

THE REBBE'S CAPITAL

THE FOUNDING OF KEAR CHABAD

City
קרית

לזכר נשמת
שיינא גאלדא ע"ה
בת יבלחט"א ר' מיכאל הלוי שיחי'
גוטלייזער

נדפס ע"י זקיניה
הרה"ת ר' יצחק מאיר וזוגתו מרת לאה
ומשפחתם שיחיו
שפאלטר



Late one moonlit night, a caravan of trucks lumbered down a long and bumpy dirt road. Following an uncomfortable ride, they finally reached a clearing and ground to a halt. Fifteen families descended. Men, women, children and elderly, all looked around at the desolation. Houses in ruins, unkempt fields, and a small well. This was to be their new home.

But this was no regular home. This was to be Kfar Chabad, the Rebbe's town. This was to be the center of Chabad in Eretz Yisroel; a haven for the Chassidim, and the nerve center from where it would spread its influence throughout the entire land.

It was to be a powerhouse. There was a lot of work to be done.



THE DESOLATE RUINS UPON WHICH THE VILLAGE OF KFAR CHABAD WAS BUILT.

Contemplation

Two years earlier, in 5708, a meeting had taken place on the other side of the world, at 770 Eastern Parkway in Brooklyn. Zalman Shazar, who would eventually become the president of Israel, came for a *yechidus* with the Frierdiker Rebbe.

On the evening before the United Nations voted whether to establish a state for the Jewish people in Eretz Yisroel, the Frierdiker Rebbe had assured Mr. Shazar via a phone message that it would be a success.

In a subsequent *yechidus* with Mr. Shazar, the Frierdiker Rebbe brought up another issue. Being that he was a prominent member of the Jewish Agency, the de facto government of the Jews in British Mandate Palestine, the Frierdiker Rebbe wanted to know about the possibility of founding a Chabad village there.

Talk of a Chabad village had begun several years earlier² amongst the Chassidim in Eretz Yisroel. During those years, the Chabad community in the Holy Land was very small and

THE FRIERDIKER REBBE WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF FOUNDING A CHABAD VILLAGE THERE.

spread out throughout the country. The Chassidim worried that the lack of a strong sense of community would have dire implications for the next generation. They also felt that a central location would do wonders for their poor economic situation. Additionally, it could be an impetus for more effective *hafotzas hama'ayanos*.

The close of World War II brought a new sense of urgency. Hundreds of Lubavitch families were stranded in displaced persons camps in Germany and Austria with nowhere to go. A village in Eretz Yisroel could be the perfect answer.

Over Tishrei 5708 (תש"ח), Reb Leizer Karasik and Reb Moshe Gurary, the heads of Agudas Chassidei Chabad in Eretz Yisroel, came to spend Tishrei with the Frierdiker Rebbe. During their *yechidusen*, they brought up the

suggestion and asked the Frierdiker Rebbe for direction.

Mr. Shazar's *yechidus* took place a short time later, where he assured the Frierdiker Rebbe that it was indeed a practical plan. Over the next year, the Chassidim in the DP camps began receiving instructions from the Frierdiker Rebbe regarding their future; some were sent to Australia, some to United States and Canada, but a very large number was instructed to go to Eretz Yisroel.

Becoming a Reality

More than a year passed without any progress. The War of Independence was fought with vengeance. Streams of Lubavitch families arrived at the shores of Eretz Yisroel, and were settled in *ma'abarot* (refugee absorption camps) throughout the country. The Frierdiker



Rebbe established a committee to deal with the refugees on his behalf. The members were Reb Leizer Karasik, Reb Shaul Ber Zislin, Reb Moshe Gurary and Reb Pinye Althaus.³

On Yud-Tes Kislev 5709, Mr. Shazar participated in the farbrengen at the Nachlas Binyamin shul in Tel Aviv, and the committee utilized the opportunity to speak to him about a village. Mr. Shazar was very enthusiastic about the idea. He said that a wide array of choices had become available since the country had declared independence; there were many empty villages with homes and land that would serve their needs perfectly. Later that month, Mr. Shazar introduced them to the top brass of the government, many of whom had positive sentiments about the idea.

The final approval and *brocha* of the Frieddiker Rebbe came in a letter toward the end of Kislev.⁴ Mr. Shazar had suggested that the Lubavitchers be settled in Meron, due to their connection to *primum haTorah*, but in his correspondence, the Frieddiker Rebbe stipulated that the village be located in the central part of the country, where they would be able to have the greatest possible influence. The village, obviously, wasn't only meant to be a haven for the refugees.

A possibility arose. The Mizrachi political party offered the committee an abandoned Arab village near Lod, called Safriyya. There was only one condition: The residents had to become card-carrying members of Mizrachi.

It sounds bizarre today, but in those early days of Eretz Yisroel's independence, everything was controlled by political parties. The schools, medical coverage, and all sorts of government programs were provided by each party separately. To remain apolitical meant that one would remain outside the normal system of subsidies and have to fend



AN INSTRUCTOR FROM THE JEWISH AGENCY TEACHES THE NEW SETTLERS OF KFAR CHABAD HOW TO USE AGRICULTURAL MACHINERY, TISHREI 5710.

for himself. Every grant would be a battle.

Nevertheless, the instructions from the Frieddiker Rebbe were clear. Come what may, Lubavitch must not belong to any political party.

They began negotiations with Mizrachi over the property, when suddenly, some Mizrachi families moved into the village without government approval, claiming it belonged to them. The committee realized that soon all would be lost, and decided to "invade" the village as well, while simultaneously pushing for government approvals.

Seeing the reality on the ground, Levi Eshkol, the then director of the Jewish Agency, decided to split the

village in two. One side of the main road would be given to Chabad, and the other side would be called Tochelet, for the Mizrachi families. Things remained this way for several years, until the majority of the Mizrachi families moved away, and Tochelet was subsumed by Kfar Chabad.

*Mud, Mud and
More Mud*

In an interview with *A Chassidisher Derher*, Reb Boruch Gopin, one of the first residents of Kfar Chabad and today one of its respected elders, described the scene of their arrival:

"When the people arrived in the middle of Iyar 5709, there was nothing



ISRAELI GOVERNMENT PRESS OFFICE

but desolation and destruction. The roofs of the stone structures had been destroyed, and all that remained intact were a few clay homes. The fields had been neglected for over a year. A small well stood at the center of town, and one outhouse served the entire community.”

Work immediately began to make the town habitable. The families settled in the clay huts, six families per hut, while the larger families received tents. The most pressing job was to prepare 70 stone structures to serve as homes for the founding families. The work was done “by the people, for the people,” under the guidance of a contractor hired by the Jewish Agency.

“The work was back-breaking,” Reb Boruch relates, “but the Jewish Agency paid each worker one *lira* and 40 *agorot* for a day’s work. That was a lot of money. A package of butter was ten *agorot*, and a liter of petrol was only three.”

For months, the new inhabitants energetically went about their new line of work; installing roofs and windows, fixing floors, and so on. When the work was finally done, the newly renovated homes were raffled off: larger families received the larger homes and smaller families entered a raffle for the smaller ones. Then the next phase of the work began; they needed a proper shul, schools, a mikvah, and basic infrastructure. The

initial work to establish Kfar Chabad lasted a full six months.

Another hurdle was electricity. Light came from kerosene lamps. For the streets lights, Kfar Chabad employed a real-life *lamternchik*—Reb Yisroel Yitzchok Zalmanov—straight out of the stories in the Rebbeim’s *sichos*, who would light the street lamps every evening at dusk.

Although none of the new Israeli villages were connected to the national grid, Kfar Chabad ultimately received power early on, thanks to the connections of Reb Pinye Althaus. He invited his prominent friends to the Yud-Tes Kislev farbrengen in Kfar Chabad, while subtly hinting that it would be inappropriate for such a



THE ROV OF Kfar CHABAD RABBI SCHNEUR ZALMAN GARELIK LEARNS GEMARA WITH THE SETTLERS. NOTICE THE PARAFFIN LAMPS ON THE TABLE, AS THERE WAS NO ELECTRICITY YET IN Kfar CHABAD. ELUL 5709.

Hanging On Tight

Reb Yitzchok Mendel Lis *a"h*, the first secretary of Kfar Chabad, related:

“Personal vehicles were unheard of in those years. The only way in and out of the Kfar was by public transportation. One single bus would pass Kfar Chabad every morning and evening, traveling to and from Tel Aviv. The problem was that the bus was very narrow, and seated only about 20 people, while over 70 families lived in Kfar Chabad. Often, the able-bodied men would have no choice but to ride on top of the roof or holding onto the ladder at the rear of the bus.

“Convincing the train to make a stop in the village was also a battle. Reb Pinye Althaus helped arrange that the train should make two stops every day in Kfar Chabad. Later, when I developed a friendship with the board members of *Rakevet Yisrael*, I once traveled along the entire route to count how many people got on and off at each stop. Seeing how the numbers compared to the numbers of Kfar Chabad, they finally agreed to a more regular pattern.”



THE TRAIN-STATION IN Kfar CHABAD.

farbrenge to be held in the dim glow of kerosene lamps. He also convinced a donor, Reb Shlomo Palmer⁵ from Chicago, to pay \$20,000 for the expenses.

Over many years, Kfar Chabad developed more and more of its infrastructure. Paved roads were a luxury still years away, and when the first proper bus made a stop in Kfar Chabad, the entire community, together with the *rov*, Reb Shneur Garelick, went out to greet it. Later, when the first train arrived, it received a similar greeting. But the *shtetl* image of Kfar Chabad would remain with it for many years to come.

The Inauguration

At the end of Nissan that year, the Frierdiker Rebbe sent Rashag to Eretz Yisroel to see the situation on hand and to assist in settling the refugees.⁶

Several weeks later, a few days after Lag B'omer 5709, he was joined by Reb Avraham Pariz who brought a *sefer Torah* from the Frierdiker Rebbe.

“When we heard,” relates Reb Boruch Gopin, “that Reb Avraham was bringing a *sefer Torah* from the Frierdiker Rebbe, it generated a lot of excitement. At the hour he was to arrive, we all walked the length of the dirt road, a kilometer and a half, to meet him at the entrance to the village.”

The Frierdiker Rebbe also sent along a letter, containing the “charter” for Kfar Chabad:

“Baruch Hashem, Friday, Erev Shabbos Parshas *Ki Savo'u El Ha'aretz*, *V'shavsa Ha'aretz Shabbos LaHashem*.

“As you settle in the Holy Land, you must contemplate and internalize the fact that Divine providence has brought you to the land *'asher einei Elokecha bah*, which the eyes of Hashem are upon, from the beginning of the year through its end,⁷ and you are now present in the palace of the

King of kings, *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*, at every moment.

“This *sefer Torah* should serve as a constant reminder to lead your lives in the path shown to us by the Rebbeim, to educate your children without compromises, and to spread your light to the rest of the Jewish people and guide them in the path to G-dliness: Torah study with fear of heaven and scrupulous fulfillment of the *mitzvos*. This should be accomplished in a loving manner, stemming from *ahavas Yisroel* and Chassidisher *middos*.

“May each of you be a light illuminating the current exile, until Hashem will redeem us.”⁷

The official inauguration of Kfar Chabad took place on Yud Beis Tammuz 5709, at a grand farbrengen, with the participation of prominent officials, led by Levi Eshkol.

Fields and Animals

Part of the idea to found an independent village was for the source of income it would provide for its residents. For this purpose, the surrounding fields were raffled off among the villagers, and they began to work the land.

The concept was a complete anomaly. The Chassidim were city people; they had lived most of their lives in Russian urban centers and had no experience with agricultural work whatsoever. Content with their new home, however, they were willing to give it a try.

The sight of long-bearded religious Jews toiling in the fields and raising animals went against the stereotypical image of religious Jews in the country, and was often praised by many government officials. One comment was even attributed to Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion: “If all of them were like this, I would agree to be a minority in this country.”

Because of this unique image, many government officials were willing to

“IF ALL OF THEM WERE LIKE THIS, I WOULD AGREE TO BE A MINORITY IN THIS COUNTRY.”



REB YITZCHOK BILINITZKY MILKS A COW ON A FARM IN KFAR CHABAD.

Safariyya - Shafrir - Kfar Chabad

Reb Yitzchok Mendel Lis related:

“Upon the founding of the village, the Rebbeim named it Kfar Chabad. However, the legal name was originally Safariyya, and was changed to Shafrir. That was the name we used in our official documents and correspondence, and sometimes we called it Shafrir-Chabad. Over the years, the Rebbe mentioned to us that we should change the legal name, but unfortunately, with so much on our hands, we never managed to pull it off.

“Changing the name proved to be quite a difficult task. The committee responsible for the names maintained that Shafrir was a historic name, mentioned even in Gemara; why should it be removed? During one meeting with the head of the committee, Hashem gave me the right words to convince him.

“He said, ‘Why should we change the name if the creek that passes nearby is also called Nachal Shafrir?’

“I jumped on his statement: ‘The creek preserves the historic name,’ I told him, ‘so the village’s name can be changed without concern.’”

The name was officially changed in Av of 5715, but took several years to become widespread. After the attack on *Beit Sefer L'Melachah* in 5716, the Rebbe wrote a strong letter to the Vaad, asking why the newspapers were still using the name Shafrir, and encouraged them to work toward raising awareness in this regard.

lend a hand. Some equipment was provided (the first truck was driven by Reb Boruch Gopin), and teachers were hired to show the Chassidim the ropes. The wife of one prominent official spent many days in Kfar Chabad teaching the women how to plant vegetable gardens. Everyone got busy planting wheat, barley, corn and more.

To their consternation, the hopes they invested in their new work were for naught. The first year's harvest was very poor, and the second year wasn't much better. The next year, 5712, was *shmitah*, so the workers spent their days in shul—learning, davening, and farbrenging, hoping the coming year would yield something better.

Notwithstanding all the setbacks, the inhabitants persevered. Month after month, year after year, they slowly built up the Kfar, and with

the Rebbe's *brachos* they began to see success.

Guidance

The new immigrants had settled down, but life was far from easy. The hardships of learning an entirely new trade and beginning anew with large families proved very difficult for the Russian Chassidim. They had already lived through several lifetimes' worth of suffering during their years under Communism; many had lost countless family members to the purges of Stalin and the Holocaust. Beginning all over again was no easy task.

From the earliest days of the *nesius*, the Rebbe sent innumerable letters to Kfar Chabad full of advice and encouragement. The Rebbe would receive the minutes of all meetings that were held and would constantly reply with comments, advice, *brachos* and—often—critique. No step, big

or small, was taken without the Rebbe's instructions. (In recent years, a full two volumes (!) of the Rebbe's correspondence regarding Kfar Chabad have been published in *Kfar Chabad* by Vaad Kfar Chabad, 5763).

"On one trip to New York," related⁸ Reb Yitzchok Mendel Lis a"^h, the first secretary of Kfar Chabad, "I went into *yechidus* for three hours! The Rebbe wanted to know every detail of what was going on.

"At that occasion I suggested to name the roads of Kfar Chabad after the Rebbeim, so that even young children will be familiar with the names of *raboseinu nesi'einu*. The Rebbe listened, and said it was a good idea, but since Kfar Chabad wasn't fully developed and there would be new main streets and new neighborhoods, 'It will be hard to play around with holy names,' so it shouldn't be done yet."⁹

As a town founded upon the ideals of Chabad, the Rebbe held the spiritual state of Kfar Chabad as a primary concern. When a *vaad ruchni* was founded, the Rebbe was very pleased that an entire committee was established just to deal with matters of spirituality. Years earlier, when a resident of Kfar Chabad shaved his beard, the Frierdiker Rebbe sent a sharp letter,¹⁰ saying that the individual should understand in no uncertain terms that living in Kfar Chabad demands a higher level of spiritual behavior.

"When the city was founded," the Rebbe noted in a letter in 5712, "my father-in-law, the Rebbe said '*az di zach firt er alein*—he is personally managing this project,' and therefore, all the affairs of Kfar Chabad need to be approached from the standpoint of his *ratzon*; it is no private matter."¹¹

The Rebbe viewed Kfar Chabad as much more than a private religious community. The Rebbe emphasized that the *ufaratza* of Eretz Yisroel must

"DI ZACH FIRT ER ALEIN, HE IS PERSONALLY
MANAGING THIS PROJECT."



THE REBBE SEES OFF THE GUESTS FROM ERETZ YISROEL WHO JOINED THE REBBE FOR TISHREI 5721.

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emanate from Kfar Chabad. In a *yechidus* with Reb Boruch Gopin, the Rebbe described it as “the *ir habirah*, the capital city,” a place where “*hert men uhn gilui Elokus*—there is a clear revelation of G-dliness.” On many occasions, the Rebbe quoted the *possuk* “*Sham tzivah Hashem es habracha*—Hashem has set His blessing there,” regarding Kfar Chabad.

The goal was very clear from the beginning: Kfar Chabad’s first and primary goal was to be a center of *hafatzas hama’ayanos*, and the Rebbe constantly pushed for more to be done in this regard.

The Spiritual Nerve Center

The first significant foray into *hafatzas hama’ayanos* for the Kfar’s residents took place outside the village, in cities throughout the country, when the Rebbe opened *Reshet Oholei Yosef Yitzchok*, a network of schools that would provide a Torah education for Israeli children. When the schools opened in 5712, many Chassidim left the agricultural work and began teaching Torah full time.

Within the Kfar’s borders, one of the earliest institutions in this spirit was *Beit Sefer L’Melachah*, a vocational school for teenagers to teach Torah along with a trade. The Carpentry School, Agriculture School, Metal Working School, and Printing School educated thousands of youth in the ways of Yiddishkeit.

There were also opportunities for people throughout Eretz Yisroel to come for a short visit to “replenish” their spiritual energy. The *hakafos shniyos* held—and still held each year—on Motzoei Simchas Torah drew many participants each year (the Rebbe sent a special telegram for the event each year), and the matzah bakery hosts thousands of school-children, teaching them about the *mitzvos* of Yom Tov.



ISRAELI PRESIDENT ZALMAN SHAZAR JOINS THE YUD-TES KISLEV FESTIVITIES IN KFAR CHABAD, 5726.

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STUDENTS OF THE BEIT SEFER L’MELACHA IN THE EARLY YEARS OF ITS ESTABLISHMENT.

This section would be incomplete without an honorable mention of the legendary Yud-Tes Kislev farbrengens. Thousands of people stream to Kfar Chabad for what was, at the time, Chabad’s largest event each year. It was an exceptionally joyous farbrengen, attended by prominent politicians and military officials.

Reb Yitzchok Mendel Lis related:

“I was one of the organizers of the Yud-Tes Kislev farbrengen. Each year, the presence of President Zalman Shazar would stand out. I remember the first time he came; he entered the shul and sat down with everyone else. When I asked him to sit at the head

table, he refused. ‘I’m only a *mechutan* here, nothing more,’ he said.

“Each year, Radio Kol Yisrael would record the proceedings, and we would send the Rebbe a copy. One year, the Rebbe wrote back to us asking for the second half of Shazar’s speech, which had been mistakenly omitted from the recording. It was a few days after *nittel nacht*, so my assumption is that the Rebbe listened to the recordings then.”

Over time, Kfar Chabad indeed became the physical center of Chabad in Eretz Yisroel. All the central institutions were located there, as evident in the *vaad’s* logo, which



REB ZALMAN SUDAKEVITCH MANAGES THE VILLAGE STORE IN KFAR CHABAD, ELUL 5709.



SOME OF THE RESIDENTS OF KFAR CHABAD.

The Rebbe's Home

When the Rebbe first spoke about the theft of the *seforim* from the library in Tammuz 5745, the Rebbe asked that a replica of 770 be built in Kfar Chabad to serve as the center of Agudas Chassidei Chabad in Eretz Yisroel. The stolen *seforim* that had reached Eretz Yisroel could be returned there, the Rebbe said.

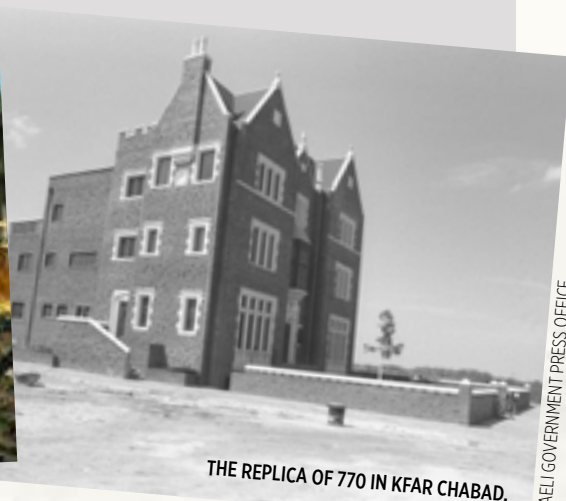
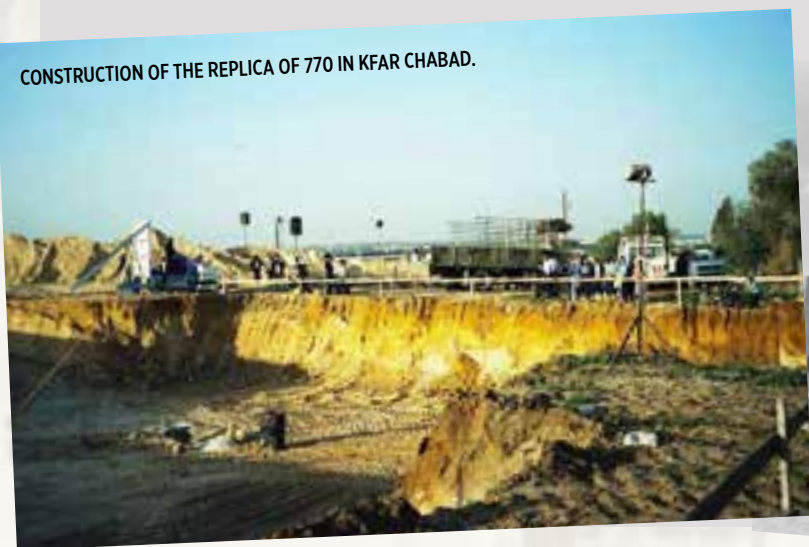
An architect was sent to map out 770 in New York, plans were drawn up and a prime location on the top of a hill was chosen, but the work didn't move very quickly.

Many months later, during the *fabrogen* of Lag B'omer 5746,¹² the Rebbe gave a deadline: the building should be completed by Yud-Beis Tammuz.

This was a huge surprise; at that point only the shell of the building was built! Although the contractors said it was impossible, work began around the clock and, amazingly, the building was completed in time. The *chanukas habayis* was held on 15 Tammuz, and it was mentioned by the Rebbe during the *yechidus klolis* on that day.¹³

Today the building serves as a center for people who wish to connect with the Rebbe. People from all over Eretz Yisroel come to daven in the replica of the Rebbe's room and write *panim* which are later sent to the Ohel. The small *zal* is a *kollel*, and the basement houses Kehos of Eretz Yisroel.

CONSTRUCTION OF THE REPLICA OF 770 IN KFAR CHABAD.



THE REPLICA OF 770 IN KFAR CHABAD.



ISRAELI PRESIDENT ZALMAN SHAZAR JOINS THE FESTIVITIES MARKING THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY SINCE THE FOUNDING OF KFAR CHABAD, 5729.

depicts Kfar Chabad on a map of Eretz Yisroel, with arrows moving in all directions, declaring, “*Ufaratzta yamah vakeidmah tzafonah vanegbah.*”

Setbacks

One of the most significant problems in those early years were from bands of Arab marauders, who would sneak in over the border from Jordan or Gaza, and steal, maim and kill at will. Small villages located in middle of vast orchards and forests were prime targets.

Reb Yitzchok Mendel Lis related:

“At first, Kfar Chabad was hit with a wave of thefts. Almost on a nightly basis, animals and equipment would disappear. The damages reached hundreds of thousands of *lirot*; a cost the destitute villagers could not afford.

“Seeing the uselessness of the police, we organized our own *shmirah*. During harvest, when we were in the fields late into the night, someone would always stand guard to chase away the potential thieves.

“The Arabs became more and more audacious. In addition to thieves, there was a great danger from the *fedayeen*, bands of terrorists who would commit

terror attacks throughout the country. We petitioned the government to help us with extra security, but we were turned down. The official who made that decision later paid with his job.

“One day, a *bochur* named Aryeh Dubruskin disappeared on his way through an orchard from Lod to *Beit Sefer L'Melachah*, where he taught a group of students. After days of searching, his body was found. Obviously, the entire village was deeply shocked.”

The danger of the *fedayeen* came to a head on Rosh Chodesh Iyar 5716. Students of *Beit Sefer L'Melachah* were gathered in their *beis midrash* to daven *Maariv*, when a group of terrorists attacked the school, shooting from the doorway. In a matter of minutes, they were finished and made their escape.

Four of the students and their teacher *hatomim* Simcha Zilbershtom lay on the floor, no longer amongst the living. A number of others were wounded, one of whom passed away a few days later.

The attack sent shockwaves throughout the country. Parents of the students traveled to Kfar Chabad,

to take their children home. The safety of their children was at stake, they felt, and they no longer wanted their children to remain in the *Beit Sefer L'Melachah*. A spirit of dejection spread amongst the Chassidim as well and many wanted to move away. Some proposed that the fledgling village be disbanded. It was simply too dangerous!

The only comfort was the firm messages of the Rebbe which came through letters and telegrams in the days following. Immediately following the *shiva*, an encouraging letter from the Rebbe arrived, and during the following weeks and months, many more followed.

In the first letter, the Rebbe wrote:

“I strongly hope that with the help of Hashem who guards with a wise eye and oversees with *hashgacha protis*, you will overcome every obstacle, strengthen both personal and communal affairs, and expand all the organizations in quantity and quality.

“From Kfar Chabad, the wellsprings of Chassidus and the deeds of our holy Rebbeim should be spread until they reach *chutza*, in

order to bring all of *bnei Yisroel* closer to our father in heaven—*b'chesed ub'rachamim*—and to speedily bring the complete *geulah* through Moshiach Tzidkeinu.”¹⁴

In the winter before the attack, the Rebbe had already encouraged an expansion of the *Beit Sefer L'Melachah*. Following the attack, the Rebbe urged that the expansion materialize quickly. Hastily, a new division called *Yad Hachamisha*, dedicated to teaching the skill of printing was opened, and plans were drawn up for a new building.

At the *siyum hashloshim* of the slain *talmidim*, a groundbreaking was held for the expansion. The chief rabbis, along with distinguished *rabbanim*, politicians, community leaders, and an enormous crowd, took part in the event.

A month and a half after the attack, Kfar Chabad was informed of an exciting development. The Rebbe would be sending twelve shluchim to visit Eretz Yisroel to lift their spirits. On Shabbos Chazon, the shluchim spent a Shabbos in Kfar Chabad.

That Shabbos was like Simchas Torah. Hundreds of Chassidim spent Shabbos in Kfar Chabad in order to see the shluchim. Young and old listened raptly as they spoke. The life infused by the shluchim remained with the inhabitants of Kfar Chabad for many years to come.

As many elderly Chassidim will relate today, it was this group of shluchim that really “brought the Rebbe to Eretz Yisroel,” and were the inspiration for many young *bochurim* to come to the Rebbe. The entire story at length was covered in “Transforming Tragedy,” *A Chassidisher Derher* Iyar 5775.

Peace

The close atmosphere of a small village made everyone feel at home with each other, but to an extent, had a very strong disadvantage. Being that

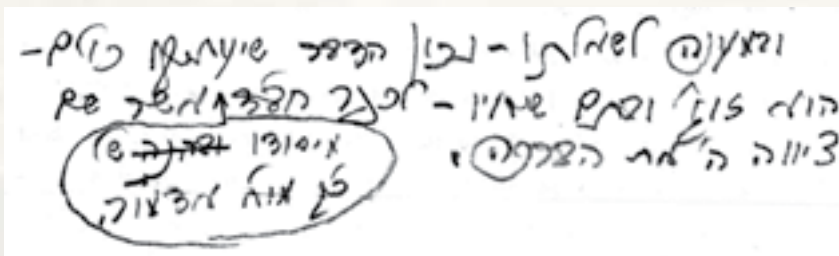
The Vessel of Peace

“...To the Vaad of Kfar Chabad...

“In regards to the unholy occurrence of a hand being raised *vechulu*... I am obliged to write the following words:

“It is very noticeable, that throughout all the years of the village’s existence, it has been protected and watched over in supernatural ways, thank G-d. This is surely through the efforts of our Rebbeim, and especially my father-in-law, the Rebbe, the founder of the Kfar and its leader. This is to the extent that from the day Kfar Chabad was founded in 5708 until now, thank G-d, not a single resident has passed away. This is clearly an open miracle. Now, Hashem’s mercy must be channeled through proper vessels, and the vessel that holds His blessing is peace. This is certainly the case to receive the blessings of the Rabbeim, who sacrificed their lives for *ahavas Yisroel*, as I’ve written several times. It is **obvious**, that each and every resident of Kfar Chabad must be extra scrupulous in matters of peace and harmony.”

(Igros Kodesh vol. 16 p. 7.)



ובמענה לשאלתו-נכון הדבר שיעתיקו כולם - הוא זוג' ובתם שיחיו - לכפר חב"ד מיסודו של כ"ק מו"ח אדמו"ר, אשר שם ציווה ה' את הברכה.

IN RESPONSE TO YOUR QUESTION: IT IS APPROPRIATE FOR YOU ALL—YOU, YOUR WIFE, AND DAUGHTER SHEYICHYU, TO MOVE TO KFAR CHABAD, FOUNDED BY MY FATHER-IN-LAW THE REBBE, FOR THERE HASHEM COMMANDS HIS BLESSING.

the mayor, city council and everyone in the town were all Lubavitchers, the lack of comfortable distance allowed for some individuals to fuel the flames of *machlokes*.

From the very beginning, the Rebbe’s letters are full of encouragement on the topic of peace and harmony, and the blessing it would bring on the Kfar. In 5718, the Rebbe sent a very strongly worded letter, with an overwhelmingly powerful message in it (see sidebar).

In 5743, a protracted conflict plagued the town over administrative issues. At the end of the following Tishrei, the Rebbe held a special *yechidus klolis* exclusively for the

residents of Kfar Chabad, speaking about the significance the Rebbeim placed in Kfar Chabad’s success and the importance of peace for that goal to be achieved. “The Rebbe *nessi doreinu* is begging everyone, stand together and receive all the *brachos* that are waiting for you,” the Rebbe pleaded. “You need only to stand together with *ahavas Yisroel*...” The Rebbe asked that everyone should put all the past occurrences behind them and turn a new page with one-another.

Just before leaving the shul at the end of the *yechidus*, the Rebbe asked that a *farbrenge* should be arranged where *hachlatos* can be made in the right direction. “I will participate in

the farbrengen as well,” the Rebbe added. “Physically I’ll be somewhere else, but in spirit, I’ll be here...”

The divides had been deep, but the clear pain expressed by the Rebbe shook Kfar Chabad to its core. That night, Reb Mendel Futerfas, the *marshpia* of Tomchei Temimim in Kfar Chabad, farbrenged throughout the night, and during the farbrengen, several people previously at odds with each other made amends.

A Holy City

In light of its special status, the Rebbe encouraged people to support Kfar Chabad in countless ways. One *minhag* where Kfar Chabad was singled out by the Rebbe was during Sukkos every year: After *bentching lulav*, the Rebbe would conduct *na'anuim* with an *esrog* from Kfar Chabad.

The Rebbe constantly encouraged them to grow in numbers, inviting more families to join; Ashkenazi, Sephardi—people from all backgrounds.

The Rebbe also directed the building of Kfar Chabad Beis—a small settlement near Kfar Chabad which today houses the Beis Rivka girls’ school and several dozen families. (At one point there was even talk of a Kfar Chabad Gimmel.)

Reb Yitzchok Mendel Lis related:

“The work in the Kfar Chabad secretariat was very difficult, and several times I asked the Rebbe for permission to leave it. I always merited to receive a letter of encouragement in response, and the Rebbe would write amazing things about the holiness of Kfar Chabad.

“In one letter, the Rebbe wrote:

“In regards to your question whether to remain in the *avodas hakodesh* of Kfar Chabad or to look for other jobs—I am very surprised to receive this question from people

again and again, after I have already answered it...

“My opinion is clear. Settling in Kfar Chabad, and especially working towards its development, is a gateway and conduit for Hashem’s blessings.”

The Rebbe’s view of Kfar Chabad was expressed succinctly in a *yechidus* to the father of Rabbi Mordechai Shmuel Ashkenazi *a”h*, the rav of Kfar Chabad, when he asked the Rebbe where his son should settle after his wedding. When he suggested Yerushalayim or Tel Aviv, the Rebbe asked,

“Why not in Kfar Chabad, *ir habirah fun Eretz Yisroel*, the capital city of Eretz Yisroel.” **T**

1. Motzei Shabbos, 4 Kislev 5708 (תש”ח)
2. In 5704 (תש”ד)
3. Reb Pinye Althaus was a respected Chossid and a beloved *askan* in Russia and Eretz Yisroel during those early years. To read more about

his fascinating personality, see *Derher Sivan* 5775, “A Friend of Every Jew.”

4. *Igros Kodesh Admur Harayatz* vol. 10 pg. 47.
5. Reb Shlomo was a prominent benefactor who sponsored many projects during the early years in America, for the Friediker Rebbe and the Rebbe. More on this topic can be found in *Igros Kodesh* vol. 20 pg. 606.
6. *Igros Kodesh Admur Harayatz* vol. 10 pg. 161
7. *Ibid* pg. 167.
8. Reb Yitzchak Mendel’s interview was printed in several installments in Kfar Chabad Magazine issues 788-791.
9. In recent years, as Kfar Chabad is a fully developed area, street names were indeed given.
10. *Igros Kodesh Admur Harayatz* vol 10, p. 298
11. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 6 pg. 257.
12. *Toras Menachem - Hiva’aduyos* 5746 vol. 3 pg. 355.
13. *Ibid* vol. 4 pg. 76.
14. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 13 pg. 30.



THE REBBE DELIVERS A BROCHA WITH THE ESROGIM FROM KFAR CHABAD ON THE TABLE.

14 TISHREI 5751, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 174390