

Derher

A Chassidisher

א חסידישער דערהער

י"ט כסלו

THE ARREST
AND LIBERATION
OF THE ALTER REBBE

**Post Holocaust
Reflections**

IGROS KODESH

**Speaking
Flames**

CHANUKAH 5752
WITH THE REBBE

THE REBBE'S
GUIDANCE ON
**How to Plan
a Family**



**“Are You
a Tankist?”**

HOW THE MITZVAH TANKS
TOOK THE FRONT LINES



KISLEV 5780
ISSUE 88 (165)
FEBRUARY 2020



CHABAD.ORG / KEHOT PUBLICATION SOCIETY



26 **"Are You A Tankist?"**
THE STORY
OF THE
MITZVAH TANKS

40 **How To Plan A Family**
THE
TORAH
WAY

18 **Yud Tes Kislev**
THE ARREST AND LIBERATION OF THE ALTER REBBE

4 **The Deer-Trapping Rabbi**
DVAR MALCHUS

6 **Speaking Flames**
LEBEN MITTEN REBBE'N -
CHANUKAH 5752

13 **Force-feeding the horse**
KSAV YAD KODESH

14 **Reb Mordechai Horodoker**
THE LIFE OF A CHOSSID

28 **The Spoken And The Unspoken**
A CHASSIDISHER MAASEH

38 **Rage About The Holocaust**
IGROS KODESH

52 **Completely Unexpected**
DER REBBE VET GEFINEN A VEG

55 **Farbrengen In The Frierdiker Rebbe's Apartment**
MOMENTS

58 **Derher Letters**



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Special Thanks to

Rabbi Yirmi Berkowitz • Rabbi Mendel Gourarie • Rabbi Yosef B. Friedman • Rabbi Sholom Ber Levin • Rabbi Shmuel Lubecki • Rabbi Michael Seligson • Rabbi Elkanah Shmotkin • Yaakov Ort • Rabbi Avraham D. Vaisfiche

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A Chassidisher Derher (ISSN 26411059) (USPS 21880) is published monthly by A Chassidisher Derher Inc, 784 Eastern Pkwy, Brooklyn, NY 11213. Subscription price \$71 a year. Periodicals postage paid at Brooklyn, NY. POSTMASTER: Please send address changes to A Chassidisher Derher, 784 Eastern Pkwy, Brooklyn, NY 11213.

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לעבן מיטן רבי'ן



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

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'

Speaking Flames

CHANUKAH 5752



Presented here is an account of Chanukah 5752* in the Rebbe's presence. The following is based on the Beis Chayenu newsletter of that week. A special highlight is, of course, the Chanukah Live program of which we'll bring some short excerpts. To properly experience this momentous and unique event, we encourage our readers to watch the full video.

SUNDAY, 24 KISLEV

Today, Shacharis was upstairs due to the preparations taking place in the big shul. After Shacharis, the *gabbai* announced that the Rebbe

is going to arrive to Mincha today at 2:50 for Chanukah Live.

Among other preparations, the Rebbe's platform was doubled in size for the event taking place tonight, and numerous screens were set up throughout the big shul in 770, in order for people inside to be able to follow the program. For the crowd standing outside (770 was reserved for children) a giant screen was set up on a special truck, so that they too could take part in this unique satellite hook-up.

Finally, the moment that everyone had been waiting for arrived. At 2:50 p.m., amidst the music and singing of "*Al nisecha*" the Rebbe walked in

to shul, encouraging the rejoicing while walking to his place. After the Rebbe ascended the stairs to the *bimah*, he turned around and continued encouraging the singing even further.

After Mincha ended, the Rebbe took his *siddur* and went to stand by the *shtender* that was set up facing the crowd. The Rebbe studied the room, looking around at the children seated, the women's section on top, and even at the camera men.

As part of the schedule, the Twelve Pesukim were recited with different children leading the recitation from around the world via satellite.

For the *possuk* of "Shema Yisroel," the screens shifted to Yerushalayim, where Rabbi Naftoli Roth called up a young boy who had recently emigrated from Chernobyl. The Rebbe concentrated intently on the video screen, which was arranged right in front of his *bimah*. In a moving display of gratitude, the boy, in a mixture of Hebrew and Russian, thanked the Rebbe for all the efforts made in order to save him and hundreds of other girls and boys from the terrible conditions in their region and bringing them to Eretz Yisroel. When the boy started to recite the *possuk*, the Rebbe answered along with everyone, word after word.

At the conclusion of the Twelve Pesukim, the assembled in 770 burst into a vibrant "We Want Moshiach Now" while the Rebbe turned in all directions to encourage the singing with both hands. The Rebbe even moved away from the *shtender* a bit to encourage the children who were situated right near the *bimah*. When the singing quieted down, the emcee, Rabbi Shimon Hecht, thanked all the children who recited the *pesukim* so beautifully, giving them a round of applause. The Rebbe joined in, clapping strongly for quite a while!

As part of the program, menorah lightings were shown on the screens from all over the world.

In Eretz Yisroel, the Sephardi chief rabbi, Rav Mordechai Eliyahu, was honored with lighting a menorah right next to the Kosel, after which a *chazzan*—along with the Tzivos Hashem choir—led the packed plaza in the singing of "*Sheyibaneh Beis Hamikdash*." With much intensity, the Rebbe encouraged the singing, swinging his hand in all directions, turning around to the Chassidim standing behind and even towards one of the camera men! These were truly special moments.

Afterwards, Rav Eliyahu was invited to deliver a few words and the Rebbe listened attentively as he spoke.



In France, an immense crowd of 20,000 people were gathered at the Eiffel Tower for the program. As the cameras turned to Paris, the chief rabbi had just finished addressing the crowd and Rabbi Shmuel Azimov took the microphone. The Rebbe had just dedicated a full *sicha* to France at the farbrengen last Shabbos, thereby creating an added interest as to what was happening there. After saying *l'chaim*, Rabbi Azimov started to sing the *niggun* "*Hoaderes v'haemuna*" to the tune of the French national anthem. The crowd at 770 joined in as well, when all of a sudden, the Rebbe started encouraging the singing, first banging on the *shtender* and then lifting his hands in the air, exhibiting tremendous *simcha*.

After the menorah was lit in 770, Eli Lipsker's orchestra started to play "*Haneiros Halalu*." As soon as he reached the first words of the song (which are usually sung slowly), the Rebbe began encouraging in a fast manner with brisk motions, looking in all directions.

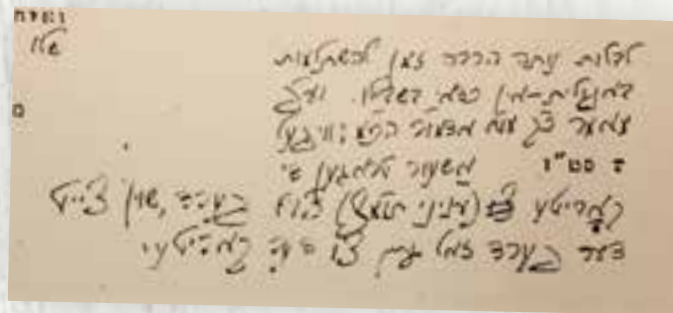


כתב יד קודש

לזכות
הרה"ת ר' נחום צבי
וזוגתו מרת דבורה לאה
ומשפחתם שיחיו
מאנגעל
לחיזוק התקשרותם
לכ"ק אדמו"ר

Force-Feeding the Horse

Postscript of a letter to Reb Yitzchok Dubov in which he asked the Rebbe about how to best approach his efforts in *hafatzas hamaayanos*:



To spend a lot of time now for advanced study of English—is not worthwhile for you. [This,] in accordance with the words of the Rebbe, my father-in-law: How long can we drag the trough (i.e. Torah and mitzvos) to the horse? It is time for the horse to go to the trough!¹

(Igros Kodesh vol. 3, p. 337)

לבלות עתה הרבה זמן להשתלמות באנגלית - אין כדאי בשבילו. וע"פ מאמר כ"ק מו"ח אדמו"ר הכ"מ: וויפעל א שיעור טראגען די קאריטע (עניני תומ"צ) צום פערד, שוין צייט דער פערד זאל גיין צו דער קאריטע.

1. I.e. although we do try as best we can to make Torah and mitzvos accessible for every Jew, at some point there needs to be effort made on the part of the student to learn and understand. As such, when the shliach speaks English with an accent he should not feel the need to spend time fixing it.

לעילוי נשמת
מרת חנה לאה בת הרה"ת ר' שמעון ע"ה
ברוק
גלב"ע ז' טבת ה'תשע"א
'ת'נ'צ'ב'ה
נדפס על ידי ולזכות משפחתה שיחיו
משפחות ברוק, באנון, ודייטש.
ניו יארק. פלארידא.
מאנטאנא. מאנטרעאל.



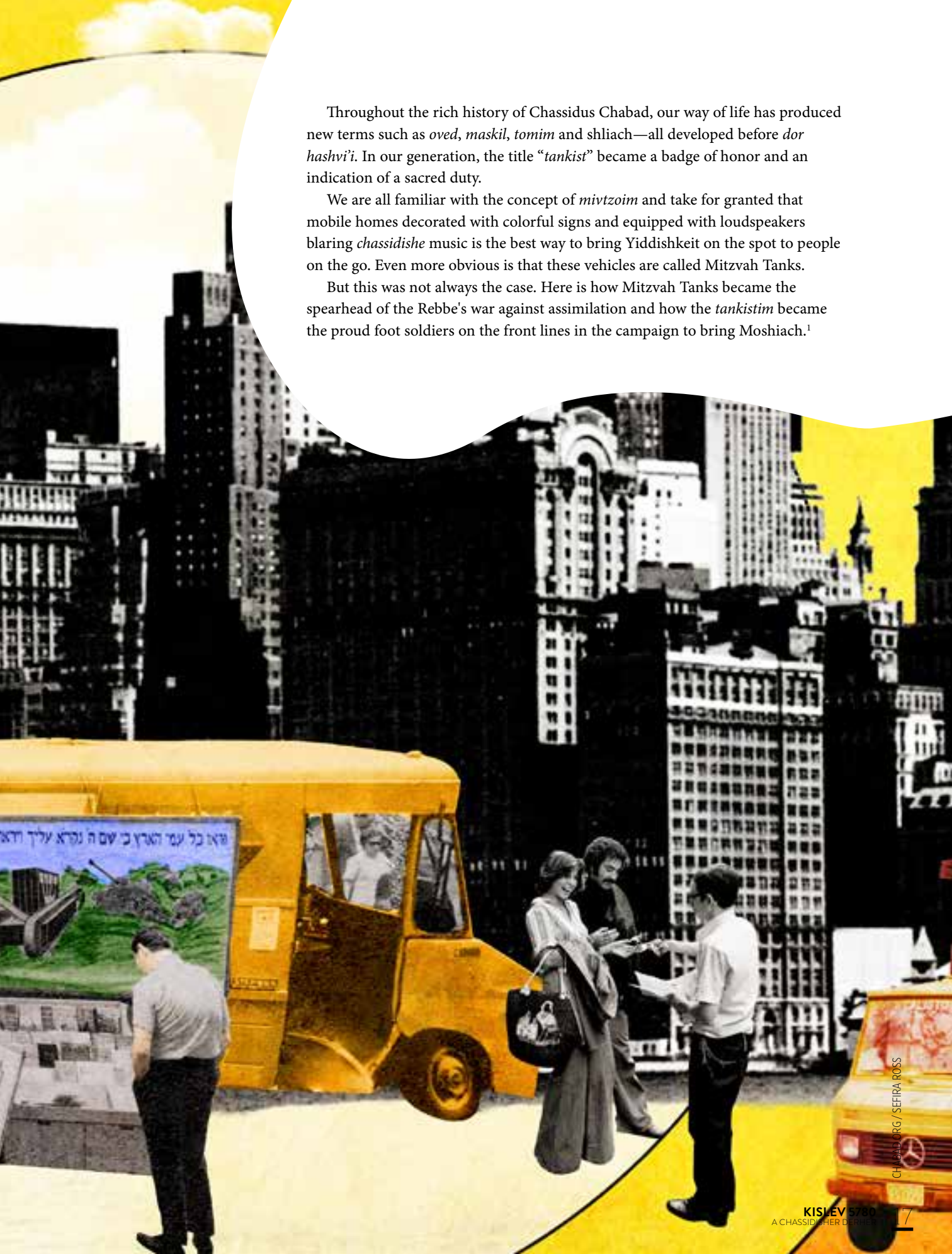
“Are You a Tankist?”



Throughout the rich history of Chassidus Chabad, our way of life has produced new terms such as *oved*, *maskil*, *tomim* and *shliach*—all developed before *dor hashvi'i*. In our generation, the title “*tankist*” became a badge of honor and an indication of a sacred duty.

We are all familiar with the concept of *mivtzoim* and take for granted that mobile homes decorated with colorful signs and equipped with loudspeakers blaring *chassidishe* music is the best way to bring Yiddishkeit on the spot to people on the go. Even more obvious is that these vehicles are called Mitzvah Tanks.

But this was not always the case. Here is how Mitzvah Tanks became the spearhead of the Rebbe's war against assimilation and how the *tankistim* became the proud foot soldiers on the front lines in the campaign to bring Moshiach.¹



Response to Inconceivable Tragedy

It was a tense time for the global Jewish community, months after the Yom Kippur War and days after the terrorist attack in a high school in Ma'alot, Eretz Yisrael, on 23 Iyar 5734* which left 22 teenagers dead *r"l*. The Jewish world was reeling in shock from the tragedy and during the farbrengen of Shabbos Parshas Bamidbar the Rebbe spoke a *sicha* about the need to strengthen the protection of Yidden throughout the world—especially in Eretz Yisroel—through five specific *mitvzoim*.

Tefillin: As the *navi* states, when the nations of the world will see that the name of Hashem is upon the Yidden (the *tefillin shel rosh*) they will fear you.

Torah: Encourage every Yid to learn Torah every day, as the Gemara states that Torah is a protection and salvation.

Mezuzah: Kosher mezuzos on the doorposts of the home serve as a protection for all of the inhabitants of the home wherever they may be.

Tzedakah: Encourage Yidden to give tzedakah every day and to have a tzedakah *pushka* at home. Chazal declare that when you take care of the poor, Hashem takes care of you.

Bayis Malei Sefarim: Having *sifrei kodesh* in the home strengthens the spiritual security of the home.

The next day, Erev Shavuos, the Rebbe unexpectedly went to the Ohel—something that had never happened before. This came as a surprise to everyone including the Rebbe's secretaries, especially since the Rebbe had been to the Ohel three days earlier.

On the way to the Ohel the Rebbe started editing the *sicha* about the five *mitvzoim* so that those going on *tahalucha* on Shavuos should speak in all the shuls about the *mitvzoim*. Upon reaching the Ohel the Rebbe asked Rabbi Krinsky to call the Vaad Lehafatzas Sichos from the public payphone to notify them of his edits.

While in the Ohel the Rebbe finished editing the *sicha* and gave Rabbi Krinsky the final draft with instructions to relay all the changes to the Vaad immediately. Thus, the *sicha* was edited by the Rebbe and then published less than a day after it was said, in time for Yom Tov.²

On the day after Shavuos, Rabbi Shneur Zalman Garelik (the rav of Kfar Chabad), Rabbi Yechiel Meir Yehuda Goldberg, Rabbi Yeshaya Weiss, and Ms. Nechama Rosenberg (Rabbi Garelik's great niece and a *kalla* at the time) were



4 TAMMUZ 5734

killed in a terrible car accident while traveling to Kfar Chabad from a wedding in Yerushalayim. News of the horrible tragedy reached 770 on Motzei Shavuot and everyone was terribly shaken.

During the farbrengen the next Shabbos the Rebbe cried bitterly about the recent tragedies and said there is no logical explanation for them.

“Since these episodes defy comprehension, we must respond by doing mitvzoim in a way that also transcends all logic. Although a Yid naturally wants to learn Torah and daven at great length, nevertheless he goes out into the street to encourage another Yid to place a tzedakah pushka and mezuzah in his home, and this will bring Moshiach quicker.”³

Lubavitch Hits the Streets

For many years, especially since the onset of Mitzta Tefillin before the Six Day War in 5727, it was routine for *bochurim* to venture out on *mitvzoim* when there was no *sefer hayeshiva*. These activities were coordinated and supported by Tzach, which was responsible for all outreach work in the New York area.⁴

After the tremendous *sichos* from the Rebbe during the recent farbrengens about *mitvzoim*, Reb Dovid Raskin—the *menahel* of Tzach as well as a member of the *hanhala* of the yeshiva

in 770—suggested that this was not enough. A rotation of groups of *bochurim* needed to be on the streets doing *mitvzoim* every day.

On Wednesday, 15 Sivan, the Rebbe returned from the Ohel and held a surprise farbrengen. The purpose of the farbrengen was so that the Rebbe can directly communicate the importance of strengthening the *mitvzoim* to those listening from afar via live hookup. Everyone that would get more involved in *mitvzoim*, wherever they were in the world, would receive one bill of the local currency from the Rebbe.

Many *anash* joined the *mitvzoim* activities and Tzach’s main office was busy 24 hours a day. Brochures were distributed about the importance of checking mezuzos and installing kosher ones. Dozens of people would call Tzach’s phone number (which was printed on the brochure) requesting home visits to check their mezuzos and a team of *bochurim* was tasked with doing the house calls.

Mitvzoim was reaching a fevered pitch, but there was much more to come.

One day that week, as the *bochurim* were out on the streets doing *mitvzoim*, their activities were interrupted by a heavy rain. Several *bochurim* came up with the idea to rent moving trucks and outfit them with a table and two benches. This way people can be invited onto



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the trucks to wrap tefillin, undisturbed by the elements.

On Erev Shabbos, 17 Sivan, two yellow trucks blaring *chassidische* music from loudspeakers left 770, manned by groups of *bochurim* to do *mitvtzoim* in Manhattan and Queens. The trucks were such a success that by Sunday, 19 Sivan, four trucks were parked in front of 770. When the Rebbe arrived that morning, the loudspeakers started playing Harav Levi Yitzchok's *hakafos niggun* and rolled away. Reb Dovid Raskin

reported to the Rebbe that on that day, 10,000 brochures were distributed...

In response the Rebbe wrote:

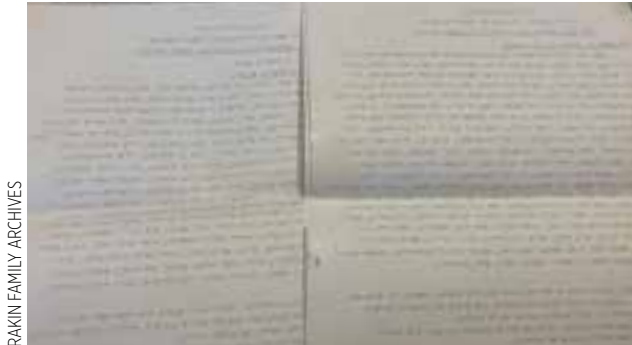
נת' ות"ת ח. ואשרי חלקם. ויה"ר שיקוים בכל המשתתפים במבצעים אלה - האנשים והנשים והטף - שליט"א: מי שיש לו מנה רוצה כו' ארבע מאות וכו'. אזכיר עה"צ.

I recieved [the report] and many thanks, many thanks. Fortunate is their lot. May it be Hashem's will that it be fulfilled by all those involved in these mitvtzoim—men, women and children—shlita: He who has one hundred wants [two hundred] etc. four hundred etc. I will mention it at the tziyun.

In addition the Rebbe notified the relevant parties that 90% of the budget for the *mitvtzoim* will be covered by the special *mitvtzoim* account under the auspices of the *mazkirus*.

Tanks Against Assimilation

On Sunday evening, 26 Sivan, upon exiting 770 the Rebbe looked intently at the five yellow trucks parked outside in preparation for the next



ONE OF MANY REPORTS SENT TO THE REBBE RECOUNTING OF THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE MITZVAH TANKS.





The Arrest & Liberation of the *Alter Rebbe*

נדפס ע"י ולזכות
הרה"ת ר' שלום וזוגתו מרת רבקה
ומשפחתם שיחי
שריקי



Reb Nochum, the son of the Mitteler Rebbe, had a Yud-Tes Kislev tradition. At the annual farbrengen, he would relate the entire series of events, beginning with the Alter Rebbe's studies in Mezeritch, all the way to the account of his liberation. If a notable individual would enter the room in the middle of his account, he would start again from the beginning.

For generations, the story of Yud-Tes Kislev has been a staple of Chassidic storytelling. From the youngest age, children are raised on the actions of the Alter Rebbe, the schemes of Avigdor, and the victory of the Chassidim.

For the first time, A Chassidisher Derher will retell the story for our readers. The full story cannot be contained in a single article; instead, we have attempted to shed light on some unknown elements of the story, based on *sichos* of the Rebbe and the Frieddiker Rebbe, and documents that were discovered in the archives of the Russian government. (Any details that are not footnoted are from "Chag Hageula - Yud Tes Kislev," by Rabbi Chanoch Glitzenshtein.)

"When I was a child," the Tzemach Tzedek told the Rebbe Maharash, "my grandfather would take me under his tallis during *tekios* and *birchas kohanim*. During *tekios* in the year 5559*, I saw that a great *tzarah* would befall him that year, and he didn't see any salvation..."

The Chassidim too, noticed a bitterness in the Alter Rebbe throughout Tishrei, but they had no plausible explanation for it. At the time, no significant news had reached the small town of Liozna. Little did

A CELL IN THE PETROPAVLOVSK
FORTRESS. THE ALTER REBBE WAS
IMPRISONED IN A ROOM SUCH AS THIS.



they know that trouble was brewing in the capital city of S. Petersburg...



In the 25 years since the passing of the Maggid, Chassidus had grown by leaps and bounds.

In Liozna, the Alter Rebbe had founded three *chadarim* (organized yeshiva-like study systems)¹ which attracted brilliant Torah scholars to their ranks. The regular crowd of Chassidim visiting Liozna had grown to such proportions that Takkanos Liozna were established, regulating

the flow of new and old Chassidim. Chassidic shuls flourished in cities and towns across Russia, and the Alter Rebbe established firm organizational principles to ensure Chassidim lived up to Chassidic ideals.

A landmark event had taken place two years earlier, with the printing of the *Sefer HaTanya*. Now, with the Alter Rebbe's teachings in a printed form, Chassidus was able to reach even further places.

The opposition to Chassidus took careful note of all these developments. Since the days of the Maggid, a severe *hisnagdus* had taken form among certain segments of Jewry, with their centers being primarily in Vilna and Shklov. Although there was an ebb and flow to their battles (the greatest flare-up had been during the Maggid's final days in 5532*) the underlying opposition remained strong throughout.

A turning point took place one year earlier, on Chol Hamoed Sukkos 5558*, with the passing of the Vilna Gaon. The presence of the Gaon had forced the opposition to suit their actions to befit a person of his stature. With him no longer present, they felt free to take their battle to places they had never dared.

A rumor spread in Vilna that the Chassidim had publicly celebrated the Gaon's illness and passing. (In truth, a *simchas beis hashoevah* had been held in Reb Meir Refael's sukkah a day before the Gaon's passing, where a public *Mi Sheberach* had been recited for his recovery.) The *misnagdim* were infuriated, and they swore to exact revenge.²



Over Elul of 5558*, communications were held between Czar Paul I and Russian Chief Prosecutor Lupochin about a "Zalman Baruchovitch and the Krolins" (a nickname for Chassidim which evolved from the Chassidic center of

**The misnagdim
were infuriated,
and they swore
to exact revenge.**

Karlin, home to two students of the Maggid, Reb Aharon and Reb Shlomo, and others). A letter had arrived accusing the Alter Rebbe of misdeeds, such as aiding the French revolution and allowing his students to waste their days in frivolous behavior with money stolen from their parents.

The Czar instructed that the Alter Rebbe be arrested (along with 30 Chassidim from Vilna) and sent to S. Petersburg. Later, the name signed on the letter turned out to be false, but the authorities felt that the Chassidic movement should be investigated anyway. New religious movements with anti-Czarist stances had been appearing in Russia, so the new Jewish group was viewed with suspicion as well.³

Soon enough, an ominous-looking black carriage rolled into Liozna accompanied by a group of soldiers, striking fear into the hearts of the Chassidim. Hearing about their arrival, the Alter Rebbe hid in the cemetery. Rebbetzin Sterna was asked about her husband's whereabouts, and when she responded that she didn't know, a soldier slapped her forcefully across the face and knocked out a tooth.

Not finding their man, the soldiers left, and the Alter Rebbe returned home. That night, Reb Shmuel Munkes came to the Alter Rebbe, and gave his opinion:

"What should I tell you? I think you need to go."

"But it's dangerous!" the Alter Rebbe replied.

“If you are a Rebbe,” said Reb Shmuel, “no bullet will hit you. But if you are not a Rebbe, you deserve it...” [According to a different version: How could you take the pleasures of *olam hazeh* from thousands of Jews?]

Resting his head on his hand, the Alter Rebbe thought about it for some time, and then said to Reb Shmuel, “Whether you are right, I don’t know, but go *gezunterheit*.”

The next morning, the Alter Rebbe went to *mikveh*. He called his brother Maharil and his sons the Mittler Rebbe and Reb Avraham⁴ and instructed them to fast, saying, “Today they will take me.” That evening, the soldiers returned. The Alter Rebbe davened Mincha, and went with them.⁵

The journey to S. Petersburg took several days. They left Liozna on Thursday night, Isru Chag Sukkos, and soon enough, Shabbos was approaching. The Alter Rebbe asked the officer to stop off at the side of the road, but his request was refused.

The wagon was beset by a series of strange events. First an axle broke, and then a horse died. The officer realized that he didn’t have a choice, and they spent Shabbos at the side of the road.⁶ In later generations, the Chassidim of nearby Nevel were able to point out the exact place the Alter Rebbe spent Shabbos, where a large beautiful tree stood out among the other broken and dead trees.



“With this pipe, I could have burned the entire Petersburg!”

The fear and distress among the Chassidim was unimaginable. The Czar was a ruthless person, and the investigations would be held in complete secrecy. Nobody had any idea how things would turn out.

The night the Alter Rebbe was arrested, the senior Chassidim held an emergency meeting. Within a short time a list of instructions was sent out for the Chassidim, both in spiritual and material matters.

All Chassidim were to fast each Monday and Thursday, and even Shabbos meals were to be kept to a bare minimum. *Cheder* children were to recite Tehillim. In the event that a Chossid would pass away, his entire community was to fast, and after the *tahara*, they were to exhort the individual to go before the Maggid and Baal Shem Tov in heaven and beseech their help.

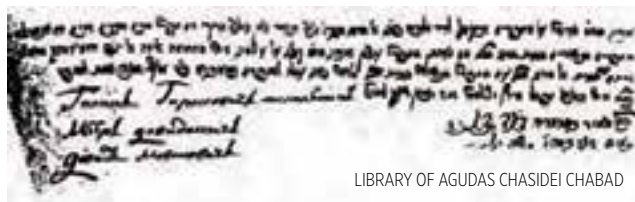
On a material level, every Chossid was asked to make a list of all the valuables he owned, and in the case of a lengthy arrest, they would be pawned and the money used for the redemption efforts.

Chassidim were dispatched to spread these instructions far and wide. Others were sent to S. Petersburg to look for clues about the Alter Rebbe’s situation, and yet others traveled to Vilna and Shklov to spy on the *misnagdim*, who were assumed to be behind the *mesirah*.



Before his departure, the Alter Rebbe dispatched the Chossid Reb Yaakov Smilianer with a *pidyon nefesh* to Reb Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev.

When Reb Yaakov arrived in Berdichev, it was morning. He immediately came to see Reb Levi



RECORD OF HOW MANY SEFARIM WERE CONFISCATED DURING THE ALTER REBBE’S IMPRISONMENT.

Yitzchak, who lit his pipe. “With this pipe, I could have burned the entire Petersburg!”

The Alter Rebbe had discussed his *derech* of Chabad Chassidus with Reb Levi Yitzchak a year or two prior, and Reb Levi Yitzchak had scolded the Alter Rebbe for taking so much responsibility instead of making use of miraculous means, which was more common among Chagas Rebbes.

The Alter Rebbe had replied, “Hashem wants a *dirah batachtonim*, that *Atzmus* should be in *tachtonim*. That is accomplished through *pnimi’im*, not through *makifim* (miracles).

Now, Reb Levi Yitzchak repeated his argument. “With this pipe, I could have burned the entire Petersburg!”

“Berdichever Rav,” Reb Yaakov replied, “the Rebbe is a *Reisisher* (a Russian). The Rebbe is *Chochmah*, *Binah*, *Daas*!” (Implying that Chabad doesn’t work through miracles).

Reb Levi Yitzchak gave him a piercing look.

“What’s a *Reisisher Chossid*. He’s fine with a Rebbe without a mother...”

This comment pertained to the *pan*. Arriving in Berdichev, Reb Yaakov had discovered that he had lost the *pan* of the Alter Rebbe, and although he remembered its contents, he didn’t know the Alter Rebbe’s mother’s name.

Reb Levi Yitzchak went to the *mikveh*, and upon emerging, he said, “*Yesh shever b’Mitzrayim*” (“*Shever*” being *roshei teivos* Shneur ben Rivkah). After davening Shacharis, he said resolutely, “*Yesh shever*, there is hope!”





לע"נ
ר' יהודה ע"ה
בן ר' משה יעקב ע"ה
גלב"ע ר"ח כסלו התשנ"ט
תנ"צ'ב'ה'
נדפס ע"י בנו
הרה"ת השליח ר' יוסף יצחק
וזוגתו מרת ביילא רחל ומשפחתם שיחיו
ביסטאן



Rage about the Holocaust

In the following letter, the Rebbe offers fascinating insight into the proper understanding (or lack thereof) of the Holocaust and the conclusions we must draw today from this horrific occurrence.

By the grace of God
5733
Dr. ...
Cambridge, Mass.

Greetings and blessings.

I duly received your letter of ... in which you write that you feel rage, etc. as a result of the Holocaust.

There is a prevalent misconception about the Holocaust that it was something new and unprecedented, and therefore requires an explanation which has never before been thought of. In truth, however, the only thing that is new about it is that it happened in the 20th Century, in a country which was one of the foremost in philosophy and science, with the rest of the world looking on with complete indifference. It only points out the glaring bankruptcy of the world's so-called "civilization."

The fact is—and in view of your academic background (Ph.D.) you must surely know—that the Jewish people had suffered Holocausts before, and—relatively speaking—even worse [than the Nazi Holocaust]. There was the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash at the hands of the Babylonians, and the destruction of the second Beis Hamikdash by the Romans. In both cases more than one third of our people—men, women and children—were brutally slain, and most of the remainder uprooted and exiled, or sold into slavery. This in addition to the loss of the spiritual center in Jerusalem, loss of the country, and independence, etc. There were the Crusades in the Middle Ages, with the loss of countless Jewish communities and Jewish lives, and more. So why single out the recent—and let us hope last—Holocaust?

Furthermore, from the viewpoint of the question, "Shall the judge of all the earth not do justice?" (a question, incidentally, asked by our patriarch Abraham); in other words, from the viewpoint of Divine justice, which is clearly the basis of your rage, etc., as you state in your letter, surely there is no difference in principle between the Holocaust and seeing a child afflicted with disease (as you also mention), for the child's suffering cannot be justified as punishment.

A further point: has it not occurred to you that throughout the ages there were faithful and God-fearing Jews, among them profound thinkers, who contemplated these and other problems, dedicating a lifetime to study and research, and whose works have become the Guide for the Perplexed (the actual title of the celebrated classic by the Rambam)? Do you think that all these great minds simply ignored a problem such as the Holocaust?



Finally—and this is perhaps the most essential point—what would you say of a person, even a superhuman being, who declared that were it not for the Holocaust he would walk humbly before God and obey all His mitzvot, yet because of the Holocaust he is impelled to conclude that God is limited in his intellect, like me and you— and indeed more so, for you and I would not tolerate such a thing?

In summary, the question about the Holocaust is as old as the age-old question: Why do the wicked prosper? It has been dealt with at great length and with profundity by great minds and in great books throughout the ages. We have not only learned to live with it, but it has not shaken the belief of the believer, for the simple reason that the human mind, even the greatest, is woefully limited and inadequate to question the Divine intellect.

The main point I wish to bring out here is that those who say that they cannot obey and fulfill the Divine mitzvot because of the Holocaust are only looking for an excuse, and it is a feeble attempt at self-justification in the face of a troubling conscience.

Moreover, to evoke the memory of the sacred martyrs—who lost their lives in the Holocaust for no other reason but that they are Jews—does not reflect, in my opinion, an honest concern for them, if their sacred memory is used as an excuse to lessen one's commitment to our people and our sacred heritage.

I trust you will forgive me if I feel impelled because of what is at stake to add that the last remark is an understatement.

I noted that you wanted to see me personally in regard to the subject matter of your letter, but there is really no need for it, since there is surely no need to add more to what has been said above. Besides, the schedule of appointments is fully booked for a long time ahead. So why wait?

With blessing,



How To Plan A Family

In the preparation of this article
we were greatly assisted by Rabbi
Shmuli Avtzon and **Sichos in English**.

This article has been reviewed
by **Rabbi Pesach Schmerling**.

The first mitzvah

Bearing children is the single most important thing that a person can do.¹ The very first mitzvah of the 613 mitzvos is—פרו ורבו—be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it. The fact that it's the first mitzvah in the Torah—even before “I am Hashem your G-d”—shows just how important it is.² The Midrash tells us that “the concept of Torah” came before the creation of the world, but “the concept of Yidden” came before everything, including Torah. The birth of another Jewish child comes before everything, even “the concept of Torah!”³

The mitzvah from the Torah is to have two children: a boy and a girl, but the mitzvah of *chachamim* is that one should continue having children as long as possible, “for anyone who adds a soul to the Jewish people is considered as if he built an entire world.”⁴

It is the first mitzvah in the Torah—and it's also the first *bracha* in the Torah, for it is the greatest *bracha* that one can be blessed with.⁵

Every individual is an *olam malei*, an entire world. When you bring a child into the world, you are bringing an entire world, and you are creating an infinite lineage of people that will come from that child. When you choose *not* to have another child, that is spiritually eliminating an entire lineage of people that could have resulted from this child.⁶

Yidden throughout all the generations—in Eretz Yisroel, as well as during all times of *galus*—always considered it to be the greatest *bracha* to have many children.⁷ This goes back to the earliest history of the Jewish people. The *Imhahs* were very different from one another: Sara performed outreach to women, which we don't find by the other *Imahs*; Rivka had unique qualities that the other *Imahs* didn't have, and so on—and we derive a lesson from each of their individual qualities. There is only one thing that we find by every single one of the *Imahs*—Sara, Rivka, Rochel, and Leah—a yearning and striving to have children. “*Sara hut avekgelait a velt!*” (loosely: ‘She gave it her all’). She came with complaints to Avraham Avinu, and she didn't allow him to rest: she needed to have children! The same was true

with Rivka and Rochel. Even Leah, who merited to have children immediately after her marriage, did everything in her power to have more.⁸

Nachas

We see clearly that the greatest *nachas* that a person can have is from raising a family. By no means is it easy but when, after all the hardships, doubts and questions, you come out successfully on the other side with children and grandchildren who follow the ways of Torah and mitzvos, there is no greater feeling! *Lefum tzaara agra* (according to the pain is the gain).⁹ You can't receive this same *nachas* from a single child, for with every additional child comes a new world of *nachas*, each in their own unique way: One child gives *nachas* in the arena of Torah, another in *avoda*, and a third in *gemmilus chassadim*.¹⁰

When a person doesn't have as many children as they can, they are denying themselves the greatest *bracha*, light, and warmth that Hashem can give a person. It is only in the darkness of today's *galus* that people tragically consider children a burden.¹¹ It is not hard to find older people who regret the fact that they didn't raise large families—“They grab their heads that they let slip such a lofty and precious opportunity to have more children”—but it's too late...¹²

(This can be felt on a practical level: “When children grow up and move away to build their own families,” the Rebbe said, “the parents want to visit their children and grandchildren, and even great-grandchildren. But if they have only one or two children, they can only visit every half a year or so... The parents can't sit in their children's homes all the time. Between trips, they are forced to be alone, without having someone to open themselves up to. Whereas parents who have many children can visit one child, stay for a while—and then move on to the next child. Similarly, the children and grandchildren come to visit their parents and grandparents from time to time, and everyone sits together—a *minyán* at the table—ושמחת לפני ה' אלוֹקֶיךָ אֹתָהּ וּבְנֶיךָ וּבְנוֹתֶיךָ—and the grandfathers and grandmothers

receive much *nachas* from their children and grandchildren.”¹³)

The model family?

The mitzvah of having children was entrusted to every single couple—whether or not their home environment is ideal; whether or not they are confident in their ability to raise good children; and whether or not they believe that they have the financial resources to continue having children.¹⁴

It applies whether they already have two children (a boy and a girl), or they’ve already caught up with Yaakov Avinu, with twelve boys and a girl—they are still enjoined to have more.¹⁵

There are three partners in the creation of every child: the father, the mother, and Hashem. The father and mother can only control that they definitely *won’t* have children, but anything past that, in fact everything else—that the mother will become pregnant, that the child will be healthy, and how the child’s life will turn out—is controlled completely by the third partner, Hashem. And Hashem gave his opinion as to whether or not a person should try having children; He said *pru u’rvu*, be fruitful and multiply—without exceptions or quotas.¹⁶

The mitzvah applies until you’ve fulfilled the second part of the *possuk*, that you’ve *filled the world and conquered it*. If in fact there’s a situation when one is not meant to have children at that time, for whatever reason, then Hashem will ensure that you won’t.¹⁷

Population control

“One cannot argue that it suffices to have two children, a boy and a girl, for they are leaving a replacement for themselves and not reducing the amount of people in the world—because you weren’t created only *not to cause damage*, you were created to *build worlds* through having children and grandchildren, thereby becoming a partner with Hashem in creation.”

(Tzav, Shabbos Zachor, 5744)

How to bring Moshiach

10 Shevat 5730 marked a special time by the Rebbe: the completion of Moshiach’s *sefer Torah*. The initiative had begun decades earlier by the Frieddiker Rebbe, but although the *sefer Torah* had nearly been completed at the time, for reasons unknown it was never brought to fruition. Finally, as the twentieth anniversary of the Rebbe’s *nesius* was approaching, the Rebbe announced that “all obstacles have been removed” and it was time to finish it. Chassidim from around the world flew in to celebrate this momentous occasion with the Rebbe, and the atmosphere of Moshiach was felt vividly in the air.

The Torah was completed on Friday, Erev Yud Shevat. At the farbrengen on Motzei Shabbos, with feelings of anticipation for Moshiach running high, the Rebbe spoke about a powerful way to bring him closer:

It says in the Gemara that “Ben Dovid [Moshiach] will not come until all souls in [the treasury of souls called] ‘guf’ will be finished...”

...There are those who are mistaken and want to debate about birth control and so on—but they are misinterpreting the Torah. Having children is not only a personal obligation to fulfill the first mitzvah of the Torah to “fill the world and conquer it,” but it is a matter that affects everyone—the geula of the entire Jewish nation depends on it.

This is a special shlichus that depends especially on women and girls, wherever they may be; how much more so regarding those who are already aware of the teachings, directives, and guidance of the [Frieddiker] Rebbe...

This would become a common theme in the *sichos* throughout the years, that especially now, in the final days of *galus*, it is vital to have children and thereby bring the *geula*.

Family planning: An imposter hiding in a kapote

The Rebbe truly felt that family planning was actively hurting families, and his language in the sichos on the topic were often quite sharp. Below, we bring the Rebbe's words as they were said, but we encourage our readers to watch and listen to the original sichos, where one can hear the compassion and care with which the Rebbe was speaking.

On the surface, the Rebbe said, “family planning” may sound like a sensible idea: If you plan everything else in your life, how much more so should you be organized in an endeavor as significant as child-bearing, to ensure that the children should come at the appropriate time and ideal circumstance.

In reality, however, it is a dangerous “plan,” concealed in a “silk *kapote*,” in holy clothing; it might have a fancy, politically correct name—*family planning*—but really it's a deceptive term for disrupting Hashem's natural order, the natural functions of our bodies.¹⁸ “One must know that when you disrupt Hashem's ways and prevent birth, you are damaging yourself and everyone around you.”¹⁹ And it has terrible effects on family life as well:

“...It causes tensions in the relationship between husband and wife, which, in turn, leads to spoiling, *r'l*, their life together—here there are precautions, here there are limitations, here comes a fight, and here there is a strain. When you disrupt the normal way that Hashem set up life in His Torah, and you start introducing changes, it hurts the relationship and *shalom bayis* between husband and wife, and it even hurts their health—both the wife's and the husband's.”²⁰ (See more on this below.)

What about getting a heter for health?

There is a scenario when it is permitted to hold off on having children—when it is dangerous for the mother.²¹ It is impossible for the parents to have unbiased judgement in

this matter, and a rav must be consulted. If, in fact, the situation calls for a *heter*, then it is *the Torah itself* that is directing the person to push off having children.²²

However, if a *heter* is not really necessary, and parents made the decision that they shouldn't be having children for other reasons, then even if they *do* manage to get a *heter* from a rav, they should know that the *yetzer hara* is behind it, he is concealed in holy clothing.²³ When one finds *heterim* for things that the *yetzer hara* wants, they are a *naval birshus haTorah*, a disgrace with the Torah's permission.²⁴

The plea of a child

A child comes home and tells his parents with excitement that he learned in Chumash that the Yidden in Mitzrayim “were fruitful and multiplied... very very much,” and, as children are wont to do, he asks his parents for more brothers and sisters. That causes the parents to do everything in their power to fulfill the mitzvah of bearing children without any calculations, so they shouldn't regret the fact that they missed this valuable opportunity.²⁵

Unstable home

In addition to teaching the general authentic Torah perspective on this topic, namely, that having children is *the* single most important goal and it overrides all other considerations, the Rebbe also expounded upon certain specific scenarios which are commonly brought up regarding this outlook:

Should a couple be encouraged to have more children if the *shalom bayis* is lacking, or when the level of *frumkeit* leaves ample room for improvement?

We have a lesson for this in Torah: in certain situations that a woman acts very inappropriately, she gains the status of a *sota*. She is brought to the *Beis Hamikdash* and tested with the *sota* water to determine as to whether she was indeed faithful to her husband. If she fails the test, she dies. But if she passes, the Torah promises her that, as repayment for all

לע"נ
ר' זיסא בן ציון
בן לוי ע"ה
ליבערמאן
נלב"ע ח"י כסלו ה'תשע"ג
ת"נ צ'ב'ה'
נדפס ע"י משפחתו שיחיו
ולחיזוק ההתקשרות
לכ"ק אדמו"ר נשיא דורנו

לזכות הורינו
ר' יעקב וזוגתו מרת רחל חנה
ומשפחתם שיחיו כהן
ר' משה צבי וזוגתו מרת לאה
ומשפחתם שיחיו יאנסאן

נדפס ע"י
הרה"ת ר' זאב נתן וזוגתו מרת אריאלה
ומשפחתם שיחיו
יאנסאן

לזכות שלוחי כ"ק אדמו"ר בכל אתר ואתר
בקשר עם 'כינוס השלוחים העולמי'
ולזכות הורינו
ר' יעקב קאפיל שיחיו רובין
בקשר עם יום הולדתו השמונים ט' כסלו ה'תש"פ
ומרת ח'י רבקה תח'י מאצקין
בקשר עם יום הולדתה י' כסלו

נדפס ע"י
הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל וזוגתו אסתי ומשפחתם שיחיו
מאצקין

לזכות
החתן הרה"ת ר' יוסף ארי' שיחיו פעלער
והכלה המהוללה מרת דבורה לאה תח'י דערען
לרגל חתונתם בשעטומ"צ
ל' תשרי אדר"ח מרחשון ה'תש"פ
נדפס ע"י הוריהם
הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל
וזוגתו מרת נחמה דינה שיחיו פעלער
הרה"ת ר' יוסף יצחק הכהן
וזוגתו מרת בת שבע קרינדל שיחיו דערען

לעילוי נשמת
ר' יוסף חיים
בן זאב אברהם ע"ה
סלאווין
נלב"ע כ"ב כסלו ה'תשל"ב
ולע"נ מרת פעסי
בת ר' שמואל יוסף ע"ה
נלב"ע כ"ד כסלו ה'תשס"ד
ת"נ צ'ב'ה'
נדפס ע"י משפחתם
ר' יוסף ראובן וזוגתו מרת אסתר מרים ומשפחתם שיחיו
פרימרמן

לזכות
הרה"ת ר' שלום דוב בער וזוגתו מרת ח'י מושקא שיחיו שוחאט
לרגל יום הנישואין העשירי, יום הבהיר ראש חודש כסלו תש"ע-תש"פ
ולזכות בנותיהם
ברכה ליפשא, עליזה ושיינדל שיחיו שוחאט

לזכות
החיילת בצבאות ה'
ח'י מושקא תח'י
לרגל הולדתה ז' אלול ה'תשע"ט
ולזכות הוריה
הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל וזוגתו מרת חנה צבי שיחיו לאזאר
נדפס ע"י זקניה
הרה"ת ר' יהודה וזוגתו מרת לאה ומשפחתם שיחיו
טייכטל

DEDICATED IN HONOR OF
THE BAR MITZVAH OF OUR DEAR SON

שיחי דני

14 KISLEV 5780

MAY YOU CONTINUE TO
BRING US MUCH NACHAS!

BY HIS PARENTS
SHUEY AND FAIGY SCHEINER

נדפס ע"י ולזכות
הרה"ת ר' יהושע דוד
וזוגתו מרת איידל חנה
ומשפחתם שיחיו
שפוטין

לזכות
אסתר יוכבד בת שיינדל דוידא תחי'
לאריכות ימים ושנים טובות
ולחיזוק ההתקשרות
לב"ק אדמו"ר נשיא דורנו

לזכות
החיילת בצבאות ה'
חי' מושקא תחי'
לרגל הולדתה י"ז אלול ה'תשע"ט
נדפס ע"י הורי'
הרה"ת ר' יוסף וזוגתו מרת חנה ומשפחתם שיחיו
בוימאארטן



מוקדש לחיזוק ההתקשרות לנשיא דורנו כ"ק אדמו"ר צוקללה"ה נבג"מ זי"ע בקשר עם יום הבהיר ר"ח כסלו



לע"נ

מרת דבורה ע"ה בת הרה"ת ר' זאב שו"ב
נלב"ע יו"ד כסלו תשע"ג

ת'נ'צ'ב'ה'

נדפס ע"י בנה

הרה"ת ר' הלל דוד וזוגתו מרת שטערנא שרה ומשפחתם שיחיו
קרינסקי



לע"נ

מרת ליובא מיכלא בת הרה"ת ר' שלמה ז"ל
אשת הרה"ח התמים ר' אברהם מאיר הכהן ז"ל זרחי
נפטרה בשיבה טובה ביום שלישי ג' כסלו ה'תשע"ה
ת'נ'צ'ב'ה'

נדפס ע"י חתנה

הרה"ת ר' שמואל חיים דוד וזוגתו מרת גיטל שיחיו
פישר

לעילוי נשמת

הו"ח אי"א רב פעלים תמים ואיש חסד עבד ה' בקבלת עול והצנע לכת

ר' ישעי' ארי' ב"ר מנשה ע"ה

טרייטעל

נפטר ליל ש"ק פ' וישלח י"ג כסלו ה'תשע"ד

ת'נ'צ'ב'ה'

לע"נ

ר' מרדכי דוד בן ר' לוי יצחק ע"ה בוימלגרין

נלב"ע ו' כסלו ה'תשע"ו

ת'נ'צ'ב'ה'

לזכות

הת' מנחם מענדל הכהן שיחי'
ראזענפעלד

באגאטא קאלאמביע
לרגל הגיעו לעול מצוות
כ"ו כסלו, ב' דחנוכה ה'תש"פ

נדפס ע"י זקינו

הרה"ת ר' יעקב יהודה ליב
וזוגתו מרת חוה שיחיו
אלטיין

מוקדש לחיזוק ההתקשרות
לכ"ק אדמו"ר נשיא דורנו

נדפס ע"י ולזכות

הרה"ת ר' לייביש משה וזוגתו מרת רינה
ילדיהם קיילא באשא, בנציון דוד,
אליהו איסר, רבקה שיינדל אלטא שיחיו
גולדהירש

לזכות בנינו שלוחי כ"ק אדמו"ר ברחבי תבל

הרה"ת ר' משה וזוגתו מרת יהודית
הרה"ת ר' יהודה וזוגתו מרת רבקה
הרה"ת ר' מאיר יצחק וזוגתו מרת חוה
הרה"ת ר' רפאל וזוגתו מרת מושקא
שיחיו שטיינער

נדפס ע"י הוריהם שיחיו



A Chassidisher Derher
Vaad Talmidei Hatmimim

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