

A black and white photograph of a group of men, likely the first group of Talmidim Hashluchim to Australia, standing in front of a Qantas sign. The men are dressed in formal attire, including suits, ties, and hats. The Qantas logo is visible at the top of the image. The background of the entire page is a composite image showing the men's photo at the top and a view of Earth from space at the bottom.

QANTAS

CONQUERING DOWN UNDER

**THE STORY OF THE
FIRST GROUP OF
TALMIDIM HASHLUCHIM
TO AUSTRALIA¹**



ע"נ
מרת גאלדא מרים בת ר' חנניה ע"ה
שיפרין
נלב"ע י"א ניסן ה'תש"פ
תנ"צ'בה'

נדפס ע"י בנה
הרה"ת ר' אליהו זוזגתו מרת רבקה
ומשפחתם שיחיו
שיפרין

FIRST ON THE CONTINENT

In 5709* the Frierdiker Rebbe instructed nine Lubavitcher families displaced by Communism and World War II, to settle in Australia, joining the handful of *anash* families already living on the continent. Rabbi Yehoshua Schneur Zalman Serebryanski was one of these shluchim and with the instructions and *brachos* of the Frierdiker Rebbe he opened a small yeshiva school, first in the town of Shepparton, and later in Melbourne.

Over the years the school grew into an impressive *mosad* with many students from kindergarten through high school, but there was no formal yeshiva setting for *bochurim* seeking to learn Torah full time.

At the time, a university education was considered the most important thing in the Australian Jewish community and most of the yeshiva graduates would stop learning Torah full time by the age of 17. Very few went overseas to attend yeshiva in Eretz Yisroel or the United States.

Over the years there had been several attempts to establish a *yeshiva gedolah* or a *zal* in Australia, but nothing had materialized. In 5726* Rabbi Serebryanski wrote a letter to the Rebbe describing the dire situation and suggested that a group of *talmidim* from 770 joining the *zal* in Australia would give it a tremendous boost and permanence. He concluded in his letter, "With regard to shluchim, although we are not audacious enough to ask for them outright, perhaps it can come as an *אתערותא דלעילא* i.e. from the Rebbe himself."

Several months later, during Kislev 5727* Rabbi Chaim Gutnick was in *yechidus* by the Rebbe and asked for a *bracha* for his son Mordechai

who was graduating high school that year and planned to travel overseas to continue learning in yeshiva. The Rebbe instructed him to remain in Australia as one of the founding *talmidim* of the new *zal*.

Rabbi Gutnick complained about the difficulties of establishing the *zal* and mentioned that perhaps a group of five or six shluchim from 770 would be the ones to make it all happen. The Rebbe agreed to the idea and suggested he look for candidates from the yeshivos in Newark (later the yeshiva in Morristown) and Montreal, but not from 770. "They think the entire world stands on [them being at] the Shabbos Mevarchim farbrengen," the Rebbe said of the 770 *bochurim*.

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WORLD

"I was learning Chassidus in the upstairs *zal* of 770 on Thursday evening, 7 Adar I, when Reb Binyomin Klein approached me," recalls Rabbi Yosef Minkowitz. "He tapped me on my shoulder and said that Rabbi Hodakov would like to see me in his office after *seder*."

"This was extremely unusual to say the least. As *bochurim* we never dealt with Rabbi Hodakov. I became concerned but Rabbi Klein assured me that other *bochurim* were invited to the meeting as well."

At 9:30 p.m., eight *bochurim* squeezed into Rabbi Hodakov's tiny office at the far end of the hallway. He notified them that a new *yeshiva gedolah* was opening in Australia and a group of *talmidim* from 770 were being sent to help in establishing and developing it. He asked them if they were prepared to undertake this mission and clarified that participation was contingent on three conditions:

1. Their willingness to go happily without feeling forced.



REB ZALMAN SEREBRANSKY SOON AFTER ARRIVING IN AUSTRALIA.

2. They received their parents' permission. 3. A doctor's certification that they were fit for travel.

This information came to them as a complete shock since they knew nothing of Rabbi Gutnick's inquiries and *yechidus* with the Rebbe from earlier that year. Before the *bochurim* could fully digest it all, they asked if this idea was coming from the Rebbe, to which Rabbi Hodakov responded, "One of the conditions is that you should go willingly without feeling obligated to do so..." He refused to elaborate further but the *bochurim* understood this was a *shlichus* from the Rebbe.

In response to their inquiry as to when this trip would take place, he said, "From our perspective you can leave right away. Technically speaking it will take some time to organize the necessary passports, documents and flight arrangements." With that the meeting was over.

That night they heard from Reb Dovid Raskin that the *hanhala* had not submitted any lists to the Rebbe of possible candidates and clearly the ones chosen were

handpicked by the Rebbe.

“I secured my parents’ permission to go,” says Rabbi Minkowitz. “The next morning I entered *Gan Eden Hatachton*, where Dr. Seligson davened for many hours and some people consulted with him about medical issues there as well. When he heard I needed confirmation that I was fit to travel he asked me if I ever had a severe illness and then looked into my eyes and said, ‘*Kenst foren*—you can travel.’ It was the fastest medical checkup of my life. I understand that the rest of the shluchim had a similar experience.”

Before Shabbos, four of the *bochurim* notified Rabbi Hodakov that they met the requirements and on Shabbos morning two more confirmed with him that they were ready. By that point it became clear that six *bochurim* would be in the group of shluchim: Avrohom Altein, Leibel Kaplan, Hirshel Lipsker, Shlomo Majesky, Hirshel Marozov and Yosef Minkowitz.

After davening Rabbi Hodakov notified the Rebbe that six *bochurim* were ready to travel, and the Rebbe said, “*Nu, vet zein a farbrengen*—there will be a farbrengen.”

This came as a surprise to everyone as it was extremely rare for the Rebbe

to announce a Shabbos farbrengen after returning to his room after davening; aside for the fact that it was an ordinary Shabbos with no apparent reason for a farbrengen.

“THEY WILL BE MISSING NOTHING”

Much of the *sichos* at the farbrengen that Shabbos were dedicated to the new shluchim to Australia. The Rebbe referenced the well known story that when the Mittlerer Rebbe sent a group of Chassidim to Eretz Yisroel to establish the Chabad settlement in Chevron, the Chassidim hesitated and asked, “What will be with Chassidus?” If they relocate to Eretz Yisroel they will never again have the opportunity to hear Chassidus from the Rebbe! The Mittlerer Rebbe assured them that he would send them *bichlach* (manuscripts) of Chassidus so they would lack nothing.

“*There is something in this story that needs clarification. Even though the Chassidim would receive manuscripts of Chassidus they would still be unable to see the Rebbe, thus lacking the integral aspect of learning Torah directly from the Rebbe, as the possuk states והי*

—your eyes will see your teacher. In far away Eretz Yisroel the Chassidim will lack that.”

The Rebbe answered this question using the concept of *sefichim*. (Prior to this *sicha* the Rebbe said a *maamar*² based on ד”ה ועשית מזבח מקטר קטורת a *maamar* of the Tzemach Tzedek³ which discusses the concept of *sefichim*.) *Sefichim* are plants that sprout long after they were planted but they are indistinguishable from plants that grow soon after they were planted. If *beis din* notices plants growing in a field during *shemittah* there is no way to distinguish whether they are after-growths of the previous year’s planting or whether they were planted during *shemittah* and they must rely on testimony to determine this.

“*So too regarding our question. Even though one may leave, and may no longer see what he has left behind, reminiscing and envisioning what he saw previously will affect him in the same way as if he was currently seeing it, like sefichim.*”

“*Therefore, even though the shluchim are leaving, they will not miss out on anything. Especially since they are leaving for a short while and will be back with us soon.*”

“*May they be successful in their shlichus, above the natural order, resulting in a public kiddush Hashem. They should succeed in learning both nigleh and Chassidus, and doing mitzvos behidur, all in good health. May they bring from there nitzutzos, neshamos, birurim and inyanim etc. And may they see the fruits of their labor.*”⁴

Following this *sicha* the Rebbe instructed the shluchim to say *lchaim*. The crowd burst into joyous singing of the *niggun Ufaratzta* and the Rebbe stood up and danced with tremendous joy.

In the following *sichos* there were extraordinary expressions about



THE FIRST LOCATION OF THE YESHIVA AT KALYMNA GROVE, IN S. KILDA, AUSTRALIA.

the necessity for every Chossid to rise to the occasion of fulfilling the shlichus of the Rebbeim.

The next Shabbos, *parshas Ki Sisa*, the Rebbe held another surprise farbrengen and said the shluchim need to be ראשונים לכל דבר שבקדושה—first for all holy matters and should therefore lead everyone in saying *l'chaim* on a full cup. While the crowd sang a joyous *niggun* the Rebbe stood and danced very energetically for a while.

“CONQUER THE COUNTRY!”

The date of departure was set for Monday, 24 Adar I. On Sunday 23 Adar I, Rabbi Hodakov notified the shluchim that they would be entering the Rebbe's room for a special *yechidus* that evening.



The *yechidus* lasted for close to 25 minutes and a detailed transcript of it was made possible because one of the *bochurim* held a hidden tape recorder during the *yechidus*.⁵

“The main purpose of your going is to bring the light and fire of Chassidus there. Everything must start with an

אתערותא דלעילא—an ‘arousal from above’—before the אתערותא דלתתא—the ‘arousal from below.’ In order to make them into Chassidim of the Alter Rebbe and of the Frierdiker Rebbe, there must be an אתערותא דלעילא. This is why you are being sent. Talmidim

“THEY WILL BRING MOSHIACH!”

It is important to emphasize that this was the first time the Rebbe sent a group of American *bochurim* on a shlichus to such a distant country for such an extended period of time. For two years the shluchim did not speak to their parents on the phone because it was so expensive, but most significant to them was that they felt completely “disconnected” from what was happening in 770. This was before the live telephone hook-ups to the farbrengens, and it would take over a week for the *hanachos* of farbrengens to arrive.

In the weeks following their departure, the Rebbe spoke extensively at the farbrengens about them and the concept of shlichus. Following are several excerpts from the *sicha* of Shabbos Parshas Pekudei—Mevarchim Adar II.⁷

“...The *talmidim hashluchim* who traveled overseas—may they have tremendous success, above the natural order and beyond all limitations, for they have gone to spread Yiddishkeit and Chassidus, with joy and cheerful hearts.”

[The Rebbe continued with great emotion.]

“Unlike those who stay here, where they waste away and do nothing... If they were somewhere

else they would be involved in spreading Chassidus and Yiddishkeit, but here they do nothing.

“On the other hand, the shluchim fulfilled the verse “לך לך מארצך” in its most straightforward way, exactly as it is stated, with no compromises! There they have no newspaper and no juice, in contrast to the custom that has evolved amongst the *shpitz d'shpitz* (our elite) who sit in Brooklyn, read the newspaper and have a glass of juice every day...

“Very soon, Moshiach will arrive and the shluchim will be the first to greet him. They will drag along the others... He will demand, ‘Write a report of how many Chassidim you have made! How many Yidden have you influenced to learn *Chitas*? How many Yidden have you influenced to come and say Tehillim on Shabbos Mevarchim?’

“Those that went on the shlichus are all below the age of 20. They saw the Frierdiker Rebbe only in their infancy, too young to appreciate and understand. Yet even though they did not merit to be showered with great spiritual energy and influence, they set off joyfully and without compromises. Through them the mission of spreading the wellsprings of Chassidus will finally be completed. They will bring Moshiach!”

who saw the Frierdiker Rebbe, heard from him and learned Chassidus.”

The Rebbe gave detailed instructions how to accomplish their mission and the appropriate attitude they must have in doing so. Firstly, not to give off the impression that they are coming to educate them, rather to come as partners in establishing this new *mosad*, in order to inspire the *talmidim* there to become *neirois leha'ir* and thereby “conquer the entire Melbourne followed by the rest of Australia, transforming it into a chassidishe country.”

The primary task is to learn *nigleh* and Chassidus, and during free time to engage in *hafatzas hamaayanos* in cooperation with the local branch of Tzeirei Chabad. The Rebbe explained in great depth, based on a *chakirah* in *hilchos Shabbos*, that their involvement in *hafatza* will only enhance their learning, but concluded that their primary objective is to learn *nigleh* and Chassidus diligently.

The Rebbe concluded with tremendous *brachos* for their success and handed each one a copy of the *maamar* of the Tzemach Tzedek which was the basis of the *maamar* the Rebbe said at the farbrengen on Shabbos Parshas Tetzvah on the

topic of *sefichim*. Then the Rebbe gave them three bottles of *mashke* to take with them to Australia to hold three farbrengens: At the Gutnick-Feldman wedding taking place shortly after their arrival, at the *sheva brachos*; and on Purim.

Pointing to one of the bottles, the Rebbe said it was sent to him from the Chassidim in Russia—*mesiras nefesh Yidden*—hence they should do all of the abovementioned with *mesiras haratzon* (putting aside their own wills) and with *simcha*. The Rebbe also instructed them to write a *duch* every two weeks. He then thanked and blessed their parents for agreeing to the shlichus.

On Monday afternoon, the Rebbe davened Mincha at 2:15 p.m. (instead of the regular schedule of 3:15 p.m.) in order to daven together with the shluchim who needed to leave 770 earlier for their flight at 5:00 p.m. After Mincha they were told to enter *Gan Eden Hatachton* and the Rebbe gave them some final instructions.

“What we spoke about last night, regarding conquering Australia, should not be publicized since the *baalei batim* are not yet ‘keilim’ for this. Rabbi Simpson who is traveling with you⁶ is one of the elder Chassidim and one of the

founding students of Tomchei Temimim. You will receive guidance from him (for a while) and seek his advice regarding a *mashpia* and *rosh yeshiva*.”

The Rebbe gave them a *bracha* for success and a good trip and handed a Tanya to each shliach.

Upon the Rebbe’s direct instructions, all of the *bochurim* in 770 and all the members of the *hanhalah* accompanied the shluchim to the airport. The Rebbe walked out of 770 to escort the shluchim and stood in the pouring rain and watched until the last bus was out of sight.

EVER SINCE MATAN TORAH!

The arrival of the shluchim made waves throughout Australia. The sight itself of young American *bochurim* proudly sporting beards and the traditional *chassidishe* garb made a tremendous impact and they immediately set about creating an atmosphere of 770 in the yeshiva. It was decided that they would keep the same schedule as the yeshiva in 770, but they felt that starting *seder nigleh* at 11:00 a.m. would seem strange to the *baalei batim*.⁸ It was suggested that *seder Chassidus* start a half hour earlier—at 7:00 a.m.—so that *seder nigleh* could begin by 10:30 a.m. Rabbi Simpson agreed to the proposed change.

In addition to learning on their own, the shluchim also learned with the local *bochurim* and served as mentors and role models for the entire yeshiva. Each shliach developed a specific rapport with a different segment of the community. One was involved with the *baalei batim*, another mainly with the older teens, and others with the younger teens and children.

Throughout their two years in Australia, the shluchim received constant encouragement from



THE REBBE SEES OFF THE TALMIDIM HASHLUCHIM AS THEY LEAVE FOR THE AIRPORT, 26 ADAR I 5727*.

the Rebbe in their shlichus by way of several special *kiruvim*.

Shortly before Pesach 5727*, a little over a month after their arrival, they received a package of matzos together with a letter from *mazkirus*, notifying them that the matzos were sent by the Rebbe as a gift to each one of them. There were six full matzos and one broken one. Each shliach took one full matzah for the first *seder* and the broken matzah was divided between them for the second *seder*.

In a postscript of the letter, Rabbi Hodakov added that it was surprising that over a month after their arrival in Australia no *duch* from them had been received. It turns out that the shluchim had sent a *duch* after the first two weeks but apparently it had not yet arrived in 770. They sent a telegram to 770 with a message that they had sent a *duch* on time and sent a copy of the *duch* immediately.

To properly appreciate this next special *kiruv* the shluchim received from the Rebbe, the following

introduction is necessary:

Approximately every month the Rebbe would compose a “*michtav kloli-proti*” (general-personal letter).

It was a generic letter that was personalized in response to many of the letters the Rebbe received from Chassidim around the world. Occasionally, before his signature, the Rebbe would include in his holy handwriting specific personalized messages in response to their inquiries and the like. In addition, letters to *bochurim* were often signed by a *mazkir* in the Rebbe’s name.

Every month an envelope from the Rebbe would arrive for the shluchim at the Melbourne yeshiva address containing six letters. Each individual shliach received the *michtav kloli-proti* for that month addressed to each one respectively. If the Rebbe added a message in his holy handwriting that was relevant to all of them, it was written in each individual letter and every letter was signed by the Rebbe himself.



A TELEGRAM SENT BY THE REBBE TO THE TALMIDIM HASHLUCHIM FOR PURIM 5727*, TWO WEEKS AFTER THEIR ARRIVAL.

In addition, the Rebbe sent every edited *sicha*, *michtav kloli*, or other general letters to the shluchim directly. They arrived in large manila envelopes that were originally used for Lubavitch News Service but the return address was typed in a way to emphasize that the package was coming directly from the Rebbe.

“Often we would receive these packages at 10:30 a.m., right before *seder nigleh*,” recalls Rabbi Minkowitz. “However, we remembered vividly the Rebbe’s clear instructions to us in the *yechidus* before our departure that our main mission in Australia is to learn a lot of *nigleh* and Chassidus,

VENICHBESHA HARETZ

COLLECTING NESHAMOS

Rabbi Yosef Minkowitz: At the farbrengen of Shabbos Parshas Tetzaveh the Rebbe said that we will “collect *neshamos*” in Australia. Here is an example of this:

Hirshel Marozov and I traveled to Sydney for Sukkos and during Yom Tov we spoke in many shuls around the community. For many it was the first time they heard the Rebbe’s *sichos* and there was tremendous excitement.

In Australia there is a program similar to the Released Time program in New York State. Once a week, public school students are given one hour to study their religion. However, in contrast to New York where there is one dedicated hour for all students on Wednesday, in Australia it was staggered. Every school had a different hour during the week dedicated to religious studies, which made it more practical for the relevant organizations to hire teachers dedicated to this and reach many more children.

We decided to utilize the days of Chol Hamoed to reach thousands of Jewish students in Sydney

public schools. We visited dozens of schools during their religious hour, spoke to the children about the message of Sukkos, and over 1800 Jewish children made the *bracha* on the *arba minim* that year.

Years later I was walking on Kingston Avenue when a *chassidisher bochur* approached me and asked if I recognized him, which I did not. He then asked me if I was in Sydney for Sukkos 5729* and when I confirmed that I was, he shared with me that he hailed from a family that was not yet *frum* in Sydney and studied in public school well into high school.

He continued, that on Sukkos he and his close friends were shocked to see young American men in beards and black hats walking into a huge public high school and teaching Yiddishkeit with true pride. It made such an impact on them that within the year they transferred to a Jewish high school and continued learning in the *yeshiva gedolah* in Melbourne, ultimately coming to 770. Today he is a venerable shliach in Australia.

and that nothing should interfere with that *seder*. Although we desperately wanted to open those envelopes as soon as we received them, we waited until after *seder* to do so.”

The importance of the shluchim keeping the *seder* was emphasized by the Rebbe in practical terms as well. Reb Abba Pliskin moved to New York from Australia approximately the same time that the shluchim arrived. Rabbi Serebryanski was looking for someone to take over a weekly *shiur* with the *anash baalei batim* that Reb Abba used to teach, and wrote to the Rebbe of his plan to set up a rotation of new shluchim to fill the position each week. The Rebbe responded:

יכול לבקש תל' הישיבה שי' בכלל, אבל
לא מאותם הששה שנסעו מכאן בתור שלוחים
ובשליחות מיוחדת (ולפלא הספק) לבד באם
יהי מחוץ לזמני הסדר שלהם לגמרי.

You may ask the other students in the yeshiva, but not from those six who traveled from here as shluchim with a unique shlichus (It is surprising that there is even a doubt [about this]) unless it will not interfere with the time of their seder at all.

During the summer, the Rebbe instructed the shluchim to visit other cities, towns and countries in the region—similar to the summer Merkos Shlichus program that happened in the US each year—but instructed that only one pair of *bochurim* (a shliach and a local *bochur*) should travel at a time so as not to disrupt the ongoing *seder* of yeshiva.

Back home, on different occasions the Rebbe continued to speak glowingly of the shluchim in Australia. Shortly after their departure the Rebbe requested a group photo and individual photos of the shluchim. When Rabbi Chaim Gutnick was in *yechidus* he noticed the photos on the Rebbe's desk.

During a *farbrengen*, Reb Yankel Lipsker approached the Rebbe and said *l'chaim* in honor “of my son



THE FIRST GROUP OF TALMIDIM HASHLUCHIM IN THE YESHIVA.

Hirshel” who was one of the shluchim. The Rebbe responded, “Why are you calling him Hirshel? You need to refer to him as Reb Tzvi Hirsh. The fact is שלוחו של אדם כמוהו...”

Reb Aharon Shidlu of Melbourne was in *yechidus* and the Rebbe explained to him that the Australian Jewish community was not yet

advanced due to the lack of yeshivos on the continent. “I therefore sent the *shluchim*—who are not from the weaker talmidim; they are the scholars, from very good families—to show a living example to the community of how yeshiva students ought to be and to inspire Australian Jewry to send their young men to the yeshiva gedolah.”

In the month of Sivan, when Reb Naftoli Hertz Minkowitz was in *yechidus* for his birthday, the Rebbe asked him if his son Yosef writes to them from Australia. He responded that from the letters he sends home he is clearly satisfied and also excelling in his learning, but he misses the environment of 770. The Rebbe responded, “The type of work the *bochurim* are doing now in Australia has not been accomplished since Moshe Rabbeinu was on Har Sinai! Please don’t write this to him so that it does not make them arrogant.”

“Indeed I never heard this directly from my father,” says Rabbi Minkowitz. “I only heard this from my older brother Leima a number of years later.”

In a similar fashion, one of the shluchim’s parents reported to the Rebbe some of the news he heard from Rabbi Yitzchok Dovid Groner about them, and the Rebbe responded, “They have accomplished much, and transformed people who were unaware of their Yiddishkeit into proud Yidden. They are doing the same thing Hashem did at Har Sinai, but they have much more to accomplish.”

For the duration of their two-year mission in Australia, the Rebbe did not allow the shluchim to leave their post even for one day.

“THEY ARE MY BNEI BAYIS”

Several days before Pesach 5729* the shluchim returned to 770 after being replaced by another group of *bochurim*. Each year on Erev Pesach after Mincha, the Rebbe would distribute shemurah matzah at the doorway of his room. Typically everyone received several broken pieces of matzah to use at their seder. Only a select few distinguished Chassidim received a full matzah.



THE DINING ROOM IN THE FRIERDIKER REBBE'S APARTMENT WHERE THE SEDARIM ON PESACH WERE HELD.

When Avrohom Altein approached, the Rebbe asked, “Where are the others?” The message passed through the line like a thunderbolt—“Shluchim to Australia”—and immediately the rest of the shluchim made their way to the front of the line and the Rebbe handed each one of them a full matzah!

That night when many Chassidim and *bochurim* stood watching the Rebbe’s *seder* in the Frierdiker Rebbe’s apartment, Leibel Kaplan was standing several feet to the Rebbe’s right. When it came time for *tzafun*, the Rebbe asked Leibel if he already ate the *afikoman* to which he answered in the affirmative.

On the second night of Pesach the shluchim made their way to the Rebbe’s *seder* before eating their own *afikoman* but upon arrival they discovered that the doors were closed. Due to the tremendous crowding that had occurred the night before, no one was allowed to participate other than the *kvutza bochurim* that were returning to Eretz Yisroel after Pesach.

The shluchim asked one of the *kvutza bochurim* to ask Rashag to ask the Rebbe for permission for the shluchim to Australia to enter the room, and the Rebbe responded,

“Of course. What is the question?”

Once again, when it was time for *tzafun* the Rebbe asked Leibel Kaplan whether he already had *afikoman*. When he confirmed that he did not yet have the *Afikoman*, the Rebbe called over the rest of the shluchim that were present and handed each one a piece of his own *afikoman*. The Rebbe then instructed that chairs be provided for them at the end of the table, along with wine for the rest of the *arba kosos*, and *haggados*. There was a lot of crowding around the table and the Rebbe looked over several times to where the shluchim were sitting to ensure all was in order.

The next day, during *seudas Yom Tov*, Rashag asked the Rebbe why he shared his *afikoman* with the shluchim. The Rebbe said that the Alter Rebbe writes in the *haggadah* regarding the *afikoman*—יחלקו לכל בני ביתו—it should be distributed to the entire family. The Rebbe continued:⁹

“דאס זיינען מיינע בני בית. זיי האבן

זיך צוויי יאר אויסגעמאטערט.”

“They are the members of my family. They worked very hard for two years.”

On 27 Nissan, Rabbi Groner notified the shluchim that since they had not been in *yechidus* for two years, the Rebbe wanted them to

have *yechidus* that afternoon. They assumed the Rebbe wanted them to enter separately but when the first shliach entered, the Rebbe inquired about the rest and asked that they all enter together. After each one handed the Rebbe their personal *tzetel*, the Rebbe spoke to them as a group.¹⁰

“Your being here is for a common purpose, not an individual one. The notes will be read at the Ohel, including all that was written in them regarding all your physical and spiritual needs.

“It is not customary to give a *yasher koach* for a mitzvah, especially for such a great mitzvah, but your accomplishments have given me *nachas ruach*.”

The Rebbe blessed them that their efforts impact their own personal *avodas Hashem*, and instructed them to remain in touch with the community and *talmidim* back in Australia, especially with the second group of shluchim who replaced them, to guide them based on their experience. Since for two years they were focused on working with others, they should dedicate their time exclusively to learning in yeshiva until Elul. Those who felt it was time to get involved in *shidduchim* should not be distracted by this, instead they should notify their parents to handle these arrangements.

SHLICHUS NEVER ENDS

The initial shlichus to Australia never ended. The Rebbe emphasized in several ways throughout the years that each successive group of shluchim was continuing the shlichus started in 5727*.

The second group of shluchim to Australia merited to have a *yechidus* on Rosh Chodesh Nissan 5729* and the Rebbe started by saying,

“You are traveling there in connection with the previous *shluchim*. Therefore the *כל התחלות קשות* (*all beginnings are difficult*) has already passed and it will be easier for you.”¹¹

When the third group of Shluchim prepared to travel in Iyar 5731*, the Rebbe instructed that the previous two groups should enter *yechidus* together with the new group on 11 Iyar 5731*. Since they were traveling during *sefiras haomer*, their itinerary included stopovers in Europe and in Eretz Yisroel.¹² The Rebbe gave them detailed instructions regarding their trip and added that since it is customary to insert notes for blessing at the *Kosel*, they should include the names of the previous shluchim, since the shlichus is a continuation of theirs.¹³

On 28 Nissan 5733*, the fourth group of shluchim together with their immediate predecessors entered *yechidus*. The new group stood to the Rebbe's right and the older group stood to the Rebbe's left. The Rebbe asked Rabbi Hodakov, “Where are the previous shluchim?” He pointed to the group to the left. The Rebbe asked again and clarified his intention was the earlier groups as well.

Rabbi Hodakov asked whether he should invite them in on such short notice and the Rebbe said, “If it will not take a long time.” Rabbi Hodakov left and the shluchim stood before the Rebbe waiting with bated breath while the Rebbe sat silently.

After a few of the previous shluchim entered, the Rebbe started the *yechidus* by saying a *maamar* מחרירי אדם מחרירי.¹⁴

When subsequent new groups of *talmidim hashluchim* to Australia merited to have a *yechidus*, the previous shluchim were welcome to join them in *yechidus*.

TRANSFORM THE FAR-OFF ISLAND INTO A CAPITAL CITY

On Purim 5727*, less than a month after the first group of *talmidim hashluchim* embarked on their historic shlichus to Australia, the Rebbe described the mission statement of every shlichus in these terms:¹⁵

“When Hashem sends a shliach to a far-off island, he goes with the power of the one who sent him, to transform that far-off island into a ‘capital city’ of its own. Just like in the capital everyone clearly knows who is in charge, so too the shliach ensures that this island is a place where everyone knows that *ein oid milvado!* **T**”

1. The information for this article was culled from the *sefarim* Iyei Hamelech (5752), Venichbesha HaAretz (5768; Rabbis Mendel Dubov and Shmuel Schuchat) and Links (5777; Rabbis Shlomo Chaim Kesselman, Yossi Lipskier and Shlomo Naparstek) and the Zichronos WhatsApp Series of Rabbi Yosef Minkowitz.

2. Toras Menachem vol 49 page 105.

3. ד"ה להבין כי גנתא לא עאל בה ההוא גנא. ביאורי הזהר צמח צדק ח"ב ע' תתיח.

4. Toras Menachem vol. 49 page 111.

5. Ibid. page 137.

6. The venerable Chossid Reb Elya Simpson was traveling to Melbourne to attend the wedding of his grandson Rabbi Pinchas Feldman.

7. Ibid. page 157.

8. As mentioned above the Rebbe had indicated prior to their departure that they should take into account the sensibilities of the *baalei batim* to a certain extent.

9. Toras Menachem vol. 56 page 85.

10. Ibid. page 174.

11. Ibid. page 25.

12. See Derher “Crossing the Dateline,” Sivan 5781.

13. Toras Menachem vol. 64 page 156.

14. Toras Menachem vol. 72 page 159.

15. Toras Menachem vol. 49 page 221.