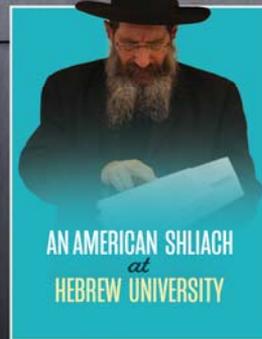
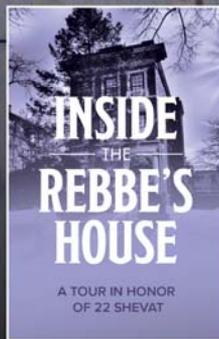
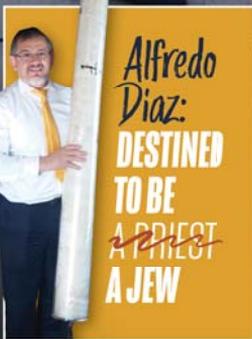


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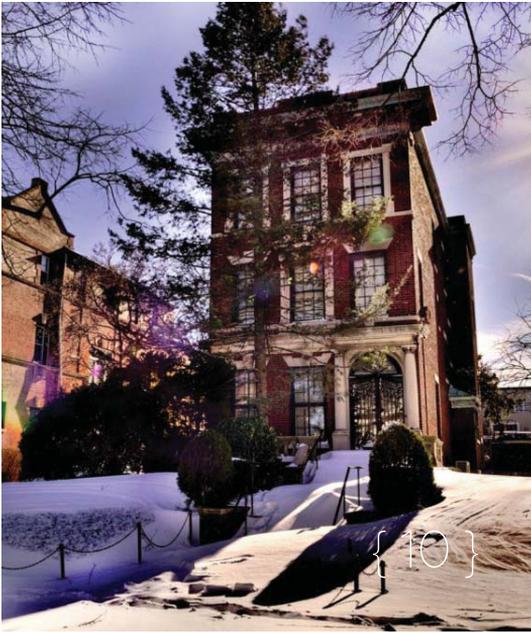
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The Rebbe waving to a child waiting outside the Rebbe's house  
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 [BMoshiach.org](http://BMoshiach.org)

 [info@BMoshiach.org](mailto:info@BMoshiach.org)

 718.778.8000

 [editor@BeisMoshiach.org](mailto:editor@BeisMoshiach.org)

Editor: **Levi Liberow** • Managing Editor: **Shraga Crombie**  
Director: **Rabbi M.M. Hendel** • Rabbinical Advisor: **Rabbi Yaakov Chazan**

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# BESURAS HaGeulah

THE REBBE ON THE IMMINENCE OF THE REDEMPTION

## A NEW PHASE OF LEADERSHIP (1)

סה. חלקים משיחות ש"פ יתרו, כ"ף שבט, וליל ויום ב' פ' משפטים, כ"ב שבט תשנ"ב

65. Shevat 20-22, 5752 – January 25, 1992

The twenty-second of Shevat, is the yahrtzeit of the Previous Rebbe's daughter and the Rebbe's wife, Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka OBM in 5748-1988. In this talk delivered four years later, the Rebbe reveals that this day was a landmark in his and his father-in-law's leadership which is divided to three stages comprising the Divine service of the Jewish people throughout all of history until the Redemption. These stages consists of (a) *preparing* the world to receive the Divine revelation of the Redemption; (b) *drawing down* that revelation; and (c) *connecting* both, thus bringing the Redemption from potential into actuality.

**Our generation is the last generation of exile and the first of the Redemption,**

**as my sainted father-in-law the Rebbe, whose *hilula* we commemorated on the tenth of Shevat, announced and notified many times:**

**that all requirements have already been met and all that is still necessary is to actually greet *Moshiach Tzidkeinu*.**

**Obviously then, if in the interim a *histalkus* (passing) took place,**

**as occurred on the twenty-second of Shevat four years ago (in the year 5748 -1988),**

— the passing of the Previous Rebbe's daughter and Rebbe's wife, Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka —

**its purpose is only to bring about the only elevation that still remains – the elevation of the true and immediate Redemption.**

אונגער דור איז דער לעצטער דור פון גלות און דער ערשטער דור פון דער גאָלד

- ווי כ"ק מו"ח אדמו"ר דער בעל ההלולא האט מקריז ומודיע געווען כמה-פעמים,

אז מ'האט שוין אלץ פארענדיקט און איצטער דארף מען נאר מקבל זיין משיח צדקנו בפעל ממש -

במילא איז פארשטאנדיק, אז אויב בינתיים איז געווען אן ענין של הסתלקות,

ווי דאס איז געווען בכ"ב שבט באַרבע שנים לפני זה (שנת ה'תשמ"ח),

איז דאס אך ורק בכדי צו ברענגען די איינציקע עלוי' וואס איז נאך געבליבן - די עלוי' פון דער גאָלד האמתית והשלמה.

How do we see the passing of the Rebbeztin as a part of the Redemption process?

**...The amazing innovation and advantage of this generation — the last of exile and first of Redemption — has been discussed frequently,**

**that it represents the end and conclusion of the Divine work and service of the Jewish people of all previous generations, to complete the final “refinements” of the Divine sparks that were in the world in exile.**

**To use the expression coined for this by my father-in-law the Rebbe: “To polish the buttons” as soldiers do with their uniforms before taking part in a victory parade.**

**Our Divine service consists of bringing the Redemption into reality, for *this* generation and for all generations preceding it!**

**Simply put, this generation concludes the work and Divine service of all preceding generations of Jews.**

**...The generation of *Nesi Doreinu* itself is comprised of several stages and periods. In general, there are three stages represented by three significant dates:**

**(1) The tenth day of the eleventh month (i.e., the 10th of Shevat, 5710 -1950), the day upon which concluded the period of my sainted father-in-law the Rebbe’s Divine service during his lifetime in this world.**

**(2) The day after – the eleventh day of the eleventh month (which was the first complete day after his *histalkus*),**

— The day after the Previous Rebbe’s passing represents the day of the Rebbe’ ascent to leadership. Traditionally, we consider the very same day of a Rebbe’s passing as the day of his successors ascent to leadership. This is based on the Medrash’s explanation (Bereishis Rabbah 58:1) on the verse “The sun rises and the sun sets,” (Koheles 1:5) that “When Hashem causes the sun of a righteous person to set, he causes the sun of his fellow to shine forth [immediately].” The Medrash lists many such instances: “The day that Rabbi Akiva passed away, Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi was born, etc.”

The explanation is found in an earlier sicha referenced in a footnote here (Sefer HaSichos, 5750, Vol. 1, p. 255, footnote 99), where the Rebbe explains that the day of a Tzaddik’s *histalkus* still “belongs” to that Tzaddik’s *avoda*, as it is a day during which he was still physically present in this world. Therefore, only on the day *after* Yud Shevat 5710 did (primarily) begin the *avoda* of the “Ninth Generation.”

... מ'האט גערעדט מערערע מאל דעם געוואלדיקן חדוש ועלוי פון דעם דור - דער לעצטער דור פון גלות און דער ערשטער דור פון גאָלה -

אז ער שטעלט מיט זיך פאר דעם גמר וסיום פון "מעשינו ועבודתנו"<sup>1</sup> פון אידן במשך כל הדורות שלפני זה, צו פארענדיקן די לעצטע ברורים אין גלות,

ובלשון כ"ק מו"ח אדמו"ר<sup>2</sup> - "צופוץן די קנעפלעך";

אונזער עבודה באשטייט אין ברענגען די גאָלה בפעל פאר דעם דור און פאר אלע דורות שלפני זה!

דאס הייסט, אז אין דעם דור איז מען מסים מעשינו ועבודתנו פון אידן במשך כל הדורות.

... אין דעם דור פון נשיא דורנו גופא זיינען פארן עטלעכע שלבים ותקופות, ובגלות - דריי שלבים:

(א) יום עשירי לחדש אחד עשר (י"ד שבט ת"ש יו"ד) - דער סיום התקופה פון עבודת כ"ק מו"ח אדמו"ר נשיא דורנו בחיים חיותו בעלמא דין.

(ב) דער יום למחרתו - יום אחד עשר לחדש אחד עשר (דער ערשטער גאנצער טאג לאחרי ההסתלקות),

# From The Rebbe's Pen



## Not As Great As It Sounds...

*A response to an individual who wanted to leave a position he had in one of the  
Rebbe's mosdos for a more lucrative one elsewhere:*

במענה לשאלתו

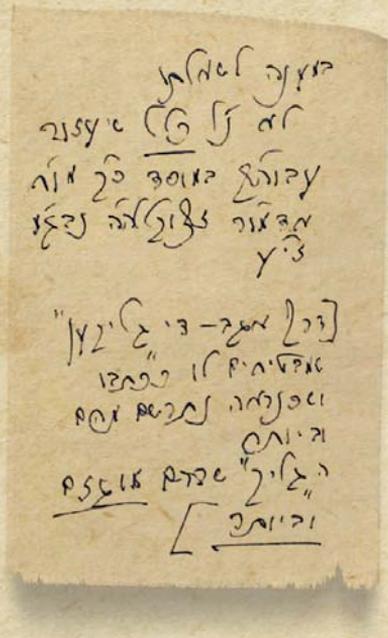
לא נ"ל [=נראה לי] כלל שיעזוב עבודה"ק  
[=עבודת הקודש] במוסד כ"ק מו"ח אדמו"ר  
וצוקללה"ה נבג"מ זי"ע

[דרך אגב - די "גליקען" שמבטיחים לו  
ככתבו ושכנראה נתרשם מהם וביותר

ה"גליק" שבהם מוגזם וביותר]

In response to your inquiry: It doesn't  
seem right to me at all that you leave your  
holy work in a *mossad* belonging to my father  
-in-law the Rebbe<sup>y</sup> "Zuklale" Nbg"m Zi"e.

[By the way — regarding the "fortunes"  
promised to you in this job as you write  
which apparently impressed you greatly,  
it appears that the "fortune" in them is  
exaggerated and greatly so.] ▪



# SHABBOS

01/22

כ' שבט

CANDLE LIGHTING	SUNRISE	LATEST SHEMA	MIDDAY	SUNSET	SHABBOS ENDS
4:22	7:13	9:40	12:07	5:01	5:46

ג' פרקים: הלכות שאר אבות הטומאות פרקים יח-כ פרק אחד: הלכות שגגות פרק ו  
ספר המצוות: מ"ע מ"ח קד, מ"ע קד

## SUNDAY

01/23

כ"א שבט

SUNRISE	LATEST SHEMA	SUNSET
7:13	9:40	5:02

ג' פרקים . . . . . הלכות טומאת אוכלין פרקים א-ג  
פרק אחד . . . . . הלכות שגגות פרק ז  
ספר המצוות . . . . . מ"ע קד

## MONDAY

01/24

כ"ב שבט

SUNRISE	LATEST SHEMA	SUNSET
7:12	9:40	5:03

ג' פרקים . . . . . הלכות טומאת אוכלין פרקים ד-ו  
פרק אחד . . . . . הלכות שגגות פרק ח  
ספר המצוות . . . . . מ"ע קד

## TUESDAY

01/25

כ"ג שבט

SUNRISE	LATEST SHEMA	SUNSET
7:11	9:39	5:04

ג' פרקים . . . . . הלכות טומאת אוכלין פרקים ד-ט  
פרק אחד . . . . . הלכות שגגות פרק ט  
ספר המצוות . . . . . מ"ע קד

## WEDNESDAY

01/26

כ"ד שבט

SUNRISE	LATEST SHEMA	SUNSET
7:10	9:39	5:06

ג' פרקים . . . . . הלכות טומאת אוכלין פרקים י-יב  
פרק אחד . . . . . הלכות שגגות פרקי י  
ספר המצוות . . . . . מ"ע קד

## THURSDAY

01/27

כ"ה שבט

SUNRISE	LATEST SHEMA	SUNSET
7:10	9:39	5:07

ג' פרקים . . . . . הלכות טומאת אוכלין פרקים יג-טו  
פרק אחד . . . . . הלכות שגגות פרקי יא  
ספר המצוות . . . . . מ"ע קד

## FRIDAY

01/28

כ"ו שבט

SUNRISE	LATEST SHEMA	SUNSET
7:09	9:39	5:08

ג' פרקים . . . . . הל' טומאת אוכלין פ' טז, ה' כלים פ' א-ב  
פרק אחד . . . . . הלכות שגגות פרקי יב  
ספר המצוות . . . . . מ"ע קד

THE TIMES ON THIS PAGE ARE FOR BROOKLYN, NY

## HALACHOS OF MINCHA

**Out of the three daily prayers, Mincha (the afternoon prayer) stands out as the one that is most auspicious (“Eliyhai HaNavi was answered only at Mincha”).** The special quality of Mincha over Shacharis and Maariv is that it comes in the middle of the day, when people are occupied and busy with their personal affairs, yet they interrupt to *daven* Mincha. (Hayom Yom 22 Adar I). We present a collection of Halachos related to this special tefillah, by Rav **Yosef Yeshaya Braun** shlita, Mara D’Asra and member of the Badatz of Crown Heights.

### EARLY MINCHAH

Some people prefer to *daven mincha* at the earliest possible time. There is a discussion in *poskim* whether it is preferable to *daven mincha gedola* (early *mincha*) or *mincha ketana* (late *mincha*— after 9.5 halachic “hours” of the day have passed). Either way, the consensus is that *mincha gedola* is an acceptable practice, certainly for people whose schedule makes it difficult for them to *daven* later.

However, it is important to be aware that one may not *daven mincha* until a half-hour after *chatzos*. The Alter Rebbe writes that if one *davened mincha* before that time, they have not fulfilled their obligation and have to *daven mincha* again at the proper time. In general, in matters of Torah we say, “*Ee efshar l’tzamtzeim*” (it is impossible to be precise), and consequently there are *poskim* who say that one should always allow a bit of leeway for *halachos* involving time—in case the time was calculated incorrectly. Therefore, it is important

to ensure that one does not start to *daven mincha* precisely a half-hour after *chatzos*, but a few minutes later. In fact, there is a discussion as to how to calculate this half-hour: whether it is an actual half-hour (by the clock) or a *halachic* half hour (1/24th of the total daylight hours on that particular day).

There is also a discussion among later authorities about whether the *korbanos* said before *mincha* may be said before the half-hour after *chatzos* has passed. However, from the *Siddur HaRamak*, it is very clear that according to Kabbalah, one should wait to say the *korbanos* until after that half-hour has passed. Halacha2G0 #358

### KORBANOS BEFORE THE ZMAN OF MINCHA

**Q. We usually daven *mincha* after Kiddush on Shabbos afternoon. But now *mincha gedola* is an hour later due to the time change. Can we start saying *Korbanos*, *Ashrei-U’va L’tzion*, and *Krias HaTorah* before *mincha***

## **gedola and then start Shemoneh Esrei at the time of mincha gedola?**

**A.** There are different opinions on the matter (see Hebrew references). There are strong arguments in favor of waiting till the time of *mincha gedola* for *korbanos* and *kriah* too.

Taking into account that the Alter Rebbe is of the opinion that *b'dieved* if one davened *mincha* before the time of *mincha gedola*, even if it was after *chatzos*, he isn't *yotzei* and must daven again (other opinions are lenient in this case) and the fact that it's only an issue of a couple of minutes or in issue of inconvenience, it's highly recommended not to rely on the lenient opinions.

This is particularly true when it comes to *Krias HaTorah*, where it involves also potential *brachos l'vatula* (though this last point is highly debatable).

Additionally, it should be noted that according to Kabbalah, all parts of *mincha* should take place after the time of *mincha gedola* (see above). #3302

## **MINCHA AFTER SHKIAH**

**Q. I see many times people davening mincha after shkiah (also with a minyan). Is this acceptable or must mincha be recited before sunset?**

**A.** There is a *machlokes ha'poskim* if one may daven *mincha* after *shkiah*. The Alter Rebbe is of the position that we shouldn't protest those who do daven after *shkiah*. [However,] this doesn't imply that it's the right thing to do *l'hatchilla*.

Chassidim generally were very particular to ensure they finish *mincha* before *shkiah*. Even according to the position that one may daven after *shkiah*, if faced with a choice of a *minyan* after *shkiah* or davening without a *minyan* before *shkiah*, some maintain that it's better to daven *b'yechidus*.

It is well known that the Rebbeim were so particular about this that they davened before *shkiah* without a *minyan* even when they had *yahrtzeit* rather than davening after *shkiah*. In the earlier years, the Rebbe did this several times too.

Certainly, in a place which has no such *minyanim* this would be a breach of custom to introduce something like this, a matter which is highly questionable. There is a very simple solution to your situation: make it a habit of always coming on time to Shul. Your reluctance or difficulty to change your habit should not result in the community changing their standards and accommodating a behavior which is highly questionable. #3988\*

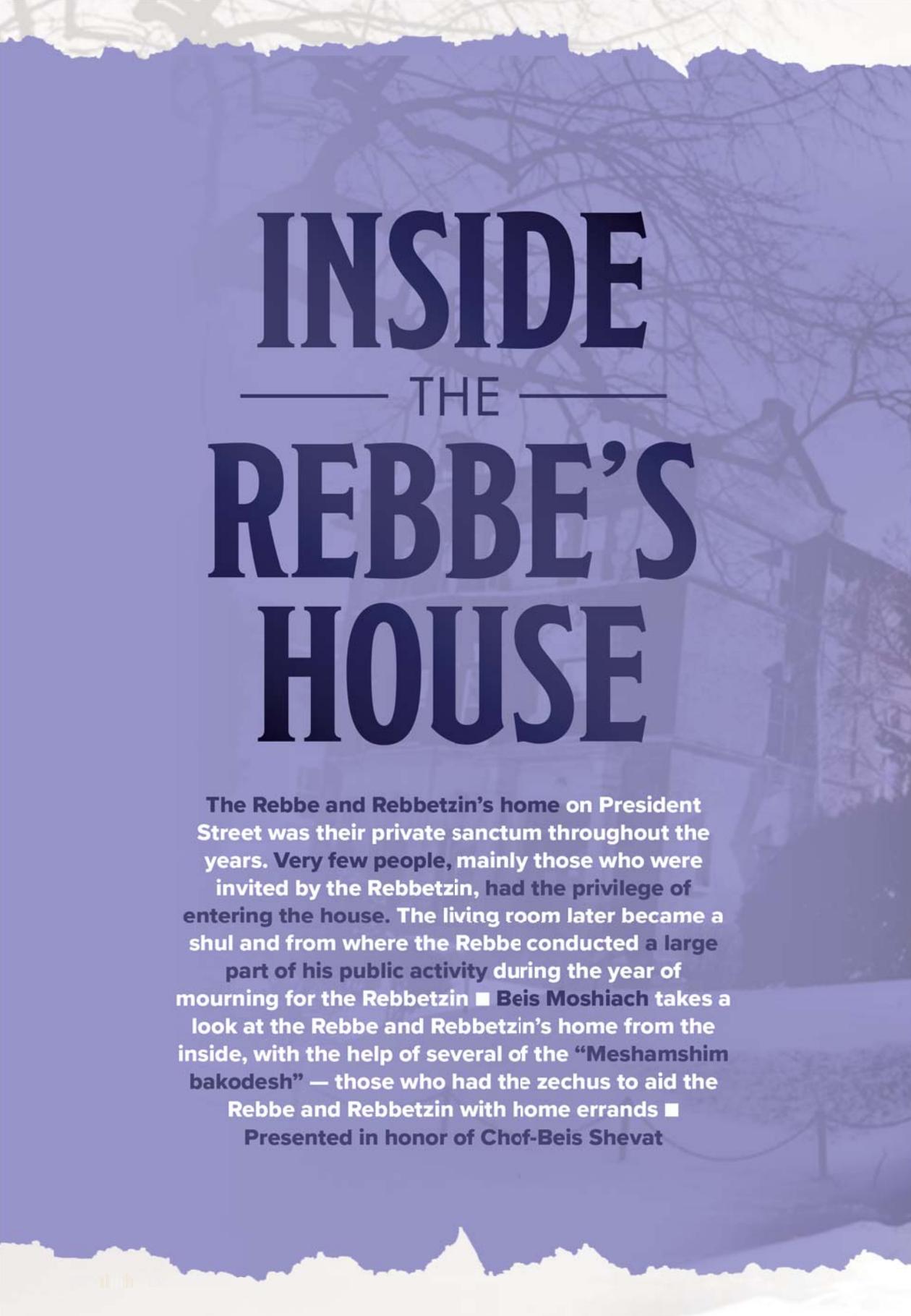
## **SHORT Q&A'S**

**Q. Can a woman Daven weekday mincha after candle-lighting time if she didn't have time before?**

**A.** *L'hatchila* a woman should daven *mincha* before lighting Shabbos candles. If she didn't and doesn't have enough time, she should have in mind when lighting Shabbos candles not to accept Shabbos and then she may daven *mincha* after lighting Shabbos candles. If she didn't make such a stipulation, she may still daven *mincha* afterwards.\*

**Q. Is there a halacha prohibiting the use of a tallis during mincha?**

**A.** No, it is a matter of custom [and it is indeed the Chabad custom as mentioned in Hayom Yom for 19 Kislev]. However, there are clear [halachic] sources against wearing a *tallis* during *maariv*. #9309\* ■



# INSIDE — THE — REBBE'S HOUSE

**The Rebbe and Rebbetzin's home on President Street was their private sanctum throughout the years. Very few people, mainly those who were invited by the Rebbetzin, had the privilege of entering the house. The living room later became a shul and from where the Rebbe conducted a large part of his public activity during the year of mourning for the Rebbetzin ■ Beis Moshiach takes a look at the Rebbe and Rebbetzin's home from the inside, with the help of several of the "Meshamshim bakodesh" — those who had the zechus to aid the Rebbe and Rebbetzin with home errands ■ Presented in honor of Chof-Beis Shevat**



**1304  
PRESIDENT  
STREET,**

Brooklyn, New York. How appropriate for the Nasi to live on a street called “President.”

The three-story home looks like other houses on the street. The block consists of two and three-family attractive houses where many Chassidic families reside. Those who live on President Street between Brooklyn and New York Avenues, not only live in the king’s neighborhood but on the Nasi’s block.

The Rebbe and Rebbetzin bought this house in 5716/1956 after living in an apartment building on the corner of New York and President. Their house was their fortress which only few were privileged to enter and this, by special invitation. Most of the guests went to visit the Rebbetzin by appointment. If you wanted the Rebbe, the address was 770 Eastern Parkway.

An aura of mystery shrouded the house, an aura of holiness and awe for the private home of the Rebbe and Rebbetzin who zealously guarded their privacy.

Not only didn’t Anash and Chassidim enter the house; for years they avoided standing near the house, like royal palaces where people are discouraged from loitering. When Anash or the neighbors needed to walk by, they would do so quickly. The guests among them would steal glances at the house, and that would be all.

**THE HOUSE WAS SUDDENLY OPENED TO THE PUBLIC**

The first time the doors were opened and the public was allowed to enter was after the passing of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka a”h on the night of Chof-Beis Shevat 5748/1988. Towards

morning they brought the Rebbetzin’s holy body back from the hospital and the women from the Chevra Kadisha laid her on the floor of the living room. Shifts were arranged for bachurim to recite Tehillim. This was the first time they were entering the inner sanctum, which had been closed to them until now. At first, these shifts were organized, but as more people wanted to participate the shifts shortened and a long line wound its way near the house.

When the news of the Rebbetzin’s passing began to spread, Anash and the bachurim flocked to the house. This was the first time that Chassidim gathered outside the house, as they waited for developments and news. It was very cold outside, typical of February in New York, but people remained there eager to hear reports about what was going on inside the Rebbe’s house.

Those who went inside, into the inner sanctum, left in a state of shock. They were teary-eyed and pale. Each one found a private spot to try and absorb the goings-on. Those who were able to muster the strength, said Tehillim. Every so often you could hear a Chassid sighing.

One of the bachurim who went inside the house, wrote up his impressions the next day:

“It’s hard. Very hard to digest the reality. People are entering the Rebbe’s private abode. Until today, nobody had access to the house. Except for the few who worked there, everybody knew the Rebbe and Rebbetzin’s house was off-limits and people’s awe kept them away to the extent that they were even afraid to walk on the pavement near the house when the Rebbe was in 770. And now... the situation arouses deep emotions in all of us.”

## “MY FATHER ALWAYS SAID TO LOOK FOR A MODEST-LOOKING HOUSE”

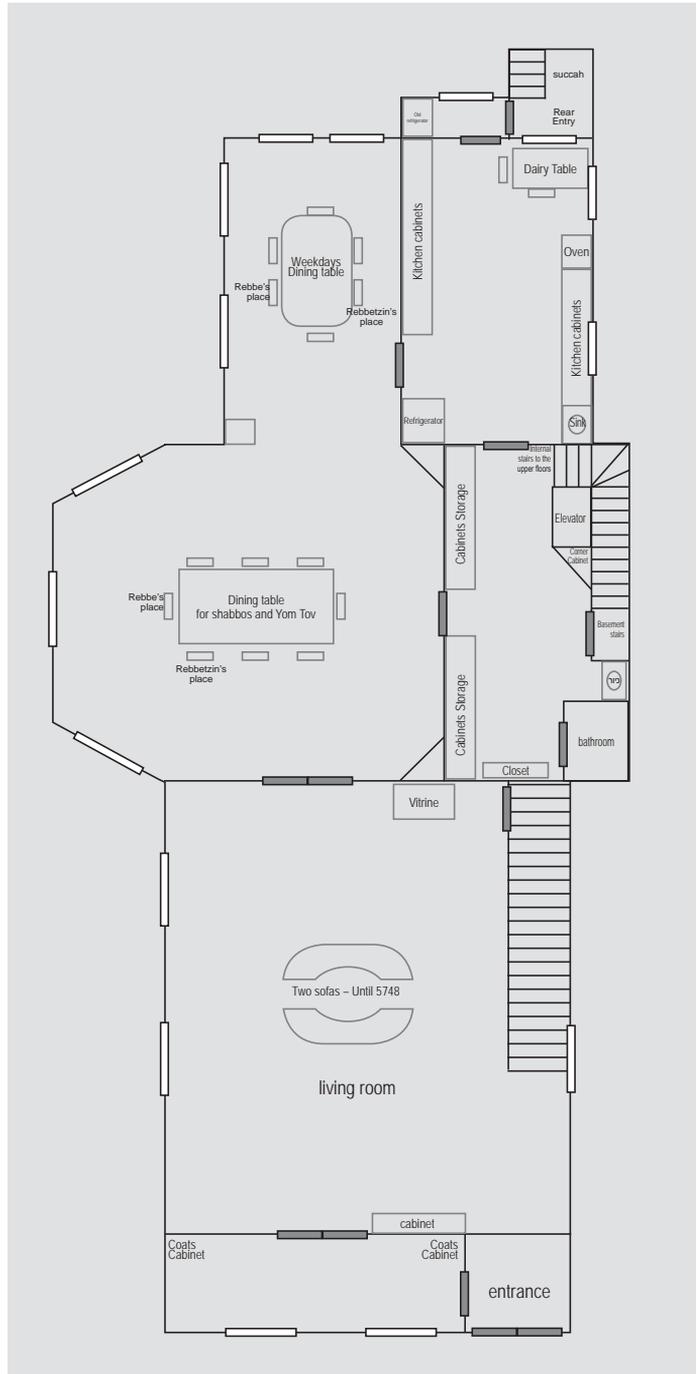
Other than invited guests, those who worked in the Rebbe’s house were so few as to be counted on one hand. They were on the premises throughout the day and some of them were even there at night.

The *mashbakim* (mash-bak=meshamesh b’kodesh, lit. one who serves in the holy, i.e. personal aides to the Rebbe and/or the Rebbe’s family) worked in the house, as opposed to the secretaries who worked in the offices of 770. After the passing of the Rebbetzin, most of the mashbakim agreed to talk about things on the “inside,” sharing stories that revealed a little bit about the royal lives lived in the royal house, lives that were private for decades.

With the mashbakim’s input and with the help of diaries that were written over the years, we will try to familiarize you with the Rebbe’s house that, since 22 Shevat, was a place of tefilla and farbrengens – whether during the first year following the *histalkus* (passing) or occasionally in later years.



Shortly after the Rebbe and Rebbetzin moved to this house, the Rebbetzin told



A MAP OF THE FIRST FLOOR OF THE REBBE’S HOME THAT WAS OPENED TO THE CHASSIDIM IN THE YEAR OF MOURNING. NOTE: IT IS NOT AN EXACT ILLUSTRATION, JUST A GENERAL VIEW OF THE LAYOUT.

one of the trusted aides, R' Yaakov Holtzman, "My father [the Rebbe Rayatz] always said to find a house that looks modest on the outside, even if you decorate it inside."

Mashbak R' Sholom Dovber Gansbourg said that one time, when he was talking to the Rebbetzin, she said, "My father told me that when a house is purchased, it should be simple and not one that 'puts out people's eyes.' So when we needed to buy a house, I tried to look for a simple one and we bought the house on President Street. However, when I sat on the porch, two bachurim passed by and I heard one comment to the other (about the house), 'What a nice house.' Nu, what do you say to that?"

Said R' Gansbourg, "The Rebbetzin did not change anything in the structure of the house but with her talents made this simple house into a house that radiated royalty."

The main entrance to the house is on President Street. The entrance opened into a narrow foyer through which you went directly into the large living room, which took up a large part of the first floor. It was this room which was turned into the place where the Rebbe davened and delivered his sichos in 5748.

Throughout the years there were two semi-circular couches in the center of the room where the Rebbetzin would receive her guests. Aside from these couches, there was hardly any other furniture.

Various visitors to the house say the house was very simply furnished and yet it was in good taste. There was barely an unnecessary item; just what was needed.

On the right was a breakfront with various commemorative items that the Rebbe received.

Only on rare occasions were guests invited further into the house, into the dining room where there was a large table with eight chairs. Here too, most of the space was devoid of furniture. Mrs. Malka Wilschansky described the room:

"On my first visit to the Rebbetzin, I went with my maternal grandmother, Rebbetzin Leah Karasik. She would visit the Rebbetzin every year when she came from Eretz Yisrael for Tishrei.

"The Rebbetzin opened the door. My grandmother extended her hand to the Rebbetzin and then I did too. The Rebbetzin then led us through the living room to the dining room.

"Before our visit, they told me to pay attention to all the details of the Rebbe's house, including the breakfront in the living room which contains silver items from earlier Rebbeim, but I was so overwhelmed by emotion that I did not remember to look at anything. The visit took place in the dining room. We sat down at the table, which had an urn with hot water, cups, and refreshments. Before we went, they told me that the Rebbetzin would offer something to eat, but it wasn't customary to eat in the Rebbe's house. During the visit I thought to myself that I wasn't sure I knew which gave more honor to the Rebbetzin, to eat or not to eat from what she prepared."

Near the dining room was a small room with cabinets for the chametz and Pesach dishes and another corner cabinet (where spices were kept year round and where the Rebbe locked up the actual chametz that he had sold for Pesach), a bathroom and a sink as well as the elevator.

## THE INSIDE OF THE HOUSE

There were two flights of stairs inside the house. The first was off the living room and led to the second floor, and the back stairs were off the large dining room with a door between it and the dining room. One of the Chassidim who frequented the Rebbe's house, would occasionally come to discuss matters with the Rebbetzin. When they spoke about personal matters, the Rebbetzin would stop and say, "There are people in the house so it's not a good time to talk now."

One time, as he talked with the Rebbetzin, R' Gansbourg came down the back stairs. Since he didn't want to disturb their conversation, he closed the door between the stairs and the dining room.

Afterwards, the Chassid told him, "When I heard the door close, I told the Rebbetzin there was someone in the house. She said, 'It's Sholom. You can talk. Sholom is not in the house...'"

Further into the house was the dinette with another table where the Rebbe and Rebbetzin ate on weekdays, mainly in the evenings when the Rebbe returned home, sometimes for a short time before returning to 770 to continue his work, generally yechidus that started early in the evening and lasted until late at night, sometimes until dawn.

In a corner of the dinette, between it and the dining room, was a telephone stand that had a pushka on it. When the Rebbe came home to eat supper, he first took the pushka and put it on the table and then put a nickel in. He also gave a nickel to the Rebbetzin for her to put in the pushka. Mashbak R' Chesed (acronym for Chananya Sinai Dovid) Halberstam related that "In later years, when my son Aharon, Hy"d, was there, the Rebbe would also give him a coin to put in the pushka."

There was also a Chumash on this stand with a Siddur at the back (Rostover Siddur), which the Rebbe used for bentching. Friday night, after the meal, the Rebbe would say the *Shnayim Mikra V'Echad Targum* in this Chumash.



THE REBBE DESCENDING THE STEPS FROM THE SECOND FLOOR

The Rebbe would light the menorah in the opposite corner, in the doorway between the dining room and the dinette.

On the side of the dinette was a tiny kitchen, which was astonishingly old-fashioned. It didn't look as though anything had been changed in decades. There were marble counter tops and cabinets on both sides of the kitchen. There was an old, plain refrigerator in the corner. In the center there was an oven and nearby a dairy table. Opposite the refrigerator was the sink where the Rebbe washed his hands for the Shabbos meals.

On the kitchen porch was an ancient icebox, which served as a storage closet. During the year of mourning, chassanim (grooms) and their families would receive the Rebbe's Siddur to daven *mincha* over here.

From the kitchen there was another exit to the back yard. The porch, which led to the outside, also served as a *sukka* for the Rebbe and Rebbetzin from 5738 and on (in earlier years they would put up a *sukka* on the third floor). Starting in 5742 the Rebbe and Rebbetzin spent Shabbos and Yom Tov in the library building adjacent to 770. Nevertheless, the Rebbe told R' Gansbourg to continue building the *sukka* at home.

## DACHA IN THE REBBE'S YARD

The back door led from the kitchen to a small porch that had a few steps that led into the back yard that was green and well tended.

R' Halberstam related:

“One summer the Rebbetzin said we would go buy porch chairs for the porch overlooking the backyard. We went to Long Island and bought the chairs and when we returned, the Rebbetzin asked me to open the chairs and put them on the porch. We sat and waited for the Rebbe to come home for supper.

“As we spoke, I suddenly saw the Rebbe standing in the doorway of the porch. I immediately stood up and moved to the side. The Rebbe came out on the porch and I quickly headed for the kitchen. From the kitchen window I could see the Rebbe sitting down, opening his sirtuk and speaking with the Rebbetzin about the *dacha* (summer home) that the Rebbe Rashab bought from the squire of a town in Russia, which was very nice. After two or three minutes, the Rebbe got up and said to the Rebbetzin, ‘Nu, for this year we have fulfilled our obligation of *dacha*. Let's go eat supper.’”

Shem (Shemi) Rokeach related that he visited the Rebbetzin many times when he was a boy, thanks to his grandmother:

“We once visited the Rebbetzin on Chol HaMoed Sukkos and the Rebbetzin gave us ice cream. We went to the *sukka* behind the house and I sat on a chair and my brother sat on a chair. Then R' Gansbourg appeared and when he saw where my brother was sitting he exclaimed, ‘Get up! That's the Rebbe's chair,’ and my brother jumped up.”



The house is similar in size to others in that row of houses on this street and nearby streets but to little Yosef Yitzchok Holtzman (today a rabbi at SUNY Downstate hospital) who visited the house many times thanks to his father, R' Yaakov Tzvi Holtzman, the house seemed huge. With a child's innocence he asked the Rebbetzin, “Why do the Rebbe and Rebbetzin need such a big house? There are no children here.” And without waiting for an answer he said, “Aha, there probably used to be children here and they grew up and got married and now the house is for you alone.”

The Rebbetzin smilingly replied, “Right, right, all the Chassidim are the Rebbe's children.”

## “THE SIMPLICITY AND LACK OF SPLENDOR AND MODERNITY STAND OUT”

The night the Rebbetzin passed away, all the Rebbe and Rebbetzin's personal possessions that were on the first floor were removed as R' Gansbourg relates:

“When I returned from the hospital and was with my brother Mendel and Dr. Moshe Feldman near the Rebbe's house, Dr. Feldman called the Rebbe and told him the terrible news since I couldn't do it. The Rebbe asked to speak to me. I took the phone as I held the Rebbetzin's clothes, her coat, and her handbag. The Rebbe

said nobody should enter the house before they brought the Rebbetzin. Since I naively thought the Rebbe meant to include me too, I asked, 'Where should I put the Rebbetzin's things?' referring to the items I was holding. After some silence on the other end of the line the Rebbe said, 'What do you mean? You can go in.'

"One of the mashbakim tried to go in but amazingly, all his attempts to open the door with the house keys failed. The same thing happened when he tried to enter through the back door.

"After I entered the house, the Rebbe intimated that I should clear out the first floor so that when they came to daven there, it would be empty of the Rebbe and Rebbetzin's things. I took everything that was there but with some items I wasn't sure whether the Rebbe wanted them to be in a certain spot. When I asked, the Rebbe told me to do as I saw fit."

The ambulance came with the Rebbetzin at 5:30 in the morning. The Rebbe walked out slowly. With his head bent a little and his eyes opened wide, he looked at the casket and the Chevra Kadisha who carried it. The Rebbe followed them into the house. After they lit candles the Rebbe went up to the second floor.

At this point, Anash and the bachurim began reciting Tehillim near the Rebbetzin. This was the first time the house was opened to the public. At first they entered by lottery with each group having ten minutes, but when the crowd grew, a line formed with thousands of people who wanted to enter and say Tehillim. The way it worked was, a group of several dozen went in from the front door for about five minutes and then left via the back door and a new group entered. The following was written by one of the bachurim in his diary:

"It was hard to take in details but the simplicity and lack of splendor and modernity stand out and the house looks very simple. The floor, for example, had no carpet and the walls had no tapestries and the like. You finally reach

the kitchen which is at the end of the house. Before the kitchen are wooden stairs that lead to the next floor. You enter the kitchen and there, on the right side of the small room lies the Rebbetzin wrapped in a white sheet with plant stalks under her head. Her head was to the south and two large candles were lit near it. It was heartbreaking. You stand in line and say Tehillim as you slowly move towards the exit. The tears keep coming. Within a few minutes you are out the back door to a small porch, which has a few steps leading to the backyard.

"The Tehillim was said until morning when the women of the Chevra Kadisha came in to do the tahara. Throughout all these hours the Rebbe stayed in his office on the second floor. About ten minutes before the funeral, the Rebbe came downstairs and spent some time alone in the room with the Rebbetzin.

"At 12:00 the Rebbetzin was taken out the front door where thousands of people waited to escort her to 770 and then to Montefiore cemetery in Queens.

"President Street, which had always been a quiet street, was full of people who came to pay their last respects to this exceptional and modest woman."

## THE HOUSE WAS OPEN TO THOUSANDS

After the funeral the Rebbe returned to his house from where he continued to lead the Chassidim. This was the first time since he became Nasi that he did so, because until this point he worked in his room, *Gan Eden HaElyon* in 770. From that day and for the entire year of mourning, the house was open to thousands of Chassidim who came to daven with the Rebbe and to attend farbrengens.

For the first *mincha*, only a few dozen shlu-chim who had come to the funeral from around the world and were returning home that same day, were allowed in. This was because of the relatively small quarters which could not con-

tain anywhere near the size of the crowd that usually davened with the Rebbe in 770.

At *maariv* that same day, things were organized alphabetically as to who would daven in the Rebbe's minyan at each tefilla. After the davening the house was open to more people who wanted to enter and console the Rebbe.

The big living room, which is where the Rebbetzin hosted her guests, turned into the central Beis Medrash of Lubavitch for a year. The couches were moved and a chazzan's lectern was set up for the Rebbe who davened for the *amud* all year, as well as an Aron Kodesh. The Rebbe sat in a corner of the room for the *shiva* and received consolation.

Over the coming months, the secretaries' work moved to the house and was overseen by R' Leibel Groner who sat in the dinette.

Every Sunday the house was opened to the public who came for "dollars," a practice which did not stop during the year of mourning. The Rebbe opened his home to tens of thousands of people who wanted his bracha and to meet him face to face.

The first time the Rebbe gave out dollars from his house was at the end of *shiva*, after *mincha*. All were tense with anticipation as they waited to see what would happen henceforth. When word got out that dollars would be given from the Rebbe's house, people were very excited.

"What happened that day on quiet President Street is indescribable!" wrote one of the bachurim in his diary. "The crowd grew from moment to moment. The long line extended the length of President Street, turned at the corner of New York and from there to Carroll! The Rebbe stood where he had sat *shiva* all week and people passed by steadily for four hours!"

The Rebbe davened the three tefillos before the *amud* in the corner of the living room that had turned into a Beis Medrash. Not all who

wanted to could participate since the room was too small, so people were chosen by lottery. It was considered a great privilege to be able to enter and daven in the Rebbe's minyan. The scene was engraved in their hearts: a quarter of an hour before the davening began, the people entered. They put on tefillin and waited for the Rebbe to come downstairs. The Rebbe's lectern was under the two-branched wall sconce. The chair was on the side. In the center of the room was a small table with a portable *bima* on top for the Torah reading. Heightened emotion was apparent on the faces of all present as the hour of 10:00 approached.

When the time came, a small noise could be heard from upstairs. Everyone moved to create a wide circle around the staircase that connected the two floors. The Rebbe appeared wrapped in his tallis and crowned with tefillin. His face was serious and the sight was very *malchusdig* (royal). When the Rebbe came down he went directly to the *amud*.

When the davening and the gabbai's announcements were over, the Rebbe went back upstairs.

Usually, at the end of the tefillos, the crowd left the house within a few minutes so that the house could revert to its original function as the Rebbe's private home. It once happened on a Friday night that R' Gansbourg waited until everybody had left so he could set the table. One of the people tarried. "I didn't feel comfortable telling him to leave. However, I felt very uncomfortable about starting to set the table while someone was in the house. When I told the Rebbe how I felt he said, 'Why does it bother you? Let him be there.'"

## "THE KING BROUGHT ME INTO HIS CHAMBERS"

At *maariv* at the conclusion of *shiva*, the Rebbe told the gabbaim to arrange a *farbren-gen l'ilui nishmasa* as is customary, with great



THE REBBE BURNING THE CHAMETZ ON THE BACK PORCH OF THE HOUSE.

pomp and many people. The Rebbe gave \$100 as his participation in the farbrengen. When, at the end of davening, the gabbai announced the farbrengen, the Rebbe motioned to him, to his surprise, that the farbrengen would take place in the house.

Right after the announcement the Rebbe went upstairs to his room. A few minutes later, R' Groner relayed a message from the Rebbe that the Rebbe wanted the entire farbrengen to take place in the house. Two tables were set up with bottles of mashke and the Chassidim who were there sat down to this most unusual farbrengen.

The news spread quickly that by the Rebbe's instruction, a farbrengen was taking place in the Rebbe's house. Large numbers of Chassidim flocked to the Rebbe's house. Around the table sat the elder Chassidim and mashpiim led by the rabbanim of the Crown Heights Beis Din and other rabbis. Around them, in the living room, stood hundreds of Chassidim and bachurim. Every few minutes a group left and

another group came in. Inside, the Chassidim related stories about the Rebbetzin.

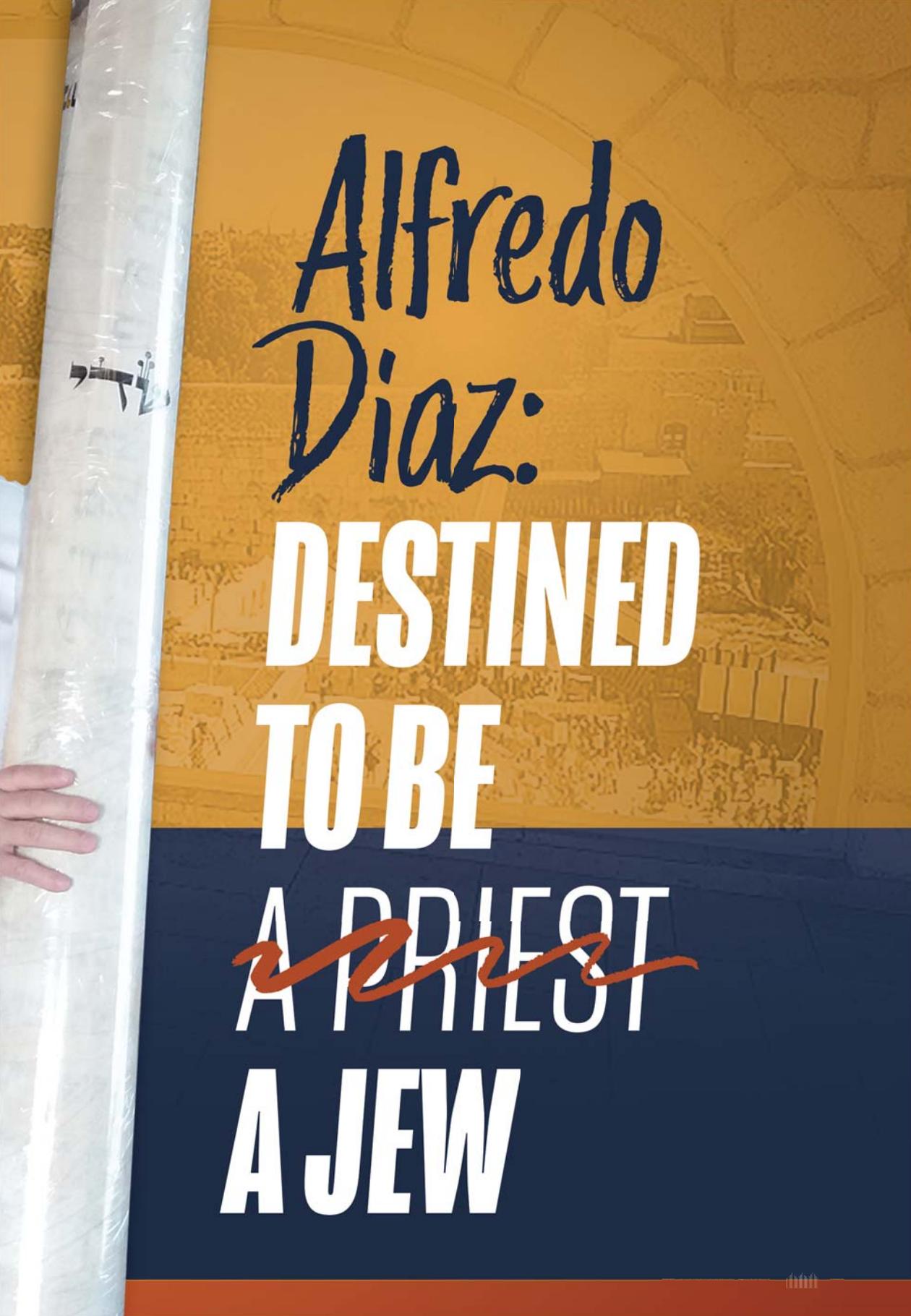
"The tremendous emotion that everybody felt cannot be described and there is no need to describe it," wrote one of the tmimim. "Chassidim are sitting in the palace of the king and farbrenging. Those were a few hours of elevation above the earth."

On the first Shabbos following the *shiva*, unlike the Shabbos of the *shiva*, the Rebbe remained at home. "It is hard to express the feeling ... when we don't know how Shabbos in 770 will look without the Rebbe there." Only married men and chassanim went for the Shabbos tefillos but many bachurim went near the house and listened to the Rebbe's Kaddish recitals from near the window.

One bachur sums it up like this: "Although the Rebbe has been working from his home on President Street, it seems that other than this nothing has changed, whether it's dollars every Sunday with thousands passing by, or the Rebbe's trips to the Ohel on Sundays and Thursdays." ■



He was born in Mexico as **Alfredo Diaz**, the son of a priest and the pride of his family of christian missionaries. Then he began to ask questions. Enough questions to turn him into **Yehuda Peretz**, a sofer and artist of fine Judaica who works near the place of the Beis HaMikdash



Alfredo  
Diaz:

**DESTINED  
TO BE  
A PRIEST  
A JEW**

**I MET RABBI  
YEHUDA  
PERETZ**

among the alleyways of the Old City of Yerushalayim. He was holding an impressive bunch of keys and he was rushing. I stopped him and asked him where the Istanbul Synagogue was, one of four Sefardic shuls in the Old City. Although he was in a hurry, he accompanied me in the direction of the shul as he told me about it.

As the conversation developed, I got to know this charming, dynamic fellow who, it turns out, holds a position on the administrative council of the Jewish Quarter and is in charge of some of the famous spots in the Old City. I also found out that R' Peretz has devoted his life to helping candidates for conversion and is involved in a wide range of activities aimed at preventing assimilation. And also that previously, his name had been Alfredo Diaz. After a long process he changed his faith, religion and name.

“I was born to a very important Christian family in Veracruz in Mexico,” he told me in a lengthy meeting we had on the balcony of the guest hall of the Jewish Quarter Administration with the Kosel facing us in all its glory.

“My father was the local pastor and I was one of ten children. Fortunately, we were very religious people. I emphasize ‘fortunately’ because it was thanks to that that our lives were not without constraint, especially since the society around us was totally unconstrained with everyone doing as they pleased. The only thing that stopped me from doing as I pleased was the knowledge that there is Judgment and a Judge.

“We were missionaries. To us, it wasn’t enough that we believed what we needed to believe; we had to convince others to believe as we did. I would go from house to house with

my father to convince people, talk to them, preach. We had plenty of work since within Christianity there are dozens of sub-religions and each one thinks his religion is right and the other is wrong. We had plenty of opportunities to spread our beliefs.”

Young Alfredo discovered his calling in the heat of debate. Although he had nine other siblings, his father saw him as his successor, the one who would grow up to be a priest.

**Why you?**

“That’s because when the adults sat and tried to analyze verses, I always brought original explanations that were utterly precocious and I defended them fiercely in the debates that ensued.

My father would take me everywhere he went. It was because I had so many debates with all sorts of people and religions that I ended up with many questions. The questions I was asked bothered me and I looked for answers not only so I would know what to answer but for my own inner peace. However, I had no answers. I slowly began to realize that perhaps I did not have the truth.”

**Did you consider searching for truth within Judaism?**

“Not at all, since I had always heard about the Jewish people because religious Christians are taught that Jews are the Chosen People, and they also pray for their welfare, but they claim that the Jews have a blind spot when it comes to ‘that man,’ and this blindness prevents them from the seeing the truth. That’s why I didn’t want to get to know this nation. Of course it never occurred to me that I would convert one day.”

And yet, R' Peretz stresses that from a young age he was interested in studying Jewish history

through Tanach and also discovered that in nearly every area, Jews are pioneers, not only in religious matters but also in areas of wisdom and culture. “I found them very interesting; they impressed me tremendously.”

## MESSENGER FROM HEAVEN

Alfredo grew up and at age 16 he began studying architecture in the local school. He was also an excellent athlete in baseball.

“The fact that I’m fully ambidextrous really propelled my career as a pitcher. That is how I made it on the Mexican national team and represented this large country in international competitions, a dream for kids my age.”

Despite the material success in his life, Alfredo did not feel satisfied and the goal that he set for himself was to continue researching to arrive at the truth.

“The more research I did, the more I felt that there was something unclear about all this. I saw blatant contradictions between the Old and New Testaments and this bothered me a lot.”

Alfredo’s life could have continued routinely but one day something interesting happened.

“Veracruz, where I lived, is a port city. One day, a ship arrived that had books of Tanach translated into Spanish. One of my friends who knew about my curiosity, told me about these books and offered to photocopy some of the translations and put them together so as to finally understand where the truth lies.

“We sat together, photocopied the pages, compared them, and discovered that each of the translators translated Tanach differently. This only confused us even more. I concluded that we needed to study Tanach in the original but didn’t know how to do that and how to learn Hebrew.”



YEHUDA PERETZ AS A BOY

### How were you feeling?

“Frustrated, lost. My one positive in those days, even before I knew the truth, was that I prayed to G-d. Although I did not yet know to call Him by the right name, I prayed to Him and asked to save me, to show me the right path so I would know what I should do.”

Hashem heard his prayer and a short time later, a Jewish tourist arrived in his city.

“That was the first time in my life that I saw an authentic Jew. The truth is he had no outward signs of being Jewish; he did not even wear a kippa. He wore a cap but I saw a certain aura about him. I asked him whether he was Jewish and when he said yes, a thought suddenly flashed through my mind - how come I didn’t think of this before, that I needed to speak to Jews in order to get an explanation

about the contradictions? They are the source who could provide me with answers.

“At that moment, I got up my courage and invited him to my house. I wanted him to bless me and my family, although I knew he would refuse. From what I knew about the Jewish people, through the Tanach, I knew that they are a Kingdom of Priests and a Holy Nation. In my ignorance, I was sure that every Jew is a priest and that he could only eat pure food in the Temple, which is why I assumed he would not accept my invitation. But I invited him anyway and to my surprise, he accepted.

“In the meantime, I called my father and told him that in a few minutes an important guest was coming to our home, a Jew. My father argued with me and claimed it made no sense but when he realized that I was bringing an authentic Jew, he called together everyone in the community. When I arrived with the Jew, they were all waiting for him and stood on line to be able to touch him and connect with holiness.”

Later on, Alfredo sat with the Jew, whose name was Nissim Yosef, and finally discovered the truth he had been searching for.

“R' Nissim explained about the Oral Torah and the Written Torah, about Chazal, and other subjects. We spoke for an entire night and ended by singing songs that he taught me. In the hours that we spent together, he managed to provide me with a comprehensive seminar on Judaism. I felt that he was tossing diamonds that illuminated the path. It was only later that he told me that I had also made a seminar for him, because this was the first time in his life that he felt he was Hashem's ambassador.”

The Christian boy told R' Nissim that he had additional questions but R' Nissim told him, “I explained to you what I know. If you have further questions, you need to speak to the rabbi of the Jewish community in Mexico.”

## HE CONVERTED AND SO DID HIS BROTHERS

“I learned from the Jews that a blessing does not rest on something unless it is hidden from view which is why I told my parents that I was going to a baseball game when I was really going to the Jewish community in Mexico.”

There, he spoke with Orthodox rabbis and many ideological subjects were raised. It turned out they were familiar with the questions which came up frequently and had clear answers.

“That was when I realized that Christianity is based on lies and manipulation. I concluded that I had two options; I could live right or not live right. It was immediately clear what path I would choose.”

But then, the rabbis tried to cool off his excitement.

“The rabbi I was speaking to warned me that if the entire reason I was enthusiastic about Judaism was because I wanted to be a better person, I should not convert. He drew a diagram with ‘good’ on one side and ‘evil’ on the other side and explained that the Creator has a special nation that He chose which are the Jews. His goal is not only for them to be better but to be holy. He asked me whether I really wanted to join this nation because it came with tremendous obligations. I had no doubts. I knew I had finally reached the truth I had sought and this is what I wanted.”

Alfredo Diaz converted in 5745 and moved to Eretz Yisrael. He went through the entire process and became Yehuda Peretz ben Avrohom. His story did not end there.

“I have nine brothers and they all wanted to know why I converted, what led me to doing this. My parents were also very affected and wanted to understand it.”

### What did you explain to them?

“While still in the conversion process, the rabbi prepared me how to respond. He asked me not to enter debates about Judaism and



YEHUDA PERETZ RECEIVING KOS SHE'EL BRACHA FROM THE REBBE

Christianity but to focus only on proper and respectful behavior. The rabbi told me: If you used to wash the dishes once a day, now wash them three times a day. If you swept the floor once a week previously, now sweep it every day. This way, your family will see that Judaism did not turn you into an evil person; on the contrary, it turned you into a *mentsch*. This tip was extremely helpful and I pass it forward.”

R' Peretz kept up a good relationship with his father until his father died a few years ago as a pastor, but R' Peretz's nine brothers joined the Jewish people. They went through a proper conversion and live today as G-d fearing Jews in the United States and Eretz Yisrael. Other local Christians in their community also converted.

“The only one in my family who did not convert was my older sister. Even my mother converted. At age 50 she moved to Eretz Yisrael, to the unknown, without knowing the language and with no knowledge of worldly

affairs. She came with pure faith and was able to reconstruct herself. She died last year and was buried on Har HaZeisim. I knew this was the greatest gift she could have asked for herself, that she merit to live and die as a Jew.”

## THE SPIRITUAL POWER OF THE 'G-DLY PART FROM ABOVE'

In his early years as a budding pastor, he had dealings with the subject of magic.

“In Mexico there is an area called Catemaco, the Witchcraft Capital of Mexico where, once a year, about 5000 people from all over the world, get together for a witchcraft festival. These are spiritual people who derive their powers from spells and forces of impurity, and do amazing things. Interestingly, when there is a Jew in the proximity of the sorcerer, he simply can't do anything. I've heard stories, some of which I saw myself, about witches with proven powers who, when a 'part of G-d mamosh' was there, were unable to connect to the forces of impu-

rity. Among the practitioners of witchcraft it is known that every Jew radiates unusual energy even if he is not religious.

“For example, there was a Jew from Eretz Yisrael who left religion and some time later went to some far off state in America. There was nothing about him that looked Jewish. He went to a hotel and got a room on the eighth floor.

“A few hours later he heard knocking at the door. It was workers from the hotel who asked him if he could leave and tour the city for an hour and a half. This bizarre request was made because there was an events hall on the floor underneath him and the star of the evening was a gentile sorcerer. He tried impressing the audience with his supernatural powers but despite his efforts and attempts he was unable to do any magic. He asked the manager of the

hotel to find out whether there was a Jew in the hotel. After they checked with reception, they saw he was the only Israeli in the hotel and they politely asked him to get out of the way during the event. The reason that magician was unable to do anything was because we have a veritable part of G-d in us.

“I heard another story from the one it happened to, a friend of mine from Mexico who lived in Ofakim and died a while ago. He was a ger tzedek and we studied Tanach together. During our classes we discussed Judaism, etc. and I told him what it says in Tanya that every Jew has a part of G-d above in him. He said that now he understands a strange experience he had.

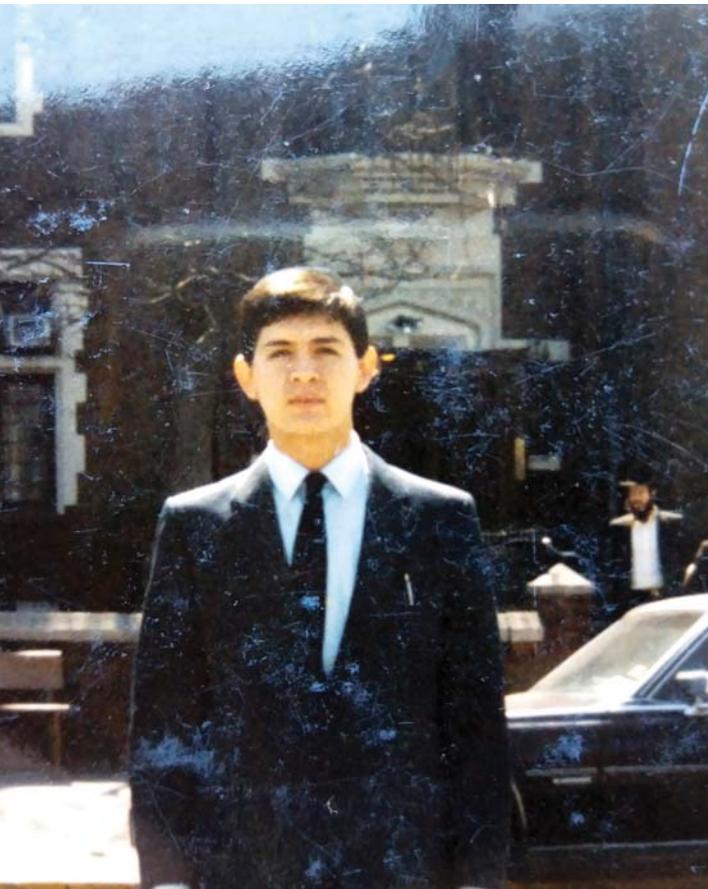
“When he lived in Mexico, he made a living from a taxicab that he bought. One day, a local family asked him to take them at two in the morning to a location in the center of a dark forest. They said that a paralyzed man in a wheelchair would join them.

“During the trip he realized they were going with him to the home of a known sorcerer who lived in that section of the forest so the man would be healed. My friend did not react to the story and brought them to their destination. When they arrived, they politely invited him to enter the house with them but he did not want to be a part of something like this since he had already converted. He remained in the entrance and waited for them.

“As he waited, he suddenly heard the sorcerer get angry and from the open window he heard him angrily say, ‘What happened that it’s impossible to do anything today? Why is it impossible? We do this every day!’ Then he asked the people how they had gotten there and when they told

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NEAR 770 DURING HIS CONVERSION PROCESS



him that the driver was waiting in the entrance, he asked my friend what his religion was. When he heard that he was Jewish, he asked that he move away from the house.”

### THE ANSWER FROM THE REBBE

R' Peretz only became acquainted with Lubavitch at a later stage in his life, after he moved to Eretz Yisrael. He had heard of the Rebbe but nothing moved him to try and meet the Rebbe until he heard the following:

“I heard this amazing story from someone by the name of Rabbi Menashe Rabi. He is a Litvish Sefardi. He was far from the world of Chassidus and Kabbalah. He lives in Boro Park but this story happened while he was still living in Eretz Yisrael.

“He was delving into a certain sugya and was ‘breaking his head’ to understand a certain Rashi but was unsuccessful. For a few days he was preoccupied with this question. One night he decided – that’s it, he was going to resolve the question! He sat with his sefarim and tried to figure it out and at some point he dozed off. In a dream, he saw the Rebbe telling him to look into a certain sefer. He woke up right away, found the sefer, and there was the answer.

“Years later, when he went to America, he remembered this story and went to see the Rebbe. He stood on line for dollars and when it was his turn, he looked at the Rebbe and did not open his mouth. The Rebbe looked at him and said with a smile, ‘Did you like the answer?’”

This story was the impetus for R' Peretz to go to the Rebbe.

“Nissim Yosef who acquainted me with Judaism had a sister who married R' Menachem Nissim of Crown Heights. R' Menachem hosted me a number of times in his home and he brought me to the Rebbe.

“I attended some farbrengens and although I did not understand a word of the Yiddish that the Rebbe spoke, I felt that my G-dly soul, that

**‘ I ALFREDO DIAZ CONVERTED  
IN 5745 AND MOVED TO ERETZ  
YISRAEL. HE WENT THROUGH THE  
ENTIRE PROCESS AND BECAME  
YEHUDA PERETZ BEN AVROHOM.**

**“I HAVE NINE BROTHERS AND  
THEY ALL WANTED TO KNOW WHY  
I CONVERTED, WHAT LED ME TO  
DOING THIS.”**

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‘veritable part of G-d above’ understood. The Rebbe’s speaking blanketed me in an inexplicable calm and delight.

“I went for dollars on Sunday a number of times and received shlichus mitzva money. Unfortunately, I never had the good sense to ask for anything.”

### PROMOTING UNITY

In addition to his duties in the administration of the Jewish Quarter in the Old City, R' Peretz is gifted with artistic talent and he uses it to produce creative works on parchment as well as write a Sefer Torah for the merit of the Jewish People. The Sefer is being written opposite the Kosel and the Temple Mount.

“G-d gave me an artistic gift and a nice handwriting for STa'M and I am using it to write a Sefer Torah while facing the place from which the Shechina has not moved. In this sefer, letters are being written by all types of people from religious people who visit the Kosel every day to famous personalities who are not observant. Boruch Hashem, this Sefer Torah is bringing about unity which will certainly hasten the true and complete Geula.” ■

How does Yosef Ibert, a “good American Jewish kid” whose dad was a sergeant in the US Navy and mom an activist in the board of Hadassah International, end up as a shliach on campus serving thousands of Jewish (and some Arab...) students in Yerushalayim’s Hebrew University?

# AN AMERICAN SHLIACH *in the* HEBREW UNIVERSITY



## FRIDAY NIGHT. THE HOWLING

wind serves to intensify the Jerusalem winter frost, which succeeds at penetrating all the layers of protection and really gets into the bones. However, it seems that nothing stops them. One after another, they climb the steps of the building made of Jerusalem stone, where the door is open wide, and inside there are students from all over the world: America; France; Uruguay; Russia; and obviously from all across the Holy Land.

Standing in the doorway is R' Yossi Ebert, shliach of the Rebbe and director of the Chabad House at Hebrew University. He greets the guests who continue to flow through the door. He also “flows,” hugging, palling around, greeting each one with a huge smile that seems close to an actual laugh. He blesses each of the guests, here and there inquiring, asking, and getting them settled in. The meal begins right away.

R' Ebert and his wife are charismatic. The warm and personal connection with each student is their strong suit. A new female student points to one of the veteran female students, who is walking around with a tray weighed down with salads and helping to set the table, and asks Mrs. Ebert, “Is she your daughter?” The student herself answers, “Just about,” and the two exchange a meaningful look.

### NO LONGER EMBARRASSED

“We have a core WhatsApp group dedicated just to Shabbos meals,” explains R' Mendy Ebert, a second generation shliach, who recently joined the shlichus with his wife. “In the group there are close to two hundred students who rotate as guests for the Shabbos meals, and bring their friends along with them.”

R' Ebert holds forth at the meal with great excitement and his heavy American accent. The foreign students feel at home and the Israelis seem to enjoy the attraction. He told me afterward, “I used to be embarrassed of my accent, until one day I heard that the Rebbe instructed the late R' Aryeh Leib Kaplan to preserve his American accent for the purpose of having a greater influence on Israelis. I started to pay attention to this and saw how the Rebbe’s directive proved itself. I am no longer embarrassed,” he concluded laughingly.

The long table somehow divides itself, without any signs or explicit direction, into a men’s section and a women’s section. At one end sits R' Ebert surrounded by the male students who congregate around him, and at the opposite end, the one closer to the kitchen, sits the Rebbetzin surrounded by the female students. Now and then they stand up to go into the kitchen and emerge with trays, pots and plates. Overseeing it all like a scene director is Mrs. Dvora Ebert, issuing instructions, making sure that nothing is missing, all the while making time to have a private consultation with one student and offer her advice, speaking to another, smiling a whole lot and running things at the women’s section of the meal.

### EVERYTHING HOMEMADE

From a culinary perspective, the Ebert Shabbos meal is truly impressive. Homemade challa and twelve types of salad were served. I know, because I counted. This was followed by a fish course, followed by the side dishes, a choice of chicken or meat as a main dish, and it closed out with dessert. “Where do you order the food from?” I ask Mendy out of genuine curiosity. He whispers back to me, “It’s not catered; everything is prepared by my mother, herself.”

Rabbanit Ebert is well known in the field of chinuch in Yerushalayim. She is a veteran and devoted educator at Beis Chana, who is spoken about glowingly by her students, even years after they leave her class. When they went on shlichus, the Rebbe instructed her to also be involved in chinuch, and since then she has integrated the two roles, and invests herself completely into both.

Between the singing and the words of Torah, one of the guests suddenly stood up. His appearance was somewhat divergent from that of the young students. He appeared to be middle-aged, tall, wearing glasses and a cap. With a pronounced American accent he asked for the floor. The table quieted down, and the students turned their attention respectfully to him.

He introduced himself as Professor Gershon Greenberg, a philosophy professor at the University of Washington, and a guest scholar at Hebrew University on religion. It turns out that quite a few staff members also partake of the Shabbos meals. Prof. Greenberg wished to express his heartfelt thanks for the amazing hosting. “Every year, I come for a few weeks to deliver a course that extends over a few weeks. Both my wife and I will not forgo the exciting Shabbos meals at Beit Chabad,” he says to the sound of applause from the students.

## SHLICHUS NON-STOP

R’ Ebert and his wife are the shlichim to Hebrew University since autumn 1991. Since that time, there have been meals at the Chabad House with almost no breaks, week after week, in summer and winter, sabbatical years, right after giving birth, and even, sadly, right after getting up from “sitting *shiva*.” Twenty-seven uninterrupted years of shlichus.

“When we arrived, the first thing we did was Shabbos meals in our home. A short while later, the meals moved into a hall at the university, but in recent years we went back to doing them

at home. We noticed that despite the crowding, the personal impact on the students is incomparably greater. And they are actually voting with their feet. Students are willing to come and even stand the whole meal, just to be a part of it.”

There is a point to what he says, as the place is really starting to get quite crowded, but the atmosphere only gets warmer. R’ Ebert tells a Chassidic story and concludes with a lesson from the weekly portion. One of the students challenges him with a question, which in another context might seem belligerent. The rabbi begins to answer, and two female students jump in on the side of the questioner, and it starts to look like the beginning of a discussion on a pretty sensitive issue, but R’ Ebert does not lose his cool. He smiles his broad smile, and sets himself for a long listening session, simply nodding his head at each point. Other students join the discussion, and considering where they are coming from, seem to step away from their accepted worldview, in order to defend the position of tradition. R’ Ebert follows both sides with great interest, turning his head to each speaker almost as if watching a ping-pong match, smiling and remaining silent.

At some point the debate tapers off, and R’ Ebert offers a brief but exacting summation, leaving all involved with food for thought. They are all nodding their heads appreciatively, when Mendy starts singing a rousing “Adon Olam,” which sort of allows for the ideas to wend their way inward into heart and mind.

At this point, two students stood up and signaled something to Mendy, and he nodded to them. They went into the kitchen and came out holding two bottles of grape juice, pushed a few strip cakes into a large bag, and started squeezing their way to the door. I whispered to Mendy, “What’s this?” “They are going out to do mitvza kiddush,” he replied. “Do you see that guy,” he asked, pointing discreetly at one of them, a thin fellow with a mane of curly hair.

“That is Tom. A sweet student who not only comes to the meals, but comes every Motzoei Shabbos for *maariv*, following which he comes home with us and helps with putting the house back together. One Motzaei Shabbos we were surprised to answer the telephone and discover that it was Tom’s mother on the other end of the line. It turns out that Tom had begun fully keeping Shabbos. When his mother had asked him when she could speak with him after Shabbos, he told her that after Shabbos ends she could reach him at our house.”

Cutting short his story about Tom, I asked him, “Where did you say they were going.” “Mivtza kiddush,” he repeated. Realizing that he probably needed to append some explanation to this caption, he added, “This is a campaign that was launched by the guys, and we fund and encourage it. The idea is that every Friday night, one or two students go out with a bottle of grape juice and some cakes, visit the many security booths around the university campus, and make kiddush for the security guards.”

## SOWING WITH TEARS

“Almost three decades with students around the table; doesn’t it get exhausting?”

I asked this question of the rabbi when it was already 1:30 in the morning. Tom had already returned in the interim and had helped clean up and get the house back into some semblance of order, and now he had just left. R’ Ebert sat down on the couch with his Dvar Malchus booklet, in order to complete the daily study regimen. I could see that he was struggling with himself in order to fulfill the Rebbe’s instructions and keep his eyes open.

Answering with complete candor, he said, “First of all, yes, but the Rebbe gives us strength. There is no other explanation within the natural order of things. The expenses are tremendous, and the physical energy that is required is practically endless, but Hashem gives strength and we try to keep working.

“The early years were harder, because you plow and plow and don’t always readily see the fruits. As the years pass, the ‘reaping with song’ becomes that much more tangible. The work may be the same work, but along with that Hashem gives us the occasional ‘treat,’ when he allows us to see and understand the significance of what we are doing. And the stories are literally impossible to count. Starting with [students who have become] actual Chassidim, who serve as shlichim around the world and began their journey with us, to business people with a warm feeling for Judaism and mitzva observance, who even play a tremendous role in supporting our work.

“Just one week ago, one of the female students stood up at the end of the meal and announced that she is interested in beginning to observe kashrus. We are not speaking of someone who participated in deep classes or heard captivating explanations. Our entire connection with her amounted only to the Shabbos meals and warm caring, but the results have shown themselves very quickly.

“There are many like her. As a result of the meals, many students strengthen their mitzva observance and we try to help them as much as we can. For one it might be help with purchasing quality tefillin, and by the way there have been a lot more than one, and with a second it could be learning the laws of Shabbos, and with yet another having a regular Torah study partnership. Recently, one of the students came and told us that he decided to write his thesis on the introduction of the author to Tanya.”

## FROM THE SUBURBS OF D.C.

R’ Ebert, he of the graying beard, currently serves as a spiritual guide to hundreds of students. In the past, he has touched thousands more graduates of the Chabad House in whom he planted seeds in their hearts, which are waiting for the right time to sprout and grow. Despite the age difference, he connects well with the students, speaks their language like



#### RABBI YOSEF EBERT WITH STUDENTS

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an equal. He is very familiar with their feelings and internal struggles. After all, he himself did not grow up with a volume of Chassidus tucked under his arm. He was also once a confused student, searching for deeper meaning than what was being offered to him in the form of the American middle class good life.

The next day, as we walked home from the main shul in French Hill led by R' Avrohom Michoel Halperin, I felt that the time was ripe to ask him to share his personal story.

“I was born and grew up in a warm Jewish home in Fairfax (Virginia), one of the nicer suburbs of Washington D.C.,” he began. “My parents were, and still are, active and well known in the Jewish community. My father was an officer in the U.S. Navy, and later he founded and managed a successful technology company. My mother is a member to this day of the Honorary Council of Hadassah Women, one of the largest Jewish philanthropic organizations in the United States.

“Like many typical Jewish-American parents, my parents guided my childhood and young adult years with the expectation that I would successfully realize the American dream – enrolling in a prestigious college, getting a respectable job, and make lots of money.

“As an American good-boy, I tried to live up to their expectations, but the high school years were a turning point for me. Various books on philosophy that I read caused me to begin to doubt Americanism and its recipe for happiness. Something about the lifestyle of money-money-money turned me off and caused me to think about other possible solutions.

“The Judaism that I was familiar with did not serve as a real answer for me. The Conservative synagogue in which my parents were members was more of a social club than a spiritual alternative, and even the unequivocal demand that was often repeated at home, ‘we only marry other Jews,’ was something that I rejected as racist and provincial.

“The teen years passed for me with no real news. When the time came, and I was supposed to continue my studies in college, I didn’t really want to, but I knew of no other option. I was interviewed and accepted at the University of Pennsylvania, a famous ‘Ivy League’ college that is consistently ranked among the top five colleges in the United States, alongside universities like Harvard and Yale.”

## THE FATEFUL ENCOUNTER

“I began law school with a marked lack of interest, while my revulsion for American culture continued its hold on me. The Wharton business school is considered the flagship of the University of Pennsylvania, so that many of the students who I hung out with were students at Wharton. Needless to say, the one thing that interested them was how to make the most money in the least amount of time.

“Then I met Rabbi Menachem Schmidt, shliach of the Rebbe to the University of Pennsylvania. In retrospect, it turned out that he began his shlichus and opened a Chabad House just

as I had started attending the university, as though the Rebbe sent him just for me.

“One of R’ Schmidt’s first activities was arranging Shabbos meals for Jewish students. At home, we made kiddush every Friday night and I looked for a similar experience. I first visited the meals arranged at the Hillel House (under the auspices of the Conservative movement) but the atmosphere there did not appeal to me, so I went to Chabad and loved it.

“The realization that the Torah has a deep, spiritual dimension was new and intriguing to me. At one of the Shabbos meals, R’ Schmidt suggested that I read chapter 36 of Tanya with the English translation.

“I took a Tanya and sat down in a corner and avidly read about creation and its purpose, about the concept of G-d’s unity, how from the perspective of created beings, reality seems to be comprised of levels and worlds, but from G-d’s perspective, all of creation is one simple reality. I felt as though a five-ton hammer had whacked me full force.



“I spent entire weeks walking around the university with this idea reverberating in my mind, challenging me with everything I saw and heard. I was confused. On the one hand, I loved learning Chassidus; I was drawn as if by magic to its ideas. On the other hand, as a child raised in a liberal home, there were still certain internal roadblocks. When I returned, for example, to the Tanya and started from chapter one, I wasn’t able to understand and agree with the idea that a gentile is essentially different from a Jew. I thought it was an antiquated outlook that evolved over the long years of exile.

“I remember a farbrengen at the Chabad House where the mashke flowed like water and I, who was all of 18, with no experience in this, took some mashke and began to cry. I sat opposite the shliach and tearfully told him that I would be so happy to adopt Chassidus fully, but I simply could not agree with certain core ideas. I could not understand how Torah, with such deep ideas, could be so superficial and racist when it came to other nations.

“I was drawn to the Chabad House and the study of Chassidus, and even traveled to the Rebbe and felt, deep in my heart, that the truth is here, but apparently, the evil inclination had to take a few more ‘hits’ for me to become a Chassid.

“I thought about whether I should travel east to ‘clear my head,’ and decide what I wanted to do next, but my parents, who did not like the idea, suggested that I join a student exchange program in my sophomore year and go study at an Israeli university.

“I agreed to that but made my consent conditional on dividing my stay in Israel into two parts. The first semester I would attend university, and the second half I would do something else. My parents wondered what I would do for the second semester, and I said, either volunteering on a kibbutz or going to yeshiva.”

## WEEKLY REPORT TO THE REBBE

“I arrived in Eretz Yisrael and began attending Hebrew University, at first in Givat Ram and later at Mount Scopus. One day, I went to the Kosel and encountered the tefillin stand run by the Yerushalmi mashpia, the unforgettable Rabbi Moshe Weber a”h. I connected with him and visited him regularly and he referred me to Yeshivas Ohr Tmimim. I waited till the end of the semester and then went to the yeshiva in Kfar Chabad. After spending a year there, a place that was my first home in Eretz Yisrael, where I was warmly welcomed and where I got the fundamentals of learning Nigleh and Chassidus, I looked for something deeper. I heard about the yeshiva in Tzfas. I knew hardly any Hebrew but decided I would take the plunge.

“At the yeshiva in Tzfas I received significant spiritual and Chassidic cargo. What I got there is with me till today. Hiskashrus to the Rebbe, and the love and desire to give everything for the Rebbe, the shiurim of Rabbi Orenstein, the approach to learning Gemara, Rashi and Tosafos with Rabbi Isaac Landau, and especially the rosh yeshiva, Rabbi Wilschansky, who was my personal mashpia and guided me like a concerned father.

“At that time, they spoke in yeshiva about keeping the sedarim and about how a bachur needs to report to the Rebbe about this. I took this very seriously and every week I filled out a detailed report, put it into an envelope, and sent it to the Rebbe. Later, when I went to learn in 770, I would submit my report to the secretaries every Sunday.

“After three years of learning in 770, I married. I began learning in kollel but we both wanted to go on shlichus. We got an offer to join the shluchim at the University of Pennsylvania, where my journey began. But because of an instruction we got from the Rebbe (‘as per the advice of Tzach in Eretz Yisrael’) we began looking for a shlichus in Eretz Yisrael. R’ Nachum Cohen a”h, then the director of

the branch department of Tzach, offered us a shlichus at Hebrew University. We received the Rebbe's encouragement and blessing and are here ever since."

## SECOND GENERATION ON SHLICHUS

Mendy Ebert is the oldest son. He was born and raised at the university. He spent his childhood among the students and he has been living and breathing the shlichus since infancy. A few years ago, after more than a year in kollel, he joined the shlichus after a bracha from the Rebbe and guidance from his mashpia. When we spoke, I learned that the Shabbos meals are only the tip of the iceberg of the work being done.

"Over here, holidays aren't simply comprised of Rosh Hashana or Pesach. We utilize every Chassidic and Jewish date, and one event follows another. Recently, for example, on 19 Kislev we opened large stands in the lobbies of the university, alongside roll-up displays about the meaning of the day with selections from Tanya, and accomplished a tremendous awareness about the day. At night there was a deep and moving farbrengen late into the night with the strong nucleus of the Chabad House.

"On Chanuka, in cooperation with the student council, we added another three menorahs, in addition to the two which have been standing throughout the years. Hundreds of doughnuts, Chanuka kits, and of course, public lightings. Right after Chanuka, on Motzaei 10 Teves, we hosted a meal to break the fast along with a great program which connected the general day of mourning to what the Rebbe said about feeling the simcha as we approach the Geula. We hosted a lecture by someone named Moshe Bart, whose son was on the Rebbe's medical team, a Holocaust survivor who helps us tremendously. Two weeks later, on 24 Teves, we printed the Tanya at an impressive event (see sidebar)."

I asked, "How do you get students to learn Torah after a long day of study at the university?" He said, "For many students it's hard, so we focus on learning one-on-one, chavrusa after chavrusa. This model has many advantages. As a result, each student gets real face time on topics that interest him and at a time and place that suits him.

"In addition to numerous chavrusos, there have formed a number of serious groups for in-depth shiurim that are given regularly. The first is for girls and is given by my mother. It's a fantastic class that attracts many girls every week. Other shiurim are given by my brother-in-law, Rabbi Noam Benhamou.

"R' Dov Hershkowitz, the shliach in nearby French Hill, is also involved in giving shiurim. Parenthetically, throughout the year we have a very productive and mutually cooperative relationship with R' Hershkowitz, as well as with his father-in-law, the rav of French Hill and member of the Chabad Beis Din, R' Avrohom Michael Halperin, who has helped and supported our work throughout the years.

"Another project is the 'Kabbalah Club,' an academic club designed also for non-Jewish students, where we do a weekly in-depth study of the Shaar HaYichud V'HaEmuna, based on the directives of the Rebbe.

"We also study the subject of Geula with the students in a thorough fashion, and we are currently about to release a number of high quality print materials, which will make the topics of Moshiach and Geula accessible in the language of the college kids' world. The identity of the Rebbe as Moshiach is something that always comes up. Many students ask about it on their own, and they receive explanations that are always accepted by them with understanding and respect.

"My father often says that it has been students that have led every famous revolution in the world. The French Revolution, the Russian Revolution, and also the recent revolutions

in the Arab world. And with the help of Hashem, the same will be true with the revolution of the True and Complete Redemption; the students will lead the way, and this is something that we speak about constantly.”

## OUTREACH TO ARAB STUDENTS

We had almost reached their home when a group of Arab students passed by, talking and laughing loudly in Arabic. A shiver of distaste mixed with some mild concern went up my back.

I point out to R' Ebert that there are a lot of Arabs here. He is unfazed. “True, there are many Arab students in the University; it is up to us as the shluchim of the Rebbe to bring about the state of ‘they will all return to the true religion.’ Obviously, this idea presents a real challenge. I always carry around with me the amazing Sheva Mitzvos cards in Arabic, produced by R' Boaz Kali, and hand out hundreds of them. No student has ever refused to accept the card from me, and they do so respectfully. Many of them even show me that they already have the card in their wallets.

“It is obviously not something that is mentioned in the media, but the Arab students who participate in demonstrations and scream hoarsely, ‘Free Palestine,’ are not necessarily particularly ideological. They actually receive grants for this and they close down the demonstrations after the exact amount of time assigned to them. Five minutes later you can find them sitting relaxed on one of the benches, and I have even handed out Sheva Mitzvos cards at that time.

“There are obviously also some very painful occurrences, as there is no lack of hatred for Jews, but we need to also see the part of the



RABBI YOSEF EBERT WITH HIS SON, MENDY, WITH THE UNIVERSITY BEHIND THEM

cup that is half full. Actually, the work with our ‘cousins’ sometimes produces some unforgettable moments. One of them took place over a year ago on Sukkos. I was on my way to ‘Simchas Beis HaShoeiva,’ when somebody passed by me who I identified as an Arab student, wearing a stocking cap and a trendy coat. ‘Hey, do you read Arabic?’ I called out to him, intending to give him a Sheva Mitzvos card. ‘Yes,’ he answered, immediately adding, ‘as a second language.’

“It turns out that he was a Jewish student, a real genius, who is studying in the law department as a soldier-student of the IDF. We got to know each other, and since then he has become deeply connected to the Chabad House. He plays an active and central role in all of our activities, helping, assisting, and taking care of arranging all necessary permits. Over the past year, he has also begun putting tefillin on regularly, keeping Shabbos and more. And all of that thanks to a little card about the Sheva Mitzvos.” ■

# TANYA in Tales

RABBI MENDY CROMBIE

## WHY THE CZAR OVER NAPOLEON?

*Stories of our Rebbeim and their Chassidim highlighting concepts we learn in the daily Tanya. In this installment: Chapters 23-25*

### CHAPTER 23: THE CHIDDUSH OF THE AKEIDA

וְזֶהוּ שֶׁאָמְרוּ רַבּוֹתֵינוּ זְכוּרֵנוּם לְבְרָכָה: הָאֲבוֹת  
הֵן הֵן הַמְּרַכְבֵּה

*The holy Avos were always subservient to the will of G-d.*

When the mechanech, R' Alexander Bin-Nun, had yechidus with the Rebbe, the Rebbe asked him the famous question about the mesirus nefesh of Avrohom Avinu at the Akeidas Yitzchok – anyone to whom G-d would appear and command him to sacrifice his son would do so immediately, so what was special about Avrohom?

He gave the well-known answers that Avrohom was the first, the one who opened the channel, that he did so with alacrity, etc. but the Rebbe said that the chiddush of Avrohom was that his bittul to Hashem so permeated his entire existence that G-d's will became his actual will.

This is seen in what it says, “And Avrohom got up early in the morning.” One would think that he would not be able to fall asleep that night, knowing he was going to slaughter his son. Human nature is such that knowing of such a thing would be a shock to his entire

system, but since G-d's will became his will, he was able to go to sleep before the Akeida.

(Teshura, Wolf 5774)

### WHY DID THE REBBE ARRANGE THE CHECKS HIMSELF?

כְּגוֹן הַיָּד הַמַּחֲלֵקֶת צְדָקָה לְעַנְיִים

*When a person gives tzedaka with his hand, the hand is batel to the will of G-d.*

Someone went to the Rebbe Rayatz and saw how the Rebbe was arranging a pile of bank checks. He stood near the door in astonishment. The Rebbe laughed and called him over and said, “You probably find this surprising, that I'm doing this myself and there's nobody else to do it. However, the zeide, the Alter Rebbe, writes in Tanya that the hand that gives out tzedaka becomes a 'chariot' for G-dliness. My hand does not distribute tzedaka since the poor do not personally come to me and even if they would come, my secretary wouldn't let them come in, even though large sums of money for the poor pass through his hands. Therefore, I wanted, at least, to arrange the checks, thus taking part in distributing tzedaka.

(Oral Testimony)

## CHAPTER 24: THE CZAR OVER NAPOLEON

אָבֵל מִכָּל מְקוֹם אֵינֶן כּוֹפְרִים וְכֹחֲשׁוּ בֵּה' לְגַמְרֵי  
וְלוֹמְרֵי לֹא הוּא  
*The kelipos do not deny the Creator's  
existence. The problem is that they  
consider themselves independent beings.*

One of the Tzaddikim complained to the Alter Rebbe: “Pania the thief, Pania the adulterer, Pania the murderer.”

Pania was a derogatory nickname for the Russian Czar and what he meant was, how could the Alter Rebbe support the czar in his war against Napoleon? The Alter Rebbe replied in his singsong: Pania the thief, Pania the adulterer, Pania the murderer, but he does not cover up “Echad”; but Napoleon does cover up “Echad”!

(*Sippurim u'Shemuos* p. 58)

## CHAPTER 25: PRICELESS TZITZIS

וְכֵן בְּעִבּוּדַת ה' שֶׁהִיא בְּדָבָר שְׂבָמֻמוֹן ..  
מִמְלַחְמוֹת הַיָּצָר וְתַחֲבִלוֹתָיו, לְקַרֵּר נֶפֶשׁ הָאָדָם  
שֶׁלֹּא לְהַפְקִיר מְמוֹנּוֹ וּבְרִיאֹת גּוֹפּוֹ  
*A person needs to fight his yetzer who  
tries to dissuade him from mitzvos that  
entail monetary expenditures.*

The Chassid, R' Meir Refael's, a Chassid of the Alter Rebbe, was traveling and he examined his tzitzis. When he found one thread was pasul, he did not continue traveling but stood on the road hoping G-d would send him a seller of tzitzis or someone who had tzitzis for him.

Suddenly R' Meir saw in the distance someone who sold Jewish ritual items and he began to shout, asking whether he had tzitzis. The seller said he had tzitzis but the profit of half a kopeck that he would earn in the sale was not worth the effort required to shlep all the way to where R' Meir was with all the merchandise on his back. R' Meir said he would pay whatever he asked but the seller said even if he paid an entire ruble the bother wasn't justified. R' Meir said, “I'll give you all the money in my wallet,” but the seller was still unwilling.

Finally, the seller said, “I'll come to you on condition that you pay me not only what you have in your wallet but everything in your possession.” R' Meir said, “Fine! I'll give all the money in my possession for the tzitzis.”

And that's what happened; he gave all the money he had on him for the tzitzis.

A while later, when he went to the Alter Rebbe, the Rebbe took out a wallet that contained the entire sum that R' Meir had given the seller and gave it to R' Meir. He said it had been Eliyahu HaNavi who was sent to test him.

(*Migdal Oz* p. 177)

## MESIRUS NEFESH ON A TIMER

וּבְזֶה יוֹבֵן לְמָה צְנִיָּה מִשֶּׁה רַבְּנוּ .. לְקַרֵּא קְרִיאַת  
שְׁמַע פְּעֻמִּים בְּכָל יוֹם, לְקַבֵּל עָלָיו מַלְכוּת שָׁמַיִם  
בְּמַסִּירַת נֶפֶשׁ

*The goal of the command to read  
the Shema every day is to accept the  
kingdom of G-d with self-sacrifice.*

The Rebbe Rayatz once traveled with his father, the Rebbe Rashab to a health spa in Germany. Germans, by nature, are punctual and orderly; everything is calculated and exact. The Rebbe learned Chassidus with the Jews who lived there and a few of them even became attached to the ways of Chassidus.

One such Jew, who began to learn Chassidus and follow its practices, began to engage in the inner avoda of “mesirus nefesh” even though it was against his nature. The right time for mesirus nefesh is when reading the Shema, when one should picture giving up his life for G-d in actuality or at least in potential. He, in fact, did so and said about himself that the feeling of mesirus nefesh lasted an entire minute.

Apparently, he had a clock on the table and while it was happening, at the height of experiencing mesirus nefesh, he looked at the clock to see how long he retained the feeling of mesirus nefesh...

(*Toras Menachem*, vol. 9, p. 114)

# THE REBBE On Chinuch

RABBI GERSHON AVTZON



## PRINCIPLES OF EDUCATION FOR JEWISH GIRLS (2)

**QUESTION** > I was hired to develop a curriculum for our local Chabad girls high school. I have heard different things and I was searching for clarity (with sources) on these three questions: What is the Rebbe's opinion about teaching girls: 1) Gemara 2) Chassidus 3) Limudei Chol (secular subjects)?



**ANSWER** > In our previous article, we discussed the first two parts of your question, namely, learning Gemara and Chassidus with girls. In this article, we will discuss the third — and very important and sensitive — part of your question: *Limudei Chol* (secular subjects) for girls. I would like to thank Beis Chaya Mushka of Crown Heights for making available and public much of the Rebbe's positions on this topic.

### "SCARED THE CHILD WILL SPEAK ENGLISH WITH A YIDDISH ACCENT"

We all know (and we discussed this in article #11 of this series) that the Rebbe strongly advocated and campaigned for "*Chinuch Al Taharas Hakodesh*" — void of any secular subjects. The following is an excerpt of the Farbrengen of Simchas Torah 5715:

**"Ideally, when a Jewish child walks in the**

**street, people should be able to tell he is a Jew from a great distance away, for 'Yisrael' is a term of distinction. Instead, however, people are ashamed of their identity. When the Jewish child becomes Bar Mitzva and begins to put on tefillin — of which the Torah states "And all the people of the land shall see that the name of Hashem is called upon you, and they shall fear you," and he has the power that the greatest of the gentiles shall be subservient to him — then, the parent takes the child and makes sure that the place on the head where the tefillin rests will be covered over with hair [imitating a gentile hairstyle]. Where is the fortitude and pride that a Jewish person should have?**

**"The parent is afraid that when the child walks in the street and has to ask for directions, he will speak English with a Yiddish accent and it will be noticeable that he is a Jew. And so, he teaches him English and all**

the other secular subjects, contaminating his young mind!

“During the first three years that a child begins to learn—years that provide the foundation for all his future success—the parent takes the child and contaminates him with English, grammar, etc. *It would be a good thing if the adults didn’t know about these things, certainly not the children until nine years old, until twelve years old, and I would like to say until even older, but “one who gets too greedy ends up with nothing.”*”

This Farbrengen was the impetus behind the founding of Oholei Torah by Reb Michoel Teitelbaum A”H.

## WHAT ABOUT GIRLS?

Our question is: does the above apply to girls as well or is it only about boys. The following are a few answers of the Rebbe:

1. A little while after this Farbrengen, the legendary shliach to Pittsburgh **Rabbi Sholom Posner** had a Yechidus with the Rebbe. The following is what he shared from the Yechidus: “I asked the Rebbe Shlita: (a) If the above matters apply to Pittsburgh. (b) If they are also relevant to girls. The Rebbe answered that all claims to the contrary are the counsel of the evil inclination, **and there is no difference between boys and girls**, and between New York and Pittsburgh, etc.”

2. It was heard that **Rabbi Y. L. Zeitlin** from Montreal asked the Rebbe Shlita if there is a difference between boys and girls in connection with being careful about learning secular studies. The Rebbe answered: “Even though there is a difference regarding the laws of Torah study [i.e., that girls don’t have an issue of *bittul Torah* when studying secular subjects], still, regarding the defilement of the mind with secular studies, there is no difference between boys and girls.

3. In 5725, **Rabbi Berel Shemtov** (shliach to Detroit) spoke with the Rebbe during a

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Yechidus. On that occasion he asked regarding his efforts to teach children only Jewish subjects: His question was: since he has two boys age three and one girl age five, should he hire a tutor for half the day so that they won’t have to learn secular studies? The Rebbe answered affirmatively and added that certainly the students would increase, and “Though your beginning was small, your end will be greatly increased.” People will see you and will do the same. Rabbi Shemtov said that this began the Cheder Oholei Yosef Yitzchok in Detroit.

Considering these stories and many more, I think the answer to your question is clear.

## THE MOSHIACH CONNECTION:

While it was always important that women and girls be inculcated with Torah and *Yiras Shamayim* (as they are the mainstay of the Jewish home), in our generation it is of utmost importance as it is in their merit that Moshiach comes.

In the words of the Rebbe (22 Shevat 5752): “At this time, in the last moments before Redemption one must raise one’s own awareness and that of all the wives and daughters of Israel concerning the great merit of the wives and daughters of Israel to actually bring the true and complete Redemption, imminently and immediately which comes ‘in the merit of the righteous women of the generation.’” ■



# PARASHA Of The Future

RABBI NISSIM LAGZIEL

## HONORING PARENTS AFTER RESURRECTION

### BEGIN WITH A GRIN

*There was a Yekke (German Jew) who got up every morning at five, davened in the first minyan of the day, and sat down to a royal breakfast at precisely seven o'clock.*

*His son was a Lubavitcher who got up at eight, ran to the mikva, learned Chassidus and davened at length. If he finished shacharis before the time for mincha, it was a miracle ...*

*One day, the father invited his son to visit. Out of respect, the son decided to forgo the darchei ha'Chassidus while he stayed in his father's home and he also got up to daven shacharis at vasikin and finished on time.*

*After breakfast (which ended precisely at 7:30), the son got up and said, "Now I understand!"*

*"What do you understand, my son?" asked his surprised father.*

*"I understand the connection between respecting parents and longevity! Here I am, with you, and suddenly, I have six more hours every day!"*

### HONOR THY FATHER AND THY MOTHER

In this week's parsha, Yisro, we read about the Giving of the Torah, the most important event in Jewish history. Millions of Jew, men, women, and children stood at the foot of Har

Sinai on that Shabbos morning, 6 Sivan 2448, in order to see (and hear) with their own eyes the giving of the Torah by G-d Himself.

These exciting moments were accompanied by supernatural phenomena described in the Medrash and Gemara. "A bird did not chirp, a bird did not fly, an ox did not low, ofanim-angels did not fly, serafim-angels did not say holy, holy, the sea did not move, creatures did not speak; the world was utterly silent ... until the voice of G-d was heard, *Anochi Hashem Elokecha...*"

This soul-stirring description of the absolute freezing of all of humanity, of all of existence, in the moments preceding the Giving of the Torah teaches us, if only in some small way, about the enormous impact this event had on us and the entire universe.

One of the special mitzvos that we were commanded during the Giving of the Torah was the mitzva of honoring parents. A moral, ethical mitzva, a mitzva which was previously (and, G-d willing, in the future will also be) accepted by all of humanity, all religions, all types, all ideologies. The mitzva of respecting parents is a mitzva which states its reward. One who honors his parents merits a long life.

What would you do in the following instance? A father sends his son to bring him baby birds from a nest at the top of a tree. The

boy climbs up, sends away the mother bird (a mitzva) and brings down the baby birds. As he does so, he loses his balance, falls, and dies. Where is the promised long life?

The famous Tanna, Rabbi Yaakov, was a witness to this tragic occurrence and, having no choice, he explained the verse, “So that you will live long – in the world that is entirely good and in the world that is completely long.” Sometimes, we get a good, long life only in the next world, in Gan Eden or the world of Resurrection!

The question is, what will happen with the mitzva of respecting parents in the era of Resurrection? Will we have to honor our parents who came back from the dead? Will a physical or emotional connection remain between father and son and between mother and daughter? What will happen if the son also returns from the dead – will the din change?

In the responsa *Rav Pe'alim* (volume 2, *sod l'yesharim*, siman 2), the author explains that there is a significant difference between mitzvos whose source is the body and mitzvos whose source is the soul. He says that the body that will arise at the Resurrection of the Dead is a new body with no connection to the body that existed in this world. A new body, with no connection to the first body that was buried and rotted. Therefore, when it comes to mitzvos that are rooted in the connection between one body and another, this connection ceases when a person dies and it won't be renewed in the Resurrection. Examples are the laws of marriage, the laws pertaining to familial relationships or the prohibited *arayos*. These laws and prohibitions are canceled when a person leaves this world and they won't come back with the Resurrection. Therefore, technically, after the Resurrection, there will be no prohibition for a brother to marry a (former) sister because she is no longer his sister; she is considered like any other woman.

Following this line of reasoning, the same would apply to parents and children. There

won't be a mitzva to honor one's father in the era of Resurrection because this particular person, who looks like one's father, sounds like one's father, and behaves like one's father, is actually ... not his father! He is someone else, with no bodily connection to the child.

## SOUL-BASED HONOR SYSTEM

However, this is not so simple. According to the Rebbe, it is very possible to say that the chiddush of this gaon is actually a fundamental dispute between Tannaim. It depends on an old debate: will the body in the future be rebuilt from the luz bone which remains from the previous body, that eternal bone which never returns to dust and which will serve as the foundation for the new, future body, or will a completely new body be formed, a body which was never previously alive and which has no connection to any previous existence?

According to the view that the body of the Resurrection will be constructed from the luz bone, it is hard to say that there is zero connection between parent and child. After all, that very bone from which the child was rebuilt is sourced in their parents, which is why it is fitting and necessary to honor and revere them.

Furthermore, even if you want to insist that there is no connection between the previous and current body, still, who says honor and reverence for parents depends on the body? Perhaps it depends on the soul!

It should be noted that even the *Rav Pe'alim* reckons with the fact that the obligation to honor parents is not based solely on bodily connection but is primarily rooted in a soul connection. In the worlds of Kabbalah and teachings of Chassidus we find many references that say that the obligation of honor and reverence is a result of the holy soul which parents drew down at the time of conception to their children, a G-dly soul which they drew down to the world through their marriage. And since neshamos don't change, the soul of the parents and children remain the same souls and this soul connection between parents and

their offspring is eternal which death cannot abrogate. Therefore, the mitzva of honoring parents will remain, unchanged, in the era of the Resurrection.

Support for this can be found in the psak halacha that a child must honor his parents even after their death (Rambam, Mamrim 6:5). Since after parents' death the bodies have already changed so why should children honor them? We see then, that there is a deep connection, a soul bond that connects parents to children, which even death does not part. This bond engenders respect and reverence which will exist even in the era of the Geula!

### TO CONCLUDE WITH A STORY

We will end with a few brief snippets about respect for a mother which we saw in the Rebbe toward Rebbetzin Chana. Rabbi Berek Junik a'h related:

News of the passing of R' Yisroel Aryeh Leib Schneerson arrived on the morning of 13 Iyar 5712. The Rebbe asked R' Groner whether anyone else knew about this and asked that the news not be conveyed to his mother.

I remember that the Rebbe made every effort to prevent his mother from finding out. For example, the Rebbe said that only a limited minyan of men should come and daven with him during the *shiva*.

Every day of the *shiva*, the Rebbe went to visit his mother, as he always did. Beforehand, the Rebbe told me he was afraid that his mother would notice that he wasn't wearing regular shoes [the Rebbe, in mourning, was wearing cloth shoes with white soles.] I brought him black paint and I painted the white part so they would look like regular shoes.

As for his daily visit, the Rebbe asked me [on the first day of the *shiva*] that a minute or two after he arrived at Rebbetzin Chana's house, I should call the Rebbetzin so that the Rebbe could say to her that he did not want to disturb her phone conversation and would be able to immediately leave for 770. [Because of

mourning, the Rebbe was unable to sit down and act as usual and he was afraid his mother would catch on.]

At the time we had made up, I called the Rebbetzin. The Rebbe picked up the phone and told his mother: Someone wants to speak to you. I don't want to disturb. *Reid gezunterheit*, good night. And he left.

For the next three months, I would take all the mail that arrived for the Rebbetzin and bring it to the Rebbe. The Rebbe would go through it and I would put the mail back in her mailbox. When the Rebbetzin opened the mail, she did not notice that someone had opened the letters before she did and did not suspect anything.

A few months passed and one day, the Rebbetzin sadly said, "I don't know what happened to my son Leibel. He hasn't written me in so long and I am very upset about this."

I told Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka. A few days later, the Rebbe gave me a letter for me to put in his mother's mail box. When I visited the Rebbetzin, she joyfully told me, "After a long time, I received a letter from my son Leibel. My daughter-in-law and granddaughter also wrote a few words."

A few days after Shavuos, the Rebbe told me it would be a good idea to arrange a telegram to be sent on behalf of his brother and family, in honor of Yom Tov.

I didn't know how to forge a telegram and Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka told me that I should go to the secretaries and bring her any telegram that was received that day and she would take care of it. I brought her a telegram and she took a kettle, boiled water, and then showed me how to steam the envelope so it shouldn't look as though someone opened it. When I finished, the secretary Rabbi Sholom Mendel Simpson wrote the text and that day we gave the "telegram" to Rebbetzin Chana. ■

Good Shabbos!

# The Chassidische Vibe

THE BEIS MOSHIACH MAGAZINE  
FOR N'SHEI U'VNOS CHABAD



יחי אדוננו מורנו ורבינו מלך המשיח לעולם ועד

# My Phone Call with Rebbetzin

## CHAYA MUSHKA

TAMMY HOLTZMAN

**REBBETZIN** Chaya Mushka Schneerson, *a”h* – the name alone is enough to make one think of *tznius*, nobility, and royalty; “The beauty of the princess is within” in real life; daughter of a king; wife of a king, and the “*eizer k’negdo*” of the leader of the generation.

Whatever we know, we know through stories. There aren’t many of us who can say, “I heard it myself or I saw it myself.”

Very few people were privileged to know the woman behind the scenes. She stayed out of the public eye and provided the *Nasi HaDor* with the strength and encouragement to be what he is. Not many visited her, and those who did were often those who became close to the royal family when the Lubavitch community

was very small. 770 was much smaller and the Rebbe MH”M walked home on foot. A microphone was hardly necessary at *farbrengens*.

I was privileged to be part of a family that had some degree of access to her home. My father-in-law, Rabbi Yaakov Tzvi Holtzman, helped out from when he was a young *bachur* learning in 770, and so he became personally acquainted with the Rebbetzin. After he married, he introduced his family to that hallowed circle.

On the day I became engaged to my husband, Yosef Yitzchok, I was told that they were going to call from my home in Eretz Yisrael in order to inform the Rebbetzin about the good news. I was terrified, my mind refusing to believe the honor I was being graced with,

and I was completely unprepared. I said I didn't speak Yiddish or English, and I had no way of communicating with the Rebbetzin, though who could refuse an opportunity like this?

When I heard the Rebbetzin picking up the phone and my husband asking, "Rebbetzin?" I made the effort not to faint. After the exchange of *brachos* and *mazal tov* wishes, the Rebbetzin asked to speak to me. My husband explained that I did not speak Yiddish. "No problem" she said, "I'll speak and she'll listen." I took the phone in trembling hand while I supported myself against the wall with my other hand so I wouldn't fall. She wished me well and blessed me, and I just listened. Even if I spoke her language, I don't think I would have dared to respond.

I heard her pause as though waiting for a response, which naturally did not come. Then, after returning the phone to my husband-to-be, as I was ready to hit myself over the head, the Rebbetzin said, "Your *kalla* and I communicated very nicely..."

With her sagacity and sensitivity she gave me back some self-respect, which I had thought was lost forever.

I had the privilege of visiting the Rebbetzin in her home, once as a *kalla* and once after I was married. I met a woman of charm and elegance. When we entered the house, she was already seated near a table beautifully set with china and crystal. There were cake and drinks. The Rebbetzin graciously led the conversation, inquiring about everybody and asking to hear a *dvar Torah*. She wanted to know how my new surroundings looked to me, and if I was happy, if I had friends, etc.



**I**T all began in 5714 when the Rebbetzin traveled to Switzerland. In her absence, our cousin, R' Berel Junik, was appointed to bring food to the Rebbe each day. One day when he wasn't able to do his job, he opened

the door to the *zal* of 770 (which was much smaller then) and looked for a replacement. His eyes fell upon my father-in-law, and from then on it was his job to bring food to the Rebbe, and to remove the dishes at the end of the meal.

Each morning, my father-in-law would bring a thermos full of tea to the Rebbe. The Rebbetzin placed the thermos in front of the door of their home. As time passed, he did more and more jobs, such as building the *sukka* before Sukkos and helping prepare for Pesach like by putting down clean paper on the shelves.

Sometimes he would nap on the couch at the Rebbe's home. After a few hours he would wake up and leave. Sometimes he woke up because the Rebbe had come in.

When the Rebbe stayed at 770 for *yechidus*, the Rebbetzin always waited for him to return, and did not go to sleep until the Rebbe came home. Often this was late at night or even the wee hours of the morning. *Yechiduyos* took place fairly often, yet the Rebbetzin always waited for the Rebbe. Her devotion towards the Rebbe was exceptional.

In 5715, the Rebbe and Rebbetzin moved to a new home from their apartment in a building at New York and President. The Rebbetzin told my husband, "Father [the Rebbe Rayatz] always said you must find a home that is modest on the outside, even if you decorate the inside."

When my in-laws were married, the Rebbetzin bought them many household items and real silverware as a wedding gift. She always helped with advice, and even would offer recommendations about which stores to shop in. They visited her every so often or spoke on the phone. Even when they moved to Belgium, she would call to see how they were. When my husband was born, she bought him a crib, a carriage, clothes, and bedding. When they visited her, she would play with him. She sometimes bought birthday gifts for him and those born after him.

// WITHOUT DISPLAYING A HINT OF HURT, THE REBBETZIN SMILED AND REPLIED WITH AN ANSWER THAT HE'LL REMEMBER FOREVER, "RIGHT, RIGHT, ALL CHASSIDIM ARE THE REBBE'S CHILDREN".

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As generous as the Rebbetzin was, she refused to accept anything in return. She once asked my mother-in-law to buy her a tablecloth, and refused to accept it as gift; she found out how much it cost and paid for it in full.

They told me that the Rebbetzin was once standing in line in the bakery that was on Nostrand Ave. at that time. The owner recognized her and didn't allow her to stand in line, and insisted on bringing what she wanted to the car. From then on, she made her orders by phone in order not to receive preferential treatment in front of everybody.

In 5738, on Shemini Atzeres in the middle of *Hakafos*, the Rebbe had a heart attack. When people saw the Rebbe sit down in the middle of *Hakafos*, something unheard of, they realized something serious was afoot. The bachurim began leaving 770 in order to give the Rebbe room to breathe, also breaking some windows on their way out.

My father-in-law ran to tell the Rebbetzin what was going on. Shaken up, she grabbed a coat and ran to 770 via Union Street as fast as she could go at her age.

The Rebbe remained until after *Hakafos*, even refusing to drink a cup of water, and then he went to the *sukka*, where he made *Kiddush*.

Rumor has it that the Rebbetzin asked the Rebbe to think of his condition and to make *Kiddush* over grape juice. The Rebbe said, "*Kiddush* is made on wine." After the heart attack, the Rebbe stopped walking home on Shabbos. Instead, the Rebbetzin spent Shabbos in the library next to 770.



MY husband remembers that as a child he asked the Rebbetzin in innocence, "Why do the Rebbe and Rebbetzin need such a big house? There are no children here?" Without waiting for an answer he said, "Ah, there were probably children here once who grew up and got married, and now the house is left for you alone..."

Without displaying a hint of hurt, the Rebbetzin smiled and replied with an answer that he'll remember forever, "*Richtig, richtig, alle Chassidim zainen dem Rebbe's kinder*" (Correct, correct, all Chassidim are the Rebbe's children).

My husband once went to visit the Rebbetzin in the library on Shabbos before the Rebbe returned. She invited him to make *Kiddush*. There was a decanter of wine on the table. My husband, who was a bit older and wiser, politely refused. The Rebbetzin, noticing his hesitation, asked, "You think it's my husband's? Don't worry!" My husband relaxed and made *Kiddush*. Afterwards, when he told this to his parents, his father said, "Of course it was the Rebbe's wine. They didn't prepare a special bottle in your honor!"

Cleverly and graciously, the Rebbetzin always knew how to sidestep, to put people at ease, although she kept her distance from falsehood as from fire. In the years when they didn't know whether the Rebbe would *farbreng* on Shabbos, it had to be clarified each week. The *gabbai* would make his announcements after *mussaf*. If the Rebbe indicated that he would *farbreng*, the *gabbai* would announce

a *farbrengen* at 1:30 pm. If the Rebbe gave no indication at all, the *gabbai* would simply announce the time for *mincha*.

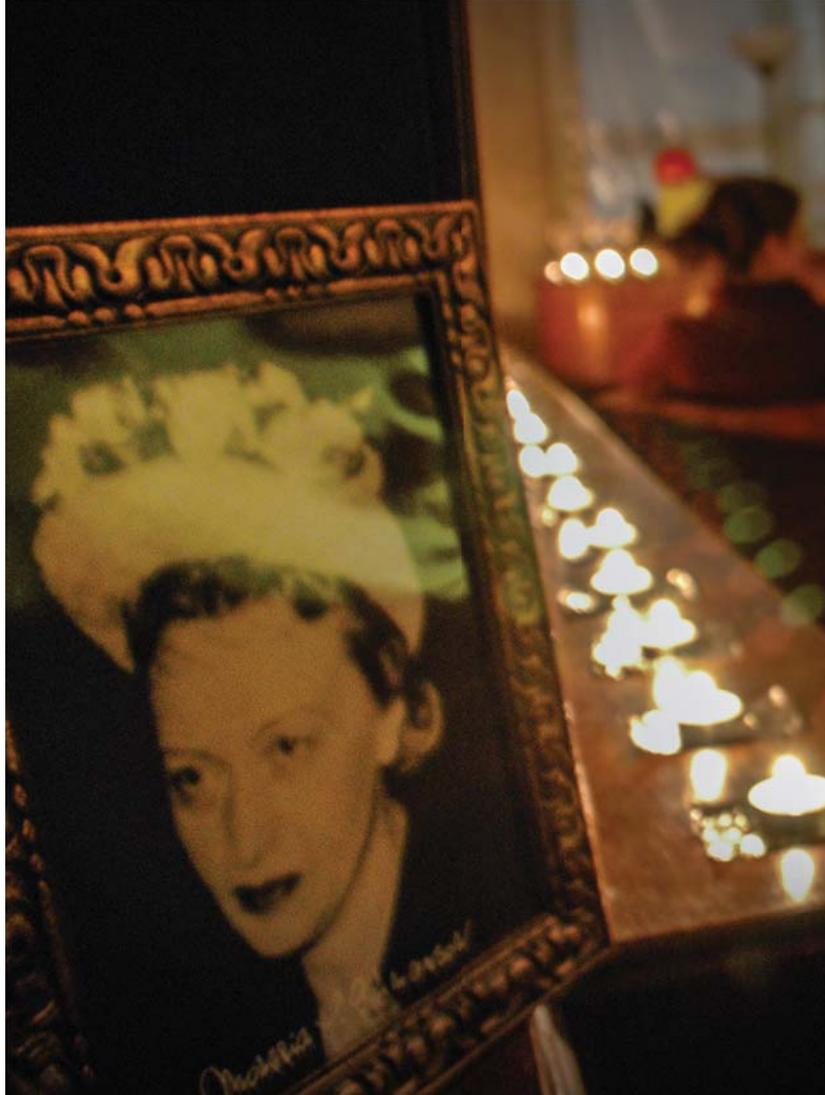
One Shabbos, when my husband visited the Rebbetzin, he tried to discover whether she knew whether there would be a *farbrengen* that Shabbos. Instead of asking her directly, he asked, “Will the Rebbe be returning to the library shortly?” (Because if not, it meant the Rebbe was staying to *farbreng*.)

The Rebbetzin wisely responded, “Did they announce a *farbrengen* in 770?”

You know about the famous picture of the Rebbe Rayatz and the Rebbetzin playing chess, which people said was played on *Nittel Nacht*? Some bachurim maintained that the picture was a forgery, and that the chess game was superimposed on the photo. They based their claim on the fact that the fingers in the picture look overly large, too large to look natural.

My husband tried to find out the truth, whether the picture was real and whether the chess game really took place. The Rebbetzin diplomatically answered, “In our family they played chess.”

Thus, without being impolite, which she always avoided at all costs, she allowed the mystery to remain.



*Talks and Tales* appeared originally in Yiddish and was called, *Shmuesen mit Kinder un Yugend*. A rumor went around that the column “Nature’s Wonderland” was written by the Rebbetzin. My husband once said to her that people said she was the editor of that column. She just smiled and said, “Don’t believe everything people tell you.”



The Rebbetzin is the true model for women today. Every word, every line of the “*Eishes Chayil*,” fits Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka, *a”h*. As the Rebbe himself testified about her, “Her true virtue only Hashem knows.” ■



## MY HUSBAND BUYS ME

fresh green beans from the market. I love green beans, especially when they come from the one and only “Machane Yehuda” shuk in Yerushalayim.

It is stated in Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim (529:2): “It is an obligation for a man to be happy and in good spirits on the festival - him, his wife, his children, and all who are with him. How should he make them happy? He should give the children nuts and the women new clothes and jewelry according to his finances.”

So, I prefer the fresh green beans from the market that my husband buys for me.

### THE SECRET: E.N.T.

My friend, **Sara E.**, recommends preserving good and long-lasting relations with your husband by taking a crash course from an ENT (ear, nose, and throat) specialist: learn when to close your eyes and not see, when to hear, and to know when to speak. Personally, I can testify that she’s right. It isn’t for naught that I get fresh green beans from the shuk!

Couples at our age have already married off their children. Baruch Hashem, the grandchildren themselves are being raised, one after another, and the financial burden of making weddings has been lifted from off our shoulders.

We are free to enjoy ourselves, give gifts for bar-mitzvas, bris milas, weddings, and all other simchas.

### DON'T INFLATE WHAT IS SECONDARY IN NATURE

Some years ago, I visited a very good friend (may she live forever!) at her home. She served lunch to her husband (he, *z”l*, passed away more than two years ago), and then said something polite but impatiently. (She is twenty-sev-

en years older than me; I turned seventy this past Elul – may G-d grant me long life. I was a regular fixture in their home.) Getting up my courage, I asked him: “How can you remain silent when she does something like that?” He thought for a moment and then replied: “I make a determination – what’s most important and what’s secondary in nature?”

*What’s most important and what’s secondary in nature.* Thus, is he expected due to a momentary lack of patience with serving a meal to forget that among other things, she’s the mother of his children and his greatest admirer?

I learned from him – to stop and think. “The mind rules over the heart” is possible according to the holy Tanya.

### THE REBBE’S HEARTFELT REQUEST AND THE KEY TO MY SUCCESS

One of the keys to success in married life at any age, as I understand it, is called “a *mashpiah*.” Yes, yes. Since the Rebbe MH”M’s holy sicha from the 15th of Av 5746 – when the flurry of explanations regarding the importance of *mashpi’im* began, the quality of my life on all fronts has been better. A day hasn’t gone by for me without a *mashpiah*.

True, it’s hard to find a good *mashpiah*; it requires ‘bittul.’ However, I have only words of praise for this directive. Until I found the *mashpiah* with whom I’ve been working for the past few decades, I asked several women to take on the responsibility. However, when the ‘shidduch’ didn’t suit my needs, or the *mashpiah’s* – we went our separate ways amicably.

Married life is also a virtual treasure. The *mashpiah* isn’t my friend and she doesn’t have to be my “paskening rebbetzin” – she simply isn’t me. She’s a shlucha of the Aibishter via the Moshe Rabbeinu of our generation, the

Rebbe MH”M – for a focused life without any doubts. Even if I need some professional advice on marriage issues, a psychologist, etc., the *mashpiah* guides me in the right direction.

Forgive me, but I could write praises ad infinitum of the work known as being a “*mashpiah*.”

In summation, my *mashpiah* helps me to learn to be a good wife, specifically to my husband, Yossel. Fortunate are we.

## WHAT I LEARNED FROM MRS. GANSBURG

I have told on numerous occasions that I learned in “Machon Chana” when I was with the Rebbe MH”M in 770. Among other things, I worked as a cook in the Machon’s dormitory, run by the eminent Mrs. **Gita Gansburg a”h**. This was because I wanted to be close to dorm life (and I didn’t even know to fry an omelet beforehand...I would call my friend in Los Angeles and she taught me how to make rice).

While there, I was privileged to see up close the private home she ran together with her husband, the Rebbe’s loyal and trusted Chassid, Rabbi **Itchke Gansburg**, of blessed memory.

I saw her bittul towards him: She helped him in all his marvelous projects, encouraged him in everything, and they even had a joint Torah class in the evening. After both of them found time available from their very busy daytime and nighttime work schedules, they gave considerable importance to sitting together as a couple at home, eating at least one meal together, and even learning together. Such joint Torah study is highly recommended even for much younger couples.

I learned from Mrs. Gansburg a”h what bittul really is. I don’t mean submissiveness *ch”v*, rather that the husband has wisdom, and I have extra understanding.

For example, I informed my husband that I want to disassemble the kitchen door, adding another small storage closet for various utensils

in the open space. My husband vetoed the proposal. Why? Because he’s wise. He knows that the kitchen would be more exposed, and we wouldn’t have privacy there when guests come.

And me? With my extra sense of understanding, I exercise my power of veto in creativity to reveal another interesting storage location – with G-d’s help.

## ALWAYS FINDING QUALITY TIME

One of our in-laws, the family of Levi Kugelman (who by the way lived in Crown Heights many years ago), are Amshinover Chassidim. Once, we met at the bris of our new great-grandson. (The child was named Yisroel Moshe, after the late Sadigura Rebbe a”h. The grandson, the child’s father, was one of his Chassidim.)

The Kugelmans have been together for many years, and they have a large family (may they increase in number). While each of them has his/her own individual pursuits, they always make time to be together.

While they are much older than me (may G-d grant them long life), their backs are strong and Mrs. Kugelman goes to work every day. As we sat together at the bris mila celebration, she said to me: “Perhaps they’re doing me a favor,” and I replied regarding her employers, “I have no doubt that the benefit is quite mutual.” She has much to contribute to her place of work. She sings in the choir and engages in her numerous other hobbies. Her husband still walks to the Kosel. He stopped testing yeshiva bachurim only two years ago, and he now learns Torah day and night, *kein ayin ha’ra*. They host whole families for Shabbos and Yom Tov without batting an eye! They maintain simplicity and tranquility in their lives with much *yiras shamayim*, Torah, and mitzvos.

I have not the slightest doubt that there are many more couples like the Kugelmans.

CONT. ON P. 57



*Mushky  
Brysky*

## NOTHING LIKE NACHAS

**"PLEASE** take a book and rest in your bed for 20 min," I said firmly to my 7-year-old, as I desperately felt the need for him to stop some energetic behavior while trying to manage the rest of my kids at the end of the long day.

A few minutes later I was surprised by his choice as he had his eyes on an open page of a volume of "*Der Rebbe Redt Tzu Kinder*".

Later when I mentioned it to my husband, I asked him to check whether my son followed what he read, and surprisingly, he repeated some key points.



**ONE** morning, I witnessed Levik washing second Negel Vaser and saying his *brachos* with so much enthusiasm and *chayus*. This was after many weeks of needing to apply creative measures to encourage him to overcome some of his natural tendencies in order to say them.



**"THANK** you for the oatmeal Mommy!" my sweet little 3-year-old remembers to politely say while I'm serving breakfast; and the priceless moment when my delicious toddler rushes over to me, open handed, with his incredibly cute waddle and crashes into me with a giant bear hug.

Moments of nachas.

Those moments that help keep things together through the regular and not-so-regular challenges we experience. These moments are invaluable and we can never get enough.

Similarly, with the health of my family. When can I say that we have enough *gezunt*? Especially when I encounter a health issue small or big *chas v'shalom*, in my family or another, it helps me value the good health we boruch Hashem experience the rest of the time.

And we can say the same when it comes to matters of *parnassa*.



**BY** example, my father instilled in all of us children the value and importance of learning the *kuntreisim* the Rebbe has given us, and not letting them just collect dust on the bookcase - even if it will cause wear and tear. He explained to us that obviously the Rebbe gave it to us with the intention of us learning from them!

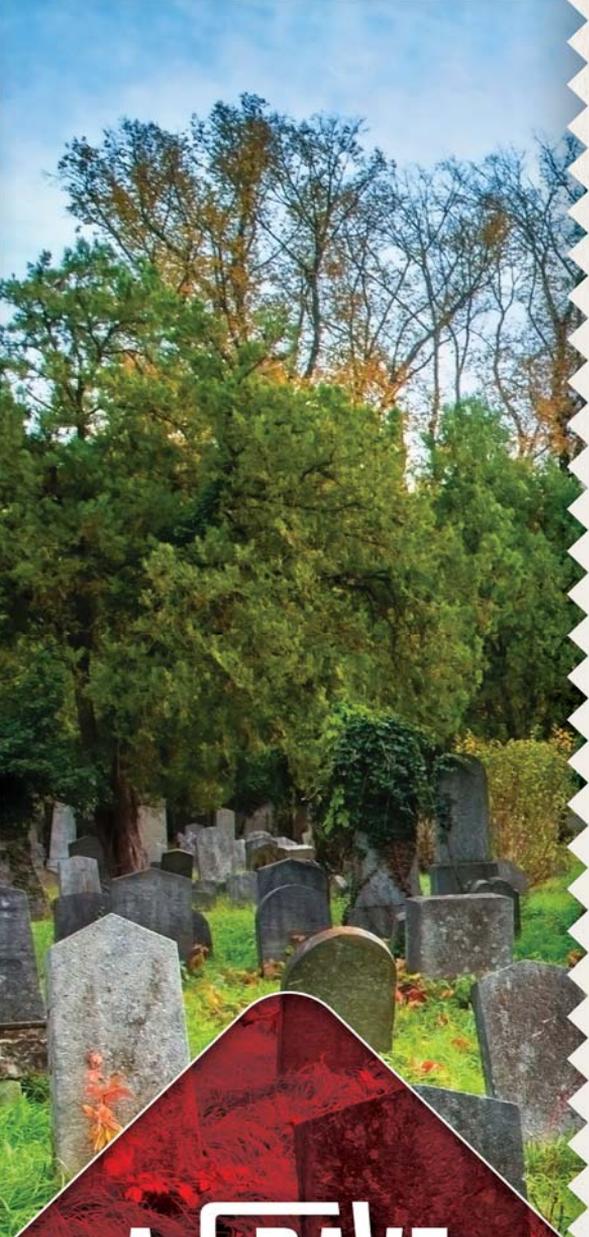
I don't manage to learn the whole thing, or even a whole part, but it's usually on my mind as an auspicious day approaches, on which the Rebbe handed out a *kuntres* and especially if I received one myself on that day. If I get to read

CONT. ON P. 57

**RECAP:** *Noa, a shlucha in a neighborhood in Yerushalayim, visits her mother's gravesite. A large chareidi family arrives at the cemetery helps to make a minyan for Kaddish. Noa feels that there's some inner connection between this family and her late mother. However, her efforts to find this connection prove unsuccessful. She tries to establish a sense of unity between the sisters-in-law, but to no avail. With the encouragement of her mashpiah, Noa decides to strengthen her connection with her own father.*



**THE** freezing cold chills her to the bone. Noa walks around the house holding little Chana, patting her gently on the back and trying to put her to sleep. The central heating is on full blast and the windows are closed, yet, the house is still cold to the extent that she can't manage to concentrate seriously on anything. Her heavy briefcase waited patiently on the table for her to find the proper moment to check what she has to prepare for tomorrow.

A photograph of a cemetery with several gravestones of various shapes and sizes, set against a backdrop of tall, green trees. The image is framed with a decorative, jagged white border.

# A GRAVE SITUATION

A SERIALIZED EMOTIONAL JOURNEY

ALUMA S.

She recalled a story she heard today from Etty, the third-grade teacher, as part of the week-long preparations for Yud Shevat. The hero of the story was a young bachur sentenced to a lengthy prison term in Siberia. What he did exactly she doesn't know, because just then Orit and Shosh were fighting over a chair at the assembly and she went over to separate between them. However, his punishment was to stand in the high watchtower without a coat through the biting winds and cold.

She also doesn't know how he was eventually saved, because Shaina asked her to help with giving out the pompoms. She promised herself that as soon as there was a break, she would get the missing details. But so many things happened before the break, she forgot all about it.

No big deal. The main thing was the girls' excitement and enthusiasm. As she looked at them, she felt that at least some of the girls thought to themselves that if they had been there, they would have acted the same way. *Mesirus nefesh*, come what may. A snowflake or two (or a million) would not change their opinion.

Now, she gently transferred the sleeping Chana to her bed, making certain to cover her well. She entered her bedroom and tried to shield herself from the cold. She pulled a pair of warm socks from the drawer and took a sweater off the shelf. As she wrapped herself to keep warm, she thought about the incredible *mesirus nefesh* of the Chassidim from the previous generation. Would she have been able to withstand such trials?

Sending her Dovi to learn in the underground, each day in a different house? Living in constant fear that he might be imprisoned? Going out now in the frigid wintry conditions to convey a secret message among all the Chassidim? The terrible poverty, and the fear that anyone could be an informant?

Chills went up her spine from the cold and the disappointment. She doesn't have the slight-

est doubt that she would do whatever was required with true *mesirus nefesh*. However, her passion, the fire in the eyes, the excitement of going out to battle for Jewish life – she didn't know how much longer that would last for her. She sat on the couch, grabbed a large towel that had been tossed there, and pulled it over her. The song they sang with such enthusiasm at the graduation ceremony for the eighth-graders continued to resound in her mind.

To this day, she remembers the great emotion that engulfed her, her absolute identification with Minda, the heroine from the play (Chani Cohen, eighth grade), who neither submitted nor grew tired. She never had any doubts or questioned whether she had any more strength for self-sacrifice. It was then so clear to her that she too would conduct herself in exactly the same fashion, if she were privileged (!) to live in those courageous times.

Even Ima enjoyed the play very much and was deeply moved. Sometimes, during the *Seuda Shlishis*, when the women would sit and sing niggunim together, they would also sing songs from the performance. She would look at Ima and think how appropriate for her to be one of those women.

And to be like Ima, is she willing to do that? Going against the grain, paving a new path for yourself, recognizing virtually no painful concessions at any stage of life? Excitement and emotion to the point of tears with the fulfillment of every mitzva? Inviting all kinds of guests for Shabbos meals, guests that no else would ever invite? Saying every word in the davening with joy and vitality, literally as if you're "counting money"?

These thoughts weren't pleasant at all, but they were familiar at least. How did the character Minda put it to the neighbor Sofia (Avital Elbaz) at the climax of the play's sixth act, when she almost gave in and was prepared to send her daughter to the Communist school? "Don't you worry about the questions, the doubts, or

the tears. They all come from the animal soul. At a moment of truth, when you touch the ‘*Ye-chida*’, it breaks down all the walls at every level, sending everything up in flames, eventually doing its job...”

“Noa?” She heard Daniel’s voice from a distance. “Noa? Maybe it would better if you got into bed?”

She opened her eyes, totally confused, wrapped in a towel on the couch. The electric radiator near her was turned on. She shook herself awake in a state of alarm. “Did I doze off? *Oy vey*, I still have so much to prepare for tomorrow!”

“It doesn’t seem to me that there will be school tomorrow, so you don’t have to worry... The city is covered in snow.”

Noa stood and looked at the window. A silent layer of white gently covered the ground as customarily happens in Yerushalayim every year or two. The soft flakes continued to fall without making a sound. She didn’t know herself if the intense cold had brought on thoughts of Siberia or vice versa, whether she would have managed to reach the levels of self-sacrifice required in those times. However, one thing was clear to her: Today’s battle is to try and stand tall with respect. On shlichus in the neighborhood, on educational shlichus, and in her private Chabad House. And that essentially is what’s important, isn’t it?



**I** *enter the back of the hall, grab a corner, and assess the situation. It’s warm and everyone’s dancing. Cousins, former neighbors and friends. I know them all, and they all know me. Yet, no one really knows what to do with me. They look at me for a moment, then turn away.*

*Abba moves among everyone, a shining expression on his face. He warmly shakes hands with the guests and smiles. I walk over to him. His smile vanishes in an instant. He shakes his*

**“ WHAT AM I DOING HERE? TO MAKE PEOPLE HAPPY, RIGHT? IF MY PRESENCE IS MAKING THEM FEEL BAD, PERHAPS IT WOULD BE BETTER IF I LEFT.**

---

*head and moves on. What do I care? The main thing is that Motty should be happy. I go over to give Motty a hug and I see the look on his face. I’m embarrassing him – and in front of all his friends yet.*

*What am I doing here? To make people happy, right? If my presence is making them feel bad, perhaps it would be better if I left.*

“Where are you going, Shloimy?” *The voice was my mother’s.*

“What are you doing outside, Ima? It’s terribly cold.”

“Where are you going?” *She’s so beautiful in her new outfit, but her eyes look so sad.*

“I have nothing to do here. I’m just putting everyone to shame.” *Now she’ll probably say: “What are you talking about? You’re important to us, you’re speaking nonsense...” – and some other nice things.*

“Do you have a key to the house? No need for you to wait outside in the cold.” *So, even my mother agrees with me.*

“Yes, Ima, I have a key.”

*I leave the hall. It’s cold. Very cold.*

“Shloimy?”

*I turn towards her.*

“I’m hoping to dance at your wedding!” ■

**To be continued...**

Experts in family relationships always recommend “quality time together”, “going out on excursions”, “having meals as a couple”, “learning Torah together”, etc. It seems to me that younger couples have a hard enough time implementing these suggestions, as they are extremely busy with raising the children and providing for their household.

Not all of us “veterans” know how to use modern day technology, whether the use of electronic mail, WhatsApp, or any other computer application. So, they talk to each other more. And they also learn to have quiet time together – without concern, tending to one another, allowing themselves to have a little fun.

### THE LADDER OF JOINT VALUES

One of the wondrous qualities of a life of Torah and mitzvos is that both the husband

and wife live according to the same ladder of values: family, community, education, et al. Living as a couple in a Chabad Chassidic environment provides yet another feature with even greater substance when both spouses go out on ‘mivtzaim’, each in his/her own area of specialization, helping the children on their shlichus, and supporting one another on the shlichus the Rebbe MH<sup>TM</sup> placed upon us – to prepare the world for his hisgalus.

We find ourselves in the era when there will be the fulfillment of what is stated in the Book of Zecharia (8:4): “So said the G-d of Hosts: Old men and women shall yet sit in the streets of Yerushalayim, each man with his staff in his hand because of old age.”

I’ve already prepared a bench for my husband and his wife – me. ■

even one letter or a paragraph, that’s already something!

Last Chof Beis Shevat, as the special day was coming to an end, I took a quick moment to peek into the *kuntres* that I had the *zechus* to receive from the Rebbe 28 years ago when I was a baby.

What I read had a deep impact and is a daily encouragement to me. While the Rebbe was explaining the importance of Jewish women being *tznius*, he explains that the modest ways of a Jewish woman are a sure path for health, parnassa and nachas that we experience from our children and grandchildren.

I understood that to mean that every small effort I put into matters of *tznius*, will be sure to affect the health, parnassa and nachas of my children.

It made me think, that while as a girl and teenager I was a lot more careful with the ‘small’

details of *tznius*. Slowly, as life progresses, those become more and more challenging to keep up with.

And I believe it’s like that with many other inspiration related matters, such as learning and davening etc.

After reading what the Rebbe writes, it pushed me to not just shrug things off but to put the effort to be more *tznius* knowing how valuable every nachas and health moment is and what a direct effect our *tznius* has. To fix the tichel, put on the socks, adjust that button – because despite the possible inconvenience, what can be more meaningful than those precious nachas moments?

May we all be inspired and encouraged to push ourselves further and experience ONLY uncompromised health, parnassa and nachas while we eagerly wait to greet Moshiach! ■



## Miami: This Year Will Be Easier

When Rabbi Korf landed in Miami, Florida, there were no shluchim there to greet him. You see, he was the very first shliach to Florida! The Rebbe sent him there with a special mission: to make Yiddishkeit in the Sunshine State thrive.

Right away, Rabbi Korf got to work and began teaching Torah classes to Yidden of all ages. As he got to know them, he realized that so many wanted to become frum! There was only one problem, though. Since they were already adults, there was no school for them to go to! How would they learn about Torah and mitzvos?

When a nearby motel was put up for sale, Rabbi Korf got very excited. If he bought it, he could turn the building into a yeshiva for baalei teshuva! Although the motel was selling for an expensive \$415,000, Rabbi Korf immediately bought it.

His hands shook with excitement as he signed the contract. Finally, whoever wanted to learn more about Yiddishkeit

would have a proper school to go to! They would be able to study the Torah in depth and learn how to live as proper Jews.

To spread Yiddishkeit even more, Rabbi Korf hired many more shluchim to join the team. Soon, there were Chabad houses all over Florida! Under the Rebbe's guidance, Rabbi Korf worked day and night to fulfill his shlichus. Slowly, Yiddishkeit in Florida began to grow.

\*\*\*

A few years went by. One day, Rabbi Korf heard terrible news: the local children's school owed a tremendous amount of money to the bank! They had no way to pay it back, and the bank was running out of patience! They were even threatening to take away the school building!

What will be? Rabbi Korf worried. If they take away the school building, where will the students learn Torah?

Immediately, Rabbi Korf sprang into action. He had to save the school! Right away, he wrote to the Rebbe: Should I take

over the school and become responsible to pay the debt?

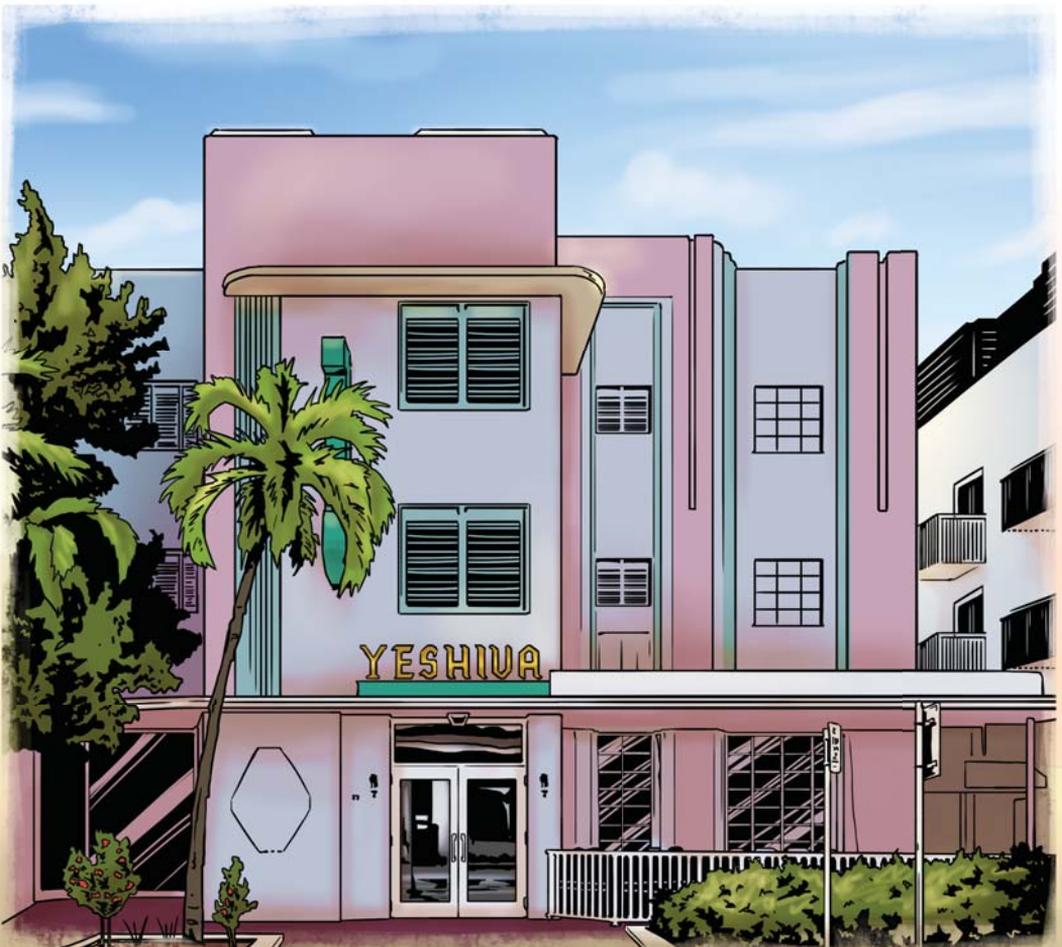
When the Rebbe didn't respond, Rabbi Korf hesitated. Taking on such a burden was like jumping into the ocean without knowing how to swim! How would he manage to pay such a huge amount of money?

He already had so many things to pay for, like his Chabad House and his yeshiva for baalei teshuva. He was even paying the salaries of five other Chabad Houses! Maybe it isn't such a good idea for me to take over the yeshiva... he thought.

A short while later, word reached Rabbi Korf that the bank was about to sell the school building! Uh oh! Rabbi Korf panicked. I can't sit quietly and watch them take away the building! Quickly, he wrote to the Rebbe again: "If the Rebbe agrees, I will take over the school."

As soon as the Rebbe received the letter, he agreed to the plan. Overnight, Rabbi Korf took over the school, becoming responsible to pay back all the money to the bank!

To have enough money, Rabbi Korf was forced to stop paying for the other five



Chabad Houses. It was very hard for him and for the other shlichim, but he had no other choice. The debt was enormous, and he had to save the school from closing!

Rabbi Korf worked as hard as he could to come up with the money. He tried to pay the bank on time, but one day, there was nothing left.

There was no money in his bank account. There was no money in his wallet. Ok, maybe there were a few dollars there—but how would that help when he needed to pay hundreds of thousands of dollars to the bank?

Rabbi Korf held his head in his hands. When the bank had called him that day, threatening to take away the school again, he had called everyone he could think of. But no one could help. His head ached. He had tried so hard to save the school, but it looked like everything was about to collapse. Was there any hope at all?

What does a Chassid do in a situation like this? He turns to his Rebbe! Around Chai Elul, Rabbi Korf boarded a plane and traveled to New York.

Rabbi Korf wanted to write to the Rebbe, but the situation seemed so hopeless, he didn't know what to write! Instead, he decided to pass by the Rebbe when the Rebbe was giving something out.

After waiting in line for a long time, it was finally his turn. As soon as he passed by, the Rebbe looked straight at him. "Miami?" the Rebbe asked. "This year will be easier."

Stunned, Rabbi Korf kept walking. Again and again, he replayed the Rebbe's words in his head. This year will be easier?

What a mysterious message! What did the Rebbe mean?

He had no idea. All he knew was that he had the Rebbe's bracha, so everything would be okay.

\*\*\*

When his time in New York was up, Rabbi Korf returned home. The next day, his phone rang.

"Hello, is this Rabbi Korf?" an unfamiliar voice asked. "I'm a real estate broker, calling about your motel. Are you interested in selling?"

Rabbi Korf blinked in surprise. No one had ever asked to buy the motel before! Unfortunately, his yeshiva for baalei teshuvah had been closed and the motel was not really being used.

"How much are you offering?" he asked.

When the broker named a price, Rabbi Korf's eyes opened wide. If he would sell, he would make \$200,000 in profit!

The offer sounded really tempting. After all, he was desperate for money! But somehow, he felt that this wasn't what the Rebbe had meant. All the profit would go toward paying off the school's debt, and then he would be left with nothing, not even the motel!

"Thank you for the offer," Rabbi Korf finally said. "But I'm not selling at the moment."

Two weeks later, another broker approached Rabbi Korf. This time, Rabbi Korf would make a profit of \$400,000!

Although this offer was even more tempting than the first one, Rabbi Korf



said no. He didn't know why, but he still believed that this wasn't what the Rebbe had meant.

To his surprise, the offers kept coming. Another two weeks later, one of Rabbi Korf's baalei teshuva asked if he could buy the motel. "I'll pay you a million dollars!" he begged. When he saw Rabbi Korf hesitate, he waved the stack of papers in his hand. "I already prepared and signed the contract!"

Rabbi Korf couldn't believe it. A million dollars?! That would be \$600,000 dollars in profit!

Rabbi Korf asked for some time to think about it. Everyone thought he was nuts! "Nu!" they yelled at him. "A million dollars? What are you waiting for?? You think a better offer will come up??"

Although Rabbi Korf agreed that this was an amazing offer, he still had in his

head that this wasn't what the Rebbe meant. So he said no!

Another two weeks later, two non-Jews from Spain came to Rabbi Korf with an incredible offer: "Sell us the motel, and we'll give you \$1,350,000 in cash!"

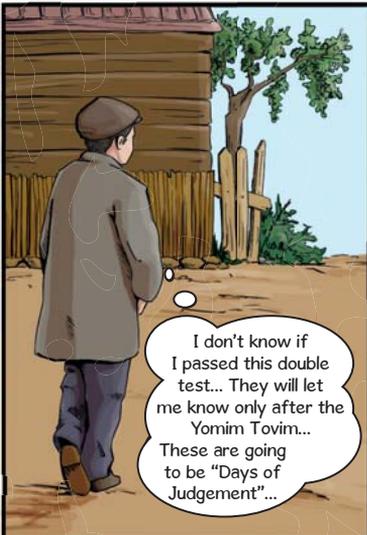
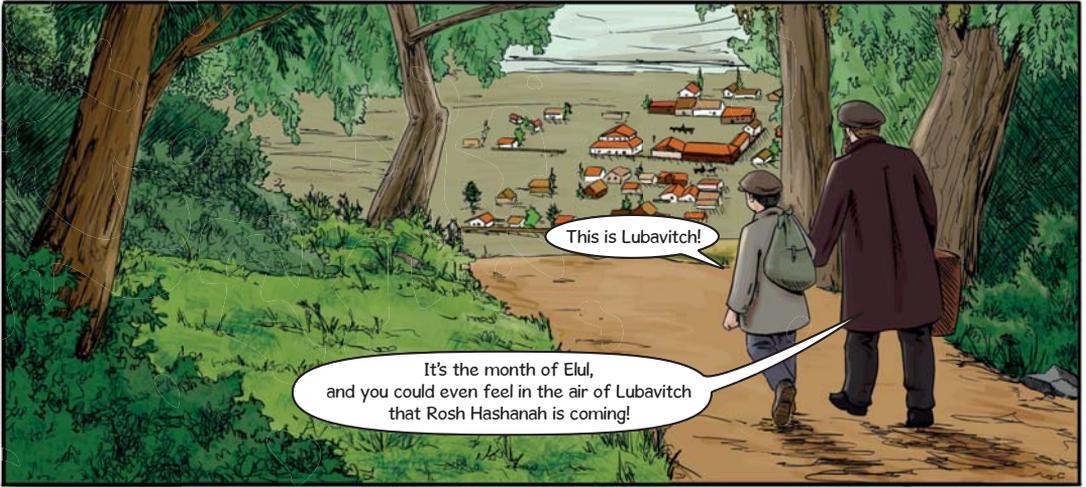
Aha! Rabbi Korf thought to himself. This must be what the rebbe meant!

"Sold!" he shouted.

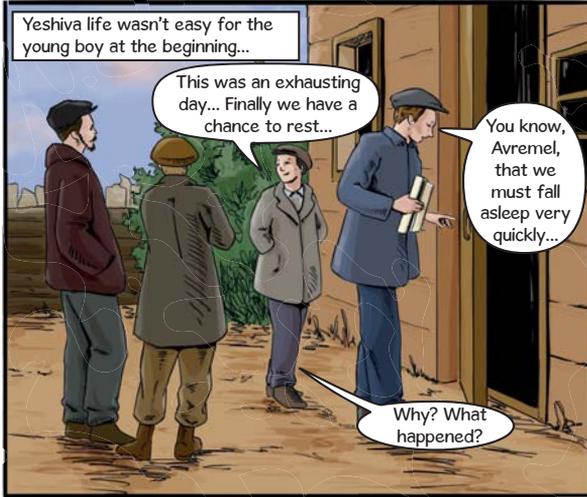
Just as the Rebbe promised, that year was much easier for Rabbi Korf in Miami. Baruch Hashem, the massive debt was paid off, and the school was no longer in danger of being shut down. Thanks to the Rebbe's brachos and Rabbi Korf's devotion, Yiddishkeit in Miami continued to flourish.

**Do you have a story about the Rebbe, a Tzaddik, or something with the Igros Kodesh? email us and we will call you to record your story: [mail@tzaddikstory.org](mailto:mail@tzaddikstory.org)**

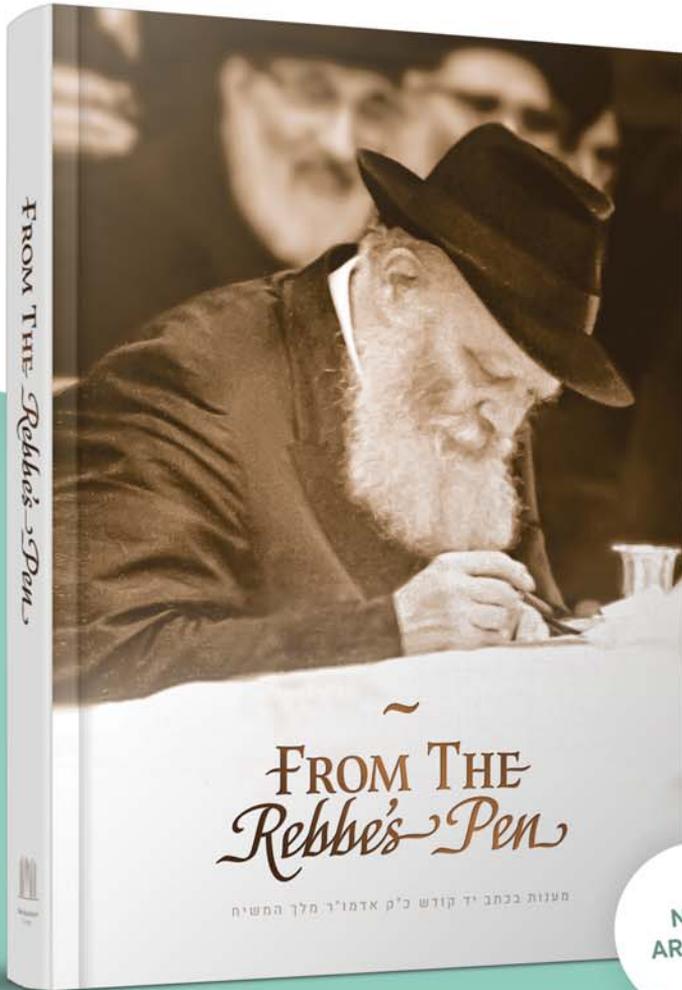
# AVREMEL'S RUSSIAN ADVENTURES



**Recap:** Avremel is traveling on the train, when a Russian antisemite decides to throw him off and no one in the car seems to care



# PRESENTING: A BEIS MOSHIACH FAVORITE



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