

Derher

A Chassidisher

א חסידישער דערהער

Seeing the Hidden
Goodness of the World

בנאמת
קלגני



SHEVAT 5786
ISSUE 163 (240)
FEBRUARY 2026

In This Issue

Shevat 5786 / Issue 163 (240)



18

Bound Through Generations

The Library of Our Rabbeim



44

Self-Sacrifice Continuum

The Nesius of the Friediker Rebbe

<p>6 Moshe Repeats the Torah Dvar Malchus</p> <p>8 The Lone Survivor Ksav Yad Kodesh</p> <p>9 Shevat 5751 Leben Mitten Rebbe'n</p>	<p>30 The Chossid Who Spoke Up In the Footsteps of Chassidim</p> <p>34 Yud Shevat 5732 Step Inside</p> <p>41 With All Her Heart N'shei U'bnos Chabad</p>	<p>56 I Experienced Clarity Der Rebbe Vet Gefinen a Veg</p> <p>60 Mitza Tzedakah Taking Action</p>
---	---	--



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

Vaad Talmidei Hatmimim

Rabbi Tzvi Altein

Publisher

Rabbi Yossi Kamman

Editor in Chief

Rabbi Mendel Jacobs

Director of Operations

Rabbi Levi Kesselman

Managing Editor

Rabbi Yankel Bergstein

Administrator

Rabbi Pinchos Sudak

Derher for Kids

Mrs. Chanie Kamman

Mrs. Mushkie Brook

Circulation and Marketing

Rabbi Mendy Shishler

Photo Research/Editing

Rabbi Avremi Browd

Editors

Rabbi Mendel Alperowitz

Rabbi Dovid Olidort

Design

Rabbi Mendel Bergstein

Contributors

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

Photo Credits

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

Special Thanks to

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

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

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

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

נא לשמור על קדושת הגליון.

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

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



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

OPEN YOUR EYES

Every Yid lives in a miraculous reality. If even one day passes and a Yid doesn't experience a miracle, he immediately realizes that something is wrong. But the truth is, the miracle was there; it's only that he closed his eyes and was unable to see it. If he'd lift his eyes and look a bit "higher," he'd surely see the great miracles occurring at every moment!

The [Frierdiker] Rebbe taught that if a Yid contemplates everything that happened to him throughout the day, he'll recognize many instances of *hashgacha pratis* and open miracles!

(*Shabbos Parshas Beshalach 5751*)

Twenty-five years ago this month, the Jewish world was on edge about the security of the Yidden in Eretz Yisroel. On 2 Shevat, 5751, Iraqi missiles began raining down on Tel-Aviv. The Rebbe reassured everyone that all would be fine; that Hashem would watch over His people.

Time and again, the Rebbe pointed out that great miracles were occurring before our eyes; it's up to us to shift our perspective and see Hashem's hand at work.

The full story of this special month in the Rebbe's presence is explored in this magazine.

Another story featured in this issue is a detailed account of the Frierdiker Rebbe's *Nesius*, traveling through its three distinct periods. The Frierdiker Rebbe's holy work was tested under varying, even opposing circumstances. Under the oppressive Communist regime, he fought fiercely to keep the flame of Yiddishkeit alive. After leaving Russia, he faced challenges to the ways of Chassidus; this time from fellow Jews. Finally, upon settling in the "kalteh" United States, spreading Yiddishkeit necessitated a battle of another kind.

In each of these situations, his resolve, his steadfast *mesirus nefesh*, remained the same.

This is all presented alongside a line of informative and inspiring content, including the history of the Chabad library; the riveting story of Reb Avraham Sender Nemtzov; a fascinating overview on the power of Mivtza Tzedakah, and much more.

As we mark the auspicious day of Yud Shevat, we are certain that the ideas discussed in this issue will inspire action: deeper commitment and dedication to the Rebbe's holy work.

Let us conclude with the Rebbe's famous words at the end of his first Maamar, Basi L'gani:

ונזכה זעהן זיך מיט'ן רבי'ן דאָ למטה אין אַ גוף ולמטה מעשרה טפחים, והוא יגאלנו.

The Editors
טו טבת ה'תשפ"ו

DERHER HONOR WALL

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

A Chassidisher Derher Visionary

YOUR NAME HERE

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

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

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

Derher Founders

YOUR NAME HERE

YOUR NAME HERE

Derher Trail Blazers

ANONYMOUS

YOUR NAME HERE

YOUR NAME HERE

Derher Pioneers

SHULY &
SOOCHIE
EIZICOVICS

לעילוי נשמת
שרה מרים
בת אברהם

PINI & SARY
ALTHAUS

GEORGE &
PAMELA ROHR

YOUR NAME
HERE

Derher Investors

CHABAD OF CONNECTICUT

SHLOIME & CHAYA NELKEN

YOUR NAME HERE

Wishing you all

ברכה והצלחה רבה, בכל מכל כל!

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

Derher Lamplighters

DOVID & DORIT BLACHMAN AND
FAMILY

CHABAD LUBAVITCH OF
MOSCOW

CHABAD OF OLYMPIA
SHAUL & SHAINDY DAHAN

לע"נ הרה"ח הרה"ת המשפיע ר' אברהם בן
הרב דובער ע"ה (מאיאר) דרייזין

RABBI AVROHOM & MRS. RIVKAH
HAZAN

RABBI SHNEINI & MRS. DEVORAH
KAPLAN

MACHNE ISRAEL

RABBI ELI & MRS. ZISI MARCUS

ALEX & ESTHER SHULMAN

YITZI & LEAH SPALTER

IN THE ZCHUS OF THE CHINUCH
OF OUR CHILDREN

BORUCH & CHANIE WEINGARTEN

ALAN & LORI ZEKELMAN

Friends of Derher

RABBI YOSSEI & MRS.
TSALCHA CHANA AMAR

YOSSEL & CHAN
BAUMGARTEN

RABBI YANKY & MRS.
SHTERNIE BELL

AMIR & DINI BEN-ISHAY

RABBI YOSSEI & MRS.
MUSHKY BENDET

RABBI YISRAEL & MRS.
SHULAMIS BENNISH

לעילוי נשמת מרת חנה לאה בת
הרה"ת ר' שמועון ע"ה ברוך נלב"ע ז'
טבת ה'תשע"א

CHABAD CENTRAL OF
BOCA

CHABAD OF IRVINE,
CALIFORNIA

CHABAD OF WESTPORT

IDAN & LEE-ANN COHEN

CRAIN-MALING
FOUNDATION

לע"נ השלוחה הרבנית מרת מינדל
בת ר' דוד ע"ה ז"ל

ANONYMOUS

ABI & YONATIY FRIEDMAN

SAMI & MARGIE
DORNBUSCH

JOSH & ROBYN
GOLDHIRSCH

SHIR CHABAD A MUSIC
ALBUM CONTAINING 10
NIGGUNEI CHABAD, TO BE
RELEASED SOON

RABBI LEVI & MRS. SHAINA
GREENBERG

RABBI MENDY & MRS.
CHAYA GREENBERG

RABBI YOSEF & MRS.
ESTHER GREENBERG

RABBI MOTTI & MRS. CHAYA
GROSSBAUM

ANONYMOUS

RABBI CHAIM & MRS. CHANI
HANOKA

MRS. DEVORAH LEAH
HIRSCH

DAVID & SHOSHANA
HOMAMI

CHAIM & DORIT KAMMAN

RABBI ALEXANDER & MRS.
CHANIE KALLER

OSHER & RIVKAH
KARNOWSKY

DEDICATED IN HONOR OF
THE CHILDREN OF THE
SHLUCHIM

CHESKY & BRACHA KLEIN

TYLER & JOHANNA
KREMBERG

RABBI LEIBEL & MRS.
SHEINA KUDAN

לע"נ יוסף שאול בן אהרון הלוי

MENACHEM & SHEINA
LIBEROW

RAPHAEL & NAOMI
MANDELBAUM

ANONYMOUS

לעילוי נשמת מרת שרה גיטל בת ר'
מאיר יעקב ע"ה ליפסקר

SHOLOM & CHERRY NEW

CHAIM PEARLMUTTER

CHAIM & FRUMA PIEKARSKI

ELI & MUSHKIE POSNER

AHARON & CHANA MIREL
ROBINSON

AVROHOM & MINDEE
SANDHAUS

NOACH & SHAINDY
SCHMAHL

DUDDY AND RACHELI
SHAGALOV

RABBI YISROEL & MRS.
BROCHO DEVORAH LEAH
SHMOTKIN

RABBI MENDEL & MRS.
DEVORAH SHMOTKIN

RABBI SHOLOM & MRS.
FEIGEL TENENBAUM

IN HONOR OF OUR TAYERE
KINDERLACH, DEDICATED
SHLUCHIM OF THE REBBE

RABBI YEHUDA & LEAH
TEICHTAL - BERLIN

RABBI DOVID & MRS.
GOLDIE TIECHTEL

RABBI YITZCHOK & MRS.
ESTHER TIECHTEL

MENDEL & DEVORAH
TREITEL IN HONOR OF
THEIR CHILDREN

RABBI URIEL & MRS. SHEVY
VIGLER

RABBI CHEZKY & MRS.
ROCHY VOGEL

לעילוי נשמת אברהם בן ישראל דוד
ע"ה

LEVI & FRAIDY
WEINGARTEN

ANONYMOUS

RABBI ASHER & MRS.
DEVORAH LEAH YARAS



לזכות
החתן הרה"ת ר' פסח דוד שיח' ליווי
והכלה המהוללה מרת חנה
פרימט ריקל תח' מאגאלניק
בקשר עם בואם בקשרי שידוכין

נדפס ע"י
הרה"ת ר' יצחק ישראל זוגתו מרת
רחל בריינא ומשפחתם שיח'ו
מאגאלניק

א שבט

Moshe Repeats the Torah

COMPILED BY: RABBI MENDEL VOGEL

On the first of Shevat in the year 2488 (ב'תפ"ח), Moshe convened the Yidden and began the 37-day “review of the Torah” contained in Sefer Devorim, which he concluded on the day of his histalkus on 7 Adar of that year.

The Gemara in Maseches Megilla (31b) notes a distinction between the first four *seforim* of the Chumash and the last one—Sefer Devorim: The first four contain Hashem’s words communicated through Moshe (“*mipi hagevura*”), while the last contains Moshe’s own words (“*mipi atzmo*”).

This certainly does not mean that Sefer Devorim is an invention of Moshe and not from Hashem, *chas v’shalom* (see Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Teshuva 3:8). Rather, as Tosafos clarify, Moshe delivered his words with *ruach hakodesh*. Now, there are many levels of *ruach hakodesh*; since Moshe Rabbeinu is the greatest *novi* ever to have lived, the *ruach hakodesh* that he experienced must have been on the highest level. Namely, *Elokus* had become so real within him that it became his entire identity; as *chazal* said of Moshe, “שכינה שכיהה—מדברת מתוך גרונו—The Shechina speaks from his throat.”

To sum up, in the first four *seforim*, Moshe is communicating Hashem’s message much like a messenger who delivers that which he is given, while in Sefer Devorim, Moshe is sharing his own thoughts while in a state of total and complete alignment with Hashem, wherein Moshe’s agenda and Hashem’s agenda are one and the same.

The same applies to “כל מה שתלמיד ותיק עתיד לחדש בתורה”; all the Torah which was revealed to us through the Tana’im, Amora’im, and the *talmidei chachamim* throughout the generations—it is all the words of Hashem as expressed through the “packaging” of human intellect.

But why is Sefer Devorim necessary? Why does Moshe need to talk to us “*mipi atzmo*” as if he is delivering his own message?

A new generation is about to enter Eretz Yisroel, and it is



these Yidden that Moshe addresses in Sefer Devorim. They are about to embark on a new *avoda*, one which is very different from what they are used to in the *midbar*. As long as the Yidden remained in the *midbar*, sheltered from material affairs, they were able to experience *Elokus* unfiltered, so to speak. Their entry into Eretz Yisroel signified an entry into the “natural world,” an existence in which *Elokus* is not as readily seen, and one must work hard in order to earn a livelihood.

Therefore, Hashem’s words needed to be “filtered,” so to speak, through Moshe Rabbeinu, making *Elokus* more tangible and accessible to the new generation.

As generations became less sensitive to *ruchniyus*, the Torah that was taught and revealed had to be even more “filtered” and packaged so that the generation could receive it.

This is all regarding the “packaging.” The content, however, remains exactly the same; the first four *seforim* of Chumash, the last *sefer* of Chumash, Mishna, Gemara, and the entire evolution of Torah until today—it is all equally the word of Hashem.

Despite the heavenly reality that the Yidden experienced in the desert—their food fell from the sky, their water flowed from a rock, and their clothing was preserved by miraculous clouds—the Yidden who entered Eretz Yisroel had it better. Because it is specifically through working with the physical world—which is what the Yidden began to do upon entering the land—that one can connect with the deepest essence of Hashem.

The desert experience might be “shinier,” but Eretz Yisroel is where the real work of fulfilling Hashem’s deepest desire begins—to make a home for Hashem in the lowest realm.

The same is true regarding Torah: Despite the unique quality of the first four *seforim*, wherein the words of Hashem are communicated “unfiltered,” Sefer Devorim possesses an even greater quality—a message which empowers Yidden living in a physical and materialistic world to tap into the deepest essence of Hashem.

The same is true with regard to the novel Torah insights and *takanos* enacted by our *chachamim* throughout the generations: The later the generation and (therefore) the lower it is spiritually, the greater the level of *Elokus* that is contained and revealed in that generation’s *chiddushim* and *takanos*, because it is specifically through fulfilling those *hora’os* and *takanos* that we will merit the greatest *giluy* of all—the era which will be ushered in with the coming of Moshiach Tzidkeinu!

Takeaway:

Besides introducing new ideas, Sefer Devorim also clarifies ideas that are already mentioned in the *previous* four *seforim* of Chumash. The same is true with regard to new practices and directives which are instituted by the “Moshe Rabbeinu” of a later generation: Only when one’s fulfillment of the present-generation’s *takanos* (which are דבר “הוי ממש” is complete, can one’s fulfillment of (the will of Hashem as it is expressed in) the *takanos* from all the previous generations be complete as well—“ויאמינו בהוי ובמשה עבדו”.

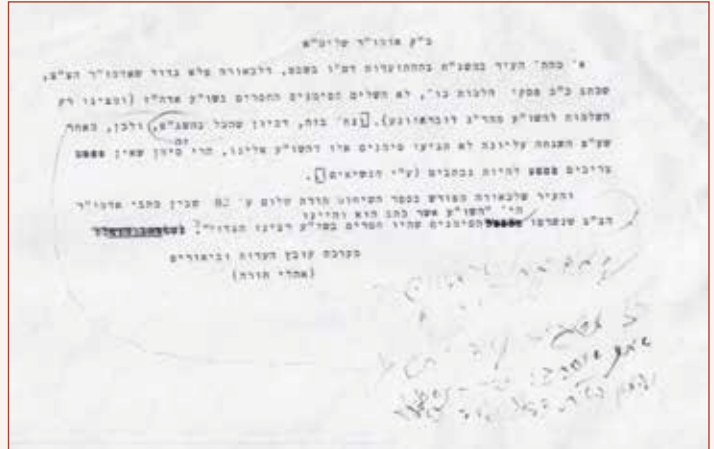
(Adapted from *Likkutei Sichos* vol. 4, p. 1087)



Compiled By: Rabbi Levi Greenberg (OH)

Written By: Rabbi Mendel Jacobs

The Lone Survivor



At the farbrengen of Chamisha Asar B'Shevat 5742,¹ the Rebbe quoted the ruling by Reb Nechemiah of Dubrovna in his supplementary text to the Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch,² that it is customary to eat fruits on this day.

As an aside, the Rebbe pointed out that Reb Nechemiah had a special merit: as a prime *talmid* of the Alter Rebbe, he filled in various missing sections of the Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch. This is something unique that we don't find in others. Even the Tzemach Tzedek, who wrote so many halachic responsa, did not supplement the Shulchan Aruch.

Since everything is by *hashgacha pratit*, it must be said that these sections of Shulchan Aruch were not supposed to be written by a *nossi*.

After the farbrengen, the Rebbe was asked by the editors of the Kovetz Haaros Ubiurim Oholei Torah:

In Sefer Hasichos—Toras Sholom,³ the Rebbe Rashab is quoted as saying that the Tzemach Tzedek actually *did* write sections of the Shulchan Aruch to supplement the parts that were missing in the Alter Rebbe's, but the manuscript was lost in a fire. Why did the Rebbe assert that the Tzemach Tzedek did not do so?

The Rebbe replied:⁴

באם את"ל שהכוונה ב[שבין כתבי אדמו"ר הצ"צ שנשרפו הי"ה
"השו"ע אשר כתב הוא, היינו הסימנים שהיו חסרים בשו"ע רבינו
הגדול"] לכל הסימנים
ה"ז מדגיש עוד יותר [בהשג"פ] שאף שנכתבו כבר - נשרפו והמונ
השו"ת דהצ"צ ופס"ד נשמר

[Even] if you wish to say that [when the Rebbe Rashab says that among the manuscripts of the Tzemach Tzedek burned in fire were the supplements to Shulchan Aruch,] he means [that the Tzemach Tzedek actually filled in] all of the [missing] *simanim*;

Then this [only] emphasizes [the sense of *hashgacha pratit*] even more: Despite the fact that these [*simanim*] were already written — they [nevertheless] got burned, while the numerous responsa and halachic rulings of the Tzemach Tzedek were preserved.⁵

1. Ashreinu audio, sicha 2. Hisvaaduyos 5742 vol. 2, p. 850 (the Rebbe's response is incorporated within the text).
2. 131:8. Many sections of the Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch were lost to fire and never published, and Reb Nechemiah authored and filled in some of those sections with text of his own.
3. P. 82.
4. Published in Teshura Telsner-Wilhelm 5782, p. 96.
5. I.e. this does not diminish the point that the Shulchan Aruch was not supplemented by a *nossi*, or the great *zechus* that Reb Nechemiah has as the one to actually do the task, since by *hashgacha pratit*, his was the only manuscript to reach future generations.



A Month of Wonders

SHEVAT 5751

In this year of wonders—*Arenu Niflaos*—it was truly a month of wonders.

With the Jewish people of Eretz Yisroel caught in the crosshairs of a war they had nothing to do with, some were fearful; others panicked. On 2 Shevat, the first SCUD missiles from Iraq were fired on Tel-Aviv, and they continued to rain down through 9 Adar.

We now know that the 39 missiles caused no direct casualties. Hashem was watching over His people, just as the Rebbe had repeatedly assured.

The Rebbe spoke on this subject at almost every public occasion throughout the month, as well as in conversations and correspondence with scores of individuals, as we will now explore.

COMPILED BY: RABBI YANKY BELL

WRITTEN BY: RABBI MENDEL JACOBS

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

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

לזכות הת' מרדכי דובער שיחיו מרקוביץ לרגל הגיעו לעול מצוות כ"ב שבט ה'תשפ"ו

נדפס ע"י משפחתו שיחיו

Have a Joyous Shabbos!

On Thursday, 2 Shevat, the first SCUD missiles were fired at Eretz Yisroel.

On Friday morning, the Rebbe sent a message to all the Jews in Eretz Yisroel:

“Have a peaceful and blessed Shabbos. The Torah gives a halachic ruling that [the words] ‘the days of your rejoicing’ refer to Shabbos. Halacha always uses the clearest terms: this joy must be open and evident.”

A group of women who were scheduled to participate in the N’shei Chabad convention in Minnesota was deliberating whether to still travel due to the tension around the world. The Rebbe told Rabbi Leibel Groner to convey to them:

“This non-Jew across the world is doing [these destructive] actions only because he believes in his false god. All the more so must we Jews, who believe in Hashem, do everything we can to demonstrate our trust in Him. *Chas v’shalom* to consider doing something that shows a weakness in our *bitachon*! Whoever was planning to travel must continue with their plans, and they should

see to it that additional women join them too!”

The Rebbe then gave dollars to be distributed to all the women who were traveling.

No One Will Touch Them

On Shabbos afternoon, the Rebbe held his usual farbrengen, dedicating much of his talk to the current situation in Eretz Yisroel.

“Eretz Yisroel is the safest place in the world for the Jewish people,” the Rebbe declared. “It cannot be that any harm should befall the Jews in their land. If anyone was indeed hit, they will have an immediate *refua sheleima*!”

The Rebbe continued elaborating how every Jew is so precious in the eyes of Hashem, and He would certainly not allow anything to touch them.

This theme was repeated several times throughout the farbrengen, as the Rebbe spoke passionately about strengthening our *bitachon* in Hashem and anticipating His immediate deliverance.

Another subject the Rebbe spoke about was the upcoming *yom hilula* of Yud Shevat, calling on everyone to make proper preparations and to arrange Chassidische farbrengens to draw down all the energy from the Frieddiker Rebbe’s life and *avoda*.

Yud Shevat

On Thursday, 9 Shevat, the Rebbe went to the Ohel and returned at 6:15 p.m. Shortly afterward, the Rebbe came into the big shul for Mincha and Maariv.

The shul was packed. Many guests had come from all over the world to be with the Rebbe for Yud Shevat and to hear as he davened Maariv at the *amud* this evening.



SCENES FROM ERETZ YISROEL DURING THE SCUD MISSILE ATTACKS.



© 2025 JEM, LEVI FREIDIN #180500

THE REBBE LEADS THE TEFILLOS ON YUD SHEVAT.



© 2025 JEM, LEVI FREIDIN #181423

Additionally, a rumor circulated that the Rebbe would distribute a special *kuntres* in honor of Yud Shevat, and many people came hoping to receive one.

The Rebbe davened Mincha on his regular platform, then descended to the *amud* to daven Maariv.

Miracles Today

After Maariv, an announcement was made that in a few minutes, the Rebbe would distribute a special *kuntres* along with two dollars for tzedakah to each person, at the place where he usually distributes dollars on Sunday (in the lobby of 770).

At 6:55 p.m., the Rebbe came out of his room and began distributing the *kuntres*, continuing to greet thousands of people for several hours, until 10:20.

The green-colored *kuntres* contained a *maamar* from the Rebbe Rashab titled “*Boruch She’asa Nissim—5664*,” which was transcribed by the Frierdiker Rebbe and included some of his notations.

The *maamar* discusses miracles and the various levels of miracles, those concealed within nature vs. those that clearly transcend it.

The last line of the *maamar* is: “This is the meaning of ‘He made miracles for our ancestors’, and we ask [Hashem] that they occur at this time as well...”



© 2025 JEM, LEVI FREIDIN #180497



© 2025 JEM, LEVI FREIDIN #180624



THE REBBE DISTRIBUTES THE KUNTRES TITLED "MAAMAR BORUCH SHE'ASA NISSIM—5664".



THE REBBE LEAVES FOR HIS HOME, BEFORE CHOF-BEIS SHEVAT.

The connection with current events is obvious. On the morning of Yud Shevat, the Rebbe once again davened at the *amud*. The Rebbe went to the *mikvah* and then to the Ohel, returning at 4:15 p.m., shortly before Shabbos candle lighting. After lighting candles in his room, the Rebbe came downstairs once more to daven Mincha at the *amud*.

Miracles Before Our Eyes

On Shabbos morning, 11 Shevat, the Rebbe entered the shul for Shacharis with the newly distributed *kuntres* in the back of his siddur. The afternoon farbrengen was a continuation of the *yom hilula* of Yud Shevat. The Rebbe spoke about the Frieddiker Rebbe and his life's work of spreading Chassidus everywhere in the world and translating it into different languages—making Chassidus available to all. With Chamisha Asar B'Shevat right around the corner, the Rebbe spoke about the importance of properly marking this holiday. "In days bygone," the Rebbe said, "there used to be a custom that the *balleboste* of each home would prepare platters of fruit in honor of this day.

The seven fruits of Eretz Yisroel were included, as well as carobs, as is the *minhag Yisroel*. We should reinstate this practice.”

The Rebbe pointed out that carobs were the staple of Rabbi Chanina Ben Dosa, who, the Gemara says, was accustomed to seeing miracles in his everyday life.

“Today as well, we can see open miracles,” the Rebbe continued. “In fact, we don’t even need to open a newspaper to read how one non-Jew [from Iraq] directed missiles at Eretz Yisroel, and another non-Jew, who is from the pious among the nations [the United States], blew them out of the sky. Instead, we can see open miracles in our own day-to-day lives!”

Towards the end of the farbrengen, the Rebbe called on everyone to learn from the *kuntres* that he had distributed two days prior, and see what lessons they could derive from it.

On Shabbos Parshas Yisro, 18 Shevat, the Rebbe again mentioned the ongoing global conflict, saying: “The Jewish people will suffer no harm from this war. These

are foreign powers that are fighting with one another, and this has nothing to do with the Jewish people. On the contrary, Hashem is telling the Jewish people (in the words of the Midrash) not to be afraid and not to be worried, for Moshiach is standing on the roof of the Beis Hamikdash and announcing the *geulah*...”



© 2025 JEM, LEVI FREIDIN #183910



© 2025 JEM, LEVI FREIDIN #183908

THE REBBE LEADS THE DAVENING ON THE MORNING OF CHOF-BEIS SHEVAT.



THE REBBE ENCOURAGES THE SINGING AFTER DISTRIBUTING DOLLARS AT HIS HOME, 22 SHEVAT.

© 2025 JEM HEVREIDIN #183833

The Rebbetzin's Yahrtzeit

On Tuesday afternoon, 21 Shevat, the Rebbe was driven to his home on President Street, where he would remain for the *yahrtzeit* of Chof-Beis Shevat.

The Rebbe led all the *tefillos* of the day at the *amud* in his home, with a hookup transmitting the davening to the shul at 770.

On Wednesday, Chof-Beis Shevat, the Rebbe went to the Ohel, returning to his home toward evening for Mincha and Maariv.

After Maariv, the Rebbe distributed two dollars to everyone, including many of the shluchos from around the world who had come to participate in the first International Kinus Hashluchos.

The Rebbe remained in his home until Friday afternoon, when he returned to his room at 770.

International Kinus Hashluchos

The Kinus took place from Wednesday to Sunday.

On Motzei Shabbos, Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky reported to the Rebbe in writing about the success of the Kinus and asked if the organizers had inadvertently done something wrong, since the Rebbe didn't mention the Kinus during the Shabbos farbrengen. The Rebbe replied:

"[I didn't mention it] because it was **in middle** of the Kinus. I already participated in the beginning [of the Kinus, and I will participate], *bli neder*, in its conclusion (by giving them a shlichus [dollars] for tzedakah—in a double measure)."

The next day, the Rebbe addressed the shluchos specifically.

At 12:00 p.m., all the shluchos gathered in the big shul at 770, and the Rebbe came in, went up to his platform, and delivered a *sicha* for about 25 minutes.

This time of year is connected with joy, the Rebbe explained, as we approach Purim, when the greatest joy manifests itself in the most physical and mundane ways.

The Rebbe concluded by saying that he would now give each of the shluchos a "*shlichus mitzvah*"—two dollars for tzedakah, bringing a double portion of Hashem's blessings to each of them. "Each of you shluchos has a part in the work that is done by all the other shluchos, even in the farthest corners of the world," the Rebbe said, "and you all partake in the reward given by Hashem for

Mitzvah of the Week

On the final Shabbos of the month, Parshas Mishpatim, the Rebbe spoke about the importance of tzedakah. It was Parshas Shekalim, which reminds us of the mitzvah of tzedakah, and the Parsha also discusses the mitzvah of lending to a fellow Jew in need. The Rebbe also mentioned the Melaveh Malka taking place that evening to benefit the Gemach Shomrei Shabbos free loan fund.

The administrator of the Gemach, Reb Shimon Goldman, donned a shtreimel and spoke about the upcoming event, sharing a chassidische story as well. The Rebbe listened to his words with a smile on his face, then told Reb Shimon to say *l'chaim*.



THE SHLUCHOS GROUP PHOTO, 5751.

these good deeds, including the good deeds done by those whom your fellow shluchos have influenced.”

The Rebbe also gave a special *bracha* that all the requests written in their *pidyonos* that were brought to the Ohel should be fulfilled.

After the *sicha*, each of the shluchos passed by the Rebbe to receive the two dollars. Once all the shluchos passed by, the Rebbe continued with his usual Sunday dollars distribution right there in the big shul, lasting another several hours.

It's Safe to Go

Every Sunday throughout the month, the Rebbe was visited by thousands of people seeking his blessing and advice. A recurring theme this month was individuals asking whether to travel to Eretz Yisroel, and the Rebbe reassuring them that Hashem was watching over His people and that no harm would befall them.

On Sunday, 5 Shevat, a woman asked the Rebbe, “Is it safe to go to Israel now?”

The Rebbe replied: “Certainly. It’s safer than the United States.”

An individual told the Rebbe that he was planning to go to Eretz Yisroel for a grandson’s bris, but with the current situation, he was deliberating whether he should go ahead with it. The Rebbe told him that he *must* go; in fact, he should influence an additional member of the family who wasn’t planning on going to join them now!

On Sunday, 12 Shevat, a woman told the Rebbe that she was traveling to Eretz Yisroel. The Rebbe said, “Don’t be afraid of the situation there.” When she responded



SHLUCHOS AT THE OHEL NEAR THE KEVER OF REBBETZIN CHAYA MUSHKA ON HER YAHRTZEIT, THE FIRST DAY OF THE KINUS.



WHILE DISTRIBUTING DOLLARS TO THE SHLUCHOS, THE REBBE RECEIVES A NEWLY RELEASED BOOK ABOUT THE WORK OF SHLUCHIM AROUND THE WORLD. THE REBBE KEPT THIS BOOK ON TOP OF THE PILE THROUGHOUT THE DISTRIBUTION.



© 2025 JEW. LEVI FREIDIN #81316

REB YOSEF LAINE PRESENTS THE REBBE WITH THE NEWLY PRINTED RUSSIAN SIDDUR BY BRIS AVROHOM, ALONG WITH RABBI MORDECHAI KANELSKI.



© 2025 JEW. CHAIM BARUCH HALBERSTAM #66725

RABBI YOSEF MINKOWITZ SHOWS THE REBBE AN ALBUM OF BEIS RIVKA—MONTREAL.



© 2025 JEW. CHAIM BARUCH HALBERSTAM #66870

REB SHEYA MENDLOWITZ (CENTER) IN CONVERSATION WITH THE REBBE AT 'DOLLARS', 26 SHEVAT.

that she was a little bit afraid, the Rebbe said, “A little is also too much!”

A Jew from Be'er Sheva told the Rebbe that his brother, who lived in Bnei Brak, wanted to join him in the south, where he'd be safer from the missiles. The Rebbe said:

“He certainly knows about what he read in the Haggadah, that Bnei Brak had very great people there, and they didn't run away because of the non-Jews. He, too, should stay in Bnei Brak!”

Heal Every Patient

A doctor from Los Angeles asked the Rebbe how he could help the Jewish people in Eretz Yisroel, and the Rebbe said: “By healing as many Jews as possible, who will eventually go to Eretz Yisroel. This is the best help and the best news you can send to Eretz Yisroel.”

After the doctor walked through the door, the Rebbe called him back and said:

“According to Shulchan Aruch, you need to do all you can to heal non-Jewish patients as well. Especially since, as a doctor, you took an oath to help whoever you can, which also has a basis in Jewish law. The main thing is that all your patients should be healthy, and your livelihood should come only from offering preventative medicines.”

Delicious Fruits

A teacher from Detroit who had come with her students for Yud Shevat passed by the Rebbe before returning home, and the Rebbe blessed them and began giving each student a dollar. After a moment, the Rebbe asked that the teacher be called back, and told her: “Your visit falls out a few days before Chamisha Asar B’Shevat, the new year for trees. See to make a farbrengen for your whole class on that day, give them good fruits, and tell them good stories!”

Thank Hashem

Rabbi Mordechai Kanelsky from Bris Avrohom came to the Rebbe and said that they recently celebrated the 2900th bris performed on Russian Jewish immigrants.

He then presented the Rebbe with a special edition of the Russian Siddur printed in honor of the occasion, along with the sponsors of the Siddur, Reb Yosef and Rivka Laine.

The Rebbe gave a dollar to Reb Yosef as his participation in the siddurim, then said to Mrs. Laine: “This is for your part in the siddurim. A siddur begins with ‘*Modeh Ani*’—you should always be thankful to Hashem for all the good things...”

It’ll Make More Money

Rabbi Yosef Minkowitz presented the Rebbe with an album of the girls’ school in Montreal. The Rebbe asked him, “Is this for me, or do you need this for fundraising?”

Rabbi Minkowitz said that it’s for the Rebbe.

“So you will make money this way,” the Rebbe said, “through it [the photo album] being by me.”

Sell More. Print More.

On Sunday, 26 Shevat, Reb Sheya Mendlowitz came to the Rebbe and said that he was putting on a concert with Mordechai Ben David in only three weeks, and that there were still 500 tickets left to sell.

The Rebbe smiled and said, “If you sell all those tickets today, what will you do tomorrow?”

S.M.: I’m asking for the Rebbe’s bracha to sell all the tickets before the concert.

Rebbe: You’ll sell them all much earlier than that. Can you print more tickets?

S.M.: Yes!

Rebbe: Then you should print at least another Chai times Chai (324). May the concert be with much success. This [dollar] is for the singer [MBD].

Fortunate Is Your Lot

Throughout the month, the Rebbe gave out many reassuring answers in writing about the situation in Eretz Yisroel.

An individual wrote to the Rebbe that “everyone here in Eretz Yisroel is full of worry,” and the Rebbe replied:

“You are assuming guilt upon **many, many** innocent people who are filled with trust in Hashem. Perhaps you should check your own tefillin and *mezuzos*.”

A group of participants in a Torah class from Migdal Haemek wrote to the Rebbe that they continue their studies even while the sirens blare, and the Rebbe replied:

“Fortunate is their lot. Check the tefillin and *mezuzos* of all those mentioned in the letter. I will mention this at the Ohel.”

A soldier from the IDF wrote to the Rebbe that the army was forcing him to shave off his beard. The Rebbe replied:

“There are many, many individuals in the IDF who wear a beard, as is well known.”

In response to the question as to whether or not *anash* in Eretz Yisroel should seal their rooms and prepare gas masks in case of an Iraqi attack, the Rebbe wrote:

“The Shulchan Aruch rules that one should not separate himself from the greater community, especially when there are *rabbanim* who are instructing to do this.

“Take note from what Yaakov Avinu instructed [his sons]: ‘*Lama tisra’u*’ [Why must you show that you are different from everyone else, that you have food when they all don’t].

“All of the above is only regarding how to act. When it comes to how to feel, I already stated many times [that you should not be afraid]. The timing is appropriate: Shabbos (the week of) Shira [song and joy].

“Especially given the fact that at all times, the **Torah of Light** says, ‘One who trusts in Hashem will be surrounded by kindness.’ ❶

BOUND THROUGH GENERATION

*The Library
of Our Rabbeim*

By: Motti Wilhelm

H
NS



לזכות
שלוחי כ"ק אדמו"ר בכל אתר ואתר שיצליחו בשליחותם
הק' בהצלחה מופלגה מתוך הרחבה בגשמיות וברוחניות
ולגרום נח"ר אמיתי ולבשר אך ורק בשו"ט ומשמחות

נדפס ע"י
הרה"ת ר' אהרן וזוגתו מרת רבקה שיחיו
סלונים
בינגהמטאן, נ.י.

Early Beginnings

The earliest documentation of a Chabad *nossi* possessing a collection of *seforim* dates to 5559, the year of the Alter Rebbe's first arrest.

In the government correspondence surrounding the arrest, one letter refers directly to the Alter Rebbe's library. It was written by Semyon Semyonovich Zhegulin, governor of Belorussia, to General-Prosecutor Pyotr Vasilievich Lopukhin:

"To carry out the imperial decree of the Emperor, communicated to me by Your Excellency's order of September 15 of this year, to arrest in the town of Liozno the Jewish rabbi, Zalman ben Baruch, to send him under the supervision of a reliable officer of the local regiment of the Belarussian district, Second Lieutenant Bunakov, together with two soldiers, and to dispatch him to Your Excellency.

"His papers and books were immediately collected, sealed with my seal, and forwarded in one chest and one suitcase."¹

The specific details of these *seforim* and manuscripts are unknown, and no record exists as to whether they were returned following the Alter Rebbe's liberation on Yud-Tes Kislev.

Two years later, during his second arrest, the Alter Rebbe's *seforim* and manuscripts were again confiscated. From this arrest, however, a full list of the collection survives: 103 printed volumes and 14 manuscript volumes. The list spans *Tanach*, *Shas*, *meforshim*, *halacha*, and *Kabbalah*. Some were single volumes from larger sets, suggesting that the investigators took a sample rather than the Rebbe's entire library.

It is not documented whether these volumes were returned, though it would be reasonable to assume they were. In any case, they—and any others—would have been destroyed in the fire that consumed the Alter Rebbe's home nine years later, in 5570, while he was traveling across White Russia.²

In the letter sent by the Mittlerer Rebbe to *anash* after the fire, he makes note of the many precious *seforim* that were lost:

"It is impossible to put into words the full extent of the damage, beyond the deep anguish it has caused. In general terms, however, we can say that the loss of all the precious and valuable *seforim*, along with the vessels, silver, pearls, and the garments of our mother, the Rebbetzin, *shetichye*, amounts to an immense and staggering sum..."³

Despite these losses, some volumes are known to have

survived. The Tzemach Tzedek at times cites the Alter Rebbe's handwritten notations on his *seforim*. Today, however, only a single volume is known to exist: *Sha'alos Uteshuvos Maharik*, which surfaced in the hands of a Polish non-Jew and was brought to New York in 5746. It was acquired by a Lubavitcher and presented to the Rebbe, returning it to its rightful place in the Rebbe's library. Additionally, several of the Alter Rebbe's manuscripts have survived and remain with us to this day.

A Library Begins to Grow

Following the Alter Rebbe's *histalkus* while fleeing Napoleon's advancing troops, the Mittlerer Rebbe settled in Lubavitch, where he established his *chotzer*. As with the



LIBRARY OF AGUDAS CHASSIDEI CHABAD



SHA'ALOS UTESHUVOS MAHARIK (PRINTED IN 5558), ALONG WITH A STICKER WITH THE FRIEDIKER REBBE'S HANDWRITING, STATING THAT THIS IS THE ALTER REBBE'S SEFER WITH HIS HAGAHOS.



Alter Rebbe, documentation of a library collected by the Mittlerer Rebbe is found in government records related to his arrest.

The arrest occurred after Sukkos 5587, when the Mittlerer Rebbe was escorted from Lubavitch to Vitebsk for investigation. Several weeks later, the governor overseeing the case sent a private investigator to Lubavitch to verify details provided by the Mittlerer Rebbe during his second interrogation.

In his report, the investigator described Lubavitch and the Mittlerer Rebbe's *chotzer* and shul in detail, including the Rebbe's collection of *seforim*:

"By order of His Excellency, delivered to me on October 19 of this year, I set out that same day and arrived in the town of Lubavitch. There I found a Jewish synagogue, and I hereby attest to what I personally observed, the synagogue and its adornments," the investigator writes.

He goes on to describe the furniture, *sifrei Torah*, and the other items in the shul, adding:

"Within the synagogue itself, I found no books. However, in the house of Rabbi Schneuri, I discovered 611 books, arranged in four cabinets. When I questioned one of the students, he explained to me, without an oath, that it was not customary to keep these books in the synagogue. Instead, they are given to a rabbi when there is a need to consult them."⁴

In addition to the *seforim*, the Mittlerer Rebbe owned numerous manuscript volumes of the Alter Rebbe's *maamarim* and his own. These manuscripts were not necessarily part of an organized library; they were often circulated among Chassidim for copying and eventual publication. Several manuscript volumes of the Mittlerer Rebbe's *hanachos* of the Alter Rebbe's *maamarim* survive to this day, along with a few pages of the Mittlerer Rebbe's own.

The First "Real" Library

The first concentrated effort to build an extensive library was undertaken by the Tzemach Tzedek.

It began with a collection of manuscripts of the *hanachos* of the Alter Rebbe's *maamarim*. These were transcribed by the Alter Rebbe's brother, Harav Yehuda Leib (Maharil), his son, the Mittlerer Rebbe, and other Chassidim. The Tzemach Tzedek gathered these manuscripts to prepare them for publication.

In a *teshuva*, the Tzemach Tzedek himself describes how this collection came to be:

"The story unfolded as follows: The [Alter] Rebbe's discourses were written down by his brother, R. Yehuda Leib z"l. [The Alter Rebbe] would pay him for this work, so that the teachings could be disseminated among all who wished to hear them.

"After [the Alter Rebbe's] *histalkus*, none of these writings were found among the family or heirs, and their whereabouts were unknown. Only one of his descendants,"—the Tzemach Tzedek was referring to himself—"took the effort to retrieve them from students who had heard and recorded the discourses."⁵

This initiative actually began during the Alter Rebbe's lifetime. The Frierdiker Rebbe dates it to 5561, the year of the Alter Rebbe's second arrest. He further records that the Tzemach Tzedek told the Rebbe Maharash that in that year alone, he had collected over 1,100 folios of transcriptions of the Alter Rebbe's *maamarim*. By the time of the Alter Rebbe's *histalkus* eleven years later, the collection had grown to more than 10,000 folios.⁶

This collection continued growing throughout the Tzemach Tzedek's lifetime. The *sefer* Beis Rebbi describes one of the significant additions to the collection.

"The renowned chossid Harav Reb Shlomo Freides of Shklov, one of the great Chassidim of the Alter Rebbe...he would record the Alter Rebbe's teachings with exceptional care. His notes survive in the hundreds, and even thousands, spanning the content of some forty volumes.

"When he made a *shidduch* with the Tzemach Tzedek [his daughter married the Tzemach Tzedek's son, Harav Yehuda Leib (known as Maharil, just as his great-uncle), later of Kopust], he handed over all these manuscripts to the Rebbe (the Tzemach Tzedek), and that was his dowry. The Rebbe then reviewed them carefully, adding his own corrections, notes, and numerous additions."⁷

Although the project had begun as an effort to prepare the *hanachos* of the Alter Rebbe's *maamarim* for publication, the sheer scope of the collection effectively created a library. Even today, despite fires, wars, and divisions of the library among descendants of the Tzemach Tzedek and Rebbe Maharash, ten manuscript volumes from this original collection remain in the Rebbe's library.

In addition to the Alter Rebbe's *maamarim*, the Tzemach Tzedek amassed a vast body of his own

writings, including *maamarim*, *teshuvos* in halacha, *chiddushim* on Mishnayos, Gemara, and Rishonim, as well as supplements to the Alter Rebbe's *Shulchan Aruch*. Though much of this too was lost to fire and time, nearly eighty manuscript volumes remain, either in the Tzemach Tzedek's own hand or that of his appointed scribe, whose work he personally reviewed and corrected. In addition, there are about a thousand manuscript volumes (!) of Chassidim's transcriptions of the Tzemach Tzedek's *maamarim*.

The Tzemach Tzedek also built a large collection of printed *seforim*, collating the first collection that could truly be called a "library."

In a *sicha*,⁸ the Frieddiker Rebbe described this collection, the Tzemach Tzedek's remarkable familiarity with its contents, and an exchange between the Tzemach Tzedek and his young son, the Rebbe Maharash, regarding it.

"When my grandfather [the Rebbe Maharash] was about eight or nine years old, he would already buy *seforim*, using his weekly allowance and pocket money.

"Once, he wanted to buy some *seforim* but had no money, so he went to his father to ask for a loan. His father asked him why he needed money. He answered that he had seen that Reb Noach Baruch the *seforim* seller had some new *seforim* which he didn't yet have, and he wanted to buy them.

"His father told him: 'First master the *seforim* you already have. When you've mastered what you have, then

you'll buy new ones and master those as well.'

"At that moment, Reb Chaim Dov, the attendant, came in and reported that the newly bound *seforim* which Reb Noach Baruch had brought had been placed in the new bookcase that Yosef Dovid the carpenter had just delivered, while the unbound volumes were set aside.

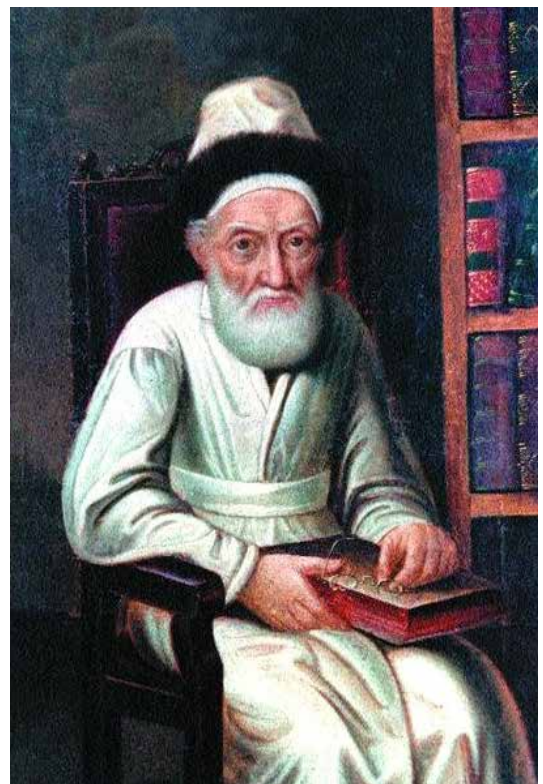
"My father's *seforim*,' my grandfather recounted, 'filled five open bookcases of printed *seforim* and two closed bookcases of manuscripts. These stood in the room where my father was. Another six open bookcases of *seforim* stood in the adjoining room, the door between the rooms always open.

"Reb Noach Baruch, the *seforim* seller, would come to Lubavitch twice a year, Shavuot and Chanukah time, and each time he would bring my father a list of new *seforim*. This time, too, he had brought a large number of books.

"When I entered the room,' my grandfather told my father, 'and saw that the new bookcase which Yosef Dovid the carpenter had just brought, the twelfth, was already



ONE OF THE KESAVIM OF THE TZEMACH TZEDEK SALVAGED FROM THE FIRE, NOTE THE BURN MARKS ON THE EDGES OF THE VOLUME.



ORIGINAL OIL PAINTING OF THE TZEMACH TZEDEK IN HIS STUDY, DISCOVERED IN RUSSIA ONLY IN RECENT YEARS. IT SEEMS THAT THE VARIOUS VERSIONS OF THE TZEMACH TZEDEK'S PORTRAIT WERE BASED ON THIS ONE. THE PAINTING COMMANDS INCREDIBLE AUTHORITY, IN PART, DUE TO THE SEFORIM ON THE SHELF IN THE PAINTING MATCHING THE SEFORIM OF THE TZEMACH TZEDEK HELD IN THE LIBRARY TODAY.

LIBRARY OF AGUDAS CHASSIDEI CHABAD



BOUND THROUGH GENERATIONS

The Library of Our Rabbeim

filled with the new *seforim* from Reb Noach Baruch, and besides that there were another four bundles of unbound *seforim* waiting to be sent to Avraham Abba the bookbinder, it pained me greatly.’

“And I said to my father: ‘You told me that first one must master what he already has before buying more. Did you master all the *seforim* you own?’

“In general,’ my father answered me, ‘I am indeed well-versed in the *seforim* I have. Take out a *sefer*,’ he told me, ‘and we’ll see.’

“Without thinking much, I ran to one of the bookcases and pulled out the first *sefer* that came to hand. As soon as I took it out, my father said: ‘That’s the *sefer Maslul*. Open it and tell me the page

number, and I’ll tell you what’s written there.’ And so it was.”

Many of these printed *seforim* were also destroyed in the great fire that swept through Lubavitch about ten years before the Tzemach Tzedek’s *histalkus*.⁹ At the time of the Tzemach Tzedek’s *histalkus*, however, he still possessed a collection of *seforim*, which were divided among his sons, four of whom became Rebbees in cities across White Russia.

The *kisvei yad Kodesh*, on the other hand, remained with the Rebbe Maharash in Lubavitch.¹⁰ In a letter sent by the Rebbe Maharash and his brothers to *anash*, they explained why the manuscripts were left in Lubavitch and what was planned for them: “Regarding the *kisvei yad kodesh*... which have not yet been divided, we wish to inform you that a total of forty *bichelach* remain. Twenty of them contain teachings on *nigleh* and are being prepared for printing, so they cannot be divided at this time. The remaining twenty, which are Chassidus... when those twenty booklets are divided into eight portions, our share will amount to two and a half *bichelach*.”¹¹

Ultimately, nearly all the *kisvei yad* remained in Lubavitch with the Rebbe Maharash, who organized them and attached labels identifying, in his own handwriting, each volume and its contents. Many of these labels have survived to this day.

To this collection were added the Rebbe Maharash’s own manuscripts. First, those he had gathered during the lifetime of his father, the Tzemach Tzedek, and marked as belonging to “Shmuel, the son of the Rebbe *Shlita*.” Later, he added his handwritten records of the *maamarim* he delivered throughout his *nesius*.

In addition, the Rebbe Maharash maintained his own collection of printed *seforim*, which he began assembling as a young child, as mentioned above, and continued to expand throughout his *nesius*. Some of these *seforim*, preserved to this day, bear his identifying marks, either inscribed as “the son of the Rebbe *Shlita*” or stamped from the period of his *nesius* with the imprint: “Shmuel Schneersohn from Lubavitch.”

Organized and Catalogued

Following the *histalkus* of the Rebbe Maharash, his library was divided among his heirs, namely, the

יום ה' ניסן ס"ו

היום נשלחה בטעמאוי הקני' המסחר

הספרים של ה' סאטמארק כסה מצד אצל ה' ר' ז' ואצל קעז' . ואצל הייזל ר' . אהרן צביא

275	149	1	1	1
10	"	"	"	"
40	31	1	1	1
1	"	"	"	"
"	23	1	1	1

LIBRARY OF AGUDAS CHASSIDEI CHABAD

THE FRIEDIKER REBBE REPORTS TO HIS FATHER, THE REBBE RASHAB, ON HIS EFFORTS TO PURCHASE SEFORIM FOR HIS LIBRARY.



LIBRARY OF AGUDAS CHASSIDEI CHABAD

REPORT FROM REB SHMUEL VINER AFTER EXAMINING THE REBBE RASHAB'S LIBRARY IN 5673.

Rebbe Rashab and his siblings. This division included only the printed *seforim*. Regarding the *kisvei yad kodesh*, however, the Rebbe Rashab wrote: “I am no better than my father, the Rebbe, who took for himself most of the holy writings of my grandfather, the Rebbe... These *kisvei kodesh* and *kisvei yad kodesh* are *chayei nafshi mamash* (my very life).”¹²

The Rebbe Rashab was not content with the manuscripts he had inherited. He actively sought to acquire additional *kisvei yad kodesh* from the earlier Rabbeim. His *Igros Kodesh* contain numerous letters concerning the purchase of such manuscripts, many of them addressed to his cousin, Reb Shneur Zalman Slonim, who served as his agent in locating and acquiring them. The Rebbe Rashab repeatedly encouraged him to persist in this work, to the point that Reb Shneur Zalman began paying considerable sums for these manuscripts. The Rebbe Rashab eventually had to caution him several times¹³ not to spend inflated amounts, even for such precious treasures.

In addition to these efforts, the Rebbe Rashab also collected and purchased manuscripts of unpublished Kabbalistic works, as well as amassing an extensive collection of his own handwritten *maamarim*.

Alongside his efforts to collect manuscripts, the Rebbe Rashab devoted significant time, energy, and funds to building a collection of printed *seforim*, ranging from rare incunabula to volumes published in his own time.

The Rebbe Rashab carefully reviewed catalogs and bibliographies, noting the titles and prices of *seforim* he wished to acquire. His *Igros Kodesh* contain dozens of letters discussing the purchase of *seforim* throughout his entire *nesius*.

In one undated note to his son, the Frierdiker Rebbe, written while he was away from Lubavitch, the Rebbe Rashab wrote:

“There is an opportunity here, *IYH*, to purchase some good *seforim*. Although they won’t come cheaply, as the seller tends to ask high prices, the *seforim* are of high quality, and I will try to acquire them *IYH*. I ask that you please obtain two hundred rubles for me and send them to me.”¹⁴

In 5661, a significant collection of *seforim* and manuscripts, which had previously belonged to a famed collector, went on the market. The Rebbe Rashab wished to purchase the library, or to have it purchased by his relative Reb Yeshaya Berlin of Riga, a philanthropist who supported the Rebbe Rashab. In a letter to Reb Yeshaya, the Rebbe Rashab explains his desire to have the library purchased, which may shed light on one of the motives

for the Rebbe Rashab’s collection of his own library.

“There are some who possess very large libraries, though their intentions in doing so are not *l’shem shamayim*, *Rachmana l’tzlan*. So why shouldn’t a G-d-fearing Jew be willing to spend a few thousand [rubles] for this purpose: to establish a place where Jews who fear G-d can study?

“Especially now that Hashem has blessed you with a large home in Riga, set aside three or four rooms for this, two or three for the *seforim*, and one for learning. It will be of benefit to you, and of benefit to the world.”¹⁵

The Rebbe Rashab also began efforts to organize and catalog his own library and to sell any duplicate volumes he owned, except those that had belonged to the Rebbe Maharash. In the early 5670s, he invited the renowned collector and bibliographer Shmuel Viner to Lubavitch to assist in this work. This visit was later described in a letter penned by the Frierdiker Rebbe’s secretariat:

“The Lubavitch Library is truly unique. Not only does it contain exclusively *sifrei Kodesh*, with no mixture of secular works or even Orthodox literature, but its collection of *she’eilos u’teshuvos* is exceptionally large, numbering over one thousand volumes in folio format, aside from those in quarto and octavo sizes. The renowned bibliographer Reb Shmuel Viner *z”l* visited the Lubavitch library in 5673 and was astonished by the richness of its treasures.”¹⁶

During his visit, Reb Shmuel Viner attempted to arrange the *seforim* so that they would have sufficient space and not be pressed together, preserving them in better condition. The Rebbe Rashab instructed the Frierdiker Rebbe to follow these guidelines to the best of his ability: “Even if they are not as spaciouly arranged as Viner placed them, they will, at the very least, not be crowded.”¹⁷

Shortly thereafter, World War I broke out, and in 5676, the Rebbe Rashab relocated from Lubavitch to Rostov.¹⁸ He took with him the collection of manuscripts and *kisvei yad kodesh*, while the printed *seforim* were sent to Moscow for safekeeping. The letter from the Frierdiker Rebbe’s secretariat provides a sense of the library’s scope at that time:

“At the time of relocating from Lubavitch, all of the printed books were packed into crates, totaling 5,430 numbered volumes. This count included every Shas, each counted as a single number, totaling fourteen different editions. These included editions from Vienna, Basel, Amsterdam, Frankfurt, Berlin, Daronfort, Slavita, Kopust, Vilna, Horodna, Zhitomir, Lemberg, and other newer printings. Likewise, large multi-part works such as the Mikraos Gedolos, Rambam, the Tur, and similar



BOUND THROUGH GENERATIONS

The Library of Our Rabbeim

multi-volume works were counted as a single unit...
"To ensure the books would be preserved, *b'ezras Hashem*, from the usual dangers of war and similar disasters, the collection was sent for safekeeping to the capital, Moscow, in a special wagon. The books were placed under protective custody in a building constructed according to all rules for safeguarding against fire, water, and theft."¹⁹

The *seforim* remained in Moscow as the world war and the subsequent Russian Revolution raged; during this period, the Rebbe Rashab was *nistalek*.

Rebuilding from Nothing

The origins of the Frierdiker Rebbe's collection of *seforim* date back to his youth, when he began assembling his own library alongside that of his father, the Rebbe Rashab. The two corresponded in several letters about their respective collections, including one in which the Rebbe Rashab declined his son's offer to supply missing volumes from his own library.²⁰

Many of the *seforim* in the Frierdiker Rebbe's collection bore his personal label: "*Sifrei Kodesh*

collected by Yosef Yitzchok Schneersohn, Lubavitch," with a space to record the exact date of purchase. These *seforim*, as well, were packed up and sent to Russia when the Frierdiker Rebbe accompanied his father to Rostov.

The plan was that, once the war subsided, the *seforim* would be retrieved. But circumstances changed drastically. The Communists seized power and began nationalizing private property, including the warehouse in which the holy books were stored. Eventually, the *seforim* were transferred to Moscow's public library, the Rumyantsev.

Even before their confiscation, the Frierdiker Rebbe made repeated efforts to have the *seforim* returned. He wrote to government officials asserting his legal ownership, and on two occasions, once in 5681 and again some years later, he actually received official permission to reclaim them. Yet each time, new obstacles arose.

As his secretariat later recorded:

"In truth, this library was taken unlawfully, even according to their own legal system. It was only due to the actions of one Zionist, Mr. Eisenstadt, formerly a librarian at the Moscow Library and later a resident of Palestine, who, out of personal revenge, since the Rebbe's household was known to be anti-Zionist, used his influence to have the books confiscated. When he learned that a permit had been granted allowing the books to be returned to their rightful owner, he devised a scheme through which the permit was withdrawn."²¹



LIBRARY OF AGUDAS CHASSIDEI CHABAD

A LETTER FROM THE FRIERDIKER REBBE REGARDING THE UNLAWFUL SEIZURE OF THE REBBE RASHAB'S LIBRARY.



RUSSIAN STATE LIBRARY.



THE STICKER FOUND ON SEFORIM COLLECTED BY THE FRIERDIKER REBBE IN HIS YOUTH.

After the Frierdiker Rebbe's arrest and subsequent departure from Russia, the struggle to reclaim the *seforim* continued from abroad. The newly founded Agudas Chassidei Chabad of America took up the cause, appealing to U.S. Senators and even the Secretary of State, but their efforts met with little success.

Decades later, in 5740, as the Soviet Union began to open slightly, the Rebbe appointed a delegation, comprising his *mazkir*, Rabbi Nissan Mindel, the Library's Chief Librarian, Rabbi Sholom Ber Levine, and California Head Shliach Rabbi Shlomo Cunin, to travel to Russia and renew the campaign to retrieve the collection.

A second delegation followed in 5751, composed of Rabbis Levine and Cunin, joined by Rabbi Yosef Aharonov and Rabbi Yitzchok Kogan. After persistent efforts, they located a significant portion of the Rebbe Rashab's library within the vast holdings of what was then called the Lenin Library. Although permission to remove the *seforim* was briefly granted, the long-awaited return never materialized.

Today, those *seforim* remain in the hands of the Russian State Library, the successor to the Lenin Library, still in *galus* to this very day. The effort to redeem them continues.²²

Faced with the loss of his father's library and his own, with only the priceless *kisvei yad kodesh* remaining in his possession, the Frierdiker Rebbe began rebuilding his library from virtually nothing. The first major purchase was the purchase of the library of the above-mentioned Reb Shmuel Viner, who was emigrating from Russia.

As the Frierdiker Rebbe's secretary described it:

"This book collection is entirely different from the Lubavitch Library. This is a bibliographic collection, including, for example: approximately 400 different editions of *Haggados* in various languages; around 140 *Kinnos* and a similar number of *Selichos*; about 60 *Siddurim* in different *nuschaos*; *Machzorim*; roughly 100 old *Techinos* in the Yiddish (*Zargon*) language; books of stories and legends, and, in addition to all that, numerous works of science, literature, and more."²³

The Frierdiker Rebbe continued to expand the collection, acquiring many additional *seforim*, including volumes once held by the Chief Censor's Office in Leningrad. Under Czarist law, two copies of every published book were required to be deposited there. Over time, millions of volumes accumulated, among them thousands of *seforim*. In the early years of Communist rule, these books were sold to raise funds, and many volumes for the Frierdiker Rebbe's new library were purchased from that source.

At the Frierdiker Rebbe's insistence, this collection accompanied him when he left the USSR following his arrest, despite the Soviet authorities' initial refusal to allow him to take it with him.

Upon his arrival in Riga, Latvia, the Frierdiker Rebbe immediately resumed his efforts to rebuild and expand



OFFICIAL DOCUMENT BY THE SOVIET CENSORSHIP, ALLOWING THE FRIERDIKER REBBE TO TAKE ALL OF HIS SEFORIM OUT OF RUSSIA IN 5687.



SOME OF THE HAGGADOS IN THE FRIERDIKER REBBE'S COLLECTION.



BOUND THROUGH
GENERATIONS
The
Library
of Our
Rabbeim

the library. He began exploring options for a proper cataloging system and even envisioned constructing a dedicated library building. He also appealed to his Chassidim in the United States and Eretz Yisroel for their assistance in building the collection.

This was at a time when the Frieddiker Rebbe was still burdened by debts from his move, had not yet established a permanent residence in Riga, and when the financial situation in *Beis Harav* was extremely strained. Yet, he felt it was of utmost importance to create a serious library where researchers could explore any subject tangentially connected to Yiddishkeit.

Letters were sent to institutions and authors, and notices were published in Jewish newspapers, asking that *seforim*, books, and documents be sent to the "Bibliothek Lyubawitch" in Riga.

Several years later, when the Frieddiker Rebbe moved from Riga to Warsaw, the library accompanied him. He gave detailed instructions for how the *seforim* were to be packed and transported. In Poland, where *seforim* were more plentiful and less expensive than in Riga, the library grew rapidly, with many new titles added to its collection.

Property of Aguch of USA

In 5698, as the situation for Jews in Poland deteriorated, the Frieddiker Rebbe instructed that all Chabad properties in Poland be registered under the name of Agudas Chassidei Chabad of America. This included the rapidly growing library.

When Germany attacked Poland, marking the beginning of World War II, the Frieddiker Rebbe and his family went to Warsaw, while the library was located in Otwock, to which it had been relocated a few years earlier. The Frieddiker Rebbe had taken with him his most precious *kesavim*, which accompanied him through his miraculous rescue from the Nazi onslaught. However, many other manuscripts, along with thousands of *seforim*, remained behind.

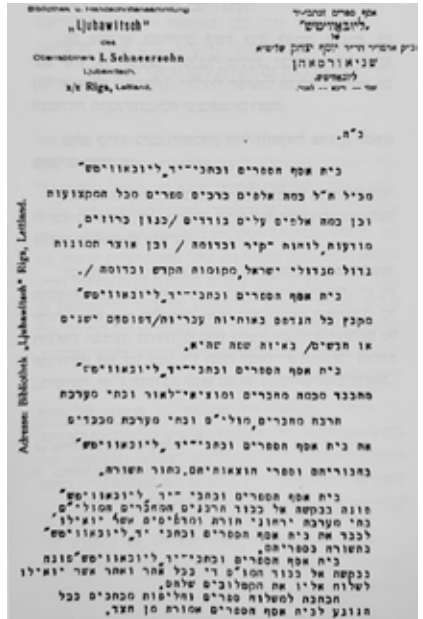
Upon reaching relative safety in Riga, the Frieddiker Rebbe wrote to Rabbi Yisroel Jacobson, who headed Agudas Chassidei Chabad of America, instructing him to work toward rescuing the library. Since the United States had not yet entered the war, it was hoped that they could intervene to retrieve the collection, now legally registered as the property of the American Chabad organization. Rabbi Jacobson and others contacted American officials in Berlin, Warsaw, and the United States, requesting the retrieval of the dozens of crates of books.

These and other persistent efforts eventually bore fruit. The vast majority of the collection, nearly one hundred crates filled with *seforim*, was successfully shipped to America. However, seventeen crates of *seforim* remained in Warsaw, along with three additional crates of manuscripts that had been placed in the American Embassy for safekeeping. When the United States entered the war and the embassy was seized by the Nazis, these crates were presumed lost.

Meanwhile, the surviving *seforim* and manuscripts that reached New York were stored in the basement of 770 Eastern Parkway, or in the Frieddiker Rebbe's *yechidus* room, whose walls were lined with shelves of rare *seforim*.

After the war ended, efforts to recover the remaining crates resumed, continuing even after the Frieddiker Rebbe's *histalkus*, but with limited success. For decades, the trail went cold.

Then, in 5732, the Ottawa Public Library received a set of microfilms from the Jewish Historical



LIBRARY OF AGUDAS CHASSIDEI CHABAD

REQUEST SENT TO INSTITUTIONS AND AUTHORS TO SEND THEIR PUBLICATIONS AND SEFORIM TO THE 'LUBAVITCH' LIBRARY IN RIGA.



THE KESAVIM ARRIVE IN PHILADELPHIA EN ROUTE TO NEW YORK. A SPECIAL RECEPTION WAS HELD AT INDEPENDENCE HALL IN THEIR HONOR.



CONSTRUCTION TO EXPAND THE LIBRARY, 5750.

Institute in Warsaw. Among them were photographed manuscripts of *maamarim*, which were soon identified as part of the Frierdiker Rebbe's long-lost collection. Renewed efforts, led by the Rebbe's *mazkir*, Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky, Rabbi Avraham Shemtov, and Rabbi Aharon Chitrik of Otzar Hachassidim, spanned several years and ultimately succeeded. After negotiations, the Polish government agreed to return the manuscripts in exchange for public acknowledgments in major U.S. newspapers thanking them for their cooperation.

These *kisvei yad kodesh* arrived at 770 toward the end of Tishrei 5738. The Rebbe's first time leaving 770 after his heart attack on Shemini Atzeres of that year was to visit the library and personally see the returned manuscripts, just one day before he returned home for the first time, on Rosh Chodesh Kislev.

The Rebbe's Own Library

Soon after the Rebbe arrived in America, he began assembling his own library, which he referred to as "the Library of Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch." This library, distinct from the Frierdiker Rebbe's vast collection, remained relatively small until after the Frierdiker Rebbe's *histalkus*. At that point, access to the Frierdiker Rebbe's library was cut off, and the *seforim* that the Rebbe received or requested were added to his own growing collection.

This collection expanded rapidly, fueled by the Rebbe's ongoing requests that *shluchim* seek out rare *seforim* and manuscripts on his behalf, as well as through book exchanges between Kehos and other publishers. The Rebbe also asked that manuscripts of *Chassidus* be sent to him, and this segment of the library began to grow as well.

As the Rebbe's library continued to expand, it eventually rivaled the Frierdiker Rebbe's in size, each numbering close to 100,000 volumes. This growth necessitated a new space, and in the early 5720s, the house adjacent to 770 Eastern Parkway was purchased to serve as the library's home. The collection continued to grow steadily, though it remained completely separate from the Frierdiker Rebbe's library, which was inaccessible.

This situation continued until the famous *seforim* court case of 5745, and the subsequent victory of *Hei Teves*, after which the two libraries were formally merged.

Since then, the library has continued to grow, both in its holdings and in its physical space. Following the



SCENES FROM THE LIBRARY IN THE BASEMENT OF 770 IN RECENT YEARS.

Rebbe's encouragement, *seforim* continued to pour in from around the world. Additional expansions were made, first by excavating beneath 770's courtyard to create more space, and more recently, with the purchase of another adjoining house to accommodate the ever-growing collection.

The library also houses many sacred artifacts used by the Rebbeim, as well as thousands of gifts, photographs, flyers, and posters that were sent to the Rebbe throughout his *nesius*. Today, a large portion of the library's vast collections can be accessed online, revealing treasures that had been tightly guarded, some since the time of the Alter Rebbe. **1**

1. *HaMa'asur HaRishon* (Yerushalayim: Knizhnik Publishing Houses, 2012), p. 50.
2. See "Journey Toward Peace," *Derher Tishrei* 5786.
3. *Igros Kodesh Admur HaEmtza'i* (Brooklyn: Kehot Publication Society, 2012), p. 6.
4. Quoted in Rabbi Sholom Ber Levine, *Ma'asar u-Ge'ulas Admur ha-Emtsa'i* (Brooklyn, NY: Kehos, in association with Agudas Shamir, Jerusalem, 5758 [1998]), p. 43 in the online version.
5. *Sha'alos Uteshuvos Tzemach Tzedek, Choshen Mishpat, siman 70*.
6. *Igros Kodesh Admur Harayatz* vol. 4, p. 560, letter 1130.
7. *Beis Rebbe*, section 1, p. 71a.
8. *Likkutei Dibburim* vol. 2, p. 457. The Rebbe records this story in *Sefer Hatoldos Admur Maharash*, p. 8 with minor differences.
9. Varying dates are given for the fire. See *Beis Rebbe* section 3, chapter 6; *Sefer Hasichos Toras Shalom* p. 81; *Igros Kodesh Admur Harayatz* vol. 3, letter 769.
10. See Rabbi Sholom Ber Levine, *Sifriyat Lubavitch* (Brooklyn, NY: Kehos, 1993), p. 36.
11. *Mibeis Hagenozim* (Brooklyn, Kehos, 2009), p. 243.
12. *Sifriyat Lubavitch*, p. 43.
13. *Igros Kodesh Admur Harashab* vol. 1, p. 102. vol. 3, p. 13.
14. *Sifriyat Lubavitch*, p. 52.
15. *Mibeis Hagenozim*, p. 206.
16. *Igros Kodesh Admur Harayatz* vol. 1, p. 538.
17. *Igros Kodesh Admur Harashab* vol. 2, p. 752.
18. See "Relocating the Capital," *Derher Av* 5785.
19. *Igros Kodesh Admur Harayatz* vol. 1, p. 538.
20. *Igros Kodesh Admur Harashab* vol. 2, p. 753.
21. *Ibid.*, vol. 11, p. 82
22. For the full story of the struggle to return the library, see Rabbi Berel Levine, *Yoman Hashlichus Hamiyuchedes* (Brooklyn: Library of Agudas Chassidei Chabad, 2001); Rabbi Shlomo Cunin, *A Library Held Hostage* (Agudas Chassidei Chabad of Russia); and "The Very Life of the Rebbeim," *Derher*, Teves 5784.
23. *Igros Kodesh Admur Harayatz* vol. 2, p. 9.



BOUND THROUGH GENERATIONS

The
Library
of Our
Rabbeim

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

The Chossid Who Spoke Up

Reb Avraham Sender Nemtsov

By: Rabbi Mendy Greenberg (Twinsburg, OH)

לעילוי נשמת
הרה"ת ר' יעקב בן הרב שמואל יוסף ע"ה
גרינבוים
גלב"ע מוצאי שבת קודש פרשת
ויחי יעקב ט"ו טבת תש"פ
תנ"צ'ב"ה
נדפס ע"י אשתו ביילא רישא תחי' ובנו
מנחם מענדל ומשפחתו שיחי'
גרינבוים



2 ELUL 5773

A Rebbe Without A Maamar

Two months before Yud Shevat 5711 (when the Rebbe officially assumed the *nesius*), a *bochur* named Mordechai Dubinsky described the state of affairs at 770 in a letter.

“There is an ideological debate going on,” he writes. “Should we pressure the Rebbe to ‘officially’ accept the *nesius*? Unofficially, he is leading us in the fullest sense of the word. Three days a week are formally scheduled for *yechidus*, and he answers everyone. We have been witness to open miracles from his *brachos*. Things are proceeding from day to day. He is called up to the Torah as ‘*Adoneinu Moreinu v’Rabbeinu*,’ and in his presence, his personal name is never mentioned.

“The only thing missing is *maamarim*—and the rumor is that this will change after Yud Shevat.”¹

Maamarim.

While the Rebbe was receiving people for *yechidus*, accepting *panim*, *farbrenging*, and so on, it was all presented as if there was no *nesius* attached to it. Most importantly, the Rebbe still refused to do the one thing that was the sole purview of the Rabbeim—deliver a *maamar* Chassidus, “*divrei Elokim chayim*.” In fact, the Rebbe wouldn’t even review *maamarim* of the previous Rabbeim; nobody had ever heard the Rebbe speak in the tune of a *maamar* at all!²

But change was in the air when the *farbrenging* of Yud



REB AVROHOM SENDER SITTING RIGHT BEHIND THE REBBE AT A FARBRENGEN IN THE EARLY YEARS.

Shevat arrived. The Rebbe publicly accepted a *pan klali*, and the notices about the Rebbe's *minyanim* and farbrengen in the Jewish media already conferred the title of Rebbe. The setting of the farbrengen—for the first time—put the Rebbe at the head of the table on a small stage. There was a strong sense of anticipation.

The Rebbe began the farbrengen with several *sichos*, speaking about the *yahrtzeit* and about the shlichus'n of the Frierdiker Rebbe. One *sicha* followed another, and several *niggunim* were sung. Meanwhile, everybody was waiting in expectation. Would the Rebbe say a *maamar*?

Finally, someone decided to speak up.

“Nimtza Chein...”

Three separate letters and *yomanim* record the moment.

One version is recorded in a letter from the *bochur* Moshe Levertov to his friend Berel Shemtov who was learning in Yeshivah in England.

“After the [*sichos*], there was a [*niggun*] break, and they began requesting Chassidus. The Rebbe said, ‘Who is requesting,’ and they responded, ‘Chassidim!’ Afterwards, the Rebbe began, ‘*in dem maamar... Basi Lgani...*’”³

Reb Yitzchak Pevsner describes it a bit differently: “During the farbrengen, someone said ‘*nimtza chein*’—that [the Rebbe] should say a *maamar* Chassidus. He waited a bit, and was *b'dveikus*, and then began the *maamar*, in the tune of a *maamar*.”⁴

The most extensive description is found in the diary of

Reb Elye Gross (which later formed the basis for the volume *Yemei Bereishis*):

“One of the elder Chassidim said in a loud voice: *Di reid iz gut, uber der olam bet chassidus*, the *sichos* are good, but the crowd requests a *maamar*! Everyone fell silent and looked towards the Rebbe. At 10:40, the Rebbe began: ‘In the *maamar... Basi Lgani...*’”

None of these descriptions record the name of the person who spoke up. Still, everyone knows who it was: Reb Avraham Sender Nemtsov, an elder chossid from Lubavitch—and possibly the oldest chossid at the farbrengen.

Reb Avraham Sender had been one of the earliest proponents of the Rebbe's *nesius*. At the time of the Frierdiker Rebbe's *histalkus* a year earlier, Reb Sender had been living in Manchester. When the news arrived, he had immediately wanted to send a *ksav hiskashrus* to the Rebbe, but the deliberations of some other elder Chassidim had delayed the sending of the letter for several weeks. Either way, the Rebbe had responded with a categorical refusal.⁵

Now, a year later, the Rebbe had finally acquiesced. Reb Sender was euphoric. Rabbi Leibel Groner would later recall that after the Rebbe paused following the first section of the *maamar* to say *l'chaim*, Rabbi Nemtsov jumped onto the table and announced, “Chassidim, we have a Rebbe!” and recited the full *bracha* of *Shehecheyanu*, with the entire crowd responding with a thundering “Amen!” With a broad smile, the Rebbe turned to Rabbi Nemtsov and asked him to quiet down and get off the table.⁶

Although he was a very distinguished character at that farbrengen, Reb Avraham Sender was unusual among the elder Chassidim of his day.

He didn't come from a Lubavitcher family and he hadn't spent much time in Lubavitch circles. When he moved from Manchester to New York in 5710, the only chossid he knew was Reb Shmuel Levitin, whom he had last met as an eighteen-year-old *bochur* in the town of Lubavitch.

The Tomim Who Didn't Know the Temimim

Reb Sender grew up in the town of Kamin, near Vitebsk, in a G-d-fearing home. He was born around 5630, just a few years after the passing of the Tzemach Tzedek.

He was a bright child, so he was sent to the Litvishe yeshiva in Minsk after his bar mitzvah where he learned for several years. He had no particular association with Lubavitch or any other streams of Chabad; as a child, he had received a *bracha* from one of the Tzemach Tzedek's sons for a terrible speech impediment that plagued him in his



REB AVROHOM SENDER.



LEFT TO RIGHT: RABBI SHMUEL GROSSMAN, RABBI YITZCHOK DUBOV, CHIEF RABBI HERZOG, RABBI BENTZION SHEMTOV, RABBI SHMUEL REIN, RABBI SENDER NEMTZOV.

childhood. When he was twenty years old, he happened to spend Rosh Hashanah in Kopust—but that was it.

At twenty, he was drafted into the Russian army. Military service for the Czar was a nightmare for any Jew, especially one who refused to eat non-kosher food. Still, somehow, Reb Sender persevered and emerged five years later without his *yiras shamayim* being compromised. After his army service, he married Sarah Mindel (the aunt of Rabbi Nissen Mindel, the Rebbe's secretary—who would later become their son-in-law as well), and made his living from a grocery store in Kamin.

But he wanted more.

Reb Sender wanted to continue his learning, which had been so rudely interrupted by the army service. He reached out to the kollel that existed in Kovno at the time, and they agreed to accept him with the stipend of ten rubles per week.

However, Reb Sender had started to gravitate towards Lubavitch. Reb Sender's uncle was Reb Shaul Raksin, a student of a chossid of the Tzemach Tzedek and an enthusiastic Lubavitcher chossid. Reb Shaul had heard about the new yeshiva the Rebbe Rashab had opened in Lubavitch—and convinced Reb Sender to try it out.

When they arrived, Reb Sender's application was categorically rejected. The yeshiva was in its infancy. Young, promising *bochurim*, in their late teenage years, were being handpicked to be part of this new 'experiment.' Reb Sender was already a twenty-seven-year-old married man; he was no longer an impressionable youngster who could receive true *hashpaa* from the *mashpi'im* at the yeshiva. This was not the right place for him.

But Reb Sender and his uncle were not willing to give up. In a *yechidus*, his uncle argued to the Rebbe Rashab that Reb Sender had been willing to give up a significant amount of funds from the Kovno kollel to come to Lubavitch instead. He deserved to be accepted.

The Rebbe Rashab gave his approval, and Reb Sender became the first *yungerman* in Tomchei Temimim.

The town of Lubavitch became his own. He learned Chassidus from the famed *mashpia*, Rashbatz. Reb Sender would relate how, when a *shiur* once ended, he had assumed that one hour had passed since it had begun, but he looked at the clock and discovered that it was three in the morning; they had spent six hours with Rashbatz ensconced in the *maamar*.

Being already advanced in his learning, he was asked to take over a Gemara *shiur* for the townspeople in a local *shteibel* that had previously been delivered by Reb Chonye Marosov.

One day, an older chossid from the days of the Tzemach Tzedek gave him some criticism; "Your *shiur* is good, but not as good as Chonye's!"

“Why?” Reb Sender asked.

“Chonye gave an excellent shiur, but he didn’t feel like he was giving an excellent shiur. He had *bitul*. But you, your shiur is excellent, *but you know that it’s excellent*.”

Lubavitch Yeshivah Old Boys Club

After a period of learning in Lubavitch, Reb Sender returned home. He was a changed person; now a fiery chossid, he immediately began teaching *shiurim* in Chassidus to the locals. Within a few short years, however, he accepted a job to become a *shochet* in faraway Manchester. So, the veteran *lamdan* but newly-minted Lubavitcher chossid soon found himself as the only chossid in an entire city, and perhaps even a whole country.

People quickly learned to trust the *shechita* of this special individual. When Rav Avraham Yitzchak Hakohen Kook was in England, he was careful to eat only from Reb Sender’s *shechita* and quickly befriended him.

One day, Rav Kook asked him for a *haskama* for a publication, but Reb Sender demurred. “In Halacha, we have the same opinions, but in *hashkafa*, it’s different.”

Reb Sender was actually known for opposing Zionism, even before becoming a chossid.

At his own engagement party many years earlier, the local *rav* had offered a *l’chaim* for the success of the Zionist Congress, which had just gathered for the first time in Basil, Switzerland. When Reb Sender refused to participate, the Rav pointed out that 77 *rabbanim* had signed a proclamation supporting the endeavor.

Always one with a witty retort, Reb Sender responded by quoting the *possuk* regarding the *meraglim*, “אפס כי עז העם” (The people who inhabit the land are mighty). The word עז, he pointed out, had the *gematria* of 77...

Over the decades in Manchester, several other *Temimim* joined him—Reb Menachem Tzvi Rivkin, Reb Yitzchok Dubov, and Reb Shmuel Rein. Reb Zalmon Jaffe was a youngster during those years; “these four personalities,” he would later write, “made up the *Lubavitch Yeshivah Old Boys Club*—a very select and exclusive group.”⁷

The Minyan to Hold Up the City

In his later years, Reb Avraham Sender settled in Long Beach, NY, near his son-in-law, Rabbi Nissen Mindel. They both davened in the local Young Israel shul, where Reb Sender gave a regular Tanya *shiur*.



TESHURA NEMTZOV 5779

RABBI NEMTZOV IN HIS
LATER YEARS IN AMERICA.

One day, the Rebbe asked Reb Sender if there were any Friday night *minyanim* in the entire Long Beach that davened *bizmana*, at sundown. Long Beach was home to many elderly, *balebatish* Jews, and the Friday night *minyanim* in the summertime were held long before *tzeis*, so Reb Sender told the Rebbe that there were not.

Hearing that, the Rebbe made a request: Reb Sender should arrange such a *minyan* each week.

Reb Sender didn’t ask any questions, and throughout that summer, he arranged a weekly *minyan* late Friday night. It proved to be very challenging. Most people were very comfortable with the early *minyan*. So, when the next summer came around, Reb Sender asked the Rebbe whether it was necessary to continue. What was the point of the *minyan* if nobody expressed any interest in it?

That’s when the Rebbe explained that the *minyan* served a very important purpose.

According to halacha, the Rebbe reminded him, if all the city shuls accept Shabbos early, Shabbos automatically begins for the entire locale. Long Beach was full of Jews who were not yet observant of Torah and *mitzvos*; if Shabbos begins early, it adds a significant portion of time to the potential *chilul Shabbos*. By maintaining one single *minyan* at *tzeis*, that entire problem was averted. “Why should they be *mechalel shabbos* for 27 hours, when it could be only 26?”⁸

✎

Reb Avraham Sender passed away at the ripe old age of 93 on Shavuot 5722, and was buried near the Ohel. **T**

This article is based on Kfar Chabad magazine issue 2096, and the Nemitzov Teshurah—Shevat 5779, unless otherwise noted.

1. 10 Kislev 5711.
2. Yemei Bereishis p. 383.
3. Kfar Chabad issue 1863, p. 110.
4. Yamim Mikedem p. 37.
5. Igros Kodesh vol. 21, p. 99.
6. Yemei Bereishis p. 383.
7. Zalmon Jaffe Encounters 5753.
8. As heard from Reb Berel Rosenberg, grandson of Reb Avraham Sender.

By: Rabbi Shneur Itzinger

גדפס ע"י ולזכות
הרה"ת ארי' יצחק הכהן
וזוגתו מרת ראשא רוזא
ומשפחתם שיחיו
וונישטיין

Step Inside

Farbrenge with the Rebbe
— A Companion

A guide to the farbrenge of
Yud Shevat 5732



Toras Menachem vol.
67, pp. 102-167



Sources

This guide is designed to assist in experiencing the farbrenge on video or audio. Timestamps correspond to the video, linked above.

On the Frierdiker Rebbe's *yom hilula*, the Rebbe points us to the *maamar* he published to be studied on Yud Shevat. Examining just the first 2 words of the *dibur hamaschil*, the Rebbe shows us the proper perspective for uncovering the hidden truth of the world—that it is a beautiful garden, Hashem's home.

Sicha 1: “...To My Garden”

The opening of the *maamar* *Basi L'gani* helps us see the world's hidden goodness.

Where to Begin?

[7:15]

Where do we look for the purpose and lessons of today's *farbrengen*?

To whom do we look for guidance?

- The *farbrengen* is connected to the Frierdiker Rebbe.
- The goal of every *farbrengen* is to influence behavior on a specific theme.
- Today, we **examine his life** to understand how to commemorate his *hilula*.

Which part of his life?

- For a Jew whose very *life* is his Torah —
 - Especially someone who had *mesirus nefesh* for Torah,
 - not just once, but for years on end.
- — **We examine his teachings** to understand his *life*.

Which part of his Torah?

- When life is Torah, the specific *part* of Torah connected to life changes with life's changes.
- So specifically, we look at **the Torah connected to his *histalkus***:
- The *maamar* he published for Yud Shevat, providentially the day of his *histalkus*.
 - Everything is *hashgacha pratis*, especially when it comes to Torah and the Rebbe.
 - Just as Hashem is found in His Torah, so are *tzaddikim*.³

Which part of the *maamar*?

- Torah is precise, including its order.

FIRE VS. LASHES

Chananya, Mishael, and Azarya were thrown into a furnace by Nevuchadnetzar, ready to be *moser nefesh* rather than bow to *avoda zara*. Miraculously, they were spared.¹

The Gemara² relates that had they been given lashes—long, drawn-out pain—they might not have withstood the test. Jumping into fire is a one-time act of *mesirus nefesh*. But continuous lashes bring prolonged suffering, and they might have given in.

(Of course, they would not have actually bowed to *avoda zara*. The *mefarshim* explain that it was not a real idol, but a matter of *kiddush Hashem* for those who thought it was.)

Those who withstood years or decades of suffering and still remained strong in their *Yiddishkeit*—such as the Frierdiker Rebbe and Russian Jews in general—showed stronger fortitude than the three *tzaddikim*. They endured “lashes,” prolonged pain, and yet remained steadfast.



Step
Inside

Farbrengen
with the Rebbe
— A Companion



- The opening part of any Torah is the “head,” setting the direction for all that follows.
 - Torah is compared to a person—*zos hatorah adam*.
- So we will analyze specifically the **opening** of the *maamar*: the words *basi l’gani*.
- [There are many *pirushim* here —
 - Seventy *pirushim* on Torah.
 - The Arizal says that because Torah

- was given to every individual,
 - which is why the *Aseres Hadibros* begin in the singular (*Elokecha* rather than *Elokeichem*),
- There are 600,000 *pirushim*, corresponding to 600,000 souls, for each level of *pshat, remez, derush, and sod*.⁴
- — We will focus on the Frieddiker Rebbe’s explanation.]

The Truth You May Not See

[14:54]

The maamar teaches us the truth about the world: it is Hashem’s beautiful home.

<p>I have come to my garden, my sister, my bride...</p>	<p>שיר השירים: בָּאתִי לְגַנִּי אֲחֹתִי כֻלָּה גו'.</p>
<p>It does not say “I came to a garden,” but rather “to My garden” – to My wedding canopy, to the place that I was originally. Was not the <i>Shechina</i> originally in the lower realm?</p>	<p>מדרש רבה: בָּאתִי לְגַנִּי, אָמַר רַבִּי מְנַחֵם חֲתָנִיָּה דְרַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר בַּר אֲבוּנָה בְּשֵׁם רַבִּי שְׁמַעוֹן בְּרַבִּי יוֹסֵפֶה, בָּאתִי לְגַן אֵין כְּתִיב כָּאן, אֶלָּא לְגַנִּי, לְגַנּוּנִי, לְמִקּוֹם שֶׁהָיָה עֹקְרֵי מִתְנַחֵלָה, וְעַקְרֵי שְׂכִינָה לֹא בְּתַחְתּוּנִים הָיְתָה?</p>
<p>The main purpose behind the creation and formation of the worlds is that the Holy One, blessed be He, desired a dwelling in the lower world, so that His presence could be revealed here through human action...</p>	<p>מאמר באתי לגני ה'שי"ת: והענין הוא, דהנה תכלית הכוונה בבריאת והתהוות העולמות, דנתאוה הקדוש ברוך הוא להיות לו יתברך דירה בתחתונים, שיהי' גילוי אלקות למטה ע"י עבודת האדם...</p>

The opening of the *maamar*:

- **The Frieddiker Rebbe cites the *midrash*:** the *pasuk* specifies *gani*—my garden, the special garden where the *Shechina* resides.
- **He explains:** *gani* refers to this world.

The lesson:

- Many observe the world around them and—mistakenly—assess it: the situation appears to be in decline.
 - Our physical eyes see only the physical.
- Goodness and *kedusha* do not appear on the rise.
- Especially for Yidden—a minority among the nations.

- The world seems to resemble a *jungle*, not a fruit-bearing *garden*, which is even more pleasant than a *field* [that grows essential grain].

[Torah teaches the difference:

- Growing a field takes less energy and time than cultivating a garden.
- Depending on the quality of the produce, the length of time to grow it varies.^{6]}

Yet the *maamar* compares the world to a garden—no less!

- The Rebbe himself experienced much hardship.
 - All four danger categories in Torah!
- Even in this country, he faced spiritual and physical hardships.
- Yet he teaches us not to be discouraged about the world's situation.
 - And not to act with *kabalas ol* only—knowing the world is a jungle yet doing our *avoda* anyway,
 - because that will prevent doing our *avoda* with joy.
- He teaches us that this very world is a garden!
- Whose garden? *Gani*—Hashem's garden (the garden owner affects the produce within it), and His primary place, *genuni*.
 - [This applies even if we don't

BETTER TIMES AHEAD?

The concept of *yeridas hadoros*—the spiritual decline of the generations—appears in a question in the Gemara. While discussing the mitzvah of *yibum* versus *chalitza*, the Gemara seems to imply that the later generation was more virtuous than the earlier one. This leads to the incredulous question: “*Achshar dara?*—Has the generation improved?!⁵”

The Gemara then reinterprets its reasoning, since we do not assume that later generations are on a higher spiritual level. On the contrary, each generation is generally considered less pious than the one before.

fully understand.

- The word *basi* is also a lesson—to be explained in *sicha* 2.]
- There are varying levels of Hashem's presence in the world —
 - The *mishna* lists ten levels.⁷
- — but even the lowest level is Hashem's *genuni*.

Uncovering the Fruit

[23:23]

Uncovering the truth of the world and acting accordingly.

- Knowing this truth changes our perception,
- and we begin to seek the good hidden beneath the surface.
- We know we will find—for Torah assures us—
- the fruits of the garden Hashem calls His own.
- This, then, is the lesson:
- We live in a precious world!
- The *yetzer hara* tries to conceal the truth so that we should give up.
- We remind ourselves that its entire purpose is to cover the truth.
- We know Hashem's path, revealed by the Rebbe,
- and we are certain to uncover the truth.
- May it go smoothly, as befits Jews — kings,
- and merit the ultimate good of Moshiach's times.



Step
Inside

Farbrengen
with the Rebbe
— A Companion



Sicha 2: “I Have Come...”

A reality check: what about the hardships we face, especially as Jews?

<p>A convert who comes to convert at the present time is told: What did you see that made you come to convert? Don't you know that the Jewish people at this time are anguished, suppressed, despised, and harassed, and hardships constantly come upon them?</p>	<p>יבמות מזא: גר שבא להתגייר בזמן הזה, אומרים לו: מה ראית שבאת להתגייר? אי אתה יודע שישראל בזמן הזה דוויים, דחופים, סחופים ומטורפין, ויסורין באין עליהם?</p>
<p>Many mistakenly think...that the evils in the world are more numerous than the good... that it is a wonder if any good is found...</p> <p>But true contemplation shows... that man's very existence is a great good for him and a kindness from G-d...</p> <p>Thus, the absolute nature of kindness and goodness, and the abundance of good, is made clear.</p>	<p>מורה נבוכים: רבות עולה בדמיון... שהרעות בעולם רבות מן הטובות... ואומרים שלפלא הוא אם ימצא טוב... אך ההתבוננות האמיתית היא... שהוא (=האדם) מציאותו היא טוב גדול לו וחסד מה'... הנה התבררה מוחלטות החסד והטובה ושפע הטוב.</p>

Despised—or Divine?

[34:30]

The Rebbe begins by questioning something we established in the last sicha:

- The Gemara says that potential converts are warned of the hardships Jews face.
- So, which is it? Is the world a beautiful garden, or a place of hardship for a Jew (as Torah itself says)?

The same question applies to the Rambam in *Moreh Nevuchim*:

[But first, regarding apparent differences in the Rambam's writings:

- He authored both the *Yad Hachazaka* and *Moreh Nevuchim*—obviously, they can be reconciled.
- *Yad Hachazaka* is *halachos*, which must be unambiguous.
- *Moreh Nevuchim* has differing interpretations, corresponding to the particular *navuch* returning to clarity.]
- He discusses two viewpoints of the world:

- A place of overpowering *kelipa*,
- or Hashem's garden.
- Now, from the Rambam's letters,⁸ we know of his difficult life; dealing with the Sultan, pain, weakness, etc.
 - A man of his stature would prefer dealing with matters of *chochma* all day,
 - which he says in *Moreh Nevuchim* is a person's true purpose,
 - yet most of his day was dedicated to other pursuits.
- Still, his *maskana* is that the world must be viewed as good.

Just as the Gemara seems to be in contradiction to the *maamar's* assertion that the world is a garden, the Rambam's life itself seems to have the same contradiction.



The same can be asked regarding each Jew:

- Being “despised and anguished” on the one hand,
- and having to “serve Hashem with joy” on the other.
 - Serving Hashem, and the joy

it requires, is constant.

- Joy is not secondary to *avoda*,
- and must be attainable, if Torah demands it.

Is it really possible to view the world as “gani”—Hashem’s garden? Torah itself seems to imply otherwise.

He Was Here First

[42:22]

The answer begins with a change in perspective:

- The answer lies in the word *basi*—“I [Hashem] have come.”
- Hashem is already in the world, in a “*dira*,” a permanent way.
- [In His presence, what are hardships in comparison?]

Example #1:

- An insect’s bite doesn’t bother someone in the midst of experiencing great joy.
- Not that the “bite”—the hardship—does not exist,
- but it does not disturb you when you recognize that you’re in Hashem’s presence, *basi*,
- and you are “inviting Him inside” by making it into *gani*—His home,
 - as explained in Tanya, each mitzvah makes the world a home for Hashem.⁹

What, then, does Torah mean when it calls Jews “despised and anguished”?

- A non-Jew, who has not yet converted, must be told the truth from *his* standpoint.

- To him, Jews are “despised and anguished” because he is not yet together with Hashem in the world.
- Hashem is close to every Jew, [not yet to the potential covert].
 - Being close to Him requires work, but that *He* is close to *us* is the *reality*.¹⁰

Example #2:

- Tell a businessman, “You earned hundreds of thousands of gold coins—and lost a penny.”
- Obviously he will not be bothered by the loss of a penny.
- **But**, he has to first **understand the value** of the gold.
- One who only recognizes the worth of the penny *will* mourn its loss.

(The Rebbe later elaborates more on the nimshal to this.)

Knowing Hashem is in the world with us is a perspective that helps us ignore the hardship. But only a Jew can appreciate that, not the potential convert.



Understanding the Worth of Gold

[46:28]

- Hashem was indeed here first—*basi*,
- but He wants our *avoda* to make the world once again His home—*gani*.
 - When we draw His presence here, it is permanent.
 - “*Yishkenu la’ad aleha*”—Hashem’s presence is forever.
 - The *mitzvah*’s effect is eternal, even if we later turn to do the opposite.¹¹
- Our *avoda* reveals *Elokus*; even if the world doesn’t see it yet, we can—because our actions brought it about.
- To reiterate: when we observe the world and hear negative occurrences, etc., we can become discouraged about our mission to repair the world.
- Torah says: No! You are only seeing with your physical eyes!
- Lift your gaze and remember Who created the world—this is Hashem’s beautiful orchard.

- Hashem’s presence is constant; as the Baal Shem Tov explains, He is constantly “coming to the garden” again.
- From a non-Jew’s perspective, life’s hardships are truly “despised and anguished.”
- In the example above, losing a coin is *still relative* to earning hundreds of thousands—they are both *quantitatively*, in *kamus*, measurable currency.
- But for a Jew, being in the same home as Hashem is a *qualitatively* better good, in *eichus*. Physical hardships are *not at all relative* to that.
- Even less than the relation between one coin and hundreds of thousands is the relevance of suffering beside being in Hashem’s presence.

A Jew can appreciate the value of being in Hashem’s world. Relative to that, oppression is not suffering at all. But the potential convert, a non-Jew, does not yet have the capacity to recognize the “worth of the gold.” For him, being “despised and anguished” is indeed the reality.

The Literal Good

[51:40]

We also want the literal, revealed good—not only the *perspective* of good.

- When we internalize this awareness—that we are with Hashem and thus not disturbed by hardship,
- we merit to receive Hashem’s ultimate blessings and treasures.

- This means in the physical sense, that the *nefesh habahamis* understands too.
- Physical good, and the ability to make a *dira b’tachtonim* with abundance.
- When Moshiach comes, we will not desire the physical pleasures because they will be plentiful as the dust of the earth.

1. Daniel *perek* 3.

2. Kesubos 33b, sourcesheet source 1.

3. Sourcesheet sources 2–3.

4. Sourcesheet sources 4–5.

5. Yevamos 39b. See sourcesheet source 6.

6. Bechoros 8a. Sourcesheet source 7.

7. Keilim 1:7.

8. Teshuvos HaRambam (Pe’er Hador) ch. 143. Sourcesheet source 8.

9. Tanya ch. 34. See sourcesheet sources 9–10.

10. Devarim Rabbah 2:14. Sourcesheet source 11.

11. Tanya ch. 25. Sourcesheet source 12.

WITH ALL HER HEART

A MOTHER'S EARLY START TO
LONG LASTING EDUCATION

Compiled By: Rabbi Levi Greenberg (OH)

Written By: Rabbi Shneur Itzinger

לע"נ אבינו היקר
ר' בן ציון
בן ר' יעקב ע"ה
גלב"ע כ"ח שבט ה'תשפ"א
תנ"צ'בה'

נדפס ע"י
הרה"ת ר' מנחם ארי' זוזגתו מרת
עדינה רחל ומשפחתם שיחיו לנדה
נאוואטא, קאליפארניא

THE CRIB: THE FIRST CLASSROOM

In¹ the corner of the local *beis midrash*, one student seemed out of place. Among elderly scholars with white beards lay a baby in his cradle.

The child, Yehoshua, would one day become the great Tanna, Rabbi Yehoshua ben Chananya, one of the most esteemed students of Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai and quoted throughout Shas.

But what was he doing in the *beis midrash* as an infant?

He was brought there by his mother, who knew that the most important thing she could do for her child was to nurture his love for Torah. She wanted his young, impressionable ears to absorb the sounds of Torah study from the very beginning of life. So, she personally brought him to be in the atmosphere of the *beis midrash*, to hear what he could not yet understand but would one day dedicate his life to teach.²

When Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai later praised his five most precious students, he described Rabbi Yehoshua with the words, “*Ashrei yoladto*—happy is she who bore him!” His greatness and lifelong devotion to Torah were credited to his mother’s dedication and the *chinuch* she instilled in him from birth.

ס

This story sets a precedent for Jewish mothers today. The custom of old—which ought not be left in the past—was for mothers to sing lullabies to their children that instilled a love for Torah. “There are raisins and almonds, but Torah is the *beste sechora* (best merchandise)!” goes the well-known bedtime song that lulled generations of *Yiddishe kinder* to sleep.

Already pre-preschool, the Jewish mother is entrusted with surrounding her children, sons and daughters alike, with holiness, Yiddishkeit, and a love for Torah that will stay with them forever. Rabbi Yehoshua’s mother did not send a *shliach* or hire an aide to bring him to the *beis midrash*; she personally brought him there, as part of her role in his *chinuch*.

A Jewish mother does not have to wait until her child goes to *cheder* to start their education. Her job of *chinuch* begins in the cradle, with words of Torah resonating in the child’s earliest memories that stay with them for a lifetime of Torah and *mitzvos*.

This is the “vital role of the Jewish woman, the ‘mother of the children,’” the Rebbe writes in an English letter to a N’shei Chabad convention. “For the *Chinuch* of the children begins in their most tender years, when they are entirely in the hands of the mother.”³

נשי
ובנות
חב"ד

N'SHEI
U'BNOS
CHABAD



© 2025 JEM, 108683

MOTHER: A PERSON'S FIRST TEACHER

On⁴ the first day of a new job, you are handed control of a complex piece of machinery with many functions and hundreds of tiny parts, and you are at a loss as to how to operate it. When it functions properly, the machinery will bring success and help others, but where do you begin? The vastness of the operation overwhelms you.

Then, another individual walks into the room, puts a comforting hand on your shoulder, and says, "I am the inventor of this machine. Here, take this user manual. I wrote it carefully with you in mind. It has all the instructions you need to operate it and achieve success in your work."

In a multifaceted universe, with conflicting influences pulling us in every direction, a Jew can easily feel overwhelmed. Knowing how to "operate" in the world and use it for good, the way Hashem intended, would be impossible without the guidebook given to us by the Creator—the Torah.

Competing forces vie for our attention; many claim to know the secret to success in life and offer alternative solutions or advice for navigating its complexities. With proper discipline and steadfast willpower, a Jew can learn to focus only on Torah for guidance, understanding that Torah is our *life* and Yiddishkeit is the guide for *daily living*.

This training begins in youth, through the mother's *chinuch* of the children Hashem gave her. Every Jewish woman—married, as well as unmarried (even young girls!) preparing for the time when Hashem will bless them to build their own homes—has the role of *akeres habayis*, the central pillar of the home, and the primary educator of her child.

As much as a teacher, counselor, or instructor can accomplish with children, it cannot be compared, nor is the effect as deep, as the effect a mother can have when she puts her whole mind and heart into ensuring her child receives

the proper outlook on life. All that the mother, or the girl preparing to become a mother, instills in the child has a deep and lasting impact on the entire life of that child.

Particularly in the first years of life, the mother has a special and exclusive mission to care for the child's upbringing and education. Even as the children grow older, fathers are often busy earning a livelihood or attending to other matters, leaving them unable to spend as much time as they'd wish guiding their children. The *akeres habayis*, the wife and mother, has more time, patience, and devotion to give herself to her children, guiding them in both the details of daily life and the fundamental principles, ensuring that from the outset the child understands the central purpose and foundation of their behavior, and how to conduct themselves according to Torah every day, month, and year of their life.

With this special mission, Hashem also gives women unique abilities to accomplish it, abilities that surpass what anyone else, even a man with great opportunities and talents in *chinuch*, could achieve. Hashem grants them as well the *bracha* to see the results of their labor, through true *nachas* from each of their children.

Even after the children grow up and marry, they remain connected to their parents, particularly to their mothers, who set them on the path of the Torah of Truth from childhood, the *living* Torah's instructions for life. They carry gratitude for their mother's guidance, expressed in many ways—foremost among them is the way they live their lives. The mother enjoys the primary delight and true pleasure that parents experience, for there is no greater joy than seeing children and grandchildren conduct themselves as a Yid should, and Hashem granting them all that they need—and even more—to continue on this path. **1**

ADDITIONAL INSIGHT

- » Women possess special soul strengths from Hashem that make them uniquely suited to be educators. They have the ability to teach with gentleness, yet at the same time with firmness, ensuring their young charges grow along the right path. They are also blessed with patience; if a child doesn't grasp a lesson the first time, the mother will explain it again and again if needed, until the child absorbs the importance and beauty of Yiddishkeit.⁵
- » The three defining characteristics of the Jewish people, *rachamanim*, *bayshanim*, and *gomlei chassadim*—being merciful, bashful, and kind—are seen much more profoundly among women. These qualities are of chief importance in the education of children, which is primarily, if not completely, entrusted to women, especially in a child's youngest years.⁶
- » Girls are not obligated to learn *Gemara*. This is not due to any lack of intellectual capacity, but rather because Hashem has given women a greater responsibility: preparing the next generation and educating children in Yiddishkeit. The Torah places this crucial task upon mothers, and to enable them to fulfill it, they are exempt from the obligation to learn Torah.⁷
- » The kitchen is one unique setting where mother-daughter education takes place. It is customary for a girl to help in preparing food for the home, thereby giving her the opportunity to be educated in the *halachos* of kashrus.⁸
- » “In Chinuch...the mother comes first, when the development of the newborn child in the first years after birth is exclusively in the hands of the mother, and only later, when the child begins to speak, the father begins to teach the child “the Torah which Moshe commanded us.” Indeed, even in later years, the mother has a greater influence on her children, the young and the older ones alike, due to her special, close, and loving relationship. We see this also in the Mitzva of *Kibbud Av v'Em* (“honoring father and mother”), where the Torah pointedly forewarns, “Everyone shall *fear* (respect) one's mother and father” — with emphasis on the mother (first).”⁹
- » “[T]he Jewish woman...is the *actual* candle-lighter, who was given the special Divine assignment, extraordinary privilege, and bright Mitzva of lighting the candles for the holy Shabbos and Yom Tov. And in a deeper spiritual sense:...in her role as *Eim habonim* (Mother of the children) she is the first to light up the young Neshomelach of the infants, until they begin to shine on their own.”¹⁰

1. Adapted from Yom Simchas Torah 5741; Sichos Kodesh 5741 vol. 1, pp. 246–247.

2. Yerushlami Yevamos 1:6.

3. English letter dated Erev Shabbos Parshas Achrei-Kedoshim, 5734.

4. Adapted from the *sicha* to the N'shei Chabad convention on 27 Iyar 5737; Sichos Kodesh 5737 vol. 2, pp. 4–6.

5. 13 Sivan 5741; Sichos Kodesh 5741 vol. 3, p. 691.

6. Letter to N'shei Chabad chapters, 15 Shevat 5721; Igros Kodesh vol. 20, p. 142.

7. The Rebbe's response to a group of college students in Yechidus. Toras Menachem vol. 3, p. 363. For a more comprehensive look on the topic of women learning Torah, see this column in Derher – Tishrei 5786.

8. *Sicha* to women, 27 Elul 5749; Hisva'aduyos 5749 vol. 4, p. 379.

9. Excerpt from an English free rendition of the Rebbe's letter to the N'shei Chabad Convention of 5737.

10. Excerpt from an English free rendition of the Rebbe's letter to the N'shei Chabad Convention of 5740.



WATCH:
BEHIND EVERY GREAT
JEW, A GREAT MOTHER



READ:
FOR THE WOMEN, BY
THE WOMEN

By: **Rabbi Mendy Greenberg** (Twinsburg, OH)

Self-Sacrific Continuum

The Nesius of the Frierdiker Rebbe

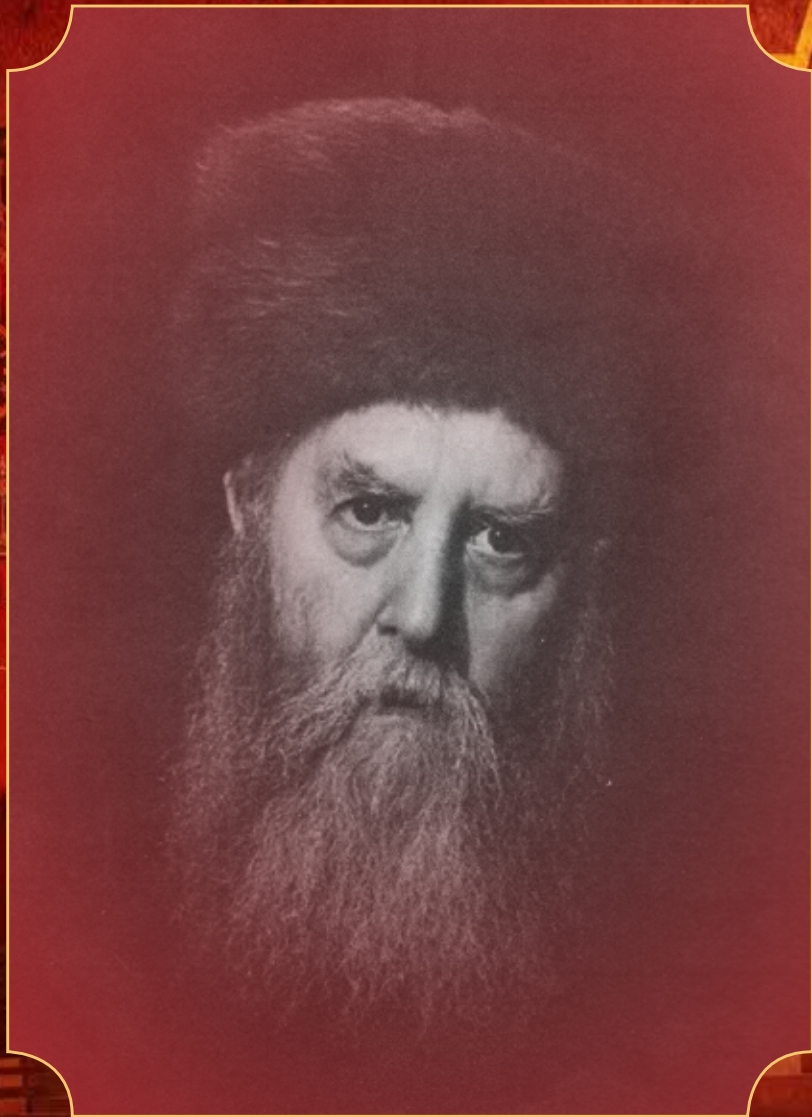
לע"נ

הילדה התמימה אלטא מינא ע"ה
בת יבלחט"א הרה"ח הרה"ת
ר' ישכר שלמה ומרת שיינא שיחיו
טייכטל

תלמידת בית רבקה חברה בצבאות ה' זכתה
לקירוב מיוחד מכ"ק אדמו"ר נשיא דורנו
נקטפה בדמי ימיה ביום ש"ק, פרשת
ואלה שמות כ"ג טבת ה'תש"נ
ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

נדפס ע"י
משפחתה שיחיו

ce



Russia—The War for Survival

The Difficult Beginning

It was Lag B'omer, just one year after the *histalkus* of the Rebbe Rashab. Russian police officers were rampaging through the home of the Frierdiker Rebbe in Rostov, collecting everything of value—furniture, clothing, and even precious inheritances from the Rabbeim—loading them onto waiting trucks. And it wasn't only material possessions they were after; a group of bochorim had been arrested as well, including Rashag, due to marry the Frierdiker Rebbe's daughter just one month later.

The bochor Yudel Chitrik stood there, horrified, taking in the scene.

"They took whatever they fancied," he later wrote. "Three large trucks were brought to cart away all the Rebbe's belongings."

The official ruse was the existence of Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim. The Yevsektzia, in their enthusiasm to close the yeshiva, had reported to the secret police that the Frierdiker Rebbe opposed the new regime, and the secret police were only too happy to act.

This was the climate in which the Frierdiker Rebbe began his *nesius*.

The Communists wasted no time in enforcing their ideology with an iron fist. In the emerging communist "paradise," low-wage workers were esteemed citizens. At the

same time, the *bourgeoisie*—a vaguely defined class—were branded enemies of the state.

The new officials could enter any home at will, confiscating possessions or "redistributing" the house itself to other families. There was no concept of civil rights. Everything was up for grabs.

Thankfully, the bochorim were released after ten days, and the wedding proceedings commenced.

"Rashag's *ufruf* took place on Shavuot," writes Reb Folleh Kahan. "After davening, everyone went to the home of the *mechutan*, Reb Mendel Gurary, who rented a room on Moskovsky Street. The poverty was striking—both in the home of the *chassan's* parents and that of the *kallah's* [i.e., the home of the Frierdiker Rebbe]. Just a short time before the wedding, the Bolsheviks had confiscated everything they owned, including the *kallah's* clothing, etc. Kiddush was made on coffee, as there was no money to buy *mashke*."

"The wedding took place on Friday, 15 Sivan. The atmosphere was very depressing. When the Alter Rebbe's *niggun*, *Arba Bavos*, was sung, the Frierdiker Rebbe wept, striking the table forcefully with his hand.

"The chair of the Rebbe Rashab remained at the head of the table, exactly as it had been in his lifetime—no one touched it. The mood was so heavy that there was no dancing at all. Only Reb Avraham Fradkin danced a *kazatzke* with his son to the tune of *Hop Cossak*..."¹

Soviet Style Equality

The Bolsheviks were the party of "equality" and "freedom." Every person, they claimed, was free to live according to their conscience; there would be no anti-religious coercion. To help "ensure" this "equality," several key laws were passed, among them the following:

All property of religious institutions—such as shuls—was now deemed the property of "the people," in other words, the state. If a certain number of locals submitted a request, the shul could remain open—but the required number of signatories was conveniently determined by the local Soviet officials.



THE CHOTZER OF THE REBBE RASHAB AND THE FRIERDIKER REBBE IN ROSTOV.

All children were required to attend public school; private education was banned.

All private enterprise was outlawed; everyone was to work equally—for the state. The new six-day work week included Shabbos.

The Jewish section of the Communist Party, the Yevsektzia, set out to ensure that these laws were observed *‘lifnim mishuras hadin.’* Across the country, shuls were turned into youth clubs, children were indoctrinated with *kefira*, and Shabbos observance was made virtually impossible.

The Frierdiker Rebbe immediately began organizing the opposition. In letters and *sichos* to Chassidim, he made it clear in no uncertain terms that it was incumbent upon every chossid to hold the torch of Yiddishkeit.

“It is true,” the Frierdiker Rebbe wrote in one *nichtav kloli*, “we are hungry and thirsty, exiled and broken, crushed and downtrodden—as though the *hashgacha* has been withdrawn *chas v’shalom*, leaving wild beasts to rule over us and wreak havoc on our homes and children.

“Yet even so... Let us rise and follow in the footsteps of our forefathers... Let us hold aloft the sacred banner whose shining letters declare: *Yisrael, Oraisa, and Kudsha Brich Hu are one.* Our ancestors carried this banner; we shall hold it too, and our children after us, until the very foundations of evil are destroyed.

“Let each of us know: deliverance will not come through sighs alone. My father, the Rebbe, demands action: to establish houses of learning and to establish public Torah classes, in both *nigleh* and Chassidus. This is the work we must do, with Hashem’s help.”²

The results quickly became visible.

In a letter to a chossid in America in 5682, the Frierdiker Rebbe tells him that one of his friends had established new Torah classes in Ratzov; another had opened a network of *chadarim* in Zhlobin; a third had opened a branch of Tomchei Temimim in Gomel. “Without regard for the difficult situation, they are all occupied with *harbatzas haTorah.*”³

As word spread about the powerful new force sustaining *Yiddishkeit* throughout the Soviet Union—the new Lubavitcher Rebbe—the secret police in Rostov also took notice. In 5684, as the Rebbe traveled back home from a trip to Moscow, they prepared to arrest him.

Miraculously, the plan was leaked to the Frierdiker Rebbe’s secretary, Reb Chonye Marosov, who rushed to intercept him before he reached Rostov. After tense negotiations, the GPU agreed to leave the Rebbe alone, provided that he leave the city immediately.



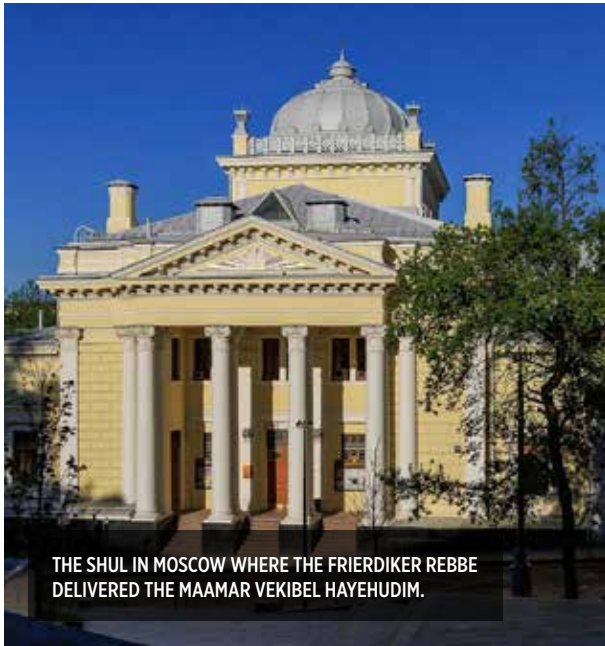
DEPICTIONS OF THE BOLSHEVIK TAKEOVER OF RUSSIA AND SEIZURE OF PROPERTY.

Before Shavuot that year, the Frierdiker Rebbe relocated to Leningrad.

The Leningrad Years

Leningrad was much closer to the major Jewish population centers of Russia. It had been more difficult for Chassidim to visit Rostov, but now the Frierdiker Rebbe’s large apartment in Leningrad saw a never-ending stream of visitors. People came for *yechidus*; crowds arrived for *maamarim* and farbrengens, and hundreds would converge for Rosh Hashanah. In the heart of Soviet Russia, a full-blown chassidic court had taken shape.

As the underground *chadarim* and yeshivos expanded, so did the need for funding. To sustain the network, the Frierdiker Rebbe began corresponding with the Joint Distribution Committee, the Alliance Israélite Universelle, and other major philanthropic organizations abroad. Soon, significant aid began to flow into Russia.



THE BIG EVENTS

Many of the major events in the life of the Frierdiker Rebbe have been covered at length in *A Chassidisher Derher*. The following is a selection of articles:

A Rebbe's Chinuch: The Story of the Frierdiker Rebbe's Childhood (Tammuz 5782)

Without Any Fear: The Frierdiker Rebbe's *mesirus nefesh* that led to his arrest in 5687 (Adar I 5776)

In The Lion's Den: The Frierdiker Rebbe's Arrest and Liberation (Tammuz 5784). **Not**

Just My Liberation: The Rebbe's Account of 12-13 Tammuz (Tammuz 5785)

The Rebbe & Rebbetzin's Chasuna (Kislev 5779)

A Royal Visit: The Frierdiker Rebbe's Trip to the Holy Land (Av 5784)

America Awakened: The Frierdiker Rebbe's Visit to the United States (Cheshvan 5786)

The Miraculous Rescue: The Frierdiker Rebbe's Escape From Nazi Occupied Poland (Adar II 5779)

Shake the Jewish World: The Frierdiker Rebbe's Call for *L'Alter L'Teshuva*, *L'Alter L'Geulah* (Adar 5775)

The New World: The Three Institutions of Machne, Merkos, and Kehos (Sivan 5778)

The general financial situation had also improved somewhat. The government began to permit small private businesses to operate for profit, and the Frierdiker Rebbe encouraged home-based work, allowing Jews to maintain their livelihoods while keeping Shabbos.

But the Yevsektzia continued to grow stronger, and the war against Yiddishkeit showed no signs of slowing. Letters from the Frierdiker Rebbe reveal that by 5685, he was already contemplating leaving the Soviet Union and continuing the struggle from abroad. In one letter—written partially in code—he described “a relative” suffering under relentless persecution, his “business destroyed” and his “factory shrinking.”⁴ The message was clear.

Nonetheless, the fight continued unabated.

“*Chapt arein mesirus nefesh*,” the Frierdiker Rebbe exhorted two hundred Chassidim gathered for Yud-Tes Kislev in 5686. “A day will come when there will be freedom of religion—and you will search for the opportunity of *mesirus nefesh* and you won't find it...”⁵

But the Frierdiker Rebbe's inner circle knew that all was not well. Spies were always present. The Frierdiker Rebbe would speak in guarded language; the Rebbe once related that *yechidus* concerning underground work was moved to a side room, as the main *yechidus* room was known to be bugged.⁶ By the winter of 5687, things seemed to reach a tipping point.

In Adar I, Reb Elya Chaim Althaus accompanied the Frierdiker Rebbe to the train station as he headed for Moscow, where he would deliver the famous *maamar Vekibel Hayehudim*. As he boarded the train, the Frierdiker Rebbe turned to Reb Elya Chaim Althaus and said in a heavy tone, ‘A perek Tehillim doesn't hurt. Say a perek Tehillim for me...’⁷

On Purim that year, as hundreds gathered in the large *zal* for the *farbrenge*, the Frierdiker Rebbe spoke with unusual sharpness. He addressed the Yevsektzia openly, despite the fact that their agents stood in the room, right across from him. Each time he mentioned them, he added “*yimach shemom*,” cursing them without restraint.

Reb Elya Chaim and the Chassidim watched the spies' faces the entire time. “We saw them flush with shame, and then turn white with anger and murderous hatred. In that moment, we could sense their thoughts and knew they were plotting revenge.”⁸

The revenge wasn't long in coming. On 15 Sivan that year, came the dreaded knock on the door.

Riga—The Temporary Station

Shortly after leaving Russia, the Frierdiker Rebbe summed up his experiences in a letter:

I cannot yet properly write about everything that transpired over the past six months; my weak health—may Hashem grant me a full recovery—demands some rest, and, at least somewhat, to forget the painful experiences I endured both in body and in spirit.

I was imprisoned under the harshest conditions—behind iron doors, guarded by armed soldiers, in terrifying conditions. Hearing the cries of the murdered, the moans of the tormented. It's hard to believe such cruelty could exist. Even now, when I recall it, my hair stands on end. Hodu LaHashem ki tov—for saving me from destruction and allowing me to emerge with my body intact.

Altogether, I spent eighteen and a half days in prison, followed by ten days of exile in Kostroma, and six weeks in exile in Malakhovka, a small village near Moscow—the only place I was able to stay, for reasons I'll explain in the future.⁹

Before Rosh Hashanah, I was in Rostov, at the Ohel of my father, the Rebbe. A few days before Rosh Hashanah, I arrived in Peterburg, and remained there throughout the Yomim Tovim. After tremendous effort and expense by our devoted friend Reb Mordechai Dubin—who traveled three times over two months on my behalf—I was finally compelled to leave the country on Thursday, Isru Chag Sukkos.

May Hashem grant that the good intentions I have to strengthen Torah in our country be fulfilled in the best way.¹⁰

Shortly after arriving in Riga, the Frierdiker Rebbe traveled to Berlin on communal matters. Knowing how unwell he was, Reb Yitzchak Dubov asked the Frierdiker Rebbe's mother, Rebbetzin Shterna Sarah, whether the Frierdiker Rebbe would see a doctor during the trip. "Yes, yes," she replied, "I asked him as well—but he told me, 'Mame, please don't ask me to. I don't have time.'"

The Frierdiker Rebbe had left Russia on *Isru Chag* of Sukkos 5688, and Riga, Latvia, would become the capital of Lubavitch for the next six years.

It was very much a continuation of the years in Russia. Concerns of Russian Jewry remained at the forefront. Now free to travel and communicate openly, the Frierdiker Rebbe launched a coordinated campaign to pressure the Soviet government to abolish the Yevsektzia. Jewish leaders across Europe were urged to meet with their local Soviet ambassadors and convey that the Yevsektzia's anti-religious persecution was damaging Russia's reputation abroad, and it



THE FRIERDIKER
REBBE'S LATVIAN
PASSPORT.



REB YECHESKEL
(‘CHATCHE’)
FEIGIN.

LIBRARY OF AGUDAS CHASSIDEI CHABAD

simply wasn't in Russia's best interest.

However, for the first time in Chabad history, the Frierdiker Rebbe was separated from the majority of Chassidim, who were left behind in Russia.

Finances were a constant challenge. The Frierdiker Rebbe's household had always been supported through *maamad*, but most Chassidim were now cut off, and the few abroad were mostly poor immigrants struggling to survive. A small amount of support came from America, but it barely covered the basics.

The Frierdiker Rebbe himself never mentioned the financial strain; in his letters, he wrote only of the debts incurred from supporting Yiddishkeit in Russia. When a planned trip to Eretz Yisroel for Tishrei 5695 was cancelled, the Frierdiker Rebbe gave no explanation—but Reb Chatche Feigin, the Frierdiker Rebbe's secretary, later revealed that there simply hadn't been enough money to make it happen.

Despite suffering from various ailments, the Frierdiker Rebbe refused to rest. As Reb Chatche Feigin later wrote to America, "There is simply no way to logically explain the Rebbe's workload."¹¹

Chassidus Renewed: Poland

Crossing to Poland

Riga was often viewed as a temporary stop.

The Frierdiker Rebbe wanted to reconstitute Lubavitch as it was in Lubavitch, where Tomchei Temimim was in close proximity to the Rebbe, and where Chassidim could easily come to congregate. Riga, however, was a modern European city with very few Chassidim; it wasn't the long-term solution the Frierdiker Rebbe was looking for.

After two years in Riga, the Frierdiker Rebbe embarked on a year-long journey to Eretz Yisroel and the United States. The trip to America was mainly to raise funds for

the Jews of Russia, yet an unspoken question was whether the Frierdiker Rebbe would ultimately settle there.

America, too, was ultimately ruled out. While he recognized its potential, the Frierdiker Rebbe did not yet see it as a home for Lubavitch.

Enter Warsaw, Poland.

Warsaw was a vibrant Jewish metropolis—filled with *yeshivos*, *rabbanim*, *rebbe*s, and a flourishing Jewish life. In earlier generations, Chabad Chassidim were virtually unknown there; Russian Chassidim often viewed the Polish Jews as foreign and different in temperament and culture. However, since the Bolshevik Revolution, many Chassidim had migrated to Poland, and the Chabad presence there had been steadily growing.

Already on the first *Yom Hilula* of the Rebbe Rashab, on Beis Nissan 5681, a *Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim* had been founded in Warsaw—the first independent branch of the yeshiva—and it was thriving.

From the very start, this yeshiva was especially dear to the Frierdiker Rebbe. Because of the wartime disruptions, it had taken a special messenger to bring him the news across the border to Rostov. The Frierdiker Rebbe had been overjoyed. Reb Berel Rivkin later wrote that the Frierdiker Rebbe spoke about it for days—expressing his hope that the institution would grow and spread its light throughout the world.¹²

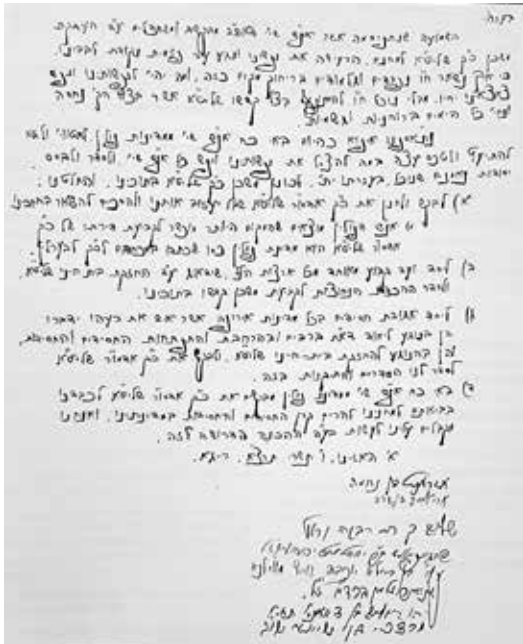
When the Frierdiker Rebbe arrived for his first visit to Poland, the yeshiva had grown to 250 students. He was very pleased. “If I had presented such a yeshiva to my father,” the Frierdiker Rebbe remarked, “I would have received an award.”¹³ A year later, the Frierdiker Rebbe held the Rebbe and Rebbetzin’s wedding in Warsaw, specifically to be in proximity to the yeshiva.

The Chassidim in Poland were well aware of their unique position and hoped that the Frierdiker Rebbe would ultimately settle among them. Just two days after his arrival in Riga from Russia, Warsaw’s Chassidim had sent a formal letter to the Frierdiker Rebbe, requesting that he make Poland his new home.

When the Frierdiker Rebbe later returned from the United States, word spread that American Chassidim were asking him to settle there permanently—and the Polish Chassidim quickly renewed their campaign. They reiterated



LETTERHEAD OF YESHIVAS TOMCHEI TEMIMIM IN WARSAW, SHOWING THE YESHIVA BUILDING OF WHICH NO PHOTOGRAPH SURVIVES, AS IT WAS DESTROYED IN THE WAR.



CHASSIDIM OF POLAND, LATVIA, AND LITHUANIA PETITION THE FRIERDIKER REBBE TO STAY IN THEIR MIDST.

LIBRARY OF AGUDAS CHASSIDEI CHABAD

their earlier request, arguing passionately that Poland was the natural and ideal location for the new Lubavitch center.

Over the course of the ensuing year, the Frierdiker Rebbe considered bringing *Tomchei Temimim* to Riga, with the hope of reestablishing the yeshiva near him. But when that plan failed to materialize, he decided instead to move closer to the yeshiva.

That Tishrei (5692) was already spent in Otwock [during this Tishrei, the Rebbe held a historic Simchas Beis Hashoevah farbrengen at the Frierdiker Rebbe's behest, when many Chassidim heard him speak for the first time]. The final move was delayed for a variety of reasons, but by the end of 5693, the Frierdiker Rebbe had permanently settled in Poland.¹⁴

Renewing Days of Old

In Warsaw, Reb Chatche Feigin reported, everything seemed different.

Being near the yeshiva, he wrote, the Frierdiker Rebbe seemed more at peace. “The Rebbe *shlita* delivers *maamarim* nearly every Shabbos—deep and long *maamarim* [referring to the famous *hemshech* of Rosh Hashanah 5694]. The *bochurim* join the *chazara*, and then they enter the Rebbe's room for *chazara* as well [on Shabbos morning, just as in Lubavitch]. At times, we forget about the current situation—it feels as though we've been transported back twenty years, when the *Heichal* [in Lubavitch] stood in its full glory—may Hashem renew those days once more.”¹⁵

Reb Avraham Yitzchak Garfinkel, one of the *bochurim*

at the time, wrote that the year 5694 was a “golden age” for the *bochurim*.

“Those were the shining days in the history of Tomchei Temimim in Warsaw. The Rebbe took a deep interest in every detail, and would often visit the yeshiva to daven, to farbreng on special occasions, and to deliver *maamarim*.

“The *Temimim* became deeply attached to the Rebbe. The *hemshechim* of *maamarim* were extraordinary and profoundly deep. We would copy them on carbon paper, review them repeatedly, and immerse ourselves in them—we truly *'koched zich'* in them.

“It was a beautiful sight to see the Rebbe walking from his home to the yeshiva on Shabbos, surrounded by elderly *anash* and distinguished Chassidim, with the *bochurim* following. His face radiated holiness and *pnimius'diker simcha*, lighting up everyone who was fortunate enough to see him.”¹⁶

The years in Poland were golden years, but they introduced unique difficulties of their own.

Tomchei Temimim was incredibly successful in drawing in the youth; seven branches were opened throughout Poland, and it eventually came to a point where Tomchei Temimim was forced to put ads in the newspaper asking young *bochurim* to stop enrolling—there simply wasn't space or funds to handle the demand.

Not everyone was amenable to the idea of the *poilisher* youth suddenly following Chabad Chassidus. In a *sicha* (referenced at the end of this article), the Rebbe once described it with the *possuk* about Yosef, *vaykan'u bo echav, v'aviv*



RESIDENCE OF THE FRIERDIKER REBBE IN RIGA ON THE SECOND FLOOR OF THIS CENTER BUILDING.



THE FRIERDIKER REBBE IN HIS STUDY IN RIGA.

shamar es hadavar. A special divine role and mission had been reserved for the Frierdiker Rebbe from above, and that engendered a sense of competition.

But there was something that concerned the Chassidim even more: the Frierdiker Rebbe's illness.

The Rebbe's Kochos Atzmiyim

When the Frierdiker Rebbe returned from his trip to America, some noticed that the pace of his speech had changed slightly. Not much attention was paid to it, but by the time of the move to Poland, it had become impossible to ignore.

The Frierdiker Rebbe visited various physicians and clinics in search of a diagnosis, to no avail. Finally, after two years, a certain Jewish doctor determined a course of treatment.

From then on, the Rebbe was often away from home. For the final four years in Poland (5695–5699), he would usually visit a sanatorium twice a year, each winter and summer—often for many months at a time, and spend additional time visiting physicians in Vienna or Paris [the Rebbe and Rebbetzin spent much of their time with the Frierdiker Rebbe during those journeys (in addition to generally spending Yom Tov with the Frierdiker Rebbe)].

There were times that the Frierdiker Rebbe was under strict orders to rest as much as possible and to speak as little as possible. During those periods—like the entire winter of 5695 in Purkesdorf—the Frierdiker Rebbe utilized the time to write long letters and *reshimos*, such as the *lange briv* (“long letter”) to the Rebbetzin.

At the end of 5695, the Frierdiker Rebbe and Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim also moved to Otwock, a quiet resort town near Warsaw. It would be easier to maintain the yeshiva financially, and the fresh air was better for the Rebbe's health.

Unfortunately, the situation didn't improve.

“When he arrived [after three months at a sanatorium], we were brokenhearted,” wrote Reb Chatche Feigin after Tishrei 5697. “We didn't see any improvement in his health, neither in his speech nor in his ability to walk.

“During Rosh Hashanah, everything went exactly as in previous years without change, with one exception: usually, he received *panim* on Erev Rosh Hashanah at the doorway of his room, but now he wasn't able to stand and remained seated at his desk as people came in following the usual order—he would always come out three times, and this time three groups entered.

“The davening on Leil Rosh Hashanah lasted as always—from nightfall until close to midnight. On Rosh Hashanah day, he recited the *haftarah*, the *lamnatzeiach*, the *brachos*, and the *pesukim* before shofar as usual—with cries from the depths of his heart. Amazingly, his speech was noticeably



A KUNTRES OF MAAMARIM OF THE FRIEDIKER REBBE PUBLISHED IN WARSAW, 5694.



PHOTOS OF THE OLDER STUDENTS IN TOMCHEI TEMIMIM, WARSAW.



RECENTLY DISCOVERED PHOTO OF THE FRIEDIKER REBBE PUBLISHED IN A POLISH NEWSPAPER, SHOWING HIS ARRIVAL IN OTWOCK FOR TISHREI 5692.

LIBRARY OF AGUDAS CHASSIDEI CHABAD

RABBI SHMUEL SUPER



KEHOT PUBLICATION SOCIETY

THE FRIEDIKER REBBE CONVALESCING IN AUSTRIA DURING THE YEARS 5695–5697.

stronger and clearer. To me, this was an example of the explanation in Chassidus that the revelation of the *kochos atzmiyim* can affect the *kochos hagluyim*.¹⁷

The next year (5698), he wrote a similar report:

“There seems to be a slight improvement, but from the days of Selichos through Sukkos, he ignored his physical state with regard to his *avoda*—such as davening on *leil Rosh Hashanah*, the *tekios*, *maamarim*... on Simchas Torah, he sat for several hours and farbrenged... It was obviously beyond his physical capacity, and it seems that this winter he will need to travel for health-purposes once again.”¹⁸

That same letter included another aspect of Tishrei, which was slightly ominous.

During the Simchas Torah farbrengen, the Frierdiker Rebbe declared that this was a year that needed *rachamim rabim*. “Obviously, this made a very strong impression on everyone. He saw the effect of his words, and he said, ‘But not with fear and sobbing, rather a *chassidisher hisorerus rachamim*, with *simcha!*’”

Later that year, the winds of war began blowing

throughout Europe. Hitler annexed Austria and began to dismember Czechoslovakia. As time passed, people became increasingly anxious that a world war would break out once again.

The next year, at the Yud-Tes Kislev farbrengen, the Frierdiker Rebbe spoke about the state of affairs.

“He said,” Reb Chatche writes, “that one can see clearly that we are in the time of the coming of Moshiach. He said, ‘Moshiach is already here, just behind the wall—and one who has a good sense of hearing can already hear his voice, and one with a good sense of vision can already see him....’”¹⁹

These were themes that would recur in the *sichos* for the entire duration of World War II, which broke out at the end of the year. In America, this would become known under the banner of *L’Alter L’Teshuva*, *L’Alter L’Geulah*.

We are at the end of the night, the Frierdiker Rebbe explained at that Yud-Tes Kislev farbrengen—and at that point, it becomes all the more difficult to stay awake. We mustn’t fall asleep.²⁰

PART III

No Different: The United States of America

To Transform the World

On Tuesday, Tes Adar II 5700, an enormous crowd waited on the pier at New York Harbor to welcome the

Frierdiker Rebbe. The Chassidim were able to emit a sigh of relief—the Rebbe was finally out of danger.

Rabbi Yisroel Jacobson was part of a special delegation that was taken on a tugboat and allowed to board the

Friediker Rebbe's ship. The Friediker Rebbe summed up his recent experiences and immediately shared his vision for the future:

"The sufferings I endured in prison in Russia do not compare to the torments of the 12 weeks I spent under their [i.e. the Nazi's] rule.

"Now we will quickly take care of the formalities and get to work immediately. Our work is Torah and Yiddishkeit. As for the contention that we are weak physically, that we have no strength—Hashem is after all '*hanosen layo'ef koach*.'"²¹

When the Friediker Rebbe disembarked onto America's shores, his *gashmius'dike* image had changed drastically since his last visit. Last time, he had walked off the boat in good health; now he was brought on a wheelchair. In earlier years, he had spoken with a strong, clear voice, but now the *sichos* were in a soft tone, and increasingly difficult to understand.

But those who thought the Friediker Rebbe came to rest were sorely mistaken. That same day, the Friediker Rebbe declared the opening of Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim on American shores. "America *iz nisht andersh*, America is no different," the Rebbe maintained.

The small Tomchei Temimim yeshiva stationed in 770 was the first Chassidische yeshiva in America, where *bochurim* learned Chassidus regularly, wore beards, and behaved in every way like *chassidische bochurim*.

Agudas Chassidei Chabad quickly became alive with activity. The network of Tomchei Temimim opened branch after branch of day schools, often sending 18-year-old *bochurim* to distant cities to establish them. A large network of afternoon Talmud Torahs opened in New York.



NEWSPAPER CLIPPING FEATURING A PHOTO OF THE FRIEDIKER REBBE AND THE REBBE GREETED AT THE TRAIN STATION UPON THEIR RETURN TO POLAND.

The Friediker Rebbe appointed the Rebbe to head three new institutions, Kehos, Machne Yisroel, and Merkos L'Yonei Chinuch. Merkos oversaw the opening of many girls' schools, and Mesibos Shabbos became one of the Rebbe's earliest campaigns.

"We were brought to America," the Friediker Rebbe said at the Greystone Hotel on the first Shavuot in America, "to have *mesirus nefesh* to make America a *makom Torah*. I know very well what type of *mesirus nefesh* it will take—but I am confident that in the merit of my holy ancestors, we will succeed."²²

In fact, the logo of Merkos was the 'light' of the '*luchos*' spreading over an entire globe. From the very first moment, the vision was global.

"I remember," related Rabbi Hirshel Fogelman, "how the Rebbe once said at a farbrengen, 'My *shver* began with Mesibos Shabbos. The end will be that we'll transform the entire world!' These words had a tremendous impact on us. We started to feel like it was really happening. Lubavitch would eventually conquer the whole world!"²³

A World of Gan Eden

At a time when much of traditional Judaism in America seemed to be dying or dead, 770 was very much alive. Other shuls or 'chassidic courts' were filled with elderly Jews, but Lubavitch was alive with youth, something which attracted many other young *bochurim*.

"Our lives were intertwined with the Friediker Rebbe," related Reb Yosef Goldstein. "His farbrengens, his image, his *spodik*, his beard, and his holy face that always appeared aflame. We were as attached to the Rebbe as bees to honey."²⁴

The *sichos* and *maamarim* from those early days, especially those from *Kayitz Tof Shin*, cover many of the basic fundamentals of Chassidus and Chassidische *hanhaga*, as the crowd listening was really a crowd of beginners. With the Russian Chassidim mostly still in Russia, and the Polish Yeshivah *bochurim* still stranded in Europe, the Friediker Rebbe began from scratch with a third group of disciples.

The Friediker Rebbe himself came to the main floor of 770 only in the first few years in America. Soon, it became too difficult, and all *tefillos* and farbrengens were held on the second floor. Access was tightly restricted, and young *bochurim* were often left waiting in the hallway.

In an interview with Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky, he described how once, after he managed to gain access, he had the privilege of attending a farbrengen:

"I walked into the farbrengen room. The Friediker Rebbe was seated in his chair at the head of the table, his

shtreimel on his holy head. The Rebbe was sitting to his left, Rashag to his right. He was already speaking. I couldn't understand much of what he was saying, but the image—his presence, the aura, the way everyone was listening intently. It felt like I was in another world, in Gan Eden. Nothing else existed in those moments.”²⁵

I Have Come To My Garden...

In the final years, as delivering *maamarim* became too difficult, the Frierdiker Rebbe began releasing *maamarim* regularly to be published and learned by Chassidim on special dates. With the approach of Shabbos Yud Shevat 5710, the Frierdiker Rebbe released the *maamar* ‘*Basi Legani*’ in honor of the *yahrtzeit* of Rebbetzin Rivkah.

In a footnote to this *maamar* in the *Maftaiach* of the Frierdiker Rebbe's Torah, the Rebbe wrote about the moments he brought the published *maamar*—the Frierdiker Rebbe's final *maamar*—to the Frierdiker Rebbe. Every detail of that moment was carefully noted by the Rebbe. Perhaps this was the final time the Rebbe saw the Frierdiker Rebbe *b'chaim chayuso b'alma dein...*

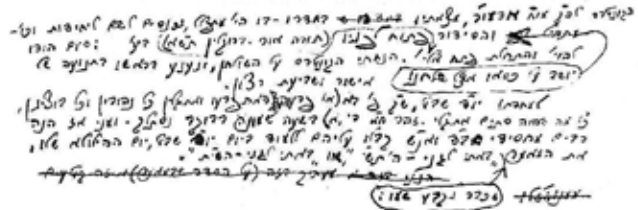
“The *maamar* (the *kuntres*) was brought from the binder on Friday, 9 Shevat,” the Rebbe wrote. “When I brought the *kuntres* to my father-in-law, the Rebbe, I found him in his room—where he would daven, receive *yechidus* etc.—sitting in his chair at his desk, with the Siddur *Torah Ohr* (Brooklyn edition 5701) open before him on page 45, where *Hodu laHashem* ends and *Pasach Eliyahu* begins. I placed the *kuntres* on the table. He nodded his head in a gesture of approval and satisfaction.

“The next day, Yud Shevat—Shabbos Kodesh Parshas Bo (‘*El Paro, da'ispar'u ve'isgalya kol nehorin u'butsinin...*’ Zohar I, 210a)—at eight o'clock in the morning, he was *nistalek*.”²⁶

The Three Stages— and Their Lesson

At a Yud Shevat farbrengen,²⁷ the Rebbe once pointed out that the Frierdiker Rebbe's *nesius* was characterized by three periods of *mesirus nefesh*, each of a different kind.

The first ten years were characterized by *mesirus nefesh* in the most physical sense, in the battle against the Soviets. The second ten years were characterized by a spiritual *mesirus nefesh*, to persevere in the face of criticism (and worse) from our own fellow Jews. And the third period was a *mesirus nefesh* of spirit—instead of building up his own *daled amos* and shielding them from the rest of the



THE REBBE RECORDS IN HIS HOLY HANDWRITING HOW HE BROUGHT THE KUNTRES OF ‘BASI LEGANI—5710’ TO THE FRIERDIKER REBBE.

country, he declared that the entire America would be his own *daled amos*.

With each form of *mesirus nefesh*, the Rebbe concluded, the Frierdiker Rebbe paved the path for us. When a Yid decides to embark on any form of *mesirus nefesh*—or even two or three—the way is open for us to do so, and to do so with tremendous success. **T**

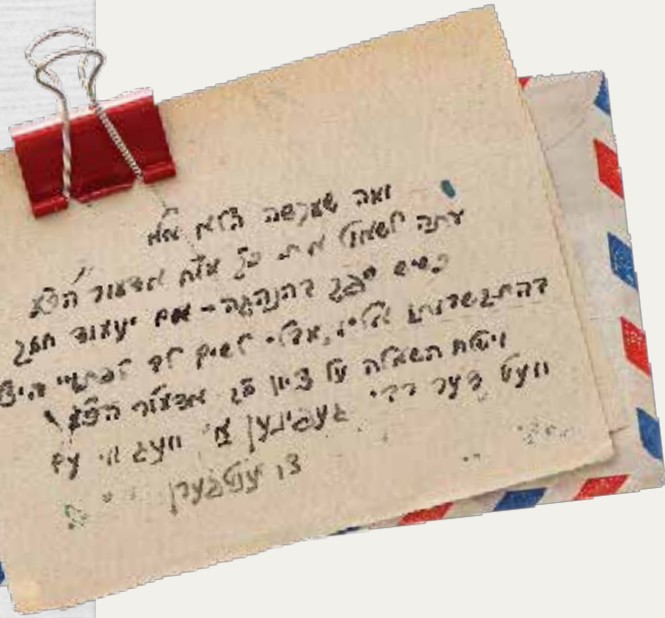
1. The events are described in Reshimas Zichronos p. 406 and Shmuos V'Sippurim vol. 1, p. 200–01. See also Igros Kodesh Admur HaRayyatz vol. 1, p. 327.
2. Igros Kodesh Admur HaRayyatz vol. 1, p. 177 (shortened for brevity).
3. Igros Kodesh Admur HaRayyatz vol. 1, p. 221.
4. Igros Kodesh Admur HaRayyatz vol. 1, p. 443.
5. Sefer Hasichos 5680–87 p. 121.
6. 12 Tammuz 5733. Toras Menachem vol. 73, p. 45.
7. Sefer Hatoldos vol. 3, p. 52.
8. Sefer Hatoldos vol. 3, p. 84.
9. The Frierdiker Rebbe moved to Malakhovka due to threats from the Leningrad GPU to rearrest him.
10. Igros Kodesh Admur HaRayyatz vol. 1, p. 613.
11. Igros Kodesh vol. 2 pg. 9.
12. Toldos Chabad B'Polin p. 85.
13. Toldos Chabad B'Polin p. 117.
14. See Toldos Chabad B'Polin p. 73.
15. Toldos Chabad B'Polin p. 153.
16. Toldos Chabad B'Polin p. 154.
17. Igros Kodesh Admur HaRayyatz vol. 4, p. 7.
18. Igros Kodesh Admur HaRayyatz vol. 4, p. 13.
19. Igros Kodesh Admur HaRayyatz vol. 4, p. 18.
20. See Sefer Hasichos 5699 p. 315.
21. Di Yiddische Heim, Issue 33–34.
22. Sefer Hasichos Kayitz 5700 p. 126.
23. Derher Sivan 5778 p. 19.
24. Derher Kislev 5785 p. 31.
25. Derher Shevat 5777 p. 43.
26. Maftaiach Sifrei Maamarei U'Drushei Admur M'HoRayatz p. 39, fn. 4
27. 10 Shevat 5734. Likkutei Sichos vol. 18, p. 303. Toras Menachem 5734 vol. 75, p. 168.



Story

לזכות
החתן הרה"ת ר' לוי שיחיל טייכטל
והכלה המהוללה מרת חנה לאה תחיל' לשס
לרגל בואם בקשרי שידוכין

נדפס ע"י
משפחתם שיחיו



דער רבי זעט
געפינען א זעג...

WRITTEN BY: RABBI LEVI GREENBERG (TX)

I Experienced Clarity



AS TOLD BY
**RABBI LEVI
SHEMTOV**
(Oak Park, MI)

Shortly after Pesach 5785, my wife was in her third month of pregnancy with our second daughter when her doctor recommended and administered a routine alpha-fetoprotein blood test to check for serious birth defects. When the results arrived, the doctor notified us that she needed to undergo more tests at the hospital. The earliest appointment we could make was a few weeks later, and in the meantime, the doctor contacted us and emphasized that we needed to receive the updated results urgently.

I sent the results of the initial test to my father-in-law, Rabbi Yitzchok Kulski, who is a radiologist in Paris, France, and he confirmed that more tests were needed. He also strongly encouraged me to write to the Rebbe requesting a *bracha*, even before our hospital appointment.

Lag B'Omer was on Friday, and I planned to write a letter to the Rebbe that afternoon, with several items I wished to report and, of course, to update the Rebbe on the evolving situation regarding the pregnancy and ask for a *bracha*.

That week, someone posted on a community WhatsApp chat that the weekly “Here’s My Story” (Issue 644) publication from JEM featured a story by Rabbi Yechiel Haboura, a teacher at the Beis Yehuda School in Detroit. While I usually don’t get around to reading the HMS, in this case, figuring that such a story would be of interest to the broader Detroit community, I took several dozen copies from yeshiva to distribute in a few local shuls.

At home, after reporting on a recent event my wife organized, I continued my letter to the Rebbe with the issues surrounding the pregnancy. After writing out all the details, my hand became a bit stiff, so I decided to take a short break before writing the other items. In the meantime, I decided to read the JEM story from the copies I had with me. In it, Rabbi Haboura described the miraculous circumstances of his birth in 5747.

By the third paragraph, I realized something very special was happening. “Early in the pregnancy, my mother took the alpha-fetoprotein test to check for birth defects. The results were not good. As the doctors explained, the levels of alpha-fetoprotein in her blood meant one of three things: The baby would have severe digestive issues, some kind of birth defect in the brain or spine, or Down’s syndrome.”

The story went on to say that the doctors recommended an abortion; however, the Chassidim she knew encouraged her to write to the Rebbe, who gave her specific instructions on how to continue the pregnancy and “gave her a blessing for a healthy child and said that everything would be okay...when the time came, she gave birth to a completely healthy baby boy, without any medical issues at all: me.”

“When I asked my mother how she felt after receiving the Rebbe’s answer, she told me that she was definitely still afraid and anxious about the future... Yet despite all

this, in a way that she couldn’t quite put into words, she felt a special connection with the Rebbe. And based on this connection, she was able to make her decision with confidence.”

As I concluded reading this story with almost the same serious medical issue we were dealing with, I experienced an incredible sense of clarity. While I know the Rebbe is with me and involved in every detail of my life, it’s often a struggle for me to feel this tangibly. At that moment, I experienced such a profound sense of clarity that the Rebbe was present with me for real; it was palpable. I was overcome with a sense of awe, as well as tremendous gratitude and relief, at receiving such a clear and direct message from the Rebbe that assured me that all would be well with my wife and child.

The results of further testing confirmed to the doctors the need for extreme concern, and early on, they insisted my wife needed to be tested three times a week so they could closely monitor her progress and make contingency plans in the event of emergencies. The results also showed grave risks for my wife’s well-being.

We made a special trip to New York to daven at the Ohel, checked our *mezuzos*, and I committed to an extra *shiur* in Chassidus. Meanwhile, the doctors devised a plan for how to monitor the pregnancy and concluded that on the first day of the ninth month, they would need to induce the birth, to ensure the maximum amount of time for the baby’s development, with the least amount of concern for the worst to happen to the baby or my wife.

Although that was the official schedule, they did not believe the pregnancy would last that long, and figured an emergency induction would be necessary much earlier, or even worse, *Rachmana litzlan*.

The results of her thrice-weekly tests always showed that the level of concern was just low enough not to necessitate an emergency birth. Every time we arrived for her

appointment, Dr. Frederic Bartholomew, who is a true *rofeh yedid*, effusively glowed how relieved he was to see us once again at his office and not in the hospital, and stressed how miraculous it was that an emergency had not yet occurred.

But despite the tremendous concern of all the doctors involved, my wife and I felt a certain calmness about it all, confident in the Rebbe's *bracha* that all would be well. The circumstances of how I read that story of the Rebbe's *bracha* for a healthy birth in a nearly identical situation gave us a strong sense of *bitachon* that is hard to explain.

Unbeknownst to us, my father-in-law had shown the medical file to some of his colleagues who are specialists in the field, and they all gave a very negative prognosis. Some family members, hearing about the seriousness of the case, took it upon themselves to recite Tehillim, but they did not share this with us.

My father-in-law said to me that since the upcoming birth could be extremely complicated, with the possibility that we would need to make difficult decisions swiftly, he suggested I discuss with a *rav* the various halachic concerns to bear in mind in case of such an eventuality. In hindsight, I realize that this conversation was his way of conveying how gravely concerned he and the other doctors were about how this pregnancy would conclude.

But because of that story, and our determination to have *bitachon*, we were both mostly oblivious to the gravity of the situation and were therefore not crushed by worry and fear. In fact, whenever I started feeling stressed about the situation, I reread the story, which I kept on our shelf ever since, and remembered the clarity I felt on Lag B'Omer when I first read it.

On Sunday evening, 22 Elul, one day before her scheduled induction, my wife went into labor naturally, and Baruch Hashem, shortly thereafter, gave birth to a



RABBI SHEMTOV AND DR. BARTHOLOMEW WITH THE MIRACLE BABY.

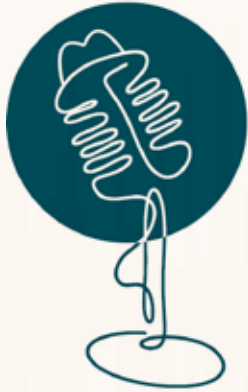
healthy baby girl. A few minutes later, Dr. Bartholomew proclaimed, “This birth was a miracle!”

He even confided to us that his concern for this pregnancy was so acute that he could not sleep at night as a result. Indeed, all the evidence available to us after the birth confirmed that the pregnancy consistently bordered on disaster, but the final result was a happy and healthy one for all. **T**

YOUR STORY

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






Among Chassidim

A PODCAST
BY **Derher**



WITH 
**Rabbi Yossi
Kamman**

WITH NEW EPISODES DROPPING WEEKLY, THIS PODCAST CAPTURES THE **VIBRANCY AND VITALITY OF DOR HASHVI'I** THROUGH IMMERSIVE, **HEART-TO-HEART DISCUSSIONS ON MEANINGFUL TOPICS**, SHARED IN RAW, UNEDITED CONVERSATIONS.

[DERHER.ORG/AMONGCHASSIDIM](https://derher.org/amongchassidim)

   @amongchassidim

STREAMING NOW ON

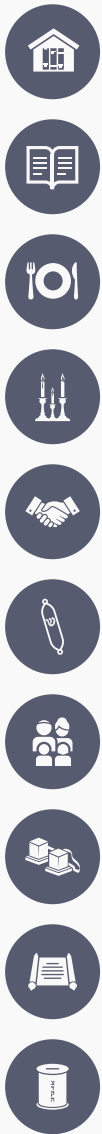


By: Rabbi Mendel Jacobs

לזכות
הת' מרדכי דובער שיחי'
מרקוביץ
לרגל הגיעו לעול מצוות
כ"ב שבט ה'תשפ"ו

נדפס ע"י
משפחתו שיחיו

MIVTZA TZEDAKAH



TAKING ACTION

THE TEN
MIVTZOIM
REVISITED



The Greatest Mitzvah

Mivtza Tzedakah

It is difficult to convey in words just how much of the Rebbe's holy work revolves around tzedakah.

Walking in and out of shul, the Rebbe was constantly seen giving coins to children for tzedakah. After weekday farbrengens, the Rebbe would distribute dollars for tzedakah through the *tankistin*. During these farbrengens, the Rebbe often made an appeal (*magbis*) for a tzedakah fund. In countless *sichos*, letters, and *yechidus'n*, the Rebbe encourages people to give tzedakah, or to increase their donations to tzedakah.

Some of the most famous encounters people had with the Rebbe occurred during "Sunday Dollars," a time when the Rebbe would make thousands of individuals his shlichim for the mitzvah of tzedakah. At these encounters, the Rebbe often encouraged his visitors to place tzedakah pushkas in their homes, institutions, or places of business, and to put the dollar they received from the Rebbe in the pushka for tzedakah.

Indeed, the Rambam rules that giving tzedakah is one of the hallmarks of our people and that it serves as an identifying sign for a Jew.

The Jewish people will only be redeemed from their exile, he concludes, in the merit of giving tzedakah.

It is only natural that one of the Ten Mivtzoim established by the Rebbe is the mitzvah of tzedakah.



MIVTZA TZEDAKAH

TAKING
ACTION
THE TEN
MIVTZOIM
REVISITED

Tzedakah: The Act

In the winter of 5734, shortly after the difficult victory of the Yom Kippur War, the Rebbe spoke about the low morale of Israeli soldiers and their demand for a spiritual boost.

“The Israeli soldiers have been asking for tefillin, siddurim, and Tehillims,” the Rebbe said. “Tefillin is a practical mitzvah they can fulfill, siddurim will allow them to engage in *tefilla*, and Tehillim is part of Tanach, which will allow them to fulfill the obligation of Torah study. As far as tzedakah—the very fact that they stand guard to protect their brothers and sisters in Eretz Yisroel is itself the greatest act of tzedakah!”

Nevertheless, the Rebbe called for a more practical and noticeable act of tzedakah to be made available to the soldiers as well.

“Every army base, every division, and every battalion, should be equipped with a tzedakah box, allowing the soldiers to place money inside them, giving them the feeling that they are actively engaging in the mitzvah of tzedakah...”

Later at the same farbrengen, the Rebbe added:

“We spoke about making tzedakah pushkas available for certain individuals in specific places [army bases]. However, in truth, all of the Jewish people are soldiers, referred to as ‘Tzivos Hashem.’ In times gone by, it was taken as a given that every Jewish home would have a tzedakah pushka. Nowadays, people usually just send checks to organizations, and this practice has therefore tapered off a bit.

“As such, it would be a great thing to reestablish this custom: Every Jewish home should have a tzedakah pushka. Its mere presence in the home will serve as a constant reminder to increase tzedakah giving—especially when the person realizes that the tzedakah pushka is not yet full...”

“This can also be an amazing educational opportunity: When the children see the tzedakah pushka in the home, it’ll prompt them to ask about it. This gives the parents a chance to explain to them the meaning of tzedakah; how giving tzedakah is like giving a loan to Hashem (Who will repay the act with interest on top). Children, as well as adults, should be trained in the mitzvah of tzedakah...”¹

Later that year, on Shabbos Parshas Bamidbar, the Rebbe formalized the mitvza in what became known at the time as “The Five Mivtzoim”:

Mivtza Tzedakah: To encourage others to give

tzedakah, and to ensure—as mentioned many times—that in every Jewish home there should be a tzedakah box. This will keep the merit of this mitzvah present at all times, and it will inspire [the inhabitants of the home] to give tzedakah...²

Specifics:

The mitzvah of tzedakah is an all-inclusive one. Tzedakah is considered equal to all the *mitzvos* of the Torah, and in the Talmud Yerushalmi, the word “mitzvah,” without qualification, refers to tzedakah.

It is no surprise that the Rebbe saw this mitvza as a catalyst, bringing to greater engagement in all the other *mivtzoim* and mitzvah fulfillment in general.

An interesting anecdote in this regard: The Rebbe asked that the widely distributed “mivtzoim pushkas,” should feature on them drawings of tefillin, *mezuzos*, and *seforim*. “This way,” the Rebbe explained, “when looking at the pushka, people will be reminded to give tzedakah as well as about all the other *mivtzoim*...”

Additionally, the Rebbe instructed that names of specific organizations should not be written on the pushkas, so people wouldn’t get the impression that this mitvza was a fundraising appeal.³

In the Kitchen

A tzedakah pushka should be affixed to the wall of one’s home, thereby transforming the entire house into a “home of tzedakah.”

The best place to hang the tzedakah pushka is in the kitchen. When a woman prepares food for her family, she needs increased *sayata d’shmaya* to ensure the food



THE MIVTZOIM PUSHKA.

is absolutely kosher to the highest standard. Giving tzedakah before she prepares meals is a great way to invoke Hashem's help in this matter.

Additionally, having the tzedakah pushka in close proximity when she prepares food for her own family will remind her of those who are less fortunate and need the extra money to feed themselves. When she drops coins in the pushka as a result, she is creating a connection, in a sense, between preparing food for herself and her family and feeding the needy at the same time.⁴

In Children's Rooms

Every child should have a tzedakah pushka, a siddur, and a Chumash in their room. This will ensure that their education is not limited to the time they spend in school, but continues at home as well. The tzedakah pushka should be affixed to the wall with a nail or the like, thereby transforming the whole room into a "tzedakah room."

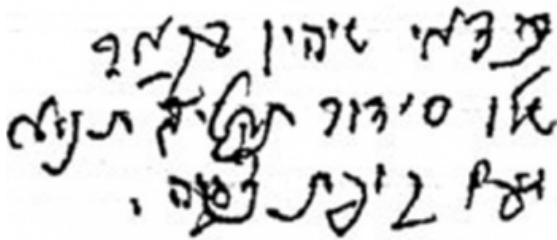
Having these items displayed conspicuously in their rooms will also help them teach others about the *mitzvos*. When the child has a friend over, and the friend will see the *seforim* and the tzedakah pushka, it's only natural that the friend's curiosity will be piqued, giving the child an opportunity to teach and share.⁵

In the Car

The Rebbe writes: "It is worthwhile to have in the car (in an appropriate place) a siddur, Tehillim, Tanya, and a tzedakah pushka. This should be publicized."⁶

In the Air

It would not be possible to enumerate all the instances when the Rebbe instructed people to place a tzedakah pushka in their homes, offices, stores, shuls, schools, *mikvahs*, and many more locations.



כדאי שיהיו בקאר שלו סידור תהלים ו גם קופת צדקה
TRANSLATION: IT IS WORTHWHILE THAT THERE BE IN HIS CAR
A SIDDUR, TEHILLIM, TANYA AND ALSO A TZEDAKA PUSHKA.

כדאי שיהיו בקאר שלו סידור תהלים ו גם קופת צדקה
TRANSLATION: IT IS WORTHWHILE THAT THERE BE IN HIS CAR
A SIDDUR, TEHILLIM, TANYA AND ALSO A TZEDAKA PUSHKA.

Even when the administrators of El-Al came to see the Rebbe by dollars, the Rebbe asked them to place a tzedakah pushka on every one of their airplanes, giving the first three dollars for the first three pushkas. "If you send me an exact list of how many airplanes you have, I will send you a dollar for each and every one!" the Rebbe said.⁷

Every Day

On numerous occasions, the Rebbe instructed people to meticulously give tzedakah every single weekday, and twice on Erev Shabbos and Yom Tov. This would serve as a channel to draw down Hashem's blessings in their lives for whatever they needed, whether material or spiritual.

In 5714, the Rebbe established "**Keren Hashana**" with the goal of ensuring that every person gives tzedakah every single day. Once a person gives a sum to tzedakah, the fund disburses it twice a day throughout the year. The Rebbe would encourage people to donate during the month of Tishrei, but said that joining later also carries the merit of the previous days.

You can join the fund by logging on to www.MyKerenHashana.com.

Tzedakah and Geulah

Chazal famously state that tzedakah is great because it brings *geulah* closer. The Rebbe quotes this statement again and again, encouraging everyone to give tzedakah at all times, even beyond their presumed capacities, in order to finally bring Moshiach here.

In the last farbrengen that we were *zoche* to hear from the Rebbe on Shabbos Parshas Vayakhel 5752, the Rebbe famously spoke about the importance of *ahavas Yisroel*. At the very end of the farbrengen, the Rebbe finished with a call to action:

As mentioned, the practical lesson we must learn from this Shabbos, Shabbos Shekalim, is to increase our giving of tzedakah. This must be done in a manner of giving *ourselves* to Hashem, as the Alter Rebbe explains in his *maamarim*.

The main thing is: we will immediately merit to [receive] the tzedakah from Hashem—not the tzedakah that He scattered us among the nations—but the tzedakah that He gathers all the Yidden together to our holy land with *geulah ha'amitis v'hashleima*, immediately *mamash*, carried upon the heavenly clouds!



MIVTZA TZEDAKAH

TAKING ACTION

THE TEN MIVTZOIM REVISITED

A Little Plastic Box Goes A Long Way



Interview with **Rabbi Levi Greenberg**

(El Paso, TX)

By: Rabbi Bentzion Pearson

Many consider the mitzvah of tzedakah as either fulfilling a religious obligation, fundraising for a worthy cause, or making a positive impact in their community or the world at large.

I believe that with Mivtza Tzedakah, the Rebbe revolutionized how we can appreciate tzedakah as the greatest catalyst for bringing Moshiach and make this mitzvah accessible and relatable to everyone.

Everyone Can Make a Difference

My efforts in Mivtza Tzedakah evolved from my involvement with Education and Sharing Day.

Several years ago, I was encouraged by fellow shluchim to arrange an Education and Sharing Day proclamation from the mayor of El Paso in honor of Yud-Aleph Nissan, based on the Rebbe's instructions⁸ that every municipality establish one day each year focused on moral and ethical education. I was familiar with the presidential proclamations issued every year, but arranging them locally was new to me. Although the mayor was happy to issue the proclamation in response to my request, I felt it was appropriate to translate its ideals into action.

Armed with the mayor's proclamation, I met

with the president of the local school district and the superintendent and pitched the idea of placing a Tzedakah box in every classroom in the district to encourage the students to start the school day with charitable giving. They were impressed with the concept, but raised concerns about potential legal issues with the idea.

As I continued to discuss the idea with friends, I was introduced to the ARK project launched by Rabbi Dovid Masinter from the Chabad House in Johannesburg, South Africa. Over 700,000 yellow, plastic, boat-shaped (Noach's Ark) tzedakah boxes had already been distributed throughout the country and were wildly popular. ARK is an acronym for Acts of Random Kindness, and the amazing success in South Africa prompted Rabbi Masinter to bring the project to the USA. Convinced these "arks" were the best way to get a tzedakah pushka into the hands of every child in El Paso, I purchased a few samples and started speaking with people about the idea.

The concept of tzedakah itself doesn't need much explaining. Whereas if you want to convince another Yid to put on tefillin, you need to rely on the *kabbalas ol* inherent in the *neshama* of a Yid to motivate them to do the mitzvah, everyone can relate to the need for giving charity.

It's also very easy to illustrate the positive

results of the mitzvah. When you give a dollar to a needy individual who can now buy a sandwich, the tangible impact in the world is obvious.

The uniqueness of Mivtza Tzedakah is in imparting the message that giving even a small amount of money can make a big difference. This is true not only for the beneficiary of the tzedakah, but also for the one giving the tzedakah. By giving tzedakah every day, a person is transformed into a giver. A designated box for giving tzedakah in a home, office, bedroom, or car transforms the space into a giving space.

Furthermore, the goal of tzedakah is not just about the specific result of that charity money. The action of tzedakah is valuable and impactful even before that money is translated into a discernible benefit for the needy.

Chassidus explains that tzedakah has a disproportionately greater effect on elevating the world than other mitzvos.

In Tanya perek 37, the Alter Rebbe explains that tzedakah is the greatest way to make a *dira b'tachtonim*. Taking money, in which so much of the person's life is invested, and using it for a holy purpose, elevates all the physical exertion that went into making that money. When money, which could have been used to sustain one's own life, is used for a holy purpose, it elevates one's entire life.

It follows that every penny given to tzedakah elevates the world and prepares it for *geulah*.

The Rebbe often invoked the Rambam's explanation (cited by the Alter Rebbe in Iggeres Hakodesh siman 21) on the words of the Mishnah "*Hakol lefi rov hamaaseh*": Better to give small amounts of tzedakah more often, than to give a larger amount at once, because every act of giving refines the person a little more, eventually elevating their entire being.

The two main action points of Mivtza



WITH THE MAYOR OF EL PASO AFTER SIGNING THE 'EDUCATION AND SHARING DAY PROCLAMATION' IN HONOR OF YUD-ALEPH NISSAN.

Tzedakah are directly in line with this idea: 1) Encouraging people to give tzedakah every day, 2) ensuring that every home has a tzedakah pushka. This causes many small acts of tzedakah to be performed by many different people, on many occasions.

Additionally, the Rebbe often emphasized that, based on sources in *shas* and *poskim*, the mitzvah of tzedakah applies to non-Jews as well.

The Pilot Program

Back to El Paso:

After months of discussions and following several leads, an influential Yid, with whom I had no prior connection, arranged a meeting for me with the president of the town's most prestigious charitable foundation.

All I had with me at that meeting was a yellow ARK pushka and a message: These boxes can help educate the next generation of philanthropists by training students to give charity consistently from a young age. He was intrigued by the idea and decided to test it out by launching a pilot program. Through their other education initiatives, the foundation found a private school and a public school willing to implement the ARK program for one month. Every student was gifted an ARK



MIVTZA TZEDAKAH

TAKING
ACTION

THE TEN
MIVTZOIM
REVISITED

and encouraged to fill it at home over a few weeks. To illustrate how their charity could make a significant difference, a date was set for them to bring their ARKs to school, the money was collected, and the students voted on which worthy cause would receive the funds.

The High School Student

The first collection was a resounding success. More money was collected than expected, but most importantly, the foundation received an email from the school principal describing the impact the program had on the students.

“One of the high school boys was walking down the hall, and he stopped me in my office and told me ‘thank you’ for allowing the students to do the ARK project. He then went on to tell me that even though he lives in Juarez (a city in Mexico adjacent to El Paso—ed.), he doesn’t spend much time thinking about the poor people there because

the city is full of desolate people. But, he told me that every time he put money in the ARK, he felt like that was kind of like sitting alongside one of the migrants.”

“He crosses the border daily with the fast pass and never truly realized the impact of so many other suffering people, until the project. He mentioned that many students say they will give when they grow up and get a job or win the lottery. He told me that he would keep the ARK in his backpack to remind him that loose change can make a difference in the lives of others.”

This was the best feedback I could have hoped for. A confirmation that the small yellow boxes were having a real impact on real people.

Public Displays

Over time, I have found the message of Tzedaka, as expressed by the pushka, to be applicable in many important areas beyond giving per se.

Several years ago, a mass shooting happened at a Walmart in El Paso. The carnage caused by the young man who opened fire was so great that it is considered one of the worst hate crimes in recent history. 23 people were murdered, many more were injured, and the city was shaken to its core.

Later that month, I met with the County Judge in honor of Rosh Hashanah. He was devastated by the shooting and found it hard to discuss anything else. I had an ARK with me and suggested that one way to respond to unspeakable and incomprehensible hatred is by encouraging children from a young age to become givers, nipping blind hatred in the bud. He was so inspired by the message that he gifted over 3,000 county employees an ARK in connection with Education Day. He also discussed this concept on a federal panel convened with leaders from communities around the country that have suffered from mass shootings.

We’ve had similar success with the mayor and other dignitaries. People really connect with the act of giving and the idea of training ourselves to be givers.

In Sivan 5751, before traveling to Washington



RABBI DOVID MASINTER WITH HIS BOAT-SHAPED CHARITY BOXES.

D.C. to deliver an invocation in the U.S. Senate, Rabbi Shmuel Butman went to the Rebbe for Dollars and was instructed to bring a pushka to the chamber and place a dollar into it before the invocation so “they should all know what money should be used for.”

I do the same every time I deliver an invocation, and everyone in City Hall knows that I’m the guy who comes with a charity box. Once the mayor approached the podium and placed a dollar in the pushka, and some employees even asked me to bring them their own. Last year, the mayor gifted all the city hall employees with an ARK. The idea of consistent tzedakah is novel, yet so simple. It resonates very powerfully.

The Pushka that Saved a Life

Although this all sounds like a strategy in promoting Sheva Mitzvos among non-Jews, the pushkas have been making a major impact within our own community. Yidden are much more intentional about displaying pushkas in their offices and stores and, most importantly, appreciate the profound message it projects, and thus feel empowered to share it with others as well. Let me share an interesting story:

We always have a supply of ARKs at the Chabad House.

One day, a Yid I am close with told me, “My friend who’s not Jewish is very ill and currently in the hospital. Can I bring him one of the ARKs?”

I said, “Sure, absolutely.”

He took the pushka, and I forgot about the whole thing.

Two years later, this Yid arranged an event focused on combating hate speech, and he invited me to attend.

The panel included community leaders as well as security professionals, such as a member of the FBI’s counter-terrorism force, a professor at the local university, a prominent

journalist, and several others.

The professor spoke about the power of language in creating narratives and shaping culture, emphasizing the need to protect society from hate speech. Towards the end of the speech, he shared a personal story. Two years prior, he experienced a very serious heart incident, and he was in the hospital close to death, awaiting open-heart surgery. “I was in bed, barely conscious and wondering if I would make it out of there alive. Suddenly, my dear friend appeared and placed a small yellow boat next to my bed, telling me to start giving small amounts of charity every day. I could barely thank him, but after my surgery, I started intentionally placing money into that container, and today it is one of my most meaningful daily rituals with my daughter.”

I was shocked. The friend was, of course, the Yid, whom I mentioned earlier.

The professor had no idea that I was in the crowd or that I had anything to do with this gesture. I saw clearly how Mivtza Tzedakah can have a tremendous impact in ways we could previously not have imagined.

We were introduced after the panel, and he told me he believed the pushka literally saved his life.

An Easy Mitzvah

It’s essential to have pushkas at all events we host and to discuss tzedakah and the concept of giving.

When the Rebbe was visited by people during Sunday dollars, the Rebbe often gave them an extra dollar for the pushka in their home, office, business, or anywhere. The Rebbe constantly encouraged people to give, whenever, wherever, and however they could.

As the Rebbe emphasized very often, it’s an easy mitzvah. All it takes is a small penny. It’s a mitzvah that every person can do and, I believe, most importantly, appreciate.

I read an incredible story about the



MIVTZA TZEDAKAH

TAKING
ACTION

THE TEN
MIVTZOIM
REVISITED

legendary chossid, Reb Avraham Hersh Cohen from Yerushalayim. He used to stand at the Kosel for a few hours every Friday and help Yidden put on tefillin.

One Friday, he asked an Israeli kibbutznik if he'd like to put on tefillin, but the fellow declined. So Reb Avraham Hirsh pulled out a ten-Agurot coin and said to the Yid, "You know what? Do a different mitzvah. Put this coin in the pushka."



RABBI GREENBERG DISTRIBUTES ARK CHARITY BOXES.

The Yid put the coin in the pushka, and a few minutes later, he came back to Reb Avraham Hirsch and said, "I've changed my mind. Let's put on tefillin."

I think this story has two powerful lessons:

Number one: we're always trying to get other Yidden to do *mitzvos*, and we sometimes get frustrated when we're not successful. But perhaps our fellow Yid is not yet ready for an intense commitment like putting on tefillin or putting up a mezuzah. Why not just give him a penny and have him do an easy mitzvah? Anyone would be ready to do that!

Secondly: *Mitzvah goreres mitzvah*. Don't underestimate the power of tzedakah. Perhaps this mitzvah will serve as a catalyst to inspire more *mitzvos* in its wake.

This Is Who We Are

The Rebbe was always giving tzedakah. Whether on his way in and out of shul, out in the street, or at a farbrengen.

At every opportunity, the Rebbe connected with others through the mitzvah of tzedakah.

There's an incredible video of the Rebbe during the first meeting of members of the Machne Yisroel Development Fund. The donors were all standing in the foyer of 770 when the Rebbe walked into the room. The Rebbe went straight to the pushka, placed a coin inside, and said, with a smile: "After charity, everything goes easier."

This was a room filled with wealthy supporters donating huge sums to Lubavitch institutions every year. And yet, the Rebbe first put a small coin in the pushka, illustrating the power of tzedakah, even the smallest amount.

The Rebbe was consumed with tzedakah. We should spread the awareness of this mitzvah as much as possible.

When people see us, they should see that we are people who encourage and promote giving. No one else presents tzedakah the way we do.

Based on my many conversations, I never take for granted that people know how to use the



© 2025 JEM. VELVEL SCHILDKRAUT #149171 (4 TISHREI 5747)

THE REBBE PLACES A COIN IN THE PUSHKA BEFORE ADDRESSING MEMBERS OF THE MACHNE YISROEL DEVELOPMENT FUND.

pushka effectively. It is important to clarify that they should place small amounts of money into it daily. Suggest to them that they keep a collection of coins nearby for this specific purpose. (“Who walks around with cash nowadays?!”) When the pushka is full, they should not hand the loose change to a poor person. They should empty the contents, count the money, and give the total value to a worthy cause of their choice or someone in need. Once they see how practical and easy it is, and especially when they realize you are not promoting this for your own benefit, they will appreciate the message much more deeply.

Moreover, in my experience, this mivtza

becomes a channel for many personal *brachos* as well.

And the greatest *bracha* of all: “*Gedolah tzedakah shemikareves es hageulah*”; it will hasten the coming of Moshiach, now! **T**

1 19 Kislev 5734; Toras Menachem vol. 74, pp. 288–291.

2 Likkutei Sichos vol. 13, p. 212.

3 Shabbos Parshas Korach 5734; Sichos Kodesh 5734 vol. 2, p. 237.

4 24 Elul 5748; Hisvaaduyos 5748 vol. 4, p. 348.

5 Ibid., p. 346.

6 Likkutei Sichos vol. 23, p. 402.

7 6 Teves 5751.

8 20 Av 5738.



MIVTZA TZEDAKAH

TAKING ACTION

THE TEN MIVTZOIM REVISITED