

Derher

A Chassidisher

א חסידישער דערהער

One More
Front

TRANSLATING CHASSIDUS

Rabban
Shel
Yisroel

RASHI

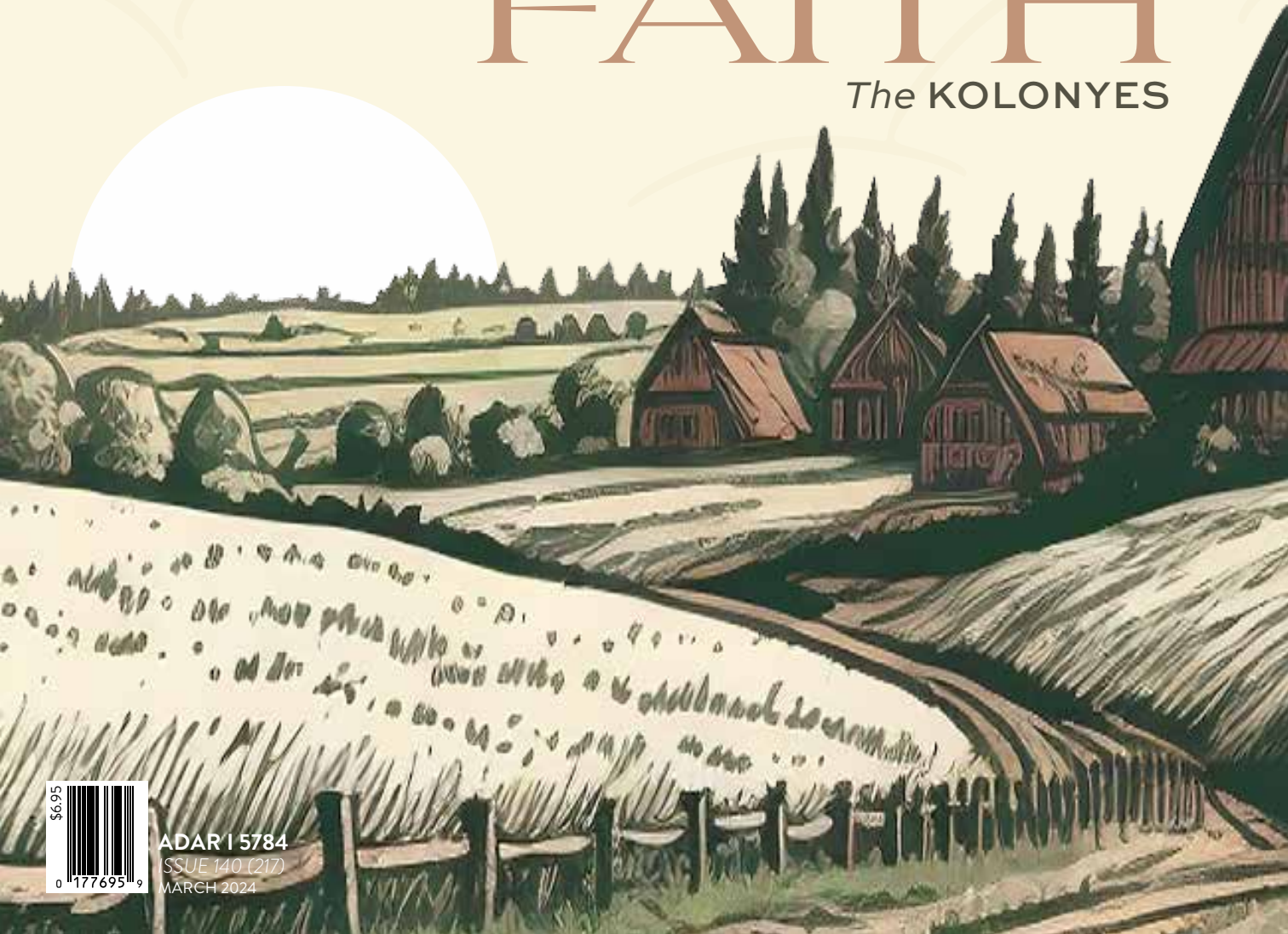
FIELDS OF

FAITH

The KOLONYES



ADAR I 5784
ISSUE 140 (217)
MARCH 2024



In This Issue

Adar I 5784 / Issue 140 (217)



14

One More Front
Translating Chassidus



24

Rabban Shel Yisroel
Rashi



40

Fields of Faith
The Kolonyes

- 4 **A Word on the Parsha**
Dvar Malchus
- 7 **Go Big!**
Ksav Yad Kodesh
- 8 **Shevat - Adar I 5744**
Leben Mitten Rebbe'n

- 33 **A Sudden Urge**
for Tefillin
Stories of the Rebbe
- 34 **Gmach Shomrei**
Shabbos
Treasures
- 37 **Tests in Yeshivos**
Practical Hora'os

- 51 **As We Heard Them**
Der Rebbe Vet Gefinen a Veg
- 54 **A Personal Moment**
With A Personal Pushka
Moments
- 60 **Derher Letters**



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This magazine
has been made possible

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

ולע"נ הרבנית חוה בת החסיד
ר' אלימלך ע"ה
שלוחה של כ"ק אדמו"ר ומנהלת
של מחנה אמונה
נלב"ע ז' אדר ראשון ה'תשפ"ב
ת"נ צ"ב'ה

The month of Adar Rishon includes the Yom Tov of Purim Katan—a significant day for us as Chassidim.

The Rebbe was once asked by a Chassidishe Rebbe from Be'er Sheva, what good regards could he bring back to the Lubavitchers in his town? The Rebbe replied:

As we approach Purim Katan, we are reminded of the story of the Frierdiker Rebbe from Purim Katan, 5687. The Frierdiker Rebbe had traveled to Moscow for communal affairs. Although he knew very well that the KGB was following his every move, keeping a watchful eye on each of his steps, he nonetheless chose to say a *ma'amar* on the *possuk* “*Ve’Kibel HaYehudim...*” He called upon everyone to remain strong in keeping Torah and Mitzvos, and specifically to make sure that their children receive a proper Jewish education. The Frierdiker Rebbe spoke bravely and fearlessly, knowing full well that there were spies in the crowd who would report everything he said to the government. Indeed, when the Frierdiker Rebbe was arrested a few months later, his interrogators mentioned the episode of Purim Katan.

The Rebbe concluded, “If you wish to bring anyone some words of encouragement (“*Ah Gut vort*”) the best words are those mentioned above...”¹

In our generation, the Rebbe delivered and distributed

a special *ma'amar* based on the above *ma'amar* from the Frierdiker Rebbe, beginning with the *possuk*, *Ve’Ata Tetzaveh*, explaining that Moshe Rabbeinu in his time, and similarly the Moshe Rabbeinu in each generation, connect the Jewish people with Hashem, strengthening the *emunah* within each and every person’s *neshama*.

The Rebbe often spoke about the *ma'amar* and encouraged Chassidim to learn the *ma'amar* from 5687 and apply its lessons, especially around Purim Katan.

On Shabbos Parshas Tetzaveh 5749, the Rebbe said:

“Standing now on Shabbos Parshas V’Ata Tetzaveh, Erev Purim Katan, it is a most opportune time to strengthen ourselves in our *emunah* and *mesiras nefesh* (our intrinsic bond with Hashem), as it manifests in daily practice of Torah and mitzvos.

“Most importantly, we should strengthen our study of *pnimius haTorah*...especially the Torah of the [Frierdiker] Rebbe, the extension of Moshe Rabbeinu in our generation, who facilitates this connection to Hashem in our time, by feeding and nurturing our *emunah* and *mesiras nefesh*, allowing us to internalize these traits. We can assist this process through *hiskashrus*, connecting with the leader, the Moshe of the generation, especially by learning his Torah.

“Finding ourselves on Erev Purim Katan everyone should be reminded and encouraged to study the *ma'amar* of Vekibel Hayehudim 5687 (פרז"ת), where the idea of ‘*Ve’Ata Tetzaveh*’ is explained at length; Moshe Rabbeinu’s effort to nurture the *emunah* of the Jewish people, especially during the time of *galus*... The added push of *mesiras nefesh* in these times brings out the essence of the *neshama*, allowing it to shine...”²

Ultimately, this *mesiras nefesh* for Torah and mitzvos, whether in easier times or harder, is what brings the *geulah*, may it be *teikef umiyad Mamosh!*

The Editors
טו בשבט ה'תשפ"ד

1. Hisvaaduyos 5744, vol. 2, p. 853.

2. 15 Tammuz 5745; Hisvaaduyos 5745, vol. 4, p. 2516.



דעם רבינ'ס א ווארט

A Word on the Parsha

Compiled By:
Rabbi Mendel Vogel

משפטים

כִּי תִקְנֶה עֶבֶד עִבְרִי שֵׁשׁ שָׁנִים יַעֲבֹד
וּבְשִׁבְעַת יָצֵא לְחֶפְשִׁי הֵנָּה: (כא, ב)

Should you buy a Hebrew slave, he shall work
[for] six years, and in the seventh [year], he
shall go out to freedom without charge.

Why is *eved ivri* the first topic to be discussed after *mattan Torah*? It is, after all, a completely negative phenomenon (i.e. a thief who is unable to repay what he stole and therefore sells himself as a slave)? Isn't this contrary to the principle of not beginning on a negative note (Bava Basra 14b)?

If we dig deeper, though, we'll realize that it is *precisely* at this point in time—immediately following *mattan Torah*—that the need arises to clarify the laws of one who is caught stealing:

As long as *mattan Torah* lasted, *Elokus* was experienced as a visible and tangible reality in this world. In such circumstances, it was not even possible to go against the will of Hashem. But after *mattan Torah*, when the revelations were not apparent and *Elokus* was no longer perceived in a tangible way, the potential arose for a person to think that Hashem is not watching. This, in turn, could lead to someone going against the will of Hashem, *chas v'shalom*.

This is the meaning of “stealing” in spiritual terms: Just as a thief carries out his deeds stealthily and in the dark, hoping

that no one will catch him in the act, so too, a person who does an *aveira* does so based on the mistaken assumption that Hashem is not watching.

This is why the *Mishpatim* open with *halachos* connected to a thief: Now that the possibility of becoming a “thief” arises, the need to provide the *tikkun* (עברי) —the rectification—for such behavior arises as well. The *posuk* provides us with the *tikkun* in the following words: “שש שנים יעבד ובשביעית יצא לחפשי חינו” —“he shall work [for] six years, and in the seventh [year], he shall go out to freedom without charge”. The remedy for the “thief” comes about through the *avoda* of Teshuva, and by refining and uplifting oneself together with one's surroundings. When this work is completed, one is guaranteed that he will be granted true freedom from his *yetzer hara*.

Takeaway:

“Whoever buys a Jewish servant, it is as if he bought for himself a master” (*Kiddushin* 20a): We are *avodim* of Hashem, and Hashem needs to—so to speak—listen to what we say. Yidden have already declared that “כל הקיצין” —the time for *galus* is up—and there is no more reason to wait. The time has come for *Elokus* to be revealed openly, with the coming of *Moshiach tzidkeinu*.

(Likkutei Sichos vol. 2, p. 673; *Toras Men-
achem* vol. 30, p. 112; *ibid.* vol. 39, p. 109)

תרומה

וזאת התרומה אשר תקחו מאתם זהב וכסף ונחשת: (כח, ג)

And this is the offering that you shall take from them: gold, silver, and copper...

The Beis Hamikdash functioned in accordance with the principle of "אין עניות במקום עשירות"; "there is no poverty in a place of riches" (Tamid 29a); meaning that all activities which took place in the Beis Hamikdash—no matter how small—were done in the most lavish way possible. Even the seemingly ordinary task of giving water to the animals used for daily *korbanos* (as preparation for their *shechita*) was done using a gold cup! Why, then, was silver and copper used in the building of the *mishkan*—shouldn't it have been built entirely from gold?

The answer to this question lies in the spiritual significance of these three metals—gold, silver and copper: We find that Chazal view gold and silver as each having an advantage over the other. The superiority of gold is due to its preciousness and greater value. Silver, on the other hand, has the advantage of being the mainstream form of currency used, and therefore—practically speaking—more useful.

Copper lacks both of these qualities—it is even less valuable than silver, and less commonly used as a medium of exchange.

These three metals symbolize three states in *avodas Hashem*: Gold represents the *baal teshuva* whose *avoda* is on a higher plane than that of a *tzaddik* (just as gold is more valuable than silver). Silver represents the *avoda* of the *tzaddik*, which—though not as lofty as that of the *baal teshuva*—is the primary *avoda* which Hashem intended for the world (just as silver is the primary form of currency). Copper represents the *rasha*, someone who has neither of the above mentioned qualities.

We can now understand what the Torah is teaching us by instructing *Yidden* to use *all* three materials in the *mishkan*: The task of establishing a *mishkan*—transforming materiality into a dwelling for the *Shechina*—was given to every single type of *Yid*, including those who have not yet done *teshuva*—the "copper" group. They too have a part to play in building the *mishkan* and bringing Moshiach.

Takeaway:

1. Those who consider themselves to be in the "gold" or "silver" category need to understand that the only way they can accomplish "ושכנתי בתוכם" is by connecting and uniting with the "copper" group, and not make the

mistake of staying separate. From gold and silver alone the *mishkan* can't be built; copper is crucial as well.

2. Those who consider themselves to be "copper" may feel dejected and think: "Who am I to participate in the building of the *mishkan*?" They need to understand that they are a vital component in the *mishkan*, and, in a way, even more so than the gold and silver (e.g., we find that the supports for the entire *mishkan* were made solely of copper).

(Likkutei Sichos vol. 6, p. 152)

תצוה

פַּעֲמֹן זָהָב וְרִמּוֹן פַּעֲמֹן זָהָב עַל-שׁוּלֵי הַמְּעִיל
סָבִיב: וְהָיָה עַל-אַהֲרֹן לְשֵׁרֶת וּנְשָׁמַע קוֹלוֹ בְּבָאוֹ אֶל-
הַקֹּדֶשׁ לִפְנֵי ה' וּבְצֵאתוֹ וְלֹא יָמוּת: (כח, לד-לה)

A golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate, on the bottom hem of the robe, all around. It shall be on Aharon when he performs the service, and its sound shall be heard when he enters the Holy before Hashem and when he leaves, so that he will not die.

Why was it important for the Kohen Gadol's entry into the *kodesh* to be accompanied by sounds? Furthermore, the *possuk* clearly states, "לא ברעש ה'"—Hashem is not to be found in the noise. The *Shechina* is *davka* revealed in a "קול דממה"; "a small, still, sound". If so, the Kohen Gadol should have made his entry with the *least* amount of noise possible?!

The explanation is as follows: The idea that Hashem reveals himself specifically in silence—as opposed to commotion—is referring to a lofty level of G-dly revelation; the *giluy* of "שם הוי". *Giluyim* associated with "שם אלוקים", however, are manifested—not in silence—but with fanfare.

The lesson in *avodas Hashem*: The level of "קול דממה דקה" is attributed to someone who has reached a place of total *bittul* before Hashem. His *avoda* extends all the way to "שם הוי", which, as mentioned previously, is manifested specifically in a "still, small sound".

However, the *avoda* for someone who has not yet achieved this kind of *bittul*, and thus still struggles with negative forces and his own *yeshus*, is different; it extends only as high as "שם" "אלוקים". His *avoda*, therefore, is "ברעש", a "stormy" *avoda*; like someone fleeing from danger.

The Kohen Gadol represents the entirety of *klal Yisroel*; both those on the loftier level, as well as those on the 'bottom of the robe'; "שולי המעיל"; whose *avoda* is performed with "noise". Therefore, the Kohen Gadol entered the *kodesh* (1.)

accompanied by noise, which (2.) emanated from the hem of his robe.

Takeaway:

1. Being that we are living in the final moments of *galus* which are referred to as עקבתא דמשיחא (“the bottom hem of the robe”), our *avoda* of bringing *Yidden* closer to Hashem (“to the *kodesh*”) needs to be with “bells”—with a *shturem*! This includes going out to the streets and calling out for *Yidden* to put on Tefillin, put up *mezuzos*, give *tzedakah*, etc.—something that was not done in previous generations.

2. The way to combat the “קול המונה של רומי”—the “commotion” created by the secular and material world—is by making a “commotion” of *kedusha*, specifically in those places where the “noise” of the material world is loud.

(Likkutei Sichos vol. 16, p. 337)

כי תשא

מִחֲנִי נָא מִסִּפְרְךָ אֲשֶׁר כָּתַבְתָּ (לִּבִּי, לֵב)

...Erase me now from Your book,
which You have written.

Rashi elaborates on these words and says that Moshe’s request to not be mentioned in the Torah was in order “that they not say about me that I was unworthy to beg mercy for them [Bnei Yisroel].”

One wonders: How is it possible that at such a fateful time—when the future of the *Yidden* hangs in the balance and Moshe is begging Hashem for their survival—Moshe is thinking about his personal honor?

The truth is that Moshe was not worried for his own honor, but rather for the future of Bnei Yisroel: If, *chas v’shalom*, Hashem would not forgive the *Yidden* for the *chet ha’egel* and Moshe’s name remained in the Torah, it might be interpreted incorrectly. People might assume Moshe was unwilling to forfeit the *zechus* of being mentioned in the Torah in exchange for the survival of *Yidden*, and that this unwillingness then made him unworthy of actually saving them. As a result of this misunderstanding, future generations might learn to behave in such a way as well—to prioritize their own welfare over that of Bnei Yisroel.

This, according to Rashi, is why Moshe was prepared to be *moser nefesh* on behalf of the *Yidden*; in order to bestow on

all future generations the strength and ability to have *mesiras nefesh* for a fellow Jew.

Takeaway: It is not enough to have Ahavas Yisroel for every single *Yid*. One must have *mesiras nefesh* for the sake of every single *Yid*, a *mesiras nefesh* which must be expressed in “אוהב את הבריות ומקרבן לתורה”; to bring them closer to Hashem and His Torah.

(Likkutei Sichos vol. 21, p. 175)

ויקהל

וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל-כָּל-עַדְת בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר זֶה הַדְּבָר
אֲשֶׁר-צִוָּה ה' לֵאמֹר. קַחוּ מֵאֵתְכֶם תְּרוּמָה לַיהוָה (לֵב, ד-ה)

And Moshe spoke to the entire community of the children of Israel, saying: “This is the word that the Lord has commanded to say: ‘Take from yourselves an offering for Hashem...’”

According to the Ramban, the mitzvah to make the Mishkan was given to Moshe earlier, before the *chet ha’egel*. It was on the day after Moshe descended from the mountain—after the *Yidden* were forgiven—when he relayed the mitzvah to the *Yidden*. This means that the mitzvah to build the Mishkan remained in effect throughout the time of the *chet ha’egel*!

One can derive an incredible lesson from this:

A person might think that in order to build a Mishkan—to transform the physical world into a dwelling place for Hashem—they must first do complete *teshuva* for all their *aveiros* and receive Hashem’s forgiveness. Until then, though, they cannot be involved in building the Mishkan.

The Torah is teaching us that this is incorrect, as we see clearly from the fact that the *mitzva* of “ועשו לי מקדש” remained fully intact during the very moments in which the *chet ha’egel* took place. Even one who has not yet done *teshuva* needs to help build the Mishkan, and that in itself will eventually put him on the proper path.

Takeaway: The *aron* contained within it the second set of *luchos*, as well as the broken pieces of the first *luchos*; representing the state of *yidden* following the *chet ha’egel*. This serves as a message for us that every single *Yid* has a place in the Mishkan and is enjoined to do their part in making this world a *dira lo yisborech*.

(Likkutei Sichos vol. 6, p. 153)



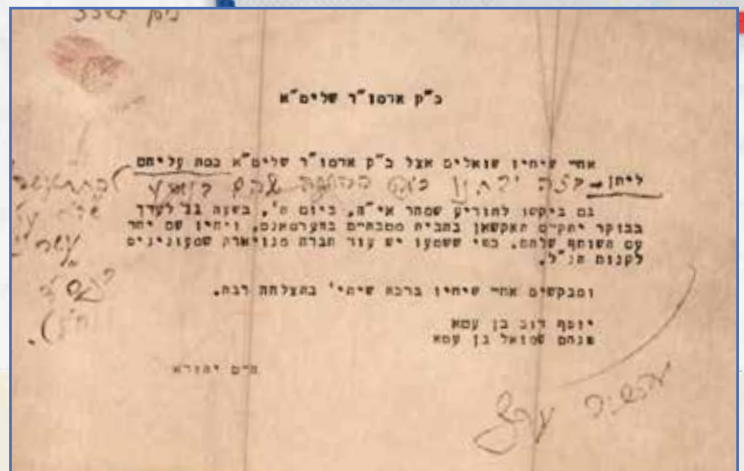
כתב יד קודש

לזכות המערכת והצוות של
א חסידישער דערהער שיחיו ימלא
ה' כל משאלות לבם לטובה ולברכה
ולהצלחה מרובה למעלה מן המשוער,
ולהוסיף נח"ר לכ"ק אדמו"ר נשיא דורנו

נדפס ע"י
הרה"ת ר' יוסף יצחק וזוגתו מרת
שטערנא שרה ומשפחתם שיחיו
לו

GO BIG!

The following is the Rebbe's response
to his mazkir, Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky,
on his question: "My brothers are
asking, how much should they give
[towards this tzedakah cause]?"



The Rebbe writes:

— בזה יבחנו כמה ההשגה שלהם בנוגע לה"תתעשר" שבא ע"י "עשר" כפס"ד
חז"ל.

Let this discern how [expansive] their mindset is when it
comes to "תתעשר"—becoming wealthy" which happens as a result
of "עשר"—giving a tenth," [to tzedakah], as per the ruling of
Chazal.¹

In the next section of the letter, Rabbi Krinsky wrote that the
brothers were holding an auction to sell their packing house and
asked for the Rebbe's bracha. The Rebbe made a mark pointing
towards these words and responded:

אזכיר עהצ [=על הציון]

I will mention this at the Ohel.²

1. Shabbos 119a. I.e. the Rebbe would not specify an amount, but the more they
would decide to give, the greater the blessing they would receive in return.

2. Teshura Krinsky-Stroh 5783.



A TANYA IN EVERY COMMUNITY! (PART 2)

SHEVAT / ADAR RISHON 5744

We continue from last month, Shevat 5744, into Adar Rishon 5744. One theme throughout these weeks was the Rebbe's call to print Tanyas in as many cities as possible.

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

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

Shabbos Parshas Yisro, 17 Shevat

During today's farbrengen, the Rebbe emphasized the importance of putting the energy of Yud Shevat into action. The ability to do this comes from Matan Torah which we read about in this week's parsha, which granted us the ability to elevate the mundane.

Later, the Rebbe further explained a Rashi from last week and noted that this Rashi was addressed by some of last week's listeners, who submitted their proposed answers in the *Kovtzim*. While some of the proposed solutions do align with "*Pshat*," they were written in a long-winded and scholarly fashion, incorporating many sources. Rashi should be understandable to a "5-year-old who's learning Chumash," allowing them to understand *pshat* quickly before going back to play.

After one of the *sichos*, the Rebbe turned to a child, Mendel Kaplan (the son of Rabbi Leibel Kaplan from Tzfas,) and instructed him to say L'chaim. (Mendel had written an answer to one of the Rebbe's questions on Rashi the previous week.)

Sunday 18 Shevat

Today, a number of questions on Rashi from the Shabbos farbrengen were brought to the Rebbe, and the Rebbe replied to each one that they should send their questions to the *Kovtzim*.

Thursday, 22 Shevat

Today after Krias Hatorah in the small zal, as the Rebbe was returning to his place, an individual approached him and said that he was in *yechidus* nine years ago. The Rebbe had told him to spread Yiddishkeit and light up his city (S. Diego). The Rebbe smiled and replied, "with much success."

After the Rebbe finished reciting Tehillim, he turned to the man and told him: (in English,) "Greetings to all the Jews in your city!"

After Mincha, the Rebbe wished a group of people who were traveling a safe trip and to share good news.

In the group was Rabbi Dovid Hollander who was traveling to Eretz Yisroel. The Rebbe asked him with a smile how he was doing and he walked with the Rebbe into *Gan Eden Hatachton*, where they stood and

conversed for almost thirty minutes.

When he emerged, Rabbi Hollander shared that the issue of *Mihu Yehudi* was discussed in connection with his upcoming trip to Eretz Yisroel. The Rebbe noted that a joint conference of Reform, Conservative, and Orthodox "Rabbis" had been announced today. This gathering, which blurs all boundaries, is totally against Halacha. The Rebbe addressed this with intensity and asked him to address this tragic issue in the places he was to visit in Eretz Yisroel.

Shabbos Parshas Mishpatim, 24 Shevat

Today there was a farbrengen for Shabbos Mevarchim.

In the second *sicha*, the Rebbe explained that there is significance to today's date, Chof-Daled Shevat, as well, saying that there is no need to search for what's special about Chof-Daled Shevat, as it is already compiled in the sefer "Dvar Yom B'yomo." The Rebbe pointed this out, he explained, to emphasize that there is no reason not to learn from the new compilation-style *seforim* that have been published recently. There is nothing to be ashamed

QUESTIONS POSED BY THE REBBE
AT SHABBOS FARBRENGENS
WERE ADDRESSED IN THE
KOVTZIM OF HA'AROS.

A KOVETZ PRINTED FOR SHABBOS
PARSHAS YISRO - 15 SHEVAT 5744.



of, and these *seforim* are a useful tool that frees up time to study in greater depth.

On this day, the *Navi* Zecharya prophesied about the wrath that will befall the “apathetic nations.” Not only do they lack concern for the suffering of Yidden in *golus*, but they actively contribute to it.

This apathy stems from the complacency of Yidden regarding their condition in *golus*. The responsibility for this lies with the leaders of the Jewish people, who must guide them to the right path.

The Rebbe then shared a recent incident where a Yid approached a Lubavitcher and inquired about the source in Torah for crying out in distress that we cannot tolerate the *golus*. The Chossid became flustered and was unable to respond.

The Rebbe asked, his voice laced with pain, how could it be that after speaking about Moshiach so many times, there are still those without an answer? If it is indeed so, what was accomplished by speaking about this for the

past 33 years?!

The Rebbe then explained that this behavior is found in many places throughout Tanach, where it tells us about Yidden who couldn’t tolerate the pain of *golus*. In Tikkun Chatzos, there’s a *piyut* where every paragraph begins with the words “Ad Mosai!” Of course, this is meant to convey that we cannot wait any longer.

Following this, the Rebbe brought up another matter that the Lubavitcher was unable to answer. Someone told him that he doesn’t want his son to learn in a Chassidische Yeshiva because he wants him to be a “*lamdan*.”

The Rebbe said that this *askan* could have responded by presenting the man with some of the *Kovtzim* from Lubavitcher Yeshivos, asking him if he’s likely to find this amount of high quality *Kovtzim* from any other Yeshiva!

Later, before answering the “Rashi questions,” the Rebbe acknowledged that the questions were discussed in the *Kovtzim*. However, many of the answers focused on splitting hairs, deviating from the basic “*pshat*”.

The Rebbe also pointed out an incident that occurred this week, a fulfillment of the *nevuah*, “והיו מלכים אומניין” — And the kings will be your nurses.” In a recent speech, the American President advocated for religious education and proclaimed the need to connect with our Creator. Unfortunately, not enough attention was given to this speech in the Jewish world, and few seemed to realize its relevance to *avodas Hashem*.

Some people just weren’t aware of this speech because they don’t read the news, which is good. However, those who always need to know what is happening on the other side of the world, and have even read the speech, overlooked its importance.

Sunday, 25 Shevat

Today, the Rebbe sent 30 one-dollar bills to Rabbi Zusha Silberstein for a group of students who came with him from Montreal for the “Pegisha - Encounter with Chabad” weekend. The Rebbe also reminded him to say Tefillas Haderech with them on the way back.

Monday, 26 Shevat

In the evening, when the Rebbe left 770, he noticed a guest standing outside without a coat despite the frigid winter weather. The Rebbe signaled his surprise that the individual wasn’t wearing a coat, and motioned for him to go inside.



THE REBBE LEAVES 770 ON HIS WAY HOME
ONE WINTRY EVENING, 5744.

Tuesday, 27 Shevat

Tonight, when the Rebbe left 770, there was a young boy standing near the car singing “Sheyiboneh Beis Hamikdash” quietly. The Rebbe turned to him, smiled, and gestured with his hands to encourage the singing.

Thursday, 29 Shevat

Today, as the Rebbe was leaving for the Ohel, he distributed coins for tzedakah to the children who were present, and indicated for a young teen to come over as well. The boy responded that he was already past Bar Mitzvah, and the Rebbe replied, “I’m also past Bar Mitzvah, and I also give tzedakah.”

Shabbos Parshas Terumah, 2nd day of Rosh Chodesh Adar I

In the afternoon there was a farbrengen.

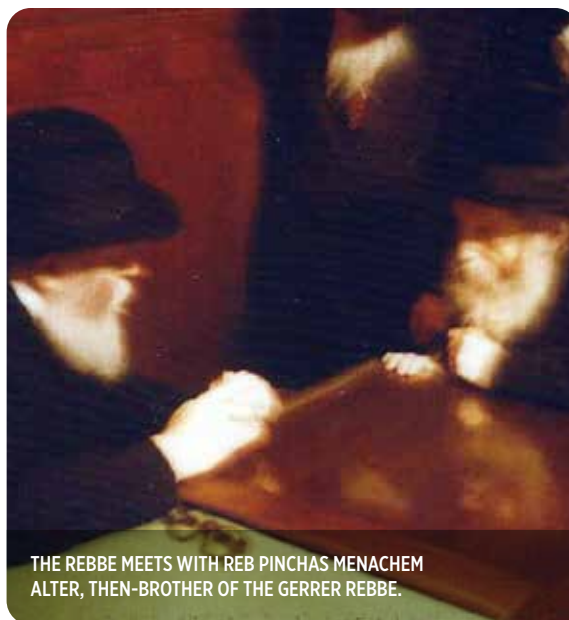
In the first *sicha*, the Rebbe spoke about the significance of the day, when Shabbos and Rosh Chodesh coincide. There is also special significance to Rosh Chodesh Adar, a month whose “Mazal is powerful.” This is particularly true this year, with two Adars, providing us with 59 consecutive days of “powerful Mazal.” This extra light should be channeled towards an increase in Torah and Mitzvos.

Toward the end of the Farbrengen, the Rebbe again stressed the importance of printing Tanyas in every locale where Jews are found. The Rebbe also emphasized that the printing should be done in coordination with Kehos, in an organized fashion.

The Rebbe spoke unequivocally against the argument that radio is “from the *Sitra Achara*” and can’t be used for *Kedusha*. *Chas v’shalom* to say that the *Sitra Achara* can create anything! Obviously, this claim is incompatible with Torah and basic *emunah*.

Wednesday, 12 Adar I

A few minutes before 8:00 pm, Harav Pinchas Menachem Alter, brother of the Gerrer Rebbe, and the Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivas “Sfas Emes” in Yerushalayim, arrived at 770 accompanied by a delegation of Gerrer Chassidim. They entered the Rebbe’s room together with



THE REBBE MEETS WITH REB PINCHAS MENACHEM ALTER, THEN-BROTHER OF THE GERRER REBBE.

members of *Mazkirus*.

After the Rebbe addressed those present for about 45 minutes, Reb Pinchas Menachem Alter requested to speak with the Rebbe privately. Everyone else left the room, and he had *yechidus* with the Rebbe until 10:15.

Following this, the Hosakover Rebbe entered the Rebbe’s room with his *shamash* and had *yechidus* for about 25 minutes.

He told the Rebbe about the activities of Chabad in Be’er Sheva, where he lives, adding that he occasionally participates as well. He then mentioned that he was present at the printing of the Tanya in the city a few weeks ago. The Rebbe expressed the hope that the Tanya was studied right after it was printed.

Thursday, 13 Adar I

When the Rebbe arrived at 770, two men from Iceland were standing near the entrance, each accompanied by his son. One of the individuals presented the Rebbe with a recently printed Tanya and mentioned that the printing was done in the merit of his son Avraham Moshe, who was very ill.

The Rebbe blessed him that he should be able to raise his son to Torah, *Chuppah* and *Maasim Tovim*, and that the boy should live for many happy healthy years. The Rebbe also instructed that the boy learn Tanya. The father

then told the Rebbe that 200 copies of the “Iceland Tanya” were printed. The Rebbe instructed that 201 people should learn from the Tanyas, “including you and me.”

Afterward, the Rebbe asked the second man if his son also had a Tanya. When he answered affirmatively, the Rebbe suggested that the boy should start learning from it even before his Bar Mitzvah. Later, the Rebbe contributed \$20 towards the printing of this Tanya.

After Krias Hatorah, Rabbi Shabsi Alpern, Shliach to Brazil, waited in *Gan Eden Hatachton* to present 100 different Tanyas printed in cities throughout Brazil. The leather-bound Tanyas were pocket-size and placed in a beautiful clear display case with a transparent map of Brazil etched on it, inscribed with the words: “We want Moshiach now.” The case was placed on a table in *Gan Eden Hatachton*, alongside a photo album documenting the various printings.

Also present were Rabbi A. D. Binyamini, who participated in the printings, and Rabbi Yitzchok Mishan, who also contributed, along with his wife and two children.

Upon entering *Gan Eden Hatachton*, the Rebbe inquired about the number of Tanyas. When Rabbi Alpern mentioned 100, the Rebbe replied, “Yashar Koach! May we greet Moshiach together with the books of Tanya and those who have studied, and will study, from them!”

After the presentation, the Rebbe participated in the

printings by contributing \$50 each to Rabbi Alpern, Rabbi Binyamini and Rabbi Mishan. The Rebbe also gave a dollar coin to Mrs. Mishan, and a half dollar coin to the two Mishan kids. The Rebbe then gave a *bracha* to the Mishans for their children.

Right before the Rebbe entered his room, he asked the group if they were staying for Shabbos. When they replied that they were, the Rebbe said that there would probably be a farbrengen.

Shabbos Parshas Ki Sisa, Shushan Purim Katan

The Rebbe entered the farbrengen holding a newly printed edition of Likkutei Torah and one of the Tanyas from Brazil. He placed the *seforim* on the table near his place.

The Rebbe addressed the importance of not utilizing the Tanya printings for financial benefit, even for Mosdos. This could cause a few misguided people to think that the printings were for an ulterior motive.

The Rebbe then spoke about the numerous volumes of Chassidus currently being printed — a development which should bring forth an outpouring of joy. Unfortunately, it seems that everyone is conducting themselves as usual.



RABBI SHABSI ALPERN ON HIS WAY TO THE REBBE WITH THE COLLECTION OF 100 TANYAS PRINTED IN CITIES THROUGHOUT BRAZIL.

LIBRARY OF AGUDAS CHASSIDEI CHABAD



PRINTING A TANYA IN A REMOTE LOCATION IN BRAZIL, 5744.

LIBRARY OF AGUDAS CHASSIDEI CHABAD

In this regard, the Rebbe mentioned the new printing of Likkutei Torah, which includes sources and references to Maamarim of the Rabbeim. The Rebbe praised and blessed those who put so much effort into bringing the project to fruition so quickly. The Rebbe also said that he would contribute a bottle of Mashke to a grand farbrengen which should be held in honor of this achievement.

The Rebbe then announced the printing of Tanyas in most Brazilian cities, which was also accomplished in a very short amount of time. The Rebbe said that he would give a bottle of Mashke to those who worked on this, with a condition. The organizers should visit all of those cities again and arrange a Chassidishe farbrengen in each one, learning from the Tanya as well. This is in addition to the learning that was done right after the Tanyas were printed.

After the *sicha*, Rabbis Alpern, Binyamini and Mishan approached the Rebbe, who poured them some Mashke. The Rebbe also gave Mezonos to Rabbi Mishan for his family. Following this, the Rebbe gave Rabbi Alpern a bottle and instructed him to farbreng in all the locations with the bottle, starting here. The Rebbe also clarified that for places that are hard to reach, Rabbi Alpern should do as he sees fit regarding a farbrengen, and ensure that the bottle is empty by Pesach.

Then the Rebbe invited Rabbi Aharon Chitrik, who had worked on the Likkutei Torah, to come up as well. Since he was not present, Rabbi Shneur Zalman Chanin came up instead, and received a bottle of Mashke for the farbrengen which would be held in honor of the printing of Likkutei Torah.

Tuesday, 18 Adar I

At 9:30 pm, Chassidim gathered together to farbreng in honor of the new printing of Likkutei Torah, as per the Rebbe's instruction on Shabbos.

During the gathering, the Alter Rebbe's *maamarim* were divided up for study, to be finished by Yud-Aleph Nissan. The farbrengen continued till morning.

Thursday, 20 Adar I

At 8:25 pm, the Chief Rabbi of the IDF, Rabbi Gad Navon, entered *yechidus* accompanied by Rabbi Simcha Fishbein and a member of the Israeli consulate in New York. They remained in the Rebbe's room until 10:15.

During their conversation, which covered various

Torah topics, the Rebbe discussed Mivtza Tefillin, the borders of Eretz Yisroel, and the "Tzahal Nussach" of davening. The Rebbe emphasized that when soldiers return from service, they should daven in the Nussach of their community.

The Rebbe also mentioned that the Tanya which was printed with the IDF and Kehos logos is very precious to him.

As they were leaving, Rabbi Navon wished the Rebbe "may we soon meet in Yerushalayim," and the Rebbe added, "on Har Habayis!"

Shabbos Parshas Pikudei, 29 Adar I

During today's farbrengen, the Rebbe spoke about the upcoming Melave Malka to benefit Hatzalah. The Rebbe emphasized the importance of the matter, and the great obligation and merit associated with helping sponsor an ambulance.

The Rebbe continued with a prayer that this be the final action needed to bring redemption and "Hatzalah" to the world. When we fly on the heavenly clouds to Eretz Yisroel, the ambulances of Hatzalah will come along with us, just like our shuls. In the same way that places where Yidden davened and learned Torah cannot be left behind in *golus*, it is also impossible to leave behind a vehicle where even one Jewish life was saved!

Later, Hatomim Feivel Rabinowitz, who printed the Tanya in two distant locations, approached the Rebbe to receive a bottle of Mashke. The Rebbe told him that, if possible, the Mashke should be used at farbrengens to be organized in those two communities, and he should continue printing Tanyas in many more places.

Following this, the Rebbe reiterated the importance of printing Tanyas in every Jewish community.

The Rebbe also announced the good news that Tanyas were recently printed in extremely remote locations with only a few Yidden! How fortunate are those who engage in this important endeavor. May many more people learn from them to "*Chap Arain*" the last moments of *golus* and complete the printing of Tanya everywhere.

Tanyas should be printed even in a place where there is just one Jew. After all, Hashem Himself dwells in such a place, as stated in Pirkei Avos.¹ 1

1. 3:6.

ONE MORE FRONT

— *Translating Chassidus* —

לע"ג

הרב החסיד השליח

ר' יוסף יצחק

בן הרה"ח ר' מאיר ע"ה

איטקין

נפטר ז' לחודש טבת ה'תשפ"ד

ת"נ צ"ב"ה

נדפס ע"י משפחתו שיחיו

Compiled by: Rabbi Levi Greenberg

Written By: Rabbi Zelig Katzman



Ever since the Baal Shem Tov's encounter with Moshiach when he was charged with the task of *hafatzas hamaayanos*, our Rabbeim have worked tirelessly to spread the teachings of Chassidus to the widest possible audience.

One of the primary barriers between the teachings of Chassidus and its intended audience is that of language. Chassidus has traditionally been delivered in Yiddish and transcribed in Lashon Hakodesh, leaving those unfamiliar with those languages deprived of the richness of its teachings.

Additionally, in order for Chassidus to be properly translated, it is not enough to translate literally, as the depths of the concepts and their subtle implications often get lost in translation. Translating Chassidus requires a deep understanding of the concepts and the linguistic knowledge to accurately articulate them. This article lays out some of the Rebbe's teachings on this issue, the history of the translation of Chassidus and some of the Rebbe's key directives to those involved in this holy endeavor.

Moshe's Translation of the Torah

In the beginning of Sefer Devarim, the Torah recounts that on Rosh Chodesh Shevat, at the end of the Jewish people's 40 year sojourn in the desert הואיל משה באר את התורה הזאת" (Moshe began explaining this Torah). Rashi comments on these words, citing the Midrash that the words הואיל משה באר את התורה indicate that Moshe translated the Torah into the 70 languages of the world.

The Rebbe poses an obvious question: Why was it necessary for Moshe Rabbeinu to translate the Torah for the Yidden into all of the world's languages at that time? Some meforshim propose that Moshe was worried that some Yidden didn't understand Lashon Hakodesh, and therefore he translated the Torah for them. However, this raises a different question: Why did Moshe wait till the end of the 40 years to do this? Why didn't he do it immediately following Matan Torah?

Other meforshim suggest that Moshe did this not for the people of his own generation, but rather for future generations, who would be exiled to other lands, so that wherever Yidden would come, they could study in that language. This

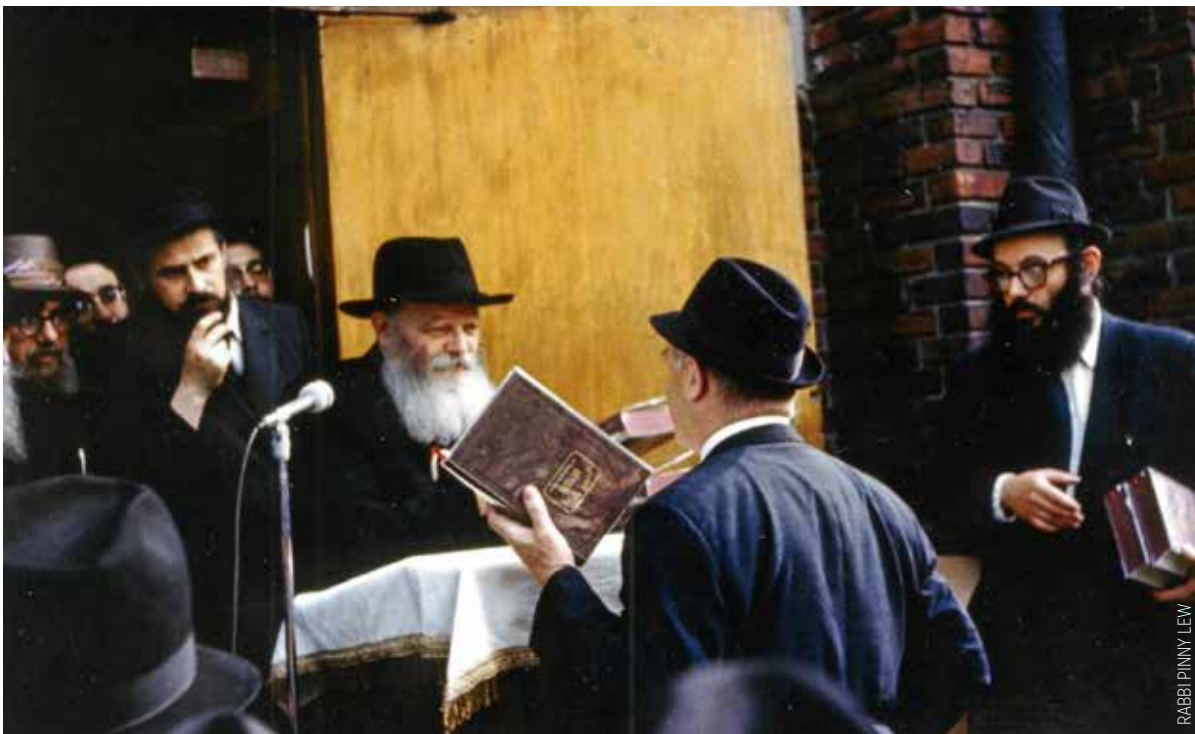
answer is not completely satisfactory, however: Why was Moshe concerned about this? He could have relied on the future leaders of the Yidden to take care of this problem when it arose...

The basic explanation: The Ramban writes that Lashon Hakodesh is the language "in which Hashem speaks." Thus, it follows that Torah Hashem should be studied specifically in that language. This would obviously be the case with Torah Shebe'ksav, which, as its name suggests, is defined by the way it's written, exactly as it was given by Hashem, no more and no less. Even regarding Torah Sheba'al Peh, there is room to say that the halachic definition of "דברי תורה - words of Torah" apply only to words spoken in Hashem's language.

This is why Moshe Rabbeinu—receiver and transmitter of the Torah—translated the Torah into 70 languages; to apply the same level of holiness to Torah taught and studied in other languages.¹

The Rebbe also gleans several lessons² from the Torah's language regarding Moshe's translation and shows their application to *hafatzas haTorah vehama'ayanos* in every time and place:

- The word הואיל denotes a beginning, which indicates



THE REBBE DISTRIBUTES THE FIRST BILINGUAL EDITION OF TANYA ON THE FRONT STEPS OF 770, 16 SIVAN 5735.

that there is a continuation. This teaches us that in our mission of spreading Yiddishkeit, it is not enough to try once and then move on. Rather one must consistently toil and work to ensure that the words of Torah reach everyone.

- The word באר denotes thorough explanation. It is not enough to merely tell someone the words of Torah. One must ensure they understand it on their level, and if necessary — to translate it to another language.

On multiple occasions,³ the Rebbe pointed out the significance of the fact that the Frierdiker Rebbe's *yom hilula* occurs in the month of Shevat, highlighting the connection between Moshe Rabbeinu's initial translation of the Torah and the Frierdiker Rebbe's lifelong mission to bring Chassidus to all, including efforts to translate Chassidus to foreign languages. The Rebbe also stressed the *chiddush* of the Frierdiker Rebbe's work - the translation of *pnimiyus haTorah*, the Torah's deepest secrets. Up until his times the only translations of Torah were in its revealed dimensions.

Why Translate Chassidus?

When discussing the importance of translating Chassidus, the Rebbe provided several reasons for this work:⁴

- For the nations of the world: We are told that the non-Jews will serve the Yidden at the time of the future *geulah*, and moreover, they will be transformed and serve Hashem themselves. Therefore, their preparation for that time must begin now by studying the concepts in Torah that are relevant to them, including concepts of belief in Hashem etc. as explained in Chassidus,

through translating them into their language. [In another *sicha*⁵, the Rebbe cites this explicitly as one of the reasons for the translation of Shaar Hayichud V'haemunah into English, so that a non-Jew could understand the concept of *Achdus Hashem*!]

- For Yidden: Being that the *geulah* needs to come quickly, there is no time to wait for all Yidden to be able to learn and understand Chassidus (which is the preparation for Moshiach's coming) in Lashon Hakodesh, rather, we need to learn it with them immediately, in whatever language they understand.

The Spiritual Significance of Translation

The Rebbe also explained that the purpose of translating Chassidus is not only for the purpose of teaching Chassidus to people of all backgrounds. Another goal of this endeavor is to conquer the languages of the nations of the world and, by extension – those nations themselves.

The Gemara says in Gittin⁶ that the Roman Empire was a מלכות שאינה הוגנת (kingdom that is not legitimate) because אין להם לא כתב ולא לשון (they have neither their own script, nor their own language, but rather, they took them from other nations). This underscores how a nation's language is linked to its status and importance, and therefore, when we conquer the language of a country, we conquer its prestige, through which we spiritually transform the entire country.⁷

On another occasion⁸, the Rebbe underscored the fact that translating Chassidus into foreign languages is a great descent, as evidenced by one of the words for translation in Lashon Hakodesh - העתקה, which denotes departure and separation from its prior, sublime state. Nevertheless, we were instructed to do so in order to spread the wellsprings of Chassidus and bring Moshiach.

History of Translation

The earliest record of the translation of Chassidus into another language is an episode recounted by the Frierdiker Rebbe about his uncle, Reb Menachem Mendel (brother of the Rebbe Rashab). On one occasion he translated a chapter of Tanya into Russian and sent it to a gentile aristocrat, who was greatly impressed.⁹ There are also accounts of the Rebbe Rashab considering having the children's periodical



THE FIRST OF THE FRIEDIKER REBBE'S KUNTREISIM, "KINYAN HACHAIM", PRINTED IN RIGA IN ELUL 5688 AND AGAIN A FEW WEEKS LATER IN THE UNITED STATES. THE SHAAH BLATT STATES THAT IT WAS GIVEN IN YIDDISH FROM THE REBBE HIMSELF IN ORDER THAT ALL UNDERSTAND.

האח translated into German for the benefit of the Jews there.¹⁰ These were isolated incidents, however.

A concerted effort to translate Chassidus began in the times of the Frierdiker Rebbe. The first record of this was recounted by the Rebbe himself¹¹, relating that the Frierdiker Rebbe once instructed to explain ideas of Chassidus to a certain gentile professor who expressed interest in deep concepts.

These efforts continued after the Frierdiker Rebbe left Russia. In a letter sent on Isru Chag Sukkos, 5689 from Riga to Rabbi Meir Munk of Berlin, the Frierdiker Rebbe writes: "This past Chodesh Elul I prepared a maamar called קנין"¹² החיים¹², written in Yiddish, and I wish to have it translated into clear and understandable German, but [it] should nevertheless maintain the true intention of the maamar,

which is its soul..." The Rebbe goes on to ask whether Rabbi Munk could take this task upon himself or whether he can suggest someone who can.¹³

On the very same day, the Rebbe reached out to the chossid Reb Sender Reinin, requesting that he pursue the translation of Chassidus into a number of languages, and stressing the importance of accuracy in translation: "Regarding the translation of the maamar קנין החיים, it would be proper to translate it into French, English, Italian and Russian, and I would also like to have it translated into Eastern languages such as the languages of Yemen, Buchara, and Georgia, but each translation must be done by someone who is both proficient in the [specific] language and knows and understands the concept well, [to enable him] to transmit the spirit of the ideas with the proper

REB HILLEL TZEITLIN

One of the pioneers in the attempt to translate the Tanya was Reb Hillel Tzeitlin, ה"ר. Reb Hillel stands out as one of the most intriguing and multifaceted figures in the Chabad community during his time. Gifted with a brilliant writing style and a poetic soul, he dedicated his diverse talents to the dissemination of the ideas of Chassidus throughout pre-war Europe.

Reb Hillel was born in 5631 in the city of Karma, White Russia, to a Chabad family associated with the Kopust community. His exceptional intelligence became apparent early on, and he made significant strides in Torah learning from a young age. During his teenage years, however, he delved into foreign literature and ideologies, succumbing to the intellectual and social trends of the nineteenth century,

like many of his contemporaries. He strayed from Yiddishkeit and gained recognition as a writer within the circles of the Maskilim, contributing scholarly articles to secular publications on topics such as literature and philosophy.

Following the First World War, Reb Hillel experienced a reawakening of his commitment to Yiddishkeit. Utilizing his talents, he began to write extensively on Kabbalah and Chassidus, including several pieces on Chassidus Chabad. Notable among his works were the Yiddish translations of *Perek Lamed Beis* of Tanya in 5685 and later the *Igeres Hakodesh Siman Beis "Katonti,"* (before 19 Kislev 5699), the first extant translation of Tanya into Yiddish.

In the later years of his life, Reb Hillel formed a connection with the Frierdiker Rebbe, writing numerous articles on Chassidus at the Frierdiker Rebbe's request. At the onset of the Second World War, the Frierdiker Rebbe actively sought to secure documents for him to escape Europe. Regrettably, these efforts proved unsuccessful. Reb Hillel's life was tragically ended by the Nazis ש"ר when he was sent to Treblinka. As he boarded the train, he was reportedly wearing his Tallis and Tefillin, holding a *Sefer Ha'Zohar*. He perished in the gas chambers on Erev Rosh Hashanah 5703.



REB HILLEL TZEITLIN
IN HIS LATER YEARS.

chayus. Every translation must be edited by others, so that the ideas emerge clearly, for the work of translation is very difficult...”¹⁴

Several years later, on 23 Sivan 5697, the Rebbe wrote to Rabbi Hodakov, who was living in Riga at the time, about translating a letter of the Frierdiker Rebbe into German: “Being that this is the first attempt to translate Chassidus into German... [We] must be very careful in its publication, so that it should be as sophisticated as possible, and should be able to reach the widest possible audience, being that this is the ultimate purpose of translating it into another language”.

The Rebbe concludes: “If this beginning [effort] is successful, I hope that we can receive [the Frierdiker Rebbe’s] approval to translate and print some of the Kuntreisim into German, French etc.”¹⁵

The First Complete Yiddish Translation of Tanya

Following the Frierdiker Rebbe’s arrival in the US, he began to publish a Yiddish periodical called הקריאה

והקדושה, containing words of Torah and inspiration for the American Jewish community during the dark days of the war. Beginning in Iyar 5702, each issue featured a translated section of Tanya. The translator was Reb Aharon Levitt, editor of the publication, who wrote under the pen name Y. Segal. The first 33 chapters had been translated when שהקדושה והקריאה ceased publication in 5705.

A complete translation of Tanya came later. It was produced by the chossid Reb Uriel Tzimmer¹⁶, and published by Kehot in two volumes. The first, in 5715, covered Likkutei Amarim. The second, in 5718, contained the remaining four sections of Tanya. This was the first translation of the whole Tanya into another language.

In its introduction, the publishers highlighted the shortcomings of translated works, noting that “Tanya is the foundation of Chassidus... Chassidim call it Torah She’bik-sav, being that each word is extremely precise. [Therefore] one must learn each word and understand it, each word containing hidden meanings. There are even sections in which one cannot ascertain the true meaning, being that the students of Chassidus disagree on the intent of the words. This characteristic of Sefer HaTanya makes it nearly impossible to translate the Tanya accurately, because even with great toil one cannot determine the intent of the original...”

“Notwithstanding all of this” the introduction concludes, “we have decided to acquiesce to the requests and publish this translation, to enable the masses who have difficulty with Lashon Hakodesh to study the Tanya”.

The Translation of Tanya to English

The translation of Tanya into English, a goal set by the Frierdiker Rebbe (as evidenced by a letter written to the Rebbe’s brother, Reb Yisroel Aryeh Leib, where the Frierdiker Rebbe asks him to look into this project¹⁹) finally came to fruition at the hands of Rabbi Nissan Mindel, *mazkir* to both the Frierdiker Rebbe and the Rebbe.

The first volume, Likkutei Amarim, was published in 5722. Those years were marked by the intense “space race” between the United States and the Soviet Union, who were competing with each other to dominate space. The Russians had launched the first satellite to orbit the earth, and the world was spellbound. When Rabbi Mindel brought his translation to the Rebbe, the Rebbe said: “The world is abuzz with the news of the launch of Sputnik, but the truth is that they should be excited about the translation



THE REBBE’S EDITS ON THE INTRODUCTION TO THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF THE TANYA.

of Tanya into English”...

The preface to this edition is signed by the Rebbe himself. It explains how the central idea of Chassidus—for a Jew to transcend the physical and see within it the absolute Unity of Hashem—is expressed in the idea of translation:

“The realisation of this purpose entails a two-way correlation: one in the direction from above downward to earth; the other, from the earth upward. In fulfillment of the first, man draws holiness from the Divinely-given Torah and commandments to permeate therewith every phase of his daily life and his environment—his “share” in this world; in fulfillment of the second, man draws upon all the resources at his disposal, both created and man-made, as vehicles for his personal ascendancy and, with him, that of the surrounding world. One of these basic resources is the vehicle of human language and communication.

“As the Alter Rebbe, author of the *Tanya*, pointed out in one of his other works, any of the “seventy tongues” when used as an instrument to disseminate the Torah and Mitzvoh, is itself “elevated” thereby from its earthly domain into the sphere of holiness, while at the same time serving as a vehicle to draw the Torah and Mitzvoh, from above downward, to those who read and understand this language.

“In the spirit of the above-mentioned remarks, the volume presented here—the first English translation of the *Tanya* (Part I) since its first appearance 165 years ago—is an event of considerable importance. It brings this basic work of Chabad philosophy and way of life to a wider range of Jews, to whom the original work presents a language problem or even a barrier. It is thus a further contribution to the “dissemination of the fountains” of Chassidus which were unlocked by Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov, who envisaged Chassidus as a stream of “living waters,” growing deeper and wider, until it should reach every segment of the Jewish people and bring new inspiration and vitality into their daily lives.

“The translation of such a work as the *Tanya* presents a formidable task. As a matter of fact, several unsuccessful attempts have been made at various times in the past to translate the *Tanya* into one or another of the European languages. It is therefore to the lasting credit of Dr. Nissan Mindel that this task has been accomplished.

“Needless to say, translations are, at best, inadequate substitutes for the original. It is confidently hoped, however, that the present translation, provided as it is with an Introduction, Glossary, Notes and Indexes, will prove a very valuable aid to students of Chassidus in general, and

of Chabad in particular.”

It is important to note that in addition to the translation itself, there are many notes, references and explanations. All were reviewed and approved by the Rebbe, who edited them carefully, as is known. Some of these *hagahos* have recently been published²⁰.

The Translation of Tanya to Italian

In the 5720s another vista in the realm of *hafatzas hamaayanos* was opened with the translation of Tanya into Italian. The Rebbe viewed it as a triumph of Yiddishkeit over the challenges of Roman civilization.²¹ The following is a brief account of the process that led to it:

Reb Avrohom Sofer (Schreiber) was a descendent of the Chasam Sofer, a Talmid Chacham who had worked on publishing *kisvei yad* of many Rishonim, most notably the Meiri. Until World War II he resided in Italy, after which he emigrated to Eretz Yisroel. He maintained contact with his kin in his country of origin, and was concerned with the spiritual state of the Jews that remained there.

Rabbi Sofer developed a special relationship with the Rebbe, and praised the Rebbe as the greatest *boki* in the works of his illustrious ancestor, the Chasam Sofer. He became close friends with the Rebbe's Shliach to Italy, Reb Gershon Mendel Garelik, who often hosted him when he visited the country.

Over the years, he merited to visit the Rebbe multiple times in *yechidus*, during which they would discuss the state of Italian Jewry.



RABBI LEVI GARELIK
AS A YOUNG BOY.



THE FIRST PRINTING OF
TANYA IN ITALIAN.

It is likely that during one of these meetings the topic of translating the Tanya into Italian was first broached, since Rabbi Sofer had experience in the realm of publishing. He suggested that the Rebbe hire a certain renowned writer by the name of Giorgio Voghera from Trieste, who was a traditional Jew, to execute the project.

The Rebbe appointed Rabbi Garelik to oversee the project. Rabbi Garelik began studying Tanya with Mr. Voghera.

The learning sessions were long and intense, as this was his first exposure to Chassidus.

Rabbi Garelik was in regular contact with the Rebbe's *mazkirus*, receiving detailed instructions on the project. Amongst other *hora'as*, the Rebbe instructed Rabbi Garelik to show the professor the English translation of Tanya, in addition to studying with him in the original.

After many delays and much urging on the Rebbe's part,

REB AHARON LEVITT

Little is known about the life of Reb Aharon Levitt, editor of הקריאה והקדושה. His real name was Aharon Halevi Hirsh. He was born in Russia and later immigrated to the United States.

At a certain point, he encountered financial difficulties, which spurred him to change his name to Aharon Levitt (being a Levi). He sent a letter to the Frierdiker Rebbe describing his financial situation and his despair.

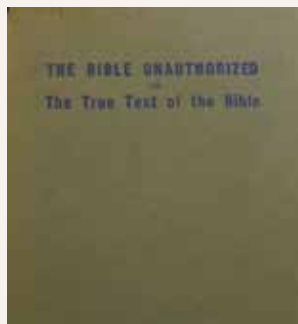
The Frierdiker Rebbe responded to him with a story, relating that in 5664 a chossid of his father, the Rebbe Rashab, experienced financial hardship. The chossid came to the Rebbe Rashab and poured out his heart, asking for assistance. The Rebbe Rashab told him:

"In Vienna there is a large wheel (the Vienna Ferris Wheel), with carts attached to it. Some of the carts go up, while others go down. Chazal tell us that the world is a spinning wheel (גלגל החומר). Naturally, someone who is at the top laughs and rejoices, but in truth he is merely a fool, since the wheel turns. Similarly, someone on the bottom who is crying is merely a fool, since that the wheel turns. Banish your sadness! Continue your business dealings and with Hashem's help the wheel will turn and return you to your previous state".¹⁷

Shortly afterwards, when the Frierdiker Rebbe founded הקריאה והקדושה, he appointed Reb Aharon as the editor. Although not associated with Chabad, he had prior experience with publishing Yiddish periodicals and would be able to attract a wide readership.

He wrote many articles under an assortment of pseudonyms, like איש יהודי, בן ישראל etc. In 5702 he authored a book called The Bible Unauthorized, which sought to show how the Torah foresaw various discoveries of modern science. It also contains much material on the Torah's outlook on Hashem, the neshama and our purpose in life.

In a letter, the Frierdiker Rebbe praises both the book and its author in glowing terms: "[Reb Aharon] came from Russia...all his life he studied *inyanei haskalah* in France, Germany and here [the US]...He was involved in writing a Sefer which is primarily a commentary on Sefer Bereishis with a lengthy introduction in English where he explains the concept of creation and Hashgacha Pratis. And when my son-in-law, Harav RaMa"m shlit" a Schneerson came [to America] I asked him to review the Sefer... Several months later my son-in-law HoraMa"m told me that it is written in an intelligent fashion... It will surely bring benefit to those who study it in their observance of *mitzvos maasiyos*."¹⁸



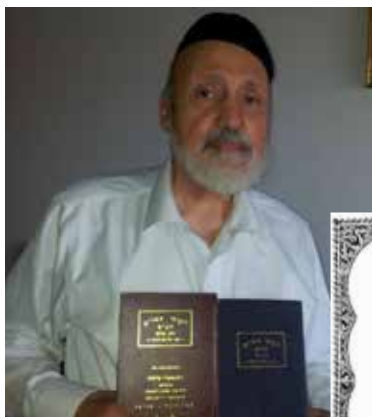
"THE BIBLE UNAUTHORIZED"

the project finally came to fruition before 19 Kislev 5728, when the translation of Likkutei Amarim was printed. Rebbetzin Garelik was coming to New York with her children to see the Rebbe, and they used the opportunity to personally deliver the Tanya, still unbound.

On the eve of 18 Kislev the Garelik family stood outside 770, waiting for the Rebbe to exit. When the Rebbe came out, the entire family recited *Shehechyanu*, as this was their first time seeing the Rebbe. The eldest son, Levi Yitzchok, who was selected to present the Tanya to the Rebbe, approached the Rebbe with trembling hands. As he handed the Rebbe the pages of the newly printed Tanya, the Rebbe smiled warmly and thanked him, and then proceeded to his car.

Several days later, on Shabbos Parshas Vayeshev, 21 Kislev, during the farbrengen, the Rebbe spoke about the translation that had just been completed: “Being that this Shabbos comes in continuation to 19 Kislev, which is connected to Sefer HaTanya... It is appropriate to mention that just now—even before 19 Kislev—the Tanya was printed in Italian... It is known that through translating concepts of Torah into the 70 languages, those languages are refined and elevated... This is the reason why the Rabbeim worked to spread Chassidus in many languages, increasing *hafatzas hamayaanos*, through which Moshiach will come”.²² After the *sicha*, the Rebbe called up the young Levi Garelik, who had presented him with the Tanya, to receive a piece of cake.

The project continued for a period of time, with the complete Tanya published in Italian in 5739.



REB DOVID BUSKILA Z"l, WHO TRANSLATED THE TANYA INTO ARABIC, HOLDING TWO EDITIONS OF THE TANYA.

THE FIRST PRINTING OF THE TANYA IN ARABIC, PUBLISHED IN 5732. THE WORDS ON THE SHAAR BLATT ARE ARABIC IN HEBREW LETTERS.



The Translation of Tanya to Arabic

Morocco was one of the first countries spiritually “conquered” by the Rebbe’s Shluchim, and for many years was at the forefront of Chabad activities. Those active there on the Rebbe’s Shlichus merited to bring thousands of Jews to the light of Torah and Chassidus.

In 5732, Reb Leibel Raskin, the legendary Shliach to Casablanca, conceived of the idea to translate Tanya into Arabic, enabling the locals to learn Tanya independently, without limiting their access to infrequent shiurim.

Although it seemed far-fetched, he sent the idea to Rabbi Hodakov. The Rebbe approved, on condition that it would be an accurate and professional translation.

The translator who was chosen was Reb Dovid Buskila, supervisor of the Otzar HaTorah school network in Casablanca, who was beloved by the city’s Jews. He was fluent in both Lashon Hakodesh and Arabic, and seemed the best candidate for the job. For this purpose, Rabbi Raskin established a regular, in-depth shiur in Tanya with Reb Dovid. They worked through each line, plumbing the depths of the Alter Rebbe’s language.

In a remarkable *Sicha*²³, the Rebbe spoke about this translation, highlighting the uniqueness of translating Tanya specifically to this language: “In addition to the *hafatza* involved in translating Chassidus to other languages, this is also a way to conquer the 70 nations. It is implied in the Zohar that the nations of the world are split into two general categories: Eisav and Yishmael. The language of ‘Eisav’ being Russian and the like, and Arabic being the language of ‘Yishmael’. Until now no Chassidus was printed in Arabic... this was accomplished in recent weeks, when the Tanya was printed in Arabic—the language of ‘Yishmael!’”

Later, when Reb Dovid went into *yechidus*, the Rebbe asked him whether he knew the significance of his translation of Tanya to Arabic. The Rebbe immediately explained: “The important thing about the translation that you made is that it will break the *klipah* of Yishmael!”

The Tanya in Braille

In 5751, the Rebbe spoke about the fact that as we await the imminent coming of Moshiach, there was still one more front to which the teachings of Chassidus had not yet reached. “Chassidus has been disseminated to the furthest reaches,” the Rebbe said. “But Moshiach has not yet come.

Perhaps there was still one more area where Chassidus had yet to reach.”

The Rebbe continued that just a few days earlier, the first Tanya printed in Braille had arrived at 770. “Now, even people who cannot see, for the time being, can also learn Chassidus.”

The Rebbe said that whether or not this step was the last one needed to bring about the *geulah*, may Moshiach’s arrival be *teikef umiyad mamash*.²⁴

The Rebbe’s Guidelines for Translating Chassidus

Over the years, the Rebbe gave many directives to those involved in the translation of Chassidus, in addition to several *hora’os* in the *sichos*. The following is an overview of some of these instructions:

During the farbrengen of Shabbos Parshas Mattos-Masei 5748, the Rebbe requested that: “[Efforts should be made to] translate Chassidus in other languages, obviously in a precise translation, that the true meaning should not be changed, etc.”²⁵

The Rebbe also gave instructions to Reb Tuvia Blau in a letter from Kislev 5725: “The first volumes of Likkutei Sichos etc. should also be translated, but on condition that it not be a word-for-word translation...”

In 5720 the Rebbe received a translation of a *מכתב כללי* and the Rebbe commented on it: “[This is a] literal translation to the point that it alters the [intended] meaning [of the letter]!!”

Another directive of the Rebbe is that the translator of a *sicha* look up the references cited in the *sicha* before translating, presumably to ensure that he understands the *sicha* properly.

The Rambam on Translation

Many of these guidelines are rooted in the Rambam’s instructions concerning the translations of his own writings. Initially penned in Arabic, works such as the Moreh Nevuchim, Shmonah Perakim, Igeres Techiyas Hameisim, and others were translated by Shmuel ibn Tibbon from Provence, France. The Rambam corresponded with him, addressing questions on these works and providing guidance for his translation efforts.

The Rambam writes²⁶: “Whoever wishes to translate

from one language to another and to precisely translate word for word, in addition to maintaining the original order—will toil much and his translation will emerge unclear and mistake-ridden... It is not proper to do this. Rather, the translator must first understand the subject matter. Afterwards he should explain it... [Following this process] it is impossible that he will not change the order, translate one word with many words or many words with one, add and subtract words, until the matter is organized and well explained by the standards of the language to which he is translating”.

We can clearly see from the Rambam’s words that a literal, word-for-word translation of the original source will always be inaccurate. Therefore, a translation must convey the ideas clearly and coherently in the second language, while remaining fully faithful to the original meaning. ①

1. Likkutei Sichos vol. 36 page 38–40.
2. Sefer Hasichos 5747 vol. 1 pg. 287.
3. The above paragraph is sourced in Sichos Kodesh 5740 vol. 1 pg. 802.
4. Likkutei Sichos vol. 29 pg. 283.
5. Toras Menachem vol. 54 pg. 241.
6. 80a.
7. Sichos Kodesh 5736 vol. 2 pg. 158-159.
8. Sefer Hasichos 5748 vol. 2 pg. 629 fn. 52.
9. Likkutei Sichos vol. 13 pg. 180.
10. Admorei Chabad V’Yahadus Germany pg. 145.
11. Sefer Hasichos 5748 vol. 2 pg. 629 fn. 54.
12. Printed in Sefer HaMaamarim Kuntreisim vol. 1 pg. 1-30.
13. Igros Kodesh of the Friediker Rebbe vol. 16 pg. 240.
14. Ibid. pg. 241.
15. Admorei Chabad V’Yahadus Austria pg. 245-247.
16. For his remarkable life’s story, see “*Chossid and Man of the World*,” Derher Sivan 5778.
17. Igros Kodesh of the Friediker Rebbe vol. 5 pg. 117-118.
18. Ibid. vol. 9 pg. 5.
19. Igros Kodesh Admur HaRayatz vol. 13 pg. 454.
20. Teshura Block-Wenger 5776.
21. Igros Kodesh vol. 25 pg. 88.
22. Toras Menachem vol. 51 pg. 430.
23. Sichos Kodesh 5737 vol. 1 pg. 370-372.
24. Sefer Hasichos 5751 vol. 2 pg. 764.
25. Hisvaaduyos 5748 vol. 4 pg. 99.
26. Igros U’Teshuvos Ha’Rambam – Warsaw 5687.

LUMINARIES

Personalities
in the
Rebbe's Torah

By:
Rabbi Levik Gourarie

לזכות
כל נכדינו שיחיו
שיגדלו לתורה לחופה ולמעשים
טובים לנח"ר כ"ק אדמו"ר

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

Rashi
Rabban Shel Yisroel



THE INDENTATION IN THE WALL IN WORMS, GERMANY, SAID TO HAVE PROTECTED RASHI'S MOTHER.



FRONT OF THE "RASHI SHUL" IN WORMS. THE BUILDING WAS FIRST BUILT SEVERAL YEARS BEFORE RASHI'S BIRTH AND IS REGARDED AS THE OLDEST EXISTING SHUL IN GERMANY. IT WAS DESTROYED AND REBUILT SEVERAL TIMES BEFORE BEING REDUCED TO RUBBLE BY THE NAZI Y.M.'S. IT WAS PAINSTAKINGLY RECONSTRUCTED SEVERAL YEARS LATER, USING MANY OF THE ORIGINAL STONES.

As mentor, teacher, and guide to all Jewish people, Rashi is one of the most impactful figures in our history. For the last 900 years and counting, Rashi has held the hand of every student of Torah, from a child in cheder, to a *talmid* in Yeshiva, to the greatest *poskim* and *lamdonim*, guiding them – simply and lovingly, through each word in Chumash and every line of Gemara.

In addition to the monumental commentaries he wrote, Rashi also led a successful yeshiva, responded to Halachic questions, and founded one of the most prestigious Torah dynasties in history.

While known for his modesty, he stood tall with unwavering opinions and teachings. Rashi was a devoted student of his teachers, and later a dedicated educator to his students and his Beis Midrash. His students became the greatest *talmidei chachomim*, authors, and compilers of their generation.

While Rashi wrote concisely, much lay beneath the surface. The Rebbe quotes the Shaloh that within Rashi's commentary, we can find "*Inyonim muflaim*" [wondrous ideas]¹.

Chassidus Chabad, starting with the Alter Rebbe, holds Rashi in a very special place, finding deep, hidden Torah concepts within his *pirush*. The Alter Rebbe explained that *Pirush Rashi* on Chumash is "*Yayna Shel Torah*" [the wine of Torah]. Much like wine reveals the secrets within a person – Rashi opens the heart and reveals *ahava* and *yirah atzmis* (the deepest, most essential love and fear of Hashem), while Rashi's commentary on Gemara opens the mind and reveals "*sechel atzmi*" (the deepest, most essential [spiritual] intellect within a person).²

Profound insight into the inner dimension of Rashi come in the Rebbe's extensive works on Rashi, emphasizing Rashi's principle — "I have come only to explain *peshuto shel mikra*—the simple meaning of the verse," on a level that a "*Ben Chamesh Lemikra*"—a five-year-old child beginning his journey into Torah study, could appreciate. At the same time, the Rebbe demonstrates the meticulous *diyuk*, attention to detail, and depth, discussed week after week in the "Rashi Sichos".³

Rabbeinu Shlomo Ben Yitzchok

Rabbeinu Shlomo Yitzchaki⁴ was born in 4800 (1040) in the city of Troyes, part of the Champagne region of France. His father was Reb Yitzchok, giving him the name Yitzchaki. Rashi taught and wrote in Troyes until his passing in the year 4865 (1105).

Rashi was born shortly following the period of the Geonim, placing Rashi in the second or third generation of Rishonim.

Not much is known about his life in a biographical or historical context. Yet, we can glean a general outline from his Torah and the writings of his students.

Additionally, there are numerous legends related about Rashi, some more difficult to prove than others, that shed light on how Rashi was perceived through the ages.

Two of these stories concern Rashi's birth. The first pertains to his father Reb Yitzchok, the second to Rashi's mother.

Reb Yitzchok happened to come across a precious and expensive diamond, one that would end all his financial worries. Word got around, and he found himself being coerced to sell the stone to the local ruler who intended to use it as an ornament in *avoda zara*. Reb Yitzchak would by no means sell him the diamond.

He took the buyers with him on a ship, and then while appearing to examine the precious stone in the sunlight, he 'accidentally' dropped it into the waters below, where the diamond was lost forever.

It was later revealed to Reb Yitzchok that as a reward for his great sacrifice, he would have a son who would illuminate the entire world.⁵

Another miraculous story is told about his mother. During her pregnancy, Rashi's mother was walking along a narrow street, when a mounted knight came galloping on horseback toward her. He advanced, not willing to stop for a "simple" Jewish woman, and was about to trample her to death. Rashi's mother squeezed against the wall, and a miracle occurred. An indentation formed in the wall, protecting her as the horseman dashed by.

The Rebbe referenced this story and said that when the Frierdiker Rebbe was in Worms in Germany he was shown the niche in the wall where the miracle occurred. The Rebbe explained that Rashi's connection to the mystical and "*sod*"

[secret] part of Torah which is contained in Pirush Rashi, can be seen in his miraculous and supernatural life.⁶

In his first comment on the Torah, Rashi writes "*Amar Rabbi Yitzchok*" in honor of his father Yitzchok. The Rebbe explains that Rashi's *kibbud av* is not just an important lesson that we must learn from Rashi, but also central to Rashi's explanation at the beginning of Chumash⁷. (See *In His Torah* section.)

Rashi – The Great Rishon of Ashkenaz

While the sun was setting on the yeshivos of Bavel with the passing of the last of the Geonim – Rav Hai, the sun was rising on new centers of Torah in the West.

The era of Rishonim had begun. The new centers were both in "Sefarad" (North Africa and Spain) with Rishonim such as Rabbeinu Chananel and the Rif (Rabbeinu Yitzchok Alfasi) at the helm, and "Ashkenaz" (France and Germany), led by the Kolonymus family, Rabbeinu Yehuda Leontin, and most famously — Rabbeinu Gershom *Me'or Hagolah*.

Rabbeinu Gershom who is said to have studied under Rav Hai Gaon⁸, and under Rav Yehuda Leontin in Germany – founded a yeshiva in Magentza (Mainz) – Germany in the region known as Luthir (close to northern France). For the next few generations it was the Chachmei Luthir and their tradition that was the base of Ashkenaz Yiddishkeit.



DEPICTION OF THE FIRST CRUSADE ON ITS WAY TO YERUSHALAYIM.

It was this world into which Rashi arrived. His mother's brother Reb Shimon was a student of Rabbeinu Gershom, and all of his teachers, Rabbi Yaakov Ben Yakar, Rabbi Yitzchok Ben Yehuda, and Rabbi Yehuda Halevi were students of Rabbeinu Gershom as well.

Rashi describes Rabbeinu Gershom's influence in one of his *teshuvo*s: "Rabbeinu Gershom זצוק"ל illuminates the eyes of the exile, we all live from (the words of) his mouth, and all the sons of the exiles of Ashkenaz (Germany) and Kittim (Italy) are students of his students"⁹.

As a young man Rashi left France to learn in the great yeshivos of the Chachmei Luthir in Magentza and Vermaize (Worms). He studied with Rabbi Yitzchak Ben Yehuda and Rabbi Yitzchok Halevi (Sega"l – Segan Leviya), who Rashi refers to as his teachers and educators.

Yet Rashi's main teacher was Rabbi Yaakov Ben Yakar, about whom Rashi writes in a *teshuva* discussing a questionable lung that "I am hanging [relying] on a great tree – Rabbi Yaakov Ben Yakar" and continues "even though I have not heard this thing from him, even so, my heart, my opinion and my understanding come from (the words of) his mouth"¹⁰.

Rashi spent a number of years studying in the Yeshivos of Germany. Even after he had married and the struggle of financial responsibilities weighed down on him, he returned to Germany for several more years of learning. Rashi describes his studies at this time: "...lacking bread and clothing, and with the yoke of livelihood on my shoulders, I served before them"¹¹.



A PORTRAYAL OF RASHI'S BEIS MIDRASH WHERE HE LEARNT WITH HIS STUDENTS. THIS WAS BUILT BASED ON PHOTOS OF RASHI'S SHUL AND HIS SPECIAL CHAIR, TAKEN BEFORE THE WAR.

Rashi as Leader

The Rebbe spoke innumerable times of Rashi's greatness. In one *sicha*, the Rebbe describes Rashi as a *gadol* in his generation and in all subsequent generations. Rashi was a *posek* and headed a Yeshiva – where he sacrificed his life to educate students that learn Torah and fulfill the Mitzvos.¹²

After moving back to Troyes, Rashi opened a Yeshiva where he continued to teach and educate his students both Chumash and Gemara, continuing the *mesorah* of the Chachmei Luthir.

Rashi's Yeshiva included many of the great *talmidei chachomim* of the next generation, most famously his sons-in-law, Reb Meir of Ramro (Rotberg), Reb Yehuda Bar Nasan (the Rivin), and his grandsons — Rabbeinu Shmuel (the Rashbam), Rabbeinu Yaakov (Rabbeinu Tam), and Reb Yitzchak (the Rivam). Others include the Ri Halavan and Rabbeinu Simcha of Vitry.¹³

Rashi and his *talmidim* wrote prolifically — in addition to the *pirushim* and *teshuvo*s — *siddurim*, *machzorim*, and other *sifrei halacha* were produced under Rashi's tutelage.

Rashi's leadership extended to Kehilla matters as well; there are *takanos*, *minhagim*, and *nusach* rooted in Rashi's tradition and his Beis Midrash. Rashi's impact was felt by the whole generation even in his own lifetime, as his teacher Rabbi Yitzchak Halevi wrote to him: "The generation in which you reside is not orphaned, and may there be many like you in Israel."

The Rebbe said that Rashi did not only teach, write, and lead the community, he was involved in business and made an impact there as well — engaging with the world both in the way of Yissachar and the path of Zevulun¹⁴. The assumption is that Rashi was in the wine industry — living in Troyes meant he was in the Champagne region of France, known for its superb wine and vibrant wine trade – though not all agree.

Rashi worked hard to support the Yeshiva and put up with the hostile world around him. The Rebbe says that Rashi taught his students with *mesirus nefesh*. A quick glance at the era of Jewish history in which Rashi lived explains this statement.

About a decade before Rashi's passing, in the year 4856 (1096) the First Crusade took place. Anti-Jewish mobs ripped through Europe, wiping out entire communities in Germany and France on their way to Eretz Yisroel to conquer the land from the Muslims. While Troyes seems to have been spared,

many of Rashi's family and friends were killed in these terrible massacres.

The Rebbe mentions that in Rashi's times there were Ghettos in which the Yidden suffered, and that the children with whom Rashi learned came from families that were affected by the crusades and the carnage¹⁵.

The Rebbe also highlighted Rashi's locale and time period to explain various concepts in his *pirush*.

In the story of Yosef and Potifar's wife, Rashi uses the term "אני מגרה בך את הדוב"—I will agitate the bear against you." The Rebbe wonders how Jewish children knew about bears, and explains that throughout Jewish history, it was unfortunately common for the local landlords and nobility to put on shows where Yidden would have to fight against agitated bears. The Rebbe explains that while the proof for this we know from later history, it can be assumed that it existed back then as well.¹⁶

Among the legends of Rashi, it is told that Rashi met one of the leading crusaders – Godfrey of Boyn on his way to Eretz Yisroel. Hearing of Rashi's greatness, the Duke decided to ask him if his crusade would be successful. Rashi responded that he would conquer Yerushalayim and hold it for three days, but on the fourth he would be driven from the city and his armies and men would be attacked and disperse. Eventually he would return with just three horsemen.

The warlord left angrily and promised that if it did not play out as Rashi had said, he would return and wreak havoc on the Jews of the town.

Godfrey captured Yerushalayim but after a few days he was driven from the city. Attacked again and again, he narrowly managed to escape with a few men. Hurt and full of rage he returned home, and having four horsemen, he came to see Rashi with the intention of massacring the Jews of the town, *chas v'shalom*. As he was entering the city a brick fell off the wall of the city and killed his fourth horseman. He then saw the holiness and divine vision of Rashi and came to pay respect. As he approached Rashi's home he saw many Jews gathered around and learned that Rashi had just passed away.¹⁷

Lessons from Rashi

While there is little biographical information about Rashi, there are a number of insights gleaned from his *pirushim* and his *talmidim* that shed light on his character and personality.

Rashi is described as a tremendous *ohav Yisroel* and very

humble. In his works and writings, in his interactions with his *talmidim* and community, Rashi's exemplary *middos* were apparent. He was also a man of *emes*, a reserved yet strong leader who stood up for the principles of Torah and Yiddishkeit.

The Rebbe points out that Rashi was a *posek*, with his hands full answering Halachic questions and rendering *teshuvos*. He also had a yeshiva with great students — the emerging generation of Baalei Tosfos and their fathers. Rashi had many things to keep himself busy with, yet he dedicated a number of years to write a simple and basic *pirush* on Chumash — one that could be appreciated by children, followed by rudimentary and unassuming *pirushim* on Gemara and Nach — all to assist his fellow Jews in their learning.¹⁸

The Rebbe also highlights Rashi's truthfulness and honesty. A key example is that every student of Chumash with



A HANDWRITTEN COPY OF A CHUMASH WITH PIRUSH RASHI (ON THE LEFT MARGIN) APPROXIMATELY 200 YEARS AFTER RASHI'S PASSING.

Rashi is sure to have experienced: Rashi's statements of "Lo yodati" or "Eini yodeia" – [I don't know] regarding a number of difficulties in *pshat*. Rashi doesn't offer a sub-par answer, nor does he skip the question — he is not embarrassed to say that there is a question, and he does not know the answer.¹⁹

Rashi's role as master educator is seen not only in his writings and with his students, but also in Rashi's home — with his holy daughters.

The Rebbe spoke about the importance of a husband and wife learning together, and mentioned that today it is possible for the wife to learn with her husband, now that women receive a robust Jewish education. The Rebbe added that throughout history there were special women who were great *tzidkanios* and were fluent and "*lamdanios*," well-versed in Torah, like Rashi's daughters. There is an opinion cited in Seder Hadoros that Rashi had only daughters, that Rashi

would learn with them, and that they transcribed his Torah.²⁰

Another lesson that the Rebbe brings from Rashi is the importance of learning a lesson in Torah or *yiras Shomayim* from each and every thing that one sees and encounters in the world.

In this regard, the Rebbe shared the story told about Rashi, explaining Rashi's *pirush* on the *eifod* worn by the *kohen gadol*²¹ — that it is like the apron that the noblewomen would wear while riding. The Rebbe explained that for business, Rashi needed to meet with the gentiles and the nobility of his times. At one point, Rashi saw a noblewoman riding a horse, and while this was not a *tznius'dige* sight, once he witnessed it, he understood that there is a lesson he must learn from it; namely, the description of the *eifod*.

Additionally Rashi learned the meaning of "*U'mileisa es yadam*"²² [lit. and you shall fill their hands] explaining that



THIS FAMOUS PORTRAIT OF RASHI, PAINTED BY THE VIENNESE ARTIST MEIR KUNSTADT (WHO ALSO PAINTED MANY OTHER LEADING JEWISH FIGURES) APPROXIMATELY 100 YEARS AGO. ALTHOUGH INTENDED AS AN ARTIST'S RENDITION, IT BECAME THE ACCEPTED PORTRAIT OF RASHI.



OPENING PAGE OF THE REBBE'S HAGAHOS ON THE VERY FIRST 'RASHI SICHA', SHABBOS PARSHAS NOACH 5725.

when the ruler appoints someone to take care of a task, he hands him a gauntlet “Gaunto” in old French, another example of Rashi’s worldly knowledge playing a role in his *pirush*.²³

Rashi’s Legacy

Rashi’s legacy and impact are incomparable. Rashi is one of the most influential and widely accepted of all the *Gedolei Yisroel* in the last 1500 years.

The acronym Rashi in addition to Rabbeinu Shlomo Yitzchaki also stands for *Raban Shel Yisroel* [Teacher of Israel] and *Roshan Shel Yisrael* [Head of Israel]²⁴.

In his times, and in all the generations that followed, Rashi and his unparalleled contribution to the Jewish bookshelf were hailed by the great Rishonim and Achronim. In the generation after Rashi, the Raavan wrote about his illustrious teacher, “*Vehèemid le’olam regel shlisi ve’higdil Torah vehè’edir*” [he added a third support to the world. He magnified Torah and glorified it].

A while later, the Ibn Ezra wrote a poem about Rashi called “*Kochav Darach Mitzarfasa*” (a star sprung forth from France), where he gives Rashi the moniker that stuck and was quoted by the Rebbe several times - “*Parshan-Dasa*” - the Commentator of the Law, the Torah.

On one occasion at a farbrengen, the Rebbe mentioned that Rashi is someone who needs no introduction, a man whose greatness as *gadol*, *posek*, and *parshan* has been accepted throughout the generations, and has been lauded by the Shaloh, the Chida and countless other *gedolei Yisroel*.

The Rebbe continued that regarding Rashi - “*Lo dumiya tehilah*” [about him, silence is a praise] because his accomplishments are so well known, they need not be repeated.

Additionally, Rashi’s *pirush* was incorporated into Halacha, in the ruling that one may use his *Pirush* instead of Targum Onkelos to fulfill the obligation of *Shnayim Mikra Vè’echad Targum*. This is an honor that we do not find for any other *gedolei Yisroel*.²⁵

Pirush Rashi

Rashi’s work emphasizes the *pshat*, the simple meaning, making Torah accessible to every Yid, while holding deeper meanings in *drash*, Halacha, and the hidden parts of the Torah. The Rebbe counts Rashi’s command of *nistar* as part of his greatness.²⁶

Rashi toiled for many years compiling his *pirushim*. The

Rebbe quotes the Chida as saying that Rashi fasted 120 days before publishing his *pirush*.²⁷ The Chida also states that Rashi re-edited his *pirush* three times throughout his lifetime, and what we have today is the last version.

It is fascinating that the Rebbe in his *sichos* discusses not only the Torah that was written but also gets into the mind of Rashi and explains what he does not explain. This is in addition to careful examination of the order of Rashi’s comments, the section of the *posuk* that he quotes, and the names and sources he cites.

The Rebbe insisted that Rashi is the ultimate standard of *pshat* in the Torah. Over the centuries, commentators have struggled and argued over the definition of “*Peshuto Shel Mikra*” in its purest form. The Rebbe explained that every comment of Rashi is the ultimate *Peshuto Shel Mikra* - based on the premise that Rashi is talking to a five year old student.

Though Rashi’s grandson, Rashbam, writes that his grandfather said that if he had the time, he would write a new *pirush* based on new ideas that arose, the Rebbe maintained that Rashi covered everything in his original *pirush*, and whatever he wrote is the definitive *pirush haposhut*.²⁸

The Name

Rashi’s commentary was originally known as the “*kuntres*” - the notebook. The Rebbe explains that the reason for this was because as soon as Rashi finished writing one portion, he immediately distributed it to assist people in their learning. After many of these *kuntreisim* came out, they were put together into one compilation.²⁹

On that topic, there are several legends and stories told about how Rashi spread his writings by traveling to different communities and discreetly leaving booklets - *kuntreisim* - for *talmidim* to use. The stories include trips to Spain (where he is said to have written a sefer called *Sefer Haparnes*), Mitzrayim (where there is a legend he met the Rambam³⁰), and Prague (where some say he was buried). While many of the stories seem hard to prove, some seem to have elements of truth.³¹

IN HIS TORAH

“בְּרֵאשִׁית”

אמר רבי יצחק: לא היה צריך להתחיל את התורה אלא מ"הַחֲדָשׁ הַזֶּה לָכֶם" שהיא מצוה ראשונה שנצטוו ישראל. ומה טעם פתח בבראשית? משום "כֹּחַ מַעֲשָׂיו הִגִּיד לַעֲמוֹ לֵיתֵת לָהֶם נַחֲלַת גּוֹיִם". שאם יאמרו אומות העולם לישראל: "לסטים אתם שכבשתם ארצות שבעה גוים", הם אומרים להם: "כל הארץ של הקדוש ברוך הוא היא; הוא בראה, ונתנה לאשר ישר בעיניו. ברצונו נתנה להם, וברצונו נטלה מהם ונתנה לנו".

Bereishis.

R. Yitzchok said³²: The Torah should have begun with the possuk "Hachodesh hazeh lochem," it being the first Mitzvah that the Jews were commanded. Why does the Torah begin with "Bereishis"? This is because of the idea contained in the possuk "Koach ma'asav higid l'amo, laseis lohem nachalas goyim" [He declared the power of His works to His people in order to give to them the inheritance of nations].

Thus, should the nations of the world say to Israel, "You are robbers, for you have taken by force the lands of the Seven Nations," they [Israel] will say to them: "All the earth belongs to Hashem. He created it and gave it to whomever He saw fit. It was His will to give it to them and it was His will to take it from them and give it to us."

The first Rashi in Torah is quoted, highlighted, and explained by the Rebbe over fifty times. On many a Shabbos Bereishis the Rebbe would re-examine and further expound on this fundamental Rashi — teaching its timeless message, a message as relevant today as it was then.

Keeping with the Rebbe's position on Rashi being simple *pshat*, the Rebbe emphasized many times that this response, however "unacceptable" it may seem to some, can be told by any child and explained to any representatives of the nations. As believers in the Bible, the nations will accept this rightful claim, when the message is delivered with conviction and strength.

In this segment, we will touch upon several interesting points regarding this Rashi. This is by no means a comprehensive treatment of this Rashi.

Rashi lived in difficult times and suffered through terrible Jew-hatred, exile, and a crusade. The Rebbe says that Rashi's message for the Jewish child or adult to respond to the non-Jews who level complaints is relevant and true even in dark and bitter times of *galus*. Even in Rashi's times when there were very few Jews living in Eretz Yisroel and the Jew-hatred was more pronounced, the true Torah response stood the test of time.

The Rebbe also explains that the fact that this is the first Rashi on Torah adds to its primary importance as a key starting point for the whole Torah.³³

On Motzei Shabbos Bereishis 5740, the Rebbe opened the Chumash and read through this Rashi, carefully translating it line-by-line in a very basic fashion. The Rebbe explained that the order in Torah is specific, and that Torah begins with the greatness of Hashem and His gift to the Yidden. The Rebbe proceeded to review the Rashi once again — this time without translating.³⁴

The fundamental point of this Rashi is to inspire the Yidden in all generations, even when being attacked and accused by the nations of the world, even when being overwhelmed by the apparent reality surrounding them, to know that Hashem created the world, and Hashem controls reality today too, no matter what the nations say.³⁵

The Rebbe explains that Rashi brings the name of Reb Yitzchok as the author of this Midrash because Yitzchok Avinu taught us the lesson of one Jew against the nations of the world (Yishmael and the Bnei Keturah).³⁶ Additionally, Rashi was honoring his father by invoking his name with this quote. This virtue of *kibbud av* highlights the partnership between the Yidden and Hashem in creation—because respecting one’s parents reflects the fact that they were partners with Hashem in creating him. This symbolizes our oneness with the divine, and is also part of the Yidden’s response to the nations of the world. This oneness will finally be seen in the time of *geulah*, when Yitzchok will reign supreme³⁷, and the connection of Hashem and the Yidden will be clear for all to see.³⁸

1. Shaloh Maseches Shavuos, 181a.

2. Hayom Yom 29 Shevat.

3. For an overview of the Rebbe’s Rashi Sichos, see “Revolution in Rashi,” Part I—Derher Vov Tishrei 5775; Part II—Derher Shevat 5775.

4. Some understand the *yud* as standing for Yarchi – suggesting that his family may have come from Lunil (which means moon, *yare’ach*) in southern France (Provence).

5. This story is cited in Seder Hadoros – 4865.

6. Sicha Noach 5743.

7. Sicha Shabbos Breishis 5751.

8. Teshuvos Maharshal siman 29.

9. Teshuvos Chachmei Tzafas Velutir 21.

10. Teshuvos Rashi 59. It is told about Rabbi Yaakov ben Yakar that he would sweep the Shul with his beard.

11. Hapardes LeRashi – 34-49.

12. Shabbos Parshas Bereishis 5741, sicha 2.

13. In a Sicha from Shabbos Parshas Nitzavim-Vayeilech 5736, the Rebbe mentions Rashi’s yeshiva, and lists the Rivam, Rabbeinu Tam, and the Ri Halavan by name. In most sources, Rabbeinu Tam and the Rivam are not brought as students of Rashi, only of their father Rabbi Meir. The Rebbe clearly states otherwise.

14. Sicha Bereishis 5740.

15. Sicha Shabbos Bereishis 5741 and Sicha Lag Baomer 5738.

16. Sicha Shabbos Parshas Miketz 5741.

17. Seder Hadoros brings this story from the Shalshes Hakabalas.

18. Sicha Shabbos Parshas Nitzavim Vayeilech 5736.

19. Shabbos Parshas Miketz 5740. Shabbos Parshas Bamidbar 5741.

20. Sicha Chof Av 5750.

21. Shemos 28:4.

22. Shemos 28:41.

23. Sicha Tetzaveh 5739.

24. Sicha Shabbos Breishis 5751.

25. Sicha Shabbos Parshas Breishis 5742.

26. Sicha Shabbos Parshas Breishis 5751.

27. Sicha Shabbos Parshas Bo 5733.

28. Sicha Shabbos Parshas Bamidbar 5741.

29. Sicha Shabbos Parshas Korach 5750.

30. According to our accepted timelines, this seems to be nearly impossible.

31. These stories are brought in Seder Hadoros from various sources.

32. There were opinions that said that Reb Yitzchok quoted here was Rashi’s father. The Rebbe mentions the various opinions but says that recently a Midrash was found with this quote in the name of R. Yitzchok, thus it seems that he was not Rashi’s father. But the reason Rashi brings the name of the one who made this statement (even though Rashi usually doesn’t mention names) was out of respect for his father, who was named Yitzchok.

33. Sicha Lag Baomer 5738.

34. Sicha Parshas Bereishis 5740.

35. Sicha Shabbos Parshas Bereishis 5741.

36. Sicha Parshas Bereishis 5740.

37. Gemara Shabbos 89b.

38. Shabbos Parshas Bereishis 5751.

לזכות מרת דבורה לאה תחי' רוזנפלד
לרגל יום הולדתה י"ב אדר
נדפס ע"י משפחתה שיחיו



A Sudden Urge for Tefillin

Recounted by R' Shabsi Turner

This story occurred in the mid 5720s. There was a *bochur* going through a difficult time in his personal life, eventually resulting in his being thrown out of Yeshiva, and even estranged from his family.

A Lubavitcher family in Chicago graciously took him in. Unfortunately, however, he continued on his downward spiral.

Around that time, the United States joined the war in Vietnam and young men throughout the country were drafted for service in the army. The *bochur* was terribly afraid of being drafted and deployed, and was looking for ways to receive an exemption.

Finally, he thought of an idea; he would enroll in a yeshiva and thereby avoid the draft. He decided to try his luck and enroll in the Central Lubavitcher Yeshiva at 770.

He traveled to New York for Shavuot, and after Yom Tov, went into *yechidus* with the Rebbe. He wrote a note, and brought it into the Rebbe, but before the Rebbe read it, he asked the *bochur*: “When was the last time you checked your tefillin?”

The *bochur* was astonished. “Rebbe,” he said, “I haven’t been putting on tefillin for two years now.”

As if he hadn’t heard the answer, the Rebbe asked again,

“When was the last time you checked your tefillin?” to which the *bochur* repeated his previous response.

The Rebbe said, “It might happen that a ‘wild idea’ will fall into your head to put on tefillin. I suggest that you make sure they are currently kosher.”

The Rebbe proceeded to ask the young man why he had come, and the *bochur* explained that he wished to enroll in the yeshiva in order to avoid the draft. The Rebbe told him, “I don’t know if I have enough sway here at the yeshiva, but I will try.”

As time passed, the *bochur* realized that he would not be accepted in the yeshiva at 770 but he was not drafted into the army either. When he arrived home, he searched for his tefillin and sent them to a *sofer* for inspection.

Some time later he enrolled in college, but things did not improve. He continued spiraling downward until one day he found himself in a mental institution. After being there for a while, he called his family and asked them, “Please bring me my tefillin; I want to put on tefillin.”

Thus began his journey back to himself. With time, he recovered and returned to Yiddishkeit completely, building a beautiful family and bearing Chassidishe children and grandchildren. **1**

מבית הגזרים TREASURES FROM THE REBBE'S LIBRARY

נדפס ע"י ולזכות
הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל וזוגתו
מרת דבורה לאה שיחיו טרייטעל
לרגל יום נישואיהם כ"ט אדר ראשון
ולזכות בתם החיילת בצבאות
ה' חי' מושקא תחי'

GMACH SHOMREI SHABBOS

In Parshas Mishpatim, the Torah talks about the mitzvah of lending money to people in need. As such, the community Gmach Shomrei Shabbos¹ free-loan fund in Crown Heights held its annual Melaveh Malka fundraiser on Motzei Shabbos Parshas Mishpatim. At the Shabbos farbrengen before the event, the longtime administrator of the fund, Reb Yochanan Gordon, would be instructed by the Rebbe to don a shtreimel and say a few words about the event, along with a dvar Torah or story about the importance of this mitzvah. After Reb Yochanan's passing in 5729, this practice was continued by his son-in-law and successor at the Gmach, Reb Shimon Goldman.

In honor of Shabbos Parshas Mishpatim this month, we present the following historic documents connected with the Gmach.²

WRITTEN BY:
RABBI MENDEL JACOBS



The Gmach was founded in 5670 and housed in the Tzema' Tzedek Shul at 184 Henry St. on the Lower East Side of Manhattan.

The earliest extant document referring to the fund is a letter written by the Frierdiker Rebbe in 5702, sent along with a check for \$25:

25 Kislev 5702

Brooklyn.

To Gemilas Chasadim Shomrei Shabbos Fund, by the Tzema' Tzedek Shul of Henry St., New York.

Greetings and Blessings!

I send herewith a check for the sum of \$25 to the Gemach fund, to participate in their invaluable work, offering interest-free loans to Shabbos observers in their time of need. May Hashem bless all the participating members with abundance, materially and spiritually.

At the time, three individuals were listed as officers of the Gmach: Reb Yochanan Gordon—Secretary, Reb Tzvi Hirsh Pidnes—Treasurer, and Reb Avraham Vaksberger—President.

In 5705, the administration of the Gmach sent an invitation for their annual event to the Frierdiker Rebbe, along with a note reporting on their most recent activities.

The printed invitation reads:

Esteemed friends, brothers and sisters!

It is now 35 years since the founding of our Gemilus Chasadim fund. Over the years, we have helped hundreds of Jewish families get back on their feet, and our work was

done in a quiet, appropriate manner.

In honor of the 35 Year-Jubilee of our Gmach, we are holding a special meeting for all our members on Sunday, Parshas Mishpatim 21 Shevat, February 4, 6:30 pm.

([when the Parshah discusses] Im kesef talveh es ami). At our usual location, 184 Henry St., New York.



In a handwritten note attached to the invitation, they reported to the Frierdiker Rebbe:

A general overview of the activities of the Gmach over the past year:

96 loans for the sum of \$100, total: \$9,600

4 loans for the sum of \$50, total: \$200

2 loans for the sum of \$75, total: \$150

1 loan for the sum of \$30, total: \$30

Total: \$9,980

המכירה של חב"ד חסידים			
96	100	9600	96
4	50	200	4
2	75	150	2
1	30	30	1
		9980	

The Friediker Rebbe responded with a letter in return:
In response to your letter, I was pleased to hear about your activities during the year 5704, that you extended loans to 103 people, totaling \$9,980.

I read with joy your invitation to the 35-year celebration since the founding of “Gemilus Chasadim Shomrei Shabbos.” I send my blessings to all the members... And may Hashem watch over their sons fighting in the army³, wherever they may be on land, sea, and air, may they return home safely...



I enclose a check for \$25 as my gift to the Gmach...

As it turned out, the Treasurer, Reb Tzvi Hirsh, passed away on 11 Shevat 5705, just a few days shy of the 35th anniversary celebration.

Reb Yochanan wrote a heartfelt letter to the Friediker Rebbe following Reb Tzvi Hirsh's passing, describing his relationship with the late treasurer:

Although it is difficult for me to write about this, I feel compelled to write about our late friend Reb Tzvi.

I knew him since I came to this country. He was orphaned in his youth, and he was brought to a potter to learn how to make earthenware pottery. But he absorbed the shul-spirit [by attending] between Mincha and Maariv, hearing classes on Ein Yaakov, Pirkei Avos, and Midrash. He later married a woman in Pleshchanitz, and was drafted into the army... During the Russo-Japanese War, he fled to the United States.

...He worked as a “customer-peddler,” and in the evening he worked as a volunteer collecting and distributing pushkas for Colel Chabad. From the time I arrived here [in the States], he frequented my home, as well the home of my brother Y.Y., where we would learn a maamar or a sicha, or just schmooz about the elder Chassidim he had known.

...Ay! He was a precious Jew! He had weak eyesight and it was difficult for him to read from a sefer. He would travel everyday to visit sick acquaintances of ours⁴, traveling to another neighborhood every day; one day to the Bronx, one day to Boro Park, etc.

He passed away on 11 Shevat and was interred on 12 Shevat.

The Friediker Rebbe responded with a letter to Reb Tzvi Hirsh's children, urging them to appreciate the spiritual legacy that their father left them and emulate his ways, and with another letter to Reb Yochanan asking him to stay in touch with the children and try to maintain their connection with Yiddishkeit.⁵ ①

1. When the fund was established, it was primarily used to help people who had difficulty finding and maintaining a job due to Shabbos observance; presumably where the fund got its name.

2. Published in Mibeis Hagnazim, article #143, p. 355.

3. During World War II.

4. Reb Yochanan was appointed by the Friediker Rebbe to head the Bikur Cholim arm of Machne Yisroel.

5. Igros Kodesh Admur HaRayatz vol. 8, p. 548-9.

לזכות
התנאים חיים לוי יצחק שיחי'
לרגל הגיעו לעול מצוות
ט"ז אדר ראשון
יה"ר שיגדל לתורה לחופה ולמעשים
טובים מתוך בריאות נכונה ושפע בגו"ר
לנח"ר כ"ק אדמו"ר והוריו הי"ו

PRACTICAL HORA'OS

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

TESTS IN YESHIVOS

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

As Rosh Hashanah of 5725 approached, the Rebbe spoke about the necessity of making a *cheshbon hanefesh*—a personal reckoning of how the year's learning went:

"Therefore, as we are at the end of the year, tests should be given to the *talmidim* in *yeshiva*—both on *nigleh* and on *Chassidus*.

We spoke years ago about giving tests to the *talmidim* at the end of the *zman halimudim* (semester), and since "I made a decree," they gave tests for the first year, but no more.

What's more, some came to me with complaints: how is it possible that we are setting up *bechinos*—and they made a point of calling them, in English, "exams"—in subjects of Chassidus?

And then something became clear to me:

My father-in-law, the [Friediker] Rebbe once told me about the establishment of Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim by his father, the Rebbe Rashab, in 5657. Before this took place, one of the Chassidim—who was great in *nigleh*, Chassidus, and *avoda*—complained, 'How can it be that you're going to bring "Volozhin!" into Chassidus?'

After returning from the Ohel of his father, the Rebbe Maharash, [the Rebbe Rashab] announced that he had resolved to establish the *yeshiva*—and did not take the complaint into account.

At the time, I didn't understand why my father-in-law, the [Friediker] Rebbe told me this story—what does this have to do with me? But when people came to me with complaints about the tests, it became clear to me.

Just as then, they were not affected by the complaints, and they established the *yeshiva*, and later on, they saw the great benefit and success of the *yeshiva*, so too with regards to the above-mentioned about the tests.

I'm not the *baal habayis* to compel someone to do something against his will. However, with regard to everything connected to me, such as entering for *yechidus* or receiving a written response, it is within my authority to make these conditional on the setting up of tests."²

THE VERY FACT THAT THERE'S A TEST WILL HELP

In the summer of 5746, amid a call for *talmidim* to increase in their learning, the Rebbe said that it would be proper that every so often, tests should be administered to determine the level of each *talmid's* knowledge, both in quantity and quality. The Rebbe also explained that the fact that tests were taking place would itself improve the learning.



“The very fact that the *talmid* knows that from time to time they will be testing him on his learning — will increase his alacrity and energy for learning Torah.”³

It would be even better—the Rebbe went on to say—if the test scores were returned in writing, which would encourage the students to strive for higher marks.

CHANNELING DIDAN NOTZACH INTO PRACTICAL STUDY

After the weeklong celebration following the verdict on Hei Teves, 5747, the Rebbe famously called for an increase in Torah-study by working people and—especially—by *yoshvei ohel*, those whose whole being is about learning Torah, in the 30 days leading up to Yud Shevat. The Rebbe said that they should increase in learning *nigleh* and Chassidus, and in giving *tzedakah*, specifying that each person should consult with their *mashpia* to determine the proper amount of studying.

The Rebbe said that each person should be tested by their *rav*—*mashpia*—during these 30 days. This meant that *talmidei hayeshivos* should be tested by their *rosh yeshiva* or the like, working people should be tested by the *rav* they have appointed, women should be tested by their *mashpions*, and children should be tested by their parents, teachers or counselors.

There would be three tests during this period; one every ten days. As further motivation, each testee was to permit the

tester to share the results with the Rebbe. The Rebbe made clear that if one’s name did not appear on the list of those tested after 10, 20, and 30 days—this would make clear that they did not fulfill the *hora’ah*.⁴

The Rebbe also addressed those who had shirked previous tests:

“Once, when a list of test scores of a class was seen a while back, alongside the scores of ‘especially excellent,’ ‘excellent,’ ‘good,’ and so on, each according to their capability, there was also a new type [of ‘score’], that our forefathers never envisioned: ‘Was Not Prepared for the Test.’

“It is unheard of that a *yeshiva* student should not be prepared for a test! You’re learning in *yeshiva* — how could you not be ready for a test to determine whether you learned or not?!

“It was explained to me—since everyone judges each Jew favorably—that this meant that the student was not ready for a test on *the particular topic* that the test was on, since the student is such a ‘deep learner’ and was entirely immersed in another part of Torah.

“As a way of judging favorably, this is great, and certainly, it was in keeping with the truth. But nevertheless, since we’re talking about a unique situation, we’re asking of those ‘deep learners’ who are immersed in a particular part of the Torah, that they should set aside time to learn another specific part of Torah, as a preparation for the *yom hilula* of Yud Shevat ... so that



they will be prepared for the first test after ten days ... the second test after 20 days ... and the completion of the 30 days of *hachana* on Erev Yud Shevat.”⁵

PARSHA QUESTIONS ON SHABBOS

In 5750, the Rebbe mentioned that it has been a *minhag Yisroel* from previous generations that the father tests his children on what they have learned that week.⁶

PLEASE TEST

From a letter to Reb Eliezer Karasik, rav of the Chabad community in Tel Aviv:

“Thank you for the good news that you have started testing the *talmidim* of the *yeshiva* in Lod. ... I suggest that perhaps it is possible that you, or someone else whom you find fitting, should also test the *talmidim* of Yeshivas Toras Emes, both the *bochurim* and the *yungeleit*. If you feel that I need to write from here about this [to ask someone to take this on], let me know that, along with the identity of the person suggested to give the tests (this should be done in such a way so as not to lessen the prestige of the teachers in Toras Emes).”⁷

I WANT TO KNOW THE TALENTS OF THE BOCHURIM

From a letter dated 27 Elul, 5712, to the hanhala of Yeshivas Lod and Yeshivas Toras Emes:

“... It has long been my wish to make clear what are the talents and capabilities, both in *nigleh* and in

Chassidus, of the *talmidim* of the *yeshivos*. This has long been part of the *sefer* of all the *yeshivos* of Lubavitch: every so often they set up tests for the *talmidim*...

Therefore, I’m suggesting and requesting that such tests be set up also in the *yeshivos* in Eretz Yisroel.

It’s self-understood that these tests should be confidential, i.e. without inviting outside people.

The testers should comprise two committees: one for testing on *nigleh* and one for testing on Chassidus. Each of these committees should include the *rosh mesivta* of *nigleh* or Chassidus of Yeshivas Lod and Yeshivas Toras Emes, as well as a third person on whom the first two members agree.

It is obvious that this test should be only for students of the higher grades and those who study on their own.

This test does not replace the tests required to promote students from one class to the next, for it is only for the higher grades, and as mentioned, serves to ascertain the true situation of the *talmidim* and their talents in *nigleh* and Chassidus.⁸ **1**

1. A reference to the Volozhin Yeshiva, a prominent *non-Chassidishe yeshiva*.
2. Toras Menachem vol. 40 p. 359-360.
3. Likkutei Sichos vol. 29 p. 245.
4. Sefer Hasichos 5747 vol. 1 p. 244-246.
5. Toras Menachem Hisvaaduyos 5747 vol. 2 p. 245.
6. Ibid 5750 vol. 3 p. 364.
7. Igros Kodesh vol. 6 p. 283.
8. Ibid p. 360-361.

FIELDS OF

FALL



By: Rabbi Mendy Greenberg

Throughout the generations, the Rabbeim encouraged Chassidim to work the land. Here is the story of the kolonyes, the agricultural colonies of the Chassidim, from the times of the Alter Rebbe to the present day.

THE

The KOLONYES



לזכות
הגה"ח הרב אברהם ליב
וזוגתו שיחיו שוואט

שלוחי כ"ק אדמו"ר למדינת
ונצואלה מאז שנת תשמ"ה
לרגל מלאות ארבעים שנה לנישואיהם

The Dowry

When the Alter Rebbe's *shidduch* with Rebbetzin Sterna was being discussed, the prospective *chossan* made one condition: that he be given free reign over the 5,000 gold coins offered by his father-in-law, Reb Yehudah Leib as a dowry. Within one year of his wedding, the entire sum was spent on the purchase of land, livestock and agricultural equipment for the purpose of settling Jewish families on agricultural colonies.

Large tracts of land were settled near Vitebsk with the Alter Rebbe's funds, and the Alter Rebbe would occasionally give speeches promoting agricultural work over business and trade. He would also visit the residents, encouraging them to set times for Torah learning.¹

At the time of his marriage, the Alter Rebbe was only fourteen years old, but incredibly, it wasn't the first time he was promoting agricultural work. Reb Moshe Ivansker told the Alter Rebbe's son, Reb Moshe, that he had witnessed the "*Liozna Iluy*," a young boy of eleven years old (!) standing on a wagon at the Liozna fair and exhorting the people to abandon trade and work the soil.

The context for the Alter Rebbe's speech was the expulsion of the Jews from Prague a short time earlier. Prague had been one of the most important Jewish cities, and the region surrounding Liozna saw increasing numbers of refugees streaming in, all in need of housing and employment.



A JEWISH PEDDLER TREKKING THROUGH VILLAGES IN POLAND. CIRCA 1910.

The Alter Rebbe's father settled many of them on his estate outside Liozna.²

This was only the beginning of the Rabbeim's extensive efforts to promote agricultural colonies, the famous *kolonyes*.

The Shtetl Myth

Our forefathers, Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov, were all shepherds. For many centuries in Eretz Yisroel, Jews tended to fields, raised livestock, and lived an agrarian lifestyle. *Terumos* and *maasros* were given from fields, *korbanos* were offered from livestock, and *bikkurim* from orchards. Life revolved around the seasons and harvests.

However, things were quite different 1800 years later, when the Alter Rebbe gave his speech on the wagon. For hundreds of years, Jews in Europe had found their primary source of livelihood in trade. Land ownership was often off-limits to Jews, and most crafts were protected by the local non-Jews in artisan-guilds. Instead, Jews turned to trading; peddlers bought and sold items in rural areas, while more successful merchants transported higher quality goods from France and England to Eastern Europe. The most successful managed to obtain government contracts to provide equipment for entire armies.

This was particularly important in the Kingdom of Poland, where the Alter Rebbe was born. Every self-respecting shtetl had a market day; Jews were the dominant force in moving goods throughout the country and in the entire service industry that surrounded it, like roadside inns. Jewish families dotted the length and breadth of the land, often just one family in each village, serving as the connection between the village and the outside world.

It sounds strange to the modern ear, but even in the "ancient" shtetl, Jews generally did not tend to fields or raise animals. With the encouragement of the Rabbeim, however, that began to change.

The Journey to Berdichev

During the Alter Rebbe's youth, a dramatic geopolitical event took place. The Kingdom of Poland—notorious for its unstable structure and weak leadership—was gobbled up by the surrounding countries of Prussia, Austria, and Russia. Unfortunately, most Jews suddenly found themselves in Russia, under the notoriously anti-semitic Czars.

Jewish livelihood took a very strong hit. The Kingdom of

Poland had been economically free, but Russia set up strict border laws blocking free trade, and the Pale of Settlement locked the Jews into a small geographic area. Corrupt officials now demanded exorbitant bribes to allow passage. The Russian government saw free trade as a bad thing—a way for Jews to profit from the poor peasants. In some instances, they banned items altogether; the Czarina Catherine once declared the import of paper illegal, because she feared that paper—and therefore books—would educate peasants, and lead to revolt.

In this climate, thousands of Jews lost their livelihood. But that was only the beginning. Soon, the government issued a series of bans directly restricting Jewish livelihoods, most significant among them the ban on leasing taverns and selling vodka, a staple of Jewish livelihood for centuries. Soon, Jews were banished from villages and entire rural areas, and forced to settle in the cities and larger towns, where it was becoming harder and harder to earn a living.

Despite the suffering, some of the *talmidei haMaggid* saw a silver lining in the situation. It was exceedingly difficult to lead a religious life in the remote villages, and some tavern-keepers were known to get very comfortable with the local non-Jews and weaken their connection to Torah and Mitzvos. When Chassidim wrote to Reb Mendel Horodoker about the decrees, he recommended that Jews leave the villages in any event, and Reb Boruch of Mezhibuzh likewise did not see village dwellers in a positive light.

The Alter Rebbe saw things differently. Seeing the suffering of his Jewish brethren, he embarked on a journey throughout Russia in the year of 5570, at the age of 65, raising money for the banished Yidden and working to avert the decrees.

“During the trip,” the story was often told, “the Alter Rebbe and Reb Moshe Vilenker suddenly felt drowsy and dozed off. This was quite unusual, and when they woke up, the Alter Rebbe said that a *neshama* had visited him from the supernal realms and told him that the *gezeiros* were due to the *kitrug* of Shabbos against the village Jews.

“What do you think we should do?” the Alter Rebbe asked Reb Moshe.

“Perhaps we should return home?” Reb Moshe replied.

“I don’t think so,” the Alter Rebbe said. “The villagers are those who provide food for traveling Jews. They provide a place with Tallis and Tefillin where travelers could daven... If there is a problem with Shabbos, we need to deal with it separately.”

The Alter Rebbe saw the taverns in a positive light and

endeavored to mitigate the decrees, even traveling to Petersburg to meet with government officials, but the situation continued to worsen. Another solution was needed.



THE APPROXIMATE TERRITORY WITHIN THE 'PALE OF SETTLEMENT' IN SOUTHERN UKRAINE PERMITTED BY TSAR ALEXANDER I FOR JEWISH AGRICULTURAL COLONIZATION IN THE TIMES OF THE ALTER REBBE.



SOME OF THE COLONIES ESTABLISHED ALONG THE DNIEPER RIVER. NOTE THE RUSSIFIED SPELLING OF NAHAR-TOV AND SDEH-MENUCHAH AND THE COLONY OF ROMANOVKA WHERE REB AVROHOM DOVID LAVUT WAS RAV.



The Esrog Campaign

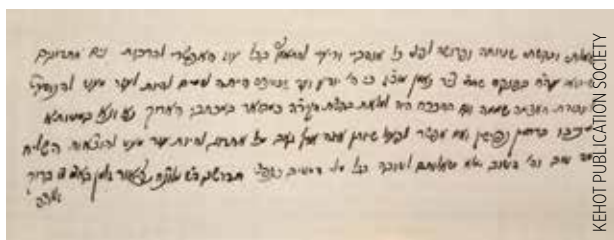
Realizing that tens of thousands of Jews had been left without homes and livelihoods, the government allowed for the establishment of agricultural colonies in Southern Ukraine which were able to contain thousands of Jewish families. The government even provided horses for the journey and permission to graze the animals in government owned fields along the way.

The Alter Rebbe encouraged families to make the move, and a widespread effort began in White Russia to support the effort. Some communities, like Vilna, demanded that all jewelry be donated towards the new settlements. Other communities made donations of *sifrei Torah* and *sefarim*.

The largest effort was the *esrog* campaign; a communal tax was enacted on *esrogim*, and the money raised was funneled to the settlements. There was a fear that—due to the tax—fewer people would purchase *esrogim*, so the Alter Rebbe sent out a *michtav klali* asking that Chassidim make every effort to buy as many *esrogim* as possible, “to help those traveling to settle the barren soil.”³

Over the next few years, numerous colonies were established in the Cherson—Nikolaev region. Due to their Jewish nature, many of them had genuine Hebrew names (with translations being used in official Russian documents), such as Nahar-Tov, Yifei-Nahar, and Sdeh-Menuchah. Over the next few decades, some twenty-two colonies were established in the area.

Among the colonists was Reb Yehudah Leib and Feiga Lavut and their young child Avraham Dovid—the Rebbe’s great-great-grandfather. He 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.⁴



THE ALTER REBBE'S MICHTOV KLOLI REGARDING THE ESROG CAMPAIGN.

Achdus

Imagine you were one day taken from your home and settled near a barren field, given some equipment, and told, “Go ahead, it’s all yours.”

The Jews settling in the colonies came armed with hope and determination, but with little experience. Agriculture is a very difficult field of work; the labor is intensive, and one is dependent on the seasons and unpredictable weather.

Soon after the colonies were established, messages were sent back—it wasn’t going well. It was difficult to learn the trade, the work was backbreaking, and they weren’t seeing success. People were starving.

Hearing about the crisis, the Jewish communities of Lithuania and White Russia did something unprecedented: An ‘*Achdus*’ campaign was declared by both Chassidim and Misnagdim to alleviate the plight of their brethren. It was just fifteen years since the peak of the conflict, with the arrest of the Alter Rebbe, and now, everyone joined hands. Reb Chaim Volozhiner led a committee alongside Reb Pinchas Reizes, appointed by the Mitteler Rebbe, and an urgent letter was sent to all communities describing the difficult state.

A new tax was declared: Every Shabbos eve, before the candle lighting, a coin was to be put into a pushka for every candle being lit. If you owned a silver *leichter*, you were obligated to give two coins per candle. If you were too poor to light more than two candles, you were exempt from the tax.⁵

As the years passed, the situation improved. Seven years later, the Mitteler Rebbe wrote a *michtav klali*, praising the colonies.

“I personally saw during my visit to the steppes how Yidden enthusiastically work the land with their wives and children... They are well-fed and happy with their lot; they learn Torah and work in a holy manner... It may not provide them with riches to buy fancy clothes and jewelry, but they are very comfortably provided for. It was very positive, in my opinion.”

The Mitteler Rebbe encouraged *anash* to continue settling the colonies, adding that if people don’t know how to work the fields, “you could hire non-Jewish hands to work for the first two-three years, until you learn the work yourself.”

Recognizing that some looked askance at this form of labor, the Mitteler Rebbe explained: “Don’t look down at such work, *chas veshalom*. On our land, in Eretz Yisroel, our entire livelihood came from fields and orchards—those who were wealthy had many workers—so why should we be worse than our forefathers, even if we live in foreign lands?”⁶

The Half-Rebbe of the Colonies

One day, the Mitteler Rebbe summoned a young chossid, just twenty three years old.

“Imagine to yourself,” the Rebbe said, “a *yishuvnik*, a farmer, standing in the field with his yarmulke and tzitzis, plowing the earth and davening to Hashem. He doesn’t need help from other people to make a living; he makes a living by lifting his eyes to the heavens and feeling Hashem’s presence.”

The chossid, Reb Hillel Paritcher, had a powerful sense of imagery, and in his mind’s eye saw thousands of Jews tilling the soil bedecked in yarmulkas and tzitzis. The image was so compelling, he decided to travel to them.⁷

For many years, Reb Hillel visited the colonies every Av and Elul to inspire the Yidden working there.

Reb Hillel was no ordinary “*shadar*.”

In those days, the Rabbeim would send messengers known as *shadar*’s, (*shluhei d’Rabannan*) to repeat Chassidus and collect *ma’amad* funds from Chassidim throughout Russia. Chassidim used to joke that there were three types of *shadar*: Some focused on teaching Chassidus while agreeing that the money be sent in the mail. Some focused on raising money, and said that the Chassidus would come in the mail. And then there were the ‘real’ *shadars*, who made sure that the *ma’amad* was raised, and taught as much Chassidus as they could.

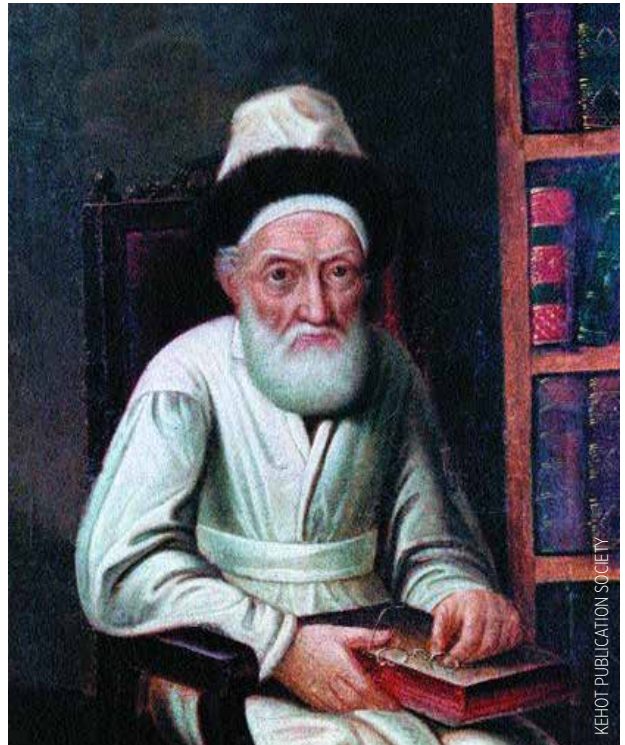
Reb Hillel was of the third type, and more. To the simple, hardworking Jews of the colonies, Reb Hillel was the image of a real tzaddik, a person of genuinely holy stature, but who truly loved them and cared for them. They would greet him by the thousands.

“Reb Hillel was a very warm person,” the Friediker Rebbe related, “and he was *mekarev* every Jew and every Jewish child. He loved to say, ‘a *Yiddishe yingele*...’ When he looked at a Jewish child, he saw only his *neshama*... You couldn’t find *gaavah* or *gasus* ten miles around Reb Hillel.”

During one such visit, Reb Hillel was saying a *maamar* to the large crowd gathered outdoors—there was no room that could hold them all—when he noticed that some were weeping. Reb Hillel was a profound *maskil*, and even his ‘easy’ *maamarim* were difficult for the audience to understand. They were upset.

Reb Hillel paused, and said the following:

“For a Sefer Torah to be kosher, ink and a quill is not enough. There needs to be parchment—and the ink of the letter needs to be completely surrounded by the parchment.



You cannot imagine the joy in heaven when Yidden simply come together; that is the parchment upon which the greatest Sefer Torah can be written.”⁸

Even many years after his passing, Reb Hillel’s name was repeated with awe and reverence in the colonies; stories were told and retold about his visits, and many families named their children after him, in gratitude for the indelible impact he had on them.⁹

Honored Citizen for Generations

In the days of the Tzemach Tzedek, a unique colony was established in White Russia, near Minsk, named Schedrin.¹⁰ As a testament to its uniqueness, a description was published about it in a Jewish newspaper during the lifetime of the Tzemach Tzedek.

The description was written by Chaim Yeshinovsky, who went on a journey criss-crossing all of Jewish Russia. When he arrived in Schedrin, he asked the people about the colony, and they told him its history: “We are farmers. When



Czar Nikolai's announcement about available lands was made public, our Rebbe, 'Reb Mendel Lubavitcher,' gathered us to this estate which he had purchased personally... Our Rebbe also built us a shul where we daven every morning and evening, and among us are those who learn Torah, Mishnah and Gemara."

The entire colony was considered the private property of the Tzemach Tzedek, who purchased it with the help of one of the wealthy Chassidim. Lots were divided and given to Jews who were willing to settle there and work the land, and it became a source of income for many families. Within several decades, thousands of Jews lived there.

This colony had a unique status. It was the only town in the

entire White Russia which did not contain a single non-Jewish resident. There were some temporary Shabbos-goys, but otherwise, it was a purely Yiddishe, Chassidishe shtetl. "In this village," another article describes it, "they know nothing of the *shkotzim* who frighten Jewish children in all the other Jewish towns. It was said that Schedrin is, itself, Eretz Yisroel..." In Russia of those days, this brought a distinct disadvantage—market-fairs were held on Church holidays by non-Jewish entities, so the absence of non-Jews meant no market-fairs. Nonetheless, the town retained its nature.

Reb Zalman Shimon Dvorkin learned in Tomchei Temimim in Schedrin, and would describe the character of one of its inhabitants, Reb Itche Nochum the blacksmith, who was a learned Jew, knowledgeable in Chassidus, with profound *yiras shomayim*. In the winter, he would go to mikvah in a hole in the icy river. Reb Zalman Shimon said that he would spend hours watching Reb Itche Nochum fix metalware and horseshoes, while his lips constantly moved with words of Chassidus. When his children wanted him to move to America in his final years, the Frieddiker Rebbe said to them, "But who will remain there?!"

In later years, *maskilim* tried to open a school in Schedrin, and the Rebbe Rashab wrote an urgent letter to stop it. "Your land and your city are under the banner of the Rabbeim," the Rebbe Rashab reminded them. A city personally founded by the Tzemach Tzedek should not, *chas veshalom*, fall prey to the *maskilim*.

The town of Schedrin served another important purpose: Since the times of the Alter Rebbe, the Rabbeim and the Beis Harav lived under threat. As public figures, the government—sometimes the local government and sometimes the national government—would try to pressure them; sometimes they wanted the Rabbeim to support the *maskilim*, sometimes they wanted their children to serve in the army 'as an example for other Jews,' and so on. Being a prominent figure in Czarist Russia came at a cost.

To relieve some of the pressure, the Chassidim used Schedrin to promote the Tzemach Tzedek to the status of "Hereditary Honored Citizen."

The law stated that if one owned large properties and settled them with workers, he could become an "Honored Citizen" who was freed from taxes, exempt from the draft, and given several other privileges. Crucially, it also included the right to travel throughout the Russian empire (Yidden were usually confined to the "Pale of Settlement"), which would allow the Rabbeim to travel to Moscow and Petersburg on behalf of Russian Jewry.



משא לעופה, ובתנפוש נפשי מעט מעמל הדרך, אמרתי: מה טוב ומה נעים המקום הזה, ושלשה אנשים עומדים לפני, עברים אתם אדוני הגורו נא לי מי אתם פה ומה לכם פה כי לשם עיר שצערדין לא שמעתי בלתי היום, ויענו לי האנשים עובדי אדמה אנתו מעת יצאה הפקודה בחסדי אדונינו הקיסר ניקאל אי ע"ה לתת לאחננו ב"י אדמה לעבד בה ולמצוא מנוח לנפשינו, אסף אותנו אדונינו הרב הגאון ר' מענדל על לובאוויצער ויתן לנו חסישור הזה שנקנה במיטב כספו ואמר קא לכם אדמה קרו לכם איש איש חלק בארץ לעבד אדמה, חוק ירכם והתאזרו במלאכתכם והי יברך אתכם במעשי ידכם, ונשמעה לדברי צדק אלה באנו הגה וכל איש מאתנו לקח שדה חלקו לנהלה לו, ונעבד בה אנתנו נשנו ונפנו, וה' השב והמשיב הריק שפעת ברכתו במעשי ידיו אין מחסור לנו, גם בנה לנו הרב אדונינו בית תפלה ונחפלה בה בוקר וערב; גם תורתנו לא נעזבה מאתנו, ובין אנורחני נמצאים אנשים לומדי תורה ויחלקו לנו ולבננו ידיעת תורה משה גם משנה ונמרא — בין אדוני נמצאים בעלי מלאכות חייסים סנדלרים וכל מעשי ידי אדם — לא כן אנתנו כשארי עובדי אדמה בימים שעברו, עברים אנתנו וזכרנו מאמר החכם שלמה, לכל זמן עת לעבד אדמה עת להתפלל עת ללמוד תורה — בקדחתנו לא יבוא המצית להצית לנו לכל נשחת יין, כי שנות י"ש לדרפה הוא לנו, הן ידענו אשר אבילה ושתיה יתחוק הגוף והנפש, וכל המסוף יותר מדי אך לכוה תוא ויוק הגוף והנפש, אנתנו לחמו במשקל נאכל ויין במשורה נשתה וחמרי אלהינו לא נשכח, הן ידענו אכי אבותינו אברהם היה עובד אדמה, ויה גם הוא סבניס אורחיס וירושה הוא לנו מאבות אבותינו לעבד אדמה ולדעת נכורות בורא יחד, ולתת שבת והוריה לו" וכשעני דבריהם אמרתי אין טוב בארץ כי אם לעבד אדמה ולראות ברכה במעשה ידיו לחיות שמה בחלקי, זה עשו וזה טובו. (חמשוך יבוא)

דברי חיים יאשינאווסקיא תושב עיר באבריוסק

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF ISRAEL

A DESCRIPTION OF A VISIT TO SCHEDRIN PUBLISHED IN THE JEWISH NEWSPAPER HAKARMEL IN 5622, DURING THE LIFETIME OF THE TZEMACH TZEDEK.

So, wealthy Chassidim arranged for the purchase and settlement of Schedrin under the Tzemach Tzedek's name, allowing him and his descendants to receive this status—which remained in effect until the Communists took over.¹¹

He Doesn't Need Help From Others

Why were the Rabbeim so committed to the idea of agricultural colonies?

At a most basic level, it was a practical choice. Doing business in those days was very risky; in the modern era, there are insurance policies for disasters, protocols for careful investing, and the option of bankruptcy in case of failure. But 200 years ago, none of that was true. One could not know if a venture would be successful, and it was difficult to ascertain whether a potential investment was a scam or not. If someone fell into debt, he would often need to flee the country to avoid arrest or harassment.

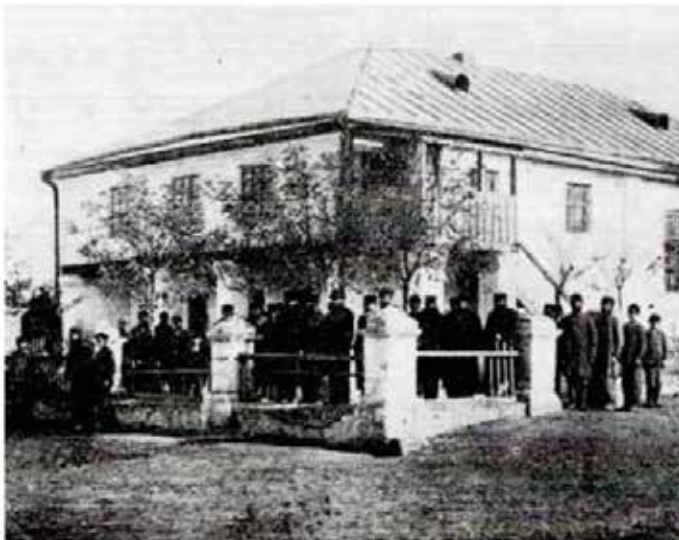
In his public letter, the Mitteler Rebbe described the state of affairs in stark terms: “There are few options to earn a livelihood, and there are countless paupers everywhere, to the extent that the vast majority of people are wandering on distant journeys [in hope of earning a living]. This is all due to a lack of real jobs—many are accustomed from a young age to waste their time, and very few run stores and taverns. Very few are craftsmen, and those who have a sum of money, end up losing it [in failed business ventures].”

Working the land was, to an extent, more stable. You owned a piece of land, worked it, davened to Hashem for good weather, and that was it. There were fewer factors that could wreak havoc on your work. It would also lessen anti-semitism among government officials, who viewed the Jews negatively for their perceived focus on business.

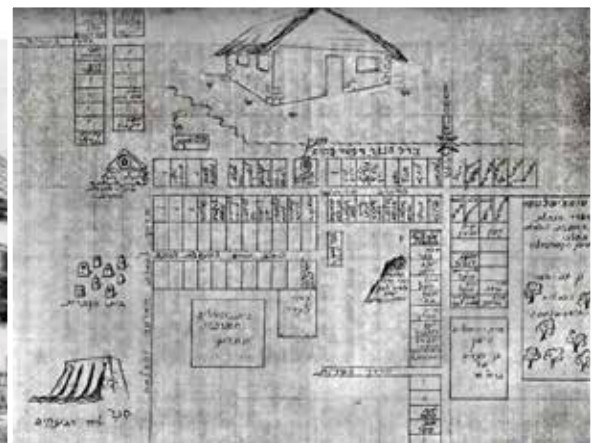
There was also an important spiritual aspect. When a person is involved in trade, his entire mind is consumed by it. He is constantly trying to imagine what could go wrong and how to resolve it. He is occupied with business trips that could go on for weeks and months. But owning a field—while the work was difficult—meant that a person's mind was more free to serve Hashem. After a long day at work, he could settle into the Beis Midrash and learn Torah, with nothing else to occupy his mind.

Another *ruchnius'diker* aspect was mentioned above. The Mitteler Rebbe told Reb Hillel: “Imagine a *yishuvnik*, a farmer, standing in the field with his yarmulke and tzitzis, plowing the earth and davening to Hashem. He doesn't need help from other people to make a living; he makes a living by lifting his eyes to the heavens and feeling Hashem's presence.”

A person working the field sees Hashem in his life far more than someone involved in trade. When trading, you might assume that your salvation could come from having the right partner. But when working the soil, you are dependent on the weather—and there is no mistaking the hand of Hashem there.



THE SHUL IN YEFEH NAHAR.



A MAP OF THE COLONY OF NAHAR TOV DRAWN FROM MEMORY BY FORMER RESIDENT ISRAEL BETZER.



One Hundred Years of Colonies

For generations, the colonies preserved their Chassidisher character. Most of the residents were simple Jews who ended their learning at Bar Mitzvah, but nevertheless retained the Chabad *lachluchis* (heartfelt style) and considered themselves dedicated Chassidim of the Rebbe. There were always those among them—usually the *klei kodesh* (rabbis, teachers, etc.)—who kept an active connection to the Rabbeim in Lubavitch, even making the occasional journey there.

Someone who visited the colony of Nahar-Tov later described the davening there: “The shul was full of people; the peasants were dressed nicely, while the *klei kodesh* even wore kapotes. It was a noisy davening—they all davened like Yidden, they weren’t standing like *golems* who don’t ‘know what they are doing.’”

Shortly after the Rebbe Rashab officially accepted the *nesius* in 5654, he visited the colony of Romanovka. It had been many years since the Rebbe Maharash’s last visit, so the impending visit generated a lot of excitement. People came from all the surrounding colonies, and when the Rebbe Rashab’s carriage appeared, they unhitched the horses and

personally drew the wagon the last 20 kilometers into town. Accompanying the Rebbe Rashab was Reb Dovid Zvi (Radatz) Chein, who described later how broken the Rebbe was by the *kvod* he received and said: “I wish that I would feel the same *tzubrukenkeit* on Erev Yom Kippur and at Ne’ilah”.¹²

During the Rebbe Rashab’s *nesius*, Zionism began to spread. Messengers would go to towns and cities asking Jews to support the new *kibbutzim* in which Jews were working the land in Eretz Yisroel. When one such messenger arrived in Nahar-Tov, he was at first welcomed with open arms; as farmers themselves, the locals thought highly of the idea, and began making regular donations and attending his talks.

But then, a *chossid* happened to travel to Lubavitch, and the Rebbe Rashab heard about the new cause. A short time later, a letter came from the Rebbe explaining that the new movement encouraged the abandonment of Torah and Mitzvos, and would have an adverse influence on their young.

That put an end to the meetings and donations. The majority of the *kolonist’n* refused to associate with the messenger, and his efforts quickly died out. By his own description, the *kolonist’n*—despite their simplicity—were very committed to Torah, and saw the Rebbe as the person who would protect their children from the new ideologies.



SOME OF THE PAINTINGS BY ISSACHAR RYBACK WHO VISITED THE COLONIES IN 5686 AND PUBLISHED THEM IN HIS BOOK “ON THE JEWISH FIELDS OF THE UKRAINE.”

A New Frontier

For close to one hundred years, the colonies of Cherson—as well as Schedrin—continued to thrive and grow. But then, the brutal hand of the communist regime was extended upon them as well. Yiddishkeit was outlawed, the shuls were shut down, and in some instances, the Jews were chased off the land altogether. In the area of Cherson some new colonies were established for Jews, but Yiddishkeit was obviously not part of the picture.

Several decades later, the Frierdiker Rebbe saw an opportunity to establish a new colony—this time in Eretz Yisroel.¹³

In 5708, Zalman Shazar (later President of Israel) had a *yechidus* with the Frierdiker Rebbe on the evening before the United Nations vote on the establishment of a Jewish state in Eretz Yisroel. During the *Yechidus*, the Frierdiker Rebbe broached the topic of founding a Chabad village in Eretz Yisroel.

The idea of a Chabad village had been circulating among Chassidim in Eretz Yisroel for several years. At the time, the Chabad community in the Holy Land was small and scattered, and Chassidim believed that a centralized location would improve their physical and spiritual situation. The end of World War II added a sense of urgency as hundreds of Lubavitch families were stranded in displaced persons camps in Germany and Austria.

Ultimately, a location was found: an abandoned Arab village near Lod called Safiriyya. As the plans began taking shape, the Frierdiker Rebbe directed many to make their way to Eretz Yisroel. At the end of Nissan 5709, the Frierdiker Rebbe sent Rashag to Eretz Yisroel to survey the situation and assist in settling the refugees. Several weeks later, shortly after Lag B'omer, he was joined by Reb Avraham Pariz who brought a Sefer Torah from the Frierdiker Rebbe.

The Frierdiker Rebbe also sent a letter, containing the “charter” for Kfar Chabad:

“Baruch Hashem, Friday, Erev Shabbos Parshas *Ki Savo'u El Ha'aretz, V'shavs Ha'aretz Shabbos Lahashem*,

“As you settle in the Holy Land, you must contemplate and internalize the fact that Divine providence has brought you to the land *‘asher einei Hashem Elokecha bah*, which the eyes of Hashem are upon, from the beginning of the year through its end, and you are now present in the palace of the King of kings, *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*, at every moment.

“This Sefer Torah should serve as a constant reminder to lead your lives along the path shown to us by the Rabbeim, to educate your children without compromises, and to spread

your light to the rest of the Jewish people, guiding them on the path to G-dliness: Torah study with fear of heaven and scrupulous fulfillment of the mitzvos. This should be done in a loving manner, stemming from *Ahavas Yisroel* and Chasidisher *middos*.

“May each of you be a light illuminating the current exile, until Hashem will redeem us.”¹⁴

The official inauguration of Kfar Chabad took place on Yud-Beis Tammuz 5709, at a grand farbrengen that included prominent officials, led by future Prime Minister Levi Eshkol.

The Agriculture

When the village was finally settled, the surrounding fields were raffled off and the Chassidim began to work the land.

Like the early Russian *kolonist'n*, the Chassidim in Kfar Chabad were city people; they had lived most of their lives in urban environments and had no experience whatsoever with agricultural work. But they nevertheless got to work and tried to learn.

The sight of long-bearded religious Jews toiling in the fields and raising animals went against the stereotypical image of religious Jews in Eretz Yisroel, and was often praised by government officials.

Because of this unique image, many government officials were willing to lend a hand. Some equipment was provided, and teachers were hired to show Chassidim the ropes. The wife of one prominent official spent many days in Kfar Chabad teaching the women how to plant vegetable gardens. Everyone got busy planting wheat, barley, corn and more.

To their consternation, the first year's harvest was very poor, and the second year wasn't much better. The next year, 5712, was *shmitah*, so the workers spent their days in shul—learning, davening, and farbrenging, hoping the coming year would yield something better.

Another challenge was bands of Arab marauders, who would sneak over the border from Jordan or Gaza, and kill, maim, and steal at will. Small villages located in middle of vast orchards and forests were prime targets.

Notwithstanding all the setbacks, the inhabitants persevered. Month after month, year after year, they slowly built up the town, and with the Rebbe's *brachos* they began to see success.

As a town founded upon the ideals of Chabad, the Rebbe held the spiritual state of Kfar Chabad as a primary concern.



“When the city was founded,” the Rebbe noted in a letter in 5712, “my father-in-law, the Rebbe said ‘*az di zach firt er alein*—he is personally managing this project,’ and therefore, all the affairs of Kfar Chabad need to be approached from the standpoint of his *ratzon*; it is no private matter.”¹⁵

The Rebbe viewed Kfar Chabad as much more than a private colony. The Rebbe emphasized that “*Ufaratzta*” in Eretz Yisroel must emanate from Kfar Chabad. In a *yeichidus* with Reb Boruch Gopin, the Rebbe described it as “the *ir habirah*, the capital city.” There “*hert men uhn giluy Elokus*—one perceives a revelation of G-dliness.”

At the same time, the rural, agricultural nature of the village remained paramount. At one point, only half of the families in Kfar Chabad were involved in agriculture, and a proposal arose to move them to a new site, while Kfar Chabad would become a more “normal” community. The Rebbe dismissed the idea; “I hope and trust—and in my opinion, there is no other option—that the main occupation in Kfar Chabad include agriculture. Not as a secondary matter, but as a primary one. If there are families who—for whatever reason—are not suited for agriculture, there are surely enough families who are... They should make every effort to specifically engage in agriculture. Everything else should be supplementary to that.”¹⁶



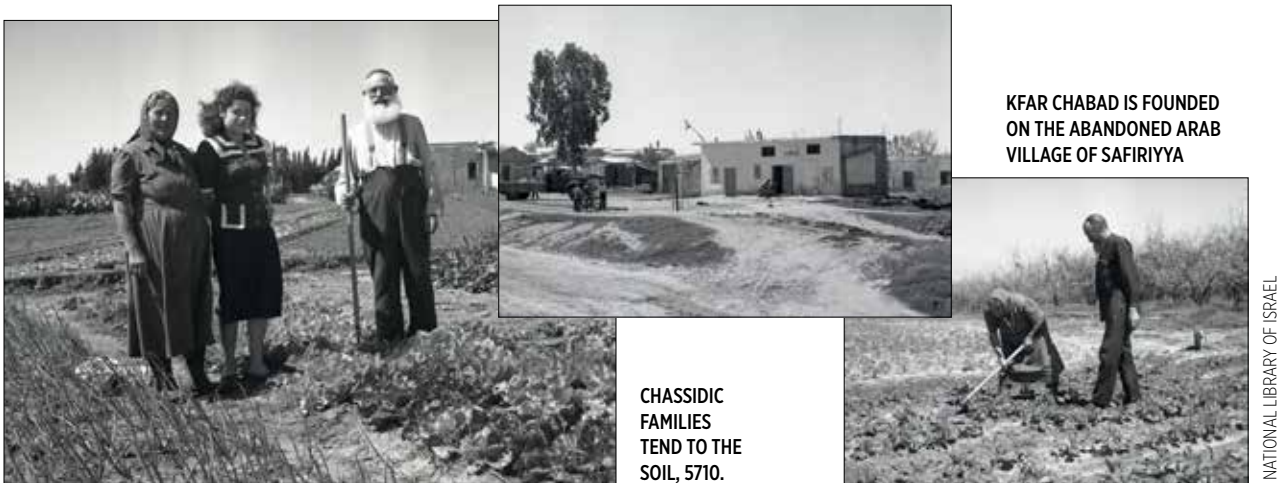
During a Pesach farbrengen in the early years in America, the Frieddiker Rebbe was explaining the value of *horovanye*, difficult toil: “Chassidus believes in abilities that were developed by the person—not ones he was born with. Chassidus places the entire weight of one’s *avodah* on toiling with his

body and soul.”

To explain this idea, the Frieddiker Rebbe quoted a saying of the Chassidim of old that hearkened back to the image of the *yishuv'nik*, the simple Jew—like those of the colonies—who toiled for his livelihood with simple faith in Hashem:

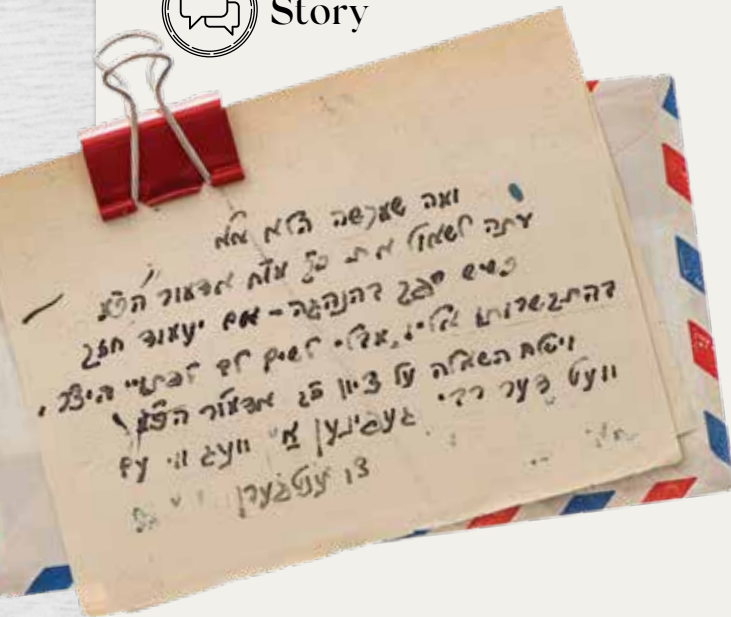
“An old *yishuv'nik* is better than a young *iluy*.”¹⁷

1. Reshimos of the Frieddiker Rebbe.
2. Likkutei Dibburim vol. 3 p. 936.
3. Igros Kodesh Admur Hazaken p. 359.
4. See Derher Elul 5781.
5. Igros Kodesh Admur Haemtza'i p. 295.
6. The information in the previous three sections is based on “Girush Hakfarim B'Rusya,” Heichal Habaal Shem Tov Issue 13.
7. Sefer Hasichos 5704 p. 83.
8. Sefer Hasichos 5704 p. 148.
9. Many details about the colonies are collected in “Chassidus Chabad Umoshvos Cherson” by Shlomo Baradah.
10. Details about Schedrin were collected in “Admur HaTzemach Tzedek Rochesh Karka b'Shedrin” by Reb Yehoshua Mundshein.
11. Igros Kodesh Admur HaTzemach Tzedek p. 130.
12. Reshimas Hayoman pg. 252.
13. For more about Kfar Chabad, see Derher Tishrei 5779.
14. Ibid p. 167.
15. Igros Kodesh vol. 6 p. 257.
16. Igros Kodesh vol. 7 p. 72
17. Likkutei Dibburim vol. 3 p. 427





Story



לע"נ
הילדה התמימה אלטא מינא ע"ה בת יבלחט"א הרה"ח
הרה"ת ר' ישכר שלמה ומרת שיינא שיחיו טייכטל
תלמידת בית רבקה חברה בצבאות ה' זכתה לקירוב
מיוחד מכ"ק אדמו"ר נשיא דורנו נקטפה בדמי ימיה ביום
הש"ק, פרשת ואלה שמות כ"ג טבת ה'תש"נ
ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

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

דער רבי וועט געפינען א וועג...

WRITTEN BY: RABBI LEVI GREENBERG

As We Heard Them

Stories heard by Chassidim in random places and times.

They Were After Someone Else



AS HEARD BY
RABBI BARUCH EPSTEIN
(Chicago, IL)

A fellow once approached me in a restaurant, asking if I was a Lubavticher. He proceeded to share the following story.

Recently his friend, who was also his chavrusa, got caught up in an FBI investigation which was ruining his life financially and medically. It caused him such severe

shalom bayis problems and other heartache that they even stopped learning together. It was a real pity to see him deteriorate like that. Then, a few weeks earlier, they met and he noticed that his friend looked a lot better. He explained:

"A few weeks ago I was in New York to meet with a

lawyer about my problems with the feds. The day before my meeting I met with an old friend and shared my story with him. He told me that in New York everyone knows that if you have a problem you go to the Lubavitcher Rebbe's Ohel to ask for a bracha. He encouraged me to do so as well."

"At first I rejected the idea outright because I am proudly Litvish and did not feel comfortable going to the Ohel, but then I realized the Ohel was not far from Long Island where I needed to meet the lawyer the next day, so I decided to stop at the Ohel on the way. It certainly couldn't hurt..."

"I was surprised to meet my old chavrusa from Pon-evezh Yeshiva there. When I asked him what he was doing at the Ohel he sheepishly answered that he was hedging his bets... I already felt a bit more comfortable knowing I was not the only Litvak coming to the Ohel."

"After davening at the Ohel I drove to the lawyer's office and explained my situation. He called his contacts at the FBI and to my utter surprise, it turned out that the feds were not after me at all! They suspected I had information about someone else and after a few inquiries, they closed my case! From then on, Baruch Hashem, my life is getting back on track."

We Named him Menachem Mendel



AS HEARD BY
RABBI SHOLOM LEVERTON
(West Windsor, NJ)

After the banquet at the Kinus Hashluchim 5783, as I was walking to my car, I was approached by a Yid who asked me if I could give him a ride to his car, parked about half a mile away from the banquet parking lot. I readily agreed and during the short ride, I asked him who he was and what brought him to the Kinus Hashluchim banquet.

"My name is Mordechai. I am a Gerer chossid and I know many shluchim around the world. However, I come to the Kinus every year to show *hakoras hatov* to the Rebbe."

"Almost three years ago my wife endured a very difficult pregnancy. The doctors predicted the baby wouldn't survive and, even if it did, it would be severely handicapped and wouldn't live long."


"My father took me to many tzaddikim for *brachos* but as the pregnancy progressed, the doctors were even more convinced that the outcome would be very bad."

"My grandmother confided to me that when she was pregnant with my father there were serious issues and she went to the Rebbe who gave her a *bracha*, after

which everything worked out. She advised me to go to the Ohel to ask the Rebbe for a bracha for our unborn child."

"My wife and I went to the Ohel. We davened and promised the Rebbe that we would name our son Menachem Mendel. Boruch Hashem our son was born hearty and healthy and we will soon be celebrating his *upshernish*"

I asked Mordechai if he ever went back to the Ohel with his son to thank the Rebbe for such a tremendous *bracha*.

"Of course!" he said. "We go as a family every Motzei Shabbos. Besides for Yomim Tovim, we never missed a week." 

YOUR STORY

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Moments





JEM 309603

לזכות
כל תושבי ארץ הקודש תובב"א

ולזכות החיילים המגינים על עם ישראל
להצלחה מרובה, ישועה, ושלום אמיתי ע"י משיח צדקנו

נדפס ע"י הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל וזוגתו מרת חי'
מושקא, בניהם ובנותיהם חנה, לוי, פערל, שלום דובער,
שיינא, סטרנא, אברהם שיחיו
לברטוב

A Personal Moment With A Personal Pushka

1 Adar 5747

On Shabbos Parshas Mishpatim 5747, the Rebbe spoke of a new campaign in continuation to the recent Michtav Kloli, requesting that every Jewish child transform their bedroom by having their own Chumash, Tehillim and Tanya, as well as their own Pushka. Two days later, on Monday Rosh Chodesh Adar, the Rebbe distributed coins specifically for children to place in their new pushkos.

Compiled By: Rabbi Shabi Soffer





Mother's line up with children of all ages for this unique opportunity.





JEM 309638



Thousands of children receive a coin from the Rebbe's hand to put in their pushkos. The Rebbe makes an effort to gain the attention of each child.



JEM 309640



JEM 309646



JEM 309644



JEM 309641

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.

From the Rebbe's Hand

Following up on the article about *kuntreisim* distributed by the Rebbe ("Eternal Mementos," Tammuz 5783), I came across two meaningful *sichos* that underscore the significance of these *chalukos*, especially after Gimmel Tammuz.

1) On Motzei Vov Tishrei 5750 the Rebbe distributed a packet containing a *kuntres* with the *maamar* "U'She'avtem Mayim B'Sasson" 5615 of the Tzemach Tzedek, in connection with 200 years from his birth, along with a *michtav kloli*, a piece of *lekach* and a dollar, to men, women and children. The *chalukah* lasted four and a half hours and about 4,000 (!) people received this special gift from the Rebbe.

The following Shabbos, the Rebbe addressed the distribution that had taken place two nights earlier in extraordinary terms.

One of the special things that the Rebbe said was:

"An effort was also made to look at each and every one individually, including the young children, in order to bring forth the *kochos* that each and every one has. This includes the young children, who also have *kochos* which will be revealed

at a later stage in their fulfillment of these matters, both in their own lives, as well as in the influence they will have on their surroundings, especially in *hafatzas hama'ayonos chutza*." (*Toichen kotzor* 5750 pg. 38 - *bilti mugah*).

2) On Motzei Yud-Tes Kislev 5751 the Rebbe distributed a special edition of Tanya to men, women and children.

The following Shabbos, the Rebbe spoke about the special edition of Tanya that he had given out and said:

"The Tanya's that are left over from this edition should continue to be handed out on Motzei Shabbos. Those who do not manage to receive it should learn with those who did receive it, and according to "V'havto l'reacha kamocha," *kamocha mamash*, it will be considered as if they received it themselves exactly like those who hurried to receive it at the beginning of the distribution". (*Roshei devorim* 5751, beginning of fourth sicha - *bilti mugah*).

(It is noted in several *yomanim* that on Motzei Shabbos and Sunday, *mazkirus* proceeded to distribute the leftover Tanya's to people who had not received one from the Rebbe).

The message here is quite powerful; even one who was not *zoche* to receive a Tanya from the Rebbe, through learning

with those who were *zoche* to receive one, it is literally considered as if he himself received a Tanya from the Rebbe!

B'tefillah that we merit once again to these special *chalukos* with the *geulah shleima*,

Mendel Zaklikovsky
YESHIVAH AT THE OHEL, NY

Many Years Later

I want to share how much I enjoyed the interview/farbrenge with Reb Shlomo Zarchi in the Tammuz issue of Derher. After reading it I was inspired to learn some of the *sichos* that he spoke about which are relevant to our important role as Chassidim of the Rebbe and how the Rebbe connects with us after Gimmel Tammuz:

Rabbi Zarchi spoke of the special farbrengens of Shabbos Parshas Tetzaveh 5727 which was held at short notice after the Rebbe was informed that six *bochurim* in 770 had accepted upon themselves to be the first

group of *talmidim hashluchim* to Melbourne, Australia.

As recounted in the Derher article “Conquering Down under” of Nissan 5782, this farbrengen was unique as the Rebbe was only informed by Rabbi Hodakov that the six *bochurim* were ready to go on the shlichus after going up to his room following Musaf. Immediately upon hearing this he said that he would come down and farbreng.

In many *sichos*, the Rebbe spoke about the shlichus to Australia, including a very strong *sicha* which was later edited by the Rebbe and printed in Likkutei Sichos vol. 6, first *sicha* of Tetzaveh.

In this *sicha*, the Rebbe spoke about how Moshe Rabbeinu inaugurated Aharon and the kohanim to serve in the Mishkan and learns a powerful lesson regarding the Moshe Rabbeinu of the generation in relation to his Chassidim.

The Rebbe says that though Moshe Rabbeinu was the *Roiech* of his entire generation, nevertheless he brought close



Aharon and his sons from among all of Klal Yisroel to inaugurate them as Kohanim to perform the *avodah* in the Mishkan and the Beis Hamikdash, a service representing the whole nation.

Similarly the Nossi of the generation serves as the head of the generation, being *mashpia* and generating *chayus* to every Jew in the generation. Nevertheless, with regard to chassidim who go on the path paved by the Rabbeim, the Rebbe gives himself over to them in particular. He brought them closer and uplifted them, giving them from his own *koichos* until he made them into “*chayil Hashem*”, Hashem’s legion, to spread Torah to all of the Jewish people.

The Rebbe continued that since everything is *b’hashgocha pratis*, by which certain Jews should be Chassidim, meriting special closeness and bearing the responsibility of spreading Torah, this means that this is something which they are commanded by Hashem to act on.

I found this *sicha* unique, since we usually focus on the Rebbe as Nossi Hador of the entire Jewish people and in this *sicha* the Rebbe clarifies the special *zechus* and responsibility of being Chassidim and shluchim.

In another powerful *sicha* the Rebbe said at this farbrengen, the Rebbe referenced the well known story that when the Mitteler Rebbe sent a group of Chassidim to Eretz Yisroel to establish the Chabad settlement in Chevron, the Chassidim hesitated and asked, “What will be with Chassidus?” After relocating to Eretz Yisroel they would never again have the opportunity to hear Chassidus from the Rebbe!

The Mitteler Rebbe assured them that he would send them *bichlach* (manuscripts) of Chassidus so they would lack nothing.

“There is something in this story that needs clarification. Even though the

Chassidim would receive manuscripts of Chassidus they would still be unable to see the Rebbe, thus lacking the integral aspect of learning Torah directly from the Rebbe, as the possuk states *והיו עיניך רואות את מורִיךְ* - your eyes will see your teacher. In far away Eretz Yisroel the Chassidim would lack that.”

The Rebbe answered this question using the concept of *sefichim*, plants that sprout long after being planted. They are indistinguishable from plants that grow soon after being planted. If *beis din* notices plants growing in a field during *shemittah* there is no way to distinguish whether they are after-growths of the previous year’s planting or whether they were planted during *shemittah*. *Beis din* must therefore rely on testimony to determine this.

“So too regarding our question. Even though one may leave, and may no longer see what he has left behind, reminiscing and envisioning what he saw previously will affect him in the same way as if he was currently seeing it, like delayed-growth *sefichim* which can even produce another yield of *sefichim* (*s’fichei sfichim*).

The Rebbe added that unlike the Chassidim of the Mitteler Rebbe who were leaving for good, we will be able to see one another again. May it be *teikef umiyad mamosh*.

Yitzchok Cohen
BROOKLYN, NY

CORRECTION:

It was brought to our attention that the source of the Dvar Malchus (“A Word on the Parsha”) for Parshas Mikeitz (Derher Teves 5784) was stated incorrectly. The *sicha* cited is adapted from Likkutei Sichos vol. 10, p. 136. We apologize for the error.