



RABBI ZEVIN ADDRESSES A SPECIAL EVENT MARKING 15 YEARS SINCE THE FOUNDING OF KFAR CHABAD, YUD-BEIS TAMMUZ 5724.

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לע"נ  
 ר' משה בן ר' זלמן צבי ע"ה  
 לרגל ה'ארצייט' הראשון  
 נלב"ע אסרו חג השבועות ה'תשע"ח  
 ת'נצ'ב'ה'

נתרם ע"י נכדו  
 הרה"ת ר' שלום דובער  
 וזוגתו מרת ח'ל' מושקא  
 ומשפחתם שיחיו  
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ה'תשע"ח

# Gaon and Chossid

RABBI SHLOMO YOSEF ZEVIN

## Jack Of All Trades

“He sits at the desk,” a reporter for *Panim El Panim* describes, “and edits one of the most complicated entries in the encyclopedia. It is difficult work, and he is fully engrossed in his writing.”

“Suddenly, the phone behind him rings. He isn’t irked at all; he picks up the phone and carries a conversation. This discussion—about helping a *shochet* find a job—is very distant from the topic he was writing about...”

“Then comes a knock at the door. An elderly rabbi wants to know where he can find sources that speak about the Sanhedrin. After offering him a drink, Rabbi Zevin lists a number of books and quickly collects them from the bookshelves in his study. The rabbi begins to peruse them, and Rabbi Zevin returns to his entry.”

“Fifty lines are written, and there is another knock and two Chabadniks enter. He seems very happy to see them. He brings some cake and *l'chaim* from the kitchen, and a mini farbrengen begins...”<sup>1</sup>

## Who Was Rabbi Zevin?

Rabbi Shlomo Yosef Zevin was arguably one of the most unique Torah

scholars of the previous generation. From his earliest rabbinic posts in Russia, to his prominent positions in Eretz Yisroel, he gained renown for his breadth of knowledge in all aspects of the Torah. Whether *nigleh*, Kabbalah, Chassidus, and especially *halacha*, Rabbi Zevin was proficient in it all. Although he was a member of the Mizrahi movement, his Torah scholarship won him respect across all walks of Jewry.

He was also famous for his humility and good heartedness. He was one of the most prominent *rabbanim* in Eretz Yisroel, with connections to the highest levels of government, yet he never demanded respect or recognition, and was always willing to help another Jew in need, without fame or fanfare.

However, Rabbi Zevin is most remembered for his clarity of thought. He not only retained all the Torah he learned; he was able to present it in the most brilliant manner, so clearly and succinctly, that any person was able to understand. When Rabbi Zevin delivered a concept in speech or in writing, no matter how profound or complicating in its original form, its lucidity was breathtaking.

Rabbi Zevin was also a Chabad Chossid.

His grandfather had traveled to the Tzemach Tzedek, and his father traveled to the Rebbes of Kopust. Rabbi Zevin himself first studied in the Mir Yeshiva, and then joined a *chaburah* studying under Reb Shmarya Noach of Babroisk, the last in the dynasty of Kapuster Rebbes, who passed away in 5683\* (תרפ"ג).

After his father’s passing in 5663\* (תרס"ג), when he was only 18 years old, Rabbi Zevin was called to assume his father’s rabbinic responsibilities in his hometown of Kazimirov.

The young *rav* quickly gained renown, in a great measure due to his prolific writing in the Torah journals of the age (years later, he would also contribute to the *Hatomim* journal). He became a favorite of many *geonim*, among them Reb Eliyahu Baruch Kamai, Reb Shimon Shkop and Reb Chaim Ozer Grodzinski. He also received *semicha* from the Rogatchover Gaon and the author of the Aruch Hashulchan.

Rabbi Zevin later served as *rav* in the towns of Klimon and Novozybkov as well. When Harav Dovid Tzvi (Radatz) Chein left the larger town of Chernigov for Eretz Yisroel in 5685\* (תרפ"ה), Rabbi Zevin was offered his prestigious position, but he refused the offer due to his involvement in building the local *mikveh*. He knew that if he left town, the construction work might not continue.

## Rashi - Shir Hashirim

Like many Kopuster Chassidim, Rabbi Zevin gravitated to the Frierdiker Rebbe after his own Rebbe’s passing, and thus began a fascinating relationship between Rabbi Zevin and the Frierdiker Rebbe, and later—the Rebbe.

Rabbi Zevin’s first encounter with Lubavitch was in 5684\* (תרפ"ד). He was 37-years-old, and already a noted



RABBI ZEVIN WORKING IN HIS OFFICE.

rabbi in the Soviet Union. At the time, the Friediker Rebbe asked him to join a secret *vaad* together with three other *rabbanim*, Rabbi Yechezkel Abramsky, Reb Yaakov Klemes and Reb Menachem Gluskin. They assisted the Friediker Rebbe in supervising and managing the vast underground network of *chadarim*, *yeshivos* and *mikvaos*.

When the Friediker Rebbe arranged an *asifas harabbanim* for the Russian rabbinate, he appointed Rabbi Zevin to be its chairman.

Correspondence was written through code. Rabbi Zevin's name was Rashi—the acronym of his name, Reb Shlomo Yosef—and sometimes Shir Hashirim (...*asher lishlomo*). Rabbinic work in the Soviet Union was perilous, and Rabbi Zevin had a few very close calls with the government.

Many years later, after Rabbi Zevin's passing, someone told the Rebbe in *yechidus* that he had been close with Rabbi Zevin and began to extoll his virtues. The Rebbe commented, "I knew him in Russia where he was working under duress, under conditions where engaging in such work meant, literally, putting one's life in peril. He was not cowed by anything, and worked with complete self-sacrifice to fulfill the mission of spreading Yiddishkeit with which my father-in-law entrusted him."<sup>2</sup>

When the Friediker Rebbe was arrested, Rabbi Zevin received a telegram that read, "Uncle fell ill." A short time later, a second telegram arrived; "Uncle recovered." He understood that the Friediker Rebbe had been released and wanted to send a congratulatory telegram, but being afraid of the censor, he decided to incorporate his message in the telegram's signature. He signed "Baruch" as his first name, and then "Matir Asurim" as his last. Seeing the city of origin, the Friediker Rebbe

## A Story Teller?

In the early 5700s, Rabbi Zevin published his first books (he had published countless Torah dissertations and articles during his years in Russia, but these were his first *seforim*): *Moadim B'halacha*, which deals with the basic halachic concepts of each Yom Tov, and *Sipurei Chassidim*, an anthology of Chassidic stories.

"Rabbi Zevin once related to me," Rabbi Nochum Rabinovitch recalled, "that his illustrious colleague Rabbi Yechezkel Abramsky (the *rosh yeshiva* of Slobodka) was upset when he wrote his book of Chassidic stories. His problem was in two points. First of all, it gives legitimacy to stories which may not have been believed beforehand; and second, it was unbefitting for such a brilliant *talmid chacham* to publish a book of simple stories..."<sup>3</sup>

In contrast to those arguments, the Friediker Rebbe greatly encouraged Rabbi Zevin in his storytelling, precisely because of the effect he could have on his readers. He even suggested that Rabbi Zevin, along with Rabbi Shimon Glitzenstein, establish a publishing house for Jewish stories. Often, the Friediker Rebbe would ask Rabbi Zevin to repeat his most recent sermons, and once commented that they fell in the category of *drush shebesod*.

immediately understood the message and enjoyed the clever ruse.

After the Friediker Rebbe left Russia, he continued his correspondence with Rabbi Zevin, and began to work to obtain a visa for him to leave Russia as well. Efforts were finally successful in 5694\* (תרצ"ד), and he immigrated to Eretz Yisroel.

His first post was rabbi of the Chabad shul in Tel Aviv. A short time later, upon the advice of the Friediker Rebbe, he accepted a role as a *maggid shiur* in a Beis Midrash L'Rabbanus in Yerushalayim. He was also involved in various matters of *askanus*. The Friediker Rebbe's letters have references to his work for Russian Jewry, as well as the Jewish refugees following World War II.

## The Rebbe's Yada Arichta In Eretz Yisroel

"Rabbi Zevin was literally the Rebbe's 'extended hand' in Eretz Yisroel," relates Rabbi Yisrael Tzvi Glitzenstein. "He was a very prominent *rav* who was respected

across the spectrum. Everything the Rebbe needed to accomplish, whether through Shazar, other elements of the government or in matters of *rabbanus*, he sent through Rabbi Zevin. Kfar Chabad, Kfar Chabad Beis, the Reshet—Rabbi Zevin had a hand in it all. For example, he was very involved in the fight over Mihu Yehudi, and I remember how he always participated in the *kinusim*.

"In his personal life, he had a strong *bittul* to the Rebbe. When the Rebbe told him not to run for the position of chief rabbi, he didn't run. (The Rebbe once wrote to him that if he was offered a position on the Moetzes Gedolei Hatorah of Agudas Yisrael, he should accept.) When the Rebbe told him not to travel to America, he listened, and indeed never came to the Rebbe. Whatever the Rebbe asked, he did."

Hundreds of letters in *Igros Kodesh* are testimony to the sheer amount of work Rabbi Zevin did on the Rebbe's behalf. His involvement wasn't limited



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RABBI ZEVIN (SECOND FROM BOTTOM LEFT) JOINS THE SINGING DURING THE YUD-TES KISLEV FARBRENGEN IN KFAR CHABAD, 5723\*.

to Chabad related matters. Throughout the years, the Rebbe was involved in countless issues that related to the Israeli government and the Israeli public in general, and Rabbi Zevin served as the conduit to achieve those goals.

Some are famous endeavors, such as the Rebbe's campaign against Israeli shipping lines that traveled on Shabbos, but others are not well-known at all. In the Rebbe's letters we find criticism of the government (including the right-wing parties) who allowed the secularization of *Yaldei Teheran* and *Yaldei Morocco*.<sup>4</sup> The Rebbe also opposed the shipping of frozen meat (before *melicha*) to Eretz Yisroel.<sup>5</sup> In other letters, the Rebbe advises against a Concordance

on Tanya<sup>6</sup> and combats the wide dissemination of paper mezuzos from Eretz Yisroel, as well as questionable esrogim that were being shipped throughout the world.<sup>7</sup>

In the 5710s\*, the Rebbe enlisted Rabbi Zevin's help in coordinating efforts to uphold the integrity of Yiddishkeit in Eretz Yisroel, and to ensure that only Torah-true Yiddishkeit be recognized as legitimate.<sup>8</sup>

"Rabbi Zevin also played an important role in the relationship of President Shazar with the Rebbe," says Rabbi Tuvia Blau. "Although Mr. Shazar had his own origins within Chabad, Rabbi Zevin was very instrumental in this regard. They were very good friends."

Indeed, a very large segment of Rabbi Zevin's work on the Rebbe's behalf was through this relationship. Whenever the Rebbe wanted something done on a political level in Eretz Yisroel, be it regarding Shleimus Ha'aretz, Mihu Yehudi, bureaucratic help for one of the Rebbe's institutions or anything else, the Rebbe would often write to Rabbi Zevin asking him to approach "*Yedideinu*, our acquaintance"—Shazar—who would then carry out the Rebbe's request. In photographs, Rabbi Zevin and Mr. Shazar are often seen together at various functions, such as the central Yud-Tes Kislev farbrengen in Kfar Chabad.

"When I traveled to *kvutza* in 5726\*," relates Rabbi Nochum

Zevin, Rabbi Zevin's grandson, "my grandfather encouraged Mr. Shazar—on the Rebbe's behalf—to work to lengthen the *kvutzah* from six months to a full year. After our return, we went to thank Mr. Shazar for his assistance, and he related the following story:

"Earlier that year, when Mr. Shazar's plans to visit the Rebbe became known, he was criticized by pundits who claimed it would be seen as an insult to the State if the President would go to the Rebbe instead of the Rebbe going to him. He contacted the Rebbe about his dilemma, and the Rebbe said he would 'ask the Shver.' The Rebbe went to the Ohel, and then Rabbi Hodakov phoned Shazar to say that the Rebbe was instructed, '*Fun Lubavitch fort men nit*—we don't travel away from Lubavitch.'

"When Mr. Shazar received the Rebbe's reply, he phoned my grandfather to tell him what the Rebbe had said. My grandfather advised him, 'I suggest that you go. It will be better for you.'

"There is a similar incident in the past,' my grandfather explained. 'The Gemara says that King Chizkiyahu and the Navi Yeshayahu argued who should come to whom. Hashem ultimately brought illness upon Chizkiyahu, and then told Yeshayahu, 'Go be *mevaker choleh*.'

"It's better to go to the Rebbe under healthy circumstances,' my grandfather concluded."

## The Beginning Of The Redemption

"Rabbi Zevin was a member of the Mizrachi," says Rabbi Blau. "Ideologically, he aligned with the religious Zionists, who saw a religious significance in the establishment of the State of Israel, and he would even recite Hallel without a *bracha* on Yom Ha'atzmaut.

"Nonetheless, he was very dedicated to the Rebbe, even though

he knew that the Rebbe disagreed with his views on Zionism, and even wrote him sharp letters on the matter. Every word from the Rebbe was holy to him, and every directive he carried out to its utmost."

"I remember how one Yud-Tes Kislev," says Rabbi Glitzenstein, "during the *farbrengen* in the Tzemach Tzedek Shul, Rabbi Zevin spoke about the letter he received from the Rebbe in which the Rebbe wrote sharply against the belief that the establishment of the State of Israel was the *as'chalta d'geula*.

"את חטאי אני מזכיר היום" (I confess my guilt today)' he said, 'Until today, I believed that the State was the *as'chalta d'geula*. However, now that I received the Rebbe's letter and I studied it, I am *mevatel* my opinion to the Rebbe. I now understand that it is not so."

In that letter, the Rebbe expressed his strong views against the Zionist ideology.

"Every time a false Moshiach appeared," the Rebbe wrote to Rabbi Zevin, "and incited the Jewish people to follow him, the matter ended with casualties, Heaven forbid. The same is true of the belief that the redemption has already begun. (Although it was a miracle, and a great salvation for millions of Jews, it is not the beginning of the fourth redemption, and to the contrary, it brings us deeper into the intense darkness of this *galus*, where light is called darkness, and darkness light.) The tragic result is another casualty in Eretz Yisroel, and another... May Hashem avenge their blood."<sup>10</sup>

Many of the Rebbe's opinions on matters related to Zionism and the State of Israel are actually known to us through Rabbi Zevin. For example, the Rebbe wrote to him in 5718\* that it was forbidden for religious Jews to enter the coalition. "I am clear in my opinion that participating in the coalition... is forbidden by

Shulchan Aruch. Most of the work in the ministries involves forbidden activities."

The Rebbe also criticized the religious parties for the infighting that prevented them from joining forces, and also harshly criticized them regarding the campaign against *giyus banos*, girls being drafted into the military. The Rebbe expressed his surprise that they fought for the rights of religious girls not to be drafted, but disregarded the fact that the presence of women in the army altogether is a halachic problem for *all* the men present.

## The Entire Torah Shebaal Peh

Due to his unique talent, after arriving in Eretz Yisroel in the early 5700s\* Rabbi Zevin was recruited to one of the most audacious projects of the generation: "Encyclopedia Talmudit," the endeavour to collect, categorize and elucidate the entire halachic part of *Torah Shebaal Peh*. For 40 years, Rabbi Zevin served as its chief editor, charting its course and setting a standard which the Encyclopedia still follows today.

The Rebbe saw immense importance in this project, seeing it as the ultimate *oznaim latorah in nigleh*, and therefore encouraged Rabbi Zevin to refuse offers of other jobs that would take his attention away from it. When Rabbi Zevin was asked to run for a seat in the Knesset, the Rebbe wrote<sup>11</sup> that this project is a *mitzvah* that cannot be accomplished by others, and therefore he should refuse.

"In my opinion," the Rebbe writes<sup>12</sup> to Rabbi Zevin in 5725\*, "your *mitzvah d'hava zahir ba tfei*, your primary mission, is only the Encyclopedia Talmudit."

Indeed, this became Rabbi Zevin's life work, and the 13 volumes published during his lifetime are his *magnum opus*. The Rebbe constantly



pushed the publishers to speed up the work, and with every volume that was published, the Rebbe sent profound words of thanks.

“I received the seventh volume of Encyclopedia Talmudit, and as the earlier volumes, *ein gomrim alav es hahallel*, it cannot be praised enough... In almost every entry, it is possible to find details that even someone involved in the subject may have missed...” the Rebbe praises in one letter.<sup>13</sup> And in another: “I received volume 16, and as in the famous term, *nismaleh habayis kulo orah*, the house was filled with light...”<sup>14</sup>

The Rebbe also constantly wrote to Rabbi Zevin with comments, corrections and editions. In one letter the Rebbe writes: “When I researched in relation to one of the farbrengens here on the topic of *birchas hamitzvos*, I obviously made use of the Encyclopedia, but I don’t understand why they didn’t cite... the Rambam’s opinion...”<sup>15</sup> And: “I needed to research the concept of *dibur chashiv k’maaseh*... I was surprised that you don’t mention the opinion of Chidushei Harashba on [Gemara] Shavuos, and you only quote the Ri Migash. See Likutei Torah L’Gimmel Parshios...”<sup>16</sup>

### “I Already Know The Sugya...”

“When my father, Reb Yosef Wineberg visited Rabbi Zevin at the Rebbe’s suggestion,” relates Rabbi Avraham Wineberg, “He *chazzered* a *sicha* from the Rebbe in *nigleh*. He began *chazzered* as he was accustomed to; first quoting all the background material, and explaining the entire *sugya*, and then proceeding to the Rebbe’s *chiddush*. Rabbi Zevin smiled and nudged him on. ‘I’m already acquainted with the

background material. Just tell me the Rebbe’s *chiddushim* on the subject.”

Rabbi Zevin’s own brilliance gave him a profound appreciation for the Rebbe’s Torah, and a voluminous correspondence—dozens of letters—exists from their Torah discussions which are breathtaking in their breadth and depth. Some of the Rebbe’s letters to Rabbi Zevin have footnotes replete with words of Torah, even on the letter’s seemingly unremarkable comments (many of the letters focus on the views of the Alter Rebbe in Shulchan Aruch).

“The Rebbe greatly appreciated his Torah,” says Rabbi Yitzchak Yehuda Yeruslavsky. “The Rebbe always addressed him in letters as *‘tzene maleh sefarim*—a bookshelf filled with Torah,’ a title the Rebbe didn’t use lightly.

“In 5736\*, the Rebbe established Beis Din Rabbanei Chabad in Eretz Yisrael, which gathered all of the senior *rabbanim* of Eretz Yisroel into one body. To head the institution, the Rebbe called on Rabbi Zevin.”

“When I was in *yechidus* as a *bochur*,” relates Rabbi Nachum Zevin, “the Rebbe asked me about what I was learning, so I said over a thought in the *sugya* of *k’misas baalim*



THE GROWING SET OF ENCYCLOPEDIA TALMUDIS OF WHICH RABBI ZEVIN SERVED AS EDITOR-IN-CHIEF.

*kach misas hashor* (that an animal is judged and sentenced to death in a similar manner to a human<sup>17</sup>). The Rebbe listened, and then blessed me that ‘*k'misas baalim kach misas hashor*—your *Nefesh Habehamis* should become like the *Nefesh Elohis*.’

“I wrote to my grandfather about the conversation, and he responded with several comments of his own. I sent his letter to the Rebbe as it was, and since my grandfather had written other Torah comments on the back side of the page (on a *chiddush* I had written on the topic of *lifnei iver*), I noted to the Rebbe that only one side was relevant to the *yechidus*.

“The Rebbe responded to the letter [printed in *Lekutei Sichos* vol. 6,<sup>18</sup> in the *hosafos* of Parshas Mishpatim], and it seems that ‘he couldn’t hold back’ from adding comments regarding my grandfather’s comments on ‘*lifnei iver*’ as well. The Rebbe also discussed it in a *sicha* a short time later.”<sup>19</sup>

## The Rebbe’s Telegram

One of the Rebbe’s earliest Torah discussions with Rabbi Zevin focused on the Rebbe’s *haggadah*.

In his book *Sefarim Vesofrim*, Rabbi Zevin heaps praise on the *haggadah*. When the Rebbe received the book, he wrote to Rabbi Zevin that he was pleasantly surprised to read it, and “it is a bit surprising [that Rabbi Zevin didn’t notify him about the review on the *haggadah*], for Chazal say, ‘One who gives a gift must notify the receiver.’”<sup>21</sup>

Much earlier, when the *haggadah* was initially published in 5707\*, Rabbi Zevin wrote to the Rebbe asking several questions on the Rebbe’s comments regarding the recitation of Hallel during *korban Pesach* (the Rebbe writes that it was the Levi’im who recited Hallel) and about the two cooked items on the *seder* plate (the Rebbe maintained that these were present even during the *zman habayis*),



A GROUP OF RABBONIM VISIT THE LUBAVITCH YESHIVA IN LOD, ISRAEL, 5710\*. RABBI ZEVIN IS SEATED ON THE LEFT.

## Rabbi Zevin’s Psak Din

Rabbi Yisrael Tzvi Glitzenstein relates:

In 5735\*, the Rebbe asked Chassidim to visit the Arizal’s *kever* on his *yahrtzeit*, 5 Av, among other *horaos*. As a Tzach representative, I phoned Rabbi Hodakov the next day to report on trip, and during the phone call the Rebbe gave a new *hora’a*.

The Rebbe asked that on Tisha B’av, *siyumim* be made on Maseches Moed Katan. He also added a directive in relation to the Arizal: The Arizal has a teaching on the *siyum* of Maseches Brachos,<sup>20</sup> which is identical to the *siyum* of Moed Katan. The Rebbe said that I should visit Rabbi Zevin, and ask if it is permitted to study that teaching on Tisha B’av. Until Rabbi Zevin gave a *psak*, I was told, I shouldn’t publicize the *hora’a*.

“Together with my uncle, Rabbi Chanoch Glitzenstein, I went to Rabbi Zevin, who was quite frail by that time, and gave over the Rebbe’s request.

“Rabbi Zevin gave it some thought, and then asked me to wheel him into his study. After he fully thought through the matter, he said as follows: ‘In Torah, if one doesn’t study the entire topic as it is brought throughout *Torah Shebaal Peh*, he doesn’t fulfill the mitzvah of Torah study. That being the case, not only is it permitted to study the teaching of the Arizal, moreover—it is an obligation! Otherwise, the *siyum* on Moed Katan is incomplete!

“I called Rabbi Hodakov, and he told me that the Rebbe was very satisfied with Rabbi Zevin’s answer.

“A short while later before I traveled to New York, Rabbi Zevin asked me to repeat the *psak* to make sure I understood, and he told me to deliver it to the Rebbe in writing.

“As soon as I arrived back in New York, I sent in a letter through Rabbi Binyomin Klein telling the entire story, and within moments, the Rebbe replied, “*Niskabel vetach tach*—[I] received [it] and many thanks.”

and the Rebbe responded with several letters<sup>22</sup> in his *ksav yad kodesh*. The letters are written in a very personal style, with an excitement that is uncommon in the Rebbe's letters.

"Rabbi Zevin would *learn* each letter he received from the Rebbe in depth," writes Rabbi Sholom Ber Wolpo, in his book *Shemen Sason Mechaverecha*. "He would often begin his *yoma d'pagra* sermons by teaching

his most recent letter from the Rebbe and be *medayek* in every letter and word."

"One Pesach," related Rabbi Nochum Zevin, "the Rebbe's telegram had concluded with the words '*Shabbos v'chag haPesach kasher vesamayach*.' My grandfather explained at length how the word *samayach* also applies to Shabbos, even though there is no specific mitzvah of joy on Shabbos.

"On another occasion, he explained to me why the Rebbe blesses new couples with a double '*Mazal tov, mazal tov*.' He said that it was founded on Torah: Yosef explained to Paraoth that the reason his dream was doubled was because it would take place very soon. Thus, when the Rebbe wants to imply that the *bracha* will be fulfilled speedily, he doubles the wish..."<sup>23</sup>

## He Doesn't Need My Opinion

Rabbi Zevin's relationship with the Rebbe began in Russia, when the Rebbe was still a *bochur* visiting the Frierdiker Rebbe in Leningrad.

In 5684\* (תרפ"ד) or 5685\* (תרפ"ה), Rabbi Zevin spent Tisha B'av in the Frierdiker Rebbe's presence. From after *kinos* in the morning until Mincha many hours later, he was closeted together with the Frierdiker Rebbe in his *yechidus* room, discussing the work of the underground *chadarim*. After sundown, he broke his fast at the Frierdiker Rebbe's table, and the Rebbe participated in the meal as well.

The next day, before he departed by train, the Frierdiker Rebbe told Rabbi Zevin that the "son of the Yekatrinoslav Rav" is suggested as a match for his daughter, and that since the Rebbe was scheduled to be traveling on the same train, he asks that he observe him.

Upon arriving home, Rabbi Zevin wrote to the Frierdiker Rebbe that he wasn't surprised to discover that

## The Korban Pesach Problem

Another famous discussion related to the aftermath of the Six Day War. On Acharon Shel Pesach 5728\*, the Rebbe spoke a *sicha* regarding the halachic status of Har Habayis. Since it was in Jewish hands and *yad Yisroel takifa*, the Rebbe maintained, there is a possibility that Jews in Yerushalayim are obligated to bring a *korban Pesach*. The easiest solution was to leave Yerushalayim during Erev Pesach, thus being in a "*derech rechoka*" and exempt from the obligation.

"I received the *sichos* of Acharon Shel Pesach," Rabbi Zevin soon wrote to the Rebbe, "and I immensely enjoyed the *chiddushim*. However, I won't hold back from expressing my surprise regarding the Rebbe's conclusion. I have several questions. With my insufficient intellect, I haven't understood..."

In several long letters, the Rebbe responded to his questions, and the entire fascinating discussion was published in the appendix of *Chiddushim Ubiurim B'shas*.<sup>24</sup>

One question is regarding *derech rechoka*: "A simple question is," writes Rabbi Zevin, "where do we find the law of *derech rechoka* in regard to Pesach Sheni?"

"A simple answer," the Rebbe responds. "The Mishnah (Pesachim 95:1) states, 'What is the difference between Pesach Rishon and Pesach Sheni'—also cited in Rambam (End of Hilchos Korban Pesach); yet I haven't found a single source that says the *derech rechoka* is one of the differences."

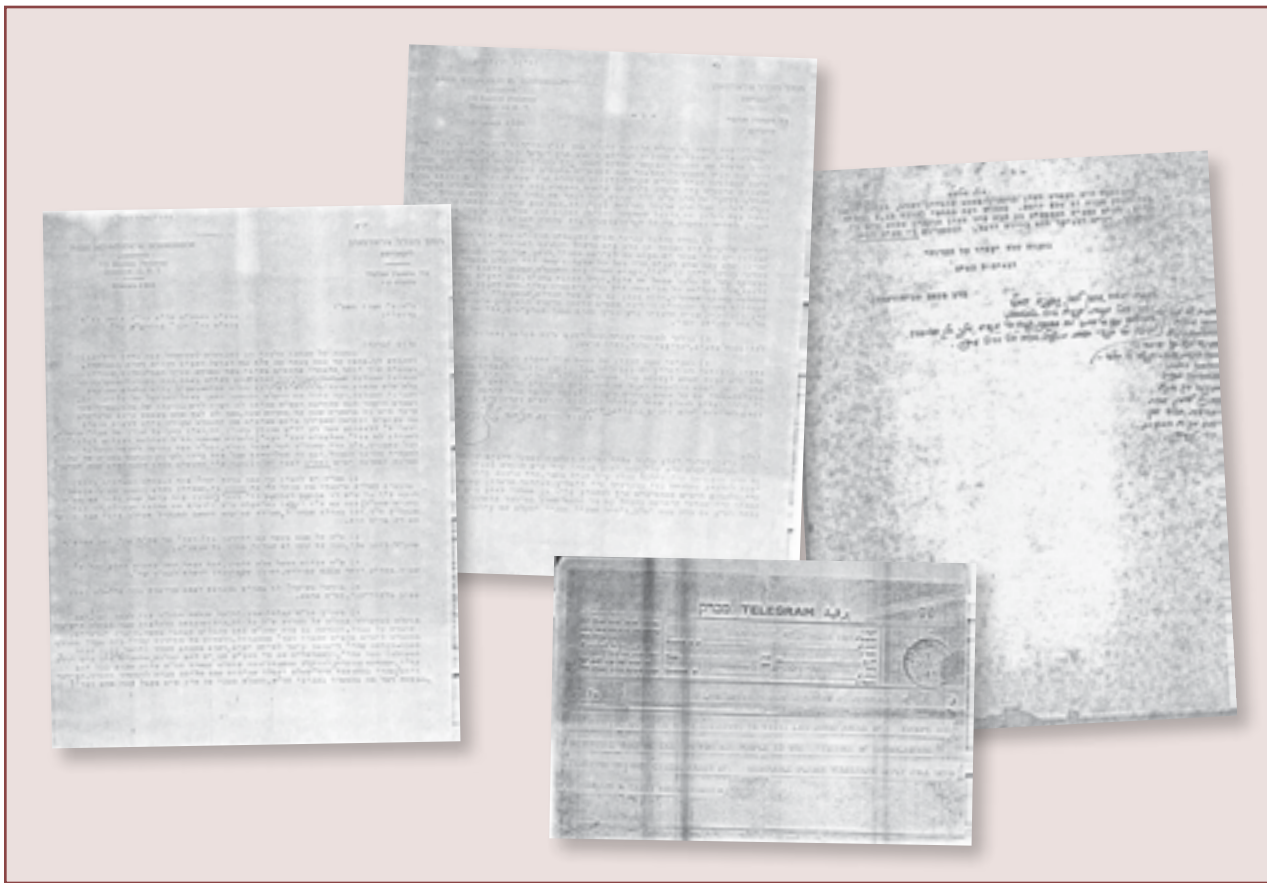
The saga came to an end in 5735\*, when the Rebbe announced<sup>25</sup> that "*nishtaneh hamatzav*, the situation had changed"; the Jewish people no longer had practical control over Har Habayis, and therefore the issue was irrelevant.

The Rebbe sent a copy of the announcement to Rabbi Zevin, and added in *ksav yad*,

"בעוה"ר (כולל שמתחיל מביום הז' (ממש - מכריזים) אחי הוא...ועלהו גו') נשתנה המצב..."

"In our great sins (including that fact that from the seventh day (literally—they announced) he is my brother...and he raised him up etc.) the situation has changed..."

With this short line the Rebbe refers to a story in Nevi'im, where King Achav conquered the King of Aram on the seventh day of war, and yet immediately announced, "He is my brother," and publicly honored him. The Rebbe drew a parallel to the conduct of the Israelis, who, immediately following the Six Day War, already seek to honor the enemy and return the conquered land (including Har Habayis).



the Rebbe was well-versed in every subject in Torah that arose, because he had already heard about his brilliant scholarship.

Rabbi Zevin wrote that he was most impressed by the *yiras Shamayim* he encountered; for example, he noticed that the Rebbe evaded partaking in the food that was sent with them from the Frieddiker Rebbe's home. There was obviously no question about the *kashrus* of the meal, but Rabbi Zevin realized that the Rebbe questioned the *hiddur* of the only vessel available on the train for *netilas yadayim*. Although it was only a matter of *chumra*, the Rebbe very subtly avoided having to wash his hands.

"When Rabbi Zevin told me this story," Rabbi Nochum Rabinovitch related, "he added: 'Do you think that the Frieddiker Rebbe really needed my opinion on the Rebbe?'"



RABBI ZEVIN SPEAKS WITH REB PINYE ALTHAUS, THE LEGENDARY CHABAD ASKAN IN ERETZ YISRAEL.

TEVES 5723, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 229321



LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM Z29880

RABBI ZEVIN SPEAKS WITH ISRAELI PRESIDENT ZALMAN SHAZAR DURING THE YUD-TES KISLEV FARBRENGEN IN Kfar CHABAD, 5731\*.

“No. He just wanted me to realize who the Rebbe is.”<sup>26</sup>

The connection between Rabbi Zevin and the Rebbe evidently continued even within Russia. Rabbi Zevin published the only scholarly Torah journal in the Soviet Union’s history, called *Yagdil Torah*, and the Rebbe’s library contains the second issue printed in 5688\* (תרפ”ח). It bears

a personal inscription from Rabbi Zevin, to “the Rebbe’s future son-in-law, Rabbi M. M. Schneerson.”

This relationship came to fore after the Frierdiker Rebbe’s *histalkus*.

When the Frierdiker Rebbe was *nistalek* on Yud Shevat 5710\*, Rabbi Zevin was living in Yerushalayim, where he had assumed the editorship of *Encyclopedia Talmudit*. As one of

the leading Chabad *rabbanim* in the city and a member of the board of Colel Chabad (appointed by direct instructions of the Frierdiker Rebbe), he assumed a central role in the efforts to crown the Rebbe as the new *nossi*.

“Because Rabbi Zevin had previously corresponded with the Rebbe,” explains Rabbi Tuvia Blau, “he knew who the Rebbe was, and he

immediately encouraged Chassidim to ask the Rebbe to accept the *nesius*. In general, all the elder Chassidim in Yerushalayim were previously acquainted with the Rebbe and had all corresponded with him in matters of Torah learning, and therefore immediately dedicated themselves to him. Rabbi Zevin, Reb Avraham Chaim Na'eh as well as Reb Shmaryahu Sasonkin—they all immediately became *mekusharim*.”

The very first edition of Hamodia<sup>27</sup> describes a large *kinus* which took place on Chai Elul 5710\*, several months after the *histalkus* of the Frierdiker Rebbe:

“Rabbi Sh. Y. Zevin began the proceedings with over 1000 Chabad Chassidim in attendance. After a number of speeches, the resolutions were read aloud, one of them announcing that Rabbi M. Schneerson was appointed as the *nossi* of Chabad.”

## He Is Here In The Room

Once, Rabbi Zevin received a letter where he was addressed, *Moreinu verabeinu hagaon hachossid sar hatorah*.

On Shabbos, during the farbrengen, Rabbi Zevin began to cry. “Please don’t see this as a personal affront,” he said to the group that had sent the letter, “but let me tell you what is on my heart. My entire life, I’ve strived to follow the way of Chassidus, as taught by the Rebbeim; woe is to me that I’ve come to a state where I am addressed with a *vilder titul*, a wild title that is appropriate only for those who don’t follow the ways of Chassidus...”

“In his old age,” related Rabbi Shmuel Elazar Halperin, “Rabbi Zevin mentioned to me that the Rebbe sends him matzah every year before Pesach. I commented, ‘Der Rebbe hot aich in zinen—the Rebbe always has you in mind.’

“True, the Rebbe always has me in mind,’ Rabbi Zevin responded, ‘But if

he would really know my true state, he surely wouldn’t do so...”

“Rabbi Zevin’s son predeceased him by a short time,” relates Rabbi Glitzenstein. “Rabbi Zevin was already old and weak, and the family did not inform him. Some time later, he happened to see a notice in the newspaper about a memorial event for ‘Rabbi Zevin’s son.’ Realizing what took place, he began weeping incessantly. He was inconsolable, and his wife began to fear for his health. My uncle, Reb Avraham Chanoch Glitzenstein was very close with Rabbi Zevin, so she called him and asked him to come over immediately.

“My uncle was also unsuccessful in calming him, so they decided to call 770. They updated Rabbi Hodakov, and a few moments later he returned with the Rebbe’s instructions. The Rebbe said to tell Rabbi Zevin as follows: The Rebbe’s *zeide*, Harav Meir Shlomo Yanovsky, lost a son at a young age, and he also took it very hard. The Rebbe Rashab sent him a letter (which, the Rebbe pointed out, had just recently been published in Toldos Levi Yitzchak<sup>28</sup>) and that letter brought him consolation.

“The Rebbe asked that my uncle read the letter to Rabbi Zevin.

“My uncle gave over the Rebbe’s message and read the letter to him, and Rabbi Zevin calmed down.”

In the period before his passing, the Rebbe paid a very close interest to Rabbi Zevin’s health. Once, a call came from Rabbi Hodakov asking if there had been any improvement in his situation. The person receiving the call answered that there had been none.

An hour later, Rabbi Hodakov called back. “The Rebbe wants to know if you are *sure* there was no improvement...”

As it turned out, Rabbi Zevin had at that moment actually returned to full consciousness.

Following an illness, Rabbi Zevin passed away on 21 Adar 5738\*, at the age of 92. “After his passing,” relates Rabbi Glitzenstein, “his wife came for Tishrei to the Rebbe (in 5741\*). It was an eye opening experience for her, and in *yechidus*, she began to cry; ‘I’m so disappointed that my husband, Rabbi Zevin, never merited to be here,’ she told the Rebbe.

“The Rebbe replied, ‘Why do you say that Rabbi Zevin didn’t merit to be here? He is with us here in this room...’” ❶

1. Reprinted in *Kfar Chabad Magazine* issue 1216 pg. 18.
2. *Toras Menachem* 5744 vol. 2 pg. 766. Translation from *Early Years* pg. 169.
3. *Kfar Chabad Magazine* issue 1416 pg. 41.
4. 10 Elul 5715. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 12 pg. 33.
5. 5 Cheshvan 5717. *Ibid* vol. 14 pg. 58.
6. 26 Cheshvan 5717. *Ibid* vol. 14 pg. 116.
7. 10 Elul 5715. *Ibid* vol. 12 pg. 33.
8. 8 Iyar 5717. *Ibid* vol. 13 pg. 40.
9. *Kfar Chabad Magazine* issue 1416.
10. 15 Kislev 5729. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 26 pg. 46.
11. 10 Tammuz 5719. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 18, p. 444.
12. 14 Cheshvan 5725. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 23 pg. 284
13. 10 Av 5716. *Ibid* vol. 13 pg. 362.
14. 11 Tammuz 5740. *Hamahapecha Shel Doreinu* pg 17.
15. 14 Adar I 5714. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 8 pg. 224.
16. 25 Teves 5718. *Ibid* vol. 16 pg. 238.
17. Sanhedrin 15a.
18. Pg. 329.
19. *Kfar Chabad Magazine* issue 1416.
20. Likkutei HaShas L’haArizal, end of Brachos.
21. Shabbos 10:2
22. 3 Tishrei 5108, *Igros Kodesh* vol. 2 pg. 241. 8 Cheshvan 5708, *Ibid* pg. 260
23. *Beis Moshiah* issue 134 pg. 33.
24. Pg. 347.
25. 13 Iyar 5735. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 30, pg. 200.
26. *Kfar Chabad Magazine* issue 1416 pg. 41.
27. 19 Elul 5710. *Yimei Melech* vol. 3 pg. 1178
28. Volume 1 pg. 60.