



A Chassidisher **Derher**

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A Man of Many Continents

REB BINYAMIN ELIYAHU
GORODETSKY

MAMEH LASHON

A look at the place of Yiddish in the
Rebbe's teachings and directives



MENACHEM AV 5786
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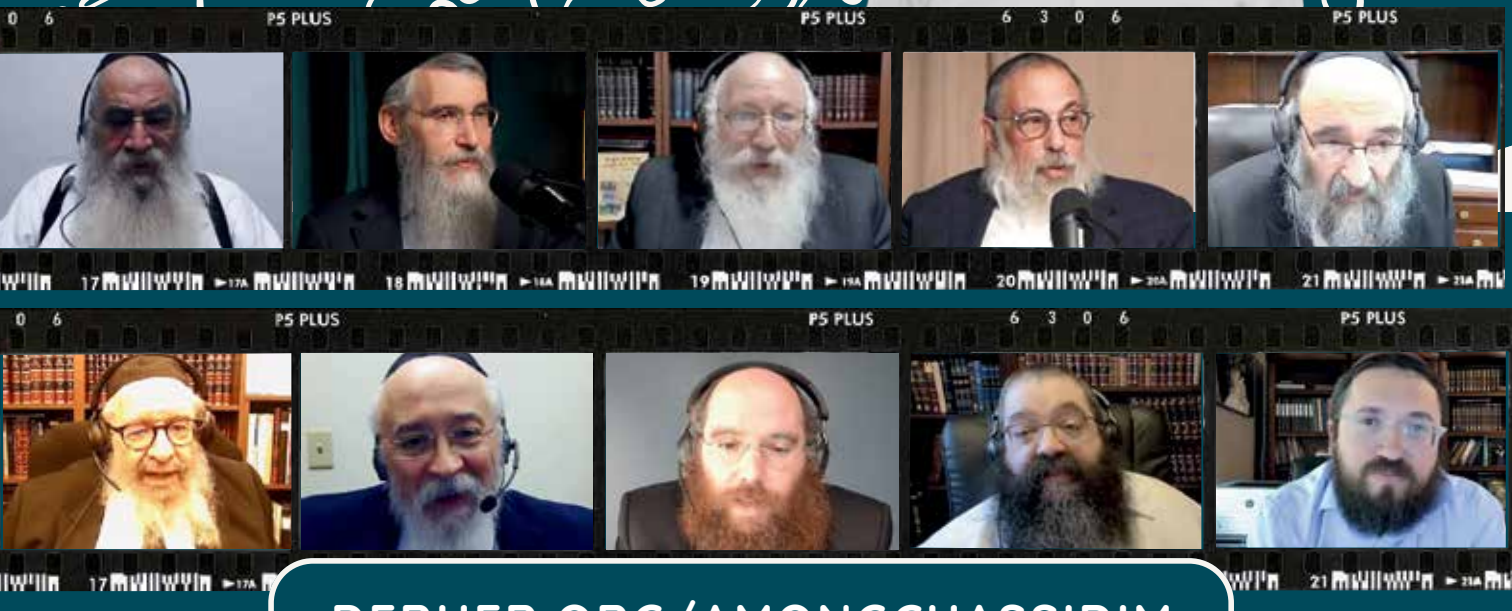


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Mameh Lashon

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FAR, YET CLOSE

Jewish children always serve as a living example for other children—especially for those children who find themselves in a far corner of the world without any Jewish education. This gathering takes place during the week, when it is permissible to capture photos—active and live photos—where the children can be seen reciting Torah pesukim. They wave their hands and shake their whole bodies, displaying their great excitement about Torah, and the deep connection they have with Torah; a connection permeating body and soul...

This was a special message the Rebbe conveyed at a children's gathering 35 years ago—Menachem Av 5751. Interestingly, the Rebbe instructed a member of *anash* who was embarking on a trip to Russia that he should bring a video of this gathering along with him and show it to the Yidden there.

It seems as if the Rebbe was conveying a message to us: If you find yourself feeling “far away” or spiritually distant, these pictures and videos can serve as a “lifeline”—bringing you closer to “*ilana d'chayei*.”

In this issue you will find more about the month of Av in the Rebbe's presence, alongside all the usual inspiring content. The remarkable life of a Chossid who traversed the globe in service of our Rabbeim, what the Rebbe says about “Mameh Lashon,” the vital task of uniting all the Jewish people through the *Sifrei Torah Haklali'im*, and much more.

Please enjoy all the above, and most importantly: let us hope that the inspiration spurs action—“*Hamaaseh hu ha'ikar*.”

יהפכו ימים אלו לששון ולשמחה ולמועדים טובים, והאמת With blessings that מוצש"ק חו"ב, י"ב תמוז, ה'תשפ"ו והשלום אהבו. May we celebrate this Tisha B'Av together with the Rebbe in Yerushalayim, with the coming of Moshiach *teikef umiyad mamash!*

The Editors

מוצש"ק חו"ב, י"ב תמוז, ה'תשפ"ו
תחילת שנת המאה

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(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 Chasadam...”

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

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נדפס ע"י בנם
הרה"ת ר' אברהם יוסף שיחי'
יפה

כ"ב מנחם-אב Yechezkel HaNavi Stands Up

COMPILED BY: RABBI MENDEL VOGEL

During his exile in Bavel, Yechezkel HaNavi was instructed by Hashem to take a brick and engrave upon it an image of Yerushalayim under siege. As a symbol of the severe deprivation its inhabitants would endure, he was told to prepare coarse “bread” made from a mixture of wheat, barley, beans, lentils, millet, and spelt (a mixture that would be eaten only under dire conditions), and to bake it using animal dung as fuel. Yechezkel was then commanded to lie on his left side for 390 days, and to eat small measured portions of this bread throughout this time. Afterward, he was to lie on his right side for an additional 40 days.

On the 22nd day of the month of Av, circa 3327 (ג'שכ"ז),
Yechezkel completed these final forty days.

The 22nd of Av marks the day when Yechezkel HaNavi completed the total number of days he had been commanded by Hashem to lie on his side, symbolically bearing the *aveiros* of the Yidden (Siddur Rav Yaakov Emden).

The Gemara in Sanhedrin (39a) relates the following story: A heretic once mockingly challenged Rabbi Avahu, “Your G-d is a jester, as He said to Yechezkel: ‘Lie on your left side’ (Yechezkel 4:4), and it is also written:

‘Lie on your right side’ (Yechezkel 4:6); Hashem had Yechezkel turn from side to side just for fun!”

In the meantime, a certain student came before Rabbi Avahu and asked him for the rationale behind the *mitzva* of Shemitta. Rabbi Avahu responded to both of them with the following analogy: The way of the world is that when a mortal king is angered by a rebellious province, his response depends on his temperament: If he is cruel, he destroys all its inhabitants; if he is compassionate, he



spares some and punishes only some of them; and if he is especially merciful, he inflicts suffering only upon the ringleaders.

“So too in our case,” Rebbe Avahu explained, “the Holy One, blessed be He, said to the Jewish people: ‘Work the land for six years, but refrain from sowing in the seventh, so that you will recognize that the land belongs to Me.’ Yet they did not heed this command; instead, they continued to sin, and as a result, were sent into *galus*. The Holy One, blessed be He, caused Yechezkel HaNavi to suffer in order to atone for the sins of the Jewish people.”

The Maharsha explains that the 390 days correspond to the 390 years of sin from the Yidden’s entry into Eretz Yisroel until the exile of the *aseres ha’shevatim*, while the 40 days represent the 40 years from that exile until the destruction of Yerushalayim.

Each year on 22 Menachem-Av, the spiritual effect of Yechezkel’s suffering is renewed; it is a time when harsh judgments are sweetened, and accusations from the attribute of Divine justice lose their force.

More broadly, this conveys a timeless idea: In every generation, *tzaddikim* willingly accept suffering—even the pain of *galus*, considered worse than death¹—in order to protect the Jewish people and spare them from hardship. The pain of *galus* is continuous and can last for many years, at times resulting in tragic death, *R”l*. A recent example of this is the *yahrtzeit* of Harav Levi Yitzchok, the Rebbe’s father, which falls on Chof Av, two days earlier. Harav Levi Yitzchak was exiled for his efforts to strengthen and spread Yiddishkeit, and that exile ultimately led to his passing.

At times, a *nevua* is accompanied by Hashem instructing the Navi to carry out a physical act (as is the case in the above-mentioned *nevua* of Yechezkel). By linking the prophecy to a concrete act, its fulfillment in reality is assured.² The same is true when speaking of Moshiach; it is not enough to just speak about him—we need Moshiach *b’poel mamosh*!

This idea is illustrated by a well-known story: The Rebbe Maharash asked his father, the Tzemach Tzedek, why Moshiach had not come by the year 5608 (ת”ר”ח), since there is a *ketz* (expected date) of Moshiach’s arrival calculated for that year. The Tzemach Tzedek responded that the Likkutei Torah was printed that year—indicating that this milestone in spreading the teachings of Chassidus represented a meaningful spiritual advance toward Moshiach’s arrival. However, the Rebbe Maharash protested, “*Tatte*, we need Moshiach literally!”

Takeaway:

“המעשה הוא העיקר”—the bottom line is action. What action can *I* take to bring Moshiach closer?

(Adapted from *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Ekev* 5737)

1. Sefer Hachinuch, *Mitzva* 610. A similar idea is found in Gemara Kesubos (33b), which quotes a statement of Rav with regard to Chananya, Mishael and Azarya, that had they been beaten rather than being thrown into a fiery furnace, they would not have withstood the test and would have succumbed to Nevuchadnetzar’s demands.

2. Ramban, Bereishis 12:6; Drashos HaRan, *Drash* 4.



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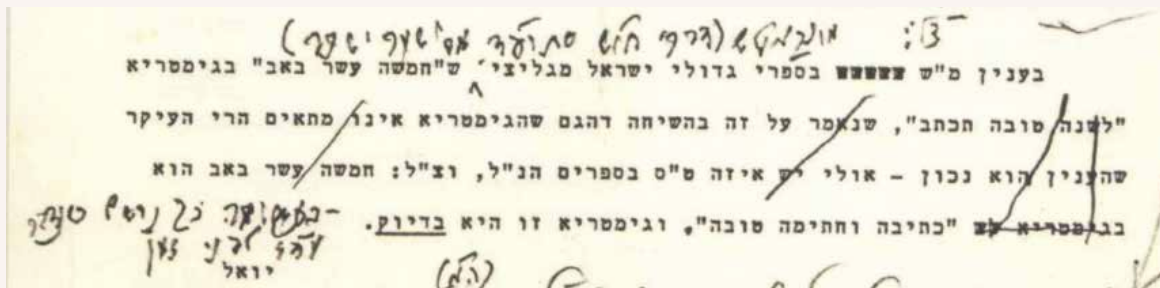
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 דערען

Compiled By: Rabbi Levi Greenberg (OH)

Written By: Rabbi Mendel Jacobs

Adding It Up



At the Farbrengen of Shabbos Parshas Re'eh 5742, the Rebbe mentioned a vort from "seforim of the gedolei Yisroel from Galicia," that the words **חמשה עשר באב** share a *gematriya* with **לשנה טובה תכתב**. The Rebbe added that although the *gematriyas* of these two phrases don't actually match (**חמשה עשר** 928=**באב**, and 1229=**לשנה טובה תכתב**), nevertheless, the connection between the two ideas still stands.

After Shabbos, Reb Yoel Kahn wrote a note to the Rebbe with several questions on the Farbrengen, one of them being:

Perhaps there was a printing mistake in the Galician *seforim*, and the phrase was supposed to be **כתיבה וחתימה טובה**, which indeed has the same *gematriya* as **חמשה עשר באב**.

The Rebbe agreed with Reb Yoel's assumption by crossing out the lines in the section about the two *gematriyas* not matching.

- כמדומה כך נרשם כשנדבר עד"ז לפני זמן

If I remember correctly, this is the way [this idea] was written when this was spoken about some time ago.¹

About the source in the "Galician" *seforim*, the Rebbe noted:

צ"ל: מונקאטש (דרכי חו"ש סתרפ"ד מס' שער ישכר)

It should say: *Munkatch (Darkei Chayim V'Shalom siman 684, [citing] the sefer Shaar Yissachar).*²

The *hanachos* of the Farbrengen³ incorporate the Rebbe's response directly into that paragraph.

1. Shabbos Parshas Shoftim 5741; Sichos Kodesh 5741 vol. 4, p. 569, and others.

2. The *maane* and *ksav yad kodesh* were published in *Techayeinu*, issue 6, pp. 11, 14.

3. *Hisvaaduyos* 5742 vol. 4, p. 2068. *Yiddish hanacha* of the Farbrengen, p. 30.



טור 'לעבן מיטן רבי'
הוקדש לזכרון
ולעילוי נשמות
ר' שמואל ב"ר יהושע אליהו ז"ל
ואשתו מרת שרה ע"ה
בת ר' יקותיאל ומרת לאה הי"ד
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רוהר

Solemnity and Joy

MENACHEM-AV 5751

The month of Menachem-Av is often seen for its paradoxical nature: One of the saddest times on the Jewish calendar remembered for the destruction of the Batei Mikdash; but also a time of comfort ("Menachem"), and even joy!

This month in the Rebbe's presence in the Year of Wonders certainly personified both these feelings. Even the sad day of Tisha B'Av itself was tinged with moments of celebration, as we shall now explore.

COMPILED BY: RABBI YANKY BELL

WRITTEN BY: RABBI MENDEL JACOBS

Farbrengens

Already on the first day of the month, we were in for a surprise. The Rebbe delivered a short *sicha* after Mincha, despite the fact that it was Erev Shabbos. Rosh Chodesh Av is the *yahrtzeit* of Aharon Hakohen, and the Rebbe expounded on the special qualities of the day and its connection with the upcoming *geulah*.

Call of the Hour

The next day, on Shabbos Parshas Matos-Massei, the Rebbe held his usual afternoon farbrengen, speaking again about Aharon Hakohen and the lessons we must learn from his life. Aharon was unique in his *ahavas Yisroel* for every single Jew, spreading peace and lovingkindness.

“This is the lesson we must take from this farbrengen,” the Rebbe said, “everyone should work on their *ahavas Yisroel*, and spread this message to others around them. On Shabbos, spread it in a way that’s permissible on Shabbos, and after Havdalah, it should be spread even further through methods of communication not used on Shabbos.”

The Rebbe concluded the farbrengen by calling on everyone to arrange the customary *siyumim* throughout the coming days, insisting that even young children be encouraged to participate.

Out with the Fast

The next Shabbos, Parshas Devarim—Shabbos Chazon, was Tisha B’Av, and the fast was postponed to Sunday. The Shabbos afternoon farbrengen was especially joyful.

The Rebbe pointed out that sitting at a farbrengen in the spirit of *ahavas Yisroel* is the exact opposite of what

brought about the *galus* on Tisha B’Av. It is therefore a most opportune time for the *geulah* to come.

“On this Shabbos, each of us already ‘sees’ the Beis Hamikdash as it is already built and ready in heaven,” the Rebbe explained, “all we need is for Moshiach to come walk into this shul right now!”

The Rebbe concluded the farbrengen with another call to continue making *siyumim* along with joyous celebrations until the fifteenth of the month, and to also make joyous farbrengens on Chamisha Asar B’Av.

A Special Mention

On Shabbos Parshas Va’eschanan—Shabbos Nachamu, at the very end of the farbrengen, the Rebbe mentioned something special:

“At this very time, there is a Kinus Hashluchim taking place in Russia,” the Rebbe said. “The Kinus began in the town of Lubavitch, and it continued at other holy sites, including the resting place of my father, and also in the capital city of Moscow. The fact that we are mentioning this here at a holy place, a shul, a *beis midrash*, and a place of *maasim tovim*, will extend good energy to the participants of the Kinus over there, strengthening all the good *hachlatos* undertaken at the Kinus...”

The Rebbe concluded with a call for *simcha*, “even greater than the joy of Simchas Torah!” and with that, he began singing his father’s *Hakafos Niggun* with great enthusiasm.

Could This Be It?

The next Shabbos was Shabbos Mevorchim Elul, Parshas Ekev, and the Rebbe addressed an incredible new phenomenon:

“We’ve been clamoring for so long now,” the Rebbe



EUROPEAN KINUS HASHLUCHIM GROUP PHOTO IN MOSCOW, 5751.



THE REBBE RECEIVES THE TANYA IN BRAILLE AT SUNDAY DOLLARS, 17 AV.

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HAFTORAH, SHACHARIS TISHA B'AV (NIDCHE).

began, “about ‘*ad mosai*’ and the imminent need for Moshiach. We’ve accomplished so much to hasten his coming, and yet he still tarries! How can this be?”

Chassidus has reached every corner of the world, the Rebbe continued. And yet, there was still an area that had yet to be included:

“A wild idea came up: to make Chassidus available for those who cannot see! A Tanya was published in ‘braille’ [the Rebbe spelled it out with the Hebrew letters, Beis, Reish, Yud, Lamed]. People who are unable to read with their eyes use this font, composed of raised lines and dots that can be felt and read through touch.”

The Rebbe concluded that whether or not this was the last step needed to bring Moshiach, let us hope that either way, Moshiach will arrive immediately, and there won’t even be a need for this new *sefer* at all, since all the ill will be healed speedily in our days!

Turning to a group of guests who arrived from Miami, the Rebbe instructed with a big smile that they should all say *l’chaim*!

The last Shabbos of the month was the first day of Rosh Chodesh Elul, Shabbos Parshas Re’eh.

The Rebbe again mentioned the recent Kinus Hashluchim in Russia. “Although Russia has opened its doors and offered a ‘*geulah*’—an exodus for thousands of Jews,” the Rebbe said, “we still need the final *geulah* to come very soon, speedily!”



EICHA AND KINOS ON THE EVE OF TISHA B'AV (NIDCHE).

Tisha B'Av

Because Tisha B'Av fell on Shabbos, the fast was postponed to Motzei Shabbos and Sunday.

The Rebbe sat on a low box situated at his regular davening place for Maariv and Shacharis.

On Motzei Shabbos, the Rebbe entered the shul for Maariv wearing non-leather shoes and carrying enlarged copies of Eicha inside his siddur.

Following Maariv and Eicha, the Rebbe distributed dollars—quite an unusual occurrence for the night of Tisha B'Av.

In the morning, the Rebbe entered the shul holding

his siddur and a *Sefer Kinot*. It was clear that the Rebbe was not davening with the *minyán*. After Krias HaTorah and Haftarah, the Rebbe sat down to recite Kinot with the crowd until about 12:30 p.m.

Mincha was davened at 3:15, after which the Rebbe went upstairs and held the usual Sunday-dollar distribution in the lobby of 770, though it lasted only about half an hour this week.

Song and Dance

As the fast drew to a close, the Chassidim were in for several surprises.

At around 8:40 p.m., the Rebbe began heading downstairs for Maariv. This was quite unexpected, as there was still some time left before the fast ended, and even the *mazkirim* were not ready. The Rebbe explained to Rabbi Leibel Groner, “I would like to say a few words, that’s why I’m going down earlier.”

A crowd immediately formed in the big shul as a *shtender* was placed at the end of the Rebbe’s platform for the surprise *sicha*.

“We find ourselves on a postponed fast day,” the Rebbe began, “it’s the 10th of Av, after we’ve already davened Mincha, during which we recited the *tefilla* of ‘*Nachem*.’”

We recite it specifically at Mincha because of the tradition that Moshiach, the redeemer of the Jewish people, was born at that hour on the 9th of Av.

“Even though we currently stand on the 10th of Av,” the Rebbe explained, “being that the fast was pushed



MINCHA, TISHA B'AV (NIDCHE).



EXITING THE SHUL AFTER SHACHARIS.



THE REBBE ENTERS THE SHUL FOR A SICHA AND MAARIV ON MOTZEI TISHA B'AV (NIDCHE).



ON 13 AV, THE REBBE DISTRIBUTES PACKETS OF COINS TO THE CAMP DIRECTORS TO GIVE TO THE CHILDREN.

out by Shabbos, nevertheless, we still recite *Nachem* on this day. True, Moshiach's birth already occurred on the ninth—it is obvious that Shabbos only pushes off the undesirable elements of Tisha B'Av, but not something like the birth of Moshiach. Still, there's obviously some connection between the current time of Mincha on this postponed fast day and the coming of Moshiach."

The Rebbe concluded that he would now distribute dollars for tzedakah.

Maariv was held a few minutes after the fast ended, followed by Havdalah.

Then came the biggest surprise:

Right before leaving the shul, the Rebbe lifted his hand and began singing, "*Ayayayayaya-hei...*"—his father's *Hakafos Niggun*.

The crowd erupted in joyous dance, continuing well after the Rebbe departed the shul. Carried by the intensity of the moment, many Chassidim lost all sense of time, forgetting even to break their fasts as the singing and dancing endured.

Lebedike Pictures!

On Wednesday, 13 Av, a rally took place at 770 for the day camp children. At 2:30 p.m., the Rebbe joined the rally for Mincha, entering the shul while enthusiastically waving his hands in all directions towards the children. It was immediately noticeable that this was going to be an exceptionally joyous event.

When the children sang *Al Tira* and *Ach Tzaddikim*, the Rebbe encouraged their singing in ways rarely ever seen before. After the children recited the 12 *Pessukim*, the Rebbe again encouraged the singing of "We Want Moshiach Now" with incredible enthusiasm. While everyone clapped a



AFTER MAARIV ON MOTZEI TISHA B'AV (NIDCHE), THE GABBAI MADE SEVERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS. WHEN HE CONCLUDED, THE REBBE TURNED TO RABBI GRONER AND ASKED ABOUT HAVDALAH.



THE REBBE LEADS THE TEFILLOS ON CHOF AV.



round of applause for the children who recited the *Pessukim*, the Rebbe suddenly began waving both his hands in the air again and again, moving the whole crowd to clap even louder and stronger!

Then the Rebbe addressed the children.

“Jewish children always show others a living example of what it means to live as a Jew,” the Rebbe began. “Especially given the fact that this gathering is taking place on a weekday, we can capture photos of the children—‘*lebedike pictures*’—depicting how children recite *pessukim* with enthusiasm, even moving their hands and their whole bodies, showing how much they actually live with the Torah they study...”

These pictures, the Rebbe said, can be used to inspire other children, even on the other side of the globe. Children who, through no fault of their own, did not have the privilege of growing up with a proper Jewish education.

[The Rebbe was presumably referring to the Jewish children of the Soviet Union, who were now in need of all the Jewish education they could get. In fact, the Rebbe told a member of *anash* who was leaving for Russia to bring along a video of today’s rally to show the children there.]

The Rebbe divided his address into four parts, between which Rabbi Sholom Ber Hecht translated the Rebbe’s words into English for the children.

In conclusion, the Rebbe announced that he would distribute three coins to each child for *tzedakah*. “This should hasten the fulfillment of the prayer of Moshe, and of each one of us, like the words of the song ‘*Nyet, nyet, nikavo...*’—that we will all see how there is nothing else in the world



THE REBBE DELIVERS A *SICHA* AFTER MAARIV, MOTZEI CHOF AV.



DISTRIBUTING DOLLARS, MOTZEI CHOF AV.

other than Hashem itself, with the coming of Moshiach!”

The children sang “*Nyet, nyet...*” while the Rebbe waved both hands in the air, again and again. Then the Rebbe began singing his father’s *Hakafos Niggun*, and the joy was indescribable. When they reached the high part, the Rebbe waved his right hand high in the air in circular motions, indicating that they repeat this part many times over.

With that, the Rebbe descended from the platform, distributed packets of coins to the camp directors for all the children, and then exited the shul to joyous song.

Chof Av

In honor of the Rebbe’s father’s *yahrtzeit*, the Rebbe led all three *tefillos* and recited Kaddish.

In the afternoon of Chof Av, the Rebbe visited the Ohel, returning to 770 in the late evening for Mincha. The packed shul was filled with children from Camp Gan Yisroel of Parksville, NY, as well as other camps, wearing their brightly colored t-shirts.

Following Maariv, the Rebbe delivered a *sicha* about the *yahrtzeit*—speaking at a slower pace than usual to allow the children to understand.

“Although the government of his time was very

unfriendly to *rabbanim*,” the Rebbe related, “my father was not intimidated by them at all. He stood up proudly and acted in the way a *rav* is supposed to, teaching Torah without fear.”

The Rebbe also spoke about the importance of educating children in the ways of Torah, stating that this would be the greatest *nachas* to his father from his esteemed place in heaven.

Dollars

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

On 3 Av, an individual approached the Rebbe saying that he’s having a hard time breaking up with his non-Jewish fiancée.

The Rebbe replied: “May Hashem give you the strength you need to overcome this *yetzer hara*, and may we hear good news.”

PUSH IT FURTHER

On Sunday, 10 Av (the postponed fast of Tisha B’Av), the Rebbe distributed dollars for a short while.

One of the people visiting was Rabbi Yirmiya Aloy of South Africa, who introduced his grandson to the Rebbe and asked for a *bracha*.



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1. RABBI YIRMIYA ALOY WITH THE REBBE.
2. RABBI HAVLIN INTRODUCES THE MAYOR OF KIRYAT GAT, MR. ZEV BAUM, TO THE REBBE.
3. THE REBBE IS PRESENTED WITH ONE OF THE 2000 T-SHIRTS ANNOUNCING THAT "MOSHIACH IS ON HIS WAY."

The Rebbe said: "May you grow up to be a chosid, *yerei shamayim*, and *lamdan*, like your grandfather, and even a little greater!"

Rabbi Aloy commented, "Much greater!" and the Rebbe replied, "Indeed, [the Gemara says,] a person envies anyone other than their own son..."

SHE HELPS

On Sunday, 17 Av, the Rebbe was visited by Rabbi and Mrs. Havlin of Kiryat Gat, along with the Mayor of their city, Mr. Zev Baum.

Seeing their young daughter in Mrs. Havlin's hands, the Rebbe asked how old she was. Learning that she was two years old, the Rebbe asked, "Does she light Shabbos candles yet?" Mrs. Havlin answered that she did, and the Rebbe gave the girl an extra dollar to be given to tzedakah on the upcoming Friday afternoon.



Rabbi Yitzchok Chaim Avigdor, a *rav* from Hartford, CT, came to the Rebbe to present two *seforim* of his father's, accompanied by his local shliach, Rabbi Yosef Gopin.

"He [Rabbi Gopin] is my competition," Rabbi Avigdor noted, "but I nevertheless help him in all his activities whenever I can."

The Rebbe replied: "You must not only help him, but become a partner in his work!"

Turning to Rabbi Gopin's young daughter, the Rebbe asked, "Does she help as well?"

Rabbi Gopin answered that she helps, and she attends the camp.

"She helps by saying *Modeh Ani*," the Rebbe continued, "and showing a good example for all the other Jewish children. May you have much *Chassidishe nachas*."

PRODUCTIVE FIRE

Rabbi Shmuel Greisman of Yerushalayim came by the Rebbe, and Rabbi Groner told the Rebbe that he is going to participate in the Kinus Hashluchim in Eretz Yisroel taking place next week in Migdal Haemek.

The Rebbe gave Rabbi Greisman a dollar for tzedakah to be given at the Kinus, then said: "You will give a fiery (passionate) speech there. The fire won't consume anything, because it's a fire of holiness—it doesn't destroy; it makes things stronger..."



14 AV 5751.

Rabbi Greisman asked for a *bracha* for another individual, and the Rebbe said: “May he be freed from all his debts. He always writes to me about his debts. Did he not mention anything about his debts?”

Rabbi Greisman indeed asked that the individual should have “*geulah*” from all his debts, and the Rebbe said, “*B’karov mamash!*”

1,999 SHIRTS

On Sunday, 24 Av, Rabbi Shmuel Butman presented the Rebbe with a t-shirt bearing the message “Moshiach is on his way,” saying that they had manufactured 2000 pieces.

The Rebbe said, “If you’ll leave one here, you’ll still have another 1,999.”

The Rebbe then gave additional dollars to the manufacturers for the “*kesonos*” (shirts).

Freedom

An interesting response from the Rebbe this month:

A non-Jewish individual who joined the group of guests from Toronto wrote to the Rebbe on behalf of his pastor, who was from Slovenia. On June 27, Slovenia declared its independence from Yugoslavia, and an armed conflict ensued between the two countries. The pastor wanted to ask for the Rebbe’s *bracha* that Slovenia should be victorious, and the Rebbe replied:

”באם יודיע שם אביו, אזכיר בתפלה למילוי משאלותיו לחרות עמו ולבשו”ט בזה.”

“If you will notify me of his father’s name [as is customary when praying for a non-Jew], I will mention him in prayer to have his heart’s desires fulfilled, to have freedom for his nation, and to bear good news in this regard.”

Indeed, the war was short-lived, and Slovenia’s independence was solidified later that year.

LIGHT, SUSTENANCE, AND PURITY

CHANA"YH: THE THREE PILLARS
OF THE JEWISH HOME

Compiled By: Rabbi Levi Greenberg (OH)

Written By: Rabbi Shneur Itzinger

לזכות
הרה"ת ר' לוי שיחי וולבובסקי
שליח כ"ק אדמו"ר
לטאסקאנא שבאטלי

לרגל יום הולדתו ר"ח מנחם אב
שנת הצלחה בכל מכל כל
מתוך הרחבה ושמחה!

נדפס ע"י
משפחתו שיחי

127 YEARS. THREE MITZVOS. ONE LIFE.¹

How can we eulogize a life so full?

In one sentence, the Torah encapsulates the life of the first Jewish woman, Sarah Imeinu. *Vayihyu chayei Sarah*—this is the life of Sarah. Three simple words speak of a life that was anything but.

Born in Ur Kasdim in a world steeped in idolatry, she was a partner in her husband's efforts to bring belief in Hashem's Oneness to the pagan population. One hardship after another, with plenty of blessings and rewards in the mix as well. Together with Avraham, they went on a Divinely dictated journey to teach everyone they could. *Sarah megayeres hanashim*—Sarah dedicated herself to teaching the women, bringing them close to Hashem. Along the way, they merited to live in Eretz Yisroel, the land shown to them by Hashem and promised to their descendants for eternity.

At home, more twists and turns defined her story. For decades, she remained childless,

waiting for Hashem to grant her and her husband the child He had promised them. At ninety, she finally bore Yitzchak, only to face the questions and doubts of others.

Taken captive twice, by Pharaoh and Avimelech, she saw a world leader's palace from the inside while he showered her with compliments—all to her great pain, wishing only to be freed and reunited with Avraham.

Finally, at age one hundred and twenty-seven, her eventful life came to an end, and even this was not without drama. It was the news of the Akeidah, of the reported sacrifice of her beloved son, that caused her holy soul to leave her body.

Such a remarkable, multifaceted, and eventful life would seem to deserve far more elaboration. Yet at the time of her passing, the Torah uses one singular expression to describe it all: *Chayei Sarah*—the life of Sarah. How can we include it all in one simple word?

Ask any of Sarah's granddaughters, any Jewish woman alive today, and they can give you the answer. Sarah's life did not revolve around her clothing, the length of her heels,

נשי
ובנות
חב"ד

N'SHEI
U'BNOS
CHABAD

or the color of her shoes. Basking in spirituality, these matters were insignificant. What truly concerned her was *ruchniyus*, and that could be found wherever she found herself. Whether in Ur Kasdim, Pharaoh's palace, or, *l'havdil*, Eretz Yisroel, whether speaking to *malachim* or preparing a meal, Sarah lived the same way.

Many circumstances, one grounded reality. *Chayei Sarah* was truly one, all-encompassing, singular life story, the constant pursuit of *ruchniyus*.

Specifically, three unique *mitzvos* defined her life, visible to all in a miraculous way. Her Shabbos candles burned from one Erev Shabbos to the next, her dough was blessed, and a cloud constantly

hovered above her tent. These are the three hallmarks of a Jewish woman and the special *mitzvos* entrusted to her: Shabbos candles, *kashrus*, and *taharas hamishpacha*.

This defined not only Sarah's life, but the lives of all her future descendants. Jewish women today, like their great-grandmother before them, do not live lives defined by the food they eat, the clothes they wear, or other trivialities. The three *mitzvos* of **ChaNa"i** – **challah** (kosher food), **niddah** (*taharas hamishpacha*), and **hadlakas haner**—are the legacy of Sarah for all who wish to live a life grounded in the pursuit of Hashem's *mitzvos*, and in inspiring others to live the same way.

FOUNDATION OF FAMILY LIFE

AN ENGLISH PUBLIC LETTER OF THE REBBE²

By the Grace of G-d,
6th of Tishrei 5745,
Brooklyn, N.Y.

To the Mothers and Daughters
Of our People Israel, Everywhere

Blessing and Greeting:

You are surely aware of the most important role in Jewish life which the Torah – called *Toras Chaim* and *Toras Emes*, because it is our teacher and guide in life, whose instructions are the everlasting truth – has conferred upon the Jewish woman.

One of the meaningful expressions of this role is the title *Akeres Habayis* ("Foundation of the Jewish Home"), bestowed on every Jewish Balaboste. A similarly meaningful title is *Aishes Chayil* ("A Woman of Valor"). Indeed, King

Shlomo, the Wisest of All Men, dedicates the entire concluding chapter of *Sefer Mishlei* (*Proverbs*) to the *Aishes Chayil*, with praises in the alphabetical order of all the letters of the Aleph-Beis, from *Aleph* to *Tov*.

As in all matters of Yiddishkeit, which are based on the principle that "Action is the essential thing," the said role of the Jewish woman has been specifically spelled out by our Torah, *Torah Or* (The Torah is Light), in terms of three fundamental *Mitzvos*. Though both men and women are duty-bound to observe these *Mitzvos*, their actual performance has been assigned to the woman, first and foremost. These three *Mitzvos* – in the order of their application in terms of age, from childhood on — are as follows:

1) *Hadlokas HaNer*. Lighting of the candles on Erev Shabbos and on Erev Yom Tov is a requirement in every Jewish household. Yet, the duty and privilege of fulfilling

this requirement has been given specifically to the Jewish woman. Only in unusual circumstances — as, for instance, in the absence of a woman in the house, and the like — it falls upon the man of the house to light the candles.

As in the case of all the Mitzvos of the Torah, requiring that a Jewish child should be educated in the performance of the Mitzvos from a very tender age, a girl of three years is generally considered ready for being educated in the matter of lighting a candle, with a Brocho, before Shabbos and Yom Tov under her mother's supervision. Our Sages relate that our Mother Rivkah lit an Erev-Shabbos-Kodesh candle at the age of three, carrying on the tradition of our Mother Sarah. Every Jewish mother who is blessed with a three-year-old daughter "Benching Licht" knows the thrilling experience that goes with it for both mother and daughter when joining in brightening up the home, with the sacred light of the Shabbos and Yom Tov candles. It is a Mitzvo that conspicuously reflects the quality of *Ner Mitzvo v'Torah Or* (A Mitzvo is a Candle and the Torah is Light) even to the human eye. Moreover, since G-d's reward is in kind, it surely is reciprocated by a generous measure of light and brightness illuminating their Mazel and whole life.

2) *Kashrus*. The Laws of Kashrus of foods and beverages are equally incumbent upon men and women. The particular importance of these laws can be deduced also from the fact that the foods and beverages a person consumes directly affect him or her, both physically and spiritually, since the food becomes part of one's flesh and blood. Again, the supervision and implementation of the Kashrus Laws, in the kitchen and in the house, have been entrusted primarily to the wife and mother. Indeed, the Halacha makes a special point of emphasizing her special status of credibility and reliability; that when she attests to the Kashrus of her kitchen and home, she is to be believed.

3) *Taharas Hamishpocho* (Laws of Family Purity). The extraordinary importance of the observance of Taharas Hamishpocho needs no lengthy elaboration. Suffice it to mention that the observance of the laws and regulations of Taharas Hamishpocho has a very strong impact not only on the parents, but also on their children and offspring, to all

posterity. Here again the husband and wife are both strictly obligated to observe these laws and regulations; yet, here too, the Halacha bestows on the wife a special status, as well as a special credibility as in the case of Kashrus.

The above three fundamental Mitzvos are three pillars on which the Jewish home and family life are founded. The fact that they have been assigned more specifically to the Jewish woman shows her unique position of responsibility and *Zechus* (privilege) in life, not only insofar as her own family is concerned, but also, of course, in regard to our Jewish people as a whole, which consists of all the Jewish family units in the fold.

Bearing in mind that these responsibilities and privileges have been bestowed upon Jewish mothers and daughters by HaShem, the Creator of humankind, it is certain that He has provided them with all the necessary capacities to carry out these responsibilities in the fullest measure. Therefore, if a woman encounters some difficulty in carrying out these G-d-given responsibilities, there is a self evident explanation for it: Either the difficulty is more imaginary than real; or, if real, she certainly has the fullest capacity to overcome it. Indeed, if the difficulty is uncommon, it is in itself evidence that HaShem has given her uncommon strength that may require a special challenge to be activated and brought to the surface, in order thereby to augment the arsenal of already revealed capabilities, and thus to spur steady advancement from strength to strength in all matters of Yiddishkeit in the everyday life and conduct.

Thus, as in all matters of Torah and Mitzvos, it is, in the final analysis, a matter of one's own will and determination, especially as one has the assurance of help from On High, if it be necessary.

Now that we are in the middle of the Ten Days of Teshuvo — coming from Rosh Hashono, when every Jew reaffirms his and her eager acceptance of the Kingship of the Creator as the guiding rule in the everyday, life throughout the year; and preparing for Yom Kippur, the special "One Day" in the year for "Purifying yourselves before HaShem" — it is particularly timely to send this reminder, in keeping with the saying of our Sages, "Give a little (awareness, encouragement,

or the like) to the wise, and he/she will become even wiser much more."

May your good resolutions in all above, coupled with the principle that "Action is the essential thing," as mentioned, bring additional Divine blessings in the "Chasimo and Gmar Chasimo Tovo," to each one of you and all yours, and to Klal Yisroel, for a good and sweet year materially and spiritually.

With esteem and blessing,
[The Rebbe's signature]

P.S. Needless to say, though this letter is written in the Ten Days of Teshuvo, its contents and message are timely throughout the year; and, of course, HaShem's blessings are certainly timely throughout the year.

1. Adapted from Shabbos Parshas Chayei Sarah 5743: *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 35, pp. 92–93; *Hisvaaduyos* 5743 vol. 1, pp. 500–501; Yiddish *hanacha* of this farbrengen, pp. 22–25.

2. Original Yiddish letter printed in *Likkutei Sichos* vol. 29, pp. 487–491.

3. *Hisvaaduyos* 5745 vol. 5, p. 2745.

4. *Likkutei Sichos* vol. 20, p. 227.

5. *Hisvaaduyos* 5746 vol. 3, p. 511.

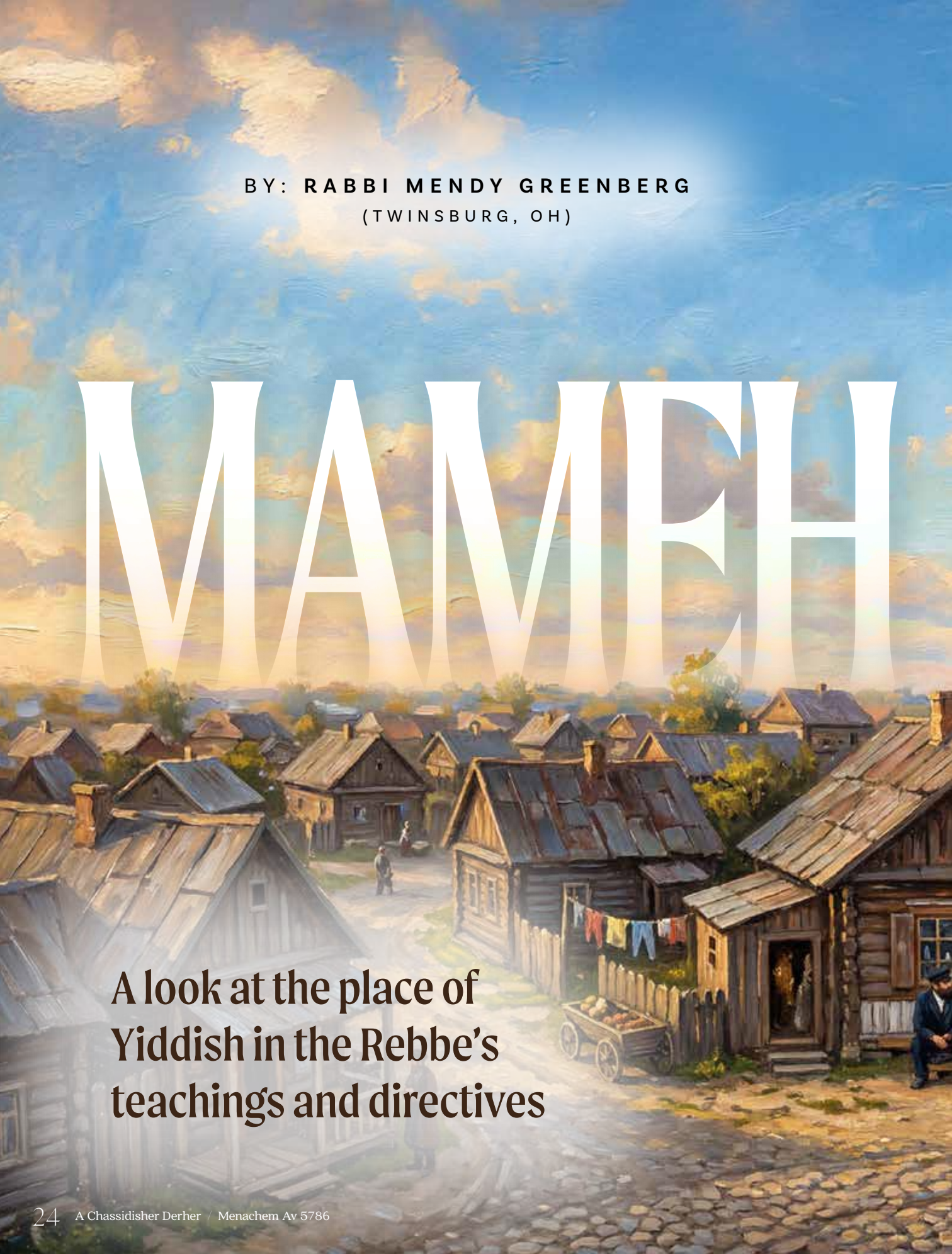
6. *Hisvaaduyos* 5749 vol. 4, p. 378.



READ:
A HAPPY
JEWISH HOME

ADDITIONAL INSIGHT

- » The three *mitzvoim* of the Jewish woman are the foundation upon which the entire Jewish people stand. Through *taharas hamishpacha*, she brings a holy *neslama* and holy body into the world. Through *kashrus*, that child continues to grow in a holy way. And through lighting Shabbos candles, she fills the home with light. Although our candles may not be *seen* to burn all week long, every Jewish woman carries a spark of Sarah Imeinu within her, and her Shabbos candles truly burn forever, creating a never-ending light. – *Adapted from Chof Av 5745*³
- » Light, food, and family life are *human* necessities, not only *Jewish* ones. The role of the Jewish woman is to infuse these basic pillars of life with Yiddishkeit. Ordinary light becomes the holy light of Shabbos and Yom Tov, sustenance becomes kosher food, and family life becomes the mitzvah of *taharas hamishpacha*. In this way, we prepare for the time when the physical itself will be refined, to the extent that we will all be able to experience G-dliness in this world, with the arrival of Moshiach. – *Adapted from Likkutei Sichos*⁴
- » The three mitzvos of the Jewish woman form the word "HaCheiN," as in the *passuk* "Sheker hachein v'hevel hayofi." While the simple meaning of the *passuk* seems to *reject chein* and *yofi*, the deeper meaning is that when a woman possesses *yiras Hashem*, such as through the fulfillment of these mitzvos, she is praised with her physical grace and beauty as well. – *Adapted from Shavuot 5746*⁵
- » Every Shabbos candle kindled by a Jewish woman and girl, even a one-year-old child who has just learned to speak, illuminates the home until the next Friday evening, long after the physical flame has burned out. Just as the candles of the first Jewish woman, Sarah Imeinu, burned from one Erev Shabbos to the next, this constant light brings true light into the home. In its merit, Hashem grants a life free of worry—a calm, illuminated, and Yiddishe life. – *Adapted from a sicha to N'shei Chabad*⁶



BY: RABBI MENDY GREENBERG
(TWINSBURG, OH)

MAMEH

**A look at the place of
Yiddish in the Rebbe's
teachings and directives**

לע"נ
הרה"ח ר' יצחק נח ע"ה בן האדמו"ר משה
מנחם מענדל מסלאנים ע"ה סילווער
נלב"ע ח"י סיון ה'תשמ"ב
הרה"ת ר' בנימין זאב ע"ה בן יבלחט"א
הרה"ת ר' אברהם יוסף שיח' סילווער
נלב"ע כ"ב סיון ה'תשע"ג
תנ"צ'ה'

נדפס ע"י
הרה"ת ר' אברהם יוסף וזוגתו
מרת צבי' הינדא שיח'ו
סילווער

אִשׁוֹן



Is Language a Factor?

Should the importance of the Yiddish language be a topic for this magazine?

The Rebbe never announced a “*Mivtza Yiddish*”; the Rebbe didn’t campaign for people to learn it and didn’t speak incessantly about the problem of its decline. Indeed, there is no mitzvah in the Torah dictating which language to speak. One can devotedly serve Hashem with genuine *ahava* and *yira* without knowing the language at all.

The Rebbe often spoke about the importance of translating Chassidus into other languages so that it could reach the broadest possible audience. The Rebbe spoke many times about the novelty introduced by the Friediker Rebbe in having *maamarim* translated to other languages, explaining that it represented a whole new stage in *hafatzas hamaayanos*.

In fact, the Rebbe once concluded such a *sicha* with an explanation for *why he himself didn’t deliver sichos in English!* Consider this statement:

*“The fact that I speak in Yiddish and not in English is for several reasons, and most simply—because it is my mameh lashon, and it is simply easier to express myself and explain ideas in this language...”*¹

So why would we write about the importance of Yiddish? Indeed, the entire purpose of *A Chassidisher Derher* magazine is to bring the Rebbe’s *inyonim* to the broader *English-speaking* audience!

But there is more to the story.

The Sichas and the Back Story

“I was once standing in the foyer of 770 on a Friday night,” relates Rabbi Asi Spiegel. “In those years, before the *histalkus* of the Rebbetzin, the Rebbe would remain in his room after *Kabbalas Shabbos* for an hour or more before heading to the library for *seudas shabbos* with the Rebbetzin.

“It was a common practice for *bochurim* to do the same; we would remain in 770 as long as the Rebbe was there. Some would learn in the small *zal*, and others would wait in the foyer to see the Rebbe leave. After the Rebbe went to the library, we would go to the yeshiva cafeteria to make kiddush.

“On this particular week, I noticed that the situation in the foyer—in the main lobby at the entrance to 770—was livelier than usual. A discussion had begun about the

new *maamar* or *likut* that had just been released, and a heated argument was raging among the *bochurim* over its contents.

“Watching the scene, a passing thought crossed my mind. This conversation was being held very close to the Rebbe’s room. Only a few thin doors and walls separated us from the Rebbe, and it seemed almost certain that the Rebbe could hear everything...”²

The next day at the farbrengen, the Rebbe spoke about the Friediker Rebbe’s innovation of translating Chassidus into other languages, when suddenly the *sicha* veered in a different direction.

“There is something very surprising,” the Rebbe began.

“When *shpitz-Chabad’nikes* meet and discuss even holy matters, in Chassidus etc.—they speak only in English!

“And not because they face the obstacle of not knowing Yiddish; they were raised in chassidishe homes, and learned in *yeshivos* where the rosh yeshiva spoke in Yiddish—he didn’t speak English at all!

“So they have no real obstacle or limitation. Nevertheless, when they discuss a concept in Chassidus, they speak and explain the idea specifically in English, except for a few terms of Chassidus that they do not know how to translate into English, so they say them in Yiddish or in Lashon Hakodesh.”

The Rebbe returned to the main discussion about translating Chassidus for the uninitiated, but even then, returned to the topic of Yiddish in the middle of his sentence, and spoke about the correction needed:

“We have the *hora’ah* from the translation of Chassidus into other languages, that even if you would say (*im timtzi lomar*) that this situation of speaking in English needs to be changed and corrected—

“And it’s not actually an *im timtzi lomar*; this indeed needs to be changed and corrected, and conversing should



RABBI ASI SPIEGEL.



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RABBI AND MRS. LEIBEL GRONER WITH THE REBBE AT DOLLARS.

be done specifically in Yiddish, especially in light of the concept of *lo shinu es leshonam* [that the Jewish people spoke their own distinct language, even in Mitzrayim].

“Nevertheless, when one comes to speak Chassidus with other Jews who, for the time being, do not yet know Yiddish—and certainly do not know Lashon Hakodesh—one should not wait until they learn Yiddish...” (at this point in the *sicha*, the Rebbe explained why he himself doesn’t speak publicly in English, as mentioned above).³

This *sicha* is unique. The Rebbe didn’t often speak about the importance of Yiddish, and when doing so, it was almost always as an aside, while speaking about the importance of translations.

Nevertheless, it was clear from the Rebbe that a Lubavitcher chossid, especially one who was raised knowing the language, should speak in Yiddish. It was almost obvious, and taken for granted. *Of course, we speak in Yiddish.*

Here are several stories in this regard:

How Many Years Have You Been in Lubavitch?

Rabbi Yossi Groner, son of the Rebbe’s secretary Rabbi Leibel Groner, shared the following story with *A Chassidisher Derher*:

“My mother was once standing in line for dollars. As she entered the main lobby, the Rebbe was in the midst of a conversation, so she used the opportunity to exchange a few words with my father, Rabbi Leibel Groner, who was standing in his usual place next to the Rebbe. She said something to him, he answered, and that was it.

“A few moments later, she was standing in front of the Rebbe.

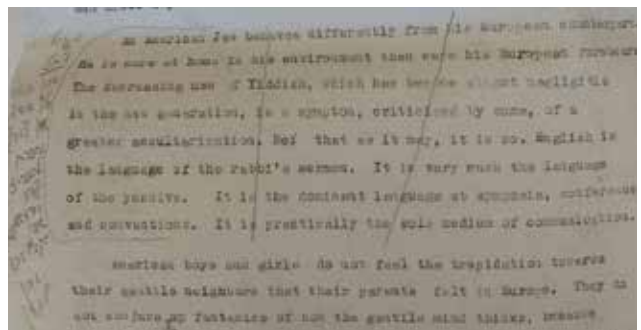
“*Farvos redt ir nit kein Yiddish?* Why don’t you speak in Yiddish?’ the Rebbe asked her. ‘*Ir kent doch redn Yiddish*, you are capable of speaking Yiddish...’

“As a result, my parents began to speak only Yiddish with one another.”

Rabbi Chaim Melul (featured in the *Derher* magazine in the recent month of Adar) related a story in this regard as well:

“A friend of mine, a fellow *baal teshuvah* from France, was in *yechidus*. At the beginning, the Rebbe asked him if he spoke Yiddish, and he said that he did not.

“The truth was that he spoke a decent Yiddish, but he was afraid that he might misunderstand the Rebbe, and was therefore hoping that the Rebbe would speak to him in French. At any rate, he told the Rebbe that he didn’t understand Yiddish, and the Rebbe responded, ‘And how many years are you in Lubavitch?’”...



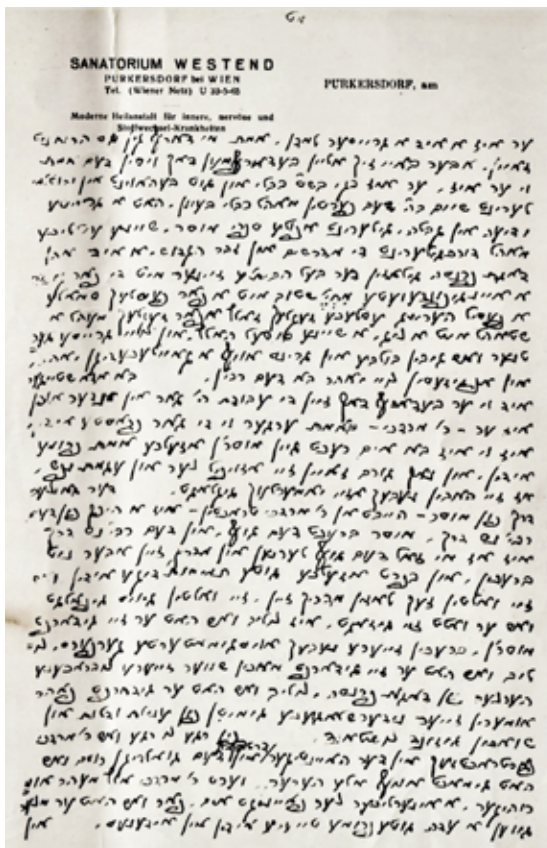
THE REBBE’S EDITS ON AN ARTICLE IN DI YIDDISHE HEIM MAGAZINE, IN WHICH HE CROSSED OUT THIS ENTIRE PARAGRAPH, EXPLAINING WHY IN THE MARGINS.

Here's a third example:

The Rebbe would edit the entire English portion of *Di Yiddische Heim* magazine. Once, the authors prepared an article that dwelt on the differences between Jewish life in America and in Europe before the war. One paragraph read as follows:

An American Jew behaves differently from his European counterparts. He is more at home in his environment than his European forebears. The decreasing use of Yiddish, which has become almost negligible in the new generation, is a symptom, criticized by some, of a greater acculturation. Be that as it may, it is so. English is the language of the rabbi's sermon. It is very much the language of the yeshiva. It is the dominant language at the symposia, conferences, and conventions. It is practically the sole medium of communication.

As usual, the article was submitted to the Rebbe for his edits and approval. The Rebbe crossed out this entire paragraph and wrote the following on the margins:



PAGE 49 OF THE 'LANGE BRIV', A LENGTHY STORY ABOUT TALMIDIM OF THE BAAL SHEM TOV, WRITTEN BY THE FRIEDRIKER REBBE IN 5695 FOR HIS DAUGHTER, REBBETZIN CHAYA MUSHKA, ENTIRELY IN YIDDISH. IT TAKES UP OVER 120 PAGES IN THE FRIEDRIKER REBBE'S IGROS KODESH.

"אפילו את"ל [=אם תימצי לומר] שכן הוא 100%, אין צורך והכרח להכריז עד"ז [=על-דבר-זה] ובמשמעות שכן יקום וכו'."

*Even if you were to say that this is 100% true, there is no need or necessity to announce it publicly in a way that implies that 'this is how it's meant to be' etc.*⁴

Clearly, the Rebbe was not pleased with even the description of the "decline of Yiddish."

But why is Yiddish so important?

The Adjacent Language

In a *muga'dike sicha* about Tanya on the radio—which was taught in Yiddish—the Rebbe explains that in addition to simply being the language which many Yidden speak, Yiddish has a special connection to the revelation of *Pnimius Hatorah*:

"The Alter Rebbe writes in *Iggeres HaKodesh* that the Baal Shem Tov would say Torah in Yiddish, not *Lashon Hakodesh*. This was also famously the practice of his *talmid*, the Mezritcher Maggid, as well as of the Alter Rebbe and the Rebbeim who followed him, down to the Rebbe *der shver*—they would say Chassidus in Yiddish.

"To truly grasp the meaning of the *divrei Torah* of the Rabbeim, it is not sufficient to learn them as they were later translated into *Lashon Hakodesh* by others. One needs the original words as they were spoken in Yiddish..."

The Rebbe added that the fact that this is so, *b'hashgacha pratis*, means that there is a deeper spiritual quality to this language:

"First, the fact that the Rabbeim said Chassidus specifically in Yiddish is itself an indication that the language possesses a unique capacity—even before it was used for this purpose—for the saying of Chassidus. Second, by actually saying Chassidus in Yiddish, the Rabbeim elevated the language itself beyond its prior state.

"This is similar to what the Mittlerer Rebbe explains in *Shaarei Orah*: when a physical object is designated for a mitzvah, the very act of setting it aside already draws a lofty spiritual light into it. Then, after the mitzvah is actually performed, an even higher light is drawn into the object—ininitely greater than what it received at the initial designation."⁵

In the *muga'dike sicha* of Vayeshev 5748 (the same occasion mentioned earlier, when the Rebbe spoke about Chassidim conversing in English), the Rebbe places Yiddish on a unique pedestal—as a language adjacent and uniquely connected to *lashon hakodesh*.

"Although it is not *Lashon Hakodesh*, it has nevertheless

been elevated by the Jewish people over the generations through their speaking it—even in everyday matters (in keeping with the directive, ‘All your actions should be for the sake of Heaven,’ and ‘In all your ways, know Him’), and all the more so through its use in matters of Torah and *mitzvos*, and especially in the study of Torah (in *chadarim* and *yeshivos*), and in particular, in *Pninius Hatorah*.

“As a result, Yiddish has a unique distinction, importance, and *chavivus*. In this sense, it can be compared to Targum, [the Aramaic] which is closely related to *Lashon Hakodesh*—to the extent that even *Torah Shebiksav* contains words in Targum, and certainly *Torah Shebaal Peh*...”⁶

The Stamps from the Rebbetzin

The Rebbe mentioned those spiritual qualities of Yiddish—being the language of the Rabbeim and *Pninius Hatorah* for so many generations—on numerous occasions. However, for Chassidim, the quality of Yiddish should be uncomplicated and straightforward: it’s the Rebbe’s language.

Rabbi Chaim Boruch Halberstam, the founder of WLCC, has become known in recent years for his campaign encouraging the use of Yiddish. In an interview with *A Chassidisher Derher*, he explains:

“The importance of Yiddish is so obvious, it doesn’t even need to be stated,” he says. “To be a chossid, you need to listen and understand the words of your Rebbe—and the Rebbe spoke in Yiddish!

“Of course, so much has been translated over the years, but there is no substitute for listening to the Rebbe’s words, as he spoke them, in their original language. No *hanacha*, translation, or printed book can really convey the *herges*, the *chayus*, the nuances of the Rebbe’s

sichos—and certainly not when they are translated into a second language. *Kli sheini aino mevashel*, the second-hand repetition just isn’t the same.

“For me, there is a personal element as well. My life’s work, since I was a *bochur* in 770, was to bring the Rebbe’s voice directly to the public. We began broadcasting and regularly recording the Rebbe in 5730, and we also invested significant effort in compiling all the recordings of the *farbrengens* from earlier years, so they would be accessible to the public.

“Today, you have all the Rebbe’s *sichos* at your fingertips—and young *bochurim* tell me that they cannot listen to the Rebbe... because they don’t understand Yiddish!

“Because of that, I decided that I would give a special gift to anyone who commits to speaking Yiddish—a stamp from the Rebbe’s stamp collection, which I once received



SOME OF THE STAMPS.



RABBI CHAIM BARUCH HALBERSTAM REWARDING BOCHURIM WHO COMMITTED TO SPEAKING YIDDISH WITH THE STAMPS FROM THE REBBETZIN.

THEN DO SOMETHING...

During Tishrei 5734, a guest from England was asked by the Rebbe in *yechidus* if he understood Yiddish. He answered: “I am afraid not...”

The Rebbe responded: “If you are afraid, you need to do something about it...”⁷



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THE REBBE SMILES AS MR. DAVID CHASE DELIVERS HIS REMARKS AT THE "GROUNDBREAKING" FOR 770'S EXPANSION.

from the Rebbetzin.¹ Baruch Hashem, I've already had the opportunity to give out many such stamps, and I know that they've made an incredible impact."

The Shortest Yiddish Speech Ever

The Rebbe's request for Yiddish was not limited to "typical Chassidim."

On 17 Elul 5748, the crowd at 770 was preparing for a momentous occasion—the groundbreaking for the expansion of 770. Being the year of *aveilus* for the Rebbetzin, the Rebbe spent most of his time at home, but there was hope that he would come to 770 in honor of the occasion.

After Mincha, Mr. David Chase—a philanthropist known for his warm relationship with the Rebbe—approached the Rebbe at the foot of the staircase with a request that the Rebbe grace the event with his presence, "at five o'clock, right near your office."

The Rebbe's response caught Mr. Chase off guard.

"A Jew is always making a deal," the Rebbe said. The deal was: "If you will say a few words at five o'clock in Yiddish."

Mr. Chase paused for a few moments, confused, so the Rebbe smiled at him and said, "It is your *mameh lashon*..."

Mr. Chase was a Holocaust survivor from Poland. Yiddish had been his first language. As he regained his bearings, he responded to the Rebbe by repeating his invitation in his Polish-style Yiddish, "*Yu, finef a-zeiger, Yes, five o'clock...*"

Lest he think that speaking Yiddish right there would suffice, the Rebbe clarified: "For all the gathering, not only for me... Then you will remember your *mameh*-tongue, and it will be a good start for all the year round—this year, and the year after that."

The conversation (in English) continued for another few moments, and as the Rebbe prepared to go up the stairs, he said to Mr. Chase, "I will see you at five o'clock."

"And don't forget to prepare a good speech in Yiddish," the Rebbe added with a smile.

Later that afternoon, a vast crowd gathered on the service lane of Eastern Parkway. A platform was set up with the Rebbe's *stender*, and some earth was spread for the *hanachas even hapina*. Soon, the Rebbe arrived and delivered a *sicha* in honor of the occasion.

As the Rebbe concluded the *sicha*, he turned towards Mr. Chase, who was standing near the Rebbe's platform, prepared with his own podium and microphone.

Mr. Chase began his remarks in English.

In a touching speech, he described his memories of the Germans burning down the shul of his town, and of witnessing the horrific killings of Jewish children. At the time, he said, he couldn't possibly imagine that he would witness a day of rebuilding—when a new shul is erected, when Jewish children scamper about, proud of their Yiddishkeit.

Then, turning to the Rebbe, he spoke about the privilege it had been for him to be connected to the Rebbe. "Rabbi, you've blessed us all with your wisdom; you've blessed us all with your leadership, and to me it's been a

privilege to work under your direction...”

All this time, the Rebbe was listening intently. But when he began the next sentence, a beautiful smile began to spread on the Rebbe’s holy face.

“Rabbi, I don’t know what to tell you, except that I promised you that I’m going to say a few words in *mameh lushon*, so I’m going to have to say it...”

Mr. Chase continued to speak about his love for the Rebbe and the privilege he felt to have had this connection. Then, he finally got to his Yiddish speech.

“All I can tell you is, *ich libe dich, zayer zayer asach...*” I love you, very, very much.

Throughout this unusual scene, all eyes were glued to the Rebbe. Everyone watched as a smile began to spread once again on the Rebbe’s face.

Mr. Chase then continued with his final statement: “Next time we get together, I promise I will be able to speak more *mameh lushon...*”

This earned him the biggest smile of all.

An Honor For You

The Rebbe’s glowing countenance during this encounter created one of the most iconic moments in Lubavitch history on film—but less famous is the continuation, which took place several weeks later, again on the topic of Yiddish.

On 8 Tishrei, the Rebbe held *yechidus* for the supporters of the Machne Israel Development Fund. Usually, the Rebbe would speak a short *sicha* of just a few minutes in English, but this time, the Rebbe delivered a longer *sicha*. The *sicha* began in English, but after a few minutes, the Rebbe said that he would now switch to Yiddish—and explained why.

This is, perhaps, the best way to conclude this article. Here are the Rebbe’s words, in the original.

“After my endeavors in English, I permit myself—after you are meeting for so many years, I believe it will be more to your honor when I will consider every one of you—as certainly you are anyway—that for you the mameh lashon, the Yiddish lashon, is familiar as it was to your mother, or to your grandmother.

“And that will be a good start—not only not to be ashamed of it, but to use it in everyday life, and to influence also your family and children and grandchildren to do likewise, and to do so happily; proud to being a Jew, having a language that belongs to the Jews—and to use it in everyday life, as an example of your pride to being a Jew...”²⁸



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THE REBBE SPEAKS AT THE YECHIDUS FOR THE SUPPORTERS OF THE MACHNE ISRAEL DEVELOPMENT FUND. 8 TISHREI 5749.

As the Rebbe says, so clearly: We should all use it in everyday life—with our families, children, and grandchildren, and we should do so happily—as an example of our being proud to be Jewish—proud to be Chassidim of the Rebbe.

1. Apparently, due to the financial value of stamps, the Rebbe would not throw them away. At some point, the Rebbetzin gave an entire collection to Rabbi Halberstam. See more in Kfar Chabad Magazine issue 2154.

Teach In Yiddish?

Any discussion about the importance of Yiddish brings along with it an adjacent question: what is the place for Yiddish in Chinuch?

For so many generations, Jewish children learned Torah in their mother tongue, in Yiddish, and they translated the Chumash and Gemara into Yiddish in the cherished, age-old tune.

This tradition continued into the new world in many *chadorim*—to a greater or lesser extent—but as fewer and fewer children understood the language, this custom began to raise questions. Many such questions arrived at the Rebbe's desk.

The Early Letters

The first (known) mention of Yiddish in the context of chinuch appears in a letter from 5713 to Reb Avraham Pariz. Describing his pain at the lack of activism in Chabad, and how much more could be accomplished, the Rebbe made the following observation:

*“Surely you know that the Satmar Chassidim have established several talmud torahs—where the learning takes place specifically in Yiddish—and these were established just in the recent past...”*⁹

This is only a passing mention, but there are two letters in *Igros Kodesh* with a much clearer stance, both dated just one year later, in 5714.

The first letter is a response to a letter from the administration of the Talmud Torah in Kfar Chabad, which wrote that they were considering changing the language of instruction from Yiddish to Hebrew.

“Despite the considerations you raise,” the Rebbe responds, “it is essential that you continue these classes specifically in Yiddish, just as until now.”¹⁰

In the second letter, the Rebbe writes quite sharply:

“Despite the ‘claims’ of certain ‘educators’ who argued, supposedly in the students’ ‘best interest,’ using the



A MELAMED (REB BARUCH PARIZ) TEACHING CHILDREN IN THE LUBAVITCH CHEDER IN LUD, ERETZ YISROEL.



A MANUAL FOR CHILDREN, PUBLISHED IN EUROPE IN THE EARLY 1900S, REGARDING LEARNING IVRIT BI'IVRIT.

reasoning cited in your letter, it is both better and easier for the teacher candidates to be taught Yiddish.”¹¹

These statements might seem to be unequivocal in their support for Yiddish instruction, but the full context of these letters (and many other letters, as included below) paints a very different picture.¹² The Rebbe’s opposition seems to be not as much the abandonment of Yiddish as it is to the adoption of *Ivrit B’Ivrit*, an entirely different problem—as we shall explain.

Lashon Kodesh—New and Improved

In the early generations of the Zionist movement, a campaign was made to educate the masses in a new, modern Hebrew, and there sprung up an educational program called *Ivrit B’Ivrit*, where school teachers would speak solely Hebrew throughout the day, immersing their students in the language and helping them to learn it quickly.

The use of *Lashon Hakodesh* as a mundane language is anathema to Yiddishkeit, and the Rebbe Rashab was at the forefront of the opposition to it, alongside his opposition to the broader Zionist movement and its secular messaging.

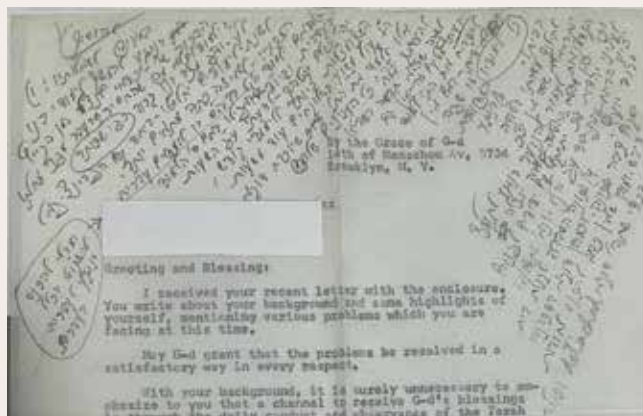
Both of these letters seem to reflect—not so much the absolute necessity of Yiddish—but the fight against encroaching secular forces and the need to preserve the purity of Jewish education. Here are the citations, in their entirety.

The first letter:

“Despite the considerations you raise, it is essential that you continue these classes specifically in Yiddish, just as until now. At a time when we see that the *le’umas zeh* (the “other side”) fights over every detail, and nothing is considered insignificant so long as they achieve victory—our Torah cannot be treated with less seriousness than their causes. We need to guard even the *ark’sa d’m’sana* [the most insignificant *minhagim*]; how much more so in a matter of education—where it is exceedingly difficult to foresee the effects of even a slight change during the years of childhood on the course of a person’s entire life.”

In the second letter:

“Regarding *Ivrit B’Ivrit*: It is well known how strongly our Rabbeim opposed this—despite the ‘claims’ of certain ‘educators’ who argued, supposedly in the students’ ‘best interest,’ using the reasoning cited in your letter. It is both better and easier for the teacher candidates to be taught Yiddish.”



ON THE MARGINS OF A LETTER, THE REBBE DRAFTED THIS POSTSCRIPT IN LASHON KODESH, COMPARING *IVRIT B’IVRIT* AND WHAT WE MIGHT CALL ‘YIDDISH B’YIDDISH.’

What about places where *Ivrit B’Ivrit* is not a factor? What about places where children do not speak Yiddish at home?

The Crying Injustice

In his interview with *A Chassidisher Derher*, Rabbi Shabsi Alpern of Brazil shared that in the early days of his shlichus, he taught Gemara to a group of children who were more advanced than the rest of his school. Some parents insisted that he teach in Yiddish, but in *yechidus*, the Rebbe didn’t approve.

“The Rebbe said we should use the language that achieves the best results,” Rabbi Alpern said. “When I returned to Brazil, I switched to Portuguese, and Baruch Hashem, we saw immediate results. There is a *lamdan* in Eretz Yisrael who still thanks me today, because the switch finally allowed him to enjoy the classes, and they were the impetus for his real growth in Yiddishkeit.”¹³

In a fascinating recording of a lengthy *yechidus*—one of the only such extant recordings—with Mr. Frank Lautenberg, the Rebbe makes a similar point:

“I am not for the Yiddish of the yeshivah. There are many in the Yeshivah who are very enthusiastic about forcing the people to teach all subjects in Yiddish, Gemara etc. I am not enthusiastic about it. We are spending a lot of time to learn a new language; after they have learned it, they have a language barrier. They cannot speak fluently—they are thinking in English, and it is a pity on the time lost, as I said before, ‘the building is burning!’ It is not a normal time.

“And to say it in a good way: it is a computer era; a computer must have the results in one second.”¹⁴



STUDENTS OF THE "CHEDER YIDDISH" IN Kfar Chabad in recent years.

There are letters in *Igros Kodesh* with similar directives. For example, in this letter to a *menahel* in Uruguay:

"Regarding the language in which to teach the bochurim and the *talmidim*:

"...There is no time to wait until they come to understand another language. They must be taught in the language they understand now, and all available time should be used—not to teach a language, but to instill in them a spirit of *yiras shomayim*, *ahavas Hashem*, and *ahavas haTorah*."¹⁵

In this final example, the Rebbe makes an explicit comparison between *Ivrit B'Ivrit* and what we might call '*yiddish b'yiddish*.' This letter was drafted by the Rebbe in *Lashon Hakodesh*, and then prepared by the secretary in English. The Rebbe writes:

"האם ילמוד הנ"ל בביה"ס בו לומדים עברית בעברית וכיו"ב—ומבלי להכנס להשקו"ט בכלל בנוגע לעברית בעברית ואפילו באם ס' הלימוד יהי' כולם עטה"ק—לדעתי ע"פ השעות המצומצמות ביותר ללימודי קודש, ה"ז עול משוע' כשלוקחים עוד משעות אלו ללמד את הת' שיוכרח דוקא להעתיק במח' כל הענינים שלומד לשפה שהיא חדשה בשבילו.
"הערה מטעם זה—אין גם להכריח את הת' ללמוד כל לימודיו באידיש—באם אין זו שפה המדוברת בביתו."

In the English rendering:

"Whether your son should learn in a school using the 'Ivris-b'Ivris' method, and the like? —without getting into the controversy about the advantages, or otherwise, of this method in general, and even if the curriculum etc. be completely *al taharas hakodesh*—it is my opinion that considering the very limited time allotted to Limudei Kodesh, it is a crying injustice to further deprive the students of this precious time in order to teach them in a way which compels them to translate in their mind the subject matter of their lessons into a language unfamiliar to them. (Note: For the same reason, the student should not be compelled to learn everything in Yiddish—if this is not his spoken language.)"¹⁶¹⁷

How To Incorporate Yiddish

However, this does not mean that we need to give up on Yiddish entirely.

In 5717, Rabbi Sholom Dovber Popack—then living in Pittsburgh—wrote to the Rebbe, asking if he should insist that his son's language of instruction be Yiddish.

The Rebbe answered:

“Since you and your wife know Yiddish, and there are only a limited number of hours your son spends in Cheder, as customary in this country, it would be appropriate that you and your wife be involved in your son’s becoming accustomed to Yiddish and understanding it, and Cheder now—until he will become accustomed to Yiddish—should be in the language he knows best.”¹⁸

There are also opportunities to teach Yiddish to children at school. This letter to Rabbi Hirshel Fogelman (then in Buffalo), for example, suggests a separate time for learning Yiddish:

“Based on your description, our advice is that, for the time being, all subjects should be taught in English. At the same time, efforts should be made that, over time, the students also learn Yiddish, and then it will be possible to transition the language of instruction to Yiddish.

“You can accustom the students to Yiddish as you see fit—either by conducting the review of the material in Yiddish (which will also make the review more engaging, even for those students who already remember well what they learned the first time), or by setting aside a specific time for learning the Yiddish language—(and it is possible to combine both approaches).”¹⁹

Similarly, in a *yechidus* with Rabbi Aharon Dov Sufrin, the dean of the Lubavitch Day School in England, the Rebbe rejected the idea of using Yiddish as the language of instruction, but then added,

“It is appropriate to speak to them in Yiddish during their playtime, recess, breaks, or when telling them a story—as this will help expand their familiarity with the language; however, not when teaching them formal Yiddishkeit subjects.”²⁰

Beware of Machlokes

Some parents in London asked the Rebbe for permission to secede from the Lubavitch Day school entirely and open a *cheder al-taharas-hakodesh*, where no *limudei chol* would be learned, and Yiddish would be the language of instruction. This suggestion was categorically rejected by the Rebbe.²¹

Interestingly, a “Cheder Yiddish” was established in Kfar Chabad in the early 5730s under the assumption that the Rebbe supported the idea of *chinuch al-taharas-hakodesh*, but there were indications that the Rebbe was not pleased with the idea of a second institution weakening the existing *mosad chinuch* which had been established by the Frierdiker Rebbe, and its establishment was indeed



LETTER TO RABBI SHLOMO DOVBER POPACK OF PITTSBURGH.

quite controversial.

In fact, in light of the controversy, one visitor came from Kfar Chabad to New York with the specific goal of asking the Rebbe about the new *cheder*, but the Rebbe answered every question on his *pa”n* aside from that one! When the visitor raised the question directly, the Rebbe told him that instead of two *chadorim*, the original *cheder* should provide an exclusively *limudei kodesh* track.

Several years later, when the *cheder’s* principal was in *yechidus* with his son, the Rebbe began to speak to the child in Yiddish, only to discover that he didn’t speak Yiddish at all—despite learning in the breakaway *mosad*

SLEEPING AMONG THE AWAKE

In some of the directives mentioned in the article, the Rebbe recommends that Yiddish be spoken in the home. However, this was not a blanket rule or *takana*, as evident in the transcript of this *yechidus*:

“Regarding the language at home—Yiddish or Lashon Kodesh? Since one should not be ‘awake among the sleeping and sleeping among those awake,’²² it depends on the location, and you should follow the custom of *anash*, or the majority of *anash*.²³

that had ostensibly been created with the goal of learning in Yiddish!

The Rebbe turned to his father with a very serious face and asked sharply, “How does the boy know *lashon kodesh* so well? *M’lernt nit in cheder oif Yiddish?* The cheder doesn’t teach in Yiddish?”²⁴

In Summary

The question of *chinuch* in Yiddish was actually addressed by the Rebbe in a letter directly to parents in Kfar Chabad a full five years before the Cheder Yiddish was established, and does well to sum up the entire issue.

The Rebbe writes:

“In my opinion, since the primary purpose of the Talmud Torah is to educate the students in *yiras Hashem* and *ahavas Hashem*, and to teach them *Toras Hashem* and His *mitzvos*, which is ‘longer than the earth and broader than the sea,’ and for this reason Chazal warned so strongly against the neglect of the learning of *tinokos shel beis rabban*, to the point that it is forbidden even for the building of the Beis HaMikdash—

“It is obvious that the main point is not the language

in which the students are taught, but those above-mentioned matters: the effectiveness and the increase, both in quantity and quality, in the knowledge of Torah and *mitzvos*. [It is also understood that in a place where the language of instruction has an effect on matters of *yiras Shamayim* and the like, then the choice of language carries importance in that respect]...

“A particular point regarding Kfar Chabad: to my great regret, there are those who seize every opportunity to turn matters into a source of dispute and divisiveness. This is the craft of the *kluginker* (the “wily one,” the *yetzer hara*)—to disguise everything in a cloak of *yiras Shamayim*. From the style of the letters of the administration and the parents, it appears that this has occurred in the present case. Therefore, it is proper to conduct an examination ... to determine the interests of each of those involved in this new dispute.

“...As for the special advantages you mention regarding Yiddish, it requires consideration whether the acquisition of these advantages is the role of the school or the responsibility of the parents and the home environment.”²⁵

1. First page of *Hashlamos* to the Farbrengen of Vayeshev 5748 in Yiddish, from Hanachos Hatmimim. See a similar *hanacha* in *Lashon Hakodesh*, in *Toras Menachem* 5748 vol. 2 p. 73.

2. Interview with A *Chassidisher Derher* for this article.

3. First page of *Hashlamos* to the Farbrengen of Vayeshev 5748 in Yiddish, via Hanachos Hatmimim. See also the version in *Lashon Hakodesh*, in *Toras Menachem* 5748 vol. 2, p. 73.

4. *Altein-Gerlitzky Teshura*, Sivan 5779 p. 4.

5. *Likkutei Sichos* vol. 21, p. 448.

6. *Sefer Hasichos* 5748 p. 158

7. As heard from Rabbi Michael Seligson.

8. *Ashreinu* Audio, 8 Tishrei 5749, minute 3:58.

9. *Echad Hayah Avraham* p. 227, dated 23 Elul 5713.

10. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 8 p. 27.

11. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 8 p. 146.

12. Of course, any interpretation given here for the Rebbe’s words is solely the opinion of the author of this article.

13. *Derher*, Elul 5779 p. 52.

14. There is a missing footnote here: *Ashreinu* Audio, Private Audience 26 Sivan 5735, Minute 1:37:44: <https://go.ashreinu.app/t4rqd315aypn>

15. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 15, p. 84.

16. *Teshurah* of Reb Meir Harlig’s *Shloshim*, p. 28. It should be noted that it is unclear whether this letter was ever sent.

17. A separate question arises regarding the incorporation of *limudei chol* in an English-speaking school, to give the children the ability to read and write in their spoken language. The directives included in this article to teach in English were given to schools

which, generally speaking, included *limudei chol* anyway. The directives against *limudei chol* (which explicitly included learning English) gave rise to schools in which children generally spoke a fluent Yiddish. Today, circumstances have arisen where there are English language schools where children do not speak Yiddish at all, but are completely *al-taharas-hakodesh* and do not teach reading and writing English either. Since we have not found any clear directives from the Rebbe regarding these specific circumstances, we have not addressed them here.

18. 13 Iyar 5717. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 15, p. 128.

19. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 21, p. 38. The suggestion to do *chazara* in Yiddish was also given to Rabbi Nachman Sudak regarding the Lubavitch Day School in England. See “*Far Gantz England*,” *Shmotkin-Sudak Teshurah* Adar 5786 p. 130.

20. *Derher*, Adar II 5779 p. 27

21. *Maseches Derech Eretz Rabba*, chapter 7.

22. Sivan 5732 (*Heichal Menachem* vol. 1, p. 224).

23. *Derher* Archives.

24. The full account of the Cheder Yiddish is recorded in *Harav Ashkenazi* vol. 1, p. 344 and on.

25. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 25, p. 142.

Mobilizing for the Rebbe's Health

By: Rabbi Mendy Greenberg (Twinsburg, OH)

On 26 Cheshvan 5705, the Frierdiker Rebbe suffered a heart attack.¹

Chassidim across the world were deeply shaken, and a series of initiatives were undertaken—in both *ruchnius* and *gashmius* areas—to improve the Frierdiker Rebbe's health. The following are some of the stories of that period.

Rushing to Mekomos Hakedoshim

A recently published letter sheds light on Chassidim's immediate reaction to the news.

The letter is dated 3 Kislev. It is sent from the leadership of Colel Chabad in Eretz Yisroel—Rabbi Shlomo Leib Eliezrov and Rabbi Yitzchak Avigdor Orenshtein—and addressed to Rabbi Shmuel Levitin and Rabbi Yisrael Jacobson in New York.

In the letter, they confirm receipt of a telegram informing them of the news, and describe how they rushed to daven at the *mekomos hakedoshim* for the Frierdiker Rebbe's health:

"We received your telegram regarding the illness of the Rebbe, נשיאנו רוח אפינו *shlit"a*. We were stunned and deeply shaken. Without delay, we rushed to gather a *minyana* of outstanding *talmidei chachamim*, the elder and distinguished *anash* here in the Holy City, and we poured out our hearts at the Kosel HaMa'aravi... Today we davened at Kever Rachel as well... It was established that there will be daily *tefillos* at the Yeshiva in Tzemach Tzedek, and in the International Tehillim Society."²

They also wrote of their plans to visit Me'oras HaMachpelah, and asked for a detailed report on the Rebbe's condition.

Almost two months later, on 26 Teves, a response was sent to them—and not from Reb Shmuel Levitin and Reb Yisroel Jacobson, but from the Rebbe, and it is printed in Igros volume 2:

"Your letter from 3 Kislev reached me, and thank G-d, the [Frierdiker] Rebbe's state of health is improving. The doctors have now allowed him to return to his holy work for several hours a day, but the restriction on receiving visitors for *yechidus* remains in place, and in general, the precaution of keeping away any form of *agmas nefesh* (distress) and excitement and so on. They are hopeful that the situation will improve, day by day."³

The Frierdiker Rebbe's Call

The most severe period of illness was for about three weeks at the beginning of Kislev. In the Frierdiker Rebbe's Igros, there is a gap between the letters dated Sunday, 26 Cheshvan—the day of the heart-attack—to the next letters, dated Yud-Tes Kislev. In one of the Yud-Tes Kislev letters, the Frierdiker Rebbe describes his experience.

"Boruch Hashem, that He has with His great



THE FRIEDIKER REBBE WRITING ON THE UPSTAIRS PORCH OF 770, LATE 5700S.

kindness—through the *tefillos* and requests of good friends—raised me up, in a good and auspicious hour of Torah and *avoda*, from my sick-bed, where I was—may it not happen now—lying for three weeks in terrible pain.”⁴

As Chanukah approached, the Frierdiker Rebbe issued a flurry of letters. There was a *michtov kloli* to all the Chassidim, as well as numerous private letters. The vast majority were all of a specific theme: to come to the aid of Yeshivos Tomchei Temimim, which were under severe financial strain.

In heartfelt words, the Frierdiker Rebbe says that what carried him through those difficult days was the thought that the Chassidim and *yedidim* would respond to his call to support the Tomchei Temimim network, and assist in opening additional branches in cities throughout the country, bringing *chinuch hakasher* to the places where it was so desperately needed.

Soon, the doctors said that the Frierdiker Rebbe’s condition had improved, allowing a small group of Chassidim to enter his room—on the condition that the Frierdiker Rebbe not speak.

On Tuesday, Motzei Asarah B’Teves, a group of the distinguished Chassidim entered the *yechidus* room, and Reb Shmuel Levitin—overwhelmed with emotion—recited “*Shehecheyanu*” with Hashem’s name.

Rabbi Zalman Gurary was also in attendance, despite

being ill himself with kidney stones. Disregarding the doctor’s orders not to hold conversations, the Frierdiker Rebbe asked him about his condition. At first, Reb Zalman didn’t know what to do—the doctors had warned them that the Frierdiker Rebbe was not to speak—but the Frierdiker Rebbe insisted, so Reb Zalman responded that the doctors wanted to operate.

The Frierdiker Rebbe rejected the idea.

“Tell the doctor that an operation is unnecessary,” the Frierdiker Rebbe said. “Drink a glass of milk every day, and sometimes you can even eat a piece of herring, and you will be healthy.”

The next time Reb Zalman was examined, the stones had disappeared.⁵

The Secret Behind the Campaigns

That winter, the Rebbe began a campaign to celebrate the *Chag HaMeshulash*—the jubilee celebrating fifty years since the Frierdiker Rebbe was brought into *askanus* by the Rebbe Rashab at age 15, eighteen years since his release from Soviet imprisonment, and his *yom huledes*. [Interestingly, an additional milestone which is commonly remembered—twenty-five years of the Frierdiker Rebbe’s *nesius*—appears to be mentioned only later, in reports

from Tishrei the next year.^{6]}

To mark that special milestone, the Rebbe pulled together a small circle of donors to sponsor a special project—the publication of all the *maamarim* delivered by the Frierdiker Rebbe in the United States over the previous five years. On Erev Yud-Beis Tammuz, a letter was brought to the Frierdiker Rebbe with the news of the initiative and the names of all the participants.⁷

There was also a campaign among Chassidim worldwide to send *mazal tov* telegrams and letters to the Frierdiker Rebbe, along with reports of *besuros tovos*. The Frierdiker Rebbe's Igros contain numerous responses where the Frierdiker Rebbe thanks those writers for the *besuros tovos*,⁸ and the Kovetz Lubavitch lists a very long and impressive list of individuals and institutions that had sent in congratulatory letters.

This was also—quietly—the Rebbe's doing.

As Rabbi Hirshel Fogelman related:

"In matters between *anash* and the Frierdiker Rebbe, the Rebbe was always in between, and usually in a secret way.

"In 5705, which marked fifty years since the Frierdiker Rebbe's entry into *askanus*, the Rebbe called me and said that we needed to encourage *anash* to send congratulatory telegrams to the Frierdiker Rebbe in honor of the milestone, to bring *nachas ruach*. The Rebbe requested that nobody know that it came from him."⁹

The Summer Crisis

The Frierdiker Rebbe's condition continued to be at the forefront of everyone's concern. In the Rebbe's letters from that period, the letter often begins with an update on the Rebbe's condition.

On 15 Kislev, to Shlomo Palmer, a well-known philanthropist from Chicago:

"My father-in-law, the Rebbe, is feeling better. May Hashem send him a complete *refuah* very soon."¹⁰

To a chossid on 23 Teves:

"My father-in-law, the Rebbe's health condition is constantly improving; nonetheless, we have continued here to recite several chapters of Tehillim every day after davening..."¹¹

On 1 Nissan, to Rabbi Volf Greenglass in Montreal:

"The schedule for the upcoming Pesach will obviously depend on the state of the Rebbe's health, and nothing can be confirmed in advance."¹²

The long process of recovery continued. There was a short farbrengen on Purim, and on Pesach and Shavuot,

the Frierdiker Rebbe delivered many *sichos* during the *seudos*.¹³

But summer was approaching.

The Frierdiker Rebbe's doctors made it clear that summer in New York posed a problem. The severe heat that plagued the city each year made the climate life-threatening for the Frierdiker Rebbe, and it was vital that he seek a better location.

In previous years, the Frierdiker Rebbe had spent time in places like Lakewood and Morristown, New Jersey. Now, the Chassidim began searching for a place that would serve as the Frierdiker Rebbe's permanent summer home. It had to be fit for a king, and much effort was invested in locating the perfect place.

A recently published letter from Rabbi Berel Rivkin to Rabbi Yisrael Jacobson—both living in New York at the time—describes the events:

"I assume that you already heard that, after a major effort to secure a permanent summer residence for the [Frierdiker] Rebbe *shlit"a*, and after tremendous labor and exertion, we succeeded in obtaining a summer home—truly a royal residence, arranged and equipped in a most suitable way for the Rebbe's condition in every respect."¹⁴

However, things didn't turn out as planned. Before



THE FRIERDIKER REBBE ARRIVES AT A DINNER BENEFITING TOMCHEI TEMIMIM IN 5703. REB ZALMAN GURARY IS STANDING AT THE TABLE ON THE LEFT.

signing, they went to the Friediker Rebbe for his final approval, and, to their shock and dismay, he rejected the idea. He said that he had decided not to leave the city altogether that summer; he would remain in his home in 770.

The thought of the Friediker Rebbe remaining in the sweltering heat terrified Beis Harav and the Chassidim.

“There is no need to describe the deep anguish this has all caused us, especially the members of the Rebbe’s household, knowing how important it is for his frail health not to spend the entire summer in the unusual heat of New York—shut in his room all day, burdened constantly with difficult work, without ever going outside even for a few moments to breathe some fresh air. We did not know what advice to take, or what to do.”

Another solution was desperately needed, and they came up with a radical new idea:

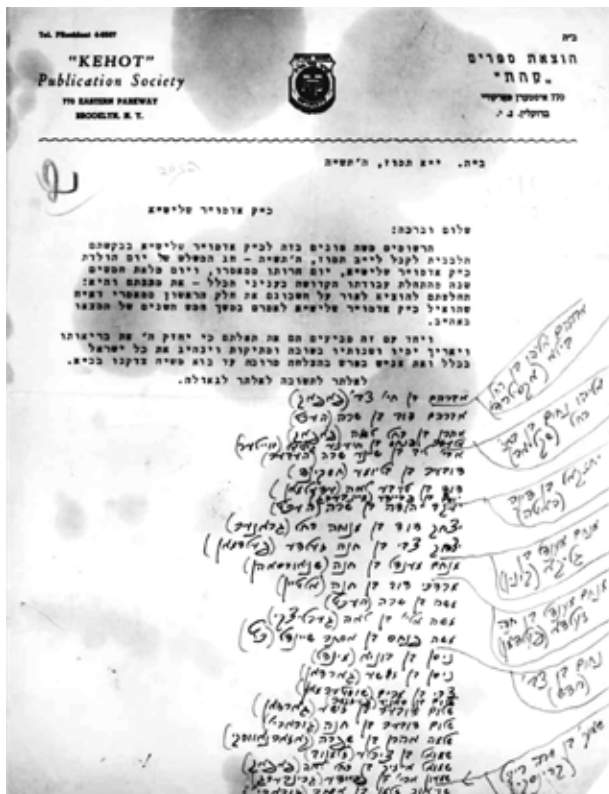
Air conditioning.

This was a novel thought. Back then, some public places had air conditioning, but it was practically unheard of in private homes.

With wartime inflation, it was also prohibitively expensive. The cost of installing air conditioning in just two rooms of the Friediker Rebbe’s home would cost close to four thousand dollars—and the financial state of Beis Harav was not good. As Rabbi Rivkin explains:

“Should I hide this from such good friends? You should know that the Rebbe’s own financial condition, as regards his personal expenses, is now under terrible strain, such as he has never before experienced. We suspect that this was in fact the main reason the Rebbe *shlit”a* decided not to go away to a summer residence. May Hashem have mercy.”

A public campaign was out of the question; the Friediker Rebbe would have never allowed a public fundraiser for his personal benefit. This was something that had to be dealt with internally, among the close Chassidim and *Temimim*. Attempts were made to raise the funds in New York, but they did not deliver the necessary results. Another solution was needed.



THE REBBE'S DRAFT OF THE LIST OF DONORS FOR THE PROJECT, TO WHICH HE ADDED THE NAMES OF ADDITIONAL CHASSIDIM, IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER. THE REBBE'S OWN NAME APPEARS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE LIST.



A REPORT IN KOVETZ LUBAVITCH ON THE INDIVIDUALS AND INSTITUTIONS AROUND THE WORLD THAT HAD SENT CONGRATULATORY LETTERS.

The Surprising Resolution

Rabbi Yitzchak Hendel was the *rav* of the Chabad community in Montreal and the Rosh Yeshiva of Tomchei Temimim there. In a recently published book about his life,¹⁵ the following story is told:

One day, as the summer of 5705 approached, Reb Shlomo Aharon Kazarnovsky suddenly appeared in town for a visit.

Rabbi Kazarnovsky was one of the most important Chabad *askanim* in New York, and Rabbi Hendel immediately understood that he hadn't come for a vacation; there was definitely something important to be accomplished.

They had a short conversation, and Rabbi Kazarnovsky filled him in on the details. The Frierdiker Rebbe's health was fragile, they needed to install air-conditioning, and most importantly, the fundraiser in New York had not brought the required results; more funds were needed.

They needed to find someone wealthy enough to cover such a large expense, someone who cared deeply enough about the Frierdiker Rebbe to understand why it mattered and agree to give such a sum—even when they didn't have air-conditioning installed in their own home!

Rabbi Hendel thought about the local philanthropists and then told Rabbi Kazarnovsky that the answer was “the mother of the yeshiva”—Mrs. Bloomberg.

Mrs. Bloomberg was a wealthy Jewish woman in Montreal who ran a large shirt manufacturing company with her husband, the biggest in Canada at the time.

Lubavitch held a warm place in her heart. She was born in Shchedrin, one of the towns founded by the Tzemach Tzedek, where everyone and everything was Lubavitch; Lubavitch was the only kind of Jewish life she had known.



MRS. BLOOMBERG (FAR RIGHT) WITH OTHER DONORS OF THE YESHIVA IN MONTREAL, AT THE GROUNDBREAKING FOR THE NEW YESHIVA. CIRCA 5720.

Like many immigrants, she had unfortunately drifted from Torah and *mitzvos* upon arriving in Montreal many years earlier, but when she heard that Chabad Chassidim had come and opened Tomchei Temimim, she had become one of the yeshiva's major supporters, to the point that people affectionately called her “the mother of the yeshiva.”

Rabbi Hendel told Rabbi Kazarnovsky about her background, and the two of them went to meet her at her home. She received them warmly, and after they explained the Rebbe's medical condition and the urgent need for an air conditioner for his health, she agreed at once to cover the entire amount.

Not long afterward, an air conditioner was installed.¹⁶

1. For a short summary, see MiBeis Hagenazim p. 47. It is often recounted that this occurred after the Frierdiker Rebbe received a letter describing how the Nazis *ym's* in Riga had gathered Jews into a shul—among them some of his closest Chassidim—and had set the building alight, burning them all alive (see *Yiras Hashem Otzaro* p. 280). Questions have been raised about the veracity of the story in Riga. See “From Latvia to London: Farbrenging with the Legendary R. Itche Masmid” by Rabbi Shmuel Super on Anash.org. See also Undaunted, p. 507 fn. 269–70.

2. Ginzaya vol. 1, p. 126.

3. Letter 180. Igros Kodesh vol. 2, p. 27.

4. Letter 2546. Igros Kodesh Admur HaRayatz vol. 8, p. 448.

5. Nitzotzei Or.

6. This element is not mentioned in the letter presented to the Frierdiker Rebbe (see next footnote), nor in the report in Kovetz Lubavitch (new edition, p. 147). It appears in a notice about the new *seforim* being prepared, in the Elul–Kislev issue (p. 177).

7. The letter is printed in Sefer Hamaamarim 5700 p. VI.

8. See Letters 2758–60. Igros Kodesh Admur HaRayatz vol. 8, p. 662.

9. 28 Sivan Teshura, 5747, p. 18.

10. Letter 173. Igros Kodesh vol. 2, p. 10.

11. Letter 179. Igros Kodesh vol. 2, p. 24.

12. Letter 185. Igros Kodesh vol. 2, p. 33.

13. The *sicha* recorded in Sefer Hasichos for the Tomchei Temimim dinner was delivered as a published *sicha*. Another *sicha* is recorded as being delivered to the committee of Tomchei Temimim, but the circumstances are unclear.

14. Ginzaya vol. 1, p. 128.

15. Titled, “A Chassidisher Rov.”

16. A Chassidisher Rov, pp. 169–70.

By: Motti Wilhelm

A MAN OF MANY CONTINENTS

**REB BINYAMIN ELIYAHU
GORODETSKY**



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

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



The term “*Bo Koach*” is not easily translated into English. Common renderings include “authorized representative,” “proxy,” or “agent,” but none fully capture the spirit of the original term, which literally means “one who comes with the power” of another.

This was the official title of Rabbi Binyamin Eliyahu Gorodetsky, who served as the Frierdiker Rebbe’s, and later the Rebbe’s, representative in Europe, North Africa, and Eretz Yisroel for nearly five decades.

His activism began long before he formally assumed that title, dating back to his years as a young man in Soviet Russia. Over the decades, he took on an extraordinary range of responsibilities: establishing Chabad communities and institutions, cultivating relationships with the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee to secure funding for Chabad activities, serving in central Chabad organizations, and carrying out numerous sensitive and discreet missions on behalf of the Rebbe. The impact of his work continues to be felt to this day.

A full account of Rabbi Gorodetsky’s life and accomplishments would require several volumes. Indeed, at least three books¹ have already been published covering his biography and correspondence with the Rabbeim. In this article, we will attempt to provide an overview of his remarkable life and the many missions he undertook as the *Bo Koach* of the Rabbeim.

Reb Binyamin Eliyahu was born in 5668 to Rabbi Mordechai Leib and Raizel Gorodetzky in the town of Bobruisk. In Chabad history, the city is best known as the seat of Harav Shmaryahu Noach, a grandson of the Tzemach Tzedek who served there as Rebbe. Bobruisk was also home to a large community of Lubavitcher Chassidim as well as a significant population of *misnagdim*.

Reb Mordechai Leib was a *talmid chochom* who had received *semicha* and was fully qualified to serve as a *rav*. The Rebbe Rashab, to whom he was *mekushar*, even urged him to accept a rabbinic position. He declined, however, preferring to earn his livelihood through business. He first opened a bookstore, then operated a mill; when the mill was destroyed in a fire, he entered the lumber trade.

Before Binyamin Eliyahu reached bar mitzvah age, World War I broke out. To avoid being drafted, Reb

Mordechai Leib eventually accepted a rabbinic position. The war, however, forced him to travel frequently in order to remain outside areas occupied by the Germans. World War I was soon followed by the Russian Revolution, introducing years of upheaval. From the fall of Czar Nicholas II until the Bolsheviks consolidated power, various factions battled for control of Russia. Despite their differences, they shared a common hostility toward Jews, resulting in widespread persecution, suffering, and bloodshed.

With his father away, Binyamin Eliyahu prepared for his bar mitzvah largely on his own. Even after the revolution subsided and Reb Mordechai Leib returned home, he was weakened and ill, leaving Binyamin Eliyahu with little choice but to help support the family. He became involved in stock and foreign currency trading and enjoyed considerable success, earning a respectable livelihood.

At the same time, Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim, which had endured its own hardships during the war and revolution, was regrouping in Poltava and Rostov. With his father's permission, Binyamin Eliyahu traveled to Poltava to study there. When the yeshivah relocated to Nevel,



KYIV IN THE 1920S.

he moved with it. Later, after the Soviets shut down the yeshivah, the Frierdiker Rebbe instructed him to continue his studies in Kharkov.

None of these locations remained viable for long. The secret police continually harassed and arrested students and members of the *hanhalah*, forcing one closure after another. Following several relocations, Binyamin Eliyahu became involved in organizing new branches of the yeshivah and securing funding for its operations. When the yeshivah was eventually reestablished in Nevel, he played a significant role in its support. He also organized Mishnayos classes for local *baalei batim* and would *chazer* Chassidus for them on Shabbos.

In 1925, the Frierdiker Rebbe instructed that a *beis medrash l'rabbanim* be established and, during a *yechidus*, directed Binyamin Eliyahu to enroll there. When he expressed a desire to remain in Tomchei Temimim, the Frierdiker Rebbe reassured him, "This is also Tomchei Temimim." During his years of study there, he received *semicha*.

A year later, in the winter of 1926, he became engaged to the daughter of the renowned *mashpia* Harav Shmuel Levitin. Later that year, a letter arrived from the Frierdiker Rebbe informing him that he was being sent to serve as *rav* in Kyiv, where he was tasked with strengthening Yiddishkeit and establishing *chadarim*, *Talmudei Torah*,

and *yeshivos*. The mission was fraught with danger; previous organizers of underground Jewish schools in Kyiv had been arrested and imprisoned.

In his memoirs, Reb Binyamin Eliyahu recalls his arrival in the city:²

"When I arrived in Kyiv in the morning, someone was supposed to meet me at the train station and guide me to the proper address. For some reason, he never arrived, and I had no idea where to go.

"My situation was quite difficult. A young man my age, with a beard and *peyos*, was conspicuous and drew attention wherever he went. Having no other choice, I boarded the first tram I came across and rode it to the final stop, which was in the center of Podol, home to tens of thousands of Jews.

"I entered a certain shul, where I was told that not far away there was a shul of Lubavitch Chassidim. They also informed me that only the day before, Reb Itche der Masmid had visited and delivered a *maamar* of Chassidus there before a large gathering.

"I made my way to that synagogue, and the shamash, Reb Wolf Ber, told me that the well-known chassidic brothers Bass lived nearby. He gave me their address..."

Upon his arrival, Reb Binyamin Eliyahu found that, while Jewish education did exist in the city, the situation was far from satisfactory. Some teachers were even

teaching Chumash and Nach without wearing a head covering. He concluded that reforming the existing schools would be ineffective and instead resolved to establish entirely new institutions. He soon set about doing exactly that, along with the other responsibilities of *rabbanus*.

Wedding or Jail?

Alongside his many activities, Reb Binyamin Eliyahu began preparing for his wedding. The date was set for Purim Katan 5687 in Nevel, and he planned to leave Kyiv a week beforehand.

When Reb Shmuel Levitin informed the Frierdiker Rebbe of the upcoming wedding, the Frierdiker Rebbe remarked, “Who knows if the chosson will be able to participate in the wedding at that time?” At the time, it seemed that the Frierdiker Rebbe was referring to the heavy workload Reb Binyamin Eliyahu carried in his *avodas hakodesh*. The true meaning of the comment became clear only later.

On the night before he was scheduled to depart, that meaning suddenly became clear. At midnight, officers of the GPU, the Soviet secret police, knocked on his door.

He was arrested and interrogated for more than a month before being unexpectedly released shortly before Pesach. He immediately sent three telegrams—to the Frierdiker Rebbe, to his parents, and to his future in-laws—informing them of his release. On Acharon Shel Pesach, *anash* in Kyiv and many others gathered for a *farbrengen* celebrating his freedom.

For Shavuot, Reb Binyamin Eliyahu traveled to Leningrad, where the Frierdiker Rebbe was then residing, both for Yom Tov and for his *ufruf*. On Yud Sivan, the long-delayed wedding finally took place in Nevel.

Just five days later, the Frierdiker Rebbe himself was arrested by the GPU, only hours after Reb Mordechai Leib Gorodetzky had met with him in *yeichidus*. Reb Binyamin Eliyahu learned of the arrest from his father when they met at the train station in Nevel, he and his new wife en route to Kyiv, and Reb Mordechai Leib returning to Paritch, where he lived.

On Gimmel Tammuz, Reb Binyamin Eliyahu received a telegram reporting that the Frierdiker Rebbe had been released, and he immediately organized a large *seudah* in celebration. Only the following day did they learn that the release had been only partial and that the Frierdiker Rebbe had been exiled to Kostroma. Ten days later, on Yud-Gimmel Tammuz, news arrived of his complete

release, leading to even greater rejoicing.

Over the following years, Reb Binyamin Eliyahu became involved in numerous areas of *askanus* and *avodas hakodesh*. Among other accomplishments, he organized a clandestine mikvah after the Soviets closed all the *mikvaos* in Kyiv, arranged a gathering of Chabad *rabbanim*, and coordinated a declaration affirming that the Frierdiker Rebbe remained the sole representative of Russian Jewry. This was intended to preempt a Soviet effort to force a public declaration that the Frierdiker Rebbe, who had since emigrated from the USSR, no longer represented the Jewish community there.

Each of these activities involved tremendous personal risk. The Soviet regime steadily intensified its persecution of religion, with particular focus on Chassidim. During this period, Reb Binyamin Eliyahu’s father-in-law, Reb Shmuel Levitin, was arrested and sentenced to hard labor in Siberia. Reb Binyamin Eliyahu himself was arrested on several occasions.

One of those arrests lasted several weeks. During that time, his daughter was born, a fact he learned only through a message smuggled into prison, sewn into a bag of sugar. During the same imprisonment, he met the famed *gaon* Harav Yechezkel Abramsky, who was being held in the same prison while awaiting release following international pressure on the Soviet government.



REB SHMUEL LEVITIN IN RUSSIA.

KEHOT PUBLICATION SOCIETY

Eventually, after weeks of interrogation, Reb Binyamin Eliyahu was sentenced to three years of exile in the Gulag.

He was transported to the town of Kotlas, where he spent several months under extremely difficult conditions. Finding a place to live was a constant struggle, and he barely survived a severe illness. Because of the nature of his “crimes,” however, he was not sentenced to hard labor. Instead, he was required to remain within a designated area and report regularly to the authorities.

When the non-Jew from whom he rented a room informed him that he could no longer stay there, Reb Binyamin Eliyahu faced a difficult choice: find another place to live or attempt an escape. Through his mother-in-law in Moscow, he managed to send a clandestine message to the Frieddiker Rebbe seeking guidance. The response he received was: act like Yaakov Avinu.

The reference was to the Torah’s description of Yaakov fleeing from Lavan, *vayivrach Yaakov*. The message was clear: he should escape.

Reb Binyamin Eliyahu successfully escaped from Kotlas and made his way to Moscow. In his memoirs, he recalls sleeping through much of the train journey despite police searches aimed at catching escapees. Officers entered his compartment, shone flashlights directly into his eyes, and spent nearly fifteen minutes attempting to

wake him. Seeing no response, they eventually moved on.

Reflecting on the incident, he wrote:

“On a natural level, the incident could be explained quite simply. Generally speaking, a fugitive burdened by guilt cannot remain calm, let alone fall into a deep sleep. Living under constant tension and fear, he is always on edge. The fact that I did not awaken, despite being called for nearly fifteen minutes, was proof that I was not a man on the run.

“As a believing Jew, however, I knew and firmly believed that ‘a man’s steps are established by Hashem.’ It was Hashem’s help that stood by me and saved me, and it was through the merit of that *tzaddik*, our Rebbe, that I was delivered from danger.”³

The following years saw Reb Binyamin Eliyahu trying to avoid further arrest by keeping a low profile and engaging in various business ventures. Remarkably, he nevertheless remained active in underground Chabad work, helping organize a branch of Tomchei Temimim in the city where he lived, meeting with the bochurim, and providing much-needed financial support.

Despite his efforts to remain out of the authorities’ sights, these years were anything but quiet. They were marked by visits from the NKVD, repeated relocations, and the constant threat of arrest.

Escape from Russia

When World War II broke out, the Gorodetzky family, like many other Lubavitcher families, fled to Samarkand. There, Reb Binyamin Eliyahu was confronted with the dire conditions facing the thousands of refugees who had streamed into the city. The situation was bleak both physically, with widespread illness, poverty, and shortages



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REB BINYAMIN OVERSEES THE UNPACKING OF PESACH AID FOR THE REFUGEES WITH A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE "JOINT" IN PARIS, 5708.



LIBRARY OF AGUDAS CHASSIDEI CHABAD

REB BINYAMIN,
CIRCA 5706

of basic necessities, and spiritually.

He immediately threw himself into efforts to improve both. His activities ranged from organizing a *gemach* and helping provide material assistance to refugees, to overseeing the operation of the mikvah and ensuring that the local Talmud Torah and yeshivah continued to function despite the difficult circumstances.

In 5705, as World War II drew to a close, a new opportunity emerged that offered hope of escape from the Soviet Union. Recognizing that large numbers of Polish refugees had ended up within Soviet borders during the war, the Soviet government permitted them, for a limited time, to return to Poland.

A plan soon developed among the Chassidim. Some obtained the identities of Polish refugees who had died, while others acquired forged documents, allowing them to register as Polish citizens and join the repatriation effort. For many, it represented the first realistic chance in decades to leave the Soviet Union.

The plan was far from a simple one. It involved enormous risks at every stage, and the Chassidim were uncertain whether they should proceed. They were desperate to know the Frierdiker Rebbe's view, and they turned to Reb Binyamin Eliyahu.

He wrote to his father-in-law, Reb Shmuel Levitin, who had already left the Soviet Union, and through coded

language and carefully worded hints sought the Frierdiker Rebbe's opinion regarding the proposed escape plan.

The response came in a telegram from the United States: "The zeide says that they should stay in place." Later, however, another message arrived, apparently indicating that the decision depended on the information the Chassidim in Russia could gather regarding the safety and feasibility of the route.

The ambiguous messages sparked intense debate among the Chassidim. Reb Binyamin Eliyahu understood them to mean that those who possessed the necessary means and opportunity should make the attempt. Accordingly, he began preparing his family for the journey.

In 5706, he and his family successfully crossed the border. They were among the many Lubavitcher Chassidim who managed to escape through that brief opening in the Iron Curtain before it closed once again.

Upon arriving in Poland, Reb Binyamin Eliyahu immediately resumed regular communication with the Frierdiker Rebbe, reporting both on his own situation and that of the many Chassidim who had remained behind in the Soviet Union. The Frierdiker Rebbe instructed him not to remain in Poland and to continue to Paris as soon as possible.

A new set of challenges awaited him there. The Gorodetzky family had no suitable place to live and, for months, endured harsh conditions in an apartment that had stood vacant for years and was filled with refuse. The apartment lacked adequate heating, leaving the family exposed to the European winter.

At the same time, Reb Binyamin Eliyahu continued his efforts on behalf of his fellow Chassidim. He worked tirelessly to secure visas that would allow them to leave the displaced persons camps in Germany, Austria, and elsewhere, where many had been sent after escaping the Soviet Union.

One of the most pressing challenges was obtaining the funds necessary to support the refugees' physical and spiritual needs and to begin rebuilding Lubavitcher communities and *yeshivos* outside the Soviet Union. To that end, Reb Binyamin Eliyahu established his first contacts with the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, commonly known simply as the Joint. Founded in 1914, the Joint was heavily involved in providing relief and assistance to Jewish refugees throughout postwar Europe, including those living in the DP camps.

This marked the beginning of a long, productive, and



A LETTER FROM THE REBBE TO REB BINYAMIN ABOUT HIS WORK IN EUROPE, 5709.

often delicate relationship between the Joint and Reb Binyamin Eliyahu in his capacity as Chabad's representative in Europe.

On 15 Kislev 5707, a letter from the Frierdiker Rebbe arrived in Paris addressed to Reb Binyamin Eliyahu. It read:⁴

My dear and esteemed student, the distinguished chossid and G-d-fearing man, Rabbi Binyamin *sheyichye* Gorodetzky,

Shalom u'bracha!

With this letter, I hereby appoint and authorize him to establish in Paris, on my behalf, an office to be known as the European Bureau for the Assistance and Resettlement of Refugees.

He is empowered to carry out this role in accordance with the responsibilities detailed in my accompanying general letter."

In the accompanying letter, addressed to *anash* and *Temimim* at large, the Frierdiker Rebbe wrote:⁵

"Blessed is Hashem, our G-d and the G-d of our fathers and teachers, who saved you and your families, and who has granted life to us and our families and enabled us to reach this brighter time, to inquire after your welfare and the welfare of your families.

All of us, ourselves, our families, and all the Jewish people, without distinction of spiritual standing or material circumstance, place our hope in Hashem our G-d that in the near future we will see one another face to face. Each and every one of our brothers and sisters, their sons and daughters, will take a leading role, with love and affection, in doing all that lies within their power to assist you in establishing yourselves with productive livelihoods, adequate sustenance, and institutions of learning for your sons and daughters.

"May Hashem our G-d look upon our broken and crushed hearts and upon our mourning for our beloved brothers and sisters and their children, the beloved and delightful *Temimim*, *Chassidim v'yeshorim* who were murdered, slaughtered, and burned *al kiddush Hashem*. May He avenge their blood, and may He lead us, together with *Moshiach Tzidkeinu*, to our Holy Land.

"I have entrusted my dear and esteemed student, one of the outstanding students of Tomchei Temimim, the distinguished chossid and G-d-fearing man, Rabbi Binyamin Gorodetzky, with organizing the necessary assistance. You should therefore write to him with the particulars of your situation, as he will explain to you. May Hashem grant us the merit of seeing one another face to face very soon."



REB BINYAMIN (CENTER RIGHT) WITH RASHAG AS THEY VISIT CHASSIDIM IN D.P. CAMPS, POKING, GERMANY.



These letters, which arrived on Reb Binyamin Eliyahu's 40th birthday, marked the founding of the *Lishka Europea's L'Ezras HaPleitim V'Siduram*, more commonly known simply as "the Lishka." Originally established to assist the thousands of refugees emerging from the upheaval of war and Soviet persecution, the Lishka soon evolved into the central Lubavitch address in Europe, a sort of regional headquarters through which Chabad's activities, institutions, and communal efforts throughout the region were coordinated.

Reb Binyamin Eliyahu immediately traveled to

Germany to visit *anash* in the Peking DP camp and assess their situation firsthand. From there, he continued to the United States to visit the Frierdiker Rebbe, whom he had not seen in nearly twenty years.

As the first of the refugee Chassidim from Europe to reach America, Reb Binyamin Eliyahu effectively served as representative of them all. During an hours-long *yechidus*, he conveyed warm regards from *anash* in Europe and presented the Frierdiker Rebbe with a general overview of their circumstances.

"A few hours after my visit with the [Frierdiker] Rebbe," Reb Binyamin Eliyahu later recalled in his memoir,⁶ "the [Frierdiker] Rebbe's son-in-law—the Rebbe, together with his wife, the Rebbetzin—sent for me and asked what had taken place during my visit and what I had discussed with the Frierdiker Rebbe.

"I replied that I had conveyed especially warm regards from *anash*. They then told me that after I left, the [Frierdiker] Rebbe had wept continuously for a long time. However, they said, in the name of the [Frierdiker] Rebbe, that these had been tears of joy. They related that the [Frierdiker] Rebbe had said: 'This is the same Binyamin whom I knew. Only his beard has grown, but he remains the same Binyamin, after twenty years had passed!'"

At that opportunity, the Frierdiker Rebbe told him, "You must know that you are mine, and you should not conduct any business with anyone else. Convey to my sons-in-law that you are mine. Convey to your father-in-law that you are mine. Tell yourself that you are mine. And tell the community as well that you are mine!"

A short while later, the Frierdiker Rebbe asked Reb Binyamin Eliyahu to accompany his son-in-law, Rashag, on a visit to Europe and the DP camps. Reb Binyamin readily agreed.

At the same time, his family was making its way to America to begin a new life there. The family met only briefly en route, with Reb Binyamin Eliyahu turning back toward Europe while his wife and children continued to the United States.

Back in Europe, Reb Binyamin Eliyahu threw himself into the work of the Lishka. Much of his effort was devoted to securing visas for refugees, but his activities extended far beyond that. He worked to provide for the needs of *chadarim* and girls' schools, arranged for kosher food and *matzos*, helped find housing for members of *anash* who had settled in France, and assisted many refugees in finding employment.

He was also deeply involved in publishing Jewish

books and educational materials in French for the benefit of French Jewry and other French-speaking communities worldwide. These publications reached Jewish communities not only in France but also in Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Canada, and other countries where French was a primary language.

Another major undertaking arose when Ireland allocated enough cattle to produce three million pounds of kosher meat for Jewish refugees and for Eretz Yisroel. The project required a large team of qualified *shochtim* and also created an opportunity for many members of *anash* to train as *shochtim* and earn a respectable livelihood. Reb Binyamin Eliyahu organized the necessary *shochtim*, *rabbanim*, and *mashgichim* and dispatched them to Dublin, where the operation continued for nearly a year.⁷

Among his many other projects were the distribution of *sifrei Torah* that had been rescued from Nazi destruction and the establishment of a system for sending aid packages to *anash* who had remained behind in the Soviet Union, an effort that continued for many years.

Morocco to Australia

In 5709, Reb Binyamin Eliyahu was approached by a young baal teshuvah from Paris who had traveled to Morocco in an effort to strengthen Yiddishkeit there but had been forced to return due to health concerns. He told Reb Binyamin Eliyahu that Morocco was home to a large Jewish population but suffered from a severe lack of Jewish educational infrastructure, and urged him to become involved.

On a subsequent visit to America, Reb Binyamin Eliyahu raised the matter with the Frierdiker Rebbe, who immediately encouraged him to pursue it. The Frierdiker Rebbe instructed him:



REB BINYAMIN WITH MEMBERS OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY IN MOROCCO, CIRCA 5710.

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REB BINYAMIN (CENTER WITH LONG WHITE BEARD) WITH THE SHLUCHIM TO MOROCCO, RABBIS EIDELMAN, MATUSOV AND RASKIN, AND MEKURAVIM, WHILE SPENDING TISHREI WITH THE REBBE, 5746.

“The work in Morocco must begin immediately. You should discuss the matter with my son-in-law *Shlit”a* [the Rebbe], since it falls under the responsibility of Merkos L’Inyonei Chinuch and therefore pertains to him.”

Thus began Chabad’s first steps in Morocco.

Reb Binyamin Eliyahu approached Reb Shlomo Matusof and Reb Michael Lipsker to undertake the mission. He then set about arranging the logistical and financial support required for the project, such as securing funding and obtaining suitable facilities.

Looking back years later, Reb Binyamin Eliyahu recalled:

“It is difficult to describe the immense challenges we faced in our sacred work on behalf of *chinuch hatahor* throughout the country. Yet, with Hashem’s help, we achieved remarkable success, until we had seventy-five educational institutions operating under our auspices, educating some ten thousand children and young adults across Morocco. In Casablanca alone, there were three *yeshivos* and three schools for girls.”

As these activities expanded, Reb Binyamin Eliyahu became involved in sending additional shluchim to Morocco, including Reb Nissan Pinson, Reb Sholom Eidelman, Reb Leibel Raskin, and several others. At the same time, he worked tirelessly to secure funding from the Joint for the rapidly growing network of schools. This was no easy task, especially in light of the attitude reflected in one remark made to him by Joint officials: “With you, new schools spring up like mushrooms after the rain! Every

day there are new institutions, and we simply cannot keep funding them all.”

Despite the constant challenges, including the expulsion of Reb Azriel Chaikin, who was serving as *menahel* of the yeshivah, and many other obstacles, the work in Morocco achieved extraordinary success. The educational network established under Chabad’s auspices played a decisive role in preserving the Jewish identity of generations of Moroccan Jews and shielding them from the growing threat of assimilation.

Reb Binyamin Eliyahu was similarly involved in establishing Chabad activities in Tunisia. With his support and encouragement, Reb Nissan Pinson, who had previously served in Morocco, traveled there as the Rebbe’s shliach and began building *mosdos chinuch* along with a range of other communal institutions and programs.

“It should be emphasized that had it not been for our sustained and energetic efforts, the condition of Jewish life in these countries would have been extremely bleak. Who knows whether any vestige of Judaism would have remained at all,” Reb Binyamin Eliyahu later wrote.

Reb Binyamin Eliyahu’s activities extended far beyond Morocco and Tunisia. He was involved in strengthening Jewish life in Spain, Copenhagen, and Turkey as well, each according to its particular needs. Whether the challenge was obtaining kosher food, establishing a kosher restaurant, opening schools, recruiting shluchim and *rabbanim*, or addressing other communal concerns, Reb Binyamin Eliyahu worked to ensure that the necessary resources



THE REBBE IN PRIVATE CONVERSATION WITH REB BINYAMIN.



and personnel were put in place.

His influence reached as far as Australia. When a group of *anash* in Paris relocated there, Reb Binyamin Eliyahu became actively involved in facilitating the effort. He contacted Reb Moshe Feiglin, one of the pioneering Lubavitcher Chassidim in Australia, to make the necessary arrangements and secured funding from the Joint to assist with the move.

At the same time, he continued to oversee and expand the growing network of Chabad activities in France, which remained a central focus of his efforts throughout these years.

One of the most notable episodes in Reb Binyamin Eliyahu's *askanus* was his involvement in securing the release of Jews imprisoned in Romania, then under Communist rule. Notable among them were the Skulener Rebbe, Harav Eliezer Zusia Portugal, and his son and future successor, Harav Yisroel Avrohom Portugal.

Working together with other activists and organizations, Reb Binyamin Eliyahu played a significant role in efforts to obtain their freedom and facilitate their departure from the country. Thanks to these efforts, more than 2,000 Jews were ultimately able to leave Romania and begin new lives elsewhere.

"I rely on you."

In 5709, a large group of *anash* left Paris to settle in Eretz Yisroel with the Frierdiker Rebbe's approval. The Frierdiker Rebbe summoned Reb Binyamin Eliyahu and instructed him to establish an office in Eretz Yisroel as an extension of his work in Europe and to spend three

months of each year there. The Frierdiker Rebbe told him, "I rely on you. You work wisely and faithfully."

The plan did not immediately come to fruition. However, after Yud Shevat 5710, and with the Rebbe's encouragement, the project moved forward. Reb Binyamin Eliyahu began dividing his time between Europe and Eretz Yisroel, adding a new sphere of activity to his already extensive responsibilities.

As in Europe and North Africa, one of his primary tasks was securing financial support for Chabad institutions. He worked extensively with the Joint to obtain funding for schools and communal activities and played a key role in the establishment and development of numerous Chabad *mosdos* throughout the country. He was also actively involved in the founding of Nachlas Har Chabad in Kiryat Malachi.

Each of these areas of activity could fill a volume. Today, with many of the Joint's archives accessible online and the publication of the *Igros Kodesh* of the Rabbeim, we can begin to appreciate the true scope of Reb Binyamin Eliyahu's work. Even so, gaining a basic understanding of the breadth of his activities requires many hours of reading and research.

Both the Frierdiker Rebbe and the Rebbe clearly held Reb Binyamin Eliyahu's work in the highest regard. One indication of this can be found in an unusual event that took place in Tammuz 5711, when the Rebbe participated in the bar mitzvah celebration of Reb Binyamin Eliyahu's son. The father himself was not present, having been dispatched to Europe on another mission, and the Rebbe attended the celebration despite having already discontinued the practice of attending bar mitzvahs in general.



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RECEIVING A DOLLAR FROM THE REBBE IN SIVAN 5750.

The Rebbe also maintained extensive contact with Reb Binyamin Eliyahu through dozens of letters and numerous lengthy conversations. One well-known photograph captures Reb Binyamin Eliyahu engaged in a deep discussion with the Rebbe in the Rebbe's room. Another striking example appeared in footage released by JEM several years ago, showing Reb Binyamin Eliyahu speaking at length with the Rebbe following a *yechidus klolis* in the main shul of 770.

The footage attracted considerable attention upon its release. The unusual sight of watching an extended conversation between the Rebbe and Reb Binyamin Eliyahu for several uninterrupted minutes offered a rare glimpse into the unique role Reb Binyamin Eliyahu occupied.

Another episode worth noting occurred on Simchas Torah 5731. During what became known as "the Rebbe's U.N.," the Rebbe assigned various shlichim and *rabbanim* responsibility for countries around the world, appointing them as the *baalei batim* over those regions.

In that framework, the Rebbe appointed Reb Binyamin Eliyahu as the *baal habayis* over the countries of Europe, with the exception of several major countries, such as France and England, which had their own designated *baalei batim*.

In addition to his far-flung responsibilities in Europe, North Africa, and Eretz Yisroel, Reb Binyamin Eliyahu also served in several of Chabad's central institutions in New York, including Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch, Machne Israel, and the Vaad Hapoel of Agudas Chassidei Chabad.

On 5 Tammuz 5755, Reb Binyamin Eliyahu passed away and was laid to rest near the Ohel in New York.

The work of the Lishka was continued by his children and later by his grandchildren, together with other

shluchim in France. Yet Reb Binyamin Eliyahu's true legacy extends far beyond France.

For over seventy years, he was involved in Chabad activism in one capacity or another. For nearly five of those decades, he served as the Rabbeim's representative across vast regions of the Jewish world, helping rebuild Jewish life in the aftermath of war, assisting Jews in escaping from behind the Iron Curtain, establishing educational networks throughout North Africa, supporting communities across Europe and Eretz Yisroel, and securing the organizational and financial foundations upon which countless Chabad institutions were built.

The story of Chabad's postwar expansion, the growth of the Rebbe's global network of shlichus, and the development of Chabad *mosdos* throughout the world cannot truly be told without him.

1. *Sefer Zikaron HaRav B. A. Gorodetsky* (Jerusalem: Agudas Anshei Kiev, 1984) — Translated into English as *Light in the Darkness* (New York: Shengold Publishers, 1984); *Ba-Koach* (Paris: European Lubavitch Bureau, 2016); *Ba-Koach*, vol. 2 (Paris: European Lubavitch Bureau, 2020).

2. *Sefer Zikaron* p. 22.

3. *Ibid*, p. 59.

4. *Ba Koach*, p. 10.

5. *Igros Kodesh Admur HaRayatz* vol. 9, p. 187.

6. *Sefer Zikaron*, p. 89.

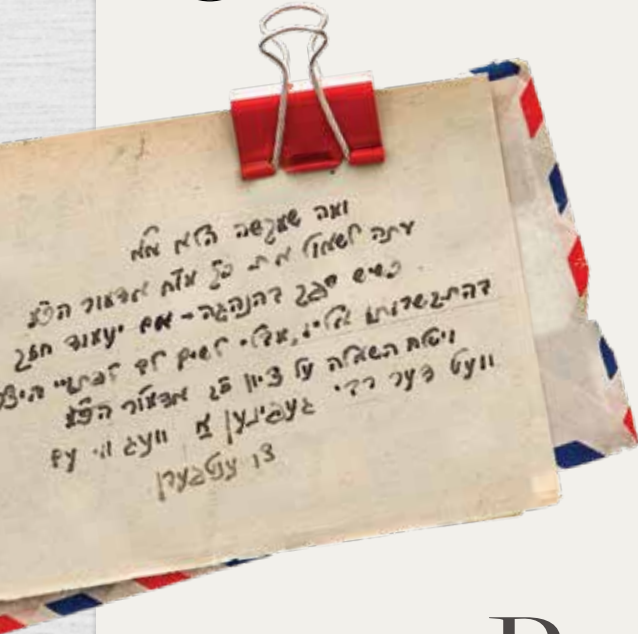
7. See "The Shochtim of Dublin." *Derher*, Elul 5785.



Story

לזכות
החייל בצבאות ה' השליח
מנחם מענדל שיחי'
לרגל יום הולדתו י"ד מנחם אב

נדפס ע"י הוריו
הרה"ת ר' דוד וזוגתו מרת פערל
גאלדא ומשפחתם שיחי'
טייכטל
שמפיין, אילינוי



דער רבי וועט געפינען א וועג...

WRITTEN BY: RABBI LEVI GREENBERG (TX)

Request the Impossible



AS TOLD BY
RABBI SHMOUEL TOUBOUL
(Issy-les-Moulineaux, France)

Our Shlichus started in 1971 with a focus on the main exhibition center of Paris, the “Parc des Expositions,” located in Issy-les-Moulineaux. This massive multi-use convention center hosts over 120 major public exhibitions, international trade shows, conventions, and cultural events every year, drawing an estimated 7.5 million visitors annually. We coordinate *mivtzoim* throughout the center to service the thousands of Yidden who do business at these events, and we set up a Kosher stand at the “La foire de Paris”—one of Europe’s largest general-purpose trade and retail events.

The first time I did *mivtzoim* at the “Le salon de l’agriculture”—a major 10-day annual agricultural event, a young man named Jonathan H. approached me and said, “I’m Jewish. What are you doing here?”

Delighted with his straightforward introduction, I said, “Would you like to put on Tefillin?”

“Sure!” Jonathan invited me over to his stand, where he wrapped Tefillin, and from then on, we became very close. He would encourage many Yidden to wrap Tefillin and initiated and sponsored the kosher food stand. I would visit him often at his stand to share *divrei Torah*,

and he became very enthusiastic about Yiddishkeit.

A few years later, I encouraged Jonathan to join me for a trip to the Rebbe. He was delighted to do so, and on Wednesday evening, 12 Adar I 5774, we boarded an Air France flight to JFK to spend Shabbos at the Ohel.

A few minutes into the flight, Jonathan asked me how he should behave in the Rebbe's presence and whether he would have the opportunity to speak. It dawned on me that, although I discuss Gimmel Tammuz with my *mekuravim*, and encourage them to make *hachlatos* and send letters with me to the Ohel, Jonathan did not internalize that reality because I speak about the Rebbe in the present tense.

Awkward as it felt, I explained the reality to him, and when he realized we would be going to a cemetery and davening at the Ohel, he was very disappointed and began asking many skeptical questions. He was bothered by the idea of connecting to Hashem through a conduit such as a *tzaddik*, and my explanations did not sit well with him.

It was the first time Jonathan kept Shabbos in his life. There were several other Chassidim from France at the Ohel for Shabbos, and we spent many hours learning together and davening. We also had a farbrengen on Friday and Shabbos day. Jonathan was very inspired and involved, but he kept expressing his skepticism and frustration about the need for a Rebbe in our relationship with Hashem.

On Motzei Shabbos, I explained to him the process of writing a *P"aN*. I am not sure what came over me, but sensing his lingering skepticism, I said, "You know what? If you still have your doubts, ask the Rebbe for a blessing for something very important for you that you think is impossible."

We both wrote our respective *panim* and then entered the Ohel together. A minute after walking in, Jonathan started crying bitterly and stayed there for close to half an hour, as he recited Tehillim and read his *P"aN* through his tears. Afterwards, he was very moved. He could not explain the experience in words, but he stopped asking his skeptical questions. The rest of the trip was uneventful; I returned home to Paris, and he continued to Miami for business.

Four months later, Jonathan called me and exclaimed, "Now I believe the Rebbe is the real deal!"

He explained that when I challenged him to ask for



an impossible *bracha*, he wrote to the Rebbe about his brother, who was experiencing a devastating marriage crisis at the time. He asked for a *bracha* for *shalom bayis* in their marriage and for them to be blessed with a baby boy.

"Shmouel, I just got a phone call from my brother that his wife is expecting a child! I honestly thought it was impossible, but now I know you are absolutely correct about everything you told me about the Rebbe. There was no way they would want to have another baby; they were going to separate! But I asked for the impossible, not only that they shouldn't get divorced, but that they should be blessed with a baby boy right now this year!"

YOUR STORY

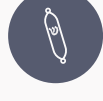
Share your story with A Chassidisher Derher by emailing stories@derher.org.

BY: RABBI MENDEL JACOBS

מוקדש לחיזוק
ההתקשרות לכ"ק אדמו"ר

נדפס ע"י
הרה"ת ר' זאב וזוגתו מרת ליבא
ומשפחתם שיחיו גולדברג
להצלחה רבה בכל אשר יפנו
בגשמיות וברוחניות

EVERY JEWISH CHILD



TAKING ACTION

SEFER TORAH
L'YALDEI
YISROEL



FARBRENGEN, YUD-ALEPH NISSAN 5741.

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A Novel Idea

“Now is the time and opportunity to remind everyone about Mivtza Pesach; to assist every Yid with whatever they need to celebrate the Yom Tov, both spiritually and materially... Especially those Yidden who find themselves in confining circumstances and away from their natural environment; whether in the hospital, at an army base, or in prison...”

“This leads us to remind everyone about all the other *mivtzoim*: Ahavas Yisroel, Chinuch, etc...”

This sentiment from the Rebbe was quite familiar and seemed to indicate that the farbrengen was nearing its end.

It had been a long and content-rich farbrengen.

The night of Yud-Aleph Nissan 5741 was when the Rebbe entered his 80th year, and the Rebbe had addressed a very wide range of issues—from the personal to the global.

The recent assassination attempt on President Reagan, energy independence for the United States, and our obligation to influence the world with G-dliness were some of the topics discussed.

Then, after enumerating all the Ten Mivtzoim, the Rebbe made a surprise announcement:

“We spoke earlier about *ma’alin bakodesh*, increasing in holiness. Therefore, after a pause for saying *l’chaim* with joy, with pomp and resounding voice (*‘simcha, t’rua, v’kol gadol’*), we will pick up [the farbrengen] and discuss a new idea.”

Smiling, the Rebbe continued, “Not a new *gezaira*, *chas v’sholom*, rather a proposal and request. As will be explained soon, with joy and gladness of the heart! *L’chaim!*”¹

The crowd was shocked. When was the last time the Rebbe had made such a dramatic announcement? What could the Rebbe have in mind?

After a short pause, the Rebbe’s father’s *hakafos niggun* was started, and the Rebbe led the fiery singing, repeating the middle stanza over and over. The anticipation grew by the minute.

The Rebbe began the next *sicha* by prefacing that, for the past few months, he had constantly been speaking “with a *shturem*” about Tzivos Hashem (established earlier that year), uniting all Jewish children throughout the world under a common banner—Tzivos Hashem—and a common goal—to spread Yiddishkeit in their homes, their surroundings, and beyond.

However, the Rebbe said, children live in a physical world where it is difficult to feel this unity. Moreover, there are some Jewish children who may not know about it altogether. For this reason, he continued, other ideas were proposed to make them feel united: a common uniform, a common symbol, and similar ideas.

True unity, though, is achieved through Torah. Therefore, the Rebbe announced, we are now proposing an utterly novel *mivtza*: to have a Sefer Torah written solely for children, boys and girls, before bar and bas mitzva; with each child acquiring their own personal letter. This will demonstrate to the child in a real, physical way that he is connected to all other Jewish children; and through the Torah.

To highlight this idea of unity, the Rebbe said that the Torah should be written in Eretz Yisroel, the one and only Jewish homeland. And more specifically, in *Yerushalayim ir hakodesh*, a city that belongs to all Yidden together, uniting them all as one—as the *possuk*



TAKING ACTION

THE TEN MIVTZOIM REVISITED

says, “עיר שחברה לה יחדיו” (a city that brings together).

To help the children cherish their letter and not treat it as *nahama dichesufa* (something acquired for free and not appreciated), each child will pay one U.S. dollar, or its equivalent in foreign currency, for the letter. The Rebbe appointed the Beis Din Rabbanei Chabad in Eretz Yisroel—“my representatives”—to oversee the writing of the Torah and to work out the halachic details. The main thing, the Rebbe said, is that the Torah should be written with the highest level of *kashrus*, and even more importantly—it should be written as fast as possible.

We’ve Received Good News

It was around 12:30 a.m. when the Rebbe launched the *mitvza*; 6:30 a.m. in Eretz Yisroel. Members of the Chabad Beis Din were listening to the Rebbe’s words via live hookup, and they immediately decided to take action. That same day, they commissioned the expert sofer, Rabbi Shlomo Aharon Henig, who wrote the first few lines of the new Sefer Torah.

When the Rebbe returned from the Ohel that evening on Motzei Yud-Aleph Nissan, Chassidim were in for yet another surprise: another farbrengen with the Rebbe would begin shortly!

“First of all, we open with good news,” the Rebbe began. “Yesterday we spoke about writing a *sefer Torah* for Jewish children...Today, the news arrived that the writing of the first *sefer Torah* has already begun, on Yud-Aleph Nissan. The first line was already written on a beautiful, high-quality parchment.”



THE SOFER, RABBI SHLOMO AHARON HENIG.

The first part of the *sicha* involved the spiritual significance of writing a *sefer Torah*, and then the Rebbe turned to the practical aspects, giving many practical guidelines about the new *mitvza*: how to choose a letter for each child; how to design the certificates; and more.²

Three Nights

The next evening, the night of Yud-Gimmel Nissan, the Rebbe held a third farbrengen! Again, the Rebbe spoke in great detail about the new *mitvza*.

After witnessing the Rebbe’s urgency for the project, Lubavitcher Chassidim worldwide rolled up their sleeves. Enrollment forms were immediately printed and sent around the world, and as the days went by, more and more people signed up.

This is a Shturem?!

The official coordination of the *mitvza* was placed in the hands of the Beis Din (who were later instructed that the *mitvza* should not be associated with any other Chabad *mosad*), and they subsequently established the *Vaad L’kesivas Sefer Hatorah Shel Yaldei Yisrael*, appointing Rabbi Shmuel Greisman to take charge.

On Erev Shabbos Chol Hamoed, Rabbi Greisman received a phone call from the Rebbe’s *mazkir*, his brother-in-law, Rabbi Binyomin Klein, with an astonishing message. The Rebbe had told him the following: “Call your brother-in-law—he is involved in the *sefer Torah*—and ask him how many children have purchased a letter. Not how many letters the *sofer* wrote, but how many children bought a letter in the Torah.”

Rabbi Greisman said he would review the lists and let him know, and when Rabbi Klein called him back, Rabbi Greisman gave him the tallies. Later on, Rabbi Klein called him back to tell him that the Rebbe had been surprised by the numbers. “This is with the whole *shturem*?!” [I.e. why aren’t there more?] The Rebbe told Rabbi Klein to call Rabbi Greisman back next week for another update. From then on, Rabbi Greisman sent Rabbi Klein a weekly *duch* for the Rebbe.

At a Tzivos Hashem rally that Yom Tov, the Rebbe spoke directly to the children about the new *mitvza*:

“The sign of a soldier in Tzivos Hashem,” the Rebbe explained, “is by having a letter in Hashem’s Torah.”

The Rebbe told the children that they should all buy letters in the new *sefer Torah* being written especially for them, using their own personal money.

“Due to the great mitzvah of *V’ahavta l’reiacha kamocho*,” the Rebbe continued, “all of you will certainly encourage

other children to join in this new project as well!”³

As the months passed, the Rebbe continued to urge ever greater and wider participation in this new *mitvza*. The Rebbe emphasized that the first *sefer Torah* had to be completed before the close of the year—a *shnas hakhel*—and that the effort invested must reflect the urgency and importance of that goal.

When someone suggested to the Rebbe that special shlichim should be dispatched to go around from community to community and encourage more children to join, the Rebbe rejected the idea:

כהנ"ל צ"ל ע"י אנ"ש ש"י **שעל אתר** והילדים/ות בעצמם ולא ע"י שליח ממק"א ובפרט - מכאן (כעין לחץ ואתדל"ע) **כמובן**.

הנ"ל צ"ל ע"י אנ"ש ש"י **שעל אתר** והילדים/ות בעצמם ולא ע"י שליח ממק"א ובפרט - מכאן (כעין לחץ ואתדל"ע) **כמובן**.

All of the above-mentioned [effort] must be carried out by the members of *anash* in **each local place**, and by the children themselves, not through a **shliach** arriving from a different place. Especially [not a shliach sent] from here (which imparts a sort of pressure and [overbearing] top-down push), **obviously**.

It was clear that the Rebbe wanted all chassidim everywhere to give this project their all and push it through to the finish line.

On Shabbos Parshas Bamidbar, Mevorchim Sivan, the Rebbe put out another urgent call for everyone to get involved:

“There should not be even one Jewish child who does not own a letter in the children’s *sefer Torah*. Effort must be made on this front as quickly as possible. Not like those who think that first they’ll go for a walk, because they need to worry about their health, then they’ll read the newspaper. Only then, if he has more time, will he go out and register children for the *sefer Torah*.

“He thinks he must read the newspaper because he must know what’s going on in the world, in order to know what he needs to do next. But he already read the newspaper last night after saying Shema, and he thinks he needs to read it again this morning to see if anything changed in the world overnight.

“Whatever he read in the newspaper yesterday



THE REBBE SPEAKS TO THE CHILDREN,
CHOL HAMOED PESACH 5741.

should have informed him enough about what’s going on in the world to prompt him to go out and do what needs to be done: First of all, to get out there and register more children for the *sefer Torah*, then to study his daily Torah *shiurim*, etc. Only then, if he still has time leftover, let him check the paper again to see if the situation in the world got any better...”⁴

Finish it Off!

When the Rebbe had launched the *mitvza*, he set Erev Rosh Hashanah as the goal for completing the *sefer Torah*; a very tall order. However, as the weeks passed and the Jewish nation got caught up in the storm of excitement, the Rebbe moved the deadline, first setting it for the end of Sivan, then for Yud-Beis Tammuz. Ultimately, all the letters were sold by the end of Tammuz. Less than four months after the Rebbe had first introduced the idea, over three hundred thousand children had signed up for a letter in the *sefer Torah*!

Looking at the lists of children that were included in this Torah, the organizers came to realize the magnitude of what had occurred before their very eyes. The children came from every sector of the Jewish world—Chareidim, Modern Orthodox, and non-religious; extreme *kana'im* and anti-religious fanatics;



Chassidim and Litvaks—there was not a part of the Jewish world that hadn't participated. And they came from all types of communities throughout the world—from big urban cities with large Jewish communities, to small towns without a rabbi; from the suburbs of California to the wastelands of Russia; from New York to Africa to the Arab world.

As the time for the *siyum* approached, the Rebbe took great interest in all the details, including personally designing the mantle for the *sefer Torah* in his holy handwriting.

Special Mission

On Shabbos Parshas Va'eschanan, the Rebbe announced that the *siyum sefer Torah* would take place the following week, on Chof Menachem-Av, in *Yerushalayim Ir Hakodesh*.

On Monday, 17 Av, the Rebbe summoned Rabbi Zalman Shimon Dvorkin to his room and appointed him as the Rebbe's personal shliach to attend the *siyum* in Yerushalayim. The Rebbe gave him \$1200 in cash as his own participation in the costs of the project, and \$118 to buy two mantels—one for the *Yomim Noraim* and one for the rest of the year.

As the Rebbe's shliach, the Rebbe told Rabbi Dvorkin that he should write a letter in the *sefer Torah* now being completed, as well as one letter in the second *sefer Torah*, which they would now begin.

A delegation of elder Chassidim, headed by Rabbi Hodakov, accompanied the *rav* to the airport as he embarked on his journey.

The *siyum* took place with great celebration and fanfare as thousands of people, led by torch-bearing children, marched through the streets of Yerushalayim, accompanying the new *sefer Torah* to the *Kosel* for *Hakafos*.

Immediately after the conclusion of the first *sefer Torah*, a second *sefer Torah* was begun, ready to unite even more

Jewish children worldwide.

Since then, eight *sifrei Torah* have been written and completed, with a ninth one to be completed this month!

In the months following the first *siyum* of the children's *sefer Torah*, the Rebbe also launched a similar initiative for adults.

As something so dear to the Rebbe and so instrumental in hastening the coming of Moshiach, every member of *anash* will certainly join the effort and enroll as many children (and adults) as they can to register for one of the *sifrei Torah*.

"A person might think," the Rebbe once said, "that as an elderly person with a white beard, it is not befitting for him to go and speak with the mother of a young child and convince her to register her child for the *sefer Torah*."

"...He needs to place his honor on the side and listen to what Hashem wants: Hashem reveals His will to His servants, the prophets; including our Rabbeim, up until the Rebbe, *Nessi Doreinu!* Our Rabbeim instructed every single person to be involved in spreading Yiddishkeit and Chassidus!"⁵

Where can I sign up?

Sefer Torah Haklali:

UnityLetter.com

Sefer Torah for Yaldei Yisrael:

KidsTorah.org



RABBI GREISMAN IN FRONT OF A WORLD MAP SHOWING WHICH COUNTRIES HAD CHILDREN PARTICIPATING IN THE MITVA.



RABBI ZALMAN SHIMON DVORKIN ADDRESSES THE SIYUM SEFER TORAH AT THE TZEMACH TEDEK SHUL IN YERUSHALAYIM.

The Easiest Mivtza You Could Be Doing



An interview with
Rabbi Chaim Piekarski

By: **Rabbi Bentzion Pearson**

Reb Chaim, thank you for taking the time to share your experience and inspiration with our readers. Please tell us how you got involved with the *mivtza Ois B'Sefer Torah*?

My story begins as a *bochur* in yeshiva. Like everyone else, I was always active in all the regular *mivtzoim*, like Tefillin, Torah, Mezuzah, and so on.

I remember reading bits and pieces about *Mivtza Ois B'Sefer Torah* in the Rebbe's *sichos* and realizing how little I knew about it. In the early 5740s, the Rebbe spoke about it frequently, using striking expressions and passionately encouraging everyone to get involved.

Especially when it came to the *sefer Torah* for IDF soldiers, the Rebbe seemed to imply that having a specific letter in the Torah literally saved lives! At times, you can even almost hear the Rebbe's frustration with the *askanim*: why wasn't more being done about it?

I started thinking to myself, "I need to take a closer look at this."

I began asking around. I asked *mash-pi'im*, *shluchim*, and other Chassidim, and I found that most people have very little awareness about this special *mivtza*.

There was a little more awareness about the children's *sefer Torah*; many of us have the certificates for our own letters hanging in our rooms. But when it came to the adults' *sefer Torah*, no one knew anything. It struck me as quite strange that there was a whole *mivtza* launched by the Rebbe, one which he spoke about so passionately, and almost no one could give me any practical information!

Eventually, when I came to learn at Oholei Torah in Crown Heights, I came in contact with Rabbi Yitzchok Pruss, a member of the Vaad of the *Sefer Torah Haklali*, and I saw that he had a whole program running. He had some printed materials and ready-made video clips of the Rebbe speaking about the *mivtza*, and he was quite active in promoting it. He encouraged me to get involved, and we started featuring a booth for this *mivtza* at various big events, such as the CTeen Shabbaton, the Chabad on Campus Shabbaton, and others.

We would go around at these events with clipboards and sign up as many attendees as we could for the adults' *sefer Torah*. We'd ask them for their names and their mothers' names, and just like that, we were signing up hundreds of new people at a time.



SEFER TORAH
L'YALDEI YISROEL

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THE TEN
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I quickly realized that it's not that complicated.

In fact, of all the *mitvtzoim*, this one might be the easiest. You're not asking a person to give you a few minutes to put on tefillin; you're not asking them to buy a mezuzah and hang it up on their door. Those things take more commitment. Signing up for the *sefer Torah* is quick and easy and requires almost no commitment. A letter only costs one dollar!

When talking to non-frum Yidden, I try to explain that we're signing them up for a very special project: having your own personal space in global Torah. It's almost like owning a valuable piece of real estate. Or like being part of a huge Jewish data center. It unites all the Jews around the world. It's a beautiful project to join.

Obviously, if it's someone you're already acquainted with and you have more time, you can give them a deeper explanation.

When it comes to frum Yidden, I've found that you can present it as a special *segula* for protection. People are very receptive to that.

Thank you for sharing your experience with us. I'm certain it will help others get involved as well. Can you tell us about any current campaigns going on in this regard?

It's good you bring that up.

This year actually marks 50 years since the Rebbe launched "*Shnas Hachinuch*." A major component of the Rebbe's campaign at the time was to have the children themselves become educators and inspire other children.

This is a very good time for our own children of *anash*, most of whom presumably already have a letter in the *sefer Torah*, to bring their friends on board too!

It's also a very special opportunity for shluchim, who dedicate their lives to spreading the Rebbe's *mitvtzoim*. Engage with all your contacts and bring this special *mitvtza* to new fronts!

If you have a preschool, a Hebrew school, or any other children's programs, make sure that all the children are included in the *sefer Torah*.

And the same goes for the adults: they, too, should be included in the *Sefer Torah Haklali*.

To make things easier for those of you out there on the ground, we set up a WhatsApp Business account where you can just text us the children's names, then click a Zelle or Cash App link to send the payment. In today's digital world, everyone can easily be included in this program.

Amazing. What about bringing the *mitvtza* to bigger events? You mentioned CTeen and Chabad on Campus events. Is there a way for someone to bring these booths to larger events in their own communities?

Absolutely.

I must mention Rabbi Yitzchok Pruss of the New York office, who works tirelessly, dedicating heart and soul to this *mitvtza*.

Whenever and wherever there's an event in the NYC area, he brings all the necessary equipment from A to Z, including a video screen, signs, and more.



THE REBBE'S MICHTAV KLOLI ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF BUYING A LETTER AS IT APPEARED IN A YIDDISH NEWSPAPER.

If you send a WhatsApp message, we will definitely try to help you obtain whatever you need.

Additionally, there are the main campaign websites: **KidsTorah.org** for the children's *sefer Torah* and **UnityLetter.com** for the adults.

Wow. Can you share some success stories that you've experienced connected with this *mitvza*?

The first thing that comes to mind when you ask me that question is the incredible work of **Chabad at the Airport**.

I've gone there many times to help out at the booth they've set up, and the number of Yidden they reach is simply staggering!

It's a great place for people to stop in on the way to their flights, with water and snacks, and while there, the *bochurim* or *yungeleit* running the booth take the opportunity to sign up as many Yidden as possible in the *sifrei Torah*. From the non-frum to the ultra-Chareidi, everyone is ready to be part of such a special program with very little effort.

I just want to reiterate how easy it can be:

When you're with a Yid on *mitvzoim*, you already put on tefillin with them; just ask them for their name and their mother's name and send it in. It's a great way to conclude the interaction and make it more meaningful. They're usually very happy and excited to hear about it.

It's an incredible thing that the Rebbe introduced to us: a way of uniting all the Jewish people around the world through Torah. The Rebbe also connected it with a



THE FIRST SIYUM OF THE SEFER TORAH HAKLOLI ON ROSH CHODESH SHEVAT 5742, HILTON HOTEL, MANHATTAN.



RABBI YITZCHOK PRUSS (RIGHT) AND RABBI SHMUEL OIRECHMAN (LEFT) AT A RECENT SIYUM FOR THE SEFER TORAH HAKLOLI.

segula for protection, based on the *possuk* “ובעת ההיא ימלט עמך כל הנמצא כתוב בספר”—At that time, your nation will be spared; all those who are found written in the book...”⁶

If all of us use the many opportunities we already have to bring in and unite even more Yidden together—we will surely be *zoche* to the ultimate unity, with the coming of Moshiach speedily. Amen!

1. Sichos Kodesh 5741 vol. 3, p. 129.

2. Sichos Kodesh *ibid.*, p. 139.

3. Sichos Kodesh *ibid.*, p. 257.

4. Sichos Kodesh *ibid.*, p. 533.

5. Shabbos Parshas Massei 5741; Sichos Kodesh 5741 vol. 4, p. 288.

6. Daniel 12:1.



TAKING ACTION

THE TEN MITVZOIM REVISITED

By: Rabbi Shneur Itzinger

Step Inside

Farbrengen with the Rebbe — A Companion

A guide to the Farbrengen of
Chof Menachem-Av 5732



Toras Menachem
vol. 69, pp. 125-186.
Likkutei Sichos vol.
14, Ekev - Chof Av.



Sources

This guide is designed to help
you experience the farbrengen
on video or audio. Timestamps
correspond to the video of the
farbrengen, linked above.

לזכות החייל בצבאות ה'
מאיר יהודה שיחי' ברון
לרגל הולדתו ה' אייר, ה'תשפ"ו
ולזכות הוריו השליח הרה"ת
ר' מנחם מענדל וזוגתו מרת
חנה רבקה שיחיו ברון
שלוחים לוויילאמסון
קאונטי, טענעסי

נדפס על ידי זקניו
הרה"ת ר' יצחק וזוגתו מרת אסתר
טייכטל
נאשוויל, טענעסי



The Rebbe's Chof Av farbrengens are unique. Typically, in honor of the *yahrtzeit* of his father, Harav Levi Yitzchak, the Rebbe would dedicate most or all of the farbrengen to deep Torah discussions, connecting all parts of Torah and conducting a Hadran. The richness of this particular farbrengen is evident from the no fewer than five *mugah'dike* Sichos in Likkutei Sichos that emerged from it.

The first concept the Rebbe discusses is the famous Rashi connecting the passing of a *tzaddik* to the breaking of the Luchos. The idea is beautifully developed across the first four *sichos*, a taste of which can be found below.

Sicha 1: The Soul's Journey

The *neshama's* constant *aliya*,
and what it means for us.

1. The Never-Ending Journey

[1:35]

The opening of Torah Sheba'al Peh teaches the *neshama's* eternity.

- **Brachos**, the first Masechta of Mishnayos,
- is the **opening of** (the Gemara that follows and) **all Torah Sheba'al Peh**,
- which is a **direct continuation of Torah Shebiksav**.
 - Also seen in that Torah Shebiksav ends with a *lamed*, and Torah Sheba'al Peh begins with *mem*.²
- **The Masechta's conclusion**,⁴
 - connected to its beginning, is:
- *Talmidei chachamim ein lahem menucha—Talmidei Chachamim have no rest*; they are constantly ascending.
- This teaches that **the *neshama* is eternal**,
- and **continually ascends**, not remaining where it was at the time of *histalkus*.
- **The Arizal** —
 - whose 400th *yahrtzeit* was this month,

WHAT'S THE SOURCE?

At the very beginning of Masechta Brachos,³ the Mishna asks: *me'ei masai korin es Shema*—when is the time to recite Shema? The Gemara immediately asks: *Tanna heicha ka'i*—where did the Tanna find that we recite Shema at all? The answer: *a'kra ka'i*—he is relying on the *possuk* that commands Krias Shema, without specifying the time.

Right at the opening of Shas, we're taught a rule: *Torah Sheba'al Peh* is rooted in *Torah Shebiksav*. *Heicha ka'i? A'kra ka'i*.

Talmidei Chachamim have no rest, neither in this world nor in the World to Come. As it says: "They go from strength to strength, they appear before Hashem in Tzion."

ברכות סד, א אמר רבי חייא בר אשי אמר רב:
תלמידי חכמים אין להם מנוחה לא בעולם
הזה ולא בעולם הבא, שנאמר: "ילכו מחיל
אל חיל יראה אל אלקים בציון".



Step
Inside

Farbrengen
with the Rebbe
— A Companion



Man goes out to his work, to his labor until evening.

תהלים ק"ד, כ"ג יצא אדם לפעלו ולעבודתו עד ערב.

- explains this **aliya of the neshama in Olam Haba**, from a *possuk*.⁵
 - [Olam Haba exists now; it is called the “World to Come” because we reach it after Olam Hazeh.]
- **Yetzei adam**: a person **departs this world**,
 - after completing the years Hashem gave,
- **pa’alo**: his work in the next world begins, which is **the Torah that he learned here**;
 - he **continues in Olam Haba the same pe’ulah and avoda** with which he was occupied.
- **Adei arev**: **as long as this world**, the *arev*—darkness—**exists**,
- **the neshama continues ascending**.
- **Until yom shekulo Shabbos** when **Moshiach comes**.
 - Even Moshe Rabbeinu continues being *mechadesh* in Torah, always ascending.

Here concludes the Arizal’s teaching on the neshama’s constant aliya.

2. Living Eternal

[7:10]

What the neshama’s aliya teaches us.

- **This teaching**—the soul’s constant *aliya*—**is a lesson**.
 - Torah does not tell stories without a lesson.
- The **halachos of Torah**, as well as **many mitzvos**, are **relevant to both men and women**,
- and even **children**,
 - as their own *chiyuv*, or the *chinuch* obligations of their fathers,
 - even before they can do *mitzvos*.
- **The lesson** of constant *halicha* must therefore be **relevant for all**.
- **Halicha** in Torah also **means constantly learning**.
 - as brought in the Gemara regarding *mi’beis ha’kneses l’beis ha’midrash*.

- This is **relevant to all; even children** inherit the Torah.
- The *neshama*’s constant *aliya* is therefore **a directive for everyone**:
- By **maintaining the connection to the neshama** ascending in *Olam Haba*,
- **we strengthen** our own *aliya*.

3. Stay Connected

[9:58]

How do we connect to the neshama and his aliya?

- The connection can be physical, or also **spiritual**, by **learning his Torah**.
- As the Mishna says, **even learning one letter**.
- The bond of *sechel* is the strongest connection,
 - as the Rambam and Alter Rebbe teach.
- **Learning his Torah gives strength to go mechayil el chayil**, constantly ascending.
 - The more one learns, the more connected they will be.

4. Power of the Yahrtzeit

[11:20]

This connection is especially powerful today.

- While *ein lahem menucha* means **daily**,
- the **yahrtzeit brings a special aliya** — evident by the unique customs of the day —
- providing additional strength for our own *aliya*, allowing it to be *be’ein aroch* — unlimited.
- The strength extends to the whole year.
- Even in a *guf*, the *neshama* can have an *aliya* without limit,
- because Torah connects us to Hashem, beyond limitations.
- By following Torah, we merit His unlimited *brachos*.

Sicha 2: Sourced in Torah

Everything can be found in Torah, including remembering a tzaddik on his yahrtzeit.

1.1 Torah: Creation's Blueprint

[19:20]

Torah is the source of all

- **This farbrengen commemorates** a past event.
- All categories mirror those in Torah, the blueprint for creation,
- [Torah also includes the idea of “remembrance” — the *mitzvos* of Edus, as will be explained (in section 2)].

An example of Torah containing everything:

- Rebbi Yehoshua ben Chananya was asked **how long it takes a snake to give birth**.
- This question had already been posed to wise men.
- Why ask someone whose expertise is Torah?
- Furthermore, **he answered them, not dismissing it as unrelated to Torah**.
- [This proves that everything, even mundane details about animals, can be found in Torah.]

1.2 Side Point

[21:13]

The Rebbe addresses recent remarks about Torah's relevance.

A sign of the darkness of the times:

- Darkness leads to confusion.
- **A Jew declared** —
 - remarks that were published and not retracted —
- — **that Torah has no say in history or other areas of *chochmos chitzoniyyos*.**

WHAT'S THE PLAN?

Just as an architect does not build without first consulting a detailed blueprint, so too, says the Midrash, Hashem “consulted the Torah” before creating the world, using it as the blueprint for creation.⁶

Nothing in the world can exist without Torah. Torah is not only the guide for how to live in the world, but the blueprint through which the world itself was created. Everything in creation must first exist in Torah.

- Further, he claims that deriving the age of the universe from Torah diminishes Torah's *kedusha*!
- He knows the Gemara of *nachash l'kamah molid* and similar cases,
- which are not just stories — they are in Gemara, relevant to *halacha*,
- and teach a *klal*: **nothing exists in the world unless it exists in Torah**.
 - If you cannot find it in Torah, it is *mikem* — because of you.
- **Missing this point misunderstands what Torah is all about** and undermines many halachic principles.
- People debate as to whether Torah addresses the age of the world or animals,

The Emperor asked Rebbi Yehoshua ben Chananya: how long is a snake's gestation? He answered: seven years. The Emperor said: the elders of Athens bred snakes that gave birth after three years! He replied: those snakes had already been pregnant for four years.

חולין ח.ב. אָמַר ל' קיסר לרבי יהושע
בן חנניה: נחש לכמה מיעבר ומוליד?
אמר ל': לשב שני. והא סבי דבי
אתונא ארבעינהו, ואוליד לתלת! הנהו
מיעברי הוו מעיקרא ארבע.

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Farbrengen
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- while the Mishna discusses kosher signs, the Gemara discusses animal gestation, etc.
- They fail to understand what Torah is and **try to shape it to their conception** of how Hashem should make a Torah.
- The darkness is such that **this claim is praised as upholding Torah's kedusha**.
- The statement is debated, without realizing that it has nothing to do with *Toras emes*.

1.3 Categories in Torah

[28:23]

After the ma'amar hamusgar, the Rebbe returns to remembrance in Torah, including remembering a yahrtzeit.

There are three categories of *mitzvos*:

- **Edus**: reminders of past events.
- **Chukim**: unexplained *mitzvos*.
- **Mishpatim**: logical, self-understood *mitzvos*.
- Regarding Edus:
 - Such as Pesach, reminding us of Yetzias Mitzrayim, or –
- Shabbos — a reminder of Creation.
 - It is not purely logical like Mishpatim, nor above logic like Chukim.
 - There is a reason: **Shabbos is a reminder** that Hashem rested from Creation.

2. Two Aspects of Remembering

[30:10]

After establishing remembrance in Torah, the Rebbe explains how it works.

When we remember something, like Shabbos, **two things happen**:

1. The remembered concept **reoccurs**.
 2. The **person remembering is affected**.
1. **Every Shabbos, the original concept reoccurs**:
 - Each Shabbos, **the world is in a different state** than during the week –
 - *Melacha* is prohibited because the world itself is holier.
 - Even eating is different; there

EMPTY? TRY AGAIN!

In Parshas Ha'azinu, Moshe urges the Yidden to keep the Torah: "It is not a vain thing for you" — *lo davar reik hu mikem*. Torah requires effort, because *ki hu chayeichem* — it is your life.

The Talmud Yerushalmi learns from *davar reik hu mikem* that anything taught by the Sanhedrin will ultimately be accepted, if they work hard enough to implement it. If it remains a *davar reik*, the problem is *mikem* — from you.⁷

The same applies to us. Anything can be found in Torah if we work hard enough. If we cannot find it, it is *mikem* — because we have not yet put in enough effort

- is no *peresh* — impurity.
- — it is elevated, **as on the first Shabbos of Creation**.
- 2. **The person remembering is also affected**.
 - Now, the event is not only repeated; it **intensifies each time**.
 - This is why we say *Hayom...Rishon ba'Shabbos* — the count restarts weekly,
 - unlike counting years, where the number increases,

THE FOOD OF SHABBOS

The physical world itself, even the food we eat, is different on Shabbos than during the week. Chassidus, elaborating on a teaching of the Zohar, explains that eating on Shabbos is fundamentally different from weekday eating.

Although the act appears the same, the purpose is different. During the week, the world is a mixture of good and bad, and eating with the proper intention elevates the good from within the bad. On Shabbos, however, there is no evil mixed in. Since the world itself is elevated, eating on Shabbos is only to elevate the good itself to an even higher level.⁸

- because the world exists in a seven-day cycle, renewed each Shabbos.
- The world is therefore both *na'ar* and *zaken* — new and old.⁹
- **The same applies to Pesach, and all recalled events.**

Regarding a *yahrtzeit*, the same applies:

1. **The *tzaddik* is elevated each year, as the first time.**
2. **Those marking the *yahrtzeit* are also affected.**

3. The Third Partner

[35:00]

After the above two aspects of remembrance, the Rebbe introduces a third.

Beyond the event and the person remembering, Hashem is also affected, so to speak.

- On Shabbos, Hashem rests from recreating the world,
 - sustaining it instead through *machshava*.
 - This rest is not only reenacted, but on a higher level each week.
- On Pesach too, the divine revelation reoccurs and affects Hashem as well.

On a *yahrtzeit* therefore, three things occur:

1. **The *tzaddik* has an *aliya*,**
2. **those connected to him are elevated, and**
3. **Hashem Himself is affected.**

All this establishes that Hashem Himself is impacted by a *tzaddik's* passing and on the *yahrtzeit*. **How so?**

4. What is Difficult for Hashem?

[37:27]

Easy vs. difficult for a human and for Hashem.

- **The answer is in the Parsha of last Shabbos.**

- Shabbos blesses the coming week, and those blessings come from Torah.
- In Ekev, we read about the breaking of the Luchos, which connects to *silukan shel tzadikim* — the passing of a *tzaddik*.
 - Rashi connects the two; it is therefore understandable to all.
- **A *tzaddik's* passing is difficult for Hashem, like the breaking of the Luchos.**

What does “difficult for Hashem” mean?

- Hashem is a *kol yachol*; what could be difficult?
- **For a person, “difficult” means something requiring extra strength.**
 - A regular task uses external strength; a difficult task draws deeper, internal *kochos*.
 - A person's face turns red during a strenuous task due to increased blood flow from the increased use of the *kochos*.
- **For Hashem, “difficult” means that a deeper level of *Elokus* is revealed.**

The breaking of the Luchos, a *tzaddik's* passing, and a *yahrtzeit* all draw down a deeper *giluy Elokus*.

5. Luchos and its Letters

[41:10]

The breaking of the Luchos represents the separation between *neshama* and *guf*.

What is the connection between a *tzaddik's* passing and the Luchos breaking?

- The Luchos had engraved letters; **the letters and stone were one.**
 - **When the letters left the stone,** they became too heavy to carry — causing Moshe to drop them.
- **A *neshama*, too, is inseparable from the *guf*.**
 - Then the *neshama* departs and the *guf* remains.

The passing of a Tzaddik is as difficult for Hashem as the day the Luchos were broken.

רש"י עקב יו"ד, ז קשה מיתתו של צדיקים לפני הקדוש ברוך הוא כיום שנשתברו בו הלוחות.

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When Hashem gave Moshe the Luchos, the heavy Luchos carried themselves.

When Moshe descended from the mountain, approached the camp, and saw the *egel hazahav*, the letters engraved in the Luchos flew away.

The Luchos became too heavy to carry, and they fell from his hands.

מדרש תנחומא תשא כו.

בשעה שנתן לו הקדוש ברוך הוא את הלוחות, היו סובלין את עצמן. כיון שירד וקרבו אל המחנה וראה את העגל, פרחו אות הכתב מעליהם ונמצאו כבדים על ידיו של משה. מיד ויחר אף משה וישלך מידיו.

- As the Baal Shem Tov explains, the **letters of a person's name** transmit the *chayus* of the *neshama*.
- Passing means the letters — the *neshama* — depart.

This explains the link between a *tzaddik's* passing and *shviras haluchos*.

6. Battle Weapon

[43:07]

A curious detail about fighting a war.

At first glance, there is nothing positive about the broken Luchos. Yet —

- When Yidden **went to war**, the *Aron* went before them, holding the **broken Luchos**.
- In war, every *zechus* is needed —
 - One afraid of *aveiros* could not go; only *tzaddikim* fought. Still, the *Aron* was also needed.
- — so **why bring the broken Luchos to battle?**
 - Furthermore, according to Rashi, *only* the *shivrei luchos* went out to war; the second set, the intact Luchos, did not.

- Even an army of *tzaddikim* needed the *Aron* for additional protection. So **why include the broken Luchos?**
- **The answer** must be that **the broken Luchos also serve as a *limud zechus*** for Yidden (**as will be explained** in the next *sicha*).
 - The broken Luchos go before the army to war and help win the battle,
 - which leads to the winning of the war, including the war of *galus*.

** The next two *sichos* continue a fascinating discussion regarding the *shivrei luchos* and the connection to a *yahrtzeit*. **

1. Additional background information about this Farbrengen can be found at derher.org/253634.

2. Source #1.

3. Source #2.

4. Source #3.

5. Source #4.

6. Source #5.

7. Source #6–7.

8. Sources #8–9.

9. Sources #10–11.