebbetzin.

## 3. NICE, FRANCE

**AV 5700:** Nice, which was controlled by Italy, became the next home for Vichy's Jews escaping persecution. Meanwhile, an application for a non-quota visa<sup>4</sup> for the Rebbe and Rebbetzin was submitted, but a conflict with the submission from earlier that year<sup>5</sup> delayed the process, further postponing their journey. At this point, the Rebbe suddenly moved his application from the US consulate in Nice to the consulate in Marseille. Finally, after months of intense efforts, good news was reported to the Rebbe.

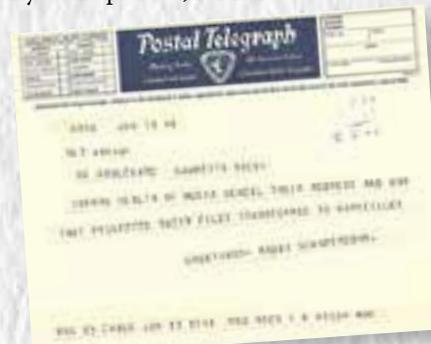


PHOTO: JEM/THE REBBE'S EARLY YEARS

4. At the time, the US government only allowed a limited amount of visas to be granted to foreigners. As the chances of receiving such visas were extremely slim, the Rebbe and Rebbetzin at this point applied for a 'non-quota visa,' a special program granting visas independent of the limit set in place for the standard visas. The Rebbe was eligible for the non-quota visa as he was a rabbi, serving the greater public.

5. The original application for a quota visa had the Rebbe listed as an engineer, whereas on the subsequent application for a non-quota visa he was listed as a rabbi. This apparent conflict delayed the process considerably.

## 4. MARSEILLE, FRANCE

**14 TEVES 5701:** The Rebbe was notified that together with the Rebbetzin he should make the trip to the US consulate in Marseille, to discuss their case. Finally on 20 Nissan, they were notified that they would receive their long awaited visas to freedom.

But an additional obstacle stood in their way: The only ships leaving Europe were from Portugal, as it was a neutral country in the war. But to travel to Portugal, the Rebbe and Rebbetzin had to first acquire transit visas. One month later, on 27 Iyar, they finally received this visa, opening the door to safety.



PHOTO: JEM/THE REBBE'S EARLY YEARS

