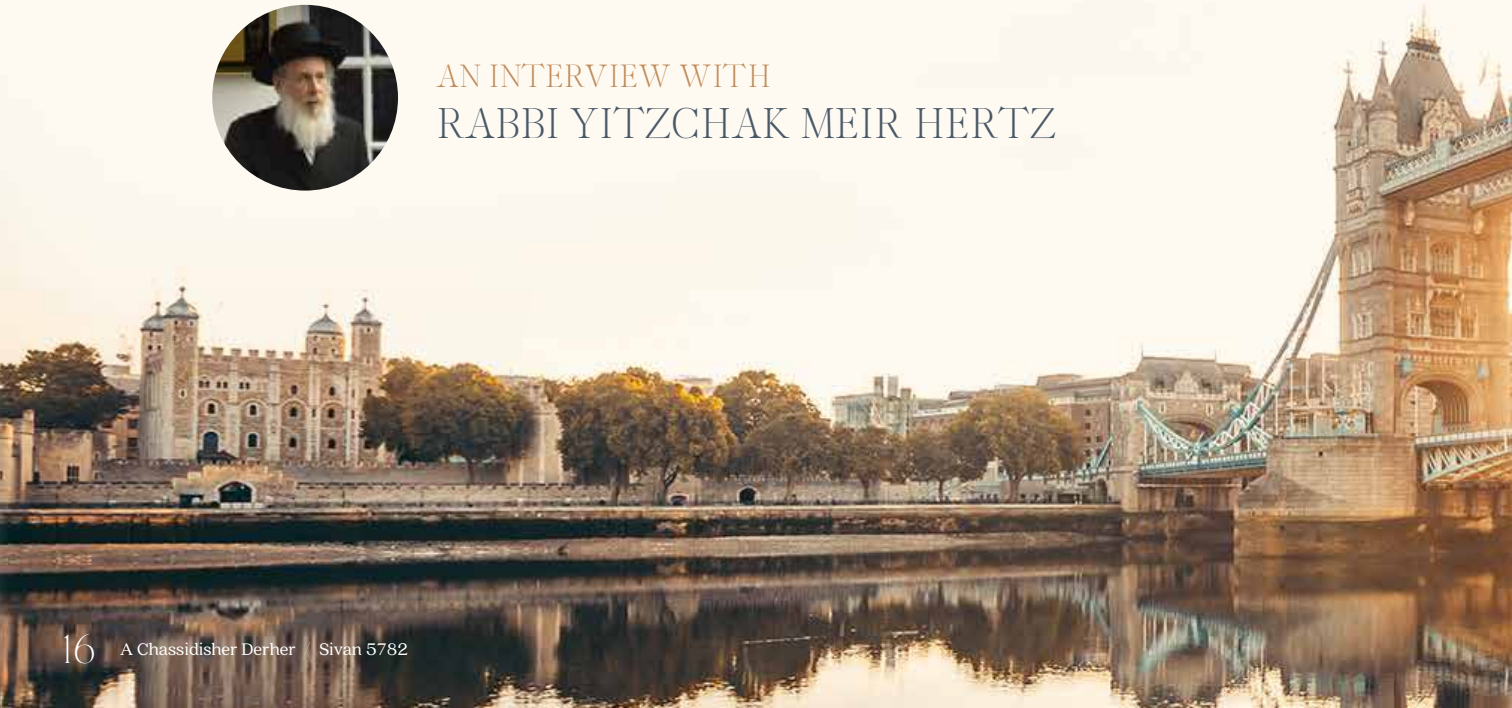


# REMAIN IN LONDON AND SUCCEED



AN INTERVIEW WITH  
RABBI YITZCHAK MEIR HERTZ





לע"נ  
הרה"ת ר' שלום דובער בן  
הרה"ת ר' יעקב יוסף ע"ה  
ראסקין  
נלב"ע ח"י חשוון ה'תשע"ד

חוגתו מרת רבקה בת  
הרה"ת ר' אברהם ישעי' ע"ה  
נלב"ע י"א סיון ה'תשע"ד  
תנ"צ'בה

נדבת משפחתם שיחיו

**I** was born in 5698\*, in Eretz Yisroel, where my father, Harav Gedalya Hertz, served as the *rosh yeshiva* of the Gerer yeshiva “Chiddushei HaRim” in Tel Aviv.

Although my father grew up as a Vorka/Skernevitser Chosid, when he was a young *bochur* he was sent to learn in Tomchei Temimim in Warsaw, where he started to develop a connection to Lubavitch, as well as a close relationship with the Frierdiker Rebbe. Some years later when the Frierdiker Rebbe was already living in Otwock, my father received a special telegram with a *bracha* from the Frierdiker Rebbe in honor of his *chasunah*, which took place in Warsaw.

At the time, Jewish activists were working tirelessly on obtaining visas from the British government (who were occupying Eretz Yisroel) to allow as many Jews from Europe to move to then-Palestine. Agudas Yisrael was granted some of the visas and with the help of *askanim*, my parents were finally granted a visa, on the condition that my father would enroll in the Gerer *kollel* when he arrived.

After getting permission from the



HARAV GEDALYA HERTZ AS A YESHIVA BOCHUR IN WARSAW.



A YUD-YES KISLEV FARBRENGEN IN TEL AVIV IN THE EARLY 5710S\*.

Frierdiker Rebbe, my parents moved to Eretz Yisroel in the year 5696\*.

Only a few months later, he was asked to open a Gerer yeshiva in Tel Aviv, where he served as the dean and *rosh yeshiva*.

During those years my father always made sure to remain connected with Lubavitch and to get me involved as well. I recall every year on Yud-Tes Kislev, my father would take me along to the farbrengen in the Lubavitch yeshiva in Tel Aviv. Although I was young at the time and didn't really understand what was going on, I do remember the special atmosphere. Reb Shaul Brook and other elderly Chassidim would farbreng, many *bochurim* wearing *kaskets* would be sitting around the table, *shvartze kasha* would be served, and they would sing very unique *niggunim*. I was able to recognize there was something different about this which can't be found elsewhere.

Eventually, in 5715\*, my family moved to Sydney, Australia where my father became the rov of the newly-created “Yeshiva” *kehillah* and was very active in spreading Yiddishkeit and establishing the Jewish community there.<sup>1</sup>

I was a young *bochur* at the time,

and my father was looking for a yeshiva for me to learn at. There were no *bochurim* my age in Sydney, but my father heard that in Melbourne there was a small group of Lubavitcher *bochurim*, and so I was sent to learn in Shepperton, near Melbourne.

Although it was a very small yeshiva, the learning there was unbelievable. I heard *shiurim* in Chassidus from Reb Zalman Serebransky, and the farbrengens of Reb Shmuel Betzalel Althaus remain with me to this day. He was the one who gave me my first real connection to the Rebbe and to Chassidus Chabad.

My father was very happy with my growth and excitement for Chassidus, but it was clear that Melbourne was only temporary and he began looking into different options for me. I personally wanted to travel to New York to be with the Rebbe and I did all I could to convince my father to send me there.

After considering various options, my father heeded my request and decided 770 would be the best option for me. I was obviously excited to travel to New York to finally be with the Rebbe!

I came to 770 in the summer



HERTZ - ROSENBLUE FAMILIES

**RABBI YITZCHAK MEIR HERTZ AS A YOUNG BOCHUR**

of 5716\*. I will never forget that first farbrengen from the Rebbe after I arrived on Shabbos Mevarchim Tammuz.

I remember that the *niggun* of *Asader Lseudasa*, taught by the Rebbe on Shabbos Balak that year, was still fresh and new. It was the *niggun* you heard everyone singing, at farbrengens, before a

*bochur* would *chazzer* a *maamar*, even on Friday nights. I remember that at one of my first farbrengens with the Rebbe, I heard the Rebbe himself singing the *niggun*.

That summer was when the famous terrorist attack took place in Kfar Chabad. Yidden all over Eretz Yisroel were devastated. The Rebbe responded by sending ten shlichim to Eretz Yisroel to raise the spirits of the Yidden there. I remember realizing then how the Rebbe cares about Yidden all over the world<sup>2</sup>.

The *sefer* then in 770 was that every Friday night, a *bochur* would deliver a *pilpul* in Chassidus, and on Motzei Shabbos someone would deliver a *pilpul* in *nigleh*. When it came to my turn, I said over a *pilpul* in *nigleh*.

Later that week, a certain *bochur* who had a hard time learning was in *yechidus*, and the Rebbe was encouraging him to learn. The *bochur* complained to the Rebbe that he doesn't have excitement about

learning. The Rebbe responded: "זאג א פלפול וועט דיר אריינגיין א חשק" אין לערנען—deliver a *pilpul* and you will obtain an excitement to learn). The *bochur* said: I don't know how to deliver a *pilpul*. The Rebbe asked: Who said a *pilpul* this week? The *bochur* responded: Hertz. The Rebbe then said: "גיי צו הערץ און פרעג עם ווי" מ'זאגט א פלפול—go to Hertz, and ask him how one says a *pilpul*." The Rebbe continued, "מ'זאגט א שאלה", מ'זאגט א תירוץ, מ'קוקט אריין אין א ספר, ווערט א פלפול—you ask a question, you give an answer, you look into a *sefer*, and there you have a *pilpul*."

At my first *yechidus* after arriving in New York, I wrote in my *tzetel* that I want to be connected with the Rebbe. The Rebbe suggested I keep a picture of the Frierdiker Rebbe with me at all times and it will help me achieve this.

This first *yechidus* took place on Rosh Chodesh Tammuz 5716\*. Thirty-two years later, on that Shabbos which was the *ufruf* of my



RABBI PINNY LEW

**RABBI HERTZ AS A BOCHUR IN 770 HOLDING THE DOOR OPEN FOR THE REBBE AS THE REBBE SEES OFF A GROUP OF GUESTS, CIRCA 5717\*.**

\* 5716-1956, 5717-1957

son, the Rebbe called my name at the farbrengen and told me to say *l'chaim*.

As a *bochur*, there was a time when I started feeling a lot of pain. I went to be examined by a doctor who diagnosed me with a condition, so I asked the Rebbe for a *bracha*. The Rebbe responded “ער איז זיכער מגזם—he is certainly exaggerating,” and suggested that I go to see Dr. Seligson. I did that, and Dr. Seligson told me, “Don’t worry about it, it will be okay.” *Baruch Hashem*, a short time later I was feeling fine.

Each year I would stay in yeshiva for Pesach. This way I had the merit to attend and watch the Rebbe’s *seder*. I was appointed as the head of the *kashrus* in the yeshiva kitchen, something the Rebbe took a special interest in. At one point, a question came up regarding Reynolds foil, if it is kosher to use for Pesach. I asked this to the Rebbe, and the Rebbe instructed me to ask Rabbi Krieger, who he said is an expert in this topic. (Rabbi Krieger approved it.)

Before my *chasunah*, I went into *yechidus*. One of the things I asked the Rebbe was, what I should do after my *chasunah*, since there wasn’t yet a Lubavitcher kollel. The Rebbe answered me, “You will be the first



RABBI HERTZ AT THE TIME OF HIS CHASUNA.



THE YESHIVA GEDOLA IN LONDON, CIRCA 1975\*.

(to learn in the kollel),” and gave me instructions as to how I should use my time: Study the entire Shas with Rashi and Tosfos; work on putting together an index for *hemshech Samech Vov*; learn *hilchos mikvaos* with the commentary of *Golas Aliyos*, one of the *talmidim* of the Tzemach Tzedek; and a few more things.

When I left, I was feeling overwhelmed. The Rebbe was asking so much from me and I felt that all this was beyond my capability. I turned to the *mashpia* Reb Shmuel Levitin, asking for help and guidance on how I can pull all this off without having a proper kollel, and without a *chavrusa*.

He responded to me with a *mashal*: A student once asked his teacher what is the proper way he should position his hands, in front of him, behind him, on the side, in his pockets, etc.? The teacher answered, “You go about doing what you do, and your hands will find their place.” So, too, with your learning, said Reb Shmuel. You sit and learn, and the rest will fall into place.

After some time in kollel, I took a part time job as a teacher in the Gerer *mesivta* in Crown Heights.

At the time, an individual in Crown Heights proposed an idea of opening a small yeshiva for *metzuyanim*,

mainly for his son and a few friends, and he suggested I run it. The Rebbe opposed the idea, explaining that the *bochurim* should attend the regular yeshiva along with their friends and not create this form of elitism.

Eventually, a shlichus opportunity came up in a Jewish community in Germany that was looking for a rov. I wrote to the Rebbe about it, who directed me to a certain individual who was well acquainted with the Jewish community there to find out more details about it.

I turned to this fellow and he described the community to me, and mentioned a lot of the issues and problems with it. Based on his description I came to the conclusion that this shlichus wasn’t for me.

A short time later I was in *yechidus* with the Rebbe, and the Rebbe asked me about it. I answered that I spoke with the individual the Rebbe directed me to, and based on his description I decided that it’s not for me. The Rebbe responded: “אה! ער איז דאך א מרה שחורה, אה!—אלץ וואס ער זעט ער שווארץ He is melancholy, everything he sees, he sees in such a way.” The Rebbe continued: “וואי בחורים זיינען לייכטער”—for sure *bochurim* are more easy-going than *baalei batim*,”

meaning it is certainly easier for me to continue working as a teacher for *bochurim* as I was doing at the time.

Already as a *bochur*, I started to develop a close relationship with the rov of Crown Heights, Reb Zalman Shimon Dvorkin. Among other things, he used to send me on Erev Pesach to many rabbonim in Boro Park—who wanted to sell their *chametz* with an *arev kablán* according to the *chumrah* of the Alter Rebbe—to pick up all their documents and bring them to him so they can participate in his *mechiras chametz*.

It was because of my relationship with Reb Zalman Shimon that the idea for me to move on shlichus to London came up.

A family member of Reb Zalman Shimon who was living in London told him that Rabbi Nachman Sudak was looking for a *yungerman* who could come to teach in the yeshiva that Lubavitch was trying to open. Reb Zalman Shimon suggested my name, I asked the Rebbe and was *zoche* to get a confirmation and *bracha* from the Rebbe, with the condition “באם יפעל במרץ—if you will act vigorously.”

Before we moved, in 5725\*, I had a meeting with Rabbi Hodakov, and he gave a lot of encouragement for the shlichus. Shlichus was not yet



RABBI HERTZ RECEIVES KOS SHEL BRACHA FROM THE REBBE ON MOTZEI SIMCHAS TORAH 5740\*.

so common and only a select few were chosen for this *zechus*. Rabbi Hodakov mentioned to me that he strongly feels the Rebbe chose me for this shlichus as a result of my work in arranging the *yeshivas erev* program for young *bochurim*, a great *peulah* of *hafatzas hamaayanos* that the Rebbe was *shtureming* about then.

When we arrived in London, I began working both with *bochurim* in the yeshiva and with the *baalei batim* there as well.

When I first started, it was only a yeshiva for younger *bochurim*. However, as the years went on we started to work on opening a *yeshiva gedolah* too. When I brought this subject up to the Rebbe for the first time, he didn't turn it down, he just said it's still too early to talk about this. From then, I knew that there would one day be a *yeshiva gedolah* in London. *Baruch Hashem* many years later, a big beautiful *yeshiva gedolah* was born, which continues to grow and flourish to this day.

(Over the years, we would send the *bochurim* from yeshiva to be tested by many prominent rabbonim in the city. We once sent a group of ten *bochurim* to be tested by a well known rov in the city on the entire Maseches

Bava Metzia. After the test, he told me enthusiastically, “I changed my whole way of thinking about Lubavitch.”)

In the late 5740s\*, I wrote to the Rebbe a suggestion on behalf of Chabad yeshivos for a framework where *bochurim* will learn two *blatt* of Gemara every day. The Rebbe answered: “לאורה הצעתו נכונה אבל נראה לכאורה—seemingly it is a proper suggestion, however it doesn't seem like the *bochurim* are capable of it.”

During my years in London, I received many prestigious offers for *rabbanus* in different places. On all occasions the Rebbe answered that I should decline these offers, adding “ישאר בלונדון ויצליח”—remain in London and succeed.”

As I mentioned before, I was working with *baalei batim* in London too. However, in the area where I was stationed, Golders Green and its surrounding suburbs, there wasn't yet a Lubavitcher shul.

I would give *shiurim* and arrange *farbrengens* but it wasn't yet a community. Over the course of time, a community started to form and there was talk of opening a shul. I wrote to the Rebbe asking if we should open a shul, to which the Rebbe gave his approval. So began



MR. EFRAIM (“FREDDY”) HAGER.

\* 5725-1965, 5740-1980, 5740s-1980s

## MY FATHER'S ENCOUNTERS WITH THE REBBE:

While my father was running the yeshiva in Eretz Yisroel, he had to come to New York for a certain matter connected to the yeshiva. That was his first time coming to the Rebbe. The next time my father came to New York was for my *chasunah*.

During these visits he had many unique encounters with Rebbe.

His first *yechidus* lasted for a while, however I only know a small portion of what they discussed.

When he entered the Rebbe's room, the Rebbe said "איך קען אייך נאך פון אמאל"—I remember you from the past." The Rebbe was apparently referring to my father's time in Warsaw. On one of the Rebbe's visits to Warsaw for Tishrei with the Friediker Rebbe, the yeshivos would send some of the *bochurim*, among them my father, to discuss their learning with the Rebbe. Any topic that any of the *bochurim* asked, the Rebbe addressed and continued to speak about at great length and depth.

During those years, the Rebbe spoke a lot about *ufaratzta*. My father said to the Rebbe in *yechidus* that if the excitement and activities of *ufaratzta* would be invested in learning Torah, it would be easier to conquer the world. The Rebbe responded, "איך מאן פון די בחורים זיי זאלן, לערנען, גייט ארויס און רעדט מיט זיי אין לערנען, וועט איר זען אז ס'דא אזויגע וואס קענען לערנען לערנען—I demand from the *bochurim* to learn; go out [into the *zal*] and you'll see there are also those who can learn." My father did so, and walked into the *zal*, and asked a few *bochurim*, "I want to talk with you in learning, because the Rebbe told me to..." Needless to say, my father was impressed.

In another *yechidus* (I believe it was his second *yechidus*), it was getting late and my father was looking at his watch. The Rebbe asked him: Why are you looking at your watch? My father answered: I have a flight tonight, and it's getting late. The Rebbe responded "ס'מאכט נישט אויס, זיצט דא ווייטער"—it doesn't matter, sit here a bit longer."

About 15 minutes passed, the Rebbe tells my father "וואס זיינט איר אזוי נישט"—Why are you not calm?" My

father answered the Rebbe: I have a flight tonight. The Rebbe said: It will be okay. After about two hours (!) my father left the Rebbe's room, where I was waiting outside with a few of my friends. We quickly ordered a taxi to Laguardia Airport. When we arrived at the airport, the plane was still there, however they had already closed the door and removed the stairs. My father ran to the plane, and they ended up bringing the stairs back, and he was allowed on the plane.

When my father would come to 770, he would attend the Rebbe's *farbrenge*s. Once, after a *farbrenge*, the Rebbe asked my father what his thoughts were on a certain *chidush* that was said.

After my father's first time with the Rebbe, he told me: "I saw many Rebbes, however such *ahavas Yisroel*, I only saw by the Rebbe. When a Yid shares with the Rebbe good news, the Rebbe is literally excited. And the opposite too—when a Yid is having a hard time *chas veshalom*, you can see tears in the Rebbe's eyes.



A LETTER THE REBBE WROTE TO REB GEDALYA HERTZ. NOTE HOW THE REBBE ADDED IN THE END בכבוד וברכה.



LEVI FREDIN VIA JEM 86522 (14 TISHREI 5752)

RABBI HERTZ RECEIVES A SET OF DALED MINIM FROM THE REBBE ON EREV SUKKOS 5752\*.

the first Lubavitch shul in the area in Hampstead Garden Suburb.

When we asked the Rebbe what to name the shul, the Rebbe responded that if the name will be connected to Lubavitch and as a result of that even one Yid will not come to the shul, we should give it a different name. With that in mind, we named the shul “Beis Medrash Kingsley Way” after the street the shul was located on.

We understood the Rebbe’s clear intentions that the shul should not just be a shul for *anash*, but rather to be a place that will attract and impact all Jews from the area. *Baruch Hashem*, the shul has a tremendous impact on the neighborhood, creating and nurturing many *baalei teshuva* and *mekuravim* over the years.

About 10 years after the shul was opened, there was a meeting of *anash*, and the discussion of the name of the shul came up again. The Rebbe was asked about the possibility of changing the name to Lubavitch.

A short time later the Rebbe sent a letter saying: “איני רואה כל תועלת” בשינוי השם עכשיו, באם זה יעכב מישהו—I don’t see any gain from changing the name, if it will prevent anyone from coming, that’s a loss through the change. I already answered [regarding this] previously.”

The crowd of people in the shul was very diverse, but there was a warm Chassidische atmosphere together.

The *gabbai* of the shul was a Yid named Efraim (“Freddy”) Hager. He had a custom that before each time he would start a new business, he would ask the Rebbe. The Rebbe would always answer him that he should keep himself busy with managing the shul and all his concerns would be resolved. He once received this *maaneh* from the Rebbe: “הטרדות בזה יבטלו סו”ס את הטרדות בענין הפרנסה—having worries about the shul will cancel your worries with *parnassa*.”

The Rebbe gave me and many

*baalei batim* continuous *brachos* and encouragement regarding the shul and its activities. The Rebbe would often tell me at dollars—“אריך ימים על ממלכתו אין די רבנות”.

Usually I would spend the whole Tishrei in London as the rov of the community. The first time I came to the Rebbe for Sukkos was in 5740\*, and the Rebbe added me to the list of people receiving the *arba minim* from him.

It is my prayer and hope that we continue to fulfill the Rebbe’s wishes and strengthen ourselves in the shlichus the Rebbe clearly laid out for each and every one of us. May we merit the התגלות המשיח תיכף ומיד ממש.

1. See Derher, Adar I 5779, interview with Rabbi Pinchos Feldman who was later sent on shlichus to Sydney, about the senior Rabbi Hertz’s activities in Sydney.

2. See Derher Sivan 5774 “Transforming Tragedy” for more about this unique shlichus.