

לזכות
הרה"ת ר' אברהם שמואל
וזוגתו מרת רבקה מירל שיחיו
שפאלטר

להצלחה רבה בכל עניניהם
לאריכת ימים ושנים טובות

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



THE REBBE AT THE TIME PERIOD AROUND THE CHASUNA.



THE REBBETZIN ON THE WEDDING DAY.

Celebrating Ninety Years



דאס איז דער טאג

THE REBBE AND REBBETZIN'S CHASUNA

It was a mere few weeks after the liberation of the Frierdiker Rebbe on Yud-Beis Tammuz 5687 (תרפ"ז). The Frierdiker Rebbe was to leave the Soviet Union and only his family members were granted the necessary papers to come along. When the Frierdiker Rebbe submitted the list of his household to the Soviet authorities to issues exit visas from Russia, they objected to one name only.

"Do you really need to bring a future son-in-law from here?" they asked.


The Frierdiker Rebbe replied, "Such a son-in-law can't be found elsewhere!"

The Rebbe and Rebbetzin's *shidduch* was already several years in the making. Since the Rebbe's early visits to the Frierdiker Rebbe in Rostov years earlier, talk began regarding the proposed *shidduch*, and as the years progressed, the Rebbe began to be identified by the Frierdiker Rebbe as "*hameyu'ad lihiyos chassano*," the future son-in-law of the Frierdiker Rebbe.

The roots of the *shidduch* go back even earlier, to the Rebbe Rashab. Rebbetzin Shterna Sarah related that she had heard from her husband, "For Mussia, we need to look into the sons of Reb Levik."

However, with the difficult situation in Russia, the wedding never materialized. One year after moving to Riga, the Frierdiker Rebbe decided that the time was ripe.






For the Chassidim in that generation, this was much more than a wedding.

The previous years had brought untold hardship and suffering to the Chassidim and to the Frierdiker Rebbe. The once glorious yeshiva in Lubavitch was now fragmented in underground units spread throughout the country. Many Chassidim languished in prison; Yiddishkeit in the Soviet Union had been all but decimated. Just a year and a half earlier, the Frierdiker Rebbe himself had been imprisoned.

Even though the Frierdiker Rebbe had now immigrated to the free world, he was geographically separated from the vast majority of his Chassidim. The financial situation was precarious. What would the future hold?

It was time to rebuild. This wedding would mark the beginning of a new era.



For Chassidim in our generation, this was also much more than a wedding.

The wedding anniversaries of all the Rebbeim are significant, as the Rebbe explained in *sichos*. However, the day of Yud-Daled Kislev is even more unique: It is the day that marked the beginning of our connection to the Rebbe, the *nossi* of our generation. As the Rebbe said, “*Dos iz der tog vos hot mir farbunden amit eich, un eich mit mir*—this is the day that connected me to you, and you to me.”

In simple terms, this day holds the beginnings of *dor hashvi'i*.

This article is a condensed version of the description of the Rebbe's wedding printed in *Early Years*, by **Jewish Educational Media**. Much of the style has been changed to cater to our readership, but the content and basic flow have remained the same.

We would like to express our thanks to Rabbi **Elkanah Shmotkin** and Rabbi **Boruch Oberlander**, the researchers and authors of the book, for allowing us to reprint their work, as well as to Rabbi **Levi Greisman** and the entire **JEM** team for their kind assistance.

The Announcement

At the end of Tishrei 5689 (תרפ"ט), the news spread that the wedding of the Rebbe and the Rebbetzin would be held during the month of Kislev. Two weeks later, the date was set for Yud-Daled Kislev, and Warsaw, the home of Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim in Poland, was chosen to host the wedding. As the Friediker Rebbe explained, "This will give us satisfaction as if it were in some way similar to Lubavitch."¹

Invitations were sent out dated 16 Cheshvan. A generic printed invitation was sent to hundreds of Chassidim, while special copies of a handwritten invitation were sent to prominent individuals, sometimes with the Friediker Rebbe's personal signature and header.

Later, in Warsaw, the Friediker Rebbe sent personal invitations to the Rebbes of Poland who lived in Warsaw and its suburbs: the Gerrer, Sochatchover, Alexander, Radziner, and Zlotopoler Rebbes, and others.

Chassidim throughout the world celebrated with the joyous news, and began preparing for the occasion. They recognized that this would be no ordinary wedding. One Chossid, Reb Yochanan Gordon,² later related a conversation he had with Reb Leib Sheinen, the *rav* of his town, Dokshitz. Reb Yochanan, having just returned from spending Rosh Hashanah with the Friediker Rebbe, was unsure whether to head out again, and he discussed the matter with Reb Leib. Reb Leib responded incisively:

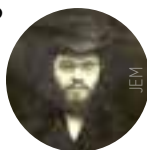
"Imagine, a wedding like this in which all the Rebbes will take part—the Rebbe Rashab, the Rebbe Maharash, the Tzemach Tzedek, the Mittler Rebbe and the Alter Rebbe; possibly even the Baal Shem Tov—how can you consider missing an opportunity like that?!"

Upon hearing this, Reb Yochanan later wrote to the Friediker Rebbe, "I went immediately and borrowed money for the trip. I hope to never

forget what I saw and felt at that wedding for the rest of my life."

Such a grand affair was going to cost a great amount of money. The Friediker Rebbe's secretary, Reb Chatshe Feigin, wrote an emotional letter to Reb Yisroel Jacobson in New York requesting help to enable the Friediker Rebbe to host a celebration befitting the occasion.

Following his request, Chassidim in many communities in North America including Montreal, Baltimore, Chicago and New York, as well as in London and Kharkov, assisted by sending funds.



REB YOCHANAN GORDON



THE LETTER FROM REB YOCHANAN GORDON TO THE FRIEDIKER REBBE, DESCRIBING HIS DECISION TO TRAVEL TO THE REBBE AND REBBETZIN'S CHASUNA.

Invitations

During the famous farbrengen marking the Rebbe and Rebbetzin's twenty-fifth wedding anniversary, on Yud-Daled Kislev 5714,³ the Rebbe described the special attention the Frieddiker Rebbe devoted to the text of the wedding invitations:

“Before the wedding of my sister-in-law [Rebbetzin Sheina], my father-in-law instructed that the text of her wedding invitation be a copy of ours. In response to my question, the Rebbe explained that the text was taken from the invitation to his own wedding.



THE WEDDING INVITATION.



AN INVITATION TO THE WEDDING, WRITTEN IN THE FRIEDDIKER REBBE'S KSAV YAD KODESH.

Preparations

In preparation for the wedding, Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka departed for Warsaw together with her mother, Rebbetzin Nechama Dina, around two weeks before the wedding. The rest of the family remained in Riga, where the *tenoim* and *ufruf* were held.

On the eve of 6 Kislev, the *tenoim* were signed in the presence of a small group of people. Two Chassidim were honored to be *eidim*: Reb Mordechai Cheifetz and Reb Chatshe Feigin.

The next day, the Frieddiker Rebbe wrote a heartfelt letter to the Rebbetzin:

“Mazal tov to you, my dear daughter; mazal tov! Last night we conducted the *tenoim* in an auspicious time in the presence of a few close friends.”

In observance of the custom to donate food for the poor prior to a wedding, the Frieddiker Rebbe sponsored free lunch in the Riga Jewish soup kitchen in the days leading up to the wedding.

The Ufruf

In a letter to his family and other Chassidim in Russia, Reb Eliyahu Chaim Althaus⁴ records the events of this day (due to the length of his writing, we have condensed certain parts, while preserving the original style):

“The *chosson* was called up to the Torah on Shabbos, Yud-Alef Kislev, with great fanfare. At about one o'clock, the Rebbetzin [Shterna Sara] prepared a *kiddush* in her ground floor apartment for approximately 100 people.



REB ELYE CHAIM ALTHAUS

“As the train began to move, the crowd followed us, dancing alongside. How beautiful and heartfelt was this emotional scene.”

“The *kiddush* lasted about one-and-a-half hours, where we sang many powerful *niggunim*. After *Mincha*, the Shabbos meal took place in the Rebbe’s apartment, with some 70 invited guests.

“The Rebbe delivered a *maamar*, *dibbur hamaschil* ‘*Vechol Banayich*,’ a wondrous *maamar* which included both deep concepts and practical advice in *avodas Hashem*. It lasted about one-and-a-half hours, followed by prolonged dancing. We celebrated greatly—rejoicing and trembling as one: Observing the Rebbe’s great joy, we, his Chassidim, rejoiced along with him. The Rebbe, in turn, sang, danced and rejoiced with us.

“For me personally, the celebration of this special moment surpassed the rejoicing of the days to follow. Why so? I will never know. But I know this is how I feel in my heart. Perhaps because this was the beginning of the festivities, the opening for all the celebration to follow—this elation that contrasted so starkly with the painful events that preceded it not long before.

“After a *sicha*, the Rebbe rose with a cup of wine in his holy hands. His face turned from white to red. His eyes filled with tears, as he looked heavenward:

“Now I would like to say *l’chaim* for my brethren who are exiled in Russia.’ In a powerful voice he delivered a long and deep *brocha*...

“This meal with the Rebbe and his Chassidim continued deep into the night. I have no doubt—were it not for the need to prepare for the next day’s journey, it would not have concluded before midnight, as it did. Such an event has never been seen or heard of before; it was a taste of *Olam Haba*.”

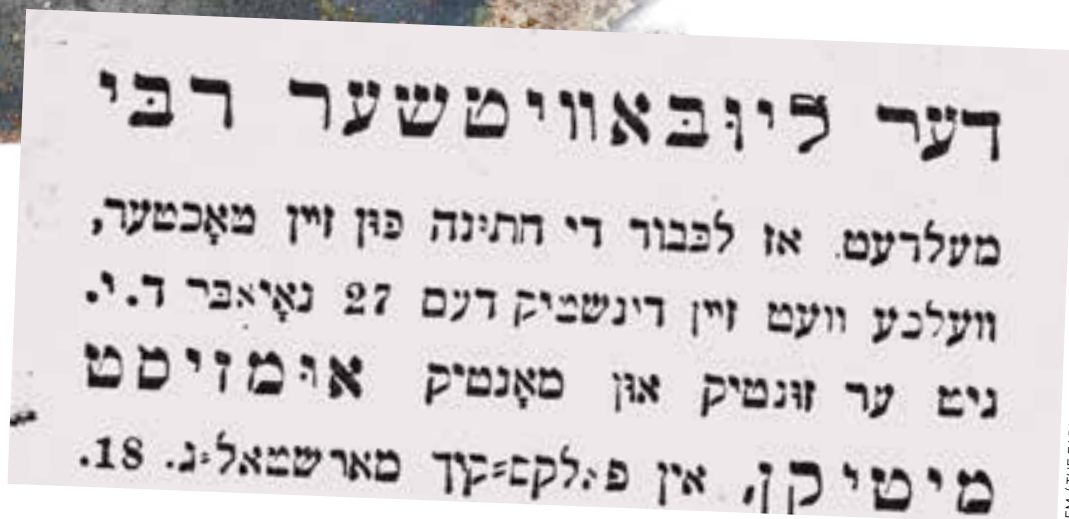
Journey to Warsaw

Reb Eliyahu Chaim describes the journey:

“On Sunday, 12 Kislev, the Rebbe departed Riga for Warsaw with his family. At the train station, he was greeted by thousands of Chassidim, acquaintances, and well-wishers who had come



THE FRIERDIKER REBBE AT THE RIGA TRAIN STATION.



AN ANNOUNCEMENT ABOUT
THE CHASUNA IN THE RIGA
FRIMORGN NEWSPAPER.

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to see him off. The crowd of men, women, and children created quite a clamor.

“In a long line, the people stood with tremendous respect, nodding their heads in greeting and blessing. The Rebbe nodded back affectionately, responding to each in a quiet voice, ‘Be well, be well!’

“Suddenly, a great sound arose from the crowd. They broke out in the well-known song, ‘*Ki Vesimcha*’ and ‘*Yivarechicha Hashem V’yishmirecha*.’ As the train began to move, the crowd followed us, dancing alongside. How beautiful and heartfelt was this emotional scene.

“Some 10 Chassidim from Riga went along with the Rebbe, and others, who couldn’t obtain visas to enter Poland, joined us until the border. We sat in the car adjacent to the Rebbe and his family, and the atmosphere was truly joyful. The entire journey reminded us of earlier times, when we would travel together to Lubavitch...

“During the train stops in Dvinsk and Vilna, thousands of Chassidim greeted us at the station, eager to see the Rebbe and wish him *mazal tov*.

“We were overjoyed to witness with our own eyes a blessed generation of offspring from our holy Rebbes—and now, after years, a seventh generation. Despite the double darkness that

covers the world in which we live, during these times of the footsteps of Moshiach, the small light that we have is bright and pure. It illuminates the darkness and nothing can prevent us from seeing its glow. Fortunate is the eye that beheld all this!

“On Monday, 13 Kislev, at 7:00 a.m., the train slowly approached the Warsaw station. Thousands of men, women and children, as well as all the students of Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim, had come out to greet the Rebbe. There was total chaos as everyone pushed forward to be the first to catch a glimpse of him.

“I was told that the Rebbe’s father-in-law, Reb Avraham Schneersohn, arrived at the station from Kishinev with his son at the same time, and the Rebbe approached him, fell on his shoulder, and kissed him.

“Suddenly, the *chosson* appeared in my car, stating that the Rebbe had requested that I proceed with him to the hotel. Of course, I didn’t hesitate for a moment. We set out immediately. We locked our arms together, and only with great difficulty did we push through the throngs.”

The Rebbe’s legal marriage certificate was issued that day by Rabbi Tzvi Yechezkel Michelsohn of the Warsaw Rabbinate.



VARIOUS NEWSPAPER REPORTS OF THE CHASUNA.

The Chosson Mohl

The *chosson mohl* was held the night prior to the wedding, in Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim. Although the Frierdiker Rebbe had declared the event exclusive to the *bochurim* of the yeshiva, other Chassidim and *bochurim* came to participate and many pushed their way into the building. Eventually police officers were summoned, and only with clearance from Reb Alter Simchovitch, the *mashgiach* of the yeshiva, were individuals allowed to enter.

The Frierdiker Rebbe repeated the *maamar* ‘*Vechol Banayich*’ he had said the previous Shabbos in Riga, and many *niggunim* were sung. After *birchas hamazon*, the Frierdiker Rebbe asked to dance with the *bochurim*. A large circle was formed, and the Frierdiker Rebbe danced with the close Chassidim and the *temimim*.

Reb Elye Chaim described his thoughts after the event:

“That night the entire building was illuminated with a great light. The moment we entered the yeshiva hall, my eyes were opened. It had been freshly painted sea-blue, with many other shades. The ceiling, walls, and floor all looked pristine.

Long tables, arranged as three sides of a square, were adorned with white tablecloths. Large electric chandeliers sparkled from the center and corners of the large room.

“The dais ran along the eastern wall. At its center, in a special chair facing the crowd, sat the exalted *chosson*, his face pale and radiant, like a king dressed in silk. At his right, attired in his Shabbos finery with his *gartel*, sat our Rebbe.

“Whoever did not behold this joyous event, with the bright, shining light radiating from the renowned *tzaddikim* sitting at the dais; our Rebbe at their head with the *chosson* at his side; the many *bochurim* standing and watching in awe, their beautiful voices echoing forth as they sang the Alter Rebbe’s *niggun*; the Rebbe’s eyes glistening with silent tears as he held himself back from weeping openly—whoever did not hear the voices of joy in this Heavenly garden, whose soul did not experience this *Gan Eden*—has never heard nor seen true beauty in his lifetime. Fortunate is the eye that beheld all this.

“Everyone finally understood why the Rebbe chose to hold the wedding in Warsaw. Only Warsaw was worthy of this. Warsaw and only Warsaw had been prepared from the time of creation to receive this lofty light.”

The celebration ended at two in the morning, when the *bochurim* joyously escorted the Frierdiker Rebbe to his hotel.

The Day of the Chasuna

Throughout the day of the wedding, telegrams arrived from well-wishers. The Frierdiker Rebbe writes: “Hundreds or thousands of telegrams were received in Warsaw. A number of people were specifically assigned to receive and record them.”⁵

“In the afternoon,” Reb Elye Chaim writes, “the *chosson* stood to pray the final *Mincha* before his wedding and to recite the long *vidui* with deep concentration, pouring out his soul in a quiet voice. It was an awe-inspiring scene: no one was present besides him and me but we were as distant

**“Do I not know that upon the path of this
praised young man are also dependent the
futures of our children and grandchildren?”**

from one another as the east is from the west; his contemplations were entirely beyond my own.

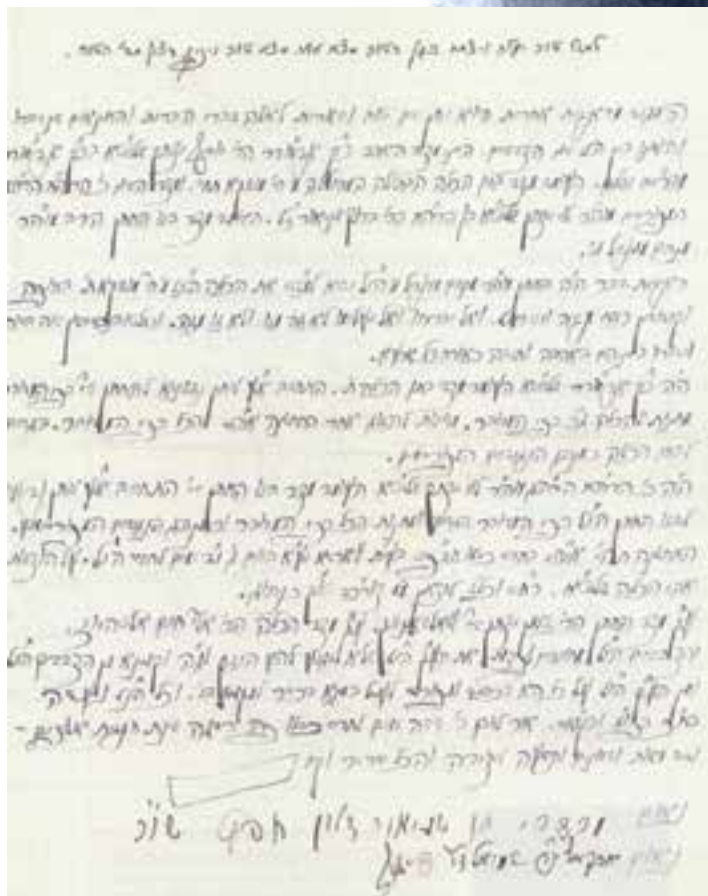
“My beloved ones, can you envision my emotions during this long wait, as I sit in a corner of the large room, watching this young man before me, who, in several hours, will become the son-in-law of our beloved Rebbe? From him he will build a Jewish home, and no secret is hidden from him... Did I not cry along with him? Do I not know that upon the path of this praised young man are also dependent the futures of our children and grandchildren?

“The gates of tears are not closed”—I have no doubt that our prayers were accepted by the Creator. He will have great success on the straight path chosen by his forefathers, our holy Rebbeim, and the *tzaddik*, as well as the Chassidim, will see and rejoice in him.

“I said to myself that I should thank Hashem for everything I was able to see, for before me stands Mendel ben Levik, who, it is well known, was born and raised in purity and holiness and who constantly fears Heaven. As of today, all I see is fear of Heaven. I examined his deeds inside and out and I found not one flaw. He is complete in *nefesh*, *ruach*, and *neshama*. He possesses his own great learning in addition to the merit of his saintly forebears.

“You know as I do, that he is naturally distant from doing the slightest thing for appearances alone. And though he knows what is outside in the secular world, he also knows well to discern between the holy and the mundane, and his holiness was never tarnished, even the slightest bit.

“As he finished davening *Mincha*, he turned from the wall to me. I studied him—his face white as chalk, his body weakened from the fasting and his intense service all day. My compassion was aroused and I suggested that he rest a bit but he didn’t react. The entire day he exchanged not even one mundane word with me. Perhaps he was commanded so. Instead he opened the Reishis Chochmah to study.



THE TENA'IM OF THE REBBE AND REBBETZIN.

“Eventually, I was called to the telephone and I was asked if the *chosson* was ready for the *kabbalas ponim*. I answered in the affirmative. I passed the information to the *chosson*, adding that he would need to dress quickly for the wedding, as they would soon come to bring us to Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim, where the *kabbalas ponim* would take place.

“How I rejoiced when I saw him in a silk *kapote* with the *gartel* tied over it, as befitting the Rebbe’s child! My joy knows no end.

“I reflected, deeply emotional, as I sat in the car with the *chosson* en route to the yeshiva.

“My thoughts raced. I asked myself incessantly: How is this? Warsaw? Tomchei Temimim?

Lubavitch? Rostov? Leningrad? Shpalerka? Kostroma? Riga? They all passed like a fleeting dream. Finally, I have come to rejoice, but my eyes are pouring forth tears!”

The Chasuna In Yekaterinoslav

At first, the Rebbe’s parents, Harav Levi Yitzchok and Rebbetzin Chana, hoped to attend the wedding. To everyone’s dismay, the Soviet authorities refused to grant them exit visas, and they were forced to remain far away.

To mark the occasion, they held a celebration in their home. Although gathering in a religious setting was illegal, hundreds of people came to celebrate with them and many hundreds more sent congratulatory telegrams from throughout Russia.

The lengthy account of the emotional wedding celebration in Yekaterinoslav has been passed down to us from several sources, primarily Rebbetzin Chana’s memoirs and letters from the Rebbe’s uncle, Reb Shmuel Schneerson. (See *Dancing From a Distance*, Derher Kislev 5772.)

The Kabbalas Panim

The *kabbalas ponim* was held in Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim. The yeshiva hall was decorated beautifully. Several rooms were set aside as a women’s section, while the main *zal* and its adjoining rooms were designated for the men.

“Only those who had an invitation,” writes Reb Elye Chaim, “or a bribe to the policemen of a zloty or a half, were allowed to enter. That is, except for the professional thieves of Warsaw—they came and went as they pleased...”

101 Words

On the day of the wedding, Harav Levi Yitzchak composed a heartfelt telegram to the Rebbe. Rebbetzin Chana later described the scene as Harav Levi Yitzchok poured his heart into his words: “The tablecloth was wet from my husband’s tears as he wrote that telegram.”

In Harav Levi Yitzchak’s letter to the Rebbe after the *chasuna*, he writes:

“Of all the countless telegrams that you received, I truly desire that my own telegram to you—the one consisting of 101 words—should remain with you, because it was written from the depths of my heart and soul... Protect it for many long, pleasant years. I hope to Hashem that He always fulfill all the good wishes contained there.”

The telegram reads:

“Schneerson, Mendel. Warsaw.

“From the deepest essence of my heart, I hereby bless you, my dear beloved son, on this day of your wedding to your intended, Chaya Mushka, in an auspicious time. May Hashem, the G-d of our holy forebears in whose merit we live, spread His shelter of peace over you, and may your edifice be everlasting. ‘*Re’eh chaim im ha’isha asher ahavta*’—both literally, and according to the Midrashic interpretation. ‘*Yehi mekorcha varuch, u’smach mei’eishes ne’urecha*.’

“May the merit of our forebears, the Tzemach Tzedek and his wife—after whom you and your *kallah* are named—protect you all the days of your life, forever—that you walk on the path of Torah and mitzvah and live lives of *nachas*, peace and tranquility, amidst all good, forever. May you both be a source of pride and renown amongst Israel. May you merit ‘a generation of upright offspring’—children and grandchildren occupied in Torah and *mitzvos*.

“Your father, who is literally together with you,

“Levi Yitzchak.”

“The *zal* was packed from end to end—even more than yesterday. Rebbes, rabbis, great world-renowned scholars; the who’s-who of Warsaw; correspondents from all the newspapers, including Hatzfirah, Moment, Haynt, Express, and many others; the chairmen of the rabbinical councils of both Poland and Warsaw; representatives of the Joint Distribution Committee, the orphans’ home and similar institutions; and on and on.”

At six o’clock, the Frieddiker Rebbe arrived at the yeshiva, and was greeted by joyous singing. Several minutes later, the *chosson* arrived. The thousands gathered outside cleared a path from the car to the yeshiva’s entrance.

On the instruction of the Frieddiker Rebbe, the *chosson* was seated at the head of the table. To his right sat the Frieddiker Rebbe, wearing a *shtreimel*. To the *chosson*’s left sat Reb Avraham Schneersohn, the Frieddiker Rebbe’s father-in-law. Around the table sat the distinguished guests—Rebbes, rabbis, relatives and close associates. Surrounding them stood Chassidim and yeshiva students, and all the guests.

Reb Elye Chaim describes what happened next:

“A long silence enveloped the great room. Suddenly, the Rebbe’s face changed from red to white. At that moment he resembled an angel. His eyes shone with a clear, radiant light, shimmering like the morning stars. Awe and trembling gripped everyone present. It is indescribable.

“At that moment, the Rebbe started to speak. His words were uttered with a passionate flame.”

The Frieddiker Rebbe announced: “It is well-known that during a wedding, the *neshamos* of parents come from *olam ha’emes*. Three generations of forebears attend every Jew’s wedding, and for some, more generations attend. There are various degrees in this.

“As an invitation to the souls of the Rebbeim who will come to the *chupa* to bless the couple, we will now deliver a *maamar*. A portion will be from the Alter Rebbe; a portion from the Mittlerer



THE CARDS ALLOWING ACCESS TO THE WEDDING.

Shtreimel

The custom of the Rebbeim was to wear a *shtreimel* every Shabbos and Yom Tov, except for when they left Lubavitch. From the day the Rebbe Rashab and the Frieddiker Rebbe left Lubavitch in 5676 (תרע"ו), they no longer wore their *shtreimels* at all.

In honor of the Rebbe’s wedding, the Frieddiker Rebbe once again donned his *shtreimel*, to the joy of the Chassidim.

In the Rebbe’s Reshimos⁶, the Rebbe records a conversation with the Frieddiker Rebbe shortly after the wedding, where he told the Rebbe that the Rebbe Rashab had appeared to him in a vision and wished him *mazal tov* on the occasion:

“Last night I saw my father... He told me, “*Mazal tov* for the hat”... This is the second time I have seen my father since the wedding. The first time I was also wearing the hat, but that time he didn’t wish me *mazal tov*.”



“A long silence enveloped the great room. Suddenly, the Rebbe’s face changed from red to white.”

Rebbe; a portion from my great-grandfather [the Tzemach Tzedek]; a portion from my grandfather, the *kallah*’s great-grandfather [the Rebbe Maharash]; a portion from the *chosson*’s great-great grandfather [Reb Baruch Shalom, oldest son of the Tzemach Tzedek]; and a portion from my father, the *kallah*’s grandfather [the Rebbe Rashab]. ‘*Kol ha’omer davar b’sheim omro*—whenever someone quotes a saying in the name of its originator, one should consider it as though the originator of the statement is standing before him.’

Immediately following his awe-inspiring introduction, the Frierdiker Rebbe began to deliver a *maamar*, *dibur hamas’chil* “*Lecha Dodi Likras Kallah*.” It lasted about half an hour.

The Bedeken

Reb Elye Chaim continues his description:

“After the *maamar*, the tables were moved aside and the *chosson* was escorted into the adjoining room, the women’s section. Large, beautiful trees with flowers and roses filled the *kallah*’s reception room. Many electric lamps were within the arrangements, and they looked beautiful.

“I saw the beautiful *kallah* inside the garden, attired in a beautiful dress. Her face was white as chalk, infused with fear of Heaven, shining like the morning light amidst the garden of flowers surrounding her. The Rebbetzin [Nechama Dina] and the *alte Rebbetzin* [Shterna Sara] were at her side. They, in turn, were surrounded by all the distinguished women, as well as dozens of girls who had come to rejoice with her.

“They all waited anxiously for the moment the *chosson* would enter to cover her with the veil. Everyone tried to catch a glimpse of her *chosson*.”

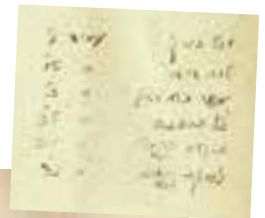
On the way to the *bedeken*, the Frierdiker Rebbe and the *chosson*, alone, entered a small room nearby the *kallah*’s reception. The Frierdiker Rebbe allowed only Reb Zalman Schneerson of Lodz, as a family member, to remain. The Frierdiker Rebbe personally dressed the *chosson* in the *kittel* made from the shirt of the Rebbe Rashab. Then, the Frierdiker Rebbe wrapped the silk *gartel* around

him, and said that he would like to say the *brocha*, “*Ozer Yisroel B’gyurah*,” but since he already did so in the morning, he wouldn’t recite it again. The Frierdiker Rebbe said, “I am tying you to myself, *bazeh u’vebah*, in this world and the next.”

Afterwards, other people were also called into the room. Reb Avraham Schneersohn and each of the Rebbes in attendance were invited to *bentch* the *chosson*. Then, the *bedeken* took place, while the Alter Rebbe’s *niggun* was sung.

The Chupa

“Immediately after the *bedeken*,” Reb Elye Chaim describes, “everyone began rushing out of the yeshiva to the inner courtyard where the *chupa* stood, hastily



THE DRUSHEI CHASUNA BOOKLET, CONTAINING THE MAAMORIM SAID BY THE FRIERDIKER REBBE IN HONOR OF THE WEDDING.

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and frantically hoping to grab a spot from which to see the *chupa* up-close.

“I didn’t rush. I waited for the *chosson* and the *mechutanim* to go ahead as is proper, and so did many distinguished guests. We were given candles, and we formed two lines between which the Rebbe and Reb Moshe Horenshtein [son-in-law of the Rebbe Maharash]—they were the *shushvinim*—led the *chosson* to the *chupa*. Everyone standing there heartfully sang the Alter Rebbe’s *niggun* in unison.

“I can’t begin to describe the scene of the pushing, running, screaming and general chaos that filled the area. Men, women and children filled the large courtyard. Many electric lamps hung above it, illuminating it brightly. The *chupa* stood in the corner of the courtyard.

“Once the *shushvinim* brought the *chosson* to the *chupa*, they went back to bring the *kallah*. At her sides were her mother the Rebbetzin, her

grandmother the Rebbetzin, and the Rebbe’s aunt, Rebbetzin Mushka, the younger sister of the Rebbe [Rashab] *nishmaso eden*.

“I heard an announcement from Reb Feivish Zalmanov, that the youngsters should move away from the *chupa* and make way for the elders. Some semblance of calm was restored.

“They then circled around the *chosson*—the *kallah*, the Rebbe, the Rebbetzin, the *alte Rebbetzin*, the Rebbe’s aunt Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka, and her husband, Reb Moshe Horenshtein.

“Suddenly, I heard the first *brocha* being recited. It was the Rebbe. His voice thundered like the rapids, deeply solemn and trembling. As his voice echoed through the courtyard, a deep awe fell upon us all. Instantly, the crowd fell silent. The Rebbe’s clear, sweet voice called out—it was mournful and elated at once, and could be heard even at a distance. Tears flowed like water from



THE BUILDING OF YESHIVAS TOMCHEI TEMIMIM IN WARSAW, WHERE THE FIRST PART OF THE WEDDING WAS HELD.

JEM / THE EARLY YEARS

“When we heard him recite the words, ‘Asher yatzar es ha’adam b’tzalmo,’ we all repented with as true a teshuva as upon hearing the Rebbe cry out ‘arov avdecha letov,’ before the shofar-blowing on Rosh Hashanah.”

every face; everyone’s hearts melted as the Rebbe said that *brocha*.

“Then, the *chosson* was *mekadesh* the *kallah*, and the Radziner Rebbe was honored to read the *kesuba*.”

Witnesses on the *kesuba* were two prominent Chassidim, Rabbi Berel Moshe Shmotkin and Rabbi Mendel Kuperstock, the rabbi of Postavy, Poland.

“The Rebbe began again, reciting the *sheva brachos* in a loud voice emanating from the depths of his heart. Again, joyful trembling fell upon all of us gathered there. It seemed as though we were hearing an angel’s voice from *Gan Eden*. I do not exaggerate when I say this: when we heard him recite the words, ‘Asher yatzar es ha’adam b’tzalmo,’ we all repented with as true a *teshuva* as upon hearing the Rebbe cry out ‘arov avdecha letov,’ before the *shofar*-blowing on Rosh Hashanah.

“How fortunate we were to hear this. May we all together merit to speedily hear ‘Barei Yehudah uv’chutzos Yerushalayim, kol sasson v’kol simcha!’

“After the *brachos* were recited and the *chosson* broke the glass, a massive cry burst forth from the thousands present, ‘Mazal Tov!’ setting forth song and dance and music before the *chosson* and the *kallah*.”

The Wedding Seuda

After the *chupa*, the Frierdiker Rebbe, the *chosson*, *kallah*, and all the relatives retired to the yeshiva building for a short rest.

One of the rooms of the yeshiva served as the *yichud* room. A number of relatives entered together with the *chosson* and *kallah*. On the Frierdiker Rebbe’s directive, they departed one at a time. The Frierdiker Rebbe poured tea for the *chosson* and *kallah* over which they broke their fast, and then he left the room as well.

The guests proceeded to the large hall at 35 Pańska Street, where the wedding meal was held. The Rebbe later noted that the wedding was held in a different location “in the American style,” as “the Frierdiker Rebbe had requested that only

the spiritual part of the wedding be held at the yeshiva.”⁷

At about 10:00 p.m., the Frierdiker Rebbe and the Rebbe and Rebbetzin arrived at the hall, amid much singing and dancing. After some time, the Frierdiker Rebbe asked that all the guests take their seats.

The waiters arrange buffet tables where *l’chaim* and cake were served, and the Frierdiker Rebbe himself walked amongst the tables with a bottle, distributing *l’chaim* to each guest and blessing them.

In a *sicha* in 5747, the Rebbe related:

“During my wedding meal, my father-in-law stood up from his place and walked amongst the guests to distribute *l’chaim*. When I saw this, I couldn’t remain sitting in my place whilst the Rebbe stood and distributed *l’chaim*, so I stood up from my place in order to at least attempt to assist—to hold the bottle, give the cups, etc.—but the Rebbe immediately turned to me and indicated that I should remain sitting at my place. When I nevertheless attempted to insist—Jews are, after all, stubborn—he motioned again, even more explicitly, that I should not stand up. So with no choice, I remained seated—on pins and needles, of course—until the Rebbe returned to his place to continue the meal.”⁸

When he arrived to where the *bochurim* were standing, the Frierdiker Rebbe directed the *mashgiach*, Reb Alter Simchovitch, to distribute *l’chaim* to each of the students. When all the *bochurim* had cups in their hands, the Frierdiker Rebbe himself took a cup, and said *l’chaim* and a short *sicha* to the *bochurim*.

Afterwards, the dancing resumed, with the participation of the Frierdiker Rebbe, who danced with the *chosson* and his father-in-law, Reb Avraham Schneersohn.

After a short interval, the Frierdiker Rebbe delivered the first portion of the *maamar* “Asher Barah Sasson,” which lasted about an hour. At midnight, the Frierdiker Rebbe paused his delivery and the tables were arranged for the meal. A

special table was also arranged for the *bochurim*. Everyone washed their hands for bread and the wedding *seuda* began.

During the meal, the Frierdiker Rebbe instructed one of the *bochurim* to distribute a *teshura* to each of the participants.

After the meal was served, the music began once again and the entire assemblage resumed dancing. The *Polisher Rebbes* in attendance danced in a circle and when they sat down to rest, the Frierdiker Rebbe took the *chosson* and danced with him “in the Russian style,” one hand on the other’s shoulder. The Frierdiker Rebbe danced quickly.

At 3:30 in the morning, the dancing concluded and the *Polisher Rebbes* took their leave. The crowd formed a half-circle around the Frierdiker Rebbe singing *niggunim* for about half an hour.

Then, the Frierdiker Rebbe resumed his delivery of the *maamar* “*Asher Bara Sasson*.” Afterwards, the Amshinover Rebbe (who entered in middle of the *maamar*), was presented with refreshments and fruit. The Frierdiker Rebbe said a *l’chaim* with him, and they sat together for a quarter of an hour, following which the Frierdiker Rebbe left for the hotel.

The *seuda* concluded after 6:00 a.m.

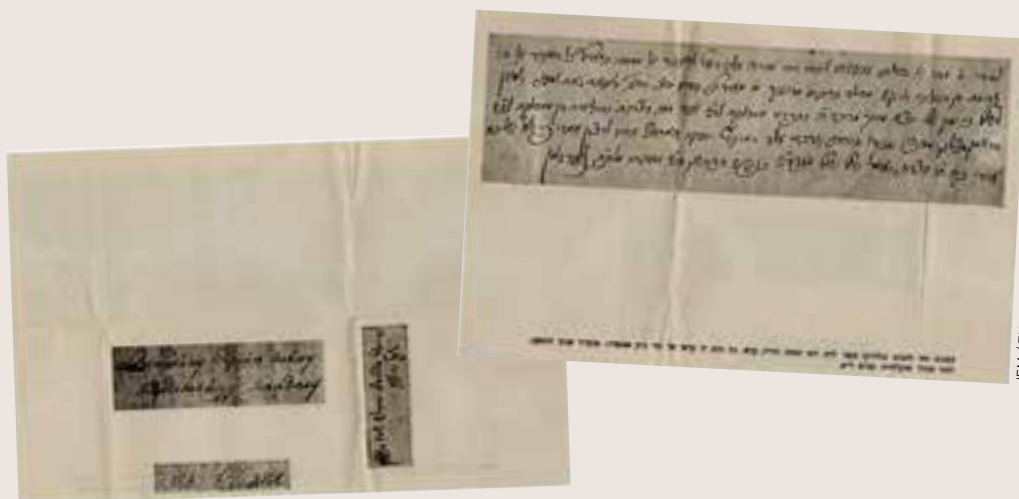
Sheva Brachos

At 6:00 p.m. on the day following the wedding, the first *sheva brachos* took place at 35 Pańska Street, where the wedding was held the previous night. Although only select close Chassidim and distinguished guests were invited, several hundred people attended.

Historic Teshura

At the wedding, a historic memento was distributed—at the time, unprecedented in the history of Lubavitch: A photocopy of a handwritten letter by the Alter Rebbe. The manuscript was accompanied by a detailed description, known as a *ya’ir nesiv*, written by the Frierdiker Rebbe.

After the wedding, the Frierdiker Rebbe mailed copies of the memento to many Chassidim around the world who could not attend.



THE TESHURA DISTRIBUTED AT THE WEDDING.

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I Gave My Daughter to a Man!

In a letter to the Rebbe shortly after the wedding, Harav Levi Yitzchak writes:

“You were brief where you should have written at length! I want to know what, specifically, were the words [uttered by your father-in-law (the Frierdiker Rebbe)] when he declared, ‘I can state, “*Es biti nasati l’ish*, I gave my daughter to this man.”’

“You conclude with, ‘*vechulu vechulu*.’ But the meaning of ‘*vechulu vechulu*’ I do not know! Report to me his words as they were. This will not be arrogance on your part, for it was not you who said it!”

What, in fact, were the words the Rebbe’s father is referring to?

During the *chasuna*, an elderly Chossid, Reb Berel Moshe Shmotkin (one of the *eidim* on the *kesuba*) asked the Frierdiker Rebbe, “Tell me about the *chosson*!”

The Frierdiker Rebbe responded:

“I have fulfilled, ‘*Es biti nasati l’ish*, I gave my daughter to a man.’

“He is *baki* in Bavli and Yerushalmi; he knows the Rishonim and Acharonim, as well as Likkutei Torah with all its references, and much, much more.”

Many Rebbes attended this *sheva brachos* and a special table was designated for them. At its head sat the Frierdiker Rebbe; at his sides Reb Avraham Schneersohn and the *chosson*.

During the meal, the Frierdiker Rebbe directed a group of Chassidim to sing the Alter Rebbe’s *niggun* slowly, and he sang along in great ecstasy. The assembled Rebbes joined in.

Following *bentching*, the Frierdiker Rebbe danced with the Rebbes and prestigious rabbis. All the guests—Chassidim and *bochurim*—stood

surrounding them, watching and singing joyfully. A short while later, the Frierdiker Rebbe prepared to deliver a *maamar*. Immediately, everyone gathered around him, and the Rebbe said the *maamar*, “*Kol Haneheneh*.”

With that, the festivities in Warsaw came to an end. The next morning, the Frierdiker Rebbe and the entire family set out by train to return to Riga.

Shabbos Sheva Brachos

After *Shacharis* that Shabbos in Riga, many Chassidim assembled in the apartment of Rebbetzin Shterna Sara for the *sheva brachos seuda*. The Frierdiker Rebbe held a *farbrengen* and delivered a *maamar*, “*Margela Bipumei D’rava*.” The room was packed, and the *farbrengen* lasted until very late.

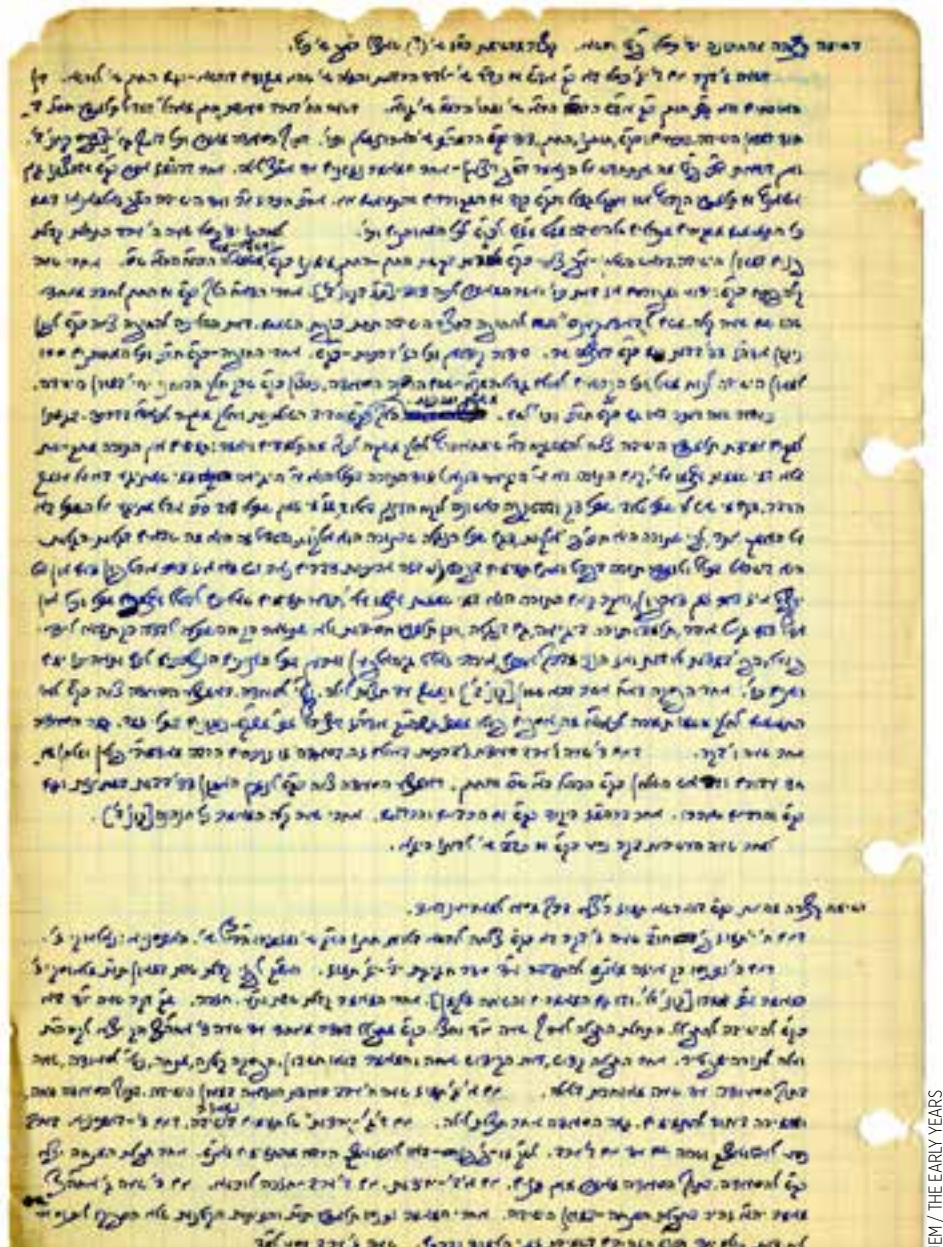
Motzo’ei Shabbos was also Yud-Tes Kislev. The Frierdiker Rebbe held a *farbrengen* throughout the night until morning. During the *farbrengen*, he noted that the day was special not only because of Yud-Tes Kislev, but also because of the *sheva brachos* of the Rebbe.

At the beginning of the *farbrengen*, the Frierdiker Rebbe dictated to his *mazkir*, Reb Chatshe Feigin, a Yiddish text to be sent to the Ohel of the Rebbe Rashab in Rostov: “*Pidyon* to be placed on my father’s resting place: ‘Your will has been fulfilled.’” (Apparently, this is a reference to the fact that the Rebbe Rashab had suggested the *shidduch* between the Rebbe and the Rebbetzin.)

Yud-Tes/Chof Kislev

On the sixth night of *sheva brachos*, the Frierdiker Rebbe held a long *farbrengen* where he spoke about a wide range of topics. The Frierdiker Rebbe challenged many Rigan Jews to personally promote Jewish education, even at the expense of their own livelihood, telling one individual, “Sell everything you have and build a *cheder* with *mesirus nefesh*!”

He also urged the assembled to study *Mishnayos baal peh*, a practice which the Rebbe would later strongly encourage.



A RESHIMA ABOUT THE CHASUNA, WRITTEN BY THE REBBE.

Toward the end of the evening, the Frieddiker Rebbe declared:

“My *mechutan* is a *mekubal* and, accordingly, he explains why the wedding took place in Kislev [according to Kabbalah]. But I explain it this way: Kislev corresponds to the ‘third month’ of *pnimius haTorah* [i.e. just like the month of Sivan, when the Torah was given, is referred to as the third month counting from Nissan].” T

1. Letter to Reb Moshe Horenshtein. Igros Kodesh Admur HaRayatz vol 16, p. 277.
2. See *With Heart and Soul*, Derher Adar I 5776,

3. *Toras Menachem* vol. 10, p. 198.
4. Reb Eliyahu Chaim Althaus was a close Chossid of the Frieddiker Rebbe, who served as the *shadchan* for the Rebbe and Rebbetzin's *shidduch*. His letters describing the Rebbe's *chasuna* are a primary source of information. For more on this unique Chossid and his special writing talents, see *Of Heart and Quill*, Derher Cheshvan 5776.
5. *Igros Kodesh Admur HaRayatz* vol 16, p. 438
6. *Reshimas Hayoman* P. 149-150
7. *Toras Menachem* vol. 10, p. 200.
8. *Hisvaaduyos* 5747 vol. 3, p. 464.
9. *Toras Menachem* vol. 10 pg 206. *Sichos Kodesh* 5714 pg. 119.

”בכלל, א חתונה איז א ענין כללי בא א איש פרטי.
אבער, בא מיר איז דאך דורך דעם בין איך שפעטער
אריינגעצויגן געווארן אין ענינים כללים....

”דאס איז דער טאג וואס מ'האט מיר פארבונדן
מיט אייך און אייך מיט מיר. און צוזאמען וועלן מיר
אויסמאטערן די גאולה האמיתית והשלימה.
”און דער אויבערשטער זאל העלפן מען זאל
זעהן פרי טוב בעמלינו.”

“Generally speaking, a wedding [even] for
a private person, is an “all-encompassing”
event. For me, however, my wedding [was
certainly of broader nature, for it] brought me
into more general and communal affairs...

“This is the day when I was connected with
you, and you were connected with me.
Together, we will successfully toil to bring
about the true and final Geulah.

“May Hashem help [us] that we will see
fruitful results from our labor!”

*(Shabbos Parshas Vayishlach,
Yud-Daled Kislev 5714)⁹*