

לעילוי נשמת
מרת לאה בת הרה"ח ר' אליהו נחום ע"ה בלאק
נלב"ע שבת קודש כ"ה אלול ה'תשע"ג
ת"נ צ"ב ה'
נדפס ע"י
משפחתה שיחיו

A Simcha
in the
Royal Court

The CHASUNA of the
REBBE RASHAB *and*
REBBETZIN SHTERNA SARA

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In honor of the 150th anniversary of the Rebbe Rashab's *chasuna*—11 Elul 5635–5785—we present a comprehensive account of the *shidduch*, wedding, and celebrations surrounding them. As much as possible, the details have been drawn from the *sichos* and writings of our Rabbeim in order to ensure accuracy.¹

The Shidduch

The Tzemach Tzedek was known to have concerned himself with the wellbeing of his grandchildren, personally involving himself in their growth and development.² Yet, he showed particular affection for the Rebbe Rashab. Already from the time the Rebbe Rashab began attending *cheder* at the age of three, his grandfather would give him special attention and would ask him daily about his progress in learning.

When the Rebbe Rashab was four years old, the Tzemach Tzedek requested that his parents arrange a *shidduch* for him, suggesting the younger daughter of Harav Yosef Yitzchak (the Tzemach Tzedek's son) as a match.³

Harav Yosef Yitzchak, the Rebbe of Avrutch, was a son-in-law of the Rebbe of Cherkas, scion of the Chernobyl dynasty. At the behest of his father-in-law, Harav Yosef Yitzchak had accepted to serve as Rebbe in the community of Avrutch.

Chassidim relate that the *shidduch* was originally brought up by the Tzemach Tzedek simply referring to

his two young grandchildren as a *chosson* and *kallah* (a comment which, said by an ordinary person, would be taken as a cute remark). Upon hearing his father's words, the Avrutcher asked that perhaps he (the Rebbe Rashab) would not grow up to be worthy of her. To which the Tzemach Tzedek replied, "This child (*katan*) will grow up to become greater than you!"⁴

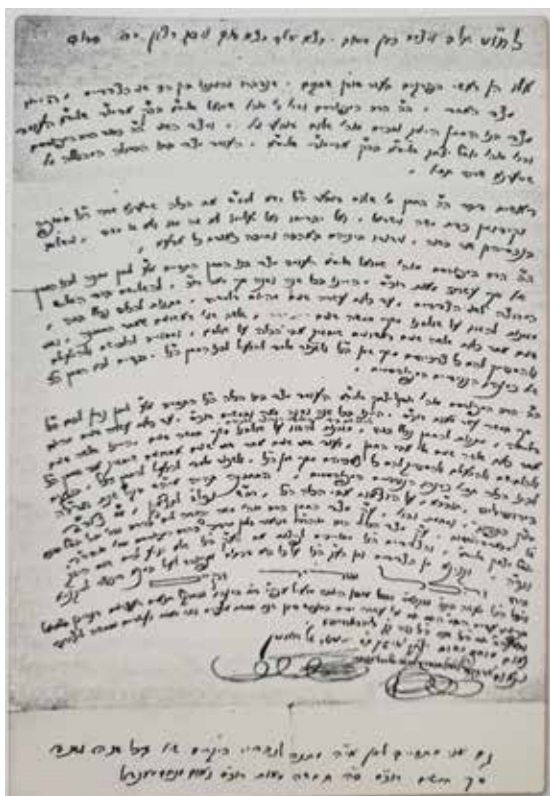
On 10 Sivan 5625, the *shidduch* between the Rebbe Rashab and Rebbetzin Shterna Sarah was finalized with the writing of the *Shtar Hat'noim* (engagement contract outlining the responsibilities of the two families). One copy was written for the *chosson's* parents to have, and another for the parents of the *kallah*. Both originals have been preserved to this day, and through them, many *halachos* and *minhagim* have been clarified.⁵ They celebrated the engagement with a *seuda*, joined by the Tzemach Tzedek and his sons—the brothers of the *mechutanim*.⁶

Preparations For The Wedding

In the *Shtar Hat'noim*, the wedding was scheduled to take place ten years later—in the summer of 5635—when the *chosson* would be fourteen years old, and the *kallah* fifteen. Due to the lengthy engagement period—and with the belief in the imminent arrival of Moshiach—Yerushalayim was listed as the wedding location.⁷

As the designated time drew nearer, a precise location was chosen for this auspicious event: the city of Avrutch—hometown of the *kallah*.

Shabbos Parshas Shoftim, 4 Elul, immediately preceded the journey of the Rebbe Rashab and his entourage to Avrutch, and the celebration began in full force. On the



ONE OF TWO COPIES OF THE SHSTAR HAT'NOIM WITH THE TZEMACH TZEDEK'S POSTSCRIPT ON THE BOTTOM, PROMISING TO GIVE HIS GRANDCHILDREN 50 RUBLES EACH YEAR FOR A TOTAL OF TEN YEARS. NOTE THE LARGE LETTERS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE SHSTAR, WHICH SAY THAT THE WEDDING WILL TAKE PLACE IN YERUSHALAYIM.



TZIYUN MARKING THE APPROXIMATE BURIAL SITE OF HARAV YOSEF YITZCHAK OF AVRUTCH—WHERE THE LOCAL JEWISH CEMETERY ONCE STOOD AND WHERE THE JEWS OF AVRUTCH WERE MURDERED DURING THE HOLOCAUST.

LIBRARY OF AGUDAS CHASIDEI CHABAD

THE MECHUTANIM—THE AVRUTCHER REBBE

Harav Yosef Yitzchak, the fifth son of the Tzemach Tzedek, was born in the year 5582.⁸ He was an exceptional *masmid* and *baal midos tovos*, and possessed remarkable humility.⁹

In 5596, he married Chana, the daughter of the Cherkasser Rebbe.¹⁰ Their wedding took place in Hornosteipel—the residence of the Cherkasser Rebbe at the time—and was well attended by the great Chassidim of Chernobyl as well as Lubavitch.

He was also a great *oved*, as illustrated by this story that his brother, the Rebbe Maharash, related:¹¹

When his father-in-law inquired about his approach to davening, he replied, “To the extent that is possible, I am mispalel b’tzibur (in public—typically referring to a minyan).” The Cherkasser was pleased to hear that his son-in-law davened with the minyan, unlike the prevalent practice in Lubavitch of davening at length.

Once, after davening, the Cherkasser called for Harav Yosef Yitzchak. To his surprise, the messenger returned empty-handed—Harav Yosef Yitzchak was still davening. After a long while, he sent for his son-in-law again, but he was still not finished. And the same occurred a third time!

When he finally did arrive, his father-in-law asked him, “Didn’t you tell me that you are mispalel b’tzibur?” Harav Yosef Yitzchak explained his behavior based on a Torah that his father (the Tzemach Tzedek) had told him in the name of his grandfather (the Alter Rebbe): Tefila b’tzibur means to gather (לצבור) all of the kochos hanefesh (faculties of the soul) and all of the nitzotzos (G-dly sparks in one’s environment). He concluded that this avoda takes him a long time.¹²

For the next twenty-three years, he alternated between being supported by the Tzemach Tzedek in Lubavitch and the Cherkasser Rebbe in Hornosteipel.

In 5614, the Czarist government implemented aggressive decrees as part of their campaign to assimilate the Jews of Russia. Hoping to use the Tzemach Tzedek’s stature to bolster their legitimacy, a secular gymnasium was opened in Lubavitch, and two of the

Schneerson grandchildren were forced to attend. Afraid of having one of his children sacrificed, Harav Yosef Yitzchak fled with his family to Hornosteipel, presumably planning to remain there.¹³

As the extended family grew, it became increasingly difficult for the Cherkasser Rebbe to support them. In 5619, the community in Avrutch—a city near Hornosteipel where the Cherkasser Rebbe had a following—requested that Harav Yosef Yitzchak be their *rav*. His father-in-law strongly encouraged Harav Yosef Yitzchak to accept, since this would assure Harav Yosef Yitzchak’s financial independence.

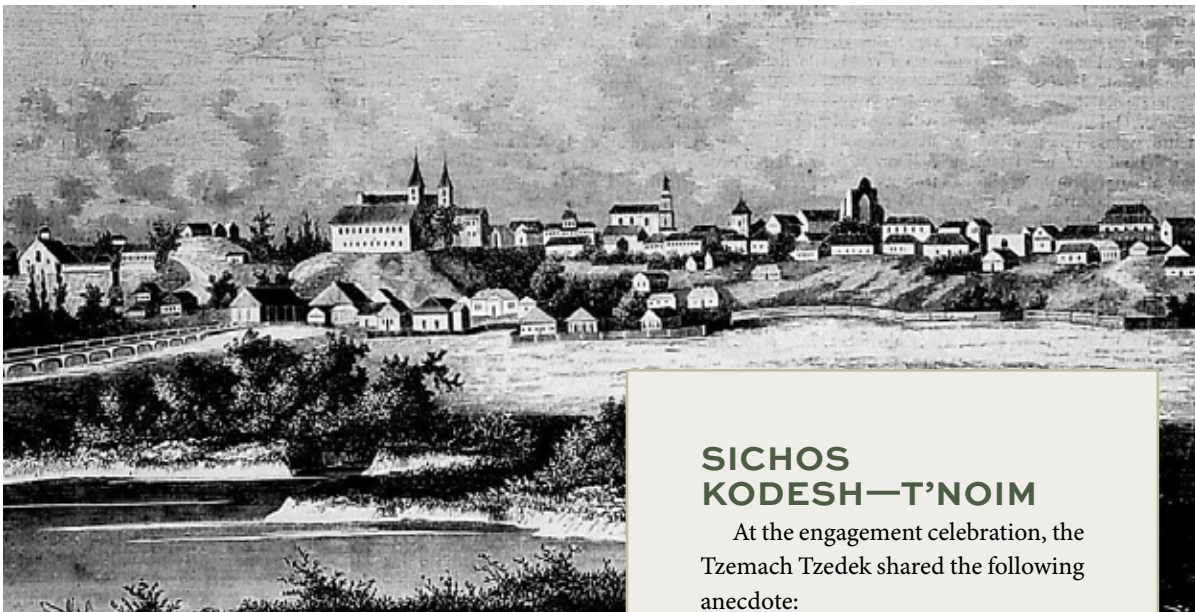
Not everyone in Avrutch welcomed this appointment. Chassidim of other Chernobyl branches had planned to bring one of Reb Aharon Chernobyl’s children as *rav*, and felt that Harav Yosef Yitzchak’s candidacy was a deliberate offense.

Prompted by correspondence from these opponents, the Tzemach Tzedek composed two letters to his son. In both letters, he advised against accepting any rabbinical position, especially when so entangled in *machlokes*. The Tzemach Tzedek begged Harav Yosef Yitzchak to return to Lubavitch, where his talents could be utilized, assuring him full financial support.¹⁴

Ultimately, under pressure from his father-in-law, Harav Yosef Yitzchak took up the position in Avrutch. Although it seems that his official role was *rav*, he served as a *magid meisharim* (the title given to a Rebbe in Chernobyl); the curious result was that a son of the Tzemach Tzedek essentially served as a *Chagas Rebbe*.¹⁵

For the next eighteen years, he faithfully guided his Chassidim. He provided them guidance in all matters of *gashmius* as well as *ruchnius*, and assisted them through supernatural channels, earning a reputation throughout the Vohlin region as a miracle-worker. Some unique individuals even merited to hear *maamarei Chassidus* from him in the style of Chabad.¹⁶

In the month of Tishrei 5637, Harav Yosef Yitzchak fell ill and, two months later, on 18 Kislev, was *nistalek*.¹⁷ He was succeeded in Avrutch by his son Harav Nochum Dovber.



CITY OF AVRUTCH AROUND THE TIME OF THE WEDDING.

Shabbos-ufruf alone, the Rebbe Maharash said Chassidus three times!

The Siyum

For various reasons, most notably due to the weak health of the Rebbe Maharash, he was unable to make the long journey to the wedding.¹⁸ Instead, he escorted the *chosson* till Achremeve (a village near Lubavitch) along with many Chassidim.

The entourage stopped in the fields of Achremeve, where the Rebbe Rashab made a *siyum* on the entire Mishnayos.¹⁹ There were no chairs in the field, aside from a small bench. The Rebbe Maharash sat down on the bench, but a *chosson* also needs to sit! (It is unclear if this was a directive of the Rebbe Maharash, or if the Chassidim understood this on their own.) Seeing the predicament, a *yungerman* bent down on all fours, creating an improvised seat for the *chosson*.²⁰

The Rebbe Maharash said a *maamar* in honor of the *siyum*, taking the final *mishnah* in Shas as the *dibur hamaschil*. He then announced, “They heard this *maamar* in the *pamalya shel maala* as well,” and added that he would not be ashamed to recite it before his father—the Tzemach Tzedek—in *Gan Eden Ha’elyon*.²¹

After a Seudas Mitzvah in honor of the *siyum*, the Rebbe Maharash returned to Lubavitch, while the Rebbe Rashab continued to Avrutch, accompanied by his mother and about twenty Chassidim.²²

SICHOS KODESH—T’NOIM

At the engagement celebration, the Tzemach Tzedek shared the following anecdote:

In the first days of the Alter Rebbe’s arrival in Mezritch, he heard a number of stories of the Baal Shem Tov related to *ahavas Yisroel*.

In general, the Jewish nation is composed of two categories. Members of the first are simple folk who cannot learn. There are multiple levels within this group, but they are all in the same general category. The second group is the *lomdim* (scholars). Within their ranks too, there are many levels, but they as well are all in the same general category.

“The Mitzvah of *ahavas Yisroel*,” says the Baal Shem Tov, “is toward both groups equally:

“We must love the simple folk because they are, unfortunately, simple folk. And yet, they believe in Hashem and his Torah with such pure, refined, and sincere hearts.

“And we must love the *lomdim* because they are great in Torah knowledge—and the holy Gemara tells us that the greater one is, the greater their *yetzer hara* is—so the *lomdim* have, unfortunately, such enormous, fiery *yetzer haras*. And yet, they are—*boruch Hashem—ehrliche Yidden* (pious Jews), so we must love them.”²³



SEFER 'DRUSHEI CHASUNA' CONTAINING THE MAAMARIM RECITED IN CONNECTION WITH THE CHASUNA.

The Wedding

On Motzei Shabbos Kodesh, Yud-Aleph Elul 5635, the Rebbe Rashab married Rebbetzin Shterna Sarah in Avrutch, hometown of his holy uncle, the father of the *kallah*.

Because few Lubavitcher Chassidim were present in Avrutch—and due to a dearth of historical records from the entire vicinity of Avrutch—little information was transcribed about the wedding. As such, we are forced to rely primarily on word of mouth.

By all accounts, it appears that—upon the Rebbe Maharash's directive—the Rebbe Rashab refused to don a *shtreimel* for the *chasuna*²⁴—an action which caused some measure of displeasure to the Chassidim of Avrutch as well as the Avrutcher Rebbe himself. Some accounts go so far as to say that the wedding was initially scheduled for Erev Shabbos, and due to this saga was postponed till Motzei Shabbos.

When the Rebbe Rashab returned to Lubavitch—after *sheva brachos*—his father reiterated this directive. Placing a *shtreimel* on the Rebbe Rashab's head, he exclaimed,

LEI"V MEIVIN

Despite being unable to attend the wedding, the Rebbe Maharash was extremely elated throughout the entire wedding period. His joy was expressed by the incredible number of times he said Chassidus.

From the *Shabbos-ufruf* until after the *shiv'as y'mei hamishteh*, the Rebbe Maharash said a total of thirty-two *maamarim*! Upon the couple's arrival in Lubavitch, the Rebbe Maharash told his son, "I have regards for you from my father, grandfather, and great-grandfather—with a *leiv meivin* (lit. understanding heart)". *Leiv* has the *gematria* of thirty-two, hence, the number of *maamarim* that were said.²⁵

Currently, only twenty-one of the thirty-two *maamarim* are accounted for; three were said on the *Shabbos-ufruf*, one of them being recited during the daytime *seuda*. The next three were recited on 5 Elul at the Siyum Hamishnayos celebration, which included a *seuda* as well.

Seven through nine were said on the following

Shabbos, Parshas Ki Seitzei, before Kabbalas Shabbos. Another nine were recited at various times throughout Shabbos Parshas Ki Savo, Chai Elul.

The nineteenth and twentieth *maamarim* we know of were delivered on Sunday 19 Elul, apparently upon the return of the *chossan* and *kallah*. The final *maamar* of the thirty-two—*Sos Tasis*—seems to have also been said at that time.

Chassidim relate that Reb Tzvi Nota Gnesin—the renowned Staradover Rav—was in Lubavitch during that time, and was overwhelmed by the Chassidus being shared. By the time the Chassidim made it to their lodgings to review and process the latest *maamar*, they were already summoned for the next one!

When he brought up the issue, the Rebbe Maharash replied that words of Chassidus purify the atmosphere. [Even if the Chassidim couldn't remember (or even comprehend) the *maamarim*, their recitation alone affected the world.]²⁶

FAREWELL OF THE REBBE MAHARASH

While in Achremeve, as the Rebbe Maharash took leave before the wedding, he told the Rebbe Rashab, “Now (in *galus*), the *giluy* is from the level of *mochin d’ima* (lit. intellect of the mother, a reference to the *Sefirah* of *Binah*), therefore your mother is traveling with you (to the wedding). In the times of Moshiach, when the *giluy* will be from the level of *mochin d’aba* (lit. intellect of the father, referring to *Chochmah*), I will be there as well.”

In the wagon, there lay a small box, and the Rebbe Maharash asked about its contents. Upon being told that it was a hat—a gift for the *kallah*—he requested to see it. The Rebbe Maharash took the hat and (seemingly, as a protest against following the latest fashion) removed its stylish adornments (most likely referring to feathers).²⁷

The Rebbe Maharash also shared praises of his father, the Tzemach Tzedek, and related a scene he had once witnessed. As a boy of seven, he heard how the Tzemach Tzedek recited Tehillim. Although he recited just two *kapitelach* of Tehillim, this *avoda*

took him two and a half hours, throughout which time he wept like a child. Even at his young age, the Rebbe Maharash could see that something incredible was taking place, and was gripped with awe and trepidation.

He continued by revealing that the Alter Rebbe said Chassidus to the Tzemach Tzedek in his sleep, and that the Tzemach Tzedek said Chassidus to the Rebbe Maharash as well, as recently as that week! The Rebbe Maharash proceeded to share the *maamar* that he had been told, but was cut off in the middle, following which the Rebbe Maharash said, “This Chassidus would take a year to say”...²⁸

A chossid of Harav Chaim Shneur Zalman of Liadi—the Rebbe Maharash’s brother—happened to be passing through Achremeve on his way home from Liadi. Seeing the gathering of Lubavitcher Chassidim, and upon hearing that the Rebbe Maharash was there as well, he went over to join. Hearing of this guest, the Rebbe Maharash asked him, “Are you traveling from Liadi?” When he responded in the affirmative, the Rebbe Maharash told him, “Show your tongue, and I will tell you which Chassidus you heard there (in Liadi),” and so it was...²⁹

“In Lubavitch, we must wear a ‘round hat’ (*shtreimel*).” Throughout the Rebbe Rashab’s life, he continued this practice—the *shtreimel* was reserved for the holy atmosphere of Lubavitch.³⁰

At any rate, without firsthand accounts, we can only imagine what took place at the *chasuna* in Avrutch.

In contrast, some recollections of Chassidim who witnessed the great joy of the Rebbe Maharash in Lubavitch have been preserved in great detail through the *sichos* of the Frierdiker Rebbe.

Celebrating From Afar

Not only did the Rebbe Maharash mark the wedding day itself, festive *seudos* were held in Lubavitch throughout the entire wedding period as well.³¹

In this heightened joy—and with the *chosson* not being present—the Rebbe Maharash used the opportunity to speak to the Chassidim of the Rebbe Rashab’s qualities.

On one occasion, he said, “*Rashab iz masig ah inyan*

la’amitaso. Chassidim vinshen zich hasogas hamochin, er vays az der ikar iz shibud haleiv. Un az m’hot shibud haleiv, git men hasogas hamochin mil’maala. Iz damols di hasogo an’andere un di mochin andere.” (Rashab understands things truthfully. Chassidim wish for themselves to have understanding of the mind; he knows that the main thing is control of the heart. When one has control of the heart, they are gifted understanding of the mind from above. Then, the understanding is of another caliber, and the mind is of another caliber).³²

Reb Abba Person recalled another occasion where the Rebbe Maharash praised his son further, “Do you know who he is? As the Rambam³³ describes, ‘with his mind, he overcomes his natural inclinations at all times, and he possesses a broad and correct mental outlook.’ And as it says in that halacha, ‘know that Hashem grants prophecy to man.’” (As if to imply that the Rebbe Rashab has the qualities to receive *nevuah*.)

From that point, the Chassidim regarded the Rebbe Rashab with newfound respect.³⁴

THE MECHUTANIM—THE CHERKASSER REBBE

The Mezritcher Maggid had once said that Moshiach would descend either from his older *talmidim*, or from the younger *talmidim*. With the youngest being the Alter Rebbe, and the oldest Reb Nochum Chernobyler, the Alter Rebbe wished to establish a lineage that would unite them both.³⁵

To this end, the Alter Rebbe traveled to Chernobyl to propose a *shidduch* between his granddaughter and one of Reb Nochum's grandsons. Reb Nochum readily accepted the offer and left it to the Alter Rebbe to choose which grandson he preferred.

He brought the Alter Rebbe to his home where his young grandchildren were asleep. The Alter Rebbe walked among the cribs, placing his holy hand over each baby's head to "feel" the nature of their mind. Upon reaching one particular child, he declared the boy suitable in his eyes.

Not long thereafter, Reb Boruch Mezhibuzher came to arrange a *shidduch* with the Chernobyler as well. When he expressed his wish to make a match with the very same grandson, he was informed that a *shidduch* had already been arranged for the child with "the Litvak." (The Alter Rebbe was known among the *talmidei haMaggid* as the Litvak, being the only one of them from Lithuania.)³⁶

This child was Harav Yaakov Yisroel Twerski, who would later become the Cherkasser Rebbe.

Harav Yaakov Yisroel was born in 5554, the third son of Reb Mottel Chernobyler.³⁷ On 6 Shevat 5571, he married Rebbetzin Devorah Leah, daughter of the Mittlerer Rebbe.³⁸

The couple settled in Liadi, where Harav Yaakov Yisroel had the opportunity to absorb the teachings of Chassidus Chabad. Initially, he hesitated to attend the *maamarim* of the Alter Rebbe, as he did not have permission from his father to learn Chassidus other than his own. The Alter Rebbe advised Harav Yaakov Yisroel to ask his father directly, and Reb Mottel gave his wholehearted consent.

Some Chernobyler *kano'im* vehemently insisted that although Harav Yaakov Yisroel attended every *maamar*—out of respect for his wife's grandfather—he did not actually listen to them. However, even a cursory glance at the Cherkasser's Torah (collected



REB MORDECHAI
DOVBER TWERSKY
(5599–5663),
THE REBBE IN
HORNOSTEIPEL.

and transcribed by his grandson in a *sefer* entitled '*Emek Tefillah*'), reveals that he was deeply influenced by Chabad Chassidus.³⁹

Their peaceful life in Liadi was abruptly ended by the French invasion of Russia in the summer of 5572. Together with the extended family, they fled from Napoleon's advance, and suffered the *histalkus* of the Alter Rebbe. After a year of wandering, the *chatzer* of Chabad found a new home in the village of Lubavitch.

Until the Mittlerer Rebbe's *histalkus* in 5588, Harav Yaakov Yisroel remained in the Lubavitcher *chatzer*. During this time, he also developed a unique relationship with his brother-in-law and *chavrusa*—the Tzemach Tzedek.⁴⁰ In 5588, he moved back to Chernobyl to live with his father. Already within his father's lifetime, Harav Yaakov Yisroel was ready to guide Chassidim of his own. In 5594, with his father's consent and blessing, he established his *chatzer* in Hornosteipel.⁴¹

In 5620, he relocated to Cherkas and, three years later, sent his grandson—Reb Mordechai Dovber Twersky—to be his successor in Hornosteipel.⁴²

The Cherkasser Rebbe was *nistalek* on Shabbos Parshas Ki Seitzei—13 Elul 5636⁴³—leaving behind his teachings and an illustrious line of worthy descendants. Indeed, many branches of the Twerski family today are rooted in Cherkas.

Although his *histalkus* took place a full year after the Rebbe Rashab's wedding, there is no evidence that he attended the wedding.⁴⁴ It is possible that due to his advanced age, he was unable to make the long journey from Cherkas to Avrutch.



THE 'CHATZER' (COURTYARD) IN LUBAVITCH.

Shabbos Sheva Brachos

The Rebbe Maharash had instructed that the *chosson* and *kallah* return to Lubavitch for Shabbos. However, the *mechutan* was reluctant to have them leave so fast. He delayed their departure by several hours, ensuring that they wouldn't make it to Lubavitch in time for Shabbos.⁴⁵

Nonetheless, the Shabbos *sheva brachos* was celebrated with great fanfare in Lubavitch—while the *chosson* and *kallah* spent Shabbos on the road between Avrutch and Lubavitch.

Reb Dov Zev (“Bere Volf”) Kozevnikov—the *rav* of Yekaterinoslav—was one of the Chassidim present to partake in the Rebbe Maharash’s *simcha*. He vividly described to the Friediker Rebbe the great joy that was felt:

In the back of the Rebbe Maharash’s home, there was a veranda with steps leading to a large garden.

The *seuda* was set up in this garden, and many Chassidim participated. The Rebbe Maharash was overjoyed. If his face was usually radiant, now it positively shone.

After addressing the Chassidim about the unique energy of Shabbos—especially Chai Elul—he instructed that a particular *niggun* be sung in unison and repeated

three times. In order to ensure that the *niggun* would indeed be sung in the desired manner, he appointed Elya “Obbeler” (Virabaitchik) and Tzadok “Homler” (Nechamkin) to serve as conductors.

Following the *niggun*, the Rebbe Maharash said a *maamar*, which was immediately followed by a spirited dance. After dancing for a short while, the Rebbe Maharash retired to his veranda. From the window, he watched the Chassidim continue to dance in a circle. Turning to his son and son-in-law (Raza and Reb Moshe Leib Ginsburg) he remarked, “*Kuk kinder vi Chassidim freien zich b’simcha shel mitzvah. Un azoy velen Yidden tantzen in di gassen az Moshiach vet kumen*” (Look, children, how Chassidim celebrate a *simcha shel mitzvah*. This is how Yidden will dance in the streets when Moshiach will come).

Due to the overcast skies on Shabbos day, the formal events were forced indoors. The kiddush after Shacharis was held in the “big *zal*”—a shul built by the Rebbe Maharash on the location of the Tzemach Tzedek’s home (this building would later serve as the *zal* of Tomchei Temimim).

The Rebbe Maharash said a *maamar* (*Ani L’dodi*), and then explained that dancing in a circle is a Chassidic innovation—introduced in the times of the Baal Shem Tov. The

first stage of revelation [of *Elokus*, i.e. through the Baal Shem Tov] is in a mode of “*makif*” [lit.: circular] with a powerful energy, which by nature, cannot be contained and internalized. The Alter Rebbe—with *mesiras nefesh* for Chassidus and for Chassidim—brought this revelation into the mode of *pnimiyus* (an internalized form). Now when Chassidim dance in a circle they have the energy of *makif*, which also affects their *pnimiyus*. The Rebbe Maharash left, and the Chassidim took to the courtyard and danced in dozens of circles.

Afterwards, the Rebbe Maharash joined Chassidim for the *seudas Shabbos*. During the *seuda*, he continued to speak about the accomplishments of the Baal Shem Tov and the Alter Rebbe—specifically in the *avoda* of Elul, and said a *maamar*.⁴⁶

The celebration came to a crescendo on Motzei Shabbos when the couple finally arrived. The Rebbe Maharash was ecstatic. The many Chassidim who greeted them—including prominent *rabbanim*—had removed their *zupetzes* (kapotes), and were dancing together with their *tzitzis* revealed.⁴⁷

The couple made their home in Lubavitch, where they were to be supported by the Rebbe Maharash for the next few years, as outlined in the *T’noim*. Throughout the next few years, the Rebbe Rashab—undisturbed by communal activities—kept an intense schedule of learning *nigleh*, Chassidus, and *avodas hatefillah*.

The Significance of It All

The wedding day of a *nossi*—and its anniversary every year—is a very important and all-encompassing day in their life. Through the *nossi*, this day holds utmost importance for all their generation as well.

The day chosen by our Rabbeim for this momentous occasion was in the month of Elul. Therefore, aside from its significance as with any wedding day of one of our Rabbeim, it inspires us specifically in the *avoda* of Elul—uniting ourselves with Hashem in a deep, loving relationship (*ani l’dodi v’dodi li*).

The Rebbe instructed that this inspiration should be actualized in the practical *avoda* of

TRUE HEIGHTS

There are two anecdotes, related by Chassidim, about Rebbetzin Shterna Sarah’s transition to Lubavitch:

After the wedding, an issue bothered the Rebbe Rashab—his father’s absence at the *chasuna* also meant the absence of his *brachos*. He instructed his Rebbetzin to request that her father-in-law give her the *brachos* she would have received under the *chuppah*.

When Rebbetzin Shterna Sarah presented her request, the Rebbe Maharash noted that the hat she was wearing was in the latest style. He agreed to give her his *bracha*, provided she would be willing to cut out the feather from her hat. She agreed and did as he said, and the Rebbe Maharash blessed her.⁴⁸

Arriving in Lubavitch, Rebbetzin Shterna Sarah quickly realized that she was quite short in comparison to her tall cousins, now in-laws. Addressing her possible feelings of inferiority, the Rebbe Maharash encouraged her, saying, “Don’t feel down, we see that short trees are very good for fruit.”⁴⁹ Perhaps these prophetic words symbolized that their “fruit”—the Frieddiker Rebbe—would be extraordinarily great indeed.



EARLIEST EXTANT PHOTOGRAPH OF REBBETZIN SHTERNA SARA.

Elul—which correspond to the practical elements of a wedding. Additions should be made in Torah (both *nigleh* and Chassidus, and particularly in *maamarim* on the topic of *chasuna*), *avodas hatefillah*, and *gemilus chasadim* (physical tzedakah, as well as spiritual kindness through disseminating Torah, Yiddishkeit, and Chassidus)—corresponding to the three methods of *kiddushin*. This will usher in the ultimate wedding—between Hashem and his nation—in the era of Moshiach.⁵⁰ **T**

1. In the preparation of this article, we were greatly assisted by information published in “Nissuei Hanesi'im” by Rabbi Zalman Hertzfel.
2. Hayom Yom 8 Teves.
3. Chanoch Lanaar pp. 8–9.
4. Migdal Oz (Mondshine) p. 221.
5. Seder T'noim Eirusin V'nisuin (Levine) p. 43ff.
6. Likkutei Dibburim vol. 2 (new edition), p. 417.
7. In Seder T'noim Eirusin V'nisuin (p. 68), he asserts that typically Beis Harav would write the actual wedding location in the T'noim, and only in the case of a lengthy engagement would they write Yerushalayim.
8. Hakria V'hakedusha vol. 15 (Kislev 5702), p. 3. In Sefer Hasichos 5697 (p. 258), the Frierdiker Rebbe speaks of his bris being in 5583.
9. Avos Hachassidus ch. 4, printed in Hatomim, Kislev 5696, p. 45.
10. B'nei HaTzemach Tzedek (Bloy) p. 186.
11. Avos Hachassidus, *ibid.* Likkutei Sichos vol. 2, p. 477.
12. Description of the ending is based on Likkutei Sichos. In Avos Hachassidus, the Frierdiker Rebbe relates the ending with slight differences.
13. Sefer Hasichos Kayitz 5700, p. 147.
14. Igros Kodesh Tzemach Tzedek pp. 146-151.
15. Hakria V'hakedusha *ibid.*
16. Beis Rebbi section 3 ch. 8, p. 123.
17. Hakria V'hakedusha *ibid.*
18. Avos Hachassidus *ibid.*
19. Toras Shmuel - Drushei Chasuna (new edition), p. 370.
20. Toras Sholom - Sefer Hasichos p. 188.
21. Toras Shmuel, *ibid.*
22. Reshimas Hayoman p. 288.
23. Likkutei Dibburim *ibid.*, p. 418.
24. See Migdal Oz p. 221.
25. Sefer Hasichos 5704 p. 173. Sefer Hatoldos Admur Maharash p. 72.
26. Migdal Oz p. 214.
27. Toras Sholom, *ibid.*
28. Toras Shmuel, *ibid.*
29. Migdal Oz, *ibid.*
30. Sefer Hasichos 5704 pp. 140–141. When the “light” of Lubavitch was needed elsewhere, an exception was made, and the *shtreimel* was worn even outside of Lubavitch.



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31. Reshimas Hayoman *ibid.*
32. Sefer Hasichos 5706, p. 10.
33. Hilchos Yesodei Hatorah 7:1.
34. Sefer Hasichos 5704, p. 173.
35. Interestingly, this merging of Chabad with Chernobyl repeated itself many times over: Harav Yaakov Yisroel married the daughter of the Mitteler Rebbe. Their daughter married the son of the Tzemach Tzedek. And their daughter married the Rebbe Rashab.
36. Zichronosai (Sasonkin) p. 222ff. There it states that the Alter Rebbe went to suggest the shidduch with Reb Motte Chernobyl (instead of Reb Nochum), but for many reasons this seems to be a mistake.
37. Rabbeinu Hakadosh Meihornosteipel p. 19.
38. Seder T'noim Eirusin V'nisuin p. 32ff.
39. In Rabbeinu Hakadosh Meihornosteipel, the story is brought with slight variations.
40. See for example Reshimas Hayoman p. 74.
41. B'nei Hatzemach Tzedek (Bloy) p. 457.
42. Rabbeinu Hakadosh Meihornosteipel p. 19.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 23.
44. See Igros Kodesh vol. 22, p. 31.
45. Toras Sholom - Sefer Hasichos pp. 187–188.
46. Likkutei Dibburim vol. 1 (new edition), p. 68ff.
47. Toras Sholom *ibid.*
48. Shmu'os Vesipurim vol. 1, pp. 78–79.
49. Lsheima Ozen — Rebbe Rashab story #8.
50. Adapted from Shabbos Parshas Ki Savo 5749; Sefer Hasichos 5749 vol. 2, p. 688ff.