



SHILOSHIM

of

Rabbi Moshe Kotlarsky

הרה"ח ר' משה יהודא בן הרה"ח צבי יוסף ע"ה קאטלארסקי

An evening of inspiration to glean lessons from
his life of dedication to the Rebbe

שאף כל ימיו לארוב זווה רוז ולבשר טוב ובהוספה

As we mark the Shloshim of our beloved father, **הכ"מ ז"ל**, we join the family of Anash and Shluchim around the globe to reflect on his extraordinary life and enduring legacy.

We are still overwhelmed by the outpouring of support, *nichumim*, and heartfelt messages since our father's passing. The personal stories and reflections of his deep care, genuine concern, and generosity have been incredibly meaningful to us. Over the past month, we were profoundly moved by the sheer number of people for whom our father served and impacted through the *shlichusin* that the Rebbe gave him.

At the same time, we are charged with our father's fervent calling and desire for us to carry on his work and life's mission. In a spirit of **והחי יתן אל לבו**, we strive to unpack the lessons we learn from his life and do our part **להכין את עצמנו והעולם כולו לקבלת פני משיח צדקנו**.

In the following pages, we share a collection of stories, anecdotes, and insights that were shared with the family or printed in his honor. We hope these pages serve to inspire us all to continue to perpetuate his legacy, which was fueled by an ongoing quest and desire to actualize the Rebbe's will.

As we assemble **שלישים שנה - תמוז**, we hope this compilation will serve as a means to strengthen our *hiskashrus* to the Rebbe, which was truly our father's lifelong goal and objective. May we be reunited with the Rebbe very soon with the coming of Moshiach, **במהרה**, **בימנו ממש**.



MAANOS TO R' MOSHE

A SMALL SELECTION OF PREVIOUSLY
PUBLISHED STORIES AND
INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE REBBE.

Cochabamba, Bolivia

The City of Eternal Spring, known for its temperate climate. The mountain city, Bolivia's third largest, is situated in the country's breadbasket. A number of Jewish people settled among the city's 700,000 residents.

On 25 Iyar, 5744 (May 25, 1984), two community leaders, Mr. Jacobe Lichtenfeld—the Jewish community's President—and Mr. Louis Meyer—its secretary—wrote a letter to the Rebbe. It was a request for help for their tiny community. The 200 or so men, women and children that made up the Cochabamba Jewish community were largely Holocaust survivors and their descendants, and they had precious little in the way of Judaism available in their new home.

“Our religious life is agonizing, since few members of our community are observant, and also for want of a community leader.” they wrote in broken but sincere English.

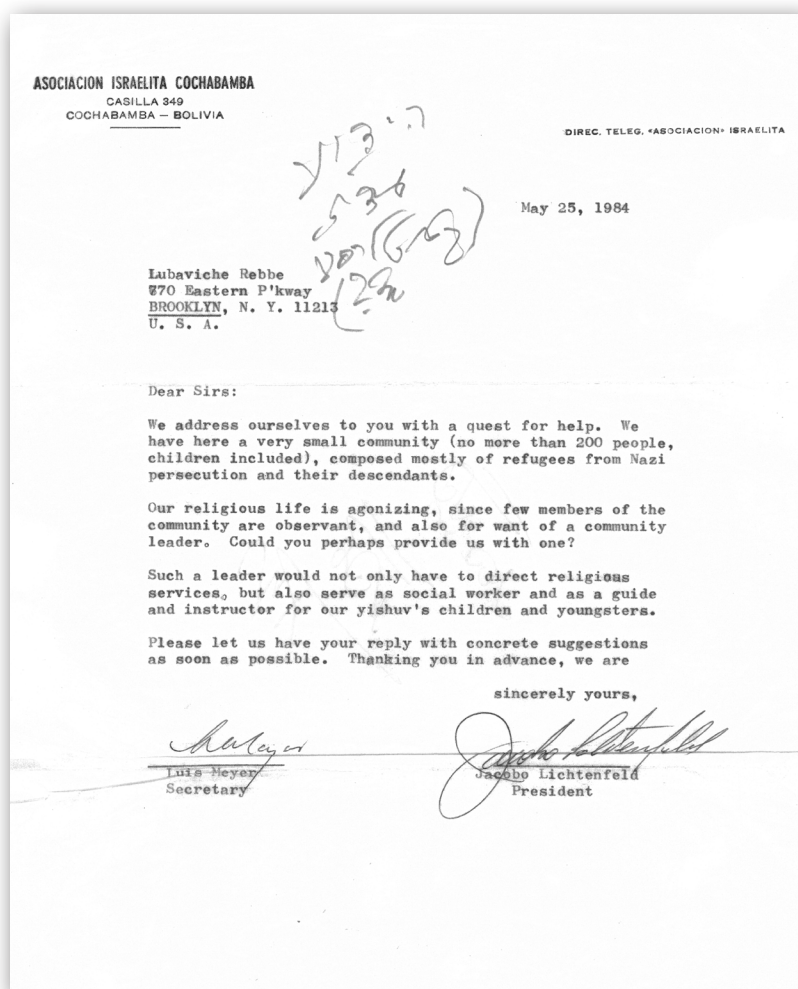
“Could you perhaps provide us with one?”

The Rebbe wrote on the top of the letter, “Does Kotlarsky, *sheyichye*, know about this?”

Rabbi Hodakov immediately got in touch with Rabbi Kotlarsky and gave over the Rebbe's *ma'aneh*. A short while later, the phone rang. Rabbi Hodakov was on the line, and it was clear that the Rebbe was awaiting a response. Rabbi Hodakov repeated the question, and Rabbi Kotlarsky replied that no, he did not know about this.

The Rebbe's holy voice came over the line: “If he knows, what has he done about it? And if he doesn't know—how does it come to be that there is a country for which you are responsible, and you don't know about this?”

Of course, Rabbi Kotlarsky quickly threw himself into caring for this isolated Jewish community, sending Merkos Shlichus *bochurim* and otherwise aiding the community for many years.



Cleveland, Ohio.

Mr. Irving Stone, the founder and CEO of American Greetings, was an ardent supporter of Chabad in Cleveland. Already at the age of 25 Rabbi Kotlarsky met with Mr. Stone, developing a partnership of support for Chabad *mosdos* in general, in addition to his support for Chabad locally. On one occasion, Mr. Stone presented a check to Rabbi Kotlarsky.

Following the meeting, Rabbi Kotlarsky presented a *duch* to the Rebbe, as usual, and included the check. A few days later, on Rosh Chodesh Tammuz, 5734, the Rebbe wrote a letter to Mr. Stone, thanking him for the donation and indicating that a receipt was enclosed. While normally, the Rebbe wrote, he did not directly involve himself in fundraising for the *mosdos*, he would make an exception here.

“Upon receiving your check, I had to take note of it vis-à-vis your role in our work,” the Rebbe wrote. Implying that in this case, Mr.



Stone had the potential to give much more, the Rebbe wrote that he would “be less than candid and fair if – while expressing appreciation for your donation and assuring you that it will be used for the utmost good, which will stand you in good stead – I were not to mention that it does not measure up to the great Zechus that ought to be yours by taking a share in our work that is more commensurate with your posture and role in Jewish life.”

ENACHEM M. SCHNEERSON
Lubavitch
70 Eastern Parkway
Brooklyn, N. Y. 11213
Hyacinth 3-9250

זמנת חנוכה שניארטאון
ליובאוויטש
770 אייטערן פארקוויי
ברוקלין, נ. י.

By the Grace of G-d
Rosh Chodesh Tammuz, 5734
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Mr. I. I. Stone
200-11 N. Park Blvd.
Shaker Heights, O.

Greeting and Blessing:

I was pleased to receive your regards through Rabbi Moshe Kotlarsky, together with your check, for which receipt is enclosed.

Needless to say, an unsolicited contribution towards our work for the cause of Torah and Mitzvoth is a welcome encouragement and is sincerely appreciated.

It is an old Jewish custom to express some thoughts when the occasion presents itself. So I will avail myself of this opportunity in the confident hope - based on our personal acquaintance of long standing - that you will accept my remarks in the spirit in which they are made.

I do not have to tell you about the vital, world-wide activities of Lubavitch. Nor do I have to emphasize the obvious that these activities could not be carried on, in all their scope and ramifications, without the active financial support of friends who appreciate the vital importance of such work. I may add that the importance of the various activities is not necessarily proportionate to their funding, as sometimes a very vital activity requires a relative smaller expenditure. But, by and large, considering the global scope of all our activities, each requires very substantial funds.

Now, as a matter of policy, I refrain from making appeals for funds, and do not engage in fund-raising, for two reasons. Firstly, in order not to prejudice those Lubavitcher institutions which depend on fundraising. Secondly, because public-minded individuals who are familiar with our work do not usually require special prodding on my part, and each according to his means and *modus operandi* comes forward to take an appropriate share in our work. There are occasions when I make an exception, where special circumstances impel me - for the benefit of the individual concerned - to suggest to him a major role in certain of our activities, but such exceptions are relatively rare.

In light of the above, I have also refrained from mentioning financial matters to you, for the said two reasons. Firstly,

-2-

because you are involved with Lubavitch work in your community, which, as I mentioned during our conversation, has priority. Secondly, because I consider you among those who require no prompting in this matter.

However, upon receiving your check, I had to take note of it vis-a-vis your role in our work. Let me assure you again that any contribution received, whether large or small, and whether or not it reflects the donor's real or potential effort, is a Zechus for the donor, since the money goes for the cause of Torah and Mitzvoth; and it is gratefully and cheerfully accepted.

On the other hand, and this is something that is easier to present to a businessman, where, for example, a factory or business is not operating at full productivity, and where much more could be achieved without overloading capacity and overheads - it would not be right not to call attention to it, especially among friends. I would, therefore, be less than candid and fair if - while expressing appreciation for your donation, and assuring you that it will be used for the utmost good, which will stand you in good stead - I were not to mention that it does not measure up to the great Zechus that ought to be yours by taking a share in our work that is more commensurate with your posture and role in Jewish life.

I trust that you will not consider this a disguised appeal for money, but for what it is - an objective evaluation, coming from a good friend, whose first and only motive is to look at the matter from the viewpoint of your best interests. At any rate, consider it as having read my thoughts.

I take this opportunity of expressing my pleasure at having heard from your daughter, who participated in the Convention of Nshei Chabad here, that you, too, were present later on. I was particularly gratified to hear from her about the progress of her children, your grandchildren, bless them. May they continue to advance from good to better and be a source of evergrowing Nachas, true Nachas, which is Torah Nachas, to their parents and grandparents.

With esteem and blessing,
M. Schneerson

Bangkok, Thailand.

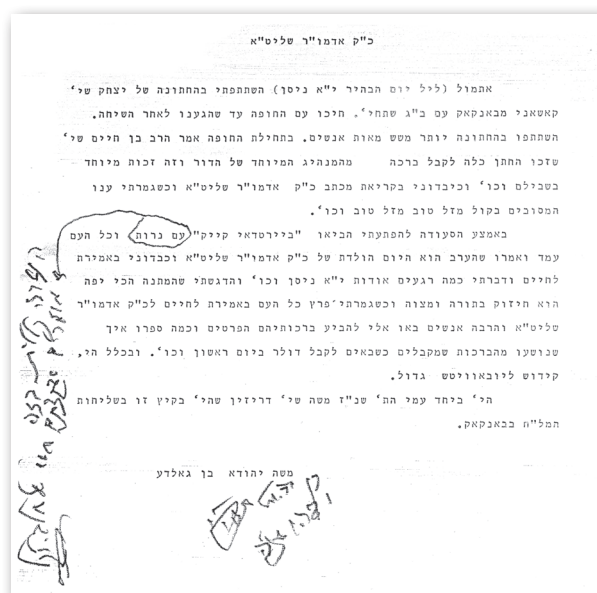
The Kashanis, a Persian Jewish family, were among the early supporters of Chabad activities in Thailand. When the oldest Kashani brother got engaged, the family invited Rabbi Kotlarsky to participate in the wedding, which was to take place on Yud Alef Nissan, 5748, on Long Island, New York. Rabbi Kotlarsky sent his thanks, but communicated that he regrettably wouldn't be able to attend the Chuppah, as it was the Rebbe's birthday and while—since the Rebbe was in *aveilus* for Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka—there was not expected to be a *farbrengen*, there was expected to be a *sicha*, and Rabbi Kotlarsky was not willing to miss that.

The *chosson* then asked that Rabbi Kotlarsky take care of preparing the *kesuba*, and Rabbi Kotlarsky agreed to prepare it in advance, so that the wedding could go on without him, and he promised to join the festivities later on.

Indeed, following *Maariv* in the Rebbe's home, the Rebbe said a *sicha* and then distributed dollars to those in attendance. Rabbi Kotlarsky was one of the first to approach the Rebbe and receive a dollar. He then hurried to join the tail end of the wedding on Long Island, arriving at the wedding venue at around 10:00 p.m.

He asked the first person he saw, "What time did the *chuppah* take place?" "It didn't happen yet," came the reply. "They're waiting for some rabbi from Brooklyn to show up."

The officiating rabbi began the *chuppah* saying, "I'm not sure with what merit you were honored to receive a personal wishes from the greatest Jewish leader in the world, the Lubavitcher Rebbe". He then invited Rabbi Kotlarsky with reading the letter and to recite the *brochos* under the *chuppah*. Following the *chuppah*, Rabbi Kotlarsky wanted to head home. The *chosson*, however, begged him to stay a while and join in the *simchas chosson v'kallah*, to which he agreed.



At about midnight, Rabbi Kotlarsky noticed that flutes of champagne were being served, and the lights were dimmed and the guests were asked to be seated. Suddenly, to the sound of "Happy Birthday" being sung, a giant cake was brought in. It was topped with 88 candles, and an inscription reading, "Happy Birthday to the Lubavitcher Rebbe."

Rabbi Kotlarsky spoke, and encouraged everyone to take on a *hachlata*, to give the Rebbe a spiritual birthday gift. He then continued asking everyone to eat the cake in hall and not take it home, as *Pesach* was just around the corner. When Rabbi Kotlarsky returned home he wrote a *duch* that night about the entire event and brought it to the Rebbe's home.

Before *shacharis* of Yud Alef Nissan, the Rebbe sent back the letter, circling where Rabbi Kotlarsky had written (a birthday cake) "with candles," and writing, "A general *hora'ah* with regards to this: it is said that in some of these [candles] there is the possibility that they may contain non-kosher tallow (*cheilev*). This is obvious." Following the line where Rabbi Kotlarsky had written his name, the Rebbe wrote – as Rabbi Kotlarsky was privileged to be told numerous times – "May you continue to always share good news *ובהוספה*." "

Montreal, Canada.

Not long after the launch of *Mivtza Tefillin*, Rabbi Kotlarsky was a student in Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim in Montreal, Canada, during the winter of 5728. It was an election year in Canada, and everywhere were signs, flyers, and buttons supporting one party or another.

When Rabbi Kotlarsky and his friend R' Menachem Mendel Lipsker saw these buttons, inspiration struck. They sought out and found the manufacturer of the buttons, and ordered 200 that would say, "I put on Tefillin, do you?"

The phone connection, apparently, wasn't great, and the proprietor heard "S" when they spelled "F," duly delivering 200 buttons that read, "I put on Tessillin, do you?"

They immediately asked for a reprint, and while they were at it, they added and changed a couple of words, so that the new buttons read, "I put on B"H Tefillin today – did you?"

The Yeshiva traveled to the Rebbe for Yud Shevat that year, and Sunday morning, Rabbi Kotlarsky was called into Rabbi Hodakov's office. "You made a toy for *Mivtza Tefillin*?" Rabbi Hodakov demanded to know. "You should have sent it in to the Rebbe."

Rabbi Kotlarsky realized that this meant that somehow, the Rebbe had found out about the buttons. It was 2 p.m. "I'm going in to the Rebbe at 3:10, and I expect to have a letter to bring to the Rebbe from you by then," he said.

Unsure what to do, they inquired of the Rosh Yeshiva, R' Aizik Schwei. He explained that one shouldn't write an apology to the Rebbe. Instead, they should write a letter describing the buttons—and including them—asking the Rebbe whether to make more of them, and whether to make any changes.

At 3:10 p.m. that letter was ready, and Rabbi Kotlarsky gave it to Rabbi Hodakov, who brought it in to the Rebbe right after Mincha. A few short moments later, Rabbi Hodakov came out of the Rebbe's room with a big smile on his face, holding the letter, which now bore the Rebbe's *maaneh*.

They had asked whether to make more, and the Rebbe underlined the words, "Make more." They had asked if there were any changes they should make, and the Rebbe changed the words to read, "No changes." Nearby, the Rebbe wrote, "Especially since they're already experienced in this. They should just note an address where people can turn for information and the like."

On the final line, Rabbi Kotlarsky had written, "And I hope this will cause much *nachas* to the Rebbe, *shlita*." The Rebbe changed the words to read, "He has caused much *nachas* to the Rebbe, *shlita*," and added "I will mention it at the *Tziyun*."

Following this, they printed and added stickers to the back of the button, directing those seeking information to call campaign headquarters—Tefillin, and providing an address and telephone number.



Guatemala City, Guatemala.

Over the course of his trips to South America, Rabbi Kotlarsky built up a friendship with a prominent Jewish family living in Guatemala. One day, their daughter reached out to Rabbi Kotlarsky — she was to be wed in New York, to ask him to officiate, because of the unique care he had shown her family throughout the years. During the course of the conversation Rabbi Kotlarsky made special mention that the date in December they chose for the wedding would be Yud Daled Kislev.

In advance of the *chasuna* Rabbi Kotlarsky met with the bride and groom to prepare them for the wedding and teach them the *halachos* they'd need to know. During the meeting, the *chosson* proudly related that he was the great-nephew of Rabbi Tzvi Yechezkel Michelson, who was the Av Beis Din of Płóńsk, a town in central Poland, and later a prominent *rav* in Warsaw, Poland. Rabbi Kotlarsky was thrilled to hear this, as his father, Rabbi Tzvi Yosef Kotlarsky, received *smicha* from Rabbi Michelson as a *talmid* in Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim in Warsaw.

The *chosson* related that his father had survived the Holocaust, and had witnessed his uncle, the prominent Warsaw *rov*, being deported to the death camps. This traumatic experience impacted him deeply, and he was now fiercely antagonistic towards religion, refusing to step foot in a *shul* on Shabbos. “No problem, we’ll make your *ufruf* on Thursday,” Rabbi Kotlarsky suggested. They did so — and on Thursday, 11 Kislev — the same date as the Rebbe’s *ufruf* — the *chosson* got his *aliyah*.

Rabbi Kotlarsky returned from the “*ufruf*” that day and wrote a letter to the Rebbe detailing his encounters with the family and requesting a *bracha* for the young couple — and the Rebbe immediately instructed the *mazkirus* to prepare a letter with the template wedding *bracha*.



On Sunday morning, 14 Kislev, the Rebbe went to the Ohel after *Shacharis*. Suddenly, Rabbi Kotlarsky received a phone call from Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky, who was seated in the Rebbe’s car at the Ohel, and had just received a *ma’ane* to pass along.

The Rebbe had circled the name of Rabbi Michelson and wrote the following reply:

“I believe that he participated in my wedding, and also gave me the book that he had authored, as a gift.

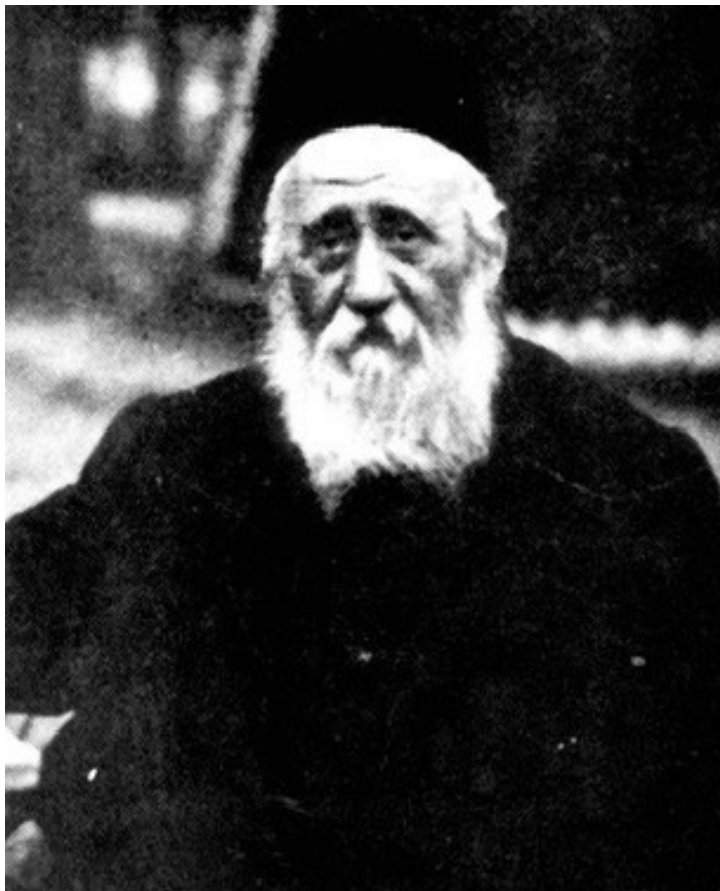
(The book is in the bookshelf in my office, next to the Midrash Tanchuma near the electric [switch])

I will lend the book to you to hold it under the *chuppah* while you officiate at the wedding and say the *brachos*. We will see from this Divine providence after 55 years.”

Rabbi Leibel Groner was instructed to give the *sefer* to Rabbi Kotlarsky, and Rabbi Kotlarsky brought it with him to the wedding. At the wedding, Rabbi Kotlarsky pulled the father aside, told him what had happened, and showed him the *sefer*. The father of the groom opened it, saw the inscription “From the books of Menachem Schneerson, 14 Kislev, 5689” and his face lost all color and he began to cry, remembering those final moments as his uncle was dragged away by the Nazis.

The Chuppah began with Rabbi Kotlarsky sharing the incredible story from that morning followed by reading the Rebbe’s letter. Although there were many prominent Rabbi’s at the wedding the family requested that Rabbi Kotlarsky be the only one to be honored under the chupah stating “they all came for our money and you would come to help our Neshama”. Although initially reluctant, Rabbi Kotlarsky realized the words the Rebbe wrote “holding the Sefer during the Siddur Kiddushin and the Brochos”.

After the wedding, the *sefer* was returned to the Rebbe’s room, where it remains today, next to the Midrash Tanchuma, near the light switch.



Milan, Italy

As the first-ever European Kinus Hashluchim was set to take place in Milan, Italy in 5749, Rabbi Kotlarsky wrote a letter to the Rebbe. He wrote that he planned to join the Kinus as a representative of Merkos, requested the rebbe's *bracha* for a successful trip, and asked whether there were *hora'os* from the Rebbe for this. He also shared the good news that more than 1700 people had joined a recent concert held by Chabad of Switzerland in Zurich, and that he had attended the Marlow-Yaffe wedding in Manchester, concluding by requesting the Rebbe's *bracha* that he be successful in all this.

The Rebbe responded with five numbered *ma'anos*:

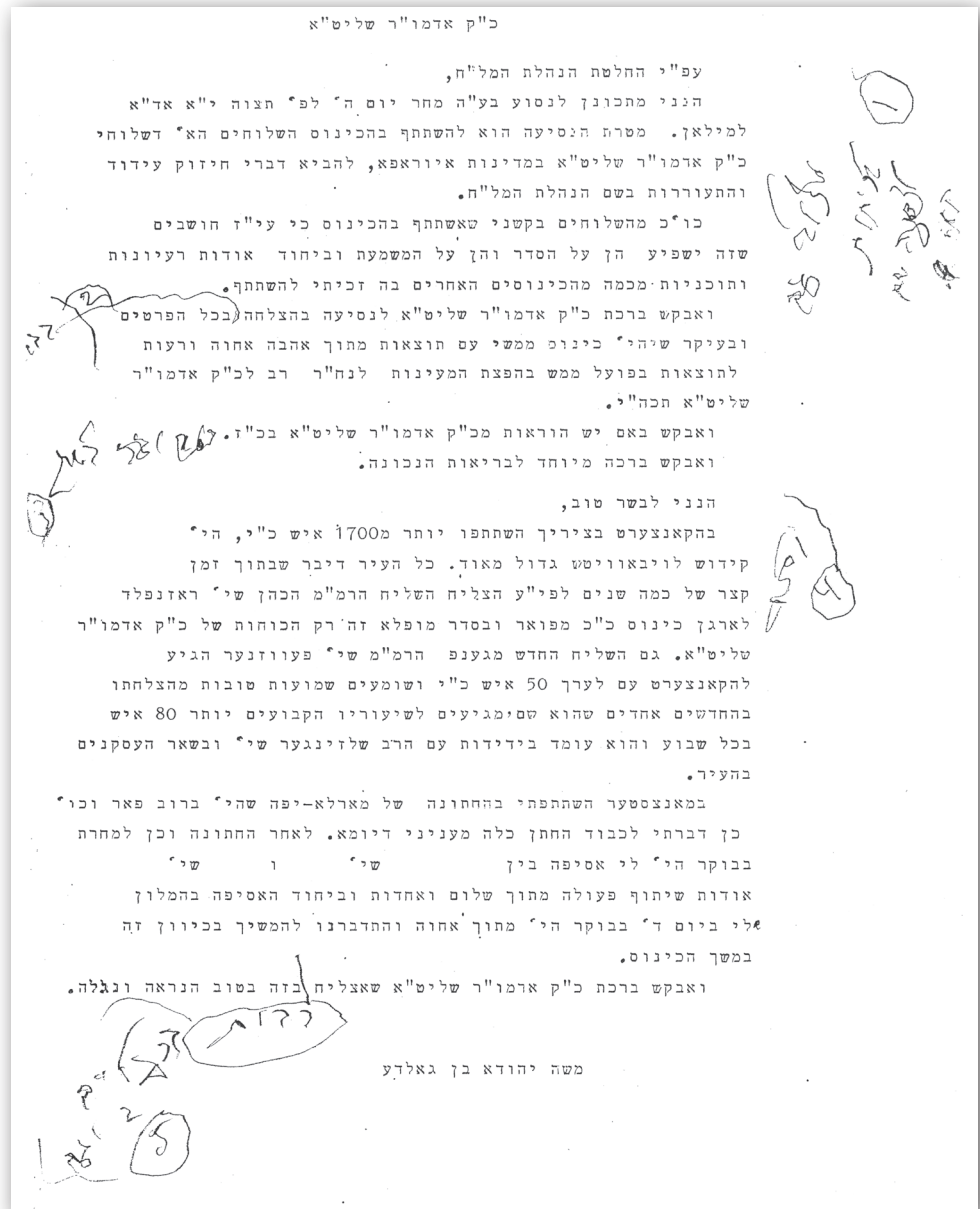
[Near the paragraph about the Kinus in Europe] “(1) I’m enclosing *shlichus mitzvah* for *tzedakah* there — \$5”.

[Near the paragraph requesting a *bracha* for the Kinus “(2) [it should be with] much [success]”

[Near the question whether there are *hora'os* for this “(3) As was discussed on Shabbos [The Rebbe’s *farbrengen* that Shabbos is printed in Toras Menachem-Hisvaaduyos 5749 vol. 2 p. 324ff].

[Near the paragraph about the Zurich concert] “(4) Thank you”.

[Where Rabbi Kotlarsky had written his request for success in this, the Rebbe inserted the word [that I be successful] very much [in this, and then wrote “Doubly so, [and this applies to *ma'anos*] 2 and 5” — the two requests for success.





Brooklyn, New York

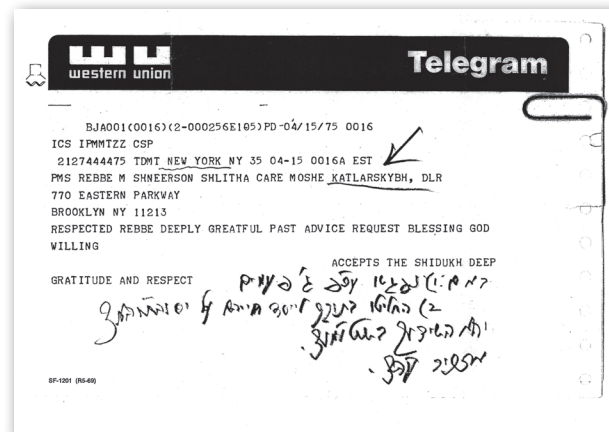
A family that was close with Rabbi Kotlarsky asked the Rebbe for a *bracha* — their daughter had found a *shidduch* and was ready to get engaged. She sent a telegram to the Rebbe “care of Moshe Kotlarsky,” as they felt they had a close relationship with Rabbi Kotlarsky. The Rebbe underlined and drew an arrow pointing towards Rabbi Kotlarsky’s name, signifying that he should bring the *ma’aneh* to the family.

The Rebbe wrote:

If

1. They have met at least three times
2. They firmly resolve to establish their lives on the foundation of Torah and mitzvos

May the *shidduch* take place in a good and auspicious time. I will mention it at the Ohel.



Montreal, Canada

Rabbi Moshe and Rivka Kotlarsky were married on Monday, 23 Kislev, 5731, in Brooklyn, New York. His many friends from his *yeshiva* days in Montreal wanted to host the young couple for a *sheva brachos* in Montreal on Thursday night, so that everyone could return to New York in time for the *farbrengen* on Shabbos Chanukah, where they would make *sheva brachos* during the *farbrengen*.

Rabbi Kotlarsky wrote to the Rebbe, asking whether to go, expressing concern about the unpleasant weather in the area, but writing that the flights were nevertheless scheduled, and that they'd aim to be back for Shabbos to make *sheva brachos* at the *farbrengen*.

The Rebbe circled the last line — that they planned to be at the *farbrengen* — and wrote “If so, why bring yourselves into all of this [traveling], and on *Nittel* etc, ומסיימים בטוב.”

That Friday was December 25th, so Thursday night would be marked as *Nittel*.

Of course, the *chosson* and *kallah* stayed put in New York. The next day, they found out that a snowstorm had grounded flights in Montreal— had they flown or attempted to drive, they wouldn't have made it back for Shabbos.

Typically, at the *farbrengen*, after the *maamar*, Rabbi Hodakov would approach the Rebbe and ask whether *sheva brachos* could now take place. This Shabbos, as soon as the Rebbe concluded the *maamar*, the Rebbe turned to Rabbi Tzvi Yosef Kotlarsky, who was standing—as he always did—behind the Rebbe.

The Rebbe signaled with his holy hand and said, “Nu? Sheva brachos!”





#23949 JEM

In Tribute

SHLUCHIM SHARE MEMORIES OF

RABBI

MOSHE

KOTLAR



SKY

WRITTEN BY RABBI AHARON LOSCHAK

“*R*”

“REB MOSHE,” AS HE was affectionately known among the close-knit family of shluchim, was like a father to so many. His recent passing touched deeply and personally into their hearts, an unfathomable loss. In the immediate days of shivah, hundreds of shluchim from around the world gathered for a farbrengen over Zoom that lasted for many hours, sharing stories, anecdotes, hora’os, and fond memories of a man who loomed larger than life.

From Moscow to Turkey, to Eretz Yisrael, to Portugal, and too many other locations to count, shluchim shared an unending stream of memories about this inimitable chassid. They spoke of his unwavering commitment to the Rebbe, how his sole desire in life was to simply provide nachas ruach to his meshalei’ach. Each one shared how they felt like a personal friend, if not a family member, of Reb Moshe, noting how he always demonstrated genuine concern for their shlichus as well as their personal affairs.

Countless stories highlighted similar themes—themes that animated Reb Moshe’s every waking moment. He was a fiercely devoted chassid with a tireless desire to see the Rebbe’s vision and empire expand across the globe, a man who exhibited an unprecedented concern for the Rebbe’s soldiers—the family of shluchim.

The memories shared can fill an entire bookshelf. The following is a small sampling of a few select remarks.



—◆◆◆—

**RABBI MENACHEM
MENDEL GLUCKOWSKY
RECHOVOT, ERETZ YISROEL**

There are so many things that can be said about Reb Moshe Kotlarsky, it's hard to focus on any particular item. It's astounding that one person could do so many things! And yet, despite his global reach and the scale of his efforts, he never lost his personal touch. He remained a personal friend to everyone he knew, and always demonstrated a deeply individualized concern.

Just to illustrate this, I recall how, one day, I received a call from a shliach in another country who proceeded to describe the difficulties he was experiencing with another shliach in that same country. As the head shliach there, this other shliach fell under his jurisdiction, and the friction between them was causing serious problems. Apparently, this issue had been going on for a number of years already.

When I asked this shliach how he'd gotten to me, he explained that he had initially called Reb Moshe to help him. Reb Moshe had told him that he would personally come from New York—this country was a considerably distant flight away—provided that Rabbi Mendel Gluckowsky from Rechovot also joined in the efforts to make peace.

I agreed to come, and Reb Moshe and I sat with

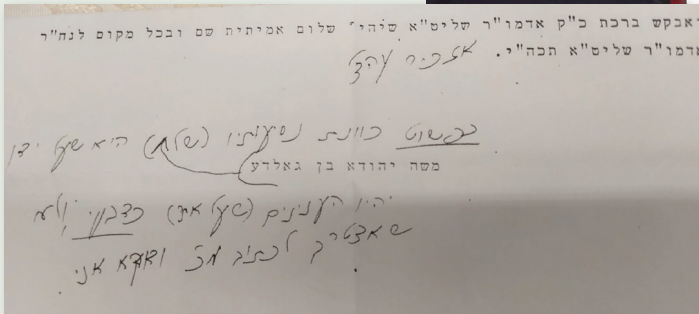
It's one thing to fly across the world to get a nice photo op at a big building inauguration ceremony—but this was a decidedly unglamorous and discreet affair. This was simply facilitating two shluchim making peace with one another.

these two shluchim for an entire day trying to work out an agreement. It was hard, grueling work, but *baruch Hashem* we were successful, and by the end of the day, we had hammered out a deal. Everyone walked away from the session exhausted but happy that peace had been reached.

The following day, we were both in the local *shul* for *Shacharis*. All of a sudden, to my dismay, I saw that Reb Moshe had passed out in the middle of davening. Hatzalah had to be called, and *baruch Hashem* they were able to immediately tend to him without any further drama.

When I asked Reb Moshe what had happened, he explained it to me. "I really wasn't feeling well already at home in New York. But when I received the call, I couldn't not come. A shliach needs help achieving *shalom*—how can I rest at home? So, I pushed myself to come and jumped on a plane to get over here. I guess the long day of negotiations just knocked me out."

I was astounded. It's one thing to fly across the world to get a nice photo op at a big building inauguration ceremony—but this was a decidedly unglamorous and discreet affair. This was simply facilitating two shluchim making peace with one another. And yet, notwithstanding the fact that he was feeling unwell, Reb Moshe dropped everything and crossed the globe to be there and do what it takes—literally until he passed out!



RABBI SHABTAI SLAVITICKI ANTWERP, BRUSSELS

Reb Moshe was a chassid with a burning desire to give *nachas* to the Rebbe—and as soon as possible. That’s it. That’s what animated him every day.

I remember once, before *Gimmel Tammuz*, there was a certain issue going on here in Antwerp about which some of the community members wrote to the Rebbe. The Rebbe sent Reb Moshe to address it. When Reb Moshe arrived in Antwerp, I went to greet him, figuring that I would escort him to his hotel to rest up after his arduous travel before setting out to tend to his affairs.

Oh, was I wrong! As soon as I met up with him, the only thing Reb Moshe wanted to do was to immediately tend to his shlichus. So, we went straight from the airport to the scene where the issue was taking place. At some point in the interaction there, we could see that Reb Moshe’s eyes were simply closing on him, he was so tired! “Reb Moshe, let’s go to your hotel now so you can finally rest!” we begged him.

“No, there’s too much to do,” he responded. And with that, he took a few chairs, put them together, and snoozed for just a short while.

That was Reb Moshe. He had a shlichus to do, and all that concerned him was how he could carry it out in the soonest and most effective way so as to give the Rebbe *nachas*.

The story didn’t end there. When he returned to New York, Reb Moshe wrote a *duch* to the Rebbe about his efforts. The Rebbe advised him what to do further in a subsequent letter communicated through the *mazkirus*, to which Reb Moshe responded that, much to his chagrin, it seems like matters aren’t turning out as the Rebbe would have wished.

That’s all I knew of what happened back then. Years later, I was sitting with Reb Moshe in his office, and I asked him what had come of that letter—had the Rebbe responded?

Reb Moshe showed me a copy of the letter he had received from the Rebbe in response:

כפשוט שכוונת נסיעותיו (שלו) היא שעל ידו יהיו הענינים (שעל אתר) כדבעי, ולא שאצטרך לכתוב מכתב ודווקא אני.

Obviously, the purpose of your travels is that matters on the ground should be settled in the right fashion through your efforts. I shouldn’t need to write letters.

We can see how much the Rebbe trusted him! The Rebbe was confident that whichever way Reb Moshe Kotlarsky would try to work it out, that would be the “right fashion” necessary for that place. Indeed, he was a literal conduit of the Rebbe’s work!



He had a shlichus to do, and all that concerned him was how he could carry it out in the soonest and most effective way so as to give the Rebbe nachas.





RABBI YOSSY GOLDMAN JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA

In addition to being a close friend with whom I grew up in the *heimishe* halls of the Bedford and Dean Yeshivah in Brooklyn, Moshe was my beloved brother-in-law. We spent many cherished years together, and his loss is simply unimaginable!

One thing about Moshe was just how available he was. Despite his intense involvement in so many truly enormous affairs, he allowed so many people to have his personal cell phone number—and, more importantly, he picked up the phone! I recall countless times sitting with him in his office and he would constantly be answering calls, lending a listening ear, and actually doing whatever he could to help the person on the other end of the line.

Which brings me to the other outstanding thing about him: he was a tremendous *baal maaseh*. He got the job done! If there was a need, he would somehow find a way to fill it, no matter what it took.

Finally, there's another wonderful characteristic about this giant of a man that deserves mention. Despite his globetrotting and ambassadorial role, he was absolutely not an absentee father. Too often, "big" people tend to get caught up in the importance of their careers and missions, letting their own families fall to the side, if only just a little bit. Not Moshe. He was inti-

mately involved in the lives of every single one of his children and grandchildren. He took great pride in his family and was a real hands-on father and grandfather.

This held true for extended family as well. He would make an effort to attend the *simchos* of whomever he could. And when certain issues came up among the broader family that needed a wise voice, he was there to take that lead and steer us all to a better place.

That was my dear, beloved brother-in-law: the Rebbe's global ambassador and an intimate father and family man as well.

RABBI SHAIS TAUB FIVE TOWNS, NEW YORK

I don't think there's a better testament to the true greatness of Reb Moshe than the fact that he trusted me so much as to put me together with his own son-in-law, Rabbi Zalman Wolowik, right here in the Five Towns. I would call him my *shadchan*, as he married me—in the *shlichus* sense—to his own family. And for that, I'm eternally grateful.

While the story of how I ended up here in the Five Towns is a personal one, it's also illustrative of who Reb Moshe was. It gives a glimpse into how he had his hand in so many different aspects of understanding what needed to be done, where it needed to take place, and



man, a local named Chaim Groisman, nearly fainted.

After he regained his composure, Chaim explained that there was no Jewish school on the island and that his son, Eli, was being harassed in school for not attending Protestant religious services. It got so bad that Eli dropped out of school, and there was tremendous pressure on the family to send him back. Chaim was at a loss.

Then, one night, Chaim had a dream in which his late grandmother, Bubbe Baila, appeared to him and told him that if ever there was a time he was in trouble, he should turn to the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

He'd never heard of the Rebbe before. The next morning, Chaim woke up and went straight to the nearby *shtiebel*, where he asked the *shamash* to open the *aron* for him. Chaim poured out his heart and repeated before the open *aron* what his grandmother had told him in the dream: if ever you are in trouble, turn to the Lubavitcher Rebbe—but he didn't know how to reach him. As Chaim exited the *shtiebel*, who did he see but Reb Moshe getting out of the cab and introducing himself as the emissary of the Rebbe?

Chaim brought Reb Moshe home, and he convinced young Eli to go to New York and attend yeshivah there.

Chaim later wrote a letter of thanks to the Rebbe for sending his emissary and caring about “a small Jew from Curacao.” The Rebbe wrote a letter back to Chaim in which he wrote:

“I must ... take exception to your referring to your-

2

*That balance
of globalism
and localism,
of massive
responsi-
bilities yet not
forgetting the
small and the
personal—it
was all so
wondrously
evident.*

self as ‘a small Jew from Curacao.’ There is no such thing as a ‘small Jew,’ and a Jew must never underestimate his or her tremendous potential.”

After telling this story at my son and daughter-in-law's *chuppah*, Rebe Moshe then read the Rebbe's letter to Chaim Groisman in full.

This story was one of Reb Moshe's favorite stories to tell, but in this case, the reason why he told it was that it had special meaning at this *chasunah*.

Living in the Five Towns, our oldest daughter became friends with another local Lubavitcher girl named Malky. We soon realized that Malky would be an excellent *shidduch* for our son Yisroel, and the two were engaged last Rosh Chodesh Tamuz.

It was only after they were engaged that it occurred to us that Reb Moshe was instrumental in the *shidduch*. After all, it was he who had sent us to the Five Towns, and it was he who flew to Curacao to help Malky's grandfather. You see, Malky is Malka Beila née Groisman, daughter of Eli, granddaughter of Chaim, and great-great-granddaughter of Bubbe Beila, after whom she is named.

Forty years ago, Reb Moshe answered a 3:00 a.m. phone call that would bestow upon him the merit to be the Rebbe's representative in answering a father's painful cries. Forty years later, in the final year of his life in this world, he brought the *shlichus* full circle by officiating at the *chuppah* of the children of two families whose lives he had touched.



The Rebbe told Chaim Groisman that there is no such thing as a small Jew, and the Rebbe's shliach Reb Moshe was the embodiment of these words.

RABBI SHOLOM RAICHIK
GAITHERSBURG, MARYLAND

I had the privilege of working with Reb Moshe on the *Vaad Hakinus* for a number of years. As with everything else he did, in this context as well his tremendous qualities were on full display. That balance of globalism and localism, of massive responsibilities yet not forgetting the small and the personal—it was all so wondrously evident. The *Kinus* was, and is, one of the largest events in the world, and yet he was concerned that every person should get their dinner at the banquet. The comments and the feedback made a real difference to him; if one person's needs weren't met, he took it personally and made sure something was done about it.

That was his uniqueness: his personal touch with everyone—not just when it came to matters related to shlichus, but with *everything*.

To illustrate: My wife is from Australia, so I remember when I was a *chossan*, during my engagement, I was working on getting tickets for my family to come to the wedding. Travel back then wasn't like it is today, so procuring tickets for an entire family to Australia was a prohibitively expensive affair.

I knew that Reb Moshe was an avid flier and had most probably racked up many thousands of frequent

flier miles. So, despite the fact that I didn't know him very well, I went over to him and asked him if I could borrow some miles for tickets to Australia and eventually pay him back. Without batting an eyelash, Reb Moshe turned around and gave me full access to his United Airlines mileage account. "Here, just call them and take whatever you need. We'll figure out how to pay it back later."

That's the essence of who Reb Moshe was: a *Yid* needed a favor, he didn't ask questions. He only knew one thing: action. That was his first question in any situation, "What's needed to be done?" And what made him unique was that upon identifying the action item, he immediately did it—whatever it took.

RABBI SIMCHA BACKMAN
GLENDALE, CALIFORNIA

I was privileged to work with Reb Moshe in the *Vaad Hakinus* and on other projects for many years, and I will forever cherish those many hours spent together.

There are countless stories and anecdotes, of course. I remember one time, I needed something for one of my younger children—a personal matter, like so many other matters with which Reb Moshe dealt. Reb Moshe knew about this particular matter and, despite both of our efforts, after a few weeks I saw that, sadly, it wasn't working out. I was quite disappointed about the situation, but there wasn't anything more I could do and I resigned myself to my fate.



A short time later, it was in the middle of a *Vaad* meeting and Reb Moshe looked across the table with his unique smile. There was that trademark twinkle in his eye, the look he had when he knew that he was about to make someone else happy—his own greatest joy. “Come sit next to me,” he said, and he showed a message on his phone to me. It turns out that though I had personally given up on this very personal matter of my own, Reb Moshe had not. He had persisted, pulling

whichever strings he could.

And sure enough, his doggedness had paid off. The message running across the screen of his phone confirmed that it had been “taken care of.”

At that moment, I felt like his own child. The truth is, he was happier than I was. The joy he derived from helping others surpassed anything even the person receiving his largesse could imagine.

From all my interactions with Reb Moshe, I would

distill the message of “*vehachai yitein el libo*” to three parts:

1. His life revolved around the Rebbe. He lived and breathed Rebbe. His only desire was to give the Rebbe nachas. In my own life, I could do more to incorporate the Rebbe into my day, into my very thinking. So often Reb Moshe would ask me, “What would the Rebbe say?” The more of the Rebbe’s Torah we learn, the closer we get to thinking as the Rebbe would want us to. That’s something Reb Moshe personified to the nth degree.
2. When it comes to shlichus, you’ve got to do it right! Don’t be stingy, and don’t do things half-baked. Everything must be first class when it comes to carrying out the Rebbe’s mandate.
3. Ahavas Yisrael. We are truly one family, and we must care for one another. We must give attention to everyone we know, in a personal, concerned, and loving way.

RABBI YOSEF CHAIM KANTOR BANGKOK, THAILAND

I credit Reb Moshe with setting me straight on the path of shlichus for life. It was a small incident, really a short anecdote, but with his straightforward devotion to the Rebbe and the mandate of shlichus, Reb Moshe taught me volumes.

It was right in the beginning of my journey on shlichus. I was a young man of twenty-four, and I was looking for a place to go. I had heard that Thailand was available, so I came into his office to speak to him about it.

Back then, Thailand wasn’t such an attractive option. It was far, very remote, and there were other local challenges as well. But I thought I could be successful there, so I came in “for an interview.” Reb Moshe told me to go there for two weeks to check it out, which I did. When I returned, I told him that we were prepared to move there, and after getting the Rebbe’s *haskama uvracha* he helped negotiate a suitable package with the local community to hire me as their *rav*.

When I started “shopping around” with my friends to see what they thought about this package, a few of them started rumbling. “The people there are so rich, this isn’t a fair deal! They should be giving you more. Go to Rabbi Kotlarsky and tell him that he’s not

pushing hard enough for you.”

I was a bit of a young hothead, so I went back to Reb Moshe and told him what the “*eitzah zuggers*” had told me. I remember very vividly what happened next: he got uncharacteristically stern, and harshly replied, “If being a shliach of the Rebbe is what you want, know that I negotiated a fair package for you. If you want something else, get lost and figure it out yourself.”

Needless to say, I was taken aback. But the more I thought about it, I figured, “All of these *eitzah zuggers* aren’t going to help me find a shlichus if I don’t take the opportunity to go on shlichus to Thailand.

So, I went right back to his office and said, “Rabbi Kotlarsky, I trust your judgment, if you think it’s fair, I accept it.”

And with that, my wife and I were off to Thailand.

I credit Rabbi Kotlarsky for giving me my first push into making an honest choice: Am I really going into this because I’m *mekushar* to the Rebbe? Am I for real, or is this just something I’m doing because I never thought about anything else? It was a truly pivotal moment.

That was Reb Moshe: A true *chassid* who was able to radiate that *emes* to all those around him.

*I credit
Rabbi
Kotlarsky
for giving me
my first push
into making
an honest
choice: Am I
really going
into this
because I’m
mekushar to
the Rebbe?
Am I for real,
or is this just
something
I’m doing
because
I never
thought
about
anything
else? It was a
truly pivotal
moment.*

RABBI BEREL LAZAR MOSCOW, RUSSIA

Reb Moshe had absolutely zero interest in himself. It was all about the other, especially when it came to shluchim. When he would visit shluchim around the world, it was the personal touch that made him stand apart—like bringing chocolate bars for the children who couldn’t otherwise get such treats in their remote locations.

It was never about him. Always about the other. He was capable of *fargining* another shliach’s success—something we should all learn from. If only we mastered this art, the majority, if not all, of friction between shluchim would dissolve. But he didn’t only *fargin*; he was deeply happy about another shliach’s success. We, too, must replicate this trait, caring for and celebrating each other’s concerns and successes. That’s what being part of one family is all about.

I remember during the COVID-19 pandemic, Shavuot was approaching and the situation was particularly severe here in Russia. At some point, we discovered a service in New York that enabled us to send cheese cakes to whichever address we provided. I called them up and scheduled cheese cake deliver-



ies to a number of important and close friends from a short list. Among them was Reb Moshe Kotlarsky.

I'll never forget his call. He was furious: "I don't accept such things! I told you not to waste this on me. Send it back!"

That was Reb Moshe. His own personal honor or credit was never part of the picture. It was always about the other person, about fulfilling the Rebbe's shlichus and giving the Rebbe as much *nachas* as possible.

RABBI YOEL CAROLINE KEY BISCAVNE, FLORIDA

We became shluchim shortly after Gimmel Tammuz, first serving as youth directors for Rabbi and Mrs. Sholom Ber Lipskar in Bal Harbor, Florida. Shortly after we moved, our second son was born.

We made a *sholom zachar* in our home, and, as new shluchim, we didn't expect a huge crowd.

Reb Moshe happened to be in town for Shabbos, staying close to an hour away from our house. I'll never forget the feeling I had when he walked in the door for the *sholom zachar*. Here I was, Yoel Caroline, a *baal teshuvah* without any "big name" in Lubavitch, and Rabbi Moshe Kotlarsky himself had walked over an hour to attend my son's *sholom zachar*! It meant the world to me—and I'm sure he knew that.

That was Reb Moshe. He cared in such a personal way for everyone he knew—and even those he didn't.

Many years later, after we had moved to our current *makom hashlichus* of Key Biscayne, I was going through a hard time regarding a personal matter. It was during this period that I met Reb Moshe at the regional Florida *kinus*. I confided with him, and he told me, "I'm here if you need me." He said it in such an empowering way, without any patronizing whatsoever. I felt truly seen and cared for.



*There was nothing more important in his life than to sit down and write a *duch* that began with the words, “Hineni levaser tov.”*

Some time passed, and eventually I took Reb Moshe up on the offer. I called him, and before long, together with his son Mendy, he was on a plane to Key West to come and personally help out with this matter. Baruch Hashem, they took care of it and we've remained in touch ever since.

Reb Moshe was such an incredible friend. He had a wonderful balance of being light, friendly, and humorous, yet very serious at the same time. It was a *chitzoniyus* to bring to the *pnimiyus*. It was so endearing.

RABBI MENDY KOTLARSKY
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK

My father taught us many things, but arguably

one of his most oft-repeated teachings was that of his effort to give the Rebbe *nachas*. There was nothing more important in his life than to sit down and write a *duch* that began with the words, “*Hineni levaser tov*.” And the amount of times the Rebbe replied with some version of “*garam nachas ruach*” are too many to count.

These last few days, as he was saying goodbye to his close family and friends, my father had a singular message: “Be chassidim, be connected with the Rebbe.”

So, please, think of something you wouldn't have otherwise done for the Rebbe, and do it for his *zechus*. My father *shturemed* about the “One Mitzvah Campaign” as the final step to bring Moshiach. Please go ahead and start a campaign in your community *l'iluy nishmaso*. Together, let's bring Moshiach for once and for all, *vehakitzu veranenu shochnei afar!*

Just a
**HUMBLE
SOLDIER**





BY SHMUEL BOTNIK

Featured in Mishpacha, Issue 1018

The

You may have been there yourself and directly felt the electric energy; you may have only seen the video clips and watched as that energy jumped off the screen.

The Torah poured forth in flowing Yiddish, expounding on a potpourri of *chassidus*, halachah, *dikduk* and *aggadah*; even those who didn't fully understand were able to follow the rise and fall of his voice, the sharp emphases followed by the slowly released intonation. They sensed a truth that transcended verbalization.

Then they would break into song, and the square gray-white beard topped by the sharply bent hat brim would blur as his forearm went up and down, up and down. The crowd's voices swelled and quickened to the rhythm of the forearm's pace.

Then he'd speak again. More Torah, more *chassidus*. More energy.

And more hope for a day when the *keilim*, the vessels, will be able to accept the *ohr*.



The concept of *ohr* and *keilim* is a fundamental one in the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, and one that characterized all that he did. There is a great *ohr*, a Heavenly light, waiting to descend upon this world, as we transform it into a *dirah batachtonim*, “a dwelling place for the Shechinah in the lower world” by our own deeds.

But this light is too great for us to withstand. Our *keilim*, our “receptacles,” are too feeble, too fragile, to contain it. Should the Great Light descend, unfiltered and unconcealed, the vessels would shatter.

But there will come a day, the Rebbe taught, when that will change. Our *keilim* will become strong enough to withstand the greatest of all lights.

When the Lubavitcher Rebbe took on the role of leadership in 1950, he set an impossibly high bar for himself. His position as the Rebbe of Chabad chassidim would comprise only a fraction of his life's mission;

the end goal, as he outlined in his very first *maamar*, famously titled “*Basi Lgani*” (lit. “I came to My garden”) was to fortify a “*dirah batachtonim*,” a dwelling place for the Shechinah in this lower world.

The Rebbe sought to bring down the *ohr*. And for that, he needed *keilim* — vessels so strong and durable that they could contain even the greatest light.

The Rebbe was a master at delegating, and he handpicked sergeants, officers, colonels, and lieutenants, to serve in the army that he built.

And then there was the general.

Rabbi Moshe Kotlarsky was the man whom the Rebbe entrusted with the responsibility of overseeing the entire network of *shluchim* across the globe.

There was so much *ohr* ready to descend. Rabbi Kotlarsky was there to provide the *keilim*.

“**D**uring Covid, we in Russia were going through a very hard time,” says Rabbi Berel Lazar, Chief Rabbi of Russia. “We received a lot of help from various individuals in the States, among them Rabbi Kotlarsky. Before Shavuot, I decided to send a package of cheesecake and wine to all those people who had helped us, as a token of our appreciation.”

When Rabbi Lazar received a call from Rabbi Kotlarsky, he assumed it was to thank him for the thoughtful gift.

“But he didn’t thank me. He was very upset. He said, ‘I sent the package back to the company. Don’t ever show me appreciation! That’s not what I do this for!’”

This encounter was emblematic of Rabbi Kotlarsky’s entire self-perspective. It was never about him. He was a *shaliach* with every fiber of his being, a messenger acting on behalf of his rebbe.

“I worked with Rabbi Kotlarsky for twenty-five years,” says Rabbi Efraim Mintz, executive director of the Rohr Jewish Learning Institute. “He was always there for min a *shaliach*, no matter what he needed. Whether it was communal or personal, he was there, taking the first flight out to do whatever he could to help.”

He refused any and all forms of appreciation, no matter how minute and basic. “Over the years, Rabbi Kotlarsky raised hundreds of millions of dollars,” says Rabbi Mintz. “But he never took a commission. In fact, when he wired money to a *shaliach*, he would pay the wire fees himself.”

But this took little sacrifice because the “himself” factor was non-existent, as evidenced by his epitaph, whose text he alone had drafted.

“*Sha’af kol yamav ligrom nachas ruach lichvod kedushas adoneinu moreinu v’rabbeinu ul’vaser tov ub’hosafah* — He aspired all his days to generate *nachas ruach* to our master, our guide, our teacher, and to report back good tidings.”



The long list of his accomplishments is glaringly absent, because in his mind, they were all subsets of one all-encompassing goal: To fulfill the will of the Rebbe, who trusted him to do exactly that.

Rabbi Kotlarsky didn’t start at the lower end and ascend the ladder of positions before reaching a leadership role; the Rebbe tapped him for this particular position the moment he stepped forward in a quest to join the ranks.

“When we got married,” Rabbi Kotlarsky shared in an interview with *Mishpacha*, “we informed the Rebbe that we would go anywhere he wanted us to, no matter where in the world it was.”

But uncharacteristically, the Rebbe did not issue a clear response, and it eventually became evident that the Kotlarskys’ *shlichus* was going to be right there, in Crown Heights, New York.

The Rebbe knew the Kotlarskys well — Reb Moshe’s father, Rabbi Tzvi Yosef (Hershel) Kotlarsky, was born in Poland and attended the Tomchei Temimim yeshivah established by the Rebbe Rayatz, the “Friediker Rebbe” (previous Lubavitcher Rebbe) in the city of Otvotzk, Poland.

The Rebbe Rayatz appointed the senior Rabbi Kotlarsky to be one of the nine *shluchim* to lay the foundations of Torah in Montreal, Canada. In 1946, he came to New York where he was introduced to a young woman named Golda Shimelman. They married and had eight children, the second of eight children was Moshe Yehuda. Meanwhile, Reb Hershel joined the administration of the Tomchei Temimim yeshivah in Crown Heights and was one of the earliest chassidim of the Rebbe.

One of the remarkable traits that Moshe Kotlarsky demonstrated early on as a child was exemplary *kibbud av v'eim*. Neighbors recalled how he would run for blocks to help his mother carry the groceries home.

But along with exceptional *kibbud av* came exceptional *kibbud rav*.

From a very young age, Moshe showed a profound passion to develop a relationship with the man who stood at the front of the *beis medrash*, led *farbrengens*, and bestowed constant blessings upon hundreds of followers.

The Rebbe.

Rabbi Kotlarsky would share how, as a young child, he and his friends concluded that the most ideal

opportunity to interact with the Rebbe was to hold the large outer door to 770 open as he left the building; this way, you could score a “yasher koach” from him.

“But I had a better idea — if I would open the door after *Kiddush Levanah*, I would get a ‘*yasher koyach*,’ a ‘*gutte voch*,’ and a ‘*guten chodesh*’ all in one. It was a bargain.”

And so that Motzaei Shabbos, Moshe Kotlarsky opened the door after Minchah and remained there, standing guard until after Maariv. He did not move from his position at the door while all the other chassidim proceeded outside to recite *Kiddush Levanah* with the Rebbe. Finally, the Rebbe began making his way toward the door to come back inside.

“The Rebbe entered and looked at me. ‘Were you *mekadesh levanah* yet, or were you too busy holding the door?’ he asked gently. I admitted that I hadn’t yet recited the tefillah. The Rebbe instructed me to go get a siddur and say *Kiddush Levanah*. Then I was to come to his room.

“I knocked at the door and he opened it, a broad smile on his face. ‘*Yasher koyach, a gutte voch, a guten chodesh*.’”

Perhaps it was this shrewd intellect and deep-seated dedication that influenced the Rebbe’s decision to choose Moshe Kotlarsky as the one to take a vision

and create reality from it, or — to term it as he may have — to take the *ohr* and encase it with *keilim*.

Rabbi Kotlarsky accepted the task, assuming the role of vice chairman of *Merkos L’Inyonei Chinuch*, whose goal was to assist and oversee Chabad *shluchim* internationally. His devotion to the mission was boundless; he was available at all times, would never miss a phone call, and would even board a flight immediately if it was necessary.

Rabbi Shalom Moshe Paltiel is the *shaliach* to Port Washington, Long Island. “Some twenty-five years ago,” Rabbi Paltiel shares, “we were struggling mightily to maintain our local Chabad institutions. Someone suggested that I reach out to a Yid named Lenny Spector, who led a private group at the HSBC bank. If I’d move my account into his group, I was told, Lenny would take care of me and make sure all would be in order.”

Rabbi Paltiel followed the advice, and it proved to be a financial lifesaver. One day, Rabbi Paltiel reached out to Lenny. “I’m so grateful to you for all you’ve done,” he said. “What can I do to repay you?”

“Well, to be honest,” Lenny responded, “Rabbi Kotlarsky has the entire Chabad account — worth tens of millions of dollars — in HSBC. If he would move the account into my group, it would boost my portfolio and be very helpful for me.”

Rabbi Paltiel put the call through to Rabbi Kotlarsky, who barely batted





an eyelash before arranging for the transfer to happen.

“A few years passed, and I got a call from Lenny,” Rabbi Paltiel recounts. “He informed me that he was moving over to Signature Bank and could no longer be of help in HSBC. He said he’d be happy to have my account in his Signature group, but since he wouldn’t have Rabbi Kotlarsky’s very significant Chabad account, he wouldn’t have the clout that he’d once had to make sure that I stayed out of trouble.”

Signature is a much smaller bank than HSBC, and Rabbi Kotlarsky would have little to gain by downgrading to the less resourceful institution. “I asked him if he would switch the entire account to Signature, since this would help me. He immediately agreed.”

Rabbi Paltiel points out that Signature didn’t even have a branch in Crown Heights. This was around

20 years ago, when the only available option to send checks to an out-of-area bank was by mail. And that is precisely what Rabbi Kotlarsky began to do.

He was a leader but never saw himself as such; in fact, he would rarely use the word “I” in reference to any of his accomplishments. “He wouldn’t say ‘I sent a *shaliach* to such and such a place,’” says Reb Efraim Mintz. “It was ‘the Rebbe sent a *shaliach*.’ He never saw himself as anything other than a conduit to fulfill the mission the Rebbe tasked him with.”

There was an insight Rabbi Kotlarsky liked to share. When Aharon HaKohein was appointed to kindle the Menorah, the Torah uses the term “*Vayaas kein Aharon* — and Aharon did so.” Rashi offers an ambiguous explanation: “*L’hagid shivcho shel Aharon shelo shinah* — to tell the praise of Aharon that he did not change.” The intent of these

words is unclear. In what sense did Aharon not make any changes? What change did he refrain from making?

Rabbi Kotlarsky would quote one of many beautiful explanations. Aharon had just been appointed to one of the most prestigious positions in the Jewish Nation. His personality could have shifted as a result; he could have grown haughty, aloof, inaccessible. But he didn’t. Aharon did not change — he remained one with his brethren, his humility dwarfing his prestige.

Rabbi Kotlarsky was a general who saw himself as a soldier — *l’hagid shivcho shelo shinah*. He was a humble soldier, just like all his fellow *shluchim*, and would do anything to help a fellow comrade.

Rabbi Paltiel shares another experience he had with Rabbi Kotlarsky’s magnanimity. In the early days of his *shlichus*, he desperately



needed about \$600,000 to keep his operations afloat. Urgent appeals to potential lenders fell short, until one day a lender called him and offered the entire sum as an interest-free loan.

“I found out that it was Rabbi Kotlarsky who had made it happen. He had called the lender and offered to guarantee the entire loan.

“I had consulted with Rabbi Kotlarsky about this, but had no idea that he would do anything of this magnitude to help me.” Rabbi Kotlarsky never mentioned this episode to Rabbi Paltiel after that.

But Rabbi Paltiel paid a visit to Rabbi Kotlarsky during his final illness.

“I looked him in the eye and said, ‘I know what you did for me.’ He didn’t deny it.”

His assistance was hardly limited to finances. He was there for the *shluchim* in times of need and,

perhaps most notably, in times of tragedy.

Rabbi Yisroel Deren, regional director at Chabad Lubavitch of Connecticut, knew Rabbi Kotlarsky since childhood. The relationship strengthened over time as Rabbi Deren embarked on his *shlichus*, and the two kept in regular contact. On November 5, 2010, tragedy struck the Deren family when their beloved son, Mendy, passed away at age 36. This coincided with the Kinnus Hashluchim, where thousands of *shluchim* convene for a weekend of *chizuk*, unity, and celebration. Rabbi Kotlarsky served as the chairman of the Kinnus Hashluchim, and while it was in session he was completely consumed with this responsibility.

But when Mendy Deren was *niftar* everything stopped. The thousands of *shluchim* joined in the *levayah*, and the Kinnus schedule was rearranged to accommodate it. The procession began at Chabad headquarters at 770 Eastern Parkway and continued to the cemetery.

“I got out of the car when we reached the cemetery,” Rabbi Deren recalls, “and there was Rabbi Kotlarsky. He was holding a stack of papers. He said, ‘All the paperwork was taken care of. You just need to sign. And all expenses have been paid.’”

You didn’t have to be a *shaliach* to be on the receiving end of Rabbi Kotlarsky’s overwhelming care and

concern. Ari lived with his family in Florida when tragedy struck. His eighteen-month-old son had drowned in a swimming pool, leaving a devastated family. But misfortune would soon strike again. Ari’s wife was expecting, and the ultrasound revealed that the fetus had a severe heart condition. They were advised to move to New York where the baby would be able to receive top-level care immediately upon birth. They left immediately, and Ari, who had been in yeshivah with Rabbi Zalman Wolowik (who had since become Rabbi Kotlarsky’s son-in-law), made arrangements to stay in his old friend’s home. The baby was born in very serious condition. “For seven months, he hovered between life and death,” says Ari. And then, on the second day of Succos, the baby succumbed, a second death in the family within a year.

“I am a quiet person by nature,” says Ari. “I never expressed the anguish I felt inside.” It wasn’t just the tragedy.

Ari had never intended to stay in New York for such an extended period of time, but as the months passed, it became evident that Florida was no longer his home. He enrolled his children in local schools and sold his home in Florida.

“It was such a difficult period, but I told no one.”

One day, Ari received a call from Rabbi Wolowik. “My father-in-law would like to speak with you,” he said.

“I had never met Rabbi Kotlarsky before,” says Ari. “I’m not a *shaliach*. I didn’t know what he wanted from me.”

Ari entered Rabbi Kotlarsky’s office and took a seat across from him. Rabbi Kotlarsky handed him an envelope. It held \$2,500 in cash.

“I really needed the money because the move had been so costly,” Ari reflects. “But it wasn’t the money, as much as the sentiment and

sensitivity that came along with it.” The two spoke for a while, and suddenly the dam burst.

“I erupted, I burst out crying, finally sharing what had been weighing on me so heavily. Rabbi Kotlarsky listened and gave me so much *chizuk*.

“This wasn’t a story,” Ari comments, reflecting on the memory. “It was a personality. This was who he was. There must be so many stories so much greater than this one.”

Rabbi Kotlarsky displayed these traits even with the smallest sensitivities and for the youngest children. Rabbi Yacov Barber was the *shaliach* to Melbourne, Australia when his wife, Mrs. Rivki Barber, a beloved teacher, passed away at age 49. After the shivah, Rabbi Barber was in Crown Heights together with his children, and Rabbi Kotlarsky asked if he could stop by his office. Rabbi Barber came along with his nine-year-old son, Mendel. Rabbi Kotlarsky first handed Rabbi Barber

a check for a significant sum of money.

“I tried to tell him that it wasn’t necessary, but he waved me off,” Rabbi Barber recounts.

Then, Rabbi Kotlarsky reached into his pocket and pulled out a fifty-dollar bill.

“He handed it to my son, Mendel, and said, ‘Go buy yourself a toy.’ It blew us away — neither I nor Mendel have forgotten that.”

He exceeded any expectation in caring for the *shluchim*, going light-years beyond his job description.

Rabbi Aryeh Lang and his wife, Leah, have been the *shluchim* to Camarillo, California for 22 years. They were blessed with a son, Zev, who was diagnosed with autism at age two. When he was seven, the Langs tried to have him enrolled in Camp HASC, but their efforts were unsuccessful.



Somehow, Rabbi Kotlarsky got wind of what was going on and personally called Rabbi Simcha Scholar, CEO of Chai Lifeline, the parent organization of Camp HASC. Zev was readily accepted to HASC and has attended every year since. He eagerly awaits those precious two months as each summer approaches.

“Whenever Rabbi Kotlarsky saw me, he asked about Zev,” Rabbi Lang recounts.

Rabbi Laima Barber is the *shaliach* to Mauritius (an Indian Ocean island). Some years ago, he endured a deeply painful experience when his wife’s pregnancy ended in a stillbirth. He was in New York not long after, and Rabbi Kotlarsky, already very unwell, found out what happened. Rabbi Barber’s phone rang — it was Rabbi Kotlarsky.

“I heard what happened,” he said, “I would like to send you some money.”

“Thank you so much,” Rabbi Barber responded, “but really, it’s not necessary. Money is the least of our problems right now.”

“No, Laima,” Rabbi Kotlarsky persisted. “You’ve always been there for me. I want to help you out.”

“But I’m telling you,” Rabbi Barber tried to insist, “it’s okay, we don’t need it right now.”

“Listen,” said Rabbi Kotlarsky. “Do me a favor. Take it and buy some jewelry for your wife.”

Rabbi Barber did just that, purchasing a piece of jewelry that he and his wife will forever cherish.

“MY father would say that the Rebbe rarely said ‘thank you,’” says Reb Mendy Kotlarsky, who has succeeded his father in Merkos L’Inyonei Chinuch. “The greatest thanks was when he asked you to do something else for him.”

The Rebbe had high expectations of Rabbi Kotlarsky.

In 1984, the Rebbe received a letter from two leaders of the Jewish community in Cochabamba, Bolivia. In broken English, they described how few people in their community were observant, and they desperately needed a rabbi to guide them. The Rebbe read the letter and scrawled something at the top before handing it to his secretary, Rabbi Hodakov. Rabbi Hodakov read the Rebbe’s message which consisted of a one-line question: “Does Kotlarsky, *sheyichyeh*, know about this?”

Rabbi Kotlarsky received a call from Rabbi Hodakov, who described the request from Cochabamba. “Do you know about this?” he asked. Rabbi Kotlarsky responded that he was not aware of the situation in Cochabamba. He then heard the Rebbe’s voice in the background.

“If he knows, what has he done about it? And if he doesn’t know — how can it be that there is a country for which he is responsible, and he doesn’t know about this?”

At times, the sense that the Rebbe was pleased with his efforts could come through seemingly mystical channels.

The Rebbe once instructed Rabbi Kotlarsky to go to the Caribbean Island of Curaçao. When he arrived, he asked a taxi driver to take him to the Jewish center. Upon arrival, a fellow approached him and asked why he was there.

“The Lubavitcher Rebbe sent me,” Rabbi Kotlarsky responded.

The man’s eyes widened in astonishment. “Then you came for me!” he said.

He then shared his story: He had been raised on the island, unaware of his Jewish status, but his grandmother, on her deathbed, told him to marry a Jewish woman.

She left him with another piece of advice. If he ever encountered any sort of problem, he was to contact the Lubavitcher Rebbe in Brooklyn.

“I married a Jewish woman, and we have a son and a daughter,” the man shared.

But then he went on to explain that the local education system was under the control of the Church, and prayer was part of the school day. When the Catholic children prayed, the Jewish children had been allowed to play ball.

Now there was a new bishop in charge, and he had decided that every student must participate in the religious service. At the beginning of

the school year, the headmaster had forced his son to join.

“My son refused to go to church, and the headmaster tried to prod him inside,” the man said. “My son resisted, and in the scuffle that ensued, the headmaster ended up on the floor.”

The man’s son was immediately suspended and had nowhere to go to school.

“Last night, my grandmother appeared to me in a dream and reminded me about the Lubavitcher Rebbe.”

Rabbi Kotlarsky traveled back together with the man, who spent Purim in Crown Heights and enrolled his son in the Lubavitcher yeshivah.

The father was exhilarated by the experience, and when he returned to Curaçao, he wrote a thank-you letter to the Rebbe. He expressed his gratitude and signed off, “*You*

touched the heart of a small Jew from a small island.”

Rabbi Kotlarsky kept a copy of the Rebbe’s response, written in Hebrew, which was then translated into English and mailed off to Curaçao. The message reads:

Every Jew carries a piece of the Divine within him, as explained in Tanya, Chapter 2... so there is no such thing as a small Jew, as you refer to yourself.

Because every Jew is a *kli*, magnificent enough to contain an *ohr* that transcends all boundaries and limitations.

“My father would want everyone to think about what they could do,” says Reb Mendy Kotlarsky. “Whether it’s chesed or mitzvos, everyone can do a little more.” One of the last programs Rabbi Kotlarsky initiated was the “Mitzvah Society,” which seeks to spread the joy of mitzvos to Jews worldwide. “My father was adamant that we do it,” says Reb Mendy. “He

was passionate about the idea that one mitzvah can tip the scale.”

Armed with an incalculable number of mitzvos, Rabbi Moshe Kotlarsky left this world on the 27th of Iyar, 5784. Up in Shamayim, he has surely reunited with his rebbe, drinking from the fountains of his wisdom, the familiar flow of Yiddish emitting a potpourri of *chassidus*, halachah, *dikduk* and *aggadah*.

And true to his wishes, Rabbi Kotlarsky had good tidings to share — *ul’vaser tov ub’hosafah*.

Thousands of Chabad Houses dot the globe, and millions of Jews have been affected, drawn close to something they felt but could not explain.

Because the *oros* are hard to see.

Yet with each passing day, the *keilim* grow stronger, sturdier, more resistant — facilitating the speedy rebuilding of an everlasting *dirah b’tachtonim*.







The Lives He Changed

In the days and weeks since Rabbi Kotlarsky's passing, countless people whose lives he touched reached out with letters of nichum aveilim. Here is a selection of those messages.

This is a tremendous loss for your family, his children and grandchildren, and *shluchim* worldwide

As I reflect upon the impact that your father had on me, my family, and my fellow *shluchim*, it amazes me how far-reaching his care was for *chassidim* and *klal Yisroel*.

You have heard it hundreds of times, yet I would be remiss if I did not share with you on paper how special and unique your father was.

Please allow me to share a few memories.

There was a young neighboring *shliach* who was going through a difficult time with his direction, motivation, *hashkafa* and emotional challenges. Your father gently took him under his wing, spent time with him, and gave him the perspective he needed to continue the Rebbe's mission and *mamash* held his hand as he navigated this particular challenge.

"If he is a *shliach*, then I am responsible for him," he told me. He cared deeply and personally when someone was going through a hard time.

I don't have to tell you—as you already know—that he was not there just with lip service but with *lev v'nefesh*, with money and resources that can help a *shliach* and their family.

A *chossid* deserves to be happy and should be joyful, and we need to remove any obstacles that stand in the way of them fulfilling the *bakashos* of the Rebbe.

Yet it was a lot more than that,

As a young *Shliach* oftentimes encountering situations that one really has no experience with, it can feel overwhelming. Knowing that your father was available to answer your call was extremely helpful to us moving along with the confidence that there is no issue that is too great and nothing that we cannot accomplish on our *shlichus*. Despite the fact that we were young and there were thousands of senior *shluchim*, it was he who paid attention to us, asked how things were going and gave us words of encouragement to continue.

I knew that his office door was open and he was available to talk anytime you wanted.

If you called him and did not get through, he called you back—I know he did when I called.

It's incredible to think about it. How many people did he help, guide, advise? Yet when he spoke to you it was not rushed—you were given his focused and undivided attention.

On a personal level, when my brother Levi got sick L'A your father took an interest into how he and his family were doing. He took it personally and tried to help wherever he was able. He went to visit him and was in constant contact with his wife, myself and my brothers.

He made you feel that Levi was all that mattered and that he was there to assist in any way possible.

During that period there were many Issues in the world of *shlichus* and despite the many headaches and pressing matters, he went to visit. It was not around the corner—it took all day—but he came. He even came to Virginia for Levi's *shloshim*. It's a big trip and there was no personal gain from it—he simply cared about the family and wanted to be there for them. I want you to know how much we appreciated it. It meant the world to us that he was there for us during this hard challenge.

I remember asking Moshe for advice before we hired our first *shliach* to help us out and how he strongly encouraged us to make sure that he has his own area in our *shlichus* that he can develop on his own and feel ownership over.

When we finished building our Chabad center, I remember that I really wanted your father to come speak at the grand opening, yet I was very nervous to ask him, thinking to myself "Who am I, and where is Chandler on the map anyway?" Seeing your father zigzagging across the globe and representing the Rebbe in bigger and more famous places, why would he want to come to us? Maybe I should not even ask and take him away from the more important things he needed to do.

When I called he was so happy and excited. He made us feel like we are the only Chabad center that matters, and how incredible it was that we built such a beautiful Chabad center—and of course he would be there and would be happy to participate.

(To top it off, not only did he not ask for payment, but he paid for his own airfare.)

He came in and out on the same day, yet he left a deep impression on all who came for that special day.

People still talk about it to this day.

One of the most amazing qualities was his personal touch to each person. At the regional *kinus hashluchim* he practically made time for each person who came with a smile and a story. He had something nice to say to each person, regardless of age or what family he came from.

There are so many things I continue to learn from your father and his humility and *bittul* to the cause. While he

had many (maybe hundreds) of personal encounters and directives from the Rebbe, he made you feel they were not his or only to him but yours—they were lessons to you, and they just happened to have been given to him, so that he can share them with others. And share them he did.

He was unashamed of the Chabad mission and stayed strong to the principles of Chabad. Despite the changing world and the many demographics and cultural differences, he stayed strong and made sure the *shluchim* remained dedicated to what the Rebbe wants and expects of us.

He often said the Rebbe did not give people jobs, but opportunities: when you fulfilled the opportunity you got another one. If you did not, then you were not given the *zechus* again to have another opportunity.

RABBI MENDY DEITSCH
Chabad of Chandler, AZ





Whoever knows about Rabbi Moshe Kotlarsky, who passed away today at the age of 74, knows what an enormous loss this is to the entire Jewish world. But most of those influenced by Rabbi Kotlarsky have no idea who he was. Yet every person who benefitted from a Chabad house over the past decades — and we are talking about millions of Jews — is indebted to Rabbi Kotlarsky.

Rabbi Kotlarsky was a father figure to Chabad *Shluchim* (emissaries) all over the world. His residence was in Brooklyn but he lived mostly in airplanes. He personally knew every emissary and many of their children. Nothing was too small in his eyes not to merit his attention and, when it came to his dreams, nothing was too big. His inspiring vision and passionate speeches raised millions of dollars for Jewish education and for assistance for the needy.

When I spoke at the gathering of Chabad women in New York, I was privileged to receive wise counsel from him and to witness his largeness of heart and brilliance of mind up close. There are many bulldozers who are unstoppable in reaching their goals and many sensitive *mensches*. There are precious few — and Rabbi Kotlarsky was one of them — who are both.

There are many stories and worthy quotes from which flowery eulogies about him could be written but he would have objected to them. Instead, he would claim to be nothing more than a simple *chossid* of the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

At the large annual gatherings of Chabad, everyone waited for the “roll call” when Rabbi Kotlarsky would

announce all the places in which there are emissaries, new and old, who serve their local Jewish population. Each year it seemed there was another country, another flag, on another continent. His efforts, in fact, encompassed the entire Jewish world. At the end of the list of every place on earth where a Chabad house could be found, he would declare: “A round of applause for the whole world!” And the entire crowd would break into dance.

He suffered from health problems for many years but he kept on going and doing. After all, “we must bring the *Moshiach*.” Recently, his health worsened. Last Shabbat I met — in Jerusalem — a Chabad woman emissary from an American college campus. She said she went to the Kotel and prayed for him. She told me she imagined how, at this very moment, at the height of the war, redemption would come and the famous “roll call” would be declared here since all the Diaspora communities would be gathered together in Jerusalem ...

Condolences to his wife and partner Rivka whose home was always open wide to guests, to Rabbi Mendy, his son and successor, to his daughter Chani Wolowick — my beloved friend — to his large family, and to all the Chabad emissaries.

And condolences also to the vast number of Jews — from Ukrainian Jewish refugees, to Jewish students from London, to Bar Mitzvah boys from Sderot and from Australia — who have no idea that a Jew who cared very much about every one of them passed away.

SIVAN RAHAV-MEIR
Israeli journalist

Over the last two days, all I could think about is Reb Moshe ...

I had a special *yachas* with Reb Moshe. I did not grow up on *shlichus*, or in Crown Heights, so I only got to know him when I was an older *bochur* and then when I went on *shlichus*.

Every time I'd see him he would lovingly ask how I was doing and tell me how he knew my grandparents and how my wife's grandfather stayed in his house etc. He would also always tell me how I was his favorite Gourarie :).

Now I realize that everyone felt they had a close *yachas*. Here are just a few thoughts and memories

I remember the excitement in his voice when he called me to tell me that we got the Rohr building grant.

When I was sitting *shiva* for my father he came to be *menachem avel*. It was a few days before Pesach and he shared with me that he has a *chumrah* to go to the dentist for a cleaning before Pesach.

My wife and I were the campus representatives at a CTeen leadership Shabbaton. On Shabbos afternoon, myself and another *shliach* were schmoozing with Reb Moshe. He shared many interesting stories. At that same Shabbaton his son Mendy made him a plate from the buffet but skipped the french fries. He was not impressed and said, "Mendy! Get some fries—they're vegetables!"

I once went to visit him before Rosh Hashanah. Of course, he first told his son Mendy and his brother, who were there, how I was his favorite Gourarie. Then he asked me how *shlichus* was going. Then he gave me \$20 and told me to get a haircut.

I'll never forget how at the past Kinus, I really wanted to say thank you to him. Security around him was tight as he was not feeling well, so I decided I wanted to catch his eye and just give him a wave. As soon as he saw me he called me over and we exchanged a quick hello. Once again he made me feel how we had this close *yachas*.

Two main lessons come to mind from Reb Moshe.

I've never met someone who genuinely enjoyed seeing others succeed as much as he did. To really *fargin!* And he would do anything he could do to help them succeed

Good old *ahavas Yisroel* and making sure to help people *b'gashmiyus*.

The warmth he showed me as a young *shliach* is something I'll cherish forever and never forget.

May Hashem give *nechamah* to the family and may we all have the true *nechamah* with Moshiach now!!

With a broken heart,

RABBI HIRSCHEL GOURARIE
Chabad Penn State Undergrads



My name is Ivan Silverman and my memories of Rav Moshe ZT”L go back to the early 1970s in Memphis, Tennessee. At that time I was a six- or seven-year-old boy who remembered this larger-than-life rabbi coming into our home several times a year, sitting at our table and speaking with my father, Sam Silverman ZT”L, for hours. He might have even slept over from time to time. What I most remember at that time was the fact that he always looked and dressed like a rabbi, with a black suit and hat, even during the most humid Memphis summers.

Rav Moshe developed a very close relationship with my father who was still relatively new to his journey in *Yiddishkeit*. What they discussed, I don’t know for certain, but I am pretty sure he attempted to help satisfy my father’s thirst for Torah knowledge and *Chassidus*. He facilitated a direct relationship with the Rebbe ZT”L and was the conduit for their many letters back and forth. Rav Moshe brought my father and sister to Crown Heights around Purim in 1976 to bake matzos and to have *Yechidus* with the Rebbe. That meeting lasted 11 minutes and made a lasting impression on my father and sister. What was unknown to us at the time was that my father was about to be diagnosed with Leukemia upon his return from New York.

His illness lasted only three weeks, and he was only in the hospital the last week. Rav Moshe came down on *Chol Hamoed* Pesach with *Matzos Mitzvah* baked by the Rebbe on *Erev* Pesach, Sadly, my father was *niftar* on the second day of *Chol Hamoed*—the 18th of Nissan, 5736. Rav Moshe was with him those last days in the hospital and only years later did he share with me what was discussed. Rav Moshe was moved by the fact that my father told him to tell the Rebbe that he had no complaints against

Hakadosh Baruch Hu and that he lived a good full life and was happy. He was 47 years old.

The relationship, however, continued for many years. Rav Moshe did not stop coming to Memphis and did not stop coming to our home. Now, though, he sat with my mother ZT”L helping her and advising her as she attempted to adjust to life’s challenges on her own and struggled to raise a young son at home. My sister at that time was in New York attending college and was a frequent guest in the Kotlarsky home. “Guest,” however, is not the right word, as she was treated and felt very much like family.

Rav Moshe and I continued our relationship, as I had the good fortune to move to the Five Towns and had the privilege of seeing him whenever he came to visit his children Rabbi Zalman and Chanie Wolowik. I also had the *z’chus* to be *mechabed* him at my wedding as well as at almost all of my children’s *simchas*. It didn’t matter if he was returning from a trip or if he was on his way to the airport: if he could make it, he did.

About 6 years ago when my mother got sick, I went to the *Ohel* one night to daven for her. Upon entering who would I run into but Rav Moshe. I truly felt it was no coincidence, *Hashem* had arranged to put us together at the *Ohel* at that exact time.

May he be a *meilitz yosher* for his family, our family and for all of *Klal Yisroel*.

With deepest feelings of *hakaras hatov*,

IVAN SILVERMAN
Five Towns, NY



RABBI MENACHEM M. SCHNEERSON

Lubavitch
770 Eastern Parkway
Brooklyn, N. Y. 11213

Hyacinth 3-9250

מנחם מענדל שניאורסאהן
ליובאוויטש

770 איסטערן פארקוויי
ברוקלין, נ. י.

By the Grace of G-d
In the Days of Sefira,
5736. Brooklyn, N. Y.

Miss Brocho Silverman
777 Mt. Moriah Rd. Apt. #3
Memphis, Tenn. 38117

Blessing and Greeting:

I was pleased to see you at the Convention of Neshei u'Bnos Chabad here. In this connection and also in reply to your note, I want to convey to you the following thoughts.

It has often been emphasized that sometimes it is difficult for a human being to understand G-d's ways. Actually this is not surprising, because a human being, even the wisest, is limited in all his capacities, as are all created beings. No created being could possibly understand the Creator. On the other hand, it is quite certain, as our Torah declares, that everything has a reason and an explanation, and that G-d is always good and just.

One point should be emphasized here, which you may have heard from thoughts I expressed in letters in similar cases, that the attachment and affection among people, especially children and parents, is not a physical one, that is to say, not for the flesh and blood of the other person, but rather for the spiritual (qualities) of that person. For the physical body is only an outer shell and a medium through which human beings can communicate and reach out to the inner spiritual qualities, and to respond to one another.

It is ^{certain} also follows that the soul of a person cannot be affected by any disease or the death of that outer shell in which the Neshama is housed, which can only bring about the separation of the Neshama from the body, while the Neshama continues its eternal life.

From the above, it is also understandable that the Neshama retains the ability to know what is happening to the members of the family left behind in this world. Indeed, this ability is infinitely greater, since it is no longer limited by the physical limitations of the body. It is of course painful to the surviving members that they cannot have the same immediate responses and relationship with the dear departed soul, but they should know what things in their own conduct and reactions can bring real gratification to the soul, or otherwise.

In light of the above, it should be clear that when the bereaved members exceed the time or manner of mourning than that which is prescribed by the Torah, it does not bring pleasure to the Neshama, which is aware of what is happening, as mentioned above. Those who think that by excessive mourning and grieving they express greater attachment to the departed soul, are obviously mistaken, especially since the Torah explicitly states the

Miss Brocho Silverman

periods of mourning, such as Shiva and Shloshim, etc.

To be sure, it may appear difficult to carry it out in actual practice, but inasmuch as this is the instruction which our Torah, Toras Emes, clearly stipulates, it is certain that with effort it is possible to overcome the emotional difficulty and to continue the daily life in accordance with the Torah's instructions.

In light of what has been said above, it is also clear that the greatest joy that children can bring to the dear departed soul which is in the World of Truth, is to conduct their daily life in accordance with the Torah, including the points which we discussed when we all met here in New York.

At this time, approaching Shovuos, the Festival of Our Receiving the Torah, may G-d grant that you, in the midst of all our people, should receive the Torah in the proper spirit, which will also bring G-d's blessings in all needs, materially and spiritually.

With blessing *M. Silverman*

P.S. Actually, the letter is intended also for your mother, but it is addressed to you in reply to your letter. But I hope you will be able to convey the contents of this letter to your mother, with my good wishes for a long life and good health, and, in the essential aspect, to have true Yiddish Nachas from each and all of her children.

My first audience with the Rebbe, was with my father, in March of 1976. I was a student at Stern College, my father was visiting NY for Purim, and to bake matzos in Crown Heights. Rav Moshe arranged for my father and me to have an audience with the Rebbe together, so we traveled from Manhattan to Crown Heights, and we were both stunned by the large lines of people that wrapped around 770!

All of a sudden, Moshe appeared at the front door and quickly ushered us inside, straight into the private offices of the Rebbe and his secretary. We were given quick instructions, told how to write a "kvitel", how to stand, not to sit, right hand left hand, walk backwards....it was a lot to absorb for us but as we were told it would only last 1-2 minutes, we were somewhat relieved that we could

handle that! But it wasn't 1 or 2 minutes inside with the Rebbe...according to Moshe (who was timing it!) it was a full 11 minutes! My father and I looked at each other as we exited, and both of us were speechless. That meeting elevated our *Emunah* and *bitachon* to another level.

This audience with my father that Rav Moshe arranged, was approximately 1 month before my father was *niftar* on the 4th day of Pesach, as he was immediately diagnosed with leukemia upon his return from NY. I'm not sure I ever thanked Moshe properly for arranging that visit... but I just hope he knew how meaningful it was for us.

BRENDA 'BROCHA'
(SILVERMAN) PRITZKER
Jerusalem



I want to say that I don't have a miracle story with Reb Moshe. He didn't bail me out of jail or help me purchase a Chabad house ...

Reb Moshe would join us in the "Western Region" for a Shabbos *kinus* every year. You could tell he had a special connection with our region. And that Shabbos was always special.

Hearing from him how much he traveled made me tired just thinking about the flights.

But at the same time, hearing it made my *shlichus* feel more real. When he spoke at the small *kinus* it felt like he just walked out of the Rebbe's office with a *tzetel* in hand, and packed his bags and flew to Kansas or Idaho to join us for a *kinus*. He shared a story of coming back from some country etc. It felt like the trip was part of another *maaneh* he got from the Rebbe pre-Gimmel Tammuz; the marching orders the Rebbe gave him.

When he spoke, the lines drawn between post-Gimmel Tammuz and pre-Gimmel Tammuz were blurred. The Rebbe was alive. He was still holding the *tzetel* the Rebbe gave him. He JUST walked out of the Rebbe's room and was on his way to help the next Shliach. And for us young Shlichim, he blurred the line. He allowed us to feel *daas tachton* how our *shlichus* is DIRECT and PURE straight from the Rebbe's mouth. He literally just walked out of the Rebbe's room with a directive to bring *chizuk* to the *shluchim* attending the *Kinus Hashluchim* in Arizona. How could one not feel that strong connection to the Rebbe?

Reb Moshe cared for all the Shluchim. But for post-Gimmel Tammuz *shluchim*, he also made our *shlichus* more pure

RABBI SHLOMY LEVERTOV
Chabad of Paradise Valley



I am also having trouble putting into words what Rabbi Kotlarsky has meant for all of us *shluchim*. Although I cannot claim a very close relationship, I am amazed that he knew everyone by first name. His signature humor, unmatched passion, and dedication will be so greatly missed.

Above all, his deep caring was always self-evident to me, inquiring about the wellbeing of our *shlichus* at every campus *kinus* and JLI retreat. Some 15 years ago when he was a keynote speaker for a large Gimmel Tammuz *farbrengen*, our baby was at a nearby hospital with

extremely high bilirubin. He stopped the entire gathering to say Tehillim for the baby, and in the years since then often inquired about his health. B"H the baby is now a 6'2" *bochur* turning 15 next week ...

We will try to make him proud through our *peulos*, and hopefully finish the job of bringing Moshiach!

RABBI DOVID & ELISA GUREVICH
Chabad at UCLA Jewish student center

Dear Rabbi Kotlarsky ז"ל ,

I'm not one to publicly express personal sentiments & reflections, but as I sit here on the plane returning home from your funeral, I look for a fitting expression for my overflowing mind and heart.

I hope these words that "the living can take to heart" (Ecclesiastes 7:2) can serve this purpose and bring an עלייה (elevation) to your soul.

As one who grew up in your home (my Bar Mitzvah reception was hosted in your dining room), much of what I am today is a reflection of the education I gleaned from you and your wife — may she live and be well, until 120.

Most glaringly for me as a child was your disregard for personal lavishness and luxury. For most of my childhood and early adulthood your home was, quite literally, a standing miracle (if you were there, you know I'm not exaggerating). The contrast of your humble home standing on its last legs with its rich overflowing hospitality and warmth was one of life's beauties.

Even when you redid your home, the paint barely had time to dry before it became a shul and an open house for a never-ending stream of guests — world Jewish leaders, influential personalities, and simpletons alike.

You and your family taught me, by example, to host as many people as your home can handle (maybe more than that, too) and to feed your guests graciously and generously, irrespective of cost, time, or energy.

And your office? The office of Chabad's global ambassador and one the world's most influential Jewish figures? An unimposing room, faded carpet, and meager shelving; not a chamber that echoed stature and authority.

When fellow *shluchim* would ask me how they can get a hold of you, I would share your cell number. Their befuddlement was always the same: "you mean he just gives out his cell number, I call, and he'll answer?!"

You also taught me the value of sharing in the joy of others. You made it your business to be at personal *simchas* and you genuinely appreciated others who came to share in your joy. In fact, just a few months ago as your illness was raging and your body was weakening, you flew to Northern California to be at our son's bris (a visit we'll always treasure).

As my father became ill at a young age, you became a father figure to our family. You convinced me to start dating and guided me along my wedding and marriage. Through your efforts, my father got to meet Fruma and walk me to the *chuppah* (he passed away two months later).





You showed me what pastoral care looks like: Being at my father's bedside each hospital stay, foregoing your attendance at conferences and events just in order to be there for our family, and being an anchor for my mother and my siblings. You took charge after my father's passing and held our hands for these past 20 years.

But why? Why did you take our family, the family of *shluchim*, and countless others under your wings?

Yes, it was your generous spirit, effervescent personality, charisma, and good heart. But it was more than that. Your motivation was the greatest legacy and lesson you left for me.

You did it because of your passionate devotion to your Rebbe. In our case, my father treated the Rebbe as his physician. And you — a devotee of the Rebbe — were going to repay that care to my father and our family.

Your life's work involved navigating complex and delicate situations, developing relationships for Chabad, and raising mega-dollars. But when it came to the Rebbe, there were no nuances, compromises, hesitations, or smoothing things over. There was only: these are the Rebbe's marching orders. My job is to bring him satisfaction and fulfill the *shlichus* (mission).

That is what motivated you to take care of me, to take care of the *shluchim*, to put your heart and soul into the

Kinus, and to be the vehicle through which the Rebbe's expansive vision has come to fruition around the globe.

Watching you, a father figure to me, suffering from the very same illness as my own father, made the bitterness of exile more palpable these past many months.

When I visited you in the hospital two weeks ago on my father's 20th *yahrtzeit* and shared some successes in our *shlichus*, you mustered the strength to give me that big encouraging "thumbs up" to keep going. Yes, as you requested from us *shluchim* in your last will & testament, I will, please G-d, increase my efforts to fulfill my *shlichus* and saturate the world with more *mitzvos*.

And we ask you, Rabbi Kotlarsky: as you ascend on High reporting back to headquarters, as you reunite with our dear Rebbe, please pound on the doors of the heavenly chambers with all your might and plead before G-d Almighty that He, once and for all, end this long bitter exile; end all pain and suffering and reunite us all once again back down here on this earth with *משיח צדקנו* and the final Redemption.

With eternal thanks and heartfelt gratitude,

RABBI RALEIGH RESNICK
Chabad Tri Valley, CA

To my dear *talmidim*, friends, and colleagues; Reb Mendy, Sruly and Dovid שירוי

Together with all of the *shluchim*, *chassidim*, and indeed *klal Yisroel* as a whole, I too am brokenhearted by the passing of your truly great father, the beloved and unforgettable Reb Moishe a”h.

Without a doubt, volumes will be written about your father’s complete dedication and devotion to the Rebbe, his *shlichus* and his *shluchim*; his unparalleled worldwide contributions in such a vast number of areas and initiatives, as well as his legendary care, love, and concern for the individual, wherever they may be.

However, I’d like to zoom in to one particular area; the area that connected me to him, through you; I was a teacher to his children, and later to his *ainiklach*.

Over the years here in Chicago, I’ve taught many hundreds of students. Many of whom had very busy parents. Your father, of course, was at least as busy as any other parent I knew; he was famously involved with activities going on in every corner of the globe!

Yet he always had all the time necessary for each of you. He would never miss a ‘Father and Son Shabbos,’ even if it meant rescheduling international trips. He would sometimes arrive in Chicago from some distant country, only to turn around after Shabbos and head to another, but missing the special Shabbos with his son just wasn’t an option!

He would inquire about each of you in detail. He would repeat to me things that you shared with him from our *shiurim* and *farbrengens*, and he took great pride in your accomplishments as fine *chassidische bachurim*.

When I saw him last this past Yud Alef Nissan, as he lay in his bed in such a terrible situation, he inquired in detail about his *ainiklach* who are currently in Yeshiva (right now there are six, I believe). After asking about the ones who are in my class, he wanted to know how the ones in the younger classes are doing as well.

He showed tremendous appreciation to the teachers. All the years, whenever and wherever I would see him, whether I was teaching a son at that time or not, he expressed that sincere appreciation loudly and clearly.

He not only showed appreciation, he also showed true respect. When I was teaching you, Mendy, I was all of twenty-four and twenty-five years old. Many a father who was twice my age let me know it in one way or another (rightfully or not), but never your father; we were his son’s teachers, to be respected and appreciated.

(I have no doubt that this contributed to the special relationship and place I have in my heart for his sons and *ainiklach* who learned and continue to learn in our Yeshiva.)

What a powerful testament to his unique *midos* and values. More importantly perhaps: what a powerful model and lesson for all of us parents to look up to and try and emulate!

•

I’ve heard it said that when the generals are called back from the front, it’s a sign that the war is about to be over.

Without any question or doubt, your father was – and still is – a general in the Rebbe’s army. We all hope and *daven* that his being called back home, is merely a sign of just that; that his extraordinary efforts have been crowned with success, and we’re about to see the final victory we’re all so impatiently waiting for.

When you’ll be reunited with your father, with his full good old vigor and strength, as we’ll all march out of Galus once and forever, with our beloved Rebbe leading the way, as all tears will be forever dried and replaced by unlimited and unending *simcha*! May it be today!

Sincerely and with great love,

RABBI ELI NOSON SILBERBERG

Rosh Yeshivah

Yeshivahs Ohr Elchonon Chicago

I'm on my way to New York and will see you later. Almost impossible to articulate anything at the moment.

It's difficult to put into words or even thoughts what we're all feeling now.

No one showed love the way your father did, or care, or vision, or personality, complete commitment to the *Meshaleach*.

I'm thinking about the tough times he was there helping ...

... the good times he was there celebrating ...

... the doubtful times he was there encouraging, ("Bentzi, go for it, but bigger!") ...

... the run-of-the-mill times he was there inspiring and entertaining (a lot of that) ...

Whatever it was, he was there. Especially when no one else was.

His huge *neshama* and life won't fit into words or categories.

A *neshama* that somehow, in his way, I know he will still be there.

RABBI BENZI SUDAK
Hampstead Garden Suburb





Dear שפחת קאטלארסקי שיחיו .

I share in your pain over the loss of your beloved husband, father, and grandfather. This loss is profound not only for Lubavitch but for the entire world.

Reb Moshe was like a father to me. He treated me with such kindness and friendship, always caring deeply for us.

Just to share a few memories, though they only scratch the surface of how much he cared: when my wife was giving birth in a third-world country and complications arose, Reb Moshe went to the *Ohel* to pray on our behalf.

When we moved to Jamaica, I spent time in his office, soaking in his wisdom. I vividly remember him saying, "The Rebbe appointed me to open *moisdos*, not the opposite. Are you ready for this challenge?" His words still resonate with me.

He was always there for us. Every time I called, he picked up the phone. If he couldn't talk, he would say, "I'll call you back, Yanky." And he always did.

When an earthquake struck Jamaica in *Shevat* 2019, Reb Moshe was the first to call and check on us, making sure we were safe.

One of the highlights of my life was spending time with him at the Caribbean *Kinusim*. We *farbrenge*d and shared deep conversations, creating memories I will cherish forever.

Reb Moshe visited our Chabad House twice, each time leaving a lasting impact. Our beautiful Chabad House stands today, thanks to his significant support in securing funding.

Reb Moshe embodied the Rebbe's teachings. He was a true soldier of the Rebbe, often reminding us at the *Kinus* to write to the Rebbe not just to kvetch but to share good news with the words *הנני רוצה לבשר*. He encouraged us to visit the Rebbe monthly, just like in the good old days.

He went above and beyond for us. During Chanukah this year, he *Shleped* to attend my son's bris and give the Rebbe's blessing.

Our last conversation was just three weeks ago, discussing plans for this year's family Caribbean *Kinus*. Despite the weakness in his voice, he said, "Yanky, call me tomorrow." I hesitated to call back, realizing how weak he sounded, but I knew how much he wanted it to happen. We will make it happen in his honor. Reb Moshe, Happy Birthday!

Thank you for always being there for us. Thank you for embodying the Rebbe's spirit and for your unwavering dedication to our *shlichus*. We will never forget you. Your presence will be tremendously missed. Who can replace a dedicated *chasid* like you, whose only desire was to make the Rebbe proud!!! Your loss is deeply felt, and our hearts are heavy with grief.

May *Hashem* comfort the whole family amongst his extended family *עפר שוכני עפר* ורננו שוכני עפר ומלכינו בראשינו.

RABBI YAAKOV & MUSHKEE
RASKIN
Chabad of Jamaica

My friendship with Moshe began sometime in the early 1970's. I had assumed the rabbinic pulpit at Congregation Beth Israel in New Orleans, LA after having served as the *rav* in Oshawa, Ontario. One day, I received a call from Moshe who introduced himself as a Chabad representative and asked if I would be willing to help him set up the first Chabad House in New Orleans. As a young *rav* in his 20's, I did not know much about Chabad and its global operations, but Moshe sounded so friendly and warm over the phone that I simply couldn't refuse.

Well, Moshe came down and stayed with our family. I introduced him to some of my *ba'alei batim* and soon the Chabad House was born. Rabbi Zelig Rivkin became the first *shaliach*, and he and I immediately became good friends, working together on many projects in the community. Most importantly, though, from that initial contact, my friendship with Moshe continued and grew.

Moshe and I would often speak, over the phone, about all sorts of things, and whenever I visited New York, Moshe always was quick to extend a warm invitation to come to his home for dinner, and, of course, to visit 770. I can't remember how many times I enjoyed the warm hospitality of Moshe and *tbl"t*, his *eshes chayil*, Rivka.

One of my more memorable experiences was when Moshe introduced me to the revered *mara d'asra* of Chabad, Rav Zalman Dworkin, *zt"l*. Whenever I was in the neighborhood, I would spend time with this eminent *talmid chacham* and *tzadik* who always graciously gave me the time to answer my many *halachic shailos* and gifted me with much needed counsel. Needless to say, Moshe would also invite me to daven *Mincha* with the Rebbe, *zt"l*, and I received, like countless others, the precious dollar bill.

On the Rebbe's 25th *Farbrengin*, Moshe invited me to attend. As I had never attended a *farbrengin* before, Moshe had me seated right up front close to the dais and asked one of his *shelichim* to explain the proceedings. Moshe, for his part, stood with the other Chabad dignitaries on the far-left wall. What made that evening an unforgettable event for me was this unexpected and special moment:

As the evening events and *niggunim* progressed, I noticed that, in between the songs, different people would line up at the dais to make a toast to the Rebbe. When I inquired as to the reason, I was told that representatives from every state in the US wished to congratulate the Rebbe on this his 25th anniversary upon assuming the role of Rebbe of Chabad. I soon realized that I was probably the



only person there from the State of Louisiana and asked whether I could also give greeting to the Rebbe from that state. I was told I could not because one had to be on a select list, chosen in advance for that privilege and I wasn't on the list. Well, I was not to be deterred. I began to make hand motions to Moshe, who, as I mentioned, was on the other side of the Hall. Before I knew it, with Moshe's quick wave of hand, I was suddenly being shoved under the dais table and found myself standing last behind the famous novelist, Herman Wouk, *zt"l*.

To say the least, I was quite nervous, repeating to myself, again and again, what I would say to the Rebbe. When my turn came, no one knew who I was, as I wasn't on any list. I glanced at Moshe and indicated with some crude gestures that I wanted to greet the Rebbe as well. And then, once again, Moshe, with some incredible hand signals, motioned to Rabbi Chodokov, *zt"l* and I was immediately approved. What a singular opportunity it was for me to stand in front of the great Rebbe and offer a toast to him on behalf of the State of Louisiana. The Rebbe even gave me a *bracha*. Moshe was even able to obtain a picture of me with the Rebbe which friends find truly amazing. And all – because Moshe remembered and befriended a simple Jew.

In 1977, I was in a difficult state in the wake of my first wife having left both me and our children. I felt devastated and was seriously depressed. Enter Moshe, who spoke with me many times, all the while encouraging and lifting my spirits. I remember, on one occasion, when I was feeling particularly sorry for myself and quite down, Moshe sensed my feelings of inferiority and gave me a loving rebuke that I have never forgotten. He said something to the effect. "Do you think I would be spending so much time talking with you if I thought you were a 'nothing'!" Well, that "scolding" was among the factors that helped me begin to make the climb back up from the dark basement of feeling crushed to a new life of bright possibilities.

A year later, a former rebbe of mine suggested that I date a young woman, who was eventually to become my wife. When I attempted to find her number in the phone directly, there were too many numbers with her last name and – call after call, I was unable to connect to

the young lady. In desperation, I called Moshe and asked him if he could help me; did he have any suggestions, as I was about to give up. He said, "Just try one more name." Well, that next number I tried "hit the jackpot." In short, had I not called Moshe and had he not encouraged me to make that one extra phone call, I'm not sure I would have ever met my wife. And this marriage, *b"n*, continues now, almost 46 years later and counting. Again, all because, at another critical moment in my life - Moshe was there!

At our wedding, Moshe, of course, was present and read a special letter from the Rebbe under the *chupah* along with Rav Soloveitchik, *zt"l*, who was the *mesader kiddushin*. Subsequently, Moshe and his *eishes chayil*, Rivka, made one of our *sheva berachos* at their home.

Summing up, to say that Moshe made an enormous and critical difference in my life would be a huge understatement. The ripple-effect his influence has had on my life: my self-confidence, my warm association with Chabad, my second marriage and entire family and more - all the good things that have come from our friendship, accrue to Moshe's everlasting merit.

I'm sure I am echoing the thousands upon thousands who have also undoubtedly been powerfully impacted by Moshe's extraordinary personality, and have benefited enormously from his wise counsel and unselfish *chesed*. I am just one, and I will forever be grateful to *HaShem* for His generous *hashgacha* in arranging the events of my life so that I was able to meet and earn the respect and affection of this one outstanding, brilliant and wonderful *tzadik*, Rabbi Moshe Kotlarsky, *zt"l*, my friend who I will cherish evermore and always!

יהי זכרונו ברוך

JEFFREY BIENENFELD
Jerusalem



At the wedding of Daniel Eleff, November 2008, Overland Park, Kansas

Last week, I went to Crown Heights with my mother and grandfather, along with thousands of others to pay our final respects to a great man, Rabbi Moshe Kotlarsky. He passed away just shy of his 75th birthday in New York.

A visionary, he worked tirelessly for decades to bring the Lubavitcher Rebbe's vision to fruition. He constantly traveled the globe to support the Rebbe's *Shluchim*, and was beloved by thousands, who could each write their own book about him. Even in his final years when he battled a lengthy illness, he was still busy with his mission and visited *Shluchim* and participated in regional gatherings worldwide.

The proof is in the pudding. Under his direction as *Shliach* of the Rebbe, the global network of Chabad centers has exploded to over 5,000. It's no exaggeration to say that millions of Jews have been able to learn more Torah and do more *Mitzvos* thanks to his efforts to do everything to bring *Moshiach*. He personified the type of *Chossid* that the Rebbe would be proud of. He never settled for what was accomplished but looked at how much more work there was to do.

The fact that G-d didn't feel the world was ready for *Moshiach* pained him personally. During his final illness, he felt like a reason for getting sick was from

negative forces that wished to counter his push for the OneMitzvah campaign. If it was too successful in getting Jews to do more *mitzvos*, *Moshiach* would have to come. His final wish was for people to sign up there to share *mitzvos*, for Bar Mitzvah *bochurim* to inspire classmates to do more good deeds, and that people should inspire others to do the same.

He was the dedicated organizer and emcee of the annual Kinus Hashluchim, which hosts thousands of *Shluchim* from around the world. His annual roll call of *Shluchim* before a call for spontaneous dancing was legendary.

And his impact on the world was massive:

The stories about him are no less legendary.

My family was no exception and our story is forever linked with Rabbi Kotlarsky as well.

My maternal grandparents, Ted and Vicky Cohn, may they live and be well, were not religious when they first met 23-year-old Rabbi Kotlarsky. Along with my Bubby's siblings, they were introduced to Chabad in Cleveland and went on an annual community trip to Crown Heights for Simchas Torah from 1972 through 1979. My grandparents' family was matched up to stay with Rabbi Kotlarsky, who was married to Cleveland native Rivka

Kazen. Their family of 5 crammed into Rabbi Kotlarsky's 2 bedroom apartment at 888 Montgomery St.

The philosophy of Chabad is that whenever you go somewhere, you aren't going there on your own volition. You are being directed by G-d himself to go there to fulfill the purpose of the world's creation. It's a lesson I drove home when our DansDeals kosher cruise to Antarctica was temporarily diverted to the remote Falkland Islands. There is a purpose to this, so make a *brocha*, say over some Torah, and let's elevate this corner of the Earth. In the end, the DansDeals reader who won a free cruise in a charity auction wound up printing the Tanya there for the first time.

Those trips were fateful indeed.

Within just a couple of months of their first trip to Rabbi Kotlarsky's apartment, they would start keeping kosher and Shabbos. My grandparents attribute their decision to become religious in their 30s to Rabbi Kotlarsky, without which I wouldn't be here today. His warm, down to Earth approach to Judaism, mixed with a very healthy dose of good humor, sold them on taking the leap of faith.

The first joke he remembers Rabbi Kotlarsky telling him? G-d told Moses to go forth, but he wound up placing fifth and G-d lost two bucks.

With the Rebbe's blessings, they wound up going into business and traveled together, with the business cards showing Mo Kotlarsky and Ted Cohn as partners.

In July 1973, my mother was going to fly by herself to Boston and then Camp Emunah as an 11 year old. The day before her flight, Delta flight 723 crashed attempting to land there, killing 88 passengers. My grandfather called Rabbi Kotlarsky for the Rebbe's advice about her flight and medical issues that my grandmother was having at the time.

Rabbi Kotlarsky typed up the note below and the Rebbe responded by circling the word that she was scared, and answering that there was nothing to fear at all. The Rebbe also noted in response to my grandmother's problems, they should keep strictly kosher. Rabbi Kotlarsky said that meant to keep things like *Bishul Yisroel*, and my grandmother recovered from the issues she was having.

My Aunt in Boston said that it was a stormy day, but suddenly the sky cleared when her plane landed at Logan Airport, before returning to heavy storms afterward.

When Rabbi Kotlarsky started working for the Rebbe's office, Rabbi Hodakov told him that he would get a small salary, but that he could collect a commission on funds raised, as is traditional for anyone raising funds. He refused to take a cent from funds raised, feeling that it



Kabalas ponim for Daniel's parents in Beachwood, OH, December 1983

was wrong to take away money that was intended for the Rebbe or the *Shluchim*.

In the end, he raised billions of dollars for Chabad and *Shluchim* worldwide, without taking any commission on those donations. When donors offered to help fix up his house, he refused to accept any help, only taking out another mortgage once he started collecting social security income. While others who raised those kinds of funds would be living quite the lifestyle, he lived modestly and Rabbi Kotlarsky's kids used his final paycheck to cover his burial expenses. While he lamented not being able to leave his 9 kids with much, he said that he was leaving them each other.

He always refused to accept any money from my grandfather, only offering to pass it on to the Rebbe. That distressed him, so he went into Lowen's Bake Shop and secretly paid off Rabbi Kotlarsky's account there.

Rabbi Kotlarsky made a party for one of my Uncles' Bar Mitzvahs in 1977 in his apartment, and when another uncle wasn't eating, made sure to let him know that if he didn't eat, he would only get 1 dessert. Later that year they moved to 398 Crown St and my mother stayed with the family for the year when she went to Bais Rivkah High School.

He also helped my grandparents' family receive several private audiences (*yechidus*) with the Rebbe, and they have several miraculous stories that came out of that connection with the Rebbe.

My grandfather relates how impressed he was when Rabbi Kotlarsky was held up in Peru at gunpoint and had his *tefilin* stolen, mistaken for a jewelry bag. Nobody in Peru had a pair of *Rabbeinu Tam tefilin* at the time, so he rushed to buy and take a flight to another country so that he wouldn't miss a day of wearing them.

My grandparents went with the Kotlarskys one *Motzei Shabbos* on the Staten Island Ferry (hey, it's cheap entertainment!) when a young man's *yarmulka* blew into the water. Rabbi Kotlarsky didn't hesitate to reach under his hat and give him his *yarmulka*, despite his wife mentioning to him that he was giving away his favorite and hard to find *yarmulka*.

As a *bochur*, I had the opportunity to stay at Rabbi Kotlarsky's house and *shmooze* with him many times. I was also roommates with his son Sruli in LA's Yeshiva Ohr Elchonon Chabad.

He also made a surprise Bar Mitzvah party for JJ when he came to Crown Heights to receive his first aliya in the Rebbe's office. At his house for the Friday night meal when JJ turned 13, he invited JJ's camp counselors and friends to celebrate with him.

When my parents were engaged, Rabbi Kotlarsky gave my father insider tips so that he would be able to *daven* from the Rebbe's *siddur*. The Rebbe also put his hands on my father's head to give him a *brocha*, something that Rabbi Kotlarsky mentioned he hadn't seen him do before.

Rabbi Kotlarsky was Mesader Kiddushin at my parents' and my own wedding. In subsequent years, he would check in on our marriage, saying he always *davened* that the people he married off would have *Shalom Bayis* and stay together.

As for the Curaçao story, my shul brought out Rabbi Shais Taub to *farbreng* in Cleveland last year, and he spoke about Rabbi Kotlarsky's influence on him moving to Five Towns, and then the Rebbe's and Rabbi Kotlarsky's hand in his son getting engaged to the granddaughter of the Jew in Curacao.

The story didn't end there.

Rabbi Taub asked if we would also fly a Trumpet player, Mike Bogart, to Cleveland, which I happily agreed to. Mike spoke about recently leaving his band, the Tower of Power, as he was becoming religious and didn't want to perform on Shabbos any longer. He went to the *Ohel* to daven by the Rebbe, pray for a *shidduch*, and ask for the strength to leave the band, and received a quick answer when he found a wedding invitation with a trumpet on it. An attendee at the Cleveland *farbrengen* loved his story and suggested a *shidduch* for him. It worked out and they got married several months later! At the wedding was a local *shliach*, whose sister was the *kallah* from the wedding invitation he found when *davening* at the *Ohel*...truly *hashgocha protis*.



As Rabbi Taub explained the *Chasidus* behind *Adam Kadmon* in the *Hayom Yom* for the 16th of Elul in the video above, when you do a favor to another, you are doing a favor to all of their progeny until the end of all generations.

People who think like that will never stop working to do a favor for another, and that was how the Rebbe, and his *shliach*, Rabbi Kotlarsky operated.

After the brutal murder of the Holtzbergs, *Shluchim* to Mumbai, in the 2008 terror attack, Rabbi Kotlarsky urged everyone to take strength and make the world a brighter place with torches of goodness and kindness.

Rabbi Kotlarsky often related how it's our job to bring Jews closer to Judaism, so that Shabbos doesn't become Saturday or the weekend. But thanks to him, the opposite happened in my family and countless other families.

Despite being incredibly busy, somehow everyone felt like they were Rabbi Kotlarsky's best friend. My

grandfather spoke with him every few weeks for decades, until recently when it became too difficult for him to talk on the phone.

Rabbi Kotlarsky exemplified what it means to love and care about his fellow Jews and we can all take a lesson from that.

Want to participate in his legacy? He founded OneMitzvah 2 years ago. You can enroll at oneMitzvah.org to do a mitzvah in his honor.

It was heartwarming to see so many thousands participate in paying their final respects. But C.D.S.G. (*Chasidim* don't say goodbye). We know that we'll see each other again very soon.

DANIEL ELEFF

*Founder of Dans Deals
Cleveland, Ohio*



ONE MITZVAH IS NOT A CAMPAIGN

it's a platform for campaigns

30 ready-to-go Mitzvah campaign
templates for every life cycle event.

[ONEMITZVAH.ORG](https://onemitzvah.org)

THE
MOSHIACH
OFFICE

