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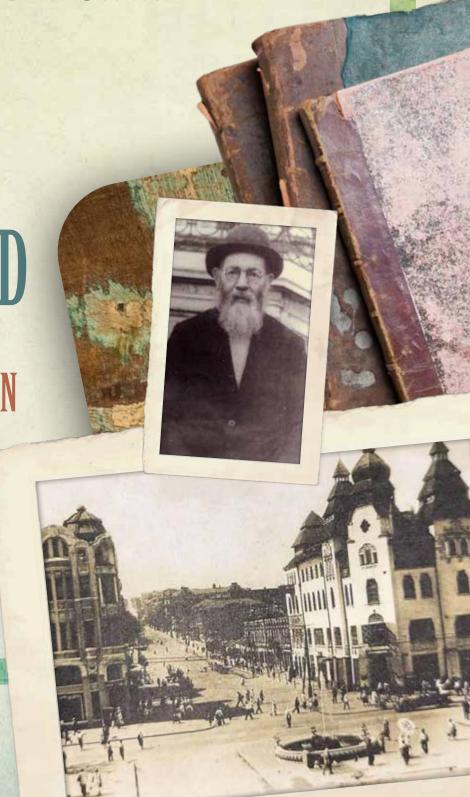
THE REBBE'S MELANED REB SHNEUR ZALMAN VILENKIN

Relocating the Capital

THE REBBE RASHAB'S MOVE TO ROSTOV



**MENACHEM AV 5785**ISSUE 157 (234)
AUGUST 2025



#### לזכות

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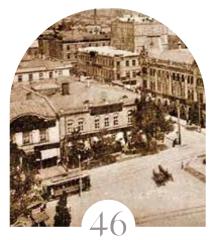




Menachem Av 5785 / Issue 157 (234)



The Rebbe's Melamed Reb Shneur Zalman Vilenkin



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#### A TIME FOR REAL LIFE

One of the special dates in the month of Av is the fifth day—the *yahrtzeit* of the Arizal.

The Rebbe once explained that although the second half of his title, Ari-Zal, (may his memory be a blessing), represents the opposite of life, he is nevertheless referred to as "HaArizal HaChai"—the living Arizal. This is, of course, due to the Alter Rebbe's explanation in Iggeres Hakodesh that on the day of a tzaddik's passing, all his life's work shines brightly, affecting change even in our lowly world.

The Arizal's life's work was all about spreading *pnimiyus haTorah*. "In recent generations," he would say, "it has become permissible, even obligatory, to reveal this [hidden] wisdom..." Chabad Chassidus took it a step further, allowing the hidden wisdom of *pnimiyus haTorah* to be understood and appreciated by the human mind. Torah in general is referred to as "the Torah of life," and *pnimiyus haTorah* all the more so. Torah is compared to water, and *pnimiyus haTorah* is like the

"living waters" of a wellspring ("mayim chaim"). The Arizal is therefore associated with "life" even after his histalkus.

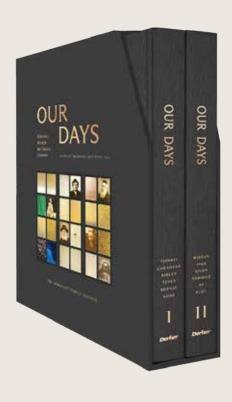
The takeaway for us must be to increase our efforts in spreading Chassidus, *pnimiyus haTorah*, during this month. Especially in the earlier part of the month, when we mourn the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash and yearn for the coming of Moshiach, the way to hasten his arrival is by spreading the wellsprings of Chassidus throughout the world!

With all of our efforts, we will succeed in transforming these days of mourning into days of joyous celebration, with the coming of Moshiach, when we will be reunited with the Arizal and all the Rabbeim, may it be *teikef umiyad mamash!*<sup>1</sup>

The Editors

י"ג תמוז. חג הגאולה ה'תשפ"ה

<sup>1. 5</sup> Menachem-Av 5748; Hisvaaduyos 5748 vol. 4, p. 103.



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"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 Chasadim..."

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

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# Order of Accomplishment

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

#### ה' אֶ-לֹהֵינוּ דָּבֶּר אֵלֵינוּ בְּחֹרֵב לֵאמֹר רַב־לָּכֶם שֶׁבֶת בָּהָר הַזֶּה: (דברים אִוּ)

״**ַרב־לָכֶם שֶׁבֶת:** בִּפְשׁוּטוֹ; וְיֵשׁ מִדְרֵשׁ אַגָּדָה, הִּרְבָּה לָכֶם גָּדְלָּה וְשָׁכָר עַל יְשִׁיבַתְּכֶם בָּהָר הַזֶּה – צֲשִׂיתֶם מִשְׁבָּן, מְנוֹרָה, וְכַלִּים, קבַּלְתֶּם תּוֹרָה, מִנִּיתֶם לָכֶם סַנְהָדְרִין, שָׁרֵי אֲלָפִים וְשָׁרֵי מֵאוֹת.״

#### Hashem our G-d spoke to us in Chorev, saying, You have dwelt long enough at this mountain.

"You have dwelt too much: [It is to be understood] according to its straightforward meaning. There is [also] an aggadic explanation: You have received much greatness (בְּרֵח) and reward for your stay (שָּבָת) at this mountain: [Here] you made the Mishkan, the Menorah, and [other] furnishings [of the Mishkan]; you received the Torah; you appointed the Sanhedrin, officers of thousands, and officers of hundreds." (Rashi)

Later, in Parshas Va'eschanan (4:32–33), the Torah describes at length the awesome heavenly experience which the Jewish people had at Har Sinai—an experience comparable to no other:

"כִּי שְׁאַל־נָא... הֲנָהָיָ' כַּדָּבָר הַגָּדוֹל הַזָּה אוֹ הֲנִשְׁמַע כָּמְהוּ. הֲשָׁמַע עָם קוֹל אַ-לֹהִים מִדָבָּר מִתּוֹךְ־הָאִשׁ כַּאֲשַׁר־שָׁמַעתָּ אַתַּה וַיָּחִי."

"You need only inquire... whether there was ever anything like this great phenomenon, or was the likes of it ever heard. Did a people ever hear Hashem's voice speaking out of the midst of the fire, as you have heard, and remain alive?"

Why, then, does Rashi—who always offers the most literal interpretation—interpret the greatness which was bestowed upon the Yidden while at Har Sinai to be referring to three different events (based on a Midrash Aggada), when he could have simply explained it as the "great phenomenon" the Yidden experienced at Har Sinai (based on an explicit *possuk* in Chumash)?

Moreover: Rashi does, in fact, include the giving of the Torah among the three events, but only as the second one—and even that as a vague statement ("you received the Torah") with no reference to the incredible divine revelation (the



"great phenomenon") that came along with it!

In addition, the order in which Rashi places the three events does not even correspond to their chronological order, since the giving of the Torah and the appointment of the Sanhedrin preceded the building of the Mishkan!

We will be able to understand this by first understanding the context of our *possuk*:

The purpose of Hashem's declaration—"You have dwelt too long at this mountain"—was to notify the Yidden that their stay at Har Sinai had come to an end, and that they needed to continue toward their ultimate destination—Eretz Yisroel.

It is in this context that we must also understand the intent behind the words "you have received much greatness": "Greatness" here is not referring to a "freestanding" greatness, but rather a specific form of greatness which prepared the Yidden for their entry into Eretz Yisroel; greatness which took root in the midst of B'nei Yisroel and became an inseparable part of their lives, serving as a moral compass and roadmap for them so that even after entering Eretz Yisroel and engaging with the realities of physical existence, their essence as an "am kadosh"—a holy nation—would be obvious.

The "great phenomenon" that transpired at Har Sinai was truly exceptional, but it was a one-time event whose impact on the Yidden was temporary. In and of itself, the experience did not serve as a preparation for entering Eretz Yisroel. Therefore, Rashi does not mention it.

Instead, Rashi says that the "greatness" to which this *possuk* is referring to is expressed in three specific events that took place during the Yidden's stay at Har Sinai. These three events constituted three stages in the transformation of B'nei Yisroel into an "*am kadosh*"; a nation in which Hashem's holiness is constantly present as its guiding light:

- 1. **Building the Mishkan**—creating a *permanent* space for the Shechina to rest.
- Receiving the Torah—the presence of the Shechina being translated into practical guidelines for dayto-day life.
- 3. **Appointment of Sanhedrin**—establishment of a system for the *application and implementation* of these guidelines.

**≈**5

Whenever there is more than one *pirush* on a *possuk*, there must be a connection between them.

The same is true with regard to the two *pirushim* in Rashi on the words "רב לכם שבת":

1. The obvious interpretation ("כפשוטו"): Hashem is saying to the Yidden that they need to arrive as soon as possible at their destination—Eretz Yisroel—and that every moment that they are not on their way is considered tarrying (notwithstanding the spiritual greatness of staying at Har Sinai).

2. The aggadic interpretation: It refers to the spiritual greatness which the Yidden attained while at Har Sinai and which prepared them for life in Eretz Yisroel:

The Yidden's relationship to their land is different from that of the other nations to theirs. For the latter, it is the land which makes them into a nation, while for Yidden, *l'havdil*, it is the other way around: It is by virtue of who we are as a nation that we have our land.

In other words, the other nations do not possess an intrinsic connection with their land, which is why they need to fight for it. Yidden, however—by virtue of their being an "am kadosh"—possess an intrinsic relationship with Eretz Yisroel, which is why, originally, there was no need to wage war in order to conquer Eretz Yisroel; as Rashi says: "There is nobody who disputes your [rights], and you do not need to wage war. Had they not sent spies, they would not have needed [even to display] weapons (Rashi, Devarim 1:8)."

#### Takeaway:

One must continually strive for growth and advancement, regardless of their current level of spiritual attainment. Remaining static is not an option; instead, one must aim to elevate their *avoda* and deepen their connection with Hashem.

(Adapted from Likkutei Sichos vol. 24, p. 12)



לזכות מרת **שרה מאשא** בת אסתר לאה תחי' לרפואה שלימה וקרובה

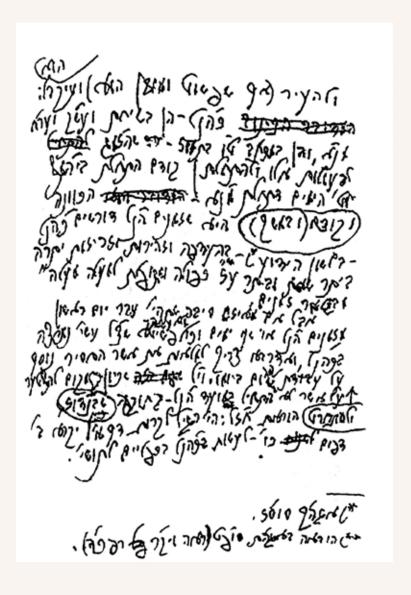
> נדפס ע"י **משפחתה** שיחיו

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

#### Time to Make Up

At the farbrengen of Erev Rosh Chodesh Av 5734, the Rebbe encouraged everyone to intensify their efforts in spreading the five *mivtzoim* (as they were known at the time), and in general, to strengthen *emunah*, Torah study, and tzedakah amongst Yidden. This is especially apropos, the Rebbe explained, given the time of year—the Nine Days of mourning the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash, in the hope that our efforts will hasten the ending of *galus* and the coming of Moshiach.

When the *sicha* was prepared for publishing,<sup>1</sup> the Rebbe added the following addendum in his holy handwriting:<sup>2</sup>



ולהעיר (אף שפשוט ומובן הוא) ועיקר הוא: כהנ"ל – הן בשיחת ועש"ק
וער"ח מנ"א, והן במכתב ט"ו בתמוז
– שהזמ"ג לפעולות אלו ולהתחלתן
קודם התחלת ביהמ"צ וקודם (ובמשך)
ט' הימים דתחלת מנ"א – הכוונה היא
שזמנים הנ"ל דורשים כהנ"ל – בלשון
הידוע\*) – "בהעדפה וזהירות וזריזות
יתרה ביתר שאת וביתר עז כפולה
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אבל אם מאיזו סיבה שתהי' עבר
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על עבודת היום ביומו. וי"ל שכיון
שבנדו"ז, מקום להצטער ולהתחרט
על אשר לא התחיל במועד הנ"ל –
בתוקפה הוראת חז"ל\*\*): הי' רגיל
לקרות דף א' יקרא ב' דפים כו' –
לעשות בכהנ"ל בכפליים לתושי'.

.אגה"ק סוס"ז (\*

\*\*) הובאה באגה"ת סופ"ט (ראה ויק"ר רפכ"ה). It should be noted (though this should be simple and selfunderstood), and this is a vital point:

All of the above — both [what was discussed] in the *sicha* of Erev Shabbos and Erev Rosh Chodesh Menachem-Av, as well as [what was discussed] in the letter [dated] 15 Tammuz<sup>3</sup> — that the appropriate time in which to carry out and initiate these activities is before the start of the Three Weeks and before (and during) the first Nine Days of Menachem-Av—the implication is that the these dates behoove the above [activities, in a manner professed by] the famous expression\*): "with an additional measure of vigilance and zeal, [a zeal] doubly and exceedingly elevated and powerful, far surpassing" [one's efforts] at any other time.

However, if for whatever reason, the first day, or two days etc., of those dates have already passed and one has not done [any activities as of yet]—it is obvious that one must [immediately] begin with the greatest effort in all of the above.

On the contrary—[not only must one begin doing these activities,] one must compensate for [the time] lost, in addition to doing what needs to be done for each day on its own merit.

We might add: Being that in this instance, a person could rightfully feel sorry and regretful for not starting at the proper time — we can aptly apply the instruction of our sages\*\*): [If one wishes to do teshuva,] if he was accustomed to studying [only] one page [of Torah], he should study two pages, etc. [In our instance:] he should engage in all the above efforts in a doubled measure.
\*) Iggeres Hakodesh end of siman 7.

\*\*) Cited in Iggeres Hateshuva, end of ch. 9 (see Vayikra Rabba, beginning of section 25).

<sup>1.</sup> Published in Likkutei Sichos vol. 13, p. 274.

<sup>2.</sup> Published in Toras Menachem vol. 77, p. VI.

<sup>3.</sup> Published in Igros Kodesh vol. 29, p. 201, where the Rebbe calls on everyone to increase their efforts in the *mivtzoim*, starting before the Three Weeks and the Nine Days.





\* 5750-1990

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

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

שיחיו **רוהר** 



A YEAR OF MIRACLES

#### "My Children, Do Not Be Afraid!"

THE MONTH OF AV 5750 — SHNAS NISSIM — IN THE REBBE'S PRESENCE.

COMPILED BY: RABBI YANKY BELL

WRITTEN BY: RABBI MENDEL JACOBS

This month included many extraordinary occurrences in the Rebbe's presence, many of which were addressed by the Rebbe at the Shabbos farbrengens. As such, although we usually begin our story with an overview of the Rebbe's sichos throughout the month, we will save that part of the story till later to provide the necessary background.

#### **Summer Camp Visits**

As the summer drew to a close, the Rebbe was visited by many of the children returning from time spent at various camps.

On Tuesday, 2 Av, a group of children returning from Gan Yisroel in Michigan joined the Rebbe's *minyan* for Maariy

At the end of davening, one of the children called out, "*Yechi adoneinu moreinu v'rabbeinu*," and everyone responded. The Rebbe seemed very pleased.

Toward the end of the month, on Monday, 22 Av, a rally was held for the children of the local day camps. The rally was supposed to have taken place a week earlier;

however, due to the untimely passing of Reb Yaakov Yehuda Hecht, the legendary emcee and translator of the Tzivos Hashem rallies, it was postponed until after the *shiva*.

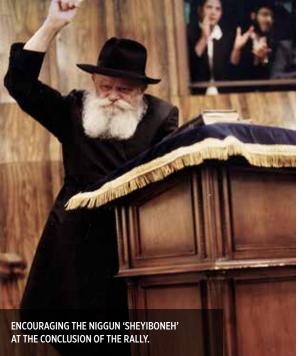
After davening Mincha with the Rebbe, the children recited the Twelve Pesukim, and when they concluded, everyone gave them a round of applause. The Rebbe clapped along with the children, turning to all directions and showing everyone to clap with even more enthusiasm.

The rally was emceed by Rabbi Shimon Hecht, while Rabbi Sholom Ber Hecht translated the Rebbe's *sichos* to English, filling their late father's two roles.

The rally concluded with the Rebbe distributing packets of coins to the chaperones, and then to the *Tankistim*, for them to distribute—three coins to every child.

On the first day of the month, Rosh Chodesh Av, and on the last day of the month—the first day of Rosh Chodesh Elul—the Rebbe went to the Ohel. (The Rebbe's visit to the Ohel on Rosh Chodesh was unprecedented. No one could remember another time throughout the







Rebbe's *nesius* that he visited the Ohel on this day.)

On the last day of the month, groups of campers from Gan Yisroel New York and Montreal were scheduled to daven Mincha with the Rebbe at 3:15, but they missed the opportunity due to the Rebbe's unscheduled trip to the Ohel.

The Rebbe gave Rabbi Leibel Groner packets of coins to be distributed to the children and instructed that some points from the *sichos* to the children of the day camps should be repeated for these children as well.

#### Tisha B'Av

This month includes the solemn day of Tisha B'Av, which will very soon be transformed into a joyous Yom Tov, with the coming of Moshiach.

A special ad, edited by the Rebbe, was placed in the New York Times and other newspapers, calling on everyone to increase in Torah, Tefilla, and Tzedakah, and stating the hope that this day will be transformed from mourning to joy.

When the Rebbe entered the shul for Mincha of 8 Av, just before the fast, the crowd was singing a *niggun*, but the Rebbe did not encourage the singing, and everyone was quiet immediately. The Rebbe's face was extremely serious; almost frightening.

After Maariv, the Rebbe sat down for Eicha and the evening Kinos.

On Tisha B'Av morning, the Rebbe joined the *minyan* for Shacharis. (However, as is known, the Rebbe does not actually daven with the *minyan* on this morning, since he

follows the practice of the Rabbeim to daven Shacharis with Tefillin privately.)

The Rebbe received an *aliya* and read the Haftorah.

After Shacharis, the Rebbe sat down to recite the traditional Kinos until about 1:00 p.m., when he left the shul for his room.

Upon reaching the door of his room, the Rebbe heard a bochur making a siyum on Maseches Moed Katan over a microphone from the big shul downstairs. When he finished the siyum, the Rebbe asked Rabbi Groner, "Is he going to say kaddish? In all the Gemaras there's a kaddish printed at the end of a siyum!" Rabbi Groner tried to send a message to the bochur, but he had already left the shul, and no one was able to locate him. All the while, the Rebbe was waiting near the door of his room. When Rabbi Groner told the Rebbe that the bochur was already gone, the Rebbe waved both of his hands, as if dismissing the whole incident, and went into his room.

Later in the day, the Rebbe came downstairs for Mincha wearing Tallis and Tefillin as customary, and again recited the Haftorah.

#### Rabbi Yaakov Yehuda Hecht

On Sunday, eve of 15 Av, devastating news was shared: the great chossid and staunch activist, Reb Yaakov Yehuda Hecht, passed away suddenly. Rabbi Hecht was exceedingly devoted to the Rebbe and his work, administering a wide array of institutions, including: The National

Committee for the Furtherance of Jewish Education (NCFJE), Yeshiva Hadar HaTorah, Machon Chana, Camp Emunah, and more. He also emceed all the children's rallies at 770 and translated the Rebbe's *sichos* into English for the children in front of the Rebbe. Moreover, he was a well-connected congregational rabbi, holding close ties with philanthropists and government officials in New York City, State, and beyond.

After Maariv, when the Rebbe was about to enter his room, Rabbi Hecht's sons and son-in-law were waiting in Gan Eden Hatachton, where they notified the Rebbe about what had happened.

The Rebbe's face became very serious, and he continued into his room. A few minutes later, the Rebbe called for Rabbi Hecht's eldest son, Rabbi Sholom Ber Hecht, conveying several instructions about how to move

forward. The Rebbe asked that they should have his body released immediately from the hospital in Ellenville, NY, where he had passed away, and brought to Camp Emunah, where the *tahara* should take place.

The Rebbe also instructed that no non-Jew should be allowed to touch the body.

The next day after Shacharis, the Rebbe asked that an announcement be made about the time of the *levaya*. It was set for 12:00 p.m.

In the meantime, the Rebbe went to the mikvah and prepared to go to the Ohel. It was still unclear whether or not the Rebbe was planning to participate in the funeral.

At 12:10, the Rebbe entered the car to leave for the Ohel. Huge crowds had gathered on Eastern Parkway in anticipation of the *levaya*, and the Rebbe waved to many people from the window of the car.



THE REBBE ENTERS THE SHUL ON TISHA B'AV.



RECEIVING AN ALIYA DURING SHACHARIS.



RECITING KINOS.



RECITING THE HAFTORAH DURING SHACHARIS.



THE LAST FEW LINES WERE

The funeral procession began at 12:55, with members of the Rebbe's *Mazkirus* in attendance. They passed some of the local organizations that Rabbi Hecht ran during his lifetime, as well as his shul in East Flatbush, and then continued to the cemetery.

All the while, the Rebbe was at the Ohel. Late in the evening, after the funeral was over, the Rebbe approached the fresh grave for a short while, before leaving back for 770.

During the shiva, the family was visited by the Rebbe's mazkir, Rabbi Binyomin Klein. He told them that the Rebbe wished to relay that all of the institutions run by Rabbi Hecht were under the auspices of Machne Yisroel, and added that one of the institutions should be renamed to carry the name Yaakov Yehuda.

The Rebbe edited the text for Rabbi Hecht's gravestone, adding the fact that he delivered Torah classes over the radio airwaves and influenced thousands of people in this manner.

On 19 Av, the Rebbe wrote to the family in response to their suggestion that Rabbi Sholom Ber Hecht, the eldest of the sons, would succeed his father's role in all the mosdos, along with a committee made up of other family members: "He should accept the position, and may it be in a good and auspicious hour. [Everything should be in

a peaceful manner] as our sages stated, like one man with one heart. I will mention this at the Ohel."

#### **Dollars**

The Rebbe's Sunday dollars distributions this month saw many individuals come and seek his holy blessings and counsel, as usual.

What was unique around this time was the reassurance that many people sought, as tensions rose in the Middle East (Iraq had invaded Kuwait, which would have major implications for the safety and security of Eretz Yisroel). The Rebbe reassured everyone that Hashem would watch over His people and that there was no need to be afraid.

On Sunday, 7 Av, the Israeli journalist Shlomo Nakdimon visited the Rebbe.

The Rebbe told him that his name, Nakdimon, is reminiscent of the character discussed in the Gemara-Nakdimon Ben Gurion-who provided water for the people of Yerushalayim during a famine. "Water represents the Torah," the Rebbe said. "You too must provide water—Torah for your readers, by inserting Torah ideas in your articles."

Mr. Nakdimon asked the Rebbe if he is pleased with

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ISRAELI JOURNALIST SHLOMO NAKDIMON PRESENTS THE REBBE WITH HIS BOOK 'FIRST STRIKE', 7 AV.



ISRAELI KNESSET MEMBER ELI KULAS MEETS WITH THE REBBE, 14 AV.





SUNDAY DOLLARS, AV 5750

the current government in Israel, and the Rebbe replied that he would rather not talk politics, but he added:

"For some thirty years now, I've been clamoring about not putting Jewish lives in danger [by giving away land]. The current government needs to be careful about saving lives. A narrow government is more conducive to staying on the right path.

"The name [of the Prime Minister,] Shamir means that it has the power to break through stone. I hope that he will have the power not to be influenced by the hearts of stone around him, but on the contrary, he will influence them for good..."

An individual came by the Rebbe saying that he does not need a *bracha*. The Rebbe said, "I need a *bracha*, he needs a *bracha*, and you also need a *bracha*. Every person needs a *bracha*!"

A woman came by the Rebbe and said that she needed the Rebbe's *bracha* regarding a certain issue, but she didn't want to disclose it right then. Instead, she wanted to write it in a letter to the Rebbe. The Rebbe replied that at the moment, he is not answering letters.

"Is there no reason for me to write then?" the woman asked.

"There is reason to write," the Rebbe answered, "because I take all the letters that come here to the Ohel of my father-in-law. This has been the practice here in Lubavitch for the past few years."

Rabbi Simcha Ashlag of Bnei Brak asked the Rebbe for a *bracha* for the Jews of Eretz Yisroel, that they should only have good things and no bad things happening.

The Rebbe replied: "There's no such thing as bad things in Eretz Yisroel. The land itself spits out anything negative. The only *bracha* we need is that the good things should be open and revealed..."

An individual came to the Rebbe saying that last week he had come asking for the Rebbe's *bracha* for a person who was in a coma, and miraculously the person had since woken up from the coma and was discharged from the hospital! The Rebbe smiled and said, "They left the coma in the hospital!"

An individual came to the Rebbe on crutches, and the Rebbe told him that he should heal quickly, and dance on the upcoming Yom Tov of *Chamisha Asar B'Av*. The person responded, "I hope so..." and the Rebbe was displeased. "Why do you only hope so? You must ask Hashem for good news!" The person replied that if he could dance on *Chamisha Asar B'Av* next year, it would

be a big miracle. The Rebbe said, "I'm talking about this year! Next year you'll dance twice as much!"

When the person nodded his head reluctantly, the Rebbe said, "Your recovery should come this year, this way I won't have to argue with you..."

On Sunday, 14 Av, Israeli Knesset Member Eli Kulas came to see the Rebbe, and asked for a *bracha* for all the inhabitants of Eretz Yisroel, adding, "Does the Rebbe have a message for the people of Israel? Iraq has invaded Kuwait, and everyone is apprehensive about it."

The Rebbe replied: "We need to increase our *bitachon* in Hashem, and He will in turn increase His blessings; healthy blessings and peaceful blessings, with peace of mind and body."

On Sunday, 21 Av, someone asked the Rebbe how to have a positive influence on their child, and the Rebbe said: "There are two ways to go about it; either by the parents themselves or through friends. Sometimes, when the parent tries to influence the child, it's not as effective, because the child feels like they're being treated like a little kid. It might be better to try through friends."

On Sunday, 28 Av, the Rebbe was visited by Mr. Roni Milo, the Israeli Minister of Police. He said that the Rebbe's *brachos* are very necessary now, in these difficult days. The Rebbe replied: "These are not difficult days. It's almost the month of Elul, when the Alter Rebbe says that the King—Hashem—is in the field. This means that He is closer to every Jew, and especially to the Jews who live in the Holy Land, about which the Torah says that His eyes are upon her throughout the entire year."

#### The Midrash

On the evening of 16 Av, the Rebbe was walking out of shul after Maariv when he stopped at the door to read an interesting sign. It quoted a Midrash Yalkut Shimoni that some people thought might be addressing the current political situation in Eretz Yisroel. The various kings of the world will be engaged in war, and the Persian king will be feared to be destroying the world. All the nations of the world will be terrified, and the Jewish people will be bewildered, asking, "Where should we go?" But at that moment, Hashem will say to them, "My children, don't be afraid! Everything that I've done was only done for your sake... The time for your redemption has arrived!"

The next day, Rabbi Leibel Groner notified the individual who had posted the sign, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok

דיו לעבר שיתיה כרבו, א'ר יצחק שנה שמלך המשיח נגלה בו כל מלכי אומת העולם מתנרים זה כזה, מלך פרס מתנרה במלך ערבי ודולך מלך ערבי לארם ליפול ענה מהם וחודר מלך פרס ומתייב את כל העולם וכל אומות העולם מתרעשים ומתבהלים ונשלים על פניהם ויארה אותם צירים בצירי יולרה, וישראל מתרעשים ומתבהלים ואומר להיכן נבוא ונלך להיכן נבוא ונלך, ואומר להם בני אל תתיראי כל מה שעשיתי לא עשיתי אלא בשבילכם מפני מה אתם מתיראים אל תיראו הגיע זמן גאולהנס, ולא כנאולה ראשונה נאולה אחרונה כי נאולה ראשונה חיה לכם צער ושעבוד מלכיות אחייה:

ו רבוחינו בשנה שמלך המשיח כא עומר על נג ביח המקדש התא משמיע להם לישראל הצימר ענוים הגיע זמן נאלתכם ,

THE SIGN QUOTING THE MIDRASH YALKUT SHIMONI POSTED AT 770. THE LAST TWO LINES WERE ADDED LATER PER THE REBBE'S INSTRUCTIONS.

שמעוני



IRAQI TANKS ENTERING KUWAIT IN THE MONTH OF AV 5750.

Kazen, that he should add another two lines from later in that Midrash:

"At the time when Melech Hamoshiach comes, he will stand on the roof of the Beis Hamikdash and announce to the Jewish people: 'Humble ones, the time for your redemption has arrived!"

The message caused great excitement at 770, and everyone began publicizing the words of the Midrash all over the world.

Reb Itche Shpringer of Crown Heights sent a copy of the Midrash to a *rav* in Eretz Yisroel, who passed it around in Eretz Yisroel, causing great excitement. Reb Itche wrote to the Rebbe about this, noting that the Midrash was "passed around from hand to hand," and the Rebbe circled these words, adding: "The more the better."

At the farbrengen of Shabbos Parshas Re'eh, the Rebbe spoke about this Midrash at length (see below).

Later in the month, the Rebbe wrote to Rabbi Yehosef

Ralbag, who had asked about the security situation in Eretz Yisroel:

- Regarding what you write about the security situation in Eretz Yisroel:
  - Ask a five-year-old who studies Chumash, what is the simple meaning of the explicit words of the *possuk*: Hashem's eyes are always upon it [the land] etc.
- Regarding the idea of stocking up on food: This will drive up the prices of food in Eretz Hakodesh!!

The Rebbe later instructed that this *maaneh* to Rabbi Ralbag should be publicized.

On 28 Av, a radio station from Eretz Yisroel interviewed Rabbi Leibel Groner on what the Rebbe said about the security situation. He repeated the Rebbe's reassuring words, as well as the words of the Midrash Yalkut Shimoni. He also said that the Rebbe is of the opinion that gas masks will not be needed at all.

#### Chof Av

The *yahrtzeit* of the Rebbe's father, Harav Levi Yitzchok, fell out on Shabbos Parshas Ekev, and it was a very special Shabbos with many guests and extraordinary occurrences.

The Rebbe davened at the *amud* for all the *tefillos*, as he always does on this day. The children of Camp Gan Yisroel of Parksville were present throughout, and they sang the various parts of davening as they would do in camp—with the Rebbe's encouragement.

During the farbrengen on Shabbos afternoon, the Rebbe gave the children much attention (see below).

#### Farbrengens

On the first Shabbos of the month, Parshas Devarim—Shabbos Chazon, the Rebbe held a farbrengen as usual.

Approaching Tisha B'Av, the Rebbe addressed the sad time of year as a temporary descent that brings about the great elevation of the third Beis Hamikdash.

The *niggunim* were quite lively, including a long rendition of Napoleon's March. The Rebbe turned to Reb Yosef Neymotin during the singing and motioned to him to say *l'chaim* on two full cups.

Towards the end of the farbrengen, the Rebbe distributed bottles of *mashke* to individuals holding gatherings in the upcoming week, including Reb Noach Bernstein.

He was making a farbrengen on 10 Av in honor of a Tanya printing in Pennsylvania, and the Rebbe noted that he should add that it would take place at a permissible hour, after midday (since many of the mourning practices are still observed until then).

At the farbrengen on the next Shabbos, Parshas Va'eschanan—Nachamu, there were two distinguished *rabbanim* visiting from Eretz Yisroel, Rabbi Shimon Dayan from Southern Israel, and Rabbi Schapiro from Yerushalayim. The Rebbe showed extra attention to the guests, especially Rabbi Dayan.

The Rebbe spoke about the double consolation offered by Hashem to the Jewish people on this Shabbos, and how it manifests in our *avoda* to transform this physical world into a holy place. Another major theme of the Farbrengen was based on the instruction of Chazal that from the 15th of Av, a person must increase their Torah study, and this in turn will increase the days of their life. "This means quite simply," the Rebbe said, "that if a person was supposed to live for 120 years, this increase can bring them to live till 180 years old, or even more: to live eternally, with the coming of Moshiach."

The next Shabbos, Parshas Ekev, was Chof Av—*yahrt- zeit* of the Rebbe's father, Harav Levi Yitzchok.

Interspersed in the crowd were the campers from Camp Gan Yisroel in Parksville, which the Rebbe showered with attention.

The Rebbe began by speaking about the fact that this year marked 46 years since the passing of his father, the *gematria* of "לוי," his father's first name.

The Rebbe spoke of his father's immense *mesirus nefesh* to fight for Yiddishkeit at a time when there were very few *rabbanim* left in the Soviet Union, especially those willing to stand up for what's right.

At the end of this *sicha*, the campers began singing a *niggun* and the Rebbe turned towards them, waving his hands with great encouragement.

The Rebbe also turned towards Reb Avraham and Reb Sholom Hecht, whose brother, Reb Yaakov Yehuda, passed away earlier in the week (see below).

In the third *sicha*, the Rebbe spoke about the upcoming month of Elul, when the "King is in the field," and mentioned the campers who were present, themselves coming from the "field," outside of the city. They came dressed in their distinctive clothing (i.e. camp t-shirts), allowing everyone to recognize that they are "*zera beirach Hashem*"—children blessed by Hashem, as the *possuk* 

says. The Rebbe then invited the children, along with their counselors and caretakers, to say *l'chaim*, and wished them that they should all be a source of *nachas* to their parents and educators.

The Rebbe turned to the camp's administrator, Rabbi Avraham Shemtov, and asked, "Can someone give them *l'chaim*? Let them say *l'chaim*!"

With that, the children said *l'chaim* and began singing the joyous *Niggun Hakafos* of the Rebbe's father. The Rebbe encouraged the singing immensely, turning again and again towards the children. One of the children cried out, "*Yechi adoneinu moreinu v'rabeinu*," and everyone responded after him, while the Rebbe smiled broadly.

In the fourth and final *sicha*, the Rebbe spoke again about increasing Torah study, including for women. Citing the example of Rashi's daughters, the Rebbe pointed out that throughout our history, there were many women who excelled in Torah study.

Then the Rebbe spoke about the late Reb Yaakov Yehuda Hecht:

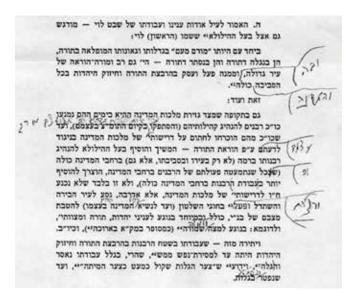
"We find ourselves within the *shiva* and *shloshim* of someone whom the [Frierdiker] Rebbe appointed to educate Jewish people, especially children. His name was Yaakov Yehuda—[a special name on two accounts, since] Yehuda is the mainstay of all the Tribes of Israel, and Yaakov is the choicest of our forefathers.

"Let us hope that very soon we will no longer need to speak about sad occurrences, for Moshiach will come, with *techiyas hameisim*, and we will be able to point with our fingers and say, 'Here is Yaakov Yehuda', along with Yaakov Avinu, and the [Frierdiker] Rebbe, *Nessi Doreinu*, together with all of his Chassidim..."

When distributing bottles of *mashke*, the Rebbe gave a bottle to Reb Chaim Yitzchok (Harry) Spiegel, who announced that there would be a dinner for Chabad of Simcha Monica, California, on a cruise ship. He concluded that the Rebbe is invited as well, and hopefully, he will lead us out of *galus* to Eretz Yisroel, now!

The Rebbe smiled and asked, "What will be with the boat if we bring Moshiach now?" Mr. Spiegel answered that the boat will come to Eretz Yisroel along with Moshiach! The Rebbe smiled and told him to announce that to the whole crowd; they need to hear it too.

On the final Shabbos of the month, Parshas Re'eh, the Rebbe made an unbelievable, groundbreaking announcement. As the tension in Eretz Yisroel heightened, the Rebbe cited the words of the Midrash in Yalkut Shimoni:



THE REBBE'S EDITS ON THE SICHA OF SHABBOS PARSHAS EKEV, 20 AV 5750, SPEAKING ABOUT HIS FATHER, HARAV LEVI YITZCHOK.

There will come a time when the various nations of the world will be at war with one another. The king of Persia and the king of Aram will cause a great ruckus. The Jewish people will be afraid and feel anxious from the situation, but Hashem will reassure them: "My children," He will say, "all of this is only a preparation for the *geulah*. The time for your redemption has arrived!" The Midrash continues that Moshiach himself will stand upon the roof of the Beis Hamikdash and announce, "The time for your redemption has arrived!"

At the end of the farbrengen, the Rebbe repeated these words again, highlighting that there was nothing to be afraid of; Moshiach is on his way!

#### You Have the Strength!

A woman wrote to the Rebbe that she is in the middle of a pregnancy and she feels like she doesn't have strength. The Rebbe replied:

[Regarding what] you write that you don't have strength etc.:

Hashem created the souls of every living being, including yours and your husband's. Hashem has already created the soul of the fetus, and He chose you and your husband for the sacred mission of bringing it into this world, with joy and gladness of the heart. I will mention this at the Ohel. ①

\*#### 5750-1990 23

לזכות מרת **חיה מושקא** תחי' לרגל יום הולדתה **י"ט מנחם-אב** 

> נדפס ע"י ולזכות בעלה הרה"ת הרב שלום דוב בער וילדיהם שיחיו שוחאט

# REBSHNEUR ZALMAN VILENKIN

This article is based on Derher's conversations with Rabbi Leibel Shapiro, and the Barash-Bistritzky Teshura 5780.

By: Rabbi Mendy Greenberg (Twinsburg, OH)





#### The Boys of Podobranka

The town of Podobranka had a thriving Jewish life. It didn't have a huge population, but was known for its atmosphere of Torah and *yiras Shamayim*, with communities of Chabad Chassidim as well as *misnagdim*, each with a *rav* of their own.

During the Rebbe Maharash's *nesius*, the Chabad Chassidim appointed a special new *rav*: a grandson of the Tzemach Tzedek by his eldest son, Reb Boruch Sholom—Reb Levi Yitzchok Schneerson.

When Reb Levi Yitzchok's son Shneur Zalman reached marriageable age, a *shidduch* was arranged with the daughter of the local chassidishe *gvir*, Reb Shneur Zalman Chaikin. Father-in-law and son-in-law had the same name, so the *chosson* took on the first name of his recently deceased grandfather, Boruch (Sholom), and became known as Boruch Shneur.

After several years in Podobranka, Reb Levi Yitzchok assumed a new *rabbanus* position in a different city, but his son, Reb Boruch Shneur, remained behind. So, when tragedy struck and Reb Levi Yitzchok passed away at the young age of 44, Podobranka soon received a new Levi Yitzchok: the newborn son of Reb Boruch Shneur, born on 18 Nissan 5638 (1878), four months after his grandfather's passing.

Just six weeks later, another baby was born in Podobranka. The *chassidishe* shochet of the town was Reb Levi Yitzchok Vilenkin, a highly-regarded chossid from a family that dated back to the Chassidim of the Alter Rebbe. He had a son on 2 Sivan 5638, and named him Shneur Zalman.

The two children, Shneur Zalman ben Levi Yitzchok and Levi Yitzchok ben [Boruch] Shneur Zalman, grew up very close to one another. Naturally, they were good friends, learning together in the local Chabad shul. For a short period of time, their paths would separate—but they would soon be intertwined in ways the young Zalman Vilenkin could not have foreseen.

#### A Call From the Russian Military

Young Zalman Vilenkin was a sharp and gifted learner. Already as a child, he memorized entire sections of Mishnayos (something which would serve him well later in life). When he outgrew his *melamed*, he continued

learning on his own in the local Beis Midrash. Mainstream Yeshivos did not yet exist in the area at that time—the Rebbe Rashab would establish Tomchei Temimim several years later, when Reb Zalman was already 19 years old.

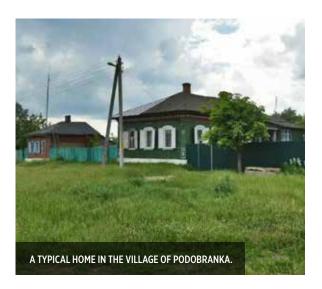
He wasn't only gifted in his learning; he was also very well-liked by his peers. His friends liked to spend time with him; he would never speak ill of anyone, and carefully avoided even a whiff of *lashon hora*.

When Zalman turned 18, a dreaded envelope arrived: a draft notice for the Russian army. Under the Czar, being a Jewish soldier wasn't just difficult—it was perilous. The gentile soldiers were antisemitic and made a sport of bullying the Jewish recruits in their free time. Even the officers were cruel and made life miserable for the Jews in their ranks.

The letter threw the Vilenkin family into chaos. They didn't have money to bribe their way out of it, and there didn't seem to be any other way to avoid this nightmare. But as Chassidim, they knew exactly where to turn. Zalman packed his bags and set off for Lubavitch.

At the appointed time, Zalman entered the Rebbe Rashab's room and handed him a *tzetel* explaining the situation. The Rebbe Rashab read the note and said, "Go home—you have nothing to worry about."

When Zalman shared the Rebbe Rashab's words back home with his parents, the sense of tension immediately lifted. He returned to the shul to resume his learning as though the draft notice had never arrived. Days turned into weeks, weeks into months, and then years. Eventually, it became clear—the army had simply forgotten about him.



#### The Planned Parnassa

When Reb Zalman reached marriageable age, he married Rivka, the daughter of the Reb Mottel Milavsky of Brayen, and settled near his in-laws. As time went on, he realized he needed a steady source of *parnassa*, and his father-in-law, who was a shochet, offered to teach him the trade. Before long, Reb Zalman had learned the craft of his father and father-in-law, becoming a skilled shochet himself.

Life was still very difficult. The economic situation in the small towns of Russia was increasingly dismal; thousands were leaving the *shtetlach* for jobs in the big cities, and *shochtim* like Reb Zalman were barely eking out a living. He needed to find a better arrangement.

Then, one day, an offer came that he couldn't refuse.

His old friend, Harav Levi Yitzchok had just been appointed the *rav* of Yekaterinoslav and had quickly gotten to work revitalizing the city's Jewish life. When he heard that his old friend Reb Zalman had become a shochet, he decided that he would be the perfect person to fill the position of shochet which had recently become vacant. Move to Yekaterinoslav, he sent the message to

For Reb Zalman, it was the perfect opportunity. He didn't think twice; that same year, he and his family packed their bags and headed off to Yekaterinoslav.

Brayen, and I'll make sure you have a good position here.

### The Missed Opportunity of a Lifetime

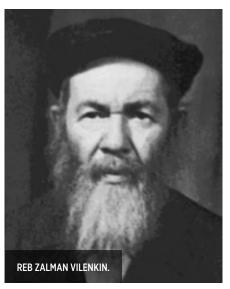
Bad news came to Reb Zalman when he arrived in Yekaterinoslav. The *shechita* position had already been filled; there was no need for his talents as a shochet after all. Given the state of communications in those days, Reb Zalman had missed the opportunity.

But Harav Levi Yitzchok had a different idea. He had just arrived from Nikolaev with three children in tow. His oldest son, the Rebbe, was just turning seven years old and was in need of a competent *melamed*. Would Reb Zalman open a *cheder* for them?

With few other options, Reb Zalman agreed to the proposal. Years later, he would say that it was the best missed opportunity of his life.

The Rebbe learned in Reb Zalman's home on 22 Kazansa Street for nine full *zmanim*, from age seven to eleven and a half, learning Chumash-Rashi, Nach, Mishnayos, and Gemara. As time progressed, more children joined the *cheder*—the Rebbe's brothers Reb Dovber and Reb Yisroel Aryeh Leib, and other children their age, such as Reb Nochum Goldshmidt and Reb Berel Rikman.

Reb Zalman's daughter, Mrs. Chana Shapiro, remembered the younger children of the *cheder* in her home. "It was a small, cramped apartment, and they would spend hours learning there. When they had recess, they would play in the apartment or sometimes go out to the street;





sometimes I remember my mother chasing them out, and they would laugh..."1

But the Rebbe would sit separately. Reb Zalman would first learn with the Rebbe for a short period of time, and then, as he moved on to teach the younger class, the Rebbe would remain sitting in a corner, learning on his own.

Reb Zalman would later relate that the Rebbe was very reserved. He rarely engaged with the other children. He told his grandson, Rabbi Leibel Shapiro of Miami, that the Rebbe once asked such a sharp question that he was left in shock—he couldn't believe that it came from so young a child.

He also shared a story about the Rebbe's brother Reb Yisroel Aryeh Leib:

When he was too young to learn, Rebbetzin Chana would send him along with his two older brothers to Reb Zalman's house so that he could play in an environment of Torah. One day, Reb Zalman asked the older boys a difficult question, and as they were trying to figure out the answer, Reb Yisroel Aryeh Leib—who had been lying on the couch, seemingly in his own world—piped up with a brilliant answer.

#### Harav Levi Yitzchok's Insistence

Reb Zalman was outstanding in his *emeskeit*, his *chassidishkeit*, and his *midos*. One of his most striking traits was his refusal to speak negatively about a fellow Jew. If someone tried to share something critical about another person, Reb Zalman would immediately shut it down and find a way to see the good in them instead.

He was also an exceptional *melamed*. Along with his vast knowledge of Torah—both *nigleh* and *nistar*, he made the most complicated ideas clear and accessible, and his teaching left a lasting impression on his students.

Harav Levi Yitzchok, who had known Reb Zalman since they were young, had a deep appreciation for his teaching. He was so impressed that when a shochet position finally opened up, Reb Levi Yitzchok refused to let him go. A *melamed* of Reb Zalman's caliber would be impossible to replace.

Rabbi Leibel Shapiro heard from his grandfather that he was a little taken aback at the time. "The Rebbe's father refused to give him the position—despite having moved to Yekaterinoslav specifically for that role... But later, he was very grateful that he had merited to teach the Rebbe."

Ultimately, Reb Zalman stayed on as a *melamed* until the youngest brother, Reb Yisroel Aryeh Leib, was almost twelve, in 5678. Only then, after nearly a decade of teaching, did he finally return to *shechita*.

#### A Few Years of Peace

When the Rebbe and his brothers grew older, Reb Zalman Vilenkin returned to the role he had initially come for—the shochet of Yekaterinoslav. Being a shochet is not conducive to a luxurious lifestyle, but Reb Zalman was content; his poverty bothered him only when he didn't have the funds to travel to see the Rebbe Rashab.

As long as he was left alone with his *seforim*, he was happy. He had a large collection of *seforim* in his home (his children recalled the Rebbe coming as a *bochur* to borrow and return *seforim*), a large collection in his *shechita* workplace, and there was a decent library in the "Butcher's Shul," the Chabad shul across the street from his home. At every free moment, he could be found among his *seforim*—and when there were no *seforim* available, he would close his eyes and review *Mishnayos baal peh*.

#### ARE YOU ONE OF THEM?

In Yekaterinoslav, Reb Zalman and his wife were blessed with four children: two daughters, Dina and Chana, and two sons, Yosef and Sholom Eliyahu.

Years later, when Dina, the eldest daughter, was in *yechidus* with the Rebbe, the Rebbe asked her, "I remember two children running around in the house—were you one of them?"

A similar thing happened when Chana came to New York. She visited Rebbetzin Chana, the Rebbe's mother, and introduced herself as the daughter of Reb Zalman Vilenkin. The Rebbetzin, who remembered the family well, asked her, "Are you the older or the younger daughter?"

His *shiurim* in Ein Yaakov at the local shul drew a significant audience, and when other shuls would invite him to give a *shiur*, many of his regulars would join him, not wanting to miss the opportunity. He would also frequently repeat the many *maamarim* he had memorized, and whenever a new *maamar* or old *ksav* reached him, he would immediately use it and deliver a *shiur*.

Reb Zalman's home was a center for the Chabad Chassidim in the city. *Shadarim* (such as Reb Itche Masmid) or visitors always knew there was an open door in Reb Zalman's home. Life seemed fairly simple and peaceful, but dark clouds were gathering on the horizon.

#### The Days of Communism

As the revolution tightened its grip over Russia, *chinuch* became increasingly complex. The new regime wanted all children to attend the government-run schools, which would teach *kefira*, and enforce attendance on Shabbos. Reb Zalman wouldn't hear of it. He kept his children home and taught them himself. He and his wife did their best to shelter them from the neighborhood children as well, hoping to protect them from outside influences. His wife sewed them dolls for them to play with in their free time.

Yekaterinoslav—renamed Dnipropetrovsk—was still a relatively calm place for Yidden. The persecution wasn't yet as intense as in other parts of the country. So, in 5689, an underground branch of Tomchei Temimim was opened in the city.

Some forty *bochurim* arrived from the shuttered Yeshivos of Nevel and Charkov. Their *mashgiach* was Reb Mendel Futerfas, and they learned in the women's section of a local shul. Hosting *bochurim* or associating with the Yeshiva was a life-threatening endeavor, but Reb Zalman and other families ignored the dangers and welcomed the *bochurim*. Reb Meir Itkin and Reb Michoel Teitelbaum, for example, lodged in Reb Zalman's house during their studies in the Yeshiva.

But the Yeshiva didn't last long. After two years, the police closed in on the location and barged into the Shul, trying to "catch them in the act." The *bochurim* managed to escape through the windows, but their *seforim* and belongings were confiscated. The Yeshiva was closed down for good.

In the early 5690s, the Soviet government passed a new law targeting "unfit citizens": anyone not properly employed by the regime had no right to live in government housing. As a *shochet*, Reb Zalman's work was deemed illegal, so one summer day, officials arrived and threw him and his family out of their apartment. Homeless, they spent several months living in the court-yard of the Butchers' Shul until they were able to rent a privately-owned home.

As the years passed, arrests became more and more



REB DOV ZEV KOZHVENIKOV.

#### MOVING THE RAV

One day, the Dnipropetrovsk city council decided to erect a park on the site of the Jewish cemetery. Led by Harav Levi Yitzchok, the community gathered to move the bodies of the *Rabbanim*—the chassidishe *rav* Reb Dov Zev Kozhvenikov, who had passed away some twenty years earlier, along with the former *rav* of the Litvishe community.

When they cleared the dirt around Reb Dov Zev, they were astounded to discover that his body was complete, like the day of his burial. The community elders remembered that it was exactly as they had buried him back then.

When they brought out his body, Reb Zalman Vilenken related to his grandsons, "Dem Rebben's Tatte hot a gos geton mit treren—rivers of tears were streaming down the Rebbe's father's face..."

5689-1929, 5690s-1930s

frequent. *Melamdim, Rabbanim, Shochtim*, and *Mohelim* were quickly disappearing, and Dnipropetrovsk was no exception. The fear in the Vilenkin home was palpable; Reb Zalman was a shochet, a prime candidate for arrest, but miraculously, it never came. Just like the Czar's army so many years earlier, the authorities seemed to have forgotten about him...

During those difficult years, another tragedy befell Reb Zalman: his wife Rivka fell ill and passed away. A few years later, he married Zelda Katzenelenbogen, his wife's long-time friend.

#### The Wedding

One day, Reb Zalman was conversing with Harav Levi Yitzchok's brother, Reb Shmuel Schneerson. Reb Shmuel pointed to his former *talmid*, the Rebbe, who was 15 years old at the time, and said, "You see him? He is a *baki* in the entire Shas—Gemara, Rashi, Tosfos—and the entire Likkutei Torah with all its references."

A true moment of *nachas* came when the news arrived that the Rebbe would become the son-in-law of the Frierdiker Rebbe. "On the occasion of the Rebbe's wedding," his son Reb Yosef recounted, "the *rav* and Rebbetzin held a celebration in their home, and the entire city came to participate. We too—my father and our entire family—were there, and it was very lively, with singing

الم المراكل المراع بعدد المراع بالمراكل المراع بالمراكل المراع بالمراع بالمرا

THE 101-WORD TELEGRAM SENT BY THE REBBE'S FATHER TO THE REBBE ON THE DAY OF THE WEDDING.

and dancing the entire time. I remember that Harav Levi Yitzchok spoke words of Chassidus—and we later discovered that it mirrored the *maamar* the Frierdiker Rebbe delivered at the wedding in Warsaw."

Reb Zalman later related how he remembered Harav Levi Yitzchok composing a 101-word telegram<sup>2</sup> to his son, the *chosson*; by the time he concluded, the tablecloth was soaked in tears.

During the celebration, Reb Zalman was overcome with joy. At the height of the evening, he danced on the table with all his strength, saying, "Ich hob zoche geven—I had the merit…" —his own talmid had merited to become the Rebbe's son-in-law.

#### Escape

When the Nazis neared Dnipropetrovsk in 5701, Reb Zalman Vilenkin and his family escaped to the distant city of Makhachkala, the capital of the Dagestan region.

Among the thousands of refugees crowding the city was a group of Jews from a certain city who had evacuated together. They were uneducated and could barely speak Yiddish, but they asked Reb Zalman to deliver classes between Mincha and Maariv. He was happy to acquiesce, and began teaching Torah, reviewing *maamarim*—all in Russian—and serving as their shochet. He quickly became their full-time *mashpia*.

However, news soon arrived that a group of Chassidim had settled in Tashkent, and Reb Zalman decided to relocate. His entire new "congregation" accompanied him to the train station to see him off.

In Tashkent, Reb Zalman continued doing what he always did—serving as a shochet, davening and learning at length in his free time. People began coming to hear his *shiurim*, which, in the diverse Tashkent refugee community, now attracted Jews of all stripes.

Reb Meir Itkin related that many people would come to see his davening. "He would emphasize every word and daven carefully from the siddur, but the main thing was that it was without any outward show. There were other Chassidim who davened at length, but people came specifically to see his davening; everybody was awed by his *pnimiyus* and *emeskeit*."

His granddaughter Mrs. Eda Shpringer, who grew up during that period, reflected that she had never in her life heard her grandfather raise his voice. "He always spoke softly and nicely, and never said a bad word about a fellow Jew. He just sat and learnt—he was a very special Jew."

#### It's Not For Me

After years of deprivation in Tashkent, the war finally came to an end. A ray of light opened for Chabad Chassidim—the Russian government decided to allow Polish refugees to return to their country, and the Chassidim grabbed the opportunity. Passports were procured, names were changed, family groups were reinvented, and all the Russian chassidim suddenly became "Polish."<sup>3</sup>

Reb Zalman and his daughters joined the mass exodus, and on Rosh Chodesh Elul 5706, they found themselves on one of the earliest *eshalons*, the trains leaving for Poland. After a short stop in Krakow, the *Breichah* organization helped transfer a large group of Lubavitcher families, the Vilenkins among them, through Czechoslovakia and Austria, until they reached the Displaced Person's camp of Poking, in the American zone of Germany.

The first act of the Chassidim was to establish a branch of Tomchei Temimim. Over the previous years, many of their own children had fallen behind in their learning, and *maggidei shiurim* were tapped to bring the *bochurim* up to their appropriate level. Reb Zalman was appointed to help guide the younger group of *zal*-age *bochurim*.

Reb Zalman was also responsible for restoring order to the *shechita* system.

When the Chassidim had arrived in Poking, they met Jews from other countries for the first time. The Russians had never seen Yidden dressed in that manner; dressed in their Shabbos finery, they seemed like angels. The Chassidim began eating from their *shechita* without compunction.

Reb Zalman wasn't pleased with this trusting attitude. He paid a visit to this specific group and asked to see their knives and their methods. He was not impressed with what he saw. Never one to speak badly about another Jew, he returned to the Chabad Chassidim and said, "The *shechita* that I saw doesn't appeal to me at all." He refused to say anything more, but they quickly decided to arrange their own *shechita*.

#### Paris—Destination: America

All the Chassidim had one destination in mind— America. The Frierdiker Rebbe had moved to New York several years earlier, and the Chassidim all planned to follow. That's why they settled in Poking (and similar camps) which were located in the American zone following the



REB ZALMAN DURING HIS YEARS IN PARIS.

war.

The problem was that to immigrate to America from the American Zone in Germany, one needed to have an affidavit affirming that they were present in the area since 1945, while the Chassidim had all arrived in 1946. When the news arrived that no such affidavits were needed in Paris, the Frierdiker Rebbe established the *Lishkah*, headed by Reb Binyomin Gorodetzky, with the goal of moving the Chassidim to Paris and, over time, to America. In the span of a few short months, some five hundred Chassidim had moved to Paris.

Once again, the Chassidim immediately established a Tomchei Temimim, and once again, Reb Zalman became one of its important features.

While in Paris, tragedy struck, and Reb Zalman suffered a stroke which would leave one side of his body paralyzed for the rest of his life. For quite some time, he was hospitalized, and afterwards, was mostly confined to his home.

In 5713, the family finally received the long-awaited visas to immigrate to America. The Joint Distribution Committee informed them that they would receive apartments in Cleveland, but they would stay in New York for a short visit beforehand. Now they would have the opportunity to see the Rebbe.

This was a very special moment. After the Frierdiker

5706-1946, 5713-1953

Rebbe's histalkus, Reb Zalman had enthusiastically signed the communal ksav hiskashrus to his own former Talmid and had sent panim of his own. When he had questions regarding medical treatment, he had written to the Rebbe for brachos and advice. Now, he would finally have the opportunity to have a yechidus.

The entire family—his wife, daughter, son-in-law, and grandchildren—entered the Rebbe's room together, while the *bochurim* crowded around the doorway, hoping to catch a glimpse.

As he walked in, the Rebbe stood up, walked a few steps forward to greet him, and asked him to be seated. Reb Zalman declined. Despite his physical infirmity, it was unthinkable to him that he would sit in *yechidus*. Mrs. Eda Shpringer recalls the Rebbe noting to Reb Zalman that they had sat together "oif ein bank—on one bench" so many years earlier—but Reb Zalman insisted on remaining standing.

With his *melamed* standing, the Rebbe wouldn't sit down either, so the entire half-hour *yechidus* was held standing. During that *yechidus*, the Rebbe told him that he should take pride in his *talmidim*, who were now spread all over the world.

#### Rabbi Shapiro's Recollections

Rabbi Leibel Shapiro, the Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshiva Gedolah in Miami, is Reb Zalman's grandson. He shared the following recollections:

"My earliest memory of my grandfather is from Paris,

where we lived until I was six years old. The Joint rented several locations around Paris to host the refugees of *anash*; we were set up in a hotel called *Modern*, where every family received one room. I remember jumping on my Zeide's bed and getting hurt...

"Later, we lived very close to each other in Cleveland, and soon after he moved to New York in 5719, I came to learn in New York as well. I arrived in Elul 5720, and I lived in his apartment until his passing, in Iyar 5723. My brother, Rabbi Sholom Ber Shapiro, and I slept in his kitchen. It seems strange to the modern ear, but we still had a very Russian mentality, and this was considered completely normal to us. It also gave us the opportunity to assist him and to learn from him.

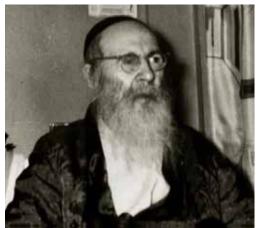
"In his later years, his eyesight began to deteriorate, and he couldn't learn normally with *seforim*. Instead, he used to review *Mishnayos baal peh*—those Mishnayos he had committed to memory when he was a young child. Whenever I would enter his house, he would be reciting Mishnayos. He would often tell us to take a Mishnayos and correct him if he made a mistake; so we got to learn Mishnayos with him too.

"His davening was a special thing to see. He said every word with such beauty and such *geshmak...* He was a person who was *avoda* through and through. I never heard him say a bad word about anyone. I only remember him once gently hinting to a family member about the importance of speaking only positively.

"When we lived in Cleveland, he was already paralyzed, but people knew that there was a venerable Yid



RABBI SCHAPIRO (LEFT) AS A BOCHUR WITH HIS BROTHERS IN CLEVELAND, OHIO, LATE 5720S.



REB ZALMAN DURING HIS YEARS IN CLEVELAND.

CHAPIRO FAMI

living in the city. People would come to visit him, and he would give a regular *shiur* in Chassidus.

"Every Yud-Tes Kislev, anash would arrange a big Yud-Tes Kislev farbrengen. My father, Reb Lipa Shapiro, usually gave the keynote address, and my Zeide would review a maamar. When my Zeide moved to New York, the Rebbe mentioned to my father in yechidus that now he had more work—he would need to review the maamar as well...

"My grandfather had an amazing way with words. His stroke paralyzed him physically, but his speech wasn't impaired—on the contrary, it was a pleasure to listen to him.

"When I was a young child, there was a Yud Shevat farbrengen at his house. He farbrenged about the concept of ein od milvado, and I remember understanding every word, despite my young age. At the end of the farbrengen, the balebatim were getting ready to head out into the snow when one person couldn't find his rubbers (galosh'n). As he began looking all over, he said to his friend, 'Where are my galosh'n?' His friend, without missing a beat, replied, 'What galosh'n, who galosh'n—ein od milvado!'

"In the late 5710s, my grandfather was thinking about moving to New York. He wanted to be closer to the Rebbe and live in the chassidishe environment of Crown Heights, and it was now feasible because one of his daughters had recently moved there from Cleveland. The only problem was that he received government support—they called it 'relief' at the time—from the state of Ohio, and certain details needed to be arranged before it would be possible for him to receive it in New York.

"I was in *yechidus* at the time with my father. The Rebbe told my father that there is a Yid named Friedman—a son of the Boyaner Rebbe—who works in the relief office of New York. We should reach out to him and tell him that the Rebbe asked for his assistance. Tell him, the Rebbe said, 'az ich gedenk noch di bleter gemara vos mir hoben gelerent tzuzamen—that I still remember the pages of Gemara we learned together.'

"When my Zeide finally arrived in New York, he went into *yechidus* again, accompanied by one of his grand-children. When my Zeide apologized to the Rebbe and said that he could not possibly stand, the Rebbe said that it wasn't a problem at all. If I remember correctly, I heard afterward that the Rebbe replied something to the effect of, 'Mit fertzig yor tzurik hoben mir gezetzen ba ein gemara, velen mir oich itzt zitzen tzuzamen—forty years ago we sat together over one Gemara; now we will sit

together again.'

"My Zeide wouldn't often speak about the Rebbe as his *talmid*; he would more often speak about the Rebbe as Rebbe. He was a true *mekushar*; whenever a new *sicha* came out, he would immediately learn it; I often heard him speak about the Rebbe in wondrous terms. To him, the Rebbe wasn't his student—it was his Rebbe, who he had the privilege of teaching so many years earlier.

"He would often ask me to bring to *Mazkirus* the letters and *panim* he wrote to the Rebbe. He never sealed the letters, so I noticed the concluding line—משתחוה הנני מול
That's how he would always write to the Rebbe. He never felt special in any way.

"Because he couldn't walk, he wasn't able to attend the Shabbos and Yom Tov Farbrengens, and the weekday Farbrengens—which in those years were not frequent—were very long, and it was difficult for him to remain. At the time, the benches in 770 didn't even have backs. So, he would come for part of the time. He would usually come at the beginning and stay as long as he could, and on occasion, he would come late and stay until the end.

"When he left, he would first make his way over from his place behind the Rebbe to say *l'chaim*, and as he left the room—not a quick process—the Rebbe would always stand up halfway, as he would do when reciting kiddush. If he came late, and entered in the middle of a *sicha*, the Rebbe would raise himself up all the same."

#### An Unprecedented Levaya

In Iyar of 5723, Reb Zalman suffered another stroke. The doctors wanted him to be hospitalized, and when the Rebbe heard about it, he said they should hire a full-time nurse, and he would cover the entire cost. Over the next few days, Reb Zalman's health began to deteriorate, and on Thursday night, 23 Iyar, he passed away.

A large crowd attended the *levaya* the next day. In an unprecedented fashion, the Rebbe participated in carrying the *aron*, and then got into his car to travel to the cemetery, remaining there until the end of the *kevura*. (The Rebbe remained outside the cemetery gate and watched the entire proceedings; he explained to Reb Shmuel Levitin—who accompanied the Rebbe in the car—that if he entered the cemetery, he would need to visit the Ohel too, and he hadn't made the proper *hachanos*.) The Rebbe paid for the entire expense of the *kevura*, and told the family to symbolically participate with one dollar.

At the farbrengen the next day, the Rebbe spoke about

5710s-1950s, 5723-1963







REB ZALMAN'S MATZEVA.

the unique merit of those who are buried after *chatzos* on Erev Shabbos—the Arizal writes that they are spared *chibut hakever*.

"When it came time to write the *matzeva*," relates Rabbi Shapiro, "my aunt brought the draft to the Rebbe in *yechidus*. The Rebbe commented, 'Farvos shteit do nit az er hot oich gelernt mit Yiddishe kinder—why doesn't it say here that he also learned with Jewish children?' The Rebbe continued: 'Ich bin an eidus—I can testify to that.' The Rebbe mentioned that there were other witnesses as well—such as Reb Nochum Goldshmidt.

"The Rebbe told my aunt that Reb Yisroel Jacobson was coming to *yechidus* that same evening. He was in charge of the *chevra kadisha*. 'Ich vel shoin mit em reidin vos tzu shreiben—I will discuss with him what to write.'

"My aunt waited in *Gan Eden Hatachton*, and when Rabbi Jacobson emerged, he gave her the text that was ultimately put on the monument, which included the words, "וזכה אשר כ"ק אדמו"ר למד ולימד ברבים ועם תלמידים, וזכה אשר כ"ק אדמו" אלמד אצלו he learned and taught Torah in public and with students, and had the merit that the Rebbe, R. M"M Shlit" a learned with him."

The Rebbe participated in the cost of the *matzeva* as well; he said that the two daughters should each pay a third (the sons were still in Russia at the time), and he would pay the final third.

#### He Put Me On My Feet

Rabbi Shapiro relates:

"When my brother Reb Sholom Ber had a baby boy in 5738, the Rebbe asked Rabbi Mindel—his father-in-law—what name they had chosen at the bris. He responded that they had named him after his great-grandfather, Reb Zalman Vilenkin. The Rebbe said to him, 'Er iz geven mein melamed—er iz geven a gehoibener Yid. Er hot mir arufgeshtelt oif di fis. He was my melamed. He was an exalted Jew. He stood me up on my feet. Der rach hanimol zol gein in zeine vegen. The new baby should go in his ways."

- 1. Interview in JEM's Early Years vol. 1.
- 2. Published in Likkutei Levi Yitzchok—Igros Kodesh, p. 207.
- 3. See "The Great Escape," Derher Adar II 5782.



Much of the information in this article, and much more, can be found in the forthcoming book, **Legacy of Resilience**, The Remarkable Journey of the Schapiro Family, by Nuchie Schapiro.

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** 

# Let's Talk About Eretz Yisroel

THROUGHTHE LENS
OF THE REBBE'S TORAH

Fake Peace (2)

COMPILED BY:

RABBI MENDEL MISHOLOVIN

WRITTEN BY:

RABBI LEVI GREENBERG (TX)

n 1949, the Chinese Communist Party gained control of mainland China after a prolonged civil war, and the original government retreated to the island of Taiwan. As part of its broader Cold War strategy to contain communism, the United States signed a mutual defense treaty with Taiwan on December 2, 1954, committing the US to defend Taiwan from aggression, especially from China. The treaty was ratified by the US Senate on February 9, 1955.

On December 15, 1978, the United States announced it would recognize the People's Republic of China as the sole legal governing body of mainland China and unilaterally terminate its treaty with Taiwan. President Jimmy Carter made this decision alone, without consulting Congress. Overnight, a twenty-five-year-old defense treaty, which could have held many more decades, disappeared because of one man's decision.

The timing of this stunning international drama was no coincidence. At the time, Israel was negotiating the details of the proposed peace treaty with Egypt, based on the framework agreed upon at the Camp David Summit earlier that year. Israel had tragically capitulated to many of the Egyptian demands to retreat from the Sinai and give up its natural resources, and Egypt was demanding more. Many of these concessions had been made based on US promises of financial and military aid for Israel. The announcement of the unilateral withdrawal from the Mutual Defense Treaty with Taiwan was a clear reminder to the Israeli delegation how international treaties are ultimately treated, and why negotiating away crucial security needs on such terms was delusional and reckless.

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In the fall of 1956, Israel, in cooperation with France and England, conquered the Sinai Peninsula from Egypt in a war known as the Suez Crisis. International backlash was fierce, and US President Eisenhower threatened Israel with severe economic sanctions if it did not retreat from the Sinai. Five months later, Israeli forces withdrew from the huge territory they had miraculously liberated in just nine days of fighting.

Some years later, the United States questioned why Israel had agreed to the withdrawal, implying that Israel should have remained there to protect itself and ensure the Suez Canal remained open to international trade and not subject to the whims of a despot like Egyptian President Nasser. The US had threatened Israel with sanctions for the sake of



performative politics, in its broader Cold War struggle with the USSR, but it had never expected them to actually retreat. Although deference to strong allies is generally appropriate, it should never be done at the expense of a country's security and prosperity.

The same was true about most of the issues discussed at the Camp David Summit, especially the most dangerous one: allowing autonomy for the Arabs living in the West Bank and Gaza, areas Israel had liberated during the Six-Day War. Although it was presented as an ethical imperative for Israel to facilitate such an arrangement, in truth, even entertaining such a formula, and especially implementing it, would spell disaster for the Yidden living in Eretz Yisroel. This fact was plainly clear to all of Israel's leaders who had repeatedly proclaimed that, while they were eager to negotiate with their neighbors and willing to give away land for the sake of peace, the idea of creating a sovereign Arab state in the West Bank and Gaza was unthinkable.

The fact that autonomy was a topic for discussion at the summit was largely performative politics. Egyptian President Anwar Sadat demanded it as lip service to the rest of the Arab world, which was opposed to



MAP DETAILING THE BATTLE OVER THE SUEZ CANAL.

his entering negotiations with Israel in the first place. Since they were politically affiliated with his rivals in Egypt, Arab autonomy in the territories would weaken Sadat's overall political position. Most importantly, he had no mandate to speak on their behalf in the first place. Surprisingly, President Carter pressured Israel to consider the idea, and both sides even agreed upon a framework for how it could happen.

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The Rambam describes in Moreh Nevuchim (Part 1, Chapter 71) how early philosophers would first invent a theory and then force reality to conform to the theory. In truth, however, reality dictates how one evaluates any situation and how to develop formulas to deal with it. At Camp David, when discussing autonomy, the diplomats and politicians engaged in bizarre conversations that had nothing to do with the facts on the ground.

Some claimed the Arabs in the territories were willing to live peacefully side by side with Israel; a blatant lie since attacks against Jews were happening with alarming frequency, with the support of the local Arab population. Besides, the new generation of Arabs was radicalized and considered Israel a blight to their religious sensibilities, which could not be tolerated.

The word "autonomy" originates from the Ancient Greek word "autonomia," meaning "self-governance" or "independence." After all parties agreed to include the word in the framework signed in the Camp David Accords, they started arguing what the word would mean in practice. While the Israelis thought they could limit Arab autonomy to administrative, educational, and civil governance, everyone understood it was a matter of time before the Arabs would procure weapons and become a lethal army, minutes away from urban and rural Jewish populations throughout the land.

When a crack appears in a dam, hanging up a sign next to the crack proclaiming it is fixed does not stop water from leaking through. The crack will only get bigger and eventually cause catastrophic flooding. Calling the disastrous Camp David Accords and the

discussions about autonomy a framework for a "peace treaty" was exactly that.

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The greatest travesty of this conversation was the fact that Jews were openly claiming that the land did not inherently belong to Am Yisroel, and that the territories Hashem gifted them through miraculous victories belonged to others. Instead of acknowledging and appreciating Hashem's kindness by annexing and settling the liberated territories, they offered to give it away through diplomatic theatrics, constituting a tremendous *Chilul Hashem*.

Although autonomy was included in the framework of the Camp David Accords, nothing came of it until the fall of 1991. Leveraging American financial assistance to Israel for the large-scale absorption of immigrants from the former Soviet Union, President George Bush pressured Israeli Prime Minister Yitzchak Shamir to participate in the Madrid Conference. At this two-day meeting in Madrid, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) under the leadership of Yasser Arafat *yimach shmo vezichro*, was considered the legitimate representative of the Arabs living in Gaza and the West Bank, and were proclaimed viable "partners" in a potential "peace agreement" with Israel through granting them autonomy.

For two years prior, the Rebbe consistently urged Shamir to reject these negotiations at all costs. When Elyakim Rubinstein, one of Shamir's advisors, came to the Rebbe for dollars on 14 Cheshvan 5750 (Living Torah #97), the Rebbe declared that the only successful way to deal with American pressure is to never compromise on vital issues. "It cannot be expected of Israel to do something contrary to its survival... This is contrary to the nature of the United States, [which] was founded and survived by taking a strong stance, that on issues critical to its survival, it would not compromise... Explain that [rejecting the talks] is not out of stubbornness. It is a matter of survival, and it is in the interest of the United States that Eretz Yisroel is strong in the Middle East, because Eretz Yisroel is their only true partner."

Two months after the Madrid Conference, following



THE REBBE SPEAKS WITH MOSHE KATZAV, THEN ISRAEL'S TRANSPORTATION MINISTER, AFTER MAARIV ON MOTZEI YUD SHVAT 5752.

Maariv on Motzei Yud Shevat 5752, the Rebbe distributed dollars and spoke to Israeli Minister of Transportation, Moshe Katzav, for over ten minutes about how dangerous and reckless these negotiations were. "Merely discussing autonomy is a Chilul Hashem. While it is a personal matter when individual Jews in Eretz Yisroel do not observe Torah and Mitzvos, the autonomy plan amounts to the Israeli government declaring war on Hashem and His Torah... This is not a diplomatic matter, but rather a discussion about surrendering portions of Eretz Yisroel, chas v'shalom!"

Tragically, the Madrid talks led to the Oslo Accords and all the subsequent "agreements" which have endangered the Yidden in Eretz Yisroel and around the world and caused constant bloodshed, *Rachmana litzlan*. An illustration of the fact that peace in Eretz Yisroel can only be achieved through following the teachings and dictates of Torah.

#### **NEXT MONTH:**

While trusting in Hashem, we must do our part to ensure security.

**Primary Sources:** Sichos Kodesh 5739 vol. 1, p. 440; Ibid. vol. 2, p. 322; Ibid. 5740 vol. 3, p. 45; Toras Menachem Hisvaaduyos 5752 vol. 2, p. 376; Make Peace, Chapters 11 and 13.

\* 5750-1989, 5752-1992

#### IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF CHASSIDIM

לזכות החייל בצבאות ה' מאיר שלמה שיחי' ניו שיגרום נח"ר לכ"ק אדמו"ר לרגל יום הולדתו כ"ה מנחם-אב נדפס ע"י משפחתו שיחיו

# The Original Pinye

By: Rabbi Mendy Greenberg (Twinsburg, OH)

The Althaus family looms large in Lubavitch history. Reb Elya Chaim, Reb Binyamin, Reb Pinye—all exceptional characters and devoted Chassidim of the Rabbeim. The patriarch of the family, Reb Pinchas Todros became a chossid of the Tzemach Tzedek and founded the chassidishe community in Nikolayev, the Rebbe's hometown. The following account, written by his grandson, tells the story of Reb Pinye's life.

# The Origin Story

My grandfather, Reb Pinchas Todros, was originally from Lithuania. Because of fear of the *chapers*<sup>1</sup> his family moved to a small town in Courland. But even there, things were unsettled, and Reb Pinchas and his two older brothers eventually fled to Königsberg.

His family were staunch *misnagdim*—followers of the Vilna Gaon who firmly opposed Chassidus. The brothers were completely immersed in Torah study, barely ever leaving the *beis midrash*. Their meager meals were brought to them there, and they would nap briefly on the benches to regain strength before continuing their learning. They only went home for Shabbos. My Zaide, himself a notable *talmid chacham*, would speak with deep admiration about his older brothers, saying, "My brother Eli—he was truly great. I didn't even reach his ankles!"

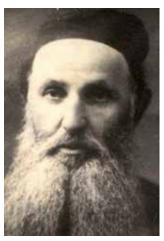
What caused Zaide—still just a teenager of about 17—to suddenly leave his brothers and pursue a life

of Chassidus remains unknown. One day, he left his father's home and his brothers behind and set off—by foot, with a walking stick and a pack on his back—to Lubavitch, the heart of Chabad Chassidus. He traveled for many days, through forests and over rivers, until he arrived. The Rebbe at the time, the Tzemach Tzedek, warmly greeted the young Litvak and drew him close. Reb Pinchas settled in Lubavitch, married, and started a family.

But his time in Lubavitch didn't last long. A devastating cholera epidemic swept through the area, claiming many lives, including those of his wife and all his children.

Around that time, a second wave of Jewish pioneers began moving from White Russia to the southern Russian plains.<sup>2</sup> With ox-drawn wagons, they made the slow, difficult journey. Along the way, they buried their dead and gave birth to new life—until they finally arrived at their new settlements.

The Tzemach Tzedek instructed the young widow-



THE FAMED CHASSID, REB ELYE CHAIM ALTHAUS, SON OF REB PINYE.



THE ORIGINAL CHABAD SHUL IN NIKOLAYEV.

er to join this journey as his personal representative. No official letter of appointment was given, because a Rebbe's authority isn't like a government office. With no title or written mandate, purely with inner strength and spirit, my Zaide inspired and led the group, first on the journey, and then in building their new lives.

# A Nikolayev Farbrengen

Although his passport listed his official occupation as "farmer," Reb Pinchas Todros actually lived in the city of Nikolayev. People from farming colonies near and far would turn to him—for advice, for help, or just to hear a warm word when their hearts were heavy, or when they needed a bit of joy and inspiration.<sup>3</sup>

Though he was poor and barely managed to support his family, he was rich in spirit. A deep, unshakable joy filled his heart, rooted in his firm *emuna*. It was part of his nature, part of his blood, and Chassidus only deepened and broadened its horizons. His sharp Litvisher mind worked hand in hand with that joyful spirit, and together, they made him someone to whom people naturally gravitated.

My mother once told this story: At the time, they lived in the military district of the city, in a courtyard belonging to an old Greek man. It was a freezing winter night. Everyone in the house was asleep, and even my father had closed his *sefer* and gone to bed. Suddenly, there was a knock on the window. My grandfather jumped up. "Who's there?" he called.

"Chevre!" came the answer—it was three chassidishe yungeleit: one from this colony, one from another, and the third—a dear guest—was the young shochet from Otchakov. They had arrived late; where would they go if not the home of Pinchas Todros?

Zaide ran to the door, opened it wide, and welcomed them with a beaming smile, warm handshakes, and hearty pats on the back. The guests, wrapped in frost and steaming from the cold, slipped inside, a bit embarrassed, huddling near the stove to warm up.

"Riva!" he called to his wife. "Riva, wake up! We have guests, guests!" Without missing a beat, she got dressed, greeted them with a smile, and immediately went to the stove to prepare a big pot of *fish kartofels*—potatoes flavored as if they had been cooked with fish, spiced with onions and pepper—though no actual fish ever made it into the pot. It was the classic poor man's dish.

Meanwhile, Zaide put on his coat and headed out into the pitch-black night to hunt down a bottle of *mashke*. "Yagaata umatzasa, taamin!" says the Gemara. Sure enough, not long after, he came back glowing, pulling the long-awaited bottle from his coat.

By now, the children were awake. The unexpected excitement lit up the house. They quickly dressed, eager to see the guests and soak in the joyful atmosphere. Zaide sat down at the table with the guests and opened a *maamar chassidus*. Then they washed, said *hamotzi*, and warmed their hearts with one *l'chaim*, and another,

and another. As the joy built up, someone began to sing the Alter Rebbe's *niggun*, "*Tzama Lecha Nafshi*," and soon they were soaring from one *niggun* to the next. The hearts were lifted, the room was glowing.

Suddenly, one of the guests jumped up—he couldn't contain himself anymore—and burst into dance. His friend joined him, caught in the same fire, then the third, and Zaide among them. The children clapped along to the rhythm, dancing and singing. After a while, Zaide went outside, brought in some straw from the shed, and laid it out by the stove as beds for the guests. "My father's home was eternally joyful," my mother said.

# The Gabbai's Account

But it wasn't only from my mother that I heard about Zaide's special qualities. One Shabbos, during davening at the "Poilishe shul," a bunch of kids—myself included—were misbehaving. The gabbai, Reb Aharon Zayablin, came over and scolded us. All the other kids ran away. But me? Maybe I was too slow. Maybe I was just too proud. I didn't move.

The man came up to me and asked, "Why didn't you run away like the others?"

I stayed quiet and looked down at the floor.

He bent down, gently lifted my chin with his finger, and looked me in the eyes. "Whose child are you?"

I told him.

He asked again, "Is your mother's name Rasya? Was your grandfather Reb Pinchas Todros?"

I nodded.

"In that case," he said, "you're allowed to stay."

Then he pulled me aside and told me, "I was once a child too, and I used to play with the other boys. Do you know what our best moments were? When your grandfather would come to our shul on Shabbos. As soon as he arrived, all the children would flock to him. He was just like one of us—he would play with us, talk with us. The things we learned from him! We followed him like little chicks after their mother. We hung onto every word he said. We loved him with all our hearts."

What's amazing is that Zaide wasn't much of a talker. He actually stuttered a bit and had trouble speaking. But Reb Aharon Zayablin, who recalled him with such fondness, seemed to forget that. Clearly, there was something about my grandfather that completely overshadowed his speech—and made him a person everyone wanted to talk to.

As I mentioned earlier, Zaide was poor. No matter how many people admired him or how sharp and clever he was, he never managed to establish himself financially. In those days, the Jewish community of Nikolayev was small, and most of its members were well-off. A few respected householders got together and decided to



NIKOLAYEV APPROXIMATELY 150 YEARS AGO.

help Reb Pinchas get on his feet—they opened a tobacco shop for him. But Zaide wasn't successful in business, and eventually had to close the store.

For years afterward, he sold lottery tickets for a living. At the same time, he gave regular *shiurim* in Gemara and Halacha to older *bochurim* who had aged out of *cheder* but kept learning on their own.

I don't think Zaide lacked practical skills. It's just that the back-and-forth world of business—the bargaining, the marketplace—was completely foreign to his spirit. It clouded his joy. And joy, true inner joy, was the very essence of who he was.

# The "Rambam"

Zaide's joy was endless and infectious. Every day was a new adventure for him, full of wonder. He never got upset about being woken from sleep—instead, he would smile as if to say thank you for bringing him back to life.

That was how he was year-round—and all the more so on Shabbos and Yom Tov, especially on days of joy like Simchas Torah, Purim, and most of all, Yud-Tes Kislev—the day the Alter Rebbe was liberated.

Simply through his presence, Zaide brought people closer to Chassidus. One such person was a young man named Meir, a brush-maker, who had drifted away from Yiddishkeit and gotten caught up in a life of 'entertainment.' While everyone else avoided him, Zaide welcomed him in. Eventually, he did full *teshuva*, grew a beard and *payos*, and became a dedicated *lamdan*.

Back then, it was common among Chassidim to refer to each other by *roshei teivos*. Zaide was known as "RaPaT" (Reb Pinchas Todros). He jokingly gave this *baal teshuva* his own set of initials: "RaMBaM"—Reb Meir Bershteleh-Macher (Brush-maker). It may have been a joke, but the name stuck with him well into his old age.

I never met my Zaide—he passed away many years before I was born. But I did see the "Rambam," the nickname Zaide gave that *baal teshuva*. He was blind in both eyes, an elderly man who never left the Chabad shul; that's where he learned and taught. One of his students, an orphan from childhood, eventually became one of the elder Chassidim in Kfar Chabad.

Zaide loved animals. Whenever he made a *bracha* on bread, he would tear off a piece, dip it in the soup, and lean down to feed it to the cat that waited patiently by his chair.

And he had compassion for every person. There was a woman who lived in their courtyard—a destitute widow. Her husband had died in a work accident, and she was left all alone with a baby in her arms. She was from the far north and known locally as "the Katsapkeh." One bitterly cold winter morning, Zaide left the house to go to the *beis midrash*, but quickly turned back. "Riva," he said to my grandmother, "invite the Katsapkeh and her baby to come stay here for a while—it must be freezing in her room."

It's no wonder that Dr. Matos, Zaide's physician, burst into tears walking behind the funeral and cried out, "*Pana ziva, pana hadara*, the beauty and splendor of Nikolayev is gone!"

He was quite a character, this doctor. A captain in the navy, dressed in a sharp uniform with a sword at his side—but that was just the exterior. Inside, he was a warmhearted Lithuanian Jew, a sharp and brilliant *yeshiva bochur* at heart. Torah never left him. How he ended up in the naval academy in Petersburg, or in a permanent military post, I don't know. And there are other details I never uncovered—perhaps the most important of all: whether, at any point along his unusual path, he had formally abandoned his Yiddishkeit. He had a civilian medical practice in addition to his naval service, and when he met Zaide, he was drawn to him. He would visit from time to time, sit with him privately, and pour out his heart.

Zaide passed away on a Friday evening, right after *licht-bentchen*, with a volume of Gemara in his hands. During his final illness, he asked that a wooden plank be placed in his arms, so he could rest the Gemara on it and finish the *masechta*. Finishing a *masechta* is usually a joyous occasion—with friends gathered, cups raised, *niggunim* sung, and dancing—but he didn't merit that. He passed at age 54. •

Account by Emanuel Harusi, formerly Novograbelsky. His memoirs of Nikolayev, published in the Barada Teshura of 3 Teves 5779, paint a fascinating picture of the city and its Chassidim.

<sup>1.</sup> Those who would kidnap Jewish boys for the Czar's army.

This is a reference to the Kolonyes. See "Fields of Faith," Derher Adar I 5784.

<sup>3.</sup> For more about the origins of the Nikolayev community, see "Cradle of Greatness," Derher Nissan 5781.

# נשי ובנור חב"ו

# MENACHEM-AV

N'SHEI U'BNOS CHABAD

/|\

BY: RABBI SHNEUR ITZINGER לע"נ מרת **צייטיל גיטל** בת ר' אלטר יהושע ע"ה **ביסטאן** נלב"ע **כ"ף מנחם-אב** ה'תשס"ט **ת'נ'צ'ב'ה**'

נדפס ע"י בנה הרה"ת ר' יוסף יצחק וזוגתו מרת ביילא רחל ומשפחתם שיחיו ביסטאן

#### A SURPRISE SPEAKER — THE REBBE HIMSELF

It wasn't every day that a large group of girls would join Mincha in 770's main shul. But on 27 Menachem-Av 5738, as summer camp concluded, the campers and staff of Camp Emunah were invited into the shul to daven with the Rebbe's *minyan* behind a specially erected *mechitza*, rather than in the usual *vaiber shul* section.

The biggest surprise, however, was still to come. What was expected to be a gathering with words from the camp staff took an extraordinary turn when the Rebbe told Rabbi J.J. Hecht, the camp director, "*Ich vel oich reden* – I too will address (the girls)."

What follows is the full transcript of that special *sicha*, as edited at the time by the Rebbe himself in English. (*Section titles and footnotes have been added here.*)

The sicha can be found at: Chabad.org/2604639

After<sup>1</sup> the children recited the Twelve Torah verses and Talmudic Passages, the Rebbe Shlita addressed them as follows:

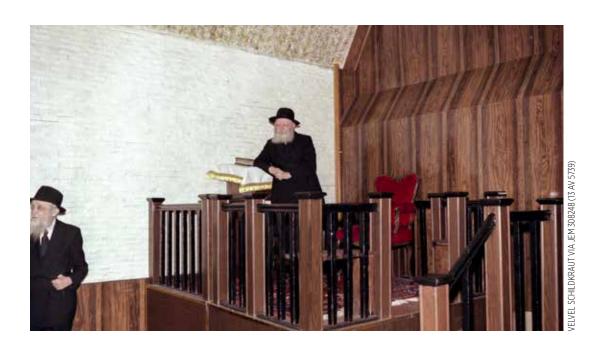
In addition to what was said recently to the children of the day camps<sup>2</sup> (subsequently published, and no doubt conveyed to you) —

Which, of course, is meant also for you, as well as for other girls returning from summer camps,

We will say a few words especially for the benefit of Jewish daughters, Jewish girls.

#### CHINUCH AT EVERY TURN

There is the well-known teaching of the Baal Shem Tov (often repeated by my father-in-law of saintly memory, the Nasi — head — of our generation) that everything a Jew (young or old) sees or hears, should make him think what lesson he should learn from it to improve his con-



duct in the everyday life — in any situation; bearing in mind that whatever the situation, it is connected with a Jew's main purpose in life, which is to serve G-d.

This, of course, is connected with *Emunah* (which is also the name of your camp) — faith in G-d, which every Jew (young and old) believes deeply —:

Since every Jew believes that G-d created the world and keeps it going every minute, including this very moment, it follows that everything that happens at any given moment comes from G-d. Therefore, everything that comes within the sight or hearing of a person must have some meaning for that person, seeing that G-d has brought it to his (or her) attention.

It is also certain that this meaning has to do with the (abovementioned) purpose for which he (or she) has been created. For, since G-d declares that every Jew is "the work of My Hands, to be proud of," the better one serves G-d, the prouder and more glorified G-d is.

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What has been said above is part of a person's education (Chinuch).

Now, you have surely heard of the "Chinuch Campaign," which helps Jewish children in their education, so that they should know how to conduct themselves not only when they are young, but also later on, when they become grown-ups.

Children's education begins even before they start school.

The Gemoro rules (and the Alter Rebbe includes it

in his Shulchan Aruch) that as soon as a child begins to speak, his father should teach him Torah, etc. Thus, long before the child begins to go to school, his (or her) Jewish education begins.

Even toys and games are a way of teaching little children, boys and girls.

#### MORE THAN A DOLL— CRADLING THE FUTURE

Let us talk about girls' toys and see what can be learned from them.

One of the favorite pastimes of little girls is to play with dolls.

The purpose of giving a doll to a little Jewish girl is to help prepare her for the time when G-d will bless her to become a wife and mother, and will take care of her own home. She will then know how to conduct her home in the way G-d wants her to, and, especially, how to bring up her children in the way G-d wants them to be raised.

So, when the girl is still very young, she is given a doll made of plastic or other material, which looks just like a little baby, to play with and "take care" of.

Later, when the little girl grows bigger, she begins to help her mother in her Jewish kitchen. When mother bakes Challah for Shabbos, she gives her little girl a piece of dough to let her make her own little Challah, and involves her also in other preparations for Shabbos and Yom Tov and in the general conduct of the home.

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Other (non-Jewish) peoples also have their own ways of bringing up their children. But our Jewish people certainly was the first to show what true education is and how to bring up and train Jewish children in Yiddishkeit from a very tender age.

And in the case of Jewish daughters — special attention is given them to train them, when they are still very young, how to go about with children and domestic chores.

All of which prepares a Jewish daughter for her serious and important role, when she will be in charge of the "Chinuch Campaign" in her own home.

Of course, every Jewish girl, on her part, must do her best to make the fullest use of this learning and training period.

#### **CHAMISHA ASAR B'AV**

The month of Menachem-Av includes a unique day with a powerful message for Jewish women: *Chamisha Asar B'Av*.

On this day, the Mishna<sup>3</sup> tells us, Jewish girls would go out into the fields to find their match. Dressed in white, they would call out to their future husbands, encouraging them to look beyond external beauty: "Grace is deceptive and beauty is vain; a woman who fears Hashem—she shall be praised (Isha yiras Hashem hi sis'halal)"<sup>4</sup>.

The message, as the Rebbe once wrote in a letter<sup>5</sup> to a woman, is timeless. Every Jewish woman and girl, whether single or married, should educate herself and her family in a holy manner (al taharas hakodesh), with yiras Hashem. Through this, she becomes worthy of the title "akeres habayis: the pillar of the home"—a role of the highest zechus and responsibility. Its foundation is being an isha yiras Hashem. In this way, she brings Hashem's brachos into every part of life, and Hashem certainly gives her the strength to live up to this mandate.

#### BUDDING "BALEBOSTE"

To be sure, learning to raise children and taking care of the home are duties and responsibilities that come after marriage; thus there is ample time to train for them since the training begins at an early age. Therefore, the training can be done slowly and gradually, in the course of time.

There are, however, certain duties which have to be fulfilled long before marriage, and the preparation for them must begin earlier and proceed at a faster pace.

This brings us to the important subject, about which we have spoken many times, and should now be emphasized again, namely, the matter of lighting the candles of Shabbos and Yom-Toy.

Every Jewish girl, on reaching the age of Bas Mitzvah, has to fulfill the Mitzvah of lighting a candle (in good time before sunset) in honor of the holy Shabbos and Yom-Tov.

But before reaching the age of Bas Mitzvah, there is the Mitzvah of Chinuch, requiring that as soon as a Jewish girl is old enough to understand something about the importance of this shining Mitzvah, she should start lighting candles regularly, before every Shabbos and Yom-Tov.

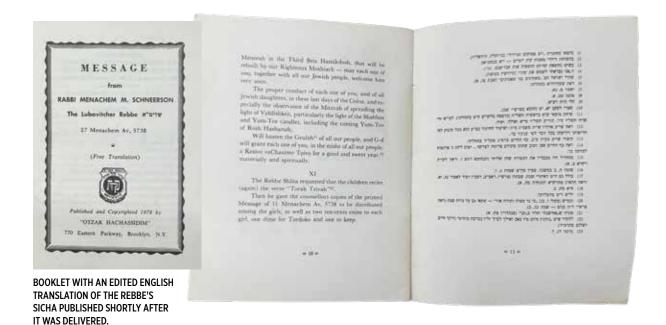
I am sure that everyone of you — having so often heard about this great Mitzvah — does light the Shabbos and Yom-Tov candles regularly, and also fulfills the good custom (at any rate from time to time, and *bli-neder*) of giving Tzedakah (a penny or several cents) — before lighting the candles.



One cannot overemphasize the importance of every Jewish girl's conduct, for it is she, along with her mother and older sisters, who was given the privileged assignment to bring the sacred light of Shabbos and Yom-Tov into the Jewish home. And it is a very meaningful assignment.

As soon as she reaches the age of Chinuch (when her training to do Mitzvos begins) — she learns to recite the *Berachah*, blessing G-d, and thanking Him, especially, for giving her the honor of fulfilling the Mitzvah that fills the house with holy light,

Which prepares her also for the time when she will be married and will fill her home with light in her role as *Akeres Habayis*, the Baleboste of her house.



And when she will be blessed with children, including daughters, whom she will raise in the same way as she had been raised, that they, too, will bring the light of Yiddishkeit into their homes, which will make their homes bright and happy in every way.

In this way, the whole world also becomes brighter and happier.

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Since "G-d rewards in kind" (according to the nature of the Mitzvah) — the reward for fulfilling the Mitzvah of lighting the Holy Shabbos candles is of the same kind, in terms of light.

This is — as can be seen from the Zohar — that through the Mitzvah of the Holy Shabbos candles the Mazal of the person lighting them brightens up, as well as the Mazal of the whole household; and, in the case of little girls it brightens especially the Mazal of her parents and teachers who trained her to do Mitzvos in general, and the Mitzvah of the candle-lighting in particular.

In this way, the Mazal of all Jews in the neighborhood also shines more brightly, as well as the Mazal of the whole world.

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Last but not least — this will bring the fulfillment of the Divine promise: "If you keep the Mitzvah of the Shabbos lights, I will show you the Lights of Zion (the Beis HaMikdash)"

For, the observance of this Mitzvah, together with

the other Mitzvos, will bring closer the Geulah, when the Kohanim will once again kindle the lights of the holy Menorah in the Third Beis HaMikdash, that will be rebuilt by our Righteous Mashiach — may each one of you, together with all our Jewish people, welcome him very soon.

The proper conduct of each one of you, and of all Jewish daughters, in these last days of the *Galus*, and especially the observance of the Mitzvah of spreading the light of Yiddishkeit, particularly the light of the Shabbos and Yom-Tov candles, including the coming Yom-Tov of Rosh Hashanah,

Will hasten the *Geuloh* of all our people, and G-d will grant each one of you, in the midst of all our people, a *Kesivah VaChasimah Tovah* for a good and sweet year, materially and spiritually.



The Rebbe Shlita requested that the children recite (again) the verse "Torah Tzivah."

Then he gave the counselors copies of the printed Message of 11 Menachem Av, 5738 to be distributed among the girls, as well as two ten-cents coins to each girl, one dime for Tzedakah and one to keep. 

1

\*\* 5738-1978 45

<sup>1. 27</sup> Menachem-Av 5738. SIE.org/2604639.

<sup>2. 11</sup> Menachem-Av 5738. SIE.org/2604636.

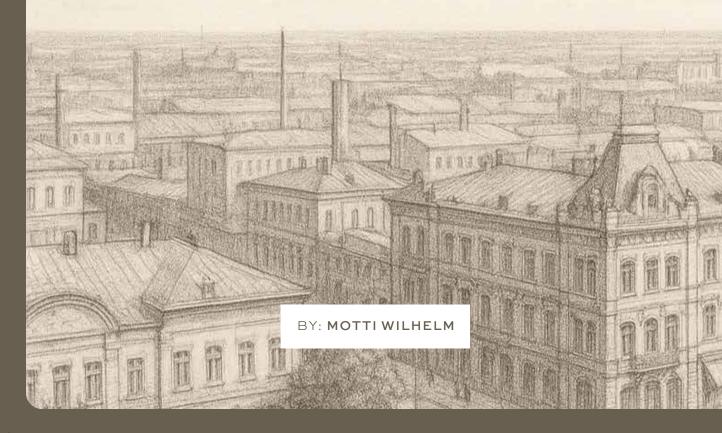
<sup>3.</sup> Taanis 4, 8.

<sup>4.</sup> Mishlei 31, 30.

<sup>5.</sup> Igros Kodesh vol. 28, p. 296.

# Relocating the. Capital

THE REBBE RASHAB'S MOVE TO ROSTOV





### Rostov-on-Don

The origins of the city of Rostov trace back to the establishment of a fortress on the banks of the Don River, known as "The Fortress of Dmitri Rostovsky," in the year 5521 (1761). Over time, settlers gathered around the fortress, gradually forming a community. By 5556 (1796), the settlement was officially chartered, receiving legal recognition as a town and adopting the name Rostov, after the fortress. In 5567 (1806), it was renamed Rostov-on-Don to distinguish it from another city by the same name.

Around this time, a small Jewish community began to take root in Rostov. The community grew significantly when the city was included in the Pale of Settlement—the region of the Russian Empire where Jews were permitted to reside—until 5648 (1888), despite being located on its periphery.

In 5596 (1836), the first year the local census recorded religious affiliation, seventy-three Jewish families were documented as living in Rostov-on-Don,<sup>3</sup> and their numbers continued to grow in the following years. By 5646 (1886), the Jewish population had risen to approximately 10,000 within a general population of 80,000.

Like many Jewish communities in the Russian Empire, the Jews of Rostov endured government decrees, partial expulsions, pogroms, and state-sponsored antisemitism. Despite these hardships, the community continued to grow and flourish, establishing shuls, batei medrash, and chadorim. Among them was a Chabad shul, evidence of which remains in the form of seforim stamped with "Beis Hamedrash HaElyon Chabad Rostov Al Nahar Don."

## From Rostov to Lubavitch

In 5648 (1888), Rostov was removed from the Pale of Settlement, and Jews were forbidden from moving to the city. Only those already residing there were permitted to remain.

This posed a significant challenge for the community, which had long relied on bringing *melamdim*, *shochtim*, *chazzanim*, and other *klei kodesh* from other Jewish centers. In response, in 5673 (1913), the community established an organization named "Orthodox" to identify talented local children and send them to *yeshivos*, ensuring they would be trained to return and serve in these essential roles in Rostov.

To find the most suitable yeshiva for this initiative, the organization sent a messenger, Rabbi Sholom Baranchik, to visit the *yeshivos* of the time. Despite having studied in the Novardok yeshiva himself, after visiting several institutions, he selected Tomchei Tmimim in Lubavitch as the ideal choice. He then met with the Rebbe Rashab, who gave his approval.

The first group of students from Rostov numbered eight, soon joined by another four. The "Orthodox" organization covered all expenses for their lodging and meals, renting a home for them in Lubavitch and appointing the *Tomim* Yaakov Eizik Blotner, who later recorded his memories of these events<sup>5</sup>—as their supervisor.

This group became known for their exemplary conduct and the strong supervision they received. As a result, several other boys, despite not coming from Rostov, joined them, including Hendel Futerfas—later known as Hendel





OLDEST ACTIVE SHUL IN ROSTOV, CALLED THE "SOLDIERS SHUL." BUILT BY RETIRED CANTONTIST SOLDIERS IN 5632, IT WAS GREATLY DAMAGED IN A POGROM BEFORE BEING RESTORED.

Lieberman—and Yaakov Yosef Raskin.

The group received periodic visits from the vice chairman of "Orthodox," Rabbi Eliyahu Yitzchok Cohen, who checked on their well-being. During one of these visits, he set events into motion that would ultimately lead to the Rebbe Rashab moving the capital of Chabad to his hometown.

# From Lubavitch to Rostov

In 5674 (1914), World War I broke out, and by the summer of 5675 (1915), the Germans were approaching Lubavitch. Facing the dangers of the frontline—both from the Germans and the Russians—the Rebbe Rashab began considering a temporary relocation from Lubavitch.

Reb Yehuda Chitrik, who was a *bochur* in Tomchei Tmimim at the time, described this period in his memoirs, printed in *Reshimas Devorim*:<sup>6</sup>

"After Yom Tov [Sukkos], it became known that Rebbetzin Shterna Sarah, had gathered five individuals—the *mashpia* Reb Shmuel Gronem, the chossid Reb Shmuel Gurary, the chossid Reb Shmuel Michel Treinin, and two others (whose names I do not recall)—and presented them with the following concern:

"Since the German army had advanced, nearing Minsk from one side and Polotsk from the other, and now stood at the gates of Polotsk, the battle-field was drawing dangerously close to Vitebsk. The wicked Nikolai Nikolaevich, the Tsar's uncle and commander of the army, had already expelled Jews living near the front. In several locations, he had even issued warnings to the rabbis that if any disruptions to the war effort were traced to their communities, they would be held personally responsible. Additionally, there was concern that the Russian government would take prominent individuals as hostages. If the Germans gained control, they too would seize influential figures.

"For these reasons, the Rebbetzin sought their opinion on whether the Rebbe Rashab should temporarily relocate deeper into Russia until the turmoil of war subsided. Many other *rabbanim* and *Admorim* in Poland had already done so.

"The assembled Chassidim responded with a question: 'And what is the Rebbe's own opinion?'



The Rebbetzin replied, 'The Rebbe's view is that there is no reason to wait. The move should happen as quickly as possible. However, the destination has not yet been decided.'

"The gathered Chassidim answered: 'If the Rebbe himself is concerned about this and has reached a decision, then our opinion is entirely nullified. We wholeheartedly agree with whatever the Rebbe deems necessary."

In his memoirs, Reb Yaakov Eizik Blotner records how the city of Rostov became an option.

"During those days, as this discussion was taking place in the home of the Rebbe Rashab, Reb Eliyahu Yitzchak Cohen, vice chairman of Orthodox, arrived for his regular visit with the bochurim from Rostov. He was invited to join the conversation.

"When the topic of relocating the Rebbe's household was being discussed, Reb Eliyahu Yitzchak Cohen, with his characteristic simplicity and sincerity, suggested: 'Rebbe, come to us in Rostov!"

The Frierdiker Rebbe also penned a lengthy *reshima* describing the meeting and the suggestions of each individual:

"After a discussion and a meeting that lasted about five hours, it was decided that we would travel

THE
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RASHAB'S
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together. R.S.G.'s opinion was Kislovodsk, while R.S.M. was unsure of a destination, only that it should not be too far. I shared my opinion, suggesting Leipzig, Slavyansk, Belgorod, and Rostov."8

On Thursday, 13 Marcheshvan 5676, the Rebbe Rashab visited the *Ohalim* of the Tzemach Tzedek and Rebbe Maharash, where he spent about four hours. The Frierdiker Rebbe writes that upon his return, his face was aflame and his eyes red from weeping. Even the next day, the effects of his tears were still visible. The Rebbe Rashab then informed the Frierdiker Rebbe that they would be leaving Lubavitch on Sunday.

"On Sunday morning, at eleven o'clock, 16 Marcheshvan, we departed Lubavitch. The *talmidim*, teachers, *mashgichim*, and *mashpi'im*, along with the *rav* and the townspeople—men, women, and children—gathered in the courtyard. Even many non-Jews assembled, pressing together as they tried to get closer. As my esteemed father, the *Rav*, *shlita*, stepped onto the carriage, all eyes turned toward him. Standing at the entrance, he called out: 'Zayt gezunt! Gezunterheit tzu ze'en zich!'—Be well! We should see each other again in good health!

"Everyone lifted their voices in response: 'Fort gezunt un kumt gezunt!'—Travel safely and return safely!— their cries overpowering even my own thoughts. Even the non-Jews removed their hats in a gesture of respect and blessing. And with that, we set out," the Frierdiker Rebbe records.

The leave obviously changed the face of the town completely. "The departure of the Rebbe Rashab had a

קום החמים. יו אי נפור אני הרכש שון ל לחוב כן ארועום ררותום בנוחם בבניות בני ביל . התוכנה שונ בצון אבצו בצות ובכוחו זוכרו וכל ועינון אבוחות ארוכ כם. כצוב כשנה לחותרת הוו עוב עינון שבוחות. ובם אחת עוב חזיי הכנו טוניה הין . בולה, הגיבלי . הקוש חוקה כי החום דו יכוז הוב . וגה לביוני וא ית ב בת השונים , וכן את שוב הו את בו בו בות בו בו בוני בות בות . בשנים שבר רובינו ועצרון . הוא ישפיון וומנבן דרום ווגן בחינוב לר שינונן זכת קינ כבערשום ולהרות בין הבת והחורה. IBRARY OF AGUDAS CHASSIDEI CHABAD תוחנו בווי כי חור בנר בושים אותו בותר ניקביע תכי וניביל והשתועה עבות הפת של פת. הבית של שבית והוכה שבע העיר, גה בפינ ואת בחבתן , לברום פובתן בהביה והעתוב . ביות אר בקר ביותר החוב עשבת בקר. של ביותו ביותר ביותר ביותר ביותר ביותר בשמונים במונים. הישנים והשניצים בכל ומצו הציר מצים נות ושל שת נבבים רבים בתנבלו לאלר , מיש אם רצון נרתנו ולחלו . וכאשר בין כבוב אבי בחר שם לי בפין בעלה. ב חשים של בנות אולו. וציב בהעלה ואים مديدو من وم مديدو (دود ود در مرزا دميد) دو ديدو درد مورود - DIE CHE . ICAS AL LEYE.

EXCERPT FROM THE FRIERDIKER REBBE'S RESHIMA DESCRIBING THE EMOTIONAL PARTING FROM THE VILLAGE OF LUBAVITCH AND THE JOURNEY TO ROSTOV.

profound impact, like the darkening of the sun during an eclipse. The joy of the Yomim Tovim had dissipated, leaving great confusion among the Chassidim and *bochurim*, both in the city and in the yeshiva. The hope that they would hear an abundance of Chassidus that year remained unfulfilled," Reb Yehuda Chitrik writes.<sup>10</sup>

When the Rebbe Rashab left, both he and the Chassidim expected the move from Lubavitch to be temporary. As he was departing, the yeshiva's secretary, Reb Moshe Rosenblum, said, "Rebbe, we should be *zoche* to see you speedily." The Rebbe Rashab replied, "I hope [to return] for Pesach..."

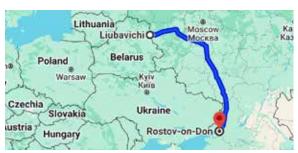
At first, the Rebbe Rashab and his family traveled to the city of Oryol, about 280 miles from Lubavitch, with the intention of settling there. However, after spending much time searching, they were unable to find a suitable house that could accommodate the Rebbe, his family, and the Lubavitch *chatzer*, now in *galus*. They then began searching for a new location.

Recalling the previous offer, they reached out to the Jewish community in Rostov. The community responded immediately with a warm invitation, assuring them that a suitable home was ready. On Chof-Hei Cheshvan, the Rebbe Rashab and his family left Oryol and traveled to Rostov.

# Lubavitch in Rostov

"On Wednesday morning, at ten o'clock, 26 Cheshvan, we arrived in Rostov on the express train. A group of distinguished community members met us at the train station, and we traveled in five, seven, or nine wagons to the residence where our accommodations had been arranged," the Frierdiker Rebbe writes.<sup>11</sup>

"Our lodging was at the Petrograd Hotel, on the fourth floor. The room numbers were as follows: 322—A large room with four beds, where my wife and our three daughters stayed. 329—A medium-sized room, which served as



THE APPROXIMATELY 850-MILE JOURNEY FROM LUBAVITCH TO ROSTOV





the sitting room of my esteemed father Harav sheyichve. We also ate our lunch and dinner there, and it was connected to another room. 331-Another medium-sized room, serving as the sleeping quarters of my esteemed father Harav sheyichye and my esteemed mother shetichye. It was located across from another room. 341-A medium-sized room where I, and my cousin, Yisroel Dov12 slept.

"The Jewish community of Rostov, deeply moved by our arrival, told us that they had initially expected us to come a day earlier, on Tuesday, via the express train. At that time, around two hundred men and women had gathered at the station to greet us, waiting several hours in anticipation of our arrival.

"When they later learned of our revised travel plans, they only informed a few individuals. Nonetheless, around forty people still came to the station, and many accompanied us in wagons to the Petrograd Hotel.

"As for the general sentiment in the Jewish community, we were the topic of discussion—some voiced opinions one way, and others another. However, even those who had differing views did not speak negatively, only recounting how my esteemed father, Harav shlita, opposed the Zionists and recalling his leadership and perspectives during the Rabbinical Conference," the Frierdiker Rebbe recalled.

Another detail about their arrival was recorded by Reb Yaakov Eizik Blotner:13

"The Rebbe Rashab and his family were met at the Rostov train station by the city's dignitaries, members of the 'Orthodox' committee, as well as the parents of students learning in Lubavitch. These parents, simple folk, assumed that the arriving guest

was the melamed who studied with their children. They were astonished and asked in disbelief—could it be that the Rebbe himself had left the city because of the war, but had left the students behind?

"A telegram was immediately sent to Lubavitch instructing that the students be brought to Rostov, followed by an urgent second telegram specifying that Yaakov Eizik should bring them. The Rebbe and his family arrived in Rostov on Tuesday evening, and I arrived with the students on Erev Shabbos just before nightfall."

After settling into their temporary accommodations, the Frierdiker Rebbe set out in search of a more permanent residence. For nine days, he searched until he found a rental home that would meet the family's needs.

"At last, I found a home for us at 166 Pushkinsky Street—six small rooms, providing only the bare necessities, and completely unfurnished," the Frierdiker Rebbe recorded.

"On Friday, Erev Shabbos Kodesh, 5 Kisley, we moved into our new home. The day was short, and there was much to do. Since the previous tenant had delayed vacating the house, we were unable to enter before two in the afternoon. The furniture we had purchased had not yet arrived, and even the lighting-meaning the electrical wiring-had not been installed.

"The weather that day was marked by heavy rain. Nevertheless, my esteemed father, Harav sheyichye, desired that we move in immediately, despite all the difficulties. And so we did. We transferred everything we had from the hotel, and we even managed to bring our luggage to the new home before lighting Shabbos candles."

Near the Rebbe Rashab's new home was the Berman residence, and Shabbos davening took place there with the Rebbe Rashab's participation.

# Yud-Tes Kislev in Rostov

Just days after the Rebbe Rashab settled into his new home, Yud-Tes Kislev, Chag HaGeulah, arrived. That year, it fell on a Friday, so the celebrations began on Thursday and continued through Monday. Guests arrived steadily, and despite the ongoing war and the Rebbe Rashab's absence from Lubavitch, the farbrengens were held with great enthusiasm.

"On Thursday evening, guests began to arrive—one after another. The first, the second, the third—one from Kharkov, another from Homel, one from Minsk, another from Kremenchug. Each was warmly received," the Frierdiker Rebbe writes.

"As they conversed, the doorbell rang again. The door opened to reveal twenty-eight guests arriving all at once. While they were still settling in, the bell rang once more, announcing the arrival of another group—around twenty more guests. Those who had arrived earlier began to grumble about the growing crowd.

"Yet, all were guests, and each had the same story. 'I thought I would be the only one,' one would say. 'Who else would come to Rostov for Yom Tov?' There were those who saw each other on the train wagon, both traveling to Rostov, and they concealed their actions from one another, so that one would not cause the other to act similarly. A third person was also hidden in another wagon,

and although he saw both of them, he merely imagined himself to be wise, and them to be foolish. How great their laughter was when they met here together.

"That evening, my esteemed father, *Harav shlita*, entered the dining room, and they began to speak about timely matters (*inyonei d'yoma*). They spoke for over an hour. Afterward, my revered father, the Rebbe *shlita*, delivered a *maamar Chassidus—Padah V'sholom Nafshi—* which continued until past eleven at night."

The celebrations continued the next day, with the arrival of additional guests, including the Rebbe Rashab's brother, Reb Menachem Mendel, and prominent Chassidim. On Friday night, the Rebbe Rashab recited another *maamar* before *Kabolas Shabbos*, and on Shabbos day, a private *seuda* was held with a select group of guests.

The increasing number of visitors to the Rebbe Rashab's home—especially on Yud-Tes Kislev—soon drew the ire of the landlord, who began causing trouble for the Rebbe Rashab and his family.

"We had not yet had time to enjoy ourselves when trouble arose. The landlord, a non-Jew, was said to be from the 'Black Hundreds,' a notorious group of Jew-haters. He began complaining that his home was being rented to Jewish refugees—'biyeshzenzi'—and that far too many people were gathering there," the Frierdiker Rebbe writes.

"The city's prominent figures, including the *rav mitaam* (the government-appointed rabbi), advised in a letter that it would be best to find another residence, a sentiment shared by some of the respected locals. However, we were not considering a move; we were simply troubled by the current situation and hoped it would pass. My esteemed



PAGE IN THE PASSPORT SHOWING THE REBBE RASHAB'S ARRIVAL IN ROSTOV.

THE REBBE RASHAB'S PASSPORT.

THE REBBE RASHAB'S MOVE TO ROSTOV

father, *Harav sheyichye*, told me that if relocating became necessary, he would sooner consider changing cities altogether."

A week after Yud-Tes Kislev, on Friday, the second day of Chanukah, the Rebbe Rashab penned a letter to Reb Shmuel Michel Treinin describing the situation in Rostov.

"The location, in terms of climate and other conditions, is average. We struggled greatly to secure lodging, as everything is occupied by those coming from war zones. After much effort, we managed to secure a place, not particularly spacious, but with good, high-ceilinged rooms that are not too small, and situated on a wide street.

"However, we have much aggravation from the landlord, who is not the most agreeable person. This became especially apparent on Yud-Tes Kislev, when more guests arrived than expected. He speaks inappropriately, which is entirely contrary to my nature and wishes. Particularly if, *chas v'shalom*, we would be forced to move, this would be very difficult for me. May Hashem grant us peace in every detail..."<sup>14</sup>

# "Don't Come to Rostov"

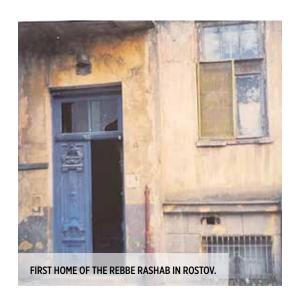
In the summer of 5676 (1916), the Rebbe Rashab traveled to Sloviansk for health treatments and remained there until after Rosh Hashanah. Many guests arrived for Yom Tov, including a large number of *bochurim* from *Tomchei Tmimim*, which was still based in Lubavitch.

Reb Yisroel Jacobson, learning in Tomchei Tmimim at the time, recalled that the Frierdiker Rebbe, who was the *menahel* of the yeshiva, had instructed the *bochurim* not to travel to Sloviansk for Rosh Hashanah—yet nearly all of them still came.

"After Rosh Hashanah, they gave us return tickets, but announced that no one should dare travel to Rostov for Sukkos. Nevertheless, a few *talmidim* traveled to Rostov," he writes.<sup>15</sup>

At some point during this period, the Rebbe Rashab's family relocated to another house in Rostov, moving to a different residence on the same block. In a letter dated 8 Tishrei, 5677, the Rebbe Rashab recorded his new address as 78 Pushkinsky Street.<sup>16</sup>

Reb Yisroel Jacobson was among the few students who traveled to Rostov to spend Sukkos with the Rebbe Rashab. In his memoirs, he describes meeting the *bochurim* from the Novardok Yeshiva, who had



also relocated to Rostov, as well as the happenings over Sukkos and Simchas Torah.

"Being as it was wartime, an announcement was made that no one should come to daven in the Rebbe's house—only guests were allowed, but not bochurim. We would come only to hear *maamarim*.

"On Simchas Torah, we came, and the *hakafos* took place downstairs in the *beis midrash*. The dancing was done on the tips of our feet (*di dibetzkes*).

"The *gabbai* who made the announcements was Reb Elchanan Dov Morozov. The recitation of the *pesukim* of *Ata Horeisa* and their sale (as was customary in Lubavitch) was done quietly. After *hakafos*, he announced that everyone should go home and that there would be no *farbrengen* that day."

However, Reb Yisroel and some other *bochurim* stayed behind to *chazer* the *maamar*. When they finished, they went upstairs and were *zocheh* to join a *farbrengen* of the Rebbe Rashab, which was taking place with a small group of people.

The Rebbe Rashab remained in this home until the end of 5678, just under two years. From the second Tishrei in that location, there are once again *zichronos* recorded by Chassidim who were present. Reb Yehuda Chitrik recounts that the entire *zal* of Tomchei Tmimim, numbering 100 *bochurim*, came from Lubavitch, along with another 100 guests from various locales. However, upon their arrival, they discovered that there was no lodging available, and they all ended up sleeping on the floor in a large

room.

"They filled the room with hay, and everyone stayed there and in the adjacent hall, sleeping on the floor. As the saying goes, 'like herring in a barrel,' that's how we slept.

"Beyond that, we weren't accustomed to drinking tap or pump water—only well water. Drinking the water there was so difficult for us that some even vomited. The food situation was also extremely tight, consisting of nothing but bread and watermelon."

"On the first night of Rosh Hashanah, during the first Maariv at the Rebbe's house on Pushkinsky Street, the room where davening took place, though spacious enough to tightly fit fifty people, was completely packed with nearly three hundred Chassidim who squeezed inside. The crowding was so intense that no one could move from their place.

"The air was so overheated that everyone was dripping with sweat, and the walls of the house became drenched, with moisture literally running down like heavy rain due to the extreme heat," he writes.<sup>17</sup>



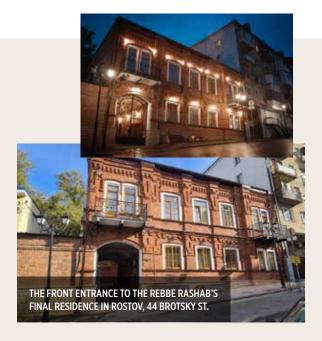
THE ONLY KNOWN PHOTOGRAPH OF THE REBBE RASHAB WAS TAKEN IN THE YECHIDUS ROOM A FEW MONTHS BEFORE THE HISTALKUS. THE DOORS TO THE YECHIDUS ROOM ARE VISIBLE IN THE BACKGROUND. NOTE THE UNIQUE WALLPAPER, WHICH IS VISIBLE TODAY IN SOME PARTS OF THE ROOM. THE PICTURE WAS TAKEN IN PREPARATION FOR RECEIVING A VISA TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY. THE REBBE RASHAB LATER CANCELED HIS PLANS FOR THE TRIP.

# Remaining in Rostov

Later that year, with World War I still raging and Russia suffering heavy losses on the battlefield, the country was thrust into further turmoil with the outbreak of the Russian Revolution. What began as political unrest quickly escalated into widespread mutinies, mass protests, and crippling strikes. Over the next five years, Russia was consumed by instability, witnessing the collapse of the Russian Empire, the abdication of the Tsar, and a brutal power struggle that saw control shift violently from one faction to another, leaving a trail of bloodshed and upheaval in its wake.

In Rostov, it quickly became evident that a return to Lubavitch was unlikely in the foreseeable future, if ever. Yeshivas Tomchei Tmimim, which had remained in Lubavitch until that point, also relocated to Kremenchug. With Rostov now firmly established as the center of the Lubavitcher *chatzer*, a larger residence was necessary—one that could accommodate the Rebbe Rashab, the Frierdiker Rebbe, and their families, while also serving as a proper *chatzer*, with space for davening, delivering Chassidus, and holding farbrengens.

Around the summer of 5678, a suitable mansion was found that met all these needs. Located at 44 Bratski, the home required extensive renovations before it could be properly used, a process that took over six months. Just ahead of Tishrei 5679—the year known among Chassidim



as "Ateres" (עטר"ת)—the Rebbe Rashab and his family moved into their new home.

The Frierdiker Rebbe and his family resided on the first floor of the mansion, while the Rebbe Rashab and Rebbetzin Shterna Sara lived on the second floor. In a semi-separated section of the mansion, several key figures of the chatzer also took up residence, including the Rebbe's mazkir, Reb Chonye Morozov, as well as Harav Yaakov Landau, who served as the rav of the chatzer, along with other Chassidim.

The mansion featured a large room that functioned as a zal and had a spacious courtyard. In the courtyard, a shalash—a partial wooden structure was built to serve as a space for davening.

On Simchas Torah, a chanukas habayis was held for the mansion. Reb Foleh Kahan recorded his memories of that event:

"The chanukas habayis took place during the kiddush that the [Frierdiker] Rebbe would hold annually on Simchas Torah, now held in the new residence. His father, the Rebbe Rashab, farbrenged there as well.

"During the farbrengen, the Rebbe instructed everyone to join in a dance, to take the hand of their fellow and dance through every room of the house, on both floors. We did as he said, singing and dancing through every room, covering both floors entirely. Even the Frierdiker Rebbe, the baal habayis, joined in the dancing at his father's directive. No one remained in their place—everyone participated,

except for the Rebbe Rashab himself, who remained seated at the head of the table.

"He began a specific niggun, and we sang it as we danced. I counted the rounds we made circling the house, and after the thirteenth round, the Rebbe signaled for us to stop—and we did."18

Thus, Rostov became firmly established as the center of Chabad-a place where Chassidus was taught, where Chassidim traveled to be in the Rebbe's presence, and from where light spread across Russia and the world.

It was during this time that the Rebbe Rashab frequently sang a particular niggun, which later became known as "the Rostover Niggun." Two generations later, this very niggun would be sung before our Rebbe would deliver a maamar Chassidus.

# The First Rainwater Mikvah

It was in Rostov that another significant milestone took place—one whose impact is felt to this day: the construction of the first Lubavitcher mikvah using rainwater.

Until then, the Rabbeim had built mikvaos only where there was a natural spring or well, avoiding rainwater mikvaos due to various halachic complexities. The mikvah in Lubavitch itself had been built over a spring, and when the Rebbe Rashab dispatched shluchim to establish mikvaos in other



locations, they too were constructed near streams or rivers.

In Rostov, however, there was no river near the *chatzer*, and digging a well was impractical. For the first time, the Rebbe Rashab permitted the creation of a *mikvah* using rainwater as its foundation. This marked the establishment of the first Lubavitcher *mikvah*, fashioned with a *bor al gabei bor*. The Rebbe Rashab provided precise instructions for its construction, which were meticulously recorded for posterity by Harav Yaakov Landau.<sup>19</sup>

Another significant event was the publication of the *Rostover Siddur* by the Rebbe Rashab. He named the siddur *Tehillas Hashem*, a name that has remained for Lubavitcher *siddurim* to this day.<sup>20</sup>

However, this period of tranquility was short-lived. Even when the house was first purchased, the Communists had already begun nationalizing property, and in 5680, they seized part of the Rebbe Rashab's mansion as well. In a letter dated 3 Kisley, 5680, the Rebbe Rashab writes:

"Generally, we are at peace, thank G-d. However, last week, a requisition was carried out here—meaning the upper and lower wings were taken, as well as the room next to my hall and the small room opposite my *shpalny* (sleeping area). With great effort, I managed to prevent

them from taking my own room, which they had set their eyes on. Thank G-d, they left it alone. For now, we are surrounded by neighbors...The current neighbors are generally peaceful—they spend the whole day at work outside and return at night. They do not demand much."21

Three months later, on Purim 5680, the Rebbe Rashab held his final farbrengen. Lasting approximately twelve hours, this farbrengen took place with great *mesirus nefesh*, as the Bolsheviks had strict laws against gatherings, especially at night. Nevertheless, the Chassidim assembled, witnessing an open miracle when inspectors entered the room and, despite numerous violations—including an illegal gathering, drinking *mashke*, and collecting money—simply left without taking action.

At the end of Adar, the Rebbe Rashab fell ill and remained weak until his *histalkus* on Beis Nissan. A fascinating account of these final weeks was recorded and later published by Harav Moshe Dovber Rivkin in *Ashkavta D'Rebbi.*<sup>22</sup>

Following the *histalkus*, Chassidim and Yidden from across the city gathered in great numbers for the *levaya*, and the Rebbe Rashab was buried in the Jewish cemetery in Rostov.

Twenty years later, in 5700, when the Communists



THE FLOOR TILES OF THE MIKVAH USED BY THE RABBEIM ARE THE SAME AS WHEN IT WAS FIRST BUILT; WHEN THE MIKVAH WAS DISCOVERED AFTER 75 YEARS OF LYING ABANDONED, THERE WAS STILL WATER IN THE BOTTOM 'BOR' FROM BACK THEN.

THE YECHIDUS ROOM (KNOWN AS THE 'LARGE ZAL')
OF THE REBBE RASHAB AND FRIERDIKER REBBE.

INSET: THE PRECISE PLACE IN WHICH THE HISTALKUS OCCURRED REMAINS CORDONED OFF.



OHEL OF THE REBBE RASHAB.

planned to build over the cemetery, a group of Chassidim, with great *mesirus nefesh*, secretly moved the Rebbe Rashab's holy body to another cemetery and built an *Ohel* over it, where it remains to this day.<sup>23</sup> This account is also recorded in *Ashkavta D'Rebbi*.

It was in Rostov that the Frierdiker Rebbe accepted the *nesius*, delivering his first *maamarim*. It was also there, in 5683, that the Rebbe first met the Frierdiker Rebbe.

From Rostov, the Frierdiker Rebbe led the fight to establish *chadarim*, build *mikvaos*, and strengthen

- 1. Kuntres Beis Rabbeinu Shebibovel, seif vov.
- Ibid.
- 3. Elyashuv Kaplun, *Besoch Hagola* (Kiryat Gat, 2012), p. 36.
- 4. Ibid., p. 63.
- 5. Published in *Shemuos V'Sippurim* (Brooklyn, NY: 1990), vol. 2, p. 74; *Mayanotecha* edition (Yerushalayim: 2014), vol. 2, p. 167.
- 6. (Brooklyn, NY, 1981) vol. 1, p. 335. New edition, (2009) p. 366.
- 7. Shemuos V'Sippurim vol. 2, p. 78; Mayanotecha edition, vol. 2, p. 170
- 8. Mibeis Hagnozim (Brooklyn, NY: 2010), p. 29.
- 9. Ibid
- 10. Reshimas Devorim vol. 1, p. 336. 2009 edition, p. 367.
- 11. Mibeis Hagnozim p. 32.
- 12. Yisroel Dov was the son of Reb Menachem Mendel, the son of the Rebbe Maharash. After his father emigrated to France, he remained with his grandmother, Rebbetzin

Yiddishkeit throughout Soviet Russia—until his expulsion from the city in 5684.

On Yud-Aleph Nissan, 5684, upon returning from a journey for *askanus tziburis*, the Soviet Secret Police were waiting for the Frierdiker Rebbe. They searched his home and nearly arrested him, but ultimately released him on the condition that he leave the city permanently.

And so, with unwavering determination, Chabad-Lubavitch entered its next *galus*, relocating to Leningrad, where the battle for Yiddishkeit would only intensify. •

Rivkah, in Lubavitch. Following her passing, he continued to stay with the Frierdiker Rebbe until his own passing at a young age.

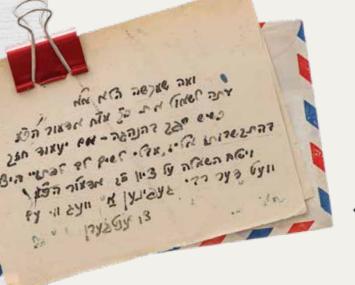
- 13. Shemuos V'Sippurim vol. 2, p. 78; Mayanotecha edition, vol. 2, p. 171.
- 14. Igros Kodesh Admur Harashab, vol. 5, p. 55.
- 15. Zikaron Livnei Yisroel, p. 56.
- 16. Igros Kodesh Admur Harashab, vol. 5, p. 96.
- 17. Reshimas Devorim vol. 1, p. 337. 2009 edition, p. 371.
- 18. *Shemuos V'Sippurim* vol. 1, p. 158; *Mayanotecha* edition, vol. 1, p. 138.
- 19. Published in Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch (Brooklyn, NY, 2005), vol. 5, p. 568.
- 20 See "From Shklov to New York," Derher Kislev 5785.
- 21. Igros Kodesh Admur Harashab, vol. 5, p. 188.
- 22. See "Timely Titles—Ashkavta D'Rebbi," Derher, Nissan 5783.
- 23. See "Moving the Ohel," Derher, Cheshvan 5785.

MOVE TO ROSTOV



לזכות החייל בצבאות ה' השליח מנחם מענדל</mark> שיחי' לרגל יום הולדתו **י"ד מנחם אב** 

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



# דער רבי וועט געפינען אַ וועג..

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

# **Utilize Your Summer**



AS TOLD BY

RABBI OSHER DEREN

(Cape Town, South Africa)

A few months before the summer of 5783, my daughter, Musya, accepted a request to serve as head counselor at CGI Detroit for the first month. She wasn't sure what she should be doing for the second month, since the summer was the only gap between her first and second years of seminary. As her parents, we felt she should come home for a few weeks of break to catch her breath between the two intense years of seminary, the many months of intensive camp preparations, and the month of being head counselor in camp.

At one point, Musya told us that she had been asked to go to Camp Pardes Chana in Montreal, where she would be taking a job with much less responsibility, but well positioned to help encourage and inspire kids with an informal job as replacement counselor, helper etc. She was inclined to accept the offer, and we accepted this as her decision.

About three weeks before the summer, Musya called us in a quandary. The pressure of the work for the first month of the summer was building, and she felt that she had made a mistake accepting the job at Pardes Chana for the second month. She wondered if it was right to ask them if it would be okay if she canceled, although she had already confirmed with them. She reached out to them and was told it would be okay for her to leave one week before camp ended, but they definitely needed her for the first three weeks; it still felt like too little time.

Musya was also unsure how to structure her second year of seminary between the afternoon options of learning, working, etc., and she felt that having time at home would help her gain clarity on that. Many more phone calls later, the pressure was only building, and we didn't know what to do. Backing out of a commitment didn't seem like an option, but spending the second half of the summer without a break and then going straight into seminary also seemed untenable.

One morning, I told her what I should have suggested much earlier: to write to the Rebbe and ask for clarity and guidance.

We had the conversation at around 8:00 a.m., and she said she would write in at approximately 11:00 a.m.

At 1:00 p.m., my phone pinged. It was a WhatsApp message from a 770 *bochur* who shares an answer from the Rebbe, often selected from lesser-known answers, together with the original manuscript from the Rebbe.

I usually give it a quick look, but this time I couldn't believe what I was seeing.

Here is some context for my shock. Although I am not fluent in all of the Rebbe's letters, answers, and *sichos*, I have learned and seen many of them, and I did not recall the Rebbe ever mentioning or speaking about Camp Pardes Chana... until that day! The Rebbe found a way to answer my daughter Musya in precise detail. In the spring of 5733, the Rebbe responded to a young woman who was undecided about her summer plans. (It is also published in Igros Kodesh vol. 28, p. 260. The handwritten note is published on p. 24. Likkut Maanos 5733 #297)

ב"ה

- כיון שלא ברא הקב"ה דבר אחד לבטלה

ולה ניתן חוש בהדרכה וחינוך - עלי' לנצל הקיץ לניצול חוש זה. ז.א. להיות בקעמפ (אמונה, או פרדס חנה, או שטרנברג וכיו"ב) באופן שכל הקיץ יופעל החוש שלה, ולתועלת הרבים ופשיטא שזה יהי' לתועלת שלה - בגו"ר.

> ובודאי שה' יעזרה ותתגבר על כל המניעות וכו', ותבש"ט. אזכיר עה"צ.

בנוגע לשנת תשל"ד - תחליט בחדש ההכנה אליו - אלול.

Since the Holy One, blessed be He, did not create anything in vain — and she has been given a talent for guidance and education — she should utilize the summer to make use of this ability. That is, to be in a camp (Emunah, Pardes Chana, Sternberg, or the like) in a way that for the entire summer her ability will be utilized and will benefit many.

And obviously, this will also be to her own benefit — both spiritually and materially.

And certainly, Hashem will help her and she will overcome all obstacles, etc., and she should share good news.

I will mention it at the tziyun.

Regarding the year 5734 — she should decide during the month of preparation for it — Elul.

Barely two hours after Musya wrote to the Rebbe, I received a clear answer from the Rebbe for her: She should definitely go to Camp Pardes Chana, to utilize the gifts of guidance and education she clearly has.

But there is more.

- The Rebbe underlines the word "that all shekol" the days of the summer, are being utilized, not just the first month.
- 2. She was unsure how much she would be utilized in the second month, and the Rebbe underlines that her gifts will be utilized.
- Regarding her concern that she would be tired from the work overload, the Rebbe underlines "and certainly" Hashem will help her overcome all obstacles, etc., and she should share good news.
- 4. About getting ready for the next school year, we realized the date Pardes Chana said she could leave without interfering with the camp program was Rosh Chodesh Elul! As the Rebbe added at the very end, "Regarding the year... she should decide during the month of preparation for it Elul."

That summer, Musya went to camp for both months and came home on Rosh Chodesh Elul to get ready for another successful year, all with the Rebbe's guidance because, as the Rebbe wrote to my great-grandfather Reb Sholom Posner just a few months after Yud Shevat 5710:

[In reply to] the question you raise: that now we cannot ask my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe, הכ"ם, when there is doubt how to conduct oneself: If you will stand firm in your connection with him, without paying attention to the tricks of the yetzer [hara], and send the question to the gravesite of my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe, הכ"ם, the Rebbe will find a way to answer you.

May we be strong in our connection to the Rebbe, without paying attention to the tricks of the *Yetzer Hara*, so that we merit very soon to see the Rebbe lead us to the *Geulah HaAmitis Vehashleima!* ①

#### YOUR STORY

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

5733-1973, 5734-1974, 5710-1950

לזכות החייל בצבאות ה' מענדל שיחי' קאמען לרגל יום הולדתו ר"ח מנחם אב

נדפס ע"י **הוריו** שיחיו

COMPILED BY: RABBI LEVI GREENBERG (OH) WRITTEN BY: RABBI SHNEUR ITZINGER

SEVERAL OF THE STORIES IN THIS ARTICLE ARE BASED ON "TEIN L'CHACHAM" BY RABBI HERSHEL FOGELMAN.

SPECIAL THANKS TO RABBI MOSHE LIBEROW FOR HIS ASSISTANCE IN THE PREPARATION OF THIS ARTICLE.

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

WORCESTER, MA



# "A CHASSIDISHE SHTOT!"

Reb Moshe Binyamin *der melamed* is a name that appears several times in the Frierdiker Rebbe's *sichos* and writings. Reb Moshe Binyamin Meitin was a chossid of the Rebbe Rashab who had taught the Frierdiker Rebbe in his youth. When he visited the Frierdiker Rebbe in New York in 5689, he asked that his identity remain anonymous before entering *yechidus*, to see whether the Rebbe would recognize him. "The door opened," the Frierdiker Rebbe wrote, "and I immediately recognized Reb Moshe Binyamin *der melamed*, who had tested me on *Mishnayos bal peh* in my youth, standing in the entranceway."

His visit to the Frierdiker Rebbe came after living in America for decades, in the city of Worcester. During the Rebbe Rashab's *nesius*, he had made the rare move of crossing the ocean to settle in the United States. Before his departure, he entered the Rebbe Rashab's room for *yechidus* to request a *bracha*. When the Rebbe asked where he planned to settle, he replied "Worcester." The Rebbe Rashab exclaimed: "Vuster! S'iz doch a chassidishe shtot!" (It's a chassidishe city).

This was a rare journey and an even rarer statement—in those years the Rebbe Rashab was not fond of Chassidim traveling to the New World.<sup>2</sup> Yet the special attention from the Rabbeim to the city of Worcester

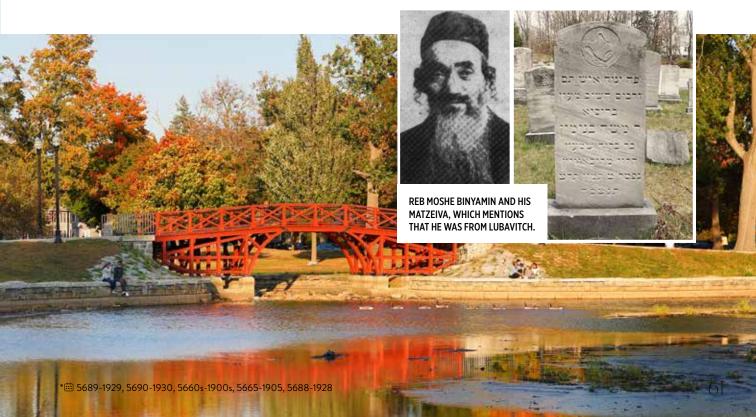
continued into the following generations. Notably, the Frierdiker Rebbe made a brief stop in the city during his historic trip to the United States in 5690.<sup>3</sup>

# "MAKE WORCESTER ERETZ YISROEL"

Tiferes Yisroel was an old Nusach Ari shul in Worcester. In the 5660s, a chossid of special stature joined the *kehilla*, recognized for his unique qualities even among this group of venerated Chassidim. Reb Yechiel Dov Sher's journey to Worcester had passed through Lithuania, Lubavitch, Kopust, and Liadi.

Born near Rakshik, Lithuania, he was said by family tradition to have traveled at a young age to Lubavitch, where he merited spending time in the Tzemach Tzedek's court. Following the Tzemach Tzedek's *histalkus*, he continued visiting the Rebbe Maharash in Lubavitch and also spent time at the Rebbes of Kopust and Liadi before settling in Worcester in 5665.

His time in Liadi is confirmed in a letter the Frierdiker Rebbe sent him in 5688, writing: "In response to your letter ... I was happy to hear about the well-being of one of *anash* who had traveled to my great-uncle, the Rebbe of Liadi."



In Worcester, Reb Yechiel Dov delivered regular shiurim in Chassidus and would *chazer* Chassidus publicly every Shabbos. He also assumed communal responsibilities, including financial responsibilities for Torah institutions and for his relatives.

Approaching ninety, he had a strong desire to move to Eretz Yisroel and dedicate himself to full-time Torah study. He wrote to the Frierdiker Rebbe in Riga requesting permission. Three times he asked, and he received three letters in return, from Sivan 5688 through Nissan 5689, encouraging him to remain. If the Torah study of Eretz Yisroel is what you desire, the Frierdiker Rebbe explained, the main purpose of Torah is when it leads to action. "From experience, we see that in every city and community, when someone inspires others to take action on behalf of tzedakah and the support of Torah study, with Hashem's help, he succeeds," the Frierdiker Rebbe wrote. He also quoted the well-known directive of the Tzemach Tzedek to a chossid in *yechidus*: "Mach do Eretz Yisroel" (transform here into Eretz Yisroel).

Heeding the Frierdiker Rebbe's guidance, Reb Yechiel Dov remained in Worcester, where he continued his *avoda* until his passing three years later.

# "BREAD FROM SHOMAYIM" — TURNING WORCESTER INTO AN IR TORAH

To<sup>6</sup> this day, the most notable expression of the Rabbeim's impact on Worcester is the Yeshiva Achei Tmimim, founded in 5702. Here is the story of the humble beginnings of a *mosad* that has shaped generations of

# SHIUR CHASSIDUS IN WORCESTER

In Teves 5702, the *mispalelim* of Tiferes Yisrael received a personal request from the Frierdiker Rebbe: to establish a regular *shiur* Chassidus in the shul delivered by Rabbi Mordechai Yaakov Golinkin.

"Hashem will help them that learning brings about its intended results—in ways of *avoda*, *hidur mitzvah*, and [acting in accordance with] *minhagei hachassidim*," the Frierdiker Rebbe wrote to Rabbi Golinkin.<sup>20</sup> That same day, he also sent a letter to the community, urging them to arrange and attend the *shiurim* and to encourage others to join as well.<sup>21</sup>

Chassidim and transformed the city.

With World War II raging across the sea, the early 5700s were a challenging time in America. The Frierdiker Rebbe fought an uphill battle to accomplish his stated goal<sup>7</sup> of transforming the American landscape into a *makom Torah*.

Worcester became a frontier for his holy work and a home for a branch of the Yeshiva Achei Tmimim, the Frierdiker Rebbe's method of choice for saving thousands of American children from assimilation. In Tammuz 5702, Rabbis Avraham Pariz and Avraham Hecht were



dispatched to do what many thought impossible. As one local rabbi put it: "Hair will grow on the palm of my hand before a yeshiva opens here."

But open it did. The yeshiva was formally established on Yud-Beis Tammuz 5702, fifteen years to the day of the Frierdiker Rebbe's miraculous *geulah*. The Frierdiker Rebbe received the news of the opening with great joy—"like soul reviving medicine," he wrote.<sup>9</sup> At the Frierdiker Rebbe's request, Reb Avraham Pariz led a Yud-Beis Tammuz farbrengen in the city.

Rabbi Avraham Hecht<sup>10</sup> remained for several months to help launch the yeshiva before being assigned to establish additional Achei Tmimim branches. Later that summer, the Frierdiker Rebbe appointed his brother, Rabbi Moshe Yitzchak Hecht,<sup>11</sup> to serve as the new head of the Worcester yeshiva.

Rabbi Moshe Yitzchak threw himself into the role with great *mesiras nefesh*. The Frierdiker Rebbe acknowledged the hardship he would face, telling him and his wife in *yechidus*: "Until now, you ate *lechem min haaretz*. Now, you will have to survive on *lechem min hashamayim*."

This wasn't just a metaphor—it was their new reality. Reb Moshe Yitzchak had to knock on doors to raise funds, hire staff, and build a student body. Even finding a place to live was difficult. He and his wife made do with a one-room apartment, completely dedicating themselves to the yeshiva.

There was no adjustment period. From the first day, Rabbi Hecht worked tirelessly, guided by detailed letters from the Frierdiker Rebbe, who emphasized the importance of nurturing every aspect of the *talmidim's* Yiddishkeit.

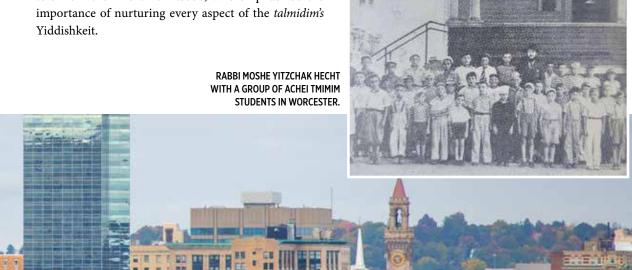
"...Much effort must be exerted in the students' education...in matters of *yiras Shamayim* such as washing hands immediately upon awakening, reciting *brachos*, wearing *tzitzis*, being scrupulous in davening and answering *amen yehei shmei rabba*, as well as with regard to proper *midos*, respecting parents and teachers, and in general conducting oneself with *derech eretz*," the Frierdiker Rebbe wrote.<sup>12</sup>

"My friends! Be strong in your holy work of spreading Torah in Yeshivas Achei Tmimim in Worcester. With Hashem's help, you will see great success in developing the yeshiva with talented students who accept the yoke of Torah and *mitzvos*. May Hashem strengthen your health, and grant you the *zechus* to raise the Yeshiva to its deserving stature."

# L'HARIM RUACH HACHASSIDUS

Achei Tmimim was not just a yeshiva—it was the springboard for the spiritual growth of the city. "The holy Yeshiva Achei Tmimim is a *kos shel bracha* for both material and spiritual blessing for the entire city of Worcester," wrote the Frierdiker Rebbe.<sup>13</sup>

The Frierdiker Rebbe had set out to transform the entire American Jewish landscape, and his *shluchim* were expected to be active on every front. *Mesibos Shabbos* 



were a hallmark of the early efforts in America, and the Worcester shluchim were urged to establish groups throughout the city.

"Don't limit yourself to just the yeshiva," the Frierdiker Rebbe instructed Rabbi Moshe Yitzchak Hecht. "Be active in anything that strengthens Yiddishkeit. Learn and chazer Chassidus in public, and uplift the spirit of Chassidus l'harim ruach haChassidus."14

The Frierdiker Rebbe's brachos, combined with their tireless efforts, bore remarkable fruit. In Cheshvan 5703, just months after the yeshiva's founding, the Frierdiker

Rebbe congratulated them on acquiring a new building. 15 Just a month later, by Kislev, the talmidim were already learning in their new home.

By 5705, a second branch of the yeshiva opened in another part of town to accommodate the growing student body. Around that time, Rabbi Hecht took up a position as ray of a local shul, which soon became another center for shiurei Torah and hafatzas hayahadus. In 5706, the Frierdiker Rebbe sent Rabbi Hershel Fogelman to succeed Rabbi Hecht, who was needed to lead another Achei Tmimim branch, while Rabbi Fogelman remained in Worcester for life.

# "THE REBBE'S LIGHT **UPON YOU"**

Another key figure in establishing the Yeshiva was Rabbi Zorach Horowitz, devoted chossid of the Rebbe Rashab and Frierdiker Rebbe and longtime *rav* in Worcester.

When Rabbi Moshe Yitzchok Hecht first arrived in the city, he encountered Rabbi Horowitz on the street near his home. Before Rabbi Hecht could say a word, Rabbi Horowitz looked at him and said, "I saw dem ohr fun Rebben-the Rebbe's light—upon you."

A firsthand witness to the success of Achei Tmimim and the Frierdiker Rebbe's revolution in America, Rabbi Horowitz got up at the Frierdiker Rebbe's farbrengen of Chai Elul 5704 and declared: "In der heim they used to say that Moshiach would come from America!"

# THE DAWN OF DOR HASHVI'I

The young bochur Hershel Fogelman vividly remembered the Rebbe's arrival to 770 on Chof-Ches Sivan 5701, and the Rebbe's powerful statement at a farbrengen in 5702 that "the [Frierdiker] Rebbe started with mesibos shabbos, and in the end he will take over the entire world!"

When the Rebbe became *nossi* following the Frierdiker Rebbe's histalkus, a common theme of the early sichos was urging all those who had a shlichus from the Frierdiker Rebbe to remain faithful to their mission. Rabbi Fogleman was zoche to continue his Shlichus in Worcester under the Rebbe's leadership, together with his wife *tblch*"t, until his passing in 5773.

In the early years of the nesius, he was once offered a rabbanus position in a moderately large city. Interested, he brought up the idea in *yechidus*. The Rebbe's response was unequivocal: "A vilder yetzer hara."

"He pointed out that I was having great success in my work, and that many families depended on me," Rabbi Fogelman recalled. "Naturally, I dismissed the idea. I



Chassidisher Derher / Menachem Av

understood clearly that the Rebbe would not alter the *shlichus* I had received from the Frierdiker Rebbe under any circumstances. And I thank Hashem for that."

# "THIS IS NOT HARCHAVA AT ALL!"

Rabbi Fogelman dedicated himself to expanding the Yeshiva Achei Tmimim and began working on plans for a new building. In 5718, he entered *yechidus* with a delegation of community members and presented the Rebbe with the blueprints.

The Rebbe reviewed the plans for just a moment and immediately made several detailed observations, asking where the cafeteria would be and offering other comments. The delegation was amazed at how the Rebbe processed the entire blueprint in the blink of an eye.

The construction concluded in 5720. At a farbrengen, Rabbi Fogelman brought up a bottle of *mashke* in honor of the new building and described the scope of the project: five classrooms, a hall, kitchen, office, and more. The Rebbe immediately responded, "*Bai mir iz dos gor nit kayn harchava*—To me, this is not considered spacious at all!"

Rabbi Fogelman took the message to heart and went on to add another wing to the building, which proved invaluable in the years to come.

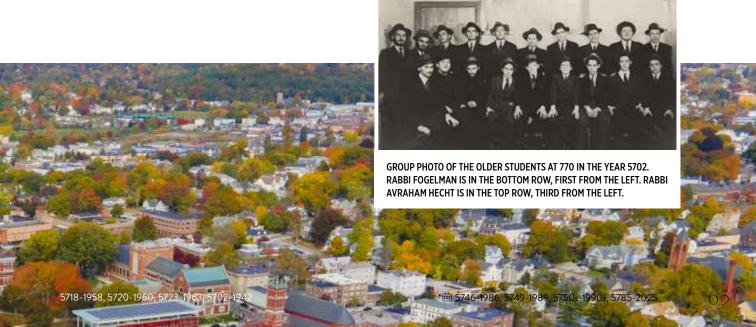
# "YOUR PLACE IS IN WORCESTER"

The Rebbe remained deeply involved in the Yeshiva and in Jewish life in Worcester in general. One of the few Shomer Shabbos Jews in the city, Mr. Moshe Levine, was introduced to the Rebbe by Rabbi Fogelman. Mr.

# VITAL TORAH EDUCATION

On the occasion of a dinner held in Rabbi Fogelman's honor in 5723, the Rebbe wrote a letter in English commending the event's participants.

"[This event] gives eloquent testimony to the accomplishments of Rabbi Fogelman as head of the Yeshiva ... and to the services which he has rendered, and is rendering, to the community at large ... It is [also] a credit to the communal leaders and community in general, in that they recognize and appreciate the vital importance of Rabbi Fogelman's dedicated work. Moreover, the Testimonial Banquet offers confident assurance of the continued and growing determination on the part of all concerned to further the cause of Torah education and religious revitalization, which is so vital for every Jewish community, and for Worcester in particular."22





THE ACHEI TMIMIM BUILDING IN WORCESTER WAS THE VERY FIRST BUILDING IN THE UNITED STATES BUILT FOR LUBAVITCH FROM THE GROUND UP. IN THIS PHOTO, RABBI FOGELMAN POSES WITH COMMUNITY MEMBERS AT THE PROJECT SITE.

Levine was the only one of ten thousand Jews in the city who closed his store on Shabbos. Feeling the pull of a more frum environment, he considered leaving Worcester for New York. The Rebbe did not allow it. "Everybody has his place, and your place is in Worcester, Massachusetts," the Rebbe told him.

"Clearly, it was my father's mission in life to prove that you could live in Worcester, own your own business, and be Torah observant too," his son, Rabbi Shmuel Levine, reflected later in an interview with JEM's My Encounter.<sup>16</sup>

The Yeshiva staff faced similar challenges. Rabbi Chaim Fishman, one of the teachers in Achei Tmimim, once presented the Rebbe with a business proposition he was considering leaving his teaching position for. "This is the opposite of what you write to me every month," the Rebbe replied, referring to Rabbi Fishman's monthly *duchos* reporting on his students' progress. Hearing the Rebbe's response, he chose to remain as a teacher in the Yeshiva.





IN THIS LETTER FROM 19 CHESHVAN 5718, THE REBBE WRITES TO RABBI FOGELMAN OF THE STRONG IMPRESSION THE PHOTOS OF THE CONSTRUCTION PROJECT MADE AND URGES HIM TO REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES WITH JEWISH WOMEN IN WORCESTER.

# THE "REAL MISHKAN" IN WORCESTER

The students of Achei Tmimim held a special *chavivus* from the Rebbe. In 5722, a group of *talmidim* from the Yeshiva came to Yechidus and showed the Rebbe a special project they had worked on—a model of the Mishkan. The Rebbe responded with a *sicha* in English,<sup>17</sup> thanking them for their presentation.

An interesting sequel to the story unfolded twenty-eight years later, in 5749, when Mr. Faivish Chernowski had a Yechidus with the Rebbe as a member of the Machne Israel Development Fund and supporter of the Yeshiva in Worcester. Faivish mentioned that the Rebbe had made note of the Mishkan in his *Sicha*, and told the Rebbe that he had been part of the group that had presented their model Mishkan to the Rebbe years earlier. "Now you have the building itself, not the model!" the Rebbe told him with a smile, referring to the Yeshiva building in Worcester.<sup>18</sup>

# A MODEL CHASSIDISHE CITY

"[Tammuz] 5713, roshei devorim to women from Worcester," the Rebbe wrote in his holy handwriting on an English transcript of a sicha.<sup>19</sup> This was a copy of a hanacha written by Mrs. Rochel Fogelman, based on notes she jotted down in yechidus as the Rebbe spoke to a group of women from Worcester who attended her classes. Noticing her note-taking, the Rebbe asked her to transcribe his words in English, which she did.

# A PROMISE AT SEA AND THE BIRTH OF BEIS CHANA

While Achei Tmimim served the needs of elementary-aged *talmidim*, Worcester lacked a suitable High School for girls—until a plane made an emergency landing in the Atlantic Ocean, and the Rebbe directed an unexpected windfall to launch a new institution.

Here is the story of the launch of Beis Chana High School, Worcester's Chassidishe school that made waves on a national level for its quality Jewish education, as told by Rabbi Hershel Fogelman.<sup>23</sup>

The need for a girls' high school was growing stronger, and Rabbi Fogelman received a letter from a community member specifically requesting it. Parents were reluctant to send their children away from home, but the means to open a local school simply did not exist.

Until one day, a twist of *hashgacha pratis* made it possible. A local resident who lived near the yeshiva was returning from a trip to Europe when his plane was forced to make an emergency landing in the Atlantic. In the chaos of the moment, he made a promise: if he survived, he would donate a home he owned in Worcester to Lubavitch.

He kept his word. Upon returning safely, he contacted Rabbi Fogelman with the offer. Rabbi Fogelman wrote to the Rebbe, asking how to use the unexpected gift. The Rebbe suggested that it be used to establish a girls' educational institution, and later agreed that it bear the name *Beis Chana*, in honor of the Rebbe's mother.



To foster in a fellow Jew a closeness to Torah; to impart to him a love for Judaism so that he will eagerly and cheerfully abide by it, is a function upon which the Torah lays great stress.

THE REBBE'S HANDWRITING ON THE ENGLISH TRANSCRIPT OF THE SICHA TO WOMEN FROM WORCESTER.

\*🖮 5722-1962, 5749-1989, 5713-1953, 5718-1957

# ACHEI TMIMIM: WORCESTER'S MORAL LIGHT

Joseph Casdin, Jewish former mayor of Worcester, was a guest speaker at the N'shei Chabad Convention held in Worcester in the winter of 5727. Mrs. Rivie Feldman of N'shei Chabad related:<sup>24</sup>

"On Motzei Shabbos we had a special speaker. They invited the mayor of the city to come and give greetings for the convention. From all outward appearances, one wouldn't think he was Jewish. At the end of his speech he said, 'I want to present the key to my city to the Lubavitcher Rebbe'—he had a key prepared in a box with a dome of glass on it—'and I want you to tell the Lubavitcher Rebbe that I am one of his own, as my father studied in the town of Lubavitch.' You could have heard a pin drop—what an impact!"

The Rebbe wrote to thank him for his attendance and symbolic gift:

"Your personal appearance at the Conference of the Chabad Women, hosted by the Women's Division of the Yeshivah Achei Tmimim Lubavitch, has demonstrated not only your genuine interest in, but also your alertness to, the need of advancing the eternal values of morality and ethics in the present-day society, and of fostering all positive spiritual forces in your city."

The symbolic presentation of the key to the city at the conference is also appropriate, the Rebbe continued, because it is the Jewish woman who "is entrusted with the keys to the general atmosphere of the home and to the strengthening of the moral fiber of the entire family." The mayor's gesture, therefore, "has made a tangible contribution...I may confidently say, to your worthy city at large."

The impact of Lubavitch's presence on the city's entire population was also expressed in another letter from the Rebbe to then-Mayor Israel Katz, who had personally attended the Rebbe's Farbrengen of Yud Shevat 5734.

After thanking him for his presence and for presenting a key to the city, the Rebbe wrote that as a recipient of this honor, it was his duty to support the increased activity of Lubavitch in the city, which, through strengthening Jewish education, also benefits the city's general population. "For...a Jew considers it his duty to further the moral and ethical forces of the community in which he lives, or, as these values are generally known as the 'Seven Noahide Laws."

After the group left *yechidus*, Mrs. Fogelman stayed behind. The Rebbe encouraged her to continue giving her *shiurim* and added that she should prepare the material in a way that others could benefit from it as well.

The English *hanacha* Mrs. Fogelman prepared at the Rebbe's request, bearing the Rebbe's handwritten title, was only discovered after Gimmel Tammuz. The closing line

of the *sicha* brings the story of the Rabbeim's connection to Worcester full circle:

"Turn Worcester into a Yiddishe and Chassidishe city. From Chicago to Philadelphia to Pittsburgh, all should know and point to Worcester as [a model of] a Yiddishe and Chassidishe city!"

- 1. Sefer Hamaamarim 5711 (of the Frierdiker Rebbe) p. 316.
- 2. See "Sacks Full of Mesiras Nefesh" Derher Iyar 5784.
- 3. Toldos Chabad B'Artzos Habris p. 84.
- 4. Igros Kodesh Admur HaRayyatz vol. 16, p. 195.
- 5. Ibid., p. 339.
- 6. Information about Yeshivas Achei Tmimim is primarily based on Toldos Chabad B'Artzos Habris, chapter 46.
- 7. Sefer Hasichos Kayitz 5700 p. 5.
- 8. Echad Hayah Avraham p. 67.
- 9. Igros Kodesh Admur HaRayyatz vol. 6, p. 367.
- 10. See "Made in the USA" Derher Adar 5778, for more about Rabbi Avraham Hecht and his time in Worcester.
- 11. See "In My Room In 770" Derher Menachem Av 5782, for more about Rabbi Moshe Yitzchak Hecht and his time in Worcester.
- 12. Igros Kodesh Admur HaRayyatz vol. 7, p. 9.

- 13. Ibid. vol. 12, p. 183.
- 14. Ibid. vol. 6, p. 423.
- 15. Ibid. vol. 12, p. 172.
- 16. Here's My Story, 5 Shevat 5776. jemtv.page.link/ocs6.
- 17. Toras Menachem vol. 34, p. 57. Original English audio at ashreinu.page.link/5dUv.
- 18. jemtv.page.link/RTr9.
- 19. Toras Menachem vol. 9, p. 57. A facsimile of the Rebbe's description can be found ibid., p. vii.
- 20. Igros Kodesh Admur HaRayyatz vol. 12, p. 261.
- 21. Ibid. vol. 6, p. 175.
- 22. 13 Elul 5723. Tein L'chacham p. 25.
- 23. Kfar Chabad Magazine issue 1314, with details supplemented by Rabbi Moshe Liberow.
- 24. Interview with JEM's My Encounter, published in "N'shei uBnos Chabad The Rebbe's Pride & Joy" Derher Elul 5783.

# 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.

#### Ahavas Yisroel

The Derher issue of Iyar 5784 (issue 143) featured a beautiful article entitled "We are All One — Ahavas Yisroel through the lens of Chassidus."

I want to share that Ahavas Yisroel is especially important following Gimmel Tammuz as we anticipate the coming of Moshiach *teikef umiyad mamash*.

In the special farbrengen of Yud-Gimmel Nissan 5726, which marked one hundred years since the histalkus of the Tzemach Tzedek, the Rebbe told the story of how the Tzemach Tzedek went to the conference of rabbanim which was held by the government in S. Petersburg regarding reforming the Torah chinuch of children in Russia. As is known, the Tzemach Tzedek spoke out very strongly about not reforming Torah chinuch—in a way that the government considered rebellious. Afterward, he was asked by one of the *gedolim* how he could put himself in such great danger and added that if he wasn't worried about himself, he should have thought about what would be with the Chassidim and Klal Yisroel.

The Tzemach Tzedek gave two answers: first, he has children (who can serve as Rebbes after him), and alternatively, that

when Chassidim will be united "vellen zei dos durchtroggen"—they will be able to carry themselves through (the difficult times after the histalkus of the Rebbe).

The Rebbe continued that "being that it's a hundred years after the *histalkus* of the Tzemach Tzedek and also the option of children is not present, so when Chassidim will be united they will be able to carry through and break through the immense darkness of *galus*."

I heard from Reb Shlomo Zarchi that at the time, Chassidim were disturbed and pained from hearing the Rebbe bringing up such a possibility, but after Gimmel Tammuz, this *sicha* took on profound meaning, as the Rebbe had discussed this and had shared what especially is needed at this time.

As is well known, also in the most recent farbrengen of the Rebbe, on Shabbos Parshas Vayakhel 5752, the Rebbe spoke at great length about the importance of Ahavas Yisroel and Achdus Yisroel.

**Yisroel Markowitz** BROOKLYN, NY

#### **Traveling Safely**

Last year, a great article was published by Derher sharing the Rebbe's *hora'os* for safe travel, including having a Chitas/seforim and tzedakah pushka in the car or with us when traveling by airplane, utilizing the time spent on flights to learn Torah and do *mivtzoim* and other important instructions.

I want to share a few things from the Rebbe that I learnt in class from my teacher about the importance of saying Tefilas Haderech when traveling, which is especially relevant in these summer months:

The strongest words from the Rebbe about the importance of saying Tefilas Haderech were shared in Elul of 5751. Rabbi Menachem Gerelitzky of Crown Heights had written to the Rebbe asking for a *bracha* for his trip from New York to Montreal together with his family.

The Rebbe answered (Likut Maanos 5751 p. 213):

כו"כ מאנ"ש שי' אין "נוהגין" בתפילת הדרך! ואולי יחזור עטרה לתוקף שלה ובשתי המדינות. אזכיר על הציון. Many amongst *anash sheyichyu* are not accustomed to reciting Tefilas Haderech! Perhaps you can restore the crown to its strength, and in both countries. I will mention this at the Ohel.

On another occasion, the Rebbe himself initiated the giving of Tefilas Haderech stickers to travelers:

Rabbi Yosef Gansburg, shliach of the Rebbe in Toronto, Canada, shares (Here's My Story — Jem, issue 548), that in the mid-5740s a group that he had brought to visit the Rebbe gathered outside the Rebbe's room to see the Rebbe for the last time before their trip home. After the Rebbe saw them

and wished them a good trip, he went into his room, and shortly afterward, one of the *mazkirim* came out of the Rebbe's room with a stack of stickers with Tefilas Haderech. The Rebbe had instructed that each participant in the trip receive one of these stickers so that they should say it on their journey home.

A particularly interesting *maaneh* in connection with Tefilas Haderech stickers was written in Shevat 5747 to a Yid living in a settlement in Yehudah, who asked a *bracha* because of his concern of Arab rioters on the roads. The Rebbe wrote (Likkut Maanos, Miluim vol. 4 p. 642):

בודאי "תפילת הדרך" על פנים המכונית. ומה טוב
– ספרי קודש ולהבדיל קופת צדקה לרשות ושמוש
הנוסעים שיחיו
אזכיר עה"צ

Certainly, there is "Tefilas Haderech" on the inside of the car. It would be even better to have *seforim* and—*l'havdil*—a tzedakah pushka for the usage of the travelers *sheyichyu*. I will mention it at the Ohel.

I will conclude with the *bracha* that the Rebbe would bless travelers before they would go on a trip—"פארט געזונטערהייט און מ'זאל הערען."

#### Shua Mishulovin

PORTLAND, OR

