

Derher

A Chassidisher

שנת
הקואה"ל
העם

א חסידישער דערהער

Perspectives of the Rambam

HIS LIFE, IMPACT, AND TORAH AS
DISCUSSED IN THE REBBE'S SICHOS

Sworn To Secrecy

RABBI ELIYAHU SIMPSON

BEYOND CONCESSION

THE STRUGGLE
OF OUR RABBEIM
TO PRESERVE THE
PURITY OF JEWISH
EDUCATION



IYAR 5783
ISSUE 130 (207)
MAY 2023

מוקדש לחיזוק ההתקשרות לנשיא דורנו
כ"ק אדמו"ר זצוקללה"ה נבג"מ זי"ע

נדפס ע"י

הרה"ת ר' הלל דוד וזוגתו מרת שטערנא שרה ומשפחתם שיחיו
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This magazine
has been made possible

לזכות
הרה"ת ר' שלום וזוגתו מרת שרה
וילדיהם ישראל, ריסא, חי' מושקא,
אמונה מלכה, יעקב יהודה, ולאה שיחיו
אייזיקוביץ

ולע"נ זקנינו הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' ישראל
בן הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' שניאור זלמן ע"ה
דוכמאן
נלב"ע ז' אייר ה'תשמ"ט
ת'נ'צ'ב'ה'



As we continue through this Shnas Hakhel, we come upon a very important milestone this month—a special event that unites all of the Jewish people together in an unparalleled way: the study and conclusion of the whole Sefer HaRambam. As the above note written in the Rebbe's *ksav yad kodesh*: “יש להתאחד ע"י לימוד הכולל את התורה כולה”—we must unite together by studying [a text that] encompasses the **entire** Torah...”

This year, those who follow both study cycles, three *perakim* and one *perek* per day, will join together in celebration as we conclude the fourteen *sefarim* of Rambam.

What sets this year apart is that we are now completing the **42nd cycle** of three *perakim* per day, which began last year on **Lag B'omer**, and beginning the **43rd cycle** this year on **Beis Iyar**, the birthday of the Rebbe Maharash.

During *sefiras ha'omer*, we work through the *sefiros* beginning with the highest one, *chessed sheb'chessed* and continuing through *malchus sheb'malchus*. Following this order, the day of Beis Iyar is associated with *tiferes sheb'tiferes*, and *Lag B'omer* is associated with *hod sheb'hod*.

The Rebbe explains that there is also a way of working through the *sefiros* from bottom-up; starting with *malchus sheb'malchus* and concluding with *chessed sheb'chessed*. In this

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יש זהות אחד זה לא אוב
הכול את התורה כולה

order, the day of Lag B'omer is associated with *tiferes sheb'tiferes*.¹

The difference between the two, says the Rebbe, is that *hod sheb'hod* represents *bittul* and *kabbolas ol*; doing our *avoda* even if we don't feel it—just because it's the right thing to do. *Tiferes sheb'tiferes*, on the other hand, represents beauty and *geshmak*; doing our *avoda* in a manner that we see the beauty and connect with the job at hand.

Generally, going top-down in our *avoda* (מלמעלה למטה) is more exciting. It means we see and feel the accomplishments of our work, and things are clear and easy. But working from bottom-up (מלמטה למעלה) can be grinding and takes a good measure of *kabbolas ol*, accepting the yoke and doing the work, whether or not we see and feel the truth of what we are accomplishing.

The lesson, says the Rebbe, is that when we do our part with *kabbolas ol*, Hashem helps us that we reach a higher level of *avoda*, which includes the joy and *geshmak* of *tiferes sheb'tiferes*.

The Rebbe continues:

The *brachos* that the Rebbe gives us are of the highest quality; *tiferes sheb'tiferes*. But in order to receive these

brachos, we must devote ourselves to the Rebbe's work with genuine *kabbolas ol*.²

What a special message for us, as we embark on this new cycle of *limmud HaRambam* on Beis Iyar—having started on Lag B'omer:

By connecting with the Rebbe every single day of the year no matter the circumstances, and by uniting with all our fellow Jews through learning the daily *shiur* with *kabbolas ol*, we will ultimately merit to receive all the Rebbe's *brachos*, including a new *chayus* and *geshmak* in fulfilling this *takanah*.

And the greatest *bracha* of all will be the uniting of all the Jewish people in a physical sense as well, in a manner of *הקהל את העם*—in the third *Beis Hamikdash*, *teikef umiyad Mamosh!*

The Editors

יום הבהיר י"א ניסן ה'תשפ"ג
שנת הקהל את העם

1. See *sichos* Lag B'omer 5710; 5751; et. al.

2. *Toras Menachem* vol. 1, p. 59.



Rashbi

A Fusion of Opposites

The Day of Passing

Lag Ba'omer, the day of the passing of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai ("Rashbi"), is a day of joy. This is because on the day of one's passing, their entire life's *avodah* and involvement with Torah and mitzvos ascend into the higher realms.

On that note, Rashbi remarked on the day of his passing, "With one bond, I am bound to Him,"¹ reflecting his deep connection to Hashem. Then, while teaching the *possuk*, "*Ki sham tziva Hashem es habrachta chaim*,"² he passed away – before reaching the word "*chaim*," symbolizing his eternal bond with the source of all life.

Every year, the elevation achieved on the day of Rashbi's passing is relived, and this is the cause for joy on Lag Ba'omer.

The Rashbi's Greatness A Day for Everyone

The Yerushalmi³ states regarding the *semicha* of Rabbi Meir and Rashbi, Rabbi Akiva's two students, that Rabbi Akiva told Rabbi Meir to sit down first to receive ordination. When Rashbi's face reddened, Rabbi Akiva remarked, "It is enough that I and your Creator recognize your greatness." Even the holy *talmidim* of Rabbi Akiva weren't able to fully comprehend Rashbi's greatness. Only Rabbi Akiva – who was on an extremely high spiritual level – and Hashem, were able to appreciate him. However, the fact that Rashbi was on an unimaginably higher level than his contemporaries seemingly makes it hard to understand how Lag Ba'omer is a day celebrated by all.

It is said⁴ that one of the *talmidim* of the Arizal used to say "*Nachem*" in *birkas hamazon* at every meal throughout the year, mourning the destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash*. One Lag Ba'omer in Miron, he did as he was accustomed to. Rashbi had a *kpeida* on the student, and the latter was negatively affected.

The above can be understood when we realize that Rashbi had a *neshama* that did not experience the *churban*, and therefore there couldn't be any mourning for it on his day of joy. From this we see two points: Firstly, Lag Ba'omer has a uniqueness that sets it aside from all other Yomim Tovim, that specifically on that day, the student was punished for saying "*Nachem*." Secondly, the joy of Rashbi

לזכות
הרה"ת ר' אברהם יהודה הלוי זוזגטו
מרת דבורה לאה ומשפחתם שיחי
סאסקינד
נוביי, מישיגן



on Lag Ba'omer is shared by all Yidden, no matter what level their *neshama* may be on.

These two ideas are what the Rashbi represents – taking the highest level that there is and making it tangible.

Bringing Both Worlds Together

The Beraisa⁵ recounts a *machlokes* between Rebbi Yishmael and Rashbi. Rebbi Yishmael held that although the Torah must never cease from one's lips, the Torah also says "*V'asafta diganecha*" – one must give attention to his material needs. Rashbi argued, however, that as long as one focuses on serving Hashem, all his physical needs will be taken care of.

This reflects Rashbi's constant and unwavering commitment to Torah. Yet at the same time, Rashbi also held⁶ that if one only said *Krias Shema* in the morning and evening, he fulfills the above mentioned commandment not to let Torah cease from our lips. This again highlights Rashbi's fusion

of the highest and lowest levels – he demanded the ultimate dedication to Torah study – that one shouldn't worry about his physical needs – and simultaneously he held that one who fulfilled only the bare minimum was still *yotze*.

Rashbi also sought out a "*tikkun*" for everything that required one. Not only when he felt there needed to be a *tikkun*, but he also actively looked for ways to do so, as he asked,⁷ "Is there something that needs repair?" In one case, there was an uncertainty regarding a certain location with *tumas meis*, the strictest form of *tumah*, yet Rashbi was *metaken* it to allow even *Kohanim* to access that location. In the same vein, Rashbi stated⁸ that "I can exempt the entire world from judgment." The ability for Rashbi to do those things was precisely because of his greatness.

A Practical Lesson

Just like all stories in Torah, stories of Chazal can give us the strength to perform our personal *avodah*. In our

mission of "*Yafutzu maayanosecha chutza*," we must draw from the highest level – the wellspring itself, to "*chutza*" – outward. This will lead to "*asi mar*" – the coming of Moshiach, when he will learn Torah with the *Avos*, yet also with Jews of all levels.

We must also teach our children *pnimiyus haTorah*, the Torah of Rashbi, which will take us into the *geulah*. Then we will be able to rely on the merit of Rashbi to exempt the world from judgment, even somewhere where *tikkun* is needed, and even in a level of "*tumas meis*," to make it a proper *dira* even for *Kohanim* (the highest level) – until the whole world will be a *dira* for Hashem. **T**

Adapted from the sicha of Lag Ba'omer 5722

1. Zohar III 288; 292.
2. Tehillim 133, 3.
3. Sanhedrin 1, 2.
4. Pri Eitz Chaim Shaar Sefiras Ha'omer 7.
5. Brachos 35b.
6. Menachos 99b.
7. Shabbos 33b.
8. Sukkah 45b.



כתב יד
קודש



לזכות
הרה"ת ר' יוסף ברוך הכהן
זוגתו מרת מחלה רבקה
ומשפחתם
שיחי
פרידמאן



IT'S A GUARANTEE!

The Rebbe guides an individual on how to lead a proper life according to Torah and with optimal levels of happiness.¹

כיון שהקב"ה משגיח בהשג"פ על
 כאו"א, ואמרז"ל דהוא עוזר לכאו"א
 בכל דבר טוב—פשוט שזה שולל
 יאוש ח"ו ואפ"י עצבות (ובפרט ע"פ
 המבואר עד"ז בתניא). ע"פ מאחז"ל
 שמו"מ צ"ל באמונה וכן כל עניני
 האדם—מובן שצ"ל ביאתו למשרתו
 בזמן, נתינות לצדקה באופן שלא
 יוגרע בפרע"ח ותשלום שכר לימוד.
 וכנ"ל—בכ"ז הובטח שהשם עוזרו
 ויגעת ומצאת. ויעבוד השם בשמחה
 וט"ל. אזכיר עה"צ.

Since Hashem watches over each and every person with **individual attention**, and *Chazal* say that He helps each and every person with the good things that they do—it is **obvious** that this negates all hopelessness, *chas v'shalom*, and even [ordinary] depression (especially according to what is explained regarding this in Tanya).²

Given that *Chazal* instruct that one's business dealings must be carried out faithfully—and this includes all matters in a person's life—it is obvious that you must get to work on time, and only give *tzedakah* in a manner that doesn't preclude paying off debt or tuition costs.

As mentioned—you are **guaranteed** that Hashem will help you in all of the above, and if you work hard, you will succeed.

May you serve Hashem with joy and gladness of the heart.

I will mention you at the Ohel.

1 Teshura Rivkin-Simpson 5769.

2 Ch. 26 ff., that depression is an impediment to serving Hashem.



THE REBBE HEADS TO THE OHEL FOLLOWING THE PARADE.

JEM105742

”YACHAD KOL YALDEI YISROEL”

IYAR 5740*

COMPILED BY: RABBI YANKY BELL
WRITTEN BY: RABBI MENACHEM LAZAROFF

ע"י בנם	טור 'לעבן מיטן רבי' הוקדש לזכרון ולעילוי נשמת
ר' יקותיאל יהודה	ר' שמואל ב"ר יהושע אליהו ז"ל
וזוגתו מרת פעסל לאה ומשפחתם שיחיו	ואשתו מרת שרה ע"ה בת ר' יקותיאל ומרת לאה הי"ד
רוהר	ת"נ צ"ב'ה

In the month of Nissan 5740*, the Rebbe initiated a new avenue of action titled “השיב לב אבות” (על ידי בנים), calling upon children to positively influence their parents, beginning with the proper observance of Pesach.

A few weeks prior to Lag B’omer the Rebbe transformed the huge demonstration of Kiddush Hashem into an international endeavor.

In every corner of the globe, in unprecedented fashion, hundreds of parades were to be arranged. Over a million children worldwide joined together in the cry of “Shema Yisroel.”

Thus began a new era of Chabad peulos for children. The following diary was written by one of the bochurim at 770 during this time!¹

Lag B’omer Parades Worldwide

On Sunday, Daled Iyar, two weeks before Lag B’omer, the Rebbe issued a call for 120 parades to be organized across the United States and 30 parades to be held in the rest of the world.

In a place where, for whatever reason, a parade would be impractical, a gathering of some sort should be arranged.

Towards this endeavor, the Rebbe distributed 120 \$1 bills for the 120 parades being arranged in the States and 30 \$1 bills for the 30 parades being organized internationally.

In addition, the Rebbe sent \$300 to the organizers of the central parade to take place in New York. Ultimately, the Rebbe was notified that a total of 141 parades were to take place across the United States and the Rebbe added another 60 dollars to the previous 120.

Preparations

Meanwhile, in Eretz Yisroel preparations were under way for a large parade, and Rabbi Nochum Cohen of Tzach coined the slogan “*Yachad Kol Yaldei Yisroel*,” which became the official motto of the parade. This would be the first time that parades would be held in Eretz Yisroel, and the instruction came on very short notice.

Preparations had to be completed in great haste. There were individual instances in the following days when the Rebbe asked people whether they were involved in making a parade in their city. For instance, closer to Lag B’omer, the Rebbe instructed Mazkirus to contact Chicago and inquire as to the latest developments.

On Tuesday, Yud-Gimmel Iyar, the Rebbe encountered Rabbi Yaakov Yehudah Hecht (the organizer of the main

parade), while on his way home. The Rebbe asked him why he wasn’t running around in preparation for the parade!

Leading up to the big day, increased efforts were made to bring as many children as possible to the grand parade in Crown Heights. With the help of the database prepared from the Matzah-ball Contest one month earlier,² scores of children were now reachable and invited to join.

The Power Of The Children

The next day, Pesach Sheni, after Mincha, it was announced that a farbrengen would take place at 9:30 p.m. During the farbrengen, the Rebbe spoke about the central theme of Pesach Sheni that “it’s never too late,” and the connection between Pesach Sheni, Rashbi, and



* 5740-1980

Lag B'omer.

The Rebbe expounded upon the unique relationship between children and Lag B'omer, highlighting their ability to overcome our enemies. The Rebbe also emphasized the significance of children's innate ability to recognize and connect with Hashem. Afterwards, the Rebbe spoke about the prohibition of giving away land in Eretz Yisroel.

The Rebbe instructed the children to say *l'chaim* and to sing "*Utzu Eitza Visufar*," which will also have an effect on the adults. Then the Rebbe instructed those assembled to sing "*Hoshi'a Es Amecha*."

At the end of the farbrengen, the Rebbe instructed to sing a number of *niggunim*, including the Alter Rebbe's *niggun*. Afterwards, the Rebbe instructed (again!) to sing "*Utzu Eitza*" and vigorously clapped along.

The farbrengen concluded around 12:40 a.m. after *benching*. Before the Rebbe left, the *niggun* "*Utzu Eitza*" was sung once again.

The Shabbos Before

On the Shabbos before Lag B'omer, upon arriving in 770, the Rebbe let it be known through *mazkirus* that there would be a farbrengen.

The farbrengen, which began at 1:30 p.m., was dedicated almost entirely to Rashbi and the general theme of Lag B'omer. Throughout the farbrengen the Rebbe spoke repeatedly about the upcoming parade, and its effect on the children throughout the year.

The Rebbe also said the *maamar* titled: "*Lehavin inyan hilula d'Rashbi*."

At one point the Rebbe said:

"My father-in-law, the [Friediker] Rebbe gave his life and educated all those around him that one must focus on *poel mamosh*, without searching for means of *kavod* and the like... Those who operated until now in a manner of *poel mamosh* for children, especially with regards to the participation of children in the upcoming parade, should increase their efforts for the success of these activities."

Later on, the Rebbe requested that following the parade a book be published containing essays by the children describing the event and what they thought of it. This will help to continue the connection with the children even after the parade. The best essays should be selected, and printed alongside pictures of the children marching at the parade. Furthermore, the Rebbe instructed that this book should be published in many languages, starting with *Lashon Hakodesh*, Russian, English, Farsi and more.

The Rebbe added that it was the obligation of the entire *tzibbur* to assist with the expenses. The book was later published as per the Rebbe's request.



Towards the end of the farbrengen the Rebbe instructed Rabbi Hecht to say *l'chaim*. Then the Rebbe instructed Rabbi Shmuel Butman to say *l'chaim* as well after which the Rebbe gave Rabbi Hecht some of the *mezonos* in front of him, and started the *niggun* of "*V'harikosi Lachem Bracha*." The farbrengen concluded at 5:10 p.m.

On Motzei Shabbos, the Rebbe entered the small *zal* relatively early for Maariv, which many interpreted as being an encouragement of the parade efforts, and leaving more time for them to prepare.

Generally, the Rebbe's inlaid wooden table in the upstairs shul was covered with a clear plastic table cloth, and removed a few minutes prior to the Rebbe's expected entrance. Now however, with the Rebbe's unexpected arrival some 15 minutes early, the Rebbe simply placed his siddur on the plastic as the *bochurim* scrambled in all directions!

Throughout the night, multitudes of *anash* and *temimim* worked with great haste to complete the final preparations for the great parade which would take place the following day.

A Phenomenal Turnout!

By the next morning, Eastern Parkway was closed to traffic, with hundreds of police officers on patrol. 770's exterior was transformed, resplendent in a vibrant display

of signs featuring the Twelve Pesukim. Alongside these, there were additional banners. One displayed a verse from the Rebbe's *kapitel*, another commemorated 30 years of the Rebbe's *nesius* and a third featured the words והשיב לב אבות על (ידי) בנים.

The Rebbe arrived at 770 by 9:30 a.m., entering through the side entrance, due to the large stage erected in front of the main entrance, an elevated and regal *bima* built for the Rebbe. It was decorated with a crown designed from the words שלושים שנה לנשיאות כ"ק אדמו"ר שליט"א as well as the official parade logo and the logo of Mesibos Shabbos. The Rebbe's *shtender* was set up on the stage and a red carpet was rolled out from the door of 770 to the Rebbe's place.

Ahead of the parade, a special agreement had been reached with the MTA and subway trains were running directly from Brighton Beach, a heavily Jewish neighborhood, to Crown Heights in order to facilitate the way for thousands of Russian children. Additionally, hundreds of buses began arriving non-stop, delivering thousands of children and adults.

In total, an unprecedented 20,000 people from all neighborhoods and backgrounds were in attendance.

At 11:20 a.m., the tune of *Ani Maamin* began to play, and the Rebbe emerged from the doorway of 770. The Rebbe walked majestically to his place accompanied by the sound of the *niggun*. He did not walk on the red carpet.

The Rebbe spoke to the children for almost two hours. The topics that were discussed included the concepts of *achdus*, והשיב לב אבות על (ידי) בנים, not to be affected by the distractions of *galus*, and the importance of valuing time.

In total, the Rebbe delivered four *sichos*, the last of which – to the surprise of everyone present – was given in Russian. In this *sicha* the Rebbe spoke very sharply regarding the situation of the Yidden trapped behind the Iron Curtain, declaring that the study of Torah and fulfillment of mitzvos is completely in accordance with the Russian constitution. The Rebbe also proclaimed that there will soon come a time when the Russian government itself will declare this.

The Rebbe also spoke strong words about the situation in Eretz Yisroel.³

After the *sichos*, which were translated at intervals by Rabbi Hecht, the parade commenced.

First to march was Eli Lipsker's drum corps, uniformed and synchronized. On their heels came representatives of the U.S. Army, bearing their weapons, to the excitement of the children assembled. The soldiers saluted the Rebbe, and the Rebbe responded with a salute of his own.

Next in line were the floats. The first float presented was created by the *Kevutza bochurim* and it portrayed Meron. There was the *tziyon* of Rashbi with people nearby saying Tehillim, a soldier standing on guard, a child receiving his upshernish, and even a real live goat with a *shochet* as per the custom of Sefardim to slaughter a goat in Meron on Lag B'omer. The Rebbe gazed at the float with a serious expression. When he saw the *shochet* sharpening his knife, he turned away.

Another float illustrated the plight of the Russian Yidden trapped behind the Iron Curtain, complete with a prison and barbed wire. A plane hung in mid air, symbolizing its flight to freedom and, on the other side, stood a replica of 770 with people sitting and learning Torah.

Other floats presented giant *sefarim*, tefillin, a giant tzedakah *pushka* and various other *mitvzoim*. In all, 26 floats passed before the Rebbe who studied them intently, all the while clapping, waving and saluting. When the giant *pushka* passed, the Rebbe indicated with his hand that tzedakah should be thrown in and when it was brought closer, the Rebbe tossed in a coin.

Afterwards, the children paraded in front of the Rebbe, who smiled and waved at them, sometimes clapping his hands. After all the children had marched past the Rebbe, Rabbi Hecht suggested that the Chassidim do the same and the *niggun* of "Al Hasela" was sung. The Rebbe clapped along vigorously while everyone danced in their places.

As the parade concluded, Rabbi Hecht asked the



IVAR 5740

Rebbe if he should announce that there would be a farbrengen that evening, but the Rebbe replied that this was still uncertain.

He also asked if the Rebbe was satisfied and the Rebbe replied affirmatively. When he commented that much work had been put into the success of the parade, the Rebbe said, “Hashem helped as well...”

At 5:00 p.m., as the Rebbe departed to the Ohel, he asked Rabbi Hecht if the children’s carnival held in the park had ended. When he informed the Rebbe that it had concluded, and that it was a resounding success, the Rebbe replied: “May the success continue throughout the entire year.”

The success of the parade was mirrored with that of the international campaign, which turned out to be a tremendous success. Thousands of children participated in parades across the globe, particularly in Eretz Yisroel.

No Rest!

Finally, the hundreds of *bochurim* and *yungerleit* who worked tirelessly for days and nights before Lag B’omer, slipped away for some well-earned rest... but not for long because shortly after returning from the Ohel, at 9:30 p.m., the Rebbe announced that there would be a farbrengen that very night!

At the farbrengen, the Rebbe expounded on the new motto of the parades in Eretz Yisroel – “*Yachad Kol Yaldei Yisroel!*” and connected it to the theme of the latest campaign of “*V’hayshiv lev avos al banim.*” The Rebbe also connected this concept of Jewish unity to Rashbi.

On a different note, the Rebbe spoke again about the dire situation in Eretz Yisroel, and warned against giving away Jewish land in exchange for “peace,” painfully reflecting upon the most recent act of terror.

At a certain point in the farbrengen, the Rebbe instructed Rabbi Yosef Goldstein, who spoke at the parade, to say *l’chaim* with a full cup. Rabbi Goldstein promptly said *l’chaim* with a smaller cup (which was full). The Rebbe responded in surprise, “Is that a full cup? You spoke much more than that!” Afterward the Rebbe said, “Whoever wants to join may do so, Moshiach is coming soon!”

While addressing people who were satisfied with what had been achieved thus far in reaching tens of thousands of Jewish children, the Rebbe insisted on not being complacent; more rallies, more activities and more children!

The Rebbe asked that a meeting be held immediately following the farbrengen to discuss how to keep the momentum of Lag B’omer going with programs for Jewish children in the days that follow.



Towards the end of the farbrengen, the Rebbe gave the leftover *mezonos* to Rabbi Hecht as a contribution towards the upcoming activities.

The farbrengen concluded with the singing of “*Hoshi’a Es Amecha,*” which the Rebbe vigorously encouraged. The Rebbe then started the *niggun* “*Ki Vesimcha.*” The farbrengen ended at around 12:50 a.m.

Immediately after, a children’s rally with the Rebbe’s participation was called for Chof Iyar, a mere two days later.

The rally was a remarkable affair. The Rebbe encouraged the lively singing (including “*Utzu Eitza*” twice). The 12 *pesukim* were recited, coins for tzedakah were distributed, and the Rebbe said four *sichos* which were translated by Rabbi Hecht.

By now, after over a month of extraordinary occurrences, there were no surprises anymore. Each passing day shattered the expectations of common practice. **T**

1. Some of the events described below were originally published in “*A Salute To Judaism,*” Derher Iyar 5774 and “*Children at the Forefront,*” Derher of Sivan 5774, based on various sources and interviews.
2. See “*Children at the Forefront,*” Derher *ibid.*
3. One day earlier, a terrorist murdered a *yeshiva bochur* in Chevron.



Why The Bris Was On Time

This story was related by Rabbi Menachem Mendel Gluckowsky, rabbi of the Chabad community in Rechovot, Eretz Yisroel.

Written By:

Rabbi Shabi Soffer and Rabbi Tzemach Feller

When the Rebbe sent us to Eretz Yisroel, the Rebbe wrote in a letter:

בלי נדר ישתדלו לעזור לכל אחד ואחד

— the Rebbe would try and help each of us.

I have a nice sized family, *baruch Hashem*, including seven sons. Most of them did not have their *bris* on time, on the eighth day. The reason for this is because my blood type and my wife's blood type clash in a way that results in our children being more likely to develop infant jaundice, which is caused by an excess of bilirubin. The bilirubin levels need to subside before a *bris* can take place, and therefore, we weren't able to make the *bris* on time for most of our children.

With one of my sons, the bilirubin level went up to 19.5 and the doctors told me that if it reached 20, they would have to make a blood transfusion. This would dilute the bilirubin and the antibodies from the mother's blood that cause the bilirubin buildup. *Baruch Hashem*, it peaked at 19.5, and his *bris* was three weeks late.

I had never written to the Rebbe about this problem because I said to myself, "The *bris* will be when it will be. The Rebbe has enough on his table that I don't have to bother him that I have to have the *bris* on the eighth day."

But the next son that was born was born early Shabbos morning in the Kaplan hospital in Rechovot. My wife told me — we were already experts — "He's yellow" — he has jaundice. I asked, "How much?" "Looks pretty high," she replied, so we had a blood test done. This was less than 24 hours after he was born. When I returned Sunday morning, the bilirubin was at 14. Bilirubin at 14 after less than 24 hours means it's shooting up, very high — in the "high risk" range

for potential complications.

I got nervous and said to my wife, "Okay, I never wrote to the Rebbe about it but this time I'm writing." I sat down and wrote a quick fax to the Rebbe, describing the problem and asking for a *bracha* that the *bris* should be "בעתו ובזמנו" — "on time," on the eighth day — which means that the baby should be healthy.

When I came back to the hospital Sunday night I asked my wife, "How does he look?" and she said, "It looks like it went down." They did another blood test and on Monday morning, the results showed that the bilirubin had dropped to six — in the "low risk" range. Great! We took him out of the hospital, the bilirubin stayed down, and the next Shabbos we had the *bris*.

On Sunday, the day after the *bris*, during Dollars — this was on 28 Sivan 5748* — one of the *gabbaim* of our shul was by the Rebbe. He had no idea what had taken place with the jaundice and on his own initiative asked the Rebbe for a dollar for me, mentioning me by name. The Rebbe gave him another dollar and said to him, "בעתו ובזמנו—on time."

He didn't know what the Rebbe meant so he ran out, went to a phone and called me, asking, "What did the Rebbe mean that I should give you the dollar 'on time?'"

I said to him, "Ah, I know what the Rebbe meant."

And to myself I said: Someone thought about you so that the *bris* should be on time. Somebody thought about the child, somebody had you in mind. That's why the *bris* was on time!

That was a moment of feeling how the Rebbe cared for us in a very specific, detailed, individual kind of way. 📌



SWORN TO SECRECY

Many titles and attributes can be used to describe Rabbi Eliyahu (Yaichel) Simpson. Chozer, mashpia, rov, gabbai, shadar, oved, maskil, pnimi, but one that represents who he was perhaps more than anything else is Ba'al Sod - trustworthy. The Frierdiker Rebbe said that he maintained the highest level of one who could keep a secret.

He was trusted by the Frierdiker Rebbe and the Rebbe with many matters of critical importance, and all that he was involved in he would carry out with utter modesty. Indeed, the Rebbe used the expression ne'eman bayis, trusted by Beis Harav to describe Rabbi Simpson.

A GLANCE INTO THE LIFE OF A CHOSSID OF THREE REBBES, RABBI ELIYAHU SIMPSON.

By: Rabbi Bentzion Schtroks



Y

לעילוי נשמת
הרה"ח הרה"ת רב פעלים וכו' ר' דוד ז"ל
בן הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' יעקב יוסף שו"ב ז"ל
ראסקין
יו"ר צאנז"ח העולמית ומנהל ישיבת תות"ל
המרכזית - 770 למעלה מיובל שנים
נלב"ע ז' אייר ה'תשע"א
ת"נצ"ב'ה'
נדבת משפחתו שיחיו

Born in the city of Babruysk on Rosh Chodesh Tammuz of 5649*, Rabbi Eliyahu (Yaichel)¹ Simpson began learning in Tomchei Temimim Lubavitch in 5661* from the young age of twelve. Since his older brothers didn't go in the ways of Chassidus, his father decided to send him at this tender age to the Rebbe Rashab.

He would often repeat the line that his father used to say: "We come to the Rebbe with three things: *bitul*, *butul*, and *baitel*." Meaning, nullification of one's ego, a bottle of *mashke* to farbrenge, and a wallet for giving *d'mei pan*.

When Reb Eliyahu arrived in Lubavitch with his father, the Rebbe Rashab and the Friediker Rebbe—who was the administrator of the yeshiva—were opposed to accepting him at such a young age. When the Rebbe Rashab heard of the young boy's quest to join the yeshiva, he said: "They are coming already with the cradles?"

Admission into Tomchei Temimim in general was very strict. When Reb Shimon Aharon Yaichel, the young boy's father, came to the realization that there was no way his son would be officially accepted, he departed from Lubavitch in the middle of the night, leaving young Eliyahu behind. His thinking was that this will leave the yeshiva no choice but to accept his son.

The *hanhala* only agreed to accept the young Eliyahu after his uncle, Reb Chaim Itkin, took upon himself to learn with his nephew and to watch over him.

Now that the young boy was already in the yeshiva, a small *cheder* was opened and started with three students; Rabbi Simpson, Reb Avrohom Pariz, and Reb Aryeh Leib Sheinen. This was the springboard that eventually led to a full *cheder* in Lubavitch.

Rabbi Simpson, who was known in

Lubavitch as Elye Babruysker, studied in Tomchei Temimim for fifteen years. He was blessed with a very sharp memory, was amongst the elite in the knowledge of *nigleh* and Chassidus, was a *chozer* of the Rebbe Rashab, and was a deep thinker.

Rabbi Simpson was so consumed by his service of Hashem, to the point that he once became sick and didn't visit a doctor. When his illness became very severe, the Rebbe Rashab prescribed him to eat a certain amount of apples and gave him a *bracha* to recover quickly.

Indeed, he did soon recuperate but the Rebbe Rashab told him that from now on this is not the correct approach and that if he fell ill again he should see a doctor.

Although he had much to boast about, Rabbi Simpson carried himself with simplicity. Holding an especially close relationship with *Beis Harav*, Rabbi Simpson was assigned many important tasks and served as the head of several organizations. At the same

time, he was known for his incredible patience and humility.

Rabbi Simpson was accustomed to doing a lot and speaking little. Throughout the years, he devoted himself to the Rebbe Rashab, the Friediker Rebbe, and the Rebbe in a wide variety of capacities that we will learn about in the following pages.

A MAN OF DEPTH

"One of the great *chozrim* of Chassidus in Lubavitch." This is the title that the Rebbe wrote in his own handwriting for the headstone of Rabbi Simpson. Perhaps an even stronger term the Rebbe used was in a letter to Shazar: "From the lead *chozrim* and *tofsim*" [i.e. greatest of incorporators of Chassidus]."

Reb Moshe Dovber Rivkin related: "One Shabbos in the year 5666*, the Rebbe Rashab said a particularly long



THE REBBE SPEAKS AT THE WEDDING OF RABBI SIMPSON'S SON, REB SHOLOM MENDEL. 2 KISLEV 5714

maamar and I could not understand it. I asked some of the *bochurim* to explain it to me, but they didn't understand it either. Finally, I was pointed to Rabbi Simpson and he knew the *maamar* inside and out."

When the Frierdiker Rebbe was away from Lubavitch, it was Rabbi Simpson who he asked to send him pointers from that week's *maamar* of the Rebbe Rashab.

After the regular *chazara*, the *chozrim* would go into the Rebbe Rashab's room to receive corrections and additions to the *maamar*. In the following days, it was Rabbi Simpson's responsibility to transcribe the *maamar*.

The Rebbe Rashab showed specific interest in the *hanachos* that Rabbi Simpson wrote, perhaps more so than others. There were several times that the Rebbe Rashab asked Rabbi Simpson for his *hanachos* and wrote comments on them. Many of Rabbi Simpson's *hanachos* were later printed in *Sifrei Hamaamarim* of the Rebbe Rashab, and in *Toras Shalom* (with edits from the Rebbe).

One of the *hemsheichim* that Rabbi Simpson wrote *hanachos* for is the famed *Besha'ah Shehikdimu* 5672*. Rabbi Simpson felt a special connection to this *hemshech* in particular and always yearned that it finally be printed. On several occasions, he asked the Rebbe if it could be printed, but his request did not receive an approval.

Many years went by, and on 20 Kislev 5737* the Rebbe announced that the *hemshech* will go to print. The Rebbe explained that the Rebbe Rashab had a special fondness for this *hemshech*, and it contains revolutionary ideas even in comparison to the *hemshech* of *Yom Tov Shel Rosh Hashanah* 5666*.

The Rebbe announced that whoever would like to participate in the printing, should give one dollar, no more and no less, this way everyone

PARNASA OR CHASSIDISHE CHILDREN?

Reb Mendel Feldman, Rabbi Simpson's son-in-law, related:

"My father-in-law suffered from great financial challenges, and yet he spent a tremendous amount of time educating his children in the ways of Chassidus. My father-in-law was a true role model of being a parent first and foremost. It has been said that the Rebbe once told someone to learn how to educate his daughters from Rabbi Simpson.

"Once, he went into *yechidus* with the Frierdiker Rebbe and lamented about the difficulties that he struggles with financially. The Frierdiker Rebbe said to him: 'Would you rather have an abundance of wealth, or that your children should be Chassidim?' He answered that he wants *chassidishe* children, and *baruch Hashem* the *bracha* was fulfilled."



THE FRIERDIKER REBBE ADDRESSES THE CROWDS FROM THE PORCH OF THE SIMPSON HOME IN BORO PARK.

will have an equal part.

Nine days later, on 29 Kislev, Rabbi Simpson passed away. Rabbi Simpson did not leave a will of any sort, aside from an envelope for the Rebbe, with instructions that only the Rebbe should open it. In the envelope, there was a sum of money intended to support the printing of *Besha'ah Shehikdimu*.

(Since the Rebbe said that each person should give only one dollar, the money Rabbi Simpson left went towards a dedication in the next printing of *maamarim* from the Rebbe Rashab, which was *Sefer Hamaamarim*

5678*.)

When the *sefer* was ready, the Rebbe called Rabbi Simpson's sons, Reb Sholom Mendel and Reb Leibel, into his room and gave them each the three-volume set of the *hemshech Besha'ah Shehikdimu* together with the index, and told them that in the envelope that Rabbi Simpson left was money for the printing of the *hemshech* together with something else.² The Rebbe gave them a *bracha* that it should be a *zechus* for the *neschama* of their father and his descendants.

*📞 5672-1912, 5737-1976, 5666-1906, 5678-1918

A YOUNG MASHPIA

In 5676* Rabbi Simpson married his wife Fruma Ita, daughter of Reb Yehoshua Binyamin Lypszyc, in the vacation resort where the Rebbe Rashab was then staying. He spent the following year learning in the town of Kublitz, financially supported by his father-in-law.

One year later, the Rebbe Rashab sent Rabbi Simpson to become the *mashpia* of the Lubavitch community in Odessa, despite his young age of 28.

Several months after he moved there, the Bolshevik revolution began, and years of war and chaos followed. The Communist regime took over the city, banned all religious activities, and physically oppressed all religious Jews, especially Lubavitcher Chassidim who would not bend.

Throughout this spiritually, physically, and financially difficult time, Rabbi Simpson stayed together with his community, encouraging them and leading them through it.

Despite the difficult circumstances, Rabbi Simpson continued to travel to the Rebbe Rashab in Rostov regularly,

notwithstanding the many dangerous obstacles that he had to face on the way.

MOVING TO AMERICA

In 5683*, Rabbi Simpson received an American visa from his brothers who had already managed to escape. He asked the Frierdiker Rebbe if he should immigrate to the United States and received the answer: “*Al menas lehachzir*—In order to return,” with the explanation: “In order to bring *neshamos* back to their father in heaven.”

Arriving in the United States, Rabbi Simpson settled in Harlem and began his efforts of bringing Yidden closer to Yiddishkeit.

There was a Nusach Ari shul in Harlem with members that had some connection to Chabad in Russia. The Frierdiker Rebbe had sent letters to Chassidim in America encouraging them to become influential in Nusach Ari shuls, and Rabbi Simpson started to involve himself there.

He would encourage people in the shul to financially support the Frierdiker Rebbe. After receiving a sum of donations, the Frierdiker

Rebbe sent the congregation a letter thanking them, and urging them to take advantage of Rabbi Simpson and to have him teach *shiurim* in *nigleh* and Chassidus. After some time, the congregation hired Rabbi Simpson as their rabbi.

By 5688* the Jewish community in Harlem had dwindled significantly, and Rabbi Simpson moved to Borough Park. At the time, the neighborhood did not have a large *frum* community, and Rabbi Simpson established Anshei Lubavitch, where he was eventually appointed by the community to serve as *rav*.

A year after the new appointment, Rabbi Simpson established another Lubavitch shul, Ahavas Achim Tzemach Tzedek, and commissioned the construction of a new building for it. The first floor would serve as the shul, and the second floor would be Rabbi Simpson and his family's personal dwelling.

When the Frierdiker Rebbe visited New York in 5689*, he was the first one to stay in this apartment. Years later, in 5711*, the Rebbe visited there as well when he was *sandek* for Rabbi Simpson's grandchild. During the *seudah* the Rebbe spoke about *bris milah* and its association with *hiskashrus* to the Rebbe.³

FIRST BEIS RIVKAH

In Kislev 5702*, the first branch of Beis Rivkah was opened in Rabbi Simpson's shul. It was an afterschool program where public high school girls would come to learn Jewish studies. The teachers were Lubavitcher women, and the school was under the umbrella of Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch. As a result of this program, a full-time school called Beis Yaakov

HANDS BEHIND MY BACK

Reb Dovid Edelman related:

“After the *histalkus* of the Frierdiker Rebbe, it was a strange time. On the one hand, most of the Chassidim considered the Rebbe as Rebbe. The Rebbe himself, though, behaved as though he was not.

Once I was returning from a trip, and I was going to enter the Rebbe's room. I knew that the Rebbe would offer me his hand to shake, and I was terrified of the thought that I wouldn't know what to do.

I decided to ask Rabbi Simpson for his advice, I was sure he would know what to do. Rabbi Simpson told me: “Do what I do, hold your hands behind your back and the Rebbe will understand your intention.” That is indeed what I did, and it worked.

was established that now boasts thousands of students.

AGUDAS CHASSIDEI CHABAD IN AMERICA

In 5684*, the Frierdiker Rebbe wrote a letter to the Chassidim in America, addressing the difficulty posed by the physical distance of Chassidim in America and Canada to their Rebbe. The solution, the Frierdiker Rebbe wrote, is for Chassidim to gather together as one *agudah* and institute *takanos*, especially in the realm of *shiurei Torah*.

After the Frierdiker Rebbe sent the letter, the Rebbe then sent letters to community leaders explaining in detail exactly how these *shiurim* should be implemented.

In Cheshvan of that year, the Rebbe wrote a letter to the three directors of Agudas Chabad, Rabbi Simpson, Rabbi Moshe Eliezer Kramer, and Rabbi Dovid Shifrin, giving them permission to send out a copy of the Frierdiker Rebbe's letter, and asking them to announce that whoever would like to reach out to the *agudah* should reach out to them directly.

A week later, the Frierdiker Rebbe wrote a letter to Rabbi Simpson, encouraging him to invest his heart and mind into building the new network of Agudas Chabad.

The *agudah* was officially incorporated as an organization in Tammuz of that year, initially with the name Agudas Hachassidim Anshei Chabad, and later as Agudas Chassidei Chabad.

At its beginning, Reb Moshe Eliezer Kramer—who together with

HALACHIC AUTHORITY

Rabbi Simpson was well known for his vast knowledge of *halacha*, and even the Rebbetzin once called him to discuss several halachic questions.

His grandson Reb Yosef Rosenfeld relates: "I write with my left hand, although my right hand is dominant in all other areas. When I became bar mitzvah, I started putting on tefillin on my right hand, as the Alter Rebbe writes in Shulchan Aruch for a person in my situation to do. A few years later, I saw that the Tzemach Tzedek writes that one who does most functions with his right hand, should put tefillin on his left hand, otherwise he does not fulfill the mitzvah of tefillin. This is in contradiction to the ruling of the Alter Rebbe.

"I continued to look into the matter until I finally asked the Rebbe what I should do. The Rebbe's answer was: "Per the instruction of *rabbonei anash* in this regard."

Following the Rebbe's directive, I turned to several Lubavitcher rabbonim. One rav told me to put tefillin on both hands, another told me to continue putting it on my right hand, and my grandfather said that I should put tefillin on my left hand. Since I was now left with an even greater dilemma of whom to listen to, I once again asked the Rebbe. The Rebbe wrote me the following answer: "כהוראת אביו זקנו שליט"א—Follow your grandfather *shlita's* instructions."



* 5684-1924

his sons contributed large amounts of money towards the establishment of Lubavitch in America—was appointed as the chairman of the *agudah*.

On 6 Iyar 5685* Reb Moshe passed away, and a board of seven Chassidim including Rabbi Simpson was created to direct Agudas Chassidei Chabad.

Rabbi Simpson was of the foremost active members of Agudas Chassidei Chabad, and together with his peers accomplished a wide array of achievements, carrying out the instructions of the Frierdiker Rebbe.

THE FRIERDIKER REBBE LEAVING THE SOVIET UNION

After the Frierdiker Rebbe was freed from imprisonment in Spalerna and exile in Kostroma, the KGB and *yevseksia* continued to persecute him in new ways, and he traveled from Leningrad to Malachovka for six weeks.

During this time, Chassidim in Europe and in America made every effort to obtain the necessary papers for the Frierdiker Rebbe to be able to leave Russia together with his family. Several letters were sent by *mazkirim* of the Frierdiker Rebbe to Rabbi Simpson and Rabbi Yisroel Jacobson, instructing them to implore the Chassidim in America to send funds that would enable the Frierdiker Rebbe to leave Russia.

Rabbi Simpson and Rabbi Jacobson's efforts netted a sum of four thousand dollars collectively from many people. Receiving the funds, Reb Yechezkel Feigin replied that the Chassidim in America must not

understand how dire the situation is. Since the Chassidim in the Soviet Union have already given more than they are able to, the Chassidim in America need to exhibit *mesiras nefesh* and come up with additional funds.

Rabbi Feigin later explained in another letter that the Frierdiker Rebbe received papers to leave Russia, and now a sum of twenty-five thousand dollars was needed so that the Frierdiker Rebbe could move to Riga.

Rabbi Simpson and Rabbi Jacobson continued to do all they could, calling many different meetings and fundraisers. Although they pursued every avenue they could think of, their work still turned up short.

In a letter dated 14 Elul 5687*, Reb Yechezkel Feigin once again writes to Rabbi Simpson and Rabbi Jacobson about the great need for funds. He expressed that there is no other way, and Chassidim must donate the funds. If the money isn't found they should take a loan that the Frierdiker Rebbe will pay back.

At the end of the letter, Rabbi Feigin writes that he is not writing this merely on his own accord. It now became clear to Rabbis Jacobson and Simpson that everything was coming from the Frierdiker Rebbe.

Finally, at a meeting with Rabbi Simpson, Rabbi Jacobson, Reb

Avremel Lokshin, and the two Kramer brothers, the latter acquiesced to single-handedly give a huge sum of four thousand dollars. The Frierdiker Rebbe sent them a letter thanking them for the money that helped cover "some of the expenses."

REUNITING WITH THE CHASSIDIM

When the Frierdiker Rebbe left the Soviet Union, Rabbi Simpson sent a letter to the Frierdiker Rebbe expressing the deep yearning of Chassidim in America to see him. In response, the Frierdiker Rebbe sent a letter validating the Chassidim's wish, and saying that he too wants to reunite with the Chassidim.

Finally, in the middle of 5689*, Chassidim were notified that the Frierdiker Rebbe would be visiting America. After some deliberation, it was decided that the Frierdiker Rebbe would stay in Rabbi Simpson's newly built residence before the Simpson family moved in.

The Frierdiker Rebbe arrived on 12 Elul 5689* on the ship La France and

HAVE YOU JUST SMOKED?

In those days (5700s*) it was very common to smoke; Rabbi Simpson was a heavy smoker and he would smoke very strong cigarettes. Although it was already known that smoking was proven to be harmful, many people were still smoking since it was difficult to quit their addiction.

Shortly after Rabbi Simpson became the Frierdiker Rebbe's *gabbai*, an incident occurred that changed that for him.

He once walked into the Frierdiker Rebbe's room right after he smoked. The Frierdiker Rebbe asked in a dissatisfied tone: "Have you just smoked?" Rabbi Simpson understood very clearly that the smell bothered the Frierdiker Rebbe, and immediately quit smoking entirely.

went directly from the port to Rabbi Simpson's house.

The Frierdiker Rebbe said that all rabbonim, rebbes, and *bnei Torah* should be allowed to visit, and within a short amount of time a crowd of two thousand people gathered outside the building. The Frierdiker Rebbe came out to the balcony together with Rabbi Simpson and other Chassidim and addressed those gathered in a loud voice.

That Shabbos, the Frierdiker Rebbe farbrenge in Rabbi Simpson's shul for a large crowd that overflowed into the streets.

During the Frierdiker Rebbe's visit, Rabbi Simpson served as a temporary *mazkir*. In his *reshimos*, the Frierdiker Rebbe writes that Rabbi Simpson

asked if an elderly man could enter into *yechidus*, saying that it has been more than thirty years since he has seen the Frierdiker Rebbe, and he would like to see if the Frierdiker Rebbe will recognize him. When the man entered, the Frierdiker Rebbe saw that it was Reb Moshe Binyamin, the *melamed* who taught him how to write and tested him on Mishnayos.

AGUDAS HATMIMIM

When Rabbi Simpson came to America, there were a small number of alumni of Tomchei Tmimim scattered

throughout the country. Many of them were involved in the spreading of Yiddishkeit and Chassidus, but each was on their own.

In an effort to bring the Lubavitcher Chassidim in America together, the Frierdiker Rebbe established Agudas Hatmimim in 5686* and put Rabbi Simpson at its head.

At the inaugural meeting which took place at Rabbi Simpson's home, a group of Chassidim signed a letter saying that they would join together as one group, in heart and soul, and convene once a month at the house of a member of *anash*, to learn Chassidus and farbrenge. They added that they take upon themselves the duty to look after the physical and spiritual wellbeing of one another, as well as the



RABBI SIMPSON (BEHIND THE REBBE) IN HIS USUAL SPOT AT FARBRENGENS. CRICA 5728.



THE FRIERDIKER REBBE'S YECHIDUS ROOM IN 1970

WHY ARE YOU CRYING?

Rabbi Yisroel Gordon related:

I was in attendance at a farbrengen on Beis Nissan 5698* at the home of Rabbi Simpson. One of the elderly Chassidim who was there began to cry when he exclaimed: "Rebbe, Rebbe!" expressing his great yearning for the Rebbe Rashab.

Suddenly, Rabbi Simpson began to reprimand him: "We have a Rebbe now, why are you crying so much? You never had the Rebbe that you are crying about, and you don't have the Rebbe that we have now," adding sharp words that I never otherwise heard from Rabbi Simpson.

Rabbi Simpson was known to be reserved and calm-natured. But he could not hold himself back when he saw a Chossid who hadn't internalized that we have a Rebbe.

When the Frierdiker Rebbe settled in America, Rabbi Simpson went back to the role of *chozer*, which he served in as a *bochur*, though not to the same extent.

When he was present for a *sicha* or *maamar*, he would repeat it together with Rabbi Mordechai Mentlik in the small *zal*. Occasionally Rabbi Simpson would also write the *hanacha*.

Part of the *hanachos* that Rabbi Simpson wrote were edited by the Frierdiker Rebbe, and parts were edited later on by the Rebbe. Many of these *hanachos* were used in the Sefer Hasichos series.

Rebbe's *mosdos*.

In response to the reports from this meeting, the Frierdiker Rebbe laid out the first steps that should be taken to begin the work of the *agudah*. A database should be made, containing the names of each member of the *agudah*, their address, occupation, and which communal work is right for them.

Each person should be assigned their specific duties, the Frierdiker Rebbe continued. The categories of work included reciting Chassidus in public, launching Torah classes, establishing *chadarim* and yeshivos, recruiting people to join Agudas Chassidei Chabad, spreading writings of Chassidus, finding communal work positions for *anash*, and helping the Chassidim in Europe.

After the lists were compiled, the Frierdiker Rebbe said that the *agudah* needs to officially appoint a leadership. A few months later, a *vaad* was chosen to lead the *agudah*. Rabbi Simpson was appointed as the chairman, Reb Gershon Simpson (Reb Eliyahu's brother) the treasurer, and Rabbi Yisroel Jacobson the secretary.

Indeed, the Agudas Hatmimim accomplished many great things, from establishing *chadarim*, sending funds to the Frierdiker Rebbe, helping Chassidim leave Russia, raising money for the printing of Likkutei Torah, and mainly creating a warm and vibrant community atmosphere among Chassidim with monthly meetings, farbrengens, and *shiurim*.

Aside from serving as the chairman of Agudas Hatmimim, Rabbi Simpson was also later chosen as a member of the *hanhala* of Tomchei Temimim in New York in 5700* and the umbrella Tomchei Temimim organization in 5711*, recruiting many students to enroll in the yeshiva, amongst a large array of things.

GABBAI YECHIDUS

When the Frierdiker Rebbe came to America to settle in 5700*, Rabbi Simpson was appointed as the *gabbai* for *yechidus*. At times he would also join the *yechidus* to help people understand the Frierdiker Rebbe.

Although Rabbi Simpson was constantly with the Frierdiker Rebbe, he never repeated any conversations that he witnessed. The Rebbe said about Rabbi Simpson on the eve of Simchas Torah 5710*: “With him everything is private.” When his son Rabbi Sholom Mendel Simpson was appointed as the Rebbe’s *mazkir*, the Rebbe told him that he should be a *ba’al sod*—secret keeper—like his father.

The Frierdiker Rebbe expressed about Rabbi Simpson, that from the three levels of a *ba’al sod* the Rebbe Maharash described, Rabbi Simpson exhibits the highest level. Even when he is told a secret that he had already heard, it is not noticeable that he already knew the information.

Rabbi Moshe Pesach Goldman, Rabbi Simpson’s son-in-law, related:

“I remember when a member of *anash* was in *yechidus* with my father-in-law present. After the *yechidus*, the man asked my father-in-law to explain what the Frierdiker Rebbe said. My father-in-law said: ‘Since you didn’t ask me to remember what was said, I don’t remember anything. As soon as I leave, I erase everything from my memory.’”

Rabbi Simpson even said about himself, that during the ten years he merited to serve as a *gabbai* for the Frierdiker Rebbe, he trained himself not to look at the Frierdiker Rebbe’s desk, in order not to see something which is not relevant to him.

At one point, the Frierdiker Rebbe

told Rabbi Simpson that he is considering whether to cease receiving people for *yechidus*, explaining that the Alter Rebbe instituted *yechidus* for people to ask for blessings and advice in spiritual matters. Here in America, the Frierdiker Rebbe said, people primarily ask for material matters.

Rabbi Simpson related what he was told to Reb Shmuel Levitin. They decided to instruct *bochurim* to make special preparations for entering *yechidus*, and prescribed an elaborate schedule for them. After some time, Rabbi Simpson told the Frierdiker Rebbe that there is a group of *bochurim* that would like to enter *yechidus* to ask about spiritual matters. They indeed entered *yechidus*, and the Frierdiker Rebbe continued to accept people for *yechidus*.

On the *yechidus* nights, Rabbi Simpson was meticulous to arrive exactly on time. Once, when he arrived a minute late, the Frierdiker Rebbe told him the following story:

“There was once a prestigious minister who called a local citizen to an interview. When the man arrived one minute late to the appointment, the minister pulled out a clock and said: ‘That is it! I am no longer a minister.’”

The story had a strong effect on Rabbi Simpson, and he made sure never to be late again.

Rabbi Yitzchok Groner related: “In the middle of a *farbrengen* with the Frierdiker Rebbe in the late 5700s*, a dissatisfied reaction was noticeable from the Frierdiker Rebbe as he looked at an open window allowing in cold air. Rabbi Simpson crawled under the tables, treading between the crowd, and closed the window. Certainly, Rabbi Simpson could have motioned to one of the younger men to close the window. But that was not the way he operated, he went and did it himself without any fanfare.”

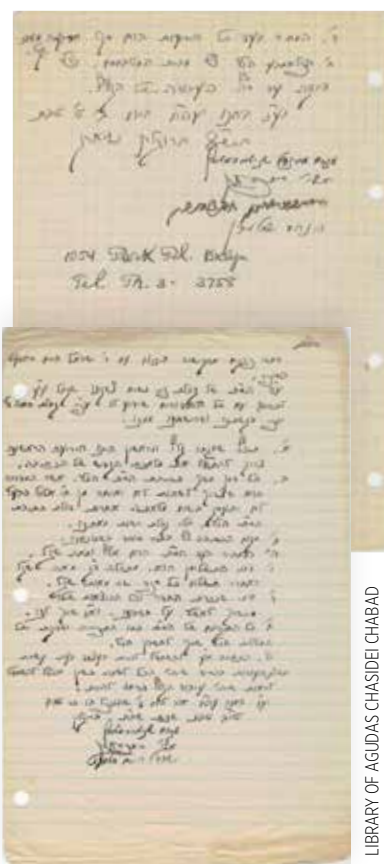
Although Rabbi Simpson kept most things discreet and confidential, there

were some things that he was able to share from what he saw in the Frierdiker Rebbe’s room. The following are a few examples:

Once, the Frierdiker Rebbe was looking for a specific *sefer* and could not find it. It was clear that it was bothering him. The next day the Frierdiker Rebbe told Rabbi Simpson: “My father came to me and showed me where the *sefer* was.”

In a conversation about the Frierdiker Rebbe’s health, the Frierdiker Rebbe told Rabbi Simpson: “We need to be Chassidim, and then I will be healthy.” The Frierdiker Rebbe also said that he feels that there isn’t peace among *anash*, and that there is a lack of good character traits.

Toward the end of his life, Rabbi



TWO CONTRACTS FROM 5702*, 1) WITH THE ORIGINAL SOFER COMMISSIONED TO WRITE MOSHIACH'S SEFER TORAH, AND 2) THE MANUFACTURER OF THE KLAFF, SIGNED BY THE REBBE AND RABBI SIMPSON

LIBRARY OF AGUDAS CHASIDEI CHABAD

* 5700s-1940s, 5710-1950, 5702-1942



SCENES FROM THE SIYUM OF MOSHIACH'S SEFER TORAH, ON 9 SHEVAT 5730. RABBI SIMPSON CARRIES THE SEFER TORAH DOWN INTO THE MAIN SHUL. BEHIND HIM, THE REBBE HOLDS A BOX CONTAINING THE SPECIAL CROWN.

Simpson suffered from health issues. He once mentioned to the Rebbe that perhaps his health was deteriorating since he did not fulfill his role as *gab-bai* for the Frierdiker Rebbe properly. The Rebbe negated this completely and said: “*Chas v’shalom* to accuse my father-in-law of such a thing. A Yid that served in the ‘*kodesh penima*’...”

HAKRIAH VEKADUSHA

At the height of the Holocaust, the Frierdiker Rebbe started to publish the Hakriah Vehakdusha monthly magazine, to strengthen Yidden and their belief in the coming of Moshiach in this dark time.⁴

The publication efforts happened very secretly and Rabbi Simpson was one of the only people that were

involved. The Frierdiker Rebbe asked him to find a professional editor who writes Lashon Hakodesh well, and can keep his work secretive. Rabbi Simpson brought Mr. A. Levitt to the Frierdiker Rebbe and he was hired. Mr. Levitt’s real name was Ahron Hirsch. At the time he was the editor of a weekly Yiddish newspaper called *Dos Idishe Licht*.

Every aspect of the magazine was done with the direction of the Frierdiker Rebbe, from the *maamarim* that were included to the distribution process and everything in between.

Mr. Levitt would visit the Simpson home almost every single day and speak with Rabbi Simpson for long periods of time. The family did not know what the content of their conversations were, but could only imagine that it was regarding the magazine.

When the fresh copies of the magazine were ready, they were secretly brought to the Simpson home where

they were packed to be sent around the world.

MOSHIACH'S SEFER TORAH

On the eve of Simchas Torah 5702*, before *hakafos*, the Frierdiker Rebbe announced the writing of a *sefer Torah* that will be used to greet Moshiach. On Isru Chag, the Frierdiker Rebbe instructed Rabbi Simpson to send out a special announcement about the new initiative.

On Beis Iyar, the Frierdiker Rebbe appointed three Chassidim to be in charge of commissioning the *sefer Torah*: Reb Shmuel Levitin, Rabbi Simpson, and Reb Dovid Shifrin. That same day Rabbi Simpson and the *sofer* Reb Shmaryahu Faktor entered the Frierdiker Rebbe’s room and started

the writing of the Torah.

The *sofer* outlined the letters of the word Bereishis, and the Frierdiker Rebbe filled them. Afterward, the Torah was put in the *zal*, and Chassidim came over to buy letters and fill them in. Later there was a special *seudah* and Rabbi Simpson read a letter that the Frierdiker Rebbe wrote to the new *vaad* for the *sefer Torah*.

Later, the *yeri'ah* became unusable and needed to be buried. The Frierdiker Rebbe started the Torah again, but this time in complete secrecy.

Although plans were made for a *siyum sefer Torah* that same year, and again in 5707*, for reasons that remain unknown, the Torah awaited completion for many years. Twenty-eight years after the Torah was originally started, at the farbrengen of 3 Shevat 5730*, the Rebbe announced that the *siyum* for Moshiach's *sefer Torah* was soon to take place. The Rebbe spoke at length about the purchasing of letters in the Torah, mentioning that those who had already bought letters need not buy them again.

After this the Rebbe said: "As there is a *vaad* of the *sefer Torah*, they will probably announce the time and place of the selling of the letters." The Rebbe then told Rabbi Simpson to announce that the sale will take place in 770 which has the numerical value of *paratzta*. After Rabbi Simpson made the announcement, the Rebbe told him to start a joyous *niggun*.

In preparation for the *siyum*, the Rebbe asked Rabbi Simpson to organize a list of people that bought letters in the *Sefer Torah* and to make a card for each family. As the *siyum* neared, the Rebbe called Rabbi Simpson into his room and briefed him on who would be receiving the various honors, including *hagbah* which the Rebbe gave to Rabbi Simpson himself.

The date of the *siyum* was not announced, but approaching Yud Shevat that year, Chassidim felt that

it wouldn't be an ordinary year, and people flocked to the Rebbe from all over the world.

On Thursday, 8 Shevat, after returning from the Ohel and davening Maariv, the Rebbe asked Rabbi Simpson to enter his room. The Rebbe told him that the *siyum* would take place the next day at 2:30 p.m. at the beginning of a farbrengen that would take place in 770.

Those who were there remember the extraordinary sight when Rabbi Simpson came down from the Rebbe's room holding Moshiach's *sefer Torah*, as the Rebbe walked behind him holding a box that later was revealed to be containing the crown for the *sefer Torah*. Exiting the Rebbe's room, Rabbi Simpson waited at the side while holding the *sefer Torah* so that the Rebbe should walk in front, but the Rebbe explained that he couldn't show his back to the *Sefer Torah*.

Reb Shaya Matlin was the *sofer* in 770 who would fix the Sifrei Torah as necessary. He once asked the Rebbe if he could fix the *mantel* (cover) for Moshiach's *sefer Torah*. The Rebbe responded: "Follow the instruction of Rabbi Simpson (the father) *sheyichye* regarding this."

SHADAR

The Frierdiker Rebbe would send Chassidim to cities around the world, to strengthen Chabad communities with words of inspiration and Chasidus, and also to collect funds for *maamad*⁵ and Chabad institutions. Those that the Frierdiker Rebbe sent were known as a *shadar*⁶. Rabbi Simpson merited to be sent on many such *shlichusen*.

The first shlichus Rabbi Simpson was sent on was to Chicago together with Reb Shmuel Levitin. They traveled there three times.

A few years after Tomchei Temimim in Montreal opened, in the summer of 5706* the Frierdiker Rebbe sent Rabbi Simpson together with two others to uplift the yeshiva. The yeshiva was composed of nine *bochurim* that fled from Otwock, Poland, to Shanghai, China, and managed to come to Montreal. The Frierdiker Rebbe directed the *bochurim* there that were of age to seek Rabbi Simpson's guidance in their *shidduchim*.

A short while before the *histalkus* of the Frierdiker Rebbe, Rabbi Simpson

A SPECIAL DREAM

About a week after Shavuos 5710*, Rabbi Simpson had a unique dream. He was sitting at a large farbrengen when the Frierdiker Rebbe asked the crowd why everyone was so broken, and continued: "I left my Mendel, he is fit for this."

At the end of the farbrengen, the Frierdiker Rebbe went into his room and told Rabbi Simpson to close the door behind them. The Frierdiker Rebbe told Rabbi Simpson twice: "Call Reb Mendel here, I want to anoint him." Rabbi Simpson opened the door to go and call the Rebbe, and the dream was over.

The dream repeated itself a few times, and Rabbi Simpson told it to the Rebbe in *yechidus*. The Rebbe replied: "It seems that you are thinking about this all day." Rabbi Simpson said, "Actually I had been busy that day and hadn't thought about this." The Rebbe replied: "I don't feel this."

* 5707-1947, 5730-1970, 5706-1946, 5710-1950

was sent to Cincinnati and then to Miami. The Frierdiker Rebbe sent letters to the two communities notifying them that he is sending Rabbi Simpson to inspire communal *shiurei Torah* in *nigleh* and Chassidus, to examine and strengthen the children's education, and to strengthen the ways of Chassidus.

Only five days before the *histalkus*, the Frierdiker Rebbe sent Rabbi Simpson a letter expressing satisfaction with the reports, and encouraging him to do more.

After the *histalkus*, the Rebbe continued to send Rabbi Simpson to communities. In the beginning, he used to travel with Reb Shmuel Levitin, and later it was with Reb Kadish Romanoff.

In Teves 5713*, the Rebbe wrote a letter⁷ addressed to rabbonim and all Yidden, officially appointing Rabbi Simpson to be a *shadar*, referring to

him with the rare title “*ne’eman bayis*.”

One shlichus that stands out is when the Rebbe sent Rabbi Simpson along with the first group of *talmidim hashluchim* to Australia. The Rebbe told the *bochurim* that went: “Rabbi Simpson, who will go with you—he is from the older Chassidim—will mentor you. You will receive guidance from him for a while, and consult with him regarding (finding) a *mashpia* and *rosh yeshiva*.”

WE WANT TO HEAR CHASSIDUS

Rabbi Simpson would converse with the Rebbe years before the

beginning of the *nesius*. The relationship began when the Frierdiker Rebbe sent Rabbi Simpson amongst a group of Chassidim to greet the Rebbe and Rebbetzin when they arrived in America. After the Frierdiker Rebbe appointed the group, he shared with them a little bit about the Rebbe:

“I will reveal to you who he is: He observes *tikkun chatzos* every night. He is versed by heart in Talmud Bavli together with the Ran, Rosh and Rif, as well as Talmud Yerushalmi with its explanations, as well as Rambam, Likkutei Torah with all of its “*ayens*” [notes of the Tzemach Tzedek, which usually start with the word ‘*ayen*’]. Go and greet him.”

Rabbi Simpson’s family recalls how in the 5700s* the Rebbe would call the house very often and ask to speak to Rabbi Simpson. They would speak for lengthy periods of time.

After the *histalkus* of the Frierdiker Rebbe, Rabbi Simpson was among the first to push that the Rebbe accept the *nesius*. He would speak about it in public, as well as speak to the Rebbe about it personally in *yechidus*.

At the farbrengen of Shavuos 5710*, Rabbi Simpson stood up and said: “The *sichos* are good, but we want to hear Chassidus!” But the Rebbe did not respond. After the next *sicha*, Rabbi Simpson stood up again and asked in the name of all of *anash* that the Rebbe should say a *maamar Chassidus*. The Rebbe smiled widely, and after pausing for a few moments said: “It needs to be specifically now? It doesn’t need to be specifically right now, it can be another time.”

MEKUSHAR TO THE REBBE

Rabbi Simpson was steadfast in his *hiskashrus* to the Rebbe from the very

THE ONLY BOSS

In the 5710s*, someone suggested the idea of appointing a president for the shul in 770. When there was a conversation about whether to pursue this, Rabbi Simpson got up and exclaimed:

“Are you completely crazy? The Rebbe is the only one in charge of 770. The fact that we can daven here is only because he allows us to.”



RABBI SIMPSON ARRIVES IN AUSTRALIA WITH THE SHLUCHIM, 5727.



CUSTOMARILY, WHEN A NEW MAAMAR WAS PRINTED, THE REBBE WOULD BRING A COPY ALONG WITH HIM ON HIS NEXT TRIP TO THE OHEL.

ON 29 ELUL 5736, RABBI SIMPSON'S LAST EREV ROSH HASHANAH ALIVE, HE APPROACHED THE REBBE AS HE ENTERED HIS CAR EN ROUTE TO THE OHEL, TO HAND THE REBBE HIS PAN. THE REBBE TURNED TOWARDS HIM, TOOK OUT THE NEWLY PRINTED KUNTRES OF MAAMARIM OF THE REBBE RASHAB FROM THE YEAR OF RATAN, AND HANDED IT TO RABBI SIMPSON.

YOSSI MELAMED VIA JEM 23123

first moment. Every decision in his life was made only after asking the Rebbe. Already in 5710*, when his daughter was in the middle of a *shidduch*, he said that they cannot go ahead with it before receiving the Rebbe's *bracha*.

During the *farbrengen* of Purim 5711*, the Rebbe expressed to Rabbi Simpson rare remarks about his *hiskashrus* despite having been *mekushar* to the Rebbe Rashab and the Frierdiker Rebbe:

"During the building of the second *Beis Hamikdash*, there were elderly people who remembered the first *Beis Hamikdash*, and they cried. You, who was with the Rebbe [Rashab] *nishmaso eden* and with the [Frierdiker] Rebbe,

how are you not crying? It is understandable [that you were *mekushar*] to the [Frierdiker] Rebbe who was an only son and successor. But what am I and who am I?"

After this, the Rebbe instructed that a *niggun* be sung and only parts of the continued conversation could be heard. One expression that was heard was: "*Mekushar* to me? *Mekushar* to the Rebbe! I am only a successor in one aspect." Another expression that was heard was: "You have faith in the *Aibershter*, I am only a conduit. We need to go out of ourselves, although I haven't gone out from being a *memaleh makom*, we don't need to learn from this."

THE REBBE'S BIMAH

In the months following Yud Shevat 5710*, many people would join the Rebbe's *farbrengens* in the *zal*. Because of the large crowd, it was difficult to hear the Rebbe and most people couldn't even see.

An idea came up to build a platform for the Rebbe to sit on, but nobody wanted to commission it since the Rebbe might not approve of it.

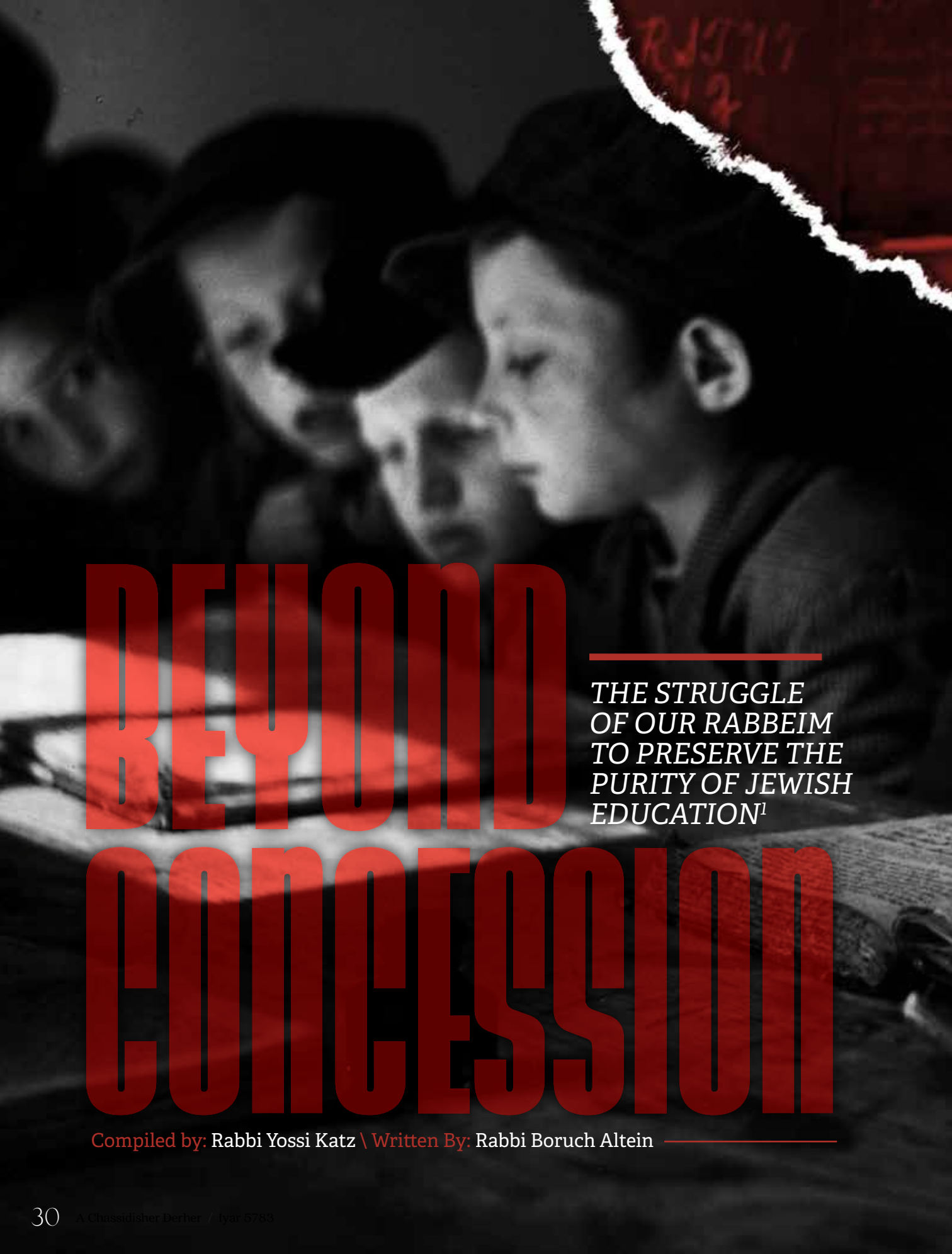
Realizing what needed to be done, Rabbi Simpson went and built a *bimah* with his own hands. Surprisingly when the Rebbe came in and saw it, he did not oppose it.

PASSING

On the fifth night of Chanukah, 29 Kislev 5737*, Rabbi Simpson passed away. His *levaya* left from his shul in Boro Park and then stopped in front of 770. The Rebbe came out to accompany the procession and remarked that he would want to go to the burial but had to visit the Ohel that day.

Rabbi Simpson was buried near the Ohel. Very shortly after the *shivah*, the Rebbe asked Reb Sholom Mendel Simpson why the *matzevah* was not erected yet. The family hurried to arrange the *matzevah*, and the Rebbe edited the words written on it. The Rebbe asked to add the title: "Of the great *chozrim* in Lubavitch." **T**

1. The family's original name was Yaichel, but upon arrival in the United States he was given the name Simpson.
2. Until today it is unknown what that was.
3. Toras Menachem vol. 3 p. 102.
4. See "*Shake the World*," Derher Adar 5775.
5. Money given to the Rebbe by Chassidim to support his household needs and to distribute to others at his discretion.
6. Acronym for *shlucha d'rabanan*.
7. Igros Kodesh, vol. 7. p. 108.



BEYOND CONCESSION

THE STRUGGLE
OF OUR RABBEIM
TO PRESERVE THE
PURITY OF JEWISH
EDUCATION¹

Compiled by: Rabbi Yossi Katz \ Written By: Rabbi Boruch Altein

לע"נ
יעקב ליבער בן גמליאל ליב ע"ה
נלב"ע ט"ו אייר ה'תשס"ד
ת"צ'ב'ה'
נדפס ע"י בנו

הרה"ת ר' ישראל ליב חזוגתו מרת פרומא רחל
ומשפחתם שיחיו
רעזניק



“No!’ That is our undaunted, fearless answer, cried from the throats of people ready and willing for the ultimate self-sacrifice.

“No!’ That is our answer to the Board of Education’s plan, a threat to every yeshiva’s existence. No! We do not accept this mandate. No! This mandate is wrong. No! The half-in and half-out current crop of Jewish leaders cannot lead our battle for Torah. No! The rabbonim and *roshei yeshivos* cannot entrust this battle to anyone else!!

“No, no, and no!’ We do not accept this mandate! We have never accepted it: not from the Romans, not from the Greeks, and not from the Russian Czars. We will not accept it from the Board of Education!”

– *Hakria V’hakedusha*

Who was the subject of these impassioned words?

Was it a cry against the horrors of the Soviet Union? Against the wanton persecution of the dedicated, selfless teachers of the underground network of *chadarim* spearheaded by the Frierdiker Rebbe?

No. The year was 5702*. The location? Brooklyn, NY.

The Frierdiker Rebbe’s battle to preserve Yiddishkeit in the Soviet Union was renowned throughout the Jewish world. Yet, that year there was another fiery battle, a staunch defense of the values of authentic Yiddishkeit, led by the Frierdiker Rebbe. Not against the

Communist *yevseksia*, who strived to make any Jewish education whatsoever completely forbidden. This time, the battle defended against something far more insidious: efforts, well-intentioned or otherwise, to modernize the education of our children. Instead of following the hallowed approach forged over the millenia, there were those who felt that things must change to account for the new world. “Let our children learn Torah,” these activists declared, “but let them also learn of science, of reason, of modern culture. It is time for us to fit in with the modern *zeitgeist*, and to become productive members of society.”

This battle was not the first. This campaign of the Frierdiker Rebbe continued a long tradition of Chabad Rabbeim, who staunchly defended *chinuch al taharas hakodesh*, a pure Torah education without compromise, imbued with wholesome *emunah*. Indeed, the consequences of these battles reverberate to this very day.

The Haskalah

How did it all start?

It was during the 5500s* that the Jews of Germany, were exposed to a corruptive influence: the *haskalah* movement. Followers of the *haskalah*, calling themselves



THE FRIERDIKER REBBE ADDRESSES THE TOMCHEI TEMIMIM DINNER, 29 SIVAN 5702.

KEHLOT PUBLICATION SOCIETY

maskilim, wished to bring their Jewish brethren in line with the cutting edge of non-Jewish culture, science, and philosophy at that time, known as The Enlightenment. Their infamous motto, “Be a Jew at home and a human on the street,” sums it up succinctly.

The *haskalah* laid its first roots in Berlin, home to one of the primary *maskilim*, the infamous Moses Mendelsohn. The son of a *sofer stam*, he spent years studying Western philosophy and culture, and published a translation of Tanach in German that consciously discounted the concept of miracles and the principles of *emunah*. His teachings spread throughout Germany and France like a wildfire in a field of dry wheat. Yet, upon encountering the vast Jewish communities of Poland and Russia, its rapid spread was halted. The students of the Mezritcher Maggid in Poland and Russia led their Chassidim with wisdom and fiery determination, placing an impregnable wall in the *haskalah's* path.

As time went on, however, cracks began to appear. Certain like-minded individuals, especially the wealthy, were attracted to this new approach, though the masses remained true to Torah and mitzvos.

Which brings us to the first battle on our list: the Tzemach Tzedek's battle against the *haskalah*, particularly during the rabbinical conference of 5603*.

The Tzemach Tzedek and the Haskalah²

In the late 5590s*, the *maskilim* began to devote their efforts toward developing relationships with the Czarist ministers. They portrayed the Jews of Russia as backward, primitive, and opposed to the Czar's kindness and his generous efforts to enlighten them, especially the Chassidim and Rebbes, who cling to their backward rituals and faith (this at the same time that the infamous cantonist decree was issued, and the Czar's burning hate to Jews was well known). They would ridicule various mitzvos to the ministers, and even the way the Jews dressed, and suggested various strategies for the government to force the Jews to change. Many of the Jew-hating Czarist ministers eagerly took note of their plans.

A primary target of the *maskilim*? The *chadarim*.

Dr. Max Lilienthal (grandson of the infamous Shimon Hakofer who was unmasked by the Alter Rebbe) ran a school of the *haskalah* movement in Riga. He was



quite friendly with the Russian minister of education, and put much effort into persuading him to completely reform the *cheder* system. Children must be taught the language of the country, he argued, mathematics, geography and the like, as the only hope of freeing the primitive Jewish masses from their beliefs in witchcraft, superstition, and backward rituals.

The *maskilim* sent emissaries to assess the situation across the varied Jewish communities, and Dr. Lilienthal himself traveled across the shtetls and towns of Eastern Europe, promoting his views and his books on the subject. Wherever he or other *maskilim* arrived, the masses of Jews distanced themselves and refused to engage with them, while getting ahold of his books and destroying them.

The *maskilim* were furious. They soon recognized that the influence of the rabbonim over the Jewish population was a significant obstacle to their plans, especially the influence of the Tzemach Tzedek and the heartfelt dedication of his thousands of Chassidim. Without compelling the rabbonim and the Tzemach Tzedek to agree to their plans, there was no possibility that they would have any meaningful impact on the Jewish population.

*📅 5603-1843, 5590s-1830s



The Conference

Thus, the *maskilim* persuaded their friends in government to call together a conference of the leaders of Russian Jewry, in Sivan of 5603*. Four representatives were chosen: The Tzemach Tzedek to represent Chasidim, Reb Yitzchok Volozhiner to represent the *misnagdim*, Reb Yisroel Halperin, to represent the Jewish business class, and Mr. Betzalel Stern on behalf of the *maskilim*.

The many items on the agenda were all resolved amicably, aside from the matter of children's education. The Tzemach Tzedek defended the way that children were taught in every detail, with regard to how to teach the Alef-Beis, what to daven with young children, and even with regard to what *bracha* small boys should say on their *tallis katan*. In the first meeting, the Russian official from the Ministry of Culture and Education demanded that the rabbonim sign a declaration proclaiming the Talmudic law that *dina dimalchusa dina*, the law of the government must be upheld. The Tzemach Tzedek replied, "Talmudic law does not need our signature. The concept that the government's law is valid applies to matters such as tax and general civil law to benefit the country's economy. It has no relation

to matters of Jewish religion and custom, where even the smallest things are considered Torah, and if those wishing to eradicate a custom intend to attack Yiddishkeit, one must observe these matters to the degree of willing to die for them."

The government officials were incensed. The Tzemach Tzedek was put under house arrest for three days, though with no effect on his willingness to fearlessly voice his opinion. Over the course of the conference he was arrested 22 times!

One time, a government minister subjected the Tzemach Tzedek to a hate-filled diatribe accusing him of revolution and treason and threatening him with the direst of consequences, yet the Rebbe remained steadfast. Even Mr. Betzalel Stern was awestruck at the Rebbe's composure, later saying, "Reb Shloime Shtadlan was known to make his visits to nobles with burial shrouds packed in his bag, in case he'd be arrested. Today certainly those who deal with ministers take their shrouds with themselves, but they leave their self-sacrifice at home. The Lubavitcher Rebbe left his shrouds at home and took his self-sacrifice with him."

The Tzemach Tzedek and the other representatives with him did their utmost to explain why there is no need to mandate secular education. In one letter, they explained that science and physics are unnecessary for

most people, while the necessary knowledge to behave as an upright Russian citizen or to be able to successfully earn a livelihood — every Jew comes to know.

The result of that conference was that the government did not mandate changes in any of the *chadarim*, and their mandates supporting compulsory education by the *maskilim* for children who were not in any other school were rarely enforced. The Tzemach Tzedek, on the other hand, launched a broad initiative to found *chadarim* and yeshivos in every Jewish community.

Over the next few years the threat of the *maskilim* was raised a few times, including a second conference of rabbis in 5608*, yet all throughout, the Tzemach Tzedek led the opposition with wisdom, tact, and unyielding strength. The *maskilim* put forward various seemingly innocuous proposals, such as issuing new, child-friendly books for schools to use for learning and davening that would only have “relevant,” enjoyable sections in them, while leaving out any part that is “uncomfortable,” seems to be inappropriate for children, or “not currently relevant.” As well, they wished for an official German translation (by Moses Mendelssohn) to be used.

The Tzemach Tzedek authored detailed written responses to each suggestion. He pointed out how the proposals ran counter to past agreements, where the Czar had agreed that *chadarim* may teach Torah as they always have. As for the merits of the suggestions themselves, the Tzemach Tzedek explained that picking and choosing certain parts of the Torah results from

the lack of belief in the entire Torah being Hashem’s wisdom; since it is all Hashem’s wisdom, every part of it is important. On the topic of the translation, any attempt to enforce the German translation would be counterproductive and needlessly onerous, seeing as both children and teachers do not speak that language. Also, the authorized German translation did not explain the Torah in line with Rashi’s commentary, while it was accepted at the conference of 5603*, with the Czar’s approval, that Rashi’s commentary would be the basis of children’s education.

The Tzemach Tzedek’s efforts succeeded. The result, again, was the freedom to teach Torah to children in time-honored tradition.

Yet, as the years moved on, the tentacles of *Haskalah* spread ever deeper into Russian Jewry, and the threat grew ever greater.

The Rebbe Rashab and Chevra Mefitzei Hahaskalah

In 5623*, a few wealthy Russian *maskilim* launched a new society called Chevra Mefitzei Hahaskalah, or Chamah for short, with the objective of spreading the enlightenment amongst the “backward and benighted” Jewish masses. Led by Baron Evzel Ginsburg and primarily based around a few families, at first Chamah had little impact on Russian Jewry. Yet, the members of Chamah were fanatically devoted to their cause, and under the new leadership of Evzel Ginzburg’s son, Horace (Naftoli) Ginzburg, and grandson David Ginzburg, their dedicated efforts penetrated deep into Jewish communal matters.

The Rebbe Rashab fought Chamah on a number of issues, describing them as an “open, festering wound.” One of the major issues was children’s education.

Most Jewish children at the time learned in *cheder*, where they were taught by dedicated *melamdim* and spent the day studying only Torah, in Yiddish. The law had always been that schools and teachers needed a permit from the regional government to teach, but no special diploma was required.

In 5653*, Chamah began advocating for all *chadarim* to teach the Russian language, and for all *melamdim* to



* 5608-1848, 5603-1843, 5623-1863, 5653-1893

have studied for a secular diploma. In addition, they launched a network of schools with secular studies and lessons in Russian across the Jewish communities.

Chamah's nefarious tactics to influence the youth were brilliantly considered. The Rebbe Rashab describes them, in a letter from around 5658*:

"They [Chamah] spread their poison by means of the schools and *talmudei Torah* they've established. They purposely call them *talmudei Torah*, so as to entrap new souls who... would not have sent their children to a secular school... Their teachers are Jewish heretics, denying Hashem and His Torah. When they learn with the youth, they instill in them the poison of heresy and atheism, completely devouring and destroying their souls..."

In Chamah's schools, children would study intoxicating-sounding secular studies, while their modern looking teachers would routinely laugh at every tenet of Yiddishkeit. In some places, even the Jewish studies teacher wore no yarmulke! Mitzvos were an object of ridicule, while the *cheder melamed* and his study of Talmud became every joke's favored punch line.

Some parents would send their children to the Chamah school in the morning and to *cheder* after school. This was of no help; after spending the day at the Chamah school, the children were exhausted and

had no energy left to study. Listening to their "outlandish-looking" *melamed* and learning subjects that their regular schoolteacher called cultish and irrelevant, had an increasingly shrinking impact.

All this was relevant to the Chamah schools in their own right. With their new initiative for *melamdim* to attain a university degree and for schools to teach Russian, they intended to bring the battle to the *cheder* itself.

In another letter, the Rebbe Rashab writes:

"[With regard to teaching Russian,] although the concept itself is not such a terrible decree, and it even has a positive side — it will diminish the effect of [Chamah's] independent schools, [since they will focus their efforts on the *chadarim* instead,] and it is better that the teaching of Russian take place in *cheder*, under the supervision of the *melamdim* — the terrible problem with this, Hashem protect us, is that Chamah will gain influence in the *chadarim* and *talmudei Torah*."

Forcing *melamdim* to study for a university degree would have the result that only teachers who were of the same ilk as the *maskilim* of Chamah would be allowed to teach. Overall, these initiatives had the potential to completely destroy the fabric of Yiddishe *chinuch*.

The Rebbe Rashab reached out to Jewish leaders across the country. He pushed for an organized fund



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to be set up and a designated representative to be appointed on behalf of the *frumme* world, to counter these varied initiatives. Indeed, the law regarding *chadarim* and *melamdin* was not changed until the fall of the Czar and the rise of Communism.

The Baron Hirsch Grant

Although Chamah's initiatives to insert themselves into the *cheder* system met the same fate as the *maskilim* in the times of the Tzemach Tzedek, they nevertheless invested huge sums of money into their own school network.

It was slightly before this time period that Czar Alexander II was assassinated (in 5641*). His death unleashed a wave of pogroms and Jewish persecution that profoundly affected the Jewish community structure of the Russian Empire. Thousands emigrated, while thousands more lost their livelihood. The traditional communal structure was shaking on its foundations, and there was a wide open breach for those with the resources to take advantage of it. Chamah leapt into the fray.

Many aid organizations were set up to help the millions of suffering Jews find a source of livelihood. Chamah, led and supported by some of the wealthiest Jews in Russia, was involved in these efforts — but used them as a springboard to launch their vision of a prosperous Russian Jewry, predicated on the Jewish population modernizing to adhere to the new spirit of enlightenment. Their schools were a fundamental part of this initiative.

With each passing year, and backed by the massive influx of money from Baron Ginzberg and his fellows, more and more Chamah schools were opened up and down the country. In 5659*, a Chamah school was even founded in the heart of Chassidus itself — in the town of Lubavitch. The Rebbe Rashab describes how he pleaded with Baron Ginzberg to “leave me Yavneh!”³ but to no avail. Indeed, this school would come to cause tremendous heartache to the Rebbe Rashab and Friediker Rebbe over the years.

Yet, despite this rapid growth and significant financial backing already in place, Chamah was held back by the huge costs of operating these schools. The schools were not yet that popular, and the burden of operating so many schools that could not cover themselves was growing too large for Chamah to swallow.

At this time, one of the primary Jewish aid



organizations was called the JCA (the Jewish Colonization Association). It had been founded by the famed Jewish philanthropist Baron Maurice de Hirsch. He was fabulously wealthy and always kept his Jewish brothers and sisters close at heart, giving tens of millions of francs to various causes around the globe.

As the economic situation of the millions of Russian Jews worsened, the JCA launched many initiatives to help, such as building factories that would provide work for those in need, building homes for poor families, and the like.

The JCA maintained a Russian office based in Petersburg, headed by none other than Baron Horace Ginzburg.

In 5656*, Baron Hirsch died, leaving a large part of his estate to the JCA. Shortly afterward, in 5660*, news broke that Chamah had asked for, and been awarded with, a massive grant of 1,000,000 francs (roughly 400,000 ruble) for their school network. Bearing in mind that it cost approximately a few thousand ruble to start a school and about 6-800 ruble a year to keep a school running, this was a huge sum of money.

As the Rebbe Rashab writes, “With the power of Baron Hirsch’s vast wealth they can establish schools in every place, and will destroy the world G-d forbid...”

The Rebbe Rashab's response

Throughout the year 5660*, the Rebbe Rashab worked tirelessly to create and implement a plan of

* 5641-1881, 5659-1899, 5656-1896, 5660-1900



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action. The Rebbe's circle of Chassidim who were active participants in advising and implementing the counter efforts included Reb Monish Moneszohn, Reb Yeshaya Berlin, and Reb Eliezer Moshe Madievsky. The issue was time. The JCA had only sent a small advance of money to date, and perhaps, with the right pressure, things could be salvaged.

After much groundwork and effort, the Rebbe Rashab responded by issuing a beautifully written letter to the JCA. In it, he described the desperate struggle the Jews of Russia have to put bread on the table, and the general appalling poverty in the overcrowded Pale of Settlement (the area of the Russian Empire where Jews were permitted to live), primarily due to the Russian Empire's restrictive policies. He described at length various ways they can be helped, whether with land grants for farms, factories to work in, or even building hospitals to care for their sick. Finally, he expounded on why the current plan, to fund Chamah, was in fact counterproductive, and even terribly harmful.

Among the points the Rebbe Rashab made is that:

1. Studying advanced studies fitting for a career as a doctor or the like is unhelpful for most children. There is no need or place for so many Jewish doctors or lawyers. To the contrary — learning a physical trade would be the most helpful, yet, children who have been exposed to higher secular studies have no wish

to perform menial labor. They look at the children of the wealthy and wish to pursue the same advanced studies, yet they end up starving and penniless, with no work available. Children exposed to such studies look down on their parents and dream of leaving home and rising in society, thus destroying vital familial bonds.

2. Basic knowledge of Russian, math and the like are already studied by Jewish children. Indeed, the Rebbe Rashab challenges the JCA to “find one youth across the entire country who cannot speak the country's language.” At the moment, it is simply that parents arrange for private tutoring in these necessary subjects for their children, and in such an environment the child remains in the cocoon of home, respectful of his parents.

3. More importantly, when being privately tutored the parents can monitor their child's studies and ensure that their teacher is a *yarei Shamayim*. By contrast, the schools of Chamah actively destroy any care and respect for Yiddishkeit and the traditions of the parents.

4. The above leads into the final point, where the Rebbe Rashab describes how a boy until around thirteen years old is, as yet, undefined, and his future character and trajectory depend on the influence of his teachers. The very first part of his development ought to be to instill within him the fundamental faith of a Jew and to arouse his Jewish spirit to daven, learn Torah and fulfill the mitzvos. He should be accustomed to the

daily mitzvos, so that immediately upon awakening he washes his hands and puts on his tzitzis to give thanks and bless Hashem, to daven and to say *brachos* and *kedushah* and to answer *amen*, to learn the forbidden and permissible; and all of this, if instilled properly, will last him for life. This is the exact opposite of the education offered to children in the Chamah schools.

The Rebbe Rashab's emissary, Reb Avrohm Abele Persohn, traveled to non-Chassidic Jewish leaders, such as Reb Chaim Brisker, Reb Chaim Ozer Grodzinski, Reb Elya Chaim of Lodz, the Chofetz Chaim, Reb Azriel Hildesheimer from Germany, and others, and garnered similar letters from them. The letters were translated into English and French and presented to the JCA committee.

It took years, and there were multiple obstacles and setbacks. Yet, eventually the Rebbe Rashab succeeded: in 5663*, news broke that the JCA withheld the final 600,000 francs from the pledge, using them instead for other purposes.

Thus, the efforts of Chamah and their supporters were thwarted. The *chinuch al taharas hakodesh* continued on, until the outbreak of World War I and the rise of Communism (in 5674* and 5679* respectively) changed everything. At that point, it was no longer about secular studies, but about any Jewish education at all. The account of the Frierdiker Rebbe's efforts in this regard are well known and beyond the scope of this article.

The next stages in the battle for *chinuch al taharas hakodesh* took place in the free country of America, and in influencing the policies of the new state of Israel.

The Frierdiker Rebbe and the Free Countries

When the Frierdiker Rebbe arrived in New York from a Europe torn apart, his famous statement, "*America is nit andersh*," that the Yiddishkeit of America is no different from that of *der alter heim* in Europe, was a shock to many. One of the early tests of this approach took place almost immediately upon his arrival.

Back in 5699 (1939), the New York Board of Education passed the following resolution:

"Voted, that private or parochial schools that operate with a program providing a session carried on in a foreign language during the forenoon, with only an

afternoon session in English, be advised that such practice violates the compulsory education law..."

Nevertheless, the existing yeshivos of New York at the time — which, though all offering secular education, reserved the morning hours for davening and study of Torah — explained that such a change could not be implemented so suddenly. The Board provided a year extension, and little more was heard of the matter until Adar 5702 (March 1942). The Educational Board reached out then to all existing yeshivos, noting that it appeared that a number of yeshivos had not complied with the above resolution and that hearings on the matter would soon commence.

The Frierdiker Rebbe was adamant that this regulation not be implemented. Using the *possuk* [regarding the mitzvah of *challah*] of "*Reishis arisosechem*," (lit. the first of your dough), the Frierdiker Rebbe explained it by relating the word *arisosechem* to a word for bed, *arisah*. In other words, the first thing one should do upon arising from bed should be connected with Torah and Yiddishkeit.

In a letter to the head of Agudas Harabbonim, Reb Yisroel Rosenberg, the Frierdiker Rebbe described this law as, "A terrifying and horrifying decree hovering over the heads of the Jewish people across the greater New York area..."

In the continuation of the letter, the Frierdiker Rebbe explained that aside from the demeaning lack of respect for *kedushah* that placing secular studies first conveys, allowing this law to pass [and thereby allowing the government a say over our religious studies] would utterly destroy the foundation of the New York yeshiva system, with unexpected and dire consequences.

The Frierdiker Rebbe goes on to point out that the operating committee, led by Reb Yitzchak Meir Bunim, was working hard and in the right direction, basing their position on American law itself, yet their approach was leading toward a path of compromise — which should be unacceptable to the yeshivos. Instead, it should be explained to the members of the Board of Education that moving secular studies to the morning is completely impossible, and demanding this demeans our people's religious feelings — and, "In every time and in every place, no one, not even those appointed by the government, has the right to demean the religious feelings of another, and certainly not in this free country; [certainly not] at a time when our brothers and sisters throughout the lands conquered by the 'Agagite' [i.e. the Nazis] are being killed, slaughtered, and murdered with tremendous cruelty; [certainly not] at a time when tremendous danger hovers over the holiness of

* 5663-1903, 5674-1914, 5679-1919

the land of our forefathers, may Hashem have mercy on it and on us; [certainly not] at a time when our Jewish brethren who live in this country place themselves in danger on the battlefields of land, sea and air..."

The Frierdiker Rebbe went on to ask that all Jews, no matter their group or party, should participate in thwarting this evil decree. Specifically, the Frierdiker Rebbe advised to arrange: 1. Mass, organized rallies with fiery, passionate speeches, 2. Public pamphlets in Yiddish and English about the matter, and 3. Well-explained articles in newspapers.

The Frierdiker Rebbe also wrote to Reb Eliezer Silver, one of the leaders of American Orthodoxy, and pushed for stronger action by the committee, while also asking Reb Nissan Telushkin to galvanize rabbonim to visit different shuls and thunder against the decree from the pulpit. That summer, the article in "Hakriah Vihakdusha" was published, with the ringing cry of the three "No's!"

Reb Dovid Edelman was a *bochur* in 770 at that time. He later related how representatives of the Chassidim attempted to work things out with the Board of Education, to no avail. Finally, the Chassidim told the government officials, "In 5687 (1927), the [Frierdiker] Rebbe was imprisoned in Russia for his work at establishing

schools that the Soviet government didn't approve of. The US Congress and President Hoover intervened and demanded that he be freed. Are you now going to arrest Rabbi Schneersohn and make America the laughingstock of the world?! The Russian government will publish the hypocrisy and irony of the matter. America demanded that we free him, and then two years after he's in America, America imprisons him for the same crime..."⁴

Sure enough, the weight of public opinion and the arguments of the committees succeeded. In Tishrei 5703*, the Hapardes journal reported that an agreement with the state educational board was reached for *yeshivos* to continue with *limudei kodesh* in the mornings.

The Struggle in Israel

Shneur Zalman Rubashov, known as Zalman Shazar (the acronym of his full name) was born to a Lubavitch family in the town of Mir, on Rosh Chodesh Kislev 5650*.

Shazar is well known for his ardent Zionism. He was one of the original founders of the Socialist-Zionist political party *Mapai*, and was the editor of the Israeli newspaper *Davar*. After having served as a member of the Israeli Knesset and in various governments, he was appointed president of Israel in the year 5723*.

Along with all the above, Shazar is famous for his fervent dedication to the Frierdiker Rebbe and the Rebbe, and for his pride in his identity as a Chabad Chossid. He acted on behalf of the Rabbeim multiple times, and his visits with the Rebbe have been well-documented.

In 5709*, when the State of Israel was founded, Shazar was appointed minister of education.

At that time, 6,000 Jewish children between the grades of first through eighth were not attending any school, aside from the thousands of new children amongst the waves of immigrants arriving in the new country.

Minister Shazar drafted a bill calling for mandatory education, calling back to the times of the second *Beis Hamikdash*, when every town and village in Eretz Yisroel had a *melamed* of children. Indeed, on 18 Elul 5709*, a bill passed into law making school education for every child between the ages of 5 to 13 legally compulsory.

[The Rebbe actually referenced these efforts in a letter to Mr. Shazar, four years later, in connection with



THE FRIERDIKER REBBE WITH THE HEAD OF AGUDAS HARABONIM OF NORTH AMERICA, RABBI ELIEZER SILVER, IN SPRINGFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS. TAMMUZ 5690*



PURITY

...With regard to educating boys and girls — we must give them all of Yiddishkeit from their earliest years, without compromise and without allowances for cutting corners.

If we want to ensure that “even when he grows old he will not stray from it,” we cannot rely on approaching him when he is mature and on the streets and telling him, “You’ve got to fight against [negative influences]. Don’t be frightened by any obstacles and challenges [to Yiddishkeit], you need to have *mesiras nefesh!*” If we want him to be able to stand up to these challenges when he “grows old,” we must begin when he is still a “youth.”

This is why *chachmei Yisrael* worked so hard and invested tremendous energy in ensuring that the education of Jewish boys and girls be completely pure, *al taharas hakodesh*.

They engaged in battle over every detail, even fighting to not give in on issues that didn’t seem so important — because they recognized that the years of education impact the boy or girl’s entire life. They recognized that we have to give them the strength and weapons they need to fight all the battles they’ll have throughout their life’s journey.

A person is compared to a tree... If we scratch a tree that has already grown, the scratch will only

be at that spot and it won’t cause any other harm. If we make a scratch in the seed being planted, though, that one scratch will likely cause the entire tree to be crippled.

The same is true regarding education:

A middle aged person... who imagines that he must compromise his way of life, only impacts a few years. He lived without compromise for forty years, so if he stumbles and compromises [his standards] for a year, the forty years he has behind him can give him the strength to soon forget about his compromise and hold on to a wholesome Yiddishkeit.

When we discuss the younger generation, though, wanting to bring them up relying on compromised [standards], we will have taken away their warmth and devotion to Yiddishkeit for the rest of their lives. Due to the “scratch” and damage formed in their youthful soul, it is likely that, *Rachmana litzlan*, they will grow up as a crippled Jew, a *ba’al mum*...

We need a youthful Jewish generation in this world, healthy Jewishly, Jews who are vibrant spiritually and consequently vibrant Jews physically. With that they will be able to take over the world not only for themselves, so that their own portion is a sanctuary for Hashem, but also for the middle and older generations...

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PRESIDENT SHAZAR CONVERSING WITH STUDENTS DURING A VISIT TO A CHABAD YESHIVA IN ERETZ YISROEL.

establishing a Chabad school network, writing, “And may the man who merited to establish mandatory education (*chinuch chovah*) also be meritorious in the area of education for mitzvos and Torah (*chinuch mitzvah v’Torah*).”]

However, the possibility that the new state policies on education would have a negative impact on *chinuch al taharas hakodesh* loomed large.

In Iyar 5709*, we find the Frierdiker Rebbe writing to Mr. Shazar, “Horrible rumors have reached my ears, indicating that perhaps, G-d forbid, the government will attempt to lay hands on kosher education in general, and especially on the learning and educational structure of the *yeshivos* and *chadarim*, which have been operating in the path of Torah from their very beginning until now, deviating neither right nor left, without compromising any spiritual standards despite various challenges.

“Even minor contemplation on past events, and on the degree of self-sacrifice with which our holy forefathers, of blessed memory, battled against allowing foreign hands to touch even the ‘tip of a *yud*’ of Judaism generally and especially of education, ought to be sufficient for one who has the capability to consider the generation, and not make any changes to education

contrary to the views of Torah.

“Without any doubt, your dear sensitive soul, rooted in storied Chassidim and men of good deeds, would not consent to participate in activities that are, G-d forbid, a destruction of the faith. My words are not directed toward you personally, but rather toward one with great influence over his surroundings. I lay out my entreaty to use this opportunity before you to be from those “who acquire their world in one moment,” and to push aside and eliminate any plan for an evil decree, G-d forbid, regarding kosher education.”

Rabbi Menachem Porush, one of the long-time activists of Agudas Yisrael, recounted:

“At that time, when there were concerns that the Ministry of Education would not allow the *chadarim* that only teach Torah to continue, I traveled to the United States. The Brisker Rav, Rabbi Yitzchak Zev Soloveitchik, requested that I visit the Frierdiker Rebbe and ask him to influence Shazar not to inhibit, G-d forbid, with the *chadarim*.

“I indeed did so. The Frierdiker Rebbe asked that I visit him again before returning to Eretz Yisroel. When I visited him the second time, he asked me to tell Mr. Shazar, in his name, to fulfill the request of the Brisker Rav, and that he hopes that the Shazar-Rubashov family in Eretz Yisroel won’t embarrass the Rubashov family of Russia...”⁵

Sure enough, the efforts were successful. The *chadarim* network in Eretz Yisroel was able to continue operating as they always had been, completely independent of all outside influence.

Today, the struggle is not over. In every generation there are those who wish to “add” secular values to Yiddishkeit. Yet, as our Rabbeim taught us, the warmth and passion for Yiddishkeit must be instilled from the very first moments of life — and then *gam ki yazkin lo yasur mimena*, even when growing old it will not fade. **T**

1. This article contains a historical overview on the subject at hand. For a comprehensive look at what the Rabbeim say on secular studies, see “Purity of the Mind,” Derher Elul 5780.

2. The following account is taken primarily from the Kuntres of the Frierdiker Rebbe, “*HaTzemaich Tzedek U’tnuas HaHaskala*,” available also in English, “The Tzemaich Tzedek and the Haskalah Movement”.

3. A reference to the plea of Rabbi Yochanan Ben Zakkai from the Roman Emperor to spare the city of Yavneh and its scholars from destruction, Gemara Gittin 56b.

4. Published by Rabbi Sholom Ber Avtzon.

5. <https://jemtv.page.link/fmYW>

נדפס ע"י ולזכות
הרה"ת ר' משה פינחס וזוגתו מרת עלקא
ומשפחתם שיחיו
וואלף

PRACTICAL HORA'OS

A CLOSER
LOOK AT
SOME OF
THE REBBE'S
HORA'OS

BUYING A HOME

THE REBBE'S DIRECTIVES ON
THIS MONUMENTAL DECISION

BY: RABBI TZEMACH FELLER

BIGGER AND NICER

In many instances, the Rebbe recommended that people seek to move to a larger, nicer home, even if doing so would come with additional financial obligations. A beautiful home broadens the mind, and this in turn helps its occupants reach their fullest potential.

The Rebbe sent letters to two shluchim on the same day, both leading Chabad activists, encouraging them that their proposed purchase of a house should be in an expansive manner.

The Rebbe wrote to Reb Shmuel Dovid Raichik,¹ “Being that the purchase of a house is usually for a lengthy period of time and especially in this case where the house is meant for communal purposes as well, such as gatherings and meetings and the like, the approach should therefore be broad-minded. In general, nothing good comes out of small-mindedness.”

And to Rabbi Efraim Wolf, the Rebbe wrote,² “In response to your question of whether to buy two small houses or to build a new house, which may cost less than the two small houses: My opinion is well known: מען דארף [— you need to have a broad mindset] and therefore it's better that you build a new house און מיט א ברייטקייט [— with broad-mindedness] — and Hashem will give you success.”

WHAT ABOUT THE MONEY?

Buying or leasing a new home often requires putting oneself in debt. The Rebbe wrote that it is worthwhile to go into debt — for a typical, reasonable amount — in order to buy a home. The Rebbe explained that “כך הוא מנהגו של עולם” — this is what people typically do,” and to one individual the Rebbe explained that this is indicated in the Gemara:

“Regarding what you write that by moving into a new home, you have gone into debt ... there are two sayings



“MY OPINION IS WELL KNOWN:

זיך שטעלן ברייט – YOU NEED TO

HAVE A BROAD MINDSET.”

in the Torah regarding this topic that are taught close together: ‘Whoever engages in construction becomes poor,’³ and along with this — on the very same page, earlier on, ‘Any man who does not have his own land is not a man.’⁴ Tosfos there explains that this refers to land upon which to build a house. This tells us that you should not take to heart the fact that you are temporarily becoming impoverished — for ‘the borrower is subjugated [to the lender],’ since the wholesomeness and growth that [the home] will bring is despite the oppressive, temporary matter [of the debt], which will eventually pass.’⁵

A short while later, in a letter regarding the building of a new community in Kfar Chabad, the Rebbe explained the inner meaning of this *seder*.

“Our sages taught that ‘whoever engages in construction becomes poor,’⁶ and on the same page it is made clear that ‘Any man who does not have his own land is not a man.’⁷ To explain the seeming contradiction in this, I explained that in order to erect a building — a true building which contains, surrounds and brings together the person and all of their possessions, to the point where they are elevated to the lofty level of אדם [man], called so because אדמה לעליון [man is comparable to the Supernal] — our revealed resources and powers are not enough to create an everlasting house.

It is only when we impoverish ourselves — meaning that we invest our revealed energies and even our hidden energies, those of our essence — do we lay the foundation and build the walls and roof, and it becomes ‘the beauty of man’ (because you put in and will put in the effort) ‘to dwell in a house.’⁸

(From a letter to Israeli President Zalman Shazar)⁹

TO BUY – NOT TO RENT

In regard to the question of whether to buy or to rent a

home, the Rebbe replied:

“My opinion on this is well known: The right thing to do is to buy a house and not to rent an apartment, for with the same money that is paid to someone else in rent, you should be paying a mortgage [which will go] to yourself.”¹⁰

“You should continue to live in Haifa, for you’re successful there in spreading Yiddishkeit. It is also a good idea that you should expand your home — but without taking on a large debt by doing so.

“Since ‘a beautiful home expands the mind of a person,’ you should not be too concerned if you have to go into an average amount of debt, for this is the custom of the world.”¹¹

To another person, however, the Rebbe responded that although the above is generally true, one must take in account the concern of למה תתראו. As explained in Gemara Taanis (10b), “It is stated: ‘And Yaakov said to his sons: Why do you show yourselves?’ (Bereishis 42:1). Yaakov said to his sons: ‘Do not show yourselves when you are satiated, not before the members of the house of Esav, nor before those of Yishmael, so that they not be jealous of you.’”

With this in mind, the Rebbe told an individual to take this concern into account, and avoid showing-off and the appearance of living ostentatiously.¹²

THE WIFE’S OPINION

Several times, the Rebbe — repeating a *hora’ah* from the Frierdiker Rebbe — stressed that when it comes to buying a home, one should follow the opinion of his wife who is the *akeres habayis* — the foundation of the home.

“Regarding your question about the home, as we heard a number of times from my father-in-law the [Previous] Rebbe, when it comes to matters of a person’s home, one should follow the opinion of his wife, the *akeres habayis*,



in keeping with the verse that “The glory of the daughter of the king is inward.”¹³ Of course, you can explain the reasons behind perspectives that differ from hers — and perhaps she’ll agree with you — but if not, you should follow her opinion.”¹⁴

WHERE TO BUY

In several letters to people in Eretz Yisroel, the Rebbe bemoaned the fact that people were spending enormous amounts of money to move to very expensive areas. Instead, the Rebbe said, one should move to an area with a *frum* community but where the cost of buying or leasing a home is lower.

“The right thing to do would be for you to move to a place where there are *anash*, so that you can partner with them in increasing Chabad matters in general, and especially in the most fundamental area — *hafatzas hamaayanos*. My opinion on this has been well-known for a long time: I don’t agree at all with the tremendous amounts of key money¹⁵ that people are paying to get a home in specific neighborhoods and cities. Even if their means aren’t limited, the money should be saved for necessities that one can’t do without (whether private or public matters) and not necessarily for key money for a home.”

DOWNSIZING

As lives go on, people often consider downsizing — selling their home and moving into a smaller home, or into the homes of relatives — to free up some extra money. The Rebbe explains the potential hazards that downsizing can bring, and details whether, when, and how to downsize.

“In response to your letter in which you write about your present situation in respect to debts that you took on when you purchased a home some time ago, and how you wonder how to resolve this distressing situation: It is clear

that your idea of selling your current home and buying a smaller one [is not the correct thing to do, since] besides for the fact that — as you write in your letter — this will cause notable financial loss, and experience has shown that doing this will not take you out of debt, what’s more — and this is the main thing — after living for some time in a home like the one you’re in now, moving into a smaller home will bring dejection, as can be understood from the positive outcome in the reverse situation, as our sages say, “Three things expand a person’s mind: [a beautiful home ...]”¹⁶ Therefore, you should try and refinance for a loan with a longer term and with more favorable conditions, and through this, you will be able to slowly resolve the pressure of the debt, which comes from outside, without affecting the inside of your home, and the broadening of your mind that comes with it.”¹⁷ **T**

1. Printed in *Derher Kislev* 5774, p. 20.
2. Published in *Leshimcha Ten Kavod* (Teshura Wolff, 6 Nissan 5776) p. 132.
3. *Yevamos* 63a.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Igros Kodesh* no. 5,703.
6. *Yevamos* 63a.
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Yeshayahu* 44:13.
9. *Igros Kodesh* no. 5,911.
10. *Igros Kodesh* no. 6,215.
11. *Igros Kodesh* no. 6,147.
12. *Igros Kodesh* no. 6,837.
13. *Tehillim* 45:14.
14. *Igros Kodesh* no. 7,590.
15. The money required to move into a home or apartment, such as the security deposit and other upfront fees.
16. *Berachos* 57b.
17. *Igros Kodesh* no. 6,397. See also no. 6,445.



לזכות החיילים בצבאות ה'
שמעון בן חי' מושקא
לרגל יום הולדתו ל"ג בעומר
שיינא בת חי' מושקא
לרגל יום הולדתה י"ב אייר

מנחם מענדל בן חי' מושקא
אסתר הנ' רחל בת חי' מושקא
שיחיו

יה"ר שיגדלו חי' לים בצבא
כ"ק אדמו"ר
מתוך שמחה, בריאות והרחבה



“Only the Rebbe’s Smile”

Written By: Rabbi Mendel Jacobs

In honor of Beis Iyar, birthday of the Rebbe Maharash, we present this fascinating excerpt of one of the letters penned by the legendary shliach, Reb Berel Baumgarten, to his friend and colleague Reb Hirshel Shusterman. Dated 2 Iyar 5703*, this letter was written when Reb Berel was studying in the yeshiva at 770, and Reb Hirshel was in Worcester, Massachusetts, where he headed a branch of Achei Temimim.

After the Frierdiker Rebbe’s *histalkus*, the Rebbe asked Reb Hirshel if he could have the letters from Reb Berel. Reb Hirshel hesitated for a moment, explaining that in addition to descriptions of the events in *beis chayeinu* and words of the Frierdiker Rebbe that these letters contained, there were also many trivial details (“*narishkeiten*,” as he referred to them). The Rebbe dismissed his concern, saying that he wouldn’t look at that part.

Reb Hirshel sent the entire packet of letters back to Reb Berel, and Reb Berel handed the entire collection to the Rebbe. Years later, the original envelope from Reb Berel containing all the letters he sent were found in the Rebbe’s room.

B”H. Birthday of the Rebbe Maharash.

The commencement day of the writing of Moshiach’s Sefer Torah—*Tiferes Sheb’Tiferes*

Tomchei Temimim, may Hashem bless it and expand it

greatly.

To my truly dear friend, Reb Tzvi *shlita*, *shalom u’vracha!*

The truth is that after I received your letter, I decided not to write to you anymore because I gathered from your

writing that you're quite down. It seems that instead of giving you encouragement, my letters are just becoming a burden. However, recently there were a few things that I believe you really must be made aware of. Also, there are some very nice things that if I don't write them to you now, I might forget them later and you will miss out on hearing them. I am therefore writing to you now, and G-d willing, I will not bother you again until you come upon easier times.

The [Friediker] Rebbe *shlita* instructed that there should be a farbrengen on the second night of Rosh Chodesh [Iyar], but there was a blackout and it couldn't be arranged. Only the next day, on Rosh Chodesh afternoon at 3:00, we had a farbrengen at the home of Reb Yisroel [Jacobson], the "younger *mashpia*," and that evening on Motzei Rosh Chodesh, 17th of the Omer, there was a farbrengen at the yeshiva.

At first, we were addressed by Reb Shmuel Levitin, the "elder *mashpia*," and then the Rebbe's son-in-law, Ramash [the Rebbe] appeared, and he was the main speaker.

As usual, he spoke very, very, beautifully, but this time he mostly related stories about the Rebbe Maharash, and his Baal-Shem-Tov-like conduct [i.e. in a supernatural manner]. Ramash repeated many of the stories that his father-in-law, the Rebbe *shlita*, wrote to him, or the stories the Rebbe related to him orally.

Firstly, he related how up until the Rebbe Maharash, the Rabbeim were mostly impoverished. Even the Tzemach Tzedek lived in a materially poor manner, without luxury and expansiveness. The Rebbe Maharash changed this, and already during his father's lifetime, he began living in a broad and expansive manner.

When he built his house, the Rebbe Maharash included large, wide windows. When the Tzemach Tzedek asked him, "Why do you need these?" the Rebbe Maharash answered that they would provide light in the house.

The Tzemach Tzedek continued, "In my grandfather's [the Alter Rebbe's] house, there were very thin, small windows." The Rebbe Maharash commented that it must not have been so light in the house. "No, no!" the Tzemach Tzedek replied. "*Lichtig, lichtig!* (It was full of light!)"

When [the Rebbe Maharash] was eight years old, he learned in *cheder* together with the Magen Avos [Harav Shlomo Zalman, son of Maharil, son of the Tzemach Tzedek], and other nephews of his who were older than him. Once, the teacher asked the children a question on the subject they were learning and asked them to come up with their own answers. The Rebbe Maharash suggested that all the other children should offer their answers, and then he would give his own. All the other children did not have what to answer, so the Rebbe Maharash offered a great answer, shocking the teacher.

The other students were jealous, as they were older and didn't have any answers to offer, and they started crying. They complained to the teacher saying that although the Rebbe Maharash is not more learned than the rest of them, the teacher pays more attention to him because he is the youngest son of the Tzemach Tzedek while all the others are merely his grandsons. They all ran crying to Maharil, the father of the Magen Avos.

Maharil came in to the *cheder* to speak to the teacher on behalf of his son, but while they were out, the Rebbe Maharash had already complained to the teacher. He said that he cannot learn with the others anymore, because he masters the material after hearing it once, while the others need to have everything repeated two or three times, and they still don't always grasp it; their minds are blocked.

The teacher explained to Maharil that he does not favor the Rebbe Maharash at all, it's just that he truly knows better than the rest. The teacher repeated the question with the Rebbe Maharash's answer and even Maharil was surprised [at the depth of his words]. He turned to the Rebbe Maharash and asked, "Still, why must you speak this way [about the other children]?" The Rebbe Maharash said, "What should I do if they have blocked minds?"

Maharil replied, "I am your older brother. How can you be so disrespectful?" The Rebbe Maharash replied, "You may be older than me counting your own years, but I am older than you if we count together with our father's years..."¹

...[Ramash] related many more stories, however I have already written for too long. I hope you will enjoy what I wrote and it won't just be a burden on your head.

...The truth is, that his only aspiration is to manifest the wishes of [Friediker] Rebbe *shlita*, the luminary of our lives, into reality. But we [must do our part as well] and try to be here [in the Rebbe's presence]. Of course, not to play [games], evading the Rebbe *shlita*'s [instructions], for this is utter foolishness. Only do things with the Rebbe's permission. But you must not be complacent; you must work on this.

...I know that the only thing to bring comfort to your soul will be by continuing your work, and bringing [even] a slight smile over the Rebbe's face.


Be well, I bless you as your friend who loves you with heart and soul, hoping to hear joyous tidings from you,

Dovber

Wishing you immediate redemption, both personally and globally.

Give my regards to the Hecht family. ①

1. This story is recorded by the Rebbe, published in Reshimas Hayoman p. 286, with some slight variances.



PERSPECTIVES OF THE RAMBAM

HIS LIFE, IMPACT, AND
TORAH AS DISCUSSED IN
THE REBBE'S SICHOS

IN HONOR OF THE SIYUM HARAMBAM
ON ROSH CHODESH IYAR!



By:
RABBI LEVIK GOURARIE

לזכות
החתן הרה"ת ר' יהושע זעליג והכלה המהוללה מרת דבורה שיחיו
ווייס

לרגל נישואיהם ט"ז שבט ה'תשפ"ג
שנת הקהל

נדפס ע"י הוריהם
הרה"ת ר' יהודה בנימין וזוגתו מרת חנה ומשפחתם שיחיו ווייס
הרה"ת ר' חיים אהרן וזוגתו רבקה
ומשפחתם שיחיו בלאק



In addition to discussing *halachos* in Rambam connected to the daily portion of Rambam and the *piskei dinim* the Rebbe repeatedly cited—such as the Rambam’s description of *yemos haMoshiach*, his perspective on *sheva mitzvos bnei Noach*, and the rule he writes about the power of one action impacting the world—the

Rebbe also discussed the Rambam himself and his impact from a historical perspective. The Rebbe described the Rambam from different angles, comparing various elements of the Rambam, his conduct, and his Torah to other *gedolei Yisroel* throughout the generations, bringing forth the versatile and comprehensive nature and influence of the Rambam.

Many of these *sichos* were said at a time around the dates in the Rambam’s life, such as the Rambam’s birthday on Erev Pesach, his *yahrtzeit* on Chof Teves, and often around the *parshiyos* of Shemos and Va’eira.

From Moshe and Aharon to the Alter Rebbe and the Tzemach Tzedek, the Rebbe explored their commonalities with the Rambam and their shared emphases, and the timeless impact they imparted to *klal Yisroel* throughout the generations.

SOURCE OF TORAH

Moshe Rabbeinu

The connection between Moshe Rabbeinu and the Rambam stands out above the rest. This begins with their shared name, Moshe, and their unparalleled giving and communicating Torah; as is quoted about both of them, “*Moshe emes v’Toraso emes*—Moshe is true and his Torah is true.” Their connection can best be summed up in the timeless inscription on the Rambam’s *kever*: “*Mi’Moshe ad Moshe lo kam k’Moshe*—From Moshe to Moshe, there has been none like Moshe.” As the Rebbe pointed out a number of times, while we don’t know the origins of this statement, it has gone undisputed by all *gedolei Yisroel* throughout the generations.

[The Rebbe also notes, referencing the Shem Hagedolim of the Chida, that there are no *Tanaim* or *Amoraim* with the name Moshe].

The Rebbe explained that “*Torah tzivah lanu Moshe*” is referring to both Moshe Rabbeinu and the Rambam, with

Moshe Rabbeinu giving Torah Shebiksav and the Rambam giving Torah Shebaal Peh in a written and organized fashion.

The Rebbe connects the theme of their communicating Torah with their names. Torah is compared to water—*mayim* and Moshe’s name comes from the word “*Min hamayim meshi’sihu*—From the water I have drawn him.” It is also apparent in the name Maimon—the Rambam’s father.

The Rebbe also connects the path and journey of the revelation of Torah, both by Moshe Rabbeinu and the Rambam, as expressions of personal and communal *geulah*. Moshe Rabbeinu gave the Torah following the *geulah* of *yetzias Mitzrayim*. The Rambam too revealed his Torah Shebaal Peh—the Mishneh Torah, after his personal *galus* and *geulah*, his trials and tribulations, and amid the battling of the *kelipah* of Mitzrayim, ultimately leading the Jewish people towards *geulah*.

UNITY AND INCLUSION

Aharon Hakohen

In addition to the connection between the two great Moshes, the Rebbe pointed out that the Rambam must also have a connection to Moshe Rabbeinu's brother, Aharon Hakohen, since the Rambam and Aharon share a very close proximity in dates: The “*nossi*” of Yud-Gimmel Nissan discusses the kindling of the Menorah by Aharon, and the following day, Yud-Daled Nissan, is the Rambam's birthday.

The overarching theme of Aharon Hakohen is *achdus* and *ahavas Yisroel*, “*Ohev es habriyos u'mekarvan laTorah*—Loving the creations and bringing them close to the Torah.” This highlights the unique quality of bringing people together, making peace, and increasing kindness while remaining true and honest to Hashem and the Torah; not lowering Torah to the struggling people but raising the people and bringing them close to the Torah.

This fusion of bringing people close and staying true to Torah does not highlight Aharon alone, rather it brings to light Aharon Hakohen as he is influenced by the *derech* of

Moshe Rabbinu—*emes*. This emphasizes the synthesis of *chessed* (Aharon) and *emes* (Moshe), creating Aharon's special version of *chessed*, going out of the way to help people but still not bowing away from the truth.

The Rebbe goes on to explain that the particular theme of Aharon's *achdus*, coupled with the undying *emes* of Moshe's Torah, is prominent in the Rambam's Torah. The Rambam wrote his *sefer* as a book of *halachos* where there aren't a myriad of opinions and differences, rather he focused on revealing the true *achdus*—unity of Hashem's will—the one true *halacha*.

Of course, Aharon's point of “*u'mekarvan laTorah*,” making the Torah accessible for everyone, wasn't lost on the Rambam either. This can be seen clearly in the Mishneh Torah's clear and concise writing, making it a *sefer* that can be used by every person, big and small, young and old, ultimately uniting all levels of learners together, creating the true fusion of Torah and *achdus*.

BRINGING TORAH TO THEIR GENERATION

The Alter Rebbe

As a general introduction to this section, it should be noted that the Rebbe once explained: While it is beyond our capability to compare and differentiate between *gedolei Yisroel* and their approaches, it is acceptable to do so in order to derive a lesson in *avodas Hashem*.²

The Rambam and the Alter Rebbe contributed tremendously to the world of Torah. Their summation, organization, and clarification of the halachic opinions preceding them, and the clear foundations they established in Torah, both in *nigleh* (the revealed part of Torah) and in *nistar* (the esoteric part of Torah), shaped the Torah continuance from their times until today.

The Rambam wrote clear-cut *halachos*, gathering and sifting through centuries of *geonim* and *poskim*, bringing forth the *halacha* in the most understandable way for his



THE RAMBAM'S MATZEVA IN TEVERYA.



THE REBBE HOLDS A VOLUME OF RAMBAM WHILE VISITING THE CHILDREN AT THE LAG B'OMER FAIR, 5744.

generation. Coupled with his effort in *nigleh*, the Rambam did the same work in *nistar*—gathering, refining, and clarifying the “Kabbalah” of his generation—*ma'aseh merkavah*, etc., in the four first *perakim* of Sefer Hamada and in Moreh Nevuchim.

Similarly, the Alter Rebbe, in his Shulchan Aruch, clarifies the opinions of the *poskim* that came before him, and even more so in Tanya, setting the foundation of Toras haChassidus for the first time.

The Rebbe explains that the *sefarim* of the Alter Rebbe and the Rambam are both great breakthroughs in the development of Torah. The Tanya is the Torah Shebiksav of Chassidus (all Chassidus, not just Chassidus Chabad) serving as the watershed *sefer* that includes the foundations of the Baal Shem Tov and Maggid’s Chassidus as well. This is similar to the Rambam’s unprecedented work in Mishneh Torah, bringing the *halacha* element—the summation of Torah Shebaal Peh—for the first time in *ksav*, in written fashion.

It is fascinating to point out that on some level the Alter

Rebbe reveals the *penimiyus* (inner dimension) of the Baal Shem Tov. While the Rambam did not include reasons in his *sefer* of *halachos*—a novel idea at the time—the Alter Rebbe specifically wrote his work in *halacha* with *taamim* (reasons)—also a novel idea at the time, revealing the inner dimension of the *halachos*.

In addition to the general shared frame of mind, we see many comparisons and similarities in numerous elements of their lives and of their Torah. For instance, both have the special multifaceted power in Torah—the hidden and revealed parts of Torah—hinted in their names. The Alter Rebbe’s name is “Shnei-Or,” two lights—the lights of *nigleh* and *nistar*. The Rambam carries the name of Moshe, who gave us the entire Torah. Also, in the common acronym for Rabbeinu Moshe ben Maimon—the Rambam—there are two *mems*; a *pesucha* (regular mem) and a *setuma* (a “*shlos*” mem). The first one refers to *nigleh*, and the second represents the Rambam’s work in *pnimiyus haTorah*.

[It is interesting to note that they both wrote their works



in *nigleh* before their works in *nistar*; Shulchan Aruch before Tanya, and the Yad Hachazakah before Moreh Nevuchim. Also, the Alter Rebbe's original plan for Tanya and the Rambam's Moreh Nevuchim are both split into three parts. We also find that they both started their *sefarim* with a reference to *shem Havaye*—the Rambam in the *roshei teivos* of the first few words “*Yesod hayesodos v'amud hachochmos,*” and the Alter Rebbe begins the Shulchan Aruch with the word “*Yehuda*” which contains in it the sanctified name of Hashem. Another connection that was highlighted and brought in a *sicha* of the Friediker Rebbe is the similarity of language and writing of the Alter Rebbe and the Rambam and the strong influence of the Rambam's halachic rulings in the Alter Rebbe's Torah.]

One of the more notable lines of comparison between the Rambam and the Alter Rebbe can be seen in the objective and reason for their *sefarim*. Born out of necessity for clarity and direction with the aim to give guidance and a clear path to a people in need, we can see in their respective works the answers to the challenges of their generation and the remedy and direction it holds for our generation as well. Plainly put, while other *sefarim* may have been written primarily to add to Torah, these *sefarim* were written to heal and inspire the Jewish people.

The Rambam wrote his *sefarim* in response to the confusion and inaccessibility to the sources that he saw in his generation, both in the worlds of halacha and *nistar*. His goal

was to aid the Jewish people in understanding the *halacha* and the truth. As we see clearly in regards to the Moreh Nevuchim, it was written specifically to help the confused and perplexed. (Although the Rambam did not want Moreh Nevuchim to be learned by everyone, and he incorporated a *shvuah*, a pledge, that people shouldn't learn it, the Rebbe points out that the Rambam definitely knew that it would get out, and on some level that was his intention. This can be seen from the fact that there are a number of ideas in it that are clearly also for the common man, and we see that there are a number of *halachos* learned from Moreh Nevuchim as well.)

Regarding the Alter Rebbe, there is of course no need to explain this point. In his introduction to the *sefer*, the Alter Rebbe clearly states his reason for writing the Tanya and who the target audience is. Chassidus in general came as a response to the need for an awakening and a boost for a tired and worn out generation and Tanya was written specifically for those looking for advice and assistance in their *avodas Hashem*.

All in all, the Rambam and the Alter Rebbe's work was to bring a revelation through Torah to the tired and confused souls of their generations and the generations to follow. They created and imparted clarity in Torah Shebaal Peh, *poskim* and *halacha*, and in the hidden parts of Torah and Chassidus, arranging these foundations in a perfect and accessible way for each and every Yid to be able to learn and understand.

SHEPHERD OF THEIR PEOPLE

Another special connection and comparison between the Rambam and the Alter Rebbe was their care for the wellbeing of the Yidden in their times.

The Rambam was known not only as a great figure in *halacha* and *chakirah*, but also as the leader of the Jewish community in Egypt and beyond, utilizing his influence and connections to protect and assist his fellow Jews.

More famously we know of the Rambam's legendary letters, *Iggeres Hashmad* and *Iggeres Teiman*, where he inspires and guides the hurting and confused Yidden of his time,

offering them solace and comfort, guidance, and direction. Similar to this are the Alter Rebbe's efforts to strengthen the Jewish community in Lithuania, White Russia, and beyond; setting up colonies with attainable livelihoods for their inhabitants, and of course, the tzedakah campaigns the Alter Rebbe successfully led for the Yidden living in Eretz Yisroel. All this was in addition to the Alter Rebbe's work for the spiritual well-being of his generation, as seen in his Torah, his letters, and the many stories and histories.

DEFYING OPPOSITION

The novel and remarkable work of both the Rambam and the Alter Rebbe were not universally accepted at first. On the contrary, both had huge opposition from the greatest Jewish figures of their generations. Only after some time did the tide change, and once learning the truth about them and their novel approaches, many of the opposing camp had a change of heart. So much so that many of these people themselves actually became followers of the Rambam and the Alter Rebbe.

It is fascinating to see the comparable response of the Rambam and the Alter Rebbe to their opposition. The Rambam stood up for his opinion and answered any question

lodged against him or his opinions, but he never got into arguments or fights with his denigrators or attackers. We see the same with the Alter Rebbe; in his famous letter after being freed from prison in Petersburg, he demands of the Chassidim to not quarrel with the *misnagdim*, but rather to behave towards them with kindness, with the hope that it will mirror back.

The Rebbe uses this as a lesson not only for the point of not fighting but primarily a lesson in strength—defying opposition, not attacking them or getting embroiled in a fight with them, rather staying strong in one's convictions and holding on to the truth in all circumstances.

CREATING CONCLUSIONS

The Tzemach Tzedek

At the farbrengen of Yud-Gimmel Nissan 5746*, the Rebbe explained that based on the proximity of the Tzemach Tzedek's *yahrtzeit* on Yud-Gimmel Nissan and the Rambam's birthday on Yud-Daled Nissan, there must be a connection between the two.

Their most definitive similarity is their work in *halacha*. The Rambam authored the first complete *sefer halachos* and the Tzemach Tzedek wrote *piskei dinim* (halachic rulings) and *teshuvos* (responsa), both spreading their Torah to and for the entire *klal Yisroel*. The Rebbe points out that while we find

teshuvos in *halacha* from the Alter Rebbe and Mittlerer Rebbe too, the Tzemach Tzedek stands out as a world-renowned and respected *posek* in his lifetime, corresponding with great halachic figures even outside of the world of Chassidus.

Additionally, the Rambam collected and consolidated *piskei dinim* and *teshuvos* from all of Gemara, the *geonim*, and *poskim*, narrowing them down into a concise conclusion. We find the same with the Tzemach Tzedek; he gathered, consolidated, and created conclusions from the *sefarim* before him. This is especially so in the world of Chassidus, where



CAMERA CONTROLS SEEN BEHIND THE REBBE AT THE FARBRENGEN OF YUD-BEIS TAMMUZ 5745. AT THESE TELEVISED FARBRENGENS THE REBBE OFTEN DEVOTED MUCH TIME TO DISCUSS UNIVERSAL MORALITY AND SHEVA MITZVOS BNEI NOACH.

the Tzemach Tzedek would often cite a number of different ideas, including from the Baal Shem Tov and Maggid, and sometimes even seemingly opposing ones, and tie them all together, bringing a clear conclusion for the matter at hand.

The one difference in the styles of the two authors is quite fascinating: The Rambam starts from the top down (*milmaalah lematah*), summarizing all the knowledge that was known at his time and bringing it down into a simple *halacha* that can be understood by everyone. The Tzemach Tzedek, on the

other end, worked from the bottom up (*milmatah lemaalalah*), starting with the most simple interpretation of the *pesukim* or *maamarei chazal*, etc. and working his way through all the sources, explaining the deeper and inner meaning, finally reaching the, *maskana*, a final conclusive point. While they take different paths to reach the final conclusion, they share the predominant avenue of consolidation and clarification in Torah.

A LIGHT UNTO THE NATIONS

The connection between the Tzemach Tzedek and the Rambam goes beyond their Torah, into their life experiences and perspectives.

Both the Rambam and Tzemach Tzedek had a profound

influence on the non-Jewish world around them, conveying the message of Hashem and the one true Torah.

With the Rambam we see special emphasis placed on the care he had for the wellbeing of the *bnei Noach*, beginning

with his ruling about the obligation of every human being to keep the *sheva mitzvos*, and his description of *yemos haMoshiach* where he openly states that the work of the entire world (including gentiles) will be to know Hashem at the highest level possible.

This is in addition to his personal work and connection with the non-Jews of his time in his capacity as physician of the sultan's court, a job that took up many hours of his day, being his primary source of livelihood. The Rebbe points out that as the sultan and the court's physician, the Rambam certainly looked after the emotional and mental needs of his patients and undoubtedly shared with them their real purpose and source of stability in life—the *sheva mitzvos bnei Noach*.

The great work of the Rambam in this field is connected with the fact that he was born on Erev Pesach, the time of slaughtering the *korban Pesach*. The Rebbe explains that this mitzvah originated in Mitzrayim primarily for the purpose of destroying its *avodah zarah*—destroying the strength of *kelipah* and bringing morality and G-dliness in its stead. Similarly, the Rambam worked to battle the *kelipah* of the nations

and to inspire them with G-dliness and purpose.

Though in a different climate, the Tzemach Tzedek also fought the battle of *kedushah* and truth against the nations of the world—the Russian government. Not only did he stand firm in his beliefs, but he also went out—arguing, explaining, and convincing the non-Jewish officials of the veracity and necessity of true Yiddishkeit (education, rabbonim, etc.).³ While we see a bit of this conduct by the Alter Rebbe and Mittler Rebbe too, they engaged in these dialogues in short stints, and they primarily explained the specific points of Chassidus that were being contested. The Tzemach Tzedek, on the other hand, spent a large part of his life battling the influence and proposed reforms of the *haskalah* movement, spending his time in many conferences, meetings, and legislative battles, explaining to the non-Jews the truth of Torah, even going so far as to be *moser nefesh* countless times for this mission—all to convince the Russian government to allow Yiddishkeit to continue and to grow without the damages that the *maskilim* were attempting to impose.

CLARITY AND STRUCTURE

The Rebbe Rashab

The Rebbe mentions that people may ask about a seeming “contradiction” between the Rambam–Tzemach Tzedek connection that the Rebbe was discussing, and the famous quote from Chassidim that the Rebbe Rashab is the Rambam of Chassidus.

To answer this question, the Rebbe takes a moment to clarify this saying about the Rebbe Rashab, explaining that the similarities between the Rambam to the Tzemach Tzedek's Torah and the Rebbe Rashab's Torah are in different elements entirely, each connection highlighting a different point.

The Rebbe Rashab, the Rebbe explains, is the Rambam of Chassidus, not the Rambam of the Torah in general. In the Tzemach Tzedek's Torah we find full works in *nigleh* and many places where *nigleh* and Chassidus are brought together and united, whereas by the Rebbe Rashab we don't really find works in *nigleh* on their own, and even when cited together with Chassidus, the *nigleh* is dwarfed in size by the large amounts of Chassidus that it comes along with.

The Rebbe explains that this fusion of the different parts of Torah was not the primary focus and undertaking of the Rebbe Rashab, possibly because this feat of Torah consolidation was already achieved by the Tzemach Tzedek, while

the Rebbe Rashab attained this achievement by learning the Tzemach Tzedek's Torah on a level where it became his own.

Where we do see the comparison between the Rebbe Rashab and the Rambam is in the sense of clarity and structure. The Rebbe Rashab's aim was to clarify and to get down to the point in Chassidus—clarifying and organizing subjects and topics—providing this structure of Chassidus to the Chassidim. This is similar to the Rambam, who summarized, clarified, and got to the bottom of the entire world of *halacha* in the revealed part of the Torah, in an accessible fashion for every Jew. **T**

Adapted from the sichos of Yud-Gimmel Nissan 5738, Chof-Daled Teves 5741, Yud-Gimmel Nissan 5746, Shabbos Parshas Shemos—Va'eira 5748, Shabbos Parshas Shemos 5752, Likkutei Sichos vol. 26—Chof-Chof Daled Teves.

1. See also “*The Rebbe's Rambam*,” Derher Teves 5783.
2. Yud-Gimmel Nissan 5746.
3. See “*Beyond Concession*,” in this magazine.

Timely Titles

By: RABBI MENDY GOLDBERG

לזכות
הת' מנחם מענדל שיח'ל
לרגל הגיעו לעול מצוות כ"ט אייר
ה'תשפ"ג שנת הקהל

נדפס ע"י משפחתו
משפחת פעלדמאן
פלארידא. טעקסאס

SEFER HATOLDOS ADMUR MAHARASH



“On Beis Iyar, in the year 5594*, the youngest child of the Tzemach Tzedek was born in Lubavitch, and he was given the name Shmuel.” Thus begins the classic biographical work—*Sefer HaToldos Admur Maharash*.

When the Rebbe Maharash was a child, he once performed exceptionally well on a test, earning lavish praise from his teacher, who gushed effusively over his impressive command of the knowledge. However, his father, the Tzemach Tzedek, remained unimpressed and calmly remarked, “For Tiferes Sheb’Tiferes, this is nothing extraordinary.”¹

If there is one hallmark that characterizes the tenure of the Rebbe Maharash, it is that his personal life was extraordinary. He possessed many unique talents and exceptional qualities, and had a penchant for exotic interests (see “A Leaf From The Book”). Overall, the pattern of his life and personality was distinct from that of the other Rabbeim.

An especially famous departure from convention was the Rebbe Maharash’s lavish conduct. The Rebbe Maharash carried two golden watches, with golden chains hanging out of each chest pocket. His cigarette holder was made of gold and his snuff was kept in a gold box. All utensils in the Rebbe Maharash’s household were made of solid gold, his chariot was decorated with gold, and even his cane was capped with a golden ball. Naturally, this demonstration of extravagance puzzled many people. In fact, Reb Meir Shlomo Yanovsky (the Rebbe’s grandfather) was once asked why the Rebbe Maharash used gold in such a flippant and extravagant manner instead of appropriating it for charitable purposes. Reb Meir Shlomo responded with a refrain, “*Petach, petach*, (fool, fool) for what do you think this gold was created? For me and for you? Perhaps for the *goyim, lehavdil?* It was all created for him!”²

The uniqueness of the Rebbe Maharash also extended to his physical condition; throughout most of his life he suffered from various ailments and illnesses. Yet despite his pain, he still maintained good spirits and a pleasant manner. This was acknowledged in a letter to Zalman Shazar, where the Rebbe marveled at the results of a handwriting analysis conducted on a sample of the Rebbe Maharash’s script by graphologist Ruth Zucker.³ The Rebbe writes that he was amazed to see how in certain aspects the graphologist was on target, especially regarding her deduction that “the Rebbe Maharash suffered all his life both physically and spiritually, and this fortified him.” The Rebbe confirmed her conclusion from a family tradition that even in his youth he suffered terribly, but was still always seen with a smile on his face, greeting others with his characteristically positive disposition.

Finally, it is especially noteworthy that the Rebbe Maharash was the only one of the Rabbeim for whom the Rebbe personally penned a biographical treatment, entitled “*Sefer HaToldos Admur Maharash.*”



OVERVIEW



Sefer HaToldos Admur Maharash is primarily a biography of the Rebbe Maharash, together with a comprehensive index of his *maamarim*. The appendices feature a piece of a *maamar*, selections of *sichos*, and a directory of other places these *sichos* can be found.

👉 **Eleh Toldos:** Over the course of about 20 pages, we are treated to a brief biography of the Rebbe Maharash that delves into the story of his life. Culled from the Friediker Rebbe's *sichos* and diaries, the material is presented in a concise and organized fashion, weaving together a tapestry of anecdotes and events from his life. The main text is interspersed with footnotes where the Rebbe provides important background and helpful context.

The Rebbe's footnotes to the sefer also clarify some historical difficulties, for example: On the very first page there is a seeming discrepancy regarding the birth year of the Rebbe Maharash. It is presented here as 5594* while other sources allege it to have been 5593*. The Rebbe resolves this contradiction by suggesting that the earlier date refers to when the Rebbe Maharash was conceived.

The narrative begins with the Rebbe Maharash's auspicious birth and the events that occurred during the *bris*. As the story unfolds, we are treated to a glimpse into the Rebbe Maharash's childhood, where his exceptionally prodigious talents are revealed and develop throughout his early years. At this point, the Rebbe provides a succinct timeline that chronicles the significant events of the next few years.⁴ It covers the Rebbe Maharash's marriage (and subsequent passing of his first wife), his second marriage, learning schedule, various efforts and travels for communal affairs. It marks when he began to say Chassidus in public and then when he formally accepted the mantle of *nesius*.

This timeline is interrupted by a letter of the Friediker Rebbe that recounts an episode of a fire in the Rebbe Maharash's house in Lubavitch, and then continues to describe more communal activism and diplomatic endeavors, with another letter and *sicha* of the Friediker Rebbe documenting his encounters in S. Petersburg. Following this, the text describes the Rebbe Maharash's schedule of saying Chassidus, his *yechidus* arrangements, and some of the unique and extraordinary talents he possessed. After recording his passing, the text concludes with a summary of basic biographical information outlining the children and descendants left behind, his sons, daughters, and in-laws, and the *sefarim* he wrote.

👉 **Facsimiles:** Singled out in the table of contents are several facsimiles that were added to the previous section for illustrative purposes. The first one featured is a facsimile of the Rebbe Maharash's signature, which appears underneath a contract for selling *chametz*. On the other side of the same page, there is a negative photograph⁵ of two columns from one of the Megillos the Rebbe Maharash wrote for his sons (see sidebar - "The Megillah"). Another double-sided page has photographs of the Rebbe Maharash's three surviving sons: Raza, the Rebbe Rashab, and Reb Menachem Mendel. [Avrohom Sender had passed away in childhood, see "A Leaf From the Book"]. The other side of that page features photographs of the Rebbe Maharash's two daughters, Rebbetzin Devorah Leah Ginsburg and Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Horenstein, as well as a photograph

of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka's husband, Reb Moshe Horenstein.

👉 **Reshimas Maamarei Dach:** Presented in chronological order is a comprehensive list of the Rebbe Maharash's *maamarim*. At the time of printing of this work, the list was still incomplete as there were still manuscripts that had yet to be discovered or attributed to the Rebbe Maharash. In the foreword, the Rebbe entreats the readers to submit any manuscripts that aren't listed here so they can be included in future collections. As indicated in the timeline above, although the Rebbe Maharash only formally accepted the *nesiv* in the summer of 5626*, he had already begun to say Chassidus that winter at the behest of the Tzemach Tzedek. Thus, this list of *maamarim* begins in the winter of 5626* (before the *histalkus* of the Tzemach Tzedek).

👉 **Appendix A:** Here, the Rebbe included a recently discovered conclusion to a previously published *hemshech* "Yonasi bechagvei hasela 5640*." This was copied from a handwritten manuscript of the Rebbe Maharash that was only obtained after the *hemshech* was published.

👉 **Appendix B:** This is a partial collection of short teachings, anecdotes, and sayings of and about the Rebbe Maharash. These vignettes were culled primarily from the diary and notes of the Frieddiker Rebbe and are arranged in the order of their appearance. While most of these teachings are not by the Rebbe Maharash himself but about him, the Rebbe still frequently referred to them as 'his *sichos*.' For instance, in a letter encouraging someone to read Sefer HaToldos Admur Maharash, the Rebbe writes: "Particularly part two [i.e.



הרב משה הורנשטיין, רבבתין ח'יה מושקה, רבבתין דבורה ליה גינסבורג



הרב מנחם מנדל, הרב ראש"ב, ר' ר' ראזא

1. THE PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE REBBE MAHARASH'S DAUGHTERS AND ONE OF HIS SONS-IN-LAW FEATURED IN THE BOOK. L-R: REB MOSHE HORENSTEIN, REBBETZIN CHAYA MUSHKA HORENSTEIN, AND REBBETZIN DEVORAH LEAH GINSBURG.

2. PHOTOGRAPHS OF THREE OF THE REBBE MAHARASH'S SONS. L-R: REB MENACHEM MENDEL, THE REBBE RASHAB, AND RAZA.

this section -ed.], which contains **his *sichos*** [emphasis added] as they will undoubtedly inspire your learning and performance of *mitzvos*."

👉 **Appendix C:** Following the previous section, here, the Rebbe included an index to other places where one can find teachings and stories of the Rebbe Maharash, including various *sichos* of the Frieddiker Rebbe, the Hatomim journal, Toras Shalom and other similar *kuntreisim*.

BACKGROUND

In the early 5700s*, the internally-focused branch of Kehos called "Otzar Hachassidim" initiated a project to gather and restore the *maamarim* of the Rebbe Maharash. These *maamarim* were collected from loose manuscripts and published in chronological order. Most of these *sefarim* were not retyped, but instead published as photocopies of original manuscripts penned by Reb Shmuel Sofer, the chief copy editor of Lubavitch. The Rebbe himself spearheaded this oper-

ation, working diligently to collect every extant manuscript.

In 5705*, Kehos published the first installment of the Rebbe Maharash's *maamarim* (Likkutei Torah-Toras Shmuel 5631*), the *hemshech* "V'hechrim." In the introduction, the Rebbe writes that the Rebbe Maharash had a very rich life, but acknowledges that for some reason, many details about his personal life were not made public. "It is my hope that after completing the series of the Rebbe Maharash's *maamarim*, we

* 5626-1866, 5640-1880, 5700s-1940s, 5705-1945, 5631-1871

will be able to follow it up with a volume that is a biography of the Rebbe Maharash, which would establish a comprehensive timeline of his life and activities.” Following this, the Rebbe provided a brief biographical sketch as a preview.⁶

Two years later, in Tammuz of 5707*, the eagerly-anticipated biographical work finally came to fruition. Using diaries and *sichos* of the Frieddiker Rebbe, the Rebbe meticulously crafted a basic biography of the Rebbe Maharash, to accompany the series of *maamarim* of Toras Shmuel. Earlier that year, while the Rebbe was in Paris, in preparation for this biography he had taken the opportunity to investigate and interview elder Chassidim to gather valuable information and insights about the Rebbe Maharash. The cost of printing was generously underwritten by philanthropist Reb Shmuel Karakovsky as a tribute to his late father. The Rebbe was deeply appreciative and wrote him a letter expressing the great merit of this sponsorship.

Over time, more material about the Rebbe Maharash came to light. When the author, Reb Avrohom Chanoch Glitzenstein, undertook to write a series of biographies of Rabbeim “Sefer HaToldos,” the Rebbe encouraged him to continue his research and use newly discovered *sichos* and memoirs to expand upon the original biography of the Rebbe Maharash. This new expanded version was published in 5736*.

Despite being incorporated into the Glitzenstein “Sefer HaToldos” series, the original edition remains popular as a standalone work, and has since been reprinted by Kehos. This recent print also contains bonus material, namely: suggested citations, biographic and bibliographic indexes, and cross-references to other sources that provide additional information — all compiled by Rabbi Aharon Leib Raskin. A selection from Reshimas Hayoman about the Rebbe Maharash was also appended to a later edition. As well, Sefer HaToldos Admur Maharash was translated into English by Rabbi Shimon Neubort for Sichos In English, making the life and legacy of the Rebbe Maharash accessible to the broader public. **T**

1. This is the version of the story as brought here in Sefer HaToldos Admur Maharash. However, in the Hayom Yom of Beis Iyar the Tzemach Tzedek is recorded to have responded “Why the surprise that Tiferes Sheb’Tiferes performed well?” See Hayom Yom HaMevuar (Raskin) for a comparison of the various *nuschaos*.
2. For a discussion of this wealthy lifestyle and behavior see the sicha of Purim 5728.
3. For more about the Rebbe’s attitude towards the graphological analyses of Ruth Zucker, see Derher Teves 5783, “Timely Titles — Sefer HaKan.”
4. A breakdown of this timeline was featured in Derher Iyar 5778.
5. In the later edition this was replaced by an improved scan.
6. This can now be found in the *hosafos* of Toras Shmuel 5631.

THE MEGILLAH

As mentioned in the overview, the biography contains a facsimile of a Megillah written by the Rebbe Maharash. However, this particular Megillah diverges from the traditional Megillah format used by *anash* in those days, in two distinct ways. Firstly, the column of text does not always begin with the word “*hamelech*,” and secondly, the ten sons of Haman are not grouped together in a single column. In Otzar Minhagei Chabad, Rabbi Yehoshua Mondshine enumerates further differences between the Megillah of the Rebbe Maharash and the conventional style.

In a letter addressed to Rabbi Isser Frankel, an accomplished author of many biographies, the Rebbe included a postscript in which he expressed his strong disapproval of the practice of reproducing scans of text written in *ksav stam* in books of *halacha* and *aggadah*, let alone historical books and biographies — as it shows a lack of sensitivity to the holiness of the script. By contrast, the Rebbe explains that the scan of the Megillah printed in Sefer HaToldos Admur Maharash is an exception to this rule for two reasons: Firstly, Hashem’s name is not mentioned, and secondly, the intention behind reproducing the Megillah here was also to demonstrate to the general public the correct way of writing a Megillah.



THE FACSIMILE OF A MEGILLAH WRITTEN BY THE REBBE MAHARASH, FEATURED IN THE BOOK.

A LEAF FROM THE BOOK

SEFER HATOLDOS ADMUR MAHRASH
His Special Talents

21

אדמו"ר מהר"ש

שגילו לו. בביקורו על אוהל אביו וחותני אדמו"ר ה"צמח צדק", קודם נסיעתו לשם הי' שואל אותי אם יש לי מה לבקש או לברר, ובחזירתו הי' אומר לי כך ענה אבא.

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נוסף על גאונו וגדלו בכל מקצעות התורה, בנגלה ובנסתרה, הי' בעל חושים נפלאים וזכרון נעלה ביותר. איזה דוגמאות:

בסוף ספר הון עשיר — לבעל ה"משנת הסידים" — יש שיר רשום בתוי נגינה. אדמו"ר מהר"ש קראם, ואמר שנגון הרשום עורר אותו על נגון — ונגון נגון הידוע מאז בין החסידים בשם "אינס צווי דריי פיר" — נגון "אין סוף". פעם בקשו אותו לחזור מאמר ששמעו ממנו לפני חמש שנים, ויהרהר במחשבתו רגעים אחדים ויאמר את הדרוש אות באות.

בניו הר"א ומהרש"ב למדו פעם בחדרם בצוותא חדא סוגיא מסובכת. אביהם נכנס לחדרם ויעמוד מרחוק וישמע את פלפולם. ויאמר: יש כאן רש"י חמורה, ואמר הלשון בעל פה, וש לעיני בה היטב. ויתחיל להציע הענין ולפלפל משך זמן רב. וסיים שזה כמו כ"ח שנה מעת עסקו בענין זה.

הי' בקי בכמה לשונות: רוסית, צרפתית, לאטיין כו'. ידיעות רבות בפרט היו לו בחכמת הרפואה.

מפני הבריאות ציוו עליו הרופאים להתעמל ולעסוק במלאכת יד, והיו בבית הרב כמה כלים שנעשו על ידו והם מעשה אומן עד להפליא. מהם: מנורה גבוה כקומת איש בעלת יב—יג קנים, שולחנות עשויים מחתיכות קטנות של עץ ואבן "מאזאיק" וכיו"ב.

בקי הי' ואומן בכתיבת סת"ם. לכל אחד מבניו נתן מגילה כתובה בכתי"ק — בזה הנמצאת אצל כ"ק מו"ח אדמו"ר שליט"א הכתב יפה ובהיר כאילו זה עתה נכתבה. לא כל העמודים מתחילים בתיבת "המלך" ועשרת בני המן אינם כתובים בעמוד בפני עצמם — כן ישנם מזוזות גכת"ק.

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בסוף שנת תרמ"ב חלה, ובאור ליום השלישי יג לחדש תשרי שנת תרמ"ג נסתלק ומ"כ בליובאוויטש באוהל אביו אדמו"ר ה"צמח צדק".

בניו: א) העילוי הגאון וצדיק ר' אברהם סענדער.

כ"ק מו"ח אדמו"ר שליט"א מספר אודותיו:

הוד כ"ק אדמו"ר הרה"ק האט מיר געזאגט — דערציילט דער פאטער (*) — אז מיין עלטערער ברודער הגאון הצדיק ר' אברהם סענדר איז געווען א מופלא אין חושים און א בעל מוחין ומדות. ער איז נפטר געווארן ווען ער איז אַלט געווען אַכט יאָר.

אין די אגרות הקדש מכ"ק אבותינו רבותינו הקדושים איז פאראן א צעטל וואָס כ"ק אדמו"ר הרה"ק מהר"ש האָט געשריבן צום רבי'ן צמח צדק, אין וועלכן ער איז תולה פטירת בנו הקדוש אברהם סענדר אין א געוויסער סיבה. ענטפערט אים דער רבי צמח צדק אז עס איז ניט אַזוי און דער רבי זאָגט, אַז הילד הצדיק אברהם סענדר — איז געווען די נשמה פון אַלטן רבי'ן.

(*) הכונה על כ"ק אדמו"ר מהרש"ב נ"ע.

Besides his genius and his great knowledge of all areas of Torah — both revealed and hidden — The Rebbe Maharash possessed outstanding talents and an excellent memory. A few examples follow:

At the end of the *sefer* Hon Ashir (by the same author as Mishnas Chassidim), there is a song marked with its musical notes. The Rebbe Maharash read them and then remarked that the song written there inspired him to sing a certain melody. He then sang the *niggun* long known among Chassidim by the name "Eins Tzwei Drei Fir," or the "Ein Sof Niggun" [today also known as "Lechatchila Ariber" -ed].

Chassidim once requested that he repeat a *maamar* they had heard from him five years earlier. He thought for a few minutes and then proceeded to repeat the *maamar* word-for-word.

His sons Reb Zalman Aharon and the Rebbe Rashab were once studying a very complex Torah subject in their room. Their father entered the room and stood aside, listening as they discussed the *pilpul*. He remarked, "There is a difficult Rashi here," and recited the text by heart. "This needs to be examined closely," he said. He then began suggesting solutions to the subject, and continued with the *pilpul* for some time. He then concluded by saying that it was 28 years since he had last reflected on this subject.

שגילו לו. בביקורו על אוהל אביו וחזוני אדמו"ר ה"צמח צדק", קודם נסיעתו לשם ה' שואל אותי אם יש לי מה לבקש או לברר, ובחזירתו ה' אומר לי כך ענה אבא.

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בניו: א) העילוי הגאון וצדיק ר' אברהם סענדער.

כ"ק מו"ח אדמו"ר שליט"א מספר אודותיו:

הוד כ"ק אדמו"ר הרה"ק האט מיר געזאגט — דערציילט דער פאטער (*) — אז מיין עלטערער ברודער הגאון הצדיק ר' אברהם סענדר איז געווען א מופלא אין חושים און א בעל מוחין ומדות. ער איז נפטר געווארן ווען ער איז אלט געווען אַכט יאָר.

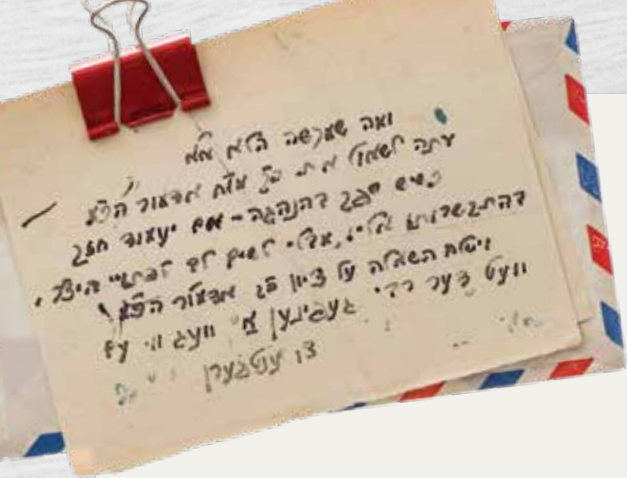
אין די אגרות הקדש מכ"ק אבותינו רבותינו הקדושים איז פאראן א צעטל וואס כ"ק אדמו"ר הרה"ק מהר"ש האט געשריבן צום רבי'ן צמח צדק, אין וועלכן ער איז תולה פטירת בנו הקדוש אברהם סענדר אין א געוויסער סיבה. ענטפערט אים דער רבי צמח צדק אז עס איז ניט אזוי און דער רבי זאגט, אז הילד הצדיק אברהם סענדר — איז געווען די גשמה פון אלטן רבי'ן.

(*) המונה על כ"ק אדמו"ר מהרש"ב נ"ע.

He was fluent in several languages: Russian, French, Latin, etc. He was also particularly knowledgeable in the science of medicine.

For reasons of his health, the physicians instructed him to engage in physical work and handicrafts. Thus, there were in the house of the Rebbeim several objects that he had made by hand; they are of the most wonderful craftsmanship. Among these was a candlestick as tall as a man, with twelve or thirteen branches. There were also tables fashioned of small pieces of wood and stone mosaic, etc.

He was an expert and gifted scribe of Torah scrolls, *tefillin*, and *mezuzos*. He gave each of his sons a Megillah that he himself had handwritten. In the one that my father-in-law the Rebbe Shlita possesses, the writing is as beautiful and clear as if it had just now been written. Not all columns begin with the word *hamelech* and the ten sons of Haman do not appear in a separate column by themselves. There are also *mezuzos* that he wrote with his own hand.



דער רבי וועט געפינען אַ וועג...

WRITTEN BY: RABBI LEVI GREENBERG

The Inverted Bracha



AS TOLD BY
RABBI MENDEL KAPLAN
(POTOMAC VILLAGE, MD)

Several years after starting our shlichus in Maryland, we moved to Potomac Village to establish a Chabad House. It is expensive to purchase or rent a house in this area, and we were grateful to quickly find a suitable house for our family and Chabad House at a reasonable price.

Soon after moving, we began a monthly Shabbos minyan, which then evolved into twice a month. At a certain point, one of our regulars said that she wanted to make our Chabad House her permanent shul, but couldn't since we didn't have Shabbos services every week. So with the encouragement of my brother who is a shliach in Franklin Lakes, NJ, we decided to take the plunge and commit to having a minyan every Shabbos. We thus began looking for a secondary location, separate from our home, to host our growing shul operation. Location was very important to us since we wanted to be in close proximity to the "Village", a central shopping district in our town.

After writing to the Rebbe about our new hachloto, we miraculously found a house to rent right across the street from where we were living. The house, situated on a 2-acre property had been built years earlier by a diplomat and had a large "ballroom" for entertaining. We rented the house for our Chabad activities with the hope of eventually buying it, but the owner's conditions for selling it to us were unreasonable.

During the month of Kislev 5780*, the house we were

renting for our Chabad activities went into foreclosure and the deed was purchased by a group of Israeli Jewish businessmen in California. After some research, I succeeded in making contact with them and they happily agreed to sell it to us, conditional on the original owner failing to purchase it back by a certain deadline.

The investors were confident the original owner didn't have the necessary funds to repurchase it and predicted the property would be ours in short order. We eagerly anticipated the deadline and were already strategizing exactly how to renovate the house to accommodate our family and the Chabad House.

To our great disappointment, right before the original owner's buyback option expired, he went to court over the property and all our well-laid plans came to an abrupt halt. Our lawyer advised us to give it up but knowing the limited properties that were available, we just couldn't walk away. We were convinced this property was our future.

Directly across the street from this property lived an elderly Jewish woman whom we had come to know. We would visit her regularly, especially during the Yomim Tovim to blow Shofar, bentch Lulav etc. Her home was an older home, set back on a 3-acre property but we never entertained the thought of purchasing it since a) we hoped she would live a long and healthy life, and b) we were completely fixated on the other property. Her daughter who

lived in the area was grateful for our visits to her mother and we kept in touch.

Around Tishrei 5780* our elderly neighbor was unable to continue living alone, and her daughter moved her to an assisted living home nearby. Unfortunately, six months later, the night before the COVID lockdown went into effect in our county, she passed away. Her daughter was beyond distraught. Not only was she unable to be at her mother's side when she passed away due to COVID restrictions, but there might also not be a funeral due to the impending lockdown. She called me frantic and after pulling some connections I was able to arrange a proper burial.

A few months later, after sorting out her mother's estate, the daughter was preparing to sign a contract with a local developer, which would have given him the exclusive rights to market and sell the property after building a brand new multi-million dollar house on it.

The daughter subsequently informed us that she requested an exception be inserted in the contract, that in the event we wished to purchase the property, we would have priority.

We thanked her for the thoughtful gesture but were still convinced that the future of Chabad Potomac Village was destined to be on the 2-acre property still tied up in litigation.

By the end of the summer, the builder was ready to move forward with his plans so the daughter called us and gave us one last opportunity to purchase the property. We were quite sure we didn't want it but faced with having to make a final decision I asked her for a couple of days and drove to the Ohel to ask the Rebbe for direction. In my letter to the Rebbe I described the two properties and explained that my wife and I were convinced that the property we were currently renting for the Chabad House was the best option. Since the only delay was some litigation, I concluded my letter by asking the Rebbe for a bracha that the litigation should clear up quickly and we should be able to move forward with our plans.

The next day we received a shocking phone call from the rental company that managed the home we had been living in for the past nine years.

They informed us that it had come to their attention that we were operating a commercial enterprise out of the residence in violation of our contract so we had 30 days to vacate the property. They claimed that since we had signed a two-year lease nine years earlier and never renewed it,

we were now on a month-to-month, and all they needed was to give us 30 days' notice.

We couldn't make any sense of this. I had just gone to the Ohel to ask for a bracha about purchasing a property and now we were being kicked out of our house in 30 days?!

For years we had operated our Chabad House out of our home with no complaints, and by this time almost three years had passed since we had rented the second location and were no longer doing any peulos in our home. All our entreaties for an extension and threats of legal action fell on deaf ears.

In desperation, I phoned the daughter and asked her to give me access to her mother's house so that I could take a walk-through. A friend of mine who deals in real estate joined me. After a quick walk-through, we stood on the front porch facing the other property still tied up in litigation.

As I shared with him my predicament, he turned to me and said, "Mendel, have you fallen on your head?! How could you even consider purchasing the other property over this one? They are not even comparable!" He then went on to enumerate the various advantages of this property over the other one. At that point I realized how blinded we had been all this time.

Baruch Hashem in Cheshvan 5781* we purchased the 3-acre property and after some renovations moved in and dedicated the permanent Chabad House before Pesach of that year. The 2-acre property we were originally working on remained tied up in litigation for another year, and the settlement would have made it impossible for us to ever purchase it.

In retrospect, we realized that the chain of events made perfect sense. The shocking eviction notice from the rental company was what finally pushed us to reconsider our options and ultimately purchase the 3 acre property. Had we waited for even a couple of days longer it would have been too late.

The Rebbe had indeed answered us. What appeared at first to be a dire situation merely 24 hours after writing to the Rebbe, was in fact the greatest bracha! 🕒

YOUR STORY

Share your story with A Chassidisher Derher by emailing stories@derher.org.



לעילוי נשמת
 הרה"ח הרה"ת הרב יהודה יעקב
 בן ר' אברהם אבא ע"ה
 רעפסון
 נלב"ע כ"ז אדר ה'תש"פ
 ת'נ'צ'ב'ה'
 נדפס ע"י
 משפחתו שיחיו

DESPITE ALL ODDS

IYAR 5751*

In the late 5740s* and early 5750s*, the newly formed Iggud Hashluchim (Shluchim Committee) took on the ambitious undertaking following Hei Teves of creating a book about the Rebbe and Chabad Lubavitch's activities worldwide. The book was published by a large publishing house and received much encouragement from the Rebbe during its writing process.

In Iyar of 5751*, the book was finally completed and presented to the Rebbe.

Compiled By: Rabbi Shabi Soffer



Mr. Peter Kalms, together with Rabbi Faivish Vogel, shliach in England, present the Rebbe the newly printed book, which the Rebbe received warmly with visible nachas ruach.

"This is the book, yes?" The Rebbe asked. "Thank you very much! I know you are selling this for many dollars but I will give you one.

"This is symbolic, may G-d almighty bless you, to have much success in spreading the book as best as possible."

The Rebbe gave each two dollars, and bentched them with a bracha v'hatzlacha.



Two days later, on Tuesday,
9 Iyar, en route to the Ohel,
the Rebbe could be seen
carrying the new book.





Letters

A forum for readers to send their feedback, add to, or ask any questions about articles. Submit your letter to feedback@derher.org.

Submissions may be slightly modified by our editorial staff before publishing.

Reb Zalman Duchman

Dear Editors,

In the Kislev issue (125) an interesting article was published about the famous Chossid, Reb Zalman Duchman and his *sefer* “Leshaima Ozen”.

In that *sefer* (section about the Frierdiker Rebbe, chapter 91), it says that at a Yud-Tes Kislev farbrengen, the Rebbe (then the future son-in-law of the Frierdiker Rebbe) and his brother, Reb Leibel, were present. The Frierdiker Rebbe mentioned to them about their not seeing the Rebbe Rashab. (See there and *Sefer Hasichos* 5687 p. 125, three versions of what was said.)

Reb Zalman continues:

“I had a question then: How is it that the *gaon* and *mekubal*, Harav Hachossid Reb Levik y”l from Yekaterinaslav, did not take such talented children to Lubavitch nor to Rostov? But, the Frierdiker Rebbe in a *sicha*, makes it all understood: The holy Baal Shem Tov instructed that the Alter Rebbe not be brought to him, because his connection was to the Baal Shem Tov’s *talmid* (the Maggid).” [See *Sefer Hasichos* 5707 p. 98.]

After the “Leshaima Ozen” was printed, I heard from my great-uncle, Reb Zalman, that he told the Rebbe that he was reluctant to print “his explanation” why the Rebbe never went to the Rebbe Rashab. The Rebbe responded that he may

print it.

Thank you for everything you do. Please continue providing fresh material which infuses a Chassidisher Derher to thousands.

Rabbi Yosef Minkowitz

MONTREAL, CANADA

Rabbi Moshe Hecht

I read with great interest your recent article about Rabbi Moshe Hecht. We knew him as Rabbi Maurice Hecht, and yes his booming voice would shake the walls.

I am a 1961 graduate of Yeshivas Achei Temimim Lubavitch of New Haven. I knew already then at the ripe old age of thirteen that Rabbi Hecht was a special person.

I was born in a DP camp in 1947 to parents who were Holocaust survivors. We immigrated to the U.S. living in the Lower East Side in 1949, and in 1953, we moved to New Haven.

My parents wanted me to go to a Jewish day school but were not in the financial position to make that possible. It was Rabbi Hecht who subsidized the costs of my schooling and my happy summers at Camp Tiferet.

A number of years later my parents went through a divorce. It was Rabbi Hecht who mediated between my parents trying to keep them together, and when

he couldn't he told them that they must make sure that the divorce would not affect the children at all or he would bring me into his own house.

In the article you mentioned how the Rebbe made a special rare request of Rabbi Hecht to name his daughter after his grandmother, Rebbetzin Rochel Yanovsky, the mother of Rebbetzin Chana. Rochel Hecht was my classmate in school and the Hecht children made a strong impression on me growing up.

I vividly remember a 1960 trip of the seventh and eighth New Haven grades to the Rebbe for a Shabbos together with Rabbi Schildkraut. I still remember the eyes of the Rebbe as he looked at me at that time. I felt something when he looked at me as if he knew what was going on in my life and into my future and indeed that he knew me even better than I knew myself. It was an experience I

will never forget.

I want to share my feeling of indebtedness to Rabbi Hecht for his care and sensitivity for a young boy which set me on a path for life being involved with my Yiddishkeit and with Lubavitch wherever I have ended up throughout my life.

Dr. David Knopf

COLUMBIA, MARYLAND

