



In Loving Memory of Chaim Katzier
On his Ya'artzeit 29 Teves
Dedicated by
Oren and Neally Antebi

Without Any Fear

As the Rebbe prepared the *kuntres* "Purim 5711" for print, he added a short yet powerful description of the events surrounding the famous *maamar* "Vekibel Hayehudim." It was said by the Frierdiker Rebbe in 5687 in the biggest Lubavitcher shul in Moscow, and was an event fraught with real dangers. In his introduction to the *kuntres*, the Rebbe spells it out:

(Loose translation)

"This is the *kuntres* for the days of Purim; it includes a *maamar* and letter.

The *maamar* was said by the Frierdiker Rebbe on Purim Katan 5687 in the Lubavitcher shul in Moscow.

The letter is from a rav in Russia who was an activist. It gives us a slight understanding regarding the relationship between the Jewish leadership and the Russian government. [It also gives us a glimpse] as to the great danger of saying such a *maamar*, especially so publicly."

Here is the story of this *maamar* and how the government responded, based on the letter printed alongside the *maamar*:

Mr. Fuchs was a religious Jew living in Moscow and he recalls the events that surrounded the famous *maamar* of the Frierdiker Rebbe in the largest Shul in Moscow in the year 5687.

"It was in Moscow, at the beginning of Adar I¹, that I was summoned to the G.P.U for questioning.

"Is it true that Rabbi Schneerson collects great sums of money to support religious institutions and large portions of these funds go to organizations outside the country for the same purpose? Does he recruit hundreds of young men to spread Judaism throughout the country? And is he indeed respected and obeyed by Chassidim and *misnagdim* alike? All this they wanted to know from me.



"From the style of their questions and manner of speech it was clear to me that they were investigating the Rebbe and that the situation was quite serious.

"I answered them that I have known Rabbi Schneerson for many years as an activist working to better the situation for Jews. I knew his father, who also dedicated his life to all communal affairs and he occasionally would visit the capital.

"I also remember, when I was still a young student learning in Leningrad, seeing how his grandfather² bravely visited the most terrifying ministers at the time, to discuss the pogroms that had been occurring in Kiev and Niezhin. Through his wisdom, wit, and strength of character he was successfully able to calm the raging storm.

"And the Rabbi Schneerson of present is truly a man of spirit. I assure you that if—and again I don't know of such activities—he is supporting religious institutions it is all in accordance with the law and you will not find anything illicit with his activities. I do know that he is now in Moscow but the reason for his visit is unknown to me.

"By the time I returned home, my friends from the *shul* were concerned about my wellbeing and they wanted to know which questions I had been pestered with, because

the 'meeting' had taken longer than usual. I did not want to reveal what had really occurred so I brushed them off with some form of an answer.

"[Being quite fearful of the government's evil intentions] I called an individual who was close to the Rebbe and I advised him that the Rebbe should leave the city that very night and return home.

"The next day, Monday, I met this individual and asked him if the Rebbe had indeed departed. He mumbled some sort of answer and I realized that my advice had been ignored; this pained me greatly.

"On Thursday evening, just a few days later, I was taking a stroll with friends, along the streets of Moscow when we noticed that the Lubavitcher *shul* was illuminated with many candles. We understood that something was going on inside. As we got closer we saw that it was packed from wall to wall and the crowd had spilled over into the alleyways and paths leading to the *shul*. When we inquired as to what was going on, we were told that the Lubavitcher Rebbe is speaking from the *bima* and that following the talk there would be a festive meal to honor Purim Katan, which was that night.

"When I internalized what was going on, a shiver ran through my whole body. I immediately thought how the grandson had inherited the strength and conviction of his grandfather, who also endangered his life on behalf of the Yidden's plight and stood up to the wicked government of his time.

"Mr. Vendil and I ventured inside to try and hear what was being said. An amazing sight caught our eyes; the Rebbe was sitting at the *bima* and talking in a powerful captivating tone, discussing the strength the Yidden had in the times of Purim not to give in to the wicked Haman. He continued to explain that this strength originated from the 24,000 young children who were ready to give up their lives for the sake of their Yiddishkeit. It is the purity of these souls that shatters and destroys our enemies.

"The scene was so electrifying and the way everyone was listening had a strong impression on me; this was despite the obvious dangers surrounding such a talk. I was so captivated that I wanted to stay and hear more. Suddenly, a few suspicious looking men caught my attention as being possible informers, so we quickly slipped out of the *shul*.



By the time I returned home, my friends from the *shul* were concerned about my wellbeing, because the ‘meeting’ had taken longer than usual...

“As we walked away from the *shul*, deeply affected by the scene we had just witnessed, my friend Mr. Vendil, who was more familiar with Chassidim and their way of life, explained to me the impact that such an event would have. “That speech, which was full of *toichen*, fits with the situation of the religious Jews right now and will surely leave its mark.” He then continued, “Chassidim review and repeat every speech, which they call a *maamar*, of their Rebbe. They examine every detail and letter and then they even write it down. Many times the Rebbe himself will transcribe it and publicize it everywhere.”

“A week later I met the head of Yevsektzia³, Mr. Litvakov, and we chatted about various things. During the conversation, the topic of the Lubavitcher Rebbe came up and he complained to me about his ongoing religious activities. ‘He continues to recruit and support the “*klei kodesh*”—rabbonim, *shochtim*, teachers, and *roshei yeshivos* throughout the country,’ he said. ‘He works to establish religious institutions such as *mikvahs*. He establishes *shuls* and schools with teachers. Wherever we turn we feel his presence. All over the country, and even beyond, he has messengers fulfilling his wishes.’

“Mr. Litvakov then proceeded to tell me two stories about the vast net of the Lubavitcher Rebbe’s work, and if they are true they stand as testimony to this great organization.

“The first story he told me was about the Jews of Georgia (Gruzia). The community there was setup with a board that would attend to the needs of the Jewish people. However, at that point all religious institutions in the city had been shut down with the rise of the Yevsektzia. One day a young Ashkenazi⁴ Jew arrived in town and began speaking publicly about the need to re-establish the *mikveh*, *chadarim*, and all the other Jewish centers. He spoke with a perfect Gruzian accent as if he had been born there, and he quoted the laws of the land to support

his case. “The law allows every citizen to practice his religion at his own expense,” he pointed out. He travelled from place to place and pleaded his case. At every speech he made, he would praise and laud the government, which recognized and appreciated the work of the laborers, and he would also stress the need for religious institutions.

“At one of the settlements he visited, the young man began as usual to recite the laws. Present at one of these speeches was a member of the “community board,” who assumed that this visitor was a messenger from the government headquarters. He was deeply affected by what he heard and passionately decided that the “board” would cover all the expenses associated with building the *mikvah*. A short while later this materialized and the *mikveh* was built.


“With that he concluded his first story and then went on with the second one.

“Within two years from when the Communist party took control, there was a Yevsektzia office in practically every city and settlement, and they worked quite effectively. Suddenly, however, things began to change. Young men would arrive in different cities and chase out the Yevsektzia, on the grounds that the religious Jews weren’t doing anything illegal and in fact the law allows citizens to practice their religion. From then the tide began to turn and all their work became undone as schools, *mikvehs*, and *shuls* sprouted up throughout the country.

“After spending a few months in rigorous investigations, the Yevsektzia discovered that this was the work of Rabbi Schneerson. He was sending men across the country and supporting their activities with great sums of money.

“I heard Both of these stories from Mr. Litvakov himself. I then asked him, ‘Is it not true that the law allows religious activities? What great crime has Rabbi Schneerson actually committed?’

“At the G.P.U,’ he replied, “we already know his crimes, and,” he added with anger, “we have decided to uproot him from the very source, and we have already acquired the material we need.”

“Following our conversation, I repeated this to someone who was close to the Rebbe. All that was left was for me to worry and hope that nothing bad comes from this.” 

1. The year 5687 was a leap year
2. Referring to the Rebbe Maharash
3. The Jewish division in the Communist Party
4. The Jews of Gruzia (Georgia) would call the Russian Jews “Ashkenazim.”