Light in the Darkness

by

Rabbi Benjamin E. Gorodetzky

60 Years of Activity in Russia and Throughout the World.

SHENGOLD PUBLISHERS, INC.
NEW YORK

Digitized by Project Zikaron
Touro University-NY Libraries
www.zikaron.tourolib.org
2024

Digitized by Project Zikaron
Touro University-NY Libraries
www.zikaron.tourolib.org
2024

Translated from the Hebrew
by
Mordecai Schreiber

ISBN 0-88400-120-2
Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 85-63010
Copyright © 1986 by Benjamin Gorodetzky

All rights reserved

Published by Shengold Publishers, Inc.
23 W. 45th St., New York, N.Y. 10036

Printed in the United States of America

Light in the Darkness

28257

Contents

Introduction 11

1 The Road to Lubavitch-Chabad 15

History of the Movement / Life in Bobruysk / Family Beginnings / The Bolshevik Rovultion / The Lubavitch Yeshiva / My Wedding / Rabbi of Kiev / Founding Talmud Torahs and Yeshivos

2 The First Arrest 37

Sudden Visit by NKVD at Midnight / Thorough Searching / Behind Bars / Quick Release / The Merit of an Apostate Jew / The Arrest and Release of Our Rabbi, Rest His Soul

3 The Rabbinical Gathering—"Then They Gathered" 46

Organizing the Rabbinical Gathering in 5688 (1928) / Founding Tahoro-Mikveh in Haronosteipla / My Arrest Because of the Mikveh / The Arrest of My Father-in-Law and His Exile to Siberia for Three Years

4 The Rabbis Sign a Declaration 51

The Rabbis in Russia without Means of Subsistence / Soviet Authorities Object to the Lubavitcher Rebbe's Leadership / Mass Petition of Russian Rabbis in Behalf of the Rebbe / Difficulties in Helping the Rabbis / My Appointment as Financial Director

5 Trial and Tribulations 54

Transfer to Moscow / Sudden Arrest on the Train / Harsh Jail Conditions / Painful Investigation / Transfer to Another Jail / First News from the Family / News of My Oldest Daughter's Birth / Three Years of Prison and Exile in the North

6 Exile 64

In a Concentration Camp where Hundreds of Thousands Were Liquidated / Transfer to Kotlas / With the Jewish Commander in All the Concentration Camps / Together with Christian Priests / The Ship leaves on the Sabbath and Leaves Me All Alone

7 At Death's Door **69**

The Ship Arrives in Kotlas / Difficulties in Finding a Dwelling / Meeting with Two Jews / A Dying Man / "Last" Meeting / The Situation Improves / One Lamb among Many Wolves

8 The Escape **74**

The Landlord Tries to Murder Me / Barefoot and Sick out in the Streets / Searching for New Dwelling / The Rabbi Suggests Escape / My Mother-in-law's Visit / The Escape from Kotlas to Moscow / Guard Job in Korsk / The NKVD follows Me / The Escape to Voronish

9 Voronish—A Military City **82**

The Danger of Continuing to Live There / The Rebbe's Letter the Day before the War Broke Out / My Employer's Denunciation Because I Refused to Work on the Sabbath / A "Troika" of Judges / I Am Acquitted / Leaving the City with Last Group of Officers

10 Escape to Samarkand Because of the War **85**

The Terrible Condition of the Jews in Samarkand / Starting a Charity Fund / Mikveh Renovation and Expansion / Founding Talmud Torah, Yeshiva and Burial Society / Things Begin to Improve

11 Leaving Russia **88**

Meeting of Our Elders Regarding Leaving Russia / Uncertainty about Our Rabbi's Opinion / A Letter from America Causing Surprise and Consternation / More Meetings about the Rabbi's Opinion on the Matter of Leaving / Special Emissary Goes to Moscow to Find Out about Possibility of Travelling out of Poland / Preparations for the Journey

12 The Road to Freedom **96**

Escape from Samarkland One Hour before the NKVD Shows up / Arrested in the Street with Large Sums in My Pocket / Release after Bribing NKVD Agent / Expelled from Airplane Ramp / Arrival in Moscow after Rocky Trip / Arrival in Cracow and First Letter from Our Rabbi in the Free Zone / Rebbe Agrees to Chassidim's Departure from Russia / Difficulties with the Rescue Committee / Czech Ambassador Smuggles Refugees / Rescue Person Carries Me on His Shoulders Across River / Twelve Tammuz Rescue Holiday in Free Tsheshin

13 Paris **109**

Arrival in Paris / The Refugees' Hard Life in Paris / First Contacts with the Joint / Many Requests for Visas / The Rebbe Charges Me with Forming a Refugee Bureau / Visit to Germany / Meeting with Chabad Refugees in Paking

14 Reunion with the Rebbe **116**

First Reunion after Twenty Years of Separation / Meeting My Relatives in Cherbourg on Trip to Europe and Germany / Visit to Germany with RaShaG / Comely Reception for the RaShaG Shalita

15 Activities of the Refugee Bureau **125**

Areas of Activity of the Refugee Aid Bureau: Founding Schools for Boys and Girls, Arranging Visas, Contacts with Institutions and Organizations, Providing Kosher Food, Matzos. Apartments, Employment for the Masses, Kosher Meat, Kosher Butchers and Mashgichim, Buying and Distributing Sefer Torahs and Religious Objects / The Bureau as Central Address for all of Europe / Special Activity in Refugee Camps Preparing for Aliyah to the Holy Land / Educational Work with Refugee Children

16 Morocco **165**

The Rebbe Orders Educational Work in Morocco / Founding Talmud Torahs and Yeshivos, Girls' Schools and Women's Teachers' School / School for Scribes in Casablanca / Meknes / Safaro / Agadir, and Various Towns and Villages

17 Tunisia **189**

Many Difficulties in Finding Adequate Educational Facilities / The Xenophobia of the Local People / Starting Talmud Torahs and Yeshivos for Men and School for Women / Full Recognition by the JDC

18 Madrid-Copenhagen-Istanbul-France-Australia **200**

Small Meeting in Madrid for Providing Kosher Food / Opening a Kosher Restaurant / Place of Study and Torah Lessons / Head of Copenhagen Jewry Requests a Yeshiva / Meetings and Consultations / First Yeshiva in Scandinavia / Head of Istanbul Jewry Requests Yeshiva / Founding a Large Yeshiva / Kindergartens, Schools and Other Institutions in Seven Large Cities of France / Organizing a Group of Chassidim in Australia / JDC Sponsors the Group / Establishing a Model Community in Australia

19 Rescuing Rumanian Jewry **217**

Appeal to Rescue Rumanian Jewry after Serious Failure of Previous Attempts / Request by Admor of Skolen to Contact the JDC / JDC Approves Large Budget / Meetings with the Activists in London / The Organizer Asks a Fortune / All Prisoners in Rumanian Jails Are Released

20 The Land of Israel **226**

A Large Group of Chassidim Settles in the Holy Land / The Rebbe Suggests I Represent Him in Israel As Well / Vocational School and Print Shop in Kfar Chabad / Forming Yeshivos, Housing Projects, Schools / The JDC Helps the Institutions

21 The JDC **253**

The Great Help in Russia / My Personal Contact with the JDC Leaders and Workers in Every Country / Special Thanks to the Leaders and Directors

22 My Family **268**

Introduction

I must confess that I am weighed down by guilt because I did not listen to my friends and colleagues who, since I came out of the Vale of Tears in 1946, kept urging me to put down on paper all that befell me in that country, for the sake of future generations.

Now that it has been suggested to me to publish my diary, I hope it is willed by the Almighty. Our holy Rabbis have always maintained that we ought to record the events of the past.

My diary consists of two parts: the first includes the events that took place in that country, and the second contains some of the activities I was fortunate to take part in in the lands of freedom, through the European Bureau for Refugee Aid, founded by our Rabbi Joseph Isaac Schneersohn of blessed and sainted memory, who put me in charge of that office, which still operates to this day under the leadership and instructions of our Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson Shalita.

In the well-known words of our Rabbi the Tzemach Tzedek, may his merit protect us, the printed word is "unto all generations." Indeed these lines deserve to be put down in print for many generations. With G-d's help they will be of profit to many, especially to the young, who will discover the hand of G-d in helping his oppressed people during a time of great upheaval, through the merit of the prophets his servants, and through the merit of many people.

The following pages are but a small portion of all that we, the Chassidim of Chabad, went through in the lands of our affliction. In order not to delay the publication of this book, I chose to be brief. I hope more can be added with G-d's help, as I pray to Him for length of

days from His beneficent abundance.

The documents I have included in the book represent a fraction of my archives. There are many more which for good reasons I prefer not to publish at this time.

Some people may take exception to the fact that I have only mentioned the Lubavitch Chassidim in my memoirs. No doubt, those were the main sufferers in the relentless struggle conducted with total self-sacrifice, and we must bow our heads before those rare souls who sacrificed everything at the instructions of our great Rabbi, especially those who were exiled to distant concentration camps, and who perished because of severe torture, in the cold of winter and the scorching sun of summer, and have disappeared without a trace. May their pure memory be blessed!

Since I have chosen to be brief in my remarks, some well-known Torah and Chassidus personalities who are revered by many have not been addressed by their proper titles, and I would like to ask their forgiveness.

* * *

It is my duty to emphasize that my wife and children, may G-d give them good health and length of days, were of great help to me during all the years of my sacred activities.

It is important to note that for years I was away from home, travelling constantly, returning home only twice a year—a few days before Pesach and a few days before Sukkos, and immediately after the holiday I would pack my suitcase and continue my endless wanderings. In Europe alone I spent ten months out of the year, while my young wife stayed home alone, year after year raising our small children, allowing me to engage in the sacred work.

No doubt, her share is greater than mine. While I worked hard, at times without food or drink, without sleep, all alone, without family or home, I had the good fortune of immersing myself in my work. I knew I was helping many people, and I felt a great sense of fulfillment. Many illustrious institutions, thank G-d, were established—Talmud Torahs, Yeshivos, Torah and charity organizations, and I knew I was pleasing our Rabbi. My family did not share this spiritual fulfillment and pleasure. My beloved wife only knew the

hard life, the solitary life, without her husband and the father of her children. She was left with all the responsibilities. No doubt, she accepted her suffering lovingly, never complained, and never asked for any reward. Her spirit is much greater than mine

Because of all of this, may the good L-rd give the members of my family—my wife, my sons and daughters, my sons-in-law and daughters-in-law an abundance of life and blessing, and may they live to see their children and children's children immersed in Torah and mitzvos, following the established path of our holy Rabbis, and may we bring joy to our leader, G-d rest his soul, and to our leader Shalita, and welcome our righteous Mashiach along with the entire household of Israel, soon in our time, amen, may it be G-d's will.

Brooklyn, N. Y. Rabbi Benjamin E. Gorodetzky

The RASHAB, Rabbi Shulem Duber Shneersohn.

Chapter One

The Road to Lubavitch-Chabad

History of the Movement / Life in Bobruysk / Family Beginnings / The Bolshevik Revolution / The Lubavitch Yeshiva / My Wedding / Rabbi of Kiev / Founding Talmud Torahs and Yeshivos

It has been my privilege and good fortune to serve for many years as emissary and representative of the great leaders of our Lubavitch-Chabad movement—Rabbi Joseph Isaac Schneersohn of blessed and sainted memory, and Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson Shalita. Through their power and merit I have been able to bring the light of our holy Torah, especially in matters of pure and holy Torah education, to remote and far-flung communities of our people throughout the world. In these pages I wish to record, for the sake of the young and for future generations, some of my experiences as servant of my movement and my people for over 60 years since my youth in Russia during the early years of the Bolshevik Revolution. In my lifetime, Chassidic life has undergone great trials and tribulations, and yet, with the help of the Almighty it has continued to grow and flourish wherever Jews have been able to breathe the air of freedom. My story is the story of the great miracle of Chassidic vitality and regeneration in our time.

But before I proceed with my own personal account, I should like to briefly pause and summarize the origins and essence of the move-

ment known as Chassidism. What has been the purpose and mission of this movement? And, more specifically, what is the unique character of the Lubavitch-Chabad branch of Chassidism?

Chassidism first started in the Carpathian Mountains of Poland, where one of the most extraordinary teachers of the Jewish people was born in 5459 (1698), exactly fifty years after the Chmielnicki pogroms, which decimated the Jewish communities of Eastern Europe.

When Israel, later known as the Baal Shem Tov (he of the good name), was born, Jewish life was engulfed in deep despair. The world of Torah and mitzvos as practiced by the scholars was closed to the masses of Jews who were hungry for spiritual strength and nourishment. It became the mission of Rabbi Israel, known by his acronym as the Besht, to bring this strength and nourishment to his people.

At the age of five, the Besht received the following legacy from his dying father: "My son, be not afraid of anyone but the Almighty. Love every Jew with all your heart and soul." This legacy guided him for the rest of his life.

Rabbi Israel was thirty-six years old when he settled in Mezibush, where he began to teach and apply the principles of what would become known as Chassidus.

It must be remembered that Torah scholarship was the only path of Judaism known at this time, while the unlearned masses were looked down upon as devoid of Torah. The Besht taught that Judaism and Torah are the property of all Jews; that every Jew, regardless of his station or attainments, is perfectly capable of serving his Maker; and that the love of Israel compels one to sacrifice oneself for a fellow Jew.

He taught that worship is vital for the full life of every Jew. That the religious potential of prayer is incalculable, not as a way of asking for a reward, but of cleaving to the Most High, or reaching the state of the soul wherein man gives up the consciousness of his separate existence and becomes part of the Eternal Being. Such a state produces an indescribable joy—simcha—which is a necessary ingredient of true worship. Thus Chassidism became a way of practicing the joy of mitzvah—the joy in the performance of a commandment—and of dealing with others warmly and affectionately.

Many people flocked to Mezibush and became ardent followers of the Besht. Among the thousands he attracted were some of the most

esteemed and erudite Rabbis and Talmud scholars of his time.

In the final years of his life, the Besht witnessed the beginning of a struggle which later, for a time , divided the Jewish people into two camps, the Chassidim and the Misnagdim (literally "opponents"). The latter opposed Chassidic teachings and accused the movement of heresy. Nevertheless, the far-reaching influence of the Besht continued to grow, and in time the breach between Chassidim and Misnagdim was healed. The Chassidim were eventually recognized as pious representatives of traditional Judaism.

Like other movements, Chassidism might have dissipated after the initial emotional momentum had been spent. Divine Providence, however, sent great and inspired leaders who, by virtue of their exalted personal qualities and intellectual creativeness provided the spark that induced Chassidism to grow into a dynamic body reconciling divergent schools of thought and attracting staunch adherents generation after generation, right up to the present day.

The first of those great disciples of the Baal Shem Tov was Rabbi Dov Ber, known as the Maggid of Meseritch. Like his teacher before him, Dov Ber taught that the key to true love of G-d is *ahavas Yisrael*, the love of one's fellow Jew. "The meaning of *ahavas Yisrael*," the Maggid declared, "is to love the worst sinner in the same way as the most righteous." He impressed this principle of love upon his followers, and moulded it into a central factor in the Chassidic outlook. When Rabbi Dov Ber returned his soul to heaven in 5533 (1772), the Chassidic movement was firmly established, and a new generation of leaders emerged, ready to carry on the teachings of the movement.

One of those leaders was Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Ladi, who later became famous as the Rav. This saintly man became the founder of Chabad Chassidism, a movement which developed into one of the strongest and most dynamic branches of Chassidism.

As a young man of twenty, Shneur Zalman felt that an element of Jewish religious experience was missing in his life. He was well versed in Torah, but he felt a need to be instructed in *avodah*, or prayer. He was told that in Meseritch there was a new world where people were taught how to pray.

He set out on his long journey and arrived at the house of Rabbi Dov Ber. Here he absorbed the teachings of the Baal Shem Tov and delved into the realm of the holy relations that unite G-d, Israel, the Torah, and the world, into one insoluble system of universal scope.

After the death of Rabbi Dov Ber his disciples separated. Each one shouldered the task of propagating Chassidism in the country assigned to him. Rabbi Shneur Zalman inherited the most difficult of all the missions. He was to capture the stronghold of the Misnagdim in Lithuania for the Chassidic ideology and way of life.

A man of lesser stature as a Talmudist could not have undertaken such a mission, for the opposition included some of the most illustrious scholars of the time. But Rabbi Shneur Zalman was well equipped to meet them on their own ground. He attracted followers and proceeded to look after their economic wellbeing as well as their spiritual needs, helping many of them rehabilitate themselves after the 1808 decree which led to the expulsion of the Jews who lived in rural areas, and at the same time the Rav began to develop his magnificent philosophy of Chabad Chassidism.

Of the people who flocked to him, he demanded much more than the unquestioning adherence required by the other Chassidic leaders. While their ideology centered around the Tzaddik (the righteous leader) as a person of supernatural powers, he posed the idea of the Tzaddik as spiritual guide, a teacher rather than a miracle worker.

The Chassid was to train himself for a life of faith and avodah (prayer) which would carry him to the highest level of Chabad (an acrostic meaning Chochmoh, Binah, Daas—wisdom, understanding, knowledge), forming a bond between heaven and earth.

Upon this basic thought Rabbi Shneur Zalman built the structure of Chabad ideology. Total man serves G-d with mind, heart and deed in unison, each complementing the other. The mind understands, the heart feels, and the hand performs.

The substance of Rabbi Shneur Zalman's teachings can be found in his major contribution to Rabbinic literature, the *Likutei Amarim,* better known as the *Tanya.* It contains a concise outline of his philosophical system as a way of life, and attests to his vast knowledge, depth of understanding and mastery of both the exoteric and esoteric teachings of our Sages. The *Tanya* has been and still is a sacred text to the thousands of followers of Chabad.

The Chabad system as taught by Rabbi Shneur Zalman is basically a synthesis between the mystical (Kabbalah) and rational (Halachah) currents of Jewish thought, remarkably blended into a cohesive religious philosophy. It considers the self a means to the knowledge of G-d, the Creator, and also to the knowledge of the

created universe. The self is endowed with absolute freedom, and is essentially moral. Absolute moral freedom is based on the "Divine soul" in man, which exists alongside the "animal soul." The latter contains all the natural dispositions inherent in man as a creature of this world. These are not evil in their pristine state, but rather neutral forces which, ideally, are to serve as the vehicle for the Divine soul which must act through them.

Rabbi Shneur Zalman insists that the religious life cannot be complete without intellectual comprehension of the nature of G-d, His Unity, Providence, and other fundamental principles of faith. He further insists that every person must strive for comprehension to the fullest measure of his capacity. In this the founder of Chabad departs from other Chassidic schools, notably the Polish and Galician, which gave predominance to *devekus*, emotional attachment in religious experience based on pure and simple faith. In Chabad *devekus* is not belittled, yet it attains a richer and deeper dimension, stemming from the highest forms of awe and love fostered by *hitbonenus* (meditation) and *hasagah* (intellectual comprehension of the nature of G-d).

It has been observed that Chabad attempts a seemingly impossible union of cold understanding and burning feeling. Rabbi Sholom Dovber, a leader of Chabad during my youth, gave the following answer: when one prays with proper understanding, the fervent prayer is proof of one's understanding. When prayer is right, that is, when it leads to good deeds, one's behavior is proof of the service of the heart.

Thus, Chabad Chassidism as taught by its founder combines the attributes of the human mind and heart to achieve perfect harmony in serving G-d and in helping one's fellow Jew both materially and spiritually through boundless ahavas Yisrael, love of Israel.

After Rabbi Shneur Zalman's death in 5573 (1813), Chabad Chassidism was led by his descendants, Rabbi Dovber, Rabbi Menachem Mendel, Rabbi Shmuel, Rabbi Sholom Dovber, Rabbi Joseph Isaac Schneersohn, and the present Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, Shalita. Under their inspired leadership, the movement grew and flourished, first in Europe, and, since World War Two, in the United States, in Israel, and throughout the world.

At the time of my birth the Chabad movement was still centered in Russia, where the movement first started. I was born in Bobruysk,

White Russia, eight years before World War One. In those days Bobruysk was a dual fortress: it was a military fortress of Czarist Russia, and it was also a fortress of vibrant and deeply rooted Jewish life.

My Chabad ancestry dates back to my maternal grandfather, Rabbi Simcha Levin, the father of my mother, Reisl, of blessed memory. He was the head of a well-to-do Chassidic family known in the region for its piety, kindness, charity and good deeds. He was contracted by the Czarist government as a supplier of construction materials and workers for the Bobruysk fortress.

The choice of Bobruysk by the Czarist Government as the site for the fortress had a great deal to do with the fact that for decades a well established Jewish community lived in that town. The town, which only two generations earlier was a small backwoods village, became at that time one of the most important towns of White Russia. It saw a rapid growth of the Jewish population and an economic prosperity far greater than that of most towns and villages in the Pale of Settlement.

In 1810 Czar Alexander the First was advised by his military command to erect a fortress controlling the mountain passes and the Berezina River, in order to ward off attacks from the West. The Jews of Bobruysk were given the task of building that fortress, which two years later played a critical role in the war against Napoleon.

The fortress consisted of a citadel surrounded by seven bastions. It was one of the most strategic points of the Czarist Empire, intended as a buffer against invasions by hostile forces.

Jewish entrepreneurs played a leading role in securing construction materials for the building of the fortress and in recruiting workers and master builders.

By the end of the nineteenth century, the Czarist regime decided to enlarge the fortress and the local garrison. It was at that time that the task was assigned to my grandfather, Rabbi Simcha Levin of blessed memory, who along with other Jewish colleagues procured the construction materials and the work force. The fortress was expanded to include additional barracks, an arsenal, a supply center, a military hospital, and even a military jail.

The presence of thousands of soldiers and officers in the fortress began to play a major role in the local economy and the life of the constantly growing town. Jewish merchants provided food for the troops and Jewish manufacturers clothed them. The growing pros-

perity attracted Jews from other towns and villages. The small Jewish community grew fast and now constituted 60 percent of the local population.

Among the troops at the Bobruysk fortress there were usually as many as two hundred Jewish conscripts, especially when the fortress received reinforcement from other garrisons. The presence of such a large number of Jewish personnel created the need for Kosher food and religious objects. Jewish soldiers began to visit the local Jewish homes, and in some instances the visits resulted in matchmaking.

Another source of income for the Jews in Bobruysk was housing for the troops. The barracks were not sufficiently large to accommodate all the soldiers, especially during maneuvers, and the Jews were called upon to provide living quarters for them.

Because of the strategic importance of Bobruysk, the authorities began to improve the access to the town. The surrounding swamps were dried, roads were paved, sidewalks were constructed, bridges were built over the Berezina, and finally a railroad was laid down. All of this turned the once small forlorn village into a major town.

The prosperity and the frequent fairs attracted more Jews to Bobruysk. It is recorded that in 1871 the Jewish population numbered 18,000. In 1910 it grew to 26,000. Most of the non-Jewish residents were Russian Orthodox, and the rest were Catholic.

The fortress, however, was not the only source of livelihood for the local Jews. The town was surrounded by large forests, which gave rise to an intensive lumber industry. Jews leased forests, cut down trees, opened lumber yards, and transported some of the lumber on the Berezina to other localities. After they unloaded the lumber at the points of delivery, they would load the boats with other commodities, such as sugar, salt and wheat, which further increased trade. Around Bobruysk there were also Jewish farmers who grew vegetables and cultivated fruit trees, mainly apple orchards. Because of all this, hconomic conditions were good, much better in fact than those of neighboring communities.

This is not to say that all the Jews were well-off and lived comfortably. There was also a poor Jewish neighborhood in Bobruysk called Sloboda, where Jewish porters, shoemakers, tailors, washerwomen and servants lived in hovels. The condition of many local Jews led the Jewish community to establish charitable organizations which attended to their needs.

Another important point: because of the presence of the fortress, the authorities decreed that all the houses in Bobruysk had to be built of wood, invariably with thatched roofs. In case of war, the houses could be burned down so that the besieging enemy could not use them for his purposes. This resulted in frequent fires in our town. A small fire was sufficient to create a danger of a major conflagration. As a result, a fire department was organized in Bobruysk. Most of the firemen were Jews. The fire department became known for its prowess, as more than once it saved the town from disaster.

Along with the prosperity and the growth of the Jewish community, Bobruysk became a fortress of Jewish life—of Torah, worship and deeds of love and kindness. It was a town of learning and mitzvos, blessed with famous Rabbis, including such luminaries as the learned Chassidic Rabbi Baruch Mordecai of sainted memory, Rabbi Baruch Mordecai Bobruysker, and Rabbi Hillel Poritcher of sainted memory, who was followed by the well-known Rabbi Shemaryahu Noah of sainted memory, a grandson of the great Chabad leader, the Zemach Zedek, G-d rest his soul. On the Misnagdim side, Bobruysk had some of the greatest scholars of that time, notably the Shapiro family which was related to the Volozhiner of sainted memory.

Religious life in Bobruysk was greatly influenced by two currents: the Chabad current, which came from Lubavitch, and the Misnagid current from Slotzk and Volozhin. When I was a child there were some 100 houses of study and prayer in town, always filled with worshipers. There were also many Talmud Torahs, chadarim and Torah study chevros.

In 1901 Rabbi Shemaryahu Noah of sainted memory opened a Chabad style yeshiva, and the Misnagid Rabbi opened a yeshiva modeled after Volozhin. At a time when many Jewish communities were either Chassidic or Misnagid, Bobruysk experienced the harmonious coexistence of both currents. On the very same street there were two synagogues—a Chassidic and a Misnagid.

After the 1905 Revolution, when many religious institutions were suppressed, the only yeshiva left in Bobruysk was the Chabad one, led by Rabbi Shemaryahu Noah Shneurson. I would like to point out that along with the many religious institutions, the town also had social institutions such as visitations to the sick, shelter for the wayfarers, clothing for the poor, and a burial society. As was said before, Bobruysk was a military fortress of the Czarist regime, and a

When my grandfather, Rabbi Simcha Levin of blessed memory, the father of my mother Reisl, was given the task of expanding the Bobruysk fortress, he hired many Chassidic Jews to do the work. The hired men only spent part of the time working. They studied Chassidus until 10 a.m., and then prayed until 2 o'clock. The Russian officers were well aware of their schedule and tolerated it. Quite often when a general came to see my grandfather and saw him standing with his face to the wall, praying, he would refrain from disturbing him.

My grandfather had seven daughters and three sons. Each daughter had a different task: one was in charge of providing Kosher food for the Jewish soldiers, another took care of the poor, a third one gave firewood to Jewish vendors at the market during the cold winter months to keep them warm, another was in charge of the water supply for the Jews at the market. My grandfather's house was next to the market, and the merchants knew they could always come in and get something to eat. The two youngest daughters studied dentistry and opened a dental practice in St. Petersburg.

My grandfather's three sons were tall and strong. All three were Lubavitch Chassidim. One of them, nicknamed Tall Leibe, used to travel each year for the Days of Awe to the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

My grandfather, his family and many other Jews, thanks to their work at the fortress, had good connections with the military authorities. Consequently, many young Jews, especially yeshiva students, who did not wish to be drafted into the Czar's army, came to Bobruysk where they knew they had a better chance to be released from military service through the good offices of my grandfather and other prominent Jews.

One day a Jew bought some lumber and did not have a place to store it. Since he knew that my grandfather's house and yard were always open to everyone, he brought the lumber into his yard. When my grandfather went out to find out what it was, the lumber stacks collapsed and landed on his back, breaking his spine and ribs. He became bed-ridden for a number of years, and even when he went to visit his Rabbi he had to be carried in his bed. His health deteriorated and he died at a young age.

My father, Rabbi Mordecai of blessed memory, belonged to the Kotzk Chassidim. His father, Rabbi Moshe Gorodetzky, a lumber merchant, was a Kotzk Chassid, the son of a wealthy Chassidic family.

My father, along with a fellow student, would immerse himself eighteen hours a day in the study of Torah.

A denunciation to the military authorities forced my father to leave home and go to a little village near Zlobin. He stayed for one year at the home of the local Rabbi who was a Chabad Chassid, and began to read Chabad literature, *Tanya* and *Likutei Torah*, which soon captivated his mind and heart. When he was able to go back home he took those books with him. His father did not want him to study those books, since the Kotzk Chassidim did not study the teaching of Chabad, and my father had to hide them in his room. He would study them at night and hide them in the morning.

One time he forgot to hide the books and his father found them under his pillow. He was startled by the discovery, and took his son to see his Rabbi, the Kotzker Rebbe.

It was customary in Kotzk to wear a special long garment when one came to see the Rebbe. My grandfather went in by himself, and must have told the Rebbe his son was studying the teachings of Chabad. Presently my father was called in. The Rebbe looked at him and told him: "I can see that you are a Chabad Chassid (and he gave him his blessing). I would only ask you," the Rebbe added, "to observe our dress code."

My father promised him he would, and since then he always paid close attention to the way he dressed.

After my father was married, he was given room and board by a friend of his father-in-law for three years, so that he could pursue his studies. He studied at the house of learning of the Bobruysker Rebbe. He was a diligent student who excelled in his studies. At the Rebbe's school he met Rabbi Abraham Aaron, the Rebbe's dayan, who used to answer legal questions. One time the dayan answered a question, and my father pointed out to him that he had made a mistake. They went to the Rebbe of sainted memory, and the latter told my father he was right. As a result, he gave my father rabbinical ordination, which he had never done before. After his wedding my father went to Lubavitch to see the Rebbe. The Rebbe, Rabbi Sholom Dov Ber, asked my father to discuss the *Tanya* and Chassidus in general before the assembled. My father, needless to say, complied.

My parents had four children, two sons and two daughters—my older brother Simcha, and I, and my sisters Hannah and Devorah.

Since my father had rabbinical ordination and was quite a learned man, his Rabbi, to whom he used to travel, asked him to take a rabbinical position. My father, however, declined.

The Rebbe once told my father-in-law, Rabbi Shmuel Levitin, concerning my father of blessed memory: "Your son-in-law's father truly fears G-d, because he refused to take a rabbinic post."

My father looked for other ways to make a living. He opened a book store in Bobruysk. When he failed to make a living from it, he opened a mill. When the mill burned down, he opened a lumber business. He used to cut the lumber into boards and make crates. He had a partner in the lumber business named Rabbi Hillel, a wealthy and influential person. This man also decided not to pursue a rabbinical career, this despite the fact that the Lubavitcher Rebbe counselled both of them to become Rabbis.

Before I reached my Bar Mitzvah, World War One broke out. This time my father was forced to take a rabbinical position in order to stay out of the Czar's army. But he was not able to stay in Bobruysk and had to wander to other towns. Because of the German military gains, he had to remain in Harsun, a town in the Ukraine, which remained outside the German occupation.

At the yeshiva studies became sporadic because of the war.

In 1917 the Bolshevik Revolution began. Czar Nikolai the Second was toppled along with the entire Czarist regime. A democratic government was established, headed by Kerensky. It lasted less than one year, and was replaced by the Bolsheviks.

There was internal turmoil throughout the country, and many groups and factions began to fight each other bitterly. In many places the state of war continued for a long time, with the Jews, always suffering the direct consequences. Many of our people were killed during that period.

As I was approaching my Bar Mitzvah, I had to make the preparations all by myself, since my father, as was mentioned before, was away from home. When he came back after the revolution, he was not able to work because of his illness, and I had to support my ailing parents and my sister.

At age thirteen I began to deal in stocks and foreign currency. For two years I cultivated good contacts with stock brokers and earned a respectable living which supported the family and left us some reserves for a rainy day.

Meanwhile, the Chabad yeshiva, Tomchei Temimim, was reorganized, and I asked my father for permission to study at the yeshiva, since I yearned for the words of Torah. My father gladly consented, and allowed me to travel to Poltava to study at the yeshiva.

Because of the difficult conditions which prevailed in Russia at that time, caused by the Bolshevik Revolution and the many internal struggles, and especially because of the passing away of our leader, Rabbi Sholom Dovber, and the serious illness of our new leader, Rabbi Joseph Isaac, the yeshiva in Rostov did not operate smoothly. This situation continued until 5682 (1922).

That year the yeshiva at Poltava was reorganized. But it only survived for one year because of a denunciation to the authorities. That year our leader, Rabbi Joseph Isaac, appointed Rabbi Yehezkel Feigin as director of the yeshiva.

In the month of Nissan 5683 (1923) it was decided to transfer the yeshiva to Neval, under the direction of Rabbi Yehezkel Feigin. That month the first group of older students arrived.

On Lag Baomer the students met at the home of Rabbi Gershon Dov Levin, and during the meeting the police arrived and arrested everyone except for Rabbi Feigin who managed to escape and went back to Rostov. The young men were kept under arrest for several days, and after they signed an agreement to leave town they were released.

I remained in Neval, because I happened to be elsewhere when the police arrived, I escaped the arrest, and so, I was able to remain in town.

When Rabbi Feigin went to see our Rebbe, the latter told him to transfer the yeshiva to Kharkov. The students arrived in Kharkov and studied at the Meshtzener shul.

Since I remained alone in Navel, I did not know what to do. I went to see our Rebbe in Moscow, where he recently arrived on some business, to ask for his opinion. The Rebbe told me to go to Kharkov, which I did.

When I arrived in Kharkov I was not yet eighteen, and the director refused to admit me to the yeshiva. After I arranged for a certificate which stated that I was eighteen years old, and after I was tested, I was accepted as a regular student.

Before Rosh Hashana 5684 (1924), Rabbi Feigin went to see the

Rebbe in Rostov, and a few students were allowed to go with him. The rest, who were not granted permission, remained to study.

Once, while I was at the yeshiva hall at the synagogue, Rabbi Shmuel Bespalov saw me.

Incidentally, the great pious Rabbi Shmuel Bespalov was the son-in-law of the learned Rabbi David Barbash of blessed memory, who was the son-in-law of Rabbi Shemaryahu Noah of Bobruysk. In 5685 (1925), two years after the passing of the Rabbi of Bobruysk, Rabbi Shmuel took his place with the consent of our leader, Rabbi Joseph Isaac, rest his soul.

He served as rabbi until the accursed Nazis arrived in town. The murderers, seeking to terrorize and destroy the Jewish community, took Rabbi Shmuel and hanged him at the entrance to the giant store which belonged to his father-in-law, in the center of Bobruysk!

May the Holy One avenge his blood!

When Rabbi Shmuel asked me why I remained here, I told him the director did not allow me to travel, nor did I have money to pay for the trip. He proceeded to give me the necessary sum, and I was able to travel and see our Rabbi for the festival of Sukkos.

In the month of Tishre our Rabbi decided to return the yeshiva to Rostov. The reason for it was an appeal from two important members of the community, who had contacts with the authorities. They promised to provide the yeshiva with all that was necessary to maintain it as a school for young men, eighteen and older. The community had at its disposal an attractive spacious house on Voronchovski Street, with good eating facilities and comfortable dormitories. As the place was clean and orderly, meeting the official specifications, a formal application was presented to the authorities to approve the operation of the yeshiva. The names of the students and the staff, as well as the two directors (Rabbi Zalman Shneurson and Rabbi Moshe Rosenblum) were added to the application.

Since we expected an official inspection in order to be granted the official approval, we saw to it that only students with the proper documents stayed on the premises. The rest, whose names were not submitted, circulated through such local synagogues, as the Hashmunik Synagogue, and the Cemetery Synagogue.

In Tevet-Shvat of that year our Rabbi had to leave Rostov, because of persistent rumors that the authorities intended to arrest him along with other leaders who were arrested at that time. He went to Mos-

cow and Leningrad, and stayed there until shortly before Pesach.

While our Rabbi was away from his home, I stayed at the house with my friend Yosef Patzin of blessed memory, since the Rabbi said he did not wish to leave his house without Torah.

On the week of Pesach, on Nissan 11 or 12, our Rabbi returned to his home in Rostov. That day, at six o'clock, only two hours after his arrival, NKVD agents came to the house and started to search the place and ask questions.

They went into the hall of the yeshiva on Vorontzovski Street and confiscated the students' documents.

They proceeded to the homes of the directors, Rabbi Rosenblum and Rabbi Shneurson, and arrested them, keeping them under arrest for a few days.

In light of this new state of affairs, it became necessary to transfer the yeshiva from Rostov to another locality.

Since I knew the town of Neval quite well, I asked Rabbi Elhanan Marozov, who was the gabbai and right-hand man of our Rabbi, to suggest to the Rebbe, in my name, to allow the students who had documents to go to Neval. Our Rabbi's answer was that if I was willing to accept the responsibility for their transfer he would give his permission.

Quite naturally I acccepted the responsibility. The students whose papers had not been confiscated went on Hol Hamoed Pesach to Kharkov, and from there to Neval.

At that time our Rabbi ordered the students not to come to his court, since the investigation was in full swing and continued until after Pesach. But since I had accepted the responsibility to go there and prepare the place for the students, I emboldened myself and went to ask for the Rebbe's blessing.

On Hol Hamoed Pesach I went to the Rebbe's house and asked his confidant, Rabbi Elhanan Marozov to help me go in to see the Rebbe, since I needed his blessing for my journey to Neval.

The answer was negative, since the Rebbe had ordered not to allow anyone to come in to see him. However, he added, Rabbi Landa and Rabbi Berman will soon leave his house, and when the Rebbe saw me he would give me his blessing.

I did as I was told, but when I saw our Rabbi's face I was seized by fear and trembling and ran as fast as I could.

When I told Rabbi Marozov what had happened, he advised me

that, since our Rabbi's mother knew me well because I had stayed at the Rebbe's house for two months when he was forced to go to Moscow and Leningrad, I might want to ask her to help me see the Rebbe.

On the second day of Hol Hamoed, at eight o'clock in the morning, I arrived at the Rebbe's house and waited in the dining room, where the Rebbitzin passed through on her way to the kitchen. When she saw me she asked me what was I doing there. I told her I was seeking the Rebbe's blessing prior to my journey to Neval, and I asked for her help. She readily agreed, and knocked on his door. There was no answer. She said that he must be busy, but in a few moments he would open the door.

Ten minutes later our Rabbi opened the corridor door and walked into the dining room, where prayers, meetings and learned discussions took place. He stood at the door and beckoned to me to come closer. He asked for the reason of my visit, and I told him I was on my way to Neval to arrange for the arrival of additional students, and I had come to ask for the Rebbe's blessing and good wishes.

I would like to mention here that when I grew up in Bobruysk, a town of great and famous Chassidim, I heard the older Chassidim say in the name of their elders, that one did not reveal the contents of the blessings bestowed on him in private by the Rebbe, and so I am not at liberty to record what took place between us during that private meeting. I can only disclose that thanks to the Rebbe's blessings that morning, I have been very successful in my holy missions, as will be related below.

That same evening I travelled to Kharkov. I arrived there the next morning and I found all six students who had been sent there.

Soon after Pesach I went to Neval and I arranged for the other students to arrive in Kharkov one at a time. The reason for this was twofold: I needed time to make proper arrangememts for them, and I did not wish the authorities to know we were establishing a yeshiva, since the year before they arrested and expelled the students after their gathering was reported.

When I arrived in Neval I found a suitable place in a part of the town called America, across a small brook. The place was called Der Groise Bes Midrash (the large academy).

I found an old man on the edge of town named R. Chaim Meir. He had no children, and he lived in a small two-room house. He let the public use one room for prayer. We would pray there on holidays and

on the Days of Awe, and at times on the Sabbath.

I found suitable lodgings and engaged a man who lived nearby to cook for us. We studied at the large academy not far from our home, and at the home of R. Chaim Meir, may he rest in peace.

Each night I would go to the train station to meet a new incoming student and bring him home. Among the arrivals were Aharon Yosef Belnitzki, Yosef Pachun, Yaakov Pulitzker, Bentzion Shemtov, Pesach Paporer, Moshe Dubinsky, and Shlomo Shiminovitz.

During the summer I realized I could bring some more students to Neval. The school was down the street from our home in a quiet and secluded place which lent itself to peaceful concentration. The lesson was conducted by R. Yehuda Eber, and since his father and brother lived in Neval, his work did not attract undue attention.

I wrote about it to R. Yehezkel Feigin, who was the director at that time, and he accepted my suggestion.

Gradually students began to arrive from neighboring communities, and in the winter of 5685 (1925) we had a considerable number of students.

While we stayed at our Rabbi's in Leningrad during the Days of Awe, it was decided to bring over R. Avraham Maurer as administrator, since the number of students increased and we needed additional classes.

I undertook the management of material needs. I organized Gabbaim and charity boxes in the synagogues, and travelled throughout the community for this purpose. The lessons were extremely successful and material needs were met quite effectively. We already had more than ten older students, and we gave a special lesson in Poskim (legal questions). Rabbi Rafael Cohen, A.H., would conduct this lesson every day.

I had excellent contacts with the Jewish Baale Batim (heads of households) in town and in the vicinity. G-d helped me befriend them. I began to organize the study of Mishna in the synagogues, and every week I would discuss Torah before the holy Sabbath in the large academy. The shul did not have a regular minyan on the Sabbath for the morning prayers.

Before Pesach 5685 (1925) Rabbi S.Z. Shneurson came from Leningrad with a letter from our Rabbi addressed to Rabbi Rafael Cohen and to R. Meir Simcha, asking the two to enable him to study pedagogy. He told me that our Rabbi was planning to establish a

rabbinical school.

A few weeks later we received instructions from R. Yehezkel Feigin to send the students immediately to Kharkov so that all the older students be concentrated in one place, leaving only the young ones in Neval. I had to stay in Neval, despite the fact that the other young men went to Kharkov.

After Pesach R. Zalman Pausner (Boberer) and R. Eliezer Karasik arrived, and we began to study together.

I had the major task of securing funds for the yeshiva, since the number of students had increased considerably and the expenses grew, despite the fact that some of the students took their meals at the homes of local Jews.

We travelled to Leningrad to our Rabbi to ask for his opinion. The Rabbi told me that we should study at the rabbinical school. When I asked him about studying at Tomchei Temimim, he told me: This is also Tomchei Temimim. I had written to Yehezkel Feigin to send the older boys to Neval to the rabbinical school. "What's the matter, you don't learn enough Chassidus? If so, you have to work harder. You want easy work? Well, one must work hard."

I remained in Neval with the school and became active in the affairs of Tomchei Temimim. I saw to it that En Yaakov and Mishna were taught in all the synagogues. The academy also grew, and new students were being added.

In the month of Ellul the learned Rabbi Shmuel Levitin and his family arrived in Neval. We all travelled together to spend the Days of Awe in the holy presence of our Rabbi. Rabbi Feigin and the students from Kharkov also came. Our Rabbi decided at that time that Rabbi Levitin will direct the rabbinical academy, and that the students of Tomchei Temimim will all leave Kharkov and settle in Neval.

In the winter of 5686 (1926) I became engaged to the daughter of Rabbi Levitin, and at that time I received rabbinical ordination.

I continued to study at the rabbincal academy and carried on with my communal work at the same time.

In the summer of 5686 (1926) the administrative office of our school received a letter from our Rabbi. The Rebbe wanted me to take a rabbinical post in Kiev and the surrounding area. I was to organize Chadorim, Talmud Torahs and Yeshivos. Quite naturally I accepted.

I travelled to see our Rabbi in Leningrad, and was told he was vacationing in Luga, not far from the city. I went there and I arrived

on Shabbos eve, Parashas Nachamu, at noon. Our Rabbi prayed at the Bes Midrash and finished his prayer at five. I sat there and listened to his prayer which was accompanied by much sobbing and heart-rending melodies, and to this day I can see him standing there praying.

On Sunday morning, after the prayer, our Rabbi went into the Bisedke, a secluded cabin in the forest. At first he welcomed the important residents of Luga and discussed public affairs with them. Then he called me in and reprimanded me for coming. I told him that since he wanted me to go to Kiev, I needed to hear him charge me with the task. He waved his hand and began to talk at length about how I was to behave and what I was to do. Finally he said, "You must work with your guts and not be afraid." He also quoted the Baal Shem Tov's commentary on the verse: "Let your beginning be humble, and your end will be great." In order for your end to be great, your beginning must be humble. He wished me a successful journey and urged me to go to Kiev right away. Finally he said: "The Days of Awe are near, and you may wish to come to see the Rebbe. Be sure not to do it. Remain where you are!"

A few years earlier the Talmud Torah directors, R. Moshe Vinersky and R. Yaakov Meislik, as well as two teachers, were put on trial, and were sentenced to two years in jail, leaving Kiev without a Talmud Torah and a yeshiva. The local Jewish leaders decided that since the law allowed to teach a group of three children, the teachers would go to the children's homes to teach them.

An observant Jew named R. Eisik Lifschitz undertook the running of the Talmud Torah, but there were some non-observant leaders involved in the school who hired some free-thinking teachers. They were activists of Zionist organizations who operated clandestinely.

When I arrived in Kiev early in the morning, someone was supposed to be waiting for me and take me to my destination. For some unknown reason the person did not show up and I did not know where to go. My situation was quite difficult, since a young man like me, with a beard and earlocks, was quite visible. Since I couldn't stay there, I took the first streetcar and rode to the last stop, in the center of Podol, where tens of thousands of Jews resided.

I went into a certain synagogue, and I was told there was a Lubavitch synagogue not far from there. I further learned that the day before I came R. Yitzhak Masmid was there and gave a d'var torah.

I went to that shul, and was told by the sexton, R. Wolf Baer, to go and see the well-known Chassidim, the Bass brothers.

When I arrived there I found their uncle, the above mentioned R. Eisik Lifschitz, and I told them about the reason for my journey to Kiev. I arranged with R. Lifschitz to go and see the places of learning and get an idea about the learning conditions and methods.

When I visited the various homes I was stunned to find out that some were learning and teaching with a bare head!

The teachers realized immediately they could not continue to teach in this manner, and the local leaders understood that if the Lubavitch people took charge they would be in trouble. So they pressured R. Eisik to stop cooperating with me.

When I saw the situation I decided to establish a new Talmud Torah, in strict adherence to the Law.

I went to Podol where there was a Lubavitch synagogue on 34 Shekovitzky Street, in a two-story building, as well as three other synagogues. On 17 Jaroslowsky Street there was a Chabad style school for the study of Mishnah. Altogether, Podol had over one hundred Batey Midrash (houses of prayer and learning), as well as an additional sixty minyanim.

In order to recruit students, I got in touch with the admimistrators of the Batey Midraish and proposed to them to send their children to our Talmud Torahs. For each child I would pay them fifty kopeks.

Within twenty-four hours they brought me some fifty students and in one week the number reached one hundred and fifty.

I engaged two expert teachers. One was from Shaklov, an outstanding veteran teacher. I stipulated that he would only teach in his own home, and in return I offered him fifty rubles, a handsome sum in those days.

My second teacher was R. Shalom Bernstein, from Shechedrin, who lived in Kiev, also a veteran teacher. Since his house was too small for the entire class, I found another suitable place. In addition to those two places, the students also took classes at the Lubavitch synagogue.

In the various synagogues, especially the ones where the common people prayed, I began to teach Torah; I told them stories about the Tzaddikim and about our Rabbi's holy work.

There was one man among them named Yaakov, nicknamed Yankl the Carpenter. He was a very simple soul, yet a man of in-

tegrity and action. He hired a teacher for several young men, and would go out and raise money to pay the teacher.

Two years earlier he was put on trial for his communal activities. He would not relent. He was firmly committed to Torah and mitzvos, and always fought the battle against the desecration of the Shabbos, and for Kashrus and Jewish education.

When I first met him he agreed to turn his students over to me on condition that he continued to pay the teacher's salary, and even if more students came from out of town he would take responsibility for the expenses and would give me the funds for them, seeing to it that the money did not go into the general community fund. He was intent on continuing to shoulder the burden. I accepted his conditions since I found him to be a sincere person of honest intentions.

R. Yaakov Lvov lived in Kiev at that time, and I appointed him the director, since he was most suited for the task.

Podol at that time also had a yeshiva for older boys, headed by Rabbi Morgenstern of the Lida Yeshiva.

One of the activists at that time was R. Sholom Rappaport of blessed memory, a Baiyan Chassid. His oldest son studied at Tomchei Temimim and was one of the best students. Unfortunately, he died in his youth.

When I realized the yeshiva was about to disintegrate, I suggested to put it under my supervision. At first they did not want to accept my conditions, but after two months they agreed to give me full control without any interference on their part.

I named the lower and upper yeshivos Torah Temima, and the Talmud Torahs Ohaley Shem. We sent letters to all the surrounding communities to let them know we were accepting young students who would start with the study of Chumash and Rashi and continue through Gemarah, Poskim and Tosafos.

A special emissary, R. Chaim Yuda Schmuckelman, travelled through the nearby communities to raise funds for the yeshivos.

As was mentioned, I did not go to our Rabbi for the Days of Awe. Bentzion Shemtov did go that year. After the Holidays he returned to Kiev with instructions from the Rebbe, as follows:

"Binyamin will remain in Kiev. B.Z. Shemtov will tour the region to study the situation and would periodically report to Binyamin on the situation. In general, there are a plowman, a sower, and a reaper. You, B.Z., will be the plowman, Binyamin will be the sower, and I

believe the sower can also be the reaper."

Shemtov travelled to Trashche, Novograd-Volinsk (Zvehil), Orotch, Karestin, Zhitomir and Berditchev.

On the eve of Yom Kippur I set up collection plates in one hundred and ten synagogues, and in sixty more minyanim in Podol, and we collected a respectable sum. Until that time I did not engage in any fundraising in this town for lack of time and for fear of opposition. But once the reputation of the yeshivos spread, everything brightened up.

R. Shmuel Zalman Korobelnik (Fohorer) was the gabbai of the Lubavitch synagogue in Kiev. He was a wise and affluent person. When I first arrived in Kiev I looked for him and was not able to arrange to see him. He came back on the eve of Rosh Hashanah and came to see me that same day, and we had a long talk.

The next day, on Rosh Hashanah, before the prayer, he went up on the bimah and told the assembly the young Rabbi would preach before the sounding of the shofar.

On the night ending Rosh Hashanah we met at his home with all the Temimim in Kiev and discussed the urgent needs of Yiddishkeit and education, and the degree of help each one had to extend. He gave a large sum on the spot for the community, and an additional donation as a Maamad for the Rebbe.

In the month of Tishre of that year we had gatherings (hitvaadut) during Hol Hamoed Sukkot and Simchas Torah. Those were glorious affairs which made a great impression on the public.

The studies conducted during that "new period," namely, the beginning of Heshvan of 5687 (1927), were most successful, both in the Talmud Torahs and in the yeshivos, and the sacred work grew, thank G-d, phenomenally.

At that time the Rebbe began to send me funds, and I was able to arrange room and board for the students three days a week at the home of R. Yuda Levin, whose sons studied in our schools.

We celebrated the 10th of Kislev, the anniversary of the release of the Middle Rebbe, Rabbi Dovber, from jail. We held a gala celebration at the Lubavitch synagogue, attended by people from the entire city and from all circles. Many participants said it was the first celebration of its kind in Kiev. That evening we were graced by the presence of leading Chassidic Rebbes who were in Kiev at that time, such as the Tchernobiler Rebbe, the Mechanovker Rebbe, Rachmestrivker Rebbe, the Loyever Rebbe etc. They were all close friends of

ours, and their children studied in our schools.

On 19th Kislev I went to see our Rabbi in Leningrad, after organizing the 19th Kislev celebration in the community. When I arrived in Leningrad our Rabbi asked me: "Whom did you leave in charge in Kiev?" I told him I had made all the arrangements before I left. He did not seem too pleased with me.

After the 19th of Kislev I returned to Kiev and continued my work according to the instructions I had received from our Rabbi during my visit.

During that winter I was in touch with the rabbis of the villages in the districts of Kiev, Podol and Voholin, and I recruited more students.

Thus we inaugurated many Talmud Torahs in many communities, some of which received financial support from us and some were established with our encouragement.

Chapter Two

The First Arrest

Sudden Visit by NKVD at Midnight / Thorough Searching / Behind Bars / Quick Release / The Merit of an Apostate Jew / The Arrest and Release of Our Rabbi, Rest His Soul

We set our wedding date for Adar 14, Purim Katan, 5687 (1927), in the town of Neval. I began to prepare myself for the journey on the first of the month, and I planned to travel on Adar 7.

I would like to mention that when my father-in-law of blessed memory told our Rabbi that he chose Purim Katan for the wedding, the Rebbe told him: "Who knows if the bridegroom will be able to participate in the wedding at the time."

On that day we thought that the Rebbe was referring to my work load. But later on we found out that the Tzaddik foresaw the future, since on that day I found myself behind bars.

I was living at the time on 32 Volshinski Street, at the house of the son-in-law of the Rabbi of Karff, Mr. Bedrin. In the middle of the night, on Adar 7, 5687 (1927), I heard loud knocks on the door. When I opened the door I saw four GPU agents with their superiors.

That night I did not sleep in my own room. When the agents came and asked about me they were told where I was staying. They asked for my documents and personal belongings. Since I was preparing for my trip, my belongings were all packed. They looked at them and

then went into my room where they saw a trunk. Inside the trunk they found a box with rubber stamps and receipts, which I prepared while I was staying at R. Sender Friedman of blessed memory in Leningrad, since R. Friedman had a duplicating machine which he used for his work as a religious writer. They found all sorts of receipts, pertaining to Ohalei Torah, Torah Temima, and Tomchei Temimim (I was also planning fundraising for Tomchei Temimim in Neval). The Talmud Torahs were called Ohalei Torah, and the small yeshivos were called Torah Temima.

When they found this material they stopped searching. They were now satisfied, having found enough incriminating evidence to arrest me.

Thank G-d they did not continue searching, for they would have found other secret documents, such as recent correspondence with many Rabbis in regard to Talmud Torahs under their control, requesting assistance for those schools, as well as a letter concerning smuggling of children into the schools in Kiev.

Our Rabbi's letters were not in my house. I knew I had to treat them with great caution, and did not keep them in the house.

After they finished their search they told me to come along with them, and they took me to the NKVD prison. They kept me there for ten days. My investigator was an evil, devious person, which was also true of the chief warden, Ivanov. The latter, at least, was polite.

They told me they had full knowlege of my activities. On such and such nights I walked the streets in the company of Ben Tzion Shemtov, and we talked about various matters.

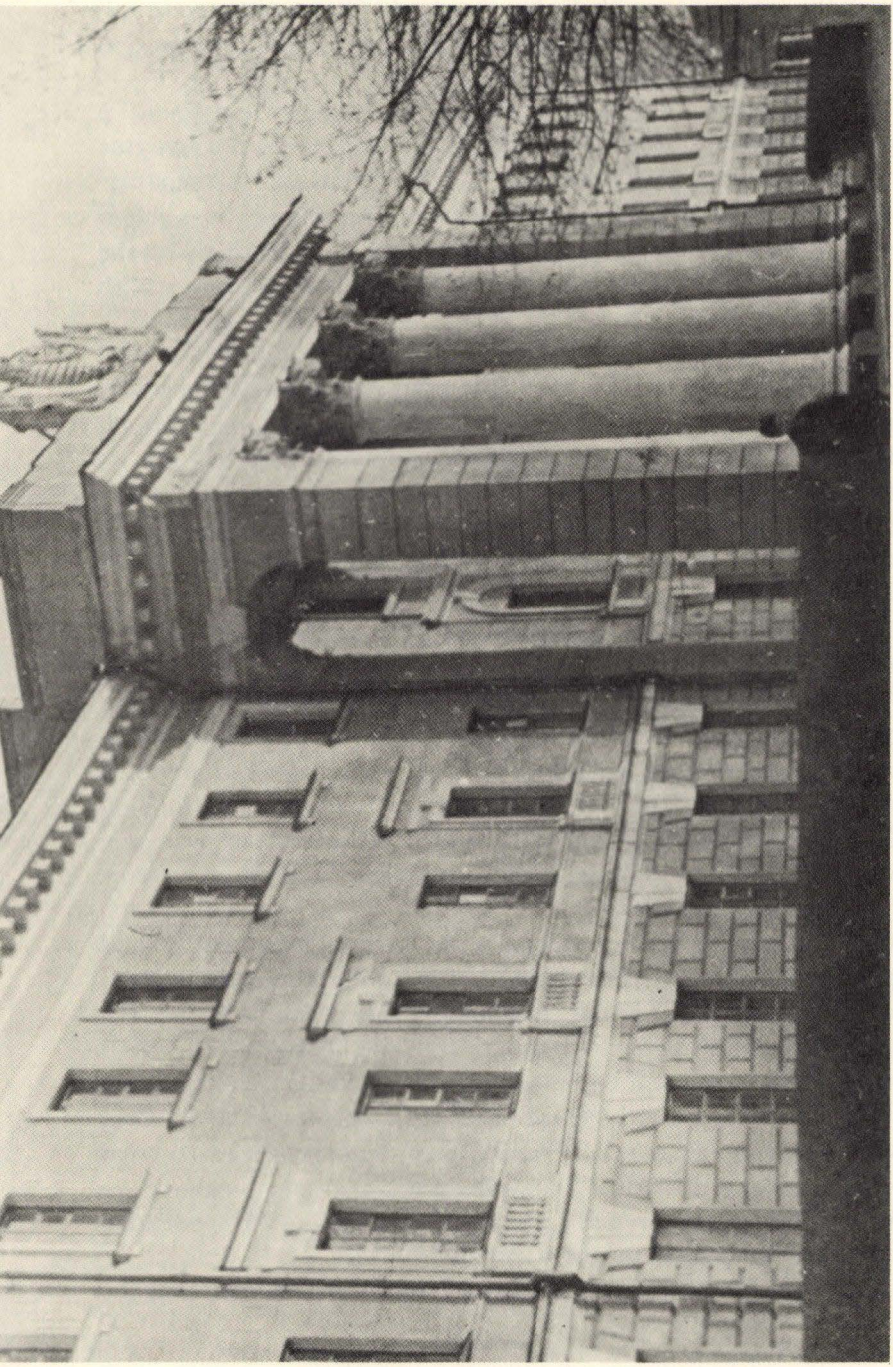
I told them I had had those stamps and receipts for several years, since the time I studied in Homil, and since the yeshiva was shut down they became obsolete. I chose that excuse, because several years before the Rabbi of Homil was put on trial and the case was a matter of public record.

As for my meeting with Shemtov, I denied the whole thing.

When they realized they could not extract anything out of me, they transferred me to the well-known Lukianovsky prison in Kiev.

This is not the place to go into all the questioning and the torture. Suffice it to say that I kept denying everything.

As the time of Pesach was drawing near, my suffering was greatly increased. I had hoped to be released before the holiday, since I counted on my friends on the outside and kept praying for help



A Typical NKVD (the name of the Soviet secret police prior to the KGB) building.

through the merit of our holy Rabbi. But on 11 Nissan there were still no signs of deliverance, and I mustered up my courage and requested a special room for the holiday.

The cell in which I was staying was shared by some eighty gentiles who ate unleavened bread during Pesach, and I could not imagine spending the holiday with them, and so I decided to ask for a separate room. I also asked for permission to receive a package by messenger without any doubt of chometz. I requested a private meeting with the chief warden, since I had some important matters to discuss with him.

On Thursday, the evening of 12 Nissan, I was taken to see the chief warden. I explained to him that since the holiday of Pesach was approaching, and it was most difficult for me to be in a common room as my religion forbade the eating of unleavened bread on the holiday, I would appreciate it if at least for the duration of the festival I could have a small private room, and also be allowed to personally receive a package of matzos from a messenger, so that I would not die of hunger during the eight days of the holiday.

That year 5687 (1927), such requests were still honored, and my plea did not go unheeded.

He promised me he would arrange for a separate room for me after I signed a statement it was a personal request rather than a punishment. As for my request for a direct delivery of matzos into my own hands, he said he was not allowed to authorize it unless he had explicit instructions from his direct superior, and since there was only one day left before the holiday, he did not believe he would have time to receive such instructions.

Prisoners were generally released in the evening, before the second counting of the inmates. The thought of spending Pesach in jail was unbearable. Even if I were released the next day, I could not sign the release papers because of the Sabbath and the holiday.

I went back to my cell and started to pray mincha. I was sure I would not be released, because I could see some prisoners being taken out with their belongings—an indication they were being released—and since my name was not called I knew I was not being set free that day.

As I stood there and prayed I heard someone calling: "Gorodetzky, your belongings!" That meant immediate release.

I quickly finished praying *shmone esreh* and took my belongings.

An hour later I was a free man. As I left the prison it was nighttime. I stood outside in the street and wondered whether I was actually breathing the air of freedom or was only dreaming.

On my way I stopped at the post office and sent three telegrams: to our Rabbi, to my parents and to my future father-in-law, to announce the good news of my release.

On the night of 13 Nissan, the day of festivity in honor of our beloved leader of sainted memory, the Tzemach Tzede, I arrived home safely. That night my friends came over to celebrate my release, and we conferred for a long time.

On the last day of Pesach we all gathered, our own as well as others, at the Lubavitch bes midrash to give thanks to the Holy One, Blessed Be He, for the deliverance. We met until midnight, and I arranged on the spot for the studies to continue the next day both in the lower and higher yeshivos, as was done prior to my arrest.

It might be of interest to explain how I was released:

During the time of the Czar, Kiev was the center of the Russian Church. The center was headquartered in a place called Pcherske Lavres. This center included, among other things, a huge candle factory which supplied candles to all the churches throughout Russia. The director of that factory was a converted Jew named Taver, who was appointed to this position after his conversion.

The anti-clerical communists put this religious center under their own control and supervision to ensure that the place not be used for counter-revolutionary activities. The place was under the jurisdiction of the Religious Affairs division of the NKVD.

After the old apostate died the job was transferred to his son, who served as an agent of the NKVD. Since the son was raised among priests and bishops, they all considered him one of them and trusted him implicitly. He had knowledge of all the affairs of the clergy and reported them to his superiors at the NKVD.

When the authorities began to step up their campaign against the Jews, they planted Taver in the Jewish community as their agent by appointing him head of the Kehillah. He also served as the gabbai of the Reform synagogue.

The NKVD did not stop there. They also wanted to know what was going on among the observant Jews, who attended the Koptzker synagogue, and began to pressure the community to merge the two syna-

gogues. Against the strong opposition of the observant Jews they united the two institutions under one authority, appointed Taver as head of the new united synagogue.

It was the time of the NEP (new economic policy), when considerable latitude was given to free enterprise, and private businesses were allowed to engage lawyers to take care of their affairs. Taver, the owner of the candle factory, had a private lawyer who also worked for a candy factory run by an observant Jew named Pestovsky, who was the gabbai of the Lubavitch synagogue.

One day this lawyer went to see Pestovsky and found him quite perturbed. When he asked him for the reason, Pestovsky told him about my arrest—the arrest of his Rabbi—and said I might die of hunger during Pesach, since I would not eat anything not Kosher for Pesach.

The lawyer took down all the information about me and got in touch with Taver who immediately got in touch with the NKVD. Thanks to his intercession I was released before the holiday. At his request, I met him during Hol Hamoed to become personally acquainted, and he told me about his efforts to release me. The release stipulated that I return to the prison immediately after the holiday, but he told me not to go back since he would use his contacts to secure my definitive release.

He kept his promise and I did not have to serve any more time. Since that day I was able to secure his help for anything I needed.

He helped me with the matter of the mikveh, as will be seen below, and with many other matters pertaining to religious observance. Once he even told me: *"Ich bin doch a Yid"* (In spite of everything I am a Jew).

I travelled to our Rabbi for the festival of Shavuos. I had my *oifrufenish* (call to the Torah prior to the nuptials), and on 10 Sivan we were married in Neval.

I asked our Rabbi for instructions how to behave, and he told me I could manage anything, but I had to be cautious and secretive. I could, however, serve openly as a Rabbi, since at that time one was still allowed to serve in that capacity.

My father travelled from Neval to Leningrad to see our Rabbi. When he arrived in Leningrad the Rebbe told him to remain at his home because of my father's delicate health. The Rebbe himself was going to let him know when they could meet in private.

On the third day he was told to come that evening to see the Rebbe. Our Rabbi kept him for several hours—he was the only person the Rebbe saw that evening—and told him about the Rabbis' meeting in Leningrad in the year 5686 (1926) and about his opposition to the meeting. The Rebbe even said to him: "I know this matter involves the GPU. But, after all, you are a Rabbi, could I have acted any other way? It was a danger to all Jews!" *(Ich veis az dos shmekt mit GPU. Ober ihr zeit doch ah rov, zogt ihr, tzu meg ich handlen anderesh? S'iz doch a sakoneh far di gantze yiddishkeit).*

The private meeting with the Rebbe ended close to midnight, and my father went back to his inn. An hour later GPU agents arrived and arrested our Rabbi. This was the well-known arrest of our Rabbi on Tuesday, 14 Sivan, 5687 (1927), recorded by the Rebbe himself in his arrest story.

I should point out that I myself was not allowed to leave Kiev, and since I had to travel to Neval to my own wedding I had to look for ways to get there. I visited Taver and asked him to help me. He told me he would take care of it and talk to the GPU, and that I could go to Neval but only stay there a few days.

I arranged with my father to meet him in Neval on his way home to Poritch, since Neval was on the way. Indeed, on Tuesday, when my father found out he could have an audition with the Rebbe that evening, he told me he was going home on Wednesday and would meet me on the way.

On 15 Sivan, when I returned to Keiv, while I was waiting at the train station in Neval, I met my beloved father, rest his soul, on his way home from the Rebbe. I could tell he was distressed. I asked him what had happened, but he would not say anything. During the entire trip I could tell he was extremely unhappy, yet he refused to let me know why. Before he left the station to take the carriage to Poritch by way of Shedrin, as I was about to go in the opposite direction, he told me, as we said goodbye, with tears in his eyes, that last night our Rabbi was arrested.

When I arrived in Kiev I prevailed upon the teachers to continue their work as before and discharge their holy duties.

On 3 Tammuz we received a telegram announcing the release of our Rabbi. I prepared a festive meal and we celebrated the release. The next day we found out our joy was premature, since the Rebbe had been exiled to Kastroma.

On 13 Tammuz we learned that our Rabbi was fully released, and was on his way home. Needless to say, our joy knew no bounds.

I was later told by my father-in-law our Rabbi was planning to travel abroad. Because of my illness I was not able to travel to the Rebbe on Rosh Hashana, and instead I went at the end of Sukkos.

As the holiday ended, I went in to see the Rebbe before leaving. Our Rabbi told me: "Do your best to discharge your rabbinic duties and do your work as before, as the need arises and wherever necessary. Your regular place will be the same as before: Kiev, Podol, Voholin. G-d willing we will write to each other."

Upon my return to Kiev I began to attend to the affairs of the Chassidic association in the city. I started a Gemilus Chassadim fund. My first 250 rubles came from our Rabbi from Riga. I also received donations from R. Gershon Pinchasnik, may G-d avenge his blood, who was martyrized during the War, the Bass brother, R. Hillel Leviant, and others.

Much assistance was given to the association by R. Meir Yosselson. He was a student of the Chassid R. Abba Persitz.

I offered a lesson in the Tanya once a week at the great Bes Midrash in Kiev—the Kopetzki Bes Midrash. In addition to my own people, many people from other circles came to the lesson. I also gave a lesson at the Lubavitch Bes Midrash in Gemarah, Tanya and other subjects. But most of my work was in the field of education.

By the end of 5688 (1928) the authorities shut down the mikveh in Podol. At first they did it under the pretext that they had to repair the place, but then they shut it down indefinitely. They were also going to shut down the mikveh in the center of the city, but this was delayed for another reason.

As I have mentioned before, I had close ties with Traver, the head of the Jewish Kehillah. When the city mikveh was in danger of being closed, I asked Taver to help us keep it open and see to it that it was repaired. He suggested we do our own repairs, and told me the bitter truth: the authorities wanted to close it altogther, as they did with the mikveh in Podol. But, he added, they may agree to the idea of the "repair." He advised me to tell the authorities that we would like to do our own repairs, and promised to seek permission to undertake this task.

I called a meeting of the Rabbis to discuss the problem of the mikveh. I could not tell them I had met with Taver, and so I made my

own suggestion to do our own repairs. They asked me to take charge of the matter, to which I agreed.

For two years all went well with the mikveh, when one day the authorities once again insisted that the mikveh needed "thorough repairs." I hastened to see Taver again and asked for his advice and influence. He told me this time the matter was quite serious and there was no way of changing the decree. Much to our regret, we were not able to do anything. The mikveh was shut with chain and lock.

Now I had to construct a clandestine mikveh. It was almost impossible to find the right place, secure building materials, and do the actual building, all of which had to be done without arousing any suspicions that a ritual bath was being built at the particular spot, which would have put us in danger and would have resulted in the destruction of the mikveh.

The first to enlist in this noble cause was R. Yaakov Meislik, "Jacob the Carpenter," who donated part of his apartment, in the center of Podol, for that purpose.

We purposely chose a central location, because of the great commotion in that place, which would divert attention from the fact that we were bringing over bricks and limestone, or that we were koshering the mikveh, or that the women were starting to go there for the ritual immersion.

In order to guard our secret during the construction of the bath, we did all the hard labor ourselves until, praise G-d, we brought the task to completion.

After the mikveh was finished, I got in touch with R. Eisik Lifschitz, rest his soul, for a suitable place for a mikveh in another area. He found a most appropriate place in Salonovka, and we built a kosher rain water mikveh. Thus we were able to establish two ritual baths for the community of Kiev which were used for a long time.

Chapter Three

The Rabbinical Gathering—"Then They Gathered"

Organizing the Rabbinical Gathering in 5688 (1928) / Founding Tahoro-Mikveh in Haronosteipla / My Arrest Because of the Mikveh/The Arrest of My Father-in-Law and His Exile to Siberia for Three Years

In the summer of 5688 (1928) I worked on organizing—with our Rabbi's approval—the gathering of the Chabad Rabbis who worked with our people—either in their own community or in other parts of the country.

In order to keep it a secret we called the activity "Then They Gathered." The rabbis who participated in this gathering were: Rabbi Moshe Axelrad, the Rabbi of Suraz; Rabbi Yerahmiel Binyominson of Zlabin; Rabbi S.Z. Schneursohn; my father-in-law, Rabbi Shmuel Levitan, who was our Rabbi's representative; Rabbi Yaakov Moskolik; and the hosid Rabbi Mendel Abramson who was a committee member appointed by the Rebbe. We met for a whole week in Mlachovka, outside of Moscow. As a precautionary measure, we met each night in a different place. Our agenda included various subjects, such as the role of each one of us, finding ways for each one of us to work in his community or throughout the country, and how to maintain correspondence with other Rabbis who were not able to attend the gathering without getting into trouble, by using a code instead of

mentioning anyone by name.

Since I was charged with the major part of the work, and my territory was rather populated, I undertook to organize a secret executive committee, consisting of the Rabbis of the communities in my region.

We assembled several times in Kiev, in my house or elsewhere. Most of our work focused on education, mikvehs, kashrus, and Torah lessons in the academies. In the area of family purity (*taharos hamishpocheh*) we had to make a special effort, especially in building mikvehs and repairing them as best we could.

More than once I had to fight over the proper condition of the mikveh, the heating, the cleanliness, and all other physical aspects.

In Heshvan 5689 (1928) I travelled to Harnosteipla where the Tzaddik R. Mordechai Ber, may his merit protect us, used to lived. There were more than one hundred Jewish families there and no mikveh.

I arrived there on Thursday evening and met with the old kosher butcher who had served the community back in the days of the Tzaddik. When he heard what my mission was he was quite amazed and told me it was a great act of self-sacrifice.

On the holy Sabbath, before the reading of the Torah, I went up on the bimah and addressed the public concerning the matter of family purity, the strict prohibitions related to it, and the urgent need for a proper kosher mikveh. There was great responsiveness on the part of the local Jews who attended that morning almost to a man.

During the Third Meal I offered words of Torah at that synagogue. When the Sabbath ended, immediately after Havdalah, all the people gathered at the synagogue and immediately formed a committee of five men who undertook to establish a mikveh for purification. Some people made considerable donations, and anyone who did not have money with him promised to pay later on. Everyone without exception pledged to contribute to this cause, and the women instructed their husbands to make generous donations.

They chose a place in the yard of that synagogue for the construction of the mikveh. I instructed them regarding the construction, and I promised to kosher it after it was finished, or invite the Rabbi of Tchernobil, who was 15 pharasangs away, to come and do it.

I could not stay there for another day because of the great attention I had attracted to myself. Since the boat for Kiev left in the morning, I had to wait until the next day. I intended to visit the grave of the

Admor of Hronosteipla in the morning and pray *shacharis*, and I ordered a carriage for 10 o'clock.

The next day after I returned to the house to take the carriage, it was already there waiting for me. However, next to the house I ran into a government official who asked me to come with him. I could not refuse him and I had to go along.

When I arrived there I saw all the members of the committee who were chosen the day before. They all seemed quite frightened. They told me they had just been asked about me, and they were sure I was going to be arrested. They also told me that a special emissary had just arrived from Tchernobil, the government headquarters of the region, in order to find out what had taken place at the synagogue the day before. I told them what to say if anyone asked again about me.

After half an hour two soldiers arrived on horseback. One ordered me to take my belongings and follow him on foot to Tchernobil.

The local people, who were apprised of my arrest, offered to put a special carriage at my disposal so that I would not have to go on foot. In addition, three messengers were sent immediately to Tchernobil to inform the local rabbi of my arrest and see what could be done.

I had with me one of my students, whom I had sent there to serve as an assistant to the local butcher, Nissan was his name, and I asked him to go immediately to Kiev and see to it that there was nothing suspicious in my house, although I always took great care not to have anything at home that could incriminate me.

We arrived in Tchernobil at 4 o'clock. They put me under arrest and waited for the NKVD agents to arrive. The NKVD representative in Tchernobil was a young man from Kiev who was friend of the Rabbi of Tchernobil. He asked him not to put me in the same cell with murderers, thieves and robbers. The agent complied and did not put me with hardened criminals. I was also given kosher food and I was told I would probably be released in the morning.

At midnight I had a visit. The NKVD agent came to see me. His face was somber and it struck fear in my heart. It was customary for the NKVD to visit a prisoner in the middle of the night to make the investigation as frightening and painful as possible.

He began to question me, shooting one question after another: Who are you? What is the purpose of your visit here? What are you doing here?

I told him I was a rabbi and a preacher and I made a living going from town to town and from village to village preaching to Jews, and I supported myself from the donations I received.

In those days there was no prohibition to engage in such activities, and since I was a legally approved rabbi, I thought my answer would satisfy, him. He refused, however, to accept my answer, and wrote out a statement which he asked me to sign.

I refused to sign.

The next morning when they brought me my food I asked them to intercede on my behalf and secure my release. I could tell he was a harsh person and I needed special intercession.

I sat all day in a room with people whose culpability had not been established and who were being investigated. At night the person in charge summoned me again and gave me an official form which stated that I agree not to visit those communities again and preach to the public about mikveh and other matters of that kind and not propagandize for Judaism.

I would not sign. I kept insisting that I had not come for such a purpose but rather to raise money for my subsistance. I was sent back to my cell where I spent another day and night. During that time they tried not to make it too difficult for me. The intercession paid off, since they presented me with a paper, merely stating that I promised not preach in those localities.

This time I signed the statement and I was released. That same day I returned to my home in Kiev.

In the winter of that year, in the month of Kislev, NKVD agents from Viliki-Loki came to Neval and arrested my father-in-law, Rabbi Shmuel Levitan, who at that time was the director of the rabbinical school, along with some students such as Hanan Movietki, Tzvi Batziakov and others. They also looked for R. Yehuda Eber and others, but could not find them. The prisoners were taken to the jail in Viliki-Loki.

We had no choice but to remove the yeshiva from Neval. I proposed to transfer some of the students to Kiev and have one of our men manage the yeshiva. Along with the students they sent Michael Lipsker. After they arrived I also invited R. Abraham Dreizin and together with R. S. Z. Schneursohn we travelled to Viliki-Loki to intercede on behalf of my father-in-law.

Our intercession did not produce any results.

There were few Jews living in Viliki-Loki, but they had good connections with the local officials. There was a Lubavitch hosid in this town, who told us there was a chance to release him.

We stayed there for two months, and spent the better part of our efforts and our money, but made no progress. Those whom we contacted only took our money and then dismissed us with all sorts of excuses.

In the end they transferred him from Viliki-Loki to the central prison of Butirka in Moscow, where he remained for six months until they exiled him to Siberia for three years.

Among those who ran the yeshiva in Neval, as was mentioned before, were R. Abraham Dreizin and R. Michael Lipsker. But in reality I shouldered the entire burden since we had to constantly look for different homes for the yeshiva. Whenever there was the slightest suspicion that someone was spying on us, we had to find another synagogue right away in which to study. Very often I had to talk to the gabaim and the rabbis of the synagogues, to persuade them to let us study in their place. More than once I had to work on removing undesirable gabaim from their position, and find others to replace them. Sometimes it was easy to do, and other times it required begging and pleading or even threats. Thank G-d I was successful in my endeavors of finding the right places as well as the funds. For that purpose.

Chapter Four

The Rabbis Sign a Declaration

The Rabbis in Russia without Means of Subsistence / Soviet Authorities Object to the Lubavitcher Rebbe's Leadership / Mass Petition of Russian Rabbis in Behalf of the Rebbe / Difficulties in Helping the Rabbis / My Appointment as Financial Director

In 5689 (1929), while our Rabbi was in Riga, he decided to visit the United States in behalf of the Jews of Russia and seek help for the rabbis and institutions in the Soviet Union. In those days Jewish life in Russia was crumbling and the rabbis remained without means of livelihood.

The Russian authorities had made a great effort to organize a Jewish community in Leningrad which would become the only official community to represent all of Russian Jewry. Their sole intention was to use it as a counterweight against our Rabbi's leadership so that he could not receive funds from American Jewry, the JDC Distribution Committee, and others.

The authorities looked for all sorts of ways to make it known that the Lubavitcher Rebbe did not represent all of Soviet Jewry. Now that our Rabbi was out of the country they could argue that he was no longer in their territory, was not in effect a Russian citizen, and had no right to represent Soviet Jewry.

GRATZ COLLEGE LIBRARY
PHILADELPHIA, PA.

In order to foil their plan, we decided to organize a mass petition of Russian rabbis who would state that the Lubavitcher Rebbe was indeed their sole leader representing Russian Jewry, although he did not live in that country.

Since signing such a petition put the signatories in serious danger, they found a clever way of doing it.

Whenever our Rabbi stayed in Russia, he had a board of rabbis known throughout the world who stood behind him, such as Rabbi Milkovski of Kharkov; Rabbi Klemes, the Rabbi of Moscow; Rabbi Mendel Gloskin of Minsk; Rabbi Yehezkel Abramski of Slotzk; and the famous philanthropist R. Avraham Hornstein of Kiev.

All of them signed a statement to the effect that the Lubavitcher Rebbe is the sole representative of Russian Jewry. This statement was called a Gilui Daas (Declaration).

They proceeded to visit rabbis throughout Russia, and asked them to agree in writing to the declaration, thus avoiding any danger, since all they did was sign a book called Gilui Daas.

I spent over two months obtaining signatures and during that time I visited more than two hundred rabbis in the area of Kiev, Podol and Voholin, where each community had several rabbis who signed and gave their consent. It was a formidable task fraught with fear and difficulties, as well as obvious miracles.

During that period I had added difficulties in sending aid to the rabbis in the districts of Kiev, Podol and Voholin. Each month I would send them assistance without specifying who the sender was, and made sure not to send the letters from Kiev but from nearby places in order not to leave any traces.

I would like to mention in this regard that as soon as our Rabbi arrived in the United States he established a special fund for aiding the rabbis of Russia, especially those who had no source of subsistence. He would transfer the necessary funds to us and give us instructions as to how to distribute the funds.

We had many difficulties in obtaining the funds because of the constant need to convert the money the Rebbe sent us for local currency.

In Tishre 5691 (1931) I received a letter from our Rabbi. Since R. Moshe Gur Aryeh, who managed the funds in the Rebbe's name in Moscow, was going abroad, the Rebbe decided to put me in charge of this work. I had to go to Moscow immediately and take charge of the

financial affairs, since Gur Aryeh was leaving immediately after the Holy Days.

As soon as I received the letter I went to Moscow. I spent the last days of Sukkos there and received all I needed.

After the holiday I visited Dr. Razin, the JDC representative in Russia. I asked him to send me the necessary documents to travel abroad, since the authorities were allowing travel abroad provided one had a travel ticket paid for in foreign currency. He promised to honor my request.

Chapter Five

Trial and Tribulations

Transfer to Moscow / Sudden Arrest on the Train / Harsh Jail Conditions / Painful Investigation / Transfer to Another Jail / First News from the Family / News of My Oldest Daughter's Birth / Three Years of Prison and Exile in the North

After I took charge of the finances I had to transfer my family to Moscow. I returned to Kiev by way of Hamil where a section of the yeshiva was located. I spent Shabbos at the home of R. Avraham Katzenlboigen of blessed memory, who was involved in the affairs of Tomchei Temimim.

When the Holy Sabbath day ended, we met at the home of R. Avraham along with the yeshivah students. The meeting was held in a secret part of the house.

Several times during the night there was knocking on the door and someone asked if Rabbi Gorodetzky was there, since a telegram for him had just arrived. The answer, of course, was no, he was not there. It must have been an NKVD agent dressed as a mailman.

R. Avraham Katzenlboigen was one of the older Chassidim. He had been ordered by our Rabbi to fast periodically, visit synagogues, and declare in public that according to the law it was permissible to teach Torah to Jewish children despite the objection of the Yevsektzia.

He performed his mission with total devotion, visited the various synagogues, and made public proclamations.

On Sunday morning I went to the train station in order to take the train to Kiev. I made sure not to have anyone accompany me to the station as a precautionary measure, but instead have someone at the station as a witness that I left town.

I boarded the train from Minsk to Kremenchug and occupied the reserved seat marked on my ticket. It was an express train which was expected to leave on time. For some reason it failed to depart, which I could not understand.

Suddenly I saw the chief inspector come over. He asked me for my destination, scrutinized my ticket, and told me to take my belongings and follow him, in order to change trains. I knew right away it was no simple matter, but I had no choice but to obey his order.

I remained standing in the passageway at the end of the car, waiting for the inspector.

After he left a man dressed in civilian clothes came out of a compartment and stood next to me. I realized immediately he was an NKVD agent. I went into the next car where I saw another NKVD agent.

I had a paper in my pocket containing a financial record. I knew that it was dangerous to let that paper be seized by the police, and I had to dispose of it immediately. I put it in my upper coat pocket so I could dispose of it quickly if need be.

I put my hand in my pocket and held the paper, ready to destroy it or throw it away. As I was waiting, the stranger approached me and asked me why I was standing there.

I told him I was waiting for the conductor who promised me a seat on another train. As we were talking, I looked straight into this face and I managed to throw out the paper through a crack between the two cars. Suddenly the train stopped in an open field, where no trains normally stopped. The man next to the door turned to me and said in Yiddish, *Kumt arup* (please get off)! At that very moment the door of the small compartment opened and another GPU agent came out, carrying my bundle. He pushed me from behind, saying *Geit, geit, farvus vart ir* (Go, why do you wait)?! They signalled to the train conductor to resume the journey, and the train continued on its way.

At that moment I saw an elegant black car, the kind known to prisoners as the *Schwartzer vorm* (the black worm), approaching us. The

two motioned to the driver to come over quickly. He stopped next to us, and one of them opened the door and gave me his hand, saying, *Sholem aleichem Kiever Rebbe*! *Ir vet ein-gichen zich zehn mit eiyer shver, Reb Shmuel Kuteizer—in Sibir*! . . . (Greetings, Rabbi of Kiev, soon you will be able to see your father-in-law, R. Shmuel of Kuteis, in Siberia!)

At that moment I was overcome with fear. They knew everything about me. But I soon recovered and told them: People live there too.

This man, named Siminovski, a native of Zlabin and a former student of the Volozhin yeshiva, was in charge of the secret division in the NKVD. The men standing behind him were his assistants.

They took me to a large building surrounded by a stone wall with a locked iron gate. The gate was opened and we entered a large yard. They locked the gate and I was escorted to a cellar deep in the ground. Inside the cellar they took me to the last cell on the row, with a round ceiling, where I could stand upright only in one corner.

In the cell there were two stakes cemented to the ground with a board above them, riveted to the wall. The board could only be used at night as a bed to sleep on, but during the day it had to be folded against the wall. One was not allowed to lie down during the day, only stand or sit.

In the corner of the cell there was a bucket for the prisoner's needs.

The general aspect of the place made a terrible impression on me, and I became extremely depressed. I stood up to pray mincha and I lay down and fell asleep in utter dejection.

At one o'clock in the morning I was awakened by an armed guard who ordered me to accompany him. He took me through many rooms, and in each room I saw armed guards, each of them pointing at me in order to intimidate me.

I was taken through a series of rooms until we entered a room where I saw Siminovski sitting at the head of table with his two assistants on either side. They told me to sit down opposite him and started shooting questions at me in Yiddish: Who are you ? Where did you come from? What is the purpose of your visit? Whom do you know and where did you stay during your visit to Hamil?

I answered each question clearly, but they would not relent: Why did you visit such and such person? Don't you know the students of the Tomchei Temimim Yeshiva? Are you not an emissary of the Lubavitcher Rebbe in charge of starting Hebrew schools and yeshivos for the youth?

"You should know," they muttered, "that we are fully aware of the fact that since the Rebbe went abroad you continue to manage his affairs in our country, and we have been following you and we know your every move. On such and such a day you went to such and such a place in Moscow, and then you arrived in such and such a place, on such and such a day. At a certain time you visited old man Avraham Katzenlboigen, and on a certain day you held a meeting and took part in a Chassidic get-together.

"We know very well all your activities, and we know Rabbi Klemes in Moscow, and Rabbi Mendel Leib Abrahamson, and your brother, and all the rest. We have expelled your father-in-law to Siberia and your intercession on his behalf did not do any good.

"Now finally your turn has arrived. If you have any brain in your head, you would confess your actions and we will be able to issue a quick sentence. Otherwise, you will rot right here in this cellar!"

I got up my courage and with a smile I told them without raising my voice that I did not know anything and had nothing to do with what they accused me of. I was travelling in order to take care of my private affairs, as I have already told them before, and in any case, they were going do to me whatever they wanted to do. I only hoped to G-d that they would not treat me too harshly, because I was innocent.

They lost their patience and began to insult me, as if they were drunk. I told them I had no desire to hear such talk, especially since they were the ones who arrested me and brought me there, and they had to be careful using such language! They were infuriated and they shouted at me: "Wait, we will teach you a lesson!"

Their chief ordered me back to my cell. At my request, they gave me back my tefilin.

I spent two weeks in that jail without being summoned for any questioning. I was given a 300 gram slice of bread, a cup of water in the morning and one in the evening. Since it was not enough for washing the hands in the morning before the prayer, washing the hands before the meal and drinking as well, I often had to forgo drinking despite the excruciating thirst. Quite often I had to give up my little morsel of bread because I had no water for the ritual washing of the hands.

All the time I sat in jail no one knew where I had disappeared or where I had been taken to. My wife went from place to place to inquire about me, but wherever she went she was told no one knew of

my whereabouts. She visited the General Prosecutor of White Russia in Minsk, and the General Prosecutor of Moscow, but wherever she went the answer was the same: we do not have such a prisoner! It has never happened in Russia that a man is arrested and no one would report it. He must have been killed somewhere.

It should be noted that this was the first case of a person arrested in those days without anything being reported.

Two months later my wife went back to Minsk and pleaded with the authorities to reveal the place of my detainment. They advised her to go to Homil, perhaps she might find me there.

On 19 Kislev, during the mincha prayer, I besieged the Almighty to recall the merit of that great tzaddik, our Great Rabbi, whose anniversary was that day , to take me out of the dark vale, and as in those days so today He should work a miracle and set me free, in remembrance of the great self-sacrifice of our Rabbi, whose bidding I was doing.

After the mincha prayer I sat on the board and started to intone some Chassidic melody, and go over words of Torah in honor of the day, when I heard the clanging of keys in the door. The door to my cell opened and I saw a guard. He threw my bundel angrily into my cell and shouted at me: "Take your bundle!"

I picked it up and opened it. It was sent to me by my wife. I was happy to find different kinds of food which she had prepared for me.

I was extremely happy when I realized that my family finally found out where I was. But on the other hand, my joy was not complete because I had hoped that on that great day I was going to be set free, or at least be transferred to another prison.

Conditions in that jail were very harsh and my suffering was most acute. Unlike other inmates, I was not allowed to go out into the open air, and even the bucket in my room was not taken out to be cleaned.

One can imagine the suffering of a human being who for two weeks is not allowed to see the light of day and is kept under the most subhuman conditions.

Only once was I taken out of my cell and transferred to another cell. Here I met a young Jew who had been put there in order to engage me in long conversations and get some information out of me. But thank G-d I caught on to it and exercised caution, not letting him get anything out of me, and so after a short while they put me back in my cell. How amazed was I as I walked into my cell to find out that

they had put two hardened criminals in my cell, who proceeded to occupy my bench and barely left me room to squeeze in!

The prisoners had their own rules. If one prisoner seized the place of another, the first one was not allowed to reclaim his place, no matter who he was. In order to make things difficult for me they proceeded to act according to those rules. After I was taken out of my cell they had brought in those two to make it look as if they were before me, and I just came into their turf.

Those two did everything they could to make my life miserable. For instance, they would relieve themselves the moment I would stand up to pray. One can imagine my condition, a Jew in one small cell with criminals, pretending it was their cell while I was intruding on their privacy.

Only He who gives strength to the weary gave me the strength to endure such suffering! As if I was not enduring enough already, they made it even harder for me. After they took those two out of the cell, they started burning wood in the furnace in my cell and filling the cell with suffocating smoke for days on end. The heat was unbearable, and I found myself lying on the ground nearly unconscious.

Each day the doctor came in to check me. Siminovski, the investigator, also came in and threatened me: "If you remain obdurate, you will rot here. You will not even be given proper Jewish burial!"

I was about to pass out and could not react. The doctor took me out of the cell, gave me some medication and took me to a cooler room until I regained my consciousness. Since I was used to cold weather, I was able to withstand the low temperature in that room, and I felt much better than I did in the suffocating heat.

By that time they had already received the various files on me which they had ordered from the NKVD offices in Kiev, dating back to 1927 and to Horonosteipla. Now they had a clearer picture of me, and they knew that my argument that I was perfectly innocent was not true.

The investigation intensified, and I was constantly pressured to admit my guilt or suffer a much worse fate. For four months they dragged me out each day and threatened me in all sorts of ways. When they realized they could not persuade me to admit anything they decided to transfer me to the city prison in Hamil.

The prison was quite crowded. In a room intended for thirty prisoners they squeezed close to one hundred. I was held in that place for

seven months, but I kept insisting I was innocent, when they realized they were not getting anywhere with me they sent me to the central prison of Moscow. I was taken in the section of the train called Stalipinska. That section had iron bars on the windows. Each compartment held six to eight prisoners, but they squeezed in twenty to twenty-six. The congestion was indescribable. We practically had to lie one on top of the other.

On the way to Moscow we had to stop in Bransk, where there was a large jail. Around that town there were forests infested with robbers and other criminals, and the jail housed some of those people.

This place was a center for all sorts of inmates, and I was a single Jew among all of them. They noticed that I had brought some food and they thought I was a well-to-do person, so they kept an eye on me.

It is the custom of prisoners to appoint a cell or room head, who is responsible to the authorities for what takes place among the prisoners in his place. The head is usually someone who has been in for a long time, or someone who is exceptionally strong and aggressive.

I befriended the head of my cell and tried to get on his good side. I gave him food which I could not eat for ritual reasons, and some other gifts, and he made sure nothing happened to me, and with the help of G-d I was not harmed by the other inmates.

When the prisoners were brought into the jail and assigned their cells, each prisoner would rush to grab his own bunk—a wooden shelf that was used as a bed. Since the inmates who came with me were faster than I, they grabbed all the bunks and I was left without a bed. I was forced to sleep on the cold floor, under the table. I put down my valise and used it as a pillow. Since my keys had been stolen, I had to guard it all the time.

After I lay down I noticed someone approaching my valise. I raised my head and the person withdrew. Moments later he came back, and I saw him talking to the cell leader. I turned to them and told them I had lost my keys, could they help me find them. This other person whispered in my ear he knew who had taken them and asked me if I was willing to pay him for getting them back to me.

The inmates used to play cards in jail, and since they were not allowed to have money they used other inmates' belongings instead. Those unfortunate inmates had to give whatever they were asked to give, and would be in great trouble if they refused the card players.

When he asked me what would I give him in return for the keys, I said I had no money, but I could give him some loaves of bread and sugar which my wife had given me. Since that day he made sure nothing happened to me.

Before I was transferred to Moscow I had been put in another room. That day, after I finished praying, my prayer shawl and tefilin were stolen. I looked everywhere, but in vain. I told the cell leader about it, and even gave him a bribe. Soon my prayer shawl and tefilin were returned.

I spent two weeks in the Brank prison, when we were prepared for another journey.

They crowded us into a special prisoner train, called Stalipinska, and took us to Moscow, where we arrived on Shavuos. I was kept three months in the Moscow prison, and was constantly questioned by the NKVD. I kept insisting I was innocent and refused to sign anything.

An interesting thing happened to me at that time:

One day, after I had not received anything from home for a whole month, I got a food package. The name of the sender was written on a slip of paper: Freida. I assumed that the package was sent by my brother Simcha (freid in Yiddish).

I was quite happy to receive the package, not having received anything for such a long time, and especially since I was under great stress, having not heard anything from my family. I waited in particular for the good news about the birth of my first child, as well as the activity for my release.

One had to exercise great caution looking for any slip of paper hidden in the package, to make sure the other inmates did not notice it, and so I could not look for anything inside the package before I was certain nothing had been put in. One can imagine the tension I felt until I was to search my package.

Finally, after a thorough search, I did find a slip of paper, sewn inside a cloth sugar bag. I was told my first daughter was born on the night of 12 Tammuz, and was named Freida, joy, marking the joy of a birth of a daughter and the Holiday of Redemption of 12 Tammuz, on which our Holy Rabbi was released from jail.

After a short while I noticed that the package had disappeared. I did not know who had taken it, but I suspected two of the inmates.

Those two were were well-known ruffians, hardened criminals, who told me themselves it was their 28th time in jail.

Twice a day the prisoners were let out to relieve themselves. This was announced ahead of time to make sure everyone was ready.

When the inmates got ready to leave the room, I stood first in line and when the door opened I hid behind the door until they all quickly went out. The guard told me to return to the room. Once alone, I searched the entire area and found my package which was well hidden.

Because of the good neighborliness, I gave them some of the food I had received, much to their satisfaction.

In the end, the investigator hinted to me that he was willing to release me on condition that I would not go back to Kiev and remained to live in Moscow. When I accepted his offer, he told me that I would have to be in touch with him on a regular basis, and obey his orders. I immediately understood what he was alluding to, and I told him it was out of the question and I was not about to undertake such an assignment.

When he heard my answer he became incensed and slammed the door behind him.

The next day I was given my sentence: Three years of prison in Kotlas, in the north of Russia.

At this point I would like to mention that one day while I was in jail the authorities installed heavy iron blocks on the cell windows. It was an added torture for the prisoners, intended to prevent them from seeing the inmates who were outside in the yard taking their walk. It was a further torture because the hot rays of the sun heated up the iron blocks and caused horrible heat and suffocation in the cells, in addition to the lack of air which already existed and the foul smell caused by the buckets in the cells. The situation became a public scandal, and eventually the iron blocks were removed.

While I was in that prison something interesting happened to me on the Sabbath, Shabbos Rosh Hodesh Elul, 5691 (1931). While I watched the inmates in taking their stroll in the jail yard I saw from my cell the illustrious Rabbi Yehezkel Abramski of sainted memory, walking about with the other prisoners. When he saw me he shouted at me, "He who performed miracles . . . " He must have been saying the Rosh Hodesh blessing. I shouted back at him, "May the Holy One Blessed Be He renew him." Rabbi Abramski was imprisoned

after he received a visit of a rabbinical delegation from Great Britain, in 5690 (1930), while he served as rabbi in Slotzk. His punishment was five years in jail and exile to Siberia. His arrest caused a great storm of protest abroad and the authorities were forced to release him and expel him from the country. On the way to his expulsion he was brought to the Butorski jail in Moscow where I saw him.

Chapter Six

Exile

In a Concentration Camp where Hundreds of Thousands Were Liquidated / Transfer to Kotlas / With the Jewish Commander in All the Concentration Camps / Together with Christian Priests / The Ship Leaves on the Sabbath and Leaves Me All Alone

On the way to my new place of detention, Kotlas, we stopped at the prison in Viatka. In Kotlas they were preparing a new prisoner camp in order to use the inmates to cut down trees and take them to the river.

This camp was built after the infamous Salapki camp, which was established immediately after the Bolshevik Revolution, was shut down. In this camp hundreds of thousands of prisoners had been liquidated, and in the thirties the place caused a great uproar in the world because of the mass extermination, and the authorities were forced to close this place of horror and build another camp instead in Kotlas.

The Viatka prison was a giant central prison, where prisoners were transferred from all over their country on their way to Siberia and other places. At that time it held tens of thousands of prisoners. Some of them had spent many years there, and there was no end to their suffering.

We were taken off the train at that place, and all our protests and insistence to be taken to to Kotlass, fell on deaf ears. There was no one to talk to and no one to reason with. Luckily, a typhoid epidemic was raging at that place, and since they were afraid the disease might spread among the thousands of prisoners they stopped sending prisoners to the place. They also wanted to send away the prisoners in the section not yet affected by the disease. Thus, after staying there for ten days we were sent away.

On the day of our transfer we were lined up and were ordered to march 3 kilometers on foot, from the prison in one end of town to the train station at the other end.

Special guards, fully armed and equipped with police dogs, kept watch over us. That day it rained and we had to march in the torrential rain, without finding any shelter. It was a regualr flood, and we were soaked to our bones.

When we arrived at the train station they pushed us into the train. In each compartment they stuffed twenty persons instead of the usual six or eight, and we remained glued to one another, unable to move. We travelled in this manner for a whole night. Our condition was dismal, and only by miracle we survived the journey, wet to our bones, freezing, unable to move a limb.

In the morning we finally arrived in Kotlas, where we were put in barracks and each had to grab his own place. I kept insisting I did not belong in a closed barrack since I was a political prisoner, and I was entitled to stay in an open camp. Needless to say, I was a voice calling in the wilderness, and no one paid any attention to me.

After a few hours we were ordered to resume our journey of twenty more kilometers, to a camp near the forest.

We boarded a small ship. At dawn we unboarded the ship and shuffled our feet for about two kilometers, until we arrived at a large camp. In this place we were told to get settled and be ready in one hour to be taken to our place of work in the forest, to chop down trees and take them to the river.

I kept insisting I was a political prisoner who had been sentenced to exile, and it was not my job to cut down trees.

I remained alone in the camp with my valise in my hand. When the dawn broke I saw in the distance a small mound and a tree, and I began to say the morning prayers. As I was praying someone went up on the mound and started addressing a group of prisoners. From his

gestures I could tell that he was Jewish, and I imagined him to be an important personality with whom I might wish to come in contact.

I hastened to finish the prayer when the speaker finished talking and went away. I ran after him, and when he saw me approaching he shouted at me to stop and not come any closer.

This happened several times. He was indeed a Jew, named Berman, who was later appointed commander of the GPU. At the time he was the commander of all the camps in the area, and since there were many shipments of prisoners in those days, he would often visit the camps and personally supervise the settlement process.

Other prisoners who saw me running after him, asked in surprise: Why are you following him? Don't you know who he is? He is the commander of all the camps, an eveil and heartless person.

And yet this man, who had Jewish blood running in his veins, must have decided to do something for me. He went into the camp office and asked the prisoners who worked there whether there were many like me in the camp, priests or rabbis, who did not work and did not let others work. "What do we need them for?" he continued. "We should ship off this entire gang to Kotlas! We have no use for them!"

There were nine priests in the camp. I had to join them and wait for further instruction from the commandant. I sat on my valise outside the office and waited, afraid of what may happen next. Suddenly one of the office workers came over in a huff and told me, smiling: "You are saved! We have received an order from the chief, Berman, to round up all the priests, including you, and send all of you to Kotlas, since you refuse to work and are not letting others work!"

That day we were given a letter adressed to the command of the Kotlas camp. We had to walk two kilometers to the river where the ships sailing for Kotlas were waiting. When we reached the dock—on a Wednesday—we found out that no ship was leaving. The ships sailed between Kotlas and Vichegorosk each day, but it broke down in Kotlas and was left there for repairs. We waited for the ship for three dats but no ship came. On Friday I was sure we would have to wait until the following week, since the ship would not sail on the Sabbath, and would be able to rest on the holy day.

The conditions in the camp at the time were extremely difficult. There were many escapes, and the surveillance was increased. If a prisoner was suspected of attempting to escpe he would be submitted

to prolonged torture.

There were many different kinds of prisoners in that camp, from all walks of life. It was the early thirties, when Stalin exiled all the nobility, the rich and the privileged, made them leave their homes and their communities to keep them out of the way.

We, who had an official letter ordering us to leave the place, were not afraid and waited calmly for the arrival of the ship.

On Saturday, at five o'clock in the morning, suddenly a large ship began to approach the bank of the river. Since the smaller ship did not sail in four days, there was a shortage of food in the camp, and they had to send the large ship to bring supplies for the thousands of workers who were beginning to suffer from hunger.

As soon as the ship arrived the priests boarded it. I remained standing on the dock, unable to travel because of the holiness of the Sabbath. I remained without the official travel document, since the priests had taken it with them.

On Saturday night the small repaired ship arrived from Kotlas, carrying many prisoners accompanied by NKVD agents. A few hours later a drunk NKVD man came off the ship and stopped when he saw me. He asked me what was I doing there. I gave him my name and told him I have been waiting for four days for the ship to take me to Kotlas. I turned to the guard in the booth nearby and asked him to vouch for my words, that indeed I had been waiting for the ship for four days.

The guard, who was a rabid anti-Semite, ignored my request. He said he had never met me before in his life. I got up my courage and rebuked him for his insolence, denying my presence in that place for four days. He stuck to his guns and refused to admit he had seen me before.

In the meantime the NKVD agent fell asleep in his drunken stupor and I was able to get away. I roamed around all night, unnoticed by anyone because of the dark.

At daybreak I went back to the camp, woke up the man who had given me the letter and told him what had happened to me. I explained that the priests had boarded the ship and left me behind while I was fast asleep, and now I was afraid I might be punished for being a desertor.

I asked him for a copy of the letter he had given me so that I could

resume my journey.

The man complied and gave me the necessary copy. I ran back to the ship, which unfortunately was yet to return. The NKVD agent noticed me and started threatening me with punishment for escaping from the camp. I pulled the letter out of my pocket and showed him that I had official permission to leave. Reluctantly, he nodded his consent and let me go.

Chapter Seven

At Death's Door

The Ship Arrives in Kotlas / Difficulties in Finding a Dwelling / Meeting with Two Jews / A Dying Man / "Last" Meeting / The Situation Improves / One Lamb among Many Wolves

On Sunday morning I boarded the ship for Kotlas, and later that afternoon we reached our destination. I unboarded the ship and stood there, not knowing where to go. As I was standing there and wondering what to do, a young man came over and offered to carry my belongings to the barracks for a small fee. I told him I had no intention to go to barracks where I would become a regular prisoner, but rather was looking for private lodgings. The youth told me that I was not going to find anyone who would give me private accommodations since there were few people living in that place and no one would take in a prisoner because of the typhoid epidemic that had spread among the prisoners.

As I was walking along, accompanied by this youth, wondering about my future, I suddenly saw a woman coming out of her house. She came over to me and said, "You are a Jew, are you not?"

"Yes," I answered, "I have just arrived here, from the camp, and I don't know where to go."

"This is not such a simple matter," she said. "My husband has been exiled to this place." She told me she had a large room in that

house, and for 50 kopeks a night she would let me stay for a few nights.

I gladly accepted her offer. I paid the landlord in advance for the night and I was given a corner to lay down my head in—among all sorts of prisoners, drunks, thieves and other ruffians.

The woman went out and came back an hour later with two young men, who turned out to be young merchants who had been expelled to this place, and had been here now for eight months. I recognized one of them—he was the son-in-law of the cantor of the Chabad synagogue in Moscow, and his name was Walosow. He had lived in a small town named Vishni-Volotchok near Neval, and was one of the affluent members of the community and a gabai of the synagogue. In 5685 (1925) or 5686 (1926) I had visited that town on behalf of the Tomchei Temimim Yeshiva. I recognized him immediately, but he did not remember me. The other man was his brother-in-law.

Both families lived in the house of one of the villagers, and I was invited to join them. Each family had its own room in the house. After they gave me some hot tea I returned to my original dwelling, since they had little children and could not take me in.

The next morning as I woke up I felt weak and dizzy. I hastened to the pharmacy and bought some aspirin and a thermometer. On the way home I felt I was going to faint and could not go on. I started to shiver when I heard a loud voice. It was the wife of that young Chassid, who was calling me. She must have noticed I had lost my way, and told me to follow her home.

When we reached her place she noticed that I was quite ill. Since she did not have room for me, she asked the landlord to let me lie down in the kitchen that was used by the landlord himself and by the other residents of the house. This was a rather busy place where people went through, and most uncomfortable for lying down, but at least I did not have to lie down on the cold floor.

My sickness took a turn for the worse and I had high fever. For five days I lay there without any improvement in my condition.

My good friends went everywhere to look for a doctor, but could not find any. On the Sabbath, when I saw that I was getting worse, I asked them to inquire for a doctor among the prisoners.

They finally found a doctor among the prisoners, and he came in the evening to see me. After he examined me he said that I must have contracted typhoid fever but he could not tell for sure. The next day

he would examine me again in the light of day and make a definite diagnosis about the nature of my illness.

It was extremely cold in the kitchen. The windows were broken, and the wind kept whining all the time. My friends took me into their room and moved up with their little children to the attic, to make sure I had a comfortable place to lie in, and to stay out of my way so that they and their children would not be exposed to my disease.

The doctor came back the next day and determined that indeed I had contracted typhoid fever.

I asked my friends to find me a private room somewhere with a private nurse, regardless of cost, since I had the money to pay for it. I also asked them to send a telegram to my family so that someone would come to see me.

These merciful people searched the entire region looking for a suitable room. But all their efforts were in vain, since there was nothing available, especially for a typhoid patient. Dejected, they came back and asked me what to do.

There were two hospitals in that place. One was used for prisoners and exiles, and the other for the local residents. The so-called prisoners' hospital was in effect a morgue, since no prisoner ever came out alive. They would put three prisoners on two broken beds, all covered with one blanket. No attention was paid to hygiene, and the prisoners were not cared for. It was no wonder that the prisoners did not survive their stay.

When I saw that the situation was critical and I could not continue to impose on my hosts and endanger their and their children's lives, I asked to be transferred to the camp hospital, as there was no other choice. I told them I would pay the doctors and the nurses generously to make sure they took care of me and see to it that I recovered.

I can still see myself being carted out of that house in an old rickety wagon, its iron clad wooden wheels rattling and bouncing on the rocky road as I was being tossed about, ready to pass out, wondering whether I was going to survive that ride.

The five young men and their wives stood by and looked at me with great pity in their eyes, as if they were seeing me for the last time and were saying goodbye to me, since, heaven forbid, I would never come back.

The man who took me to the hospital and accompanied me was the husband of the woman I met when I first arrived. He had been a pris-

oner at the Solovki camp and was sent here after the camp was shut down.

When we arrived at the hospital he was surprised to find out that he knew the doctor and the nurse from the Solovki camp. After a short conversation I found out that the doctor was from Kiev and he knew me from there!

The young man told the doctor about my condition and gave him and the nurse 50 rubles, a considerable sum in those days, and promised more where that came from.

The doctor put me in a special bed near the door. This way he could keep close watch on me since he had to go through there many times a day. In addition, my bed was in a narrow space where they could not fit in another bed, which spared me sharing it with two other patients.

Since my condition was quite serious, the doctor ordered a nurse to remain next to my bed. She kept applying ice to my forehead to bring down my fever.

Since my bed was isolated from all the rest, they were able to keep my space clean and uncluttered. My friends also helped by bringing me enough water to drink, and slowly I began to come out of danger.

My critical condition occurred on the first day of Rosh Hashana. On the second day my brother-in-law Binyomin, along with my mother-in-law, came to see me, and he blew the shofar for me.

My condition continued to improve, but as time went on the time came for me to leave the hospital, since the doctor could not go on treating me because of the constant influx of new patients.

Once again I faced the hard question of where to go and find a place for my ailing body. Even if I had been perfectly healthy it would have been almost impossible for me to find a place to live, but as a diseased person who just left the hospital the hope was nil.

The doctor could put me in the general hospital for a few days, but if he did it for any longer period of time he had to contend with his superiors.

At that time the young man with whom I had stayed before I went to the hospital was given permission to go back home. The landlord, who knew that he was about to lose a tenant, told my mother-in-law that since I was sick he took pity on me and agreed to have me stay in his house and sleep on top of the oven until the room was vacated.

Anyone who knows how an oven is built in Russia can image what it was like to have a sick man lie in a hot suffocating place like that, narrow and crowded, without a breath of air. Still, it was better than sleeping in the streets.

On the eve of Sukkos I left the hospital and moved to my new dwelling— on top of the oven.

On Hol Hamoed Sukkos the young Chassid was set free and left with his brother-in-law. I was quite happy to have my own room at long last to rest my sick body. But this was not the end of my tribulations. The landlord now announced that he needed the room for himself and would try to find another room for me.

I had no choice but to agree. He then changed his tune again and told me that he could not give me the proposed room because he could use it for four more persons, since it was big enough for six. I agreed again.

I spent six weeks in that room with my new roommates, four or five burly peasants. My condition, however, began to improve, my brother-in-law and mother-in-law went home, and I remained alone, one lamb among many wolves.

Chapter Eight

The Escape

The Landlord Tries to Murder Me / Barefoot and Sick out in the Streets / Searching for New Dwelling / The Rabbi Suggests Escape / My Mother-in-law's Visit / The Escape from Kotlas to Moscow / Guard Job in Korsk / The NKVD follows Me / The Escape to Voronish

It occurred on the Holy Sabbath, parashas Toldos, at midnight. I was awakened from my sleep by the shouts of my drunken landlord. This man was good natured, but when be became drunk he became violent and was prepared to do anything, no matter how vile and inhuman.

The young Jews who had lived in his house when I first came to town would tie his hands each time they saw him get drunk, and put him to bed. Once he had some sleep he became human again. Now that they had left one can imagine my fear when I heard his shouts: "I am going to fetch a knife and kill him! I will tear him to pieces!"

When I heard him I knew he was referring to me and was about to murder me. A few seconds later I heard his footsteps, approaching my room.

When I saw what my situation was, I jumped out of bed and hid under the bed of one of my peasant roommates in the utter darkness of the room.

A few seconds later I heard the footsteps of the landlord approaching my bed and looking for his prey. When he found out the bed was

empty he became even more furious and yelled to his wife to bring him the lamp so he could look for me. She begged him not to murder an innocent person, but he insisted he had to kill the Jew. He pushed his wife aside and hastened to his room to look for the candle. I quickly stole out of my room, running like mad, and escaped before he had a chance to come back. I only had my nightgown on me, and I remained standing outside in the freezing cold.

When he saw that he had lost his prey, he became furious and locked the door so that I could not come back in.

I remained standing outside in the open air, dressed in my thin gown, in the Siberian winter, having just recovered from a dangerous disease!

What was I to do?

There was another lonely house on that street, inhabited by a Russian. I had no choice. Barefoot and nearly naked I went over to that house. I knocked on the door, and when the owner came to open he refused to let me in. I started to cry and told him what had happened. Fortunately, he knew my landlord and was well aware of the fact that when he got drunk he could kill someone. He let me into his house and gave me a place to sit next to the furnace. I warmed my shaking body and stayed there all night. The next day his wife brought me my clothes, since I was afraid to go back. I found out when my landlord left the house, and went back there to spend the Sabbath at home and eat the Sabbath meal.

That night after the Sabbath ended I found a place to sleep in another person's house, and slept on the floor. I spent the next day looking for a new place of dwelling, since I could not go back to my former home, but was not able to find anything.

Finally I found a place not far from the hospital where I had stayed. Here there were two Chassidic young men, one from Odessa and one from Vitebsk. One of them was the young man who had taken me to the hospital when I came down with the typhoid. Around the same time he also became sick with typhoid and was rushed to the hospital, but shortly thereafter he died, may G-d protect us. I went into great pain to arrange Jewish burial for him.

When this young man died his room was vacated and it was offered to me.

This room had a large oven and a kitchen. Half of the room was used as a bedroom for the landlord and his wife and their children.

The oven was rented to the prisoners or the exiles for a high fee.

Above the oven there were two boards, like bunk beds, and in order to reach them one had to climb up and remain lying there without being able to sit or stand. The two young Chassidim slept on those beds. I was to take the place of the one that passed away.

In order to have an idea of what it was like to live in that place, let me describe it in a few words.

The room was full of statues. The owner and his wife lived in one corner, and in the other corner his son and daughter-in-law. Above the oven lived the tenants, including me. Needless to say, it was impossible to live in such a place, and I had to look for another alternative.

I had two alternatives: not far from there, about 60 km away, there was another town where Jews used to live. I could go there, or take the risk of running away to wherever I could go. The escape from Kotlas was quite dangerous, since there was only one road out of there, and I was sure to be discovered.

I sent the letter to our rabbi in Riga, through my mother-in-law in Moscow. I gave him the picture of my situation, and I asked for his holy opinion as to what I was to do.

His answer was—do as Jacob our father did!

At that time my mother-in-law arrived with forged documents that could help me get away from Kotlas. She had paid a large sum of money for them. When I saw the documents I told her it was dangerous to use them, since they were poorly forged, and I would be caught and be severely punished. The best thing for me to do was to escape without documents, so that in the worst case I would be given another month in jail for an attempted escape.

In the same house where the landlord tried to kill me lived the brother-in-law of the landlord who was an NKVD agent. He was in charge of controlling all the trains that passed in the area and check out the passengers in order to arrest escaping prisoners and exiles. Since we had lived together for a while, he knew me quite well.

In the end we decided that I should take nothing along except for a pair of tefilin, and two train tickets for my mother-in-law and myself. Since she had come legally, she had no problem going back. I would go with her and speak to her in her compartment until the train was ready to depart, at which time I would get off, and when no one noticed I would get back on and travel with her.

It was the 19th of Kislev. I boarded the train with my mother-in-law. The NKVD inspector was there, keeping an eye on those who boarded the train. When the first whistle was heard, I got off the train. When he saw me get off, he turned to the other cars, to check the other passengers. After he left I knew that in one minute the whistle would blow again and the train would start to leave. I went back on the train and went into one of the compartments.

The compartment was quite crowded. There was no place to sit and no place to lie down. In those days there were seats and above the seats there were bunks to sleep on. When I saw that there was no place to sit down, I went up and found a corner to lie down in.

I was exhausted and I fell asleep immediately. When I woke up it was five o'clock in the morning. The train was quite empty. Those left told me that I was quite fortunate, since the NKVD had arrested many people who tried to escape and even stopped where I was and shone lights into my place for fifteen minutes, but since I would not wake up they finally gave up and left.

It is quite natural that a sinner, an escapee, is not able to sleep soundly, since he is in a state of agitation and fear. If I had awakened during that quarter of an hour they would have realized I was an escapee. But as a believing Jew, I knew and I believed in perfect faith that G-d guards man's steps and G-d's help would come to my rescue because of the merit of that righteous man, our Rabbi, G-d rest his soul.

Meanwhile the train stopped near Viatka. I knew my mother-in-law was on the train, and I went to her compartment. When she saw me she nearly fainted, since she was sure the NKVD had taken me off the train and arrested me for my escape, like all the others.

A half an hour later the train arrived in Viatka. I walked around the train station in great fear. But with G-d's help, no one noticed me. We left the station and rented a carriage that took us to the house that had been prepared for us.

We decided that we would not take the risk of taking the main highway to Moscow, but rather let my mother-in-law go by herself and obtain the necessary documents for me.

On Hanukkah my brother-in-law Binyomin Levitka came and brought me a passport. We decided again not to take the main road but to go by way of Nijana-Novograd. Before the Shabbos Hanukkah

I arrived at the home of the Raskin family, who lived there, and from there I went to Mlachovka, near Moscow, where Avraham Dreizin (Myorer) lived, and stayed with him for one month, without anyone knowing I was there. His house was near the forest, a lonely house without neighbors, and my presence did not arouse any suspicions.

I proceeded to rent my own apartment, and my wife arrived from Kiev. During that time my father-in-law returned from three years of exile in Sibera, and the housing question became acute.

I asked our Rabbi where I should live, and he told me to live in Korsk where one of our men, R. Shmuel Zalmanov of blessed memory lived, who can help me settle down.

I decided to go to Moscow, arrange the necessary papers, and not rely on strangers who were not experienced. I would put my age down on the documents as being forty years old, past conscription age, and would not need any other documents.

I went to the militia office and told them I was forty years old, my name was Eliyahu (instead of Binyomin Eliyahu). I picked a family name similar to my own name, in order not to arouse any supicions and yet to have a different name with the authorities.

When I arrived in Malachovska my brother Simcha arrived from Samarkand to visit me. He had met with Dr. Yosef Razin of blessed memory, the JDC director in Moscow, and told him all that had happened to me until then. He gave him 1500 rubles for me, so that I could obtain the necessary papers.

When I finally had my papers I went to Korsk, at the instructions of the Rebbe. Korsk is not far from Kiev, and one could arrive there in one night.

When I arrived in Korsk I was in a quandary. It I stayed at home all day, I would arouse the suspicion of the neighbors for not working, and besides, I did want to find some occupation.

It was agreed that I would become a night watchman so that I could obtain a work certificate, and the neighbors would understand why I stayed home in the day time.

I spent a long time in this job, and even earned the nickname *Eli der shomer* (Eli the watchman).

Meanwhile I bought an apartment and my wife joined me with our baby daughter—the oldest—Freida—six months old.

My work as a watchman was not easy. It was difficult to work at night and pay was modest. I became partner with a friend in a bakery

business, which was not too profitable, but somehow we eked out a living.

One time as I was walking in the street a Jew from Kiev came running up to me and hugged me and kissed me as he shouted out: "Oy, Rabbi, you have already been set free?"

I looked at him in disbelief, as if he did not know me and had made a mistake. He kept insisting that it was no mistake, he knew me well as the Rabbi of Kiev. "Or perhaps you have a double?" he said, begining to doubt his eyes. I told him he had made a mistake and I walked away.

This Jew was a friend of R. Shmuel Zalmanov, the butcher. He told him he had met the Rabbi of Kiev who told him he was mistaken. R. Shmuel understood immediately what had happened, and told the man that my name was Eli the Watchman, or Eli the Baker, and he must have made a mistake.

I spent several years in this manner, with everyone knowing me as the watchman or the baker, and life went on more or less normally.

In those days there was a drought and a famine, and all food products were in short supply. There was, for one thing, great shortage of salt. When some one offered that I trade in that commodity, I grabbed the offer and began to trade in salt. Each day I received two tons of salt, and within two hours I would sell it and make a tidy profit.

Shortly thereafter the store was taken away from me, perhaps because of a denunciation by someone. I became a partner in food business and made friends with a member of the Communist party. He was one of the senior officials of his department which controlled the political section of the party. He gave me the right document which stated that I had worked for many years in a certain place, and that my father and grandfather were also devoted workers, and so I was a true worker without a blemish. This document came in very handy, and for five years I had no special problems.

When I first arrived in Korsk, I found out that I could organize a branch of Tomchei Temimim where Torah could be studied peacefully. I asked the main office to send fifteen older boys to Korsk and I would take care of them.

The office agreed, and sent me twelve students, including Ben Zion Katzenelson of Homil, the Vilenkin brothers of Yekatrincslav, Beril Goldschmidt, Elimelech Kaplan of Kiev, and ylt R. Haim Liberman.

I would study with them at night and meet with them, and I took care of all their needs. I did it for five years, without a hitch, and with no one knowing I had any contact with them.

In 1936 my brother-in-law, may G-d avenge his blood, was arrested on his way from Mlachovka to Moscow. He was investigated and they asked him about me, about his sister and his father. We did not know all day where he had disappeared to, and in the evening when he was released and went back to his home, they got in touch immediately with me in Korsk and told me to be careful, since the NKVD was looking for me.

In the meantime we found out that a stranger had asked the supervisor of our building about me, and wanted to know personal details about me and my wife.

One day I noticed NKVD agents and I had to hide in my home. At night, after dark, I went out the window in the back of the house, where there was a large garden, and spent all night on a tree. Before dawn a carriage ordered by my wife arrived and I travelled to Voronish, where the butcher R. Bezalel Vilshanski lived. I found a small apartment and stayed there. My family joined me later on.

Except for R. Bezalel, there were also the distinguished families of the Shub R. L. Schiff and the Slavin family living there.

The next day the NKVD came to my house, but miraculously I had left already.

Before my journey, when I felt that I was being followed, I told the students that if I had to leave or escape they must go to Voronish and not stay by themselves, because it was too dangerous, since if I was caught they too would probably be arrested.

Indeed, when I arrived in Voronish they also came there. There was a Beis Midrash in that place, with an *ezras noshim*, and they could study there. In Korsk itself only the young students remained, both from Korsk and Voronish.

The boys stayed at the Beis Midrash and made it their living quarters, and took their meals at the home of R. Bezalel. Their leader was Michael Teitelbaum.

Thank G-d I was able to find a livelihood, and I would regularly meet with the students.

I also gave him the funds for running the yeshiva.

One day, early in the morning, the Rabbi of Golochov came to my home in Voronish, and seemed to be extremely frightened. He told

me that the infamous informer D.A. came to his home in Korsk the day before and asked about me. He told him he was asking about me since we were old friends and he wanted to see me since he had not seen me for a long time. He just found out that I was in Korsk. He told the informer that as far as he knew I was not in Korsk.

After he left, the Rabbi came to see me and cautioned me not to appear in public, since I was being followed. Indeed, in those days I exercised extra caution to make sure no one should, G-d forbid, discover my whereabouts.

Chapter Nine

Voronish—A Military City

The Danger of Continuing to Live There / The Rebbe's Letter the Day before the War Broke Out / My Employer's Denunciation Because I Refused to Work on the Sabbath / A "Troika" of Judges / I Am Acquitted / Leaving the City with Last Group of Officers

Voronish was a large industrial city with the largest plants in Russia for building airplanes. My apartment was near the largest aircraft plant in the city. I worked in a liquor store owned by a communist, but it was closed on the Sabbath and the holidays. When the war started, there was great fear and tension everywhere, and I was afraid to stay in that apartment because of the danger. I wrote to our Rabbi and asked him if I should sell my apartment and give up my job.

The Rabbi told me to leave the apartment and the store and move elsewhere. He gave the letter to my father-in-law and instructed him to send me the letter quickly by way of Rokshik, where my mother-in-law lived. I had the letter in my hands one day before the war between Germany and Russia broke out, when all communications had been broken off!

Immediately after I received the letter I sold my apartment and bought another one in the center of town. I should not have done it,

since we knew that soon we would have to run away. I lost a great deal of money. But I wanted to do what our Rabbi had told me to do, namely, move elsewhere.

When I expressed my desire to leave my job they wanted to put me on trial, by pretending that Stalin had ordered that in time of emergency no one was allowed to leave his source of work. The new director also turned against me because I refused to work on the Sabbath. He agreed not to put me on trial only if I would pay him a huge sum of money, which I did not have.

On Thursday I went to see him and told him I was very ill and was not allowed to work. I got up my courage and told him that he was a "Hitler in til," alluding to the famous words of Stalin, may his name perish, regarding the need to keep an eye on Soviet citizens who served as a Fifth Column.

When I told him this he was frightened, and he denounced me to the authorities. He told them I had warned him that when Hitler came I would settle my account with him.

In those days there were special expeditious courts in Russia for trying those who betrayed their country. The director got in touch with the NKVD and told them that I had horded food in my apartment in anticipation of the war—an accusation which resulted in severe punishment.

NKVD agents arrived at my home immediately and proceeded to conduct a thorough search but did not find a thing. Nevertheless, they decided to arrest me and brought me before a "troika" of three judges.

The judges asked me if I was a Russian citizen or a Polish Jew. I told them I was a Russian citizen, and how could I say anything about Hitler coming to Russia?!

One of the judges, who was a Jew, turned to his colleague and instructed him to visit my place of work to find out from my coworkers if indeed I had made that statement. My wife went to see those people and implored them to tell the truth about me.

When the judge arrived, the treasurer and the cashier told him about all the trouble the new director had been giving me, and what I had told him. After they had deliberated the matter they found me innocent and set me free, and I was officially allowed to leave my position.

It ought to be mentioned that our apartment was in the center of town, and we were visited by many who had fled from the west and

came to Voronish because of the threat of war. There was great scarcity of food at that time, and I gave them all they needed while they stayed with me. I had excellent connections in that town, and thank G-d I was able to obtain sufficient food to take care of the many who stopped at my home on their way to Samarkand. It must have been our Rabbi's foresight, when he told me to take an apartment in the center of that town.

The danger drew closer, and we had to start making plans for leaving the town as soon as we could.

Fortunately, I was able to join the last party that left Voronish on its way to Tashkent. This party consisted solely of the families of Russian officers. I paid a small fortune in bribes and had my wife registered as the spouse of a senior officer, while I was registered as her father, and thus we left the threatened town of Voronish.

The journey lasted about a month, and we had many adventures on the way, when we finally arrived in Tashkent.

Chapter Ten

Escape to Samarkand Because of the War

The Terrible Condition of the Jews in Samarkand / Starting a Charity Fund / Mikveh Renovation and Expansion / Founding Talmud Torah, Yeshiva and Burial Society / Things Begin to Improve

In Heshvan 5702 (1941) I had to move again because of the war, this time to Samarkand, where many of our people were arriving, fleeing the war zone.

When I arrived there I stayed with my brother, Simcha, and I found the Chassidim in dire straights. They were all refugees who had escaped their homes and left all their possessions behind because of the war, and many did not even have a piece of bread. Many had fallen prey to the typhoid epidemic which raged in the area at that time.

There were also many Jews from Poland in Samarkand, who had arrived there after the famous pact between Germany and Russia, and many Jews escaped to Siberia. After Hitler declared war on Russia, the Polish Jews were allowed to leave cold Siberia and go to the warmer climate of Tashkent and Samarkand. The condition of those Polish Jews was extremely difficult. They came by the thousands, had no money, were assailed by hunger, and many of them lay in the streets emaciated, with their bellies distended from starvation.

A meeting was called at the home of the Chacham Hizkiya, a local Rabbi, which included the Chacham Djuri, and several people who had stayed with me in Kiev—R. Shmuel Botvinikov, son-in-law of RaMaSh Chen of blessed memory, who was a distinguished young Chassid, my brother Simcha, R. Moshe Vinarsky, R. Haim Shotland of Moscow, and others. We were able to raise a large sum for establishing a charity fund and lend substantial sums of money to our needy brethren.

I undertook the management of the mikveh which was run clandestinely, in the basement of the home of Avraham Haim, built by my brother Simcha. It was too small for the large community that had congregated in the town. Because of the great scarcity, there was no one to turn to for help with the mikveh. But I was able to use some of my own funds to renovate and expand it, and I also installed proper heating.

Before Pesach we used the charity money to buy matzos for the public. However, because of the general penury, no one was able to pay back our loans, and soon the fund was emptied.

In the summer of that year the situation improved somewhat, and some people began to work and earn some money. R. Mendel Potraps and Michael Teitlebaum started to work in education. They appointed Eliyahu Haim Ablasky a melamed and he began to study Torah with some of our students. At first we only had a few students, but soon the benches filled up as the children of refugees from Poland began to reach us, as well as from nearby Tashkent. The old shamos, R. Zusha, also gathered a group of children and started a study session, and before long we had a full-fledged Talmud Torah. The number of the students grew, both in the Talmud Torah and in the Yeshiva, and we had to find more instructors for all those students who arrived from all the surrounding towns. We brought Rabbi Avraham Eliyahu Plotkin, of blessed memory, to Samarkand, and we appointed him Rosh Yeshiva. He was joined by R. Nissan Neminov who became the director of the Yeshiva.

Because of the large number of students we started a similar yeshiva in Tashkent. This Yeshiva, along with the Talmud Torah, were headed by R. Shlomo Jaim Kesselman and R. Yona Cohen.

I spent a great deal of time taking care of the Yeshiva and the Talmud Torah, and I looked for different ways to raise funds.

An enormous amount of work was invested in establishing a burial society and a cemetery. People died every day and we had to take care of hundreds of deceased persons and give them proper Jewish burial. Many also died in the hospitals, every day, and we had to persuade the authorities to allow us to take care of the bodies and bring them to a Jewish grave.

The one who worked ceaselessly on this sacred task was R. Yehuda Leib Levin who nearly sacrificed himself, from the day he arrived in Samarkand, to the day he left, performing this mitzvah. Besides the enormous difficulties of bringing the deceased to the burial place, it was extremely difficult to find the large amounts of money required for that purpose. We also had problems with the Bucharan Jews, who refused to let us practice our customs, and did not take kindly to Ashkenazic Jews taking care of such matters.

But, despite the incredible difficulties, we were able to take care of the dead and organize all the details of the burial operation.

In addition, we were able, thank G-d, to prevent people from starving, as we took care of the sick and nursed them back to life until they were able to get back on their own.

Another person who gave a great deal of his time to the burial society was R. Aharon Yosef Belintzky.

In time things began to improve, some trade began to develop, people found ways of earning some money, and life began to normalize again.

Chapter Eleven

Leaving Russia

Meeting of Our Elders Regarding Leaving Russia / Uncertainty about Our Rabbi's Opinion / A Letter from America Causing Surprise and Consternation / More Meetings about the Rabbi's Opinion on the Matter of Leaving / Special Emissary Goes to Moscow to Find Out about Possibility of Travelling out of Poland / Preparations for the Journey

In late summer 5705 (1945), when the horrible war which raged for several years came to an end, the question of the return of the Polish refugees to their country arose. We too started to consider leaving Russia by way of Poland.

In a meeting called for this purpose, we weighed the pros and the cons of the matter, and the danger involved.

We decided to consult our Rabbi, and do whatever he instructed us to do.

I undertood this task, and started corresponding with my father-in-law, who was now living in the United States. I used indirect language and code words in my letters in order to find out what our Rabbi wanted us to do. I also sent him a telegram to this effect, using, of course, a code.

In the month of Tevet or Shvat we received an answer from our Rabbi, telling us not to leave. We knew that Polish citizens only had

limited time to apply for exit visas.

Each one of us tried to take care of his own application, because of the shortage of time, in a way which he saw fit. All that time, I was afraid to fill out an application with my picture attached to it, and I waited for the last day before the deadline. Then, in Samarkand, I submitted the application with a picture which distorted some of my features.

That day, in the evening, I received a cable from the United States, stating: "*Der zeide zogt, men zol bleiben zitzen oif ort*" (The grandfather says we should remain where we are).

When we received the cable I started having doubts. Was it directed to all of us or only to me personally?

In the summer of 5703 (1943, the GPU invited me one day to their headquarters. When I failed to show up and they failed to find me at home, they took my wife by force and treated her as a prisoner. They tried to persuade her with kind words to tell them more about our plan to leave the country and immigrate to the Land of Israel, via Iran. They ordered her to come back and report to them as soon as I came home.

As I failed to show up the next day as well, they returned to my home and to my wife again to find out from her more details about me.

The whole thing was a riddle to me, and I could not make any head or tail out of it.

Later on I found out the real reason for that investigation. The United States was asking the Soviet government at that time to allow five well-known Chassidic leaders and Rabbis to leave via Iran, along with the Polish children (known as the Teheran children).

When I found out that my name appeared among the five, I had reason to believe they were asking the authorities for an exit permit for me and so there was no reason for me to resort to illegal ways in order to secure exit permits.

But since I had my doubts about it, I did not want to proceed on my own, and decided to organize a meeting of rabbis and elders who would decide on the matter.

I organized a meeting at the home of R. Israel Noah Belintzky, where the "Spitz Chabad" prayed on Shabbos. The meeting was attended by the the Chassidic Rabbis Avraham Eliyahu Plotkin, Nahum Shemaryahu Sasonkin, Israel Noah Belintzky, Nissan

Neminov, Shmuel Botvinikov and others.

I showed them the cable and told them about my misgivings. Contrary to my view on the matter, they decided our Rabbi's answer alluded to all of us and therefore it had to be publicized—not in my name.

The next day the message was publicized, letting our people know that our Rabbi did not agree that we travel by way of Poland. They had also been told secretly that the cable had arrived and was in my possession. Shortly thereafter a letter came stating clearly that our Rabbi was opposed to our people's departure from Russia by way of Poland because of the danger involved.

The Rabbi wrote in his letter: "*Es iz nit gut tzu bleiben in an orat vos iz nito kein sholom bayis. Besser zein in an ort fun sholom bayis un vartan oif an andere gelengenheit.*" (It is not good to live in a place where there is no domestic tranquility. It is better to live in a place where there is domestic tranquility, and await another opportunity). He meant, of course, a place where there was no peace and there was a problem of anti-Semitism.

I wrote our Rabbi again and asked for his opinion.

Before Pesach some young Chassidim arrived from Tashkent on business, and asked in the name of the Chassidim living in Tashkent to gather and decide on the question of emigrating from the country. They told us that they had received letters from Polish Jews who had left Russia and went to Poland, telling them that they were travelling on from Poland through Europe to the Holy Land and to other places.

Our people as well as others gathered, and decided not to go against our Rabbi's instructions and not to assume any responsibility for this matter.

The day before Pesach I received a letter from Samarkand from someone who wrote me: Please come here, I have a letter and regards from the United States. He asked me to come to him to address he indicated. It seemed quite strange. If a Jew came from America, why didn't they bring him directly to me? It seemed that the NKVD was behind the whole thing. They would invite someone to a private address and would lay a trap for him.

It was decided that my wife and ten-year-old daughter would go there, while I hid somewhere. My wife would not enter the house, but rather hide nearby, while my daughter went inside. If my daughter

RABBI J. SCHNEERSOHN
OF LUBAWITZ
770 EASTERN PARKWAY
BROOKLYN 13, N. Y.
BLOCUM 6-2919

יוסף יצחק שניאורסאהן
ליובאוויטש

ב"ה, ח' שבט, תש"ו
ברוקלין

ידי"ע הרה"ג הרה"ח
מוה"ר שמואל שי' הלוי

שלום וברכה!

במענה על התלגרם של ידידי
חתנו הר"ב שי', בין שהוא לעצמו ובין
שהיא שאלה כללית, הנה מפני המצב בהוה
צריכים לחכות עד שבעזה"י יתברר המצב
והשי"ת יהי' בעזרם בגו"ר.

בשם כ"ק אדמו"ר שליט"א

מזכיר [illegible]

On behalf of the Rebbe, this letter is directed by his secretary to Rabbi Gorodetzky's father-in-law, Rabbi Shmuel Levitan:

"In answer to the cable of my friend, your son-in-law, Rabbi Binyomin, whether in this particular case or as a general matter, because of the present situation we have to wait until matters are clarified, and may the Almighty come to their aid."

came out, all good and well. If not, the mother would hide.

Actually, three letters had arrived at the Samarkand post office from the United States. At that time it was a rare thing to receive a letter from America, and so the mail room employee attached them together with a paper clip. The mailman did not notice the clip and delivered all three letters together to the first address. The addressee was afraid to take them back to the post office, so he contacted the other two and asked them to come and get their mail.

Since it was the eve of Pesach, and it was difficult to understand the letter, I decided to take care of the matzos.

The letter was from my father-in-law, who wrote that our Rabbi agreed to our leaving Russia on condition that it was clear to us that there is a possibility of going from Poland to Germany to the camps under American control. My brother-in-law, Avraham Yaakov, would not go, because he had small children, but would wait until the Holy One Blessed Be He would find a safer way for him to travel.

The language of the letter was couched in many hints and allusions, and it was difficult to understand. After a whole day and night of much effort I was finally able to decipher its contents.

I gathered from reading the letter that the words. "little boys" referred to the students of Tomchei Temimim, because the Rebbe wrote that "You know them from Neval."

The next day I showed the letter to R. Nissan Neminov and asked for his opinion. At first he agreed that the letter was not so clear, but after I told him what I thought, he agreed with me. He felt that our Rabbi's consent was given quite reluctantly, only after my father-in-law urged him to do it.

Since he was of a different opinion, I sent off a cable and asked for a more precise answer, as the letter was not sufficiently clear as to whether it was possible to go from Poland to Germany through the American zone.

The answer was, we ouselves had to find out about it and then travel, and since my brother-in-law, Avraham Yaakov, had little children, he should not go.

On the first day of Hol Hamoed Pesach we gathered again for a consultation, and I expressed the opinion that we had to let everyone know that whoever wishes to travel and can afford it should do so, but not remain in Poland since our Rabbi did not agree to it. The intention was to nullify the earlier prohibition issued by our Rabbi against

travelling, and make it know that anyone who can travel through Poland can do so, but not remain in Poland, but continue on his journey.

I could not understand why no one asked me why all of a sudden I had changed my mind so radically, when right before Pesach I stated that the journey was not desirable, and here I was changing my opinion. But they must have known that I sought to avoid publicity, and they did not dare ask any questions, although I did intimate to some of them that I had received a letter just before Pesach.

Immediately after the holiday a delegation of four of our people arrived from Tashkent. Unfortunately, they did not behave properly, since the moment they arrived in Samarkand, before they had a chance to talk to us and find out exactly what was going on, they made it publicly known that I was leaving the country, and that I had received a letter from our Rabbi instructing our people to leave Russia, while I was hiding it from the public.

It was very dangerous for anyone to publicize such a thing, particularly for me, since the authorites followed me all the time.

The four wanted to meet me in my home, but I refused, and instead we met at the home of R. Nissan. I explained to them that I did not have any letters from our Rabbi in my possession stating the need to leave the country, and then I rebuked them for the deplorable thing they had done.

I mentioned to them that the decision made at that meeting was sufficient, and they did not need any other proof. But after they promised not to tell anyone, we shook hands and I showed them the letter.

After they looked it over they decided that the letter meant that we should not go, and so they decided on the spot not to pursue the idea any further.

For two days they discussed the letter. The Rabbis, including Rabbi Nissan, joined the consultations, and nearly all of them decided that the letter makes it clear that we should not leave the country.

Some people decided to join me and participate in the expense of dispatching a special emmisary to find out about the situation in Poland, as we were instructed by our Rabbi. But in the end they decided not to go along or contribute toward the expense.

I continued to express the opinion that the cons in the letter did not outweigh the pros, but rather that it meant that whoever wanted to go should go, if he can afford to, and reach the American zone in Germany.

When they asked me what would happen to the Tomchei Temimim Yeshiva if the people of means left the country, I suggested that it was not a reason to stop anyone from going, although the people of means should be asked to contribute whatever they could, and in time, after the first group left, things will be clarified. I proposed that the people of means make a contribution one year in advance, as I was sure the Yeshiva would be moved abroad before a year was out.

Afterwards, I made several copies of the letter and gave them to whoever wanted to read it, with the clear stipulation that no one in Tashkent knew who was the original recipient of the letter.

I started to prepare for the journey, but first I wanted to find out how one travelled outside Poland. I told one of my relatives in secret about my trip, and asked him to prepare to go the same journey. I also promised him to pay his expense as an act of charitable concern.

S.B. was in Poland in the winter, and when he arrived in Samarkand after Pesach I asked him to travel to the city of Cracow in Poland and find out if we could leave Poland. If he could not come back he would send me a cable with an allusion to his situation. I promised him a large sum of money for this mission. I also gave him a sum of money to transfer to Moscow, since it was extremely dangerous for me to keep money.

The emissary left. Although we had agreed that after one day he would send me a cable from Moscow, letting me know he had arrived there, I did not receive any news. Not one word. I was greatly perplexed. After not hearing from him for three weeks I was sure he had been arrested with the money in his possession, and he might tell the authorities who had given him the money.

I had no choice but to go myself of Moscow. The trip was very hazardous, since I had to obtain a permit to travel. I finally did get a permit, but I had to pay a large sum of money for it.

When I arrived in Moscow I did not find the emissary in the place where he was supposed to be. Nor had he left the money there for me. After a long investigation I found out that he was out of town during

the day because of his business, but came back in the evening. I left him a notice about my whereabouts and let him know I was waiting for him.

The next day he came to see me, and returned all the money I had given him. I reprimanded him for what he had done to me, but it was all after the fact.

There was a man in Moscow at the time name R. Haim Shotland, who dealt in foreign currency, diamonds, jewels, etc. His family members went every day to Poland on business. Since I had to exchange my rubles for foreign currency, I went to him to make the exchange. At his home I found out that there was a possibility to go from Poland to Germany to the American zone. This was also confirmed by the merchants from Cracow.

After I found out all those details I returned to Samarkand and started preparing to leave Russia.

Chapter Twelve

The Road to Freedom

Escape from Samarkland One Hour before the NKVD Shows up / Arrested in the Street with Large Sums in My Pocket / Release after Bribing NKVD Agent / Expelled from Airplane Ramp / Arrival in Moscow after Rocky Trip / Arrival in Cracow and First Letter from Our Rabbi in the Free Zone / Rebbe Agrees to Chassidim's Departure from Russia / Difficulties with the Rescue Committee / Czech Ambassador Smuggles Refugees / Rescue Person Carries Me on His Shoulders Across River / Twelve Tammuz Rescue Holiday in Free Tsheshin

After the word spread in Samarkand that I was leaving the country, I knew I had to be extremely cautious abut letting the NKVD know about my departure. I was living in constant fear. I did not want to order a truck to my house to move my belongings from Samarkand to Tashkent lest anyone noticed it. Nor could I take the train because of the danger involved. I went to Tashkent and ordered a car to come to Samarkand and pick us up so that no one would notice it. To those close to me I revealed the news about my journey and the day I was travelling. I was afraid to tell anyone else about it.

The car arrived in Samarkand on Thursday. We had arranged to have it come to the house at midnight. The main entrance to my

apartment was on the first floor, but on the other side of the building there was a high window and the car could park right next to it. We only took out of the house the most necessary objects and left everything else in place, to avoid detection. All of us went out through the window, and we locked the place with everything left behind as if we continued to live there.

A few days later I found out that one hour after we left the apartment some NKVD agents came to arrest me. When they failed to find me at home, they went to my sister's house and looked for me there. Failing to find me again, they confiscated a bank book I had left for my sister and my mother, may she rest in peace, to help support them. They confiscated all my funds and left the two without a a kopek in their pocket.

We left the city on our way to Tashkent, where we arrived the next morning, on Friday. We went to the home of one of our relatives who lived on a side street so that no one would notice us. We remained in the house all the time and never went out.

On Sunday I ordered train tickets for my family to go to Moscow. It took one whole week to get there. It was dangerous for me to take the train, since I had two documents in my possessions—a Russian citizenship document, and a fake Polish passport, to be used in my transit through that country. There was strict inspection on the train. A Jew like me, with a long beard and earlocks, stood out in the crowd, and was subject to inspection at all time. I therefore decided not to travel by train but rather take the airplane while my family took the train, since they would not arouse any suspicions. Besides, it was difficult to get plane tickets for them, so we decided they would go by train.

The week before Shavuos I began to look for a plane ticket. A young Chassid lived in Tashkent whom I knew. He was involved in all sorts of unkosher business deals. He promised to find a plane ticket for me. I asked him to find a ticket that would enable me to arrive in Moscow before the Sabbath, since my family was scheduled to arrive there at that time.

I was on my way to meet that young man, carrying bundles of 3000, 4000 and 5000 rubles in my pocket. As I was crossing the street, a young Uzbek came over to me and flashed a card identifying himself as an NKVD agent and told me to follow him. When I asked him why he was arresting me, he said that he had to check my documents. I

showed him my official document, but he insisted that I follow him to the NKVD headquarters.

The Uzbeks in Tashkent were quite aware of the fact that Jews were good business people who dealt in illegal things, and had a lot of money. Furthermore, they knew that it paid to start up with a Jew, since a Jew would pay them to be left alone. I decided to play along with him. On the way to his headquarters I reasoned with him and told him I would give him a large sum of money if he would let me go. He asked me how much I was willing to give. I told him I only had 3000 rubles in my possession and I was prepared to give it to him. He declined my offer and told me to come along. As we came closer, I told him I might have another 2000 rubles on my person, and I was willing to give it to him, making it 5000 rubles. He still refused and we continued to walk.

This villain did not realize that I knew where the NKVD headquarters were, and started to walk in the opposite direction. I realized that the money was having an effect on him, and that I had to continue my negotiations. I could now be adamant and not offer him any more. I kept haggling with him as he was leading me roundabout from one street to the next. After several hours he stopped and said, "If you do not have anymore I will have to settle for whatever you have." I took a bundle of 5000 rubles out of my pocket and gave it to him. I started to run and I disappeared immediately before he had time to change his mind.

I continued to walk toward my meeting place with the Chassid who had my ticket, but I changed my direction to make sure no one was following me so as to avoid jeopardizing him as well. I returned to my home, where I was spending the nights, and on the way I met some of our people who asked me about leaving Russia. I told all of them that if they do it, they should, but they had to make sure not to stay in Poland but rather to continue to the American zone in Germany. If they could go on to America, they should.

Several days later I got in touch again with that dealer, and asked him to come to my house with the ticket. He told me I should not be afraid to come to his house. When we met at his place he told me that on Wednesday or Thursday evening I should be at the airport, where he would introduce someone to me who would give me the ticket. When I arrived there I met him and he pointed out someone who, he told me, would keep an eye on me and help me, and he proceeded to

give me the ticket.

That same evening the general secretary of the party was travelling from Tashkent to Moscow, and many high officials had come to the airport to send him off. The dealer told me he did not know the secretary was going on that flight. Had he known, he would have put me on another flight. Meanwhile, it was time to board the plane, and they began to call the names of the passengers who were going on that flight. I rushed to the plane and waited in line to go in. Suddenly someone came running towards me, snatched the ticket from my hand, and shouted angrily: "You cannot go on this plane. You must go home immediately!" He put the ticket back in the safe and told the cashier to return my money.

I went to the airfield and stood there all alone like an orphan. I did not know what to do or to whom to turn. The agent who had sold me the ticket had already left, and I was helpless. After a few minutes someone came over to me and told me that another plane leaving for Moscow was about to arrive, and I would be able to board it. He whispered those words to me as he walked by, so as not to be noticed by anyone. He suggested that I leave the airport and wait outside until 4, and only then come back and board the plane that was leaving at 5.

I started to mill about outside the airport. I was quite worried, since the time was coming, and I did not have a ticket to replace the one that was taken away from me. I was afraid to talk to the cashier since the latter had been instructed not to sell me another ticket. I decided not to ask for a ticket, but instead board the plane when the passengers' names were read so that no one would notice that I did not have a ticket.

As soon as they started reading the names I ran over to the plane and no one stopped me. It seems someone had arranged with the guard not to stop me from boarding the plane.

The plane turned out to be quite inferior. It was a transport, rather than a passenger plane. The flight was quite rocky. It made several stops on its way from Tashkent to Moscow, and at each stop there was new inspection of the new passengers who came on board. Hence, each time it landed I was assailed by paralyzing fear.

Fortunately, my salvation came from an unexpected direction. The flight was so rocky that I kept throwing up, and when the plane made its stops I did not have to get off but was left alone to my misery. As we approached Moscow my tension and fear were overwhelming, since

the control at Moscow airport was the strictest, and here I could get caught and would not be able to extricate myself.

Once again my salvation came from an unexpected source.

As the plane landed and the passengers began to unboard, a commotion suddenly was started. It turned out that an important passenger had lost his little suitcase and could not find it. All the passengers took part in the search, and so their minds were diverted from anything else. I did not have any baggage, except for my tallis and tefilin case, and so I was able to walk away without anyone noticing me.

I was fortunate to find means of transportation and I went to the place I had arranged for my reunion with my wife. It was the home of Avraham Cohen, near Moscow, where I found the members of my family. I proceeded to find out about getting a ticket for Lvov, and received all the information. Once we got the tickets, we travelled to Lvov and arrived there without any unusual adventures.

When we arrived in Lvov I found out about the special transports (echelons) that went from Lvov to Poland. Those were freight trains packed with all sorts of passengers, who constantly shuttled back and forth.

On Thursday evening we left Lvov with the echelon going to Cracow. Our journey lasted all night, and on Friday morning we arrived in Cracow—our first stop outside the borders of the Soviet Union.

The whole family was with me. There was a Polish Jew with us whom I included in our party. He had worked for me in Samarkand, and I took him along as a Polish interpreter, just to be on the safe side when we travelled through Poland. He was quite costly, since, in addition to the fare, I had to pay him a fee for his services.

As it turned out, he was of little use to me, since each time I needed him he was fast asleep, and refused to open his mouth.

We were crossing the border from Lvov to Cracow. It was a freight train for transporting wheat, but because of the war conditions it was used for transporting people, and it was extremely crowded. During the trip a Pole started up with me and accused me of stealing some gold coins from him. He ranted and raved, and I could not answer him since I did not speak any Polish. I asked my companion to tell the Pole in his own language to leave me alone, but the paid interpreter refused to get in the middle of it and went back to sleep. "When we get to Cracow," he muttered, "we will go to the police station and refute

his allegations. There is no point in arguing with him now."

I knew exactly what that Pole was after. He wanted to search my suitcase so that he could find out what was inside. He knew we were coming from Russia, and since Jews are leaving the country they must have gold and silver with them.

I had no choice but to listen to his vituperation and bear it in silence. I was made to suffer, and had to go on enduring it all night until we crossed the border. When we arrived in Cracow we met another Polish Jew who had worked with us in Samarkand. He recognized us immediately. He had come to meet one of our relatives, but when he saw us he decided to help us in our new place.

He took us to the hotel, and at our request we were given a room in a hotel, which we could not have gotten on our own.

The Rabbi of Stotshin (who now lives in the United States) was staying at that hotel. He had also lived in Samarkand and lived a life of poverty, since no one there knew him and would take care of him.

My brother and I were good friends of his, and we helped him as much as we could, but there was no one else there to help him.

The Jew we had met at the train station was one of his Chassidim, and since he knew that we had helped his Rebbe he felt obligated to reciprocate.

It was Friday, the eve of the Sabbath, when he took us to meet the Stotshin Rebbe who lived in that hotel. After we greeted each other, I asked him if he knew of anyone who was travelling to America, since I wanted to send a letter to K.K. the Admor of Lubavitch, since it was dangerous to mail a letter from Poland. He told me he knew someone whom he was supposed to see that same day.

His visitor was a Jew from Tsheshin, a small town divided by the border of Poland and Czechoslovakia, whose people went back and forth trading in the two countries. That man was from the Czech side, and he could easily transfer letters to the United States, as he often did for the Rebbe himself.

I started to prepare a long letter to our Rabbi. At that time our Rabbi did not have all the information about our people in the Soviet Union, and he did not know whether they had sufficient means to travel out of the country, since it was dangerous to communicate with him and no one dared write to him. I was the only one at that time who corresponded with him, unbeknown to anyone, except during

the war years when all communications stopped altogether.

I wrote to the Rebbe about what was taking place in Russia, that there was possibility of travelling from Poland to the American zone, and that our people are waiting for his consent to leave Russia.

Three days later I received a fast cable from our Rabbi, saying that if the situation was indeed as I was describing it, he was giving his full consent for our people to leave Russia.

As soon as I received the letter I wrote several letters to people in Moscow, Samarkand, Tashkent, etc., regarding our Rabbi's consent to our people leaving Russia via Poland, to the American zone in Germany. In the letter to Samarkand, addressed to Rabbi Israel Noah Belintzky, I added that if he knew of any hardship cases that needed help with the fare, he could spend up to 3000 dollars and I would pay him back.

I knew that the financial situation of our Rabbi was most difficult and our people had to abstain from asking him for financial help.

As soon as the letters were received, our people began to prepare for the journey—as I found out later on—and a month or two after they received the letters nearly all of them arrived in Lvov.

In the month of Ellul everything was ready for the trip. But for several reasons, which cannot be enumerated here, the special transport for crossing the Russian border to Poland shortly before Rosh Hashana was cancelled and all the passengers had to hide in Lvov until the situation changed.

A few days later I received a cable from our Rabbi instructing me to continue to Paris, rather than anywhere else.

At that time there was a central rescue committee charged with helping Jewish survivors of the Holocaust. The representative of the committee in Europe was a woman named Sternbuch, the daughter of a renowned rabbinical family and a native of Switzerland. She headed the rescue committee in Europe and ran a large operation of saving Jews from dangerous places and transferring them to Czechoslovakia.

Our Rabbi at that time paid 2000 dollars—a rather large sum in those days—to transfer me and the members of my family from Poland to Czechoslovakia.

I had no knowledge of it at the time, and only got the instructions to go to Paris and leave Poland as soon as possible, because of the unrest

in Poland at that time.

I started to look for ways to leave Poland, go to Prague and from there to Paris. At first I tried to transfer my family to Prague. I found out about Mrs. Sternbuch, who was active in transferring Jews to Prague through her office in Katowitz. In the meantime, some Polish Jews (who now live in Israel) with whom I had had business contacts in Samarkand offered to take us to Czechoslovakia on condition that we did not take any belongings with us. After we agreed on a price for each person separately, they told me that the first condition for the trip was for me to remove my beard, since it was dangerous for me to travel as a Jew. Naturally, I refused.

In the end I agreed to have them transfer only the members of my family, and later on I would find a way to smuggle myself. They first took the children and left my wife behind. They made her leave all her clothes and other personal belongings behind, and then they took her as well.

I remained all alone, without my family. Since I was not tied down, I saw no need to remain in Cracow, and I travelled to Lodz. Some of our people had already arrived there.

One day I was told that some strange visitor had come to see me. He turned out to be Mrs. Sternbuch's secretary. He told me he had instructions to transfer me to Czechoslovakia, and that the transfer had already been paid for in America. I told him my family was already there, and only I was left behind.

We agreed that he would send me a cable as soon as he returned to his office in Katowitz, and after I received the cable I would go to Katowitz as they would have an arrangement to smuggle me into Czechoslovakia.

Earlier, when I first learned about the rescue committee in Katowitz, I had gone there to see what was going on. The trip from Cracow to Katowitz in those days was quite hazardous, since the Poles had an open season on Jews, and did to them whatever they wanted. Going by bus with Poles could only end in trouble, particularly for a bearded Jew who could be detected right away.

I took my life in my hands and travelled to Katowitz, where, thank G-d, I arrived intact. I looked for the hotel where the rescue committee was housed.

When I arrived there I was told that Mrs. Sternbuch was not there that day, and might be away the whole week.

Right away I had the feeling everything did not go well there, and was yet to go through great hardships before I would cross the border.

In the meantime I met with some people who informed me that my family was safe and sound, and so I was no longer under such great tension and I returned to Lodz where I met our people who, as was mentioned, had arrived there earlier.

On Sunday I received a cable informing me of the date of my rescue. I went back to Katowitz and I met with Mrs. Sternbuch. It was very difficult for me to communicate with her, since she spoke fluent German which I barely understood. She told me she had received instructions from America to transfer me to Prague and that tomorrow I would be taken across the border.

We arrived the next day, as was agreed, when, suddenly, her assistants told me that there was no chance of taking me across that day or even the next day. I expressed my surprise, since Mrs. Sternbuch had made a personal promise to me. They avoided giving me a direct answer, and only added that the consul was not going that day.

What did that consul do?

The Czech consul worked in Katowitz, and lived in Tsheshin. Each day after work he would go home and take two passengers along, disguised, of course, to free Tsheshin.

Since I discovered the secret of the transfer, I would stand there every day and watch two persons enter the consul's car and travel with him towards freedom. This happened for several days, as I stood there and watched, waiting, not knowing why they were more privigeged than I, and why I was not one of the lucky ones, despite the repeated promises.

For a whole week I waited for my transfer in vain. By the end of the week Mrs. Sternbuch arrived and I reprimanded her for her behavior. She promised me I would go the next day, but I insisted I wanted to go that same day.

On Friday she told me to come at five o'clock when I would be picked up. I expressed my surprise. What it meant was, that I would have to travel on the Sabbath!

They kept putting me off for two whole weeks, despite the fact that each day the consul arrived and took two passengers across the border.

The next Friday the office staff told me that they were not getting anywhere with the consul, and they had found another way to trans-

fer me. They told me that on Sunday morning I would travel by train to Tsheshin where a young lady who worked for them would be waiting for me at the train station. When she gave me the signal, I would follow her to a place that she would point out and from there I would be taken across the river. They added that it would cost me 60 dollars, and that I would have to bring along a picture of myself to arrange for an ID card.

After I took the picture in the same building where the office was, and gave it to them, they told me to come on Sunday to the train station, since it was Friday, the eve of Shabbos.

They had told several people the same thing, and arranged for all of us to come on Sunday.

Tsheshin was a small town, and had a relatively small train station.

On Sunday I arrived by train in Tsheshin, where I met the young woman who signalled to me to follow her. There were other people with me who had arrived there at the instructions of the rescue committee.

The border guards saw these "guests" who undoubtedly were planning to cross the border. One of them approached me, showed me an official card identifying him as a government official, and told me to follow him. I had my tallis and tefilin case with me and a small suitcase. He wanted to know why I was there.

In the meantime I noticed that the young lady, who was going to show me the way to cross the border, had disappeared as soon as she saw the agent come over, and hid behind a nearby building.

As the agent started to search my suitcase, someone came out of the building and started to shout, "Jidovski gemeinde, Jidovski gemeinde!" (Jewish community). I understood him to be addressing me, telling me that I should inform the agent who had detained me I was going to the Jewish community. I told the agent where I was going, when I saw a young Chassid who had worked for me in Samarkand. He recognized me and decided to come over and help me.

His name was Rosenberg, and he was a local smuggler. He turned to me as if in surprise and said, "Here, here is my house, where are you looking for me?" He turned to the agent and told him in Polish, "What do you want from him, he is looking for me." I now knew he was trying to save me, and so I played along and said, "Finally I have found the person I was looking for."

The agent, who failed to find anything special in my possession, finally released me, and the young Chassid took me to his home.

I told him how I had arrived there, and he expressed his amazement at the way the members of the rescue committee behaved, especially here in a small town on the border, where most of the people were known to the authorities. After all, one could see right away that I was a stranger and would arrest me!

After we spoke for a while he told me he was prepared to help me cross the border, and since he was not allowed to host strangers in his house, he was going to transfer me to someone else's house, a safer one, and in the evening he would take me to Tsheshin, on the Czech side, and everything would be all right.

At midnight he arrived at my home and told me that he could not transfer me that night, but I should not go anywhere, because he might have to come back to fetch me.

When Mrs. Sternbuch and her staff found out that I had been detained, they panicked and came immediately to the Czech side of Tsheshin to look for me.

That Jew came the next day, accompanied by a gentile, put me in a small car, and took me to a thicket where someone was waiting for me (it was the brother of Rabbi P. Teitz of Elizabeth).

Half an hour later many people arrived, strangers all, and told us to follow them. They took me to the bank of the river where the river was quite narrow. One of them put me on his shoulders and carried me across the river, to Czechoslovakia, and to freedom, as the dawn began to break.

My family had also been transferred to free Tsheshin across that river. The children had been taken over the bridge.

When I arrrived there I found several Chassidic families, Lubavitchers and others, who had lived in Samarkand. There I also saw a letter from our Rabbi to R. Mordechai Dubin, stating that he could shave his beard to save his life.

I spent two days in Tsheshin, at the address I had been given before I left. It was 12 Tammuz, and I celebrated the rescue of our Rabbi from jail. From there I went to Prague. There I stayed several days, took care of the necessary documents and went on to Paris.

The documents we had were not the right ones, since we did not get papers as one family, but each had separate documents. I, for example, was given the documents of a very old man. My wife received a

document of a young girl. My 12-year-old daughter was given the document of a 20-year-old, and my 11-year-old son had a document giving his age as 19. Our 10-year-old daughter was given the document of a 20-year-old, and the 8-year-old son the document of a 17-year-old.

Needless to say, as we crossed the border we had quite a problem, but fortunately many people travelled in the same direction to a convention for the founding of the Poale Agudas Israel in Antwerp, and they helped us with the authorities.

Rabbi and Mrs. Gorodetzky after their arrival to the United States in 1947.

Rabbi Gorodetzky in Paris soon after leaving the USSR. From right to left: Rabbi A.M. Silberstrom, Rabbi Zalman Schneursohn, Rabbi Gorodetzky, Rabbi Israel Jacobson, Rabbi Weinberger.

Chapter Thirteen

Paris

Arrival in Paris / The Refugees' Hard Life in Paris / First Contacts with the Joint / Many Requests for Visas / The Rebbe Charges Me with Forming a Refugee Bureau / Visit to Germany / Meeting with Chabad Refugees in Paking

We arrived in Paris on 17 Tammuz 5706 (1946). I remained standing in one place, unable to speak the language, not knowing what to do. As I stood there, utterly perplexed, a young Chassid came over to me who knew French. Without saying anything he took me to a hotel where we were given two rooms and were taken to a kosher restaurant where we had a meal.

The rescue committee official came and brought us a food card to help us obtain some food items which were extremely difficult to get after the war. He also gave us coupons for the local kosher restaurant, which provided food for the refugees, although we did not want to eat at that restaurant.

We lived at that hotel for several days.

I got in touch with Rabbi Zalman Shneursohn, who had lived in Paris since 5796 (1936), where he was in charge of a community with several institutions. He invited me to come over to his house.

He found rooms for us in a hotel near his home, so that we could be close to him. In the meantime I began to make contacts with the local

institutions and with private persons. The leaders of Agudas Israel invited me and asked me to take charge of several educational matters. They also publicized the fact that I was beginning to occupy myself with education, arranging Gemorah lessons, etc. But I did not want to make any commitments, especially after I realized that it involved political matters, and I wrote about it to our Rabbi.

We lived six persons in one room in that hotel, on the fourth floor. We could not bring food into our room, since hotels in Paris do not allow it.

One time they saw us bring food into our room. When we came back that day we found our belongings out on the street. The anti-Semitic owners of the hotel simply threw us out of the hotel and brought down our belongings, depositing them on the sidewalk.

A few years later that hotel became ours, as we rented the entire building for our purposes.

Right then, our situation was most dire. My family remained without a roof over its head, including the little children. I was nonplussed.

At first my wife and daughters went to live at the institute for girls run by Rabbi Shneursohn, but for various reasons they did not get along there and had to leave the institution.

At last we found a partial solution by using an apartment belonging to a Jew. The landlord, a tailor by trade, had been expelled from his house by the Nazis and had disappeared. The apartment had two rooms he had used for his work. Because of the war it had remained empty and deserted for five years.

This tailor had a son whose life was saved by Rabbi Shneursohn, who became his guardian.

After a year the neighbors wanted to take the apartment since they knew that the owner was lost in the war. Trying to prevent them from taking it, Rabbi Shneursohn suggested that I occupy it.

The place was a scene of total desolation. It did not have the minimal requirements for a family to live in it, but we had no other choice and had to make the best of it. We worked hard for two days removing the debris and the garbage which had accumulated during five years. We could not find any fire wood or coal or anyone who could repair the broken windows. We lived under most difficult conditions during the entire winter, suffering from the extreme cold, under incredible conditions.

Once, on 19 Kislev, some of the local Rabbis paid me a visit, and were stunned to see the conditions under which we were forced to live. They rebuked me for not letting them know about the situation, since they would have done something to help.

We spent half a year in this way. In the meantime we started to look for visas for our people who had left the Soviet Union and were staying in camps in Austria. We had many requests from those people.

In the month of Ellul 5706 (1946) Rabbi Israel Jackobson arrived at the behest of our Rabbi from the United States, in order to study the condition of our people in France, Czechoslovakia, and a few other places.

On the eve of Sukkos I received a cable from our Rabbi that read: "Tell our people in Lvov to continue their journey." This was after efforts had failed to leave Lvov for Poland, and our Rabbi was notified about it, which is why we received such a clear answer.

Indeed, our people in Lvov did as told by our Rabbi. They left with the special train from Russia and arrived in Poland without any trouble.

In Paris I occupied myself with the local communal affairs, such as working with the Joint Distribution Committee. It should be pointed out that some of the workers in the Kehillah's section for helping refugees were communists who opposed religion, and whenever an observant Jew came under their care they looked down on him and treated him with contempt. Meanwhile a host of religious Jews came to Paris, among them famous Rabbis and personalities, and the situation called for a solution.

One day the local Rabbis and communal workers gathered and sought a solution for the problem. The meeting was attended by the representatives of Agudas Israel, who proposed to purchase a large building outside the city, where the Rabbis would get apartments for their families. They would also organize support systems for them through proper contacts with the JDC and other organizations.

I strenuously objected to that proposal, arguing that we could not make a decision that would remove the Rabbis from the city so that they would have no contact with the general public of refugees. I also argued that such an association of Rabbis would be under the control of a party, when Rabbis are expected to be apolitical, rise above the party and give it guidance, rather than the other way around. I

argued that particularly in the city we had to mingle among the people and spread G-d's Torah and mitzvos, especially now that the world was in ruins, and all were waiting for shepherds to show them the way in which to walk and what deeds to be done!

The assembled began to nod their heads in consent, and asked me: "Very well, then, can you propose something better that would benefit all of us?"

I proposed that we appoint a special committee that would be in charge of obtaining funds from the appropriate bodies. The committee would distribute money to Rabbis and to important people, to widows, etc., so that they would not have to wait in line, be abused and forced to push their way among the women and children, but rather receive their aid with dignity.

They liked my proposal, and they proceeded to form a committee of prominent persons. I declined their suggestion that I head that committee, and proposed for that post an older person of stature. I only agreed to serve as a vice president and treasurer.

I immediately visited Dr. Schwartz, the head of the J.D.C. and asked him to allocate the J.D.C. grants to us. I did not ask for any additional funds or for larger grants, but only the existing funds for the refugees, to be transferred directly to us, so that the Rabbis would not have to lower themselves and stand in line like all the rest.

Dr. Schwartz agreed to my request and asked me for a detailed list of the refugees.

I had many difficulties with the local leaderhip of the J.D.C., but Dr. Schwartz was the highest authority, and since he gave his consent, no one could question it.

Afterwards we also received funds from the rescue committee, who had to increase their allocation to us, that is to say, to the body called the Rabbinical Association.

Meanwhile I became acquainted with all sorts of people, and I became friendly with a specialist for "arranging" visas.

The demands for visas kept increasing, especially from our people in Austria who lived in camps under very trying conditions. In order to produce forged visas we needed large sums of money. Having no other choice, I took the last step I could take, and sold my last gold coins, thus remaining penniless.

I paid one man 2000 dollars—a hefty sum in those days—and ordered 60 visas. It was Ellul, 5706 (1946). The refugees had arrived

about half a year earlier, right before Pesach.

Meanwhile Chief Rabbi Y. A. Herzog and Rabbi Mishkovsky came for a visit, as they toured Europe in order to rescue Jewish children from the gentiles. I befriended them and we formed close ties.

At that time I received a letter from our Rabbi, asking me to found the European Bureau for Refugees, and appointing me as he bahkoah (representative).

I should like to add parenthetically that the letter arrived on my 40th birthday!

As I was preparing to travel to see our Rabbi in America, he asked me to visit our people in the camps in Germany, talk to them and find out about their needs, listen to their requests and bring him personal regards from all of them, as I gave them regards in his name.

In those days it was very difficult to obtain a visa to Germany, but if this was the wish of our Rabbi, nothing would stop me. Although I was stateless, I was able, thank G-d, to obtain the right visa and I embarked on my journey.

The trip to Germany in those days was most arduous. It was almost impossible to obtain a plane ticket and I had to take the train to Munich.

On Friday, the eve of the Holy Sabbath, I arrived in Munich and with great difficulty I found lodgings for the Sabbath. That same evening, the eve of the Holy Day, the gas system in the house broke down and I nearly suffocated from the gas that assailed the house.

I ran out to the street and spent many hours outside to let out the gas that had entered my body.

I spent the Sabbath in this man's house, and on Sunday I looked for ways to arrive in Paking where our people lived in camps.

I was exhausted when I arrived in Paking that night, and I went directly to the camps.

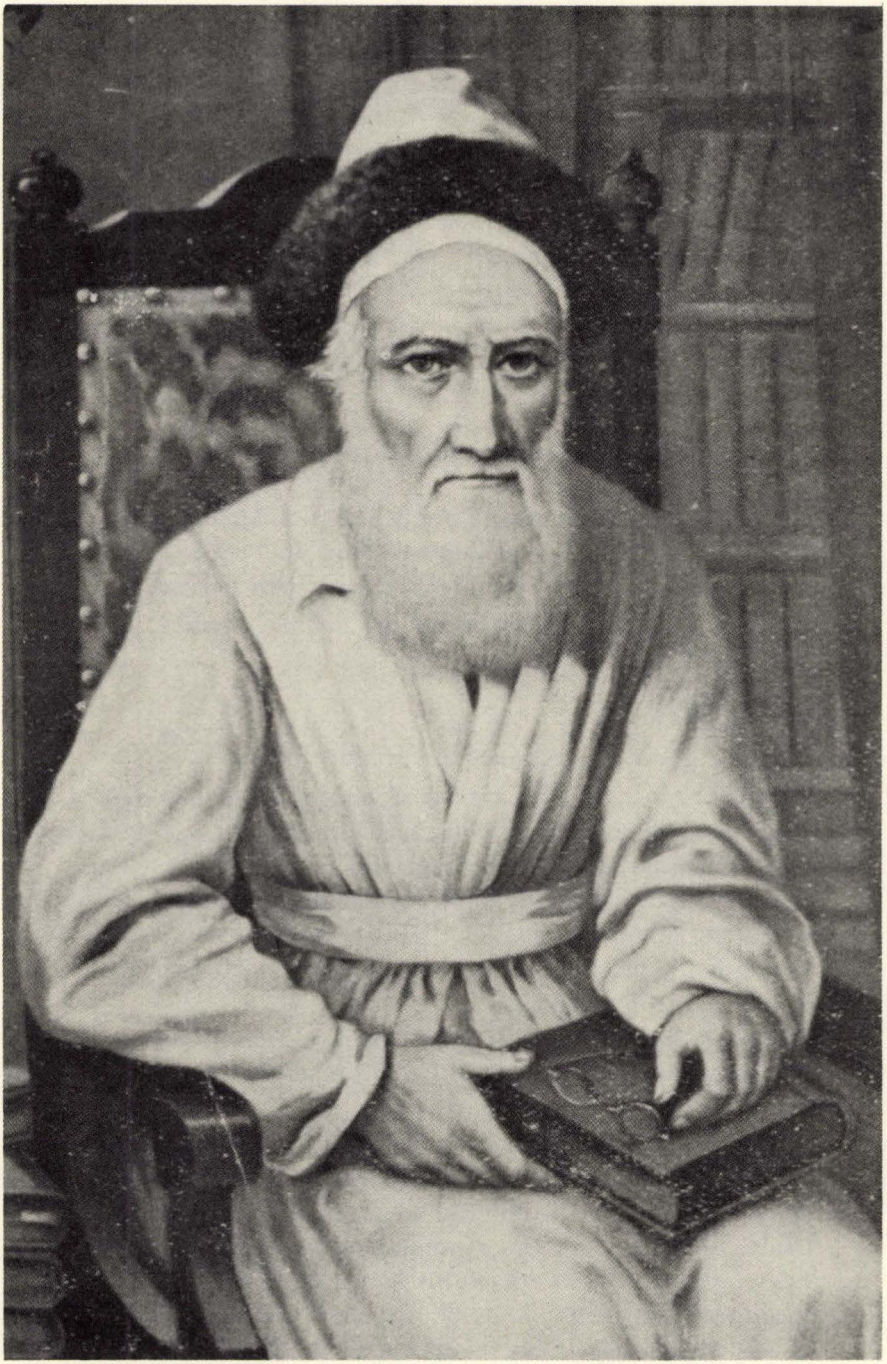
After I greeted the people I had dinner in the kitchen of the yeshiva and I was invited by the elders to a meeting. They voiced various arguments, and among other things they asked me to pay someone who demanded a huge sum of money. I told them that I had come at the request of the Rabbi, to bring them his greetings, and find out what possibilities we had to help them, and bring him first-hand regards from them. My coming here, I told them, was fraught with great difficulties, but I overcame all the obtacles in order to do the bidding of the Rebbe. I wanted to see, hear, and report everything to

our Rabbi.

The next day we held a general meeting attended by nearly all of our people, who expressed their requests of the Rebbe concerning their physical and spiritual welfare, and wishing to know what to do about the future.

I took advantage of my visit and stopped in Munich to ask the J.D.C. director to arrange for a special budget for our people and their institutions.

Two days later I travelled to Paris and London, and on the Holy Sabbath I remained in London. The trip from London to the United States was most difficult. It was the middle of winter, and the airplane was unstable, and had to land in Ganda, Canada, a forced landing because of a snow storm. We were kept there for 24 hours. We received a call there from our Rabbi's house, asking why we were delayed.



Rabbi Tzemach Tzedek, of blessed memory.

Chapter Fourteen

Reunion with the Rebbe

First Reunion after Twenty Years of Separation / Meeting My Relatives in Cherbourg on Trip to Europe and Germany / Visit to Germany with RaShaG / Comely Reception for the RaShaG Shalita

I arrived in New York on 9 Tevet 5707 (1947).

After twenty years of separation from our Rabbi, since the day he left us in the beginning of 5788 (1927), I once again was privileged to see his holiness, our Rabbi face to face.

It is hard to describe in words my feelings during that visit, after twenty years of total separation. I spent several hours alone with the Rabbi, and I gave him warm regards from our people in Russia and from my last visit to Paking.

I did not tell him in detail about the meeting in Paking, but gave him general hearty regards, and I could read great satisfaction in his face.

Several hours after my visit with our Rabbi, his son-in-law, the Admor Shalita, and his wife, Talita, asked for me and wanted to know about my visit to our Rabbi and what we spoke about.

I told them I gave warmest regards from our people.

They told me that after I left his house, our Rabbi cried for a long time without stopping. They told me, in our Rabbi's name, that his tears were tears of joy. They told me his words; "This is Binyomin

whom I knew, only his beard grew, but he remained the same Binyomin, after twenty years!"

It should be recalled that I was actually the first one who had the privilege of meeting with our Rabbi—twenty years since he left Russia in 5728 (1927), bringing him personal regards from our people and sharing with him good news which he greatly appreciated.

It should perhaps also be mentioned here what our Rabbi told me when I first came to him and gave him the news: "You must know, that you are my man, and you should not have any dealings with anyone. Tell my sons-in-law, may G-d keep them, that you are my man, tell your father-in-law that you are mine, tell yourself that you are my man, and tell the public that you are my man!"

At first I thought I would remain in the United States until my family arrived, since according to law I had to go and get them personally. Meanwhile, our Rabbi summoned me and told me that RaShaG, HDBN, had to go to Europe and to Germany, and he wanted me to join him. I told our Rabbi that I had to wait for the arrival of my family. But our Rabbi's opinion was that they could come and that I did not have to put off my trip because of it.

Meanwhile I received word from my family that they were taking the ship from Cherbourg to the United States. Interestingly, the ship they were taking was the same ship that we were going to take from the United States to Cherbourg, so we were going to meet there!

And this is precisely what happened. When we unboarded the ship on Friday, I met the members of my family in Cherbourg, where we spent the Holy Sabbath together, and we said goodbye when the Sabbath ended, as RaSHaG and I continued to Paris while my family sailed for the United States.

When our Rabbi had told me to accompany RaSHaG on his journey, he smiled and said: "I will tell you a story. When my father, G-d rest his soul, was about three or four, and his brother, RaZA, was five or six, the two used to go together to their grandfather, the Tzemach Tzedek. One time when they came back from their grandfather's house, R. Hillel of Poritsh saw them and ran over toward them and said, 'Oy, the grandchildren of our Rabbi, why are you walking alone?' He took them by the hand and brought them home. Their home was in the same courtyard, but he took them to their door nonetheless."

Our Rabbi smiled constantly as he told that story and murmured, *Nu, dem rabin's ayniklach, dem rabin's ayniklach* (Our Rabbi's grandchildren, our Rabbi's grandchildren). It was a hint letting me know he wanted me to accompany his son-in-law, the RaSHaG.

Naturally, I was glad to comply with his request, and I went with the RaSHaG to Germany.

In Germany the RaSHaG was greatly honored and was given an impressive reception. He spoke words of Chassidus, and the public greatly enjoyed it. As for myself, I did not interfere with any of his affairs and actions in that country.

There were representatives of the rescue committee in the camps in Germany. They conducted meetings and gatherings and provided funds for the refugees and for the yeshiva. I did not take part in those meetings. Instead, I remained in my room.

When the dignitaries remarked to the RaSHaG about my absence from the meetings, he told them: "You can trust Rabbi Gorodetzky. He knows what he is doing. Actually, it is a great success for you and for me that he does not take part in these meetings. You can rest assured he would not have allowed us to take any funds from them!"

ב"ה

משרד אירופית לעזרת פליטים ומיודים

מיסודו של כ"ק אדמו"ר רבי יוסף יצחק זצוקללה"ה נבג"מ זי"ע

שניאורסאהן מליובאוויטש

על יד כ"ק אדמו"ר מליובאוויטש רבי מנחם מענדל שניאורסאהן שליט"א

באי־כח באירופה הרב בנימין אלי' גראדעצקי

Siège des Services Sociaux et Culturels Européens
du Rabbi M.M. Schneerson de Lubavitch

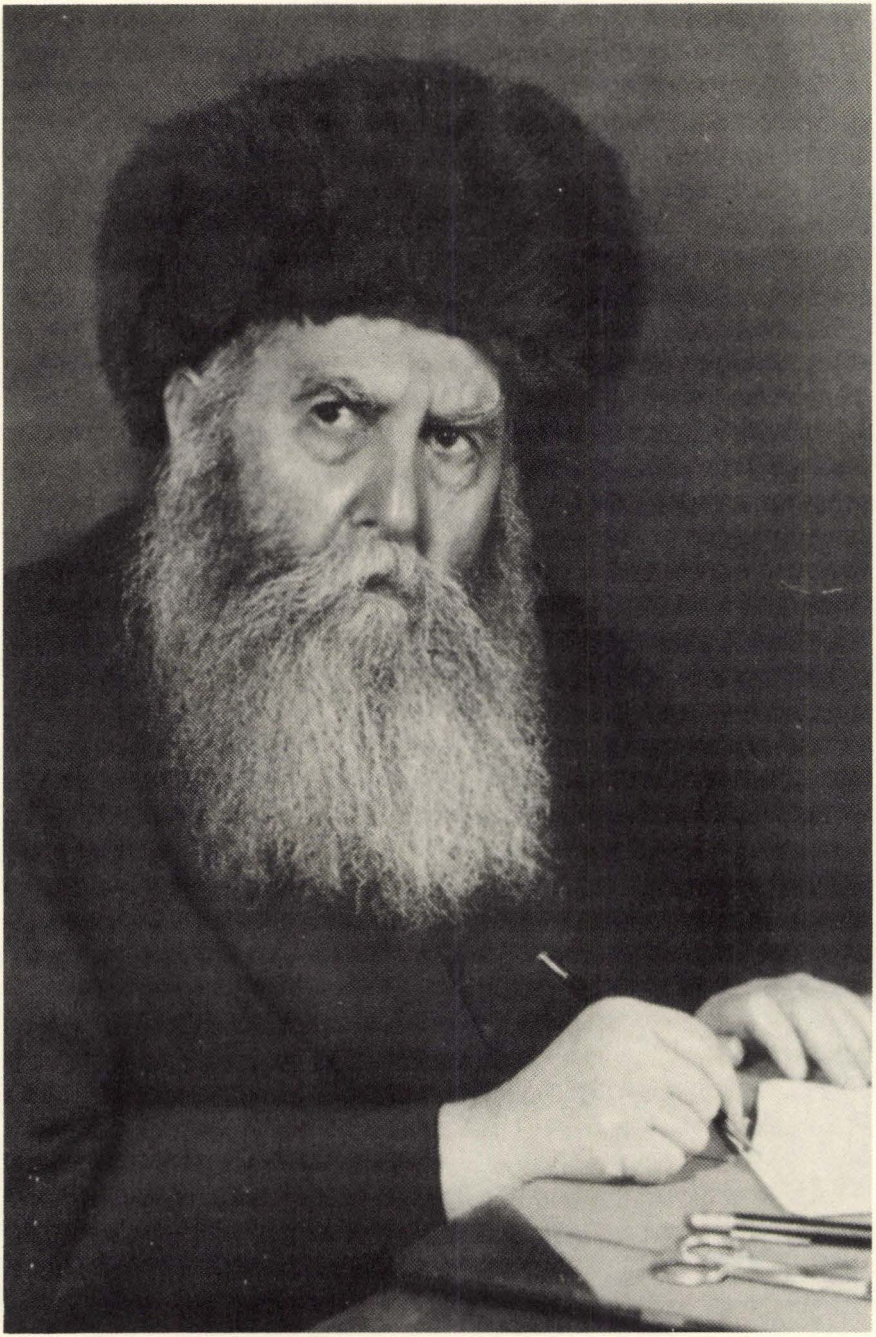
770 Eastern Parkway - BROOKLYN 11213 New York U.S.A.

Directeur Général Fondé de Pouvoir : le Grand Rabbin B. Gorodetzki

8, rue Meslay, 75003 PARIS - Tél. 887 87.12
272 70.62
277 80.45

Institutions : Yechivah Tomchei-Tmimim Lubavitz ; Chadré Thora Tmima Lubavitz ; Oholey Josef Itzchak Lubavitz ; Beth-Hamidrasch « Beth Josef Itzchak Lubavitz » (formation des Rabbins, Schochtim, Sofrim, Menaqrim) ; Séminaire d'Institutrices et Ecole de Filles Beth-Rivkah et Beth-Sarah ; Cours du Soir ; Centres de Jeunes.

Letterhead of Rabbi Gorodetzky's office in Paris.



The Admor, Rabbi Joseph Isaac Schneersohn of blessed memory.

RABBI J. SCHNEERSOHN
OF LUBAWITZ
770 EASTERN PARKWAY
BROOKLYN 13. N. Y.
SLOCUM 6-2919

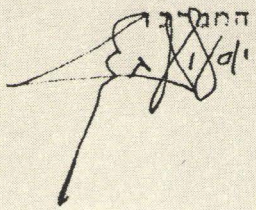
יוסף יצחק שניאורסאהן
ליובאוויטש

ב"ה ט"ו בסלו תש"ז.
ברוקלין.

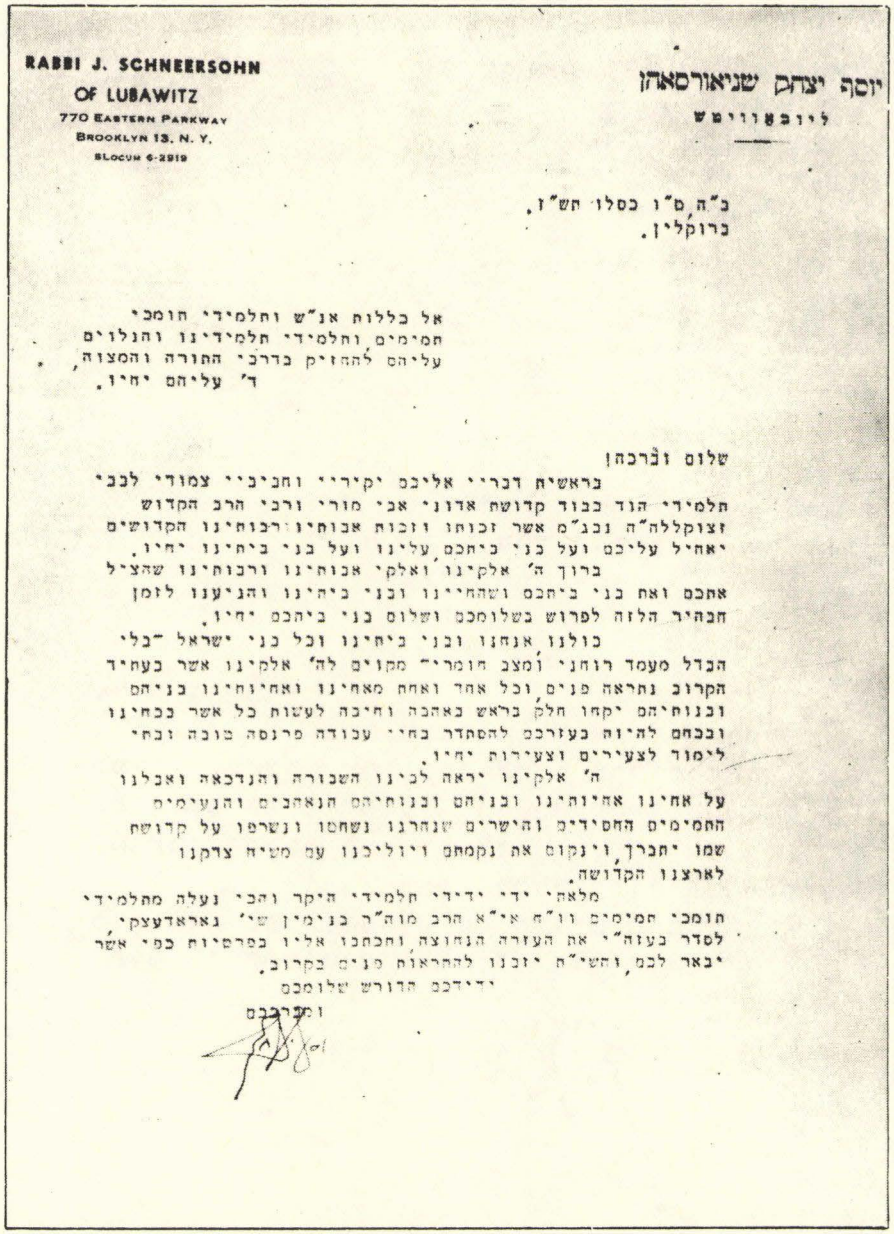
ידידי תלמידי היקר והכי נעלה
וו"ח אי"א הרב מוה"ר בנימין שי'
גראדעצקי.

שלום וברכה!

בזה הנני ממלא את ידו לסדר
בפאריז לשכה בשמי בשם לשכה אירופית לעזרת
הפליטים וסידורם על ידי בהתפקיד המפורט
במכתבי הכללי המצורף לזה.
את מכתבי הכללי יואיל לפרסם
בקהלות אשר נמצאים שם הפליטים מאנ"ש
ותלמידי החמימים ותלמידי תלמידיהם יחיו.



In this letter, Rabbi J.I. Schneersohn writes: "I hereby authorize you to establish a European bureau for refugee aid and rehabilitation."



RABBI J. SCHNEERSOHN
OF LUBAWITZ
770 EASTERN PARKWAY
BROOKLYN 13, N. Y.
SLOCUM 6-2919

יוסף יצחק שניאורסאהן
ליובאוויטש

כ"ה מ"ו כסלו תש"ז,
ברוקלין.

אל כללות אנ"ש ותלמידי חומכי
תמימים ותלמידי תלמידינו והנלוים
עליהם להחזיק בדרכי התורה והמצוה,
ד' עליהם יחיו.

שלום וברכה!

בראשית דברי אליכם יקירי וחביבי צמודי לבבי תלמידי הוד כבוד קדושת אדוני אבי מורי ורבי הרב הקדוש זצוקללה"ה ונכ"מ אשר זכותו וזכות אבותינו ורבותינו הקדושים יאחיל עליכם ועל כני ביתכם עלינו ועל בני ביתינו יחיו.

ברוך ה' אלקינו ואלקי אבותינו ורבותינו שהציל אתכם ואת בני ביתכם ושהחיינו ובני ביתינו והגיענו לזמן חבתיר הלזה לפרוש בשלומכם ושלום בני ביתכם יחיו.

כולנו אנחנו ובני ביתינו וכל בני ישראל "בלי הבדל מעמד רוחני ומצב חומרי" מקוים לה' אלקינו אשר בעתיד הקרוב נתראה פנים וכל אחד ואחת מאתנו ואחיותינו בניהם ובנותיהם יקחו חלק בראש באהבה וחיבה לעשות כל אשר בכחינו ובכחם להיות בעזרכם להסתדר בחיי עבודה פרנסה בובה ובחי ליטור לצעירים וצעירות יחיו.

ה' אלקינו יראה לבינו השבורה והנדכאה ואבלנו על אחינו אחיותינו ובניהם ובנותיהם הנאהבים והנעימים החמימים החסידים והישרים שנהרגו נשחטו ונשרפו על קדושת שמו יתברך וינקום את נקמתם ויוליכנו עם מעיה צדקנו לארצנו הקדושה.

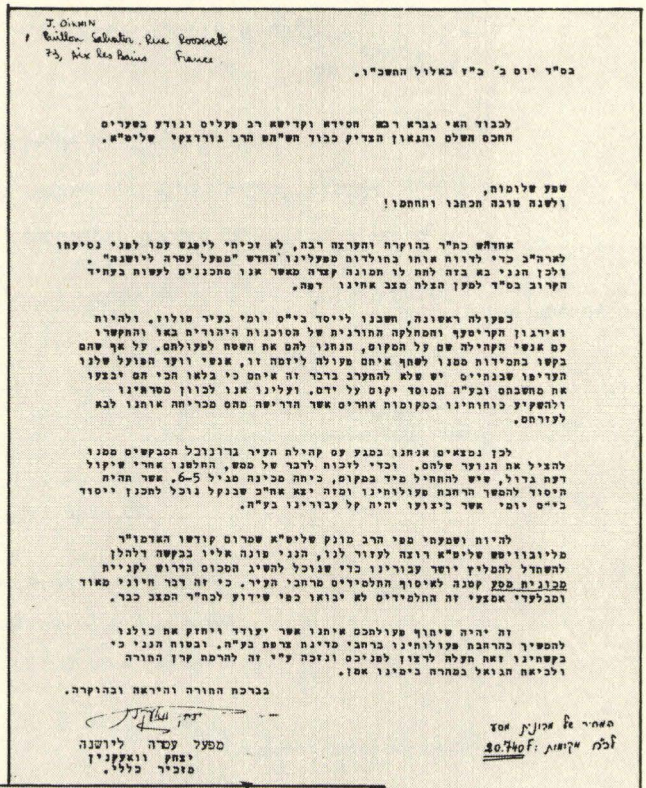
מלאתי ידי ידידי תלמידי היקר והכי נעלה מתלמידי תומכי תמימים וו"ח אי"א הרב מוה"ר בנימין שי' נאראדעצקי לסדר בעזה"י את העזרה הנחוצה ותכתבו אליו בפרטיות כפי אשר יבאר לכם, וחש"ת יזכנו להתראות פנים בקרוב.

ידידכם הדורש שלומכם

וברכתם

In this letter, Rabbi J.I. Schneersohn, the Lubavitcher Rebbe, writes to his students and followers, letting them know that "I have empowered Rabbi Gorodetzky, my beloved and most esteem student, to be in charge of all necessany aid, and contact him directly as he shall explain, and may the Almighty enable us to meet soon."

Various Jewish institutions in France write to Rabbi Gorodetzky for help in establishing schools, yeshivos and other educational institutions.



J. Oikmin
1 Caillaux Salvator, Rue Roosevelt
73, Aix Les Bains France

בס"ד יום ב' כ"ז באלול התשכ"ו.

לכבוד האי גברא רבא מסידא וקדישא רב פעלים וגודע בשערים
החכם השלם והנאון הצדיק כבוד הש"ס הרב גורדצקי שליט"א.

שמע שלומה,
ולשנה טובה תכתבו ותחתמו!

אחדש"ט כה"ר בהוקרה והערצה רבה, לא זכיתי ליפגש עמו לפני נסיעתו לארה"ב כדי לדווח אותו בהולדות מפעלינו החדש "מפעל עטרה ליושנה". ולכן הנני בא בזה לתת לו תמונה קצרה מאשר אנו מתכננים לעשות בעתיד הקרוב בס"ד למען הצלת מצב אחינו דמה.

כאמולה ראשונה, חשבנו לייסד בי"ס יומי בעיר טולוז, ולהיות ואירגון הקריסטף והמחלקה התורנית של הסוכנות היהודית באו והתקשרו עם אנשי התחילה שם על המקום, הנחנו להם את השטח למעלתם. על אף שהם בקשו בתחילה מאנו לשתף איתם פעולה ליזמה זו, אנשי ועד הפועל שלנו הקריפו שבנתיים יש שלא להתערב בדבר זה איתם כי בלאו הכי הם יבצעו את מחשבתם ובע"ה המוסד יקום על ידם. ולעינו אנו לכוון מפרשינו ולהשקיע כוחותינו בפקומות אחרים אשר הדרישה מהם מכריחה אותנו לבא לעזרתם.

לכן נפנאים אנחנו בפנע עם קהילת העיר ברונוכל הפבקשים מאנו להציל את הנוער שלהם. וכדי לזכות לדבר של פמש, החלטנו אחרי שיקול דעת גדול, שיש להחחיל מיד בפקום, כיתה מכינה מגיל 5-6, אשר תהיה היסוד להמשך הרחבת פעולותינו ומזה יצא את"ב שבנקל נוכל להכין ייסוד בי"ס יומי אשר ביצועו יהיה קל עבורינו בע"ה.

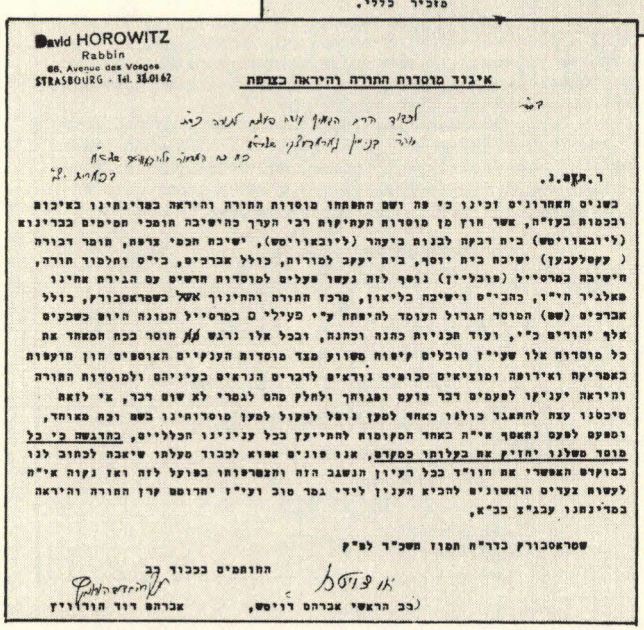
להיות ושמעתי מפי הרב פונק שליט"א שפרום קודשו האדמו"ר מליובוויטש שליט"א רוצה לעזור לנו, הננו פונה אליו בבקשה דלהלן להשתדל להמליץ יושר עבורינו כדי שנוכל להשיג הפכוס הדרוש לקניית מכונית פפך קטנה לאיפוף התלפידים פרחבי העיר. כי זה דבר חיוני פאוד ומבלעדי אפצעי זה התלפידים לא יבואו כפי שידוע לכה"ר הפצב כאן.

זה יהיה שיתוף פעולהכם אימנו אשר יעודד ויחזק את כולנו להפשיך בהרחבת פעולותינו ברחבי פדינת צרפת בע"ה. ובשוח הנני כי בקשתינו זאת תעלה לרצון לפניכם ונזכה ע"י זה להרפה קרן התורה ולהביאה חבואל בפחרה בימינו אפן.

בברכת התורה והיראה ובהוקרה.

מפעל עטרה ליושנה
יצחק וואקנין
מזכיר כללי.

מאחר אין אפונין אפד
לכפי איקוות: 30.740F



David HOROWITZ
Rabbin
66, Avenue des Vosges
STRASBOURG - Tel. 35.01.62

איגוד פוסדות התורה והיראה בצרפת

ר.תקפ.ג.

בשנים האחרונים זכינו כי פה ושם התפתחו פוסדות התורה והיראה בפדינתינו באיכות ובכפות בעי"ה, אשר חוץ פן פוסדות העתיקות רבי הערך כהישיבה תוכבי תפיפים בבריכוז (ליובאוויטש) בית רבקה לבנות ביעתר (ליובאוויטש), ישיבה תכפי צרפת, פוסר דבורה (עקשלעבען) ישיבה בית יוסף, בית יעקב לפורות, כולל אברכים, כי"ס ותלפוד תורה, תישיבה בפרסייל (פובלין) נוסף לזה נעשו פעלים לפוסדות חדשים עם הגירת אחינו פאלגיר ת"ו, כהכי"ס וישיבה בליאון, פרכז התורה והחינוך אשל בשראסבורג, כולל אברכים (שם) המוסר הגדול העומד להיפתח ע"י פעילי ס בפרסייל המונה היום כשבעים אלף יהודים כ"י, ועוד תכניות כתנה וכתנה, ובכל אלו נרגש את מוסר בכח תפאתר את כל פוסדות אלו שע"י פובלים קיפות פשותף פצד פוסדות הענקיים הנוסדים הן פועפות באפריקה ואירופה ופוציאים פכפופים נוראים לדברים הנראים בעיניהם ולפוסדות התורה והיראה יעניקו לפעמים דבר פועט ופצותך ולחלק פהם לגפרי לא שום דבר, אי לזאת פיכפנו עצה להתאגר כולנו באחד למען נוכל לפעול למען פוסדותינו בשם ובת פאוחד, ופפקם לפעט נפאסף אי"ה באחד המקומות לחתייעץ בכל ענייננו הכלליים, בתנאה כי כל פוסר פשלנו יחזיק את בעלותו כפקדם, אנו פונים אפוא לכבוד פעלתו שיאבה לכתוב לנו בפוקדם האפשרי את חוו"ד ככל רעיון הנשגב הזה ואתאפרותו בפועל לזה ואז נקוה אי"ה לעשות צעדים הראשונים להביא הענין לידי גפר טוב וע"י יתרופס קרן התורה והיראה בפדינתנו עבנ"צ בב"א,

שראסבורג כדר"ח תפוז תשכ"ד לפ"ק

התופפים בכבוד רב

אברהם דוד הורוביץ

(בב הראשי אברהם דויטש,

ב"ה ד" אר"ש תש"ח, פאריז.

לחנחלת איחוד האדמו"רים והרבנים חגולים בצרפת.

פאריז

שלום וברכה!

בזה חנני להודיעם כי ביום ג" בקר

בשעה השמינית צריכים ליסע לחכשיר את בית הרחיץ. חנסיעה היא

מהחזנה גאר דע ליאן, יהי" נא מסובם לשלוח מי מהרבנים שליט"א

להשתתף בזה. רצוף בזה מכתב כ"ק אדמו"ר שליט"א שהתקבל עבורם.

בכבוד וברכה

חרב בנימין גוראריעצקי

Le Rabbin Albert
CHOUKROUN

92100 BOULOGNE

Tél: 609.15.29

BOULOGNE, le 15 Juillet 1981

Monsieur le Grand-Rabbin GORODETZKI

Directeur de "Conversation avec les Jeunes"

8, rue Meslay - PARIS 3e

Monsieur le Grand-Rabbin Gorodetzki,

Cessant mes fonctions d'aumônier militaire le 31 Juillet, et mon successeur n'etant pas encore designé, je viens par la presente vous demander de suspendre l'envoi habituel des exemplaires de Conversations avec les jeunes, à mon adresse militaire à AMIENS.

Permettez-moi de saisir cette occasion pour vous exprimer, Monsieur le Grand-Rabbin, ma gratitude au nom de ces nombreux jeunes qui, durant près de 20 ans, en ont beneficié de cette enrichissante lecture, lors de leur service militaire, aussi bien en Algerie qu'en metropole, grâce à vos envois reguliers.

Si comme je le pense, a travers cette action que nous accompli ensemble, leur judaïsme en sort renforcé, c'est surtout à votre comprehension que revient tout le mérite.

Puisse ce כל המלכה את הלבוש ... vous aider à developper encore davantage votre oeuvre éducative - להגדיל תורה ולהאדירה -

Veuillez croire, Monsieur le Grand-Rabbin, en l'assurance de mon profond respect.

Rabbi Gorodetzky requests the rabbis and institutions to come and participate in the koshering of the flour mill.

Chapter Fifteen

Activities of the Refugee Bureau

Areas of Activity of the Refugee Aid Bureau: Founding Schools for Boys and Girls, Arranging Visas, Contacts with Institutions and Organizations, Providing Kosher Food, Matzos. Apartments, Employment for the Masses, Kosher Meat, Kosher Butchers and Mashgichim, Buying and Distributing Sefer Torahs and Religious Objects / The Bureau as Central Address for all of Europe / Special Activity in Refugee Camps Preparing for Aliyah to the Holy Land / Educational Work with Refugee Children

The situation in Paris in the post-war days was horrible. There was hardly any food, and there was practically no housing. In this respect the situation in Paris was the worst in Europe.

My office was housed mainly in hotels, since there were no other rooms for rent.

As I have mentioned, my main task was securing visas for our people who lived in the camps in Austria and complained about their deplorable condition.

I also organized a Cheder in the Pletzl Synagogue, with twenty-five children in two classes. I found a G-d fearing young Chassid named Berkowitz and appointed him a Melamed.

It was around that time that Chief Rabbi Herzog and Rabbi Mishkovsky came to Europe and sought to rescue children from their gentile guardians and look for ways and means to help Jewish refugees who were flocking to Paris by the thousands.

I met with them and discussed plans, methods and ideas for alleviating the suffering of the refugees. There was a great deal to do. We had to work through the rabbinical association and make contacts with the JDC and many other bodies, in order to obtain funds for the refugees and distribute those funds.

This situation continued until Sukkos, during which time we received many letters from our Rabbi with matters that had to be taken care of in the best possible way.

Meanwhile we started to receive lists of names of our people who were kept in various camps. I transferred the letters to our Rabbi who took personal interest in each person, with special affection, like a father, and to the extent possible I answered his questions down to the smallest detail.

During that period I received a letter from our Rabbi appointing me as his official representative and Bah-Koach (deputy). Since then I had to start conducting things in a new way, using new methods.

Pesach was approaching, and I had to make great efforts to secure matzos and other Kosher L'Pesach food. We received shipments from the United States of matzo shmurah and Kosher L'Pesach wine.

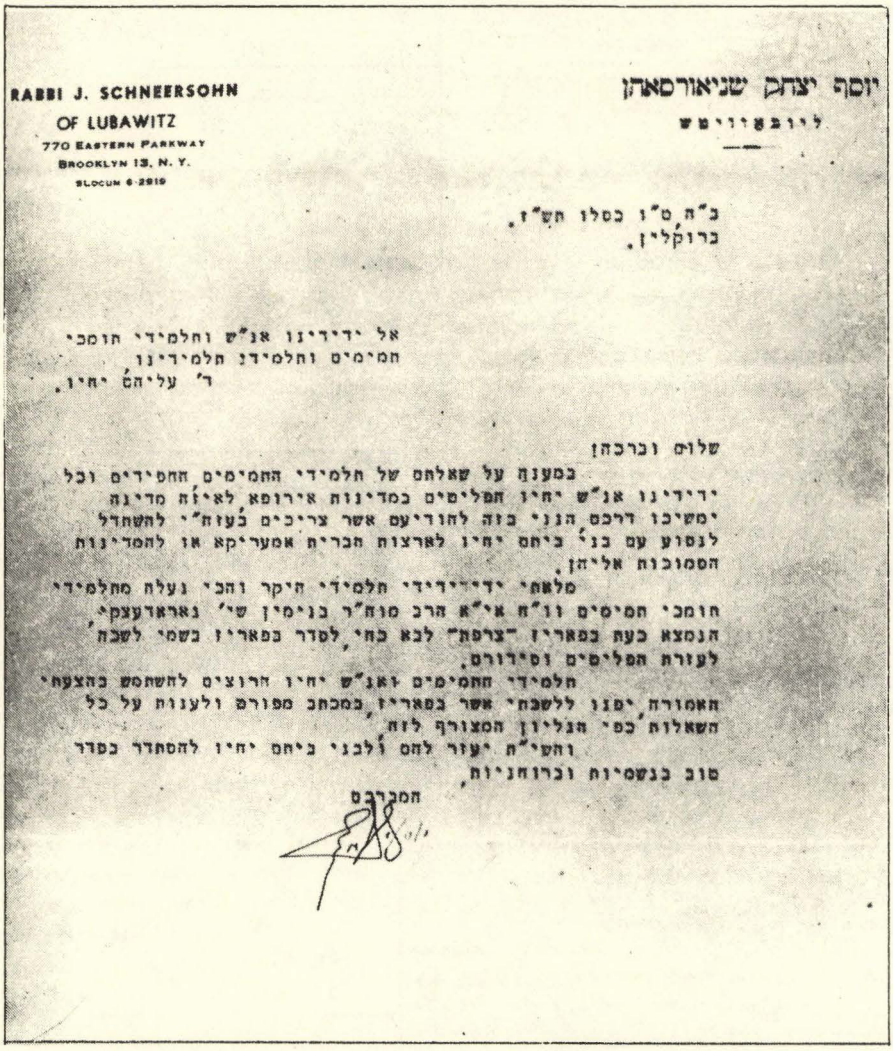
In Paris there was a Jew named Rotker, a Modzitz Chassid, who had lived there since before the war. He had a large building, and on the ground floor there was a kosher restaurant. The upper floor was a synagogue and his home.

He agreed to rent his lower level, and I moved in my office and organized a special office for the yeshiva, as well as an oven for baking matzos by hand.

The landlord himself worked for me in the bakery, which was his condition for renting the place, as he needed regular employment.

He was a great help to me, since he spoke French, and had excellent contacts with many merchants, and was able to show me around. We found a flour mill and we were allowed to kosher it for our purposes.

Before Pesach we had to purchase an enormous quantity of flour in order to bake matzos for thousands of people. In order to buy so much flour we needed large sums of money, and we only had a fraction of



RABBI J. SCHNEERSOHN
OF LUBAWITZ
770 EASTERN PARKWAY
BROOKLYN 13, N. Y.
SLOCUM 6-2919

יוסף יצחק שניאורסאהן
ליובאוויטש

ב"ה, ט"ו כסלו תש"ז.
ברוקלין.

אל ידידינו אנ"ש וחלמידי תומכי
תמימים וחלמידי חלמידינו
ד' עליהם יחיו.

שלום וברכה!

במענה על שאלתם של חלמידי התמימים החמידים וכל ידידינו אנ"ש יחיו המליטים במדינות אירופא לאיזה מדינה ימשיכו דרכם הנני בזה להודיעם אשר צריכים בעזה"י להשתדל לנסוע עם בנ' ביתם יחיו לארצות הברית אמעריקא או להמדינות הסמוכות אליהן.

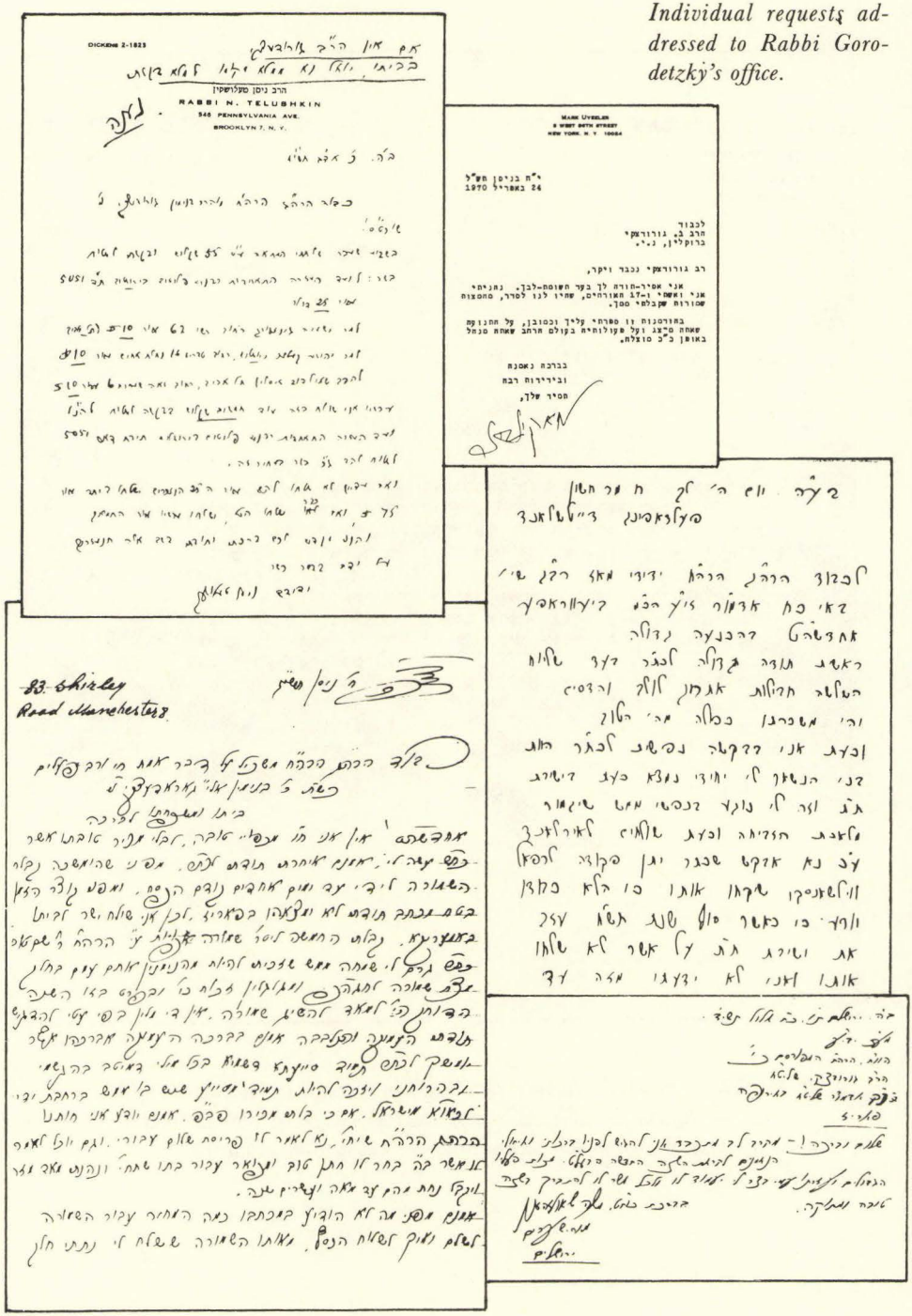
מלאתי ידידי חלמידי חיקר וחבי נעלה מחלמידי חומכי תמימים וו"ח אי"א הרב מוה"ר בנימין שי' נאראדעצקי, הנמצא כעת בפאריז "צרפת" לבא בחי לסדר בפאריז בשמי לשבת לעזרת המליטים וסיורם.

חלמידי התמימים ואנ"ש יחיו הרוצים להשתמש בהצעתי תאמורת יפנו ללשבתי אשר בפאריז במכתב מפורש ולענות על כל השאלות כפי תנליון המצורף לזה.

והשי"ת יעזר להם ולבני ביתם יחיו להסתדר בפדר טוב בגשמיות וברוחניות.

המברכם

Individual requests addressed to Rabbi Gorodetzky's office.



COMITÉ MONDIAL DU TOMBEAU DU MARTYR JUIF INCONNU

SOUS LE HAUT PATRONAGE DE

M. le Général Charles de GAULLE, *Président de la République Française.*
M. Chaim WEIZMANN, *Président de l'Etat d'Israël.*
M. le Maréchal Josip Broz TITO, *Président de la R.P.F. de Yougoslavie.*
S.M. LA REINE ELISABETH DES BELGES.
S.A.R. LA PRINCESSE WILHELMINE DES PAYS-BAS
S.A.R. Mgr LE PRINCE JEAN, *Grand-Duc du Luxembourg.*
M. Vincent AURIOL, ancien Président de la République Française.
M. René COTY, *ancien Président de la République Française.*
M. Georges POMPIDOU, *Premier Ministre de la République Française.*
M. Winston CHURCHILL, *ancien Premier Ministre de Grande-Bretagne.*
M. Josef CYRANKIEWICZ, *Premier Ministre de la R.P. de Pologne.*
M. Tage ERLANDER, *Président du Conseil des Ministres de Suède.*
M. David BEN-GOURION, *ancien Premier Ministre de l'Etat d'Israël.*

Dr. Nahum GOLDMANN, *Président du Congrès Juif Mondial et du Comité Mondial du Tombeau.*
M. Marius MOUTET, *Sénateur, ancien Ministre, Président d'Honneur.*
M. Diomède CATROUX, *ancien Ministre, Vice-Président.*
M. Isaac SCHNEERSOHN, *Président du Comité Exécutif.*

Paris, le 22 .2 .1968

17, *RUE GEOFFROY-L'ASNIER, PARIS-4e*
Tél. 508.06-04
C.C.P. PARIS 8462.60

Monsieur le Grand-Rabbin
C o r o d e t z k i
8, rue Meslay
P A R I S 3e

כבוד הר"ג רב הפעלים
הרב בנימין גאראדעצקי שליט"א

אדוני הרב מאד מכובד,

איך האב באקומען אייער ברייוו פון ס"ז בשבט באגלייט מיטן ספר התניא אין פראנצויזיש. דער ספר אליין איז ביי מיר זייער סיי'ער און איך האב אים אין מיינע יונגע יארן א סך געלערנט. דערביבער איז עס ביי מיר געווען א סיי'ערע איבערראשונג צו באקומען דעם ספר אין דער פראנצויזישער איבערזעצונג. די מחנה איז ביי מיר נאך שיי'ערער און הויך געשעצט צוליבן פאקט, וואס כבוד קדשו דער רבי , אדמו"ר שליט"א, האט וועגן מיר געדענקט און כבעטן עס מיר צושיקן.

איך בין אויך זייער דאנקבאר אייך פאר שיקן מיר דעם ספר מיטן גאנצן הארצן. איך וואלט נאר געוואלט אייך בעטן, אויב אייך איז עס מעגלעך, מיר צוצושיקן דעם ערשטן סייל, וועלכן איך האב נישט באקומען.

איך שעץ זייער הויך אייער פערזענלעכע און פריינטלעכע באציאונג צו מיר און בין זייער צופריידן פון דער געלעגנהייט אייך צו זאגן, אז איך שאץ אפ אייער גרויסע פערזענלעכע ארבעט לטובת די אלע ישיבות פון ליובאוויטש, מיט וועלכע איר פירט אן אזוי מייסטערהאפט און וועלכע עקזיסטירן גוט א דאנק אייך. איר האט זוכה געווען צו זיין א מרביץ תורה בישראל. זאל אייך גאט העלפן אין אייער גרויסער און הייליקער ארבעט.

ברגשי כבוד והוקרה
מכבדך כערכך הרם
שלך
יצחק שניאורסאן

World Committee of the Tomb of the Unknown Jewish Martyr
23 Shevat 5728 (February 22, 1968)
To: Rabbi Gorodetzky,
Distinguished Rabbi,

I have received your letter of 16 Shevat with the enclosure of the TANYA in French. The book is very precious to me, as I studied it diligently in my youth. It was a great event too for me to receive this book in French translation. This gift is even more significant to me and highly valued because the Admor Shalita thought about me and asked to have it sent to me.

I am also grateful that you sent me this book with all your heart. My only request is that, if possible, do send me the first part of the book, which I did not receive.

I greatly appreciate your personal feelings toward me, and I am happy to have this opportunity to tell you that I value all your direct personal work on behalf of all the Lubavitch yeshivos, which you direct so masterfully, and which exist thanks to you. You have been privileged to spread Torah in Israel. May the Almighty help you in your great and holy work.

With feelings of respect and appreciation,
respecting your great value, yours,
Isaac Schneersohn

MACHNE ISRAEL, Inc.
770 EASTERN PARKWAY
Brooklyn 13, N. Y.
Tel. SLocum 6-2919

מחנה ישראל
700 איסטערן פארקווי
ברוקלין 13, נ. י.
טעל. סלאקום 6-2919

כ"ה, יום ג' י"ט מנ"א תש"ז.

כבוד ידידי הנכבד וחנעלה חרת"ח
ז' א מוהר"ר בנימין גראדעצקי שי'

שלום וברכה.

בהיותי ביום ה' העבר בחיכל כ"ק אדמו"ר שליט"א ביקש אותי לכתוב לכבו' למסור ולפרסם לאנ"ש והחיתים הנמצאים בפאריז, תורת חכמת הכלילית לאנ"ש והחתמימים ס"ס ע"ד הנסיעה לאח"ב.

„מען דארף זיך ניט איילען מיט'ן קומען אהער, דא איז ניט לייכט זיך מסתדר צו זיין. אמעריקא גלייכט ניט אזעלכע, מען קען דא זוערען גיך א שעהנער איד, מיט א סיזוער בארד..."

„איך זאג ניט, אז זיי זאלען ניט קומען אהער, פארקערט, איך האב א כוונה פנימית, אז זיי זאלען זיין דא, זועט זיין מיט זועמען אויפצוטאן, אבער מען דארף זיך ניט איילען. דאס מיינט ניט, אז זיי דארפען דארטען זיצען בחיבוק ידים, נאר מען בעדארף זיך צוגרייטען יעדער לפי ערכו וסצכו."

„מען בעדארף דערווייל לערנען אליין און לערנען מיט אנדערע. מען בעדארף זיך צוגרייטען צו מלאכת חשו"ב, שחיטה נסוח איז א זאך גוט, לכה"פ שחיטת עופות, אזוי מוהל'שאפט, חזנות-דער זאל איז מסוגל דערצו-, מלמדות וכדומה, אבער ניט איילען און ניט נעכאפט, "וחשי"ת יחי' בעזרם בגו"ר."

בטח יספור כבו' את האמור בזה -בכלל בלשונו חק' ממש- לידידינו אנ"ש והחתמים שי' בפאריז וגם בחמחנות.

וחנני ידי"ע חדו"ש וחמכבדו בערכו

חרב שמואל זאלמאנאוו

In this letter to Rabbi Gorodetzky, Rabbi Shmuel Zalmanov suggests that the people prior to their arrival in the new country should prepare themselves by learning a Jewish ritual trade, such as shechita, milah, chazanus, *etc.*

ב"ח.

ח ס כ ם

בין חרב גשרשדעצקי, באי־כחו של כ"ק אדמו"ר שליט"א מליובאוויטש ומנחל לשכתו האירופית שבפריס -מצד אחד, ובין חרב פינגערהוט העומד מצד חרב חראשי דצרפת וחקונסיסטוריה המרכזית דצרפת -מצד חשני:

א. חלשכה האירופית מתחייבת לבחור ולמסור חמשה מתלמידי ביחמ"ד לשוביי"ם שלה, להתלמד ולהתרגל במלאכת ואומנות חעמדת חסכין, חשחיטה וחבדיקה, אצל חשוביי"ם חעובדים בבתי חמסבחים דפאריס תחת פיקוח חקונסיסטוריה.

ב. זמן חתלמדות וחתהרגלות חוא משך שנת שלימה, לא פחות. וחתלמידים צריכים להתעסק בכל יום באומנות חעמדת חסכין, חשחיטה וחבדיקה, לפי חאפשרות שיתנתן להם בבתי חמסבחים מצד חשוביי"ם וסדרי בית חמסבחים.

ג. במשך שנת חתלמדות כנ"ל בסעיף חקודם, יקבל כל תלמיד ותלמיד עזרת כספית בסכום של חמשה עשר אלף לחורש.

ד. חקונסיסטוריה מתחייבת להחזיר להלשכה כל חחוצאות חקשורות בחתלמדות חתלמידים חנ"ל, ז"א. חוצאות חעזרה חכספית חנזכרת בסעיף חקודם, קנין סכיני שחיטה בער חתלמידים וכדומה.

ה. אחרי גמר שנת חתלמדות, יתייצג כל תלמיד לפני ועידה מיוחדת אשר בה ישתתפו: א. נציג ביחמ"ד לשוביי"ם מטעם חלשכה. ב. נציג ועד חכשרות וחקונסיסטוריה. ג. אחד משוחטי ובודקי העיר. חועידה חזאת תחליט אם חתלמיד חתמחה כבר די צרכו בכל פרטי חאומנות ובידיעת חדינים, ואם חוא כבר ראוי לקבל חעודות חעראה וקבלה.

ו. אחרי קבלת חעודות חנ"ל מחויב כל תלמיד לעבוד במשך שנתים ומחצה, באחת חקהלות בצרפת אשר תוקצע עבורו מטעם חרב חראשי דצרפת חרב קפלן ובחסכמת חלשכה, ויקבל משכורת חדשית לא פחות מששים אלף פרנק.

ז. כל תלמיד שלא יקבל משרה קבועה מטעם חקונסיסטוריה תיכף אחרי גמר חתלמדות וקבלת חתעודות בחתאם לסעיף ח' -יקבל בינתיים ארבעים אלף פרנק לחודש. וחקונסיסטוריה מתחייבת להחזיר להלשכה את חמעות האלו.

ח. במשך חזמן שבין גמר חתלמדות וקבלת משרה קבועה כנ"ל בסעיף חקודם, חתלמיד מחויב לעזור בשחיטה ובדיקה בבתי חמסבחים דפאריס, על פי בקשת ורצון חקונסיסטוריה ובחסכמת שוחטי העיר.

ט. אם במשך ששה חדשים אחרי גמר חתלמדות וקבלת חתעודות, לא יקבל חתלמיד משרה קבועה מטעם חקונסיסטוריה, חרי הוא נפטר מחתחייבותו כלפי חקונסיסטוריה חנזכרת לעיל בסעיף ו', וחרי חוא ברשות עצמו. ובלבד שלא יקבל שום משרח של שו"ב במדינת צרפת בלי חסכמת חרב חראשי דצרפת, נוסף על קבלת רשות מהלשכה לכל קבלת משרה של שחיטה באירופה, בחתאם לחתחייבותם חמיוחדת כלפי חלשכה.

י. חקונסיסטוריה מתחייבת לסדר ביטוח חתלמידים במשך זמן חמצאם בבתי חמסבחים. ביטוח זה צריך להיות לא על ידי מוכר של לימוד כמו בית חמדרש לרבנים וכדומה.

יא. חתחייבות התלמידים כלפי חקונסיסטוריה כנ"ל בסעיף ו' ובסעיף ח' וכן חחסכם בכמות חמשכורת אחרי קבלת משרה קבועה ואופן חשלומי חמשכורת, יוחלם על ידי חוזה מיוחד בין חקונסיסטוריה וכל תלמיד בפרט.

ועל זה באנו על חחתום חיום יום..... לחורש..... ח'חשי"ט, פה פריס ע"א.

חרב ב.א. גשרשדעצקי חרב א.ס. פינגערהוט

An agreement between Rabbi Gorodetzky and the Chief Rabbi of France in regard to the training of yeshiva students in the practice of schechita.

Various publications concerning Jewish subjects such as holidays, Jewish personalities, Torah thoughts, Chassidus and more, published and distributed by the French office.

the amount.

In those days the refugees received a new kind of card which enabled them to buy bread each day. After many efforts I was able to persuade the merchants to let us buy flour on credit, on condition that after Pesach I would turn over to them the coupons distributed by the authorities.

This was indeed providential, being able to secure so much flour without paying a sou, especially for me, a stranger in a strange land, who was unknown to the merchants and had not established any credit. And yet they put their full trust in me!

The most difficult work in those days was finding living quarters for the multitude of refugees who kept streaming into Paris from many countries, Germany, Austria, etc. The first building I acquired—with the help of the JDC—was in Bologna. It was a hotel I bought to house refugees. When the first refugees arrived, I put them up in that building, and we began to look for additional building around the city.

It was most difficult work, endless runarounds and trips, all over the city. But thank G-d, we were able to find adequate dwellings, more or less, and everyone was given housing.

It was a most difficult period which required enormous efforts and undescribable work. I am sorry I did not keep a more detailed diary in those days—as our Rabbi suggested I did—that could serve as a glorious chronicle of the varied and multifarious activities of that period. Since I was one person conducting all that work practically by myself, I did not have the time to keep such a diary, and there is no way of correcting that mistake. What is done is done.

I also had a personal secretary, Rafael Vilshansky. In those days he was a very young fellow, but most conscientious and dedicated to the work, as was the need of the time. His great devotion was in total disproportion to his salary. His dedication to the public good knew no bounds.

So much for the first stage of securing dwelling places for the many refugees and providing them with initial help until they became acclimated in their new place. This was followed by the second stage of helping those people become financially secure and finding legal papers for them.

Finding adequate employment for those people caused great effort and tension. Some people wanted to go into the garment industry,

and we had to find the right tools and machines for them. Others preferred other occupations. Each one had to be dealt with on a personal and individualized basis, since everyone was different. Each person had different skills and different aptitudes, and one had to have enormous patience to fit each person with the right occupation. All of this was done by our bureau.

At that time the bureau was the central and nearly exclusive address in all of Europe, receiving the most unusual requests from all corners of the continent. Someone wanted a pair of tefilin, and someone wanted a prayer book. Someone wanted religious objects and someone wanted Jewish books. There were also heart-rending requests from individuals and public bodies to help them through contacts with the JDC.

As I go over the pile of letters I have saved, I marvel at how I was able at that time to honor all the requests and solicitations that came from as far as Sweden or Finland or Norway. Hardly any letter ever went unanswered.

We did not only deal with daily problems, but also with the special needs of the holidays, each holiday and its own particular needs, whether *shmuro* matzo for Pesach, or the four kinds for Sukkos. One can easily image the enormous difficulties involved in obtaining those things for our local needs as well as for the refugees who had remained in the camps in Germany, Austria, and other faraway places.

No less difficult was the problem of Kashrus—organizing proper kosher slaughter.

A particularly difficult problem was the matter of education—organizing Chadorim and Talmud Torahs for the children, in private homes, in synagogues, or in other public places, so that Jewish children could receive the proper education.

Another special undertaking was the publishing of pamphlets and booklets in French for French readers who did not have textbooks and other reading materials, such as prayer books, Bibles, etc. This work produced many complications. We had to find expert translators from Hebrew into French as well as Yiddish or English into French, obtain legal permit to publish, distribute and ship to many places and countries. It should be pointed out that this material is still used today by French youth to study about the Jewish people, the Torah, and learn the principles of Jewish education.

Our publications reached every place in the world where French

was spoken. Among other places, we sent them to Lebanon, where there were many French-speaking Jews; to Iran, Tunisia, Canada, Morocco, Algeria, Israel, etc.

We should emphasize the great contribution of Rabbi Rafael Vilshansky who had learned French and dedicated himself to issuing those publications. He still publishes them to this day!

A great deal of effort was invested in obtaining government aid for the refugees. The French Government helped families with many children by giving them a monthly allowance. In order to receive such a grant, the head of the family had to prove that he was employed.

I arranged work for many of them in our institutions, the yeshiva, the school for girls, mashgichim, etc. Others I gave general certification that the bearer was performing a certain job. We also paid various taxes imposed on every citizen, so that they could receive the regular government allowances and the state medical service.

Others needed documents in order to receive reparations from the German authorities for their suffering and losses during the Holocaust. They received the proper documents from our offices.

This also applied to all other certifications which people turned to us for. It never happened that someone needed some document and did not receive it from our office. We had a special liaison person who was in touch with the authorities and took care of such matters.

It should be pointed out that there was great demand for certification, since our certifications were accepted without any questioning, both by the local authorities and by public bodies in other countries.

In 5708 (1948) Ireland gave through the JDC, 3 million pounds of meat as a gift to Jewish refugees. It was necessary to organize proper supervision, and we had to provide the JDC with kosher butchers for that purpose.

I organized butchers, Rabbis and *mashgichim* and sent them to Dublin. The person in charge of the operation in Dublin was the Jewish mayor of the city, Mr. Briscoe, who was also a member of the Irish Senate. He took care of the entire operation and make sure that the authorities carried it through.

In the group there were also veteran butchers, who were joined by young men who studied the trade, as well as rabbis who could answer halachic questions. Altogether the group numbered twenty-five.

There were also women who took care of meals and other needs. Everything was slaughtered locally, checked and koshered, and the meat was packed in cans,

This work lasted for six months. The members of the team, some of whom were learning on the job, received a respectable salary.

After the 3 million tons of meat were sent from Ireland to the camps and to Eretz Yisrael, the business was put in the hands of Mr. Briscoe who continued to manage it as a private business.

I was in constant touch with him, and I provided him with our own experts, who made a decent living. This continued for several years until he stopped doing it.

Many studied the kosher slaughter trade and became expert butchers in many places in Europe, establishing themselves in their trade.

In addition to the Beit Rivka School for Girls, we also established a women's teachers' school, which did very well. The JDC helped us expand the building and built a new one for the older girls. At its own expense, the JDC built a well equipped building with the latest educational equipment, which is operating to this day.

It should be pointed out that the school began to graduate in its third year woman teachers for sacred subjects, who taught in many communities in Israel. The demand for woman teachers who graduated that school was quite high.

Afterwards we opened the Talmud Torah and an additional school for girls in the city of Lyon. For many years these institutions operated successfully, and some are still in operation.

There was great activity in the camps near Marseilles, which were used for preparing people to their new life in the Land of Israel. We began to send young men to those camps who did outstanding educational work. Some of the children in the camps did not receive any kind of education because of the vying of the various political parties for the souls of those children, while no party was authorized to engage in education. The children, as a result, remained without any Jewish education. After many efforts we succeeded in entering those camps, where others failed to enter, as we did not represent any political party.

After the war the question arose of how to distribute *Sefer Torahs* that had been rescued from the claws of the Nazi beast. In those days many bundles of Torah scrolls were found, packed by the Nazis to be

used as merchandise.

The UNRRA gave the JDC some 1200 Torahs, which were brought to Paris, the main headquarters of the JDC, in order to check them and distribute them to the proper places.

The JDC staff turned to us and asked us to take charge of this project, correct the scrolls and send them to the Land of Israel and to various camps where Jewish refugees were kept. I organized several people, Torah scribes and scribal apprentices, who corrected the scrolls and sent them to the Land of Israel and to several camps in Europe. It was extremely difficult to take charge of so many Torah scrolls, check each one of them, correct them and put them in final form so that they could be used for worship. Thank G-d all went well and we sent the scrolls to their destinations.

It was undoubtedly an outstanding operation on the part of the JDC, and the organization deserves our admiration and appreciation.

It should be added that in addition to the difficult operation of preparing the Torah scrolls, many people learned the art of the scribe which they have pursued profitably to this day.

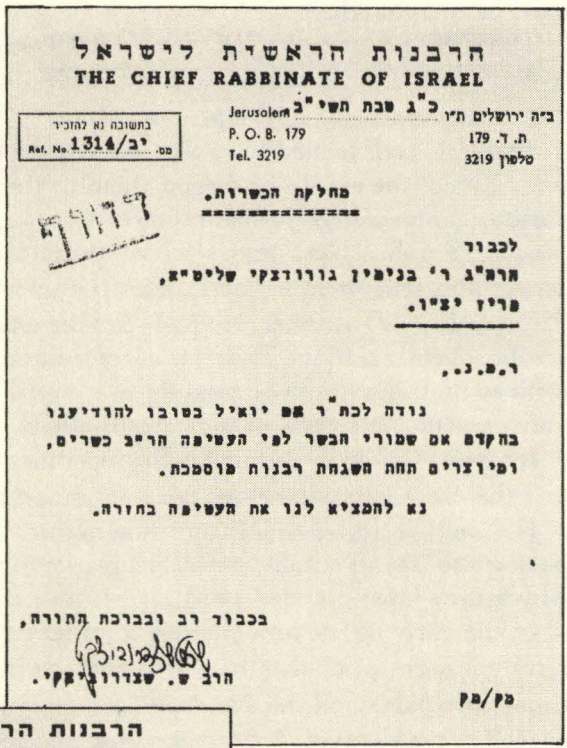
In the early fifties, immediately after leaving Russia, we began to send packages of clothes to needy persons in the Soviet Union. At times we would send thousands of packages in the course of the year, as well as packages of *shmura matzo*, four species, etc. This went on for many years until the Soviet authorities forbade us from sending shmura matzo and other things pertaining to religion.

We have been sending clothes to Russia for over thirty years. In the early years we had sent much more, and after many left the vale of tears it was no longer necessary to send so much. But the shipments continue to this day, albeit not so large a quantity.

Many know that these packages have greatly helped the people in Russia, both economically and in preserving Judaism and its institutions. There is no way of overestimating the help those packages have meant.

We would generally send those packages four times a year, and in the course of each year we sent thousands of packages.

Letters from the Chief Rabbinate of Israel to Rabbi Gorodetzky concerning the validity of the kashrus *of certain meat products.*



הרבנות הראשית לישראל
THE CHIEF RABBINATE OF ISRAEL

בתשובה נא להזכיר
Ref. No. יב/1314 מס.

Jerusalem כ"ג שבט תשי"ב ב"ה ירושלים ת"ו
P. O. B. 179 ת. ד. 179
Tel. 3219 טלפון 3219

מחלקת הכשרות.

דחוף

לכבוד
הרה"ג ר' בניימין גורודצקי שליט"א,
פריז יצ"ו.

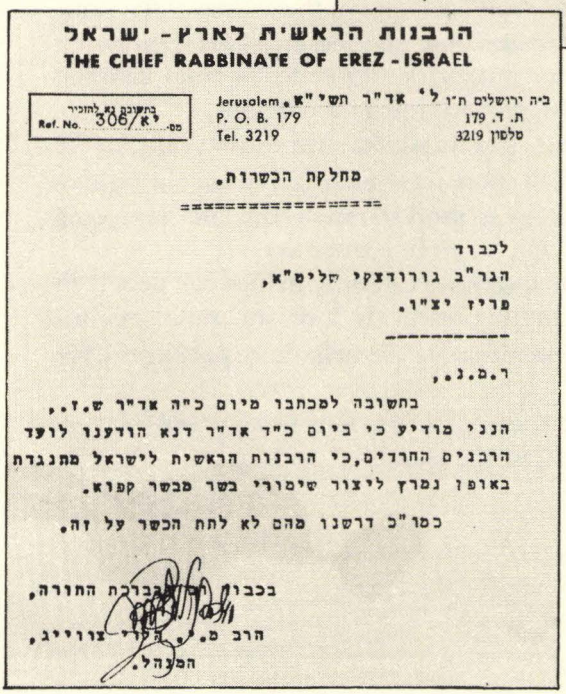
ר.מ.נ.,

נודה לכת"ר אם יואיל בטובו להודיענו בהקדם אם שמורי חבשר לפי העטיפה הר"ב כשרים, ומיוצרים תחת השגחת רבנות פוסמכת.

נא להמציא לנו את העטיפה בחזרה.

בכבוד רב ובברכת התורה,
הרב ש. שצדובי-יצקי.

מק/מק



הרבנות הראשית לארץ-ישראל
THE CHIEF RABBINATE OF EREZ-ISRAEL

בתשובה נא להזכיר
Ref. No. י"א/306 מס.

Jerusalem ל' אד"ר תשי"א ב"ה ירושלים ת"ו
P. O. B. 179 ת. ד. 179
Tel. 3219 טלפון 3219

מחלקת הכשרות.

לכבוד
הגר"ב גורודצקי שליט"א,
פריז יצ"ו.

ר.מ.נ.,

בתשובה למכתבו מיום כ"ה אד"ר ש.ז.,
הנני מודיע כי ביום כ"ד אד"ר דנא הודענו לועד הרבנים החרדים, כי הרבנות הראשית לישראל מתנגדת באופן נמרץ ליצור שימורי בשר מבשר קפוא.

כמו"כ דרשנו מהם לא לתת הכשר על זה.

בכבוד ובברכת התורה,
הרב מ. פרי-צוויג,
המנהל.

הרבנות הראשית לישראל
THE CHIEF RABBINATE OF ISRAEL

ב"ה ירושלים ת"ו
ת. ד. 179
טלפון 3219

Jerusalem
P. O. B. 179
Tel. 3219

י"א תמוז תש"י"א

בתשובה נא להזכיר
מס. יא/761 Ref. No.

מחלקת הכשרות.

לכבוד
הרה"ג ר' בנימין גורודעצקי שליט"א,
פריז יצ"ו.

ר.מ.נ.,

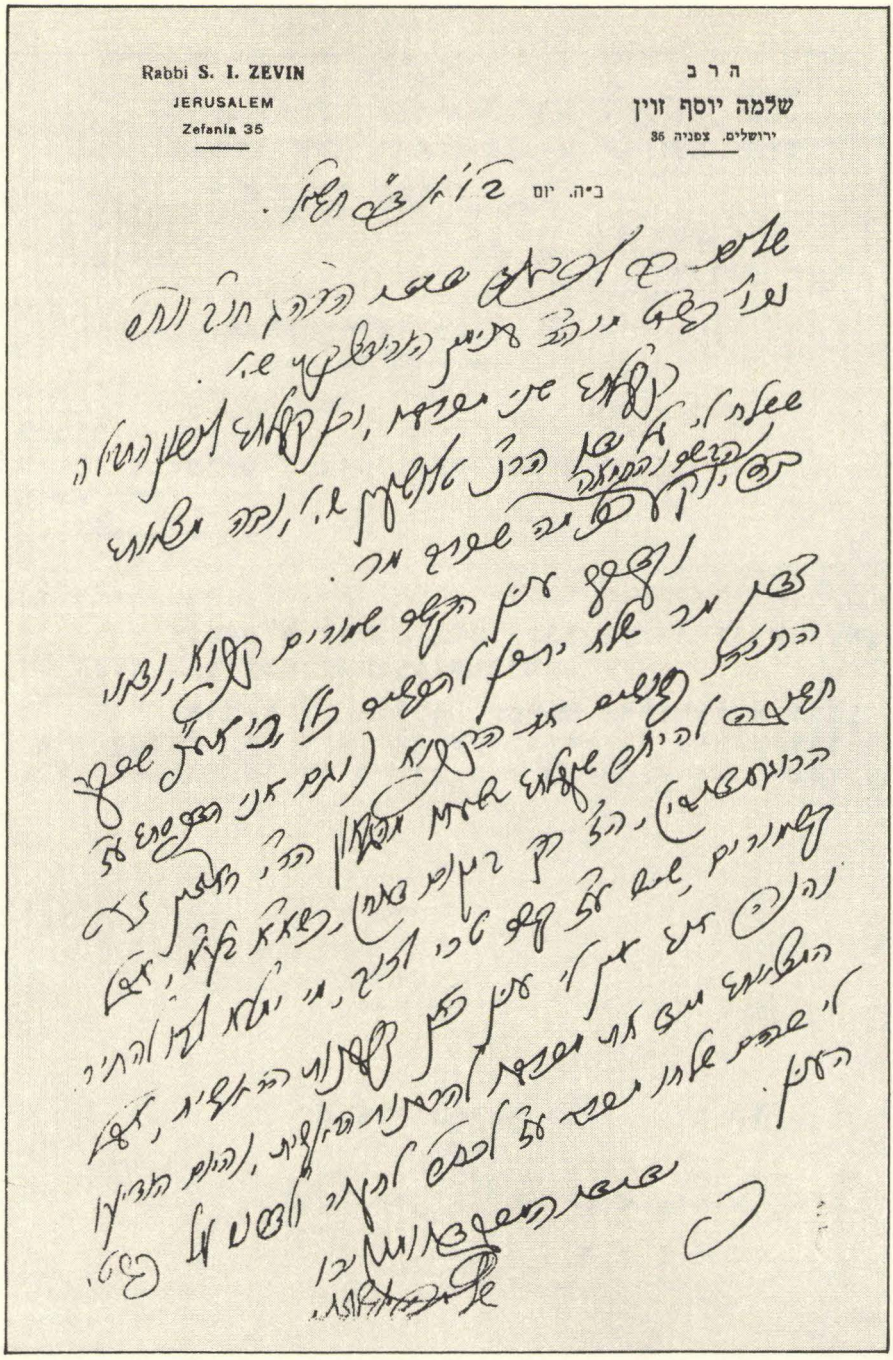
נתקבלה הודעה בשם רבני חסידי לובאוויטש,
על הסרת אחריותם מכשרות השחיטה.

הודעה זו מחוסרת חתימה אורגינלית,ולכן
כת"ר מתבקש בזה לתקן את זה בהקדם בתוספת בירור
מקיף ויסודי על כל העניין,כדי שנדע את אשר לפנינו

בברכת התורה מציון וירושלים,

הרב מ. י. הלוי צוויב,
ה מ נ ה ל.

מצ/מק



Letter from Rabbi Zevin of Jerusalem to Rabbi Gorodetzky concerning kashrus of meat.

TELEPHONE:
DUBLIN 93158.

12. HERBERT PARK.
DUBLIN.

24th August, 1949.

Grand Rabbi B. Gorodetzki,
20, Rue Villiers-de-l'Ile-Adam,
Paris. XXe.

Very Rev. Grand Rabbi Gorodetzki,

I thank you for your very prompt reply of the 22nd inst., to my letter to you of the 19th inst.

I further confirm my Telephone conversation with you this morning, and I hope to be in Paris on Monday afternoon.

Should, however, I have to delay a day or two, I will of course notify you by Telegram.

Before leaving for Paris I will make arrangements for the visas for the names of those we decide on for the work.

I know that you will make the terms satisfactory and suitable.

Thanking you for your Blessing and looking forward to meeting you soon.

I remain,

Most respectfully and sincerely yours,

R. Briscoe

P.S. It will be necessary for one of the men to come back immediately to superintend the work of making the Machinery and Factory Kosher, and also to help with the arrangements in connection with the living accommodation for the team, when the team arrives.

RB.

RB/MS

Letters from Mr. Robert Briscoe, the mayor of Dublin, Ireland, concerning the supply of kosher meat from the Government of Ireland to the refugees.

TELEPHONE: DUBLIN 93158.

12. HERBERT PARK.
DUBLIN.

24th January, 1949.

Grand Rabbi Gorddetzki,
20, Rue Villiers-de-l'Isle-Adam,
Paris-XXe.

My Dear Very Rev. Grand Rabbi,

I am very grateful to you for the very kind sentiments expressed to me in your letter of January 20th.

It is unfortunate that I did not have the pleasure of meeting you when I was in Paris recently.

I hope, however, to be in Paris again shortly when I will make an arrangement to see you at your convenience.

I am very sorry that it appears impossible to be able to consider the treibering of hind-quarters with the result that for any Kosher Meat Scheme from this country prices of Kosher Meat will be seriously affected by having to confine Kosher production to fore-quarters only.

With regard to the order which I am trying to arrange to supply to Israel, unfortunatly the matter has not yet reached finality.

There has been so much interference and offers to do things on a better basis than proposed by myself that the whole scheme has been held up from week to week.

The position however, is that during this week I will be able to find out finally and definitely whether the first order for five hundred thousand tins can be completed between now and the end of April and if not I will have to try to work for the possibility of commencing somewhere after June.

I am very happy that the reports to you by your men has included their satisfaction at the manner in which I looked after them while they were here.

I assure you it was indeed a pleasure to be able to have such happy relations with every individual ofthe team and in particular may I say that the discipline shown to the senior members made work run smoothly and where difficulties arose a conference with the Rabbonim always resulted in a satisfactory solution. I will be very much obliged to you if you will be good enough to convey my deep appreciation to Rabbi Schnersohn whose guidance throughout the scheme was of such value.

Kind regards to yourself and to all the members of the Lubavietzer Chassidim.

Very respectfully and sincerely yours,

P.S. I trust that Rabbi Siminowitz is now completely restored to full health.

RABBI I. SCHNEERSOHN
OF LUBAWITZ
770 EASTERN PARKWAY
BROOKLYN 13, N. Y
SLOCUM 6-2919

יוסף יצחק שניאורסאהן
ליובאוויטש

ב"ה, כ"ז אלול, תש"ט
ברוקלין

ידידי ווי"ח איי"א הרב מוה"ר בנימין שי'
שלום וברכה!

במענה על מכתבו מח"י אלול. דבר טוב מאד עשה בהשתדלותו שיעסיקו את סופרי אנ"ש שי' בהגהתהס"ת שהובאו ע"י הדזשאינט, ולפעלא טבא אומר יישר. יהא השי"ת בעזרתם של הסופרים שי'להוציא מתחת ידם דבר מתוקן ויצליחם בגשמיות וברוחניות.

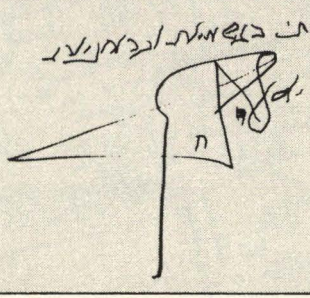
נוסף על שליחותו בענין פליטי אנ"ש שי' באה"ק תובב"א אבקשו אשר בהיותו שמה ישתדל לברר בפרטות אודות מצב כולל חב"ב ומוסדותיו ואופני עבודתם.

בצרוף לזה יקבל מכתב שהגיעני ממר קול שי', ונכון הדבר אשר יבקרו ויברר אצלו אודות מצב הענין עכשו, ובאם באפשר להשיג תיכף כארבעה או חמשה מצטנכים, ישתדל אשר מר קול שי' ימסור תיכף לרשותו מספר ילדים מהמחכים לבתים ולמתנכים ויקצם עבורם את התקציב הדרוש ויתן להם בתים וכו'.

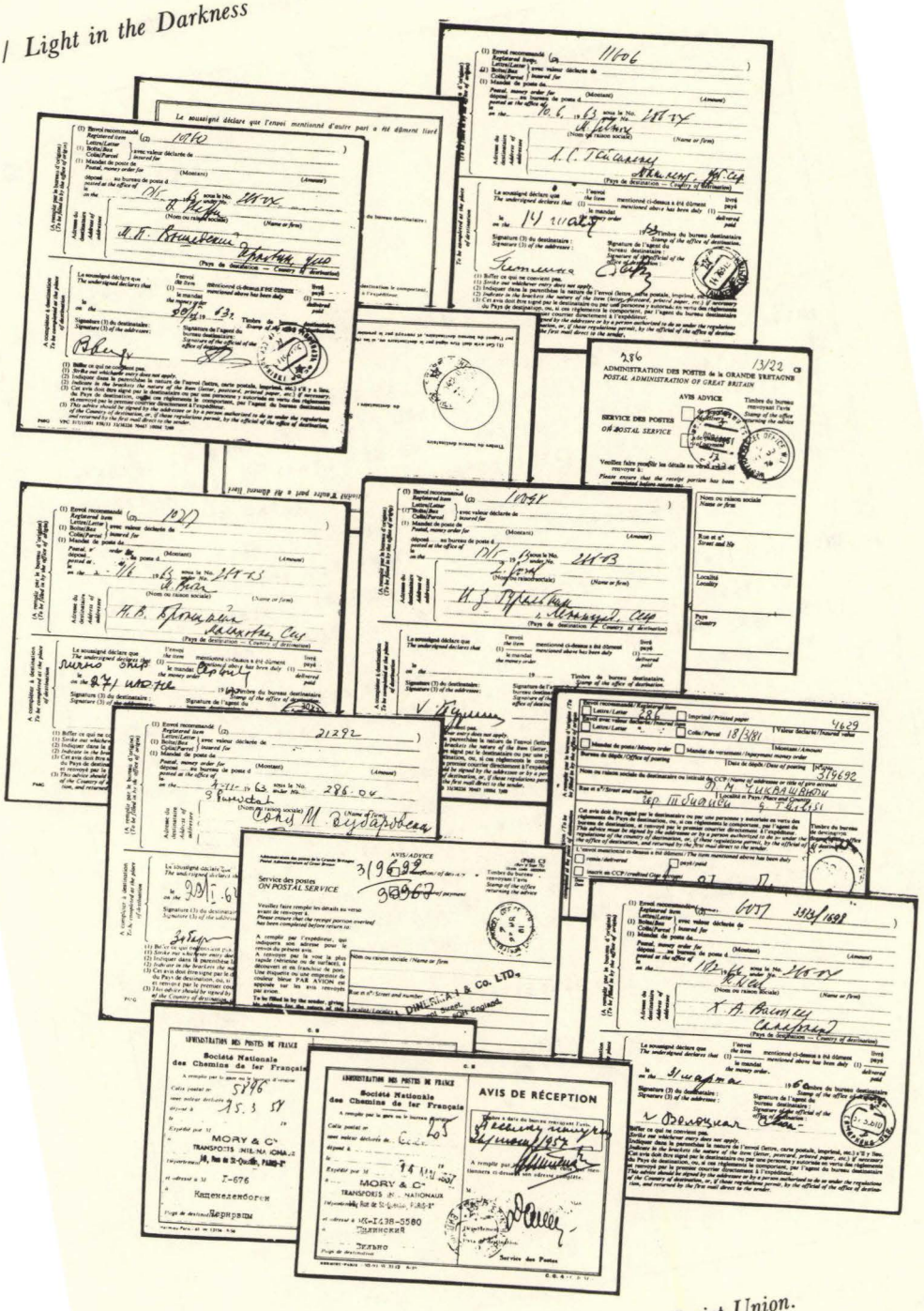
כדאי לברר בפרטות אם בין תלמידי התמימים שי' באה"ק תובב"א ישנם כעת כאלה אשר בשעת הצורך יוכלו לקבל הדרכת מספר ילדים בבתי עולים ולשלום לי' רשימתם.

ולקראת השנה המדשה הבאה עלינו ועל כל ישראל לשובה ולברכה, הנני בזה לברך אותו ואת בי"ב יחיו, בתוך כלל אחב"י וכללות אנ"ש, הי"עליהם יחיו, בברכת שנה טובה ומתוקה. וכתיבה וחתימה טובה.

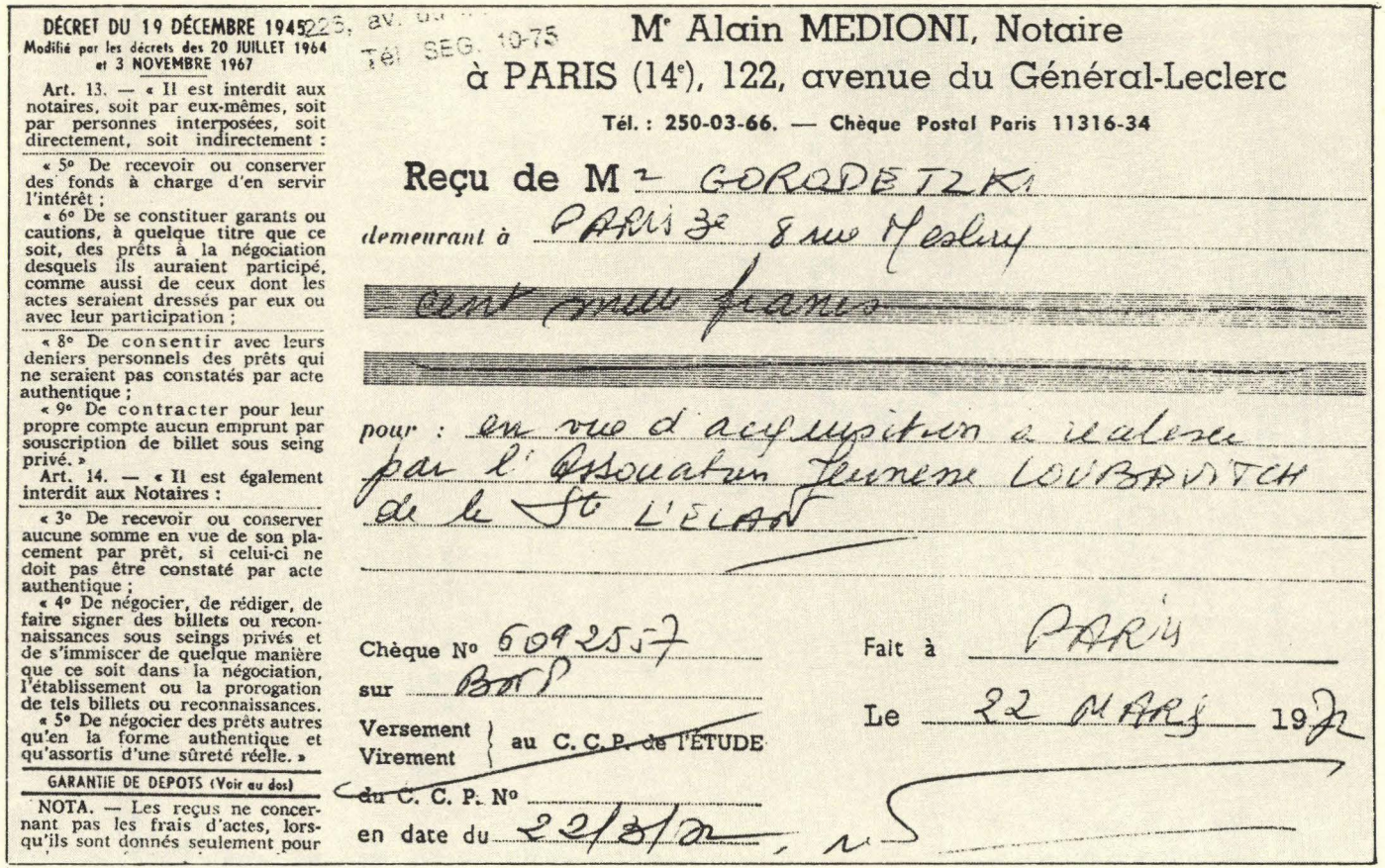
יברכ הדו"ש ומברכם בברכות לחתימה כתובה



In this letter the Lubavitcher Rebbe endorses Rabbi Gorodetzky's activities in engaging and supporting Torah scribes. The Rebbe goes on to discuss Rabbi Gorodetzky's mission to the Land of Israel.



Receipts of packages sent to needy families in the Soviet Union.



DÉCRET DU 19 DÉCEMBRE 1945
Modifié par les décrets des 20 JUILLET 1964 et 3 NOVEMBRE 1967

Art. 13. — « Il est interdit aux notaires, soit par eux-mêmes, soit par personnes interposées, soit directement, soit indirectement :

« 5° De recevoir ou conserver des fonds à charge d'en servir l'intérêt ;

« 6° De se constituer garants ou cautions, à quelque titre que ce soit, des prêts à la négociation desquels ils auraient participé, comme aussi de ceux dont les actes seraient dressés par eux ou avec leur participation ;

« 8° De consentir avec leurs deniers personnels des prêts qui ne seraient pas constatés par acte authentique ;

« 9° De contracter pour leur propre compte aucun emprunt par souscription de billet sous seing privé. »

Art. 14. — « Il est également interdit aux Notaires :

« 3° De recevoir ou conserver aucune somme en vue de son placement par prêt, si celui-ci ne doit pas être constaté par acte authentique ;

« 4° De négocier, de rédiger, de faire signer des billets ou reconnaissances sous seings privés et de s'immiscer de quelque manière que ce soit dans la négociation, l'établissement ou la prorogation de tels billets ou reconnaissances.

« 5° De négocier des prêts autres qu'en la forme authentique et qu'assortis d'une sûreté réelle. »

GARANTIE DE DEPOTS (Voir au dos)

NOTA. — Les reçus ne concernant pas les frais d'actes, lorsqu'ils sont donnés seulement pour

223, av. [illegible]
Tél. SEG. 10-75

Me Alain MEDIONI, Notaire
à PARIS (14e), 122, avenue du Général-Leclerc

Tél. : 250-03-66. — Chèque Postal Paris 11316-34

Reçu de Me GORODETZKI

demeurant à PARIS 3e 8 rue Mesley

Cent cinq francs

pour : en vue d'acquisition à vendre par l'Association Cultuelle LOUBAVITCH de la Rue L'ELAN

Chèque No 509257

sur BNP

Versement / Virement au C.C.P. de l'ÉTUDE

du C. C. P. No

en date du 22/3/72

Fait à PARIS

Le 22 MARS 1972

Receipt for advance payment of 10 million francs for the purchase of a building for the Chabad activities, used now as Chabad House on Lamartine St. in Paris.

Reports of activities and supply of religious objects throughout the world.

לשכה אירופית לעזרת פליטים וסידורים

מיסודו של כ"ק אדמו"ר רבי יוסף יצחק זנוקללהה"ג נבג"מ זי"ע שניאורסאהן מליובאוויטש

על יד כ"ק אדמו"ר מליובאוויטש רבי מנחם מענדל שניאורסאהן שליט"א

באבה באירופה הרב בניימן אלי' שניאורסאהן מליובאוויטש

BUREAU EUROPEEN DU RABBI M. M. SCHNEERSOHN DE LUBAWITZ POUR L'AIDE AUX REFUGIES

770, Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn New-York, U.S.A.

Fondé de Pouvoir pour l'Europe : GRAND-RABBIN B. GORODETZKI

BUREAU CENTRAL: 80, RUE SAINT-ANTOINE, PARIS (IV-). — Tél.: TUR. 87-12.

CENTRES D'HEBERGEMENT :

36, Rue Yves-Kermen, Boulogne-sur-Seine
Tél.: MOL. 37-73

10-bis, rue de l'Ermitage
Montmorency (S.-et-O.)

2, Av. des Petits-Châteaux, Brunoy (S.-et-O.)

49, Rue Bichat (Modern-Hôtel)
PARIS 10e Tél.: NORD 38-30

1, Place du Marché, Bezons (S.-et-O.)
Tél.: ARG. 71-25

WITH REFERENCE TO THE SPECIFIED LISTS ENCLOSED HEREWITH WE WISH TO POINT OUT THAT THE BEST PART OF THE ARTICLES GIVEN WERE DISTRIBUTED GRATIS, THAT A MUCH SMALLER PART WAS PAID BY THE PEOPLE ACCORDING TO THEIR POSSIBILITIES AND THERE WERE ONLY VERY FEW PEOPLE FROM WHOM WE RECEIVED FULL PAYMENT.
IT IS CLEAR THAT IN THE LAST YEARS OUR ACTIVITY COULD NOT BE EMPLOYED ANY MORE IN THE FOLLOWING COUNTRIES: POLAND, CZECHOSLOWAKIA, ROUMANIA, HUNGARY.

THESE LISTS ENCLOSED HEREWITH ARE INTENDED TO GIVE A GENERAL VIEW. WE HOPE TO BE ABLE AT A LATER TIME TO CLASSIFY EACH ITEM ACCORDING TO EACH COUNTRY.

ALL THE WORK DONE DURING THESE YEARS WAS LIMITED BY OUR POSSIBILITIES, I.E. THERE WERE TIMES WHERE THE DEMAND WAS MUCH GREATER THAN THE SUPPLY COULD BE.

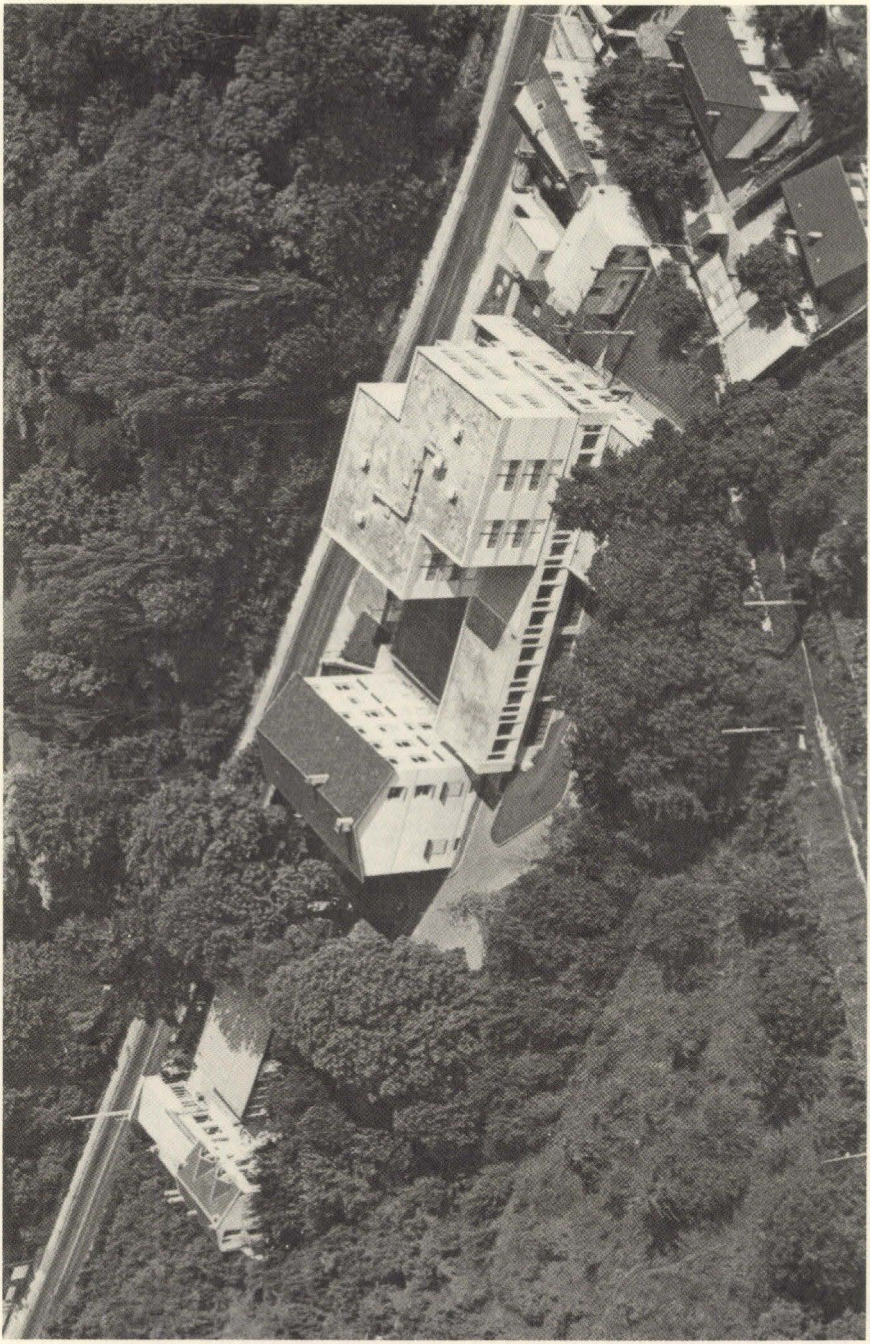
... Lubavitz; Chadré Thora Tmimo Lubavitz; Oholey Josef Itzchak Lubavitz; Beth Hamidrasch « Beth Josef abbinique pour Schochtim, Sofrim, Menagrim) ; Beth Rivkas; Beth Sarohs; les Cours de Soir, etc.

LIST OF COUNTRIES IN WHICH THE EUROPEAN OFFICE OF RABBI M.M.SCHNEERSOHN WAS ACTIVE FROM 1946 TO 1953 INCLUSIVE

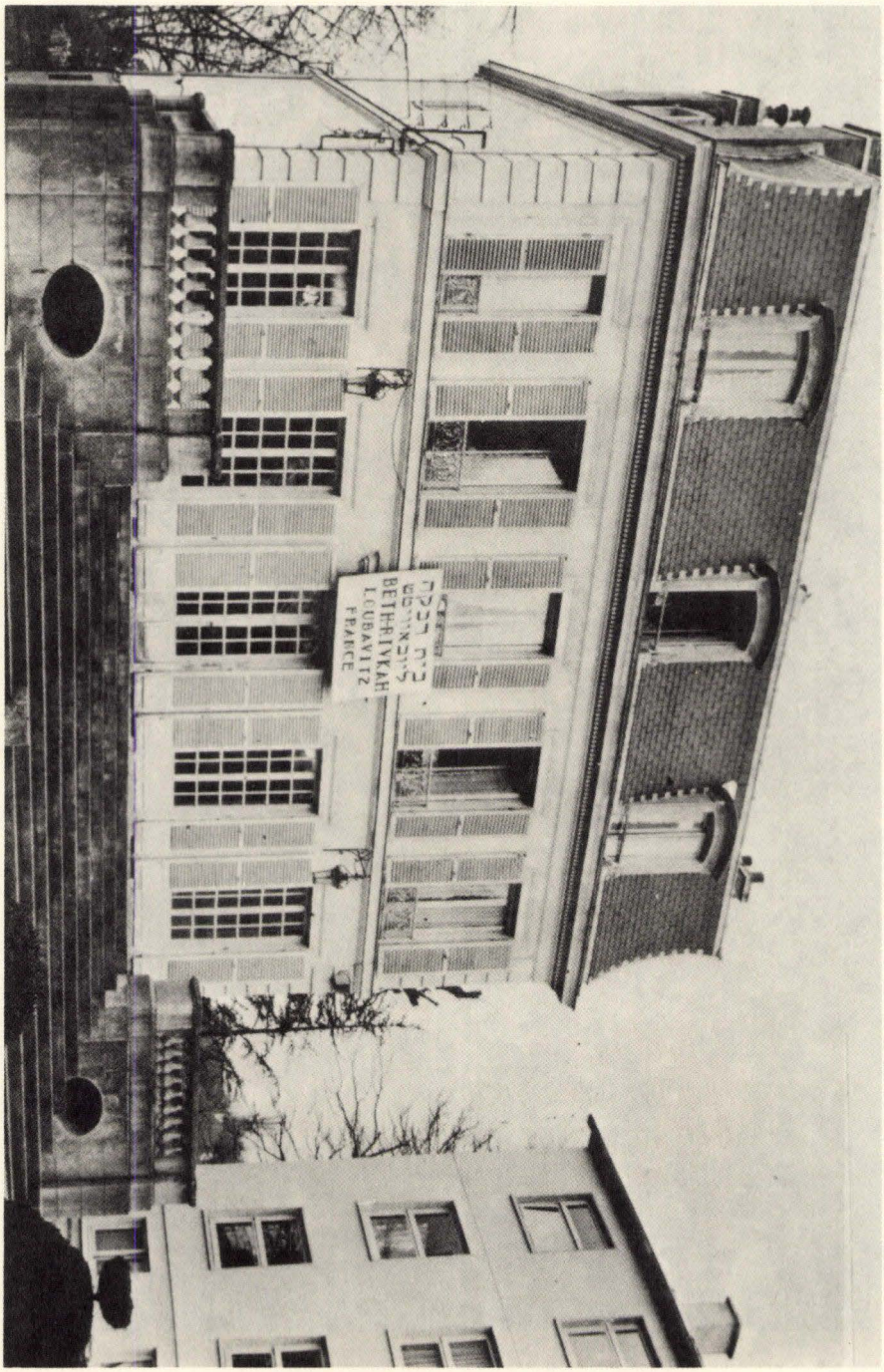
FINLAND
SWEDEN
DANEMARK
BELGIUM
HOLLAND
GREAT BRITAIN
ITALY
SPAIN
IRLAND
AUSTRIA
GERMANY
FRANCE
SUISSE(Davos etc.)
HONGRY
POLAND
ROUMANIA
~~XXXXXXXXXXX~~
CHZECHOSLOWAKIA
TUNIS
TANGER

The students of the Tomchei Temimim Yeshiva in Paris who came from Russia with their teachers.

Tomchei Temimim Yeshiva in France. Students and teachers who arrived from the Soviet Union, headed by Rabbi Haim Hillel Azimov of blessed memory.



Aerial view of Beth-Rivkah schools.

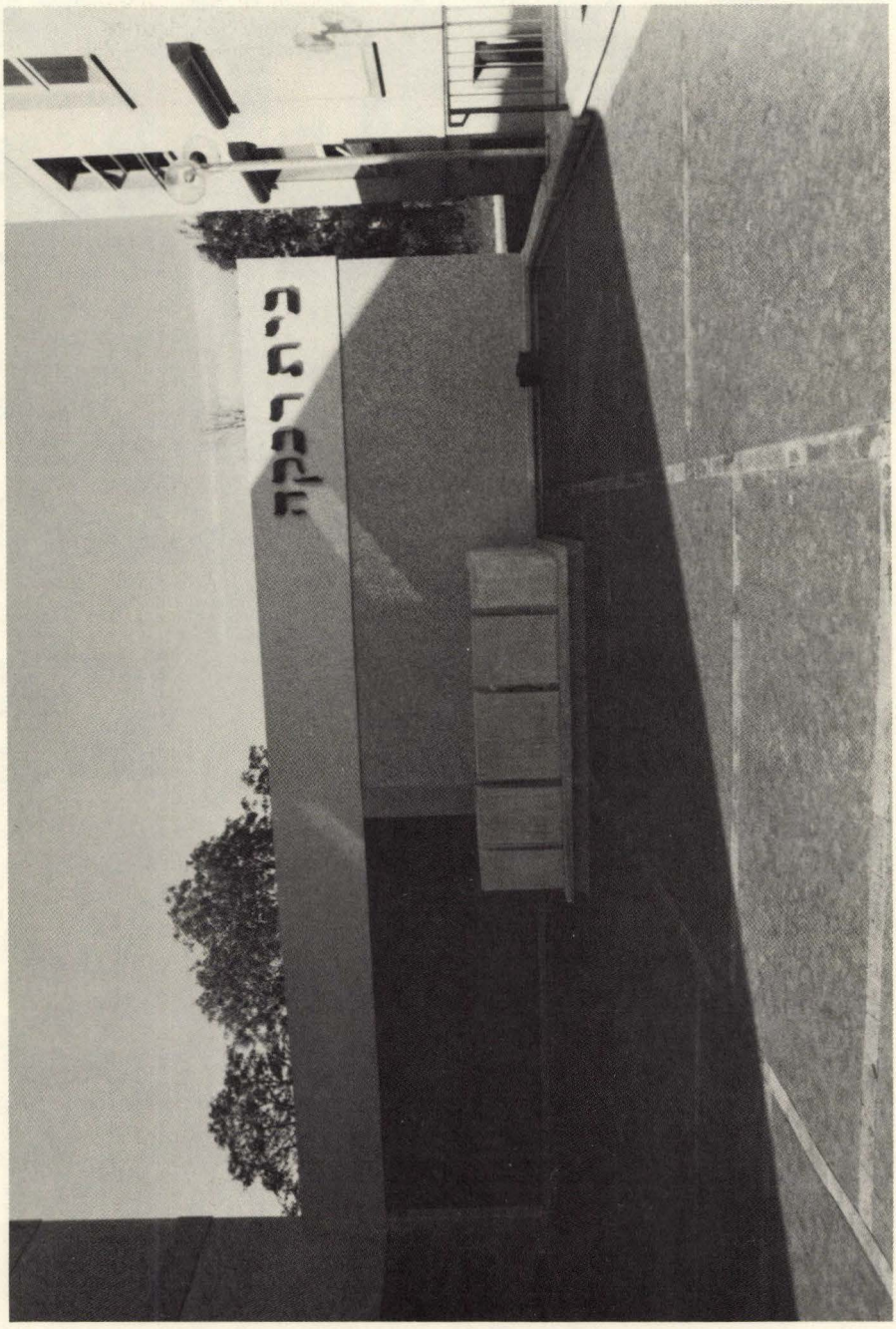


Old building of Beth-Rivkah.

The students and their teachers standing in front of the old building.

JDC Director in Paris, Mr. Nelson, unveiling plaque at dedication of old seminar building. Standing behind him are: Rabbi Gorodetzky, JDC Director General, Mr. Jordan, Rabbi Yehudah Chen, and the secretary of the European office, Rabbi Raphael Vilsheinsky.

From left to right: Rabbi Hillel Penzner, Paris Rabbi Zeit, Rabbi Gorodetzky, Mr. Jordan, and the Israeli Consul in Paris.



The entrance to the new building of Beit Rivka.

The inside of a dormitory room.

Visit from the leaders of the Joint during the dedication of the seminar building. From right to left: The director, Rabbi David Gurevitch, Mr. Feder, Dr. Kahana, Rabbi Gorodetzky, Mr. Haimontz, Joint Director General in Israel, and Rabbi Haim Shlome.

The leaders of the Joint visit Chabad Schools in Paris.

Rabbi Shlome explains the working arrangements of the seminar to French & Welfare Minister Mrs. Simone Weil.

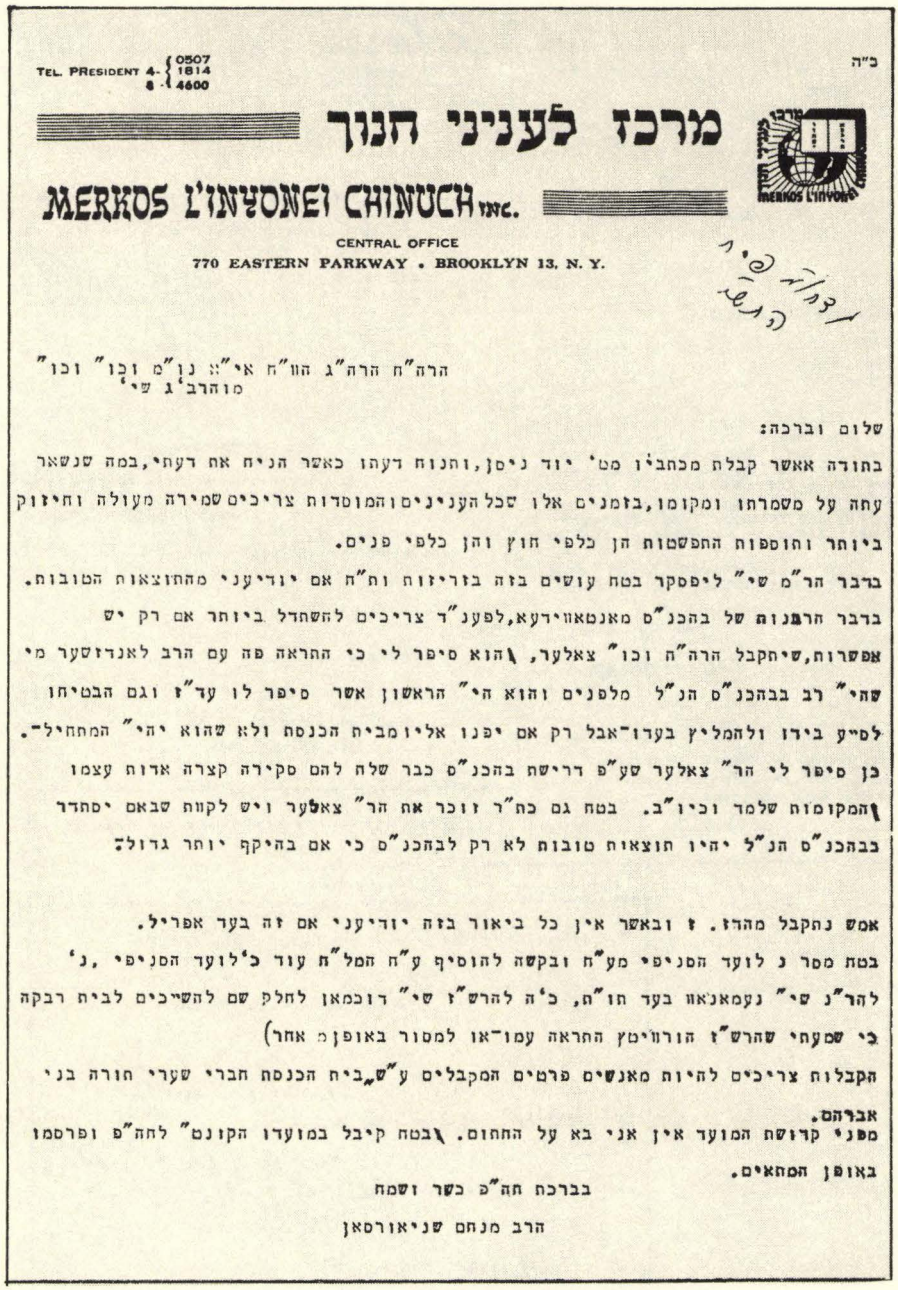
Chabad housing in a suburb of Paris.

Zalman Shazar, before becoming President of Israel, participates in Chassidic gathering in Paris. Next to him is Rabbi Gorodetzky.

Chief Rabbi of Israel, Rabbi Isaac Herzog, participating in a Chabad gathering.

A gathering of Lubavitch Chasidim in Paris.

Rabbi Menachem Mendel Shneerson, the Lubavitcher Rebbe.



ב"ה

TEL. PRESIDENT 4-{0507 1814 4600

מרכז לעניני חנוך

MERKOS L'INYONEI CHINUCH INC.

CENTRAL OFFICE
770 EASTERN PARKWAY • BROOKLYN 13, N. Y.

הרה"ח הרה"ג הוו"ח אי"א נו"נ וכו" וכו"
מוהרב"ג שי'

שלום וברכה:

בתודה אשר קבלת מכתבו מט' יוד ניסן, והנוח דעתו כאשר הניח את דעתי, במה שנשאר עתה על משמרתו ומקומו, בזמנים אלו שכל העניינים והמוסדות צריכים שמירה מעולה וחיזוק ביותר וחוספות התפשטות הן כלפי חוץ והן כלפי פנים.

ברבר הר"מ שי" ליפסקר בטח עושים בזה בזריזות וח"ח אם יודיעני מהחוצאות הטובות.

ברבר הרצנות של בהכנ"ס מאנטאוידעא, לפענ"ד צריכים להשתדל ביותר אם רק יש אפשרות, שיחקבל הרה"ח וכו" צאלער, והוא סיפר לי כי ההראה פה עם הרב לאנדזשער מי שהי" רב בבהכנ"ס הנ"ל מלפנים והוא הי" הראשון אשר סיפר לו עד"ז וגם הבטיחו לסייע בידו ולהמליץ בערו"אבל רק אם יפנו אליו מבית הכנסת ולא שהוא יהי" המתחיל". כן סיפר לי הר" צאלער שע"פ דרישת בהכנ"ס כבר שלח להם סקירה קצרה אדות עצמו והמקומות שלמד וכיו"ב. בטח גם כת"ר זוכר את הר" צאלער ויש לקוות שבאם יסתדר בבהכנ"ס הנ"ל יהיו תוצאות טובות לא רק לבהכנ"ס כי אם בהיקף יותר גדול.

אמש נתקבל מהרז. ז ובאשר אין כל ביאור בזה יודיעני אם זה בער אפריל.

בטח מסר נ לועד הסניפי מע"ח ובקשה להוסיף ע"ח המל"ח עוד כ'לועד הסניפי, נ' להר"נ שי" נעמאנאוו בער חו"ח, כ'ה להרש"ז שי" דוכמאן לחלק שם להשיכים לביח רבקה כי שמעתי שהרש"ז הורוויטץ התראה עמו-או למסור באופן אחר)

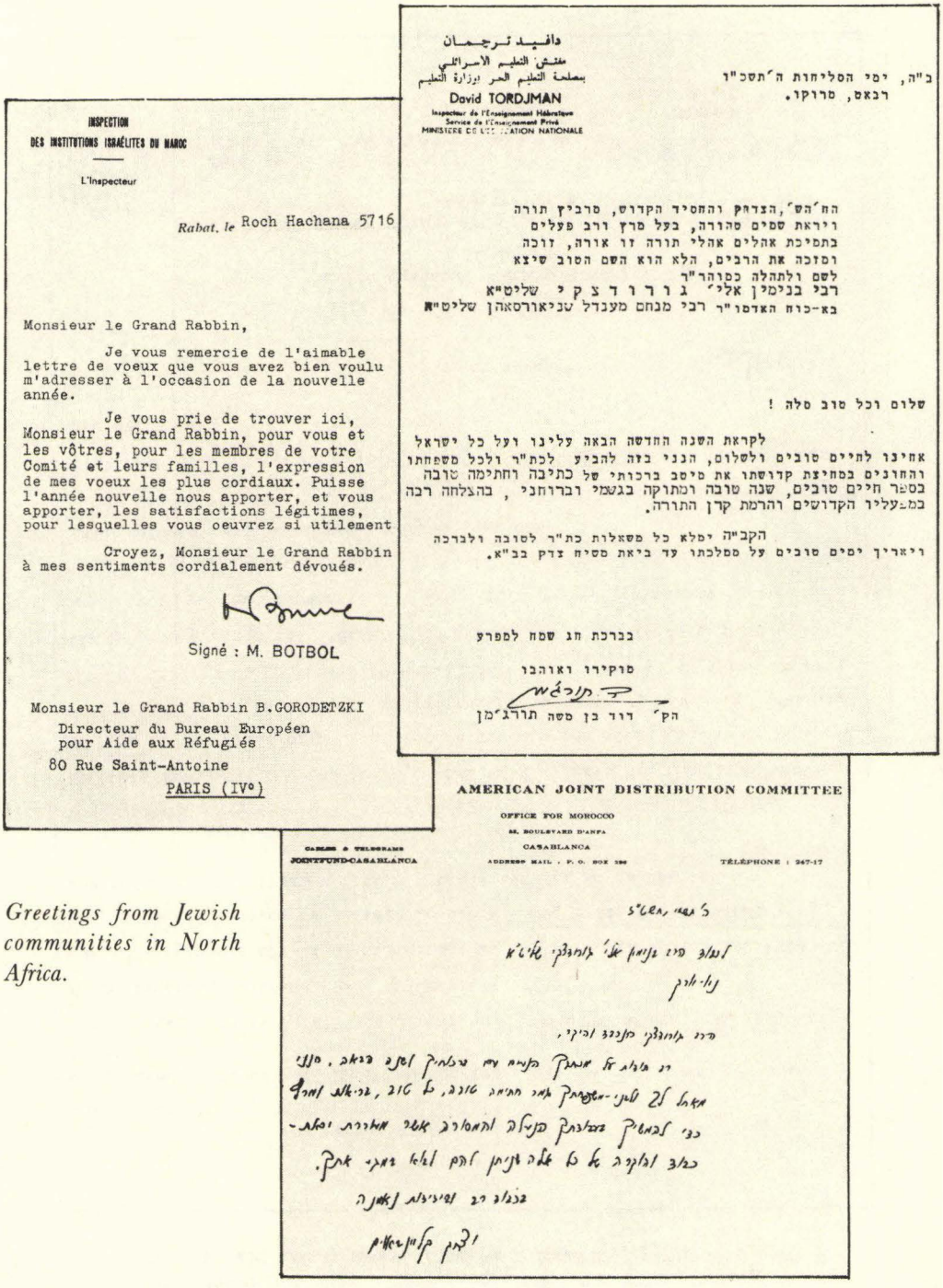
הקבלות צריכים להיות מאנשים פרטים המקבלים ע"ש ביח הכנסת חברי שערי חורה בני אברהם.

מענ' קדושת המועד אין אני בא על התחום. ובטח קיבל במועדו הקונט" לחה"פ ופרסמו באופן המתאים.

בברכת חה"פ כשר ושמח

הרב מנחם שניאורסאן

A letter from Rabbi Menachem Shneerson to Rabbi Gorodetzky regarding a rabbinical appointment in a Montevideo, Uruguay, synagogue, as well as other organizational matters which Rabbi Gorodetzky is asked to attend to.



INSPECTION
DES INSTITUTIONS ISRAÉLITES DU MAROC

L'Inspecteur

Rabat, le Roch Hachana 5716

Monsieur le Grand Rabbin,

Je vous remercie de l'aimable lettre de voeux que vous avez bien voulu m'adresser à l'occasion de la nouvelle année.

Je vous prie de trouver ici, Monsieur le Grand Rabbin, pour vous et les vôtres, pour les membres de votre Comité et leurs familles, l'expression de mes voeux les plus cordiaux. Puisse l'année nouvelle nous apporter, et vous apporter, les satisfactions légitimes, pour lesquelles vous oeuvrez si utilement.

Croyez, Monsieur le Grand Rabbin à mes sentiments cordialement dévoués.

Signé : M. BOTBOL

Monsieur le Grand Rabbin B.GORODETZKI
Directeur du Bureau Européen
pour Aide aux Réfugiés
80 Rue Saint-Antoine
PARIS (IVe)

داڤيد ترجمان
مفتش التعليم الاسرائيلي
بمصلحة التعليم الحر بوزارة التعليم
David TORDJMAN
Inspecteur de l'Enseignement Hébraïque
Service de l'Enseignement Privé
MINISTÈRE DE L'ÉDUCATION NATIONALE

ב"ה, יסי הסליחות ה'תשכ"ו
רבאט, מרוקו.

הח'הש', הצדקן והחסיד הקדוש, סרביץ תורה
ויראת שמים טהורה, בעל פרץ ורב פעלים
בתפיסת אהלים אהלי תורה זו אורה, זוכה
ומזכה את הרבים, הלא הוא השם הטוב שיצא
לשם ולתהלה כפוהר"ר
רבי בנימין אלי' ג ו ר ו ד צ ק י שליט"א
בא-כוח האדמו"ר רבי מנחם מענדל שניאורסאהן שליט"א

שלום וכל טוב סלה !

לקראת השנה החדשה הבאה עלינו ועל כל ישראל
אחינו לחיים טובים ולשלום, הנני בזה להביע לכת"ר ולכל משפחתו
והחונים בסחיצת קדושתו את סיסב ברכותי של כתיבה וחתימה טובה
בספר חיים טובים, שנה טובה ומתוקה בגשמי וברוחני , בהצלחה רבה
במעלליו הקדושים והרמת קרן התורה.

הקב"ה יפלא כל מפאלות כת"ר לסובה ולברכה
ויאריך ימים טובים על מפלכתו עד ביאת מסיח צדק בב"א.

בברכת חג שמח למפרע

סוקירו ואוהבו

הק' דוד בן משה תורג'מן

AMERICAN JOINT DISTRIBUTION COMMITTEE

OFFICE FOR MOROCCO
88, BOULEVARD D'ANFA
CASABLANCA

CABLES & TELEGRAMS
JOINTFUND-CASABLANCA

ADDRESS MAIL : P. O. BOX 198

TÉLÉPHONE : 247-17

Greetings from Jewish communities in North Africa.

Chapter Sixteen

Morocco

The Rebbe Orders Educational Work in Morocco / Founding Talmud Torahs and Yeshivos, Girls' Schools and Women's Teachers' School / School for Scribes in Casablanca / Meknes / Safaro / Agadir, and Various Towns and Villages

In the winter of 5709 (1949) a young Chassid with an engineering degree, who had become a *baal teshuvah* after the war, came to see me. He was a native of Paris who went to Morocco to spread yiddishkeit and work in education. Since the weather affected his health, he came back to Paris. He told me that in Morocco there were many Jews and there was a great need to provide Jewish education. He suggested bringing children over from there, and started a school or a yeshiva which he would run.

We agreed that he would bring up to one hundred children. I would arrange for the proper place, and he would run the institution. Since it was the period before Pesach, we agreed to start working on it after the holiday.

I went back home to the United States for Pesach, and I told the Rebbe about it. I told the Rebbe that we had to find someone who would go to Morocco and open a school over there as well. He told me that he would think about it.

Rab Benyamine Grtski

~~972 Eastern Parkway~~

Brooklyn

N.Y.

USA

לכבוד הרב הגדול
כמוהרר בנימין אזולי נ"י אבדק"ק קזבלנקה שליט"א
מרבינו תורה ומאורו התנון שלה

הנני מאחל לכם ולכל התומכים
שנה טובה ומבורכת
והרמת קרן התורה ולומדיה
והרבצתם בין כל התונים.

מאחל:

הרב ח"ד בן סומאן

ראב"ד בעי"ת קזבלנקה מרוקו

ערב ריה התש"י

Rosh Hashana greetings from the Rabbi of Casablanca, Morocco.

Rabbi Gorodetzky distributes Hanukka money to students.

When I came back to Paris after Pesach I found out that that young man had taken ill, given up his offer and cancelled his trip to Morocco.

The proposal to bring over children from Morocco was shelved and we were left with the idea of working only in Morocco.

When I arrived in the U.S. in Tishre 5710 (1949) I told the Rebbe about the cancellation of the project proposed by that young man and the need to discuss the other idea. The Rebbe kept me until the fifth candle of Hanukkah, and then told me: "We must start immediately with the work in Morocco. You must talk to my son-in-law, (who in a few months would become the successor of the Rebbe, and who would take over the entire leadership of the Lubavitch movement), who continues to instruct me in all my endeavors." The fact that a few months before he died the Rebbe told me that his son-in-law would be in charge—gave me the only indication that he would succeed him, and since it is a matter of education, it is under his jurisdiction.

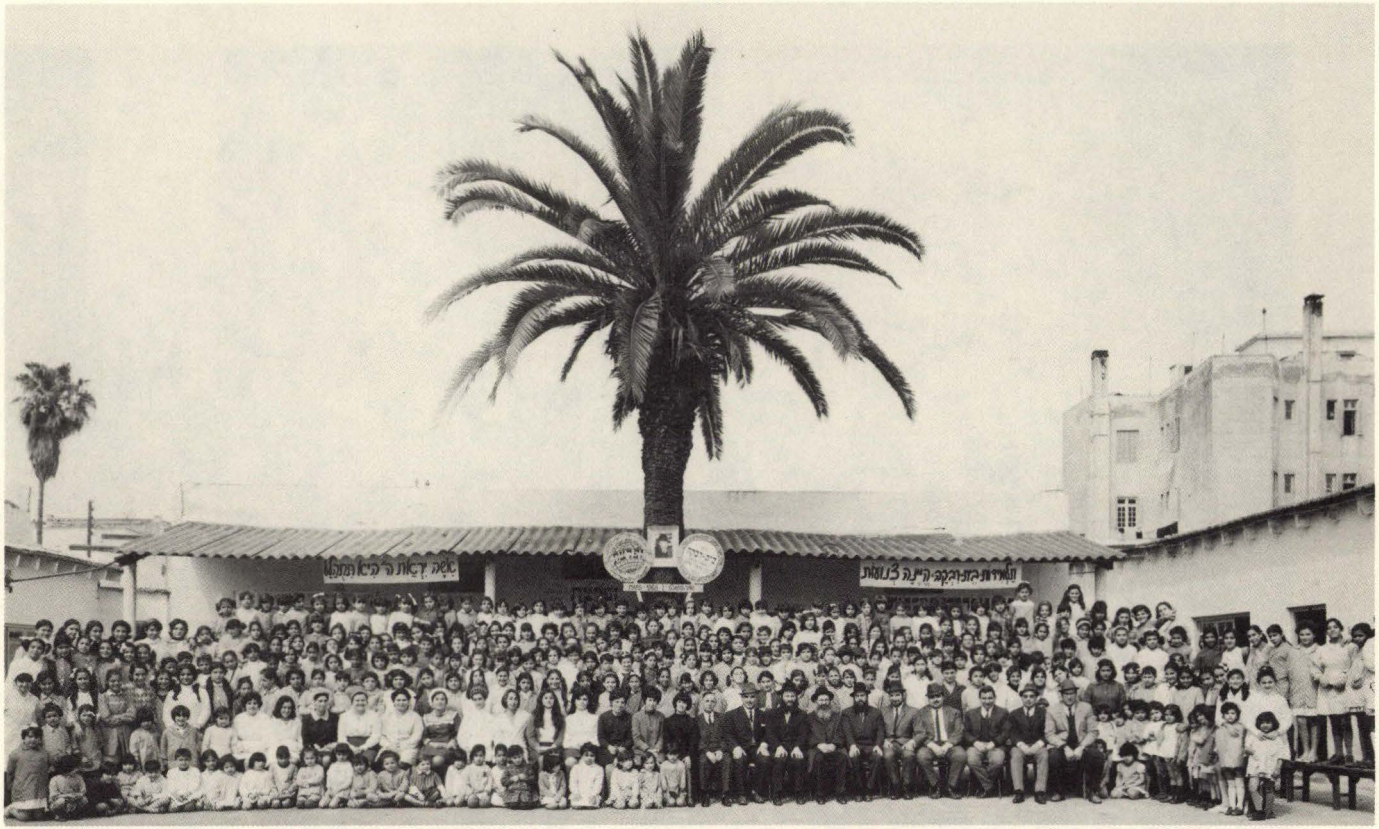
I spoke to the Rebbe's son-in-law and he asked me if I had anyone I could suggest for that mission. I suggested R. Michael Lipsker, who was in Paris at that time, and had inquired me about it. I asked him to get in touch with Lipsker personally, and after the latter agreed, he directed him to me.

The Rebbe asked me to proceed forthwith and do everything possible, beginning in the training camps near Marseilles, where people were preparing for their journey to the Land of Israel. The first person I sent there was R. Shlomo Matosov, then R. Meir Itkin, then R. Zalman Teivel.

One day the two sons of Rabbi Demkans who went to study in London at the Smetizke Yeshiva stopped over at our place in Paris. I found out from them a great deal about conditions in Morocco, including many details of which I had not been aware. They left us their father's address, the Rabbi of Meknes, from whom I received a solicitation letter for Michael Lipsker, asking the authorities to allow him to enter the country.

Rabbi Baruch Toledano, the Rabbi of Meknes, had a yeshiva with ten young men who studied Torah in his school. Rabbi Toledano put the yeshiva in the hands of R. Michael, who stayed over there for three months. He then returned to Paris to organize the transfer of his family to Morocco, and I went along to see how things went.

Seminary students of Beth-Rivkah in Casablanca. Seated in first row, center, are Rabbi Nissan Pinson, Rabbi Shlomo Motosov and one of their teachers.



Girls of the Beit Rivka schools and students of the seminar in Casablanca. Seated are Rabbi Shlomo Matosov, Rabbi Sholom Edelman, Rabbi Leib Raskin, and the teachers.

Parties and receptions in honor of Rabbi Gorodetzky.

Rabbi Shalom Mashash, the former Chief Rabbi of Morocco, speaks in honor of the guest.

I told Rabbi Toledano that I did not think that the place where his students studied was adequate, and that a new building would attract more students. He expressed his agreement, and brought over a woman who had started to build a house. He promised to give her the money to finish the building of that house, and also promised her in my name rent for half a year, so that the yeshiva could be opened immediately.

The woman accepted the proposal and I gave her an advance. The construction was completed in several months, and the yeshiva opened under the direction of R. Michael.

It was, in effect, the first yeshiva to open its doors in the city of Meknes, Morocco.

At that time, while I was in Meknes, I went to Midilet, near Meknes, to see Rabbi Meir Abuhatzira, the oldest son of the Admor Rabbi Israel Abuhatzira, Shalita, and I opened there a Talmud Torah.

While in Morocco I looked around and realized that there were tens of thousands of Jews living there, and there was an awful lot one could do.

I established a Talmud Torah and I sent over to Casablanca R. Shlomo Matusov. I had many difficulties at that time, especially the problem of adequate lodgings. But, with the mercy of G-d, we overcame those problems and finally found an apartment on the roof of some building, and we refurbished it for him.

I spent several months there, and during that time we worked very hard. After the Sabbath we would go from Casablanca to nearby towns and villages, where we would spend one, two, three days, or a week, and came in contact with the rabbis, asking them to allow us to establish educational institutions for their children. It was very difficult to obtain their consent to establish those institutions, to give us the proper facilities and the necessary manpower.

Various interesting episodes come to mind from that period, and I would like to relate two.

They used to irrigate the fields with special dams. From time to time they would open all the water sources and flood all the cultivated land with water. In one of our many journeys we came to such an area, and as we were driving along we were suddenly surrounded by water. The water kept rising and the car was beginning to sink. We

Rabbi Gorodetzky replies to greetings at the banquet given in his honor in Morocco.

Rabbi Gorodetzky greets the gathering assembled in his honor. Mr. Abramowitz, a JDC leader, speaks in honor of the guest. Among the guests: Moroccan rabbis, Mr. Katzki, a JDC official from the U.S., Mr. Kirsch, JDC director in Morocco.

were afraid we were about to drown. After a while the villagers heard our cries for help, and they sent over a large vehicle that was able to enter the flooded area and save us, thank G-d.

Another time we got lost while travelling and did not know how to get back on the right way. It started to pour down rain, and we barely managed to reach the Morocco-Algeria border. It was quite a dangerous place, but we had to keep going. We reached a remote village, where there were some Jews, who were very happy to see us. It was late at night, but as they saw us they began to let out shouts of joy, announcing the arrival of Ashkenazic *chachamim*, and they woke up the entire village.

The border police, who heard the commotion, came to the village and started asking questions about us and our doings. They invited us to come to the police station the next day, and so we had no other choice but to hide in the woods that night, and in the morning we left the place quickly.

It is hard to describe the difficulties that were piled up before us in seeking to pursue the holy work of education, but thank G-d our success was vast. We were able to establish seventy-five educational institutions which educated ten thousand young people throughout the country! In Casablanca alone we had three yeshivas and three schools for girls.

The momentum of our educational work was great, and our success was outstanding. This continued until the large immigration to the Holy Land, when most of those Jews settled in the Land of Israel.

As our activities expanded, we needed more manpower. We sent over additional people, men like R. Nissan Pinson, R. Sholom Idelman, and R. Saadia Liberov, R. Zalman Teivel and his wife, R. Mordechai Belinov, and Rabbi Aryeh Leib Raskin.

R. Zalman Teibel had the job of gathering the girls in one place and teaching them Torah and yiddishkeit. At first they studied at the synagogue, because there was no other place, but eventually we built impressive institutions which are there to this day!

The level of studies in those schools was very high, and sometimes the girls were more knowledgeable than the yeshiva students!

In the town of Safaro we established a *yeshiva gedola* for boys of all ages, under the direction of Rabbi Saadia Liberov. We also had a school for girls, Beit Rivka, directed by the rabbi of the town, Rabbi David Ovadia, Shalita.

Among the guests: Moroccan Chief Rabbi, Yedidi Masinga, Mr. David Amar, head of the Moroccan Jewish Community, his son, David Amar, Mr. Bordogo, vice president of the kehillah.

Rabbi Gorodetzky distributes to the guests the Rebbe's drink.

Mr. Amoyal, director of the seminary, addresses the gathering.

Rabbi Gorodetzky affixes a mezuzah in one of the rooms of the Kolel and rabbinical academy.

A trustee of the seminar receives a gift from Rabbi Gorodetzky—a picture of the Rebbe.

Rabbi Gorodetzky greets Mr. David Amar, a leader of Moroccan Jewry, at a reception. Right: The Chief Rabbi of Morocco.

Parents and children at the village of Riza.

As was mentioned, we faced great difficulties in our efforts to establish the institutions, and we spent a great deal of money. We had to contend with the local rabbis, find adequate facilities, and argue with the JDC officials, who in those days were not in favor of establishing new educational institutions serving the sacred word of the Torah. They would complain to us that "Your institutions grow like mushrooms. Every day you start a new one, and we cannot keep up with the expense."

I struggled, arguing and bargaining with them, both the local JDC and the headquarters in Paris and in America. But, thank G-d, my efforts were rewarded, and my work began to bear fruit. In the end we received many allocations from the JDC for building Torah institutions that became renowned and acclaimed.

Every *motzey shabbos* we would go, R. Shlomo Matosov and I, to all the villages, far and near, to inspect the condition of yiddishkeit in each one of the communities. During the week we would go to different places to start new institutions and to visit and supervise the existing ones. We received a great deal of help from the local communal leader, R. Yitzhak Elmaleh, who lent us his car, along with his driver, at his own expense, to go wherever we wanted.

In 5716 (1956) we founded in Meknes a specialized school for teaching young people how to make tefilin, do scribal art and all related matters. We brought all the necessary materials from the Land of Israel. This school was under the supervision of R. Leib Levine and it lasted for many years, until the Moroccan authorities decided to expel him because of his Israeli citizenship. The school was then put under the direction of R. Michael Lipsker, and then was moved to Casablanca and put under the direction of R. Sholom Idelman, who is still there.

When R. Leib Levine was expelled from Morocco he moved to Paris, where we established a similar school under his supervision.

In addition, we formed a school for girls and a women teachers' school in Meknes under the direction of R. Michael Lipsker.

The directors of those institutions did not have any budgetary problems, since the bureau arranged for all their expenses and paid for everything so that they could function without any interference. In the early years I was not engaged in raising funds for them. Whenever I came to visit, they would give me a warm reception, attended by hundreds of the local dignitaries and the general public, and I would

deliver a speech. But they did not participate in funding those operations, and did not contribute toward the maintenance and development of those institutions.

Only later on, after many Moroccan Jews immigrated to Israel and only the wealthy ones remained, they themselves offered to help maintain the institutions, especially now that the expenses grew and the income had declined. Thank G-d the institutions continue to exist to this day.

The work of maintaining those institutions in Morocco was most difficult, both for the local workers and for myself, as I had to spend many months on the spot and had to work ceaselessly, either with the teachers or with the educational problems of the multitude of students.

Tens of thousands of students, thank G-d, crossed the threshold of our institutions. Most of them have raised outstanding families and have children and grandchildren who live the life of Torah and mitzvos, in the way of Chassidus.

Many of those students, who studied in our schools, are now serving as rabbis in the Holy Land and abroad, as well as butchers, scribes, and teachers of Torah to the multitudes of their people, may they multiply.

A special mention should be made of Rabbi Mordechai Belinov who directed the Chabad institutions in Marrakech until he was expelled by the authorities and had to leave the country.

Another mention goes to his son who serves successfully as our rosh yeshiva gedolah in Casablanca.

During my journeys I would stop from time to time in Tangier where I helped promote the local institutions.

One of the people I sent to Morocco to do educational work was Azriel Heikin. He was single at the time, and at my suggestion he married the daughter of Michael who lived with her parents in Morocco.

At that time we opened a yeshiva in Agadir. This was a port city, near a quiet sea, one of the most beautiful spots in the country. Many students flocked to that school, that numbered more than 150. The director was R. Azriel Heikin.

One day we received word that the secret police had suddenly come to the yeshiva, arrested the principal and took him to the airport in Casablanca, where they put him on a plane and sent him directly to

Paris, without giving him a chance to say goodbye to his family.

When I went there to find out what had happened, I found out the following: Morocco had become an independent state, and immigration to Israel was forbidden. The aliyah emissaries were operating clandestinely, and the authorities suspected him of helping Jews immigrate to Israel. Consequently, they expelled him immediately from Morocco.

I explained to the authorities that we were a movement dedicated to the dissemination of Torah among the local Jews, and that we did not engage in aliyah. It was clear that if they suspected our people of aliyah activity they would shut down all our institutions and expel all our people from the country.

After I explained to them all of the above, they showed me a picture of the principal gathering people for immigration to Israel.

As it turned out, the picture was taken during a meeting in a village near Agadir, where we had sent him in order to start a Talmud Torah. It was attended by the head of the community, the rabbi and the local people, who discussed communal matters in general and the starting of the Talmud Torah in particular.

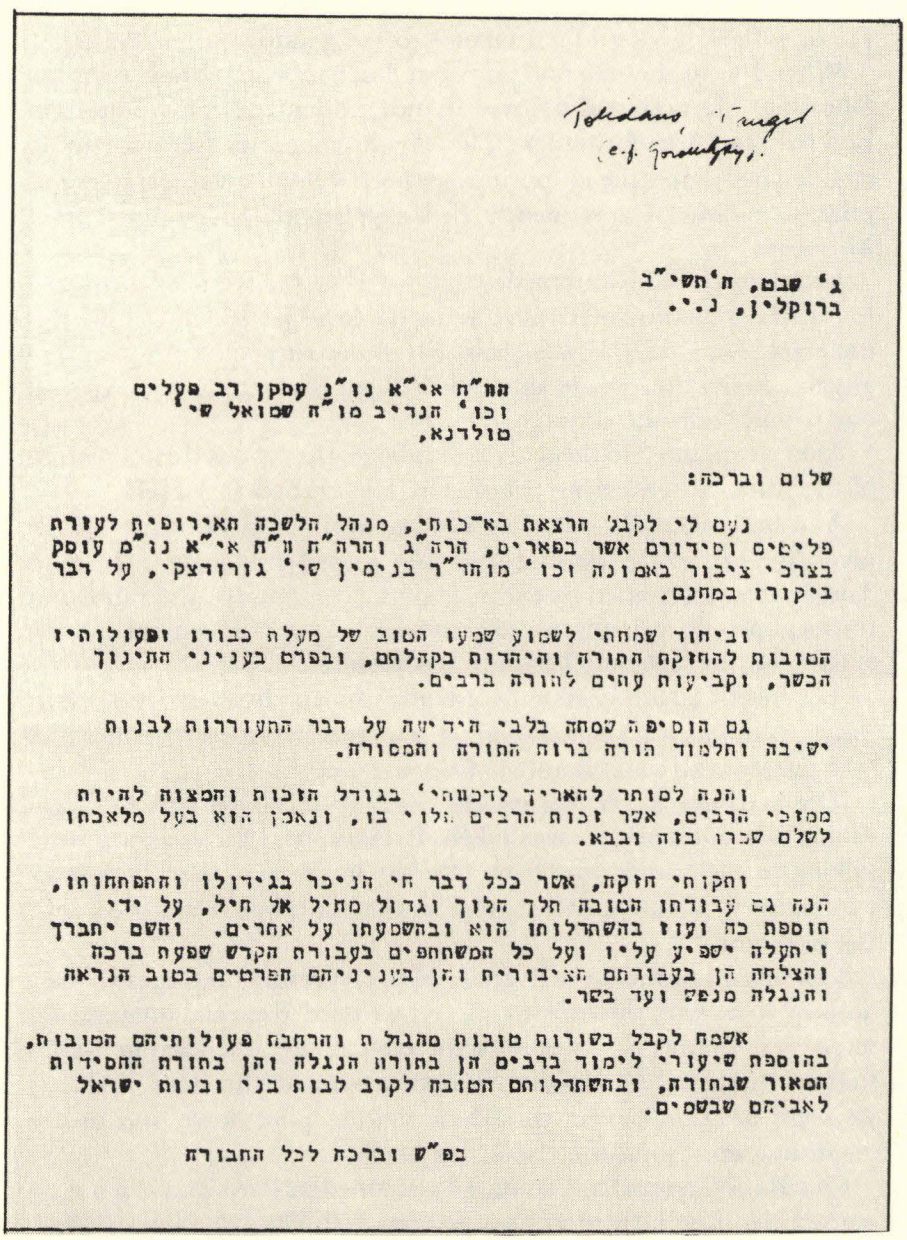
The meeting happened to be attended by an aliyah emissary from Israel, who was working on sending Jews there. The secret police had sent agents who took pictures of the meeting.

The emissary sat in the middle, next to R. Azriel and the local rabbi. When the picture was taken, R. Azriel and the emissary were talking to each other, and it created the impression that the former was active in aliyah matters, as he was engaged in conversation with the emissary.

I explained to them the purpose of that meeting, and that we had nothing to do with the emissary. Since we needed special intercession in order to permit R. Azriel to come back, I suggested to our Rabbi that it would not be advisable to create a stir over this issue, and that we were better off to let the whole matter quiet down and in the meantime send someone else in his place.

Our Rabbi agreed and R. Azriel remained in Paris and did not go back. I sent him instead to Copenhagen to direct the yeshiva in that city.

Later on, the rabbi of that city left, and Azriel took his place. He was then invited to serve as the rabbi of Brussels, where he is the rabbi to this day.



Toledano, Tangier
c.f. Gorodetzky, Paris

ג' שבט, ת'חש"ב
ברוקלין, נ.י.

הוו"ח אי"א נו"נ עסקן רב פעלים
וכו' הנדיב מו"ח שמואל שי'
טולדנא,

שלום וברכה:

נעם לי לקבל הרצאת בא"כותי, מנהל הלשכה האירופית לעזרת פליטים ומידורם אשר בפאריס, הרה"ג והרה"ח הו"ח אי"א נו"מ עוסק בצרכי ציבור באמונה וכו' מוהר"ר בנימין שי' גורודצקי, על דבר ביקורו במחנם.

וביחוד שמחתי לשמוע שמעו הטוב של מעלת כבודו ופעולותיו הטובות להחזקת התורה והיהדות בקהלתם, ובפרט בעניני החינוך הכשר, וקביעות עתים להורה ברבים.

גם הוסיפה שמחה בלבי הידיעה על דבר התעוררות לבנות ישיבה ותלמוד תורה ברוח התורה והמסורה.

והנה לסותר להאריך לרכוותי' בגודל הזכות והמצוה להיות ממזכי הרבים, אשר זכות הרבים תלוי בו, ונאמן הוא בעל מלאכתו לשלם שכרו בזה ובבא.

וחקותי חזקה, אשר בכל דבר חי הניכר בגידולו והתפתחותו, הנה גם עבודתו הטובה תלך הלוך וגדול מחיל אל חיל, על ידי חוספת כח ועוז בהשתדלותו הוא ובהשפעתו על אחרים. והשם יתברך ויתעלה ישפיע עליו ועל כל המשתתפים בעבודת הקדש שפעת ברכה והצלחה הן בעבודתם הציבורית והן בעניניהם הפרטיים בטוב הנראה והנגלה מנפש ועד בשר.

אשמח לקבל בשורות טובות מהגלות והרחבה פעולותיהם הטובות, בהוספת שיעורי לימוד ברבים הן בתורה הנגלה והן בחודרת החסידות המאור שבתורה, ובהשתדלותם הטובה לקרב לבות בני ובנות ישראל לאביהם שבשמים.

בפ"ש וברכת לכל החבורה

Brooklyn, 3 Shevat 5712 (January 30, 1952)

In this letter the Lubavitcher Rebbe addresses Rabbi Shmuel Toledano after the Rebbe received a report from his Bah-koach (representative), Rabbi Gorodetzky, director of the European Office for Aid and Rehabilitation of Refugees in Paris, regarding Rabbi Toledano's community, and its desire to build a yeshiva and Talmud Torah in the spirit of tradition. The Rebbe applauds Rabbi Toledano's intentions and expresses his hope for the success of this undertaking that would teach Torah and Chassidus to the young generation.

EMPIRE CHÉRIFIEN

MINISTÈRE DE LA JUSTICE

JURIDICTIONS RABBINIQUES

TRIBUNAL DU
RABBIN JUGE DÉLÉGUÉ

LE .....

ב"ה, ג' כסלו תשח"י

לכבוד הרה"ג הרה"ק הרה"ח המפורסם בתורה ובחסידות
שלם בכל המידות עצו"ר בישראל אין נוסרין עליו את
החלל ענוותן כהילל כקש"ת וכסוהר"ר בנימין
גורודעצקי שליט"א ברך ה' חילו ופועל ידיו תרצה אכי"ר :

רב גדול מאד נכבדי!

באתי להודיע לכת' שליט"א שעשינו חינוך הישיבה
החדשה ליל א' מש"ק ובאתי להודיע לכה"ר כמה טרחו כל בני החברה יז"ל עד שהיה
החינוך כ"ך יפה בעם רב ובסדר מסודר, ג"כ תחלה וראש ברכנו את המלך יר"ה
לפי שחי' אחנו עמנו אחד מאנשי השררה (הקאליפא של הפחה), תלמידי ישיבה
ניגנו ניגונים, וגם תראו מחזה יפה והי' כ"ך נורא עד שכל האנשים מחעניינים
בו, ורק לבד נצטערנו כ"ך על שלא זכינו שיחי' מע' כת"ר עמנו, אבל במעמד
כולם עמדתי אני על עמדי והזכרתי את מע' כת"ר בזכרון טוב על פעולותיו
הנשגבות והודעתי להם שכמה וכמה תודות והודות צריכים אנחנו להודות לכת"ר
על כל טרחותיו ויגיעותיו בשבילינו ועל אחת כמה וכמה שלא סנע ממנו כל טוב
ובפרט הישיבה המתולה הזאת יקרת הערך, שכת"ר הוא יסוד כל הבנין, וגם
עוררתי את כולם להשתדל לעשות בכל מאמצי כוחם למע' כת"ר בכל ענייני הישיבה
שזה הדבר נוגע לכולנו.

חוץ מהועלת הפרסום שנתפרסם ע"ז לטובת כ"ך שם הישיבה
לשם ולתהלה היתה לנו ג"כ הכנסה של איזה סכום חשוב ב"ה, לפי ערך ושיעור
אנשי העיר.

אתמול בלילה עשינו אסיפה אנחנו חברי הועד בהשתתפות
הרה"ח חרב עזריאל חיקין הי"ו והחלט שמחובתינו להודיע לכת"ר מהלך וסדר
כל העניינים היאך היו והיאך נעשו ולהודות למע' כת"ר שליט"א משם כל אנשי
החברה.

ג"ך אחר שדיבר עמנו מע' הרב הנ"ל לעזור בהוצאות החיקונים
שניתקנו בחישיבה, הסכמנו לעזור בסך של חמשה ושבעים אלף פראנק, שזה כמו חצי
ההכנסה של אותה הלילה.

כעת אנחנו מבקשים ממע' כת"ר שליט"א יקבל נא את תודותינו
ויברך אותנו ברכה שלימה בגשמיות וברוחניות, וכל המברך מתברך.

ולמע' כת"ר החיים והשלום
נאום עבדך

יאודה שיחרית
דום"ץ אגאדיר

Agadir, Morocco, 3 Kislev 5718 (November 26, 1957)

In this letter the dayan of Agadir, Yehuda Shitrit, informs Rabbi Gorodetzky of the inauguration of the yeshiva and the impressive ceremony that took place, attended by a representative of the King of Morocco, and expresses his regret that the Rabbi could not attend the ceremony. He adds that a large sum of money was raised on the occasion for the yeshiva. It was decided to allocate half of the sum, in the amount of 75,000 francs, for repairs to the yeshiva, matching the contribution pledged by Rabbi Gorodetzky.

It might be interesting to mention that two months after he was expelled from Agadir they had a terrible earthquake there that killed many people, including ten students of our yeshiva. The house where R. Azriel had lived collapsed in the middle of the night. Thus, thank G-d, R. Azriel was saved from mortal danger, as if the Almighty saw to it that he left in time.

In concluding this chapter I would like to add that our people worked in that country with great self-sacrifice, headed by R. Shlomo Matusov who had worked there from the very first day to this day. Hence the great success of our sacred work, through the great power of the Admor Shalita.

Kindergarten in Morocco.

Chapter Seventeen

Tunisia

Many Difficulties in Finding Adequate Educational Facilities / The Xenophobia of the Local People / Starting Talmud Torahs and Yeshivos for Men and School for Women / Full Recognition by the JDC

My first vist to Tunisia was in 5712 (1952). In those days we did not have the right people to send there. We got in touch with five local men who studied Torah with the public, and sent them books and pamphlets that we had published in French.

This continued until 5719 (1959).

We proposed to R. Nissan Pinson to move to Tunisia, and he agreed. When we arrived in Tunisia we encountered many difficulties. The communities were not too interested in having strangers engage in education and there were great difficulties in finding the proper facilities for schools or any other educational institutions.

In light of the difficulties, I had to remain there for many months, until we found the right facilities for boys and girls. Subsequently, we sent young R. Simcha Zirkind from America. He remained there for several years when he had to leave for certain reasons.

We also started to work in Gerba. Here the difficulties were even greater, since according to the local custom each teacher had a right to the children of a given family. This right was reserved for a certain teacher, his sons and grandsons, and no one else could work with the

בע"הו

ביום ראשון לשב"ק סדר ויגש כ"ס לחודש כשליו התשכ"א התקיימה אסיפה
פה זרבה בנוכחיות כבוד הרב בנימין אלי' גאראדעצקי וכבוד הרב גיסן
פינסון עם הרב הראשי הרב סאסי הכהן ועם חברי ועד אור תורה חכב"ץ
והם רבי נסים הכהן ורבי בועז חדאד ורבי בוגיד סעדון ורבי מוסה
חדאד ורבי קארוץ חורי

והיו הסכמות דלהלן

א) לבנות עוד חדר לבד החדר שכבר בונים בבהכ"נ הדיג'חייא (הכוהנים)
ב) להושיב באותם שני חדרים שתי כתות של הגמרה בכל כתה וכתה עשרים
תלמידים בערך
ג) הילדים ילמדו גמרה פרשה נביאים ודינים וילמדו כל היום עם המורים
ד) המורים יהיו מהמובחרים שיודעים ללמוד הגמרה עם הילדים
ה) [illegible]
ו) [illegible]
א) לקחת חלק בבנין החדר בהרבעים דינאר (40 דינאר)
ב) ליתן חלק חמשים אחוז על ספסלים בעד הרבעים תלמידים
ג) ליתן חמשים אחוז בשכירות של שני מורים הנז"ל ועל שאר ההוצאות
כמנהג של החדרים

ובכן באנו על החתום ביום הנ"ל

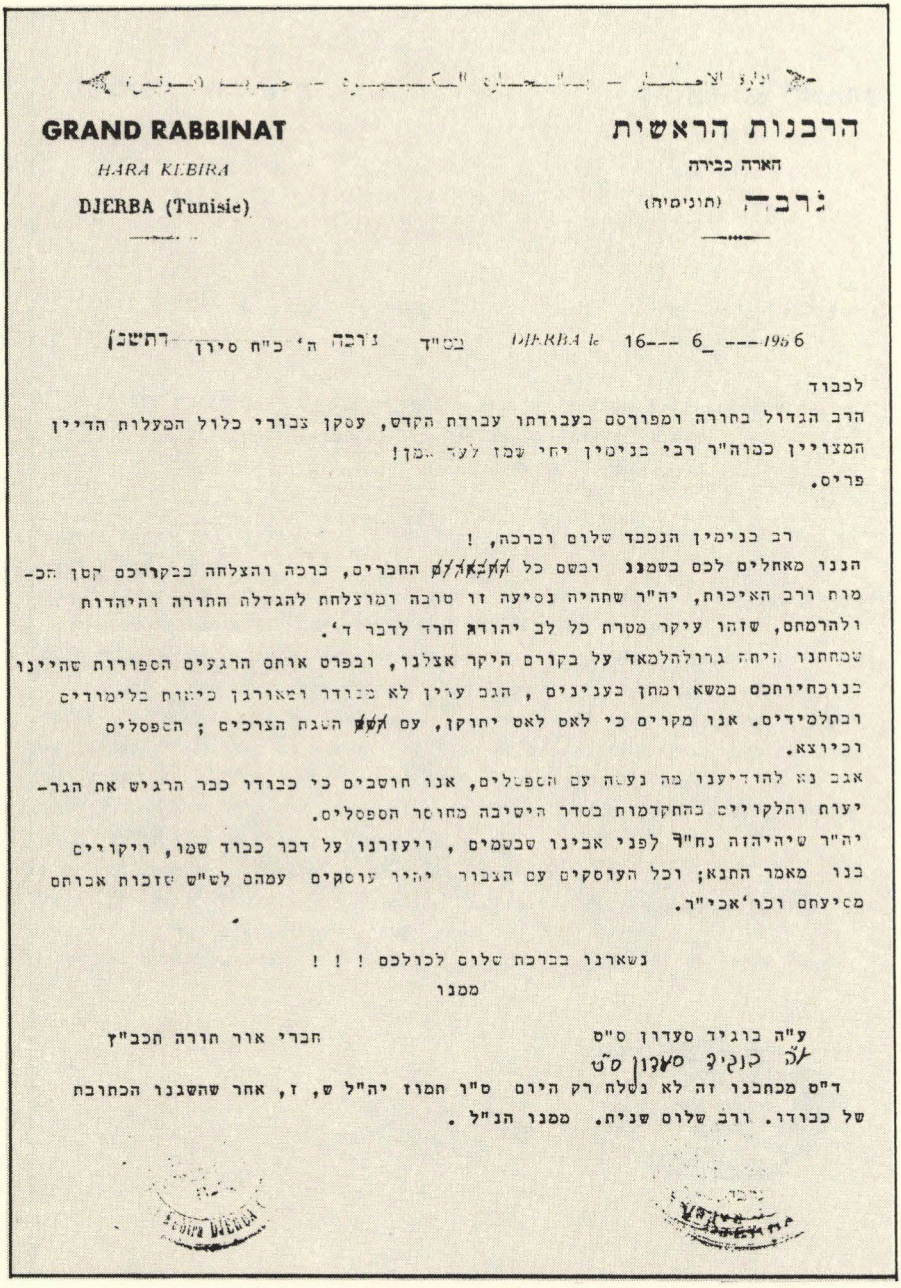
Tunisia, 29 Kislev 5721 (December 10, 1960)

In a meeting attended by Rabbi Gorodetzky, Rabbi Pinson, Chief Rabbi Sasi Hakohen, and the members of the Or Torah committee, it was decided:

a. To add a room to the Cohenite synagogue.
b. To use the room for two Gemarah classes with 20 students each.
c. The students will learn Gemarah, Parasha, Prophets, and Dinim.
d. The best Gemarah teachers will teach the students.
e. No secular studies will be included in the curriculum.

Lubavitch commit themselves to:

a. Spend 40 dinars on the building of the room.
b. Provide half of the benches for the 40 students.
c. Pay half of the teachers' salaries and maintenance cost.



GRAND RABBINAT
HARA KLBIRA
DJERBA (Tunisie)

הרבנות הראשית
הארה כבירה
גרבה (תוניסיה)

DJERBA le 16--- 6_ ---1966 בס"ד גרבה ה' כ"ח סיון התשכ"

לכבוד
הרב הגדול בחורה ומפורסם בעבודתו עבודת הקדש, עסקן צבורי כלול המעלות הדיין
המצויין כמוה"ר רבי בנימין יחי שמו לעד אמן!
פריס.

רב בנימין הנכבד שלום וברכה, !
הננו מאחלים לכם בשמנו ובשם כל החברים, ברכה והצלחה בבקורכם קטן הכ-
מות ורב האיכות, יה"ר שתהיה נסיעה זו סובה ומוצלחת להגדלת התורה והיהדות
ולהרמחם, שזהו עיקר מטרת כל לב יהודי חרד לדבר ד'.
שמחתנו היתה גדולהלמאד על בקורם היקר אצלנו, ובפרט אותם הרגעים הספורות שהיינו
בנוכחיותכם במשא ומתן בענינים , הגם עדין לא סבודר ומאורגן כיאות בלימודים
ובתלמידים. אנו מקוים כי לאם לאם יחוקו, עם השגת הצרכים ; הספסלים
וכיוצא.
אגב נא להודיענו מה נעשה עם הספסלים, אנו חושבים כי כבודו כבר הרגיש את הגר-
יעות והלקויים בהתקדמות בסדר הישיבה מחוסר הספסלים.
יה"ר שיהיהזה נח"ר לפני אבינו שבשמים , ויעזרנו על דבר כבוד שמו, ויקויים
בנו מאמר החנא; וכל העוסקים עם הצבור יהיו עוסקים עמהם לש"ש שזכות אבותם
מסיעתם וכו'אכי"ר.

נשארנו בברכת שלום לכולכם ! ! !
ממנו

ע"ה בונים סעדון ס"ס
בנים סעדון סס

חברי אור תורה תכב"ז

ד"ס מכתבנו זה לא נשלח רק היום ס"ו תמוז יה"ל ש, ז, אחר שהשגנו הכתובת
של כבודו. ורב שלום שניה. ממנו הנ"ל .

Grand Rabbinate, Tunisia, 28 Sivan 5726 (June 16, 1966)

In this letter the Or Torah committee members express their appreciation to Rabbi Gorodetzky for his visit and his efforts on behalf of Torah education. They are hopeful that the school will become well organized, and they mention the need for benches for the students, which they are confident Rabbi Gorodetzky will take care of.

GRAND RABBINAT
HARA KEBIRA
DJERBA (Tunisie)

הרבנות הראשית
הארה כבירה
גרבה (תוניסיה)

ג'רבה ד' י"ז-מנ"א - התשכ"ו DJERBA le 3 / 8 / 1966

לכבוד הרב הגדול המפורסם בתורה וביראה חמשחדל בעבודתו עבודת הקדש להרמת
קרן התורה הדיין המצויין כמוה"ר ר' בנימין אלי'גורודצקי הי"ו
עי"ת פריס יע"א

שלום וברכה כאשר יאות לך רב גדול נכבד ונעלה !
אחרי דרישת השלום .
מכתבך הייקר זמנו ז' מנחם אב קבלנו בשמחה בסוף שבוע שעבר . ובפרט מענין הספסלים
שנתראה עם הממונים והסכימו לו וכתבו הודעה להממונים בספאקס.
הננו להודיעו כי סלפננו ביום ב' להרב דשם והוא השיב שבערב יתראה עם נשיא הקהלה
אם קבל ידיעה בענין זה ולמחר יודיענו בחילפון . והיום קבלנו חשובה ממנו
שנכונים הם לשלוח מעתה מה שאינו צריך להם כעת ואחרי עבור ימי החופש של בתי
ספר הממשלה ישלחו עוד מה שאינו צריך להם .אך מבקשים לשלוח להם מכתבו של כת"ר
כדי להסתמך עליו (כנראה שעדיין לא ידיעה וסומכים על דברי כת"ר)
ומענין ההשתדלות בסידור הלימודים והתלמידים אנו מצדינו משתדלים בל"ן לחקמה
שאנו יכולים והשי"ת יעזור לנו עדכ"ש אמן .
שלחתי לו בסוף שבוע שעבר העתק מכתב מענין בעית הילדים .
ובימים שני שבוע זה קבלנו התחאת מאנצ'א כאר'ס מאת הרב פינסון בסך 120 מאה
ועשרים דינאר מתשלומי חדש ג'ואן לבד
ובעת אין להאריך אליכם עוד כי אם ברוב עוז ושלום מכלל חברי אור תורה וממני

הצעיר ועדו"הי"ו

ראש הרבנים
גרבה
DJERBA

Grand Rabbinate, Tunisia, 17 Av 5726 (August 3, 1966)

Rabbi Gorodetzky is apprised by the committee of the fact that arrangements have been made to obtain the necessary benches through his good offices, and that the sum of 120 dinars was obtained from Rabbi Pinson as a Chabad contribution for the school. The writer alludes to the fact that the committee continues to work on the recruitment of students for the school.

Children during prayer.

Chief Rabbi of Tunisia, Rabbi Meir, visits the yeshivah.

Welcoming receptions for Rabbi Gorodetzky in Tunisia.

children of those families.

When we arrived there and tried to organize classes with children of the same age, the local teachers prevented us from doing it as they were afraid to lose their rights. The local rabbis and lay leaders were afraid we might introduce new customs, and began to pile enormous difficulties in our way. We reasoned with them for a long time, explaining to them that we did not intend, G-d forbid, to introduce secular studies and the like, but rather develop the proper traditional education and raise the level of the students. We also promised to provide teachers with sufficient work so that they could live comfortably.

Only after several years were we able to establish an educational program, secure the proper facilities, and build Talmud Torahs and schools for boys and girls, which have become outstanding institutions functioning to this day!

We now have in Tunisia a large yeshiva with 175 students, a school and teachers' seminar for girls, and a yeshiva in Gerba with 130 students.

At first the JDC did not want to recognize all of our operations, but eventually we were given full recognition and they have given us full support.

It should be mentioned that had it not been for our persistent, dynamic work, the condition of Jewish life in those countries would have deteriorated greatly, and who knows if there would be any trace of yiddishkeit left.

Chapter Eighteen

Madrid-Copenhagen-Istanbul-France-Australia

Small Meeting in Madrid for Providing Kosher Food / Opening a Kosher Restaurant / Place of Study and Torah Lessons / Head of Copenhagen Jewry Requests a Yeshiva / Meetings and Consultations / First Yeshiva in Scandinavia / Head of Istanbul Jewry Requests Yeshiva / Founding a Large Yeshiva / Kindergartens, Schools and Other Institutions in Seven Large Cities of France / Organizing a Group of Chassidim in Australia / JDC Sponsors the Group / Establishing a Model Community in Australia

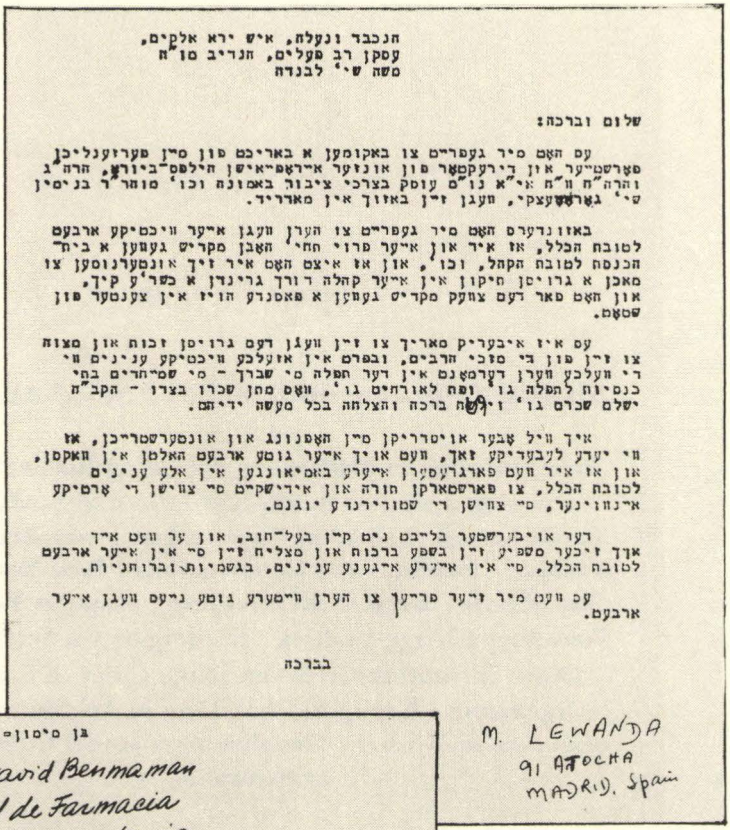
MADRID

On one of my travels to Morocco I arrived in Madrid and had to sojourn there for the Sabbath. I met Jewish students from other countries who could not get kosher food and were forced to defile themselves, since there was no Jewish place for them to go to.

There was one Jew in Madrid named Moshe Launda, who had opened a small unofficial shul, and a Jew from Hungary, a butcher. I met with the two of them and we discussed the situation. We rented a three-story house. The top floor was used for a school for those students, and on the ground level we opened a kosher restaurant.

Brooklyn, 3 Shevat 5712 (February 30, 1952)

The Lubavitcher Rebbe writes to Moshe Levanda of Madrid, Spain, to let him know he received a report from his representative, Rabbi Gorodetzky, about Mr. Levanda's contribution to Jewish life in Spain in the form of a synagogue and a kosher kitchen. The Rebbe wishes Mr. Levanda success in his endeavor, and assures him that the Almighty will reward his efforts.



הנכבד ונעלה, איש ירא אלקים,
עסקן רב פעלים, הנריב מו"ח
משה ש' לבנדה

שלום וברכה:

עם השם סיר געפרים צו באקומען א באריכם פון סיין פארזעצליכן פארשטייער אין דירעקטאר פון אונזער אירגאניזאציע חילפס־בירעא, הרה"ג והרה"ח ר' אי"א נו"ם עוסק בצרכי ציבור באמונה וכו' מוהר"ר בנימין ש' גאראדעצקי, חעגן זיין באזוך אין מאדריד.

באזונדערס השם סיר געפרים צו הערן חעגן אייער ויכטיקע ארבעם לטובת הכלל, אז איר און אייער פרוי חחי' האבן מקריב געווען א בית־הכנסה לטובת הקחל, וכו', און אז איצט השם איר זיך אונטערנומען צו מאכן א גרויסן חיקון אין אייר קהלה דורך גרינדן א כשר'ע קיך, און השם מאר דעם צוטק מקריב געווען א מאנדע הויז אין צענטער פון שטאם.

עס איז איבעריק מאריך צו זיין חעגן דעם גרויסן זכות און מצוה צו זיין פון די מזכי הרבים, ובפרט אין אזעלכע ויכטיקע ענינים ווי די אעלכע חערן דערמאנם אין דער חפלה סי שברך - סי שטרחים בתי כנסיות לחפלה גו', ואם לאורחים גו', חשם מחן שכרו בצרו - הקב"ה ישלם שכרם גו' וישלח ברכה והצלחה בכל מעשה ידיהם.

איך זיכער אויסדריקן סיין האפנונג און אונטערשטרייכן, אז ווי יעדע לעבעדיקע זאך, חעם אויך אייער גוטע ארבעם האלטן אין חאקטן, און אז איר חעם פארגרעסערן אייערע באציאונגען אין אלע ענינים לטובת הכלל, צו פארשפארקן חורה און אירישקיים סי צוישן די אנדערע יונגע, סי צוישן די שטודירנדע יוגנם.

דער אויבערשטער בלייבם נים קיין בעל־חוב, און ער וועם אייך אלץ זיכער משפיע זיין בשפע ברכות און מצליח זיין סי אין אייער ארבעם לטובת הכלל, סי אין אייערע אינדעם ענינים, בגשמיות וברוחניות.

עס וועם סיר זייער פריען צו הערן וויסערע גוטע נייעס חעגן אייער ארבעם.

בברכה

M. LEWANDA
91 ATOCHA
MADRID. Spain

בן ציון = מאדריד/שפאניא

Joseph David Benmaman
Facultad de Farmacia
Ciudad Universitaria
Madrid

ב"ה, א' שבט תשי"ב
ברוקלין.

הח"ח אי"א עוסק בצ"צ
מוה"ח יוסף ש' בן ציון.

שלום וברכה!

בעקו קבלתי מכתבו ציום ה' כסלו העבר, וכיון שאין מזכירי יכול לכתוב בשפה השפנית, הנני מוכרח לכתוב לו בלשון הקדש אשר בפה יבין תוכן מכתבי, והוא:

כאשר ח"י פת זה לא כבר, בא־כתי הרה"ג הרה"ח אי"א נודע בעוסק בצ"צ וכו' מוהריר בנימין אלי' ש' גאראדעצקי דברתי אתו עוד הפעם בהנוגע למצב בית האכל של הסטודענטן במאדריד, וזה כעשרה ימים שחזר הרב גאראדעצקי לפאריז, ובטח ישמה שמה מה שחלוי בו לחקן המצב, ואם בינתים נתחדשו איזה פרטים בזה, מסתבו לחודיע אודות זה ישר להרב גאראדעצקי, לבען לסחר את הדבר.

אקוה אשר בפשך ימי החנוכה נחקבצו הוא והבריו יחד ונדברו אודות הנס של חנוכה, הימים ההם, ואשר גם עתה מוכרח הדבר שבני ובנות ישראל יעמדו חזק נגד כל אלו שרוצים להשכיח את חורת השם יחברך ולהעבירם מחוקי רצונו יחברך, ומוף מוף מצליח השם יחברך ועושה חשועת ופורקן גדול לכל אלו ההולכים בדרכיו.

בברכת הצלחה וברייח שלום כל חבריו

Brooklyn, 1 Tevet 5713 (December 19, 1952)

The Lubavitcher Rebbe writes to Mr. Yosef Ben Maimon, a pharmacy student at the University of Madrid, encouraging him to continue his efforts for establishing a kosher kitchen for Jewish students in Madrid. The Rebbe mentions Rabbi Gorodetzky's report about this matter, and tells Mr. Ben Maimon that the heroic example of the Maccabees

In Madrid. Right to left: Mr. Levanda, Rabbi Gorodetzky, Shochet R. Moshe David Schilkrent, and one of the heads of the kehillah.

This became the students' home, and they were now able to live a true Jewish life.

The butcher and his wife prepared the kosher food and supervised it. For several years the place was used as a hostel for Jewish students, saving many from defiling themselves. To my regret, the butcher left the place a few years later and settled in the United States, thus putting an end to a glorious institution that lasted for six years.

Not only did those students save themselves from eating forbidden food, but they also found themselves as a result under one roof and we were able to organize for them special Torah lessons and lectures on Jewish subjects which helped mould their character.

COPENHAGEN

One day the head of the religious Jewish community in Copenhagen, Mr. Cohen, came to see me and suggested that we open a yeshiva in his city, since there was not a single yeshiva in the Scandinavian countries.

Another person who contacted me with a similar request was Rabbi Steinheus, the Rabbi of Copenhagen.

I went to Copenhagen and met with the heads of the community. Many unexpected difficulties arose, when we finally decided to open a yeshiva. They also accepted the candidacy of Rabbi Azriel Heikin.

Subsequently, we founded the yeshiva and put it under the direction of Rabbi Heikin, who directed it effectively. When Rabbi Heikin was called to serve in Brussels, he was replaced by Rabbi Ozdubeh.

ISTANBUL

In Istanbul there was a Jew named Nisim Behar, who now lives in Israel. He was one of the leaders of Mahazikey Torah.

It was forbidden to establish Jewish schools in that city except for the one school operated by the chief rabbinate.

Studies were taking place at that time in the synagogues, where one could pray and study, but not under any formal program of a school. Thousands of Jewish children studied Torah in the synagogues under the direction of Nisim Behar, who sacrificed himself for that purpose.

One day he got in touch with our office and asked me to come for a visit and attempt to establish a yeshiva. I visited the city and found

RABBINER
MARKUS LEBOVITS
DRONNINGENS TVÆRGADE 31IV
KØBENHAVN K

מירדכי לעבאוויטש
אב"ד לעדת מחזיקי הדת
בקופנהגן

ב"ה יום ג' דסליחות תשס' קופנהגן/תצו'

שלומים רבים וברכת השנים לחיים טובים ערוכים בכל ושמורים לכבוד הרב הגאון האדיר ומפורסם בתורה ומעשים וכו' כש"ת מוה"ר בנימין גראדעצקי שליט"א אחדשה"ט בכבוד רב כיאות, הנני אגיש בזה ברכתי שיכתב ויחתם לאלתר לחיים טובים ארוכים ושלום בספרן של צדיקים גמורים עם כל אליו נלוים ובצלו חוסים וה-שומע תפלה יאזין לעתירתו הזכה ויחדש עלינו ועל כל ישראל שנת ישועה וגאולה שלימה ובנין ביהבחירה אכיר' ובזה מצאתי גכ' לחובה לגלות את אזנו שעל מכתבו היקר ועל דבר משלוח מצות שמורות שנתכבדתי ב-הם מאת כה"ג ש"י שלחתי מכתב תודתי ע"י איש אחד מחבורתנו שנסע לשם אחר חג הפסח ואחר זמן רב נודעתי כי נאבדה,ממנו האגרת ולא עשה שליחותו,ובכן אבקש שלא יקפיד עלי בזה ואתו הסליחה.יש לי שאלות ותשובות הרמא' ה-דר מאד ואם אין ספר החשוב זה לכה"ג מאד אשמח אם אוכל להתכבד לשולחו.לפי דעתי הי' מן הצורך ומן ההגון לעשות איחוד הרבנים החרדים מארצות מערב אירופא כי ע"ז איש את רעהו יעזורו ויש לתקן כמה ענינים לחזוק הדת וגם להרבות השפעת הרבנים היראים בארצות אלו אשר אין כח הממשלה בידם מצד הערכאות.והנני בדשה"ט ומצפה לגאולה קרובה ובנין בית הבחירה מוקירו כערכו הנשגב

מן מרשלשטראסל

מחזיקי הדת

(MACHSIKE HADASS)

Forening til Varetagelse
af den ortodokse Jødedom
i
Danmark.

København, den כאזניסן תשכד

לכב' הרהג ר' בנימין גורודצקי שליט"א

הנני מתכבדים בזה להזמין את מע"כ תורתו להשתתף בשמחה של מצוה שלנו כשנסיים אי"ד ר"ח אייר מסכת בבא בתרא.
מסכת זו למדנו אצל מהור"ר עזריא' חיקין שליט"א ושמחה כפולה היא לנו אם כבוד מעלתו ישתתף באופן אישי בשמחתנו.
מקוים לראותו אצלנו ומברכים אותו בברכת התורה ובשמחת יו"ט
בשם הועד של הסיום

ש"בן

ב"ה ר"ח תמוז תשי"ח.

אל הר"ג כ"ק הגה"צ האדמו"ר מליובאוויטש שליט"א.

ומדשכ"ק שליט"א בהכנעה ויראת הכבוד כיאות.

באתי בזה להגיד תורתי החמה וחודת כל חברי קהלתנו פה לכ"ק אדמו"ר שליט"א עבור כי נסכים בסובו הגדול לשלוח לנו האיש המרומם והרבול, שלוחא דרחמנא, הרה"ג ר' ב"א גורודעצקי נ"י, כדי להגדיל תורה ולהאדירה במחננו ע"י ייסוד ישיבה קדושה לנוער של ארצות סקנדינביא.

ע"ל, הצעד הראשון הי' בהצלחה ניכרת, כי הציבור נחמס להגיש לעבודה באופן ישר ובמהרה כדרוה כדי להוציא המחשבה מן הכח אל הפועל, למרות כל קשיים שלא יבואו. ובזה"ת נתחיל בלימודים בר"ח אלול הבע"ל, ויש סיכויים שיקובצו קרוב למנין בחורי ומוסד ללימוד כל-היום ועוד כמה לשיעורי ערב. נשמח לקבל פני הראש ישיבה בספ"י פה ע"מ הרב חיקין נ"י, אשר הרה"ג גורודעצקי שיבח אתו מאד והיציעו לעננו כאיש מסוגל ומאד ומתאים לחפקיד הנעלה, לנהל ישיבה ק'.

וזה צרוף העתק מההסכם בין הרה"ג גורודעצקי, בא-כח של האדמו"ר שליט"א, ובינינו. ויהא רעוא שירצה ד' את מעשה ידינו, ונזכה לבנות ולהבנות.

בתודה כפולה ומכופלת, הנני ברגשי כבוד

ה ס כ ם .

בעזרת השי"ת נפגשנו לייסד ישיבה קדושה בקופנהגן, ואנו החתומים למטה הסכמנו כדלהלן:

א)השם של הישיבה: ישיבת אהלי יוסף יצחק - בית התלמוד ישורון בסקנדינביא.
תרגום: דען סקנדינביזקע יעדיזקע הויסקאלע אי דאנמארק.

ב)נוסד ע"י הרה"ג ר' בנימין אלי' גורודעצקי, בא-כח של כ"ק האדמו"ר שליט"א מליובאוויטש, וע"י הרב דוב זאב שטיינהויז, ביום כ"ח סיון תשי"ח.

ג)המטרה: להרביץ תורה בארצות סקנדינביא, לאסוף הנוער בכותלי הישיבה ללימודי קודש ברוח ישראל סבא. (ראה 'הוספה' למטה.)

ד)ההנהלה הרוחנית של הישיבה תהי' בידי הראש ישיבה והרב שטיינהויז.

ה)בין בסדר התפילה בין בעניינים אחרים אין לשנות מנוסח וממנהגי המקום.

ו)התוכנית של הלימודים יכלול זמן קבוע בכל יום ללימוד ספרי יראה ומוסר, כמו ספר "תניא" וכדומה.

ז)הרב גורודעצקי מקבל עליו לשלוח ראש ישיבה, ולשלם משכורתו -אלפים קראנער לחדש- בעד הששה חדשים הראשונים, החל מחדש תמוז. ואם יעסוק הר"י בעניני שחיטה פה, בדרך ארצי, יקבל הוא תשלום עבודתו אותו הסכום אשר השוחט הרגיל מקבל עבור עבודתו. ואם יקל מעלינו העול של אספת כספים, לא לעמוד על ההסכם של ששה חדשים דוקא.

ח)עלינו, אנשי העיר, מוטל ההתחייבות למצוא דירה בשביל הראש ישיבה.

ט)כל הצורכים הגשמיים של הישיבה יסודרו ע"י עסקנים ושתדלנים של העיר, יחד עם ההנהלה הרוחנית של הישיבה, ובצירוף אנשי מעשה משאר מדינות סקנדינביא.

ובכן באנו על החתום לעדות ולראי', ביום כ"ט לחדש סיון שנת חשי"ח לפ"ק.

[illegible]

הוספה : ובאם יהי' הצורך, תהיה האפשרות נתונה גם ללימודי חול - בהשגחה מדויקת - בתוכנית מפורד, בכיתות מיוחדות של'מכינה לישיבה'.

JOS. KAHN

CABLE: SILVERKAHN
PHONE: BYEN 7481

COPENHAGEN
Købmagergade 62-64

יום ב' לח'איר תשי'ח

לכבוד מסהר'ר ב.א.גאראדעצקי שלי'טא

שלו'ובראכה

בשמחה רבה האבען מיר ערהאלטען דעם בריף פון כ'ד ניסן
און מיר פארשטיי'ען,אז מען האט באשלאסען אונז פאזיסיוו
צוצוהעלפען מיט דער גרינדונג פון א ישיבה אין קאפענהאגען
וועלכעם קען האבען א באדייטונג,וואס מען קען דאס גארניט
אפשאצען,סיי פאר אונזער שטאט און זיי פאר גאנץ סקאנדינאוויען.
עס וואלט זייער גוט געווען אויב מען זאל קענען מסדר זיין
דעם ענין במשך פון די קוט-ענדיגע 2-3 חדשים,אזוי אז די
לטודים זאלען קענען אנפאנגען באלד נאך דעם זומער.

מיר האבען די מגלוכקייט צו באקומען א לאקאל, א ביז יעצט
געווענדעט קלויזע שול,און לעבעו דער שול געפינט זיך א דירה
פאר א ראש ישיבה. מיר האלטען אויך דאביי צו פארמאנדלען
מיט א ראש ישיבה,וועלכער איז יעמצט א מגיד שיעור איז דער
ישיבה פון באר יעקב. דער באטראפענדער -הרב משה יעקבזאן -
האט אין זיין יוגענט געלעבט אין קאפענהאגען(זיין פאטער
הרב בנימין זאב יעקבזאן איז געווענען אונזער רב דורך10 יאר)
און איז באקאנט מיט דער שפראך און מיט דער מענטאליטעט פון
לאנד,נאר אזוי ווי עד האט א פרוי מיט 5 קינדער ב"ה,מוזען
מיר אים צוזיכערן פרנסה אויך א געוויסע ציים,בעפאר מען בריינגט
אים אהער.(ער האט דאס גישט פארלאנגט,נאר מצדינו מוזען מיר
אזוי טאן על פי מנהג המדינה,לאמיט עס זאל חס ושלו' גיט אויס-
קומען אז מיר האבען אנגעהויבען א זאך און אהערגעבראכט א
משפחה און געבליבען שטעקען אין מיטען)

וועגען תלמדים איז אזוי,אז מיר שיקען דאך כסדר קינדער נאך
ענגלאנד,אויך יעצט האבען מיר קינדער דארטען און אין עטליכע
חדשים זיינען עטליכע מוכן צו פארען.אבער וועז מיר האבען
הצלחה און פאנגען אן צו לערנען דא,ברויך מען זיי גיט שיקען
נור פארקערט קענען מען צוריקרופען אונזערע בחורים פון דארטען.
אבער ביי אלעדעם וואלט גוט געווען צו באקומען א פאר עלטערע
בחורים וועלכע האבען אין זיך רוח ודעת התורה,דאמיט די התחלה
זאל זיין אביזעל געמאכט און זאל אריינגעבען חשק אין אונזערע
קינדער.עס וואלט אבער געווען גוט אז מען זאל זיך באלד ארום-
קוקען אין די אנדערע מדינות פון סקאנדינאוויען אפפאר. עס
פאנגט זיך אן דער נייער שוליאהר.

סך-הכל איז,אז מען קיין סך ציים גישט פארליערן און איך
ערלויב מיר צו פרעגען,צו עס וואלט געווען טעגליך למשל איבער
שבועות צו זיין ביי אונז אין קאפענהאגען - זמן קבלת התורה.

זבדה אסיים את מכתבי ומצפה לקבל את תשובתו החשובה בקרוב
ממני המכבדו כערכו הרמה

יוסף כהן הכהן

Page 197 (top)

Copenhagen, 3 Elul 5709 (August 28, 1949)

Rabbi Markus Lebovits of Copenhagen apologizes to Rabbi Gorodetzky for the failure of his congregant to deliver a letter in which Rabbi Lebovits thanks Rabbi Gorodetzky for the shipment of shumuro matzo. He offers to send Rabbi Gorodetzky a copy of the RaMA's Responsa, and proposes to form an association of Orthodox rabbis for Western Europe in order to increase the influence of the Orthodox rabbis in those countries.

Page 197 (bottom)

Copenhagen, 21 Nisan 5724 (April 3, 1964)

In this note Rabbi Gorodetzky is invited by Machzike Hadas to a siyyum of Masechet Baba Basra.

Page 198

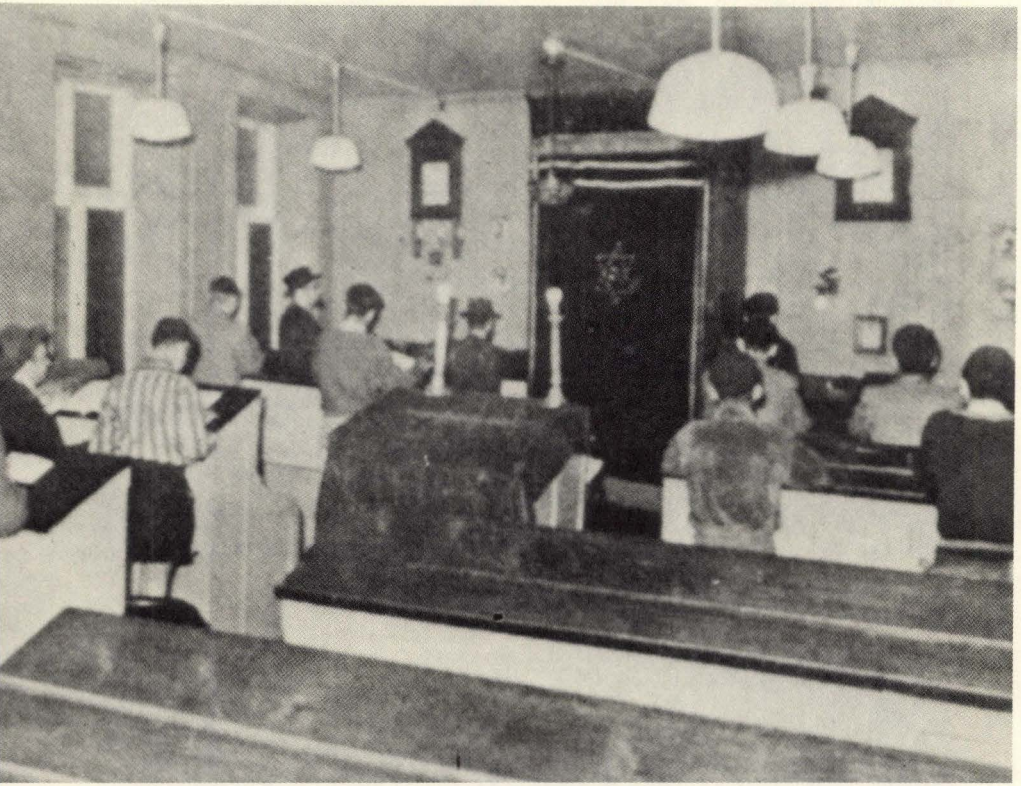
Denmark, 1 Tammuz 5718 (June 19,1958)

Rabbi Dov Zeev Steinheus submits to the Lubavitcher Rebbe a copy of the agreement between him and Rabbi Gorodetzky for the establishment of a yeshiva in Denmark for the Jews of the Scandinavian countries. A group of ten students is expected to begin their studies in two months, headed by Rabbi Çheikin, who was recommended by Rabbi Gorodetzky. The yeshiva is to be named Yeshivas Ohalei Yosef Yitzhak—Bet HaTalmud Yeshurun of Scandinavia. It is to follow the nusach of the community, and the daily lessons are to include the study of the Tanya. Rabbi Gorodetzky undertakes to send a Rosh Yeshiva and pay his salary for the first six months. The local communal leaders undertake to provide for the needs of the yeshiva.

Page 199

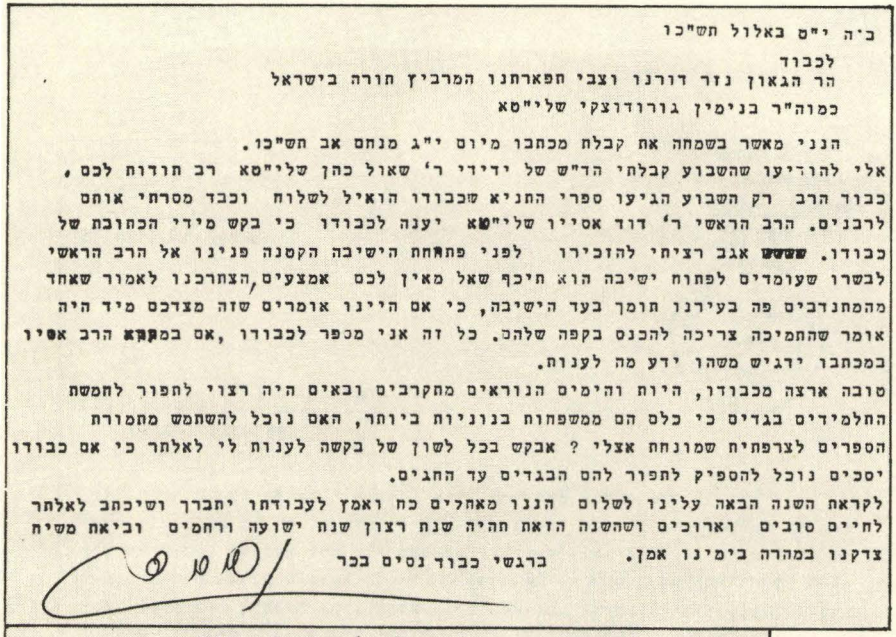
Copenhagen, 8 Iyar 5718 (April 28, 1958)

In this letter R. Yosef Kahn acknowledges Rabbi Gorodetzky's letter regarding the founding of a yeshiva in Copenhagen which would serve the Scandinavian countries. R. Kahn points out that a facility for the yeshiva is available as well as an apartment for the Rosh Yeshiva. A Rabbi who speaks the vernacular, named Moshe Jacobson, is available. In the past, students were sent to England, where some of them are studying at the present time. They can be recalled and resume their studies in the new yeshiva in their own country.



Ohalei Yosef Yitzhak Yeshiva in Copenhagen.

In Istanbul. With the communal leaders and the students.

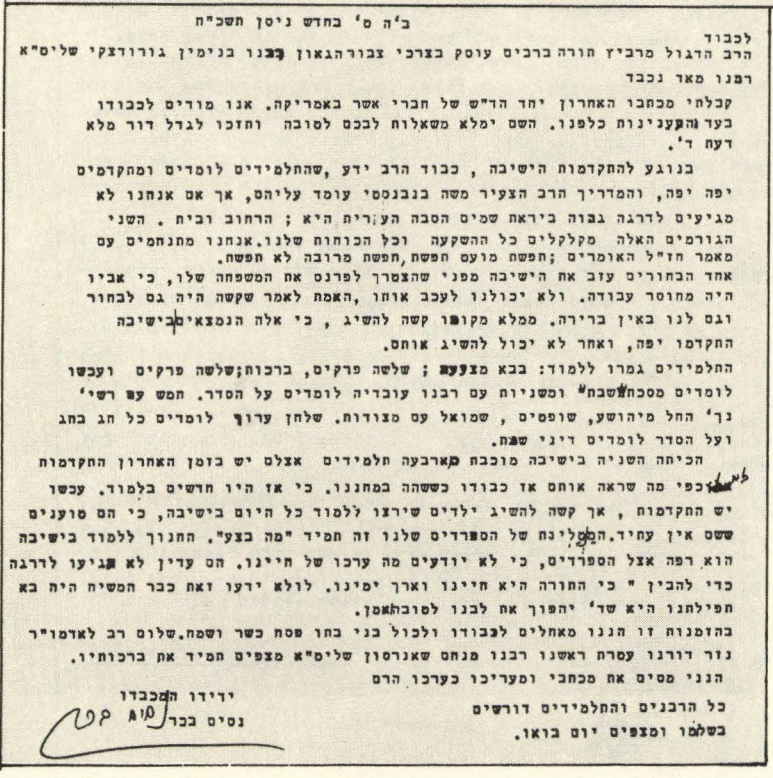


ב"ה י"ם באלול תש"כו

לכבוד
הר הגאון נזר דורנו וצבי תפארתנו המרביץ תורה בישראל
כמוה"ר בנימין גורודוצקי שליט"א

הנני מאשר בשמחה את קבלת מכתבו מיום י"ג מנחם אב תש"כו.
אלי להודיעו שהשבוע קבלתי הד"ש של ידידי ר' שאול כהן שליט"א רב תודות לכם,
כבוד הרב רק השבוע הגיעו ספרי התניא שכבודו הואיל לשלוח וכבד מסרתי אותם
לרבנים. הרב הראשי ר' דוד אסייו שליט"א יענה לכבודו כי בקש מידי הכתובת של
כבודו. ששש אגב רציתי להזכירו לפני פתיחת הישיבה הקטנה פנינו אל הרב הראשי
לבשרו שעומדים לפתוח ישיבה הוא תיכף שאל מאין לכם אמצעים, הצתרכנו לאמור שאחד
מהמחנדבים פה בעירנו תומך בעד הישיבה, כי אם היינו אומרים שזה מצדכם מיד היה
אומר שהחמיכה צריכה להכנס בקפה שלהם. כל זה אני מכפר לכבודו, אם במקרה הרב אשי
במכתבו ידגיש משהו ידע מה לענות.
סובה ארצה מכבודו, היות והימים הנוראים מקרבים ובאים היה רצוי לחפור לחמשת
התלמידים בגדים כי כלם הם ממשפחות בנוניות ביותר, האם נוכל להשתמש מתמורת
הספרים לצרפתית שמונחת אצלי ? אבקש בכל לשון של בקשה לענות לי לאלתר כי אם כבודו
יסכים נוכל להספיק לחפור להם הבגדים עד החגים.
לקראת השנה הבאה עלינו לשלום הננו מאחלים כח ואמץ לעבודתו יתברך ושיכתב לאלתר
לחיים סובים וארוכים ושהשנה הזאת תהיה שנת רצון שנת ישועה ורחמים וביאת משיח
צדקנו במהרה בימינו אמן. ברגשי כבוד נסים בכר

Istanbul, 19 Elul 5726 (September 4, 1966)
Nisim Behar of Istanbul acknowledges the receipt of the Tanya books, and goes on to mention that he had to tell the chief rabbi that a local Jew supports the yeshiva ketana, since he could not tell him that the aid came from outside. He asks Rabbi Gorodetzky for clothes for the five needy students of the school for the forthcoming Holy Days.



ב"ה ס' בחדש ניסן תשכ"ח

לכבוד
הרב הגדול מרביץ תורה ברבים עוסק בצרכי צבור הגאון בנימין גורודצקי שליט"א
רמנו מאד נכבד

קבלתי מכתבו האחרון יחד הד"ש של חברי אשר באמריקה. אנו מודים לכבודו
בעד ההתעניינות כלפנו. השם ימלא משאלות לבכם לסובה וחזכו לגדל דור מלא
דעת ד'.

בנוגע להתקדמות הישיבה, כבוד הרב ידע, שהתלמידים לומדים ומתקדמים
יפה יפה, והמדריך הרב הצעיר משה בנבנסתי עומד עליהם, אך אם אנחנו לא
מגיעים לדרגה גבוה ביראת שמים הסבה העקרית היא ; הרחוב ובית . השני
הגורמים האלה מקלקלים כל ההשקעה וכל הכוחות שלנו. אנחנו מתחמים עם
מאמר חז"ל האומרים ;תפשת מועט תפשת,תפשת מרובה לא תפשת.
אחד הבחורים עזב את הישיבה מפני שהצטרך לפרנס את המשפחה שלו, כי אביו
היה מחוסר עבודה. ולא יכולנו לעכב אותו ,האמת לאמר שקשה היה גם לבחור
וגם לנו באין ברירה. ממלא מקומו קשה להשיג , כי אלה הנמצאים בישיבה
התקדמו יפה, ואחר לא יכול להשיג אותם.

התלמידים גמרו ללמוד: בבא מציעא ; שלשה פרקים, ברכות;שלשה פרקים ועכשו
לומדים מסכת שבת ומשניות עם רבנו עובדיה לומדים על הסדר. חמש עם רשי'
נך' החל מיהושע, שופטים , שמואל עם מצודות. שלחן ערוך לומדים כל חג בחג
ועל הסדר לומדים דיני שבת.

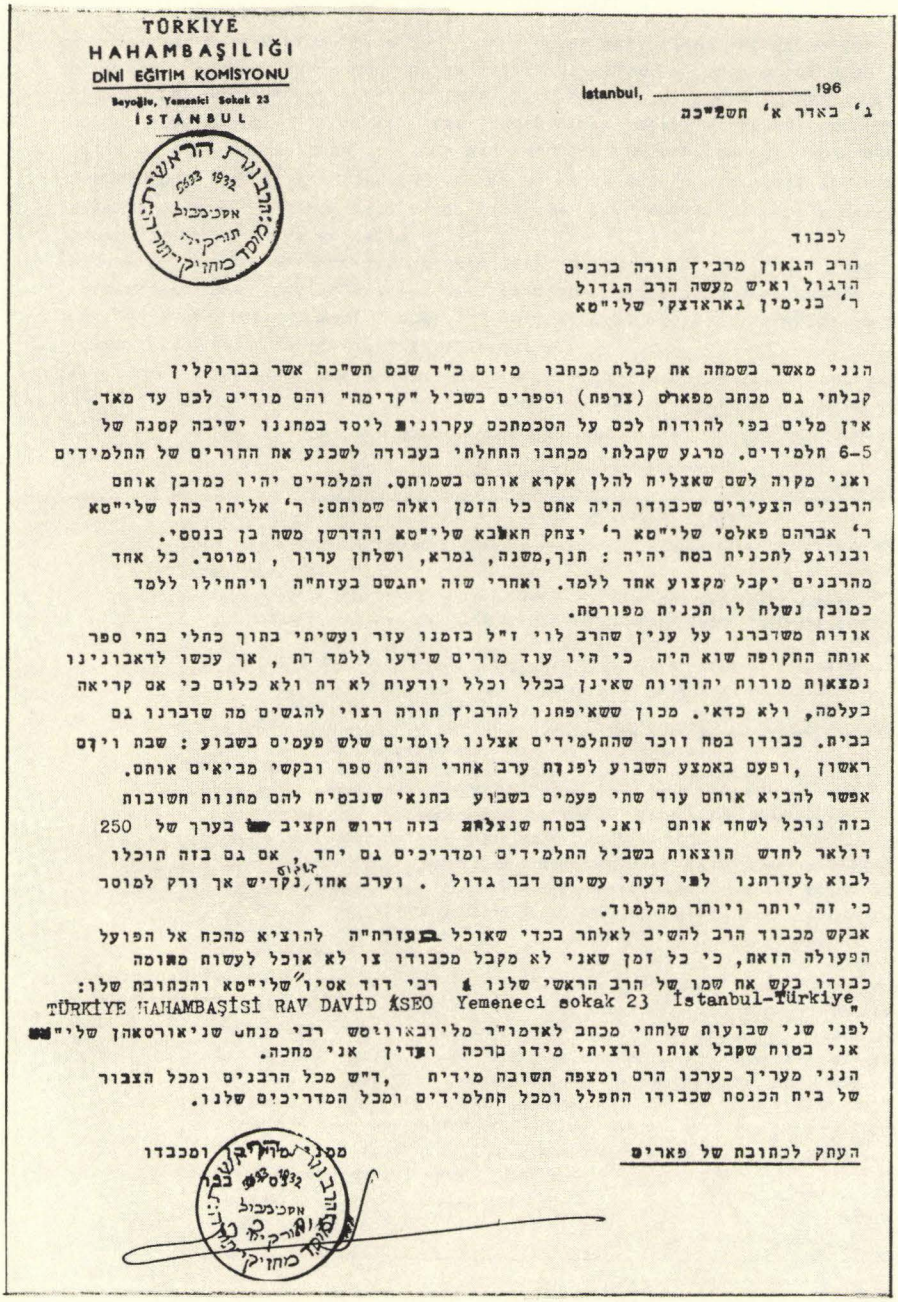
הכיתה השניה בישיבה מובכת מארבעה תלמידים אצלם יש בזמן האחרון התקדמות
כפי מה שראה אותם אז כבודו כששהה במחננו. כי אז היו חדשים בלמוד. עכשו
יש התקדמות , אך קשה להשיג ילדים שירצו ללמוד כל היום בישיבה, כי הם טוענים
ששם אין עתיד. המטלינת של הספרדים שלנו זה תמיד "מה בצע". התנון ללמוד בישיבה
הוא רפה אצל הספרדים, כי לא יודעים מה ערכו של חיינו. הם עדין לא הגיעו לדרגה
כדי להבין " כי התורה היא חיינו וארך ימינו. לולא ידעו זאת כבר המשיח היה בא
תפילתנו היא שד' יהפוך את לבנו לסובתאמן.
בהזמנות זו הננו מאחלים לכבודו ולכול בני בתו פסח כשר ושמח.שלום רב לאדמו"ר
נזר דורנו עטרת ראשנו רבנו מנחם שאנרסון שליט"א מצפים תמיד את ברכותיו.
הנני מסים את מכתבי ומעריכו כערכו הרם

כל הרבנים והתלמידים דורשים
בשלמו ומצפים יום בואו.

ידידו המכבדו
נסים בכר

Istanbul, 9 Nisan 5728 (April 7, 1968)

In this letter Nisim Behar reports to Rabbi Gorodetzky about the progress of the yeshiva ketana. One student had to drop out because he had to help support his family. The rest of the students are making good progress in the study of Mishna, Chumash, and Prophets. It is hard to obtain additional students, because the youth asks for practical application of learning, failing to realize that the Torah is "Our life and the length of our days."



TÜRKİYE
HAHAMBAŞILIĞI
DİNİ EĞİTİM KOMİSYONU
Beyoğlu, Yemenici Sokak 23
İSTANBUL

İstanbul, ... 196
ג' באדר א' חשכ"ה

לכבוד
הרב הגאון מרביץ תורה ברבים
הדגול ואיש מעשה הרב הגדול
ר' בנימין גאראדצקי שליט"א

הנני מאשר בשמחה את קבלת מכתבו מיום כ"ד שבט תש"כה אשר בברוקלין
קבלתי גם מכתב מפאריס (צרפת) וספרים בשביל "קדימה" והם מודים לכם עד מאד.
אין מלים בפי להודות לכם על הסכמתכם עקרונית ליסד במחננו ישיבה קטנה של
5-6 תלמידים. מרגע שקבלתי מכתבו התחלתי בעבודה לשכנע את ההורים של התלמידים
ואני מקוה לשם שאצליח להלן אקרא אותם בשמותם. המלמדים יהיו כמובן אותם
הרבנים הצעירים שכבודו היה אתם כל הזמן ואלה שמותם: ר' אליהו כהן שליט"א
ר' אברהם פאלסי שליט"א ר' יצחק חאבא שליט"א והדרשן משה בן בנסטי.
ובנוגע לתכנית בסח יהיה: תנך, משנה, גמרא, ושלחן ערוך, ומוסר. כל אחד
מהרבנים יקבל מקצוע אחד ללמד. ואחרי שזה יחגשם בעזה"ש ויתחילו ללמד
כמובן נשלח לו תכנית מפורסת.
אודות משדברנו על ענין שהרב לוי ז"ל בזמנו עזר ועשיתי בתוך כתלי בתי ספר
אותה התקופה שוא היה כי היו עוד מורים שידעו ללמד דת, אך עכשו לדאבוניני
נמצאות מורות יהודיות שאינן בכלל וכלל יודעות לא דת ולא כלום כי אם קריאה
בעלמה, ולא כדאי. מכון ששאיפתנו להרבין תורה רצוי להגשים מה שדברנו גם
בבית. כבודו בסח זוכר שהתלמידים אצלנו לומדים שלש פעמים בשבוע: שבת ויום
ראשון, ופעם באמצע השבוע לפנות ערב אחרי הבית ספר ובקשי מביאים אותם.
אפשר להביא אותם עוד שתי פעמים בשבוע בתנאי שנבטיח להם מחנות חשובות
בזה נוכל לשחד אותם ואני בטוח שנצליח בזה דרוש תקציב בערך של 250
דולאר לחדש הוצאות בשביל התלמידים ומדריכים גם יחד, אם גם בזה תוכלו
לבוא לעזרתנו לפי דעתי עשיתם דבר גדול. וערב אחד נקדיש אך ורק למוסר
כי זה יותר ויותר מהלמוד.
אבקש מכבוד הרב להשיב לאלתר בכדי שאוכל בעזה"ש להוציא מהכח אל הפועל
הפעולה הזאת, כי כל זמן שאני לא מקבל מכבודו צו לא אוכל לעשות מאומה
כבודו בקש את שמו של הרב הראשי שלנו רבי דוד אסיו שליט"א והכתובת שלו:
TÜRKİYE HAHAMBAŞİSİ RAV DAVİD ASEO Yemeneci sokak 23 İstanbul-Türkiye
לפני שני שבועות שלחתי מכתב לאדמו"ר מליובאוויטש רבי מנחם שניאורסאהן שליט"א
אני בטוח שקבל אותו ורציתי מידו ברכה ועדין אני מחכה.
הנני מעריך כערכו הרם ומצפה תשובה מידית, ד"ש מכל הרבנים ומכל הצבור
של בית הכנסת שכבודו החפלל ומכל התלמידים ומכל המדריכים שלנו.

העתק לכתובת של פאריס

מסכי ומוקיר ומכבדו

Istanbul, 3 Adar 5725 (February 5, 1965)

Nisim Behar thanks Rabbi Gorodetzky for his agreement to find a yeshiva ketana in Istanbul. He proposes the teachers and the curriculum, pointing out that at present certain women are teaching who do not have sufficient knowledge. There is a need for better teachers, for funding, and for expanding the teaching hours. Nisim Behar asks for an immediate answer so that the new school program can be implemented.

During study and prayer.

out there were many candidates for learning and teaching.

The main difficulty was funding the teachers. It was also necessary to pay older students since their parents were extremely poor and they had to help support their families. When their studies were subsidized they were able to give up other jobs and they preferred to dedicate themselves to the halacha.

We founded an outstanding yeshiva that functioned for years. I would visit it twice a year, test the students, speak to them about different topics, and help buttress religious observances.

This went on for many years until most of them immigrated to Israel, headed by Nisim Behar, and regretfully the institutions that functioned so well for years were shut down.

FRANCE

After Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco became independent countries, tens of thousands of Jews left their borders and flocked to France, settling mainly in the big cities.

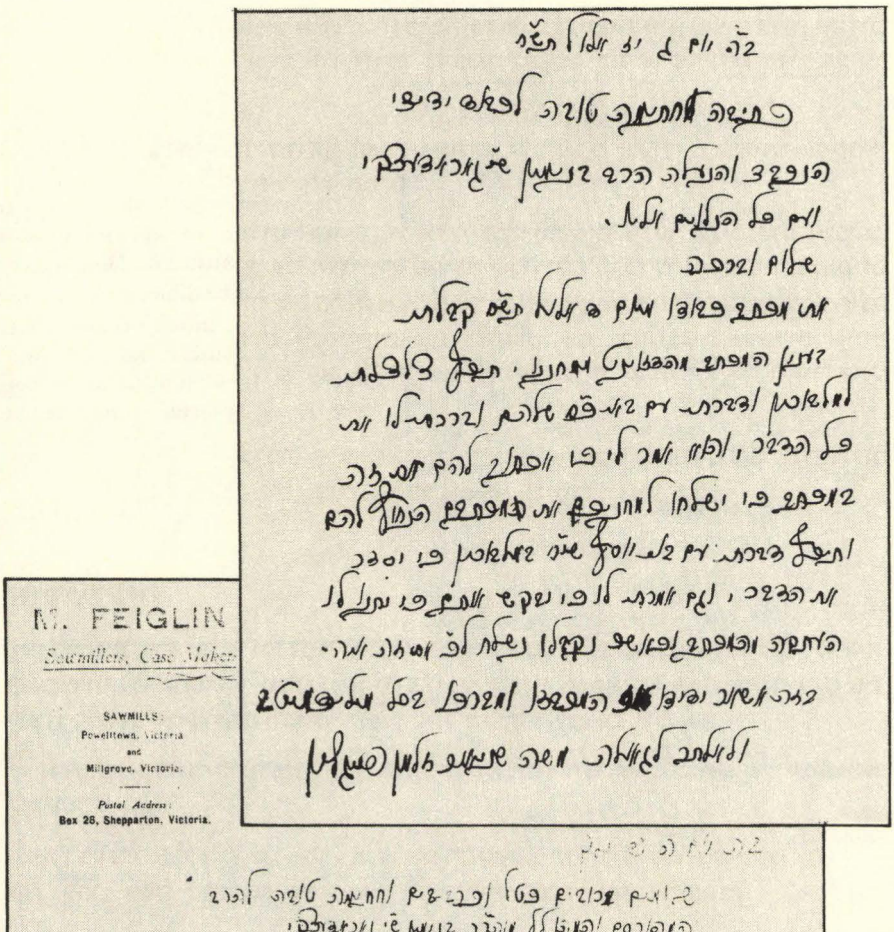
There was an urgent need to help them and make sure they remained in the Jewish fold and did not assimilate among the gentile population.

Many of our alumni grew up in those countries and knew the culture and language of France. With their ordination certificates they became faithful Chabad emissaries in the large cities of France who spread the living words of yiddishkeit and Chassidus among tens of thousands of Jews, helping maintain and promote Jewish life through the various institutions they established, starting with kindergartens and continuing with schools for older boys and girls, with hundreds of *baale teshuvah.*

We now have seven emissaries in France—besides Paris—in the large cities of Marseilles, Lyon, Nice, Toulouse, Metz, Grenoble and Montpellier.

AUSTRALIA

In 5708 (1948) some of our people in Paris decided to settle in Australia. I got in touch with R. Moshe Feiglin and asked him as one of the old timers on that continent to make the necessary preparations for their arrival.



M. FEIGLIN

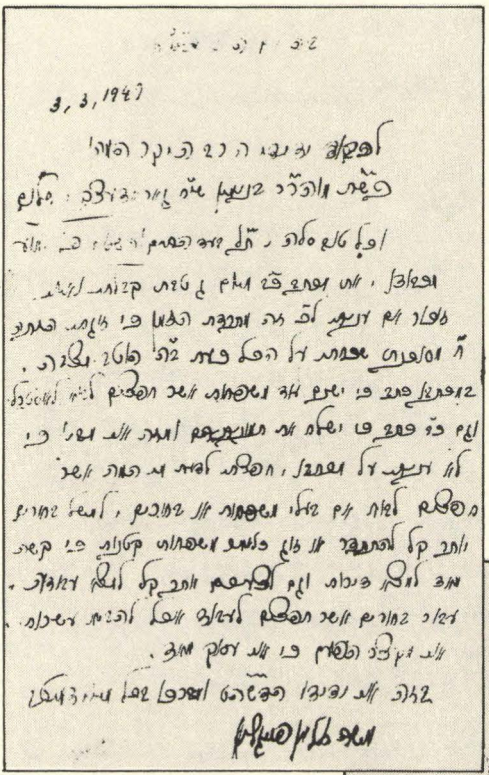
Sawmillers, Case Makers

SAWMILLS:
Powelltown, Victoria
and
Millgrove, Victoria.

Postal Address:
Box 28, Shepparton, Victoria.

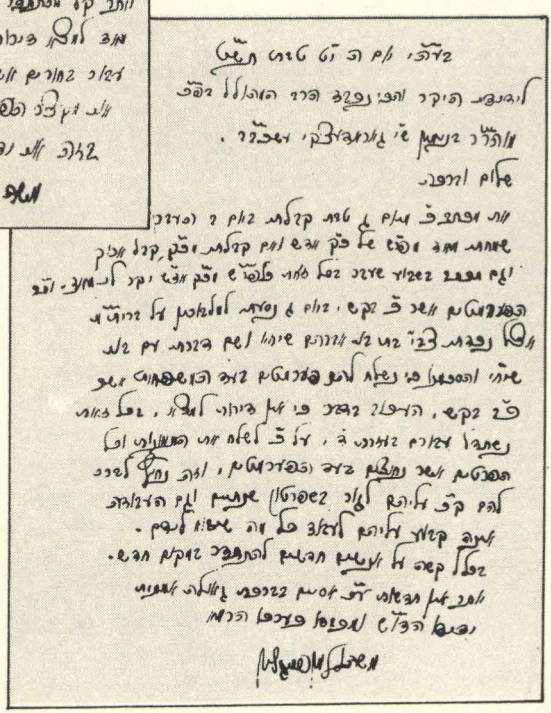
Victoria, Australia
17 Elul 5708 (September 21, 1948)

The Hasid Moshe Shneur Zalman Feiglin writes to Rabbi Gorodetzky from Australia in these two letters about the help of the Joint Distribution Committee in sponsoring four chasidic families who wish to settle in Australia. In the first letter R. Feiglin contacts the Joint office in Melbourne. In the second letter he apprises Rabbi Gorodetzky about the help the JDC is willing to extend to the families.



Victoria Australia, 11 Adar 5707 (March 3, 1947)

In this letter R. Feiglin refers to the proposition of bringing more chasidim to Australia. He points out that it would be difficult to accommodate large families because of the problem of housing and work, and it might be preferable to bring single young men or small young families.



Victoria, Australia, 19 Tevet 5709 (January 20, 1949)

R. Feiglin reports to Rabbi Gorodetzky about the situation in Australia regarding the settling of more chasidic families. He alludes to the problems of housing and work, and informs Rabbi Gorodetzky that he had travelled to Melbourne to arrange for visas for the new settlers, and he needs photographs for the visas.

He liked the idea and obtained all the necessary documents for settling those families in Australia.

I also contacted the JDC and asked them to fund the trip, and soon ten families with all their children settled in Australia.

The beginning, like all beginnings, was difficult. But eventually they became acclimated and did a great deal to spread yiddishkeit in Australia.

R. Moshe visited me in Paris several times on his way to Israel, and told me about their difficulties and slow acclimatization. Nevertheless, they were able to do great things in the field of education, and today there is a glorious Chabad community in that country.

At present there are many institutions there—schools for boys and girls, as well as for young adults—under the direction of Rabbi Yitzhak David Groner.

Chapter Nineteen

Rescuing Rumanian Jewry

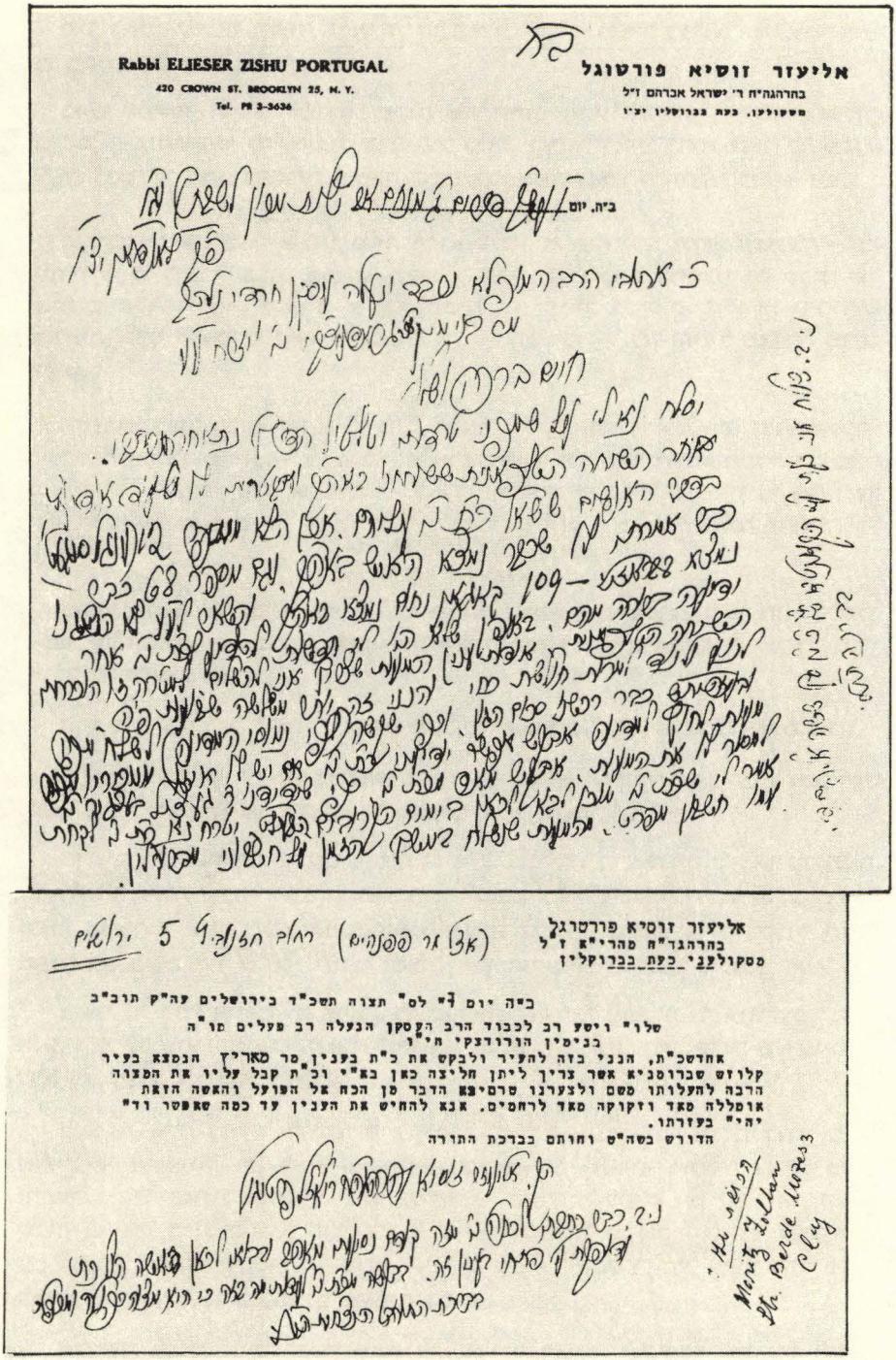
Appeal to Rescue Rumanian Jewry after Serious Failure of Previous Attempts / Request by Admor of Skolen to Contact the JDC / JDC Approves Large Budget / Meetings with the Activists in London / The Organizer Asks a Fortune / All Prisoners in Rumanian Jails Are Released

A large task was the rescue of Jews via Rumania.

In 5707 (1947), in the month of Tishre, while I was staying at our Rabbi's in the United States, the Rebbe showed me a letter he had received from a young man who informed him that our people charged him with transferring Jews from Russia, via Rumania, since the route through Lvov had been closed. He asked the Rebbe's blessing for the success of the indertaking.

When the Rebbe asked me about it, I told him that I did not know the writer of that letter and it was hard for me to become involved with such people. Our Rabbi told me that if he decided in favor of it he would put me in charge of that task. I answered him that if so, I would only do it as an emissary.

The author of the letter was in Paking at that time with our people. He travelled to Rumania and began to occupy himself with that mission.



Rabbi ELIEZER ZISHU PORTUGAL
420 CROWN ST. BROOKLYN 25, N. Y.
Tel. PR 3-3636

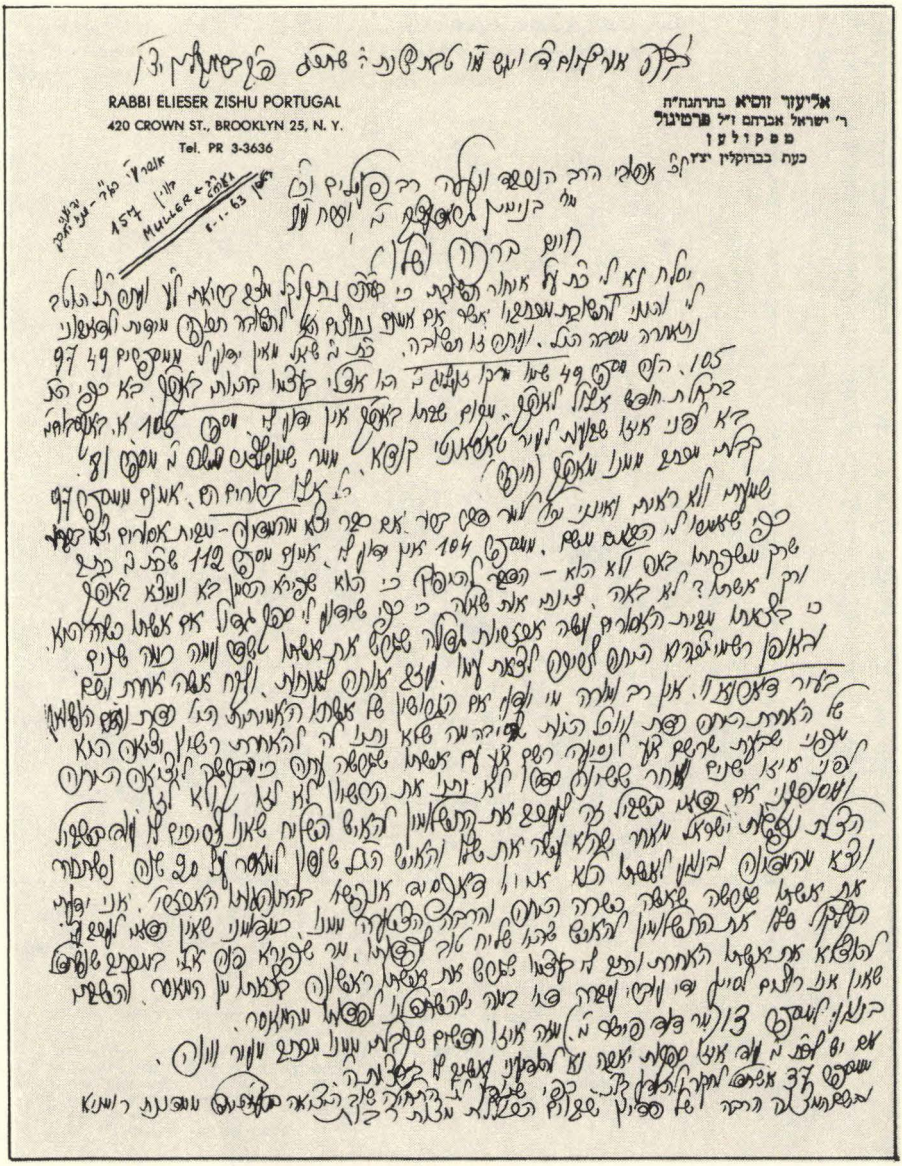
אליעזר זושיא פורטוגל
בהרהגה"ח ר' ישראל אברהם זי"ל
מסקולען, בעת בברוקלין יצ"ו

Brooklyn

In this letter Rabbi Elieser Zishu Portugal, the Admor of Skolani, submits a report to Rabbi Gorodetzky about the status of the rescue work of Romanian Jews who had been jailed and are helped to leave the country.

Jerusalem, 12 Adar 5724 (February 25, 1964)

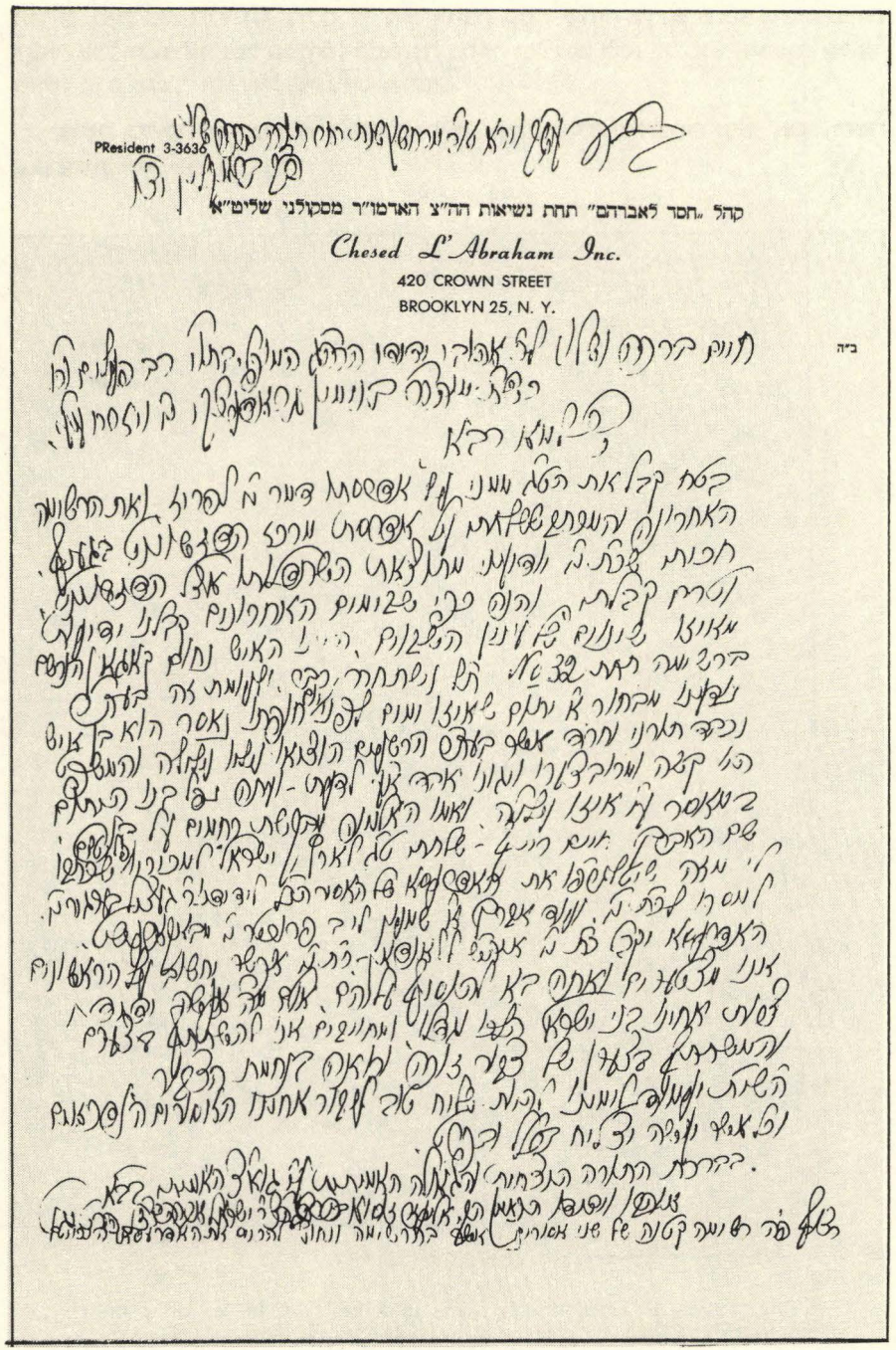
Rabbi Portugal writes to Rabbi Gorodetzky in regard to a Romanian Jew who needs to be brought to Israel in order to give halitzah to a woman who keeps asking Rabbi Portugal for help in this difficult matter.


RABBI ELIEZER ZISHU PORTUGAL
420 CROWN ST., BROOKLYN 25, N. Y.
Tel. PR 3-3636

אליעזר זושיא בהרהנג"ח
ר' ישראל אברהם ז"ל פורטוגל
מ מ ק ו ל ע ן
כעת בברוקלין יצ"ו

Brooklyn, 13 Tevet 5723 (January 9, 1963)

In this letter Rabbi Portugal reports to Rabbi Gorodetzky about the rescue work on behalf of imprisoned Romanian Jews. Some of those Jews now live in the United States and Canada. Rabbi Portugal makes mention of a Jew who was rescued from jail and then left his wife for another woman. He points out that this Jew committed an act of cruelty against his wife, and most likely did not divorce his first wife according to the Jewish law, nor married the second one according to the law of Moses and Israel.



PResident 3-3636

קהל "חסד לאברהם" תחת נשיאות הה"צ האדמו"ר מסקולני שליט"א

Chesed L'Abraham Inc.

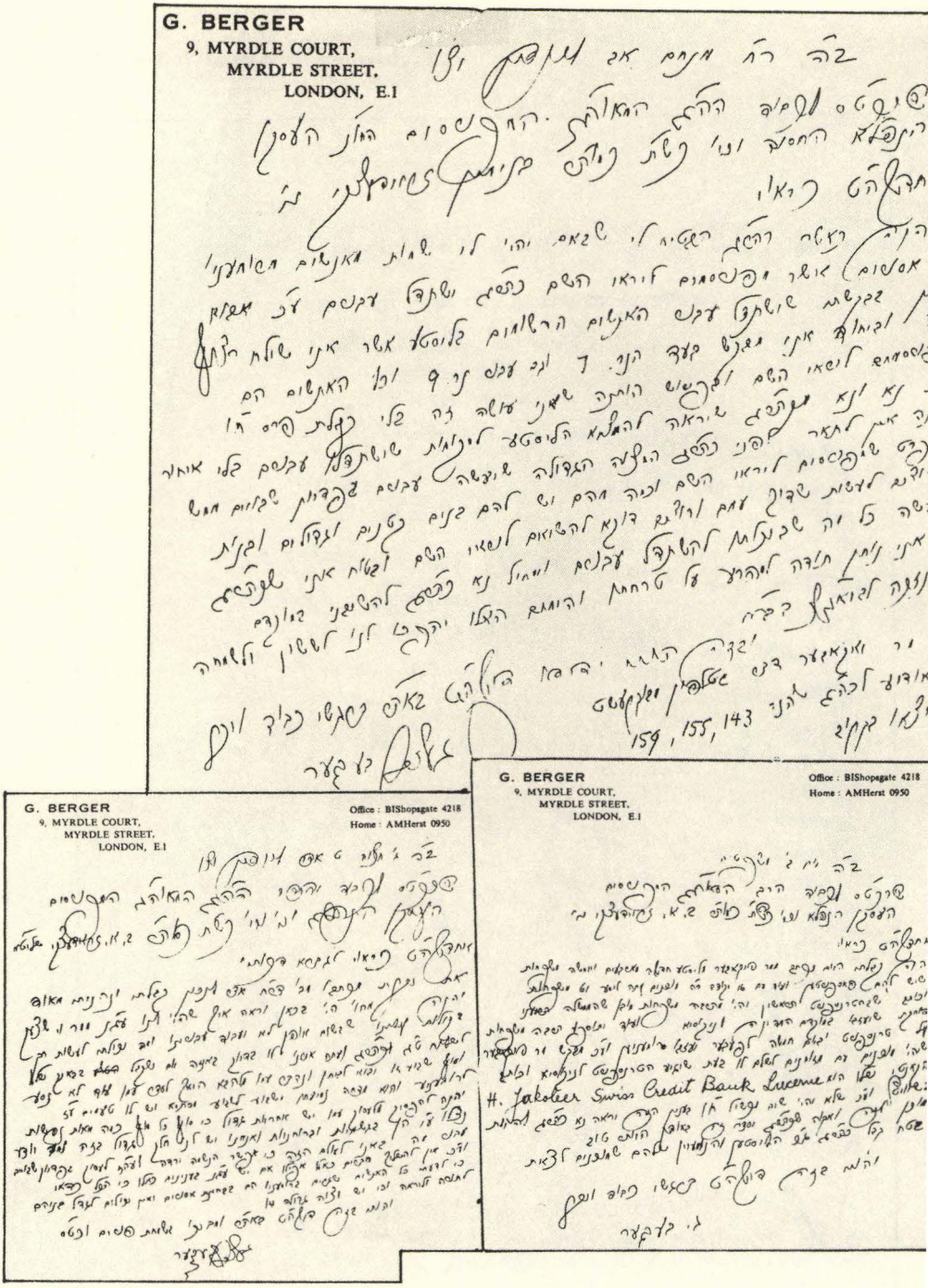
420 CROWN STREET

BROOKLYN 25, N. Y.

ב"ה

Brooklyn

Rabbi Portugal reports to Rabbi Gorodetzky about additional cases of rescue of Romanian Jews. He mentions the case of a Jew who was put in jail because of a false accusation, and special intervention was needed in order to release him from jail.



London

In these three letters, R. Getzl Berger writes to Rabbi Gorodetzky about the rescue work on behalf of Romanian Jews. He points out that several hundred Romanian Jews have been released from jail thanks to Rabbi Gorodetzky's efforts. R. Getzl adds that several of the rescued persons have children whom they wish to marry to observant Jews, and alludes to the connection between the time of the rescue and the holiday of Purim which symbolizes the rescue of the Jews, when their mourning was turned to gladness and rejoicing.

TELEPHONE:
MAYFAIR 3845

55, PARK LANE,
LONDON, W.1.

Rabbi Gorodetski,
770 Eastern Parkway,
Brooklyn,
New York,
U.S.A.

19th September 1962.

c.c. Paris. c.c. Mr. Berger.

Dear Rabbi Gorodetski,

I acknowledge receipt of your further transfer of $14,000 which makes the total amount received by us 164,000. If you consider that 120 families have so far left, the countervalue which I should have received is $240,000. Please make out a complete account of arrivals and payments. This is very important.

I refer to your letter of the 9th instant. As stated previously I have only one advice of $6,000 on the 22nd June. If you transferred 2 x 6,000 then I would like to see a copy of your Bank advice to that effect.

With reference to the other two persons you wish to have included with 155 Weinberg. As their name is different, namely Weiner, they must be under another number. I am giving them 158.

On the other hand you gave me two numbers 150 and 151 and now you say that they are identical. Therefore I will try to arrange this.

159 is the number for Baruch and Sarah BENDER.

I look forward to having your complete statement at an early date.

Yours sincerely,

R. Jakobovits

He organized a full-fledged operation to smuggle people through Rumania, but his plan failed and he lost large sums of money.

The smugglers would take people from Tchernowitz and bring them to the border. They would arrive on Friday afternoon and had to stay there until after Shabbos.

Five minutes before the end of the Sabbath the police arrived and arrested all of them. Some were sentenced to many years in jail, some for shorter terms, and some were never seen again.

It turned out that the whole thing was planned. The smugglers had informed the authorities about the transfer so that they could get rid of the whole group and end the plan.

The organizers did not want to give up their share of the profit and insisted on being paid. We had no choice but to pay them.

I had known that I had become implicated with the wrong people, and I was quite anxious to get away from them.

In the summer of 5719 (1959) I was in Israel. While there, I received a telephone call from our Rabbi who told me that the Rabbi of Skolen had visited him in regard to rescuing Jewish prisoners from Rumanian jails, and transferring their families from Rumania. He told me that he had contacted the JDC and asked for an allocation of 100,000 dollars, since he had the right contacts for saving many Jewish prisoners from Rumania and sending them to Israel or to other places. He explained that he needed 2000 dollars per family whose head of family was in jail, and that with such an amount he could rescue many Jews.

The JDC directors did not approve his request. Since the Rabbi of Skolen knew that Lubavitch had strong ties with the Joint, he turned to our Rabbi and asked him to persuade them to allocate the necessary funds.

Our Rabbi turned to me and asked me to use my contacts with the Joint and go to Switzerland, the Joint headquarters.

In those days Mr. Moshe Levitt, one of the JDC directors in the United States, came to visit, and I asked him to honor the request of the Rabbi of Skolen. Mr. Levitt told me that he knew about the affair, since the rabbi had visited him, and he explained, he did not think that the rabbi could handle successfully such a complicated operation.

When I began to argue with him about approving the necessary funds, he told me that he was willing to grant me personally a sum of 50,000 dollars for that purpose, but not to anyone else.

I phoned our Rabbi and told him about the outcome of my conversation with Mr. Levitt. Our Rabbi asked me to come to the United States for a few days.

I went there and met with our Rabbi and gave him a general report about my activities in Israel and other matters. In the States I continued my negotiations with the JDC director in Europe, Mr. Jordan, of blessed memory, and I explained to him that the amount was too small for the great expenses involved.

We finally agreed that I would go to London and meet Mr. Yakober, with whom I had to netgotiate, and after I sized him up I would become responsible for that operation, and they would fully fund it!

I accepted the proposal, since it meant not only rescuing Jews from Rumania, but also saving them from jail and torture.

I told the Rabbi of Skolen that I wished to meet the man who was involved in that operation, and find out what he was like, and if I found him to be the right person he could start making the lists.

He gave me his name—Yakober, and told me he lived in London. In London I could get in touch with R. Getzil Berger, the magnate, and he would arrange a meeting for us.

Immediately after Sukkos I travelled to Paris, where I got in touch with R. Getzil Berger, and arranged a time for the three of us to meet.

On the appointed hour I arrived in London where I used to go to deliver packages, and I announced my arrival to Reb Getzil Berger. I met with him and he told me he had arranged a meeting in his office for the next day at noon. At the appointed time we all met and started our negotiations.

Yakober demanded—as he had told the Rabbi of Skolen and Reb Berger—that since he had an account in the bank in Lucerne, Switzerland, he wanted us to deposit 200,000 dollars in that account. After the sum was credited to his account, he would start working on getting Jews out of Rumania. He stressed he would not do anything beforehand.

I told Yakober I could not give him one dollar ahead of time. Only when I got the word that such and such person left the borders of Rumania and reached freedom I would pay him, without any delays. I told him it was not a question of money, since I had the funds, and he could receive any amount of money the moment I saw actual results!

After much reflection he told me that since he knew about me, he could trust my word. He asked me for the lists of the people that were to be set free, so that he could start his work right away.

The Rabbi of Skolen had given me the lists, so I handed them over to him.

Reb Getzil was quite surprised to see him agree to my proposal, since he himself had spent a great deal of time bargaining with him and was not able to have him agree to do anything without being paid two hundred thousand ahead of time.

We waited for many months until we finally saw the first people come out of Rumania. When the gate finally opened, we managed to bring out four hundred families whose fathers were kept in jail with danger to their lives. Not all of them were observant Jews, but I paid for all of them all the same.

He had reached an agreement with Mr. Jordan to call his assistant in Paris, Mr. Haber, and let him know about the release of such and such people, and then transfer to Lucerne certain sums of money without any delay, to my account in the bank.

We were able to release the prisoners from Rumanian jails. Only when the negotiations began for the release of all Rumanian citizens, and the Israeli authorities became involved, I withdrew from that affair, since my offices were no longer needed. The Israeli authorities had direct contacts with Yakober, after I had put both in contact with each other, and I was able to remove myself from the scene, especially since the figures were becoming quite large.

The work itself was quite difficult and complicated, saving Jews from the hands of an oppressor. The JDC was extremely generous in making funds available to me, a total of 2000 dollars per family, and everything went along without a hitch for over two years.

Thanks to this activity more than two thousand souls were set free along with their imprisoned heads of family.

Chapter Twenty

The Land of Israel

A Large Group of Chassidim Settles in the Holy Land / The Rebbe Suggests I Represent Him in Israel As Well / Vocational School and Print Shop in Kfar Chabad / Forming Yeshivos, Housing Projects, Schools / The JDC Helps the Institutions

Last but not least—our Holy Land!

In late 5708 (1948), a large group of our people in Paris decided to settle in the Holy Land, and received permission from our Rabbi.

In the summer of that year our Rabbi summoned me before my trip to the United States, and suggested that I open an office in Israel that would be a branch of my activities, where I would spend three months out of the year.

He told me at that time: *Ich farloizich oif dir. Du arbest b'chochma u'v'emuhah* (I trust you. You work wisely and faithfully).

I got up my courage and told our Rabbi I was afraid to take charge of the Land of Israel. When he heard my answer he did not say anything further about that subject and said he would talk to me about it some other time.

In the month of Elul of that year, before I returned to the United States, I received a letter from our Rabbi asking me to pay a visit to the Land of Israel before I come home, look into the condition of our people in that land and find the right way to help them establish

themselves in the Holy Land. He also asked me to bring him a report on all that was going on there, in order to plan his future moves.

During the High Holy Days of 5710 (1949) I visited the Land of Israel, and before Sukkos I returned to Paris on my way to the United States.

I wrote our Rabbi a detailed report of our visit, everything I saw and was impressed with, as well as all the work that I thought could be done. When he proposed R. Pinhas Altheus, who lived in the Holy Land and could be trusted. I stressed that if necessary, I would go there whenever the need arose.

That year, 10 Shvat 5710 (1950), the *erelim* overcame the *metzokim* and our Rabbi was taken to his heavenly abode, may he rest in paradise, and may his merit protect us.

The Admor Shalita, may he have many good years, also asked me to go on his behalf to the Holy Land, and visit our works and see what more could be done.

Since then I would go twice a year, in the summer and in the winter, to the Land of Israel. And praise the Almighty for all the Chabad has accomplished in our Holy Land, even if it were only half or a quarter of what we have done.

Here are some examples:

I found out that the JDC was interested in establishing a vocational school combining Torah and trade for yeshiva students, to which the yeshiva committee did not agree on principle. I informed the Admor Shalita and told him we had enough students who had to be kept lest they became prey to evil winds blowing in the streets, by creating the kind of a program for them that would help them learn a trade in a Torah atmosphere.

After the Admor Sahlita gave his consent, I met with the heads of the JDC and explained to them that we were willing to take the vocational school under our control.

We reached an agreement with the heads of the JDC and proceeded to implement the project. As a first stage we opened the carpentry school and admitted the qualified students.

Next we opened the print shop. It is important to note that we encountered many difficulties, since many institutions and organizations wanted to take this kind of a school under their control. I explained to the JDC leaders that it was not wise to give profitable

זכרון דברים

על הישיבת שהתקיימה ב־ום 24/1.56 במשרד עליית הנוער בירושלים.

נוכחים: מר מנחם אלמחוי, מר וולף, ממעם חב"ד
ד"ר ש. נתן, מר מ. רוזנטל, ממעם עליית הנוער.

נידונה שאלת מימון התקמת בנין חדר אוכל במוסד חב"ד בשפרי"ר,(כפר חב"ד) וסוכם כדלקמן:

1) לפי התחכנית של המחלקה ושכנית ולפי הערכת התצ'ב'ית מוקדמת, התקמת חדר אוכל דורשת השקעה בסכום של "28.000 ל"י.

בייצוע העבודות תיסמר לחברת "רסקו" שהיא - כפי שנמסר ע"י מר אלמחוי" מוכנה לקבל את העבודה תוך תנאי, כי הסך של "10.000 ל"י מתוך הסכום הכולל של הבנייה, ישולם כעבור שנתיים מיום גמר הבנייה ואישור התשבונות המסופיים ע"י המחלקה המבנית של המוסד".

2) למימון התקמת בנין חדר אוכל, מחלקת עליית הנוער תקציב סכום קבוע של "12.000 ל"י, ואילו שאר הסכום (על כל הוספותיו) ישולם מהסכומים אשר עומדים לרשותו לזכות מוסדות חב"ד (בלוד ובכפר חב"ד) בעד החזקת חניכי עליית הנוער.

3) המחלקה לעליית הילדים ונוער תבקש מנזברות הסוכנות להחזם בשם הסוכנות על החוזה עם חברת רסקו על התקמת בנין חדר אוכל ולבצע את התשלומים - בהתאם לאישורים של המחלקה המבנית: "12.000 ל"י ע"ח התקצבת עליית הנוער מקרן הדסה לבנייה, ואילו התשלומים הנוספים ע"ח דמי התזקה של מוסדות חב"ד בהתאם לנ"ל.

4) ע"מ לחקל על חב"ד במימון התוצאות החלות עליהם בהתאם לנ"ל, ניתנת בזה התכמתם הכללית הזנרה, שהחל מתאריך התימת התוזה עם "רסקו" נזברות הסוכנות תנכה מתשלומי החזקה החדשיים עבור המוסדות הנ"ל כל חודש "500 ל"י, עד לגמר פרעון חלקם במימון המבנה.

5) אחרי הסדורים הנ"ל, תימון לתקמת המוסר כולו יהיה כדלקמן:

א.עד כה הושקע בהקמת 3 מבני מגורים בנין ב"ם, מחברת וב'תן סנימרי
הסך של..... 54.000 ל"י
ב.תקמת בנין חדר אוכל יעלה בהתאם לנ"ל..... 28.000 "
82.000 ל"י

בהתאם לסדורים הקיימים, עליית הנוער משתתפת בסכום התלול הנ"ל:

ע"י הקצבות בסך של 18.000 + 12.000 ל"י..... 30.000 ל"י
סועצת כפר חב"ד קבלה ממשרד העבודה הלואה בערבותה של הסוכנות"
למשך 12 שנה..... 36.000 "
השתתפות נוספת ממעם חב"ד בהתאם לסדור הנ"ל..... 16.000 "
82.000 ל"י

הואיל ולפי התימכם, אשר נחתם ב־ום 7.6.53 בין הרב בנימין גורודצקי נציגו של האדמור מלובביץ', מצד אחד, לבין מר זלמן שזר ומר מ. קול ממעם הסוכנות מצד שני - סוכם כי התשקעות לתקמת המוסד הנ"ל תחולקנה לבין הסוכנות לבין חב"ד באופן שווה, הרי הוחלט כעת:

אם חב"ד תגדיל את חלקה במימון התכנית - נוסף לסכום הנ"ל של "16.000 ל"י - בסכום של "25.000 ל"י או בצורה חלום בסוכמים או בצורת אחרת הסוכמה מערבותה בעד התלואה הנ"ל של 36.000 ל"י, תהי עליית הנוער תקבל על עצמה את התחריות הבלעדית בעד תשלום תסכום הנותר של "11.000 ל"י ע"ח התלואה הנ"ל.

מתוך האמור לעיל ברור כי התתפותה של הסוכנות בצורה זו או אחרת, לא תעלה על תסך של "41.000 ל"י.

הסדור הנ"ל יבוצע אחרי אישורו ממעם נזברות הסוכנות".

ירושלים, י"ד בשבט תשי"ו
27.1.56.

העתק: נזברות
מר מ. קול
מר ז. שזר

שו/רס

Jerusalem, 14 Shevat 5716 (January 27, 1956)

This memorandum reflects an agreement between Chabad and the Youth Aliyah, regarding the building of a dining room at Kfar Chabad. The cost of the dining room is estimated at 28,000 liras. The contractor is the Rasco company. The Youth Aliyah section of the Jewish Agency is willing to pay 12,000 liras, while the rest is to be paid by the Chabad institutions. The memorandum specifies the terms of payment, and makes mention of the fact that the agreement is based on an earlier agreement between Rabbi Gorodetzky, representing the Lubavitcher Rebbe, and the representatives of the Jewish Agency, Mr. Zalman Shazar and Mr. Moshe Kol.

ב"ה. יוד תמוז תש"נ.

לכבוד מחותני ידידי הנכבד וכו' נעלה
הרה"ג הרה"ח הוו"ח א"א נו"נ וכו' זכו'
הרב בנימין אלי' שי' גורודצקי

שלום וברכה!

בשמחה רבה קבלתי מכתבו מד' תמוז ונהניתי בו במאד.

בהזדמנות זו הנני לבקש סליחתו הרבה על שלא באתי ללותו בשדה התעופה אך כפי הידוע לו נסעתי אז לירושלים בנוגע לרשיון לספרים מארצות הברית ובדיוק היה זאת מוצלח במאד שבאותו יום ישבה הועדה ודנה בנדון זה. לעת עתה אשרו לנו לשלוח ספרים על שלשת אלפים דולר והשאר במשך הזמן. דרך אגב נודאי ידוע לו שהשער נתחלף ובמקום $$ 72 גרוש לדולר צריכים לתת כיום לירה לדולר.

ביום הראשון היותי בירושלים וראיתי את מר קול ואמר לי שהצליח לקבל הבטחה לכספים מהממשלה בשביל בית הספר החקלאי בספריא. ובמשך השבועות הקרובים וועט ער מיר ארויס רופן.

מר פסמן מהג'וינט שלח כבר את המהנדס שלו לראות את המקום בנוגע לבית ספר למלאכה. הוא נתן כמה הוראות מה שצריכים להכין והבטיח לסדר הדבר בקרוב. כבר התחילו לכנות את בנין בית הספר למלאכה בספריא ומחכים לקיום הבטחתו.

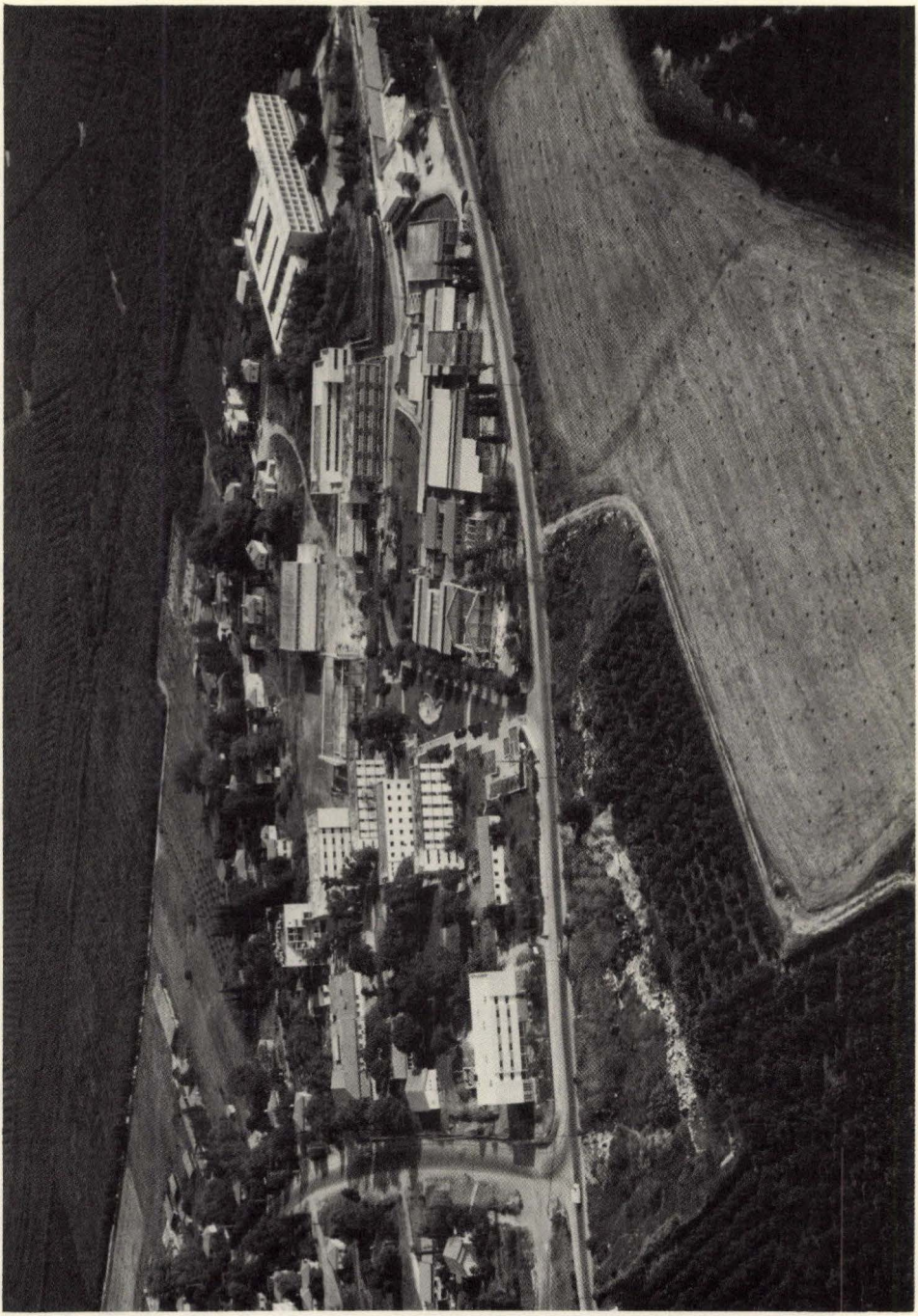
הננו מאחלים לו כט"ס.

בברכת חג שמח

פנחס אלטהויז

14 Tammuz 5713 (June 27, 1953)

In this letter R. Pinhas Altheus writes to Rabbi Gorodetzky in regard to arranging to ship books from the United States to Jerusalem. He goes on to say that Mr. Kol told him in Jerusalem that the Government promised to fund the agricultural school. Mr. Passman of the JDC had sent his engineer to look into the vocational school which is now being built.



Aerial view of vocational schools of Kfar Chabad in Israel.

Vocational Schools: Printing, mechanics, carpentry, automotive, electronics, computers.

JDC President, Mr. Robinson, speaks at a reception in honor of JDC delegation.

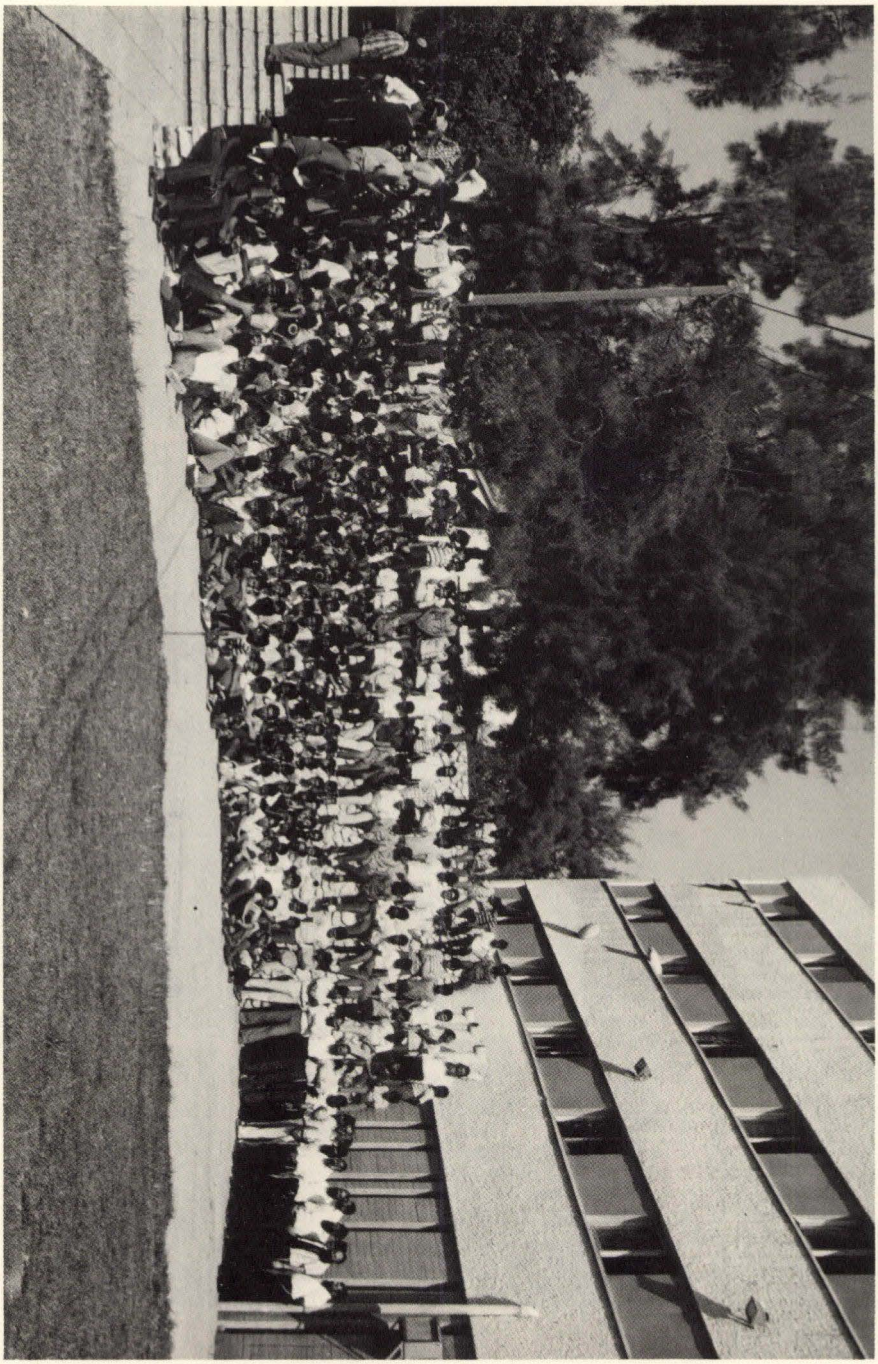
Right to left: Rabbi Avraham Mayer, Rabbi Pinchas Altheus, Rabbi Eliezer Karasick, Mr. Horowitz, Rabbi Gorodetzky, Mr. Jordan, Mr. Passman, Rabbi Yeshayahu Gofin.

The brothers, Rabbi Simcha Gorodetzky of blessed memory, and Rabbi Binyomin Gorodetzky, Shalita, with the JDC leaders.

Rabbi Gorodetzky speaks before JDC delegation

Carpentry workshop.

Rabbi Gorodetzky guides a group of visitors at workshop in Kfar Chabad. Mrs. Gorodetzky is seen behind him.

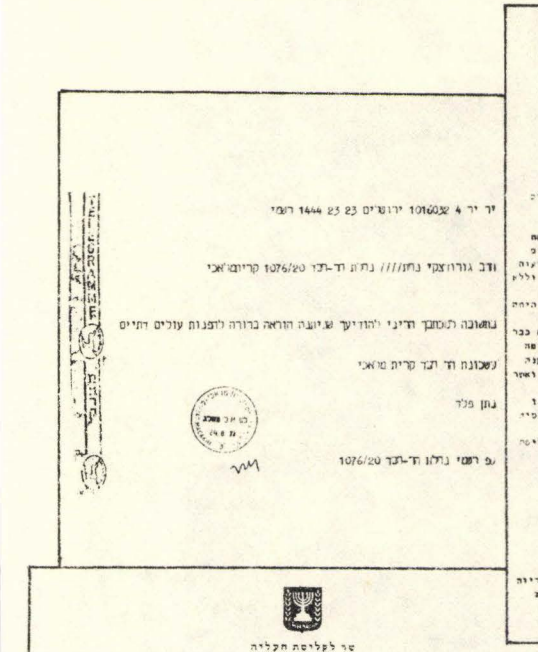


Vocational school students and graduates with their teachers and instructors.

Music session.

Teachers seminar Beit Rivka in Kfar Chabad.

Bucharian Yeshivah, Kfar Chabad.



כ"ת עזיר תשל"א

לכבוד
מר ג. פלר
שר הקליטה,

שלום רב!

לאחר שהות של 3 שבועות בארץ ושבישות יגידורים בקשר לדיור לעולים חסידי חב"ד שבניו ובניותיו מברית המועצות לכולה הר חב"ד בקרית מלאכי. תרינו יצטרך להודיעך כי אני חזרו מאוכזב מביקורי זה, בראשוני מה דרכי הגישה לכיוון אנושית ראשונה זו שבר מקידי משרד הקליטה.

הנשתי ארצה, לסרוב התסיבויות רבות ומוסבר בעיניי ראשי המוסדות על בסיבות שונות, לשביטה עם כבוד שר בקרה שתון ימים אחדים העניין לטיהור לשביעות רצון כולם, וכפי שהבעתי זאת בעת פגישתנו, שמבדנו אנו סוכנים לתת יותר מאמצותינו, ושילו, אשיתך, אינני מוכנים אלא דבריך שביכולת משרד הקליטה לספק זאת ללא קשיים -למרות ההתחייבויות השכלתיות שניתנו מאשרות הגישה מרבה לסלת שמה שדרשנו-, ואשר בהשקעה לרצון, כשניהי שבדנו ירוכים הסיבויות כראוי שיניהם ללא מאמצות להתעלות בכישות מרות אופי.

ביכולתי לקבוע -ולטעלה מכל ספק- כי גישה זו תביאה בקלקולים עצמה נפש מיותרת לתלונין היתה יכולה למנוע מראונה ללא כל קושי מיוחד, וכפי שהסברתי לכבוד השר בפגישתנו.

הדיבר שראה לנכני לבקשך לשכל בבקיה זו באופן אישי ובדיוקה המתאימה, כי הקולות ומצויים בשר ומאוזרים אצל עולים שלנו הנמצאי דיור שעים, ובמיוחד, אם בכונה משמעה, שבנוסל התנועה בלבד, אין נותנים לאנשים שלנו הנמיים מברית המועצות הסיבה לקרוא מלאכי נחלת חב"ד, כמקום של תוסר דיור במקום, ולפי הדיעות שבידינו קומרים להניע אנשי בע"ה עוד משפחות שלנו מרוסיה ואשר לעולים אלו ציפינו ששרות אנו.

סודה לך שם מוכיל להודות להעמיד לרשותנו למהות 30 דירות מתוך 100 הדירות שהושלו מאתנו בראשו קצו. אולן שעבו לעולים מרוסיה, ואשר יל דירות הם מגוונים, - לצרכי ליפות העולים מרוסיה ובמיוחד שר הקליטה בשנו רעת השאלה הדיורית.

בסופנו, כי אפנם יזכה תדבר למיטול מיידי ואיתי סבדן, לאון המשימה הגדולה והחשובה של קליטת העולים בארץ.

בכבוד רב

הרב בנימין אליהו גורודצקי

נ.ב.
כיון שאני יוצא מהארץ ללא כל מיידים ובאי ובאות לבני עמיר בולים אלו, ובכלי לבקש כל האחריות שלרשני רציני הדבר כאן, אני פונה בזאת לרשיכי העתידים מבחירי זה לכבוד בפיא הסדיות, ראש הממשלה וסגן ראש הממשלה.

יר יר 4 1016035 ירושלים 23 23 1444 רמזי

ודב גורודצקי נתיו///// נתיו תד-תצ 1076/20 קריתיואכי

נשמחה לסתמך תדיני להודיעך שיעניה הזרה ברורה לתפנות עולים חדשים

נשכונת תד תצ קרית מואכי

נתן פלר

עפ רמזי נתיו תד-תצ 1076/20

שר לקליטת תקליה

ירושלים, ט"ו בסיון תשל"א
8 ביוני 1971

לכבוד
הרב בנימין אליהו גורודצקי
ש ר י ו

כבוד הרב!

הנני מאשר את קבלת מכתבך בעניין הדיון לעולי חסידי חב"ד בנחלת הר חב"ד בקרית מלאכי.

בדחש למוסכם בפגישתנו יצאו עובדי משרדי לבדוק במקום מה מספר הדירות האמוריות המצויות כיום בקרית מלאכי.

בבדיקה זו השתתפו גם נציגי חב"ד בקרית מלאכי.

הוכרה שמצויות כ-30 דירות מגוונות, ובהן, איסוא שדירות אלו עומדות לרשות העולים המגיעים מברית"מ, אשר ברצונם להשתקע בקרית מלאכי. כן הודיעתי להמציד לרשותם של עולים אלה עוד 10 דירות מבין הדירות שנועדו בהסכמה הדדית למרכז קליטה בקרית מלאכי.

לחץ העליה והצורך במקומות במרכזי קליטה אינני מאפשר לשחרר כרגע דירות נוספות המיועדות למרכז הקליטה.

עם זאת הנני תוהן ומאמין שבמהיר והדרגת הנ"ל תאוכלסנה ע"י עולים חדשים, נראה לפיענוי דירות נוספות במרכז הקליטה, בכדי לאפשר השתקעותם בקרית מלאכי של כל עולי חב"ד, אשר יבקשו זאת.

בכבוד רב,

נתן פלר

העתק: ראיא המדינה
ראש הממשלה
סגן ראש הממשלה

שר השיכון

ירושלים, ה' באב תשל"ג
3 באוגוסט 1973

לכבוד
הרב ב.א. גאראדצקי
ש ר י ם

מלאכי,

אני מאשר הקבלת נ-ח"א במכתב תשל"ב.

ניתנה הוראה ביצוע לבניית 64 דירות בקרית מלאכי בנות 4 חדרים, בשטח 93 מ"ר כל אחת, עם מרפסות לסוכות.

אני מצפה של האיחור בביצוע ההבטחה.

בברכה,

זאב טרף

25 Iyar 5731 (May 20, 1971)

Rabbi Gorodetzky writes to Mr. Natan Peled, Minister of Absorption of the State of Israel, and expresses his disappointment at the way the Absorption Ministry has been handling the settlement of Chabad immigrants from the Soviet Union. He urges the minister to make at least 30 of the 100 apartments which were borrowed from Chabad in the past for Romanian immigrants available to the Russian immigrants.

Jerusalem

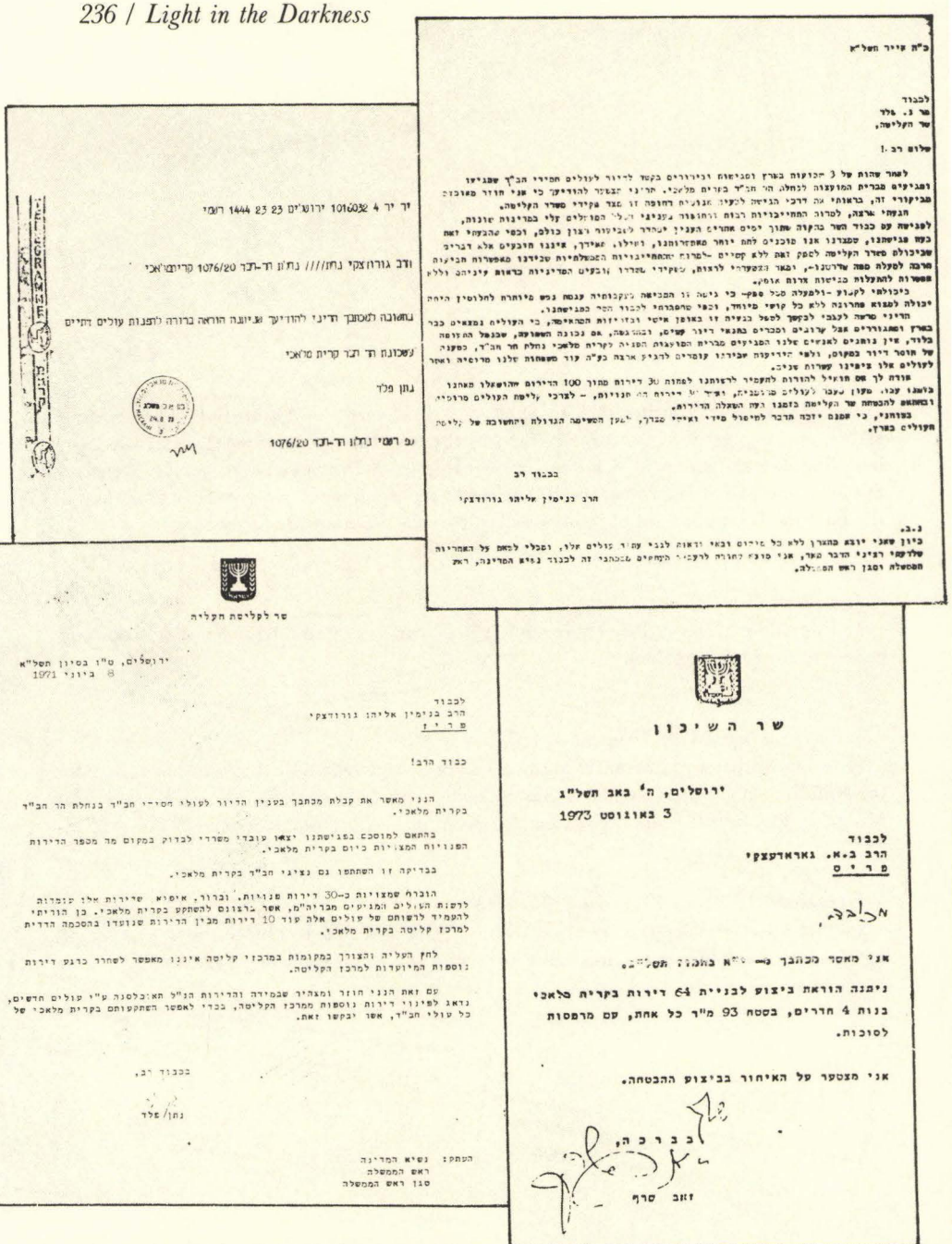
In this cable, Minister Peled informs Rabbi Gorodetzky that religious immigrants have been sent to Kiriat Malachi.

Jerusalem, 5 Av 5733 (August 3, 1973)

Housing Minister Zeev Sharaf informs Rabbi Gorodetzky that the order was given for the building of 64 apartments, 4 rooms each, with balconies for a sukkah, in Kiriat Malachi. The minister apologizes for the delay in keeping the promise.

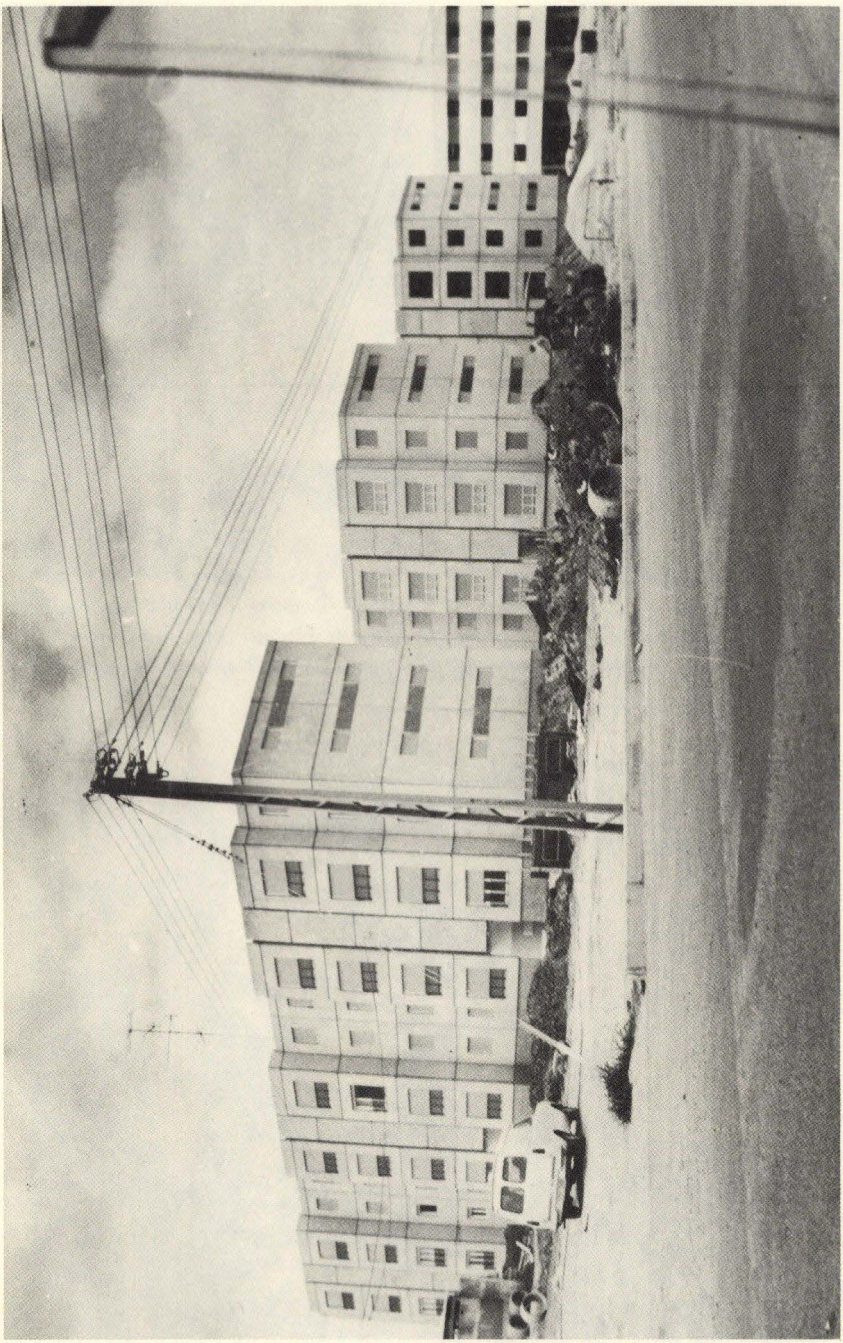
Jerusalem, 16 Sivan 5931 (June 8, 1971)

In this letter Absorption Minister Natan Peled informs Rabbi Gorodetzky that 30 apartments are being made available to Soviet immigrants. More apartments will be made available as the need arises.



Jerusalem, Adar 5729 (February 1969)

In this correspondence between Rabbi Gorodetzky and Yigal Allon, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Immigration Absorption, Mr. Allon expresses his approval for the settlement of Chabad chasidim in Kiriat Malachi (Nahalat Har Chabad). Rabbi Gorodetzky thanks the minister in his letter for his personal concern and attention to this matter. Minister Allon in his second letter goes into specific details about the absorption of the Chabad settlers in Kiriat Malachi, and expresses the hope that the settlers will become acclimated in their new home.

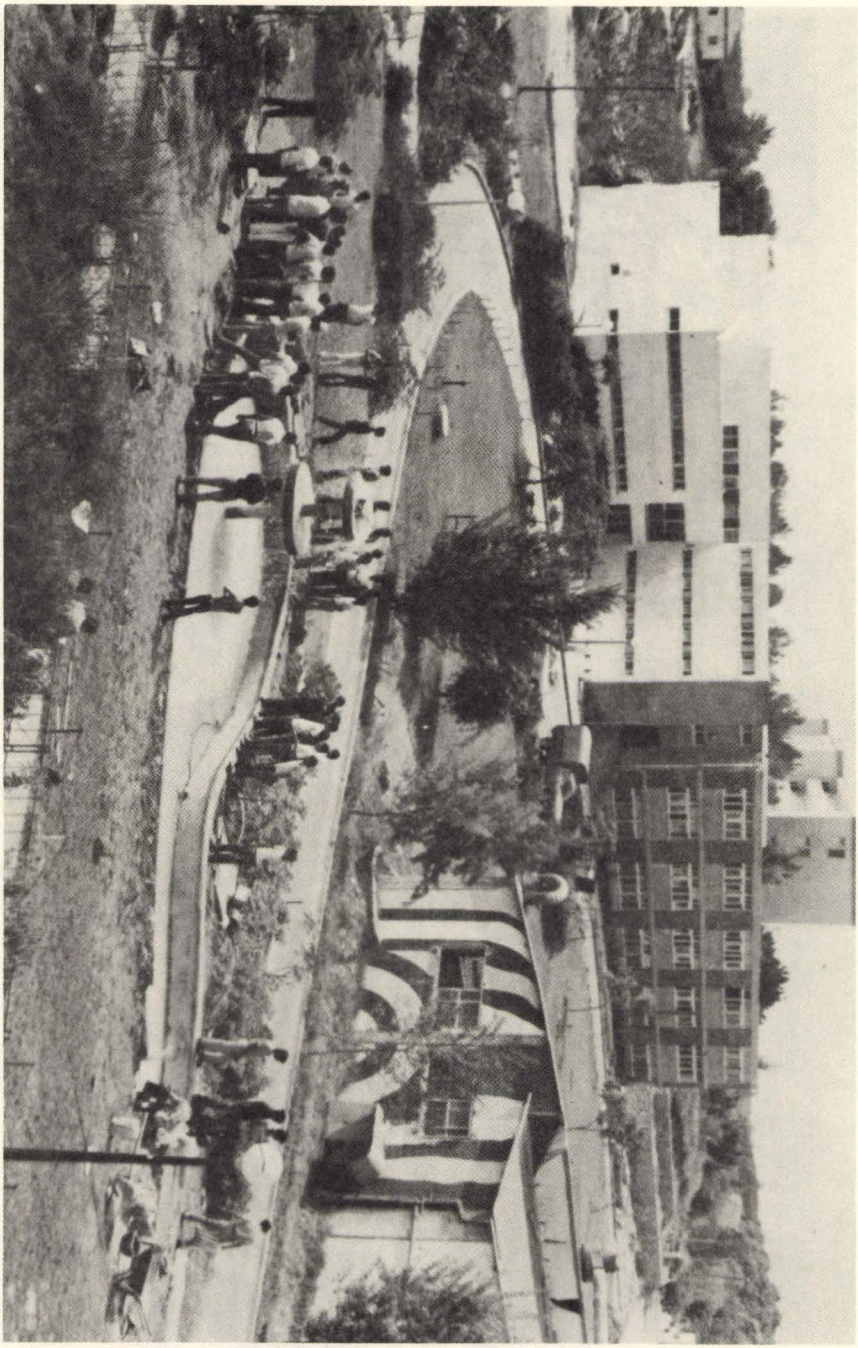


Nahalat Har Chabad development (Kiriat Malachi).

Consultation meeting for establishing a Tomchei Temimim Yeshiva in Rishon Letzion. Right to left: Rabbi Gorodetzky, Deputy Finance Minister and his aide, Wasserman brothers, Rabbi Levi Grossman, Rabbi Bentzion Schneurson, and Rabbi Jacob Flass.

A delegation of the JDC headed by (left to right) the then president, Mr. Donald M. Robinson, Rabbi Gorodetzky, Mr. Ralph Goldman, Vice-President, and Rabbi Simcha Gorodetzky.

Beit Eliezer, to include a synagogue and a study room in memory of Mr. Steinberg, a senior JDC official from the U.S.



School buildings.

JDC leaders at Kfar Chabad vocational schools.

Rabbi Gorodetzky with Dr. Judah Shapiro. In the background are Rabbi Shmariv Gur-Ary and Rabbi Efraim Wolf.

projects to others, while we only received problematic ones.

It should be noted that the heads of the yeshiva committee complained to me that we were breaking the rules of the yeshivos by imbuing the students with the spirit of manual labor. I explained to them that our institutions were different from the other ones, since we received different kinds of students from different circles and different countries, such as Tunisia, Morocco and so on. In their countries they receive vocational education, and if they did not receive it here they would succumb to the winds blowing in the street and will assimilate among the secular youth. Moreover, the Chabad movement in Israel had several yeshivos which have students who do not become acclimated, and may, G-d forbid, find their place in another environment, foreign to the spirit of Torah, while in this kind of a school they can remain within a proper Chassidic Torah frame and there was no danger of breaking the principle of the yeshivos.

In the end we established the printing school with the full support of the JDC, which has since become an acclaimed school, and its blessings go far beyond what anyone could have anticipated.

Long is the list of institutions which I have been able to participate in establishing, thank G-d, or at least expand, and I shall only mention a few. The Chabad housing project in Lod for which I worked for years to secure the land from the government. The Tomchei Temimim yeshiva in Rishon L'tzion. The various kinds of help in building the new facility of Yeshiva Toras Emes in Jerusalem. The network of Chabad schools, etc.

When immigration from the Soviet Union increased, and the Chabad housing project in Lod was full to capacity, we had to find new housing for the largae number of new immigrants. I travelled the length and breadth of the country and finally suggested to build a new Chabad center in Kiryat Malachi, where there were about four hundred empty apartments. I reported to our Rabbi Shalita who expressed his consent and gave the new neighborhood the name of Nahalat Har Chabad.

This is not the place to describe all the difficulties that were piled in our way, until we were given that place. But, thank G-d, the community became a reality, and it is now a jewel on the map of Chabad in the Holy Land.

The time I spent, days, weeks, months, the suffering I went through, until the Holy One, Blessed Be He, allowed me to see the

fruit of my labor. Indeed, may G-d remember me favorably in all the glorious institutions and in allowing me to be the emissary of our Rabbi Shalita, in all this glory and splendor.

I would like to express my deepest appreciation to the leaders of the JDC for all they have done for those institutions, as will be described in greater detail in a special chapter dedicated to them in this book.

Rabbi Gorodetzky at the remnant of our holy Temple—the Western Wall.

Chapter Twenty-One

The JDC

The Great Help in Russia / My Personal Contact with the JDC Leaders and Workers in Every Country / Special Thanks to the Leaders and Directors

As is well known, had it not been for the great financial help our Rabbi received inside Russia, our many activities would have encountered all but insurmountable difficulties. Raising money for our activities was most difficult. The Chassidim were not affluent, and, in addition, one was afraid to raise funds in the Soviet Union because of the fear of the authorities. Each little action was quite costly. The many wanderings of the children and the yeshivos from one place to the next, providing food for the students, paying the teachers their monthly salary so that they could feed their families, making all the other payments, bribing officials, etc., all of this resulted in enormous financial expenses.

The mainstay in continuing those activities was the Joint Distribution Committee, which our Rabbi turned to for help. It all began when we started to consolidate and expand our activities in Kiev-Podol-Voholin, when I used to send regular reports to our Rabbi and he would transfer them to America and to Berlin, to the headquarters of the JDC in Europe. Those reports had great impact.

I felt it quite palpably when I arrived in Paris and met the JDC workers in their offices in Berlin and Paris.

Since they knew me from the many reports I dispatched from the Soviet Union, it was much easier for me to do my work, and I was able to secure substantial funds. When I first visited them and told them my name, they asked me immediately if I was the Rabbi Gorodetzky from Kiev. When I answered in the affirmative, they proceeded to do for me whatever I requested.

One time when I came to collect some funds, the treasurer asked me: "Who can vouch that you represent the Lubavitch, and is the Lubavitch an organization we know? I need a special authorization from my superior, Mr. Shraga."

When I met Mr. Shraga and introduced myself, he asked me if I was Rabbi Gorodetzky from Kiev. When I told him I was, he immediately instructed his treasurer to transfer all the funds to me without hesitation. In addition, since that day I have had no more difficulties with the JDC during my thirty-five years of contacts with them to this day.

It is important to point out that those connections were not only in one country, but in every country where they had workers. Workers kept changing, and one had to keep in contact with each place separately.

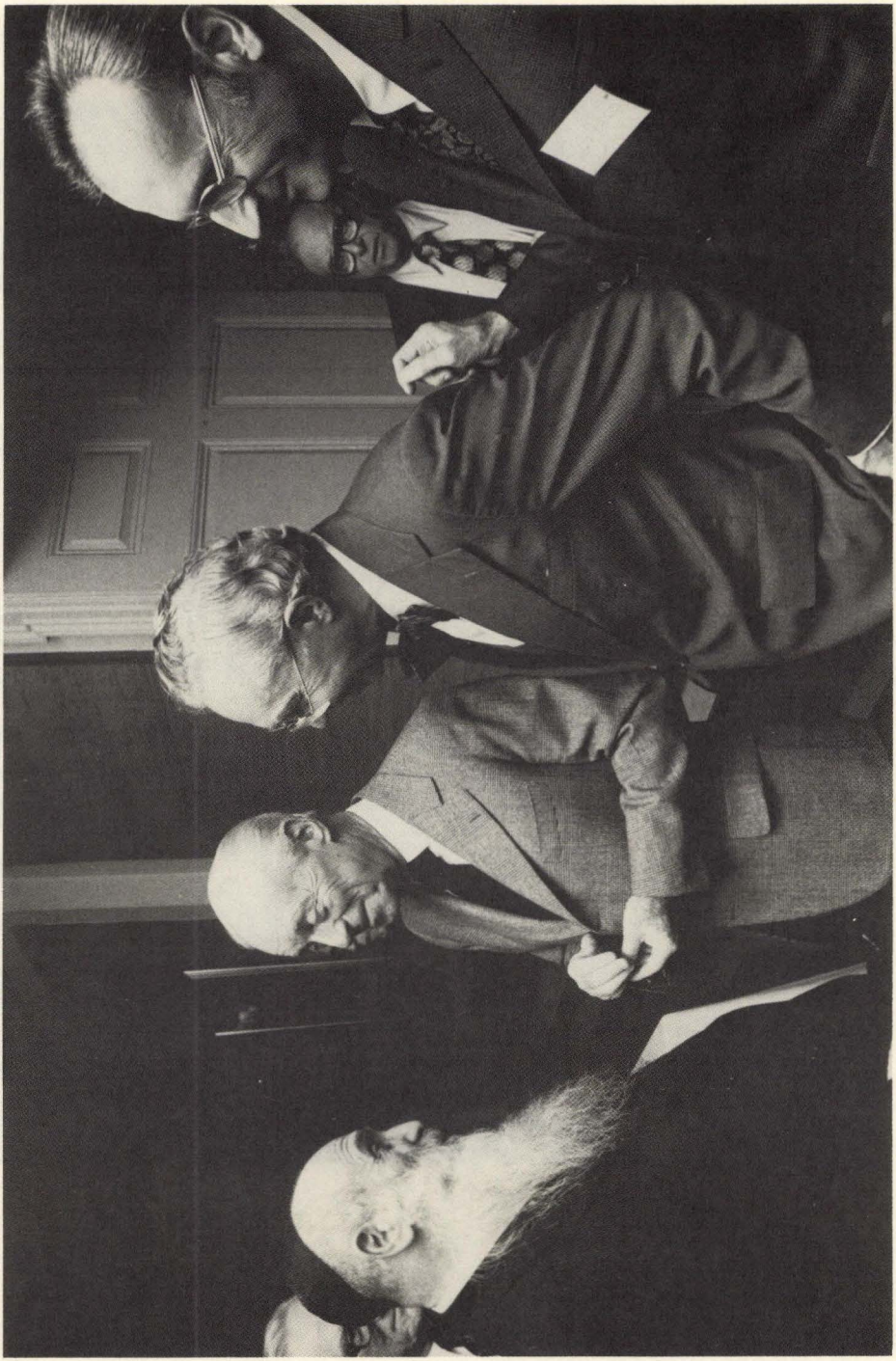
There were times when they did not grant my requests fully, but they never turned me back empty-handed. Never once in all those years, when I proposed a certain project in some country did they answer me in the negative. They did argue with me, and tried to reduce the allocation, but did not go any further. The word "No" did not exist in our mutual vocabulary.

Thus I was fortunate, and the Holy One Blessed Be He helped me find grace in the eyes of the JDC directors in every country and in every city. Thanks to those close ties, we were able, with G-d's help, to do our work and find success in all those countries.

This is the place to express my deepest thanks to the heads and directors of the JDC, as well as to the great Jewry of the United States, for the generous support they gave us everywhere, during all those years.

Double thanks to the leadership of the JDC organization for helping establish institutions in our Holy Land, such as vocational schools, Tomchei Temimim yeshivos, etc., and thanks to them those institutions have become a thing of glory and renown. To quote the RaShBa: It is a mitzvah to make known those who perform the

Mr. Felix Warburg, honorary president of the JDC, discusses with Rabbi Gorodetzky the founding of the JDC by his father and friends in 1914.



Rabbi Gorodetzky chats with Baron Rothschild, Mr. Goldman, director general of the JDC, and Mr. Robinson, JDC president, during their convention in 1981.

Rabbi Gorodetzky with JDC heads in the U.S.

Rabbi Gorodetzky with Ambassador Chaim Herzog (today President of the State of Israel) in the sukkah of Mr. Weiler in midtown Manhattan, 1976.

From left to right: Rabbi Gorodetzky, Israeli Consul, General Moshe Yegar, and Mr. Jack D. Weiler.

In the sukkah of Mr. Jack D. Weiler, 1985. Right to left: Mr. Heinz Eppler, President of the JDC, Rabbi Gorodetzy, Mr Jack D. Weiler, Honorary President of the JDC, Israeli Consul, General Moshe Yegar, and Dr. Saul B. Cohen, Executive Vice-President of the JDC.

mitzvah.

In concluding this chapter I would like to add that I have no doubt that all I have done since the first day to this day, with G-d's help, was through the power of our Rabbis and leaders, K.K. our Rabbi and Teacher, Rabbi Yosef Yitzhak, G-d rest his soul and may his merit defend us, and the Admor Shalita, thanks to whom I was able, thank G-d , to overcome all the enormous hardships and difficulties that I encountered at every step; and I was fortunate to have had the privilege of doing the bidding of our leader, the Admor, Shalita, and of bringing him joy and satisfaction.

May it be G-d's will that all of Israel, those who serve the community, the doers and the deeds, be blessed and successful in their sacred work of raising the glory of the Torah and of Judaism, to increase Torah and enhance its power, and may we all so deserve as to see the coming of our righteous redeemer, and may the Third Temple be rebuilt soon in our time in the newly rebuilt Jersusalem.

ב"ה

Non Partisan Committee

For the Spiritual Survival of Eastern European Jews

cordially invites you and your friends to attend a

Forum

"Behind the Scenes"

report by

Rabbi Benjamin Gorodetzky

of Paris

on Tuesday evening, December fourteenth
Nineteen hundred and forty-eight
at eight o'clock

Hotel Edison
228 West 47th Street
New York City

No appeals or pledges
will be solicited

Because a segment of Jewry was willing to sacrifice their all for Torah,—because no mental, physical or material loss was too great,—because they were willing and ready to die in order that the "Torah way of life should live,"—because they lived in the Valley of Death for many years—, because they refused to compromise, to be coerced, to assimilate, to depart one iota from G-d and His ways,—because they cried and then laughed while subjected to modern cruelties and the horror chambers,—because they held fast to their faith and their brother Jews, they have earned the "schus" to see their efforts recognized and rewarded as the heroic torch-bearers of the Torah.

Honorary Chairman
Rabbi Joseph I. Schneersohn

Chairman
Benjamin Glazer

Sponsors Committee (Partial)

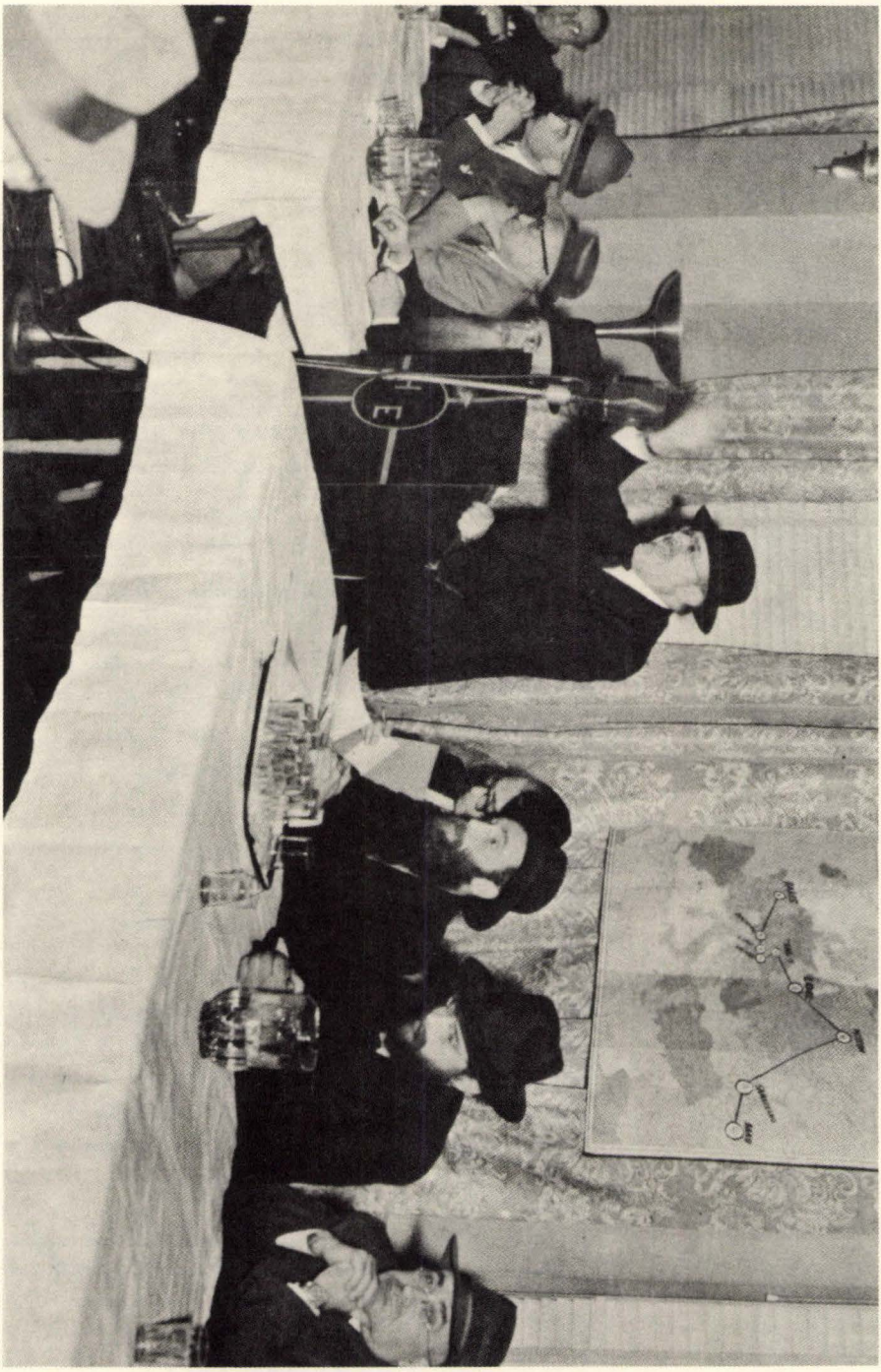
Robert G. Horowitz
Jacob Kestenbaum
Hon. Philip M. Kleinfeld
A. B. Kramer
H. S. Kramer
Samuel Kramer
Morris Kulok
Samuel Kulok
Martin Lesser
D. L. Meckler
Ira Rosenzweig
Joseph Rosenzweig
Samuel L. Sar
Joseph Shapiro
Earl Spero
Julius Stulman
Lester Udell
Sam A. Zavon
Sol L. Zavon

Rabbinical Committee

Rabbi I. Dusowitz
Rabbi Herbert S. Goldstein
Rabbi I. Jacobson
Rabbi Leo Jung
Rabbi A. Kazarnovsky
Rabbi S. Levitin
Rabbi Joseph H. Lookstein
Rabbi L. Predmesky
Rabbi M. B. Rivkin
Rabbi E. Simpson
Rabbi S. Zalmanoff

This gathering will also serve as a farewell reception to Rabbi B. Gorodetzky, who leaves for Paris to continue his noble work on behalf of Torah and our fellow Jews.

No appeals or pledges will be solicited



Rabbi Herbert Goldstein addresses the gathering.

Rabbi Nisan Telushkin addresses the gathering.

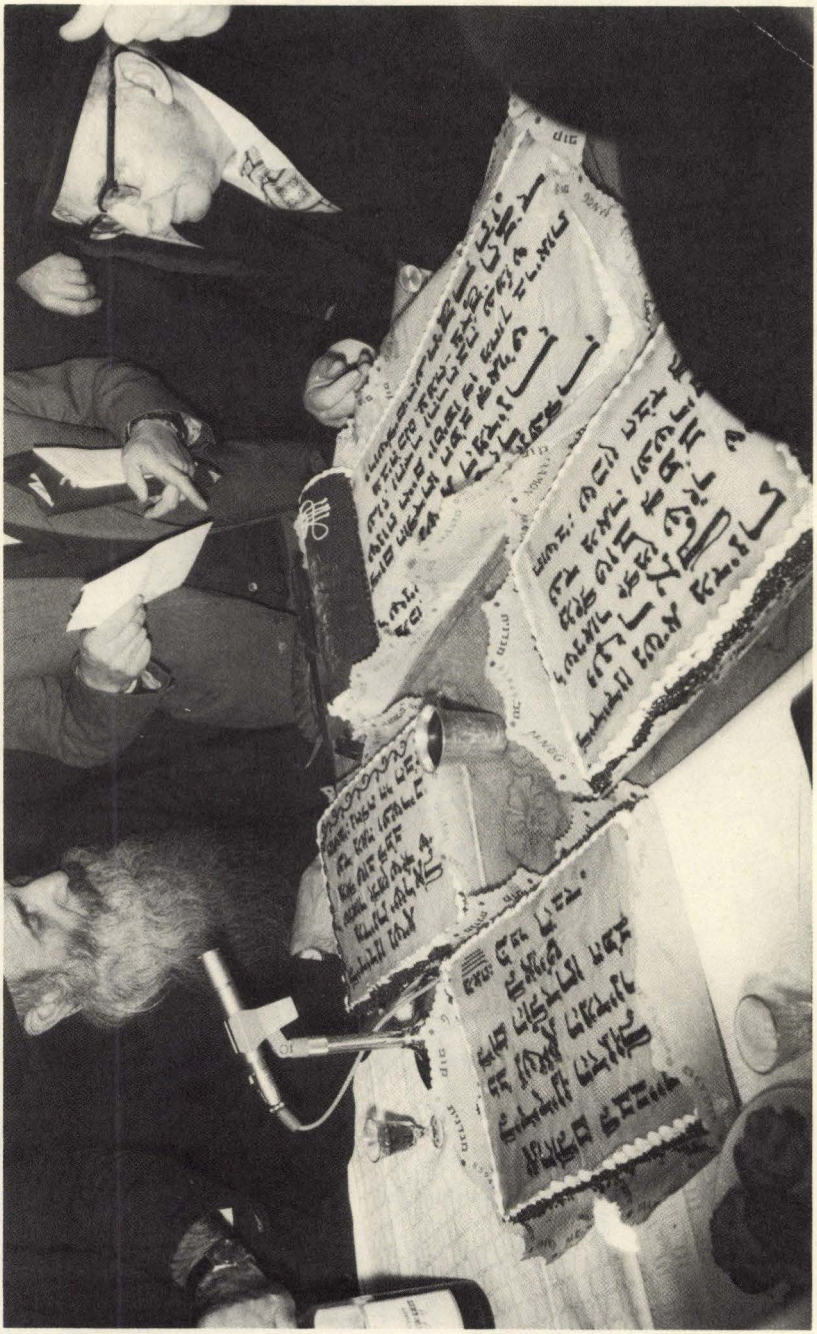
Rabbi Gorodetzky reports on his activities on the European scene.

At JDC meeting, Judge Philip M. Kleinfeld of the Supreme Court of the State of New York.

Rabbi Gorodetzky addresses the 28th convention of the Ceirei Agudath Chabad.

On the occasion of the 80th anniversary of the establishment of the Yeshiva Tomchei Temimim.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe places a Torah scroll in the ark of his Beit Midrash, a gift from Tunisian Jewry presented by Rabbi Gorodetzky.



Rabbi Gorodetzky greets the President of the State of Israel, Zalman Shazar, at his 80th birthday reception in the old City of Jerusalem.

Sukkos eve 5743—Rabbi Gorodetzky recei the four species from the Rebbe.

A blessing from the Rebbe on the last night of Pesach 5743.

Chapter Twenty-Two

My Family

At the beginning of this book I discussed my own family history. It now behooves me to say a few words about my wife's family.

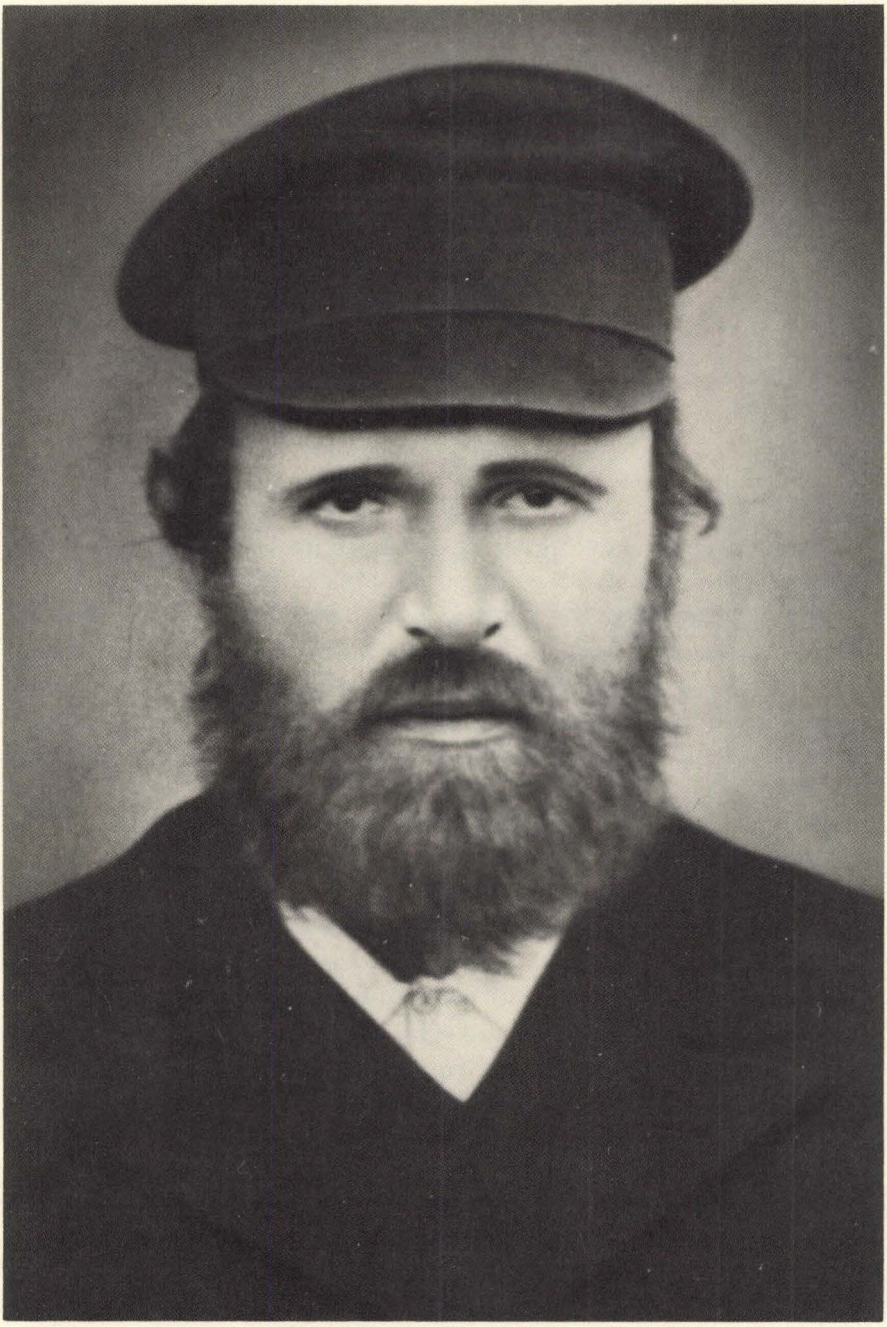
My father-in-law, the Chassid Rabbi Shmuel Levitin of blessed memory, was a leading student of the Tomchei Temimim yeshivah. He was the son of the Chassid R. Zeev (Reb Velvel), who was the supervisor of the yeshivah for Nigleh studies. It was in regard to him that our Rabbi *MOHARSHAB* said that in his four cubits there was no lie!

Rabbi Levitin's grandfather was the renowned Chassid R. Gershon Ber Pohrer (Nevler), a great Chassid.

His first rabbinic post was in the town of Rokshik in Lithuania, replacing his father-in-law Rabbi Asher Margalit, the author of well-known books, the son of a famous rabbinic family in Lithuania.

During World War One he escaped from Lithuania to Kersonov, and from there, at the command of his rabbi, MOHARSHAB rest his soul, he travelled to Russian Georgia. He lived in Kutayisi and became the Chief Rabbi of Georgia. He travelled the breadth and length of Georgia, and did outstanding things in that region.

In 5667 (1917) he established a major yeshivah, where the MOHARSHAB sent outstanding students, steeped in Torah and fear of heaven, men like Eliezer Karasik, Avraham Leib Slavin, Bezalel Vilshansky, Nachum Shemarya Sasonkin, Zalman Pevzner (Boberer), Eliezer Shmuel Kahanov, Mordechai Perlov, Israel



Moshe Gorodetzky, the author's grandfather, in his youth.

Rabbi Shmuel Levitin, father-in-law of the author.

The author's mother-in-law, Rebetzin Sheine Levitin, daughter of Rabbi Asher Margolis, perished in the Vilna ghetto.

"Behold how good it is for brothers to dwell together in unity." The elder chassidim during a Bar Mitzvah reception for one of the author's grandchildren.

Mrs. Gorodetzky speaks before Agudas N'shey Ubnos Chabad. Third from left: The Lubavitcher Rebbe's mother, Rebetzin Chana Shneerson.

At wedding of son Rabbi Mordechai Leib in Jerusalem. From right to left: Rabbi Gorodetzky, the bridegroom, Rabbi Zevin of blessed memory, and Rabbi Sasonkin of blessed memory.

Rabbi Gorodetzky next to his son, Rabbi Sholom Ber.

Zuber, Shmuel Notik, all of blessed memory, and R. Haim Lieberman, YBLHT.

In 5684 (1924), when the NKVD found out about his many activities in Georgia, they sent out for him. They were looking for the man who headed the yeshivah, not knowing my father-in-law's name and address.

In early 5685 (1925) he had to flee from the place where he had done so much to strengthen religion throughout the land. At the instructions of his Rabbi, the Admor Joseph Isaac Schneersohn, he moved to Neval where he became the director of the rabbinical school founded by his great Rabbi.

In 5699 (1939) he was arrested by the NKVD and exiled to remote Siberia for three years.

After his release he was able, through special intercession, to leave Russia and move with his family to the town of Rakshik.

In 5698 (1938) our Rabbi Joseph Isaac appointed him his emissary in the United States, "Which would be for his good and for the common good."

At the time he did not understand the meaning of those words. But later on he realized the Tzaddik foresaw the future, and during the Holocaust it was he who headed the struggle to save our Rabbi from the jaws of the accursed Nazis in Poland. Who knows what might have happened if he did not devote himself with total self-abnegation to the rescue of his beloved Rabbi from Satan, and tranferred him to the great free country, the United States of America!

His wife, Sheine, was the daughter of Rabbi Asher Margalit, the son of the famous rabbinic family, who wrote several books, including *Emek Halachah*. Together with her husband she went into exile in Siberia and helped him share his burden during his great ordeal.

She was his helpmate throughout the years, in times of calm and in times of trial, and always stood by his side.

She was not able to leave the Vilno Ghetto during the rule of the Nazis, may their name perish, and died there after great suffering. Her beloved son, Sholom, HYD, was shot before her eyes, and also her son Gershon Ber HYD perished at that time.

May their souls be bound up in the bond of life with all the martyrs of Israel!

Rabbi Gorodetzky surroanded by his family. Seated in the middle row, 3rd from right, is Mrs. Gorodetzky.