



LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 27000

RABBI ABRAHAMS RECEIVES KOS
SHEL BROCHA FROM THE REBBE,
MOTZEI SIMCHAS TORAH 5746*.

לחיזוק ההתקשרות
לכ"ק אדמו"ר זי"ע
נדפס ע"י
החבר הצעיר בשליחות המל"ח
קיצ ה'תשי"ט



“Wherever You Will Be...
***The Rebbe Will
Be With You***”

*Exclusive interview with Rabbi Yosef Abrahams
Mashpia, Yeshivah Gedola Lubavitch of Greater Miami*

אברהם, יוסף

Rabbi Yosef Yeshaya Abrahams is the senior *mashpia* of Yeshivas Lubavitch of Miami. He merited to spend his years as a *bochur* in the Rebbe's presence, during the years of *kabbalas hanesius* and after. We thank him for sharing his story. We also thank Rabbi Bentche Korf, *mashgiach* in the yeshiva, for conducting the interview on our behalf.

My First Connections

I was born in Philadelphia in 5697* (תרצ"ז).

My family wasn't associated with Lubavitch. The first time I encountered Chabad was as a seven-year-old student in Yeshivas Achei Temimim. The school was run by a Chossid from Nevel named Rabbi Schneiderman, who also served as the rabbi of a Nusach Ari shul across the street.

My first teacher was Reb Yitzchak Dovid Groner,¹ who taught there for a short period of time. Rabbi Mendel Tenenbaum was also a teacher there. Although it was officially a Chabad-run school, many teachers weren't Lubavitch, and I didn't learn much about Lubavitch during my four years there. I was, however, an avid reader of Talks and Tales.

When I was eleven-years-old, my family moved to Chicago, and we were members of the Chabad Bnei Reuven Shul, which still exists today. Only one month after our arrival, my father tragically passed away, and towards the end of the year, my mother returned to Philadelphia.

I was already twelve-years-old, and my classmates from the *olam'she* school I attended were enrolled in the Telz Yeshiva in Cleveland for the upcoming school year. However, the rabbi of Bnei Reuven, Rabbi Dovid Moshe Lieberman (today the rabbi of Shomrei Hadas in Antwerp) suggested to my mother that I enroll in Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim in New York on Bedford and Dean, which was much closer to Philadelphia. We thought it was a good idea, and so, Reb Dovid Moshe brought me along on his trip

to the Frierdiker Rebbe for Rosh Hashanah 5710*.

Seeing The Frierdiker Rebbe

I began learning in Tomchei Temimim, and naturally I participated in many of the events in 770.

In those days, the Frierdiker Rebbe made minimal public appearances. When he did hold farbrengens on Yomim Tovim and *yomi d'pagra*, children my age and *bochurim* were not allowed to attend due to space constraints.

I recall waiting on the steps to the Frierdiker Rebbe's apartment on Simchas Torah along with other youngsters hoping to be allowed upstairs, but it was not to be.

The same occurred once again several months later, on Yud-Tes Kislev. We waited on the stairs hoping to catch a glimpse of the Frierdiker Rebbe, again to no avail. Suddenly, towards the end of the farbrengen, the door opened. The Frierdiker Rebbe had specifically requested that everyone outside be allowed in.

I was a short child and the room was packed with people, but one *bochur* kindly held me up and I was able to catch a glimpse the Frierdiker Rebbe for a moment. He was sitting at the head of the table wearing his *spodik*, and his holy face was a fiery red.

As it turned out, that was the Frierdiker Rebbe's last farbrengen.

Early Memories Of The Rebbe

My first recollection of the Rebbe is from the Simchas Beis Hashoeva farbrengen the Rebbe held each year for yeshiva students. Many *bochurim* from non-Lubavitch *yeshivos* would come for the evening and I recall participating in that farbrengen in 5710*, before the Frierdiker Rebbe's *histalkus*.²

Suddenly, towards the end of the farbrengen, the door opened.



RABBI ABRAHAMS, AGE 15, OUTSIDE LUBAVITCHER YESHIVA AT BEDFORD AND DEAN.

I recall another event which took place a few days later, on Simchas Torah.

The Frierdiker Rebbe's *hakafos* were held in his *yechidus* room which could only contain so many people. All those who couldn't participate joined a separate *minyán* in the *zal*. Understandably, they wished they could be participating in the Frierdiker Rebbe's *hakafos*, and the spirit in the *zal* wasn't fully *Simchas Torah'dik*.

But then the Rebbe came down from the Frierdiker Rebbe's *hakafos* to dance with us. That brought new life to the dancing. The Rebbe danced with us for quite some time, and because of the strong *hadras kavod* we felt towards the Ramash, "*Der Rebbe's Eidim*," nobody left the circle as long as he was present.

The Year Of Kabbalas Hanesius

Although I was still quite young, I clearly remember the atmosphere in Lubavitch at the time. There was a constant push for the Rebbe to accept the *nesius*, but no one knew how long it would take or how it would play out.

Throughout the year of *aveilus*, davening took place in the Frierdiker Rebbe's *yechidus* room. I wasn't usually present, being in yeshiva in Bedford and Dean, but I do recall, from the times I did participate on Shabbos, that the Rebbe always approached the Frierdiker Rebbe's desk after davening. I don't know if he recited anything or the like.

The first farbrengen I attended after the Frierdiker Rebbe's *histalkus* was, if I recall correctly, Acharon Shel Pesach 5710*. A few days later, on Shabbos Mevorchim Iyar, the Rebbe farbrenged once again, and then again for the *bochurim* on Beis Iyar.

The older *bochurim* in 770 would make sure to involve us and keep us informed of what was going on, so



THE REBBE FARBRENGS IN THE EARLY YEARS OF THE NESIUS.

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although the Beis Iyar farbrengen wasn't officially publicized anywhere, we were aware that it was to take place and made sure to be there.

Although the Rebbe's *sichos* are usually difficult for a 12-year-old, the Rebbe spoke many *sichos* about *hiskashrus* that year, and those *sichos* were easier to understand. I clearly remember, for example, the *sicha* on Acharon Shel Pesach where the Rebbe cited the story about Rabbi Yehudah Hanasi visiting his family on Friday nights even following his passing.³ The Rebbe also continued on this topic on Shabbos Mevorchim.

Before the official *kabbalas hanesius* on Yud Shevat, the Rebbe's place during farbrengens was at the back wall of the *zal*, near where the door to the yard is today. He would sit at the center of the table, older Chassidim would sit and the *bochurim* would stand around. There was a small area

open between the Rebbe and the wall behind him, and sometimes I stood directly behind the Rebbe.

On Yud-Tes Kislev 5711*, there was a very large crowd at the farbrengen and I stood right behind the Rebbe. In middle of a *sicha*, I noticed the Rebbe's *gartel*, and in my childish mind, I was gripped by a desire to touch it. I surreptitiously reached out and touched it very gently. A few minutes later, the Rebbe finished the *sicha*, and turned around to those standing behind him with a big smile, "People are hiding behind me and not saying *l'chaim!*"

"Who Told You To Come?"

In Tammuz 5710*, I celebrated my bar mitzvah. Some days beforehand, a *bochur* told me that I should go to *yechidus* before my bar mitzvah, so I went to 770 and after Mincha, he directed me to simply knock on the



Rabbi Mentlick said loudly to Rabbi Katz, “The Ramash asked to be notified when the operation begins.”

One suggested that the Rebbe will take on the *nesius* at that point, but another claimed that I had probably misunderstood... However, I recently discovered a letter from the same month, where the Rebbe writes an identical directive to someone else.⁵

My Appendix

On Erev Sukkos 5711*, I suddenly developed appendicitis and was taken to the hospital for emergency surgery. My mother wasn't present, so I was accompanied by the *rosh yeshiva*, Rabbi Mordechai Mentlick, who signed consent for the surgery, and his brother-in-law, Rabbi Moshe Pinchas Katz, who worked in the office in the yeshiva. Needless to say, I was quite nervous. As I was being wheeled into surgery, Rabbi Mentlick said loudly to Rabbi Katz, “The Ramash asked to be notified when the operation begins.” The thought that the Rebbe was thinking about me calmed me considerably.

In those days, the surgery was no simple matter and I was released from the hospital only on Hoshana Rabbah. That night, a few friends arranged *hakafos* in the *zal* in Bedford and Dean, but the next day I managed to make it to 770. In the evening, the Rebbe *farbrenge*d in the sukkah in the *shalash* (the *farbrenge*n began before *shkia*), and then *hakafos* were held in the Friediker Rebbe's room upstairs (where only the older Chassidim were granted entry). I wasn't up to being at the *farbrenge*n, so I stood with another *bochur* in the foyer of 770.

As we were talking, Rebbetzin Chana arrived in 770 and opened the door to *Gan Eden Hatachton* with her personal key.

Looking at us with a smile, she said, “*Mistame vet ir velen aroifgein*—you'll probably want to go up.” She opened the door wide and we went in after her.

The *farbrenge*n was soon over, and people started to come upstairs. Immediately, the entrances were tightly supervised, and when Rabbi Mentlick saw me, he couldn't believe I had made it in. Rabbi Jacobson told us to hide in the sukkah which was right next to the Friediker Rebbe's *yechidus* room, and that's how I was able to participate in those *hakafos*.

After davening, Rabbi Mentlick brought me over to the Rebbe, saying that I was the child who had been in the hospital, and the Rebbe said, “*Nu, er vet zein a gezunter Yid*—he will be a healthy Jew.” The Rebbe repeated this three times.

The next day, there was a *farbrenge*n in the *zal*. At some point, the Rebbe began giving out *l'chaim* to everyone. One *bochur* asked the Rebbe for *l'chaim* for me but the Rebbe refused to give him and said, “*Zol er alein tzugein*—he should come himself.”

That's what I did.

There was a short postscript to the story of my appendix:

At my next birthday *yechidus*, in Tammuz 5711*, the Rebbe asked as I walked in, “*Nu, bist shoim gezunt*—are you healthy already?”

Witness From The Window

As Yud Shevat drew closer, more and more pressure was placed on the Rebbe to accept the *nesius*. I recall the *farbrenge*n of Chof-Daled Teves; Reb Meir Ashkenazi publicly requested of the Rebbe, “*Az der Rebbe zol kumen*

Rebbe's door and ask for the Rebbe's *bracha*. This was before the official *yechidus* schedule was established in Elul 5710*.

I followed his instruction, and Rabbi Nissan Mindel answered my knock. He understood that I wanted to speak to the Rebbe so he left the room. I approached the Rebbe's desk, and said that I would soon be celebrating my bar mitzvah and that I ask for the Rebbe's *bracha*.

The Rebbe asked, “Who told you to come here?”

I answered, “A *bochur*.”

“Which *bochur*?”

I said the name (which I no longer remember).

The Rebbe put on his hat, took out a paper, and asked me for my name and mother's name. He asked about my family, and he also told me to continue reciting *kapitel* 71 every day for the Friediker Rebbe (this was after Yud-Beis Tammuz, when the Rebbe had addressed the question of saying the *kapitel* even after the *histalkus*).⁴ The Rebbe said I should continue at least until Rosh Hashanah, “*Un vu du vest zein, vet der Rebbe zein mit dir*—wherever you will be, the Rebbe will be with you.”

After I reported the Rebbe's instructions, the *bochurim* debated the significance of the Rebbe's instruction to say the *kapitel* until Rosh Hashanah.

tzum ratzon—the Rebbe should acquiesce to our request.”

For the Yud Shevat farbrengen, a massive crowd gathered in 770. It was unbearable, and at one point, after leaving the room for a moment, I simply couldn't push my way back inside. Instead, I got onto a bench at the window of the *cheder sheini* where I stood together with Reb Shmuel Zalmanov and Reb Berel Rivkin. At that moment, the Rebbe began the *maamar* Basi Legani.

Throughout the year of *aveilus*, the Rebbe would receive his regular *aliya* of *shishi*, while Reb Shmuel Levitin would receive *maftir*. On the first Shabbos after the *kabbalas hanesius*, on Yud-Gimmel Shevat, they planned to give *maftir* to the Rebbe, so Reb Shmuel was called up for *levi*. However, when they reached *shishi*, the Rebbe asked to receive the *aliya*, and instructed that Reb Shmuel receive *maftir*, because he was observing the *yahrtzeit* of Rebbetzin Shterna Sarah as was his custom, at the behest of the Frierdiker Rebbe.

However, from the following week and onward, the Rebbe always received *maftir*.

Significant Farbrengens

Those early years of the Rebbe's *nesius* were extremely special. The Rebbe was *mekarev* us all in ways that weren't possible later on. I have many precious memories from that period.

On the night of Simchas Torah 5712*, when the Rebbe came down from the *seudas Yom Tov* in the Frierdiker Rebbe's apartment, he walked into the *zal*, and said that whoever hadn't yet received a *hakafah* should do so then. We began *hakafos* all over again; the Rebbe stood there and honored the *bochurim* with *pesukim*, and then we all had an opportunity to dance with the Torah, all in the Rebbe's presence.

One really historic farbrengen was on Shabbos Mevorchim Iyar 5712*. The Rebbe said *l'chaim* many, many times, and farbrenged in a very special manner. At one point, he began instructing certain individuals to turn over their hats. Soon, he told everyone to do so, and then he did so himself as well. Rabbi Mentlick held onto it to ensure that it wouldn't fall.

During the farbrengen, one of the elder Chassidim spoke to the Rebbe about “the Rebbe *nishmaso eden*,” referring to the Frierdiker Rebbe.

The Rebbe responded very sharply. “*Vos shikt ir dem Rebbe'n... Why are you sending the Rebbe away? We need the Rebbe here physically, lemata masarah tefachim...*”⁶

In between the *sichos*, the Rebbe spoke to someone and mentioned a certain Gemara. The Rebbe asked for a Gemara to be able to see it inside, and after using it, it remained sitting

on his knee. Someone offered to hold it, saying to the Rebbe, “*Efsher iz der Rebbe shver*—perhaps it's heavy for the Rebbe...”

The Rebbe answered, “*A Rebbe iz Torah nit shver*—Torah is not heavy for a Rebbe.”⁷

Towards the end of the farbrengen, the Rebbe announced, “The [Frierdiker] Rebbe said regarding Moshiach, הנה זה עומד אחר כותלינו, משגיח מן החלונות, מציץ מן החרכים He stands behind our wall, watches from the windows, and peers in through the cracks.”⁸

Pointing toward the wall, the Rebbe continued:

“*Ut shteit er hinter'n vant*—he is standing behind the wall and looking at us through the window, wondering, ‘Why are we delaying his coming?’”⁹

Towards *shkia* time, one of the elder Chassidim was asked to approach the Rebbe and request that



THE REBBE ENCOURAGES THE SINGING DURING A SIMCHAS BEIS HASHOEVA FARBRENGEN ON CHOL HAMOED SUKKOS, 18 TISHREI 5715*.

The Rebbe answered, “Torah is not heavy for a Rebbe.”

he conclude the farbrengen, because they were worried about the Rebbe’s health. When he spoke to the Rebbe, the Rebbe replied, “*Ba dem maamar zeit ir nisht gevezzen*—you weren’t by the *maamar*, nor by the *sichos*. *Itzter kumt ir zogen deyos vegen Mincha*—now you’re coming to offer an opinion about Mincha?”

In those days, there were two versions of the *niggun Shalosh Tenuos*. One of them was Reb Zelig Katzman’s version; he had learned it from Reb Dovid Leib Marosov, who heard it from his father, Reb Chonye Marozov.

During that farbrengen, the Rebbe chose his version and we sang the *niggun* many times. When the Rebbe came in for Maariv, he asked that we sing it again, and I saw how he joined in the singing, even snapping his fingers along with the tune. That was a sight I never saw at any other time.

During the farbrengen, the Rebbe was in a state of *giluyim*, but that night, after the farbrengen was over, he even held *yechidus*. Reb Mottel Kalmenson had a *yechidus* that night for his bar mitzvah, and he reported afterwards that the Rebbe had spoken in his regular manner and no changes were evident.

Even A Gartel Wouldn’t Help

During the farbrengen of Yud-Beis Tammuz 5712*, everyone filed by the Rebbe to receive *l’chaim* and the Rebbe spoke a few words to each person. The Rebbe blessed me with, “*Lernen nigleh un Chassidus, b’shkida uv’hasmada*—to learn *nigleh* and Chassidus diligently.”

On Simchas Torah 5715*, the Rebbe spoke about a certain *yungerman* who wasn’t behaving appropriately regarding a certain

matter, and the Frierdiker Rebbe had even visited him in a dream, without effect.

The Rebbe repeated the story of Reb Zalman Zlatopolsky, who had an intense desire to see his Rebbe, the Rebbe Maharash, after his *histalkus*. The Rebbe Rashab advised him on a specific mode of conduct, one of which was to wear a *gartel* at night, and ultimately, the Rebbe Maharash appeared to him in a dream.¹⁰

I recall that the Rebbe continued—this part isn’t published in the *hanacha*—that this *yungerman* didn’t deserve such a revelation even with a *gartel*...

In this regard, the Rebbe repeated the story of the Ruzhiner:

A Jew complained to him that he did *gilgulei sheleg* (rolling in the snow) but still didn’t merit a vision of Eliyahu Hanavi. In response, the Ruzhiner took him outside, and pointed to the horse rolling in the snow.

“He also does *gilgulei sheleg*,” the Ruzhiner said, “and hasn’t had a *giluy Eliyahu* either...”

Shlichus

When we graduated Bedford and Dean in 5715*, the Rebbe sent our group of *bochurim* to Montreal (instead of 770).

During the farbrengen on Shabbos Mevorchim Teves, before we left, the Rebbe called out, “Abrahams, *zog l’chaim*.” Afterwards, the Rebbe told Rabbi Mentlick that the others should say *l’chaim* too.

The Rebbe added, “*Oib zei veisen nisht vegen vos dos iz, zollen zei zich farlozen oif mir*—if they don’t know what this is about, they should rely on me.”

In fact, we had already been informed that we would be going to Montreal.

Before leaving, we also had a short *yechidus*. We were there until Pesach 5716* when we returned to 770. I lived

in Reb Peretz Mochkin’s home, and we became very close.

During that year, I corresponded with the Rebbe a few times. On one of those occasions, I asked about thinking Chassidus before davening; I asked whether I should think Chassidus *b’oisios harav*, in the Rebbe’s words, or in my own words. The Rebbe answered,

“לפעמים תכופות, כשחושבים הענין באותיות שלו, טראגט מען זיך צו מער, און מען קריגט מערער חיות.”

Often, when you think something over with your own words, you focus on it more, and you become more enthusiastic.”

In 5717*, they established the yeshiva in Newark with the oldest class of students from Bedford and Dean, and Reb Zelig Katzman was the *mashgiach*. The Rebbe instructed Rabbi Mentlick to send two *bochurim* from 770 to be *mechazek* the *bochurim*, and he asked me and Mottel Kalmenson if we would agree to go.

When we responded in the affirmative, he reported it to the Rebbe, and within the hour the Rebbe answered, “*Mahir, sheyihye b’hatzlacha muflaga*. [Deliver the message] quickly. May it be with great success.”

We went to Newark the next morning.

This was during the month of Kislev. A week later, at the Yud-Tes Kislev farbrengen, the Rebbe asked the entire yeshiva to come onto the *bima*, poured *l’chaim* for all of us and blessed everyone with *hatzlacha muflaga*.

We were there for one year.

Yom Tov Seuda

In those years, the Rebbe was involved in our lives in very intimate ways. The Rebbe essentially took the place of my birth father, who, as mentioned, had passed away when I was a child. This was also the case with material matters, like health and so on.

Seven Branches

During the farbrengen of Yud-Tes Kislev 5718*, the Rebbe made a *magbis* for Kfar Chabad and said that everyone should donate generously. When the Rebbe began collecting the papers with the pledges, he began calling out names of people and telling them to increase their sum. The Rebbe told some people to double their donations, others to triple it, and some even to add a zero. There were even individuals who were told to add two zeros.¹¹

This was also the case with the *bochurim*. Hilkeh Katzman was a *bochur* with no parents or means, and the Rebbe told him to give 10 times more than his original pledge.

On Yud-Beis Tammuz 5718*, the Rebbe spoke about the concept of “*Ufaratzta*” for the first time. The Rebbe first mentioned it briefly in the *maamar*, and then spoke about it in several *sichos*. Afterwards, he directed the *bochurim* to call out “*Ufaratzta!*”¹²

At the time, we didn’t understand that the Rebbe was beginning an entirely new campaign. During the next period, the Rebbe spoke about the need to spread out, *ufaratzta*, on a constant basis. For *bochurim*, the Rebbe often spoke about *ufaratzta* in *limmud haTorah*.

The following Kislev, the Rebbe instituted a project called *Shivas K’nei Hamenorah*.¹³

It began with a suggestion of Rabbi Mentlick to appoint seven *bochurim* who would volunteer to put extra effort in learning *nigleh*, thus bringing in a new *chayus* in the yeshiva. The Rebbe agreed, and also instructed to appoint a parallel seven *bochurim* for Chassidus. The Rebbe called it the *Shivas K’nei Hamenorah*, the seven branches of the menorah.

I was one of the *kanim* in *nigleh*. Some of the other *kanim* in *nigleh* were Yitzchak Raitport, Yisroel Friedman,



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RABBI ABRAHAMSON RECEIVES A DOLLAR FROM THE REBBE.

I remember on Shvi’i Shel Pesach 5717*, the Rebbe noticed me walking to the dining room to eat *seudas Yom Tov* at a very late hour. The Rebbe asked, “*S’iz noch doh seudas Yom Tov dorten?* Is there still food for the Yom Tov meal left?”

I said, “Probably.”

“*Mistame, uder bist zicher?* Probably, or are you sure?”

I answered, “For sure.”

At *kos shel bracha* the following night, the Rebbe asked, “*Nu, hostu gehat seudas Yom Tov?* Did you have *seudas yom tov?*”

The following summer in *yechidus*, the Rebbe spoke to me about eating properly, and asked if I have *mezonos* before davening. I replied that I do, but then the Rebbe noted that he heard there was no *mezonos* before davening in Newark (the *bochurim* were young, and they would daven first thing in the morning). I answered that indeed, they didn’t provide regular *mezonos*, but instead I would eat cornflakes. I felt a bit sheepish telling the Rebbe details like my eating cornflakes, and hearing it, the Rebbe smiled.

Avrohom Shemtov and Moshe Bogomilsky. The *kanim* in Chassidus that I recall were Mottel Chein, Leibel Alevsky, Shmerel Roitblat and Zalman Lipsker. Later, we were informed that the Rebbe asked that we deliver *pilpulim* to the yeshiva on a weekly basis. That was followed with a *hora'a* that we give the *bochurim marei mekomos* before the *shiur* so they would be able to prepare, and later the Rebbe instructed us further to publish the *pilpulim*.

As *kanim*, we would spend an extra hour and a half after *sefer* learning our respective topics, and Rabbi Piekarsky would deliver a *shiur* several times a week in the afternoon in *Kodshim*. Overall, that was the strongest year of learning in yeshiva.

During Sefiras Haomer that year, the Rebbe farbrenged every single Shabbos, in honor of the *ufaratzta* in Torah learning (besides for Shabbos Parshas Emor, when the Rebbe didn't farbreng because a *bris* was taking place).

The following Erev Rosh Hashanah we were all called in for a *yechidus* with the Rebbe. The Rebbe spoke to us quite sharply, and said that although he had been *shtureming* regarding *ufaratzta* for quite some time, there hadn't been any true *hazaza*. He cited the saying of the Frierdiker Rebbe, that some people, instead of taking *perel* (pearls), they get confused and grab the *perel-grupen* (soup croutons). Needless to say, although they have similar names, they have a vastly different meaning.

The Rebbe suggested that as a *tikun*, we should hold *mishmaros*, learning Torah and davening for the entire 24 hours of every day of Aseres Yemei Teshuvah.¹⁴

The First Talmidim Hashluchim

In 5722*, I merited to be among the first group that the Rebbe sent

as *talmidim hashluchim*, to Tomchei Temimim in Lod, Eretz Yisroel.

It seems that our shlichus came about together with the advent of the first *kvutza* from Eretz Yisroel. Reb Shlomo Chaim Kesselman, the *mashpia* in Lod, had written to the Rebbe that the yeshiva would be weakened if the older and *chassidische bochurim* would leave to New York. You have to remember that the entire yeshiva numbered around 30 *bochurim* at the time.

In response, the Rebbe suggested that he would send a group of American *bochurim* to Eretz Yisroel.

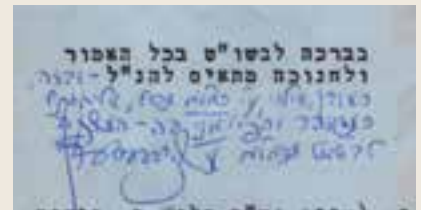
As *bochurim* who had learned by the Rebbe, we came with a sense of shlichus that we were to "bring the Rebbe" to the *bochurim* of Eretz Yisroel. One of our first projects was to institute *sefer* on Friday mornings, as the Rebbe had done in 770 (until then, *bochurim* would normally remain awake all Thursday night, and then go to sleep).

At Reb Shlomo Chaim's first farbrengen with us, he said a significant amount of *l'chaim*, and started telling us that the true reason we were sent to Eretz Yisroel wasn't to be *mashpia* on the *bochurim*, but for

our own growth—because there were insufficient *mashpi'im* in the United States.

Among our group, I was appointed to write to the Rebbe about our shlichus (the Rebbe's first letter was actually addressed to me). However, I obviously never mentioned the occurrence at that farbrengen with Reb Shlomo Chaim to the Rebbe; I didn't feel that it was "newsworthy" in any form.

However, in the next letter we received, the Rebbe wrote in *ksav yad* at the end,



RABBI Y ABRAHAMS / YOSSE FELLER

ברכה לבשו"ט . . מילוי, ע"י כאו"א מהם, שליחותם כמדובר וכפ"ל אני בה...

"With blessings for good news... [including] that each one of you is fulfilling their shlichus, in the way that I interpret it."

We thought it was a clear sign of *ruach hakodesh*, but later we



A LETTER FROM THE REBBE TO RABBI ABRAHAMS WHILE A SHLIACH IN LOD, SENT VIA EXPRESS AIR MAIL.

discovered that one of our fellow shluchim had written to the Rebbe about Reb Shlomo Chaim's farbrengen.

We definitely brought a *chayus* about the Rebbe to Eretz Yisroel. I recall that on Yud Shevat, Reb Shlomo Chaim had kidney stones and wasn't up to farbrenging himself, so we Americans led the farbrengen.

We retold the Rebbe's *sichos* from 5710* and we also emphasized that our celebration on Yud Shevat was the Rebbe's *kabbalas hanesius*.

One of our activities in Lod was to arrange a *tahalucha* for Shvi'i Shel Pesach. We reported about it to the Rebbe afterwards, and the Rebbe responded,

"Yasher koach al godel hanachas ruach—thank you for bringing me great gratification."

Marriage And Settling Down

During my last *yechidus* before going to Eretz Yisroel, the Rebbe blessed me with *"Histadrus tovah b'itah ubizmanah—to settle down in the proper time."* In other words, this meant that I would be getting married sooner or later.

Before Yud Shevat, Reb Shlomo Chaim showed me a letter he received from the Rebbe. It was a *michtav klali proti*, and at the end, the Rebbe had written,

"לדאוג ונכבדות עבור התמים אברהם—find a shidduch for Hatamim Abrahams."

Reb Shlomo Chaim asked Reb Meir ("Munke") Gruzman to be my *shadchan*, and I became a *chossan* at the end of the year.

When we were ready to move forward with the *shidduch*, we wrote to the Rebbe separately, and my wife received a letter with the Rebbe's *bracha*. She began to share the news but I felt that I still wasn't a *chossan*, so Reb Munke wrote to the Rebbe that there is news of the *shidduch*



RABBI ABRAHAMS' CHASUNA. TO HIS LEFT IS REB SHLOMO CHAIM KESSELMAN.

but I still haven't received an answer from the Rebbe. We soon received a telegram from New York that read, *"Nechonah hahatz'aa, viyaaleh lo yafeh, chag sameach—the suggestion is appropriate, may the shidduch be a successful one, and chag sameach [Sukkos]."*

I returned to New York before Pesach, where I remained until my wedding, which took place after Shavuot (this was before the Rebbe asked that engagements be shortened). The Rebbe instructed that we live in Eretz Yisroel, and agreed that I should continue teaching in Reb Chaim Shaul Bruk's yeshiva in Rishon Litziyon, where I had begun teaching several months earlier.

In Eretz Yisroel, we were looking to buy an apartment. Reb Chaim Shaul had built several apartments, and he was looking to rent them for a down payment and then a small sum each month, but the Rebbe said I should only take it if he will sell it to me, not rent.

Later, I was the *mashpia* in the *mechina* in Lod, and when our *rosh yeshiva* left to Yerushalayim, I was

recommended for the job. The Rebbe said that I should accept the job, but only temporarily:

"באופן זמני, כי בדר"כ צ"ל שונה הצורך—והנהגה דמשפיע—temporarily, because normally, the image and behavior of a mashpia is different."

1. For more about Rabbi Groner, see "Conquering a Continent," *A Chassidisher Derher*, Av 5778.
2. For more about those early Simchas Beis Hashoeva farbrengens, see "The Street Will Dance," *A Chassidisher Derher*, Tishrei 5777 pg. 61.
3. *Toras Menachem Hisva'aduyos* vol. 1 pg. 26.
4. See *Toras Menachem* vol. 1, p. 149.
5. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 3, p. 350.
6. *Toras Menachem Hisva'aduyos* 5712 vol. 2 pg. 183.
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Shir Hashirim* 2:9.
9. *Toras Menachem Hisva'aduyos* 5712 vol. 2 pg. 184.
10. *Toras Menachem* 5715 vol. 1 pg. 76.
11. *Toras Menachem Hisva'aduyos* vol. 21 pg. 238.
12. *Toras Menachem Hisva'aduyos* vol. 23 pg. 151.
13. See also *A Chassidisher Derher*, Iyar 5778, pg. 48.
14. *Toras Menachem Hisva'aduyos* vol. 26 pg. 239.