

לזכות החייל בצבאות ה'
מאיר שלמה שיחי'
ניו
שיגרום נח"ר לכ"ק אדמו"ר
לרגל יום הולדתו כ"ה מנחם-אב
נדפס ע"י משפחתו שיחי



Secret Communication

As told by:

Reb Mordechai and
Reb Elazar Garelik

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By: Rabbi Mottel Slonim

In 5731, Reb Mordechai Garelik was granted permission to leave the Soviet Union. His parents, however, and his brother Elazar, were forced to remain behind the Iron Curtain. At Reb Mordechai's first *yechidus* with the Rebbe, he wrote a *tzetel* asking for a *bracha* for him and for his family, and he also brought a few photos of the Ohel of the Rebbe's father, Harav Levi Yitzchok.

The Rebbe read the *tzetel* and then held the photos. The Rebbe opened one of the drawers of his desk, took out a magnifying glass, and examined them very closely. Then, in a low voice that almost sounded like the Rebbe was speaking to himself, but loud enough for Reb Mordechai to hear, the Rebbe said: "Is it possible to move the Ohel from there to here, in New York?" Then after a moment, the Rebbe said, "*Zol shoin zein azoi*" (let it stay as is).

Then the Rebbe made a request: "Please write to your father that I want to renovate the Ohel [of my father] and to erect a new *matzeiva*, on the following conditions: 1) The stone should be carved by a Jew who has *Yiras Shomayim*

and is *Shomer Shabbos*, 2) It should have beautiful and clear letters, 3) To keep track of all the costs involved."

The Rebbe wanted it to be done in the best way possible.

Immediately after the *yechidus*, Reb Mordechai wrote a letter to his father and brother.

When the letter arrived, Elazar and his father were already getting hints that they would soon be able to leave the Soviet Union. The government gave them exit visas and told them, "You have a month to leave the country."

In the meantime, Reb Mordechai's father, with some assistance from acquaintances, acquired a big stone for the kever. Finding an engraver who was *Shomer Shabbos* and had *Yiras Shomayim* proved to be quite a challenge. They searched and searched but couldn't find anyone. They looked in Moscow and Leningrad, all to no avail.

Reb Mordechai's father wrote to his cousin, Reb Gershon Ber Jacobson, to ask the Rebbe two questions: 1) Given the current circumstances, should they hire an engraving specialist, even if he wasn't Jewish, or should they hire a Jew



REB MORDECHAI GARELIK (STANDING SECOND FROM LEFT) AS A YOUNG MAN IN RUSSIA. HIS BROTHER ELAZAR IS STANDING ON THE FAR RIGHT.

who was less professional? 2) What should be done with the old tombstone?

The letter was sent to Reb Gershon Ber, but no answers were forthcoming. Meanwhile, the search continued, and eventually a *Shomer Shabbos* Yid was found in Tashkent who could get the job done. He flew to Alma-Ata and started to work on the new *matzeiva*. When they tried to remove the old *matzeiva*, however, it wouldn't budge. They decided to break it down, piece by piece, making room for the new stone. But what should be done with the broken pieces of the old stone? They decided to bury the pieces around the *kever*, and then cover it with a layer of cement. They photographed the scene and left.

A few weeks later, Reb Mordechai's father and brother left Russia.

When they came to the Rebbe for the first time in 5732, they stayed with their cousin Reb Gershon Ber. They asked him about the letter they had sent to him for the Rebbe, "Did you even receive it?" they asked. "Of course, I received your

letter!" he answered. "I sent it to the Rebbe right away, and shortly afterward I received a response.

"The Rebbe's response was, Regarding the fact that your cousin is having difficulty finding a proper engraver, the adage is well known—'ג'עט ומצאת תאמ'ר'. Regarding what should be done with the old stone, they should break it into pieces and bury them near the Ohel." Amazingly, this was exactly what they had done; without ever having received the Rebbe's response!

When Reb Elazar went into *yechidus* with his parents, the Rebbe said, "I received your *duch*." The Rebbe then thanked Rabbi Garelik for renovating the Ohel, repeating three times, "Forgive me, I don't want to take away the *zechus* of what you did for my father's Ohel, but please understand that as a son is obligated to honor his parents, I must pay for everything. Please give a full account to the *Mazkirus* and everything will be repaid." **1**