

לע"נ
הרה"ת ר' יהושע זעליג ע"ה
בן הרה"ת ר' משה זלמן הכהן ע"ה כצמאן
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ולע"נ הרה"ת ר' קהת ע"ה בן ר' יחזקיהו שמואל ע"ה ווייס
גלב"ע כ"ב אדר ב' ה'תש"ס
תנ"צ'בה

נדפס ע"י
הרה"ת ר' יהודה בנימין וזוגתו מרת חנה ומשפחתם שיחיו

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P I N P O I N T S

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

BNEI BRAK



THE FOUNDING OF THE CITY

In the 5680s, eight Polish Chassidische families emigrated to Eretz Yisroel. Led by Reb Yitzchok Gerstenkorn, they founded the city of Bnei Brak. Gerstenkorn was the city's first mayor, a title he held until 5714, when, due to his ailing health, he made the choice to step down from his position.

Three months earlier, Gerstenkorn had written to the Rebbe, whose response encouraged him to stay at his post, leading a city that had already become a bulwark of the *frum* community in Eretz Yisroel.

“It is unnecessary to explain at length how necessary it is for every member of the camp of the *chareidim* to not only remain at his post in public work, but should increase in his determination... if the other side is recruiting all of its forces, all the more so must this be the case in the camp of the *chareidim*.”¹

Gerstenkorn did step down; a few days after he did so, the Rebbe wrote to him, urging him to remain active in communal life.

“I hope that you will increase in your determination in working in communal affairs ... and you will be successful

in adding light to the hearts of those around you, so that they will be able to overcome the darkness of the *galus* of our generation—the footsteps of Moshiach—and to bring closer the time when the night will be illuminated like the day, with the complete redemption through Moshiach.”²

THE RAV

In Elul, 5694, Rabbi Yaakov Landa, a Lubavitcher *chossid*, arrived on the shores of Eretz Yisroel. Rabbi Gerstenkorn invited him as “scholar-in-residence” for a Shabbos in the nascent city of Bnei Brak. As Shabbos began, the community did what they did every week: they gathered on Rabbi Akiva street, preventing traffic from entering the town as Shabbos began, and sang and danced in the street. There, on the street, Rabbi Landa delivered his first sermon in Bnei Brak.

It wouldn't be his last.

Rabbi Landa served as the *rav* of the city for more than 50 years. As he left Bnei Brak after that Shabbos, Rabbi Gerstenkorn told him, “You've acquired many good friends here.” A year later, he was formally appointed as the *rav* and *av beis din* of the city.

In 5713, Rabbi Gerstenkorn visited the United States to

REB YITZCHOK
GERSTENKORN.



promote his *seforim*, and while there, he went into *yechidus*. He wrote a letter to Rabbi Landa describing the visit. “I sat with the Rebbe, *Shlita*, on Sunday, 15 Tammuz, for an hour and a half in *yechidus*—from 10:30 until after midnight... During our conversation, I saw that the Rebbe is interested in opening a Chabad *yeshiva* in Bnei Brak, and he asked me about a location, a building, how much it would cost, etc.”³

Rabbi Gerstenkorn’s grandson, Reb Yisroel Aryeh Gerstenkorn, who was the *rav* of Kiryat Malachi, related that his grandfather would often speak of that visit. “When he returned to Eretz Yisroel, a number of people, including Chabad Chassidim, came to meet him. He told them with great feeling, ‘You should feel fortunate! You have no idea what kind of a Rebbe you have!’”⁴

HAFATZAS HAMAAYANOS IN BNEI BRAK

Rabbi Yehuda Leib Zalmanov was one of the heads of Tzeirei Agudas Chabad in Tel Aviv and a founding member of the Lubavitch community in Bnei Brak. In 5717, the Rebbe replied to a *duch* Rabbi Zalmanov had sent about a *shiur Chassidus* he had for the *bnei hayeshiva* in the city.

“It’s surprising that the number of participants in the *farbrengen* and the *shiur* from the *bnei hayeshivos* is not increasing as it should. It would be best if those involved would quietly seek counsel on how to fix this.”⁵

After a *farbrengen* was held in Bnei Brak in honor of Yud Shevat, 5719, the Rebbe wrote a letter addressed to the participants.

“... [I was notified of your] participation in the *yom hilula* of a *tzaddik*, *Nessi Yisroel*, and the *Nossi Hador*, who ascends very high on this day, as is explained in many places in *Toras HaChassidus*.”⁶

To the administration of Tzeirei Agudas Chabad in Bnei Brak, the Rebbe wrote in 5721:

“I was pleased to read about the *shiur* in Chassidus that is being taught in your pure encampment. I very much hope that you recognize the situation as it is, and the potential that continues to grow for *hafatzas hamaayanos* in [your city]. This should encourage you to do more and more, in recognition of what the times demand.

Although, seemingly this would not be the [correct] way, that my first correspondence to you (this year) should include demands, nevertheless, because of how important this is, I cannot hold back...”⁷

A CITY THAT CONTAINS EVERYTHING

Rabbi Moshe Irenstein, Mayor of Bnei Brak, visited the Rebbe in 5750. He was the first to speak to the Rebbe at Dollars on 14 Cheshvan. After Rabbi Groner introduced him to the Rebbe as the Mayor of Bnei Brak, the Rebbe said, “It’s a



REB YEHUDAH LEIB ZALMANOV.



RABBI YAAKOV AND HIS SON AND SUCCESSOR RABBI MOSHE LANDA, WHO SERVED AS THE RABBONIM OF BNEI BRAK FOR 70 YEARS.

city that contains everything!”

Rabbi Irenstein mentioned that some are trying to create issues in connection with the *Moatza Hadatit* (Religious Council). The Rebbe said, “Presumably, they will fail. You can stop trying to find a way to resist them. But in any case, may Hashem help you separately—you don’t need them.”

Rabbi Irenstein mentioned that some were trying to convince storekeepers to switch from the *hechsher* of Harav Landa to the Badatz - Eida Hachareidis *hechsher*, which could weaken Rabbi Landa’s *hechsher*. The Rebbe replied,

“There are still members of the *Badatz* who are in line with the Lubavitch view. You most probably know them. One member moved away, but he still receives phone calls from them on a regular basis. In any case, may Hashem help that you should completely avoid the issue of ‘and so we were in our own eyes.’⁸”

SITTING IN BNEI BRAK ALL NIGHT

During Dollars on 5 Elul, 5750, Rabbi Asher Yaakov Kopelowitz, *rav* of the Neveh Hashloshah neighborhood in Bnei Brak, asked the Rebbe for a *bracha* on behalf of Rabbi Landa.

The situation had become quite difficult, with various factions in the city attempting to undermine him. Rabbi Landa’s only “sin,” said Rabbi Kopelowitz, was that he was a Lubavitcher, and this they were trying to uproot.

The Rebbe smiled and said, “*Chas v’shalom* to uproot this. He will remain a Lubavitcher *chossid* until 120, and then he will have a long life. May there be good news.”

Rabbi Kopelowitz said, “Meanwhile, he is suffering very much.”

The Rebbe gave another dollar and said, “Give this to *tzedakah* for him.” Then the Rebbe gave a third dollar and said, “Give this to *tzedakah* for all the *gutteh Yidden* in Eretz Yisroel,” and the Rebbe gave a fourth dollar and said, “and in Bnei Brak specifically.”

Rabbi Kopelowitz asked for a *bracha* for his son, and the Rebbe asked, “Is he learning in Bnei Brak as well?” Rabbi Kopelowitz said he was learning in Yeshivas Chiddushei HaRim in Tel Aviv, and the Rebbe asked, “Tel Aviv. But he comes home at night to Bnei Brak?” Rabbi Kopelowitz said yes. The Rebbe gave a fifth dollar and said, “May Hashem help that he should be one of those who were ‘sitting in Bnei



RABBI MOSHE IRENSTEIN, MAYOR OF BNEI BRAK, WITH THE REBBE, 5750.



Brak all that night' and wait there for the days of Moshiach.⁹ May you have good news.”

Rabbi Kopelowitz asked for a *bracha* for himself, as there were *misnagdim* in his area creating problems as well. The Rebbe inquired, “Also in Bnei Brak?” “Yes,” Rabbi Kopelowitz replied. “I am the *rav* in northern Bnei Brak ... and there, too, the *misnagdim* are creating problems, asking how it can be that a Gerrer Chossid is there.”

The Rebbe replied, “It should be in an auspicious hour, and ‘the Chassidim have the upper hand’ is guaranteed to us by the Alter Rebbe and the Baal Shem Tov. So there should be the ‘sitting in Bnei Brak all that night,’ and you should talk about Moshiach. You don’t need to wait for Pesach for this. You can do it this month as well, especially since it’s the month of Elul. The truth is ‘I wait for him [Moshiach] to come every day.’ The main thing is that it should bring about its fulfillment. It shouldn’t be pushed off for tomorrow!” **1**



SHLEIMUS HAARETZ AND BNEI BRAK

The Rebbe often mentioned that if the Israeli government would give away territory, it would affect the safety of Yidden living in Bnei Brak—among other places—cities relatively far from the border.¹⁰

“Those that support giving away land say clearly, that notwithstanding that the security expert says that it will making the army’s situation worse, and it will make it more difficult to protect Kfar Chabad, Bnei Brak, Meah She’arim, Hadera, and Ein Charod—there are Yidden who need to be protected everywhere, nevertheless [they say that it’s worthwhile].”¹¹

“When they will stand strong, and say that they cannot give away even one inch (*af sha’al*) from Yehuda and Shomron, because that will put at risk Yidden who are found in Yerushalayim, Bnei Brak, Hadera, Haifa, Tel Aviv, Kfar Chabad etc., and all of Eretz Yisroel and those who live there...—[the United States and the Soviet Union] will be very satisfied.”¹²

“They gave away additional territories [which will bring Egypt] closer to Yerushalayim, Bnei Brak, Kfar Chabad, and Tel Aviv by hundreds of kilometers.”¹³

“By giving away Yamit [an Israeli settlement in the Sinai Peninsula], the Arabs come ten kilometers closer to Tel Aviv, Bnei Brak, and Kfar Chabad.”¹⁴

1. Igros Kodesh vol. 8, p. 183. Weintraub-Lifshitz Teshura, 15 Kislev 5785.

2. Igros Kodesh vol. 9, p. 49.

3. Teshura ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Igros Kodesh vol. 14, p. 517.

6. Igros Kodesh vol. 18, p. 183.

7. Published in the Sagiv-Ben Amotz Teshura, 28 Sivan 5784.

8. Based on Bamidbar 13:33. The Meraglim saw themselves as grasshoppers in their own eyes; they had lost their own self esteem. Here, too, the Rebbe said, they must not lose their own self esteem.

9. A reference to the passage in the Haggadah about the Tana'im in Bnei Brak who were discussing the story of Pesach all night, concluding with the words “including the days of Moshiach.”

10. These sichos were compiled in the Sagiv-Ben Amotz Teshura, 28 Sivan 5784.

11. Sichos Kodesh 5736 vol. 2, p. 628.

12. Sichos Kodesh 5738 vol 1, p. 231.

13. Sichos Kodesh 5739 vol. 2, p. 384.

14. B'tzel Hachochma p. 168.