

מוקדש לחיזוק ההתקשרות לכ"ק אדמו"ר

נדפס ע"י

הרה"ת ר' יצחק מאיר וזוגתו מרת

לאה ומשפחתם שיחיו

שפאלטר

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# P I N P O I N T S

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

OKLAHOMA



Since 5747, Rabbi Yehuda and Etel Weg have served the 5,000 or so Yidden who make up the Jewish community in Oklahoma, from their Chabad House in Tulsa. Today, the families of shluchim in the state continue to serve the Jewish community with dedication.

The Rebbe's care for Yiddishkeit in the state, however, began long before.



RABBI YEHUDA WEG

## TALMUD TORAH IN TULSA

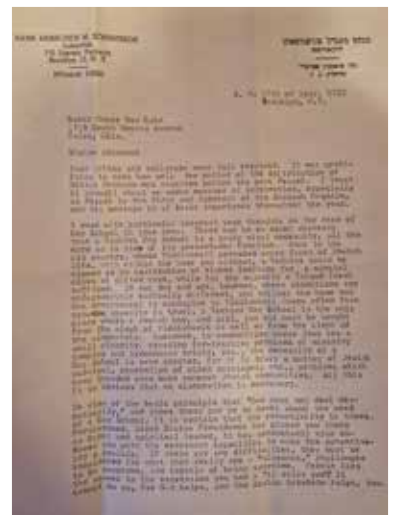
In the mid-20th century, Rabbi Osher Dov (Arthur) Kahn served as the spiritual leader for the Jewish community in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Facing the challenges of life as an observant Jew in this relatively remote location, Rabbi Kahn went in to the Rebbe for *yechidus*, intending to leave his post, citing the lack of *chinuch* locally. During that meeting, the Rebbe made it clear that not only should Rabbi Kahn not leave Tulsa, but that he should found a Jewish school there.

Rabbi Kahn accepted the Rebbe's advice and traveled back to Oklahoma, where he founded a Jewish day school. It did not go smoothly. Rabbi Kahn faced opposition from local community members, to the point where he was ready to throw in the towel. In his poetic way, he wrote to the Rebbe that here in Tulsa, instead of "*Talmud Torah K'neged Kulam*," people are "*Kulam K'neged Talmud Torah*"—all are opposed to the school!

The Rebbe responded with a nearly two-page-long letter in English dated 17th of Iyar 5722. "There can be no doubt whatsoever that a Yeshiva Day School is a truly vital necessity," the Rebbe wrote. "Since Divine Providence has placed you there as Rabbi and spiritual leader, it has undoubtedly also endowed you with the necessary capacities to make the potentiality a reality."

Rabbi Kahn had written about the poor response the school had encountered; how difficult it was to enroll even five children. The Rebbe wrote, "Surely, even one soul is a whole world, and justifies every effort... when the lamp is lit, many will surely gather around it."

The lamp Rabbi Kahn lit remains kindled today, in the form of the Mizel Jewish Community Day School, which continues to provide the locals with an invaluable Jewish connection.



THE REBBE'S LETTER TO RABBI ARTHUR KAHN.

## “THE SHLUCHIM ARE HERE!”

Not long after their marriage, in 5747, Rabbi Yehuda and Etel Weg resolved to move out on shlichus. Around that time, the Rebbe approved a plan to open new branches of Merkos in four states, and they were offered the opportunity to open a branch in Oklahoma. Four letters were prepared by Rabbi Moshe Kotlarsky and provided to the Wegs.

The first letter was Rabbi Kotlarsky’s, describing the situation in the suggested city. The second was from the Wegs, who wrote that they were prepared to move to Oklahoma, or anywhere else the Rebbe would send them. The third was from Rabbi Hodakov, who directed Merkos L’Inyonei Chinuch, approving that they be sent on shlichus—this would be a new branch of Merkos, so Rabbi Hodakov gave his authorization. The fourth was from the Rosh Kollel, who wrote that he approved of the prospective shliach and confirmed that he had been keeping the *sedorim* of Kollel. Rabbi Weg, and his friend, Rabbi Moshe Wilansky, sent in their letters Friday afternoon—Rabbi Weg to open a new branch in the state of Oklahoma and Rabbi Wilansky in the state of Maine

Rabbi Weg was scheduled to stop by the *Mazkirus* office that afternoon to see whether the Rebbe had given a *maaneh* to his father-in-law on an unrelated topic. He and Rabbi Wilansky, on their way back from *mitvoim*, stopped

by the office. As they walked in, Rabbi Groner called out, “*Di shluchim zeinen doh!*”—“The shluchim are here!”

“We said to him, ‘You mean there was an answer?’” Rabbi Weg told *Derher*. “He said there was an answer in less than an hour; but he couldn’t tell me the answer because there was a *seder*: The *maaneh* was intended for—and therefore had to go to—Rabbi Hodakov, most likely it would be shared with us after Shabbos. I asked ‘Can you tell me something?’ He said, ‘I said, “the shluchim are here,” what more do you want me to say?’ It was obvious that it was a positive answer.”

Rabbi Moshe Wilansky stopped in Rabbi Moshe Kotlarsky’s house on the way home, and he told him that there was an answer from the Rebbe. Rabbi Kotlarsky used to come to shul early, and Rabbi Weg met him there, asking if there was a way to expedite the process of receiving the Rebbe’s answer.

Rabbi Kotlarsky told Rabbi Weg to wait downstairs after Maariv Friday evening, and Rabbi Kotlarsky spoke to Rabbi Groner, and then came over to Rabbi Weg, “You have received an answer for your shlichus that no-one has yet gotten!” he exclaimed. “The Rebbe wrote, ‘May it be in a good and auspicious time in everything, I’ll mention it at the *tziyun*’ adding the word “*Mahir*” (urgent) in block-letters that the *maaneh* should be brought ‘express’ to Rabbi Hodakov.”

“The Rebbe wrote, ‘*Bakol*’—‘in everything,’—that’s a



*bracha* for your entire life, wherever you are, for you, your children, whoever you hire!” Rabbi Kotlarsky said. “This is the first of its kind!”

## THE REBBE WASHED AWAY HIS LONELINESS

The Wegs arrived in Oklahoma right after Pesach. Etel was expecting their son Mendy at that time, and they wanted to go as soon as possible—after all, the Rebbe had written *mahir* on the answer. But the move from Brooklyn to Tulsa was not easy, and Rabbi Weg was very lonely. The Wegs went back to New York Erev Shavuos, spending Yom Tov with the Rebbe. “On Motzei Shavuos, the Rebbe was giving out *Kos Shel Bracha*, and at that time it was not common for *bochurim* and *yungeleit* to go for *Kos Shel Bracha*—certainly not more than once a year,” Rabbi Weg related. “I had gone already that year, in Tishrei, and I didn’t want to go now, but I felt it was important, because I was very unhappy.”

“Regarding the shlichus, there was no question, because the Rebbe had responded very positively, and had, for example, given me a bottle of *mashke* before we left, but the shlichus has to be *b’simcha uv’tuv levav*—joyously and with goodwill—and so I went for *Kos Shel Bracha*.”


“As I approached the Rebbe, I was thinking in my mind, over and over, that I will say ‘*b’simcha uv’tuv levav*’ — because

often people would become flustered when they got to the Rebbe, and would forget what they wanted to say.”

But as Rabbi Weg held up the cup for *Kos Shel Bracha*, moments away from the Rebbe, Rabbi Groner saw him, and he told him, “Tell the Rebbe, ‘Oklahoma.’” In other words, he should tell the Rebbe that he was a shliach in Oklahoma, and that way the Rebbe would give a bottle of *mashke* for the community.

“Now I had a dilemma—should I say ‘Oklahoma’ or ‘*Bsimcha uv’tuv levav*’? I have *kabbalas ol*, and I was told by *Mazkirus* to say “Oklahoma,”—so I passed by and told the Rebbe, ‘Oklahoma.’” The Rebbe responded, “Amen!” while handing me a bottle of *mashke*, and made an encouraging motion with his holy hands.

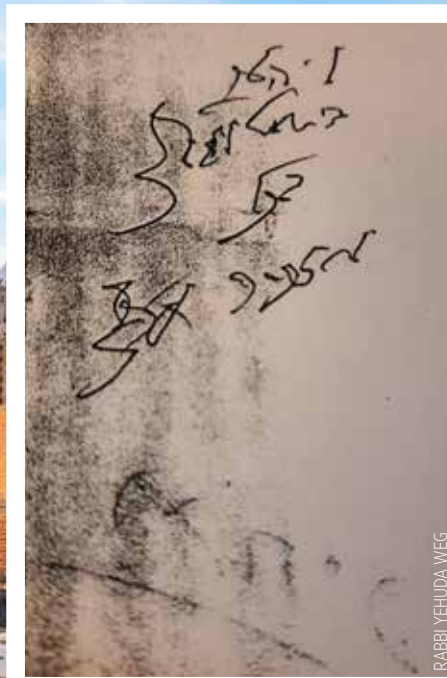
“The Rebbe responded to what was on my heart, not on my lips.”

“The Rebbe washed away the sadness and the loneliness—I haven’t been lonely ever since!” 

RABBI AND MRS. WEG AND THEIR ELDEST SON SEVERAL YEARS AFTER ARRIVING IN TULSA



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THE REBBE’S ANSWER TO RABBI WEG: ויהא בשעה טובה ומוצלחת בכל אזכיר על הציון AND ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE PAGE IS VISIBLE THE REBBE’S HANDWRITING IN BLOCK LETTERS (FLIPPED): מהיר URGENT

RABBI YEHUDA WEG