

## RABBI LEVI AZIMOV OF PARIS, FRANCE RELATES:

In honor of the month of Tishrei 5730, Chassidim arranged a charter plane from Eretz Yisrael to New York (as they had done in years past). After Tishrei, the plane took off for Eretz Yisrael. A little while later, the Rebbe asked the *mazkirus*, “*Vos tut zich mit dem charter? What is happening with the charter?*”



They didn't understand what the Rebbe was asking—they had just taken off! A few minutes later, however, the news came to 770 that one of the engines of the plane had caught fire mid-flight, and they had miraculously managed to return to the New York airport safely.

The Rebbe proceeded to give them several *hora'os* (including to *chazer a maamar* Chassidus in the airport), and they ended up leaving the following morning.

This is the famous story of the charter, but less known is more background to this story. My parents, Rabbi Shmuel and Basya Azimov, were part of the charter (it had picked them up in France). That day, before the plane was originally scheduled to leave, my parents had gone to visit the Rebbetzin together with my brother Mendel, who was a baby at the time, and my grandfather, Reb Bentzion Shemtov.

As they were talking, the Rebbetzin asked, “When are you traveling back?” My father replied, “Tonight.”

The conversation continued, and a few minutes later the Rebbetzin asked again, “When are you traveling back?”

“Tonight,” my father replied. A few minutes later, she asked yet a third time, “When are you traveling back?”

“Tonight.”

When they left, my father discussed this strange occurrence with his father-in-law, Reb Bentzion Shemtov, and they both understood that something was clearly wrong with the trip. Maybe they shouldn't even go... In the end they decided to take the flight, and that's when the engine failed.

There are different messages that one can take from this story. One is the clearly evident *ruach hakodesh* of the Rebbetzin. But on a different level, and perhaps deeper, this is a lesson in how to be a Chossid. Many people who would be present in such a situation might shrug it off—who knows why the Rebbetzin asked three times? Who says it has any significance? But Chassidim who were more involved knew that obviously there

was a deeper meaning here. As it turned out, the *ruach hakodesh* was revealed shortly afterwards. This is how my father would always tell us this story—to illustrate how one must view a word of the Rebbetzin.



Once, when my parents visited the Rebbetzin, they noticed a certain gift that someone had given. On their way out, as the Rebbetzin accompanied them to the door, my mother complimented her by saying that it was a beautiful gift. The Rebbetzin commented, “*Nisht dos iz matanos vos mir darf'n*—These are not the type of gifts that we need.” My mother grabbed the opportunity and asked, “What are the types of *matanos* that the Rebbe and Rebbetzin would be satisfied with?” The Rebbetzin answered, “*A shiur mit yunge—dos git nachas ruach*—Classes for youth—that is what gives *nachas ruach*.”



Rosh Chodesh Kislev 5748 was a time of great joy in Lubavitch. The *seforim* case was finally over and my family, along with many other Chassidim from all over the world, had come to celebrate this time with the Rebbe.

When the *seforim* actually came back on Monday, Beis Kislev, my mother immediately went to the payphone to call the Rebbetzin and wish her *mazal tov*.

The Rebbetzin immediately asked her, “*Ver iz duh?*” Who is here (from the family)? My mother said that the entire family was here, and that even my sister had flown in from Paris. The Rebbetzin said, “*Miken morgen araingein*”, you can come by tomorrow.

This was something special, as we had never visited the Rebbetzin as a family.

Being that the Rebbetzin had asked for “everyone” to come, my mother understood that the extended family was also invited, and Reb Nachman Sudak and his wife—my mother's sister and brother-in-law—came with us.

During the visit, my uncle Nachman and my father gave a report of their activities on *shlichus*, and the Rebbetzin didn't speak much, though she said a few words here and there. At one point she said, “*Ir zolt vissen mir zaynen tzufriden fun aich*.” You should know that we are happy with you. More than once throughout the conversation, the Rebbetzin remarked, “*Nu! Itzt vet zich unhoiben a naye tekufa*.” Now a new era is beginning.

A few months later was Chof Beis Shevat...