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This is a Tomim!

THE STORY OF
REB SHOLOM POSNER



"We Were Starting Our Lives Over"

MEMORIES FROM THE EARLY DAYS OF TIFERES BACHURIM IN MORRISTOWN

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Reb Sholom Posner



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Publisher
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Derher for Kids
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Circulation and Marketing
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Photo Research/Editing
Rabbi Avremi Browd

Editors
Rabbi Mendel Alperowitz
Rabbi Dovid Olidort

Design
Rabbi Mendel Bergstein

Contributors
Rabbi Yanky Bell • Rabbi Yossi Bendet • Rabbi Koppel Chaiton • Rabbi Avrohom Moshe Dyce • Rabbi Tzemach Feller
Rabbi Mendy Goldberg • Rabbi Levi Gourarie • Rabbi Levi Greenberg • Rabbi Menachem M. Greenberg
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The month of Elul is associated with *teshuva*, often referred to as "*chodesh hacheshbon*"—the month of reckoning. Especially the last 12 days of the month, from Chai Elul until Rosh Hashanah, each day corresponds to another month of the past year when we think about how to do better in the year to come.

"At this point in Elul," the Rebbe says, "when we're already saying Selichos for the sixth day in a row, obviously there are no undesirable elements left within any Jew! All the more so in our day and age, when we already have the accumulative merits of thousands of years of *avoda* before us; there can be no question that not even one word of prosecution could be leveled against any Jew.

"The *teshuva* that is expected of us now is '*teshuva ilaah*'—the highest form of *teshuva*, which is done with utmost joy… With that, a Jew has the power to transcend the confines of time, and immediately bring about the final seal for a good year ahead [normally associated with Yom Kippur], and jump right in to the joy of Simchas Torah and Simchas Beis Hashoeva!"[1]

This *sicha* was said at the culmination of the month of Elul 5751. As you will read in this issue, it was an action-packed month with the Rebbe: some will recall it as the chaotic time of the Crown Heights Riots, but the Rebbe insisted on an outpouring of *simcha* at every occasion throughout the month.

Joy breaks boundaries. Joy enables us to push through the perceived difficulties and get beyond whatever challenges they present.

Much like the Chassidim in Communist Russia, whom you will read about in "Shaming the Angels." Many of them pushed through impossible odds, teaching Torah to young university students with the "Tiferes Bachurim" program.

And as the saying goes, "*America iz nisht andersh*"—the challenges may have been different for the American youth of the 1970s, but many of them pushed just as hard to reconnect with their Yiddishkeit, as you will read in the story of Tiferes Bachurim—Morristown in this issue.

Reb Sholom Posner, a pioneering shliach, carried that same spirit through decades of work—building a yeshiva in Pittsburgh despite the odds stacked against him.

Please enjoy the stories and lessons in this issue, and most importantly, let the words move you to action—*hamaaseh hu ha'iker*.

Wishing you a happy, sweet new year ahead, and may it be a year of *geulah* for all of us, in the most literal sense, *teikef umiyad mamash!*

The Editors

בברכת כתיבה וחתימה טובה לשנה טובה ומתוקה,
כ"ף מנחם-אב ה'תשפ"ו

1 Transcript, 27 Elul 5751.

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(מכתב יום ד' י' לחדש מנ"א תשג"ה)

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

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

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לזכות
הרה"ת ר' משה וזוגתו
מרת **שרה חנה ומשפחתם**
שיחיו **גוראר'**
טאמס ריוועך, ניו דזשערזי

ב אלול

Shulchan Aruch Completed (Orach Chaim)

On this date in the year 5315 (ה'שט"ו), the first section of the Shulchan Aruch, authored by Rabbi Yosef Caro, was completed in Eretz Yisroel.

י"א אלול

Completion of Beis Yosef

In the year 5282 (ה'רפ"ב), Rabbi Yosef Caro started writing the Beis Yosef, his famous commentary on the Arba Turim, Rebbi Yaakov Ben Asher's comprehensive Halachic code. He started writing this commentary in Adrianople, Turkey, and continued for the next twenty years, during which time he relocated to the holy city of Tzfas. He completed the monumental work on the 11th of Elul in the year 5302 (ה'ש"ב). It took another ten years for the writings to be published.

COMPILED BY: RABBI MENDEL VOGEL

The Maggid Meisharim—a *sefer* which records teachings which the Beis Yosef, Rabbi Yosef Caro, received from a *malach* referred to as the "Maggid"—relates the following: The Heavenly Maggid once told Rabbi Yosef Caro that it had been decreed from Heaven that he would merit to give up his life *al kiddush Hashem*. Years passed, and this did not occur. The Beis Yosef asked the Maggid why the promise had not been fulfilled. The Maggid explained that certain aspects of his conduct were not entirely befitting his lofty level, and therefore he did not receive that privilege.

Now, in addition to being a great *gaon* who devoted his life to Torah, Rabbi Yosef Caro authored the Shulchan Aruch, which became the foundation of Halachic practice among the Jewish people for generations. Through this work, he became a teacher and guide not only for his contemporaries but also for all future generations.

Halachic instruction represents a unique quality within Torah itself. While Torah study often includes discussion and differing opinions (with both opinions being equally valid and "the words of Hashem"), Halacha determines the practical path a Yid must follow. Halacha therefore plays a central role

5315-1555, 5282-1522, 5302-1542



in fulfilling the purpose of creation: That the physical world should become a dwelling place for Hashem.

We are told that several *gedolei Yisroe*l were capable of composing the Shulchan Aruch, yet the merit was granted specifically to the Beis Yosef. (Similarly, in later generations, the Mezritcher Maggid chose the Alter Rebbe to compose a Shulchan Aruch even though there were many other outstanding scholars among his disciples.) As a result, he possessed the special quality of "'Hashem is with him'; [meaning,] the halacha always follows his opinion."[1]

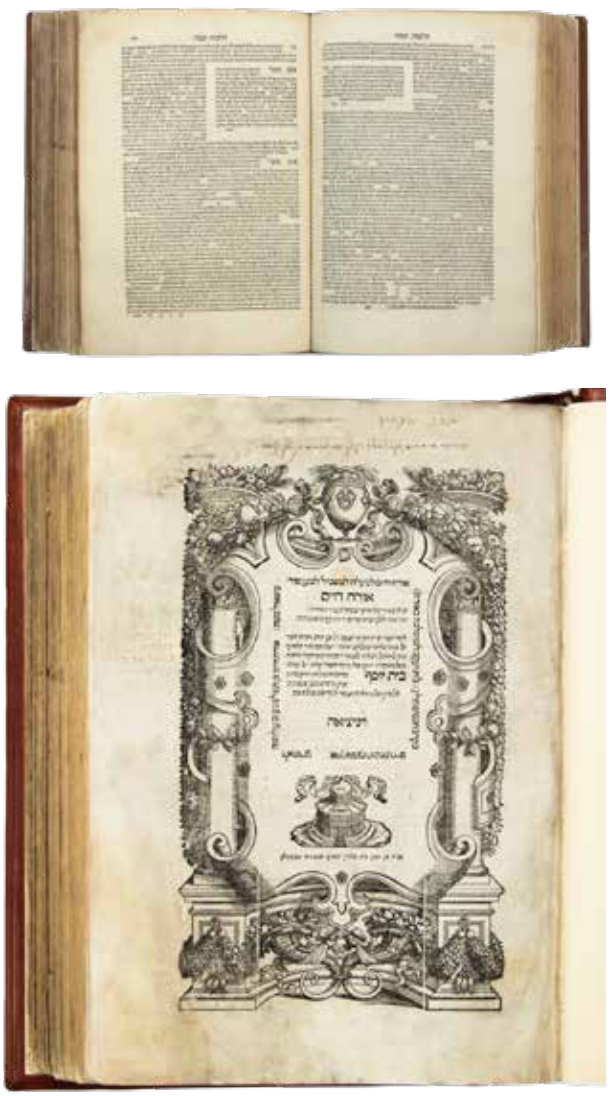
Had he indeed merited to give up his life *al kiddush Hashem*, he would not have been able to complete the Shulchan Aruch. And yet, despite the greatness of establishing Halacha for the Jewish people for all time, the Beis Yosef still longed for the merit of giving up his life *al kiddush Hashem*.

This is a remarkable concept: *Mesirus nefesh*—self-sacrifice for the sake of Hashem—is considered such an exceptionally great spiritual level that even the greatest heights of Torah scholarship cannot surpass it.

Another illustration of this concept is the statement of Chazal regarding the Martyrs of Lod ("הרוגי לוד"), that "no one can stand in their enclosure."[2] Although these individuals did not leave behind scholarly works and were not a source of Halachic guidance, their greatness lies in their complete self-sacrifice for the sanctification of Hashem's Name.

We find something similar with regard to the Ten Martyrs ("עשרה הרוגי מלכות"), as well.

This is also the reason that so many great individuals who were *morei hora'ah* (Halachic authorities) passed away before their time; because they possessed the quality of *mesiras nefesh,* which is higher than being a source of Halachic guidance.



FIRST EDITION OF THE BEIS YOSEF ON TUR ORACH CHAIM, PUBLISHED BY REB YOSEF KARO HIMSELF IN VENICE IN THE YEAR 5310.



Someone once asked the Frierdiker Rebbe two questions: the first concerned his personal *avodas Hashem*, and the second concerned the *avoda* of the *malochim*. The Frierdiker Rebbe answered his first question, but regarding the second question, he wrote that he would not answer it, since it was not relevant to the questioner's personal *avoda*. (It is indeed explained in Chassidus that *hisbonenus* about the *avoda* of *malochim* refines the *nefesh habehamis* and is beneficial for one's *avoda*. However, apparently that questioner was not yet holding at that level ("יענער האָט נאָך ניט געהאַלטן דערביי")).

Accordingly, everything we encounter must contain a *hora'a* in *avodas Hashem*. And regarding our topic—the *hora'a* is concerning the superiority of *iskafya*:

Sometimes a person feels that serving Hashem in accordance with his natural talents will enable him to accomplish more. He may think that if he acts according to his own inclinations and abilities, he will achieve greater results for the sake of *kedusha*.

However, Chassidus teaches that true *avoda* requires ***iskafya***—self-restraint and discipline. Even positive natural tendencies must sometimes be restrained or redirected so that one's *avoda* is rooted in *bittul* rather than natural self-expression.

This is why, when one is faced with two possible approaches in serving Hashem, the guiding principle is clear: Choose the path that requires greater *bittul*. Through this approach, one aligns his *avoda* with the true Divine purpose.

This principle also applies to our yearning for Moshiach: It is natural to desire that Moshiach come to escape the difficulties of *golus*. However, Chazal teach us that Moshiach will come specifically when people stop focusing on their own personal benefit ("אין בן דוד בא... בהיסח הדעת").[3]

The Rambam explains that the Chachomim did not long for the days of Moshiach in order to rule over the nations or enjoy physical pleasures. Rather, they desired a time when the Yidden would be free from oppression and able to devote themselves fully to studying Torah *for Hashem's sake.*

Takeaway:

The true reason we long for Moshiach is not merely for personal relief—whether physical or spiritual—but because the Divine purpose of creation should be realized. Hashem desires that this world become a dwelling place for Him, and the complete fulfillment of this purpose will be revealed with the coming of Moshiach. Our task is therefore to serve Hashem with *bittul* and *mesirus nefesh*, ensuring that every aspect of our *avoda* contributes to this ultimate goal.

(Adapted from Sichas Shabbos Parshas Ekev — Chof Menachem-Av 5713)

1. Sanhedrin, 93b.
2. Pesachim, 50a.
3. Sanhedrin, 97a

לעילוי נשמת
ר' **מנחם זאב** בן ר' פנחס ע"ה **הרמן**
נלב"ע **כ"ה אלול ה'תשנ"ט**

ולעילוי נשמת זוגתו
מרת **חי' ריסא** בת ר' מרדכי ע"ה
נלב"ע **יום א' דחג הסוכות ה'תשפ"ב**
ת.נ.צ.ב.ה'

נדפס ע"י
משפחתם שיחיו

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

Not Losing Sight

In an address to the girls of Camp Emunah upon their return from the summer trip of 5739,[1] the Rebbe spoke about the importance of lighting Shabbos and Yom Tov candles, and how their lights have the power to illuminate the whole week, and the whole year, ahead.

The Rebbe also mentioned the practice that women and girls give tzedakah before lighting candles.

While editing the sicha for publishing, the Rebbe added the following note (after marking the matter "מהיר—Urgent"):

להוסיף הערה (במקום המתאים) באותיות **מודגשות**

Insert a footnote (in the appropriate place), in **bold** letters.

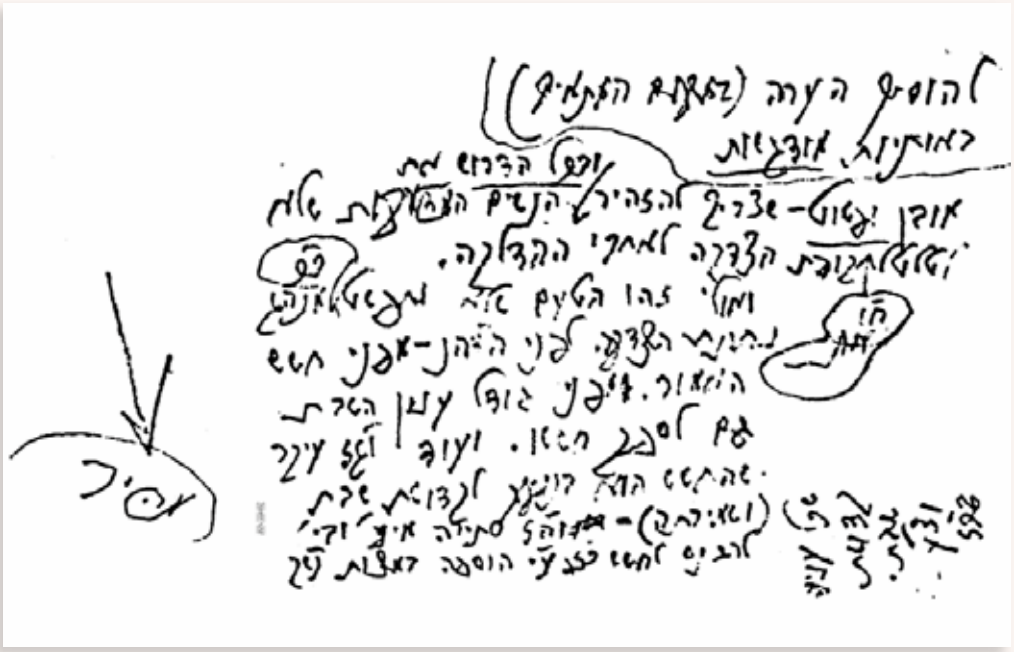
מובן **ופשוט** – שצריך להזהיר **וככל הדרוש** את הנשים המדליקות שלא לטלטל ח"ו את קופת הצדקה לאחרי ההדלקה.

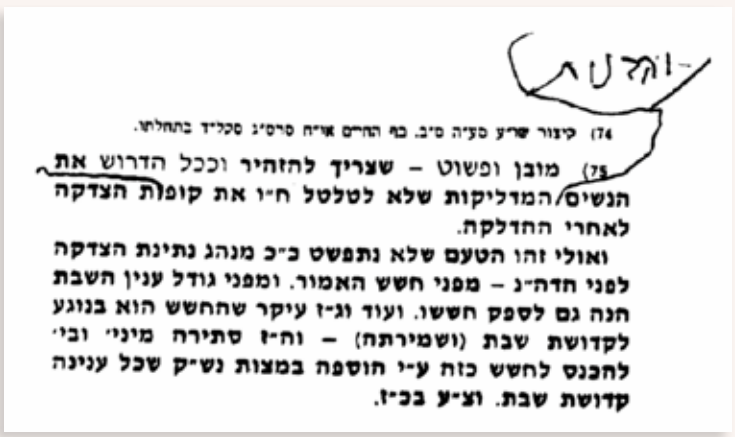
It is clear **and obvious** that the women who are lighting must be **adequately** cautioned not to move the tzedakah box, *chas v'shalom* after lighting [the candles].

This may also be the reason why the practice of giving tzedakah before lighting candles didn't spread so widely—due to the aforementioned concern. Being that Shabbos is so great a matter, they were concerned even over a possible [desecration of Shabbos, and thus reluctant to institute this practice in all places].

ואולי זהו הטעם שלא נתפשט כ"כ מנהג נתינת הצדקה לפני הדה"נ – מפני חשש האמור. ומפני גודל ענין השבת גם לספק חששו. ועוד וג"ז עיקר שהחשש הוא בנוגע לקדושת

Also—and this too is an essential point—the concern is for upholding the sanctity of Shabbos (and guarding [against its





74) כיצור שר"ע סע"ה ס"ב. בפ' החרים אר"ח סרס"ג סקכ"ד בתחלתו.

75) מובן ופשוט – **שצריך להזהיר** וככל הדרוש **את הנשים/המדליקות שלא לטלטל ח"ו את קופות הצדקה לאחרי החדלקה.**

ואולי זהו הטעם שלא נתפשט כ"כ מנהג נתינת הצדקה לפני חדה"נ – מפני חשש האמור. ומפני גודל ענין השבת חנה גם לספק חששו. ועוד וג"ז עיקר שחחשש הוא בנוגע לקדושת שבת (ושמירתה) – וה"ז סתירה מיני' וביי' להכנס לחשש כזה ע"י הוספה במצות נש"ק שכל עניינה קדושת שבת. וצ"ע בכ"ז.

desecration])—it would be paradoxical to ignore this concern by enhancing the mitzvah of Shabbos candles [by giving tzedakah at a time when there is a chance that someone will inadvertently move the tzedakah box on Shabbos], when the very idea [of Shabbos candles] is about the holiness of Shabbos.

This whole matter requires further analysis.

שבת (ושמירתה) – וה"ז סתירה מיני' וביי' להכנס לחשש כזה ע"י הוספה במצות נש"ק שכל ענינה קדושת שבת. וצ"ע בכ"ז.

When the Rebbe edited the text a second time, he added:

[The women] and girls [who light Shabbos candles…][2]

[הנשים] והבנות [המדליקות]

1. Published in Likkutei Sichos vol. 24, pp. 290–300.

2. Footnote is published on p. 298, fn. 75. Ksav Yad Kodesh first published in Tzaddik Lamelech vol. 6, pp. 198–199.



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

•

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

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

Wonder of Wonders

ELUL 5751

The month of Elul in this Year of Wonders was packed with non-stop activity. Summer winds down, and a new year is about to set in. The spirit of Tishrei is felt in the air as thousands of guests arrive from all over the world to celebrate the Yomim Tovim with the Rebbe. Tragic disturbances in the neighborhood leave the community reeling. And through it all, everyday life with the Rebbe—with all the excitement that entails—continues in full swing. It would be impossible to include everything in a month like that. Let us nevertheless try...

COMPILED BY: **RABBI YANKY BELL**

WRITTEN BY: **RABBI MENDEL JACOBS**

Our Novi

The first Shabbos of the month is Parshas Shoftim, and the Rebbe leads a most fascinating farbrengen filled with exceptional lessons.

"The lesson from the Parsha is," the Rebbe explained, "that we need to listen to the *Shoftim* of our time, especially the *Nevi'im* of our time, especially someone about whom the Rebbe, *nessi doreinu*, testified, making clear that he is a *novi*."

Following this *sicha*, the Chassidim sang "*Yechi adoneinu moreinu v'rabeinu*" with great enthusiasm, and the Rebbe encouraged the singing for a long time with both hands.

On the next Shabbos, Parshas Ki Seitzei, the Rebbe spoke on marriage, since the day before, 13 Elul, marked the Frierdiker Rebbe's wedding anniversary.

"The Hebrew word for marriage is '*nissuin*', the Rebbe explained, "which comes from the same root as 'uplifting'. The *possuk* says that Moshiach will be *'nissa v'gava me'od*'—uplifted very high. Each and every Yid has a spark of Moshiach within, and the way to reveal that spark is by connecting with the *nossi hador*, the Moshiach of our generation…"

Later in the farbrengen, the Rebbe reminded everyone that, standing thirty days before the Yom Tov of Sukkos, it's important to begin all the necessary preparations.

Shabbos Selichos

The next week, Shabbos Parshas Ki Savo, the Rebbe spoke about the fact that Selichos would begin later that evening, and that this year, the days of Selichos include two Shabbosos. Some years we recite Selichos for only four days, and of course that's enough to bring about Hashem's forgiveness without a doubt. Nevertheless, when we say Selichos for longer, it brings us to even higher levels. This is especially true according to the Sefardic custom, to say Selichos throughout the month of Elul and Aseres Yemei Teshuva—though this is not the Chabad custom.

At the end of the farbrengen, after the Rebbe gave out bottles of *mashke* for events happening in the coming week, the Rebbe turned to Rabbi Leibel Groner and asked, "Where is your son? Tonight he's celebrating Sheva Brachos! May it be in a good and auspicious hour."

The Rebbe then called over the *chosson*, Aharon Groner, and gave him *l'chaim* and a bottle of *mashke*.

The Last Shabbos

The final Shabbos of the year served as a "goodbye" to the wondrous year of *Arenu Niflaos*. It was the longest farbrengen of the year—lasting more than three hours—and was filled with incredible moments.



AFTER MAARIV ON 13 ELUL, THE REBBE SPEAKS ON INCREASING JOY.

Only two days before Rosh Hashanah, the Yom Tov atmosphere was already palpable.

The Rebbe spoke on the theme of *"Atem Nitzavim Hayom,"* stating that every Jew stands tall at this time of year, as powerful as a king, "*nitzav melech,*" and must not be intimidated by any external disturbances.

Once again, the Rebbe reminded the crowd to step up their efforts in preparation for the Yomim Tovim: helping fellow Jews with the necessary provisions and learning the *halachos* pertinent to this time of year. Additionally, the Rebbe called upon everyone to study the *halachos* of Moshiach in preparation for his imminent arrival.

This coming year is referred to as *'Shnas Niflaos Bakol'*—a year of wonders in all [aspects]," the Rebbe declared. "This means that every single moment of the year will be filled with wonders; the wonders of Moshiach's coming…"

Ever-Flowing Fountain

One of the most distinctive features of this month is that, in addition to these farbrengens, the Rebbe delivered multiple weekday *sichos* after Mincha or Maariv, and on other occasions.

Again, it would be impossible to go through everything the Rebbe said. The Rebbe communicated some of the most incredible ideas about the imminent *geulah* and dozens of other topics—and of course it's important to study all these *sichos*, since they were subsequently published.

Nevertheless, let's attempt to highlight at least some points:

He's Already Been Revealed

On Monday, 9 Elul, a car driven by a chossid (who was following the Rebbe's car on the way back from the Ohel) accidentally struck and killed a young child from the Black community of Crown Heights.

This resulted in a horrific anti-Jewish pogrom that terrorized the Jewish community.

That night, Yankel Rosenbaum, a *bochur* from Australia, walking innocently down Brooklyn Avenue, was murdered when a mob of rioters stabbed him mercilessly. He was immediately taken to the hospital where he tragically passed away.

The wound to the entire community was searing; the atmosphere was tense and frightening.

On Tuesday, 10 Elul, the Rebbe visited the Ohel once again, and upon his return, the Rebbe davened Mincha and Maariv with a small crowd in the shul.

Then the Rebbe indicated that he would say a *sicha*, and suddenly the shul filled up with Chassidim. Everyone was eagerly anticipating what the Rebbe would say, and how, or if, he would address the current situation.

The Rebbe began by saying that "It is our custom to connect everything with *nessi doreinu*," explaining that this week we celebrate the wedding anniversary of the Frierdiker Rebbe. This continued with a discussion about the importance of *simcha*, connected to the Frierdiker Rebbe's second name—Yitzchok.

"Some people might ask," the Rebbe said, "How can we have joy while still in *galus*? Halacha dictates that it's forbidden to have full joy before Moshiach comes. The *possuk* says '*Az yimalei s'chok pinu*'—that only *then*, after Moshiach comes, can we have complete joy."

To answer this question, the Rebbe said that this certainly does not apply to us, since the *possuk* is only talking about before Moshiach is revealed. In our time, however, since *Nessi Doreinu* was the Moshiach of our generation, and he has already been fully revealed, it is certainly permissible to rejoice in every way.

Later, the Rebbe again mentioned all the amazing miracles that occurred over the past year, which will



THE REBBE RETURNS FROM THE OHEL UNDER POLICE PROTECTION, 12 ELUL.



FOLLOWING THE REBBE'S SICHA, AN URGENT GATHERING TOOK PLACE AT 770 WHERE COMMUNITY ACTIVISTS AND MEMBERS OF THE POLICE ADDRESS THE DEVELOPING SITUATION IN CROWN HEIGHTS.

culminate in Hashem reassuring His children that they need not be afraid, as their complete redemption is at hand.

Hearing the Rebbe's words, the crowd felt much more at ease.

Two nights later, on Thursday evening, the night of 13 Elul, the Rebbe addressed the crowd again. This date marks the Frierdiker Rebbe's anniversary, and the Rebbe called on everyone to increase the joy at weddings and joyous occasions in general.





THE REBBE SPEAKS ON THE NIGHT OF 27 ELUL.

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THE REBBE PARTICIPATES IN THE FUNERAL PROCESSION OF REB YOSEF NEMOTIN.

On 15 Elul, the day Tomchei Temimim was founded in Lubavitch, the Rebbe again delivered a *sicha*, calling on everyone to model their own homes after Tomchei Temimim.

On Monday evening, 23 Elul—the third night of Selichos—the Rebbe said a special *sicha*, explaining that the Rabbeim had a unique affinity for this date, and the Frierdiker Rebbe often delivered Chassidus on it. "Everyone will certainly take some time throughout this 24-hour period to learn at least some of those *maamarim*," the Rebbe added.

The Rebbe also instructed that the joyous farbrengens should be held, to the point of "*ad d'lo yada*," albeit with some limitations, "since, after all, it's not Purim…"

The slew of *sichos* continued almost until Rosh Hashanah. In each, the Rebbe continued to share incredible Torah insights and bestow beautiful *brachos* as the new year approached.

On the night of 27 Elul, the Rebbe explained that, standing almost at the end of the month of Elul and after so many days of Selichos, we can rest assured that everyone is already guaranteed a favorable outcome from Hashem's judgment. The only *teshuvah* that we still must perform is the highest form; *teshuvah i'laa*.

Reb Yosef Nemotin

This month also included several other unique occurrences:

On Sunday, 15 Elul, the Rebbe participated in the funeral procession of Reb Yosef Nemotin, a special chossid who had the privilege of serving the Rebbe's father, Harav Levi Yitzchok, during the final period of his life in Alma-Ata. In 5739, Reb Yosef managed to leave the Soviet Union and settled in Crown Heights. In appreciation for everything Reb Yosef had done, the Rebbe would show him much affection and give him special *kiruvim*.

At 1:05 p.m., the Rebbe emerged from the door near the driveway of 770 and followed closely behind the casket down Eastern Parkway, crossing Kingston Avenue and waiting there until the entire procession had left for the cemetery.

On Tuesday, 17 Elul, the campers of Camp Gan Yisroel and Camp Emuna of New York returned to Crown Heights and joined Mincha with the Rebbe.

Due to recent events in the neighborhood, several TV crew members were present, and it seemed the Rebbe used the opportunity to spread a message to a broader audience (much as he would during the televised farbrengens in prior years). Speaking about the importance of tzedakah, the Rebbe mentioned that one should not make a distinction between a Jew and a non-Jew when helping another person in need. The Rebbe also spoke about the need to influence all inhabitants of the world in the divine ways of justice and kindness, and how even on the currency of the United States, our trust in Hashem is proclaimed.





RALLY FOR RETURNING CAMPERS, 17 ELUL.

Then the Rebbe distributed coins to the children through the head counselors. The first one was Yossi Hodakov, head counselor of Gan Yisroel—Parksville. He handed the Rebbe a packet of letters that the campers had written to the Rebbe, and the Rebbe said: "Thank you. May it be an illuminated year for all."

Handing him packets of dimes, the Rebbe said to Yossi, "Give three to each one," then added with a smile: "and take for yourself as well!"

Later in the month, on 24 Elul, the Rebbe also addressed the women ahead of Rosh Hashanah, concluding with distributing dollars and wishing them all, "in the singular form: *L'shana tova tikaseivi v'seichaseimi*…"

Wonders in Russia

On 4 Elul, two of the Rebbe's shluchim to Russia who were working on redeeming the *seforim* of the Rabbeim—Rabbi Shlomo Cunin and Rabbi Yosef Aharonov—came to New York, bringing the case file of the Rebbe's father, Harav Levi Yitzchok. It included transcripts of his interrogation, along with his holy signature. After Maariv, the two of them waited in Gan Eden Hatachton holding the file, and as the Rebbe entered, he motioned for them to follow him into his holy room.

The Rebbe was very happy to receive the file and thanked them profusely for their efforts. The Rebbe also asked them about Dr. Veronika Irina-Kogan, a Moscow attorney who was working tirelessly on retrieving the captured *seforim*. "This is the mitzvah of *pidyon shvuyim*. Every moment is precious," the Rebbe urged them. "The next 'file' [the Rebbe used the English word] should come together with Moshiach!"



THE REBBE HANDS YOSSI HODAKOV PACKETS OF DIMES FOR THE CHILDREN.



THE REBBE EXITS THE SHUL AFTER ADDRESSING THE WOMEN, 24 ELUL.

A few days later, chaos erupted within the Soviet government. The path towards openness and freedom was challenged by a group of Communist Party loyalists, who attempted to overthrow Gorbachev's government. Tanks rolled through Moscow, and it seemed like a period of instability was about to begin.

Throughout Russia, hundreds of Chabad *bochurim* and *shluchim* were busy coordinating summer camps and educational programs, and the uncertainty of the situation was quite unsettling. Many turned to the Rebbe asking what to do next. The Rebbe replied:

בתמהון **הכי גדול** קבלתי **השאלה** – כפשוט ימשיכו בכל התכניות שלהם, כולל הקייטנות עד גמירא כמתוכנן. וה' יצליחם ויבשרו טוב. אזכיר על הציון.

"With the **greatest** shock I received this question. Obviously, they must continue with all their programs, including the day camps, till the end, as planned. May Hashem grant them success, and may they report good news. I will mention this at the Ohel."

The Rebbe's response was widely publicized, and his reassuring words calmed the raw nerves. Indeed, several days later, the matter was resolved, and stability returned.

Selichos

As the new year approached, Rosh Hashanah could be felt in the air. On Motzei Shabbos Ki Savo at 1:05 a.m., the Rebbe entered the shul for Selichos.

In contrast to his usual custom, this time the Rebbe encouraged the singing while he walked to his place.

The legendary *chazzan*, Rabbi Yosef Wineberg, led the congregation in heartfelt prayer.

At around 1:50 a.m., after Selichos concluded, the Rebbe stood at the door of his room and began receiving *panim* from everyone, wishing each person a "*Shana tova umisuka.*"

Niflaos Bakol

The final day of the Year of Wonders is packed with activity.

Sunday, 29 Elul—Erev Rosh Hashanah.

The Rebbe begins the day with Selichos at 8:35. Upon conclusion, the *gabbai* announced that Shacharis will begin "when we're ready…"



AFTER DESCENDING FROM THE PLATFORM, THE REBBE CONTINUES THE SICHA.

At 11:05 a.m., the Rebbe leaves for the mikvah, then joins the congregation for Shacharis at 12:30 p.m.

After Shacharis, a group of 10 elder Chassidim and *rabbanim* sit down on the Rebbe's platform as the Rebbe performs *Hataras Nedarim*, reading from enlarged copies of the text.

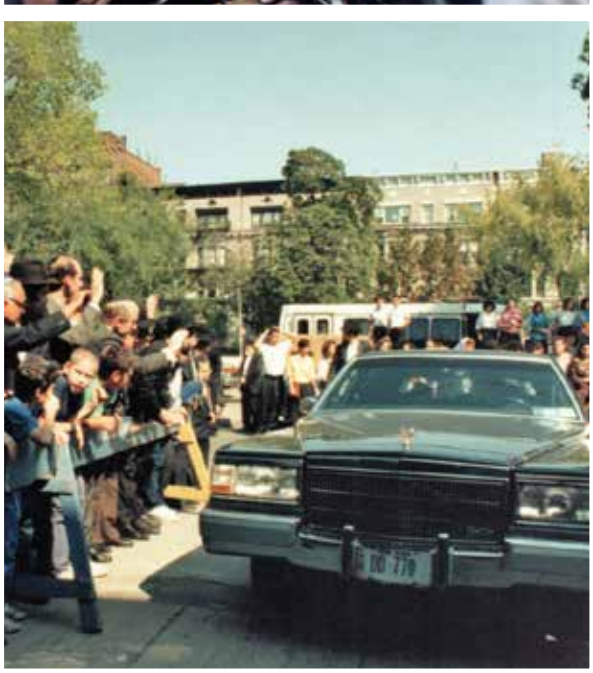
When the Rebbe finished, he wished them all a "*Ksiva v'chasima tova,*" adding *brachos* for the imminent *geulah*, and began descending the stairs of the platform. Suddenly, the Rebbe began to speak again!

"We just mentioned Moshiach's coming," the Rebbe continued, "which is especially pertinent to the new year we are now entering…"

The Rebbe then expounded on the special qualities of the coming year—5752.

Shortly after Shacharis, the Rebbe received *panim* again from anyone who had not yet given, while another line formed outside for the usual Sunday dollars.

After the line for *panim* finished, the Rebbe was given the *pan klali* on behalf of all the Chassidim. The Rebbe read through some of it, then responded with a lengthy



DEPARTING FOR THE OHEL, EREV ROSH HASHANAH.

bracha lasting almost 20 minutes.

At 3:00 p.m., the Rebbe emerged once again from his room; this time to give out dollars. The dollars line passed fairly quickly; most people did not converse with the Rebbe as they usually would.

At around 3:45 p.m., the Rebbe left for the Ohel.

The Rebbe returned from the Ohel about five minutes after *licht tzinden*, and soon afterward entered the small *zal* for Mincha.

Before Mincha was over, the year of *Arenu Nifla'os* came to a close, ushering in the year of *T'hei Shnas Nifla'os Bakol*.



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THE REBBE SPEAKS WITH ZALMAN SHECHTER, 8 ELUL.



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MAYOR DINKINS MEETING WITH THE REBBE ABOUT THE CROWN HEIGHTS RIOTS, 15 ELUL.

Dollars

"SEND ME AN INVITATION"

Some of the interesting encounters with the Rebbe during this month of Elul at dollars:

On Sunday, 1 Elul, a group of guests from Montreal passed by Rabbi Zushe Zilberstein. When Rabbi Zilberstein presented the Rebbe with a packet of letters from members of the group, the Rebbe said: "They should not all wait for [written] answers from me. I will mention them all at the Ohel. May they all share good news; a *shana tova umisuka*."

An individual asked the Rebbe for a *bracha* for a shidduch, and the Rebbe blessed him. As the man started to walk away, the Rebbe said, "Send me an invitation to the wedding!"

Another individual wished the Rebbe good health and that we should soon greet Moshiach with the Rebbe at our lead.

The Rebbe responded, "Amen," and added: "But it must be right away! There's no more time to wait!"

GOOD CHANGES

On Sunday, 8 Elul, Rabbi Zalman Chanin introduced a Brazilian Jew who had sponsored the printing of Sefer Hamaamarim Melukat vol. 4.

The Rebbe said: "I have a full library of all the *seforim* that you published! May you share good news, with much success, with happiness, and a good new year."

The man then asked the Rebbe if he should expand his business ventures in Brazil, and the Rebbe replied:

"Yes, now is a good time, due to the revolution and other changes happening there. The current changes in Brazil will hopefully help to better your *parnassa*."

The man wished the Rebbe much *nachas* from all his Chassidim and all Jews, and the Rebbe added, "Including you!"

When Zalman Shechter passed by, the Rebbe said: "I haven't seen you in a long time! You're a Kohen, you will certainly participate in '*duchenen*'. Rosh Hashanah is coming, then a whole month [of Yomim Tovim]. Make sure to *duchen*, and 'I [Hashem] will bless them [the Kohanim]'."

"ONLY ONE SIDE"

On Sunday, 15 Elul, Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky introduced a New York Times reporter to the Rebbe, and the Rebbe said: "May you always have good news to report about the population of New York, me included…"

To a female photographer who accompanied them,

the Rebbe said: "May you always have good pictures of all of New York."

She asked the Rebbe for *bracha* for a *shidduch*, and the Rebbe gave her an additional dollar, saying: "Send me an invitation to your wedding…"

ꕥ

The Mayor of New York City, Mr. David Dinkins, visited the Rebbe in response to the recent riots in Crown Heights.

"It's good to see you again," he told the Rebbe.

"May G-d Almighty bless you to be successful," the Rebbe replied, "to go from strength to strength, with good health and good intentions. May you have many blessings from G-d Almighty."

The Mayor mentioned that last time, the Rebbe's blessing had helped him very much [when he was elected], and the Rebbe said: "May G-d Almighty bless you to have good news, and to use all your influence in a quiet atmosphere and with much success."

"Well, thank you," said the Mayor. "I'm confident that with the good people of all of our communities…"

"From both sides," the Rebbe added.

"From both sides," the Mayor agreed. "We will come together and do what is necessary to protect everyone."

The Rebbe added: "And to forget that there are 'both sides'; it is one side, one people, united by the management of New York City…"

PEACE IN THE WORLD

On Sunday, 22 Elul, Rabbi Shea Hecht introduced Ms. Janice Robertson to the Rebbe, saying that she was one of the leaders of the Black community trying to mend what's going on now in Crown Heights.

The Rebbe wished her: "May G-d Almighty bless you to go from strength to strength in all matters of goodness for the benefit of all the population of Crown Heights, and Brooklyn in general, and even for the whole city of New York. Here is a double portion of benediction, a double portion of charity, as a symbolic gesture."

The Rebbe then blessed her son, who said that he helps his mother in her endeavors.

Ms. Robertson told the Rebbe that she came because "I think I possess the strength of Esther. I also have the faithfulness and the loyalty of Ruth. There are people that want to mutually destroy both the Black and the Jewish communities. I do need your blessing to help us all to stop this…"

She asked the Rebbe to pray for her, and the Rebbe asked for her name and her father's name.

The Rebbe then gave her another two dollars, saying



GREETING A CHOSSON AND KALLAH FOLLOWING THEIR CHUPPAH, 15 ELUL,

she should give to charity for herself, and for her parents, for having "raised a daughter like you, who now helps all the people around us, and around you, and all the people of New York. By bringing more peace to one part of New York, it automatically increases a measure of peace in all of New York, and after that, in all the United States. May G-d Almighty bless that there be peace in all the nations of the world..."

A Year of Wonders

We conclude with a beautiful response from the Rebbe to a shliach who wrote about being overwhelmed by many debts:

כו"כ שנים (עשיריות) עוסק בכהנ"ל ומצליח, ובלשונו "מלומד בנסים", ודווקא בשנת ה'תשא"נ כותב מכ' בתוכן היפך כהנ"ל! ובוודאי יחזור לרגילותו ויהי' גם להבא מלומד בנסים וכו' וכו' אזכיר עה"צ

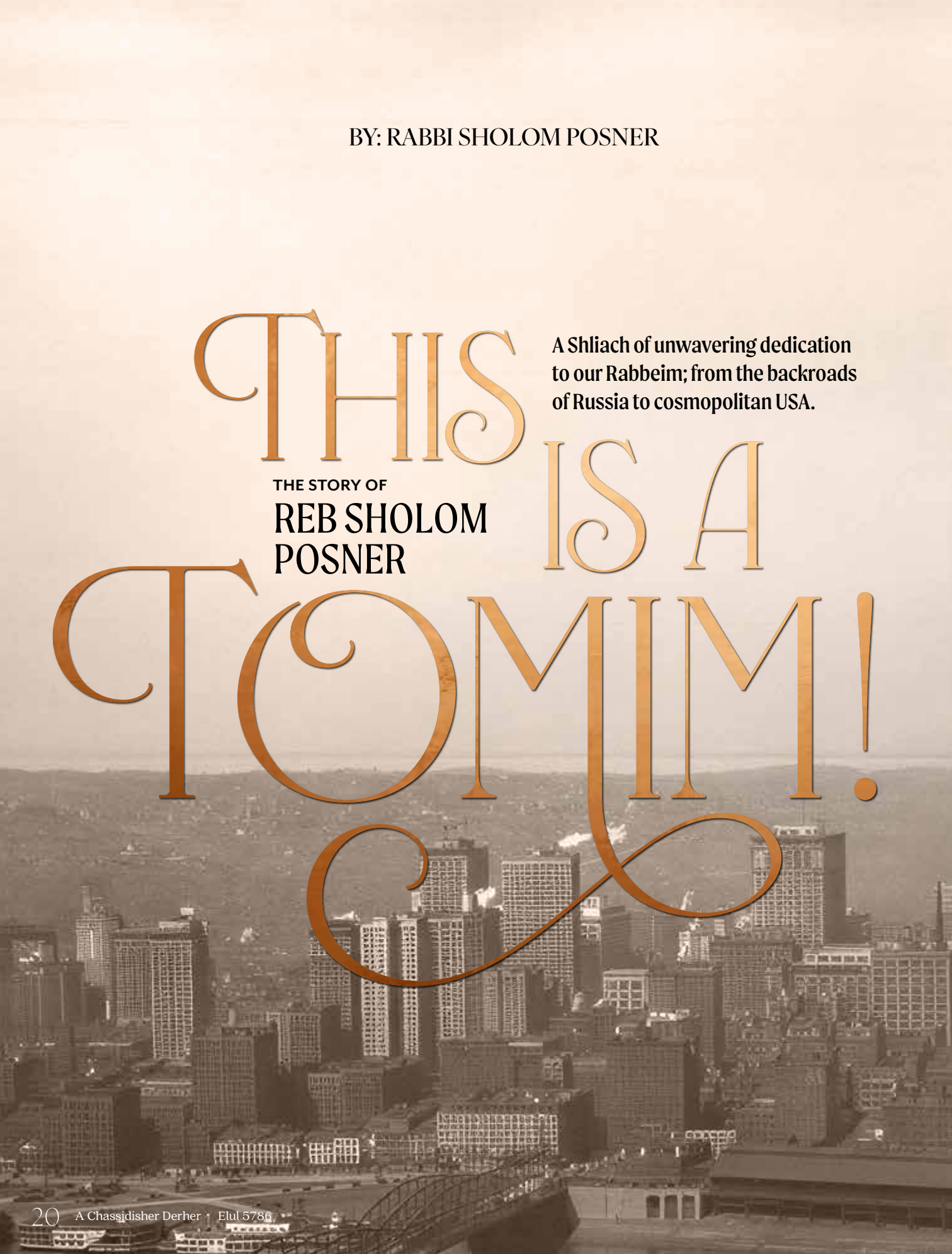
"For many years (decades) you've been involved in the above [holy work] and were successful; in your own words, [you were] 'regularly accustomed to miracles', and specifically now, in the year of **5751** [a year of wonders] you write a letter with its content contrary to the above! You will certainly return to your routine of being **accustomed to miracles** in the future as well, etc. etc. I will mention this at the Ohel." ✝

BY: RABBI SHOLOM POSNER

This is a Tomim!

THE STORY OF
REB SHOLOM POSNER

A Shliach of unwavering dedication to our Rabbeim; from the backroads of Russia to cosmopolitan USA.



לזכות
החתן הרה"ת ר' **יחיאל מיכל** שיחי' **גאלדמאן**
והכלה המהוללה מרת **חי' מושקא** שתחי' **גרינבערג**
לרגל נישואיהם בשעטומ"צ
כ"א אלול ה'תשפ"ו

נדפס ע"י הוריהם
הרה"ת ר' **יוחנן** וזוגתו מרת **לאה**
ומשפחתם שיחיו **גאלדמאן**



In 5728, the Pittsburgh section of the National Council of Jewish Women began a monumental project to interview immigrants from Eastern Europe so their experiences could be recorded for posterity. In 5734, they got to interview a figure who had become a legend in the Pittsburgh Jewish community: Rabbi Sholom Posner.

Throughout the interview, one can hear his signature understated manner of explaining things pertaining to himself. But one thing stands out.

"Before everything, I told you last time that I have to make for you a statement, do you remember?" Asks Rabbi Posner in his heavily accented English, *"The statement I want to make is this: Everything that you see in me good—for instance the characteristic, the work in the Yeshivah, and my strength in some things without any compromising, this is all because of the training in Lubavitch and by the Rebbe… All the bad things, this is because they didn't succeed to change me altogether…* [At this point, the interviewer challenged the claim that Rabbi Posner had any bad qualities.] *Even to stay at this job [through] the hardships I [went]... through, without the strength from the Rebbe I wouldn't stand it…"*

What extraordinary struggles did he endure in his shlichus? How did he acquire such a sterling reputation among the entirety of the Pittsburgh Jewish community? What was the training and guidance from Lubavitch and the Rebbe to which he attributed all his qualities? For that matter, to which Rebbe was he referring? By tracing his biography from the beginning, this statement will become ever more poignant and relevant to understanding who Reb Sholom Posner was and the unique lessons his life teaches.

5728-1968, 5734-1974

Training Grounds

Reb Sholom grew up in the town of Baturin in the Chernigev province. The eldest child of an ordinary family, he attended Cheder for most of the day while spending a few hours with a tutor learning subjects, such as arithmetic and Russian, which his father felt were necessary. Although his family had a background in Chabad (they traced their lineage to a brother of the Alter Rebbe), his true journey in Chassidus would begin at eleven years old.

A flourishing yeshiva sprouted in the nearby city of Rommenn, under the leadership of Reb Itche der Masmid. When Reb Sholom's family moved there, he was enrolled. After three years of study and growth under Reb Itche's guidance, he was sent, like many of his peers, to continue in the central branch of Tomchei Temimim in Lubavitch.

Although just shy of his fourteenth birthday, and notwithstanding the rigorous entrance examination, Sholom *Rommener,* as he was now known, was admitted with no investigation into his character and academics. The fact that Reb Itche had sent him was proof enough that he was worthy of being a *Tomim*.

His arrival was not at an opportune time. World War I had already been devastating Europe for a year's time, and the German army was advancing through Russia. Sholom experienced little more than Tishrei in Lubavitch before the Rebbe Rashab left forever—refusing to live under German rule.

In 5677, Sholom fell ill and went home to Rommenn to recuperate. During this time, the Yeshiva's situation deteriorated further, and all of the *bochurim* were transferred to Kremenchug. Despite the dangers, Sholom—now recovered—joined a group of *bochurim* traveling through his city to reestablish the yeshiva in Kremenchug.

His decision came with significant risk. As war ravaged Russia, violent gangs abounded, and food was scarce. It wasn't uncommon for a *bochur* to temporarily lose vision as a result of malnutrition. Under such conditions, the *bochurim* could not properly continue their studies, yet they stayed because they knew that if they left, the yeshiva would have even greater difficulty to build anew. Their *mesirus nefesh* ensured the continuation of Tomchei Temimim.

The dire conditions soon led to a viral epidemic of the dreaded typhus disease. Hospitals became places for patients to die, so *bochurim* who fell ill were nursed and cared for by their friends. Even decades later, Reb Sholom would still choke up when remembering his friends who had not survived.

Sholom was not spared either, and soon was ill himself. Patients would often fall delirious as a result of fever. But while most patients would ramble meaningless sentences, Sholom's mouth unceasingly reviewed the *maamarim* of *Hemshech Samach Vav*.

Their conditions were greatly improved once the Yeshiva was moved to Rostov in the summer of 5680. Food was more plentiful, and the proximity to the river meant an unlimited supply of fresh fish. But the short-lived respite was brutally ended by Bolshevik oppression just getting underway. Learning Torah was officially legal, but any formal institution supporting it was forbidden, and the Yeshiva was forced to continue moving.

The Ceitlin Family

Chaya Ceitlin found herself at a crossroads in 5685. Russian Jewry was on a complex journey through ideas and practices, and the Ceitlin family was a microcosm of that struggle.

Avraham Chaim—the oldest—traded being a *shochet* in Siberia for the Zionist vision of building a Jewish homeland in Eretz Yisroel. Elka—the eldest sister—married a non-observant Jew against her father's protests. They lived in Odessa, the unofficial capital of secular-minded Jewry.

Another brother, Aharon Leizer, took a different route



REB CHATCHE FEIGEN WITH HIS FAMILY.

in life. He was among the first *Temimim* in Lubavitch and his chassidisher enthusiasm made its impact on his Litvisher family.

Soshe spent her early adulthood in Odessa. She was readily accepted into Odessa culture and was quite popular, but something within her changed. She saw the secular way of life, but she grew disgusted by it and was drawn to return to the shtetl. This spirit of "rebellion" led her to ask the Rebbe Rashab—through her brother—for a *shidduch* with the most scrupulously observant young man, "*der frimster bochur*"! Her request was fulfilled, and she married Reb Chatche Feigin—later the Frierdiker Rebbe's secretary and *mashgiach* of Tomchei Temimim in Rostov.

Chaya—the youngest—and her remaining siblings now had various paths to choose from within their own family. At first toggling between traditional Yiddishkeit and the secular culture of Odessa, she eventually chose the upright path. Her brother-in-law, Reb Catche Feigin, helped find her shidduch from the yeshiva where he was the *mashgiach*; he introduced her to Sholom Rommener.

Chaya was impressed by his wisdom and character. He was equally satisfied with the *shidduch*, and with the Frierdiker Rebbe's *bracha* and *haskama*, they were engaged.

They looked forward to building their home in the Frierdiker Rebbe's proximity. The Frierdiker Rebbe was everything to Reb Sholom, and his *kallah* had at this point fully adopted his enthusiasm. However, a brutal tragedy dimmed their joy.

Reb Itche Zalman—the chosson's father—was taking a ferry on his way home from a trip. Monarchist terrorists attacked the boat and killed all the Jewish passengers. Reb Sholom waited three days at the riverbank till his father's lifeless body was washed ashore—his Tallis stuffed down his throat.

They could not build a home in land stained with this traumatic experience. With the Frierdiker Rebbe's agreement, they decided to move to Eretz Yisroel and marry there.

The Chalutz

Immigration to Eretz Yisroel was triply blocked for Reb Sholom; he needed a passport, permission to leave Russia, and a British visa to enter Eretz Yisroel. A visa would be arranged by Avraham Chaim—Mrs. Posner's brother—as he arranged visas for the rest of his family, but a passport was a local issue. Reb Sholom, with his beard and long jacket, would certainly receive no sympathy from a Soviet commissar, so Mrs. Posner took responsibility to negotiate for his passport. She worked tirelessly, trying one office after another until someone would take her case.

Soviet law required every home or building to maintain a register of its inhabitants, but Reb Sholom, who had spent all of Soviet history in illegal transit Yeshivas, was never registered anywhere. He now moved into his future mother-in-law's Gomel home, where he was registered, but the authorities were reluctant to ignore his shrouded past. They refused to issue a passport on suspicion that he had been involved in criminal activity. Mrs. Posner was not afraid to tell them the truth—her groom was a Yeshivah *bochur*, not a criminal—but her explanations

THE REBBE

When Reb Sholom recounted what it was like when the Rebbe Rashab recited Chassidus, it was difficult to follow. It went something like this: "The *Rebbe* would sit here, and the *Rebbe* would sit across from him…". "Which Rebbe?" His listeners would ask, but his innocent reply was, "The Rebbe" not understanding the question.

In his lifetime, he was *mekushar* to three of our Rebbeim, but each was simply "the Rebbe." No further titles were necessary nor appropriate; in his eyes, they were all one.

With such a view, he did not have a difficult transition from one Rebbe to another—there was no need to pledge allegiance to a **new** Rebbe. After Yud Shevat 5710, when they were discussing their need for the Rebbe to take on the *nesius*, his distraught daughter protested, "It's been so little time, how can you already be looking for a replacement?!" He gently explained to her, "It's not a replacement; it's a *hemshech*."

For the sake of clarity, this article uses the customary titles for each Rebbe.

were not accepted.

At last, she found a young commissar with a listening ear. "We are religious," she told him bravely. "We will never become communists. We have no future here, and communism will gain nothing from us." The man relented and issued Reb Sholom a passport without ever seeing him.

The impossible accomplished, all that now remained was to procure a visa. Within a short time, Reb Sholom arrived in Eretz Yisroel. He was penniless and had to live in Avraham Chaim's home as he worked to make some money. On a Friday morning, 6 Kislev 5686, they traveled from Balfuria—where Avraham Chaim lived—to Chaifa, where a *rav* married them. Their wedding 'guests' consisted of workers who the *rav* gathered, and the feast was virtually nonexistent. They returned to Balfuria that day and converted a ramshackle barn into their new home. But they were happy.

For *parnassa*, they could have joined the Kolel Toras Emes in Yerushalayim, but having just escaped from the Communist 'utopia', they were averse to anything that smelled of handouts. With limited employment options, Reb Sholom signed up for manual labor. He wasn't accustomed to the work, and the pay was dreadful, but still, they were happy.

His fellow workers—often antagonistic to Yiddishkeit—didn't usually interact with a *chassidisher yungerman* like Reb Sholom, but they came to respect him for his integrity and boundless Ahavas Yisroel. Subtly, they were also influenced by him. Reb Sholom noticed that the sight of his large woolen *tallis katan* could stop vulgar conversations, so he decided to wear them on top of his shirt while working. This led to an even deeper influence than he intended:

An angry teenage boy once approached Reb Sholom at work with the accusation, "Because of you, I davened today!" The boy had been lured to a kibbutz from his innocent youth in Poland, expecting an environment befitting Eretz Hakodesh. Instead, he found himself alone and harassed in his belief. They would snatch away his siddur each morning and throw it around. Eventually, the pressure got to him, and he stopped davening. His *tzitzis* and *peyos* went to the same place his siddur went, and he



JEWISH WORKERS CONSTRUCTING A ROAD IN ERETZ YISROEL IN THE 5680S. REB SHOLOM PERFORMED THIS TYPE OF LABOR FOR SOME TIME AFTER HIS WEDDING.



REB SHOLOM AT THE TIME OF HIS WEDDING.



THE YISHUV BALFURIA, WHERE THE POSNERS LIVED RIGHT AFTER THEIR MARRIAGE.

soon was 'one of them'. "Yesterday, I was driving by and saw a **young** man with *tzitzis* on top of his shirt—like in the '*alter heim*'. I came closer for a better look, and indeed I saw a *chalutz*, but with a beard and *peyos*! If you're not afraid to dress like that, I have no excuse to be afraid to daven," the boy concluded.

A Channel For Light

Special as his influence was, the Frierdiker Rebbe did not see this as Reb Sholom's potential. "Not for this purpose did I send you to Eretz Yisroel," the Frierdiker Rebbe wrote in response to Reb Sholom's first letter. The Rebbe also admonished the senior Chassidim for leaving a *Tomim* to suffer financially, especially one whose talents could be utilized.

In early Shevat 5686, the Frierdiker Rebbe advised Reb Shlomo Zalman Havlin of Yeshiva Toras Emes to hire Reb Sholom, noting his suitability to education, *"He knows the fundamentals of Tomchei Temimim… and is a good vessel through which will come the 'light which is good' to many, through orderly instruction."*[1]

The Frierdiker Rebbe asked Reb Ezriel Zelig Slonim to look out on his journeys for a yeshiva which could hire Reb Sholom because, *"Great blessing is in him and he is capable of accomplishing good in [matters of] learning, supervision, and guidance in yiras shamayim — [all with] wisdom and understanding."*[2]

The Frierdiker Rebbe also wrote to Reb Sholom that it would be best for him to emigrate to America, where his extended family lived. The arrangements were to be coordinated with Reb Yisroel Jacobson, who spearheaded the broader initiative of growing the ranks and impact of Agudas Chassidei Chabad in America.

All of Reb Sholom's extended family, including his grandfather and great-grandfather, lived in the U.S. and established strong foundations in the country. His great-uncle, Dr. Abraham Posner, arrived in 1885 and made his wealth through a new type of shoe he designed and manufactured named "Dr. Posner's Shoes for Kids." He helped his entire extended family come to America, and many of them became similarly successful entrepreneurs.

The single member of the four-generational family who wasn't enamored by the American dream was Itche Zalman—Reb Sholom's father. He visited America but found its culture hostile to Yiddishkeit. Children would throw snowballs or stones at him because he wore a beard. He prioritized his children's chinuch over material affluence and returned to Russia. His assessment was painfully correct—relatives of his own generation abandoned Torah observance, the next generation saw intermarriage—practically the only branch in the large family tree which remained true to Yiddishkeit is that of Reb Sholom. On the other hand, this decision was a great sacrifice on the part of Reb Itche Zalman; he ultimately lost his life to Russian anti-semitism.

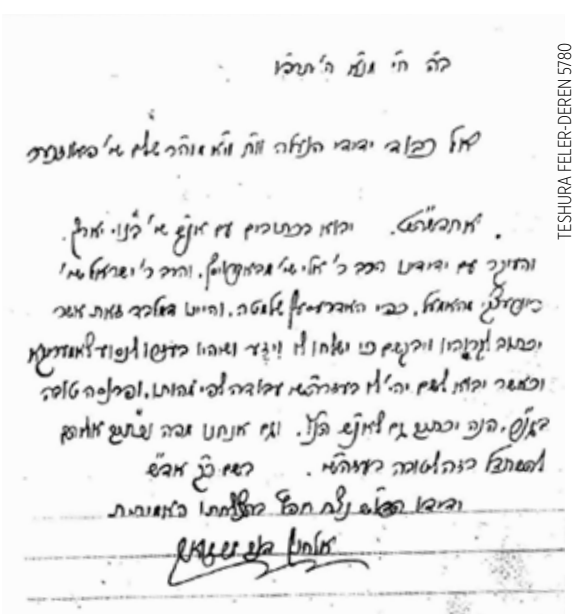
Given this history, Reb Sholom and his wife were apprehensive about moving to America. How could they raise their children (the first was on its way) in the "*treif-ene medina*" that his father gave his life to avoid? Despite their misgivings, they followed the Frierdiker Rebbe's instructions and reached out to his family and Rabbi Jacobson to initiate the American immigration process.

In the meantime, Reb Sholom was given a job at Toras Emes in Tel Aviv.

Another *melamed*—not a Lubavitcher—was already teaching in the Yeshiva and resented the new teacher. He felt that Reb Sholom had been hired to displace him. Reb Sholom wanted no part in *machlokes*, so he began searching for a new job.

A shochet was needed in Rishon L'tziyon, so Reb Sholom took up that post. He also gave private lessons because there was no yeshiva.

Around this time, Reb Sholom wrote to the Frierdiker



TESHURA FELER-DEREN 5780

IN THIS LETTER FROM 5686 TO REB SHOLOM LIVING IN ERETZ YISROEL, REB CHONYE MOROZOV, THE SECRETARY OF THE FRIERDIKER REBBE, GIVES INSTRUCTIONS REGARDING EMIGRATING TO THE UNITED STATES.

Rebbe that he would much prefer to serve as *klei kodesh* in Eretz Yisroel—despite the financial constraints involved—than to move to America. But the Frierdiker Rebbe reiterated that they should move to America with the assurance that he will be successful both physically and spiritually.[3]

Yet, the immigration process was tedious. Three years had gone by, and a visa was still not forthcoming. Reb Alter Simchovitch—the Mashpia in Toras Emes—traveled to the Frierdiker Rebbe in Europe for Tishrei 5689. While there, he asked on behalf of Reb Sholom whether the Frierdiker Rebbe would advise him to stay in Eretz Yisroel due to unforeseen delays in immigration. But the Frierdiker Rebbe said that he stood by his decision and that it was not up for discussion.

At this point, Reb Sholom was not as afraid of America. The *chinuch* in Rishon L'tziyon was no better—the mayor allowed no school other than the Zionist one—and they had no livelihood in Yerushalayim. After another year, the Posners received their visas.

Towards the end of their sojourn in Eretz Yisroel, they merited to be present for the Frierdiker Rebbe's visit in the summer of 5689. The Frierdiker Rebbe traveled throughout Eretz Yisroel to visit the *mekomos hakedoshim* and the Jewish community there. Reb Sholom wasn't going to waste his time shechting chickens when he could spend it with his Rebbe. So he paid another shochet (more than his own earnings) to take over his post, and followed the Frierdiker Rebbe.

Since he was hardly home, he didn't even know that his older son, Zalman, felt ill. Mrs. Posner sent a message through *Mazkirus* requesting a *bracha*, but Reb Sholom was not informed. At the conclusion of his trip, when the Frierdiker Rebbe was boarding the train, he turned to Reb Sholom and asked, "*Vos macht der yingel?*" (How's the boy doing?) Seeing Reb Sholom's puzzled expression, the Frierdiker Rebbe burst out laughing. Reb Sholom rushed home, anxious to know which son the Frierdiker Rebbe had referred to and what had happened to him.

The Frierdiker Rebbe continued to America. Reb Sholom followed a few months later, arriving on 15 Shevat 5690 with his wife and two sons — Zalman and Leibel.

Difficult Land

In America, they were welcomed by Reb Sholom's grandfather Zushe. They lived in his home for a few weeks until relatives helped them get an apartment. But they were desperate to be independent of anyone's kindness. At the same time, a *talmid* from Lubavitch, Reb Nota Zuber, was searching for a shochet for his community in Roselle, New Jersey. Reb Yisroel Jacobson made the connection and secured Reb Sholom the job. In addition to *shechita*, a nearby shul hired him as *baal kore* and *chazan*.

In New Jersey, they began to really feel the hardship of life in America. The culture was antagonistic to Yiddishkeit. Zalman and Leibel's yarmulkas were regularly snatched by boys double their age. Mrs. Posner felt overwhelmed. Fortunately, the Frierdiker Rebbe was still in America, and had just begun receiving women for *yechidus*.

In her *yechidus*, Mrs. Posner asked how she could possibly raise her children in such a country. The Frierdiker Rebbe laughed and replied that though it was a difficult country, *"Ir vet hobben gutte, frumme, chassidishe kinder."* That gave her much strength. She left knowing that everything was alright.



MRS. CHAYA POSNER WITH HER TWO OLDEST CHILDREN, ZALMAN AND LEIBEL, AT THE TIME OF THEIR EMIGRATION TO AMERICA.



THE MATZEIVA OF REB ZUSHE POSNER, REB SHOLOM'S GRANDFATHER.

The *shechita* job didn't last very long. Like in Tel Aviv, Reb Sholom realized that his job opportunity was embroiled in *machlokes*—this time with a previously hired shochet—and summarily resigned. But the shul members had grown fond of him and wanted him to stay. To that end, they gave him a loan to open a shop selling chicken and fish. The business wasn't very successful, and they just got by.

There was no Jewish school anywhere nearby. Zalman went to public school for first grade. Throughout the year, he often had to devise strategies to be excused from overtly Christian school projects. Public school was clearly not a viable option.

After a short attempt at establishing a proper cheder in New Jersey, the boys—ages eight and ten—were eventually sent to study at Yeshiva Torah Vadaas in New York.

Chicago

For eight years, they lived in New Jersey, eking out a living. They had two more children during this time: Kenny and Zushe. Their dire financial straits couldn't support their growing family, so it was little surprise that Reb Sholom accepted a different job when the opportunity arose.

Congregation B'nei Reuven, one of the oldest Chabad shuls in Chicago, offered Reb Sholom the job of *shamesh* in the summer of 5698. The Frierdiker Rebbe sent him a


RABBI I. SCHNEERSOHN
OF LUBAVITZ

יוסף יצחק שניאורסאהן
ליובאוויטש

IN THIS HEARTFELT LETTER, THE FRIERDIKER REBBE ENCOURAGES REB SHOLOM TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESCUE EFFORTS SAVING THE FRIERDIKER REBBE FROM WAR-TORN EUROPE, TO HELP PREPARE FOR HIS IMPENDING ARRIVAL IN THE UNITED STATES.

THE REBBE'S NESIUS

Immediately after the Frierdiker Rebbe's *levaya*, Reb Sholom went to the home of his *mechutan*—Reb Shlomo Aharon Kazarnosky. Rabbi Zushe Posner, a child at the time, recalled catching one line of their conversation, "*S'iz do a Rebbe,*" there is a Rebbe.

Reb Sholom was quick to accept the Rebbe (see sidebar The Rebbe). Before Yud Shevat, Reb Sholom would sit across from the Rebbe in 770 and speak with him on all sorts of topics. After Yud Shevat, such a relationship was inappropriate. In fact, people recall Reb Sholom standing among the younger Chassidim at the Rebbe's farbrengens — he didn't want to sit in the Rebbe's presence.

A few letters in the Rebbe's Igros indicate that Reb Sholom wrote to the Rebbe about accepting the *nesius*. In one of them, the Rebbe hand-wrote a response which is especially relevant to us, "[Regarding] your question that it is now impossible to ask [the Frierdiker Rebbe] when there is doubt [as to what is proper] behavior: if you will stand strong in your *hiskashrus* to him, without paying heed to the *yetzer hara*'s schemes, and send the question to the *tziyun* [of the Frierdiker Rebbe], the Rebbe will find a way to answer you."[7]



THE LETTER IN WHICH THE REBBE ADDED IN HIS HOLY HANDWRITING THE FAMOUS ANSWER: "THE REBBE WILL FIND A WAY TO ANSWER YOU."

beautiful congratulatory letter, in which he outlined **his** vision for Reb Sholom in Chicago. After praising Reb Sholom's accomplishments in spreading Chassidus, the letter encourages him to do more, *"You are one of the [more] capable* Temimim *that Hashem gave the merit to see [the Rebbe Rashab] and to be blessed by him spiritually and physically. The words of tzaddikim live and endure forever and ever.*

"Constantly remember that I have good hopes for you—regarding matters of Chassidus and Chassidim—as a result of your settling in Chicago. Although you are responsible for fulfilling your specific work in the B'nei Reuven Shul for your parnassa *(which Hashem should arrange and give you in abundance)... And in spiritual matters, you will fulfill what [the Tzemach Tzedek taught on the words] 'Kara lashemsh vayizrach or' (Hashem called to the sun (shemesh) and it radiated light) — 'kara* ***la'shamesh*** *vayizrach…' The Shamesh radiates the light of Torah and tzedakah in the shul that he serves. A lot depends on his work physically and spiritually.*

"However, as one of the Lubavitcher Temimim, you must know that not for this—endeavoring and being active in the B'nei Reuven Shul—alone did Hashem's providence bring you successfully to Chicago. Rather, it is also to be active in the greater community of anash *in Chicago. To awaken them in all matters of* anash. *Until, with Hashem's help, the activities in all the shuls and within* anash *will expand to how they should be."*

MRS. CHAYA POSNER

Equal to her husband's dedication to the Rabbeim was that of his wife, Mrs. Chaya Posner. She was fully dedicated to the will of the Rebbe, and her dedication was recognized with special attention from the Rabbeim. Presented are a few examples, in addition to those in the body of the article.

When their son Zalman was only twenty years old, his parents received word that he was soon to embark on a journey to Europe on behalf of Lubavitch to offer encouragement to the survivors. Mrs. Posner was terribly upset. She wanted him to be learning in yeshiva, not touring Europe with no supervision. While Reb Sholom called 770 to find out more information, she stood nearby sobbing uncontrollably. Suddenly Reb Sholom put away the phone and said, "It comes from the Rebbe". Her crying immediately dissipated. If her son's mission came from the Rebbe, it was surely best.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REB SHOLOM AND CHAYA POSNER RECEIVE DOLLARS FROM THE REBBE DURING A VISIT TO NEW YORK, 5 ADAR II, 5749.

On one of her visits to New York, soon before her return to Pittsburgh, her grandson took a baseball to his eye and was rushed to the emergency room. When she got to Pittsburgh, she called for an update on his condition. The doctors were saying that he would lose his eye. She immediately took a train back to New York and quickly arranged to speak with the Rebbe.

She was emotional and couldn't get her words out. The Rebbe asked her what was bothering her. She replied, "I want him (her grandson) to see!" The Rebbe assured her that he would see. But that wasn't enough for her: "I want him to see with both eyes". The Rebbe reiterated, "*Mit beide oigen.*" Sure enough, he beat the odds and can still see with both eyes.

When she passed away in 5750, the hearse passed 770 on the way to the airport, to be buried on *Har Hazeisim*. The Rebbe accorded Mrs. Posner with a tremendous and unusual honor. He came out to participate in the *levaya*—uncommon altogether in those years—and stood outside long after the hearse had moved on. It seems that the Rebbe continued 'watching' the *levaya* until they arrived at the airport.

5702-1941, 5750-1990, 5749-1989

The Frierdiker Rebbe continued elaborating on the shlichus Hashem entrusts to everyone, especially when he causes them to move.[4]

Indeed, Reb Sholom was a trusted agent in Chicago for all Lubavitch activities, as evident from the numerous letters to him and regarding him in the Igros Kodesh of the Frierdiker Rebbe and the Rebbe. Their trust in Reb Sholom was also underscored by the fact that, when visiting Chicago in the winter of 5702, the Frierdiker Rebbe ate all of his meals from the Posners' kitchen.

A year after their move to Chicago, World War II broke out. Although Reb Sholom was safe in America, the pressure of having loved ones trapped in Europe was immense. It was a very traumatic time. But the bleak darkness was interrupted by a ray of light when the Frierdiker Rebbe arrived in America—this time to permanently settle—on 9 Adar Sheini 5700.

Reb Sholom himself couldn't afford the trip to NY to be there for this momentous occasion [see sidebar: A Precious Pupil], but his son Zalman was there and received the Frierdiker Rebbe's *bracha*.

However, Reb Sholom could not bear to be so close yet so far from his Rebbe. He bartered his possessions to purchase a train ticket to New York. At his *yechidus*, he said that he was giving his children—as well as his responsibility that they should remain true to Yiddishkeit and Lubavitch—to the Frierdiker Rebbe. Naturally, Zalman and Leibel were in the pioneering group of Tomchei Temimim's mesivta.

Pittsburgh

A stroke of good fortune came Reb Sholom's way that could potentially give him much better *parnassa*. A member of the community in Chicago came to like and trust Reb Sholom very much. He proposed that they go into business together; he'd invest all of the capital, yet Reb Sholom would have an equal share in the profit.

Of course, Reb Sholom would not agree to any big decision—no matter how promising—without the Frierdiker Rebbe's approval. But the Frierdiker Rebbe did not approve; with so few people in America working to strengthen Yiddishkeit, it was inconceivable that Reb Sholom should invest his energy in business. Instead, the Frierdiker Rebbe told him to move to Pittsburgh.

Reb Mordechai Dov Altein had been sent to Pittsburgh as a *bochur* to open a Yeshiva day school. But the pushback from the Pittsburgh community was immense; practically no one was interested in having a Jewish school. The most that he could do was put together a Talmud Torah where kids learned after school. Reb Sholom was sent to assist in his efforts and, hopefully, break through the antipathy.

Reb Sholom arrived in the summer of 5703 to begin canvassing homes, so that they could open for the school year of 5704. It was extremely difficult. Who would willingly take their children out of good public schools and entrust their education to these strange, old-fashioned, bearded Rabbis—one of whom spoke English like a greenhorn. One boy was planning to go to New York to attend a Jewish school, Reb Sholom asked his parents to keep him local so that they would have at least one student! Over the summer, they managed to enroll four more students. These were kids who were failing in public schools or lived in low-class neighborhoods—they had little to lose from experimenting with this new school.

Not only was there an aversion to a Jewish school. People refused to rent a home to Reb Sholom. They were not interested in a bearded Jew "ruining" their neighborhood. So Reb Sholom lived in an ally's home, while his family remained in Chicago. Only halfway through the year did they find a home. A stingy landlady lost her tenant in January and wouldn't miss out on a month's rent; money triumphed over her ideals, and she reluctantly agreed to rent the available half of her home to Reb Sholom. His family—now including Bessy and Sarah Rivkah—soon joined him in Pittsburgh.

As soon as the landlady saw an opportunity for other



LIBRARY OF AGUDAS CHASSIDEI CHABAD

THE POSNER FAMILY IN PITTSBURGH IN THE LATE 5700S. THIS PHOTO WAS SENT TO THE FRIERDIKER REBBE AT HIS REQUEST.

RIGHT TO LEFT: MRS. KENNY DEREN, REB SHOLOM POSNER, REB LEIBEL POSNER, MRS. SARA RIVKA SASONKIN, MRS. BASSIE GARELICK, MRS. CHAYA POSNER, REB YITZCHAK ZALMAN POSNER AND REB ZUSHE POSNER.

tenants, she wanted the frum Posners out. But it was wartime, and that meant that she was legally unable to evict a tenant even if they weren't paying rent—and the Posners were. Instead, she tried to force them out by making them miserable. She disconnected their gas pipes, leaving them without heating until the fire department uncovered her actions. She also cut off their water right before Pesach (for that offense, they pressed charges). Despite the inhumane treatment and conditions, Reb Sholom would not be persuaded to leave.

Fundraising was another necessary pain. Reb Sholom had never done it before, and it took three months for him to muster the courage to meet with donors. The first person he was introduced to welcomed him politely, but was uninterested. He had been told he'd be introduced to the school's principal; he wasn't expecting to meet a bearded *Yidele* who spoke no English.

No matter the struggles and suffering, Reb Sholom did not report it to the Frierdiker Rebbe. He wanted only to report good news and avoid causing pain. The Frierdiker Rebbe, of course, knew of the difficulties tied into this shlichus and sent the following letter to Reb Sholom when he first moved.[5]



LIBRARY OF AGUDAS CHASSIDEI CHABAD

YESHIVAS ACHEI TMIMIM IN PITTSBURGH IN THE 5700S. REB SHOLOM IS STANDING IN THE TOP ROW ON THE RIGHT, AND IN THE CENTER OF THE TOP ROW IS REB MORDECHAI ALTEIN.

"...At all times and in all places, beginnings are difficult. Especially in this country and time, it is certain that beginnings are exceedingly difficult. We need great effort, hard work and complete trust in Hashem that certainly,



RABBI J. SCHNEERSOHN
OF LUBAWITZ
770 EASTERN PARKWAY
BROOKLYN, N. Y.
SLocum 6-2919

יוסף יצחק שניאורסאהן
ליובאוויטש

ב"ה, כ"ג שבת, תש"ד
ברוקלין

ידידי הרב וו"ח אי"א מו"הר שלום שי'

שלום וברכה!

במענה על מכתבו המודיע כי בא
עם ב"ב יחיו להסתדר בהדירה החדשה למז"ח
הנני בזה לברכם בברכת מז"ח ואשר העתקתם
והדירה שנכנסו בה יהיו להצלחה לו ולזוגתו
ולילדיהם יחיו שיהיו כלם בריאים ושלמים
ויצליח בעבודתו הק' בגשמם וברוח ותהי'
מרנסתו בהרחבה בגשמיות וברוחניות.

ידידו הרו"ח ומברכו



RABBI J. SCHNEERSOHN
OF LUBAWITZ
770 EASTERN PARKWAY
BROOKLYN, N. Y.
SLocum 6-2919

יוסף יצחק שניאורסאהן
ליובאוויטש

ב"ה, ג' שבת, תש"ד
ברוקלין

ידידי וו"ח אי"א הרב מוהר"ר שלום שי'

שלום וברכה!

בזה הנני שולח לו המחאה ע"ס
$400 (ארבע מאות שקלים) בתור גמ"ח להוצאות
העתקת ב"ב יחיו בשעסו"ג וישתדרו בסדר
טוב באהלה של תורה בבריאות הנכונה
להצלחה בגשמיות וברוחניות.
זמן התחלת הפרעון-קמץ קמץ-
לא קודם מחדש אייר הבע"ל.

בנוסף מצות אהבת ריעים הכפולה
במצות אהבת ישראל, צריך לסדר אשר פסעם
ועד היישיבה יסדרו בעזה"י קבלת פנים
מיוחד לשמחת חגיגת נשואי הראשהיישיבה
ידידי עוז הרב ר"מ שי' אלטעין מייסד
ישיבת אחי התמימים בע"ת פיטסבורג, כמובן
אשר סידור כזה דורש הכנה כשבועות שתים
ואחר החגיגה-שיהי' להם-ית' השי"ת להצלחה-
ביום א' מבע"ל יתחיל בהתחלת סידור הקבלת
פנים ויקבעו ביום המוכשר ומסוגל לרבים
שיבאו אל החגיגה, וזה כבוד החסידים
והחסידות וכבוד הישיבה.

בשם כ"ק אדמו"ר שליט"א
מזכיר ת.

TWO LETTERS FROM THE FRIERDIKER REBBE TO REB SHOLOM. IN THE FIRST, DATED 3 TEVES 5704, THE FRIERDIKER REBBE SENDS HIM $400 TO HELP WITH THE MOVE TO PITTSBURGH. IN THE SECOND LETTER, FROM 23 TEVES 5704, THE FRIERDIKER REBBE BLESSES HIM AND HIS FAMILY UPON THEIR MOVE INTO THEIR NEW HOME.



THE REBBE AT THE KABBOLAS PONIM OF REB LEIBEL POSNER (SITTING ON THE RIGHT) ON 30 SHEVAT 5711. REB SHOLOM IS SITTING TO THE LEFT OF THE REBBE.

certainly Hashem will help. Much energy must be given both to gathering students and for collecting funds…

"…'Hazorim B'dimah' *(those who plant with tears) — the* Roshei Yeshivos *are the planters, and I —* 'b'dimah' *— am shedding tears that their seeds should take root [*'Klitah'*] properly and sprout exceptionally… True success is that even in a difficult land at a difficult time, there will nevertheless be, with Hashem's help, a hundred-fold [beyond what was projected].* Amen, kein yehi ratzon…"

The hard work paid off, and a shift gradually began. They started 5704 with five students, they finished the year with thirteen. For 5705, they had twenty-seven students. Parents saw that the yeshiva's students were not falling behind in general studies; they were actually above average! Reb Sholom made sure to hire the best teachers for secular studies, and it showed. Enrollment continued to grow. People began to recognize the importance of a yeshiva and became more open to providing financial backing.

That did not mean that it was easy sailing. When others in the community saw that the strange Rabbi Posner, who couldn't speak English, was able to found a yeshiva and that kids were transferring from public schools, they decided they could start their own day school. Reb Sholom tried to convince them to work together, but they preferred to have their own school.

Growing enrollment means that a larger building is needed to house the school. Yeshiva Achei Temimim moved buildings a number of times and was sometimes scattered across multiple locations. This caused enrollment to decline. But no matter the struggles the yeshiva faced, Reb Sholom did not create a board. He assumed full responsibility for the yeshiva, even in the physical elements. His reason was simple. If *balei-battim* would be responsible for bringing in funds, they would want to have a say in the yeshiva's operations. As the Rebbe's representative, he knew the school would have to operate strictly under Lubavitch standards without any compromise. (He

gave the example of the Rabbeim's insistence to teach Aleph-Beis according to *mesorah*. We first teach the letters, followed by *nekudos*, and only then combine them to make sounds.)

Throughout the ups and downs of Yeshiva Achei Temimim—with full responsibility—Reb Sholom never considered leaving his post. The Rebbe sent him to Pittsburgh, and only the Rebbe would tell him if he should leave.

Ultimately, the Pittsburgh community came to see and appreciate Reb Sholom's qualities. He was dedicated, consistent, wise, and a man of deep integrity and purpose. He stood his ground and kept building the yeshiva, paying no attention to the naysayers. He was, and still is, a beloved character in Pittsburgh. This was what he meant when he told the interviewer that it was *"all because of the training in Lubavitch and by the Rebbe… without the strength from the Rebbe I wouldn't stand it…"*

As the Rebbe wrote Isru Chag Pesach 5720, *"... the Yeshiva was founded at a time when the idea of a Jewish day school seemed very remote, and the idea of a Lubavitcher day school even more so, yet not only was the Yeshiva in Pittsburgh brought into existence, but it has made great strides and progress… Thus, there is no room for discouragement, despite the present financial or building problem…*

"I need hardly tell you how much effort my father-in-law of saintly memory put into the establishment of the Yeshiva in Pittsburgh and into its growth. *Therefore, all who work for the Lubavitcher Yeshiva in Pittsburgh have enjoyed his blessings in the past and will continue to enjoy them in the future, for the words of Tzaddikim are everlasting and effective…"*[6]

Reb Sholom would often say, *"M'darf ton vos der Rebbe vil"* (We need to do what the Rebbe wants), this was his mantra. There was no other pursuit, physical or spiritual, that had inherent importance to him—only to carry out the Rebbe's will.

1. Igros Kodesh Admur HaRayyatz vol. 1, p. 503; vol. 14, p. 272.
2. Igros Kodesh Admur HaRayyatz vol. 1, p. 594. This letter was written over a year after the first. The Frierdiker Rebbe was insistent throughout that time for Reb Sholom to work in a yeshiva.
3. Zikaron Livnei Yisroel ch. 25, footnote 258.
4. Igros Kodesh Admur HaRayyatz vol. 11, p. 328.
5. Igros Kodesh Admur HaRayyatz vol. 7, p. 362.
6. Teshura Feller-Deren 5780.
7. Igros Kodesh vol. 3, p. 263.

A PRECIOUS PUPIL

While Reb Sholom was still learning in Kremenchug, the *bochurim* traveled to Rostov to spend Tishrei with the Rebbe Rashab. On Simchas Torah, Reb Sholom was called up to be honored with a *possuk* preceding *Hakafos*. Upon hearing the name called, the Rebbe Rashab exclaimed, "***Dos** iz a Tomim!* (This is a Tomim!)"

At another opportunity, Reb Sholom stood in the front row of the path the Rebbe Rashab was walking. The Rebbe Rashab stopped in front of Reb Sholom and gave him a light pat on the cheek. "Sholom, Sholom," he said, "*Vaystu farvus m'hut dir a nomen gegeben Sholom?*" (Do you know why you were named Sholom?) When Sholom remained silent, the Rebbe Rashab threw out his hand with a smile and exclaimed, "Ach!"

Years later, the Frierdiker Rebbe moved to live permanently in America. Reb Sholom lived in Chicago at the time and couldn't afford the journey to greet the Rebbe in New York. Instead, he asked the wealthy members of the shul—who were traveling to New York—to send his regards.

When the Chicago delegation was admitted to see the Frierdiker Rebbe, they mentioned, in passing, "Sholom Posner sends regards, if you know him." The forthcoming response was unexpected, "*Tzi ich ken Sholom?! Sholom iz doch* [at this point he put his hand on his heart] *meiner!*" (**If** I know Sholom?! Sholom is **mine.**)

THE NEXT FRONTIER

WOMEN BRINGING THE GEULAH

Compiled By: Rabbi Levi Greenberg (OH)
Written By: Rabbi Shneur Itzinger

נשי
ובנות
חב"ד
N'SHEI
U'BNOS
CHABAD

WOMEN ON THE ROAD TO REDEMPTION

A voice rang out on the banks of the Jordan River. "Ben Amram, Ben Amram, arise! You are wanted before Hashem!"

It was almost nine hundred years since Moshe had been buried in a location known only to Hashem, and the Navi Yirmeyahu needed him. The first Beis Hamikdash had been destroyed, the Jewish people were sent into *galus*, and the Navi needed help. "Go and call Avraham, Yitzchak, Yaakov, and Moshe," Hashem told him. Not knowing where to find Moshe Rabbeinu, Yirmeyahu went to the Yarden to call out to the first leader of the Jewish people and enlist his help.

Upon being summoned, Moshe appeared before Hashem to plead for mercy on behalf of the Jewish people and to try to rescind the decree. Each of the three Avos stepped up to stop the terrible exile and slaughter being perpetrated. But all to no avail. The decree had been sealed, and they were unable to overturn it.

All hope seemed lost. But then another voice was heard.

Rachel Imeinu, mother of the Jewish people, was heard weeping for her children. Drawing on her *zechusim* and selfless intervention on behalf of her sister, she now heard the cries of the Jewish people and came to their aid. She had been laid to rest on the side of the road leading to *galus* precisely for this reason. So that she would be there for her descendants as they were sent away, so that she could intervene.

Kol b'ramah nishma. A voice was heard on high. Bitter weeping; Rachel weeping for her children. Immediately, Hashem had mercy and said, "For your sake, Rachel, I will return the Jewish people to their home." Stop crying, hold back your tears. *Yesh sachar lipeulasech*. Your voice has been heard, and I will return your children to their home once again.

What Avraham, Yitzchak, Yaakov, and even Moshe Rabbeinu could not accomplish, Rachel did. The future *Geulah* was promised there and then, at the very beginning of the exile. It was a Jewish woman

who succeeded in securing Hashem's promise, words that have echoed ever since: *V'shavu banim ligvulam*. Your children will, one day, return home.[1]

~

To be buried in Mearas Hamachpela, next to the lofty souls of Adam and Chava, the *Avos* and *Imahos*, was certainly Rachel's preference. Rachel willingly gave up this great merit to bring about the *Geulah*. She chose a dusty roadside over the holiest burial place in the world. To this day, she remains on the roadside so that she would be able to intercede before Hashem and bring the *Geulah*. By remaining there, and accompanying her children through exile, she became the one who would ultimately secure Hashem's promise for our homecoming.

The lesson for her descendants, the Jewish women of today, is to also be on the front lines in bringing the *Geulah*. It is their job to save the entire Jewish people from *galus*, a task that even Moshe and the *Avos* could not fulfill.

No discomfort is too great to fulfill this sacred mission. We don't have to sacrifice something as exceptional as Mearas Hamachpela, but we do sometimes have to go out of our way and give up some level of comfort, such as being away from home overnight or foregoing enjoyable food, in order to help another Jew. Like Rachel, we must step outside our comfort zone in order to bring another Jew closer to Yiddishkeit and our entire people closer to *Geulah*.

And like Rachel, we too will certainly succeed. *V'shavu banim ligvulam*. The children will return home. May it be very soon![2]


ספרי' – אוצר החסידים – ליובאוויטש

קונטרס עד.

קונטרס

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ב"ה.

בזה הננו מו"ל הקונטרס לימי היא"צ יו"ד וי"ג שבט, הכולל שני מאמרים.

ע"פ פקודת כ"ק מו"ח אדמו"ר שלט"א, א) בא בתור הוספה מכתב לאחרים מהת' שי', ב) ציינתי איזה מראי מקומות והערות בשולי הגליון.

רשימת מנהגי יא"צ שיש בהם חידוש באה בסוף קונטרס ב' ניסן תש"ת, ובתחלת קונטרסי י"ד-י"ג שבט תש"ט וב' ניסן תש"ט.

מנחם שניאורסאהן

ז' שבט, ה'תש"י, ברוקלין נ. י.

THE KUNTRES THE FRIERDIKER REBBE PUBLISHED FOR 10-13 SHEVAT 5710

HOW IT ALL ENDS

Erev Shabbos, 9 Shevat 5710 in 770. A *maamar* is published and distributed among Chassidim thirsty for Chassidus, *Divrei Elokim Chaim*.

This *maamar*, Basi L'Gani, would become famous as the one the Frierdiker Rebbe chose to publish in connection with the day of his own *histalkus*, which took place the following day. The landmark *derush* that the Rebbe would expound upon each year for almost forty years to come, and would be integral to the mission of *Dor Hashvi'i*.

The date of the *maamar*, Yud Shevat, honored the *yahrtzeit* of the Frierdiker Rebbe's grandmother, Rebbetzin Rivkah, wife of the Rebbe Maharash. The next installment of the *hemshech* was published for Yud-Gimmel Shevat, *yahrtzeit* of the Frierdiker Rebbe's mother, Rebbetzin Shterna Sara, wife of the Rebbe Rashab.

A *maamar* that would conclude one *Nesius* (and open another), a *maamar* that defines our generation, was centered around two *nashim tzidkaniyos*, two of our holy Rebbetzins.

This is, of course, no coincidence. As the last generation of *galus* and the first generation of *Geulah*, the unique *avodah* of Jewish women takes on special significance. After all, it was in the merit of Jewish women that the redemption from Mitzrayim came about, and it will be in the merit of Jewish women that our current and final *galus* comes to an

end. This pivotal *maamar* follows the same pattern, placing women front and center.

The date of the *maamar*, its header, is already significant. But the content of the *maamar* too—Basi L'Gani, bringing the *Shechina* back here to this world—is also centered around Jewish women. Hashem calls out to the Jewish people, *Knesses Yisrael,* with the endearing title *achosi kallah*. In this scenario, Hashem represents the *chosson*, while *Knesses Yisrael* represents the *kallah*.

HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF

In the days before Mattan Torah, Hashem spoke to Moshe daily to convey His instructions to the Jewish people before they would gather at the mountain. "*Ko somar l'beis Yaakov*", He said at the first of these encounters, "So shall you say to the Jewish women," putting *n'shei Yisroel* before the men at the moment we became a people. Shortly thereafter, when the men rallied around the *egel hazahav*, the women stood apart, refusing to donate their jewelry to the sinful endeavor. They also displayed an eagerness to build the Mishkan, expertly spinning goats' hair for Hashem's home.

These lofty souls, the women who stood at Har Sinai, are the very same Jewish women of today. It is recorded in *Kisvei ha'Arizal* that the souls of today's generation are *gilgulim* of the souls who left Mitzrayim.

Just as it was the women's merit that brought about the first *Geulah*, the future incarnation of those very souls, the women of today, will bring about the end of our current and final *galus*.

As we get closer to the *Geulah*, our role becomes ever more significant. And Chassidus tells us that when it finally happens, *n'kevah t'sovev gaver*; the feminine will be above all else, the *sefirah* of *malchus* revealed as above all the others.[3]

1. Adapted from *Midrash P'sichta D'Eicha Rabbasi* 24; *Rashi*, Vayechi 48:7.

2. Adapted from Shabbos Vayechi 5746: *Sefer Hasichos 5746 (Vaad Hanochos Hatmimim)*, vol. 2, pp. 371–377, *Hisvaaduyos 5746* vol. 2, pp. 311–316.

3. Adapted from *Sefer Hasichos 5752*, pp. 299–301.

4. *Sefer Hasichos 5746 (Vaad Hanochos Hatmimim)*, vol. 2, pp. 367–368.

5. *Likkutei Sichos* vol. 1, p. 113.

6. *Sefer Hasichos 5749* vol. 1, pp. 239–240.

7. *Likkutei Sichos* vol. 26, p. 375.

ADDITIONAL INSIGHT

» Recently, we have been clamoring, *ad masai?!* How long will this *galus* continue when we have already done all we can, and more, to bring the *Geulah?!*

To bring the *Geulah* into actuality, both men and women are needed. The Mivtzoim that hasten the *Geulah* apply to both men and women. Women can themselves fulfill most of them and, in many cases, be even more effective than men at influencing others to fulfill all ten *mivtzoim*.

— Sicha, Vayechi 5746.[4]

» The Jewish women in Mitzrayim did not allow the boys being thrown into the river to deter them. If Hashem commanded us to raise Jewish children, they reasoned, we will let nothing stop us.

This same approach will bring the *Geulah*. Jewish women must not fall prey to the influences of America or become consumed with concerns of *tachlis*, but instead raise Jewish children exactly as Hashem wishes.

— Likkutei Sichos.[5]

» In preparation for Matan Torah, Hashem first conveyed His message to the women and only afterward to the men. Likewise, when Moshiach comes and teaches the *Torah Chadasha*, the women, whose merit brings about the *Geulah*, will be the first to study this new Torah of Moshiach.

— Sefer Hasichos 5749.[6]

» The yearning for *Geulah* burns more naturally within Jewish women than within men. They require less encouragement and effort to awaken a desire to leave *galus* and enter *Geulah*.

— Sicha, Mishpatim 5746.[7]

לזכות
משפחת **קארנפעלד**
בורביינק, קאליפורניא

Shaming the Angels

The Young Men of Russia's Tiferes Bachurim

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

"Are There Other Jewish Students?"

It was Mincha in a Moscow shul one day in 5682, during the early years of Communist persecution. Shul attendance was dropping, and young people were an especially rare sight. So when a young man entered and joined the *minyan*, Reb Yankel Landau's curiosity was piqued.

Reb Yankel Landau was a *Tomim* who had merited a close relationship with the Rebbe Rashab and had even served as the *rov* of the Rebbe's *chatzer* in Rostov (later, he would become the chief rabbi of Bnei Brak). After the Rebbe Rashab's *histalkus*, he moved to Moscow at the instruction of the Frierdiker Rebbe.

Noticing the young man, Reb Yankel approached him warmly.



REB YANKEL LANDAU AS A YOUNG RAV IN RUSSIA.

"Where are you from? What brings you here?" he asked.

"I'm a student at the nearby university," the young man replied.

"Are there other Jewish students there as well?" Reb Yankel asked.

"Many!" came the answer.

Reb Yankel made an immediate announcement.

"I'm opening a shul for students!"[1]

"The Angels Stand Shamefaced"

Much has been written about the underground yeshiva network—the secret *chadarim* and *yeshivos* that dotted the landscape of the Soviet Union in the 1920s and 1930s. However, there was another institution—Tiferes Bachurim—that did a job no less critical: gathering and strengthening Russian youth, including those who were unable (or unwilling) to study in Yeshiva full-time.

These were incredibly dear to the Frierdiker Rebbe.

In a letter to a chossid after leaving Russia, the Frierdiker Rebbe describes them in glowing terms:

"In several locations in the '*emek habacha*' (the 'valley of tears')...associations called *Tiferes Bachurim* have been organized.

"Their purpose is that young men—businessmen, factory workers…and tradesmen, as well as university students, gather together to learn Gemara, Ein Yaakov, and Chumash with Rashi; each strengthens his fellow in the observance of Yiddishkeit—may Hashem bless them."

The Frierdiker Rebbe concludes with this amazing line:

"The *malachei marom*, the angels on high—as well as those who live in lands in which they are free to study and observe Torah—stand shamefaced when compared to the self-sacrifice of these students."[2]

Six Hundred Strong

It seems that the first chapter of Tiferes Bachurim was opened in Moscow by Reb Yankel Landau, but it quickly spread to other locations as well. Six years later, the Frierdiker Rebbe noted in a *reshima* that there were over 600 members of *Tiferes Bachurim,* in cities like Moscow, Leningrad, Minsk, Vitebsk, Nevel, Velizh, Kiev, and Gomel.[3]

In an overview of Yiddishkeit in Russia written by Rabbi Shlomo Yosef Zevin[4] in Adar of 5687, he writes enthusiastically about these young men:

"We had assumed that the youth of our country had already drifted away from traditional Jewish life, and that our only hope lay with the small segment being educated in the *yeshivos*. Who could have imagined that there remained a large and vibrant population of Jewish young men—clerks, office workers, tradesmen, merchants, and students—who would organize themselves into structured groups dedicated to Torah study?

"Yet the facts speak for themselves.

"In Vitebsk, Moscow, Leningrad, Minsk, Nevel, Samarkand, and other cities, young Jews formed Tiferes Bachurim associations. They established regular daily study sessions in Gemara, Mishnah, Ein Yaakov, Midrash, Shulchan Aruch, and other areas of Torah learning.

"It is impossible to overstate the impact of these Tiferes Bachurim groups. Their influence was felt not only by their own members, but also by other Jewish youth and, indeed, by the broader Jewish communities in the cities where they operated. With all the enthusiasm of youth and the boundless energy of young men, they devoted themselves wholeheartedly to their organization, their mission, and their learning."[5]

In a long letter to Reb Menachem Zemba about the efforts to sustain Yiddishkeit in the Soviet Union, the Frierdiker Rebbe makes note of a unique Tiferes Bachurim—the chapter established by Reb Simcha Gorodetzky in Uzbekistan:

"He put himself literally in harm's way, and came to Bukhara, and in the city of Samarkand he established *chadarim*… and he established Tiferes Bachurim (an association of young men in their twenties and thirties, businesspeople, factory workers and craftsmen), and one hundred fifty *talmidim* were enrolled, *kein yirbu.*"[6]

In another letter, the Frierdiker Rebbe reveals that it had a snowball effect as well:

"He arranged Tiferes Bachurim, in which there were, at first, only fifteen members, but by the summer there were fifty, and by the end of the summer there were over one hundred. The youth of Tashkent grew envious, and they established their own Tiferes Bachurim with some thirty members, and in Kokand there was another chapter as well."[7]

In a letter that reached the Frierdiker Rebbe in 5694, the writer ("Efraim ben Sara Rivkah") introduces himself as someone who came closer to Yiddishkeit through Tiferes Bachurim in Moscow:

"I arrived in Moscow in 1927, and I grew very connected to the Tiferes Bachurim and to Reb Yaakov Landau. I lived at the home of Reb Boruch Shalom Kahan z"l.

"Reb Yaakov Landau, the Tiferes Bachurim, living by Reb Reb Boruch Shalom—that planted within me a chassidishe *varemkeit* for Torah and Yiddishkeit."[8]

Preserving the Memory

In 5735, a visitor named Reb Emanuel Michlin had a *yechidus* with the Rebbe. He was a recent immigrant from Soviet Russia and had intimate knowledge of Russian Jewish life; he was the son-in-law of Rabbi Shlomo Shleifer, the chief rabbi of Moscow until 1957, one of the key figures of Yiddishkeit in Russia in his time.

"You have an obligation," the Rebbe told him, "to publicize everything that you know, and all the information in your possession, to demonstrate to the entire world that Yiddishkeit and the observance of *mitzvos* have not ceased in Russia even for a single moment—despite the difficult conditions."

The Rebbe pointed out one specific topic that deserved special attention:



A BRANCH OF TIFERES BACHURIM IN EUROPE, PICTURED IN 5689.

"It would be worthwhile to meet with those who were involved with *Tiferes Bachurim*… they should review the content and give their opinions, and so on."

Reb Emanuel began working earnestly on such a project, and in the end—with the Rebbe's personal financial support—wrote a book on Soviet Russia himself called *Hagacheles*, containing much of his own memoirs.[9]

His book contains extensive descriptions of Tiferes Bachurim in Moscow. He was deeply connected to Reb Yankel Landau and wrote at length about the impression he—and the entire group—made on him.

What started as a small group of sixteen young men had quickly grown. They would gather each night with Reb Yankel to learn Shulchan Aruch, Ein Yaakov, and Chassidus. Each Shabbos, they would gather for *Shalosh Seudos* to hear Reb Yankel review a *maamar*, and on special occasions, they would gather for farbrengens.

"The highlights of the year were the celebrations we held on Purim, Simchas Beis Hashoeivah, Simchas Torah, and other joyous occasions. We spent hours singing heartfelt *niggunim*, dancing, and saying *l'chaim*… The celebrations stirred our hearts and left a lasting impression on us long after they had ended.

"The most memorable celebration was on Purim Katan 5687, when the [Frierdiker] Rebbe *nishmaso eden* was in Moscow and honored us by attending a farbrengen we organized [see sidebar]. The Rebbe sat with us, spoke with us, and spent several hours in our company. His presence demonstrated how much he valued Tiferes Bachurim and the importance he attached to its work."

It also spread to many more cities:

"The good reputation of our organization began to spread throughout Jewish communities, and that created fertile ground for associations all over. That's how chapters were established in Leningrad (through Reb Leib Schneerson, the late brother of the current Lubavitcher Rebbe), in Minsk, in Vitebsk (through Reb Dov Medalia), in Gomel (through Dovber Karasik), in Vetka near Gomel, Poltava, Nevel, Smolensk, Samarkand, and more.

"In light of the expansion, a national committee was established (in addition to the Moscow committee) headed by Reb Yaakov Landau. His secretary was my brother, Gershon Michlin. We knew that our efforts put us in grave danger, but that did not stop our activities."

The Leningrad Chapter

As the years passed and persecution worsened, countless Chassidim were arrested and "were disappeared" by the KGB. In Leningrad, the arrests were specifically tied to Tiferes Bachurim.



REB EMANUEL MICHLIN

One of the leaders was Reb Moshe Vishetzky, who was appointed to his role by Reb Chonye Marosov (the main administrator of the underground network after the Frierdiker Rebbe left).

"The *talmidim* of Tiferes Bachurim," his son Reb Bentzion Vishetzky related, "would learn for two or three hours a day. Reb Chonye told my father to gather the young men, arrange a clandestine place for them to learn, and to locate *maggidei shiurim* for Gemara, Shulchan Aruch, and Chassidus. One of the *maggidei shiurim* was Reb Avraham Sverdlov. My father would also teach and would farbreng on occasion. For a long period of time, he would also teach Chassidus and repeat *maamarim* for them every Shabbos."[10]

One of the students was Aharon Koznitzov, who had moved to Leningrad to escape the persecutions that seemed to be tightening everywhere else.

In his memoirs, he described the group, and how it all came to a terrible end:

"In Leningrad, there was a Tiferes Bachurim, where we would gather in the shul and learn Nigleh and Chassidus. There were some older people as well as young people. Reb Nochum Trebnik[11] was the *maggid shiur*, and Reb Elchonon Marosov taught Chassidus.

"One of the people who would occasionally participate in the learning was a young man named L. M.. One of the regulars had invited him to the classes so that he would learn Torah, and he would indeed participate. He knew

exactly when and what we would learn, and so on.

"On occasion, this young man would raise political issues during our conversations, and for some reason, we weren't careful enough when speaking to him.

"One day, for example, he came and told us that one could obtain exit visas by reaching out to the chief rabbi in Eretz Yisroel. He offered to help us all apply to the rabbinate and obtain visas for ourselves.

"Every so often, he would show up with some new discovery, and he would always carefully note our responses."[12]

L.M., apparently, was a *moser.* It was unclear whether he was willing or coerced—some pointed to his intense sobs during Yom Kippur davening as a sign of the impossible dilemma the KGB must have put him in—but whatever the case, angels of destruction suddenly appeared on the doorsteps of many *anash* homes in Leningrad late one night in Adar of 5698 (the year *tirtzach*).

They woke up the residents, conducted careful searches, and arrested those on their lists. Twenty-five Chassidim were arrested that night, and many were never heard from again. Their *mesirus nefesh* to learn and teach Torah cost them the ultimate sacrifice, returning their holy souls *al kiddush Hashem.*

1. *Mara D'Asra* p. 4.
2. Igros Kodesh Admur HaRayyatz vol. 16, p. 265.
3. Toldos Chabad B'Rusya Hasovietis p. 52.
4. See "Gaon and Chossid," Derher Sivan 5779.
5. Igros Kodesh Admur HaRayyatz vol. 1, p. 583.
6. Igros Kodesh Admur HaRayyatz vol. 2, p. 147.
7. Igros Kodesh Admur HaRayyatz vol. 16, p. 210.
8. Toldos Chabad B'Rusya Hasovietis p. 53.
9. *Dyedushka* p. 597.
10. Mashpia Bamachteret — Reb Moshe Vitebsker, p. 41.
11. Later the Rov of Kfar Chabad.
12. *Yahadut Hademama* vol. 1, p. 184.
13. See the *reshima* of Adar 5687 (printed in Sefer Hasichos 5687 p. 151) for a different timeline of the events.
14. This may refer to Reb Itche Masmid, or Reb Yankel Maskalik. See Sefer Hasichos 5687 p. 152, and Beis Chayeinu issue 101, p. 41.
15. Igros Kodesh Admur HaRayyatz vol. 4, p. 16.

Purim Katan 5687

On Purim Katan 5687, the Frierdiker Rebbe held a very special farbrengen with the Tiferes Bachurim in Moscow. In the following letter, the Frierdiker Rebbe describes the events.

On Purim Katan 5687, which fell on a Wednesday, I was in Moscow. *Anash* and *Temimim* arranged a farbrengen in the Chabad shul…and I delivered the *maamar "Vekibel HaYehudim Es Asher Hecheilu."*[13]

In many places throughout the *maamar*, *mesirus nefesh* and the observance of Torah and *mitzvos* were discussed, and I emphasized these ideas with particular force. I paid no attention to the fact that "the walls have ears." During the farbrengen itself, I repeated these themes with deliberate intensity, to awaken their hearts…

Among the crowd were about thirty young men. Most of them were students in higher educational institutions. Yet, through the efforts of Reb Yaakov Landau…they had formed a *Tiferes Bachurim* association, established fixed times for Torah study, and were even learning Chassidus.

During the farbrengen, our friend R"Y Halevi,[14] who was present, remarked that these young men are *moser nefesh* to keep Shabbos, observe *mitzvos* and study Torah—and that they needed to be encouraged.

One of the elder Chassidim present, who was familiar with the difficulties these students faced, commented: "These young men deserve to be kissed."

As for myself, although I honored them greatly, and, through Rabbi Yaakov Landau, did everything possible to strengthen their organization, I nevertheless could not ignore what my heart told me.

These young men certainly needed to be drawn close, as R"Y Halevi said. They deserve to be kissed, as Reb Peretz the elder said…

…The truth is that these young men should have been learning in yeshiva. Had they remained there, their entire way of life would have been different. But since they chose other vineyards, the fact that they still observed Shabbos, kept *mitzvos*, and set aside fixed times for Torah study is worthy of the highest praise.[15]

"We Were Starting Our Lives Over"

BY: **RABBI MENDY GREENBERG**
(TWINSBURG, OH)

MEMORIES FROM THE EARLY DAYS OF TIFERES BACHURIM IN MORRISTOWN







In the early 5730s, a unique institution took shape in the picturesque hills of Morristown, New Jersey. A group of fresh baalei teshuvah gathered to spend a few weeks immersed in Torah study, farbrengens, and yeshiva life. What began as a small experiment soon became Tiferes Bachurim—a full-fledged yeshiva that would shape generations of young men returning to Yiddishkeit.

Three talmidim from those early years—Dr. Dovid Lazerson, Rabbi Tuvia Teldon, and Rabbi Menachem Shmidt share their recollections.[1]

A Beis Midrash is Not A Library

Dr. Dovid Lazerson: I can still remember the first time I walked through the building of the Yeshiva in Morristown. They showed us the cafeteria, the office, the different rooms—and suddenly we came across a large room filled with a cacophony of voices. The room was filled with people leaning over books, talking and arguing.

"What is this?" I asked.

"This is the beis midrash," they explained. "That means *House of Study*."

"Study?" I asked incredulously. How could a person ever study anything here? In college, the study hall was the library, where all the signs said "Shhh" and everyone sat quietly by themselves. I had never seen anything like *this* before.

Just a few weeks later, I suddenly realized that I had become one of those guys myself. Here, learning was alive, interactive, and exciting. I loved every minute of it. Me—the guy who barely learned eight hours *a week* in college—was suddenly spending eight hours a day over a Gemara, Shulchan Aruch, and Tanya. I would lie in bed at night and wonder, "What happened to the real me? Who am I?" I couldn't recognize myself at all.

But I was very content. "Maybe just maybe," I would think to myself, "I've found the real me." It was like I was connecting to something very profound—this deep part of me I had been searching for for several years—and never realizing it was in my own backyard.

Rabbi Tuvia Teldon: Tiferes began with just a few guys who wanted to spend the summer in Morristown. They had been coming closer to Yiddishkeit, and the shluchim who were guiding them wanted a more 'real' experience. So, someone asked Rabbi Herson if he would host a group

"IF YOU DECIDE TO DO IT, CALL IT TIFERES BACHURIM"

Rabbi Moshe Herson *a"h* would often relate that when the Baal Teshuvah yeshiva in Morristown began to take shape, there were concerns of opposition from parents of the boys in Tomchei Temimim of Morristown, so the news was initially kept quiet. However, word soon spread about the new initiative, and parents began to express their reservations. "Who is going to be responsible for ensuring that there will be no negative influence on our sons? How do you know this is a good idea?"

The *bochurim* themselves were enthusiastic. Many wrote letters to Rabbi Herson encouraging him to keep the program going, arguing that this was surely what the Rebbe wanted. Meanwhile, a series of meetings was held with parents in Crown Heights.

Around this time, Rabbi Herson was in *yechidus* with the Rebbe and thought he would inform the Rebbe of this new initiative. To his surprise, he discovered that the Rebbe was already aware of the plan—and also of the resistance from parents.

Instead of giving him a definitive directive for or against the initiative, the Rebbe began by justifying the parents' claims.

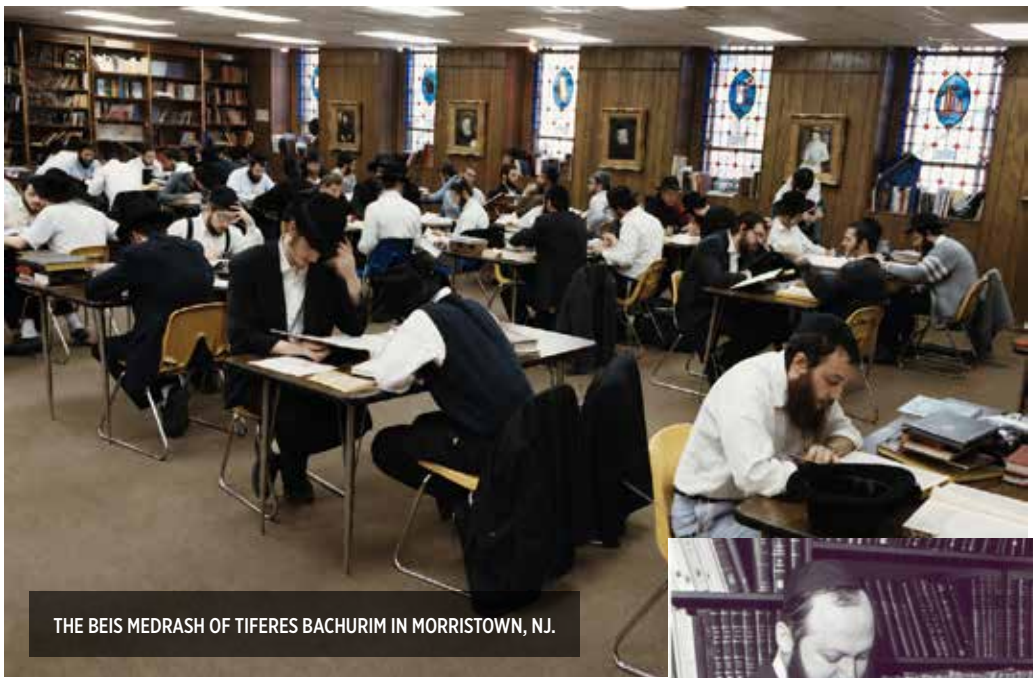
לכאורה, וואס פאר א טענה קענסטו האבן קעגן זיי? דאס איז דאך קינדער וואס זיינען געבוירן געווארן אין די זעלבע מדינה, זיי רעדן די זעלבע שפראך; וואס וועסטו טאן? דו וועסט אוועקשטעלן א וואנט צווישן זיי? מ'מוז זיי פארשטיין. און אפילו אז זיי וועלן דיר צו זאגן אז זיי וועלן יא שיקן, ווייס איך נישט צי עס וועט זיין אזוי - און דו וועסט בלייבן קרח מכאן ומכאן.

"Seemingly, what argument can you make against them? These are children who were born in the same country; they speak the same language. What are you going to do? Are you going to put up a wall between them? One must understand them [the parents].

"And even if they tell you that they will send [their children to the yeshiva], I don't know whether it will actually happen—and you might end up losing on both ends."

However, Rabbi Herson related, he got the impression that the Rebbe wasn't negating the plan altogether. In fact, it seemed as if the Rebbe was actually uncomfortable with the parents'.

This sense was amplified when the Rebbe



LIBRARY OF AGUDAS CHASSIDEI CHABAD

THE BEIS MEDRASH OF TIFERES BACHURIM IN MORRISTOWN, NJ.



RABBI MOSHE HERSON WITH A STUDENT AT TIFERES BACHURIM.

concluded by saying, "אויב דו וועסט באשליסן דאס טאן, איז אין רוסלאנד אזעלכע פראגראמ'ס פלעגט מען רופן תפארת בחורים. If you decide to do it—in Russia such programs were called Tiferes Bachurim."

After the yechidus, Rabbi Herson thought he understood what was going on.

Despite the Rebbe's desire to see the program actually take off (and even giving it a name!), the Rebbe did not want to give an official directive on an issue that was steeped in *machlokes*. If the parents were vehemently opposed to the idea, the Rebbe wasn't going to issue an official *hora'ah* against them.

Rabbi Herson began working with parents on a plan. He carefully addressed the parents' discomfort, arranging for separate zals, dormitories, eating times, and so on, and Tiferes began as its initial small group for a trial period.

That entire first year, the Rebbe did not inquire further. The Rebbe didn't even respond to any duchos regarding Tiferes. Rabbi Herson received answers regarding all his other institutions, but his reports regarding Tiferes Bachurim were left unanswered.

Finally, the first year came to a close. The students were happy, the parents were satisfied, and the new yeshiva proved a success. Rabbi Herson wrote a long report to the Rebbe, describing the entire year and various plans for its future, and the Rebbe's answer arrived quickly:

ת"ח ת"ח על הבשורות טובות, כן ילך המוסד הלך וגדול ואור, המוסד בכל פרטיו וכו'.

Many thanks for the good news. May the institution continue to grow and expand in light, the institution in all its details, etc..

For the first time, they had the Rebbe's firm approval. Tiferes Bachurim had become a reality.

for the summer.

As time went on, it slowly became clear that this could become something bigger—a real yeshiva for baalei teshuvah. Rabbi Avremel Lipsker (he should have a *refuah sheleima)* was brought in, and things started to pick up. Soon there were twelve, thirteen, fourteen students—myself among them—and before we realized it, we had become a full-fledged institution.

Hadar HaTorah already existed at the time (and to be honest, there was a bit of a competition), but Morristown was a very different environment. It was not Crown Heights. It was more relaxed. It was a beautiful campus. It was isolated. You were surrounded by the yeshiva, the learning and davening, and there were no other distractions. That gave it a certain intensity.

Rabbi Menachem Schmidt: For me, it started with a Pegisha in Crown Heights.

I came from a Conservative home in New Jersey. We identified very strongly as Jews, and I attended synagogue regularly, but the Yiddishkeit I knew was very shallow. We would go to shul on Yom Kippur, and there would be two or three thousand people—but most people just cared about what the others were wearing. Very few people really knew how to pray.

Then I attended a Pegisha weekend in Crown Heights, and it was a completely different thing.



DOVID LAZERSON AS A COLLEGE STUDENT IN BUFFALO, N.Y. IN 5732, AROUND THE TIME HE FIRST MET RABBI NOSSON GURARY.

Before Shabbos, a wonderful young gentleman named Moshe Kotlarsky took me on a tour around the neighborhood, saying, "This is a Chassidic butcher, this is a Chassidic florist, this is a Chassidic this, this is a Chassidic that."

It was all very quaint and interesting, but I was really attracted by the sincerity. I had never met people so sincere about Yiddishkeit. It was real, and it was alive—and also they accepted me. People didn't care whether I had money or status. It was simply: "You're here. You're Jewish. Welcome home." That made a real impression.

So, when the invitation came—"If you like this, why don't you come to yeshiva for a few days?"—we said, "Why not?" We do all sorts of other crazy things.

So we went.

Dr. Lazerson: Many of us arrived at Tiferes with a sense of what Judaism was, with a desire to study it in a deeper way. By that time, I had already been learning Chassidus with Rabbi Nussi Gurary in Buffalo for some time, and I already understood that Yiddishkeit was more than a country club, bagels and lox on Sunday, and writing checks to the UJA.

But I didn't realize what I was actually getting myself into. I thought I was coming as a student, to learn the wisdom of Judaism, but I soon discovered that this was very much about living Judaism as well.

My original plan was to give it three weeks. I wasn't ready to commit to anything. I wasn't planning to cut off my long hair or put on a white shirt. I was simply going to jump in, take a serious look at Judaism, and see whether this was the real thing. Three weeks soon turned into three years. I loved Gemara. I loved Chassidus. I loved Shulchan Aruch. I couldn't get enough of it.

Rabbi Schmidt: Despite the excitement over the new ideas we were learning, there was a lot of hard work to be done. When you grow up in the *frum* system, your capabilities grow with you. You can read, you can *taitch*, you understand the vocabulary. But for us, all of it was new. I could understand ideas, but the skills had to be built from the ground up. In college, I was able to read a book and consume ideas quickly. Suddenly, I found myself sitting with a Tanya and trying to translate three lines over the course of an hour. That is a very humbling experience.

Rabbi Teldon: The amount of Torah available in English was incredibly limited. The bilingual Tanya did not yet exist; we had the blue "Pentateuch" with its translation of Chumash-Rashi, "My Prayer," and a few other titles; there was very little else available. Kehos had very

few English titles, and other English publishing houses didn't even exist. We had to learn from scratch. I still have the Tanya from when I was there; it's covered with English words I wrote wherever I could.

Dr. Lazerson: One of the lessons I quickly learned in Morristown is that Yiddishkeit is not something that happens to you by itself. You have to work.

I remember Rabbi Lipsker telling us, "You think Moshe Rabbeinu went up to Har Sinai and Hashem simply zapped the Torah into his head?" To be honest, that was exactly how I had imagined it.

"No!" he said, "Moshe Rabbeinu had to work. He had to put his blood, sweat, and tears into learning. He had to break himself over it."

He was very clear with us that we would not get anything out of Yiddishkeit unless we put in the effort. Yiddishkeit is growth, and growth is step by step. You need to climb the mountain.

"Throw Him In the Mikvah"

Rabbi Teldon: The real secret sauce of Tiferes in those early years was Rabbi Lipsker's farbrengens. He would talk about the issues we were going through; he would talk about Chassidus, sometimes he would yell at us—he really knew his crowd, and he really knew our kelipahs. Those made an incredibly strong impression.

If not for those, Morristown would have been just another bump on the road, so to speak, but they really convinced us to stay and remain connected. Many people later told me that what really connected them to Yiddishkeit were those farbrengens.

Rabbi Schmidt: The farbrengens in Morristown in the early years were legendary. Lively is not even the word.

Rabbi Lipsker was dramatic. Very dramatic. But he was not a showman. There was nothing about him that was a show. It was dramatic, but it was also very real.

It's difficult to convey the energy of those evenings in words. If I were to tell you that he said things like, "We don't want you, we don't need you, go home," that might be a verbatim transcript, but those words alone do not capture it. Those farbrengens were when he educated us. He really welcomed us into the world of Torah and Chassidus in an absolutely authentic way.

I still remember my first farbrengen. Rabbi Lipsker explained to us that the material world was really just the *shmarei ha'ofanim,* the waste of the angels—describing it in very vivid terms—and that the real goal was to find the holy sparks hidden within it. That farbrengen went









RABBI AVREMEL LIPSKER WITH STUDENTS AT TIFERES BACHURIM.

until six in the morning.

Dr. Lazerson: Rabbi Lipsker was always very kind, but he was also very blunt. If he thought you needed to shape up, he told you. If he thought it was time for you to start going to mikvah every day, or saying Tehillim every day, he told you. He didn't pull punches. He was a straight shooter. What you saw was what you got.

That was incredibly important for us, especially given our backgrounds.

I showed up in Morristown with a very healthy dose of self-confidence. I had traveled the world, I had dabbled in Eastern religions and Christianity. I thought I knew everything. Somewhere in my mind, I thought: I am G-d's gift to mankind.

It's a bit embarrassing to share, but about a month after arriving in Morristown, I actually wrote a letter to the Rebbe that basically said: "Dear Rebbe, I think it is time that I reveal myself to you." I felt like I was an incredible contribution to Lubavitch.

Rabbi Lipsker took care of that. At the farbrengens, he taught us how to be honest with ourselves. He never put us down, but he taught us about *midas ha'emes,* and we felt that he really personified it himself. He didn't like it when we dressed "chassidish" without living the part. He wanted *pnimiyus*.

He was also incredibly spontaneous. He would speak, sing, dance on the table, and create all sorts of drama (every once in a while, one of the guys at the farbrengen would be unceremoniously carried off and dumped into the mikvah, clothing and all. I don't know if this was his idea, but you definitely weren't a *metzius* until you had been honored with a dunk).



REB MEILACH ZWEIBEL AT A FARBRENGEN IN MORRISTOWN.

Sometimes, after a farbrengen, we would carry him home, and he would suddenly break out of our arms and run back to continue the farbrengen. He had a level of energy that would make me feel like a senior citizen. We thought we had "been around the block" when it came to wild energy, but Rabbi Lipsker put us all to shame.

This was true in Lubavitch in general. In those days, there was a popular song called *Dancing in the Streets*. Of course, we didn't actually do that—until I came to Chabad, and on Simchas Torah I suddenly found myself literally dancing in the streets. I had thought I was fun and exciting, but then I joined Chabad and discovered that while we 'talked the talk,' they 'walked the walk' (or should I say, 'danced the dance').

Rabbi Schmidt: Rabbi Lipsker would sometimes give the impression that we were in bootcamp, and he was the general. There was real discipline. We had full *seder,* and the guys woke up every morning for Chassidus—there was no playing around.

Many years later, I heard from Rabbi Herson that there were reservations among Lubavitcher parents that the Baalei Teshuvah in Tiferes would have a bad influence on the *bochurim* in "Tomchei"—perhaps we would share drugs with them or something of the sort—but the truth is there was nothing of the sort.

The regular 18-year-olds in "Tomchei" were doing regular 18-year-old stuff—breaking into the kitchen to steal cake, and all other regular yeshiva antics—but we were way past that. The boys of Tiferes were there with full seriousness. Coming to Morristown was a life-changing decision, one that came with a lot of sacrifice. It was not a game.

When Tiferes boys would go on to other *yeshivos*, people would immediately notice that about us. We might not be the biggest scholars, but these *bochurim* were waking up for seder Chassidus, and were taking it very seriously.

Dr. Lazerson: One time, I was sitting in Rabbi Lipsker's car on the way to New York for the Rebbe's farbrengen. We pulled up next to a taxi, and I noticed the driver had turned off his on-duty light, indicating he was no longer taking passengers.

Rabbi Lipsker grabbed me and said: "Dovid, did you see that?"

I said yes, but I had no idea what he wanted.

"Do you see the lesson!?"

"Uh, not really." I responded, shaking my head.

He said: "A Jew can never do that. A Jew's on-duty light

is always on. It can never be turned off."

He really pushed us hard. He used to tell us that a baal teshuvah is like a river blocked by a dam. When the dam finally bursts, the water flows with much greater force. That was what he expected from us.

He also very quickly turned us into teachers and influencers. He would make us share ideas at farbrengens. He would pair us up with new guys and make us teach them. Within half a year of arriving in Morristown, I suddenly found myself teaching a beginners' class in the *maamarim* of the Frierdiker Rebbe. Sometime later, he decided that I needed to *lein,* and instructed me to prepare a full parshah (thanks to him, I've been leining ever since, including the past 30 years at Beis Menachem in North Miami Beach).

The Fancy "Rabbinical College"

Dr. Lazerson: The Tomchei *bochurim* used to jokingly call us the *Sitra Achara*. They would ask: Are you here for Tomchei, or for the *Sitra Achara?* But we wore it like a badge of honor.

The boys of Tomchei were nice; they set up *chavrusos* with us to help bring us up to par and so on, but they were also intrigued. On one hand, we wanted to be like them—they knew so much, and they made Yiddishkeit and learning look so easy—but we were also a bunch of formerly crazy hippies.

For a while, the entire Tiferes slept in a single large room, with mattresses strewn on the floor. At night, we would push all the mattresses together and have wrestling matches. We also decided one day that we couldn't eat the regular stuff they were cooking for 150 people; we needed our own macrobiotic kitchen in the basement (Rabbi Lipsker said, "Sure, whatever you want.")

At one point, my parents decided to visit me at "the Rabbinical College of America." I tried very hard to dissuade them. I told them: I'll come visit you in Buffalo. I could not possibly bring them and show them fifteen or eighteen mattresses on the floor in one room. Eventually, however, things improved.

Rabbi Teldon: The mikvah was its own story. At the beginning, we went to mikvah in the pool outside. Around October or November, the pool was green and had frogs in it.

Eventually, someone built a mikvah by the fire escape on the side of the building. They dug a hole, poured cement, and that became the mikvah.



DR. LAZERSON WITH HIS FAMILY IN 5737 IN BUFFALO, NY.

It had to be filled with water directly from the hot water pipes. The heat was unbelievable, and you could not possibly go in right away. It would take some time for the mikvah to become usable.

Then, the water had to be removed. We called it "the bucket brigade." Someone had to go all the way to the bottom and fill buckets, and then everyone passed them up. The bottom was obviously not very clean, and sometimes we would make fascinating discoveries.

Dr. Lazerson: In addition to Rabbi Lipsker, there was a whole cast of characters.

There was Rabbi Herson, the *menahel* of the entire operation. He was like a big brother. Rabbi Lipsker was 'unattainable'—we totally looked up to him and hoped that one day we could give him some Yiddishe *nachas*. He didn't need to understand the world we were coming from—he just taught us authentic Yiddishkeit and really led by example. But Rabbi Herson was a vital component in the whole Tiferes experience. He related to us in a warm personal way. He wanted to know how we were doing and what needed improvement. We could talk to him about soccer and other sports. He was close with the guys.

Then there were the holy people, like Rabbi Meilach Zweibel. He was on a different *madreigah* altogether. He had those piercing eyes and that serious demeanor. If I bumped into him in the hallway, I would find the first door to get away.

He was completely removed from *olam hazeh*. I was once waiting in the office to speak to Rabbi Herson, and I overheard Mrs. Zweibel on the office phone telling her husband that she had a flat tire and needed help changing it. A few minutes later, Rabbi Zweibel came out and handed her a hammer and a screwdriver.

He did not have the faintest idea what was needed. *Olam hazeh* was simply not his thing. He was, like Rabbi



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DR. LAZERSON RECEIVES KOS SHEL BRACHA FROM THE REBBE.

Lipsker, a real McCoy Chassid, inside and out.

Rabbi Schmidt: There was also Rabbi Lipsker's younger brother, Rabbi Fitzy *a"h*. He met you where your mind and skills were. He was an amazing teacher and really helped us develop our learning skills.

He would tell guys very practical things too: Dress like a mensch. Take a shower.

For a baal teshuvah in that stage, that was important. Some guys would suddenly decide, "What do I need *gashmiyus* for?" Fitzy brought them back down to earth.

Rabbi Teldon: We also had Rabbi Osdoba teach us Nigleh, and Rabbi Eli Touger as well, for a period of time. At the time, it was a small group, and the staff was pretty sparse.

In The Rebbe's Presence

Rabbi Schmidt: One of the amazing advantages of Morristown is that—alongside having the benefit of a quiet, beautiful campus without distractions—we were very close to Crown Heights, and had the opportunity to participate in every farbrengen of the Rebbe.

I remember the first time I saw the Rebbe, during my first Pegisha.

I must have been standing only ten feet away from the Rebbe during davening at 770. But I had never heard of a Rebbe. I had never seen a Rebbe. I did not know that Judaism had an 'authority' figure like that. In my world, every synagogue had its own rabbi, but there was no central figure. My brain was just saying: What is going on here? I was utterly confused.

Needless to say, that confusion soon dissipated, and we made sure that we wouldn't miss a farbrengen, a *kos shel bracha*, or whatever was going on. We would always make sure to stand next to a *bochur* who could translate for us between the *sichos*, and over time, we began to understand more and more on our own.

We also wrote to the Rebbe whenever we had big decisions; we understood that one should not bother the Rebbe for trivialities, but when there was something important, we wrote. Many of us received detailed guidance.

At the time, there were some *anash* families that davened in other shuls in Crown Heights to support those *minyanim*, but that was unthinkable for us—we were coming to see the Rebbe, and nothing else.

This was actually a bit of a problem for me.

You see, there were families in Crown Heights that adopted us Tiferes guys as our own. They were incredibly kind and generous.

My adoptive family was Rabbi Leibel Mochkin's family. He would insist that I come to his house every week, and he wouldn't take no for an answer. The only problem was that there was a lot of Yiddish at the table—Reb Peretz, his father, was often there, and he lived there at the end of his life—and I didn't understand much of the conversation. But I couldn't avoid him. I was at Maariv at 770, and so was Reb Leibel. So I would always eat at his table.

Dr. Lazerson: I had my own first encounter with the Rebbe.

During my college years, I had met people from all sorts of movements, especially Eastern religions. In that

world, the weirder you looked, the more credibility you had.

At the time, I had concluded that if someone were a true spiritual master, he would be able to win a staring contest. I would lock eyes with them and wait to see who would break down and look away first. If I could break them, it was a sign that they were fakers.

I once had a long staring contest with a spiritual master in India, and another one with a strange spiritual master in the desert near Eilat. Each time, these people would look away after a few minutes.

Well, now I found myself at my first farbrengen with the Rebbe. "Another spiritual master?" I thought to myself.

I kept my eyes focused on the Rebbe, and at some point in the singing, we locked eyes. And suddenly I had to look away. I felt the Rebbe was looking through me. I couldn't explain it, but I couldn't handle it. I lost that competition very badly.

That was my first encounter with the Rebbe.

But then I enrolled in Tiferes and was on my way to becoming a more Torah-observant Jew. One day, Rabbi Lipsker made a bombshell announcement at a farbrengen.

"I don't know why you deserve this. You won't properly appreciate this. But for some reason, you guys will be allowed to have *yechidus* for your birthdays."

This was near the end of April, and my birthday was in August, but I managed to finagle myself into the group. We began very intensive preparations. Rabbi Lipsker had us going to the mikvah, learning *sichos*, and doing a lot of spiritual preparations. Finally, the day arrived, and we headed for 770.

We were fully briefed and prepared. We wrote letters with our questions; we were told not to sit down in the Rebbe's office, and so on and so forth. We sat down on a bench in 770 and waited.

As the night went on, I read my letter to myself again and again. I had written about marriage. I was turning 23, and I had a dream to be a young father like my own father had been (my parents would take us to ball games and fun outings, while my friends' parents would sit in rocking chairs smoking pipes. My friends would always ask me, "Can your parents adopt me?").

But as I reread the letter to myself, I suddenly realized, "I look like an idiot!" I've been in yeshiva for only six months, and I'm already rushing to get married? Regretting the question, I rushed to find another paper and quickly rewrote the entire letter.

By that time, it was already two in the morning, and we were sitting on that bench half asleep. The crowd was slowly thinning out, and we realized we were going in last.

Finally, it was our turn. First was Michoel Muchnik (the famous chassidic artist). He was inside for several minutes, and Rabbi Groner began to get aggravated. He opened the door and began to lead him out when suddenly I noticed Michoel go back inside and approach the Rebbe's desk. I later heard that the Rebbe was discussing his artwork and actually asking for samples.

When he walked out, I was spooked. All I can say is Michoel looked different. Something had changed; there was an energy that came out from that room—and it made me quite nervous.

Now it was my turn. As I walked inside, the Rebbe began shuffling papers around; I think he was trying to make me comfortable. I handed the Rebbe the letter, and the Rebbe began to read it.

I had a very naive picture of *yechidus*. I imagined that the Rebbe would read the letter and say: "*Bracha, bracha, bracha, amen amen amen*, next case."

That is not what happened.

First, the Rebbe said, "You write you will be thirty-three in Elul?" and he looked up quizzically.

My handwriting was terrible. "No Rebbe," I said, "I'll be twenty-three." I thought: Wonderful. We are off to a great start.

The next question was about my middle name. My parents weren't sure whether they had named me Dovid Boruch or Dovid Bennet. The Rebbe said to me, "Concerning your name…" And explained that Torah sources say a person is the master of his or her own name. Therefore, I could choose what I wanted. The Rebbe then added, "But Boruch is in *lashon haKodesh*." I breathed a sigh of relief. My public high school was named Bennett, and although I liked the place, it wasn't enough to carry on the name.

Then the Rebbe set the letter down and said, "What do you think about a shidduch?"

I remember thinking, "Whoa. I took that question out, right?" I was really taken by surprise. Nobody had told me that the Rebbe might actually ask questions or want to know what I thought about something.

It took me a couple of seconds to regain my senses, and I said, "Well, I have been thinking about it, but I don't feel ready."

"What do your parents think about it?"

That surprised me again. My attitude had been "Who



A RECENT REUNION OF TIFERES ALUMNI AT THE NEWLY CONSTRUCTED CAMPUS IN MORRISTOWN.

cares what my parents think?" They weren't that supportive of this journey anyway!

"Knowing my parents," I said, "they would probably want me to have my financial situation straightened out first before I would get involved in a shidduch."

"Is anybody taking care of it?" the Rebbe asked, but didn't wait for an answer, and he looked back at my letter.

The next question was whether to be a lifeguard at Morristown Yeshiva's day camp. (In my four years of college, a lifeguard course was the only course I had taken that actually gave me a useful skill). The Rebbe went right past that question.

Then came the last question. "You write that you want to go back to college to get your master's degree in Judaic studies. Why?" Then he looked up at me.

The Rebbe's slow and emphatic manner of speech gave every word such gravity. To me, it sounded like, "Are you for real? You're finally in a place where Torah and Yiddishkeit are alive and joyful, and you want to leave for college courses? Why?"

For a few seconds, I was speechless. I never thought the Rebbe would be asking me questions, let alone ones that begin with the word 'why.'

"Well," I finally said, "I want to go into *kiruv*, and I think I'll have more prestige with a master's degree." And then I added, "Besides, now they're accepting credits from the Morristown yeshiva."

The Rebbe said to me, "Find out exactly how many credits they will accept."

With that, the Rebbe put my letter in a drawer in his desk. The *yechidus* was over.

As we headed back to Morristown, all the guys were flying high, but I was confused. Did the Rebbe want me to get married? Should I get a job? Should I ask my parents? I had no idea what was going on.

Well, I told the whole story to Rabbi Lipsker and Rabbi Gurary, and Rabbi Gurary said, "Okay, that's it. Your time is up. It's time for a shidduch."

By Rosh Chodesh Elul, I was engaged to my wife. Rabbi Lipsker told me to forget about the lifeguard job—I needed to learn as much as possible—and I suddenly understood why the Rebbe had skipped the question. And the final question about credits became clear to me when I went back to college for a master's degree in education and discovered that my Morristown credits weren't actually enough.

No Place Like Tiferes

Rabbi Teldon: After several years in Yeshiva, some would ask the Rebbe whether to go back to college, but I never had that question. I knew that I wanted to enroll in 770 and learn.

I just learned and learned, and pretty much ignored anything else—I had so much to catch up on.

Breaking into 770 was not so easy; I was an outsider, while the people there had grown up together and had spent their whole lives together, but those were still some of the most beautiful days of my life.

Nevertheless, the bonds we Tiferes *bochurim* had remained strong—and have remained ever since.

Dr. Lazerson: When I received the Rebbe's instruction to leave Morristown and go back to school for a master's degree, it was not an easy moment.

We had a farbrengen with the guys the night before, and I cried bitterly. Tiferes had been among the most formative years of my life—that's where I learned to be a Jew, that's where I learned to be a chassid, that's where I got my connection to the Rebbe. The bonds we formed were bonds for life.

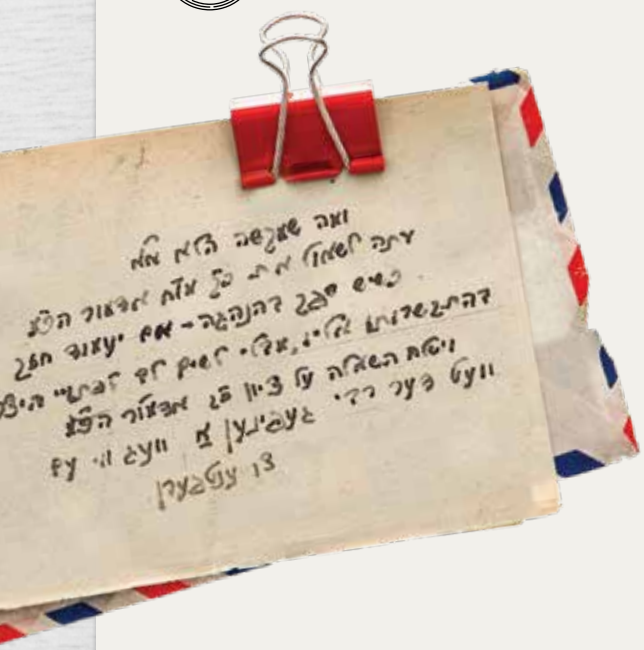
Rabbi Schmidt: That was the sense we had from the very beginning. We were all very close, because we were all starting our lives over together. It was a very warm, very close environment, and we loved each other. To this day, Moishe Shwartz is still one of my best friends. Tzvi Freeman was my chavrusa, and we are still close. There really was no place like Tiferes.

1. These interviews were conducted individually, but are presented here in a continuous form.

לעילוי נשמת
הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' **מאיר** בן הרה"ח
הרה"ת ר' **חיים שניאור** זלמן ע"ה
איטקין
מנעוול
נלב"ע **י"ז אלול ה'תשס"ז**

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

Story



דער רבי זועט געפינען אַ וועג...

WRITTEN BY: RABBI LEVI GREENBERG (TX)

Thank You for the Miracles



AS TOLD BY
RABBI YISROEL KOZLOVSKY
(Mumbai, India)

One week, early in the month of Teves 5786, I had difficulties balancing financial pressures and faced the daunting task of preparing a fundraising proposal for a prospective donor. For several days, I tried elevating myself from the sadness and confusion I was feeling, to no avail. Finally, on Friday morning, I decided to write a letter to the Rebbe.

As I started writing my letter, I was reminded of a farbrengen I had participated in at the Ohel during the Kinus Hasluchim five years ago with Rabbi Shalom Ber Lipsker *a"h*. He said that when he davens Shemoneh Esrei and reaches the words "ועל ניסך שבכל יום עמנו — [we thank You] for the miracles You do for us every day," he reflects on the fact that even though the Rebbe knew all of his failings and limitations, the Rebbe still chose him to be his Shliach, and gifted him the opportunity to spend his life representing the Rebbe. And this miracle continues today. No matter what is going on, he is still chosen to continue this Shlichus every day.

At the time, I strongly identified with these sentiments, and I opened my letter expressing my deep appreciation for the opportunity we were given to have such a special connection to the Rebbe through Shlichus, especially in such a holy Chabad House, the one

in Mumbai. I briefly reported good tidings about certain activities and learning I was doing, then detailed all the pressures I was facing, with all the emotional baggage it entailed. I concluded by thanking the Rebbe for all the miracles we had experienced up to that point, and asked that they continue so that we could remain proper conduits to fulfill the Rebbe's Shlichus in India.

After sending my letter to the Ohel, I joined a daily online *shiur* with several shluchim in the Rebbe's Torah. That morning, we learned the sicha of Asara BeTeves 5752, and I was very energized by its message. I spent the morning making phone calls, and when I came home to prepare for Shabbos, I told my wife that I felt like I was back on track.

When we arrived at the Chabad House before candle lighting, Jacob and Ilana Stockman from Modiin, Israel, were standing in the lobby waiting for the elevators. Jacob is originally from Melbourne, studied in Yeshiva Gedola, and even spent several months learning in 770. Ilana is from Flatbush, and when they married in 5751, they first lived in Brooklyn for a few years before moving to Eretz Yisroel. Fifteen years ago, Jacob came to India to lead an NGO working to enhance the quality of life in remote areas in the country. He joins us for Shabbosim several times during the year, but Ilana comes to India only once every few years.

After we exchanged greetings, Ilana pulled a *kuntres* out of her bag and handed it to me. "This is for you," she said.

I immediately recognized it as a *kuntres* from the Rebbe, but the name was covered by two dollars folded over the cover. "Do you know what this is?" I exclaimed in shock. "I cannot take this from you. It is a *kuntres* you received from the Rebbe!"

"Yes, we know what it is. Jacob received it from the Rebbe in 1991. But we haven't opened it since then, and we feel you can use it more than we can."

Still in shock, I opened the plastic and moved the dollars to read the name: ברוך שעשה ניסים תרס"ד.

Just that morning, I had thanked the Rebbe for the miracle of Shlichus, for the miracles that had



THE KUNTRES CONTAINING THE REBBE RASHAB'S MAAMAR "ברוך שעשה נסים" THAT THE REBBE DISTRIBUTED ON 10 SHEVAT 5751.

accompanied us up to that point, and had requested more miracles. Now the Rebbe was sending me a clear message through the *kuntres* he had distributed years earlier, entitled "Blessed [is Hashem] who made miracles!"

"This is incredible!" I said, holding back tears. "I will explain everything later…"

There was no time for me to process what had just transpired since we were rushing to begin the program with over 70 participants. Finally, toward the end of the meal, I approached Jacob and asked him to tell me the story behind the *kuntres*. He shared that since they had been living in Brooklyn that year, he had merited to spend Yud Shevat with the Rebbe and to receive the *kuntres*.

"But why did you decide to give it to me now?" I asked.

"Last week you shared a story in Shul which inspired me to give it to you."

Here is the story:

One day, in the diamond district of Tel Aviv, Yoav*, a diamond dealer from Netanya, noticed his neighboring dealer, who was angry with his father, stuffing anything that reminded him of his father into a garbage bag. He noticed a framed $100 check from the Rebbe in the bag, and although he did not appreciate its value at the time, he retrieved it with permission and brought it home. A few weeks later, his family was invited to Seudas Shabbos at the home of Rabbi Wolpo, the shliach to Netanya, and Yoav brought the check as a gift to the Wolpo home before Shabbos.

Over time, Yoav and his family became more observant and moved to Yerushalayim. Years later, Yoav was in Moscow for business and joined a Chai Elul farbrengen, where they auctioned off a dollar bill from the Rebbe, which sold for $5,000.

Yoav was shocked by the price tag of a one-dollar bill from the Rebbe and became upset that he did not even get a "thank you" from the Shliach to whom he had given the $100 check. He complained to his wife Shira* about what he felt was a gross injustice. They consulted a *rav*, who advised them to forget the whole story.

A few days later, Rabbi Wolpo called Yoav's home to fundraise as part of a crowdfunding campaign for Chabad of Netanya. Shira answered the phone and said she was happy to donate, but wished to clarify the story about the check.

Rabbi Wolpo explained that he had been given the check by one of his children right before Shabbos and had never realized who had given it to him; it had been hanging in his office for years. Recently, the Shliach to Ramat Gan, Rabbi Motti Gal, tragically passed away, leaving his wife and children with a significant financial burden. Several shluchim had gathered to strategize how to help the Gal family, and one of them suggested that Rabbi Wolpo gift the Rebbe's check on the wall to the family to help fundraise the much-needed funds.

"So in the end, the check is benefiting an entire community!" Rabbi Wolpo concluded.

Shira was satisfied with the story and shared it with Yoav. The next day, Yoav met the neighboring dealer and asked him how the $100 check had reached his father years ago.

"Rabbi Motti Gal from Ramat Gan would visit him often to fundraise. One time, he asked him for a significant loan. Because he had made a good deal that week, my father gave him the entire sum as a donation. Rabbi Gal was so appreciative that he brought back a $100 check from the Rebbe as a gift."

Yoav was amazed to learn that the Rebbe's check, originally sent to Rabbi Motti Gal, was ultimately returned to his family years later as part of a fantastic sequence of revealed *hashgacha pratis*.

"When I heard you tell the story," Jacob concluded. "I decided it was time to pass on the *kuntres* I received from the Rebbe, but never used, to you in Mumbai, as you would surely appreciate it much more and learn from it."

This turn of events opened my eyes to how amazing this miracle was. Rabbi Gal's wife later married my father-in-law, and they had visited us in Mumbai the previous Shabbos because we were celebrating an Upshernish that week. Although I had shared this fabulous story before, I repeated it in her honor. Now it turned out to be the catalyst for the Rebbe's way of responding to me.

Even before I was experiencing the problem, the Rebbe had set in motion the chain of events that would ultimately drive home the message to me about the miracle of Shlichus. T

YOUR STORY

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



BY: RABBI MENDEL JACOBS

ON THE DAILY TAKING ACTION

TAKANAS LIMUD HARAMBAM

Standing Order

Over the past year, this series has covered each of what the Rebbe referred to as the "Ten Mivtzoim," as well as an "eleventh" *mivtza*: *Ois B'Sefer Torah*. The Rebbe almost always included that *mivtza* when listing the other *mivtzoim*, and it was only natural to include it in our series.

However, with one month left in this year, there was room for debate over what should be featured in the final installment.

After all, the Rebbe gave us so many instructions over the years, including many which he referred to as a "*mivtza*"—like *Mivtza Shmura*, *Mivtza Chanukah*, and many others.

For several reasons, we decided to feature the *Takanas Limud HaRambam*—the Rebbe's call for every Jew to have a daily session of Rambam study: three *perakim* of Mishneh Torah, one *perek* of Mishneh Torah, or selections of Sefer Hamitzvos.

First, this *takana* is unique in that it applies to every single Jew without exception: man or woman, child or senior citizen, scholar or layperson. Everyone should participate. And it applies at all times: every single day of the year has its *shiur*.

To the best of our knowledge, no other project initiated by the Rebbe has such broad application.

Additionally, the Rebbe often said that carefully observing the Frierdiker Rebbe's *takana* of Chitas is a channel for many *brachos*.

Moreover, the Rebbe once explained that keeping the *shiurim* of Chitas is a daily opportunity to connect with the Rebbe and make his presence real in our lives:

"There are a number of *takanos* that the *Baal haGeulah* instructed be printed and publicized for all Yidden, like the *takana* of learning Chitas—Chumash, Tehillim, and Tanya—and other *takanos*, including the main *takana*: to spread *ahavas Yisroel*...

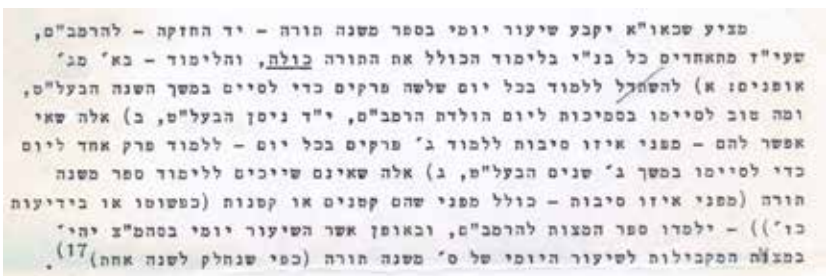
"...When we learn his Torah and follow in his ways, by observing his *takanos,* fulfilling his *shlichus etc.*, the activity of the *Baal haGeula* is emphasized publicly, declaring that just as his children are alive, so too he is alive—מה זרעו בחיים אף הוא בחיים. Meaning, the *Baal haGeula* lives within our midst, and more so, he lives within each one of us, to such an extent that our entire being is no more than as *shluchim* and fulfilling the *shlichus* of the *Baal haGeula*, because "*shlucho shel odom k'moso!*"[1]"

The same could be said of our commitment to the daily study of Rambam.

From the time the Rebbe instituted the daily study of Rambam, he never stopped speaking of its importance.

At almost every farbrengen or *sicha* (including *divrei kivushin* on fast-days, *yechidus klolis*, children's rallies, etc.), the Rebbe would spend time discussing the daily *shiur* of three *perokim* Rambam, much as he had always done with the daily *shiur* of Chitas.

Additionally, the Rebbe fervently called on everyone to do all they can to further spread this *takana*, as we shall soon explore.



IN THE INTRODUCTION TO HAYOM YOM, IN THE SECTION RECORDING THE REBBE'S ACTIVITIES, YEAR BY YEAR, IT ORIGINALLY STATED THAT THE REBBE INSTRUCTED "להשתדל"—TO TRY—TO LEARN THREE PEROKIM OF RAMBAM EACH DAY. THE REBBE CROSSED OUT THE WORD להשתדל.

The Whole Thing

"I've been waiting for several years," the Rebbe announced, "for someone to divide the Rambam's Mishneh Torah for daily study; such as has been done for the study of the entire Shas. Finally, in one of the Sephardic lands, they implemented something similar: they divided the study of the entire Mishneh Torah among many individuals, with each undertaking one section, thereby completing the entire sefer among them.

"Better would be, however, that each individual should complete the entire *sefer* on their own. Learning all of the Rambam's *sefer* in their proper sequence has many advantages, especially given the fact that the Rambam relies on earlier explanations and rulings to elucidate what he writes later on…"[2]

Without much detail, the Rebbe launched this new *takana*, or "*hatza'a*" (suggestion), as he referred to it, at the Acharon Shel Pesach farbrengen of 5744.

Track Two

A few days later, at the *yechidus klalis* for the guests who had come for Pesach, the Rebbe elaborated, adding detail:

"Let us use this opportunity," the Rebbe said, "since we are addressing a broader audience, including those listening via hook-up, to follow up on what we recently mentioned about studying Rambam."

The Rebbe suggested that the study cycle begin the following Sunday. Since there are approximately 1000 *perakim* in Mishneh Torah, if we study three *perakim* each day, it would take a little less than a year to complete the whole *sefer*.

If, for whatever reason, someone finds it difficult to study three chapters every day, there will be another study track of one *perek* per day, completing the *sefer* in three years.[3]

Why?

On the following Shabbos, the Rebbe dedicated more time to discussing this new idea.

First, the Rebbe explained why it was so important for all Jews to study Rambam:

When all Jews will study the same Torah ideas each day, it will create a sense of unity—*Achdus*—throughout the whole Jewish nation.

The reason the Rambam's Mishneh Torah was specifically chosen: It is the only *sefer halachos* that includes all of the laws of *Torah Shebaal Peh* in its entirety; even the *halachos* pertinent during the times of the Beis Hamikdash and Moshiach's coming.



THE REBBE'S DETAILED EDITS ON THE COVER PAGE OF THE FIRST MOREH SHIUR IN 5744.

It is a mitzvah incumbent upon every Yid to know *all* of Torah. What better way to unite all Jews than by studying the entire Torah—connecting *Shleimus Ha'am* (the wholeness and integrity of the Jewish people) with *Shleimus HaTorah* (the wholeness and integrity of the Torah).

The Rebbe added that the second track he mentioned of studying one *perek* per day corresponds to the second cycle of *krias haTorah* mentioned by the Rambam, completing the whole Torah in three years. Although the prevailing custom is to complete the whole Torah each year, the custom of doing it in three years is still cited. Similarly, with the study of Rambam, it would be best if everyone completed the whole *sefer* each year. If, for whatever reason, one cannot, the option remains to complete it in three years.

In order to include absolutely every single Jew in this study—young and old, men and women— the Rebbe added one more avenue: those who are not able to study even one *perek* per day should study a portion of the Rambam's Sefer Hamitzvos, learning the *mitzvos* corresponding with the

halachos in the three *perakim* of that day.

This will surely hasten the coming of the *geulah*: the only reason we're in *galus* is due to a lack of *ahavas Yisroel*. Uniting the Jewish people in this unique way will do away with the *galus* entirely and bring Moshiach speedily.[4]

The Dream

Needless to say, the Rebbe's call to study Rambam daily is not limited to Lubavitchers. It is the Rebbe's wish that this practice spread to each and every Jew throughout the world.

"In addition to one's own study of Rambam," the Rebbe said, "we must influence other Yidden —men, women, and children—in the same direction, cultivating multitudes of students!"[5]

Once, when the Rebbe was encouraging everyone to establish new Torah classes in their communities, the Rebbe added:

"It would be a good idea (at least periodically) to connect the Torah study at these classes with a selection of the Rambam's Mishneh Torah (especially with that day's portion). Very often, when you study an idea in Gemara or in other sources, you can gain clarity and depth by seeing the way the Rambam rules…"[6]

Perhaps most poignantly, it was the Rebbe's dream that the study of Rambam would indeed reach every Jew, one that has already begun coming to fruition:

"This 'dream' of uniting all the Jewish people through the study of Rambam," the Rebbe said, "has already taken off and is constantly spreading and gaining new adherents each day. May it be fulfilled completely; and then all Yidden, wherever they may be, will be united in a complete manner ('*shleimus*') by completing the Torah in its entirety ('*b'shleimusa*')."[7]



A SEFER OF RAMBAM ON THE TABLE IN THE REBBE'S APARTMENT AT THE LIBRARY NEXT DOOR TO 770. SEEN DURING THE YECHIDUS WITH RAV MORDECHAI ELIYAHU, 6 CHESHVAN 5752.

5752-1991

ARE YOU A JOSHNICK?



An interview with
Rabbi Shalom Moshe Paltiel
Port Washington, NY

By: **Rabbi Bentzion Pearson**

Rabbi Paltiel, thank you so much for taking the time to speak with us today. You were a *bochur* when the Rebbe launched the daily study of Rambam. Would you share with us what that was like?

Indeed, I was there at the farbrengen when the Rebbe launched it—Acharon Shel Pesach 5744. We started learning right away, maybe a few days later, and we did our best to keep up.

This was over forty years ago.

But a few years ago I made a drastic change. Until then, I was learning at what I *thought* was to the best of my ability, not paying enough attention to the words I was reading. I remember being invited to speak at a *kinus* in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and, between speeches at the program, I was skimming through the daily Rambam, as I often did. My dear colleague and mentor, Rabbi Yisroel Shmotkin, noticed this and said to me: "Shalom Moshe, who are you fooling? You're not fooling the Rebbe. Maybe you're fooling yourself?"

His words made a very deep impression on me. I realized that I was not giving the study the proper attention it deserves.

From then on, I started spending much more time studying the daily Rambam. With the help of master teacher Rabbi Yehoshua Binyomin Gordon *z"l*, my Rambam learning turned into a real "*limud.*"

Since then I've started learning with Rabbi Avraham Zajac's *shiurim*, which are more in depth. On occasion I also listen to Rabbi Moshe Wolberg, when I have time for even deeper study. But today there are



RABBI YEHOSHUA BINYOMIN ('JOSH') GORDON RECORDING ONE OF HIS SHIURIM.

many competent *shiurim* to choose from. Rabbi Gordon's *shiurim* and many others are available at chabad.org as well as on the Rambam app.

Boruch Hashem, since then, we have seen tremendous *brachos* in our shlichus. We had been dealing with dire financial challenges for years, and within a relatively short period of time, we were able to turn it around. I have no doubt that it was due to my commitment to learning Rambam better.

On that note, I have a great story about a friend of mine.

I went to *yeshiva* with him many years ago, and we've stayed in touch since. A few years ago, I suggested that he take Torah learning more seriously, and he decided to start with the daily Rambam.

Two months later, I touched base with him and asked how it was going. "To tell you the truth," he confided, "I'm finding the Rambam very difficult."

When I suggested that he should try some other type of learning, maybe Gemara, Mishnayos or something else, he said, "Alright. I'll try something else, but I'm not giving up on Rambam! It's too crucial for *parnassa!*"

My friend explained that since he started learning Rambam, his business has never been better.

This is not the type of person who most people would identify as "chassidish." He's a regular, down-to-earth businessman. But he recognized that learning Rambam was bringing big *brachos*. "You don't understand," he told me. "When I'm behind on Rambam, my deals are all frozen. All of a sudden, when I catch up on my learning, they all start closing immediately!"

Wow. Very powerful stuff! I understand you've succeeded in introducing Rambam to members of your community. Can you tell us how that happened?

It started a few years ago after the *siyum hashas* of the *daf hayomi* learners. It got me thinking about how to replicate this type of enthusiastic learning within my own community. Of course, I'm not here to negate the way others learn Torah. However, everyone understands that learning a full *daf* of Gemara daily is not feasible for most people.

And here we have something the Rebbe gave us that is truly accessible to everyone: learning Rambam!

For most people, learning one *perek* a day with the help of today's online resources is a no-brainer.

As I mentioned before, I myself was learning with Rabbi Gordon almost every day, and I knew how *geshmak* it could be for any of my *balei-battim*. So I made a list of all the people in my community who I felt would be up for such a thing, and I started reaching out to them, one by one.

I started by explaining to them that there's a practical way for everyone to learn all the *halachos* of the Torah. All you need to do is study a little bit of the Rambam's book each day, and you'll master it within three years. Then I promoted Rabbi Gordon as a great teacher—which he really is. He goes through all the *halachos* in clear English, adding humor and excitement. He's also careful to take into consideration the sensibilities of his audience when dealing with the more difficult or obscure *halachos*.

We created a WhatsApp group chat called *Rambam Port Washington*, with the idea that when each individual finishes their daily chapter, they send a "thumbs up" to

the chat, thereby holding themselves accountable.

I ended up with about 25 commitments of people who undertook to study one *perek* each day. Since we started, the number has dwindled a bit, but we still have a nice group of committed people who study the Rambam daily.

It succeeded much more than I had originally imagined, to the point that the following Tishrei I decided to take it a step further: I started the same idea for the daily Chumash—Rashi.

We started a new group called the "Joshnicks for Chumash"—named for Rabbi Josh Gordon. So we now have *Joshnicks Chumash* PW, *Joshnicks Rambam* PW, and then we started *Joshnicks Tanya PW*.

Some people commit to one year of each, moving from one group to another. But the impact it's had on people's lives is unbelievable.

We now have 70-80 people learning Torah daily. On the group chats, people will often ask questions about what they're learning, and my son or I will try to answer them. It's created an incredible atmosphere of learning in our community.

Then we came up with a creative idea to further promote it: We now do a "Joshnick" Shabbos every year, dedicated to our community's daily learners.

We print a giant banner and hang it in the lobby of our building, listing the names of all participants across all three categories of this project. I invited everybody to a grand kiddush that Shabbos and sent out invitations, emails, text messages, and so on.

We also ordered a big giant cake, wishing "*Mazal Tov Joshnicks*" to all the participants.

At the kiddush, I asked every participant to stand up and say a few words about how the learning has affected their lives. It was really moving.

One woman stood up, saying, "I grew up in New Hampshire. I never went to temple, never attended Hebrew school; nothing. Now I'm learning *Chumash* for the third time, and I'm becoming fluent in Torah at this stage of my life." Her words were very impactful.

Here I just want to add a note:

Based on my experience, I feel that this could become a massive movement. I think that if all shluchim and *anash* would put their hearts and minds to it, we could create worldwide momentum and get many, many people to start learning Rambam daily.

There are so many resources already available, and there could be much more if we employ the right technology.

We owe it to the Rebbe to do it. The Rebbe wanted Rambam to be mainstream—not an exclusively Lubavitch practice.

That's really amazing. Thank you for sharing.
You mentioned earlier that strengthening your own study of Rambam had a positive impact on your personal life. Would you care to elaborate on that a bit?



SCREENSHOT FROM THE DAILY TORAH WHATSAPP GROUP IN PORT WASHINGTON AND A LIST HONORING DAILY PARTICIPANTS.

Sure.

We all know that the Rebbe really wanted us to study Rambam. There's only one way to learn: using your brain and understanding what you're reading. Especially when it comes to *Torah She'baal Peh*, if you don't understand it, you can't even make a *bracha* on it.

I know it's hard to learn three *perakim* every day. But we need to give it our best and really try to learn it. Skimming through the pages and reading it like Tehillim is not acceptable.

And for those who are unable to learn three *perakim*, the Rebbe added the track of one *perek* per day.

Today there are many *shiurim* available online, and we should absolutely make use of them. Whatever the case, we need to at least understand the basic meaning of the words.

And it pays off. After learning Rambam properly year after year, you can really gain proficiency in all the *halachos* of Torah! One of the reasons that the Rebbe gave for learning Rambam is to have a *yedia* in all of *Torah She'baal Peh*. It's a beautiful thing!

Our Connection

Obviously, the main motivation we all have for learning Rambam is that the Rebbe wants us to. We're all looking for ways to be more connected to the Rebbe. And learning Rambam properly is the deepest *hiskashrus*.

Of course, this is in addition to the very practical benefits of studying Rambam and becoming proficient in all *mitzvos* of Torah. And in general, when you commit yourself to daily study, you will develop a *geshmak* in the learning and it will add so much value to your daily life.

In countless letters, the Rebbe points to "*Chitas*" as the channel for receiving all of Hashem's *brachos*. As a *takana* of the *Nossi Hador,* it holds the keys to bringing all those *brachos* into your life.

The same is true of studying Rambam. It brings overflowing blessings in all areas of life: *bonei*, *chayei*, *umezonei*—children, health, and livelihood.

In fact, when it comes to health, the Rebbe made a clear connection: There are 83 sets of *halachos* in the Rambam's Mishneh Torah, which is the *gematriya* of "מחלה"—sickness. The Rebbe said that by studying Rambam, we can avoid all sicknesses and diseases.

We all know people who were helped in all areas of life by strengthening their commitment to the daily Rambam.

Try it yourself; you'll see it too.

And the main thing is, we should finally experience the greatest *bracha* of all, the *geulah shleima* with the coming of Moshiach, when we'll be reunited with the Rebbe, *teikef umiyad mamash!*

1. Hisvaaduyos 5745 vol. 4, p. 2487
2. Hisvaaduyos 5744 vol. 3, p. 1545.
3. Ashreinu Audio.
4. Shabbos Parshas Kedoshim 5744; Hisvaaduyos 5744 vol. 3, p. 1595.
5. Shabbos Parshas Shemos 5752; Sefer Hasichos 5752 p. 257.
6. Shabbos Parshas Korach 5750; Sefer Hasichos 5750 vol. 2, p. 539.
7. Shabbos Parshas Korach 5744; Hisvaaduyos 5744 vol. 4, p. 2222.

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

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

By: Rabbi Shneur Itzinger

Step Inside

Farbrengen with the Rebbe — A Companion

A guide to the Farbrengen of
Erev Rosh Hashana 5741





Learn: Sichos Kodesh 5740 vol. 4, p. 1120–1145.

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

As one year concludes and a new one begins, the Rebbe prompts us to ask some fundamental questions: Why am I here? What is the purpose of creation? Am I fulfilling my role? Through a series of vivid *meshalim* and clear explanations, the Rebbe peels back the layers of concealment and reveals the foundations of *Achdus Hashem*. He shows how the world is not separate from *Elokus*. Our task is simply to learn how to see through the layers and uncover the truth.

Sicha 1: Behind the Sunglasses

The truth about Hashem's concealment, and how to see beyond it.

1. Not Just For Us

45:25

Rosh Hashana influences all of creation

In the *maamar*, the Rebbe explained that Rosh Hashana affects not only Yidden, but the *giluy Elokus* in the entire world.

- We stand on Erev Rosh Hashana **preparing for Rosh Hashana**,
- on which *kol ba'aei olam*, **the entire world is judged**,
- **not only Yidden**, and **not only** *medaber*; all forms of creation.
  - Although the Mishna lists a separate Rosh Hashana for trees, plants are also dependent on Rosh Hashana.
  - *Tchilas maasecha* means all creations.
- This answers the question: **must I involve myself in worldly matters?**
- [**Rosh Hashana teaches** that Yidden affect all creations]. **Our task is to illuminate the world.**

2. Light = Clarity

47:50

What does "illuminate the world" mean? First, what does light mean?

- Light does not create anything new; it **reveals what was already there**.
- Light shows **what an object is** and **how to use it**. Is it good? Does it need cleaning?

Light is the *mashal*; what is the lesson?

- As *maaminim* we believe that **the world was created by Hashem**'s *maamaros* from nothing.
- **The Baal Shem Tov teaches** that the world needs constant recreating.
- **The Alter Rebbe explains** how this is **self-understood**:
  - *Yesh me'ayin* can only be sustained by being recreated every moment.
- Since the object cannot exist without Hashem's speech, **the real** *metzius* **of everything is** Elokus.

Despite believing, we can sometimes forget this point.

- If we **lose sight of this truth**, we begin taking into account **the world's limitations as a** *metzius* for itself,
- at the cost of serving Hashem.

Here we need "light".

- Torah is Or, it radiates light, **showing the truth**; even after creation, the world is **not a real** *metzius*. It is unsustainable without Elokus.
- When we learn the Torah, which is *Or,* and put it into practice, **we know the truth about worldly entities** —
  - As mentioned, light does not create anything new. Torah as *Or* reveals the truth.
- — that this is **not something that we are "at war" with**; it is Hashem's creation.
- When the light of Torah illuminates us, we can spread it to others — even to non-Jews.
  - *V'haluchu goyim* ***l'oreich*** — they follow our **light**.
- Until *v'yeida kol pa'ul* — **all creations recognize** that they are nothing but **creations of Hashem**.
  - *V'yeida* means *daas*, unwavering conviction.





On the *possuk*, "Forever, Hashem, Your word stands in the heavens," the Baal Shem Tov taught: Hashem's "speech" with which He created the heavens, "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters," those very words remains forever within the heavens, giving them life and existence.

שער היחוד והאמונה, פרק א' ...הִנֵּה, כְּתִיב: "לְעוֹלָם, ה', דְּבָרְךָ נִצָּב בַּשָּׁמָיִם", וּפִירֵשׁ הַבַּעַל־שֵׁם־טוֹב ז"ל: כִּי "דְּבָרְךָ" שֶׁאָמַרְתָּ "יְהִי רָקִיעַ בְּתוֹךְ הַמָּיִם וְגוֹ'" - תֵּיבוֹת וְאוֹתִיּוֹת אֵלּוּ, הֵן נִצָּבוֹת וְעוֹמְדוֹת לְעוֹלָם בְּתוֹךְ רְקִיעַ הַשָּׁמַיִם, וּמְלוּבָּשׁוֹת בְּתוֹךְ כָּל הָרְקִיעִים לְעוֹלָם לְהַחֲיוֹתָם...

Upon understanding this truth, every thinking person can properly understand that every created being is, in reality, considered absolutely nothing compared to the divine power and "breath" of Hashem that continuously creates it and brings it from nothingness into existence.

שער היחוד והאמונה, פרק ג' וְהִנֵּה, אַחֲרֵי הַדְּבָרִים וְהָאֱמֶת הָאֵלֶּה, כָּל מַשְׂכִּיל עַל דָּבָר יָבִין לַאֲשׁוּרוֹ, אֵיךְ שֶׁכָּל נִבְרָא וְיֵשׁ הוּא בֶּאֱמֶת נֶחְשָׁב לְאַיִן וְאֶפֶס מַמָּשׁ לְגַבֵּי כֹּחַ הַפּוֹעֵל וְרוּחַ פִּיו שֶׁבַּנִּפְעָל, הַמְּהַוֶּה אוֹתוֹ תָּמִיד וּמוֹצִיאוֹ מֵאַיִן מַמָּשׁ לְיֵשׁ...

SOMETHING IS NOTHING

As explained at length by the Alter Rebbe in *Shaar HaYichud V'haEmunah*, the Baal Shem Tov taught that the world is brought into constant existence through Hashem's speech. Just as He created it with *maamaros* at the beginning of creation, He continues to recreate it at every moment.

Building on this, the Alter Rebbe draws the obvious conclusion: if the world cannot exist for a moment without the *dvar Hashem* within it, then it has no independent existence at all. It is completely *battul* to Hashem, nothing more than an expression of His speech and divine power.

3. Knowledge is Power

53:52

The confidence from knowing this truth.

- Throughout Elul, we have been internalizing this truth.
- Today, **the final day before Rosh Hashana** —
  - The very name erev Rosh Hashana connotes a preparation for Rosh Hashana,
- — we are ready for *lovshim levanim*, **possessing the full strength of the knowledge that** *ein od* — there is nothing but Hashem.
- **This gives strength** for the entire year
- **to accept Hashem's** *melucha* and keep Torah and *mitzvos*.
- With this confidence, **the world is not a distraction**;
- it becomes more illuminated and **assists with our mission**.

To summarize, **Torah is the light that reveals the true** *metzius* **of the world** and everything within it, and the **purpose for which it was created**. But Torah's light goes even further:

4. More than Purpose

56:32

Two levels of understanding what the world is.

- **One level of truth**: **the world was created to serve a purpose**. It is not a contradiction to Kedusha.
- **Even further:**
- when we properly apply the Baal Shem Tov's teaching that the *metzius* of the world is inseparable from Hashem's word,

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 אָמַר רַבִּי חִיָּיא בַּר אָשֵׁי אָמַר רַב: תַּלְמִידֵי חֲכָמִים אֵין לָהֶם מְנוּחָה לֹא בָּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה וְלֹא בָּעוֹלָם הַבָּא, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: "יֵלְכוּ מֵחַיִל אֶל חָיִל יֵרָאֶה אֶל אֱלֹקִים בְּצִיּוֹן".

- **it becomes Kedusha** itself.
- Beyond serving a lofty purpose, the world is an extension of Hashem's speech.

5. Beyond the Blanket

57:37

The Rebbe gives two — connected — meshalim to explain how Hashem hides Himself.

- **When something is covered** by blankets, **you cannot know what lies beneath the layers — especially if multiple layers are present**.
- **Further**, you might think **only the blankets exist** with nothing underneath them.
- Until someone with better knowledge informs you that **under the blankets lies a precious gem**,
- so precious that **one layer was not enough to diminish its light**.
- Or, **a radio**: radio waves can **penetrate many layers**, walls, etc.
- **If the precious gem's rays are too strong, it needs many covers to make the light usable**,
- To the point that **the light source, or radio, is not visible** — one may even think it doesn't exist.

Why the cover?

- **This mistake** — that the radio or light source does not exist —
- comes from a lack of knowledge on **why they were created** in the first place.
- **Light is meant to be used**; if it is too strong, it will burn.
- **Covering it enables revealing** it in a controlled way; just the right amount when it is needed, without burning the receiver.

The *nimshal*:

- Hashem created the world with a light that "**the world was not worthy to use**",
- hidden because **the world cannot use it and remain in existence**.

6. Sunglasses

1:02:04

Another Mashal for the above.

- **Sunlight is beneficial** for vegetation's growth, etc, but **looking at it directly is harmful**.

VERDICT BEFORE JUDGMENT

The Yerushalmi points to a unique quality of the Jewish people. Generally, people approach judgment with fear and uncertainty, expressed through dark clothing and a somber mood. Yidden approach Rosh Hashana differently. Even before the Day of Judgment begins, they "dress in white, wrap themselves in white, eat, drink, and rejoice," confident that Hashem will grant them a favorable judgment.

- The solution: **sunglasses**.
- One doesn't think the sun is any less bright because one is wearing sunglasses.
- To look directly at the sun, you need the glasses. To view the world around you and see the sun's beneficiaries, you can take them off.

The *nimshal*:

- "Shemesh u'magen Havayeh Elokim — *Havaye* is the sun and *Elokim* is the shield."
- With shemesh — a *giluy* of Hashem — alone, **the world cannot exist**.
  - The Gemara tells of Ben Zoma who saw *Elokus* and his *neshama* could not remain in his *guf*.

7. You are the Sun

1:04:52

Another way of understanding the mashal:

The sun is the *neshama*, the sunglasses the *guf*:

- Hashem wants the *neshama* **to be in the world** without destroying it, so it's covered by a *guf*.
- We **remain aware** that **under the sunglasses is a *chelek Elokah***.
- **The *neshama* does not change** when covered. The cover is only to enable the *guf* to operate without wanting to leave this world, and be able to perform physical *mitzvos*.
  - A *neshama* cannot do physical *mitzvos*.





- **The sunglasses are not a *yerida*** — they are a protection against too strong of a light.
- **We remember: my identity is the precious gem, the *neshama***;
- but in order to operate within the world and illuminate it, the light had to be veiled.

8. The Perfect Balance

1:08:43

Bringing the above into daily avoda.

- **Davening all day**, standing before Hashem,
  - although *halevai shyeispalel kol hayom*,
- **is not the regular order**. We daven three – five times daily,
- and **between *tefillos* we interact with the world**.
- We **eat bread and make a *bracha***, showing how the bread comes from Hashem;
- the *bracha* reminds him that **without Hashem, the bread cannot exist**.
- **Hashem created a wondrous world** with many creations,
- but the world's purpose was not complete, until a Yid uncovers the truth: **the world** – even *domem* – **is really *Elokus***.

A story:

- When the **Baal Shem Tov made a *bracha* on his *tzitzis*, they would shake**.
- Tzitzis must be made of **physical wool**, yet when the wool is **properly illuminated**, it can also **shake from the mitzvah**.
- We may not see it, but we know it: **when we do a mitzvah, the physical object shakes from the *chayus Eloki* inside it**.

To apply this in action:

- **Don't think the *guf* is an independent force** to be reckoned with.
- **It is merely the sunglasses**, the shield that allows the *neshama* to turn the world into a home for Hashem and to know that Hashem created it.

9. Torah of Light

1:13:38

Connecting all the above back to Rosh Hashana

GIVE IT LIFE

Several months before this Farbrengen, the Rebbe was visited by the Sadigura Rebbe. Here, the Rebbe references something he shared during that *yechidus*.

The Maggid teaches that the Torah's phrase *"vechai bahem"* means that a Yid gives life and vitality to a mitzvah that would otherwise remain *domem*. As an example, the Rebbe told the story of the Baal Shem Tov, whose *tzitzis* would physically shake from the vitality of a mitzvah being performed with them.

In preparation for Rosh Hashana, we need **light and clarity** on our purpose in the world. **Where does clarity come from**?

- Hashem is good; He wouldn't leave us without **illuminating instruction**.
- This is the **Torah**: the **tool to illuminate the world**.
- The light allows us to understand — perhaps even see — that **the world's existence is *dvar Hashem***.
  - Everything exists from a *tziruf* of different letters.
- Our job: **to not be fooled by the sunglasses**; to see the truth.
  - If not, one lives in darkness, which is not beneficial for us or the world.
- Sunglasses only **alter the perception**, not the object itself; they filter light so it's not too strong. **Don't be fooled** into thinking that the light itself has changed.
- On Erev Rosh Hashana, we should contemplate the above.
- The eyes covered by sunglasses are **only the physical sight**.
- We have eyes of *sechel*, and **understand that the darkness is only perceived**.
- Not wanting to live in darkness, we can **find the hidden gem**, which is every creation created by Hashem's speech.
- The object is truly a precious stone, sustained by the *chayus Eloki* within it.

10. Action!

1:18:20

Connecting the above to the Mivtzoim.

It's always a good time to increase the spreading of Yiddishkeit and Chassidus, [especially before Rosh Hashana]. **Beginning with the Mivtzoim**:

- **Ahavas Yisroel**: **just as you wish to know the truth** about the sunglasses, that they don't change the reality, **teach** re'acha — **others**.
  - *Re'acha* includes **every Yid**;
  - Before Rosh Hashana we read in Nitzavim that all Jews stand together — *nitzavim kulchem* — as one before Hashem, renewing our covenant with Him.
    - Hashem, we and the covenant are eternal, but it needs renewing.
- Spare no effort to **teach another the truth about the world**: *emes Havayeh l'olam* — Hashem is the constant creator. *Olam* is a cover concealing the truth.
- **Chinuch**: educate yourself and others to internalize this idea through Torah and *mitzvos*,
- all of which are compared to **Tefillin**.
- Put **Mezuzos** on every door.
- **Tzedaka:** don't wait to repay a favor. Hashem returns your *neshama* daily — before you did anything to deserve it! Give Tzedaka to others without *cheshbonos*.
- Surround yourself with Torah through Bayis Malei Sefarim**.**
- All this is founded on the inspiration of the *Akeres Habayis* with *Neros Shabbos Kodesh***.**
  - This year's Rosh Hashana brings three consecutive nights of lighting Neros,
  - and in the spirit of Hakhel unity, we unite with Eretz Yisroel, where they too observe two days of Rosh Hashana, followed by Shabbos Shuva.

Simply put:

- Utilize the remaining hours before Rosh Hashana for increased *Mivtzoim* efforts,
- especially ensuring every Jew is ready for Rosh Hashana without worry,
- by sending financial assistance to anyone who may need it, in a dignified way, anonymously,
- so everyone can fulfill Shulchan Aruch's directive to "eat savory food and drink sweet drinks" on Rosh Hashana.
- A joyous Rosh Hashana and Shabbos following sets the tone for a joyous year,
- until the ultimate joy — the coming of Moshiach.

STROLLING IN THE GARDEN

The Gemara tells the famous story of four *Chachamim* who "entered the *pardes*," setting out to explore the deepest secrets of Torah. Of the four, only one emerged unscathed; the others were harmed by the intense revelation of *kedusha* they encountered.

Our relationship with *Elokus* follows the same principle. Just as the sun's rays must be filtered to be safely experienced, Hashem's revelations require a *magen*, a shield. Without it, the light would be too intense for the world to contain. The concealment allows us to experience the right measure of *Elokus*, benefiting from its light without being overwhelmed by it.

ASK FOR DIRECTIONS

As the essence of goodness, Hashem wants what is best for us. He would not place us into this world and leave us to fend for ourselves. Instead, He gives us the Torah, illuminating every aspect of life and guiding us in navigating the world and fulfilling our purpose within it.



Letters

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

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

The Frierdiker Rebbe's Mission

Dear Derher Staff,

Thank you for your beautiful article about the Frierdiker Rebbe's historic visit to the United States of 5690 ("America Awakened," Derher Cheshvan 5786).

I would like to add an interesting story about the visit which, to the best of my knowledge, is not so well known.

At the beginning of the Frierdiker Rebbe's visit in the United States, a special Melava Malka was held at the home of Reb Eliyahu (Yeichel) Simpson, in which many of the American Chassidim participated. An appeal was held and all attendees responded warmly, pledging large percentages of their stock holdings to support the Frierdiker Rebbe's affairs.

At the end of the Melva Malka, Reb Dovid Shifrin announced: "Rabbosai, we must immediately give our pledges to the Rebbe on Monday morning!"

Others argued with Reb Dovid. Don't be silly, they quipped, the market is doing well, in another five weeks we'll be able to give much more money.

Reb Dovid was insistent. To a Rebbe you must fulfill your pledge immediately. Indeed, that's what he did. On Monday he sold all of his stocks and gave the Frierdiker Rebbe a tenth or a fifth of everything he had.

The following Friday morning was to become known as Black Friday. All of the attendees lost their entire fortunes, as all had been bought on margins and the losses were several times the size of their margins. They went from being wealthy to owing more than all their assets combined. The economy crashed, unemployment was over 20%, wealth among the middle class disappeared.

The Frierdiker Rebbe had come to find funding to reestablish the Lubavitcher yeshiva and with it, the Lubavitch movement from its 156-year home in Russia. Without funding there would be no yeshiva and that possibility for success seemed to disappear with the Great Depression.

But the Frierdiker Rebbe was undaunted. His resolve to come to America wasn't only to raise funds, it was also to encourage Jews not to close their faith in the crucible of American assimilation. The Frierdiker Rebbe personally engaged in deep conversation with thousands of Jews during his visit here. His presence and persona inspired many to return to Yiddishkeit and educate their children in the way of Torah.

The Shabbos of a Single Yid

The Frierdiker Rebbe's unyielding commitment to his holy mission is aptly demonstrated in the following story:

In the month of Nissan, the Frierdiker Rebbe visited the city of Detroit, where a Chabad shul flourished and many, who remembered him fondly from Russia, resided.

In order that the Frierdiker Rebbe understand the requests of the supplicants who came for yechidus, and to make sure that his response was clear to the recipients, a translator was needed; someone who was fluent in the Frierdiker Rebbe's Russian Yiddish as well as the jargon of Midwest Americans. Such an individual was found in the person of Isadore (Yitzchok) Starr O.B.M., a law student at U of M, from whom I had the privilege of hearing this story firsthand on two separate occasions.

Izzy's father was a staunch Chassid who longed for the Frierdiker Rebbe to come and dispel the notions that America is different. The G-d who is in Russia and Poland also functions in Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago

and of course, Detroit. The people who lined up were caring, giving people, However, there were almost no wealthy people left after Black Friday. Almost none.

One man in Detroit remained unaffected by the stock market crash. His name was Max Osnos, born in Lubavitch, sole owner of Sam's Five and Ten, where every item in the store sold for a nickel or a dime! Max came to Izzy and told him, "If the Rebbe will come to my home and eat a meal, I will give The Rebbe $25,000," (over half a million dollars in today's currency).

Izzy was excited and shared the good news with the Frierdiker Rebbe's secretary.

"Impossible," he was told. "The Rebbe never eats at someone's private home."

Izzy dejectedly came back with the negative news to Max.

Max, a seasoned negotiator, was not deterred. "I'll tell you what," he said, "I'll give $100,000 if the Rebbe will come into my house and drink a glass of tea."

This time Izzy ran, not to the secretary's room but rather to the Frierdiker Rebbe's private quarter.

"The Rebbe was immersed in deep thought when I suddenly barged in," Izzy later recalled. "'Rebbe," I said, "Moishe Osnos is ready to give the Rebbe $100,000 (equivalent to more than 2 million in today's dollars), if the Rebbe will come and drink a glass of tea by him.'

"The Rebbe thought for a second and said, 'No! I am not going to him!'

"For a moment, I forgot whom I was speaking with. I yelled, 'Rebbe why? The Rebbe needs money!'

"The Rebbe wasn't fazed: 'Itzaleh – you are an understanding boy – Moishe Osnos is not the only Detroiter who knows me from the city of Lubavitch. There are several dozen such people in Detroit – some of whom still keep Shabbos! – I believe that Moishe isn't one of them! So, what will happen if I visit Moishe and not one of those who keeps Shabbos? What will he say? I keep Shabbos, but Moishe doesn't. So who does the Lubavitcher Rebbe visit – Moishe, not me. That means by the Lubavitcher Rebbe money means more than keeping Shabbos! Better that I do not take the money than to affect this person's Shabbos!'"

According to Rabbi Berel Shemtov, who heard this story with me, the sum of $100,000 would have covered the Frierdiker Rebbe's deficits for the yeshiva in Poland as well as for his family for the full ten years between 1930 and when he was rescued in 1940, landing in the U.S.A.!

But Shabbos of one Jew was worth more than that to the Frierdiker Rebbe.

Rabbi Chaim Moshe Bergstein
FARMINGTON HILLS, MI

When Did You Learn It?

Dear Editors,

I read with interest the *yoman* you published from the month of Nissan 5751 ("*Month of Miracles in a Year of Wonders,*" Derher Nissan 5786), including a story of a young boy who reported to the Rebbe about extra learning he did for Yud-Aleph Nissan.

I'd like to share that I was the young boy. Please allow me to fill in some of the details to the story:

I was a student in first grade in Montreal at the time. My father was my teacher in school, and he ran a program (which he still does to this day) for boys to study Chumash by heart between Yud Shevat and Yud-Aleph Nissan. Indeed, I learned through the entire Parshas Bereishis by heart.

Our family was traveling to New York for a *simcha* at the beginning of the month of Nissan, and my father told me that when we pass by the Rebbe for dollars, I should share what I'd done with the Rebbe.

As we were traveling in the car, my father suggested (probably as an attempt to keep me occupied on the road) that I should review the Chumash I had learned again. "What happens if the Rebbe asks you when you learned it, and you'll have to tell him that it was two months ago?" he explained. "If you review it again now, you can tell the Rebbe that it was very recent."

The following Sunday, I went by dollars with my mother and siblings. I was a very nervous seven year old boy, and when I reached the Rebbe, I said (transcript from the video):

"איך האב גע'חזרט די גאנצע פרשת בראשית בעל פה, ווערטער און טייטש, לכבוד י"א ניסן."

(I studied the whole Parshas Bereishis by heart, text and translation, in honor of Yud-Aleph Nissan).

The Rebbe immediately asked:

"וואן האסטו עס גע'חזרט? נעכטן?"

(When did you learn [review] it? Yesterday?)

I suddenly became very flustered and couldn't find my next words. Finally I said, in a mix of Yiddish and English: "A *voch* ago."

Handing me another dollar, the Rebbe replied in English: "That you'll give for your learning; it will be even better than till now."

I said in Yiddish, "א דאנק" (Thank you), and the Rebbe repeated in Yiddish, "לערנען נאך בעסער" (learn even better).

Thank you for everything you do. Much *hatzlacha*!

Dovber Berkowitz
WALNUT CREEK, CA

The Album

Dear Editors,

In Derher issue 163 page 16 appears a photo of the Rebbe receiving an album from me.

Following is the background and the unique words that the Rebbe said then.

At the Rebbe's request, an album of the Shluchim (and their families) who attended the Kinus Hashluchim 5750, was published in Cheshvan 5751.

At the farbrengen for the Kinus Hashluchim 5751, the Rebbe requested that a Sefer Hashluchim be published which would include all the Shluchim and their families. Afterwards, the Rebbe added that photos of the *mosdos* should be included as well.

I was inspired by this, and as principal of Beis Rivkah Montreal, I prepared an album of the school, which was founded by the Rebbe and is under the Rebbe's *nesius*. On the right side was a class-photo of each grade, from 18 months old through 18 years old; on the left-hand side was a typed sheet with the names and mothers' names of each student (and teacher), in the order in which they appeared in the picture. The first page featured a photo of all 450 students כ"ת and staff in front of the school building (this photo was also printed in the Sefer Hashluchim volume 1 on two pages, 452–3).

For Yud Shvat 5751, we brought two buses for our annual High School trip to the Rebbe. On Sunday, 12 Shvat, during Dollars, before the students passed by the Rebbe, I presented the album to the Rebbe. I opened it to the photo of the students in front of the building and said that this is from Beis Rivkah — Campus Chaya Mushka — Montreal, and that it included pictures of each class, together with the students' names and mothers' names.

The Rebbe asked me:

דאס איז פאר מיר? צ'י דאס דארפט איר אויף מאכן געלט?

"Is this for me? Or do you need it to make money?"

I was stunned by the question and replied: "No, it's not for money, it's for the Rebbe!"

The Rebbe continued:

אויף געלט מאכן.

"To make money."

I again replied: "It's for the Rebbe".

The Rebbe then asked:

ס'איז ניט אויף מאכן געלט?

"It's not to make money?"

I answered : "It's not to make money".

The Rebbe then gave me a Dollar and said:

אויב אזוי וועט דאס בלייבן ביי מיר. בשורות טובות.

"If so, it will remain by me. *Besuros Tovos.*"

I began to walk away, and then the Rebbe turned to me, gave me another Dollar, and said:

וועט איר אזוי מאכן געלט, דורך דעם וואס עס וועט זיין ביי מיר!

"You will make money this way, through it being by me!"

These are such amazing words—I have never heard anything similar!

Yasher Koach for all the *toichendike* articles published every single month.

Rabbi Yosef Minkowitz
MONTREAL, CANADA

