



”איך גיי אין הימל
די כתבים
לאז איך איך“

COMMEMORATING 100 YEARS
from THE HISTALKUS of the REBBE RASHAB

ב' ניסן תר"פ ~~~~~ ב' ניסן תש"פ

PART 1 ❖ English

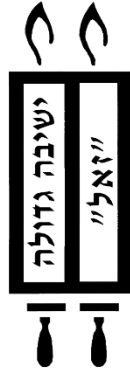
ב"ה



THE REBBE RASHAB נ"ן

The 5th Lubavitcher Rebbe

RABBI SHOLOM DOVBER SCHNEERSOHN



KOVETZ “DI KESOVIM LOZ ICH EICH”

-MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA-

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FOREWORD



Beis Nissan, this year, marks 100 years since the passing of the Rebbe Rashab, Rabbi Sholom Dovber of *Lubavitch*. In connection with this historic milestone, we are proud to present this publication entitled "Di Kesovim Loz Ich Eich" ("I leave you my [Chassidic] writings"). This title is from a famous line which the Rebbe Rashab said shortly before his passing (see further on pg. 7) and is an apt title for the *kovetz* which focuses on the later events in his life.

The Rebbe Rashab stood at the helm of the *Lubavitch* dynasty during a period of immense change to the structure of Jewish life. He lived at the turn of the twentieth century, when the bulk of Eastern European Jewry transitioned from shtetl life to industrial societies. To ensure that *Yiddishkeit* and *Chassidus* would flourish in this new environment, notwithstanding the fact that the external lifestyle was not as religiously inclined, the Rebbe Rashab saw the need for people to be more inwardly Jewish in order for them to remain independent and unaffected by their environs. For this purpose, in 5657, he established *Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim*.

He envisioned the *Yeshiva* to be the cradle of *chassidim* and that all its students should have such a strong Jewish and *chassidic* identity that they will remain unaffected by their surroundings. In this, the Rebbe Rashab succeeded in raising hundreds of students to become lamplighters, bringing the light of *Chassidus* wherever they may be.

At every *Chassidic* milestone, the *Rebbe* encouraged us to notice-mark it in a significant manner. In line with his directive, we have decided to mark this historic occasion with this *kovetz*. We hope it will bring a lot of nachas to the *Rebbe*.



This *kovetz* includes, for the first time ever, a translation of segments of the book "Ashkavta De'Rebbi". This book was written by the *Chassid Reb* Berel Rivkin who spent the last three weeks of the *Rebbe Rashab's* life by his bedside. He recounts the story of the *Rebbe Rashab's Histalkus* in riveting detail and with master storytelling. Additionally, the *kovetz* includes a few fascinating articles about the life, achievements and vision of the *Rebbe Rashab*.

Our utmost appreciation is extended to the *Mashpia* of Yeshiva Gedola, Rabbi Yaakov Winner. Whose vision and persistence have made this *kovetz* possible, notwithstanding the trying times in which we find ourselves.



In merit of this publication and in merit of the increase of the dissemination of *Chassidus*, may we see the final and complete redemption and the goal of the *Rebbe Rashab* accomplished with the coming of *Moshiach*.

18th of *Elul* 5780
(September 7 2020)

TABLE OF CONTENTS



Foreword	Page 3
Transformative Quote from the Rebbe Rashab	Page 6
<i>The Power of a Chassidic Melody</i>	
The Final Message of the Rebbe Rashab	Page 7
<i>Dvar Malchus, Sicha of the Rebbe</i>	
The Events Leading Up to The Histalkus	Page 12
<i>The Final Farbrengen Despite the Curfew</i>	
Resolution in a Time of Revolution	Page 19
<i>The Rebbe Rashab and the Russian Revolution of 1917</i>	
Publishing the Talks of the Rebbe Rashab “Toras Sholom”.	Page 35
<i>Years-Long Project of Revealing a True Treasure</i>	

ASHKAVTA DE'REBBI

100 Years Later, Translated for the First Time: A Historic Firsthand Description of the Last Three Weeks of the Rebbe Rashab's Life

Introduction	Page 45
Ashkavta De'Rebbi	Page 50
Epilogue	Page 87

TRANSFORMATIVE QUOTE FROM THE REBBE RASHAB

THE POWER OF A CHASSIDIC MELODY



Hayom Yom: 22 Tammuz

אָאָמו"ר [הרבי רש"ב] אָמַר: אַ חַסִידִישֶׁר וואָרט מאַכט קלאָר די קאָפּ און
רײן די האַרץ. אַ חַסִידִישֶׁ הַנְהַגָה טוֹבָה מאַכט ליכטיג אײן שטוב. אַ
חַסִידִישֶׁר נגון שְׁטאַרקט די תְּקוּנָה וּבְטָחוֹן בְּרִיינגט שְׂמֻחָה און שְׁטעֶלט אַוועק
די הויז מיט דער הויז געזינד אין קרן אורה.

My revered father, the Rebbe [Rashab], once said: “A *chassidic* teaching clears one’s mind and cleanses one’s heart. A positive *chassidic* practice lights up one’s home. A *chassidic* melody strengthens one’s hope and trust, brings joy, and positions the home and the entire household in a ray of light.”

THE FINAL MESSAGE OF THE REBBE RASHAB

DVAR MALCHUS, SICHA OF THE REBBE



Sicha of 20 Cheshvan (Birthday of the Rebbe Rashab), 5746
Translated by Sichos In English (sie.org)

1.

Before his passing the *Rebbe Rashab* remarked apothegmatically: “*I am going to heaven and I leave you my [Chassidic] writings*”.

In a sense, when we study his *Chassidic* teachings, we grasp him as he now exists in a celestial state. This again emphasizes that the innovations to be gained on his birthday pertain to all his followers. And this association is affected by careful and diligent study in a scholarly and intellectual manner.

It was the *Rebbe Rashab* who explained that *Chassidus* reveals lofty *Kabbalistic* concepts in an intellectually fathomable format. Thus, through study we connect with the celebrant of the day.

As a result, his disciples and followers experience a newness and resurgence of energy in matters related to the study of the esoteric teachings of Torah.

Can ordinary people like us, reach a true unity with these lofty aspects of this day (*Chof Cheshvan*)? The answer is that since we

are dealing with inner, essential matters, although we grasp only the edge we really are holding on to the whole.

2.

We might draw an analogy to this idea from the function of a “name.” On the one hand, the only need for a name is to give someone else a means of addressing you or calling you. Yet, when someone calls your name your entire being turns to that caller.

Furthermore, a name can bestir a person’s hidden powers. For when one is in a state of faintness a good suggestion is to call him by his name. This will energize his hidden powers, to the essence of his soul, which will supersede the life force that has “fainted,” and he will awake.

So, although we grasp only the periphery of the *Rebbe Rashab’s* teachings — still we hold the essence — just as in the analogy of the power of a name.

There is room for a more detailed analysis and discussion of this concept. The Rambam writes in his introduction to his commentary on Torah:

The whole Torah is comprised of Names of the Holy One, Blessed be He.

This would mean that when we read the Torah we are calling G-d’s Name.

3.

Tanya puts it this way:

This means that through one’s occupation with the Torah one calls to the Holy One, Blessed be He, to come to him, to use an anthropomorphism, like a person calling to his companion to come to him, or like a child calling to his father to come and join him. (Ch. 37).

In this way the “*Yechidah*” (only one) level of the person’s soul unites with the unity of G-d. So, when the intellect comprehends the Torah it effects an intellectual unity, and when we are stymied beyond the scope of understanding, we may still call out the Names of G-d by reading the Torah — and once again the union will be effected.

Interestingly, the Shaloh refers to this phenomenon:

Even one who is a total ignoramus ... and has no understanding (of Torah) if he will pronounce, wholeheartedly, the names of the books of the Written Torah and the Oral Torah, e.g. to mention the names of the six orders of the Mishnah ... the names of the Tractates of the Talmud and the chapters of each Gemara ... the pronouncement of these names will be beneficial and it will be considered as if he had studied all these books.

The Shaloh then adds:

Even one who is not ignorant and even if he is a member of the highest intellectual group, he should also do the same at such times that he cannot study diligently and deeply, because of fatigue or weariness.

This concept, that the Torah is comprised of the Names of the Holy One, Blessed be He, finds special meaning in the esoteric teachings of Torah (Chassidus) which tend to reveal to a greater degree the G-dliness in Torah. Hence, it formulates a stronger association with the Master of the Name, who will turn to the caller.

It should be noted that the founder of Chassidism, the Baal Shem Tov, was named “Yisrael,” because his *neshamah* descended to the physical world with the mission to awaken the Jewish people from their state of faintness in the *galus*. By calling him “Yisrael” — the Jewish people were “called” and it aroused their hidden powers and the essential soul of the Jewish people.

When we speak of the esoteric teachings of Torah we can more readily visualize the early stages of learning at which point true understanding has not yet been attained — it is still on a level of calling the Names (as described in the Shaloh). And yet the union with G-d is accomplished because we call His Name and His whole Essence turns to us and unites with us.

4.

In a similar vein there is an “amazing unity” accomplished with the loftiest and most profound aspects of the Rebbe Rashab — on the 20th of *MarCheshvan*. For even though we may be only at the initial stages of studying and comprehending his Torah — our study is like calling out his name — “like a person calling his companion,” where the one who is called turns his whole essence to the caller. In the case of Teacher and disciple even more so. And on the deeper level of Chassid and Rebbe even more: “it effects an essential amazing bond the likes of which may be found nowhere else.”

The lesson we garner must be applied to action. On this day of the 20th of *MarCheshvan*, we must increase all activities which follow the path of the teachings of the Rebbe Rashab — and especially — the diligent study of his teachings in an intellectually comprehensible way.

It must be stressed, we speak of a *Nasi*: “for the *Nasi* is the whole,” (Rashi, Bamidbar 21:21) he encompasses everything; at the same time, he bequeathed everything to us! “I leave you my writings (manuscripts).” “I have put myself in the script” (See Shabbos 105a); “A gift is usually made in a liberal spirit.” (B. Basra 53a) And the “gift” is transferred to the possession of the recipient; through the efforts of the student it becomes own.

And although we are dealing with something beyond the normal reach, nevertheless the Torah assures us:

It is not too mysterious or remote from you.... It is something that is very close to you, it is in your mouth and in your heart so that you can keep it. (Devarim 30:11-14).

These powers are bestowed upon us by the *Nesi'im* even in this generation of the "heel of the heel" of *Moshiach*; we can then reveal this from the potential to the kinetic.

When many Jews gather at a *farbrengen* the power is enhanced, for we gather with the unified intention to maximize our powers in the essence of Torah. When the added aspect of *tzedakah* is introduced we have an additional force, for:

He who is merciful to others, mercy is shown to him by Heaven. (Shabbos 151b).

In this manner we evoke a higher power. Through these activities, of spreading the wellsprings outside, we bring closer the coming of *Moshiach*, as the *Baal Shem Tov* told us, and when there is extra effort in this cause we will reach our goal, instantly, specifically, the true and complete redemption through our righteous *Moshiach*.

THE EVENTS LEADING UP TO THE HISTALKUS

THE FINAL FARBRENGEN DESPITE THE CURFEW



Taken from a project of "The Jewish History Challenge"

The *Rebbe Rashab* was born on *Chof* (20th) *Cheshvan*, in תרכ"א, 1860. He assumed leadership as the fifth *Lubavitcher Rebbe* at the age of 22. Over the next 37 years as *Rebbe*, until his passing at the age of 59 on *Beis* (2nd) *Nissan*, תר"פ (1920), he guided *Lubavitch* and Russian Jewry through turbulent times.

The *Rebbe Rashab* is known as the "*Rambam of Chassidus*"; like the famed codifier of Jewish law, he developed an analytical approach to the most complex topics in *Chassidus*. *Chabad Chassidus* was enriched immeasurably by his famed discourses and writings.

During his *Nesius*, the *Rebbe Rashab* instituted *Yeshivas Tomchei Tmimim*, the official *Lubavitch* educational institution. Its students went on to become the stalwart soldiers of the *Frierdiker Rebbe*, spreading *Yiddishkeit* with the utmost *mesiras nefesh*, even in the face of the brutal Communist Regime.

The *Rebbe Rashab* had a one and only child, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok, known today as the *Rebbe Rayatz* or the *Frierdiker Rebbe*. Being his father's obvious successor, *Beis Nissan* is also the first day of his *Nesius*.

Lubavitch, a small town in White Russia was about to lose its sole distinction: For a hundred and two years', it had been the chosen home of the *Chabad Rabbeim*, and the centre of the *Lubavitch Chassidic* community. From this point onward, the *Lubavitcher Rabbeim* would no longer reside in Lubavitch.

For on the seventeenth of *Cheshvan*, תרע"ו-1915, the *Rebbe Rashab* reluctantly left Lubavitch to live temporarily in Rostov. World War I's bloody battles were fast approaching the area of White Russia, and far away Rostov seemed like a haven from the turmoil of war.

After World War I, the Russian Revolution placed Lubavitch under the control of the communists. The *Rebbe Rashab* chose to remain in Rostov. But life did not remain peaceful in Rostov for long.

In 1920, during the Russian Civil War, the Communists solidified their control of Rostov and declared it illegal for any three people to gather for a meeting. Anyone doing so would be charged with counter-revolutionary activity and submitted to interrogation by a secret tribunal.

Mindful of the dangers a *Farbrengen* posed, the *Rebbe Rashab* told the *Chassidim* during the month of *Shevat* that from now on they are not to come to his home, to hear the *Maamer*. It will be said in the presence of only a few people.

But when *Purim* arrived that year, the *Chassidim* could not bear to stay away. One by one, they came that Tuesday afternoon to the *Rebbe's* home, each thinking that no one else would come.

The city's night curfew began at 9:00 p.m., and everyone thought the *Farbrengen* which began at 6:30 in the evening would be a short one.

At first, the spirit of the *Chassidim* was subdued. But half an hour into the *Farbrengen*, the *Rebbe* said "*L'chaim*" and told the *Chassidim* to say "*L'chaim*" as well. He then began to sing a *Niggun*.

The *Frierdiker Rebbe* motioned to the *Chassidim* to sing quietly, so as not to attract the attention of the authorities. When his father the *Rebbe Rashab* noticed this, he told him not to worry, for no harm would come to anyone, as a result of rejoicing on *Purim*. He motioned to the crowd to sing loudly.

To ensure that everyone would be in joyous spirits, the *Rebbe* handed a *Chassid* some money and instructed him to purchase a quantity of *Mashkeh*. Once again, everyone present said "*L'chaim*".

The *Rebbe* then called for a collection for *Kupas Rabbeinu* to support his activities in strengthening *Yiddishkeit*. All the money was placed on a silver tray in the middle of the table.

That evening, the Communists were making one of their "sweeps" through the town, on the lookout for any suspicious activity.

At around ten o'clock, three officers came to the *Rebbe's* house to check everyone's passport. The *Chassidim* quaked with fear. The attendant, hoping to delay the search until after the *Farbrengen*, told the officers that the *Rebbe* was engaged at the time and that they should return in a few hours. To his surprise, the officers agreed, and they moved on to search other houses. The *Rebbe* was totally unfazed when he was told of this visit and continued the *Farbrengen* as if nothing had happened.

One of the *Chassidim*, wished the *Rebbe* "*L'chaim*," and the *Rebbe* responded, "*L'chaim ul'brocho*, *Hashem* should give us life - I don't mean just living (surviving) and not dying, but living a life full of vitality."

Afterwards, he said a *Maamor* and a few *Sichos* in which he explained that when someone is completely connected to G-dliness, there is no place for *Kelipos* (the evil forces which wish to oppose the revelation of G-dliness).

A few hours later, the officers returned and entered the house. When they came to the dining room and noticed the gathering, they stared in astonishment: What was the meaning of this [illegal] gathering, especially at such a late hour?

However, they did not interrupt nor demand that the *Farbrengen* be stopped.

When the *Frierdiker Rebbe* noticed that they were staring in bewilderment at this unusual scene, he wanted to remove the vodka and hide the overflowing tray of money or at least cover them, as all of it was illegal.

The *Rebbe Rashab* told him to be calm and allow everything to remain as it was. He also told him: "I am not intimidated by them. Since holiness always remains in its place, I have no fear of them at all."

Turning to his son, he continued in a loud voice, "Yosef Yitzchok! We will remain whole, and I don't mean whole but hidden [only if we serve *Hashem* in secret], I mean that we will be whole with full openness and expression [when we serve *Hashem* publicly], for unholiness in the presence of holiness is truthfully nothing."

When the *Rebbe Rashab* heard that they wanted to search his private study, he declared: "There, they will become completely nullified." The officers did not enter the study but stood at the entrance and glanced inside. The *Rebbe* repeatedly told the *Chassidim* to ignore their presence, and no one would be harmed.

Then, with great ecstasy, he exclaimed: "I will say another *Maamor*, so they will become completely ineffective." He then said the *Ma'amor* "*Reishis Goyim Amolek*", which explains that the forces that oppose G-dliness do not exist in the true sense. Their entire entity is void and nothingness."

After standing in the hallway for a while, the officers meekly asked that at least some of the people show them their passports. Three

Chassidim, among the very few whose passports were completely in order, complied. The officers then left. The whole episode was miraculous, for the officers disregarded the many illegalities, each of which alone carried heavy penalties and grave consequences.

Many times, in anger and disgust, the *Rebbe Rashab* said of the Communist officers: "Feh, they are evil, I can't bear them and I can't be together with them." He was in very high spirits throughout that entire *Farbrengen*, which drew to a close at 4:00 a.m.

The *Chassidim* hoped that the experience of that *Purim* evening with the *Rebbe* was a sign that the situation was improving and from now on they will be able to come end hear the (weekly) *Maamor*. But on that *Motzei Shabbos Parshas Ki Siso*, the *Rebbe* secluded himself in his study and began writing his *Tzava'a*, his last will.

The following Thursday night of *Parshas Vayakhel-Pekudei*, the twenty-first of *Adar*, it was evident that the *Rebbe* was not feeling well, and was running a low grade fever.

On Monday the *Chassidim* fasted the entire day and read the Torah portion of *Vayechal*. Every night, they tearfully recited the entire *Tehillim*. On *Shabbos Parshas Vayikra*, Rabbi Bernon, the *Rov* of Rostov, announced that all should go to their *Shul* that afternoon and recite the entire *Tehillim* beseeching *Hashem* for a complete recovery for the *Rebbe*.

The finest doctors in the area were summoned to cure the *Rebbe*. For the next week, the doctors tried hard to restore him to health, but their efforts were unsuccessful.

At ten o'clock in the evening, a few hours before his *Histalkus*, he said in a clear voice, "I am going to heaven, but my writings I am leaving with you." Although his body would not be present, the

Chassidim could still be connected to him through learning his *Maamorim*.

He then continued and said; "Take me into the study hall and we will be one." The [*Rebbe*] *Rayatz* was visibly shaken by these words. His father, the *Rebbe Rashab* quickly admonished him by saying "*Moichen, Moichen*" - the mind rules over emotions. The [*Rebbe*] *Rayatz* immediately rejoined his composure. The *Rebbe Rashab* then asked the *Rebbetzin* for coffee and made *Havdalah*.

Between two and three in the morning, it was noticeable that the *Rebbe Rashab* wanted to spend some time alone with his family. The *Frierdiker Rebbe* instructed everyone to leave, and the *Rebbe Rashab* then blessed his three granddaughters individually. He then blessed his only son and successor, the *Rebbe Rayatz*. The *Rashag*, the future son-in-law of the *Frierdiker Rebbe* was also called in and received the *Rebbe's* blessing.

The *Chassidim* were then allowed in. On *Motzei Shabbos* of *Parshas Vayikro*, the 2nd of *Nissan*, 3:30am, the *Rebbe Rashab* was *Nistalek*.

Being that it was not possible at that time to bury the *Rebbe Rashab* in Lubavitch, he was interred in the local Jewish cemetery with the understanding that he may be moved at a later date. Subsequent research in the *Rebbe Rashab's* writings did not show any specific request to be buried in Lubavitch, so they did not move him, even when it became somewhat easier at a later date.

In 1930, the Russian Government decided to convert the old Jewish cemetery into a building complex. They forbade the transfer of any graves to the new Jewish Cemetery. Defying the order, one bitter winter night when no one would venture outside, *Chassidim* dug up the grave, and reburied the *Rebbe Rashab* in the new Jewish cemetery."

The *Shabbos* following his father's passing, the *Frierdiker Rebbe* said a *Maamor* starting with the words "*Reishis Goyim Amolek*"

which was based on his father's - the Rebbe Rashab's - last *Maamor*. Seeing the legacy of *Chabad* thus continuing, gave much comfort to the *Chassidim*.

Before reciting his first *Maamor*, the *Frierdiker Rebbe* humbly declared: "I am only saying this *Maamor* because I was instructed to do so by my father."

Initially, the *Frierdiker Rebbe* refused to take any *Pidyonos*. This concerned the *Chassidim* greatly. But shortly after *Pesach*, the *Frierdiker Rebbe* began to accept the letters and *Pidyonos* of *Chassidim*, which was a great relief to the *Lubavitch* community.

The following winter in the month of *Kislev* the *Rebbe Rayatz* contracted the dreaded typhoid disease. His very life was in danger. *Hashem* listened to the prayers of the *Chassidim* and *Klal Yisroel*, and the *Rebbe Rayatz* recovered.

During these tense nights, when his fever was at its peak, the *Chassidim* noticed the *Rebbe Rayatz's* lips were moving. The *Frierdiker Rebbe* later explained that his father had convened a special *Beis Din* in Heaven, together with all the previous *Lubavitcher Rabbeim*, the *Baal Shem Tov* and the *Maggid*. He entreated them to decree that the *Rebbe Rayatz*, his only son and successor, should have a complete recovery.

The *Rogochover Goan* wrote a letter to the *Frierdiker Rebbe*, wishing him a complete recovery, explaining that when one becomes a prince in Israel, his body must undergo a drastic change, hence, his temporary illness.

The *Rebbe Rayatz* recovered his strength and began spreading *Chassidus* and *Yiddishkeit* throughout the world. Provisional

RESOLUTION IN A TIME OF REVOLUTION

THE REBBE RASHAB AND THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION OF 1917



*By Eli Rubin (taken from Chabad.org)*¹

INTRODUCTION

Over the course of eight months in 1917 Russia underwent rapid change, moving from a Tsarist autocracy to a republic ruled by a Provisional Government, then rushing headlong into full scale communist revolution and crippling civil war. For the Jewish population of Russia these upheavals were especially disruptive. At first it seemed that a new era of civil and religious liberty might emerge. But ultimately the revolution would drive Jewish religious life and culture entirely underground.

Throughout the revolutionary period, its leadup and its aftermath, Rabbi Sholom Dovber Schneersohn—known in *Chabad* as the *Rebbe Rashab*—worked tirelessly to mobilize the Jewish community, strengthen its infrastructure, and ensure that its most basic religious needs were provided for. A wealth of documentary evidence reveals his keen awareness of the significance of the unfolding events, and of the opportunities and pitfalls that the end of the autocracy might bring. The decisive days of February and October 1917 found him in Petrograd and Moscow respectively. Even as the revolution unfolded in the streets around him he

¹) In the digital article as published on Chabad.org, there are copious footnotes.

remained undistracted and resolute, always asking himself: what can I do today for the perpetuation of Jewish life, learning and practice?

Back in 1910 the *Rebbe Rashab* had stood up to the Tsarist regime when they sought to secularize Jewish education. In a meeting with Pyotr Stolypin at the time, the soon to be assassinated Minister of the Interior dubbed the *Rebbe* “Schneersohn the revolutionary.” The communists, in contrast, would later brand all associated with the Schneersohn name (the “Schneersohnovschina”) as counter-revolutionaries. As we shall see, the *Rebbe* was constantly alive to the changing political conditions. But in the face of tyranny and upheaval alike, the future of Judaism always remained his foremost concern.

THE SPIRIT OF REVOLUTION: WORLD WAR ONE AND THE END OF AN ERA

By the summer of 1914, political and social unrest had been brewing in the Russian Empire for decades. Now Europe, and indeed the entire world, was on the brink of war, and the situation seemed more unstable than ever. Austria-Hungary, backed by the assurance of German support, declared war on Serbia at the end of July. The Tsar responded by mobilizing the Russian army in defense of Serbia, and when the Tsar refused to stand down Germany declared war on Russia.

The *Rebbe Rashab* often traveled to Vienna, Berlin, Würzburg and Wiesbaden, and had formed a strong dislike for the German Kaiser, Wilhelm II. The *Rebbe*'s son, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok later recalled an occasion when they had gone to hear Wilhelm deliver a speech in Berlin. The Kaiser was a notorious anti-Semite and he apparently noticed the two Jews in the audience: “We saw from afar that the Kaiser was staring at us with a sharp look. He tilted his head to the crown prince beside him, whispered something in his ear, and the prince smirked slightly. A few moments later police

detectives approached us and ordered us to leave. When World War One began my father said to me: 'Do you remember when we were in Berlin and saw Wilhelm speak with a face as white as plaster? Already then, all the plans of this war were arrayed in his mind and thoughts.'"

On August 3rd Germany invaded neutral Belgium, and the British government issued an ultimatum requiring Germany to withdraw or face the full might of Britain's army and navy. The newspapers carrying reports of this ultimatum arrived a few days later, and were read before the *Rebbe Rashab* during the meal on the eve of Shabbos. In his diary Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok noted that his father was pleased by the British ultimatum to Germany, saying that this would weaken the Kaiser's aloof egotism: "Though he is by nature not one to be intimidated, this may cause in him a small degree of diffidence. But, without doubt, he will not easily be detached from actions that he has planned in advance." He also expressed wonder at the reckless presumption of a monarch who seemed to be deliberately waging war on all the great powers at once.

On the following Tuesday, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok accompanied his father on one of their customary walks. By now all of Europe was at war, and the *Rebbe Rashab* mused on how the rapid pace of world events would touch the lives of so many individuals in ways both terrible and miraculous. He also mused on the nature of the strong nationalist spirit that seemed to transcend the material resources or military capabilities of each nation, and which seemed to be most powerfully felt not by the populace, but by the leaders and monarchs. Above all he mused about the future, expressing a sense that Russia was facing an existential threat akin to the one faced just over a century before with Napoleon's invasion of 1812.

In this context, the *Rebbe Rashab* recalled that at every moment the famed Rabbi Levi Yitzchok of Berdichev anticipated the onset of the messianic age, the ultimate redemption that Jews have

awaited for two thousand years. But at the time of Napoleon's invasion, Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, the founder of *Chabad*, "knew with clarity that the time had not yet come," and argued instead that Russia's success would ensure the spiritual welfare of the Jewish people.

While the *Rebbe Rashab's* comments—as recorded by his son—are rather cryptic, it seems that he hoped that this time the war would indeed anticipate a messianic upheaval, bringing spiritual and physical emancipation for the Jewish people and the entire world. Echoing the hopes of Rabbi Levi Yitzchok a century before, the *Rebbe* concluded: "Now is the general era of the footsteps of the Messiah. Therefore we must hope for light that is good, and that the forecasts transmitted to us by the prophets of G-d will be fulfilled, that they shall not continue to make war, and that peace will be upon the nations for eternity."

Over the course of the next eighteen months it became clear that the war would neither end swiftly nor leave the Jewish communities of Eastern Europe untroubled. As the Germans advanced, hundreds of thousands of Jews were expelled from areas close to the front or fled voluntarily. Hundreds of thousands more would be drafted into military service before the war was over.

Early in the winter of 1914 the *Rebbe Rashab* instituted a new practice. Each day he would pen a note of supplication (*pidyan nefesh*) and send it with ten yeshiva students to be read at the burial place of his father and grandfather, the *Rebbe Maharash* and the *Tzemach Tzedek*, in Lubavitch. Rephael Nachman Kahn was a student in the *Tomchei Temimim yeshiva* and on one occasion received permission to copy the note, later publishing the text in his memoirs.

In part it reads: "It is several months now that war has broken out between our country [Russia], and Germany, Austria and Turkey,

and the war is extremely heavy and mighty. Many of our Jewish brethren are at the front (including many heads of families) ... may G-d place it in the hearts of kings to make peace between themselves, and the land will become tranquil after the great and fearsome turmoil ...”

The *Rebbe* did not make do with prayers alone. It was during this period that his previous efforts to abolish the restriction of Jews to the Pale of Settlement finally met with success. He likewise partnered with other influential rabbis, lawyers (such as Oscar Gruzenberg, who had led the defense of Mendel Beilis in 1913) and lay leaders (chief among them Baron Alexander Günzburg), working to secure the exemption of the religious rabbinate, rather than only the state-appointed clergy, from military conscription. This was of fundamental importance; without competent leadership, the basic infrastructure of Jewish religious life would be in danger of unravelling completely. He also revived the campaign to send *matzah* to soldiers at the front, which he had pioneered during the Russo-Japanese war a decade before. Finally, he began sending emissaries (most notably Rabbi Yaakov Landau) to provide for the needs of Jewish refugees who often found themselves in places without synagogues, *mikvaot*, *kosher* meat or Jewish schools.

During the summer of 1915 the Germans advanced eastward, taking all of Poland, large swathes of Lithuania, and part of Belarus. As the Russians retreated they often committed atrocities against the locals, and especially against the Jews, who in addition to being regular targets of casual violence were often perceived as pro-German. The supreme commander of the Russian army at the time was a first cousin of the Tsar, Grand Duke Nicholas Nikolaevich, who shared the monarch’s anti-Semitic views. Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok, who as a young man invested in the logging trade, later recalled that he once had a personal business encounter with

Nicholas Nikolaevich. The Grand Duke, he testified, “took pleasure in the spilling of Jewish blood.”

In the face of the double threat of the German advance and the Russian retreat, the *Rebbe Rashab* resolved to leave Lubavitch. His grandfather and great-grandfather had first settled in the town following the war of 1812, and for just over a century it had been the home of four successive *Chabad Rebbes*. This was not just a physical home for the *Rebbe*, but a place steeped in the holy spirit of *Chasidism*. It was here that his ancestors were buried and it was here that he had built the great *Tomchei Temimim Yeshivah*. Initially it was hoped that the move from Lubavitch would only be a temporary one. But in truth the tumult of war and unrest was only just beginning, and the spirit of revolution was already in the air.

Yehudah Chitrik was a student in Lubavitch at the time. In his memoirs he recalls that Rabbi Levi Yitzchok Schneersohn of Ekaterinoslav spent the *Sukkos* festival in Lubavitch together with the *Rebbe Rashab* in the fall of 1914 or 1915. Rabbi Levi Yitzchok was one of the *Rebbe's* foremost lieutenants in all manner of communal affairs and was also renowned as a *kabbalistic* authority in his own right. At one of the festive meals in the *Rebbe's* home, Chitrik writes, a discussion about the *kabbalistic* significance of revolution ensued. “They searched in *Kabbalistic* books to find a source for this, but I did not hear what resulted from that search.”

A long diary entry by Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok makes it very clear that no one took the *Rebbe's* departure from Lubavitch lightly. Not his family, nor the *Chassidim*, nor even the local non-Jews. In the course of the deliberations the *Rebbe* spoke again of the national spirit vested in the person of the Tsar and his hope that the Tsar would somehow marshal that power to rally the army and the people and push the Germans back. “May G-d help that in this town the Germans will never set foot, not even for a short while! ...

It is my hope that the hated [enemy] will not come here, and nor our marauding army."

The *Rebbe Rashab* was then in the midst of delivering the great series of discourses known as *Hemshekh Beshah Shehekdimu* 5672. He would continue working on the manuscript for the rest of his life, but now that he was leaving Lubavitch a significant portion would never be orally transmitted. From this point until the end of the Russian Civil War, the temporary center of *Chabad-Lubavitch* would be far to the south, in the Caucasian city of Rostov on the River Don, at the north-eastern tip of the Black Sea. Though the *Rebbe* would continue to deliver *Chassidic* discourses, and though the *Yeshiva* would be partly reestablished in Rostov, the golden era of "*Lubavitch* in Lubavitch" had come to an end.

PURIM IN PETROGRAD: THE FEBRUARY REVOLUTION

The *Rebbe* continued with his efforts on behalf of Jewish soldiers and refugees from Rostov. During the winter and summer of 1916 he was particularly concerned with constructing new *mikva'os* in the towns and cities seeing great intakes of Jewish refugees, and also with securing the exemption of the religious rabbinate from military conscription. These efforts were hampered by the increasing incompetence and disorder of Russia's central institutions. The people, the Duma and even the army were rapidly losing confidence in the Tsar, and as 1916 drew to a close the vast apparatus of the Russian state was bereft of effective leadership and authority.

For several months the *Rebbe* had resisted the suggestion that he travel to Petrograd (the Russified name given to St. Petersburg during World War One) and intercede with the authorities in person. But that winter he wrote to Shmuel Michel Trainin—a wealthy *Chassid* and well-connected industrialist who had served as his main representative in the capital for decades. He expressed

his frustration at the lack of news and progress, and concluded: "I'm thinking of traveling to Petrograd in another two weeks."

The documentary record on the *Rebbe's* activities over the next two months is scant. No letters from this crucial period are extant. His internal passport, however, shows that he arrived in Petrograd on Tuesday, January 10th according to the old style calendar, corresponding to January 23rd, new style. He would remain there for seven full weeks before returning to Rostov. In the course of those seven weeks the Tsar's government would disintegrate before his very eyes.

Corresponding to the gap in extant correspondence is a gap in transcribed *Chassidic* discourses. The last discourse before he traveled to Petrograd was delivered on *Shabbos Parshas Va'airah*. These discourses, as a rule, do not explicitly address current affairs, restricting themselves to explaining *kabbalistic* concepts and their application in the service of G-d. But in this case the allusions are hard to overlook. Commenting on the verse "See! I have made you a lord over Pharaoh," he discussed the power given by G-d to Moses to bring about Pharaoh's downfall.

The souls of the righteous, he explained, are from the realm of *tikkun* (order and repair). The souls of the evil, on the other hand, are from the realm *tohu* (unchecked chaos), which resulted from the cosmic shattering of divine singularity. Paradoxically, *tohu* carries greater divine potency than *tikkun*, but without order and repair it is tragically perverted. It is generally the role of the righteous person to help the evil person through a process of repair, identifying their good points, or finding a way to extract some good results from their chaotic activity. Only once the good that *tohu* harbors has been extracted can the downfall of evil be brought about. Without this process of repair the evil person remains at the height of their unconstrained power, and the righteous cannot bring about their downfall. Pharaoh remained impervious to all attempts at repair, and so Moses was powerless

against him. Only the transcendent power inherent in G-d's essential infinitude could bring about emancipation and exodus for the enslaved people of Israel.

"This is the meaning of 'See! I have made you a lord over Pharaoh,' ... this is only in the power of the essence of the infinite, and G-d gave this power to Moses, which is a wondrous thing..." The *Rebbe Rashab* further argues that this power is also given to Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai and others, "for righteous people of this station have the power to topple the wicked" even if they remain at the height of their powers and are impervious to any process of repair.

While resentment against the Tsar was building few imagined that he would soon be forced to abdicate. The practical change that most envisaged was more along the lines of constitutional monarchy. Considering the events that would unfold over the next few weeks, this teaching on the downfall of a despotic monarch at the height of his powers seems presciently significant.

That year, International Women's Day serendipitously coincided with the festival of *Purim*, which marks the salvation of the Jewish people, in part through the audacious bravery of Queen Esther. Tens of thousands of men and women joined the workers of the Putilov factory who had already been striking for several days. Marching in the streets of Petrograd they demanded an end to the continuous food shortages, an end to the war, and an end to the Tsarist autocracy. Michael Dworkin, a graduate of the *Tomchei Temimim yeshiva*, was in the city at the time and recalled that the *Rebbe* delivered a discourse marking the festival. It began with the passage from the *megillah* in which Haman, the arch-foe of the Jews is advised to "build a gallows fifty cubits high" (Esther, 5:14). Though originally intended for Mordechai, the righteous Jew, Haman himself was ultimately hung upon it instead. Unfortunately, no transcript of the discourse is extant.

By the end of the week most of the armed forces in the city had mutinied and joined the revolution, the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies had been convened, and the Provisional Committee of the State Duma declared itself the governing body of Russia.

Many years later Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok recalled that he too had been together with his father in Petrograd during the revolution, and that they traveled back to Rostov accompanied by Eliyahu Chaim Althaus. "At one of the stations Reb Eliyahu Chaim bought a newspaper with the latest reports. When my father read that the Tsar had been overthrown and that the country had become a free land he said, 'now we must establish branches of the *Tomchei Temimim yeshiva* in all towns and villages. Now that secularism is spreading we must make many schools and yeshivot. In all times and in all matters victory is determined by the power of *mesirus nefesh* alone.'" *Mesirus nefesh* translates literally as "soul dedication" but signifies the willingness to offer your very life for the perpetuation of Judaism. This term is traditionally associated with oppression, anti-Semitism and martyrdom. But the *Rebbe* understood that the civil freedoms of a new secular state would pose just as great a challenge to the Torah way of life, which could only be overcome with even deeper levels of selflessness and commitment. Under such circumstances a rigorous foundation of Torah education would be the only guarantor of a Jewish future.

In several public letters issued in the next few months, the *Rebbe Rashab* rejoiced at "the event that has illuminated the entire earth" and at "the emancipation given to all the peoples of the land." He even compared the end of the autocracy to the exodus from Egypt. He hoped that the ascendant forces of the liberal revolution sought to reshape Russia into a free nation, enlightened and democratic. In this spirit he called on the Jewish community to rally behind the new government, subscribing to the liberty loan program and supporting the new military effort to turn back the German army.

"In one word, it is incumbent on us to dedicate our hearts and souls to the good of the land of our birth, and to save it from the mouths of the predatory lions. When all citizens of our land will together apply themselves to the one cause, G-d will be at our aid ... and eternal peace will reign in our land."

But the *Rebbe* was also very alive to the profound consequences of the liberal revolution for the place of the Jewish people within Russian society. Despite his enthusiasm for the newfound freedoms, the *Rebbe* also expressed deep concern that the spirit of emancipation would lead to a new degree of religious laxity and irreverence within the Jewish community. Rather than throw off the yoke of heaven, he argued, the Jews of Russia should exercise their civil rights to advance the cause of Torah. In a second public letter he called for individuals in each city and town to organize themselves on the local level, acting strategically to reinforce the fundamental institutions of Jewish life. "You, my brethren in each city and town who are in awe of G-d and tremble at His word, if you stand from afar and do nothing, all of Judaism is in great danger. Our land, which till now was the nest of the Torah, made splendid by its scholars and writers, will in not much time be emptied of everything ... Awaken yourselves, inspire yourselves ... each man must strengthen his fellow. Each person must make his Judaism more visible than before, both in personal affairs and in public affairs."

Corresponding personally with leading rabbis across Russia, and especially with Rabbi Chaim Ozer Grodzinski of Vilna, the *Rebbe Rashab* began developing a vision for a united religious front that could gain a majority in the National Jewish Congress. The congress would be a democratically elected body, empowered by the new government of Russia with a degree of autonomy over Jewish affairs. The *Rebbe* understood that with religious freedom came the civic responsibility of political organization and engagement. To sit with arms folded would be to allow Zionists

and Secularists to displace the traditional Torah way of life, learning and practice, and to reshape the Jewish community and its public institutions in their own image.

After much deliberation, a rabbinic conference was held in Moscow in the Summer of 1917, where many questions of public policy were discussed, and a united religious front was established. In the end, however, all of these efforts would prove to be futile: Following the February Revolution the Provisional Government faced crisis after crisis. The fragile dream of a free Russia was slowly disintegrating and would soon be entirely swept away. No democratic government would ever be elected, nor would the Jewish Congress ever convene.

SHABBOS IN MOSCOW: THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION

In the fall of 1917 the *Rebbe Rashab* received a series of letters and telegrams urging him to travel to Petrograd where the Ministry of Religion was convening a commission that would help shape some of the public policy issues surrounding the establishment of the Jewish Congress. By this time the Provisional Government's continuous state of crisis was reaching new heights. The country was rapidly descending into anarchy and bankruptcy. Revolts by peasants and workers against land and factory owners were rife, and large divisions of the army and navy had formed Soviets, declaring that they would no longer take orders from the government. Travel was becoming less reliable and more dangerous due to strikes and increasing lawlessness.

The Bolshevik party had until now been one of the smallest of the revolutionary parties competing for power. But now their radical call for immediate peace, immediate land redistribution, and a complete restructuring of government - "all power to the Soviets" - was swiftly gaining support. On October 10th (old style) Lenin returned to Petrograd from Finland and the Central Committee of

the parts passed a resolution declaring that recent developments place "armed uprising on the order of the day." An armed revolution was now only a matter of time.

Considering these circumstances, the *Rebbe* was understandably reluctant to travel to the capital. On October 24th he wrote to one of his associates in the city: "Due to the tremendous gravity of being in Petrograd now, apart from the gravity of traveling, I nearly decided not to travel. But due to the importance of the matter, that there may be public policy questions... I found it to be an obligation that I must travel... salvation is in G-d's hand... we will travel tomorrow."

Soon after his return from Petrograd he wrote to Rabbi Shmarya Yehuda Leib Medalia—a senior member of the Russian rabbinate who would later be murdered by the NKVD—and recounted the details of his trip:

"The rumors about opposition to the Provisional Government inspired dread, and my household protested greatly against me traveling, and with great emotion. In my mind the thoughts were racing ... In the end I decided to travel alone and achieved the consent of my family ... When I was in Oryol, I first received news via telegram of what was happening in Petrograd, and in Tula I got hold of a Petrograd newspaper with specific reports, and I saw that it was impossible to travel to Petrograd. Being that it was Thursday evening I decided to halt my journey in Moscow, spend *Shabbos* there, and return home on Sunday."

In the early hours of that morning, Thursday October 26th, revolutionary Red Guards had entered the Winter Palace, meeting little resistance. At about 2 am they found the ministers of the Provisional Government sitting around a table and placed them under arrest. At 5 am the Second Congress of Soviets, which was then in session, adopted a decree drafted by Lenin transferring power to the Soviet Government and giving all local power to the

Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies. The revolution in Petrograd had been achieved with minimum disturbance. In Moscow, however, the streets were about to turn into a battleground between pro-government forces and Red Guards, with upward of 10,000 armed men on each side.

In his letter to Rabbi Medalia, the Rebbe reported:

“I arrived in Moscow about one or two hours after midnight, and between then and *Shabbos* morning the maelstrom in Moscow began. On *Shabbos* morning there was gunfire in the locality of my hotel and one corner of the building was disfigured by [cannon] shot. On Sunday the gunfire increased greatly in some sections of the city, though not in the immediate vicinity of my hotel ... and our friends would not allow me to travel on that day. On Monday morning I decided to travel and walked to the train on foot. Some of our friends accompanied me ... and thank G-d we arrived safely at the Kurskaya Station and departed on the Kislovodsk train.”

Rephael Nachman Kahn was in Moscow at the time and recalled that his parents prepared *kosher* food for the *Rebbe* which they carried through the streets “while the cannon shot flew over our heads.” He also recalled that the *Rebbe* stayed in the Varvarinskoe Hotel, better known as the National, which still stands today in Manezhnaya Square in the center of the city, facing the Kremlin. In March 1918 the National would become the home of the first Soviet government as the Kremlin was still under repair from the damage done in October.

Kahn also reported that at one point “the *Rebbe* walked back and forth from one corner of his room to the other with a look of dissatisfaction upon his face ... saying, as if to himself, ‘I set out to Petrograd and now remain in Moscow, certainly there must be a reason for this.’” Despite the danger, the *Rebbe* then decided to gather a group of wealthy *Chassidim*. Kahn’s father began calling them by phone, but soon the lines were cut, and he walked to call

on the rest in person. Once they had all gathered, the *Rebbe* began to speak about the religious needs of the many refugees who had been displaced to cities and towns that did not have even the most basic resources necessary for daily Jewish life. He proposed a new initiative to print and distribute prayer books so that they could pray and seek spiritual solace despite the difficulties that they would continue to face. All of those gathered pledged substantial sums of money, and the *Rebbe* listed their names and commitments. A copy of that document remains extant to this day.

On returning to Rostov the *Rebbe* acquired a printing press and published prayer books according to both the regular *Ashkenazi* liturgy and the *Arizal* liturgy favored by *Chassidim*. The press imprint was Defus Ezra and the prayer book was titled Siddur Tehillas Hashem. These prayer books were reprinted several times during the early years of the Soviet regime and the standard *Chabad* prayer books in use today continue to bear that title.

Over the course of the next few months the *Rebbe* continued to hope for a free Russia with a unified front of religious leadership in the Jewish National Congress. But the situation went from bad to worse. Soon the entire country was wracked by civil war, with famine and disease not far behind. Lines of communication were often cut and always unreliable, so it became nearly impossible to organize on a national scale. Slowly but steadily the Bolshevik Red Guards strengthened their grip and ultimately gained complete control of Russia. They consolidated their hold on Rostov at the beginning of 1920 and imposed strict curfews, forbidding any gathering of three people or more.

To begin with, the *Rebbe* kept a low profile. But when the festival of *Purim* arrived he allowed the *Chassidim* to gather and encouraged them to sing and celebrate without constraint. The illegal gathering soon attracted the attention of Soviet officers who entered the room but didn't intervene. Many of those present were understandably afraid, but the *Rebbe* announced "I am not

impressed by them ... Perhaps at another time I would be afraid, but as I stand now I am not impressed at all ...” Turning to his son he proclaimed loudly: “Yosef Yitzchok! We will remain whole, and I don’t mean whole but hidden, I mean that we will be whole with full openness and expression, for unholiness in the presence of holiness is truthfully nothing.”

PUBLISHING THE TALKS OF THE REBBE

RASHAB “TORAS SHOLOM”

YEARS-LONG PROJECT OF REVEALING A TRUE TREASURE



*By Mendel Jacobs (taken from Chabad.org)**

“I am ascending to heaven, and I leave my writings with you.” These were among the last words uttered by Rabbi Sholom Dovber of Lubavitch (henceforth: *Rashab*), shortly before his passing on 2 Nissan 5680 (1920). The statement served almost as *Rashab’s* “will” in a sense, instructing his *chassidim* to keep their connection to him alive even after his passing by living with his holy writings.

Shortly after his passing, *Rashab’s* only son and successor, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok (henceforth: “*Rayatz*”), the sixth *Lubavitcher Rebbe*, wished to publish all of his father’s writings and make them available to the general public.

This would be no simple task, given the particularly difficult circumstances in which his movement found itself at the time. The Bolshevik revolution was on the rise, and Judaism in general, and *Chassidism* in particular, were not in the best state.

Realizing the unavoidable difficulties such an endeavor would entail at home in Russia, *Rayatz* decided to attempt the project in Warsaw, Poland. In a letter addressed to Rabbi Leib Raskin of

*) In the digital article as published on Chabad.org, there are copious footnotes.

Warsaw dated 27 *Mar-Cheshvan*, 5682 (1921), he writes of his intention to publish his illustrious father's works:

"I intend, with G-d's help, to copy my father's discourses so they will be available for study by members of our community in all locations. As doing so in our country is a very difficult task due to the lack of paper and ink here, I resolved to have it done in your place..."

Rayatz goes on to specify the method by which he intended to have the writings made public. Rather than properly printing them, they were to be handwritten and copied via photostat, and then bound in large volumes.

It remains unclear what exactly was the outcome of that correspondence with Rabbi Leib, and whether the writings were actually published in that manner. In the meantime, the Second World War broke out, and *Rayatz* was forced to flee Europe and resettle in the United States in the year 5700 (1940).

"THE YELLOW CHEST"

Throughout all the turmoil and in all his weary travels, *Rayatz* constantly held the collection of his father's precious writings close by, never allowing it to wander out of his sight. Referring to the priceless collection in a letter, he writes: "...The yellow chest containing the writings of my father...which I have always taken along with me in all my travels..."

But only with the arrival of his son-in-law, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson (subsequently *Rayatz's* successor—henceforth: the *Rebbe*), to the United States in 5701 (1941) and the subsequent establishing of the Kehot publishing house which he headed, would the idea of publishing these writings actually come to fruition.

A quick glance through the *Rebbe's* letters in that period tells of his insatiable desire to publish more and more books of *Chassidus* and make them accessible to the broader public. As soon as there was a go-ahead from his father-in-law allowing specific writings of one of the preceding *Chabad Rebbes* to be printed, the *Rebbe* spearheaded major campaigns to ensure that the books would be published immediately.

In a letter to a *Chabad* activist in which the *Rebbe* asks him to form a committee and establish a fund for this purpose, the *Rebbe* writes: "It is my hope that the project of publishing the *chassidic* teachings of our *Rebbes* should not be stopped due merely to a lack of means, since my father-in-law, the *Rebbe*, has already given permission to publicize them..."

ESTABLISHING THE "KEREN SHOLOM" FUND

In his preface to *Kuntres Uma'ayon*, the *Rebbe* writes of a special meeting that took place on 2 *Nissan* 5702 (1942—shortly after *Kehot* was founded), during which it was decided to establish a new fund dedicated to printing *Rashab's* writings, by the name of *Keren Sholom*. The plan was, at it seems, to print all of the letters, *sichos* (talks), and *ma'amorim* (discourses) of *Rashab* in one series.

The first volume chosen to commence the new series would be *Toras Sholom*—*Sefer Hasichos*, containing *Rashab's* talks.

This volume is very unique in character as well as content.

Rashab held official gatherings for his *chassidim* (*farbrengens*) only three times throughout the year: on *Simchas Torah*, *Yud-Tes Kislev* and *Purim*.

These *farbrengens* were filled with profound explanations on the deepest concepts of *chassidic* thought, as well as many stories that had been transmitted down from one *Chabad Rebbe* to the next,

generation after generation. Perhaps above all, *Rashab* added most interesting and telling anecdotes about his predecessors, elucidating each of their specific contributions in the chain of transmission of *chassidic* teachings.

Unlike his *ma'amorim*, which were all transcribed by *Rashab* himself (and subsequently published from his own handwriting), the *sichos* were never authoritatively recorded. The only remnants of these precious talks were the journals and transcripts of individual *chassidim* who had jotted down *Rashab's* words from memory shortly after the farbrengens. These notes were scattered about in the possessions of private *chassidim*, and the *Rebbe* had the task of searching them out.

There were a substantial number of transcriptions written by *Rayatz* himself, which served as a basis for the collection, but most of the volume was compiled from the writings of the elder *chassidim*. The largest and most notable collection of all was received from Rabbi Eliyahu (Yaichel) Simpson. He handed the *Rebbe* his own notebook, which he had written while studying in Lubavitch between the years 5662–5666 (1902–1906).

ORIGINAL WRITERS; GENUINE CHASSIDIM

As most of the talks had not been authoritatively recorded, the existing transcriptions needed to be revised and amended. The *Rebbe* undertook this challenging task and, in his preface to the published volume, he made note of the difficulties with which he had contended:

“In many instances we were unable to ascertain who wrote the transcriptions, and we therefore cannot be certain how accurate they are. Nevertheless, one must bear in mind that the writers were genuine *chassidim*, who held every word of their *Rebbe* as most holy. Hence, it is without doubt that they made their best attempt

to stay true to their *Rebbe's* actual words, without adding or omitting anything."

The *Rebbe*, in addition to revising the existing text, also added footnotes and placed them at the end of the book. (In subsequent editions, these were included at the bottom of the pages throughout the book.)

The editing and preparation of the book proceeded for six months, and it was finally printed in *Adar II* 5706 (March 1946).

LIMITED EDITION

In accordance with *Rayatz's* original instruction, the text was not printed in the usual way, but rather copied from a mimeograph (typewritten) draft. Presumably this was because the transcriptions were not official recordings, and *Rayatz* didn't want them to be published as such.

Additionally, *Rayatz* wanted only a limited number of copies to be printed, and the words "Limited Edition" were stamped on the inside cover, along with the number of that particular copy.

(Later the volume was reproduced in a standard format, and is available for purchase even today.)

The expenses incurred in editing and publishing the new volume were covered by two *Chabad* philanthropists: Mr. Shmuel Dov Ganeles, and another individual. In a letter to Mr. Yaakov Katz of Chicago, dated 1 *Adar I* 5706 (February 2, 1946), the *Rebbe* asks him to contribute financially:

"A long time ago, my revered father-in-law, the *Rebbe shlita*, gave permission to publish limited talks of his father, the *Rebbe* [*Rashab*], in mimeograph form. The printing of this book will be completed at the end of this week, and it will contain 330 pages.

“The publishing expenses totaled close to \$1900. To meet that cost, we had made the following calculation: there would be two partners who would pay \$500 each, and the remainder would be collected from sales. One of the two partners has already donated \$500 to this account, but at the last moment, the second partner, no longer able to undertake such a commitment, was forced to retract.

“At this opportunity, I would like to call upon you to become the second partner, and to help in the printing of the aforementioned text.”

Mr. Katz, a well-known good-hearted and passionate *chassid*, agreed without hesitation.

WAITING FOR THE REBBE AT THE ELEVATOR

About one month later, on Friday of *Parshas Zachor* 5706 (March 15, 1946), the published volumes arrived at Lubavitch World Headquarters at 770 Eastern Parkway. As the delivery truck arrived, the *Rebbe* chanced upon Rabbi Yosef Goldstein, and motioned for him to assist with carrying the boxes into his office.

Meanwhile, the *Rebbe* opened one of the boxes and took out a book, and together with Rabbis Shmuel Levitin and Shlomo Aharon Kazarnovsky headed to *Rayatz's* study to present him with the first copy.

Chassidim knew that whenever the *Rebbe* would return from visiting his father-in-law, he would relay parts of their conversation. Thus, while the *Rebbe* was in *Rayatz's* room, a small crowd gathered around the elevator awaiting his return.

After a few minutes, the *Rebbe* returned and told the *chassidim* that when *Rayatz* received the new volume he showed great satisfaction, and with it in hand, he remarked, “With this, one can live for seventy years!”

It was clear to all that *Rayatz* greatly cherished the newly published volume of his father's talks. The following year, during a *Shavuos farbrengen*, he turned to the *chassidim* and said: "One must set aside time each day to study a few lines from *Toras Sholom*. One need not study so much; a few lines will suffice, but it is there that one will see how to live his life as a *chassid*."

In the ensuing years, the volume was reprinted several times with many additions. The *Rebbe* continuously urged the elder *chassidim* to record and hand in whatever they recalled from *Rashab's farbrengens*, to be included in subsequent editions.

In 1993, *Toras Sholom* was reprinted with many new additions, including an index.

As mentioned, *Sefer HaSichos—Toras Sholom* is replete with gems: explanations of the deepest concepts in *chassidic* thought, stories and anecdotes about early *Chabad Rebbes* and their *chassidim*, and more.

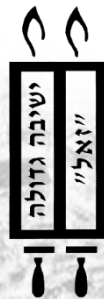
In *Rayatz's* words: "The main thing is not what is written on the paper; one must live with what it says!"



ASHKAVTA DE'REBBI



*THE STORY of the HISTALKUS
of THE REBBE RASHAB*



INTRODUCTION

With gratitude to Hashem, we present before you a free English translation¹ of sections of the *Sefer*, “*Ashkavta De’Rebbi*” “The Story of the *Histalkus* of the Rebbe Rashab.” This translation is being published in connection with *Beis Nissan*, 5780, commemorating one hundred years since the *Histalkus* of the Rebbe Rashab.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Harav Moshe Dov Ber Rivkin was born to R’ Ben Tzion and Esther Rivkin on 21 Kislev 5650/1891, in Zintsi, Ukraine. R’ Ben Tzion was the *Rav* of the town and was considered an expert in *Shas Bavli*, *Yerushalmi*, *Shulchan Aruch* and *Sifrei Kabbalah*. Many *Gedolim* corresponded with him in *halachah* issues.

From a very young age, Moshe Dov Ber was known to be a prodigy. He began learning *Gemara* at age 5. In his early years, he learned in *Yeshiva Tomchei Temimim* in Lubavitch, under the close tutelage of the famed *Mashpia*, Reb Michael Blinner. After his studies, he married Nacha Heber of Kalisch, daughter of the *chossid* Reb Yaakov Tuvia Heber. He later followed the Rashab to Rostov where he learned with him privately and remained near the Rashab until the *Histalkus*.

1. As is the way with translation, much of the beauty and richness of the original is lost, hence, readers are encouraged to look into the original Hebrew/Yiddish edition. The translation used in this print is a liberal one, focusing on flow and clarity.

In the year 5684/1924, he immigrated to Eretz Yisrael where he was appointed Rosh *Yeshiva* of *Yeshiva Toras Emes* in Yerusholayim. He was Rosh *Yeshiva* there for 4 years and following which, he was invited to join the faculty of *Yeshiva Torah Vodaath* in America.

During his time at *Torah Vodaath*, he gave *smicha* to hundreds of *talmidim*. He had close personal relationships with the *Gedolim* of the age including R' Moshe Feinstein, R' Yaakov Kaminetzky, R' Yitzchok Hutner, R' Yosef Ber Soloveitchik and others. Through his years, Rabbi Rivkin published extensively in *Torah* journals and also collected a selection of his *chidushim* in his *Sefer, Teferes Tzion*.

In his later years, Rabbi Rivkin would often attend *Farbrengens* of our Rebbe and is clearly visible sitting behind the Rebbe in many videos. Rabbi Rivkin passed away 18 Cheshvan 5737/1976 and is buried in the Lubavitch section of the cemetery on *Har Hazesim*.



ABOUT THE SEFER

Rabbi Rivkin wrote this *Sefer* narrating us through his own experiences. He was 28 years old at the time of the story. As mentioned, Rabbi Rivkin was a “Ben Bayis” in the house of the Rebbe Rashab, a close confidant of the Frierdiker Rebbe and a devout *chossid*. He wrote this diary in the summer of 5680/1920, a few months following the events. The *Sefer* was published many years later [5712/1952]², with Rabbi Rivkin’s lengthy and extensive

2. In the year 5695/1935, Reb Chatche Feigin asked Rabbi Rivkin for permission to print this *sefer* in the *Hatomim* journal. Rabbi Rivkin refused, explaining that he had previously shown the diary to the Rayatz and it had pained the Rayatz greatly. However in the year 5712/1952, following the *Histalkus* of the Rayatz in 5710/1950, the *Sefer* was printed at the behest of our Rebbe.

footnotes. Rabbi Rivkin was an exceptional Ga'on and Talmid Chochom, and these footnotes are an in depth halachic and Kabbalistic analysis of the Rebbe Rashab's every move. In this translation we have included only the sections of the Sefer that describe the story of the Histalkus excluding the footnotes.

A general note on perspective:

Being that much of the content of this Sefer discusses the condition of the Rebbe Rashab's physical health, one can mistakenly understand the events in a "coarse/crude" manner.

It is important to keep in mind the following: In a Maamor printed in Sefer HaMaamorim Melukat Aleph, "Atah Echad" Chapter 7, the Rebbe writes as follows: "The imprisonment of the Friediker Rebbe was with his consent. Every Tzadik controls the physicality of his life, and every physical occurrence is by his consent."

It is clearly evident and obvious from this Maamor that the Tzadik agrees to the heavenly decree to impose sickness or suffering upon him, i.e. the Tzadik controls these events.

Additionally, the Tzadik is Bedugmah Shel Maalah, meaning, all that transpires to the Tzadik in our physical world is reflective of the events occurring in the spiritual realms of Seder Hishtalshelus and the Sefiros.

The Sefer before us was written by a chossid observing the events with what we call, "fleshly eyes," i.e. the chassidim watching the events only saw the external physicality of the story. Chassidim over the generations always knew that what we see occurring to the Rebbe is just the tip of the iceberg and the events are not to be gauged by the regular measures of human beings. Therefore, as we read through the events which superficially appear to have human properties, we must remember that our understanding and view of the matter barely scratches the surface of the true reality.

For ease of reading, please note the following references:

“The Rebbe” refers to the Rebbe Rashab.

“The Rebbetzin” refers to the Rebbe Rashab’s wife, Rebbetzin Shternah Sarah

“The Rayatz” refers to the Friediker Rebbe.

“The Rashag” refers to Reb Shmaryahu Gurary. At the time of this story he was but a bochur, he would later be the son-in-law of the Rayatz.

The times of day written are all approximate.



This project was spearheaded and directed by Rabbi Yaakov Winner. Rabbi Winner initiated this project months in advance and guided the production throughout. His guidance, editing and counsel were vital in ensuring the accuracy and proper perspective. We thank him for his dedication and leadership.

Many thanks to Hatomim Hashliach Shmuel Kesselman for the translation and editing, (for comments, suggestions and questions, please email shmulykesselman@gmail.com). Many thanks to Hat’ Yechezkel Lever, Hat’ Menachem Mendel Perlow and Hat’ Dovid Perlow for the assistance and editing.

Note regarding the footnotes: Throughout this translation there are footnotes with additional information. They have been added by the translator for the purpose of furthering clarity.

Additionally, a chossid by the name of Avrohom Boruch Poizner, mentioned in this Sefer as being the one charged with preparing wheat for Matza, also wrote brief snippets of a diary documenting the story of the Rashab’s Histalkus. His notes are printed in the Sefer “Shemuos Vesipurim ” by Reb Refoel Kahn. Reb Refoel writes that he attained a copy of this diary from his brother-in-law, Reb Hillel Poizner, the son of Avrohom Boruch Poizner. [The brief diary is also printed in Hebrew in the Sefer, “HaMashpia Shelo Chozar,” a biography of Reb Avrohom Boruch].

It is interesting that when comparing the 2 diaries, although the gist of the story is almost identical, there are a few small differences. We have included a few of those discrepancies in the footnotes and clearly indicated the source.



May it be the will of Hashem that very soon, we will merit the fulfillment of the prophecy, "And those that lie in the dust will awaken and celebrate." With the arrival of Moshiach, when we will be reunited with our Rebbe, the Rebbe Rashab and with all the Rabbeim, may it be speedily in our days.

18th of Elul 5780
(September 7 2020)

ASHKAVTA DE'REBBI



ROSTOV, THURSDAY NIGHT, 15 ADAR

Following the Purim Farbrengen, which took place in the Rebbe's home, the Rebbe returned to his room and sat down to rest. Yankel Landau¹ - a young student who had a close bond with the Rebbe and spent much time in the Rebbe's home - followed the Rebbe into his room. Beaming with inspiration and excitement gleaned from the fervor of the Farbrengen, he said to the Rebbe, "On this night we experienced great happiness. How lucky we are to have celebrated with the Rebbe, an event no one had dreamed would occur. May Hashem grant us the opportunity to celebrate next Purim in a similar manner, with the Rebbe, back in Lubavitch." The Rebbe did not respond. Yankel Landau repeated the sentiment, and again the Rebbe did not respond. Meanwhile, the Rebbe stood up and walked into a second room nearby. Yankel Landau followed him, and repeated himself a third time. Following which, the Rebbe responded, "May Hashem bless us to be near one another, spiritually."

Yankel Landau exited the Rebbe's chamber, and excitedly recounted his discussion with the Rebbe. He supposed, based on the implication of the Rebbe's words, "near one another spiritually," that the Rebbe planned to journey overseas within the

1. Who would go on to become the Rav in Bnei Brak.

year. (Being that, at that time, many prominent chassidim suggested that the Rebbe re-establish his court outside of Russia².) No one entertained the thought of the tragedy that would take place barely two and a half weeks later.

MOTZEI SHABBOS, 17 ADAR

A few minutes after Havdolah, I stood outside the Rebbe's room. I had a pressing personal issue regarding which I sought his advice. Together with me stood R' Yisroel "Nevler" Levin and the Rashag, they too, had urgent issues they wished to discuss with the Rebbe. We waited in the antechamber near the door to the Rebbe's room, hoping that the Rebbe would walk out for a moment and we could approach. Soon, a member of the Rebbe's family knocked on the door to the Rebbe's room and entered, he too, sought the advice of the Rebbe. Almost immediately, the door reopened and he walked out. He turned to us and said, "You cannot meet with the Rebbe tonight. I could not ask him anything. He is preoccupied, sitting and writing with intense concentration and involvement."

Nevertheless, we continued waiting outside his room, perhaps he would walk out for a moment and we would be able to converse with him. Soon enough, the Rebbe did indeed walk out of his room. His face was burning with a fierce expression, and he appeared weighed down by many thoughts. He saw us and motioned that he could not meet with us. When he reentered his room a few minutes later, he closed the door and locked it from the inside.

We despaired from any chance of seeing him that night and understandably, we were disappointed. Slowly, we parted ways and returned to our homes. We were most surprised by his

2. The Rebbe had originally consented to travel abroad and Reb Shmuel Gurary actually purchased boat fare for himself and the Rebbe to travel to Turkey. However, a mere few days after the tickets were purchased the Rebbe decided not to travel. (A Chassidisher Derher, Elul 5779)

response that night. Regularly, the Rebbe would receive visits with a glowing and joyful countenance, yet that night his response was cold and uninviting.

Yet, none of us even entertained the thought that tragedy would soon strike, and that very night the Rebbe had sat and wrote his last will and testament. Following the Histalkus, we discovered this fact. The Rebbe spent that night as well as the next few days writing his will. He instructed that many Seforim from the large library in Moscow be brought to his disposal, books of halachah and Kabbalah. Many of these Seforim were then quoted and referenced in the lengthy halachic and Kabbalistic discussion, regarding the recital of Kaddish, included in the will. Within a few days, the Rebbe finished writing the will and placed it in the drawer in his desk. Clearly with the intention, that when his drawers would be opened following his Histalkus, the will would be obviously found. So it was, a short while after the Histalkus, the drawer was opened, and the will was found.

THURSDAY NIGHT, 22 ADAR

That night, I found myself in the Rebbe's home. By the time I had finished tending to the issue that brought me there, it was already past curfew. For in those days, the government forbade walking in the streets after 9:00 PM. I had no choice but to sleep in one of the rooms on the ground floor of the Rebbe's house.

That night, the Rebbe did not eat dinner because he felt unwell and a slight stomachache. (In truth, he had begun to feel unwell on Wednesday but had not told anyone.)

10:00 PM³: The Rebbe descended to the ground floor to inquire regarding the health of his daughter-in-law, the Rebbetzin

3. According to the record of Reb Avrohom Boruch Poizner: This occurred at 11:00 PM and the Rebbe remained downstairs for ½ an hour, not 15 minutes.

Nechomah Dinah, who at that time was suffering from spotted typhus⁴. He appeared overly weak and exceptionally tired. He sat in the dining-room for 15 minutes, and then went upstairs. He went to sleep at approximately 12:00 AM. Following which, the Rayatz and his family went to sleep, except for his daughter, Mushka⁵, who remained awake the entire night at her mother's bedside. I too, retired in one of the rooms on the ground floor.

2:00 AM: I awoke, hearing a commotion. I immediately got up, dressed and walked out of my room. As I walked out, I noticed Mushka scurrying about, carrying a cup of milk. When I asked her what was happening and who the milk was for, she responded that her grandfather, the Rebbe, felt sick. His wife, Rebbetzin Shternah Sarah, had measured his temperature at 37.5c. I panicked, ran upstairs and the Rebbetzin repeated what Mushka had told me. Nevertheless, I soon went to sleep and slept soundly.

FRIDAY, 22 ADAR

In the morning, the Rebbe's temperature measured a concerning 38.5c. The family asked him if he would like Dr. Landa, an expert doctor and a close confidant of the Rebbe's family, to be summoned. The Rebbe refused and remained in bed for a while, suffering from an aching head. Following midday, the Rebbetzin and the Rayatz begged the Rebbe to allow the doctor to be called. He said, "Nu, if you want him to come, let him come." At about 3:00 PM, Dr. Landa arrived. He examined the Rebbe and

4. A spotted fever is a type of tick-borne disease which presents on the skin. They are all caused by bacteria of the genus Rickettsia. Typhus is a group of similar diseases also caused by Rickettsia bacteria, but spotted fevers and typhus are different clinical entities.

5. Who later became the wife of our Rebbe.

announced that the sickness is a light case of influenza⁶ and a slight stomachache. His diagnosis calmed us all very much⁷.

FRIDAY NIGHT, 23 ADAR

After Shabbos began, the Rebbe lay down on his bed and slept for a short while⁸. When he awoke, he went into his office and davened Kabbolas Shabbos and Maariv. The table, that the Rebbe was wont to sit at while reciting Chassidus was set for the Shabbos meal. The Rebbe recited Kiddush in an undertone, ate a piece of bread, some soup and a baked apple with sugar. Following which, he bentched, said Krias Shema and returned to his bed. The night passed uneventfully.

SHABBOS MORNING, 23 ADAR

Shabbos morning, the Rebbe awoke and entered his office for davening as usual. Following Birchah Hashachar the Rebbe had to return to his bed, the headache and fever had intensified. Dr. Landa again came for a visitation, and repeated his diagnosis of the previous day. At the appointed time for Shachris, the Minyan took place in the dining room, and for Kerias HaTorah the Minyan moved into the Rebbe's office. He sat, wearing his silk Shabbos clothes albeit without a Talis, in a small room leading off his office with the door slightly ajar. Mussaf took place in the office also, and following the tefilos, all the chassidim went home confident that

6. A highly contagious but not dangerous viral infection of the respiratory passages causing fever, severe aching, and catarrh, and often occurring in epidemics.

7. According to the record of Reb Avrohom Boruch Poizner: This visit of Dr. Landa occurred on Shabbos and not on Friday.

8. This was not an unusual occurrence and it was not due to weakness. The Rebbe would regularly fall asleep at the time of the onset of Shabbos. This "nap" is a Kabbalistic custom practiced by many Tzadikim including the Alter Rebbe; see Toras Sholom pg. 13.

Hashem would heal and strengthen the Rebbe. I too, went home and only returned later that evening. Upon my return, I was informed that the Rebbe had felt sick and rested for most of the day.

MOTZEI SHABBOS, 24 ADAR

Following Havdolah, the Rebbe asked for a cigar. He smoked, and suddenly felt very unwell and almost fainted. We sprayed cold water on his face and he came back to himself. (From that moment on, I did not budge from his side for even a second. From that moment on, I remained in his presence until his holy coffin was laid to rest.) Dr. Landa was immediately summoned, and he calmed us. Dr. Landa brought with him another doctor, who was hired to stay in the house throughout the night. The Rebbe was not informed that another doctor was in the house. The second doctor sat in the dining room all night, ready to be called should the need arise. But thank G-d, the night passed uneventfully.

Unfortunately, the Rebbe's general weakness deteriorated, and he was too weak to stand or even sit without help. During the following week, the doctors, the Rayatz and I would assist the Rebbe when he wanted to sit up and stand. I would also assist the Rebbe when he wanted to wash Nettilas Yodayim. The first few days of his illness, he would sit up in his bed and I would wash his hands. Towards the end of the week however, he would remain lying down and I would wash his hands in that manner.

SUNDAY, 24 ADAR

Dr. Landa returned and examined the Rebbe. After a thorough examination, he declared aloud, so that the Rebbe would hear, "It appears that the Rebbe's spleen is inflamed." Dr. Landa walked out of the Rebbe's bedroom and into the Rebbe's office, to have a word with the Rebbetzin and the Rayatz. I remained in the Rebbe's

bedroom. The Rebbe turned to me and said, “Nu, what did Dr. Landa say? Is it not typhus?” “Heaven forbid,” I cried out, “the doctor believes it is typhoid⁹, nothing more.” He asked again, “Is it not typhus?” “No! no!” I exclaimed.

The doctor reentered the room to take leave of the Rebbe and receive a blessing. The Rebbe asked him again, “Have I contracted typhus?” The doctor affirmed that it was not typhus, and he told the Rebbe not to worry. The doctor then went on his way. The Rebbe said he wished to daven Shachris, and the Rayatz and I assisted him to do so.

On that day, a Dr. Lazinski of the city of Babroisk arrived to treat the Rebbe. I introduced him to the Rebbe, and the Rebbe remained under his care until his final moments. [The doctors were professionals, not committed chassidim, with limited understanding of the concept of a Rebbe. Nevertheless, they felt a deep affection for the Rebbe, and they stood before him with the fear and trepidation common amongst old-time chassidim. They worked day and night, with total selflessness and devotion, and when the Histalkus did occur, they all cried bitterly.]

The Rebbe instructed me to give over a message to Hatomim Avrohom Boruch Poizner. I was to tell him that the Rebbe charged him with the job of grinding wheat to bake Shmurah Matza, being that in the past he had been in charge of the project. Additionally, the Rebbe wished to be informed about all the details of the Matza making process.

3:00 PM: The Rebbe requested that we aid him as he wished to daven Mincha. The Rayatz (who would not vacate his father’s side for even a moment, day and night) and I waded in to provide assistance.

9. An infectious, non life-threatening, bacterial fever with an eruption of red spots on the chest and abdomen, and severe intestinal irritation.

I washed the Rebbe's hands, and we wound his Gartel around him. We laid Rabbeinu Tam's Tefilin on the Rebbe, and he finished Shachris without using a Siddur. He continued davening, reciting many indeterminable tefilos, followed by Korbonos, Ashrei and Mincha. We removed the Tefilin, and the Rebbe rested.

Over the entire course of his illness, it was clearly evident that the Rebbe was deep in thought. His face held a grim expression, and he rarely smiled. It seemed as if he was mourning over the heavenly decree placed upon the chassidim, that were to lose their crown and glory, the Rebbe.

In hindsight, over the course of the winter 5680, the Rebbe gave clues and indications to the Rayatz and the Rebbetzin vis a vis his own Histalkus. Yet, even in our wildest dreams we did not interpret these messages from the Rebbe to mean that the Histalkus was coming. We did not imagine that we would be struck with such a fierce blow, 'Woe unto us! May Hashem have mercy on us, chassidim, amongst the entire Jewish nation and rebuild our broken fortress.'

In my estimation, the Rebbe did not want the Histalkus to come as a result of typhus, and it became obvious as the illness progressed, that indeed it was not typhus. The illness sapped the Rebbe's strength with alarming speed. The doctors themselves were unable to determine the root of the sickness, or even what it was called. Prof. Zavadski claimed that it was potentially typhus, but Dr. Landa - who was indeed an expert - was willing to swear that it was not.

10:00 PM: The Rebbe davened Maariv, and at 12:00 AM he recited Shema and went to sleep. Dr. Lazinski, the Rayatz and I remained awake throughout the night. The Rebbe's sleep was fitful and inconstant.

MONDAY, 25 ADAR

The Rebbe awoke, and I washed his hands. He recited Birchas Hashachar and drank what appeared to be milk or coffee.

8:00 AM: Prof. Zavadski arrived. He examined the Rebbe for quite some time, and then walked from the Rebbe's bedroom into the Rebbe's office. The Rebbetzin and the Rayatz were there, and the professor told them that in his opinion the Rebbe was suffering from a severe form of typhus. The situation, in his opinion, was critical due to the Rebbe's age. I stood near the Rebbe's bed and listened in to the conversation. The Rebbe himself could not hear the conversation, all he could hear was the sound of the voices. The Rebbe realized that the Rebbetzin and the Rayatz were badgering the professor with questions. He turned to me and joked, "They are harassing him with their questions like the snake's oven¹⁰." The professor returned; the Rebbe turned to him with uncertainty filling his eyes and asked "Nu?". Prof. Zavadski said, "As of now, I cannot determine what will be. However, do not worry, you will yet be healthy." Prof. Zavadski then went on his way.

Dr. Landa returned and performed yet another lengthy examination. He said, "I am sure that Prof. Zavadski is mistaken. I see no symptoms of typhus." He then proceeded to make light of the professor's diagnosis. His comments calmed us very much.

About an hour later, a laboratory doctor arrived and performed many tests. He took blood from the Rebbe, etc.

The Rebbe said he wished to daven Shachris. The Rayatz had left to go daven himself, so I alone aided the Rebbe. I tied his Gartel

10. The reference here is to a story mentioned in Bava Metziah 59b, where the sages argued with Rabbi Elazar regarding the status of purity of a certain type of oven. The Gemara writes, that the oven was called the "snake's oven" because the Sages surrounded the topic with so many questions, just as a snake coils around its prey.

on, gave him his glasses and held the Siddur before him. He said the tefilos and Korbonos up until Hodu while lying down. I then took a pillow and propped it beneath him so that he would be half-sitting half-lying down, and placed his Talis on him. Wrapping the Talis with the many stringencies that the Rebbe usually practiced was difficult for me and taxing for him. Once the Talis was on, I suggested to him to rest for a minute from the exertion of putting on the Talis, and he did. I placed his Tefilin on, and he davened. He stopped after Shimusha Raba, and would continue with Rabbeinu Tam's at Mincha time. He drank coffee and milk, and dozed off.

4:00 PM: The Rebbe wanted to daven Mincha. We placed his Rabbeinu Tam's Tefilin on him, and he completed Shachris. After he finished Shachris, I heard him reciting random chapters of Tehilim but I could not make out the words. I did hear him say aloud (Tehilim 23:4), "Even if I walk in the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil." He raised his voice, and completed the verse, "For you are with me." He then began Korbonos for Mincha, recited a few verses from Tehilim chapter 27 and davened Mincha.

Towards evening, a Dr. Mirski arrived to remain at the Rebbe's side together with Dr. Lazinski. He too, remained with the Rebbe until the Histalkus.

The family suggested to the Rebbe, that his bed be moved from his room to his office which was bigger and roomier. The Rebbe refused without reason. Later, we discovered that he did not want to remain lying in bed in the presence of holy books and Chassidus manuscripts. Even when the Rayatz offered to place sheets over all the bookshelves, the Rebbe refused.

11:00 PM: The Rebbe davened Maariv, drank something, recited Shema and went to sleep.

The chassidim of Rostov declared Monday as a day of fasting and prayer. They read the Parshah of “Vayechal,” and recited much Tehilim.

During the course of the week, 10 chassidim gathered each night at the home of R’ Yaakov Heber. They remained awake all night, reciting Tehilim with great concentration and fervor. They poured out their souls and begged Hashem to heal the Rebbe. Amongst them were, R’ Yitzchok Yoel Rafelovitch, R’ Shmuel Gurary, his brother R’ Nosson Gurary and their children.

TUESDAY, 26 ADAR

Early morning: The Rebbetzin asked the Rebbe, “How do you feel? Did you sleep well?” The Rebbe answered, “I slept sufficiently.” The Rebbe’s morning schedule was similar to Mondays, he washed Nettilas Yodayim with our assistance, recited Birchas Hashachar, etc. However, it was evident that the Rebbe was even weaker, and he required more assistance for everything he did. Dr. Landa returned and repeated his opinion that it was not typhus. He suggested slightly different forms of treatment than the day before but as a whole did not change much.

The Rayatz again suggested that the Rebbe’s bed be moved to his office at least for an hour or two, to allow the bedroom to be cleaned and aired out. The Rebbe agreed; the bookshelves in the office were all covered, and the Rebbe was carried in while lying on his bed.

When it came time for the Rebbe to put on his Talis, I suggested to the Rebbe that he use his Shabbos Talis. It was cleaner, and the doctors had warned him to maintain optimal hygiene standards. He said, “The Shabbos Talis is heavier,” paused, and then said, “but nu, bring it to me.” From that day, he davened only wearing the Shabbos Talis until he was eventually buried in it.

I had a personal matter to deal with, and the Rebbe (who knew about it) instructed me to go and take care of the matter. The Rebbe davened while still in the office in a similar fashion to the day before with the Rayatz at his side. Meanwhile, his room was cleaned.

By the time I returned, he had finished davening, and I found that the Rashag had taken my place.

2:00 PM: We carried the Rebbe back to his room. He began to cough, and the Rayatz said to him, "Father, you are coughing." The Rebbe said, "Indeed, the light does not rest in the vessel properly¹¹."

The Rebbe davened Mincha in a similar fashion to Monday, and again recited extra verses and prayers that I could not make out.

That night there was not much change, the Rebbe davened Maariv without a Siddur and prepared to sleep. The Rebbe's sleep was fitful.

WEDNESDAY, 27 ADAR

Early morning: The Rebbetzin asked the Rebbe if he had slept through the night, he answered, "Nu, another night of suffering has passed." That morning, the Rebbe's schedule was similar to Tuesday.

9:00 AM: Prof. Zavadski arrived and immediately summoned Dr. Landa to join him. The professor noticed that the Rebbe's general state of health had improved slightly but he was weaker. The

11. A Kabbalistic reference to an unbalanced relationship between G-dly energy and the acceptor of energy.

doctor advised that dry “bunkes¹²” be administered, as well as other medication.

The Rebbe wanted to daven and I went to find his regular red Siddur. He called out to me, “Bring my old Siddur.” (The “Old Siddur” was the Siddur with the Rebbe’s commentary on Shaarei Tefilah written in the gloss. Previously, the Rebbe only used that Siddur on special occasions. The year that he said Kaddish or on a day that he observed a Yartzeit as well as on Rosh Hashonah and Pesach. The Siddur was later bequeathed to the Rayatz, as stated in the Rebbe’s will.) I brought him the Siddur, and from that day on he used only that one. He davened Shachris in a similar fashion to Tuesday.

Later that day, the Rebbe turned to the Rayatz and said “It would be preferable if you leave this room.” The Rayatz immediately obeyed and exited the room, but he remained standing right near the door. A moment later, the Rayatz could not control himself and walked right back in. The Rebbe turned to him and said again, “You should not be here.” The Rayatz responded in a pleading voice, “Father, why do you want me to go away from here? Why can’t I remain near you?” The Rebbe answered, “This is how it must be. We do not know the nature of my illness and you have a weak heart. Your mother too, should not be here.” (The Rebbe’s intention was that if he had indeed contracted typhus it would be highly contagious. Those with heart conditions needed to be careful not to come in contact with the sick.) The Rayatz responded, “Father, it is not as bad as you make it seem. You have not contracted typhus. Hashem will protect us. I want to remain in your presence.” The conversation ended at that.

12. Cupping therapy is an ancient form of alternative medicine in which a therapist puts special cups on skin for a few minutes to create suction. People get it for many purposes, including to help with pain, inflammation, blood flow, relaxation and well-being, and as a type of deep-tissue massage.

That evening the bunks were administered as per the instructions of the doctors. The Rebbe davened Maariv without a Siddur. The night passed in an uncomfortable manner, the Rebbe's sleep was sporadic. He continuously would fall asleep for a few moments and wake up, and from moment to moment he appeared weaker and weaker.

THURSDAY, 28 ADAR

Thursday morning: Prof. Zavadski returned and noted that the Rebbe's condition had significantly deteriorated. Dr. Landa came after him and calmed us slightly compared to the grim diagnosis of the professor. However, Dr. Landa too, was highly concerned about the Rebbe's weakness which had deteriorated. The professor instructed that the Rebbe receive camphor¹³ injections five times per 24 hour period. Practically, the injections began to be administered on Thursday night. The doctors also instructed to place about 30 dry "bunks" on the Rebbe's body near his lungs, as well as 8 "bunks" that would draw blood.

11:00 AM: The "bunks" were administered. Even though the treatment pained the Rebbe greatly (as he later told us), he gave no indication of any pain, not even a sigh escaped his lips.

Following the treatment, the Rebbe rested, drank some coffee and prepared for davening. The Rebbe was weaker than he had been the day before, and the doctors had instructed us not to touch the areas of his body that had come under the "bunks", so donning the Talis and Tefilin was a challenge. Nevertheless, Hatomim Yaakov Aizik Balanter and myself assisted the Rebbe, and he davened.

13. Camphor (*Cinnamomum camphora*) is a terpene (organic compound) that's commonly used in creams, ointments, and lotions. Camphor oil is the oil extracted from the wood of camphor trees and processed by steam distillation. It can be used topically to relieve pain, irritation, and itching.

Throughout the course of the day, the Rebbe appeared sicker and sicker. The situation seemed dire indeed.

An additional, expert doctor was brought in to remain at the Rebbe's side around the clock. Dr Rabinowitz was his name. He arrived late afternoon and remained until the Histalkus. He too was tremendously devoted to caring for the Rebbe and was completely selfless. He amongst all the others, held a strong affinity for the Rebbe.

From Thursday and on, it was difficult for the Rebbe to sit up or even turn himself without assistance, he was too weak. Furthermore, the doctors warned him not to exert himself and not to move at all.

The Rayatz summoned Yehoshua Folik Gurary, his brother the Rashag, and myself, and appointed us as a Beis Din. In the presence of the Beis Din, he made a legally binding pact that he accepted upon himself certain acts of tzedaka with the hope that Hashem would heal the Rebbe.

10:00 PM: The Rebbe was asleep. I sat in the Rebbe's room together with Yaakov Aizik Balanter, and Dr. Landa would occasionally walk in and out. Suddenly, the Rebbe awoke and began to speak as if he was in the middle of a discussion. Yaakov Aizik and myself approached the Rebbe's bed to hear what he was saying. These are the words we heard, "One surrenders to Hashem at an essential level, his entire existence becomes nullified in a manner that is beyond intellect. The reason being: When the essential light of Hashem shines, automatically one surrenders their entire self at the deepest level. That is what the Possuk says, "To you Hashem, my soul will soar," this regularly occurs when one davens on Shabbos." The Rebbe then concluded, "I am at that level, right now." He then continued speaking but it was difficult to make out the words. We did however hear him say, "Understanding and contemplation. When one contemplates with

a wide berth of understanding, he becomes totally nullified. The ego and selfishness of his soul are destroyed.”

When Dr. Lazinski heard him speaking words of Torah which was forbidden for him, primarily because the doctors did not want him to exert his mind with deep thoughts. The doctor interrupted the Rebbe, saying, “Rebbe, now is not the time for you to say Torah, now you must sleep. When you are healthy, you will teach Torah.” The Rebbe responded, “Indeed, that is why one must be healthy,” the Rebbe went quiet and went to sleep.

Three people heard the Rebbe saying the words “To you Hashem my soul will soar” myself, the Rashag, and Yaakov Aizik. We were thunderstruck and our hearts fell within us; I began to sense doom, however, we did not tell a soul.

Later that evening, the Rebbe turned to Dr. Mirski and said, “Lazinski sits here, takes me by the hand, and says ‘do not think about certain things.’ He does not warn me to avoid things that are forbidden to think, but he encourages me not to think about certain matters in the present situation. [However, he does not understand,] for me, saying [Chassidus] is different, [i.e., Chassidus will not negatively influence my health, on the contrary].”

11:00 PM: The Rebbe davened Maariv without a Siddur. Throughout the night, the Rebbe appeared weaker and weaker, and it was evident that he was critically ill. The camphor injection was administered three times over the course of the night.

FRIDAY, 29 ADAR

8:00 AM: The Rebbe appeared weaker than Thursday. Prof. Kastarian arrived to treat the Rebbe. He joined Dr. Landa, Rabinowitz, Lazinski and Mirski. Following a careful examination, the professor gave his verdict. He told us that the Rebbe was indeed in grave condition, but he sided with Dr. Landa that it did

not seem to be typhus. He warned the Rebbe not to exert himself or move at all.

I washed the Rebbe's hands while he remained lying down, and he remained in that position throughout Birchas Hashachar. I held the Siddur open before him, and he did not move at all. Besides for the fact that he was too weak to move, we would not let him.

10:00 AM: The Rebbe asked for his Siddur; he wanted to daven. I held the Siddur open in front of him, and he began to say Korbonos. As he davened, I could see that the activity was taxing his strength terribly. I wanted to interrupt him so that he could rest for a moment, but I was afraid to do so. However, immediately, I said to myself, "I do not care what happens to me, I will not be a foolish chossid¹⁴, I must ask him to rest for a moment." So when he reached Ketores, I leaned in and said, "Rebbe, would you like to stop for a moment and rest a bit?" He immediately consented because he could feel the negative affect the effort was having on him. He was given some tea to drink and injected with camphor, but it was evident to everyone that his strength had abandoned him.

I entered a side room to consult the Rayatz how we should proceed with preparing the Rebbe to daven. The issue; the doctors had strongly warned the Rebbe not to strain himself or move and placing the Talis and Tefilin on him would necessitate movement and exertion. Especially, due to the fact that the Rebbe was meticulous about how the straps should be wound around his arm and arranging them in the desired fashion would require much exertion. We could not make a decision, even though halachically due to his weakness and illness he was definitely exempt from both Talis and Tefilin. Eventually, the Rayatz decided to ask the Rebbe

14. This expression is a reference to a statement in the Gemara. The Gemara describes an individual who avoids doing a kind act to another person, out of fear of transgressing an Avairah.

to, at least, shorten his davening. The Rayatz walked back into the Rebbe's room and said, "Father, you need to shorten your davening. The doctors do not want you to move too much." The Rebbe did not respond, but he clearly heard what the Rayatz had said.

A few moments later, the Rebbe said to me, "Berel, bring me my Siddur." I thought he wanted to continue saying Korbonos, and although I wished he would rest more, I had to obey. When I brought the Siddur, the Rebbe indicated to turn to the back of the Siddur. I realized that the Rebbe wanted to look into the halochos of davening regarding someone that is critically ill and immobile¹⁵. I began to turn the pages slowly, stalling for time; I knew that a Halachic investigation would tax his mind which was forbidden for him. I hoped he would forego his plan of figuring out the halachah himself and leave it to others. I did not ask him which page to turn to, I just began turning pages. He suddenly stopped me and said, "Bring me a Shulchan Aruch Admur Hazaken volume 1," [evidently, he had decided to deduce the halachah from the source, in Shulchan Aruch].

I walked out of the room, and I immediately turned to the Rayatz and asked what to do. He advised me to not return to the Rebbe's room but rather to remain outside. A few moments later, the Rebbe turned to the Rebbetzin and asked, "Where is Berel?"

She answered, "He will probably walk in any minute." After a considerable chunk of time, the Rebbe realized that I was abstaining from returning and giving him the Shulchan Aruch. He turned to the Rayatz and said, "Tell Berel to look into the Shulchan Aruch, infer the halochos of how one who is very ill should daven, and then inform me of his conclusion. I will rely on his decision." I stood right outside the door and overheard the conversation. The

15. At the back of the Siddur Torah Oir, one can find the section called "Derech Hachayim," containing many halachos of davening.

Rayatz walked out and repeated the dialogue to me. We were unsure how to proceed. We were afraid that if we tell the Rebbe that halachically he is entirely exempt from davening, his spirits will dampen and his mind will be unsettled. On the other hand, to allow him to daven with his Talis and Tefilin would be dangerous, and the doctors would not approve of it. We did not know what to do, so we decided to stall for time. A few moments later, the Rebbe said to the Rebbetzin, "Please summon Berel." She answered, "He is busy checking the halachah in the Shulchan Aruch." A few moments later, the Rebbe asked for me again and the Rebbetzin again said that I was busy checking up the halachah. A few moments later the Rebbe asked again, with a very surprised expression, "Where is Berel, he is still busy checking up the halachah? I meant for him to investigate the possibility of a leniency not a stringency."

The Rashag and myself, who were both standing outside the room listening in, realized that I had to walk in immediately. Clearly, the Rebbe was concerned about this matter, and delaying was not making him any calmer. I told the Rayatz that I would try to be as lenient as possible, and hopefully the Rebbe would accept my decision. I would forbid the Rebbe to wear Tefilin, for that involved the most exertion which the doctors had warned about, but as for saying words of davening, that was not so taxing and I would permit it. The Rayatz answered that under no circumstance would he allow that. On the contrary, the one thing that, in his opinion, the Rebbe must do is wear Tefilin.

Meanwhile, I was forced to enter the Rebbe's room, and as soon as the Rebbe saw me he asked, "Nu? What [did you come up with]?" [My knees were shaking and] I began to mumble, stutter and stumble. I blurted out a few non-conclusive irrelevant half-sentences, "Generally, the most important part of davening is Shema and Shemona Esreh. Mideoirasa, one can fulfill his obligation of saying Shema by just reciting the first line, and with

regards to Shemoneh Esreh, even someone that is busy or travelling can suffice by reciting Havinenu¹⁶. Although, in the rainy season, we avoid saying Havinenu, one may still suffice with a shortened tefilah, comprising the first three and last three Brachos of Shemoneh Esreh." I stopped speaking, and thought to myself, "I will not even mention Pesukei Dezimrah." Almost immediately, he asked, "What about Pesukei Dezimra?" I answered, "I believe that Boruch She'omar, one chapter of Tehilim, and Yishtabach would suffice." He listened to everything I told him. I had not mentioned one word about the Tefilin, I decided that if he would ask about Tefilin I would do everything possible to make sure that he would not wear them. Again he immediately grasped what I was thinking and asked, "What about Tefilin?" I began to mumble, "I believe that Tefilin is like all other Mitzvos, and for a critically ill person even Shabbos and Yom Kippur are violated." I did not finish the verdict. I had thought to say, "and since the doctors have forbidden you to lay Tefilin, you are exempt." Before I had a chance to say those words, the Rayatz interrupted me and said, "No father, you may certainly lay Tefilin." The Rayatz called Dr. Mirski, and whispered in his ear, "Tell the Rebbe that he may wear Tefilin." Dr. Mirski turned to the Rebbe and said, "Rebbe, I permit you to wear Tefilin." The discussion ended there, as there was nothing more I could say, the doctor had permitted it. I did however add, "But Rebbe, we will tighten the knots of the Tefilin for you, you are not to assist us at all," and he agreed.

I brought his Siddur, opened to Boruch She'amar and held it open before him. He recited it and I turned to Ashrei; I thought that the one chapter of Tehilim he would choose would be that one, (as stated in Shulchan Aruch). However, he did not begin saying the words so I understood that he would prefer a different chapter. I

16. A one-paragraph abbreviation of the Shemoneh Esreh.

turned to Hallelu Es Hashem Min Hashamayim, he nodded and began to read. I then pointed at Yishtabach which he recited also.

I put down the Siddur and said, “Rebbe, now we will put on your Tefilin.” The Rayatz and I wound the Tefilin on him, he did not assist us at all. It was a very difficult task because we tried as hard as possible not to move his body at all. I then took the Siddur and pointed to the Bracha of Yotzer Oir, [even though we had not discussed whether he should recite Birchos Krias Shema, I was sure that he would like to say at least the opening short Bracha]. He recited the first paragraph of Shema, the first 3 and last 3 Brachos of Shemoneh Esreh. Interestingly, he also recited the Brachos of Velamalshinim and Veliyurashalayim, he recited them quietly and without Hashem’s name. As soon as he concluded Shemoneh Esreh, we removed the Tefilin and left him to rest.

Over the course of the day, the camphor injection was administered many times. A Dr. Tatarski joined the medical team that day. During the course of the afternoon, the Rebbe asked me on numerous occasions what time it was.

6:30 PM: The Rebbe said to me, “Berel, go and have a look on my desk, there is a calendar. Check what time Shabbos begins.” I went to check, and astonishingly, that very moment was exactly the minute that Shabbos began. I returned to his room and told him as such. He said to me, “Please call the Rebbetzin.” I went to call her and found that she had just lit Shabbos candles. The Rebbe said to her, “I would like to have my nails cut in honour of Shabbos.” She answered, “Now, it will be difficult for you, soon, with Hashem’s help, you will be healthier, and then we will cut them.” The Rebbe responded with an exasperated and doubtful tone of voice, “Sunday...?” As if to say, who knows what will be by Sunday. The Rebbe then turned to the Rebbetzin and said, “Now is the time to light Shabbos candles.” She responded, “I have just done so.”

9:00 PM: Dr. Abramowitz came to administer the leech treatment. He prepared it and proceeded to place 3 leeches under each of the Rebbe's ears. When we, who were all standing around, saw the blood flowing out, our hearts melted and we cried bitterly. We could not contain the feelings anymore. The doctor removed the leeches and wrapped the Rebbe's head in bandages. The image was heart-breaking, we could not control ourselves and we cried and cried. However, we made sure that the Rebbe did not see us so emotional.

Throughout Shabbos, we did whatever was necessary to improve the Rebbe's health and comfort. We did not refrain from touching and moving Muktzeh objects. The Rebbe noticed this, but did not comment. We gave him coffee to drink and let him rest. He slept sporadically and appeared even weaker.

Later that night: I went to sleep on a bench in one of the side rooms of the Rebbe's house, and Yaakov Aizik took my place at the Rebbe's bedside. The Rebbe began davening Maariv in a loud voice, even though already then, it was difficult for him to speak. Once he had finished davening, and had taken the medication that the doctors prescribed for the evening, the Rebbetzin asked, "Can I give you some coffee to drink?" and she placed some of the liquid on a spoon and offered it to him. The Rebbe refused, [as he had not made Kiddush yet].

Soon after, Yaakov Aizik too went to sit down in a nearby room and dozed off, leaving the chossid Tzvi Hersh Gurary to tend to the Rebbe. Yaakov Aizik was dozing off and he heard the Rebbe calling him, "Yaakov Aizik..." he immediately came running in to the Rebbe's room. He asked, "What is it, Rebbe?" the Rebbe said, "Kiddush." Yaakov Aizik asked, "Would you like to make Kiddush on tea or coffee?" the Rebbe answered, "on a Kezayis of challah." Yaakov Aizik consulted the doctors and they permitted the Rebbe to eat a Kezayis of dry challah soaked in coffee. The Rebbe then asked Yaakov Aizik to call the Rebbetzin but she had fallen asleep

for a few moments, (she had barely slept the entire week). The Rebbe inquired, “Has she heard Kiddush?” and when the response was confirmed as positive, the Rebbe agreed to make Kiddush without her.

The Rebbe’s hands were washed, and the soaked challah was handed to him. He recited Yom Hashishi quietly and Hamotzi out loud. He began reciting the Bracha of Kiddush and stopped 2 lines in, at the word Hinchilonu. He was silent for a few moments and said, “Nu,” Yaakov Aizik thought that the Rebbe had finished Kiddush, so he said to the Rebbe, “Do you want the challah?” and the Rebbe did not answer. Yaakov Aizik realized that the Rebbe had not finished Kiddush, so he said, “You are up to the word Hinchilonu,” and the Rebbe said again, “Nu.” Yaakov Aizik realized that the Rebbe wished to complete Kiddush, so he asked the Rebbe, “Would you like to finish Kiddush?” and the Rebbe motioned in the positive. So Yaakov Aizik began reciting the words of Kiddush from where the Rebbe was up to, leading the Rebbe word by word, and the Rebbe repeated after him until the end of the Bracha. The Rebbe said a few more words following the Bracha, and then said the Bracha of Hamotzi again and ate the Kezayis. We did not hear him recite Birchas Hamazon.

Following which the Rebbe turned to Yaakov Aizik and said, “Kerias Shema.” Yaakov Aizik asked, “Should I read it to you?” and the Rebbe nodded. Yaakov Aizik led the Rebbe word by word through the first paragraph of the Shema. Dr. Lazinski then said, “Enough Rebbe, it is time for you to sleep.” The Rebbe said, “I will recite the paragraph that brings protection,” and he turned to Yaakov Aizik and said, “Nu.” Yaakov Aizik asked, “Would you like to recite the second paragraph of Shema?” the Rebbe did not answer. Yaakov Aizik asked again, “Would you like to recite Hamapil?” and the Rebbe nodded. Yaakov Aizik recited word for word of the Bracha, and the Rebbe recited the Bracha in an undertone. However the phrase, “Illuminate my eyes, lest I sleep

until death" was recited by the Rebbe in a loud voice. The Rebbe then went to sleep. He would sleep for a few moments at a time and wake up, the night did not pass smoothly.

SHABBOS, PARSHAS VAYIKRA, 1 NISSAN

The Rav of the city, Rabbi Y. Berman, announced that every member of the Jewish community of Rostov must gather in their respective shuls that afternoon to recite Tehilim and beseech Hashem to have mercy on the Rebbe. So it was, Jews of many affinities came to shuls and prayed for the Rebbe. Being that all the Jews of Rostov, chassidim and not, trembled at the mention of the name of the Rebbe. However, alas, all our prayers were to no avail.

Early morning: I noticed that the Rebbe was sweating profusely, and I pointed this out to Dr. Rabinowitz and Dr. Lazinski. They were on duty at that time but had both dozed off. They measured his temperature, and it measured 37.5c, which was lower than his average of 38.5c. I saw their expressions denote fear so I asked them, "Why is he sweating so?" They answered, "We don't know, but it might be a good sign."

8:00 AM: Prof. Zavadksi and Dr. Landa arrived. The professor interpreted the recent change as being negative and his prognosis was dire indeed. In his opinion, all hope was lost and it was a matter of time. Dr. Landa was more optimistic and he said, "We will see over the next hours if the sweating is a good sign. If his temperature rises, we will know that it is a step in the right direction." [His words calmed us slightly. In truth, Dr. Landa already knew that the end was imminent. However, he did not want to break the spirits of the Rebbe's family and the chassidim, so he pretended to be doubtful.] The professor's words spread throughout the chassidim and had a strong impact on them; their faces fell.

It was very difficult for the Rebbe to speak. His breathing was weighty also, as if his throat was blocked. It was hard for him to even drink a bit of coffee. A few times during that day, the Rebbe asked me the time. He received many injections that day, camphor, caffeine, etc. almost every half an hour another injection would be administered.

2:00 PM: The Rebbe asked me, "Have you davened?" I answered that I had, and then he asked, "What about everyone else?" I answered, "There are probably some chassidim that have not davened." [I did not want to tell him directly, that it was late in the day, and almost all the chassidim had already davened.] A few moments later, the Rebbe turned to me and said, "Please gather a Minyan to daven and read the Torah here, and have Yankel Landau (who was the regular Ba'al Koreh) join them. I will listen in, after all it is Shabbos, Rosh Chodesh and Parshas Hachodesh. The doctors are trying to prevent me from doing anything, but their rules and limitations must also be bent a little." I said, "I will go and see if I can find a Minyan who have not davened yet." I did not go gather the Minyan, I remained near his bed and he did not mention the Minyan again.

2:15 PM: The Rebbe turned to me and mumbled, "I want you to recite the first Bracha of Birchas Hashachar with me." I asked, "Al Nettilas Yodayim or Hanosen lasechvi?" he did not respond, and I did not know if he heard me or not. I did not persist because every time he wanted to speak he had to muster all his energy and it clearly exhausted him. I decided to begin reciting Hanosen lasechvi because I did not want him to recite Al Nettilas Yodayim, for that would require him to wash his hands which would strain him. A moment later, he indicated that he wished to wash his hands. I wet his hands slightly, and led him in reciting the Bracha. Even though that day he spoke with great difficulty, to the surprise of everyone around, when he recited the Bracha his voice boomed clearly. He then laid back to rest, and I remained at his bedside.

5:00 PM: I walked out of the Rebbe's room and Reb Tzvi Hersh Gurary took my place standing near the Rebbe's bed. Tzvi Hersh noticed that the Rebbe's face had changed and its appearance was frightening. Tzvi Hersh came running out of the room to call me. I immediately reentered and noticed that indeed the Rebbe's face was burning red. His gaze rested upon us and we were shaking in our boots, we did not know what to think or do. The doctors noticed and did all they could, using whatever medicine and treatments they could get their hands on, irrespective of cost or energies used. They monitored his pulse constantly. The doctors did not inform us of the goings-on, but at that point they all knew that naturally there was no hope for the Rebbe to make it out. They later told us that most of Shabbos the Rebbe's pulse was almost non-existent, by that stage the injections bore no results. The chassidim who were all gathered, understood that the situation was dire indeed.

Towards evening, the entire community of chassidim in Rostov gathered in the Zal, (the big room at the left side of the complex where the Minyanim took place), they did not enter the part of the complex where the Rebbe's house was, so as not to disturb the Rebbe. They all said Tehilim and begged Hashem for mercy with incessant tears.

MOTZEI SHABBOS, 2 NISSAN

Immediately following Shabbos: The doctors instructed that much water be heated to warm the Rebbe's feet which had begun to go cold.

Dr. Landa called over the community leaders, Shmuel Gurary, Tzvi Hersh Gurary and Reb Avrohom Boruch Poizner and he revealed to them that naturally there was no hope for the Rebbe's survival. He asked them to relay this information to the Rayatz, in case he had any final matters he wished to ask his father, the Rebbe.

However, none of the chassidim agreed to be the one to relay the awful news. They decided that the next time the Rayatz would ask Dr. Landa for an update, Dr. Landa would begin to break the news to him slowly. A few minutes later, the Rayatz did indeed ask Dr. Landa how things are progressing, and the doctor began to slowly try and give the devastating news over to the Rayatz. The Rayatz listened but did not internalize the harsh reality, (his mind would not let him), all he gleaned from the doctor was that the situation was critical. [In truth, it is difficult to describe what was going through our minds at that time. It was absurd, everyone knew and understood that the Rebbe was on the verge of Histalkus but our minds refused to grasp the facts. Even at the moment of Histalkus when all the chassidim cried out Shema Yisroel in one joint voice, our minds would not accept the reality that our Rebbe had departed from among us.]

9:00 PM: The Rebbe spoke indiscernible words, the only few words we could hear were, “The unification of Yichudah Ila’ah and Yichudah Tata’a.” His speech was heavy and difficult, he spoke softly and seemed to be talking to himself.

10:00 PM: The Rayatz did not move from the Rebbe’s bedside for even a moment, he stood bent over near the Rebbe’s bed.

The Rebbe suddenly turned to the Rayatz and said,

"איך גיי אין הימל, די כתבים לאז איך פאר אייך נעמט מיך אין זאל וועלען מיר זיין אין איינעם"

“I am going to heaven. I am leaving my writings for you. Take me into the Zal, we will be together.”

Understandably, when the Rayatz heard these words addressed to him he was shocked to the core.

When the Rebbe saw that the Rayatz was so deeply moved and emotionally affected, he said,

"!...מוחיך !... מוחיך ?... התפעלות ?... התפעלות"

"Excitement...? Excitement...? Intellect...! Intellect...!"

It was evident to all of us standing around watching the interaction that at that moment, with his holy words, the Rebbe removed the Rayatz's natural emotion of excitement and placed into him great intellectual powers. It was blatantly evident; from that moment onwards the Rayatz become calm and calculated, he engaged the events with powerful intellect. It was incredible to see how from that moment, the Rayatz stood by the Rebbe's side until the Histalkus dressed in his Gartel and his Shabbos hat. He stood for those few hours in the same position that he would stand when he would face the Rebbe during Maamorim. It is impossible to describe the scene, how much more so, to put it down on paper.

We carried the Rebbe in his bed up into the Zal - the room where he had always sat learning and davening, the room from which he spread his great light to the whole world - we placed the bed at the eastern wall of the Zal, his head towards north and his feet towards south. [The Rayatz led the davening for the following year from exactly that spot.] The bed was a small distance from the wall, enabling people to stand around on all sides. The doctors were all at hand, administering injections every 20 minutes or so and keeping the Rebbe's feet in warm water.

The Rebbe began speaking and requested something, it was difficult to understand exactly what it was he was asking for. Yaakov Aizik suggested, perhaps the Rebbe wanted to wash Nettilas Yodayim, and some water was brought. The Rebbetzin asked the Rebbe if he would like some milk or coffee, he indicated that he wanted coffee. When the cup of coffee was brought near his mouth, his lips were moving and it was evident that he was reciting Havdolah, [reminiscent of the Alter Rebbe who was also Nistalek on Motzei Shabbos and recited Havdolah on coffee]. He drank some coffee, and laid back. His lips were moving and the Rayatz

leaned in and heard him reciting the second paragraph of the Shema. Most of the time, his eyes were closed, and his breathing was difficult and heavy. It was obvious that he was suffering terribly, and each breath escaped with a deep sigh crushing the body and spirit of every chossid present.

12:00 AM: The chassidim remained in the Zal reciting Tehilim with heart rendering sobs praying that Hashem lengthen the life of the Rebbe. They decided to add the name “Chaim” to the Rebbe’s name. The chassidim formed a Beis Din of three members, (Reb Shmuel Gurary, Reb Zalman Havlin, Reb Yisroel Nevler), and in their presence many chassidim came forth and pledged to gift the Rebbe with years from their own lives. The three members of the Beis Din themselves each donated half a year to the Rebbe. The Rebbetzin approached the Beis Din and with bitter tears donated 10 years of her life to the Rebbe. The Beis Din did not deem such an extensive period as appropriate and they encouraged her to donate half a year or a full year, but she persisted. Eventually they agreed that the Rebbetzin would give 2 years. I, too, donated half a year. Following the Beis Din scene, the chassidim continued saying Tehilim and davening intensely.

The Rayatz walked out of the Zal for a few moments and stood in the hallway near the stairs. He stood, wearing his Gartel, bent over, deep in thought. He was reciting some words of tefilah or Tehilim, crying deeply, and singing a nigun with great dveykus. The nigun he sang was the well known nigun of the Alter Rebbe that the Rebbe used to sing while davening on the high holidays. The Rayatz went back to the Zal and called in his daughters to come join him near the Rebbe’s bed, he wanted the Rebbe to see them.

2:00 AM: The Rayatz stood next to the bed with his head bent. Suddenly the Rebbe lifted his hand and began to move his lips, the Rayatz understood that the Rebbe wanted to bless him. The Rayatz lowered his head and rested the Rebbe’s hand on his head, and the Rebbe’s lips continued to move. Following which, the Rayatz arose

and said, "Tateh, father, here are the children, Chanah, Mushkah, Sheindel." One by one, they each bent down and the Rebbe's hand rested on their heads as his lips continued to move.

The Rayatz asked all the chassidim to leave the room, just the family should remain. Within seconds the room emptied, even the doctors walked out. [I, too, walked out but later the Rayatz recounted to me what had occurred]. The Rayatz's eldest daughter, Chanah, stood before the Rebbe. He looked at her face and lifted his hand. The Rayatz assisted him to place his hand on her head, just as he blessed them on Erev Yom Kippur, and this time his words were clear. He said Yevorechecho and some other tefilos, and they could hear him say the name Chanah. So it was with Mushkah and Sheindel, they received the same Bracha, and both heard their names being mentioned. The Rebbe then placed both his hands on the Rayatz's head and said Yevorechecho, as well as many more tefilos and Brachos. [Later, when the Rayatz recounted the events, he told me that he could not determine many things the Rebbe had told him. However, I suspect that he understood a lot more but did not want to reveal them.] The Rayatz clearly heard him recite the Possuk, "May Hashem be upon him, and may he be elevated." A certain young man was called into the room, and the Rebbe blessed him too. It was the Rashag, (at that time he was not yet engaged to the Rayatz's daughter, Chanah). The doctors and chassidim all returned.

The Rayatz walked out of the Zal again and sat on a bench in one of the nearby rooms. He sat crying and davening with a soft nigun. I followed him and sat down in that room, also. He paced the room, walking to and from, and then walked over to me and grabbed me by the shoulders. He screamed at me, "Gevald !!! Gevald !!! We have stone hearts." He continued crying, and then turned to me again and said loudly, "Berel, what do you say?" I had no idea what to answer. I said, "Hashem Himself can help us." He returned to the Zal and stood in the same position as before. The Rebbe was

lying with his eyes closed, sighing deeply with each difficult and heavy breath. Every few moments it would seem as if he stopped breathing, and the Rayatz would cry out, "Tateh, Tateh." When those standing around heard the cries, their hearts were torn to shreds. Each time it happened, and it did happen a few times, the same story would repeat. Each time the Rayatz would cry out, the Rebbe would open his eyes and stare at the Rayatz.

This continued until about 4:00 AM, when it became clear to all that these were the final moments. The Rebbe's eyes were closed and he had almost stopped breathing, the Rayatz cried out, "Tateh, Tateh," and the Rebbe opened his eyes wide and smiled at the Rayatz. He closed his eyes again and it seemed as if he had stopped breathing, the Rayatz again cried out, "Tateh, Tateh." The Rebbe's eyes opened and he looked at the Rayatz, two tears streamed down the Rebbe's cheeks, and his breathing grew weaker. A few moments¹⁷ later, he drew in his hands and feet and turned his head upwards (until then he had been lying slightly to the side, facing the Rayatz and the chassidim), his face contracted¹⁸ and it was clear that his breathing had ceased. Every person in the room cried out in unison, "Shema Yisroel Hashem Elokeinu Hashem Echad." The people screamed, cried and wailed bitterly. Many candles were immediately lit. The doctors tested the Rebbe's breathing using a feather beneath his nose, but alas it was to no avail. The hysterical screaming and wailing intensified from all the chassidim and Anash standing there. They immediately covered his face and his holy Neshomah ascended to heaven in holiness and purity, leaving us behind to grieve and sigh.....

.....

17. According to the record of Reb Avrohom Boruch Poizner: The Rebbe first drew in his hands and feet and then 2 tears fell from his eyes.

18. According to the record of Reb Avrohom Boruch Poizner: The Rebbe face contracted just as it would when he blew Shofar on Rosh Hashonah.

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Chassidim who had been to Mikva on Shabbos morning were requested to come forth. Reb Zalman Havlin, Reb Yisroel Nevler, Reb Avrohom Boruch Poizner and Reb Tzvi Kutman came forth, as well as a few others. They lifted the Rebbe's body and placed it upon the floor, near the entrance to the room, his feet facing towards the door. The Rebbe's body was covered in his silk Shabbos clothes. At that point, many chassidim ran to the Mikva, while the remaining group completed the Tehilim in the Zal.

The members of the Chevrah Kadisha arrived. A group of chassidim left to the cemetery to choose a plot for the Rebbe, they were: Reb Shmuel Gurary, Reb Nosson Gurary, Reb Tzvi Hersh Gurary, Reb Zalman Havlin, Reb Yisroel Nevler, and myself. We chose a spot and returned to the Rebbe's home. Reb Shmuel Gurary then took the Rayatz to the cemetery to show the Rayatz the spot we had chosen and get his consent. They returned about an hour later. By that time the news had spread like wildfire, the entire community of Rostov began to come to pay respects.

The Rebbetzin and the Rayatz immediately handed the keys of the Rebbe's office to Reb Shmuel Gurary instructing him to search if the Rebbe had left a will with instructions regarding the burial. Reb Shmuel Gurary and the Rashag went looking in the Rebbe's office and immediately came across the will in the top drawer of the Rebbe's desk, he had clearly placed it there with the intention that it be clearly visible and easily found. They also found a personal letter from the Rebbe to the Rayatz near the will. However, the will did not contain instructions regarding the burial or anything of that sort.

Reb Shmuel Gurary and the Rashag also gathered all of the Rebbe's handwritten books and binders that had been in his office,

and brought them down to the Rayatz's house. By that time, almost all the chassidim had been to Mikva and returned, as well as many other community members.

The Bimmah used only on Rosh Hashonah and Yom Kippur, as well as the Shtender that the Rebbe used everyday in the Zal were dismantled to use the wood for the Rebbe's coffin. A few more Shtenders from the shul were dismantled to create a platform/bed for the Rebbe's coffin to be carried on.

Before the taharah began, the Rebbetzin walked into the Zal and requested that everyone leave. She stayed inside alone, and from the outside we could hear her crying profusely and speaking many heartfelt words.

SUNDAY, 2 NISSAN

1:00 PM: The taharah began. Two announcements were made, a) anyone that had not been to the Mikva should not enter the room, b) only temimim and a few of the older chassidim should be involved in the taharah process. [Understandably, every chossid wished to have a part in the great Zechus of performing the taharah. However, there was a collective understanding that those that served the Rebbe so faithfully during his lifetime, should have this merit. Other chassidim assisted in other ways, by bringing the equipment and supplies etc.]

A large table (that later became the table that the Rayatz would sit at while he said Maamorim) was brought into the Zal and placed in the middle of the room. They placed the table at a slight angle and lifted the Rebbe's body onto the table. A certain Polish chossid who was well versed in the process of taharah stood near the table instructing the temimim how it should be done, he himself did not touch the Rebbe's body.

Many bochurim that were Kohanim also did their part in joining the taharah. Some of them did not even ask the Rabbonim if halachically it was permitted, they simply felt that they had to. Others asked the Rav, R' Rafolevitch, and he answered from amidst an overwhelming emotional turmoil, "Of course it is permitted, the body of a Tzadik does not become tamei."

The Rebbe's body was washed with linen. The linen was an inheritance passed down from generation to generation within the family of the Rabbeim. These very strips of linen were the ones that were used for the Alter Rebbe's taharah, as well as all the other Rabbeim until that point. The Alter Rebbe's handkerchief was also inherited through the generations in the Rebbeim's families and that was used to wipe and clean the Rebbe's body also. [Astonishingly, a mere few weeks before the Histalkus, the Rebbe had asked the Rebbetzin if she knew where the linens and handkerchief were kept.]

Before the taharah began, Reb Zalman Havlin and others were appointed in charge of dividing up the taharah between the bochurim, so that each bochur would receive a fair share. I washed the Rebbe's hands and face. Following which Reb Shmuel Gurary and myself were given the Zechus of pouring the water over the Rebbe.

The Rebbe's body was then clothed. The shirt was one that had belonged to his father, the Rebbe Maharash. The hat and pants were sewn from new linen, this too was done by the temimim. The Kittel was the Rebbe's own, that he would use on Yom Kippur. The Rayatz then stepped forward and wrapped the belt/Gartel around the Rebbe's body, and then he tore Keriah.

During the taharah, we were amazed to see that the Rebbe's face was radiant, it seemed alive. Until the moment that his face was covered for the final time, he had a hint of a smile on his face.

The Rebbe's body was wrapped in his Shabbos Talis, (the Talis mentioned above, the one he used while davening during the final few days). An additional layer of linen shrouds were wrapped around the Rebbe's body over the Talis. Moments before the Rebbe's body was about to be carried out, the Rebbetzin and the rest of the Rebbe's family approached the table and ripped Keriah.

The body was then transported to the cemetery. After the Rebbe's body had been lowered down into the grave but before it was covered, the Rayatz appointed 3 chassidim (Reb Avrohom Boruch Poizner, Reb Eliezer Karasik and one other) as a Beis Din and declared that the Rebbe was being buried there on the condition that it would be permissible to relocate the Rebbe's body to Lubavitch in the future. Following that, the pit was filled and the Rayatz said Kaddish.

When everyone returned from the funeral, the Rayatz and the Rebbetzin entered the Rebbe's office and removed their shoes as per the halachah. The meal following the funeral took place there, too. The rest of the community returned to the house also, and they too removed their shoes and sat on the floor.

The Rayatz was chazan for Mincha and Maariv, and he davened at great length crying deeply throughout. Afterwards, many of the chassidim went home. A select few chassidim including myself, remained at the house and slept there for the duration of the week of Shivah.

Following Maariv, when most of the chassidim had went on their way, I remained in the Rebbe's office with the Rayatz. We spoke for quite an extensive period of time and amongst other things he said to me as follows, "Now, I look back and I can see that the Rebbe was preparing for this event. Over the last few months he told me many things that were a "will" of sorts. I did not dream that this was his intention in telling me these matters." The Rayatz raised his tone and in a broken voice said, "Gevald Gevald, where

was my intuition?! The entire winter the Rebbe had been telling me so clearly and pointedly that the Histalkus is coming, and I did not realize it.”

In the forthcoming weeks, the Rayatz was chazan for all of the tefilos and he recited Kaddish. He davened at length, with great fervor, devotion and flowing tears. His tefilos caused all those surrounding him to feel a spiritual awakening and an emotional connection to Hashem. When he davened, all those davening with him felt like one would feel on Yom Kippur. The Rayatz later mentioned that during the year of mourning he davened with the intentions spelled out by the AriZal in the books of Kabbalah. The tune in which he davened was identical to that of the Rebbe.

SHABBOS, PARSHAS TZAV, 8 NISSAN (THE FINAL DAY OF SHIVAH)

Between Mincha and Maariv: The majority of the chassidim present were in the Zal waiting for Maariv time to come. The Rayatz was alone in the Rebbe's office and he summoned me into the office. I entered; he began to speak with words that bespoke a broken heart, he said, "My father instructed me to teach Chassidus to the community, but who am I? How can I bring myself to stand before the chassidim and teach Chassidus?" His great humility drove him to continue bemoaning the fact that he was not worthy or befitting of saying Maamorim, however, I was not too interested in hearing him speak negatively about himself and I told him that. He continued, "But my father instructed me to teach Chassidus, therefore, I want to recite a Maamor to you, thereby I will fulfill my obligation to heed my father's instructions." I obviously agreed. He did not want to sit down, rather we walked about to and fro and he repeated the final Maamor of the Rebbe, "Reishis Goyim Amalek" that the Rebbe had taught at the Purim Farbrengen. He repeated the Maamor verbatim and added many words of his own explanation.

He finished, and as I was about to walk back from the office to the Zal, he asked me not to tell a soul what he had just done. I asked, "Why not? I would love to tell everyone," (I was sure that the chassidim would be overjoyed to hear that the Rayatz had begun to say Chassidus, which is a sign of being a Rebbe.) However, he persisted in his request.

As I walked out, I turned to Reb Shmuel Gurary and secretly told him what had happened. He, who had not been warned about the privacy, went ahead and excitedly told as many chassidim as he possibly could. Very soon, all the chassidim knew about the Maamor, and many were comforted by the knowledge that sooner or later the Rayatz would take over the mantle of leadership of the Lubavitch dynasty.

EPILOGUE



Introduction¹⁹: The year was 5708/1948. A member of the *Chabad* community of Rostov successfully escaped the clutches of communism that gripped the Soviet Union and regularly did not allow its citizens exit. Upon his arrival to democratic Paris, he penned a letter to the Rebbe Rayatz, who was then living in the USA.

In the letter, he describes in detail an event that had transpired in the month of *Adar*, 8 years prior, [5700/1940]. In that year, the *chassidim* and *temimim* of Rostov displayed much *Mesiras Nefesh* and performed the illegal task of relocating the Rebbe Rashab's grave. They removed the grave from the old cemetery which had received government permission to be demolished and industrialized. The Rebbe's body was then reburied in the new cemetery of Rostov and the *Ohel* was built around it. [That *Ohel* stands to this very day.]

The letter is out of order and vague, the terminology used is awkward, however there is enough information there for the reader to understand the intention of the author, and to appreciate the extent of the *Mesiras Nefesh* involved.

19. This introduction was written by Rabbi Rivkin at the time that this Sefer was first published.

For obvious reasons, I have excluded sections of the letter as well as the names of the *chassidim* involved²⁰, (their merit is great and their names deserve to be engraved among the righteous for generations to come).

The following are the excerpts:

... When Reb A. returned from the city of Charkov, he informed us that he had received a letter from the Rayatz with instructions to relocate the Rebbe's grave. Immediately following that, Reb M. L. travelled to Yekaterinoslav to consult Reb Levi Yitzcok Shneersohn²¹ for instructions on how to go about the task of relocating the holy remains of our Rebbe.

Reb M. L. returned and gathered a *Minyan*, they were, Reb T. K., Reb M. K., Reb M. Sh., Reb Y. K., Reb M. V. L., Reb Ch. Y. E., Reb N. L., Reb A. from Charkov, Reb Y. A. and me. We all accepted upon ourselves to fast that day, and to pour 9 *Kavin* of water on ourselves²². We gathered in the house of Reb M. Sh., and we fashioned a sturdy, smooth bed built with no nails or screws.

Late that night, we went to the cemetery. The darkness was heavy and unusually thick, the skies opened and it was pouring with rain, and there was still snow and ice remaining on the ground. We neared the grave and all individually asked forgiveness from the Rebbe beginning with Reb Y. K. and Reb T. K.. We dug around the grave and sent three members of our group down, Reb T. stood near the Rebbe's head, Reb M. K. stood near the middle of the Rebbe's body, and I stood at his feet. Reb M. V. remained above the hole instructing us how to proceed.

20. Seemingly, the intention here is to maintain the safety and security of some of these chassidim who at the time of the printing of this Sefer remained under communist oppression.

21. Our Rebbe's father.

22. A lesser form of purification, in situations where a Mikva is unavailable.

The *Talis* was intact and covered his face and beard; the head, body and feet were all complete. There was one slight "injury", one of the heels was bent out of shape and slightly cracked, Reb T. corrected this. We lifted the holy body together with three *Tefochim* of earth from inside the grave, brought it up and placed it on the bed.

The daughter of Reb N. L. gave us 12 meters of linen sheet, and I brought a large new material covering [tarp] with which to cover the bed. Originally we had intended to carry the bed from the old cemetery to the new one, but we quickly realized that it would be impossible. The bed, body and earth together were too heavy and we were all weakened from fasting that day. Additionally, the heavy foggy darkness combined with the rain made the job of carrying it on our shoulders physically implausible. We realized that the only possibility was to procure a hearse, but without a permit that too seemed impossible.

An idea was raised, to contact a gentleman, the son of Reb Y. L. who had deserted the path of *Yiddishkeit* and had joined the communist party. He, as a government employee, was in charge of and had access to the hearse we sought. I went to his house, and with tears in my eyes, I begged him to lend me the hearse so that I could use it to bury someone. Obviously, I did not dare tell him who it was I wished to transport and bury, for if he would have known the truth he would have instantly banished me from his house and no amount of begging would help. He was an ardent communist and fiercely opposed to any sort of religion. For that reason, I hid the truth and told him that a family-member of mine needed to be buried. He refused. I begged and pleaded, and I said, "I will not leave your house unless you accede to my request." After much nagging, he finally bent to my pleas and feeling bad for me, agreed. He made a phone call and arranged the hearse to be given to me.

I returned to the old cemetery with the hearse, and it was with great difficulty that we managed to move the body and the earth into the hearse. We then all entered the back of the hearse and created a human wall around the casket so that the driver would not see what was inside.

We arrived at the new cemetery, but the hearse could not drive in, from there onwards, we carried the casket. We began carrying it to the designated spot where we had already dug a grave, and it was with great difficulty. Many times along the way we had to stop and rest as the weather and our physical state both contributed to making it even harder of a process.

When we arrived at the spot, we did everything precisely as per the instructions of Reb Levi Yitzchok, in a manner befitting of the honour of the Rebbe. . . [Parts of the letter are cut out at this point.]

The following day, the son of Reb Y. L. discovered that we had used the hearse to transport and rebury the Rebbe. Reb Y. L. informed us that his daughter-in-law, was terribly afraid that this illegal business would be discovered. She was sure that were that to happen, her husband would lose his job and would suffer terrible punishments from his employers. I returned to their house to calm their spirits, and I said, "You have done a noble and holy deed, I promise you that the merit of the Rebbe will protect you from any harm." So it was, Thank G-d, the job was done without having been noticed. Within a few days, Reb T. K. also relocated the remains of Reb Shmuel Gurary and Reb Nosson Gurary. He gathered their remains, bought graves, transported them to the new cemetery and placed them in the same order as they had been laid in the old cemetery.

Reb M. L. travelled to the city of L. to visit the *chassidim* there and collect money to construct a new *Ohel* using the stones from the old *Ohel*. The new *Ohel* was slightly smaller than the old one and we used the extra stones to build a *Mikva* in the home of Reb N.

L.. I would visit the *Ohel* periodically to keep it in shape, recently, not many people have been coming to the *Ohel* but many letters are sent there, Reb N. L. and I would receive the letters and place them in the *Ohel*.

After Hitler (may his memory be obliterated) and his armies were defeated, I returned to Rostov. I returned to the *Ohel* and found the door broken, I borrowed money from ... and fixed the door. I then wrote a letter to Reb L. in Moscow who gathered money from the *chassidim* there, to repay me; he himself also paid a handsome sum. I constructed a spiky metal fence around the grave so that no foreign hands will touch it. I also placed an eternal candle in the office of the cemetery. I spoke with Mr. S. and he agreed to oversee the upkeep of the *Ohel*, and in return, I promised to mention his name to the Rayatz.

Many of those who helped bury the Rebbe were themselves later buried within a few meters of the *Ohel*.

May the merit of the Rebbe grant us the opportunity to see the Rebbe Rayatz very soon with the coming of the righteous *Moshiach*.

Signed...

לעילוי נשמת
הווי"ח אי"א ר' שראגא פייוויש בן ר' מאיר ע"ה
גולדהירש
נפטר ביום י"ב אלול ה'תש"נ

ולעילוי נשמת
מרת שיינדל אלטא בת ר' יחיאל מיכל ע"ה
נפטרה ביום ח' סיון ~ אסרו חג השבועות ה'תש"נ
ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.



נדפס ע"י
ר' מיכל מאיר וזוג' מרת שפרינצא גיטל שיחיו
גולדהירש
ומשפחתם שיחיו
לאריכות ימים ושנים טובות
והצלחה רבה בכל עניניהם בגשמיות וברוחניות

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IN LOVING MEMORY of his FATHER and his MOTHER

Reb Shraga Feivish ben Reb
Meir ^{ע"ה} Goldhirsch
*Whose Yahrtzeit is on Yud
Beis Elul*

Shaindel Alta bas Yechiel
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*Whose Yahrtzeit is on Ches
Sivan, Isru Chag of Shavuot*



לעילוי נשמת

הרה"ח אי"א נו"נ עוסק בצ"צ רב פעלים לתורה ולחסד מו"ה אברהם דוב

בן הרה"ח ר' משה צבי ע"ה

זוינער

נפטר י"ט מנחם אב ה'תשכ"ב

ת.נ.צ.ב.א

והאשה הצנועה והחשוכה מגזע תרשישים וחסידים מרא בלומא ע"ה

בת הרה"ח ר' אלכסנדר זושא ז"ל הי"ד

זוינער

נפ' ש"ק פ' ואתה תצוה, שבת זכור, י"א אדר ה'תשס"ז

ת.נ.צ.ב.ה

