



לזכות
החתן הרה"ת ר' צמח דוד שיחי' פעלער
והכלה המהוללה מרת חי' מושקא תחי' ווינער
לרגל חתונתם בשעטומ"צ
ג' חשוון ה'תשע"ח
נדפס ע"י הוריהם
הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל
וזוגתו מרת נחמה דינה שיחיו
פעלער



Colel Chabad



The central tzedaka of Chabad
and the Rabbeim's relentless
call for its support



THE JEWISH QUARTER OF TVERYA, CIRCA 5617 (תרי"ז).

The Journey

The story of Colel Chabad begins in the year 5537 (תקל"ז), five years after the passing of the Maggid of Mezritch.¹

The Maggid's students, led by the Alter Rebbe and Reb Mendel Horodoker, were relentlessly hounded by the *misnagdim*. They and their *talmidim* were subject to endless persecution at every twist and turn, until Reb Mendel Horodoker finally decided that he, accompanied by a group of Chassidim, would journey to Eretz Yisrael, where they would be free to serve Hashem to their heart's content. The Alter Rebbe decided to join as well.

They embarked on their journey in Adar, and slowly made their way towards Turkey, where they would embark on ships for the remainder of the voyage.

Upon reaching Mohyliv near the Turkish border, the plans changed. Not wanting to leave the Chassidim behind without a leader, Reb Mendel Horodoker begged the Alter Rebbe to remain behind and take responsibility for the Chassidim of White Russia. For a few weeks, the group remained in limbo, while Reb Mendel Horodoker and the Alter

Rebbe closeted themselves in a room in intense discussion. After a few weeks of deliberation, the Alter Rebbe ultimately acquiesced, and returned to his hometown of Liozna.²

The rest of the group continued on their journey and reached Eretz Yisrael after half a year on the road. The journey was a harrowing one; one of the ships sunk and there were numerous casualties. Meanwhile, many poor people attached themselves to the group to avail themselves of their resources.

Reaching their destination, Reb Mendel Horodoker and the Chassidim realized that their funds had been depleted, and taking the economic situation of Eretz Yisrael into account, they understood that the Jews of the Holy Land would not be able to support them.

An alternative needed to be found.

The Colel

Reb Mendel decided to send one of the most prominent Chassidim back to Russia to raise awareness of their plight and to champion the cause of the Yidden in Eretz Yisrael. Reb Yisroel Polotzker was selected to make the arduous trip back.

In his letters to the Chassidim in Russia,³ Reb Mendel appointed three individuals to lead the Chassidim and to oversee the collection of

funds: The Alter Rebbe, Reb Yisroel Polotzker, and Reb Yissachar Ber of Lubavitch. After a few years, Reb Yisroel Polotzker passed away and Reb Yissachar Ber accepted the Alter Rebbe's leadership. When Reb Mendel Horodoker passed away in Eretz Yisrael in 5548 (תקמ"ח), the Alter Rebbe became the undisputed leader of all of the Chassidim and *nossi* of the Colel.

The system for collecting funds was as follows:

Every Chossid had a *tzedaka pushka* in his home, and would donate a specific amount each week. With the approach of Yom Tov (and later, each week), the Chossid would transfer the *pushka's* contents to the local *memuneh*, who would hold onto the funds until the arrival of the chief *gabbai*, Reb Yaakov of Smilian, or one of his assistants, at some point during the winter.

By the time Pesach would arrive, all of the funds would have been gathered in Liozna, and a special messenger would leave for Eretz Yisrael shortly after Yom Tov with the money. The duration of the trip could easily be a few months; after the Russo-Turkish war broke out, the messenger would take a longer, more roundabout route through Trieste in Italy, and the trip would sometimes last until Rosh Chodesh Cheshvan.

This system continued with impeccable order for over 30 years. Each year, the Alter Rebbe would pen a letter to the Chassidim extolling the virtues of supporting the Yidden of Eretz Yisrael, and the Chassidim would happily contribute towards the noble cause.

The Alter Rebbe would also write detailed instructions, often adding new rules and *takanos* to the existing format. One constant issue was the lure of using the collected funds for *gemilas chessed* loans. Chassidim in those days were not wealthy, and

The Alter Rebbe forbade any such usage. The money was to be held under lock and key; it was exclusively for the poor of Eretz Yisrael, and under no circumstances was it to be touched for anything else, no matter how noble the cause.



A LIST OF FAMILIES THAT RECEIVED A GRANT FROM THE ENDOWMENT ESTABLISHED BY SIR MOSES MONTEFIORE, 5671 (תרע"א).



A LETTER FROM THE ALTER REBBE URGING TO GIVE TO COLEL CHABAD, DATED 5551 (תקנ"א).

Poland, and the money often had to be sent surreptitiously due to the Russo-Turkish conflict, yet the Alter Rebbe managed the vast operation with striking precision.

When the Alter Rebbe was arrested, much of the case surrounded the Colel. The funds being sent to Eretz Yisrael were claimed by the *misnagdim* as money being sent to the Turkish Empire, as part of the Alter Rebbe's purported efforts to overthrow the Czar.

Changes

In the last ten years before the Alter Rebbe's *histalkus*, the organization concentrated on a smaller area due to Reb Avraham Kalisker's disagreement with the Alter Rebbe over the *shita* of Toras Chabad.⁵ As a result, a competing organization was created by his supporters in Poland, while the Alter Rebbe continued to maintain the system in White Russia.

Everything changed with Napoleon's invasion of Russia in 5572 (תקע"ב). Huge swathes of land were utterly destroyed by the fighting, and countless Jews lost their homes, livelihoods, and, *r"l*, their lives. In the midst of all this mayhem, no collection was possible.

many often looked for ways to borrow money for various business ventures or even basic needs. The vast sums of money sitting untouched in the home of the *memuneh* seemed to be a perfect opportunity; they began to become a source of loans, and the loans often remained unpaid. Eventually, the Alter Rebbe forbade any such usage.

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The organization was extremely vast and complex; donations would be collected from places as distant as



LIST OF FAMILIES WHO RECEIVED MA'OS CHITIM IN 5669 (תרט"ט).

Then, in the middle of the war, the Alter Rebbe was *nistalek*, and the Mittlerer Rebbe accepted the *nesius*.

The Mittlerer Rebbe

The Yidden were only beginning to settle down after the war when another calamity struck. The Czar banished all Jews from the countryside and confined them to the cities of a limited area. Hundreds of thousands lost their livelihoods.⁶

With the new situation, the Mittlerer Rebbe—in addition to his activities of alleviating the *gezeiros*—sought to reinvigorate the Colel. Letters were sent to all the Chassidim reminding them of the Alter Rebbe's dedication to this cause, along with several new directives:

Each Chossid was to affix a *pushka* to the wall near the dining room table, and before each meal, he and all his family members were to put *tzedaka* into it. Guests, too, should be invited to donate according to their capabilities.⁷

The Mittlerer Rebbe set specific amounts for each Chossid: High income—3 rubles per year; middle income—1.5 rubles per year; and low income—1/4 to 1/2 ruble per year.⁸

Two other important developments can be found in the letters of the Mittlerer Rebbe:

- The Colel took on the name Colel Chabad,⁹ the previous name had been “Tzedakas Eretz Yisrael” with some variations.
- The Colel became synonymous with Tzedakas Reb Meir Ba'al Hanes, to which many Jews had customarily donated.¹⁰ The Mittlerer Rebbe connected these funds to Colel Chabad.¹¹

Besides for focusing on the value of supporting the Yidden in Eretz Yisrael, the Mittlerer Rebbe also emphasized the fact that this matter was so close to the Alter Rebbe's heart. “I have come,” he writes, “to awaken the hearts of those dedicated with love to my father, the Rebbe...Knowing that his true will was to fortify the communities of the Holy Land...Therefore, I call to my beloved to take on this cause in a manner that they can afford...”

The Tzemach Tzedek

Under the leadership of the Tzemach Tzedek, Colel Chabad continued its regular activities. The Tzemach Tzedek would bring all of the funds to Lubavitch and from there send them off to Eretz Yisrael, with detailed instructions as to how much should be given to each person. He was assisted by the Alter Rebbe's son, Reb Chaim Avraham, and the Mittlerer Rebbe's son, Reb Menachem Nochum.

In his letters,¹² the Tzemach Tzedek encourages Chassidim to donate to the *pushkas* constantly, and to fill in the missing amounts each month, so that they don't “fall into debt” at the end of the year. He also instructs that responsible individuals be appointed to oversee the collection in each city.

Some years later, a *vaad* based in Rogatchov was established to oversee the collection and report back to the Tzemach Tzedek in Lubavitch. This *vaad* continued to function for many years.

After the Tzemach Tzedek's *histalkus*, most of his sons became Rebbes in different cities. The Chassidim in Eretz Yisrael wrote to the Tzemach Tzedek's children, beseeching them to continue the activities of the Tzemach Tzedek and to ensure that they continue receiving their sustenance. One known letter¹³ is from the Rishon Letziyon of Yerushalayim, Harav Chaim Dovid Chazan; in a long, beautiful letter, he describes the value and influence of Colel Chabad and conveys his hope that the work will continue.

During these years, the situation of the Yidden in Russia deteriorated further; state-sponsored pogroms were incited in many cities, and millions of Yidden fled the country. Throughout all this time, Colel Chabad continued to function.

Umbrella Organizations

With time, Colel Chabad became more than just a *tzedaka* organization. The Colel was the umbrella organization of all Chabad institutions in Eretz Yisrael, with the *hanhala* of the Colel being the most prominent members and leaders of the Chabad community.

During the *nesius* of the Mittlerer Rebbe, many Chabad Chassidim traveled to Eretz Yisrael and settled there, establishing the *yishuv* of



AN APPEAL LETTER FOR MATANOS LA'EVYONIM AND KIMCHA D'PISCHA ON BEHALF OF COLEL CHABAD, CIRCA 5690 (תר"צ).

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Chabad in Chevron. The Mittlerer Rebbe's daughter, Rebbetzin Menucha Rochel, and her husband, Reb Yaakov Culi Slonim, joined the community during the *nesius* of the Tzemach

Tzedek, and she became famous for her miracles and sage advice.

The Chevron community remained the center of Chabad activities in Eretz Yisrael for many years, and it served as the base for the Colel and

many other institutions. During the *nesius* of the Rebbe Rashab, some Chabad Chassidim began to settle in Yerushalayim, but the Rebbe Rashab took pains to ensure that Chevron remained the bastion of Chassidus Chabad in Eretz Yisrael. In fact, when he sent *bochurim* from Lubavitch to establish Yeshivas Toras Emes, it was with the express instruction that they do so in Chevron, and the building purchased to house the *yeshiva* was the personal property of the Rebbe Rashab.¹⁴

In those years, a discussion took place as to the nature of the Colel. Some leaders of the Colel in Eretz Yisrael were of the opinion that it was to assist anyone living in Eretz Yisrael, regardless of occupation. The result of this outlook was that assistance was even provided for individuals who educated their children in the anti-religious schools. In his letters, the Rebbe Rashab vehemently objected. "The Colel was founded to support those who are involved in Torah and *avoda* in the Holy Land...not G-d forbid to support those who seek to destroy Yiddishkeit in Hashem's land..."¹⁵

When the Frierdiker Rebbe was asked to become the *nossi* of the Colel after the Rebbe Rashab's *histalkus*, he agreed to do so only after they straightened out a number of issues that had prevented the Colel from functioning properly.¹⁶ In the end, the Frierdiker Rebbe only agreed to become the official *nossi* after visiting the Colel during his visit to Eretz Yisrael in 5689 (תרפ"ט) and seeing the improvements from up close.¹⁷

The work of the Colel continued. The Frierdiker Rebbe asked that the Colel look after the spiritual well-being of its members, especially the youth. They should be tested in their learning from time to time; those who excel should be rewarded, and those who don't should be reprimanded (but

under no circumstances should money be withheld). The Frieddiker Rebbe requested that the older members should also be drawn into *shiurim* and Torah learning.

One of the last letters of the Frieddiker Rebbe before his *histalkus* was about supporting the Colel,¹⁸ as was one of the first letters penned by the Rebbe after officially accepting the *nesius* on Yud Shevat 5711.¹⁹ [See sidebar.]

During the early years of the Rebbe's *nesius*, Colel Chabad continued its regular activities. With the dispatch of shlichim throughout the world, the Colel was able to

expand its reach, as many shlichim served as *gabbaim* of the Colel in their respective countries.

In the Rebbe's *Igros* from before the *nesius*, we see that the Rebbe would send donations to Colel Chabad each year for Chof Av in honor of his father's *yahrtzeit*, and they would organize Torah learning in his memory.²⁰

The Rebbe often personally directed people to donate to Tzedakas Reb Meir Baal Hanes, specifically before candle lighting each Erev Shabbos and Yom Tov, explaining that it would serve as a conduit for blessings for all sorts

of issues —infertility,²¹ healthy pregnancy,²² good health,²³ bad dreams,²⁴ *shalom bayis*,²⁵ and more.

Often, when individuals would send money to the Rebbe to distribute as he saw fit, the Rebbe would send a considerable portion to the Colel. When someone wrote to the Rebbe that he had held a fundraiser for the Colel, the Rebbe's response was a *personal* thank you for doing something so close to his heart, adding, "...the mitzvah alone is enough of a merit."²⁶

The Rebbe writes,²⁷ "It is incumbent upon each and every man and woman, a custom to be upheld in every place and at all times... to have a shofar (*pushka*)²⁸ of Reb Meir Baal Hanes—Colel Chabad in their homes." In fact, the only *pushka* the Rebbe kept on his desk was for Colel Chabad.

Throughout the following years, the Rebbe continued to guide the *hanhala* of Colel Chabad, appointing new directors²⁹ when the previous ones passed on, and strongly encouraging their work. However, the Rebbe had bigger plans...

The Rebbe's first letter about Colel Chabad

To our good friends, *anash* wherever they may be, *sheyichyu*.

Colel Chabad, which was founded by the Alter Rebbe and established with *mesirus nefesh*, and continued by the Rabbeim...is currently in dire straits.

The following are the words of the Frieddiker Rebbe...on the Yud-Tes Kislev before his *histalkus*.

"Every single individual of *anash* must always remember that the support of Tzedakas Reb Meir Baal Hanes is a personal obligation, incumbent on every man and woman, at every time and every place, for generations. The Rabbeim's blessings are upon all those who support this holy cause, which is set forever and ever."

These words are surely etched into the hearts of *anash*, and this is merely an attempt to encourage all those who may not yet have a *pushka* of Reb Meir Baal Hanes in their homes...

The merit of this *tzedaka* can invoke Hashem's kindness, with blessings for them and their entire households, for all their needs, physical and spiritual.

With blessings for the material and spiritual,
[the Rebbe's signature].



AN ANNOUNCEMENT FROM SIVAN 5695 (תרכ"ה) LISTING THE NEWLY ELECTED DIRECTORS OF THE COLEL.



Time for Growth

At the conclusion of the farbrengen of Yud-Tes Kislev 5736 (תשל"ו), the Rebbe announced a new initiative.³⁰ Twenty shlichim were to be sent to Eretz Yisrael—ten of them would settle in Tzfas and ten in Yerushalayim—to study Torah and engage in doing mitzvos. The list was open; the Rebbe said whoever wanted to join could sign up with the *mazkirus*.

Of course, many *bochurim* and *yungeleit* pounced on the opportunity, and a select group was chosen from the many applicants.

Among the group of *bochurim* chosen for this unique shlichus were Rabbis Sholom Duchman and Avraham Baruch Pewzner. The group left to Eretz Yisrael on 11 Shevat of that year, and after about two years of fulfilling their shlichus, some of the *bochurim* returned to New York for a short while to prepare for their weddings.

The rest of the story as told by Rabbi Sholom Duchman:

Those were the days after the Rebbe's heart attack in 5738 (תשל"ח),

when the Rebbe wasn't receiving people for regular private *yechidus*. On the Tuesday before my wedding, the Rebbe held a group *yechidus* at the door of his room for all of the *chassanim* and *kallos* who were getting married in the coming weeks (see image on pg. 23). Each person had a chance to pass by the Rebbe, hand him a *tzettel*, and receive a short *bracha*.

When my turn came, the Rebbe asked me "*Vos tustu doh*—what are you doing here?"

I was confused, because I had received the Rebbe's express permission to come to America; what did the Rebbe mean?

For a moment I thought the Rebbe meant I shouldn't be staying in the same city as my *kallah*, as per *minhag Chabad*, so I began saying that I planned to be in Morristown until my wedding, but the Rebbe said no:

"*M'hot doch upgeredt*, we made up that you would enter *yechidus* separately." When the Rebbe saw that I didn't understand, he told me to speak to *mazkirus*.

I approached Rabbi Hodakov, who informed me that the Rebbe wanted to give me a specific mission, and I should notify him if my *kallah* and I were prepared to accept it. We both

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immediately agreed, and a few days later I was told to prepare for the *yechidus*.

It was the Friday morning before my wedding, at 11:20 a.m. The Rebbe came into Gan Eden Hatachton holding two *Tanyas*, and began speaking to Rabbi Avraham Baruch Pewzner and I for approximately five minutes.



COLEL CHABAD'S FIRST SOUP KITCHEN, YERUSHALAYIM.



THE COLEL CHABAD SOUP KITCHEN IN TZFAS, ONE OF THE MANY THEY OPERATE THROUGHOUT ERETZ YISRAEL.



THE COLEL CHABAD PUSHKA ON THE REBBE'S DESK.

The Rebbe spoke about the importance of Colel Chabad as an institution founded by the Rabbeim, and asked that we get involved in the institution, especially in the fundraising aspect of it. I had never merited such a *yechidus*, so I was obviously quite overwhelmed and it was difficult to pay attention to what the Rebbe was saying. When he concluded, he asked us, “*Hot ir farshtanen*—did you understand?”

I was so bewildered that I hadn’t understood. Looking at our faces and expressions, the Rebbe said, “*Es kukt ois az nisht altz*—it seems that you didn’t understand everything.”

The Rebbe continued, “*Al kol ponim*, in any case, discuss it between yourselves, and if something is unclear, Rabbi Hodakov will clarify it for you.”

The Rebbe then asked each of us when our weddings would be taking place. All in all, it was an incredibly warm *yechidus*, the likes of which we had never experienced before. The Rebbe handed us the Tanyas, and the *yechidus* was over.

Upon returning to Eretz Yisrael with our wives, we both got very involved in the Colel. The next year, 5739, I came back to New York for Pesach, and on the Monday after Yom Tov (the last day of Pesach was on Thursday) my wife and I entered *yechidus*.

The Rebbe spoke about our work in Colel Chabad, and told me in no uncertain terms that he was very disappointed. Colel Chabad, the Rebbe said, is an institution that the Alter Rebbe founded and that each of the Rabbeim was involved with, and although it has a lot of potential, very little was being done. The institution was at a standstill. He had sent us to help turn things around, but nothing seemed to have been accomplished.

After making his point clear, the Rebbe asked me how long we planned



THE YECHIDUS FOR CHASSANIM AND KALLOS AT THE DOOR OF THE REBBE’S ROOM, EVE OF 12 SHEVAT 5738 (תשל"ח).



to stay in the U.S., and I replied, “One week.” The Rebbe said that if that is the case, I have a full week during which I could draw up a plan, and if we will get a campaign off the ground before Shabbos, he will even mention it at the Motzai Shabbos farbrengen!

The Rebbe concluded the *yechidus* on a special note. He said that if someone toils and puts his head into something, it is bound to be successful. How much more so with regards to an institution established by the Alter Rebbe and headed by each of the Rabbeim; if I would invest

the proper effort, I would surely be successful.

I worked intensively throughout the next three days, and on Friday I sent a letter to the Rebbe describing everything that had been done. The answer I received was not what I had expected (see *ksav yad kodesh*):

“לא נזכר כלל מהגעשה בכ”ז קודם”
היחידות—you didn’t write about what you did *before* the *yechidus*.”

The *yechidus* had taken place three days after Yom Tov; a day of *yechidus* wasn’t much of a day at all, so there had only been two days for me to work, and needless to say, I

hadn't accomplished much. Since I had nothing to write, I decided that it would be better not to write anything.

After Shabbos I sent another report with a few questions, but the Rebbe replied "עדיין לא קיבלתי מענה מהנעשה כאן"—I have not yet received an answer about your work here [in New York] before the *yechidus*." I had no choice; I wrote about the few things I had accomplished during those few days, and then I received my answers.

To Work

We quickly got to work. We conducted fundraisers, sent mailings, and within a short period of time, we merited to see huge success. Colel Chabad grew by leaps and bounds. In a few instances the Rebbe had pointed to the other Colels that provided for the poor of Eretz Yisraela and asked why Colel Chabad doesn't learn from their fundraising tactics. Over the

years that followed, Colel Chabad was so reinvigorated that it grew into a mammoth organization that vastly surpassed any other *tzedaka* in Eretz Yisrael.

At the outset, I had planned to run Colel Chabad from Eretz Yisrael. However, when we searched for an administrator who could run things on the ground in America, the Rebbe rejected all the names we suggested. I asked Rabbi Hodakov what to do, and he advised me to ask the Rebbe for permission to remain in the United States and fundraise for the Colel from there. I did so, and I received the Rebbe's *bracha* for the move.

Throughout the years, the Rebbe led us through every step of the way. Every brochure and every decision was sent to the Rebbe for his approval, and we often received detailed instructions on how to proceed [see sidebar]. We were *zocheh* to receive detailed

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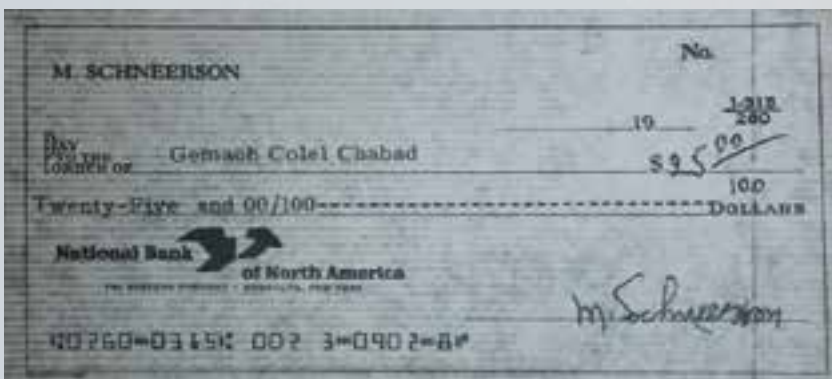
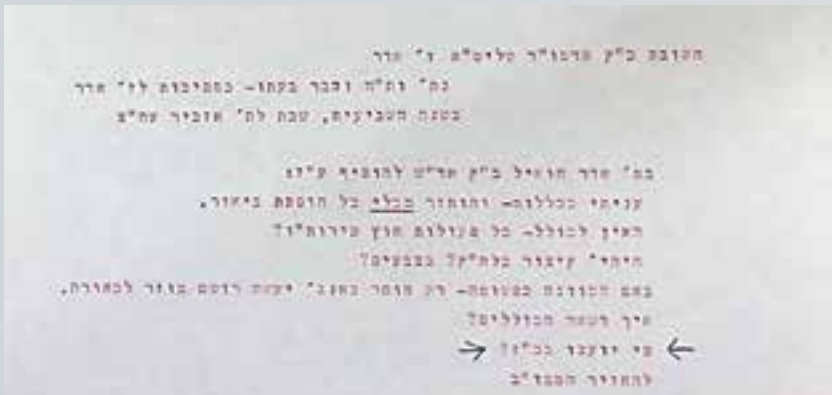
answers as often as two or three times a week for over ten years all the way through 5752.

In addition, the Rebbe himself would constantly send money to the Colel. Often, before leaving to the Ohel, sometimes two or three times a week, the Rebbe would send a check for \$100 and ask to receive a receipt before he left his room. The *pushka* in the Rebbe's house was also filled very often and the Rebbe would send its contents to Colel Chabad.

The first time we sent out a mailing, we forgot to remove the Rebbe's name from the donor list, so the Rebbe received our regular appeal. We received an envelope with a donation. This occurred a few times. Once, the Rebbe actually received two envelopes due to an error in our system, and he sent back two donations.

To Connect

When we had asked the Rebbe who should be the administrator, part of the Rebbe's response had been about the job description. The Rebbe wrote that



A PERSONAL CHECK FROM THE REBBE TO COLEL CHABAD.

The Rebbe's instructions to Colel Chabad

Throughout our work, the Rebbe guided us in every way possible. Whenever we wrote to the Rebbe, we received clear and illuminating answers [most of which are beyond the scope of this article]; and from time to time, sharp criticism.

Here are a few examples:

- A few months after opening our New York office, I rented a location with five rooms to accommodate two secretaries, myself, a partner, and some additional staff. The Rebbe sent us a few sharp *maanos*, instructing us to inquire how many rooms and how many workers Merkos L'inyonei Chinuch or Beis Rivkah had before taking on unnecessary expenses. The Rebbe also indicated that salaries were too high, and ultimately we began paying the workers by the hour, which proved to be much more efficient.
- Once, I sent the Rebbe a black and white brochure we had designed, and the Rebbe immediately responded (see image) that it should be in color, and should contain a Hebrew translation as well.
- In that same first brochure, our designer felt that “200 years of charity in Jerusalem” was more enticing than “200 years of charity in the Holy Land.” The Rebbe commented, “האין לכולל כל פעולות” חוץ מירושלים ת”ו—does the Colel not have activities outside of Yerushalayim as well?”

for Chassidim in Crown Heights, and a gala dinner in Manhattan for the *baalei batim*. Each year, the Rebbe would give us a bottle of *mashke* at the *farbrenge* for the *melaveh malka*, and send two letters for the occasions; one in Yiddish for the *melaveh malka*, and the other in English for the gala.

When speaking about the Colel at *farbrenge*s, letters, and in his correspondence with us, the Rebbe emphasized time and again the massive potential of the Rabbeim's *brachos*, which need only be tapped into. Colel Chabad is the only institution that has merited to be supported by every single one of the Rabbeim, from the Alter Rebbe to our day.

The Rebbe's *brachos* are seen clearly at every step of the way. This is true not only of Colel Chabad, but of any *mosad* founded by the Rabbeim, and every institution that follows in the Rebbe's ways. With just a small effort on our part, vast potential can be revealed.

With the Rebbe's *brachos* and guidance, Colel Chabad has become a world class operation. It operates 23 soup kitchens throughout the country that serve about 3,000 fresh, hot meals a day, and deliver meals to the homebound and elderly in 45 cities. It also runs a large dry goods and food distribution program that serves tens of thousands of needy homes all over Eretz Yisrael, second only to the IDF in national food distribution.

This all, in addition to not-for-profit grocery stores; six dental clinics (plus two mobile ones); two wedding halls for needy families; a *yeshiva* for Russian boys in Migdal Ha'emek; a *gemach* for *chassanim* and *kallos*; the only multiple sclerosis center/hostel in Israel (with 35 full time residents); a *chevras Tehillim*; *machon bar mitzvah*; a young orphans early intervention program; and a safe-house in Tzfas for children from dysfunctional homes.



RABBI SHOLOM DUCHMAN SPEAKS WITH THE REBBE AT A MACHNE ISRAEL DEVELOPMENT FUND YECHIDUS, 23 ADAR 5750 (תש"ו).

part of the *menahel's* role was to reach out to those “who are not *shpitz Chabad* and connect them with the Colel.”

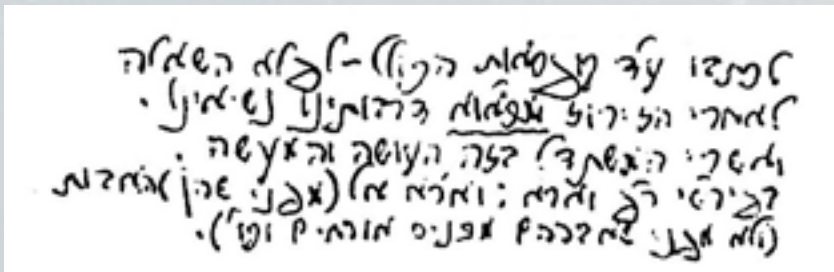
This directive has guided Colel Chabad to this very day. Instead of remaining a small *pushka* organization sustained only by Chabad families, Colel Chabad's mission is to reach

out to Yidden of all denominations, even those quite distant from Torah and mitzvos, and to serve as their connection to Yiddishkeit.

On this note, we would always conduct two separate evenings here in New York (aside from other events all over the world); a *melaveh malka*



A RECENT COLEL CHABAD DINNER AT THE NYC HILTON, WITH OVER 1000 IN ATTENDANCE.



HANDWRITTEN RESPONSE FROM THE REBBE TO REB YITZCHOK DUBOV ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF COLEL CHABAD:

לכתבו ע"ד קפסאות הכולל-לפלא השאלה לאחרי הזירוז מכא"א דרבתינו נשיאנו. ואשרי המשתדל בזה העושה והמעשה.
 בפרש"י ר"פ וארא: וארא אל (מפני שהן) האבות (ולא מפני שאברהם מכניס אורחים וכו').

Because They Were the Avos

In a letter to the Rebbe, the elder Chossid Reb Yitzchok Dubov once asked about supporting Colel Chabad. (Presumably about the nature of the *mosad* and why it takes precedence over other *mosdos*.)

The Rebbe replied (see *ksav yad kodesh*):

"I'm surprised by your question, after every one of the Rabbeim encouraged supporting this cause...

"See Rashi's commentary in the beginning of Parshas Va'eira.

וארא אל (מפני שהן) האבות (ולא מפני שאברהם מכניס אורחים וכו').

[The *possuk* says] "And I revealed myself to [Avraham, Yitzchok, and Yaakov]." Rashi adds, "To the *avos*;" [implying: Hashem revealed Himself to them] because they were the *avos*, not because Avraham was hospitable.³¹

The Rebbe's message is clear: With all the humanitarian and social work that the Colel can accomplish, its main merit is the *avos*; the fact that it was founded and headed by *rabboseinu nesi'einu*. T

1. Much of the information for this article was culled from Toldos Chabad B'Eretz Hakodesh, by Rabbi Shalom Ber Levin.
2. Beis Rebbi, 7b.
3. Likkutei Amarim, letter 5.

4. Igros Kodesh Admur Hazaken, Igeres 1.
5. Reb Avraham Kalisker, who led the Chassidim in Eretz Yisrael after the passing of Reb Mendel Horodoker, felt that the Alter Rebbe's method of spreading Chassidus to the masses was contrary to the will of the Maggid. The Alter Rebbe responded to his claims at length.
6. See the introduction to Igros Kodesh Admur Ha'emtzai by Rabbi Shalom Ber Levin, p. 28.
7. Igros Kodesh Admur Ha'emtzai, Igeres 21.
8. Ibid. Igeres 35.
9. Ibid., p. 320, p. 326.
10. Tzedakas Reb Meir Baal Haness (also known as "Kupas RaMBaHN") is a *tzedaka* that was founded between the years 5002-5005 (תק"ב-תק"ה) to fund the rebuilding of Tveryah (where Reb Meir is buried), later becoming a means of support for the whole Eretz Yisrael. Reb Meir is known as a miracle worker (see *Avodah Zarah* 18b), and Yidden throughout the world would donate towards this cause in times of trouble, asking for salvation in his merit. The Baal Shem Tov encouraged this *minhag* (See Kesser Torah vol. 2, p. 52b).
11. Igros Kodesh Admur Ha'emtzai, Igeres 21.
12. Igros Kodesh Admur Hatzemach Tzedek, Igeres 20.
13. Yagdil Torah NY, *choveres* 66, p. 115.
14. Igros Kodesh Admur HaRashab vol. 2, Igeres 198.
15. Ibid. vol. 1, Igeres 118.
16. Igros Kodesh Admur HaRayatz vol. 1, Igeres 107.
17. Ibid. vol. 2, Igeres 455.
18. Ibid. vol. 10, Igeres 3,678.
19. Purim Katan 5711. Igros Kodesh vol. 4, p. 177.
20. Igros Kodesh vol. 2, p. 46, p. 371.
21. Ibid. vol. 6, p. 60.
22. Ibid. p. 104.
23. Ibid. vol. 5, p. 314.
24. Ibid. p. 49.
25. Ibid. p. 81.
26. Ibid. vol. 18, Igeres 364.
27. Ibid. vol. 4, p. 177.
28. The term shofar was often used by the Rabbeim in reference to Colel Chabad *pushkas*. A shofar has a similar makeup to a *pushka*; it is narrow on one side and wide on the other. Hence the usage of the term.
29. See Igros Kodesh vol. 27, p. 241.
30. Sichos Kodesh 5736 vol. 1, p. 272.
31. Igros Kodesh vol. 23, p. 344. See explanation in Likkutei Sichos vol. 3, p. 860.