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A א חסידישער דערהער CHASSIDISHER DERHER

ADAR 5775
ISSUE 29 (106)

אורה ושמחה

The evolution of Mivtza Purim; the initiative that brings the light and joy of Purim to every Jew, brightening the darkest prison-cells, encouraging soldiers at their posts, and giving hope to hospital-bound patients

A CRACK IN THE IRON CURTAIN

Early mission penetrating the
Community of Jews of Silence

EREV SHABBOS MAAMOR

Unexpected Purim celebration

לאתר לתשובה לארטר לגאולה!

The Call to Shake the World



A CHASSIDISHER DERHER

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VAAD TALMIDEI HATMIMIM
Rabbi Tzvi Altein, Director

COPY EDITORS
Rabbi Yosef Boruch Friedman
Rabbi Nota Yisroel Shurack
Rabbi Moshe Zaklikovsky
Rabbi Eliezer Zalmanov

DESIGN
Rabbi Mendy Weg

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Submit your questions and comments:
Call: (970) 680-3370
Email: feedback@Derher.org

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Editorial

...אזוי ווי זיי זיינען בריחוק מקום גשמי, אבער בקירוב
ובהתאחדות ברוחניות, זאלן די אלע הנאספים כאן זאגן
לחיים פאר זיך און פאר זיי, "וגדולה לגימה שמקרבת",
אז עס ווערט בטל דער הפסק און ריחוק אין מקום
גשמי. . עס ווערט נמשך ברכת ה' אין בני חיי ומזוגי
רויחי און אין אן אופן פון "אורה ושמחה וששון
ויקר..." (שיחת פורים תשל"ג).

Speaking of those who went out involved in *mivtzoim* on Purim, the Rebbe explains that although the many physical miles distance between them, by saying *l'chaim* for them, the Chassidim are very much together with one-another. Indeed, the Chassidim standing in the midst of the Sinai Desert, listening to the live hook-up while the Rebbe said those words, felt very much close to the Rebbe in 770; despite the thousands of miles comprising the physical barrier between them.

The Rebbe's urge that all go out on *mivtza* Purim stands unique in many ways, emphasizing the special significance of sharing the mitzvos and joy of this yom tov with all our fellow Yidden.

With the joyous month of Adar and the yom tov of Purim upon us, we have presented a comprehensive article outlining the Rebbe's call for *mivtza* Purim, especially with the

Israeli soldiers protecting the borders of our Holy Land.

•

Towards the end of the month, we are reminded yet again of the dark *galus* in which we find ourselves today. Since the day of Chof Zayin Adar we await to see the Rebbe again in his full strength and hear Torah from his lips, מלך ביפיו תחזינה עיניך.

During the dollars distribution one day prior, on 26 Adar I, the Rebbe uplifted and encouraged the many thousands who came to seek his blessing, relaying ever so strong that Moshiach is literally at our doorstep. A collection of some of those conversations appear in this issue.

We hope that the above will serve as a means, stimulating our readers to further engage in the Rebbe's *inyonim*, hastening the time that we will see the Rebbe again and join in a *l'chaim* at a farbrengen this year Purim. In the Rebbe's words to a news reporter on 26 Adar I, 5752: "Circulate the letter that the Moshiach is coming very soon. He's not only coming, but he's on his way!"

May it be *teikef umiyad Mammosh!*

The Editors

Erev Rosh Chodesh Adar, 5775



PHOTO: JEM/THE LIVING ARCHIVE / 104489

לזכות החתן הבחור הנעלה והמצויין, חבר וועד תלמידי התמימים העולמי,

הרה"ת שמואל שיחי' סלונים וב"ג מרת נחמה שתחי' לזרוב

לרגל חתונתם בשעטומ"צ ביום י"ד שבט תשע"ה

נדפס ע"י משפחתם שי'

The Greatest Zechus

Proper conduct on a birthday

On Chof-Hei Adar 5748 (the Rebbetzin's 87th birthday), only one month after the Rebbetzin's histalkus, the Rebbe introduced a new initiative in her zechus. The following is based on the sicha as it appears in Sefer Hasichos 5748, with some additions from the audio recording of the sicha.

We have recently discussed the idea of “*Vehachai yiten el liboi*,” and as in every matter, [we attempt to connect it] with its practical implications—*hamaase hu ho'iker*:

By utilizing the [Rebbetzin's] birthday—a time during which *mazala gover*—to this end, it will lead to an increase in matters of Yiddishkeit, Torah and its mitzvos.

To preface: in addition to the fact that any private matter of a Yid affects all Yidden and the entire world, as *Chazal* said, “Every person is required to say: ‘the world was created for me,’” this phenomenon is emphasized even more regarding the day of Chof-Hei Adar.

According to Rebi Yehoshua, the world was created during the month of Nissan. This means that *Adam Harishon* was created on the first of Nissan. Since *Adam*

was created on the sixth day of creation, it follows that Chof Hei Adar is the day that “All the creations of heaven and earth were created,” and then “Each one was fixed in its proper place on the day that was decreed upon it.”

Chof-Hei Adar is the birthday of all of creation, heaven and earth and all their hosts, including the spiritual heaven and earth, all of *seder hishtalshelus*.

...Practically speaking, a suggestion is being made now to introduce a valuable *minhag*. This will be the greatest *zechus* for her *neshama*, and for the elevation of her *neshama*; to begin properly marking one's birthday.

The Friediker Rebbe publicized the manner in which one should conduct himself on his birthday. (In previous generations this was only known to specific individuals.) “Recall one's

memories [from the past year] and reflect upon them. Tend to matters that require correction and *teshuvah*.” It has also been customary to increase in giving *tzedaka* before *Shacharis* and *Mincha* (and should one's birthday fall out on Shabbos or Yom Tov it is customary to give *Tzedaka* on the preceding day), and to add an additional session in Torah study, both *nigleh* and *Chassidus*.

In light of the above, it is most worthwhile to further publicize this custom amongst all Yidden; that on their birthdays they should increase in Torah, *tefilah*, and *tzedakah*; the three pillars upon which the world stands, beginning from the miniature world—man. They should accept upon themselves positive resolutions to increase in Torah and mitzvos over the course of the coming year.

In the same vein, one should host a joyous farbrengen on his or her birthday with family and friends. The purpose is that the new resolutions will be accepted amidst joy, further ensuring that their performance will also be in a joyous and lively manner.

This custom pertains to all Yidden; men, woman and children, and even the very young. The parents of children at a very young age can fulfill this custom for them, and when they reach an age of proper comprehension the parent can—and must—explain to them, on each one's level of understanding, that on one's birthday we must add in all areas of *kedusha*. The children too must celebrate their birthday with a joyous farbrengen together with friends.

A special emphasis must be placed on children fulfilling this custom, as a child's nature is to show enthusiasm

over anything. This excitement will also cause their brothers and sisters to want to celebrate their birthdays in a proper manner.

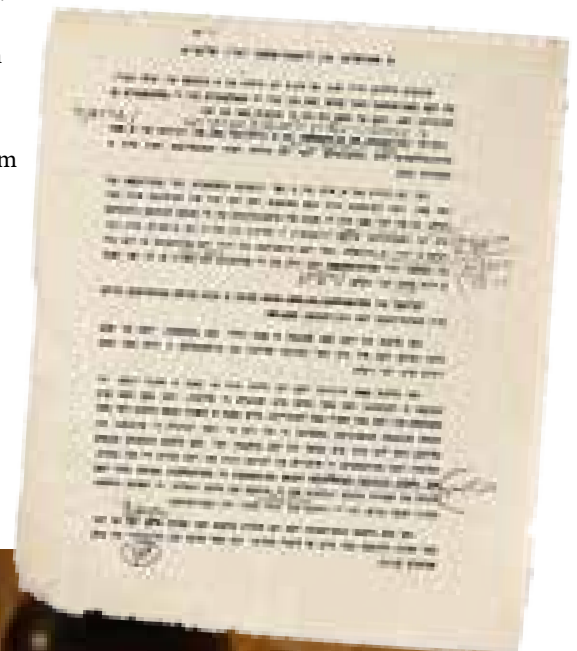
[Note, that there is no concern here regarding the legitimacy of adding new customs. For in addition to the fact, as mentioned earlier, that this is not really a new custom, this is also a matter of improving Torah and mitzvos through farbrenging with friends, amidst good wishes to each other.]

...In order to launch this new custom immediately, in connection with Chof-Hei Adar, we will begin with giving *tzedakah*, something that is possible for all to do. It will be given to all—men, women and children—as

THE REBBE'S HAGAOS ON A PRESS RELEASE IN YIDDISH DETAILING THE REBBE'S CALL TO BEGIN CELEBRATING BIRTHDAYS.

shlichus mitzvah money; for them to give to *tzedakah*, ideally today, and for each person to add *tzedakah* from his own money. **D**

1. Full listing of appropriate conduct for one's birthday appears in Sefer Hasichos 5748 vol. 2 p. 406



THE REBBE LEADS THE DAVENING IN HIS HOME, FOLLOWING THE PASSING OF THE REBBETZIN.

PHOTO: JEM/THE LIVING ARCHIVE / 157554

Where is the Good News?

This powerful message in *ksav yad kodesh* was written as a postscript to a *michtav kloli-proti* sent to Reb Sholom Posner on 25 Adar, 5710

(the full letter appears in *Igros Kodesh* vol. 3 p. 258):

לכבוד מה אהבתי אולי אולי אולי אולי
אתה וכל דבריך? וזהו התשובה
זה צדקה שחורה. ואולי אולי אולי
סיבת שתיקתו? ואם אין דבר זה
אולי אולי, הרי אולי אולי אולי.

Why don't you notify [the Rebbe] at all about the good that goes on with you and in your surroundings? What is the purpose of all this despondent behavior, or a fraction thereof (if this is the reason for your silence)? And if you don't have what to write about at all, that, in its own right, is a very puzzling matter!

מפני מה אינו מודיע מאומה מהנעשה אתו ובסביבתו לטוב? ומהו התכלית מהמרה שחורה ואביזרייהו (אם זהו סיבת שתיקתו)? ואם אין ע"ד מה להודיע, ה"ז גופא תמי' גדולה מאד.



PHOTO: JEW/THE LIVING ARCHIVE /129650

ליהודים היתה אורה

THE FRIDAY AFTERNOON MAAMOR

Special thanks to Rabbi Mendy Harlig, Rabbi Hirshel Rashkin.

In 5741 Purim fell out on a Friday and was expected to be less eventful than a regular year. The plan was for the Rebbe's farbrengen to be postponed to Shabbos. But as it turned out, Chassidim were in for a pleasant surprise!

On Tuesday, 11 Adar II, the Rebbe issued a *michtav kloli*, calling upon everyone to utilize this year's *kvius* to keep Yerushalayim in mind by continuing the Purim celebrations on the Sunday after Purim—the day Purim will be celebrated in Yerushalayim—by increasing in joy on that day with extra Torah study, *mishloach manos*, and children's gatherings.

After the *sicha* on Taanis Esther (“*divrei kivushin*”) the Rebbe distributed dollars through the “*tankistin*,” quite an unusual gesture. While giving out the dollars, the Rebbe asked, “Where is the ‘chief *tankist*’ of Europe, Rabbi Glick?” Rabbi Glick approached and the Rebbe handed him two stacks of \$1 bills (\$100 in each), instructing him that one was to be distributed in Europe.

Mincha

In the early afternoon of Purim day the Rebbe gave money to Rabbi Binyomin Klein to send to his home on President Street for the Rebbetzin to distribute as *matonos le'evyonim*. Rabbi Klein chanced upon a young bochur, Hirshel Raskin, and asked him to deliver it.

The Surprise

Mincha itself was uneventful. The crowd was fairly small, perhaps thirty or forty people (as most of *anash* and *bochurim* were out doing *mitvza* Purim), and the Rebbe concluded the *tefilla*, leaving the *zal* for his room. The Rebbe's chair was already being carried downstairs for Shabbos, when suddenly the Rebbe emerged from his room again, holding his siddur, and followed by Rabbi Groner who was carrying a bottle of wine!

The small crowd had already begun to disperse, but seeing the Rebbe walking back into the *zal*, whoever was in sight hurried back inside to see what was

לעבן
מיט'ן
רבי'ן

Purim
5741

happening. This was merely a few short minutes after the Rebbe had left, and now he was coming back! For what? The suspense was baffling!

Entering the *zal*, the Rebbe asked the *mazkirim* to close all the windows. (Before leaving his room, it is rumored that the Rebbe told Rabbi Groner that this *maamor* should be kept quiet without much tumult, so as not to disturb the people who were busy preparing for Shabbos.)

Arriving at his place in the *zal* at the southeastern corner, where he would daven *Mincha* on Shabbosim with no farbrengen, the Rebbe waited until his



PHOTO: JEW/THE LIVING ARCHIVE / 108467

chair was returned (in the meantime, he wrapped a handkerchief around his hand as was the custom of the Rabbeim before the recital of a *maamor*). When the chair arrived, the Rebbe sat down and immediately began to recite a *maamor* on the *possuk* “*Layehudim haysa oira*”.

Being a total surprise, no microphone or tape-recorder was present to record the Rebbe’s words. Reb Yoel Kahn and the other *chozrim* were also not there to memorize the *maamor*. But a few of those present did the best they could to transcribe a *hanocha* of the *maamor* as the Rebbe spoke. Hence, between these *hanachos* and with the assistance of Rabbi Mentlik, the *maamor* was quickly published in time for Shabbos!

Say L’chaim!

The *maamor* lasted around seven minutes. Afterwards, the Rebbe asked that a glass of wine be filled for him. When asked if he wanted his regular *becher*, the Rebbe declined and Rabbi Mentlik poured wine for the Rebbe into a plastic cup. After saying *l’chaim*, the Rebbe asked that all those present should do so as well, and then began

singing *Uforatzta*, standing up and responding *le’chaim ve’livrocha* to all.

Then the Rebbe asked for another *l’chaim*, drank a second cup, and recited the *brocha acharona*. Before leaving the *zal*, the Rebbe reminded everyone to recite the *brocha acharona*, and encouraged all to “utilize the time that I’m still here and say *l’chaim* without limits!”

כאפט אריין כל זמן אז איך בין דא און!
זאגט לחיים אן הגבלות

Leaving the *zal*, the Rebbe waved his hands encouraging the singing.

[During the *maamor*, one of *anash* who had heard of the surprise ran to 770 and knocked on the window of the *zal*. After someone opened, he put his ear to the window to follow along. Seeing the open window, the Rebbe turned to Rabbi Klein and asked, “Didn’t we decide that the windows would be closed?”]

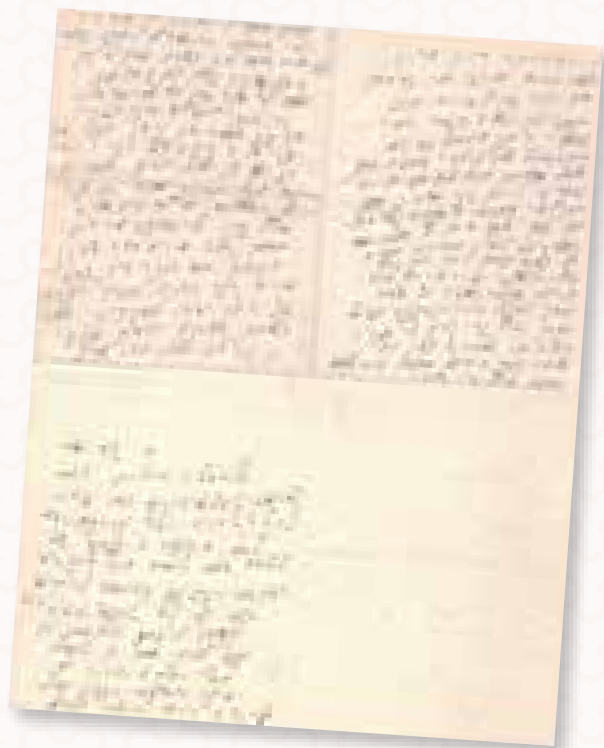
After a few minutes, the Rebbe left for home.

Meanwhile, scores of *bochurim* and *anash* returned to 770, and hearing what had happened a joyous celebration ensued! Overjoyed by the immense *giluyim* of the day and hearing about the Rebbe’s request to say *l’chaim*, Chassidim sang and danced, welcoming the Shabbos with tremendous joy.

When the Rebbe entered the shul for *kabbolas Shabbos* that evening the Chassidim were in particularly high spirits, singing the *hakofos nigun* joyously. Reaching his place, the Rebbe put down his siddur on the *shtender* and turned around to encourage the singing. The scene that unfolded that night reminded everyone of Sukkos celebrations with the Rebbe!

For Yerushalayim

On Shabbos afternoon, the Rebbe held a long farbrengen in conjunction with Purim, again reciting a *maamor* on the *possuk* of *Layehudim*, this time with a



HANOCHA OF THE MAAMOR WRITTEN WHILE THE REBBE RECITED IT. THIS WAS LATER USED TO PUBLISH A PROPER HANOCHA OF THE MAAMOR.

much lengthier explanation.

Suddenly towards the end of the farbrengen, the Rebbe covered the *mezonos* in front of him and explained: “We will now hold a special farbrengen in honor of Yerushalayim, where the celebration of Purim is just beginning. Essentially, we should have made a proper second farbrengen after Mincha, but so as not to overly burden the crowd (*tircha d’tzibura*) we will suffice with covering the *mezonos* as if we are starting over now...”

The Rebbe then reiterated the theme he had written about in the *michtav kloli* a few days earlier, to continue the Purim celebrations on Sunday and to hold children’s gatherings as well.

This concluded a memorable Purim with the Rebbe, leaving Chassidim uplifted and full of enthusiasm until the next time the Rebbe would shower us with *giluyim* of this kind. In the meantime, we continue in the spirit of *Layehudim haysa oira*, spreading the light of Torah and Chassidus all over, until the world shines with the light of the *geulah*. **D**



How Was I to Know?

THE FOLLOWING STORY IS TOLD BY THE REBBE
AT THE FARBRENGEN OF BEIS YAR, 5710.

When one sets out to bring a fellow Jew close to the Rebbe and to the spiritual lifestyle of *Chassidus*, one can begin in many ways, including the recounting of miracles, and the like. The ultimate aim, however, should be to bring him close to the study of the teachings of *Chassidus*, for this is the *essential* aspect — the *Chayah-Yechidah* — of the Rebbe, whereas miracle-working is merely an outward reflection of the Rebbe.

Hiskashrus, one's bond with the Rebbe, is basically unconnected to miracles and the like. Indeed, *hiskashrus* neither needs miracles nor is benefited by them — in both directions: seeing miracles adds nothing to one's *hiskashrus*, and not seeing a miracle (for a day, or a week, or a month) detracts nothing from one's *hiskashrus*. The fact is, that if one were so to desire, he could see that my father-in-law, the Rebbe, related to him even in his natural affairs in a manner that involved miracles day-by-day — but

there is no need for this [awareness] at all, nor should one be overawed by it.

By way of illustration: An *agunah*, a deserted wife, accompanied by her son, who was dumb, once set out to request the blessing of the *Tzemach Tzedek*. Try as she might, however, she was unable to gain admission to his study, even after having pleaded with the *rebbitzin* (as was the custom of the women visitors of the time). An enterprising chassid advised her to write out her request and give the note to her son. Then, when no one was in the room, he would hide under the table in the room where *yechidus* took place, and when the *Tzemach Tzedek* entered, he would hand it to him. And that is exactly what happened.

When the *Tzemach Tzedek* received the note, he said: "Go and tell your mother that your father is in such-and-such a place." So both of them were helped — the boy began to talk, and his mother found her husband.

When chassidim came and excitedly told the *Tzemach Tzedek* that by relaying this message the boy had spoken for the first time, he replied: "But how was I to know that the boy was dumb?..."

When his *rebbitzin* heard this story — and she, like all the daughters of the Mittler Rebbe, was a woman of mellow understanding — she showed no signs of amazement. She simply quoted the words of her grandfather, the Alter Rebbe: "In Mezritch [at the court of the Maggid], miracles used to roll about under the table, but no one found the time to bend down and pick them up...."

Nevertheless, if there is a need, then as far as others are concerned, one may begin to bring them near by this means too — by recounting miracles. The ultimate aim, however, as explained above, should be to introduce them to the study of the teachings of *Chassidus*. **D**

(*Toras Menachem* vol. 1 p. 42 – translation from *Proceeding Together by Sichos In English*)

many thanks for the 10/16/17.

GOOD NEWS

Time and again the Rebbe implored of Chassidim to write about their besuros tovos, enumerating the many benefits of this practice

IT LESSENS THE LONELINESS

In response to your letter of Wednesday, *parshas Va'eschanan*: your apology for writing to me is unnecessary, since it does not bother me. In fact, it is always a pleasure to hear what is happening with *anash*. For if it is good news, it gives me satisfaction and joy, and even if it's not, the mere fact that you write to me strengthens the spirit and lessens the feelings of loneliness and dejection. It is explained in many *seforim* that even if a person cannot help out in a tangible way, his positive thoughts and wishes are helpful. It is also well known that verbally mentioning a fellow person's virtues, or the things he needs, bears significance [in and of itself] as this causes his situation to become easier, whether immediately or eventually. (This matter is explained with a *moshol* by Reb Hillel Paritcher, printed in *Hatomim* vol. 2 and in *Kovetz Michtavim* 1 p. 20.)

REASON TO WRITE

A *bochur* once asked the Rebbe about the necessity of writing a *duch* to the Rebbe, saying, "Why must we inform you if the Rabbeim know everything regardless?" The Rebbe answered him that this is similar to what Rashi writes on the *possuk* "And Moshe repeated the words of the nation to Hashem" (Yisro 19:8). [Rashi writes:] "Did Moshe really have to repeat [their words]? Rather, this teaches us proper conduct. Moshe didn't say "Since the One who sent me knows everything I don't need to repeat [their words]." The same applies in our case.

It is well known that the Ba'al Shem Tov tried to encourage simple people to speak positively about one another, and through this they were able to transform [lit. sweeten] harsh judgments.

I will read your *pan* in the room of the Rebbe, my father-in-law, where we go to deliver *panim* and for *yechidus*, as well as at the Ohel of the Rebbe, my father-in-law, at an opportune time.

When a tzaddik blesses, Hashem fulfills—to its fullest extent—the blessing of the tzaddik, who is in this world [now] more so than during his lifetime.¹

"TZAROS CHASSIDIM"

...It is surprising that you have still not answered me as to whether you have set aside fixed times to learn Torah in general, and particularly the Torah of the Rebbe, my father-in-law. The Rebbe, my father-in-law, would say that there are "*tzaros Chassidim*"—who only remember about the Rebbe and Chassidus when something negative happens to them, and then they write a *pan*. When there is abundance, and "each man is under his grapevine and his fig tree" [they do not write to the Rebbe].

I do not understand why you, who has merited through supernatural means to see the holy face of the Rebbe, my father-in-law, need to be reminded about the necessity of learning his Torah; and even after you are reminded, you are still undecided about whether to accept the suggestion or perhaps you have more important things to do instead.

Obviously, it is not my intention to bring up something that is the opposite of compassionate. But I am surprised at those who

have the choice of whether to be “*Polishe Chassidim*,” “*tzaros Chassidim*,” “*veibershe Chassidim*,” or to be at least some of what was demanded of us by all the Rebbeim, something whose taste is that of the sweet, good, and light. Yet nonetheless these people choose to become *ba’alei battim*; they become occupied [with other things], say that learning one line of Chassidus is enough, and that they shouldn’t be asked to do more.²

GOOD NEWS AVOIDS THE OPPOSITE

I received your letter of 9 Cheshvan in which you apologize for writing news that is not positive.

Generally, when someone ought to write and delays it, another reason will come up which forces him to write. On the other hand, when someone writes in a timely manner, informing [the Rebbe] when there is good news, instead of only about the opposite, Heaven does not need to find other means to compel him to write, connecting [the two parties] with one another.

I hope that by the time you receive this letter, the matter about which you wrote will already be resolved in a good way, and hopefully also the other matters [will be resolved] as they should be, slowly but surely. I also wait to hear good news; that everything is well with you, both physically and spiritually.

P.S. When I will visit the Ohel of the Rebbe, my father-in-law, I will mention all of the people whom you wrote about, [and ask a *bracha*] for good health and livelihood for them.³

THE RABBEIM PROTESTED

...As I recall, I have already told or written this to you: I wish *anash* would make it a habit of notifying me when they have good news, as this will cause Heaven to decrease the amount of negative notices needing to be sent. Even though already in the Alter Rebbe’s times, withholding good news was bemoaned, it should not serve as an indication that this behavior is tolerated; not even for the later generations, as even then the Rabbeim protested strongly against this behavior.

In keeping with the theme of your letter, you haven’t mentioned anything about utilizing the month of Tishrei to strengthen and spread Yiddishkeit. I would hope that you actually did so even though you aren’t telling me about it.

With blessings for good news.⁴

MISSING THE POINT

In response to your notification that you turned 16; you have certainly learned in Chassidus the meaning of “Avraham was

שמחה ותענוג נפשי ופנימי

May Hashem help that when you will next come into *yechidus* you will be able to write about the good things that you are doing, not only about negative things [happening in your life]. When I hear about a *bochur* in Tomchei Tmimim who is learning, davening, and behaving properly, this gives me joy and a true and intrinsic delight (“שמחה ותענוג נפשי ופנימי”). It is obvious [what happens] when the situation is the opposite.

Certainly, you and your acquaintances in Tomchei Tmimim will try to improve in this regard, if for no reason other than *ahavas Yisroel*.

(From a *yechidus* in Kislev 5732)

old, advanced in days,” that one’s time should be filled with Torah and mitzvos. But when you write that you turned 16 and you request a *bracha*, without mentioning anything about your studies and your current status of *yiras shomayim*, the main point is missing. The fact that you have completed 16 years of life—may you live long—is not in your hands. You neglect to mention entirely about the purpose for which you were created, which is, as *Chazal* say (towards the end of *Masechte Kiddushin*), “I was not created for any purpose other than to serve my Creator.”⁵

WRITE GOOD NEWS YOURSELF

Thank you for the good news regarding the improvement in the health of Harav [...]. I am surprised that he didn’t inform me about this on his own. In fact, this is one of the ways of fulfilling the mitzvah of loving your fellow as yourself—through gladdening the heart of a Jew with good news. [What I said applies] particularly to this individual, who obviously informed me earlier what the situation was before he received treatment. Apparently, the saying of the Alter Rebbe that [the mitzvah of] ‘love your fellow as yourself’ creates a receptacle for—and is also included in—[the mitzvah of] ‘love Hashem your G-d’ has not reached everywhere yet.⁶ **D**

1. Igros Kodesh vol. 3 p. 402

2. Ibid. p. 416

3. Ibid. vol. 21 p. 233

4. Ibid. vol. 14 p. 52.

5. Ibid. vol. 5 p. 203

6. Ibid. vol. 14 p. 358



אורה ושמחה

The light and joy of Purim
reaches the most
lonesome and destitute

לזכות הילד מנחם מענדל שי', לרגל יום הולדתו - י"א אדר
ולזכות אחותו חנה תחי', לרגל יום הולדתה כ"ב אדר
שירו מהם נח"ר רב כרצו"ק כ"ק אדמו"ר
נדפס ע"י הוריהם הרה"ת יוסף וחי' מושקא שיחיו בענדעט

“Ah Chossid iz ah Lamternshzik!” was how the Rebbe Rashab categorized the role of a Chossid; a Lamplighter.

Throughout the years, the Rebbe utilized every opportunity that arose to dispatch his Chassidim with the charge to serve as lamplighters to their fellow Yidden. Naturally, each of the Yomim Tovim became yet another chance for Chassidim to bring the light of Torah to others, assisting them with the mitzvos of that particular day. The first *mivtza*, *arba minim* on Sukkos, was launched by the Rebbe as early as the year 5714!

Being that Purim is the most joyous Yom Tov on the Jewish calendar, it is not surprising that the Rebbe displayed so much interest and concern towards *mivtza Purim*, urging Chassidim to carry it out with the greatest *shturem*.

The earliest mention of *mivtza Purim* by the Rebbe was in 5721. The Rebbe's *mazkirus* sent a letter addressed to “The honored Rabbonim, Roshei Yeshivos, educators, teachers, and parents” urging them to educate

the youth about the mitzvos of *mishloach manos* and *matanos la'evyonim*.¹

The letter explained that many youth believe that their parents could fulfill these mitzvos on their behalf, when, in reality, the parents did not even fulfill *mishloach manos* and *matanos la'evyonim* themselves.

Therefore, the Rabbonim and educators were asked to reach out to every person they had influence on, and tell them two points: 1) That every single boy over thirteen, and every single girl over twelve, has an obligation to fulfill these mitzvos. (For *chinuch* purposes, children even younger than that should fulfill these mitzvos as well.) 2) To stress that these mitzvos are quite simple to fulfill: For *mishloach manos*, only two types of food are needed, e.g. an apple and a candy or a piece of cake and a drink; and for *matanos la'evyonim*, all one needs to do is give two pennies to two poor people; one penny each.

Special thanks to Rabbi Shmuel Butman, Rabbi Yossi Butman, Rabbi Yisroel Glitzenstein, Rabbi Itche Gurevitch, Rabbi Menachem Katz, Rabbi Lipa Kortzveil, Rabbi Mordechi Laufer, Rabbi Eliezer Lichtstein, Rabbi Shmuel (Mulik) Rivkin, Rabbi Yehuda Weg.

The Rebbe's Call

The next year, in a sicha on *Shabbos mevorchim* Adar 5722, the Rebbe took this appeal to *klal Yisroel*.

First, the Rebbe pointed out an astonishing fact. These two mitzvot of *mishloach manos* and *matanos l'evyonim* are from the easiest mitzvot in the Torah to perform, and one would think that they would be widely observed. Yet, in reality, they are largely overlooked, with some, who meticulously perform the other mitzvot of Purim, leaving these out!

The fact that they are easy to fulfill, explained the Rebbe, is an indication of how essential they are; and because they are so important, the *yetzer hora* comes up with all types of excuses to convince one out of doing them.

Therefore, the Rebbe urged that every person should use their influence to encourage everyone they possibly can to fulfill these mitzvot, explaining to them both the utmost importance of the mitzvot, and how simple they actually are to perform.²

Tzach—Lubavitch Youth Organization—publicized this sicha in flyers throughout Eretz Yisroel, under the headline “The Lubavitcher Rebbe’s Call for the Days of Purim.” A press release was also issued by Lubavitch News Service to all major newspapers, and the Rebbe also instructed that it be translated to Hebrew for Israeli newspapers.

In the Schools

That year, in a telegram to Rabbi Dovid Chanzin, who was the head of the Chabad educational system in Eretz Yisroel, the Rebbe urged him to arrange for the Israeli education system to organize *mishloach manos* and *matanos la'evyonim* for all the youth in their care above *bar* and *bas mitzva*. The Rebbe added that if money was needed for the poorer children, he would participate with one thousand *lirot*.

The Israeli education system included all Jewish children in Eretz Yisroel, so this had the possibility to bring the mitzvot of Purim to countless Jewish youth.

Following the Rebbe’s instructions, the

WITH GREAT EMOTION, I BOARDED THE PLANE, AND WE TOOK OFF. MOMENTS LATER WE WERE DIRECTLY ABOVE THE MAIN STREET OF HERZELIYA. I TOOK A HANDFUL OF PAMPHLETS, AND TOSSED THEM OUT.

Lubavitcher activists asked Mr. Rinos, the general manager of the education office in Eretz Yisroel, to bring it up to Minister of Education Abba Eban.

Mr. Eban was impressed by the idea, and he committed that next year his office will come up with ways to publicize these mitzvot throughout all the schools in Israel.

True to their word, the following year (5723), the ministry of education published an official statement:

“It would be fitting to prompt our children to fulfill the beautiful mitzva of *mishloach manos*... the children should send to their friends portions of food to eat... It would be fitting to bring this up to the parents ahead of time at class meetings... in order to ensure their cooperation.”

One can only speculate how many young Jews fulfilled the mitzvot of Purim that year because of the Rebbe’s proposal.

Higher and Higher

As the year of 5725 approached, Rabbi Hodakov sent a letter to Rabbi Yisrael Leibov, head of Tzach in Eretz Yisroel. In it he expressed shock that Tzach was unsure whether to arrange a *mitzva Purim* that year.

“In reality, they should be adding more and more. How can they even consider canceling what they had done already?!



AN ADVERTISEMENT PREPARED BY TZACH, ENCOURAGING THE PRACTICE OF THE MITZVOT OF PURIM.



CHASSIDIM POSE FOR A PICTURE BEFORE SETTING IN THE AIRPLANE TO CIRCULATE THE FLYERS. CIRCA LATE 5720S.



“After so much energy, time, and money, was invested into such an operation, they should at least attempt, with Hashem’s help, to arrange [it for the next year] in the best way. They should influence the newspapers to give the *mitvza* huge publicity, both before and after. Bear in mind that the publicity itself is an immense benefit for the strengthening of Yiddishkeit.”

Purim “In the Air”

Rabbi Yitzchak Gansburg a”h was involved in *mitvza Purim* in Eretz Yisrael from the early 5720s. In 5724, he came up with the idea to publicize Purim by flying an airplane over the Gush Dan area, scattering pamphlets over the entire area.

“When I found out how much it would cost,” he related, “I almost gave up on the idea. The amount of money it would

entail was way above what we had in those days. But knowing that such an operation would reach every single Jew in Gush Dan pushed me to think beyond the money, and to figure out a way to do it.”

He decided to work on getting a major company to sponsor it in exchange for an advertisement on the other side of the pamphlets. However, he was concerned that it would look like Chabad was endorsing a specific company, so he asked his father-in-law, Reb Refael (“Folle”) Kahn, who was in New York at the time, to ask the Rebbe whether he should do it.

The Rebbe answered that he should, on the condition that it is a company that the public would not be upset that Chabad promoted them. Additionally, the company had to be one with which the *frumme* community was comfortable,

and that the *hanhala* of Tzach should determine which companies were fitting.

They decided on a wine company called Karmel Mizrachi, both because of its kashrus, which was widely accepted in the *frumme* community, and also because Chabad was well connected with the owners. Rabbi Gansburg met with them, and they agreed on one side of the pamphlet being an advertisement, and on the other side would be a sicha of the Rebbe.

Because of the immense reach these pamphlets would have, Rabbi Gansburg was hesitant to choose the sicha himself, so he asked *mazkirus* to provide him with the text.

Mazkirus sent him the text which was based mostly on a sicha of the Rebbe on concept that “Mordechai does not bend nor bow.” In the sicha the Rebbe explains that every person should take upon themselves Mordechai’s conduct—not to be afraid of or influenced by the world at large, rather to fulfill mitzvot with Jewish pride.

Rabbi Gansburg continues to relate:

“On Purim morning, I traveled to the airport in Herzeliya with the boxes of pamphlets. With great emotion, I boarded the plane, and we took off. Moments later we were directly above the main street of Herzeliya. I took a handful of pamphlets, and tossed them out.

“Hundreds of people were startled out of their daily routine, as hundreds of papers descended from the skies, with everyone trying to grab one to find out what it was about.

“I will never forget those moments; hundreds of people running after a pamphlet of a sicha. When I saw that, I knew without a doubt that the Rebbe would derive tremendous *nachas ruach* from this *mitvza*.

“When we got to Bnei Brak it was very windy and all the pamphlets were scattered to the fields at the edge of the city. Suddenly, I saw hundreds of people streaming towards the fields to



RABBI DOVID RASKIN AND RABBI SHMUEL BUTMAN OVERSEE THE PACKAGING OF THE MISHLOACH MANOS, TO BE DISTRIBUTED ON PURIM THROUGHOUT NEW YORK.



grab a pamphlet. To me this was like a fulfillment of the prophecy, 'Not hungry for bread and not thirsty for water, rather to hear the word of Hashem...'

This operation continued for many years.

One year, Tzach received a letter from the Rebbe. Without a word of explanation, the Rebbe instructed them to cancel the operation.

The Rebbe never allowed anything good to be stopped, and this was an enterprise which had reached literally thousands of Jews. Why would the Rebbe cancel it?

In *yechidus*, the Rebbe explained the reason to Rabbi Gansburg: Because of the security situation in Eretz Yisroel, the citizens are in a constant state of fear. When they hear airplanes flying overhead it scares them; it brings fear, not happiness. So, the Rebbe said, I thought to myself, why should we frighten Yidden?

Even when it came to the *mivtzoim*, the first consideration was the simple, physical well-being of Yidden.

From then on, they publicized Purim through more conventional avenues.

The Rebbe's Mishloach Manos

In 5731, the Rebbe came out with a special call to reach out to the soldiers of the IDF throughout the day of Purim and to assist them with the mitzvot of the day.

Reb Shloim'ke Maidanchik met with Israeli Air Force officials before Purim and coordinated with them to supply an airplane that would enable Chassidim to fly to the far-out army bases and visit the soldiers there. At one point they were about to back out because the airplanes were required for training purposes. However, the Chassidim didn't give up, and they eventually convinced the Air Force personnel to allow the use of the planes for the *mivtza*.

A few days before Purim Rabbi Efraim Wolf wrote a *duch* to the Rebbe outlining the plans for Purim, following the Rebbe's *hora'a*:

"About the *mishloach manos* for the soldiers, we finalized with the military authorities, and we ordered ten thousand sets of *mishloach manos*. We are now in the process of signing up volunteers from *anash* to go to the army bases on Purim."

As Purim got closer, the Rebbe added many *hora'os* detailing how the *mivtza* should be carried out:

Lubavitchers who serve in the IDF and will be taking part in the *mivtzoim* should wear their normal army fatigues.

The *mivtza* should be done on a large scale, but they shouldn't worry about the size of the *mishloach manos*. All soldiers on all levels and all ranks should receive.

No publicity before the *mivtza* takes place.

They should also speak about the concept of Purim and *mishloach manos* as was done in the schools (until now).

They should take *megillos* with as well.

The Rebbe asked that the *mishloach manos* be given to the soldiers as a personal gift from the Rebbe.

Another extraordinary aspect of *mivtza Purim* in 5731 was the Rebbe's request to give *mishloach manos* on his behalf to the widows and children of fallen Israeli soldiers, *Hy"d*.

The Rebbe personally covered the expenses for those *mishloach manos*, and when Purim approached, the Rebbe also



REB EFROYIM WOLFF

added a message to be delivered to each of the recipients:

לכל אחד ואחת מהנ"ל, ולכולן-תחייה: פורים שמח וקיום מש"נ ליהודים היתה אורה ושמחה וששון ויקר-כן תהיה לנו

"To every single one of them: happy Purim. May the verse [in the *megilla*] be fulfilled for us: 'For the Jews there was light and happiness, joy and glory.'"

One can only imagine how touched the soldiers were to witness the care and

"A SPECIAL YASHER KOACH GOES TO THOSE WHO BROUGHT THE JOY OF PURIM TO YIDDEN IN ERETZ YISRAEL... THOSE WHO TRAVELED TO SINAI, TO THE NORTH, AND TO THE OTHER ARMY BASES, BRINGING JOY TO THE YIDDEN WHO GUARD THE BOUNDARIES OF ERETZ YISRAEL... THEY ARE PHYSICALLY DISTANT, YET SPIRITUALLY THEY ARE CLOSE AND UNITED WITH US. WITH THIS L'CHAIM, THE PHYSICAL DISTANCE WILL BE NULLIFIED..."

concern of the Rebbe, to the extent that he sent his Chassidim to visit them.

Almost all of them heeded the request of the Chassidim to put on *tefillin*. In addition to the public readings of the *megillah* that were arranged for the soldiers, and the words of inspiration that were spoken, above all what the Chassidim brought was the joyous Purim spirit.

In the report that was sent to the Rebbe after Purim, we read of the soldiers' strong emotional impressions that they experienced from these visits. They were all very thankful to the Rebbe for his initiative. One particular soldier, upon seeing the Rebbe's picture that was handed out together with the *mishloach manos*, burst into tears. Many took the picture of the Rebbe and affixed it next to

PURIM FARBRENGEN IN 770. CIRCA LATE 5720S.



THE REBBE ASKED IF WE ARE ABLE TO HEAR THE FARBRENGEN FROM SINAI TO WHICH WE ANSWERED YES, AND ONLY THEN DID THE REBBE GO DOWNSTAIRS TO BEGIN THE FARBRENGEN.

their beds. The *duch* was filled with many more such stories, of the heartfelt thanks that the soldiers expressed to the Rebbe.

An interesting anecdote from the *mivtzoim*, as reported in the long and detailed *duch* that was sent to the Rebbe:

“When we were there, a reserve soldier related that for a long time, he had had only sons, and he wished to have a daughter. A friend advised him to turn to the Rebbe, and the Rebbe told him to check his *tefillin* and *mezuzos*, which he did, and they turned out to be *possul*. After he bought new *tefillin* and *mezuzos*,

a daughter was born. After hearing this story, many soldiers asked for the Rebbe’s address.”

That night (on *Motzei Purim*) the Rebbe entered the Farbrengen a few minutes later than usual. He immediately began by saying, “We were delayed by a few minutes, beginning a bit later than planned. This is *be’hashgocha protis*; meanwhile, word was received from Eretz Yisroel that all those who had traveled to the Suez Canal to visit the army bases and bring the joy of Purim to those [soldiers] who protect the Jewish people of the Holy Land, returned home safely.”

These words were spoken by the Rebbe with great emotion, and he began to cry, adding that the officials of the army spared no effort in assisting them with a safe journey there, enabling them to fly and drive to all the places that special security is needed.³

With a “K’nak”!

The following year, on 6 Adar 5732, Rabbi Yisroel Leibov sent a letter to all the Chassidim who had joined in *mivtza Purim* the previous year, writing that a *hora’a* had come from the Rebbe that the *mivtza* with the soldiers should be increased accordingly [i.e. because it’s already a year later].

Rabbi Efraim Wolf, who headed the Chabad *mosdos* in Eretz Yisrael, used to hold daily phone conversations with *mazkirus*, which he would later transcribe.⁴ Reading the transcripts from Adar I 5733 one can see the immense interest the Rebbe took in *mivtza Purim*.

In one conversation, the following message was relayed for Rabbi Yisroel Leibov: The *mivtzoim* of Purim this year should be done in the nicest and largest fashion. Regarding the great financial cost, if the *mivtzoim* would be with a *shturem* and a *hiddur*, the *mazkirus* would cover 95% of the expenses!

In addition, Rabbi Wolf was told to “inform Tzach that the Rebbe *shlita* is happy about the preparations for *mivtza Purim* with the bereaved families, and



LUBAVITCHERS BRING THE JOY OF PURIM TO IDF SOLDIERS STATIONED NEAR THE SINAI DESERT.



RABBI DOVID RASKIN AND RABBI YISROEL LEBOV CONVERSE AT THE TZACH OFFICE IN CROWN HEIGHTS.



A PURIM DANCE WITH THE SOLDIERS IN THE SINAI DESERT.

that the activities should be done with a “*k’nak*” [a bang]!”

Over the next month, Rabbi Wolf was repeatedly asked to provide updates of the preparations for *mivtzoim*, and to check with Rabbi Leibov throughout all the proceedings.

As Purim neared, the Chabad activists in Eretz Yisrael came up with more and more ideas of how to arrange *mivtza Purim* with the greatest *shturem*. Also, at that time there were many immigrants arriving in Eretz Yisroel from Russia, and the activists set out to reach them in the most successful manner.

Then, on 9 of Adar II, a few days before Purim, Rabbi Wolf was instructed to give

Rabbi Leibov 10-15 thousand *lirot* for the *mivtzoim*, based on Rabbi Leibov’s guarantee that the *mivtzoim* would be with the greatest *shturem*, and to give it immediately, so that *mivtza Purim* could be carried out free of worry.

On Shabbos *mevorchim* Adar II, the Rebbe said⁵ that among the mitzvos of Purim, *mishloach manos* and *matanos la’evyonim* have unique significance. Yet, at the same time, they are for some reason less observed (as the Rebbe had spoken years before). Therefore, the Rebbe said, an emphasis should be put on encouraging every single Jew, male and female, young and old, to fulfill these mitzvos. The Rebbe added that this must start now, before Purim, in order that by

the time Purim comes, everyone should be ready to fulfill these mitzvos.

The Rebbe gave a bottle of *mashke* to one of the organizers of the *mivtza* and said:

Those involved in this *mivtza* should take *mashke* and split it among themselves, and this will add in the *bracha* and *hatzlacha* for their activities. *Yehi ratzon*, that these activities will be with *pirsumei nissa*, with the greatest publicity, and that the activities should be done with the greatest amount of *shluchim*; in quantity, and even more so, in quality.

At the farbrengen on Purim⁶ the Rebbe made special mention to all those who took part in the *mivtzoim*, asking them to say *l’chaim*:

“A special *yasher koach* goes to those who brought the joy of Purim to Yidden in Eretz Yisrael, and also to those who were involved in *mivtzoim* here in America. A special *yasher koach* to those who traveled to Sinai, to the North, and to the other army bases, bringing joy to the Yidden who guard the boundaries of Eretz Yisrael, enabling the soldiers to fulfill *mishloach manos* and *matanos la’evyonim*. A *yasher koach* also goes to those in overseas countries who encouraged Yidden to perform the mitzvos of *mishloach manos* and *matanos la’evyonim*, as fulfilling these mitzvos alone causes simcha.

“They are physically distant, yet spiritually they are close and united with us. So everyone here should say *l’chaim* for yourselves and for them. With this *l’chaim*, גדולה לגימה שמקרב, the physical distance will be nullified. And we will become a unified nation, even though in the current situation we are scattered among other nations.”

Farbrengen in the Desert

In the sicha, the Rebbe specifically mentioned those who went on *mivtzoim* in Sinai. In an interview with A Chasidisher Derher, Rabbi Lipa Kurtzveil, a senior member of Tzach in Eretz Yisroel, related:

Be Original

The Rebbe took interest in every small detail of the *mishloach manos*, as we saw earlier regarding the size and *shiur* of the *mishloach manos*. In a sicha on *Shabbos parshas Terumah* 5740, the Rebbe exhibited a similar unique interest in the brochures for Purim, admonishing the fact there was no thought being put into them.

יעדן יאר ווען עס קומט דרוקן א "בראשור" מיט די אלע פרטים וואס זיינען מיט פורים וכיו"ב - גייט מען און מ'נעמט ארויס א "בראשור" וואס מ'האט אוועקגלייגט פאר א יארן, און מ'איז פון דארטן מעתיק אות באות, און דאס דרוקט מען אפ.

וואס יענער "בראשור" וואס מ'האט געדרוקט מיט א יאר פאר דערויף איז אויך א העתקה אות באות פון דעם וואס מ'האט געדרוקט פאר צוויי יאר צוריק, און עד"ז איז יענער א העתקה פון דעם פריערדיקן, און אזוי גייט דאס ביז צו דעם זמן פון מ"ת, וואס דעמאלט האט מען קיין ברירה ניט געהאט, און מ'האט געדארפט זאגען א נייע זאך, אבער נאך דערויף וואס דארף מען האנדלען און יעדן יאר איבערטראכטן וואס מ'דארף דרוקן - מ'קען דאך ניצן דאס וואס מ'האט געדרוקט פאר א יארן!?

The Rebbe went on to list details that could and should have been changed in this year's brochure. For example: Purim (in 5740) fell out on Sunday, which meant that certain laws were different than in other years;

machatzis hashekel needed to be given before Shabbos; people needed to be reminded not to prepare their *megillos* on Shabbos for the reading after Shabbos; and so on.



THE FLYING MEGILLAH: RABBI CHAIM BRIKMANN, THEN A BOCHUR, TOURED THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA ON A PRIVATE JET, BRINGING THE JOY OF PURIM TO VARIOUS REMOTE COMMUNITIES AND ARMY BASES. CIRCA 5749.

"That year, I was in charge of dispatching the groups of *bochurim* and *yungeleit* who traveled to the Sinai desert for *mitvzoim* with the soldiers. Now, you have to remember, there were no cellphones then, and there were no means of contact between the different groups, so we set a time, well after we were all due to finish the *mitvzoim*, to meet together and board the airplane back to Tel Aviv.

"The time came and we were all waiting at the plane, but one of the groups still did not return. The pilot was getting edgy and said that he would only wait one more hour. If by then the group did not return, we will have to take off without them. I told the pilot that if this was the case then I will have to remain behind with my group. We could not take off and leave the other group behind. The pilot took off and a few of us stayed behind.

Now we had a real dilemma; how would we hear the Rebbe's Purim farbrengen? We approached the Army officers and asked them if they would be willing to open the office for us so we can hear the Rebbe; the officer agreed. We entered the office and called New York to say that we were safe and sound. The Rebbe asked if we are able to hear the Farbrengen from Sinai to which we answered yes, and

only then did the Rebbe go downstairs to begin the farbrengen. Yet again, we can see the Rebbe's special affection for the participants in *mitvza Purim*!

The Rebbe's Encouragement

The Rebbe always showed great appreciation for the *shluchim* who would take part in *mitvza Purim*, and he would often speak of the great privilege of those involved.

In a *yoman* from Purim 5734 a bochur records a unique incident which took place that year:

"After davening Rabbi Dovid Raskin announced that whoever joins in *mitvza Purim* will receive a dollar from the Rebbe [a rare occurrence in those days]. Understandably, everyone was very happy about this, and we all rushed to go on *mitvzoim*. The Rebbe gave the dollars to Rabbi Raskin after davening and said,

ס'זאל זיין פירות טובות במשך כל השנה

"There should be good results [from this] throughout the entire year."

Women as well

On Rosh Chodesh Adar 5735 the Rebbe held a special farbrengen. The Rebbe said⁷ that one of his intentions in holding

this unusual farbrengen was so that Chassidim throughout the world could participate via hook-up, and hear directly from the Rebbe his encouragement to take part in *mitvza Purim*. Every man and woman should be involved.

The Rebbe added that the involvement of *nshei ubnos Yisrael* is especially important in *mitvza Purim*, even more than in any of the other *mitvzoim*. The Shulchan Aruch rules that with *mishloach manos*, a man gives to a man and a woman gives to a woman. In order for a woman to do the mitzvah properly, both the giver and the receiver must be women. Because the emphasis in this mitzvah is that it must be woman to woman, it is critical that women go out on *mitvzoim* and encourage other women to fulfill the mitzvah.

The Rebbe continued, saying, that surely all the women and girls will join in the *mitvza Purim* in *tznius'dike* manner, but still, there should be much enthusiasm! Just as we saw by the redemption on Pesach, that in the merit of the righteous women the Yidden were released, the same is true in our *galus*. We need the merit of the righteous women, and it

should start with their involvement in *mitvza Purim*.

Not only Lubavitch

In this farbrengen the Rebbe also emphasized that *mitvza Purim* is not exclusively for Lubavitch. It is for every person in *klal Yisroel*:

The mitzvos of Purim are written in Shluchan Aruch; and even earlier, in *rishonim*; and even earlier than that, in the Gemara; and earlier still, in the Mishna; and even before that, in Megillas Esther. They are written in a way that is understood to every person, even a *ben chamesh limikra*! Don't let anyone try to twist it by saying that it is only for Lubavitch, it is incumbent on *every person in klal Yisroel* to be involved in *mitvza Purim*!

Even though some [i.e. Lubavitch] *tumul* more than others—which would seem to indicate that it is connected to Lubavitch more than to other circles—*on the contrary*, if only they would *tumul* with the *mitvzoim* more than Lubavitch, this itself would stir the tumult in Lubavitch and make it grow stronger. We are living in a world with the *קול המונה של רומי*

“great noise of Rome,” and we need to counter it with the “המונה” of holiness!

The same is true regarding *mitvzoim* in general—whether *mitvza Torah*, or *mitvza tefillin*, or *mitvza mezuzah*, or *mitvza tzedaka*, or *mitvza neiros Shabbos kodesh*, and even more so *mitvza Purim*—each one of the *mitvzoim* is for all of *klal Yisroel*, and it is incumbent upon every single person to be involved in them, with happiness and a joyful heart. Every person who does so is extremely fortunate and has great merit.

In truth, the Rebbe said, these are simple facts, as we have discussed many times and it is printed in several places. But in order to ensure that no one is bothered by this question *for even a single moment*, we are emphasizing that *mitvza Purim* is connected to every person in *klal Yisroel*.

On the night of Purim 5735, Rabbi Wolf received a *hora'a* from *mazkirus*:

“The *mitvza* of going to the soldiers to distribute *mishloach manos* should be strengthened and grown as much as possible, without considering the expense, and it should be done with *simcha*.

“*Bihashgacha protis*, Purim is on Tuesday, which is a day of *טובים וטוב* לבריית good for heaven and good for the creations, so the *mitvzoim* for the soldiers - good for the creations - should be done with even more *geshmak* and energy.”

Yet again, we see the Rebbe's unbelievable “*koch*” in the *mitvzoim* for the soldiers.

Prisons and Hospitals

On Shabbos *mevorchim* Adar 5736⁸, the Rebbe introduced a new phase of *mitvza Purim*—to visit Yidden in prisons and hospitals to help them perform *mishloach manos* and *matanos la'evyonim*.

The Rebbe also detailed how to go about it. *Mishloach manos* is simple to arrange, because according to law prisoners are generally permitted to receive food; but *matanos la'evyonim* may prove to be a bit trickier, as they cannot receive money



PHOTO: THE ALEPH INSTITUTE

A PURIM PARTY ARRANGED FOR THE JEWISH SOLDIERS STATIONED IN IRAQ, PURIM 5768.

Mivtza Purim – Eilat 5737

In 5737 Rabbi Yisroel Glitzenstein of Eilat, Israel oversaw a massive *mivtza Purim*, reaching all the IDF bases in Southern Israel, near the Egyptian border.

The soldiers were very moved by the Chassidim's visit and enjoyed a joyous yom tov celebration with their guests.

The following is a very touching letter sent to the Rebbe by Mr. Shimon Vagim, commander of the IDF base in Eilat, expressing his heartfelt feelings about the visit of the Chabad Chassidim to his base on Purim:

To the Honorable Lubavitcher Rebbe, Greetings!

It is my duty and great privilege to extend kind wishes to you from all the IDF soldiers in our unit, and to thank you, and all of your Chassidim, for the mivtzoim carried out on your behalf and at your behest.

We spent Purim this year in the company of Chabad Chassidim, who took care to bring us your blessings along with mishloach manos, thus sweetening our holiday.

The devotion and dedication of your Chassidim is noteworthy; they go above and beyond [the call of duty] for the IDF soldiers. There was not one corner in the entire region where our soldiers serve that was not visited by your Chassidim, extending your blessings.

It is also noteworthy to point out the mezuzah campaign on the army bases, as well as the tefillin campaign, that your Chassidim practice at every opportunity.

Honorable Rebbe, all the activities done with your inspiration by your Chassidim contribute to bringing the hearts [of the soldiers] closer to love of their fellow man, and to a deeper appreciation of the fundamentals of the Jewish nation; fulfilling the verse "Ve'havta le'reiacha kamocha."

I wish to bless you again on my behalf and on behalf of all the soldiers in my unit. We wish you many long years, that you may witness the fulfillment of the prophecy of the end of days [i.e. the coming of Moshiach].

לכבוד הרב מלובביץ; שלום רב!

חובה וזכות גדולה נפלה בחלקי לשגר אליך פריסת שלום מחילי צה"ל במילואינו, וכן להודות לך ולכל חסידך על המבצעים שנעשים בשמך ולפי המלצתך.

את חג הפורים השנה בלינו במחיצת חסידי חב"ד אשר דאגו להביא לנו את ברכתך ואת משלוח המנות אשר המתיק לנו את החג.

ראוי לציין את המסירות והדבקות של חסידך אשר עשו ועושים מעל ומעבר למען חילי צה"ל לא היתה באזור פינה אשר משרתים בה חילי צה"ל שחסידך לא הגיעו לשם והפיצו את ברכתך.

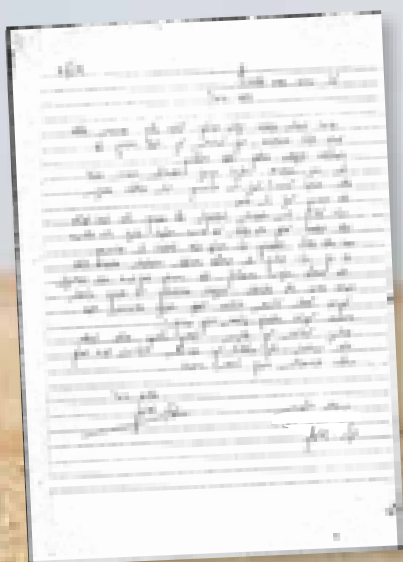
כמו כן ראוי לציין את מבצע החלפת המזוזות בבסיסי צה"ל וגם למבצע הנחת התפילין אשר חסידך מקיימים בכל הזדמנות.

כבוד הרב, כל הפעולות שנעשות בהשראתך וע"י חסידך תורמות לקרוב לבבות לאהבת האדם ליתר הבנה ביסודות העם היהודי, לקיום הפסוק "ואהבת לרעך כמוך".

ברצוני לברך אותך שנית ולברך אותך בשמי ובשם חילי יחידתי. אנו מייחלים לך בריאות ואריכות ימים למען תראה בהתגשמות חזון אחרית הימים.

שלום רב!

וג'ים שמעון



Much Success

In response, the Rebbe sent a letter to Mr. Vagim, urging him to allow these heartfelt impressions to be translated into practical deeds:

With pleasure I received your letter regarding the visit of Chabad personnel, carrying out mitvza Purim, and of the impressions left upon you and all the IDF soldiers in your unit. I thank you for your courteous gesture to write to me about this; it has obviously caused me great pleasure.

I hope that the impressions did not remain only in the feelings of the heart and in speech, but that they found their expression in action as well; as Chazal say the המעשה הוא העיקר.

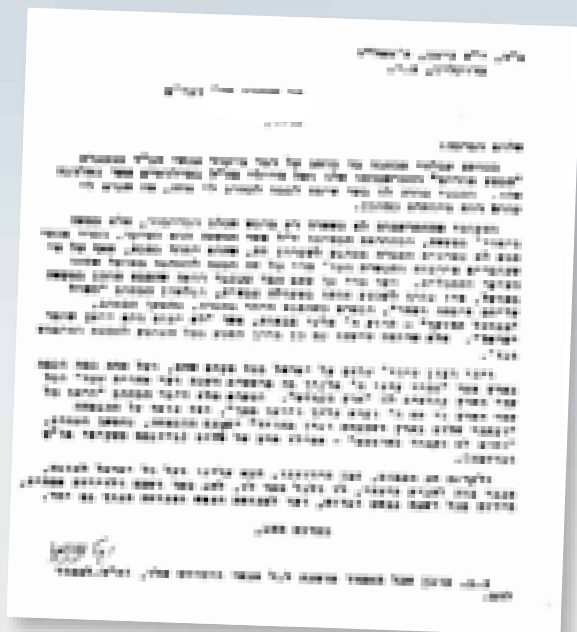
Soldiers need not be explained this concept; it is a basic tenet of the army—although one goes through training and preparations etc., this is all mere preparations for the action itself.

The Rebbe concludes with a P.S.:

Obviously, all of the above is addressed to all the members of your unit. Many thanks for your willingness to convey this message to them.

This letter is a *michtav kloli-proti* sent before Purim 5736. Receiving reports about all the preparations, the Rebbe expressed his thanks for the reports, and added a special *brocha* in his holy handwriting (see *ksav yad kodesh*):

בברכת הצלחה בעבודה"ק [=בעבודת הקדש]



from outside the prison. The way to get around this is to bring a *tzedaka pushka*, give them coins which will completely belong to them, and then have them put it directly into the *pushka*. [As *achronim* explain, if there is no poor person to whom to give the *matanos la'evyonim*, one can put it in a *pushka*.]

This also solves another issue. There are no poor people in prison or in the hospital, because their facilities provide their clients with all their needs. Therefore, the only way to fulfill the mitzvah is by putting the money into a *pushka*.

On Rosh Chodesh Adar the Rebbe again farbrenged, adding⁹ that now is the time to remind everyone about *mitvza purim* since it is a weekday, and Chassidim throughout the world are listening to the farbrengen via the hook-up.

Again the Rebbe spoke about going on *mitvzoim* to prisons and hospitals, and he went on to stress the unique merit associated in doing *mitvzoim* in these locations, specifically prisons. Besides for enabling them to fulfill the mitzvos of Purim, it brings them the joy of Purim when it is most needed.

The Rebbe explained at length the importance of going to prisons; at one point addressing an interesting question:

This person is sitting in prison, and it is quite possible that he is sitting there for a valid reason, so why the emphasis on helping criminals? The Rebbe answered that there is a fascinating Midrash, relevant to this topic, on the *possuk* אֱלֹהִים יִבְקֹשׁ אֶת הַטוֹב (Hashem seeks [the good of] the pursued). The Midrash says that even if the pursuer is a *tzaddik*, and the one being pursued is a *rasha*, Hashem seeks the good of the pursued, the *rasha*, because he is in a trying situation. From this we see how important it is to assist people who are in arduous circumstances, no matter who they are or what they did to end up there.

Surprise Farbrengen

A few days later, on 7 Adar II, the Rebbe went to the Ohel, as he would most years. No one expected there to be a farbrengen, especially since the Rebbe had already conducted a special farbrengen, when he spoke about *mitvza Purim*, on Rosh Chodesh.

At 6:30 p.m. the Rebbe davened *Mincha* following his return from the Ohel, and immediately thereafter called Rabbi Chodakov into his room.

Rabbi Hodakov came out and announced that at 7:30 p.m. there will be a short

farbrengen. Being that 7:30 was only a few minutes away, and because no one had expected a farbrengen, the shul downstairs was not ready at all for a farbrengen. So everyone ran downstairs to set up the shul before the Rebbe came in.

In those years, when the Rebbe farbrenged on weekdays, he often began with a *maamor*. This time, as the Rebbe entered the farbrengen and sat down—even before a *niggun* was started—the Rebbe began to speak about the reason for this farbrengen¹⁰.

This farbrengen, the Rebbe said, should serve as a reminder to begin all arrangements for *mitvza Purim* to be even greater than years before, being that this year is a leap year.

The Rebbe went on to say that the נקודה הפנימית, the inner meaning of all of the *mitvzoim of Purim*, is that they should lead to תורה או תורה—to learn Torah. That when speaking to a Yid about *mishloach manos* and *matanos la'evyonim*, one should ensure that it brings to learning Torah, and *chinuch* according to Torah.

In the third sicha, after the *maamor*, the Rebbe said¹¹ that in some places they had sent out miniscule *mishloach manos*; so small that it was doubtful



whether they were worth more than a *pruta* or constituted the necessary *shiur*. The Rebbe went on to speak about the *halachos* of *mishloach manos*, and asked that the *mishloach manos*'s that were too small should be corrected in the days before Purim. Then the Rebbe concluded:

“Hashem should grant success to the *mitvza Purim* of *mishloach manos* and *matanos la'evyanoim*, and especially in the *mitvza Purim* with those who guard and defend Eretz Yisrael, ארץ אשר ג' עיני ה'—אלוקיך בה מראשית השנה ועד אחרית שנה—the land which Hashem's eyes are on it from the beginning of the year until the end of the year. They defend—literally with their physical bodies—the many Jewish men, women, and children who live there. *Mivtza Purim* should be arranged for them, הצלחה ביתר שאת וביתר עוז, and with them, 'מופלגה'”

Because the Rebbe had spoken so passionately that year about prisons, hundreds of Chassidim spread out to visit prisons across America, to bring them *mitvza Purim*. During the Purim *farbrengen* that year, the Rebbe spoke again about *mitvza Purim* in prisons, and gave an intriguing explanation about the role of prison in Torah and in society in general.¹²

Through the Winter

The *mitvza* became larger and larger as the years went on, and the Rebbe showed much attention in *mitvza Purim* and all those who participated in it.

Each year, the Rebbe sent large sums of money to the administration of Tzach in Eretz Yisroel (through the *mazkirus*) to help cover the expenses of *mitvza Purim*.

An example of his great concern for the *mitvza* is in 5743, when the Rebbe instructed Tzach that they begin with the planning of *mitvza Purim* as early as mid-Cheshvan!

Today hundreds and thousands of Yidden are reached and influenced to observe the mitzvos of Purim, bringing light into their lives; the light of Torah and the joy of this most joyous Yom Tov. As the *megillah* attests regarding the outcome of the miracle of Purim:

“ליהודים היתה אורה ושמחה וששון ויקר”

And might we add: כן תהי' לנו!

A Gift from the Rebbe

Rabbi Kurtzveil relates:

One year the Rebbe delivered an instruction to Rabbi Yisroel Leibov that all *bochurim* and *yungeleit* participating



RABBI YOSEF YITZCHOK GUREVITZ

in *mitvza Purim* are to take one of the *mishloach manos* packets for themselves and consider it personal *mishloach manos* from the Rebbe! Imagine, what would a Chossid not do to receive a dollar, a *kuntres*, a piece of *lekach* or anything from the Rebbe? Here we have the chance to receive *mishloach manos* from the Rebbe himself. Who could resist but go out on *mitvzoim* this Purim with the greatest *shturem*?!

The Rebbe's Shlichus

In an interview with A Chassidisher Derher, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Gurevitz, mashpia in Migdal H'aemek related:





I merited to be one of the shluchim sent by the Rebbe to Eretz Yisroel in 5736. The Rebbe sent a group of *bochurim* and *yungeleit* to Yerushalayim and a group to Tzfas. We left New York for Eretz Yisroel on 11 Shevat 5736. I was a Bochor at the time and my shlichus was in Yerushalayim.

A few weeks earlier, at the farbrengen of Shabbos parshas Miketz, when speaking about the shluchim who would be leaving soon to Eretz Yisrael, the Rebbe said: "Those shluchim who are traveling to Eretz Yisrael, I accept upon myself the responsibility for their trip - עלי ועל צווארי [lit. upon me; on my neck]."

When Purim arrived, Tzach coordinated a massive *mitvza Purim* for the soldiers, with Chassidim branching out to army bases all over Eretz Yisroel. I was directed to an army base near Shechem. Together with several other Lubavitchers, a driver from the IDF, and another soldier, we entered an army truck and traveled the twisted, curvy roads on the way to our destination.

Suddenly, we came to a shrieking halt. After a moment of deadly silence, a

cacophony of ominous voices was heard outside the truck. The smell of fire filled the air, and black smoke began seeping in. We were sitting in the back and were oblivious as to what was going on outside. A roadblock was barring the way, and crowds of Arab youth holding stones were standing nearby. "We have no choice, we have to turn around," the driver said, his face white as chalk.

I turned to the driver and said, "We are not going back, we must continue on!"

The driver looked at me as if I fell off the moon. "We are turning around," he repeated. "I am responsible for your safety!"

But I didn't give in. "If you turn around, I'm getting off right here!"

The soldier couldn't understand. Why would I want to go on in the face of obvious danger? Why not just return another day? "I am a shliach of the Rebbe," I said. "And the Rebbe said that the responsibility for the shluchim is on his shoulders. We have no reason to be afraid."

"Do you really believe so strongly in your Rebbe?" the driver asked me.

"Yes," I replied. "We have nothing to be afraid of."

Hearing my strong reply, he finally gave in.

The driver backed up the truck, and went full speed ahead straight into the burning roadblock, with the truck almost flipping over. We then went directly through the crowd of Arabs, as they threw heavy stones on the truck. The soldier fired a warning shot in the air, but the Arabs didn't disperse. The rocks kept coming from all sides.

Finally, we got out to the open; the danger had passed. When we arrived at the army base, the commander had already heard the harrowing story and the courage we had displayed, and so he hurried to gather all the soldiers on base. In the broken *Ivrit* I had at the time, I repeated the story, and the soldiers were moved by the powerful faith we had displayed, many of them rolling up their sleeves to put on *tefillin*.

That night, when we returned to Yerushalayim, I immediately called Rabbi Binyomin Klein and told him all the details of the story, which he passed on to the Rebbe.

At 4:30 a.m. Israel time, the Rebbe's Purim farbrengen began. The Rebbe spoke two sichos followed by *niggunim* and then in the third sicha, the Rebbe said:¹³

"I would like to share something which just took place, just a short while ago. A message arrived from Eretz Yisrael about an episode which brings out that when a Jew stands strong for Yiddishkeit, and doesn't think twice about it—rather he does what he has to do—he is successful without getting hurt and without hurting others."

The Rebbe went on to relate the story at length:

"The *minhag Yisroel* is that when the chance arises to bring good tidings and encouragement to another Jew who can use it, especially those whose job it is to guard Eretz Yisroel, they seize the opportunity immediately.

"There was a request to bring *mishloach manos* and lift the spirits of those Jews who are privileged to guard Eretz Yisroel. I received a message that a group of shluchim traveled to the soldiers that are stationed in Shechem.

"Seeing that recently it has been very tumultuous in Shechem, the shluchim

were accompanied by a driver and one or two¹⁴ soldiers. When they were a short distance away from Shechem, they encountered a roadblock that the Arabs had built, to stop Jews and soldiers from entering Shechem and its surroundings. They soon realized that it was not only a block of stones sticks and earth, but many Arabs stood there as well. The driver did not want to take the risk and responsibility for the shluchim who were bringing the *mishloach manos*, especially since their *shlichus* could be done another time.

"The shluchim, however, told him simply, that since they were given a *shlichus* to bring encouragement to other Jews, and to enliven them with the joy of Purim, they should ignore the barrier of stones, sticks, and earth, and even if there are people there. Since they were going to do a good thing, nothing bad would happen. They convinced the driver and the soldiers to go on further and not to be afraid.

"The driver went further, and broke through the roadblock. The Arabs tried throwing stones, and the soldier had to fire a few shots in the air to scare them off.

"When they arrived at the army base, they had a very lively Purim gathering. They then returned to Yerushalayim unharmed and in good spirits. Now in Yerushalayim the Purim celebration is starting, since in Yerushalayim Purim is celebrated on the Fifteenth of Adar."

The Rebbe concluded with an important lesson that one need not be intimidated by the goyim around him and stand up proud with his Yiddishkeit.

This story sends us a very powerful message. When we go on *mitvzoim* and fulfil the Rebbe's directive to help another Yid—in whatever mitzvah it may be—we are the Rebbe's shluchim! We must go with courage and not allow ourselves to be disturbed by barriers that can often stand in our way. The Rebbe is protecting us and making sure that we fulfil the *shlichus* properly; and when we persevere, we merit to bring the Rebbe great *nachas ruach*, as evident in the above story.

May we merit to great success in doing the Rebbe's *mitvzoim*, thereby becoming vessels to true *nachas ruach*. And may we be *zoche* to spend Purim with the Rebbe *b'gashmiyus* and hear the Rebbe's Purim farbrengen this year! **D**



1. Igros Kodesh vol. 20 p. 176
2. Likkutei Sichos vol. 2 p. 536
3. Sichos Kodesh 5731, vol. 1 p. 509
4. Many of these transcripts are published in Yemei Temimim - 8 volumes (Kehos, Eretz Yisroel).
5. Sichos Kodesh 5733, vol. 1 pp. 365-367
6. Ibid. p. 425
7. Sichos Kodesh 5735, vol. 1 pp. 417-418
8. Sichos Kodesh 5736, vol. 1 pp. 525-526
9. Ibid p. 546
10. Ibid p. 555
11. Ibid p. 565
12. Ibid. p. 611
13. Sichos Kodesh 5736, Vol 1, pages 608-609
14. Rabbi Gurevitz pointed out, that interestingly enough on the way to the base they picked up a rabbinic army chaplain who was hitching a ride. This chaplain was also present during the entire story. However, when he related the story later to Rabbi Klein he didn't mention anything about the additional passenger. Here the Rebbe hinted to the fact that there was an additional soldier present.

Purim in the News

Throughout the years, Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky has brought the Rebbe's messages to the press for public dissemination. The Rebbe often edited the press releases, commenting and correcting as necessary.

The Rebbe launched *mitvza Purim* in 5721. Below is the text of the press release detailing the Rebbe's call.

7th of Adar, 5721

February 23, 1961

LUBAVITCHER RABBI CALLS FOR INCREASED PURIM OBSERVANCE

The Lubavitcher Rabbi, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, issued a call to Rabbis, Principals, Teachers and Parents, urging them to encourage Jewish children to observe the Purim festival by attending the reading of the Megillah on the night and morning of Purim, and sending food-gifts to friends (Shallach Monos) and giving alms to the poor (Mattonos loEvyonim) in accordance with Jewish precept.

Pointing to the widespread misconception among Jewish children in regard to these observances, the Lubavitcher Rabbi urged the Jewish spiritual leaders, educators and parents to inspire the children with the spirit and observance of the happy Purim festival...

A few weeks later, a follow-up statement was issued:

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(LNS) - March 7, 1961

The pre-Purim call of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, to Rabbis, Jewish educators and parents, for revitalization of the observance of the Purim Mitzvochs - "Mishloach Monos", sending gifts of at least two edibles one to another, and "Matonos loEvyonim", giving charity to at least two poor people, with special emphasis that these Mitzvochs be taught to and practiced by Jewish youth - has received wide recognition and acclaim the world over.

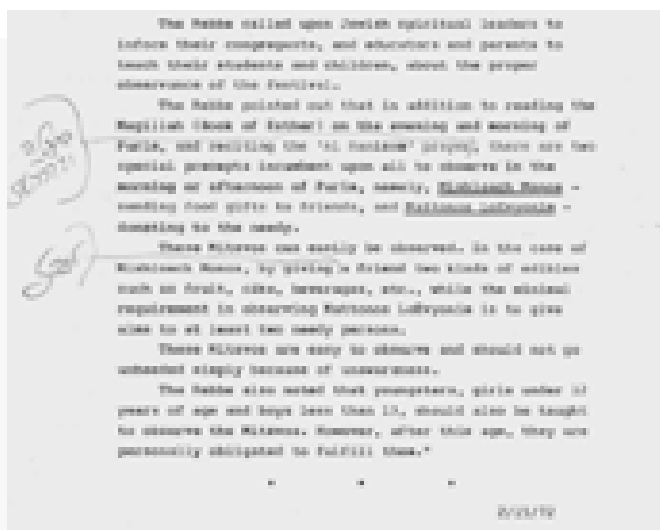
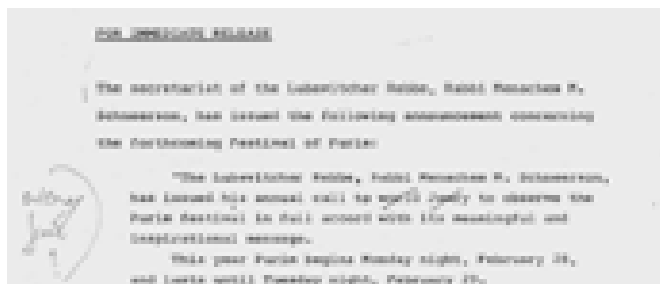
As a result of the Rebbe's initiative in this matter tens of thousands of young Jewish people will observe these Mitzvochs for the first time.

It has been learned from the Lubavitcher Department of Education in the Holy Land that the text of the Rebbe's message was relayed by radio and newspapers to all communities there. Mr. Abba Eban, Minister of Education, warmly received the Rebbe's suggestion and expressed his intention to institute a special program for the observance of these Mitzvochs in all schools throughout the Holy Land.

With this project another link is added to the long chain of the Rebbe's ramified activities in the area of bringing the masses of Jewish youth closer to Torah observance.

Every Jew

Featured here are the Rebbe's edits on a press release about *mitvza Purim* in 5732.



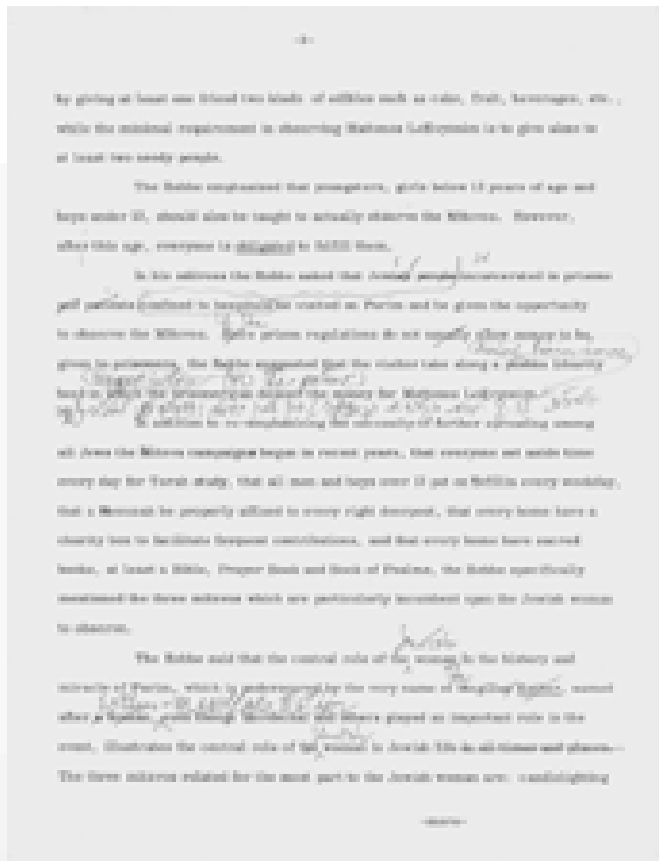
The Rebbe deleted “world Jewry” and suggested it be replaced with “every Jew?”

The Rebbe also noted that it must be stressed that “*Al hanissim*” is recited in both *tefilla* and *bentching*, and commented that *mishloach manos* is given to “at least” one friend.

Hospitals and Prisons

In this press release from 5736, we see the Rebbe's emphasis on assisting hospital-bound and incarcerated Jews with the mitzvot of Purim, as well as the special lesson for Jewish women from the story of the *megillah*.

(Teshura Krinsky-Raskin 5771)



לע"נ השלוחה מרת ראשע בת יבלחט"א הרה"ת חיים מאיר שי' מינקאוויץ

נפטרה בדמי ימיה, י' אדר-שני ה'תשע"ד

נדפס ע"י משפחתה שי'

"Moshiach is Already on his Way!"

sunday dollars - 26 adar 1, 5752

As he would every Sunday, the Rebbe stood ready to give dollars to a growing line in 770. But on this Sunday, the 26th of Adar I 5752, for the first time ever, the Rebbe asked how long the remaining line was, providing a small clue that all was not well. The distribution continued until 7:30 that evening!

The next day, Monday, 27 Adar I, the Rebbe had a stroke while at the Ohel. Since then, Chassidim await the day that the Rebbe will return in his full strength and lead us out of galus, may it be bekarov Mamosh!

Following we present a short review of what took place on the final day of 'dollars.'

At 2:00 p.m. the Rebbe entered *Gan Eden Hatachton* to daven *mincha* with a small *minyan*,¹ then distributed coins for tzedakah to all those present and allowed two *chassanim* to use his siddur.

In the meantime, a large crowd had gathered to see the Rebbe that Sunday. In addition to the usual mix of individuals who regularly came to receive Sunday dollars, there were several large groups of guests that had come to the Rebbe for Shabbos and would pass by to receive his *bracha* before returning home.

There was also a sizeable group of Vizhnitzer Chassidim who had come for dollars that day. The Vizhnitzer Rebbe from Israel was making a family *simcha* in the United States at that time and many of his Chassidim who came to New York used the opportunity to visit the Rebbe and receive his holy blessing.

Some excerpts of conversations with the Rebbe during this final distribution dollars:



PHOTO: JEM/THE LIVING ARCHIVE / 100323



PHOTO: JEM/THE LIVING ARCHIVE / 100958



PHOTO: JEM/THE LIVING ARCHIVE / 100141

“Participate in the *Haoros!*”

Rabbi Avrohom Hecht introduced his grandson to the Rebbe, informing the Rebbe that his grandson’s birthday had been the week before.

The Rebbe (handing two dollars): He should be a *yorei shomayim*, *chossid* and *lamdan*. Which grandson is he?

Rabbi Hecht: He is from California.

The Rebbe: He learns in California?

Rabbi Hecht: No, he learns now in Morristown.

The Rebbe (handing an additional dollar): *Hatzlocha rabba* in Morristown. You should participate in writing in the “*Haoros Hatmimim*” that they produce in Morristown.

Bring Besuros Tovos

A supporter of Chabad in Edgware, England approached the Rebbe and said:

“Three years ago you gave a blessing for my son to be born and he was born. Thank you very much.”

The Rebbe: “May G-d Almighty bless you and thank you for returning to me *besuros tovos*; not everyone is doing so.”

He’s on his Way!

Rabbi Krinsky approached the Rebbe with an editor of the New York Post.

The Rebbe: “Circulate the letter that the Moshiach is coming very soon. He’s not only coming, but he’s on his way.”

Asking from Angels?

A Chossid (not a Lubavitcher) approached the Rebbe and asked a question: The Tzemach Tzedek writes in *Shoresht Mitzvas Hatfilah* (117a) that one should not recite the parts of davening that request of the angels to petition from Hashem on our behalf. Why then do we find that the custom is to recite them?

The Rebbe: “It is surprising that you would ask such a question when the Tzemach Tzedek himself already offers the explanation, and it has already been printed (*Hagahos to Torah Or, Ner Chanukah*). We are not davening to the

angels, rather we are asking of them to serve as messengers, bringing our requests up to Hashem.”²

“Thank you for the Gift!”

To a famous Russian artist who told the Rebbe that he is working on drawing a picture of the Rebbe in honor of his ninetieth birthday, the Rebbe responded (in Russian): “Blessing and success. Thank you for the gift. This [the extra dollar] is for your entire family.”

I Love You!

A young toddler who was passing by shouted excitedly: “Rebbe of Lubavitch, I love you!”

The Rebbe: “Thank you very much.” The Rebbe then gave the young girl another dollar and said: “This is for the love.”


A Chossid As Well

A father who passed by with his young son, asked the Rebbe for a *bracha* that his

son grow to become a *talmid chochom*. The Rebbe replied: “He should become a chossid as well! Don’t forget...”

This Generation Davka!

Towards the end of the distribution, a news reporter approached the Rebbe and asked: “Rebbe, why does this generation deserve to see the *geula*; this generation *davka*?”

The Rebbe: “Because the number of this year is תהא שנת נפלאות בתוכה בכל ה'.” 

1. See A Chassidisher Derher Shevat 5775, pg. 54.

2. See the Rebbe’s footnote to the section “*Machnisei Rachamim*” in *Slichos*, printed in the back of Chabad *Slichos*. It should be noted that this same explanation is offered as to why we write a *Pan* to the Rebbe, and some Chassidim would actually write this in the header of the *Pan*. See *Reshimos, choveres* 156; *Toras Menachem* vol. 1 p. 39.



PHOTO: JEM/THE LIVING ARCHIVE / 101014

להביא לימות המשיח

SHAKE THE JEWISH WORLD

"לא לתר לתשובה לא לתר לגאולה"

THE STORY OF THE FRIEDIKER REBBE'S CALL FOR TESHUVAH
IN THE JEWISH NATION'S DIREST OF TIMES, ANTICIPATING IMMEDIATE
REDEMPTION, AND ITS EFFECT—THEN AND NOW...

JEWISH WORLD IN TURMOIL

The year was 1941; the Nazis י"ש had already attacked and occupied a number of European countries, as they continued to spread the oppressive reign of Hitler throughout the region. During that year, the Nazis officially began the extermination of Jews, in what they thought would be "the final solution" to the Jewish problem, the systematic eradication of every last one, *rachmona l'tzlon*.

The Nazis went from city to city killing every Jew they could find. They would round up hundreds, even thousands at a time, wiping out entire Jewish towns.

Shuls were burned down and destroyed, homes pillaged. The once thriving and vibrant *shtetels* of Europe were up in flames.

Thousands of miles away, in the United States of America, Yidden were able to go about their lives without persecution. But as the Nazis steadily swept through Europe, a fire of a different nature was burning in the "new world."

For most of American Jewry, a top priority at the time was to integrate into general society as much as possible. Many felt that keeping a business closed on Shabbos was a thing of the past. The children went to non-Jewish schools and

had many non-Jewish friends. They tried their best to live the lifestyle of a non-Jew, attending parties and events of their non-Jewish friends. The general attitude was that in America things are different; Yiddishkiet doesn't apply in the same manner anymore.

In addition, this feeling that Yiddishkiet was a relic of the past belonging to the "old world," caused a lack of *emunah* and *bitachon* in the *Aibershter*. America provided freedom from the oppression prevalent in Europe, but at the same time, its environment was cold to faith and religion. The idea of Yidden being in *golus*, constantly yearning for Moshaich's

לעילוי נשמת

הרה"ח הרה"ת עוסק בצ"צ באמונה ר' עזריאל זעליג ע"ה בן הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' אברהם זאב שו"ב ע"ה שארפשטיין שליח כ"ק אדמו"ר זי"ע בסינסינעטי אהייא למעלה מיובל שנים ושימש שם כמרא דאתרא ומו"צ ורב הראשי דועד העיר במשך כארבעים שנה נפטר בשם טוב ה' אדר ראשון ה'תשס"ח ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

נדפס ע"י משפחתו שיחיו



arrival, was a distant notion to them; not for the current times.

The fire burning in Europe was a physical one, while the fire in America was of a spiritual nature; burning at the souls of the enlightened Jews.

And yet, there was a stir in heart of the American Jew; their brethren were being slaughtered en masse! They looked for answers, and asked themselves what they could possibly do to end the genocide.

It was during this time that the Frierdiker Rebbe decided to take action. In addition to his tireless efforts in rescuing Yidden from Nazi-occupied Europe, he set out to bring clarity to the tumultuous time and give direction as to how to appropriately respond. The Frierdiker Rebbe's approach was twofold: The horrible events occurring in Europe were (part of) the *chevlei Moshiach*—the birth pangs of Moshiach; and the way to go about fighting the war was through each and every Jew arousing themselves

to do *teshuvah*, which would bring to the *geulah*.

The slogan representing the fundamental theme of this campaign was, **לאחר** - **"לתשובה לאחר לגאולה Immediate teshuva, to immediate geulah."**

HOLY PRESS

In those days, one of the most powerful means of reaching and affecting the public was through newspapers. At the time, a Yiddish newspaper existed in America called the *Morgen Journal*. It

was read even by so-called non-religious Jews. The Frierdiker Rebbe proceeded to write four declarations (“*kol koirehs*”),¹ publishing them in this and other newspapers.

Through these declarations, the Frierdiker Rebbe established his stance on the war and how to respond to it. The first *kol koireh* started off with a chilling message: “A rampant fire is spreading throughout the ‘old world,’ threatening to destroy/annihilate, Heaven forfend, more than two thirds of the Jewish nation; and who is to be sure that this fire will not spread to here, the ‘new world!’”

As stated above, American Jews felt that something had to be done. This led to many Jewish leaders and rabbonim giving their advice as to how to respond. The Frierdiker Rebbe did not mince his

THE PUBLISHING OF THE NEWSPAPER ITSELF WAS SHROUDED IN MYSTERY... CHASSIDIM SPECULATED THAT A CERTAIN MAN WAS IN CHARGE, AS THEY HAD SEEN HIM COMING TO 770 QUITE OFTEN TO MEET WITH THE FRIEDIEKER REBBE...

words as he chastised those leaders and rabbonim who had voiced their opinion: “The declaration of the spiritual leaders, calling for repentance, prayer, and fasting—even though they in and of themselves are of positive nature—nevertheless, under these current circumstances, they alone are not enough, and are of (exceedingly) minimal value”.

The Frierdiker Rebbe continued to explain that regarding terrible events such as the holocaust, it is stated “When

calamity strikes the world, anticipate the footsteps of Moshiach,” the painful suffering that we are experiencing is the “birth pangs” before the redemption of *Am Yisrael*. Moshiach is “standing right on the other side of the wall,” and all he requests is that we do *teshuvah*, through which we’ll bring “*l’alter l’geulah*”—the immediate redemption.

In addition, the Frierdiker Rebbe wrote, *teshuvah* was needed as a preparation for Moshiach. “We must cleanse ourselves from any impurities, and ‘stock up’ with true holiness.” This message was specifically to the younger generation; we must be in a ready state, as befitting for the coming of Moshiach.

FACING THE OPPOSITION

The Frierdiker Rebbe’s campaign was not met without opposition. In fact, Lubavitch lost quite a few supporters and donors as a result. Some of the *misnagdishe* rabbanim likened the declarations to missionizing, using strong language to convince people not to heed the Frierdiker Rebbe’s holy call. In the second *kol koireh*, their allegations were addressed:

“What has happened to you?! What is your idea of what Yiddishkiet is? In what do you believe? You make a grave and foolish mistake, to be ashamed of! A fundamental principle of our faith, the foremost foundation of Yiddishkiet, is to believe in the coming of Moshiach; yet you relegate it to a non-Jewish practice being that they also preach such ideas within their faith! Would you also



TWO OF THE DECLARATIONS ANNOUNCING L'ALTER LETSHUVA, PRINTED IN VARIOUS NEWSPAPERS.

abandon Shabbos, *taharas hamishpocha*, *tefillin*, *tzitzis*, and other holy Yiddishe practices if the Christian missionaries would start preaching about them as well?! Are you not aware that the belief in the coming of Moshiach is one of the fundamental principles of our holy Torah—the foundation of our holy *Nevi'im* and *Chazal*?!”

In the third *kol koireh*, the Frierdiker Rebbe addressed those who felt that saying Moshiach’s imminent arrival was unfounded, as well as those who simply did not believe in the coming of moshiach. He thoroughly and proficiently explained their errors.

And in the fourth and final *kol koireh*, the Frierdiker Rebbe wrote that the “*chevlei Moshiach*” would immediately pass, and the time of “*sisu v’simchu b’simchas hageulah*” would follow. He reiterated the call for *teshuvah* and asserted that through *teshuvah* “**the chevlei Moshiach would be prevented, or at least alleviated; do not give up during these troubled times.**”

Meanwhile, the Frierdiker Rebbe also launched a new monthly newspaper, calling it *Hakriah V’Hakedusha*. In a letter to HaRav Moshe Shapiro, the Frierdiker Rebbe explained that the name of the newspaper was an indication of its content: *Hakriah*—the call, for *Kedushah*—holiness; holiness being the readiness and preparation for the coming of Moshiach, which come through “repentance and good deeds.”

The publishing of the newspaper itself was shrouded in mystery. Some of the articles were signed with pen names like “Ish Yehudi,” “HaRav Meir,” and “ben Yisrael,” but most had no names at all. The story goes that Chassidim speculated that a certain man was in charge, as they had seen him coming to 770 quite often



THE FIRST ISSUE OF HAKRIAH VEKEDUSHA.

to meet with the Frierdiker Rebbe. One day they decided to follow him; maybe they could glean some information that would shed light on the publication. They attempted to trail him on the subway and through the streets of Manhattan. But realizing that he was being followed, he

finally approached them and said that as long as they were observing him, he would keep wandering. Years later, after the Frierdiker Rebbe’s *Igros Kodesh* were published, it was finally revealed that the man behind *Hakriah V’Hakdushah* was Reb Aharon Hirsh, the editor of the



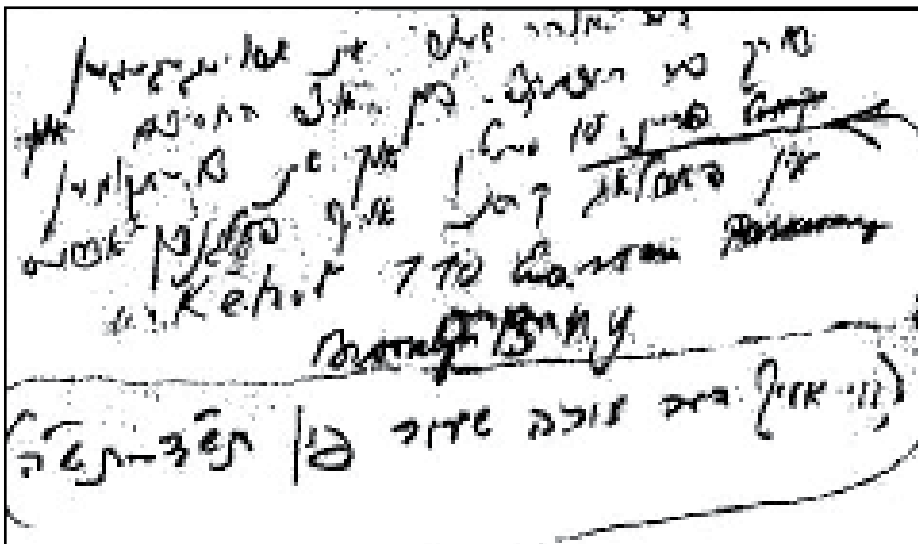
TWO NEVER-BEFORE-SEEN TELEGRAMS SENT BY THE BOCHURIM STUDYING IN SHANGHAI TO THE BOCHURIM LEARNING IN MONTREAL (L) AND TO RASHAG (R), REQUESTING TO BE SENT THE HAKRIAH VEKADUSHA, MAAMORIM, AND SICHOS OF THE FRIEDIKER REBBE. CIRCA 5706.

OVERTURN THE STREETS

Reb Avraham Pariz, one of the most active Chassidim assisting with the Frierdiker Rebbe's activities, once told his grandson, Reb Menachem Wolf:

I used to go along with the Rebbe to hand out the Frierdiker Rebbe's *kol koirehs*. On one occasion he said to me: "The sign of our success will be if we accomplish overturning the 'streets'!" (I.e. the awakening of the Yidden in America.)

(Yoman Rosh Hashonah 5725)



THE REBBE'S HANDWRITTEN HAGAOS ON HAKRIAH VEKADUSHA.

weekly Yiddish newspaper *Dos Iddishe Licht*.

The Frierdiker Rebbe himself was profoundly involved in guiding the editor; what the content should be and how to write it. Our Rebbe attested² to the fact that the Frierdiker Rebbe usually proofread each issue of *Hakriah V'Hakdushah*, often adding material which he felt was lacking with his own handwriting.

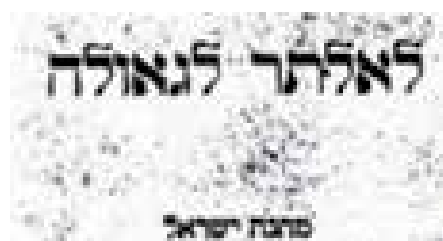
The publication was sponsored by "Agudas Chassidei Chabad." Every issue was replete with articles and ideas connected to Moshiach, it being its underlying theme. The *kol koirehs* were a prominent feature in the newspaper. In addition, there were sections dedicated to the *yahrtziets* of the family of *Raboseinu Nesienu*, explanations on *tefilah*, the happenings in *beis chayenu*, and more. The articles were written primarily in Yiddish, with a section in English as well. In each issue there was a section titled *Osiyos Poirchois*, which included letters written in incomprehensible



combinations and only in a later issue would the editors reveal that they were predicting events taking place during the war.

The Friediker Rebbe saw this monthly newspaper as a pillar of light that would illuminate the dark path of those living the lifestyle of the “new world.” He constantly demanded that it be distributed everywhere possible.

The Chassidim themselves, realizing how important this was to the Friediker Rebbe, involved themselves immensely in the dissemination of the Hakriah V’Hakdushah newspaper and the *kol koirehs*. Particularly, there was special effort in its printing and distribution in Eretz Yisroel. Reb Avrohom Pariz would



ABOVE: THE L’ALTER LETSHUVA STAMP.
BELOW: THE MACHNE YISROEL LOGO.

send copies of each edition to Eretz Yisroel, which were in turn re-printed in large quantities and sent out all over the land. Young and old were involved in translating and printing its content. Some Chassidim even went so far as spending vast amounts of money in order to affect as much of the populace as possible. One wealthy Chossid, Reb Moshe Yeruslavsky, sold a large piece of property he owned, donating all the profits to further this worthy cause. Two Chassidim, Reb Efrayim Wolf and Reb Dovid Chanzin, would travel from city to city throughout Eretz Yisrael, visiting each shul and handing out copies of the *kol korehs*.

It can be said that the preoccupation of Moshach by the Rebbe and Chabad in

general started during those times³, as is illustrated by the following story told by the Rebbe:

“I heard that during the time that the [Frierdiker] Rebbe publicized his declaration of *l’alter l’teshuvah*, *l’alter l’geulah*, two friends were talking when one asked the other: ‘Who are these

Lubavitchers?’ and his friend responded: “Lubavitchers are wild people, who believe that literally tomorrow, Moshiach can come!”⁴

On another occasion, the Rebbe said that he himself had never heard from his father and definitely not from his grandfather of such behavior—walking

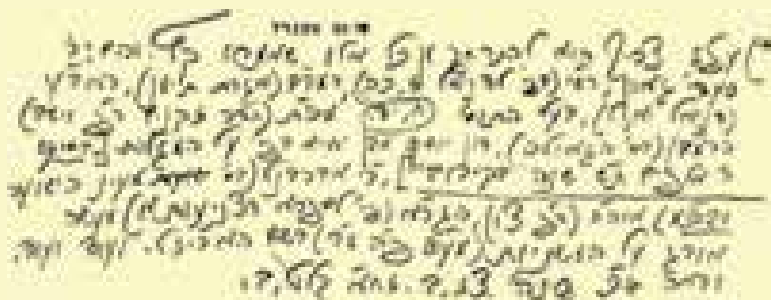
in the streets, or standing in a shul in the middle of the day, and announcing “*Ad mosai?*”

The Rebbe continued, “I did not even ‘tell myself’ about it until I got to America; I don’t know why this is, but this is the fact of the matter. Yet, it is without a doubt that such actions have positive effects, even though it may not fit with certain people’s opinions.”⁵

THE TORAH WAY OF OLD

In the early years of the Rebbe’s *nesius*, he instructed his *mazkir*, Rabbi Sholom Mendel Simpson, to visit a well-known Jewish activist in the United States to ask him about his relationship with Lubavitch. In his report to the Rebbe following this visit, Rabbi Simpson quoted the activist as saying that although he considered himself close to Lubavitch in previous years, even assisting the Frierdiker Rebbe’s endeavors here in the United States, he distanced himself from Lubavitch after the Frierdiker Rebbe proclaimed “*L’alter l’teshuva l’alter l’geulah*,” and then when he commissioned the *Sefer Torah shel Moshiach*. The activist felt, in his own words, that “no one can know when Moshiach is going to come!”

In this handwritten response, the Rebbe counters this argument:



עפ"ז צריך הוא להתרחק מן כל אלו שאמרו קץ, והם:

ר' סעדי' גאון, רש"י (בפ' לדניאל ז, כה, ח, יד), רמב"ם (אגרת תימן), ראב"ע (דניאל יא, ל), בעלי התוס' עה"ת (הדר זקנים ר"פ וישב), הרמב"ן (בס' הגאולה), דון יוסף אבן יחיא בפ' על המגילות ["בסוף ה' אלפים ת"ש שנה בקירוב"], ר"י אברבנאל (ס' מעיני הישועה ובכ"מ), אזה"ח (ר"פ צו), הגר"א (פ' לספרא דצניעותא), מעשה אורג על המשניות (מע"ש פ"ה מ"ב) בשם האריז"ל. ועוד ועוד.

וראה ג"כ סנה' צז, ב. זח"א קלט, ב.

According to this, he would have to distance himself [as well] from all those who predicted a *keitz*, namely: [The Rebbe spells out names of *gedolei Yisroel* throughout all the generations, along with sources stating that they predicted *kitzin*. As a matter of fact, one of them—Don Yosef Ib'n Yechaye—actually predicts a year quite close to the time that the Frierdiker Rebbe issued his *kol korei*: “At the end of the year five thousand, seven hundred, approximately...” The Rebbe concludes:] And many, many more.

MACHNE YISROEL

An additional project initiated by the Frierdiker Rebbe in the spirit of Moshiach was Machne Yisrael. Its official motto was *L’alter l’teshuvah*, *l’alter l’geulah*, and it was inscribed on all its stationary. In the Hayom Yom *luach*, the Rebbe clearly outlines its objective: to create a club-like organization that would “exert influence—through the conduct and activities of its members—on strengthening Yiddishkeit and the fulfillment of Torah and practical mitzvos; to awaken the hearts of Jewish people and draw them into *teshuvah*, into Torah study, and into fulfillment of the practical mitzvos. To publicize the truth—that *l’alter l’teshuvah*, *l’alter l’geulah*—immediate repentance leads to immediate and complete redemption by our righteous Moshiach.”

There was no membership fee for Machne Yisrael; anyone who observed Torah and mitzvos was welcome to join. Their activities were simply to be examples to others of how to behave in the spirit of Torah and mitzvos. Members were to go about their mission without revealing their identity—their membership in Machne Yisrael. In addition, the members were to divide the *Mishnayos* among themselves, learning it by heart, so that wherever they went, they could review *Mishnayos*, thereby “cleansing” the air.

Machne Yisrael began around the time that our Rebbe came to the United States, and he was appointed as the head of Machne Yisrael and chief of operations. The Rebbe encouraged rabbanim and other Jewish leaders to join Machne Yisrael, as well as to incorporate in their talks and sermons to their communities the call for *l'alter l'teshuvah*, *l'alter l'geulah*. During that time, when signing a letter or document, the Rebbe would generally add in that line.

day that over fifty thousand Yidden were taken from the city of Dnepopetrovsk to be killed. *Isru Chag* he requested of his *gabbai*, Reb Eliyahu Simpson, to send out a special proclamation to the whole community, inviting everyone to participate in the writing of the *Sefer Torah shel Moshiach* through buying letters. This call was well received by all who heard it, intensifying the feeling that the

THE REBBE CONTINUED, "I DID NOT EVEN 'TELL MYSELF' ABOUT IT UNTIL I GOT TO AMERICA; I DON'T KNOW WHY THIS IS, BUT THIS IS THE FACT OF THE MATTER..."

To further disseminate the Friediker Rebbe's call, stickers were printed with the words *l'alter l'teshuvah*, *l'alter l'geulah*. Rabbi J. J. Hecht related that he once traveled on the same subway car as the Rebbe, and as the Rebbe got up to leave the train, he noticed that near the Rebbe's seat, where a few moments ago was an empty space, a *l'alter l'teshuvah*, *l'alter l'geulah* sticker was now prominently displayed.

MOSHIACH'S SEFER TORAH

To welcome Moshiach's imminent arrival, the Friediker Rebbe also commenced the famous *Sefer Torah shel Moshiach*. This project increased the excitement felt by the Chassidim, and was seen as a solidification of all the talks and campaigning connected to Moshiach.

The Friediker Rebbe revealed his intention for this special initiative on Simchas Torah 5702, exactly the same

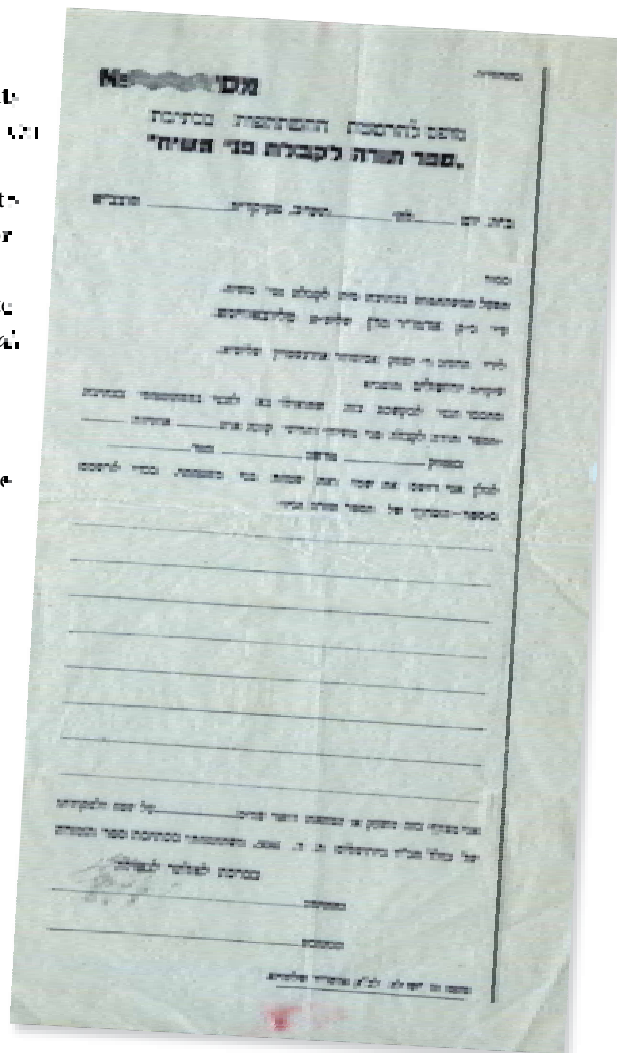
revelation of Moshiach was close at hand.

Many people, Chassidim and non-Chassidim alike, bought letters and the Torah was almost complete. But for unknown reasons, the Friediker Rebbe requested that it be left unfinished.

Twenty eight years later, for Yud Shevat HaGadol, 5730, the Rebbe announced that the Torah would be completed. In a grand ceremony and with thousands in attendance, the *siyum sefer Torah* took place.

THE CALL TODAY

Indeed, the efforts of the Friediker Rebbe were having their effect on American Jewry.⁶ An arousal to do *teshuvah* was felt by thousands of Yidden no matter their affiliation—whether Orthodox, Conservative, or Reform. The topic of Moshiach was now a popular conversation topic; whether pro or



THE FORM FROM 5702 TO PARTICIPATE IN THE MOSHIACH SEFER TORAH.

against. As the Friediker Rebbe himself wrote: "We have *b"h* succeeded in implementing our mission; all the Jewish newspapers, as well as the Jewish leaders, are discussing—whether directly or indirectly—our call of the imminent arrival of the *geulah*." Powerful Jewish organizations made efforts to integrate the call for *teshuvah* of the Friediker Rebbe into their doctrine. Schools dedicated time on their schedule to discuss and act upon his message.


The Rebbe explained that just like during other times in history when *tzaddikim* foretold of the imminent arrival of

Moshiach—Rav Saadia Gaon, Rashi, Rambam, Ramban, and others—the year of 5703 was foreseen by the Frierdiker Rebbe as a *keitz*, and just like the other instances in history, *ilu zochinu*, had we been worthy, Moshiach would have come during that time.⁸ Nonetheless, a spiritual effect of Moshiach has definitely occurred, as was clearly seen through the additional involvement of the masses in Chassidus.⁹

Reb Yisroel Jacobson related that on Erev Rosh Hashanah 5704, he entered into the holy chambers of the Frierdiker Rebbe together with a group of Chassidim to be blessed before the new year. Being that throughout the preceding year the Frierdiker Rebbe had called for *l'alter l'teshuvah*, *l'alter l'geulah*, along with many other forms of strengthening the *emunah* of the coming of Moshiach, Reb Nissan Telushkin (one of elder Chabad rabbonim in the US at the time) asked the Frierdiker Rebbe: “Is the Rebbe truly of the opinion that we find ourselves in the times of Moshiach, and that Moshiach is nearly here?”

The Frierdiker answered: “We say in *shemoneh esreh*: “את צמח דוד עבדך מהרה” תצמיח”. The nature of a seed when planted is to first have the appearance of a blade of grass; then it grows to be a sapling, until with time it turns into a tree with fruits.” The Frierdiker Rebbe concluded: “A planting [of Moshiach], there definitely is!”

In a farbrengen on Purim 5747 the Rebbe said that the Frierdiker Rebbe’s call for *l'alter l'teshuvah l'alter l'geulah* applies even today. The Rebbe asked: How is it possible that so many years have passed since the Frierdiker Rebbe announced the coming of Moshiach and still he has not arrived?! Answering his own question, the Rebbe said that after searching for an explanation he

determined that until now, being that *hanossi hu hakol*, it was enough to depend on the *nassi hador* to bring the *geulah*. But now the *avoda* of the *nossi* has been *transferred* to us. Being that we stand in the times of *ikvisa d'meshicha*, where the need for the *geulah* is much greater, each and every Jew must make it his personal duty to do all that he can to hasten the arrival of Moshiach. 

1. Printed in Igros Kodesh Admur HaRaYYaTZ vol. 5 p. 361 (see references there).
2. Hisvaaduyos 5745 vol. 5 p. 2640
3. See Hisvaaduyos 5748 vol. 4 p. 267
4. Toras Menachem vol. 51 p. 298
5. Hisvaaduyos 5748 vol. 3 p. 118
6. See the Rebbe’s Igros Kodesh vol. 1 p. 40
7. Igros Kodesh Admur HaRaYYaTZ vol. 5 p. 410
8. Toras Menachem vol. 9 p. 122
9. See Sefer Hasichos 5751 vol. 2 p. 734
10. Zikaron L’Bnei Yisroel p. 161
11. Hisvaaduyos 5747 vol. 2 p. 620; see also *ibid.* 5745 vol. 5 p. 2622

אין אים לעבט נשיא דורנו!

There is a well-known *kol koreh* issued by the [Frierdiker] Rebbe that לאלתר לאתור (immediate *teshuvah* will bring about the immediate redemption). The meaning of “לאתור” is intended to be taken literally; as in right now!

Now, the *Yetzer Hora*, who is referred to as the *kluginker*—the “wise-guy,” may raise an objection: This *kol koreh* was issued by the [Frierdiker] Rebbe many years ago; since then, some forty-two or forty-three years have passed. Who is to say that things will not continue in this manner in the future as well?

But, as we know, arguing with the *Yetzer Hora* is a mere waste of time! The *Yetzer Hora* is referred to as a מלך זקן וכסיל—an old and foolish king. It would be no use to argue with him, or with anyone that carries his message, who attempt to doubt the words of the [Frierdiker] Rebbe that the *geulah* is coming now, and that “לאתור” is to be understood in a literal sense.

The [Frierdiker] Rebbe’s words stand true today as ever, for he clearly published these words under the auspices of *Agudas Chassidei Chabad*, an organization active until this very day. It did not cease to exist in 5710 [with the Frierdiker Rebbe’s *histalkus*]; for just as his children are alive, so too, he is alive!

This is especially so for those individuals who do not need these explanations [about how the Frierdiker Rebbe still lives], for they feel it within themselves! They feel that the [Frierdiker] Rebbe is with them, whether by way of a dream, or by seeing extraordinary success in business, or in other areas.

Others may feel the [Frierdiker] Rebbe’s presence due to the fact that one day, in the midst of nowhere, they feel a sudden arousal to *teshuvah* (הרהור תשובה) when they happen to be occupied with something else, totally non-related. Where would a thought about *teshuvah* suddenly emerge from, seemingly in the midst of nowhere? Why would it enter only his mind and not someone else’s? Very simple: because the [Frierdiker] Rebbe, *nessi doreinu*, is alive and lives within him!

(*Shabbos Parshas Pinchas*, 5745)

לזכות החיילת בצבאות ה' חנה תחי'
לרגל הולדתה למז"ט ביום י"ט מר-חשון ה'תשע"ה
שנזכה לגדלה לתורה לחופה ולמעשים טובים כרצו"ק ולנח"ר כ"ק אדמו"ר
נדפס ע"י הורי' הרה"ת מנחם מענדל וזוגתו חי' מושקא שיחיו גרינברג

THE REBBE'S CHILD

*A Chassidisher Derher recently interviewed **Reb Benny Vaksberger** and **Reb Sholom Mordechai Rubashkin**, who shared this heartwarming story.*

Special thanks to Reb Sholom Mordechai for his tremendous effort in bringing this story to print, despite his present situation.

*We dedicate this story l'zechus **Reb Sholom Mordechai HaLevi ben Rivka**.
May he merit a geulah shleima and revealed good, teikef umiyad.*

Special thanks to Yossi Rubashkin.

My name is Benny Vaksberger. My family are Seret-Vishnitzer chassidim, and most of us live in Eretz Yisrael, where we have a Judaica business. Our company is called Malchut Vaksberger. We produce all kinds of Judaica, such as *bentchers*, *birkas hashachar cards*, and other such products. Today I also live in Eretz Yisrael, where I work for the family business.

At the time this story took place, approximately eighteen years ago, I was working as a *shochet* in Postville, Iowa for Reb Sholom Mordechai Rubashkin. He had always wanted families to move to Postville, so that there will be children who need a *cheder*. That, in turn, would cause teachers to come with their families. In short, he wanted to build a full community.

Postville is a small isolated village, hours away from the closest Jewish community. To convince someone to move there with

his family is no simple task, and every new member in the community was a cause for celebration. Likewise, every baby born in Postville was a *simcha*; one more child for the *cheder*.

As I was one of the first to move there with my wife, the 'pioneers,' Reb Sholom Mordechai was always very grateful to us. Over the years we became good friends. We would spend many long hours in conversation, and I was a regular guest at his weekly *melava malka*.

I was living in Postville for a few years already, and after four years of marriage, my wife and I had not yet been blessed with children. My wife was getting lonely living in far-off Postville, and she was becoming a bit bitter about the whole situation.

We managed to get an appointment with a top fertility doctor in Eretz Yisrael, and my wife wanted to leave to Eretz Yisrael right away. My job included a little bit

of everything at the factory; I *shechted* chickens, turkeys, cows, sheep, and anything else they produced. As this was right before Tishrei, the busiest season at the meat plant, I didn't feel comfortable leaving Reb Sholom Mordechai short a *shochet*. I suggested to my wife that we stay until after Succos, and immediately after Simchas Torah we would go to Eretz Yisrael, and she agreed.

That Simchas Torah was very *freilach* in Postville. There were only about twenty five people there, with plenty of *lchaim* to go around, and the dancing went on all day.

The next segment of the story is related by Reb Sholom Mordechai himself:

I recall that Simchas Torah clearly; it was in true Postville style. The dancing, singing, and *farbrenging* were all *freilach*, and our entire small community was in a very uplifted mood.



During the dancing, I stepped out onto the front porch for a small break (something which I hardly ever do) and I bumped into Reb Benny. He looked a little too serious for Simchas Torah, as if something was bothering him. I approached him and invited him back inside to join the dancing. He refused, so instead we stood outside and chatted for a while.

He told me that he was leaving after yom tov back to Eretz Yisrael. I asked him why, and he told me he's going to look into medical help for having children. They had an appointment with a big specialist who they thought would be able to help. So I told him, "Why don't you go to the greatest specialist of them all? Go to the Rebbe!"

He said it's too hard for him and his wife to go to New York. Being that my

birthday is Chof-Ches Tishrei, and I was planning on going to the Ohel, I suggested that they come together with me, and they'll ask the Rebbe for a brocha to have children.

Reb Benny continues his story:

During the festivities, Reb Sholom Mordechai approached me, and we started talking. I told him I had an appointment with a doctor in Eretz Yisrael, and that I would be leaving shortly after yom tov.

He tried convincing me to stay and suggested that we consult with specialists here in America. I told him that we had already gone down that avenue and nothing had helped. Then he told me that he's taking me and my wife to New York with him. We'll go to the Ohel, and ask the Rebbe for a *brocha* which will

surely be fulfilled. I figured he was just in a *Simchas Torah'dikeh* mood, and I didn't take him too seriously.

A few days later, I was sitting at home after a regular day's work, when I heard a car horn frantically honking. I ran outside and found Reb Sholom Mordechai waiting in his car. As soon as he saw me he started screaming that we're late for our flight, the airport is an hour away, and that I have to get into the car right away. He wouldn't even let me pack; before we realized what was happening, my wife and I were sitting in the car on the way to the airport.

We flew on a tiny North West regional jet carrying us, the pilot, and a handful of other passengers. In New York, Reb Sholom Mordechai rented a car, and we drove to the Ohel. We got to the Ohel at around two o'clock in the morning, where he brought us into a house adjacent to the *beis hachayim*. There was a big screen playing a video of the Rebbe distributing dollars. There were tables and chairs, and a very welcoming atmosphere. This was our first time there, and it made a big impression on us.

Reb Sholom Mordechai offered us drinks, but we weren't interested. We told him all we wanted to do was daven for children and leave. He then informed us that the *minhag* is not to wear shoes when we go into the Ohel. There were some pairs of slippers laying there for visitors to use, and he told us that we can wear those. My wife started saying that she doesn't really want to put on slippers that so many people used, so he said, "No problem, go in barefoot."

We went into the Ohel. I must say that although living in Postville got me used to winter weather, the cold still shocked me. There is no roof on top of the Ohel, so we were standing there, barefoot, in the bitter cold, shivering from the freezing wind. My wife said enough is enough, she's going back inside.

I tried to reason with her and convince her to stay a little, but she refused to stand outside for even one more minute. Finally I told her, "Listen, we came here all the way from Postville. This kind man purchased plane tickets for us and went through so much trouble just to bring us here. Let's at least write our names and ask for a *brocha*."

She agreed, and we wrote our names. I also found a *maane lasnho* and started reading. We stood by the Ohel, alone, with no one else there, crying our hearts out. We ended up being there for a while, enough time for me to finish the whole *maane lashon*. We went back inside, where Reb Sholom Mordechai was waiting for us with some hot tea. Then he himself went into the Ohel and after he finished, we drove straight back to the airport.

We got back to Postville and as Reb Sholom Mordechai dropped us off at our house, in what seemed to be a final attempt to convince us out of leaving town, he turned to us and asked, "Nu; so are you still going to Eretz Yisrael?"

My wife told him that we already had scheduled an appointment, and to cancel after working so hard to get it didn't seem right. Additionally, we already had plane tickets, which would cost a lot of money to cancel. In short, our minds were made up about leaving for Israel. He offered to arrange everything, to pay to have our tickets canceled, cancel our appointment, to give me a raise, anything, as long as we would stay in Postville. My wife thanked him warmly for everything he did for us, and told him how we felt standing at the Ohel. We believed that our *tefilos* would be answered, but there was no change of plans. We were determined to leave.

A week or two later we were in Israel for our appointment. The doctor performed all the tests, and we sat in the waiting room to hear the results. After about half an hour, the doctor came in and asked us

impatiently, "What are you doing here? Why did you come to me? Don't you know that you're pregnant?"

We both burst out crying, and told the doctor the whole story. We called Postville to inform Reb Sholom Mordechai that the Rebbe's *brocha* was fulfilled and we were going to have a child!

Our son was born on Yud-Beis Tammuz (the *chag hageula* of the Friediker Rebbe). I remember calling Reb Sholom Mordechai excitedly and telling him that today is indeed a *chag hageula* for my family! He replied that he feels responsible for this child and he will take care of him. And he did exactly that. Once we were back in Postville, all expenses for our son came straight out of his pocket. For the *upshernish* he hosted a big party for the whole community, with a full catered meal. It was a really beautiful event.

My wife had a grandfather after whom she always wanted to give a name. In addition, throughout the first four years of our marriage, she had committed herself a number of times to give certain names, in the hope that this would grant us a child. When our first son was born we both knew that we now had to repay the Rebbe. My wife would always tell Reb Sholom Mordechai, "Don't worry, as soon as

I finish with the names I'm obligated to give, the next name is for the Rebbe."

Our sixth child was also born on a special day, Yud Shevat (the beginning of the Rebbe's *nesius*). This turned out to be our last child, and he understands very well that he is here thanks to the Rebbe's *brocha*. When asked what his name is, he proudly answers, "My name is Menachem Mendel, after the Lubavitcher Rebbe!"

I also have a big picture of the Rebbe hanging on the wall in my house. People ask me if I'm a Seret-Vizhnitz chossid or a Chabad chossid. I answer them that I am a Seret-Vizhnitz chossid, but I am no less a chossid of the Lubavitcher Rebbe. **D**

LEFT: REB SHOLOM MORDECHAI RUBASHKIN JOINS REB BENNY VAKSBERGER AT THE UPSHERNISH CELEBRATION OF HIS FIRSTBORN SON, BORN AFTER A VISIT AT THE OHEL.
BELOW: THE VAKSBERGER CHILDREN, INCLUDING THE YOUNGEST; MENACHEM MENDEL





A Crack in the **IRON**

Special thanks to Rabbi Ezriel Chaikin,
Rabbi Binyomin Katz, Rabbi Gedaliya Korf,
Rabbi Shlomo Tzuntz, Rabbi Dovid Dubov,
Mrs. Rishe Deitch.

לעילוי נשמת הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' ברוך מרדכי ב"ר זלמן ע"ה ליפשיץ
הנק' מאטל דער שוחט פון מאסקווע
שהיה שו"ב ומוהל במאסקווע למעלה מ-25 שנה
נפטר ד' אדר שני ה'תשע"ד
לרגל יום ה'ארצי"ט הראשון
נדפס ע"י נכדיו
הרה"ת ר' לוי יצחק וזוגתו נחמה איידל ומשפחתם שיחיו חזקלביץ'

CURTAIN

*The fateful mission
that produced the
first crack in the
iron curtain and
ignited a spark
of hope in
the gloomy
Russian night.*

WITH TORAH AND YIDDISHKEIT BANNED BY THE CRUEL COMMUNIST REGIME OF THE FORMER SOVIET UNION, AND DARKNESS AND DESPAIR REIGNED OVER AN ENTIRE REGION OF THE WORLD, THE REBBE, THROUGH HIS SHLUCHIM, HELD TOGETHER A CAREFULLY STRUCTURED JEWISH COMMUNITY. NEVER LOSING AN OPPORTUNITY TO STRENGTHEN AND SUPPORT ITS MEMBERS, MANY YOUNG SHLUCHIM WERE DISPATCHED THROUGHOUT THE YEARS, BRINGING WITH THEM THE MUCH-NEEDED SEFORIM AND TASHMISHEI KEDUSHA; AND ABOVE ALL, THE REBBE'S UNRELENTING MESSAGE OF ENCOURAGEMENT. IN THE FOLLOWING STORY, WE LEARN ABOUT ONE OF THE FIRST OF THESE MISSIONS, A YOUNG BOCHUR SENT TO RUSSIA ON A DAUNTING MISSION, AND ULTIMATELY PROVIDING MANY JEWISH FAMILIES WITH MEANS OF ESCAPE FROM THE LARGE COUNTRY-WIDE PRISON.

An expectant hush descended upon the crowd of Chassidim assembled at the Shavuot farbrengen of 5724. The Rebbe had just said *l'chaim* on a full *becher* following a *sicha* addressing the plight of the Russian Jews trapped behind the Iron Curtain. The quiet was suddenly pierced by the Rebbe's call; "Nu, Nu..."

The Rebbe paused for a moment and then, making a hand motion which seemed to express immense dissatisfaction, he said:

"When dealing with a brother or a relative there would be no need to wait for my directive (to say *l'chaim*), but now, when speaking of a broader group of Yidden, nobody is moved!"

Immediately a few Chassidim raised their cups to say *l'chaim* but the Rebbe didn't even glance in their direction. Instead he said "You make *kiddush* on a full cup of *mashke*, but when it comes to saying

l'chaim for the Russian Jews, a small cup suffices...?"

Needless to say, the Chassidim were speechless. Someone began to sing *Hoshia es amecha* but the Rebbe made a hand motion similar to before and began singing alone the *niggun* *Essen est zich*. When the Chassidim tried joining in, the Rebbe motioned with his hand once more and said:

"Tomorrow they will come with requests about sending visas to their relatives. But they should know that earlier, it was an auspicious time where a heartfelt *l'chaim* was to be said sincerely, with 'an *emmes*,' and a good word spoken while it's still yom tov. Great things can be accomplished through this for all the Jews of Russia and they can be redeemed in the blink of an eye. Yet nobody is moved to take action! The fact that there are millions of Jews suffering does not

bother them in the least! They think that they will accomplish something with their money..."

The Rebbe then continued to speak in anguish of the apathetic attitude and indifference towards the plight of the Russian Jews, using words that were extremely difficult for the Chassidim to hear. Many of those present couldn't even bear to look at the Rebbe as he spoke.

Afterwards, the Rebbe requested for a child under the age of bar mitzvah to begin the *niggun* of *Hoshia es amecha*, saying "The children cannot be blamed for this."

When the child began to sing, the Rebbe sang along with him. The Rebbe seemed to be in great *d'veikus* and the look on his face was frightening.

Reb Binyomin Katz was a *bochur* in 770 at the time and was present at this farbrengen. He relates the following:



The Mission

Rabbi Katz continues his story:

Shortly thereafter, I was approached by Bentzion Shafran, a close friend of mine who was also learning in 770 at the time. After some small talk, he shared with me his thoughts on the Shavuot farbrengen. “Why did the Rebbe feel it necessary to speak about the Russian Jews with such a public display of emotion?” he wondered aloud. “Surely the Rebbe could have accomplished whatever he did from the privacy of his room. It seems as though the Rebbe was waiting for somebody in the crowd to internalize his holy words and heed the call for real action.” Turning to me he said “And I think the Rebbe was talking directly to you!”

At first I refused to believe such a far-out notion. Who was I that the Rebbe should be talking specifically to me? What could I possibly do to help the situation? But Bentzion didn’t let it go so fast. He had an acquaintance who was a businessman that travelled frequently to Russia. Apparently every town that he visited had one or two Jews who were the key figures and served as the unofficial leaders of the community. If someone was to travel to Russia and make a connection with these people, maybe he would be able to bring great assistance to these suffering communities. He thereupon withdrew a pile of photos of these Jews and showed them to me, one by one.

Knowing that he possessed a wild imagination and not yet quite sure what he was driving at, I still wasn’t taking him seriously.

He then proceeded to explain to me why I was the perfect candidate for this job. For starters, I was single. Such a trip was very risky and dangerous, and it



RABBI BINYOMIN KATZ

“After the farbrengen, the Rebbe davened *Maariv* and made *havdala* and then began to distribute *kos shel brocha*. I joined the line right behind a Chossid by the name of Reb Itche Churgin. He was an extremely devout Chossid who had a very unique and open connection to the Rebbe, who was *mekarev* him tremendously. When Reb Itche passed before the Rebbe to receive *kos shel*

brocha I heard him say ‘Rebbe, when I said *l’chaim* today I specifically had in mind the Yidden of Russia...’

“The Rebbe acknowledged that this was true but responded: “I was waiting for a *l’chaim* strong enough to shake heaven and earth!”

“Hearing this exchange, I understood that the Rebbe expected from the Chassidim much more than what had been done for the Russian Jews until that point. The Rebbe wanted us to move heaven and earth, not only to offer assistance to them in their dire situation but to do everything in our power to bring about their ultimate redemption from ‘the valley of tears.’

“There was no way I could have known how much a part of the next few years of my life these efforts were to become...”





THE SHLUCHIM TO RUSSIA WOULD BRING THE LOCAL YIDDEN THE JOY OF TORAH AND YIDDISHKEIT.



wouldn't do to send a married man on such a mission. Also, the fact that I was an American boy would make it somewhat safer for me when dealing with authorities. Another advantage that I had was that by nature I was an introvert, and I was also not picky about my food. Both these traits would make it easier for me to endure the trip and all it would entail.

It seems as though he had thought of everything. Until this day I have no idea if he was sent by somebody or he approached me on his own initiative, but he definitely knew how to talk a person into something, and his power of persuasion was quite strong. I soon found myself swept into his words and slowly I became convinced that he was onto something.

A little while later I was slated to go in to *yechidus* for my birthday. Recently, *Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch* had been looking for a couple of *bochurim* to travel to Scandinavia on *Merkos shlichus* where the Rebbe's shliach, Reb Ezriel Chaikin, was in desperate need of extra hands to service the outlying communities. It seemed as though I would be chosen and I planned on asking the Rebbe about it during my *yechidus*. As I was waiting for my turn, Bentzion Shafran came over

to me and showed me a map of Europe. "Look here," he said, pointing to the space between Russia and Finland. "It's a five hour train ride from Copenhagen to Leningrad. Why don't you show this to the Rebbe in *yechidus*?" Slipping the map into my hand, he walked away.

Indeed, the Rebbe directed me to travel to Scandinavia but stressed that I should go alone and that the Jewish community should sponsor the trips. The Rebbe told me to heed the instructions of Rabi Chaikin very carefully and to send a report every single week.

Before the Rebbe gave me the *brocha* one customarily received for his birthday, I pulled out the map Bentzion had given

me moments earlier and showed it to the Rebbe, proposing that following the completion of my *shlichus* in Scandinavia I would travel to Russia. The Rebbe smiled and asked me what I planned to do there. I replied that I was ready to do whatever the Rebbe would ask of me.

The Rebbe looked towards the windows on his right and after a moment said that because the situation in Russia is subject to change from one day to another, I would have to wait and see. As of now, the Rebbe said, I was to completely immerse myself in fulfilling my *shlichus* in Copenhagen and not to think of anything else.

Shortly thereafter I traveled to Copenhagen. After a few months of intensive *hafatza* I was ready to return to New York, but Rabbi Chaikin called and begged me to stay in Copenhagen for Tishrei. The community needed a *chazzan*, a *baal koreh*, *baal tokea*, and everything in between. I told him that there was no way I was going to miss out being by the Rebbe for Tishrei but after he let me know that he had misplaced my return ticket to New York, I knew I was fighting a lost battle.

During my stay in Copenhagen, the Rebbe's mother was *nistalek* on Vov

THE REBBE LOOKED TOWARDS THE WINDOWS ON HIS RIGHT AND AFTER A MOMENT SAID THAT BECAUSE THE SITUATION IN RUSSIA IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE FROM ONE DAY TO ANOTHER, I WOULD HAVE TO WAIT AND SEE.



RABBI EZRIEL CHAIKIN

Tishrei and I sent the Rebbe a telegram. Shortly thereafter I received a telegram back informing me that I would be going to Russia in the near future and that much preparation would have to be made.

These preparations began after Simchas Torah. Rabbi Chaikin was in touch with Rabbi Hodakov and relayed various instructions to me from headquarters. Every detail of the trip, including the cities I was to visit, hotels, and transportation, was to be arranged and paid for beforehand through an official tourist agency. I was to give off the impression of a spoiled rich American boy on a world tour, with the next stop being Australia. It was important that I would not be identified as a Lubavitcher Chossid. I therefore memorized

all the names of the *roshei yeshiva* in *Torah Vadaas* in case I needed proof that I learnt there. I was not meant to have any obvious contact with anybody, especially Chassidim, for that would put both them and me in danger. In general, the less information I possessed, the safer I would be.

My primary assignment was to simply sit in a public place where Yidden congregate, namely a shul, and to quietly and carefully collect family names. International law stipulated that a request for an exit visa received from an overseas relative was not allowed to be turned down by the government. I was therefore to memorize these names and bring them out of Russia with me so that their relatives can be located and instructed to

request visas for them. In this way many people would hopefully manage to escape the Soviet chokehold.

There was another purpose in my trip. Recently a delegation of American rabbis made an official visit to the USSR and their external appearance gave Soviet Jewry the impression that authentic religious life in the western world was on the decline. My presence as a *frum* bearded young man would surely lift their spirits. I was to always bear in mind that sitting in my hotel room was just like lounging around back in Crown Heights. I was on the Rebbe's *shlichus* only as long as I spent time in the local shul.

The preparations took a considerable amount of time but finally everything

Verdict of a Beis Din

The farbrengen of Simchas Torah 5722, was a most memorable time in 770. During one of the sichos the Rebbe blessed the Jews behind the Iron Curtain to merit revealed good and be able to leave the USSR immediately.

After saying *l'chaim* and singing a *nigun*, the Rebbe went on to say:

Chassidus translates the *possuk* *Kein bakodesh chazisicha* to mean that we aspire to have the same longing to Hashem while in the "holy domains" as we would in a desolate land, devoid of spirituality. Applying the concept to this situation, we wish for ourselves to have the same yearning for Torah and spirituality as our brethren behind the Iron Curtain do.

With that, the Rebbe began to sing the *nigun* of *Tzomo L'cho Nafshi*, and then asked that the crowd sing *Hoshia Es Amecha*.

When the song finished, the Rebbe stood up in his place and began to speak with great fervor:

"When the (Frierdiker) Rebbe was given a *pan*, he said that since there was a *minyan* present, the group has the authority of a *beis din*, to whom Hashem has granted the power to decide what is to happen in the world. Whatever the verdict given by the *beis din* here below may be, it must also be obeyed by the *beis din* above. Hence, everything requested in the *pan* must be fulfilled.

"Because there is a *minyan* present now, and much more so, we must declare that all negative things be converted to goodness. And although Hashem takes pleasure when the Jewish people act with self-sacrifice in trying times, He will be "forced" to follow our verdict to give all the Jewish people only revealed good.

"Starting with the Jews behind the Iron Curtain; even before Moshiach's arrival, they should be redeemed from their captivity, and be allowed to observe Torah and mitzvos openly. May they have their own personal redemption, and through that, the ultimate redemption will come about for the entire Jewish nation!"



BUILDING THE MIKVA IN THE MARINA ROSCHA SHUL IN MOSCOW.

was pulled together. I was designated to visit a handful of Russian cities, including Moscow, Tbilisi (Georgia), Riga, Odessa, Lvov, and Leningrad. Tashkent was specifically not included in the official travel plans but I was told that if I could somehow manage to arrange a spontaneous visit on the way, I should do so. I bought along the necessary clothing for the three month journey and stocked up on matzos for kiddush and *lechem mishne*, plenty of hard cheese from Denmark, jam, and sausages. This was to be my fare for the next three months. To prepare myself for the lack of food (and to give an appearance of a wealthy, healthy American), I put on large amounts of weight, all of which I shed during my journey.

A few days before the trip, I received a letter from the Rebbe containing a concise sentence in the form of one long acronym which, when broken up, was a *brocha* for *hatzlacha* in my travels, there and back.

The day prior to my scheduled departure, screaming headlines appeared in the newspapers proclaiming that an American professor was arrested on Russian soil and accused of spying on the Soviets. He was imprisoned and denied contact with anybody, including the American consul. After three days he was

released but not before being interrogated and brutally beaten...

When I saw this I became terrified and immediately showed the newspaper to Rabbi Chaikin. About an hour later Rabbi Chaikin returned with an instruction from Rabbi Hodakov: Every week I should write a postcard to a contact in a different country excluding America. I was to report wonderful things about the country and this would please the Russians. In addition, it would give off the impression to the authorities that I was well-connected with many people in various parts of the world, lowering the chances of me being targeted.

At last, I was ready for my *shlichus*.

Fright

Already on the airplane I encountered a most frightening experience. Russian officials boarded the aircraft and read through the list of passenger names, eyeing every one of us with a very fierce glare. If not for Rabbi Chaikin preparing me well for such an instance, I don't know what the end would have been. He repeatedly told me that under scrutiny, I must think Torah in my mind and preserve the image of the Rebbe's holy face before me.



A SECRET LIST OF JEWISH FAMILIES IN RUSSIA FOR THE SHLUCHIM TO MAKE CONTACT WITH.

Upon landing in Moscow, I was whisked off by the tourism agency straight to my hotel. After getting settled I made my way to the main shul of Moscow.

Entering the shul, I went off to daven in the side room (the *Chabad'nitze*) when I was approached and greeted warmly by a local Jew who immediately began to assist me. He removed my coat and led me to an area of the shul which was a bit isolated from most of the congregation. I soon realized that he was an informer "on duty" and I quickly learnt to avoid him.

Eye Contact

It was then that I finally understood the instruction that I had been given earlier: In Russia, you will not be able to speak out and inquire about anything; you will have to speculate and put pieces together merely from what your eyes see and what your heart senses.

Indeed, very rarely did I notice proper conversations taking place in between two people. Instead, one would look at the other and it was expected that the look alone would be understood. Even when a few words were spoken, nothing was said clearly, and one would have to make sense of the broken sentences on his own.



I spent a few weeks in Moscow and as per my instructions. Almost my entire days were spent in the shul, taking a break for a couple of hours in middle of the day to go to my hotel room. At the beginning nobody looked at me, let alone made contact with me. The coldness in the air was palpable enough to make one shiver. Through half closed eyelids they would inspect me from across the room and eventually they had their signs that indicated to them that I was “kosher.” Here and there someone would whisper an inquiry about their relatives or chant a request in the tune of davening while looking into his siddur.

On Erev Shabbos I was sitting in shul when I noticed someone standing a few feet away facing the wall and chanting in a sing-song voice. I perked my ears and heard him chant: “It is customary to go to mikveh before Shabbos. There is a mikveh downstairs.” I immediately understood that he was telling me to go down to the mikveh.

I found a few men there but none of them even glanced at me. I undressed and approached the mikveh and from the corner of my eye, I saw them inspecting my tzitzis. After I entered the mikveh a voice from behind asked “Where are you from?”

I didn’t answer. The next question surprised me: “From the Rebbe?”

I nodded.

After toiveling I was greeted by towels and a complete change of atmosphere. At once the air became lighter and after telling me their names and information they began to argue amongst themselves over who would host me for Shabbos.

Suddenly the room became silent and in an instant, the usual chill pervaded the room as everyone became preoccupied with their own business. I looked towards the door and noticed that it was open a little and through the crack, a listening ear was discernible.

Despite the fact that the very walls possessed ears and eyes, people still managed to convey to me their messages.

Sad Fate

A most memorable example that sticks out in my mind: One day in shul, I noticed a Chossid weeping uncontrollably throughout his davening. After he finished, I realized that he was waiting for an opportunity to kiss the mezuzah while I was nearby so that he would be able to share a few words with me. As I approached him, he began to kiss the mezuzah, while reciting some

pesukim under his breath, adding a few words that came out to be something like this: “My name is Yitzchok Yoel Kremenchuger. I served as a *mohel* and now they caught me. My court case is very soon and a terrible punishment awaits me. Will you be able to mention my name to the Rebbe? I am very likely facing a death sentence...”

I immediately responded: “Reb Yitzchok Yoel, I promise that you will be of the first that I will mention to the Rebbe!”

As time progressed, the Chassidim became more confident of my true identity and were therefore comfortable enough to exchange a few words with me. All in all, one can say that the mood prevailing amongst them all was one of hopelessness. As if the curtain was locked and there was nothing to do about it! Most of the Chassidim that I met were either just freed from a long prison sentence or knew that one awaited them in the near future...

Rostov

My journey continued on to Rostov. Although this wasn’t part of my trip, I was asked by the Chassidim in Moscow to visit the Ohel of the Rebbe Rashab and daven on their behalf. My first stop was at a small shul called the Solladatsky

[soldiers'] Shul. I had been instructed to locate a Jew by the name of Shlomo Ish Ne'eman who held the key to the Rebbe Rashab's Ohel. If I would not make mention of this code-name, the key would not be given to me.

In the meantime, I had the chance to meet a Chossid named Reb Mordechai Lifshitz, affectionately known as Reb Mottel der Shochet. Not sparing an extra word he asked me, "Anash?" I nodded. The only thing that he asked me was "How is the Rebbe?" More than that, we simply did not exchange a word...

I then went on to fulfill my mission in this city; to inspect the upkeep of the Ohel there. After doing so, I left Rostov.

I had similar encounters throughout my travels in Russia, but two cities stood out from anywhere else I visited: Tbilisi and Tashkent.



REB MOTTEL DER SHOCHET DURING A BRIS CEREMONY.

Tbilisi

Tbilisi, Georgia. Rabbi Chaikin had told me much about this city as he had grown up there. As I made my way to the large shul, I was reminded of the story that I had heard from Rabbi Chaikin describing the great self-sacrifice of the Georgian Jews to save their shul from being desecrated by the Communists a little



What's bothering a Bochur in Russia?

During the farbrengen of the night of Simchas Torah, 5728, the Rebbe spoke about the need to educate Jewish children in the path of Torah, even if the results don't seem very promising. He brought an example from a story found in Yeshaya where the *novi* insists that they teach Torah to the children despite the dire circumstances of the time. In the end, in the merit of these children, King Sancheirev was defeated.

The Rebbe went on:

Even if the *Yetzer Hora* will try to convince you that this is an ancient tale and is not pertinent to our day and age, we have a more modern example, too.

There are a number of Jews who sit restricted in their observance of Torah and mitzvos. Their children were born into this way of life and have been raised this way as well. They, too, may ask, what sense does it make to educate our children in the way of Torah? It will be very difficult for them to lead normal Jewish lives.

But the truth is that they continue to give their children a Torah education, and they do so successfully.

Many of them don't even entertain the thought of ever being able to leave. I know of a *bochur* who is already at marriageable age, and still does not believe he'll be able to leave.

I received a letter from him; the mere sending of such letter alone poses great danger to him. In it he asks me—not for a blessing that he'll be able to leave; for that he'll need a miracle and he doesn't believe he's worthy of a miracle. He barely has enough food to eat, but that's not what concerns him.

Why he has to face such challenges on a daily basis, I don't know... (The Rebbe began to cry at this point).

So he writes in his letter that he has disturbing thoughts that haunt him during davening, and he seeks advice as how to best deal with them, for these thoughts disrupt his concentration and he's unable to daven properly.

This issue must truly bother him to the core, for if it weren't so, he would not put himself in danger to resolve it. Why does Hashem present him with such trying challenges that he does not deserve? But this boy asks no such questions. The truth is that the entire world's existence depends on him, but he does not know this, and in any case, it wouldn't concern him anyway.

Now, let's compare our own "hardships" that we face here to those of that boy in Russia.

This is no ancient "tale" from the past; the *bochur* exists where he is right now, and I have the actual letter here!"



THE OLD SHUL IN ODESSA, UKRAINE.



over a decade earlier, during Stalin's final years. The government officials had sent a herd of trucks towards the shul with the intention of removing all of the *sifrei Torah* and other holy articles, replacing them with equipment to be used for a Communist Youth Club. Seeing this, all the members of the Jewish community—men, women, and children, young and old—lied down on the street in front of the shul to form a human blockade, preventing the trucks from coming any closer.

Notwithstanding that the Communists wouldn't hesitate to drive right over them, every single person stayed put, placing his life in danger to save the very shul I was now walking into.

In Tbilisi, the tension was less and the people there seemed to be more at ease. I did not feel the same pressure that I did while in Moscow or in the other cities.

I was able to open up a bit and share a few words with the inhabitants of the city and I even met many of *anash*. The one thing of primary concern to these Chassidim was the Rebbe. In general, I found many Jews who felt themselves very much connected to the Rebbe, although they did not know very much about him and what he did in the past fifteen years of his leadership. As long as I remained in Tbilisi, they constantly

asked me to repeat a word of Torah from the Rebbe, or to explain to them the meaning of the concept *uforatzta* and how it is beginning to have an impact around the world.

**ONE THING
FOR CERTAIN
IS THAT THE
REBBE DOES
NOT ALLOW
US TO FORGET
ABOUT THEM!**

Initially, I had received instructions that when in Russia I was not to visit private homes at all. Just a short while earlier, when the delegation of rabbis from the United States visited the Soviet Union, one of them was hosted by a Jewish family. In the subsequent months, this family suffered terribly from the government, and was constantly harassed and interrogated. But here in Georgia, there was less apprehension and the people felt safe enough to bring me into their homes. Each of these families would invite many of their relatives and acquaintances to join us, and we would sit together for many hours.

Tashkent

From Tbilisi I travelled to Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan. When I arrived there, I found a rather large community of Chassidim and a thriving network of underground yeshivos and schools. The atmosphere here was very similar to Tbilisi.

Apparently they had received a message: "*Es kricht eppes*—something is crawling around," and they understood it to mean that they should expect me.

At first the only person who dared talk to me was a Chossid by the name of Reb Levik Pressman. He was an official chazzan recognized by the government and he therefore had a simple excuse for hanging out with me—I was a chazzan from America and we were sharing cantorial pieces. Walking through the streets, we would sing *Adon Olam* and other songs at the top of our voices.

One morning during my stay he brought me to a Bucharian shul which was jammed with Chassidim, young and old, and for two hours I sang all the Rebbe's *niggunim*. Some of the people present are still alive today.

The first Shabbos I spent there was *Shabbos Mevorchim*. When I came into the shul courtyard I was greeted by



A WEDDING HELD SECRETLY, ARRANGED BY THE SHLUCHIM.

HOW WAS I TO ALLOW MYSELF TO TAKE SUCH A LARGE SUM OF MONEY OUT OF RUSSIA, WHILE ACTIVISTS IN THE FREE WORLD WERE CONSTANTLY DOING ALL THEY COULD, AND BEYOND, TO SMUGGLE MONEY INTO RUSSIA!

tens of people sitting around outside saying Tehillim. Reb Levik told me to approach the older Chassidim first and converse with them. I would talk into my Tehillim and the person sitting next to me would talk into his and it would all look really casual. Afterwards, I was to do the same with everyone else. I met many Chassidim and one of those who I developed a connection with was a Jew by the name of Reb Leizer Nannes. He had endured many years in the Siberian gulags and had long given up on any hope of ever leaving Russia. Broken and sick that he was from his sufferings, I tried to encourage him and promised to do all I could to get him out of Russia.

One thing that struck me about these Chassidim was their incredible longing to hear about the Rebbe. They constantly begged of me, time and again, to please share with them whatever I can concerning the Rebbe and his teachings.

While I was in Scandinavia I had heard that since the passing of his mother, Rebbetzin Chana, the Rebbe undertook a

new initiative—to explain a Rashi of the week's *parsha* at each farbrengen. I was glad to be able to bring to them this piece of news now.

I had also brought along with me a small book containing the transcriptions of the *maamorim* of the Rebbe from the year 5715. I had received this *sefer* from one of the *bochurim* in Montreal who had typed them out himself, and I kept it with me at all times. Seeing how thirsty these Chassidim were for something from the Rebbe, I decided to leave my copy with them in Tashkent. Years later, when these families managed to leave Russia and some of the *bochurim* came to New York, I found that they were so well versed in these *maamorim*; they could repeat them almost word for word.


Pidyon Nefesh

As I left my hotel one night heading for the old marketplace, where I was scheduled to meet with some of the younger Chassidim, I suddenly came upon a young couple trying to catch my

attention. They began to direct me by pointing with their fingers and saying broken sentences, until we reached a side street where they were sure that we were not being watched, and then they began their tale:

The husband's name was Reb Yaakov Lepkivker (known in Tashkent as "Yankele der Shvartzer," as he had a black beard). After searching with great difficulty to find employment that would not require him to work on Shabbos, he finally found a job in a laundromat. After a while the exposure to the chemicals that were used in the cleaning process had a serious effect on Reb Yaakov's health and he became critically ill. Having no other choice, they took the risk of sending a telegram directly to the Rebbe and they received a one word answer: "Shomaati" (I heard). Shortly thereafter, Reb Yaakov miraculously began to heal until his health was completely restored. Now, as a way of saying thank you, they wished to send a large sum of money with me to the Rebbe as a *pidyon nefesh*.

I was now faced by a serious dilemma: On the one hand, I was very moved by the devotion and dedication that they displayed. But on the other, how was I to allow myself to take such a large sum of money out of Russia, while activists in the free world were constantly doing



*"...It was an auspicious time
where a heartfelt l'chaim
was to be said sincerely,
with 'an emmes,' and a good
word spoken while it's still
yom tov. Great things can be
accomplished through this
for all the Jews of Russia
and they can be redeemed
in the blink of an eye..."*

all they could, and beyond, to smuggle money into Russia!

After a brief discussion, we resolved that I would only bring along 18 dollars, and that we would consider it to be on behalf of the whole of the community of Tashkent.

As I turned to leave, I felt a tug on my arm. There were two people standing there preventing me from leaving. I was terribly frightened for a moment, but they began to speak to me in Yiddish, telling me not to worry.

As it turned out, they were Lubavitcher *bochurim*, Yosef Mochkin and Michel Vishedsky. They began asking how they could obtain visas allowing them to leave Russia when suddenly, during our conversation, we noticed a man lurking nearby, but being that we were standing in a darkened alleyway, we couldn't make out who it was. Realizing that we noticed him, the man came over and asked me for a match with which to light his cigarette. Yosef Mochkin immediately realized that the man before us was an informer and he needed a match so that he can identify our faces and report us to the authorities. He whispered for me to turn away...

On the spot I came up with a very simple suggestion that saved the situation—don't give him a match...

After discussing the visa issue at length, they began describing the hardships that face the Jewish community in the Soviet Union, and asked "Tell us, do the Chassidim on the other side of the curtain think about us?"

I began to explain to them that although I cannot speak for all the rest of *anash*, one thing that is certain is that the Rebbe does not allow us to forget about them! I went on to describe what I had witnessed at the Shavuot farbrengen just a few months earlier, when the Rebbe painfully rebuked the Chassidim when they did not say *l'chaim* for the Russian Jews. I added that often when the Rebbe sings *Hoshia Es Amecha*, he substitutes the word "*uvoreich*" with "*veracheim*"—have mercy. Chassidim felt that by doing so, the Rebbe was intervening in Heaven on behalf of the Russian Jews.

While I spoke, the pair of *bochurim* listened with great affection and they began to cry. Again I witnessed the profound devotion that the Chassidim in Russia possessed towards the Rebbe; sincere, wholehearted *Hiskashrus*.

Mission Accomplished

I spent three months in Russia and when I finished my *shlichus*, I left carrying

with me hundreds of names committed to memory, which I immediately wrote down upon arriving in Copenhagen. The very next thing I did was to write a detailed report to the Rebbe about everything that transpired during my *shlichus* and to ask the Rebbe how I should proceed. I was sure that I was meant to pass on the names to someone else and return to New York to continue life as if nothing happened, but I was wrong.

A few weeks later I received a letter from the Rebbe containing instructions for the next part of my mission. I was to travel to Eretz Yisroel where my father was living at the time, and from there, I would work on obtaining visas for the families whose names I had. There would be a special committee there that would help me understand what I was to do. On the way to Eretz Yisroel, I stopped off in Italy and spent *Shabbos Hagadol* with the Rebbe's shliach, Reb Gershon Mendel Garelik. From there I proceeded to Eretz Yisroel, and after Pesach, my real task began in earnest.

I worked for Reb Simcha Gorodetzky and Reb Folle Kahn on the following task:

They obtained for me a special pass from an *aliyah* official by the name of Aron Duvdevani, which gave me free access to the ledger containing all the names and addresses of every person living in Eretz Yisroel. I merely had to walk into any post office and show this pass and I was immediately allowed into the back where I sat perusing the ledger, matching up names with the ones I had.

After pairing up the names, my next task was to determine if any of these citizens I wanted to sell my story to had Communist leanings. Once I got the green light, I would personally travel to their homes and try to convince these Israeli's to send their supposed relatives a visa request, something which was unheard of at the time. I made sure to go in the evenings when most people were home, and I would show them my passport bearing the Russian stamp. I



REB SIMCHA GORODETSKY



REB REFAEL ("FOLLEH") KAHAN

explained that I had just been to Russia and I had met their relatives who were desperate to obtain exit visas. Most people weren't sure these families were really related to them but I usually managed to convince them by saying that they look similar and shared similar mannerisms.

I immediately encountered a dilemma: Anything to do with Soviet Russia smelled of danger and nobody wanted to be the first one to try. For a long time I wasn't able to convince anybody to be the first example and I was very distressed. One Shabbos in B'nei Brak I met a *yungerman* by the name of Reb Shmulik Gurevitch, who noticed that I was very disturbed. Without getting into details, I shared with him my troubles and straight away, he asked me if there are any Gurevitches on my list. Indeed there was one and he offered to be the first to send a visa to this family. From there, everything went extremely smooth.

Another concern most people had was how they were going to take care of these families once they arrived in Eretz Yisroel. As their supposed relatives, the immediate responsibility of supporting them would fall on their shoulders. I assured them that the Israeli government was committed to taking care of these families from beginning to end.

One day Reb Berke Wolf approached me and asked that I accompany him that night on a trip, telling me to make sure I bring my passport along. I agreed and that night he took me in his jeep



REB SHOLOM DOVBER ("BERKE") WOLFF



A SMALL STUDY-GROUP LEARNING TORAH IN MOSCOW, 5717.

to visit an important Israeli official. I quickly understood the purpose of this trip. A while back, the Rebbe had given a *brocha* to this man for his relatives to leave Russia, but much time had passed since then and they had not yet managed to leave. Reb Berke presented me to this official and showing him my passport, he explained that a major breakthrough was soon to come. This scene repeated itself several times with various important officials, and in this way Reb Berke managed to fortify their *emuna* in the Rebbe's *brachos*.

All of my work remained a very big secret and although people noticed my frequent meetings with Reb Simcha Gorodetzky, very few people had an inkling as to what I was up to.

To this day, I don't know how many Russian families were helped as a result of this project but I can estimate that the number stands in the hundreds. In any case, this was definitely a major breakthrough, and it caused waves which continued for many years. The small crack in the Iron Curtain sparked hope in many hearts, banishing years of despair and gloom that engulfed most of these Yidden.

After more than two years, right before Yud-Tes Kislev 5727, the Rebbe instructed me to return to New York. A short while later I was told that the Rebbe had suggested a *shidduch* for me. Of course I agreed to pursue the matter and a short while later, *mazkirus* notified me that the Rebbe had asked if he can wish me *mazal tov* yet. Of course we closed the *shidduch* right away! The Rebbe instructed that the *kalla* and I stand in *Gan Eden Hatachton* after Mincha and that he would wish us *mazal tov* on the way to his room; and so it was. The next Shabbos, during the *farbrengen*, the Rebbe publicly announced that because I was a *chosson*, and a *chosson* is like a king, I should therefore come up and stand behind the Rebbe for the duration of the *farbrengen*. Reb Yoel told me afterwards that for months the Rebbe had seemed to be in a very serious mood but since I had arrived back in 770 things seemed to have changed.

Although the Rebbe never mentioned my *shlichus* to me, I still feel to this day that the few *kiruvim* I merited to receive from the Rebbe are all in the merit of this unique *shlichus* that I had the incredible *z'chus* to fulfill. **D**



BEHIND THE PICTURE

NO SIMPLE GIFT

The Rebbe's Megillos

The Rebbe's Megillah

As is true about all the Rebbe's holy *hanhogos*, Chassidim are always looking to know more about each nuance and detail of the Rebbe's performance of mitzvos.

When it comes to Purim and its four mitzvos, there is plenty to notice and be attentive to. In this article we will focus the Rebbe's *megillah*.

For the first several years of the *nesius*, the Rebbe used a very old *megillah*, its parchment yellow from age, and it was stored in a black carton box. This *megillah* was written based on the common *minhag* of every column beginning with the word *hamelech* (aside for the final three), and the list of *asseres b'nei Haman* occupying an entire column.

It wasn't until 5729 that the Rebbe began using a new *megillah*, encased in a beautiful silver container. This *megillah* was a gift from Reb Getzel Rubashkin.

Reb Getzel had commissioned a *megillah* for himself, to be written with all the *hiddurim*. Once, a *sofer* was examining it, and began showering Reb Getzel with compliments for the high quality of the *megillah*, exclaiming that it was even nicer than the Rebbe's *megillah*! Upon hearing that, Reb Getzel became concerned rather than flattered; could he own a *megillah* that was nicer than the Rebbe's? He immediately commissioned a second one to be written just as beautifully, and offered it as a gift to the Rebbe, enclosed in an exquisite silver container.

Surprisingly¹ the Rebbe accepted the gift, but offered \$50 to Reb Getzel for it, saying that it says in Mishlei² “*Soneh matonos yichye*”—one who dislikes gifts shall live.

Under the pressure of the moment Reb Getzel accepted the money, but he did not keep it; instead he immediately donated it to Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch.

This *megillah* was written in the style of the ones written by the Rebbe Maharash, who was a *sofer*³, and had written a *megillah* for each of his children. Hence, not all columns begin with the word *hamelech*, and the names of *asseres b'nei Haman* share a column with other *pesukim*.

Reading the *Megillah*

During *krias hamegillah* the Rebbe would open the *megillah* on a nearby table, which had been prepared in advance. Over the years this changed, until eventually, a second, wider *shtender* was often placed near the permanent one, upon which the Rebbe would place his *megillah* and fold it into three layers.

The Rebbe would recite the opening *brochos* to himself,⁴ as well as the actual *kriah* itself. Upon the conclusion of *krias hamegillah*, the Rebbe would begin rolling the *megillah* while saying the concluding *brochos*.⁵

Paris, 5698

Until 5737 the Rebbe personally read the *megillah* for Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka, although never in public. Decades prior however, on Purim 5698, during the Frierdiker Rebbe's visit in Paris during the months of Adar and Nissan, it was the Rebbe who read the *megillah*. We know this from a letter sent to Rabbi Yaakov Landa in 5716⁶ in which the Rebbe writes (free translation):

"[...] Incidentally, then [in 5698] I read the megillah for him [the Frierdiker Rebbe] and repeated those words [v'laharog and lifneihem] and he nodded in agreement..."

Presidential Gift

Another episode related to *Megillas Esther*, is that on a visit from Israeli President

Zalman Shazar in 5731, the Rebbe presented him with a *megillah* in a silver case. The words "Purim 5731" were inscribed onto the elegant encasing.

A deeply moved Shazar gladly accepted the gift, and he treasured it from thereon as a very prized possession. So touched was he by the Rebbe's gesture, that in 5733, some two years after he had

received the *megillah*, Shazar chose to hold it while being photographed with the shluchim to Australia, who had paid him a visit on a stopover in Eretz Yisroel⁷ **D**

1. The use of a silver item was something very rare by the Rebbe. Reb Zalman Jaffe recorded in his diary how, in 5742, he had once bought a silver wine decanter for the Rebbe, but the Rebbe politely refused it, explaining in a letter that "I do not wish to make a distinction between me and those surrounding me."

2. 15:27

3. Sefer Hatoldos Admur Maharash by the Rebbe, p. 21

4. See Sefer Haminhogim p. 74, that this is not a *hora'a* for all.

5. There is a halachic debate as to whether one must first recite the *brochos* and then roll the *megillah*, or vice versa.

6. Igros Kodesh, vol. 13, p. 337; see also Reshimas Hayoman, p. 395

7. The pictured is featured in "Iyey Hamelech" p. 93.

PURIM 5724. NOTE THE ASERES BNEI HOMON TAKE UP THE ENTIRE COLUMN



PURIM 5751



מוקדש לחיזוק ההתקשרות
לכ"ק אדמו"ר זצוקללה"ה נבג"מ זי"ע

לזכות

הבחור הנעלה והמצויין, מנכ"ל המסור ונתן בלו"נ של גליון ה"חסידים" דערה"ר

החתן הרה"ת יוסף דוד שי' שטראקס

וב"ג הכלה מרת רבקה תחי' קסלמן

לרגל חתונתם בשטומ"צ ביום י"ט אדר תשע"ה

נדפס ע"י חברי המערכת שי'

לזכות

החתן הרה"ת זאב שי' שטיינמן והכלה מרת שיינא תחי' צירקינד

לרגל חתונתם בשטומ"צ ביום ו' אדר ה'תשע"ה

נדפס ע"י הוריהם

השליח הרה"ת חיים שאול וזוגתו מרת שרה ומשפחתם שיחיו שטיינמן

השליח הרה"ת שניאור זלמן וזוגתו מרת רחל ומשפחתם שיחיו צירקינד

לע"נ

הרה"ת השליח ישעי' בן ראשע ע"ה גאנזבורג

נפטר מוצש"ק פרשת תצוה ז' אדר ה'תשע"ג

בקשר עם יום ה'ארצייט' הב' שלו

ולזכות

הרה"ת שלום בן אסתר

וזוגתו נחמה דינה בת פראדעל נעשא ברכה

וב"ב, הת' מנחם מענדל, הת' שניאור זלמן,

חיה רבקה, חנה, הת' לוי יצחק,

להתברך בכל מילי דמיטב בגו"ר ובהרחבה

לע"נ

הרה"ח הו"ח אי"א התמים נר"נ עוסק בצ"צ רב פעלים וכו'

עסק בנייה וישיבת תורת"ל כיוכל שנה

גבאי ביהכ"ס וביהמ"ד ליובאוויטש שבליובאוויטש 770

ר' משה פנחס בהרה"ח אברהם מרדכי הכהן ז"ל

נפטר בדר"ח אדר-שני, ה'תשמ"ו

וזוגתו מרת מינדל בת הרה"ח דוד הלוי ז"ל

נפטרה כ"ח תשרי התשנ"א

כ"ץ

נדפס ע"י משפחתם שי'

לע"נ

הרה"ת ר' בן ציון דוד

בן ר' שמעון אליעזר ע"ה שאפראק

נפטר ביום הש"ק

פ' ויק"פ, כ"ה אדר ה'תשנ"ו

תנצב"ה

נדפס ע"י משפחתו שי'

לזכות

הרה"ת ר' לייביש משה

וזוגתו מרת רינה

וילדיהם

קיילא באשא, בנציון דוד, אליהו

איסר, רבקה שיינדל אלטא

שיחיו

גולההירש

לזכות

החתן הרה"ת אפרים שיחיו

פליטאל

והכלה מרת חי' מושקא תחי'

חזן

לרגל חתונתם בשטומ"צ

ביום כ"ח אדר תשע"ה

נדפס ע"י משפחתם שי'

לזכות

החתן הרה"ת יששכר שי'

אייזנברג

והכלה מרת שרה רבקה תחי'

שערמן

לרגל חתונתם בשטומ"צ

ביום י"א אדר תשע"ה



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