

A Chassidisher **Derher**

א חסידישער דערהער

City *of Our* Forefathers

The CHABAD
COMMUNITY *of*
CHEVRON

What Are You Waiting For?

EXCERPTS FROM THE
REBBE'S TEACHINGS ON
THE CONCLUSION OF THE
RAMBAM'S MISHNEH TORAH

Marked With the Baal Shem Tov's Blood and Tears

THE BAAL SHEM TOV'S
SIDDUR, THE CROWN JEWEL
OF THE CHABAD LIBRARY



ADAR 5785
ISSUE 153 (230)
MARCH 2025

In This Issue

Adar 5785 / Issue 153 (230)



18

Marked With the Baal Shem Tov's Blood and Tears

The Baal Shem Tov's Siddur, the
Crown Jewel of the Chabad Library



36

What Are You Waiting For?

Excerpts from the Rebbe's
teachings on the conclusion of the
Rambam's Mishneh Torah



48

City of Our Forefathers

The Chabad Community
of Chevron

6	Cedars of Hope Dvar Malchus	30	Part 6: The Experts Let's Talk About Eretz Yisroel	60	The Miracle Happened! Der Rebbe Vet Gefinen a Veg
8	Women and Children Bringing Moshiach Ksav Yad Kodesh	32	The Attack of the Poalei Tziyon In the Footsteps of Chassidim	63	Bnei Brak Pinpoints
10	Adar 5750 Leben Mitten Rebbe'n	46	Adar N'shei U'bnos Chabad	68	Derher Letters



A Chassidisher Derher Magazine is published
and copyrighted by **A Chassidisher Derher**
under the auspices of **Vaad Hatmimim Haolami**.
All articles in this publication are original content.

Vaad Talmidei Hatmimim

Rabbi Tzvi Altein

Publisher

Rabbi Yossi Kamman

Editor in Chief

Rabbi Mendel Jacobs

Director of Operations

Rabbi Levi Kesselman

Managing Editor

Rabbi Yankel Bergstein

Administrator

Rabbi Pinchos Sudak

Derher for Kids

Mrs. Chanie Kamman

Mrs. Mushkie Brook

Circulation and Marketing

Rabbi Mendy Shishler

Photo Research/Editing

Rabbi Avremi Browd

Editors

Rabbi Mendel Alperowitz

Rabbi Dovid Olidort

Design

Rabbi Mendel Bergstein

Contributors

Rabbi Yanky Bell • Rabbi Yossi Bendet • Rabbi Koppel Chaiton • Rabbi Avrohom Moshe Dyce • Rabbi Tzemach Feller
Rabbi Mendy Goldberg • Rabbi Levi Gourarie • Rabbi Levi Greenberg • Rabbi Menachem M. Greenberg
Rabbi Mendy Greenberg • Rabbi Levi Katz • Rabbi Yossi Katz • Rabbi Zelig Katzman • Rabbi Menachem Lazaroff
Rabbi Mendel Misholovin • Rabbi Levi Shemtov • Rabbi Mendy Shemtov • Rabbi Bentzion Schtroks
Rabbi Schabse Soffer • Mendel Zaklikovsky

Photo Credits

Jewish Educational Media • Library of Agudas Chasidei Chabad • Vaad Hanachos B'Lahak • Kehot Publication Society

Special Thanks to

Rabbi Mendel Gourarie • Rabbi Chaim Shaul Brook • Rabbi Yosef B. Friedman • Rabbi Moshe Klein • Rabbi Sholom Ber Levin
Rabbi Shmuel Lubecki • Rabbi Michael Seligson • Rabbi Elkanah Shmotkin • Rabbi Avraham D. Vaisfiche

Reproduction of any portion of this magazine is not permissible without express permission from the copyright holders,
unless for the use of brief quotations in reviews and similar venues.

Submit your questions and comments: (718) 305 6859, Feedback@Derher.org

To subscribe, order a copy, or access back issues visit us at www.Derher.org

נא לשמור על קדושת הגליון.

A Chassidisher Derher (ISSN 26411059) (USPS 21880) is published monthly by A Chassidisher Derher Inc, 784 Eastern Pkwy. Brooklyn, NY 11213.
Subscription price \$79.95 a year. Periodicals postage paid at Brooklyn, NY.

POSTMASTER: Please send address changes to A Chassidisher Derher, 784 Eastern Pkwy. Brooklyn, NY 11213.



A Chassidisher Derher is honored to feature unique and historic photos from **Jewish Educational Media's Living Archive** photo collection. The Living Archive is a project to preserve, and provide access to the video, audio, and photographic recordings of the Rebbe. These photos are copyright by JEM and are available at TheLivingArchive.org



Your Name Here

Join with a visionary level gift and have the zechus of all the learning, inspiration and action impacting tens of thousands every day of the year.

Be the lead annual donor to Derher and be featured on this space every month throughout the year.

Please contact Derher for more information.



A DREAM OF FORTY YEARS

Forty years ago this month, the Jewish world prepared for a historic and momentous occasion: The first Siyum HaRambam.

One year after the Rebbe had introduced the daily study of Rambam, the annual cycle of 3 *perakim* a day was coming to its first conclusion on 11 Nissan, 5745.

On the 7th of Adar, the birthday and *yahrtzeit* of Moshe Rabbeinu, the Rebbe held a farbrengen dedicated in large part to discussing the daily study of Rambam and preparations for the upcoming Siyum.

The Rebbe reiterated what he had said when first initiating the daily study of Rambam: that the Rambam's sefer is accessible to all, regardless of age, gender, or background.

"The study of Rambam is not limited to one type of Jewish community or another," the Rebbe said, "Every single Jew until the end of time is able to study Rambam."

Just as *Torah She'biksav*, given to us by Moshe Rabbeinu, is accessible to all, so too is the *Mishneh Torah*, given to us by Moshe ben Maimon, intended for universal study and understanding. This reflects

the profound truth in the saying of *Gedolei Yisroel* that "*MiMoshe ad Moshe lo kam k'Moshe*—From Moshe [Rabbeinu] until Moshe [ben Maimon, the Rambam], there arose none like Moshe."

Studying Rambam is beneficial to every individual. The Rambam writes in his introduction that the work is intended, "*Lakatan v'lagadol*—for the small and for the great." Its contents should be studied to the point that it influences the whole world, as the Rambam concludes his work, "*Mal'ah ha'aretz de'ah es Hashem*—the [entire] earth will be covered with knowledge of Hashem..."¹

Forty years later, as we begin - on the first of this month - another cycle of Rambam study, it's a good time to recommit ourselves to the daily study of Rambam. Furthermore, we must do all we can to ensure that more and more Jews join the Rebbe's global initiative, "this dream," as the Rebbe referred to it. And this will bring the fulfillment of the *most* important "dream"—the ending of *galus*, with the coming of Moshiach, now!²

The Editors

יום ההילולא כב שבט ה'תשפ"ה

1. Hisvaaduyos 5745, vol. 2, p. 1306.

2. Shabbos Parshas Pinchas 5744; Hisvaaduyos 5744, vol. 4, p. 2222.

DERHER HONOR WALL

EXTENDING THANKS TO KEY DONORS, ON BEHALF OF THOUSANDS
OF BENEFICIARIES OF A CHASSIDISHER DERHER.

A Chassidisher Derher Visionary

YOUR NAME HERE

“נוספת על התודה ברכת מזל טוב, על שזכה בענין חשוב כזה, להיות מן המזכים את הרבים, להאיר בע”ה את נפשם באור דברי כ”ק מו”ח אדמו”ר שליט”א, ולהתעורר עי”ז לתורה, לעבודה ולגמילות חסדים...”
(ממכתב יום ד’ י’ לחדש מנ”א תשנ”ה)

“In addition to thanks, I would like to add the blessing of ‘mazal tov’ for your merit in taking part in such an important project, bringing merit to the masses, illuminating their souls with the light of the words of my father-in-law, the Rebbe Shlita, inspiring them to Torah, Avoda, & Gemilus Chasadam...”

(THE REBBE'S LETTER, 10 MENACHEM-AV 5703)

Derher Founders

YOUR NAME HERE

YOUR NAME HERE

Derher Trail Blazers

ANONYMOUS

YOUR NAME HERE

YOUR NAME HERE

Derher Pioneers

SHULY &
SOOCHIE
EIZICOVICS

לעילוי נשמות
שרה מרים
בת אברהם

YOUR NAME
HERE

YOUR NAME
HERE

YOUR NAME
HERE

Derher Investors

CHABAD OF CONNECTICUT

SHLOIME & CHAYA NELKEN

RABBI SHLOIMY
& MRS. MIRELE GREENWALD

Wishing you all

ברכה והצלחה רבה, בכל מכל כל!

Thank you for bringing the teachings of Chassidus & the Rebbe's message to so many around the world, every day. Your impact is felt & inspires action—paving the way for the Geulah now!

Derher Lamplighters

PINI & SARY ALTHAUS	SAMI & MARGIE DORNBUSCH	LEILUI NISHMAS THE REBBE'S SHLIACH TO MORROCO HORAV YEHUDAH LEIB A"H RASKIN
DOVID & DORIT BLACHMAN AND FAMILY	לע"נ הרה"ח הרה"ת המשפיע ר' אברהם בן הרב דובער ע"ה (מאיאר) דריזין	GEORGE & PAMELA ROHR
YAAKOV & EYTA BRAFMAN	MOTTY & ESTHER	RABBI SHMULY & MRS. CHANI ROTHMAN
לעילוי נשמות מרת חנה לאה בת הרה"ת ר' שמעון ע"ה ברוך נלב"ע ז' טבת ה'תשע"א	RABBI AVROHOM & MRS. RIVKAH HAZAN	YITZI & LEAH SPALTER
CHABAD LUBAVITCH OF MOSCOW	ANONYMOUS	IN THE ZCHUS OF THE CHINUCH OF OUR CHILDREN
CHABAD OF IRVINE, CALIFORNIA	RABBI MOISHE MEIR & MRS. PENINA LIPSZYC	לזכות החיילות בצבאות ה' השלוחה רבקה בת אסתר חדוה, וצביה ליבא בת אביבה מלכה לרפואה שלימה וקרובה
CHABAD OF OLYMPIA	MACHNE ISRAEL	ALAN & LORI ZEKELMAN
SHAUL & SHAINDY DAHAN	MAYER & HENNY PRAGER	

Friends of Derher

RABBI YOSSIE & MRS. TSALCHA CHANA AMAR	RABBI LEVI & MRS. SHAINA GREENBERG	DR. YIZHAK & MRS. CHANA KUPFER	NOACH & SHAINDY SCHMAHL
RABBI YANKY & MRS. SHTERNIE BELL	RABBI MENDY & MRS. CHAYA GREENBERG	RABBI MOSHE & MRS. LIBBY LAZAROS	RABBI MORDECHAI & MRS. MALKIE SHAIN
RABBI YOSSIE & MRS. MUSHKY BENDET	RABBI YOSEF & MRS. ESTHER GREENBERG	MENACHEM & SHEINA LIBEROW	RABBI LEVI & MRS. PEREL
RABBI YISRAEL & MRS. SHULAMIS BENNISH	ANONYMOUS	ANONYMOUS	RABBI SHOLOM & MRS. FEIGEL TENENBAUM
CHABAD CENTRAL OF BOCA	RABBI CHAIM & MRS. CHANI HANOKA	RABBI ELI & MRS. ZISI MARCUS	RABBI DOVID & MRS. GOLDIE TIECHTEL
CHABAD OF WESTPORT	DAVID & SHOSHANA HOMAMI	לעילוי נשמות מרת שרה גיטל בת ר' מאיר יעקב ע"ה ליפסקר	RABBI YITZCHOK & MRS. ESTHER TIECHTEL
IDAN & LEE-ANN COHEN	RABBI YAKOV JACOBOWITZ	SHOLOM & ROCHEL MEYER	MENDEL & DEVORAH TREITEL IN HONOR OF THEIR CHILDREN
CRAIN-MALING FOUNDATION	CHAIM & DORIT KAMMAN	SHOLOM & CHERRY NEW	VAAD HATMIMIM HAOLAMI
RABBI YASEF & MRS. BASSIE DEITSCH	RABBI ALEXANDER & MRS. CHANIE KALLER	CHAIM PEARLMUTTER	RABBI URIEL & MRS. SHEVY VIGLER
לע"נ השלוחה הרבנית מרת מינדל בת ר' דוד ע"ה ז"ל	RABBI SHNEINI & MRS. DEVORAH KAPLAN	ELI & MUSHKIE POSNER	RABBI CHEZKY & MRS. ROCHY VOGEL
ABI & YONATYI FRIEDMAN	OSHER & RIVKAH KARNOWSKY	RABBI YOSEF & MRS. SHAINY RAICHIK	לעילוי נשמות אברהם בן ישראל דוד ע"ה
JOSH & ROBYN GOLDHIRSCH	CHESKY & BRACHA KLEIN	AHARON & CHANA MIREL ROBINSON	LEVI & HENNY YANNI
ANONYMOUS	TYLER & JOHANNA KREMBERG	AVROHOM & MINDEE SANDHAUS	RABBI ASHER & MRS. DEVORAH LEAH YARAS



לזכות
הרה"ת ר' שניאור זלמן
וזוגתו מרת נחמה דינה שיחיו
טייכטל
ולזכות ילדיהם שיחיו לחיזוק
ההתקשרות והצלחה בכל עניניהם

Cedars of Hope

IN HONOR OF 60 YEARS SINCE THE REBBE INTRODUCING
HIS REVOLUTIONARY APPROACH TO UNDERSTANDING
RASHI, 5725–5785, THIS MONTHLY COLUMN FEATURES AN
ADAPTATION OF ONE OF THE REBBE'S "RASHI SICHOS."

COMPILED BY: RABBI MENDEL VOGEL

וּתְכַלֶּת וְאַרְגָּמָן... וְעֵצֵי שִׁטִּים. (כה, ד-ה)

"וּתְכַלֶּת: צֹמֶר צְבוּעַ בְּדָם חִלְזוֹן וְצִבְעוֹ יָרֹק. וְאַרְגָּמָן: צֹמֶר צְבוּעַ מִמִּין צִבְעֵי שִׁשְׁמוֹ אֲרָגְמָן. וְעֵצֵי שִׁטִּים: וּמֵאֵן הָיוּ לָהֶם בַּמִּדְבָּר? פֶּרֶשׁ רַבִּי תַנְחוּמָא: יַעֲקֹב אָבִינוּ צִפָּה בְרוּחַ הַקֹּדֶשׁ שֶׁעֲתִידִין יִשְׂרָאֵל לְבָנוֹת מִשְׁכָּן בַּמִּדְבָּר, וְהֵבִיא אֲרָזִים לְמִצְרַיִם וְנִטְעָם, וְצֹה לְבָנָיו לְטַלֵּם עִמָּהֶם כְּשִׁיֵּצְאוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם."

Blue and purple [wool]... and acacia wood.

"Blue [wool]: Wool dyed with the blood of the *chillazon* [animal], which bears a blue color. **Purple [wool]:** Wool dyed with a kind of dye named *argaman*. **And acacia wood:** Where did they get these [trees] in the desert? Rebbe Tanchuma explained that Yaakov Avinu foresaw with *ruach hakodesh* that the Yidden were destined to build a Mishkan in the desert, so he brought cedars to Egypt and planted them. He commanded his sons to take them with them when they left Egypt." (Rashi)

Why does Rashi quote the teaching of Rebbe Tanchuma (that Yaakov Avinu had planted acacia trees in Egypt many years prior) when he could have answered something much more simple—like, for example, that the Yidden purchased the trees from the surrounding nations, or that they cut them down from a nearby forest?

The explanation is as follows: The *possuk* says: "וְיִקְחוּ־לִי..." *And have them take for Me an offering; from every person whose heart inspires him to generosity, you shall take My offering. And this is the offering that you shall take from them...*" (25:2–3). The wording of these *pesukim* implies that all of the materials required for the Mishkan were *already* in the Yidden's possession; there was no need to obtain them from an external source. All that was left was to *take* them from the hands of the donors.

This detail reshapes our understanding of Rashi's question ("Where did they get these [trees] in the desert?"): The Yidden were traveling through the desert, and, normally, when someone travels, they don't take wood with them. Why, then, did they have the wood readily available?

Now that we understand Rashi's question, we can also understand why he gave the answer that he did: Any other answer (like the ones suggested above) would not explain how the Yidden had wood *readily available*. The only satisfactory explanation is the one based on Rebbe Tanchuma's teaching; that the Yidden had wood with them because of Yaakov's foresight and instructions to his family.



We can now explain another difficulty (among others) in Rashi; namely, that he begins his question with the letter Vov



("וּמֵאִין הָיוּ לָהֶם בְּמִדְבָּר"), which, according to the rules of grammar, means that it is a continuation of a previous comment. The question is which one?

The answer is: Rashi's *pirush* on *possuk* 4 regarding *t'cheiles* and *argaman*:

At first glance, the words "*t'cheiles*" and "*argaman*" seem to be referring to the dyes themselves. Accordingly, the *possuk* is saying that these dyes should be collected from the *Yidden* so that wool could then be dyed in these colors. But why would the *Yidden* have dyes with them in the middle of a desert?

This is why Rashi interprets the words "*t'cheiles*" and "*argaman*" to mean (not the dyes themselves, but rather) wool dyed in these colors. And it's no wonder that the *Yidden* were carrying dyed wool with them, since the Torah explicitly states that the *Yidden* owned many sheep. It is reasonable to assume, therefore, that they had a variety of wool—dyed wool included.

Having addressed the issue of how the *Yidden* had the necessary materials readily available in the middle of the desert—and interpreted the words "*t'cheiles*" and "*argaman*" accordingly—Rashi raises the same question regarding the acacia wood. But here it is with added emphasis, since (unlike in *possuk* 4) there doesn't seem to be an explanation that fits into the straightforward reading of the *possuk*.



Why, indeed, did Yaakov go through the trouble of transplanting trees from Eretz Yisroel to Mitzrayim 200 years before the *Yidden* left Mitzrayim and would need wood for the Mishkan?! As we have discussed, there are much simpler ways of procuring wood when the time arises!

The answer is that Yaakov intended that the trees offer comfort to the *Yidden* over the long years of *galus*. True, they

already had a promise from Hashem that the redemption would come ("וְאָנֹכִי אֵעָלֶךָ גַּם-עִלְיָה"), but the trees planted by Yaakov (for the *Yidden* to take with them when they leave Mitzrayim) turned the promise into something visible and tangible; they were a source of encouragement and reassurance during the long years of *galus*.

This is why Yaakov brought saplings with him from Eretz Yisroel (and did not simply buy them in Mitzrayim); so that the sight of the trees would encourage the *Yidden* and reassure them that, in the end, they would leave Mitzrayim and return to Eretz Yisroel.

This is also why Rashi mentions the source for this teaching by name (something which he does not usually do)—Rebbi Tanchuma: Tanchuma is associated with the word "*nechama*," meaning "comfort"; hinting at the fact that the trees were planted with the purpose of giving the *Yidden* encouragement and comfort throughout their *galus*.

Takeaway:

Every *galus*—including the present one—is referred to as "Mitzrayim"; just as the *Yidden* then drew strength from Yaakov Avinu's trees—so too now: "Yaakov Avinu's trees" refer to the *tzaddikim*—and, specifically, the Nossi—in each generation, who really don't belong in *galus*; their true place is in "Eretz Yisroel." But Hashem places them in every generation so that they can be a source of reassurance, inspiration and courage for us to carry on, and build a Mishkan for Hashem in this world.

(Likkutei Sichos vol. 31, p. 146)

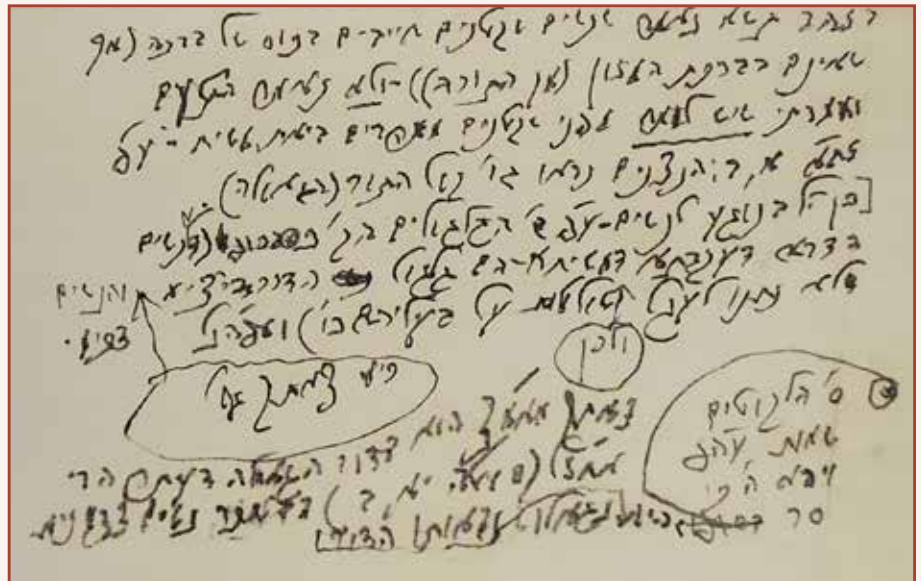


Compiled By: Rabbi Levi Greenberg (OH)
Written By: Rabbi Mendel Jacobs

לע"נ מרת רבקה ח' הינדא
בת הרה"ת ר' אשר הלוי ע"ה
ברבר
נלב"ע י"ט אדר שני ה'תשע"ד
ת"נ צ"ב ה'

נדפס ע"י בתה וחתנה
הרה"ת ר' לוי יצחק
וזוגתו מרת שפרינצא פערל
ומשפחתם שיחיו
שמוטקין

Women and Children Bringing Moshiach



At the farbrengen on Shabbos Parshas Ki Sisa 5741, the Rebbe addressed a cryptic passage in the Zohar, which states that although women and children are exempt from mitzvos, they are nevertheless obligated to partake in *Kos Shel Bracha*—the cup over which *Birkas Hamazon* is recited.

The Rebbe explains that the meaning of “*Kos Shel Bracha*” in this case refers to the heavenly revelations

at the time of Moshiach's arrival. Women and children too will partake in and appreciate those revelations.

The *ksav yad kodesh* featured here is apparently a response by the Rebbe to the *manichim* on their questions after the farbrengen, and was later integrated into the edited version of the *sicha*. The Rebbe cites several sources as proof of the fact that women and children are especially involved in the effort to bring Moshiach.¹

בזהר תשא נאמר שגשים וקטנים חייבים בכוס של ברכה (אף שאינם בברכת המזון (מן התורה)) – ולא נאמר הטעם ואמרתי שיש לומר מפני שקטנים ממהרים ביאת משיח – ע"פ זח"א, א, ב: הנצנים נראו גו' קול התור (הגאולה).
[כן י"ל בנוגע לנשים ע"פ ש' הגלגולים הק' כ' ס' הלקוטים שמות עה"פ וירא ה' כי סר בסופו (דאנשים דדרא דעקבתא דמשיחא – הם גלגול הדור דיצי"מ כימי צאתך גו' והנשים לא נתנו לעגל ולכן שולטות על בעליהם כו') ועפ"ה"ל דכימי צאתך מאמ"צ הוא בדור הגאולה דעתה הרי אחז"ל (סוטה יא, ב) דבשכר נשים צדקניות שהיו באותו הדור נגאלו.]

In Zohar [Parshas] Tisa it says that women and children are obligated to partake in *Kos Shel Bracha* [the cup of wine over which *Birkas Hamazon* is said], (even though they are exempted (by Torah law) from reciting *Birkas Hamazon*). But [the Zohar] does not offer a reason.

I said that we might suggest a reason [as follows]: Children hasten the coming of Moshiach, according to the Zohar (vol. 1, 1b): [Quoting the *possuk*²] “The blossoms have appeared...the voice of the turtledove ([referring to] the *geulah*).

[The full *possuk* reads as follows: “הנצנים נראו בְּאֶרֶץ” – “The blossoms have appeared in the land, the time of singing has arrived, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land.” The Zohar says that the *possuk* refers to the children who study Torah. The conclusion

of the *possuk* about the voice of the turtledove is explained by the Midrash³ as referring to the voice of Moshiach.]

[We can also say [a reason] about women, based on Shaar Hagilgulim introduction 20; [also cited in] Sefer Halikutim [of the Arizal] Shemos on the *possuk* “And Hashem saw that he turned” at the end [of the section]. ([It says there as follows:] **That the [souls of the] people in the final generation before the coming of Moshiach are a reincarnation [of the souls] of the generation that left Mitzrayim,** [as the *possuk* says] “**Just like the days...** [when you left the land of Mitzrayim I will show him wonders.” I.e., the time of the final *geulah* is compared to the time of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*]. **The women did not give [their jewelry for the purpose of] the [Golden] Calf. Which is why [the women in the final generation before Moshiach] are superior to their husbands etc.)**

According to the above, that “Just like the days when you left the land of Mitzrayim” applies to our current generation of redemption, [i.e. the souls of our current generation are reincarnations of the souls of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, we can infer that the women of our current generation are very much responsible for bringing the *geulah*, based on] **the words of Chazal (Sotah 11b), that in the merit of the righteous women that were in that generation, they were redeemed.]**

1. The full edited sicha is published in Sichos Kodesh 5741 vol. 2, p. 515.
2. Shir Hashirim 2, 12.
3. Shir Hashirim Rabbah 2, 13 et al.



THE REBBE RETURNS TO HIS ROOM AFTER
SHACHARIS ON THE MORNING OF PURIM 5750.

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"צ'ב'ה

ע"י בנם
ר' יקותיאל יהודה
וזוגתו מרת פעסל לאה ומשפחתם
שיחיו
רוהר



A YEAR OF MIRACLES

The Joyous Month of Adar With the Rebbe

5750—SHNAS NISSIM

The month of Adar is always joyous —*marbim b'simcha*. In the holiness of the Rebbe's presence, this joy is felt more even potently—especially around the Yom Tov of Purim.

Let us continue our journey through the *Shnas Nissim*—5750—with the Rebbe.

COMPILED BY: RABBI YANKY BELL

WRITTEN BY: RABBI MENDEL JACOBS

The First Shabbos

On the first Shabbos of the month, Shabbos Parshas Teruma, the Rebbe addressed the *yahrtzeit* of his brother-in-law, Rashag, who served as the dedicated administrator of Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim for many decades.

On the preceding Thursday night, at the Rebbe's behest, a farbrengen took place, led by the *hanhala* of the yeshiva. On Friday, the Rebbe went to the Ohel and also stopped at Rashag's gravesite for a few minutes before returning to 770. Right before Shabbos, the Rebbe requested that a *yahrtzeit* candle be brought to his room.

At the Shabbos farbrengen, the Rebbe spoke about his brother-in-law's life's work and the fruit of his labor easily evident around the globe: the alumni of Tomchei Temimim who illuminate the world. The Rebbe mentioned Thursday night's farbrengen, adding that the students of Tomchei Temimim should print something in his memory—a *maamar* that discusses the ideas of Moshiach, the Beis Hamikdash, and *techiyas hameisim*.

Towards the end of the farbrengen the Rebbe distributed bottles of *marshke*, as usual. A group of five students from Tomchei Temimim in Moscow approached. They had been visiting at 770 since Yud Shevat and were scheduled to return to Russia on Monday, where they would hold a farbrengen in honor of Tes Adar (marking fifty years since the day that the Friediker Rebbe settled in the United States). The Rebbe poured a *l'chaim* for each of the students, asking each one if he too was traveling this week. When one of them made an announcement about the planned farbrengen, the Rebbe smiled and said (in Russian), "Announce it in Russian!"

Members of Agudas Chassidei Chabad approached the Rebbe to receive a bottle for a farbrengen to take place in the coming week in honor of Tes Adar. In the midst of Reb Zalman Gurary's announcing the event, the Rebbe interrupted him, saying with a smile: "Am I not invited?" Reb Zalman added, "The Rebbe, *Nessi Doreinu*—the leader of our generation who is equivalent to the whole generation—is invited to be at our lead!"

The next morning after Shacharis, the Rebbe was about to leave the shul when he turned to Rabbi Leibel Groner, saying, "There must be an announcement that buses will be going to the holy site [i.e. to the Ohel, in honor of the *yahrtzeit*]."

The announcement was made, and soon after the Rebbe concluded the Sunday-dollars distribution, two buses went out to the Ohel. About an hour later, the Rebbe himself went to the Ohel as well.

The following day, on Monday 8 Adar, a *maamar* from the Rebbe was released, titled "*Kol Yisroel Yesh Lahem*

Chelek L'Olam Haba—5733" (based on the Rebbe's instruction at the preceding Shabbos farbrengen). The Rebbe dated the *maamar* "*Zayin Adar*, Sunday [Parshas] *V'Ata Tetzaveh*."

50 Year Celebration

This month marked a special occasion in Lubavitch history: 50 years since the Friediker Rebbe's arrival in the United States on Tes Adar 5700.

On the eve of Tes Adar following Maariv, the Rebbe approached the *shtender* at the edge of his platform and spoke about the great milestone; how the Friediker Rebbe's arrival in the "lower hemisphere" brings the holiness of Torah, especially *pnimiyus haTorah*, to the lowest of realms.

In honor of the a momentous occasion, the Rebbe called for special farbrengens to be arranged all over the world, but most importantly in Brooklyn, where the Friediker Rebbe established his headquarters and operated for the last ten years of his life.

Farbrengens

As usual, the entire month was filled with many *sichos*, both at Shabbos farbrengens as well as during the week, when the Rebbe offered deep insights into the parsha of



SOME OF THE EXTENSIVE EDITS OF THE REBBE ON THE SICHA OF SHABBOS 6 ADAR 5750.

the week and the time of year.

Interestingly, on one of the first nights of the month, Motzei Rosh Chodesh, the Rebbe concluded Maariv and turned around, glancing at the place where he would usually deliver a *sicha*. Immediately, the organizers started setting up a *shtender* for the Rebbe, but the Rebbe made a gesture with his hand as if to say, “What’s going on?” Turning to Rabbi Leibel Groner, the Rebbe clarified, saying, “Dollars!” The Rebbe then distributed two dollars to each of the assembled.

Shabbos Parshas Tetzaveh was the day before Purim, and the Shabbos farbrengen was exceptionally joyous. The Rebbe encouraged the singing with both of his hands, turning to all sides of the shul throughout.

In one of the *sichos*, the Rebbe spoke about the importance of making more farbrengens in the coming week, even in the days after Purim. On Purim itself, in addition to having a *seuda*, the celebration is expressed by reading the Megillah and other mitzvos. But once

Purim concludes, the joy can and must continue through Chassidishe farbrengens.

“I received a letter from some people,” the Rebbe divulged, “complaining about the fact that we are constantly telling people to make more farbrengens, even on birthdays and the like. With so many farbrengens, they ask, when will there be time left for Torah study? They conclude in their letter that this is not only a question they’re asking of their own volition. They actually checked with senior Chassidim, and were told that their concerns were valid...”

The Rebbe responded that the farbrengens are extremely important. They symbolize *Ahavas Yisroel* and are able to accomplish great things—even more than what Malach Michael can do, as the Alter Rebbe famously said. However, the Rebbe reiterated that all farbrengens must be conducted with the proper limits according to Shulchan Aruch and according to Chassidus, especially when the participants are *yeshiva bochurim* (i.e.

THE REBBE ENTERS
THE SHUL FOR
MINCHA ON PURIM
AFTERNOON.



THE REBBE ENCOURAGES
THE LIVELY SINGING AFTER
DISTRIBUTING DOLLARS
ON MOTZEI PURIM.

the Rebbe's *takana* about limiting the amount of *l'chaims* must be heeded).

It should be noted that after Shabbos, in response to a letter from parents of students at Oholei Torah who complained to the Rebbe about the many *farbrengens* taking place, the Rebbe replied with a reference to the last *Siman* of *Orach Chaim*, which discusses the celebrations of Purim Katan:

”לאחרי ריבוי הלימודים (כל חלק אוה"ח) הסיום הוא וטוב לב משהתה תמיד. ימצא ההנהלה ושאלה מה הי' ע"ד כ"ז בליובאוויטש מאז.”

“After much study ([learning through] the entire section of Orach Chaim [the first section of the Shulchan Aruch]), it concludes [with the *possuk*]: “*Tov lev mishteh tamid*, the cheerful of heart feasts constantly.” Seek out the administration [of Tomchei Tmimim] and ask them what the practice was in this regard [i.e. having many *farbrengens*] in Lubavitch of old.”

Purim

Of course, a highlight this month is celebrating the Yom Tov of Purim with the Rebbe.

Purim night was Motzei Shabbos, and the Rebbe

entered the shul for Maariv holding his Siddur and his Megillah in its beautiful silver case.

When it came time for the Megillah to be read, the Rebbe opened his siddur to the page of the *brachos* and read them at the same time as the *baal koreh* (this occurred with the *brachos* both before and after the reading).

Later in the evening, after the Rebbe left the shul, he sent word through the *Mazkirus* that the distribution of Sunday dollars would take place the next day as usual, even though it was Purim morning.

Shortly after Shacharis the next morning, a few members of *anash* went into the Rebbe's room to receive checks to be distributed to poor people for *matanos l'evyonim*. The Rebbe wished each of them a “*Chag HaPesach Kosher V'Sameach*.” Then the Rebbe sent out three sets of *mishloach manos*, which included a bottle of *mashke* and a fruit, to a Kohen (Reb Mottel Rivkin), a Levi (Reb Shmuel Dovid Raichik), and a Yisroel (Rabbi Hodakov).

At 12:20, the Rebbe began distributing dollars for about an hour.

One of the people who passed was Reb Shimshon Stock, holding his famous “collection box” raising funds for “*Chevra Simchas Shabbos V'Yom Tov*,” assisting needy



SCENES FROM THE YECHIDUS WITH MEMBERS OF THE MACHNE YISROEL DEVELOPMENT FUND, 23 ADAR.

SAM SHLAGBAUM VIA JEM 308397

families in the community. The Rebbe placed a dollar into the box, then picked up two dollars with both his hands and dropped them inside with a smile.

One of the children passed by the Rebbe in costume, holding a fake gun, and the Rebbe smiled, saying, “Don’t shoot me.”

At 3:15, the Rebbe davened Mincha in the big shul, and afterward he received Reb Leibel Bistritzky in his room. Reb Leibel always brings a special cake to the Rebbe for *mishloach manos*. The Rebbe greeted him with a big smile and instructed him to put down the mishloach manos. Then Reb Leibel told the Rebbe that exactly 50 years earlier, on Purim 5700, he merited to see the Frierdiker Rebbe for the first time. The Rebbe responded, “Till 120. May you have much *nachas* from your children and grandchildren.”

When the Rebbe came into the shul for Maariv, the crowd sang Napoleon’s March, and the Rebbe strongly encouraged the singing. Upon reaching his *shtender*, the Rebbe set down his Siddur and, with incredible enthusiasm, encouraged the *niggun* with sweeping gestures. The Rebbe’s holy hands soared through the air again and again, igniting the Chassidim with the true joy of Purim.

After Maariv, the Rebbe delivered a *sicha* for about 45 minutes, discussing how Purim reveals the inner core of the Jewish people, and their quintessential connection with Hashem.

Later that evening, Chassidim farbrenged together in 770 into the wee hours of the morning. Reb Yoel Kahn admonished the crowd for sitting around apathetically when the Rebbe is not farbrenging in honor of Purim and not delivering a *maamar*.¹

Yechidus With Lubavitch Supporters

Towards the end of the month, on Tuesday, 23 Adar, the Rebbe greeted the members of the Machne Israel Development Fund in the big shul, first addressing them as a group, then meeting with each of them one-on-one for a few private moments.

The Rebbe entered the shul at 4:35 with a big smile on his face, waving to many of the members present, and shook hands with the fund’s chairman, Mr. David Chase, before taking his seat.

The Rebbe spoke to the group for about 25 minutes, while those who didn’t understand Yiddish listened to simultaneous translation through small transmitters. The Rebbe spoke about the meaning of the word “development”—how it indicates utilizing one’s every opportunity



to grow and do good with all the blessings given to him by Hashem. This is especially true about the people gathered here, the Rebbe said, who have demonstrated through their success in business how to always work hard and bring things to the next level. The Rebbe encouraged the members to use their extraordinary influence to spread Yiddishkeit, justice, and peace in their surroundings, thereby bringing peace into their own lives and homes—and to the entire world—with the coming of Moshiach.

The Rebbe then began meeting with each member individually, giving *brachos* and advice. One member asked the Rebbe what to do about frequent headaches, and the Rebbe told him to take care to eat three meals a day at their proper times, even though Chassidim aren't necessarily so careful about this. Another individual told the Rebbe that he puts on tefillin and davens every day, but he still doesn't feel close enough to Hashem. The Rebbe advised him to recite the *kapitel* in Tehillim corresponding to his age every day. One member brought his family with ten children along, and the Rebbe gave each child a nickel for *tzedakah*. When one of the children told the Rebbe about his upcoming bar mitzvah, the Rebbe asked when it would be, and he responded that it was on the upcoming Thursday. "You still have enough time to learn a *perek* of Tanya by heart," the Rebbe said.

The individual meetings lasted four hours, until about 9:00 PM.

The Rebbe then addressed the group of shluchim who had brought the supporters, speaking about the fact that every Yid is a shliach in this world, although there are

those who were officially appointed as "shluchim," in whom this is more evident. Even a newborn baby is able to do a shlichus—by causing his parents to bring holy objects into the hospital (a *Shir Hamaalos* card and the like).

Dollars

Each Sunday, the Rebbe greeted thousands of people from all walks of life, giving each a *bracha* and a dollar for *tzedakah*.

On Sunday, 7 Adar, an individual came to the Rebbe and said that he is a supporter of a certain yeshiva, and that his father-in-law was a student of Reb Issur Zalman Meltzer, the famous rosh yeshiva of Slutzk. The Rebbe told him to be sure to teach his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren about the special pedigree they have.

An individual from Australia told the Rebbe that the shluchim in his city are doing amazing things and that all the credit is due to the Rebbe. The Rebbe corrected him: "All the credit is due to the activists in the city, including you! Hashem should bless you and your wife to do even more than until now."

An individual told the Rebbe that he had a choice of two properties to buy, one in New York and one in Toronto, and asked the Rebbe's advice about how to move forward. The Rebbe told him to seek the counsel of wise friends, but added that perhaps he should buy both.

An individual told the Rebbe that his daughter was married to a non-Jew, and they had a baby girl together,



THE REBBE IN CONVERSATION WITH MR. BENJAMIN GILLMAN, A MEMBER OF THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES FROM NEW YORK.



NEW YORK SENATOR, MR. DANIEL PATRICK MOYNIHAN, PRESENTS THE REBBE WITH A RARE SEFER AS A GIFT FOR HIS LIBRARY.

but now they were divorced. The Rebbe said, "Because her mother is a Jew, that means she is a Jew. Now we need to ensure that she gets a Jewish education."

A woman told the Rebbe that she fell at the train station and was now in middle of a lawsuit, but her opponents want to settle the case with a smaller sum of money; she asked whether or not she should accept it. The Rebbe replied, "This you should ask a lawyer who is a friend." The woman told the Rebbe that she had asked Rabbi Marlow, and the Rebbe said, "May it be in an auspicious time."

A *kallah* came to the Rebbe and asked for a *bracha* for her friend; the Rebbe told her, "Think about your friend when you're under the *chuppah*. It's an auspicious time for the *chassan* and *kallah* to have all their heart's desires fulfilled."

An individual complained to the Rebbe that—while many members study at his *kollel*—the *kollel's* financial situation was very difficult. The Rebbe said, "On the contrary, that means that you're running a healthy institution. Some institutions have a lot of money but no people attending; that's the opposite of how it's supposed to be."

On Sunday, 21 Adar, a group of *rabbanim* from Flatbush approached the Rebbe, thanking the Rebbe for sending shlichim to speak at their shuls. One of them mentioned that Lubavitch is active in "*kiruv rechokim*" (bringing close those who are far), and the Rebbe remarked, "People use the expression '*kiruv rechokim*' without realizing that every day before davening, we say '*Ve'ahavta l'reiacha kamocho*' (love your fellow as yourself). Instead, the view should be that those who are already close can be brought even closer..."

A doctor approached the Rebbe, saying that many of his patients have been helped by the Rebbe's *brachos*, and the Rebbe replied, "It would be a good idea to make an innovation for every doctor to have a *tzedakah pushka* in his office. It is a good remedy for the patients and also for the doctor."

An individual came to the Rebbe and said that his wife had a baby a few days earlier and was not feeling well. The Rebbe said she would be alright; it could take time till she heals.

Senator Patrick Moynihan came to the Rebbe, and the Rebbe told him, "Thank you very much for honoring me [with the visit]. May you have good news in the protection of the population of New York and the United States. You are a member of the Congress also." The senator said that he is actually a member of the Senate, and the Rebbe said, "Congress is also the name for the Senate," and the senator agreed.

Senator Moynihan presented the Rebbe with an old

copy of Tikkun Chatzos that he had found in an ancient synagogue in Morocco, and the Rebbe accepted it graciously, saying, "You certainly know that all those coming from your country [Ireland] are famous for their resistance. [The senator's parents were Irish immigrants.] May G-d Al-mighty help you to be successful for the benefit of the whole population of the U.S. in good health and good energy."

On Sunday, 28 Adar, Rabbi Kasriel Kastel brought an individual to the Rebbe who was born to Jewish parents but later converted out of the faith and became a priest. Now he wished to come back to Judaism. The Rebbe asked him what his mother's name was, and he said "Gittel." The Rebbe gave him a dollar for *tzedakah* and remarked, "From now on, you should have only *good* news, like your mother's name ['Gittel' means good in Yiddish]. You should have good news and, most importantly, 'Jewish' news, and forget about everything in your past. May you have long years, Jewish years, and Torah years."

Rabbi Kastel asked for a *bracha* for *parnassa* for this individual, since he will lose his livelihood by giving up his current post. The Rebbe waved both of his hands in disappointment, saying, "Why do you have to mention... He already forgot about that a long time ago. May you have good news."

"And You Emerged Safely"

The Rebbe wrote many interesting responses to the letters he received throughout the month. The following episode took place the previous month, on 16 Shevat:

A shliach in the United States was in Crown Heights for Yud Shevat. Before leaving for home, on Sunday, 16 Shevat, he brought his family to get dollars from the Rebbe. As he was pulling away from 770 in his car, the Rebbe's car passed by en route to the mikvah, and the Rebbe gazed very intently at him and his family.

Later, on the road, his car was hit by a truck and severely damaged, but miraculously, every member of the family was unharmed. The shliach immediately called the Rebbe's *Mazkirus* to notify the Rebbe of the incident, adding that the car had a *Chitas* and *tzedakah pushka* in it. On the note written by the *mazkir*, the Rebbe underlined the words *Chitas and tzedakah pushka* and wrote:

"ויצא שלם, אזכיר עה"צ."

"And you emerged safely. I will mention this at the Ohel." ①

1. After the Rebbetzin's *histalkus* two years earlier, the Rebbe no longer held weekday farbrengens.

MARKED WITH THE BAAL SHEM TOV'S BLOOD & TEARS

The Baal Shem Tov's Siddur,
the Crown Jewel of the
Chabad Library



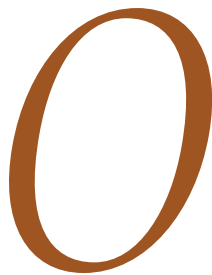


לעילוי נשמת
שיינא גאלדא ע"ה
בת יבלחט"א ר' מיכאל הלוי שיחי'
גוטלייזער
נלב"ע כ"ח אלול ה'תשע"ו
ת' נ' צ' ב' ה'

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

By: Motti Wilhelm

In preparing this article, we were greatly assisted by Rabbi Yehoshua Mondshine's comprehensive articles on the siddur published in *Kfar Chabad* magazine. Special thanks to Rabbi Yisroel Barda for providing images of the Friediker Rebbe's *reshima* and to Rabbi Shmuel Super for directing us to the original newspaper articles about the siddur.



On Shabbos Parshas Balak 5745, during a *sicha* addressing the theft of *seforim* from the Lubavitch library, the Rebbe made a striking statement: “I am filled with awe and trepidation when it comes to the Baal Shem Tov’s siddur! Whatever the reason, the reality is that I feel a deep trepidation when it comes to the Baal Shem Tov’s siddur.”¹

The siddur in question was a 496-page manuscript containing the *nusach hatefilah* and *kavanos ha'Arizal*, which was personally used by the Baal Shem Tov for years. Among its pages are the names of his *talmidim*, inscribed in their holy handwriting, for their Rebbe to remember them during *davening*. The siddur bears marks of the Baal Shem Tov’s own tears—some mixed with blood—and includes a number of corrections made by his hand.

After the Baal Shem Tov’s *histalkus*, this holy siddur was passed down through his descendants before becoming part of the extensive library of Lubavitch. However, the exact path of transmission remains shrouded in mystery. The details of the siddur itself—its contents and characteristics—were closely guarded and only came to light in recent times.



The Baal Shem Tov’s siddur first came to public attention in 5661, when historian and author Avraham Kahana published his book *Rebbe Yisroel Baal Shem Tov* in Zhitomir, Ukraine. While preparing the book, Kahana reached out to Rabbi Yitzchak Lipson, a wealthy chossid from Kaminetz, who had the Baal Shem Tov’s siddur in his possession. Rabbi Yitzchak corresponded with Kahana personally and later had his *melamed* exchange further details, providing valuable information about the siddur and the names of some of the *talmidim* inscribed in it.

In his book, Kahana wrote the following about the siddur, though some of the details were later discovered to be inaccurate:

“The Baal Shem Tov had a beautiful siddur written on parchment by his brother-in-law, Reb Avraham Gershon. Without a doubt, this siddur came into the Baal Shem Tov’s possession after his brother-in-law underwent a transformation—from a critic who was distant to an enthusiastic follower. He gave it as a gift to atone for the disrespect he had once shown toward the Baal Shem Tov’s teachings. It is also possible that the siddur was written specifically for the founder of Chassidus. Supporting this theory is the unique arrangement of *Shemoneh Esrei*: in the *bracha* ‘*Boneh Yerushalayim*,’ the writing stops in the middle of the page, leaving not only half of it blank but also two entire pages following it. The *bracha* ‘*Es Tzemach*

Dovid’ resumes on the fourth page.

“These blank pages served a purpose—they became a means for the Baal Shem Tov’s *talmidim* and closest followers to forge a connection with their Rebbe. Over time, these empty spaces were filled with various requests, written and signed by his students and other prominent individuals, asking the Baal Shem Tov to remember them for blessing in his *tefillos*.

“The siddur is currently in the possession of Rabbi Yitzchak Lipson of Kaminetz, a devout chossid, who kindly shared with me some valuable details about this significant artifact. According to tradition, the handwriting is that of Reb Avraham Gershon of Kitov. However, the first pages, until ‘*Hodu*,’ were added later by Reb Nachman of Horodenka, after the original pages, written by Reb Avraham Gershon, were destroyed in a fire. The main text is written in Ashuri script, while the *kavanos* are inscribed around it in Rashi script.

“In the *tefillos* of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, and in the *tekios*, stains from tears mixed with blood can be found. The *shinuyei nusach* (textual variations) are few—for example, in *birkas hamazon* for Shabbos, it says: ‘*Liyadecha hamelei’ah hapesuchah hagedushah*’ (‘to Your full, open, and overflowing hand’) instead of ‘*hakedoshah*’ (‘holy hand’).”²

How did the siddur make its way from the Baal Shem Tov to Reb Yitzchok Lipson? Different traditions offer varying accounts. Historian and scholar Rabbi Yehoshua Mondshine, in a series of articles on the Baal Shem Tov’s siddur,³ documented three versions.

According to the first account, the siddur was inherited by the Baal Shem Tov’s grandson, Harav Yisroel, son of the *tzaddik* Harav Tzvi, the Baal Shem Tov’s only son.

During one of his journeys, Reb Yisroel stopped in the village of Yarivitch (modern-day Yurovichi, Belarus), where he fell ill and sensed that his passing was near. Reb Yisroel informed the townspeople that he possessed a siddur from the Baal Shem Tov and was bequeathing it to Harav Mordechai of Chernobyl, with whom he was very close. He instructed the townspeople to send Reb Mordechai the siddur immediately after his passing. Following Reb Yisroel’s passing, representatives of the community traveled to Chernobyl and informed Reb Mordechai about the siddur. They agreed to give it to him on the condition that he visit their town for Shabbos. Reb Mordechai accepted the invitation, and upon his arrival, the townspeople fulfilled their promise and handed him the siddur.

A second tradition places the siddur in the hands of Harav Moshe Tzvi of Savran, a *talmid* of Harav Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev and Harav Boruch of Mezhibuzh,

and the second rebbe in the Savran dynasty. However, neither of these traditions would explain how the siddur subsequently made its way to Reb Yitzchok Lipson.

The third tradition is based on a document issued by a *beis din* regarding the division of the inheritance of Harav Moshe Chaim Ephraim of Sudilkov, author of the renowned Chassidic work *Degel Machaneh Ephraim*, and grandson of the Baal Shem Tov through his daughter, Rebbetzin Odel.

Among the items divided was a siddur attributed to the Baal Shem Tov. The document states:

“Concerning the estate left by the deceased, the distinguished *bnon shel kdoshim*, our teacher Harav Moshe Chaim Ephraim z”l, and his son, our teacher Harav Yaakov Yechiel z”l: Their heirs selected us, the undersigned, to mediate between them... This is what we, the undersigned, have determined through mediation according to our judgment: [The siddur of the Baal Shem Tov], as well as the remaining Rashi and Rabbeinu Tam tefillin, and also the *seforim*... belong to the maiden, Ms. Devorah Rachel, may she live...

“And as testimony, we hereby sign on Sunday, the tenth day of the month of Kislev, 5614...”

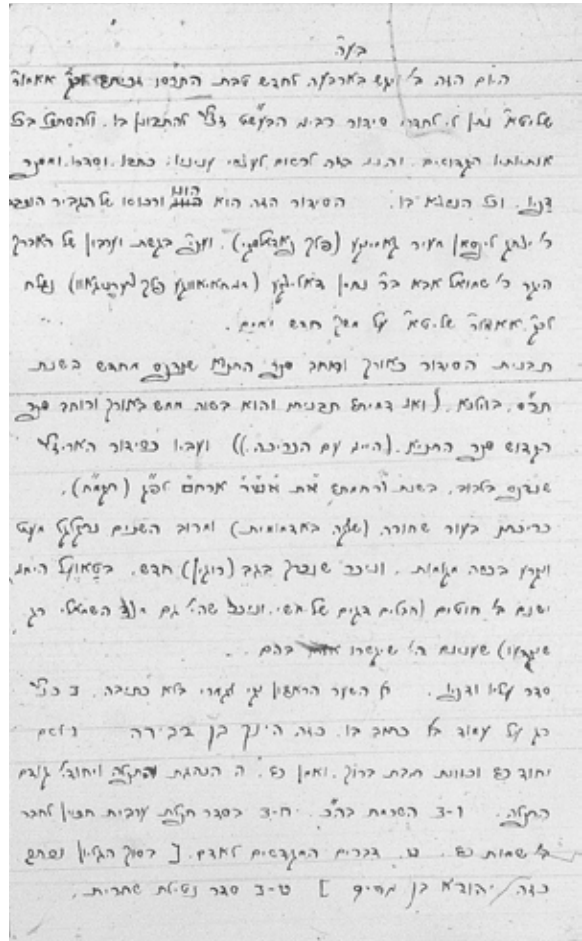
In his article, Rabbi Mondshine provides several reasons why this tradition best matches the siddur in question:

First, there’s a clear link between the siddur owned by Reb Yitzchok Lipson and the *Degel Machaneh Ephraim*: When the Frieddiker Rebbe visited Reb Yitzchok to see the siddur, he noted that Reb Yitzchok also owned the Degel Machaneh Ephraim’s tefillin—the same tefillin mentioned in the inheritance document. Second, Reb Yitzchok’s wife was named Devorah Rachel, matching the name of the young woman in the document. The timing also aligns—she would have been the right age to be the maiden mentioned in the ruling.

The Rabbeim See the Siddur

Some time after the siddur came into Reb Yitzchok’s possession, before it had become public knowledge with the publication of *Rebbe Yisroel Baal Shem Tov*, select individuals were granted access to the sacred siddur. Among them was the Frieddiker Rebbe, then *menahel* of Yeshivas Tomchei Tmimim in Lubavitch.

In 5666, when the Frieddiker Rebbe saw the siddur for the third time, he wrote a detailed *reshima* with details of the siddur, and also recorded the previous times he had seen it.⁴



FIRST PAGE OF THE FRIEDDIKER REBBE'S RESHIMA ABOUT THE BAAL SHEM TOV'S SIDDUR.

“I am now seeing this siddur, thank G-d, for the third time,” the Frieddiker Rebbe wrote. “My first viewing was in 5660, when traveling back from Kishinev. I stopped in Kaminka and saw the siddur there with Rabbi Y.L. mentioned above (the owner of the siddur).”

He also recorded a miraculous occurrence associated with the siddur, one whose aftermath he had personally witnessed.

“The second time was when I attended a wedding there in 5661. I arrived on Wednesday morning and saw that Reb Y.’s house had burned down, *rachmana litzlan*. Only a small house remained. They told me that one night, due to some cause, a fire had started in one of the houses near Reb Y.’s, and since he wasn’t home at the time, his house burned down too. However, the room where the siddur was kept was completely spared. I, the writer, can testify that I was there myself and saw the room that remained intact—even the ceiling plaster wasn’t singed. This room remained perfectly whole, while the entire house and all the neighboring houses were completely burned. I saw this with my own eyes.

“The items in Reb Y’s possession include the siddur of the Baal Shem Tov z”l, a cloth belt, and an amulet said to help with three things: first, for difficult childbirth; second, for the disease of scarlet fever r”l; the third I don’t remember. I believe he doesn’t know either.

“Besides these, he also has the tefillin of the Baal Shem Tov’s grandson, Harav Ephraim of Sudilkov, the author of *Degel Machaneh Efraim*.”

In 5666, Reb Yitzchok sent the siddur to the Rebbe Rashab as a loan for one month. The Frierdiker Rebbe described the arrangement as being “at the request and with the security deposit of the esteemed *avrech*, Reb Shmuel Abba, son of Reb Nachman Dolitzky.”⁵

Reb Shmuel Abba was a prominent Chabad philanthropist and a leader of the Chabad community in Odessa. After the Communist Revolution, he became one of the primary supporters of the underground yeshiva network in Soviet Russia. Tragically, in 5698, he was executed by Soviet authorities on charges of “counter-revolutionary activities.”

When the siddur arrived in Lubavitch, the Rebbe Rashab allowed the *bochurim* of Tomchei Tmimim to briefly view it. Rabbi Chaim Mordechai Perlow, then a student at the yeshiva, recorded his memories of the event in *Likkutei Sippurim*, his collection of stories:⁶

“The siddur was sent by mail, and to retrieve it from the post office, [the Rebbe Rashab] specifically sent his *meshores*, Reb Nachman HaKohen, even though he was not ordinarily responsible for collecting packages. He also instructed him to immerse himself in the *mikvah* beforehand.

“On Asara B’Teves, around midday, Reb Shmuel Katzman (who was then a yeshiva student) suddenly entered and announced, in the name of the Rebbe’s son [the Frierdiker Rebbe], that anyone who wished to see the Baal Shem Tov’s siddur should immerse in the *mikvah*, after which the siddur would be shown to everyone.

“Naturally, everyone went to the *mikvah*. I, the writer, did so as well and merited to see it. The siddur was entirely handwritten. In one place, it bore tear stains that appeared to be blood. In the *Shemoneh Esrei* prayer, the names of [the Baal Shem Tov’s] disciples were included, along with their mothers’ names.

“I don’t recall the details clearly, as he wanted everyone to have the opportunity to see it. Groups of three or four, no more than five, were allowed in at a time, and we were permitted to stay for only a brief moment.”

A few days before allowing the bochurim to see the siddur, the Rebbe Rashab entrusted it to the Frierdiker Rebbe, instructing him, as the Frierdiker Rebbe described, “to study it and carefully examine all its sacred letters.”⁷

Immediately upon handling the siddur, the Frierdiker Rebbe noticed something extraordinary about it.

“On Monday, when I took the siddur, I noticed a pleasant fragrance coming from it, and especially the second time—that is, on Wednesday—I paid particular attention to this. Indeed, a sweet fragrance was emanating from it, like the scent of perfume. Several people came to see it, and they were all amazed by this...”

“At night, when I returned the siddur to my father, the Rebbe *shlita*, and told him about this, he told me that he too had sensed this, though only slightly (this is because my father, the Rebbe, suffers from an inability to smell, even strong scents—yet he was able to smell this...), and that it wasn’t very strong. But we could smell the fragrance quite clearly, [to us it smelled] strong. It was truly like the scent of perfume.”⁸

On this occasion, the Frierdiker Rebbe wrote a lengthy, twenty-page *reshima* detailing the features and characteristics of the siddur.

“I hereby record for myself its contents, its script, its arrangement, the number of its pages, and everything found within it,” he began.

The Frierdiker Rebbe began by documenting the dimensions and physical characteristics of the siddur:

“The format of the siddur matches the length and width of the *Tanya* printed in Vilna in 5660. (I compared its dimensions and found that they were precisely the same as the holy *sefer Tanya*—including the cover.) Its thickness was similar to that of the *siddur HaArizal* printed in Lvov in the year 5548.

“Its binding was made of black leather with a reddish tint. Due to its age, the binding had deteriorated somewhat and was torn in several places. It was evident that it had been rebound with a newer spine. On the right flap of the cover were two thin silk cords, and it appeared that there had originally been similar cords on the left flap, though they had since torn off. These cords were used to tie the book closed.”

The Frierdiker Rebbe then provided a detailed listing, page by page, of where each *tefilla* appears and the location of each signature by the Baal Shem Tov’s disciples. On the 64th folio of the siddur, where the *bracha* of *Al HaTzadikim* is found, the Frierdiker Rebbe notes:

“This *bracha* ends mid-page, a little less than half of the upper part of the page. A blank space was left, within which several *pidyonos* were written by great and renowned tzaddikim.”

Some of these *pidyonos* consist solely of the names of the *talmidim* and their mothers’ names. Others are more detailed, such as: “To serve as a remembrance to pray for us: Dovid ben Devorah, my wife Feigel bas Yentel, my sons

Shmuel and Shneur, that Hashem strengthen our hearts to serve Him wholeheartedly, and that He take us speedily out of Exile and quickly bring us to the Holy Land.”

Another reads: “As a remembrance to pray for me, Yitzchak ben Esther, that my wife not suffer miscarriages.” Other requests include supplications such as “Hashem instill in our hearts the desire to serve Him” and “that He grant us righteous, living, and enduring offspring, who engage in Torah and mitzvos.”

After documenting all the signatures, the Frierdiker Rebbe wrote extensive notes, delving into the identities of the signatories and the distinct styles of handwriting. The Frierdiker Rebbe even replicated the style of some of the signatures to later compare them with other *kisvei yad*.

Regarding one of the handwritten names, he wrote:

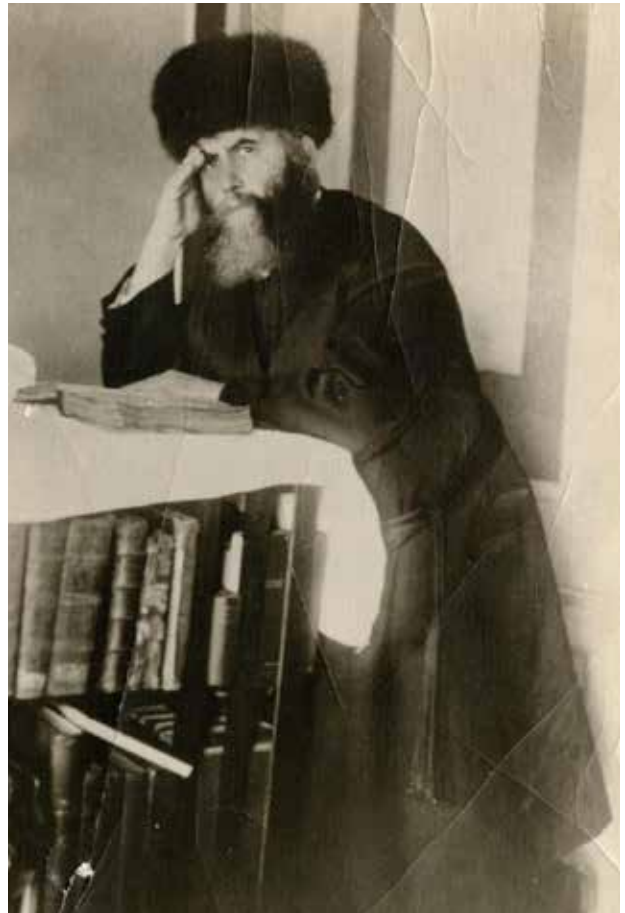
“The *lamed* letters are in the style of the Alter Rebbe’s holy handwriting. The *beis* letters resemble the writing of my grandfather, the Mittlerer Rebbe. It seems to me that this is the handwriting of the Maggid of Mezritch, though I cannot say this with certainty. Meaning, I know for certain that among the *pidyonos*, there is indeed the handwriting of the Maggid. However, I am uncertain if it is the signature ‘Dov ben Breina’ or the one signed ‘Dov ben Baila.’”

He also identified other *talmidim*, such as Harav Pinchos Koritzer, the *Degel Machaneh Efraim*, and the Baal Shem Tov’s son-in-law, husband of Rebbetzin Odel.

Regarding one of the signatures, the Frierdiker Rebbe writes: “This holy handwriting has extraordinary *chayus* shining in it. On the previous Monday night, when my father, the Rebbe *shlita*, looked at it, he remarked several times, ‘It seems that this was written by an elevated individual.’”

The Frierdiker Rebbe continues listing which *tefillos* appear on each page, interspersed with short notes, such as the following:

- *Mincha of Erev Shabbos*: “Here, many tearstains are noticeable.”
- *Birkas Hamazon* of Shabbos: “The words *hakedosha veharechava* in the weekday *Birkas Hamazon* are written as [*hakedosha veharechava*], while in the Shabbos version they appear as [*hagedusha veharechava*]. It is evident that the letter *beis* in *veharechava* was intentionally erased and replaced with a *vav*. In the margin, the letter *vav* is written, and it seems that this notation is in the Baal Shem Tov’s own holy handwriting.”
- *Nishmas*: “On this page, the paper is very dark—due to the abundance of tears and frequent handling by, undoubtedly, the Baal Shem Tov’s holy hand.”
- *Haggadah*, by *Maror*: “Here it is written as follows:



[*Vayevarech ve'achal beheseiba*], and it seems clear to me that this is in the holy handwriting of the Baal Shem Tov. I have copied the style of those letters here as accurately as I was able. In general, the handwriting strongly resembles the style of the letters of the Mittlerer Rebbe, as my father, the Rebbe *shlita*, remarked. This further confirms for me that these three words are indeed in the holy handwriting of the Baal Shem Tov.”

- *Shemoneh Esrei* of Rosh Hashanah: “On this page, at the bottom margin, there are two tear stains from the Baal Shem Tov, known as *die blutike treren* (the bloody tears).”

An intriguing detail, not explicitly mentioned in the Frierdiker Rebbe’s *reshima*, is that the *nusach hatefilah* in the Baal Shem Tov’s siddur is not *nusach Sefard*, which Chassidim later adopted for their *tefilos*. Instead, it follows *nusach Ashkenaz*. One striking example of this is the placement of *Baruch She’amar*, which appears in the original manuscript before *Hodu*.

This is particularly surprising in light of the Baal Shem

Tov's teaching, which explains "the reason we recite *Hodu* between the section of *korbanos* and *Pesukei Dezimra*, rather than including it within *Pesukei Dezimra* itself."⁹ Rabbi Nossan Nota Donner, the compiler of *Baal Shem Tov Al Hatorah*, notes in his commentary *Be'er Mayim Chaim* that: "In the pamphlet *Beis Tzadikim* at the end of the book *Niflaos HaYehudi*, it is testified that in the Baal Shem Tov's siddur, *Baruch She'amar* appears before *Hodu*."

However, it should be noted that in the siddur, a note before *Baruch She'amar* states: "According to the *nusach* of the Arizal, *Baruch She'amar* belongs on the page preceding *Mizmor L'Todah*, as mentioned above [in the *kavanos* on the previous page]." This suggests that there is no definitive proof that the Baal Shem Tov davened according to the written *nusach* of the siddur. It is possible that he davened *nusach Sefard* while using the siddur as a reference for *kavanos*.

The Siddur Reappears in Warsaw

Over the following years, the holy siddur remained in the care of Reb Yitzchok Lipson, who permitted select individuals to view it. Occasionally, he lent it to prominent Rebbes, including the Skverer Rebbe. Some accounts suggest that the siddur made a second journey to Lubavitch around the year 5672.¹⁰ The Frierdiker Rebbe may have viewed it on another occasion as well, as evidenced by the Rebbe Rashab's letter to him dated 23 Adar I, 5668,¹¹ which stated: "You need to visit Kaminitz; you will surely see the Baal Shem Tov's siddur. It would be appropriate for you to document the locations where his handwritten notes appear. Additionally, please verify whether what we believe to be the handwritten notes of the Maggid of Mezritch are indeed accepted as authentic."

During this time, the Rebbe Rashab, along with other Rebbes, sought to purchase the siddur from Reb Yitzchok, but he refused to part with it. This detail was noted by Rabbi Chaim Mordechai Perlow, who described the siddur's time in Lubavitch:¹² "The Rebbe [Rashab] sought to purchase it for full price and offered him a large sum, but he absolutely refused."

A more detailed account was provided by Rabbi Nissan Telushkin, a prominent Lubavitcher *rav* who served in Belarus and later in the United States. Writing in *Der Morgen Journal* in 5694, he stated: "The Rebbe Rashab expressed at the time that if the siddur were to be sold and he had the means, he would give two thousand gold rubles for it. However, the owner absolutely refused to sell

it, rejecting all offers, including one from the Chortkover Rebbe, who also sought to acquire the siddur."¹³

Then came the First World War and the Communist Revolution in Russia. As the world plunged into upheaval, Russian Jews endured suffering under each successive regime, ultimately finding themselves isolated behind the Iron Curtain. During this turbulent period, the siddur vanished from public view.

Suddenly, in 5694, the Warsaw Yiddish Daily *Haynt* published an article with the headline "Major Chassidic Sensation Over a Baal Shem Tov Siddur in Warsaw," going on to describe that "The Lubavitcher Rebbe purchased it from the Baal Shem Tov's great-great-grandson for 1,500 dollars," and "Chassidim, *rabbanim*, and Rebbes come to



JEWISH NEWSPAPERS REPORT ON PEOPLE COMING TO SEE THE SIDDUR, INCLUDING A LENGTHY ARTICLE IN THE 'MORGAN JOURNAL' BY RABBI NISSAN TELUSHKIN.

(אפגעזעצט פון דער צוקערמאן)
לאנדאן, מיטוואך. — דער "היינט"
פון ווארשע מעלדעט, אז דער לובא
וויטשער רבי האט איצט געקויפט פאר
פערצעהן הונדערט דאלאר א זעלטענע
נעם סידור פון בעלשמיטוב.
די וואהאנונג פון לובאוויטשער
ווערט טעגליך בעלאגערט פון חסידים
וואס קומען אנטקעגן דעם סידור.
אבער יעדער בעזוכער פון זענען
נעהן אין סקוה איידער איהם איז ער
לויפט צו כאפן א בליק אויף בעל
שם'ס סידור.

see this rare siddur; they must first immerse in a *mikvah*.”¹⁴

What had made the owner finally decide to sell? And why to the Frierdiker Rebbe?

Among some Chassidim, there was talk that it was actually a gift to the Rebbe Rashab, rather than a purchase of the Frierdiker Rebbe. As Rabbi Chaim Mordechai Perlow writes: “During the Revolution, the owner of the siddur was deeply concerned that it might fall into unworthy hands (perhaps a museum or similar institution), and therefore sent it as a gift to the Rebbe [Rashab]. This is what I heard, though I do not know the precise details of how it came to be once again in the Rebbe’s possession.”¹⁵

Other sources offer additional details, such as that the siddur was purchased for the Frierdiker Rebbe by a wealthy chossid, Reb Zalman Yitzchok Valshanik.¹⁶ Another version suggests that the siddur was sold by the heirs of Reb Yitzchok Lipson after his passing. Reb Yitzchok had reportedly instructed his family to sell it within their own lineage—the Skverer dynasty—but when none of them could afford to buy it, they sold it to the Frierdiker Rebbe.¹⁷

In recent years, an exchange of letters between Reb Yitzchok and the Frierdiker Rebbe was published, revealing the accurate details and timeline of the sale. In the first letter, dated *Erev Shabbos Kodesh Vayetzei*, 5688, Kishinev, Reb Yitzchok writes the following to the Frierdiker Rebbe:

“*Kvod Kedushaso* (your holiness) *Shlit”a* has known me for many years. Therefore I gather the courage to approach you with my plea and request:

“I am approaching 80 years of age, *Baruch Hashem*, and can no longer go out and engage in business dealings. For some time now... I have been left destitute and lacking everything in the fullest sense of the word, except for the holy siddur of the Baal Shem Tov, which *Kvod Kedushaso* has seen. This remains as my last remnant, and this is my portion from all my labor. Now, great necessity, *rachmana litzlan*, forces me to sell this holy siddur.

“Last year, Dr. Gorodetzky from Berlin offered me 1,500 dollars for it, and surely he would have increased the price had I entered into negotiations with him. But I refused for two reasons: First, I considered this sum far too low compared to the precious value of this holy object. Second, and more importantly, I wanted then, and continue to want the holy siddur—if Divine Providence has decreed that it leave my possession—to remain in a holy place.”¹⁸

He then offers the Frierdiker Rebbe, who had recently left the USSR following his release from Soviet prison, the opportunity to purchase the siddur for three thousand dollars, with an initial payment of one thousand or five hundred dollars, and the remaining balance to be paid in installments.

The Frierdiker Rebbe responded: “Regarding the holy siddur of the Baal Shem Tov, I must repeat what I already told your distinguished son-in-law, the esteemed Rabbi Solomon Zalman, that given my current circumstances, it would be extremely difficult for me to pay the price that would be asked for it, even if it were significantly reduced from what was mentioned in your letter. And despite how greatly I desire and long for this incredibly precious item, such an expense is simply impossible for me. I am deeply pained about this situation...”

Over the course of the following months, it seems that some arrangement was made, as later letters confirm ongoing correspondence between the Frierdiker Rebbe, Reb Yitzchok, and his children.

Later that year, Reb Yitzchok dictated a letter to send to Harav Avrohom Schneerson, the Frierdiker Rebbe’s father-in-law, in which he describes the decision to sell the siddur to the Frierdiker Rebbe.

“I wrote to [my daughter] that she should finalize the arrangements with your son-in-law, Reb Yosef Yitzchok *Shlita*. Firstly, because he has already put down some money towards purchasing the siddur, and secondly, because the siddur suits him, and he suits the siddur,” he writes.

After some additional delays and several payments made by the Frierdiker Rebbe, the siddur finally made its way to him some time between the end of 5688 and 5691.

Several years later, the Frierdiker Rebbe allowed the public to view the siddur, as reported in the aforementioned *Haynt* article, which continued: “Among the Warsaw Chassidim of various *shtibelach* and *batei midrashim*, there has been tremendous excitement in recent weeks...” The article describes how the Frierdiker Rebbe only allowed people to see the siddur after going to *mikvah*, and even instructed a Chassidishe Rebbe who had already been in *mikvah* on the day he visited to *toivel* again, “*lishma*, specifically to see the *ksav yad*.”

This “sensational” piece of news, as the *Haynt* described it, was picked up by other Jewish newspapers as well, including the Riga “*Frimorgen*”¹⁹; the New York *Der Morgen Journal*²⁰ who wrote that they received a special telegram from London with the news, *Haaretz* in Eretz Yisroel, and others. Rabbi Nissan Telushkin’s article, which provided more details about the siddur and the purchase, followed two months later.

A year or two later, the Frierdiker Rebbe sent the siddur to Łódź to the home of the renowned chossid Reb Zalman Schnnerson, in order to show it to people in exchange for a generous donation to the local Tomchei Tmimim.

Rabbi Volf Greenglass, then a *talmid* in Yeshiva, was one of the individuals who viewed the siddur at that time.

He later related: “There were several conditions for viewing the siddur. It could only be seen after immersion in the *mikvah*, and only one of Reb Zalman’s men was permitted to turn its pages and show it to visitors; they were not allowed to touch the siddur. I, too, was privileged to be among those who viewed the siddur. I had the opportunity to leaf through it from beginning to end and saw all the *chidushim* it contained.

“The siddur remained there for two weeks. At first, when it arrived, Reb Zalman secluded himself for several days, spending a few hours each day studying the siddur. On his face, one could clearly see a sense of seriousness and awe.”²¹

Saved from the Fire

In Elul 5699, the Frierdiker Rebbe was residing in Otwock, Poland, when World War II erupted. As German forces intensified their aerial bombardment, he and his family relocated to Warsaw. His large collection of *seforim* and many precious *kisvei yad* remained behind, but the most valuable manuscripts, including the Baal Shem Tov’s

siddur, accompanied him.

Tishrei, 5700, was marked by constant peril. Warsaw endured relentless bombing campaigns that reduced large sections of the city to rubble, claiming countless lives. Throughout this period of upheaval, as the Frierdiker Rebbe and his family moved from one location to another, seeking safety from the aerial attacks, the Baal Shem Tov’s siddur remained by his side.

In his dramatic account of those days, Rabbi Yosef Weinberg describes how the Baal Shem Tov’s siddur remained at the Frierdiker Rebbe’s side during even the heaviest bombardments. He records that on Motzei Yom Kippur, another wave of bombing forced the Rebbe’s family and Chassidim to prepare for immediate escape.

“For about three-quarters of an hour, they sat like this in the hallway, dressed in their outer garments, each with a bundle ready in hand in case they needed to flee. Next to the stove stood the suitcase with the Rebbe’s *tallis* and *tefillin* and, among other things, the Baal Shem Tov’s siddur.”²²

Six and a half weeks later, Rabbi Moshe Leib Rodshtein, who was then in Vilna and would later serve as the Frierdiker Rebbe’s *mazkir*, wrote a letter to another chossid. He detailed the Frierdiker Rebbe’s well-being and recounted how the holy siddur “never left the Rebbe’s hand,” even as other items were tragically lost to a fire.

“The library in Otwock remains intact, guarded to the best of his ability by one of *anash*. The three cases of precious *kesovim* that were brought to Warsaw are also safe. Among them is the Baal Shem Tov’s siddur, which never leaves the Rebbe’s hand.

“However, the rest of the household belongings—including clothing, valuable silver and gold items, cash, and even the Rebbe’s *tallis* and *tefillin*—were consumed by the fire. Tragically, some holy manuscripts and *reshimos* of incalculable value were also destroyed and are now lost forever...”²³

The siddur traveled with the Frierdiker Rebbe throughout his rescue from war-torn Europe, one of the few cherished possessions he brought with him, until it reached New York.

“Do You Have a Gartel?”

After its arrival in New York, the Baal Shem Tov’s siddur was occasionally shown to individuals or the public. Rabbi J.J. Hecht related one such occasion, which occurred around 5707:

“I received a phone call from the Rebbe. He asked, ‘Did you go to the *mikvah* today?... Do you have a *gartel*?... Then please come here.’

“When I arrived at the Rebbe’s office, he explained:



RABBI MOSHE LEIB RODSHEIN'S LETTER
DESCRIBING THE FRIERDIKER REBBE'S
ESCAPE FROM WAR-TORN POLAND.

‘Professor Abraham Joshua Heschel wants to write a study on the Baal Shem Tov and has requested permission from the [Friediker] Rebbe to see the Baal Shem Tov’s siddur, particularly the page with the two drops of blood. ‘Normally,’ the Rebbe added, ‘I would never dare to approach or touch this siddur. However, since the Rebbe instructed me to take it out to show Professor Heschel, I want to give you the merit as well.’

“The Rebbe turned the pages of the siddur until he reached the page with the two drops of blood, and then he allowed me to hold the siddur and look at it,” Rabbi Hecht recalled.²⁴

On another occasion, an announcement was made that anyone wishing to see the Baal Shem Tov’s siddur could do so, provided they immersed in the *mikvah* beforehand.²⁵

At one point, the Rebbe reviewed the siddur and compiled a list comparing its *nusach* with that of other *siddurei Ha’Arizal*, including another siddur that some attribute to the Baal Shem Tov.²⁶

Over the ten years that the Friediker Rebbe resided in America, the siddur remained constantly by his side, carefully stored in a suitcase directly behind his chair in his *yechidus* room. After his *histalkus*, the siddur stayed in its place, untouched and undisturbed. It only resurfaced in public attention during the *parshas haseforim* that unfolded in the events leading up to Hei Teves.

On Shabbos Parshas Balak 5745, the Rebbe spoke in length about the siddur, saying:

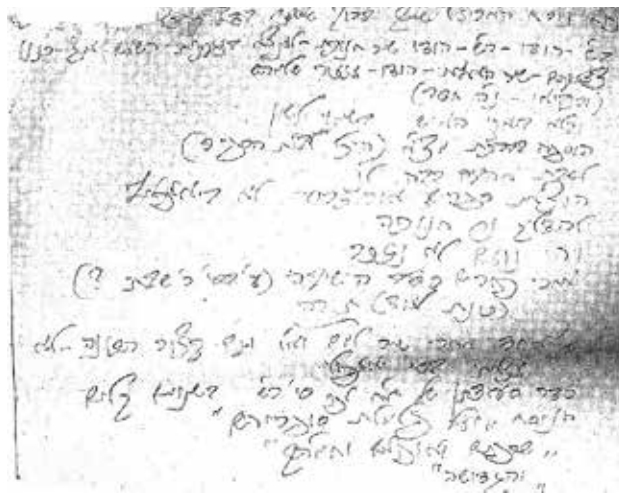
“Among the *seforim* in the possession of the [Friediker] Rebbe, there are many valuable and rare texts, both from the teachings of Chabad Chassidus and general Chassidus, including the Baal Shem Tov’s siddur.

“They set their sights on this siddur, devising schemes and strategies to remove it and take it away, *chas v’shalom*, from the Rebbe’s possession!

“The Rebbe did not allow anyone to approach or touch this holy siddur. On rare occasions, he would permit someone to kiss it, but only with appropriate preparation—such as immersion in a *mikvah*. Nevertheless, there are those who think of taking the siddur, *chas v’shalom*, from the Rebbe’s possession!

“...Why do I emphasize the Baal Shem Tov’s siddur? It is not because I wish to acquire it myself. On the contrary, I am filled with awe and trepidation when it comes to the Baal Shem Tov’s siddur! Whatever the reason, the reality is that I feel a deep trepidation when it comes to the Baal Shem Tov’s siddur, even when it comes to safeguarding it temporarily.

“...Let it be known that the Rebbe foresaw such potential schemes and took precautions. It seems that the Rebbe



THE REBBE'S NOTES ABOUT THE BAAL SHEM TOV'S SIDDUR.

anticipated the possibility of theft. For this reason, the Rebbe instructed me to create photographic reproductions of every single page of the siddur and to store these copies securely in a bank vault. This way, even if the siddur were stolen, no one could sell or distribute individual pages, as exact replicas exist for each one.”²⁷

After the Rebbe’s victory, the siddur was placed in a safe in the library, where it remains to this day.

For Everyone to See

Just three years ago, the story of the Baal Shem Tov’s siddur took an unexpected and remarkable turn. As part of the library’s effort to digitize and share its manuscripts and *kisvei yad kodesh*, a complete scan of the Baal Shem Tov’s siddur was made available online for public access. For the first time in history, anyone can view the siddur, including the signatures of the Baal Shem Tov’s *talmidim*, and see the handwriting, tears, and even blood of the Baal Shem Tov himself.

“We had many doubts about whether this was the right thing to do,” Rabbi Berel Levine, chief librarian of the Library of Agudas Chassidei Chabad, shared at the time. Ultimately, the decision was guided by the precedent set by the Rebbe himself, who had approved sending photographs of the siddur to individuals who requested them. **1**



SCAN THIS CODE TO VIEW THE
SIDDUR IN ITS ENTIRETY
DERHER.ORG/54987

A GLIMPSE INTO THE SIDDUR.

LIBRARY OF AGUDAS CHASSIDEI CHABAD



LEATHERBOUND COVER.



THIS PAGE, AS WELL AS THE FOLLOWING FIVE, RIGHT AFTER THE BRACHA 'BONEH YERUSHALAYIM,' WERE DELIBERATELY LEFT BLANK FOR TALMIDIM TO WRITE DOWN THEIR NAMES AND REQUESTS



IN THE BRACHA OF 'RACHEM' IN THE BENTCHING OF SHABBOS, THE WORD 'הגדל' (Hagdal) APPEARS INSTEAD OF 'הקדוש' (Hakadosh).



PICTURED ARE WHAT APPEAR TO BE BLOODSTAINS ON THE SIDDUR'S PAGES.

1. Hashmata L'sichas Shabbos Parshas Balak 5745.
2. A. Kahana, Rebbe Yisroel Baal Shemtov (Zhitomir, 1901), pg. 80–83, reprinted by R. Yehoshua Mondshine in Kovetz Sifsei Tzadikim, vol. 7 (Yerushalayim, 1994), p. 72.
3. Published in Kfar Chabad Magazine, issues 906–910. Accessed December 30, 2024, at kramim.info.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Page 171.
7. Kfar Chabad Magazine, issue 908.
8. Ibid.
9. Baal Shem Tov Al Hatorah, Parshas Noach, ois 142.
10. Ki Karov Magazine, no. 90 (Shavuos, 2022), p. 5.
11. Igros Kodesh Admur Harashab, vol 4, p. 252.
12. Likkutei Sippurim, p. 171.
13. "Vegen dem Baal Shem Tov's siddur," Der Morgen Journal, March 20, 1934, 9, available at National Library of Israel Digital Collections.
14. "Groyse chassidishe sensatsye mit a sidur fun bal-shem-tov vos gefint zich in varshe," Haynt (Warsaw), January 8, 1934, 7. Available at the National Library of Israel Digital Collections.
15. Likkutei Sippurim.
16. Rabbi Yehuda Chitrik, Reshimos Devarim, vol. 4 (Brooklyn, NY: 1992), p. 76.
17. Rabbi Baruch Oberlander, Kovetz Sifsei Tzadikim, vol. 7, p. 90.
18. Kfar Chabad issue 910.
19. "Yidishe Naves" column, January 26, 1934, p. 1.
20. "Lubavitsher rebe handelt ein sider fun baal-shem-tov," January 11, 1934, p. 1.
21. Likkutei Sipurei Hisvaduyos (2011), p. 455.
22. Shemuos V'Sipurim, vol. 3 (Brooklyn, NY: 1990), 127.
23. Derech Tamim, no. 4 (Teves–Shevat 5777), p. 40.
24. Kfar Chabad magazine, no. 365, p. 19.
25. Reshimos Devorim, vol 4, p. 77.
26. Cf. Rabbis Levi Raskin and Boruch Oberlander, "He'aros C"K Admor MiLubavitch ZY"A al siddur HaBa'al Shem Tov 1-2," Heichal Menachem 11 (Tammuz 5765): 6–12.
27. Hashmata L'sichas Shabbos Parshas Balak 5745.



New Series!

THE LIVES OF OUR RABBEIM

Let's start
from the
beginning...

Fascinating &
fundamental
Chassidishe
stories

Join us as we go back a few generations, and begin to hear the fascinating and fundamental stories of the lives of our holy Rabbeim, starting with the Baal Shem Tov.

Out now on all streaming platforms

DERHER.ORG/KIDS •



לעילוי נשמת
הרה"ח מנחם מענדל ב"ר
צבי הירש הכהן ע"ה
נלב"ע
י"ג אדר - תענית אסתר - ה'תשע"ה
וזוגתו מרת לאה בת הרה"ת
צבי אייזיק ע"ה
נלב"ע כ"ט אדר שני ה'תשפ"ד
כהן
תנ"צ'ה'
נדפס ע"י נכדיהם שיחיו

Let's Talk About Eretz Yisroel

THROUGH THE LENS
OF THE REBBE'S TORAH

PART 6 The Experts

COMPILED BY:
RABBI MENDEL MISHOLOVIN

WRITTEN BY:
RABBI LEVI GREENBERG (TX)

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

On 15 Sivan 5742, the Israeli Defense Forces attacked Lebanon in an operation called “Shelom HaGalil—Peace of the Galilee” which was scheduled to accomplish all of its goals in ten days. In reality, the military operation dragged on for four months and devolved into a military quagmire and political fiasco—all because Halacha’s most basic rule of war was violated.

For years the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) under the leadership of Yasser Arafat *yimach shmo vezichro* built up a formidable military presence in southern Lebanon. The terrorists attacked Yidden in Eretz Yisroel by shooting rockets at towns and cities and with cross-border raids. The most shocking attack occurred in Adar 5738 when 11 terrorists attacked a bus, murdering 35 and wounding 71. In response, the IDF launched “Operation Litani” which forced the terrorists to retreat to the other side of the Litani River.

The IDF occupied the buffer zone for three months until the United Nations Interim Force (UNIFIL) was created to ensure the terrorists would not return to the area and threaten Eretz Yisroel. As expected, UNIFIL failed in its “peacekeeping mission” and the area quickly swarmed with terrorists again. Over the next three years, PLO terrorists perpetrated 1,500 terror attacks, killing 110 and wounding over 1,000. Another invasion was necessary to clear the murderers out of Lebanon and to make northern Eretz Yisroel safe, and the IDF drew up plans for such an operation.

On 12 Sivan 5742, three terrorists tried to assassinate the Israeli ambassador to the United Kingdom, Shlomo Argov, in London. In response, Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin ordered the invasion of Lebanon, setting in motion the plan to destroy the terrorist infrastructure there. The opening days of the war were miraculously successful. On the fourth day of the war, the Israeli air force carried out a historic attack (Operation Mole Cricket 19) against the Syrian army, which had joined the fight, knocking out their Soviet-provided anti-aircraft missile system and destroying many of their aircraft. Within a week, the terrorists were retreating, and the Israeli Forces were within striking distance of Beirut, Lebanon’s capital.

But the world was calling foul, as usual. While Israel initially ignored the UN resolutions demanding a ceasefire in the opening days of the war, by noon on Friday, 20 Sivan, Israel unilaterally declared a ceasefire—to the dismay of the Israeli military brass. As General Rafel Eitan wrote in his memoirs, “That Friday, we needed only three more hours to conquer the [strategically crucial] Beirut–Damascus highway.”

Accepting a ceasefire before achieving all military objectives allows the enemy to regroup, rearm, and prepare for the

next round; inevitably, the element of surprise is lost. From then on, the war in Lebanon continued in bursts and spurts, causing unnecessary casualties because politicians interfered in the war's progress for political reasons.

Halacha is clear: In medical situations, only the opinions of professional doctors on how to cure the patient matter, not insurance companies or hospital CEOs. Similarly, on the battlefield, only the opinions and directions of military professionals to achieve military goals with the fewest casualties are relevant, not the opinions of politicians and diplomats. If military experts entertain political considerations—especially if they have already retired from active duty—their opinions are categorically irrelevant. This is the only way to ensure lives are not lost unnecessarily; violating it causes unnecessary loss of life.

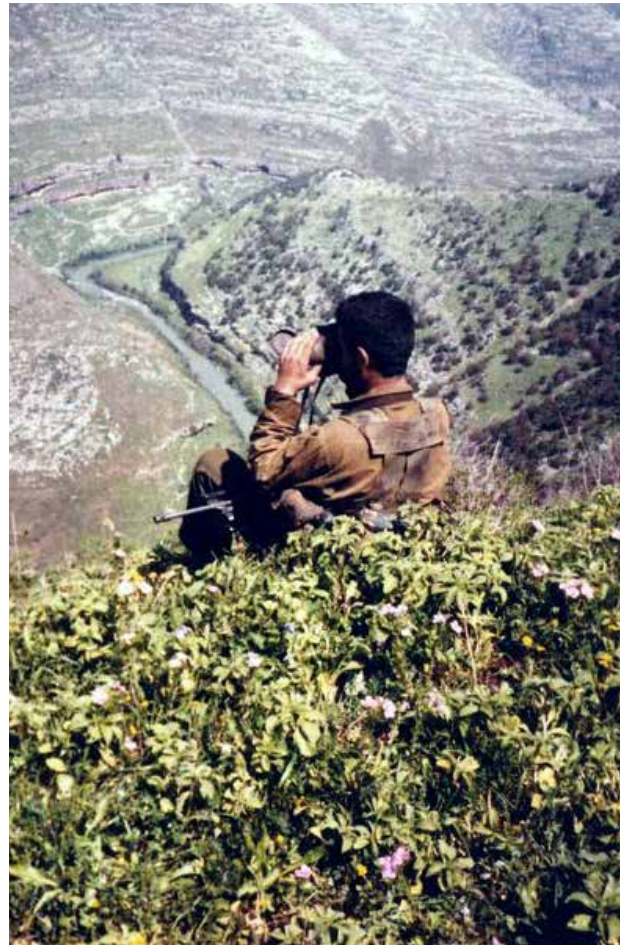
The same thing happened on the morning of Yom Kippur 5734. The politicians' opinions prevailed over the dire warnings of the military brass, leading to the tragically irreversible outcomes of the Yom Kippur War. Less than ten years later, the desperation of diplomats and politicians to remain in the “good graces” of the nations of the world outweighed the clear military guidance of the IDF high command, with tragic results.

Ironically, during the first week of the campaign, there was no real pressure from the world for Israel to stop. The only foreign nation with legitimate influence over Israeli policy was the United States since they provided all their weaponry. However, President Reagan embarked on a ten-day trip to Europe, sending a clear message to the Israelis that they had ten days to complete their task without American interference. Nevertheless, certain Israeli politicians were intimidated by the noise coming from the United Nations, which had lost all legitimacy in the conflict with the failure of UNIFIL, and they prematurely halted the military operation.

The bizarre behavior of politicians halting a miraculously successful military operation, and then allowing it to proceed at a snail's pace per misguided political calculations, can be compared to someone entering an operating room while doctors perform a life-saving operation. The bystander becomes frightened upon seeing the first drops of blood from the incision and insists they halt the operation to allow the patient to recuperate from the small incision and then continue with the operation.

Such behavior in the operating room is foolish and not at all compassionate. It is the cruelest way to treat any human being. In the same vein, prolonging a vital military operation for political reasons not only endangers the lives of our soldiers unnecessarily, it also causes much more suffering and loss to the enemy.

Even if there was a legitimate debate about whether starting the war was appropriate, once started, it must be



AN ISRAELI SOLDIER MONITORING THE LANDSCAPE AT THE LITANI RIVER IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE LEBANON WAR.

completed quickly and efficiently—according to the directives of active military experts. This is the only way to accomplish the war's goal of securing the safety of the Yidden living in Eretz Yisroel. If this goal is not achieved, the sacrifice of the many soldiers HY”D who had already lost their lives would be in vain.

When Hashem performs miracles, it is a clear indication that the army must behave according to Halacha and prosecute the war exclusively according to the directives of military experts. **T**

NEXT MONTH:

What is the proper way to deal with the aftermath of war?

Primary Sources: *Toras Menachem Hisvaaduyos* 5742 vol. 3 p. 1663; *Ibid.* p. 1720; *Ibid.* p. 1737; *Ibid.* vol. 4 p. 1843. *Letters to Mr. Peter Kalms 3rd Light of Chanukah and 13 Shevat 5741. Berega HaEmet Chapter 10.*

The Attack of the Poalei Tziyon

By: Rabbi Mendy Greenberg

לע"נ הו"ח אי"א נו"נ ר' חיים
בן הו"ח ר' יעקב ע"ה וזוגתו
מרת דינה בת ר' משה ע"ה
גרייזמאן

לע"נ הרה"ח הרה"ת משה אליהו בן
ר' אברהם יצחק ע"ה וזוגתו מרת
חנה עטקא בת ר' נטע זאב ע"ה
גערליצקי
ת'נצ'ב'ה

נדפס ע"י ולזכות
הרה"ת ר' חיים וזוגתו מרת
ביילא מינדל בניהם ובנותיהם
מנחם מענדל, חי' מושקא, לוי יצחק,
חנה דינה, משה אליהו שיחיו
גרייזמאן

Winds of Heresy

In the early 1900s, there was a spiritual epidemic. *Yeshiva bochurim* throughout Eastern Europe were being attracted to new movements spreading through the Jewish community, whose books and newspapers were infiltrating the Yeshivos. Too many Torah students were being drawn away.

When the Rebbe Rashab established Tomchei Temimim, one thing was absolutely clear; *haskalah* would make no inroads in Lubavitch. Not one inch would be given to those ideologies; not one of their books would be allowed on the premises, and not a single *bochur* would be allowed to engage with them.

For ten years, Tomchei Temimim thrived. The Yeshiva numbered in the hundreds and Jews throughout Russia had heard about the phenomenon—a group of *bochurim* left untouched by the changing times. They didn't shave their beards, they learned only Torah subjects, and they were ready to go in fire and water to preserve authentic Yiddishkeit. Soon, the Yeshiva's alumni were dotting the landscape of Eastern Europe. To the *maskilim* of Russia, Tomchei Temimim was the worst sort of enemy. If they could only *chap* one of their *bochurim*...

Soon, they found their catch.

The Boy from Chernigov

Berel Dovzik was an only child. Seeking the best possible place for his education, his father brought him to Lubavitch when he reached his fourteenth birthday to enroll him in Tomchei Temimim. He was still practically a child, but as the months passed, he began making strides in his learning and maturing into a serious *bochur*.

But then there was a minor hiccup. Being an only child, he begged for permission to go home for Pesach—which was



A DIVISION OF POALEI TZIYON FROM THE YEAR 5666.

EXCERPTS FROM
AN ARTICLE IN A
NEWSPAPER OF THE
MASKILIM DESCRIBING
THE EPISODE.

דער ליובאוויטשער רבי האט געזען
דעם א ישיבה. א סך פונטערניש האט
דיא האזיגע ישיבה שוין פערשפרייט צוויי
שטען אידען. אין דער ישיבה ווערען דיא
יונגע בחורים'לעך שוין אזוי יעוואיטיש
ערצויגען, אז דאס ליכט האט שוין מער
אויף זיי קיין שליסט נישט. דיא ישיבה האט
דיא איינציגע אייפנאכע אזוי איינזארגע
לען דיא פונטערניש אין דיא יונגע הער
צער, אז דאסען זאל שוין קיין סאך קיין
ליכט מיט קענען ארוינדרענגען. אין דיא
יונגע בחורים'לאך, וואס קומען פון אלע
עקען רוסלאנד, געדען ארויס פון דער
ישיבה שוין גרויסע אייפנעוואכסענע יעד
וואסען אין זיי צושטאנען דיא יעוואיטיש
שע תורה פון זייער רבי'ן אין אלע זייער
קלער.

שפאלט אין א ציטער. אז דיא הינט, פער
ציון" האבען זיך דערוואוסט פון אדעם,
ווינען זיי געקומען צום רבי'ן מיט דער
דעה צו בעפרייען דעם „געפאנגענעם" מיט
נומען, אדער מיט געוואלט. צווישען דיא
פועליציון מיט דעם רבי'ס „סטראזשיי
קעם" וואס האבען געהיט דעם „געפא
נגענעם" איז אויסגעבראכען א קאמפ.
דעם רבי'ס סטראזשיקעס, דיא ישיבה
בחורים ווינען געווען בעוואפענט מיט
טפיסער האלז און אייזערנע שטעקעס
און דיא פועליציון — מיט ליידענע הענד
דיא פועליציון האבען דעם קאמפ נישט
געקענט אויסהאלטען און האבען געמיזט
אכטרעטען, נאך דא האט איינער אייבער
טאכען פון א דעוואלוער... געטראט האט
עס קיינעם נישט, נאך דער איינשליסענע
שאט האט געבראכט צו שרייענע דער
נאמען.

usually allowed only after spending a full year-and-a-half in the Yeshiva. Under pressure by the boy's parents and also by Radatz Chein, Rav of Chernigov, the *hanhala* relented.

After Pesach, Berel didn't show up. He sent a letter saying that, due to family circumstances, he wouldn't be able to return immediately. Instead, he showed up half a year later, for the winter *zman*.

The *hanhala* didn't know what to do. It was unheard of for a *bochur* to “play hooky” for an entire *zman*! In the end, they chose to allow him back, but put him under the strict supervision of several elder *bochurim*. He was on probation—if there was any trouble, he would immediately be expelled.

Late that winter, rumors began to spread. Berel Chernigover was hanging out with members of Poalei Tziyon, the secularist youth group in Lubavitch. After a few weeks, the news landed on the Frierdiker Rebbe's desk, and he opened an investigation. He reached out to the owner of Berel's lodging, and asked for a full report.

The owner of the lodge reported that Berel had been spending nights in the company of the Poalei Tziyon. At first, he had claimed it was to convince them of the error of their ways, but he had soon begun singing their praises. It turned out that during his hiatus from Yeshiva, he had become associated with Poalei Tziyon in his hometown of Chernigov. By now, he was no longer observing Torah and Mitzvos.

At this point, Berel realized he was in trouble. When a message came from the Frierdiker Rebbe asking him to come to his office, he refused, hunkering down instead in the home of a friend. An emergency message was sent to his father: come get your son quickly. Meanwhile, the *hanhala gashmis*

determined that he owed forty-seven rubles to the Yeshiva's *gemach*, so they confiscated his belongings.

The next day, a group of five Poalei Tziyon youth showed up at the Yeshiva administration and began yelling. Berel was a member of their club, they said, and therefore could not be expelled from the Yeshiva without their agreement. They demanded the immediate release of his belongings.

Hearing the commotion from his office, the Frierdiker Rebbe asked what was going on, and soon the whole crowd entered his office. They repeated their claims, but the Frierdiker Rebbe made it very clear that the Yeshiva wouldn't be asking their advice. The boys opened their coats to show that they were carrying revolvers, but the Frierdiker Rebbe didn't seem impressed. “*Ir hot mich nisht bashafen, un nit mir vet ir upshafen. Der Oibershter firt di velt. Arois!* You didn't create me, and you won't uncreate me. Hashem runs the world. Out!”

The Kidnapping

The story was far from over. According to the lodge-owner, Berel had been under severe pressure since realizing that the Yeshiva would probably expel him, because he was terrified of the prospect of facing his parents. He had even been threatening to commit suicide. The report on Berel's mental state was concerning, and regardless, he was the Yeshiva's responsibility until he was returned to the care of his father. The Yeshiva needed to get their hands on the *bochur*.

That Motzei Shabbos, the chance arrived. Berel was walking past the *chatzer* with a group of boys and girls of Poalei Tziyon when a group of *bochurim* raced out, nabbed him, and

quickly shlepped him into the office of the Frierdiker Rebbe.

In the office, the Frierdiker Rebbe told him that he would be under the Yeshiva's care until his father arrived. Meanwhile, he would be provided all his needs—while remaining in the office. Berel did not object.

Things took a dramatic turn that night. At eleven thirty that evening, a noisy crowd of Poalei Tziyon approached the *chatzer*. Five armed leaders came to the Frierdiker Rebbe's home, demanding the release of their friend. The Frierdiker Rebbe brushed them off; he told them that their friend hadn't been kidnapped; he had merely changed locations and was being well cared for. They had nothing to worry about.

Infuriated, two hundred Poalei Tziyon youth gathered outside and soon began to attack. Stones flying towards the Yeshiva broke all the windows, and several gunshots were heard. Reb Moshe Klatzkin, the Rav of Romanov who was visiting Lubavitch, had just bent down to pick something up when a bullet flew right over his head.

But the wild crowd soon met their match. The Yeshiva also had hundreds of *bochurim*. Seeing the tumult, they removed the iron bars from their beds in the *zal* and soon emerged into the *chatzer* bearing their makeshift—but dangerous—weapons. They charged at the Poalei Tziyon and chased them away from the Yeshiva premises. After a short scuffle, quiet was restored.



PHOTO OF THE FRIERDIKER REBBE TAKEN SEVERAL YEARS AFTER THE EVENTS.

Involving the Police

The Poalei Tziyon youngsters were terrified that the police would become involved. The Russian government did not see kindly to the new youth movements, and their involvement in a violent attack would not help their situation. They situated guards at key locations throughout the town to ensure that no one would be able to notify the police officer.

Despite their best efforts, a local guard managed to evade them and notified the police. Within a short time, several young men were arrested.¹ Soon, Berel's father arrived and took his son back to Chernigov.

The story was far from over. The Poalei Tziyon were a formidable group. Lubavitch didn't have a large police force; they would be able to make a lot of trouble for the Yeshiva, and they threatened quite clearly to do so. It was a miracle that nobody had gotten hurt so far, but there was no telling about the future. The situation was so stressful, especially for the families of *Beis Harav* living in the *chatzer*, that the Rebbe Rashab sent the Frierdiker Rebbe and his Rebbetzin out of the country for the time being. A special *pan* was sent to be read at the Ohel of the Rebbe Maharash and Tzemach Tzedek.

It was also a bit of a public relations disaster. The newspapers, mostly published by *maskilim*, were having a field day with the story. A poor *bochur*, who only wanted to be "enlightened" by the *haskalah*, had been kidnapped. The Yeshiva bochurim had "violently attacked" the "empty-handed" Poalei Tziyon who had come to rescue their friend. True, "one person shot a revolver, but nobody was hurt," and yet the Lubavitchers had immediately involved the police, and now the poor youth of Poalei Tziyon were facing trial. Many supporters of the Yeshiva were hearing these accounts and asking what was going on. The Rebbe Rashab wanted to turn the page on the entire story.

The Poalei Tziyon came with demands to the Rebbe Rashab. They wanted him to fire the Frierdiker Rebbe from his post as *Menahel*, fire one of the Yeshiva administrators, expel five *bochurim* from the Yeshiva, and pay "restitution" of two thousand rubles. More importantly, they wanted to be allowed into the Yeshiva. Why was the *hanhala* so afraid of the *maskilim*, they argued? Why didn't they allow the *maskilim* into the Yeshiva, at least if only to discuss and debate the important issues of the day?

If the Rebbe Rashab wouldn't give in to their demands, they said, they would attack the Yeshiva again.

The heads of the regional Poalei Tziyon were in the nearby city of Vitebsk, where the Raza, the brother of the Rebbe Rashab lived. The Raza made it very clear to them that there would be no firing and no expulsion. Poalei Tziyon would have no say in how the Lubavitcher Yeshiva would run. At most, if they had a financial claim, they could bring it to a

neutral arbitration.

As news of the events spread, others began to pressure the Poalei Tziyon to back down. Many Vitebsk locals viewed themselves as Chabad Chassidim, and even if they were sympathetic to the new movements, the fight with Lubavitch was entirely unbecoming. The local villagers in Lubavitch also warned the Poalei Tziyon that “blood would be spilled” if they touched the Yeshiva—because it was the central pillar of the local economy.

The Poalei Tziyon weren’t willing to back down. They persisted in all their claims, and insisted that they choose two out of three members of the arbitration panel. To get their point across, they decided on another attack—this time against the Rebbe Rashab himself.

One summer day, as the Rebbe Rashab was staying in a quiet summer home near Liozna, a large crowd of Poalei Tziyon showed up at the door. They broke into the home, and began breaking everything in sight. The kitchen was totally destroyed. All that survived the attack was the clock on the wall. Everything else was in shambles. Rebbetzin Shterna Sara tried to leave the home with her terrified granddaughters, but their way was blocked. Again, the Poalei Tziyon blocked the roads so that nobody would be able to notify the police. “You didn’t listen to us,” they yelled. “Now we will show you!”

The End of the Story

The story up to this point is based on the letters of the Rebbe Rashab and the Raza, newspaper accounts, and a lengthy description in *Toldos Hatemimim* by Reb Moshe Rozenblum, written several years later. But how did the saga end?

In his letters, the Rebbe Rashab made it clear that Poalei Tziyon would never get a foothold in the Yeshiva. “Regarding their first demand [that the Frierdiker Rebbe step down], I will absolutely not fulfill it; they will have no say in the inner workings of the Yeshiva, and I will not allow the *bochurim* to be afraid of any figure outside the Yeshiva.” But what happened with the rest of the demands?

Forty years later, the Frierdiker Rebbe shared the following in a *Sicha*:

“In 5666, during the Haftorah on Rosh Hashanah, the Rebbe Rashab fell silent after reciting the words, *umorah lo yaaleh al rosho* (a razor shall not come upon his head). His lips were moving silently. In Adar that year, the incident with Poalei Tziyon and Tomchei Temimim took place. They didn’t want me as the *menahel* of the Yeshiva because [as I was the *menahel*], they didn’t have a foothold in the Yeshiva at all...

“My uncle the Raza was not a *pachdan* (coward)... but when he told my father, the Rebbe Rashab, what the Poalei Tziyon were planning, he said that we needed to take them seriously; they are big *shkotzim* and they could do a lot of



RECENTLY RECONSTRUCTED ZAL OF YESHIVAS TOMCHEI TMIMIM IN LUBAVITCH.

damage.

“My father answered: *Morah*, fear, is not possible. I already said on Rosh Hashanah that *umorah lo yaaleh al rosho*. But money? The *possuk* says *lo yecheratz kelev*. Well, when the dog does bark, you need to throw him a coin.” It seems that the Yeshiva paid off the hooligans, and the matter was considered settled.

What Happened to Berel

Ten years later, Reb Yisroel Jacobson was in Chernigov when the local police did a sweep of the market looking for draft evaders. Reb Yisroel didn’t have his paperwork in order, and he was soon arrested and put in a large holding cell.

As he sat there, a young Jewish man with a trimmed beard was brought into the cell. The Jew approached Reb Yisroel and said, “You look like a *talmid* of Lubavitch.” Reb Yisroel answered in the affirmative. As they conversed, the man revealed that he was married and leading a life of Torah and Mitzvos with his family.

“What’s your name,” Reb Yisroel asked.

“Dovber Dovzik,” the man replied. “In Lubavitch I was known as Berel Chernigover.” ❶

1. The entire preceding section of the story is based on the account of Reb Moshe Rozenblum (who worked in the Yeshiva administration at the time) in *Toldos Hatemimim*. Divrei Yimei Hatemimim pp. 159–172. The following section of the article is based on the collection of letters in Divrei Yimei Hatemimim pp. 284–296. The Frierdiker Rebbe’s *sicha* at the close of the article is published in *Sefer Hasichos* 5705 p. 12.



WHAT ARE YOU



נדפס ע"י ולזכות
הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל וזוגתו
מרת דבורה לאה שיחיו
טרייטעל

לרגל יום נישואיהם כ"ט אדר ראשון

ולזכות
בתם החיילת בצבאות ה'
ח' מושקא תח'ל

WAITING FOR?

Excerpts from the Rebbe's
teachings on the conclusion of
the Rambam's Mishneh Torah

Presented in honor of the Siyum and Has'chalas
HaRambam, Rosh Chodesh Adar 5785

Prepared by: Rabbi Levi Greenberg (OH)



n 28 Nissan 5751, the Rebbe shocked the crowd at 770 and Chassidim around the world with a heart-wrenching call. Despite all his efforts, he cried, Moshiach has still not yet arrived: “I have done all that I can.

From now on, you do all that you can, and see to it that the coming of Moshiach finally materializes...”¹

Following up a week later, the Rebbe explained that the most straightforward way (“*derech hayeshara*”) to bring Moshiach is by increasing Torah study on the subjects of Moshiach and Geula.²

Following the Rebbe’s instructions, a special edition of the weekly Dvar Malchus booklet was published, including four *sichos* on the final two chapters of Mishneh Torah. These are chapters 11 and 12 of *Hilchos Melachim Umilchamoseihem*—the Laws of Kings and their Wars. The Rambam was the first to organize these *halachos* and to present them in a systematic fashion, so that the topic of Moshiach could be comprehensively studied.

Upon receiving the booklet, the Rebbe asked that it be printed again, this time for the Rebbe to distribute. On the evening of 15 Iyar 5751, the Rebbe personally distributed thousands of copies of this Dvar Malchus booklet to men, women, and children.

In honor of the Siyum HaRambam on 30 Shevat and the beginning of the new cycle on 1 Adar, we present the following essay based on some of the *sichos* in this booklet.³

The English translation and adaptation presented here (with slight variations) first appeared in the lesson “*A Vision for Mashiach*” as part of the “*Tut Altz*” program, published and copyrighted by JLI. Special thanks to Rabbi Efraim Mintz and the JLI team for their permission to include selections in this issue.

SECTION I:

What is Moshiach Really About?

For millennia, through a long and painful *galus*, the Jewish people have been waiting impatiently for the coming of Moshiach.

But what exactly are we waiting for? Is it for a miraculous savior to do away with our everyday problems? For the peace and prosperity promised by the *nevi'im*?

Perhaps the coming of Moshiach is actually about something altogether different.

Let's begin our exploration by reading the Rambam's first statement in his treatment of the subject of Moshiach:

הַמֶּלֶךְ הַמְּשִׁיחַ עֲתִיד לַעֲמֹד וּלְהַחְזִיר מַלְכוּת דָּוִד לְיִשְׂרָאֵל. וְחוֹזְרִין לְמַמְשְׁלָה הָרְאשׁוֹנָה. וְבוֹנֶה הַמִּקְדָּשׁ וּמִקְבֵּץ גְּדֻחֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל. וְחוֹזְרִין כָּל הַמְּשֻׁפָּטִים בְּיָמָיו כְּשֶׁהָיוּ מִקֶּדֶם. מִקְרִיבִין קֶרְבָּנוֹת. וְעוֹשִׂין שְׂמִטָּין וְיוֹבְלוֹת כָּכָל מִצְוַתָּה הָאֲמוּרָה בַּתּוֹרָה. וְכָל מִי שֶׁאִינוֹ מֵאֲמִין בּוֹ. אוֹ מִי שֶׁאִינוֹ מְחַכֶּה לְבִיאָתוֹ. לֹא בִשְׂאֵר גְּבִיָּאִים בְּלִבָּד הוּא כּוֹפֵר. אֲלֵא בַּתּוֹרָה וּבִמְשָׁה רַבְּנֵי. שֶׁהָרִי תוֹרָה הַעֲיִדָה עָלָיו שְׂנֵאָמֶר (דְּבָרִים ל') "וְנֹשֵׁב ה' אֶל-הֵיךְ אֶת שְׂבוּתְךָ וְרַחֲמֶךָ וְשָׁב וְקִבְּצָךְ" וְגו', "אִם יִהְיֶה גִדְּחָךְ בְּקִצָּה הַשָּׁמַיִם" וְגו', "וְהִבְיָאָה ה'". וְאֵלּוֹ הַדְּבָרִים הַמְּפֹרָשִׁים בַּתּוֹרָה הֵם כּוֹלְלִים כָּל הַדְּבָרִים שְׂנֵאָמְרוּ עַל יְדֵי כָּל הַנְּבִיאִים. אִף בְּפֶרֶשֶׁת בְּלַעַם נֶאֱמַר וְשָׁם נִבָּא בְּשֵׁנֵי הַמְּשִׁיחִים. בְּמִשְׁיַח הָרְאשׁוֹן שֶׁהוּא דָּוִד שֶׁהוֹשִׁיעַ אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל מִיַּד צָרָהּ. וּבְמִשְׁיַח הָאַחֲרוֹן שֶׁעוֹמֵד מִבְּנֵי שְׁמוּשִׁיעַ אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל [בְּאַחֲרוֹנָה].

In the future, the Anointed King (*Melech haMoshiach*) will arise to renew the Kingship of *Beis Dovid*, restoring it to its ancient sovereignty. He will build the Beis Hamikdash and gather the dispersed of the Jewish People.

In his days, all the [Torah's] laws will be

reinstated as in former times. We will offer *korbanos*, and observe the *Shemita* and *Yovel* years according to all their particulars as described by the Torah.

Anyone who does not believe in him or does not await his coming, denies not only the statements of the other prophets, but also those of the Torah and Moshe Rabbeinu. The Torah testified to his coming, as it states:

"Hashem will bring back your captivity and have mercy upon you. He will again gather you... If your dispersed remnant will be at the ends of the heavens... And Hashem will bring you..."

These explicit words of the Torah include all the statements made by all the prophets.

Reference is also made in the portion of Bilam, who prophesied about the two *meshichim* [anointed kings]: the first Moshiach, Dovid, who saved the Jewish people from their oppressors; and the final Moshiach who will arise from his descendants and save the Jewish people in the end of days.

The Halachic Relevance

The Rambam begins by describing Moshiach's role. To the casual reader, it appears that the Rambam intends simply to offer a general introduction to the subject before discussing the specifics.

However, as the Rebbe often said, every word in the Rambam is important, and contributes to understanding his halachic rulings. Nothing is said, no story is told, that does not have halachic significance.

Throughout these two *perakim*, the Rambam explains what we can expect Moshiach to do and what we cannot expect from him, what will occur in the era of Moshiach, and in what order. This is not storytelling. This is a book of

halacha, and as such, the Rambam tells us what Moshiach is expected to do, *according to halacha*, and what he is not expected to do. This will enable us to determine his authenticity. Even Moshiach will be bound by his halachic role. If he fulfills it, we will know he is Moshiach. If he fails to fulfill it, we will know that he isn't.

Moreover, this halacha is relevant even before Moshiach arrives. It is a mitzvah to believe in and to await the coming of Moshiach. A mitzvah cannot be ambiguous. If we are to believe, we need to know specifically *what* to believe. If we are to await, we need to know precisely what we are waiting for. Thus, these descriptors have practical significance. They inform our faith in, and our anticipation of, Moshiach.

Four Descriptors

In the first halacha cited above, we read that Moshiach will:

1. Restore *Malchus Beis Dovid*.
2. Build the Beis Hamikdash.
3. Bring about the ingathering of the Jewish people (*Kibbutz Galuyos*).
4. Restore all the mitzvos that can't be fulfilled in *chutz la'aretz* and during *galus*.

The casual reader might reasonably conclude that the first three points are Moshiach's primary goals, while the last point merely derives from them. In other words, Moshiach's primary role is to bring relief to the Jewish people and to restore our former glory.

The Rebbe reads the Rambam differently, asserting that Moshiach's entire purpose is not to restore *our* glory, but *the Torah's*. The first three steps are mere precursors, necessary conditions, to make the final one possible.

Moshiach: The Culmination of Yiddishkeit

The Rebbe arrives at this conclusion through a comprehensive analysis that is as astounding as it is simple, as deep as it is obvious.

The Rebbe asks two questions:

1. Why is this section, Hilchos Melachim, the last section of the entire Sefer Mishneh Torah?
2. Why are the halachos about Moshiach not only in the last section of the Mishneh Torah, but also within the very last *perakim* of this section?

The second question is easy to answer. Since Moshiach will only come at the end of time, it makes sense to place the halachos about him at the end of the book. But the first question is more difficult to answer.

Why are the laws about Jewish kings, a primary aspect of Jewish life, placed at the end of the entire *sefer*? Moreover, in the opening halacha of Hilchos Melachim, the Rambam writes that the obligation to appoint a king became binding when the Yidden entered Eretz Yisroel. If this was among the first mitzvos that Yidden encountered upon entering the land, why is it placed all the way at the end of the *sefer*?

The Rebbe's answer:

The last page of a book is not the least important page. It is the culminating page. Every word in the book, every chapter of the book, must flourish and come to fruition in its final page. Accordingly, the end of a *sefer* that encapsulates the corpus of Torah is the culmination of the entire Torah.

Having presented every mitzvah in the Torah, the Rambam concludes with the conditions that are necessary to fulfill these mitzvos.

Some of these mitzvos can be fulfilled in all places and at all times. But some can only be performed by those who live in Eretz Yisroel. Others only take effect when all, or at least most, Yidden live in Eretz Yisroel. Many require the presence of the Beis Hamikdash. And others still, can only be accomplished through a king.

After the Yidden entered Eretz Yisroel, some mitzvos were left unfulfilled for nearly four hundred years. This is because they didn't have a king through whom the mitzvos of waging Hashem's wars (destroying Amalek) and building the Beis Hamikdash could be fulfilled. It was only after Hashem appointed the first permanent Jewish king, Dovid Hamelech, that the necessary conditions were achieved to fulfill *all* of the mitzvos.

Inasmuch as having a king was a necessary ingredient for the fulfillment of all the mitzvos in the Rambam's *sefer*, these halachos appear as the final section of the Yad Hachazaka.

This explains why Hilchos Melachim is the last section of the *sefer*.

Why are the halachos about Moshiach in the final *perakim* of this section?

This the Rebbe answers by explaining what the true meaning of Moshiach is:

The primary impact of *galus* is our inability to fulfill all the Torah's mitzvos because we lack the Beis Hamikdash and because the Jewish people are not present in Eretz Yisroel. Moshiach's role is to correct this. He will restore the Kingship of *Beis Dovid* in order to restore the Torah and all its precepts.

As the restorer and successor of *Malchus Beis Dovid*, Moshiach will restore all that Dovid Hamelech achieved. He will rebuild the Beis Hamikdash and return all Yidden to Eretz Yisroel. But all this will be the means to his primary purpose. They will create the necessary conditions for his main function—the complete restoration of the Torah and its mitzvos.

The Rambam wrote his *sefer* in *galus* when, as we outlined, many of the mitzvos were not practicable. He placed the halachos about Moshiach at the very end of this section because Moshiach's primary role will be to restore what the first Jewish king established—the complete observance of the halachos and mitzvos of the Torah.

On the basis of this comprehensive treatment, the Rebbe concludes that, of the four descriptors that the Rambam provided of Moshiach's role, the fourth one is primary. Moshiach will come not only because we need him to redeem us. Moshiach will come because he will renew and restore *Malchus Beis Dovid*, and bring the ultimate state of fulfilling Torah and mitzvos.

That is why Jews have anticipated his arrival for so many years. That is why Jews have always been desperate for Moshiach. That is why Hashem can't wait to send Him.

The Proof

In this context, the Rebbe lends new understanding to the Rambam's intention when he cites the following proofs about Moshiach's arrival:

שְׁהָרִי הַתּוֹרָה הָעִידָה עָלָיו שְׁנֵאמַר (דְּבָרִים ל') "וְשָׁב ה' אֶל-
הָיָד אֶת שְׁבוּתְךָ וְרָחֵמְךָ וְשָׁב וְקִבְּצָךְ" וְגו', "אִם יְהִיָּה נִדְחָךְ בְּקֶצֶה
הַשָּׂמַיִם" וְגו', "וְהִבֵּיָאֲךָ ה'".
...אֵף בְּפֶרֶשֶׁת בְּלָעָם נֶאֱמַר וְשָׁם נִבָּא בְּשֵׁנֵי הַמְּשִׁיחִים. בְּמִשִּׁיחַ
הָרִאשׁוֹן שֶׁהוּא דָּוִד שְׁהוֹשִׁיעַ אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל מִיַּד צָרֵיהֶם. וּבְמִשִּׁיחַ
הָאַחֲרוֹן שֶׁעוֹמֵד מִבְּנֵי שְׁמוּשִׁיעַ אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל [בְּאַחֲרֹנָה].

For the Torah testified to his coming, as it states:
"Hashem will bring back your captivity and have
mercy upon you. He will again gather you... If your
dispersed remnant will be at the ends of the heav-
ens... And Hashem will bring you..."

...Reference is also made in the portion of Bilam,
who prophesied about the two *meshichim* [anointed
kings]: the first Moshiach, Dovid, who saved the
Jewish people from their oppressors; and the final
Moshiach who will arise from his descendants and
save the Jewish people in the end of days.

A casual reader would assume that the Rambam is focused on the first and third descriptors of Moshiach's role—restoring *Malchus Beis Dovid* and *Kibbutz Galuyos*. Yet, the Rebbe remains focused exclusively on the fourth goal—restoring the mitzvos that are denied to us in *galus*. The Rebbe continues to see all the other goals as means to this end.

There are two sets of passages referenced here, in which "the Torah testified to his coming."

1. The Jewish people will return to Eretz Yisroel.
2. Moshiach is compared to Dovid Hamelech.

The first set testifies that we will one day return to Eretz Yisroel, which will allow us to restore the mitzvos that were nullified because of *galus*.

The second set testifies that Moshiach will be a king like his illustrious ancestor. This shows us that the role of Moshiach is to pick up where Dovid Hamelech left off. All the particular elements that characterized the kingship of *Moshiach harishon* will also be present in the *Moshiach ha'acharon*. Going in the footsteps of Dovid Hamelech (and obviously much more), Moshiach will release us from *shibud malchuyos* (the subjugation of the non-Jewish nations), and even more so, he will rule over them. This will make it possible for the Yidden to "occupy themselves in the Torah and mitzvos in a desirable manner," without any disturbances.

The Torah Demands It

Once we understand Moshiach's primary role, we can understand why the Rambam inserts the following lines:

וְכָל מִי שֶׁאֵינוֹ מֵאֲמִין בּוֹ, אוֹ מִי שֶׁאֵינוֹ מַחֲכֶה לְבִיאָתוֹ, לֹא
בְּשָׂאָר נְבִיאִים בְּלִבָּד הוּא כּוֹפֵר, אֶלָּא בְּתוֹרָה וּבְמִשְׁנֵה רַבְּנֵינוּ.

Anyone who does not believe in him or does not await his coming denies not only the statements of the other prophets, but also those of the Torah and Moshe Rabbeinu.

At first glance these words are superfluous and out of context. If the Rambam merely wants to define the role of Moshiach, why does he veer into discussing the severity of denying Moshiach? It would be sufficient if he told us that we are required to believe in him without mentioning that denying Moshiach equates with denying the Torah.

The Rebbe teaches that these words play directly into the Rambam's primary point. The Rambam wants us to know that Moshiach's coming is not merely a further concept that was revealed by the *nevi'im*, but rather is an integral element of the Torah and of what Moshe Rabbeinu taught us. The Torah itself is foretelling and promising that Moshiach will come and that he will bring about the complete observance of the Torah.

Thus, concludes the Rambam, if you deny the coming of Moshiach, you're not just denying a prophecy. You're fundamentally denying the Torah itself. You are saying that more than half of the Torah will no longer be applicable. Such denial is theologically impossible. If you deny the coming of Moshiach, you are basically denying the entire Torah.

Bilam's Contribution

The Rambam continues with further proof from the Torah of the coming of Moshiach by citing several *pessukim* from Bilam's *brachos* to the Yidden:

אֶף בְּכָרְשֵׁת בִּלְעָם נֶאֱמַר וְשֵׁם נִבָּא בְּשֵׁנֵי הַמְּשִׁיחִים. בְּמִשְׁיַח
הָרִאשׁוֹן שֶׁהוּא דָּוִד שֶׁהוֹשִׁיעַ אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל מִיַּד צָרֵיהֶם. וּבְמִשְׁיַח
הָאַחֲרוֹן שֶׁעוֹמֵד מִבְּנֵי שְׁמוּשִׁיעַ אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל [בְּאַחֲרוֹנָה].
וְשֵׁם הוּא אוֹמֵר (בַּמִּדְבָּר כֹּד):
"אֶרְאֶנּוּ וְלֹא עֲתָה" זֶה דָּוִד. "אֲשׁוּרְנוּ וְלֹא קָרוֹב" זֶה מֶלֶךְ
הַמְּשִׁיחַ.
"דֶּרֶךְ כּוֹכַב מִיַּעֲקֹב" זֶה דָּוִד. "וְקָם שִׁבְט מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל" זֶה הַמֶּלֶךְ
הַמְּשִׁיחַ.
"וּמַחֲץ פְּאֵתִי מוֹאָב" זֶה דָּוִד. וְכֵן הוּא אוֹמֵר "וַיֵּךְ אֶת מוֹאָב
וַיַּמְדֵּם בַּחֶבֶל". "וַיִּקְרַךְ כָּל בְּנֵי שֵׁת" זֶה הַמֶּלֶךְ הַמְּשִׁיחַ שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר
בּוֹ "וּמָשְׁלוּ מִיָּמַי עַד יָמָם".
"וְהָיָה אֱדוֹם יִרְשָׁה" זֶה דָּוִד. שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר "וַתְּהִי אֱדוֹם לְדָוִד
לְעַבְדִּים" וְגו'. "וְהָיָה יִרְשָׁה שְׁעִיר אוֹיְבָיו" זֶה הַמֶּלֶךְ הַמְּשִׁיחַ
שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר "וַיַּעֲלוּ מוֹשְׁעִים בְּהָר צִיּוֹן" וְגו'.

Reference is also made in the portion of Bilam, who prophesied about the two *meshichim* [anointed kings]: the first Moshiach, Dovid, who saved the Jewish people from their oppressors; and the final Moshiach who will arise from his descendants and save the Jewish people in the end of days.

That passage relates:

"I see it, but not now" - This refers to Dovid; "I perceive it, but not in the near future" - This refers to *Melech HaMoshiach*;

"A star shall go forth from Yaakov" - This refers to Dovid; "and a staff shall arise from Yisroel" - This refers to the *Melech HaMoshiach*;

"crushing all of Moav's princes" - This refers to Dovid, as the verse relates: "He smote Moav and

measured them with a line;” “breaking down all of Shais’ descendants” - This refers to the *Melech HaMoshiach*, about whom it is written: “He will rule from sea to sea.”

“Edom will be demolished” - This refers to Dovid, as it states: “Edom became the servants of Dovid...;” “his enemy, Seir, will be destroyed” - this refers to the *Melech HaMoshiach*, as it is written: “Saviors will ascend *Har Tziyon* [to judge the mountain of Esav]...”

The Rebbe explains that these four proofs from the words of Bilam in the Torah refer to the four stages of identifying Moshiach, based on his actions and accomplishments. The Rambam explains what Moshiach will have to *do*, as follows:

וְאִם יַעֲמִיד מֶלֶךְ מִבֵּית דָּוִד הַזֶּה בְּתוֹרָה וְעוֹסֵק בְּמִצְוֹת כְּדָוִד אָבִיו. כְּפִי תוֹרָה שֶׁבִּכְתָּב וְשֶׁבְּעַל פֶּה. וְיִכְפֹּל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל לִפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ וְיִלְחָצוּ בְּדָקָה. וְיִלְחֹם מִלְחָמוֹת ה' הָרִי זֶה בְּחֻזְקָת שְׂהוּא מְשִׁיחַ. אִם עָשָׂה וְהִצִּילֵם (וְנִצַּח כָּל הָאֻמוֹת שֶׁסְּבִיבָיו) וּבָנָה מִקְדָּשׁ בְּמִקְוָמוֹ וְקִבֵּץ גִּדְּחֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הָרִי זֶה מְשִׁיחַ בְּוֹדָאִי. וְיִתְּנוּ אֶת הָעוֹלָם כֻּלּוֹ לַעֲבֹד אֶת ה' בְּיַחֲד שְׂנֵאָמֵר “כִּי אֲזִ אֶהְפֹּךְ אֶל עַמִּים שִׁפָּה בְּרוּרָה לְקָרָא כָּלֶם בְּשֵׁם ה' וְלַעֲבֹדוֹ שְׂכָם אֶחָד.”

And if a king will arise from the House of Dovid who diligently studies the Torah and observes its mitzvos as prescribed by *Torah Shebiksav* and *Torah Sheb'al Peh* like his ancestor Dovid; and compels all of the Jewish people to walk in [the way of the Torah] and rectify the breaches [in its observance]; and fights the wars of Hashem - [we may,] with assurance, consider him [a potential] Moshiach.

If he succeeds [in the above], (vanquishing all the nations surrounding him,) builds the Beis Hamikdash on its site, and gathers in the dispersed of Yisroel, he is *definitely* Moshiach.

LIVING RAMBAM

The Rebbe’s intention with the *takana* of Rambam is not that we should merely learn the text, but live with it:

“The Rambam tells us that when we learn *Torah Shebiksav* and then study his compilation, we will know the entire Torah!” the Rebbe explains. “Just like we need to live with each day’s section of the weekly *parsha*, we also need to live with the day’s *shiur* in Rambam.”⁵

In this spirit, the Rebbe encouraged people to learn lessons in *avodas Hashem* from the daily *shiurim*. “The fact that we always try to find a *hora’a* from the day’s *shiur* in Rambam is not just to show a ‘*kuntz*’ that we can find one,” the Rebbe says. “Rather, according to the Torah there is a real lesson that needs to be learned from the day’s *shiur*, which tells us that we need to search for it. That’s why, when *rabbanim* or featured speakers are looking for something to say at a *drasha* or a *farbrengen*, in addition to speaking about timely topics, they should search for a lesson in the daily *shiurim*...”⁶

He will [then] improve the entire world, [motivating all the nations] to serve Hashem together, as it states: “For then I will transform the peoples, [granting them] pure speech so that they all will call upon the name of Hashem and serve Him with one intent.”

In this reading, we see that Moshiach must satisfy four criteria:

1. To be a diligent student of Torah and a meticulous observer of mitzvos.
2. To persuade Yidden to return to the path of Torah and mitzvos.
3. To defeat the nations that would seek to prevent this.
4. To rectify the entire world and motivate all nations to serve Hashem.

The Rebbe explains that each of these identifying steps can be derived from the four *pesukim* cited in Bilam’s prophecy above.⁴

SECTION II:

The Two Tekufos

אל יעלה על הלב שבימות המשיח יבטל דבר ממונהגו של עולם. או יהי' שם חדוש במעשה בראשית. אלא עולם כמונהגו נהג. וזה שנאמר בישעיה' (ישעיה' יא, ו) "וְגַר זֶאֵב עִם כֶּבֶשׂ וְנִמְרָם עִם גְּדִי יִרְבֹּץ" משל וְחִידָה. . וְכֵן כָּל כִּיּוּצָא בְּאֵלֵי הַדְּבָרִים בְּעֵינֵי הַמְּשִׁיחַ הֵם מְשָׁלִים.

Do not presume that in the Era of Moshiach any facet of the world's nature will be nullified or that there will be any innovation in the work of creation. Rather, the world will continue according to its pattern. Although Yeshaya states: "The wolf will dwell with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the young goat," these words are a metaphor and a parable... Similarly, all other [prophecies] of this type concerning Moshiach are metaphors.

Literally No Miracles?!

How can the Rambam make this statement if he, himself, in the 13 *Ikarei Emuna*, enshrined the belief in *Techiyas Hameisim* as one of the fundamental principles of Jewish faith?

Moreover, the Rambam wrote a lengthy epistle on *Techiyas Hameisim*, proving that the dead will literally come back to life.

How, then, could the Rambam assert that miracles won't occur in the era of Moshiach? There is no greater change to the natural pattern than the dead returning to life!

To answer these questions, the Rebbe introduces a bold idea. Most commentaries approached this Rambam from a

binary perspective; either the Rambam accepted that there will be miracles, or he didn't. The Rebbe insists that both of the Rambam's statements are equally true. Moshiach is not required to *perform* any miracles, yet all the miracles foretold by the *nevi'im* and the Gemara about the era of Moshiach *will come to pass*. How can this be?

The Rebbe explains that the Rambam anticipated two stages in the era of Moshiach. In the first stage, there will be no change to the world's natural pattern.

In the second stage, all the miracles foretold by our *nevi'im* and the Gemara will occur.

With this simple but brilliant suggestion, the Rebbe resolves a question that had bothered Torah scholars for generations.

Is it a Must?

Is this a novel suggestion or is there something about Moshiach that *compels* us to say that there will be a second stage?

To be clear, the two-stage doctrine is a masterful way of resolving the contradiction between the Rambam's ruling on

RAMBAM FOR JOY

Rabbi Zushe Feldman relates:

At one point in my life, I was going through a difficult period and was feeling down. I wrote to the Rebbe, and he answered:

"למוד רמב"ם וחת"ת, פקודי ה' ישרים משמחי לב, וכל התוצאות המסובבים מזה כמובן. אזעה צ' שיהי' בהצלחה רבה ויבשר טוב."

"Study Rambam and Chitas — [as the *possuk* says,] 'the laws of Hashem [which] are straightforward, bring[ing] joy to the heart' — and all the obvious results that will follow. I will mention you at the *Tziyun* for much success, and you will report good news."

miracles and his ruling on *Techiyas Hameisim*. But how did the Rebbe surmise that this will, in fact, be the case?

Moreover, if the dramatic and sweeping changes that Moshiach will introduce upon his arrival will only be sufficient to initiate the first stage, what kind of pivotal event will precipitate the second stage?

The Rebbe begins his answer by explaining a section of Gemara. The Gemara says:

כְּתִיב "וַאֲרוּ עִם עֲנָנֵי שְׁמַיָּא כְּבֵר אָנֹשׁ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ, וְכָתִיב "עֲנִי רוֹכֵב
עַל חֲמוֹר." זָכוּ, עִם עֲנָנֵי שְׁמַיָּא. לֹא זָכוּ, עֲנִי רוֹכֵב עַל חֲמוֹר.

The *possuk* states, [Moshiach] "will arrive with the heavenly clouds..." Yet another *possuk* states that [Moshiach will be] "a poor person riding on a donkey." [How do we reconcile this apparent contradiction?]

If [the Jews] are meritorious, [he will come] with heavenly clouds. If they are not meritorious, [he will be] a poor person riding on a donkey.

There are two possible formulas for Moshiach's arrival. If we are in an ordinary, non-meritorious state, Moshiach will not perform miracles. If we are in a state of extraordinary merit, the world will be miraculously transformed.

The Rebbe explains that there are two dynamics at play: (A) Moshiach's role, which is to restore the Torah (as we learned above), and (B) the miracles, which are not part of Moshiach's default job description. They are added benefits in reward for extraordinary merit. The Rambam's no-miracle ruling is based on Moshiach's default role.

As a *sefer* of halacha, the Rambam describes the basic legal role that Moshiach is required to play. Miracles are not part of it, unless unique circumstances—our merits—warrant it. Therefore, the Rambam rules that the base criteria for Moshiach, without extraordinary conditions, do not include a requirement to perform miracles.

The Gemara presents two possibilities. Either Moshiach performs miracles, or he doesn't. It depends on our state of merit. The Rebbe's two-stage doctrine adds a beautiful idea: It is not a binary, either-or, proposition. It is a timeline; one phase leads into the next—even if Moshiach arrives when we are in an ordinary state of merit and doesn't perform miracles, we will transition to a miraculous state. Moreover, the Rebbe did not propose this as a matter of faith, but as a logical necessity. What makes this transition necessary and inevitable?

The Rebbe explains:

The offer of miracles as a reward for merit doesn't go away once Moshiach arrives. It is always there. Thus, even

BRINGING THE GEULAH

The Rebbe pointed out two reasons why learning Rambam hastens the *Geulah*:

1) Since *galus* was caused by the opposite of *ahavas Yisroel*, it follows that *ahavas Yisroel* removes the reason for *galus*, and with it, *galus* itself. Therefore, the Jewish unity fostered by everyone studying Rambam helps bring the *geulah*.

2) *Chazal* tell us: "The exiles will only be redeemed by virtue of Mishnayos..." Mishnayos are *halachos* gathered and taught without necessarily including their reasons. Similarly, the Rambam is "Concise... without questions and answers." So, just like the study of Mishnayos, the study of the *halachos* in the Rambam hastens the *geulah*.⁷

if—when Moshiach arrives—we lack extraordinary merit, we will quickly *accumulate* merit, and the miracles will follow.

We can now understand the Rambam's statement that Moshiach will not be expected, by default, to perform miracles. The words of the *nevi'im* and the Gemara do not contradict this. Miracles will certainly occur in the era of Moshiach: either immediately upon his arrival (if we are meritorious) or a little later (when we accumulate merit).

However, in his epistle on *Techiyas Hameisim*, the Rambam writes that his ruling in *Sefer HaYad* asserting that there will be no miracles is not necessarily "the final word." For although halachically speaking Moshiach's arrival does not need to be in a miraculous fashion, it's still very possible that the miraculous stage of Moshiach will occur right away. If the Yidden refine themselves during the time of *galus*, bringing about a meritorious state, then they will deserve the higher revelation of Moshiach immediately.

May it be speedily in our days, Amen! **T**

1. *Sefer Hasichos* 5751 vol. 2, p. 474.

2. *Ibid.* p. 501.

3. Section I is adapted from Siman 1 in the *Dvar Malchus*, originally published in *Likkutei Sichos* vol. 18, Balak (2). Section II is adapted from Siman 3 in the *Dvar Malchus*, originally published in *Likkutei Sichos* vol. 27, Bechukosai (1).

4. See the *sicha* for a full explanation.

5. *Hisvaaduyos* 5746 vol. 1, p. 207.

6. *Hisvaaduyos* 5749 vol. 1, p. 309.

7. *Sefer Hasichos* 5748 vol. 2, p. 534.

לע"נ הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' אברהם
יעקב ב"ר חיים מרדכי ע"ה
נלב"ע כ"ה תשרי ה'תשנ"ו
ולע"נ זוגתו האשה החשובה מרת פריידא ראצא
בת הרב יחיאל אפרים פישל ע"ה
נלב"ע ט"ז אדר-שני ה'תשע"ו
תנ"צ'ב'ה

נדפס ע"י בנם
הרה"ת ר' משה מאיר שמואל וזוגתו
מרת רבקה לאה ומשפחתם שיחיו
גלוצאווסקי

נשי
ובנות
חב"ד

ADAR

N'SHEI
U'BNOS
CHABAD

COMPILED BY:
RABBI LEVI GREENBERG (OH)

WRITTEN BY:
MOTTI WILHELM

The highlight of the month of Adar is, without a doubt, the joyous Yom Tov of Purim. The connection to Jewish women is clear—the entire story revolves around the courage and faith of Queen Esther. The Megillah itself bears her name: Megilas Esther.

In a Purim sicha delivered in 5717,¹ the Rebbe drew a timeless lesson from Esther's conduct, offering inspiration and guidance for every Jewish woman.

MAKE AN INDEPENDENT CHOICE!

When discussing the obligation for women to hear the Megillah, the Gemara uses the expression: "They *too* were part of the miracle," the same phrase appearing in connection with the story of Chanukah.

However, there is an important distinction when it comes to Purim, as the story of Purim places a Jewish woman—Esther HaMalka—at the very center of the miracle.

Chassidus takes this idea even further, emphasizing that Esther didn't simply follow instructions—some of her decisions were made without consulting Mordechai HaTzaddik.

Today, we find ourselves in a state of *helem v'hes-ter*—a time when *Elokus* is hidden, which would seem to indicate that we're not entirely clear about what should be done, and therefore need to ask someone else for guidance. That is true, and so should be done—most of the time. However, we are also reminded of the story of Esther, whose very name is linked to the *possuk* "V'anochi hasteir astir," referring to Hashem's hidden presence. Her story stands as a guiding light for Jewish women, teaching that there are moments when they must take

initiative—and when their husbands must follow their lead.

Namely, since a husband and father spends much of his time outside the home, he may view certain needs or desires for the home as essential and, in order to fulfill them, be willing to give up on some important matters and lower his standards. Moreover, he might assume that the members of his family will not compromise on these “essential” matters.

The wife and mother, however, who is more attuned to the inner workings of the home, often has a clearer sense of what is truly important.

PRIORITIES

This principle doesn’t apply equally to everyone; each household must apply it in a way that suits their unique circumstances. However, there are certain general guidelines that are universally relevant.

First and foremost, *chinuch* of the children must be the highest priority. When income is brought into the home, the first allocation should be for the education of one’s children in a true Yiddishe manner. All other needs, important as they may be, should follow in priority.

A wife must also encourage her husband to focus on what truly matters in life. Often, men face a choice: spend more time in business to bring in more income for the family, or dedicate some of that time to studying Torah. By demonstrating that she values Torah study, even at the cost of potential income, she can inspire her husband to dedicate more time—or even more than he already does—to Torah learning.

The husband may believe that certain expenses are essential for the proper functioning of the home. However, the wife, who manages the household, may recognize that some of these are extras or not truly necessary. She can, and should, explain to her husband that his Torah study takes precedence over acquiring these items, and she may even insist that he not forgo any matters of Torah and Mitzvos in order to meet those expenses.

In these areas, the woman should not simply follow her husband’s lead. She should take the initiative, making these matters a top priority and ensuring they are upheld in her home.

HELPING OTHERS HELPS YOURSELF

Another area where a woman can learn from Esther HaMalka and should take initiative is helping others.

As Achashverosh’s queen, Esther was safe in the palace, even if Haman’s plot to exterminate the Jewish people had succeeded. Not only was she protected, she even had the freedom to observe mitzvos as she wished. Chazal teach that she had her own calendar system to ensure she could keep Shabbos.

WHO CAN COMPARE?

In a letter written to the Ladies Auxiliary of Tomchei Tmimim in Brownsville and East New York, the Rebbe draws a similar lesson from Esther HaMalka, but first provides an important clarification:

It is true that none of us can really compare ourselves to Esther HaMalka. However, she serves as an example of what a Jewish woman is capable of accomplishing. Every woman, by following the ways of the Torah with a full heart, can achieve great things in her own unique way and within her own environment.²

Yet, when she learned that other Jews were in danger, Esther risked her life to intervene and try to help them.

At first glance, her decision may seem illogical. She knew, as did everyone in the kingdom, that appearing before Achashverosh uninvited would not only result in her request being denied, but could end her life.

Yet, despite the great risk, she proceeded to do everything within her power to help, ultimately bringing about the miracle and triumph.

In today’s day and age, it is not necessary to risk one’s life. What is essential for every woman is to dedicate at least a few minutes each day to supporting her friends and acquaintances.

This support should encompass both spiritual matters and practical assistance. As the saying goes, “Another Yid’s *gashmiyus* is my *ruchniyus*”—meaning that by helping another Jew with a physical need, you are fulfilling the mitzvah of *ahavas Yisroel*, which is the highest level of *ruchniyus*.

Assisting another woman will not only benefit the recipient but will also bring great blessings to the one offering help, ensuring success in her own home. After all, every Jew is beloved by Hashem, just as a parent cherishes their only child. In return for helping His beloved child, Hashem will reward the woman abundantly. **1**

1. Toras Menachem vol. 19, p. 193-7.

2. Igros Kodesh vol. 23, pp. 349–50.

City *of Our* Forefathers

The CHABAD
COMMUNITY *of*
CHEVRON

By: Rabbi Mendy Greenberg
(Twinsburg, OH)

*Special thanks to
Rabbi Mordechai Hellinger
for his assistance in preparation
of this article.*





לזכות הגה"ח
הרב אברהם ליב וזוגתו
שיחיו שוחאט
שלוחי כ"ק אדמו"ר
למדינת ונצואלה,

לרגל מלאות ארבעים
שנה לשליחותם
(תשמ"ה-תשפ"ה)

ers

The Pre-History

When Reb Mendel Horodoker arrived in Eretz Yisroel with over 300 Chassidim, they quickly found a suitable place to live. The city of Tzfas lay desolate after suffering a terrible earthquake several years earlier. They settled in the empty homes, davened in the Beis Yosef Shul, *toiveled* in the Arizal's mikvah, and davened at the many holy *kevarim* in the area. It seemed like a spiritual paradise.

But things quickly turned sour. The local Pasha demanded heavy taxes, and the Sephardi community leaders demanded money for the city's upkeep. The Chassidim couldn't keep up. Huge sums had been spent to feed and clothe the many impoverished families who had joined the Aliyah, and there was nothing left. Soon, the Pasha threatened to arrest the community members, and Reb Mendel fell ill in distress.

A minor salvation occurred when tzedakah money sent by the Alter Rebbe finally arrived, but everyone realized that Tzfas had no future. Soon, Reb Mendel and most of the Chassidim relocated to Tveria.

At first, the Sephardi community leaders seemed to be more welcoming, but things soon soured there as well.

When the Chassidim wanted to open their own shul, the local community leader refused to give his approval, claiming that it was forbidden by the Ottomans; he gave

the Chassidim a *cheder-sheni* of the local shul instead.

Soon, however, the loud and enthusiastic davening of the Chassidim disturbed the locals, and the community leader 'remembered' that opening a new shul was permitted. Relieved, the Chassidim began davening in Reb Mendel's home and in his courtyard, but the problem wasn't resolved. In the description of one Chossid, "Reb Mendel's *beis midrash* was right under the open windows of the Rosh Hakahal's home; the thundering sounds of davening would arise as the Rosh Hakahal sat over his pot of meat, long after his davening had concluded. He could hardly stand it; it made his life unbearable."¹

Problems continued to arise after the passing of Reb Mendel Horodoker. He was succeeded by Reb Avraham Kalisker, who became a vocal opponent of the Alter Rebbe. Soon, the Chassidim were splintered into two groups—supporters of Reb Avraham Kalisker, and Chassidim of the Alter Rebbe. Tensions were high. Reb Avraham Kalisker set up his own tzedakah system for his Chassidim, and the Alter Rebbe's *chaluka* was the main source of funding for his Chassidim.

Feeling unwanted and persecuted, Chabad Chassidim began to migrate back to Tzfas. But living conditions there hadn't improved, and a new solution was needed. In the early years of the Mitteler Rebbe's *nesius*, he sent them a message: the Chabad Chassidim should move to Chevron.²

Why Chevron?

The Rebbe once related that when the Mitteler Rebbe established the Chabad *yishuv* in Chevron, he chose several Chassidim to travel from Russia to Eretz Yisroel to be its founders. The Chassidim protested, "What will be with Chassidus?" (i.e., their visits to hear Chassidus from the Rebbe). In response, the Mitteler Rebbe promised to personally send them *ksavim*. The Rebbe noted that, in fact, numerous *kisvei yad* were discovered in the possession of grandchildren of the Chevron Chassidim.³

Who were those Chassidim who traveled from Russia directly to Chevron? The above story is told about Reb Yisrael Yaffe, "the printer from Kopust" who had been very active in publishing Sifrei Chassidus for the Mitteler Rebbe.

Another instance of a Chossid moving to Eretz



THE HOME OF REB MENDEL HORODOKER AND HIS SHUL ON THE UPPER FLOOR OF HIS HOME.

Yisroel was preserved in the Shmerling family history. According to this account, Reb Shimon Shmerling was a wealthy Chossid of the Mittler Rebbe living in Shklov. One day, when he arrived for Tishrei to the Mittler Rebbe, he received a surprise Shlichus—the Mittler Rebbe asked him to travel to Eretz Yisroel and find a suitable living space for *anash* there. He spent over a year on the road, and after a long and difficult journey, returned to Lubavitch with his findings. Soon the Chabad community in Chevron was born.⁴

The small Sephardi community was exceptionally welcoming. Unlike Tzfas and Tveria, where conflict was far too common, the Sephardim and Ashkenazim in Chevron worked together with remarkable harmony. Over the next century, the community would remain united.

As Chassidim began moving into the Jewish quarter, resources were needed to help establish the new community, and two *shadarim* were dispatched to Russia to raise funds—Reb Shimon Shmerling and Reb Leib “Baal Yisurim” (the sainted Chossid of the Alter Rebbe who was famously asked to become a rebbe himself).

Reb Shimon came up with a unique strategy. He began to sell “*daled amos* of Chevron” to all major donors; instead of simply giving *tzedakah*, they now had the opportunity to symbolically own a piece of land in Eretz Yisroel, and in the holy city of Chevron, no less. His campaign reached a pinnacle of success when the Mittler Rebbe wrote a letter supporting the effort, and personally purchased a piece of land, the “Avraham Avinu shul,” for the Chassidim.

The letter did not survive, but the *rav* of Chevron, Reb Shimon Menashe Chaikin, shared what he had seen in his youth: “I testify to what I saw with my own eyes—a handwritten letter by the Mittler Rebbe... In the letter, he wrote as follows: ‘I found a statement attributed to the Radbaz, that anyone

THE STORY OF THE AVRAHAM AVINU SHUL

The Mittler Rebbe’s property in Chevron was a portion of the Avraham Avinu shul; the central hall hosted a Sephardi minyan, and the Mittler Rebbe purchased the small adjacent shul for the Chassidim. The following story is told about how the Shul got its name:

Hundreds of years ago, the Jewish community of Chevron numbered only nine Jewish residents. There was no *minyan* during the week, and they depended on Jews from nearby villages for Shabbos and Yom Tov.

One Erev Yom Kippur, the nine Jews waited for visitors from the surrounding villages to arrive, but no one came. They later learned that everyone had gone to Yerushalayim instead. They prepared to begin Yom Kippur, saddened by the prospect of davening without a *minyan*.

Suddenly, an elderly man appeared. They invited him to join them for the *seudah hamafsekes*, but he explained he had already eaten. Overjoyed, they began the Yom Kippur *tefillos*.

After the fast, the group drew lots to decide who would host the guest for the break-fast meal, and the *chazzan*, who was also the *shamash*, was selected. However, as he escorted the man to his home, the guest suddenly disappeared. The entire community joined forces to find him, to no avail. He was gone.

That night, the elderly man appeared to the *chazan* in a dream. “I am Avraham Avinu,” he said. “I saw your distress over not having a *minyan*, so I came to join you.”⁶



THE ORIGINAL AVRAHAM AVINU SHUL, 5685.

who owns land in Chevron will be spared from *chibut hakever* (painful refinement of the body after death).”

The Mittler Rebbe also sent a letter to all the Chassidim in Russia, extolling the spiritual virtues of the Chevron. He explained that all the *tefillos* we daven in the diaspora rise to Hashem through Chevron, the resting place of our three forefathers, Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov, who represent the three *tefillos* of Shacharis, Mincha, and Maariv. Therefore, the Mittler Rebbe concluded, anyone who holds Chevron dear should do everything in their power to support the Jewish community of that holy city.⁵

The Black Rabbi

In those days, Chevron was a backwater. To reach the city from Russia, one would travel first to Kushta (Istanbul), take a ship to the port city of Yaffo, from there ride by camel to Gaza, and then across the desert to Chevron. Often the journey was done riding in boxes hanging off both sides of a camel. It was quite literally a life-threatening journey.

Politically, the situation was even worse. Unlike Tzfas or Tveria, which were close to the port city of Acco and were semi-civilized, Chevron had no formal government in place and was controlled by local Bedouin tribes. For protection, the Jewish community would pay “protection

money” to the most powerful sheikh in the area, Sheikh Abdul Rachman.

The man tyrannized the entire city. He would walk down the streets and help himself to anything that struck his fancy, and with the Jews as his “subjects,” they were obviously no exception.

One day, the sheikh visited the home of Reb Levi Yitzchak Slonim, who was responsible for distributing funds for Colel Chabad. Seeing the money and ledgers, he told Reb Levi Yitzchak, “You know that I could take all of this by force. But I am a fair man, and I would not deprive the poor of their livelihood. However, in exchange for my protection, I feel entitled to be listed among your respected rabbis.”

With little choice, Reb Levi Yitzchak included him in the list of prominent recipients and referred to him in the Colel Chabad records as “the Black Rabbi.” He would receive bi-annual contributions before each Yom Tov, and in turn, promised the Jews protection.

The situation was obviously far from perfect. The sheikh himself was always involved in wars with neighboring tribes, and on one occasion, when the battle didn’t go his way, the city was overrun, and a terrible pogrom was perpetrated against the Jewish community. The sheikh himself abused the Jewish community at every opportunity, seeing how helpless they were. The difficult situation continued for many years, until the Ottomans finally deposed him.⁷

Despite the difficulties, the Chassidim were steadfast in their commitment to remain in Chevron. The reason? The Rebbe’s *ratzon*.

This sentiment was beautifully expressed in a letter written by Reb Shimon Menashe Chaikin, the *rav* of the Chassidim in Chevron, towards the end of his life:

“I am ninety years old, thank G-d... Here in Chevron we have four hundred souls in our community... and I can testify what I saw with my own eyes from the time of the Mittler Rebbe, when *anash* were living together with the *poilisher* Chassidim in Tzfas. In those days, the Rebbe commanded us to establish our community in Chevron, and we fulfilled his directive.

“Despite the persecutions we suffered at the hands of the Chevron strongmen, his directive preserved our spirit to fulfill the will of the Tzaddik who placed immense effort to establish a community in Chevron.



REB MORDECHAI DOVBER SLONIM, SON OF REBBETZIN MENUCHA ROCHEL, ARRIVED IN CHEVRON WITH HIS PARENTS AT THE AGE OF FIVE. IN THIS PHOTO, TAKEN IN CHEVRON SHORTLY BEFORE HIS PASSING, REB MORDECHAI DOVBER IS SEEN SURROUNDED BY HIS DESCENDANTS. IT WAS SAID THAT HIS APPEARANCE WAS VERY SIMILAR TO THAT OF HIS GRANDFATHER, THE MITTELER REBBE.

HIS GRANDSON REB YAAKOV YOSEF SLONIM, THE LAST RAV OF CHEVRON, IS ON THE FAR RIGHT.

I saw many *kisvei yad kodesh* with requests and *brachos* both physical and spiritual for those who remain committed to Chevron. In one letter, he wrote that it was Chevron specifically that he wanted as a dwelling place for *anash*. The Tzemach Tzedek after him, as well, when he sent the *tzedakah* money each year, would specifically extoll the importance of Chevron.”

A New Infusion of Life

After twenty years in Chevron, the Chassidim received a new delegation: the Tzemach Tzedek sent a large group of families to Eretz Yisroel, led by Rebbetzin Menucha Rochel, the Mittlerer Rebbe’s daughter, and her husband, Reb Yaakov Kuli Slonim.

Rebbetzin Menucha Rochel had always longed to reach Eretz Yisroel. As a young woman, she had fallen ill, and the doctors had lost all hope, but the Mittlerer Rebbe sent a messenger to tell her that she would soon recover and would have the merit to travel to Eretz Yisroel. Miraculously, she opened her eyes and made a full recovery.

Before leaving, she visited the Tzemach Tzedek and shared her fear of the journey—that she might fall sick from the rain on the long and arduous trip. “Nu,” the Tzemach Tzedek replied, “So you’ll go between the drops.”

She got onto the wagon to Shklov for the first leg of the trip, and the wagon driver soon returned with an astounding story—the way to Shklov had been dry and beautiful, but the return trip had turned into a nightmare. No rain had fallen as long as Rebbetzin Menucha Rochel was in his wagon.

Many of the Jews in Chevron would later testify to an amazing feat—Rebbetzin Menucha Rochel would walk through the rain and come home totally dry, while everyone else would be wet. The miracle continued until her final day.

Rebbetzin Menucha Rochel became a central figure in Chevron. For the next 55 years, until she was almost ninety years old, people flocked to her for *brachos* and advice; every *kallah* visited “the Bubbe Rochel” for her blessing before the

THE BONFIRE

The Arizal began a tradition of lighting bonfires each Lag B’omer in Miron, and over the ensuing centuries, the custom spread to Yerushalayim, Chevron, Tzfas, and other locations in Eretz Yisroel. The merit of dedicating the *hadlaka* was available for purchase, and the Frierdiker Rebbe related that one year, either 5653 or 5654, the Rebbe Rashab bought the rights to the first *hadlaka* in Chevron.

Another purchase is recorded in a letter from several years earlier, in 5648, in a letter from the Rebbe Rashab to Reb Shneur Zalman Slonim of Chevron, the Rebbe Rashab asks him to specifically buy the *hadlaka* of Chevron, but not that of Miron: “I would like to acquire the *hadlaka* in Chevron, but do not buy the *hadlaka* on the *kever* of Rashbi for me.”

chuppah, and great *rabbanim* would stop in her house during their visits to Chevron to hear her stories about her father and grandfather. Non-Jews in the area told stories of her greatness. One story, in particular, had an impact on the entire Jewish community:

Chevron’s water was controlled by an Arab named Abu Zurayik, who was viciously antisemitic. When distributing water, he would make the Jews wait until everyone else had taken their fill, and only then ‘graciously’ share some drops with them. The Jews were helpless.

One day, his only daughter Fatmah fell terribly ill, and the doctors could offer no cure. Seeing Abu Zurayik’s desperation, someone suggested that he ask Rebbetzin Menucha Rochel’s blessing. Rebbetzin Menucha Rochel conditioned her



blessing on one thing—that he stop mistreating the Jews. Abu Zurayik put his hand on his heart and took a solemn oath that he would do so—and his daughter soon recovered. From that day onward, the Jews had a steady supply of fresh water.⁸

The Chevron Palace

As the community of Chevron grew, Jews began to build homes in new areas outside the walls of the tiny Jewish ghetto. One of the first to do so was Chaim Yisrael Romano, a wealthy Jew from Kushta (Istanbul) who had come to spend his final years in Eretz Yisroel. He built a large building and courtyard, which became known as Beit Romano, and was—at the time—one of the most beautiful buildings in the city.

Containing homes, shuls, and stores, it became a central part of the Chevron community. One of its inhabitants was none other than the Sdei Chemed, who served as the Sephardi Rav. Community members would note that the Sdei Chemed actually passed away while learning Torah in the shul of Beit Romano.

Several years later, Mr. Romano passed away, and his children put the building up for sale. The Jews were concerned; the Arabs might want to make it a mosque, and the secular Jews might want to open a school there, in the heart of the Jewish community. Until then, Chevron had been spared the winds of secularization that had begun blowing through Eretz Yisroel. But who could afford such a large purchase?

In desperation, they turned to Lubavitch. A local businessman convinced the owners to hold off on selling

the complex until an offer was made to the Rebbe Rashab. After long negotiations, the Rebbe Rashab agreed to the purchase. Now, the Rebbe Rashab had a personal possession in the city of Chevron, just like the Mittlerer Rebbe in his time.

The Rebbe Rashab sent specific instructions for the building, asking that it be used mainly for davening and Torah learning; its real use would become clear later, with the establishment of Yeshivas Toras Emes.

Just Like in Lubavitch

In Cheshvan, 5572, a beautiful event took place in Lubavitch. A few wagons stood in front of the *chatzer* of the Rebbe Rashab carrying seven *bochurim* and one family. Around them crowded hundreds of *bochurim* and townsfolk, headed by the *hanhala* of the yeshiva, elder Chassidim, the *menahel*—the Frierdiker Rebbe—and the Rebbe Rashab himself. They were bidding farewell to the seven *bochurim* being sent to Chevron to establish Yeshivas Toras Emes.

For decades, the Chevron community had been falling into decline. People were leaving to seek livelihoods elsewhere, and others were leaving to learn Torah in Yeshivos in Yerushalayim. Chevron was struggling both physically and spiritually.

In many letters, the Rebbe Rashab encouraged the Chassidim to strengthen the community's *ruchniyus* with a renewed commitment to learning Chassidus. A Yeshiva called Magen Avos was established with the hope of improving the situation for *bochurim* and *yungeleit*, but despite everyone's best efforts, the trajectory did



BEIT ROMANO.



not change.

The Rebbe Rashab made a dramatic decision. He would dispatch seven of the best *bochurim* in Tomchei Temimim, along with a *mashpia*, to establish Yeshivas Toras Emes—a yeshiva that would resemble Tomchei Temimim to the fullest degree.

The arrival of the Shluchim made waves in Eretz Yisroel. Most Torah learning in Eretz Yisroel still took place the old-fashioned way—young people came to shul, learned on their own, and had occasional help from a teacher. Toras Emes was the first European-style Yeshiva, with a dormitory, fully provided needs, and a comprehensive educational outlook. It was also far more Chassidus-oriented than the Jews of Eretz Yisroel had ever seen; the *bochurim* learned Chassidus for hours each day and spent many more hours davening. It was a totally new phenomenon, and was incredibly successful.

The Yeshiva attracted *bochurim* and *yungeleit* from all over Eretz Yisroel. Reb Mordechai Dovber Slonim described the effect in a letter to a close friend:

“The *mashpia* and the *bochurim* have made an incredibly positive impact on the entire community; they have lit up the entire city. I had lost all hope—and had I not seen this with my own eyes, I would never have believed it. How great is the Rebbe’s power to turn darkness into light. The impact of the *bochurim* and *yungeleit* is obvious to all. Even we, the elderly—our sparks have been rekindled. I can’t describe the spiritual pleasure of a perek Tanya every day, and Chassidus being learned constantly. Not only myself and the elders—even the *leitzanei hador* agree that the city has hope again...”

For three years, the Yeshiva and community thrived. Then, tragedy struck. World War I broke out, and the Ottomans were at war with the Russians. All Russian citizens were banished from the country, including the seven *bochurim* who were the beating heart of Toras Emes. After just a few short years, the Yeshiva was forced to close.¹¹

Twilight

The years following World War I marked a low point in the history of Chevron. Most of the Chabad Chassidim had moved away, a secular school opened for the local youth, and Beit Romano was taken by the British government to be used as a police station, jail and courthouse. When the Frierdiker Rebbe reopened Yeshivas Toras Emes, he chose to situate it in Yerushalayim.

But one major event during the interwar period left an indelible impression: the Frierdiker Rebbe’s visit in 5689.

That year, the Frierdiker Rebbe embarked on a historic voyage to Eretz Yisroel, the only one among all of the Rabbeim to do so. For ten days, he traversed the land, visiting the *mekomos hakedoshim* as well as many towns and cities along the way.¹²

One of those days was dedicated to Chevron. Despite the fact that most Lubavitcher Chassidim



THE ENTRANCE TO THE ME'ARAS HAMACHELAH AS IT APPEARED AT THE TIME OF THE FRIEDIKER REBBE'S VISIT.



THE SIGHT OF DESTRUCTION IN THE AVRAHAM AVINU SHUL IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE RIOT. THE ORIGINAL EDIFICE WAS SOON DESTROYED BY THE ARABS AND LATER RECONSTRUCTED BY THE RETURNING JEWS.

now lived elsewhere, Chevron remained prominent as the capital of Chabad in Eretz Yisroel; it was home to several properties personally owned by the Rabbeim, and, of course, it was home to Me'aras Hamachpeila, which was to be the centerpiece of the Frierdiker Rebbe's visit.

On Tuesday, 7 Av, the Frierdiker Rebbe arrived from Yerushalayim along with a large convoy of Chassidim. The whole community came out to greet him at the outskirts of the city, the crowd jostling to shake the Frierdiker Rebbe's hand as he sat in the home of the rav, Reb Yaakov Yosef Slonim. A short time later, the entire crowd joined the Frierdiker Rebbe on a walk toward Me'aras Hamachpeila.

In those days, Jews were not allowed entry into the building. Access was permitted only up to the notorious "seventh step." Many prominent Jews had tried to gain permission to enter, but to no avail; even Moses Montefiore, the famed philanthropist, had been refused entry. That day, Jewish dignitaries were trying to gain permission for the Frierdiker Rebbe, but, at the outset, it didn't seem possible.

The Frierdiker Rebbe arrived at the seventh step and davened Mincha with the hundreds of Jews gathered there. It took almost two hours. Those nearby could hear the Frierdiker Rebbe davening with the most heartfelt tunes of the Rosh Hashanah *nusach*. It was a very special moment.

After Mincha, news arrived that in a historic gesture from the Arab leadership, the Frierdiker Rebbe and a small entourage would be allowed into the building. When the Frierdiker Rebbe entered, they respectfully gave him and his delegation leather slippers to wear over their shoes instead of asking them to remove their shoes altogether.

From Me'aras Hamachpeila, the Frierdiker Rebbe visited the Avraham Avinu Shul and Beit Romano. Later, he delivered a *maamar* in the central shul and paid a short visit to the Chevron Yeshiva. Late that night, the Frierdiker Rebbe returned to Yerushalayim.

The uplifting emotions felt after the Frierdiker Rebbe's visit didn't last long. Just eleven days later, on 18 Av 5689, Arab rioters perpetrated a horrific pogrom on the Jewish community. Known as the 1929 riot, 67 Jews were brutally murdered, and many more were injured. The British government, which had utterly failed to protect

the Jewish community, decided to evacuate the remaining Jews to Yerushalayim.

In one fell swoop, the centuries-long Jewish presence in Chevron came to an end.

Rebirth

Some six months after the Six Day War, the Arab manager of the Park Hotel in central Chevron noticed a group of Jews approaching his property. His heart dropped. "This is it," he thought, "the Jews are coming to take revenge for the 1929 riot."

To his relief, the Jews just wanted to rent his hotel for Pesach. Led by Rabbi Moshe Levinger, a group of families had decided to reestablish the ancient Jewish community of Chevron. After spending Pesach at the hotel, they ended up in a building owned by the military, where they lived with their families for over two years, refusing to leave.

Knowing of the Rebbe's support for Eretz Yisroel and the longstanding connection of Chabad to Chevron, Rabbi Levinger wrote to the Rebbe asking for his support in the reestablishment of the Chevron Jewish community. If the Rebbe would only give the command, he assumed, thousands would take up the call.

The Rebbe didn't agree. While very supportive of his desire to resettle Chevron, the Rebbe would not issue an official directive to move there. The reason: *ein somchin al hanes* (one should not rely on a miracle). The government was already involved in talks to return those territories to the Arabs; it was, therefore, irresponsible to encourage families to make the move.¹³



RABBI MOSHE LEVINGER (FAR LEFT) WITH GENERAL MOSHE DAYAN AND SOME OF THE SETTLERS AFTER BEING RELOCATED TO KIRYAT ARBA.

When General Ariel Sharon asked the Rebbe to make an endorsement, the Rebbe's response was similar. The Rebbe wrote that he agreed with the need to settle all of the territories, but the government couldn't be trusted to support those settlements in the long term. At that very moment, the Rebbe wrote to him, there were Lubavitchers ("some revealed ones and some secret ones") among the families living in Chevron—and the conditions were abominable.¹⁴ There were several occasions where the Rebbe looked into the possibility of re-establishing a Chabad community or Yeshiva in Chevron, but each time, the plan was shelved because of the lack of government support.

Still, the Rebbe was very supportive of those who chose to move there on their own accord, and when, a few short years later, the government decided to evacuate the nascent Jewish community to the nearby, newly-established settlement called Kiryat Arba, the Rebbe spoke out sharply against the move. The new Kiryat Arba was not Chevron, the Rebbe pointed out, but *outside* Chevron.

"It's shameful," the Rebbe said, "that Eretz Yisroel passed a law implying that Jews will not be allowed to live in Chevron and near Me'aras Hamachpeila—and the law was joyously handed to the mayor of Chevron, whose own family members murdered Jews in 5689! *Harotzachta v'gam yorashita* (Have you murdered and also inherited your victims)?!"¹⁵ The Rebbe was very pained by the withdrawal. It would take another ten years for the community to be born again.

Beit Hadassah

Reb Boruch Nachshon was among the first group of settlers on that Pesach after the Six Day War. A Lubavitcher Chossid, he and his wife had fallen in love with Chevron and dreamed of rebuilding the Jewish community there.

In 5739, he and his colleagues in Kiryat Arba decided to take the plunge. They would secretly enter Chevron, reoccupy one of the Jewish buildings in the city, and refuse to leave, come what may. After careful deliberation, they settled on Beit



BEIT HADASSAH.

Hadassah, the former hospital that had served the Chevron community. The building stood vacant and seemed to be the most fit for the operation.

To make it politically difficult for the government to remove them, they decided that the plan would be executed only by their wives and children. After Pesach that year, a group of ten women and 40 children climbed into the vacant structure through a small window, and began to settle down. The next morning, soldiers patrolling the area were shocked to find the building's new Jewish occupants.

Prime Minister Menachem Begin was very upset, but he was disturbed by the thought of forcibly removing women and children from the building. Instead, he put the building under siege. No one was allowed inside, and anyone who left was not allowed to return.

They remained there for a long time. They refused to leave, and the government refused to let others in. Husbands and fathers would come to visit every Shabbos through the windows—but nothing more was possible. As the months dragged on, with no light at the end of the tunnel, some of the women questioned whether it was correct

to remain. Mrs. Nachshon wrote to the Rebbe asking what to do.

At first, no answer was forthcoming. But suddenly, a tape recorder arrived in Chevron. At the farbrengen on Vov Tishrei 5740, while delivering a *sicha* on the topic of Shleimus Haaretz, the Rebbe said that he had received a letter from the women, asking what they should do. “What could I answer her?” the Rebbe said. “Who is blocking access to the building? Jews themselves—the same soldiers who have been tasked with protecting Jewish lives!”

The Rebbe’s support continued throughout their stay. On the Shabbos before Lag B’omer 5740, a terrible terrorist attack took place outside Beit Hadassah; six Jews were killed, and many more injured. That year, the Rebbe had asked for Lag B’omer parades to take place in cities throughout Eretz Yisroel, and a parade had been planned for Chevron as well. But now, Chevron on Lag B’omer was going to be the site of six funerals. Reb Boruch Nachshon wasn’t sure if the Lag B’omer parade should proceed as planned.

He phoned the Rebbe’s *Mazkirus*, and soon received the Rebbe’s response —the parade should go on as planned.

The Rebbe’s *hora’ah* was perplexing to many of the Jews as well. Most people were in no mood to celebrate. But the effect only became evident later. Privately, local Arabs admitted to the Jews that the sight of Jews celebrating right after a terrible terrorist attack made them realize that expelling the Jews from Chevron wouldn’t be an easy endeavor. They began to come to terms with their presence.

The government began to come to terms with it as well. With each attack, it would allow a few more homes and buildings to be added to the Jewish community, and the Chevron Jewish community experienced a slow and steady rebirth.

Reclaiming the Lands

In one of his earliest attempts to reclaim Jewish land in Chevron, Rabbi Moshe Levinger located the home of Rebbetzin Menucha Rochel. He wanted to reclaim the property for the Jewish community, so he reached out to Colel Chabad. They turned to the Rebbe for permission, and the Rebbe instructed that a *rav* from *anash*



REB BARUCH NACHSHON WITH HIS FAMILY SOON AFTER THEIR SETTLING IN CHEVRON.

determine what should be done.

Reb Yaakov Landa, the *rav* of Bnei Brak was consulted, and—being acquainted with Rabbi Levinger—he determined that Rabbi Levinger could be given power of attorney.

Rabbi Levinger quickly got to work. Instead of trying to force out the current occupants through the courts, he simply offered them a large sum of money to vacate the premises. At first, they seemed to be open to the suggestion, but then they suddenly changed their minds. It turned out that Jewish activists from *Shalom Achshav* had offered them even more money to remain! In the end, however, Rabbi Levinger prevailed and succeeded in receiving the home.

Following this success, Rabbi Levinger decided to go for a bigger prize: Beit Romano, the large building that had been the personal property of the Rebbe Rashab. Perhaps, he thought, he could establish a Yeshiva in the building once more. Again, he would need the Rebbe’s approval; this time, he decided to travel to New York.

He arrived in Nissan 5741. When he entered the office of *Mazkirus*, they made it very clear that the Rebbe wasn’t receiving anyone for *yechidus*, but soon he received a call from the office; the Rebbe had heard of his arrival, and wanted to see him after Mincha that very day.

For long hours, the Rebbe questioned him in great



A PLAQUE IN FRONT OF THE HOME OF REBBETZIN MENUCHA ROCHEL SCHNEERSOHN IN CHEVRON.

detail about the situation in Chevron and in Yehudah and Shomron in general. He told the Rebbe about the state of the settlements, the government's policy, the situation among the local Arabs, and so on. At the close of the *yechidus*, the Rebbe agreed to give him power of attorney to redeem the estate and to establish a Yeshiva there as well.

Chevron Today

After much long and hard work, the efforts bore fruit, and Beit Romano was returned to Jewish

hands. Many other areas of Chevron were restored as well. Today, Beit Romano is home to hundreds of *Yeshiva bochurim*, the Avraham Avinu shul is used regularly, and Beit Schneerson—home of Rebbetzin Menucha Rochel — houses Jewish families and institutions. Led by Rabbi Daniel Cohen, seven Shluchim families are active in the area, and a Kollel Chassidus gathers every day.

Once again, Jewish life thrives in the city of our forefathers. **1**

1. Toldos Chabad B'Eretz Hakodesh chapter 2. Much of this article is based on *Chevron Ir Hakodesh* chapter 4.
3. Toras Menachem vol. 49 pg. 111.
4. Oholei Lubavitch vol. 3 pg. 156.
5. Igros Kodesh Admur Ha'emtzai pg. 168.
6. A visitor to Chevron described an amusing debate that existed regarding the story: "A lively debate surrounded these two shuls: in which one did Avraham Avinu appear to complete the minyan? The Sephardim were certain that he would naturally appear in the big shul that bore his name. The Ashkenazim, however, claimed otherwise. Their reasoning? The big shul always had a minyan, but in their smaller shul, the tenth man was often missing, and therefore Avraham Avinu had come to complete their *minyan*. The question remained with a *teiku*." (Chassidus Chabad B'Chevron p. 165)
7. From the account of Reb Menachem Shmuel Slonim.

8. See *Chevron Ir Hakodesh* Chapter 2.
9. Lag Ba'omer 5699. Sefer Hasichos 5699 pg. 330.
10. 22 Adar 5648. Igros Kodesh Admur Harashab vol. 3 pg. 14.
11. Sefer Pilpulim Toras mes vol. 2 p. 509.
12. See "A Royal Visit," Derher Av 5774.
13. Igros Kodesh vol. 26 pg. 51.
14. Igros Kodesh vol. 25 pg. 170.
15. Shabbos Parshas Ekev 5730.

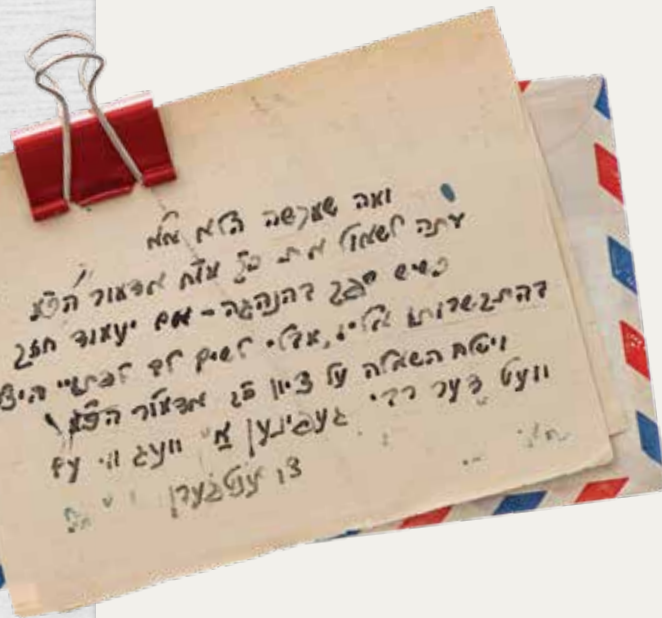




Story

לזכות
הת' השליח שניאור זלמן שיח'י
לרגל יום הולדתו
י"א אדר שני
לשנת הצלחה בכל מכל
כל, לנח"ר כ"ק אדמו"ר

נדפס ע"י הוריו
הרה"ת ר' דוד וזוגתו מרת פערל
גאלדא ומשפחתם שיח'י
טייכטל



דער רבי וועט געפינען א וועג...

WRITTEN BY: RABBI LEVI GREENBERG (TX)

The Miracle Happened!



As told by

Rabbi Chanoch Gechtman

(Gadera, Eretz Yisroel)

In the winter of 5782, my wife was pregnant with our daughter Sara. During one of the routine doctor appointments, after running some tests, the doctor notified us that our unborn daughter had a major heart defect. The news hit us like a lightning bolt on a bright summer day. Our initial reaction was shock, confusion, and sadness. However, we quickly realized this was the will of Hashem, clearly part of our life's mission,

and we strengthened our *bitachon* that all would be well. We hoped the diagnosis would turn out to be a mistake, and that even if it wasn't, that there would be a medical solution.

Sara was born on 21 Iyar at the Beilinson Hospital, one of the best in the country for such complicated medical issues. A large team of specialists was on hand to deal with every situation that could come up during



DR. TAL GEVA TREATS PATIENTS AT BOSTON CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL.

such a birth. Despite our best hopes, it was immediately clear that our daughter was very ill. The medical team worked diligently to give her the best care possible, but she had a major heart problem which impacted her blood circulation. The only medical solution available in Eretz Yisroel is a complicated surgery that would make her handicapped for life and dependent on many medicines every day.

Sara's prospects devastated us and we felt at a loss of how to proceed. We wrote a letter to the Rebbe describing Sara's medical situation and asked for a bracha. The Rebbe often encouraged consulting with a "*rofeh yedid*" (a doctor who is a friend), and we started searching for a specialist who would completely invest himself in our case and guide us through this difficult and painful journey like a true friend. With the help of a friend, we finally found a cardiologist who took a personal interest in Sara's condition. He devoted many hours to checking on her and answering all our questions; he even fought on her behalf when necessary.

I never gave up hope that a miracle would happen and Sara's heart would function normally. Every time we saw a doctor I always asked about this possibility

and every time I was told, with some pity, that it was not possible. I continued to ask, but after months of appointments and treatments, the prognosis remained the same. We finally consulted with the famous medical *askan* Rabbi Elimelech Firer.

Rabbi Firer confirmed we had exhausted all of our options in Eretz Yisroel so he recommended we contact Dr. Tal Geva, the cardiologist-in-chief at Boston Children's Hospital, who had developed a new treatment that could completely heal our daughter. We sent Sara's medical file to Boston and two days later Dr. Geva responded that based on the information in her file, Sara was a candidate for his treatment, and we were welcome to come to Boston and begin the process.

We were overjoyed with the news which provided us much hope for Sara's cure, but dismayed to discover the treatment would cost \$700,000, an amount far beyond our wildest dreams.

Initially, the Israeli Health Ministry refused to cover the costs of the treatment in Boston, claiming she could receive treatment in Israel. It was a difficult and protracted battle, but with the help of our "*rofeh yedid*," many friendly *askanim* who pulled many strings, and

most importantly the Rebbe's *brachos*, many miracles happened and the Health Ministry agreed to pay for the treatment.

Dr. Geva's treatment consists of two surgeries, a year apart. Sara's first surgery in Boston was a major success and we returned to Eretz Yisroel shortly thereafter. A year later, as we prepared to return to Boston for the second surgery, we requested the Health Ministry to book our flights to Boston with a stopover in New York so that we could take Sara to the Ohel before the second surgery. After some hesitation at the Health Ministry, we prevailed, and Sara was very happy to fly to New York to visit the Rebbe, instead of flying to Boston for treatments that scared her.

When we arrived at the Ohel on Sunday, 2 Cheshvan 5785, my wife and I sat down at a table to write our respective *panim*. I wrote a lengthy letter asking the Rebbe for a *bracha* that the surgery should be successful and that Sara should live a happy and healthy life. While writing, I glanced at my wife's *pan* and saw she was asking the Rebbe for a *bracha* that Sara's heart should be completely healed naturally and there should be no need for the second surgery at all.

Slightly startled by my wife's bravery to ask for such a *bracha*, I remembered a story. A chossid once asked the Rebbe in *yechidus* for a *bracha* that his upcoming heart surgery should be successful. After giving him a *bracha* the Rebbe said, "You should have asked there should be no need for surgery in the first place." The chossid immediately corrected himself but the Rebbe said it was too late.

Right away I told my wife I wanted to sign my name on her letter instead of bringing my own to the Ohel. We were jointly asking the Rebbe for a *bracha* that there should be no need for surgery at all.

On Monday, 3 Cheshvan we arrived in Boston and Dr. Geva's team started preparing Sara for surgery which was scheduled for Monday, 10 Cheshvan.

On Wednesday, 5 Cheshvan at 4:00 pm we received a phone call from the hospital to come for an urgent consultation with Dr. Geva. We were terror-stricken. Was some unforeseen problem just discovered that made Sara unfit for surgery? Would she need to undergo the other standard surgery and be handicapped all her life? With racing thoughts and pounding hearts, we rushed to the hospital.

"After all the tests it seems clear to me that your daughter's heart problem has almost completely solved and there is a strong chance her heart will heal naturally," Dr. Geva said. "It is incredible, but we had better not interfere with her progress by doing the surgery."

It had happened! Baruch Hashem, the miracle had occurred! Despite the concrete medical science that had confirmed Sara was very ill and needed such an expensive, complicated, and difficult surgery, her heart was healing on its own.

Our connection to the Rebbe through writing to the Ohel guided and strengthened us from when we first learned of Sara's condition until we discovered her heart would be fine. The Rebbe inspired and elevated us from the fear, confusion, and sadness to have strong bitachon in Hashem throughout the difficult journey, until the tremendous miracle of Sara's good health. **T**

YOUR STORY

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

לע"נ
הרה"ת ר' יהושע זעליג ע"ה
בן הרה"ת ר' משה זלמן הכהן ע"ה כצמאן
גלב"ע ח"י אדר ה'תשנ"ח
ולע"נ הרה"ת ר' קהת ע"ה בן ר' יחזקיהו שמואל ע"ה ווייס
גלב"ע כ"ב אדר ב' ה'תש"ס
תנ"צ'ב'ה'

נדפס ע"י
הרה"ת ר' יהודה בנימין וזוגתו מרת חנה ומשפחתם שיחיו

COMPILED BY: RABBI LEVI GREENBERG (OH)

WRITTEN BY: RABBI TZEMACH FELLER

THE INFORMATION IN THIS ARTICLE WAS CULLED FROM
THE SAGIV-BEN AMOTZ TESHURA, 28 SIVAN 5784, AND THE
WEINTRAUB-LIFSHITZ TESHURA, 15 KISLEV 5785.

P I N P O I N T S

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

BNEI BRAK



THE FOUNDING OF THE CITY

In the 5680s, eight Polish Chassidishe families emigrated to Eretz Yisroel. Led by Reb Yitzchok Gerstenkorn, they founded the city of Bnei Brak. Gerstenkorn was the city's first mayor, a title he held until 5714, when, due to his ailing health, he made the choice to step down from his position.

Three months earlier, Gerstenkorn had written to the Rebbe, whose response encouraged him to stay at his post, leading a city that had already become a bulwark of the *frum* community in Eretz Yisroel.

"It is unnecessary to explain at length how necessary it is for every member of the camp of the *chareidim* to not only remain at his post in public work, but should increase in his determination... if the other side is recruiting all of its forces, all the more so must this be the case in the camp of the *chareidim*."¹

Gerstenkorn did step down; a few days after he did so, the Rebbe wrote to him, urging him to remain active in communal life.

"I hope that you will increase in your determination in working in communal affairs ... and you will be successful

in adding light to the hearts of those around you, so that they will be able to overcome the darkness of the *galus* of our generation—the footsteps of Moshiach—and to bring closer the time when the night will be illuminated like the day, with the complete redemption through Moshiach."²

THE RAV

In Elul, 5694, Rabbi Yaakov Landa, a Lubavitcher *chossid*, arrived on the shores of Eretz Yisroel. Rabbi Gerstenkorn invited him as "scholar-in-residence" for a Shabbos in the nascent city of Bnei Brak. As Shabbos began, the community did what they did every week: they gathered on Rabbi Akiva street, preventing traffic from entering the town as Shabbos began, and sang and danced in the street. There, on the street, Rabbi Landa delivered his first sermon in Bnei Brak.

It wouldn't be his last.

Rabbi Landa served as the *rav* of the city for more than 50 years. As he left Bnei Brak after that Shabbos, Rabbi Gerstenkorn told him, "You've acquired many good friends here." A year later, he was formally appointed as the *rav* and *av beis din* of the city.

In 5713, Rabbi Gerstenkorn visited the United States to

REB YITZCHOK
GERSTENKORN.



promote his *seforim*, and while there, he went into *yechidus*. He wrote a letter to Rabbi Landa describing the visit. “I sat with the Rebbe, *Shlita*, on Sunday, 15 Tammuz, for an hour and a half in *yechidus*—from 10:30 until after midnight... During our conversation, I saw that the Rebbe is interested in opening a Chabad *yeshiva* in Bnei Brak, and he asked me about a location, a building, how much it would cost, etc.”³

Rabbi Gerstenkorn’s grandson, Reb Yisroel Aryeh Gerstenkorn, who was the *rav* of Kiryat Malachi, related that his grandfather would often speak of that visit. “When he returned to Eretz Yisroel, a number of people, including Chabad Chassidim, came to meet him. He told them with great feeling, ‘You should feel fortunate! You have no idea what kind of a Rebbe you have!’”⁴

HAFATZAS HAMAAYANOS IN BNEI BRAK

Rabbi Yehuda Leib Zalmanov was one of the heads of Tzeirei Agudas Chabad in Tel Aviv and a founding member of the Lubavitch community in Bnei Brak. In 5717, the Rebbe replied to a *duch* Rabbi Zalmanov had sent about a *shiur* *Chassidus* he had for the *bnei hayeshiva* in the city.

“It’s surprising that the number of participants in the *farbrengen* and the *shiur* from the *bnei hayeshivos* is not increasing as it should. It would be best if those involved would quietly seek counsel on how to fix this.”⁵



REB YEHUDAH LEIB ZALMANOV.

After a *farbrengen* was held in Bnei Brak in honor of Yud Shevat, 5719, the Rebbe wrote a letter addressed to the participants.

“... [I was notified of your] participation in the *yom hilula* of a *tzaddik*, *Nessi Yisroel*, and the *Nossi Hador*, who ascends very high on this day, as is explained in many places in *Toras HaChassidus*.”⁶

To the administration of Tzeirei Agudas Chabad in Bnei Brak, the Rebbe wrote in 5721:

“I was pleased to read about the *shiur* in *Chassidus* that is being taught in your pure encampment. I very much hope that you recognize the situation as it is, and the potential that continues to grow for *hafatzas hamaayanos* in [your city]. This should encourage you to do more and more, in recognition of what the times demand.

Although, seemingly this would not be the [correct] way, that my first correspondence to you (this year) should include demands, nevertheless, because of how important this is, I cannot hold back...”⁷

A CITY THAT CONTAINS EVERYTHING

Rabbi Moshe Irenstein, Mayor of Bnei Brak, visited the Rebbe in 5750. He was the first to speak to the Rebbe at Dolars on 14 Cheshvan. After Rabbi Groner introduced him to the Rebbe as the Mayor of Bnei Brak, the Rebbe said, “It’s a



RABBI YAAKOV
AND HIS SON AND
SUCCESSOR RABBI
MOSHE LANDA, WHO
SERVED AS THE
RABBONIM OF BNEI
BRAK FOR 70 YEARS.

city that contains everything!”

Rabbi Irenstein mentioned that some are trying to create issues in connection with the *Moatza Hadatit* (Religious Council). The Rebbe said, “Presumably, they will fail. You can stop trying to find a way to resist them. But in any case, may Hashem help you separately—you don’t need them.”

Rabbi Irenstein mentioned that some were trying to convince storekeepers to switch from the *hechsher* of Harav Landa to the Badatz - Eida Hachareidis *hechsher*, which could weaken Rabbi Landa’s *hechsher*. The Rebbe replied,

“There are still members of the *Badatz* who are in line with the Lubavitch view. You most probably know them. One member moved away, but he still receives phone calls from them on a regular basis. In any case, may Hashem help that you should completely avoid the issue of ‘and so we were in our own eyes.’”

SITTING IN BNEI BRAK ALL NIGHT

During Dollars on 5 Elul, 5750, Rabbi Asher Yaakov Kopelowitz, *rav* of the Neveh Hashloshah neighborhood in Bnei Brak, asked the Rebbe for a *bracha* on behalf of Rabbi Landa.

The situation had become quite difficult, with various factions in the city attempting to undermine him. Rabbi Landa’s only “sin,” said Rabbi Kopelowitz, was that he was a Lubavitcher, and this they were trying to uproot.

The Rebbe smiled and said, “*Chas v’shalom* to uproot this. He will remain a Lubavitcher *chossid* until 120, and then he will have a long life. May there be good news.”

Rabbi Kopelowitz said, “Meanwhile, he is suffering very much.”

The Rebbe gave another dollar and said, “Give this to *tzedakah* for him.” Then the Rebbe gave a third dollar and said, “Give this to *tzedakah* for all the *gutteh Yidden* in Eretz Yisroel,” and the Rebbe gave a fourth dollar and said, “and in Bnei Brak specifically.”

Rabbi Kopelowitz asked for a *bracha* for his son, and the Rebbe asked, “Is he learning in Bnei Brak as well?” Rabbi Kopelowitz said he was learning in Yeshivas Chiddushei HaRim in Tel Aviv, and the Rebbe asked, “Tel Aviv. But he comes home at night to Bnei Brak?” Rabbi Kopelowitz said yes. The Rebbe gave a fifth dollar and said, “May Hashem help that he should be one of those who were ‘sitting in Bnei



RABBI MOSHE IRENSTEIN, MAYOR OF BNEI BRAK, WITH THE REBBE, 5750.



Brak all that night' and wait there for the days of Moshiach.⁹ May you have good news."

Rabbi Kopelowitz asked for a *bracha* for himself, as there were *misnagdim* in his area creating problems as well. The Rebbe inquired, "Also in Bnei Brak?" "Yes," Rabbi Kopelowitz replied. "I am the *rav* in northern Bnei Brak ... and there, too, the *misnagdim* are creating problems, asking how it can be that a Gerrer Chossid is there."

The Rebbe replied, "It should be in an auspicious hour, and 'the Chassidim have the upper hand' is guaranteed to us by the Alter Rebbe and the Baal Shem Tov. So there should be the 'sitting in Bnei Brak all that night,' and you should talk about Moshiach. You don't need to wait for Pesach for this. You can do it this month as well, especially since it's the month of Elul. The truth is 'I wait for him [Moshiach] to come every day.' The main thing is that it should bring about its fulfillment. It shouldn't be pushed off for tomorrow!" ❶



SHLEIMUS HAARETZ AND BNEI BRAK

The Rebbe often mentioned that if the Israeli government would give away territory, it would affect the safety of Yidden living in Bnei Brak—among other places—cities relatively far from the border.¹⁰

"Those that support giving away land say clearly, that notwithstanding that the security expert says that it will making the army's situation worse, and it will make it more difficult to protect Kfar Chabad, Bnei Brak, Meah She'arim, Hadera, and Ein Charod—there are Yidden who need to be protected everywhere, nevertheless [they say that it's worthwhile]."¹¹

"When they will stand strong, and say that they cannot give away even one inch (*af sha'al*) from Yehuda and Shomron, because that will put at risk Yidden who are found in Yerushalayim, Bnei Brak, Hadera, Haifa, Tel Aviv, Kfar Chabad etc., and all of Eretz Yisroel and those who live there...—[the United States and the Soviet Union] will be very satisfied."¹²

"They gave away additional territories [which will bring Egypt] closer to Yerushalayim, Bnei Brak, Kfar Chabad, and Tel Aviv by hundreds of kilometers."¹³

"By giving away Yamit [an Israeli settlement in the Sinai Peninsula], the Arabs come ten kilometers closer to Tel Aviv, Bnei Brak, and Kfar Chabad."¹⁴

1. Igros Kodesh vol. 8, p. 183. Weintraub-Lifshitz Teshura, 15 Kislev 5785.

2. Igros Kodesh vol. 9, p. 49.

3. Teshura ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Igros Kodesh vol. 14, p. 517.

6. Igros Kodesh vol. 18, p. 183.

7. Published in the Sagiv-Ben Amotz Teshura, 28 Sivan 5784.

8. Based on Bamidbar 13:33. The Meraglim saw themselves as grasshoppers in their own eyes; they had lost their own self esteem. Here, too, the Rebbe said, they must not lose their own self esteem.

9. A reference to the passage in the Haggadah about the Tana'im in Bnei Brak who were discussing the story of Pesach all night, concluding with the words "including the days of Moshiach."

10. These sichos were compiled in the Sagiv-Ben Amotz Teshura, 28 Sivan 5784.

11. Sichos Kodesh 5736 vol. 2, p. 628.

12. Sichos Kodesh 5738 vol 1, p. 231.

13. Sichos Kodesh 5739 vol. 2, p. 384.

14. B'tzel Hachochma p. 168.

Letters

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

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

The Rebbe's Visits to Kollel

I want to begin by thanking you for the tremendous work that you put into this *toichendig* monthly magazine. I wish you much continuous *hatzlacha*, *mechayil el choyil*.

Derher issue 144 of Sivan 5784 featured excerpts of Reb Zalmon Jaffe's diary from Shavuot 5733, published in his acclaimed "My Encounter with the Rebbe" series.

He starts by describing the details of what he heard had happened before he arrived in New York, that the Rebbe had unexpectedly made a surprise visit to the Kollel. I thought to share a number of details that were not mentioned in the article and are recorded in the various *yomanim* we have available, especially as this has a special lesson to Kollel *yungeleit* and, in general, to all Chassidim with regard to the *zechus* to fulfill the Rebbe's "*taiva*," as he described it, of having a real *koch* in *limud haTorah*.

The Rebbe's visit to the Kollel on this occasion took place in the afternoon of Tuesday, 27 Iyar 5733. The Rebbe had been picked up at his home by Reb Binyamin Klein to go to 770 but, on that occasion, drove down Union Street and went into the Kollel.

The Rebbe went through all the floors of the building (including the apartment that the Jaffes would use on their trips to the Rebbe in those years) and also read the various signs hanging on the wall.

One *yoman* mentions that when the Rebbe came in, there were *yungeleit* who got scared and ran to hide and that the Rebbe looked at the *seforim* that were on the tables.

Before the visit's end, the Rebbe gave a *bracha* that there should be *hatzlachah rabba* in *limud haTorah* and *Kabbalas haTorah b'simcha ub'pnimiyus*.

The next morning, Rabbi Hodakov visited the Kollel, and read a note that the Rebbe had written regarding his

visit to the Kollel the previous day, which included the following points:

In an interesting reference to the *niggun* of Shamil which the Rebbe had taught sixteen years earlier, on Simchas Torah 5719, the Rebbe had written that the *niggun* contains three parts: a) a spirit of joy; b) a state of brokenness; and c) *bitachon* and hope for a better future.

So too, with regard to his visit to the Kollel, the Rebbe wrote, that a) there were *yungeleit* there with *chomer* but with no *tzura*; b) the learning *sedorim* were '*mavhil*' (shocking), one *yungerman* was learning Gemara Nedarim while another was learning Shulchan Aruch Even Haezer; c) the cleanliness of the Kollel was '*mavhil*'.

It must be clear that Kollel is not an "employment agency."

In general, a member of the Kollel must be a) a mature individual, b) strong-minded (*takif b'daato*); c) one who strongly wants to be learning Torah.

Conditions: To make a meeting by Friday and to appoint from the Kollel members those who will be in charge of the *sefer halimud*, ensuring that the *yungeleit* are coming on time and that the building is clean.

If the times of learning are not being kept, fines should be imposed.

There were members of the Kollel who had written to me that they wanted to remain in the Kollel for a third year, who I did not see when I visited.

Following this, on that same day, a meeting was held of the Kollel members, and '*memunim*' were chosen to implement the above mentioned points.

Several months later, at the farbrengen of Shabbos Parshas Eikev, Chof Av, 5733 the Rebbe spoke at length about the Kollel, saying that it was established to create a "*koch*" in learning, but that, unfortunately, there are *yungeleit* that are wasting their time there.

The Rebbe said that one should not go to Kollel just

because that's the thing that people do at that stage in life or because someone else is going. If someone is not busy learning, like the *possuk* says, then they should be busy with "*v'asafta d'ganecha*", making *parnassa*.

Furthermore, it is not fair for the wife to work to support the household if the husband is not properly learning in Kollel.

This situation had been caused by the Roshei Yeshiva, *mashpi'im*, Rabbanim and older Chassidim who are not inspiring the *yungeleit* to *koch* in learning.

The Rebbe continued that he has a very personal connection to the Kollel and expressed himself with much pain that for a hundred and eighty years there was never a Kollel in Lubavitch and he had started one because "*chashka nafshi*"—my soul deeply desires—that *yungeleit* should *koch* in learning.

But seeing that *yungeleit* are not learning in Kollel, the Rebbe said that just as he opened the Kollel, he could close it down, and then everyone could do whatever they want, and he wouldn't have to come to them with complaints.

The Rebbe continued sharing how he endeavors to influence *yungeleit* to learn Torah diligently, *b'hasmada ushkida*, with no success, but it's these same *yungeleit* who are quick to write letters to the Rebbe "at the snap of a finger," and if the Rebbe doesn't answer them straight away, they're quick to learn "explanations" why it's been held up (for example, that they don't have enough *zechusim*, or because there's a *kepeida* on them), and if the request they asked of the Rebbe isn't fulfilled, they think it's the Rebbe's fault, being that they are sure that the Rebbe could daven for them and achieve for their request to be fulfilled...

The Rebbe continued, "Make up your mind (*mima nafshach*): If you believe in me so much, why aren't you fulfilling my '*taiva*' that you should *koch zich* in learning Torah?!"

The Rebbe continued that the *magbis*—tzedakah appeal—for Chof Av goes to Keren Levi Yitzchok which seeks to further *limmud haTorah* and therefore, he had the following idea of how to build up the Kollel:

From all the *yungeleit* who are connected to me throughout the world, the Rebbe said, five *yungeleit* who learn Nigleh with *charifus* (depth) and five who learn with *bekius* (vast amounts of material) should be chosen. Similarly five who learn Chassidus with *charifus* and five who learn Chassidus with *bekius* should be chosen, and they should learn in the Kollel with no worries about

making a livelihood because they would be paid three times as much as what the Kollel *yungeleit* were being paid at the time.

The Rebbe said that whoever wanted to be part of these *yungeleit* should submit his name right away, so that it could be organized as soon as possible, and mentioned that references would be needed to make sure that they met the criteria mentioned.

For some reason, this idea of the Rebbe to reestablish the Kollel in this fashion did not materialize.

It should be noted that this was not the Rebbe's first visit to the Kollel. The first one was around 5728; there were many similarities to the above visit in 5733.

As quoted in the Derher interview with Reb Nochum Kaplan (Issue 99 — Cheshvan 5781):

After Mincha, I spent a few minutes talking to friends in 770 and then made my way through the courtyard towards the Kollel. To my shock and surprise, I saw the Rebbe approaching me from the direction of the Kollel. I quickly moved aside, and the Rebbe gave me a sharp look as he passed by. As soon as the Rebbe was out of sight, I raced to the Kollel.

Immediately after Mincha, the Rebbe had walked over to the Kollel. Only a few *yungeleit* had been there during the Rebbe's visit. One fellow was wearing tallis and tefillin, and others were loitering around. The Rebbe had surprised them. He made a quick circle around the room, took in everything that was going on, and quickly made his exit.

We were certain that the Rebbe wasn't pleased with what he saw, and we expected immediate 'fireworks.' Less than five minutes later, Rabbi Klein came into the Kollel. "Rabbi Hodakov would like to speak to all the Kollel *yungeleit*."

"The Rebbe has several comments," Rabbi Hodakov told us in his office. "First of all, why weren't you all present and learning immediately after Mincha? Why were you late?" He then turned to me and added, "The Rebbe said to tell Kaplan that five minutes is also late..."

The Rebbe was also displeased to see that those who were present were all learning different subjects, and that there were not enough *seforim* for reference. From then on, we were obligated to present a monthly report to Rabbi Hodakov, and only then were we given our \$72 allowance.

Yisroel Melamed
POMONA, NY