



In loving memory of
Mrs. Raizel Wolvovsky

לע"נ מרת **אדל רייזל** ע"ה
בת ר' אברהם דוד ז"ל **וולבובסקי**
הצטיינה באהבת ישראל, הכנסת אורחים,
וחינוך חסידותי כרצון כ"ק אדמו"ר נשיא דורנו
נפטרה ח' **כסלו ה'תשפ"ב**
ת'נצ'בה'



LIKE A FATHER

*Rabbi Moshe Lazar on his years in the
Rebbe's presence and how they continue to
shape the story of his life, till today¹*

By: Rabbi Zelig Katzman



One spring day in 5703, Moshe'le Lazar was playing with his friends on the street in front of his family's Williamsburg home. At the time, the Brooklyn neighborhood had only a small Jewish population, and most of his friends were gentile children.

On that day, a Jew with a noble countenance encountered the yarmulka-wearing lad and patted him on the head.

"Several months later," relates the Shliach Rabbi Moshe Lazar, "when I began to learn in Lubavitch, I was playing with my friends in the *chatzer* of 770, and I spotted the man who had patted me on the head. I asked my friends who he was and they told me it was the Rebbe's son-in-law, Ramash..."

Thanks, There Is No Need...

Rabbi Moshe Lazar was born in 5694 to a family that had lived in Vienna, Austria for many years. He saw Hitler ym"sh conducting a victory parade as thousands cheered.

His family sensed the coming danger and, at the last moment before the closing of the American consulate in Vienna, Rabbi Lazar's mother contacted his uncle who lived in the US, who sent the necessary documents taking responsibility for Rabbi Lazar and his parents. Thus, in 5699, at age 5, he and his family arrived in the United States and settled in Williamsburg.

His siblings had already been evacuated to Great Britain along with thousands of other children on the "Kindertransport".

"When my siblings and the other children arrived in London" Rabbi Lazar shared "There was a Jew living there named Reb Shmuel Unsdorfer, who at the time was still unmarried. Seeing the children wander the streets, he resolved to open a Yeshiva for them. He acquired a building in a London suburb and opened a Yeshiva there.

"Four years later, in 5703, the US began to allow passenger ships to enter its ports after several years of barring them in fear of German attacks. My parents sent my siblings a visa to the United States. Before my brother departed, Rabbi Unsdorfer told him that once in the US he should do his utmost to study in a Chassidische Yeshiva".

Rabbi Unsdorfer's words are what brought Rabbi Lazar to Lubavitch. "The only Chassidische Yeshiva in the US in those days was the Lubavitcher Yeshiva in 770. When my brother told my father he wanted to go to Lubavitch, my father, a Yekkeh, was resistant at first. He didn't understand the need to travel an hour each day to Crown Heights when there were Yeshivos much closer to home.

"However, my brother pleaded and insisted, and my father acquiesced. 'But,' he said 'If you travel to Yeshiva, Moshe will



REB MOSHE WITH HIS PARENTS AROUND THE TIME THEY ARRIVED IN THE UNITED STATES

also go with you'. I transferred from Yeshivas Torah Vo'daas to Rabbi Zalman Gurary's class on Albany street, and my new life began.

In those days the Lubavitcher Yeshiva was the destination for all parents who wanted their children to get a wholesome chinuch, with *Yiras Shomayim*. "Our class was comprised of seven students" Rabbi Lazar recalls, "but only two of us remained Lubavitchers. The others continued to other Yeshivos. That was Lubavitch in those days—nice American youth but not necessarily well-versed in the world of Chassidus. We didn't know what a Rebbe is, what Chassidus is. It was a Yeshiva, and we sat and learned. At a later stage the *Temimim* arrived from Russia and helped us acclimate".

In fact, says Rabbi Lazar, "In the lead up to my bar mitzvah, Rabbi Mentlick, the Rosh Yeshiva asked me whether I would like to receive a bracha from the (Friediker) Rebbe. I replied: 'No thanks, there's no need'.. We didn't understand what it meant..."

Rabbi Lazar shares a few memories of the Rebbe from those years. "The Rebbe was extremely private in those days. I remember being in 770 on Shabbos and seeing the Rebbe sitting at a table in the *zal* and farbrenging with several bochorim, but I was unable to understand his deep words. Additionally, when rallies would be held for the local Jewish children, the Rebbe would address them from the porch."

Rabbi Lazar merited to see the Friediker Rebbe on a number of occasions: "In the early years I spent in Lubavitch, the Friediker Rebbe would farbreng in his apartment on the second floor of 770. If you look at the wall behind the *Chazan's amud* in the small *zal*, you can see two protruding wires. They used to be connected to speakers that would broadcast the Friediker Rebbe's words during those farbrengens.

"We would stand in the *zal* on the ground level and listen to the farbreng. It was very difficult to understand

the Frierdiker Rebbe's words in those days, but his son-in-law, Rashag, would repeat every sicha. (One word that I do remember the Frierdiker Rebbe saying routinely after the Sichos was "ובכן", meaning: What is the practical application of what was discussed?)

"At the end of the farbrengens we used to wait at the stairs next to the apartment. The door would be opened and we would enter and say l'chaim, then exit from a different door."

Another memory: "During our breaks we would play in the *chatzer* (where the *Shalash*—the tent—was later built and which is currently the back of the main Shul). The Frierdiker Rebbe would sometimes sit near his window and watch with pleasure the *Yiddishe kinder* playing in the courtyard."

The Rebbe Made Us Chassidim

The *histalkus* of the Frierdiker Rebbe on Yud Shevat was a shock to everyone. "On Motzei Shabbos there was supposed to be a simcha at the Yeshiva building on Bedford Avenue. I came from Williamsburg and saw that barely anyone was there. When I asked why, I received the bitter news. We ran quickly to 770 and encountered a painful scene: the greatest Chassidim sat on the floor crying bitter tears, like children. We split the night into shifts of people reciting Tehillim—my turn was from six to eight in the morning—after which the *Taharah* was held.

"We all thought that the world had come to an end. But then came Yud Shevat 5711. I remember the image of the farbrengen well, the place where I stood, and how the Chossid Reb Avrohom Nemtsov stood up and announced: 'Rebbe, the *sichos* are good, but we want to hear Chassidus!'. The Rebbe said the Ma'amar, and we knew that we had a Rebbe...

"It was a complete revolution. We, the bochorim, had known that the Frierdiker Rebbe was there, but we had almost

no personal connection or interaction with him. The older Chassidim would participate in the farbrengens and meals, but the bochorim and *anash* rarely saw him.

"Now, the situation was utterly transformed. We took to the Rebbe immediately. Like a caring father, the Rebbe thought about all our problems and gave us detailed answers to all the questions we asked him. Our lives were changed".

One event is engraved in Rabbi Lazar's mind as a pivotal moment in the development of his *hiskashrus*. It was in the early years, during *Kos Shel Bracha* after a farbrengen: "Each person in the crowd passed by the Rebbe and received some wine from his cup, and the Rebbe said a few words to each of them. When the Rebbe spoke to me, his holy words had such a great impact on me. The manner in which the Rebbe spoke to me was unique, not rote or generic that could be told to anyone. The Rebbe's words were personal. Afterwards I thought to myself: How did the Rebbe know? How did he understand? These were deeply internal and personal matters, and this completely consumed me. I said to myself: 'If the Rebbe recognizes me and knows my innermost state, he is my Rebbe.' I understood that I was standing before my father.

"This was the relationship that the bochorim of those years had with the Rebbe. We would go to the Rebbe's room and ask questions. I have many notes of the things I asked them. Many seem silly and small in hindsight. Nevertheless, we would get immediate and detailed answers for everything regarding what to do and how to behave.

"The farbrengens were another way in which the Rebbe deeply impacted us. We would stand for many hours and hear the Rebbe speak. We felt as if the Rebbe was speaking to us, penetrating our inner worlds. We listened to and understood the *sichos*. If so, how could we not be transformed? The Rebbe shifted us from average people to Chassidim that could accomplish something.

"We were 'Brooklyn boys', American kids, and the Rebbe took us and revolutionized our lives. Many of my classmates went on with their lives and reverted to being regular American *balebatim*. But those of us that connected to the Rebbe—the Rebbe changed us. How else would a child like me grow up to be a Shliach?

"We were children from Austria/Brooklyn. What did we know about Chassidus? About the Rebbe? But the Rebbe taught us, from the most basic concepts, and raised us up. There were barely any Chassidim in those days. So the Rebbe made us Chassidim. We were the Yeshiva. We were the Chassidim.

"When the Rebbe spoke of "*Ufaratzta*"—spreading forth with the message of Chassidus beyond all boundaries—we thought that it meant to reach Williamsburg, Boro Park and Brownsville. We could not imagine what the Rebbe had in mind, everything that we see today—to spread throughout



REB MOSHE WITH HIS SIBLINGS AT THE TIME OF HIS BAR MITZVAH



REB MOSHE STANDS BEHIND THE REBBE (TOP ROW, FIRST FROM THE RIGHT) AT THE FARBRENGEN OF 10 SHEVAT 5716

the entire world and bring Torah and Mitzvos to every place. To reach every Jew. "ואתם תלוקטו לאחד אחד".

Rabbi Lazar illustrates his point about the fatherly relationship the Rebbe had with the bochorim in those years: "Many times, when the Rebbe arrived at 770 early in the morning, he would pass the three doors of the *zal* to see which bochorim were there, and only afterwards would he enter his room.

"We knew that we should be at *seder*. It wasn't a matter of fear, for we were never 'punished'; the Rebbe never did that. But the very thought that the Rebbe would enter and we would not be there... It was like a father teaching his son how to behave, not through threats and fear but rather through showing how important these things are.

"I went into Yechidus with my mother several times. The Rebbe spoke to her in "High German"—the dialect of the language used in academia and high society in those days. My mother was very impressed by the fact that the Rebbe would speak to her in her own language, in a very formal and important language.

"What did she request from the Rebbe? Every time she would ask: What will be with Moshe? He is sitting and learning, what will be his *tachlis*, his *parnassah*? In America in those days it was unheard of to sit and learn in Yeshiva without thinking about the future, but every time the Rebbe would calm her and promise her that I would be able to make a *parnassah*, saying that the main thing is that I should sit and learn...

"In the period before my wedding, Rabbi Hodakov once called me and told me that the Rebbe would like to speak with me. I asked if I should go into *yechidus*. Rabbi Hodakov said no, suggesting that I instead stand near the door of the Rebbe's room when the Rebbe returns from Mincha.

"This is what I did, and when the Rebbe saw me he said:

'Moshe, I convinced your mother to allow you to sit and learn for another two years, but in the end you got involved in *'tzarchei tzibbur*'. If I sit and learn your mother will not be satisfied. You must sit and learn...'

"These words hit differently. The Rebbe was not a member of the *Hanhala Hayeshiva*, but the learning of every *bochor* was very important to him. The Rebbe sat and thought about me and my learning. Whenever I think of these things, tears come to my eyes..."

Another story illustrating the Rebbe's close relationship with the *bochorim*: "In those years, the benches in 770 were not very sturdy, and many times after a farbrengen a bench or two would come apart. I was very handy, and in camp I had built bunks for the campers to stay in. Rabbi Mentlick therefore approached me and politely asked whether I would be able to fix the benches.

"I couldn't refuse, so I would go down to the *Shalash* (tent-like structure) where the Rebbe would farbreng, remove my jacket and start fixing the benches.

"Once, while I was working, the curtain moved in the window to the Rebbe's room (later closed when the *zal* was expanded). I looked up and saw the Rebbe smiling down at me. The Rebbe asked, 'Why aren't you wearing a jacket?'

"The connection we felt to the Rebbe was not of a formal nature. We certainly understood the greatness of the Rebbe, but he acted towards us in a way that made us feel like he was our father."

When I Almost Fainted In Yechidus

As a *bochor* Rabbi Lazar served as a counselor, and at one point as head counselor, of camp "Agudas Yisroel", at the time

the only from summer camp in America.

In 5715, Rabbi Lazar and his friend Reb Yosef Weinbaum decided that the time had come to establish a Chabad camp to serve public school students with the goal of encouraging them to enroll in Jewish schools. “In Camp Agudah, many of the children attended public school, and many of the parents were not fundamentally opposed to the idea of sending their children to Cheder. However, they were unwilling to pay tuition at a Cheder if they could access public education for free.

“When I asked Agudas Yisroel to provide financial support in order to enable these children to transfer to *Chadorim*, they were not interested. I therefore concluded that it was imperative to found a camp that would assist these children in moving to Cheder.

“I wrote to the Rebbe about this, and the Rebbe answered that because running a camp involves a lot of *pizur hanefesh* (mental and emotional unease), I should sit and learn over the winter and then ask about this matter again.

“When summer came I once again wrote to the Rebbe, who answered that I should enlist an older person to take responsibility for the project. We drafted Rabbi Kehos Weiss a”h, and after we notified the Rebbe we were called into *yechidus*.

“We entered the Rebbe’s room, and the Rebbe received us with a serious expression, and to my great surprise he asked: “Why do we need to have a camp?” When I heard these words I nearly fainted and fell on the floor. Rabbi Weiss grabbed me and the Rebbe instructed us to leave for several minutes and to return when I felt better.

“We went outside, and I felt as if my world had collapsed. I was hoping that we would enter and receive accolades for taking initiative and guidance on how to implement the idea, and suddenly the Rebbe asks me why the whole thing is necessary...



REB MOSHE (CENTER) AS HEAD COUNSELOR IN CAMP GAN YISROEL. THIS PICTURE WAS RECENTLY FOUND IN THE ARCHIVES OF REB MEIR HARLIG

“Reb Kehos was a very calm person, and he told me: Moshe, the Rebbe simply wanted to hear from you why, based on your experience and understanding, you think that we have to make a camp.

“We went back in, and the Rebbe greeted us with a big smile and asked, ‘Do you feel better?’ The Rebbe continued: “Nu, why do we need to have a camp?”

“At this point I said, ‘Camp is the only medium to give these children *Yiddishkeit*. Even a child that learns in Cheder—when he comes home his mother ‘clarifies’ to him that what really matters is to study a profession and worldly matters. On the other hand, when a child is in an environment of *kedusha* and *yiras shomayim* 24 hours a day for several weeks, it will make an indelible impression on him.

“The Rebbe was satisfied with my response and gave his *brocha* for the success of the camp.”

The Rebbe guided the development of the camp at every step, instructing us to create a *vaad hanhala* to be led by Rabbi Shlomo Aharon Kazarnovsky, and to buy a property for the campgrounds.

The name of the camp was also chosen by the Rebbe: “When we asked the Rebbe what to call the camp, the Rebbe said that since the grounds we had purchased had previously been “Camp Israel,” and it was possible that some children would remember that, we should keep the name “Yisroel” and add the word “*Gan*”—Camp Gan Yisroel.

“This is another example of the Rebbe’s careful attention to every detail.

“Afterwards the Rebbe explained in a *sicha* how the name ‘Gan Yisroel’ symbolizes the Torah’s 53 (*Ga”n*) *Parshiyos* as well as the name of the holy Baal Shem Tov.

The Rebbe’s Visit

The Rebbe’s singular affection for the camp was fully on display when the Rebbe came to visit. This was an outstanding occurrence. Besides his camp visits, the Rebbe never left New York City throughout his *nesius*.

“One of the days before camp,” Rabbi Lazar recalls, “as we were feverishly preparing for the start of camp in the office at 770—one of the *mashbakim* approached me and asked how long it takes to get from 770 to camp. I responded that the trip generally takes about two and a half hours. Twenty minutes later he returned to me and said: “The Rebbe is leaving to camp soon, the Rebbe wants to make a *farbrengen* in camp.”

“And so it happened that we merited that the Rebbe came to make a ‘*Chanukas Habayis*’ for camp.

“The next year, we purchased a property in Swan Lake, one of the best locations in the Catskills. We opened the camp amid much fanfare and publicity. At the *Yud Beis Tammuz* *farbrengen*, held after camp had begun and we were already

there, the Rebbe said that he would continue the farbrengen in camp.

“We received a phone call informing us that the Rebbe was coming to visit camp the following Sunday. This time it was not a surprise, everyone knew about it before. On the day the Rebbe was to arrive, tens of buses and cars came to camp. The shul and the main hall were packed to full capacity...

“When the Rebbe came, I could’ve worn a hat and jacket, but I wanted the Rebbe to see an authentic picture of the way the camp ran day to day, so I chose to wear the white cap, like a camp director.

“The children, too, though they wore Shabbos clothes in honor of the Rebbe’s visit, they did not decorate the camp in a special way, so that the Rebbe could see the way the camp was ordinarily.

“After Mincha, the Rebbe requested a tour of the campgrounds. All the children went into their bunks and stood next to their beds, and the Rebbe went from room to room, speaking to several of the children. The Rebbe was like a loving father interacting with his children. The Rebbe was satisfied, seeing that everything was organized and clean, and that the atmosphere was so positive. I think that I caused the Rebbe some *nachas ruach*...

“I walked with the Rebbe and showed him every corner of the camp, including the big lake.

“The Rebbe commented on several things. For instance, when we reached the lake, the Rebbe said to install a rope at the point where the lake starts getting deep, so that young children shouldn’t swim there. When we reached the infirmary the Rebbe remarked that it was a necessity, but gave a *brocha* that there should be no need to use it, and so on.

“At the entrance of the lunchroom there was a sign reading ‘Don’t forget to tip your waiters.’ The Rebbe called over Reb Yosef Weinbaum and, taking some money from his pocket, handed it to him with the words, ‘Here’s a tip for the waiters’...

“At the end of the tour, before entering the car, the Rebbe turned towards me and said the following words: ‘*Ich hob keinmol nit forgeshtelt aza reichum*’ [I never imagined such richness]...

“I live with these words constantly, knowing that I gave the Rebbe some *nachas ruach*. Till this day those few words propel me forward...

“He Should Give Suggestions”...

For about a year and a half, Rabbi Lazar merited to work in the *mazkirus*: “I was an older *bochur*, I had already received *semicha*, and in the mornings I used to help Reb Michael Teitelbaum a”h with the administration of Oholei Torah,



THE REBBE SPEAKS WITH REB KEHOS WEISS AS HE TOURS THE CAMPGROUNDS IN 5717. REB MOSHE CAN BE SEEN IN THE BACKGROUND DRESSED IN HIS HEAD COUNSELOR CLOTHES.

founded in those years. Rabbi Hodakov suggested I work in Merkos in the afternoons, and gave me secretarial tasks such as writing receipts, taking inventory on Seforim, answering phone calls, accepting notes and letters addressed to the Rebbe, and relaying the Rebbe’s responses.

“In the office there were two boxes stacked atop one another. One box contained letters people had written to the Rebbe, and the other contained the Rebbe’s responses. When the Rebbe wrote an answer to someone I would give the person the Rebbe’s handwritten response, and then take the note back to the *mazkirus*.

“When I was in the office and the Rebbe would call over the intercom asking whether there was anything in the box, I would bring its contents into the Rebbe’s room. The Rebbe would be sitting without his hat and *sirtuk*, wearing glasses and holding a *sefer*. I would give the Rebbe whatever he needed from the box, the Rebbe would give me whatever had to be taken out, and I would leave.

“But on those occasions I entered as an ‘employee.’ Otherwise I would enter only one other time per year, on my birthday, for *yechidus*.”

Rabbi Lazar also merited to drive the Rebbe on several occasions. “In those years car ownership was more rare, but I did have a car. Whenever Rabbi Krinsky was not around, I would drive the Rebbe from and to his house and the mikvah”.

While still working in *mazkirus*, Rabbi Lazar wished to take a more significant role in the Rebbe’s mission. He asked

Rabbi Hodakov to give him a bigger role in *mazkirus*, to which Rabbi Hodakov responded: ‘The Rebbe drafted you into this work, you should ask him.’

‘I asked the Rebbe and received a three word answer: ‘He should give suggestions’. This is what the Rebbe demands of us; that we should work at our own initiative, and not wait for the Rebbe’s instructions at every moment, to do this or not to do that. Rather, he demands that we work on our own. Although he gives us assistance, he wants us to do what we can on our own, with our own talents and capabilities.

‘Steinmetz Is Already Here?’

In the winter of 5720 Rabbi Lazar became engaged to his wife, daughter of the noted Chassidishe poet, Rabbi Tzvi Meir Steinmetz (known by his pen name ‘Tzvi Yair’).

In the letter that the couple wrote to the Rebbe before *yechidus*, they requested a *brocha* for the wedding and asked that the Rebbe honor them with *Siddur Kiddushin*. They added: “We notify the Rebbe that we are happy to accept any *shlichus* that the Rebbe gives us, of any sort and in any location, and it should be a source of *nachas* to the Rebbe”.

When he entered *yechidus*, the Rebbe said: “After Yud Shevat of this year, a ‘new seder’ has begun, and I no longer serve as a *mesader kiddushin*”...

Rabbi Lazar’s mother tried to push the Rebbe, citing the great dedication of her son in *Hafatzas Hamayanos*, and the Rebbe commented: “Physically I will not be there, but I will be there”.

“This was a shock for us. We were the second couple for which the Rebbe declined to be *mesader kiddushin*. We couldn’t bear it. But the Rebbe said that he would be there... In that period the Rebbe even wrote to me ‘Siddur Kiddushin belongs to the Kallah’s side, and he should not get too involved in it. Obviously he should go to the wedding and the *chuppah* etc. with true *simcha* and it should be at an auspicious time’.

“The wedding was held in Adar. The Rebbe was certainly present, though not physically. That summer, my wife and I traveled to the camp that I ran. Suddenly we received a phone call informing us that the Rebbe would once again come for a visit. As mentioned, the Rebbe visited the camp in 5716 and 5717 but in 5718 and 5719 the Rebbe had not come. He even told someone that he had yet to make up for the time he lost traveling to camp.

“What happened suddenly that the Rebbe chose to once again visit camp? The Rebbe said that it was in connection with the 200th anniversary of the Baal Shem Tov’s *histalkus*. In addition to that, we feel that the Rebbe wanted to ‘make up



REB MOSHE CAN BE SEEN NEAR THE REBBE AT THE FARBRENGEN DURING THE REBBE’S FINAL VISIT TO GAN YISROEL IN 5720

with us’ for not being *mesader kiddushin* (if someone doesn’t want to accept this, it’s okay with me). The Rebbe saw how disappointed we were from his lack of physical participation in our wedding, and made us happy by coming to visit the camp.

Shlichus

“While we were at camp we did not receive any directive to go out on *shlichus*, despite writing to the Rebbe about it before our wedding. We knew and felt that *shlichus* is what the Rebbe wanted! We were one with the Rebbe, with the same goals and intentions. The Rebbe to us was not just a *tzaddik* from whom we got *brachos* and *hashpa’aos*, but our father! And our father wished that we go far out and transform the world into a *dirah* for Hashem—so we go!

“After our wedding, Rabbi Gershon Mendel Garelik, who had gone on *shlichus* to Milan two years prior, wanted us to come assist him. He asked the Rebbe about this, and the Rebbe said that he should suggest it to us. When we received the suggestion we once again asked the Rebbe about it. The Rebbe told us that if there were no difficulties in terms of language—we should go *b’hatzlacha*.

“And so, in Cheshvan of 5721 we departed for Milan.

“We initially intended to go for two years and then return. However, when the time came, we asked the Rebbe if we could return, being that my wife was having a hard time in Milan. The Rebbe wrote to us ‘*Kol haschalos kashos*’ (all beginnings are difficult), and we understood that our *shlichus* was for life.

“A year after we left on *shlichus* we asked the Rebbe for permission to visit him, but we immediately received a response saying that the custom is that the Rebbe allows *Shluchim* to visit only once every two years.



TWO TELEGRAMS THE REBBE SENT TO REB MOSHE, WITH HIS HASKAMA AND BRACHA FOR REB MOSHE'S TRIP TO THE REBBE, TISHREI 5723

“Therefore, we first traveled to the Rebbe for Tishrei 5723. We got to New York on the night of Erev Rosh Hashanah, when the Rebbe held a farbrengen. The hour was late, and we hurried with my father-in-law—who had picked us up from the airport—to 770, to be at least at the farbrengen’s end.

“Before we arrived the Rebbe asked ‘Steinmetz is already here?’ and the Rebbe went on and asked: ‘Lazar is also not here yet?, ‘Do we know what happened to them?’

“The Rebbe said another sicha and afterwards asked again: ‘He’s still not here?’

“At the end of the farbrengen the Rebbe said another sicha and the farbrengen ended. We felt that the Rebbe gave us all his love and life. We felt like we were being given everything”...

The loving and paternal attention from the Rebbe was expressed throughout the years:

“In those years we had not yet established proper *mosdos chinuch* for our children, and when they got a little older we would send them out of the country. When our daughter turned 10, we wanted to send her to New York, where we had family. But when we asked the Rebbe about it in *yechidus* the Rebbe told us to send her to Paris, since that is much closer to Milan. The Rebbe didn’t only give us *brachos*, but also paid attention to the specific problems and questions we brought to him, addressing each detail. In this case, the Rebbe was sensitive to the feelings of a girl of 10, concerned that she should be as close as possible to home, so that if she didn’t feel good she could come home, and if a problem arises, we could come to her”...

Rabbi and Mrs. Lazar have served on shlichus in Milan for more than six decades now, *l’rech yomim v’shonim tovs*.

In these years Rabbi Lazar led the activities of Chabad of Milan, under Rabbi Gershon Mendel Garelik who served as Rov. Rabbi Lazar was—at the Rebbe’s direction—appointed as the Rov of the Persian community in the city, and until recently, when a house was purchased for him near the shul, he would spend two hours every Shabbos walking to shul. Rabbi Lazar serves as the Rabbi for several other shuls in the city; he works with the youth and gives them shiurim; he also gives shiurim and educational guidance at the girls seminary in the city. Rabbi Lazar built mikvaos, ran the Gan Yisroel camp, and is active in everything related to spreading Yiddishkeit and Chassidus.

Conclusion

“I was educated by true Chassidim, who passed on the chinuch they received from the Chassidim before them. Those Chassidim taught not just by words but by example.

“As I mentioned, I merited to drive the Rebbe several times. Many times I would open the door to 770 for him. The Rebbe would always say ‘Thank you’.

“In the days when I was a counselor in Agudah, I worked with someone who was not a Chabad Chossid. One time he told me: ‘Moshe, I have no desire to do anything for Chassidus, but for the Rebbe—I will roll up my sleeves’. When I asked him why, he told me that he lived in the same building as the Rebbe (an apartment building at 341 New York Avenue). ‘Every time I entered the building and the Rebbe went in or exited before me, he would hold the door till I went in’...

“This is the chinuch we received from the Rebbe. Through his actions the Rebbe taught us to behave carefully in every regard. The Rebbe didn’t merely tell us what to do, he showed us a *dugmah chaya*. One can learn from every detail of the Rebbe’s behavior.

“Throughout all our years on shlichus,” Rabbi Lazar concludes, “although we were not in close physical proximity to the Rebbe, I felt that the Rebbe was with me. As I mentioned, the Rebbe told us that he would be at our wedding, despite not being *mesader kiddushin*. From then until today, I feel that the Rebbe is with me. Just as at my wedding the Rebbe was with me although I didn’t see him, so too throughout my life. The Rebbe said ‘I will be there’, and he indeed was and is with us.” **T**

1. Much of the material in this article previously appeared in the Kfar Chabad magazine, issue #1867.