

A Chassidisher **Derher**

א חסידישער דערהער

Rehovos HaNahar

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF
THE MITTELER REBBE

Like a Father

RABBI MOSHE LAZAR ON HIS YEARS
IN THE REBBE'S PRESENCE

WHEREVER YOU MAY BE

*Seizing every opportunity
to spread Yiddishkeit*



KISLEV 5784
ISSUE 137 (214)
DECEMBER 2023

לע"נ
מרת דבורה
בת הרה"ת ר' זאב שו"ב ע"ה
קרינסקי
נלב"ע יו"ד כסלו ה'תשע"ג
ת'נ'צ'ב'ה'

נדפס ע"י בנה
הרה"ת ר' הלל דוד וזוגתו מרת שטערנא שרה
ומשפחתם שיחיו
קרינסקי

The Rebbe on Eretz Yisroel

Together with Yidden around the world, we daven for the safety and security of our brothers and sisters in Eretz Hakodesh, ארץ אשׁר . . . תמיד עיני ה' אלקיך בה מרשית השנה ועד אחרית שנה

To read selections of what the Rebbe said during times of tension in Eretz Yisroel and the physical and spiritual steps to be taken in order to bring a true and lasting peace, see the following previously published articles:

- "Reconnecting" – The Rebbe's launch of Mivtza Tefillin
- "Stop the Enemy" – The spiritual battle of the Yom Kippur War
- "Against All Odds" – The inner dimension of Entebbe
- "Sacred and Secure" – The Rebbe's campaign to ensure "Shleimus Haaretz" - The integrity of Eretz Yisroel

May we finally merit an end to this bitter galus and the coming of Moshiach when בלע המות לנצח ומחה ה' אלקים דמעה מעל כל פנים

And the fulfillment of the pessukim of the Rebbe's kapitel:

שָׁלוֹם שְׁלוֹם יְרוּשָׁלַם יִשְׁלַי אֶהְבִּיךְ: יְהִי
שְׁלוֹם בְּחֵילְךָ שְׁלוֹה בְּאַרְמְנוֹתֶיךָ.



TO READ PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED
ARTICLES ABOUT THE REBBE'S
PERSPECTIVE ON ERETZ YISROEL VISIT:
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LISTEN TO THE DERHER FOR KIDS AUDIO VERSION TO HEAR THESE STORIES COME TO LIFE.

ROSH CHODESH KISLEV

Rosh Chodesh Kislev is one of the most joyous days on the calendar. What led up to that day? Journey through the full story of the yomtov of Rosh Chodesh Kislev with this fascinating new Derher For Kids episode.

EPISODE # 63

YUD DALED KISLEV

Travel to the year 5689 and experience the complete story of the Rebbe & Rebbetzin's Chasunah on Yud Daled Kislev

EPISODE # 9

[KIDS.DERHER.ORG](https://kids.derher.org)





דעם רבינ'ס א ווארט

A Word
on the
Parsha

Compiled By:
Rabbi Mendel Vogel

תולדות

עֲקֵב אֲשֶׁר-שָׁמַע אַבְרָהָם בְּקוֹלִי וַיִּשְׁמֹר מִשְׁמֵרֹתַי מִצְוֹתַי
חֻקוֹתַי וְתוֹרָתִי (כ"ה)

“Because Avraham hearkened to My voice,
and kept My charge, My commandments,
My statutes, and My instructions.”

Based on this *possuk*, the Gemara (Kiddushin 82a) states that Avraham Avinu kept the entire Torah prior to *Matan Torah*.

The question is well known: How could Avraham have fulfilled all the mitzvos if some of them are directly connected to events that had not yet occurred? The *parshiyos* of Tefillin, for example, contain the yet-to-occur story of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*.

Chassidus explains that Avraham Avinu's performance of some of the mitzvos was not in the physical sense as we do today, but rather spiritually. In this way, he was able to fulfill

all the mitzvos of the Torah, even those associated with events that took place later in time.

Everything in Torah provides instruction for us in *avodas Hashem*.

How can Avraham's fulfilling of the mitzvos *b'ruchniyus* be a meaningful lesson for us if the way we perform mitzvos nowadays is in their physical form?

The answer is that we too can perform mitzvos *b'ruchniyus*. When we influence someone else to perform a mitzva, though the *physical* fulfillment of the mitzvah happens through the other person, we—who helped bring it about—have done the mitzva *b'ruchniyus*.

Takeaway:

In addition to the mitzvos we physically observe, we must also fulfill the mitzvos *spiritually*—by influencing other *Yidden's* observance.

(*Hisva'aduyos* 5745 vol. 1, p. 575)

לזכות השלוחה
מרת אסתר בת רחל שתח"י טייכטל
לרגל יום הולדתה כ"ג כסלו
לשנת ברכה והצלחה בכל מעשיה
ושתרווה נחת רוח רב מכל יוצאי חלציה

נדפס ע"י בעלה ומשפחתה
בנאשוויל, טענעסי

ויצא

וַיִּקְרָא שְׁם־הַמָּקוֹם הַהוּא מַחֲנַיִם (לב,ג)

“...and he named the place Machanaim.”

Rashi tells us the reason Ya'akov named this location Machanoyim; plural for the word *machane* (meaning “camp” or “group”): It is because of the two entourages of *malochim* that met at this spot. One had accompanied Ya'akov in his travels outside Eretz Yisroel, and the other escorting him within Eretz Yisroel.

From this we see that even after encountering the angels of Eretz Yisroel, the significance of the angels of *chutz lo'aretz* did not become less in Yaakov's eyes. Rather, the two camps joined together to create one name—*Machanoyim*—implying that each group—even the one from outside—has something unique to offer.

We learn from here how we ought to view the world around us: The goal in life is not to shun the physical world or break it, but rather to harness it and infuse it with *kedusha*. This is represented in the word “*Machanoyim*”—a fusion of the physical (*chutz lo'aretz*) and the spiritual (Eretz Yisroel).

One thereby gains from each of these aspects: The holiness and purity of “Eretz Yisroel”, on the one hand, but also the benefits of the struggle with “*chutz lo'aretz*” and its transformation to sanctity. The latter has an advantage, like light that shines after darkness.

Takeaway:

This is a lesson for us regarding the era of Moshiach: Even after *Yidden* leave *golus* behind and gather in Eretz Yisroel, the incomparable value and benefits of our *avoda* in *golus* will not be forgotten. In the words of *chazal*, the

very shuls and study halls of *chutz lo'aretz* will be raised up and carried to Eretz Yisroel, forming an integral part of the true and ultimate *geula*.

(*Hisva'aduyos* 5749 vol. 1, p. 400)

וישלח

וַיִּשְׁלַח יַעֲקֹב מַלְאָכִים (לב,ד)

“And Ya'akov sent messengers.”

Rashi tells us that the *mala'achim* that Yaakov sent to Eisav were no ordinary messengers, but “מלאכים ממש”; they were actual angels.

The Mezeritcher Maggid interprets this Rashi as follows: Yaakov Avinu sent Eisav only the “*mamosh*”—the “substance” or “corporeality”—of the *malochim*. Their *ruchniyus*—their *nefesh*—remained behind with Yaakov.

This teaching seems difficult. After all, even with regard to human beings and animals, a body cannot exist without a soul. This is certainly the case with regard to angels, whose primary existence is their soul. How, then, did Yaakov separate their bodies from their souls?

This can be explained as follows: Yaakov sent the *malochim* in their entirety, both ‘body’ and soul. But he sent them in such a manner that even while they were with Eisav, it was evident that there was not their home, that they belonged with Yaakov. Thus it was as if their souls—their primary identity—had remained with Yaakov, in line with the teaching of the Baal Shem Tov: “A person is wherever his thoughts are.”

The reason their *shlichus* had to be in this manner is because their mission was to be *mevarer*, to refine Eisav. To do this, and not allow the reverse—that they be influenced by him—they had to constantly remain attached and connected to their sender.



Takeaway:

When the Rebbe sends a *shliach* with a mission to spread Chassidus, the *shliach* must constantly remember that he is there to carry out the will of the *meshalei'ach*. On the one hand, he must be invested in the *shlichus* with every fiber of his being. On the other hand, he must be careful that his surroundings do not influence him. The way to ensure that is by always remembering that every act is with the purpose of fulfilling the mission. Conducting oneself in such a manner, one is provided with the *koichos* necessary to fulfill the *shlichus*.

(Likkutei Sichos vol. 10, p. 100)

וישב

וַיָּבֹא אֵלֵיהֶם יוֹסֵף בְּבֹקֶר וַיֵּרָא אֹתָם וְהֵנָּם זָעִפִּים. וַיִּשְׂאֵל
אֶת־סָרִיסֵי פַרְעֹה אֲשֶׁר אִתּוֹ בְּמִשְׁמֶר בַּיִת אֲדֹנָיו לֵאמֹר
מִדּוּעַ פְּנֵיכֶם רָעִים הַיּוֹם (כׁ, ו-ז)

“And Yosef came to them in the morning, and he saw them and behold, they were troubled. And he asked Pharaoh's chamberlains who were with him in the prison of his master's house, saying, “Why are your faces sad today?””

Why does the Torah go into such detail about the conversation between Yosef and Pharaoh's ministers—it should have been enough to simply say that Yosef listened to their dreams, and interpreted them correctly?

Because these details contain a powerful lesson: Yosef had suffered greatly and experienced many hardships in his life. Torn away from his family at a young age, he was sold into slavery in Egypt, and later found himself sitting in an Egyptian jail due to false accusations. In such a situation, one would expect Yosef to be depressed and withdrawn, not paying attention to the problems of others.

In fact, however, we find that as soon as Yosef noticed that the two ministers appeared a bit more troubled than usual (for they surely looked despondent the entire time they were in prison, such that the change in their mood that day was not overly noticeable), he took an interest. He reached out to them to find out what was wrong, and offered to help as much as he could.

We learn from this how important it is to show interest in the welfare of others—even in the smallest details—and to assist them as much as possible, despite experiencing hardship in one's own life.

Takeaway:

From this story one can see the far-reaching effects of taking even a slight interest in the plight of others. Because Yosef paid attention to the suffering of his fellow inmates, he was later freed and rose to greatness, enabling him to employ a strategy saving all of civilization from hunger.

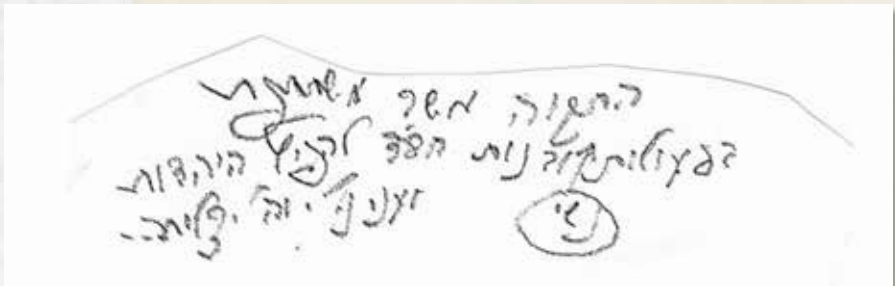
(Sichas Shabbos Parshas Mikeitz 5734)



כתב יד קודש



לזכות הילד שניאור זלמן נ"י לרגל יום ההולדת י"ג כסלו יה"ר שיגדל לתורה לחופה ולמעשים טובים מתוך בריאות נכונה ושפע בגו"ר לנח"ר כ"ק אדמו"ר והוריו הי"ו



JOIN IN

In a letter to a woman, the Rebbe adds the following postscript in his holy handwriting:

[My] hope is that you participate in the activities of Nshei U'bnos Chabad, spreading Yiddishkeit and its ideas. May Hashem grant you success.¹

התקוה אשר משתתפת בפעולות נשי ובנות חבד להפיץ היהדות ועניני' וה' יצליחה.

1. Teshura, Tzikashvilli-Tzikashvilli, 5783.



THE REBBE VIEWS A PAINTING AT REB BARUCH NACHSHON'S ART EXHIBIT ON 6 KISLEV 5739

CHAIM BARUCH HALBERSTAM VIA JEM 101700

“WHY WASN'T THERE ANY DANCING?”

KISLEV 5739

A description of Kislev, 5739 with the Rebbe. Bochurim's diaries reveal the special atmosphere surrounding the 50th anniversary of Yud Daled Kislev.

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

ע"י בנם	טור 'לעבן מיטן רבי'ן 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'

Thursday, First Day Of Rosh Chodesh Kislev

Today, several Shluchim who oversee educational institutions wrote to the Rebbe, seeking guidance on whether to attend a relative's wedding in New York. The Rebbe responded with the words of the Gemara, that "The Torah learning of children should not be interrupted, even for the building of the Beis Hamikdash."

Monday, Daled Kislev

After Mincha, an individual approached the Rebbe and asked if the Rebbe had received his letter.

The Rebbe asked, "From Italy?"

When the man answered that he had recently sent a letter, the Rebbe instructed him to visit *Mazkirus* for his response.

Conversing with *Mazkirus*, the man expressed his confusion as he was not from Italy. While waiting, the man recalled with astonishment that last summer, while he was in Italy, he had sent a letter to the Rebbe - an incident he had forgotten about. He found it incredible that the Rebbe knew who he was when seeing him, even though they had never met in person.

One of the issues raised in the man's letter was the intrusion of negative and confusing thoughts, distracting him from doing the right thing.

In response, the Rebbe addressed an incident from the man's past that was the source of these troubling thoughts. (Once more, the man was astonished that the Rebbe, who he had never met, knew about this event from his history although he had never shared the details.) The Rebbe advised him to don Tefillin daily and to adhere to the laws of the Shulchan Aruch.

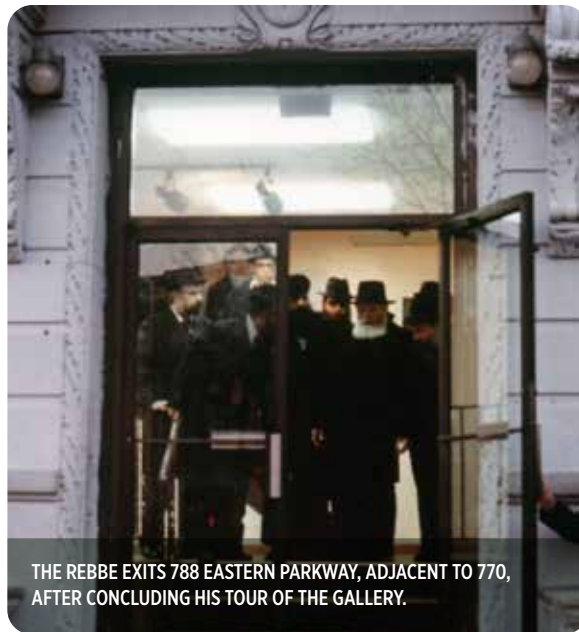
Wednesday, Vov Kislev

Today, the Rebbe visited the Art Exhibition of Reb Baruch Nachshon in the adjacent building of 788 Eastern Parkway.¹

Motzei Shabbos Tes Kislev, Parshas Vayeitzei

Maariv began at 5:20. At the conclusion of Maariv, the Rebbe recited Kaddish and Mishnayos.²

After Maariv, around 5:40, the Rebbe went home for about twenty minutes. Upon returning to 770, he engaged Mr. Yechiel Chananya Henry, who was present, in a conversation about his well-being. Mr. Henry indicated his



THE REBBE EXITS 788 EASTERN PARKWAY, ADJACENT TO 770, AFTER CONCLUDING HIS TOUR OF THE GALLERY.

discomfort, particularly with his legs. After discussing his situation further, the Rebbe instructed him to say 'L'chaim' three times at the next farbrengen and wished him a good week.

Mr. Henry replied: "With Moshiach!"

The Rebbe responded first in Yiddish and then repeated in English: "You too!"

Later in the evening, at 9:30 pm, the Rebbe came down for the Motzei Shabbos farbrengen. After the second *sicha*, the Rebbe smiled at Mr Henry, signaling for him to say l'chaim.

Wednesday, Yud Gimmel Kislev, Erev Yud Daled Kislev

Today, on the Rebbe's instructions, the manuscript of '*Drushei Chasuna*' from 5689 (*ma'amorim* said by the Friediker Rebbe during the Rebbe's Sheva Brachos) was sent to print. A booklet containing the Rebbe's *sichos* from 5729, the Rebbe's 40th anniversary, was also printed.

Furthermore, the Rebbe edited the *sicha* from Yud Gimmel Elul, 5714, where the Rebbe explained the Maamar 'L'cha Dodi' from 5689. This *sicha* was printed together with the Maamar 'L'cha Dodi' of 5714.

The dedication in the booklet reads:

"In Honor of The Rebbe and Rebbetzin, on the occasion of their 50th wedding anniversary, 5689 to 5739. May they have *arichus yomim* and healthy years. May they

*☎ 5729-1968, 5714-1954, 5689-1928, 5739-1978

have abundant *nachas* from their students, Chassidim and Klal Yisrael. May they lead us all very soon, in the best of health and with much *nachas*, to our holy land.”

The Rebbe arrived for Maariv at 6:45 pm. Many *yungeleit* were wearing their *kapotas* in honor of the Rebbe’s 50th wedding anniversary, and the room was filled with anticipation that perhaps there would be a *farbrengen* tonight.

After Maariv, the Rebbe asked for Rabbi Hodakov. While the Rebbe spoke with Rabbi Hodakov, bochurim excitedly waited near the door of *Gan Eden Hatachton*, hoping to hear something. Maybe there would be a *farbrengen*.

After about two minutes, Rabbi Hodakov emerged and announced that the Rebbe said that at 9:30 there will be a “short *farbrengen*.”

At the *farbrengen*, the Rebbe addressed the reason for the gathering: his 50th wedding anniversary. The Midrash states, “When one is in a place, he follows its customs” and in America, when a significant anniversary milestone is reached, close friends and relatives gather together to celebrate.

The Rebbe also expounded upon the significance of the number 50.

Later in the *farbrengen*, the Rebbe said that for those who still need a “satisfactory pretext” for holding an anniversary *farbrengen*, we will arrange *sheva brachos*. (There were a few *Chassanim* and *Kallos* present.)

“Then (at the *sheva brachos*), those who aren’t yet satisfied should drink the wine, and, as the Gemara says: ‘Those who drink wine become children.’ Children have to do what they’re told, even if it doesn’t make sense to them. When they grow older, they will understand.”

Afterwards, the Rebbe delivered the Maamar titled “*Asher Bara Sason V’simcha*.”

During the Maamar, the Rebbe mentioned all of the Rebbeim from the Baal Shem Tov.

After the Maamar, as per the Rebbe’s instructions, two *sheva brachos* ceremonies were held, with a slight break between them.

Following this, the Rebbe mentioned that in the year 5707, which marked 50 years from the Frierdiker Rebbe’s wedding, it was arranged to present the Frierdiker Rebbe with new *seforim* (that had just been printed in Shanghai) every day of the ‘*Sheva Brachos week*’ following his anniversary.

Later, the Rebbe instructed that in addition to the customary gift of a set of Shas given to a Chosson, a Tzedaka pushka should also be given.

The Rebbe discussed the importance of engaging in “*Hachnasas Kallah*” and asked that the organization

“*Nshei U’bnos Chabad*”, publish a booklet containing the laws of *taharas hamishpacha*. Committees should be organized in every locale to oversee this.

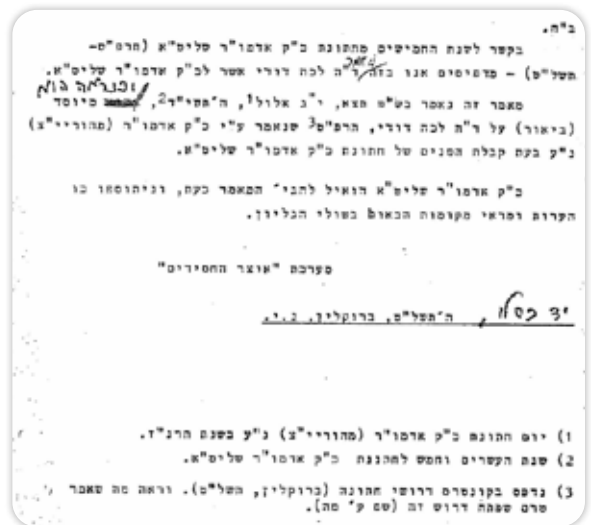
The *farbrengen* concluded at 12:17 am.

As the Rebbe left the shul, and while exiting the elevator upstairs, he enthusiastically encouraged the singing multiple times .

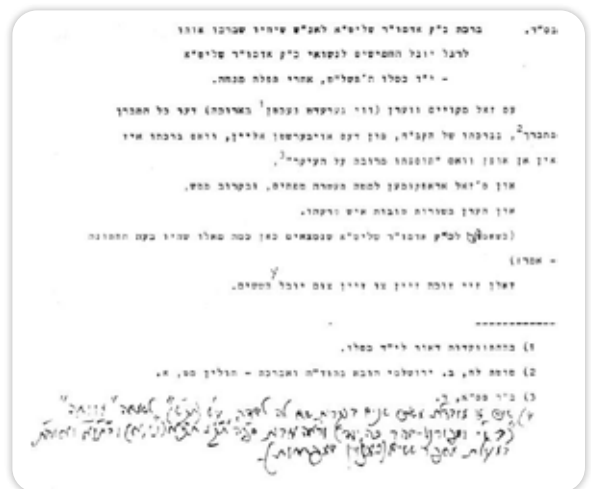
Thursday, Yud Daled Kislev

This morning during Shachris, Kriah was read from “Moshiach’s Sefer Torah.”

Later in the day, the Rebbe went to the Ohel. While



INTRODUCTION TO THE MAAMER OF 13 ELUL 5713. THE REBBE WROTE THE DATE YUD DALED KISLEV.



IN THE REBBE’S EDITS TO THE BRACHA GIVEN BY ELDER CHASSIDIM FOR THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY, HE ADDED A FOOTNOTE EXPLAINING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE UPCOMING 60TH ANNIVERSARY.



RABBI BEREL LEVY FARBRENGING WITH CHASSIDIM IN THE SOVIET UNION

that everything was fine. The Rebbe then remarked, “Aren't there multiple Jews who are incarcerated?” When the Rabbi explained that they were considered “terrorists,” the Rebbe emphasized, “We must take care of every single Jew,” and cited the Gemara in Yoma which highlights the importance of *pikuach nefesh*.

The chief rabbi of Colombia asked the Rebbe for permission to step down from his post. In response, the Rebbe told him, “The captain is last to abandon the ship.”

During tonight's *yechidus*'n, the Rebbe gave each person a dollar. The Rebbe also tested children in their learning.

Yechidus concluded at 1:15 am. Fifteen minutes later, as the Rebbe was leaving 770, he noticed Rabbi Mishkovsky from Kfar Chassidim (who had been in *yechidus* earlier) standing near the door. The Rebbe asked if he had a ride home, and he replied that he did.

Thursday, Chof Alef Kislev

Tonight as well there was *yechidus*.

A Baal Teshuva from France, who was looking to get married, asked the Rebbe which qualities to look out for in a wife. The Rebbe answered: “*Yiras Shamayim*.”

Rabbi Leibel Kaplan, (from Tzfas,) had a *yechidus* lasting about twenty minutes. The Rebbe instructed him to convey to the mayor of the city that he's “doing good in my ‘domain’”. (Last year, the Rebbe was presented with a key to the city of Tzfas.)

The chief rabbi of South Africa had a 30 minute

yechidus with the Rebbe. The Rebbe instructed him to ensure that every Jewish inmate had their own Chanukah Menorah. The Rebbe also mentioned that “Tzach has what to learn from your activities.”

Rabbi Berel Levy, who had just returned from the Soviet Union, described his visit to the Rebbe. He said that the Chassidim in Russia are singing “*Ata Hakeil*” (The Rebbe's kapitel niggun of that year) and wish the Rebbe well. Hearing this, the Rebbe began to cry. All told, Rabbi Levy was in *yechidus* for an hour and forty minutes.

Yechidus concluded at midnight. For the first time in many years the curtains on the windows in the Rebbe's room remained open throughout.

Motzei Shabbos Parshas Vayeishev

Tonight there was a farbrengen.

The Rebbe spoke about *Mivtza Chanukah*, emphasizing the importance of women's involvement (also in hospitals and prisons).

During the second *sicha*, the Rebbe explained the reason for holding the Shabbos Mevorchim farbrengen on Motzei Shabbos (as has been the seder for the past year⁴) instead of during the day—to bring light to the darkness.

Towards the end of the farbrengen, the Rebbe instructed everyone to sing “*Ha'aderes Viha'emuna*,” remarking, “We have individuals from France among us, and they haven't yet sung ‘*Ha'aderes Viha'emuna*!’”

An aerial photograph of a rural landscape. A paved road runs diagonally from the top right towards the center. To the right of the road is a fence and a building with a dark, corrugated metal roof and a wooden base. The background shows rolling hills and fields under a cloudy sky.

RECHOVOS

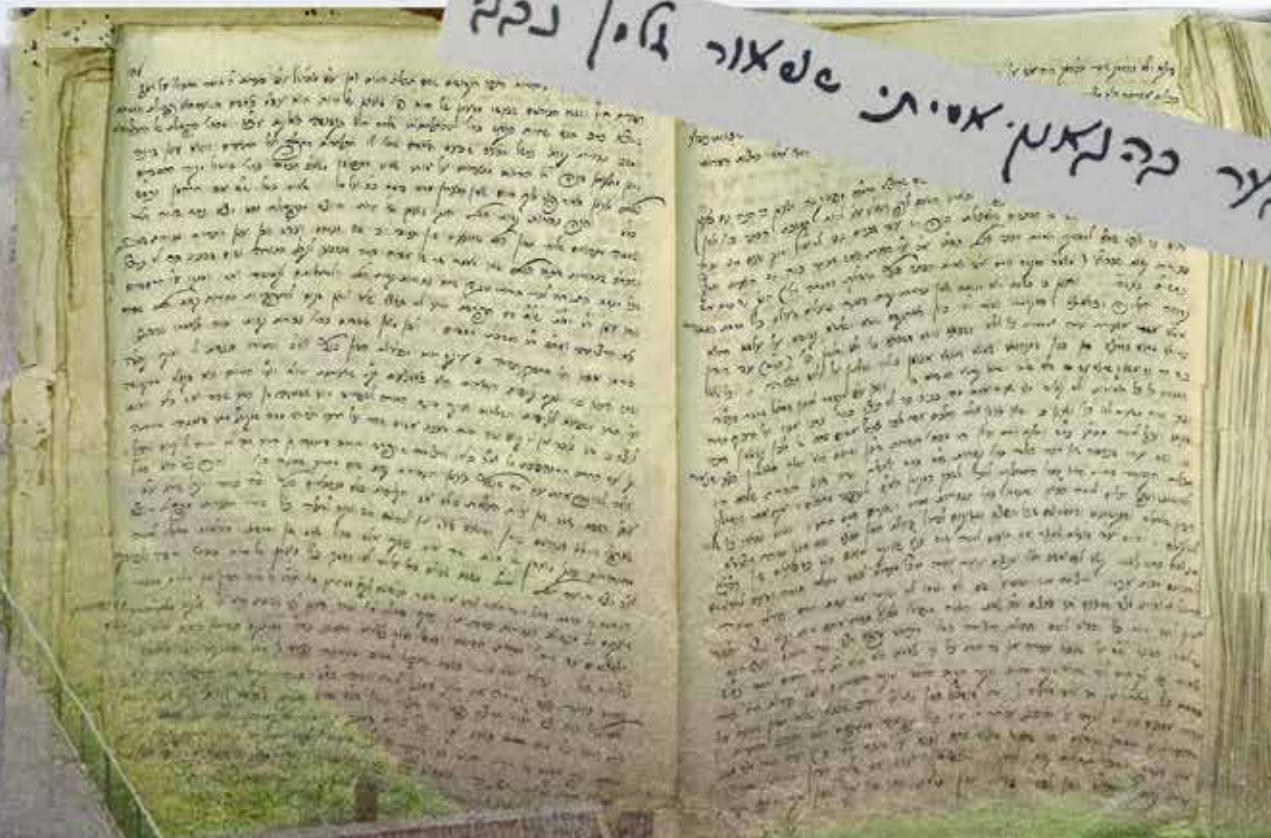
HANAHAR

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF THE MITTELER REBBE

The dates of Tes-Yud Kislev mark the Mittlerer Rebbe's birthday and yom hilula (on Tes), and his chag hageulah (on Yud). We present a glimpse of the fascinating story of his nesius.

BY: RABBI MENDY GREENBERG

גובה קבלת אשכנזי של אור גאון נב"ה



לזכות החייל בצבאות ה' מנחם מענדל שיחי' גולדברג,
לרגל האפשרושים שלו ב' כסלו תשפ"ד יה"ר שיגדל
להיות חייל ויגרום נח"ל לכ"ק אדמו"ר נשיא דורנו

מוקדש ע"י הוריו
הרה"ת ר' שמעון בן-ציון זוזגנו מרת
ח' מושקא שיחי' גולדברג
שלוחי כ"ק אדמו"ר בפסיפיק פליסיידו, קלפורני

A New Situation

The Mittlerer Rebbe's leadership began amidst the tumult of Napoleon's invasion of Russia. At the time of the Alter Rebbe's *histalkus*, the Mittlerer Rebbe was in Kremenchug, Ukraine, where the Alter Rebbe had sent him to search for a suitable place to settle. Upon receiving news of the *histalkus*, the Mittlerer Rebbe embarked on the several-month long journey back to Belarus, stopping along the way to deliver *maamarim* and meet with Chassidim in *yechidus*.¹

For Jews in Czarist Russia, this was a challenging period. Both the Russian and French armies had wreaked havoc throughout the country, leaving villages in ruins and many without a livelihood. Moreover, the Czarist government was growing increasingly hostile towards the Jewish community.

The opposition from the *misnagdim* remained intense, leading to conflicts in shuls and communities across the region. Even among Chassidim themselves, disputes arose over the merits of Chabad over Chagas. And within Chabad, there was a question of succession between the Mittlerer Rebbe and Reb Aharon Shttrasheler.

The Mittlerer Rebbe acted swiftly, issuing directives to strengthen Chassidim and their communities. One of his earliest *takkanos* was prohibiting Chassidim from entering the *misnagdim's* shuls, so as not to cause unnecessary conflict. Chassidim were encouraged to establish their own *batei midrash* and, if necessary, to daven privately at home, hearing *krias hatorah* while standing outside the non-Chassidic shuls.

"I knew a chossid of the Mittlerer Rebbe," the Frierdiker Rebbe once said, "who davened without a minyan for five consecutive years—aside for Elul and Tishrei in Lubavitch—because his hometown of Lida did not have a Chassidisher Beis Midrash."²

These efforts dramatically reduced the tensions between Chassidim and *misnagdim*, and fostered a stronger sense of community among the Chassidim gathering in their own spaces.

The Mittlerer Rebbe traveled extensively, visiting Chassidim to deliver *maamarim* and receive them for *yechidus*. Many of the transcripts of the Mittlerer Rebbe's *maamarim* note the locations of their recital; in the early years of his *nesius*, we find the Mittlerer Rebbe visiting towns and cities throughout Belarus, and sometimes even the much-farther Ukraine.

A printing campaign of massive proportions was also undertaken. In the days of the Alter Rebbe, the Tanya was the only *sefer* available in published form. The Mittlerer Rebbe worked incessantly to publish more and more.

In just the first three years of his *nesius*, he published nine volumes of the Alter Rebbe's Torah: the Tanya with *Igeres*

THE FIRST PRINT OF THE SEFER SHAAREI ORAH PUBLISHED IN 5582



FIRST VOLUME OF A LARGE SET OF THE MITTLER REBBE'S MAAMORIM PUBLISHED BY KEHOS IN 5749

Hakodesh, the *Siddur im Da'ch*, *Biurei Hazohar*, and the six volumes of *Shulchan Aruch*.

Over the next six years, he would publish his own Chassidus, releasing a new *sefer* at least once each year: the two sections of *Shaarei Teshuvah*, *Derech Chaim*, *Shaar Ha'emunah v'Shaar Hayichud*, *Imrei Binah*, *Ateres Rosh* and *Shaarei Orah*.

The volume and pace of his publishing activities would not be rivaled for over a century, until the establishment of Kehos by the Frierdiker Rebbe, headed by the Rebbe in 5702. For generations, these *sefarim* made up most of the Chassidic bookshelf.³

The Never Ending Fountain

A respected professor, the most famous doctor in the Vitebsk region, was once riding his horse through a small town on his way to treat the local landowner who had fallen ill. As he rode through the quiet streets, he came across an intriguing scene.

Hundreds of Yidden crowded a courtyard to hear a long address from a dignified looking individual in the center of the crowd. They stood in absolute silence; not a cough, not a sneeze, not even a breath was heard. Fascinated, the professor stood there for several minutes. Suddenly, he realized

something incredible—his own chronic cough had been silenced as well.

He soon proceeded to the landowner, who explained to him that this was no ordinary speaker; he had witnessed the delivery of Torah teachings by the Rebbe, Reb Dovber Shneuri, who had settled in the town of Lubavitch several years prior.⁴

Over the 14 years of his leadership, from תקע"ג through תקפ"ח, the Mitteler Rebbe delivered an incredible amount of *maamarim*. Sometimes he would deliver two or three in a single Shabbos, each between forty-five minutes and an hour long. Even on Yom Kippur—there were years when he delivered a *maamar* on Yom Kippur morning, again at the end of the fast, and a third time the following morning. On occasion, he would suddenly emerge from his room to deliver a new *maamar* at four in the morning.⁵

The Rebbe often remarked that the Mitteler Rebbe's Chassidus is known as "*rechovos hanahar*" (like the wide flow of a river); in contrast to the succinct writing of the Alter Rebbe, the Mitteler Rebbe's Torah is lengthy and clear, every point broadly elaborated and clarified.

The volume of his many *maamarim* alone, occupies nineteen volumes published by Kehos, not including the many *sefarim* published separately. Even in the final moments before his *histalkus*, when his holy body seemed to possess no energy at all, he continued to teach Chassidus until his final breath in this world. The Tzemach Tzedek famously quipped that if his finger were cut, it wouldn't be blood emerging, but Chassidus instead.⁶

In contrast to his predecessors, the Alter Rebbe, the Maggid and the Baal Shem Tov, the Mitteler Rebbe transcribed his own *maamarim* often writing them at far greater length than his oral delivery. Chassidim related that he wrote so quickly, the ink of the first line on the page was often still wet when he finished writing the last.⁷

The Rebbe once pointed to a strange fact about the Mitteler Rebbe's Chassidus: Despite the immense amount he wrote, very few original *kisvei yad* remain in the Rebbe's library. The reason, the Rebbe explained, seems to again be associated with the Mitteler Rebbe's intense dedication to spreading Chassidus:

When the Mitteler Rebbe established the Chabad *yishuv* in Chevron, he chose several Chassidim to be its founders. The Chassidim protested; "What will be with Chassidus?" (i.e., their visits to hear Chassidus from the Rebbe). In response, the Mitteler Rebbe promised to personally send them *ksavim*. The Rebbe noted that in fact, numerous *kisvei yad* were discovered in the possession of grandchildren of the Chevron Chassidim.⁸

When the Mitteler Rebbe was asked, "Why is so much more revelation necessary now than in previous generations?"

THE SHTENDER

As a youngster, the Rebbe Maharash once asked his older brother the Maharil, "Why are you nicknamed 'the shtender'?"

"Because," the Maharil responded, "our grandfather the Mitteler Rebbe would lean on me when reciting Chassidus in the fields."

"How long would he lean on you?" the Rebbe Maharash asked.

"For an hour or two," the Maharil responded.

The Rebbe Maharash found that difficult to believe. "For just one or two hours they wouldn't have called you shtender," he argued.

"Sometimes, it was three or four hours," he said.

The Rebbe Maharash wasn't satisfied; even that wouldn't suffice to earn him such a nickname. Finally, the Maharil admitted the full extent of his role; "It once happened," he said, "that he leaned on me for eighteen hours!"¹⁰

he answered with a *mashal*:

"An ill person is told to lessen his consumption of ordinary foods, and given medication. A very sick person is given stronger medication—with potentially harmful side-effects, and someone who is near death is given the most powerful drugs, with the hope that a single drop might enter his body and have the desired effect.

"Previous generations lived on higher levels of spirituality, and didn't need to engage with Kabbala at all... For our orphaned generation, however, it is necessary to 'spill' Chassidus in volume, in the hope that it will reach the person's *pintele yid*..."⁹

Personal Responsibility

The Mitteler Rebbe wasn't content delivering Chassidus himself. Every chossid visiting Lubavitch was expected, on his return trip, to publicly review the *maamarim* they had heard in Lubavitch at every shul along the way.

One chossid famously got himself into 'hot water' by obeying the Mitteler Rebbe's instruction:

Reb Moshe Yitzchak of Yas¹¹ once began *chazering* Chassidus in the shul of the famed Apter Rav, unaware that the Apter Rav was an avowed opponent of Chabad's broad dissemination of Chassidus. Hearing the teachings, the Rav

exclaimed: “הגם לכבוש את המלכה עמי בבית—are you attempting to conquer the queen with me in the house?”¹² He went on to indicate that Reb Moshe Yitzchak would not survive the year.

Reb Moshe Yitzchak immediately returned to Lubavitch and recounted the story to the Mittlerer Rebbe. The Rebbe asked, “Did you G-d forbid [intentionally] disrespect the tzaddik of Apta?” “No,” responded Reb Moshe Yitzchak. “I didn’t even know that it was his *beis midrash*...”

The Mittlerer Rebbe reassured Reb Moshe Yitzchak that he would live out his allotted years. This did little to calm him, however. The Rebbe leaned on the table for some time, and then said, “You will outlive him.” Still, Reb Moshe Yitzchak’s mind was not put at ease, for the tzaddik of Apta was much older than he was. Again the Rebbe leaned on the table and then said, “You will outlive his children.” Reb Moshe Yitzchak lived to the ripe old age of 102.¹³

One chossid felt that the positive response to his delivery of Chassidus was detrimental to his spiritual growth; he was gaining *yeshus*, he told the Mittlerer Rebbe. The Rebbe wasn’t impressed. “*A tzibele zol fun dir veren, uber Chassidus zolst du chazeren*, even if you become an onion, you should continue repeating Chassidus,” he told him.¹⁴

A Thirst For Chassidus

The Mittlerer Rebbe was born on Tes Kislev תקל”ד, just under a year after the *histalkus* of the Mezritcher Maggid. After being blessed only with daughters, the Alter Rebbe had asked the Maggid for a *bracha* to have a son, and the Mittlerer Rebbe was named in his memory.

The Mittlerer Rebbe’s first *melamed* would complain that the young boy always wanted him to teach more and more, while the other children were falling behind. As was typical in those days, the *melamed* taught an older class and a younger class, and one would review their studies while the other learned new material. The Mittlerer Rebbe simply participated in both.¹⁵

When his Bar Mitzvah approached, the Alter Rebbe temporarily lifted the *Takanos Liozna* (which restricted the Chassidim’s visits with the Alter Rebbe to once a year) and allowed all Chassidim to participate in the grand celebration.¹⁶ Around that time, his *melamed* realized that the Mittlerer Rebbe had suddenly outpaced him, and he no longer understood him. The Mittlerer Rebbe explained to him that it was a result of his *hanochas tefillin*—it had caused him a *psichas halev v’hamoach* (“opening” of his heart and mind), and his learning was now on a higher level.¹⁷

From a very young age, the Mittlerer Rebbe displayed extreme sensitivity to *ruchniusdiker* matters, and due to his weak heart and lungs, he often fell ill from distress.¹⁸

FROM ONE END OF THE SHUL TO THE OTHER

When the Tzemach Tzedek assumed the *nesius*, he told Chassidim that it was on condition that he not be disturbed from his Torah learning.

“What about your father-in-law, the Mittlerer Rebbe?” he was asked.

“How can you compare me to him?” the Tzemach Tzedek replied. “Walking from one end of the *Beis Midrash* to the other, he would review an entire *Masechta*!”

Sichas Shabbos Parshas Vayeshev, 5731

One year, the Alter Rebbe, who would usually *lein* on Shabbos, was out of town during Shabbos Parshas Ki Savo, and an ordinary *baal koreh* read in his place. Hearing the *Tochecha*, the Mittlerer Rebbe—not yet bar mitzvah—fell so ill that the Alter Rebbe questioned whether he should be allowed to fast on Yom Kippur!

When asked, “Don’t you hear this same parshah every year?”, the Mittlerer Rebbe responded, “*Az der tatte leint, hert zich nit kein klalos*, when father reads the Torah, no curses are heard!”¹⁹

On another occasion, Reb Shlomo Karliner came to visit the Alter Rebbe while the Mittlerer Rebbe and Reb Aharon Strasheler were learning together in the outer room. Hearing a heated discussion, the Mittlerer Rebbe lay down on the floor next to the door, and heard the Alter Rebbe exclaim, “It’s *ossur al pi Torah!*” Soon, the door opened and Reb Shlomo Karliner emerged, responding to the Alter Rebbe with a very sharp expression.

Shocked at the harshness of his words, the Mittlerer Rebbe fainted, and remained ill for several months. The Alter Rebbe later shared that the *Talmidei Hamaggid* had wanted to declare a *cherem* on the Gra, and the Alter Rebbe opposed the endeavor.²⁰

As a young man, the Mittlerer Rebbe famously did everything possible to hear additional *maamarim* from his father, and often went to great lengths to do so. Seeing that Chassidus so enlivened him, the Alter Rebbe would often come to his room and privately say a *maamar* for him when he was ill.²¹

When asked about a shidduch, the Mittlerer Rebbe said that he had no preference—whichever option could be finished quicker was preferential, because he wanted to hear the Chassidus that the Alter Rebbe would deliver at the *t’naim*.

As repeated by Reb Ezriel Zelig Slonim, the Mittlerer Rebbe was so enthusiastic about the opportunity that he put on his Shabbos clothes and stood next to the Alter Rebbe's room in anticipation. When the *shadchan* emerged and informed him that the Alter Rebbe had rejected the proposal, he was sorely disappointed. "Oy, if only he would have agreed—we would have been able to hear Chassidus this very night..."

Who Will Succeed Him?

When the Alter Rebbe passed away on Chof-Daled Teves א"תקק"א, some Chassidim felt that the *nesius* should be passed to a talmid of the Alter Rebbe, not a biological son. They chose to follow Reb Aharon Strasheler, the most prominent of the Alter Rebbe's talmidim, whose style closely resembled the Alter Rebbe's.

In response, two letters were circulated among Chassidim from those closest to the Alter Rebbe—his younger brother Reb Yehudah Leib, and the *chozer* Reb Pinchas Reizes of Shklov.

Reb Pinchas Reizes argued that the Alter Rebbe had, in no uncertain terms, designated the Mittlerer Rebbe as his successor. He shared that at the wedding of the Mittlerer Rebbe's daughter to Reb Yaakov Yisrael Cherkasser, the Alter Rebbe had called him and the Mittlerer Rebbe into a private room, and said that inasmuch as the Mittlerer Rebbe's life was dedicated to spreading Chassidus and guiding the Chassidim, he requests that after his passing, *pidyonos* be given to the Mittlerer Rebbe and no one else.

Reb Pinchas also noted a well-known fact: The Mittlerer Rebbe had long been involved in guiding the Chassidim and serving as a liaison between the Alter Rebbe and Chassidim.²²

In the Alter Rebbe's "*Takanos Liozna*," the Mittlerer Rebbe is given the role of explaining Chassidus to those with questions, at the young age of twenty-seven. He is mentioned by the Alter Rebbe even earlier, when he was only twenty-two, as an intermediary between the Rebbe and Chassidim. In the first *michtav klali* after the Alter Rebbe's *histalkus*, the Mittlerer Rebbe writes of his presence in the Alter Rebbe's inner circle even earlier, "for over twenty years,"²³ i.e., from before age twenty. In fact, as noted by the Rebbe in *Shalshelos Hayachas*, his first appointment was when he was just sixteen years of age, when he was appointed to guide the younger Chassidim.

The early appointment of the Mittlerer Rebbe was not without controversy; when Reb Avraham Kalisker wrote a letter to the Alter Rebbe opposing the publication of *Tanya*, he also mentioned the appointment of the Mittlerer Rebbe: "I am worried for your progeny... you are placing him in a great *nisayon*, like a ship in the sea which needs experienced navigators to be saved from the trap of *gaavah* and *gadlus*..."²⁴



THE MITTELER REBBE'S TZIYON IN NIEZHIN, AS IT APPEARED IN 5748.



THE TZIYON AND SURROUNDING BUILDING TODAY, AFTER EXTENSIVE RENOVATIONS

These responsibilities came to a head in the Alter Rebbe's final years, when he was also tasked with saying Chassidus. There were instances when both the Alter Rebbe and the Mittlerer Rebbe would say Chassidus on the same Shabbos! Sometimes, the Alter Rebbe himself would listen in to his son's recitals.²⁵

On one occasion, Reb Yehudah Leib related in his letter, the Alter Rebbe heard that the Mittlerer Rebbe had revealed something that his father had chosen to conceal, but his reaction was, "What can I do? *Dor dor ve'dorshav*, each generation has its teachers. Perhaps his generation has reached a level where they are worthy of it."²⁶

Like A Pillar

As mentioned, the Alter Rebbe used to *lein* from the Torah each week. Chassidim might have expected the Mittlerer Rebbe to follow suit, but he did not such thing. In fact, he would even avoid receiving *aliyos*, doing so only once a year on Simchas Torah, during *kol hane'arim*—so great was the shame he felt when standing before a Sefer Torah.

On one occasion, he recited the Haftorah, but became so overwhelmed with emotion that he read from both columns of the *Sefer Haftorahs* as a single line. Even during his year of *aveilus*, he avoided davening for the *amud*, and sufficed with reciting kaddish instead.

This wasn't the only area in which the Mittlerer Rebbe differed dramatically from his father.

In moments of *dveikus*, the Alter Rebbe was accustomed to

strong displays of emotion. He would sometimes even roll on the floor in the intensity of the moment. The Mittlerer Rebbe, on the other hand, displayed no emotion at all.

His chossid, Reb Yaakov Kadaner, described it as follows:

“One Rosh Hashanah, he davened *shemoneh esreh* for three hours, yet I did not see a single movement. He stood like an iron pillar built into the ground... As he made his way out of shul, it was difficult to look at his holy face, aflame with holiness.

“Seeing the attendant with the Rebbe’s wet garment, the Chassidim told him not to hold it with his hands as water would certainly be squeezed out of the garment, a prohibition on Yom Tov. After Musaf, the Rebbe changed his shirt again as it was again soaking wet, although, amazingly, throughout his davening he was completely still.”

In his letters to Chassidim, the Mittlerer Rebbe opposed the notion that one needed to display physical expressions of emotion during davening. In one letter, he criticized the behavior as follows: “Some of *anash* seem to think that one cannot achieve *hisbonenus* without walking to and fro, from corner to corner, pacing intensely as if deeply engrossed in *hisbonenus*... Would anyone suggest that in worldly matters too, running to and fro is a way to reach deep contemplation?”

Physical expressions of emotion, the Mittlerer Rebbe explains, should emerge naturally from one’s *hisbonenus*, but the *hisbonenus* itself should be done in a calm, collected manner, sitting in one place.²⁷

The intensity of the Mittlerer Rebbe’s *hisbonenus* was famous; his *meshares* would sometimes let Chassidim into the room where the Rebbe davened. The Chassidim would see the Rebbe standing still, eyes open, but noticing nothing.²⁸

Once when the Mittlerer Rebbe was young, his father passed his home on the way to mikvah and noticed him standing at the window smoking a pipe, deep in thought. The Alter Rebbe reached inside, removed the pipe from his mouth, and continued walking. On his return from the mikveh, the Mittlerer Rebbe was still standing in the same position—completely oblivious to the fact that the pipe was no longer there.²⁹

He would often need to be reminded to eat and sleep, but, as his father noted, he never needed to be reminded to recite the long *Vehu Rachum* on Mondays and Thursdays, or *Yaale V’Yavo* on Rosh Chodesh, since “when he davens, he sees matters as they are *l’malah* (on high).”³⁰

Perhaps the most famous story is one the Rebbe repeated on several occasions:

“The Mittlerer Rebbe was once deep in study in his room, when his small baby fell out of the cradle and began to cry. He didn’t notice anything, but the Alter Rebbe—learning on the top floor—heard the cries, paused his learning, and soothed the baby back to sleep.

THE WAGON DRIVER’S OPINION

During a journey, the Tzemach Tzedek’s gentile wagon driver said to him, “Rebbe, your predecessor was greater than you!”

“How do you know?” the Tzemach Tzedek asked.

“At our first stop on this journey,” he explained, “you gave me money for some vodka. When we stopped a second time, I asked for money again, but you said—correctly—that the change from the first stop should suffice for another purchase. But the old Rebbe never mentioned the change...”

It was, in fact, well-known that, like the *amora* Rabbi Menachem ben Sumai, the Mittlerer Rebbe never looked at the face of a coin (Pesachim 104a).

(Likkutei Sippurim pg. 135)

“Afterwards, the Alter Rebbe admonished his son. ‘*Az a Yiddish kind veint, darf men derheren*, when a Jewish child cries, one needs to hear...’”

The lesson, the Rebbe repeated from the Frierdiker Rebbe, is that no matter how lofty our own *avodah*, when a Jewish *neshama* cries out, we need to hear, and heed, the call.³¹

The Banishments

In the final years of the Alter Rebbe’s *nesius*, the Czar’s government released a series of laws restricting Jewish life. Most significant was the ban on leasing taverns and selling vodka, a trade which had been a staple of Jewish livelihood for centuries.

At first, local landowners evaded the new laws—the local peasants hired in place of the Jewish lessees would just drink all the vodka themselves—but as the decades passed, the government enforced the law with increasingly effective measures.

In the final years of the Mittlerer Rebbe’s *nesius*, Jews were banished from the taverns and small villages altogether. From Nissan to Elul of תקפ"ג, in the regions of Mohilev and Vitebsk surrounding Lubavitch, over twenty thousand Jews lost their homes. By the next year, the number had passed

forty thousand. Destitute families arrived in towns and cities in droves and lived in the local shuls; infections were rampant, and many succumbed to their illnesses.

The difficult situation raised questions about the future of Jews in Russia altogether; “Who knows what will be in the end,” the Mitteler Rebbe writes; “should we *chas veshalom* be banished to distant lands...”³²

The Mitteler Rebbe worked incessantly to better the lives of his Jewish brethren. In those days, the antisemitic tropes saw Jews as sly businessmen taking advantage of the peasants, so the Rebbe promoted agricultural work instead, telling Chassidim that working the fields was nothing to be ashamed of—after all, that was our primary occupation in our homeland of Eretz Yisrael.

Reaching out to the government, the Mitteler Rebbe arranged for the establishment of agricultural colonies in the areas surrounding Cherson in Southern Ukraine, allowing thousands of Jews to find their livelihood. The government even provided horses for the journey and permission to graze the animals in government fields along the way. In light of the distance from Lubavitch, the Mitteler Rebbe appointed special *Mashpi'im*, most notably Reb Hillel Paritcher, to travel throughout the colonies and invigorate the Jews living there.

One couple that moved to the new colonies was Reb Yehudah Leib and Feiga Lavut, with their young child Avraham Dovid—the Rebbe’s great-great-grandfather who would later become the rav of the Chassidim in the area and patriarch of the Rebbe’s family, many members of whom served as Rabbanim throughout the colonies and nearby cities.³³ He authored the earliest work on the Alter Rebbe’s Siddur, the Sha’ar Hakollel.

The Mitteler Rebbe also sought to better the spiritual state of Chassidim; he wrote letters of encouragement, directing the Chassidim to focus inward despite the difficulties, and issued specific directives about the appropriate *sedarim* of davening and Torah learning.

One important enactment was that every chossid, without fail, find time each evening to learn Torah in the Beis Midrash. “Those who are overly occupied with commerce,” the Rebbe writes, “should hire someone to learn in their stead—so it should be as if they themselves participated.”

During that period, the Mitteler Rebbe began publishing *Toras Chaim* on the weekly parshah. Instead of releasing it all at once, he released it in short installments, selling each for the small sum of eight kopeks. Over time, every chassid could collect all the pieces and bind them into one Sefer. This was apparently due to the difficult economic situation; despite the hardships, the Rebbe went to every length to help Chassidim continue growing in Chassidus.³⁴

The Arrest and Liberation

After ten years of *nesius*, in his fiftieth year, the Rebbe’s health began to falter. Traveling to Chassidim became difficult, and the recital of Maamarim was somewhat curtailed. Chassidim were asked to avoid unnecessary trips to Lubavitch, and especially, to avoid bringing negative news that would cause him distress.

In search of a cure, the Mitteler Rebbe embarked on a long journey over the summer of תקפ”ה to visit the doctors and spas in Germany. During his journey, he wrote several fascinating letters home, describing the Jews of Ashkenaz and his visit to Reb Akiva Eiger.

Unbeknownst to Chassidim, other developments were taking place in Vitebsk, the seat of the regional government. A *mesirah* had been filed with the governor claiming that the Mitteler Rebbe had amassed a large sum of illegal funds. In those days, a Rav was permitted to tax his community only in the context of the legally recognized *kahal* structure. The Mitteler Rebbe was not the official rabbi of a community. This implied that his collection of funds was illegal.

The main accusation rested on a private letter by the Mitteler Rebbe to Reb Pinchas Reizes about the *maamad*-funds raised after the Alter Rebbe’s *histalkus*, in which he asked that the information be kept secret. The secrecy raised eyebrows, as did a deliberate mistranslation by the *moser* which quadrupled the amount of money raised.

After Sukkos תקפ”ו, the Mitteler Rebbe was brought to



PHOTOS SHOW JEWS WORKING IN THE AGRICULTURAL COLONIES IN SOUTHERN UKRAINE

Vitebsk for questioning. The arrest quickly raised alarm among Chassidim, but after a few weeks, they were able to arrange for conditions to be eased; the governor soon allowed the Rebbe to daven with a minyan and deliver Chassidus, and his imprisonment became a form of house arrest.

The Mittlerer Rebbe soon proved the truth about the allegations: firstly, it was a much smaller sum than stated, secondly, it was collected voluntarily, in a legal and straightforward manner. The secrecy was due to sensitivities as to who the money was being distributed.

Investigators were sent to confirm the Mittlerer Rebbe's defense; townspeople in Lubavitch were questioned, the *chatzer* was paid a visit, and several other Chassidim were detained. Reb Aharon Strasheler was implicated in the case as well. Finally, on 10 Kislev, the first stage of the investigations was concluded, and the Rebbe was free to return home. Thousands of Chassidim celebrated his release, but the joy was marred by the fact that a final ruling hadn't been issued; the case would continue to be debated and appealed at higher levels of government. The final acquittal wasn't issued until 21 Kislev תקפ"ב, twelve days after the Mittlerer Rebbe's passing.

The Source of Life

In the summer of תקפ"ז, worrying news arrived in Lubavitch; there was a possibility that the case-file would be sent to Petersburg, the capital, which could entail a much harsher judgment. The Mittlerer Rebbe decided to travel to Haditch for the Yomim Noraim, to be near the Ohel of his father, the Alter Rebbe.

A large group of Chassidim gathered in the town for the duration of the visit; the Mittlerer Rebbe delivered many *maamarim* in the shul near the Ohel, and spent many hours sequestered at the *tziyun*. Throughout this time, the Rebbe was very solemn, and alluded to a period of *dinim*, judgment, which Chassidim later realized were references to the *histalkus*.

After the Yomim Tovim, the Mittlerer Rebbe and his large entourage began the journey back to Lubavitch, but at the town of Niezhin, the Rebbe fell ill. His health continued to deteriorate; by the eve of Tes Kislev, the Rebbe's fifty-fourth birthday, the situation was dire.

The following events were described in a letter by Reb Moshe Vilenker and other Chassidim, written at the behest of the Mittlerer Rebbe's son, Reb Nochum:

"Let us share a bit of the Rebbe's immense, wondrous *kedusha* that we witnessed during the *histalkus*. We heard words of *divrei Elokim chaim*—he literally did not finish reciting the word 'chaim,' in the posuk '*ki imcha mekor chaim*,' when a short time later, his holy soul ascended...

"In the evening, the Rebbe learned Mishnayos *Kodshim* with incredible joy and *dveikus*, and told us to be joyful as well, because *simchah* sweetens judgment. About four hours before day break, he began to faint, but he regained consciousness a short while later and delivered Chassidus several times, for about an hour and a half, revealing the deepest secrets of the Torah amid genuine joy, until the very moment of his passing, as day broke on Tes Kislev. The Aron Kodesh was entombed here, in Niezhin."³⁵ **T**

1. For the story of the Alter Rebbe's fight against Napoleon, see "A Battle of Good vs. Evil," *Derher Teves* 5779. For the story of the *histalkus*, see "Memaleh Mekomo," *Derher Shevat* 5779.
2. *Kuntres Toras Hachassidus* pg. 8
3. For more on the history of printing Chassidus, see "Wellsprings Unleashed," *Derher Teves* 5778.
4. This story was retold in several versions. See, for example, *Toras Menachem* vol. 2 pg. 178.
5. *Likkutei Dibburim* vol. 1 pg. 394. *Reshimas Hayoman* pg. 199. To read about the Rebbe's unique commemoration of this custom, see "Three Maamarim and Stories," *Derher Vayetze* 5773.
6. *Toras Menachem* vol. 54 pg. 295.
7. *Reshimas Hayoman* pg. 363.
8. *Toras Menachem* vol. 49 pg. 111.
9. *Migdal Oz* pg. 309.
10. *Likutei Sipurim* pg. 137
11. See *Derher*, *Shevat* 5780 pg. 22.
12. *Megillas Esther* 7:8.
13. *Likkutei Sipurim* pg. 136. *Otzar Sipurei Chabad* vol. 16 pg. 62
14. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 8 pg. 288.
15. *Sefer Hatoldos* pg. 21.
16. *Ibid* 31.
17. *Migdal Oz* pg. 185, from Reb Ezriel Zelig Slonim.
18. *Sefer Hatoldos* pg. 39.
19. *Reshimas Hayoman* pg. 338 See also *Rosh Chodesh Elul* 5742.
20. *Reshimas Hayoman* pg. 176
21. *Sefer Hatoldos* pg. 44.
22. *Igros Kodesh Admur Ha'emtza'i* pg. 290.
23. *Igros Kodesh Admur Ha'emtza'i* pg. 7
24. *Ibid*. 8
25. *Reshimas Hayoman* pg. 198.
26. *Igros Kodesh Admur Ha'emtza'i* pg. 291.
27. *Igros Kodesh* pg. 268.
28. *Likkutei Sipurim* pg. 141.
29. *Ibid* pg. 87.
30. *Reshimas Hayoman* pg. 315.
31. 10 Kislev 5713, and many other occasions.
32. *Igros Kodesh* pg. 22.
33. See *Derher Elul* 5781.
34. A recently published sefer by Kehos details a list of all the Mittlerer Rebbe's maamorim, with comprehensive bibliography and annotation: *Mafteiach Sifrei Maamorei Udrushei Admur Ha'emtzoe Udfuseihem*.
35. *Igros Kodesh* pg. 327.

PRACTICAL HORA'OS

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

EATING BEFORE DAVENING

THE REBBE'S HORAOS
ON THIS UNIQUE
CHASSIDISHER HANHAGA.¹

COMPILED BY:
RABBI LEVI GREENBERG
WRITTEN BY:
RABBI TZEMACH FELLER

מוקדש לחיזוק
ההתקשרות לכ"ק אדמו"ר

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

Halacha dictates that when a *mitzvah* needs to be done by a certain time, *Shofar*² *Lulav*³ and *Bedikas Chametz*⁴, for example, we don't eat before performing the *mitzvah*. A similar prohibition applies before fulfilling the *mitzvah* of *davening Shacharis*. The Shulchan Aruch⁵ states that one may not eat or drink anything (besides water) before *Shacharis*, as it is an act of haughtiness to take care of one's own needs before *davening* to Hashem. The Alter Rebbe continues, however, and says that one who would not be able to concentrate on the *davening* as well without eating prior, may do so.⁶

In general, *chassidim* don't look for *heteirim*. Indeed, Lubavitcher Chassidim do not eat before *bentching esrog* or hearing *Shofar* and the like. But the eating of *mezonos far'n davenen* is all but ubiquitous.

In the *Hayom Yom* entry for Yud Shevat, the Rebbe quotes the Frierdiker Rebbe, who told the following story:

When my grandmother, Rebbetzin Rivka, was eighteen (in 5611, 1851) she fell ill and the physician ordered her to eat immediately after waking up. Not wishing to eat before *davening*, she *davened* very early, then ate breakfast. When her father-in-law, the Tzemach Tzedek, learned of this he said to her, "A Jew must be healthy and strong. The Torah says about *mitzvos*, 'V'chai Bohem (to live with them),' meaning to bring *chayus* (life and vitality) into the *mitzvos*. To infuse *mitzvos* with *chayus*, one must be strong and joyful." He concluded, "You should not be without food. Better to eat for the sake of *davening* than to *daven* for the sake of eating." He then blessed her with long life. [She was born in 5593 (1833) and passed away on Yud Shevat, 5674 (1914) at the age of 81.]

My father [the Rebbe Rashab] repeated this teaching of the Tzemach Tzedek to someone in *yechidus*, adding: "And this must be done with joy."⁷

In numerous instances, the Rebbeim permitted people to eat before *davening* when there were health concerns. The Rebbe wrote in a letter,



LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM | 192326 (17 TISHREI 5740)

“If you don’t do so already, you must eat *mezonos* before *davening*, in addition to drinking ...

Many members of *anash* were instructed by my father-in-law, the Rebbe, for health reasons, to eat before *davening*, and not suffice with only drinking. Conducting yourself in this manner will be beneficial to both your health and your business.”⁸

In another letter, the Rebbe writes,

“You must safeguard your health. Since what should be eaten and drunk is one of the things the Torah put in the responsibility of doctors, you must do what they tell you. I don’t understand what you wrote - that because of this you can’t involve yourself in *davening*. If you mean that you don’t eat before *davening*, the *acharonim* and our holy *nesiim* ruled that when necessary for health reasons, one may eat before *davening*, and in fact, it is a *mitzvah* and an obligation.”⁹

The Rebbeim also encouraged eating before *davening* when doing so would enable the person to have proper *kavanah*. Especially for someone *davening b’arichus* — at length — an empty stomach can interfere with their *kavanah*. The Rebbe writes:

“In these matters, it depends on the method of the person’s *avodas hatefillah* — whether or not his *davening* is lengthy. The Tzemach Tzedek’s statement that “better to eat for the sake of *davening* than to *daven* for the sake of eating” is well known, and simply stated, it’s better to eat before *davening* if by doing so, his *davening* will be more organized.”

Finally, the Rebbeim encouraged eating before *davening* in cases when the person’s *davening* would not be completed until a late hour, as hunger will interfere

“WHEN NEEDED FOR HEALTH, ONE MAY EAT BEFORE DAVENING, AND IN FACT, IT IS A MITZVAH AND AN OBLIGATION.”

with the *davening*. The Rebbe wrote:

“I spoke to your father, the *rav*, and to my bewilderment he told me about your eating and drinking habits, which are not the proper way, and this despite the fact that we see clearly that not having a *seder* in [eating and drinking] causes physical weakness, which is immediately followed by weakness in learning Torah and doing *mitzvos*. As is well-known, my father-in-law, the Rebbe demanded that all of the *yeshiva bochurim* have a proper *seder* in matters related to eating, drinking and sleeping. I hope that at least as soon as you get my letter, you will fix this.

The Tzemach Tzedek’s aphorism that ‘Better to eat for the sake of *davening* than to *daven* for the sake of eating’ is well-known. With the weakening of our generation, it is permitted to eat even *mezonos* before *davening* (of course, after saying the morning *Krias Shema*) for those who will

finish *davening* a while after waking up. One should not be stringent in this, because ‘*hachumra mevi’ah likula*’, such stringency leads to leniencies in your *avodas Hashem*.¹⁰

Upon awakening, a *chossid* should spend time studying *Chassidus*. Then, each word of davening should be said unhurriedly, with *kavanah*. So the *chossid* recites *Birchos Hashachar* and *Krias Shema*, eats and drinks something, and can then *daven* like a *chossid*.

In conclusion, we will cite the following from the notes of the venerable Chossid, Reb Zalman Duchman:

“I told the Rebbe [in *yechidus*] that I heard from Reb Binyomin Althois, who heard from Harav Meir Shlomo [Yanovsky], the Rebbe’s grandfather, that a doctor once instructed him to eat something before davening. When he asked the Rebbe Rashab what to do, he was told, ‘Nu, you will have to recite Shema in tefillin first, and then say Shmoneh Esrei as well...’ Obviously, he did not end up eating before davening...”

“Another Chossid, Reb Yehoshua Beshenkovicher, told me that he was once instructed by a distinguished doctor in Vitebsk to eat before davening. So he went to Lubavitch, and the Rebbe Rashab told him: ‘The doctor didn’t say you must eat before davening; he said you must eat earlier in the day. Make sure to finish davening earlier and then eat.’

“The Rebbe listened to my stories and then commented, ‘This was true only about the great Chassidim of yesteryear. In today’s generation, we should eat before davening. But not the way it is done in Kfar Chabad; [a full meal] with bread and herring.’¹¹ **T**

1. Thanks are due to Rabbi Chaim Rapoport, whose writings on this topic serve as the source material for much of this article.

2. *Mateh Efraim* 588:2.

3. *Shulchan Aruch*, *Orach Chaim* 652:2.

4. *Alter Rebbe’s Shulchan Aruch* 431:5.

5. *Orach Chaim* 89:3.

6. *Alter Rebbe’s Shulchan Aruch* 89:5.

7. *Hayom Yom* 10 Shevat, pg. 18. Translated by Kehos.

8. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 6 p. 142.

9. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 7 p. 322.

10. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 14 p. 18.

11. *L’Sheima Ozen* (new edition) p. 357.

12. *Igros Kodesh Admur Rayatz* Vol. 10 p. 2.

13. 2 *Adar I*, 5689.

KRIAS SHEMA IN TEFILLIN FIRST?

As mentioned, before eating, one must fulfill the *mitzvas asei mideoraisa* of reciting *Krias Shema*. Should this *Krias Shema* ‘*ketana*’ be recited in *tefillin*?

In *Tomchei Temimim* in Lubavitch, different *temimim* received varied *hora’os* from the Rebbe Rashab on whether and how to eat before *davening*. Some were instructed to wash and eat bread, some to eat a little, and some not to eat at all. Reb Shmuel Levitin related that he was told by the Rebbe Rashab, “If you need to eat, it should be after putting on *tefillin* and saying *Krias Shema*.”

The Frieddiker Rebbe wrote, “Regarding those *temimim* who ask about eating before *davening*, certainly they are careful to first say *Krias Shema ketana* in *tefillin*, after which they can eat *mezonos*.¹²

The Rebbe’s father, Harav Levi Yitzchok, wrote to the Rebbe¹³ that he should not fast — the Rebbe had been fasting until *Mincha* each day — and went on to detail when the Rebbe should eat:

“Do not do this [fasting each day] under any circumstances; not only [should you not fast] until *Mincha*, but you shouldn’t even [fast] until after *Shacharis*. You should eat breakfast (‘*pas shacharis*’) each day before *davening*. (You should, however, say *Krias Shema* beforehand, and if you can do so in *tefillin*, all the better.)”

In a *sicha* on Shabbos Parshas Shelach, 5712, the Rebbe spoke about wearing *tefillin* for *Krias Shema ketana*. The Rebbe begins with the premise that *chassidim* generally don’t say *Krias Shema ketana* in *tefillin*. He then discusses the concerns that arise from saying *Krias Shema* without *tefillin*, explaining that not only is it not problematic, but that there are *ruchniyusdike* benefits in beginning with the sanctity of *Krias Shema* before moving onward and upward to the sanctity of *Tefillin*.

What about eating before putting on *tefillin*?

In the context of the above-mentioned *sicha*, one bochur asked whether it is necessary to put on *tefillin* and say *Krias Shema ketana* before eating. The Rebbe wrote,

“כעצת רב חבד”

“As per the advice of a Chabad rov.”

לע"נ
ר' יהודה ע"ה בן ר' משה יעקב ע"ה ביסטאן
נלב"ע ר"ח כסלו ה'תשנ"ט
ת'נ'צ'ב'ה'

נדפס ע"י בנו
הרה"ת השליח ר' יוסף יצחק
וזגתו מרת ביילא רחל ומשפחתם שיחי
ביסטאן



WHERE YOU MA

*Seizing every opportunity to
spread Yiddishkeit*

EVER YBE

Compiled By: Rabbi Levi Greenberg
Written By: Rabbi Boruch Altein



The different roles of ‘Yissachar’ and ‘Zevulun’ (referring to elements within B’nei Yisroel) are well-known. Yissachar represents those whose primary focus involves learning or teaching Torah. ‘Zevulun,’ by contrast, represents those involved in ‘mundane’ activities as their occupation and livelihood, whether in business or similar pursuits.

The role of Zevulun is often perceived as simply supporting ‘Yissachar’ in their holy work; Zevulun provided the material resources that Yissachar needs in order to do their job of spreading Torah, Mitzvos and Chassidus. However, this is not the whole story.

A FOREIGN LAND

On 12 Menachem Av 5712 (1952), the Rebbe wrote the following letter to Reb Bentzion Bruk (paraphrased), a Yid who, after the upheavals of the Second World War, found himself in a city and country foreign to him. The Rebbe wrote:

“In general, all Yidden believe that ‘Hashem directs the steps of man... (Tehillim 37:23)’ Taking into account that Hashem is the essence of goodness, and that the nature of goodness is to do good, if Hashem brings you to a city and society which is foreign, one with which you are unfamiliar and where you consequently struggle physically and/or spiritually, as a Yid you should have perfect clarity in knowing that the purpose is not to wear you down, but because you have a mission to accomplish specifically there...

“It is clear that your *shlichus* is to instill in your city and surroundings a revival of Yiddishkeit in general, and especially the spirit of Chassidus—namely, love of Hashem, the Torah, and another Yid....”¹

The Rebbe explained to Reb Bentzion that there is a deeper purpose and mission in place for him, wherever he is. This is because every Yid, the businessman as well as the rabbi, is on a mission to spread Torah and Mitzvos.

This is actually a core concept expounded upon multiple times in Chassidus: The *possuk* in Tehillim (37:23) quoted above is cited time and again in Chassidus, “מה' מצעדי גבר, כווננו ודרכו יחפץ (Hashem directs the steps of man, for He desires his way),” explaining that wherever a Yid goes, it is for the purpose of doing a mitzvah. In fact, every Yid is considered a *shliach* of Hashem to bring *Elokus* to the world,

and is thus empowered with the energies of the *mishaleach* (the sender), Hashem, Himself.

היום יום ל' תמוז:

רבינו הזקן בתחילת נשיאותו אמר תורה: מה' מצעדי גבר כווננו, אז א איד קומט אין א ארט, איז עס צוליב א כוונה טאן א מצוה, הן א מצוה שבין אדם למקום והן א מצוה שבין אדם לחבירו. א איד איז א שליח של מעלה, א שליח וואו ער איז, איז ער דער כח המשלח, דער יתרון המעלה אין נשמות לגבי מלאכים - וואס בא נשמות איז דאס על פי התורה.

In the early period of his *nesius* the Alter Rebbe taught: “Hashem directs the steps of man.” When a Jew comes to a particular place it is for an (inner, Divine) intent and purpose - to perform a mitzva, whether a mitzva between man and Hashem or a mitzva between man and his fellow-man. A Jew is Hashem's shliach. Wherever a shliach is, he represents the power of the *meshalei'ach*, the one who sent him. The superior quality that *neshamos* possess, higher than the *malachim* (who too are “messengers”), is that *neshamos* are messengers by virtue of Torah.

A SHLIACH OF DER AIBERSHTER

In various *sichos* the Rebbe expounded on this further. One well-known example is the *sicha* of Simchas Torah 5746.²

After first addressing the shluchim and how everything the [Frierdiker] Rebbe transmits to his generation flows through them, the Rebbe went on to explain that every Yid is a shliach of Hashem to create a “*Dirah bitachtonim*,” a home for Hashem in this world—essentially, to bring Moshiach. In fact, this is why the numerical value (*gematria*) of the word shliach, plus ten, is the same as that of the word Moshiach. Every *neshamah* comes into its body to fulfill its shlichus by, first, studying Torah and performing mitzvos themselves, and second, by using their *every interaction* with the world around them to bring it closer to Hashem. To make this shlichus even more relatable, each person is empowered in this mission by the *Nossi Hador* and via his direct shluchim.

In a *sicha* on 21 Menachem-Av 5744, the Rebbe spelled out this concept in even more revolutionary terms:



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First the Rebbe expounded on various levels present in shlichus, describing how a shliach at first balances, and then harmonizes, two seemingly opposing forces. His own identity, on the one hand, and a complete submission and *bitul* to the *mishaleach* on the other, can be merged by accessing that which is beyond these distinctions. Then the Rebbe stated:

“Although the title ‘Shliach,’ and the formalities of giving *meshke*, and all of the above was said with regard to only a portion of those present at this farbrengen, the ultimate truth that we must know is that each and every one of us, all of us together, and all of *B’nei Yisroel*, are ‘shluchim’ of *Nessi Doreinu*, the [Friediker] Rebbe. From the moment that the [Friediker] Rebbe was appointed *Nossi Hador*, all Yidden in this generation became his attendants and shluchim, for “הנשיא הוא הכל— the *Nossi* encompasses all!”

“It is clear that once one becomes a shliach of the *Nossi Hador* they remain so always, just as one who is a Yid remains so always. Notwithstanding how one behaves, no matter whether one actually fulfills his *shlichus* or the opposite, *R”L*, one cannot change his very identity—the only difference is that some have realized and accepted (*derhered*) this and act accordingly, while for others it takes time.... May it be Hashem’s will that they are inspired to realize who they truly are and immediately begin to behave as is fitting...”³

These words are breathtaking in scope: every single Yid,

whether a *rov*, *melamed*, *shliach*, businessman, computer technician, doctor, lawyer, taxi driver and tractor-operator, can be called “shliach,” has been entrusted with a unique mission by *HaKodosh Boruch Hu* that is indispensable to all of creation, and has been called by *Nessi Doreinu* to fulfill this mission!

Indeed, at the farbrengen of the Rebbe’s *Kabbolas Hanesius*, 10 Shvat 5711 (1951), addressing various chassidim, some who had received directives of the Friediker Rebbe to get involved in communal work and others who were directed into the realm of business, the Rebbe stated that everyone’s underlying purpose is to spread *Toras Hachassidus*.⁴

A TWO-FOLD MISSION

To break it down, what are the primary responsibilities of which a chossid ‘out in the world’ should be aware?

In Hayom Yom, the mission of laypeople is described as follows:

היום יום ד' ניסן:

עבודת בעלי עסקים מתחלקת לשני סעיפים עיקריים:
 (א) **העבודה עם עצמו**. בעת עסקו ממש בשעה הפנוי, בישוב בחנות וכדומה, ילמוד משנה משניות פרק תניא, ויהי לו איזה דברי תורה, כמו חומש משניות תהלים תניא, שיהי' בקי בהם בעל פה, למען שיוכל לחזור עליהם בהלכו ברחוב, בשוק וכדומה.
 (ב) **העבודה עם זולתו**. בעת הדבור בעניני עסק יסבב הדבור לספר איזה ספור תוכני, ולמצוא עילה וסיבה לעורר ע"ד למוד וכיוצא בזה.

“The *avodah* of a layperson has two primary categories: 1) *Avodah* with self: Whenever he has a free moment during his work, sitting in his store or the like, he should study a Mishna or two or a *perek* of Tanya. He should know some Torah by heart - for example, Chumash, Mishnayos, Tehilim, Tanya, so that he can review it while walking on the street, in the market, and so on. 2) *Avodah* with others: while discussing business matters he should use the conversation to share a meaningful story, and find some way to inspire his fellow to study Torah or similar activities.”



BUT I'M A BUSINESSMAN!

It is not always easy to accept this mission. One might feel that it is better performed by others, while he focuses on his business and his material livelihood. A well-known story told by the Friediker Rebbe on this topic goes as follows:

There was once a chossid of the Rebbe Maharash from the town of Volodimir, Russia, where he served as a goldsmith and clock maker. On a visit to Lubavitch, the Rebbe Maharash asked him to report on any public *shiurim* in Volodimir that he was involved with. The chossid replied that the people of town were simple and ignorant, mostly from the ranks of the Cantonists and “Nikolay soldiers,” conscripted to the Russian army as children.

They spoke Russian instead of Yiddish and in behavior were barely distinguishable from their Russian neighbors. The majority of the townsfolk couldn't read the davening — they just about managed a *bracha* upon receiving an *aliya*. The chossid said that he had his own, private *shiur* for an hour each day, and also prepared the *krias haTorah* for the community (as no one else could *lein*), but how and why would he try to arrange public *shiurim* for the townspeople?!

“If so,” responded the Rebbe Maharash, “why do you live there? You come from Polotsk, a town filled with shuls and yeshivos. Why did you abandon Polotsk in favor of Volodimir, as you describe it, a spiritual wasteland?”

The chossid explained that in Polotsk he had struggled to make a decent livelihood. In fact, he had even asked the Rebbe Maharash for a *bracha* before moving to Volodimir and had received one! The chossid said that, *boruch Hashem*, the *bracha* had been fulfilled —and he was now earning a respectable livelihood.

The Rebbe Maharash replied, “You are making a mistake. It was not for material livelihood that Hashem sent you to Volodimir. One who believes in Hashem, the Torah, and *hashgachah protis*, must understand that Hashem would not uproot a Yid and his family to an empty wasteland, to live among boors and ignoramuses, simply for better material livelihood — Hashem can assist you with material needs wherever you are.

“The reason for this mistake is another mistake: in your mind, your profession, with which you must occupy your time and attention, is that of a goldsmith and clock maker. This is an error; a Yid's true occupation and profession is that of Torah and *avodas Hashem*. The reason Hashem moved



you from Polotsk to Volodimir was to bring the people there closer to Yiddishkeit. The Ba'al Shem Tov taught that Hashem brings a *neshamah* to this world for 70 or 80 years just to do another Yid a favor; this is true even in the physical sense, and especially in the spiritual sense.

“One who imagines that Hashem moves a Yid from town to town simply for their material livelihood is lacking in faith, for Hashem provides food for all flesh, no matter whether they are in Polotsk or Volodimir! When you moved to Volodimir I blessed you with success [in your true mission there]; [yet], a *bracha* is only effective when one takes action! Without action even a *bracha* cannot help ...”

The Friediker Rebbe concluded, “A person must take these words to heart, consider his situation, and ask himself: to what purpose did Hashem bring me to where I am? What positive impact can I have in the realm of Torah, mitzvos and *middos tovot*? Have I discharged the obligations of my *shlichus*?⁵

היום יום יד חשוון:

מה מצעדי גבר כוננו, לכל אחד מישראל יש לו תעודה רוחנית בחיים, והוא להתעסק בעבודת הבנין לעשות דירה לו ית'. וכל אחד באשר הוא ובכל מקום שהוא צריך להתענין בכל מאמצי כוחו לחפש בחפש מחופש למצוא איזה פרנסה רוחנית כמו שהוא מחפש אחר פרנסה גשמית. והוא לפי שדרכו - של הקב"ה - יחפץ, כדכתיב באברהם כי ידעתיו גו' ושמר דרך ה', כי יש שני דרכים: דרך הטבע ושלמעלה מן הטבע, העולם בראו הקב"ה להיות נראה כמו שהוא בדרך הטבע - בעיני בשר - והוא דרך אלקים. תורה ומצות הם דרך הוי' והוא המשכה שלמעלה מן הטבע בטבע, אשר בגלל זאת הנה הקב"ה משפיע לישראל למעלה מן הטבע בטבע.

"Hashem directs the steps of man." Every one of the Jewish people has a spiritual mission in life - to occupy himself with construction, to make a "dwelling-place" for Hashem. Everyone, regardless of station or location, must, through an exhaustive search, seek out a spiritual livelihood with all his strength, just as he seeks material livelihood.

This is so because, (as the *possuk* concludes) "He desires His (Hashem's) way." As it is written of Avraham: "For I know and love him because... they will keep the way of *Havaye* (Hashem)." There are two "ways": That of nature and that which transcends nature. Hashem created the universe in such a way that, in man's eyes, it appears to follow a set pattern of nature; this is the "way" of *Elokim*. Torah and Mitzvos are the "way" of *Havaye*, drawing that which transcends nature into nature. By virtue of this (conduct) Hashem endows the Jewish people from that which is beyond nature into the natural.

I'M NOT SO TALENTED!

Some people who understand that there is an important *avodah* to strengthen Yiddishkeit in their locale, might not feel that they are the right person for the job. Surely the job would be better accomplished by someone influential, or with many talents — not a simple worker!

In the above-mentioned letter to Reb Bentzion Bruk, the Rebbe writes the following:

"One need not wonder that seemingly, such a mission

ought to have been entrusted to an influential magnate or the like, whose every word is listened to, not to one who just about manages to survive. That would only be logical were one to rely on their own abilities; being that this is a mission from Hashem, who is omnipotent, all challenges and obstacles disappear. You can understand this using even simple human logic: when Yidden see that you have no ulterior reasons nor political designs they will pay attention to you, since 'words that come from the heart enter the heart.'"

THE REWARDS ARE GREAT

The reality is that fulfilling this mission brings tremendous blessing. The Rebbe continues:

"We see in human agency (*lihavdil* infinite degrees) that an agent receives pay or a gift from the sender; how much more so when the sender is Hashem, and He sees that we've accepted his *shlichus* with joy — that we receive great assistance from Above to fulfill the mission."

In Hayom Yom 16 Iyar, the Rebbe mentions the following anecdote about the Rebbe Maharash:

אאזמו"ר אמר להחסיד ר' אלי אבעלער - איש פשוט מצד כשרונותיו וידיעותיו - כשנכנס אליו ליחידות: אלי איך בין דיר מקנא. פאהרסט אויף מערק זעהסט א סך מענשען, איז ווען אינמיטען עסק רעדט מען זיך מיט יענעם פאנאנדער אין א אידישען ווארט א עין יעקב ווארט, און מ'איז מעורר אויף לערנען נגלה און חסידות, פון דעם ווערט שמחה למעלה. און די מעקלעריי צאהלט דער אויבערשטער אפ בבני חיי ומזוני. און וואס גרעסער דער מארק מעהר ארבעט, איז גרעסער פרנסה.

"My grandfather [the Rebbe Maharash] told Reb Elya Abeler, a simple individual in terms of scholarship and aptitude, in *yechidus*: 'Elya, I envy you. You travel to the markets and see many people. When, in middle of a business deal, you have an involved conversation about a *yiddische* idea, something from *Ein Yaakov*, and you inspire them to learn *nigleh* and *chassidus*, the heavens above rejoice. Hashem rewards such a business transaction with children, health, and livelihood. The greater the market, the more work to be done — and the greater the [commensurate *brochos*] and livelihood.'"



THE BEST WAY OUT

After the tragedies and destruction of the Second World War, chassidim moved to different cities around the globe, with the help of organizations such as the Joint Distribution Committee. The Joint and others wished to help Jewish refugees without overloading existing communities, and often arranged for the refugees to move to new areas where there was little Jewish infrastructure in place. As a consequence, many chassidim ended up feeling highly isolated. Addressing this phenomenon in a farbrengen on Shabbos Parshas Beshalach, 12 Shevat 5714, the Rebbe shared the following:

“When even one chossid arrives in a city, it is for the sole purpose that he bring Chassidus to the city and transform it. That is the real reason he is there, notwithstanding any other factors or organizations at play. One may wish to be elsewhere; in that case, let him accomplish the true purpose of his arrival there and Hashem will move him on to other pastures.”

Further developing this point, the Rebbe shared the following story that had recently occurred:

“A Yid from Eretz Yisroel fell ill and required a complicated surgery. He wrote to me [the Rebbe] and asked for a *bracha*. After responding with a *bracha*, [the Rebbe] advised him to begin putting on tefillin every day. This individual indeed began wearing tefillin and, lo and behold, he immediately recovered without any need for surgery! All the doctors and other patients were shocked. When the other patients asked him what happened he shared with them that he’d begun laying tefillin daily. Upon hearing that they also began laying Tefillin; in any case, he was released from the hospital.

“In other words, the entire purpose of this person’s illness and subsequent hospital stay was so that he lay tefillin and inspire others to do so as well; as soon as he accomplished his mission he was able to go.

“The same applies to homes of the spiritually ill, such as universities — places where ideas contrary to Torah are taught. If one ends up in such a locale, he must realize that his purpose there is to spread Yiddishkeit. True, one may wonder how he can possibly affect a whole city when he is all alone?

“The answer is that the [Friediker] Rebbe expects one to do only that which he is able, just as Hashem asks only according to our abilities — since *tzadikim domim laborum*

(*tzadikim* are similar to their Creator). The very fact that a certain task is expected, indicates that the requisite abilities have been granted as well. Thus, that lone chossid has been given the abilities of the Rebbe — one who is not subject to being cowed by any opposition — to accomplish his task, and Hashem surely rewards any such initiative with abundant blessing physically and spiritually.”⁶

YOU HAVE CONNECTIONS

In Iyar of 5736, the Rebbe launched “*Shnas Hachinuch*” — a year of education. In an effort to boost educational activities around the world, the Rebbe’s secretariat sent letters to shluchim and heads of Chabad organizations, promoting the new initiative.

Again we see the Rebbe’s insistence that every individual see their *parnassah* as an opportunity to spread Yiddishkeit. Several *anash* businessmen, received letters as well:

“Taking into consideration that by *hashgacha pratis*, you have business contacts in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the like, you obviously understand that it is your responsibility, and also your privilege, to take interest in the current status of Jewish education in these places, and to do all you can do to better the situation...”⁷

HOW CAN I BROACH THE TOPIC?

Someone involved in business or a profession might feel that bringing Yiddishkeit to the workplace crosses lines, blurs boundaries, and could make others feel uncomfortable.

On Yud-Tes Kislev 5733, the Rebbe addressed this:

“[As a business owner,] Hashem has given you the opportunity to assist another individual with their physical livelihood. It is just as important to assist them with their spiritual livelihood; namely, that they appreciate that even their eating and drinking are ways to serve Hashem.

“One should not tell himself that he is only the business owner and his relationship precludes talking to his employees about spiritual matters — surely helping someone in one area, such as physical needs, is not a contradiction to assisting them in other areas, especially such a fundamental area as to be fully alive! Talking to them about such matters

is actually an expression of true care and concern.

“This is a unique *shlichus* with which Hashem has empowered an employer, since as the employer, your words regarding tefillin, eating kosher, observing shabbos, keeping *taharas hamishpacha* and so on have a much better chance of being accepted.

“The important thing is to not criticize the errors of others. One’s approach should be energetic, with light and joy. The owner can share the following: ‘Hashem told me to love you like I love myself. Now, it seems to me that if you do the following [i.e. strengthen your commitment to Yiddishkeit] you will be happier and more alive. Hence, I can fulfill my mitzvah of expressing love and care for you, and you in turn will live a better, more complete life, *‘tomim tiyeh im Hashem...*’”⁸

TO THE WORLD AS WELL

In the 5740s the Rebbe began calling strongly for the teaching of the *Sheva Mitzvos B’nei Noach* to any non-Jew upon whom one has influence.

One example is the *sicha* of Chof Menachem-Av, 5745, where the Rebbe explains that the *shlichus* of each individual to bring *Elokus* into the world and hasten the coming of Moshiach, must also extend to inspiring non-Jews — for Moshiach will come when the entire world is uplifted in serving Hashem, including the non-Jewish population.

Thus, anyone with connections or influence with non-Jews should talk to them about the *Sheva Mitzvos B’nei Noach*, encouraging them to recognize Hashem’s influence in their daily existence, and to lead moral, upstanding lives. The Rebbe underscored that one’s goal should be to simply influence others to behave in a more refined and G-dly manner, in accordance with the directives of Hashem, not for any ulterior motives. When communicated in the right spirit, openly and truthfully, one’s words would surely be effective.⁹

“Don’t think,” says the Rebbe, “that a Yid’s connection with a non-Jew is only for *parnassa*, and the relationship should remain limited to that. In fact, the very opposite is true: The real reason a Yid has something to do with a non-Jew is in order to give him the opportunity to teach him about *Sheva Mitzvos!*”¹⁰



REB MAYER ZEILER HELPS LORD MARCUS SIEFF OF ENGLAND PUT ON TEFILLIN

FABRIC OF YIDDISHKEIT

Indeed, the Rebbe encouraged various individuals to implement this approach of love and care, with colleagues, employees, clients, and acquaintances. As we will see below, this approach has been wildly successful. Let us start with some fascinating anecdotes shared by the dedicated chossid Reb Mayer Zeiler, proprietor of Flocktex, a textile business in Eretz Yisroel. The business was started after the Yom Kippur War by Reb Mayer’s father-in-law, Reb Dovid Deitsch, at the behest of the Rebbe.

Reb Mayer relates:

“The Rebbe instructed us to locate our factory in Eretz Yisroel as a way to strengthen the country and provide income for many Russian Yiddishe families in the area. However, we always knew that the Rebbe’s intent for us was not only to turn a profit, and not only to help immigrant families with *parnasa*, but also to be an example of Yiddishkeit and a source of inspiration for others.

“Being in business, we had the opportunity to reach places and individuals who others would have difficulty getting to. Many opportunities arose during visits of dignitaries to our factory, when I would offer to put on tefillin with them and encourage them to strengthen their Yiddishkeit. Before and after these visits, I would send reports to the Rebbe and often receive detailed guidance.



TEFILLIN FOR THE LORD

“One early example was when Moshe Katzav brought us a very prominent visitor: Lord Marcus Sieff of England, chairman of Marks & Spencer, president of the Weizmann Institute, and a strong supporter of the economy in Eretz Yisrael. He had come to see the new industry we were developing in the country. His company sold clothing and furniture, so his visit had great business potential as well. We were warned ahead of time that no publicity was allowed while he was in Israel, to ensure his safety. He was accompanied by Professor Sella of the Weizmann Institute. After a light breakfast, we gave him a tour of our plant.

We had just developed a new type of velvet which had the ability to fully block out sunlight. He was very impressed and told us that we had a nice plant and that he thought we would be successful. His statement was encouraging, since, at the time, we had yet to turn a profit. ‘What can I do for you?’ he asked. No doubt, he expected us to ask him for help in marketing our product. Velvet fabrics were very popular in England, and we had created the perfect new version. To his surprise, I requested something else entirely: ‘Lord Sieff, how about putting on tefillin?’ Moshe Katzav and Professor Sella started to laugh. Lord Sieff was surprised. ‘Tefillin? It’s been 54 years since my bar mitzvah when I last put on Tefillin.’ After some hesitation, he agreed. He put on the tefillin, the photographer snapped a few photos, and we said Shema together. Always the perfect gentleman, he thanked me for the opportunity.

“The visit went off without a hitch, but the next morning I was shocked to discover a picture of me putting on tefillin with the lord on the front page of the newspaper. I was mortified. We had specifically been asked not to publish any pictures until Lord Sieff left the country. The photographer wouldn’t answer my calls, so I called Professor Sella and began to apologize profusely. To my surprise, he said there was no need to apologize. The day before, the photographer had called him for permission to use the picture, and Lord Sieff, who happened to overhear the question, said that he wasn’t embarrassed about it and they were welcome to use it.

SHINUI IN SHINUI

“Another time, a member of the Knesset named Ehud Rassabi visited our factory. He belonged to a political party



REB REUVEN
DUNIN IN 5726

called Shinui that was antagonistic toward the religious community. He brought a group to our factory as an example of religious people doing honest work. After the tour we had lunch and the conversation turned to how I came to be in Eretz Yisroel. I shared with them that I was sent by the Rebbe himself to help develop the country’s industry—this was a story I shared quite often with visitors. I explained that I had passed by with my father-in-law at *lekach*, and the Rebbe told us to make the move. Suddenly, a woman in the group corrected me: ‘*Leikech*, not *lekach*!’ She was a professed antireligious advocate, so I asked her where she got her clearly religious Poilishe accent. ‘Do you know Moshe Klein, a sofer in New York?’ ‘Of course I do.’ ‘He’s my cousin. I’m the black sheep of my family. I was born in Meah Shearim...’

“Before leaving, the woman came over to me: ‘I live in Ashkelon and I’m on the city council. If the Chabad schools ever need any help, let me know.’ Towards the end of the visit there was a great atmosphere in the room and I saw that we had made a real connection. I turned to Ehud who was of traditional Yemenite origin and said, ‘Let’s show them how to put on tefillin.’ He rolled up his sleeve, put on tefillin, took a picture with us, and several others followed. I gave each of them a beautiful leather Tehillim. They were a very anti-religious party but we had managed to make a real connection with them. Afterward, I sent Ehud Rassabi the photo of him putting on tefillin and he placed it proudly on his Knesset desk. ‘My associates all wanted me to take it down,’ he told me later, ‘but I insisted that it remain.’”

THE TRACTORIST

As the above stories demonstrate (and as the Rebbe’s *sicha* quoted above points out), when businessmen reach out to

others about *Yiddishkeit*, they can connect with people who otherwise would not be open to any conversation.

Similar stories occurred with the famous chossid, Reb Reuven Dunin, who connected with Lubavitch and the Rebbe in the mid 5710s. Before his time in yeshiva he had worked as an engineer on heavy machinery.

After Chanukah 5719, the Rebbe told Reb Reuven that it was time for him to return to Eretz Yisroel, and that his mission was to work on heavy machinery in a place where many people would see him. Finding such a job was not easy, but eventually he found work at a quarry in Chaifa, near a very busy intersection — exactly what the Rebbe instructed him.

Understandably, the sight of a bearded chassidishe Yid on a tractor made an impression on all who saw him and he became a familiar figure in the area. People would often stop him in the street to tell him “good job” or “keep up the good work.” In this way he was able to reach many people who would otherwise never talk to a *frummer* Yid. After his long workday, he would invite groups of people over for discussions, that brought many Yidden back to their roots:

“One night I schlepped home a group of people from the anti-religious league. I became very close to many of them. One of them, Reb Efraim Lev, and his wife, became chassidim and eventually moved to Kfar Chabad. Years later, they confided in me that the reason they became frum was not due to anything I had said, but because I once visited their home driving my tractor!”

“SOLAR RAYS” OF YIDDISHKEIT

From heavy industry to the peaks of science; here are two occasions when the Rebbe instructed chassidim to use their advanced secular education and professions to fulfill their mission:

Prominent scientist Dr. Yaakov Hanoka pioneered cutting-edge solar technology and held 57 patents in the field. He was also one of the early *baalei teshuvah* of Lubavitch on campus. He co-founded and chaired the iconic “Encounter with Chabad” Shabbatons called *pegishos*. Dr. Hanoka merited a rare personal connection with the Rebbe, who personally guided him through life's challenges.

Dr. Hanoka had grown up in a traditional but non-religious Sefardic home. In college he became involved with the Hillel rabbi and eventually connected with the Rebbe. Later, he left college and joined the yeshiva in 770.

After a year in yeshiva, the Rebbe told Dr. Hanoka in yechidus to return to graduate school and complete his PhD. Dr. Hanoka replied that he had been thinking of staying in yeshiva and becoming a rabbi, but the Rebbe shook his head and explained, “You’ll do more for Yiddishkeit with three initials after your name.” In a long, handwritten *tzetel*, the Rebbe elaborated on his reasoning: “Each and every one of us is tasked with spreading Yiddishkeit to the best of our ability. Understandably, priority must be where one will have the greatest influence, especially if this place has greater need for this inspiration — understandably in a manner most appropriate for this particular place.

“From this it is clear — that your shlichus is primarily in the circles of students, professors, and the like. An effective way of carrying out this shlichus is by the mere fact that they will see that since you were brought closer to Torah and mitzvos you have seen increased success in the field you pursued earlier — which is highly regarded by them. It is clear from this how much effort you must put into this.

“The above is in addition to another main reason: since you have already expended many years on these studies, you must complete them so that you can utilize them as much as possible...”

Indeed, Dr. Hanoka fulfilled the Rebbe’s instructions, attained his PhD, and became one of the most prominent innovators in the field of solar energy — all while wearing a *yarmulke* and a full beard.

3M TO IBM

Reb Moshe Rappoport, of Zurich, Switzerland, had a similar story. Reb Moshe’s family stemmed from other communities but always had a connection with Lubavitch. In his teens, Reb Moshe drew closer to Lubavitch and the



REB MOSHE RAPPOPORT AT A TECHNOLOGY PRESENTATION



Rebbe, until eventually it became clear to all that he was a Lubavitcher through-and-through. Throughout this period the Rebbe guided him on his growth and his relationship with his family.

Eventually Reb Moshe got married and needed to make a living. He relates:

“Due to the Arab oil embargo in the early 1970s, the American economy came to a grinding halt and the job market was scarce. I had just obtained a college degree in computer science and my father-in-law urged my wife and I to come to Switzerland where the recession hadn’t hit yet and where he had lined up job interviews for me. I wrote to the Rebbe asking his opinion, and he answered, “Since you have many prospects, it will certainly work out.” I took his word as a promise and went to Switzerland for the interviews.

“In those days in Switzerland it was not considered acceptable to wear a religious symbol like a *yarmulke* at the office. But how can a chossid not wear a *yarmulke*? So I didn’t take it off, and I actually got the job – at the 3M Company – because of it, as the person who interviewed me owed a debt of gratitude to a *frummer* Yid.

“I had already been working for some time at 3M and then IBM, when on Hei Teves 5747, I heard the sicha in which the Rebbe asked that everyone add in their activities as shlichim of the [Frierdiker] Rebbe, especially through opening more Chabad Houses.¹¹ I found myself unsure on how to interpret this: does the Rebbe want me to quit my job and go on shlichus? I wrote to the Rebbe asking if I should leave my job and become a full-time shliach. The Rebbe’s response was just one word: “Why?” I understood – there was no need for me to give up my job to be a shliach; the Rebbe wanted me to stay and fulfill my shlichus in my workplace, which is exactly what I did.

“I started out doing normal computer stuff, but as time went on, I went into research and ended up building an IBM center in Switzerland where important people like CEOs, politicians and famous journalists from all over the world would come to see what IBM was doing. I did that for twenty years, and everyone I met who saw my *yarmulke* and full beard, saw the face of a Torah Yid. In my position, I also traveled all over the world, where other Yidden approached me and I was able to influence them positively. This would not have happened had I not followed the Rebbe’s advice to stay in hi-tech.”

EVERY MOMENT IS PRECIOUS

Many other businessmen and professionals had times when the Rebbe was intimately involved in various activities they performed in *hafatzas hayahadus vihamalayanos*. Reb Bentzion Rader, a prominent chossid, businessman, and *askan* from London, related the following:

“In the summer of 5735 I went to Detroit for some business meetings. I arrived on a Tuesday morning, had meetings all day, and in the evening went to stay with someone involved in the business meetings and whose family was associated with the local Lubavitch community.

“My hosts had invited a few couples to their home. Without my directing it there, the conversation turned to religion, and one of the men there kept asking seemingly facetious questions about tefillin: ‘Why can’t they be round? Who said they have to be black?’ and so on. The conversation went on till about 2:00 AM. As we were saying goodbye, I said to the man who had been asking the questions: ‘I suppose that you have a special interest in tefillin; is that why you were asking those questions about them?’ ‘I haven’t put on tefillin for over 20 years!’ was his reply. ‘But you should!’ I responded. He said, ‘Everyone else is going home to sleep, but I’m going to work. I own a bakery, and we work through the night. If you want me to put on tefillin, you can come to my bakery at about 6:30 AM, when we’re between batches, and I’ll put on tefillin.’

“I must admit that this was not my style, but I couldn’t refuse, so at 6:30 AM Wednesday morning I arrived at his bakery with tefillin, siddur and *yarmulke*, and there among the sacks of flour he put on tefillin. What surprised me was that he needed no help—he knew exactly what to do and what to say.

“When he finished, I said to him, ‘You obviously know how to put on tefillin, and you know the blessings and the prayers. Why don’t you do it regularly?’ He told me that he didn’t own a pair of tefillin, and buying a pair was not a priority, but if someone gave one to him, he would put them on regularly. I answered that I was returning to England via New York, but I expected to be back in Detroit in about six weeks, and that I would bring him a pair of tefillin.

“Late that evening I flew to New York and stayed in Crown Heights overnight. Thursday morning I davened with the Rebbe and sent in a *tzetel*, detailing the business discussions I had and also the episode with the man in

REMEMBER TO DO BUSINESS AS WELL!

Reb Yitzchok Nemes was a devoted chosid, who looked at every business trip as an opportunity to reach another yid and bring them closer to Yiddishkeit. The Rebbe would often tell him, “Yarbeh Biniseios—He should make many trips,” as he used his trips to spread Yiddishkeit and bring tashmishei kedushah to far-flung locales.

One time, when Reb Yitzchak returned from a trip and entered yechidus, the Rebbe told him: “Yitzchok, you are a businessman. You must remember to [also] do business...”

Detroit and the tefillin. I concluded the note saying that I was returning to London that evening (Thursday night), and that I was especially looking forward to Shabbos, since, for the first time, all our children and grandchildren would be staying with us.

“Shortly before Mincha the Rebbe’s secretary told me that he had been trying to reach me, as he had a response to my note. In his reply the Rebbe wrote, ‘Do you think it is right that a Yid who put on tefillin yesterday for the first time in over twenty years should wait another six weeks for you to buy him a pair of tefillin so that he can perform the mitzvah again? You should buy the tefillin today. If you can arrange to get them to him in Detroit in time for him to put them on today, fine; if not, you should personally return to Detroit today with the tefillin, so that he can put them on in good time. You should do this even if it means not being with your family for Shabbos. When this Yid sees how important it is for you that he does not miss even one day putting on tefillin, this mitzvah will have special importance to him.’

“There were a number of problems. First, I only had a small amount of money with me—not enough to buy a new airline ticket. Second, how would I obtain a pair of tefillin in Crown Heights? I tried the Tzach office, but they had none; the Judaica store Drimmers was also out of stock. Finally, I was able to buy a pair at a store on Kingston Avenue—the last pair they had—against my check. Then I phoned American Airlines, who would transport them. Next

I called the person with whom I had stayed in Detroit, who said he would collect them at the airport and deliver them to the man in time. One of the yeshivah students gave me a lift to La Guardia Airport, and the tefillin were put on a plane to Detroit.

“I left for London only after notifying the Rebbe what had been arranged, and waiting to hear that the tefillin had been collected and delivered.

“A few months later, I met this person again in Detroit, and asked him how he was doing with the tefillin. He told me that he had not missed a day—even walking home in the snow one day when his car broke down so that he could put on the tefillin before sundown. He said: ‘Because of the trouble you went to in order that I receive the tefillin the very next day, they are especially important to me.’

“Almost the exact words that the Rebbe had written to me.”¹²

MAMASH A SHLIACH

On 21 Menachem-Av 5744 (quoted above), the Rebbe said:

“I ask the *‘shpitz-Chabadnikes’* to not be foolish and add explanations or hidden intents to my words — *‘Ich mein vos ich zog* (I mean what I say), there is no need for their help (and *halevai* it shouldn’t be counterproductive). I stress again: each and every person is a shliach of *Nessi Doreinu*, the [Friediker] Rebbe, who is a shliach of *Nessi Ha’Olam* by way of Moshe Rabbeinu...”

With these unforgettable words echoing in our hearts, we will surely each fulfill our shlichus and bring the *Geula Shleima* now.

1. Igros Kodesh vol. 6, p. 263.
2. Likkutei Sichos vol. 29, p. 348.
3. Toras Menachem Hisvaaduyos 5744 vol. 4 pg. 2452 and forward.
4. Likkutei Sichos vol. 2, p. 497.
5. Igros Kodesh RaYatz vol. 7, pg. 20-21.
6. Toras Menachem vol. 11, p. 60 and forward.
7. Igros Kodesh vol. 31, p. 194, et. al.
8. Toras Menachem vol. 70, p. 239.
9. Hisvaaduyos 5745, vol. 5, pp. 2722-2724.
10. Yud Alef Nissan 5743; Hisvaaduyos 5743 vol. 2 p. 1207. For a comprehensive overview on this subject, see “*A Light Unto the Nations*,” Derher Shevat 5777.
11. See “*The Beis Chabad*,” Derher Kislev 5778.
12. Credit to chabad.org/511189.



LUMINARIES

Personalities
in the
Rebbe's Torah

By:
Rabbi Levik Gourarie

מוקדש לחיזוק ההתקשרות לכ"ק אדמו"ר

נדפס ע"י

הרה"ת ר' אברהם צמח הלוי
וזוגתו מרת דבורה לאה ומשפחתם שיחיו
ראזענפעלד

Matisyahu

Matisyahu, the son of Yochanan Kohen Gadol, from the Chashmonai family of Kohanim, is famous for starting the legendary revolt against the Greeks, resulting in the story of Chanukah.

Matisyahu was the father of the band of the Macabee brothers: Yochanan, Shimon, Yehuda, Elazar, and Yonasan. His descendants ruled the Jewish people following the Chanukah story, up to the time of the Roman conquest.

The war began when Greek soldiers came to Modi'in and demanded that the Jews sacrifice a swine to Avodah Zarah. Outraged, Matisyahu killed the person offering the sacrifice as well as the Greek soldiers.

With the call, *'Mi LaHashem Eilai!*' [Whoever is for Hashem, follow me!] Matisyahu gathered a band of loyal and courageous Jews who fought the mighty Greek empire, winning miraculous victories both physical and spiritual.

Chazal attribute the miracle of Chanukah and the victory of the Macabees primarily to Matisyahu. In the Rebbe's Torah as well, the *mesiras nefesh* and *avodah* of the Macabees is credited to Matisyahu. Additionally, Pri Eitz Chaim states that "Matisyahu *Tiken Hahod*" [Matisyahu repaired the *Sfirah* of *Hod*].

Matisyahu was not just a military leader. Matisyahu and his sons implemented various halachos as well.¹ The Gemara quotes a *Psak Din* about intermarriage from the Beis Din of Chashmonai. The Rebbe also highlighted Matisyahu's role as educator of the Jewish people.

Matisyahu died early in the war, and passed the mission and leadership on to his famous sons. The miracle of the oil and establishment of Chanukah occurred after his passing.

Matisyahu Ben Yochanan Kohen Gadol

The war between the Syrian Greeks and Matisyahu was far more than a military action. It was a clash of spirit and culture, of faith and logic. What ultimately triumphed was *Kedusha*.

The Greeks symbolized the cold and dry position of *sechel* and logic, which is a very powerful and persuasive force. They fought to uphold the reign of intellect, holding it supreme, finding *emunah* and *mesiras nefesh* to be misguided and outdated.

To fight against the champions of *sechel*, it is not sufficient to use *Chochma* of *Kedusha*, for it may become tainted by the secular and nonspiritual ideas and philosophies. Rather it is a deeper G-dly force that must be revealed to combat this *Klipah*.

Matisyahu Ben Yochanan was sent by Hashem to lead the campaign against the Greeks and their philosophies. Matisyahu means *Matnas Hashem*, a gift from Hashem. Only with the power granted to us by Hashem were Matisyahu and the Yidden able to prevail, bringing the spirit of *emunah* and *mesiras nefesh* into everything that they did.

The Rebbe explains that the title 'Ben Yochanan' indicates a man of great miracles. The two nun's of Yochanan denote *Nissei Nissim*, 'miracles of miracles. And "Ben" can mean "a person of"—not just the "son of." (Just like 'Ben Chorin' means a person who is free, not 'son of freedom'.) With the power of *Kedusha* that comes from the soul, the Macabees merited miracles far above the realm of nature. The Rebbe continues that he was also a Kohen Gadol, a person charged with entering the *L'fnai V'lifnim*, into the inner sanctum of the Beis Hamikdash. This represents the deepest levels of the soul.

Matisyahu Kohen Gadol

The opening words of *V'al Hanissim* for Chanukah read "In the days of Matisyahu, the son of Yochanan Kohen Gadol." This implies that Matisyahu served as Kohen Gadol.

There is much discussion and controversy as to whether this was actually the case. Some hold that it was his father Yochanan who was Kohen Gadol. Others explain that he was given this title out of respect, though he never held the position. There is a third opinion that says that he was a *Mashuach Milchama*, a Kohen anointed to inspire the people in wartime.

In *Kisvei HaArizal* it says that Matisyahu was in fact the



TZIYON OF MATISYAHU KOHEN GADOL IN THE 'YAAR BEN SHEMEN' NEAR THE CITY OF MODI'IN

Kohen Gadol,² and the Rebbe quotes this opinion of the Arizal in a beautiful *sicha*:

The idea of Chanukah—lighting up the darkness of the streets and leading the world towards Moshiach—was initially accomplished by Matisyahu as Kohen Gadol and Nossi of his generation. The Rebbe compares this to our times, when the Rebbe, Nossi Hador, leads today's battles and shines the light needed to overcome the darkness outside.³

In another *sicha* however, the Rebbe says that Matisyahu was not the Kohen Gadol. In fact, the Kohanim Gedolim of his time were *Misyavnim*, of the Hellenized Jewish party.⁴ As proof, the Rebbe cites his residence in Modi'in rather than Yerushalayim, where, according to the Rambam, the Kohen Gadol must remain.⁵

Throughout the years, the Rebbe mentions the various opinions and theories on this matter, but does not offer a conclusive opinion.

Matsiyahu's Resilience

The Rebbe learns from Matsiyahu what our correct attitude should be in confusing and difficult times.

Equating his battles with the modern situation of secular influences and assimilation, the Rebbe highlights Matsiyahu's response.

Instead of going to war, Matsiyahu, as Kohen Gadol, had the option to go to Yerushalayim—the capital and center of the political and religious dispute, to begin wheeling and dealing with the Greeks, but he refused to do so.

Others tried brokering some sort of deal, offering religious compromises in return for the protection of the Beis Hamikdash.

But Matsiyahu would not have it. He was not looking to be Kohen Gadol, or to be in the Beis Hamikdash or Yerushalayim, rather, he knew that he needed to be in Modi'in and fight those who wished to remove his fellow Jews from Hashem's ways. Matsiyahu stood up to the desecration of Hashem's

name and fought to restore the Shechina to the Beis Hamikdash and the Jewish people.

Today too, some push for compromise, claiming that this is the only chance we have at preserving Yiddishkeit.

Matsiyahu taught that one must fight for what's right even when there may be advantages that come from compromise. As the Rebbe put it "Who needs the Beis Hamikdash if they are bringing *Avodah Zarah* into it?"⁶

In another *sicha*, the Rebbe explains that Matsiyahu, when faced with *Chilul Hashem*, did not wait to gather witnesses or check with the Beis Din, rather he went ahead and stood up for Hashem's honor.

While there are times for discussion, Matsiyahu saw a time for action, because *Chilul Hashem* outweighs all other calculations.

Zeidim Beyad Oskei Torasecha

The Rebbe explains that the battles waged by Matsiyahu and his sons were against not only the Greeks but also their Hellenized Jewish countrymen. Both physically and spiritually, it was against their wayward brothers who they needed to fight and ultimately win over.

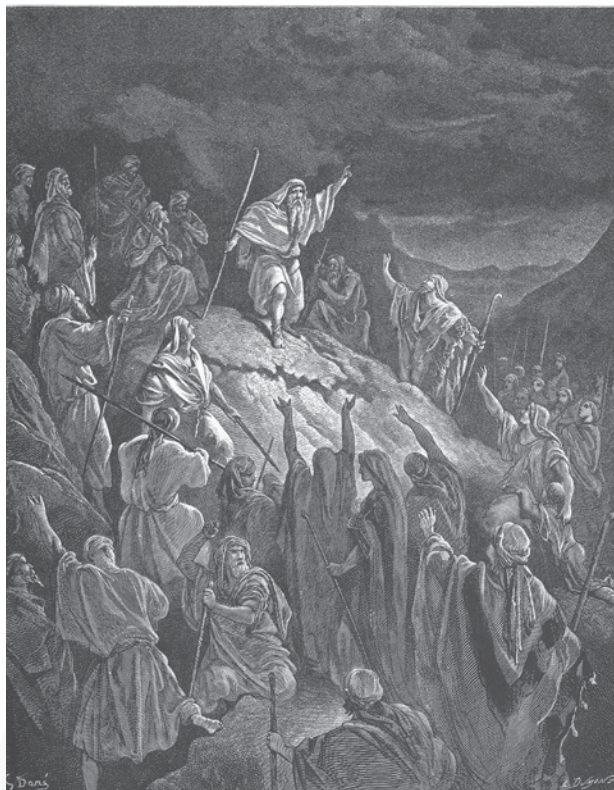
This brings us to another side of Matsiyahu. According to some opinions, he was not even the Kohen Gadol, and he and his sons were not the Jewish leaders at the time (see above). They were not in Yerushalayim or any other political center, rather they waged their war from the small town of Modi'in.

The Jewish establishment of the time, including the *Kehuna Gedolah*, was in the hands of *Misyavnim*. They were the majority of the people, and much better established.

Yet, even with all the cards stacked against them, Matsiyahu and his sons went to war. As *Kohanim* (*Shevet Levi*) they were not military men or accustomed to the art of war, nevertheless, with only a small group of Yidden loyal to Torah and Mitzvos, Matsiyahu and his sons had no choice but to take matters into their own hands.⁷

The Chashmonaim

The war for restoration of true Yiddishkeit was a noble one. Even though the Mishnah doesn't discuss the story of Chanukah, the Baraisa explains that the *possuk* "*V'lo Gealtim*" [and I have not repulsed them], means that Hashem sent Shimon Hatzaddik, Chashmonai and his sons, and Matsiyahu Kohen Gadol.⁸



MATSIYAHU INSPIRING FELLOW JEWS TO REVOLT (PAINTING BY GUSTAVE DORÉ, 1866)

Rashi interprets the *possuk* in Daniel “*Amad al kano maavir nogesh heder malchus*” [His place will be taken by one who will dispatch an officer to exact tribute for royal glory] as referring to “Matisyahu Ben Yochanan, who would strengthen his hold on the mountain of Modai, and evict the Greeks from the land. His glory will live on in his children who will lead the Jewish people.”⁹

Even so, the Chashmonaim’s retention of power was not seen positively by Chazal. They were meant to remain in the realm of *Kehuna* while returning the *Melucha* to the tribe of Yehuda and the house of Dovid. ¹



THE NUSACH OF “BI’MEI MATISYAHU” AS PRINTED IN 1738 IN A SIDUR FROM BAVARIA

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF ISRAEL

מסרת גבורים ביד חלשים, ורבים ביד מעטים, וטמאים ביד טהורים, ורשעים ביד צדיקים, וזדים ביד עוסקי תורתך

“You gave over the mighty into the hand of the weak, the many in the hand of the few, impure in the hand of the pure, wicked in the hand of the righteous, and sinners into the hands of those who occupy themselves with your Torah”

The Rebbe explains that the miracle of Matisyahu and the Macabees’s war wasn’t just with the Greeks, but also the *Misyavnim* who allied with them.

The terms “impure” and “wicked” as opposed to “righteous”, and “sinners” do not make much sense when describing the Greeks. The *Misyavnim* on the other hand, knowing about Torah and Mitzvos and fighting it, can be referred to as impure etc.

The three levels of pure, righteous, and occupied with Hashem’s Torah, used to describe Matisyahu and his people, represent the service of Hashem in thought, speech, and behavior. *Tehorim* refers to people pure of thought, *Oskei Torasecha*, to people who study Torah, and *Tzadikim*, to people whose actions are righteous. “Many in the hand of the few” also refers to the Maccabees vs. the *Misyavnim*, saying that even compared with their brothers, they were fewer in number.

This understanding magnifies the miracle. Firstly, when most of your own people side with the enemy, it makes the battle much harder. Secondly, even though a large portion of the Jewish people were not only unworthy of the miracle, but actively fighting against it, Hashem still made this great miracle.

The Rebbe concludes that the term used for victory in *Val Hanissim* is “*Mosarta*” [you gave over], meaning that the victory was not in crushing the other side, but rather transforming them into full-fledged *Tzadikim*. The Rebbe draws a comparison to today and teaches that even if opposition comes from fellow Jews, we should not hold back from fighting for the truth and bringing our brothers back home.¹⁰

Of course, today, those opposed to the Torah are *Tinokos shenishbu* who, due to the darkness of *galus*, simply don't know better. How much more so is our obligation to bring them close, and show them love, influencing them *b'darkei noam ub'darkei shalom*.

על ידי כהניך הקדושים “Through your Holy Kohanim”

There is a *Machlokes Haposkim* whether a person may give up their life for a mitzvah when not obligated to do so. It seems from Rashi that it is permissible but the Rambam and the Ramban hold otherwise.

Nevertheless, the Kesef Mishnah on the Rambam explains that in a case where one is a great Chossid and a G-d fearing person, and sees that his generation's piety and devotion is weak in certain areas, he may be *moser nefesh* to inspire and teach his generation.

The Rebbe explains that in this case, the *mesiras nefesh* is for *Kiddush Hashem* and upkeep of the Jewish faith, not just for the one specific Mitzvah.

Regarding the *mesiras nefesh* of Matisyahu and his sons in the time of the Chanukah story, the Rebbe says that while the period of Greek oppression is usually considered a *Gezeiras Hashemad* [a decree against observing the Torah], which warrants *mesiras nefesh* across the board, going to war is a different story.

Even in a case where one must be *moser nefesh* for every Mitzvah, there is still no obligation to actively go and fight, especially if, by the rules of nature, you have no hope of victory.

This did not stop Matisyahu and his sons, who waged a war that they could not naturally win, with utmost *mesiras nefesh* for Hashem and His Torah.

This is why they are referred to in *Haneiros Halalu* as “your Holy Kohanim” (and in Rambam “the great Kohanim”). This title explains why they were able to go on *mesiras nefesh* even when not obligated. They saw themselves as the holy and great people who are applauded for their *mesiras nefesh* that inspires their generation.

The Rebbe concludes that it is this higher-then-logic *mesiras nefesh* that ultimately won over the Greek ideas.

The Hellenists were not against Torah and Mitzvos, they were bothered by the supernatural, devotion and belief in something that is higher than logic. To combat this, *mesiras nefesh* of the highest order is necessary, showing and proving the transcendent Divine in each person and in the world.

This carries over to the miracle of the oil as well. The Greeks did not *destroy* the oil, they defiled it, trying to separate Jewish practice from its spiritual aspects. The Maccabees found one pure jug of oil – one that had the stamp of approval of the Kohen Gadol – representing *bittul* and *mesiras nefesh* higher than logic and reason.¹¹ The miracle showed that with even a tiny amount of utter devotion, the light of *Kedusha* prevails.

1. Sifrei HaMacabbim.

2. Shaar Hagilgulim, end of Hakdamah 32.

3. Zos Chanukah 5713.

4. Referring to Jason and Meneleus.

5. Sicha Mikeitz 5732, note 23.

6. Sicha Yud Tes Kislev 5731.

7. Mikeitz – Shabbos Chanukah 5732.

8. Megillah 11a

9. Daniel 11:20.

10. Likkutei Sichos 30, Chanukah 2. Mikeitz – Shabbos Chanukah 5732.

11. Likkutei Sichos 35, Vayeshev – Chanukah.

לזכות
 הרה"ת הרב שלום דוב בער
 זוזגתו מרת חיה מושקא שיחיו
 לרגל יום נישואיהם - יום הבהיר ראש חודש כסלו
 ולזכות ילדיהם ברכה ליפשא, עליזה,
 שיינדל, ומנחם מענדל שיחיו
 שוחאט



Don't Spare the Details

As related by Rabbi Yisroel Tzvi Glitzenstein, shliach in Eilat, Israel.

Written By: Rabbi Tzemach Feller

As a *chossid* and *shliach*, I would regularly report on all of my *peulos* to the Rebbe by writing a detailed *duch* (report); these *duchos* could sometimes be quite lengthy, filled with details of the *mitvzoim* and other activities I was doing.

Not long before Chanukah 5748, I was at a *farbrengen* with several other shluchim. One well-meaning shliach spoke quite passionately against the writing of long-winded *duchos*. “The Rebbe’s time is precious,” he pointed out, “And it can be spent doing better things than reading long *duchos*.”

I resolved to take his words to heart as I prepared for the annual *mitvzoim* and *peulos* in the Eilat area, both with the community and on local military bases.

Tzach in Israel had prepared *duch* stationery for *chassidim* doing *mitvzoim* on military bases. It included blank spaces to be filled with the names of individuals who visited the bases, the name of the base, the number of soldiers who attended, and other such information. On the top of each page was the message, “Take to heart! The Rebbe wants and asks for a detailed *duch*, and as soon as possible.”

But I was taking another message to heart — that of my well-intentioned fellow *shliach* and his concern for the Rebbe’s time.

So I filled in the blanks and sent a *duch* with just basic

information, no extra, and—in my mind, extraneous—details. I took a similar approach in reporting on my communal activities in Eilat, writing a brief and concise *duch* and including some photos of our activities.

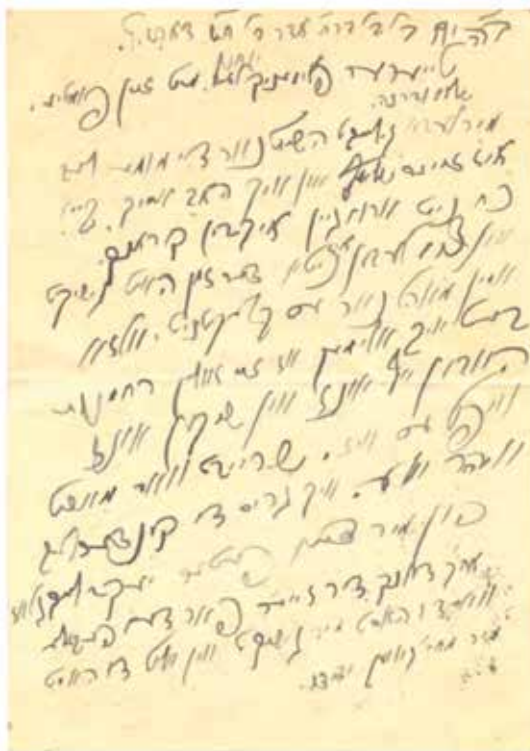
A short while later I received a letter from the Rebbe. (Editor’s note: this letter was a *michtav Klali-Prati* — a communal/individual letter which came out for Chanukah 5748. This letter would follow a general template, but in some copies the Rebbe added a few words or lines to the text.) At the beginning of the letter, where it says “מאשר הנני קבלת המכ” — “I acknowledge having received your letter,” — the Rebbe added in his holy handwriting, “האלבום והדו”ח” — “the album and the report” (referring to pictures of the activities). Before his holy signature, the Rebbe also added, “וילהצלחה בכל” — “success in everything.”

But that was not all.

Enclosed in the envelope was a clipping from the *duch* stationery I had sent in — the one that read, “Take to heart! The Rebbe wants and asks for a detailed *duch*, and as soon as possible.”

The message was crystal-clear, and from then on, I went back to my previous style of writing detailed, comprehensive *duchos* to the Rebbe. ①

מבית הגזרים TREASURES FROM THE REBBE'S LIBRARY



REB LEIB
SHEININ'S
LETTER

“WHAT I SAW, HEARD, AND FELT...”

This beautiful letter was written by 770's legendary gabbai, Reb Yochanan Gordon to the Frierdiker Rebbe. It contains a fond mention of his participation in the Rebbe's and Rebbetzin's wedding.

THE BACKGROUND:

Before emigrating to the United States in 5692, Reb Yochanan lived in Dokshitz, whose rav was the venerable Chossid, Reb Arye Leib Sheinin הי"ד.

When World War II broke out, Reb Leib was still in Dokshitz, where he was ultimately killed. At the beginning of the war in the winter of 5700, Reb Leib wrote a postcard to Reb Yochanan in the United States, posing as his uncle and asking for help.¹

Reb Yochanan gave the postcard to the Frierdiker Rebbe, who had just arrived in the United States, along with this letter of explanation.



WRITTEN BY:
RABBI MENDEL JACOBS

B”H

Erev Shabbos Kodesh [Parshas] Kedoshim
Brooklyn, NY

To the Rebbe *Shlita*,

From the time that the Rebbe sent our friend, Harav Arye Leib Sheinin to serve as rav of our city, Dokshitz, he has been etched into the walls of my heart, for we have found within him all forty-eight qualities enumerated in the Mishnah of *Shanu Chachomim*.² Most importantly, he possesses purity of heart and sincere *hiskashrus* to the Rebbe *shlita*; in his mind there is not an iota of difference between the holy Baal Shem Tov and the Rebbe *shlita*.

With the Rebbe’s permission, I would like to relate an incident that occurred in 5689: When the Rebbe was celebrating the marriage of his daughter Mrs. Mussia on 15 Kislev³ in Warsaw.

[Before the wedding] I discussed with him the possibility of traveling [to the wedding], and I told him that I was not planning to go, since I had already been [with the Rebbe] in Riga for Rosh Hashanah. At that moment, he didn’t push me to go. But with time, as I would frequent his residence (I would visit him almost every day), he said to me, “Imagine what is bound to happen at such a wedding! The Rebbe [Rashab, our Rebbe’s] father, the Rebbe Maharash, the Tzemach Tzedek, the Mitteler Rebbe, the Alter Rebbe, and maybe even the Baal Shem Tov [will all be there]. Imagine missing such an opportunity!”

Sensing that he really meant it, I immediately went to borrow money (in a halachically permissible manner) for the trip, 100 gold coins.

What I saw, heard, and felt at that wedding, will never, ever, I hope, leave my memory.

During these eight years that I am here in America, I’ve kept an ongoing correspondence with him. But from when the war broke out until now, I haven’t heard anything from him. In my home [everyone is concerned about his well being], my sons and my wife constantly mention him, saying, “Only Hashem knows what’s going on with Reb Leib...”

Yesterday, thank G-d, I received a postcard from him. He signed it with my uncle’s name (I have an elderly aunt in Dokshitz, my mother’s sister). [Before the war] I was sending a monthly stipend to them [my aunt and Reb Leib] addressed to Reb Arye Leib, and he would respond [acknowledging receipt]. But now he is obviously afraid to write to me in his own name, so he signs with my uncle’s name. However, on the bottom of this postcard he added a special thank you for the parcel I had sent.

[He was referring to] something I had sent two weeks before the war; a copy of the Rebbe’s letter to his grandson about the Tanya.⁴ (Our friend Reb Avraham Pariz made

REB YOCHANAN GORDON’S LETTER TO THE FRIEDIKER REBBE



a copy of it, right when he started his project of copying [letters and sichos].) I also included the small pamphlet “Shema Yisroel”⁵ printed by the elder Chossid Reb Dovid Shifrin.

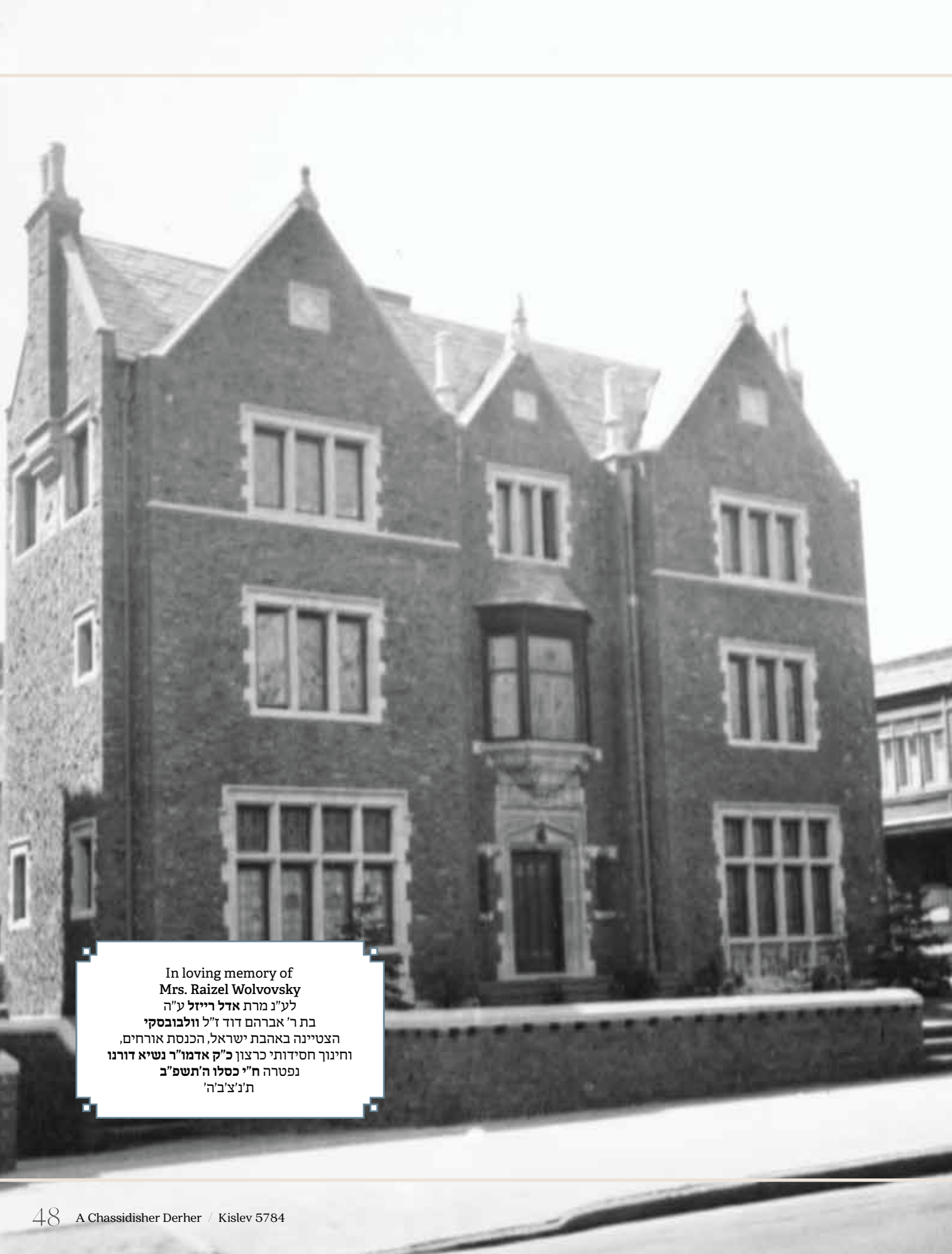
He [Reb Leib] thanks me for these [copies] and writes, “You have literally given me new life...” (האסט מיר ממש מחי). (געווען).

I know how much the Rebbe loves every Jew, especially the *Temimim*, and even more specifically, him [Reb Leib]. I am therefore giving this postcard to the Rebbe. You will see that it is indeed his very handwriting. May Hashem help that we will soon hear the news of the salvation of all the Jewish people.

Your servant,
Yochanan Gordon the Shochet

MiBeis Hagnazim, article 152, p. 370.

1. The postcard in its entirety appears in *Mibeis Hagnazim*, p. 369.
2. Avos ch. 6.
3. Since the wedding took place after nightfall on 14 Kislev, the anniversary is also marked on the 15th.
4. *Igros Kodesh Admur HaRayatz*, vol. 4, p. 259.
5. A maamar from the Tzemach Tzedek delivered to the Cantonists. See “*We Want to see the Rebbe*,” *Derher Cheshvan* 5782.



In loving memory of
Mrs. Raizel Wolvovsky

לע"נ מרת **אדל רייזל** ע"ה
בת ר' אברהם דוד ז"ל **וולבובסקי**
הצטיינה באהבת ישראל, הכנסת אורחים,
וחינוך חסידותי כרצון כ"ק אדמו"ר נשיא דורנו
נפטרה ח' **כסלו ה'תשפ"ב**
ת'נצ'בה'



LIKE A FATHER

*Rabbi Moshe Lazar on his years in the
Rebbe's presence and how they continue to
shape the story of his life, till today¹*

By: Rabbi Zelig Katzman



One spring day in 5703, Moshe'le Lazar was playing with his friends on the street in front of his family's Williamsburg home. At the time, the Brooklyn neighborhood had only a small Jewish population, and most of his friends were gentile children.

On that day, a Jew with a noble countenance encountered the yarmulka-wearing lad and patted him on the head.

"Several months later," relates the Shliach Rabbi Moshe Lazar, "when I began to learn in Lubavitch, I was playing with my friends in the *chatzer* of 770, and I spotted the man who had patted me on the head. I asked my friends who he was and they told me it was the Rebbe's son-in-law, Ramash..."

Thanks, There Is No Need...

Rabbi Moshe Lazar was born in 5694 to a family that had lived in Vienna, Austria for many years. He saw Hitler ym'sh conducting a victory parade as thousands cheered.

His family sensed the coming danger and, at the last moment before the closing of the American consulate in Vienna, Rabbi Lazar's mother contacted his uncle who lived in the US, who sent the necessary documents taking responsibility for Rabbi Lazar and his parents. Thus, in 5699, at age 5, he and his family arrived in the United States and settled in Williamsburg.

His siblings had already been evacuated to Great Britain along with thousands of other children on the "Kindertransport".

"When my siblings and the other children arrived in London" Rabbi Lazar shared "There was a Jew living there named Reb Shmuel Unsdorfer, who at the time was still unmarried. Seeing the children wander the streets, he resolved to open a Yeshiva for them. He acquired a building in a London suburb and opened a Yeshiva there.

"Four years later, in 5703, the US began to allow passenger ships to enter its ports after several years of barring them in fear of German attacks. My parents sent my siblings a visa to the United States. Before my brother departed, Rabbi Unsdorfer told him that once in the US he should do his utmost to study in a Chassidische Yeshiva".

Rabbi Unsdorfer's words are what brought Rabbi Lazar to Lubavitch. "The only Chassidische Yeshiva in the US in those days was the Lubavitcher Yeshiva in 770. When my brother told my father he wanted to go to Lubavitch, my father, a Yekkeh, was resistant at first. He didn't understand the need to travel an hour each day to Crown Heights when there were Yeshivos much closer to home.

"However, my brother pleaded and insisted, and my father acquiesced. 'But,' he said 'If you travel to Yeshiva, Moshe will



REB MOSHE WITH HIS PARENTS AROUND THE TIME THEY ARRIVED IN THE UNITED STATES

also go with you'. I transferred from Yeshivas Torah Vo'daas to Rabbi Zalman Gurary's class on Albany street, and my new life began.

In those days the Lubavitcher Yeshiva was the destination for all parents who wanted their children to get a wholesome chinuch, with *Yiras Shomayim*. "Our class was comprised of seven students" Rabbi Lazar recalls, "but only two of us remained Lubavitchers. The others continued to other Yeshivos. That was Lubavitch in those days—nice American youth but not necessarily well-versed in the world of Chassidus. We didn't know what a Rebbe is, what Chassidus is. It was a Yeshiva, and we sat and learned. At a later stage the *Temimim* arrived from Russia and helped us acclimate".

In fact, says Rabbi Lazar, "In the lead up to my bar mitzvah, Rabbi Mentlick, the Rosh Yeshiva asked me whether I would like to receive a bracha from the (Friediker) Rebbe. I replied: 'No thanks, there's no need'... We didn't understand what it meant..."

Rabbi Lazar shares a few memories of the Rebbe from those years. "The Rebbe was extremely private in those days. I remember being in 770 on Shabbos and seeing the Rebbe sitting at a table in the *zal* and farbrenging with several bochorim, but I was unable to understand his deep words. Additionally, when rallies would be held for the local Jewish children, the Rebbe would address them from the porch."

Rabbi Lazar merited to see the Friediker Rebbe on a number of occasions: "In the early years I spent in Lubavitch, the Friediker Rebbe would farbreng in his apartment on the second floor of 770. If you look at the wall behind the *Chazan's amud* in the small *zal*, you can see two protruding wires. They used to be connected to speakers that would broadcast the Friediker Rebbe's words during those farbrengens.

"We would stand in the *zal* on the ground level and listen to the farbrengens. It was very difficult to understand

the Frierdiker Rebbe's words in those days, but his son-in-law, Rashag, would repeat every sicha. (One word that I do remember the Frierdiker Rebbe saying routinely after the Sichos was "ובכן", meaning: What is the practical application of what was discussed?)

"At the end of the farbrengens we used to wait at the stairs next to the apartment. The door would be opened and we would enter and say l'chaim, then exit from a different door."

Another memory: "During our breaks we would play in the *chatzer* (where the *Shalash*—the tent—was later built and which is currently the back of the main Shul). The Frierdiker Rebbe would sometimes sit near his window and watch with pleasure the *Yiddishe kinder* playing in the courtyard."

The Rebbe Made Us Chassidim

The *histalkus* of the Frierdiker Rebbe on Yud Shevat was a shock to everyone. "On Motzei Shabbos there was supposed to be a simcha at the Yeshiva building on Bedford Avenue. I came from Williamsburg and saw that barely anyone was there. When I asked why, I received the bitter news. We ran quickly to 770 and encountered a painful scene: the greatest Chassidim sat on the floor crying bitter tears, like children. We split the night into shifts of people reciting Tehillim—my turn was from six to eight in the morning—after which the *Taharah* was held.

"We all thought that the world had come to an end. But then came Yud Shevat 5711. I remember the image of the farbrengen well, the place where I stood, and how the Chossid Reb Avrohom Nemtsov stood up and announced: 'Rebbe, the *sichos* are good, but we want to hear Chassidus!'. The Rebbe said the Ma'amar, and we knew that we had a Rebbe...

"It was a complete revolution. We, the bochurim, had known that the Frierdiker Rebbe was there, but we had almost

no personal connection or interaction with him. The older Chassidim would participate in the farbrengens and meals, but the bochurim and *anash* rarely saw him.

"Now, the situation was utterly transformed. We took to the Rebbe immediately. Like a caring father, the Rebbe thought about all our problems and gave us detailed answers to all the questions we asked him. Our lives were changed".

One event is engraved in Rabbi Lazar's mind as a pivotal moment in the development of his *hiskashrus*. It was in the early years, during *Kos Shel Bracha* after a farbrengen: "Each person in the crowd passed by the Rebbe and received some wine from his cup, and the Rebbe said a few words to each of them. When the Rebbe spoke to me, his holy words had such a great impact on me. The manner in which the Rebbe spoke to me was unique, not rote or generic that could be told to anyone. The Rebbe's words were personal. Afterwards I thought to myself: How did the Rebbe know? How did he understand? These were deeply internal and personal matters, and this completely consumed me. I said to myself: 'If the Rebbe recognizes me and knows my innermost state, he is my Rebbe.' I understood that I was standing before my father.

"This was the relationship that the bochurim of those years had with the Rebbe. We would go to the Rebbe's room and ask questions. I have many notes of the things I asked them. Many seem silly and small in hindsight. Nevertheless, we would get immediate and detailed answers for everything regarding what to do and how to behave.

"The farbrengens were another way in which the Rebbe deeply impacted us. We would stand for many hours and hear the Rebbe speak. We felt as if the Rebbe was speaking to us, penetrating our inner worlds. We listened to and understood the *sichos*. If so, how could we not be transformed? The Rebbe shifted us from average people to Chassidim that could accomplish something.

"We were 'Brooklyn boys', American kids, and the Rebbe took us and revolutionized our lives. Many of my classmates went on with their lives and reverted to being regular American *balebatim*. But those of us that connected to the Rebbe—the Rebbe changed us. How else would a child like me grow up to be a Shliach?

"We were children from Austria/Brooklyn. What did we know about Chassidus? About the Rebbe? But the Rebbe taught us, from the most basic concepts, and raised us up. There were barely any Chassidim in those days. So the Rebbe made us Chassidim. We were the Yeshiva. We were the Chassidim.

"When the Rebbe spoke of "*Ufaratzta*"—spreading forth with the message of Chassidus beyond all boundaries—we thought that it meant to reach Williamsburg, Boro Park and Brownsville. We could not imagine what the Rebbe had in mind, everything that we see today—to spread throughout



REB MOSHE WITH HIS SIBLINGS AT THE TIME OF HIS BAR MITZVAH



REB MOSHE STANDS BEHIND THE REBBE (TOP ROW, FIRST FROM THE RIGHT) AT THE FARBRENGEN OF 10 SHEVAT 5716

the entire world and bring Torah and Mitzvos to every place. To reach every Jew. "ואתם תלוקטו לאחד אחד".

Rabbi Lazar illustrates his point about the fatherly relationship the Rebbe had with the bochorim in those years: "Many times, when the Rebbe arrived at 770 early in the morning, he would pass the three doors of the *zal* to see which bochorim were there, and only afterwards would he enter his room.

"We knew that we should be at *seder*. It wasn't a matter of fear, for we were never 'punished'; the Rebbe never did that. But the very thought that the Rebbe would enter and we would not be there... It was like a father teaching his son how to behave, not through threats and fear but rather through showing how important these things are.

"I went into Yechidus with my mother several times. The Rebbe spoke to her in "High German"—the dialect of the language used in academia and high society in those days. My mother was very impressed by the fact that the Rebbe would speak to her in her own language, in a very formal and important language.

"What did she request from the Rebbe? Every time she would ask: What will be with Moshe? He is sitting and learning, what will be his *tachlis*, his *parnassah*? In America in those days it was unheard of to sit and learn in Yeshiva without thinking about the future, but every time the Rebbe would calm her and promise her that I would be able to make a *parnassah*, saying that the main thing is that I should sit and learn...

"In the period before my wedding, Rabbi Hodakov once called me and told me that the Rebbe would like to speak with me. I asked if I should go into *yechidus*. Rabbi Hodakov said no, suggesting that I instead stand near the door of the Rebbe's room when the Rebbe returns from Mincha.

"This is what I did, and when the Rebbe saw me he said:

'Moshe, I convinced your mother to allow you to sit and learn for another two years, but in the end you got involved in *'tzarchei tzibbur*'. If I sit and learn your mother will not be satisfied. You must sit and learn...'

"These words hit differently. The Rebbe was not a member of the *Hanhala Hayeshiva*, but the learning of every *bochur* was very important to him. The Rebbe sat and thought about me and my learning. Whenever I think of these things, tears come to my eyes..."

Another story illustrating the Rebbe's close relationship with the *bochorim*: "In those years, the benches in 770 were not very sturdy, and many times after a farbrengen a bench or two would come apart. I was very handy, and in camp I had built bunks for the campers to stay in. Rabbi Mentlick therefore approached me and politely asked whether I would be able to fix the benches.

"I couldn't refuse, so I would go down to the *Shalash* (tent-like structure) where the Rebbe would farbreng, remove my jacket and start fixing the benches.

"Once, while I was working, the curtain moved in the window to the Rebbe's room (later closed when the *zal* was expanded). I looked up and saw the Rebbe smiling down at me. The Rebbe asked, 'Why aren't you wearing a jacket?'

"The connection we felt to the Rebbe was not of a formal nature. We certainly understood the greatness of the Rebbe, but he acted towards us in a way that made us feel like he was our father."

When I Almost Fainted In Yechidus

As a *bochur* Rabbi Lazar served as a counselor, and at one point as head counselor, of camp "Agudas Yisroel", at the time

the only from summer camp in America.

In 5715, Rabbi Lazar and his friend Reb Yosef Weinbaum decided that the time had come to establish a Chabad camp to serve public school students with the goal of encouraging them to enroll in Jewish schools. “In Camp Agudah, many of the children attended public school, and many of the parents were not fundamentally opposed to the idea of sending their children to Cheder. However, they were unwilling to pay tuition at a Cheder if they could access public education for free.

“When I asked Agudas Yisroel to provide financial support in order to enable these children to transfer to *Chadorim*, they were not interested. I therefore concluded that it was imperative to found a camp that would assist these children in moving to Cheder.

“I wrote to the Rebbe about this, and the Rebbe answered that because running a camp involves a lot of *pizur hanefesh* (mental and emotional unease), I should sit and learn over the winter and then ask about this matter again.

“When summer came I once again wrote to the Rebbe, who answered that I should enlist an older person to take responsibility for the project. We drafted Rabbi Kehos Weiss a”h, and after we notified the Rebbe we were called into *yechidus*.

“We entered the Rebbe’s room, and the Rebbe received us with a serious expression, and to my great surprise he asked: “Why do we need to have a camp?” When I heard these words I nearly fainted and fell on the floor. Rabbi Weiss grabbed me and the Rebbe instructed us to leave for several minutes and to return when I felt better.

“We went outside, and I felt as if my world had collapsed. I was hoping that we would enter and receive accolades for taking initiative and guidance on how to implement the idea, and suddenly the Rebbe asks me why the whole thing is necessary...



REB MOSHE (CENTER) AS HEAD COUNSELOR IN CAMP GAN YISROEL. THIS PICTURE WAS RECENTLY FOUND IN THE ARCHIVES OF REB MEIR HARLIG

“Reb Kehos was a very calm person, and he told me: Moshe, the Rebbe simply wanted to hear from you why, based on your experience and understanding, you think that we have to make a camp.

“We went back in, and the Rebbe greeted us with a big smile and asked, ‘Do you feel better?’ The Rebbe continued: “Nu, why do we need to have a camp?”

“At this point I said, ‘Camp is the only medium to give these children *Yiddishkeit*. Even a child that learns in Cheder—when he comes home his mother ‘clarifies’ to him that what really matters is to study a profession and worldly matters. On the other hand, when a child is in an environment of *kedusha* and *yiras shomayim* 24 hours a day for several weeks, it will make an indelible impression on him.

“The Rebbe was satisfied with my response and gave his *brocha* for the success of the camp.”

The Rebbe guided the development of the camp at every step, instructing us to create a *vaad hanhala* to be led by Rabbi Shlomo Aharon Kazarnovsky, and to buy a property for the campgrounds.

The name of the camp was also chosen by the Rebbe: “When we asked the Rebbe what to call the camp, the Rebbe said that since the grounds we had purchased had previously been “Camp Israel,” and it was possible that some children would remember that, we should keep the name “Yisroel” and add the word “*Gan*”—Camp Gan Yisroel.

“This is another example of the Rebbe’s careful attention to every detail.

“Afterwards the Rebbe explained in a *sicha* how the name ‘Gan Yisroel’ symbolizes the Torah’s 53 (*Ga”n*) *Parshiyos* as well as the name of the holy Baal Shem Tov.

The Rebbe’s Visit

The Rebbe’s singular affection for the camp was fully on display when the Rebbe came to visit. This was an outstanding occurrence. Besides his camp visits, the Rebbe never left New York City throughout his *nesius*.

“One of the days before camp,” Rabbi Lazar recalls, “as we were feverishly preparing for the start of camp in the office at 770—one of the *mashbakim* approached me and asked how long it takes to get from 770 to camp. I responded that the trip generally takes about two and a half hours. Twenty minutes later he returned to me and said: “The Rebbe is leaving to camp soon, the Rebbe wants to make a *farbrengen* in camp.”

“And so it happened that we merited that the Rebbe came to make a ‘*Chanukas Habayis*’ for camp.

“The next year, we purchased a property in Swan Lake, one of the best locations in the Catskills. We opened the camp amid much fanfare and publicity. At the *Yud Beis Tammuz* *farbrengen*, held after camp had begun and we were already

there, the Rebbe said that he would continue the farbrengen in camp.

“We received a phone call informing us that the Rebbe was coming to visit camp the following Sunday. This time it was not a surprise, everyone knew about it before. On the day the Rebbe was to arrive, tens of buses and cars came to camp. The shul and the main hall were packed to full capacity...

“When the Rebbe came, I could’ve worn a hat and jacket, but I wanted the Rebbe to see an authentic picture of the way the camp ran day to day, so I chose to wear the white cap, like a camp director.

“The children, too, though they wore Shabbos clothes in honor of the Rebbe’s visit, they did not decorate the camp in a special way, so that the Rebbe could see the way the camp was ordinarily.

“After Mincha, the Rebbe requested a tour of the campgrounds. All the children went into their bunks and stood next to their beds, and the Rebbe went from room to room, speaking to several of the children. The Rebbe was like a loving father interacting with his children. The Rebbe was satisfied, seeing that everything was organized and clean, and that the atmosphere was so positive. I think that I caused the Rebbe some *nachas ruach*...

“I walked with the Rebbe and showed him every corner of the camp, including the big lake.

“The Rebbe commented on several things. For instance, when we reached the lake, the Rebbe said to install a rope at the point where the lake starts getting deep, so that young children shouldn’t swim there. When we reached the infirmary the Rebbe remarked that it was a necessity, but gave a *brocha* that there should be no need to use it, and so on.

“At the entrance of the lunchroom there was a sign reading ‘Don’t forget to tip your waiters.’ The Rebbe called over Reb Yosef Weinbaum and, taking some money from his pocket, handed it to him with the words, ‘Here’s a tip for the waiters’...

“At the end of the tour, before entering the car, the Rebbe turned towards me and said the following words: ‘*Ich hob keinmol nit forgeshtelt aza reichtum*’ [I never imagined such richness]...

“I live with these words constantly, knowing that I gave the Rebbe some *nachas ruach*. Till this day those few words propel me forward...

“He Should Give Suggestions”...

For about a year and a half, Rabbi Lazar merited to work in the *mazkirus*: “I was an older *bochur*, I had already received *semicha*, and in the mornings I used to help Reb Michael Teitelbaum a”h with the administration of Oholei Torah,



THE REBBE SPEAKS WITH REB KEHOS WEISS AS HE TOURS THE CAMPGROUNDS IN 5717. REB MOSHE CAN BE SEEN IN THE BACKGROUND DRESSED IN HIS HEAD COUNSELOR CLOTHES.

founded in those years. Rabbi Hodakov suggested I work in Merkos in the afternoons, and gave me secretarial tasks such as writing receipts, taking inventory on Seforim, answering phone calls, accepting notes and letters addressed to the Rebbe, and relaying the Rebbe’s responses.

“In the office there were two boxes stacked atop one another. One box contained letters people had written to the Rebbe, and the other contained the Rebbe’s responses. When the Rebbe wrote an answer to someone I would give the person the Rebbe’s handwritten response, and then take the note back to the *mazkirus*.

“When I was in the office and the Rebbe would call over the intercom asking whether there was anything in the box, I would bring its contents into the Rebbe’s room. The Rebbe would be sitting without his hat and *sirtuk*, wearing glasses and holding a *sefer*. I would give the Rebbe whatever he needed from the box, the Rebbe would give me whatever had to be taken out, and I would leave.

“But on those occasions I entered as an ‘employee.’ Otherwise I would enter only one other time per year, on my birthday, for *yechidus*.”

Rabbi Lazar also merited to drive the Rebbe on several occasions. “In those years car ownership was more rare, but I did have a car. Whenever Rabbi Krinsky was not around, I would drive the Rebbe from and to his house and the mikvah”.

While still working in *mazkirus*, Rabbi Lazar wished to take a more significant role in the Rebbe’s mission. He asked

Rabbi Hodakov to give him a bigger role in *mazkirus*, to which Rabbi Hodakov responded: ‘The Rebbe drafted you into this work, you should ask him.’

‘I asked the Rebbe and received a three word answer: ‘He should give suggestions’. This is what the Rebbe demands of us; that we should work at our own initiative, and not wait for the Rebbe’s instructions at every moment, to do this or not to do that. Rather, he demands that we work on our own. Although he gives us assistance, he wants us to do what we can on our own, with our own talents and capabilities.

‘Steinmetz Is Already Here?’

In the winter of 5720 Rabbi Lazar became engaged to his wife, daughter of the noted Chassidishe poet, Rabbi Tzvi Meir Steinmetz (known by his pen name ‘Tzvi Yair’).

In the letter that the couple wrote to the Rebbe before *yechidus*, they requested a *brocha* for the wedding and asked that the Rebbe honor them with *Siddur Kiddushin*. They added: “We notify the Rebbe that we are happy to accept any *shlichus* that the Rebbe gives us, of any sort and in any location, and it should be a source of *nachas* to the Rebbe”.

When he entered *yechidus*, the Rebbe said: “After Yud Shevat of this year, a ‘new seder’ has begun, and I no longer serve as a *mesader kiddushin*”...

Rabbi Lazar’s mother tried to push the Rebbe, citing the great dedication of her son in *Hafatzas Hamayanos*, and the Rebbe commented: “Physically I will not be there, but I will be there”.

“This was a shock for us. We were the second couple for which the Rebbe declined to be *mesader kiddushin*. We couldn’t bear it. But the Rebbe said that he would be there... In that period the Rebbe even wrote to me ‘Siddur Kiddushin belongs to the Kallah’s side, and he should not get too involved in it. Obviously he should go to the wedding and the *chuppah* etc. with true *simcha* and it should be at an auspicious time’.

“The wedding was held in Adar. The Rebbe was certainly present, though not physically. That summer, my wife and I traveled to the camp that I ran. Suddenly we received a phone call informing us that the Rebbe would once again come for a visit. As mentioned, the Rebbe visited the camp in 5716 and 5717 but in 5718 and 5719 the Rebbe had not come. He even told someone that he had yet to make up for the time he lost traveling to camp.

“What happened suddenly that the Rebbe chose to once again visit camp? The Rebbe said that it was in connection with the 200th anniversary of the Baal Shem Tov’s *histalkus*. In addition to that, we feel that the Rebbe wanted to ‘make up



REB MOSHE CAN BE SEEN NEAR THE REBBE AT THE FARBRENGEN DURING THE REBBE’S FINAL VISIT TO GAN YISROEL IN 5720

with us’ for not being *mesader kiddushin* (if someone doesn’t want to accept this, it’s okay with me). The Rebbe saw how disappointed we were from his lack of physical participation in our wedding, and made us happy by coming to visit the camp.

Shlichus

“While we were at camp we did not receive any directive to go out on *shlichus*, despite writing to the Rebbe about it before our wedding. We knew and felt that *shlichus* is what the Rebbe wanted! We were one with the Rebbe, with the same goals and intentions. The Rebbe to us was not just a *tzaddik* from whom we got *brachos* and *hashpa’aos*, but our father! And our father wished that we go far out and transform the world into a *dirah* for Hashem—so we go!

“After our wedding, Rabbi Gershon Mendel Garelik, who had gone on *shlichus* to Milan two years prior, wanted us to come assist him. He asked the Rebbe about this, and the Rebbe said that he should suggest it to us. When we received the suggestion we once again asked the Rebbe about it. The Rebbe told us that if there were no difficulties in terms of language—we should go *b’hatzlacha*.

“And so, in Cheshvan of 5721 we departed for Milan.

“We initially intended to go for two years and then return. However, when the time came, we asked the Rebbe if we could return, being that my wife was having a hard time in Milan. The Rebbe wrote to us ‘*Kol haschalos kashos*’ (all beginnings are difficult), and we understood that our *shlichus* was for life.

“A year after we left on *shlichus* we asked the Rebbe for permission to visit him, but we immediately received a response saying that the custom is that the Rebbe allows *Shluchim* to visit only once every two years.



TWO TELEGRAMS THE REBBE SENT TO REB MOSHE, WITH HIS HASKAMA AND BRACHA FOR REB MOSHE'S TRIP TO THE REBBE, TISHREI 5723

“Therefore, we first traveled to the Rebbe for Tishrei 5723. We got to New York on the night of Erev Rosh Hashanah, when the Rebbe held a farbrengen. The hour was late, and we hurried with my father-in-law—who had picked us up from the airport—to 770, to be at least at the farbrengen’s end.

“Before we arrived the Rebbe asked ‘Steinmetz is already here?’ and the Rebbe went on and asked: ‘Lazar is also not here yet?, ‘Do we know what happened to them?’

“The Rebbe said another sicha and afterwards asked again: ‘He’s still not here?’

“At the end of the farbrengen the Rebbe said another sicha and the farbrengen ended. We felt that the Rebbe gave us all his love and life. We felt like we were being given everything”...

The loving and paternal attention from the Rebbe was expressed throughout the years:

“In those years we had not yet established proper *mosdos chinuch* for our children, and when they got a little older we would send them out of the country. When our daughter turned 10, we wanted to send her to New York, where we had family. But when we asked the Rebbe about it in *yechidus* the Rebbe told us to send her to Paris, since that is much closer to Milan. The Rebbe didn’t only give us *brachos*, but also paid attention to the specific problems and questions we brought to him, addressing each detail. In this case, the Rebbe was sensitive to the feelings of a girl of 10, concerned that she should be as close as possible to home, so that if she didn’t feel good she could come home, and if a problem arises, we could come to her”...

Rabbi and Mrs. Lazar have served on shlichus in Milan for more than six decades now, *l’rech yomim v’shonim tovs*.

In these years Rabbi Lazar led the activities of Chabad of Milan, under Rabbi Gershon Mendel Garelik who served as Rov. Rabbi Lazar was—at the Rebbe’s direction—appointed as the Rov of the Persian community in the city, and until recently, when a house was purchased for him near the shul, he would spend two hours every Shabbos walking to shul. Rabbi Lazar serves as the Rabbi for several other shuls in the city; he works with the youth and gives them shiurim; he also gives shiurim and educational guidance at the girls seminary in the city. Rabbi Lazar built mikvaos, ran the Gan Yisroel camp, and is active in everything related to spreading Yiddishkeit and Chassidus.

Conclusion

“I was educated by true Chassidim, who passed on the chinuch they received from the Chassidim before them. Those Chassidim taught not just by words but by example.

“As I mentioned, I merited to drive the Rebbe several times. Many times I would open the door to 770 for him. The Rebbe would always say ‘Thank you’.

“In the days when I was a counselor in Agudah, I worked with someone who was not a Chabad Chossid. One time he told me: ‘Moshe, I have no desire to do anything for Chassidus, but for the Rebbe—I will roll up my sleeves’. When I asked him why, he told me that he lived in the same building as the Rebbe (an apartment building at 341 New York Avenue). ‘Every time I entered the building and the Rebbe went in or exited before me, he would hold the door till I went in’...

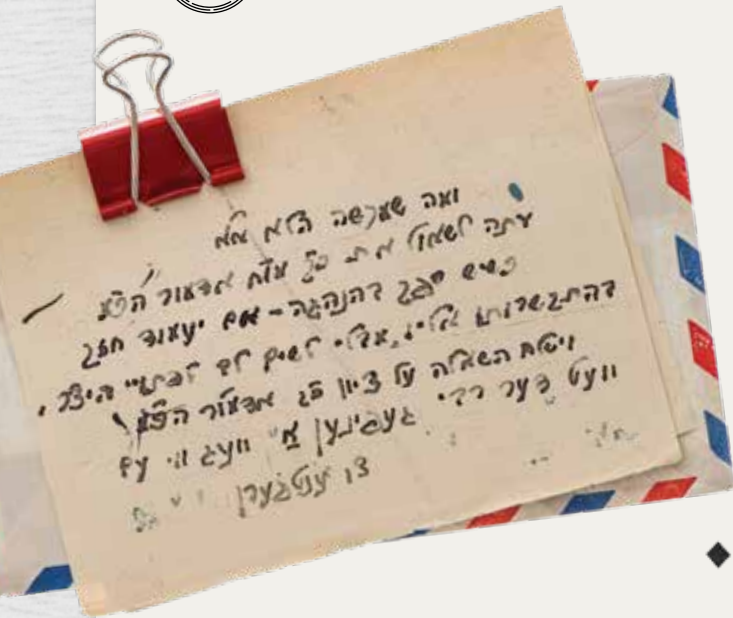
“This is the chinuch we received from the Rebbe. Through his actions the Rebbe taught us to behave carefully in every regard. The Rebbe didn’t merely tell us what to do, he showed us a *dugmah chaya*. One can learn from every detail of the Rebbe’s behavior.

“Throughout all our years on shlichus,” Rabbi Lazar concludes, “although we were not in close physical proximity to the Rebbe, I felt that the Rebbe was with me. As I mentioned, the Rebbe told us that he would be at our wedding, despite not being *mesader kiddushin*. From then until today, I feel that the Rebbe is with me. Just as at my wedding the Rebbe was with me although I didn’t see him, so too throughout my life. The Rebbe said ‘I will be there’, and he indeed was and is with us.” **T**

1. Much of the material in this article previously appeared in the Kfar Chabad magazine, issue #1867.



Story



לזכות
 הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' יששכר
 שלמה שיחי' בן ח'י פייגל
 טייכטל
 לרגל יום הולדתו לאורך
 ימים ושנים טובות

נדפס ע"י
 הרה"ת ר' דוד וזוגתו מרת פערת גאלדא ומשפחתם שיחיו
 טייכטל
 שמפיין אילינוי

דער רבי וועט געפינען אַ וועג...

WRITTEN BY: RABBI LEVI GREENBERG

The Perfect Space



AS TOLD BY
RABBI SHIMON SUSSKIND
 (Vernon Hills, Illinois)

We moved out on shlichus Yud Daled Kislev 5771. After the first Chanukah event in our rented home, we realized there were many young families in the area and we started a Jewish Kid's Club. It attracted so many children that after Pesach we decided to try and open a Hebrew School the next school year. In order to attract local families we felt it was important to operate the Hebrew School in a commercial space, but we simply did not have the financial resources needed for another rental.

One of our routine peulos at the time was BLT - Bagel, Lox, and Torah/Tefillin. Men would come over one Sunday every month to wrap Tefillin, eat kosher breakfast, and learn some Torah. It was Sunday, Pesach Sheini, and after setting up BLT I had some extra time and decided to write a tzetel to the Rebbe about our plans to open a Hebrew School. I wrote that we were determined to host it in a commercial space despite our financial limitations and asked for a bracha that we should find the right space,



“לשם ולתפארת”, either for free or at a very low price.

Approximately a dozen men attended that particular BLT, all of whom were regulars except for a newcomer named Alex who brought a friend. After everyone left Alex stayed behind and shared that he had kidney failure and had been on dialysis for almost two years. He desperately needed a kidney transplant but it seemed very unlikely that a donor would be found. It was clear that his chances of living much longer were slim.

As a brand new shliach I was caught off guard but Baruch Hashem I was able to share with him a clear message of bitachon in Hashem that all would turn out for the best. Toward the end of our conversation I offered to put on Tefillin with him, and he agreed.

We exchanged phone numbers and, as he turned to leave, Alex said, “Rabbi, we just completed construction of a new Montessori preschool building about five-minutes from here. It’s a state-of-the-art facility, with an indoor and outdoor playground and the latest technology and toys. It can handle 160 children and there are currently only 20 children enrolled. Would you by any chance have any need for this type of property?”

I couldn’t believe my ears!

Right then and there we drove to the building and toured the premises. Alex showed me a section with

two large classrooms and a separate entrance for us to use as we wished: “Rabbi, you can use this for free.”

With such an amazing venue we were able to sign up 40 children for that first year of Hebrew School and for six years we used the facility for many of our programs, with tremendous success.

Since that first meeting on Pesach Sheini, Alex and I remained in touch, and we would meet every week to wrap Tefillin. Two months after we met, he called me with the news that a kidney donor had been miraculously found. He asked me to come to the hospital to wrap Tefillin with him before the surgery.

The surgery was a success and the next day he wrapped Tefillin again to thank Hashem for the miracle. Alex has been wrapping Tefillin every day since.

During the next Kinus Hashluchim, Alex joined me at the Ohel to thank the Rebbe and he has continued to visit.

YOUR STORY

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נדפס ע"י ולזכות
הרה"ת ר' שרגא פייוול וזוגתו
מרת דבורה לאה ומשפחתם
שיחיו
מאן



YUD TES KISLEV FARBRENGEN

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE
FARBRENGEN OF 19 KISLEV 5745

Compiled By: Rabbi Shabi Soffer

YOSSI MELAMED VIA JEM 23958

The Rebbe speaks on the concept of leaving our own personal galus, and how that brings the world to the universal state of geulah. Other topics discussed were *Sheva Mitzvos Benei Noach*, the day's *shiur* Rambam, and *siyum haShas*.



The Rebbe recites the Maamar "Pada Beshalom".





YOSSI MELAMED VIA JEM T2749



YOSSI MELAMED VIA JEM 23981

The Rebbe strongly encourages the singing of *Sheyiboneh Beis Hamikdash*.



YOSSI MELAMED VIA JEM 23982



YOSSI MELAMED VIA JEM127753



YOSSI MELAMED VIA JEM127753

The Rebbe hands dollars for the tankist'n
to distribute among the crowd.

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.

“We have a “Heilige Tatte”!”

The Tammuz issue of Derher featured a book review on *Reshimas Hamaaser*, outlining the arrest and liberation of the Frierdiker Rebbe from Soviet prison in 5687.

I would like to share two points in this regard:

The article states that the first account of the arrest and liberation, and the only one printed during the Frierdiker Rebbe's *nesius*, was an anonymously printed booklet entitled “*Di Yisurin Fun Lubavitch'n Rebbe'n*” I want to point out that the book “*Sefer, Sofer Vsipur*” by Rabbi Yehoshuah Mondshein documents who the author is.

The book contains a facsimile of a letter Rabbi Mondshein had written to Rabbi Avrohom Godin, asking if he knew the authorship of the booklet printed in Riga in the 1930s.

Rabbi Godin was a Chabad chossid who lived in Riga at the time. In his youth, he was a student of Rabbi Hodokov, later the Rebbe's chief *mazkir*. He served as secretary to Rabbi Mordechai Dubin, a member of the Latvian Parliament and a major player in bringing about the Frierdiker Rebbe's release. For his efforts in spreading Yiddishkeit, he was imprisoned by the Soviets for many years. When he was finally released, he moved to Eretz Yisroel and served as secretary of Tzach.

Rabbi Godin replied to Rabbi Mondshein's inquiry that the author of the booklet was

Jewish-Latvian newspaper reporter Mr. Elimelech Yesalson, who wrote it based on conversations he had with Rashag, the Frierdiker Rebbe's son-in-law.

Interestingly, in the *Yisurim* booklet, many individuals directly involved with the rescue efforts in Russia are not named. At the time of the booklet's publication they were still in the Soviet Union and would be in grave danger if their roles were publicized.

2) The book review documented how in *Reshimas Hamaaser* the Frierdiker Rebbe shares some of his personal “*oisios hamachshova*”, innermost thoughts and reflections.

It is important to note that in the *sicha* of Lag Baomer 5710, the Rebbe taught a powerful lesson about the importance of *tziyur pnei harav* (bringing to mind the face of the Rebbe) from one of these “*oisios hamachshova*”. This is especially pertinent in our present situation after Gimmel Tammuz. The Rebbe clarified that this should be done even by people who were not *zoche* to ever see the (Frierdiker) Rebbe and who can picture him with the aid of a photo.

With regard to our Rebbe, it is made easier by the tens of thousands of photos taken throughout his *nesius*, and even more with hundreds of videos of *farbrengens*, *tefillos*, *dollars* and many other special occasions.

The following is the Rebbe's *sicha* from Lag Baomer 5710 (translation from Proceeding

Together vol. 1 by Sichos In English):

“In his own record of his imprisonment in 5627 [1927], the Rebbe [Rayatz] describes how thoughts about his family darkened his spirits, and concludes with these words: “My mind lit up as with a lightning flash: Enough of those thoughts! [...] After all, everything proceeds from G-d [...]. They are dependent on me, and I am dependent on Him-Who-spoke-and-the-world-came-into-being [...]. At that moment I ascended to heavenly heights with lofty thoughts [...]. And by virtue of the merit of our holy forebears,... (- The continuation of this thought is spelled out in thought-letters.)”

Later in the same document the Rebbe [Rayatz] writes similarly: “I am not permitted to think such thoughts that lower my spirits [...]. The place and the time demand [...] the courageous heart and high spirits [...] that spring from meditation [...] upon a mental picture of the holy face of my revered father, [the Rebbe Rashab,] whose soul is in Eden. (- The continuation of this thought, too, is spelled out in thought-letters.) Father, saintly father!”

In a word, here the Rebbe [Rayatz] is giving advice: When one finds himself imprisoned (so to speak) in low spirits, the solution is to bind oneself with the Rebbe by picturing his countenance.

From time to time, in his mind’s eye, every individual should picture the Rebbe’s holy face and recall teachings that he heard from his lips. (Those who never saw the Rebbe can likewise envisage his appearance by means of a photograph, and can study his teachings.)

We need to know that we have a “holy father,” and so, there is no cause to worry.

Since the Rebbe has promised us that the Nesi'im of the Jewish people “are not separated from the flock whose shepherd they have been,” the above attitude of certain trust will enable us better to absorb the blessings that come from the Rebbe in all the spiritual and material things that are needed, including children, health, and ample sustenance.”

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Photo of the Rebbe leaving for the Ohel

Thank you for your very interesting monthly magazine. I would like to share an interesting point about a picture printed in the Moments section of the Elul Derher. It was printed a picture of the Rebbe as he got into the car outside 770 to go to the Ohel on Erev Rosh Hashanah, 29 Elul, 5736 and receiving Reb Eliyahu Simpsons Pan.

At that time the Rebbe was holding in his hand a *kuntres* of the Rebbe Rashab’s *maamorim* from 5659 (“Ranat”), as was the Rebbe’s custom to bring new Seforim or Kuntreisim to the Ohel. However when Reb Eliyahu Simpson gave his Pan, the Rebbe handed Rabbi Simpson (who in his youth had served as a chozer of the Rebbe Rashab) that Kuntres (which it seemed was supposed to go to the Ohel). That was the last Erev Rosh Hashanah of Reb Eliyahu’s life, as he passed away just a few months later on the fifth night of Chanukah 5737.

Hatzlacha Rabba!

Eli Rosenfeld

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