

# Derher

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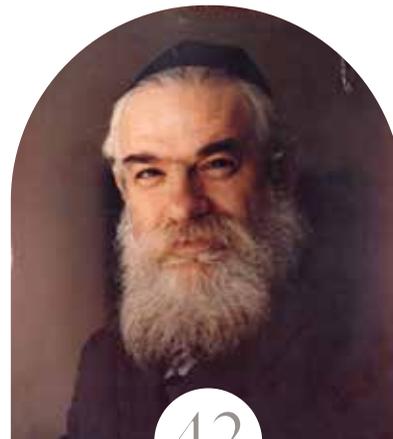
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This magazine  
has been made possible

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

ולזכרון הצדקנית הרבנית  
מרת חנה ע"ה  
שניאורסאהן  
בת הרה"ג הרה"ח ר' מאיר שלמה ע"ה  
אמו של כ"ק אדמו"ר  
לרגל היארצייט-הילולא  
ו' תשרי



For the month of Tishrei—the “שביעי” (seventh), “מושב” (filled with spiritual energy), and “משביע” (fills the rest of the year), there is so much to focus and reflect on. However, this year marks a special milestone: Vov Tishrei 5785 marks 60 years since the *histalkus* of the Rebbe’s mother, Rebbetzin Chana.

In addition to the great *zechus* that she had in raising the *nossi hador*, the Rebbe often spoke about her extraordinary *zechuyos* in her own right: Rebbetzin Chana was a partner with her husband, Harav Levi Yitzchok, in his *mesirus nefesh* to preserve Yiddishkeit in the former Soviet Union, and her tireless efforts to save his precious *chiddushei Torah*.

“Everything that my father did in his fight for Yiddishkeit,” the Rebbe said, “was due to the atmosphere in his home, fostered by my mother...”<sup>1</sup>

In her honor and memory, the Rebbe introduced his revolutionary teachings on Rashi’s commentary to the Chumash—the “Rashi Sichos.”

Marking 60 years since Vov Tishrei—the *Dvar Malchus* column in each magazine this year will feature one of the Rebbe’s Rashi Sichos, in an effort to pique further interest and deeper learning.

Another special launch in honor of this milestone is a new monthly column—N’shei Ubnos Chabad—featuring the Rebbe’s messages directed specifically to women, alongside many other new columns and updates in honor of the new year.

Let us hope that this new year will bring *ohra*, *bracha*, *geulah*, and all the blessings that the Jewish people so desperately need at this moment, with the coming of Moshiach, *teikef umiyad Mamash*.

#### The Editors

בברכת כתיבה וחתימה טובה לשנה טובה ומתוקה,  
טו אלול ה'תשפ"ד

1. Motzei Vov Tishrei 5750.



# Fish With A Purpose

IN HONOR OF 60 YEARS SINCE THE REBBE INTRODUCING HIS REVOLUTIONARY APPROACH TO UNDERSTANDING RASHI, 5725—5785, THIS MONTHLY COLUMN WILL FEATURE AN ADAPTATION OF ONE OF THE REBBE'S "RASHI SICHOS."<sup>1</sup>

**וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹקִים אֶת-  
הַתַּנִּינִים הַגְּדֹלִים** (א, כא)

"הוא לוֹיִתוֹ וּבֶן זֹוגוֹ שֶׁבְרָאָם זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה וְהָרַג אֶת הַנְּקֵבָה וּמְלַחָהּ לְצַדִּיקִים לְעֵתִיד לְבֹא, שְׂאֵם יִפְרוּ וְיִרְבוּ לֹא יִתְקַיֵּם הָעוֹלָם בְּפְנֵיהֶם" (רש"י)

And Hashem created  
the sea monsters...

*"This refers to the Leviatan and its mate, for He created them male and female, and He slew the female and salted her away [i.e. preserved her] for the Tzaddikim in the future, for if they would propagate, the world could not exist because of them." (Rashi)*

Rashi's commentary demands an explanation: If the world's existence depends upon the female Leviatan being killed, for what purpose did Hashem create it in the first

place? If the purpose is to serve it to "the Tzaddikim in the future" (when Moshiach comes), then it could have been created as a lifeless, already-salted fish?

This can be answered according to Rashi's *pirush* on a different *possuk*:

**לֹא-טוֹב הִיּוֹת הָאָדָם לְבַדּוֹ** (ב, יח)

"שְׂלֹא יֵאמְרוּ שְׂתֵי רְשׁוּיּוֹת הֵן, הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא בְּעֲלִיּוֹנִים יַחִיד וְאֵין לוֹ זֹוג, וְזֶה בְּתַחְתּוֹנִים וְאֵין לוֹ זֹוג" (רש"י)

It is not good for  
man to be alone...

*"Lest they [people] say, 'There are two authorities: Hashem is alone among the heavenly beings and He has no mate, and this one [man] among the earthly creatures has no mate.'" (Rashi)*

Based on the reasoning used in the second Rashi, we can explain the first Rashi: Had the male Leviatan been created

לעילוי נשמת אם המלך  
 הרבנית הצדקנית מרת חנה ע"ה ז"ל  
 אשת כ"ק הרה"ג והרה"ח המקובל  
 מוהר"ר ר' לוי יצחק  
 בקשר עם יום ההילולא השישים  
 ו' תשרי ה'תשפ"ה

נדפס ע"י  
 הרה"ת ר' לוי יצחק וזוגתו מרת  
 הדסה ומשפחתם שיחיו  
 סלונים



alone, without a mate, it would have left room for people to make the mistake of saying that “there are two authorities—Hashem has no mate, and the Leviasan has no mate.”

It was necessary, therefore, for Hashem to create the female Leviasan, and as a live creature.

According to this, however, we are still left with a question: For what purpose does Rashi mention the details of the female Leviasan being killed and “salted away for the Tzaddikim in the future”? What does this add to our understanding of the topic at hand?

The answer can be found in the concluding words of our *possuk*: וַיִּרְא אֱלֹקִים כִּי טוֹב—*and Hashem saw that it was good*” (as well as—and, indeed, even more prominently—later on in the *parsha*, in *possuk* 31: “וַיִּרְא אֱלֹקִים אֶת כָּל-אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה וְהִנֵּה—*And Hashem saw all that He had made, and behold it was very good*”):

If the entire purpose of the creation of the female Leviasan is only to preempt and *negate* a mistaken assumption (that “there are two authorities”)—a *negative* purpose, without any *positive* and productive element—then it is not possible to define its creation as “(very) good.”

This is why Rashi adds the additional detail of the female Leviasan being “salted away for the Tzaddikim in the future,” in order to highlight a *positive* element in its creation, allowing it to be defined as “(very) good.”

In Likkutei Torah, the Alter Rebbe explains the concept of the Leviasan in terms of *avodas Hashem*: The “Leviasan,” he says, represents an individual who is on an extremely elevated and exalted level of *avodas Hashem*, called יחודא עילאה. Compared to a fish in the sea who can swim very far distances with little effort, these holy individuals—also referred to as “*Nunei Yama*” (Aramaic for “Fish of the Sea”)—ascend higher and higher within the realm of *Kedusha* quickly and effortlessly.

Since these Tzaddikim are on such a lofty level—“*if they*

*would propagate, the world could not exist because of them*”: This form of *avodas Hashem* is special, and belongs only to a select few. For if it would be a common form of *avoda* that belongs to many, the physical limitations of the world would be overwhelmed with their intense holiness and cease to exist—contrary to Hashem’s desire. Hashem wants an earthly, physical and limited world, and that this world—as it is—should be a home for Him—a *dira lo yisborech ba’tachtonim*. The *avodah* of most people, therefore, is on the lower level of יחודא תתאה.

## Takeaway:

Hashem killed the female Leviasan, leaving the male one alive. Also, though the female Leviasan was killed, it didn’t disappear; its body remains for the future Tzaddikim (“Tzaddikim”—referring to all Yidden; “וועמך כולם צדיקים”).

From this we learn that also “regular” people (who are not on the “Leviasan” level) need to incorporate into their *avoda* a bit of the “Leviasan *avoda*” (i.e. not to suffice with just the *bittul* of יחודא תתאה, but also some of the *bittul* of יחודא עילאה.)

And since the *giluyim* of Moshiaich depend on our actions in *galus*, the little bit of the higher level of *bittul* that we have now prepares us for Moshiaich, a time when all Yidden will constantly be on the level of יחודא עילאה—the level of the Leviasan.

(Likkutei Sichos vol. 5, p. 19)

1. See “*Revolution in Rashi— parts I & II*,” Derher Vov Tishrei (supplement) and Shevat 5775.



Compiled By: Rabbi Levi Greenberg (OH)  
Written By: Rabbi Mendel Jacobs

לזכות  
החיילה בצבאות ה'  
ח' מושקא שתח'ל'  
לרגל יום הולדתה הראשונה כ"ו אלול ה'תשפ"ד

נדפס ע"י הוריה  
הרה"ת ר' לוי יצחק וזוגתו מרת  
מרים יוכבד ומשפחתם שיחי  
גאלדשטיין

# The Seven Days of Teshuvah

At the farbrengen on the second day of Rosh Hashanah 5734,<sup>1</sup> the Rebbe quoted an idea mentioned in the Siddur Ha'Arizal that the seven days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur include each of the seven days of the week, bringing atonement for all the wrongdoings committed on each corresponding day the previous year. For example, the Sunday of Aseres Yemei Teshuvah brings atonement for all the Sundays of the past year, the Monday for all the Mondays, and so on.

The exact wording in the Siddur Ha'Arizal is:

”אם חל יום ראשון מז' ימי התשובה ביום א' דשבת, מתכפרים לו  
כל עונותיו שחטא ביום א' דשבת...”

“If the first day of these seven days of *teshuvah* occurs on the first day of the week [Sunday], he receives atonement for all the sins transgressed on the Sundays [of the past year]...”

At this point, the Rebbe tangentially asked: Why was this example chosen? In the calendar that we follow, the first day of Rosh Hashanah can never occur on a Friday, so the first of the seven days of *teshuvah* cannot be on a Sunday!

The Rebbe answers that this example follows the first Rosh Hashanah of creation, which indeed occurred on a Friday, when Adam Harishon was created. In this manner, the first day of the seven that year was indeed a Sunday. (Later the Rebbe offers a second answer as well, as can be seen in the full transcription of the *sicha*.)



A few days later, at the farbrengen of Vov Tishrei 5734, the Rebbe continued the discussion:<sup>2</sup>

The Rebbe said that people had asked a question on the explanation he had offered: In the time of Adam Harishon, Rosh Hashanah only consisted of one day. If so, the first of the seven days of *teshuvah* would actually be Shabbos, not Sunday.

The Rebbe responded by asking an even greater question: If Adam Harishon only had one day of Rosh Hashanah, then there are actually **eight days** of *teshuvah* between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, not seven!

The Rebbe explained that Hashem wants there to be a full cycle of seven days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, in order to offer the opportunity to atone for all the days of the week. At times, there will be an eighth day as well, which Hashem adds for reasons known to Him alone. The eighth day that is sometimes added is the day right after Rosh Hashanah, and the seven days that precede Yom Kippur are the ones counted towards the seven-day cycle of *teshuvah*.

After the farbrengen, Reb Berel Rivkin wrote a letter<sup>3</sup> to the Rebbe offering an explanation of his own:

“I thought [perhaps the explanation for this] is that for Adam Harishon, Friday and Shabbos were like one long day<sup>4</sup> [so there were actually only seven days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur]...”

On Reb Berel's letter, the Rebbe circled the words “Friday and Shabbos were like one long day” and responded in his holy handwriting:





טור 'לעבן מיטן רבי'ן' הוקדש לזכרון  
ולעילוי נשמת  
ר' שמואל ב"ר יהושע אליהו ז"ל  
ואשתו מרת שרה ע"ה בת ר' יקותיאל  
ומרת לאה הי"ד  
ת'נ'צ'ב'ה'

ע"י בנם

ר' יקותיאל יהודה  
וזוגתו מרת פּעסל לאה ומשפחתם  
שיחיו  
רוהר

## A YEAR OF NISSIM

# TISHREI 5750

Already Pesach time 5749, the Rebbe announced that the year 5750 would be a “שנת נסים”—a year of miracles. Indeed as it turned out, it was a very special year both in the Rebbe’s presence and around the world; the “Evil Empire” of the Soviet Union began to dissolve without bloodshed; a prelude, the Rebbe declared, to the miracles of the Geulah.

Tishrei was always a special time in the Rebbe’s presence, with enough “*giluyim*” and spiritual energy to last all year and beyond. In this compilation we will focus on several unique moments that distinguished Tishrei 5750 from other years, based on accounts recorded in yomanim and other sources.

COMPILED BY: **RABBI YANKY BELL**

WRITTEN BY: **RABBI MENDEL JACOBS**

THE REBBE CARRIES THE SEFER TORAH TO THE BIMA AS SHLIACH TZIBBUR ON 6 TISHREI.



LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM186784

## A Most Unusual Time for a Farbrengen

On the first morning of Rosh Hashanah, a rumor circulated that the Rebbe would farbreng that afternoon—an unprecedented phenomenon. The Rebbe generally farbrengs at the end of the second day of Rosh Hashanah, close to the end of Yom Tov — in part because the Rabbeim were generally careful not to speak much at all on the first day of Rosh Hashanah. The surprise brought joy and excitement to everyone in shul.

Musaf ended shortly after 2:00 p.m., and about a half an hour later, the Rebbe entered the shul for the farbrengen.

As the Rebbe entered, the crowd sang the *niggun* with the words “השנה תהא שנת נסים” (This year will be a year of miracles), based on the *roshei teivos* of the new year.

The Rebbe sat down and made *kiddush*, and then the crowd sang “*Yemin Hashem*” (a *niggun* of the Tzemach Tzedek, whose 200th birthday was just celebrated on Erev Rosh Hashanah).

Addressing the obvious anomaly, the Rebbe began by explaining why he was holding a farbrengen at this unusual time:

Since it was Shabbos, and in the recent past there had been a farbrengen almost every Shabbos, it was appropriate to hold a farbrengen on this day. The custom is actually based on a practice instituted by Moshe Rabbeinu. The Midrash tells us that Moshe was told by Hashem that he should make “large gatherings” (“להקהיל קהילות גדולות”) every Shabbos, and teach future generations to do the same, to gather on Shabbos for communal Torah study.

The Rebbe went on to explain the special qualities of the day: the confluence of Rosh Hashanah and Shabbos create an utterly unique moment. “All of these special qualities were present the moment Rosh Hashanah began,” the Rebbe said. “But we had to wait for a time that we could practically gather the people together in order to discuss it at length, and appreciate it all the more...”

The farbrengen lasted almost two hours, after which the Rebbe davened Mincha.

The shul was not set up as it usually was for a farbrengen, creating a rather rare scene: All the tables had been removed for davening, and there wasn't enough time to set them up again. The only table in the room was the Rebbe's table—and people stood all about the

rest of the shul.

Another surprise took place on Motzei Yom Kippur: As usual, the Rebbe came outside to recite Kiddush Levana. After concluding, it seemed like the Rebbe was ready to go back inside, when he suddenly began saying a *sicha*!

The Rebbe spoke about the fact that we are supposed to begin building the sukkah on Motzei Yom Kippur. “We don't find that most people are careful to do this in practice, including myself,” the Rebbe said. “However, we can fulfill this by at least speaking about building the sukkah. May we speedily merit to sit in the sukkah built from the “hide of the Livyasan [with the coming of Moshiach]”. Have a good month and a good year, and may [this goodness] continue throughout the year ahead, especially given that it's a year of miracles, and the greatest miracles at that (*nissei nissim*)!”

## Vov Tishrei— The Distribution From Hashem

After Shacharis on the morning of Vov Tishrei, the Rebbe called Rabbi Dovid Nachshon and Mr. Avi Taub (who had been standing in the lobby) into his room. They gave the Rebbe several old *seforim* (presumably found on a recent trip to Russia), as well as the new key to the Rebbe's father's Tziyun. The Rebbe wished them that we should merit “הקיצו ורננו שוכני עפר” (those who lie in the dust shall arise and sing), and gave them each a piece of *lekach*.

Later that afternoon, the Rebbe asked that 10,000 copies of a newly discovered *maamar* from the Tzemach Tzedek be printed, as well as 10,000 copies of the most recent *michtav kloli*, to be distributed to all.

That night after Maariv, the Rebbe spoke a beautiful *sicha*, relating stories of the immense *mesirus nefesh* of his mother, Rebbetzin Chana, in great detail. The Rebbe spoke about her part in preserving the Torah of his father—how she painstakingly made ink so he could write down his innovative Torah-thoughts while in *golus*, as well as her part in her husband's activism in general. The atmosphere she fostered in their home allowed the Rebbe's father, Harav Levi Yitzchok, to fiercely stand up to one of the world's most powerful regimes, not bending one iota from Torah and Halacha.



After the *sicha*, the distribution began. The Rebbe gave out thousands of manila envelopes to men, women, and children, each containing: A copy of the *maamar* “*Ushé'avtem*” from the Tzemach Tzedek, a copy of the most recent *michtav kloli*, a piece of *lekach*, and a dollar for tzedakah. The Rebbe wished each person who passed “*Ah zisseh yohr*” (a sweet year).

One person wanted to ask the Rebbe for an additional envelope for a relative, but couldn't seem to get the words out. About half an hour later, the Rebbe asked his secretary to find out what the person had wanted. He was called back (after already having gone home), and this time he told the Rebbe that he wanted an additional envelope, and the Rebbe agreed.

The distribution continued for close to four and a half hours. When Rabbi Y.Y. Hecht passed, he told the Rebbe that the Rebbe has been standing for so long already; he should go have a bite to eat (the Rebbe had been at the Ohel and had not eaten all day). The Rebbe smiled and replied, “*Morgen vel ich meyashev zein...*” (I'll think about it tomorrow).

The following Shabbos—Shabbos Shuva, Parshas Haazinu, the Rebbe spoke about the distribution that had occurred two nights earlier in exceptional terms:

The reason for distributing *lekach*, the Rebbe explained, is in case it was decreed upon an individual to be forced to take provisions from a fellow human being during the coming year, the decree should be fulfilled by asking for



LEVI FREDIN VIA JEM 227080

THE REBBE SAYS A SICHA ON 6 TISHREI.

*lekach*. “As a matter of fact,” the Rebbe explained, “the *lekach* of Erev Yom Kippur (or the preceding days) is given in such a manner that it doesn’t even feel like it’s coming from a fellow human being—but straight from Hashem Himself. The person giving the *lekach* is merely an intermediary who connects (*‘memutza hamechaber’*).”

The Rebbe continued that this year, the *lekach* was given along with words of Torah (the *maamar*), which is referred to in a *possuk* containing the word *lekach*: “כִּי לֶקַח: טוֹב נָתַתִּי לָכֶם, תּוֹרַתִּי אֶל תַּעֲזוּבוּ” (For I have given you a good *‘lekach’* (lesson), do not forsake my Torah). The *maamar* itself featured a Yom Tov-diker cover, beautifully colored (in red), and is also about a joyous topic—“*Ushē’avtem mayim b’sasson*,” drawing water with joy (referring to the

*Ruach Hakodesh* drawn at the *Simchas Beis Hashoeva*).

This was a rare and glowing insight offered by the Rebbe himself about the nature of the distribution, further highlighting how special it was.

## Ohel Visits

Also unusual were the Rebbe’s surprise trips to the Ohel. On the morning of Erev Yom Kippur, a rumor circulated that the Rebbe was going to visit the Ohel that day—for the first time since 5720!

At 8:30 a.m., the Rebbe left for the *mikvah*, and on the way he gave a coin for tzedakah to the photographer, Reb Levi Friedin, saying, “Maybe you should take a photo

of the nickel!” After Shacharis, the Rebbe distributed *lekach* to those who hadn’t yet received. One of the people was an assistant to Minister Ariel Sharon (formerly the commander of the Southern Front of the IDF), who told the Rebbe that Mr. Sharon was about to publish a book. In it he would relate how the Rebbe’s cautionary words against the Bar-Lev defense line proved correct. The Rebbe remarked, “You are speaking about the past; more important is the present: we need to ensure the integrity (“*shleimus*”) of the Jewish people, the Torah, and the Land of Israel...” The Rebbe turned to the wife of the assistant and said, “You certainly help your husband in all of the above. If miracles are needed, there’s no need to be afraid; we will have miracles. Jewish people say about this year that it’s a ‘*shnas nissim!*’”

At around 1:00 p.m., the Rebbe left for the Ohel, returning for Mincha close to 4:00. After Mincha the Rebbe said a *sicha* with a *bracha* for all, and then distributed dollars. The tone of the *sicha* – and the Rebbe’s mood in general – was very joyous and uplifting.

On Erev Sukkos the Rebbe again went to the Ohel, also a real rarity.

On the morning of Erev Sukkos after davening, the Rebbe gave out sets of *Arba Minim* to representatives from around the world (as he would every year). When this concluded, the Rebbe announced that he would distribute dollars to everyone. A line was formed and the Rebbe gave out dollars for about a half hour. During the distribution, someone closed the front door of 770 (presumably to keep the line shorter so the Rebbe wouldn’t need to keep standing on his feet on such a busy day), but the Rebbe instructed that it should be reopened so that anyone who wished could come and receive a dollar. After the distribution, the Rebbe went to the *mikvah* and then to the Ohel, returning shortly before Yom Tov set in.



## Unprecedented Sichos

Over the month of Tishrei, the Rebbe spoke dozens of times. In fact, the Rebbe spoke on almost every single day of this special Tishrei—even including a short *sicha* on Erev Shabbos Bereishis after Mincha. These *sichos* were filled with deep ideas of Torah—*nigleh* and Chassidus, as well as an emphasis on this special year of miracles and its close proximity to the coming of Moshiach.

A *sicha* that stands out was delivered by the Rebbe after Maariv on the fifth night of Sukkos. The Rebbe began by encouraging everyone to again rejoice in the *Simchas Beis Hashoeva*, increasing the joy, even over the



YOSSI MELAMED VIA JEM122656

previous nights. Then the Rebbe spoke about the night's *Ushpizin*: Aharon Hakohen and the Tzemach Tzedek, drawing lessons from their shared theme of *Ahavas Yisroel* and *Achdus Yisroel*. Towards the end of the *sicha*, the Rebbe noted that both of these individuals are very much connected to the coming of Moshiach: Aharon Hakohen's primary function was doing the *avoda* in the Beis Hamikdash, which will resume with the coming of Moshiach, and the Tzemach Tzedek's *sefer* for which he was named includes one of the names of Moshiach; the name "Tzemach."

Then the Rebbe said something incredible: If we call out his name three times, "*Tzemach, Tzemach, Tzemach*,"

he will certainly respond to our call, and Moshiach will arrive immediately!

As soon as the Rebbe concluded the *sicha*, the whole crowd enthusiastically called out "*Tzemach*" three times, and then the Rebbe distributed dollars for *tzedakah*.

These are just a few of the many wondrous moments that occurred throughout the special Tishrei of "*Shnas Nissim*."

May we speedily merit the *nissim* of the coming of Moshiach *teikef umiyad Mamash!*

THE REBBE EN  
ROUTE TO THE  
OHEL, EREV  
YOM KIPPUR.



LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 234303

THE REBBE DISTRIBUTES  
LEKACH AT THE  
ENTRANCE TO HIS ROOM  
ON EREV YOM KIPPUR.



LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 234303

THE REBBE SAYS A SHORT SICHA AFTER KIDDUSH LEVANA ON MOTZEI YOM KIPPUR.



LEVI FREDIN VIA JEM 234323



LEVI FREDIN VIA JEM 234284

THE REBBE DISTRIBUTES LEKACH AGAIN AFTER MINCHA ON EREV YOM KIPPUR.

INTERVIEWS: RABBI LEVI GREENBERG (OH)  
WRITTEN BY: RABBI ZELIG KATZMAN



# Memories

WITH

# Rebbetzin Chana

INTERVIEW WITH  
**RABBI AND MRS. LEIBEL  
AND DVONYA ALEVSKY**

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Rabbi Leibel and Mrs. Dvonya Alevsky have been the Rebbe's Shluchim to Northeast Ohio for more than 50 years, and have transformed the Jewish landscape in Cleveland and beyond. There was so much we could discuss with the Alevskys about their life and shlichus,<sup>1</sup> but in this conversation we focused on one special aspect of their lives: the relationship they enjoyed with the Rebbe's mother, Rebbetzin Chana.

לזכות ילדינו היקרים יצחק צבי,  
מנחם מענדל, אברהם מאיר,  
יהודית, וישראל ארי' לייב שיחיו  
שיגדלו להיות חסידים  
יראי שמים ולמדנים

נדפס ע"י  
הרה"ת ר' אליעזר זזוגתו מרת חנה שיחיו  
וואלף



Rabbi Leibel Alevsky was born in Ukraine; he emigrated with his mother during the “Great Escape” of Chassidim from Russia in 5706-7<sup>2</sup> (his father had been killed in World War II), and after some time in a DP (displaced persons) camp and then in Paris, moved to Kfar Chabad in 5709 as per the instruction of the Frierdiker Rebbe. After spending some time in Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim in Lod, he arrived in New York to be near the Rebbe and learn at 770 on Rosh Chodesh Sivan 5718.

Mrs. Dvonya Alevsky was born in Russia, and left on the same series of trains with her family as well as hundreds of other Chassidim. They also spent a few years in DP camps and Paris, ultimately arriving in the United States in 5713. Soon after, they moved to Cleveland on the Rebbe’s instruction and by the recommendation of HIAS (Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society).

Rabbi Alevsky shares his earliest memories of Rebbetzin Chana: “On Yom Tov, the Rebbetzin would come to 770 and daven. After Davening, she would go with the Rebbe into his room for several minutes. Afterwards, they would leave together, as hundreds of people awaited them outside. The Rebbe would walk her out of 770, with his right hand linked under her left, until about the middle of 788 Eastern Parkway (the second apartment building after 770), where she would be met by two women (Mrs. Kazarnovsky and another woman). The Rebbe would watch his mother and her entourage until they were out of sight. When she turned the block and was hidden by the building, the Rebbe would turn around and walk briskly back to his room. The whole scene was very majestic, like a king escorting the queen...”

After several years of learning in 770, in Cheshvan of 5722, Rabbi Alevsky was recruited to work in Tzach (Lubavitch Youth Organization). The day he began his work, he was approached by his new boss, Reb Dovid Raskin. “Reb Dovid told me that he would like to introduce me to Rebbetzin Chana. Rebbetzin Chana had a special affection for Tzach, because unlike the other Chabad *mosdos* (established by the Frierdiker Rebbe or others), it was founded by the Rebbe himself. Reb Dovid wanted to give her some *nachas* so he decided to bring me to her, and to inform her that I would be opening the first official office of Tzach.

“After that, I began helping the Rebbetzin around the house with various things. I became a regular there; whenever there was something to fix in the house and the like (e.g. to buy some things for her), she would call me and I’d come and take care of it.

“Twice a year, on Yud-Aleph Nissan and Chof Av, she would hold a farbrengen in her apartment with elder Chassidim. She would sit at the head of the table, slanted towards the right. She would have a cup of wine for L’chaim in front of her, and would listen as the Chassidim recounted memories of



REB LEIBEL ALEVSKY (STANDING SECOND FROM RIGHT) AS THE REBBE SITS DOWN FOR A SHORT FARBRENGEN WITH ELDER CHASSIDIM IN THE FRIERDIKER REBBE’S APARTMENT, 19 KISLEV 5722.

her husband, Harav Levi Yitzchok, occasionally interjecting with factual corrections.

“I would be in the kitchen and would help with whatever she needed, I would set the table beforehand with *mashke*, wine and cookies.

“On one of these occasions, one Chossid on her right was telling a story about Harav Levi Yitzchok. Another elder Chossid on the left (who had more of an outspoken personality) interjected, saying that he also remembered the event. The Rebbetzin ignored him (I thought maybe she didn’t hear him), but when the first Chossid finished, she turned to the second one and said ‘*Yeh, Reb (ploni), vos hot ir gevolt zogen?*’ (Yes, Reb (so-and-so), what did you want to say?)’ This is just one example of how she shared many mannerisms with the Rebbe. She was fully present, wherever she was.

“Once, when I was there at a farbrengen, the Rebbetzin requested that her husband’s niggun be sung. Nobody remembered how it started, so she said, ‘*Alevsky iz in kich, ruft em, er vet gedeinken* (Alevsky is in the kitchen, call him, he will remember)’. They called me out and I started the niggun.

“As part of my duties, I was organizing various events, and sending out letters promoting them etc. Whenever I would write a letter for Tzach, I would bring it to the Rebbe with

a carbon copy. The Rebbe would often write comments and notes on the carbon copy and return them within several minutes. Thus, the Rebbe remained up to date on all Tzach's activities.

"Once, I accumulated some twenty letters, with a number of letters acknowledging receipt of some interesting letters from chaplains, senators, heads of colleges, and the like (if a letter was being sent to acknowledge receipt, I would send the original letter to the Rebbe as well). Whenever interesting things came in, I would bring them to Rebbetzin Chana, since I knew that she enjoyed reading them.

"That day, I sent the package of letters into the Rebbe's room, planning on bringing it to Rebbetzin Chana as soon as it came back. I waited for a while, but the package did not come back out.

"The Rebbe would usually give written responses to letters four times a day: In the morning, from the bag he would bring from home, before Mincha, before Maariv, and then finally, when Rabbi Hodakov would enter the Rebbe's room at the end of the day, right before the Rebbe would go home for the night.

"Having brought the letters at 11 a.m., I expected to get them back at Mincha time. Nothing came out then, so I figured I would get them back before Maariv, but again, they did not come out. I was certain that they would finally come out at night, but yet again, they did not.

"The next morning, I got a call from Rabbi Binyomin Klein: 'Your package is back.'

"I rushed over from my office, and I told Rabbi Klein that I expected that the Rebbe had written many comments, as I could not imagine why else the Rebbe would have kept it for

so long. I opened the package, only to discover that the Rebbe had not left a single note. I was quite perplexed.

"Later that day, I brought the package over to Rebbetzin Chana's house and showed it to her. She looked at the letters and half-smiled. I asked her, 'Rebbetzin, what is the problem?' She replied, '*Ich veis nit tzi ich zol dir zogen* (I'm not sure if I should tell you)...' To which I responded, 'Rebbetzin, if you weren't sure you wanted to tell me, you wouldn't have said that either...'

"She burst out laughing (I had never seen her laugh like that before), and said, 'Last night the Rebbe already showed these to me...'

**Mrs. Alevsky:** "My family had a longstanding connection with the Rebbetzin. My grandmother, Mummeh Sarah (Katzenelnbogen), was deeply involved in the great escape of Chassidim from Russia in 5706-7, and she helped Rebbetzin Chana get out as well.

"One story from that ordeal: The Rebbetzin refused to lie and declare the name on her false passport in order to leave. The problem was that as soon as the Rebbetzin would say her last name, Schneerson, she could be arrested immediately. So my grandmother accompanied her for the first leg of the journey, from Moscow to Lvov from where the trains out of Russia were leaving.

"She bought first-class tickets for them, wrapped a huge kerchief around the Rebbetzin's head, and told her to sit in a corner of the compartment and pretend to sleep. Meanwhile, my grandmother started an intense game of chess with another passenger, as some other people gathered to watch.

"The conductor eventually showed up and asked everyone for their ticket and passport. When he approached the Rebbetzin, he asked, 'What is your name, *babushka*?' My grandmother called out to him, 'The *babushka* is old and frail. Please leave her alone. I have her passport and ticket here.'

"The conductor insisted, 'I want her to tell me her name.' But the other passengers protested, 'Can't you leave her alone? We're in the middle of a game here, and you're mixing us up.' Finally he left the Rebbetzin alone.

"When we got to New York, we visited the Rebbetzin and she told us that when my grandmother sat down to play chess in first class, it seemed strange. '...But then I realized how brilliant she was. She saved my life, because if the conductor had insisted on knowing my name, I would have told him the truth, that I am Chana Schneerson, which would have been a death sentence at that time. She managed to distract attention from a vulnerable old lady, also protecting our suitcases (in which the Rebbetzin had brought the *ksovim* of her holy husband, Harav Levi Yitzchok) from being stolen by other passengers."

Mrs. Alevsky herself grew up in Cleveland, and went to school at the Hebrew Academy of Cleveland until ninth



ONE OF THE LETTERS PREPARED BY REB LEIBEL ALEVSKY ON TZACH STATIONARY. THE LETTER CONCERNS THE PRINTING OF THE SECOND VOLUME OF LIKKUTEI SICHOS AND THE REBBE MADE SEVERAL COMMENTS ON THE SIDE.

grade, after which she went to Beis Yaakov in New York. When she approached 10th grade, Hebrew Academy opened a high school and she went back home until graduation.

“During my year in New York, I remember seeing Rebbetzin Chana and saying ‘Gut Shabbos’ to her on the corner of Kingston and President, near her apartment, where she would often stand. I also remember standing in 770 and hearing people say that the Rebbetzin was about to come, and people greeting her there. When I came back to Crown Heights for seminary, I had similar interactions with her. But a more significant relationship with her began later that year.

“That year, I went home to Cleveland for Pesach. Before I returned to New York, my mother told me that when she had previously been in New York, she had given the Rebbe a list of *bochurim* for my shidduch, and that the Rebbe had picked out Leibel Alevsky. She said that I should speak to Reb Dovid Raskin, who would arrange a meeting.

“At this point I met the Rebbetzin again. When I came back, Reb Dovid approached me and said that the Rebbetzin needed someone to stay with her to be present in case of necessity, as her usual helper had left for Pesach and not yet returned; I agreed. I would come every night at 7 and leave in the morning to go to seminary. I don’t remember doing much for the Rebbetzin, since I was only there at night.

“Once, I came and another lady opened the door. I walked in and saw a room full of women [representatives of N’shei Chabad, who had come to invite the Rebbetzin to the N’shei Chabad convention]; the Rebbetzin told the other women that ‘*Ale meidelach vos helfen mir hoben a zechus az zei veren bald kallah* (All the girls who help me have a *zechus*, that they become a Kallah quickly)’. This was when I was already meeting my future husband.

“On the Sunday of the convention, the Rebbe spoke to the ladies of the convention in the upstairs *zal*, after which the ladies were able to pass the Rebbe for a short *yechidus*-like encounter. My mother passed by and spoke a few words to the Rebbe, after which my husband-to-be gave us a ride to bring my mother to the bus station to go back to Cleveland.

“When I got back, I went to the Rebbetzin’s apartment as usual. I rang the bell, and nobody answered, which was strange, since the Rebbetzin would usually open the door right away. I waited a few minutes and rang again; the door still didn’t open. I was quite baffled, because I didn’t expect anything out of the ordinary. After the third ring, the door opened, and the Rebbe was on the other side! That shocked me... The Rebbe saw me, smiled, and asked, ‘*Iz di mamme noch duh* (Is your mother still here)?’ (The Rebbe knew that my mother was supposed to travel back to Cleveland.) I answered the Rebbe that she had already gone back to Cleveland. The Rebbe smiled and walked back to the table where his mother was sitting, and I entered the hallway and went to



REBBETZIN CHANA (THIRD FROM LEFT) LISTENING TO ONE OF THE YOUNG MEMBERS OF NSHEI CHABAD SPEAK AT A CONVENTION.

my room. After the Rebbe left, I came out of my room, and the Rebbetzin gave me a broad smile and asked, ‘Nu? Nu?’ (as in, what do you say about the Rebbe opening the door?) She then said that she wasn’t feeling well, and the Rebbe had come for a special visit. If I would’ve known the Rebbe was there, I wouldn’t have come during that time.

“I stayed with the Rebbetzin for about a month. Around Shavuos time we decided to ask the Rebbe for a *bracha* to get engaged. After we got engaged, we went to meet the Rebbetzin as *chossan* and *kallah*. When the Rebbetzin opened the door, my husband let me go in first, and I started to walk in. But the Rebbetzin didn’t move. She smiled and said, ‘*Bei unz Chassidim, der man geit freier* (By us Chassidim, the man goes first)...’”

**Rabbi Alevsky:** “The next time my wife stayed there was a year later, when we were expecting our oldest daughter Sarah, who was born on 6 Menachem Av 5723. On Rosh Chodesh Av, my wife went to stay with the Rebbetzin, as the Rebbetzin’s helper had to leave.”

**Mrs. Alevsky:** “When I stayed with her this time, I was also asked to cook for her. It was during the nine days, yet the Rebbetzin instructed me to buy ground meat and make meatballs. She said, ‘You and I will eat together, because you are pregnant and you need strength, and *fleish git shtarkeit* (meat gives strength), and I’m an elderly woman, and I need strength as well.’ She also said that either Reb Dovid Raskin or Reb Berel Junik would come to make a *siyum*. If I remember correctly, one of them came one day, and the other came a different day.

“When I washed the dishes, I didn’t know where to get a towel to use for drying them. She told me it was in the

drawer. The first towel I took out had blue markings, and the Rebbetzin told me that ‘*Bloi iz far milchig* (Blue is for *milchig*), look at the next towel, that one is *roit* (red), that’s for *fleishig*.’

**Rabbi Alevsky:** “My wife slept there Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. Overnight Wednesday, my wife didn’t sleep much and was tossing and turning the whole night. Apparently the Rebbetzin realized, and on Thursday morning she called me and said, ‘*Nem tzu dein veib fun mir, zi vet noch duh hoben dem kind* (Take your wife away from me, she will have the baby here)...’ Knowing that if my wife left, there would be nobody to replace her, I said, ‘Rebbetzin, I can’t imagine a better place for my child to be born...’ She didn’t react, and since the Rebbetzin had nobody else to stay with her, my wife remained the following night as well. Friday morning, the Rebbetzin called again and said, ‘I will not take a wife away from her husband for Shabbos. Take her home and don’t give me any excuses...’ So I came over and took her home.

“Before she left, she made up with the Rebbetzin that she would come over on Shabbos afternoon at 4:00 PM to help clean up after the Rebbe came over for Kiddush. In those years the Rebbe would daven in his room after the minyan finished, and then leave for home at around 3:00. On his way home he would visit his mother and make Kiddush for her.

“We ended up going to the hospital at 9:00 on Shabbos morning. The baby was born fairly quickly, and I was able to walk back to 770 from the hospital in time to see the Rebbe leave on his way to meet his mother. When the Rebbe came down the steps, I told the Rebbe that my wife had given birth to a girl. The Rebbe said *Mazel Tov*, and then I told the Rebbe

that we want to name our daughter after my wife’s grandmother, ‘Mummeh Sarah’. The Rebbe said, ‘*A gleiche zach, un zolstu geben a nomen heint tzu Mincha* (It is appropriate, and you should name her today at [Krias HaTorah of] Mincha.’ At the time, this was unusual. People generally waited to name their daughter on the following Shabbos morning, I was one of the first to do so). The Rebbe then continued to walk towards his mother’s house.

“At 4:00, I came to the Rebbetzin’s house. I had prepared a whole speech apologizing on behalf of my wife for being unable to come... I knocked on the door, and the Rebbetzin opened, and before I could say anything, she said ‘*Mazel Tov!*’ Afterward, I went inside and cleaned up.”

**Mrs. Alevsky:** “Right after Shabbos, I called the Rebbetzin, and she wished me a hearty *Mazel tov*, and told me that ‘*Mein zun hot mir shoin dertzeit* (My son already told me).’”

“Before we got married, the Rebbetzin gave a check for \$15 as a wedding gift, a large sum in those days. When our daughter was born, she gave us another check for double the amount and said, ‘I realized that you didn’t deposit the last check that I gave you for your wedding. Now I’m giving you double, to buy something for your daughter.’

**Rabbi Alevsky:** “The Rebbetzin needed to go to a specific doctor once a month (at an office on Eastern Parkway and Washington, near Grand Army Plaza). Since I had a car, my wife and I would drive the Rebbetzin to her appointments. When we got there, I would remain in the car and my wife would walk the Rebbetzin up the stairs to the doctor’s office; when they were done, they would come out and we would drive home together.”

**Mrs. Alevsky:** “I remember how on one of those trips, when I was pregnant, the Rebbetzin complimented me on my dress, and said that it looked nice, asking where I bought it.

“There are several other fond memories I recall about Rebbetzin Chana. One Yom Tov night, before I got married, I was standing with some friends on Eastern Parkway and we saw the Rebbe and Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka walking Rebbetzin Chana back home from 770 after a Yom Tov meal (when Rebbetzin Chana would eat at the Friediker Rebbe’s apartment on the second floor of 770).



LAST KNOWN PHOTO OF REBBETZIN CHANA. LAG B’OMER 5723.



THE CHECK GIVEN BY REBBETZIN CHANA.



THE REBBE AT THE KEVURAH OF REBBETZIN CHANA, 6 TISHREI 5725.

“Rebbetzin Chana tried to make conversation all the time. Once, the Rebbetzin asked me whether I read her *Zichronos*’ which were serialized at the time in the ‘Di Yiddishe Heim’ magazine.

“Vov Tishrei occurred over a year after our daughter Sarah was born. That Shabbos, I wanted to bring her to Rebbetzin Chana. She was already walking, so I took her to President Street on Shabbos afternoon. As I approached, I encountered a woman who was the Rebbetzin’s next door neighbor; she asked me whether I heard what happened. As she is asking me, I see Dr. Seligson running from 770 to the Rebbetzin’s apartment. This woman then told me that overnight, Mrs. Wiener, the Rebbetzin’s helper, had knocked on her door. (As a side note, I was the one that suggested her name to Reb Dovid Raskin to hire her to help the Rebbetzin.) Mrs. Wiener told her that the Rebbetzin had fallen, and she asked this neighbor to go and quickly notify the Rebbe. In the meantime I see people running to and fro, and I realized that I wouldn’t be seeing the Rebbetzin. So I walked back home with my daughter. After Shabbos, we heard the news...”

Rabbi Alevsky now shares a memory from the *levaya* of the Rebbetzin: “Right before the *kever* was covered, the Rebbe

began to ask where the *‘kliyona’* (Russian word for a plastic) is. I believe there were a few drops of blood on it, which meant that it would need to be buried as well. They couldn’t find it, and the Rebbe asked people to move back to see whether it fell somewhere, but there was a lot of pressure from the crowd, which made things very difficult.

“The Rebbe was standing at the foot of the *kever*, I was standing at the head, facing the Rebbe, and Reb Leibel Mochkin was standing on the Rebbe’s left side. I don’t recall the details but at a certain point we realized that the Rebbe wanted us to go into the *kever* and look for it. We jumped inside and ultimately found the plastic...”

May the merit of the Rebbetzin stand for all of us to be blessed with a *shana tova umesukah*, and may we be speedily reunited with the coming of Moshiach.

1. An interview with Rabbi Leibel Alevsky about his years in 770 has been published in *Derher*, Iyar 5778.

2. See full overview of this story in “The Great Escape,” *Derher* Adar II 5782.

# Let's Talk About Eretz Yisroel

THROUGH THE LENS OF THE REBBE'S TORAH

PART 1:  
**Ownership**

COMPILED BY:  
**RABBI MENDEL MISHOLOVIN**

WRITTEN BY:  
**RABBI LEVI GREENBERG (TX)**

*Special thanks to the Enduring Peace think-tank, JEM and Sichos in English.*

לע"נ  
הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' שמעון בהר"ר  
שמואל זאנוויל הי"ד גאלדמאן  
נלב"ע כ"ט תשרי ה'תשע"ז  
ולע"נ זוגתו מרת אסתר בת הרה"ח  
ר' יוחנן ע"ה נלב"ע ט"ב תשרי ה'תשע"ד  
ולע"נ ר' יצחק יעקב ב"ר משה ע"ה סיימאן  
נלב"ע ד' אדר א' ה'תשע"ט

**W**hy are we having a conversation about Eretz Yisroel? Certainly, as Yidden, we care deeply for the millions of our brothers and sisters living there. The success of the government and security forces there is crucial to ensuring their security and prosperity and the impact on Yidden everywhere is also obvious.

Yet many would argue that we know too little to formulate educated opinions on the problems challenging Israeli society today. We should say Tehillim, give extra Tzedaka, strengthen our efforts in the mitvzoim the Rebbe launched specifically in connection with the security of Eretz Yisroel, and stay out of politics, they say. Besides, our opinions don't matter, and discussing these issues is, at best, a waste of time.

While this perspective is understandable, it's flawed. Every Yid must care about the situation in Eretz Yisroel, formulate an educated opinion based on Torah principles, and get involved whenever and however possible.

That's right. Judaism does not recognize the idea of individuals making up their own opinions based on their personal feelings and perspectives or whatever worldview happens to be popular at the moment. We were given a Torah, the divine blueprint for the universe that is eternally true, applicable, and binding. While there may be differences of opinion as how to understand and apply the Torah to any given situation, the basic principles remain the same.

The fact that the Rebbe spoke publicly – for hundreds of hours – about the security of the Yidden in Eretz Yisroel is a profound lesson for all of us. Certainly, the Rebbe intended for his messages to reach the right people in positions of power to influence certain outcomes. But choosing to communicate these messages in public, at farbrengens, implies that there is a purpose in the “people on the street” knowing about these matters as well. Not just because in a democracy the masses control their leadership at the ballot box. Even Yidden with no voting rights in Israel should understand these issues.

These were not simply declarations of policies the Israeli government ought to adopt or protestations of bad decisions with deadly consequences. The Rebbe delved deeply into the Torah principles from which he derived his positions, and

shared them with Klal Yisroel at great length. Because the issues at stake in this conversation go to the core of what it means to be a Yid in a historically hostile world. Knowing the truth and sharing it with all Jews and the world is crucial to preserving our nation, and our relationship with our land, and ultimately achieving a *dira b'tachtonim* through Moshiach.

In this new column, we will present the Torah principles explained and clarified in the Rebbe's many sichos and letters regarding the security of Eretz Yisroel and highlight their eternal relevance.



Most conversations about Eretz Yisroel have the strange dynamic that Yidden are always on the defensive. If you dig beneath the surface, every challenge boils down to the same question: why are you there in the first place?

It's a good question. After all, the casual observer with a peripheral knowledge of world history will claim that although it was a Jewish homeland for many years, that ended close to two thousand years ago.

Let's ask a more important question: What creates ownership? If a family lands on a deserted island, builds a home, and plants a garden, does the island belong to them? Perhaps.

When dealing with private property the answer is typically straightforward. At some point, the property or home was legally owned by someone (however that was established), and the transfer of ownership occurs by legally recognized means, like a sale or gift.

The question is more complicated when dealing with collective ownership. How do nations own the land they inhabit? Many nations, including the United States, acquired their territories by conquest. Does this make it theirs?

The ownership of territory by countries is generally the realm of politics and statesmanship. When it comes to Eretz Yisroel, however, we are dealing with factors that are far beyond treaties and agreements between humans, as strong as they might be.

The United States was established in North America by Europeans who began settling the land 300 years earlier. There were natives here before then, and there were wars between them and the newcomers. Nevertheless, today it is an accepted fact that the government of the United States of America, declared a nation in 1776, is the legitimate owner

# Our claim to Eretz Yisroel rests on a simple and eternal fact. Hashem gave it to us.

of the vast landmass between Canada and Mexico. Even if there are some pockets of land in dispute, surely a claim to return the property of the White House to the natives is an absurdity that would never hold weight in a court of law, or even in the court of public opinion. That's the way it is.

In the same vein, arguing that the stretch of land between the Sinai Desert and Syria should be an autonomous Jewish homeland today since there was an autonomous Jewish homeland there two thousand years ago is simply strange.

For over 75 years, people operating in official capacities have formulated other answers to this simple question.

In 1947, the United Nations voted to designate certain parts of the land for the establishment of a Jewish state. The Jews didn't steal it from anyone, they argue; it was done with the world's permission.

Firstly, what right did the 140 nations represented in that august body have to vote on such a decision? And if your claim to the land is the permission granted by the United Nations, what's stopping them from holding another vote and granting it to someone else? Besides, it's no secret the United Nations makes plenty of silly decisions and takes biased votes against Israel, and we rightfully ignore the vitriol constantly emanating from that organization. So claiming legitimacy to

Eretz Yisroel based on the UN vote is a non-starter.

Others go back to the Balfour Declaration of 1917. In a famous letter to Lord Rothschild, Britain's Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour wrote: "His Majesty's Government views with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people." Before using this as the legitimacy for Jewish autonomy in Eretz Yisroel, remember this letter was written in the context of European colonialism, the merits of which are in and of itself questionable. Who gave the King of England the right to decide the future of the land? And if Mr. Balfour's stroke of a pen can determine the destiny of this stretch of land, then some other bigwig can change its destiny by stroking another pen. It's a bad claim.

The fact that Jewish philanthropists legally purchased large properties in Eretz Yisroel, and established cities, towns, and agricultural communes for many decades – while true – is a weak claim for Israel's legitimacy. The village of Kfar Chabad, for example, was never purchased from anyone, as is the case with more than half of current-day Israel, and considering it stolen ground is absurd.

There is the concept of the "Right to Conquest." Wars have consequences and when one country conquers areas of land from other countries has been considered historically a legal form of acquisition. However, the international community officially stopped recognizing this around 1950.

This leaves us with the burning question: What right do we have to Eretz Yisroel?



Our claim to Eretz Yisroel rests on a simple and eternal fact. Hashem gave it to us.

In Parshas Lech Lecha (13:15) we learn that after Lot's departure, Hashem said to Avraham:

כי את כל הארץ אשר אתה ראה לך אתגננה ולזרעך עד עולם... קום התהלך בארץ לארכה ולרחבה כי לך אתגננה.

*"All the land which you see, to you will I give it, and to your children forever... Arise, walk through the land in its length and its breadth; for I will give it to you."*

At the *Bris Bein Habesarim*, Hashem (15:18) reiterated this promise with an expression emphasizing the transfer of ownership *had already taken place* because Hashem's word has the force of action.

לזרעך נתתי את הארץ הזאת.

*"To your seed I have given this land."*

Lest one claim that this gift was meant for all of Avraham's descendants, we learn in Parshas Toldos (26:3) that Hashem repeated this promise to Yitzchok.

גור בארץ הזאת... כי לך ולזרעך אתן את כל הארצות האלה והקמתי את השבועה אשר נשבעתי לאברהם אביך.

*"Live in this land... for to you, and to your children, I will give all these lands, and I will fulfill the oath which I swore to Avraham your father."*

To clarify that the land was given specifically to Bnei Yisroel and not to the descendants of Eisav, Hashem repeated this promise to Yaakov in Parshas Vayeitzei (28:13).

הארץ אשר אתה שכב עליה לך אתגננה ולזרעך.

*"The land on which you lie, to you I will give it and to your children."*

Even before Bnei Yisroel began conquering Eretz Kena'an under Yehoshua's leadership in the year 2488, it rightfully belonged to them due to Hashem's vow. Even before it had become sanctified with the many mitzvos associated with it, *ownership* of the land had been transferred to the children of the three *Avos*.

Just as our ownership of the land predated our arrival in the land, it continues after we were exiled. There is no expiration date to this promise. In the *Tochacha* Hashem declares we will be exiled from our land – but continues referring to it as *our land*. No exile can change that.

והיתה ארצכם שממה ועריכם יהיו חרבה.

**"Your land** will be desolate, and **your cities** will be laid waste."

Our objective and enduring claim to Eretz Yisroel is Hashem's promise to the *Avos* repeated numerous times in Torah. All other claims, while technically true, are unhelpful and perhaps even harmful to the cause.

#### NEXT MONTH:

Why is it important for Jews to know and internalize this specific claim to Eretz Yisroel?

**Primary Sources:** Purim 5730 Likkutei Sichos vol. 21 page 404, Yud Alef Nissan 5736 Sichos Kodesh vol 2 page 53-61, Chof Av 5738 Sichos Kodesh vol 3 page 276, Daas Torah (Wolpo) chapter 2.



ROSH  
HASHANAH  
IN

*Lubavitch*

MEMORIES OF  
CHASSIDIM WITH  
THE REBBE RASHAB

*By:*  
RABBI MENDY GREENBERG

לעילוי נשמת  
ר' יצחק ליב  
בן ר' חיים אהרן ע"ה  
בלאק  
נלב"ע ערב חגה"ס י"ד תשרי ה'תשע"ח  
תנ"צ'בה'

נדפס ע"י משפחתו שיחיו

תש"ח



## THE TURNING POINT

One year, a large crowd gathered in Lubavitch for Rosh Hashanah. It was Tishrei 5653, and Yud-Gimmel Tishrei would mark the tenth Yom Hilula of the Rebbe Maharash. Although the Rebbe Rashab had still not assumed the *nesius* officially, he had begun—informally—to fill the role. He delivered *maamarim* regularly, received Chassidim for *yechidus*, and did not travel as frequently as before.

Hundreds of Chassidim were present. That year, Rosh Hashanah fell on Thursday and Friday, followed by Shabbos Shuva, which gave the Chassidim ample time to review the two *maamarim* the Rebbe Rashab had delivered on Yom Tov. Among the guests were several dozen Chassidim who could easily absorb the *maamarim*.

In those years, the Rebbe Rashab usually delivered *maamarim* in his home; only on rare occasions, such as Yomim Tovim when a large crowd was present, would he say Chassidus in the Beis Midrash. That year, for the first time in a decade, the Beis Midrash was packed. Thanks to the pleasant weather—a rarity in Lubavitch—some guests davened outside in the street and in the courtyard.

“For the first time in my life,” recounted the Frierdiker Rebbe, who was twelve years old at the time, “I saw a table being taken out from the Beis Midrash to the courtyard. A chair was placed on the table, and the chossid Reb Leib Hoffman sat and repeated the *maamar*.”

On Shabbos Shuva after davening, the courtyard filled with people; the Chassidim again reviewed the *maamar*, and concluded with singing and dancing that lasted late into the night.

This was a turning point. Each year, Rosh Hashanah would bring larger crowds of Chassidim eager to hear Chassidus, enter the Rebbe’s room for *yechidus*, and gather inspiration for the entire year. After ten years of “*Churban Lubavitch*,” Chassidim were again streaming to the capital city of Chassidus Chabad.<sup>1</sup>

Presented here is a description of Rosh Hashanah in the presence of the Rebbe Rashab—Rosh Hashanah in Lubavitch.



THE OHEL OF THE TZEMACH TZEDEK AND THE REBBE MAHARASH AND THE NEWLY REBUILT “AKEIDAS YITZCHOK” SHUL ADJACENT TO THE OHEL.



## THE FIRST ARRIVALS

“The atmosphere of Rosh Hashanah,” writes Reb Yudel Chitrik in *Reshimos Devarim*, “was already palpable from the first shofar blast of Elul.

“In the first week, elder Chassidim could already be seen arriving to spend three months or more immersed in *avodas Hashem* during these auspicious days.

“Some Chassidim came specifically for Rosh Hashanah, arriving two days before Yom Tov, staying for the two days of Rosh Hashanah, and remaining for two days afterward. Separately, there were the ‘*mashinover*’ Chassidim, who traveled by train solely to have a *yechidus* with the Rebbe, whether for material or spiritual matters, and returned home on the next available train.

“In the *chatzer* and the *yeshiva*, the upcoming Yomim Noraim were tangible; every face was pensive. The first Selichos—after midnight on Motzei Shabbos—was particularly moving. The *Shadar* Reb Yechiel Halperin, who served as *shliach tzibbur* during the Yomim Noraim, began “Ashrei” with a trembling voice. The crowd, about eight hundred Chassidim, davened in unison, praying to our Father in Heaven that He accept our supplications.”<sup>2</sup>

## WHAT SHOULD I DO NOW?

In *Lubavitch V’Chayoleha*, Reb Folle Kahn describes Erev Rosh Hashanah:<sup>3</sup>

“On Erev Rosh Hashanah morning, the Rebbe would receive *pidyonos*. In the afternoon, he would travel to the Ohel, and upon his arrival, everyone would leave and the Rebbe would remain there alone. This was also the practice in Rostov when the [Frierdiker] Rebbe visited the resting place of his father—no one else would be present.”

In a footnote, Reb Folle makes a comment to his contemporaries in *Dor Hashvi’i*:

“Here, I would like to point out to the readers that it is inappropriate to stand and stare at the Rebbe *Shlita* when he visits the Ohel. I have spoken about this before. The Rebbe does not comment simply because he is a refined person and won’t chase people out. However, everyone should themselves understand that it is not respectful to be present at the Ohel while the Rebbe is there.”<sup>4</sup>

One year, after *Hatoras Nedorim* (after having moved to the United States), the Frierdiker Rebbe shared his recollections of Erev Rosh Hashanah during his childhood.

“The *seder* on Erev Rosh Hashanah was that my father the Rebbe would receive *pidyonos* early in the morning after Selichos, before davening. He would then daven and do *Hatoras Nedarim*.

“In those years, I did not yet accompany my father to the

## THE SPECIAL CUSTOM

A special Erev Rosh Hashanah *minhag* of all the Rabbeim, beginning with the Alter Rebbe, was to visit the Rebbetzin’s room after Mincha to bless her and to receive her blessing.

One such visit was remembered by the Frierdiker Rebbe as extraordinary.

In the final weeks of 5642, the Rebbe Maharash became severely ill. It was also a difficult time for Russian Jewry; widespread pogroms had taken place throughout the country over the preceding years.

During his conversation with Rebbetzin Rivkah that Erev Rosh Hashanah—his final one in this world—the Rebbe Maharash said, “My father [the Tzemach Tzedek] told me that the decree has been broken; there will be no more physical pogroms, but spiritually...” The Rebbe Maharash finished by saying: “You must look after the children.”

The Rebbetzin began to cry; she understood that the Rebbe Maharash was hinting at his passing, but she wasn’t ready to accept it. She began to say that he would recover and they would be together, but the Rebbe Maharash replied, “I have taken the weight of the decree upon myself.” Regarding the Rebbetzin’s statement that they would be together, he continued, “Together—but in separate worlds. I will go up 31 spiritual steps, and you will go up 31 physical steps.” He added, “As for you, my father has promised you long life.”

When the Frierdiker Rebbe shared the story with the Rebbe, he noted that when he first heard the story from his grandmother, he didn’t understand the Rebbe Maharash’s statement about the 31 steps. When she passed away in 5674, thirty one years after her husband, he finally understood.<sup>23</sup>

Ohel of the Rebbe Maharash and Tzemach Tzedek. On Erev Rosh Hashanah 5649 (when he was eight years old), I asked my father after *Hatoras Nedarim*, ‘What should I do now?’

“My father replied, ‘On Erev Rosh Hashanah, one should spend the entire day reciting Tehillim and doing *teshuva* for the wrongdoings of the past year. This way, by the time we reach Maariv of Rosh Hashanah, we will already be cleansed

of the previous year's bad habits.”<sup>5</sup>

The Friediker Rebbe also shared that earlier, in the days of the Tzemach Tzedek, Erev Rosh Hashanah would be marked with a *maamar* (possibly because it was the Tzemach Tzedek's birthday). The atmosphere was different each year—sometimes solemn and sometimes joyful. For example, Erev Rosh Hashanah 5608 was a joyous one. Chassidim attributed the joy to the publication of Likkutei Torah that year; in fact, they named the entire year a “Shnas Orah.”

The Friediker Rebbe noted that there was also a personal reason for the joy that year. The Tzemach Tzedek had

a minyan within his own household: in addition to his seven sons and two daughters and their spouses, his eldest granddaughter had gotten married. “The Alter Rebbe had told the Tzemach Tzedek,” the Friediker Rebbe explained, “that his *shleimus hamochin* (peak intellectual capabilities) would be achieved when his household's minyan was complete.”<sup>6</sup>

## THE FIRST MAARIV

“At Maariv time,” writes Reb Yudel Chitrik, “there was a profound *hisorerus* in the air. Everyone tried to find a place where they could daven with as much focus as possible. The younger bochurim, not yet accustomed to davening at length, stood in their places and davened with sincerity to the best of their abilities. The *ovdim*, the older bochurim and Chassidim who had tasted the avodah of *hisbonenus*, each stood in a chosen corner to avoid distraction. They wept like children before their father, with tears and *ga'aguim*, accompanied by heartfelt niggunim.”<sup>7</sup>

At the front of the shul, to the right of the Aron Kodesh, stood the Rebbe Rashab. “From my childhood years,” the Friediker Rebbe recalled, “I remember the *hanhagah* at Maariv of Rosh Hashanah *barichus*, with the niggun of longing and *bitachon* of the Alter Rebbe, with a heart-stirring voice, his glowing and tearful holy face, and his loving ‘*Lshana tova*.’ His holy face would remain pensive throughout the entire first 24 hours of Rosh Hashanah.”<sup>8</sup>

Long after the minyan concluded, the Rebbe Rashab would remain at his place, davening at length, with a crowd of bochurim and Chassidim creating a tight circle around him, hanging on to every word. Reb Yudel Chitrik describes

## EVEN IN YALTA

The Rebbe Rashab spent Rosh Hashanah 5647 in Yalta, where he was staying for an extended period (in the years before he assumed the *Nesius*). There were no Chabad Chassidim there, and the Rebbe Rashab davened in the *Poilisher* shtibel without fanfare. However, he conducted himself as if he was in Lubavitch.

On the night of Rosh Hashanah, he remained in the shul to daven at length, long after the minyan had concluded, and the *shamash*—before going home— instructed the non-Jewish custodian not to extinguish the candles or lock the doors.

After his Yom Tov meal, the *shamash* began to feel guilty. He had left a Talmid Chacham alone in the shul—perhaps he shouldn't have—so he returned to the shul to check on things.

He found the custodian standing in the entrance hall, crying profusely. “Why are you crying?” asked the *shamash*. The custodian replied, “A man is standing there,” referring to the Rebbe Rashab, “and he doesn't stop weeping. How can I not cry? I usually hear people sing joyfully during their prayers, but here stands a man and doesn't stop weeping. I remembered my own troubles—my uncle died, my animal died, and my elderly mother is ill, so I'm also crying.”

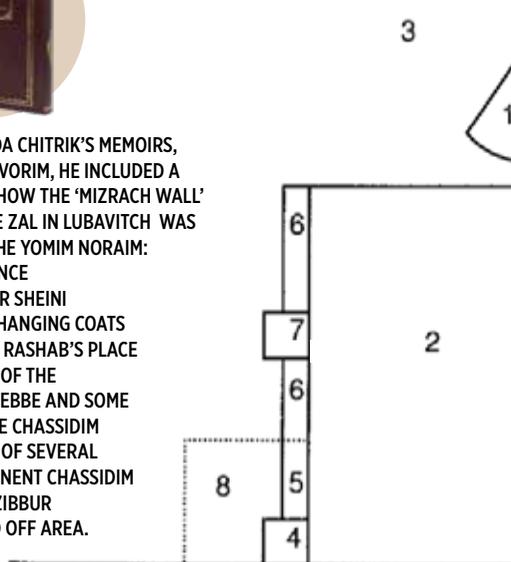
When the *shamash* entered the shul and heard the Rebbe Rashab's davening, he began to cry as well.

(*Sefer Hatoldos Admur Harayatz* pg. 22)



IN REB YEHUDA CHITRIK'S MEMOIRS, RESHIMOS DEVORIM, HE INCLUDED A DIAGRAM OF HOW THE 'MIZRACH WALL' OF THE LARGE ZAL IN LUBAVITCH WAS SET UP FOR THE YOMIM NORAIM:

- 1) THE ENTRANCE
- 2) THE CHEDER SHEINI
- 3) AREA FOR HANGING COATS
- 4) THE REBBE RASHAB'S PLACE
- 5) THE PLACE OF THE FRIEDIKER REBBE AND SOME OF THE ELTERE CHASSIDIM
- 6) THE PLACE OF SEVERAL OTHER PROMINENT CHASSIDIM
- 7) SHLIACH TZIBBUR
- 8) SECTIONED OFF AREA.



it with powerful imagery:

“My pen cannot adequately describe the davening and avodah of the Rebbe Rashab on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. The heart-stirring niggunim he sang during davening, the words of davening emerging from his holy mouth—the image of the holy tzaddik uniting and connecting with Hashem, standing before the *Kisei Hakavod* and pleading for mercy on behalf of his nation, awakened every single person present to *teshuva*...

“The Rebbe’s davening would extend about two hours after the minyan concluded. The entire crowd would remain in their places to hear his davening; his tearful voice would awaken even a heart of stone.

“Throughout the davening on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, he did not sway at all. There were tears, *dveikus*, and an occasional niggun—I believe it was *Shalosh Tenuos*. Even on regular days, I did not see the Rebbe Rashab, nor the Frierdiker Rebbe, sway during davening, especially during Shmoneh Esreh. Occasionally, during moments of *dveikus*, a slight swaying could be seen (they apparently adhered to the opinion brought in the Magen Avraham, the Radbaz, and the Rama MiPano against ‘*shuckling*’ during davening, which also seems to be the view of the Alter Rebbe).”<sup>9</sup>

Lengthy davening was a feature of Leil Rosh Hashanah among all the Rabbeim.

Reb Yaakov Kadaner describes the lengthy Rosh Hashanah davening of the Mittlerer Rebbe, and likewise notes how the Mittlerer Rebbe would remain still throughout: “One Rosh Hashanah, he davened *Shemoneh Esreh* for three hours, yet I did not see a single movement. He stood like an iron pillar built into the ground... As he made his way out of shul, it was difficult to look at his holy face, aflame with holiness.

“Seeing the attendant with the Rebbe’s wet garment, the Chassidim told him not to hold it with his hands as water would certainly be squeezed out of the garment, a prohibition on Yom Tov. After Musaf, the Rebbe changed his shirt again as it was again soaking wet, although, amazingly, throughout his davening he was completely still.”<sup>10</sup>

The Rebbe Rashab would not speak during the first 24 hours of Rosh Hashanah, even during the Yom Tov meals. The previous Rabbeim maintained this custom regarding the first night of Rosh Hashanah, but from the year of his Bar Mitzvah, the Rebbe Rashab resolved not to speak until after the maamar on the second night of Yom Tov.<sup>11</sup> He once explained to the Frierdiker Rebbe that one’s first words after the *kabbalas ol* of Rosh Hashanah need to be words of Torah and *avodah*.<sup>12</sup>

Reb Chaim Shaul Bruk related that at the Yom Tov meal one Rosh Hashanah night, the Rebbe Rashab was deep in thought as he sat in front of a bowl of soup, stirring it absent-mindedly. The *meshamesh*, who wasn’t particularly

## WHEN THE MAGGID WAITED FOR THE ALTER REBBE

When the Frierdiker Rebbe was in the convalescence town of Purkersdorf, a “*Ruzhiner Eiynikl*” came to visit, and shared a story about the Alter Rebbe that he had heard from his forebears:

Once, on the night of Rosh Hashanah, the Maggid of Mezritsch and his *talmidim* had finished their davening, but the Alter Rebbe was still in middle of his, so the Maggid waited for him and did not begin the *seudah*.

Since the Alter Rebbe was the youngest among them, the *talmidim* were slightly critical of the fact that he was making the Maggid wait, but the Maggid sensed their thoughts and said to them, “When Zalmina (the Alter Rebbe) says ‘*V’yeida kol pa’ul ki atah fe’alto*,’ he does not move from the *shtender* until the *shtender* itself feels ‘*ki atah fe’alto*.”

*Shemuos V’Sipurim vol. 1 pg. 159*

wise, thought the Rebbe was looking for the noodles, so he said, “the lokshin are at the bottom.” The Rebbe Rashab enjoyed the comment immensely, and told him, “*Du host mir poshut mechayeh geven*, you have literally revived me.”<sup>13</sup>

Another Rosh Hashanah minhag of the Rabbeim was the recitation of Tehillim. The Frierdiker Rebbe related that this—among many other customs of the Rabbeim—was a tradition passed down from the Alter Rebbe. The Alter Rebbe would recite Tehillim from after Mincha on Erev Rosh Hashanah until Maariv of the second night. This was a custom he had learned from his father, Reb Boruch.<sup>14</sup>

## THE HUMAN BARRIER

“On the morning of Rosh Hashanah,” writes Reb Folle Kahn, “the Rebbe went to the mikvah. In 5677, when the Rebbe was staying at a resort in Slavyansk, more than two kilometers from the city, he walked from the resort to the mikvah in the city on both days of Rosh Hashanah.”<sup>15</sup>

In his account of Rosh Hashanah 5675, Reb Yudel Chitrik continues:

“Shacharis on Rosh Hashanah lasted until four o’clock, despite starting at eight. The Rebbe Rashab would begin

## GUT YOM TOV

The Frierdiker Rebbe shared that in Lubavitch, the Rabbeim were careful to wish their relatives Gut Yom Tov. The Tzemach Tzedek, for example, would visit relatives on every Yom Tov to wish them Gut Yom Tov, except on Rosh Hashanah, when he would wish each relative *l'shana tovah* in the shul, personally approaching each one. In his later years, when he was physically weak, he would sit in his place and the relatives would come to him to wish him *l'shana tovah*. Once, when one of his relatives was delayed, the Tzemach Tzedek asked why he had not yet come.<sup>24</sup>

davening with the *tzibur*, but would finish *Shemoneh Esreh* by *Kedusha*, or sometimes even at the end of *Chazoras Hashatz*.

“During Kriah, the Rebbe would sit facing the bimah (there was no stage, just a bimah on the floor). The Rebbe would be called up for Maftir, and everybody would crowd in to hear the Rebbe’s Haftorah. The crowd was incredibly dense as everyone pushed their way forward. The strong bochorim would hold on to each other like a chain and form a barrier, preventing the crowd from pressing too close to the bimah and the Rebbe. Only a few of the elder chassidim and the *baal koreh* (who also served as the *makri* for *Tekios*) were allowed inside the barrier.”<sup>16</sup>

## THE VOICE OF “LAMNATZEACH...”

After the Haftorah, the Rebbe Rashab would cover his face with his tallis and lean on the bimah, remaining there silently. After a few minutes, the Rebbe’s voice was heard... “*Lamnatzeach...*”

Slowly, the Rebbe Rashab would recite the *kapitel* that prefaces *Tekios*. After everyone had finished, it was possible to hear him reciting the final *possuk*, נְדִיבֵי עֲמִים, in a special tune, and then repeating from the beginning of *Lamnatzeach* in a whisper, sometimes two or three times. The *pessukim* before and after the *Tekios* were sung in the special tune known from the Rabbeim.

During the shofar blowing, Reb Zalman ‘Sofer’ stood beside him. In earlier years, the Rebbe Rashab recited the *pessukim* and brachos but had Reb Zalman blow the shofar. In later years, the Rebbe Rashab himself blew all the *Tekios*.

On the second day, the Rebbe Rashab would cover the shofar with a new silk handkerchief, and after davening, as he walked home, he would wear the handkerchief around his neck (as a new *begeg* for *Shehecheyanu*).<sup>17</sup>

“The Rebbe was a masterful *baal tekiah*,” writes Reb Yudel Chitrik. “Following the intense Avodah of Shacharis, the *Tekios* were extraordinary. The *tekiah* blast was long, the *shevarim* consisted of three and a half notes, and the *teruos* were approximately forty-two or seventy-two sounds—I can’t recall exactly. The Rebbe blew the shofar without a *kittel*, and the one assisting him merely pointed with his finger to the order of the blasts as they are printed in the machzor or siddur.

“After the *Tekios*, the Rebbe sat on his chair in the south-eastern corner with his face uncovered, gazing at the congregation, and the congregants looked back at him—akin to a ‘*Yasher Koach*’ (and as explained in *Sifrei Kabbalah*).”<sup>18</sup>

## THE PICTURESQUE MOMENT

On the afternoon of the first day of Rosh Hashanah, the Rebbe Rashab would go to Tashlich at the river near Lubavitch. Crowds of bochorim and Chassidim would join, and a chain of bochorim would be arranged around the Rebbe to ensure that the pushing didn’t come too close.

It wasn’t just about the pushing. Tashlich was the only occasion each year when the Rebbe Rashab would emerge from the chatzer bedecked in Yom Tov clothing and wearing a *shtreimel*. The image of the Rebbe and the entire procession was a striking one, and photographers were known to come from Vitebsk and stand on the rooftops hoping to catch a photo. The Rebbe Rashab did not want to be photographed (the only extant photograph is a passport photo), so tall bochorim were appointed to shield him from the photographers.

Reb Folleh Kahn notes that the Rebbe Rashab would not carry outdoors on Rosh Hashanah, so he would hand his siddur and glasses to one of the bochorim to carry for him. “One time, he gave me the siddur and glasses, and when we reached the river, I wanted to give them back. The bochorim surrounding the Rebbe tried to take them from me, but I insisted on pushing through and handing them back myself.”<sup>19</sup>

## THE CENTRAL EVENT

After Tashlich, it was time to rush back to save a place for the *maamar*.

A description of Rosh Hashanah 5660 in Lubavitch was once published in an issue of *Hatomim*. The author remained anonymous, but it seems to have been written by the Frierdiker Rebbe himself.

Here is the description of the *maamar*:



RECENTLY  
DISCOVERED  
PHOTO OF THE  
RAZA, BROTHER  
OF THE REBBE  
RASHAB.

“After Tashlich, all the Chassidim flocked to the *zal* to recite Tehillim. Each person found a place to stand and listen to the Rebbe’s *maamar*.

“In the middle of the *zal*, a special place was set up for the Rebbe, consisting of a chair and a small table. Surrounding this area, tables were arranged in a closed square formation, creating an open space in the center to prevent people from crowding too close to the Rebbe’s table.

“All the Chassidim stood in rows surrounding the square. The crowding was intense. Sweat poured from their foreheads, yet no one complained. On the contrary, they were joyous to be in the front rows. Those who could not find a spot close enough stood on benches and tables. Many younger attendees climbed onto pillars, stoves, and any high place they could find, all to see and hear the Rebbe better.

“The Temimim and other Chassidim who were well-versed in niggunim started to sing, one niggun after another for a long while. When the time for Maariv arrived, the Rebbe entered the hall. Immediately, silence fell, and the singing stopped in an instant. Maariv was recited, and afterward, the Rebbe took his seat at the small table in the center of the hall. His face glowed with holiness; he looked like an angel.

“The Rebbe spent a few moments preparing himself in contemplation. Amid the profound silence that filled the hall, the Rebbe began to speak. Initially, his voice was calm and quiet, but gradually it grew louder and more passionate. The Rebbe delivered the *maamar* for a long time, and throughout, the Chassidim and bochorim stood in deep concentration, striving to absorb and retain every word.

“In a corner of the hall, slightly removed from the central tables, stood a young man. Unlike his peers, who pressed

## NO FEAR ON HIS HEAD

“My father,” the Friediker Rebbe related, “used to be called up for Maftir on Rosh Hashanah. During the Haftarah, he would hold the Machzor at an angle, his head covered with his tallis and tears streaming from his eyes.

“In 5666, after my father recited the words, ‘*Umorah lo yaaleh al rosho*, and a razor shall not come upon [Shmuel Hanavi’s] head,’ he paused for a moment, and I noticed his lips moving silently.

“In Adar of that year, the conflict arose between the Poalei Tzion and Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim. My uncle, the Raza, learned about the plans Poalei Tzion were making against us, and told everything to my father.

“The Raza was not a fearful person. Despite this, when he told my father about Poalei Zion’s plans, he said, ‘We need to consider them carefully; they are dangerous and could cause significant harm.’ My father replied, ‘There is no need to fear, as I clearly stated on Rosh Hashanah, *Umorah lo yaaleh al rosho*.’

“When the Raza left, I asked my father what he had whispered during the Haftarah on Rosh Hashanah. He replied, ‘The simple interpretation of the *possuk* is “razor,” but I said *morah* in the meaning of “fear.” Therefore, I repeated the *possuk* in a whisper.’”

(*Sefer Hatoldos Admur Harashab* pg. 12)

close to the Rebbe’s table, he stood apart, facing the wall, eyes closed, his brow deeply furrowed in concentration. This was the *chozer* – someone exceptionally gifted with a remarkable ability to remember. As he listens to the Rebbe’s discourse, he can instantly recall it word for word. To avoid any distractions, he always stands aside, fully focused on capturing the Rebbe’s teachings.”<sup>20</sup>

## THE FINAL DANCE

A select group of *chozrim* would enter the Rebbe Rashab’s room early in the morning, before Shacharis, to review the *maamar* and receive the Rebbe’s comments and explanations.

The Tefillos and *Tekios* of the second day proceeded more or less as on the day before, with an important exception—now that the Rebbe Rashab had delivered a *maamar*, many

bochurim and Chassidim spent the early morning hours committing the *maamar* to memory, in anticipation of the second *maamar*, expected that evening. *Chazanus* and *piyutim*—never a major focus in Lubavitch—were left to a bare minimum.

As Rosh Hashanah drew to a close, Chassidim again gathered around the Rebbe Rashab’s table for a *maamar*. This time, the Rebbe Rashab timed his delivery to the end of Yom Tov, to connect the holiness of Rosh Hashanah with the entire following year. The *maamar* would begin while it was still Yom Tov, but by the time it finished, the sun had made its descent.

For the Chassidim, however, it was still Yom Tov. After the *maamar*, the entire crowd, sometimes over a thousand strong, would erupt into a *lebedike* dance. One year, Reb Yisroel Jacobson recalled, some fifteen-hundred Chassidim were dancing when the *maamar* concluded—and the entire roof of the *zal* began to shake. After Yom Tov that year, the *zal* was closed for renovations.<sup>21</sup>

Summing up the entire two days of Rosh Hashanah in Lubavitch, the article in *Hatomim* concludes:

“Thus passed the two days and nights of Rosh Hashanah in Lubavitch, like one long day, without interruption, of *avodas Hashem*—from davening, to Tehillim, to hearing the *maamar*, to *chazarah*, and from one *chazarah* to another.



FACSIMILE OF ONE OF THE PAGES OF THE YOMAN OF THE REBBE'S GRANDFATHER, REB BORUCH SHNEUR SCHNEERSOHN

KEHOT PUBLICATION SOCIETY

“On Motzei Yom Tov, following the second *maamar*, everyone joined in dancing and singing for hours. Each person was filled with hope that their *tefillos* and *bakashos* had been accepted on high, and that Hashem would grant a *shana tova umesukah* to them and the entire Jewish people.”<sup>22</sup>

## THE YOMAN FROM THE REBBE’S ZEIDE

*The Rebbe’s grandfather, Reb Boruch Shneur Shneersohn, was accorded special attention by the Rebbe Rashab, and kept a diary of his interactions with him (published as Reshimos HaRabash). The following is his description of Rosh Hashanah 5673:*

On the first night of Rosh Hashanah, before Maariv, the Rebbe recited Tehillim for over half an hour along with all the gathered Chassidim. Maariv was marked by extraordinary *hisorerus*. He davened softly, and only the sound of his sobs could be heard.

Throughout the davening of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, he sang the niggun of my uncle, the Rebbe Maharash. Only a few words could be discerned from his holy lips.

On both days of Rosh Hashanah and throughout Yom Kippur, the Rebbe davened with his *tallis* draped over most of his front, almost completely covering him. At the back, the *tallis* only reached his *gartel*. The

front corners of the *tallis* lay on the *shtender* before him. Only during *Borchu*, *Kedusha*, and *Kesser* would he pull the *tallis* back over his shoulders, as he did throughout the rest of the year.

On the *shtender* before him was a Tehillim, *Siddur*, and *Machzor*. During *Shacharis*, he didn’t say ‘*Machzor*’ at all, using it only during *Musaf* [in those days, there was no Chabad *machzor*—the regular *siddur* had *Shmoneh Esreh* and the *Avodah*, and a non-Chabad *machzor* was used for *piyutim*].

The *Tekios* were beautiful; physically, the *mitzvah* was performed beautifully, and spiritually, everyone was deeply stirred to *teshuvah*. When he sang a niggun, such as the one sung before “*Lamnatzeach*” and the *pesukim*, it was truly powerful.

The *brachos* before the *Tekios* were smooth and beautiful, without weeping. During the silent *Musaf*, another person blew the *tekios*, but the Rebbe blew during *Chazoras Hashatz*. Throughout *Musaf*, he sat on the bench and looked into the *siddur*. On both days, they blew the thirty *kolos* after davening.

## ROSH HASHANAH 5703 WITH THE FRIEDIKER REBBE

*Rabbi Yossi Goldstein (of 'Uncle Yossi' fame) merited to spend the Tof-Shins in 770. In addition to having the opportunity to be in the Frierdiker Rebbe's presence, he was also attracted to the personality of our Rebbe, then known as "Ramash," and spent a lot of time in his presence. He shared the following recollections of Rosh Hashanah with the Frierdiker Rebbe:*

On Rosh Hashanah 5703, I had the privilege to daven in the room which formerly belonged to Rebbetzin Shterna Sarah, adjacent to the Frierdiker Rebbe's room. It was very small, and that's where the Frierdiker Rebbe davened. It was packed with people. Reb Shmuel Zalmanov was the chazan. Our Rebbe stood to the Frierdiker Rebbe's right and Rashag to his left, near the *mizrach* wall.

In general, our Rebbe often watched the Frierdiker Rebbe during davening, and he did the same here. He looked intently at the Frierdiker Rebbe for a long time, while I watched how he watched the Frierdiker Rebbe. The Rebbe noticed me and occasionally turned around to see if I was still watching him.

The Frierdiker Rebbe davened as he usually did, with intense weeping. Those standing directly behind him could hear the sound of his davening and his cries. Having spent a lot of time in the Rebbe's home, I managed to slip in and stand quite close. I heard him crying intensely during "*Meloch al kol ha'olam kulo bichvodecha*" and "*V'yieda kol pa'ul ki ata fe'alto*." Obviously, neither I nor the others could see his face—at

night it was hidden by his *spodik*, and during the day, it was covered by his tallis, soaked with sweat and tears.

I also recall *Tekios* with the Frierdiker Rebbe. Rabbi Berel Rivkin, the *baal tekiah*, was on his right, and the Frierdiker Rebbe would indicate with his finger when to start the *tekiah*, *shevarim*, and *teruah*. Rabbi Rivkin would continue to blow until the Frierdiker Rebbe removed his hand, signaling that the blast was complete. Sometimes, he had to blow for a very long time. Although he was a very skilled *baal tekiah*, his face would turn beet red.

At the time, I was 15 years old, and as a young person, I was embarrassed to cry in public. But, when I came to *Tekios* for the first time, when the Frierdiker Rebbe lifted his *tallis* soaked with sweat and tears and said "*Lamnatzeach*"—I felt tears beginning to choke me. There were a few other boys my age, like Sholom Chaskind and Sholom Rivkin, and they cried like children. At first, I tried to hold back, but when the Frierdiker Rebbe began "*Min Hameitzar*" and then covered his face again with the *tallis*, I couldn't hold back anymore, and I burst into uncontrollable tears.

However, our Rebbe stood motionless, with no expression on his face. He stood to the side and watched the Frierdiker Rebbe the entire time. I later noticed that every single movement, including the way the Rebbe raised the *tallis* a bit at the beginning of the *pessukim*, was exactly like the way the Frierdiker Rebbe did it. Those who had the merit to see the Rebbe during *Tekios* would recall how amazingly similar his *hanhagos* were to those of the Frierdiker Rebbe.<sup>25</sup>

1. Based on Sefer Hasichos 5695 pg. 169.

2. Reshimos Dvarim (Old Edition) pg. 325, condensed for brevity.

3. Lubavitch V'Chayoleha pg. 27.

4. It should be noted that throughout the year, Chassidim would be asked to leave the Ohel before the Rebbe entered, but Erev Rosh Hashanah and Yud Shevat were considered exceptions.

5. Sefer Hasichos 5704 pg. 1.

6. Sefer Hasichos 5705 pg. 1.

7. Reshimos Dvarim pg. 356.

8. Sefer Hasichos 5701 pg. 27.

9. Reshimos Dvarim pg. 356.

10. Sipurim Noraim 85.

11. Sefer Hatoldos Admur Harashab pg. 436.

12. Sefer Hasichos 5701 pg. 27.

13. Chaim Sho'al pg. 17.

14. Sefer Hatoldos Admur Hazaken vol. 4 pg. 1116.

15. Lubavitch V'Chayoleha pg. 27.

16. Reshimos Dvarim pg. 356.

17. Lubavitch V'Chayoleha pg. 28.

18. Reshimos Dvarim pg. 356.

19. Lubavitch V'Chayoleha pg. 29.

20. Hatomim issue 4 pg. 98, condensed for brevity.

21. Zikaron Livnei Yisrael pg. 21.

22. Hatomim issue 4 pg. 99.

23. Reshimos Hayoman pg. 261 & 272-3.

24. Sefer Hasichos 5698 pg. 263.

25. Kovetz Lechizuk Hahiskashrus - Rosh Hashanah 5771 pg. 23.

IN THE FOOTSTEPS  
OF CHASSIDIM

# The Rising Star

REB MENDEL CHEIN

BY: RABBI MENDY GREENBERG

לע"נ  
ר' משה חיים בן ר' ר' מאיר הערץ ע"ה  
נפ' ר"ח תמוז ה'תשפ"ד  
תנ"צ ב"ה

ולזכות הורינו  
ר' אברהם שמואל זוגתו מרת  
רבקה מירל שיחיו שפאלטר  
מרת שרה תח' גיפען  
לאריכות ימים ושנים טובות  
מתוך בריאות הנכונה

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

## The Conference of 5670

It was finally the moment of truth. After years of slow and painstaking work, the Czarist government had granted permission for the conference of all conferences; the leading Rabbonim of Russia would gather to discuss the critical questions facing Russian Jewry.

Forty-two of Russia's most famous Jewish figures gathered in Petersburg, from *maskilim* like Baron Ginzburg and Yitzchok Schneersohn to some of Russian Jewry's most venerable figures, like Reb Chaim Brisker and the Rebbe of Babroisk.

There was one whose presence electrified the entire conference. "Above all," wrote the conference's secretary Yitzchok Shneerson, "was the unearthly magnetism of the Lubavitcher Rebbe's eminent presence. He was a genuine leader—he set the tone, and was the de-facto leader of the conference."

But the rules of the conference dictated that the formal proceedings be held in Russian, a language the Rebbe Rashab preferred not to use.

How would the Rebbe Rashab speak? How would he battle the ambitions of the *maskilim* at the conference?

Not to worry—the Rebbe Rashab came armed with a secret weapon: Reb Mendel Chein.<sup>1</sup>

## The Rising Star

Reb Mendel Chein was an up-and-coming star, barely thirty years old, but he was already the Rebbe Rashab's right-hand man in the public sphere.

"Reb Mendel Chein was a Gaon in both Nigleh and Chassidus," writes Yitzchok Schneersohn. "He was so rhetorically talented that even the simplest people understood him. He was a genuine Yirei Shomayim, a kind person, and unusually humble. He was esteemed by all, Chassidim and non-Chassidim. He was the Lubavitcher Rebbe's spokesman; the Rebbe would be *mishtashe'a* with him—he practically raised him and he loved him dearly."

Reb Mendel made an indelible impression on the conference. A dynamic speaker, he used his skills well in confrontations and clashes with the *maskilim*. In Reshimos HaRabash, written by the Rebbe's grandfather Reb Boruch Shneur, we get a glimpse of the Rebbe Rashab's pride in Reb Mendel. During a *seudah*, the conversation dwelled on the fact that the Czar had listened to a speech from a certain Rov. The Rebbe Rashab commented, "The Czar should have stopped off in Niezhin—Mendel Chein would have already shown him how to give a speech."<sup>2</sup>



A GROUP PHOTO OF SOME OF THE PARTICIPANTS  
AT THE CONFERENCE OF RABBONIM IN 5670.

## Who Was Reb Mendel

The Chein family was one of the most respected families among Chabad Chassidim. Reb Peretz Chein was among the eminent Chassidim of the Tzemach Tzedek, and his son, Reb Dovid Tzvi (known as the Radatz) was a distinguished chossid of the Rebbe Maharash and Rebbe Rashab. He had a holy visage and regal bearing; people would repeat miracle stories in his name and cherish the moments they spent in his presence.

Reb Mendel was born to Radatz and his wife on Chol Hamoed Sukkos 5640. By six years of age, he knew Tanach by heart and was well-versed in the names, authors, and details of every sefer in his father's library. By eighteen, he was a *baki* in Shas and Rambam. His father would quip that he (Radatz) was better than his father, Reb Peretz—because “he had a son like me, but I have a son like Mendel.”

At a meeting with the Rogatchover Gaon as a young man, the Rogatchover explained a *lishitasei* (showing the through-line logic in the opinions) of two Tannaim in several *sugyos*. Reb Mendel asked, “That’s it? There’s nothing more?” The Rogatchover (known for his sharp tongue) thought for a moment and said, “*sheiget, du bist gerecht!*” Another Mishnah, in Maseches Keilim, made a similar point.<sup>3</sup>

When Radatz would come to Lubavitch from Chernigov, where he served as Rov, he would bring Reb Mendel and his brothers along. They quickly stood out; the Rebbe Rashab was *mekarev* them, and Reb Mendel would spend a lot of time with the Frieddiker Rebbe, who was the same age.

By the time he reached marriageable age, his fame had spread far and wide. Reb Chaim Brisker, searching for a hus-

band for his daughter, sent scouts to meet with the young Reb Mendel.

Many versions of the story are told. According to a common account, Reb Mendel first presented the visitors with a *pilpul*, and when they agreed with his point, he proceeded to refute (*shlog op*) the entire thing. Then he refuted the refutation, and again refuted the refutation of his refutation.

Their minds spinning, they returned to Brisk to report on their mission. When Reb Chaim saw them, he said, “*Nu*, does he know how to learn?” They enthusiastically reported that he did. “He can learn like my Velevele [later the Brisker Rov]?” Reb Chaim continued.

“Much more!” came the response.

In addition to his brilliance, he was known for his refined character. During a conversation at the Asifas Harabanim, Reb Mendel disagreed with Reb Chaim on the precise wording of a specific Rambam. As someone went to fetch a Rambam, Reb Mendel quietly excused himself to make a cup of tea. The sefer was soon opened and Reb Chaim saw that Reb Mendel was correct—but was nowhere to be found to enjoy his victory. Reb Chaim Brisker later noted that he was jealous of the Rebbe Rashab, not merely because of the brilliance of his *talmid*, but because of his refined character.

The shidduch with Reb Chaim didn’t pan out. When he was twenty-four years old, Reb Mendel married Pessia, the daughter of Reb Shabsi Berman, a wealthy chossid from Bessarabia. At the wedding, the attendees expected a memorable *drasha*, but the chosson apologized and said he was tired—would they mind postponing the *drasha* to the next day’s sheva brachos? Those present agreed on one condition: he would give a speech on a random topic, determined on

the spot by opening a sefer.

He agreed. The next day, a sefer was opened to the story of David Hamelech's passing on Shabbos. Reb Mendel immediately gave an elaborate speech on the Halachic topic of taking care of the deceased on Shabbos, and everyone listened attentively.

## The Beloved Leader

The town of Niezhin was home to many wealthy Jews who owned large tobacco and pickle factories, but it was also a place of terrible poverty. When Reb Mendel arrived as Rav in 5667, he immediately began to make rounds of the wealthy homes, insisting that contributions be increased ten or sometimes twenty-fold. The donors were begrudging at first, but they ultimately came around; something about the young Rov's determination earned their respect.

Reb Mendel soon became very sought after for *dinei Torah* and *teshuvos*, especially regarding Agunos. One story reflects his *ge'onus* alongside his *Yiras Shomayim*:

A Tomim from Lubavitch happened to stay in the same room as Reb Mendel during their travels. Late at night, he saw Reb Mendel sitting on his bed murmuring for hours. He finally asked about it, and Reb Mendel quietly explained that it was his custom to review the entire Choshen Mishpat the night before he sat in a Din Torah.

Reb Mendel's daughter later related that on a regular day in Niezhin, Reb Mendel didn't have a moment's peace, but after nightfall, when the last visitors finally left, Reb Mendel would retire to his beloved Seforim. "How much he loved learning! The sweet sound of his Gemara would waft through the quiet rooms." There were notebooks filled with *teshuvos* and *chiddushei Torah* that he wrote on those long nights, but they were all ultimately lost.

On Shabbos, he would daven for hours, long after the minyan concluded. During the Asifas Harabonim, Reb Chaim Brisker noticed his lengthy davening on Shabbos morning and was puzzled that a *gaon* of his caliber would spend so much time davening instead of learning. "Why do you let him daven for so long?" he asked the Rebbe Rashab.

## Can We Have Our Rav Back?

After ten years of Rabbanus, the locals wrote to the Rebbe Rashab with a complaint.

They were blessed with a Rav with incredible gifts—but he was never in town! As the Rebbe Rashab's right-hand man in public affairs, Reb Mendel was constantly traveling on the Rebbe's behalf, leaving the community bereft.



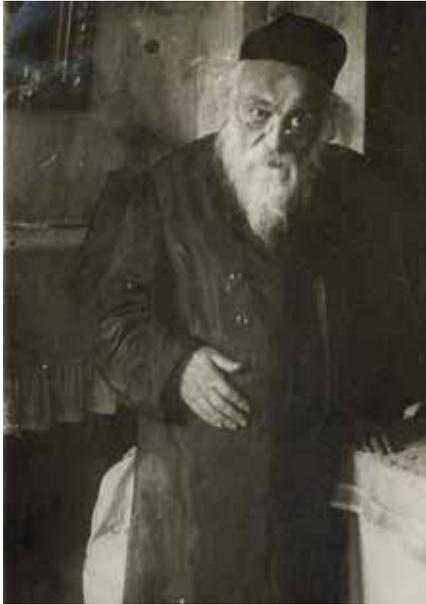
REB DOVID TZVI  
CHEIN

There was always a new crisis that demanded attention. After the Asifas Harabanim, for example, when Reb Mendel was in Petersburg working on the expected presentation to the government, news came of the arrest of Mendel Beilis on the charges of a blood libel. The Rebbe Rashab immediately brought Reb Mendel into the fray. At the trial, the defense was represented by a famous lawyer along with Rabbi Yaakov Maze of Moscow, an eloquent Jewish defender, but behind the scenes was Reb Mendel, preparing the extensive sources and arguments proving the charges utterly baseless.

The letter of complaint reached the Rebbe Rashab in 5677, following the end of World War I, when it seemed that Russia would become a democracy. Reb Mendel led the Rebbe Rashab's efforts to unite the Jewish community as a coherent political group for representation in the future government.

However, the Rebbe Rashab wasn't willing to part with his prized pupil. In his letter to Niezhin, the Rebbe Rashab asks them to forgive their Rav for his absences and be supportive of his holy work on behalf of the entire Jewish people, thereby earning a participation in his critical work.

The tremendous value the Rebbe Rashab placed on Reb Mendel's work is evident in a letter written by the Friediker Rebbe to Reb Shmuel Gurary before the Asifas Harabanim, listing the potential participants and grading them according to their ability to perform in such circumstances. Some are listed as "good," some as "average," and some, "bad." The Rogatchover Gaon, Reb Meir Simcha of Dvinsk and Radatz, are listed as "*mefursam*, famous." But only one person — Reb Mendel Chein — is listed as "*me'od tov*, very good."



REB CHAIM  
BRISKER



REB MENDEL  
CHEIN

## Father and Son

Reb Sender Yudasin (a *bochur* from Lubavitch) once stayed with Radatz when Reb Mendel was visiting. “Reb Mendel sat surrounded by leading Rabbonim from among the refugees,” he described. “They asked him questions from throughout Shas and Poskim, and Reb Mendel responded with a sharp and brilliant *pilpul* on the topic. A hush fell over the room, everyone hanging on to his words.

“As this was happening, Radatz approached and said, ‘There is a Midrash which states that *milchamta shel Torah* nullifies the wars of the world.’ This was in the midst of World War I. He continued: ‘But I don’t know if these *pilpulim* will end the war.’

“In mid-sentence, his son Reb Mendel fell silent. Standing there, I saw the *gaon’s* incredible *bitul hayesh* and *kibud av*. It was truly remarkable.”<sup>4</sup>

## The Final Wish

After World War I, the Russian Civil War broke out; the Jewish community of Ukraine was decimated by vicious pogroms committed by the various armies vying for control of the region.

When one such group arrived in Niezhin thirsty for Jewish blood, Reb Mendel (accompanied by the local priest) went to beg the regional police chief to protect the Jews. Protection was not forthcoming, and the delegation left disappointed.

The pogrom began as they were returning. Seeing the danger, the priest begged Reb Mendel to hide inside the nearby

church, but Reb Mendel refused, turning instead to a Jewish hotel that was teeming with terrified townspeople.

Realizing that these might be his final moments, Reb Mendel turned to the townspeople and recited *vidui* with them, exhorting any survivors to strengthen each other in Yiddishkeit. Moments later, the soldiers entered and killed everyone in sight. It was Rosh Chodesh Elul 5679.



The news arrived in Rostov along with other tragic news: Reb Shilem, the famed Mashpia and Chozer, had also passed away. “*Shilem un Mendel*,” the Rebbe Rashab said, “*iz a klap far di velt* (a blow to the whole world).”

Chassidim relate that the Rebbe Rashab would speak of his three prized *talmidim*, saying that he would take pride in them “in this world and in the next.” The first was the Rebbe’s father, Harav Levi Yitzchok; the second was Reb Zalman Schneerson of Lodz, and the third was Reb Mendel Chein.

During the Rebbe Rashab’s final illness, he was heard asking, “Is he still here?”

The attendant asked, “Who?”

“Mendel.”

“Which Mendel?”

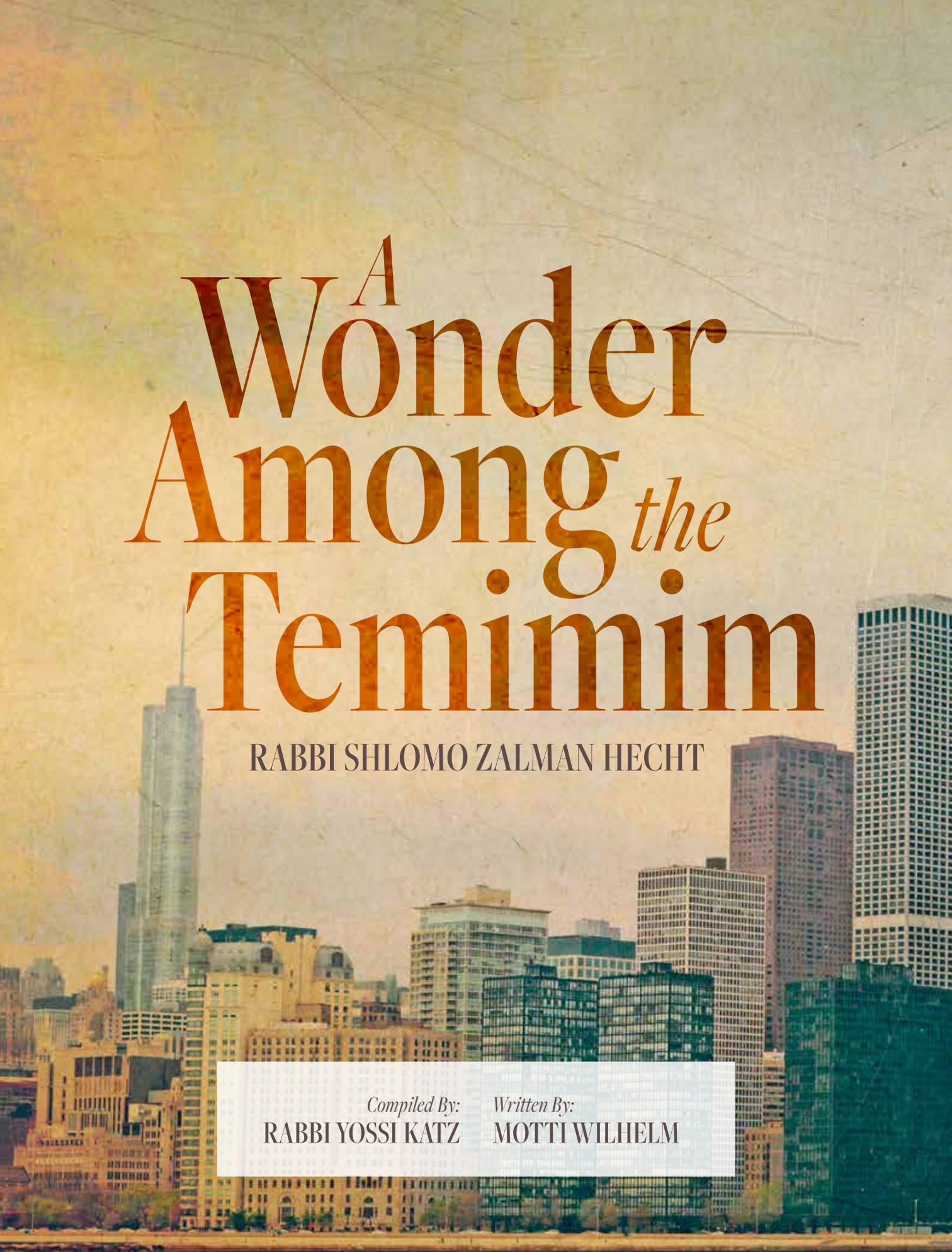
“Mendel *der Rov*,” came the reply.

1. This article is based on Chapter 27 of Avnei Chein, unless otherwise noted.

2. Reshimos Harabash pg. 127.

3. Oholei Lubavitch issue 1 pg. 273.

4. Halekach V’Halibuv pg. 215.



# W<sup>A</sup> Wonder Among *the* Temimim

RABBI SHLOMO ZALMAN HECHT

*Compiled By:*  
RABBI YOSSI KATZ

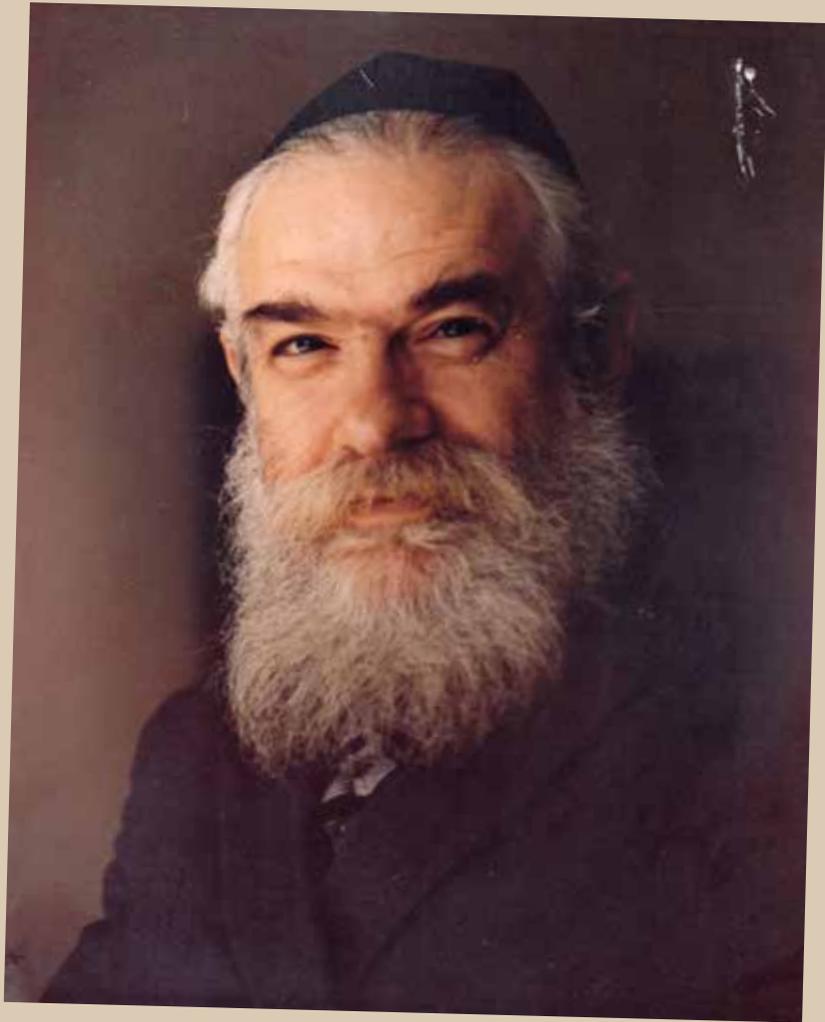
*Written By:*  
MOTTI WILHELM

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לזכות  
הרה"ת ר' יוסף יעקב שיח' מאראס  
שליח כ"ק אדמו"ר בבורני, טעקסאס  
לרגל יום הולדתו החמישים יום  
א' דראש השנה ה'תשפ"ה

נדפס ע"י משפחתו שיחיו

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**I**n today's day and age, Chabad is most closely associated with the Rebbe's empire of shluchim spread around the globe. In the Jewish world, Chicago is known as an *ir v'em b'yisroel* (great Jewish city), boasting shuls, yeshivos and *mosdos Torah*. However, just a few decades ago, both of these realities were unimaginable. Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Hecht, the first permanent shliach of the Frierdiker Rebbe and the Rebbe to Chicago, served as a pioneer on both of these frontiers, creating a ripple effect that is felt to this day.

## Early Life

Born on 17 Shevat, 5677, Shlomo Zalman was raised in a home steeped in Yiddishkeit and Chassidus, a rarity in America of those days. His grandfather, Reb Hersh Meilich, a chossid of the Shinever Rav, had emigrated to the USA only after receiving his Rebbe's approval. There he became a powerhouse of Yiddishkeit. He established *shiurei Torah*, served as a *gabbai tzedakah* for the poor of Europe and *yeshivos* in Eretz Yisroel, and built a *mikvah* in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn, reviving the *chassidisher minhag* of *toveling* every morning.

This *mikvah* would play an important role in the life of the Hecht brothers. When the Frierdiker Rebbe visited America in 5689, he asked to use a reliable *mikvah* before Shabbos, and was directed to Reb Hersh Meilich's Brownsville *mikvah*. Preparing for the Frierdiker Rebbe's arrival, Reb Hersh Meilich scrubbed every nook and cranny of the building, laid out new wooden planks, towels and mats, and even prepared two *boros* – hot and cold – for the Frierdiker Rebbe to choose from. Upon seeing his efforts, the Frierdiker Rebbe offered a ten-dollar bill, but Reb Hersh Meilich refused the money.

Instead, the Frierdiker Rebbe gave him a *bracha* – that his grandchildren should be his (the Frierdiker Rebbe's) chassidim, a *bracha* which was manifestly fulfilled with Shlomo Zalman and his younger brothers.

Reb Hersh's passion for Yiddishkeit was inherited by his son Shea Hecht, who was born in 5656. At the tender age of twelve, his parents sent him to *yeshiva* in Yerushalayim; at the time, America did not offer any opportunities for serious *limud haTorah*. He studied in Yerushalayim for six years, then returned to the United States, where a *shidduch* was proposed with Sorah Auster, the daughter of a passionate Galitzianer chossid. A short while later they married, and over a span of ten years, they had six boys, the oldest being Shlomo Zalman.

Like his father before him, young Shlomo Zalman left home at twelve years old to study in a *yeshiva* in Eretz Yisroel. He lived with his grandfather Reb Shea Auster, who had remarried after his wife's passing and emigrated to Eretz Yisroel. Seven years later, in 5695, Shlomo Zalman returned home and began studying in *Yeshiva Torah V'daas* in Williamsburg.



REB SHLOMO ZALMAN AS A YOUNG BOY WITH HIS MATERNAL GRANDFATHER REB SHEA'LA AUSTER.

## Introduction to Chassidus

One of his fellow students, Avrohom Barnetsky, had been introduced to Chassidus through the *shiurim* of Reb Yisroel Jacobson. Avrohom was *mikarev* Shlomo Zalman to the light of Chassidus by encouraging him to join the *shiur*. Shlomo Zalman and his younger brothers Avrohom Dov and Moshe Yitzchok soon became regular visitors at the Jacobson home, where they would study Chassidus and farbreng. Before long, the entire Hecht family were dedicated Chabad Chassidim.

In a letter sent from Reb Yisroel Jacobson to the renowned chossid and *shadar* Reb Mordechai Chefetz, he writes of his joy upon seeing Shlomo Zalman *chazer a maamar Chassidus*. “[He] amazed all the listeners, reciting the *maamar* like one who is an elder and experienced. My joy knew no bounds. It made a strong impression on all the students, fostering a deeper connection and renewed commitment to the study of Chassidus.”

In the spring of 5698, while visiting America as a *shadar* of the Frierdiker Rebbe, Reb Mordechai Chefetz arranged a *shidduch* between Shlomo Zalman and Chaya Sara Jacobson, daughter of the Hechts’ beloved *mashpia* Reb Yisroel. When he got engaged, Shlomo Zalman resolved to grow a beard, something which was virtually unheard of at the time, even amongst *frum bochurim*.

His bold decision made its mark on the fledgling Jewish community of New York. In an autobiography penned by Shlomo Zalman’s brother Rabbi Avraham Dov Hecht, the author recalls people’s reactions.

“Passersby would sadly shake their heads, murmuring with marked sympathy that the ‘Hecht’s oldest son had obviously gone out of his mind.’”<sup>13</sup> Nonetheless, his action was emulated by a number of fellow *bochurim* who took an example from the new *chossan*.

## LETTERS

*The Frierdiker Rebbe encouraged Shlomo Zalman to frequently write to his friends back home in the States, and share with them of the goings on in the Frierdiker Rebbe’s court. Shlomo Zalman did so faithfully, and these letters remain a treasure-trove of descriptions of pre-War life in Tomchei Temimim with the Frierdiker Rebbe. Below is an excerpt of these letters:*

Tuesday, Parshas Mattos-Massei [5699]

Otwock, in the presence of the [Frierdiker] Rebbe *Shlita*

To my esteemed, dear brothers and friends, the Achei Temimim,  
Sholom Uv’racha!

It’s been a while since I’ve last written to you, but my esteemed father-in-law certainly shares with you all the detailed news [which I write to him], of life in the Rebbe’s presence, so I only need to add a few words.

If we only knew how much the Rebbe cares about every detail of the lives of each and every one of us, especially the “Achei Temimim,” we would be *mekushar* in a completely different manner; [much greater] than we are now.

When I was in *yechidus*, [the Rebbe] asked me in great detail about each one of the Achei Temimim; not just about me but about every one of us. The Rebbe asks and wants to know in detail how each of you are doing. The problem is, I didn’t have any information to report about you.

This is a great wonder to the Rebbe *Shlita*: how is it possible that the “Achei Temimim” (who are literally like brothers, for we all have one father) withhold and don’t write often, and in detail?

## In Poland, By the Rebbe

On 3 Elul, 5698, Shlomo Zalman and Chaya Sara were married. Shortly afterwards, the *chossan* informed his family that the couple would be traveling to Poland, so he could study in Yeshiva Tomchei Tmimim in Otwock, a small suburb near Warsaw where the Frierdiker Rebbe and his yeshiva were located at the time.

“We were shocked by the sheer absurdity of the young couple’s plans for their future, but careful introspection revealed that they were not as unrealistic as previously conceived,” Rabbi Avrohom Dov Hecht recalled decades later.<sup>2</sup>

The move was made with the approval of the Frierdiker Rebbe, and with the full agreement of Mrs. Hecht, who later recalled that, despite the looming danger of war and the talk of a Nazi invasion, “we knew we would be safe, since we would be with the Frierdiker Rebbe.”<sup>3</sup>

Ahead of their travels, Reb Yisroel Jacobson wrote to Reb Chatche Feigin, asking him to help the young American couple acclimate to the unfamiliar terrain. Reb Chatche responded, “*Im yirtzeh Hashem*, from my end, all that is possible in terms of bringing [them] closer will not be lacking, and I will strive to influence the *hanhalas hayeshiva* to pay special attention to him.”<sup>4</sup>

After arriving in Otwock, Reb Shlomo Zalman was seen by the Frierdiker Rebbe on a Friday afternoon, and the Frierdiker Rebbe gave him several instructions about his stay there. (Reb Shlomo Zalman would later write that this encounter with the Frierdiker Rebbe was not an actual “*yechidus*” with all the spiritual significance that comes along with it. It was merely a chance for the Frierdiker Rebbe to see him and greet him.)

Reb Shomo Zalman later described the encounter in a letter:

“[The Frierdiker Rebbe] asked: ‘How are your friends, the Achei Temimim? How is your father-in-law?’ I answered, ‘Boruch Hashem’. He asked me, ‘How is your father?’ I answered ‘Boruch Hashem’. I mentioned that my father is in need of a *refuah shleima*, and if I remember correctly, he answered ‘Hashem will help’.

“...Then he said to me: ‘Your coming here, Shlomo Zalman, is an act of *mesirus nefesh*, coming to Poland with a wife,

especially now when times are unsettled. You must greatly value your time here; every moment. Immediately establish a *seder* in *nigleh*, and a *seder* in Chassidus.’

“He also told me to write frequently to the Achei Temimim [back home in America], for they very much want to know [about what goes on here].”<sup>5</sup>

Several months after the Hechts’ arrival in Otwock, they were joined by six American *bochurim* who had also come to learn in Tomchei Temimim, accompanied by Reb Yisroel Jacobson.

On their arrival, Reb Shlomo Zalman and the *bochurim* quickly realized that both the manner of *chinuch* and living conditions in “old world” Poland differed greatly from those in the United States. Avrohom Dov Hecht, one of the six *bochurim*, described how he and his friends would frequently go hungry, unwilling to eat the “apples, moldy hard cheese, and rotting vegetables” available for lunch. The *bochurim* also raised eyebrows when they pulled out baseball mitts and boxing gloves, which they had brought from the United States.

But Reb Shlomo Zalman was perturbed by something else entirely.

“My son-in-law, naturally pessimistic, was dissatisfied with his studies, feeling he hadn’t achieved what he should have in both revealed and mystical Torah knowledge,” Reb Yisroel Jacobson wrote in his memoirs.<sup>6</sup>

“My son-in-law later shared with me what the [Frierdiker] Rebbe told him: ‘In Lubavitch, one didn’t touch the neck.’ This is a *chassidische* expression derived from a story about a man in poor health who, on doctor’s orders, began eating nutritious foods. After consuming hearty meals throughout the day, he felt his neck, expecting to already find it thicker from all the food he had eaten.” The Frierdiker Rebbe’s point was that in Lubavitch, they didn’t look for immediate results,



REB SHLOMO ZALMAN BEFORE EMBARKING ON THE SHIP TO POLAND. FROM RIGHT TO LEFT: REB SHEA HECHT, REB SHLOMO ZALMAN HECHT, REB HERSH MEILICH HECHT AND REB YISROEL JACOBSON.



DURING HIS TIME IN OTWOCK. FROM RIGHT TO LEFT: REB CHATCHE FEIGEN, REB MOSHE LEIB RODSHTAIN AND REB SHLOMO ZALMAN HECHT.

but over time, one began to see a transformation.

In Poland, the young couple lived in close proximity to, and developed a close relationship with, *Beis Harav*, including Rebbetzin Shterna Sara. They both were *zoche* to attend the Frierdiker Rebbe's *farbrengens* and to enter *yechidus* on several occasions.

## Escape from the Nazis

This spiritual bliss did not last long. In Elul of 5699, the Nazis were preparing to invade Poland, and the United States consulate warned all American citizens to return home immediately. At first, the American Chassidim stayed put, assured by the Frierdiker Rebbe that no harm would befall them. But then, as the Nazis began bombing Poland, laying waste to entire neighborhoods and killing many, the Frierdiker Rebbe gave his consent for them to travel back to the USA.

Prior to the group's departure, which took place on Friday, 17 Elul, the Frierdiker Rebbe received them for *yechidus*. He told them to travel "without confusion or emotional excitement," and gave them warm *brachos* for their travels and for the upcoming new year.

Before they walked out, one of the Americans asked, "Rebbe, what will happen if we have to be *mechalel* Shabbos?"

"The merit of the two great tzaddikim born on Chai Elul – the Baal Shem Tov and the Alter Rebbe – is powerful enough to ensure you won't need to violate Shabbos," the Frierdiker Rebbe told them.

The group sped to Warsaw, where they faced one challenge after another, including the anti-Semitic American consul, an evening curfew, and hostile Poles. Throughout, even when faced with expulsion from a hotel – a dangerous situation with the Nazi bombings and the threat of Polish imprisonment – Reb Shlomo Zalman steadfastly held to the Rebbe's promise, refusing to be *mechalel* Shabbos, even though the situation could undoubtedly be classified as *pikuach nefesh*. Finally, after midnight, they found a place to stay until the end of Shabbos.

On Motzei Shabbos, the group managed to leave Poland on a train to Lithuania, and from there to Latvia. They remained in Riga until Chol Hamoed Sukkos, when they traveled to Norway, and from there to Sweden, where they spent Simchas Torah. After Yom Tov, they boarded a ship for the two week voyage to the United States.

The boat docked in New York on Friday afternoon, leaving the passengers wondering if they would make it out in time for Shabbos. Unbeknownst to them, Reb Yisroel Jacobson was waiting at the port, and he arranged for them to be in a hotel by the time Shabbos began. The *bracha* and *havtacha* of the Frierdiker Rebbe was realized once again.

Shortly after their arrival, the Frierdiker Rebbe, seeking to



THE FRIERDIKER REBBE AT A FARBRENGEN, CIRCA 5699.

rescue his voluminous library from the hands of the Nazis, registered it under the names of Rabbi Yisroel Jacobson and his son-in-law Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Hecht, both US citizens and members of Agudas Chassidei Chabad. The Frierdiker Rebbe later documented this action in a letter to Jewish historian and librarian Alexander Marx.<sup>7</sup> Decades later, the Rebbe designated this letter as a crucial piece of evidence in the seforim court case, and it contributed significantly to the '*Didan Notzach*' verdict.

In America, Rabbi Hecht began initiating projects to spread Yiddishkeit to the multitude of Yidden who had made America their home. Two letters in the Frierdiker Rebbe's *Igros Kodesh* shed light on some of his activities: Giving a shiur in Young Israel, authoring a booklet about Tefillin and other *mitzvos ma'asios*<sup>8</sup>, and influencing couples to increase their Torah observance<sup>9</sup>.

In 5702, Rabbi Hecht was appointed *rov* of the Beis Yehuda shul in East Flatbush. The Frierdiker Rebbe wrote a letter to him on the occasion, addressing him as "My dear friend *Harav Hagaon*, most distinguished student, discerning in righteous matters, endowed with exemplary character, diligent *askan* engaged in spreading Torah and *yiras shomayim*, *vosik v'chossid*, *ish yirei Elokim*, *Moreinu Harav Reb Shlomo sheyichye* Hecht."<sup>10</sup> The Frierdiker Rebbe wished him *mazal tov*, and offered his *brachos*, along with instructions to arrange *shiurei Torah*, deliver speeches, and encourage parents to send their children to the shul's Talmud Torah.

Reb Shlomo Zalman would later recount to his son, Rabbi Yossi Hecht, some of the *peulos* he undertook while serving as *rov* of this shul. Among them was walking the streets wearing a "sandwich board" – a two-sided sign – with messages about *shemiras Shabbos*. While such an action might be unthinkable for a *rov* in today's day and age, at that time *shemiras Shabbos* was an enormous challenge, and Rabbi Hecht was willing to

do whatever it took to encourage a fellow Yid to keep Shabbos. He would also take members of his congregation to 770, to see the Frierdiker Rebbe.

In Cheshvan 5703, less than a year later, came the pivotal moment that would define the rest of Rabbi Hecht's life.

## Shlichus to Chicago

Before writing about Rabbi Hecht's appointment as a shlich and *rov* in Chicago, we must first describe the general situation of the Jewish community of Chicago at the time.

The city boasted several Chabad shuls, but over time, these remained Chabad mostly in name and *nusach*, while observance levels steadily declined and many moved away from Lubavitch. The last permanent Chabad *rov* at one of these shuls was Rabbi Mordechai Zevin, who served at the Anshei Lubavitch shul until his passing in 5684. After that, the Frierdiker Rebbe made numerous attempts to appoint a new Chabad *rov* for the city, but none succeeded, save for a brief period in 5693.

When the Frierdiker Rebbe arrived in America in 5700, he made it his objective to appoint Lubavitcher *rabbonim* to the Lubavitcher shuls of Chicago. In 5701, Rabbi Moshe Leib Rodshtein, the Frierdiker Rebbe's *mazkir*, arrived in America

after escaping the Nazis. Upon his arrival, he was sent by the Frierdiker Rebbe to Chicago, to lead Agudas Chabad there. Over the coming months, he exchanged letters with Reb Yisroel Jacobson about the Anshei Lubavitch shul and the possibility that Rabbi Hecht would be appointed as *rov*. The discussions continued for a year and a half.

In 5703, Anshei Lubavitch of Chicago celebrated their 50th anniversary. The Frierdiker Rebbe sent Reb Shlomo Zalman as his representative to the celebration, along with a letter introducing him to the community. The introduction was made with the hope that it might lead to Reb Shlomo Zalman's appointment as the congregation's *rov*.

Indeed, the community took a liking to Rabbi Hecht, and appointed him as their *rov*. On Motzei Shabbos, the second night of Chanukah, 5703, the Hechts traveled to Chicago to assume the role.

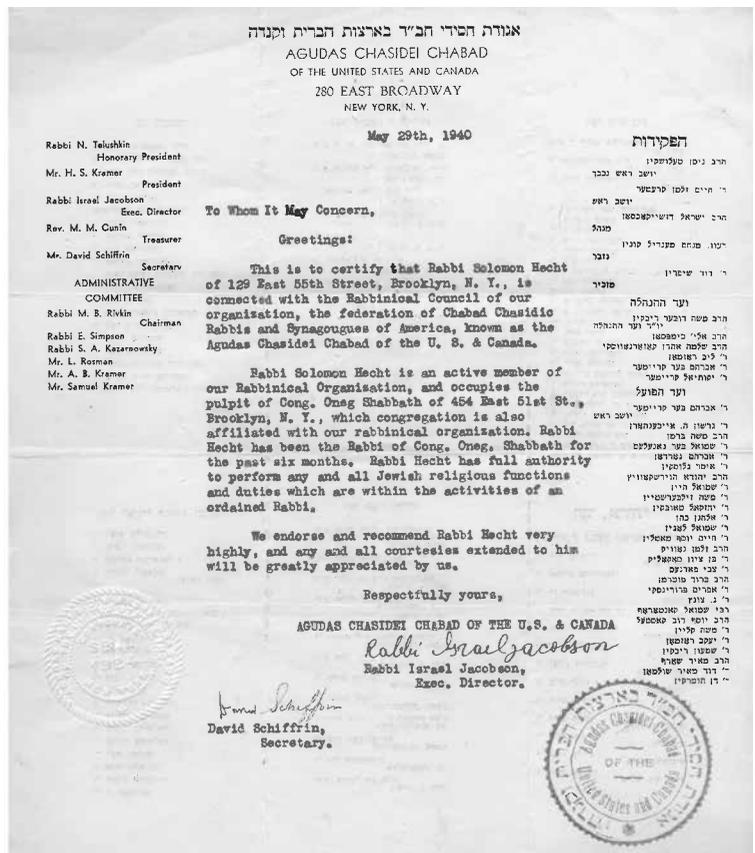
The following day, the Frierdiker Rebbe penned a letter to Rabbi Sholom Posner, who lived in Chicago at the time, asking him to be *mekarev* Rabbi Hecht "with all types of *kiruv*," and honor him "all forms of genuine respect, for he is your brother."

"...He agreed to my request to relocate and accept upon himself the rabbinical position in the aforementioned shul

### A LETTER OF ENDORSEMENT FOR REB SHLOMO ZALMAN HECHT BY AGUDAS CHASSIDEI CHABAD.



REB SHLOMO ZALMAN HECHT, CIRCA EARLY 5700'S



*l'mazal tov*. It was a *mesiras nefesh* on his part, to leave his parents, and his wife's parents, only because we see in this, *bézas Hashem*, a great benefit for the public. For he is a wonder even among the senior *Temimim*, all the more so as someone born in this country. For this reason alone, it is appropriate to strengthen, support, and assist him.<sup>11</sup>

According to family tradition, related by Rabbi Yossi Hecht, before his parents' move, some family members opposed the idea, wanting the couple to stay in New York. When a relative approached the Frieddiker Rebbe, he responded, "The first time I set my eyes upon him, I decided that he is going to be my shliach to Chicago."

Prior to their departure, the Hechts entered *yechidus*. The Frieddiker Rebbe gave Mrs. Hecht three special directives. To have household help; to teach; and to be very active in the community.<sup>12</sup>

Rabbi Hecht's *hachtarah* took place the day after their arrival. In a letter to his father-in-law, Reb Yisroel Jacobson, he described the event.

"Monday night there was a meeting at the shul. I was invited and I waited in the Talmud Torah building as instructed. After a while, two of the members came and led me into the shul for the meeting. There were several dozen people present, and when I entered, everyone stood up and offered *mazal tov*. Afterwards, the Rama"l [Reb Moshe Leib Rodshtein] read the *ksav harabanus*.

"On Shabbos afternoon I spoke; there were about 400 people, *rabbonim*, *shochtim*, etc. It was probably a straight miracle. A Lubavitch shul hasn't had a *rov* for 8 years, and all *rabbonim* have already tried, and it's such a fortress that no one can conquer them, but they do accept the Rebbe's *yungerman*."

The move wasn't easy. Besides for the *mesiras nefesh* mentioned by the Frieddiker Rebbe, living conditions for frum Yidden were also very different from their native New York. In an interview given decades later, Mrs. Hecht recalled that when they came to Chicago, "it was a spiritual desert."

"There was no kosher bakery or *cholon Yisroel* milk. There was a man who would go to a farm and bring back milk for us. I pasteurized it and boiled it, and the milk had to be enough for at least a week.<sup>13</sup>"

## "Quite a Stir"

Immediately after their arrival, Rabbi Hecht embarked on his mission to strengthen Yiddishkeit in the entire Chicago. His arrival created "quite a stir," says the book 'Chicago's Rabbis,' a collection featuring brief biographies of 99 rabbis who served the city between 1847 and 1950:

"At a time when most Chicago Rabbanim were European-born and educated, Rabbi Hecht's regal appearance, full



REB SHLOMO ZALMAN HECHT WITH MR. EPHRAIM MOSCOWITZ.

red beard, and attire of a long kapota belied his American origin.

"People were pleasantly surprised when they heard Rabbi Hecht speak. Blessed with brilliant oratory talent, his beautiful speeches in both English and Yiddish brought him fame as a sought-after speaker.<sup>14</sup>"

In a 5775 interview, Ephraim Moscowitz, who was influenced by Rabbi Hecht to study in Yeshivas Tomchei Tmimim in New York, and later became a pillar of Chicago's Chabad community, recalled the strong impression Rabbi Hecht made.

"Rabbi Hecht's arrival stirred much interest," he recalled. "With a full beard, wearing a long frock coat and speaking perfect Yiddish, people were surprised to learn that he was American-born. With his charisma and regal appearance, he attracted a following of young adults into his Torah classes.<sup>15</sup>"

A quick search for Rabbi Hecht's name in the Frieddiker Rebbe's *Igros Kodesh* gives us a glimpse at some of the many activities he was involved with at the time, and the *hora'os* he was given at each step.

These activities included establishing *Mesibos Shabbos* and programs for children, distributing Chabad publications, delivering speeches in shul, teaching *shiurim* in Nigleh and Chassidus, providing kosher food for Jewish soldiers, raising money for Colel Chabad in Eretz Yisroel, creating a *vaad hachinuch*, convincing the community to build a new *mikvah*, saving Yidden from missionaries, ensuring *brissin* were held at the proper time, and many others.

The Frieddiker Rebbe encouraged Rabbi Hecht to write him every week; based on the volume of letters to him in *Igros Kodesh*, we can safely assume that this instruction was kept faithfully. Many of the letters contain unique instructions and expressions about his role and how to influence American youth.

Rabbi Hecht was appointed secretary of the Chicago Merkaz Harabbonim and used his position to strengthen *kashrus* standards across the city. He was also a member of the Hebrew Parochial School's board of education and of the Vaad Hatzalah, which provided assistance to Jewish war refugees. In each position, he used his role as a springboard to enhance the observance of Torah and mitzvos.

Another project of his was the creation of the Milah Foundation of Chicago, which was founded to ensure babies received a *bris milah* at the proper time, on the eighth day from their birth. When Rabbi Hecht arrived in Chicago, many mothers opted to have their sons' *brissin* performed at their convenience, and not necessarily with proper *mohalim*; the new organization set out to change that, and saw much success.

Along with his well-attended *shiurim*, Rabbi Hecht began another, revolutionary initiative – Jewish programs on the radio. These programs were able to reach a far wider audience than a traditional shiur, and they brought many Yidden closer to Yiddishkeit.

“Rabbi Hecht had a wonderful commanding voice, and he was very inspiring. When he spoke, you listened,” Mrs. Tzivia Moscowitz recalled some six decades later. “His programs were very popular with all kinds of Jews and even non-Jews. I remember my principal telling me that his mother would listen regularly to the Yiddish programs—and she was by no means religious.”<sup>16</sup>

Additionally, Rabbi Hecht was known as an extremely principled person, unwilling to bend even on a minute detail of Halacha. “Rabbi Hecht hardly had a penny to his name, but he had a drawer full of checks that he never cashed, because they came from individuals whose businesses were open on Shabbos,” says Rabbi Meir Shimon Moscowitz, today the Regional Director of Lubavitch Chabad of Illinois.

In 5706, Reb Moshe Leib Rodshtein, who until that point had headed Agudas Chabad of Chicago, returned to New York to resume his role as the Friediker Rebbe's *mazkir*. Rabbi Hecht then assumed the role, and from that point until his passing in 5739, all Chabad activities in Chicago were under his purview, as the Rebbe made clear in a number of written and oral *ma'anos*. In one example, when an individual wrote to the Rebbe regarding establishing a Chabad House in Chicago, and requested to meet with Rabbi Hodakov on the topic, the Rebbe responded “Refer him – and likewise all who inquire similarly – to Rabbi S.Z. Hecht, with the explanation that all responsibility [for Chabad activities in Chicago] is [Rabbi Hecht's].”<sup>17</sup>

In another *ma'aneh*, written to Rabbi Daniel Moscowitz – later Head Shlichus of Illinois – in response to his letter about traveling on *shlichus* to Chicago to establish a Chabad House and expand Chabad activities in the city, the Rebbe wrote:

“As is known regarding the situation in Chicago, this depends solely on Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Hecht...”<sup>18</sup>

## Forty Years of Rabbanus

Rabbi Hecht's leadership of Anshei Lubavitch was no honorary position; he actively guided the shul and the congregation to greater heights. When needed, he would roll up his sleeves and personally do what was necessary.

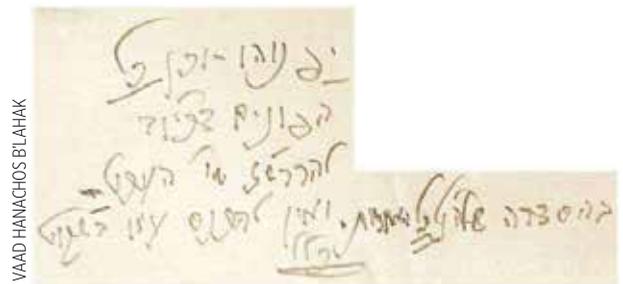
In addition to establishing shiurim and teaching Torah, Rabbi Hecht organized the delivery of crates of kosher food to those in need and to many Jewish servicemen in the U.S. Armed Forces. Before Pesach, he would personally boil vats of hot water to help people kasher their dishes and cutlery.

Once a month, on Motzei Shabbos Mevorchim, Rabbi Hecht would hold a *farbrengen*, hosted at a different home each month. These *farbrengens*, renowned for their warmth and unique style, brought many young men back to Yiddishkeit.

One humorous anecdote about these *farbrengens* was related by Roy Pinchot, a young man who lived in Skokie at the time, and was a close disciple of Rabbi Hecht.

“After a few years, all the old timers had hosted the *farbrengens*, and I felt it was our turn. I asked Rabbi Hecht if I could do something different than the usual herring with bones (which I never did learn to eat) and potatoes. Always one to go for the novel idea (as long as he trusted you) the Rabbi said, ‘Go ahead!’ That *farbrengen* at our house in Skokie featured pizza, peanuts in their shells, beer on tap, and other novelties that had never been seen at a *farbrengen*. My children filled the steins with the beer and waited on the long tables. It was an experience the Lubavitchers truly enjoyed and said they could not wait for our turn to come again. The Rabbi was exceptionally pleased – but it was really a credit to his creative and ever-young spirit.”

A notable yearly event was the Purim *farbengen* in Rabbi



THE REBBE'S MA'ANEH REFERRING THE DECISION ABOUT OPENING A CHABAD HOUSE IN CHICAGO TO REB SHLOMO ZALMAN HECHT:

יפנהו - וכן כל הפונים בכיוצא בזה להרב ר' שלמה זלמן העכט - בהסברה שלהנ"ל כל האחריות. ואין להכנס עמו בשקלא וטריא כלל.

Hecht's home. Started in 5703 by Mrs. Hecht, when her husband was in New York to spend Purim with the Friediker Rebbe, the farbrengen became an annual highlight, with large crowds showing up to participate.

"Harvey Lang...used to say that he lived a whole year from the Purim farbrengen because it was so full of *chayus*," Mrs. Hecht said in her 5754 interview.<sup>19</sup>

"Rebbetzin Hecht would prepare for the open house months in advance," recalled Mrs. Harriet Turner. "Everyone was welcome and I even remember her moving out the furniture to the backyard to make room."

As the city's demographics shifted, and the Jewish community moved away from the city center, Anshei Lubavitch relocated a number of times. In the mid-5720s, Rabbi Hecht was offered the position of *rov* at another shul, the Warsaw Bikur Cholim Congregation, and he accepted it. Nevertheless, the Rebbe instructed him to stay in touch with his former shul, and Rabbi Hecht would regularly check in on developments at Anshei Lubavitch.

## Mivtzoim Pioneer

When the Rebbe initiated the early *mivtzoim* campaigns, Rabbi Hecht enthusiastically threw himself into implementing them. In the 5720s, he began encouraging young Chicago men to bring *shofar* and *Arba Minim* to local hospitals.

"I remember a hospital room with an elderly woman and her childhood friends from Eastern Europe," Roy Pinchot, one of the first men to join the initiative, said. "She looked at me carrying the *lulav* and *esrog* in my hands, her eyes opened wide, tears came to her eyes, and she said to her friends, 'Look, they still do this in America!' I knew it was all worth it."

Another *mivtza* he brought to Chicago was *Neshek*. As he did with the other *mivtzoim*, he not only participated

personally but also inspired others to help their fellow Yidden.

"He told me one day, 'the Rebbe has a campaign for Jewish women to light Shabbat candles. The Jewish patients in the local hospital also need to perform this mitzvah. You and your wife should see that they have what they need.' And thus, our Or Torah 'Shabbat Candle Program' was born at what was then called Skokie Valley Hospital," Pinchot recalls.

After the Rebbe launched *Mivtza Mezuzah*, Rabbi Hecht initiated a campaign to bring *mezuzos* to as many homes as possible. Hundreds of kosher *mezuzos* were placed on Chicago homes and defective *mezuzos* were replaced – staggering numbers for the time. When the Rebbe launched *Mivtza Tefillin*, in addition to taking part himself, Rabbi Hecht raised money for it and sent it to the Rebbe.

## "We Tried to Book Him For Ten Years"

Blessed with a powerful speaking ability, Rabbi Hecht was renowned world-wide for his speeches and talks. Fluent in English, Yiddish, and Hebrew, he could reach diverse crowds, and his delivery pulled in anyone who was listening.

At the earliest Lag B'Omer parades, Reb Shlomo Zalman was the one who translated the Rebbe's words for the children into English, a job later taken over by his brother Reb Yaakov Yehuda.

Rabbi Hecht's reputation as a compelling speaker is illustrated in a personal account. The author describes her journey to Yiddishkeit, pinpointing a pivotal moment, a speech by Rabbi Hecht at her local shul.

"The rabbi whom everyone had gathered to hear, Rabbi Solomon S. Hecht, lived in Chicago. He was known as an unusually talented speaker, and the small Chassidic community of St. Paul, Minnesota, had been trying to book him for a solid ten years."<sup>20</sup>



THE NORTHSIDE LOCATION OF ANSHEI LUBAVITCH IN CHICAGO.



LOCATION OF THE WARSAW BIKUR CHOLIM CONGREGATION.

The speech, delivered a few months before Rabbi Hecht's passing, set her on a path to becoming fully frum and a proud Lubavitcher.

"He was a phenomenal speaker. His *ko'ach hasbara* was just unbelievable," recalls Reb Meyer Silber, a member of Anash in Chicago.

In 1978, America was celebrating its Bicentennial, two hundred years since its declaration of independence. While visiting Philadelphia, Rabbi Hecht was approached by Rabbi Avrohom Shemtov and unceremoniously informed that he would be the main speaker at an official event marking the occasion. Despite his protest over the lack of notice, Rabbi Hecht was able to deliver a speech just a short while later. The speech, presented with hardly any preparation, was so impactful that former Vice-President and then-Senator Hubert Humphrey declared that he had never in his life heard such a good speech.

The Rebbe strongly encouraged his speaking, on occasion referring *mosdos* to him, suggesting they book him as a speaker.

"Once, before we went to Israel for a visit, the Rebbe [Shlit"a] instructed my husband to speak in every school that he could. He spoke a beautiful Hebrew," Mrs. Hecht recalled.<sup>21</sup>

Another such occasion was when Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim Montreal held its first *Chag Hasemicha*. "A huge event was arranged for the occasion, which was a significant milestone for the Yeshiva and community," Rabbi Yossi Hecht says. "The Rebbe asked Rabbi Leibel Kramer who they were bringing to speak at the event. Rabbi Kramer responded that they planned on bringing Rabbi Eliezer Silver, one of the leading *rabbonim* in America at the time, and a renowned speaker. The Rebbe told him, 'I have a better speaker for you: Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Hecht...'"

"On the day of the event, inclement weather significantly



REB SHLOMO ZALMAN WITH THE MAYOR OF CHICAGO MR. MICHAEL A. BILANDIC. ON THE RIGHT STANDS REB SHLOMO ZALMAN'S SUCCESSOR, REB DANIEL MOSCOWITZ.

delayed his travels. Despite arriving only towards the end of the event, he delivered a speech that left a lasting impression on everyone present for years to come."

## Generosity Beyond His Means

Despite his own financial struggles, Rabbi Hecht was known as an incredible *ba'al tzedakah*, donating his own funds and raising money for *tzedakos* as well.

"At the end of his life, his financial situation was precarious, as the shul didn't have the money to pay him a salary. At times, the gas and phone companies sent him letters threatening to cut off service. Yet, after his passing, we found numerous envelopes showing he supported *mosdos* and families in Eretz Yisroel," Reb Shabsi Turner, a *mekurav* of Rabbi Hecht, recalls.

Rabbi Sholom Duchman, director of Colel Chabad, testifies that Rabbi Hecht was one of the biggest supporters of Colel Chabad in his time.

"We didn't have any money growing up, and any money my father would receive went straight to Colel Chabad," Rabbi Yossi Hecht recalls. "My father used to say, don't plan for rainy days, and you won't need to save money."

## Unique Kiruv from the Rabbeim

As mentioned earlier, both the Frierdiker Rebbe and Rebbe gave personal *hora'os* to Rabbi Hecht, guiding him in his role. In addition, he was *zoche* to special *kiruvim* from both Rabbeim, with guidance in personal matters.

When Mrs. Hecht went to the hospital to give birth to Sima, her father Reb Yisroel Jacobson notified the Frierdiker Rebbe. The next morning, he updated the Frierdiker Rebbe that she had given birth earlier in the night. The Frierdiker Rebbe asked him why he hadn't informed him earlier, saying that he couldn't sleep all night... He then expressed his joy by saying, "A new grandchild was born to me!"

As noted by his father-in-law decades earlier, Rabbi Hecht had a nature of *marah shechorah*, being overly hard on himself. In addition, his life was not an easy one, with *tzaros* from his *baalei batim*, a child who was sick, another who passed away young, and severe financial constraints. The Rebbe encouraged him, telling him to rise out of his *marah shechorah*.

"I remember several times at farbrengens when the Rebbe told Reb Shlomo Zalman to stop being *marah shechorah*," *mashpia* Rabbi Shlomo Zarchi recalls.

Rabbi Yossi Hecht recalls how, after his father wrote a

despondent letter to the Rebbe, the Rebbe responded with a passage from the Zohar about positivity. Rabbi Hecht typed the quote onto an index card and displayed it where he could see it constantly.

Rabbi Yossi Shanowitz related that once, when Rabbi Hecht complained to the Rebbe about the heartache he received from some of his *baalei batim*, the Rebbe told him how his father, Harav Levi Yitzchok Schneerson, also suffered heartache from his congregants, saying, “[Your troubles] don’t compare to the troubles of my father.”

Reb Shabsi Turner recalls that on another occasion, when Rabbi Hecht expressed concern, the Rebbe reassured him by saying that nothing should be difficult in a city visited twice by the Friediker Rebbe.

## His Final Journey

On Friday, 24 Menachem-Av, 5739, Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Hecht passed away. The first thing his wife did was call 770 to notify the Rebbe, and it was later discovered that in his *tzava'ah*, Rabbi Hecht had instructed that the Rebbe be immediately informed of his passing.

With the *aron* traveling from Chicago to New York, it seemed at first that the *levaya* would not be able to take place before Shabbos. Rabbi Leibel Groner wrote a note to the Rebbe on behalf of Rabbi Y.Y. Hecht, informing the Rebbe of the development.

On this note, the Rebbe marked “?!”. He then wrote to see Kesubos 103b, and Rashi’s commentary there. The Gemara states that one who passes away on Erev Shabbos “is a good sign for him.” Rashi explains that this is because the *neschama* can immediately enter into rest. The Rebbe thus expressed that the *levaya* should take place that very day.

In the end, arrangements were made to hold the *levaya* before Shabbos, although it would not have time to pass 770. The Rebbe told Rabbi Leibel Groner to tell the *hanhala* of Tomchei Temimim that it would be proper that the bochorim join the *levaya*, and to tell the *Chevra Kadisha* to request

*anash* in his name to do whatever they could to join as well. Later, the Rebbe told him that if they would be able to return to Crown Heights before *licht bentchen*, he would also join the *levaya*. In general, the Rebbe rarely traveled to the *beis hachaim* for a *levaya*, and after the heart attack on Shemini Atzeres a year and a half earlier the Rebbe stopped coming to almost all *levayos*, but to this *levaya*, the Rebbe went, even with Shabbos quickly approaching.

At 5:50 p.m., the Rebbe traveled to the Montefiore *beis hachaim* for the *levaya*, arriving before the *aron*. The Rebbe did not enter the *bais hachaim*, presumably not wanting to be near the Friediker Rebbe’s *Ohel*, as he had not planned and not prepared to be there that day.

Rabbi Nochum Kaplan, who was standing near the Rebbe, recalls the Rebbe pacing back and forth as they waited for the *aron* to arrive. “It was the only time I saw the Rebbe pacing,” he says.

When the *aron* arrived, the Rebbe sent the *mazkirim* inside the *beis hachaim* while he waited outside, watching the proceedings from outside the gate.

On his *matzeiva*, the following words are inscribed:

“Here lays *Harav Hachossid Hatomim* Reb Shlomo Zalman ben Reb Yehoshua z”l. He served in *rabbanus* for forty years. Spoke with supernal eloquence, *v’rabim heshiv ma’avon* – he brought back many from iniquity [a term generally reserved for the Rebbeim -ed]<sup>22</sup>. He provided sustenance to the needy. Devoted and loyal to *Beis Chayenu*. He passed away on Erev Shabbos Kodesh, 24 Menachem Av, 5739, and was laid to rest the same day.

“*T’hay nafsho tzrurah b’tzror hachaim.*”



SCAN THE BARCODE TO VIEW THE FULL LETTERS BY REB SHLOMO ZALMAN DESCRIBING THE GOINGS ON IN OTWOCK WITH THE FRIEDIKER REBBE.

1. Avraham B. Hecht, *My Spiritual Journey* (Brooklyn, NY: Self-published, 2006), 42.
2. *Ibid*, 43.
3. *Above and Beyond: An Oral History of Rebbetzin Chaya Sarah Hecht*. Lubavitch Girls High School, 5754.
4. *Zikaron L'vnei Yisroel* (Brooklyn: Kehos, 5756), 217n371.
5. Based on the letters Reb Shlomo Zalman wrote in accordance with the Friediker Rebbe’s instructions, published here for the first time, graciously provided by Rabbi Boruch Hertz. Scan barcode at the end for the full original letters.
6. *Zikaron L'vnei Yisroel*, 221.
7. *Igros Kodesh Admur Harayatz* volume 9, pg. 93
8. *Ibid*, volume 5, pg. 278.
9. *Ibid*, pg. 454.
10. *Ibid*, vol 6, pg. 119.
11. *Ibid*, vol 7, pg. 45.
12. *Above and Beyond*.
13. *Ibid*.
14. Moshe Kushner et al., eds., *Chicago Rabbis: Visionaries, Pioneers, and Leaders 1847-1950*, (Chicago, IL: Chicago Rabbinical Council, 2014), 66.
15. Menachem Posner, “Rabbi Takes to the Radio, Offering Insight Through the Generations,” *Chabad.org*, April 13, 2015.
16. *Ibid*.
17. *Ma’aneh* dated 9 Iyar, 5736.
18. *Igros Kodesh* vol 31, pg. 337.
19. *Above and Beyond*.
20. Shifra Hendrie, “The Other Side of the Tapestry,” *Chabad.org*, accessed 07/26/2024.
21. *Above and Beyond*.
22. According to family tradition, the Rebbe instructed to add this phrase.

נשי  
ובנות  
חב"ד



# TISHREI

N'SHEI  
U'BNOS  
CHABAD

COMPILED BY:  
RABBI LEVI GREENBERG (OH)

WRITTEN BY:  
RABBI BORUCH ALTEIN

WE ARE EXCITED TO DEBUT A NEW COLUMN IN A CHASSIDISHER DERHER, ENTITLED "N'SHEI U'BNOS CHABAD," FEATURING TIMELY SELECTIONS OF THE REBBE'S SICHOS AND LETTERS PERTINENT TO THE AVODA OF WOMEN AND GIRLS. WE HOPE YOU ENJOY!

Tishrei is packed with *Yomim Tovim*. It is the *chodesh 'hashvi'i'*, which means seventh month but also means '*she'musba umasbia*' (it is sated and it satiates) every Jewish heart with joy, *bracha*, and every variety of good.

Along with joy and happiness, the *Yomim Tovim* of Tishrei require prodigious investments of time and energy. This is true for all, and certainly so for women and girls.

Over the years the Rebbe often spoke of the special significance of Tishrei's *Yomim Tovim* to women and girls.

Throughout these *sichos* and letters, the Rebbe explains how the *Yomim Tovim* of Tishrei relate to one of the primary missions of Jewish women: raising their family with the best possible *Yiddishe* education.

In Elul 5740 (1980), addressing a gathering of *N'shei Ubnos Chabad*, the Rebbe explained some essential lessons from the *Krias HaTorah* of Rosh Hashanah regarding this important shlichus (paraphrased from the original sicha):

The *Krias HaTorah* on Rosh Hashanah describes how Sarah Imeinu was remembered by Hashem and conceived Yitzchok Avinu, as well as how she raised Yitzchok with the care and concern appropriate for the first – and only – Jewish child born to Jewish parents. We also read about Sarah instructing Avraham Avinu to send Yishmael away, lest his negative influence corrupt Yitzchok.

The first message: We read about Sarah conceiving in the first *passuk* of *krias haTorah*, on the first day of Rosh Hashanah, even before we blow the



shofar. This teaches us that all women who live in a way that would bring Sarah Imeinu *nachas* will also merit to have children who can proudly bear their title as descendants of the Avos and Imahos.

Another point: as we read on Rosh Hashanah, Yitzchok grew up to be so entirely devoted to Hashem that he was prepared for actual *mesirus nefesh*, when it came to the *Akeidah*. Even so, Yitzchok did not suffer from his willingness for *mesirus nefesh*; on the contrary, through this he merited to establish a nation, becoming the ancestor of the entire Jewish people. Yitzchok's deep devotion was primarily thanks to Sarah's influence.

Sarah Imeinu was extraordinarily welcoming and hospitable; this came naturally to her as a mother, and beyond that as a *Yiddische* mother, and all the more so as Sarah Imeinu. She had an exemplary relationship with the non-Jewish population in her vicinity.

Yet, though Yitzchok was the only Jewish child in existence at that time and had no children for company, aside from his non-Jewish neighbors and his half brother, Yishmael, Sarah understood how careful she must be with Yitzchok's education, and put her natural and healthy tendencies of kindness and hospitality aside — real *mesirus nefesh* on her part — to ensure that Yitzchok remained pure.

The timeless lesson is clear: a Jewish mother whose child is a minority in the non-Jewish neighborhood or city, "*Atem Hameat Mikol Hoamim*" (You are the smallest of all nations), can make every effort, to the point of *mesirus nefesh*, to ensure her children receive the purest education, according to the ways that were shown to us by the *Imahos*.

Chazal tell us<sup>1</sup> that on Rosh Hashanah, Sarah, Rochel, and Chana were remembered by Hashem, and blessed with pregnancy.

Sarah, as mentioned above, was the first Jewish woman. Rochel was one of the four *Imahos*, and played an important role in the story of the Jewish people. The Midrash relates that when the Yidden went into *galus*, Rochel gave them the strength to withstand the hardships of *galus*. Her fortitude

helped the Yidden strengthen their trust in Hashem and hold onto their unique Jewish identity, keeping Torah and mitzvos throughout the long and weary exile and paving the way for the *geulah* hastily. The Zohar says that when the Yidden return from *galus* very soon, we will pass by Rochel's resting place and thank her for the strength and courage she gave us on the way to *galus*.

The third woman on the list is Chana *Haneviah*. In the Haftorah of Rosh Hashanah we read that she was childless, that she prayed in the Mishkan and encountered the Kohen Gadol Eili, and that she gave birth to Shmuel Hanavi, dedicating him to serve Hashem all his life. Last but not least, we read of her prophecy, which is the first by a *Neviah* to tell us about Moshiach's coming, "וירם קרן משיחו," that he will come with uplifted strength and take us all out of *galus*.

When Jewish women today learn from our *Imahos* and continue to live up to this legacy, the reward from Hashem is as happened to them: *Harba Arbeh es Zaracha* (I will prolifically increase your descendants); to have descendants who are prolific and fruitful, both physically and spiritually. Such children will transform their neighbors and surroundings for good, and are the source of the greatest and true *nachas* to their mothers — who educated them thus — as well as their fathers, their families, and all of *Am Yisroel*.<sup>2</sup>

## SIMCHAS BEIS HASHOEVAH

Sukkos with the Rebbe was always something to behold. Nightly sichos, special farbrengens, and endless joy in the streets.

Throughout the years, the Rebbe encouraged people to go out and share the joy of Sukkos with others, creating activities that would encourage all to participate.

Of note, however, is when the Rebbe specifically encouraged women and girls to participate in the *mitvza* of spreading Sukkos joy.

In 5738<sup>3</sup> (and again in 5752<sup>4</sup>), the Rebbe noted that *simcha*

– joy – of Yom Tov is also a Mitzvah for women and girls, as is clear from the Gemara<sup>5</sup> which discusses how a husband should bring his wife and children joy on Yom Tov, and from the long-standing Jewish custom.

If so, the Rebbe said, “wherever men travel to bring the joy of *simchas beis hashoevah* to others, their wives should go along as well to bring joy to the women and girls at their destination; if only women and girls are expected, then the women should go on their own to perform the great *mitzva* of being *misameach* others for Yom Tov.”

In 5716, the Rebbe emphasized a fascinating Mishna and Gemara<sup>6</sup> with regard to *simchas beis hashoevah*.

The original celebration of *simchas beis hashoevah* was in the Bais Hamikdash, in the *Ezras Noshim*, the women’s courtyard. At first, says the Gemara, both men and women would be present during the Sukkos festivities. When Chazal saw inappropriate behavior, the solution they decided on was to build a balcony in the *Azara* every *Chol Hamoed Sukkos* — it couldn’t be done on the first day of Yom Tov as building it is a forbidden *melacha* — and women could watch and participate in the proceedings while ensuring there was no inappropriate intermingling.

“Essentially,” the Rebbe stressed, “it is thanks to Jewish women that an entire section of the Beis Hamikdash would be added year after year, and one that lasted not only over *Chol Hamoed Sukkos*, but also through *Shemini Atzeres* — as it would be forbidden to dismantle the balcony on Yom Tov.

“In other words, the entire Jewish nation merited an added section of the Beis Hamikdash, solely due to the *zechus* of those women who participated in the joy of *simchas beis hashoevah*.”

Finally, the Rebbe explained, “*Simchas beis hashoevah* is really about serving Hashem to the point of self-sacrifice, *mesirus nefesh*...”<sup>7</sup>

“The *mesirus nefesh* of those women who went along to those sleepless nights in the Beis Hamikdash and encouraged their husbands in joy of *simchas beis hashoevah* was what brought about such a powerful, communal impact of adding to the Beis Hamikdash.”

In today’s reality, the Rebbe continued, “this same *mesirus nefesh* is present when wives and mothers joyfully support their husbands and families in serving Hashem beyond limit, even if the cost of doing a Mitzvah in the best way possible might impact which home improvements or the like are possible — and even without calculating it.”<sup>8</sup>

“In the *zechus* of such conduct Hashem blesses them with joy, health, and every need, in a way that outlasts *Chol Hamoed* and *Yom Tov*, lasting all year round.”

May we merit to once again experience these tremendous sights with the coming of Moshiach Tzidkeinu, *bimheiro biyomeinu*.

## THEME OF THE MONTH

... Especially since the holy days of Tishrei have special lessons for Jewish women and mothers.

As is well-known, our Chachomim organized the Torah readings and Haftorahs in such a manner that whatever we read in the Torah or *nevi'im* reflects the theme of the holy days and their messages for our daily lives.

On the first days of the year — the days of Rosh Hashanah — we read in the Torah about the birth of the first Jewish child who was born as a Jew, to Jewish parents, and we read about the *mesirus nefesh* of Jewish parents for the education of a child.

This is also the theme of the Haftorah of the first day of Rosh Hashanah. We read about another Jewish mother — Chana, the birth of a Jewish child — Shmuel, and her *mesirus nefesh* to give her only child a G-dly education.

In the Haftorah of the second day of Rosh Hashanah, when we ask Hashem to take the Jews out of *galus*, it says that Hashem’s mercy is aroused when “*Rochel mivakah al boneha*,” Rochel Imeinu cries for her children’s fate.

The lesson — which must be a foundation for the entire year — is to be aware that a Jewish child belongs to Hashem from birth; that Jewish parents, especially mothers, must have self-sacrifice for their children to have a kosher education; and that a kosher education *al taharas hakodesh* (that is wholly and purely holy) is the basis of the complete *geulah*, may it happen speedily in our days.

*Igros Kodesh vol. 19, pg. 29-30*

1. Rosh Hashanah 11a.
2. Sichos Kodesh 5740 vol. 3 (4), pg. 1115-7.
3. Sichos Kodesh 5738 vol. 1, pg. 139-40.
4. Toras Menachem - Hisvaaduyos 5752 vol. 1, pg. 76.
5. Rosh Hashanah 6b.
6. Sukkah 51a-b.
7. See full transcript of the sicha for detailed explanation as to why it is such.
8. Toras Menachem vol. 15, pg. 148-51.



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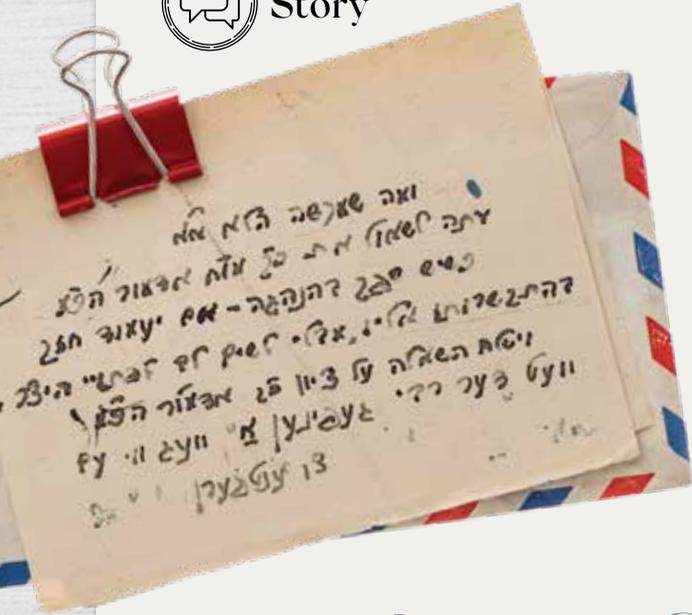


Story

לזכות

דוד בן שיינא

לרגל יום הולדתו, לשנת הצלחה  
בכל מכל כל, אמן, והצלחה  
מרובה בעבודת השליחות



# דער רבי וועט געפינען א וועג...

WRITTEN BY: RABBI LEVI GREENBERG (TX)

## כפליים לתושי

PART II



AS TOLD BY

**RABBI BORUCH SHOLOM DAVIDSON**

(Bala Cynwyd, PA)

**AND RABBI YOSEF ARYEH SIMONOWITS**

(Rio de Janeiro, Brazil)

**Rabbi Davidson:** In the summer of 5782, I discovered a dollar from the Rebbe in our brand new Chabad House. A friend of ours, Mr. Nesanel Zhivalyuk, had placed a stack of dollar bills for visitors to the Chabad House to give tzedakah; unbeknownst to him, among these bills was a dollar from the Rebbe. Nesanel had no idea that this dollar had ever been in his possession or how it got there.

When it was discovered, we both felt it was a *bracha* from the Rebbe in response to our respective requests on our community trip to the Ohel several weeks earlier.<sup>1</sup>

Despite our best efforts, we could not find the dollar's original owner, so in the meantime, we had it framed and displayed in Nesanel's home.

During the month of Adar 5783, for no particular reason, I had a renewed curiosity to solve the dollar mystery. I contacted Rabbi Zalmy Ceitlin from JEM and asked him

to help me get to the bottom of it. We analyzed the writing on the dollar:

נתקבל מכ"ק אד"ש ט' שבט בביקורי עם חבר כנסת ...

Received from the Rebbe 9 Shevat during my visit with a member of the Knesset ... [the name was written in the printed part of the bill and I could not decipher it.]

On the middle of the dollar bill was written: כפליים לתושי - a double portion of blessing.

We had originally narrowed down the date to 9 Shevat 5750 and had confirmed that the Israeli Knesset members who were there that day did not match the details inscribed on the dollar. After some more thought, we realized perhaps the term כנסת was not exclusive to an Israeli parliamentarian, but could also include parliamentarians of other countries. After another exhaustive search through the recordings of that Sunday, Erev Yud Shevat Hagadol

(which was the longest “Sunday Dollars” on record) he narrowed it down to one clip.

Zalmy recognized Rabbi Shabsi Alpern, the head shliach to Brazil accompanied by another shliach presenting a Brazilian congressman named Fabio Feldmann to the Rebbe. After blessing the congressman and giving him two dollars the Rebbe handed each of the shluchim two dollars and told them each “כפליים לתושי”.

Excitedly we contacted Rabbi Alpern through relatives to find out if the dollar belonged to him. He quickly responded that he had both dollars he received from the Rebbe that day. After some research, we identified the second shliach as the shliach to Brasilia – capital of Brazil – Rabbi Yosef Aryeh Simonowits. My good friend Baruch Cohen is his nephew so I asked him to send his uncle a photo of the dollar and ask him if it was his handwriting.

**Rabbi Simonowits:** On Lag B’Omer 5747, my wife and I arrived on shlichus in Brasilia. In addition to serving the local Jewish community, we worked with the Jewish politicians living and working there from all over the country. I was considerably close with a prestigious legislator named Fabio Feldmann.

On Sunday, 9 Shevat, I was in New York for Yud Shevat Hagadol when I received a phone call from Mr. Feldmann who had just arrived in New York from an important trip to Russia. He had heard about Sunday Dollars and asked if I would arrange for him to see the Rebbe that afternoon. I gladly scheduled a time for him to come to 770 and asked Rabbi Shabsi Alpern, head shliach to Brazil, to introduce Mr. Feldmann to the Rebbe.

There is a video of those few moments we stood in the Rebbe’s presence that day. The Rebbe said a few words to Mr. Feldmann and handed both Rabbi Alpern and myself two dollars with the *bracha* “כפליים לתושי”.

Years later, my daughter was learning in seminary abroad and I gave her one of the dollars I received from the Rebbe to take with her on her long trip away from home. Unfortunately, at some point during her time in seminary, the dollar was lost, but over time I forgot about it.

After fourteen years of shlichus in Brasilia, we moved to Rio de Janeiro to continue our shlichus running the Beis Chabad in the Barra da Tijuca area of

town. Today my daughter and son-in-law, Rabbi Leib and Sara Beila Rojtenberg are shluchim to Brasilia in our stead.

In Adar 5783 I was experiencing a severe crisis and wrote a letter to the Rebbe asking for a *bracha*.

A few days later my granddaughter came to our home with an envelope for my wife from the principal of her school Mrs. Margalit Berkes. She and her husband Rabbi Avraham Berkes are also shluchim in Rio de Janeiro. Since it was such a stressful time I forgot to give it to my wife till two days later. When I noticed the envelope on my desk I placed it in our bedroom so she would see it when she came home.

In the afternoon my wife opened the envelope and found a note from Mrs. Berkes with a page cut out from a Chabad magazine that was published in 5750. It was an article describing Congressman Fabio Feldmann’s visit to the Rebbe and a photo of the event. We were pleased to receive “regards” from our shlichus in Brasilia many years earlier, but I didn’t think much of it.

Later that evening, my nephew Baruch Cohen sent me a message on WhatsApp: “I’m sending you a photo of a dollar. Let me know if this is your handwriting.”

To my utter shock, he sent me a photo of the dollar I had received from the Rebbe on 9 Shevat 5750, which had been lost for so many years – and just hours earlier I had received a fresh “regards” from that special moment!

After hearing how the dollar was discovered and how Rabbi Davidson had so recently had an inexplicable urge to find the owner, I was overwhelmed by the tremendous *hashgacha pratis* of it all. This was a clear sign of encouragement and *bracha* from the Rebbe to us.

The Rebbe is with us today. When we write to him and ask for his *brachos* and guidance he finds a way to answer.

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1. Read the full story in Derher Magazine, Elul 5784.

## YOUR STORY

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שלמה בן רישה לאיוש"ט

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

COMPILED BY: RABBI YOSHI KATZ  
WRITTEN BY: RABBI ZELIG KATZMAN

# P I N P O I N T S

STORIES OF THE REBBE'S  
REACH AND IMPACT AROUND THE GLOBE

## ALASKA



“ALASKA HAS A NAME FOR BEING COLD,” THE REBBE TOLD AN ALASKAN JEWISH FAMILY. “DON’T USE THE COLDNESS WHEN IT COMES TO YIDDISHKEIT. ON THE CONTRARY: HAVE A SPECIAL [WARM] TEMPERATURE— ESPECIALLY FOR ALL MATTERS OF YIDDISHKEIT IN ALASKA!”

KNOWN AS AMERICA’S ‘LAST FRONTIER’, THE STATE OF ALASKA IS KNOWN FOR ITS NATURAL BEAUTY, AN ABUNDANT WILDLIFE POPULATION, AND SOME OF THE COUNTRY’S MOST FAMOUS NATIONAL PARKS.

THANKS TO THE REBBE’S BROAD VISION, ALASKA’S COLD LANDSCAPE HAS BECOME A PLACE EXUDING THE WARMTH OF YIDDISHKEIT AND CHASSIDUS.

## THE FIRST SHLUCHIM

In the summer of 5730, Reb Shmuel Langsam and Rabbi Shmuel Spritzer approached Rabbi Hodakov to request an assignment for Merkos Shlichus, specifically asking for the opportunity to travel to Alaska.

When Rabbi Hodakov entered the Rebbe’s room to discuss the various Merkos Shlichus locations, the Rebbe responded affirmatively about other locations but did not mention Alaska.

The next day, Rabbi Hodakov came out of the Rebbe’s room and said, “For the first time in history, Lubavitch is coming to Alaska!”

Rabbi Hodakov added that there were many *horaos* in connection to this *shlichus*, and that it would be quite different from a typical Merkos Shlichus trip, i.e. longer and requiring more preparation.

Interestingly, the *bochurim* were told by Rabbi Hodakov that they could take time off from their Shlichus to see the Northern Lights (that are only visible in Alaska), as they are *Niflaos HaBorei* (the wonders of Hashem).



## THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST

Rabbi Sholom Ber Levitin, who traveled on *shlichus* to Seattle in 5733, was appointed by the Rebbe for the Pacific Northwest, which included Alaska. He held this position until 5751, when Rabbi Yosef Greenberg arrived to serve as the Rebbe's full-time Shliach to Alaska.

At the end of Tishrei 5733, before they left on *shlichus*, Rabbi Levitin went into Rabbi Hodakov's office in 770 and was told that he was being appointed as the Rebbe's Shliach to the following places: Washington, Oregon, Alaska, Idaho, British Columbia and Alberta (in Canada) [Rabbi Hodakov mentioned that Alaska is not far from Siberia, to which Reb Shmuel Levitin (Rabbi Levitin's grandfather) was exiled by the Communists]. Rabbi Hodakov also told him that the Shliach of a state is considered the "*Baal HaBayis*" of that place.

In the summer of 5734, Rabbi Levitin traveled to Alaska for the first time, and from then on he made many such trips, connecting with numerous Jews in Alaska, especially the Green brothers, who became Chabad's primary supporters in Alaska for many years.



RABBI SHOLOM BER LEVITIN.

## THE FIRST MIKVAH

Rabbi Yisroel Haber served as a military chaplain in Alaska between the years 5734 and 5736. He merited to build the first Mikvah in Alaska, under the supervision of Rabbi Yitzchok Hendel and with the assistance of Rabbi Gershon Grossbaum.

Due to their involvement with the Mikvah, the Habers merited to become close to Chabad and especially the Rebbe, receiving many letters in connection to the Mikvah and their work with local Jews. They also merited to go into Yechidus several times.<sup>1</sup>

They arrived in Elul 5734. One of the first issues they encountered was the lack of a proper Mikvah for them to use. They raised the issue with Air Force higher ups, and

after consulting with Washington, the Air Force agreed to build a Mikvah for the Habers. The Habers reached out to several Jewish organizations to seek assistance and guidance in constructing the Mikvah, but no help was forthcoming.

*B'Hashgacha Pratis*, they decided to drive to Alaska from New York, stopping in S. Paul, Minnesota to visit a family friend. That week, a *Chanukas HaBayis* was held for a new Chabad building. The friend invited them to the event, where they were introduced to the local Shluchim, Rabbi Moshe Feller and Rabbi Gershon Grossbaum.

When they met the Shluchim, the Habers told them about the challenges they were experiencing with the Mikvah project. Rabbi Feller immediately informed them that Rabbi

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**הרב משה יצחק הנהל**  
 מנהל  
 חיל האוויר  
 5734. Brooklyn, N.Y.

By the Grace of G-d  
 Rosh Chodesh Sivan,  
 5734. Brooklyn, N.Y.

Chaplain Israel Haber  
 Elmendorf Air Force Base  
 Alaska.

**Greeting and Blessings:**  
 Due to a very crowded schedule, this is my first opportunity of congratulating you on your extraordinary Zechus of initiating the project of the first Mikvah in Anchorage for the Alaskan Jewish community, which you accomplished, with G-d's help, as I am informed by our mutual friends, the Rabbonim who flew in to participate in this great event.

As for the importance of this matter, I need hardly emphasize it to you, since your own initiative is best proof of being fully aware of it.

However, on the basis of the dictum of our Sages, "Encourage the energetic." I wish to express my confident hope that you are doing all you can to make the Mikvah a busy place, frequented regularly not only by the women who directly benefit from your good influences, but also by their friends and acquaintances who will be induced by them to follow their example. And while this kind of religious inspiration is a "must" wherever Jews live, it is even more so in the City and State where the Mikvah has just been established for the first time. It is well to bear in mind that a "Jewish heart is always awake" and responsive to Torah and Mitzvot.



**THE REBBE'S LETTER TO RABBI YISROEL HABER REGARDING BUILDING THE MIKVAH.**

**BUILDING THE FIRST MIKVAH IN ALASKA. RIGHT TO LEFT: RABBI GERSHON GROSSBAUM, RABBI YITZCHOK HENZEL AND RABBI YISROEL HABER.**

Grossbaum was an expert on Mikvaos, and that he would be happy to travel to Alaska to assist.

Two weeks later, Rabbi Grossbaum sent a letter to Rabbi Haber with a general plan for the Mikvah so that he could show it to the Air Force engineers stationed there. Before Purim of that year, the Air Force officially invited Rabbi Grossbaum to Alaska to help with the construction of the Mikvah.

On Rosh Chodesh Sivan, Rabbi Haber received a letter from the Rebbe – written in English – where the Rebbe wrote that “Due to the weight of my work I have been unable to bless you for your great zechus to build the Mikvah in Anchorage until now...”

The Rebbe added that he should do everything in his power to ensure that the largest number of women come to use the Mikvah, both people over whom he had direct influence

as well as their friends and acquaintances.

The Rebbe also wrote that though one is always obligated to influence the Jews in his area, it is doubly true in a case where one is in a remote place. It is important to remember that Jews are always receptive to Yiddishkeit.

The Rebbe concluded: “May you go from strength to strength in all that has been said above, in all aspects of Yiddishkeit, which includes also influence to promote among non-Jews the observance of the basic Seven Mitzvot, with all their numerous ramifications, which are incumbent upon all mankind and the foundation of human society...”

The Rebbe finished off by wishing him a Gut Yom Tov and “Kabbolas HaTorah B’simcha Ube’Pnimiyus”.

## EVEN ONE HOUR...

In 5740, Rabbi Haber, who had moved with his family to Eretz Yisroel, came back to the US on an Air Force assignment. He was supposed to spend some time in Alabama and then return.

Since they were in the country, they merited to go into *yechidus* with the Rebbe. In the beginning of the *Yechidus* the Rebbe heard Rabbi Haber say something to his son in English. The Rebbe asked, “Why do you speak to a child who grew up in Eretz Yisroel in English and not in *Lashon Hakodesh*?”

Before they left *yechidus*, the Rebbe instructed Rabbi Haber to fly to Alaska. The reason the Rebbe gave was to “Check the Mikvah there and fix whatever needs to be fixed.”

Rabbi Haber asked the Rebbe, “How long must I be there?” The Rebbe responded, “Even for one hour.”

The Rebbe’s response was puzzling; Rabbi Haber did not understand why the Rebbe needed him to go, as there were Shluchim in the Seattle area who could have gone instead.

Rabbi Haber nevertheless booked a flight to Alaska for Friday morning, and stayed with the Green brothers for Shabbos.

On Sunday morning he traveled to the Mikvah to inspect it and make sure everything was in order. He found nothing wrong and still couldn’t understand why the Rebbe had sent him.

An hour before he was to depart to the airport for his return flight, two people approached him. They were brothers, traditional Jews from Philadelphia. They said that they



heard that an Orthodox Rabbi was in town and they wanted to seek his counsel.

They told him that their father had recently passed away. For business reasons they had to be in Alaska for the year. They wanted to say Kaddish for their father, and they wished to consult with Rabbi Haber about the possibility of organizing a Minyan in Anchorage, at least for Shabbos.

Rabbi Haber responded that this would be a great opportunity to make a regular Minyan in Alaska. He said that he could arrange for the Minyan to be held in the living room of the Green brothers. Rabbi Haber said that he would arrange the Torah and Siddurim for this Minyan.

The Green brothers agreed to host this Minyan, but they pointed out to Rabbi Haber that his flight was departing soon, and he would be unable to arrange this Minyan before he left.

Mr. Green suggested that he call the manager of the local airport, who was a friend of his, and ask him to push off the flight for an hour. Mr. Green asked if this would be sufficient, and Rabbi Haber responded that he thought he would be able to arrange a Minyan within the hour.

Rabbi Haber called several of his friends in Anchorage and asked whether they could come help make the Minyan on Shabbos. Soon enough, he had collected enough commitments for them to have a regular Minyan every Shabbos.

Thus, the first Orthodox Shul in Alaska was founded. When Rabbi Greenberg came, he transformed it into a Chabad House. This was all arranged in one hour, exactly as the Rebbe said...

## Youthful Rabbis Bring Message To Area Jews

By CONNIE GODWIN  
Women's World Editor

Two young men, representatives of an ancient tradition, are in Anchorage this week bringing their message to area Jewish families.

Rabbinical students Lipa Brennan and Nechemia Kessler, both 22, are among 10 of their colleagues at Central Lubavitch Yeshiva in Brooklyn, N. Y., who have landed out across the world this summer "on assignments" but to bring "spiritual security" to Jews.

Yeshiva, derived from the Hebrew word for seat, is a school providing religious and secular education for Jews, with emphasis on the Torah, the collection of Jewish law.

Lubavitch students Brennan and Kessler are Hasidic Jews, members of a group devoted to the strict observance of religious rules. "But it is a Hasidic group with a difference," Rabbi Brennan says. "We are a 20th century group."

Explaining that Lubavitch translates as "brotherly love," the young rabbis have met with local Jewish families since their arrival Tuesday to describe a five year campaign aimed at "securing and protecting the Jewish people from unanticipated harm and danger."

With schools throughout the world, Lubavitchers teach their history to Rabbi Schneur Zalman 200 years ago in Russia. Their leader now is Rabbi Menachem Schneerson at the Brooklyn headquarters.

The five-year campaign taught by

Rabbi Schneerson and his followers stresses the practice of traditional Jewish rituals and "showed before their Jews" spiritual defense "the young rabbis say."

"We make no differentiation, we cannot not see differences," Rabbi Brennan says, indicating the three basic "branches" of Judaism in America — Orthodox, Conservative and Reform. "We are here to visit and help Jews know about their heritage, to aid in their morals and spirit. We are accepted."

The five traditional rituals include study of the Torah; affixing miniature (small prayer parchment) in a decorative way (tapestries to doorways at the home); daily during the affixing (whether things affixed to the wall) by Jewish males 13 years of age or older; contributing to a charity box in each home; and keeping sacred books in each home.

Both rabbis carry suitcases full of reading material describing the symbols of their religion and the five-year campaign. "We travel heavy," Rabbi Brennan says. The booklets and pamphlets help Jews to know how to be an orthodox Jew," Rabbi Kessler says.

"We are not missionaries," Rabbi Brennan adds. "We are here to help physically and to increase the spiritual awareness of Jews here, as in the other cities we have visited."

The first Jewish families in Edmonson, Ala., and the 1,100 in Calgary "received us warmly, also," Rabbi Brennan says.



THEY TRAVEL 'HEAVY'

Rabbi Nechemia Kessler, left, and Rabbi Lipa Brennan, representative of the Lubavitch Yeshiva in New York, have brought literature to Alaska Jewish families explaining traditional orthodox rituals and their applications in the 20th century. "We travel heavy," Rabbi Brennan says, indicating the suitcase full of books, pamphlets and Kessler books they carry.

The Perry Greens are the rabbi's hosts in Anchorage. A gathering for Jewish youth at the Green's home is scheduled for tonight.

After visits later this week to Fairbanks and Juneau, the rabbis will head back to New York. Next year,

they will arrive their own days of faith to the "stress on Judaism in the family."

"They were brought up, they say, I grew whatever they have in other and this is one way for them to share."

While women in Orthodox Judaism do not sit with men in worship services, Rabbi Brennan says does not mean that Jews in women in this state. "They are important. Where they sit in a temple is not meant to say they second class. In fact, they usually sit in a gallery, above the men conducting a higher plane," he suggests.

Since both men adhere to Jewish dietary laws, not eating fish, pork or shellfish and not mixing dairy with meat products in the same meal they travel with canned food since it is impossible to find a Kosher home or restaurant.

They live in a dormitory at 100 Avenue C in Brooklyn and lead a "learning" or "religious" life.

Rabbi Kessler says "We don't get all from our work."

It is such community they only need Jews to sit them. It is their own religion. They arrive Anchorage not knowing anyone in the Jewish community, able they had met Edmonson's R. Capt. Israel Haber. "We heard about of homes where Jews live we're always welcome," a Brennan says.

Lubavitcher schools are "all the country," he says. The best is Seattle.

With their hands the young link like many other Alaskan difference is in their outer blue suits and quiet but as message they carry.

ALASKA'S LARGEST NEWSPAPER

# The Anchorage Times

THE NEWSPAPERS REPORT ON THE ARRIVAL OF RABBI NECHEMIA KESSLER AND RABBI LIPA BRENNAN WHO CAME ON MERKOS SHLICHUS TO ALASKA.



## “WE WILL THINK ABOUT THEM...”

In the summer of 5736, Rabbi Nechemia Kessler and Rabbi Lipa Brennan traveled on Merkos Shlichus to Alaska. Before they left, they asked Rabbi Hodakov how to behave with regard to the *zmanim* of Shabbos in the summer in a place that has no *Tzeis Hakochavim*. Rabbi Hodakov instructed them to ask Rabbi Zalman Shimon Dvorkin.

Rabbi Dvorkin told them that since Rabbi Hendel and Rabbi Grossbaum, who were involved in building the Mikvah in Alaska, were in 770 at the time, they should ask them.

Rabbi Hendel instructed them to keep the *zmanim* of the closest Jewish community, i.e. Seattle. If they were in Anchorage, where there is always *shkiah* even in the summer, they should keep the local *zmanim*.

However, with regard to the northernmost regions, which have neither sunset nor sunrise, he did not have

a satisfactory answer.

They returned to Rabbi Hodakov and asked him what to do about the *Zmanei Tefillah* and what they should do when they were in the northern region of Alaska.

Rabbi Hodakov said he would ask the Rebbe, and the Rebbe said that they should daven at the times of the minyanim in 770: Shacharis at 9:30, Mincha at 3:15 and Maariv at 9:30. The Rebbe added: “[If] they will think about us, we will think about them.”

At a certain point they wanted to travel to a remote town in the north of Alaska. It was only reachable by traveling on a small airplane. They called Rabbi Hodakov and asked whether they should go, and Rabbi Hodakov told them that they should not fly on a plane that had only one engine.

RABBI YOSEF  
GREENBERG AND HIS  
TWO YOUNG CHILDREN  
RECEIVE DOLLARS  
FROM THE REBBE, 28  
SHEVAT 5752.



## WARM IT UP!

On 28 Shevat 5752, Rabbi Yosef Greenberg, who had recently moved to Alaska as the first permanent Shliach in the state, came to the Rebbe with his family for dollars. The Rebbe gave a dollar to their son Mendy. Rabbi Groner said that these were the Shluchim to Alaska and that they would be returning in a few days.

Rabbi Greenberg relates: “The Rebbe gave me a dollar and then turned to my son and gave him another dollar. The Rebbe said, ‘He should give it’ and then stopped and asked, ‘Is he also traveling to Alaska?’ The Rebbe gave me another dollar and said to give it to tzedakah in Alaska.

“My wife was holding our daughter Chaya Mushka. The Rebbe took two dollars and placed them on her, saying, *‘Bracha V’Hatzlacha’*. He then gave my wife two dollars, and said, ‘One dollar here, one dollar in Alaska, *Hatzlacha Rabbah U’Muflaga’*...”

“After we had already moved on to Gan Eden Hachtont, the Rebbe began to give a dollar to the person behind us, and suddenly stopped and called out to us, ‘You should make over there...’, so we turned around and came back. The Rebbe proclaimed in a loud voice, with a radiant smile, ‘You should make it warm over there!’”<sup>2</sup>

1. See "A Rabbi's Northern Adventure" by Yisroel Haber.  
2. Teshura Greenberg-Hertzel 3 Nissan 5781.

# Letters

A forum for readers to send their feedback, add to, or ask any questions about articles. Submit your letter to [feedback@derher.org](mailto:feedback@derher.org).

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

## The Early Days of Mivtza Lulav

Thank you for your informative and inspiring article about *Mivtza Lulav*, the very first of the Rebbe's mitzvah campaigns, in last year's Tishrei issue. I found an interesting story in the book "Harav Ashkenazi" – a biography of the late Rov of Kfar Chabad – which I believe will interest your readers.

As a youngster, Rabbi Mordechai Ashkenazi lived in Tel Aviv and was raised among distinguished Chassidim who davened at the Lubavitcher Shul on Nachalas Binyomin St. In these early years of the Rebbe's *nesius*, many of the elder and distinguished Chassidim had a hard time swallowing the Rebbe's big vision and belief that Yidden who are not involved in Yiddishkeit could truly be affected and brought closer.

These Chassidim saw their role as a continuation of their chinuch in Tomchei Temimim, learning *nigleh* and Chassidus, davening at length, and so on, and did not involve themselves with much else. The Rebbe, on the other hand, created a complete revolution in the Chabad worldview and demanded that Chassidus can and must be spread to the furthest circles.

To illustrate this point Rabbi Ashkenazi related the following story:

"It was Sukkos 5715 and the Rebbe had launched *Mivtza Lulav* the previous year. During one of the conversations in Shul on Yom Tov we youngsters emphasized the need to go out and find Yidden to make a *bracha*

on the Lulav. Some of the elder Chassidim were skeptical about it and one of them said to us disparagingly, "Let's see you go to Cafe Kasit and get the people there to make a *bracha*!" Cafe Kasit was where all the anti-religious poets, composers, and authors spent their time."

"My friend Rabbi Yitzchok Yehuda Yeruslavsky and I accepted the challenge and together with another yungerman we walked over to Cafe Kasit with a set of *Daled Minim*. The two of us were not yet Bar Mitzvah and when we reached the cafe the yungerman was too frightened to enter with us.

"When we entered the cafe, someone called out to Natan Alterman, a renowned poet and one of the most influential socialists in the country, in a mocking tone, "Hey, look! They came here with a Lulav and Esrog!" We walked over to Mr. Alterman and said, "We are coming to you as Shluchim of the Lubavitcher Rebbe so that you can make a *bracha* on the *Daled Minim*." He stood up and said he must first wash his hands. Then he asked us for a Yarmulke, made a *bracha* and shook the *Daled Minim* with visible emotion. Everyone in the cafe followed his lead."

In a similar vein Rabbi Ashkenazi repeated that when Reb Nochum Goldschmidt started a weekly Tanya shiur on Israeli radio (with the Rebbe's encouragement), a number of elder Chassidim struggled with this and it did not find favor in their eyes.

In due course, however, it became clear to all the great success and deep philosophy of Chassidus behind the Rebbe's call to go on

shlichus and the mitzvah campaigns to bring all Jews closer to Yiddishkeit and Chassidus.

Wishing everyone *hatzlacha rabba* with *Mivtza Lulav!*

**Dovid Cohen**  
CROWN HEIGHTS

## When the Rebbe's Esrog Became Passul

The Derher issue for Tishrei 5784 featured a beautiful article about Yanover Esrogim and how meticulous the Rabbeim were to specifically use them.

The article contains a story about when the Rebbe's *esrog* became *passul* when the *pitum* fell off and what transpired afterwards; it included several details which were not correct and I would like to share the events as I saw them, on Chol Hamoed Sukkos 5730:

That morning during Shacharis, I was standing up close to the Rebbe, next to Reb Zalman Duchman who was leading the davening as *chazan*.

The Rebbe would usually begin Shacharis while people continued to *bentch* on the Rebbe's *Daled Minim*. Before Hallel, Reb Meir Harlig would bring the *Daled Minim* back to the Rebbe. This time, when they brought the *Daled Minim* to the Rebbe, Reb Meir informed him that the *pitum* had fallen off.

Upon being informed of this the Rebbe did not take the *esrog* and use it for Hallel as written in the article but rather walked over to Rabbi Duchman and told him "צואוארטן. מען" (loosely translated: We need to wait. My *esrog* has become *passul*).

The Rebbe then went to his holy room to contact the Rebbetzin, and sent Rabbi Harlig over to the house to bring the Rebbetzin's *esrog*.

Immediately after calling the Rebbetzin, the Rebbe came back into Shul and stood waiting with his hands supporting his head until Reb Meir brought the *esrog* and davening continued.

The custom was that after davening the Rebbe would take his lulav and *esrog* back to his room and then give it again to Reb Meir

Harlig for anyone who did not yet shake and say the *bracha* yet on the *Daled Minim*.

This year however, after the completion of this *tefillah*, and so too for the following days of Chol Hamoed the Rebbe did not give out his *Daled Minim* for the crowd to say the *bracha* and shake it, explaining that it is not his to give out.

We later heard that right after davening on the day the *esrog* became *passul*, Reb Leibel Bistrizky had brought a selection of Italian *esrogim* to the Rebbe for the Rebbe to choose a new one for himself. However, the Rebbe said that since the first day of Yom Tov had passed there was no longer a requirement to own one's *esrog* (based on the *possuk* וּלְקַחְתֶּם לָכֶם); he would therefore use the Rebbetzin's *esrog*, because he wanted to use an *esrog* that had the *kedusha* of having been used on the first day of Sukkos.

Parenthetically I will share an interesting anecdote: As mentioned above I was standing right next to Reb Zalman Duchman who was the *chazan* at that *tefillah* and who the Rebbe spoke to.

Being that I was standing next to him he shared with me that since the *esrog* was made *passul* he's scared that next year the Rebbe would not give out his *Daled Minim*, saying that when something of this nature happened by the Rabbeim their *hanhagah* sometimes changed.

Baruch Hashem the Rebbe did not change this *hanhagah* and we had the great *zechus* to *bentch* on the Rebbe's *Daled Minim* for over two more decades.

**Rabbi Sholom Ber Chaikin**  
CLEVELAND, OH

