

לזכות הילד
ישראל שלום נ"י
לרגל יום הולדתו י"ז חשוון

יה"ר שיגדל לתורה לחופה ולמעשים
טובים מתוך בריאות נכונה ושפע בגו"ר
לנח"ר כ"ק אדמו"ר והוריו הי"ו

COMPILED BY: RABBI YOSSI KATZ
WRITTEN BY: RABBI ZELIG KATZMAN

P I N P O I N T S

STORIES OF THE REBBE'S
REACH AND IMPACT AROUND THE GLOBE

URUGUAY



URUGUAY HAS HAD A JEWISH PRESENCE EVER SINCE THE 16TH CENTURY, WHEN MANY JEWS FLED THE SPANISH INQUISITION TO SAFER SHORES. THE JEWISH POPULATION PEAKED IN THE 1960S AT ABOUT 50,000, MOST OF THEM LIVING IN THE CAPITAL CITY OF MONTEVIDEO. AS WE WILL SEE, THE FRIERDIKER REBBE AND THE REBBE TOOK GREAT INTEREST IN URUGUAY'S JEWISH COMMUNITY, ASSISTING WHENEVER POSSIBLE.

THE RABBEIM AND THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OF URUGUAY

In the month of Adar 5703 (1943), the Frierdiker Rebbe wrote to a young man named Rabbi Tzvi Yehuda Feigelstock, whose parents lived in Uruguay. The Frierdiker Rebbe asked him to notify his father that he was interested in hearing about the state of the Jewish community and the school, and the spiritual state of the war refugees there.¹

An interesting anecdote is found regarding the construction of a new community mikvah in 5710:

In a booklet of halachos compiled by one of the local rabbonim in Montevideo, published by the the “*Vaad Ha'ir L'chol Inyonei Hadas*” (city's committee for religious matters), the publishers discuss the state of the fundraiser for the local mikvah building. Bemoaning the fact that most non-local organizations ignored their appeals for help, they single out several individuals, including, “the holy tzaddik, the [Frierdiker] Lubavitcher Rebbe o.b.m., who offered us much encouragement with his heartfelt letter and contribution of \$200...”

Over the years, the Rebbe sent several shlichim to assist the Jewish community, including Rabbi Hershel Chitrik, Rabbi Mordechai Zajac, Rabbi Berel Baumgarten, and bochorim on Merkos Shlichus.

In an issue of *Kovetz Lubavitch* published in 5716,² a report appeared about the visit of the Rebbe's shliach, Rabbi Mordechai Zajac, over Rosh Hashanah in Montevideo, the capital of Uruguay, to strengthen the Jewish community there. He met with Rabbi Katz, one of the local Rabbis, and disseminated various publications from Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch. With the help of “our friend, Reb Dovid Dovid Shalmyuk” he succeeded in founding several shiurim in Chassidus for local youth in Uruguay.

Additionally, in the early 5720s, Rabbi Yona and Rochel Slapochnik were sent by the Rebbe to Uruguay to teach in the local Jewish school; a post they held for 11 years.



BOOKLET PUBLISHED BY THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OF URUGUAY ACKNOWLEDGING THE FRIERDIKER REBBE'S CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS THEIR MIKVAH CAMPAIGN.

¹ 5710-1950, 5716-1956, 5720s-1960s



THE REBBE SENDS SHLUCHIM

In the 5740s, the Jewish community in Montevideo requested that the Rebbe send a shliach to help strengthen their community. After sending Merkos Shlichus *bochurim*, a permanent position was offered to one of the Merkos Shluchim—Rabbi Eliezer Shemtov, who was getting married at the time, in the winter of 5745. When the Shemtovs wrote to the Rebbe, asking whether they should begin their shlichus right away or first spend time in Crown Heights, where Rabbi Shemtov would study at the Kollel, as is the norm, the Rebbe responded by circling, “לנסוע מיד” (leave immediately). And so, on 7 Adar 5745, Rabbi and Mrs. Shemtov set out to establish the first permanent presence of Chabad in Uruguay, building an array of programs and institutions that continue as the beating heart of the Jewish community of Uruguay till today.



“WHAT DOES SEVEN MEAN?”

An interesting story that occurred with the Rebbe and one of Uruguay’s important political leaders:

In 5749, Rabbi Shemtov was visiting a friend in the hospital when he met Senator Luis Alberto Lacalle de Herrera of Uruguay, who was visiting the same friend. A short while later, Rabbi Shemtov received a phone call from the senator, saying that he would like to meet with him, and explaining that he would be running in the upcoming presidential elections and he would like for Rabbi Shemtov to arrange a meeting between him and the Rebbe, in the hopes of garnering local Jewish support.

Rabbi Shemtov explained to the senator that while a photo with the Rebbe might not be the best political investment, if he



THREE GENERATIONS OF SHLICHUS IN URUGUAY. RABBI ELIEZER SHEMTOV (CENTER) LOOKS ON WITH HIS SON AND LOCAL SHLIACH, RABBI MENDEL SHEMTOV, AS HIS GRANDSON SHNEUR SHEMTOV PRESENTS THE PRESIDENT OF URUGUAY MR. LUIS LACALLE POU, WITH A MENORAH ON CHANUKAH.



wished to receive important spiritual guidance in his personal and public life, the Rebbe was certainly the best address. With that, Rabbi Shemtov gave the senator two books about Sheva Mitzvos B'nei Noach, and the meeting concluded.

Several weeks later, the senator indeed traveled to New York and met the Rebbe at dollars, along with Rabbi Shemtov's father-in-law, Rabbi Hirshel Chitrik.

Rabbi Chitrik: This is Senator Herrera. He's running for president of Uruguay. He's a strong supporter of Chabad in Montivideo.

The Rebbe: May G-d A-lmighty bless you to have good news, and to use your influence for the benefit of many. *Besuros tovos.*

Senator Herrera: I was reading this book [about Sheva Mitzvos B'nei Noach], to help me understand...

The Rebbe: What is this all about?

Senator Herrera: "The Path of the Righteous Gentile."

Rabbi Groner: Sheva Mitzvos B'nei Noach.

The Rebbe: *Besuros Tovos. Hatzlacha rabba.* Give this [dollar] to charity, a mitzvah accepted by all the people of the world. May G-d A-lmighty bless you... Thank you for giving me the opportunity to meet you and wish all good things. I hope you will cash it in [i.e. the blessings].

The senator returned to Uruguay to continue his campaign, and although previously it didn't seem like he had a chance to win the election, he suddenly got a big boost in the polls.

The day of the election was during the Kinus Hashluchim, 5750. When Rabbi Shemtov passed by the Rebbe for dollars, the Rebbe wished him "*Hatzlacha rabba*," as opposed to "*Bra-*

cha v'hatzlacha," as he usually would, and Rabbi Shemtov felt that this was an added *bracha* intended for Senator Herrera. He called the senator and relayed what had happened, and Senator Herrera asked that the Rebbe pray on his behalf. The Rebbe was at the Ohel at that moment, but Rabbi Shemtov called Rabbi Krinsky's car phone and asked him to relay the message to the Rebbe.

At 7:00 in the evening, polling stations closed across Uruguay, and it soon came to light that Senator Herrera had won the election by 7%. After the Rebbe returned to 770 and davened Mincha and Maariv, the Rebbe distributed dollars, and Rabbi Shemtov passed by once again to notify the Rebbe of the good news. The Rebbe smiled and asked, "The one that was here?" Rabbi Shemtov affirmed, and mentioned that the senator won by 7%, and the Rebbe said, "*M'darf im masbir zein vos meint shiva*" (you need to explain to him the meaning of 'seven').

The Rebbe then gave Rabbi Shemtov an additional dollar,

saying, "This is for commission, for bringing the president."

Afterwards, Rabbi Shemtov wrote to the Rebbe asking whether he could publish a press release about the new president's connection to the Rebbe, and if he could give a copy of the press release to each of the shluchim at the Kinus. The Rebbe replied: "שייך להוראות אגודת חסידים או מרכז השלוחים ש' שהרי צ"ל" (This [decision] belongs to Agudas Chassidei Chabad, or the Shluchim Committee, for it must be consistent [on both fronts]).



Today, the shluchim in Uruguay continue implementing the Rebbe's vision for the world, paving the way for the coming of Moshiach.

1. Igros Kodesh Admur HaRayatz, vol. p. 198.
2. Year 4, issue 2; p. 319 in the new edition.



LUIS ALBERTO LACALLE, THEN CANDIDATE FOR THE PRESIDENCY IN URUGUAY, IS INTRODUCED TO THE REBBE BY RABBI HIRSHEL CHITRIK.