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החיילת בצבאות ה'  
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ולזכות הוריהם  
הרה"ת ר' ארי' לייב  
וזוגתו מרת אריאלה ליבר שיחיו לבנר  
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ר' מנחם שלום  
וזוגתו מרת שושנה יפה  
סיגלשטיין



# DEVOTED CHOSSID, MAN OF THE WORLD



THE FASCINATING LIFE OF REB URIEL TZIMMER

Reb Uriel Tzimmer was a fascinating personality.

Possessing a brilliant mind, he was fluent in some seventeen languages and many secular subjects, and was equally versed in Shas and *poskim*.

On top of all that, he was a dedicated Chossid of the Rebbe.

His many talents and unique persona earned him a special place in 770. He worked in *mazkirus*, and was often sent by the Rebbe on mysterious *shlichus'n*, the nature of which remain unknown to this day.

## BIRTH AND UPBRINGING

Reb Uriel Tzimmer was born in Vienna in 5680 to a traditional yet non-observant family. Young Uriel was the apple of his parents' eye. He was blessed with a warm heart and he also showed early signs of genius. When the family moved to Eretz Yisroel shortly before World War II, Uriel enrolled in the famous Herzliya Hebrew Gymnasium.

Among his studies, he chanced upon a song written by the famed poet Chaim Nachman Bialik, called "Hamasmid," which described the life of a yeshiva *bochur* who studied Torah assiduously. The song's subject piqued his interest, and he began to visit yeshivos in the Tel Aviv area. He was impressed by what he saw and over time began keeping Torah and mitzvos.

Being very strong-minded, he wasn't moved by the ridicule of his staunchly secular classmates; even his mother's protests didn't sway him. When she threatened to cut off his newly grown long *peyos* in middle of the night, he was unsure whether she was jesting, so he began to sleep with bandages on his *peyos*.

After graduating high-school, he began studying Orientalism in a university in Yerushalayim, while



simultaneously becoming fluent in numerous languages. He lived near Meah Shearim, and there he developed a relationship with members of the Neturei Karta. He grew close to many of the prominent rabbanim of the Yerushalmi *kanaim*, among them Reb Yosef Tzvi Dushinsky and the Brisker Rav, and developed close friendships with many of the *askanim* in those circles.

Uriel was an ideologue; the moment he felt that a specific teaching or ideology was true, he was ready to fully incorporate it into his life. After his wedding, he began wearing a long *chalat* and a *shtreimel*, and energetically began using his talents to spread the ideology of the Neturei Karta. A gifted writer, his articles were razor-sharp and powerful, and quickly became very sought out by all newspapers.

He soon became the editor of *Hakol*, where he published article after article attacking the Zionists and any religious Jew who dared to cooperate with them. So dedicated he was, that *Hakol* was the only newspaper published in Yerushalayim during the seige in the War of Independence. "There was no electricity," his sister later related, "so he prepared the printing plates by hand. He would arrive home with a blackened shirt, to his wife's consternation. She wasn't worried about the labor of cleaning it; there was simply no water with which to do laundry..."

## CONNECTING WITH CHABAD

At the close of World War II, many organizations began sending representatives to Europe to assist the refugees in the DP Camps. Reb Uriel was involved with Agudas Yisroel at the time, but they were

# WHEN SHE THREATENED TO CUT OFF HIS NEWLY GROWN LONG PEYOS IN MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT, HE BEGAN TO SLEEP WITH BANDAGES ON HIS PEYOS.

not in a financial position to send a representative, so Reb Uriel volunteered to travel at his own expense.

In Germany, he chanced upon the DP camp in Poking where he met a large contingent of Chabad Chassidim. This wasn't his first encounter with Chabad. In Yerushalayim, he had sometimes joined the Chassidim for a *shiur* Tanya or a Chassidisher farbrengen, so he was pleased to meet the Chassidim in Poking and spent time in their presence.

His encounter with the Russian Chassidim impacted him greatly. He was so impressed by their *mesiras nefesh* that he published his impressions in the religious newspapers of Yerushalayim upon his return to the Holy Land. He began frequenting the Chabad Shul in Meah Shearim more often for *shiurim* and farbrengens, and grew very close with the Chassidim there. In time, he began to identify as a Lubavitcher Chossid.

After the *histalkus* of the Frierdiker Rebbe, his relationship stalled. He heard that the new Rebbe had studied at university, and the *kanaim* of Yerushalayim accused Lubavitch of Zionist views. Still a vehement *kanai*, he felt a bit estranged by these developments.

This all changed in 5712. After some ten years of marriage, Reb Uriel and his wife hadn't been blessed with children and they embarked on a trip to the United States for medical treatments.

## THE YECHIDUS

Arriving in the US, Reb Uriel utilized the opportunity to enter *yechidus* with the Rebbe. He brought

all his questions about Chassidus, Zionism, and what not. His *yechidus* lasted *four hours!*

The *yechidus* totally changed his perspective.

"This isn't what we thought," he wrote in an animated letter to a friend back home in Eretz Yisroel. "The Rebbe has clear views on *everything*."

For the next ten years when Reb Uriel lived in Williamsburg, he became a devoted Chossid of the Rebbe. He merited many long letters and hours of *yechidus'n*, (he once wrote, "my personal miracle by the Rebbe is that Rabbi Hodakov doesn't carry live ammunition...") and would join the Rebbe's Yom Tov and weekday farbrengens.

Reb Uriel was proficient in many languages: Hebrew, Yiddish, English, French, German, Russian, Polish, Czech, Spanish, Portuguese, Arabic, Turkish, Italian, Dutch, Hungarian and more. He was employed as a



A YOUNG URIEL TZIMMER.

translator in the United Nations where he developed many relationships with prominent ambassadors. One deep friendship evolved between him and the ambassador of Soviet Russia! In time, these connections were utilized for various important *shlichus'n* from the Rebbe.

*Mazkirus* too, made use of his many talents. Some years after his arrival, Reb Uriel became the Rebbe's translator. One time he translated a letter from the Rebbe into Portuguese, and to his surprise, he received it back from the Rebbe with corrections...

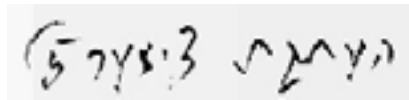
He also translated the entire Tanya into Yiddish, and did many other jobs



REB URIEL (RIGHT) AT HIS TYPEWRITER IN THE OFFICE OF THE HAKOL NEWSPAPER, WHERE HE SERVED AS EDITOR.



THE REBBE'S HAGAOS ON REB URIEL TZIMMER'S TRANSLATION OF THE TANYA.



inside glimpse into the life of a semi-*mazkir*. He shares information such as the Rebbe's schedule, the format of *yechidus*, the Rebbe's views on many current events, and much more.

## HO'ADERES VEHO'EMUNA, TZU VEMEN TZU VEMEN?

Reb Uriel relates the following story in a letter to Reb Tuvia Blau:

"After *shacharis* on Shabbos Bereishis, Rabbi Hodakov approached me with a message from the Rebbe. He said the Rebbe had listened to the children singing the Yerushalmi song "*Ho'aderes Veho'emuna, Tzu Vemen Tzu Vemen*," and they had translated the words *tzu vemen* to other languages, Hebrew and then English. The Rebbe liked the idea, and asked that during the second *fabrengen* that afternoon, the continuation to the *Simchas Torah farbrengen*, they should sing the song, with each stanza sung in a different language.

"Being that I know many languages, the Rebbe asked that I lead the singing together with the children.

"You can imagine how uncomfortable it was for me to do such *shtick* in front of approximate one thousand people, *kein yirbu*, and in the Rebbe's presence. However, I had no choice; I was commanded to do so.

"We sang the song in Hebrew, Yiddish, English, French, Russian, German, Spanish, Portuguese, Czech, Polish, Arabic, Turkish, Italian, Dutch, Hungarian, and perhaps some more."

## ZIONISM

During his first *yechidus*, the Rebbe encouraged Reb Uriel to continue using his literary talents in the United States. He began authoring articles for



TWO PUBLICATIONS REB URIEL TZIMMER WORKED ON FOR KEHOS.

for Kehos and Lubavitch in general. He would author articles describing life around the Rebbe, about *fabrengens* and *Yomim Tovim*, and they would be printed in numerous

languages. Many of those articles—essentially the first *yomanim*—were often edited by the Rebbe himself.

Additionally, Reb Uriel worked on preparing the Rebbe's *sichos* for the Rebbe to be *magiah*, later published in *Likutei Sichos*. [In the preface of *Likutei Sichos* vol. 2, published shortly after Reb Uriel's passing, there is a special mention of him as "one who expended much time and effort in editing these *sichos*..."]

Many of the stories of Reb Uriel are known from a collection of letters he wrote to Reb Tuvia Blau, who was a young *bochur* in Eretz Yisroel at the time. Reb Uriel was acquainted with his family, but little did Tuvia know that the correspondence began only at the Rebbe's behest, in order to be *mekarev* young Tuvia to Chabad.

These letters are a treasure trove of information about 770 and life around the Rebbe, and also give an

*Der Yid, The Jewish Press, Der Yiddisher Heim and Hakol.*

In the unique position of Chossid and also a virulent *kanai*, Reb Uriel would often speak to the Rebbe about Chabad's position on Zionism. There was one major issue which bothered him. It appeared to Reb Uriel that the Rebbe was opposed to the Zionist ideology no less than he or many of his friends were. Why then, didn't the Rebbe join them in their war against it?

During one *yechidus*, the Rebbe told him the following:

"If you will read all the anti-Zionist writings, you will find nothing which is more clear and sharp than Kuntres Umayan and Kuntres Pesach 5703. We have reprinted those booklets, and sent thousands of copies to Eretz Yisroel and throughout the world.

"What more should we do? The only additional thing possible is that I should print my opinion with the logo of Kehos, but here we must evaluate:

Will the gain outweigh the potential loss."

It seems that the issue continued to bother Reb Uriel. In a letter, he described what happened at the Yud-Tes Kislev farbrengen that year:

"During the farbrengen, the Rebbe called out certain people by name, instructing them to say *l'chaim*, sometimes adding a comment about the individual. When he called my name, he said, 'Harav Uriel is probably thinking to himself, why don't I say what he thinks I should say. Meanwhile, say *l'chaim* and "wash out" those thoughts.'

"When I approached the Rebbe's place, he said to me, 'It's not my fault. I wanted to speak, but I'm not allowed to.'"

During one *yechidus*, the Rebbe urged Reb Uriel to utilize his talents even more, so he suggested to the Rebbe that he would write a booklet outlining Torah's opposition to Zionism. He was worried, however,



A KUNTRES PUBLISHED BY REB URIEL TZIMMER ON TORAH'S VIEW ON ZIONISM.

that the cost of printing it would be prohibitive and he wouldn't be able to find a sponsor. The Rebbe strongly approved of his idea, and instructed him to write it and not to worry about the cost.



Some time later, he complained to the Rebbe about his bizarre situation. "I'm not a Satmarer; why should I use my energy to attack the Zionist ideology?" The Rebbe didn't allow him to quit. "Why hasn't the booklet been printed yet?" the Rebbe urged him.

Once, the Rebbe explained that he couldn't quit because of people's potential reactions. There were those, the Rebbe informed him, that had asked the Rebbe to instruct Reb Uriel to refrain from his anti-Zionist polemics, knowing that the Rebbe could sway Reb Uriel's opinion. If he were to stop writing, the Rebbe said, it would seem that the Rebbe had taken their advice...

After the booklet was published in 5719, the Rebbe commented to Reb Uriel in *yechidus* that he felt the writing should have been even sharper.

## IN BETWEEN

With his many contacts in the world of *kanoaim*, the Rebbe often urged Reb Uriel to be *mekarev* them to the world of Chassidus. Reb Uriel had a personal relationship with

the Satmar Rov, for example, and the Rebbe also spoke to him about individuals such as the Brisker Rav (the Rebbe wondered why he didn't allow his students to participate in enrolling immigrant children in Jewish education) and the Steipler (the Rebbe asked Reb Uriel to visit the Steipler, but the visit never materialized.)

On a trip to Eretz Yisroel in 5716, his main mission was to encourage the study of Chassidus in those circles.

Due to his relationship with these circles, he became an in-between for many of their questions and disagreements.

In one letter, Reb Uriel writes that during the Shabbos farbrengen, the Rebbe quoted a Zohar that explains why the Mabul is called "*mei noach*." When you withdraw into the *teivah*, the Zohar says, instead of encouraging the people to do *teshuva*, you become responsible for the disaster.

He would often receive letters from Eretz Yisroel with all sorts of comments which he would often forward to the Rebbe. In general, he writes in a letter, the Rebbe doesn't respond to every false report in the

press in Eretz Yisroel. "I would have to leave everything and open an entire newspaper just to respond to all the falsehoods which are reported. I don't see any gain from that, nor is that my job," the Rebbe said.

On one occasion, an article filled with vitriol against the Rebbe and Chabad was published in *Mishmeres Chomoseinu*, the newspaper of Neturei Karta. When the article reached the Rebbe's desk, the Rebbe didn't treat it lightly, and responded in a number of ways.

One way affected the writer:

In a letter to the Edah Hacharedis, the Rebbe's *mazkirus* writes that "out of *ahavas Yisroel*, please inform the writer of the article to check his tefillin. Try to find out how long he has been wearing *pussuleh* tefillin."

A short time later, Reb Tuvia Blau informed Reb Uriel that the tefillin were purported to be kosher. Reb Uriel responded that he passed on the letter to the Rebbe, who had written back that he was confident that the tefillin *shel rosh* were indeed *possul*. Reb Uriel asked Reb Tuvia to pass on this information.

At the same time, Reb Uriel was in Eretz Yisroel, so the Rebbe sent him to the leader of Neturei Karta, Reb Amram Blau,



REB AMRAM BLAU,  
LEADER OF NETUREI  
KARTA.

to encourage him to study Chassidus. When he returned to New York with a report about his trip, the Rebbe shared with Reb Uriel that he would ask Reb Avraham Hersh Cohen, a Chabad Chossid in Yerushalayim, to actually start a *shiur Tanya* in the Neturei Karta shul!

Indeed, a day before Rosh Hashanah that year, Reb Avraham Hersh Cohen received an express letter from the Rebbe, asking him to teach



REB URIEL (SECOND FROM LEFT) IN ERETZ YISROEL.

“I WOULD HAVE TO LEAVE EVERYTHING AND OPEN AN ENTIRE NEWSPAPER JUST TO RESPOND TO ALL THE FALSEHOODS WHICH ARE REPORTED. I DON'T SEE ANY GAIN FROM THAT, NOR IS THAT MY JOB,” THE REBBE SAID.

Tanya to Neturei Karta, and to begin the *shiur* before the conclusion of the year, to ‘elevate’ the entire past year.

Needless to say, Reb Avraham Hersh was quite bewildered. How was he supposed to establish a *shiur Tanya* within a group so opposed to Chabad, and in so short a time? It seemed like a futile endeavour.

Doing his best, Reb Avraham Hersh decided to visit Reb Amram Blau, to request that he not disturb the establishment of the *shiur* at least for the time being. Arriving at his home, he was shocked to discover that the Rebbe had written directly to Reb Amram, asking him to assist in establishing the *shiur*!

To his surprise, Reb Amram accepted the Rebbe's request, and suggested that they go immediately to the shul to begin the first session. He gathered a few of his sons, and together with some other *mispalelim*, they listened as Reb Avraham Hersh delivered the first *shiur Tanya*.

The *shiur* continued on for many years to come. Interestingly, when the students of the *shiur* stipulated that Reb Avraham Hersh refrain from voting in the Israeli elections in order for the *shiur* to continue, the Rebbe accepted their request, even though the Rebbe usually instructed that every single person vote for the “*reshimah hacharedis b'yoser*” (the most Torah-true parties).

## SHLICHUS

The Rebbe also sent Reb Uriel on many missions; until today, we don't know the purpose of most of them.

Some missions related to his work in the United Nations, while some related to his relationships with Rebbes, rabbonim and *roshei yeshiva*.

A small example can be found in a letter to Reb Uriel on 14 Sivan 5716: “The yeshiva for the study of Kabbalah which we discussed (I asked that you clarify their *seder halimud* etc.) is called Zichron Shimon in Yerushalayim, under the address of Rabbi Aharon Zelatki, in the Nachalat Tzion neighborhood.” Until today, nobody knows what the Rebbe wanted to accomplish through this yeshiva.

Among his missions, he was sent to the White House to lobby for something regarding Jewish education. On another occasion, he traveled to a distant town in the United States to strengthen Judaism there, and on a different occasion, finding himself in

Cuba for legal issues, the Rebbe sent him on a mission there as well.

When visiting other communities, Reb Uriel would often be invited to farbreng with the local Chassidim, who accorded him with great respect in light of his being a secretary and personal shliach of the Rebbe. Naturally quiet and humble, these honors often caused him profound discomfort, and he wrote to the Rebbe about his concerns.

The Rebbe answered:

“Obviously, if their assumptions are correct [that Reb Uriel deserves respect as the Rebbe's *mazkir*] then there is no reason to be ashamed. This also answers and negates your complaint, that Lubavitch views you as an outsider and you have no reason to be lazy or depressed.”

## SICKNESS

During Reb Uriel's final years, he fell ill with the terrible sickness, and was often too weak to leave his home. In one of his letters to Reb Tuvia Blau, he describes how the entire *tahalucha* to Williamsburg, on their way back to 770, passed by his house to visit him and bring him joy. “The *tahalucha* is led by Reb Dovid Raskin,



REB URIEL ON ONE OF HIS MISSIONS TO THE UNITED NATIONS.





REB URIEL TZIMMER ARRIVES AT SCHIPHOL, HOLLAND IN 1961.

who is known to be a strict leader and stubborn *kabolas ol'nik*. Therefore, many surmise that the visit to my home was an instruction 'from above,' but nobody knows for sure."

Even with his waning strength, Reb Uriel continued doing the Rebbe's work with extreme self-sacrifice. In 5721, already confined to a wheelchair, Reb Uriel traveled to Eretz Yisroel to visit his ailing father. While there, in a much-anticipated event, he *farbrenge*d with the residents of Kfar Chabad for many hours, concealing the fact that he was suffering from a high fever.

Concluding his visit, his family surmised that he would immediately travel to the States, but Reb Uriel had other plans. He stopped over in Austria and Holland as a *shliach* of the Rebbe, speaking, *farbrenge*ng and inspiring Jews all over.

While traveling through London on his way back to the United States, Reb Uriel's condition suddenly deteriorated and he was hospitalized. After two months of suffering, Reb Uriel's soul returned to its Maker on Tes Kislev 5722, at the young age of 42.

Leaving no children, the Rebbe personally arranged for someone to recite *kaddish* in his memory. During his last hours, this dedicated Chossid was repeatedly heard calling out, "Rebbe! Rebbe!" Those were his last words in this world.

That Shabbos, during *shacharis*, the Rebbe motioned to sing the *niggun* which Reb Uriel had brought from Eretz Yisroel, "*Ho'aderes Veho'emuna.*" **T**

OBITUARY OF REB URIEL TZIMMER, PRINTED IN "PANIM EL PANIM" FOLLOWING HIS PASSING.



# A VISIT TO KFAR CHABAD

The following article was printed in *Panim El Panim*, a short time after his passing:

It's a dark, starry night in Kfar Chabad. The lights in the village homes were turned off one by one, but the large shul at the center of town was brightly lit up. Hundreds of villagers, men, women and even children, gathered in and around the shul, waiting patiently— notwithstanding the late hour. They knew that he was coming on a mission from the Rebbe. This being the case, no one was ready to miss listening to what he had to say.

Close to midnight, a black taxi appeared on the sand road which led to the main highway between Tel Aviv and Yerushalayim. It drove up until it reached the shul and slowly came to a halt. When its doors first opened, a sophisticated wheelchair was brought out. His wife demonstrated how to unfold the wheelchair. The man is severely paralyzed in his legs. The wheelchair was rolled all the way into the shul, and placed at the center of the large table.

Hundreds of people stood around. They pushed towards the table, hung onto the window sills and perched themselves on edges and walls.

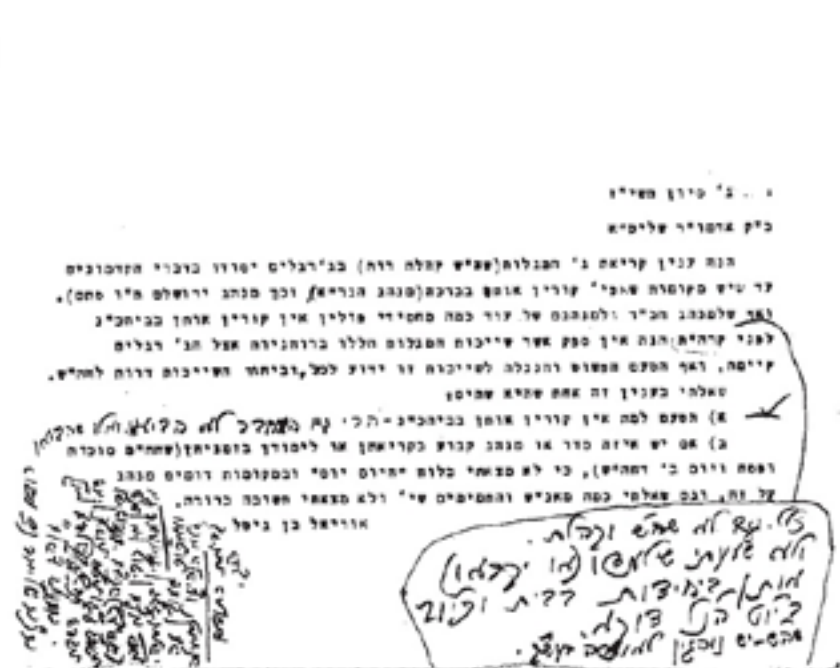
“Shhh, quiet!” was heard from all over. A quiet calm settled over the room. All ears perked to hear the words of the honored guest, but he felt otherwise.

“We first must say *l'chaim*.” The *mashke* stood ready on the table. It was poured into small cups and the participants all said *l'chaim*, and then the guest began to speak.

He related that he had just been all over the world on the Rebbe's shlichus. “I was in Europe, England, Spain, France, Italy and Greece. On my way back to the United States, I will pass through Holland and Belgium and perhaps I will also go to Sweden and Norway, all in the Rebbe's shlichus.”

As he continued to speak, his voice grew stronger. He spoke words of Torah, reviewed *sichos*, incorporated a story here and there and included a *chassidische vort*.

The words poured forth, and only when he concluded, when the circles of people around him began to sing a *niggun*, did he ask to be brought to a nearby home. “I have a fever of 102 degrees.” Only then did people realize that his entire body was shivering, and his teeth were chattering.



A LETTER FROM REB URIEL, WITH THE REBBE'S HANDWRITTEN RESPONSE.

VAAD HANOCHOS B'LAHAK