


לזכות  
שלוחי כ"ק אדמו"ר בכל אתר ואתר  
שיצליחו בגשמיות וברוחניות,  
וימלאו שליחותם בפועל 'לקבל פני  
משיח צדקינו' באופן של 'ופרצת',  
ובאופן ד'ואתם תלוקטו לאחד אחד'  
עדי נזכה לגאולה שלימה  
ונשיא דורנו בראשינו

נדפס ע"י  
בית חב"ד מעקוואן, ויסקנסין



R U A  
CHABAD

20



**BULL  
ACO**

# DING UNTRY



Rabbi  
Shabsi  
Alpern

RABBI ALPERN  
WORKING IN HIS  
OFFICE.

## SEEING THE FRIERDIKER REBBE

I was born on 1 Elul 5796\* in Dokshitz, a well known Chassidic town (I am an only child). As soon as World War II broke out, we miraculously immigrated to the United States, where we were initially hosted by Reb Yochanan Gordon,<sup>1</sup> also of Dokshitz. Then my father was hired by a shul in Cincinnati to be a rav and *shochet*, and seven years later he held a similar job for the Bnei Yaakov Nusach Ari shul of Worcester, MA. A short time before my bar mitzvah, my parents sent me to learn in Tomchei Temimim on Bedford and Dean, in Brooklyn, New York. A year later, my parents joined me in Crown Heights (the phone companies had been thriving on our phone bills), and that's where I lived until we went on shlichus to Brazil.

Together with my father, I merited to have a *yechidus* with the Frierdiker Rebbe before my bar mitzvah, several months before his *histalkus* (that was the only time I saw him; we youngsters weren't allowed to participate in the *farbrengens*). It was difficult to understand the Frierdiker Rebbe's speech, so Reb Elye Simpson, the Frierdiker Rebbe's secretary, repeated the Rebbe's *bracha* to us. The Frierdiker Rebbe also sent me a mazal tov letter before my bar mitzvah, and he signed with the print letter "Yud" at the beginning of his name, as he did throughout the last year before the *histalkus*.<sup>2</sup>



RABBI ALPERN RECEIVES A TANYA FROM THE REBBE.

YUD SHEVAT 5750, LEVIFREDIN VIA JEM 236496

*The Rebbe instructed me to recite the kapitel of the Frierdiker Rebbe for my mother's recovery...*

## A SPECIAL PHONE CONVERSATION

Some time after the Frierdiker Rebbe's *histalkus*, the Rebbe returned to wearing his regular jacket and hat, but nevertheless, we all knew where things were headed. I was still a young boy, but I clearly remember the talk of how to convince the Rebbe to assume the *nesius*. At some point during the year, we insisted that people cease using the term "Ramash," and call him only, "Rebbe."

The crowds in 770 were very small, and we all received the Rebbe's personal attention. The Rebbe would *farbreng* each Shabbos *Mevorchim*, and we all fit into the small *zal* comfortably.

During that year, I once came home to Worcester and discovered that my mother needed a serious operation. Before the procedure, the Rebbe personally called our home and spoke to my parents and to me as well. He instructed me to recite the *kapitel Tehillim* of the Frierdiker Rebbe for my mother's recovery (he had spoken

about reciting the *kapitel* in *sichos* as well).<sup>3</sup>

## OUR RELATIONSHIP

I learned in Bedford and Dean until 5715\*, and then I moved to 770.

We felt a very close connection to the Rebbe in those days. Nonetheless, we didn't write to the Rebbe often. There was a powerful *yiras haromemus*, and we felt uncomfortable to take the Rebbe's time.

I recall one instance where I did write to the Rebbe. At that time, my father served as the rabbi of Chevra Shas in Crown Heights, and one of his congregants was a modern individual who came from a family of rabbonim. I resolved to speak to him and to encourage him to strengthen his Yiddishkeit, but I wasn't sure how to go about it. I wrote to the Rebbe, and the Rebbe responded immediately. The Rebbe said to explain to him the teaching from Hayom Yom, ווען מען אקערט און מען פארזייט - וואקסט.<sup>4</sup> In other words, if he wanted to receive

## A SPECIAL HAGGADAH

My father had a large *sheimos* box inside his shul and I would often rummage through the old *sefarim* people would drop off. One day, a few days before Pesach 5718\*, I found a *haggadah* called “Tzuf Amarim.” I opened it, and discovered a *haskama* from Harav Levi Yitzchok, the Rebbe’s father. I felt that it was a remarkable discovery, so I immediately went to 770 and asked Reb Moshe Groner to bring it to the Rebbe (he would often enter the Rebbe’s room to speak about different matters, and he had a knack for old *sefarim* as well).

He brought it to the Rebbe, and later he told me that the Rebbe was very pleased to see it. The Rebbe had remarked that it was his first time seeing a *haskama* his father had written. I obviously was very pleased to have made the discovery.

During the *farbrengen* on the second night of Pesach after the *seder*, the Rebbe started one explanation on the *haggadah* with the following:

“Before Pesach, I was brought a *haggadah* with a *haskamah* from my father.”

The Rebbe looked at me while saying those words, and he then proceeded to expound on one of the *haggadah’s* *pirushim*.<sup>6</sup>



THE HAGGADAH “TZUF AMARIM” WITH A HASKAMA BY THE REBBE’S FATHER, WHICH RABBI ALPERN GAVE TO THE REBBE.

Hashem’s blessings, he needed to create a vessel for the blessing.

Each year, we had a *yechidus* with the Rebbe before our birthday. The *yechidus* would last two or three minutes. Being an only child, sometimes my father would join me in *yechidus*, and those would last a bit longer.

One year, when we were learning *Maseches Gittin*, the Rebbe spoke to us about the deeper meaning of *Gittin*; that the Jewish people are considered the wife of the *Aibershter*. The Rebbe explained the matter in *avodas Hashem*.<sup>5</sup>

I have an interesting memory from another *yechidus*. As I was waiting in line, the individual before me said that he came to receive the Rebbe’s approval for a book he had written. He left the Rebbe’s room in amazement. In 20 minutes, he told me,

the Rebbe recapped the exact thesis of his book, which had taken him five years to develop.

When I was 17 years old, I had my tonsils removed. Although it was a relatively simple and safe procedure, the Rebbe asked my mother to notify him as soon as it concluded. I remember my mother racing down Eastern Parkway from the doctor’s office to 770 to notify the Rebbe.

Some time later, I suffered from strong headaches. For two months, I didn’t want to bother the Rebbe about it, but as the problem persisted, I decided to write to the Rebbe asking for a *bracha*. It was shortly before Pesach. During *kos shel bracha* on Acharon Shel Pesach, the Rebbe gave me a powerful *bracha*, and miraculously, the headaches disappeared. In fact, the miracle grew even larger: I was accustomed

to wearing eyeglasses in the street, but afterwards, I felt that I no longer needed them. Baruch Hashem, until today the Rebbe’s *bracha* continues.

## THERE WILL BE A CHANGE...

My years in 770 were before the Rebbe announced the *mitvzoim* which are so famous today, but the Rebbe nevertheless spoke incessantly about spreading Yiddishkeit. Those were the days when the Rebbe first began speaking about *Ufaratzta*.

As *bochurim*, we all participated in Wednesday hour (the Released Time program for public school children), *Mesibos Shabbos*, *Merkos Shlichus* and so on. We also knew that after our marriage, we hoped to become the Rebbe’s *shluchim* and continue the Rebbe’s work for the rest of our lives.

On 17 Kislev 5721\*, I married my first wife, Esther (nee Kazen) a”h.

She merited to attend to the Rebbe's mother, Rebbetzin Chana, in various ways, so through my wife, I also had the opportunity to visit her. After we left to Brazil, we merited to receive two letters from her in her own handwriting.

We hoped that the Rebbe would be *mesader kiddushin* at our wedding. By then the Rebbe no longer officiated at all weddings, but if a couple committed to go on shlichus, the Rebbe usually did agree. Before our wedding we went into *yechidus*, and there the Rebbe informed us that, "*S'vet zein a shinui in di siddur kiddushin*, there will be a change regarding officiating weddings."

I immediately understood—to my dismay—that the Rebbe had decided to cease *siddur kiddushin* entirely, and I plucked up the courage to say, "But we are going on shlichus..."

In response, the Rebbe said something very powerful.

"*Tzu den darf ich shteyen unter di shtangen kidei tzu benchen? Do I need to stand under the poles [of the chupah] in order to bless you?*"

### POINTY SHOES

On Shvi'i Shel Pesach 5721\*, shortly after our wedding, the *tahalucha* went to Williamsburg. We were a crowd of some 200 *yungerleit*. After we crossed Eastern Parkway, my attention was caught by a man leaning against the wall. He was clearly Jewish, but his clothing were peculiar; he had pointy shoes, which weren't the style then.

I approached him, wished him a *Gut Yom Tov*, and asked him where he was from.

"Brazil," he answered.

"What are you doing here?"

"I'm on business."

Although he wasn't fully observant, he wasn't working that day, so I offered him to join us on our walk to Williamsburg. He joined us, watched

the dancing and the speaking in the shuls, and afterwards I brought him to my home for the *seudah*.

He was a warm Jew, and very touched by everything he had seen that day. We had a conversation late into the night.

"Would you be willing to move to Brazil?" he asked us at the conclusion.

I explained that we don't make these decisions, but that I would write to the Rebbe about it after Yom Tov. After Yom Tov I wrote to the Rebbe, and very quickly, the Rebbe responded in the affirmative.

At the same time, he asked me if he was allowed to ask the Rebbe a question as well. I responded that he was more than welcome to, so he

wrote to the Rebbe about his dilemma. He and his wife weren't blessed with children, and they were thinking about adoption. It was very rare to find a Jewish child available for adoption, but he managed to find a little girl, and he asked the Rebbe if he should go along with the plan. The Rebbe said that he should.

Several weeks after adopting the girl, an elderly rich man passed away, and his sole heir was this little girl. As her legal father, he suddenly found himself with newfound riches, and he moved to New York. Meanwhile, we moved to Brazil.

Thirty years later, I walked into 770 for the Kinus Hashluchim, and lo and behold, I see this individual.

*The Rebbe had decided to cease siddur kiddushin entirely, and I plucked up the courage to say, "But we are going on shlichus..."*



RABBI ALPERN SPEAKS AT A FUNCTION IN BRAZIL SHORTLY AFTER HIS ARRIVAL ON SHLICHUS.

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We hugged and kissed, and he related that a short time after he adopted his daughter, his wife became pregnant with a son. Through a series of events, they had grown much closer to the Rebbe, and the son was now a shlich himself. He had brought along his father for the Kinus Hashluchim.

### THE CLOSED BLINDS

Our flight was set for 5 Av 5721\*.

We had two *yechidusen* before our departure, and on Shabbos, 2 Av, the Rebbe held a *farbrengen*. During the *farbrengen* the Rebbe said a short *maamar* on the topic of Bnei Gad and Bnei Reuven, but at the end, he suddenly spoke about the importance of shlichus in faraway places.

“Unlike those who mistakenly want to remain in their own *daled amos*, and don’t want to travel to distant places. One must know that although it is easier to remain in your own *daled amos*, it is nevertheless not the *tachlis hakavana*, the ultimate purpose. Hashem’s will is that you go to a distant shlichus and spread the wellsprings of Chassidus there.”<sup>7</sup>

That last paragraph wasn’t directly connected to the *maamar*, and we understood that it was a farewell to us. In the *sicha* following the *maamar*, the Rebbe spoke about it once again.

In those years, there was a special ritual to see off a couple going on shlichus. On the way to the airport, the shluchim would stop off in front of 770, and the *bochurim* would come out of the *zal* to dance and see you off. During the dancing, the Rebbe would pick up the blinds of the window in his room about a third of the way up.

When we came to 770 before our departure, the Rebbe did not pick up the blinds. Everyone thought it to be very strange. The Rebbe had given us two *yechidusen* before our trip, and there was no doubt that the Rebbe wanted us to go. Slightly disappointed, we left for the airport.



RABBI ALPERN WITH ONE OF HIS SUPPORTERS DURING THE INAUGURATION OF THE BEIS CHABAD IN S. PALO, 5739\*.

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RABBI ALPERN BEING AWARDED AN HONOR AT CITY HALL IN S. PALO, BRAZIL, 2 NISSAN 5737\*.

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The first leg of our journey, to Caracas, Venezuela, was on a Belgian airline. We sat down ready for take-off, but the plane didn’t move. After some time, the pilot apologized and said that one of the engines had burned out, and it would take another 48 hours to receive a replacement from Brussels. We were told to go home and return two days later.

On Tuesday, before returning to the airport, we again stopped off to say farewell at 770. This time, the Rebbe opened the blinds.

### NO CONFLICT

We arrived in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil on Thursday, 7 Av. We immediately got to work.

*It would be another five years before a phone was installed in our home, and until then, everything was done through written correspondence.*

During our *yechidus* before we left, the Rebbe gave me an interesting directive. He said there are already two *anash* families living in Brazil. Whenever they do an initiative together, I should participate as well. However, if one family does something without the other, I should have no part in it.

In those days, there was no concept of a Beis Chabad. We knew that we were sent to a location to strengthen Yiddishkeit, and that was all. I became the principal of a small Jewish school in Rio, as well as the rabbi of the small shul located on its premises. My wife taught all day at the school in addition to helping at the shul. They paid us a very small salary.

Brazil was very primitive in those days. It would be another five years

before a phone was installed in our home, and until then, everything was done through written correspondence. I wrote a report to the Rebbe every Sunday morning, and I would receive letters back every two or three weeks. Some of those letters were only two lines, sometimes just acknowledging my report, but I always received something. Whenever I came to New York, I would converse lengthily. Later, I would converse with Rabbi Hodakov about various matters.

Two and a half years after we arrived, the Rebbe instructed us to move to S. Paulo. The letter caught us by surprise, but obviously, we packed up and moved. In S. Paulo, I began to work in the largest religious day school, and within a few years, I became the principal.

In this day school, there was a group of children in “Cheder.” They learned *limudei kodesh* on a higher level than the rest of the school. Now, there were several parents who insisted that we teach Gemara in Yiddish only. This was obviously a challenge: the Gemara itself was difficult enough, and Yiddish was entirely foreign to them. I felt it would be counterproductive.

When I visited New York, I told the Rebbe about the situation, and the Rebbe said that we should use the language that brings the best results. When I returned to Brazil, I switched the language to Portuguese, and Baruch Hashem, we saw immediate results. There is a *lamdan* in Eretz Yisroel that still thanks me today, because the switch allowed him to finally enjoy the classes, and they were the impetus for his real growth in Yiddishkeit.

## **OUR BEIS CHABAD**

Ten years after we moved to S. Paulo, we left the school and decided to open our Beis Chabad. When we opened our doors, I reported to Rabbi Hodakov over the phone, and the *bracha* we received was, “*Azkir al hatziyon*, I will mention it at the resting place [of the Friediker Rebbe].” Truthfully, I was a bit disappointed, so I decided to travel to New York for Shabbos for some additional inspiration.

During the *farbrengen* that Shabbos, the Rebbe called me over, and handed me a bottle of *mashke*, “*Far dem mosad, far di shtot, un far di medinah*—for the institution, the city and the country.” (There were several instances where the Rebbe gave me a bottle of *mashke* on his own initiative. Usually, if you wanted to receive a bottle of *mashke* for some special occasion, you would bring a bottle to *Mazkirus* before Shabbos, and then you would get it back. I never did so,

## **FOUR CITIES**

In the beginning, we made very few trips to New York, because the cost was prohibitive. Our salary was \$250 a month; there were times I didn’t have enough money for Shabbos meals.

After we moved to S. Paulo, my wife made a special trip to the Rebbe. We had been married for almost three years, but hadn’t yet been blessed with children, and a very prominent doctor in Rio told us that we were both infertile and suggested we look into adoption.

We decided that my wife would travel to New York to ask for the Rebbe’s *bracha*.

Before she left, I asked the doctor, who spoke a fluent English, to write a letter to the Rebbe describing our situation. My wife gave the Rebbe the letter during *yechidus*, but the Rebbe didn’t respond to it. He read it, folded it and put it away. He then turned to my wife and said that she should go to the Merkos office, and they would give her plane tickets to four cities to speak to groups of Jewish women about Yiddishkeit.

As per the Rebbe’s instructions, my wife spoke in four cities in New England, and then she returned to Brazil. To our joy, our first child was born nine months later, and over the ensuing years we were blessed with four children, *ka”h*. We hoped to have more, but weren’t successful. Our *bracha*, evidently, was vested in those four cities.



RABBI ALPERN LEADS A BAR MITZVAH FOR 17 JEWS IN SURINAME, A COUNTRY IN SOUTH AMERICA, CIRCA 5744\*. THE EVENT WAS BROADCAST ON NATIONAL TV.

yet I still received several bottles from the Rebbe.)

Mission completed, that very night, I returned to Brazil.

Baruch Hashem, our Beis Chabad quickly became very popular. Many young people would come to learn and to participate in our events. There were times that we would have a few hundred people at our Tuesday night class, and it reached a point that we had to break it down into groups, to be able to create more personal connections with the participants.

### PRINTING TANYAS

On Chanukah 5744\*, the Rebbe asked that Tanyas be printed in every single Jewish community throughout the world.<sup>8</sup>

Since it was summer vacation in Brazil, it was a perfect opportunity, so I organized two groups of *bochurim*, each accompanied by a rabbi and technician, to travel around Brazil in vans and print Tanyas.

In the beginning of Shevat, once the plan was in place, I traveled to New York to report to the Rebbe



RABBI ALPERN MAKES A L'CHAIM WITH A GROUP AT THE CHABAD HOUSE OF CURITIBA, BRAZIL.

about the good news. The same week I arrived, Rabbi Meni Wolff from Kehos in Eretz Yisroel also arrived with the first batch of Tanyas that had been printed in Eretz Yisroel.

That Shabbos (Shabbos Parshas Bo, 3 Shevat 5744\*) the Rebbe held a surprise farbrengen, and explained that there were two reasons.

One: It was a week before Yud Shevat.

Two: The Tanyas.<sup>9</sup>

Towards the end of the farbrengen, the Rebbe called me over to give me a bottle of *mashke*.

The Rebbe asked me how many Tanyas I planned to print.

I answered, "Eighty-three" (the Rebbe's *kapitel* that year).

\*📅 5744-1983/4



The Rebbe responded, “*Oib du vest machen mer, vet keiner nisht faribel hoben*, if you do more, no one will be upset...”

Right away, I upped the number to 100, and the Rebbe gave me a broad smile.

On Sunday morning, Rabbi Groner approached me with a *maaneh* from the Rebbe:

”מצור”ב השתתפות מקרני כ”ק מו”ח אדמו”ר - בהוצאות ההו”ל - דכאו”א מהנ”ל. כשיוסיפו בעוד ישובי בני” יודיע, ויוסיפו בהנ”ל.”

“Attached is a participation from the funds of my father-in-law, the Rebbe—towards the cost of the printing—for each one [of the printings] mentioned before. Inform [us] when more Jewish communities are added, and more will be added to the above sum.”

Together with the *maaneh* came \$2,040. Twenty dollars per city, and another \$40 to participate in the cost of the printing presses.

We picked 100 small cities throughout Brazil. In each city, the *bochurim* would print the Tanya, study a portion with the local Jews, and then

send us the copies (100 per city) via the delivery company that we hired to bring them kosher food. When we received them in S. Paulo, we would have them bound.

These journeys were a golden opportunity to connect with Jews in those forsaken places. Many amazing stories happened through the trips. One group met an eligible young bachelor looking for a Jewish wife, and in another town they met a young Jewish woman looking for a husband. The *bochurim* connected the two of them, and together they established a Jewish home. In another city, they helped a woman write to the Rebbe for a *bracha* for children, and later she had twins. To my surprise, she named one baby Menachem Mendel in honor of the Rebbe, and the second one Shabsi, for me.

We finished the printings in 33 days. We then prepared a leather-bound copy of each Tanya, and placed them in a beautiful acrylic case with the map of Brazil on its cover prepared especially for the Rebbe.

## NEW LOCATIONS

We arrived in New York early Thursday morning, 13 Adar I. As the Rebbe left *krias haTorah* that morning, I stood in *Gan Eden Hatachton* along with several other individuals who were involved in the printing, and we presented the Tanyas to the Rebbe.

The Rebbe was very pleased. He gave 100 crisp dollar bills towards the printing, and gave additional sums to the others as well. Before entering his room, the Rebbe asked if we would remain for Shabbos, and when we answered in the affirmative, he said that there would be a *farbrenge*.

We were obviously very excited. There indeed was a *farbrenge*, and the Rebbe dedicated a significant portion of a *sicha* during the *farbrenge* to our Tanyas, and conveyed the special *nachas ruach* that he had from it.<sup>10</sup>

Later that day, during the late *seudas Shabbos* at my brother-in-law’s home, someone mentioned that a long lost cousin of mine had been discovered living in Communist East Germany. Because I was hyped up about the Tanyas, I thought to myself that I should go visit him, and print a Tanya there as well.

I wrote to the Rebbe the next morning, and the Rebbe sent out a pocket-size Tanya that had been printed in Prague, which was also under Communist control. I was surprised not to receive a clear answer (which I understood later) but I saw this as a signal that my idea was approved, so I began working on the project.

I reached out to my cousin, and a short time later I traveled to visit him. After spending time together, he and his non-Jewish Communist wife took a liking to me, and when I broached the topic of the Tanyas, they were open to the idea. They agreed to arrange a printing—on the presses of the local



RABBI ALPERN POSES WITH THE 100 TANYAS PRINTED THROUGHOUT BRAZIL, WHICH WOULD BE PRESENTED TO THE REBBE.  
INSET: THE PRINTING OF THE TANYAS.

## GAMARA

S. Paulo had a Jewish city councilman named David Roysen. He was originally associated with Communists, but he met us and over a short period of time became very dedicated to Yiddishkeit. In addition to his own extensive Torah learning, he also became the “shliach” to city hall. He would put on tefillin with Jews who visited and so on, and he also encouraged all the councilmen to correspond with the Rebbe, and the Rebbe answered all of them.

My wife brought a large group of people to visit the Rebbe for Yud Shevat 5738\*. At that time (following the events of Shemini Atzeres 5738\*) instead of regular *yechidus*, the Rebbe would sit in *Gan Eden Hatachton*, and all the guests would pass by for a short *bracha*.

The Rebbe instructed that when the Brazilian group enters, both doors should be shut, and they would receive their own *yechidus*. During the *yechidus*, David Roysen handed the Rebbe a scroll which declared the Rebbe as the “Citizen of the Year” of S. Paulo. The Rebbe asked, “Does this mean that when I come there, I will be able to speak?”

One time, someone was appointed the president of the city council, and David Roysen helped him write to the Rebbe. The Rebbe’s response was always in English, but here the Rebbe used the Portuguese word for city council—*Câmara Municipal*. However, there seemed to be a typo. It said *Gâmara Municipal*.

David Roysen asked me what the change could mean, and I responded that it was a hint from the Rebbe that the city council should have a *shiur* in Gemara. The city council wasn’t located in a Jewish area, so the *shiur* was small, just 10-20 participants. The classes were taped by the city council and each week all the participants got a gift, a tape of the previous class. There was one teenager who did live in the area, and he loved to come and ask questions (to the consternation of the other participants).

I offered to arrange a private *shiur* with him in the Beis Chabad. Initially he wasn’t interested because he lived far away, but ultimately he agreed, and began studying with one of the shlichim. We saw that he was very serious about his learning, so we sent him to Morristown where he became a full-fledged *baal teshuvah*, and slowly brought his entire family along as well. After getting married, this youngster, now known as Rabbi Shlomo Levy, first settled in Brazil, then spent a short while in Uruguay, and today he is a very successful shliach in Argentina.

Several years ago, I invited a visitor from Uruguay for *seudas Shabbos* in my home. I told over the story at the table, and suddenly this young man grabbed me and began to dance! He said to me, “I want to call you Zaide.” All those at our table were brought to tears.

I didn’t understand what he wanted, but then he explained himself.

“During the few months that Rabbi Levy was in Uruguay, he brought me to Yiddishkeit, and I since call him ‘Father.’ If you brought him to Yiddishkeit, I will call you ‘Zaide.’”

All these beautiful results were a result from one word in the Rebbe’s letter, Gamara instead of Camara. *Der Rebbe’s a vort geit nisht farfalen.*



RABBI ALPERN IN A MEETING WITH BAALEI BATIM.

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Communist Party, no less! However, it wouldn’t be possible for me to be present there, so I left them with instructions and material, and flew back to Brazil.

Ultimately, the plan didn’t work out. A short time after my visit, I

received a very mean letter from my cousin. I had left a collection of our Chabad magazines from Brazil with my cousin’s wife (who understood Portuguese) and she had read an article describing the suffering of the Jews behind the Iron Curtain.

As an ardent Communist, she was very offended, and they wrote back attacking me. Obviously, the printing was off the table.

Now I understood why the Rebbe didn’t write at all when he sent me the Tanya from Prague.

\*📅 5738-1977/8

However, that Tanya that I received from the Rebbe had an impact in a different, unexpected way.

On the way back from East Germany, the plane had to land in a city two hours from S. Paulo. In all my 58 years in Brazil I never landed in this city. After landing, I looked around and saw a member of our shul who gave me a ride to S. Paulo.

As soon as I got into his car, he told me that he just met an Israeli expat living in S. Paulo, who was the architect of the Brazilian outpost in Antarctica. When I heard the word

Antarctica, one thing immediately flashed through my mind: we need to print a Tanya there. After all, I had just given the Rebbe 100 Tanyas from Brazil and I was just coming back from Germany where (I thought) the Tanya would be printed soon and now Antarctica simply falls onto my lap. It was unbelievable! The next day, Roy (the Israeli) came to see me and although he thought it was crazy, he agreed to do it.

Shipping a printing press to Antarctica was the most difficult hurdle. Space on the ship that went

there was always very tight, and only essential items were allowed on board. To overcome the issue, I had an idea. I gave the press as a present for the scientists of Antarctica, as a way to entertain themselves while sitting bored at the edge of the world. They would now be able to print a small newspaper with news from Brazil.

We shipped off the press and all the accessories on the next ship, and waited to hear from our engineer. Soon enough, at three o'clock one morning, I received a call.

"Rabbi, I have a kippah on, and the printing of the Tanya is ready. Let's study." We studied perek 5 together.

A few weeks later, the ship brought the Tanyas back to S. Paulo, where we had them bound, and then I sent one copy to the Rebbe with someone traveling for Purim.

After the Megillah reading here in Brazil, I received a phone call from Rabbi Groner. The Rebbe was very pleased with the Tanya, he said, but he also noted a mistake. On the *shaar blatt*, we had written Antarctica, but the Rebbe felt that it was imprecise, because 14 different countries had bases there. Instead, we were to write the name of the, "Brazilian Base of Antarctica."

Immediately, I replaced all the *shaar blatts* and sent an updated version to the Rebbe.

It still bothered me that I didn't print the Tanya in Berlin but, Baruch Hashem, I was later informed by the shliach there that he arranged a printing after the two Germanys were united. Still, something else disturbed me, that that I hadn't managed to print it on a Communist press. But this was also solved when my son Yossi printed the Tanya on the Communist press in Havana, Cuba.

## ANGELA

Once, a non-Jewish couple joined a class of mine, and afterwards asked

*On the shaar blat, we had written Antarctica, but the Rebbe felt that it was imprecise...*



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to speak with me in private. They were a prominent family; the husband was a district attorney and his wife was a lawyer, and they had an only daughter named Angela who was 11 years old. They had recently discovered that their daughter had four tumors in her head. They traveled the world seeking out a cure, but there was nothing that worked. Then, they heard about the Rebbe, and they came to ask how to go about writing to him.

I wrote a letter to the Rebbe for them in English. In those days, I kept a supply of US stamps, and whenever I wanted to send an urgent letter, I would go to the airport and ask a Jewish traveler to drop the letter in a mailbox in New York, and the Rebbe would receive it a day later. That's what I did this time as well.

This took place in Adar. They came every week to our Tuesday night class, and, being that Brazilians naturally share their problems with everyone, it was only a short time before all the participants knew their story.

A month later, as I arrived before the class I noticed everyone standing around them with joyful faces. They related that they had just visited the doctor, and were told that the tumors had disappeared.

Some months later, I spent 10 days by the Rebbe for Yud-Beis Tammuz. After Mincha on my final day in New York, Rabbi Groner approached me with a note in the Rebbe's handwriting. The Rebbe wanted to know what had happened to Angela.

I realized that I had made a mistake. I had wanted to spare the Rebbe the time of opening and reading my letter, since he knew anyways without me telling him. But I was wrong, you have to always write good news to the Rebbe (today as well).

As I returned the Rebbe's note I turned it over and saw that it was a corner piece of my original letter sent five months earlier.

I immediately sat down in the Merkos office, and wrote the Rebbe the end of the story.

When I returned to Brazil, I phoned Angela's mother, and told her about the Rebbe's interest in her daughter. I noted that the Rebbe had asked me about it only on the last day of my 10-day trip, a fact which I found rather interesting.

The mother had an immediate explanation: "Yesterday was Angela's birthday. She turned twelve..."

This is a story I often tell youngsters when they ask me,

"Where is Lubavitch going? How will we survive without the Rebbe here physically?"

My answer is very simple. If the Rebbe could spend months thinking about a non-Jewish girl at the other end of the world, is it possible to think he didn't think of this eventuality?

It must all be part of the Master Plan.

May we soon merit to see the entire plan fulfilled *lemata me'asora tefochim* and all pieces will fall into place and all be clear and understood. **T**

1. For our biography of this Chossid, see "With Heart and Soul," *Derher* Adar I 5776.
2. See *Toras Menachem* vol. 2, p. 190.
3. See *Toras Menachem* vol. 1 p. 149.
4. *Hayom Yom*, 25 Cheshvan.
5. The Rebbe spoke about this at length on 20 Av 5719. See *Toras Menachem* vol. 26 pg. 156. *Lekutei Sichos* vol. 4 pg. 1121, vol. 9 pg. 143.
6. *Toras Menachem* vol. 22 pg. 229.
7. *Toras Menachem* vol. 31 pg. 160.
8. For a full overview of the Rebbe's Tanya campaign, see "Tanya to the World," *Derher* Adar II 5776.
9. *Hisvaaduyos* 5744 vol. 2 pg. 811.
10. *Toras Menachem* 5744 vol. 2 page 1096.