



העיקר הפצת המעיינות חוצה



Rabbi Eliyahu Hecht

📍 Lomita, California

”נשיא דורנו האמ
אויפגעטאן און
אנגעזאגט צו כל
אנשי ונשי הדור
אז מצוות הדור
איז אין דעם ענין
השליחות...”

“The Rebbe *nessi doreinu* established and mandated each and every man and woman in this generation that the ‘mitzvah of our generation’ is *shlichus*...”
(ש”פ וישלח תשמ”ז)

I was *zoche* to be sent by the Rebbe on shlichus to Lomita, California in Elul 5733. Rabbi Shlomo Cunin—who was sent by the Rebbe eight years prior to head the *mosdos* in California—came to visit me. I had been on Merkos Shlichus to the west coast and he felt that I would be the right candidate to start a Chabad House in the South Bay. At the time, he was opening many new *mosdos* as part of the 71 institutions in honor of the Rebbe’s 70th birthday, and a number of my *chaverim* were brought out as shlichim to California.

“There is a new shul there,” Rabbi Cunin said, “and you will become the *rav*.” I wrote to the Rebbe, asking if I should go forward with this position, or maybe I should look into something else. The Rebbe answered “להתעניין”—I should look further into it.

Shortly before we left on shlichus, we were told that we should wait in *Gan Eden Hatachton*. As the Rebbe returned to his room after *Mincha*, he went inside for a moment and came back out with a Tanya and a *siddur*. He gave the Tanya to me and the *siddur* to my wife and then he gave a silver dollar to my son, Menachem Mendel. The Rebbe blessed us:

“זאלסט מאכן פריילאך ביי אנדערע וועט זיין פריילאך ביי דיר—Bring happiness to others, and you will be happy.”

We arrived in Lomita in time for Rosh Hashana 5734. A large crowd turned up for services, but then on Yom Kippur, as I was leading the davening, I realized that most of the crowd had disappeared. The Yom Kippur War had just broken out and many of the congregants who were involved in the aerospace industry, serving as engineers and the like, had to leave on urgent call.

The position as *rav* turned out to bring me a much smaller salary than planned, but with the Rebbe’s *brachos* we had tremendous *hatzlacha* expanding our reach and we garnered many new *baalei batim*. We found that the Jews in the area were not particularly warm towards spirituality but we did our best and, slowly but surely, our fledgling Chabad House grew.

When I wrote to the Rebbe that I wanted to purchase a Chabad House, the Rebbe responded:

“לא כדאי פיזור הנפש על כזו חוצאה גדולה... והעיקר הפצת המעיינות חוצה—The psychological unease that such a great expense would bring with itself is not worthwhile. The main thing should be spreading the wellsprings of Chassidus to the outside.”

Two years later, we finally received the Rebbe’s *bracha* to go ahead and buy. The Rebbe also sent 10 twenty-dollar bills as his participation in the purchase.

לע"נ
הרה"ת ר' אייזיק גרשון
בן ר' אברהם זאב ע"ה
מינץ
גלב"ע ב' חשוון ה'תשנ"ג
תנ"צ'ב"ה
נדפס ע"י משפחתו שיחיו



As we continued expanding our reach during that first year, we were bringing close to 100 children each week to study in the Talmud Torah (Hebrew school). It was no longer possible for me to teach all the children alone, so I asked the Rebbe about bringing out another shliach to join in the work. The Rebbe responded:

”כעצת עסקני אנ”ש שיחיו שם ע”מ
שמקבלים אחריות
ובאם כוונתו לאחריות כספית הרי הוא חדש
שם ובשנת תשל”ד ותשל”ה לא יוכל לקבל עליו
אחריות זו—

If the local Chabad activists agree and are willing to take responsibility for this [then its a good idea].

If you intend to assume the financial burden, [that is inadvisable since] you are new to the area, and in the years 5734 and 5735 you will be unable to shoulder such a [financial] responsibility.”

A few years later, in 5744, I started to get into heavy debt. When things became very difficult, I wrote to the Rebbe that I am במבוכה גדולה, a big mess. In the same letter, I inquired about expanding the school building as we needed a larger space for our activities. The Rebbe circled the words במבוכה גדולה and wrote:

”?! הרי כבר הי' עד”ז עכ”פ. ויצא סו”ס
לחרות

וכ”ז יחליט כשיוקל מעט עול החובות
ובהתאם להמצב אז

הצלחה רבה ואזכיר עה”צ בשורות טובות
?! You have been in similar
situations in the past and eventually
you came out fine.

[Regarding the building,] you
should make a decision about this

when the burden of the debt decreases a bit, relative to the situation you will be in then.

Much success. I will mention this at the *tziyon*. Good news.”

One issue that we were having in California then was that the *kashrus* industry was not built up enough. At some point I got involved with Histadrus Hakashrus of California, and together with a senior *rav* at the time, Rabbi Pinchas Gruman, we started working on *cholov Yisroel*, *glatt kosher*, etc. Some of my fellow shlichim tried discouraging me. “Our job is to focus on connecting Yidden to Yiddishkeit, not dealing with *gashmius*,” they said. So I asked Rabbi Zalman Shimon Dworkin, the *rav* of Crown Heights, and he told me that I should continue. When I wrote this to the Rebbe, the Rebbe was pleased with my decision. Although this is not the general work of a shliach, the Rebbe wrote “כמבצע ליחידים—it’s a campaign that some **individuals** should work on.”

Later, I was asked to become the president of the Rabbinical Council of California. When I asked the Rebbe about this, the Rebbe responded:

”באם יהי' לו דעה בה על ידי זה לקבל
הצעה. אעה”צ”

“If this [joining the council] will allow you an authoritative opinion in its decisions, then take the position. I will mention this at the *tziyon*.”

As our financial situation became more pressing, my father, Rabbi Avrohom Hecht, wrote to the Rebbe about it, telling the Rebbe that I need to come to New York to raise money to expand the building, because if I

do so, that will bring in more money. The Rebbe responded that if we bring more people to our activities, that will bring more money. Regarding the trip, the Rebbe said I don’t have to come to New York for money; there is enough money in California. With the Rebbe’s *brachos* we managed to build a mikvah and a daycare center over the next couple of years.

Over the years I sent frequent *duchos* to the Rebbe, always meriting to receive answers or acknowledgment of my reports. Once while in a *yechidus*, I detailed many difficulties I was contending with on shlichus, including my financial situation which was quite desperate. The Rebbe encouraged and blessed me, and as soon as I returned to California, an individual I knew made a very generous donation, enabling us to continue.

A few years after Gimmel Tammuz, I was once again in dire financial straits. In desperation, I went to the Ohel and wrote to the Rebbe, “How can I go on?”

That was a difficult visit. It was pouring rain and I got completely soaked. I returned to Crown Heights in low spirits and was on the way to get something to eat when I suddenly got a call on my cell phone. “Is this *Rabbit Hecht*?” the caller from somewhere in Texas asked. “Yes, this is *Rabbi Hecht*,” I replied. “A family friend of ours just passed away and left a gift of \$25,000 for you.” I wasn’t even aware of who this person was, but the Rebbe had answered me. There’s no such thing as a מבוכה גדולה. The Rebbe is always *bentching* us! T