

ב"ה

Living With the Rebbe



תשורה ממשחת הנישואין של
ישעי' זוסיא ואסתר איטקין
ו' תמוז ה'תש"פ

ונזכה זעהן זיך מיט'ן רבי'ן דא למטה אין אַ גוף
ולמטה מעשרה טפחים, והוא יגאלנו!

My wife and I want to thank Hashem for this special moment in our lives, the marriage of our youngest child.

The Rebbe has been an instrumental part of our lives and especially how we have tried to bring up our family.

Coming from Gimmel Tammuz, a time of reflection, we have decided to share a few *sichos* and responses translated into English that we feel have been a major part of our lives.

Especially in these very trying times, when everyone is searching for guidance, we must turn to the Rebbe's *sichos*. As we study the Rebbe's *Sichos*, we appreciate his vision and how correct he was in dealing with life's challenges. His constant Torah approach to life gives us hope and strengthens our faith in Hashem.

To receive Hashem's blessings, which we currently need so much, we must conduct ourselves as "Mentchen," Jew and non-Jew alike. This is stated in the *sicha* of *yud alef* Nissan 5742 that we included in this booklet. When we hurt others and act in a non-*mentchlichen* fashion, the negative forces are strengthened, Heaven forfend.

The Rebbe's positive approach that Hashem always sends the remedy before the calamity (**מקדים** **רפואה למכה**) provides us hope and encouragement that a cure will soon be found and what we should do to counter all the troubles and unrest that have descended upon the world. The Rebbe explained this later in that same *farbrengen*. He was guiding us throughout his entire life, and we just need to open our eyes and ears.

The other *sichos* regarding Crown Heights and the Rebbe's address to the wounded Israeli soldiers who visited him are just a few examples of the Rebbe's love for another Jew and were a major part of my life.

My letter regarding Gimmel Tammuz for last year was prompted unfortunately by some very negative opinions that I read online, that as a chossid, I tried to deal with the only way I could.

May we merit to see the Rebbe very soon, as he spoke about seeing the previous Rebbe.

Pesach and Elisheva Laufer

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Moving Out of a Jewish Neighborhood

*An excerpt from an address of the Lubavitcher Rebbe on the last day of Pesach 5729 (1969) in connection to the mass migration from Crown Heights**

In recent times, a “plague” has been spreading among our brethren. Jews have been moving out of the Jewish communities and selling their houses, and even shuls and *batei midrashos*, to gentiles. This has weakened and even completely destroyed the livelihood of many Jews in the community.

This matter ought to be dealt with by *askanim* (community activists) and *rabbanim*—and it is not my custom to render halachic decisions in these areas. However, rumors have unfortunately spread that I agree, G-d forbid, with these actions. The list would be endless if I were to deny every baseless rumor. Nevertheless, since this matter is pertinent to tens of thousands of Jews, I must clearly express my opinion, and point out relevant halachic rulings in the Shulchan Aruch, in ascending order of severity:

The Law regarding Selling or Renting in a Jewish Neighborhood

A Jewish real estate owner (in a Jewish neighborhood) who sells or rents his property to a gentile is subject to excommunication unless he assumes responsibility for any loss incurred by his Jewish neighbors or unless the gentile purchaser or tenant agrees that all disputes arising from his use of the property be adjudicated in accordance with Jewish law.¹

Shulchan Aruch² continues to state that these restrictions are relaxed in instances where no Jewish purchaser or tenant is willing to offer an equivalent sum.

* This *sichab* was edited by the Rebbe and published in the *HaPardes* journal (vol. 43:7 – Iyar 5729) and in *Likutei Sichos* (vol. 6 pp. 350-350). Additional comments that weren't included in the edited version can be found in *Toras Menachem* (vol. 56 pp. 141-146).

¹ *Shulchan Aruch, Choshen Mishpat*, 175:40 (sourced in *Talmud, Bava Kamma*, 114a).

² *Ibid.*, 175:41 (opinion of the Rosh).

However: (a) The commentators³ qualify that this only applies when the gentile is offering the fair market value; if, however, he offers significantly higher than the fair market value, the owner must sell it to a Jew for the market value and he is forbidden to engage in profiteering.

(b) The Shulchan Aruch also stipulates that “if it is evident that the gentile intends to destroy the Jewish character of the neighborhood (e.g., there are available properties elsewhere and he specifically chooses to buy in the Jewish neighborhood⁴), the matter is left to the discretion of *beis din*.” Aruch Hashulchan⁵ clarifies: “We do not allow him to do so.”

* * *

The above laws apply to selling or renting to gentiles in general, the prohibition being due to the mere concern that the Jewish neighbor can argue, “You caused a lion to crouch on my border.” However, if the tenant will definitely bring financial harm to the neighbors, it is forbidden to rent to him even if he is Jewish, as evidenced in the following law:

If an objection is raised by any one of the residents, householders sharing a common courtyard may not rent a dwelling to a physician, blood-letter... or teacher of secular subjects. This applies even if he can't find any other tenant.⁶

Thus, if there will be definite harm to the Jewish neighbors, it is forbidden to sell his house to a gentile (even if the gentile has no express intent to ruin the Jewish character of the neighborhood), and even if he is unable to find a Jew willing to pay the market value. (Furthermore, since the damage is

³ *Sefer Meiras Einayim* and *Nesivos* loc. cit. (This applies even if the gentile's intent is not to destroy the Jewish character of the neighborhood.)

⁴ *Sefer Meiras Einayim*, *ibid*.

⁵ *Choshen Mishpat* 175:45.

⁶ Summary of *Tur* and *Shulchan Aruch*, *Choshen Mishpat* 156:1 (based on *Bava Basra* 21a and *Tosafos* loc. cit.) [These rentals would increase traffic in the courtyard, and objections to such a rental are legitimate.]

caused at the time of the sale, it is more severe than renting to a blood-letter, for it is considered a direct damage, like “his arrows.”⁷)

Although the above prohibition relates to *rentals* to members of these professions and not to a sale⁸—

(a) Only a sale to Jewish members of these professions is permitted, for they are bound by *beis din*, but not to a gentile engaged in these professions.⁹ (b) In the situation at hand, there is no difference between a rental and a sale. The logic to permit a sale is that the harm is not definite,¹⁰ which is only applicable if the potential harm is due to the profession of the purchaser. In the case at hand, however, the sale will definitely cause harm.¹¹

An alternative explanation is that by a **sale**, the property leaves his ownership, thus the harm is not attributed to him.¹² However, this only applies in cases that the harm is caused after the property has left his possession. In the case at hand, however, the harm is caused by the sale itself, and even prior to the sale. The mere rumors that a gentile intends to buy the house are sufficient to lower prices of the neighboring houses, and introduce fear to the residents of the neighborhood.

[There is much to discuss regarding the exact parameters of direct vs. indirect damages in halacha, however, this is not the place for it. Besides, this discussion would only emphasize the severity of

⁷ See *Shulchan Aruch, Choshen Mishpat*, sec. 155.

⁸ *Rema, Choshen Mishpat* 156:1 (based on view of the Mordechai).

⁹ *Rema* (and Mordechai), *ibid.* [A non-Jew engaged in one of these professions is not bound by *beis din* and they won't be able to curtail activity that is counter to the interests of other residents.]

¹⁰ *Sefer Meiras Einayim* explains that a purchaser may subsequently lease it to another individual who does not practice these professions. A renter, however, is assumed to be renting the property for his personal use.

¹¹ [I.e., depress property values or result in the lowering of existing housing standards.]

¹² *Bach*.

moving away from the neighborhood. It should also be noted that the Talmudic discussion in Tractate Eiruvin¹³ is not relevant to the case at hand.]

* * *

All the above applies even when selling the property to a gentile harms a **single** Jew; all the more so in the case at hand, where it brings harm to the Jews of the entire neighborhood. (By extension, it also affects the Jews in other neighborhoods of the city, and even Jews in other countries, as will be explained below.)

Additional severity of this case is demonstrated by the following law:

A feudal lord threatened the Jewish community under his jurisdiction with expulsion unless the Jews living in scattered villages throughout the countryside would move to an area within his domain. The Jews in the scattered villages are indeed obligated to alleviate the public danger by moving under that feudal lord's domain. Afterwards they can claim financial compensation if they incurred any losses due to the move.¹⁴

They are obligated to move even though by doing so they are placing themselves under the jurisdiction of this evil feudal lord who threatened the Jewish community with expulsion for no fault of their own!

In our case, perhaps Jews who already moved out would be obligated to return to their former homes in order to prevent deterioration of the neighborhood, if they can't find anyone else to do so. It is certainly forbidden for the Jews still living in the neighborhood to move away and worsen the situation even further.

* * *

¹³ Beginning of chapter *Hadar*, and in *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim* ibid.; Tractate *Avoda Zara* 21a, and *Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deiah* ibid.

¹⁴ *Rema, Choshen Mishpat* 155:22 (quoting *Mordechai, Kidushin* §561-562).

An additional issue is that moving away leads to the sale (or closing) of many shuls. Regarding the prohibition against selling a shul, there are three parameters:

- (1) Due to the sanctity of the shul that is being sold (not applicable to closing it).
- (2) Decreasing the amount of shuls in the neighborhood. [For this reason, it is forbidden to sell (or destroy or close) a shul, even when there is another shul existent, unless they first build another shul in place of the old one.¹⁵]
- (3) The congregants of the shul won't have a place to daven. [For this reason, it is forbidden to destroy a shul with the purpose of building a new one, even if there is no concern that they won't end up building the new one. This is because the congregants need a shul to daven in during the time it takes to build the new one.¹⁶]

In the situation at hand:

- (a) Regarding the sanctity of the shuls – we must say that even under the conditions in America, it would be permissible to sell a shul if they stipulated as such at the time it was built. [Even a shul in a big city, which has a more strict degree of sanctity,¹⁷ may be made conditional upon on the intentions of an individual, and then that individual may do with it as he wishes (with the agreement of the community).¹⁸] There is precedent from great *rabbonim* who acted as such, and there is lengthy discussion on this subject in the responsa of the *acharonim*. What requires further analysis is if an individual built (or bought) a shul with money that he collected from many people. Often, some of the donors specify that this is only for the shul in which his father davened etc., and the individual explicitly accepts this condition and publicly blesses him for it. Also, the Shulchan Aruch writes that the individual needs “the agreement of the community.”

¹⁵ *Magen Avraham* beginning of sec. 152 (but see *Biur Halacha*, loc. cit.) and 153:16.

¹⁶ Like the second reason cited in *Bava Basra* 3b and in *Shulchan Aruch*, *ibid*.

¹⁷ Shuls in big cities are built also for those that come to visit the city, as opposed to in a small village where the shul is built solely for the residents of the village.

¹⁸ *Shulchan Aruch*, *Orach Chaim* 153:7

- (b) The decrease in the amount of shuls can be mitigated by building another shul in the new neighborhood.
- (c) The third issue, however, is still applicable. Although plenty of shuls remain open, still, often:
- (1) The other shuls are further from the residences of some of the congregants;¹⁹
 - (2) The *nusach* may be different than what they were used to, and Chazal say that one should not deviate from the local custom.²⁰

* * *

The same applies in connection with the educational institutes that are decreased by the migration, which forces many parents to send their children to further locations, incurring additional expenses and effort, which cause some of them to stop sending their children to proper Jewish schools.

* * *

There is an additional point, besides for the financial harm, spreading of fear, and closing of shuls:

The very fact that homes and neighborhoods are transitioning to gentiles strengthens the goal of the latter in chasing the Jews away, G-d forbid. Every single house that is sold to them furthers this objective.

Furthermore, once they are successful in one neighborhood, this provides the opportunity for them to continue with adjacent neighborhoods. Additionally, the news regarding one city spreads immediately to other locations and encourages similar activities elsewhere as we have clearly seen. Thus, besides for the harm that is caused to the entire individual community, the damage spreads to other communities as well, G-d forbid.

Now, *halacha* rules that the request of the feudal lord must be fulfilled in order to *avert* communal harm, even though the feudal lord retains the authority regardless to expel the Jews under his

¹⁹ See *Magen Avraham* 153:40 that a person can argue that he doesn't want to go to a further shul.

²⁰ See *Magen Avraham* beginning of sec. 68, and the responsa of the *acharonim*.

jurisdiction. In the case at hand, the Jews in other communities are certainly obligated to use whatever means they have to prevent the *strengthening* of the movement to chase away Jewish residents, and are most certainly forbidden to directly sell Jewish property in this context.

* * *

Another *halacha* with a similar message, though not entirely comparable:

*Gentiles that have laid siege on Jewish cities; if they have come for financial matters, the Shabbos is not violated for them. If they have come to take lives, and even if they have an unannounced purpose, we go out and greet them with weapons and we desecrate the Shabbos.*²¹

*In the present age when we dwell amongst nations that plunder and murder, even if they come only for financial matters, we desecrate Shabbos. If the Jew tries to prevent them from plundering his possessions, they will kill him, and it is presumed that a person doesn't hold himself back when it comes to his money, thus there is concern that maybe even one Jew will stand up against them and get killed, and this is a matter of life and death.*²²

The discussion of whether it is a life-threatening situation is only relevant to the laws of Shabbos. On a weekday, it is clear that we must “go out with arms” even if they merely come for monetary matters and there is no concern at all that it will lead to any life threats, G-d forbid.

In the discussion at hand, it can be derived that all possible legal means must be utilized to prevent the displacement of Jews from the neighborhoods in which they have lived for a period of time, especially as the mass exodus involves much waste of money and destruction of livelihood, G-d forbid, and more.

Furthermore, the mass migration brings in reckless individuals who plunder the Jewish properties, and sometimes leads to loss of life (as is known that there were cases of murders, G-d forbid, and

²¹ *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim, 329:1. Shulchan Aruch of Alter Rebbe, 329:6.*

²² *Shulchan Aruch of Alter Rebbe, 329:7.*

beatings). The only way to prevent this is by strengthening the Jewish neighborhoods as experience has shown.

* * *

In addition to all of the above, the moving from one neighborhood to another also affects the spiritual standing of those Jews who are moving, and to an even greater extent, their children. Throughout the time that they lived in the neighborhood, they belonged to a group that met for Torah study, whether it was *mishnayos* or *gemara*, and was active in his shul. This was in addition to his role in charitable organizations and so forth. In other words, in his original neighborhood, he built up a spiritual “estate” over the years, and his children were also influenced to follow in his path. On the other hand, in his new community, various aspects of his spiritual “activeness” will be lacking, at least until he becomes accustomed to the new neighborhood. Absorption into the new community takes time and is not always easy and smooth.

* * *

The argument is put forth that the current situation in the neighborhoods under discussion is dangerous, and thus the above-mentioned prohibitions are not applicable.

However:

- 1) It is clear that every additional house that is sold weakens the Jewish community and strengthens the danger. In other words, the seller takes part in creating the danger, and especially if his action will influence others to follow suit.
- 2) Many of the Jews in the community won't be able to move out (especially “the poor, orphans and widows amongst you”), and only some have the option of moving out. Thus, the harm to the public (many individuals, as well as shuls and *batei midrashos*) that is caused by the sale is certain, while the “gain” of the minority is highly questionable, because—
- 3) Moving to another neighborhood doesn't necessarily remove them from the anticipated danger.

It is known regarding a number of people who moved from a community where nothing negative ever occurred to them (only that they scared themselves and others), and specifically in their new neighborhood they were targeted and plundered, G-d forbid. [There are additional cases similar to this that are kept quiet and not spoken about.]²³

4) An important point, and as has been demonstrated:

Appropriate effort in avoiding mass exodus from these communities has the power—within a short time—to curb any potential for violence. We have seen clearly by a number of neighborhoods where the Jewish community held on steadfastly not to move away, enlisting help from the government in instituting additional security patrols and so forth, and now they are living securely in their original neighborhood. More so, the community continues to grow, with more homes, shuls, *batei midrashos* and so on.

* * *

What follows from all the above:

- 1) The choice to move out of the communities is not a question that is pertinent only the individual (only the perceived benefit is for the individual), rather the harm that it causes is pertinent to the entire community, and by extension also to other communities.
- 2) Besides for the prohibitions involved, it doesn't make sense to move out, rather to build up and further secure the community. This is the solution that have been proven to be successful (unlike the moving out).
- 3) An additional point—for those that have faith in Tzadikim and Jewish leaders (and all Jews are “believers the son of believers”):

²³ On the positive side, our sages teach “The very matter regarding which the righteous one was careful, his offspring stumble?!” (*Bava Kama* 50a). Thus it can be inferred—and also based on the rule that a prosecutor cannot become a defense—how is possible that one can gain specifically through an action that harms the public?

The further establishment of these communities brings much reward along with it, for through the efforts in this direction, the blessings of Hashem will rest in them more than in other places.

It is known the practical directive of the Alter Rebbe and of his son the Mittler Rebbe that “it is not proper in my eyes that some members of your community considered uprooting their dwelling (because “the hand of Hashem touched them by causing a fire etc.”), for in my opinion, it is specifically there that Hashem will command His blessing.”²⁴

The Tzemach Tzedek similarly directed: “One should assist one another to build their houses *in their place*.”²⁵ He also quotes from the Alter Rebbe who heard from the “heavenly saints” an explanation why one becomes wealthy following a fire: The order of the Divine emotions is *chessed* (kindness), *din* (severity), and *rachamim* (compassion), “thus, after the Divine judgement with the fire, the Divine compassion is aroused, and it is greater than the original kindness, as is known that it is the attribute of Yaakov, an inheritance without boundaries, which jumps from one end to the other.”

* * *

If after taking all the above into account (and sharp expressions that would be appropriate for the severity of the matter were intentionally left out), someone still thinks contrary to the above conclusions—

I hope (based on the presumption of innocence that all Jews possess) that before acting upon selling his home, causing others to do so, or deciding that he doesn’t have a responsibility to fix the wrongdoing (if he already did it, G-d forbid)—

²⁴ *Mei'ab Shearim* 14b.

²⁵ *Mei'ab Shearim* 18b.

He should picture in his mind that his own family “is in his friend’s situation”—i.e., the plight of the tens of thousands who presently live in these communities—and it becomes known to him that his neighbor plans to sell his home to a gentile. Judge *objectively*: Is this sale desirable or hated in his eyes?

After performing the above calculation, one should follow the directive of our Torah: “What is hated by you, do not do to your fellow.” Especially as this is not an ordinary directive, rather “a great general rule of the Torah,” and even more so, “this is the entire Torah and the rest is commentary. It is also stated, “you should do what is just and good in the eyes of Hashem, in order that He act good towards you... to chase away all your enemies from before you as Hashem has spoken.

(Sichah of Acharon shel Pesach 5729)

Excerpt of a letter addressed to Rabbi Shmuel Tuvia Stern, dated 3 Iyar 5729

For understandable reasons, the transcript of the *sichah* did not include expressions that appropriately convey the strange, distressing and shocking conduct of those selling homes in these communities in order to move to other communities. I strongly hope that the *rabbanim* in America, *morei horaah*, who are responsible to act upon any breach in the conduct of the Jewish people, and especially regarding this important matter, will come out with an outcry appropriate for the severity of the issue. It should be with publicity, without being afraid of anyone,²⁶ and the merit of the public will assist them.

Another point that I mentioned by the *farbrengen* in brief but left out of the transcript is that those who run away from these communities—against *halacha*—bring along with them, G-d forbid, the very circumstances from which they were trying to escape. When they move to the new neighborhood, this serves as a constant reminder that that they are found in that place in opposition to the directive of our Torah, the Torah of truth... As I have noted on other occasions, that due to Hashem's compassion on our orphaned generation, there are many matters of Torah that are clearly apparent in the ways of nature. In the case at hand, when a non-Jew meets this Jew on the street, a new face in town, he asks where he came from and why he moved. Upon hearing the story, this teaches the non-Jew to try the same tactics, G-d forbid!

It is wondrous that specifically in this free country, where it would be expected that the Jewish people should stand strong and not be frightened, there is instead a strong feeling of inferiority and total self-nullification. One of the expressions of this shocking attitude is the mass-emigration, besides for the general striving to “be like all the nations.”²⁷ Our sages put this succinctly in the phrase [describing the Jews in the time of Purim],²⁸ “They derived **enjoyment** from the meal of the **wicked one**” (i.e., enjoyment from the fact that the **evil one** invited them to his meal). There is a strange

²⁶ Based on Devarim 1:17.

²⁷ Based on Shmuel I 8:20.

²⁸ Talmud, *Megilah* 12a.

development in America that any convention that doesn't have a non-Jew sitting at the head table is not worthy of its name, and if honors are being given out, it is self-understood who will be receiving the top honor... We will not dwell on this painful subject...

May it be Hashem's will that as we find ourselves in the days between the Season of our Freedom and the acceptance of the Torah, we should all successfully free ourselves from the exile in our private life. (My intention is obviously not contrary, G-d forbid, to the exhortation of our sages not to "storm the wall,"²⁹ and not either to "incite a small nation,"³⁰ but these issues aren't at all connected to the above developments). Every day, we should have additional excitement for the receiving of the Torah and its mitzvos as described in the midrash (quoted by Ran in the end of Pesachim) in connection to the mitzvah of *sefiras haomer*.

With respect and blessings for good news in general, and with regard to your success the above-mentioned issue, for which you are utilizing your influence, wherever it reaches, to curb this breach and ultimately eradicate it completely.

²⁹ A reference to the "three oaths" mentioned in the Talmud, *Kesubos* 111a, one of which is that the Jews in exile are not allowed to forcefully rebel against the nations and return as a nation to Eretz Yisrael. There is much discussion as to the parameters of this and the other "oaths."

³⁰ See Talmud, *Pesachim* 113a.

Affordable Housing in Crown Heights

An excerpt from an address of the Lubavitcher Rebbe on 15 Tamuz 5745. Free Translation.

Breaking a Glass

As stated earlier, we want to seize the opportunity to accomplish whatever we can when we still have the advantage of **קיימא סיהרא באשלמותא** (“the moon is complete,” i.e., the fifteenth day of the month), and being that the night follows the previous day [in certain aspects], this advantage is present now as well.

[To preface:]

According to *halachah*, when it comes to participating in a wedding, even six hundred thousand and more are obligated to participate and bring joy to the *chassan* and *kallah*. Yet, being that we are in *golus*, a glass is broken. One of the reasons for this is to remind us that [our happiness is incomplete, because] **אז ימלא שחוק פינו** – “Then our mouths will be filled with laughter,” the word **ימלא** being written in the future tense, referring to the coming of Moshiach Tzidkeinu who will bring the true and complete *ge'ulah*.

The above serves as an example to the present situation as well, and we must unfortunately now discuss something which can be compared to “breaking a glass.” However, we will attempt to discuss it in as short a manner as possible and limit our words to what is necessary.

Alive More Than Before

[The issue] is as follows:

As discussed above, we find ourselves in a time when **זרעו בחיים** – “his offspring are alive,” and **הוא בחיים** – “he is alive” [referring to the Friediker Rebbe and his *chassidim*.] And to the contrary: as the years pass, the [Friediker Rebbe’s] “offspring” increase in life ([in keeping with the instruction] to increase in matters of holiness) by increasing in studying Torah and performing *mitzvos* according to

the directives given to them by the Frierdiker Rebbe. As such, the fact that “he is alive” is all that more apparent.

Furthermore: the Alter Rebbe explains in *Igeres Hakodesh* that the contrary is true; when a *tzaddik* passes away, he is found in this physical world even more than when he was alive. [The Alter Rebbe] provides an explanation: When the *tzaddik* was alive, he was limited to a physical body—an extremely holy one, but one that has limitations nonetheless. This is the way the Torah determined it should be, and therefore this is the way it is in actuality. But when [he passes away—which is a negative event, but] every negative event must include something positive, especially one that is connected with a *nossi*—and these limitations are removed, אשתכח בכולהו עלמין יתיר מבחיוהי, – “he is found in all the worlds even more than when he was alive.”

The emphasis in this statement is [that he is found] “in **all** the worlds,” which means—unlike the simple meaning of the Zohar, that this refers to other worlds—that he is found in **this physical and materialistic world** even more than he was when he was alive. This is the understanding of the [above-mentioned] *Igeres Hakodesh* section 27 and its [subsequent] *bi'ur*. Additionally, [there exist] lengthy explanations on this [letter], especially as can be understood from the *maamorim* of the Rebbeim who followed the Alter Rebbe.

The Rebbe's Neighborhood

Since we must connect this idea to something in this physical world, [I would like to state the following] piece of good news ([in keeping with the rule that] פותחין בברכה – “one should begin with a blessing”), connected with this neighborhood:

[To preface: 770] is the house where the [Frierdiker Rebbe] spent the last ten years of his life. It is the place where he studied and *davened*, and it is here where he ate, drank, and slept, which are [activities] by which a wise man can be recognized, as the Rambam writes. [This is true regarding] any wise man; all the more so wisdom connected to a leader of the generation!

As can be easily understood, even though [we find ourselves in] *golus* and are restricted by limitations, we must do whatever we can so that it should be apparent that an increase [in the above is taking place] in the area surrounding these *daled amos* (which include the entire house, courtyard, and so on).

An Urgent Meeting

[The following message] is therefore being given over: Individuals who are down-to-earth and practical should hold an urgent meeting—and the opportunity should be seized as early as tonight (when the advantage of **קיימא סיהרא באשלמותא** is still present, because the night follows the previous day)—to begin making plans how to improve (*bederech hateva*) the houses that are already found in this neighborhood.

Those houses that are already fit for human residence should be made fit for human residence in an expansive manner, and those that were not fit for human residence should be made fit for human residence. Ideas should be considered—*bederech hateva*—to build houses and buildings wherever there is an empty lot, so that people who follow in the ways of [the Frierdiker Rebbe] can settle there.

The [Frierdiker Rebbe, who was] arrested and released [on *Yud Beis Tammuz*,] will surely help [in the implementation of these plans], and furthermore—it is certain that success will be achieved.

In these houses, the Torah of [the Frierdiker Rebbe] will be studied along with all other parts of Torah, and *mitzvos* will be performed along with those *mitzvos* which the Frierdiker Rebbe emphasized particularly.

Extorting Money

From the above is understood that [the following conduct] should be avoided:

Certain people mistakenly believe that when building a house in this neighborhood, they must collect as much money as possible, because after all, the buyer will certainly pay the money he demands, because he desires to live in this house!

In truth, the correct conduct should be to be *mekadesh* the name of this neighborhood, by showing how it is a place where one can settle easily. It should be a place where one does not have to search for diverse and bizarre ideas how to obtain the large amount of money required to buy or rent a residence, and even after the money is obtained, the seller provides a second-rate residence that is missing this amenity or that amenity, and when the buyer comes to complain, the seller replies: “You’re even complaining?! You’re living in the neighborhood of the Friediker Rebbe, the leader of our generation! Even if you were to live in a hut, you should still be paying many times this amount! All the more so when we do you a favor and supply you with a residence—perhaps a substandard and dreadful one, where the roof leaks and the floor is not the way it should be, [but a residence nonetheless]!” [More can be said about this, but] there is no reason to speak at length regarding painful, shocking matters.

This is one of the phenomena that accomplishes the opposite of *kiruv rechokim*, and results in the opposite of *kiruv* to those who are *kerovim*!

These people definitely have good intentions—to obtain more money to use for positive things. But one should not obtain money by bringing about difficulties in the life of another Jew, and a difficulty of the type that Hashem did not place upon him!

“He Is Destined To Lose the Money Anyway...”

There are foolish individuals who claim that they can explain everything according to Chassidus. They claim that the fact that they are causing pain to another Jew is based on a *psak din* of the Alter Rebbe in *Igeres Hakodesh*. (And being that the Alter Rebbe writes this in *Igeres Hakodesh*, he certainly considers it to be a *psak din*, and he is certain that the other considers it a *psak din* as well! At least, so he claims...)

The Alter Rebbe rules in *Igeres Hakodesh* that one cannot cause a problem for another Jew, and even for a non-Jew. For if it has been decreed from Above that the other will suffer, Hashem has many messengers [and He will ensure that it will transpire nonetheless], and if he won’t be the one to cause him suffering and squeeze out the money from him, than another will do it, because it has already been

decreed as such from Above! He doesn't have the power to bring about a new decree; it must be that it has been decreed that the other will lose the money either way! And being that this is the case, why should he allow another to be the one who will squeeze out the money from him, let him be the one to serve as Hashem's messenger and squeeze out the money, cause him pain and suffering, and upset his *shalom bayis*! And he has a claim to substantiate his actions: this is what it says in *Igeres Hakodesh*!

This can be compared to the conduct in Sedom: in Sedom, if one person caused another to bleed, he would demand compensation, claiming that he would have had to pay a doctor to let out blood, and he did it instead, so he should be paid for letting out blood! And the same is true here.

An Evil Choice

However, the Alter Rebbe immediately rules out this claim: Yes, it's true that the other would have undergone the suffering regardless; but he must know that the reason he is acting in this manner is (not because he wants to serve as Hashem's messenger, but) due to **רוע בחירתו** – **his evil choice**! That's the wording used by the Alter Rebbe!

Hashem gave a Jew a unique power—the power of complete free choice, just like *atzmus u'mehus*, so to speak. As it says in *Lekutei Torah*, no one else has free choice to such a degree, other than *atzmus u'mehus* and a Jew. And Hashem wants a Jew to use **his bechirah**, which is exclusively his—**הכל בידי שמים**—to choose life (**ובחרת בחיים**). [Hashem wants that a Jew] should make his *bechirah* be one of life, by choosing to bring life to another, and to bring life to **himself**! And instead, he took his *bechirah* and made it one of **evil**!

If he would have merely used his faculty of **action** for evil, one would be able to rationalize [his conduct], because when it comes to the faculty of action, a human and an animal are alike. As Chassidus explains at length, when it comes to action, a human—although endowed with the power of speech and intellect—is the same as an animal, and the difference between the two begins with speech, thought, and so on.

But Chassidus continues to emphasize and explain that *bechirah* does not exist by angels, *serafim*, *ofanim*, *chayos hakodesh*, or by any other level in all the worlds. This is how Chassidus rules on the matter, and it's also implied as such in *Moreh Nevuchim* (referenced in *Lekutei Torah*). And yet, he comes along and uses this power, in which he is similar to Hashem himself, for an **evil** choice!

Since we are found in the great darkness of *golus*, he's in the category of a *tinok shenishbba le bain ha'akum* with regard to this matter, and he is therefore subject to the above-mentioned persuasions, excuses, and so on. But from now on it will be different.

An Urgent Meeting – II

However, we can't wait until he performs complete *teshuvah* and rely only on the individuals who have acted in such a manner; instead we should immediately devote ourselves to the issue with a *shturem* by holding an initial urgent meeting (as stated above) with those individuals to whom this matter has been addressed before. [The meeting should be held] tonight, which still possesses the advantage of **קיימא סיהרא באשלמותא** of the fifteenth day of the month, being that the night follows the previous day [as stated above].

The beginning should already take place today, and we should certainly seize the opportunity to do whatever possible before the beginning of the three weeks, as a special *avodah* will then be necessary—the *avodah* of *is'hapcha*, and so on and so forth. (This is despite the fact that this year, the first day of the three weeks [coincides with Shabbos, and the three weeks begin with Shivah Asar Betamuz] being pushed off [to Sunday.] We will recite *kiddush*; it will be a day of rejoicing (as *Chazal* say: **וביום שמחתכם אלו השבתות**), pleasure, and rest ('**כל מלאכתך עשוי'**); and one must avoid any gesture that can be interpreted as an expression of sadness related to the atmosphere of the three weeks, G-d forbid. The emphasis must be on the exact opposite, as has been explained at length numerous times.)

This is the issue I wanted to seize the opportunity to address when the advantage of **קיימא סיהרא באשלמותא** is still present. I have already spoken with certain individuals and instructed them to hold

an urgent meeting, [urgent] but also held in a calm and in an orderly fashion, to discuss plans to erect buildings, renovate and improve them, and the like.

They should also think of solutions so that the cost of housing for one who desires to move to this neighborhood should be on the average side. Even better, the prices should be *becheted u'berachamim*, because this is the neighborhood of the Friediker Rebbe, who made a condition with his father when accepting the *nesi'us* that he is accepting the *nesi'us* because it will be *becheted u'berachamim*, and he indeed accomplished that it should be this way. And together with this, the residence should be an attractive one, which broadens one's mind (as the *gemara* rules in the end and conclusion of *masechet Berachos*).

Alive More Than Before – II

When the above is accomplished, not only will these *daled amos* of *nesi doreinu* not be affected in a negative manner, but to the contrary: it has been thirty-five years in which his sovereignty and control increases as each year passes, and **הוא בחיים, יתיר מבחיוהי**. This will also affect **חיוהי**—his life—as explained in simple terms in *Igeres Hakodesh*: his life as it pertains to physical concepts in this physical and materialistic world in general, and particularly as it pertains to the place where he resided for ten years of his life, along with the limitations of a body.

Nothing in this world is totally negative, and it is certain that there is something positive [in the Friediker Rebbe's *histalkus*]. The positive aspect is the fact that now he is alive more than before—**יתיר מבחיוהי**: in the very same place where until then he was present only to a certain extent, he is now found **יתיר מבחיוהי**. And with each passing year this has increased more and more, in keeping with the rule that one must **להעלות בקודש** – increase in matters of holiness.

It is certain that there is no need to speak more about this matter. More should be said about the topic, but everyone will act [in this matter] as he understands.

Exceptional Soldiers

The Lubavitcher Rebbe's Address to a Group of Disabled Israeli Soldiers and Athletes

23 Av, 5736 – Aug. 19, 1976

Free Translation



Preface

In 1976, Mr. Yosef Lautenberg led an Israeli delegation, made up in large part of injured IDF veterans, to the Paralympics in Toronto, and during their trip they came to visit with the Rebbe. Mr. Lautenberg himself was injured in the battle for Jerusalem in 1948, and among the founders of the IDF Disabled Veterans Organization. The Rebbe spoke to the group in Hebrew, and afterwards went over to each one of them and shook their hands. Years later, Mr. Lautenberg recalled how the group felt the Rebbe's great empathy and they were very moved by the experience. He also attested that, as a person who spent his entire life in this field, the Rebbe's words served as a guiding light for him.¹

Mr. Joseph Cabilio—who later became a successful real estate developer—was among the group. His legs had been severely injured while serving reserve duty, and they had to be amputated. He later recounted that he was accustomed to being looked at with pain, pity, revulsion or anger. In the Rebbe's presence, it was the first time that he encountered true empathy. When the Rebbe came to shake his hand after the address, he felt the Rebbe gaze deeply into his eyes, press his hand firmly, and say 'Thank you' with a slight nod. In Mr. Cabilio's words, "I later learned that he had said something different to each one of us; to me he said 'Thank you'... With those two words, the Rebbe erased all the bitterness and

¹ See an interview with him at <http://www.chabad.org/2349213>

despair that had accumulated in my heart. I carried the Rebbe's 'Thank you' back to Israel, and I carry it with me to this very day."²

The Rebbe, as a leader who was exemplary in his care and sensitivity for every individual, utilized the opportunity to encourage and guide these disabled veterans how to cope with their challenges with a positive frame of mind. He explained that when someone has a physical weakness or lacking, it is proof that the Creator has endowed him or her with special spiritual powers which enable him to overcome and succeed where the ordinary person cannot.

These people should not be called "handicapped," indicating inferiority. To the contrary, they are "exceptional." They have the ability to be a living example of joy and self-confidence, and express how every Jewish man and woman—regardless of their physical or bodily state—possesses a Divine soul which enables them to overcome any limitations.

* * *

Transcending Time and Place

I will speak in the Ashkenazic pronunciation, to which I am accustomed, but I hope that everyone will understand.

When Jews meet, it is customary to begin with a blessing. The foremost blessing is one of peace, thus the greeting, "*Shalom Aleichem*, Peace upon you!"

When Jews from several locations and countries meet, this is a cause for joy. Particularly so when Jews from the Holy Land—"on which G-d's eyes are focused from the beginning of the year to its end"³—meet with Jews who live, for the time being, in the Diaspora. Notwithstanding being exiled from our land and living in the Diaspora, the physical distance does not truly separate between us. Despite being "scattered and dispersed among the nations,"⁴ we remain "one people" through our "distinct laws"—the laws of Torah—given to us by the one G-d. This is what unites us all, underscoring our ability to lift ourselves above the limitation of place.

² <http://www.chabad.org/1202>

³ Devarim 11:12.

⁴ Esther 3:8.

We are not separate entities that happened to meet by chance. Quite the contrary, we are one entity (“one people”) which happens to be dispersed and scattered throughout the Diaspora, or in different parts of the Holy Land. When we get together, our inner truth is revealed, that we are all part of one people.

Moreover, just as we can unite by rising above the confine of place, so too are we able to unite by transcending the limitation of time. This is the secret to the power and eternity of *Am Yisroel*. We are “the fewest amongst the nations”⁵ only when considering a particular time and place. However, all Jews, from the experience at Sinai until the end of generations, are intertwined⁶ to the point that we constitute one entity, one nation, thus we are numerous and powerful quantitatively as well.

Our ability to transcend the bounds of place and time stems from a Jew’s innate ability to elevate the spiritual over the physical and quality over quantity. For this reason, despite being a minority, we did not agree to assimilate under any circumstances – even though it meant, at certain times in history, Jews giving up their lives. In prosperous times as well, when we were invited and pressured to remove the distinguishing barriers by adopting the lifestyle of our non-Jewish neighbors, we steadfastly held to the principle that we are a unique and special people. Even though we were a minority, we elevated quality over quantity, thus imbuing our quantity with the strength of our quality.

Exceptional, not Handicapped

This brings us to the next point: When, for some reason, a person is lacking in the physical sense (i.e. quantitatively)—all the more so if their injury was a result of doing something positive, especially by sacrificing themselves in defense of the Jewish people, and particularly in the Holy Land—it is not reason to be dejected, G-d forbid. Quite the contrary: The fact that they are lacking in this regard, by no fault of their own, is proof that the Creator endowed them with special spiritual energy, which enables them to overcome that which ordinary eyes perceive as a physical, bodily lacking. Furthermore,

⁵ Devarim 7:7.

⁶ Based on the Talmudic phrase (Shevuos 39a) “*Areivim zeh bazeh*.”

they can demonstrate that they are not only equal to those around them, but they also have superior spirit which enables them to achieve and rise in important and good areas, succeeding above and beyond the ordinary person, notwithstanding their apparent physical shortcoming.

For this reason, I do not approve of the term “handicapped” being used, as it suggests some type of inferiority. To the contrary, we must emphasize that they are considered special and exceptional by the Creator, Who endowed them with special energies above and beyond the capacity of an ordinary individual, thus they can overcome hardships and obstacles which an ordinary person cannot overcome.

In keeping with the “Jewish custom” of offering advice even in areas that are not quite one’s own business, I would like to suggest that the name be changed from “handicapped” to “exceptional” (*metzuyanim*), whether they are exceptional by cause of war, or otherwise. This term also calls to mind the teaching of our Sages that when our ancestors were exiled in Egypt, “they were distinctive (*metzuyanim*) there.”⁷

This change in name is not merely semantics, but rather describes the situation in the truest way. The very name highlights their unique and outstanding qualities which give them the ability to be a living example. With joy and self-confidence, they demonstrate how every Jewish man and woman—regardless of their physical or bodily state—possesses a soul which is “an actual part of G-d above”⁸ (in the words of the Alter Rebbe, founder of Chabad Chassidism), and that this Divine soul ultimately overcomes the limitations of the body, with the body acting in alignment with the soul’s directives.

The Joy Imperative

The above underscores another fundamental area in Torah, especially as it is elucidated in the teachings of Chassidism. Because the Torah requires of us to “serve G-d with joy,”⁹ and our service of

⁷ Sifri, Ki Savo §31, quoted in Pesach Hagadah.

⁸ Tanya, beginning of ch. 2.

⁹ Tehillim 100:2.

G-d encompasses our entire lifetime, it follows that we are provided with the ability to be in a state of joy throughout our entire life.

When a person encounters difficulties, it arouses within him hidden powers that surface and become active. This enables him to proceed with happiness—notwithstanding the obstacles—and fulfill his mission of increasing light, spirituality and holiness in the world. Doing so will spread recognition of G-d in the world, and that His commands and way of life are accessible to everyone to be fulfilled in a joyful manner.

As mentioned above, a Jew has the ability to transcend the limitations of time and place. Nevertheless, the goal is to accomplish the above within the framework of time and place. The place in which we find ourselves is a House of Prayer and Torah study. The present time is the conclusion of the month of Av when we mourn the destruction of the Temple, and we are approaching the month of Elul when we prepare for the coming year, may it be good for us and for all the Jewish people.

The Alter Rebbe explains¹⁰ that during the month of Elul, when each person is preparing himself to merit a positive verdict for the coming year, G-d makes it easier and assists him. In the terminology of the Alter Rebbe, G-d makes Himself accessible like a king in the field. When the king is in his palace, entry to submit requests is very restricted. However, when the king goes out into the field, there is no need to gain permission from the various officers, rather each and every person can approach the king directly—regardless of how he is dressed—and the king receives him with a smiling countenance. The king patiently listens to his requests, and ensures that they will be taken care of.

May it be G-d's will that just as the month of Av is concluding, similarly all aspects of destruction should cease. Through each individual illuminating his life with Torah and holiness and building his personal Beis Hamikdosh, this will hasten the conclusion of the exile and the redemption through Moshiach who will build the Beis Hamikdosh. Until this happens, each and every one should be blessed with a good and sweet year.

¹⁰ Likutei Torah, Re'eh, 32b.

Spiritual and Practical Security

In line with another Jewish “custom,” I will conclude with a request, and I hope that every man and women here will receive my request graciously. The recent incidents perpetrated by terrorists in Uganda and Istanbul—as well as prior and subsequent attacks—require of us to intensify practical measures of security, which is connected with intensified spiritual security. This is, first and foremost, connected with the *mitzvah* of Mezuzah.

I request that on your return to the Holy Land, each of you check that your Mezuzos are all Kosher and in the proper position, so that the *mitzvah* will be fulfilled properly. I would consider it a great honor if you would accept a gift from me through my representatives in the Holy Land: If those present will leave their addresses, you will each be visited at home by my representatives there who will assist in checking the Mezuzos and affixing them to the doorposts. They will also bring additional Mezuzos for those who need. In this way, the *mitzvah* of Mezuzah will certainly arouse and reveal G-d’s protection over every Jewish man and woman, wherever they may be. In the words of Dovid Hamelech, “G-d will guard your goings and comings, now and for all time.”¹¹

The Handshake – Five and Five

Since we began with one Jewish custom, let us conclude with another: When two Jews meet, it is customary to extend one’s hand. This highlights the difference between “the hands of Eisav”¹² and the hands of Bnei Yisroel. The hands of Eisav engage in war, terror, destruction and the like. Whereas when Jews meet, they take each other’s hand, expressing the fact that they are united as one.

There is an allusion to this in the Torah: When the Ten Commandments were given, five were engraved on one Tablet and five on the other. Thus, when two Jews shake hands, the five fingers of one person meet the five fingers of the other, and together, they reflect the Ten Commandments.

¹¹ Tehillim 121:8.

¹² Bereishis 27:22.

They also reflect the Ten Divine Utterances by which G-d created the world, and G-d's Divine Providence over every single individual wherever they may be.

Therefore, before we conclude, I would be honored if I could greet each of you individually with a "*Shalom Aleichem*." May your return to the Holy Land be in a successful and auspicious time, as planned. May it also be a true "*Aliyah*"—the term commonly used—to Eretz Yisroel, an ascent in every sense of the word: both in your personal lives and in your public activities. Finally, the ultimate blessing is that G-d fulfill His promise: "I shall set peace upon the Land"¹³ as well as upon the entire world, in addition to the promises: "You will sleep securely, with no one to fear; and I will lead you with your heads held high."¹⁴ May every man and woman here, amongst the entire Jewish people, merit very soon the true and complete redemption through our righteous Moshiach.

You should all be blessed with a good and sweet year, and may we all meet again soon, with the coming of Moshiach. Then, we will also be united with our fellow Jews who are scattered amongst the nations, for "a great multitude will return"¹⁵ to the Holy Land, speedily and joyfully. At that time, "G-d will be King," in a calm and peaceful manner, and everlasting joy will reign.

I would also be honored to present each one of you with a dollar to give as *tzedakah*, and I thank you in advance if you could donate it to *tzedakah* when you return to the Holy Land.

May each and every one of you be blessed in all that you need, both materially and spiritually, and in the spirit of the mission of the eternal *Am Yisroel* (as discussed earlier): to elevate the spiritual over the physical, form over matter and the soul over the body. This will be the true victory for the Torah in Eretz Yisroel and throughout the entire world, when all nations of the world will recognize that we were justified in our struggle throughout the ages to preserve our existence and distinction; despite our dispersion, we remained one nation, living by our one Torah, given to us by the true and one G-d.

¹³ Vayikra 26:6.

¹⁴ Vayikra 26:6; 26:5; 26:13.

¹⁵ Yirmiyahu 31:7.

With blessing and many thanks for the great honor you have given me through your visit. May it be G-d's will that you succeed many times over in bringing joy, light and Judaism to every place you will visit in the Diaspora, and afterwards, in the Holy Land as well.

[Following the address, the Rebbe extended his hand to each one with the greeting "*Shalom Aleichem,*" and gave each one a dollar to give to *tzedakah*. Before leaving, the Rebbe wished everyone a good and sweet year.]

Addendum – “Special Children”

*Years later, in 5788 (1988), the Rebbe applied a similar idea to children with special needs:*¹⁶

In English, as well as in other languages, children that possess underdeveloped capabilities, Heaven forbid, are called “special children.” [This development was specifically in recent times, for as we approach the times of Moshiach, the truth is progressively being revealed in the world.] Although this term is used out of respect, it also represents that they possess special powers (similar to the discussion in the address to the “special soldiers”). Furthermore, specifically due to the lofty nature of their powers, these powers are not able to be fully expressed in their physical bodies.

We find, similarly, that a blind person is called “*sagi nabor*” (“endowed with great light”) in the Talmud and Midrash.¹⁷ It is explained that this is not meant in a teasing manner, G-d forbid, rather because often the cause of blindness is due to the overabundance of light that entered the eye and ruined its protective layers.¹⁸ Also, the internal power of eyesight is shining too strongly and cannot be expressed in the body.¹⁹

¹⁶ Adapted based on *Sefer Hasichos* 5788 2:590; *Toras Menachem* 5788 4:184.

¹⁷ See for example: *Berachos* 56a; *Yerushalmi*, *Peah* 5:5; *Bereishis Rabbah* 30:9.

¹⁸ See *Or Hatorah*, *Bereishis*, 1038b; *Sefer Hamaamarim* 5668, p. 32; *Hemshech* 5672, vol. 1, p. 275 and vol. 2 p. 1024ff.

¹⁹ *Sefer Hamaamarim* 5705, p. 6.

Dealing with a Novel Disease

*Selections adapted from the farbrengen of 11 Nissan 5742 (1982)**

Torah instructs us to “begin with a blessing,” a blessing associated with Hashem, the Source of all blessings...

To receive Hashem’s blessings, we must make appropriate “vessels” for them, and we require Hashem’s help in doing so. We must pray and request from Hashem that we succeed in conducting ourselves as a “*mentch*” — both on an individual level and as part of the general community in our city, country, and ultimately the entire world. When we do our utmost to prepare the proper vessels, we merit receiving G-d’s blessings in the fullest measure, and our vessels, filled with these blessings, shine.

The influence of these shining vessels has no limit, just as we see that the nature of light is to travel without limit to the furthest reaches of the earth (unless it is obstructed by something). This is evident from the light of the stars—to which the Jews are compared—that can be seen from earth at an extreme distance, and even variations between the light of different stars can be noticed.

Similarly, when we serve Hashem properly, fully utilizing our G-d-given abilities, we illuminate not only our immediate surroundings, but the entire universe — including the heavens. We have seen in recent times how scientists have reached intellectual breakthroughs allowing man to fly into space. If the will is there, a person can utilize his intelligence to help the entire world!

We see therefore the magnitude of our every action, speech or even thought—each one has the power to illuminate and affect the entire world. One shouldn’t mistakenly think to themselves that there is no crucial significance to how they act in a particular moment and it’s not worth investing effort. In reality, it is a life-altering moment for the entire universe!

* Particularly the first and sixth *sichos*.

A person can't understand how it is possible for his action to affect the universe. This is no surprise, since of course his limited human intellect cannot fathom the wisdom of his Creator, and how He created the world in a way that a minor action could have a global effect.

The reality, however remains, as the Rambam—The “Guide for the Perplexed” of all generations—renders in a halachic decision: “A person must regard himself ... and the whole world as being evenly balanced between good and bad ... thus, when he does [even] *one* mitzvah—in thought, speech or deed—he tips himself and the entire world to the meritorious side, and brings salvation and redemption for himself and them.”

...Hashem created man with unique abilities for the purpose of utilizing these abilities to be a “man” worthy of the name — by influencing others likewise to act like a *mentch*. This is the purpose of the Seven Noachide Laws, to ensure that the world be in a state of decency, each person acting with justice and righteousness to another. So much so that he gives away his own belongings to his friend, and certainly doesn't take away his friend's belongings. This is connected with the “Name of the L-rd,” since the Seven Noachide Laws are fulfilled when a person is permeated with faith in the Creator of the world, and his Creator, Who commanded him to conduct himself in a decent fashion and to utilize his abilities and influence on others to ensure that they also conduct themselves properly.

Every person can influence those around them, at least to some extent. This is particularly true of those to whom G-d has given the merit and entrusted them with a special mission to engage in the affairs of the neighborhood, the city, state or entire country. Their heavy responsibilities are accompanied by G-d-given abilities to fulfill this mission—since G-d only demands of a person that which he is able to fulfill—and thus they certainly can influence others for good.

The true blessing for a person is when he merits to fulfill G-d's mission to help the entire world know and recognize that there is a Creator Who wishes the world to be full of blessings and guidelines, righteousness and justice. Success in this endeavor inspires him further to continue in this work and to increase in it many times over.

When a person chooses to utilize all his abilities in this fashion, he is complete and healthy both physically and spiritually, meaning that his body and soul work in harmony. Then the promise “A nation will not raise up sword against nation” and “In that time there will be no hunger and no war” will be fulfilled, and the entire world will be in a state of true peace.

Through each person fulfilling his mission, the coming of our righteous Moshiach is hastened, when will be fulfilled the promise “I will convert the nations to a pure language ... to serve Him with one consent,” when all peoples will unite to serve G-d and fulfill their mission in the world.

In our service of Hashem, we must constantly add and ascend in matters of holiness. Thus, we see that in each generation, and indeed every year, there are additional insights into Torah. Of course, they are all founded on the general principles that were given to Moshe on Har Sinai, and “everything that a veteran scholar is destined to innovate was given to Moshe on Har Sinai.” Still, it is called an “innovation” of that scholar.

This is relevant to every Jew, since every Jew has their individual “portion” in Torah, and they have the power to uncover their portion... It is also known that every Jew has their own letter in Torah, as is pointed out that the word “Yisrael” is an acronym for “There are 600,000 letters in the Torah” (יש ששים ריבוא (אותיות לתורה)—corresponding to the 600,000 general souls that branch out to all the individual sparks.

...Our lengthy discussion regarding how every Jew has their individual part of Torah and letter in Torah is to remind everyone once again about the campaign that every Jew should purchase a letter in the sefer Torah. We have already spoken several times how important this is, thus there is no need to elaborate again.

Returning to the discussion at hand, since each Jew has their portion in Torah in which they can grow and innovate new concepts in understanding Torah, every generation brings with it novel insights into Torah.

Besides, even without the specific mandate to grow and innovate in Torah, the situation in which we find ourselves certainly behooves doing so. When we witness an increase of negativity in the world, as the

Talmud (end of Sotah) teaches that in era preceding Moshiach each day will have more negativity than its predecessor, it is definitely vital to add in matters of goodness and holiness, starting with an increase in Torah study.

In simple terms: When a new disease appears, G-d forbid, that has never before existed, we obviously can't suffice with the remedies used in the past, rather it is necessary to find a new cure to heal this new disease.

It is certainly possible to find a new cure, since Hashem created His world in a manner that "the cure precedes the sickness." Even before the new disease appears, the world already possesses its antidote.

To discover it, those who were entrusted and privileged with the mission of facilitation G-d's healing must invest true effort in searching for it. Then they must determine when the remedy should be used, and the necessary strength and amount for each individual patient that requires it. Since each person is a "complete universe," general guidelines are insufficient, rather each patient must be evaluated with individual attention and a pleasant demeanor.

Similarly, we live in a new era, which has both new blessings and medicines, as well as an increase in new challenges and illnesses. A new disease therefore requires finding a new appropriate remedy, beginning with an increase in Torah, which brings healing to the world.

One of the innovations revealed in this generation is the initiative of my father-in-law the [Previous] Rebbe to study every day a section of the weekly Torah portion. (In previous generations, this was the practice of unique individuals, and the [Previous] Rebbe publicized this practice to the masses.)

The study must be in a manner that it leads to practical outcomes, as with Torah in general, regarding which it is said, "Torah study greater since it leads to action." The [Previous] Rebbe quoted the Alter Rebbe's saying that we must "live" with the time, meaning with the lessons that can be derived from the Torah portion connected with the current time.

Elections for the Badatz of Crown Heights

Responses of the Rebbe ~ From Rabbi Eliezer Zirkind's File*

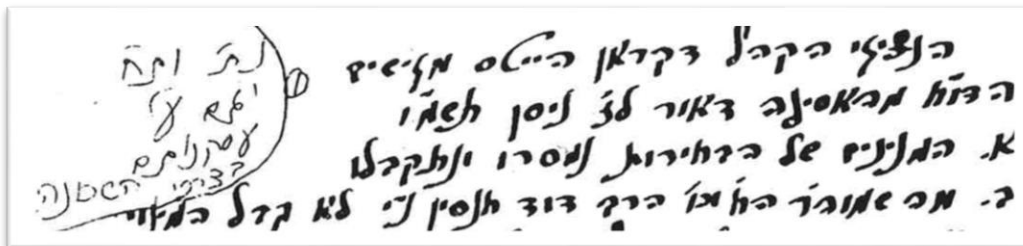
Rabbi Zalman Shimon Dworkin, the *rav* of Crown Heights for 20 years, passed away on 19 Adar 5745 (1985). Close to a year later, in Shevat 5746, the residents of Crown Heights began forming a committee to organize and supervise the elections of *rabbanim* for the *beis din*. This "Netzigim" committee consisted of representatives from each shul in Crown Heights and for each of the main *mosdos*. Rabbi Eliezer Zirkind was chosen to serve as chairman of the organization.

Elections were held on Sunday, 4 Nissan 5746, and three *rabbanim* were chosen. When Rabbi Chanzin, one of the elected *rabbanim*, requested a *bracha* for his move from Eretz Yisrael, the Rebbe responded that he should continue his work in Eretz Yisrael. The committee then sent out a letter to the community with the election results and the Rebbe's response to Rabbi Chanzin, and announced that elections for a third *rav* would take place after Pesach.

א

[ז' ניסן]

מענה לנציגי הקהל דשכונת קראון הייטס:



[1] במכתבם כתבו: "הנציגי הקהל דקראון הייטס מגישים הדו"ח מהאסיפה דאור לז' ניסן תשמ"ו".

מענה כ"ק אדמו"ר:

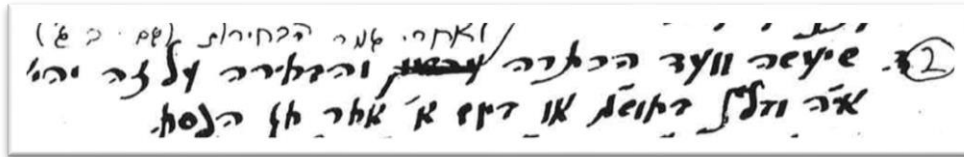
נת' ות"ח – וגם על עסקנותם בצרכי השכונה (1)

* An effort has been made to translate the responses accurately. In some instances, however, it wasn't sufficiently clear to the translator the Rebbe's intention. The entire file containing the letters and responses will IY"Y be made available online, to enable seeing the entire sequence of events (contact phillauffer@gmail.com).

(1) In their letter, the committee wrote: "The representatives of the Crown Heights community present a report from the meeting held on the night preceding 7 Nissan 5746."

The Rebbe responded:

Received and thank you. Also for your involvement in the needs of the community.



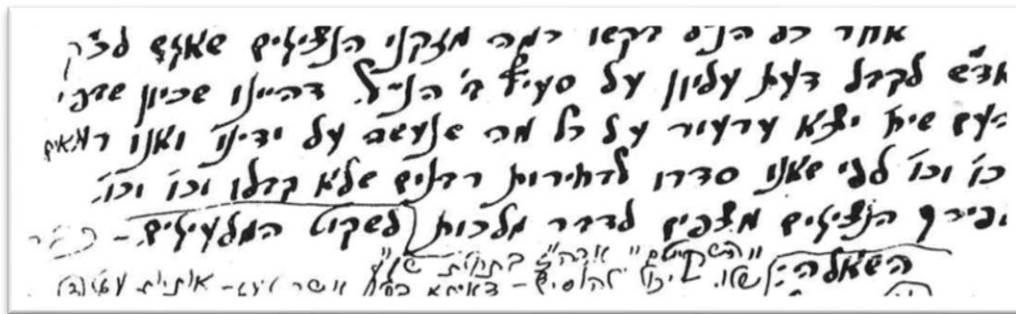
[2] במכתבם כתבו: "ד. שיעשה וועד הכתרה עכשיו, והבחירה על זה יהי אי"ה ובל"נ בחוש"מ או ביום א' אחר חג הפסח".
כ"ק אדמו"ר מחק תיבת "עכשיו", וכתב:

[שיעשה וועד הכתרה] **לאחרי גמר הבחירות (גם רב ג')** (2)

(2) In their letter, the committee wrote: "We will put together a committee for the coronation [of the rabbanim] now, and the vote for this will take place IY"n and bl"n during Chol Hamoed or on Sunday following Pesach."

The Rebbe made a line through the word "now" and wrote:

After concluding the elections (also of a third rav).



[3] במכתבם כתבו: "אחר כל הנ"ל בקשו כמה מזקני הנציגים שאגש לכ"ק אד"ש לקבל דעת עליון . . שכוון שבפי העם שיח' יצא ערעור על כל מה שנעשה על ידינו ואנו רמאים וכו' וכו' לפי שאנו סדרנו לבחירות רבנים שלא קבלו וכו' וכו', לפיכך הנציגים מצפים לדבר מלכות לשקוט המלעיגים".

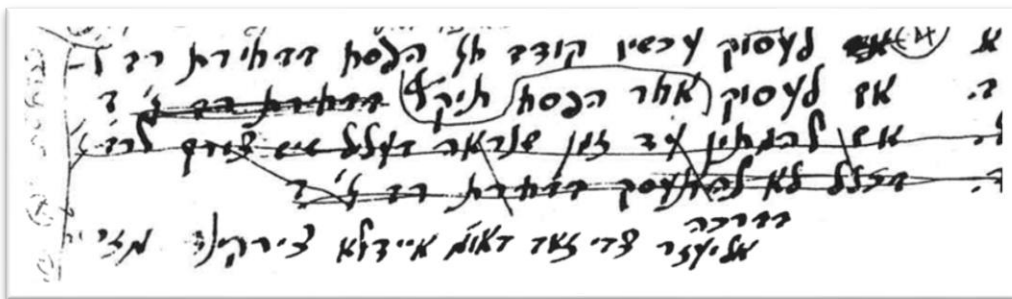
כ"ק אדמו"ר סימן בעיגול את התיבות "לשקוט המלעיגים", וכתב:

– **כבר "השקיטם" אדה"ז בתחלת שו"ע שלו. – יכול להוסיף – דאיתא בס' אשר לעג – אותיות עגל (3)**

(3) The committee's letter stated: "After all of the above, some of the senior Netzigim asked me to approach the Rebbe to receive his opinion (*daas elyon*)... since people are disputing everything we did and accusing us of deception, since we arranged elections for *rabbanim* that were not accepted etc. Therefore, the Netzigim await the royal word in order to silence the mockers.

The Rebbe responded:

The Alter Rebbe already 'silenced' them at the beginning of his Shulchan Aruch. It is possible to add, that it says in sefarim that *la'ag* (mockery) is the same letters as *eigel* (referring to the golden calf).



[4] במכתבם כתבו: "השאלה: א. אם לעסוק עכשיו קודם חג הפסח בבחירת רב ג' ב. אם לעסוק אחר הפסח תיכף בבחירת רב ג' ג. אם להמתין עד זמן שנראה בעליל שיש צורך לרב ג' ד. בכלל לא להתעסק בבחירת רב ג'?"

כ"ק אדמו"ר מחק תיבת "אם" (שבס"א) והתיבות "בבחירת רב ג'" (שבס"ב), והעביר תיבת "תיכף" שיהי' לפני התיבות "אחר הפסח", וכתב:

[לעסוק עכשיו קודם חג הפסח בבחירת רב ג' א. אם לעסוק תיכף אחר הפסח?] **כהחלטת הקהל שי' (4)**

ומחק את מה שכתבו: "ג. אם להמתין עד זמן שנראה בעליל שיש צורך לרב ג' ד. בכלל לא להתעסק בבחירת רב ג'?"

(4) Their letter stated: "Our question is—(a) Whether we should involve ourselves now, before Pesach, in the elections for a third *rav*? (b) Should we deal after Pesach immediately with elections for a third *rav*? (c) Should we wait until it becomes clear that a third *rav* is necessary? (d) Should we not get involved at all in elections for a third *rav*?"

The Rebbe drew a line through the word "Whether" in the first option, and the words "with elections for a third *rav*" in the second option. The Rebbe moved the word "immediately" to be before the words "after Pesach." Then the Rebbe added [after the remaining phrase "To be involved now, before Pesach, in the elections for a third *rav*? Whether to deal immediately after Pesach?"]

As per the community's decision.

The Rebbe also drew a line through the last two options.



[5] על כללות המכתב, כתב:

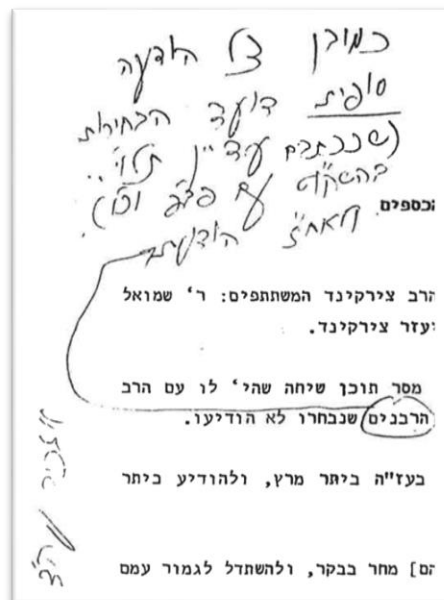
אזכיר עה"צ להצלחה בכהנ"ל (5)

(5) Regarding the letter in general, the Rebbe responded:

I will mention it at the [Rebbe Rayatz's] resting place for success in all the aforementioned.

ב

[י"ב ניסן]



מענה על הפרטי-כל מאסיפת ועדת הכספים בקשר להבחירות לבד"צ דשכונת קראון הייטס, בו כתבו: "האסיפה נקראה בדחיפות לאחר שהרב צירקינד מסר תוכן שיחה שהי' לו עם הרב גרונו, אודות שלא הודיעו לכ"ק אד"ש ע"ע וכמו"כ הרבנים שנבחרו לא הודיעו. לאחר דיון הסכימו כלם לתקן להבא לעסוק בעז"ה ביתר מרץ, ולהודיע ביתר

תכיפות לכ"ק אד"ש" (מהעתקת המזכיר. המענה מתפרסם בזה לראשונה באדיבות ר' פסח שי' לויפער וזכות הרבים תלוי בו):

כמובן צ"ל הודעה סופית דועד הבחירות (שככתבם עדיין תלוי' . בהשקו"ט עם פב"פ וכו'), ולאח"ז הודעת [הרבנים]

אזכיר עה"צ

Response to the protocol from the midnight meeting held on 12 Nissan by the financial committee in connection to the elections for the *rabbanim* of Crown Heights. They wrote: "The meeting was called urgently after Rabbi Zirkind delivered the content of his conversation with Rabbi Groner regarding the fact that they didn't notify the Rebbe up until now, and neither did the chosen *rabbanim*. After deliberation, we all decided to rectify this from now on, to work on this matter with more energy, with Hashem's help, and to notify the Rebbe more often."

The Rebbe responded:

Understandably, there needs to be a conclusive notification from the election committee (you wrote that is still dependent... on the discussion with so-and-so...), and afterwards the *rabbanim* [will notify].

I will mention it at the [Rebbe Rayatz's] resting place.

ג

[י"ח ניסן]

ובתנאים אלו רשות להריק מארלאו לענין השינה
 ונקרא ברובת
 כל היום הלוי על הסכום כן ארבע אלפי
 מאות צוחקים האני עקום הסכום ורובה אכ"ק
 אדם על כל קולט מיהו ר' י' מארלאו אי ארז ל רחילט
 על ב פ ה
 מרובה על הכל
 איעני צי באז קאום אינדל עם גירקל
 א. א. כהן

מענה לנציגי הקהל דשכונת קראונהייטס שכתבו: "בעזה"שית ובחסדו הגדול, גמרנו המו"מ עם ההנהלה דתומכי תמימים ומוה"ר הח' וכו' וכו' הרב יהודה קלמן מארלאו נ"י, והוא קבל עליו העול הרבנות דקהלתינו, לרב אחד, עד

שיתבררו הב' האחרים, ואז ישמש עמהם. והוא ואנו נתרצו להשכירות של שכר בטלה, ובהוספה דעשרון. והנהלה נתן רשות להרי"ק מארלאוו לעזוב הישיבה ולקבל הרבנות. כל הנ"ל תלוי על הסכמת כ"ק אד"ש מצדו. ואנו דוחקים השער לקבל הסכמה וברכה מכ"ק אד"ש על קבלת מוה"ר ר' י"ק מארלאוו נ"י לרב על קהילתנו על פי כל הנ"ל" (מהעתקת המזכיר. המענה מתפרסם בזה לראשונה באדיבות ר' פסח שי' לויפער וזכות הרבים תלוי בו):

[והנהלה נתן רשות להרי"ק מארלאוו לעזוב הישיבה ולקבל הרבנות] **עפ"ז** [הסכמה וברכה מכ"ק אד"ש]

אזכיר עה"צ

The Netzigim wrote: "With Hashem's help, we completed the negotiations with the administration of Tomchei Temimim and the Rav and chossid Rabbi Yehuda Kalman Marlow. He accepted the yoke of *rabbanus*... and the yeshiva administration granted permission for Rabbi Marlow to leave the yeshiva and accept the *rabbanus*. All of this is pending the Rebbe's agreement. We are pressing the gates to receive the Rebbe's agreement and blessing for accepting Rabbi Marlow as *rav* over our community based on all the above."

The Rebbe responded by adding the word "accordingly," to make the phrase:

[The yeshiva administration granted permission for Rabbi Marlow to leave the yeshiva and accept the *rabbanus*] **accordingly** [the Rebbe's agreement and blessing.]

ד

[מענה מכ"ג ניסן, אסרו חג הפסח, נדפס בס' "דעת הקהל" ע' 81]

ה

[כ"ו ניסן]

מענה לנציגי הקהל דשכונת קראון הייטס שהכניסו את הפרטי-כל דהאסיפה דר"ח ניסן, והחלטות האסיפה דכ"ו ניסן (מהעתקת המזכיר. המענה מתפרסם בזה לראשונה באדיבות ר' פסח שי' לויפער וזכות הרבים תלוי בו):

נת' ות"ח אזכיר עה"צ להצלחה רבה

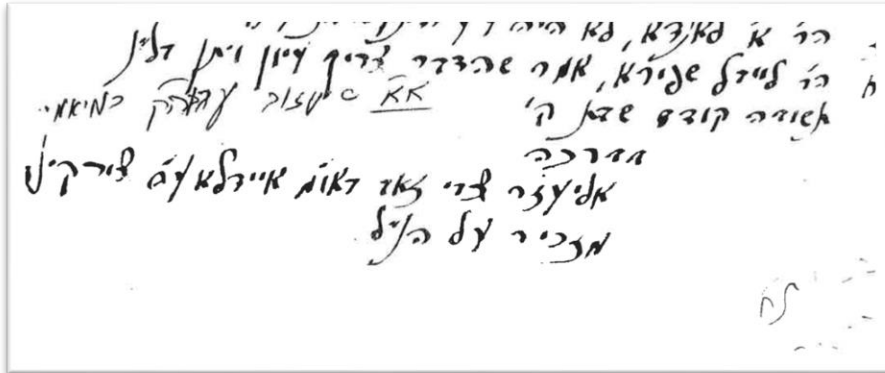
The Netzigim submitted the protocol from the meeting held on Rosh Chodesh Nissan and the resolutions taken by the meeting held on 26 Nissan.

The Rebbe responded:

Received and thank you. I will mention it at the [Rebbe Rayatz's] resting place for much success.

ו

[ו' אייר]



מענה לנציגי הקהל דשכונת קראון הייטס על דו"ח שכתבו (מהעתקת המזכיר. המענה מתפרסם בזה לראשונה באדיבות ר' פסח שי' לויפער וזכות הרבים תלוי בו):

[1] במכתבם כתבו: "הר' לייבל שפירא, אמר שהדבר צריך עיון ויתן בל"ג תשובה קודם שבת ק"א."

מענה כ"ק אדמו"ר:

א"א שיעזוב עבוה"ק במיאמי

[2] על כללות הדו"ח, כתב:

נת' ות"ח

להחזיר

The Netzigim wrote in their report: "Rabbi Leibel Schapiro said that the matter requires investigation, and he will provide an answer before Shabbos."

The Rebbe responded:

It is impossible that he should leave his holy work in Miami.

Regarding the general report:

Received and thank you.

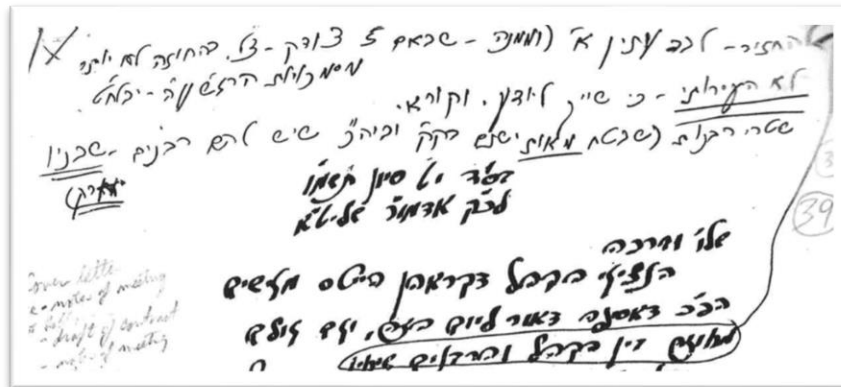
To be returned.

ז

[י"ט סיון]

מענה לנציגי הקהל דשכונת קראון הייטס שכתבו: "הנציגי הקהל דקראהן הייטס מגישים הפ"כ דאסיפה דאור ליום הזה, וגם צילום מחוזה בין הקהל והרבנים שיחיו. אנו מקוים, שכיון שהב' צדדים הנ"ל הם דרדקי בענינים אלו, אם יחנן כ"ק אד"ש להאיר או להעיר על החוזה כדי שלא יביא ח"ו שום היזק בהוה או בעתיד לא' או לב' הצדדים מחמת חוסר דעתם. . . יש ב' שטרות לפי שאין ראי זה כראי זה" (ס' "דעת הקהל" ע' 62. וחלקו מתפרסם בזה לראשונה, מהעתקת המזכיר, באדיבות ר' פסח שי' לויפער וזכות הרבים תלוי בו):

The Netzigim wrote: "The representatives of the Crown Heights community are submitting the protocol from the meeting last night, and a copy of the contract drawn up between the community and the *rabbanim*. We hope, since both sides are inexperienced in these areas, if the Rebbe will be gracious to point out anything about the contract so that it won't G-d forbid bring any harm in the present or future to one or both of the sides due to their lack of knowledge... there are two contracts since they each are different."



[1] בהחזרה נכתב בין השאר: (5) סדור חופה וקדושין יה' רק בידי ג' רבני השכונה [מלבד כאשר ימצאו לנכון לתת רשות לרב אחר]."

כ"ק אדמו"ר סימן בעיגול את התיבות שבמכתב (המצורף להחזרה): "מחוזה בין הקהל והרבנים שיחיו", וכתב:

להחזיר – לבד ענין א' (וממנה – שבאם 5 צודק – צ"ל בהחזרה לא יותר מסמכויות הרז"ש ע"ה – יבלח"ט.

לא העירותי – כי שייך ליודעי וקוראי שטרי רבנות (שבטח מאות ישנם בק"ק וביה"כ שיש להם רבנים – שבניו יארק)

(1) The fifth clause of the contract stated: "Conducting chupah and *kidushin* will be in the sole authority of the three *rabbanim* of the community [unless they find it proper to grant another *rav* permission."

The Rebbe circled the words (in the letter attached to the contract) “the contract drawn between the community and the *rabbanim*” and wrote:

To be returned – besides one thing (and from it – that if clause 5 is correct – there needs to be in the contract not more than the authority of Rabbi Zalman Shimon Dworkin ob”m, may they be separated for good life.

I didn't make note – since this is the domain of those who are familiar with and ready rabbinic contracts (surely there are hundreds found in the communities and shuls with *rabbanim* – in New York)

[2] על כללות המכתב, כתב:

כפשוט מופרך לגמרי שאני אתעסק בהנהלת הקהל, או בהנהלת הנציגים, ובאם [הם דרדקי בענינים אלו] **יחפשו מי שילמדם, ואין זה עניני כלל.**

2) **לאחרי מה שקרה (התהפכות מן הקצה אל הקצה, מחלוקת במציאות וכו' וכו') ועד לטענות משני הצדדים – שהצד השני עושה היפך השו"ע – שזה הכריחני להכנס לכ"ז, כי א"א 770 ואני (בתור תושב השכונה – ותו לא) יעברו ע"ז בשתיקה (דמדשתיק אודי לי', כמו שאמרו לי בפירוש) – מוכרח שיבררו המצב והספקות – וישללו מחלוקת בעתיד**

3) **התעלמות מן הספקות – היא גם ללא תועלת כלל – כי ראו בעליל – כי ישנם כו"כ שיפרסמום וכו'**

4) **כפשוט – הנ"ל כולל מענה ברור על הטענות שכבר שאלו ובפרהסיא, ובריבוי המכ' שלהם והפר"כ אין אף רמז למענה.**

5) **מהטענות העקריות (ולא כולם, כ"א אך א-ב): מפורסם שכל הענין נתעורר בכדי למ"מ הרב דוארקין ע"ה יבלח"ט, ולזה נבחרו לנציגים – מהי הסמכות שלהם בכל שאר הענינים, לבד בחירת רבנים, וועד להכתרתם? וממי קבלוה? ובהוספה עקרית – לפני זמן בחר הקהלה ועד השכונה לנהל השכונה (והוא ערך האסיפה שבחרה בהנציגים לבחור רב וכל השייך לזה) ויש מהועד טוען שרק אלה שבחרו בהועד שכונה בסמכות – ע"פ שו"ע – לבטלו או אפילו למעט תקפו. וזה צ"ל באופן רשמי ע"פ שו"ע, כמו שהייתה בחירתם וע"י נציגים לבחירת רב.**

6) **לשולל מה שאירע בעבר – מוכרח שהמענה עכ"ז יהי' בכתב וברור ובפרטיות ובמילא האחריות – ובמילא בטח יבררו: א) טענות השו"ע – או שאין טענותם מהשו"ע. ב) טענות תושבי השכונה שי' – בירור כדרוש ע"פ שו"ע.**

7) **באם הטענה שב5 צודקת – צ"ל בהחזקה דיוק (למנוע כו') שהם ב"כ הקהל לבחירת רבנים.**

8) **באם יחקרו יודע להם – שב770 עורכים חו"ק (וכן עשו בימי הרב דוארקין ע"ה) מכו"כ סוגים, בהביאם מסדר קידושים משלהם ובמילא יבררו דעת השו"ע בנוגע לס"ה שלהם.**

Regarding the general letter, the Rebbe circled the words "they are inexperienced in these areas" and wrote:

Obviously, it is completely out of the question for me to be involved in the administration of the community or in the administration of the Netzigim. If they are [inexperienced in these areas] they should look for someone to teach them, and this isn't my area at all.

2) After what happened, (reversals from one extreme to the other, arguments over the facts etc., etc.) to the point that both sides claim that the other side is acting against Shulchan Aruch, this **compelled me** to get involved in all this, because it is impossible for 770 and myself (as a resident of the community **and nothing more**) to let this pass in silence (since silence is interpreted as agreement, as was said to me **explicitly**) – it is imperative to **resolve** the situation and doubts – and preclude future disputes.

3) Ignoring the doubts is of no use at all, for they have clearly seen that there are people who will publicize them...

4) **Obviously**, this includes a clear response to all the arguments they have already raised publicly, and in the abundance of your letters and protocols there isn't even a hint of a response.

5) Amongst the primary arguments (not all of them, only alef beis): It is well known this entire matter was started to fill in for the Rav Dworkin ob"m—may they be separated for good life—and it is for this purpose that the Netzigim were chosen. What is their authority in all the other matters besides for the elections of the *rabbanim* all the way to their installment? From whom did they receive this authority? An additional integral point: A while ago, the community chose a community council to run the community, (and it is this [council] that arranged the meeting to choose the Netzigim for electing a rav and everything associated with this) and some from the council argue that only those who chose the Community Council have the authority—according to the Shulchan Aruch—to dismantle it or even minimize its jurisdiction. This needs to be in an official manner according to Shulchan Aruch, just as they were chosen, and through them the Netzigim for electing a *rav*.

6) To preclude what has happened in the past, it is imperative that the response to all the above should be in writing, clear, and detailed, consequently carrying responsibility, thus you will certainly clarify: (a) the claims from the Shulchan Aruch, or that their claims aren't based on Shulchan Aruch; (b) the claims of the community residents, may they be well – a thorough clarification according to Shulchan Aruch.

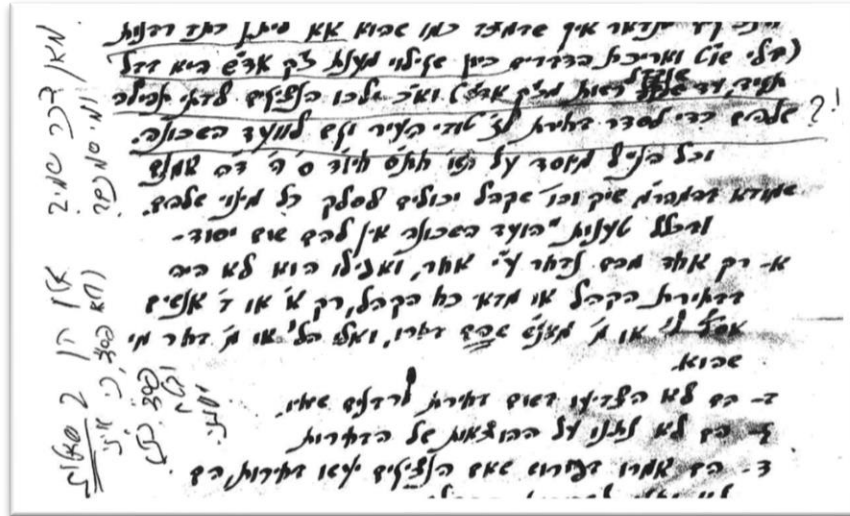
7) If the argument in item 5 is correct, the contract must include a nuance (to avoid etc.) that they are the proxies of the community for the elections of the *rabbanim*.

8) If you investigate you will find out that that various types of *chupah* and *kidushin* are arranged in 770 (as in the days of Rav Dworkin ob"m) and they bring their own *mesader kidushin*, thus you must ascertain the view of Shulchan Aruch regarding their *sidur kidushin*.

ה

[כ"ב סיון]

מענה לנציגי הקהל דשכונת קראון הייטס שכתבו: "דו"ח מאסיפת מוצש"ק אור לכ"ב סיון ואח"כ"ב סיון מועד נציגי הקהל דקראהן הייטס. אחר שבת הגדול לעיין במענת כ"ק אד"ש דעש"ק להוועד ואחר קבלת דעת הרבנים המיועדים על המענה הנ"ל, החליטו הוועד שהדרך הכי קל היא על ידי שבאסיפת הנציגים יתבאר איך שבמצב כמו שהוא א"א ליתן כתב רבנות (בלי שו"ט ואריכת הדברים כיון שגילוי מענת כ"ק אד"ש היא בבל יגיד, עד שנקבל רשות מכ"ק אד"ש) וא"כ ילכו הנציגים לבתי תפילה שלהם כדי לסדר בחירות לז' טובי העיר וגם לוועד השכונה" (ס' "דעת הקהל" ע' 62. וחלק מתפרסם בזה לראשונה, מהעתקת המזכיר, באדיבות ר' פסח שי' לויפער וזכות הרבים תלוי בו):



[1] כ"ק אדמו"ר סימן קו תחת התיבות "א"א ליתן כתב רבנות", והתיבות "כיון שגילוי מענת כ"ק אד"ש היא בבל יגיד, עד שנקבל רשות מכ"ק אד"ש וא"כ ילכו הנציגים לבתי תפילה שלהם כדי לסדר בחירות לד' טובי העיר וגם לוועד השכונה", וכתב:

!?

מאן דכר שמי'?

ומי סמכס?

אלו הן 2 שאלות (ולא פס"ד, כי איני פס"ד כנ"ל) ובטח יענני.

The Rebbe underlined the words "it isn't possible to give a *ksav rabbanus*" and the words "since we can't reveal the Rebbe's answers until we receive the Rebbe's permission, and if so, the Netzigim will go to their shuls to arrange elections for seven communal leaders [*tuvei ha'ir*]" and a Community Council" and wrote:

!?

Who mentioned this?

And who granted them authority?

These are two questions (and not halachic rulings, as I am not giving halachic rulings as I stated previously) and certainly you will answer me.

אסימ. בבסטאט. בחרו פהם אגחור מע
 איתן, יאזו עץ העני. ויחילו בו לפי
 (והרגה יתני להחיותה) וקטל אקרוהיות וכו'
 וקוב "הי"ב" נסו - ויטן אפנש. ו יכאלין
 אגאלי פ' העקנות שאי. ארי בבסטאט מלי. סילוי
 פ' (אני סיקן, או פסג - אהא הפך האמת)
~~ב' בהתקם הפ' אכסיה (החוקר החדש) וכו'~~
 אכרי גרה פ' העקנות כנאע אכחיות העקנות
 (אם אהי שא רצתי אכיתם כתי, ויקרו אילתם
 איתן היצבים) ויהוסיק ואסיים תקופם כחיות
 רבנים, מסירת הנתפ העקנות (אכסיטא - כחיות
 קום סינק).
 (3) תקופ סיא חגש העקנות היחא
 תיא. ואם יוגיקונן תיב אהיתא כנפ וקמא -
 ת' מראש

[2] ועל כללות המכתב, כתב:

אין לדבר סוף! ובדבר הכי פשוט! ומפעם לפעם ניתוסף ענין משונה וזר לגמרי! לדוגמא במכ' שלפני זה: שכיון שאין יודעים איך לבחור ולגמור בחירות רב - עלי ללמדם!

ובמכ' זה - שא"א ליתן כתב רבנות וכו' כיון שא"א לגלות . . מענות שלי!

ואריכות גדולה - בנוגע . . לועד השכונה וז"ט הקהל!

הדבר הכי פשוט: לפני כו"כ חדשים נבחרו נציגים לבחירת מ"מ הרב דווארקין ע"ה - וע"ע: כו"כ (יותר מב') צדדים, וכאו"א מאשים את השאר או בהיפך השו"ע, או בהיפך כבוד הרבנות, או בהיפך שכל הפשוט, או בהיפך האנושיות וכו' וכו' ומתעסקים . . באסיפות ופר"כ!

והוסיף על כולם - שעשה אותי צד, פוסק בכ"ז, מחווה דעות ומצווה פקודות וכו'!! בשעה שכל התערבותי הייתה: עפשו"ע העמדתים בחזקת כשרות ובמילא כששולחים פר"כ - בטח אמת הוא (שהיתה החלטת הרוב ככתוב בהפר"כ) ועניתי שאזכיר עה"צ וכו'

וכשהגיעו טענות חזקות ומבהילות נגד כו"כ ולא מצאתי שום מענה עליהם בכל הפר"כ ואפילו לא רמז – הודעתים שיש טענות אלה (ולא כולם – לרוב הבהלתם) מבלי לומר דעתי בהם כלל (כיון שאין זה עניני כלל, ולא חקו"ד בזה, ופשיטא – שלא פס"ד בזה כלל) – כנ"ל מצד הב' או הג' ואני לא אמרתי בזה חו"ד כ"א אך שצ"ל מענה עליהם (הן או לאו ברור), בצירוף מ"מ ברור בשו"ע: מהיכן דנתוני, או שפטורים מלומר מהיכן דנתוני (והלעז שיגרם עי"ז – ג"כ פשוט).

לסיום בפשטות: בחרו בהם לבחור מ"מ להנ"ל, קבלו ע"ע המינוי והתחילו בו בפועל (והרבה יותר מהתחלה), נעשו שערוריות וכו', ועוד "היד" נטוי' – ולכן לפענ"ד: (1) יכולים לגלות כל המענות שלי, אבל כפשוט מבלי סילוף כלל (שאני טוען, או פס"ד – שזהו היפך האמת), (2) בהקדם הכי אפשרי (להמעיט המחלוקת וכו') – לברר ברור כל הטענות בנוגע לבחירות הרבנות (גם אלה שלא רציתי לכותבם כנ"ל, ויחקרו אודותם אצל הצדדים) ולהמשיך ולסיים תפקידם בבחירת רבנים, מסירת הכתב הרבנות (ופשיטא – כמתאים ע"פ שו"ע), (3) עכ"פ קודם סיום חודש הרבנות – ירחא תליתאי

ואם יודיעוני תיכף שהותחל בכ"ז ובמרץ – ת"ח מראש

Regarding the general letter:

There is no end to this! And with something so simple! And every so often a strange and completely foreign idea is added! For example, in the previous letter: since they don't know how to hold elections for a *rav*—I should teach them!

And in this letter – that it isn't possible to give a *ksav rabbanus* etc. since they can't reveal... my answers!

And a lengthy discussion regarding... a community council and seven community leaders!

The simplest thing: Netzigim were chosen several months ago to elect a replacement for Rav Dworkin ob"m – and until now: there are several (more than two) sides, and each one accuses the other with either acting against Shulchan Aruch, against the honor of the *rabbanus*, against simple logic, or against basic decency etc. etc. and they are involved with meetings and protocols!

And above everything – he made me a side, a decider in all this, one who voices opinions and gives commands etc.!! While my entire involvement was that I afforded them a presumption of innocence, thus when they sent a protocol, it is certainly true (that there was a majority decision as written in the protocol), and I responded that I will mention it at the *tziyon* etc.

When I received strong and startling claims against several individuals and I didn't find any response to them in all the protocols, not even a hint – I let them know that these claims exist (but not all of them—due to their frightening nature) without expressing my opinion on them at all (since this isn't my thing at all, and I didn't investigate the matter, and obviously I didn't rule on it at all) as above from the second or third side and I didn't express my opinion, only that there must be a response to them (a clear positive or negative), along with a clear source in Shulchan Aruch: "From where have you judged me," or they are exempt from explaining the source (and the gossip this will cause is also obvious).

In conclusion simply: They were chosen to elect the replacement for the aforementioned [Rav Dworkin]. They accepted upon themselves the appointment and actually began to deal with it (and have done much more than just a beginning). Commotions developed etc., and the "hand" is still stretched out.

Therefore, in my humble opinion: (1) They may reveal all of my answers, but obviously without any distortion whatsoever (such as that I am presenting a claim or issuing rulings – which is the opposite of the truth). (2) As soon as possible (to minimize the arguments etc.), to clearly resolve all of the claims regarding the election for the *rabbanus* (even those claims that I did not wish to write as above, and they should investigate them with the various sides). And to proceed to complete their job as far as electing *rabbanim*, presenting the *ksav rabbanus* (and obviously – as appropriate according to Shulchan Aruch). (2) At least before the end of the month of *rabbanus* – the third month (Sivan).

And if you will inform me forthwith that all of this has begun and with alacrity – thank you in advance.

ט

[כ"ג סיון]

ג'ט א יבררו 5 האננות
 זאזע צ' שיה, אק'
 באינן שא יה אק'
 אציקורי טעה זאז אק'
 וכו' וכו'
 אציקורי טעה

מענה לנציגי הקהל דשכונת קראון הייטס שכתב: "בבקשת מחילה על כל העבר ות"ח על כל ההדרכה אפילו אם אין דרכו בקודש. באסיפה דחופה מהועד אחר קבלת מענת כ"ק אד"ש הסכימו: א. לפרסם תיכף ועד ג' ימים, שיהי' אסיפה כללית לכל תושבי השכונה ולכל השייך לדלהלן שיבואו ויערערו אם יש להם ערעור ויטענו אם יש להם טענות, ויסכימו אם הם מסכימים. ב. ובעיקר מי שסובר שיש לו דין יבא ויזמינו לדין שם. ג. ומי שבא לפשרה יבא ויפשר שם. ד. ומי שבא להסכים יסכים שם. ואי"ה ובלי נדר מודעות יצא לכל בתי תפילה ומקום דריסת הרבים על כל הנ"ל ואנו מתחילים בכל הנ"ל ואי"ה ובל"נ יכנס לפני ולפנים המודעות. וע"פ כל הנ"ל אנו מוכנים ליתן כתב רבנות בזמן שקצב כ"ק אד"ש בחודש סיון בשטומ"צ. ת"ח עוד הפעם!! ועוד הפעם!!" (מהעתקת המזכיר. המענה בזה לראשונה באדיבות ר' פסח שי' לויפער וזכות הרבים תלוי' בו):

בטח יבררו כל הטענות לאיזה צד שיהיי', אבל באופן שלא יהיי' מקום לערעור שזה לא נענה וכו' וכו'.

אזכיר עה"צ

The Rebbe responded:

Certainly they will clarify all the claims from whichever side they may be, but in a manner that there won't be room to argue that it wasn't answered etc. etc.

I will mention it at the tziyon.

,

[כ"ד סיון]

מענה לנציגי הקהל דשכונת קראון הייטס שכתבו: "אתמול ביקש כ"ק אד"ש [לעיל מענה ח] מענה על ב' שאלות "מאן דכר שמ"י? ומי סמכם?". אמת אגיד שלא השבתי עליהם ע"ע לפי שאין ברור בעינינו השאלה. מ"מ אשתדל לענות כפי שדמינו השאלות להיות, ואם כווננו טוב, ואם לאו, אם יחונן כ"ק אד"ש להסביר מה השאלות נשתדל לענותם. מאן דכר שמ"י? .. ובזה באנו לשאלה הב' מי סמכם? .. ובעיקר!! אחר כל הנ"ל, אם אנו נחתום על החוזה עם הרבנים, על מי חל חיוב תשלומי השכירות? .. ואם עלינו, מאין לנו כסף? אם לא מקופת הקהל או כיס הקהל? ומאין יש לנו הכוח להוציא ממון אלו, אם תפקידינו וכוחנו מסתיים בחתימת החוזה והכתב רבנות?! .." (מהעתקת המזכיר. המענה מתפרסם בזה לראשונה באדיבות ר' פסח שי' לויפער וזכות הרבים תלוי בו):

פשוט שכיון
 חוצים לבחירת רב
 בהש"ק ע"ש דוקא, ולא בנוגע
 (ה"י) ז"ל השלם וכו' (1)
 חש
 א
 ד' אלוט' מאן דכר
 ו ע"י לעי' שאן מרוד 22 ||
 מו דר זכרון משה

[1] כ"ק אדמו"ר סימן בעיגול את התיבות "שאינ ברור", וכתב:

!!!!

[2] ועל השאלות שבמכתבו, כתב:

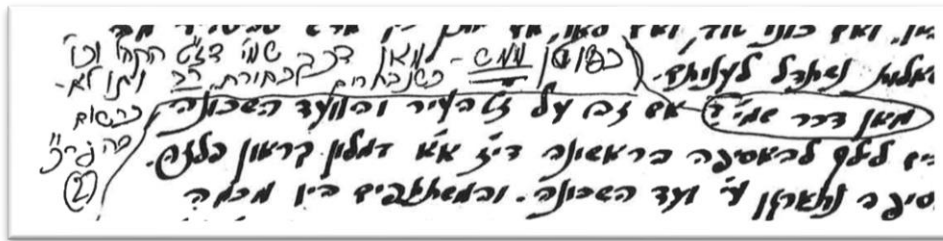
פשוט שכיון ששאלתי ועד הנציגים לבחירת רב – ה"י בהשייך עליהם דוקא, ולא בנוגע (רק) לועד השכונה וכיו"ב (1)

The Rebbe circled the words “it is not clear” and wrote:

??!!

Regarding the questions in the letter:

It is obvious that since I asked the Committee of Representatives (Netzigim) for Electing a Rav – it is specifically regarding what is associated with them, and not regarding (only) the community council and the like.

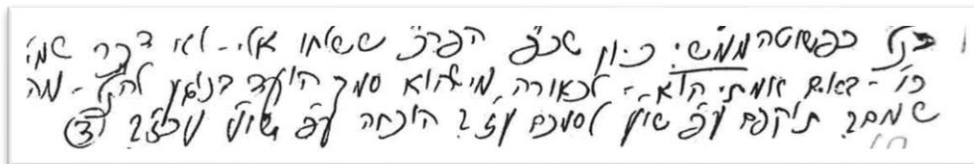


סימן בעיגול את התיבות “מאן דכר שמי”?, וכתב:

כפשוטו ממש – מאן דכר שמי' דז"ט הקהל וכו' כשנבחרים לבחירת רב ותו לא – כרשום בהפר"כ (2)

The Rebbe circled the words “Who mentioned this?” and wrote:

It is **extremely** literal – who mentioned the seven communal leaders etc. when they were chosen to elect a rav and nothing more – as written in the protocol.



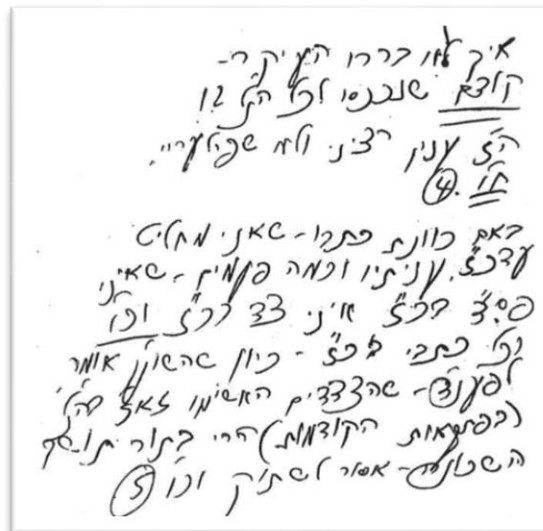
סימן בעיגול את התיבות “ובזה באנו לשאלה הב' מי סמכם?”, וכתב:

כנ"ל כפשוטה ממש: כיון שכ"פ הפר"כ ששלחו אלי – לא דכר שמי' כו' – באם אמתי הוא – לכאורה מי שהוא סמך הועד בנוגע להנ"ל – מה שמס? תוקפם ע"פ שו"ע לסמכם ע"ז? הוכחה ע"פ שו"ע עכ"ז? (3)

The Rebbe circled the words “and with this we come to the second question of who granted them authority” and wrote:

As above, extremely literally: since several times the protocols that they sent me – not mentioning – if it is accurate – seemingly someone authorized the committee for the above – what is their

name? Their strength based on Shulchan Aruch to authorize them? A proof based on Shulchan Aruch for all this?



על מה שכתב: "ובעיקר!! אחר כל הנ"ל, אם אנו נחתום על החוזה עם הרבנים, על מי חל חיוב תשלומי השכירות?" – סימן בעיגול תיבת "ובעיקר", וכתב:

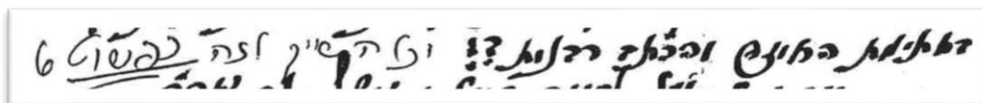
איך לא בררו העיקר – קודם שנכנסו לכל הנ"ל?! ה"ל ענין רציני ולא שפילעריי, ח"ו. (4)

באם כוונת כתבו – שאני מחליט עדכ"ל, עניתו וכמה פעמים – שאיני פס"ד בכ"ז, איני צד בכ"ז וכו' וכל כתבי בכ"ז – כיון שהש"א אומר לפענ"ד – שהצדדים האשימו זא"ל בהנ"ל (בפתקאות הקודמות) הרי בתור תושב השכונה – אסור לשתוק וכו' (5)

Regarding the phrase in the letter "Primarily!! After all the above, if we sign on the contract with the *rabbanim*, upon whom is the obligation to pay the salaries?" – the Rebbe circled the word "Primarily" and wrote:

How did they not clarify the primary aspect before getting into all of this?! This is a serious matter and not a game, G-d forbid.

If it is his intention that I decide about all of this, I answered him a number of times – that I am not issuing a ruling on all this, I am not a side in all this etc. All of my writing about all of this – since the Shulchan Aruch says in my humble opinion – that the sides have accused each other of the above (in the previous notes) – so as a resident of the community – it is forbidden to remain silent etc.

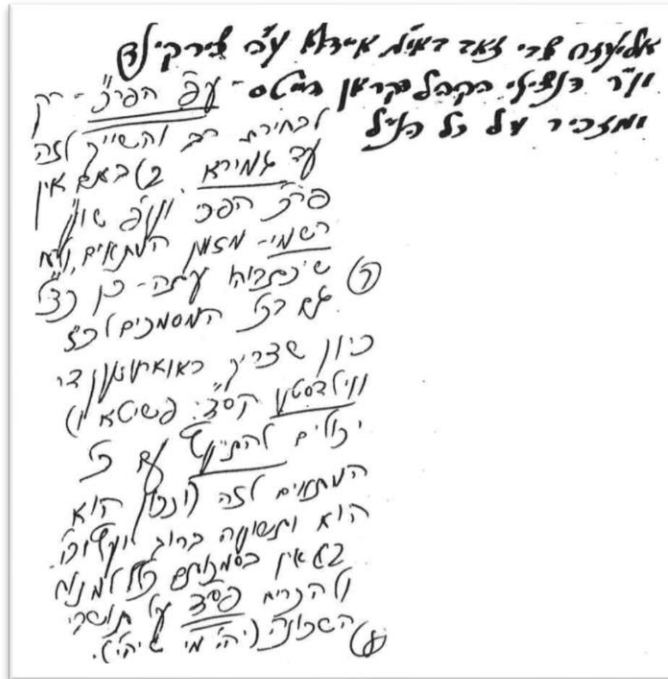


על מה שכתב: "אם תפקידינו וכוחנו מסתיים בחתימת החוזה והכתב רבנות!?", כתב:

וכל השייך לזה כפשוטו 6

Regarding what they wrote “If our mission and power conclude with signing the contract and the *ksav rabbanus*!” the Rebbe wrote:

Along with everything involved as obvious



[3] על מה שכתב בחתימת מכתבו: "יו"ר דנציגי הקהל דקראן הייטס", כתב:

- ע"פ הפר"כ – רק לבחירת רב והשייך לזה עד גמירא, (2) באם אין פר"כ הפכי וע"פ שו"ע רשמי – מזמן המתאים, ולא שיכתבוהו עתה – כן כצ"ל גם בכל המסמכים לכ"ז (7)
- כיון שצריך באוארענען די ווילדסטע קס"ד: פשיטא (1) יכולים להתייעץ עם כל המתאים לזה (ונכון הוא ותשועה ברוב יועץ וכו'), אין בסמכותם כלל למנות ולהכריח פס"ד על תושבי השכונה (יהי' מי שיהי'). (8)

Regarding the signature at the bottom of the letter “Chairman of the Representatives of the Crown Heights Community” the Rebbe wrote:

- Based on the protocol – only for electing a *rav*, and all that is involved, until completion, (2) If there is no opposite protocol and according to Shulchan Aruch official – from an appropriate date, and not that they should write it now – this is how it must be in all the documents.

Since it is necessary to forewarn to wildest notions: obviously (1) they can consult with anyone appropriate for this (and it is proper “and there is salvation with many counselors” etc.); (2) they

are not authorized at all to appoint and force a ruling on the residents of the community (no matter who it is).

יא

[כ"ד סיון]

מטוב (1) לצייין מספר הסידורי דמכ' זה בנדו"ז
 (2) לברר בק"ק שבנו יארק עכ"פ – כמה אסיפות נערכו עד שבחרו רבניהם
 (ב) כמה זמן נמשך מתחלתו ועד סופן
 (ג) כמה מכ' ופר"כ הוצרכו עכ"ז

מענה לנציגי הקהל דשכונת קראון הייטס שכתבו: "הנציגי הקהל דקראון הייטס מגישים: א. המודעה לקהל בלה"ק. ב. בקשה מועד רבני ליובאוויטש" (מהעתקת המזכיר. המענה מתפרסם בזה לראשונה באדיבות ר' פסח שי' לויפער וזכות הרבים תלוי בו):

מטוב:

(1) לצייין מספר הסידורי דמכ' זה בנדו"ז

(2) לברר בק"ק שבנו יארק עכ"פ – כמה אסיפות נערכו עד שבחרו רבניהם

(ב) כמה זמן נמשך מתחלתו ועד סופן

(ג) כמה מכ' ופר"כ הוצרכו עכ"ז

In their letter: "The Netzigim of the Crown Heights community present: (1) the notice to the community in Hebrew; (2) a request from Vaad Rabbanei Lubavitch."

The Rebbe responded:

Out of his goodness:

1) To indicate this letter's serial number in this case.

2) To find out from other holy communities, in New York at least, how many gatherings were held until they elected their *rabbanim*.

(b) How much time did it take from its beginning to its end.

(c) How many letters and reports did they need for this.

יב

[ועש"ק שלח, כ"ז סיון]

ע' תמ"ח בק"ק סיון'
 קול מכתב היבנות - תכ"א י"ח
 י"ח המצ"ב נת' ות"ח'

מענה לנציגי הקהל דשכונת קראון הייטס שכתבו: "בעזהשי"ת ובשעטומ"צ הנציגים והקהל נתקבצו יחד למלאות הבימה"ד של כ"ק אד"ש למעלה, ושם אחרי קריאת החוזות והכתב רבנות ע"י הועד מנציגי הקהל דק"ה לבחירת רבנים וכל השייך לזה מסר היו"ר להרבנים שיחיו החוזות, והרה"ח א"נ שקליאר נ"י מסר הכתב רבנות להרבנים שיחיו, ובתוך שמחה, ניגון אהבה, אחוה, ורעות, הרבנים שיחיו הכירו טובה על הכל . . מצו"פ משקה מהאסיפה, צילום כתבי הרבנות חתומים, צילום החוזות חתומים" (מהעתקת המזכיר. המענה מתפרסם בזה לראשונה באדיבות ר' פסח שי' לויפער וזכות הרבים תלוי בו):

ות"ח

להחזיר

בא' מכתבי הרבנות – תיבה א' יתרה

וכל המצו"ב נת' ות"ח

The Netzigim wrote that the community gathered together, and after the committee of representatives read aloud the contracts and *ksav rabbanus* (letter of rabbinical appointment), the chairman handed the *rabbanim* the contracts... They attached to their letter copies of the signed *kisvei rabbanus* and signed contracts, together with some *mashke* from the gathering.

The Rebbe answered:

Thank you.

To be returned.

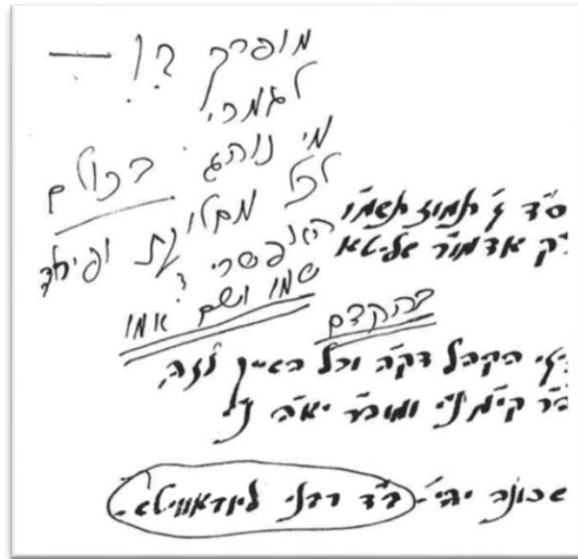
There is an extra letter in one of the *kisvei rabbanus*.

All the attached was received and thank you.

יג

[ג' תמוז]

מענה לנציגי הקהל דשכונת קראון הייטס על "דו"ח מועד הכספית דנציגי הקהל דק"ה וכל השייך לזה, עם ב' מרבני השכונה שיחיו" (מהעתקת המזכיר):



[1] במכתבם כתבו: "א. ששם הב"ד דהג' רבני השכונה יהי' – ב"ד רבני ליובאוויטש – קראהן הייטס".

כ"ק אדמו"ר סימן בעיגול את התיבות "ב"ד רבני ליובאוויטש", וכתב:

!?

מופרך לגמרי

מי נוהג בכולם לכל מחלוקת ופירוד האפשרי!?שמו ושם אמו בהקדם

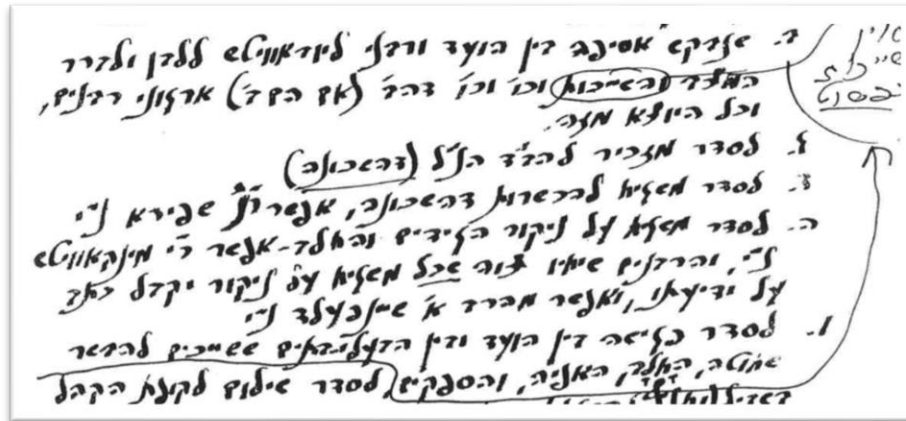
(1) In their letter: "The name of the *beis din* of the three *rabbanim* of the community will be Beis Din Rabbanei Lubavitch – Crown Heights."

The Rebbe circled the words "Beis Din Rabbanei Lubavitch" and wrote:

?! Completely out of the question

Who conducts in all of them the most arguments and divisiveness possible?!

His name and his mother's name soon



[2] במכתב כתבו: "ב. שנבקש אסיפה בין הועד ורבני ליובאוויטש ללבן ולברר המצב והשייכות וכו' וכו' דהב' (אם הם ב') ארגוני רבנים, וכל היוצא מזה . . . ו. לסדר פגישה בין הועד ובין הבעלי-בתים ששייכים להבשר שחוטה, החלב, האפיה, והספקים, לסדר שילום לקופת הקהל בשביל (וחלף) השגחת הב"ד דהשכונה".

כ"ק אדמו"ר סימן בעיגול תיבת "והשייכות", והתיבות "לסדר שילום לקופת הקהל", וכתב:

אין שייכות כפשוט

(2) In their letter: "(b) We will request a meeting between the Vaad and the Rabbanei Lubavitch to clarify the situation and the association etc. between the two (if they are two) rabbinical organizations, and all its implications... (f) To arrange a meeting between the Vaad and the *baalei batim* who are connected with slaughtering meat, milk, baking, and suppliers, to arrange payment to the community fund for (and in exchange for) the supervision of the community *beis din*."

The Rebbe circled the words "and the association" and the words "to arrange payment to the community fund" and wrote:

There is no association as is obvious

יד

[ג' תמוז]

מענה לנציגי הקהל דשכונת קראון הייטס שכתבו: "אין משיבים וכו' מ"מ אפשר מקוצר מילין וכו' לא הוצאתי מה שנדבר באסיפה בין ועד הכספית דנציגי הקהל והרבנים שיחיו. א. השם דבר עקרי, ובמו"מ להשם יצא כמה וכמה ובתחילה הי' להכניס כולם, אבל בסוף נבחר מה שנכנס ולע"ד לא הי' בגילוי ענין מחלוקת וכו' רק אופן שלא לשלול ליובאוויטש, אבל כיון שיצא מפ"ק, נחזור לעיין לשם שלא יגרר פירוד וכו', אי"ה ובל"נ ובעהשי"ת. ב. ענין השייכות דרבני ליובאוויטש ורבני השכונה בא מועד רבני ליובאוויטש, לרבני השכונה ע"י אגרת שפנו אל רבני השכונה לסדר הדיני תורות דהשכונה, והרבנים דהשכונה פנו אלינו לפגוש בועד רבני ליובאוויטש" (מהעתקת המזכיר):

אין לדבר סוף – כלל!

הדגשתי כ"פ שקראתי הפר"ק (שכתבם בעצמו) ומפורש שסמכות הנציגים לבחור רב(ני) השכונה (ולא ז' טובי העיר כלל).

בגמר ענין זה (וכל השייך לזה) נגמרה שליחותם בדרך ממילא.

בשכונה תושבים שאינם דליובאוויטש – ומהו הקס"ד דועד רבני ליובאוויטש (שמהם הדרים מחוץ לשכונה, ולעבר למדינה) כאן?!

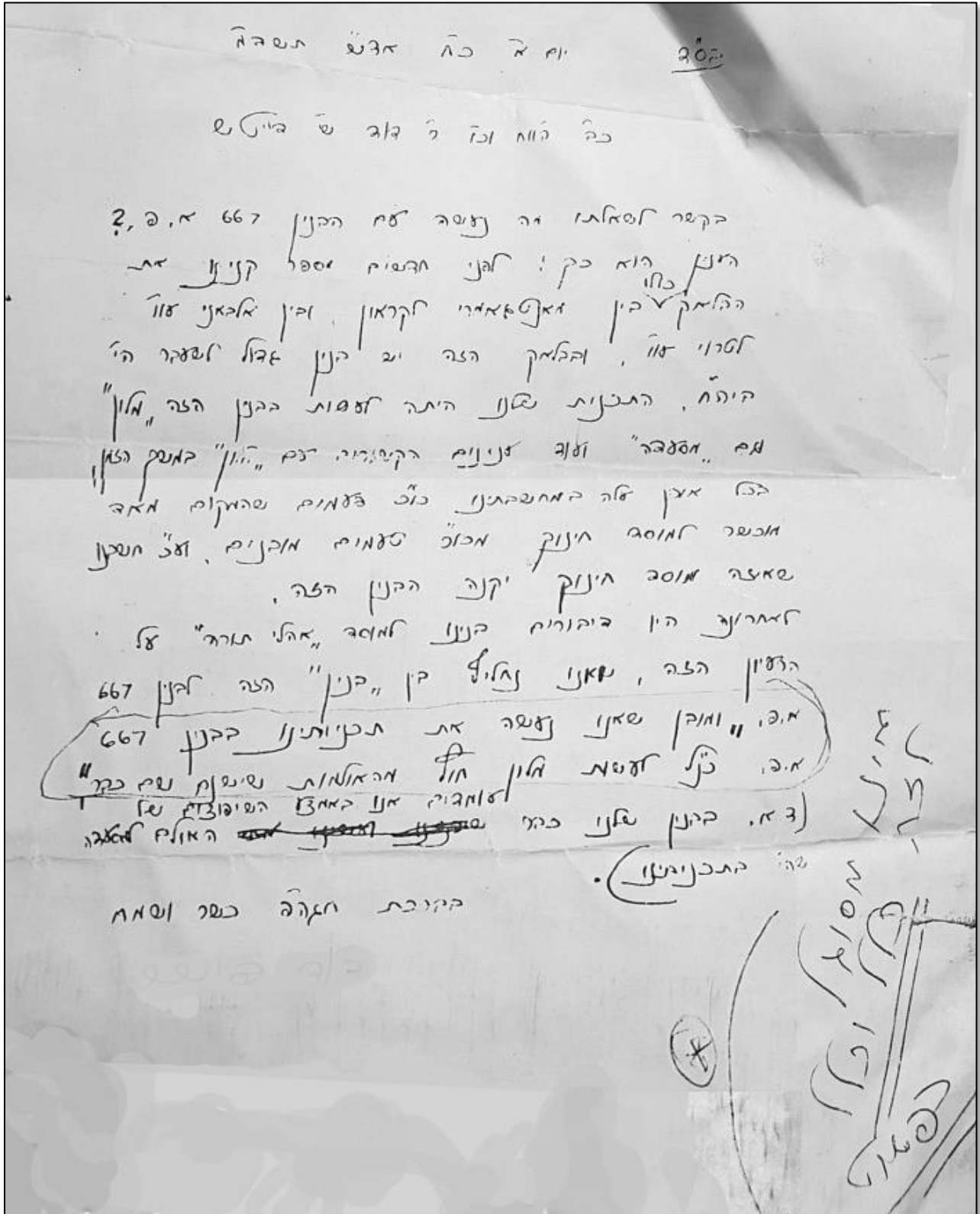
This is dragging out without any end!

I stressed several times that I read the protocol (that he himself wrote) and it explicitly states that the Netzigim's authority is to elect a *rav / rabbanim* for the community (and not seven communal leaders [*"tuvei ha'ir"*] at all).

When this matter (and everything associated with it) was completed, their agency was automatically finished.

The neighborhood has residents who aren't Lubavitch – so what is the connection of Vaad Rabbanei Lubavitch (of whom some live outside of the community, and out of the state) to here?!

A Maaneh on a Letter Regarding the Oholei Torah Building



Memento from the Wedding Celebration

Honoring the Lubavitcher Rebbe's 25th Yahrzeit

(Originally published 8/21/19)

As many of us try to reflect on the life and accomplishments of the saintly Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, to help us in becoming better people and better Jews, I'd like to share my personal feelings:

The Jewish people have survived through the ages—while other civilizations and nations have come and gone—because of their contributions to mankind. Beginning with Abraham our forefather and on, Jews have been making the world that G-d created a better place for all of His creations.

One can only be amazed how many thousands of hours of lectures, together with volumes of written correspondence and books of teachings we have from the Rebbe. The amount of private audiences he held with countless individuals and how many people he helped.

This was his contribution to the world—a truly selfless leader.

I've always wondered how a public figure as the Rebbe allowed himself to be recorded, videoed and photographed as much as he was. Wasn't he afraid of being criticized for what he said or for what he didn't say? Wasn't he worried to be caught contradicting himself, especially in the world we live in that is so judgmental and unsympathetic? The answer, I think, is because the Rebbe spoke the truth and was consistent, virtues that are extremely rare.

All civilized social systems that are based on just and fair ideas will prosper, survive and benefit mankind. The Jewish people were given the Torah, upon which our lives are based. That's why we survived the unspeakable and continue to be a guiding light to the world. Everything the Rebbe did or said was based first and foremost on Torah—not trying to fit Torah with the world views. This is a fact that is evident and demonstrable from all of his recorded life and teachings. This is why the Rebbe loved America, because it was established on the belief in G-d and kindness.

I'd like to share the following passage to illustrate my point. The distinguished author, Nicholas Lemann, in his book *The Promised Land* (p. 24), states the reason why the white southern landowners treated their black southern sharecroppers the way they did:

“Americans are imbued with the notion that social systems proceed from ideas, because that is what happened at the founding of our country. The relationship of society and ideas can work the other way around, though: people can create social systems first and then invent ideas that will fulfill their need to feel that the world as it exists makes sense.”

Jews are not permitted to measure the value of one *mitzvah* against another *mitzvah*. In a similar vein, who am I to comment on the value of the Rebbe's many campaigns, initiatives and projects. But there are particular ones that made a special impression on me.

The Crown Heights neighborhood in Brooklyn was very dear to the Rebbe. Preserving the neighborhood of his saintly father-in-law the Previous Rebbe was one of the reasons. The 1960's and 70's were very turbulent times in America, and urban American cities were in decline. Crime was rampant and

New York City was called "Fear City." The Crown Heights neighborhood where the Lubavitch movement resided was not spared. People were fleeing in the thousands to safer neighborhoods. Long established Jewish institutions of all denominations were being abandoned.

In 1969, the Rebbe addressed this exodus in public at the *farbrengen* (chassidic gathering) on the last day of Passover. He stated his unequivocal position that according to Torah law it was forbidden to move. This approach was revolutionary at that time. I'm sure this was not an easy decision for the Rebbe to make, especially when so many other groups were leaving, property values were collapsing and people were being terrorized. Over the next few years, the Rebbe suffered much from those followers who did not listen and from outside instigators. But the Rebbe stood his ground literally and prevailed. Many politicians later thanked the Rebbe for resisting the temptations to leave Crown Heights. All those who stayed in Crown Heights, Jews and non-Jews alike, benefited materially and spiritually. Crown Heights eventually became the Promised Land for both Jews and African Americans. Only the Rebbe, with his wisdom and vision, could have foreseen what would happen fifty years later; one example of the Rebbe's mantra of truth and commitment.

The Rebbe's love for Israel and all those who fought to protect her knew no bounds. In August of 1976, a group of injured Israeli soldiers came to visit the Rebbe. The Rebbe spoke to the group in Hebrew, and afterwards went over to each one of them, personally shaking each of their hands. The organizers recalled how the group felt the Rebbe's great empathy and they were very moved by the experience. If I may use my own words, "The Rebbe gave them a reason to continue living."

The Rebbe's campaign to promote the seven Noahide laws demonstrated that he wanted to make the world at large a better place. With all the violence we currently witness, only a great and caring leader like the Rebbe could have seen the importance of instilling the fear of G-d into the world.

Every great Jewish leader yearned for the coming of Moshiach and endeavored instilling that feeling into the Jewish people. The Rebbe would often quote the Hebrew prayers that we say daily, beseeching G-d for the redemption.

Over forty-four years ago, as a teenager, I heard the Rebbe pleading in public for all to hear, "Where are the students of the Chofetz Chaim?" Someone had insulted the great Lithuanian Torah scholar, author and Jewish leader, and since he could not defend himself after his passing, the Rebbe expected his students to come to his defense. These words still ring in my ears to this day. Amongst decent people it is accepted that to write or say derogatory things about ordinary people who can't physically defend themselves is very disrespectful, to say the least. How much more so regarding a great Torah scholar like the Rebbe, whose encyclopedic knowledge of the Torah can be compared to Rashi, the primary commentator of the Written and Oral Torah, and the great Maimonides, of whom it is said, "From Moses to Moses there was none other like him." The Rebbe spent his life expounding on the works of these Torah giants.

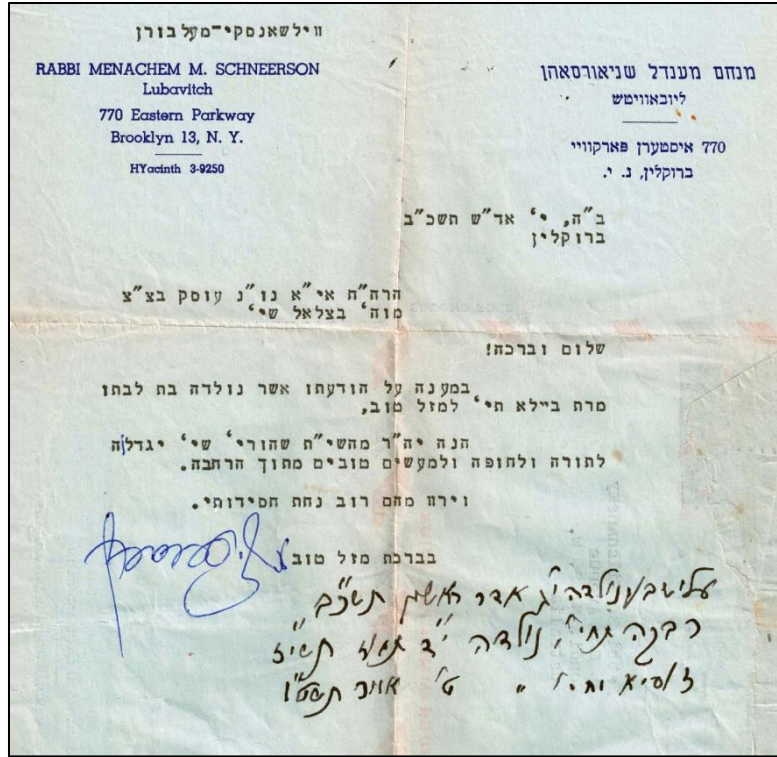
Pesach (Philip) Laufer

Crown Heights, Brooklyn

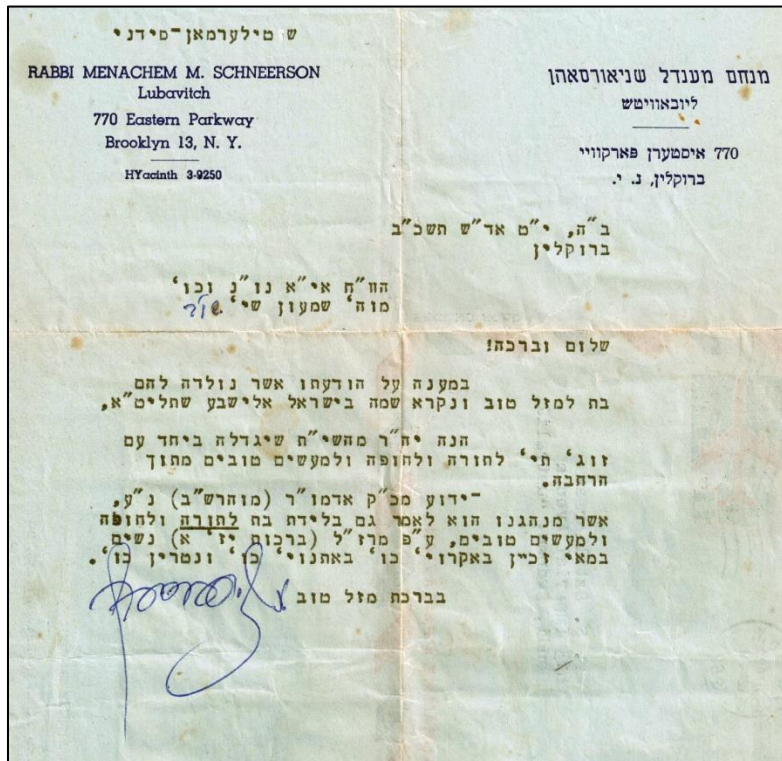
Letters of the Rebbe to the Family



Mr. Pesach Laufer's father receiving Kos Shel Bracha from the Rebbe



To Mrs. Elisheva Laufer's grandfather, Rabbi Betzalel Wilschanski, on her birth



To Mrs. Elisheva Laufer's father, Rabbi Shimon Sztillerman, on her birth

לאפער-

RABBI MENACHEM M. SCHNEERSON
Lubavitch
770 Eastern Parkway
Brooklyn 13, N. Y.
HYacinth 3-9250

מנחת מענדל שניאורטאהן
ליובאוויטש
770 איסטערן פארקוויי
ברוקלין, נ. י.

ב"ה, ר"ח כסלו ה"ל
ברוקלין

האברך פסח שמעון שי'

שלום וברכה!

במענה על החודעה ע"ר הכנסו לגיל מצוה, הנה יה"ר מהשי"ה אשר מבן שלש עשרה למצוה יגדל לבן חמש עשרה וכו' כפסק המשנה (אבות פרק ה') ויוסיף החכמה ושקידה בלימודו בחורה בחורה הנגלה וכן בחורה החסידה ויחזיר בקיום המצוה, והשי"ה יצליחו להיות חסיד ירא שמים ולמדן.

בברכה
[Handwritten Signature]

To Mr. Pesach Laufer on his Bar Mitzvah

מ"ה מרכז לעניני חינוך
MERKOS L'INYONEI CHINUCH, Inc.
תחת נשיאות כ"ק אדמו"ר שליט"א מליובאוויטש
770 Eastern Parkway HY 3-9250 Brooklyn, N. Y. 11213

\$ קבלה *8.00*

Received from *מחנה מענדל שניאורטאהן*

The sum of *Eight Dollars* סך

For *Donation* בעד

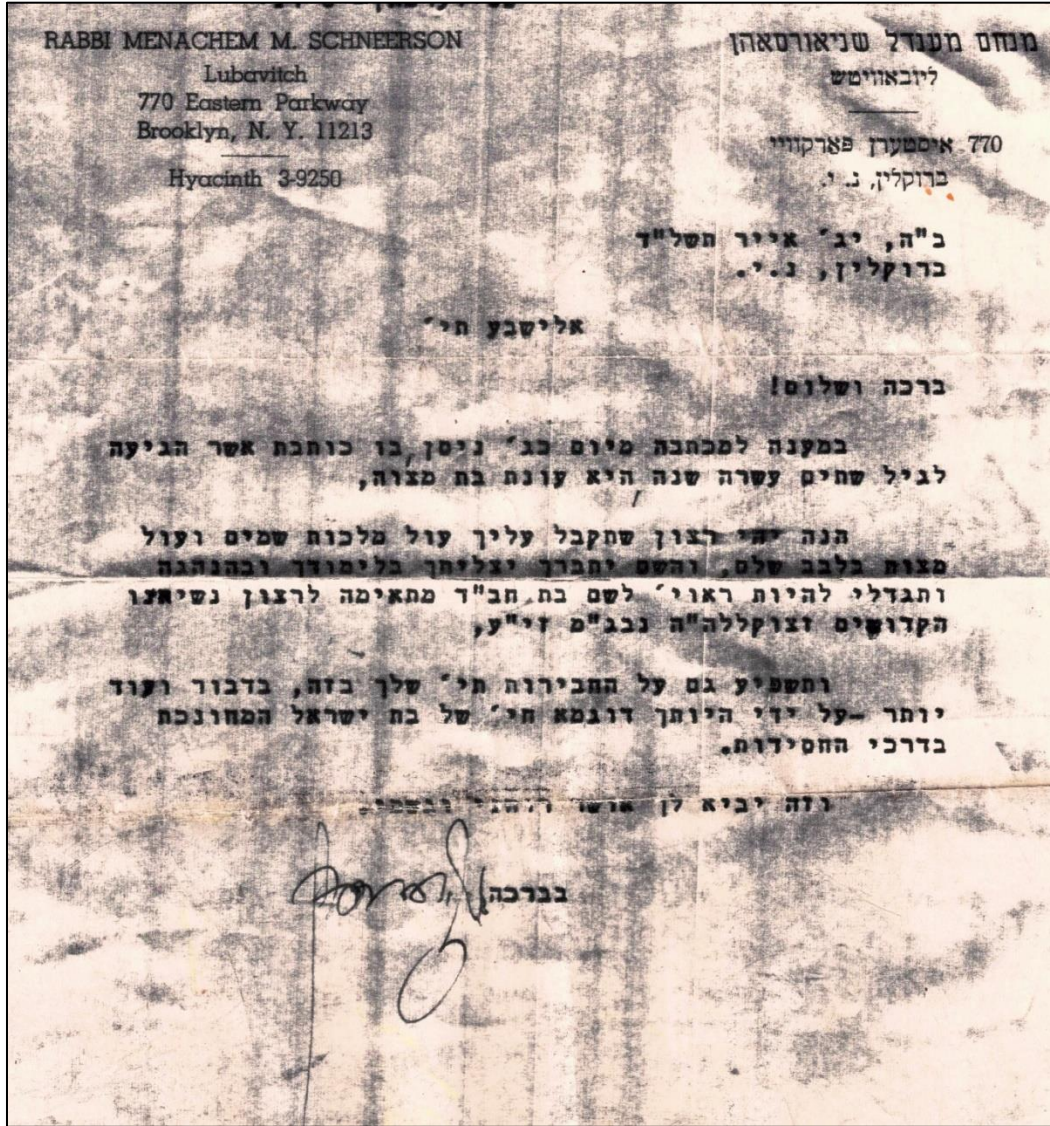
Signature *[Signature]* ההתימה

Date *11/11 תש"ל* יום להודש *ט"ו* תש"ל

(This Donation is Tax Exempt.)

Receipt No. K 5331

A receipt for his donation of \$8



To Mrs. Elisheva Laufer on her Bas Mitzvah

(לאופער) שטילערמאן-ברוקלין
 RABBI MENACHEM M. SCHNEERSON
 Lubavitch
 770 Eastern Parkway
 Brooklyn 13, N. Y.
 HYacinth 3-9250

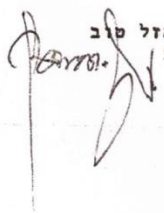
מנחם מענדל שניאורסאהן
 ליובאוויטש
 770 איסטערן פארקוויי
 ברוקלין, נ. י.

ב"ה, ו' אד"ש תשמ"א
 ברוקלין, נ. י.

האברך הו"ח אי"א נו"נ וכו'
 מו"ה פסח שמעון שי'
 וב"ג תי'

שלום וברכה!
 במענה על ההודעה מקביעות זמן חתונתם
 ליום כו' אד"ש הבע"ל,
 הנני בזה להביע ברכתי ברכה מזל טוב
 מזל טוב ושחיה' בשעה טובה ומוצלחת ויבנו
 בית בישראל בנין עדי עד על יסודי התורה
 והמצוה כפי שהם מוארים במאור שבתורה זוהי
 תורת החסידות.

בברכה מזל טוב
 מזל טוב



To Mr. Pesach Laufer and his wife on their wedding

וילשנסקי-מלבורן
 RABBI MENACHEM M. SCHNEERSON
 Lubavitch
 770 Eastern Parkway
 Brooklyn, N. Y. 11213
 493-9250

מנחם מענדל שניאורסאהן
 ליובאוויטש
 770 איסטערן פארקוויי
 ברוקלין, נ. י.


ב"ה, כ"ג אד"ש תשמ"א
 ברוקלין

הרה"ח הו"ח אי"א נו"נ יעו"ס בצ"ב כו'
 מו"ה בצלאל שי'

שלום וברכה!
 להודעה ע"ד קביעות זמן חתונת נכדתו מרת
 אלישבע תי' עם ב"ג שי' ליום כ"ו אד"ש הבע"ל,
 הנני בזה להביע ברכתי ברכה מזל טוב מזל טוב
 ושחיה בשעה טובה ומוצלחת ויבנו בית בישראל בנין
 עדי עד על יסודי התורה והמצוה כפי שהם מוארים
 במאור שבתורה זוהי תורת החסידות.

והוא וזוג' תי' ירוו מהם ומכל יו"ח שי' רוב
 נחת חסידותי.

בברכה מזל טוב
 מזל טוב



To Mrs. Elisheva Laufer's grandfather, Rabbi Betzalel Wilschanski, on her wedding

לאופער - ברוקלין

RABBI MENACHEM M. SCHNEERSON
Lubavitch
770 Eastern Parkway
Brooklyn, N. Y. 11213
493-9250

מנחם מענדל שניאורסאהן
ליובאוויטש
770 איסטערן פארקוויי
ברוקלין, נ. י.

ב"ה, יב' סיון חשמ"ב
ברוקלין, נ. י.

הוי"ח אי"א נו"נ וכו'
מוה' פסח שמעון שי'


שלום וברכה!

במענה על ההודעה אשר נולדה להם בת
למזל טוב,

הנה יה"ר מהשי"ת שיגדלה ביחד עם
זוג' תי' לתורה ולחופה ולמעשים טובים מחוץ
הרחבה.

- ידוע מכ"ק אדמו"ר (מוהרש"ב) נ"ע,
אשר מנהגנו הוא לאמר גם בלידה בת לתורה
ולחופה ולמעשים טובים, ע"פ מרז"ל (ברכות
יז' א) נשים במאי זכיין באקרוי' כו' באתנוי'
כו' ונטרין כו'.

בברכת מזל טוב



To the Laufers on the birth of a daughter

לאופר - ברוקלין

RABBI MENACHEM M. SCHNEERSON
Lubavitch
770 Eastern Parkway
Brooklyn, N. Y. 11213
493-9250

מנחם מענדל שניאורסאהן
ליובאוויטש
770 איסטערן פארקוויי
ברוקלין, נ. י.

בי"ה, י"ט מני"א תשמ"ג
ברוקלין, נ. י.


הוי"ח אי"א נו"נ וכו'
מוה' פסח שמעון שי'

שלום וברכה!

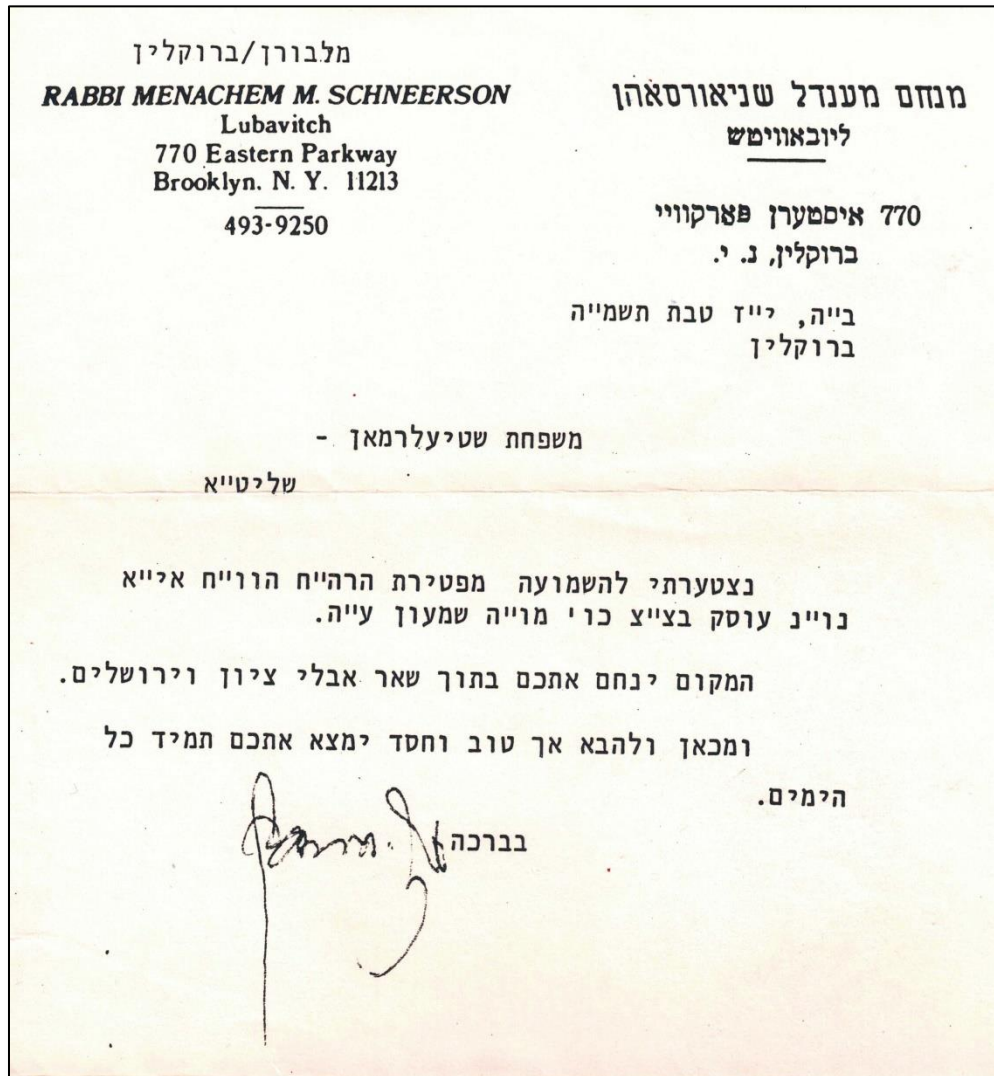
במענה על ההודעה אשר נולד להם בן למזל טוב,

הנה יה"ר מהשי"ת שיכניסוהו לבריתו של אברהם
אבינו, וכשם שיכניסוהו לברית כן יכניסוהו לתורה
ולחופה ולמעשים טובים, ויגדלו ביחד עם זוג' תי'
מתוך הרחבה.

בברכת מזל טוב



To the Laufers on the birth of a son



To the Sztillerman family on the passing of Rabbi Shimon Sztillerman, Mrs. Elisheva Laufer's father

לאופער- ברוקלין
RABBI MENACHEM M. SCHNEERSON
 Lubavitch
 770 Eastern Parkway
 Brooklyn, N. Y. 11213
 493-9250

מנחם מענדל שניאורסאהן
 ליובאוויטש
 770 איסטערן פארקוויי
 ברוקלין, נ. י.

בי"ה, כי"ח סיון תשמ"ה
 ברוקלין, נ. י.

הו"ח אי"א נוי"ב וכו'
 מוה' פסח שמעון שי'

שלום וברכה!

במענה על ההודעה אשר נולד להם בן למזל טוב,
 הנה יה"ר מהשי"ת שיכניסוהו לבריתו של אברהם
 אבינו, וכשם שיכניסוהו לברית כן יכניסוהו לתורה
 ולחופה ולמעשים טובים, ויגדלו ביחד עם זוגי תי'
 מתוך הרחבה.

בברכת מזל טוב

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בי"ה, ט"ו מני"א תשמ"ו
 ברוקלין, נ. י.

הו"ח אי"א נוי"ב וכו'
 מוה' פסח שמעון שי'

שלום וברכה!

במענה על ההודעה אודות יום הולדת השלישי של בנם בצלאל שי',
 הנה מועתק לקמן חלק ממכתב כי"ק מו"ח אדמו"ר זצוקלה"ה נבג"מ זי"ע
 בנוגע למנהגי ישראל בזה. ויה"ר מהשי"ת שיגדלו ביחד עם זוגי תי'
 לתורה ולחופה ולמעשים טובים מתוך הרחבה.

בברכה

וד"ל כי"ק מו"ח אדמו"ר.

..... ובדבר גזירת השערות -אפשרעניש- הוא דבר גדול במנהג ישראל
 ועיקרו הוא בהתינוך דהשארת פיאות הראש, ומיום הגזירה והנחת הפיאות של
 הראש, נהגו להדר להרגיל את התינוק בענין נשיאת ט"ק וברכות השחר וברכת
 המזון וק"ש שעל המטה. והשי"ת יהי' בעזרם שיגדלוהו לתורה ולחופה ולמעשים
 טובים מתוך פרנסה בהרחבה ובמנוחת הדעה בגשמיות וברוחניות.

To the Laufers on the *upsherenish* of their son Betzalel

Memento from the Wedding Celebration

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 Lubavitch
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 Brooklyn, N. Y. 11213
 493-9250

מנחם מענדל שניאורסאהן
 ליובאוויטש
 770 איסטערן פארקוויי
 ברוקלין, נ. י.
 ב"ה, כ' תמוז תשמ"ז
 ברוקלין, נ. י.

הווי"ח אי"א נוי"נ וכו'
 מוה' פסח שמעון שי'

שלום וברכה!
 במענה על ההודעה אשר נולדה להם בת למזל טוב
 הנה יה"ר מהשי"ת שיגדלה ביחד עם דוג' ת"י
 לתורה ולחופה ולמעשים טובים מתוך הרחבה.
 -ידוע מכ"ק אדמו"ר (מוהרש"ב) נ"ע, אשר
 מנהגנו הוא לאמר גם בלידת בת לתורה ולחופה
 ולמעשים טובים, ע"פ מרז"ל (ברכות י"ז א) נשים
 במאי זכ"ן באקרובי כו' באתנוי' כו' ונטרין כו'.
 בברכת מזל טוב

To the Laufers on the birth of a daughter

לאופער - ברוקלין
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 Lubavitch
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 493-9250

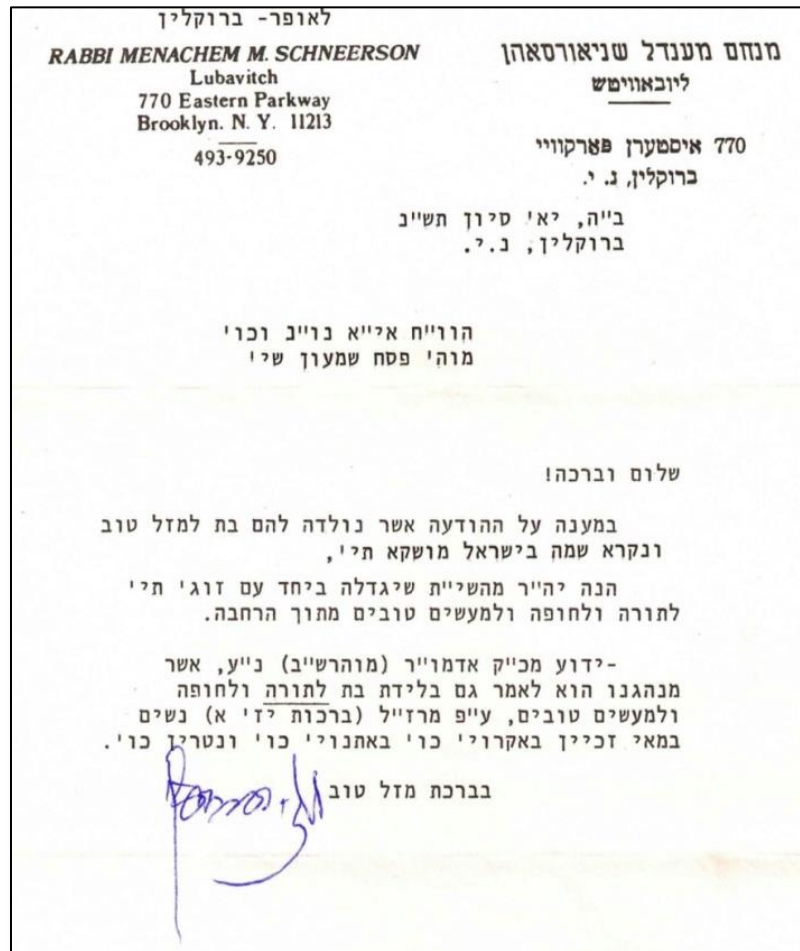
מנחם מענדל שניאורסאהן
 ליובאוויטש
 770 איסטערן פארקוויי
 ברוקלין, נ. י.
 ב"ה, ח' סיון תשמ"ח
 ברוקלין, נ. י.

הווי"ח אי"א נוי"נ וכו'
 מוה' פסח שמעון שי'

שלום וברכה!
 במענה על ההודעה אודות יום הולדת השלישי של בנם יהושע שמשון שי'
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 ולחופה ולמעשים טובים מתוך הרחבה.
 בברכה

וז"ל כ"ק מו"ח אדמו"ר.
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 ועיקרו הוא בתחילתו והשאר פיאור הראש, ומיום הגזירה והנחת הפיאור של
 הראש, נהגו להדר להרגיל את התינוק בענין נשיאת ט"ק וברכות השחר וברכת
 המדון וק"ש שעל המטה. והשי"ת יהי' בעזרם שיגדלוהו לתורה ולחופה ולמעשים
 טובים מתוך פרנסה בהרחבה ובמנוחת הדעת בגשמיות וברוחניות.

To the Laufers on the upsherenish of their son Yehoshua Shimshon

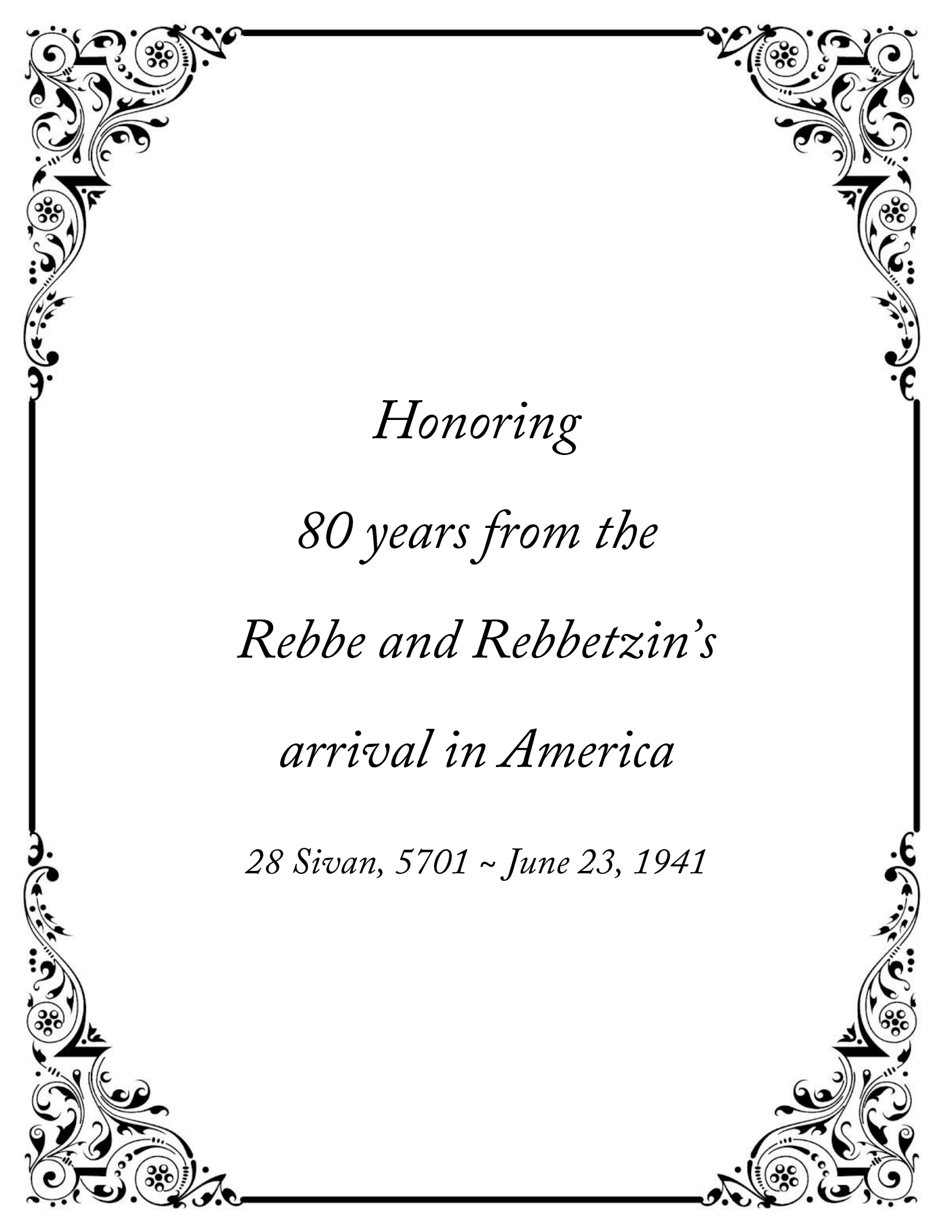


To the Laufers on the birth of their daughter Mushka

קצת היום יום 3 באביוץ ה'תש"א רבך
 זה היום המלא המהותי וט' בתם שאלו ויהי האלוקים
 וזה היום נפלאהו האלוקים ויהי האלוקים
 אלהי אלהי! אלהי! אלהי!

ביום אלוהים באל גאון אור צאם הדין מאלף זכאי לעין
 ביום ואלהו היום ה'תש"א ב'תש"א יאמי ב'תש"א אלהי
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From Mrs. Elisheva Laufer's grandfather, Rabbi Betzael Wilschanski, to her and her husband



Honoring
80 years from the
Rebbe and Rebbetzin's
arrival in America

28 Sivan, 5701 ~ June 23, 1941