

TO GREATER HEIGHTS

Machne Israel Development Fund

לזכות החתן הרה"ת ר' אליהו שיל' כהן והכלה מרת אסתר תחיל' פיינ
לרגל חתונתם בשעתומ"צ ביום ג' אלול ה'תשע"ה הבעל"ט
נדפס ע"י הרה"ת ר' רוגי ומרת שמחה פיינ



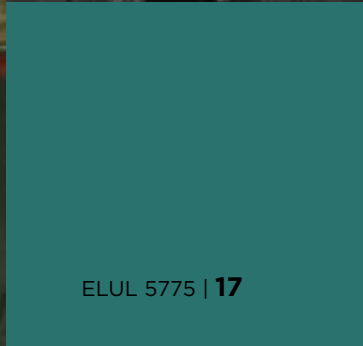


One day during the month of Tishrei, 770 would grind to a halt. Right in the middle of the Aseres Yemai Teshuva, when 770 was usually bustling with chassidim, all normal activity was suddenly suspended. The thousands of guests who were generally davening and learning in “770” at all hours of the day were asked to leave. The doors to the building were locked, festive tablecloths covered the tables and red carpets covered the sparkling floor. The same would happen one day at the end of Adar.



When they see the words “Machne Israel Development Fund”, many people think of Mr. David Chase and beautiful videos of people meeting the Rebbe. But what happened at the Machne Israel Development Fund? How did this idea come about?

In the following pages, we bring you the never-before published history of this central Lubavitch institution, based on interviews with people involved, and Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky’s diary of the time, which has never been printed.



In the preparation of this article, we interviewed the people who were involved in the forming of the Machne Israel Development Fund: Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky, Rabbi Moshe Herson, Rabbi Berel Shemtov and Rabbi Yisroel Shmotkin. We were also greatly assisted by Rabbi Yosef Boruch Friedman and Rabbi Chaim Greenberg, who were also intimately involved in the project. We extend our deepest thanks for their help.

A special thank you to Rabbi Yirmiya Berkowitz, who greatly assisted us in the preparation of this article.

The private *yeichidus'in* are published from the Living Torah video collection of JEM. We would like to thank the staff at JEM, and especially Rabbi Mendel Gourarie, for their assistance.

The Rebbe chose the name Machne Israel Special Development Fund--Israel being in its English form--and it will be referred to as such throughout the article.

EARLY SEEDS

It all started during the Kinus Hashluchim 5745, when Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky was having a discussion with several senior shluchim, including Rabbis Moshe Herson, Berel Shemtov, and Yisroel Shmotkin, about the great financial difficulties facing many shluchim. Seeking a solution to the problem, the idea of a central funding organization for Lubavitch and its shluchim was discussed.

When Rabbi Krinsky went in to the Rebbe's room on the morning of Friday, 28 Cheshvan, he mentioned their discussion to the Rebbe. The Rebbe encouraged the idea, adding that any fund of this nature should be part of Machne Israel, one of the Rebbe's three central organizations.



DURING THE CAR RIDES, THE REBBE WOULD DISCUSS MANY DETAILS OF THE FUND WITH RABBI KRINSKY.

Buoyed by the Rebbe's approval for the concept, Rabbi Krinsky and the group of Shluchim met over the following few months and plans were set into motion to bring together a group of supporters who would pool together substantial donations to create a general fund for Lubavitch.

THE FIRST MEETING

Several months later on 10 Nissan, one day before the Rebbe's 83rd *yom huledes* while driving the Rebbe home, Rabbi Krinsky said to the Rebbe that a small group of shluchim and prominent *baalei batim* would be coming in the morning for a meeting. The Rebbe asked who was coming, where it would take place, and at what time. Rabbi Krinsky told the Rebbe the names and that they would be coming to 770 at 9:00 am.

The following morning, on 11 Nissan 5745, Rabbis Moshe Herson, Yisroel Shmotkin, and Berel Shemtov came to 770 with a group of four *baalei batim*. They were some of the founding *baalei batim* recruited by these shluchim to be involved in bringing new funding for Lubavitch.

Each of these *baalei batim* was a major player in both the Jewish world and the business world, and their influence extended over many levels of the American Jewish community.

One name is familiar to most readers of A Chassidisher Derher: Mr. David Chase, a highly successful businessman and investor from Connecticut and New Jersey who had a decades-long connection with the Rebbe and was a major supporter of the Rabbinical College of America Yeshiva in Morristown. The others were also well-known figures in

the Jewish world: Mr. David Hermelin, a Detroit real estate investor who was vice President of the UJA and later became the American ambassador to Norway; Mr. Max Karl, a Wisconsin lawyer who pioneered the national private mortgage industry; and Mr. Martin Stein, a prominent Milwaukee businessman who was renowned for his philanthropy.

After a meeting with Rabbi Krinsky in his office where they discussed the new initiative, the visiting shluchim and *baalei batim* went down to 770, gathering in *Gan Eden Hatachton* to await the Rebbe's coming. Then, they gathered in "*Gan Eden Hatachton*" to wait for the Rebbe at the door of his room. Rabbi Krinsky introduced the people to the Rebbe and the Rebbe gave a *brocho* for *hatzlacha* and coins for *tzedaka*.

During this very warm meeting the Rebbe was asked by the *baalei batim* to be chairman of this new, historic endeavor. The Rebbe rejected the suggestion, saying that the chairman should be one of the supporters. Mr. David Chase became the chairman, and he was one of the driving forces in the Fund in the years that followed.



THE REBBE GREETS TWO OF THE FOUNDING SUPPORTERS OF MIDF WHO WERE FROM WISCONSIN: MR. MAX KARL (SHAKING THE REBBE'S HAND) AND MR. MARTIN STEIN (BEHIND HIM, ON THE LEFT). RABBI YISROEL SHMOTKIN, HEAD SHLIACH OF WISCONSIN, IS LOOKING ON FROM THE LEFT, AND MR. DAVID CHASE IS STANDING ON THE RIGHT.

FOR IMMEDIATE DEPOSIT

Following this initial meeting, things took a turn to the extraordinary, as the Rebbe involved himself in the project in an unprecedented way.

After the meeting, when he returned from the *mikveh*, the Rebbe called Rabbi Krinsky into his room and presented him with two checks, one for \$26,000 and another for \$84,000 (the second corresponding to the Rebbe's birthday that year). The Rebbe told him that this was for the new Fund and that they should be deposited into the Machne Israel bank account before they would leave for the Ohel (which will be at 2:00 pm that day).

In effect, the Rebbe was the first donor to the fund.

That day, on the way to the Ohel, the Rebbe asked Rabbi Krinsky how the meeting went. The Rebbe also discussed other aspects of the Fund, including what the name would be, and gave a *brocha* that it should be *behatzlacha*.

On 13 Nissan, while in the Rebbe's room, Rabbi Krinsky reported more details of the meeting, and asked whether they should form a women's division and what the name should be. The Rebbe answered in the affirmative on the first question and instructed that names for the fund be suggested.

Each of these baalei batim was a major player in both the Jewish world and the business world.

THE CHARTER

A few days later, while riding home with Rabbi Krinsky at the conclusion of the first days of Pesach, the Rebbe spoke about the fund and indicated that the

name of the fund should be very specific and that it will pertain to the Chabad-Lubavitch Houses. He added that on the following day he would give Rabbi Krinsky some written comments about the fund.

In the morning, while riding to 770, the Rebbe asked Rabbi Krinsky to come into his room a half-hour after *shacharis*.

Upon entering the room, the Rebbe gave Rabbi Krinsky one and a half pages of a lengthy note written by the Rebbe. The note was divided by two headlines: "*Pesicha* (Opening)" and "*Tochnis* (Vision/Plan)." This note encapsulated the Rebbe's vision and plan for the new organization, as it outlined its objectives and the way it would operate (see below).

The Rebbe's investment in time and effort in writing the Charter for the new fund, underscored the great importance the Rebbe attached to the new fund, and how dear it would be to him.

In the note, the Rebbe lays out what needs the new fund would address and the way it should be set up. It is fascinating in its own right, but more so, one can glean many insights into *shlichus* and *askonus* from this unique *tzettel*.

In the note, the Rebbe explains the need for the new fund:

- The number of Chabad Houses keeps growing around the world.
- The shluchim's activities have expanded, necessitating renovations and/or new facilities.
- New cities and towns are asking for shluchim to be sent to their communities.

Then the Rebbe outlines some of the reasons that the increasing budget cannot come from the local shliach:

- The other activities shluchim do schools, *mivtzoim*, etc. are expanding in commensurate with the *Batei Chabad*, leaving the shluchim strapped for funds and unable to afford an increase in the budget of the *Batei Chabad*.
- Funding from local Jewish institutions [i.e. Federations] often doesn't exist and is hardly enough to cover their budget.

The Rebbe also explains how the fundraising would operate. One might imagine that if Lubavitch is setting up a



THE REBBE'S HANDWRITTEN "CHARTER" FOR MIDF.



THE REBBE SPEAKS WITH MR. DAVID CHASE AT A FARBRENGEN SHORTLY BEFORE THE MIDF WAS LAUNCHED.

PHOTO: MIDF ARCHIVE

JEW/THE LIVING ARCHIVE / 129764 / 10 NISSAN, 5745



PHOTO: MIDF ARCHIVE

A LARGE GROUP OF SHLUCHIM TRAVELED TO WISCONSIN FOR A MIDF MEETING. ON THE BOTTOM ROW (L-R): RABBIS SHIMON LAZAROFF, SHOLOM BER SHEMTOV, YEHUDA KRINSKY, YISROEL SHMOTKIN, MOSHE HERSON, HERSHEL FOGELMAN. MIDDLE ROW: RABBIS ZALMAN AARON GROSSBAUM, ZALMAN LEVERTOV, YOSEF GOPPIN, DANIEL MOSKOWITZ, SHMUEL BUTMAN, SHOLOM BER LEVITIN, YITZCHOK WOLF. TOP ROW: RABBIS SIMCHA ZIRKIND, YOSEPH GRONER, SHOLOM DUCHMAN, CHAIM CAPLAND, YISROEL BROD, AND YONASAN DENEBEIM.

global fund, people would fly around to shuls throughout the world fundraising money and making appeals.

The Rebbe writes that this approach wouldn't work, since it would interfere with the shluchim's local fundraising; instead, the supporters would have to be solicited on an individual basis.

In addressing the name for the fund, the Rebbe gives fascinating insight on naming the organization. When establishing such a fund, one usually tries giving a name that reflects its far reach and global influence. The Rebbe, however, writes to take the opposite approach: to give the fund a modest name which reflects its *narrow* aim, a fund exclusively for the Chabad-Lubavitch Houses and *not* for the general Jewish world--something along the lines of "friends" or "helpers" of Chabad-Lubavitch Houses.

This, the Rebbe explains, is to avoid the perception that Lubavitch is creating a new mega-funding organization for the Jewish world--in competition with the United Jewish Appeal and such

organizations. In addition, it would help in avoiding competition with local shluchim.

[This caution was evident at other times as well. Much later on, when the Machne Israel Development Fund was up and running, the shluchim proposed arranging an elaborate dinner in Manhattan honoring one of their major supporters, hoping that this would attract new levels of funding. The Rebbe rejected their idea, with the reasoning that a high profile event of that nature might be viewed as competition to the UJA.]

The Rebbe also adds that they should consider creating a women's group as well (as Rabbi Krinsky had previously asked), and that the supporters should include their children so that they, too, should give symbolic donations.

WHAT'S IN A NAME

Two days later, on 19 Nissan 5745, Rabbi Krinsky submitted to the Rebbe four proposals for a name for the new fund that he prepared with senior *mazkir* Rabbi Nissan Mindel. However, the

Rebbe gave his own name a few months later.

Throughout the following summer, the *vaad* of shluchim, Rabbi Krinsky and the initial supporters continued planning the fund and garnering support. At that point in time, the concept was very straightforward: a group of *baalei batim* were pooling together substantial sums of money to fund the continued growth and expansion of Chabad activities. No one imagined that the members of this funding group would have the *zechus* to have lengthy, personal meetings with the Rebbe--the idea never occurred to anyone, as this was simply unthinkable up to that time.

An additional meeting took place in New York on 19 Tammuz. The group stood in "*Gan Eden Hatachton*" after *krias Hatorah*, and the Rebbe blessed them with *hatzlacha*, *parnosos* and *nachas*. In the evening, on the way home, Rabbi Krinsky reported on the meeting. The Rebbe then told him that the name of the fund should be Machne Israel Special Development Fund.

Over the summer of 5745, the committee enlisted some twenty philanthropists who agreed to join this initiative. The first meeting of the newly named fund was set for the beginning of the following year; in Tishrei 5746.

A SURPRISE MEETING

On 4 Tishrei 5746, the members of the newly established MIDF came to 770 for an official meeting. The planned program consisted of meetings in the offices at Lubavitch Headquarters, followed by a tour of 770, and the highlight, seeing the Rebbe during *krias hatorah*; no one could imagine what would follow.

Suddenly and unexpectedly--*ubiasarus del'eilah*--the Rebbe told Rabbi Krinsky to tell the *baalei batim* that they should wait around after *shacharis*. After the Rebbe returned to his room, he came out to greet them in the foyer of 770, next to the elevator, and each supporter approached the Rebbe for a short conversation.

In the following years, these short meetings turned into full fledged *yechidus'in*: the Rebbe would sit in the shul, at a table, and each supporter would have a few minutes for a private *yechidus* with the Rebbe. It is fascinating that these personal meetings with the Rebbe were started by the Rebbe himself, on his own initiative--which is powerful evidence for the unique *chavivus* the Rebbe had for the MIDF and its participants.

Once the supporters began having personal meetings with the Rebbe, the whole dynamic of MIDF changed. The opportunity to have *yechidus* with the Rebbe, for both individuals and families, became a powerful impetus for more and more people to get involved.

MIDF began having bi-annual meetings: during Tishrei between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, and before Pesach in the month of Adar, usually around Chof Hei Adar.

As the years passed, the meetings with the Rebbe evolved: In its first year, the Rebbe gave very short greetings to the group, but later this became a full *sicha*; in its first year, the Rebbe only spoke to each supporter for a moment, but, as mentioned above, later this turned into a full *yechidus*.

In 5748, the meeting moved from the foyer to the small *zal*, where the Rebbe delivered a short *sicha* before greeting each individual as he stood by his *shtender*. In Adar 5749, the meeting with the Rebbe was moved to the big shul downstairs, due to the growing amount of members. [MIDF continued to grow: in its first year there were only fifteen or twenty members; by 5752, there were several hundred.]

THE EVENT: IT'S ALL IN THE DETAILS

The MIDF *vaad* of shluchim and *baalei batim* would have periodic meetings throughout the year where they would discuss future plans and practical arrangements; together with Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky and his staff, they



PHOTOS: MIDF ARCHIVE

MR. DAVID CHASE WOULD SEND AN INITIAL INVITATION TO SUPPORTERS ON HIS PERSONAL STATIONARY. AFTERWARDS, THE MIDF OFFICES WOULD SEND AN OFFICIAL INVITATION.

Suddenly and unexpectedly, the Rebbe told Rabbi Krinsky to tell the *baalei batim* that they should wait around after *shacharis*.



PHOTO: JEM/THE LIVING ARCHIVE / 145305 / 7 TISHREI, 5751

THE EVENT BEGAN WITH A BEAUTIFUL DINNER WHERE SPEAKERS HIGHLIGHTED CHABAD'S GLOBAL ACTIVITIES.

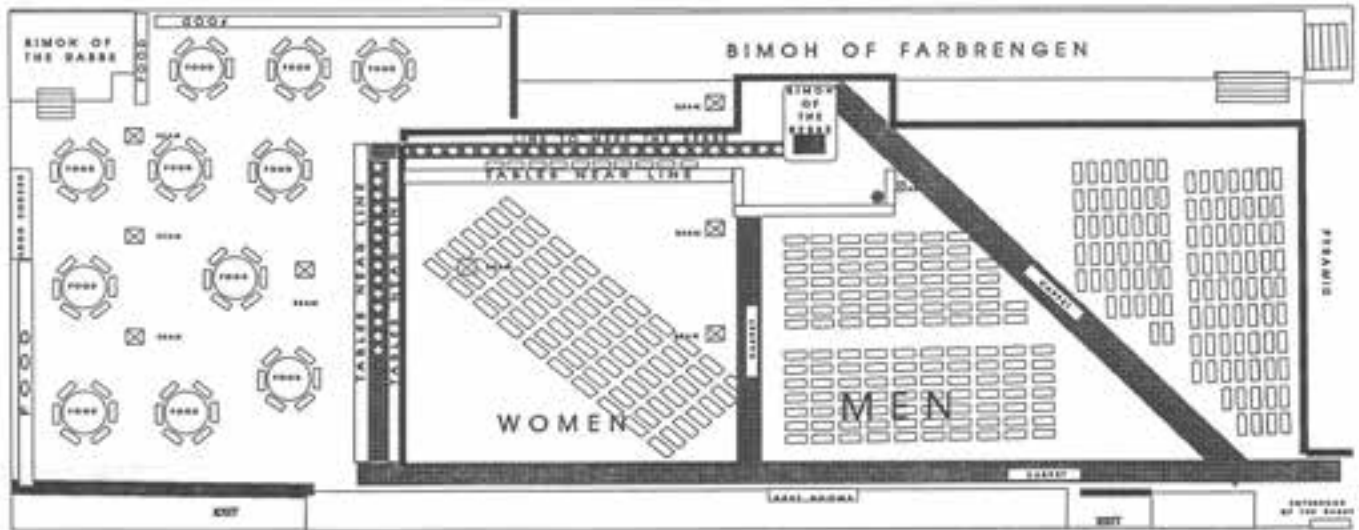


PHOTO: MIFD ARCHIVE

A MAP WITH THE SET-UP OF THE YECHIDUS WAS DISTRIBUTED TO THE BAALEI BATIM SO THAT EVERYONE KNEW WHERE TO BE.

organized the bi-annual meetings. But as MIFD grew, it needed the attention of a full time office.

In 5748, the committee set up the MIFD office at Lubavitch Headquarters. Over the years, various people headed up the office, including: Rabbi Yisroel Brod, Rabbi Yosef B. Friedman, Rabbi Sholom Ciment, Rabbi Eliezer Avtzon, Rabbi Levi Zirkind, and Rabbi Chaim Greenberg. Rabbi Berel Levertov was also involved.

The office coordinated with the *vaad* organizing and running the MIFD bi-annual meetings, and recruiting new members. The *vaad* of shluchim included: Rabbi Moshe Herson, Rabbi

PHOTO: MIFD ARCHIVE / VELVEL SCHILDKRAUT



THE REBBE GREETS RABBI SIMCHA ZIRKIND A"H TOGETHER WITH MR. NOCHUM GELBER.

Berel Shemtov, Rabbi Yisroel Shmotkin, Rabbi Chaim Capland, and Rabbi Simcha Zirkind a"h.

THE EVENT

[Note: the MIFD meeting evolved over the years; the following is a description

of a typical MIFD-meeting, but each year was different.]

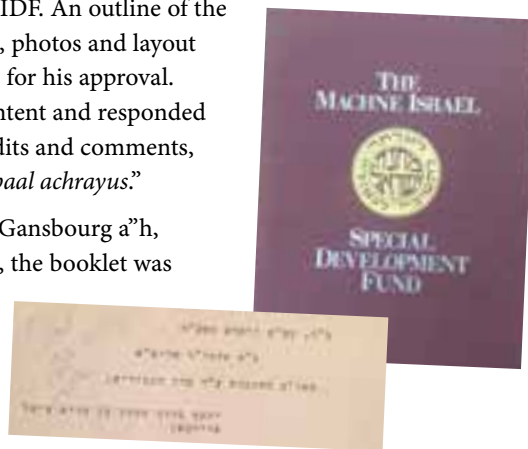
The evening started with a beautiful dinner in a New York ballroom, usually Oholei Torah, where a family atmosphere prevailed over this relatively small group of supporters. Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky and Mr. David Chase would address every meeting of the MIFD dinners. The keynote speaker would be a prominent member of the MIFD. Additional speakers at various meetings throughout the years included, among others, Professor Herman Branover and Rabbi Yitzchak Groner. Rabbi Moshe Kotlarsky, who was also involved in arranging the MIFD event, spoke about Chabad-Lubavitch around the world.

This dinner was utilized to showcase Lubavitch's wide ranging, global activities which were growing at a rapid pace each year. Although the *baalei batim* attending were supporters of their local Chabad Houses, and were well acquainted with Chabad in their city, here they felt the impact of being part of an international network, which was changing the face of the Jewish nation.

In connection with these events, Rabbi Yosef B. Friedman and Mrs. Baila Olidort would make sure that the latest issue of the *Lubavitch International* magazine would be published in time for the meetings. The magazine typically

In the winter of 5748, Rabbi Yosef B. Friedman prepared a special booklet describing the MIFD. An outline of the booklet, along with the text, photos and layout was submitted to the Rebbe for his approval. The Rebbe reviewed the content and responded in great detail with many edits and comments, referring to it as a "*pirsum baal achrayus*."

Working with Rabbi Shaya Gansbourg a"h, who facilitated the printing, the booklet was published in a very elegant and high-quality format, and was distributed at the following meeting and to prospective members.



“There were many special moments during the Machne Israel Development Fund meetings, but I will never forget the Rebbe’s smile at that moment.”

depicted Chabad’s work throughout the world in a sophisticated and colorful manner. (The Rebbe once remarked to Rabbi Krinsky that the magazine “*heibt oif dem prestige fun aleh shluchim.*”)

After the dinner, the group moved to the transformed-for-the-occasion shul in 770, to await the Rebbe’s arrival.

Two sections were created in the large shul: 1) the western part of the shul (the area of the Rebbe’s farbrengen *bima*) was set up for the *sicha* and *yechidus*; 2) the eastern part (towards the *aron kodesh*) was walled off with partitions and set up

with refreshments and tables and seats. (See the map.) Keep in mind that it was a very long event: the *sicha* began at about 5:30 p.m., and the Rebbe would leave the shul at the conclusion of the *yechidus*’in at about 12:30 a.m. so the guests needed refreshments and a place to relax.

At the set time, the Rebbe entered the shul on a red carpet runner, and Mr. David Chase would greet the Rebbe with a handshake, as the *baalei batim* and *shluchim* watched from their places. “There were many special moments during the Machne Israel Development

One of the themes in the Rebbe’s *sichos* was how the blessing of wealth comes with an important *shlichus* from Hashem—the importance of giving to charity. By giving *tzedaka* they become *shluchim* of Hashem, by directing their G-d-given bounty to support holy causes. Being cognizant of the fact that they are *shluchim* of Hashem adds to their joy in giving *tzedaka*.

The Rebbe encouraged the supporters to increase in their *tzedaka* giving. In one *sicha*, the Rebbe said that when Hashem grants a person success beyond limitations, he must give *tzedaka* beyond any limitations.

The Rebbe also emphasized that through giving *tzedaka*, Hashem blesses a person with more success. In a remarkable *sicha* on 20 Adar 5749, the Rebbe said that the people standing in the room had seen this in their own lives in the recent weeks. “Those gathered here saw this in their own lives in the past year and two years, in the past month and two months, and even in the past week that through increasing in *tzedaka* and *chesed*, Hashem increases in his *brochos*.”

Another major theme is the need to be a positive influence on others, which includes influencing non-Jews to fulfill the *sheva mitzvos b’nei Noach*. The Rebbe said that it is important to emphasize that this concept Jews influencing non-Jews is not chauvinism. To the contrary, the Jewish people have a special mission, and a harder job, to spread Torah and its values to the rest of the world.

Another interesting aspect of these *sichos* is that the Rebbe would often bring examples from concepts in the world of business, including competition, balance sheets, and time-sensitive business opportunities.



In the first years of MIDF, the Rebbe would greet each of the *baalei batim* in the foyer of 770.

◁ Members of MIDF join the Rebbe for *krias haTorah*.

▽ Bottom left: the Rebbe speaks to Minnesota Senator Rudy Boschwitz.



PHOTOS: JEM/THE LIVING ARCHIVE



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PHOTOS: JEM/ THE LIVING ARCHIVE

This is a photo collage depicting a MIDF meeting in the upstairs shul, before the event was moved to the shul downstairs.

1. Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky and Mr. David Chase prepare the crowd for the Rebbe's entrance. 2. The Rebbe enters the shul. 3. The Rebbe addresses the crowd. 4. The Rebbe speaks to members of MIDF.

Fund,” says Rabbi Greenberg. “But I will never forget the Rebbe’s smile at that moment.”

THE SICHA

The Rebbe would begin by delivering a *sicha* to the supporters.

For the first few years, the Rebbe would deliver brief remarks, usually in English. In Nissan 5748, the Rebbe spoke the *sicha* in Yiddish. In 5749, something quite interesting took place, highlighting the remarkably intimate tone set by the Rebbe during the event: the Rebbe began the *sicha* in English, but after a few minutes the Rebbe paused, and said,

HONORING THE WEALTHY

Speaking to the members of the MIDF on 4 Tishrei, 5750, the Rebbe explained the Gemara that states that Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi would “honor the wealthy.”

The following is from the *mugah* “Excerpts From an Address by the Lubavitcher Rebbe שליט”א”:

“...This time of year is associated with the acceptance of resolutions regarding one’s behavior in the year to come. This particularly applies to men of means who have been blessed with special capabilities and opportunities to increase the good that exists in their own homes, their communities, and in the world at large. Their wealth is a sign of trust and confidence G-d has in them that they will exercise these potentials to the fullest degree.

In this context, we can better understand our Sages’ statement: “Rebbe (Rabbi Yehudah HaNasi, the compiler of the Mishnah) honored the wealthy.” Now, Rebbe did not need to curry favor with anyone. (Indeed, our Sages compared his personal wealth to that of the Roman emperor.) He honored the wealthy because of his awareness of the trust that G-d vested in them to utilize their bounty to spread good and blessing around them and in the world at large.

I DON’T WANT YOU TO BE A MERE “SPONSOR”

In 5749, the Rebbe established the year as *shnas habinyan*, a year of building, and during the *yechidus* of 8 Tishrei, the Rebbe spoke candidly to the *baalei batim* and encouraged them to create new initiatives.

The following is from the *mugah* “Excerpts From Remarks by the Lubavitcher Rebbe שליט”א”:

...At the beginning of a new year everyone makes firm resolutions and aspire to reach new goals, and finds new strength to realize these potentials.

As we have discussed on many recent occasions, this year is “a time to build,” especially to build in the realm of Yiddishkeit. Since you are associated with a local Chabad-Lubavitch Center, I would like to propose a new goal:

During this year all the activities of Lubavitch should be done in a building owned by the organization.

Discuss this matter with your local *Shliach*—I do not want you to be a mere “sponsor” of your local project, but rather, to join in a true partnership with the *Shliach*, and to utilize all you energies. Determine whether you need to purchase an existing facility or to build a new one so that all the activities may take place on your *own* premises.

The facilities themselves should also pose a challenge. Build a building larger than the present activities call for. When you will visit the building and see unused space, as a practical businessman, you will be motivated to fill that space with new activities.

When successful business people like yourselves will get involved in this matter, the objectives will be accomplished faster and more efficiently than if it were done by the *Shliach* alone.

This then, is my proposition:

During this new year every Chabad-Lubavitch Center which does not have its own building should acquire or build its own facility, and wherever the property is already owned there is certainly room to build additional floors, rooms or wings...

“After my endeavors in English, I will permit myself, after we are meeting for so many years, to continue in Yiddish.”

The Rebbe added that this “will be a good start not only not to be ashamed of it [Yiddish], but to use it in everyday life, and to influence also your family and children and grandchildren to do likewise, and to do so happily... as an example of your pride in being a Jew.”

Then the Rebbe continued in Yiddish, first translating the beginning of the *sicha* into Yiddish, and then finishing the rest of the *sicha* in Yiddish. From that year onward, the *sicha* would always be delivered in Yiddish, so the participants were provided with a simultaneous translation via headphones hooked up to special radios.

The Rebbe spoke very warmly in these *sichos*, showering the *baalei batim* with *brochos* for success in all their endeavors. The Rebbe showed much warmth to this relatively small group of people who were major supporters of Lubavitch activities in their hometown, and who were now going above and beyond to provide substantial contributions to MIDE.

Immediately following the *sicha* was the *yechidus*.

PRIVATE YECHIDUS

Earlier in the program, each participant received a card with a number indicating their turn for *yechidus*. Once the *yechidus'in* began, the current number in line was discretely announced every ten minutes. As a person's number came closer, they would sit on a line of chairs leading up to the Rebbe's table (see map.) Older people, and people rushing for a flight, were given earlier times, and younger people had the later time slots.

These *yechidus'in* are a window into the vast and disparate problems, challenges, and opportunities facing a Jewish person in both private and communal life.

For the sake of privacy, tables were set up around the Rebbe's table blocking access to anyone but the person speaking to the Rebbe; the exception was the *shluchim* who would often go up together with their *baalei batim* in order to introduce them to the Rebbe. Many *baalei batim* wanted their *shliach* to be with them so that they would help them remember what the Rebbe said.

The *yechidus* was videotaped, so that the supporters would be able to see their *yechidus* later on, but due to their private nature, only the supporter himself was able to access the video after the event.

These *yechidus'in* are a window into the vast and disparate problems, challenges, and opportunities facing a Jewish person in both private and communal life. As prominent figures in the Jewish community, these *baalei batim* came to the Rebbe for help on both private and communal issues. Many of these *yechidus'in* were made public by these individuals in conjunction with JEM's “My Encounter” and “Here's My Story” series, and are available from JEM.

As expected, many of the questions were regarding business matters. Some interesting examples of advice the Rebbe gave: get out of the stock market (see sidebar); stay in business and not give it up for Torah study (see sidebar); and

not to let investors have more than fifty percent of the business.

Many questions related to *chinuch* and *shalom bayis*. The Rebbe counseled one family against lengthy, cross-country commutes for business. Another family had a son who was entering a more advanced school, and the Rebbe gave them advice on motivating him to meet the challenge.

Many people came with questions in *avodas Hashem*. One person asks the Rebbe for advice on achieving awe of Hashem, and the Rebbe counseled him to focus on love of Hashem the fear will come by itself. To another person, the Rebbe said that by increasing their trust in Hashem, they would receive more *brochos*, and told them to study *Shaar Habitachon* from *Chovas Halivovos*.

The Rebbe continually encouraged one and all to strive to always proceed higher and higher build another Chabad House, bring another Jewish person closer to *yiddishkeit*, and donate more money to *tzedaka*.

The Rebbe would also strongly encourage the supporters to be more involved with their local *shluchim*. The following is just one beautiful example:

Mr. Jack Shenkman, a major supporter of Chabad in Michigan under the directorship of Rabbi Berel Shemtov, spoke to the Rebbe about the new Chabad center and how he is trying to help. The Rebbe: “You certainly know that he [Rabbi Shemtov] has a large appetite, on my instructions. Don't be afraid.” Later in the conversation, Mr. Shenkman says that the construction is going well, and that “Rabbi Shemtov's



SENATOR RUDY BOSCHWITZ ADDRESSES A CROWD OF SUPPORTERS AT AN EARLY MIDEF DINNER HELD AT OHOLEI TORAH.



1



3



3



2



3



2

These photos depict an MIDF meeting in the in the shul downstairs.

1. Upon entering the shul, the Rebbe greets Mr. David Chase while walking to his place. 2. The Rebbe delivers a sicha. 3. The Rebbe gives yechidus'in to members of MIDF. Pictured on the left is Mr. Jack Shenkman and his wife, a major supporter of Chabad of Michigan (see main article for a fascinating conversation with the Rebbe). In the far right picture is Mr. Max Karl, one of the founding members of MIDF. 4. The Rebbe distributes Lekach at a MIDF gathering that took place during Tishrei.



3



4

PHOTOS: JEM/THE LIVING ARCHIVE

appetite is going to be satisfied a little bit.” The Rebbe: “I am not happy if he will be satisfied. Give him all he wants, but that should not satisfy him; this way he’ll demand more of you ...”

The warmth and affection the Rebbe showed in these *yeichidus*’in was very special to see, and people who merited participating in them remembered them vividly for years afterward.

The supporters would come away from the event newly energized and inspired to help their local shluchim; shluchim gained tremendously from bringing their *baalei batim*.

Membership soared from year to year. Some of the major supporters of Chabad today were present at and inspired by these meetings to give large sums of money to support global Lubavitch activity.

THE SHLUCHIM

“One of the unique parts of this *yeichidus*”, says Rabbi Greenberg, “was the special affection and *kiruv* the Rebbe showed to the shluchim, greeting them with a radiant face as they approached with their local supporters. One could see the Rebbe receiving much *nachas* during these moments.”

“For example, I remember when Rabbi Yossi Geisinsky from Great Neck, New Jersey brought a supporter for the first time. When he came over to the table, the Rebbe gave him a smile that he will never forget, and everyone standing around will never forget either. Of course, he has a large picture of this moment hanging in his home.”

Some shluchim took the opportunity to speak to the Rebbe for a few, short seconds on their own.

After the *yeichidus* with the *baalei batim*, the shluchim and arrangers of MIDF would each receive a dollar from the Rebbe and, at the Tishrei meeting for some years also *lekach*. Afterwards, the Rebbe would speak briefly to the shluchim, showering them with *brochos*

for their communal shlichus as well as their private lives.

One example from 7 Tishrei 5751: the Rebbe gave a remarkable *brocho* to the shluchim that they should have true *harchova* (prosperity) in their material needs including beautiful homes and clothing, and added that this would bring *harchova* in their *avoda*. Later, in the same *sicha*, the Rebbe gave a *brocho* that “every one of us will be a shliach to inform ourselves, our family, and all the Jewish people around us that *hinei zeh bo*—he has finally arrived!...Here is *Dovid Malka Meshicha!*”

At the conclusion of the event, the Rebbe would lift the brown shopping bag filled with the letters handed to him by the supporters during the *yeichidus*, and carry it to his room. The Rebbe would later give the bag to Rabbi Krinsky who would bring it to his office to separate the letters and donations. The donations were receipted and deposited in the Machne Israel bank account. The letters were returned to the Rebbe along with a report of the donations.

After the Rebbe returned to his room, the shluchim would often break out in a joyful dance with the happiness of seeing the Rebbe’s *nachas*.

PERSONAL LETTERS

Following the meetings, the Rebbe would send personal letters to each of

the MIDF members that participated in the meeting. In the letters, the Rebbe expressed his appreciation for their visit and would touch upon a lesson to be learned from the time of year. A sample letter begins “I was pleased to see you last Tuesday, Tishrei 4, together with our other distinguished friends...”

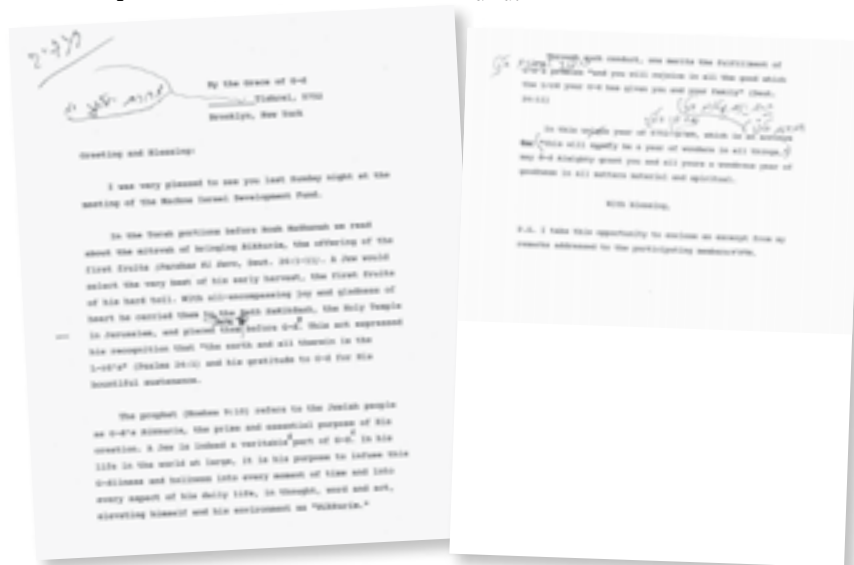
An English transcript, of the *sicha*, edited by the Rebbe, was enclosed with the Rebbe’s letter.

In the weeks following the event, each supporter received a selection of photographs of their *yeichidus*, from which they would choose one to be beautifully framed.

SUPPORTING THE SHLUCHIM

In the later years, the Rebbe began granting the shluchim financial sustenance—in sizable amounts—by sending checks from Machne Israel (- and sometimes Keren Hachomesh -) to each of their various *mosdos*. From time-to-time, usually around a special day on the calendar, the Rebbe would ask Rabbi Krinsky to prepare such checks, and the Rebbe would indicate the amount. As the years went by, these gifts came more often, and it became a vital source of support for many shluchim.

It seems that the bulk of these funds came from the Machne Israel Development Fund.



A SAMPLE DRAFT OF A LETTER PREPARED TO BE SENT BY THE REBBE TO THE MIDF SUPPORTERS, WITH THE REBBE'S HANDWRITTEN COMMENTS.

The shluchim would often start dancing after the event.

A SPECIAL MAANE

“The Rebbe showed special *chavivus* for MIDE, and we were constantly receiving encouraging *maanos*. But there’s one I will never forget,” says Rabbi Moshe Herson.

“After each Machne Israel meeting, I would write a report to the Rebbe and would make sure that the Rebbe should receive it immediately after the meeting, in order to avoid the rush of the upcoming *yomim tovim* (Yom Kippur or Pesach).

“One year, when I was in *shul* early on Erev Yom Kippur morning, one of the *mazkirim* told me that ‘the Rebbe just gave a *maane* for you.’ When I opened it, I saw that it’s a *maane* for the Machne Israel Development meeting report.

“The Rebbe wrote,:

ת"ח ת"ח, ודבר בעתו בהמצאו קרוב אפילו ליחיד,
ועאכו"כ לציבור, ועאכו"כ לעוסקים בצרכי ציבור--
שגדולים מתורתם אומנתם. אעה"צ.”

Many thanks. It is a timely matter--
[between Rosh Hashanah and Yom



PHOTO: JEM/THE LIVING ARCHIVE / 12916 / 5 TISHREI, 5748

THE REBBE ADDRESSES THE SHLUCHIM.

Kippur] when [Hashem] is closer to every individual, and even more so to a community. How much more so to those involved in the needs of the community—who are greater than those whose occupation is solely in the study of Torah. I will mention it at the *tziyun* [of the Friediker Rebbe].”

“This *maane* was so powerful, it has stayed with me throughout all the years since...” **D**



TISHREI, 5747

The following is a personal account of one of the many MIDF meetings. It provides a taste of the special warmth of these meetings. This meeting, in 5747, was in the entranceway of 770.

“...With a radiant face, the Rebbe greets Mr. David Chase, and speaks a few words to him. Afterwards, each person approaches the Rebbe, and Mr. David Chase, who is standing at the Rebbe’s side, introduces many of them as they come by.

“It’s a fascinating scene. The *baalei batim* crowd around as the Rebbe greets each one and exchanges a few words. One of the prominent members of this group is Minnesota Senator Rudy Boschwitz, and you can see him crowding around with everyone else, hanging on to the Rebbe’s every word. [Two other senators were also present at this meeting, and the Rebbe addressed them later on in the meeting.]

“One special moment is when Mrs. Emma Schaver from Detroit approached the Rebbe, aided by her walking cane. She is a veteran supporter of Chabad, and you can see that the Rebbe is pleased to see her. The Rebbe lifts his hand and says, ‘[An] *aishes chayil!* A woman of valor.’ Gesturing to the men crowded around, the Rebbe said, ‘You are the only woman [present]. But you are not afraid, and you are showing the path for all the men around you. עזר כנגדו.’ After blessing her with a sweet new year, the Rebbe added, זאלסט ניט דארפן האבן, דעם שטעקן. You shouldn’t need the cane!’

[She did, indeed, dispose of it--and didn’t need it going forward.]

“The meeting has a very intimate, close feeling. Each one of the *baalei batim* express their appreciation for the Rebbe: ‘You should continue to be at the head of the Jewish community,’ says one person. ‘It’s a privilege to have met you,’ says another.

“At the conclusion of the meeting, Mr. David Chase emotionally thanks the Rebbe, saying that ‘You give us the inspiration, you give us the pride of being Jews, and the kind of *nachas* we can’t get anywhere else...G-d bless you, and give you many, many more years of health.’

The Rebbe responds, saying that each of you should, ‘spread this spirit to all the Jews around you, and also to the non-Jews.’ Emphasizing that when the non-Jews keep the *sheva mitzvos*, ‘it will become much easier to achieve all the good things that we all have spoken about.’

“As soon as the Rebbe enters his room, the entrance way full with people--in which you could hear a pin drop until now--erupts with commotion, and Mr. Chase can be heard saying ‘I lose my cool, I get all emotional...’”



SUPPORTERS AT A DINNER HELD AT 788 EASTERN PARKWAY DURING THE EARLY DAYS OF MIDF.

SELECTIONS FROM PRIVATE YECHIDUS'IN

GOING OUT OF BUSINESS

MR. LARRY SHEFTEL

A businessman tells the Rebbe that he is thinking about changing his focus from business to learning Torah and helping the shluchim in his area. The Rebbe has a surprising response.

Mr. Sheftel: I have enough money to live comfortably, to give charity comfortably, to do everything comfortably. I'm thinking to learn Torah two hours a day, and to help Chabad for two hours a day - to work with Rabbi Fogelman and other Chabad rabbis.

I'm not sure about going into business again, or half-day business. That I'm not sure of. I would like a blessing for whatever I do, and also a blessing for my family, my mother and father, and all my relatives.

The Rebbe: Have good news and much success.

Continue the business also - not only learning Torah. It is very strange coming from me about the business, but nevertheless it is a good thing to show an example of a successful businessman who has set times for Torah study every day, and is happy about it!

Thank you.

Have a sweet year, and make a sweet example.

RELIGIOUS JEWS IN POLITICS

MR. SCOTT SHORE

Mr. Shore: I am considering running for the United States Congress in Florida. My question is whether or not it is an appropriate thing for a person to do as a Shabbos-observant Jew, to run for Congress. And if you believe it is, I ask for a blessing to do that.

The Rebbe: It is not only proper - I believe it is a sanctification of G-d's Name. If you will be in the Congress, and people will know that you observe Shabbos, then it will help inspire the gentile people to observe their commandments also - not only for the Jews to become Shabbos-observant.

Blessing and success. Good tidings.

NO STOCKS!

MR. EDUARDO ELSZTAIN

Today, Mr. Eduardo Elsztain is a billionaire Argentinian businessman, and is his country's largest real-estate developer. In this yechidus - which was towards the beginning of his career - he asks the Rebbe about investing in the stock markets.

Mr. Elsztain: I invest for people; for myself and other people. I've been doing portfolio management in risk countries in Latin America, especially

PHOTO: JEM/THE LIVING ARCHIVE / 13019 / 5 TISHREI, 5748

Hundreds

of private Yechidus'in took place throughout the years of the MIDF. These four yechidus'in are merely a peek into the wealth of detailed guidance and inspiration the Rebbe dispensed to the MIDF supporters and Shluchim.



Argentina, for more than four years, giving advice. I now have a big portion to invest. I ask for a blessing.

The Rebbe: May G-d Almighty bless you to have good news.

I have more than \$15 million [to invest]. I'm doing very well, but I'm asking the Rebbe's opinion if I should go on investing in the stock market, as I've done until now?

On the stock market... I am not so happy about putting money in the stock market, because it has no connection with peace of mind. It is disturbing you to sleep properly if you know that your money is invested in the stock market.

Because of that, if you can transfer it little by little – not by losses, but transfer it little by little into some other investment, it will be a good thing.

But I take risky positions for people, they want risky portfolios, portfolios all over the world?

If *they* want it, then you have no choice, you must give in to them. But about yourself, it is not safe to do so; better something which is safe.

Thank you very much.

Mr. Elsztain pulled his investments from the stock market. Shortly afterwards, the stock market crashed.

A MESSAGE FOR THE PRIME MINISTER MR. AND MRS. REUBEN AND ROSE MATTUS

Mrs. Mattus: We have an appointment to see [Prime Minister] Shamir today. We feel the same way he feels. Do you have a message that we can tell him?

The Rebbe: That he must be stronger than he was until now.

He must be stronger and Israel must be stronger...

He was strong until now, but that is not enough.

He has to keep getting stronger.

Stronger, because the opposition is not resting, they are adding to the opposition. And to do something that is against the life-interest of Jewish people everywhere, not only in Israel, but also in the United States....

...To add to his strength, and not be afraid that someone will be uncomfortable about it - because he has no choice, it will be that way always.

How do they say it? "There is no..."

If you have two Jews, you have three opinions - that is also a Jewish character. Nevertheless, as I said before, all of us have survived all these things, and we'll survive it now also. And to be prepared to receive our righteous Moshiach.

G-d bless you.

We must deliver to him Eretz Yisroel, strong and total, without any cutting of it.

We'll tell him that.

May G-d Almighty bless you to be a good messenger.

Thank you.