



לזכות החיילים בצבאות ה'
שמעון בן חי' מושקא
לרגל יום הולדתו ל"ג בעומר
שיינא בת חי' מושקא
לרגל יום הולדתה י"ב אייר

מנחם מענדל בן חי' מושקא
אסתר הנ' רחל בת חי' מושקא
שיחיו

יה"ר שיגדלו חי"לים בצבא
כ"ק אדמו"ר
מתוך שמחה, בריאות והרחבה



“Only the Rebbe’s Smile”

Written By: Rabbi Mendel Jacobs

In honor of Beis Iyar, birthday of the Rebbe Maharash, we present this fascinating excerpt of one of the letters penned by the legendary shliach, Reb Berel Baumgarten, to his friend and colleague Reb Hirshel Shusterman. Dated 2 Iyar 5703*, this letter was written when Reb Berel was studying in the yeshiva at 770, and Reb Hirshel was in Worcester, Massachusetts, where he headed a branch of Achei Temimim.

After the Frierdiker Rebbe’s *histalkus*, the Rebbe asked Reb Hirshel if he could have the letters from Reb Berel. Reb Hirshel hesitated for a moment, explaining that in addition to descriptions of the events in *beis chayeinu* and words of the Frierdiker Rebbe that these letters contained, there were also many trivial details (“*narishkeiten*,” as he referred to them). The Rebbe dismissed his concern, saying that he wouldn’t look at that part.

Reb Hirshel sent the entire packet of letters back to Reb Berel, and Reb Berel handed the entire collection to the Rebbe. Years later, the original envelope from Reb Berel containing all the letters he sent were found in the Rebbe’s room.

B”H. Birthday of the Rebbe Maharash.

The commencement day of the writing of Moshiach’s Sefer Torah—*Tiferes Sheb’Tiferes*

Tomchei Temimim, may Hashem bless it and expand it

greatly.

To my truly dear friend, Reb Tzvi *shlita*, *shalom u’vracha!*

The truth is that after I received your letter, I decided not to write to you anymore because I gathered from your

writing that you're quite down. It seems that instead of giving you encouragement, my letters are just becoming a burden. However, recently there were a few things that I believe you really must be made aware of. Also, there are some very nice things that if I don't write them to you now, I might forget them later and you will miss out on hearing them. I am therefore writing to you now, and G-d willing, I will not bother you again until you come upon easier times.

The [Friediker] Rebbe *shlita* instructed that there should be a farbrengen on the second night of Rosh Chodesh [Iyar], but there was a blackout and it couldn't be arranged. Only the next day, on Rosh Chodesh afternoon at 3:00, we had a farbrengen at the home of Reb Yisroel [Jacobson], the "younger *mashpia*," and that evening on Motzei Rosh Chodesh, 17th of the Omer, there was a farbrengen at the yeshiva.

At first, we were addressed by Reb Shmuel Levitin, the "elder *mashpia*," and then the Rebbe's son-in-law, Ramash [the Rebbe] appeared, and he was the main speaker.

As usual, he spoke very, very, beautifully, but this time he mostly related stories about the Rebbe Maharash, and his Baal-Shem-Tov-like conduct [i.e. in a supernatural manner]. Ramash repeated many of the stories that his father-in-law, the Rebbe *shlita*, wrote to him, or the stories the Rebbe related to him orally.

Firstly, he related how up until the Rebbe Maharash, the Rabbeim were mostly impoverished. Even the Tzemach Tzedek lived in a materially poor manner, without luxury and expansiveness. The Rebbe Maharash changed this, and already during his father's lifetime, he began living in a broad and expansive manner.

When he built his house, the Rebbe Maharash included large, wide windows. When the Tzemach Tzedek asked him, "Why do you need these?" the Rebbe Maharash answered that they would provide light in the house.

The Tzemach Tzedek continued, "In my grandfather's [the Alter Rebbe's] house, there were very thin, small windows." The Rebbe Maharash commented that it must not have been so light in the house. "No, no!" the Tzemach Tzedek replied. "*Lichtig, lichtig!* (It was full of light!)"

When [the Rebbe Maharash] was eight years old, he learned in *cheder* together with the Magen Avos [Harav Shlomo Zalman, son of Maharil, son of the Tzemach Tzedek], and other nephews of his who were older than him. Once, the teacher asked the children a question on the subject they were learning and asked them to come up with their own answers. The Rebbe Maharash suggested that all the other children should offer their answers, and then he would give his own. All the other children did not have what to answer, so the Rebbe Maharash offered a great answer, shocking the teacher.

The other students were jealous, as they were older and didn't have any answers to offer, and they started crying. They complained to the teacher saying that although the Rebbe Maharash is not more learned than the rest of them, the teacher pays more attention to him because he is the youngest son of the Tzemach Tzedek while all the others are merely his grandsons. They all ran crying to Maharil, the father of the Magen Avos.

Maharil came in to the *cheder* to speak to the teacher on behalf of his son, but while they were out, the Rebbe Maharash had already complained to the teacher. He said that he cannot learn with the others anymore, because he masters the material after hearing it once, while the others need to have everything repeated two or three times, and they still don't always grasp it; their minds are blocked.

The teacher explained to Maharil that he does not favor the Rebbe Maharash at all, it's just that he truly knows better than the rest. The teacher repeated the question with the Rebbe Maharash's answer and even Maharil was surprised [at the depth of his words]. He turned to the Rebbe Maharash and asked, "Still, why must you speak this way [about the other children]?" The Rebbe Maharash said, "What should I do if they have blocked minds?"

Maharil replied, "I am your older brother. How can you be so disrespectful?" The Rebbe Maharash replied, "You may be older than me counting your own years, but I am older than you if we count together with our father's years..."¹

...[Ramash] related many more stories, however I have already written for too long. I hope you will enjoy what I wrote and it won't just be a burden on your head.

...The truth is, that his only aspiration is to manifest the wishes of [Friediker] Rebbe *shlita*, the luminary of our lives, into reality. But we [must do our part as well] and try to be here [in the Rebbe's presence]. Of course, not to play [games], evading the Rebbe *shlita*'s [instructions], for this is utter foolishness. Only do things with the Rebbe's permission. But you must not be complacent; you must work on this.

...I know that the only thing to bring comfort to your soul will be by continuing your work, and bringing [even] a slight smile over the Rebbe's face.

Be well, I bless you as your friend who loves you with heart and soul, hoping to hear joyous tidings from you,

Dovber

Wishing you immediate redemption, both personally and globally.

Give my regards to the Hecht family. ①

1. This story is recorded by the Rebbe, published in Reshimas Hayoman p. 286, with some slight variances.