

ב"ה

תשורה

למשתתפים

בשמחת הנישואין של

אברהם משה וגאלדא איטא

חנוכה

חמישה-עשר בשבט ה'תש"פ

Memento

from the wedding of

Golda and Avrohom Moshe

Hanoka

15th of Shevat, 5780 • February 10, 2020

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The Rebbe at the wedding of *kallahs's* grandparents,
Berl and Fruma Junik, Sivan 9, 5714.

WELCOME

Dear Family and Friends שיחיו,

As tradition, at all joyous events we begin by thanking G-d for granting us life, sustaining us, and enabling us to be here together. We are thrilled that you are able to share in our *simcha*. Indeed, Jewish law enjoins the entire community to bring joy and elation to the *chosson* and *kallah*.

In honor of the Rebbe and Rebbetzin's wedding in 1928, the Friediker Rebbe distributed a special *teshurah*, memento, to all the celebrants: a facsimile of a manuscript letter written by the Alter Rebbe.

In this tradition, we are honored to present:

- A compilation of letters from the Rebbe to the grandfather of the *chosson*, Dr. Yaakov Hanoka and a brief history of Dr. Hanoka and several stories about his experiences with the Rebbe.
- Three responses from the Rebbe to the great-grandfather of the *chosson*, Rabbi Berel Levy, and the background to them.
- Stories of the Rebbe and Rebbetzin with the grandfather and father of the *kallah*, as recorded by the father of the *kallah*.

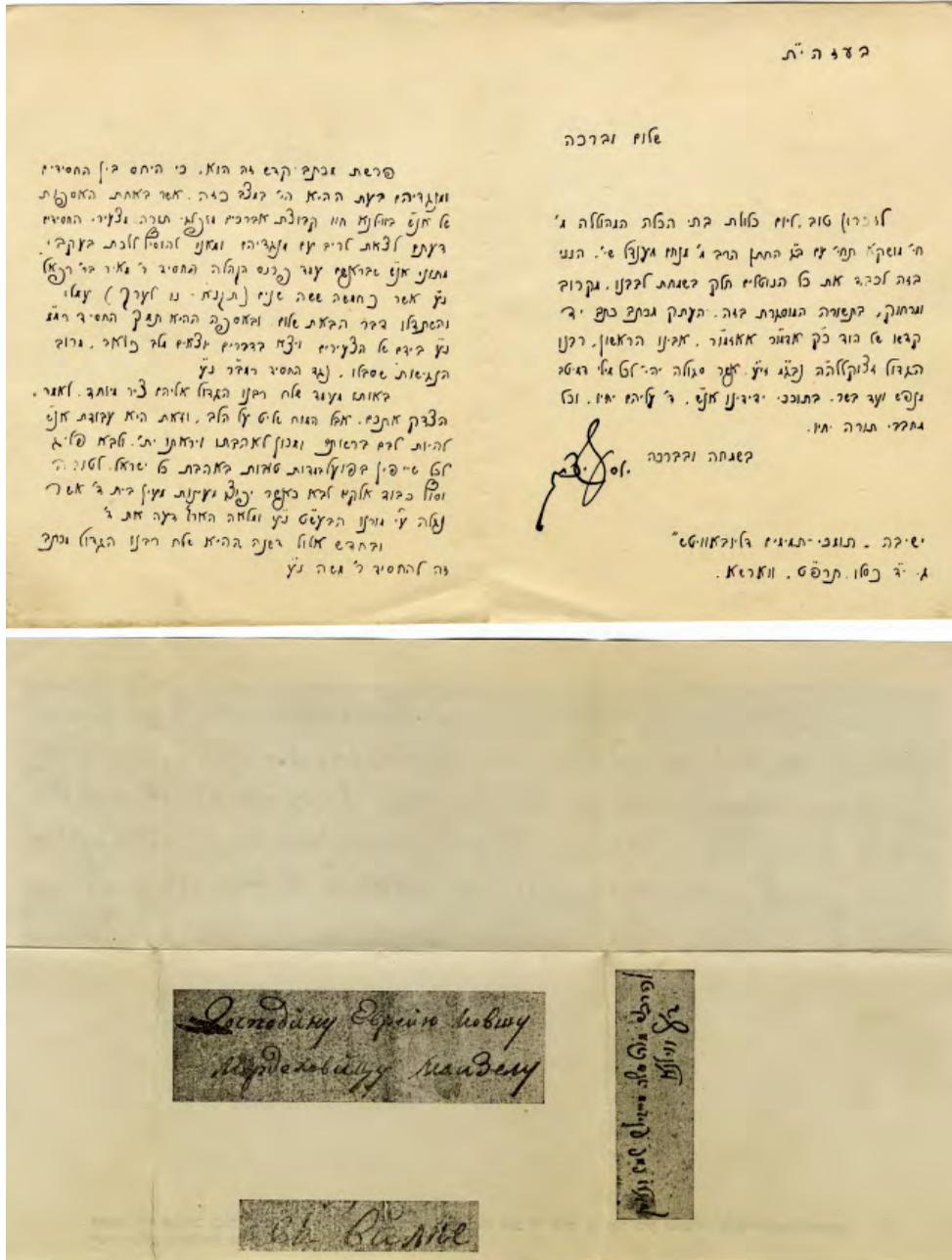
We would like to thank Rabbi Dovid Zaklikowski, and the staff of Hasidic Archives, for their dedication in preparing this memento.

We hope that you will enjoy the festivities, become involved in every facet of the celebration, and share the happiness and pride we feel on this day. May we share many more *simchas* in the near future!

And may the merit of bringing joy to the *chosson* and *kallah* bring us to the greatest joy of all, when we will celebrate the rebuilding of the *Beis Hamikdosh*, speedily in our days.

The Hanoka and Junik families

THE REBBE'S WEDDING MEMENTO



At the wedding of the Rebbe and Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka in Warsaw in 1928, the bride's father, the Rebbe Rayatz, distributed a special memento, a copy presented here, to all the celebrants: a facsimile of a manuscript letter written by the first Chabad Rebbe, Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi. On top is the Rebbe Rayatz's explanation of the manuscript.

MAZEL TOV WISHES

Letter that the Rebbe sent to the parents of the *kallah*:



By the grace of G-d
15 Menachem Av, 5744
Brooklyn

To the young man, who is accomplished and a Chassid,
a man who fears G-d, pleasant and gracious, etc.
Rabbi Shamshon Aharon and his bride may you be well,
Greetings and Blessings!

In reply to the notification of the date of your wedding on the 11 Tishrei that is forthcoming for the good,

I would like to convey my blessings, Mazel Tov, Mazel Tov. May your wedding be held in a good and auspicious hour and may you build a true Jewish home, an eternal structure, on the foundations of the Torah and its commandments, as they are illuminated by the inner-light of Torah, namely, the teachings of Chassidism.

With blessings of Mazel Tov, Mazel Tov and to be inscribed and sealed for a good year,
M. Schneerson



Of Science, Yiddishkeit and Positivity

By Dovid Zaklikowski

Solar energy pioneer Dr. Yaacov (Jack) Hanoka held patents for 57 of his inventions and was known for his optimism and his passion for finding alternative energy sources to fossil fuels.

Dr. Hanoka, who held a Ph.D. in solid state physics, was a pioneer among modern scientists in exploring the interplay between science and Torah. He played a leading role in founding Pegisha, the weekend study programs in Crown Heights that became popular among Jewish college students and professors in the early 1960s.

As chief technology officer of Evergreen Solar, Inc., Dr. Hanoka headed a successful effort to reduce the cost of solar power.

Dr. Hanoka “was very inventive [and exhibited an] extraordinary level of energy,” said Emanuel Sachs, Professor of Mechanical Engineering at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

While he authored more than 70 papers in the field of solar energy, as a Chassid and scientist, Dr. Hanoka devoted much of his time to Torah study and writing papers addressing apparent contradictions between Judaism and science. Among his efforts was explaining, in scientific language, the Rebbe’s choice to read the story of creation literally.

The Rebbe “took a very unpopular stand on the age of the world,” Hanoka wrote in his last essay, a 56-page treatise entitled *A Time for Every-*

thing: Thoughts on the Age of the World, published a month before his passing. Nevertheless, the Rebbe “was undeterred in standing his ground. From this I learned that if something is true, but very unpopular, I should not be afraid to advocate it.”

Many of his papers appeared in the scientific journal *B’or Hatorah*, including a critique of evolution and carbon dating entitled “Monkeying Around With Hominid Evolution and Torah, Science and Carbon 14.”

“Much of modern science tells us that the planet we inhabit is 4.5 billion years old,” he wrote, and that we “have ancestors who were animals such as monkeys.” However, “there are varying degrees of certainty regarding scientific ideas, [and] science is not a monolithic activity in a search for absolute truth of the world that we inhabit.”

He brought proof from the 20th century revelations of relativity and quantum theory, which overturned the classical view of the world:

“Physicists believed that they understood most of the basic principles that govern the physical world and that there were just a few puzzling things to be explained,” he wrote. “And along came new discoveries that challenged those principles.”

He quoted famed Russian physicist Lev Landau, who said: “Cosmologists are often wrong, but never in doubt.”



With Rabbi Shmuel Lew (left) and Dr. Irving Block (right).



Dr. Hanoka with one of his inventions.

Pioneer of Jewish Weekends

In the early 1950s, *bachurim* from 770 began travelling to college campuses throughout the United States to give classes and organize weekend programs for Jewish students.

At Pennsylvania State University in 1961, they encountered a free-thinking, spirited intellectual in Jack Hanoka. According to Rabbi Pini Baumgarten, whose father, Rabbi Berel Baumgarten, was among the group who visited Penn State, Dr. Hanoka “was

constantly challenging [the rabbinical students’] statements.”

The back-and-forth and the willingness on the part of his interlocutors to be challenged had a deep effect on Dr. Hanoka. At the end of the weekend, he escorted the visitors to their train.

“I remember the Chasidic dancing in the train station,” he later recalled them singing *Hoshia Es Amecha*, the melody the Rebbe taught that year on Simchas Torah.

He turned to the *bachurim* and told them he wanted to visit Crown Heights. The students arranged his trip and scheduled a private audience for him with the Rebbe.

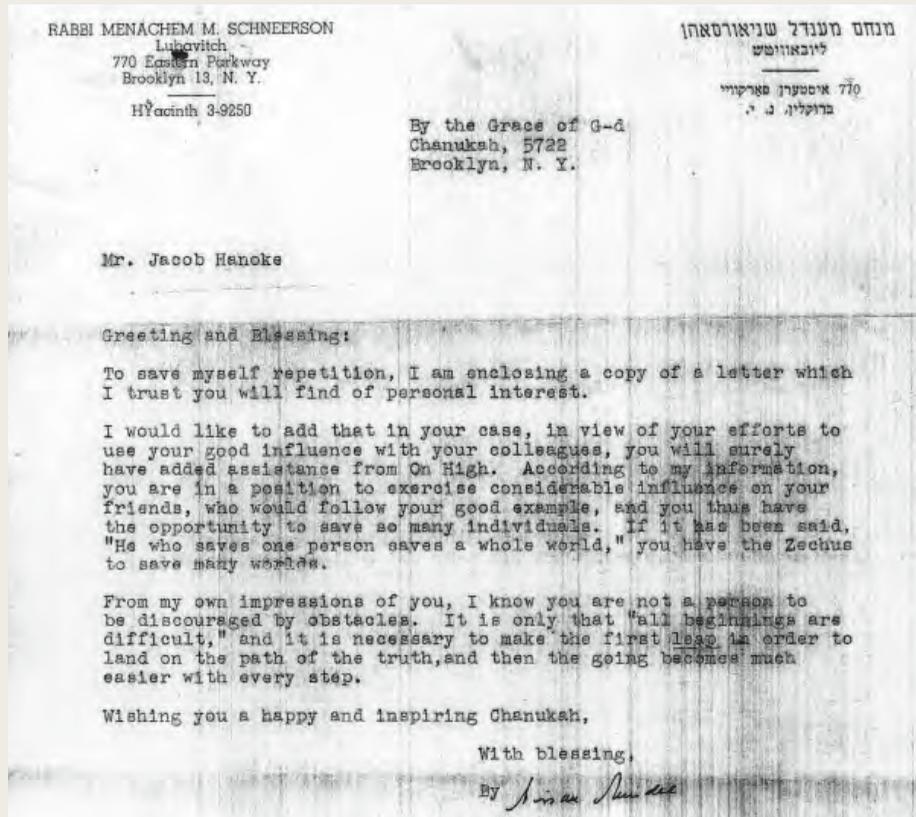
“I had no prior Jewish knowledge,” Dr. Hanoka said in a 2006 interview, and “since that Shabbos, I was searching for my place in Yiddishkeit. I decided that I wanted to remain and study with the students in Brooklyn.”

Dr. Hanoka, who barely knew the Aleph-Beis, told the Rebbe of his wish.

“I am sure you realize the great difficulty you will face while learning here,” the Rebbe said. In 1962, there were no schools for adult beginners in Judaism.

Dr. Hanoka was undeterred, so the Rebbe arranged for him to learn with a slew of students, each student for two hours a day. This way, he would simultaneously learn the Aleph-Beis, Gemarah, *Shulchan Aruch* and Chassidus.

For the next several months, he spent much



By the Grace of G-d
Chanukah, 5722
Brooklyn, NY

Mr. Jacob Hanoka

Greeting and Blessing:

To save myself repetition, I am enclosing a copy of a letter which I trust you will find of personal interest.

I would like to add that in your case, in view of your efforts to use your good influence with your colleagues, you will surely have added assistance from On High. According to my information, you are in a position to exercise considerable influence on your friends, who would follow your good example, and you thus have the opportu-

nity to save so many individuals. If it has been said, "He who saves one person saves a whole world, you have the Zechus to save many worlds.

From my own impression of you, I know you are not a person to be discouraged by obstacles. It is only that "all beginnings are difficult," and it is necessary to make the first leap in order to land on the path of the truth, and then the going becomes much easier with every step.

Wishing you a happy and inspiring Chanukah,

With blessing,

By Nissan Mindel



Dr. Hanoka on his graduation day.

time in the home of Rabbi Mendel and Nechamah Baumgarten, who were involved in campus outreach. They became his adopted family in Crown Heights, a relationship that continued throughout Dr. Hanoka's life. (The date of Golda and Avrohom Moshe's wedding, the 15th of Shevat, is Rabbi Baumgarten's birthday.)

"In the beginning, I did not know what to expect," said Dr. Hanoka. "What I knew was that I would need to make a great effort and invest myself into the learning process. What I knew was that there was a lot of deep scholarship there and I was greatly attracted to it."

Several weeks after his arrival, at the Rebbe's suggestion, he organized an event that brought college students and professors to Crown Heights for a weekend. The effort, which later became known as Encounter With Chabad, drew the attention of *The New York Times*.

"Students came from campuses in the United States and Canada to stay with followers of Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson," reported the paper, "observed the Sabbath, learned the meaning of the religious commandments and enjoyed [a Chasidic

gathering] with Rabbi Schneerson."

Over the next few years, more weekend programs followed. Today, in addition to the many Crown Heights weekends, regional groups of campus Chabad Houses host similar events for thousands of students. He took great pride when Chabad on Campus made their first Crown Heights Shabbaton in 2012. "He was filled with joy and vigor from it," recalls his son Yitzchak. Four months later he would pass away.

"Dr. Hanoka would choose topics that he felt would attract the most interest from the students," said Rabbi Kasriel Kastel, program director of the Lubavitch Youth Organization. "He was intimately involved in organizing all the events from [his home in] Boston for more than 30 years."

"Intellectual curiosity brought me here," Jeff Marx, a student at Washington University in S. Louis, told the *Times*. "I leave [here] intellectually and emotionally involved after my first experience with living Judaism."

After a few months of study in Brooklyn, the Rebbe advised Dr. Hanoka to return to Penn State and complete his degree out of respect for his parents.

"My grandfather was orphaned at a young age, forcing him to leave school and supplement the family's income," said Dr. Hanoka's son, Rabbi Yitzchak Hanoka. He "was concerned that [my father] now dropped college to pursue religious studies in Brooklyn."

But the Rebbe also explained to Dr. Hanoka

By the Grace of G-d
5th of Cheshvan, 5724
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Mr. Jacob Hanuka
770 Eastern Parkway
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Greeting and Blessing:

I was pleased to see you during the Season of Our Rejoicing, and I hope that your participation in the Farbrengens will be lastingly beneficial to you.

I was pleased to receive your letter written at the beginning of the month of Tishrei, in which you write about your activities in the past summer. I was particularly pleased to hear from Rabbi Lew about the discussions which you had between you with regard to your future activities, in addition to those you write about in your said letter. May G-d grant that all these activities should be continued effectively, in accordance with the principle of our Sages that the essential thing is the deed. This is to say, the ultimate aim is to influence all participants in the direction of actually fulfilling the daily Mitzvoth.

I wish to emphasize again what I have mentioned to you before, that you ought to utilize your capacities in a satisfactory measure in your field of studies, and what is also most essential, to find a suitable Shidduch soon.



With regard to your question about מחי"צ which is a Shaala related to the Shulchan Aruch, you surely know that it is not my custom to give decisions on such Shaalos, and you should therefore discuss the matter again with the Rov that you mention.

As we are coming from the month of Tishrei, concluding on the happy note of the Season of Rejoicing, the purpose of which is to take the goodly measure of this spirit along for the whole year, may it be so in your case, materially and spiritually.

With blessing M. Schneerson



With the Rebbe.



that his doctorate would enable him to have a greater influence on Jewish youth.

“The Rebbe told me I will do more for Judaism by having three initials after my name,” Dr. Hanoka

children on trips and help them with their homework, “when it came to scientific homework, he did it all himself,” recalls Yitzchak with a smile. When

recalled.

The Rebbe told him to be strong.

“You must feel like a pioneer. Every Jew whether they are aware of it or not, is an example for the world, so don’t feel bad about being an example,” the Rebbe said. “When you go to Penn State, act like yourself. Convey to the students your true feelings [and] don’t be afraid that it might distance them.”

Dr. Hanoka returned to school, and on 11 Tishrei 5725 (1964), married Polish Holocaust survivor Bina Herzberg. Zushe Feldman, who was a *bachur* in 770 at the time, recalled that the Rebbe asked the 770 students to travel to the wedding, which was not in Crown Heights.

One time, Mrs. Hanoka told the Rebbe that she feels that her husband needs more time to study Torah full time in a Kollel. The Rebbe told her that it is best for him to continue to pursue his scientific career. “Whatever concerns you have,” the Rebbe said, “his *yiras shamayim* makes up for that.”

While he was busy with his scientific research, and communal activities, he still was a very involved father. He would take his

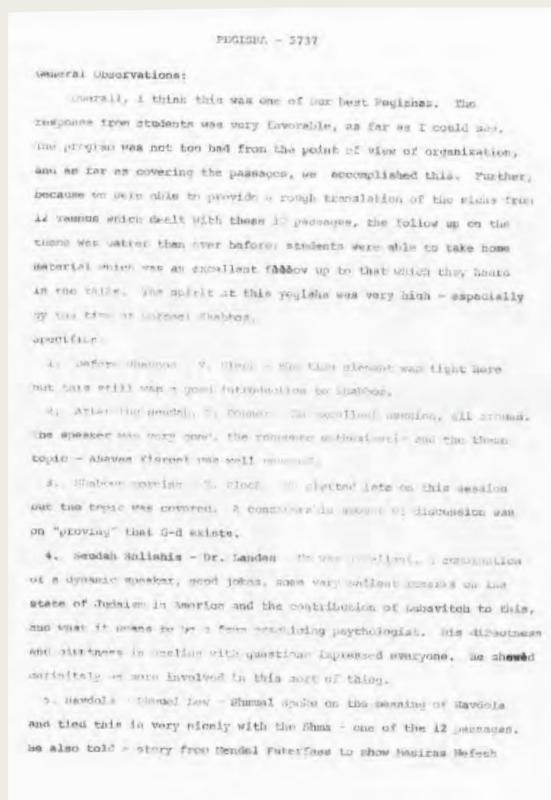
Pegisha - 5737

General observations:

Overall, I think this was one of our best Pegishas. The response from students was very favorable, as far as I could see. The program was not too bad from the point of view of organization, and as far as covering the passages, we accomplished this. Further, because we were able to provide a rough translation of the sicha from 12 tammus which dealt with these 12 passages, the follow up on the theme was better than ever before; students were able to take home material which was an excellent follow up to that which they heard in the talks. The spirit at this pegisha was very high – especially by the time of Motzoei Shabbos.

Specifics:

1. Before Shabbos – Y. Block – The time element was tight here but still was a good introduction to SHabbos.
2. After the seudah, Z. Posner – An excellent session, all around. The speaker was very good, the response enthusiastic and the theme topic – Ahavas Yisroel was well covered.
3. Shabbos morning – Y. Block – We started late on this session but the topic was covered. A considerable amount of discussion was on “proving” that G-d exists.
4. Seudah Shlishis – Dr. Landes – He was excellent. A combination of a dynamic speaker, jokes, some very salient remarks on the state of Judaism in America and the contribution of Lubavitch to this, and what it means to be a frum practicing psychologist. His direct-



laboration between Zalman Posner and Dr. Landes from California. The need for such a booklet was, to me, painfully obvious from the emotion laden questions on this subject during the Pegisha.

2. Many of the participants came because of their connection with Chabad House. Our efforts to reach students in places where there is no Chabad House should be investigated further and improved. Our publicity is still inadequate, I think.

[In the handwriting of Rabbi Kasriel Kastel:]

Yaacov, The Rebbe שליט"א answered:

נת' ות"ח.

ודבר בעתו -

בין הילולא דכ"ק אדה"ז והילולא דכ"ק מו"ח

אדמו"ר

אזכיר עה"צ

Still waiting for the copy of the commentary ad, the brochure and plan for the June פגישה

Kasriel



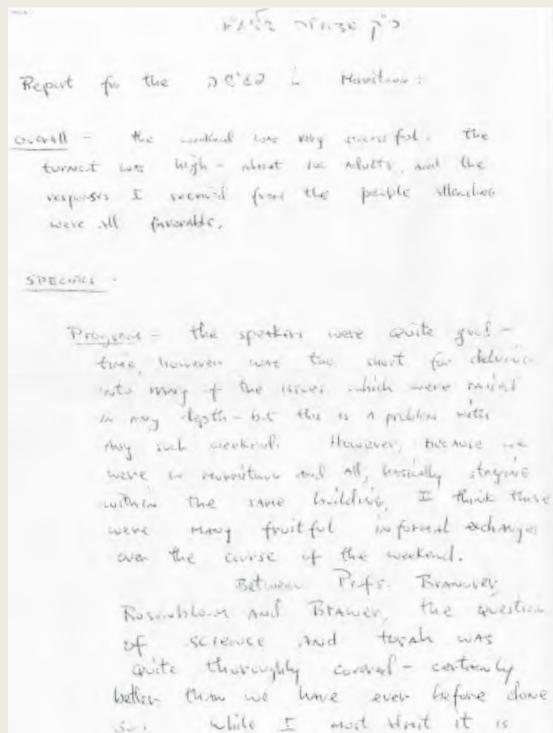
כ"ק אדמו"ר שליט"א

Report for the פגישה in Morristown:

(א) **Overall** – the weekend was very successful. The turnout was high -- about 100 adults, and the responses I received from the people attending were all favorable.

(ב) **Specifics** –

Program – the speakers were quite good – time, however, was too short for delving not many of the issues which were raised in any depth – but this is probably with any



such weekend. However, because we were in Morristown and all basically staying within the same building, I think there were many fruitful informal exchanges over the course of the weekend.

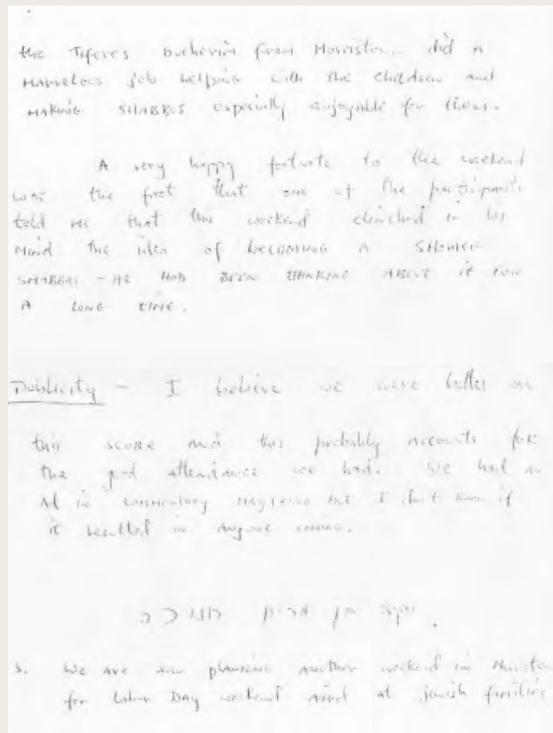
Between Profs. Branover, Rosenblum and Brawer, the question of science and Torah was quite thoroughly covered – certainly better than we have ever before done so. While I must admit it is not likely to happen, it would be an excellent thing to have all the material on science and Torah said at such a weekend printed up in some kind of self-contained document, this was the first time that we have representatives of both the physical sciences and the biological sciences together to discuss this issue – I think this was very effective.

Other noteworthy features of the pro-

gram were the participation of women speakers such as Shaina Sarah Handel- man, Mrs. Leah lock and Mrs. Bronyah Schaeffer. We had a large number of speakers but this was a benefit considering all the participants we had for the program and also that the speakers were almost continually available for informal discussions.

Rabbi Lieberman and Dr. Block were also quite effective, each in their own way. The variety presented by this weekend was interesting. We had the usual emotional appeal – *nigunim* and *rikudim*, in addition there was intellectual content and some very intellectual speakers, and finally, there were attractive elements for both the singles and the families present. Furthermore the Machon Chana girls and the Tiferes Bucherim from Morristown, did a marvelous job helping with the children and making Shabbos especially enjoyable for them.

A very happy footnote to the weekend was the fact that one of the participants told me that this weekend clinched his mind the idea of becoming Shomer Shabbos – he had been thinking about it for a long time.



Publicity – I believe we were better on the score and this probably accounts for the good attendance we had. We had an ad in Commentary Magazine but I don't know if it resulted in anyone coming.

יעקב בן מרים חנוכה

P.S. We are now planning another weekend in Morristown for Labor Day weekend aimed at Jewish families.



With his colleagues at Evergreen Solar.



Dr. Hanoka giving a lecture on science and Torah at Tiferes Bachurim in Morristown, NJ.

we came, he would humorously ask, “How did I do on my test?”

“He believed in us, and he imparted in us, that you could do whatever you truly want to accomplish.”

A New Schedule

In Crown Heights, Dr. Hanoka was forced to live with more discipline than he had been used to.

In graduate school, he would work in the lab

until midnight, then meet friends in a bar until the wee hours of the morning, waking the following day in time for lunch. The schedule of a yeshiva student, which begins early in the morning with preparations for prayer, thus presented a challenge to him.

During a yechidus, he raised this issue with the Rebbe. The Rebbe responded (paraphrased), “It is important to have a daily schedule, and to eat, study and go about your activities at a set time.”

The Rebbe added, “I also find this conduct helpful in my personal life.”

When Dr. Hanoka returned to University, the discipline he had learned in yeshiva allowed him to continue his Torah studies while pursuing his degree, and later, his career. He would follow an intense Torah learning schedule for the rest of his life. “He had a deep love and thirst for Torah,” says Yitzchak, “It gave him great nachas learning with his grandchildren, including with Avrohom Moshe, who is grateful

for that opportunity.”

Periodically, he would travel to New York to visit the Rebbe. They would discuss his Torah study and other religious activities, including the time he spent in contemplative prayer.

After addressing these points, the Rebbe would “inquire at length about his scientific studies,” said Rabbi Hanoka.

“The Rebbe knew more about what I was studying,” Dr. Hanoka once told his son, “than I

knew myself.”

At one point the Rebbe guided him to move to Boston, known as “The Athens of America,” where he became a staple of the Chabad community there. Many a time, during the heat of a *chassidish farbrengen*, he said, “The Rebbe sent Chanukah [Hanoka] to Yavan [Greece].”

Incurable Positivity

Dr. Hanoka’s defining characteristic was his consistently positive outlook on life; he viewed obstacles and difficulties as challenges to be overcome, not problems to be endured.

“I feel that this is what the Rebbe recognized in me from the beginning, and the Rebbe appreciated that,” he told his son.

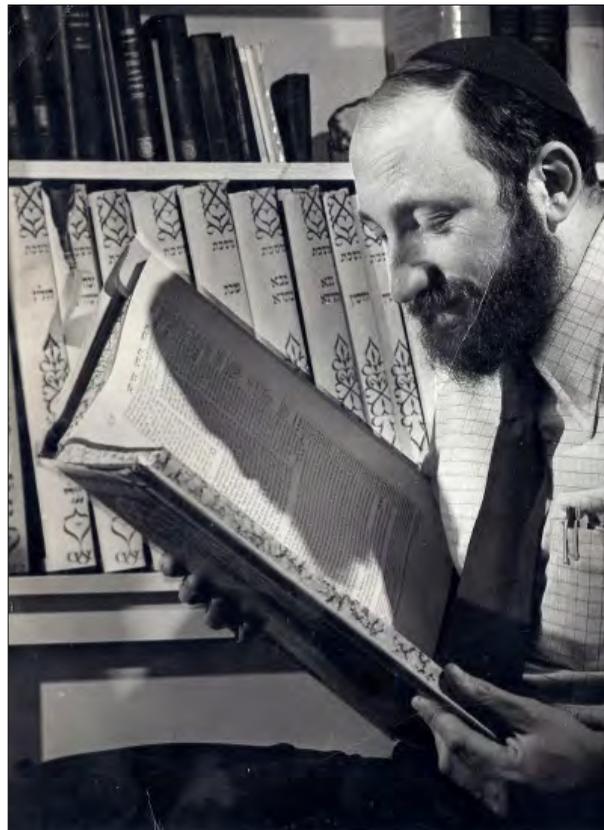
“He had a sense of urgency, cherishing each moment to use it well,” recalled Rabbi Shmuel Lew of Lubavitch of the UK, a co-organizer of Encounter With Chabad in the 1960s. “He had a total dedication to what he knew was right, with a consistency that stood the test of time over decades.”

His co-workers agreed.

He had, “unfailing energy, cheerfulness and enthusiasm,” said David Harvery, who worked with Dr. Hanoka at the Mobil Tyco Solar Energy Corp, as well as an “extensive knowledge and eagerness to learn.”

“He had such energy, personal drive, creativity, dedication and love of life,” added Mark Farber, “to the extent that [the] company’s energy stemmed from one person, it was [he] who inspired others.”

“It is rare to find a man who can couple faith, optimism and pragmatic abilities,” said Richard Chleboski, who worked with Dr. Hanoka at Evergreen Solar.



He recalled how Dr. Hanoka once announced at a board meeting: “Everyone should walk around with two pieces of paper in their pockets. On one piece it should say: All I am is ashes and dust. And on the other: Everything in the universe, Gd created for me. The challenge for everyone is to hold these two disparate concepts in harmony.”

“Jack [was] an outstanding example of how to do this,” Chleboski said.

“He always had something nice to say to people,” said Peter Vandermeulen of 7Solar. “He added to the team, building the attitude and the fun working atmosphere in the company.”

“He believed in people,” said Sachs. “He treated every human being with respect. Those who worked for him sensed that and responded to it.”

By the Grace of G-d
20th of Adar II, 5722

Mr. Jacob Hanuka
770 Eastern Parkway
Brooklyn, NY

Greeting and Blessing:

Enclosed is the Rebbe's (Shlitta) letter, which he hopes you will be able to use to good advantage in your youth work, conveying it to your friends with more elaboration if necessary.

It would be well if you also convey to them the message which we heard at the Purim Farbreng, as briefly outlined in the enclosed LNS Bulletin.

With blessing,
Nissan Mindel Secretary



By the Grace of G-d
Chanukah, 5722

Blessing and Greeting:

This is to follow up our conversation when you were here, and to reiterate my hope that you have had an opportunity to contemplate on the subject of our discussion, and that it has had some beneficial practical results along the lines which we touched upon during our conversation.

I want to take advantage of the present auspicious days of Chanukah to emphasize its timely message and inspiration. As you surely know, the events which brought about the miracle of Chanukah had to do with the battle against the Greek power and influence over the Jewish people. In those classical days of Greek art and philosophy, etc., so-called



Greek culture had conquered the whole world, except for the tiny area of Eretz Yisroel and the Jewish people. The Greek attack on the Jewish people was not directed against the study of the Torah per se, or against the observance of the Mitzvoth in general. But their attack was aimed at the study of the Torah as G-d's Torah, and against the Chukkim as the statutes of G-d's will, as we emphasize in the text of Ve-al Hanissim. In other words, the Greeks did not object the Torah as a "science," nor did they object to the observance of the Mitzvoth as a pure "ritual," but they wanted to eradicate the Divine source and Divine authority of the Torah and Mitzvoth, insisting that the human intellect is sufficient to discover all truths. At that time the Jews

who were few in number and “weak,” not only physically but also in the dialectic ways of philosophy, decided that the only true reply to follow the time-honored Jewish approach of Naaseh v’Nishma, that is to say, the readiness to adhere to the Torah and Mitzvoth without question, even at the very peril of their lives. Consequently, since this approach was not a “logical” one, their victory was also not a logical one, and the few and the weak could deal a smashing blow to the many and the strong. Herein lies the real miracles of Chanukah, as it is perpetuated by the lighting of the small Chanukah candles.

Fortunately, we live in a country and society wherein there is religious freedom and where everybody can follow his religious convictions, not only without being subjected to persecution or ridicule, but, on the contrary, being respected for it. And when a Jew is firmly determined to follow his convictions, regardless of the difficulties, it soon becomes apparent that the difficulties are not as insurmountable as they had appeared at first, and with every step along the path of truth, the going becomes easier and easier.

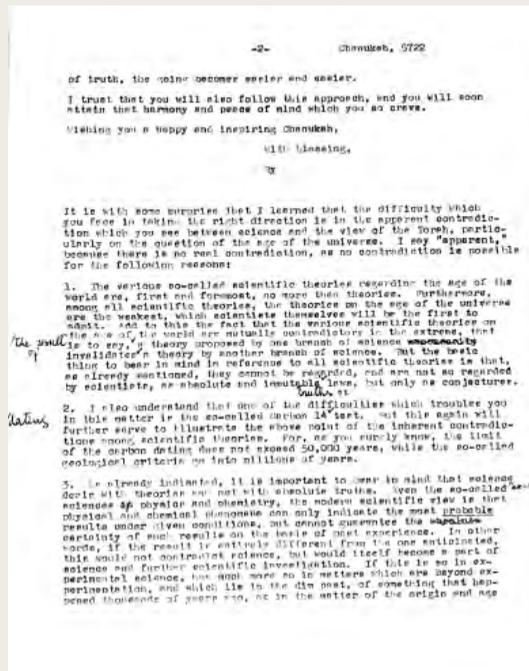
I trust that you will also follow this approach, and you will soon attain that harmony and peace of mind which you so crave.

Wishing you a happy and inspiring Chanukah,

With blessing,

By

It is with some surprise that I learned the difficulty which you face in taking the right direction is in apparent contradiction which



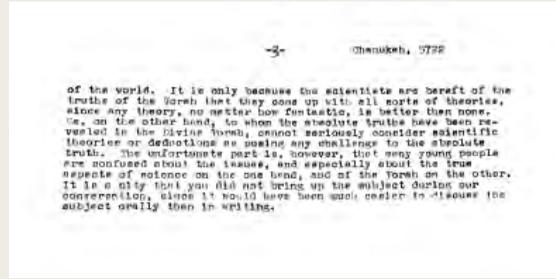
you see between science and the view of the Torah, particularly on the question of the age of the universe. I say “apparent,” because there is no real contradiction, as no contradiction is possible for the following reasons:

1. The various so-called scientific theories regarding the age of the world are, first and foremost, no more than theories. Furthermore, among all the scientific theories, the theories on the age of the universe are the weakest, which scientists themselves will be the first to admit. Add to this the fact that the various scientific theories on the age of the world are mutually contradictory in the extreme, that is to say, the result of a theory proposed by one branch of science invalidates a theory by another branch of science. But the basic thing is to bear in mind in reference to all scientific theories is that, as already men-

tioned, they cannot be regarded, and are not so regarded as already mentioned, they cannot be regarded, and are not so regarded by scientists, as absolute and immutable truths or laws, but only as conjectures.

2. I also understand that one of the difficulties which troubles you in this matter is the so-called Carbon 14 dating test. But this again will further serve to illustrate the above point of the inherent contradictions among scientific theories. For, as you surely know, the limit of the carbon dating does not exceed 50,000 years, while the so-called geological criteria go into the millions of years.

3. As already indicated, it is important to bear in mind that science deals with theories and not with absolute truths. Even the so-called “exact” sciences in physics and chemistry, the modern scientific view is that physical and chemical phenomena can only indicate the most *probable* results under given conditions, but cannot guarantee the certainty of such results on the basis of past experience. In other words, if the result is entirely different from the anticipated, this would not contradict science, but would itself become a part of science and further scientific investigation. If this is so in experimental science, how much more so in matters which are be-



yond experimentation, and which lie in the dim past, of something that happened thousands of years ago, as in the matter of the origin and age of the world. It is only because the scientists are bereft of the truths of the Torah that they come up with all sorts of theories, since any theory, no matter how fantastic, is better than none. We, on the other hand, to whom the absolute truths have been revealed in the Divine Torah, cannot seriously consider scientific theories or deductions as posing any challenge to the absolute truth. The unfortunate part is, however, that many young people are confused about the issues, and especially about the true aspects of science on the one hand, and of the Torah on the other. It is a pity that you did not bring up the subject during our conversation, since it would have been much easier to discuss the subject orally than in writing.



Dr. Hanoka with his Gemara.

My Father's Kashrus Stories

By Rabbi Yitzchak Hanoka

My father, Dr. Yaakov Hanoka, was never satisfied with mediocrity, constantly growing in all areas of his life. In 1962, as a young man, he merited to be one of the first college-aged *baalei teshuva* in America. He was studying physics at Penn State University, when he came in contact with the local Hillel rabbi. We will call him Rabbi G.

Seeing that my father was showing a serious interest in Yiddishkeit, Rabbi G arranged for a

group of Lubavitch young men to come to campus and host a Shabbaton. (They were Rabbis Binyomin Klein, Yossi Goldstein [“Uncle Yossi”], Chaim Swed, Berel Baumgarten, Avremel Shemtov, and Shmuel Lew.)

After the Shabbaton, my father decided that he wanted to go to Crown Heights to meet the Rebbe. He subsequently spent a year learning in Tomchei Temimim Lubavitch in 770, the central Lubavitcher yeshiva for young men. There was no program geared to *baalei teshuvah* at the time, and almost no *seforim* translated into English.

The Rebbe instructed my father to feel and act like a pioneer, and the Rebbe told the yeshiva administration to expect many more to follow in his footsteps. When my father replied that he did not feel like a pioneer, the Rebbe said that every Jew is a pioneer, just by virtue of having received the

Torah at Har Sinai and having the responsibility to spread its light.

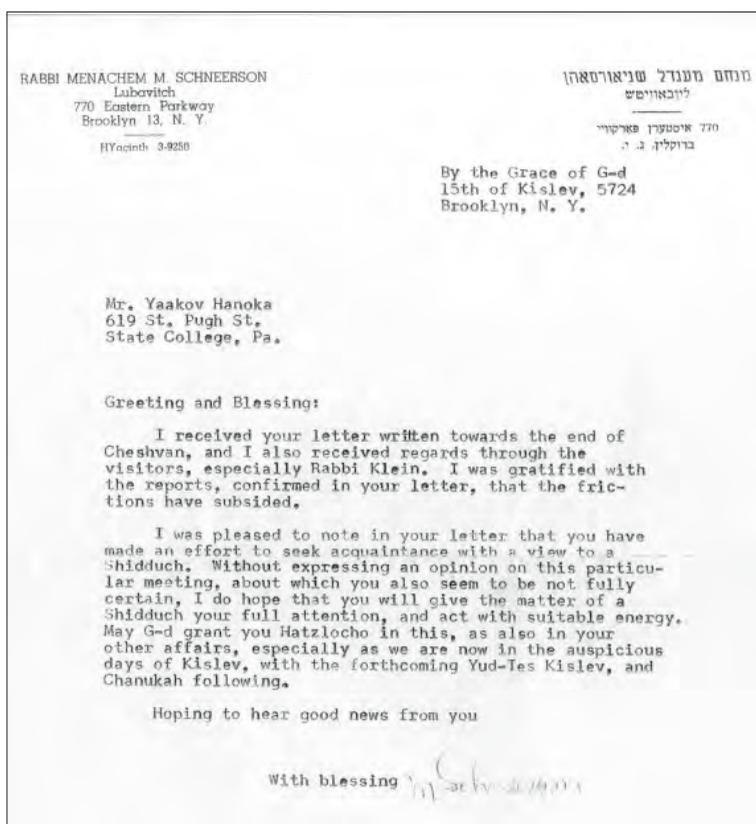
The beginning would be challenging, the Rebbe said. He should not ask himself why he was there (in yeshiva) because, for the first three (and then the Rebbe added, the first six) months, he would not be able to answer that question. The Rebbe added that he could see my father was not the type to be afraid of challenges.

As a college student, my father had resolved not to blame his parents for any of his difficulties (even though it was fashionable to do so at the time), and he pledged to view all of his future trials in life as challenges to overcome, rather than problems to be endured. My father told me that the Rebbe appreciated that approach.

The Dairy Conundrum

After my father's year in yeshiva, the Rebbe advised him to return to university and complete his degree. He also encouraged my father to pursue his scientific career in solar energy, so that he could spread Yiddishkeit in his field of expertise. My father's life's mission, it became clear, was to balance a deep commitment to Yiddishkeit and Chassidus with a successful career (registering an astounding 57 patents!) in the secular world, thereby serving as a role model to others.

My father was determined to continuing observing all the mitzvahs he had learned in Crown Heights, including Cholov Yisroel. This became a point of contention, because Rabbi G did not keep



Cholov Yisroel (it was very difficult to obtain in central Pennsylvania). My father could thus not eat the dairy in the rabbi's home, the rabbi took this difficulty. My father told the Rebbe about this, and the Rebbe instructed his secretary, Rabbi Binyomin Klein, to speak to Rabbi G on behalf of the Rebbe. Rabbi Klein told the Hillel rabbi that all of my father's *Yiddishkeit* was in his *z'chus* (merit), so he should not feel slighted.

A few years later, when my parents got married, they moved back to Rabbi G's neighborhood near Penn State while my father studied for his Ph.D. My mother was a Hebrew Studies teacher, and she taught Rabbi G's two sons. The rabbi was very indebted to my parents for living there and strengthening the community, and specifically for educating his sons. Seeing how committed my parents were to Judaism gave him a new appreciation for the importance of Cholov Yisroel. The matter was settled,

and the Rebbe then put at ease with the situation.

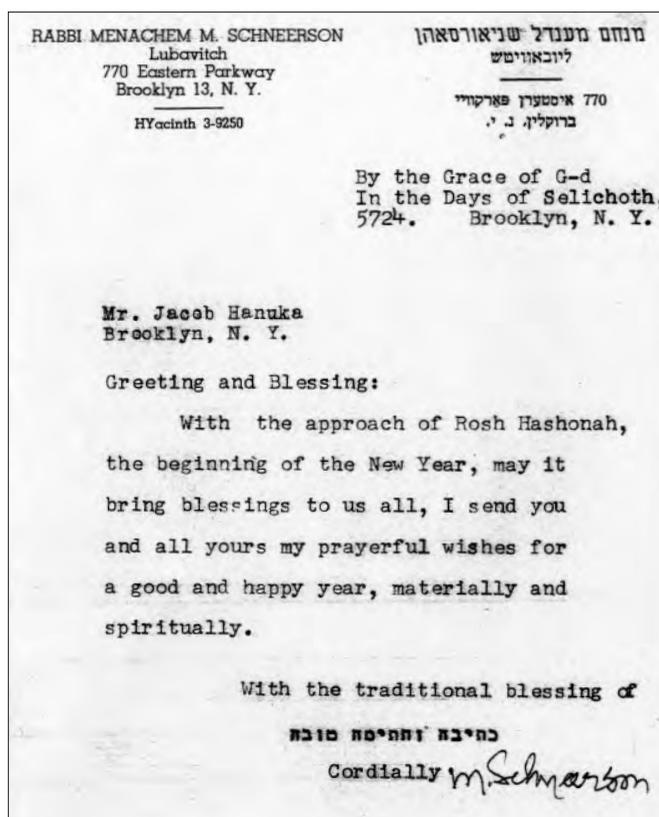
Warm Regards

Rav Sha'ar Yashuv Cohen, the chief rabbi of Haifa, Israel, and a well-known personality, once visited Penn State University while my father was studying for his doctorate.

He met my parents, and was very taken by the fact that they were keeping Cholov Yisroel in such a remote place. Rabbi Cohen had a close relationship with the Rebbe, and shortly after his visit, he came to the Rebbe for *yechidus*. He told the Rebbe about my parents, saying how proud he was of their dedication to Yiddishkeit. A few months later after Shavuot, when my father got *kos shel brocha* from the Rebbe, the Rebbe said, "I have warm regards for you from Rabbi Sha'ar Yashuv Cohen."

One time after the Shabbaton, and the attendees were lining up to meet the Rebbe at Sunday Dollars. We stood at the head of the line, and my father introduced me to the Rebbe.

The Rebbe gave me an extra dollar, and told me, "May you follow in your father's footsteps." After leaving the Rebbe's presence, I slightly humorously asked my father, "Do you think the Rebbe



wants me to become a scientist?"

My father answered, "No, he wants you to spread Yiddishkeit like we are doing here today."

With the Rebbe's encouragement, I feel a strong personal calling to share my father's unique qualities, his unique relationship with the Rebbe so could all learn from it and enrich our lives.



Three Answers, Global Guidance

By Dovid Zaklikowski

Printed below are three responses from the Rebbe to Rabbi Berel Levy, who headed the OK Laboratory and carried out many covert missions for the Rebbe in the Soviet Union. For context, we present several pages from *Kosher Investigator: How Rabbi Berel Levy Built the OK and Transformed the World of Kosher Supervision* (Hasidic Archives, 2017):

“Would you give me a ride to the synagogue?” Rabbi Levy asked the occupants of the black car. “You are going there too, so why not just take me with you?”

The time for prayer services was approaching, but there were no taxis outside the Soviet hotel in Rostov. The Soviet secret police, the KGB, were following his every move. He knew that as soon as he found a ride, the car idling outside the hotel would make its way to the synagogue as well. But the two stone-faced men inside ignored his request.

“We finally got a taxi,” Mrs. Levy recalled. “We get into the taxi, and of course the black car follows right behind us.”

Rabbi Levy’s extensive travel schedule and his willingness to take risks spurred one of the Chabad movement’s most daring projects in the 20th century: sending Westerners to the Soviet Union with the goal of spreading Judaism, supplying Soviet Jews with ritual objects and assisting them in any way possible.

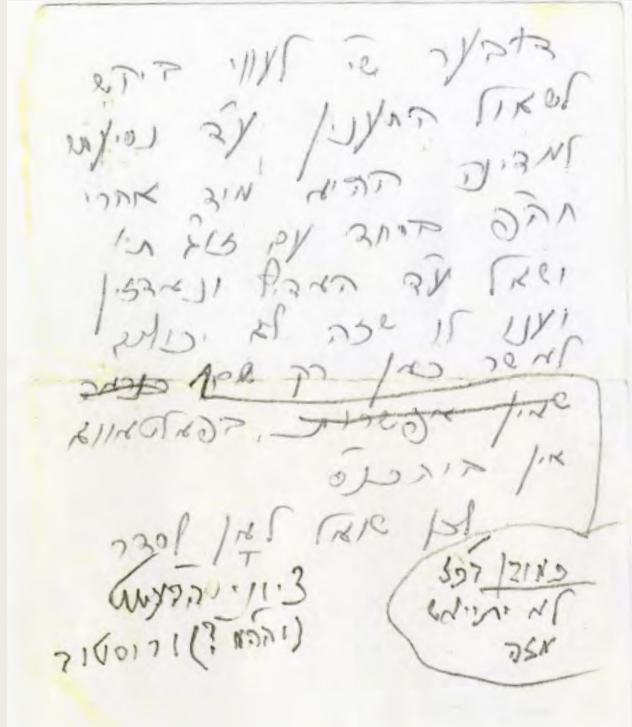
While the Soviet government did not outlaw religious practice, they did everything they could to uproot it. Public Jewish gatherings were forbidden. Young people were ridiculed by their teachers for attending synagogue, and most Jewish schools and institutions were shuttered or requisitioned for other purposes. Ritual items became difficult to find as the older generation died out.

For many years the Rebbe sent ritual items to the Soviet Union through the Israeli diplomatic mission in the Soviet Union. But when diplomatic ties between the two countries were severed after the Six-Day War in 1967, he began to look for an alternate route.

Around the same time, American Jewish activists began to publicly protest on behalf of Soviet Jewry. As his work in kosher took him to the Far East frequently, Rabbi Levy wondered if he might be able to assist Jews in the USSR. In 1967 he wrote to the Rebbe asking advice about entering the Soviet Union.

It was a dangerous undertaking. Not long before, a fisherman in Prague had discovered the body of Charles Jordan, a high official with the Joint Distribution Committee, in the Vltava River. Mr. Jordan dedicated his life to helping Jews and other refugees to flee the Soviet Union. The murder remains unsolved until today, but at the time it was believed to have been orchestrated by the KGB.

The Rebbe discouraged Rabbi Levy, stating that it was too risky, and he dropped the idea.



1. Don't Give Up

דובער ש' לעווי ביקש לשאול התענין ע"ד נסיעתו למדינה ההיא מיד אחר חה"פ ביחד עם זוג' תי' ושאל ע"ד האדיץ ונאדזין וענו לו שזה לא יכולים לאשר כאן רק שם, כנראה שאין אפשרות, בפאלטאווא אין ביהכנ"ס

כ"ק אדמו"ר מחק: "כנאה שאין אפשרות" וכתב: **כמובן** בכ"ז לא יתאייש מזה

בסוף המכתב כתב הרבי: ציוני הבעש"ט (והה"מ?) ורוסטוב

מאחורה כתב: **מהיר**

In 1972, Rabbi Levy wrote to inform the Rebbe that he would be in Europe for several days, and from there would travel to the Far East. In between, he would have a break of several days. "Should I go to the Soviet Union to assist the Jews there?" he asked. The Rebbe crossed out the words "Should I," and returned the letter. The message was clear.

Rabbi Levy's trip to the Soviet Union that win-

ter was the first of many. On five of them he was accompanied by his wife; once his son Don Yoel came with him; and three times he took his youngest son, Eliezer.

On that first trip to the Soviet Union, the Levys did not know what to expect, or how to make contact with Jews in the country. In order to be granted visas, they were required to provide a detailed itin-



At the *tziyon* of the Rebbe's father, Reb Leivik.



At the *tziyon* of the Baal Shem Tov.

erary, with flights, hotels and tourist destinations scheduled to the minute. This itinerary had to be preapproved by the Soviet travel agency, Intourist. Founded by the infamous Joseph Stalin, the agency was staffed with secret police. It was said that “Intourist is to tourism what indigestion is to digestion.”

The Levys decided to focus their itinerary on cities that were important in Chabad history or had a personal significance. They scheduled visits to such places as Ilya, the town where Rabbi Levy’s

maternal grandparents had resided, and Haditch, where the founder of the Chabad movement, Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, was interred. They hoped that in each city they would be able to visit the synagogues and meet local Jews.

1. Don't Give Up

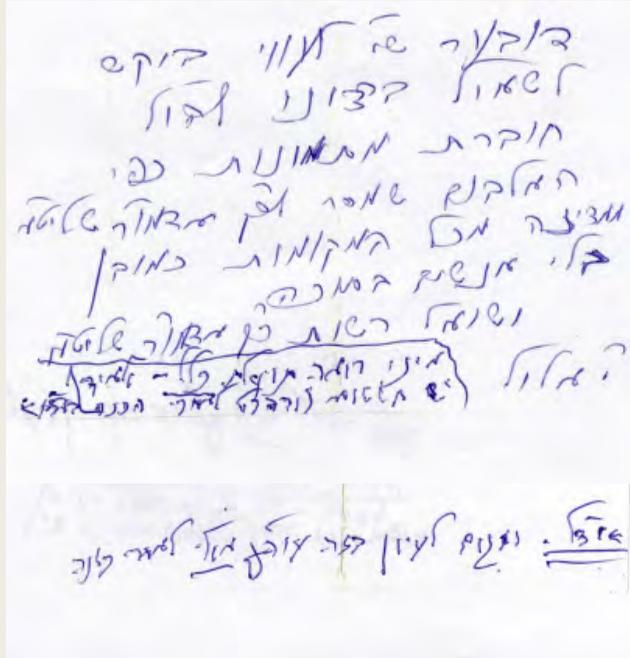
Before a trip to the Soviet Union with his wife, Rabbi Levy informed the Rebbe that he had requested permission from the Soviet authorities to visit Haditch and Nizhyn, the burial places of the Alter Rebbe and the Mitteler Rebbe. “And they responded that they cannot grant permission while I am here [in America]. It seems that it will not be possible [to visit the sites].”

The Rebbe crossed out “It seems that it will not be possible,” and wrote, “It is *understood* in all this, that he should not give up.” And at the end, added that Rabbi Levi should also try to visit the grave of the Baal Shem Tov, the city

of Rostov (where the Rebbe Rashab is buried), and perhaps also the grave of the Maggid of Mezritch.



Few in the American Jewish community understood how dangerous religious observance had become in the Soviet Union. After a visit to the USSR, Senator James Buckley spoke publicly about his visit to a synagogue and the fear he had



2. Photos in Soviet Union

דובער שיי לעווי ביקש לשאול ברצונו להו"ל חוברת מתמונות כפי האלבום שמסר לכ"ק אדמו"ר שליט"א ממדינה [ההיא] מכל המקומות כמובן בלי אנשים ברורה

ושואל רשות כ"ק אדמו"ר שליט"א

י' אלול

כ"ק אדמו"ר ענה: איני רואה תועלת כלל - ולאידך יש חששות (ובפרט לאחר הכנס באה"ק יד"ל). ומקום לעיון בזה עוה"פ אולי לאחר כשנה

witnessed in the Jews he met there.

“Religious persecution is an important part of the strategy of the Soviet rulers to erase all forms of freedom,” he wrote in a February 1975 statement. “In many ways [the Soviet Union today is] far more cruel and more oppressive than even the persecu-

tion under Stalin.”

Mrs. Levy was blunt about the anxiety she felt during their trips. “Freedom!! At last,” she began a letter to her daughter. “I have not slept one night yet since I left home. If I had to stay any longer, I don’t think I’d have made it.” Until they landed in



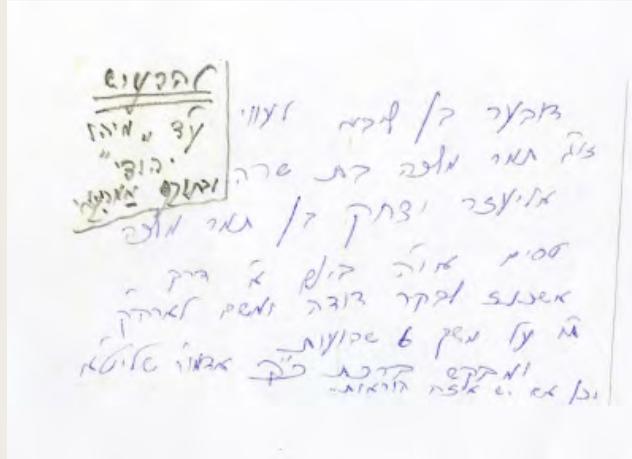
Rabbi Levy receives *lekach* from the Rebbe.



Dancing with a group of yidden in the Soviet Union.

the Rome airport, she wrote, she never believed they would make it out. “It’s just an awful country, and we don’t know how lucky we are to be living elsewhere.”

Though Rabbi Levy himself seemed to think little of the risks involved in his expeditions, others thought of them often. “Rabbi Levy is in Russia,” Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson, the Rebbe’s wife, once said to the man who helped her with household chores. “It is very dangerous there. He brought there Jewish books and other items. I think about him every day.” The rebbetzin had first-hand experience, having lived in the Soviet Union with her father, the previous Lubavitcher Rebbe, who was arrested and sentenced to death for the crime of strengthening Jewish observance. Under international pressure, his sentence was commuted



3. Americanism

דובער בן ליבא לעווי

זוג' תמר מלכה בת שרה

אליעזר יצחק בן תמר מלכה

טסים אי"ה ביום א' דרך אשכנז לבקר דודה ומשם לארה"ק על משך 6 שבועות ומקש ברכת כ"ק אדמו"ר שליט"א וכן אם יש איזה הוראות

כתב כ"ק אדמו"ר: **להרעיש** ע"ד "מיהו יהודי" ובתוקף אמריקאי

and he was expelled from the country.

When she did not accompany her husband on his trips, Mrs. Levy worried incessantly. To Rabbi Levy, however, they were simply an exciting challenge. "I am doing so much for these people," he told his wife. "You don't have to be so frightened."

Those who encountered him in the Soviet Union confirmed that he seemed utterly confident and unafraid. "He knew that he was an emissary of

the Rebbe," said Rabbi Yitzchok Kogan, who was a leader of the Chabad underground in Leningrad, now St. Petersburg. "As an independent-minded person, he exhibited no fear in all of his doings and visits in the houses of the Chabad underground." Now the chief slaughterer of the Russian Jewish community, Rabbi Kogan recalled how Rabbi Levy, on one of his trips, gave him the certification to be a shochet.



Rebbetzin Levy attends a clandestine *bris*.



Rabbi Levy consults a young man in his yiddishkeit.

Rabbi Levy did not write or speak much about these trips, fearing to endanger the Jews he met. "I am not ready to say even one word about my trips there," he once told a reporter who asked. However,

undertake the project.

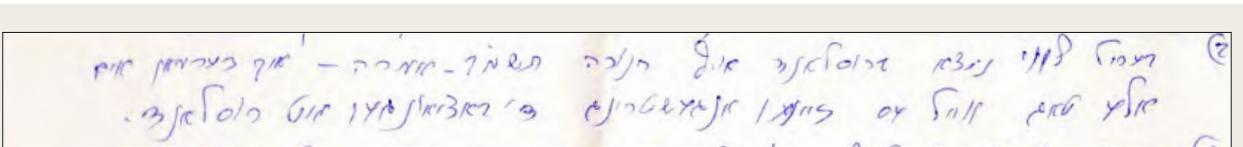
The Rebbe responded, "I do not see any benefit at all from this – on the contrary, there are concerns

he did make brief diary entries in order to be able to give the Rebbe a full accounting of everything that happened.

Once, Knesset member Menachem Hacohen was in the USSR at the same time as Rabbi Levy, and they participated in a *farbrengen* together with one of the Chabad activists. Afterwards, Mr. Hacohen wrote an article for *Yediot Achronot*, at the time Israel's largest newspaper, in which he described the gathering and those who attended. In a private audience the Rebbe told Rabbi Levy how much the story had pained him, and fervently hoped there would not be repercussions.

2. Photos in Soviet Union

Rabbi Levy informed the Rebbe that he would like to publish, and publicize, an album of photos from his trip to the Soviet Union, while making sure that none of the faces could be seen in the photos. He asked the Rebbe's permission to



From the notes of Berl Junik, grandfather of the kallah: "Berel Levy was in Russia for Chanukah 5742 [1981]. [[The Rebbetzin] told me 'I think about him every day, because the relations with Russia is under duress.'"



Rabbi Levy at the Rebbe's farbrengen (sitting on the left).

(especially following the gathering in the Holy Land) and this *should be enough for those who understand* [the situation in the Soviet Union]. Perhaps the idea can be revisited in a year.”



Sitting close to the Lubavitcher Rebbe as he spoke for hours at Chassidic gatherings, Rabbi Levy grew to share his desire to reach every Jew. The Rebbe wanted to strengthen Jewish observance in the most far-flung locations in the world, and Rabbi Levy’s work took him to some of them. In an interview, he paraphrased a message he received from the Rebbe more than once: “There is no such thing as traveling somewhere only for whatever

mission I have to do in the food world. Every trip also has to be utilized for spreading Torah and Judaism.”

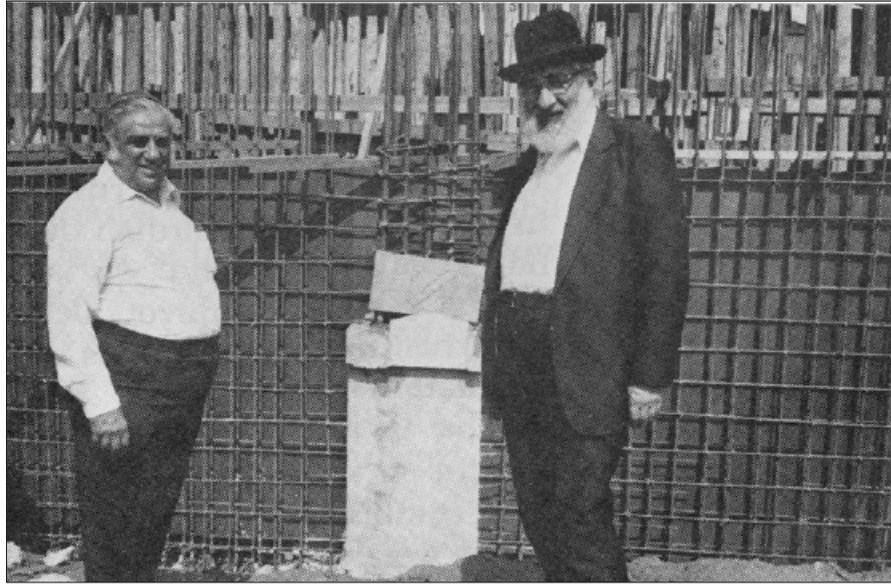
Rabbi Levy’s grandson Rabbi Yosef Gartenhaus, principal of Yeshivas Torah Temimah in Lakewood, New Jersey, remembered how his grandfather used to emphasize the importance of reaching out to non-observant Jews. “We need to bring people closer to Yiddishkeit,” Rabbi Levy would tell his grandchildren. “It is not only about us and our immediate community.”

“He lived it,” Rabbi Gartenhaus said. “We expected to always hear about his trips, and we knew that this [Jewish outreach] was what his life was really about.”

Rabbi Levy’s task as the Rebbe’s “ambassador”

was not usually stated explicitly, and sometimes came as a surprise. But Rabbi Levy always rose to the occasion. “Man never knows what the Almighty has in store for him when he travels around the world,” he wrote in February 1985. “It’s true that my work is a *melech hakodesh*, a sacred mission in itself. However... it seems that G-d has other missions for us [as well].”

Before every trip, Rabbi Levy would write to inform the Rebbe where he was going. The Rebbe’s responses varied greatly depending on Rabbi Levy’s destination, but were always short and to the point. “I felt like I was living in the times of the Baal Shem Tov,” Rabbi Levy said, referring to the cryptic instructions that the founder of Chassidism was known for giving his disciples.



In the Philippines, observing the construction of a mikvah that he sponsored.

3. Americanism

Rabbi Levy informed the Rebbe that he, his wife, and his son Eliezer would be going to Germany to visit his aunt, and then to Israel for six weeks. He asked for the Rebbe’s blessing, and whether the Rebbe had “any directives,” for them during the trip.

The Rebbe responded, “*To make a ruckus* about *mihu Yehudi* and with the firm attitude of an American.”



In the Rebbe's Presence

By Shamshon Junik

My most vivid early memories of my father, Rabbi Berl Junik, *alav hashalom*, are of his involvement with the Rebbe and *Beis Harav*, the Rebbe's household.

There were the public duties, which everyone saw: Before the Rebbe's *farbrengens*, my father would set the table with a pristine white tablecloth, the Rebbe's *becher*, napkins, and wristwatch. On the last day of major *yomim toivim*, when the Rebbe would wash his hands at the gathering, my father would also set out challah and hold the basin while the Rebbe washed. After the passing of Rabbi Mordechai Mentlick, during Tishrei 1987, my father was appointed the Rebbe's "*Sar Hamashkin*," pouring wine into the Rebbe's *becher* for *Kiddush* and *Havdalah* and refilling the cup during *Kos Shel Brachah*.

Before these *farbrengens*, the Rebbe would open office door, leaving it slightly ajar. My father would go into the room, known as "*Gan Eden Haelyon*," where the Rebbe was usually looking into a *sefer* or something else, and discretely take the Rebbe's *becher*.

During the early years, until the mid-1970s, Anash would approach the Rebbe in the middle of the *farbrengen* to say *l'chaim* for a birthday, bar mitzvah, wedding or to ask for a *brachah*. Then the custom became that only *chassanim* could approach

the Rebbe. In 1978, all of this stopped. Community leaders or *shluchim* who had requested the Rebbe's blessing for an upcoming event would give a bottle of *mashke* to the *mazkirus* before Shabbos, and the *mazkir* would bring it to the Rebbe's room. When my father took the Rebbe's *becher*, he would also take those bottles of *mashke*.

During the *farbrengen*, the people who had given the bottles would approach the Rebbe one by one. The Rebbe would pour some *l'chaim* from the bottle of *mashke*, or, occasionally, he would pour from his *becher* into the *mashke*. The Rebbe would then give back the bottle to be used at the event.

As children and young adults, my siblings and I would help our father bring down the items needed for the *farbrengen* from a locked cupboard, located in the staircase just off the antechamber known as "*Gan Eden Hatachton*." We would then help set the table, and after the *farbrengen*, bring everything back upstairs.

Then there were the less visible parts of my father's work, things he did for the Rebbe and the Rebbetzin in their home. As children, we once or twice had the privilege of visiting the Rebbe's house. I remember how regal the Rebbetzin looked, and how the table was set with china dishes, beautiful cutlery, and crystal glasses. In my young eyes, they were true royalty.

My father's job came with other privileges as well. The Rebbe would sometimes ask him about his personal life, a particular child, his health, or the



My father holds the wash basin at a children's rally, Sukkos 1976.

like. And sometimes, my father would seize a favorable opportunity to ask the Rebbe a question about personal matters, or, when necessary, for a *brachah*.

In general, however, my father strove to go unnoticed. "It does not matter who gets to do what the Rebbe wants," he used to say, "as long as it gets done." He never put himself forward, but the Rebbe knew he could count on my father when needed. The Rebbe once told his mother, Rebbeztin Chana, that he could rely on three people, one of them being my father.

Over the years, he was selected for many tasks that required extreme



My father father filling up the Rebbe's becher during *kos shel brachah*.



My father with the Rebbe (left), 1952.

discretion. Some of these stories and anecdotes I am sharing below. (Note that the quotes are transcribed from memory and freely translated from the Yiddish. Many details have been omitted for the sake of brevity.)

European Trip

In 1953, the Rebbetzin secretly traveled to Europe. While she was away, my father would bring the Rebbe supper every night and see if anything were needed in the apartment. It was during this

period that the Rebbe famously told my father about Reb Mendel, an aide in the home of the Rebbe Rashab. Whenever someone asked Reb Mendel what he saw in the Rebbe's home, he would respond, "I do not know."

"If someone asks you about your work," the Rebbe told my father, "answer that you do not know, or some other response." He added, "If you could forget everything you saw, that is even better."

My father accompanied the Rebbe and Rebbetzin to the airport, to assist the Rebbetzin with her luggage. He also carried her carry-on bag all the way to the steps of the plane, which at the time was permitted. He later recalled that while the plane was taking off, the Rebbe was quietly saying something to himself, and there were tears in his eyes. The trust they had for my father was so complete that the suitcase the Rebbetzin traveled with was tagged "Berl Junik."

Keeping the Secret

In 1953, Reb Yisroel Aryeh Leib, the Rebbe's brother, passed away. His mother, Rebbetzin Chana, was quite frail, and the Rebbe decided not to give her the news. This required some elaborate schemes, in which my father was involved: Despite the fact that he was sitting *shiva*, the Rebbe continued to visit his mother each day in her home, as was his custom. He asked my father to paint his non-leather Ohel shoes black, so that his mother would



My father standing (second from the right) at a farbrengen of the Rebbe, 1960's.



My father (left) during *kos shel brachah*.

not notice the difference.

The Rebbe also wanted to keep his visit as short as possible, so it was my father's "job" to distract Rebbetzin Chana, allowing the Rebbe to leave soon after he arrived. To do this, he would go to one of the public phones on Kingston Avenue and call her. When the phone rang, the Rebbe would stand up and bid her farewell, saying that she should talk freely, or something similar.

My father was also tasked with bringing Rebbetzin Chana's mail to the Rebbe before she had

a chance to take it in. The Rebbe would make sure that there were no condolence letters that might have revealed his brother's passing, and then my father would return the mail to the mailbox.

The Belated Matzah

"If you do what the Rebbe wants, you will not lose out," my father would often say. This was highlighted once on Pesach, when my father, and some of my siblings and I, would receive matzah personally from the Rebbe before both *Seders* (together with other select individuals).

At that time, the Rebbe's brother-in-law, Rabbi Shmaryahu Gurary (the "Rashag") was frail due to a stroke. It was my father's job to escort him, on Shabbos and yom tov, from his third floor apartment in 770 to the large *shul* for Maariv each night and bring him back afterwards. In addition (though it made him late to work), each morning at 9:30, he would help the

Rashag down the stairs from his apartment to the car that was waiting to drive him to the yeshivah.

For many years, on erev Pesach, the Rebbe would give out matzah. To those making a public Seder, the Rebbe would give a pound or two. In 1977, after the Rebbe had a heart attack, he gave matzah to members of the Kollel to distribute to everyone. The next year, the Rebbe once again gave matzah to those making a public Seder (who lived within driving distance).



With the Rebbe, 1952.

In addition, after Maariv on the first night, the Rebbe would give matzah to the secretariat, those who helped in the Rebbe's house, and a select few of the older chassidim. When Pesach was on Shabbos, he would give it on erev Pesach.

The first year that my father escorted the Rashag, we suggested that perhaps on the Seder night he should let someone else do it; otherwise he would miss receiving the matzah. He responded: "No, I do this every time because they [Beis Harav] want me to make sure Rabbi Gurary is okay, and I will do it tonight as well."

That night, when everyone had received their matzah, the Rebbe said, "I think someone is missing." One of the Rebbe's *mazkirim*, Rabbi Leibel Groner, responded that Berl Junik had taken the Rashag upstairs. The Rebbe said someone should take for him, and being the oldest son there, I received a complete matzah and an additional piece for my father.

Later, when the Rebbe was leaving 770, he saw my father standing with everyone in the lobby. The Rebbe gave him a questioning look, as if asking whether he had received the matzah, and my father subtly nodded his head ... Later, my father

stressed to us once again that doing the Rebbe's will is more important than anything. You could never lose out that way.

Shared Kaarah

From what I think was 1950 or 1951 until 1954, my father served the Rebbe during the Seder in the Frierdiker Rebbe's apartment on the second floor of 770. (The Rebbe held the Seder there until passing of Rebbetzin Nechama Dina in 1971.)

In 1952, the Rebbe looked at my father when the Seder began and asked him where his *kaarah* (קערה) for the Seder was. My father responded that he would fulfill his obligation with the Rebbe's Seder plate. Though the Rebbe had rejected this plea from others, telling them to make their own *kaarahs*, the Rebbe accepted it from my father, saying, "If you rely on me for everything, you can rely on me for this as well."

Midnight Call

There was once a sensitive issue in 770 that needed to be dealt with discretely. Only a very small circle knew about it. Not knowing how to handle it, they told the Rebbetzin about it, and she said, "Let me take care of it." She called my father, told him what happened, and asked him to make sure the issue was resolved.

Over the next ten days, every day after work, my father dealt with the issue. Each night, he would call the Rebbetzin to report on the progress he was making.

Usually, the Rebbetzin was very careful to not



The Rebbe during the reading of the *kesubah* at my parents wedding.



Rebbetzin Chana (second from right), near my mother, at my parents wedding.

make anyone feel uncomfortable, impose her will on others, or garner any attention for herself. However, for the Rebbe, she would go out of her comfort zone, and during this episode, she once called our home at around 12:45 A.M.

That night, as usual, she had stayed up until the Rebbe returned home from 770. She had then relayed my father's "progress report" to the Rebbe, who had asked her some questions that she did not know the answer to. On the spot, she called my startled father, starting the conversation, "You are probably not sleeping," and repeated the Rebbe's questions (if I recall correctly, my father said that he heard the Rebbe in the background). Having taken note of his answers, she bid him farewell. In the end, my father successfully resolved the situation.

A Private Sukkah

One year, it was proposed to build a private *sukkah* in the driveway in front of 770 for the Rebbe's personal, private use. (The benefit would be that the Rebbe could enter the *sukkah* unnoticed.) There was some light opposition, however, because they felt the Rebbe would not use it.

My father discussed it with the Rebbetzin, who said, "Because it was decided to build a *sukkah* there, don't ask by [someone who worked in 770]. It's a private matter. *Im yirtze Hashem*, after Yom Kippur, I will tell him [the Rebbe] that a *sukkah* was erected there."

A few days later, she asked my father how much the *sukkah* cost, "I would like to pay." My



My father (third from left) at the *siyum* for his *shechitah* students.



My father talks to the new *shochtim*.

father responded that everybody had “put in a finger,” meaning that the costs were taken care of, and it was no big deal. To this, the Rebbetzin replied, “And I would like to give a hand.”

(Later, a sukkah was built in a room in 770 with a retractable roof.)

The Shechitah Class

In the mid-1950s, Reb Shmuel Levitin, the official *mashpiah* in 770, asked my father to take over

the class on *shechitah* for the bachurim. For the next three months, he arrived directly from work, before eating dinner, and taught on his feet from eight to ten P.M., when he finally went home. It was very tiring, and when he was asked to do it again the next year, he refused. Only then was he informed that the idea for him to teach had come from “higher up,” i.e., the Rebbe.

My father continued the class for the next forty years, never complaining or expressing his frustration. To us it was clear: if this was what the Rebbe wanted, he did it with a smile and pride.

Students of the class would relate how he had all the patience in the world for them, going over the details of how to *shtel* (make sure there are no imperfections in the blade) dozens of times. They said, “We never felt rushed.”

A New Seder?

Once, in the early 1950s, my father was accompanying the Rebbe to his apartment at 346 New York Ave (the Rebbe moved to 1304 President Street in 1955), when my father noticed that the Rebbe’s breathing was a bit heavy. He took the Rebbe’s arm to assist him in walking the stairs, but the Rebbe stopped immediately and remarked, “What type of new *seder* is this?”

Another time, there was a downpour with strong winds, and my father tried to cover the Rebbe with an umbrella. The Rebbe remarked with a



The Rebbe waving to my daughter Raizy (in the red coat).



Setting up the Rebbe's *shtender*.

smile, “*A neih minhag?*” A new custom?

“He Wouldn’t Eat”

Around 1953, many *bachurim* went on Merkos Shlichus, and barely a *minyan* remained in the *yeshivah*. The kitchen was thus closed, and for several weeks my father ate supper in the Rebbe’s apartment. One day, when he came to the apartment, he heard the Rebbe tell the Rebbetzin, “I will go into the next room; otherwise he will not want to eat.”

Appreciative Son

After World War II, many chassidim smuggled out of the Soviet Union using forged Polish passports. Whole “families” of Polish citizens were born this way, and in 1946, my father was placed on the Polish passport of a mother with a single child.

All information in the Soviet Union was on a need-to-know basis: If you did not need to know, you simply were not told. Those who were on the Communists’ lists of “enemies” had to be especially careful. Since everyone was using assumed names, during the first part of the trip, my father did not know who his “mother” was. Only later, when other chassidim recognized her, did he find out that it was Rebbetzin Chana.

Both my father and my father’s older sister, Rebbetzin Etty Jurkowitz, made every effort to assist Rebbetzin Chana with her physical and emotional needs dur-

ing the arduous trip, keeping her company and taking her for walks.

Over the years, in various ways, the Rebbe showed his appreciation for their dedication to his mother. One time, referring to my father, Rebbetzin Chana asked the Rebbe, “How is your ‘brother’ doing?” The Rebbe once called my father, “*svoy brat*,” a Russian expression that means “one of us,” but in literal terms, it means a brother.



At the Rebbetzin's *levaya*, my father is standing next to the Rebbe (on the left), and I am on the right.

Fatherly Care

Since my father's parents lived in Montreal, the Rebbe often stepped in to fill a parental role in his life. Among other things, the Rebbe invested a great deal of time and effort into convincing my father to get married, helping him choose a spouse, and find employment.

The Rebbe's guidance extended to the minutest details of his life. He once asked my father if he had purchased a new suit for *yom tov*. My father said no. The Rebbe gave him one hundred dollars to purchase a suit and anything else he needed. When he came next, the Rebbe asked if he was wearing the new suit. He affirmed that he was, and the Rebbe asked him to turn around, which he did. Smiling,

the Rebbe said, "I think it's a bit small..."

Another time, the Rebbe encouraged him to visit his parents (he had not seen them in four years) and assisted with his papers. Before he left, the Rebbe gave him money to purchase gifts for his parents and younger sister, and, once in Montreal, to purchase "a *torte*" (cream cake).

When my uncle Dovid was going to Montreal, the Rebbe asked my father if they had arranged to send a "signal" through the telephone. At the time, long distance calls were prohibitively expensive, so people would place a collect call, and instead of stating their name at the prompt, they would say, for example, "*ungekumen*" (arrived), and then the other party knew they had arrived safely. My father said they had not. That was good, the Rebbe said,





My birthday gift to the Rebbetzin, which she insisted on sharing with my mother.

“because the *shver* [the Friediker Rebbe] said it is not totally kosher.”

My father was once jay walking, and the Rebbe saw. The Rebbe called him over and told him it was against the law. (Even fifty years later, whenever I cross inappropriately, I think of this story.)

Salary from the Rebbe

In the early 1970s, due to an economic recession, there was not much work for diamond cutters. The Rebbe knew that my father wasn't working much. When he came into the Rebbe's office to discuss changing professions, the Rebbe told him to discuss it with Reb Dovid Deitsch, a New Haven businessman. The Rebbe then asked him, “How many weeks are you not working?” He responded



The Rebbetzin.

that it had been three weeks. “How much do you make a week?” My father told him the amount. The Rebbe took three weeks' salary out of his pocket and gave it to him. He then added that if my father needed more, he should go to the *mazkir*, Rabbi Chaim Mordechai Aizik Hodakov, every week to receive the same sum. When conditions improved and he had more work, my father repaid the Rebbe.

Yechidus Anniversary

My father's first *yechidus* with the Rebbe was on the seventh of Iyar, 1950. Every ten years, around that day, my father would bring his entire family in for *yechidus*.

In 1990, however, when it was time for another anniversary *yechidus*, the Rebbe had stopped having private audiences. My father wrote to the

Rebbe asking what they should do, and the Rebbe responded that they should come all together to “Sunday dollars” which is “*yechidus diatah*” (the current way to have yechidus).

The Right Eye

My father, as a *bachur*, was once in the Rebbe’s room. The Rebbe was opening letters, reading them, and then placing them in a large pile. At one point, The Rebbe said to himself (and to my father), “*Ahh... ich hob azoi gemacht a hachlatah, tzu kuken oif yeder zach mit a rechter oig, oib nisht volt ich nisht oisgahalten*” (I made a resolution to look at everything with the right eye, if I would not do that, I would not be able to endure). As a child, I was taken so much by this story that I typed up the words in Yiddish and kept it in my wallet for many years.

Before Rosh Hashanah 1952, the Rebbe gave my father a box, saying, “Someone sent this to me, and I do not take any presents. It should be a good beginning for the wedding [my father was then engaged]. You probably need to dress in a black tie, with a white handkerchief [in the jacket pocket]. You just need to look that nothing [besides the handkerchiefs] is inside the box. Use it in health and happiness.”

The box contained eight white handkerchiefs, and our parents had eight children. Years later, my father would present one to each of us before their weddings.

Desire to Assist

My siblings and I grew up hearing stories of the Rebbe, and of my father’s work in Beis Harav. While the stories and anecdotes had their influence on us, it was mainly watching our father, a living example, which taught us the correct path in life. It also created a desire to follow in his footsteps.

As a young *bachur* learning in Oholei Torah, I was determined to be *zoche* to become involved in Beis Harav, and, by extension, in the daily operations of 770. My father, who didn’t want me to be distracted from my studies, was not thrilled with my new pursuit. Nevertheless, when the opportunity presented itself during Tishrei of 1978, with the assistance of Chaim Baruch Halberstam, I began to assist in Beis Harav.¹

During my lunch break, I would call the Rebbetzin, or her sister, and see if there was anything that I could help them with. Over the next few years, I performed various tasks in 770 and the Rebbe’s house. In addition, so that there should always be someone in 770, I was given a bed in the WLCC room, from which the Rebbe’s *farbrengens* were broadcast.

It was a fascinating time. I was a sixteen-year-old *bachur* with responsibilities beyond my years, and the need to make decisions quickly in various situations matured me quickly.

1. When I started to help out in the Rebbe’s house, there were not many others assisting in Beis Harav, besides Chessed Halberstam, who worked in the house during the day. When the Rebbetzin fell in 1982, Sholom Gansburg moved into the house to help out. Also helping were Mendel Gansburg and Chaim Baruch Halberstam. While they may have other recollections, the episodes described here were witnessed first-hand.



The "Bistritzkis' *shalach manos*."



The third-floor room in the Rebbe's house where the Purim cakes were kept (the Bistritzki cake is on the left).

At the Rebbe's Home

Whenever I went to the Rebbe and Rebbetzin's home, the Rebbetzin always made a point of making me feel comfortable. Being that my visits were informal, I would not make an appointment, or, at times, even call before. I would ring the bell, and the Rebbetzin would open the door. If she had company, I understood it was not a good time and left.

She would offer me a snack, telling me to go to the refrigerator and/or the cabinet to take some-

thing. Many times we would sit together and drink coffee or tea. She would inquire about what was going on in our family, yeshivah, with my friends, and life in general. During one of these conversations, I told her that the *bachurim* in Oholei Torah were learning well. I later heard that she had told someone else, "I heard that in Oholei Torah, the *bachurim* are learning well."

I had the merit, during the first few months, to accompany the Rebbetzin to Manhattan, where she had some errands. Later, when Chessed Halberstam took over the job of driving the Rebbetzin, I occasionally joined them as well.

Her Language

Over time, I learned that the best way to communicate with the Rebbetzin was to speak to her in the same "language" she spoke to me. By that I mean a clear, good Yiddish, but also, using the same terms she did when discussing her past. For instance, when she spoke about her family, she would say "*der tatte*" (the father), or "*der zaide*" (the grandfather).

For the sake of clarity, I would use the same terms, for example, "*Der tatte iz geven in Marienbad in drie un tzvanzig jahr*" (the father [the Friediker Rebbe] was in Marienbad [a popular spa town] in the year 1923). A few times during these conversations, she asked me, "Whose father, mine or yours?"



At the yechidus (I am standing, third from the left) of Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu, the chief rabbi of Israel, in the library behind the Rebbe and Rebbetzin's apartment.

Sensitivity

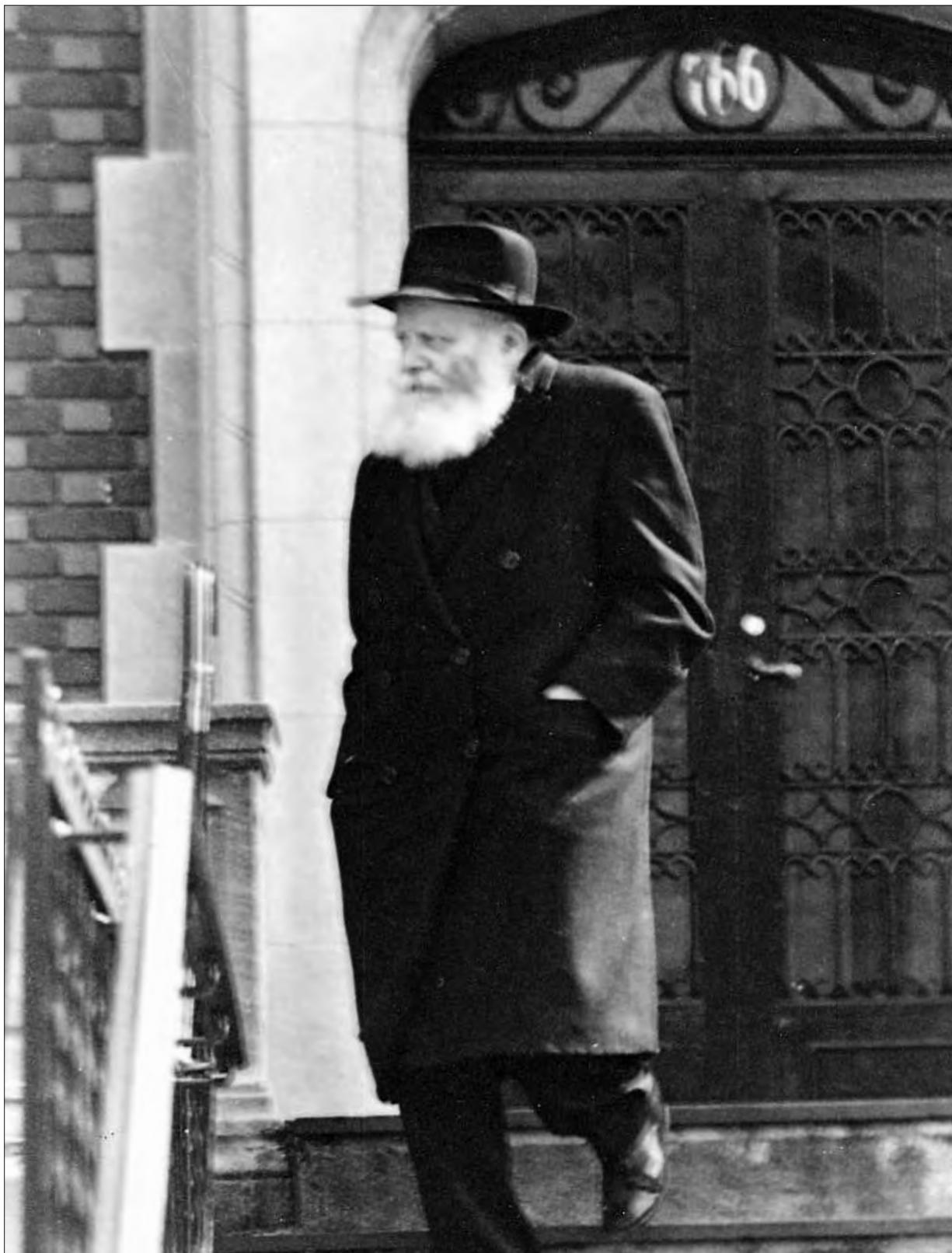
Purim was an interesting time. All day long, people would bring *shalach manos* to the Rebbe and the Rebbetzin. Someone needed to open the door and receive it, and to give the children who delivered it a tip. For several years, that was my role together with others who helped in the house.

Reb Leibel Bistrizki, who was close to Beis Harav, had a boutique food store in Manhattan, and he would send an elaborate *shalach manos* of chocolates, Swiss cheeses, and other items (it was the one *shalach manos* that we all looked forward to). In addition, his family would make a large, beautiful cake, decorated according to a theme about

which the Rebbe had spoken during a *farbrengen* that year. Once I photographed the cake and made an album so that the Rebbe and Rebbetzin could look at it later.

After Purim, the Rebbetzin would send some of the cakes and other items she received to 770. There, I would put them down for the *bachurim* to enjoy without saying where they came from.

My first year in the Rebbe's house, the Rebbetzin told me to take some cake, sit down, and enjoy it. There was a painter in the house at the time, and the Rebbetzin was occupied with him. I sat down by myself, in the room between the dining room and the kitchen. I never sat at the head or the foot of the table. That day, I sat on the side of the



The Rebbe leaves the library apartment library.



My father cleans the dishes in the Rebbe's Pesach kitchen.

table, with my back towards the driveway. (When those who assisted in the house would sit with the Rebbetzin, she would always sit in the Rebbe's chair, and we sat opposite her.)

Unbeknownst to me, however, the chair I chose was where the Rebbe would sit, during the weekdays, across the Rebbetzin. She walked by while I was eating and saw me, yet she let me enjoy the snack, and didn't say or indicate anything that would have shamed me because of my mistake.

Sharing the Gift

One year, I decided to purchase the Rebbetzin a birthday gift: two plastic domes filled with water, with roses mounted on the bottoms, as in a snow globe. We were together in the dining room, when I presented them to her. The Rebbetzin's face lit up. She thanked me, but said, "I can only take it on one condition, and that is if you give one of the domes to your mother as a gift." Of course, I agreed. She put the dome with some other trinkets on a low table in the dining room, behind the Rebbe's chair.

The Snorkel

The sukkah in the Rebbe's house used to be on the third floor back porch. In 1979, Chaim Baruch moved the sukkah to the back porch on the first floor. I would assist him with building the sukkah (at times another bachur would also assist).

Before Pesach, the Rebbetzin, Chessed and I (later Sholom Gansburg too) would make the kitchen Pesachdik. In one day, we would cook all the food that was to be

used on yom tov.

On *erev* Pesach, I would help make all the items needed for the Seder, especially the *maror* and "*keplach*" (a piece of the horseradish stem). In the beginning, we would grate the maror by hand, which was difficult and irritated my eyes.

One year, before we made the maror, I opened the back door of the house to air out the kitchen. I also put on a mask and snorkel, hoping it would stop my tears. Of course, it didn't help, but the Rebbetzin had a very good laugh. Ultimately, we switched to a food processor, which made the job much easier. At first, the Rebbetzin was concerned that the maror would not be strong enough with this method. In the end, however, it turned out to be too strong, and she had to leave the dish uncovered to mellow.

I vividly recall standing with the Rebbetzin in the dining room while she showed me how to tie the legs of the Rebbe's chair to one another, to make a place for the pillow the Rebbe would use during the Seder.

On *erev* Pesach 1979, the Rebbe was giving out the matzah, and Rabbi Groner asked if I should get



Holding the broket plate the Friediker Rebbe and Rebbe used for *makkos*.

matzah now because I was helping out the in the Rebbe's house. The Rebbe said, "*Zol er tzukumen*" (He should come and get).

Yom Tov Meal Memories

There was a period of time when the Rebbe would eat his Shabbos- and yom tov-night meals at home and his day meals in 770. Close to midday on yom tov, I would go to the Rebbe's house and call to the Rebbetzin through the window to open the door. We would put some food on the fire to warm up, and I would bring the food to 770. Rabbi Groner would later bring it into the Rebbe's office, where the Rebbe would eat.

Once, during Pesach, I came to the Rebbe's house to get the food, and the Rebbetzin, wanting to give me something eat, asked me if I had already made *Kiddush*. I responded no. She apologized and said, "I cannot offer you wine, because wine is my husband's department, and in that I don't get involved!" (The Rebbe kept the Pesach wine in a cabinet in the living room, and she didn't want me to touch it.)

Another year, on the first day of Pesach, I told

the Rebbetzin, "Let's make a fresh kugel together." I took out the ingredients to make a potato kugel, grated the potatoes and onion by hand, put everything together and cooked it on the stovetop. But when it was ready, we discovered it was stuck to the bottom of the pan. The next day, the Rebbetzin told me, "We forgot to put the eggs in the kugel, but I still kept it on the table until after the Seder."

One year on Yom Kippur, the Rebbe stayed in 770 the entire twenty-six hours. I felt that someone should visit the Rebbetzin and let her know that everything was okay. So I walked over to the Rebbe's house. I gave the Rebbetzin regards from 770, and she asked me if I was tired and if I wanted to lie down. I declined.

Shared Conversations

Whenever I called the Rebbetzin, I would mentally prepare beforehand what I wanted to say. Keeping in mind what the Rebbe told my father decades earlier. I always tried to be positive, not to say anything negative about what was going on in the community, the schools or in local politics. I was very mindful that, at times, she would repeat things to the Rebbe.

One summer, I took a job as a counselor in a Chabad day camp in California. The Rebbetzin would often say, "You are learning so hard. You need to rest during the summer." I also knew that the Rebbe wanted us to be spreading *Yiddishkeit* all the time.

I kept in touch with the Rebbetzin that summer by calling her. I also knew that she wanted a letter



The Rebbetzin's *leichters*.

or a postcard. I decided to send her a postcard with a dual message: on the one hand I wanted her to know that I was resting, as she had suggested, but also make clear that I was doing what the Rebbe wanted.

It took me over an hour to write the card, which went something along these lines: The camp had visited an amusement park, and everyone had a good time. I added that the counselors were using the relaxed environment as an opportunity to speak to the kids about Yiddishkeit, *davening*, and so on. The next time I spoke to the Rebbetzin, she thanked me for the card, saying, “I gave my husband regards

from you and gave him the card to read.”

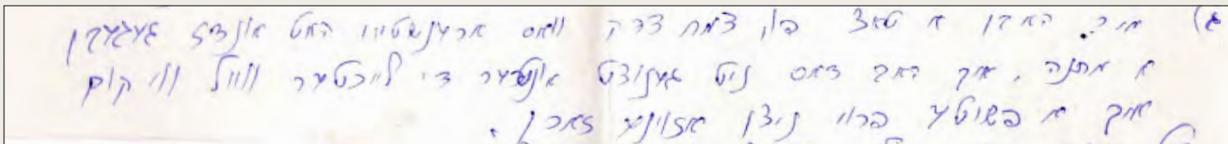
One *motzei* Shabbos, my brother Meir Shlome was speaking to the Rebbetzin, and mentioned that he was going to the pizza shop. I believe that it was not a coincidence that, during a *farbrengen* a few weeks later, the Rebbe spoke about going to the pizza shop. Interestingly, it happened to be Shabbos, the 23rd of Elul, the *yahrzeit* of the Rebbe’s grandfather Rabbi Meir Shlomo Yanovsky. It was also the first time the Rebbe mentioned him at a *farbrengen*.

After the events of the 5th of Teves, I heard a number of *gematrios* from a friend of mine about the significance of the day. That week, in the library apartment, instead of using a napkin to mark the place of “*Sholom Aleichem*” in the Rebbe’s siddur, I used a paper on which I had written the *gematrios*. In a talk a while later, the Rebbe mentioned the practice of making *gematrios*. He didn’t seem too fond of it.

In the year 5745, the Rebbetzin mentioned to me that the Rebbe fasted the *Tannis Bechorim* on Thursday, the 13th of Nissan, since *erev* Pesach was Friday. She then asked me to tell Chessed Halberstam that “he could make a *siyum* [for his son Ari, who was not *bar mitzvah* yet] and still fast.” In general, when the Rebbe came home *erev* Pesach, and later in the apartment near 770, he ate a potato.

Apartment in the Library

The Rebbe’s library, which is adjacent to 770, had a small apartment. Around 1980, during a par-



From the notes of my father: “[The Rebbetzin told me that] we have a tray from the Tzemach Tzedek, that [Moshe and Chaya Mushka] Horenstein gave us as a present. I never used it under the *leichters*, for how could a simple woman use such things?”



The Rebbe going to the apartment in the library.

ticularly cold and icy winter, it was proposed that the Rebbe and Rebbetzin should stay in the library for Shabbos. The Rebbetzin would tell us if she would go to the library or not. At times, she would wait until midday on Friday to tell us.

Being that I was involved in the Rebbe's house and 770, I got access to the Rebbe's library. The first Shabbos when they decided to stay there, I went to see what was going on in the apartment. Although it had a dining room set, bedroom and kitchen, nothing was actually prepared. I immediately started cleaning, vacuuming and getting the apartment ready. I also brought linen from the Rebbe's house and the food that was prepared for Shabbos. From then on, I would take care of the library apartment whenever the Rebbe and Rebbetzin stayed there.

For the first few years, I would go to the Rebbe's

house and take a large bag, in which I placed the Rebbe's *becher*, the Rebbetzin's *leichters* (which she told my father she inherited from her grandmother, Rebbetzin Shterna Sarah), and the Rebbe's personal Siddur (a Torah Ohr Siddur 5701, which he received from the Friediker Rebbe with a dedication on the front page. The Rebbe had also written different customs and comments in a few places), as well as some personal items that the Rebbetzin wanted.

The first time I held the Rebbe's Torah Ohr siddur in my hands, I had this momentary thought, of how I could make a copy of the handwritten dedication from the Friediker Rebbe to the Rebbe, and the Rebbe's notes on the siddur. However, I knew that later that day, the Rebbe would make *Kiddush* using the siddur. Surely he would be able to sense



Watching with my son Itchel as the Rebbe enters 770 after the Lag BaOmer Parade.

that it had been tampered with, and then I would be out of the library and who knows what else. Our father instilled in us to not touch or look at something that is not our business, to be respectful of our surroundings and recognize the *zechus* we had.

In addition to setting up all the rooms in the apartment, including the dining room table, where fine china was used, I would also set up the kitchen, put the food on the stove, and generally make sure that the apartment was fully stocked with everything that might be needed, including some nosh in case a child came to visit with their parents.

To brighten up the dining room of the apartment, I bought a big bouquet of flowers from Spitz Florists and arranged for it to be paid for by Rabbi Leibel Zajac of Brazil. I also purchased a beautiful stand made out of mirrored glass, on which I placed the flowers.

A Door?

In the beginning, before *licht bentchen* on erev Shabbos or yom tov, the Rebbetzin would be driven to Union Street, and walk the path on the side of the old Kollel building, then through the courtyard

where they used to do Tashlich, to the library. To make it easier for her, they built a kind of bridge from the old Tashlich area to the library. They also removed one of the windows from the apartment and made an entrance door.

If the driver (at first Chessed Halberstam, and later also Sholom Gansburg) had enough time before Shabbos, he would walk the Rebbetzin to the apartment and then take the Rebbe's car home. If it was too late for that, I would meet her

on Union Street, escort her in and carry her bags.

A few years later, when it became difficult for the Rebbetzin to walk, the car would drive her down the narrow alley at 766 Eastern Parkway, and she would go in through the basement, and go up to the apartment via the elevator that they installed especially for her.

Generally, I tried to complete everything that needed to be done before the Rebbetzin arrived. Then I would wait to greet her, make sure that she was comfortable, and ask if she needed anything. The Rebbe would come to the library after the Rebbetzin. Often, he would bring interesting things for her to read, and spend some time talking to her. As in the house, I would make sure to stay out of the way to give the Rebbe and Rebbetzin their space and privacy.

The Rebbe was not always there when the Rebbetzin lit candles. Once, I lit the candles before, and then put them out, to make it easier for the Rebbetzin to light them. But the Rebbetzin took out my candles, went to the kitchen and got two new ones. Another time, when she was about to light, I saw her looking to see if anyone was in the room. I



My father during Havdalah with my siblings (left to right):
Menachem, Dovid, and Meir Shlome.

understood to immediately leave the area. When I mentioned this to Chessed Halberstam, he thought for a moment, and said that he had never watched the Rebbetzin light candles.

One erev Shabbos, the Rebbetzin told me that she had forgotten to bring the Rebbe's glasses and she would like me to go to the house and retrieve them. She was not comfortable giving her house keys to anybody, but because she knew the Rebbe needed the glasses, she gave them to me. It was already late, so I took the keys and ran to the house, got the glasses, and ran back to the apartment through the back entrance. I recall thinking to myself that I would clean the glasses when I got to the apartment and put them next to the Rebbe's siddur.

Rushing in, I pushed the curtain aside and entered the dining room (there were heavy curtains covering the entire back wall, including the windows and the new door). To my shock, the Rebbe was standing there speaking in Yiddish to the Rebbetzin. The Rebbe was taken aback, and asked with surprise, "*Vos? Es iz doh a tir?*" (What? There is a door over here?) "Yes," I replied, and I picked up the curtain to show him.

With shaking hands, I put the glasses on the table (at that point, with the Rebbe standing there, I had no thought about cleaning them, only to leave the apartment as soon as possible). The Rebbetzin turned to the Rebbe and said, smiling, "*Du vais, az er firt doh un mit di gantze balabatshkiet*" (You know that he takes complete charge of the household here).

Being that I needed to double lock the back door from inside, the only way out was through the front door. It was a terrifying scene that I will never forget: the Rebbe and Rebbetzin were standing on either side of the dining room doorway, and I had no choice but to walk out between them, while wishing them a good Shabbos.

The Rebbetzin let me set up the apartment as I thought best. I tried to set a regal table with the china we had, and made sure that every item on the table had a separate plate under it. For example, the jar of *chrein* had a plate under it. I placed a beautiful white tablecloth on the table and rings around the napkins. I did not place seforim on the table itself, except a regular siddur to be used for *Kiddush* and *bentching*. I would place a napkin in the Rebbe's siddur at the place of "*Sholom Aleichem*."

In general, if something needed to be changed, I would pick up clues from how the Rebbetzin was doing it. For example, under the *leichters*, we placed a nice doily, and I got a nice wooden *pushkah* for the table. Before Shabbos, I would also place a fruit basket on the table.

Once the Rebbe and Rebbetzin were staying in the library every week, winter and summer and all *yomim tovim*, the *leichters* were kept there, as well



The Rebbe giving out Tanyas after the farbrengen. He finished at 6:10 A.M.

as some of the other items they needed. The Rebbe's siddur, however, remained in his house, and he used a regular Kehos siddur in the library. In the later 1980s, the Torah Ohr siddur was reprinted. The publisher made her a special lightweight copy, with thinner pages, and that was what she used during the last two or three weeks that she stayed in the library.

To the left of the Rebbe's place at the table, in the corner, there was a table where I would put the seforim I saw the Rebbe use consistently: *Torah Ohr* or *Likutei Torah* and the *Ohr Torah* of the Tzemach Tzedek. Originally, I included a large Rambam, but later switched to a *Rambam Lam*, placing in it a *moreh shiur* of the three *perakim* of Rambam. We also put there the new seforim that Kehos published.

Periodically, I would take the money from the pushka, overwhelmingly nickels, count it up and send a check to the Rebbe to distribute to *tzedakah*.

I never entirely relinquished my involvement in the apartment or 770 after I got married. In the summer of 1984, however, my brothers Meir Shlome, Menachem, and Dovid took over some re-

sponsibilities in the library. All of them were also involved in the daily operations of 770 to various degrees. Each went on to develop his own relationship with the Rebbetzin and 770.

To visit the Rebbetzin at home was more formal. But when she stayed in the library, when people close to her would call asking if they could drop by on Friday night, she would generally say yes. Sometimes she would say, "knock on the window," or, "Ask one of the Junik children to open the door for you."

Reporting from 770

On 11 Nissan, 1982, after the *farbrengen*, which began at 9:30 P.M., in honor of his birthday, the Rebbe gave out *Tanyas* for the first time. It was the first time the Rebbe had distributed a sefer, and there was a rush to receive them. There was also a fury of phone calls, as people informed their friends and family about the unique opportunity.

By that time it was past midnight, and the broadcast of the Rebbe's *farbrengen* on the radio was over. There was also no one in the Merkos office, as they were assisting with the distribution. I thought to myself, the radio stopped broadcasting, Merkos is closed, how would the Rebbetzin know what was going on? I felt a responsibility to call her and inform her.

She was very appreciative that I called. The Rebbe finished at 6:10 A.M., then listened to *krias Hatorah*, was examined by Dr. Ira Weiss in his office, and only then went home at 7:25. Throughout this time I continued to call the Rebbetzin with updates.



Behind the Rebbe (extreme right) at the Rebbetzin's *levaya*.

During one of the calls, I told her that the Rebbe was giving *Tanyas* to men, women and children. Out of deep care for the Rebbe, the Rebbetzin said, “Do children also have to take?”

One Simchas Torah, after the *farbrengen* at night, I came to tell the Rebbetzin what the Rebbe had spoken about. Later, I learned that somebody else had been there before me and told her the same thing. Nevertheless, she listened to me as if it were the first time she was hearing it.

On Sukkos, the Rebbetzin had her own *lulov* and *esrog*. Once, I told her that the *pitom* broke (referring to the Rebbe's *esrog*). In astonishment, she said, “Whose, mine?” When I told her that it was the Rebbe's, she instantly calmed down and said, “Ahh.”

Helping at Home

For a young person like me, speaking with the Rebbetzin was humbling. At the same time, she was always positive. She made me feel comfortable and good about myself, giving me her ready smile and her full attention.

The Rebbetzin was always worried about whether I was also helping enough at home. She didn't want to infringe on my mother's needs. Before Pesach, especially, she would always ask me if I was helping at home as well (I was).

Business Mentor

The Rebbetzin, in her smart and *eidel* way, was not shy about giving advice and guidance. When



My son Itchel, daughter Raizy and I, receive a piece of matzah from the Rebbe.

she heard that I was going into business, she invited me over to the house. We sat on the second floor, in the back room, which was the Rebbe's library. She asked me many different questions about what I was doing, and she offered to call a "friend," who might be able to help me.

Whose Handwriting?

Once, I was sitting with the Rebbetzin in the library and talking to her about the old days in Russia, especially her father and grandfather. I thought to myself, there are all these *kisvei yad kodesh* (manuscripts from the Rabbeim) in the library. Let me show them to the Rebbetzin. I asked her if she would like to see them, and she responded yes.

I went to the catalog box and looked up the

manuscripts of the Alter Rebbe, the Mittlerer Rebbe, and the other Rebbeim, and showed them to the Rebbetzin. Then I took out a *Sefer Chassidim* in which her father had written in, and asked her if she recognized the handwriting. "Zicher" (Sure), she said. "*Dos is der tatte*" (This is my father).

Humble Appreciation

I am very thankful to the *Aibeshter* for giving me the *zechus* and the opportunity to be involved with the Rebbe, the Rebbetzin, and their "*daled amos*." As a chassid, I feel that the Rebbe always related to me and guided me on a very personal level.

I remember as a child, I went over to the Rebbe for my birthday during the *farbrenge* (as was the custom then) and ask for a *brachah*. Once, I got con-

fused and called my father to assist me, which he did. When I got older, since my birthday is on the second night of Pesach, every *erev* Pesach, when the Rebbe gave out matzah, until the last time in 5737 (1977), I was able to mention to the Rebbe that it was going to be my birthday.

Being that I got matzah again, personally, from the Rebbe in 5739 and on, I could again ask a *brachah* for my birthday, especially since I got matzah on both nights of Pesach.

Once, on the second day of Pesach, the Rebbe told me, “I mentioned you last night by the Seder, and we both had a glass of wine in your honor.”

I hope that the zechus of my involvement in Beis Harav will assist my children and grandchildren to be *mekusher* to the Rebbe and Chassidus.

ב"ה

תשורה
למשתתפים
בשמחת הנישואין של
אברהם משה וגאלדא איטא

חניכה

ט"ו שבט ה'תש"פ

(א) ז"ל

אז כי אלו האבות קדמו לרובו ולרובו
אנחנו יאמר בך ואלו אבותינו יאמר
אלו רובו תבין את חולי קדמונינו ואלו רובו יאמר
זי-רוב אבותינו יאמר ואלו רובו יאמר ירם

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יוצר קבלי, און ברום פאנסטאט פון אונטער
 איז נאך האקט.

ע. דס אלס קונץ א מן וואס די קאטה ווארט
 מן זעהר גרויס. אונטער דער פאקאר איז
 אונטער.

עס זינען בא קוין זעלבס וואס עס איז
 אלס זיין קוין קעגן: אן בעלוג השעה
 וועגן (אנה) קיאר העשית: אן סניק
~~דער דור וואו עס איז גאר די זעלבס פון~~
 גיהנום, שטענדיג באפט. אז פער גרעסטע
 זינט איז די קאטה. אזוי אונטער וואו עס
 וועט קונץ וועט באמאסט זיין די קאטה אונטער
 זען דער העקאר איז. העל שטן קונץ פון
 עסן וועט אונטער זיין דארה, אגור פער
 עסן פון דער קוין אז דער וועט באמאסט אלס
 זיין טיין.

ע. דס שטענדיג אן סניק, אז די רעדן וועלן
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לזכות

החתן הרה"ת אברהם משה
והכלה מרת גאלדא איטא
חנוכה

ולזכות הוריהם וזקניהם

הרב יצחק ופנינה חנה
חנוכה

הרב שמשון אהרן ומרים מינדל
מרת פרומא
יוניק

הרב דן יואל ומלכה
הרבנית תמר מלכה
ליווי

שיחיו לאורך ימים ושנים טובות

ולעילוי נשמת זקניהם

דה יעקב ובינה
חנוכה

הרב דובער
ליווי

הרב דובער
יוניק

ר' אברהם ומרים
תגר

עליהם השלום