

A Chassidisher **Derher**

א חסידישער דערהער

A Simcha in the Royal Court

THE CHASUNA OF THE REBBE RASHAB
AND REBBETZIN SHTERNA SARA



A FLAME BEHIND THE FROST

THE CHABAD HOUSE
BEHIND THE IRON CURTAIN



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Administrator

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Derher for Kids

Mrs. Chanie Kamman

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Circulation and Marketing

Rabbi Mendy Shishler

Photo Research/Editing

Rabbi Avremi Browd

Editors

Rabbi Mendel Alperowitz

Rabbi Dovid Olidort

Design

Rabbi Mendel Bergstein

Contributors

Rabbi Yanky Bell • Rabbi Yossi Bendet • Rabbi Koppel Chaiton • Rabbi Avrohom Moshe Dyce • Rabbi Tzemach Feller
Rabbi Mendy Goldberg • Rabbi Levi Gourarie • Rabbi Levi Greenberg • Rabbi Menachem M. Greenberg
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The Rebbe points out that the month of Elul has three Chassidishe Yomim Tovim: Chai Elul—the birthday of the Baal Shem Tov and the Alter Rebbe, Yud-Aleph Elul—the wedding anniversary of Rebbe Rashab, and Yud-Gimmel Elul—the wedding anniversary of the Frierdiker Rebbe.

Every Yom Tov is not just a day to remember a historic event that occurred in the past. It is a day that we actually relive the original occurrence, as the *possuk* says: “והימים האלה נזכרים” —“ונועשים”—these days are recalled, and [thereby] brought into action.

If this is true about all Yomim Tovim, says the Rebbe, it’s true all the more so about Chassidishe Yomim Tovim.

We must therefore “relive” these dates properly in the way that the Rabbeim taught us, by following in their ways and increasing our efforts in *hafatzas hamaayanos chutza*.

Our Rabbeim, especially the Rebbe, *nessi doreinu*, who is very much alive, in a manner of “*hu bachaim*” give us the power to spread Chassidus to each and every Jew in our generation. With that, we will merit the fulfillment of Moshiach’s promise to the Baal Shem Tov: “*Ka’asi Mar*”—the coming of Moshiach now!¹

בברכת כתיבה וחתימה טובה לשנה טובה ומתוקה,

The Editors

יום ההילולא כ"ף מנחם-אב ה'תשפ"ה

1. Shabbos Parshas Ki Seitzei 5745; Hisvaaduyos 5745 vol. 5, pp. 2867–2874.

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(ממכתב יום ד' י' לחדש מנ"א תשנ"ה)

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

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RASHI, 5725—5785, THIS MONTHLY COLUMN FEATURES AN
ADAPTATION OF ONE OF THE REBBE'S "RASHI SICHOS."

COMPILED BY: RABBI MENDEL VOGEL

וְהוֹרְדוּ זִקְנֵי הָעִיר הַהוּא אֶת-הָעֵגְלָה אֶל-
נַחַל אֵיתָן אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יַעֲבֹד בּוֹ וְלֹא יִזְרַע
וְעִרְפוּ-שָׁם אֶת-הָעֵגְלָה בְּנַחַל: (דברים כא, ד)

"אָמַר הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא: תָּבֵא עֵגְלָה בֵּת שְׁנֵתָה שְׁלֹא
עֲשֶׂתָה פְרוֹת וְתַעֲרַף בְּמָקוֹם שְׂאִינֹו עוֹשֶׂה פְרוֹת, לְכַפֵּר
עַל הָרִיגָתוֹ שֶׁל זֶה שְׁלֹא הִנְיָחוּהוּ לַעֲשׂוֹת פְרוֹת."

And the elders of that city shall
bring the calf down to a rugged
valley, which was neither tilled
nor sown, and there in the valley,
they shall decapitate the calf.

"The Holy One, blessed be He, said: Let a calf in its
first year, which has not produced offspring, come
and have its neck broken in a location that produces
no yield, to atone for the killing of this person,
which prevented him from producing offspring."

One can ask:

1. We know that Rashi's purpose with his *pirush* on
Chumash is to explain the literal meaning of the *pesukim*.
How does this statement of Rashi help us to better un-
derstand the *possuk*?

2. What is the meaning of the unusual introduction,
"The Holy One, blessed be He, said"? Was not *every* word
in the Torah uttered by Hashem?!

The answer is as follows:

Rashi is addressing a fundamental question regarding
the general concept of *egla arufa*:

The idea of taking an animal's life as a means of atone-
ment appears in the Torah many times, and is invariably
linked to the Beis Hamikdash. The most common instance
of this is a *korban*, brought as atonement, which is slaugh-
tered and sacrificed inside the Beis Hamikdash. Even
the *sa'ir hamishtale'ach* (the goat taken to the wilderness
on Yom Kippur) and *para aduma*—whose procedures
take place *outside* the Beis Hamikdash—maintain a direct
connection to the Beis Hamikdash: The Kohen Gadol
places his hands on the goat and says *viduy* in the Beis
Hamikdash courtyard, and the *para aduma* is slaughtered



and burned facing the Beis Hamikdash.

The *mitzva* of *egla arufa*, however, in which the life of the animal is taken as an atonement (“Grant **atonement** for your people Yisroel... [Thus] the blood [guilt] will be **atoned** for them” (Devarim 21:8)), stands out. Unlike any of the above-cited instances, the *egla arufa* requires neither *shechita* nor blood-sprinkling; it is killed neither in nor near the Beis Hamikdash; there is no presence of a *mizbe'ach*, and it does not require the involvement of a *kohen*.

In order to address this seeming inconsistency, Rashi quotes these words of Chazal (“*The Holy One, blessed be He, said: Let a calf in its first year, which has not produced offspring... to atone for the killing of this person, which prevented him from producing offspring*”) in order to convey to us that, indeed, the process of this *mitzvah* is an unusual one relative to what we know from the rest of the Torah. This is also expressed in the unusual introduction, “*The Holy One, blessed be He, said...*”: Hashem is introducing a new type of atonement; one that is, in fact, different than all others and not linked to the Beis Hamikdash. The reason being that this is a *mitzvah* whose procedure is specifically designed to mirror the act of the criminal: “*Let a calf in its first year, which has not produced offspring, come and have its neck broken in a location that produces no yield, to atone for the killing of this person, which prevented him from producing offspring.*”



Torah is eternal. Therefore, the lesson that can be learnt from the *mitzvah* of *egla arufa* must be one that can be applied to all Yidden, in all places and at all times.

The lesson is:

We are talking about a situation in which an individual

is found lifeless in a field. One can argue, “The Gemara says, ‘There is no death without sin.’ As well, this is a person “who has not produced ‘*peiros*’”; i.e. he had no Torah and *mitzvos* to shield him from harm. Additionally, if such a thing happened to him, it must have been decreed from Above. So what do I have in common with such an individual that I should get involved in this whole business?”

The same argument can also be made when encountering an individual who is spiritually “lifeless.” Whose fault is it that he is in this state? It was *he* who chose to remain in a spiritually toxic environment (“field”) and not in an environment of holiness and purity (“city”). So why do those living in a “city” surrounded by *yirei shomayim* have to leave it and deal with such a person...?

The Torah teaches us that, indeed, every Yid is responsible for every other Yid. Which is why the elders of the Beis Din need to announce, “We did not see him and [then] let him go off without food and without escort” (Rashi, 21:7): “Food” is Torah, and “escort” refers to *mitzvos* which escort a person on their journey through the “field” of *galus*.

Takeaway:

Elul is a time when the King of all kings is “in the field,” and accessible to every single Yid—no matter their spiritual standing. We, too, must go out into the “field,” and assist every single Yid in revealing their *neschama*.

(Adapted from Likkutei Sichos vol. 24, p. 121)



לזכות
ר' פינחס הירש שיחי'
מאראס
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ב' תמוז ה'תשפ"ה
לאריכות ימים ושנים טובות
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נדפס ע"י משפחתו שיחי'

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

Physical vs. Spiritual Reality

At the farbrengen of Shabbos Parshas Nitzavim 5734,¹ the Rebbe spoke about the famous teaching of the Baal Shem Tov that Hashem *bentches* the month of Tishrei, and with the power of this *bracha*, the Yidden *bentch* the remaining eleven months of the year. The Rebbe explained that though this *bracha* comes from above, there is still some intervention from us below (*is'arusa d'lisata*): The Baal Shem Tov, with this teaching, caused that Hashem's *bracha* also include the advantage of human *avoda*. Similarly, when this teaching is publicized and discussed by Yidden in future generations, we too can accomplish that this *bracha* is not only given from Hashem above (*is'arusa d'leila*), but instead we become "partners" with Hashem in this *bracha* of the Shabbos before Rosh Hashanah.

The Rebbe went on to explain that the preciousness of *avodas ha'adam* did not begin when Adam Harishon was created on Rosh Hashanah; rather, it existed before the world was created as well. Even before the world was created, Hashem took pleasure in the Torah and *mitzvos* that the Jewish people would do in the future, after creation.²

Based on the above, we can understand the meaning of the fact that "the world was created on 25 Elul." Was there a calendar year before the world

was created? How can we set a date for the first day of creation when time itself is a creation along with the rest of the universe?

The explanation is: Hashem deliberately created the world to appear as if there were eleven months and 24 days before creation began on 25 Elul, to symbolize that there actually *is* something that "precedes" creation: the effect of the *avoda* of Yidden that will come in the future.

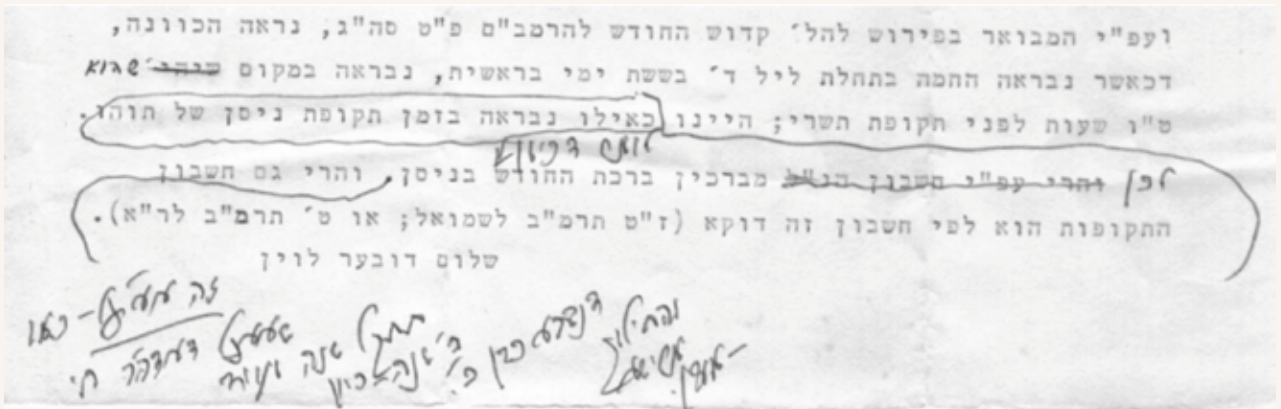
The Rebbe pointed out that we find proof for this idea in *nigleh* as well: The Midrash says that Adam Harishon was created like a 20-year-old man—i.e. looking as if he had lived for twenty years before creation.



After Shabbos, Rabbi Sholom Ber Levine wrote a note to the Rebbe, suggesting another proof for the Rebbe's position from a halacha regarding *Birkas Hachama*:

There are two opinions in the Gemara as to when the world was created: Tishrei or Nissan. The generally accepted ruling is that, in the practical sense, the world was created in Tishrei. However, in Hashem's "thought," the world was created earlier, in the month of Nissan.

We actually see this manifest in the physical



position of the sun, in the fact that we begin counting the seasons from Tishrei assuming that the sun's position is slightly delayed, based on the fact that it was created to look as if its position during the preceding Nissan season actually occurred in the physical sense.

Furthermore: we actually rely on the position of the sun during this preceding Nissan season for a matter of halacha: The *bracha* of *Birkas Hachama* is recited when the sun reaches the position it had occupied at the time of creation—based on the opinion that the world was created

in Nissan; *not* when it returns to where it had been placed at the time of its actual creation.

Rabbi Levine sought to prove from this that, as the Rebbe had stated, Hashem created the world as though time had previously existed. When the sun was actually created in Tishrei, it was made to look as if it had undergone the preceding Nissan season, even in the physical sense.

The Rebbe however did not accept his assumption as proof, writing as follows:³

לומר דכיון [כאילו נבראה בזמן תקופת ניסן של תוהו] לכן [מברכין ברכת החודש בניסן]. זה אפ"ל – כמו שאפ"ל [לדאדה"ר חי תתקל שנה ועוד כ' שנה – כיון דנברא כבן כ'].
והחילוק מרישא – מובן.

To suggest that the reason why [we recite *Birkas Hachama* in the month of Nissan] is due to the fact [that the sun was created looking as if it was created in the preceding Nissan season] is **not plausible**. Just like it is not plausible to say that Adam Harishon lived 930 years, plus an additional 20 years, since he was created [looking] like a 20-year-old.

[I.e. we don't count the years preceding his creation as part of his life, though his body looked as if he had lived through them. Similarly, we wouldn't say a *bracha* commemorating the physical creation of the sun based on the fact that it *appeared* as if it was created at that time.⁴]

The difference between this and what was explained above [i.e. what the Rebbe explained at the farbrengen, that the future *avoda* of the Jewish people had its effect, in a spiritual sense, even before the physical creation of the world] is obvious.⁵

1. Toras Menachem vol. 77, p. 334.

2. See edited *sicha*, Likkutei Sichos vol. 16, p. 486.

3. Published in Toras Menachem *ibid.*, p. vii.

4. For an explanation as to why we indeed recite the *bracha* then, see Likkutei Sichos vol. 16, p. 99.

5. I.e., to say that in a spiritual sense, the future *avoda* of the Jewish people had an effect on the physical world is not quite the same thing as actually equating the spiritual position of the sun with the way it was physically created.

טור 'לעבן מיטן רבי'ן הוקדש לזכרון
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רוהר



A YEAR OF MIRACLES

Ushering In A Year of Wonders

ELUL—5750

This month, we conclude our journey through the special year of Shnas Nissim with the Rebbe. The year's final month of Elul included many special events, including the Rebbe's calming assurance through a growing state of tension in the Middle East, and culminating in preparations for the upcoming new year.

COMPILED BY: RABBI YANKY BELL

WRITTEN BY: RABBI MENDEL JACOBS





THE REBBE LEAVES THE SHUL AFTER SELICHOS.

Farbrengens

Every Shabbos afternoon at 1:30 p.m., the Rebbe entered the shul for a farbrengen where he spoke timely words of Torah and said *l'chaim* with Chassidim.

On the first Shabbos of the month—Parshas Shoftim, 4 Elul—the Rebbe spoke about the special qualities of the month of Elul, a time of *teshuva* and closeness to Hashem. The Rebbe also spoke about the fact that we are standing at the threshold of Moshiach's arrival, based on the words of the Midrash Yalkut Shimoni, which had been “publicized widely and continues to spread even further,” that Moshiach stands on the roof of the Beis Hamikdash and announces: “Humble ones! The time for your redemption has arrived!”¹

While the Chassidim sang *niggunim* between *sichos*, the Rebbe encouraged the singing strongly, at times even joining the song in an undertone. The Rebbe motioned to several individuals to say *l'chaim* on full cups, including Israeli Knesset Member, Reb Avraham Werdiger. Visiting the Rebbe for the week, Reb Avraham received much positive attention from the Rebbe. He was instrumental, at the Rebbe's behest, in allowing Mr. Shamir to establish the current government in Eretz Yisroel.

Toward the end of the farbrengen, the Rebbe distributed bottles of *mashke* to people hosting gatherings in the upcoming week. The first one to receive was the oldest of the Scharf boys, who announced that the bottle was

for a farbrengen in honor of the conclusion of Kaddish, eleven months after his father's passing. While he spoke, the Rebbe watched and smiled, and when he concluded, the Rebbe said, “*Gut!*”

The Rebbe then called for Rabbi Shimon Hecht, who was sitting in his late father, Rabbi Yaakov Yehuda's place, and gave him a bottle of *mashke* to “make a farbrengen.” Rabbi Hecht was confused and announced that there would be a gathering in honor of his father's *Shloshim*, but the Rebbe corrected him, saying, “For a farbrengen!”

On Shabbos Parshas Ki Seitzei, 11 Elul, the Rebbe spoke about the theme of the Parsha—waging war, which includes the spiritual battle that each of us wages against one's natural tendencies. But though we are in constant battle, the theme of Elul is joy; it's a time when Hashem expresses His love for us, and we respond by serving Him with joy.

In the second *sicha*, the Rebbe spoke about the late Rabbi Yaakov Yehuda Hecht, drawing lessons from his lifelong commitment to educating Jewish children. The *gematria* of his name is 212, the Rebbe said, which is the same as the word “רבי,” because he dedicated his life to educating children who are referred to as *tinokos shel beis rabban*. At the conclusion of this *sicha*, the Rebbe encouraged the singing very strongly, and turned to Rabbi Shimon Hecht, who was sitting in his father's place, indicating that he should say *l'chaim* on a full cup.

[On the following Tuesday, a large gathering was held



A LARGE CROWD GATHERS AT 770 MARKING THE SHLOSHIM OF RABBI YAAKOV YEHUDA HECHT.



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at 770 to mark Rabbi Hecht's *Shloshim*. In the midst of the event, the Rebbe sent out the edited version of this section of the farbrengen and asked that it be printed and distributed amongst the participants.]

At the end of the farbrengen the Rebbe distributed bottles of *mashke*, as usual. Members of the *hanhala* of the Central Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim approached to receive a bottle for a farbrengen in honor of Tes-Vov Elul—marking 93 years since the founding of the yeshiva. When the Rebbe saw the yeshiva's *mashpia*, Rabbi Shlomo Zarchi, he asked Rabbi Leibel Groner if he too was part of this group.

Shabbos Parshas Ki Savo was also Chai Elul, and the theme of the farbrengen centered around that date. One of the ideas that the Rebbe discussed was about the Alter Rebbe, who is referred to as “Alter,” meaning elderly. Just like an elderly individual has stocked up on many years of lived experience, the Alter Rebbe is similarly “stocked” as his Chassidus includes the general ideas of all the Chassidus that would be taught in subsequent generations.

On the final Shabbos of the month, Parshas Nitzavim-Vayelech, the Rebbe cited the famous teaching of the Alter Rebbe, who heard from the Maggid in the name of the Baal Shem Tov: On the Shabbos before Rosh Hashanah, we don't bless the upcoming new month, because Hashem

Himself blesses this month. With the power of His *bracha*, the Jewish people are able to bless the remaining 11 months of the year.

It's interesting that specifically in this teaching three Rabbeim are mentioned: The Baal Shem Tov, the Maggid, and the Alter Rebbe. The Rebbe explained that in order to bring Hashem's blessings down into this world, we invoke the *zechus* of our Rabbeim. This mirrors the daily practice in the Beis Hamikdash, where before bringing the *korban tamid*, they would mention the city of Chevron to invoke the *zechus* of our holy Avos.

The Rebbe concluded the farbrengen with a call to action: It was mentioned several times in the past that on Shabbos, people should gather together for Torah study. When addressing these gatherings this week, people should be reminded to assist their fellow Jews and ensure that everyone has what they need for the upcoming Yomim Tovim. Especially this year, when Rosh Hashanah leads straight into Shabbos, care must be taken that everyone has enough food, meat, and wine, and everything else necessary for a hearty celebration.

The Rebbe mentioned that we are now concluding the year which has the acronym of “*Shnas Nissim*”—the year of miracles—and we are entering into the year of “*Ar'enu Niflaos*”—when Hashem will show us the wonders of the complete and final *geula*.



THE REBBE EXITS THE ELEVATOR ON THE WAY TO HIS ROOM AFTER THE CONCLUSION OF THE CHILDREN'S RALLY, 7 ELUL.



What Was the Outcome?

Throughout the month, there were several interesting occurrences:

On Sunday, 5 Elul, the Rebbe visited the Ohel as usual, following the distribution of dollars. The Rebbe left 770 at 5:55 p.m., returning late into the night at 11:50! At 12:00 a.m., the Rebbe entered the shul for Mincha and Maariv, encouraging the singing with a radiant face.

The next week, the Rebbe again returned very late from the Ohel, at 11:15 p.m., and the next week at 10:25 p.m.

As it turned out, the crowds coming to see the Rebbe at Sunday dollars were growing larger by the week, and it became very difficult for the Rebbe to go to the Ohel afterward in a timely manner. On the final Sunday of the month, the Rebbe did not go to the Ohel on Sunday and went on Monday instead. Rumor has it that the Rebbe said he would officially change his practice from going on Sunday to going on Monday with the start of the new year, after performing *Hataras Nedarim* on Erev Rosh Hashanah.

On Thursday, 16 Elul, a shliach from out of town had joined the Rebbe's *minyán* for Shacharis along with one of his supporters. As the Rebbe left the shul following davening, he waved his hand in encouragement towards the supporter, who was holding a child in hand. Later that day, the Rebbe told Rabbi Leibel Groner to ask the shliach: What effect did the Rebbe's encouragement have on the supporter? The Rebbe wanted an answer before leaving for the Ohel later that day! The shliach responded that the effect was "extraordinary."

Women and Girls

The Rebbe addressed two groups of women and girls this month:

The first, on Tuesday, 7 Elul, consisted of the campers and staff of Camp Emunah. Originally, the Rebbe had sent a message that Rabbi Sholom Ber Hecht should address the girls, but on Tuesday morning, the Rebbe let it be known that he himself would address them.

At 3:00 p.m., the campers arrived and took their seats in the big shul of 770. A small group of men was at



THE SCHARF CHILDREN (LEFT)
STAND AT THEIR PLACE NEAR
THE REBBE AT THE CONCLUSION
OF SHACHARIS, 8 ELUL.

THE REBBE ADDRESSES
THE WOMEN, 22 ELUL.



the front of the shul near the Rebbe's platform in front of a movable *mehitza*. The Rebbe entered the shul at 3:25, encouraging the singing of the men while the girls clapped along. Mincha was davened, followed by shofar blowing, and the girls then recited the Twelve Pesukim as the Rebbe watched with noticeable pleasure.

Then the Rebbe addressed the girls, and Rabbi Sholom Ber Hecht translated into English. The Rebbe spoke about the name of their camp: *Emunah*, and how it gives life to all the Torah and *mitzvos* we do. Drawing closer to the upcoming new year, the Rebbe mentioned that this Rosh Hashanah leads straight into Shabbos, giving all the women and girls—even the very young ones—a special opportunity to bring more light into the world by kindling Yom Tov and Shabbos candles for three days in a row.

The Rebbe concluded that children's rallies of this type usually end with singing *niggunim*. However, since most of the participants at this gathering are women and girls, we will ask the *chazan* to sing "*Sheyiboneh Beis Hamikdash*" on his own, and to end off with "*Amen, kein yehi ratzon!*"

Chazzan Teleshevsky indeed sang *Sheyiboneh*, and all the girls clapped along, after which the Rebbe distributed packets of dimes to the counselors for the girls.

This Mincha was the last time that the Scharf children recited Kaddish for their father. When the Rebbe came into the shul for Maariv that evening, the children were not at their regular place next to the Rebbe's platform. During Maariv, the Rebbe kept looking very intently at the spot where the children used to stand, and they understood that the Rebbe wanted them to be there even though they had already finished with Kaddish.

Later in the month, on 22 Elul, the Rebbe addressed all women and girls gathered at 770 in advance of the new year. "This has been referred to as 'Shnas Nissim,'" the Rebbe said, "and we have indeed seen many miraculous occurrences throughout the year."

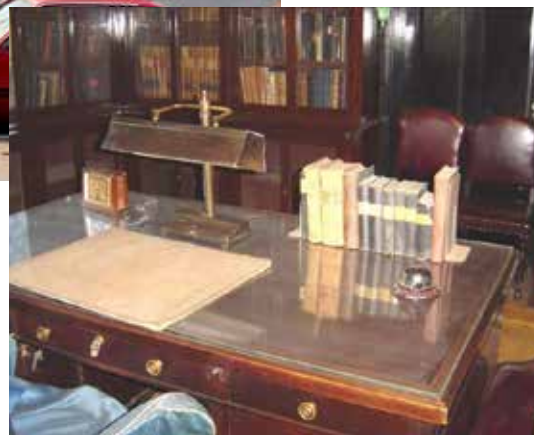
The Rebbe continued at great length speaking about the incredible phenomenon taking place in Russia, where thousands of families and individuals were finally allowed to leave to the United States and Eretz Yisroel after decades of harsh oppression.

The Rebbe also spoke about the coming of Moshiach



CONSTRUCTION AT THE LIBRARY NEARS COMPLETION. PHOTO FROM 12 ELUL 5750.

THE 11 SEFORIM RETURNED TO THE FRIEDIKER REBBE'S DESK IN ELUL 5750, IN THE SAME SPOT UNTIL THIS VERY DAY.



as most imminent:

"We have spoken several times in the recent past about the words of the Yalkut Shimoni," the Rebbe said, "that when times are turbulent throughout the world, Hashem tells His children, 'Do not be afraid, the time for your redemption has arrived!'"

The *sicha* went on for over an hour. At its conclusion, the Rebbe handed out packets of dollars to the organizers to distribute to all the women present. When Mrs. Chava Hecht (wife of the late Rabbi Yaakov Yehuda) passed by, the Rebbe gave her an additional packet of dollars, saying, "Give this out for the *aliyas haneshama* [of your husband], but do it with joy!"

Before leaving the shul, the Rebbe took to the microphone once more and said, "We'll conclude with a wish to each of you, as the [Friediker] Rebbe would say it in the singular tense: *L'shana tova tikasev v'sechasem!*"

The Library

Over the past several months, construction had been underway at the Agudas Chabad Library with a plan to connect the basement of the building at 770 with the library building next door, as well as adding a bridge connecting the third floors of the two buildings. Towards the end of Elul, the basement construction was completed, along with the facade of the bridge.

On 21 Elul, marking 50 years since the Chanukas Habayis of the building of 770, the Rebbe edited and published a *maamar* titled "*Al Shlosha Devarim*," the same title of the *maamar* delivered by the Friediker Rebbe at

the original celebration in 5700.

Towards the end of the month, on Tuesday, 28 Elul, the final remaining *seforim* that had been stolen during the infamous theft several years earlier were returned to 770. These were the 11 *seforim* that were on the Friediker Rebbe's desk at the time of his *histalkus*. The Rebbe was visibly relieved when learning the news that this long, painful saga had finally come to an end, and asked that the newly arrived *seforim* should be placed on the desk in the same order as they were at the time of the *histalkus* on Yud Shevat.

Hashem Is Watching Every Yid!

Each Sunday, the Rebbe was visited by thousands of individuals seeking his blessings and holy counsel.

On Sunday, 5 Elul, many people asked the Rebbe about the rising tensions in the Middle East and their implications for Eretz Yisroel. The Rebbe reassured them that all would be well.

One army reservist asked the Rebbe—if war were to break out in Eretz Yisroel, should he return to fight and protect the land? The Rebbe responded, "There will not be a war! If you wish to help protect the land, you can go back even during peaceful times." The reservist asked

the Rebbe again, “But if there were to be a war, should I go?” The Rebbe repeated: “There will not be a war. There will be peace!”

A woman told the Rebbe that she was planning to send her daughter to Eretz Yisroel for this school year to attend a Beis Yaakov seminary, but she was now rethinking her decision due to the current situation. The Rebbe replied: “There’s nothing to rethink; don’t make yourself crazy. Send her there. It’s better to be there than here!”

Another woman told the Rebbe that she planned on leaving soon to Eretz Yisroel, but her mother-in-law was very worried. The Rebbe said, “There’s nothing to worry about. Hashem is watching every Yid!”

A *rav* from Bnei Brak came to the Rebbe asking for a *bracha* for his yeshiva, which he referred to as “a neutral yeshiva.” The Rebbe responded, “You keep saying that you are neutral. Why don’t you say that you’re a chossid?” The Rebbe gave him an additional dollar, wishing him to be a chossid and to go from strength to strength.

“And don’t be frightened by this!” the Rebbe said.

The *rav* told the Rebbe that his children are enrolled in “*Tzevakos Hashem*,” and the Rebbe corrected him: “*Tzivos Hashem*.” The children had asked the *rav* to bring back dollars from the Rebbe for them, and the Rebbe asked, “What are their ranks in *Tzivos Hashem*?”

The father replied that two of them are captains, one is an officer, and the other is a general. The Rebbe blessed the children and gave the *rav* 8 dollars for his 8 children, saying, “*Moshiach* will have 8 names. May each of your children greet *Moshiach* with another name!”

When one woman passed by, the Rebbe asked her about her sister. “It’s been three or four years since she’s written to me. Please make sure that she writes more often and shares good news.”

On Sunday, 12 Elul, an individual came to the Rebbe saying that his brother-in-law was very sick. The Rebbe told him to check the mezuzos of his home. “The doctors want me to convey to my brother-in-law that his situation is grave,” the man said. “Why would the doctors want you to do that?” the Rebbe replied. “You don’t need to mix in with the doctors’ affairs. You need to tell your brother-in-law that he’ll have a *ksiva vachasima tova*.”

A woman came to the Rebbe, pointing at a young boy, saying that he is very sick, and asking if she should change his name. The Rebbe said no and asked for his name.

“Yosef ben Sara,” she replied.

“That’s a good name,” the Rebbe said. “Mainly because



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REB MORDECHAI BEN DAVID WITH THE REBBE
AT SUNDAY DOLLARS, 12 ELUL.



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RABBI MENACHEM MENDEL MENDELSON AT SUNDAY DOLLARS, 12 ELUL.



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SENATOR JOSEPH LIEBERMAN AND HIS WIFE HADASSAH
IN CONVERSATION WITH THE REBBE, 26 ELUL.



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THE REBBE WITH MR. JERRY WEINTRAUB ON THE NIGHT OF EREV ROSH HASHANAH.

Yosef [Hatzaddik] lived for 110 years!”

Another woman told the Rebbe that she plans to discharge her son from the hospital, taking responsibility for the decision on her own. The Rebbe said that she should not make such a decision before consulting a doctor.

Reb Mordechai Ben David Werdyger came to the Rebbe, saying that Rabbi Shlomo Cunin asked him to ask the Rebbe for a “*shtarke bracha*” for the telethon fundraiser. The Rebbe said, “May it be doubly-strong, *kiflayim l’tushiya*.”

Reb Mordechai mentioned that he sang for the children who were rescued from the Chernobyl nuclear disaster, and the Rebbe wished him that from now on he should sing for happy occasions, unlike the Chernobyl situation, which was quite the opposite.

Rabbi Menachem Mendel Mendelson, the *rav* of Komemiyut, Eretz Yisroel, came to the Rebbe, and reported that he recently visited the Lubavitcher yeshiva in Kiryat Gat. Boruch Hashem, the yeshiva is growing and doing well, but they need a *bracha* because they’re deeply in debt.

The Rebbe replied, “You are a *rav*! You must give a halachic ruling that they should be free of all debt, enabling them to be at ease, like the Rambam says, in order to fulfill Torah and *mitzvos* properly. The Rambam

can be the basis for your *psak-din*.”

On Sunday, 19 Elul, a woman came to the Rebbe saying that she had cancer, and that she needed the Rebbe’s *bracha*.

“Forget about it,” the Rebbe said, “and lose it. You say that you have it, you can just as well say that you lost it.”

“With the Rebbe’s prayers?” she asked. “Yes!” the Rebbe answered.

Rabbi Simcha Yerushalmi came to the Rebbe and said that while he was the chairman of the religious affairs office in Rechovot, he often assisted the Chabad Chassidim, and the Rebbe had once sent him a thank-you letter for this.

“Why do you speak about the Chassidim as if you’re not one of them?” the Rebbe asked.

“*Chas v’shalom!*” Rabbi Yerushalmi answered. “I am a descendant of many holy Jews, including Reb Mendel of Rimnitz, the Yismach Moshe, and others.”

The Rebbe replied, “But at times it’s harder to make a holy person into a Chossid, because he thinks he’s already holy.”

“I am a Chossid!” Rabbi Yerushalmi said.

“May you be a Chossid and also holy!” the Rebbe answered.

Rabbi Yerushalmi mentioned that in his younger

years, he learned with the Minchas Elazar of Munkatch.

The Rebbe concluded: “May Hashem bless you have his zealousness, but express it in a peaceful and pleasant manner.”

On Sunday, 26 Elul, Senator Joseph Lieberman came to the Rebbe, saying that it was a great pleasure to see the Rebbe again. The Rebbe told him that he’d heard a lot about what the senator was up to, and blessed him with a double benediction of Hashem’s blessings.

Senator Lieberman: I appreciate it very much. These are serious times in Washington, and thank G-d I have the opportunity to be active. Your blessings mean a lot to me, steering me in the right direction.

The Rebbe: But you have Hashem’s blessings directly, without any intermediary, and you will utilize them in good health and with much success.

The senator asked the Rebbe if he had advice as to the situation in the Middle East, and the Rebbe said: “Things move so quickly, there are changes every day; it’s difficult to predict what will be tomorrow. Take one day at a time...”

Senator Lieberman introduced his wife to the Rebbe, and the Rebbe gave her a dollar “for your cooperation with your husband.”

“We have four children,” Senator Lieberman said, “the youngest is Chana Rochel; I think that’s a good Chabad name.”

The Rebbe gave them four dollars, instructing them to let the children give the tzedakah on their own. “Don’t rely on the senator,” the Rebbe said with a smile.

An individual came to the Rebbe saying that a while ago, he had asked the Rebbe for a *bracha* for a *shidduch*, and the Rebbe had told him that very soon he should send the Rebbe his wedding invitation, but he still hasn’t found his match.

The Rebbe replied: “No one can do that for you. It says ‘*Ha’ish mekadash lirtzono*,’ a man betroths by his own will.”

The man insisted: “The Rebbe should decree that I will soon become a *chassan*!” The Rebbe replied: “I already did!”

An individual told the Rebbe that he heard that the Rebbe asked everyone to speak about the words of the Yalkut Shimoni (about the imminent coming of Moshiach), and the Rebbe agreed, adding, “Don’t be afraid that [it might be perceived as] we’re mixing into politics...”



THE REBBE HANDS OUT COINS FOR TZEDAKAH WHILE LEAVING THE MIKVAH, EREV ROSH HASHANAH.

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Preparing for Rosh Hashanah

Of course, as the year drew to a close, preparations were underway for the new year, 5751.

In an unusual gesture, the Rebbe released three *Michtavim Klaliyim* before Rosh Hashanah (as opposed to two, as he normally does): One on Chai Elul, a second on 25 Elul, and a third on Gimmel D’Selichos. The theme of the letters was about the unique advantage of this year’s Rosh Hashanah, which brings together three consecutive days—a “*chazaka*”—of holiness, by leading directly into Shabbos.

On Wednesday, 22 Elul, an announcement was made and signs were posted that the Rebbe would begin receiving *panim* on Motzei Shabbos after the first Selichos. Everyone who is in town at the time is asked to bring their *panim* at the earliest opportunity, allowing for the guests who arrive later to give the Rebbe their *panim* in due time. Additionally, everyone was asked to place the



HATARAS NEDARIM.

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money for *d'mei pan* in a separate envelope.

On Motzei Shabbos, 26 Elul, at 1:05 a.m., the Rebbe entered the shul for the first Selichos. The Rebbe was fairly serious and he did not encourage the singing on his way in. After Selichos, at 1:50, the Rebbe began receiving the long line of people with *panim* until 3:00 a.m. The Rebbe wished each person a “*Ksiva vachasima tova.*”

The Rebbe received *panim* again after Maariv on Monday night, and then again on Tuesday night.

On Tuesday evening, the night of Erev Rosh Hashanah, the Rebbe distributed dollars after Maariv and was visited by a special delegation of *balebatim* from California, including Mr. Jerry Weintraub.

The Rebbe spoke and smiled warmly to them, and then called back Mr. Weintraub, wishing him “Much success,” and giving him two additional dollars.

On the morning of Erev Rosh Hashanah, the Rebbe entered the shul for Selichos at 8:35. At around 10:45 a.m., the Rebbe left for the *mikvah*, and only afterward came back to the shul for Shacharis, much later than usual—beginning at 11:45.

After Shacharis, a group of *rabbanim* and elder Chassidim sat down on the Rebbe’s platform and the Rebbe performed *Hataras Nedarim* before them.

At around 1:15 p.m., the Rebbe received the last line of people giving their *panim*, then received the communal *pan* from a group of elder Chassidim, headed by Reb Mendel Futerfas. The Rebbe responded with a *bracha*



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for the new year, including a *bracha* beginning with each letter of the Aleph-Beis.

At 2:45 p.m., the Rebbe left for the Ohel. People who were at the Ohel observed that the Rebbe cried openly while standing there.

The Rebbe returned to 770 at 6:36 p.m., minutes before candle lighting.

The Rebbe then davened the final Mincha of Shnas Nissim—5750 in the small *zal*. When Mincha ended, it was already 7:02 p.m., the onset of the new year—5751—*Shnas Ar'enu Nifla'os...* ①

1. See the previous installment of this column in the Av magazine.

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

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

Let's Talk About Eretz Yisroel

THROUGH THE LENS
OF THE REBBE'S TORAH

PART 12 Real Peace

COMPILED BY:
RABBI MENDEL MISHOLOVIN

WRITTEN BY:
RABBI LEVI GREENBERG (TX)

Since the horrific war broke out in Eretz Yisroel on Simchas Torah 5784, there is an intense interest among so many to understand how to deal with it based on the Rebbe's teachings.

Isn't it better to bomb a city to rubble than to endanger soldiers' lives fighting urban warfare? Should aid trucks be allowed to enter Gaza in the middle of a war? Should murderous terrorists be exchanged for hostages? What is the proper response to a woman being killed by a terrorist on the way to the hospital to give birth? Is there an alternative solution to rocket attacks other than the Iron Dome?

For decades, the Rebbe addressed the security of Yidden in Eretz Yisroel, analyzing and clarifying every possible detail and addressing numerous specific situations. There are clear answers to the above questions and many more, but upon reflection, many of these questions are predicated on the wrong foundations.

As the Nossi Hador who leads, guides, and educates the generation, and the "Ro'eh Ne'eman," the faithful shepherd who nourishes our *emuna* in Hashem, the Rebbe educates us to truly believe and see how Torah is a guide to every detail of life, especially the most important questions facing world Jewry in the modern era, instead of relying on and accepting parameters defined by "the world." These teachings restructure the premises with which to approach the vital challenge of ensuring the security of millions of Yidden surrounded by so many enemies. When viewed through this prism, the options available to the Israeli government today become much broader and bolder than many think possible.

In the past eleven articles of this column, we have provided brief overviews of some of the fundamental principles that enable us to properly analyze the current situation and chart a path to peace and prosperity for everyone in the region.



During the farbrengen of Shabbos Parshas Noach 5742, the Rebbe spoke about a conversation he had with an influential figure in Eretz Yisroel who participated in the negotiations for the disastrous Camp David Accords. He admitted the details of the deal were negotiated under immense pressure and that this was a critical mistake, since they could have insisted on signing a general agreement and then worked out the details later without pressure. But they felt stuck in an irreversible situation, compelled to fulfill their obligations, despite seeing the terrible results of these retreats and the danger it was causing to the Yidden in Eretz Yisroel.

“When I asked him what their long-term plan was [to ensure Yidden are secure in Eretz Yisroel –ed.], he responded that Hashem will help! While I was happy to hear him proclaim his faith and trust in Hashem, I explained to him that Hashem wants to help us when we do our part within the natural realm, according to Hashem’s instructions.”

The Torah states, “וּבִרְכָּהּ אֱלֹקֵיךָ בְּכָל אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשֶׂה — Hashem will bless you in all that you do.” To receive Hashem’s *brachos* of sustenance and health, we must work, eat, and sleep properly. In the same way, to achieve peace and tranquility in Eretz Yisroel, we are obligated to stockpile weapons, invest in natural resources, and prepare battle plans for all scenarios, because securing a tiny country in a sea of hostile enemies demands a skilled army and all other components of national security. Instead of an aberration of Jewish values, military preparedness and credible deterrence are a feature of our trust in Hashem, the natural vessels through which we avert violence and war in the first place. Striking first, completing the task, and consolidating victories saves lives on both sides.

Even the best army relies on effective guidelines to assess threats, formulate strategy, and approve tactics to achieve security, grounded in a moral value system. Our values are determined only by Torah, not politicians, diplomats, journalists, professors, or activists.

Confidence in identity and purpose is also critical. The millions of Yidden in Eretz Yisroel today must understand they are not there because the European Jewish community disappeared in the Holocaust or because 33 nations voted in the United Nations to recognize the creation of an independent Jewish state. The land was gifted to Am Yisroel by Hashem at the *Bris Bein Habesorim* as an

eternal inheritance, to the exclusion of all others. Members of other nations might live there, but they have no inherent right to it.

While there is no obligation for Yidden to conquer these territories until Moshiach comes, when Hashem performs miracles during a defensive war, and areas within the biblical borders of Eretz Yisroel, or territories that are essential to its security and wellbeing, are liberated, no one has the right to give them away. They are Hashem’s gift to Am Yisroel. Stopping Jewish settlement there to avoid insulting local inhabitants or angering foreign nations is not called being reasonable; it is reckless. Using them as bargaining chips in negotiations for any reason, even declarations of peace, is not acceptable; **it is theft**. Even if politicians signed agreements to do so, they are illegitimate and should be revoked, because they endanger the inhabitants of Eretz Yisroel.

Allies will celebrate success, regardless of how loudly they initially protest for performative reasons; enemies will vilify and condemn, regardless of how the Jewish government and military go about their business. Hence, there is no need to seek legitimacy from the international community when it comes to protecting Eretz Yisroel, because the most important goal must be to save every life. Every life is an entire world.

Ensuring the security of its citizens is the most basic responsibility of any sovereign nation. There are no such things as “tolerable losses,” military or civilian, and sacrificing lives to protect historic structures or enemy populations is wrong. Security experts determine how best to achieve these goals, providing their professional opinions without regard to politics or diplomacy.



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ELIEZER KULAS SPEAKING WITH THE REBBE AT DOLLARS.

Clarity in these principles helps us cut through the noise, appreciate the roots of the multiple security crises, and insist on credible solutions. Clarity allows us to reject the tragic and suicidal perspective that living in Eretz Yisroel comes along with the price tag of terrorism, rockets, sirens, and shelters. Real peace can be achieved if the security playbook is written based on Torah values and in accordance with the Shulchan Aruch.

Eliezer Kulas, a former Member of Knesset and member of the Likud party, came to the Rebbe for dollars on 21 Shevat, 5752. He shared that in response to the Rebbe's conversation with Transportation Minister Moshe Katzav on Motzei Yud Shevat regarding Israel's security, he had formed the "Israel Loyalist Faction" to promote the Rebbe's causes in the Likud so that "even in the Knesset they should see that when the Rebbe says something they should take heed and act accordingly."

The Rebbe responded, *"Much outstanding success. Instead of asking me, just look into the Shulchan Aruch, and you will see what needs to be done, and you will have Hashem's help."*

Spiritual means are certainly the core of our obligations to securing Eretz Yisroel. During war and peacetime, the Rebbe launched the *mitvzoim* campaigns to strengthen the security of the Yidden in Eretz Yisroel and boost the morale of the soldiers. During various crises, the Rebbe called for specific spiritual efforts to overcome the enemy. For example, before the Yom Kippur War, the

Rebbe mobilized Jewish children throughout the world to gather for rallies of Torah, Tefilla, and Tzedaka; as the war unfolded, the Rebbe charged Chassidim to intensify their *simcha* in unprecedented fashion. When there was a serious threat of an imminent attack from the PLO on multiple Jewish targets on 28 Nissan 5750, the Rebbe announced that everyone should give the value of three meals to tzedakah in lieu of fasting, and called upon Klal Yisroel to increase in Torah, Tefilla, and Tzedakah.

However, Shulchan Aruch in Orach Chayim Siman 329 states that when non-Jews threaten Jews on Shabbos, we are obligated to meet them with weapons, ready for battle. Suggesting that in order to preserve the sanctity of Shabbos, we should respond to the threat through learning more Torah or saying more Tehillim is a violation of halacha! Decisive action is critical to channeling Hashem's blessings of security and peace.

Although we are still in *galus*, Klal Yisroel has been granted the historic gift of self-governance in Eretz Yisroel with all the necessary tools of ensuring real peace and security for all Yidden. Through overcoming the stifling *galus* mentality which pervades much of the current decision-making processes and political posturing, our brothers and sisters living in Eretz Yisroel can merit the realization of Hashem's blessing of "וישבתם לבטח בארצכם" — and you shall dwell securely in your land." 📌

Primary Sources: Likkutei Sichos vol. 21, p. 291; Toras Menachem Hisvaaduyos 5742 vol. 1, p. 371; Living Torah #336.

BY: RABBI MENDY GREENBERG (TWINSBURG, OH)

A FLAME[★] BEHIND THE FROST

THE CHABAD HOUSE BEHIND
THE IRON CURTAIN



לזכות ברכה ליפשא תחי'
לרגל יום הולדתה י"ז אלול

ולזכות מנחם מענדל שי'
לרגל יום הולדתו ט' אלול

נדפס ע"י הוריהם הרה"ג הרה"ח ר' שלום דוב
בער וזוגתו מרת ח' מושקא שיחיו שוחאט



RABBI YITZCHOK KOGAN
SERVES AS ONE OF THE
ELDER SHLUCHIM OF
MOSCOW AND RABBI
OF THE BOLSHAYA
BRONNAYA JEWISH
CENTER. THIS IS THE
INCREDIBLE STORY OF
HIS LIFE AND WORK
UNDER SOVIET RULE.



The Special Visit

“Let me share some memories from the past few days.”

With these words, a *kevutza bochur* begins a fascinating description of a special visitor at 770 one morning in Kislev, 5747.

“On the morning of Tes or Yud Kislev, I arrived at 770 from Seder Chassidus in Chovevei Torah for the 9:30 a.m. *minyan*, and a quiet buzz was going around—Reb Yitzchok Kogan—the *tzaddik from Leningrad*—had arrived.

“One by one, people slipped into the *cheder sheni* to see the ‘tzaddik’ for himself.

“Before davening, they made sure to stand him to the left of the *aron kodesh*, facing the entrance, so that he would be able to see the Rebbe when he arrived at 10:00.

“When the Rebbe entered for *krias haTorah*, Reb Yitzchok said *Shehecheyanu* aloud, and the Rebbe answered ‘Amen!’ The entire time, there was no overt reaction from the Rebbe, but when Reb Yitzchok performed *hagbah*, the Rebbe looked at him intently and wiped his holy eyes with his handkerchief again and again.

“Immediately after davening, a *farbrengen* began in the small *zal*. The crowd piled up into a human pyramid stretching to the ceiling. They brought out *mashke*, and a *lebedike farbrengen* went on for around two hours. People looked at him as if a rare celestial being had descended. Every word he uttered during his stay was considered holy.

“Before Maariv, Rabbi Groner approached him and whispered something in his ear. After Maariv, he and his wife went into *yechidus* with the Rebbe. They remained inside *Gan Eden Hatachton* for two hours and ten minutes!

“We waited the entire time outside the door. As soon as they emerged, we sang *Mimitzrayim Ge’altanu*, and Reb Mendel Futerfas, who was visibly moved by the *yechidus*, took hold of him and led him into the big shul, where a crowd had already gathered. Somehow, they managed to get him seated, and another exciting *farbrengen* began. He shared stories of the Rebbe, the Rebbe’s miracles, stories about *baalei teshuvah*, and the Rebbe’s *brachos*.

“On Friday night, after davening, many people approached him to wish him ‘*Gut Shabbos*’ and he greeted everyone warmly. Everyone saw in him a real *tziyur* of a Chossid.

“The night before his departure, he and his wife went in again for a half-hour *yechidus*. The next morning, they left for the airport.

“*Thus ends the story of the Tzaddik from Leningrad in Lubavitch.*”¹

This remarkable description was not about an elder chossid from a previous generation. This Reb Yitzchok didn’t have a long white beard, and he wasn’t a *Tomim* from Lubavitch who had seen the Rebbe Rashab.

His was a very different pedigree. For the previous ten years, he had been responsible for a spiritual revolution in the most unlikely of places—his hometown, the city of Leningrad. His ‘Chabad House’ had been operating right under the nose of the Soviet regime.

The Center in Leningrad

Yiddishkeit in the Soviet Union was almost non-existent in the 5730s. The legendary Chabad underground had largely petered out after the Great Escape of 5706, and even the small Chabad community that remained behind mostly left the Soviet Union in the years after the Six-Day War. Only a tiny handful of Chassidim remained.

At the same time, interest in Jewish life was on the rise. Inspired by the miracles of the Six-Day War, an entire generation of young Jews desperately wanted to emigrate to Eretz Yisroel and reconnect with their people. Many indeed submitted requests to leave, only to be rejected and branded as *refuseniks*, immediately losing their jobs and livelihoods. Suddenly, thousands of young Jewish men and women wanted to reconnect—but had no sense of



RABBI YITZCHOK KOGAN AND HIS WIFE AT JFK AIRPORT
AFTER ARRIVING IN THE U.S.A. FOR THE FIRST TIME.



REB YITZCHOK WITH RUSSIAN REFUSNIKS IN LENINGRAD, 5740S.

direction. There was no one to guide them.

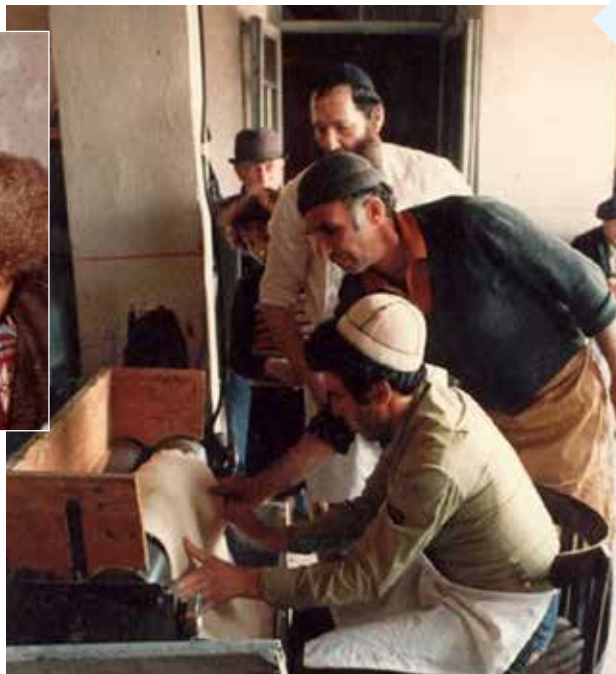
Then, in Leningrad, news began to spread among the Jewish community: Yiddishkeit could be found in the home of Izya and Sofia Kogan, a young, dynamic couple whose home was open 24 hours a day. Yomim Tovim, weddings, *brissin*, Torah classes, kosher food, or even just a kind heart and a listening ear—it was all possible at the Kogan home, on the fourth floor of a nondescript Leningrad apartment building.

Moshe Shapir was a young Jew studying at Leningrad University. Somehow, he received Reb Yitzchok's address and soon became a regular guest in his home.

"Life in his home was incredibly interesting. There were never fewer than ten people in the house at any given time. There was always a pile of shechted chickens ready, and each time, his wife would prepare large amounts of food for the guests.

"His home served as a shul and the central hub of Jewish life in Leningrad. His close circle would often conduct secret weddings and *brissin*. At times, close to a hundred people would squeeze into the small room.

"Every Shabbos, dozens of guests would join him. When everyone sat down to eat together, it naturally turned into a farbrengen. They would sing together, say *l'chaim*, and Reb Yitzchok would share words of Torah. There were always new people there, experiencing Shabbos or a Pesach Seder for the very first time. His home was open 24 hours a day, and I have no doubt that among the many unfamiliar faces were also undercover KGB agents."²



DIRECTING THE SECRET MATZA BAKING.

Alexander Sheinin was another young man searching for Yiddishkeit who found his way to Reb Yitzchok's home, and was immediately hooked. "Rabbi Kogan would give lessons in his kitchen. I was completely drawn in. I felt like I had finally found the path, the direction I had been searching for."

Alexander's parents weren't particularly thrilled about his new direction in life, so he moved out of his parents' home and rented a small room of his own; "a few crates served as a table, and a few more as a closet." As soon as he settled into his new 'apartment,' he asked Rabbi Kogan to begin teaching Hebrew lessons in his living room.

"Rabbi Kogan taught the word *shalom*—not just as a greeting used when meeting or parting, but also as one of the names of Hashem. So, while learning Hebrew, we were also learning about Yiddishkeit. During one of the first lessons, he pulled candles from his pocket, arranged them on a chair, said the *brachos*, and lit them. That was the first time in our lives we celebrated Chanukah."³

Rabbi Zalman Aharon Grossbaum, shliach to Toronto, went on a shlichus to Russia in the 5740s together with Rabbi Aryeh Leib Kaplan *a"h* of Tzfas where they visited Moscow, Kiev, and Leningrad. When they arrived in Leningrad, a key place on their itinerary was the Kogan home.

"We came there on a Friday night," he related in his interview with *A Chassidisher Derher*. "Despite the fact that he lived on the fourth floor of a building without an elevator, there was no problem with a *minyan*; the home was overflowing with people, all trickling in quietly, one by one.

"Generally, the young Jews didn't speak a word of Yiddish, so all our conversations were in *lashon hako-deesh*, which many of them had painstakingly learned from Mishnayos or Rashi. I saw immediately that there were no shortcuts in Russia; whatever they knew was because someone had sat and taught them a Mishnah in Pe'ah or Megillah or Bava Basra—whatever *bletel* they had become the resource through which they learned Aleph-Beis and everything else they knew.

"There was a stark difference between the *ruchnius* and the *gashmius*. The apartment was old, the wallpaper was peeling, but there was always room for another person. This was true wherever we went in Russia—there was always another chair or milk carton for another guest, and no one counted place settings. Somehow, another fork or spoon would materialize for the latest arrival.

"At the Shabbos meal in the Kogan home, Mrs. Kogan introduced her children and noted that her teenage daughter was walking home from the other side of Leningrad.

"Mrs. Kogan explained to me that her school had a recital that day, which she was forced to attend. Since Shabbos came in very early—it was the month of

Teves—she had gone straight from school to a friend's house nearby to *bentch licht*, and then she would walk for several hours across the whole city to get home without being *mechalel Shabbos*.

"I was astounded at what I heard. It was unbelievable."

Full Circle

Reb Yitzchok Kogan himself had roots in Chabad. His mother's father, Reb Yosef Tamarin, had been a chosid of the Frierdiker Rebbe and pillar of Yiddishkeit in Leningrad. When the Frierdiker Rebbe left Russia, he told Reb Yosef that *ayere kinder bleiben mit*, your children will remain connected to Yiddishkeit. But when Yitzchok was only three years old, his grandfather was caught baking matzah for the Jews of the city. The NKVD called him in for interrogation after interrogation; upon leaving one such encounter, tragedy struck. His heart gave out and he passed away.

Growing up, 'Izya' would always bring a kosher lunch to school and look for excuses to avoid attending on Shabbos and Yom Tov. Old chassidim would come to tutor him in the afternoons, teaching him basics like *davening*. But as he reached his teenage years, he followed the route of most Jewish youth through high school and university, and was later employed in a technological department of the Red Army. For several years, Yiddishkeit wasn't a central factor in his life.⁴



But then, in the years following the Six-Day War, Reb Yitzchok and his wife felt the pull of Eretz Yisroel along with so many of their brethren and applied to leave. After a long two year wait, their application was denied. They were summarily fired from their jobs and placed under strict surveillance of the KGB. They were no longer honored citizens of the Soviet paradise; now they were criminal suspects.

A small group of refuseniks in Leningrad banded together to support one another. They attempted to learn Hebrew and hoped for an eventual release from Russia, doing what they could in the meantime to survive. With no background in Jewish education, the group had very little involvement in Yiddishkeit.⁵

A turning point came just before Pesach.

Reb Yitzchok had been invited to a Passover celebration on the night of the Seder. When he asked where it would be held, he was shocked to hear it was scheduled to take place in a restaurant.

“That was just too much,” he later shared. “I asked them, ‘How can it be that on the night of the Seder—when the entire Jewish people around the world are sitting and conducting a Seder—we’ll be sitting in a non-Jewish restaurant having a party?!’ I managed to convince them to move the event to a different night.”

Afterward, he realized that they were not to blame. They simply didn’t know anything about Yiddishkeit! The thought bothered him so much that he decided to invite everyone to his home for the Seder. At the time, the Kogan family lived in a two-room apartment—but Reb Yitzchok invited no fewer than 46 friends!

“That Seder night was one I will never forget. We even had a guest from Eretz Yisroel who led the Seder. My friends and I had never before experienced such pure joy and spiritual elevation.”⁶

He began attending shul every Shabbos, and his connection to Yiddishkeit steadily grew. He reconnected with the elder Chassidim he had known in his youth, becoming a close *talmid* of Reb Refoel Neymotin, an elderly *Tomim* from Lubavitch still living in Leningrad, and other Chassidim like Reb Avraham Medalia. Soon, he was a full-fledged Lubavitcher chossid.⁷

He never forgot about his fellow refuseniks.



LIBRARY OF AGUDAS CHASSIDEI CHABAD

TWO PICTURES SMUGGLED TO THE REBBE OF REB YITZCHOK WITH MEKURAVIM AND CHASSIDIM VISITING FROM AMERICA.



REB YITZCHOK AS A SEVEN-YEAR-OLD BOY (CENTER) WITH HIS PARENTS.



REB YOSEF TAMARIN, MATERNAL GRANDFATHER OF REB YITZCHOK KOGAN.



ONE OF THE ANNUAL PURIM SHPIELS THAT TOOK PLACE AT THE KOGAN HOME.

“We were still a young couple, and many of them would come to our home, simply because they sensed a real Yiddishe atmosphere there. On Shabbos and Yom Tov, there was a special warmth that left a deep impression on them.

“When I saw how moved they were, I realized I had to start teaching. I began learning with a few young refusniks, and the more I taught and the more they asked, the more I realized how much I still needed to learn myself.”

The shul in Leningrad was crawling with listening devices and informers, so he opened a private *minyan* in his home and began giving *shiurim* regularly. Soon, the Kogan home became a spiritual hub for an entire community—dozens of young families who turned to him for everything from kosher food to *seforim* to halachic guidance.

Though the Kogan apartment was no more than two small rooms, every Shabbos, it was packed with people. Dozens would join for davening and the *seudos*, and many would stay well into the night.⁸

It wasn’t only Russian Jews who were finding their way there. One frum visitor from the United States recalled how comical it seemed when Reb Yitzchok tried to plot with him how to be *mekarev* the secular Israeli who had been sent to Russia on behalf of the Israeli government. The Israeli had ostensibly come to help the Russian, but that’s not how the Russian saw it.

Rabbi Zalman Aharon Grossbaum had a similar experience during his Friday night visit to the Kogan home:

“While waiting for the *minyan* to come, I noticed a young man there, and approached him to open a conversation. I opened in Hebrew, but he didn’t understand. He didn’t understand my Yiddish either. To my shock, he began speaking to me in perfect English! As it turned out, he was a South African who was studying in Philadelphia, and he had arrived in the Soviet Union as an exchange student majoring in languages.

“So you found Yiddishkeit through Chabad in South Africa?” I asked.

“No,” he replied.

“So it must have been in Philadelphia,” I said.

“Not there either,” he answered. “In Leningrad, I met Rabbi Kogan, and he brought me to Yiddishkeit.”

“I was floored. He had lived all his life in locations with a strong Chabad presence, and yet no one had reached him there. Where did he find his connection? In a lonely fourth floor apartment behind the Iron Curtain, in a secret *minyan*, where the participants had to quietly enter one by one to ensure nobody noticed...”

Under the Nose of the KGB

One of Reb Yitzchok’s *mekuravim* was Reb Dovid Aldin. His first meeting with his future *mashpia* was also his first meeting with the KGB—a very close call:

“Despite the tremendous obstacles we faced,” Reb Dovid related, “we always tried to stay joyful. One special



REB YITZCHOK KOGAN IN LENINGRAD SOON AFTER HE BEGAN HIS FULL RETURN TO YIDDISHKEIT.

tradition we had each year was a *Purim Shpiel*, where we would retell the story of the Megillah, adding ‘contemporary’ commentary to the story.

“One year, on Purim night, dozens of us gathered in a private apartment for the Purim celebration, and I met Reb Yitzchok Kogan there for the first time.

“Most of the guests had already arrived, but before the program even began, KGB agents burst into the apartment. They blocked the doors and windows and ordered everyone to stay in place. We were terrified—we thought it was the end. But instead, we experienced a Purim miracle; the agents recorded everyone’s names and details, then expelled us from the apartment. And that was it.

“The next day, I was summoned by the principal of the school where I worked. She rebuked me harshly and said: ‘I know you participate in these gatherings, and that you encourage others to learn about Judaism. My advice to you: stop immediately.’”

Throughout those years, Reb Dovid was ‘invited’ to many ‘discussions’ with the KGB. (He was lucky—others from Reb Yitzchok’s circle spent time in prison as well). Every time, they warned him: stay away from Kogan and his friends! Don’t exchange even one word with them!

Despite the lessening intensity of the KGB persecution in those years, the danger was still

real and acute, and one needed to carefully weed out informants from joining the *peulos*. But as the years passed, Reb Yitzchok made a firm decision: no more fear of the KGB. He carried himself with unwavering resolve, despite knowing full well that “they” were monitoring his every move. He moved to a much larger apartment, making his presence far more conspicuous, but refused to be afraid.

“One time,” Reb Yitzchok recalled, “my wife told me that a coworker of hers had asked if she and her family could come to our home for the Seder. My wife was very nervous and said to me, ‘They don’t even look Jewish. Who knows? Maybe they’re KGB agents sent to spy on us and see what we’re doing.’

“I told her, ‘How can we make such calculations? In other areas of halacha, we are meticulous to the finest detail. If there’s even the slightest question in shechita, we go *lechumra*. And here, when it comes to a Yiddishe *neshama*, are we going to be *meikel* and turn them away?’

“In the end, the entire family came to the Seder—and they ended up staying for the rest of Yom Tov. They became full *baalei teshuvah*, and eventually became some of the most dedicated activists we left behind. All from that one Seder night.”

The Test

From his early childhood, Reb Yitzchok’s mother would tell him: “You should know: there is a Rebbe who cares for every Jew in the world.” As a youngster, it sounded like a fairy tale; how could one person be in tune with the entire world? But her words made an impact.

When he reconnected with the Lubavitcher Chassidim in Leningrad, he finally had the opportunity to forge his own connection with the Rebbe. Rabbi Dovber Levy came to Russia armed with a video camera, and every person at the farbrengen had the opportunity to talk directly to the Rebbe through the screen.

After hearing so much about the Rebbe, Reb Yitzchok decided that he needed to ‘test’ this phenomenon. At the time, Yosef Mendelevitch was a very well-known refusenik languishing in a Siberian gulag with a sentence of many years ahead of him. Reb Yitzchok used the opportunity to ask

REB MOTTEL “DER
SHOCHET” LIFSHITZ
PERFORMING SIDDUR
KIDDUSHIN IN THE
JEWISH UNDERGROUND.



for a *bracha* for his release.

“A few months passed with no news of him,” Reb Yitzchok related. “Then, I decided to take a few days off to visit his prison camp and try my luck at getting some information about him. I came home from work, davened Mincha and Maariv, and turned on the radio to hear the world news on the BBC broadcast. When I heard the news, I almost fainted. I couldn’t contain myself. They reported, ‘Right now, Yosef Mendelevitch is on an airplane headed for Vienna, and will continue directly to Israel.’

“I never tested the Rebbe again.”

The Shechita Message

One major challenge in the Soviet Union was kosher food. At one point, no kosher meat could be obtained in Leningrad for a full two years. The city’s aging shochet had become too frail to continue, and there was simply no one to take his place.

One day, Reb Mottel “*der shochet*” Lifshitz arrived from Moscow to perform a *bris milah* for a close friend of Reb Yitzchok Kogan. After the bris, as they sat together at the table, Reb Yitzchok asked him to do some shechita before he left. “Reb Mottel, my children haven’t seen meat in two years. Shecht something! A chicken, an ox, anything!”

But Reb Mottel refused. “Izya,” he said, “I can’t. If the authorities find out I shechted here, they’ll revoke my permit in Moscow. But you—you’re young. You should study shechita. Come to my home for a month and I’ll teach you how to shecht chickens.”

When Reb Yitzchok’s mother heard that he was about

to travel away for an extended period of time, she found an elderly chossid in Leningrad to teach him locally. He soon became an expert shochet for chickens, but there was no competent Rav to give him a *kabbalah*, which meant that the elder *shochtim*, like Reb Refoel Neymotin, would need to accompany him each time to be *omed al gabav*. The chossid who taught him warned him not to go to any official government-sanctioned rabbis for certification, because they were under constant surveillance and his own safety would be compromised.

Shlepping elder Jews around wasn’t something he enjoyed, and after several months, Reb Yitzchok decided that *kapparos* on Erev Yom Kippur would be his final shechita. Then he would wait for a visiting *rav* from abroad to give him a proper *kabbalah*. The Rebbe had already sent several *rabbanim*, but Soviet authorities had caught wind of them and turned them all back at the border.

In the middle of *kapparos*, he was approached by the old chossid Reb Avraham Medalia. Reb Yitzchok only knew him as a math professor, but now Reb Avraham leaned in and said quietly, “Reb Refoel told me you need a *kabbalah*. I am a *rav*, but I can’t say so publicly. I’ve already spent seventeen years in prison. Let me watch you shecht, and if it’s good, I’ll give you a *kabbalah*.”

He watched, approved, and gave his *kabbalah*—but not in writing. “I’ve sat in prison long enough,” he said. “If anyone questions your certification, send them to me. I’ll explain why I couldn’t write it down.”

Moments later, someone called his name: “Izya! Izya!” A young man known as Yehudah Hakatan had just arrived



REB REFOEL
NEYMOTIN
INSPECTING REB
YITZCHOK'S SHECHITA
KNIVES, 5740.

from Moscow. "I don't really understand what this means," Yehuda told him, "but the Rebbe sent a message for you: '*Tikach misras shechita b'yadecha*—Take upon yourself the role of shechita.'" The Rebbe's message had arrived just seconds after he had become a shochet.

A few months later, Rabbi Levy visited Leningrad. He tested Reb Yitzchok and issued his first official *kabbalah*.

At the time, he was only shechting chickens, and he didn't think it qualified as fully "taking on shechita," as the Rebbe had said. But within a few short months, he had become a teacher to a full yeshivah of students from across the Soviet Union—young men who came to learn shechita from him.

When one of those students left Russia, he asked the Rebbe for a *bracha* that Reb Yitzchok should merit to leave as well. By then, Reb Yitzchok had been waiting seven years for an exit visa.

The Rebbe responded that "I give him a *bracha* in everything that he does."

"In those years," Reb Yitzchok related, "we accomplished things that by any natural measure were simply impossible."¹¹

Taking Leave

For twelve long years, the long-awaited exit visas failed to appear. Then, on Yud-Beis Tammuz 5746, he received the call: his exit visa had been

approved.

It was incredible news, but they were unsure whether they should use the opportunity to leave. By then they were central figures in Yiddishkeit in Leningrad, and they knew that the Rebbe didn't approve of leaving Russia if one was active in *hafatzas hamaayanos*.

They sent a message with the question to the Rebbe, and soon, the response came back: move to Eretz Yisroel.

In the weeks leading up to their departure, Reb Yitzchok divided his responsibilities. One *mekurav* would take over the *minyán*, another would oversee the Torah classes, another the *shechita*, and so on. On the Shabbos before their departure, sixty Jews traveled from across the Soviet Union to spend those final hours with him. It was a very difficult moment; at that time, no one imagined the Iron Curtain would fall just a few years later. For all they knew, this goodbye was forever.

Under the watchful eyes of the KGB, a large crowd accompanied the Kogans to the airport. As the time came to board, the crowd broke out in a chassidishe dance. Even the KGB could not stop them.

When they arrived at the Ben Gurion Airport, crowds of people were waiting. The accounts of the Jewish resurgence in Leningrad had already made its way to Eretz Yisroel, and the newspapers all came to catch the moment. Cameras flashed as the person who had become known as "the Tzaddik

of Leningrad” appeared—a young Jew, straight out of the Soviet Union, but looking like the full chossid he was, with a hat, *kapote*, and long black beard.¹²

Reb Yitzchok himself would quip that he was specifically called the Tzaddik of Leningrad, a city with very little Yiddishkeit, “because to be the Tzaddik of Yerushalayim would be a much more difficult task...”

The Yechidus

Three weeks after arriving in Eretz Yisroel, the Kogans boarded a plane to New York and merited the *yechidus* described above.

The *yechidus* was at a table in *Gan Eden Hatachton*, and as they entered, they realized that three chairs had been set up. When the Rebbe asked them to sit, they initially remained standing, but then the Rebbe said, “I know you were told not to sit, but it will be more comfortable for me

if you sit, because our conversation will be a long one.”

Reb Yitzchok gave the Rebbe a detailed *duch* about their activities, and the Rebbe began asking questions—about their exit visas, about Jewish life in Leningrad, and about the general state of Yiddishkeit in the Soviet Union.

The Rebbe gave detailed *horaos* for the broader Russian public. The Rebbe explained that Soviet Jews needed to know that their mission was not to protest. The priority was living a Jewish life—learning Torah, observing *mitzvos*, and especially giving children a Jewish education. Yidden who had already emigrated needed to understand that reaching Eretz Yisroel or the West was only the beginning—their journey toward Torah and *mitzvos* was just starting.

The Rebbe spoke against the public demonstrations, telling Reb Yitzchok that “The government wants to change—it must not be disturbed.”¹³ Soon, the Rebbe said, the gates of Russia would open wide. Jews would

ONE HALACHA OF RAMBAM

When the Rebbe launched the *takana* of learning Rambam daily, it was no small challenge for a Jew living in Soviet Leningrad. *Seforim* were scarce, and a full set of Rambam was nowhere to be found.

Still, Reb Yitzchok was determined to participate. He traveled to a friend who happened to own a few worn pamphlets—just the *halachos* of Shabbos. That’s where he began learning Rambam.

As he learned, one concept stood out to him. The Rambam writes that we honor Shabbos by ‘accompanying’ it like one would escort an important guest. The image lodged itself in his mind.

Some time later, a Jewish couple from Phoenix, Arizona, arrived in Leningrad. Unprepared for the brutal Russian winter, they braved the frigid weather and walked six kilometers on Shabbos to join Reb Yitzchok for a meal. By the time they arrived, the *seuda* was already over, but they were welcomed warmly, given food and drink, and stayed until the end of Shabbos.

With the memory of the Rambam’s “accompanying,” Reb Yitzchok decided to accompany them back

to their hotel. He wanted to drive them, but his car’s engine was frozen solid. Instead, he ordered a taxi and paid the driver out of his own pocket to take them.

Several years later, in 5748, Reb Yitzchok and his wife were visiting the United States and were invited to speak in Phoenix. The community—including some members of the Reform congregation—greeted them warmly.

After his lecture, he asked where he could find kosher food in the city. They told him, “There are only two homes in Phoenix where the kashrus is truly *mehudar*: the shliach’s house, and another family that became fully observant because of you.”

He was taken aback. “Because of me?” he asked.

They explained: “Years ago, they visited Leningrad and spent Shabbos at your home. They were touched by your warmth, but what made the deepest impression was what happened after Shabbos: that you personally walked them to the taxi and even paid the driver yourself. They had come to help Russian Jews—but in the end, it was a Russian Jew who helped them. That moment stayed with them. They began keeping Shabbos and kashrus, and have become fully observant.”¹⁰



REB YITZCHOK
RECEIVES A
DOLLAR FROM
THE REBBE, 5750.

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soon be allowed to leave the Soviet Union freely, and it was time to begin preparing to receive them, particularly in Eretz Yisroel.

The Rebbe also said that they should make sure to preserve their Russian—they would still need it.

Indeed, just a few years later, they would return to Russia to help the *yaldei Chernobyl* and to assist in attempts to recover the Rebbe's library. Ultimately, they would remain there to stay; today Reb Yitzchok serves as the shliach in the Bolshaya district of Moscow and *rav* of the beautiful Bolshaya Bronnaya shul and Jewish center.

After over two hours in *yechidus*, they rose to leave, and Mrs. Kogan—who was usually quiet and reserved—suddenly burst out in Russian: “Rebbe, we will do everything in our power!”

The Rebbe smiled and responded in Yiddish: “*Ah Chossid tut merer vi er hot kochos*—A Chossid does more than he has the strength for.”¹⁴ **T**

1. Otzros Lubavitch 5782 p. 14.

2. Toldos Chabad B'Peterburg p. 293.

3. Ibid., p. 301.

4. Ibid., p. 290.

5. “Profile in Courage: The Tzadik of Leningrad,” lubavitch.com/profile-in-courage-the-tzadik-of-leningrad/.

6. Sichat Hashavua, Vayigash 5747.

7. “The Tzaddik of Leningrad Looks Back 30 Years After the Fall of the USSR,” chabad.org/5387559.

8. Toldos Chabad B'Peterburg p. 289.

9. “My Encounter,” Living Torah Program 677.

10. Yomim Tovim Im HaRebbi, pg. 126.

11. “My Encounter,” Living Torah 746.

12. Toldos Chabad B'Peterburg p. 265.

13. See “Quiet Diplomacy,” Derher Sivan 5778.

14. “The Tzaddik of Leningrad Looks Back 30 Years After the Fall of the USSR,” chabad.org/5387559.

IN THE **FOOTSTEPS**
OF **CHASSIDIM**

The Shochtim of Dublin

By: Rabbi Mendy Greenberg (Twinsburg, OH)

לזכות החייל בצבאות ה'
צבי הירש אייזיק בן חי' מושקא שיחי'
לרגל הולדתו כ"ז סיון ה'תשפ"ה

ולזכות אחיו ואחיותיו
החיילים בצבאות ה'
מנחם מענדל, אסתר הנ' רחל,
שמעון, שיינא, אליהו שמואל שיחי

יה"ר שיגדלו לנח"ר כ"ק
אדמו"ר והוריהם שיחי'
מתוך בריאות, שמחה,
הרחבה והצלחה בכל

In the aftermath of World War II, Europe lay in ruins. Tens of millions were dead, cities and towns were reduced to rubble, and the continent's infrastructure—its roads, railways, and communication lines—was devastated.

A terrible famine began to spread, not from natural causes like drought, but as a direct result of the war. Farmland had been destroyed, farmers displaced or killed, and food could not be transported even where it did exist. It was a man-made crisis of historic proportions.

Ireland, a neutral country during the war and part of the British Commonwealth at the time, remained largely unscathed. With its wide expanses of farmland and surplus of cattle and other staples, Ireland was uniquely positioned to help feed a starving continent. The Irish government launched a massive campaign to export food across Europe.

A Jewish member of the Irish Parliament, Robert Briscoe, lobbied the government to help Jewish refugees as well.

Hundreds of thousands of Holocaust survivors were scattered throughout Europe with nowhere to go and no means to sustain themselves. Briscoe lobbied the government to extend aid to them specifically, by arranging for the production of kosher meat—a lifeline for Jews in displaced persons (DP) camps.

Around that time, Eretz Yisroel's Chief Rabbi Yitzchok Eizik HaLevi Herzog—former chief rabbi of Dublin and highly respected by the Irish leadership—visited the country. In honor of his visit and at Briscoe's urging, the Irish government agreed to establish kosher meatpacking plants to serve Jewish needs.



MR. ROBERT BRISCOE.

But who could provide the kosher supervision and expertise needed for such a large operation?

Enter the Chassidim in Pocking. Posing as Polish refugees, hundreds of Lubavitcher Chassidim had just emerged from Russia with their families on the trains known as 'eshalons'. Among the Chassidim were many competent *shochtim* and qualified *Rabbanim*. They were stuck in DP camps, waiting for immigration papers to the United States or Eretz Yisroel, with nothing to do and no source of income in the meantime.

It was a match made in heaven.

A group of Chassidim traveled to Ireland and immediately began working. But when Chassidim arrive somewhere, it's never just about earning a living. They quickly turned their attention to the spiritual needs of the local Jewish community. "A chossid macht a sevivah"—a Chassid transforms his environment. Guided by the Frierdiker Rebbe, they got to work doing just that.

One of the most prominent Chassidim in the group was Reb Nachum Shmaryahu Sasonkin (known as "Shmerel Batumer"), one of the elder chassidim from Lubavitch who had already served many years in rabbanus. He was one of the leaders, along with Reb Shneur Garelik, Reb Peretz Mochkin, and Reb Zalman Shimon Dvorkin.

Years later, at a Kinus of Tzeirei Agudas Chabad in Eretz Yisroel, Reb Shmerel shared the remarkable story of their time in Ireland and the lasting impact they made on the local Jewish community. His account was published shortly afterward in *Bita'on Chabad*, issue 6, in honor of Yud-Beis Tammuz 5714.

That account has never been fully republished—and never before translated into English. It is presented here in its entirety.

The government of Ireland decided to donate one million (!) cans of meat for Jewish refugees, through the efforts of Mr. Briscoe, a Jewish member of the Irish Parliament. The Irish government provided only the raw material—a specific number of cow heads. But turning those into kosher canned meat required much more. That part of the operation was taken on by the Joint Distribution Committee in Paris, who appointed Mr. Briscoe himself to carry it out.

Mr. Briscoe began searching the globe for qualified *shochtim* and *menakrim*, looking in London, Eretz Yisroel, and Paris, but came up empty. At a certain point, he was ready to give up. That's when the Joint suggested he reach out to the *Lishkah*, the European Office for Refugee Relief and Resettlement established by the Frierdiker Rebbe. He was directed to its European representative, Reb Bin-

yomin Gorodetzky.

As soon as he connected with Rabbi Gorodetzky, he realized that he had found a source for *kashrus* of the highest standard. In the summer of 5708, Rabbi Gorodetzky assembled a group of thirty-five *shochtim* and *menakrim*, all Lubavitcher Chassidim and refugees from Russia. Among them were two *rabbanim*—Rabbi Shneur Garelik, *rav* of Kfar Chabad, and myself—who served as the rabbinic supervisors and heads of the *kashrus* operation.

Mr. Briscoe excels in the mitzvah of *ahavas Yisroel*; he is someone who cherishes Torah and those who study it. He made the trip easy for us, arranging our flights to Dublin, the Irish capital. Within three hours, we arrived and were warmly received by the city's dignitaries, with Mr. Briscoe at their head.

He told us that he had never met anyone from Chabad,



REB NACHUM SHMARYAHU SASONKIN AND HIS ARTICLE IN 'BITA'ON CHABAD'.



A MEMBER OF THE 'JOINT' WITH (LEFT TO RIGHT) RABBIS BINYOMIN GORODETZKY, SHMARYAHU SASONKIN, PERETZ MOCHKIN, AND ZALMAN GORELICK.

but he had read about the movement in history books. Now, he was overjoyed to finally meet Chassidim in person. During our entire stay in Ireland, he barely left our side. He genuinely enjoyed our company, and more than once confided that he often skipped parliamentary sessions just to be with us, saying there was no greater pleasure than spending time with Chabad Chassidim. He said that everything written in secular books about Chabad doesn't come close to the truth. To really understand who Chassidim are, you need to live among them.

We were given our own kitchen and dining area, and a shul was set up especially for us. We arrived in the month of Elul, and throughout the *Yamim Nora'im*, many local residents visited our shul. Some were visibly moved to tears, remembering earlier times—when they too had davened with heartfelt sincerity—but had since grown cold.

For Sukkos, they gave us space in the courtyard of the city's central shul, where a large sukkah was built that fit us all comfortably. On Shabbos and especially during Yom Tov, the pauses between courses would naturally be used for *niggunim*, thanks to the talented *baalei men-agnim* among us. It was very moving. Even on ordinary Shabbosim, many locals would come just to hear the singing—and during Sukkos, our sukkah became a magnet for the community.

Seeing how joyful our Sukkos was, the townspeople concluded: if this is how Chabad celebrates Sukkos, we

can only imagine what Simchas Torah will be like! So they made up their minds—this year, everyone in town would come to participate.

As in Jewish communities all over the world, on Simchas Torah men, women, and children come out for *Hakafos*. And so it was in Dublin: the entire city showed up.

After the *chazan* and the dignitaries completed seven *Hakafos* with the Torah and sang the familiar Simchas Torah songs—a process that took about half an hour—the women and children returned home. But the men stayed. They wanted to see how the Lubavitcher Chassidim celebrated.

In the large hall adjacent to the shul, tables had been set up, overflowing with fine drinks and *farbeisen*. We made *kiddush* and the *balebatim* joined us. For hours we sat together, farbrenging about Yiddishkeit and Chasidus.

The atmosphere warmed and the *l'chaims* flowed; soon the hour had grown late. So we headed back into the Shul for *Hakafos*. Since the men weren't returning home, the women eventually came to check what was going on.

At first, the men stood by and simply watched our dancing. But quickly, they were swept up by the energy. They joined in excitedly, dancing like Chassidim. The women couldn't believe their eyes. Never in their lives had they seen such inner joy, or their husbands dancing like this. They were very moved, and none of them even

suggested heading home, even though it was well past midnight. They remained, captivated, watching the celebration; though the *Hakafos* were still going strong and the hour was very late, the women remained in the *ezras nashim*, watching.

That's when Mr. Briscoe stood up on the *bima* and called for quiet. Addressing the crowd, he said: "What's going on here, people of Dublin? On a regular Simchas Torah, by ten o'clock, the whole city is asleep. But look at tonight—the hour is late, and not only are the men still here, they haven't even thought of going home. And when the women came, I thought they'd be upset and drag their husbands away. But no—I was shocked to discover that they too were swept up in this Lubavitch *simcha*!"

Then he turned to the crowd with a heartfelt cry: "What have you seen here? What changed? What happened to us? We're Jews too. We also made *Hakafos* with the Torah—but it was cold and lifeless. These people came and breathed new life into us! How beautiful it is to see people whose entire energy is Torah, who are so connected to Torah that they are literally one with it. Their joy, their vitality—it's overflowing! It's contagious! And we're all feeling it. We're in another world."

Then he concluded, overcome with emotion: "You see now what Lubavitcher Chassidim are. *"Zutra d'bchu mechaye meisim,"*¹ the smallest among them can bring the dead to life! Jews like these—we need them! They will bring our city to life. They'll revive our entire country. We can't let them leave. Let's do everything we can to make sure they settle right here with us." His words made a powerful impression, and everyone present wholeheartedly agreed.

When Reb Shneur Garelik described the entire episode in a letter to the Frieddiker Rebbe, on behalf of the whole group, this was the Rebbe's holy response:

"In response to your letter, sent by Reb Shneur Garelik, regarding the activities during the Yomim Tovim in general, and especially on Shemini Atzeres and Simchas Torah—and about the reception on Motzei Simchas Torah with the participation of the local *balebatim*—and no doubt also joined by representatives of the Joint—I greatly enjoyed hearing about all of it.

"In my personal journal, I have a note from one of the *sichos kodesh* in which the Rebbe [Rashab], my father, shared something that he had once heard from his father, the Rebbe Maharash, during a *yechidus* regarding



SOME OF THE YOUNGER LUBAVITCHER SHOCHTIM IN IRELAND.

the study of Chassidus:

"Chassidus," the Rebbe Maharash said, 'is like a palace standing in a lush, flowering garden, surrounded by an iron gate.'

"When my father, the Tzemach Tzedek was in Petersburg at the Rabbinic Conference of 5603, some of the *balebatim*—who were there along with Reb Itzele Volozhiner—asked him what Chabad Chassidus really is, and what effect it has on those who follow the ways of Chassidim.

"The Tzemach Tzedek answered: 'Chassidus makes a person wiser, more *frum*, and more joyous. And they influence others to be joyous as well, and that, in turn, makes them wiser and therefore more *frum*.'

"May Hashem grant all of us the strength to fulfill the ultimate purpose of Chassidus, in the merit of our holy Rebbeim."



*A few months passed. A million cans of kosher meat were prepared and shipped to continental Europe, and the project drew to a close. The canned meat supplied Yidden throughout Europe with vital kosher food, and some of it even made it to Eretz Yisroel during the years of austerity.*²

Mr. Briscoe desperately tried to find ways to keep the shechita plants operational and have the Chassidim settle there permanently, but it was not meant to be. The Chassidim returned to their families, soon moving on to their final destinations.

*But for a short while, the light of Chassidus burned bright in Ireland.*³ **T**

1. A quote from the Gemara about Rabbi Yehuda Hanassi's disciples.

2. See "Pinpoints, Ireland," Derher, Sivan 5785.

לזכות משפחת קארנפעלד
בורביינק, קאליפורניא

נשי
ובנות
חב"ד

ל
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N'SHEI
U'BNOS
CHABAD

COMPILED BY:
RABBI LEVI GREENBERG (OH)

WRITTEN BY:
RABBI SHNEUR ITZINGER

AN ANCHOR OF KINDNESS

*Adapted from the Sicha to Nshei
Chabad, Chof Daled Elul 5748.¹*

THE KING IS SMILING – ARE YOU?

The month of Elul evokes the Alter Rebbe's well-known *mashal* of *Melech Basadeh*—the King in the field, teaching us that Hashem is accessible to all in the lead-up to Rosh Hashanah.

An important detail of the *mashal* is that the King shows *panim sochakos*—a smiling face—and grants the requests of all His subjects with joy.

For the Jewish woman, this is a particularly meaningful message. The woman is the “smiling face” of the home, raising her children with warmth and love, while the role of the men is often more about instilling a sense of *kavod* and discipline.

The King's joy in granting requests during Elul makes this the ideal time to ask Hashem for help in our core mission of being the *akeres habayis*, the foundation of the home, and to build Jewish life on the solid ground of Torah and *mitzvos*. Hashem surely grants this heartfelt request.

THE MISSION – JEWISH UNITY AND EDUCATION

“*Atem Nitzavim Hayom Kulchem*... You are all standing today before Hashem... the heads of your *shevatim*... your young children, your women...”, we read in Parshas Nitzavim.

The lesson for us is that standing together before Hashem is the great equalizer and brings true *achdus* among us, especially crucial as we prepare for the new year. It also emphasizes the importance of *nitzavim*—standing strong and proud in our Yiddishkeit.

The Torah emphasizes that *tapchem*—“your children”—are included as well. Jewish women and girls are at the forefront of educating the youngest members of the family and play a crucial role in building the Jewish home.

While the mother is the main educator, unmarried girls also contribute meaningfully: assisting in keeping the house clean and creating an atmosphere of Yiddishkeit, and directly participating in educating their younger siblings.

THE SKY'S THE LIMIT

A Jewish woman's influence is not confined to her own home and family members. In this year of 5748 – *Tismach* – we must influence – *T'samach* – whoever we can reach. Make phone calls, send letters, use any available means. Your sphere of influence is the entire world!

THE SETTING – THE KITCHEN

What is the primary setting for a woman's influence in the home?

When we picture the heart of Yiddishkeit in the home, we may think of the rooms used for *davening* and

learning, or the dining room where guests are hosted and *kiddush* is made. In these settings, the responsibilities are divided between men and women.

Yet all activities in the home are fueled by nutrition: healthy Kosher meals, prepared by the woman in the home's kitchen. A kitchen might not seem to be the center of attention, but without it, nothing else can happen.

The man of the house filling the home with the sound of Torah study? It's the food he ate that gives him *chayus*. The child sweetly saying his *tefilos*? His healthy body is thanks to a nourishing meal his mother prepared. And the *rav* sitting in the study answering a complex *shaila* in *halacha* is also not possible without his wife graciously keeping him fed.

Food for our bodies not only sustains life, but also shapes it, dictating how we live. Food in a Jewish home is not just a means to keep our bodies and souls connected. The Jewish attributes of *bayshanim*, *rachamanim*, and *gomlei chasadim*—being bashful, merciful, and doing acts of kindness, which the *Gemara* tells us are the classic Jewish characteristics, are dependent on what the Jew eats. If the food one eats is kosher, prepared with distinction and effort to ensure all the rules of *kashrus* are carefully adhered to, the *middos* of the person will also be proper and precise.

YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT

While eating Kosher should be primarily done because Hashem commanded us to do so, we are also privy to one of its explanations. The food we eat directly impacts our actions. When one consumes a *chaya torefes*, a predatory animal, for example, it can negatively affect their *middos*, causing them to become more cruel or unrefined, reflecting the nature of the animal.

It is the Jewish woman who has the responsibility to keep her family well-fed, and thus is accountable for the *kashrus* of her kitchen. While the laws of kosher are intricate, the woman's word is final when it comes to the *kashrus* of the food. The yeshiva-educated husband or community *rav* need not ask any questions before eating. Rather, we rely on the Jewish woman, who might have been educated only by her mother, grandmother, and older sisters.

The kitchen, then, is not just another function in the home, a place to cook. It is the nerve center of a Jewish family and shapes how we act to fulfill all that Hashem wants from us.

THE METHOD — A PERMANENT REMINDER

With the kitchen so integral to the home's atmosphere, how is the woman to ensure it remains the source of the household's inspiration? How can she merit Hashem's assistance, which is clearly essential, in fulfilling the great responsibility of maintaining the *kashrus* of her food and kitchen?

The answer is surprisingly simple. One item, hanging on the wall, can facilitate this special *bracha* from Hashem in her home.

That simple object comes in the form of a *tzedakah pushka*, prominently displayed in the kitchen for all to see, and of course, make use of.

Why the big deal about a *pushka*? Picture this. While the woman is deep in preparation, carefully creating her tasteful and kosher meals, she needs a reminder of the mitzvah that will enable her to keep her house *glatt-kosher*: *tzedakah*. Amidst the detail and rhythm of cooking, the *pushka* speaks silently but clearly. The *Shulchan Aruch* might not be open in front of her, but the *pushka* is right there, in eyesight, reminding her of the centrality of others' needs, saying, "Hashem is right here in your kitchen. It is He who provides the food you are preparing. And caring for others while providing for your family is essential."

A *pushka* doesn't necessarily need a fixed spot, and perhaps it's better this way—if someone wants to give *tzedakah*, we should be able to bring the *pushka* to them. But such an important fixture of the home should also be, literally, a *fixture*. A family can have many *pushkas*, but the kitchen, the spiritual nerve center, should

have one that is firmly fastened to the wall, part of the home's permanent makeup.

This should be done in a way that the *Shulchan Aruch* considers attached: fastened in a manner that is considered building in the context of *Hilchos Shabbos*. In this way, the influence of the *pushka* becomes a real foundation of the home.

While pots, pans, and ingredients are necessary to prepare meals, a *pushka* is just as important. Giving *tzedakah* before cooking reminds us that as we nourish our own families, we must also care for others.

When we undertake our special mission of feeding a Jewish family, Heavenly assistance is essential to ensure that everything remains kosher as it should be. The mitzvah of *tzedakah* brings extra merit to the woman and helps her maintain the highest standards of *kashrus*. And when *kashrus* is strengthened, the food's

HASHEM SEES IT TOO!

As we act with others, Hashem acts with us. When we place the needs of others at the center of our thoughts and actions, giving *tzedakah* even to people we've never met, Hashem responds with kindness.

It's not only the physical inhabitants of the home who are influenced by the presence of the *pushka*. Hashem too, so to speak, "sees" the symbol of *tzedakah* and is reminded that this is a family that cares for others. And so, He in turn cares for them.

taste is elevated too.

The influence of the *pushka* goes further, beyond the home's inhabitants. When a neighbor comes over, it's often to exchange a recipe, share a cooking tip, or borrow an ingredient. A friendly chat between two

THE REBBE STANDS IN THE KITCHEN OF HIS HOME, 5749. NOTE THE GREEN TZEDAKA PUSHKA AFFIXED TO THE WALL.



akaros habayis will inevitably take place in the kitchen. When guests and visitors see the *pushka*, they too will be reminded of the importance of tzedakah, and prompted to give on their own as well.

Children have friends over, too, and children ask questions. “What’s that on the wall?” “What’s a *pushka*, and what do I do with it?” Questions lead to explanations, and explanations lead to action. Children may empty their pockets of coins, eager to join in. And the *pushka*, by its very placement, leaves an imprint on their young minds that taking care of others is just as important as taking care of ourselves.

In this way, the entire home becomes a home of tzedakah. The *pushka* isn’t just attached to the wall—it becomes attached to the *neshama*. It becomes a part of the family’s *avoda*, something fixed and inseparable, never to be overlooked.

The Mishnah teaches us that the world stands on three pillars: Torah, *avoda*, and *gemilus chassadim*.

Our homes, miniature worlds, should reflect the same. Torah becomes part of the home when shelves are filled with *seforim* and attached firmly to the wall. The same is true of *siddurim* and *tefillah*. And Tzedakah, the third pillar, deserves the same treatment. A *pushka*, fixed in place, holds up the very spiritual structure of the Jewish home.

Even on Shabbos and Yom Tov, when the mitzvah of giving cannot be performed, the *pushka* continues to fulfill its purpose. Its presence alone reminds us of what we value, what our home is built around, and Who truly sustains us.

Continuing on the theme of strengthening the three pillars of Torah, avodah, and gemilus chassadim, the Rebbe concluded this sicha by giving three dollars for Tzedakah to representatives, to be passed on to each of the women present. ❶

1. Hisvaaduyos 5748 vol. 4, p. 339ff.

לעילוי נשמת
מרת לאה בת הרה"ח ר' אליהו נחום ע"ה בלאק
נלב"ע שבת קודש כ"ה אלול ה'תשע"ג
תניצ'ב'ה'
נדפס ע"י
משפחתה שיחיו

A Simcha *in the* Royal Court

The CHASUNA of the
REBBE RASHAB *and*
REBBETZIN SHTERNA SARA

Compiled By: RABBI LEVI GREENBERG (OH)
Written By: RABBI SHOLOM POSNER



In honor of the 150th anniversary of the Rebbe Rashab's *chasuna*—11 Elul 5635–5785—we present a comprehensive account of the *shidduch*, wedding, and celebrations surrounding them. As much as possible, the details have been drawn from the *sichos* and writings of our Rabbeim in order to ensure accuracy.¹

The Shidduch

The Tzemach Tzedek was known to have concerned himself with the wellbeing of his grandchildren, personally involving himself in their growth and development.² Yet, he showed particular affection for the Rebbe Rashab. Already from the time the Rebbe Rashab began attending *cheder* at the age of three, his grandfather would give him special attention and would ask him daily about his progress in learning.

When the Rebbe Rashab was four years old, the Tzemach Tzedek requested that his parents arrange a *shidduch* for him, suggesting the younger daughter of Harav Yosef Yitzchak (the Tzemach Tzedek's son) as a match.³

Harav Yosef Yitzchak, the Rebbe of Avrutch, was a son-in-law of the Rebbe of Cherkas, scion of the Chernobyl dynasty. At the behest of his father-in-law, Harav Yosef Yitzchak had accepted to serve as Rebbe in the community of Avrutch.

Chassidim relate that the *shidduch* was originally brought up by the Tzemach Tzedek simply referring to

his two young grandchildren as a *chosson* and *kallah* (a comment which, said by an ordinary person, would be taken as a cute remark). Upon hearing his father's words, the Avrutcher asked that perhaps he (the Rebbe Rashab) would not grow up to be worthy of her. To which the Tzemach Tzedek replied, "This child (*katan*) will grow up to become greater than you!"⁴

On 10 Sivan 5625, the *shidduch* between the Rebbe Rashab and Rebbetzin Shterna Sarah was finalized with the writing of the *Shtar Hat'noim* (engagement contract outlining the responsibilities of the two families). One copy was written for the *chosson's* parents to have, and another for the parents of the *kallah*. Both originals have been preserved to this day, and through them, many *halachos* and *minhagim* have been clarified.⁵ They celebrated the engagement with a *seuda*, joined by the Tzemach Tzedek and his sons—the brothers of the *mechutanim*.⁶

Preparations For The Wedding

In the *Shtar Hat'noim*, the wedding was scheduled to take place ten years later—in the summer of 5635—when the *chosson* would be fourteen years old, and the *kallah* fifteen. Due to the lengthy engagement period—and with the belief in the imminent arrival of Moshiach—Yerushalayim was listed as the wedding location.⁷

As the designated time drew nearer, a precise location was chosen for this auspicious event: the city of Avrutch—hometown of the *kallah*.

Shabbos Parshas Shoftim, 4 Elul, immediately preceded the journey of the Rebbe Rashab and his entourage to Avrutch, and the celebration began in full force. On the



ONE OF TWO COPIES OF THE SHTAR HAT'NOIM WITH THE TZEMACH TZEDEK'S POSTSCRIPT ON THE BOTTOM, PROMISING TO GIVE HIS GRANDCHILDREN 50 RUBLES EACH YEAR FOR A TOTAL OF TEN YEARS. NOTE THE LARGE LETTERS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE SHTAR, WHICH SAY THAT THE WEDDING WILL TAKE PLACE IN YERUSHALAYIM.



TZIYUN MARKING THE APPROXIMATE BURIAL SITE OF HARAV YOSEF YITZCHAK OF AVRUTCH—WHERE THE LOCAL JEWISH CEMETERY ONCE STOOD AND WHERE THE JEWS OF AVRUTCH WERE MURDERED DURING THE HOLOCAUST.

THE MECHUTANIM—THE AVRUTCHER REBBE

Harav Yosef Yitzchak, the fifth son of the Tzemach Tzedek, was born in the year 5582.⁸ He was an exceptional *masmid* and *baal midos tovos*, and possessed remarkable humility.⁹

In 5596, he married Chana, the daughter of the Cherkasser Rebbe.¹⁰ Their wedding took place in Hornosteipel—the residence of the Cherkasser Rebbe at the time—and was well attended by the great Chassidim of Chernobyl as well as Lubavitch.

He was also a great *oved*, as illustrated by this story that his brother, the Rebbe Maharash, related:¹¹

When his father-in-law inquired about his approach to davening, he replied, “To the extent that is possible, I am mispalel b’tzibur (in public—typically referring to a minyan).” The Cherkasser was pleased to hear that his son-in-law davened with the minyan, unlike the prevalent practice in Lubavitch of davening at length.

Once, after davening, the Cherkasser called for Harav Yosef Yitzchak. To his surprise, the messenger returned empty-handed—Harav Yosef Yitzchak was still davening. After a long while, he sent for his son-in-law again, but he was still not finished. And the same occurred a third time!

When he finally did arrive, his father-in-law asked him, “Didn’t you tell me that you are mispalel b’tzibur?” Harav Yosef Yitzchak explained his behavior based on a Torah that his father (the Tzemach Tzedek) had told him in the name of his grandfather (the Alter Rebbe): Tefila b’tzibur means to gather (לצבור) all of the kochos hanefesh (faculties of the soul) and all of the nitzotzos (G-dly sparks in one’s environment). He concluded that this avoda takes him a long time.¹²

For the next twenty-three years, he alternated between being supported by the Tzemach Tzedek in Lubavitch and the Cherkasser Rebbe in Hornosteipel.

In 5614, the Czarist government implemented aggressive decrees as part of their campaign to assimilate the Jews of Russia. Hoping to use the Tzemach Tzedek’s stature to bolster their legitimacy, a secular gymnasium was opened in Lubavitch, and two of the

Schneerson grandchildren were forced to attend. Afraid of having one of his children sacrificed, Harav Yosef Yitzchak fled with his family to Hornosteipel, presumably planning to remain there.¹³

As the extended family grew, it became increasingly difficult for the Cherkasser Rebbe to support them. In 5619, the community in Avrutch—a city near Hornosteipel where the Cherkasser Rebbe had a following—requested that Harav Yosef Yitzchak be their *rav*. His father-in-law strongly encouraged Harav Yosef Yitzchak to accept, since this would assure Harav Yosef Yitzchak’s financial independence.

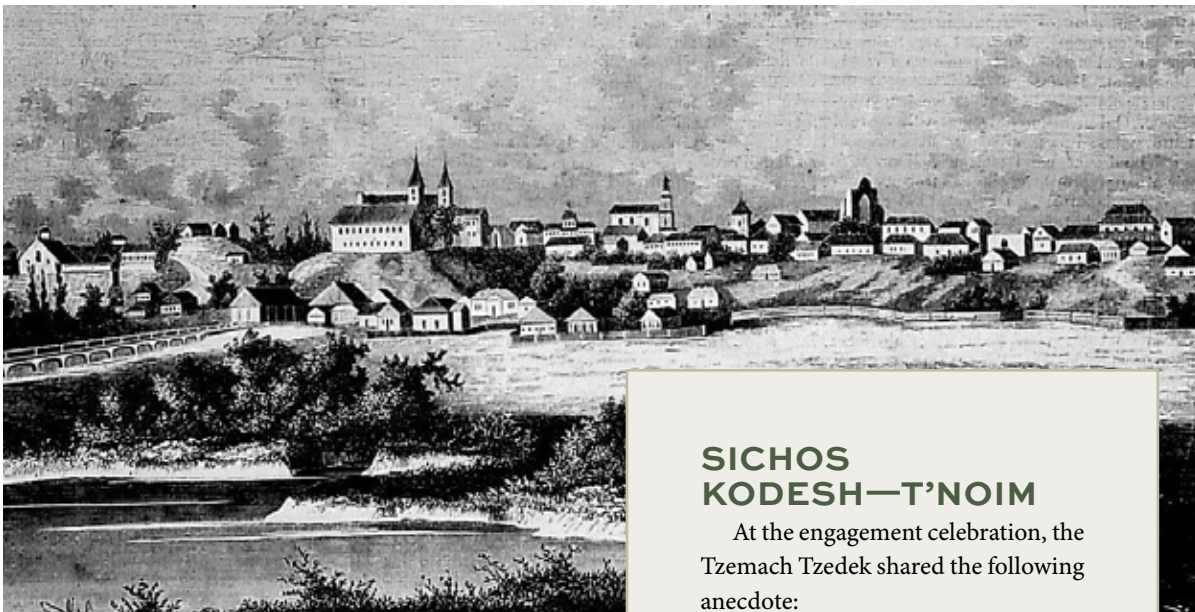
Not everyone in Avrutch welcomed this appointment. Chassidim of other Chernobyl branches had planned to bring one of Reb Aharon Chernobyl’s children as *rav*, and felt that Harav Yosef Yitzchak’s candidacy was a deliberate offense.

Prompted by correspondence from these opponents, the Tzemach Tzedek composed two letters to his son. In both letters, he advised against accepting any rabbinical position, especially when so entangled in *machlokes*. The Tzemach Tzedek begged Harav Yosef Yitzchak to return to Lubavitch, where his talents could be utilized, assuring him full financial support.¹⁴

Ultimately, under pressure from his father-in-law, Harav Yosef Yitzchak took up the position in Avrutch. Although it seems that his official role was *rav*, he served as a *magid meisharim* (the title given to a Rebbe in Chernobyl); the curious result was that a son of the Tzemach Tzedek essentially served as a *Chagas Rebbe*.¹⁵

For the next eighteen years, he faithfully guided his Chassidim. He provided them guidance in all matters of *gashmius* as well as *ruchnius*, and assisted them through supernatural channels, earning a reputation throughout the Vohlin region as a miracle-worker. Some unique individuals even merited to hear *maamarei Chassidus* from him in the style of Chabad.¹⁶

In the month of Tishrei 5637, Harav Yosef Yitzchak fell ill and, two months later, on 18 Kislev, was *nistalek*.¹⁷ He was succeeded in Avrutch by his son Harav Nochum Dovber.



CITY OF AVRUTCH AROUND THE TIME OF THE WEDDING.

Shabbos-ufruf alone, the Rebbe Maharash said Chassidus three times!

The Siyum

For various reasons, most notably due to the weak health of the Rebbe Maharash, he was unable to make the long journey to the wedding.¹⁸ Instead, he escorted the *chosson* till Achremeve (a village near Lubavitch) along with many Chassidim.

The entourage stopped in the fields of Achremeve, where the Rebbe Rashab made a *siyum* on the entire Mishnayos.¹⁹ There were no chairs in the field, aside from a small bench. The Rebbe Maharash sat down on the bench, but a *chosson* also needs to sit! (It is unclear if this was a directive of the Rebbe Maharash, or if the Chassidim understood this on their own.) Seeing the predicament, a *yungerman* bent down on all fours, creating an improvised seat for the *chosson*.²⁰

The Rebbe Maharash said a *maamar* in honor of the *siyum*, taking the final *mishnah* in Shas as the *dibur hamaschil*. He then announced, “They heard this *maamar* in the *pamalya shel maala* as well,” and added that he would not be ashamed to recite it before his father—the Tzemach Tzedek—in *Gan Eden Ha’elyon*.²¹

After a Seudas Mitzvah in honor of the *siyum*, the Rebbe Maharash returned to Lubavitch, while the Rebbe Rashab continued to Avrutch, accompanied by his mother and about twenty Chassidim.²²

SICHOS KODESH—T’NOIM

At the engagement celebration, the Tzemach Tzedek shared the following anecdote:

In the first days of the Alter Rebbe’s arrival in Mezritch, he heard a number of stories of the Baal Shem Tov related to *ahavas Yisroel*.

In general, the Jewish nation is composed of two categories. Members of the first are simple folk who cannot learn. There are multiple levels within this group, but they are all in the same general category. The second group is the *lomdim* (scholars). Within their ranks too, there are many levels, but they as well are all in the same general category.

“The Mitzvah of *ahavas Yisroel*,” says the Baal Shem Tov, “is toward both groups equally:

“We must love the simple folk because they are, unfortunately, simple folk. And yet, they believe in Hashem and his Torah with such pure, refined, and sincere hearts.

“And we must love the *lomdim* because they are great in Torah knowledge—and the holy Gemara tells us that the greater one is, the greater their *yetzer hara* is—so the *lomdim* have, unfortunately, such enormous, fiery *yetzer haras*. And yet, they are—*boruch Hashem—ehrlische Yidden* (pious Jews), so we must love them.”²³



SEFER 'DRUSHEI CHASUNA' CONTAINING THE MAAMARIM RECITED IN CONNECTION WITH THE CHASUNA.

The Wedding

On Motzei Shabbos Kodesh, Yud-Aleph Elul 5635, the Rebbe Rashab married Rebbetzin Shterna Sarah in Avrutch, hometown of his holy uncle, the father of the *kallah*.

Because few Lubavitcher Chassidim were present in Avrutch—and due to a dearth of historical records from the entire vicinity of Avrutch—little information was transcribed about the wedding. As such, we are forced to rely primarily on word of mouth.

By all accounts, it appears that—upon the Rebbe Maharash's directive—the Rebbe Rashab refused to don a *shtreimel* for the *chasuna*²⁴—an action which caused some measure of displeasure to the Chassidim of Avrutch as well as the Avrutch Rebbe himself. Some accounts go so far as to say that the wedding was initially scheduled for Erev Shabbos, and due to this saga was postponed till Motzei Shabbos.

When the Rebbe Rashab returned to Lubavitch—after *sheva brachos*—his father reiterated this directive. Placing a *shtreimel* on the Rebbe Rashab's head, he exclaimed,

LEI"V MEIVIN

Despite being unable to attend the wedding, the Rebbe Maharash was extremely elated throughout the entire wedding period. His joy was expressed by the incredible number of times he said Chassidus.

From the *Shabbos-ufruf* until after the *shiv'as y'mei hamishteh*, the Rebbe Maharash said a total of thirty-two *maamarim*! Upon the couple's arrival in Lubavitch, the Rebbe Maharash told his son, "I have regards for you from my father, grandfather, and great-grandfather—with a *leiv meivin* (lit. understanding heart)". *Leiv* has the *gematria* of thirty-two, hence, the number of *maamarim* that were said.²⁵

Currently, only twenty-one of the thirty-two *maamarim* are accounted for; three were said on the *Shabbos-ufruf*, one of them being recited during the daytime *seuda*. The next three were recited on 5 Elul at the Siyum Hamishnayos celebration, which included a *seuda* as well.

Seven through nine were said on the following

Shabbos, Parshas Ki Seitzei, before Kabbalas Shabbos. Another nine were recited at various times throughout Shabbos Parshas Ki Savo, Chai Elul.

The nineteenth and twentieth *maamarim* we know of were delivered on Sunday 19 Elul, apparently upon the return of the *chosson* and *kallah*. The final *maamar* of the thirty-two—*Sos Tasis*—seems to have also been said at that time.

Chassidim relate that Reb Tzvi Nota Gnesin—the renowned Staradover Rav—was in Lubavitch during that time, and was overwhelmed by the Chassidus being shared. By the time the Chassidim made it to their lodgings to review and process the latest *maamar*, they were already summoned for the next one!

When he brought up the issue, the Rebbe Maharash replied that words of Chassidus purify the atmosphere. [Even if the Chassidim couldn't remember (or even comprehend) the *maamarim*, their recitation alone affected the world.]²⁶

FAREWELL OF THE REBBE MAHARASH

While in Achremeve, as the Rebbe Maharash took leave before the wedding, he told the Rebbe Rashab, “Now (in *galus*), the *giluy* is from the level of *mochin d’ima* (lit. intellect of the mother, a reference to the *Sefirah* of *Binah*), therefore your mother is traveling with you (to the wedding). In the times of Moshiach, when the *giluy* will be from the level of *mochin d’aba* (lit. intellect of the father, referring to *Chochmah*), I will be there as well.”

In the wagon, there lay a small box, and the Rebbe Maharash asked about its contents. Upon being told that it was a hat—a gift for the *kallah*—he requested to see it. The Rebbe Maharash took the hat and (seemingly, as a protest against following the latest fashion) removed its stylish adornments (most likely referring to feathers).²⁷

The Rebbe Maharash also shared praises of his father, the Tzemach Tzedek, and related a scene he had once witnessed. As a boy of seven, he heard how the Tzemach Tzedek recited Tehillim. Although he recited just two *kapitelach* of Tehillim, this *avoda*

took him two and a half hours, throughout which time he wept like a child. Even at his young age, the Rebbe Maharash could see that something incredible was taking place, and was gripped with awe and trepidation.

He continued by revealing that the Alter Rebbe said Chassidus to the Tzemach Tzedek in his sleep, and that the Tzemach Tzedek said Chassidus to the Rebbe Maharash as well, as recently as that week! The Rebbe Maharash proceeded to share the *maamar* that he had been told, but was cut off in the middle, following which the Rebbe Maharash said, “This Chassidus would take a year to say”...²⁸

A chossid of Harav Chaim Shneur Zalman of Liadi—the Rebbe Maharash’s brother—happened to be passing through Achremeve on his way home from Liadi. Seeing the gathering of Lubavitcher Chassidim, and upon hearing that the Rebbe Maharash was there as well, he went over to join. Hearing of this guest, the Rebbe Maharash asked him, “Are you traveling from Liadi?” When he responded in the affirmative, the Rebbe Maharash told him, “Show your tongue, and I will tell you which Chassidus you heard there (in Liadi),” and so it was...²⁹

“In **Lubavitch**, we must wear a ‘round hat’ (*shtreimel*).” Throughout the Rebbe Rashab’s life, he continued this practice—the *shtreimel* was reserved for the holy atmosphere of Lubavitch.³⁰

At any rate, without firsthand accounts, we can only imagine what took place at the *chasuna* in Avrutch.

In contrast, some recollections of Chassidim who witnessed the great joy of the Rebbe Maharash in Lubavitch have been preserved in great detail through the *sichos* of the Frierdiker Rebbe.

Celebrating From Afar

Not only did the Rebbe Maharash mark the wedding day itself, festive *seudos* were held in Lubavitch throughout the entire wedding period as well.³¹

In this heightened joy—and with the *chosson* not being present—the Rebbe Maharash used the opportunity to speak to the Chassidim of the Rebbe Rashab’s qualities.

On one occasion, he said, “*Rashab iz masig ah inyan*

la’amitaso. Chassidim vinshen zich hasogas hamochin, er vays az der ikar iz shibud haleiv. Un az m’hot shibud haleiv, git men hasogas hamochin mil’maala. Iz damols di hasogo an’andere un di mochin andere.” (Rashab understands things truthfully. Chassidim wish for themselves to have understanding of the mind; he knows that the main thing is control of the heart. When one has control of the heart, they are gifted understanding of the mind from above. Then, the understanding is of another caliber, and the mind is of another caliber).³²

Reb Abba Person recalled another occasion where the Rebbe Maharash praised his son further, “Do you know who he is? As the Rambam³³ describes, ‘with his mind, he overcomes his natural inclinations at all times, and he possesses a broad and correct mental outlook.’ And as it says in that halacha, ‘know that Hashem grants prophecy to man.’” (As if to imply that the Rebbe Rashab has the qualities to receive *nevuah*.)

From that point, the Chassidim regarded the Rebbe Rashab with newfound respect.³⁴

THE MECHUTANIM—THE CHERKASSER REBBE

The Mezritcher Maggid had once said that Moshiach would descend either from his older *talmidim*, or from the younger *talmidim*. With the youngest being the Alter Rebbe, and the oldest Reb Nochum Chernobyler, the Alter Rebbe wished to establish a lineage that would unite them both.³⁵

To this end, the Alter Rebbe traveled to Chernobyl to propose a *shidduch* between his granddaughter and one of Reb Nochum's grandsons. Reb Nochum readily accepted the offer and left it to the Alter Rebbe to choose which grandson he preferred.

He brought the Alter Rebbe to his home where his young grandchildren were asleep. The Alter Rebbe walked among the cribs, placing his holy hand over each baby's head to "feel" the nature of their mind. Upon reaching one particular child, he declared the boy suitable in his eyes.

Not long thereafter, Reb Boruch Mezhibuzher came to arrange a *shidduch* with the Chernobyler as well. When he expressed his wish to make a match with the very same grandson, he was informed that a *shidduch* had already been arranged for the child with "the Litvak." (The Alter Rebbe was known among the *talmidei haMaggid* as the Litvak, being the only one of them from Lithuania.)³⁶

This child was Harav Yaakov Yisroel Twerski, who would later become the Cherkasser Rebbe.

Harav Yaakov Yisroel was born in 5554, the third son of Reb Mottel Chernobyler.³⁷ On 6 Shevat 5571, he married Rebbetzin Devorah Leah, daughter of the Mitteler Rebbe.³⁸

The couple settled in Liadi, where Harav Yaakov Yisroel had the opportunity to absorb the teachings of Chassidus Chabad. Initially, he hesitated to attend the *maamarim* of the Alter Rebbe, as he did not have permission from his father to learn Chassidus other than his own. The Alter Rebbe advised Harav Yaakov Yisroel to ask his father directly, and Reb Mottel gave his wholehearted consent.

Some Chernobyler *kano'im* vehemently insisted that although Harav Yaakov Yisroel attended every *maamar*—out of respect for his wife's grandfather—he did not actually listen to them. However, even a cursory glance at the Cherkasser's Torah (collected

and transcribed by his grandson in a *sefer* entitled '*Emek Tefillah*'), reveals that he was deeply influenced by Chabad Chassidus.³⁹

Their peaceful life in Liadi was abruptly ended by the French invasion of Russia in the summer of 5572. Together with the extended family, they fled from Napoleon's advance, and suffered the *histalkus* of the Alter Rebbe. After a year of wandering, the *chatzer* of Chabad found a new home in the village of Lubavitch.

Until the Mitteler Rebbe's *histalkus* in 5588, Harav Yaakov Yisroel remained in the Lubavitcher *chatzer*. During this time, he also developed a unique relationship with his brother-in-law and *chavrusa*—the Tzemach Tzedek.⁴⁰ In 5588, he moved back to Chernobyl to live with his father. Already within his father's lifetime, Harav Yaakov Yisroel was ready to guide Chassidim of his own. In 5594, with his father's consent and blessing, he established his *chatzer* in Hornosteipel.⁴¹

In 5620, he relocated to Cherkas and, three years later, sent his grandson—Reb Mordechai Dovber Twerski—to be his successor in Hornosteipel.⁴²

The Cherkasser Rebbe was *nistalek* on Shabbos Parshas Ki Seitzei—13 Elul 5636⁴³—leaving behind his teachings and an illustrious line of worthy descendants. Indeed, many branches of the Twerski family today are rooted in Cherkas.

Although his *histalkus* took place a full year after the Rebbe Rashab's wedding, there is no evidence that he attended the wedding.⁴⁴ It is possible that due to his advanced age, he was unable to make the long journey from Cherkas to Avrutch.



REB MORDECHAI
DOVBER TWERSKY
(5599–5663),
THE REBBE IN
HORNOSTEIPEL.



THE 'CHATZER' (COURTYARD) IN LUBAVITCH.

Shabbos Sheva Brachos

The Rebbe Maharash had instructed that the *chosson* and *kallah* return to Lubavitch for Shabbos. However, the *mechutan* was reluctant to have them leave so fast. He delayed their departure by several hours, ensuring that they wouldn't make it to Lubavitch in time for Shabbos.⁴⁵

Nonetheless, the Shabbos *sheva brachos* was celebrated with great fanfare in Lubavitch—while the *chosson* and *kallah* spent Shabbos on the road between Avrutch and Lubavitch.

Reb Dov Zev ("Bere Volf") Kozevnikov—the *rav* of Yekaterinoslav—was one of the Chassidim present to partake in the Rebbe Maharash's *simcha*. He vividly described to the Friediker Rebbe the great joy that was felt:

In the back of the Rebbe Maharash's home, there was a veranda with steps leading to a large garden.

The *seuda* was set up in this garden, and many Chassidim participated. The Rebbe Maharash was overjoyed. If his face was usually radiant, now it positively shone.

After addressing the Chassidim about the unique energy of Shabbos—especially Chai Elul—he instructed that a particular *niggun* be sung in unison and repeated

three times. In order to ensure that the *niggun* would indeed be sung in the desired manner, he appointed Elya "Obbeler" (Virabaitchik) and Tzadok "Homler" (Nechamkin) to serve as conductors.

Following the *niggun*, the Rebbe Maharash said a *maamar*, which was immediately followed by a spirited dance. After dancing for a short while, the Rebbe Maharash retired to his veranda. From the window, he watched the Chassidim continue to dance in a circle. Turning to his son and son-in-law (Raza and Reb Moshe Leib Ginsburg) he remarked, "*Kuk kinder vi Chassidim freien zich b'simcha shel mitzvah. Un azoy velen Yidden tantzen in di gassen az Moshiach vet kumen*" (Look, children, how Chassidim celebrate a *simcha shel mitzvah*. This is how Yidden will dance in the streets when Moshiach will come).

Due to the overcast skies on Shabbos day, the formal events were forced indoors. The kiddush after Shacharis was held in the "big *zal*"—a shul built by the Rebbe Maharash on the location of the Tzemach Tzedek's home (this building would later serve as the *zal* of Tomchei Temimim).

The Rebbe Maharash said a *maamar* (*Ani Ldodi*), and then explained that dancing in a circle is a Chassidic innovation—introduced in the times of the Baal Shem Tov. The

first stage of revelation [of *Elokus*, i.e. through the Baal Shem Tov] is in a mode of “*makif*” [lit.: circular] with a powerful energy, which by nature, cannot be contained and internalized. The Alter Rebbe—with *mesiras nefesh* for Chassidus and for Chassidim—brought this revelation into the mode of *pnimiyus* (an internalized form). Now when Chassidim dance in a circle they have the energy of *makif*, which also affects their *pnimiyus*. The Rebbe Maharash left, and the Chassidim took to the courtyard and danced in dozens of circles.

Afterwards, the Rebbe Maharash joined Chassidim for the *seudas Shabbos*. During the *seuda*, he continued to speak about the accomplishments of the Baal Shem Tov and the Alter Rebbe—specifically in the *avoda* of Elul, and said a *maamar*.⁴⁶

The celebration came to a crescendo on Motzei Shabbos when the couple finally arrived. The Rebbe Maharash was ecstatic. The many Chassidim who greeted them—including prominent *rabbanim*—had removed their *zupetzes* (kapotes), and were dancing together with their *tzitzis* revealed.⁴⁷

The couple made their home in Lubavitch, where they were to be supported by the Rebbe Maharash for the next few years, as outlined in the *T’noim*. Throughout the next few years, the Rebbe Rashab—undisturbed by communal activities—kept an intense schedule of learning *nigleh*, Chassidus, and *avodas hatefillah*.

The Significance of It All

The wedding day of a *nossi*—and its anniversary every year—is a very important and all-encompassing day in their life. Through the *nossi*, this day holds utmost importance for all their generation as well.

The day chosen by our Rabbeim for this momentous occasion was in the month of Elul. Therefore, aside from its significance as with any wedding day of one of our Rabbeim, it inspires us specifically in the *avoda* of Elul—uniting ourselves with Hashem in a deep, loving relationship (*ani l’dodi v’dodi li*).

The Rebbe instructed that this inspiration should be actualized in the practical *avoda* of

TRUE HEIGHTS

There are two anecdotes, related by Chassidim, about Rebbetzin Shterna Sarah’s transition to Lubavitch:

After the wedding, an issue bothered the Rebbe Rashab—his father’s absence at the *chasuna* also meant the absence of his *brachos*. He instructed his Rebbetzin to request that her father-in-law give her the *brachos* she would have received under the *chuppah*.

When Rebbetzin Shterna Sarah presented her request, the Rebbe Maharash noted that the hat she was wearing was in the latest style. He agreed to give her his *bracha*, provided she would be willing to cut out the feather from her hat. She agreed and did as he said, and the Rebbe Maharash blessed her.⁴⁸

Arriving in Lubavitch, Rebbetzin Shterna Sarah quickly realized that she was quite short in comparison to her tall cousins, now in-laws. Addressing her possible feelings of inferiority, the Rebbe Maharash encouraged her, saying, “Don’t feel down, we see that short trees are very good for fruit.”⁴⁹ Perhaps these prophetic words symbolized that their “fruit”—the Frierdiker Rebbe—would be extraordinarily great indeed.



EARLIEST EXTANT PHOTOGRAPH
OF REBBETZIN SHTERNA SARAH.

Elul—which correspond to the practical elements of a wedding. Additions should be made in Torah (both *nigleh* and Chassidus, and particularly in *maamarim* on the topic of *chasuna*), *avodas hatefillah*, and *gemilus chasadim* (physical tzedakah, as well as spiritual kindness through disseminating Torah, Yiddishkeit, and Chassidus)—corresponding to the three methods of *kiddushin*. This will usher in the ultimate wedding—between Hashem and his nation—in the era of Moshiach.⁵⁰ **T**

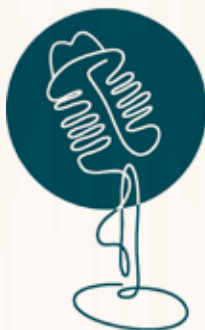
1. In the preparation of this article, we were greatly assisted by information published in “Nissuei Hanesi'im” by Rabbi Zalman Hertzfel.
2. Hayom Yom 8 Teves.
3. Chanoch Lanaar pp. 8–9.
4. Migdal Oz (Mondshine) p. 221.
5. Seder T'noim Eirusin V'nisuin (Levine) p. 43ff.
6. Likkutei Dibburim vol. 2 (new edition), p. 417.
7. In Seder T'noim Eirusin V'nisuin (p. 68), he asserts that typically Beis Harav would write the actual wedding location in the T'noim, and only in the case of a lengthy engagement would they write Yerushalayim.
8. Hakria V'hakedusha vol. 15 (Kislev 5702), p. 3. In Sefer Hasichos 5697 (p. 258), the Frierdiker Rebbe speaks of his bris being in 5583.
9. Avos Hachassidus ch. 4, printed in Hatomim, Kislev 5696, p. 45.
10. B'nei HaTzemach Tzedek (Bloy) p. 186.
11. Avos Hachassidus, *ibid.* Likkutei Sichos vol. 2, p. 477.
12. Description of the ending is based on Likkutei Sichos. In Avos Hachassidus, the Frierdiker Rebbe relates the ending with slight differences.
13. Sefer Hasichos Kayitz 5700, p. 147.
14. Igros Kodesh Tzemach Tzedek pp. 146–151.
15. Hakria V'hakedusha *ibid.*
16. Beis Rebbe section 3 ch. 8, p. 123.
17. Hakria V'hakedusha *ibid.*
18. Avos Hachassidus *ibid.*
19. Toras Shmuel - Drushei Chasuna (new edition), p. 370.
20. Toras Sholom - Sefer Hasichos p. 188.
21. Toras Shmuel, *ibid.*
22. Reshimas Hayoman p. 288.
23. Likkutei Dibburim *ibid.*, p. 418.
24. See Migdal Oz p. 221.
25. Sefer Hasichos 5704 p. 173. Sefer Hatoldos Admur Maharash p. 72.
26. Migdal Oz p. 214.
27. Toras Sholom, *ibid.*
28. Toras Shmuel, *ibid.*
29. Migdal Oz, *ibid.*
30. Sefer Hasichos 5704 pp. 140–141. When the “light” of Lubavitch was needed elsewhere, an exception was made, and the *shtrimmel* was worn even outside of Lubavitch.



E.K. TIEFENBRUN

31. Reshimas Hayoman *ibid.*
32. Sefer Hasichos 5706, p. 10.
33. Hilchos Yesodei Hatorah 7:1.
34. Sefer Hasichos 5704, p. 173.
35. Interestingly, this merging of Chabad with Chernobyl repeated itself many times over: Harav Yaakov Yisroel married the daughter of the Mittler Rebbe. Their daughter married the son of the Tzemach Tzedek. And their daughter married the Rebbe Rashab.
36. Zichronosai (Sasonkin) p. 222ff. There it states that the Alter Rebbe went to suggest the shidduch with Reb Motte Chernobyler (instead of Reb Nochum), but for many reasons this seems to be a mistake.
37. Rabbeinu Hakadosh Meihornosteipel p. 19.
38. Seder T'noim Eirusin V'nisuin p. 32ff.
39. In Rabbeinu Hakadosh Meihornosteipel, the story is brought with slight variations.
40. See for example Reshimas Hayoman p. 74.
41. B'nei Hatzemach Tzedek (Bloy) p. 457.
42. Rabbeinu Hakadosh Meihornosteipel p. 19.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 23.
44. See Igros Kodesh vol. 22, p. 31.
45. Toras Sholom - Sefer Hasichos pp. 187–188.
46. Likkutei Dibburim vol. 1 (new edition), p. 68ff.
47. Toras Sholom *ibid.*
48. Shmu'os Vesipurim vol. 1, pp. 78–79.
49. L'sheima Ozen — Rebbe Rashab story #8.
50. Adapted from Shabbos Parshas Ki Savo 5749; Sefer Hasichos 5749 vol. 2, p. 688ff.

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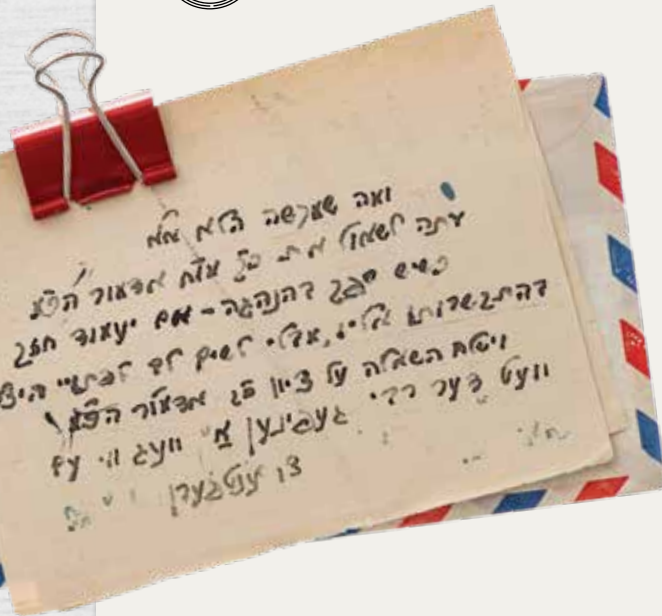
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דער רבי וועט געפינען א וועג...

WRITTEN BY: RABBI LEVI GREENBERG (TX)

Treasures from Above (part 2)



AS TOLD BY
**RABBI LEVI YITZCHOK
CEITLIN**

(Haifa, Eretz Yisroel)

Every year, I have the great merit of organizing a trip for Lubavitcher girls to visit the Rebbe for Chof Beis Shevat. This project was very dear to my father, Rabbi Aharon Eliezer Ceitlin *a"h*, who would arrange this “kvutza” every year. Since it coincided with the International Kinus Hashluchos, he felt that the girls’ participation in the legendary banquet was crucial to inspiring them to go on Shlichus themselves in the future. Understandably, there was a price for their participation in the banquet, and each year, he happily raised the funds.

After his passing, I assumed responsibility for the “kvutza”; their participation in the banquet is my highlight of the program, and a focus of my fundraising for the trip. In the past, I shared how I experienced the Rebbe’s *brachos* to cover this unique budget through many miracles during the Kinus of 5784. (Published in Derher Cheshvan

5785. –ed) I’d like to share similar miracles I experienced for the “kvutza” of 5785.

Since airline tickets to New York became more expensive because of the war in Eretz Yisroel, registration for the trip opened before Tishrei, and we encouraged potential participants to purchase tickets early, when they were still more affordable. As usual, there was a special “*hachana*” program to learn the *Basi Ugani maamarim* for this year, and over 150 girls participated. Despite the financial challenges, the “kvutza” exceeded those of previous years, and there was a special addition to the group.

My friend Rabbi Motti Kenig is a Shliach in the Chareidi neighborhood of Kiryat Sefer in Modiin Ilit. This is a Litvishe stronghold, and he and his wife have successfully brought Chassidus to the community in powerful ways. Recently, they opened a high school named “Beit

Chaya” catering to all the neighborhood girls who were not accepted into the other high schools in town. The students are not from Chabad families, and in addition to providing top-notch *chinuch*, the Kenigs introduce them to Chabad and the Chassidishe way of life.

For the first time, the Kenigs arranged a special learning program for their students, and those who excelled won a free trip to the Rebbe for Chof Beis Shevat. It was a huge success, and 25 girls qualified for the trip. While the Kenigs shouldered the financial responsibility of the flights and accommodations in New York, I welcomed them to join our program free of charge. Although Rabbi Kenig was skeptical of the need, I insisted on their participation in the Kinus banquet along with the others, even though it would significantly raise my cost.

Rabbi Kenig fundraised large sums of money for his program, and one of his significant donors was Rabbi Eliyahu Schlossberg from Yerushalayim. I also sent Rabbi Schlossberg an email requesting his support for our program, but did not receive a response.

Before the program started, I had already paid the Kinus office approximately half the funds needed for the girls’ participation, and based on previous experience, I was confident the Rebbe would find a way for me to cover the considerable expense before we returned to Eretz Yisroel, but I did not know how.

When I arrived at 770 on Friday morning, 23 Shevat, to daven Shacharis, the main shul was closed for a rally for the Kinus Tzeirei Hashluchos, so I davened in the upstairs *zal*. Toward the end of Shacharis, I vaguely recognized someone sitting at the table on the south end of the room, and was told this was Rabbi Schlossberg from Yerushalayim.

I had never met him before, but I sat down next to him and introduced myself. He recognized my name from the email and explained he had already donated a large sum to Rabbi Kenig for the 25 girls from Kiryat Sefer. When I clarified they were participating in our program free of charge, he said he would need to rethink my request.

On Sunday evening, I was so happy that all the girls, including the Kiryat Sefer group, participated in the Kinus banquet. However, I had still not managed to secure more than half of the deficit for the cost of their participation. After the banquet, there was a special *farbrengen* for the girls, and I went to sleep close to three o’clock in the morning. For some reason, I awoke barely two hours later and could not sleep. Since I was scheduled to fly

back to Eretz Yisroel later that evening and had much to accomplish that day, I decided to go to the Ohel, and by 5:30 a.m., I caught a ride at the corner of Kingston and Eastern Parkway.

During the ride, I sent a WhatsApp message to Rabbi Dovid Fisher with a photo of the “*kvutza*” in front of 770. He had donated a significant sum of money to our program in 5784, and I had tried to contact him this year without success. In the short message I wrote to him during the ride to the Ohel, I thanked him for his previous participation and asked him to help cover my deficit with the Kinus office for the banquet.

To my pleasant surprise, he responded by asking how much it cost, and committed to a very significant amount that covered almost the entire deficit. At the Ohel, I wrote a letter to the Rebbe reporting on the trip’s success, thanked Hashem for all the miracles I had experienced in fundraising that year, and asked for a *bracha* that I secure the remaining amount very soon.

Throughout the day, I was busy with errands in Crown Heights, and as I was about to pack everything up and head to the airport, I encountered Rabbi Schlossberg on Kingston Avenue. I thanked him for supporting Rabbi Kenig’s efforts on behalf of the Kiryat Sefer girls. I played him a WhatsApp voice note I had received that morning from Rabbi Kenig, describing how inspired the Kiryat Sefer girls were from participating in the banquet. When he heard Rabbi Kenig’s emotional reaction to this part of the trip, he asked me what the cost was for each girl and immediately pledged to cover the cost for the 25 girls from Kiryat Sefer!

Once I arrived in Eretz Yisroel, I received a message from Rabbi Yosef Gopin, the shliach in Hartford, CT, who had participated in the Seudas Shabbos with our group and pledged to sponsor five girls’ participation in the banquet. His donation was the final amount I needed to pay the Kinus office.

Once again, through tremendous *hashgacha pratis* and the Rebbe’s *brachos*, the girls of the “*kvutza*” were inspired by their participation in the Kinus Hashluchos, which will surely have a meaningful long-term impact. **1**

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תנ"צ'ה

COMPILED BY: RABBI LEVI GREENBERG (OH)

WRITTEN BY: RABBI SHNEUR ITZINGER

*This article is based primarily on Admurei Chabad
v'Yahadus Germany and Shlichus Kedosha (teshura
Lapidos-Wolff 5784), both by Rabbi Zushe Wolff.*

P I N P O I N T S

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

MUNICH, GERMANY



“GUARDED” SHMURAH MATZAH

The Rebbe Rashab traveled frequently outside his home in Lubavitch for *askanus* and health-related reasons. For most of 5661, from Kislev to Elul, the Rebbe Rashab spent much of his time in Worishofen, Germany, a health resort not far from Munich. While the trip was primarily for medical treatments available in Worishofen, the Frierdiker Rebbe records in his diary¹ that the Rebbe Rashab also engaged in communal affairs. He met with prominent leaders in various cities, including Berlin, Vienna, and Paris, to discuss issues affecting Russian Jewry, especially those relating to the “Pale of Settlement.”

As a larger, more established city, nearby Munich served as a resource for the Rebbe Rashab during his stay. One visit is documented in a letter the Rebbe Rashab sent to the Frierdiker Rebbe, describing a trip to Munich to procure matzah for Pesach:

“Yesterday, I traveled to Munich to receive the *shmurah* [matzah]. Before leaving, I was informed by the person to whom the matzah had been addressed that the package had already arrived and was no longer in customs. I understood this to mean that the box had been opened outside my presence, which caused me great distress [for I was not there to make sure it remained free of *chametz*].

Upon arriving in Munich, the individual [who received the package] told me that he, too, had not

been present when the box was opened, meaning that it had been unsealed by the customs officials with no Jew present. Understandably, this caused me even deeper pain.

However, upon inspecting the contents, I found that one of the tin containers had not been opened, and its seal remained intact. I thanked Hashem from the depths of my heart that I had *shmurah matzah* with which to fulfill the mitzvah [on the Seder nights], and to eat throughout Pesach. I am deeply grateful to Hashem for this kindness... and I pray that going forward as well, I will be spared even from the slightest trace (*mashehu*) of *chametz*... and that I no longer remain in this foreign land, but return home in peace...”²

FROM NEW YORK TO MUNICH

The Rebbe Rashab would later voice pointed criticism of Germany and its Kaiser in the lead-up to World War I and throughout the war itself. Germany’s descent into darkness deepened with the onset of World War II, during the *nesius* of the Frierdiker Rebbe. Yet, with the conclusion of both wars, the country was again ready for the light of Torah and Chassidus to shine, piercing through the darkness. Munich, too, received the Rabbeim’s focused attention.

Safely in America shortly after the war’s end, the Fri-



MUNICH AROUND THE TIME OF THE REBBE RASHAB'S VISIT.

erdiker Rebbe received a letter in 5708 from a Yisroel Meir Munitz, who had recently traveled to Munich. He described the absence of a proper school there, and his desire to help change that reality.

The Frierdiker Rebbe responded with warm words:

“I was very pleased to read your letter... about your dedication to establishing a *cheder* where children will learn Chumash and Nach with Rashi, and some will also study Gemara. It is of utmost importance to also teach them the meaning of the words in *davening*, *Birchas Hamazon*, and selected practical *halachos*, and to instruct them about good conduct in honoring their parents and loving their peers. Be mindful of the education of girls as well. Stay in touch by mail with the *hanhala* of Merkos L’Inyonei Chinuch [here in New York].

“May Hashem bless you with success in raising upright *talmidim* and *talmidos*...”⁴

The Frierdiker Rebbe addressed another letter around that time to a chossid who had recently lived in the city, inquiring as to what had been accomplished in terms of “strengthening *shiurei Torah*, the laws of *taharas hamishpacha*, *kashrus*, and Shabbos, especially among the youth.” The Frierdiker Rebbe also asked whether he had traveled to other areas to encourage adherence to Torah and *mitzvos*, and requested that he remain in contact with Merkos on the matter.⁵

Two years later, in 5710, the Frierdiker Rebbe again

inquired about the state of Jewish education in Munich for boys and girls in a letter to Reb Dovid Henich Zaklikowsky, then serving as a shochet in the city. The Rebbe encouraged him to remain there and continue his sacred work “in the place to which Divine Providence has led you to fulfill your soul’s purpose.”⁶

KEHOS IN EUROPE

With the high cost of printing in the United States during the 5700s, the Rebbe, in charge of Kehos, sought to

THE FRIERDIKER REBBE’S VISIT

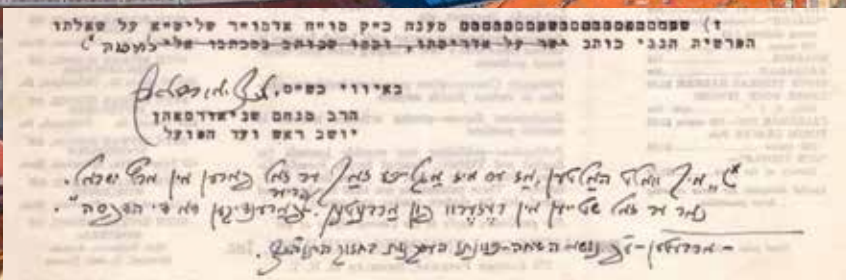
Returning from his historic visit to Eretz Yisroel, en route to the United States, the Frierdiker Rebbe notes in his diary³ that he passed through Munich on 22 Menachem Av 5689.



REB DOVID BRAWMAN.



THE 47TH EDITION OF THE TANYA, PRINTED IN MUNICH, GERMANY, 5707.



IN THIS HANDWRITTEN NOTE FROM THE REBBE, REB DOVID IS ENCOURAGED TO IMMIGRATE TO ERETZ YISROEL AFTER HE CONCLUDES THE PRINTING PROJECT.

establish additional centers for publishing *sifrei Chassidus*. During his visit to Paris in 5707 to bring Rebbetzin Chana to New York, the Rebbe appointed Reb Dovid Bravman to open a European branch of Kehos, where printing was significantly more affordable, especially in Germany.

Munich was chosen for the printing. Between the years 5707 and 5711, many *seforim* were printed there, including the first-ever *Tanya* printed under the Friediker Rebbe's direct instruction. This was followed by *Siddur Torah Or*, *Sefer Hamaamarim Yiddish*, *Torah Or*, *Likkutei Torah*, the Alter Rebbe's *Shulchan Aruch*, the *Shu"t* of the Tzemach Tzedek, and several other *seforim*.

The operation continued until rising inflation in Germany made printing increasingly expensive. In 5711, the Rebbe allowed Reb Dovid to immigrate to Eretz Yisroel, having completed his *shlichus*.⁷

THE SLABODKA GRADUATE'S CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE REBBE

When postwar Germany was divided between the Soviets and the United States, Munich found itself in free West Germany, under the control of the US Army. By 5715, the West German civilian government had assumed full authority, and the U.S. military occupation officially ended, though American influence remained strong.

Against this backdrop, the Jewish community faced growing concern about potential changes to their religious

A BASE FOR ANASH IN POST-WAR EUROPE

Of particular note when discussing Munich is the nearby refugee camp in Pocking, home to forty thousand Jewish refugees who had escaped the Soviet Union at the end of World War II. Among them were some three hundred members of *anash* who spent a considerable amount of time there, establishing the full infrastructure needed to sustain a *chassidische* lifestyle, including a branch of Tomchei Temimim and schools for girls. It was during this same period that the branch of Kehos in Europe was established and run by the Pocking refugees.

freedoms, which until then had been strongly protected by U.S. authorities. The Chief Rabbi of Munich, Rabbi Shmuel Abba Snieg, turned to the Rebbe with a dilemma: Should he open a new school for the community, anticipating the changes that were to come?

In response, the Rebbe advised Rabbi Snieg to leverage the Americans' fear of Soviet influence:

"By forming the appropriate connections with representatives of the American occupation, it will be possible to maintain the [existing] education-



RABBI SHMUEL ABBA SNIEG, IN HIS YOUTH BEFORE THE WAR.

al [structure] without changing it, especially because [the Americans'] current policy is to strengthen all religious matters as much as possible, since they've come to realize that religion is the only true shield and defense against the Reds [i.e., the Communists], whose fear looms over them.”⁸

This was just one of many letters exchanged over several decades between the Rebbe and Rabbi Snieg, a Slabodka graduate who helped found Yeshivas Eitz Chaim in Lithuania before becoming Munich's Chief Rabbi.

The Rebbe's letters to Rabbi Snieg show a continued influence of the *ruach* of Chassidus in Munich, with the Lithuanian-educated Chief Rabbi serving as the Rebbe's emissary in many areas. Rabbi Snieg frequently reported to the Rebbe about the well-attended Yud-Tes Kislev farbrengens held in his city and informed the Rebbe of a communal *hachlata* to recite *Tehillim* on *Shabbos Mevarchim*, in accordance with the Frierdiker Rebbe's *takana*.

In one letter in response to his report on the Yud-Tes Kislev farbrengen, the Rebbe concludes with a *bracha*:

“May [the *zechus* of the farbrengen] assist you and your wife for improved health... and for success in all your activities as *mara dasra*. Certainly, you will continue with increased strength in all your work, and particularly in matters relating to the *chinuch* of the children, and no doubt, with proper effort in the school regarding which you wrote to me.”

“Ultimately, you will certainly see success. Especially since, as a result of the Alter Rebbe's *mesirus nefesh* for Chassidus [which was commemorated on Yud Tes Kislev], the Heavenly *Beis Din* issued a *psak* that in all matters of Torah, *yiras Shamayim*, and good *middos*, all who are *mekushar* to and follow the Alter Rebbe's path will have the upper hand.”⁹

The Rebbe also guided him on the question of introducing *limudei chol* in the school, advising that the decision rested on his own discerning judgment, because, while the Rabbeim were generally strongly opposed to such a move, there were rare instances in which they nevertheless supported similar schools, albeit behind the scenes.¹⁰

A SHLIACH TO MUNICH

With¹¹ a vacancy in the position of Chief Rabbi of Munich in 5747, the community leadership turned to Rabbi Yaakov Biderman, the Rebbe's *shliach* to Austria since 5740, asking him to assume the role. Rabbi Biderman directed them to the Rebbe, explaining that as the Rebbe's *shliach*, he was not in a position to leave his post. The Vice President of the Munich Jewish community, along with other officials, sent a letter to the Rebbe formally requesting that Rabbi Biderman be sent.

The Rebbe's response in English, dated 15th of Kislev 5747, reads, “In reply, I regretfully have to advise that I am unable to accede to your request (and the person you write about cannot leave his current position).” Before affixing his holy signature, the Rebbe concluded his letter with a *bracha* in connection with the approach of Chanukah.

However, a permanent *shliach* for Munich was not long in coming. Through the Rebbe's “traveling *shliach*” to Europe, Rabbi Avraham Yitzchak Glick, the community requested that Rabbi Yisrael Meir Diskin and his wife be sent to Munich as the Rebbe's *shluchim*. The previous *rav*, who had recently been dismissed from his position, was still living in the city. Seemingly in deference to him, the Rebbe gave his *haskama* only after the former *rav* joined the community leadership in formally signing off on the request. The Rebbe's blessing came in the winter of 5749, and the first *shluchim* ever sent to Germany were on their way.



“L’HATZLACHA B’AVODAS HAKODESH”

Shortly after the Diskins arrived in Munich, they sent a detailed report to the Rebbe outlining their initial activities. In response, they merited a letter from the Rebbe, addressed to both of them and dated 7 Nissan 5749.

After acknowledging receipt of their *duch*, the Rebbe wrote a *bracha* in honor of the upcoming Yom Tov of Pesach.

A beautiful testament to the Rebbe’s concern for their shlichus in Munich, which continues until today, appears at the bottom of the letter, where, in his holy handwriting, the Rebbe added the words:

“*L’hatzlacha ba’avodas hakodesh* – for success in your holy work.” **T**

1. Published in Sefer Hatoldos Admur HaRashab p. 247.

2. Igros Kodesh Admur HaRashab vol. 3, p. 233.

3. Published in Masa HaRabi B’eretz Hakodesh p. 271.

4. Igros Kodesh Admur HaRayatz vol. 9, p. 363.

5. Ibid. vol. 13, p. 453-4.

6. Ibid. p. 511.

7. See at length in Hotzo’as Seforim - Kehos p. 137ff.

8. Igros Kodesh vol. 10, p. 297-8.

9. Ibid. vol. 12, p. 256.

10. Ibid. vol. 20, p. 120. For an in-depth discussion on the topic of studying *limudei chol*, see “Purity of the Mind” - Derher Iyar 5780.

11. The last two sections of this article are based on Shlichus Kedosha p. 84ff.

12. Toras Menachem vol. 70, p. 192-3.

13. Ibid. p. 298-9.

TRAGEDY IN MUNICH

A dark chapter in Munich’s postwar history occurred in Elul 5732, when, *Rachmana litzlan*, eleven young Jews, athletes on Israel’s Olympic team, were targeted and murdered during the Olympic Games.

Initially, the Rebbe did not speak about the tragedy publicly. “My *inyan* is, like any Jew, to make a *dirah b’tachtonim*, not to take a stand on current events!” the Rebbe explained when he eventually addressed the events at a *farbrengen* three months later.¹² He was now choosing to speak, he said, in order to confront the root cause of the massacre so that such a thing would never happen again.

Only a deep lack of Jewish pride and a sense of inferiority before the nations of the world could lead a group of young Jews to travel to Germany ‘to dance amongst non-Jews’—as if they had entirely forgotten what had happened to six million of their fellow Jews not long before. That mentality, the Rebbe emphasized, must be corrected going forward.

[The Rebbe also noted the German government’s responsibility in the massacre, something officials denied at the time but was later understood by all to be the case.]

Several weeks later, the Rebbe spoke again about the massacre and decried not only the trip to Germany despite its history but also the Olympics themselves, given their origins in *avoda zara*.¹³



RABBI YISRAEL MEIR DISKIN.



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Seeing the Rebbe

In connection with the fascinating article about the Frierdiker Rebbe's trip to Eretz Yisroel in the summer of 5689, which appeared in the Derher issue of Av 5784, I want to share a special story with an important lesson that occurred during the visit.

Living in Eretz Yisroel at the time of the visit was a chossid who, unfortunately, had had a significant deterioration in his commitment to Torah and *mitzvos*. This Yid knew that if he saw the Frierdiker Rebbe and went into *yechidus*, he would feel compelled to improve his ways and add to his Torah and *mitzvos*. Therefore, even though he really desired to see the Frierdiker Rebbe, he made sure not to be in the vicinity of where the Frierdiker Rebbe was and even to wear shorts, which, being not respectable attire to see the Frierdiker Rebbe in, would serve as a "safeguard" of sorts to hold himself back.

Throughout the weeks that the Frierdiker Rebbe was in Eretz Yisroel, this Yid experienced a tremendous inner struggle about whether to go see the Rebbe or not. Finally, toward the end of the visit, he could no longer contain himself and went to see the Frierdiker Rebbe wearing shorts!

When the Frierdiker Rebbe saw him, he said "מ'דרייט זיך און מ'טרעפט זיך"—one wanders and wanders and (in the end) we meet.

The story continues some twenty years later. Reb Yoel Kahn would recount the following:

In the summer of 5710, the custom was that

when people had something they wanted to speak with the Rebbe about, they could just knock on the Rebbe's door and go in after being admitted.

At that time, Reb Yoel wanted to speak to the Rebbe about (the above-mentioned) chossid who had unfortunately left the path of Torah and *mitzvos*, so that he would become stronger in his Yiddishkeit.

The Rebbe asked how old he was.

"I answered that I didn't know." The Rebbe then asked whether the Frierdiker Rebbe had seen him when he was in Eretz Yisroel in 5689. I answered that I knew that he had seen the Frierdiker Rebbe.

The Rebbe: "If the Rebbe saw him, then he will surely be alright."

Indeed, in due course, his Yiddishkeit was strengthened.

These stories demonstrate the great power of "*dem Rebben's a kuk*" and its power to influence Yidden to come closer to Torah and *mitzvos*.

On a personal note I witnessed this special phenomenon firsthand with a Yid in our *makom hashlichus* in Gresham, Oregon.

Mr. Moshe (Jack) Kiperman grew up in Brighton Beach in Brooklyn. He regularly participated in activities of F.R.E.E. and Tzivos Hashem, including Shabbatons to Crown Heights, where the children would participate in the Rebbe's *farbrengens* on Shabbos and would have the opportunity to receive a dollar on Sunday.

When he was about twelve, his connection with Chabad and Yiddishkeit stopped, and for over thirty years he was not involved in Yiddishkeit at

all.

After meeting with shluchim of the Rebbe on his different travels around the world, Mr. Kiperman decided to connect with his local Beis Chabad and reached out. We had moved there just a few months prior.

At our first meeting, he shared his feelings about the special way that the Rebbe would look at every person responding to a *l'chaim* at farbrengens, connecting to them very deeply. "The experience was so strong that even though I experienced it thirty-five years ago, I recall it vividly as if it happened two minutes ago," he said.

At that first meeting, Mr. Kiperman asked to buy a pair of Tefillin, started learning Torah regularly and became a meaningful supporter of our Chabad House. We see clearly how the connection that the Rebbe initiated all those years ago has its effect today in such a strong way.

As a postscript I want to share that in addition to the powerful effect of the Rebbe having seen a person, the Rebbe speaks about how this same connection can be felt at the Ohel, the Rebbe coming to people in a dream, learning the Rebbe's Torah, and other ways.

Avrohom Moshe Dyce
GRESHAM, OR

Treasure Trove of Chabad History

I really enjoyed reading the article in the recent Teves issue, "A Hole in My Heart: The Rebbe's Fight for Giyur K'Halocha."

I had recently been wanting to look into the Rebbe's *sichos* on this topic, but it was hard for me to properly understand them since I didn't know a lot of the background or much about Israeli politics.

I also want to share that, being interested in the history of Chassidim from the times of the Alter Rebbe and on, I have found much benefit from the archive of Derher articles available on derher.org

and its comprehensive index.

I was able to print out a lot of articles about fascinating Chassidim, like the Kremenchuker Berelach, the Toras Chesed, the Rashbatz, Reb Yosef Kol Noi, and learn about their *avodas Hashem* and deep *hiskashrus* to the Rabbeim.

I would really appreciate it if you could send some copies of Derher to my Yeshiva every month, where there are a number of *bochurim* who would be interested in reading it.

Baruch Shmotkin
KIRYAT GAT, ERETZ HAKODESH

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