

GUIDANCE FROM THE REBBE

MR. PINCHAS
KALMS

לזכות הורינו
הרה"ת ר' אהרן מרדכי
וזוגתו מרת שרה מאשא שיחיו אבענד
ר' זאב וואלף
וזוגתו מרת ליבא יוספה שיחיו רודלף
נדפס ע"י צאצאיהם
הרה"ת ר' נחמן וזוגתו מרת עלקי
ומשפחתם שיחיו
אבענד



12 ADAR II 5749, CHAIM B HALBERSTAM via JEM 24491



In the genre of portraits and interviews of Chassidim in *A Chassidisher Derher* to date, there is usually a common thread; stories of Chassidim of old, a dedication to the Rebbe, and a life experience that can provide each of us with a life lesson.

In the following pages, this genre will take a twist.

This article is meager on the personal stories, anecdotes and *chassidisher hergeishim*; Pinchas Kalms is not a man of self-embellishment, and barely speaks of himself at all. Yet it is extremely rich on the other side; he is a veritable treasure trove of directives and instructions from the Rebbe.

Mr. Kalms is a prominent businessman in the Jewish community of London, England, who is today close to ninety years old, *l'orech yamim v'shanim tovos*.

From the earliest days of Lubavitch in England, Mr. Kalms was intimately involved in running, assisting, and representing Lubavitch in all sorts of ways. As someone with a hand in many different Jewish organizations, he served as a shliach, representing the Rebbe and promoting the Rebbe's directives in numerous forums and fields.

Mr. Kalms merited to be in *yechidus* by the Rebbe a total of nine times, for a span of thirteen hours, and also carried on a lengthy correspondence with the Rebbe. Much of his fascinating memories shed new light on the Rebbe's campaigns and activities over the years.

Contrary to unverifiable stories that pass from ear to ear and grow new parts at will, Pinchas Kalms took brief notes during his *yechidusen*, and documented them in their entirety immediately upon leaving the Rebbe's room. In 5754 he published his transcripts in a book called *Guidance from the Rebbe*. It is a modest looking book if you judge it by its cover, but it is, in fact, one of the most accurate and detailed descriptions of *yechidus* that was ever published; the information hidden amongst its pages is utterly fascinating.

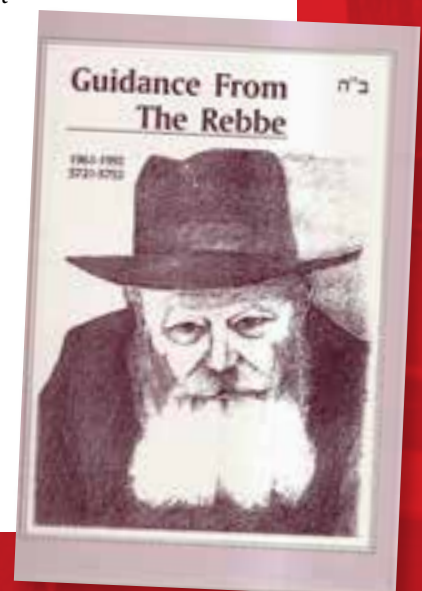
Mr. Kalms was gracious to be interviewed by the staff of *A Chassidisher Derher* from his home in England, where he shared many of his fascinating stories and directives he received from the Rebbe, for us to share with our audience.

In the following pages, we will attempt to highlight some of the fascinating parts of this relationship.

Additional details were provided by Mr. Kalms's My Encounter interview. We thank Rabbi Yechiel Cagen and JEM's My Encounter team for that.



JEM 229392



"GUIDANCE FROM THE REBBE", THE TREASURE OF YECHIDUS AND LETTERS MR. KALMS PUBLISHED.

MEETING LUBAVITCH

I grew up in a standard observant home; we kept kosher, attended shul, and I was enrolled in the local Sunday School Talmud Torah. After completing my education I went into accounting, and thank G-d, I was quite successful. Through my work, I met my wife, and we set up a fine Jewish home.

Lubavitch in England was just beginning; Rabbi Nachman Sudak *a"h* had arrived a few years prior, and Rabbi Feivish Vogel had just arrived to join the team.

In an attempt to reach new people, Rabbi Vogel would skim through the Jewish Chronicle and pick out names of people who had announced their *mazal tovs*, births, engagements, and so on, and he would proceed to contact them.

I had no relationship with Lubavitch whatsoever, but when our third daughter Peninah was born in 5721, I placed a *mazal tov* ad in the Jewish Chronicle, and Rabbi Vogel showed up at my office. We quickly became close friends, and I was very instrumental in helping Lubavitch set themselves up.

Rabbi Vogel would often tell me about the Rebbe, and while I was very

impressed by his stories, I still didn't feel enough reason to travel across the Atlantic Ocean to visit him. In fact, it was precisely because I respected him that I refrained from having a relationship with the Rebbe. I felt very blessed in my personal life; I was happily married, we had beautiful children, and my business and public life were quite successful. I didn't see a reason to waste the time of such an important, and undoubtedly busy, person.

Nevertheless, Rabbi Vogel insisted, and eventually in 5725, I agreed to join him for a trip to New York. With that, I embarked on a new path. From that day onward, my life course was uplifted and illuminated by the guidance, vision and blessings of the Rebbe.

LONDON FINANCES

My initial involvement with Lubavitch was assisting them in organizing themselves from a financial perspective; it was in the midst of the project to build the Lubavitch House that exists today, and that was much of what I discussed with the Rebbe during my first *yechidus*.

I spent some two days in Crown Heights prior to the *yechidus*, where I became acquainted with Lubavitch

World Headquarters. On the night of the *yechidus*, I watched the different types of people who came to see the Rebbe. Lubavitcher couples soon moving out on shlichus, lay-leaders from all types of communities, and people from all walks of life.

During my *yechidus*, I told the Rebbe that I had observed that Lubavitch in London was most successful with a very specific type of people: young, non-orthodox, commercially successful Jews.

The Rebbe responded, "I very much approve of this."

During that *yechidus*, the Rebbe actually gave me guiding principles for Lubavitch in England:

"More people should be influenced and brought in touch by the idealism spread by the *baalei batim*, who could relate their own experiences... Then more and more people would become involved; perhaps a women's division, doctors and professionals...The proposed new Lubavitch House should not only be a school but a symbol and a center for as many activities as possible."

There was something else that I brought up in that first *yechidus*, which I felt was very important:

I was aware of the different salaries that Lubavitch of London paid its workers. I told the Rebbe that although the leadership of Lubavitch of London received a salary equal to the commercial wages for similar positions, the teachers and employees of the school didn't receive the same; their salaries were lower than average. I felt that this was an erroneous policy, and I asked the Rebbe his opinion.

The Rebbe agreed with me that the teachers must also receive average salaries, "Perhaps even a pound or two more." But the Rebbe also pointed out that it would be more appropriate if this idea would come specifically from the laymen.



RABBI PINNY LEW



LUBAVITCH HOUSE, LONDON ENGLAND. CIRCA 1962.

THE PROPOSED NEW LUBAVITCH HOUSE SHOULD NOT ONLY BE A SCHOOL BUT A SYMBOL AND A CENTER FOR AS MANY ACTIVITIES AS POSSIBLE.

they are parents to young children, “it would be more suitable to be active in the home rather than outside.”

I also became quite involved with representing Lubavitch on different levels. I would meet with the chief rabbi of England, Rabbi Jakobovitz, as well as the officiators of the United Synagogue in London and Sir Isaac Wolfson. The Rebbe very much approved of these meetings.

In general, the Rebbe never accepted our complaints about financial issues. One time, when I brought up the financial strain, the Rebbe smiled and said that he was happy to hear that our problems had grown, because that meant that our activities had grown as well.

“A recent visitor from South America,” the Rebbe related, “told me that the greatest sign of the strength of the USA was its deficit of billions of dollars.

“If you get the *neshamos*,” the Rebbe assured me, “the checks will come.”

The Rebbe’s attitude was even more pronounced when it was a question of accepting new students in the school.

At one point, I had written to the Rebbe that we were going to limit the size of the school because we couldn’t afford to grow anymore. Upon receiving my letter, the Rebbe sent an urgent response over the telephone,

and later reiterated his point in a letter:

“I heard from my father-in-law of saintly memory...in regard to any child’s education, especially in regard to a Jewish child, it should be borne in mind that if he will not be absorbed in a kosher educational institution immediately, the opportunity may be lost altogether, and it becomes a matter of spiritual *Pikuach Nefesh*. On the other hand, the problem of financial capacity of the institution, although it may be difficult, could in time be resolved if the proper effort is made.”

Needless to say, that idea was scrapped.

When I asked the Rebbe if it would be appropriate for the Lubavitch women to be more active in the community, the Rebbe responded that although he was a believer in emancipation, in this case, being that

ALIYA TRAUMA

In 5731, I readied myself for what I viewed to be the most sublime undertaking I could ever do: Make *aliya* to the Holy Land.

We had prepared for years. I had invested considerable efforts in finding a deputy who would run my business in England, and we had spent years negotiating the purchase of a majestic property in Yerushalayim, upon which we built a beautiful home.

Confident that this was the best step of my life, I readied for our third *yechidus* with the feeling that the Rebbe would be very encouraging, and wish us well on our endeavor. In fact, Rabbi Vogel asked me if I planned to ask the Rebbe’s opinion, and I responded, “Of course; is the Rebbe going to tell me, ‘No, don’t go?’”

I could never have been prepared for what actually happened.

The *yechidus* began normally. I presented an old *sefer* to the Rebbe (I was aware that the Rebbe loved old *sefarim*, and I would often present him with books that I would bring from England), and the Rebbe smiled and commented on the book's content.

Then, the Rebbe asked regarding our move to Israel. "Do you want a *bracha*, or my opinion...?"

I looked at my wife (who had been less enthusiastic about the move this whole time), but I couldn't catch her eyes.

The Rebbe continued: "If you ask, you must be prepared for an answer that can be 'no.'"

I told the Rebbe that I was ready to hear his advice. The Rebbe asked my wife if she agreed, and she did.

Then he became very serious, and went into great detail, explaining why it would be a bad decision on every front.

For *parnassah*, the Rebbe said, I would be extremely limited, due to the governmental policies at the time. My standing in the community would be greatly diminished; while in England I was a prominent member of the community, in the position to influence two hundred thousand Jews, in Israel I would become one of two million. My children, the Rebbe added, would become more independent. And so on and so forth.

The Rebbe's argument was very difficult to accept, and I respectfully countered. I mentioned that we didn't see our children's independence as a bad thing, and that I felt I could be quite influential from within Israel too.

The Rebbe replied that while independence is not necessarily a bad thing, it was not the relationship we wish for with our children, and regarding my influence, the Rebbe asked me:

"If Yaakov Herzog would have become chief rabbi of England, would he have more or less influence on

the *mihu Yehudi* question than he does now as advisor to the Prime Minister?"¹

"More," I replied.

"Also Mr. Kalms," the Rebbe said. "Not to the same degree, of course, but also..."

At the conclusion of the *yechidus*, I sat down and wrote a letter to the Rebbe. I felt that the Rebbe hadn't adequately answered my questions, and so (to my wife's consternation), I

reiterated my position and wrote why I felt the move would be beneficial in every way.

I submitted the letter on Friday morning, and by Motzei Shabbos, I received a detailed response. In addition to repeating, emphasizing and explaining all of the points he had made before, the Rebbe added a reason, which he said he didn't bring up earlier because my wife was present. And this was:



MR. KALMS ON A TOUR OF KFAR CHABAD AND ITS INSTITUTIONS. TISHREI 5731.

LEVI FREDIN via JEM 229389



MR. KALMS LOOKS ON AS ISRAELI PRESIDENT ZALMAN SHAZAR RECEIVES AN ALIYA IN THE TZEMACH TZEDEK SHUL IN YERUSHALAYIM.

KALMS FAMILY

THE REBBE CONTINUED: "IF YOU ASK, YOU MUST BE PREPARED FOR AN ANSWER THAT CAN BE 'NO.'"



A SHAMIR PROGRAM LED BY PROFESSOR BRANOVER.

“Each and every one of us has been mobilized by Divine Providence to wage the battle for Yiddishkeit in a specific place, and it is not for a military man to forsake his post... because he found (in his opinion) another place where the battle is easier...”

I had concluded my letter by saying that I did not feel ready to listen to the Rebbe out of sheer *kabbalas ol* and self-sacrifice, and therefore I asked the Rebbe to explain his stance once more.

The Rebbe responded:

“You do not realize the extent of your soul’s abilities. You are qualified and are prepared for a high level of self-sacrifice if necessary. But in the matter at hand the situation is just the reverse.” The Rebbe once again explained that my status in Israel would be so diminished, that canceling my move was a purely rational decision.

Needless to say, we canceled the move.

During our next *yechidus*, we told the Rebbe that we had decided to follow his advice, but that we also “have not lost our interest or identity with Israel.”

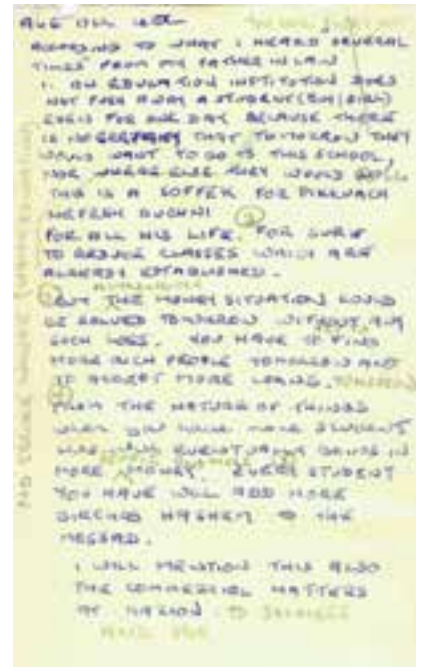
“*Chas v’shalom* that you should,” the Rebbe responded. “I too, do not lose

my identity with Israel, even though I sit here in Brooklyn.”

The Rebbe continued by saying that I should know I was not the only one to cancel my move; someone else in London had done so as well. The Rebbe also discussed the fact that our decision had been criticized in the Anglo Jewish press; he felt that this was also, in truth, an advantage, because the journalist had obviously been affected by our decision; it had had larger reverberations than merely a personal decision.

RUSSIAN JEWRY

In Yerushalayim over Chanukah 5731, I met a fresh immigrant from the Soviet Union, a young man named Sanya. He introduced me to his friends, and their group made an indelible impression on me. They were very enthusiastic about Yiddishkeit, and I felt that they had a lot of hidden potential. It seemed that they were being totally neglected by the government and by the Israeli public. They were full of drive and energy and they were so excited to have arrived in the Holy Land, yet I felt that their enthusiasm would dissipate quickly if we did not engage them (which is what happened to many new immigrants).



MR. KALMS KEPT DETAILED NOTES OF HIS INTERACTIONS WITH THE REBBE.

I wrote to the Rebbe about the group and that I felt we could accomplish a lot with them, and in a *yechidus* with Rabbi Shia Yuzevitz of Yerushalayim, the Rebbe encouraged my ideas.

With that, I began a long and fascinating journey into the world of Russian Jewry.

My first endeavor was to create a center for Russian immigrants to Israel, where they would be able to congregate, learn, and grow together. We lobbied the Israeli government and the Jewish Agency for a budget that would provide the means for the center to exist.

At every step of the way, the Rebbe was consulted. Yet, by the Rebbe’s own suggestion, his name was not directly associated with the project. The Rebbe explained that if the project would instead be associated with a name of one of the old, established institutions if Eretz Yisrael—led by someone who, for example, served in the army—it would be easier for the government to support the project, and even the most

KALMS FAMILY

THE REBBE SHARED WITH ME ANOTHER INTERESTING QUESTION REGARDING THE LEADERSHIP: SHOULD IT BE LED BY A RUSSIAN IMMIGRANT, OR NOT?

left-wing parties wouldn't be able to protest.

The Rebbe was very particular with who would lead the organization. He felt that it was of primary importance to ensure that the leadership remain in the hands of people loyal to Chabad and to Yiddishkeit in general, and not in the hands of someone who would be easily influenced by outside interests.

In a long letter over Chanukah in which the Rebbe discussed this issue, he drew my attention to the story of Chanukah:

Why is it, the Rebbe asked, that the oil in the *Beis Hamikdash* had to be pure? Would impure oil burn less brightly?

But the lesson is, that "in the realm of the spirit...there must be absolute purity and holiness. It is not for the human mind to understand why..."

The Rebbe shared with me another interesting question regarding the leadership: Should it be led by a Russian immigrant, or not?

On one hand, the Rebbe said, even the most dedicated refuseniks had a very low level of Jewish education and observance, due to the great self-sacrifice required for even the most basic *mitzvos* in the Soviet Union. Therefore, such a leader wouldn't be able to help the immigrants grow to a higher level. On the other hand, it would be very difficult to place a non-Russian, someone who never lived under oppression and never made a true sacrifice, in charge of a group of Russian *baalei mesirus nefesh*...

A short while later, we decided upon Professor Herman Branover,

a close friend of mine, who developed the Russian center into an organization called SHAMIR, to assist and educate Russian immigrants all over the world, as well as Jews still in the Soviet Union. This was a person of whom the Rebbe greatly approved; henceforth he was the leader of the organization.

The Rebbe was extremely supportive of our activities. He

stressed the importance of influencing the new immigrants while they were still full of idealism and enthusiasm, and hoped that SHAMIR would be able to make a lasting impact on them.

RUSSIA

My involvement with SHAMIR also brought me closer to the Yidden who were still living in Russia. Over my years of activism, I learned much about the Rebbe's outlook on those Yidden and on the ways to assist them.

A very interesting thing I learned, is that the Rebbe was essentially against Yidden leaving Russia!

In the Rebbe's opinion, the Jews leaving were the leaders of the community, the ones who kept



MR. KALMS ON HIS TRIP TO RUSSIA.

KFAR CHABAD MAGAZINE

COMMITMENT VS INSPIRATION

When my eldest daughter Tanya graduated from high school, she planned to enroll in a seminary in Israel for one year, and then to proceed to a school of art (she is a very talented artist). Around that time, we entered into *yechidus* together.

The Rebbe asked her why she didn't want to stay in the seminary for the full two year program, and she explained that the full program was for Israelis, and the foreign students usually only participated for one year. Additionally, she explained, she wanted to enroll in the school of art.

The Rebbe was very clear in his opinion of art school. He explained to her that every Jew—whether *tzaddik* or not—recites a blessing every morning, “*Al teviaini lidai nisayon*—do not bring me to a test.”

That request originates from Dovid Hamelech, the Rebbe said. At age sixty, he had asked Hashem to test him, and he failed the test! He then instituted the prayer of “*Al Teviaini.*”

The atmosphere of art schools is in direct contrast to Torah and mitzvos, the Rebbe maintained. The students come from families steeped in art, and those are usually not modest, *tzniusdiker* families, and there was no way to be sure that she would be able to separate herself from the society around her.

The Rebbe said that if she wanted to study art, she should do so with a private teacher at home.

During this conversation the Rebbe told her something very interesting.

He said that he noticed she had written about her “commitment to Chabad.” The Rebbe said that he prefers the term *inspiration* to *commitment*. A commitment connotes compulsion; it is a conscious decision to act contrary to your desire. Inspiration, on the other hand, means that this *is* your desire.

“We try to persuade that it is the best for you; you should look without prejudice until you will feel that it is part of your way of life.”



22 TEVES 5737 LEVI FREIDIN via JEM 292321

AT A PROGRAM BY SHAMIR. AT THE RIGHT IS PROFESSOR BRANOVER.

Yiddishkeit alive, and because these ten thousand Jews left, three million of the simpler, more assimilated Jews were left to fend for themselves.

Once, while in *yechidus*, the Rebbe told me that he had not allowed anyone to leave the Soviet Union; all

those who had emigrated to Israel had not asked for his opinion...

It is well known that the Rebbe was against the demonstrations for Russian Jewry. In many *sichos*, the Rebbe said that conducting demonstrations against the Russian government would be counterproductive and would hurt

the three million Jews left behind; quiet diplomacy would be more productive.

However, in my *yechidus*, the Rebbe went back to the former reason as well. The Rebbe said that the Soviets were deliberately letting out the leaders of the Jewish community, so the rest of the flock would be at their mercy.

“The leader of the community in Odessa,” the Rebbe told me, “was allowed to go to Israel, and the people there won't know whom to ask when Yom Kippur occurs.”

The Rebbe added that they were also letting out those who would become a fifth column in Israel; some to become actual spies for the Soviet Union, and others who were “mentally indoctrinated and psychologically conditioned” to act eventually against the State of Israel.

In fact, once SHAMIR proposed sending shlichim to Russia under the auspices of, and reporting to, the Israeli government, but the Rebbe



"THE LEADER OF THE COMMUNITY IN ODESSA," THE REBBE TOLD ME, "WAS ALLOWED TO GO TO ISRAEL, AND THE PEOPLE THERE WON'T KNOW WHOM TO ASK WHEN YOM KIPPUR FALLS."

categorically rejected the idea, stating that whatever the Israeli government would be told would be immediately transmitted to the Soviets via their spy network (the Rebbe did not include Israeli spy agencies in this equation).

DEALING WITH SOVIETS

When SHAMIR began its activities, we sought a way to cater to the Jews inside of Russia as well as outside, and the Rebbe guided us at every step of the way, showing how to understand and properly deal with the Soviet government.

The Rebbe's outlook was - as mentioned before - that the focus must be on strengthening Judaism within Russia. The most important thing was to care for the millions of Yidden who were very quickly assimilating and being lost.

The Rebbe said that legally there is freedom of religion in Russia, so if all of our programs would clearly focus on Judaism, and steer clear of anything that smelled of Zionism, *aliyah*, etc., then there was a possibility that our organization wouldn't be blacklisted

by the government. (Whenever the Soviets would stop Jewish activities, it was with the official complaint that "You are a Zionist entity," and so forth.) And so long as the Soviets don't recognize us as a hostile entity, we should be "good boys," and do everything in a manner that does not seem to encourage any anti-revolutionary activities.

To our consternation, many of the refuseniks and the activists living in Russia were doing the very opposite. Their (somewhat selfish) modus operandi was to very publicly confront the government about their immigration policy, hoping to thereby secure their own exit visas. The Rebbe was very pained by this. Instead of focusing on spreading Yiddishkeit, they were worrying only about themselves; they promoted an agenda of *aliya* at the expense of the rest of Russian Jewry. The leaders would



leave, and the regular Jews would be left to deal with an angry and hostile regime.

When the Rebbe heard that there was a group of young Jews in Russia who called their group “Tarbut,” he asked us to convince them to change it, so it would not seem to be a direct continuation of the Zionist culture groups of the early twentieth century, which were called by the same name and lead the Russian government to persecute them. (Unfortunately, our attempts failed.)

At one point, we convinced the BBC to broadcast tapes to Russia—recordings with Jewish content and so on. Here too, the Rebbe was very particular that the content be pure religion, and should in no way sound like propaganda.

The Rebbe told us another way to keep the government appeased:

In all of our publications, the Rebbe said, it should seem that our books were directed to *Russian speaking Jews*, no matter where they lived. If the Russians would see that we were directing our publications to their

country specifically, they would immediately blacklist them. Therefore, the Rebbe instructed, if we publish the times of candle-lighting for five cities in the Soviet Union, we should do the same for ten cities around the world.

The Rebbe explained that this would help even if our efforts were discovered by the Soviets. Even if the top officials don’t see us in a positive eye, the Rebbe said, that attitude might not trickle down, and the minor bureaucrats of smaller cities won’t realize that there is a problem.

On a similar note, the Rebbe told us that Soviet law does technically allow some religious activities. “I know this,” the Rebbe explained, “because my father-in-law in Leningrad copied all of the details and permitted numbers² and sent them to the government.”

The Rebbe said we should print a similar list, and whenever a Jew might be confronted by a police officer in his town, he will be able to produce this document and prove that he didn’t break the law. In this case too, the Rebbe explained, it might not impress

the high level authorities, but it will be a strong deterrent for the simple policeman confronting a situation.

MY TRIP TO RUSSIA

In 5737, I decided to embark on a journey to see Soviet Jewry from up close. The Rebbe was very supportive of my trip, and upon my return, I had a three hour *yechidus* with the Rebbe.

I went to Russia over Sukkos; I brought along fifty *sefarim*, and miraculously, they weren’t confiscated. In Moscow, Leningrad and Riga, I saw the shuls and the many Jews who would gather there to pray, and I also participated in the mass dancing sessions that famously took place all over the Soviet Union on Simchas Torah (to the consternation of the authorities).

While I was there, a request came asking for the Rebbe’s blessing to restore the Baal Shem Tov’s *kever* in Mezhibuzh. The Rebbe greatly discouraged the idea. He said that currently one can surreptitiously visit the site, but if a whole tumult will be made out of it, it will become much more difficult. Additionally: if there is

THE REBBE COMPARED IT TO A FARMER, WHO SOWS A GREAT MULTITUDE OF KERNELS, EVEN THOUGH ONLY A SMALL PERCENTAGE WILL GROW.

publicity about the *kever*, the Jews all over Russia will have to answer for it.

In the *yechidus* after my trip, the Rebbe explained to me how we should build an educational movement in the Soviet Union. The Rebbe said that we should convince the activists and those knowledgeable in Yiddishkeit to create small study groups, where they would learn basics of Yiddishkeit, Modeh Ani, and so on. Even though the Yidden there were ignorant and many of them were quite assimilated, the Rebbe said that if they will be approached on the morning after Simchas Torah, when the inspiration is at its height, they can be told, “Here is a way to bring this into action; come learn Torah and make it a part of your life.”

Although these efforts would have a minimal effect on some of the students, the Rebbe nevertheless felt that this was the key to creating a space for higher learning and a general movement. Only if there were thousands at the grassroots level, would there be enough traction to create a movement of thousands of dedicated Jews.

The Rebbe compared it to a farmer, who sows a great multitude of kernels even though only a small percentage will grow. The Rebbe also quoted the

Midrash, which states that for one rav to be able to *pasken shailos*, there must be ten in “*mesivta*,” one hundred in yeshiva, and one thousand in *cheder*.

While in the airport at the conclusion of my journey, I was detained by the KGB and some of my notes (only non-discriminatory ones) were confiscated. (The Rebbe told me that I couldn’t appreciate the miracle that this really was - that I was detained only upon leaving the country, and I was able to bring in all of my books and items unhindered).

The incident was reported in the Russian press. They painted me as an enemy of the state, and claimed that I had been blacklisted from Russia forever, although in reality this was untrue. I asked the Rebbe if I should publish a correction, and the Rebbe rejected the idea. If I would simply remain quiet, the Rebbe felt, the Russians may forget about the entire incident and I would be able to travel there again in the future.

AVODAS ATZMO

The vast majority of my *yechidusen* dealt with issues of the public, about England and around the world. However, the Rebbe also guided me in my personal life (as discussed earlier in the *aliyah* segment) and over the years I received many *horaos* about how I should conduct myself.

Something that the Rebbe was very particular about was my Torah study. In my first *yechidus*, the Rebbe encouraged me to learn Kitzur Shulchan Aruch, *Chassidus* (particularly in a group session) and to do so in English if that would be easier for me. In a later *yechidus*, the Rebbe made it clear that I must learn Torah every day, not only twice a week as I was accustomed to, “And if you do it without a secret you may become a shining example for others.”

In 5735, when the Rebbe announced five of the ten *mivtzoim*,

he sent me a letter encouraging me to take part in them. “And while you are destined for, and capable of, great things and accomplishments,” said the Rebbe, “one should not attempt to weight the difference between big Mitzvos and small Mitzvos, but to do them as they come along.”

Once, the Rebbe told Professor Branover in *yechidus* that “I see Peter. Things are going so well... I would expect that he would be jumping, dancing! How come when things go so well, he keeps to being an Englishman?”

When Professor Branover told me about the Rebbe’s remark, I wrote:

“I would like to assure the Rebbe *shlit*”a that behind the English facade, I am continuously smiling for the many, many benefits that I have received. I will try to let it show more clearly.”

INTENSE AS YECHIDUS

As the years passed, the Rebbe’s time became more limited, and the opportunities for long *yechidus* were no more. In correspondence as well, I understood that it would not be possible to receive the detailed answers I had in the past.

Nevertheless, our connection remained strong. Each time I would visit the Rebbe, he would greet me with a broad smile, one that lit up the room. This was now our *yechidus*; although the time was shorter than before, the intensity and the warmth remained the same.

Our connection with the Rebbe enriched our lives in ways we could have never imagined. I hope that this small essay will enrich the lives of others as well. T

1. Yaakov Herzog was the son of chief Rabbi Yitzchak Herzog and served in the administration of three Israeli Prime Ministers.
2. I.e. how many people are permitted to gather for religious study.