TREASURES FROM THE CHABAD LIBRARY

TREASURES

FROM THE CHABAD LIBRARY

Rare Volumes, Manuscripts, Letters, Documents, Sacred Objects, Marriage Contracts, Portraits & Photographs

> selected from the Central Chabad Lubavitch Library and Archive Center

Compiled by
Rabbi Shalom Dovber Levine



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MIBEIS HAGENOZIM TREASURES FROM THE CHABAD LIBRARY

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PREFACE

The collection of the Central Chabad Lubavitch Library is a veritable treasury of Judaic manuscripts, rare volumes, historic pamphlets, archives, portraits, photographs, letters, documents, marriage contracts, sacred and rare objects of all sorts.

Since 1977, when I was privileged to be appointed to direct the library, I have published some of this material, from time to time, in various publications, alongside overviews of the item's provenance. At first they appeared in the periodical *Yagdil Torah* (Kehot, 1977-1986), and later in the weekly *Kfar Chabad* and other periodicals such as *Heoros Uve'urim*, *Pardes Chabad*, *Heichal HaBaal Shem Tov*, *Or Yisroel* and others.

I am now pleased to present many of these in the present, handsome volume, with additions and corrections to the original material. They have been categorized in sections according to subject-matter, and within each section the chapters generally follow chronological order.

The variations in writing style and depth of treatment between many of the book's chapters, are due to the fact that they have ben written over the course of 30 years, and published in various publications.

The volume opens with an introduction that provides an overview of the history of the library and its collection of historic treasures. Concluding the volume are a subject index and an index of personalities.

The English section, compiled by Rabbi Daniel Goldberg, includes a translation of the introduction, and summaries of each of the volume's chapters, often with additional background information and chronology that may otherwise be unfamiliar to the general reader.

Shalom Dovber Levine

18 Elul 5769 Brooklyn, New York

Note on Transliteration & Chronology

Most Judaic works published in English base their transliteration of Hebrew words on Sefardic pronunciation. Here, however, we have chosen to base most transliterations on the Ashkenazic pronunciation used by Chasidim and most north-eastern European Jews in previous generations and largely to this day. Although the transliterations do not always precisely reproduce pronunciation as actually used, they are close enough to reflect customary use.

In the English section, the dates given generally follow the civil calendar. As is known, the new Jewish year usually starts during September, while the new civil year starts during the Jewish month of Teves, leaving a three-four month gap in between. When a Jewish year is specified—in this work's Hebrew chapters and introductions, or in historical sources—if the actual Jewish date or at least month is known, our notation of the civil year reflects the actual year. When, however, no precise date was known by this translator, we assumed the Jewish year given to be identical to the civil year starting in January, although the event—birth, decease etc.—may have occurred during the Jewish year's first three-four months, and therefore may actually belong to the last months of the civil year previous to the one noted.

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Introduction





The the Library of Agudas Chasidei Chabad—Ohel Yosef Yitzchak—Lubavitch, the Central Chabad Lubavitch Library and Archive Center, is located at the world headquarters of the Chabad Lubavitch movement at 770 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, New York.

This is one of the most prominent Judaic libraries, containing about 250,000 published volumes, most of them rare. Around 200,000 of these are in Hebrew and Yiddish, and about 50,000 in other languages.

In addition, the Library contains:

- Several thousand manuscripts, mostly on Chabad Chasidic philosophy, either actual manuscripts of the Chabad Rebbes, or copied by Chasidim for their own study and inspiration.
- A large archive of correspondence and writings relating to the Chabad philosophy and movement, including the vast collection of letters written by Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn, sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe.
- A collection of sacred objects bequeathed by the Chabad Rebbes, as well as various items presented, as gifts, to the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, during his years of leadership.
- A collection of photographs of Chasidim and Chabad activities sent to Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak and his successor, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, during their years of leadership.
- A large collection of news clippings relating to the Chabad movement and Jewry in general.
- Announcements, flyers and brochures of all sorts that were sent to the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson.

The Chabad Research Center is assigned the task of reasearching the manuscript and archive collections, and the fruits of their labors are published in the volumes of discourses, addresses and letters of the Chabad Rebbes, by Kehot Publication Society, the Lubavitcher Publishing House.

The only section of the Library open to general researchers is the collection of published volumes, of which a detailed, computerized catalogue is available. This catalogue can be accessed by the public at:

http://chabadlibrary.org.catalog

The Library also maintains an active exhibition hall, where items from the various collections are selected for display.



Throughout the history of the Chabad movement, a central collection of books and manuscripts was in the possession of the Rebbe of every generation.

In earlier generations—end of 18th century and early 19th century—this collection was relatively small. Little remains of the original collections, for almost all books and manuscripts were either destroyed in the frequent fires plaguing small towns in those days or were lost in various other upheavals and crisis situations over the generations.

The bulk of the existing collection began to form in the third generation of Chabad—during the mid-19th century—and progressively expanded over time to become one of the world's most prominent Judaic libraries.



Our only knowledge of a library during Chabad's first generation is an extant list of about 100 published volumes seized for inspection from the home of the movement's founder, Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi (1745-1812), known as the "Alter Rebbe," during his arrest by the Czarist government on trumped up charges. It is assumed that only part of his library was seized—for the purpose of seeking evidence of subversion, from which investigators could deduce the likely content of the rest of the library.

Based on this list, it seems that Rabbi Schneur Zalman's entire collection comprised no more than a few hundred books. Even a collection of that size was large for Russia in those days, but it was still too small to be called a "library."

At the end of Rabbi Schneur Zalman's life, two fires ravaged his home. The first, in 1810, claimed many of his manuscripts, including those of his *Shluchan Aruch* (his revision of the standard code of Jewish law). The second was during the War of 1812, when the Rebbe, accompanied by his family and many followers, fled before Napoleon's advancing forces. The refugees traveled from place to place until the Rebbe passed away on 24th Teves, 5573 (1812).

At the end of summer, 1813, Rabbi Schneur Zalman's son and successor, Rabbi DovBer Schneuri (1773-1827), known as the "Mitteler Rebbe," settled in the White Russian town of Lubavitch. He built a large synagogue and a house for himself. According to a police report made after an 1825 search of his home, he possessed a library of 611 volumes contained on the shelves of four bookcases.

During Chabad's third generation, under Rabbi DovBer's son-in-law and successor, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneersohn (1789-1866), known for his major Talmudic-Halachic work, *Tzemach Tzedek*, a more substantial collection took form. It became the nucleus of the central Chabad collection, which continued to grow during following generations.

Over time, however, the collection endured many crises:

- Much of the collection, including important manuscripts, was ravaged by serious fires that plagued the town of Lubavitch.
- After the passing of Rabbi Menachem Mendel and of his son and successor, Rabbi Shmuel (1834-1882), some published volumes in their collections were inherited by heirs other than their successors.
- Most of the collection accumulated by the Chabad Rebbes—especially by Rabbi Shmuel's son, Rabbi Shalom DovBer (1860-1920), and the latter's son, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak (1880-1950)—was sent for safekeeping to Moscow during World War I. In 1924, this collection was confiscated by the new Soviet regime, forcing Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak to start building a new library.
- After the 1939 Nazi invasion of Poland and eventual rescue of Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak to New York, his new collection remained in Poland. His strenuous rescue efforts finally succeeded in getting it transported—in the midst of World War II—to New York at the end of summer, 1941.
- From 1985 to 1987, a protracted court battle was successfully conducted against a relative of Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak, who claimed inheritance rights for parts of the library.

Despite all these crises, most of this great and rare collection assembled by the Chabad Rebbes over several generations remained intact. The largest portion is now housed in the Central Chabad Lubavitch Library.



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ושוכנ וזכנע המנים וקובקשניאוויאן

The Library today has three sections: 1) The Lubavitch Collection; 2) The Collection of Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak; 3) The Collection of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson.

THE LUBAVITCH COLLECTION

Most of the books accumulated by the Chabad Rebbes from the early 1800s to 1915 are presently in the Russian State Library.

In fall, 1915, as German forces approached, Rabbi Shalom DovBer and his family were forced to leave Lubavitch. He moved to Rostov, in south Russia. He sent most of his collection to Moscow for safekeeping, planning to retrieve it after the war. In 1920, however, he passed away in Rostov, before the end of the Russian civil war that followed World War I.

As peace gradually returned to the land, his son and successor, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak, finally had an opportunity to request the return of the collection. The new Soviet regime, however, nationalized the warehouse and gave the Lubavitch Collection to the Russian State Library (then called the State Rumyantsev Museum). Only about 100 of the collection's volumes had accompanied Rabbi Shalom DovBer and Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak to Rostov—for study or because of sentimental value—and these accompanied Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak on all his later wanderings, to Leningrad, Riga, Warsaw, Otwock, and Brooklyn. Today they are held in a special bookcase in the Chabad Library.

During the years following, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak attempted through various means to seek the release of his original library, but was unsuccessful.

In 1981, at the first signs of a new era in the Soviet Union, the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson—who had succeeded his father-in-law, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak, in 1950—renewed efforts to reclaim this sacred collection. For more than a decade, he energetically pursued this goal, sending special representatives and twice dispatching a special delegation for a prolonged mission to the Soviet Union to seek the collection's retrieval. Unfortunately, the collection remains in the Russian State Library to this day.

These efforts continue today in the hope, faith and conviction that it will be recognized by all that these sacred books must return to their rightful place, the Library of Agudas Chasidei Chabad—Ohel Yosef Yitzchak—Lubavitch.



THE COLLECTION OF RABBI YOSEF YITZCHAK

When the Lubavitch Collection was confiscated in 1924 and given to the Russian State Library, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak began to rebuild his library anew. He started by acquiring the entire collection of Shmuel Winer, a bibliographer and collector of rare books whose personal collection comprised about 5,000 valuable, antique and rare volumes, scrolls, marriage contracts, and the like. The Rebbe continued to expand and supplement his library by acquiring volumes of Judaica and Hebraica of all kinds.

In 1927, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak was arrested by the Soviet authorities and eventually sent into exile. Miraculously, he was set free, but was forced to leave the Soviet Union later that year. At first he was denied permission to take his new book collection. He firmly refused, however, to leave without it, and even-

tually his collection was permitted to accompany him to Riga, Latvia.

From there, and later from his home in Warsaw and later in Otwock, Poland, the Rebbe requested his followers everywhere to help enrich the "Lubavitch Library" with volumes of all kinds.

When World War II began in 1939, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak was trapped in Nazi-occupied Warsaw. Several months later, he was rescued along with his family and some members of his secretariat, returning first to Riga and finally, at the end of winter, 1940, arrived in New York.

The library, however, remained in occupied Poland. It took a year and a half for his tireless efforts to succeed in getting the library transported to New York from Europe, through Sweden, at the end of summer, 1941.

The ground floor of the new Lubavitch World Headquarters at 770 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, New York, became the home of Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak's Collection, where it remains to this day.

THE COLLECTION OF THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE, RABBI MENACHEM M. SCHNEERSON

In early summer, 1941, the Rebbe's second son-in-law, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, arrived with his wife, Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka, in New York. Soon after, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak appointed him head of Merkos L'inyonei Chinuch (the Central Organization for Jewish Education). Rabbi Menachem Schneerson established a separate library on the premises to serve that organization's needs.

After Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak's passing on 10th Shevat, 5710 (January 28th, 1950), the mantle of leadership passed to his son-in-law, who became the seventh Rebbe of Chabad-Lubavitch. The Rebbe continued to expand his new collection, and, in 1967, as this collection grew, the building adjacent to the headquarters was acquired for the purpose of housing this special collection.

Two distinct libraries were now maintained at Lubavitch World Headquarters between 1968 and 1985—the Collection of Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak on the ground floor of 770 Eastern Parkway, and the Lubavitcher Rebbe's Collection in the annex.

During 1985 to 1987, the aforementioned litigation was conducted, in which a relative of Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak claimed inheritance rights over part of the Rebbe's collection. The United States Federal Court ruled that all books illegally removed must be returned to the library, for the Rebbe retained no personal ownership of the books, but all belonged to the Library of Agudas Chasidei Chabad (the association of Chabad Chasidim).

After the court victory, the Rebbe directed that both collections be merged into a single central library entitled the "Library of Agudas Chasidei Chabad— Ohel Yosef Yitzchak-Lubavitch," and that the library annex be renovated and expanded to join to the main building. The Rebbe also launched a campaign for new book acusitions.

Construction began in 1989, and was completed in 1992. Also completed then was a master catalogue of both collections, enabling the reading room to be opened to researchers. Since then, the library comprises both collections in a single facility. In 1994, the exhibition hall was opened to the public.





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THE MANUSCRIPT COLLECTION AND ARCHIVE

Parallel to the collections of published volumes through the seven generations of the Chabad movement, the Manuscript Collection also grew from generation to generation. The bulk of this collection comprises manuscripts of Chabad Chasidic philosophy.

The writing of Chabad manuscripts began during the era of Rabbi Schneur Zalman's leadership, when no works of Chabad philosophy had yet been published. When the Rebbe's center was in Liozna, he delivered public discourses regularly on holidays and on the last shabbos of every month. After his release from imprisonment in 1798, and especially after he moved to Liadi in 1801, he delivered discourses every Shabbos. The discourses were transcribed by his brother, Rabbi Yehudah Leib (Rabbi of Yanovitch and author of *Sh'eiris Yehuda*), and others, including the Rebbe's sons. The transcripts were copied and widely disseminated among the thousands of Chasidim. Even the Rebbe's central work, the *Tanya*, was originally disseminated during the early 1790's as handwritten copies of the Rebbe's manuscript, until it was published in a more complete edition in 1796.

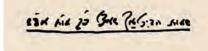
Chasidim strove to collect as many of these discourses as they could, usually binding the few dozen they managed to obtain in a volume or two. Even so, these collected manuscripts did not yet constitute a collection. It was Rabbi Schneur Zalman's grandson and eventual successor, Rabbi Menachem Mendel, author of *Tzemach Tzedek*, who worked hard to gather as many manuscripts as possible, especially following Rabbi Schneur Zalman's passing. He was able to gather most of his grandfather's discourses, forming the basis of the Chabad Manuscript Collection, which remained at the center of Chabad leadership during the following generations.

In every generation this collection grew. The Rebbes sought to acquire manuscripts of the Rebbes of previous generations, or transcripts of their discourses that were not in the collection. Every Rebbe also wrote many of his own discourses, and Chasidim likewise wrote transcripts (which might differ from the Rebbe's manuscript because, when delivering a discourse orally, he may have said it at greater length or briefer length than when he wrote it), copies of which often became part of the Rebbe's collection. Thus, the collection of manuscripts grew and passed from every Rebbe to his successor.

Even this collection was not entirely safe from depletion. Fires in Lubavitch destroyed many volumes of manuscripts, and after every Rebbe's passing, a few volumes passed into the possession of heirs other than his successor. The bulk of the collection, however, remained at the Chabad movement's center in every generation. Even the few volumes passing into the possession of other heirs were in most cases ultimately acquired by the Rebbes of following generations or by their followers and were returned to the collection.

The Manuscript Collection was preserved until the Nazi invasion of Poland in 1939. After Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak left Poland, the collection was lost. Decades later, however, its location was rediscovered in a library in Warsaw, and efforts were made to retrieve it. With Divine help, it was returned to the Central Chabad Library at the end of 1977.

Today, the Library has some 3,000 manuscript volumes, of which over 100 are in the handwriting of the Chabad Rebbes themselves. In addition, the Li-



brary's vast archive has about 100,000 letters and documents of seven generations of Chabad Rebbes, as well as letters written to them, plus thousands of other historic letters and documents.

A special team of the Chabad Research Center studies these manuscripts and compile and publish the discourses, public addresses and letters of the Chabad Rebbes. The publishing is in the hands of the Lubavitcher Publishing House, Kehot Publication Society.

THE EXHIBITION HALL

The Library is open to researchers, rabbis, lecturers and authors who visit the library to examine rare books unavailable elsewhere.

Nevertheless, in order to satisfy public demand to view some of the Library's treasures, a special hall has been designated solely for exhibits. Periodically the librarians select a specific theme to which the new exhibition is dedicated. Presented at these exhibitions over the years have been books, manuscripts, artifacts, paintings, photographs, and the like, relating to each of the Chabad Rebbes and to every area of Chabad activity, in addition to other great Jewish leaders, particularly leaders of the general Chasidic movement.

Other displays have included the Library's outstanding collection of Passover Haggados, *kesubos* (marriage contracts), and first editions of Chasidic books published in early generations.

These exhibits attract individuals and families, schoolchildren and students, tourists and visitors from all backgrounds who are interested in viewing priceless books, artifacts and other treasures of the library, which bring to life Chasidic history and Jewish history in general.



History of the Chabad Rebbes



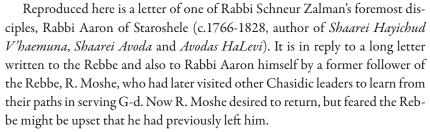
1. REGISTRATION OF RABBI SCHNEUR ZALMAN OF LIADI IN THE LIOZNA COMMUNAL RECORD AS A MEMBER OF THE BURIAL SOCIETY

Various sources record that Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, the "Alter Rebbe" (1745-1812), founder and first leader of Chabad, was registered in his child-hood as an attendant member of the burial society of his home town, Liozna. Membership in the burial society was traditionally considered a great honor.

Several manuscripts in the Chabad-Lubavitch Library transcribe the original entry in the Liozna *pinkas* (communal record). The most complete transcription—of three entries over a period of several years—is reproduced here.

Of note are the remarkable honorific titles—rarely applied even to the most prodigious Torah scholars—applied here to Rabbi Schneur Zalman, who was then in his early teens. Two Rabbinic figures are mentioned in this entry: Rabbi Yaakov ben Rabbi Tzvi Hirsh of Plentzna, author of *Yeshuos Yaakov* on *Midrash Tanna D'bei Eliyahu*, and a Rabbi Yehuda Leib the Elder. Some manuscripts write that Rabbi Leib Sora's, a renowned disciple of the Baal Shem Tov and the Maggid of Mezeritch, was visiting Liozna at the time and it was he who wrote the third entry. Possibly he is Rabbi Yehuda Leib the Elder mentioned here.





Rabbi Aaron discussed the letter with the Rebbe and records his reply. The Rebbe, he writes, is known not to insist that disciples learn exclusively from him, and he does not mind if they visit other Chasidic leaders to seek a path in serving G-d. As Rabbi Schneur Zalman writes in the introduction to his central work, *Tanya*, each Jew has his own path in serving G-d, based on his soul's unique character—although not everyone is able to determine that path unaided. For good reasons of their own, some other Chasidic leaders insist that their followers absorb exclusively from them. But Rabbi Schneur Zalman does not subscribe to that approach, for his sole desire is to give the most appropriate advice to those who wish to become closer to G-d.

Therefore, Rabbi Aaron writes, R. Moshe should feel free to return to Rabbi Schneur Zalman, who will relate to him as before, and he adds that he, Rabbi Aaron, too, will welcome him as a close friend.



Chabad Chasidim have always been fascinated by the life of the movement's



founder, Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi. Soon after his passing in 1812, an anonymous follower compiled the main outlines of his biography, and his manuscript was copied by hand and widely disseminated. Many tried to correct and improve on the original, changing and adding material. These manuscripts formed the basis of Rabbi Schneur Zalman's first published biographies: *Shivchei HaRav* (Lvov, 1864) and *Toldos Amudei Chabad* (Koenigsberg, 1876). Rabbi Schneur Zalman's standard biography, *Beis Rebbe* (Berditchev, 1902), too, was largely based on these manuscripts, but with a wealth of additional material based on the author's careful research.

The Chabad Library has in its collection at least ten of the early manuscripts, which are generally similar in content but still have differences between them.

Unique about the manuscript featured here is that its cover has a Hebrew inscription in gold letters declaring that it was "written by the hand of Rebbetzin Shterna Sarah Schneersohn of Lubavitz" (1859-1942)—the wife of Rabbi Shalom DovBer (1860-1920), fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe—probably in her youth. She may have given it as a gift to her sister, Rebbetzin Sheina Bracha, because an inscription written inside shows that it was later in the possession of her sister's stepson, who in 1940 gave it as a wedding present to a couple, of whom the bride was a member of the Schneersohn family. Possibly, the couple later presented it to Rebbetzin Shterna Sarah's only son, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak (1880-1950), sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe, which would explain how it became part of his collection.

4. LETTER BY RABBI DOVBER OF LUBAVITCH, SENDING SUPPORT FOR HIS RELATIVES & OTHERS

The second leader of Chabad, Rabbi DovBer (1773-1827), was known as the "Mitteler Rebbe"—the "Middle Rebbe" between his father and his own successor, his nephew and son-in-law, Rabbi Menachem Mendel, author of *Tzemach Tzedek* (1789-1866). The Rebbe sent this letter with R. Chaim of Lubavitch to "R. Leib, the teacher" and Rabbi Yosef, the Rabbi and Halachic authority of a certain town. The letter informs them that he is sending 20 rubles for the poor of that town and for "our relatives" there, to be distributed "as you see fit," and an additional 20 rubles for "my uncle's daughter, Ms. Sheina."

Since Rabbi DovBer's wife had the same name, Sheina, it is conjectured that the one mentioned here might be a cousin of his wife, possibly named after the same deceased relative (a grandmother etc.). Accordingly, the other relatives mentioned may also be his wife's. This leads us to think that the unnamed town may be Yanovitch, where Rabbi DovBer's father-in-law had lived and where at least two of his four brothers-in-law from his wife's side lived. The Rabbi of Yanovitch, however, was Rabbi DovBer's uncle, his father's brother, Rabbi Yehuda Leib—not Rabbi Yosef, as mentioned here—unless this letter was written after Rabbi Yehuda Leib's passing in winter, 1826. If that was the case, then this letter was written during the less than two years between winter, 1826, and fall, 1827, when Rabbi DovBer himself passed away on 9th Kislev.



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5. LETTER BY RABBI SHMUEL OF LUBAVITCH ABOUT HIS TRIP TO SWITZERLAND FOR HEALTH REASONS

For many years of his short life, Rabbi Shmuel Schneersohn, fourth Lubavitcher Rebbe (1834-1882), suffered from a serious illness. In fall 1879, his doctors advised him to travel to the Swiss Alps where the clear air and warm sunshine would benefit him. As he writes in this letter, he first stayed a week or two in Vevey, then left for Montreux, which was warmer and had clearer air. Both towns are at the east end of Lac Leman, in the French-speaking region of Switzerland. He intended staying there another couple of weeks and then to proceed to Biarritz, on the French Riviera, where, if warm enough, he would stay for three weeks and bathe in the sea. Otherwise he would return home through Paris. The precise date of the Rebbe's return to Lubavitch is unknown, but he could not have stayed the full three weeks in Biarritz, because, less than three weeks after the date he writes here for traveling there, he was back in Lubavitch where he delivered, on Shabbos Chanukah, a Chasidic discourse that initiated a new series ("hemshech") of such discourses.

This letter is addressed to one of his outstanding Chasidim, Rabbi Shmuel DovBer of Borisov (c.1808-1889), who, as the Rebbe once wrote in another letter, had been highly praised by the Rebbe's father and predecessor, Rabbi Menachem Mendel, author of *Tzemach Tzedek*. His letter to the Rebbe asking about his welfare had been forwarded from Lubavitch to Montreux, from where the Rebbe replies to him here that he now feels much better.

6. LETTER BY RABBI YOSEF YITZCHAK OF AVRUTCH TO HIS BROTHER RABBI SHMUEL OF LUBAVITCH

Following the passing of Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Lubavitch, author of *Tzemach Tzedek*, in 1866, five of his sons served as Rebbes in various towns in White Russia and Ukraine. Rabbi Shmuel continued as the Rebbe in the town of Lubavitch, where their father and their grandfather (their mother's father), Rabbi DovBer, had resided while serving as the second leader of the Chabad Lubavitch movement.

One of the sons, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok (1822-1876), was a son-in-law of his uncle, Rabbi Yaakov Yisroel of Cherkassy (1794-1876)—a son of Rabbi Mordechai of Chernobyl (1770-1837) and son-in-law of Rabbi DovBer. At his father-in-law's insistence, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok already served as a Rebbe during his father's lifetime—following the practice of families of non-Chabad Chasidic leaders—with his center in the town of Avrutch (or "Avritz," as he writes it here in a second letter, following Ukrainian Yiddish pronunciation).

In 1865, Rabbi Menachem Mendel arranged a formal future match between Rabbi Shmuel's second son, who would later succeed his father as the fifth Rebbe—he was then aged four and a half—and Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak's daughter, Rebbetzin Shterna Sarah, who was a year older.

In the following letter, written in summer, 1870, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok asks Rabbi Shmuel to let him know full details about his state of health, including his required diet and exercise. He requests him also to give their children, the bride and groom, the presents he had bought on their behalf in S. Petersburg—to the groom in his future father-in-law's name, and to send his daughter, the



bride, her present—and he promises more presents from his side in the future.

He further asks whether official collectors had been sent to tour the Chabad communities in Lithuania and Zamut (a province of Lithuania) to collect funds traditionally donated to benefit Chasidim in the Holy Land—a charitable cause (known as *Colel Chabad*) of great concern to all Chabad Rebbes ever since Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi initiated this collection in 1781. Here he refers to the collection as "the trade of prayer-shawls"—probably to conceal from the Czarist government the sending of funds to the Holy Land, which was in the Ottoman Empire of Turkey, Russia's traditional foe.

He also asks about the future publication of the Halachic responsa of their father, which, since his passing in 1866, were being prepared for publication by two prominent Chabad Rabbinic scholars. Indeed the first volume of *Tzemach Tzedek* was published the following year, in 1871 (see also below, chapter 59).

In a postscript, he asks what is happening with the match then being arranged between Rabbi Shmuel's daughter and the son of a wealthy Chasid, R. Avraham Zalman Ginzburg of Vitebsk. He further asks to forward an enclosed letter—also reproduced here—to that Chasid, requesting him to order from Moscow, on Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak's behalf, a certain brand of good tea, for which he would send payment.

7. CERTIFICATE OF EXEMPTION FROM MILITARY SERVICE GRANTED TO RABBI SHALOM DOVBER OF LUBAVITCH IN HIS YOUTH

In 1874, Russian law was changed regarding conscription of Jews to the Czarist army. Previously, since 1827, the cruel "Cantonist" law had compelled each Jewish community to supply Jewish boys (sometimes as many as 30 per 1000 members of the Jewish population) who, from a young age—officially 12 but often as young as seven—were prepared at boot camp for military service, which started at age 18 and lasted for 25 years. Throughout this time, conscripts were severed from any family contact, with the clear aim of persuading them to accept baptism. When a Jewish community could not muster enough boys, unscrupulous men known as *khapper* used to kidnap Jewish boys, callously ignoring the outcry and laments of their parents.

In 1874, however, this law was changed. Now, at age 18, every young Jewish man had to appear at a local draft office to enter a lottery, from which were drawn the names of those who had to serve in the army for four years. On the surface this seemed far fairer than the previous law. But it still severed the young Jews from their family and Jewish community, endangering their Jewish identity and observance. Jews therefore resisted this law, too. Sometimes the authorities suspected or discovered efforts to obtain illegal exemptions for Jewish young men, arresting those suspected or involved, and often condemning them to long prison sentences.

Reproduced here is the certificate of exemption from military service granted to Rabbi Shalom DovBer in summer, 1879, when he was aged 18. He is called here "the son of a Vitebsk merchant, Shalom Berke Shmuelov [son of Shmuel] Schneersohn," implying that—perhaps in order to facilitate a grant of exemption—he was registered as a resident of Vitebsk (the closest city to



Lubavitch), where his father, Rabbi Shmuel, fourth Lubavitcher Rebbe, owned several houses.

The certificate records that although the lottery number he had drawn rendered him eligible to be selected to serve, nevertheless medical examinations showed him to be unfit for military service, entitling him to lifelong exemption.

8. RABBI SHALOM DOVBER'S INTERNAL RUSSIAN PASSPORT

In Czarist Russia, Jews were confined to a Pale of Settlement encompassing most of Ukraine, Belarus, Lithuania, and neighboring parts of Latvia and Russia—the areas populated by Jews before Russia annexed great swaths of Poland during the 18th century.

Jewish merchants were issued passports—for internal travel and residence within Russia—categorizing them as belonging to various "guilds." Those in the "first guild" were high rank merchants of wealth, entitled them to special privileges such as residence and travel outside the Pale, including the cities of S. Petersburg and Moscow. The rank of Rabbi Shalom DovBer, fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe, was the "second guild," entitling him to reside or travel only within the Pale. For travel beyond the Pale, second guild members had to obtain a special permit.

This passport was issued in Orsha, seat of the county that included Lubavitch, in the province of Mogilev, on January 2, 1903. From a historical perspective, it is of great value for showing precise dates when Rabbi Shalom DovBer was registered on his visits to the Russian cities of Vitebsk, S. Petersburg, Moscow, Vilna, Rostov and Slavyansk—during the period 1903-1917. For foreign travel, a different passport was required.

9. DIARY OF RABBI YOSEF YITZCHAK OF LUBAVITCH, LATE SUMMER, 1914

From the age of 11, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn (1880-1950) kept a regular diary recording events and whatever he observed and heard from his father, Rabbi Shalom DovBer, fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe, and elder Chasidim. Some excerpts, often selected by Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak himself, have already been published. Presented here is an excerpt covering a one month period, starting a few days after World War I was declared on the ominous date of the Fast of 9th Av (August 1, 1914).

Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak records his father's deep interest in all news about the war, and his comments about the German Kaiser and government, the Russian Czar, Duma (parliament), Senate and government, and the British government, and on various reports about the course of the war.

At the time, Rabbi Shalom DovBer, his son Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak and their families were staying at a *datcha* (vacation residence) at Zaolsha, not far from Lubavitch. Occasionally, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak returned to Lubavitch for a few days to take care of affairs of the Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim, at which he served as executive director. The first time he went, Rabbi Shalom DovBer de-





cided to accompany him on the brief trip, in order to pray about the strained situation, at the burial site of his grandfather, Rabbi Menachem Mendel, and father, Rabbi Shmuel. When his father returned from praying there, notes Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak, he was noticeably exhausted and apparently had been crying profusely.

During their time at Zaolshe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak often accompanied his father on the walks he took for health reasons. Besides his father's comments on the political and military situation, he records also his father's concern for the students of the yeshiva and his desire that they combine Talmudic-Halachic scholarship with devotion in prayer.

10. RABBI YOSEF YITZCHAK'S ACCOUNT OF THE MOVE FROM LUBAVITCH TO OROL AND ROSTOV, FALL 1915

Ever since fall, 1813, when Rabbi DovBer, second Lubavitcher Rebbe, had settled in Lubavitch, that White Russian town had been the center of Chabad Chasidism, to the extent that the names Chabad and Lubavitch remain inextricably intertwined until today.

As the German armies won victories, however, penetrating deeper into the Russian empire, prominent Chasidim and some members of Rabbi Shalom DovBer's family expressed concerns about the front nearing Lubavitch and urged the Rebbe to escape in time. Reports of the Czarist government taking important Rabbinic figures hostage in regions close to the front—because of malicious rumors spread by antisemites that Jews were a fifth column siding with the Germans—also aroused concern for the Rebbe's personal safety.

In this long account, Rabbi Shalom DovBer's son and future successor, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak, describes in detail how the decision to leave was reached, and who was consulted and involved. He describes the long trip, first to Orol for a week and then, when they could find no dwelling there, to Rostov-on-Don in southern Russia. There, too, it took a while to find a suitable dwelling, and even the one eventually rented was not the most suitable. The antisemitic owner found every opportunity to complain, especially when Chasidim gathered to visit the Rebbe, such as on 19th Kislev, anniversary of Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi's 1798 release from Czarist imprisonment.

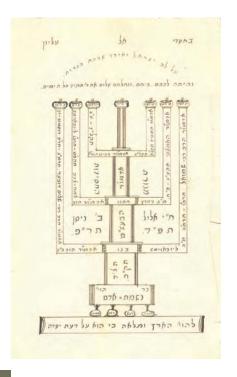
Highlights of this account include the colorful description of Rabbi Meir Simcha Chein of Nevel, a prominent Chasid (and ancestor of many of today's Chabad Chasidim), who was utterly beside himself at the thought of the Rebbe departing from his Chasidim in White Russia. Another is the in-depth description of the spiritual level of an ordinary Chasid at that time, and how even such a Chasid becomes inspired on the occasion of a Chasidic festival such as 19th Kislev.

11. TWO LETTERS BY RABBI SHMUEL DOVBER OF BORISOV

Published here are two letters by Rabbi Shmuel DovBer of Borisov (c.1808-1889), a renowned Chasid of Rabbi Menachem Mendel, author of *Tzemach Tzedek*, and his son and successor, Rabbi Shmuel (see above, chapter 5). In addi-







tion, Rabbi Shmuel DovBer was a close friend of the Schneerson family.

The first letter, the beginning of which is missing, was written to Rabbi Shalom DovBer, fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe, probably after summer, 1886. In heartfelt words, the writer tries to resolve differences of opinion between the Rebbe and his brother, Rabbi Zalman Aaron (1858-1908). He suggests the possibility of their resolving them through a *Din Torah* (Rabbinic lawsuit) before the renowned Chabad Rabbinic authority, Rabbi Schneur Zalman Fradkin (d.1902, author of responsa *Toras Chessed*), who was then Rabbi of Lublin in Poland and later one of the leading Rabbis of Jerusalem.

He also writes about Rabbi Shalom DovBer's medical condition, his frequent consultations with doctors and his regimen of medications. He further requests the Rebbe to transmit to his mother, Rebbetzin Rivka, to his brothers Rabbi Menachem Mendel and Rabbi Zalman Aaron, and to his own son, R. Nachman Tzvi, who resided in Lubavitch, his requests that they write to him.

The second letter, written in 1871, is an invitation to his close friend, the renowned Chasid R. Avraham Chaim Rosenbaum of Pleshtzenitz, to participate, either personally or at least with blessings and good wishes from afar, in the wedding of Rabbi Shmuel Ber's only son, which was to take place in Lubavitch.

12. REPLY BY RABBI SHALOM DOVBER OF LUBAVITCH, AND MONEY (BILLS) HE GAVE CHASIDIM

Reproduced here is a handwritten reply of Rabbi Shalom DovBer, fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe, to a mother, blessing her that her son follow in the right path.

Also shown are bills Rabbi Shalom DovBer gave as gifts etc. to Chasidim during the last half-year of his life (1919-1920). On the bills, the Rebbe's secretary has noted the dates when the Rebbe gave them to their recipients.

13. THE SEVEN-BRANCHED "MENORAH OF CHASIDUS"

On 2nd Nissan, 1920, Rabbi Shalom DovBer Schneersohn, fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe, passed away in Rostov, southern Russia, where he and his family had settled after leaving Lubavitch in fall, 1915, in the face of the advancing German armies. During the following year of mourning, his only son and successor, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok (1880-1950), spent his time in solitude in his study, except when he came out to lead the three daily prayers and recite the *kaddish*.

During that year, he worked on several special projects, including: 1) a list of Rabbi Shalom DovBer's manuscript discourses of Chasidic philosophy; 2) a detailed description of several special Chasidim who, during the years of Rabbi Shalom DovBer's leadership, used to publicly repeat his discourses by heart after he delivered them and later wrote up transcripts; 3) a general summary and description of his collection of Rabbi Shalom DovBer's letters. All three of these have already been published.

Another of his projects of that period was a drawing of a "menorah of Chasidus," summarizing the history of Chasidism through seven generations of leaders, from its founder, the Baal Shem Tov (1698-1760) to Rabbi Shalom DovBer—who are represented by the menorah's seven branches. On each

branch is marked the name of one of the leaders, together with his years of leadership, the date of his passing and, for some, where he is buried.

14. TWO LETTERS BY R. YAAKOV KOPEL SECRETARY TO RABBI YOSEF YITZCHAK

The first letter, a postcard with a letterhead of "Yosef Yitzchok Schneersohn," and written in his name, was written in 1907 to Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Tzirelson, Rabbi of Ludmir, Ukraine, in connection with the campaign for funds to benefit the poor of the Holy Land. It is signed by "Y. K. Zeliksohn," who served then as secretary of the Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim and of Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak.

The second letter is in response to a *pidyon nefesh* (request to the Rebbe to pray and give his blessings) for the new year. It records the Rebbe's blessings and is signed by "Yaakov Kopel, [one] of the people of our holy Teacher, long may he live." There is some doubt, however, whether the handwriting here is identical to that of the first letter and accordingly, whether this is the same Yaakov Kopel as the one mentioned above. If the writer was a different individual, then there is a further uncertainty as to which Rebbe (possibly not of Chabad) he was referring.

15. REBBETZIN SHTERNA SARAH'S ENTRY VISA AND A LETTER TO HER SON

Reproduced here is Rebbetzin Shterna Sarah's entry visa to the USA.

Also shown is a warm Yiddish letter she wrote to her only son, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak, sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe, on the occasion of the festival of 19th Kislev, blessing him that the merit of their great ancestor, Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, should protect him, as Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak is his sole surviving successor who disseminates Rabbi Schneur Zalman's Chabad teachings. She also wishes him a speedy, complete recovery.

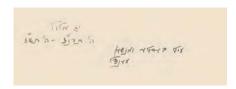
16. THE "RIIWENDSCHEL" FUND

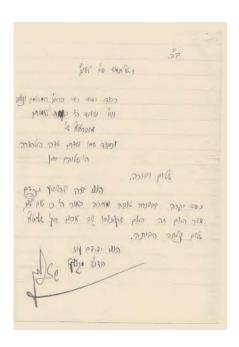
This fund was named for Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak, sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe, and his wife, Rebbetzin Nechama Dina—"Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak U'Nechama Dina Schneersohn, Lubavitch." It was established in winter, 1944 and was under the personal direction of the Rebbe and Rebbetzin (who continued directing it after her husband's passing in 1950 until her own passing in 1970), and was for the purpose of distributing their personal charity. It was registered as an official non-profit organization, with several prominent Chasidim among its officers. Later, their second son-law, the future successor of Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak as Lubavitcher Rebbe, was named as the fund's bookkeeper. The fund's official rules, as later formulated, were that the organization's purpose was "to advance Orthodox Judaism, particularly the obligation of giving charity, without profit for the organization."

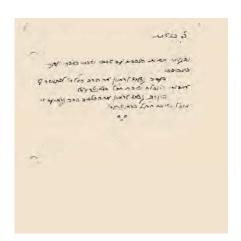












17. GIFTS & GOOD WISHES FOR RABBI YOSEF YITZCHAK'S 50TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

On 13th Elul, 1947, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak and Rebbetzin Nechama Dina Schneersohn celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. Reproduced here is a letter written in Yiddish by the Rebbe to his Rebbetzin, expressing his good wishes and blessings, accompanied by his gift to her of a new coat.

Another gift, from their second son-law, the future Rebbe, was the first volume of *Sefer Hazichronos* in Yiddish—Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak's family memoirs about the early history of the Chasidic movement—which was first published that year. The inscription inside reads (in Yiddish): "13 Elul, 5657-5707, with best wishes, Mendel."

18. LETTERS SENT BY RABBI YOSEF YITZCHAK'S SECRETARIES TO RABBI AVRAHAM ELYA AKSELROD

Rabbi Avraham Eliyahu Akselrod was an outstanding graduate of the original Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim in Lubavitch, a great Talmudic scholar and truly G-d-fearing Chasid. One of the first Chasidim to receive Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak's blessing to emigrate from Russia to the United States, he joined his parents who had arrived there earlier. Settling in Baltimore, he became Rabbi of a congregation, until his passing there in 1952.

As a devoted Chasid, he corresponded regularly with the Rebbe and his secretaries, through whom the Rebbe himself often sent his responses. Reproduced here are handwritten replies sent to him by four of the Rebbe's secretaries, well-known Chasidim who served at various times in that role.

- 1) From Rabbi Nochum Shmarya Sossonkin, who served only briefly as secretary. The letter is from Rostov-on-Don, 1921, when Rabbi Akselrod was living in Zembin, USSR.
- 2) From Rabbi Elchonon Dov Marozov, the Rebbe's secretary from fall, 1921, until his own first arrest in spring, 1927. The letter is from Leningrad, 1925, after Rabbi Akselrod had already settled in Baltimore.
- 3) From Rabbi Schneur Zalman Schneersohn, who served only briefly as secretary. The letter is from Leningrad, 1927, announcing the Rebbe's arrival home after his release from exile in Kostroma, following his imprisonment a month previously.
- 4) From Rabbi Yechezkel Feigin, the Rebbe's secretary from 1927 until 1940. The letter is from the end of 1928 (apparently from Riga, Latvia, where the Rebbe had settled over a year earlier).

19. RABBI YOSEF YITZCHAK'S PERSONAL DIARY, FALL, 1944—EARLY WINTER, 1945

After the sufferings he endured during his 1927 imprisonment by the Soviet authorities, the Rebbe's health steadily deteriorated through the years following. In 1939, he suffered through the blitz of Warsaw and the consequent German occupation, witnessing the effective start of the Holocaust. Following his miraculous escape from Poland, he reached New York in 1940, and was brought off the ship in a wheelchair.

Nevertheless, he threw himself into his declared task of building North America into a land of Torah. He personally wrote replies to thousands of letters received from around the globe, together with profound Chasidic discourses and many other writings to inspire Jews. He granted audiences to hundreds of visitors, and established Jewish schools in many cities and other organizations to strengthen Jewish observance and awareness. The work was strenuous and his health deteriorated further.

In fall, 1944, the Rebbe suffered a heart attack. A diary, starting soon after the Simchas Torah, about a month before his heart attack, details how, already then, he felt pain and stress and was under constant medical care. During that month, he carefully followed the doctors' orders to rest many hours daily, but still tried mightily to continue his holy work, lamenting the unavoidable loss of valuable time.

For almost six weeks after his heart attack, the diary has no entries, but then they resume, continuing for a further three weeks.

The diary, usually written late at night before retiring, reveals his busy schedule and some of the important pursuits occupying his time, as detailed above.

20. EXCERPTS FROM RABBI YOSEF YITZCHAK'S PERSONAL DIARY, END OF 1948 TO EARLY SUMMER, 1949

Most of this diary details the numbers of the letters to which the Rebbe replied—he used to number each letter when he first read it—and the people whom the Rebbe received in private audience. Those parts are omitted here.

Published here are only the Rebbe's occasional entries supplying information of more general interest, which shed light on various events and personalities. One unique event was the special visit by United States judges and officials to grant the Rebbe and his family American citizenship.

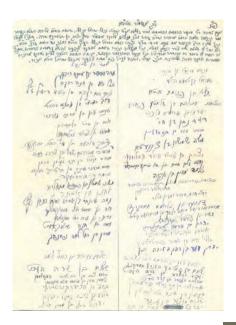
21. COMMUNAL REQUESTS FOR BLESSING SUBMITTED TO RABBI YOSEF YITZCHAK OF LUBAVITCH

Chasidim have always given their Rebbe written requests to pray for them or for others, especially before the High Holidays and at times of distress. Such a request is known as a *pidyon nefesh*, or in abbreviated form—*pan*. The signatures on these requests and the names of individuals on whose behalf they request the Rebbe to pray, are followed by "son/daughter of ..." and their mothers' names.

Often Chasidim join to sign on such a request, before Rosh Hashanah and at other special times, on behalf of the Rebbe and/or on behalf of the general Chasidic community, either worldwide or in a particular place or situation of distress. This is known as a *pan klali*—a "general" or "group" *pidyon nefesh*.

Reproduced here are five examples of such a *pan klali* during the period after Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak, sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe, reached the United States. These examples reflect the Chasidim's concern for the Rebbe's health and for the welfare of fellow Jews, especially Chasidim, suffering under Nazi occupation or in the Soviet Union. The Chasidim's signatures are headed by those of the Rebbe's sons-in-law.





Of special interest are the lists of signatures of Lubavitcher Chasidim and Temimim—students of the Lubavitcher Yeshiva—who were then in New York.



22. "THE SOCIETY OF TEMIMIM"

Featured here is a pamphlet printed in 1910, listing the names of members of the "Society of Temimim." The word "Temimim" is used to refer to students and graduates of the original Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim, founded in Lubavitch in 1897, and of all later branches until the present day. The society's purpose was to unite all the yeshiva's graduates—which by 1910 numbered over 200—for their spiritual and material benefit.

The society's rules allowed two categories of membership: 1) "active members" who had actually studied at the yeshiva, and 2) "ordinary members" who had not studied at the yeshiva but lived in accordance with the teachings of the Chabad Rebbes.

Of particular interest is that the list of members includes the father of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson—Rabbi Levi Yitzchak (who had become Rabbi of Yekatrinoslav in 1909), and his younger brothers, Rabbi Shalom Shlomo and Rabbi Shmuel. Until now, we have had no indication that any of the three studied at the yeshiva.

Possibly their names are included in the list only as "ordinary members." On the other hand, their inclusion in this list suggests that they may actually have studied there at some point, at least briefly. For the Rebbe's father, that could have been only between the end of summer, 1897, when the yeshiva was founded, and his marriage in early summer, 1900.

23. LETTERS BY RABBI MEIR SHLOMO YANOVSKY & REBBETZIN ROCHEL TO THE SEVENTH REBBE & REBBETZIN AND THE REBBE'S BROTHER

The Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, was born in 1902 in Nikolayev, in southern Ukraine, where his mother, Rebbetzin Chana, was the older daughter of the city's Rabbi, Rabbi Meir Shlomo HaLevi Yanovsky, and his wife, Rebbetzin Rochel. In 1909, when the Rebbe was seven years old, his father was appointed Rabbi of Yekatrinoslav. In later years he would visit his grandparents in Nikolayev for several weeks at the end of every summer, and he was always deeply grateful to his grandmother for taking care of him then.

Rabbi Meir Shlomo succeeded his grandfather, Rabbi Avraham David Lavut, as Rabbi in 1890, and served until his passing in 1933, when he was succeeded by his second son-in-law, Rabbi Shmuel Schneersohn, the Rebbe's uncle.

Presented here are letters, written in 1929, from both grandparents with new year wishes to the Rebbe and the Rebbetzin. Rebbetzin Rochel follows with a brief note to the Rebbe's youngest brother, Yisroel Aryeh Leib, after he had succeeded in leaving the Soviet Union and had joined the Rebbe in Berlin.



24. LETTERS TO RABBI SHALOM SHLOMO SCHNEERSOHN'S WIDOW AND THEIR DAUGHTER, THE FUTURE POET, ZELDA MISHKOVSKY

The Rebbe's uncle, Rabbi Shalom Shlomo Schneersohn, his father's brother, was married to Rebbetzin Rochel, daughter of the renowned Chasid, Rabbi Dovid Tzvi-Hersh Chein, Rabbi of Chernigov, Ukraine. Their only child was Sheina Zelda, later well-known as the Hebrew poet, Zelda Mishkovsky-Schneersohn.

Rabbi Shalom Shlomo was Rabbi of Shiroka. During the chaos following the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, the family moved back to Chernigov. In 1925, Rabbi Dovid Tzvi and his family, including Rabbi Shalom Shlomo, moved to Jerusalem. Unfortunately, both passed away less than a year later, Rabbi Dovid Tzvi before Chanukah, and Rabbi Shalom Shlomo six weeks later.

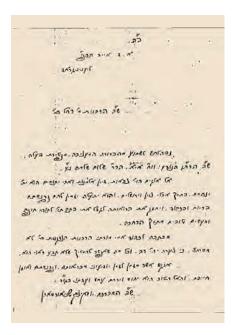
Presented here are the following:

- 1) Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak's letter of condolence to Rebbetzin Rochel on her husband's passing. Of interest is his comment that he had not given her letter to his mother, Rebbetzin Shterna Sarah, to avoid upsetting her (which could harm her health).
- 2) Letters, written in 1929, by Rebbetzin Rochel's brother-in-law, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak, and sister-in-law, Rebbetzin Chana—parents of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson—to Rabbi Shalom Shlomo's wife and daughter, thanking them for their good wishes on the occasion of their son's wedding at the end of 1928. Of particular interest are a) Rabbi Levi Yitzchak's efforts to obtain financial assistance for his sister-in-law; b) Rebbetzin Chana's excellent command of Hebrew—unusual for women in those days; c) their special attention to their young niece, Zelda, to whom both write sensitively in language suited to her age level.
- 3) Letters to Rebbetzin Rochel from her brother-in-law, Rabbi Shmuel Schneersohn, which provide important details about the Rebbe's family.

25. DOCUMENTS RELATING TO THE 1941 RESCUE OF THE SEVENTH REBBE & REBBETZIN FROM EUROPE

In late spring, 1940, the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, and his wife, Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka, left Paris in the face of the German occupation and escaped to Vichy, the new capital of France's unoccupied zone. After several months in Vichy, they realized the difficulty of obtaining there immigration visas to the United States, where her parents, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak, sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe, and Rebbetzin Nechama Dina, had arrived earlier that year. They therefore moved to Nice, where they continued efforts to obtain the visas. At the end of 1940, they heard it was easier to get visas at the U.S. Consulate in Marseilles, and asked Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak to send the required documentation there. Indeed they did obtain U.S. visas there, and also transit visas to travel to Lisbon, Portugal. From Nice, where they had resided all this time, they traveled to Lisbon to await there tickets for the voyage to New York, where they finally arrived on 28th Sivan (June 23), 1941.

Some documents associated with their rescue are already published. Three more are published here for the first time—two telegrams sent by Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak to Barcelona during the winter to find out what else was needed to





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facilitate their rescue, and a telegram from the U.S. Consulate in Marseilles confirming that their voyage to New York had been arranged.

26. **LETTER** BY REB YISRAEL **ARYEH** LEIB. **THEIR BROTHER** THE SEVENTH **REBBE** TO OF MOTHER, REBBETZIN **CHANA** SCHNEERSON, LETTERS WRITTEN BY THE REBBE IN HIS BROTHER'S **NAME**

Presented here is the letter sent by the Rebbe's brother, Yisrael Aryeh Leib, to their mother, Rebbetzin Chana Schneerson, after her rescue from the Soviet Union and her arrival in the United States.

Also shown are notes the Rebbe added at the end of letters his sister-in-law sent Rebbetzin Chana after his brother, who was in his mid-40's, passed away suddenly in 1952 in England. The Rebbe did not want his mother to learn of this tragedy for fear that it could adversely affect her health. Therefore, to every letter that his sister-in-law sent Rebbetzin Chana, the Rebbe added a note in his brother's handwriting, signed "Leib." This continued until his mother's passing in fall, 1964.

27. INVITATION OF CHASIDIM IN THE HOLY LAND & FRANCE FOR THE REBBE TO VISIT THEM, 1953

In 1953, the largest communities of Chabad Chasidim outside the Soviet Union were in the Holy Land and France, where many Chabad refugees had settled following their escape from the Soviet Union after World War II. Following Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak's passing in 1950, they urged the Rebbe to accept the Chabad leadership. Early in 1951, he accepted the leadership, and soon rallied the ranks of Chabad Chasidim around the world by means of a prolific correspondence and inspiring public addresses and discourses, many of which were gradually disseminated.

Most Chabad Chasidim, however, had never met the Rebbe in person and they were eager to meet the source of their inspiration. Trans-Atlantic voyages, however, were prohibitively expensive, making it impossible for most to travel to Brooklyn, New York.

Over three hundred Chasidim, including many Rabbis and prominent personalities, besides rank-of-file Chasidim, signed the letter presented here, inviting the Rebbe to visit their communities. The Rebbe replied to them in a letter that has already been published, writing how pained he was to be unable to accept their invitation and sending them an inspirational message for the new year.

28. CORRESPONDENCE ABOUT THE TEFILLIN CAMPAIGN BETWEEN THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE & RABBI YITZCHAK HUTNER

Shortly before the Six Day War in late spring, 1967, the Rebbe proclaimed an international Tefillin Campaign to encourage as many Jews as possible to fulfill this fundamental precept. After the miraculous victory, he intensified this



call, and his Chasidim gave hundreds of thousands of Jews the opportunity to don *tefillin*, many for the first time.

Over the summer, some Torah-observant Jews raised Halachic questions about the propriety of the campaign. In the fall, the Rebbe publicly addressed these questions, answering all objections in detail, and later edited the transcript, which was then published. The Rebbe noted that although it was not his practice to get involved in debates, he was answering the questions in order to avoid weakening the resolve of those active in the campaign.

The renowned Torah scholar, Rabbi Yitzchak Hutner, head of Yeshiva Rabbi Chaim Berlin in Brooklyn, had known the Rebbe for many years, even before his ascension to the Chabad leadership. Over the years, he had several private audiences with the Rebbe, and continued to correspond with him, requesting the Rebbe's explanations on subjects of Halacha, Chasidus and Kabbalah. Some of these replies appear in collection of the Rebbe's letters, *Igros Kodesh*.

When Rabbi Hutner read the afore-mentioned transcript, he wrote to the Rebbe about a question he had that was not mentioned there: In his opinion, someone who dons *tefillin* needs to be aware that they contain parchments of specific Torah passages.

Meanwhile, a prominent Orthodox Jewish organization held its annual convention, at which one speaker criticized Lubavitch and the Tefillin Campaign. A week later, the Rebbe replied publicly to that criticism.

Rabbi Hutner was aware how busy the Rebbe was, and knew not to expect a speedy reply to his letter. But when heard about the criticism at the convention and the Rebbe's response, he feared the Rebbe had not replied because he thought Rabbi Hutner might be implicated in the criticism. Therefore he wrote a second letter to explain that he never attended such conventions and had been unaware of the whole story. His original letter, he wrote, was intended solely to raise the Halachic issue and not to cause any distress, and he now regretted writing that letter altogether and requested the Rebbe's blessing. When that letter, too, elicited no reply, he sent a short note a few days later asking whether, and why, the Rebbe was upset with him.

The Rebbe replied in detail to the Halachic question, explaining why, in his opinion, it constituted no problem. He also assured him that the delay in answering was only due to his busy schedule. Rabbi Hutner replied with arguments to support his opinion, and the Rebbe sent a second reply to clarify his own opinion. Rabbi Hutner then sent one more letter to clarify his opinion further.

Of note is Rabbi Hutner's obvious deep respect for the Rebbe and for his valuable time, his requests for the Rebbe's blessings (to which he signs his name and his mother's name—like a Chasid), and his concern not to upset the Rebbe in any way. He writes, for example, how he had opportunities to discuss this Halachic issue with other Rabbinic personalities but kept his opinion to himself so as not to weaken the campaign.

29. BLESSINGS & GOOD WISHES FOR THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE'S 70TH BIRTHDAY

Before the Rebbe's 70th birthday, 11th Nissan, 1972, many of Israel's most



Treasures from the Chabad Library



prominent personalities wrote their good wishes and blessings. These were bound in an album and sent to the Rebbe.

Reproduced here are selections from this album, including the good wishes of some of Israel's most famous personalities, headed by President Shazar and including 18 other well-known leaders—Rabbinic, literary, military and political, including ministers of the government, members of the Knesset and the mayor of Jerusalem. Of note are the warm words they use in their greetings to the Rebbe.

Rabbis and the Rabbinate





30. RABBI YEHUDA IBN ATTAR, CHIEF RABBI OF FEZ, MOROCCO

North Africa, particularly Morocco, was a great center of Torah scholarship until the 20th century. One of its outstanding sages was Rabbi Yehuda ibn Attar (1655-1733), Chief Rabbi of Fez, known among Morocco's Jews as Aribbi Alkabir, "our great Rabbi."

Various sources give brief biographical details about him, the most complete in the introduction to his Halachic responsa (Jerusalem, 1989). The Chabad Library's archives include documents from that era that shed further light on Rabbi Yehuda's family—his children and grandchildren, and his brother's family—as detailed here, with the sources for each item of information, in the introduction to this chapter.

Reproduced here are twelve of Rabbi Yehuda's letters, most of them to Rabbi Yaakov Ibn Tzur (see next chapter), when he left Fez to become Rabbi of Meknes, Morocco, from 1718 to 1728. These letters do not discuss scholarly subjects but are mostly requests for action on urgent social problems connected with Halachic issues of concern to the Rabbis as spiritual and social leaders of their flock, reflecting the difficulties of life in Morocco at the time.

31. RABBI YAAKOV IBN TZUR (YAABETZ), RABBI OF FEZ & MEKNES

Another of Morocco's greatest sages was Rabbi Yaakov ibn Tzur (1673-1753), known by the initials of his name as "YaABeTz." He was Rabbi in Fez (1704-1718, 1728-1753) and Meknes (1718-1728).

The Chabad Library has dozens of books and documents that were once part of his personal collection, and from which can be learned many hitherto unknown biographical details about him. One example is his record of the marriages he performed, a record continued by his decendants for a few years after his passing.

Based on these documents, the introduction traces YaABeTz's distinguished ancestry and important details of his life and Rabbinic career, and notes the tragic fact that 16 of his 17 children passed away during his lifetime, although some grandchildren survived.

Ya ABeTz was a great collector of Torah works. He requested travelers—such as the Holy Land's emissaries for raising funds in the diaspora to support its Jewish communities—to seek and send him Torah books missing in his collection. Some of his books now in the Chabad Library include his notes describing how they came into his possession, while others have his handwritten comments on their subjects.

32. RABBI NOSSON HURVITZ, RABBI OF POLOTZK

Although not well-known today, R. Nosson HaLevi Segal Hurvitz was one of the great scholars and most prominent Chabad Rabbis of his time. A Chasid of the first three Chabad Rebbes, R. Nosson was the Rabbi of Polotzk, an important Chabad community in White Russia, around the years 1820-1840.

His few extant Halachic responsa—some of them to Rabbi Yehuda Leib of

Yanovitch (Rabbi Schneur Zalman's brother, d.1826), and to Rabbi Menachem Mendel, author of *Tzemach Tzedek*, both before and after his ascension to the Chabad leadership—are profound, discussing at great length subjects in all areas of the *Shulchan Aruch*. Their responsa and queries to him address him with close friendship and deep respect for his scholarship.

R. Nosson's Chasidic humility is apparent in how he addresses them and in describing his own inadequacy for ruling on difficult issues. Of special note is the following: In late 1827, when Rabbi DovBer, second Lubavitcher Rebbe, passed away, the Chasidim begged his nephew and son-in-law, Rabbi Menachem Mendel, to accept the mantle of leadership. For some time he refused. Even when he eventually agreed, he did not at first accept any *pidyon nefesh* (see above, chapter 20) to pray for anyone—although that is usually a key characteristic function of a Rebbe. During this sensitive period, R. Nosson wrote a lengthy Halachic query to Rabbi Menachem Mendel, less than three months after Rabbi DovBer's passing, and concludes "These are the words of your friend, [who is] prepared to obey you and desires your success," signing "Nosson HaLevi, son of Chiyenna"—as a Chasid does when writing to his Rebbe (writing his mother's name after his own, so that the Rebbe will pray for him). With these words, this prominent Rabbi was urging Rabbi Menachem Mendel to accept the position of Rebbe and wishing him success in that role.

Reproduced here are the openings and conclusions of 12 Halachic responsa written by or to R. Nosson.

33. RABBIS OF THE TOWN OF LUBAVITCH, & BIOGRAPHY OF RABBI YISSACHAR BER HURVITZ

The town of Lubavitch was founded around five centuries ago, and always had a settled Jewish community. The town is renowned, of course, for the fact that for 102 years (1813-1915) it served as the spiritual center of the Chabad Chasidic movement which, even then, enjoyed international prominence. Lubavitch was the residence of four generations of Chabad leaders: 1) Rabbi DovBer, second Lubavitcher Rebbe (1773-1827); 2) Rabbi Menachem Mendel, author of *Tzemach Tzedek* (1789-1866); 3) Rabbi Shmuel, fourth Rebbe (1834-1882); and 4) Rabbi Shalom DovBer, fifth Rebbe (1860-1920).

All the Rebbes were renowned for their Torah scholarship. But their prime role was not to minister to the needs of local residents: Each Rebbe served as spiritual leader of the entire Chabad movement, and was regarded as a supreme religious authority by many thousands of Chasidim in White Russia, Lithuania, Latvia, Ukraine, and as far afield as Bessarabia (now Moldava) and Romania—and even in locations outside the Russian Empire. The scope of interest of the Chabad-Lubavitcher Rebbes embraced not only the material and spiritual benefit of their own followers but of all Jews in the Russian Empire and beyond, as far as their influence reached.

Accordingly, in addition to the Rebbe, Lubavitch—like all Jewish communities—always had its own communal Rabbi, whose main function was to issue rulings for the townsfolk on day-to-day questions of Halachic law. Such a Rabbi was termed the *moreh tzedek* ("teacher of righteousness"), or in abbreviated form—*matz*.





Listed here are the Rabbis of the town of Lubavitch for whom any documentary evidence exists, during a period of 150 years—1770-1920:

- a) Rabbi Yissachar Ber Segal, the *maggid* (preacher) of Lubavitch, was a disciple of the Maggid of Mezeritch (the Baal Shem Tov's successor) and a colleague of Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi. But it is unclear whether he served as the town's Halachic authority or only in the role of a spiritual leader who disseminated Chasidic teachings.
- b) Rabbi Yisroel Kissin, a disciple of the Vilna Gaon and a cousin of Rabbi Schneur Zalman's wife, was a Rabbi and Halachic authority in Vitebsk and for some time served as Rabbi of Lubavitch. Rabbi Schneur Zalman's published Halachic responsa include one sent to Rabbi Kissin (and noting their relationship), and another written after Rabbi Kissin's passing that mentions him as "the great Rabbi...of Lubavitch."
- c) Rabbi Binyomin, a Chasid of Rabbi Schneur Zalman, was Rabbi of Lubavitch, and Rabbi Schneur Zalman's published responsa include one sent to him.
- d) Rabbi Yissachar Ber, son of Reb Tzvi Hirsh HaLevi Hurvitz, was the Rabbi in several White Russian towns, including ten years in Lubavitch (1832-1842). Born in Horodzetch (probably around 1790), he married the daughter of a resident of Yanovitch and settled there, earning his living as a teacher—probably of advanced teenaged students, since he was a significant scholar. He also studied and gained Rabbinic experience under the renowned Rabbi of Yanovitch, Rabbi Yehuda Leib (Rabbi Schneur Zalman's brother), whom he considered his main Torah master (we find him studying under him in 1812, but he may have started several years earlier).

Later, on Rabbi Yehuda Leib's advice, Rabbi Yissachar Ber took a position as teacher in Rohatchov (later Russified to "Rogatchov"). There he conducted a prolific correspondence on Halachic issues with Rabbi Yehuda Leib and Rabbi Menachem Mendel, author of *Tzemach Tzedek*, (before he became Rebbe) and other prominent Rabbis. Although not the town's official Rabbi, he was recognized in Rohatchov as a scholar with experience in practical Rabbinics, and was consulted to issue Halachic rulings on various questions. Years later, he wrote that he had been arranging Halachic divorces—which require great expertise—since 1815 (probably while still in Yanovitch).

In 1827, he became Rabbi of New Bikhov. From there he continued his prolific correspondence on Halachic issues with Rabbi Menachem Mendel and other prominent Rabbis. In 1831, however, the community wanted to replace him with a Rabbi related to one of the town's communal leaders. Rabbi Menachem Mendel wrote to protest against dismissing a Rabbi for no reason, and his letter highly praised Rabbi Yissachar Ber for his scholarship and Rabbinic expertise.

In late 1832, Rabbi Yissachar Ber became the Rabbi of Lubavitch, where he remained until 1842. While there, he often utilized the opportunity to discuss Halachic issues with Rabbi Menachem Mendel. Other Rabbis often requested his Halachic ruling on complex issues and sometimes requested him to ask Rabbi Menachem Mendel's opinion, too.

Later he became the Rabbi of Konotop, where apparently he stayed until his passing, which is why other Rabbis used to refer to him as "Rabbi of Konotop." Rabbi Yissachar Ber was a great collector of Halachic material. He preserved

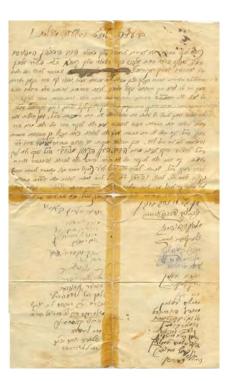
שולה זו בכרב ב כני וב בנותמיות של כיי חות בכואו ליהתבות ב בייור ב במי וב בנותמיות של כיי חות כוא בבור בייו לי חות אותר ב נתר לכנים איל בשוקרה בשקיפורי אותר שבר ביי בי רות שבר אל על עב אותות של ברבומיום - באל שבלו שקול שונה הי עב י וני שבת אל על עב אותר אינו בער של את הי עלים אותר לואת הי עב יוני שבת אל על עב של אותר אינו בער מל בייו של בייותר בייור בייול בייול או ברבומיות בייול בי the original responsa that Rabbi Yehuda Leib and Rabbi Menachem Mendel, sent him and copies of their responsa to others, besides his Halachic correspondence with other Rabbis, and his personal Halachic writings. He had all these documents bound in many volumes, of which five, original or photographed, are in the Chabad Library. Much of this material has been published in the latest editions of *Tzemach Tzedek* and of Rabbi Yehuda Leib's *Sh'eiris Yehuda*, and in the periodical *Yagdil Torah*.

- e) Succeeding him was the Chasid, Rabbi Avrohom, son of Rabbi Avigdor HaKohen, who served as Rabbi of Lubavitch until around the time of Rabbi Menachem Mendel's passing. On one published responsum in *Tzemach Tzedek*, Rabbi Avrohom's name is signed together with Rabbi Menachem Mendel's, and another bears his signature because Rabbi Menachem Mendel did not wish to sign himself. In 1856, he was among the Rabbis who wrote approbations for that year's publication of Rabbi Schneur Zalman's Shulchan Aruch in Zhitomir.
- f) Succeeding him for a brief period was the Chasid, Rabbi Shmuel, son of Rabbi Shlomo Levin. He is signed on a certification for a shochet written in Lubavitch in summer, 1867. He passed away in the Holy Land—where he was known as "the Rav of Lubavitch"—in fall, 1913.
- g) Succeeding him was the Chasid, Rabbi Avrohom, son of Rabbi Yosef Zeligson, who served as Rabbi of Lubavitch throughout the era of Rabbi Shmuel, fourth Lubavitcher Rebbe. In a bill of sale dated in 1874, Rabbi Shmuel sold him his *chametz* before Pesach.
- h) Succeeding Rabbi Avrohom Zeligson was his son-in-law, Rabbi Dovid, son of Rabbi Benzion Yakubson, who served throughout the years that Rabbi Shalom DovBer, fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe, resided in Lubavitch. When his father-in-law passed away, close to the time of Rabbi Shmuel's passing, Rabbi Dovid was considered too young to become Rabbi of Lubavitch, a prestigious position, so Rabbi Shalom DovBer, tried to find him another Rabbinic post. In letters he sent for this purpose, the Rebbe praises Rabbi Dovid's ability to determine the correct ruling from various Halachic sources, and states that he is "utterly remote from dissension." Meanwhile, Rabbi Dovid remained in Lubavitch and before long was accepted as its Rabbi.

In 1907, when a new *mikveh* was constructed in Lubavitch, Rabbi Shalom DovBer (who was then abroad) sent him lengthy learned letters on the subject. Students of the yeshiva in Lubavitch who studied for Rabbinic ordination were tested and granted ordination by Rabbi Dovid.

i) By 1915, Rabbi Dovid was in his later years, and he agreed to the appointment of a second Rabbi in Lubavitch.

Rabbi Elchonon, son of Rabbi Avrohom Shimon, Yakobovitch was born, between 1875 and 1880, in Griva, a suburb of Dvinsk (now Daugavpils, Latvia). He studied at the Lithuanian *yeshivos* of Slabodka, Kelm and Radin, and after his marriage became a lecturer in Talmud at several *yeshivos*—in Shtzutzin, Warsaw and Telz. During World War I, he became a refugee, wandering deeper into Russia. For a brief period he became the "second Rabbi" in Lubavitch, where Rabbi Shalom DovBer also appointed him to serve in Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim as a discussor of Talmudic subjects. Before long he left Lubavitch and served as lecturer at various *yeshivos* in Russia until 1918, when he returned to Lithuania, continuing as lecturer at *yeshivos*. In 1933, he migrated to the Holy



Land, settling in Jerusalem, where he remained until his passing in 1941. He was the author of Even Shimon, in two volumes.

Rabbi Elchonon was appointed as the second Rabbi of Lubavitch in summer, 1915, a few months before Rabbi Shalom DovBer and his family left the town because of the approach of the German armies. A Rabbinic contract granted to him by the townsfolk states that when he was honored to give a sermon at one of the town's *shuls*, the congregants enjoyed it immensely, and since Rabbi Dovid attested to his Torah scholarship and expertise in Halachic ruling, therefore the congregants of two of the town's *shuls* accept him, with Rabbi Dovid's agreement, as Halachic authority and for all religious functions—with various limitations—and that he preach at each of the two *shuls* every alternate Shabbos. Forty residents of Lubavitch are signed on this contract. Many are known from other sources, as indicated in the Hebrew footnotes. The contract is followed by a note in Russian signed by Rabbi Dovid Yakubson, attesting to the validity of the signatures on this Jewish contract, and countersigned by the non-Jewish "elder" (a sort of mayor) of the town.



34. LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION BY R. MORDECHAI BANNET ON BEHALF OF R. YEHUDA ASSAD

R. Mordechai Bannet (1753-1829) was the renowned Rabbi of the important Jewish community of Nikolsburg, Moravia (now in the Czech Republic). In his letter presented here, he writes in 1826 to another prominent scholar, R. Aaron Suditz-Bichler (1785-1828), Rabbi of Szardehel, Hungary, recommending a young scholar, R. Yehuda Assad (1797-1866), who had actually studied under R. Aaron. In flowery style, he describes R. Yehuda's scholarship and his present difficult economic straits, requesting Rabbi Aaron to find him some means of support. Indeed, that year—on the recommendation of R. Aaron and of R. Moshe Sofer (1763-1839, renowned author of responsa *Chasam Sofer*, see chapter 76)—R. Yehuda was appointed Rabbinic judge in Szardehel, and later became one of Hungary's great Rabbis.

35. THE CHABAD RABBIS OF ROMEN, UKRAINE

Romen was a town of Chabad Chasidim in the Ukrainian province of Poltava, not far from Haditch, where Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi is interred. We know of at least eight Chabad Rabbis of the town during the period between the 1820's and 1930. Presented here are the openings and conclusions of two Halachic queries to Rabbi Menachem Mendel, author of *Tzemach Tzedek*, and a responsum from the Rabbi of a neighboring town on the same question—concerning the selling of *chametz* before Pesach.

The two queries reveal names and biographical details of the first three Rabbis of Romen known to us:

- 1) Rabbi Menachem Nachum was Rabbi there during the 1820's and until winter, 1835. Due to dissension in the community, he left to become Rabbi of Tchetzersk, although many in Romen begged him to stay (as explained at length in the first query).
 - 2) Rabbi Yitzchak Yaakov, son of Rabbi Moshe, author of the first query,

was related to Rabbi Menachem Nachum by the marriage of their children. The latter's supporters would not let him leave Romen unless he persuaded the former, who was recognized for his scholarship, to serve as temporary Rabbinic authority—for ruling on issues of Halachic law—at least until a permanent Rabbi would be appointed.

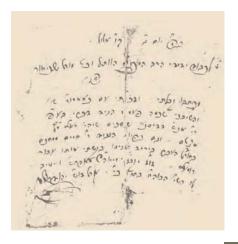
- 3) In winter, 1836, Rabbi Menachem Tzvi Hirsh, son of Rabbi Moshe, from the town of Krutze, was appointed Rabbi of Romen. For some time, his economic straits had prompted him to seek a Rabbinic position, and when he visited Rabbi Menachem Mendel, author of *Tzemach Tzedek*, in fall, 1835, the Rebbe lent him funds and gave him a letter of recommendation to Rabbi Peretz Chein, Rabbi of Beshenkovitch, to help him find a suitable position. The latter, after thoroughly examining his Halachic knowledge and awarding him a fine *semicha* (certificate of Rabbinic ordination), tried to help him but was unsuccessful. Later he visited other prominent Rabbis—Rabbi Yitzchak Isaac Baharad, Rabbi of Vitebsk; Rabbi Meir Berlin, Rabbi of Mohilev; and Rabbi Yitzchak Isaac Epstein, Rabbi of Homel. All three examined him and awarded him fine *semichos*. The last-named told him about the open position in Romen and sent with him a letter of recommendation that the community should accept him as Rabbi. It was Rabbi Menachem Tzvi Hirsh who authored the second query to Rabbi Menachem Mendel, in which he writes the above details.
- 4) Rabbi Schneur Tzvi Segal was Rabbi of Romen during the later years of Rabbi Menachem Mendel's life, who sent him a Halachic responsum in 1852.
- 5) From 1863 until his passing in 1901, Rabbi Eliezer Arlozorov was Rabbi of Romen. He was one of Russia's prominent Rabbis.
- 6) Rabbi Akiva Yankelevsky, Rabbi Arlozorov's son-in-law, was appointed as Rabbinic authority in Romen after his father-in-law's passing, serving concurrently with Rabbi Schneersohn (see next paragraph).
- 7) Rabbi Chaim Yishaya Schneersohn, great-grandson of Rabbi Menachem Mendel, was Rabbi of Romen from 1901 until his passing in late 1927.
- 8) Rabbi Schneur Zalman Yisrael Yaakov (known as "Yanni") Gurarye was the son of Rabbi Shmuel, the Rabbi of Charol. He was appointed Rabbi of Romen in summer 1928. Previously, starting in 1925, he had headed a clandestine branch of Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim there, which was closed by the authorities in 1927. It is not clear how long he served in this Rabbinic position during that difficult period, but later he moved to Moscow, and around 1947 was appointed Rabbi of Lvov (Lemberg).

36. RABBINIC APPOINTMENT FOR RABBI SCHNEUR ETTIN

Rabbi Schneur Ettin was the son of Rabbi Yishaya, Rabbi in Vyetka and later one of the Rabbis of Vitebsk. Testifying to the latter's prominence is that he was requested to be among the signatories on approbations for publication, in 1848-1867, of *Likkutei Torah* and of the Siddur (with Chasidic discourses), both by Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi.

Presented here are two letters by sons of Rabbi Menachem Mendel, author of *Tzemach Tzedek*, concerning a Rabbinic position for Rabbi Schneur. The first, signed by the Rebbe's second, third and fourth sons (who all served later as





Rebbes), is a recommendation attesting to his renowned scholarship in Halacha and Chabad philosophy, with a request to appoint him to some Rabbinic position. The second, signed only by the Rebbe's second son, Rabbi Yehuda Leib, is addressed directly to Rabbi Schneur, and notes that his father, the Rebbe, had several times mentioned his name to the community of Disna, Lithuania, as suitable to become its Rabbi.

It is unknown whether the appointment in Disna actually materialized. Two Rabbis of Disna are known to us, one until 1884 and one from that year onwards. If Rabbi Schneur was indeed appointed Rabbi of Disna, it must have been before those two.

37. CHABAD RABBIS OF BOBRUISK, WHITE RUSSIA

From the early 1800's until 1851, the Rabbi of Bobruisk, an important Chabad community in White Russia, was the renowned scholar Rabbi Boruch Mordechai Ettinga, a prominent Chasid of Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, Rabbi DovBer and Rabbi Menachem Mendel. Shown here is the opening and conclusion of a responsum in Rabbi Boruch Mordechai's handwriting. In 1851, he went to live in the Holy Land, settling in Jerusalem, where he passed away the following year.

In his place, the Bobruisk community appointed Rabbi Hillel HaLeivi Malisov (1795-1864), renowned as "Rabbi Hillel Paritcher" because previously he had served as Rabbi of Paritch. He was celebrated not only for his Talmudic-Halachic scholarship but for his great erudition in Kabbalah and Chasidus and his outstanding saintliness. Besides his transcripts of discourses of his Rebbes, accompanied by his own explanations, he authored many original Chabad discourses (many of his works are collected in the volumes of *Pelach Harimon* and *Likkutei Biurim*). Bobruisk's non-Chasidic community, too, recognized him as the city's sole Rabbi, and he served there until his passing in summer, 1864.

Before Rabbi Hillel's appointment, however, the community apparently considered another candidate—Rabbi Aaron Lipshitz, Rabbi of Belinitz, a great scholar known for his diplomatic talents in dealing with important Czarist officials on behalf of the Jewish community. A delegation from Bobruisk traveled to meet him to confirm his appointment, obtaining also a letter from Rabbi Menachem Mendel's son, Rabbi Yehuda Leib, urging him to accept and to return with them. For some reason, Rabbi Aaron's appointment did not materialize, and they later selected Rabbi Hillel.

Presented here is Rabbi Yehuda Leib's letter.

38. CHABAD RABBIS OF HORKI, & RABBI ZALMAN NEIMARK'S RABBINIC POSITIONS

During the 19th century, we know of four Rabbis of the White Russian town of Horki (later Russified as "Gorki"—not to be confused with the city of Gorki, previously and now again known as Nizhni-Novgorod, in central Russia):

- 1) Rabbi Yehoshua, who served until around summer, 1842.
- 2) Succeeding him was Rabbi Yehoshua Eliyahu, son of Rabbi Yosef, who served until at least the end of 1849. Among the letters written by Rabbi Men-



achem Mendel, author of *Tzemach Tzedek*, there are two in which he urges the Horki community to give this Rabbi a good dwelling and to pay him regularly.

3) Succeeding him was Rabbi Meshulam Zalman Neimark (who may have been related to Rabbi Yehoshua Eliyahu, for he called one of his sons by that name). Presented here is a letter written at the end of 1859, signed by Rabbi Menachem Mendel's second, third and fourth sons, urging the community to find a regular source for Rabbi Neimark's salary, and to give him a modest raise—"for the benefit of both of you...for a renowned Rabbinic authority, both in ruling on Halachic law and in knowledge of Chasidic philosophy, is precious in these times..." Around 1862, however, he left Horki.

Rabbi Neimark became Rabbi of Starodub, where, together with 80 other Jews, he was imprisoned for two years—1881-1883—on charges of helping Jewish young men evade the Czarist draft. Around 1886 he became Rabbi of Vitebsk, and in 1888 of the Chabad Chasidic town of Nevel, where he remained until his passing in summer, 1893. His son, Rabbi Yechezkel Feivel, succeeded him as Rabbi of Nevel.

4) When Rabbi Neimark left Horki in 1862, he was succeeded by Rabbi Chaim Shimon Dov Zivov—son of Rabbi Aryeh Leib, Rabbi of Smilovitch and later of Homel and then of Dvinsk. Both father and son were followers of Rabbi Menachem Mendel and later of his son, Rabbi Yehuda Leib, and *his* son, the Rebbes of Kopust. Rabbi Zivov was Rabbi of Horki until at least 1889.

39. THREE LETTERS BY RABBI YITZCHOK ELCHONON SPEKTOR, RABBI OF KOVNO, LITHUANIA

Presented here are three letters written in 1887 by Rabbi Yitzchok Elchonon Spektor (1817-1896), the renowned Rabbi of Kovno. The first is a *semicha* (certificate of Rabbinic ordination), the second concerns amulets—about which he writes that they are beyond him—and blessings for a sick person, and the third confirms receipt of funds collected for victims whose homes and possessions had been destroyed by fire (a frequent occurrence in those days).

40. LETTERS & PIDYONOS BY RABBI YEHOSHUA NIMOYTIN

Rabbi Yehoshua Nimoytin was born in Koblitz in 1848, and passed away from hunger, with his wife Rochel, in 1942, during the German blockade of Leningrad. A renowned scholar and Chasid, he was Rabbi in the towns of Ushatz, Danilovitch, Beshenkovitch, Veliz and Vitebsk. In his later years, he joined his son, R. Shmuel, who lived with his family in Leningrad and was active in the Jewish community there.

Presented here are two letters and two *pidyonos* written by Rabbi Yehoshua, all apparently in the years 1937-1938, when his hand trembled, so that the writing is somewhat unclear. Shown first, for comparison sake, is the opening and conclusion of a Halachic responsum he wrote some 30 years earlier in 1907.

The first letter is written to the Chasid Reb Eliyahu Pahr, who had left in summer, 1936, for the Holy Land. Rabbi Yehoshua rebukes him for feeling depressed that the only employment he could find was as beadle of Chasidic *shuls*

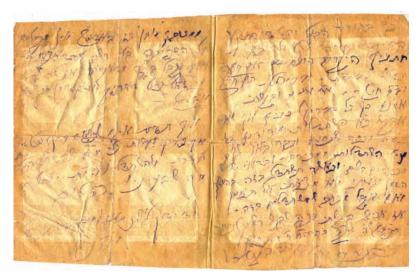


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in Tel Aviv. On the contrary, he wrote, he should be happy at the opportunity to help the congregants study Torah and perform good deeds. He also asks him to arrange a visa for him to travel to the Holy Land through the port of Odessa.

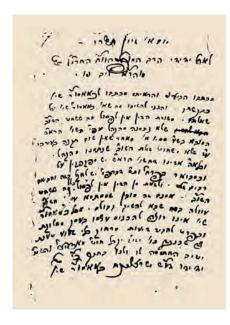
In that year began the terrible purges in the Soviet Union, when hundreds of Chabad Chasidim were arrested and disappeared. Years later, it was revealed that most had been shot soon after their arrest. Among those arrested were Rabbi Yehoshua's son, Reb Shmuel, and his son-in-law, Reb Moshe Isaac HaKohen Saposhnik. Shown here are the *pidyonos* he wrote for each of them, carefully avoiding mention of any relationship with him (doubtless for fear of retaliation by the authorities).

Identifiable from the same handwriting is also part of a letter he wrote to the well-known Chasid, Rabbi Chaim Shaul Bruk, who left the USSR for the Holy Land in 1936, leading us to believe that it, too, was written during those years, 1937-1938.





Shechita and Shochtim



41. RESPONSUM OF RABBI MENACHEM MENDEL OF LUBAVITCH, WRITTEN BY HIS SON, RABBI YISROEL NOACH

Even before he accepted the Chabad leadership in 1828, Rabbi Menachem Mendel was recognized as one of the great Halachic authorities of his time. As his fame spread, he received an increasing stream of queries from other Rabbis on complex issues of Jewish law—as reflected in his multi-volume collected responsa. The manifold concerns of his leadership, however, took up more and more of his time, leaving little time to write the detailed responsa that these important queries required. In his later years, he delegated that task to his fourth son, Rabbi Yisroel Noach, (1815-1883, who later became Rebbe of Niezhin, Ukraine). A great scholar in his own right, Rabbi Yisroel Noach prepared responsa to the queries and submitted them for his father's approval before sending them.

After his passing, Rabbi Yisroel Noach's responsa were prepared for publication, but were never actually published. A few have been published in various journals etc., but most apparently have been lost.

Presented here is Rabbi Yisroel Noach's reply to a query about whether to prohibit meat slaughtered by a shochet (ritual slaughterer) not authorized by the community. By request of the Rabbi asking the question, he had shown the letter to Rabbi Menachem Mendel, and here he records his father's reply and reasoning. He notes that although his father ruled leniently in this case, he understood that the shochet was probably infringing on the turf of local shochtim. Yet he was unwilling to get involved in any dispute, particularly without hearing the arguments of the other side.

The responsum is addressed to Rabbi Aryeh Leib Zivov, Rabbi of Smilevitch. Later he became one of the Rabbis of Homel, and afterwards served as the Chasidic Rabbi of Dinaburg-Dvinsk (now Daugavpils, Latvia) from 1865 until his passing in 1887. He was one of Russia's prominent Rabbis, known to have written many Halachic responsa, of which few, however, have survived, and fewer still have been published (see also above, end of chapter 38).

42. RESPONSUM OF RABBI HILLEL OF PARITCH

Rabbi Hillel of Paritch (1795-1864—see above, chapter 37) was a renowned Halachic authority, besides his other superlative qualities. Presented here is a responsum he wrote after he had already become Rabbi of Bobruisk in 1852. The surprise he expresses that the query had not been addressed to the sons of Rabbi Menachem Mendel, author of *Tzemach Tzedek*, allows us to date it more precisely to the period starting in 1860 (and before Rabbi Hillel's passing in 1864), when the Rebbe was in poor health and delegated most public duties to his sons.

The responsum is about the communal *shochet* of the Chabad town of Pahar, White Russia. He had become involved in a dispute between others and sided with a Jew who testified in civil court against other Jews, later also insulting the town's Rabbi. When Rabbi Hillel previously wrote to the Rabbis of three neighboring communities to get involved and make peace between the sides, they had replied with Halachic discussion and queries on the subject. Here Rabbi



Hillel responds, giving his opinion on the Halachic issues and suggesting a way to allow the shochet to continue at his post if he demonstrates his remorse. He concludes by insisting that the three Rabbis gather in Pahar to make peace.

43. DOCUMENTS RELATING TO REB YECHIEL MICHEL ZUSNITZ, CHASIDIC SHOCHET OF BIRZ, LITHUANIA

The archives of the Jewish Department of the New York Public Library include the "Zusnitz Collection"—several boxes of documents from the legacy of Reb Yosef Yehuda Leib Zusnitz (1837-c.1920). These include also documents of his father, Reb Yechiel Michel, the shochet of Birz, Lithuania, a Chasid of Rabbi DovBer, second Lubavitcher Rebbe.

From this collection, three documents have already been published: two letters of Rabbi DovBer to Reb Yechiel Michel, and a nominal bill of sale to Reb Yechiel Michel of "four cubits of land" in Hebron in 1822, when Rabbi DovBer founded the Chabad community there.

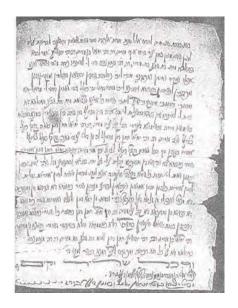
Presented here are four more of Reb Yechiel Michel's documents from that collection: 1) his *kesuba* (marriage contract) from his first marriage in 1799; 2) a letter of recognition written in 1814 by the Rabbi of Disna that Reb Yechiel Michel is qualified to serve as shochet; 3) his 1814 certification as shochet by the shochet of Disna; 4) an agreement in 1820 between the communal leaders of Birz and the leaders of its Chabad community, allowing them to employ their own Chasidic *shochet*.

The last document's background is as follows: An important enactment of Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi was that *shochtim* should use slaughtering knives only of tempered steel (for they are easier to sharpen while keeping the blade perfectly smooth without defect)—a practice that is now universal among Jews. At the time, however, Lithuanian opponents of Chasidism proscribed use of such knives because the initiative had come from Chasidim, whom they considered as deviating from traditional Judaism.

Wherever Chasidim had a community, even a very small one, they strived to employ their own Chabad *shochet* to slaughter with these knives. In towns where Chasidim were a minority, however, their opponents often refused to agree. Here we see that, in 1820, the non-Chasidic leaders of Birz came to an agreement with the Chasidim permitting them to retain their own *shochet* if they fulfilled certain conditions. Following this agreement, Reb Yechiel Michel apparently served as the Chasidic *shochet* there.

44. LETTER BY FIRST REBBE OF GUR, AUTHOR OF CHIDDUSHEI HARIM

Rabbi Yitzchak Meir Alter (1799-1866), the first Rebbe of the Gerer dynasty of Polish Chasidim, was a renowned scholar, whose Talmudic writings are gathered in his work, *Chiddushei HaRim* (see also below, chapters 55, 146). He responds here to one of his followers, R. Meir Shachna Reich, who had asked him to investigate whether a certain *shochet*, who apparently had aged, was still fit to slaughter. The Rebbe checked the *shochet's* slaughtering knife to see if it was properly sharpened and checked his ability to feel defects on its blade. In





this letter, written in 1862, he assures him that the shochet was still adept at his craft.

R. Meir Shachna's son, R. Meshulam Reich, became a Chabad Chasid and married Rivka, daughter of Rabbi Boruch Shalom, eldest son of Rabbi Menachem Mendel, author of *Tzemach Tzedek*.

45. COMMUNAL CONTRACT WITH A BUTCHER IN POLTAVA, UKRAINE

Presented here is a document signed by Rabbi Yaakov Mordechai Bezpalov, Rabbi of Poltava, Ukraine, and by the 11 members of the community committee for supervision of *nikkur* (de-veining required by the rules of kashrus) and sale of meat. It certifies that Reb Shmaya Oderman, a *menaker* (expert de-veiner) and butcher, had agreed before them to observe all the rules enacted by them to ensure high levels of *kashrus*, and had signed on those rules. A copy of the rules was doubtless attached to this document, but is no longer extant.

The document is dated in Hebrew "Monday, 29th of the month of Marcheshvon, in the year 5669," corresponding to November, 1908 (the day of the month would follow the Julian calendar still in use then in Russia, not the Gregorian calendar now used universally and adopted in the Soviet Union after the 1917 Revolution). Following the signatures, however, appears a secular date 2/11/1903—which (following European usage) indicates November 2, but five years earlier! At present we have found no explanation for this disparity.

Rabbi Yaakov Moshe Bezpalov was a renowned scholar and Chasid of Rabbi Shmuel, fourth Lubavitcher Rebbe and Rabbi Shalom DovBer, fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe. He frequently participated in conferences on Jewish communal issues organized by Rabbi Shalom DovBer.



Rare Documents
Pertaining to Rabbinic
Court Rulings

Treasures from the Chabad Library



46. LEGAL DOCUMENTS & RABBINIC COURT DECISIONS—FEZ, MOROCCO, 1697-1708

Chapters 29-30 above featured letters of prominent Rabbis of Fez, Morocco, during the early 18th century. Presented here are five official documents issued by the Halachic courts of Fez during the years 1697-1708, relating to cases brought before the judges for a ruling or compromise. As in the above chapters, the cases described here—and in the next two chapters—reflect rich details about the life of Morocco's Jews in that era. Biographical details for most Rabbinic judges mentioned can be found in standard reference works on the Sages of Morocco—as indicated in the footnotes.

47. LEGAL DOCUMENTS & RABBINIC COURT DECISIONS— FEZ, MOROCCO, 1710-1722

Four more legal documents and court decisions issued by the Rabbinic courts of Fez during the early 18th century.

48. LEGAL DOCUMENTS & RABBINIC COURT DECISIONS— FEZ, MOROCCO, 1723-1728

Four more legal documents and court decisions issued by the Rabbinic courts of Fez during the early 18th century.

49. ARBITRATION AGREEMENT & RABBINIC COURT DECISION, 1816, BY RABBI DOVBER OF LUBAVITCH WITH HIS BROTHER & HIS UNCLE

In 1798, when Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi was arrested and incarcerated in S. Petersburg, he responded to his interrogation with written replies, some of which have been preserved. Among his replies, he wrote that sometimes, when disputes arose between Jews on financial matters and they were unwilling to resort to a court case, they instead asked him to arbitrate, knowing they could rely on his just resolution.

In this and the following three chapters, we see that his son and successor, Rabbi DovBer, continued this practice, clearly seeing it as a beneficial activity that promoted peace. Sometimes he was asked to arbitrate disputes even between Jews and non-Jews. When he himself was arrested in 1826 and was asked about this, he confirmed that indeed, he was occasionally asked to arbitrate disputes. His accuser, the governor of Vitebsk, seized on this as an admission of illegal activity, for Russian law insisted that clergy be involved only in religious practice and not act as judges. The Russian court, however, ruled that it was not illegal because the parties accepted him to make peace between them. The governor lodged an appeal against this as a false interpretation of Russian law, but the Russian senate confirmed the court's ruling exonerating Rabbi DovBer.

In later generations, too, some of the Chabad Rebbes, such as Rabbi Shmuel, occasionally were involved in arbitration.

Presented here are an 1816 arbitration agreement and legal decision of a



Rabbinic court consisting of Rabbi DovBer, his brother Rabbi Chaim Avraham (c.1777-1848), and their uncle, Rabbi Yehuda Leib, Rabbi of Yanovitch (d.1826). They are written on official paper, and the arbitration agreement is translated into Russian and accompanied by a stamp confirming payment of a fee for notarization of the document's legal validity—as also specified within the ruling that it is legally valid according to Russian Imperial law.

The arbitration is between two adult brothers concerning their inheritance of property from their father. Of interest is the legal decision's mention of the trade fair held in Lubavitch twice yearly, in January and June.

50. ARBITRATION DECISION BY RABBI DOVBER OF LUBAVITCH CONCERNING PUBLICATION OF THE TALMUD AND TURIM

The printing press in Slavita, Ukraine, was one of the most important Jewish presses in the Russian Empire. It was renowned for its beautifully crafted and precisely printed Torah books, and was where the first edition of *Tanya*, Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi's central work of Chasidic philosophy, was printed in 1796.

At the end of the 18th century, there was a shortage of basic Torah works, such as the Talmud, in the Russian Empire. In summer 1800, Rabbi Schneur Zalman sent his brother Rabbi Mordechai, and his son-in-law, Rabbi Shalom Shachna (father of Rabbi Menachem Mendel, author of *Tzemach Tzedek*), to the renowned Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev to obtain his approbation for them to publish the Talmud and the *Turim* (a fundamental code of Halachic law, which is the basis for the *Shulchan Aruch*) at Slavita. The approbation does not mention that the above two partners were emissaries acting on behalf of Rabbi Schneur Zalman.

On behalf of these two partners, the *Turim* were published in Slavita in 1801-1802, and the Talmud from 1801-1806. The Talmud was published there a second time, from 1808-1813, by the owner of the Slavita press, Rabbi Moshe Shapiro (d.1839)—Rabbi of Slavita and son of Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz (1728-1790), a renowned disciple of the Baal Shem Tov.

It was not until 1815 that the involvement of Rabbi Schneur Zalman (who had passed away in 1812) was publicized. When Rabbi Moshe Shapiro published the Turim a second time, in 1815-1817, and the Talmud a third time, from 1816-1822, he reproduced the documents Rabbi Schneur Zalman sent him, in 1807-1808, renewing his right to publish these two works. Apparently, however, Rabbi Schneur Zalman had retained his original rights for their publication.

Reb Yisrael Yoffe, a Chasid of Rabbi Schneur Zalman and his son and successor, Rabbi DovBer, later established a new printing press in Kopust, White Russia. Rabbi DovBer published some of his father's and his own works there. In 1816, Yoffe decided to issue his own edition of the Talmud. He first published a sample booklet of several pages, on the basis of which he received several approbations and many advance subscribers. Immediately, Rabbi Shapiro raised a storm of protest against what he considered infringement of his rights, arguing that the approbations on his original edition prohibited new publication of



those works for 25 years—until 1825-1826—and that he still had unsold sets of his 1808 Talmud edition. Yoffe retorted that he knew for certain that Shapiro's stock of the Talmud was sold out, and therefore the original prohibition was no longer valid.

Rabbi DovBer was a natural choice to arbitrate this case, for his father had originally initiated the Talmud's publication in Slavita. And Reb Yisrael Yoffe was a prominent Chabad Chasid, who no doubt would follow the Rebbe's decision on the case.

The Rebbe directed each of the two sides to select its own judge to represent him on a *zabla* arbitration panel, and he himself nominated the third, neutral judge. He gave his personal guarantee that Yoffe would follow the panel's decision. Meanwhile, neither side was allowed to start publication until after the panel's decision, unless one side would delay selection of his representative judge, in which case that side would still be prohibited while the other side would be free to proceed with publication.

For some reason, this arbitration was unsuccessful and both sides started publication of Talmud editions. Rabbi Shapiro published the entire Talmud for the third time. Yoffe published only several volumes, together with the code of Rav Alfasi (RIF). He published there an approbation from another brother of Rabbi Schneur Zalman, Rabbi Yehuda Leib of Yanovitch, justifying Yoffe's publication of the RIF, despite its previous publication in Slavita, because the approbations prohibiting republication for many years were by Rabbis of Volhynia, whereas Kopust was in White Russia, which was relatively far from there and therefore those Rabbis had no jurisdiction there.

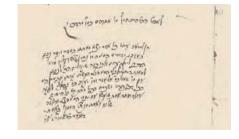
In 1822-1823, Reb Yisrael Yoffe left for the Holy Land, settling in Hebron. In 1835, a similar but much greater dispute broke out between Rabbi Shapiro's sons, owners of the Slavita press, who were now publishing a new edition of the Talmud, and the non-Chasidic owners of the press in Vilna, who were publishing their own edition. This renowned dispute inflamed all of Russian Jewry, and eventually even the Czarist government intervened, which resulted in the closing of virtually all Hebrew printing presses for several years.

51. MEDIATION BY RABBI DOVBER OF LUBAVITCH ON BEHALF OF THE INHERITANCE OF ORPHANS

Here is a letter of Rabbi DovBer, who apparently had presided over a Rabbinic court to sort out the inheritance of young orphans. The letter, apparently accompanied by a copy of the court's decision, asks their town's Rabbi to supervise fulfillment of its stipulations for the orphans' benefit, and to accept guardianship of their inheritance, together with two other town residents named by the Rebbe.

52. LETTER BY RABBI DOVBER OF LUBAVITCH TO ARRANGE A RABBINIC LAWSUIT

In this letter, Rabbi DovBer writes to the Rabbi of a Chabad community, together with three other town residents, to arrange (or serve as judges at) a *Din Torah* (Rabbinic lawsuit) to settle a dispute between two Chasidim in a way





that satisfies them both, and to ensure that their creditors be paid. The Rebbe further asks that if either of the two does not fulfill the decision, the letter's recipients should please inform him (so that he would intervene to ensure fulfillment).

53. RABBI MENACHEM MENDEL'S SON ASKS RABBI HILLEL OF PARITCH, AND THEN RABBI AARON OF BELINITZ, TO BE HIS REPRESENTIVE JUDGE

The second son of Rabbi Menachem Mendel, author of *Tzemach Tzedek*, was called Rabbi Yehuda Leib Schneersohn (1811-1866). In summer 1855, he urgently needed to arrange a *Din Torah* (Rabbinic lawsuit), by *zabla* arbitration, to settle a dispute he had (the details of which are not given here).

Both Rabbi Yehuda Leib and his father, the Rebbe, preferred that his representative Rabbi on the *zabla* court be Rabbi Hillel Paritcher (see above chapters 36 and 41). Rabbi Hillel, however, had made a vow 31 years previously never to be a representative Rabbi on a *zabla* court but only the third, neutral Rabbi. This vow was based on his apprehensions that representative Rabbis, because they inevitably have some bias towards the side they represent, may not judge neutrally and objectively as judges must do. Halachically it was possible to annul his vow, but this was no simple matter, and he asked whether the Rebbe could seek a satisfactory way for him to do so. Other prominent Rabbis, too, were asked for their opinions and wrote detailed responsa on the subject.

Because of this problem, Rabbi Yehuda Leib eventually decided to request Rabbi Aaron Lipshitz, Rabbi of Belinitz (see chapter 37 above), to serve as his representative Rabbi.

Presented here are four letters. Three are to Rabbi Aaron—from late summer, 1855, to early summer, 1856—asking him to represent him and to read the case's documentation. The fourth is to Rabbi Aaron's brother, Reb Zev Volf, a merchant who lived in a larger town where mail arrived at its post office, asking him to forward the letter and documentation to his brother as soon as possible.

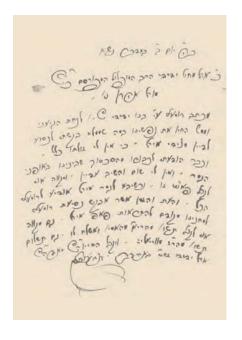
In those days, mail to small towns such as Belinitz and Lubavitch arrived at the post office of the nearest larger town. For Lubavitch, that town was Babinovitch, as Rabbi Yehuda Leib notes in a postscript to the first letter.

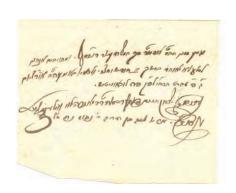
54. PROMISSORY NOTES (VEKSELEN) WRITTEN IN LUBAVITCH, 1854-1858

In the era before ordinary folk had bank accounts and issued checks for drawing funds from their account, they wrote a promissory note—known in Yiddish as a *veksel*—which guaranteed payment of their debt by a certain date. These *vekselen* were often passed on by the recipients to others as payment for their own debts.

Here we have three promissory notes written in Lubavitch from 1854 to 1858.

1) The first was written by Reb Yissachar Ber Melamed ("Torah teacher") in fall, 1854, for payment of three ruble by the following spring.





Treasures from the Chabad Library



- 2) The second was written in winter, 1858, to confirm a debt of six ruble for a copy of *Likkutei Torah*, by Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, published by his grandson, Rabbi Menachem Mendel, author of *Tzemach Tzedek* (together with his own notes and explanations, see chapter 57). This volume had been bought on behalf of the Lubavitcher congregation in the Lithuanian township of Dokshitz.
- 3) The third was written in late 1857 to confirm a debt of 15 ruble to Rabbi Menachem Mendel himself—either for a loan he issued or perhaps as an obligation to pay maamad, the funds Chasidim contribute to support the Rebbe's household and activities. The first of the two signatories is Reb Yitzchak Chaim DovBer Vilensky, a Chasid of Rabbi Menachem Mendel, Rabbi Shmuel, and Rabbi Shalom DovBer, who later became renowned for his profound scholarship in Chabad philosophy. Born about 1836-1838, he was married at the age of 18 or 19. Several months later, he went to stay in Lubavitch to spend time close to the Rebbe, as was the custom of newly married Chasidic young men (both in Chabad and among other Chasidim) during the 19th century. This promissory note was apparently written during that period.

Books and Publishing

55. THIRD EDITION OF RABBI SCHNEUR ZALMAN OF LIADI'S SIDDUR

The teachings of Chasidism, the inspirational movement founded by Rabbi Yisrael Baal Shem Tov (1698-1760), are based primarily on the Kabbalah teachings of the Arizal—Rabbi Yitzchak Luria (1534-1572), the greatest of the Kabbalists. The same is true of the movement's customs, including the *nusach* (prayer text) it adopted—the Baal Shem Tov used prayer texts following the Arizal's teachings. For many decades, however, Chasidim had no published prayerbook following actual Chasidic custom.

Late in the 18th century, Rabbi Schneur Zalman prepared a prayer text that carefully followed both rules of Jewish law and the Arizal's teachings, but excluded virtually all his explicit *kavanos* (mystical meditations). It is used by Chabad Chasidim to this day.

In 1816, after Rabbi Schneur Zalman's passing, his son and successor, Rabbi DovBer, published in Kopust his father's Siddur accompanied by over 100 of his father's profound discourses of Chabad philosophy that explain passages of the prayer text, basic mitzvos associated with prayer such as *tzitzis*, *tefillin*, Shabbos, and festivals of the Jewish year. In 1818, it was republished in Berditchev with several additional discourses. This work came to be known as the "Siddur with Chasidus." It was not published again until many years later. Most Chabad Chasidim lived then in the Russian Empire. In 1837, false charges prompted the Czarist government to close all Jewish printing presses except one in Vilna, Lithuania. Another printing press was to be permitted to open in Zhitomir, Ukraine, but it did not start publication until 1847.

The Vilna press, the sole surviving Jewish press in Russia, could not satisfy all Russian Jewry's demands for religious books. To fill this need, new Jewish printing presses sprouted up across the border in Prussia, in cities such as Koenigsburg, Johannesburg, Danzig and Memel.

At these new presses in Prussia, most published works featured on the front page, as is customary, the actual city and year of publication. For some works, however—such as those of Kabbalah and Chasidus, which had been defamed to the Russian government by *maskilim* (Jewish secularists)—they were concerned that, when exported into Russia, these could arouse problems with the censor. Instead, they hoped to smuggle them across the border. Therefore they often printed these works with a front page showing a false date many years before; if caught, the smugglers could say the works were published long ago in some unknown location.

The third edition of the Siddur with Chasidus was published during the 1850's. Most copies of its front page do not show the place of publication, but state that this edition carefully follows the Berditchev edition, with the word "Berditchev" printed in large red letters—making it look as if it is the actual place of publication.

From the typeface, however, bibliographers have long discerned that this edition was actually published in Koenigsberg. The year of publication is given by means of the numerical value of some letters, which were printed in bold font, of a Torah verse (as was customary for many works). The above bibliographers read that date as 5591 (1831), which they assumed to be false.

Previously, the Chabad Library had six copies of this edition in its posses-

sion. Recently it received a seventh, which once belonged to a Chabad Chasid who had served as *shochet* of Koenigsberg before World War II. It is unique in having a second "front page" almost identical to the first, except that it states explicitly that it was published in Koenigsberg, by a publisher who is named, in the year indicated by the bold letters of the same Torah verse.

That verse includes the Hebrew letter *hey*, referring to G-d's name, which bibliographers thought should be counted as 5 (the numerical value of *hey*), giving a total that indicated the year 5591 (1831). If, however, we include all four letters of G-d's Name, which have a total numerical value of 26, the total numerical value of all the verse's bold letters indicate the year 5612 (1852). This seems to be the correct year of this edition.

This unique copy of the book must have been one of the relatively few published for internal dissemination within Prussia—for the small number of Chabad Chasidim living there at the time.

56. LETTER BY FIRST REBBE OF GUR, AUTHOR OF CHIDDUSHEI HARIM

Rabbi Yitzchak Meir Alter (1799-1866), author of *Chiddushei HaRim*, a renowned Torah scholar and saintly personality, lived in Warsaw, Poland (see also above, chapter 44). For most of his life, he was a distinguished follower of other great Chasidic leaders. Only during his last years, starting in 1859, when Chasidim urged him to accept them as followers, did he become a Rebbe. His Gerer dynasty was continued by his grandson and descendants and became the largest Chasidic group in pre-World War II Poland and one of the largest worldwide to this day.

Before becoming Rebbe, he supported himself by publishing Torah works, working personally on preparing them for publication. During the 1850's, he cooperated with two other publishers to issue a multi-volume set of the Mishnah with commentaries. For these he obtained, in 1853, approbations of three distinguished Polish Rabbis, which prohibited others from publishing the Mishnah for the next six years. Two approbations prohibited this from their date of writing, but the third prohibited it for six years from the end of the printing process, which finished in 1857, thus extending the prohibition until 1863.

In 1861, another publisher started republishing the Mishnah without Rabbi Alter's knowledge or permission. A different publisher suggested that Rabbi Alter transfer his rights to him in writing so that he could stop the other publisher from proceeding and infringing on Rabbi Alter's rights. He promised not to use this permission immediately and even then not until he came to a detailed agreement with Rabbi Alter. This was a trick, however, and soon he started publishing his own edition of the Mishnah.

In this letter, written in 1861, Rabbi Alter asks to inform customers not to buy either of the new editions, for both transgressed the third approbation's prohibition, and it is proper to buy only books published by honest means rather than those published by wronging others.

Interestingly, it was Rabbi Alter's son, Rabbi Avraham Mordechai, who in 1838, together with a partner, published Rabbi Schneur Zalman's *Shulchan*



Aruch for the first time in Poland, introducing study of this important Halachic code to Polish Jewry. The son was quite young at the time, and it was probably his father who prepared the multi-volume work for publication, for that was then his occupation.

57. RABBI YEHUDA LEIB'S LETTER TO RABBI SHMUEL BETZALEL, ABOUT THE SECOND EDITION OF LIKKUTEI TORAH

During the more than three and half decades that Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, led Chabad Chasidim, he orally delivered over one thousand discourses of Chabad philosophy. Of all his Chabad teachings, however, Rabbi Schneur Zalman published only his central work, *Tanya*—in three sections—and one discourse and a brief passage in his Siddur (see above, chapter 55).

His grandson, Rabbi Menachem Mendel, author of *Tzemach Tzedek*, invested great effort in gathering transcripts of Rabbi Schneur Zalman's discourses, many of which had been dispersed or lost during the upheavals of the era. Over the course of 20 years—1814-1834—he carefully prepared the discourses for publication, adding occasional references and explanations.

In 1837, Rabbi Menachem Mendel published the first volume of these discourses, naming it *Torah Or*, which contained discourses on *Bereishis* and *Shemos*, Chanukah and the Book of Esther. Printing was almost concluded when the Czarist government moved to close most Jewish printing presses in Russia (see above, ibid., and chapter 50).

The second volume was not published until after a Chasidic-owned printing press opened in Zhitomir, Ukraine, in 1847. It was published in 1848 under a new name, *Likkutei Torah*, and included hundreds of discourses on *Vayikra*, *Bamidbar*, *Devarim*, and *Shir Hashirim* (the Song of Songs) and on most Jewish festivals. Until today it is considered one of the most fundamental works of Chabad Chasidism.

Likkutei Torah's official publishers—as noted on the front page and in the approbations, which prohibited anyone from republishing it for 25 years—were two of Rabbi Menachem Mendel's sons. One was his second son, Rabbi Yehuda Leib, who, after his father's passing, became a Rebbe with his center in Kopust. The other was his third son, Rabbi Chaim Schneur Zalman (1814-1880), who also later became a Rebbe, with his center in Liadi. The approbations note that it was they who had invested funds to publish this work.

In 1866, just months after Rabbi Menachem Mendel's passing, *Likkutei Torah* was republished in Zhitomir. The 1866 edition's front page and the approbations no longer mentioned Rabbi Menachem Mendel's two sons as publishers. The approbations, which otherwise are virtually identical to the first edition, mentioned Rabbi Menachem Mendel's sons—apparently referring to all of them—as owning the 25-year copyright, without specifying any of them as publishers. The front page gives the publisher's name as R. Shmuel Betzalel Sheftel, a well-known Chasid of Rabbi Menachem Mendel—and later of Rabbi Shmuel and Rabbi Shalom DovBer, who referred to him as "Rashbatz."

In 1878, a third edition was published. It again mentioned Rabbi Menachem Mendel's sons in general as owning the copyright, and warned that no one else

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could republish it without their permission. This confirmed that it was actually they who had published the 1866 edition, too, only delegating actual involvement in publication to R. Shmuel Betzalel.

It should be noted that when the 1866 edition was published, the sons were during the year of mourning for their father and and were also occupied with concerns relating to their inheritance. To determine the latter, the brothers requested several prominent Chabad Rabbis to conduct a *Din Torah* (Rabbinic lawsuit) for the purpose of delineating their respective rights vis-a-vis each other. Before a ruling was issued, it would be not be appropriate to mention any of the sons' involvement in republishing *Likkutei Torah*, for their division of rights had not yet been determined. The eventual ruling determined that the brothers' rights on most issues were equal (as recorded by *Beis Rebbe*, the standard biography of the first three Chabad Rebbes), which would explain why the approbations mention all Rabbi Menachem Mendel's sons together.

From the letter published here, it is evident that Rabbi Yehuda Leib was closely involved in the publication of the 1866 edition, too. He writes to R. Shmuel Betzalel that he encloses 100 ruble towards his portion of the publication costs—probably shared equally by all the brothers—and also lengthy notes concerning details of publication (which, however, are no longer extant). The letter shows how close R. Shmuel Betzalel was with the Rebbe's family.

Written in late summer, 1866, this letter is one of the last written by Rabbi Yehuda Leib, who passed away in Kopust about two and a half months later, at the early age of 55.

58. ITEMIZED BILL FOR THE 5TH EDITION OF LIKKUTEI TORAH—1904

Rabbi Shalom DovBer, fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe, deeply desired that Chabad Chasidus be studied widely. He arranged for preparation of a new, carefully corrected edition of *Tanya*, based in part on reliable manuscripts and early editions, and supplemented by careful examination of the text. Published in a large square-letter typeface in Vilna in 1900, this edition of *Tanya* remains, after minor corrections, the standard edition republished and studied ever since.

The next project was to prepare a new, fifth edition of *Likkutei Torah*. Previous editions were out of print and, anyone seeking a copy found it hard to obtain and very expensive. They also had many mistakes that made some passages difficult to follow, and, as such, the Rebbe wanted a new edition as free of mistakes as possible and available at cost price.

Under the Rebbe's supervision, an expert proofreader-copyist of Chabad manuscripts made corrections to the previous editions, based in most cases on Rabbi Menachem Mendel's original manuscripts prepared for *Likkutei Torah's* first edition, or other reliable manuscripts. Afterwards, the Rebbe himself checked the corrections, carefully analyzing every nuance to ensure that all were justified and made sense in the context.

The Rebbe signed the publishing agreement with the Romm family printing press of Vilna in early spring, 1902 (a facsimile is reproduced at the end of recent editions of *Likkutei Torah*). On completing final corrections of each section, he sent them to Vilna for typesetting. Publication was completed in





summer, 1904. Shown here is the itemized bill sent by Romm to the Rebbe in summer, 1904, for payment of remaining publication costs, after deducting installments already paid, for which the dates are noted.

Romm agreed that, after publication, they would keep *Likkutei Torah's* printing plates on the Rebbe's behalf for whenever he needed them. From these original plates, *Likkutei Torah* was republished in 1928, on the initiative of and funded by graduates of the original Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim in Lubavitch who had settled in the United States.

59. PUBLICATION AND SALE OF FIRST VOLUME OF TZEMACH TZEDEK

Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneersohn, third Lubavitcher Rebbe, left a vast legacy of Torah writings—Halachic responsa, explanations of the Talmud and its commentaries and of Halachic authorities of previous generations, besides voluminous writings on Chasidic philosophy. Soon after his passing in 1866, his sons arranged for two distinguished Torah scholars to prepare their father's Halachic responsa and Talmudic writings for publication.

The first volume of *Tzemach Tzedek*—his responsa on the first part of *Even Ha'ezer*, third section of the *Shulchan Aruch*—was published in Vilna in 1871. The front page notes that it was published by the author's sons and grandsons, meaning that they shared in publication costs and sale of the books.

Those actually involved in the publishing process were R. Rafael Mordechai Schneersohn, a grandson of Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi's middle son (and son-in-law of Rabbi Hillel Paritcher), and R. Meshulam Reich, son-in-law of Rabbi Menachem Mendel's eldest son (see above, chapter 44). After publication, they distributed these volumes among Rabbi Menachem Mendel's sons and grandsons. Among them, they wrote to his fifth son, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak of Avrutch, Ukraine (1822-1876, see above, chapter 6), asking what to do with his share of the books and how he planned to dispose of them.

In the letter presented here, he replies, asking them to leave two thirds of his share in Bobruisk, a large town and important Chabad center in White Russia, where he hopes to sell them through a certain individual recommended to him. The other third he asks to send to him in Avrutch, where he hopes to sell them locally.

60. LETTER FROM RABBI SHLOMO HAKOHEN, RABBI OF VILNA, ABOUT HIS BINYAN SHLOMO

Rabbi Shlomo HaKohen was a prominent Halachic authority in Vilna in the second half of the 19th century. In 1889 he published his work *Binyan Shlomo*, consisting of responsa and explanations of Orach Chaim, first section of the *Shulchan Aruch*.

He sent his book to other Rabbis, accompanied by a letter asking them to send him comments on its contents, in the hope of promoting a fertile Torah correspondence, and requesting them to give its payment to the emissary bringing the book. Presented here is one of these letters.

The Chabad Library has in its possession two of Rabbi Shlomo HaKohen's





Halachic responsa, which it has already published elsewhere. Shown here are their openings and conclusions, including the author's signature.

61. RABBI SHALOM DOVBER SEEKS TO ESTABLISH A TORAH RESEARCH LIBRARY

Over the course of 19 years—1866-1885—Rabbi Abraham Merzbacher, a wealthy resident of Munich, Germany, assembled an important collection of 156 Hebrew manuscripts and 4332 old and rare books, including 43 incunabula (books published at the dawn of printing, before 1500). Merzbacher was the patron of Rabbi Rafael Noson Rabinowitz, a noted scholar who needed such works in the course of preparing his classic *Dikdukei Soferim*, a vast work on textual variants in most volumes of the Talmud. Merzbacher allowed him a free hand to buy on his account whatever rare Torah works he desired. After Merzbacher's passing in 1885, his son asked Rabinowitz to prepare a catalogue of the collection, which was published in 1887 as *Ohel Avraham*.

In late 1900, Rabbi Shalom DovBer, fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe, was in Germany for medical reasons and met there Merzbacher's son, who sought a buyer for his father's collection. Rabbi Shalom DovBer was interested and immediately wrote home to his son, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak, to find and send him his copy of the above catalogue and of the list of books in the Lubavitch Collection.

The Rebbe did not have the funds for such an acquisition, which would cost about 35,000 ruble, and he wrote several times to one of his wealthy Chasidim, Rabbi Yeshaya Berlin of Riga (who was related to the Schneersohns by marriage), and later to others, to interest them in funding it. The Rebbe's goal seems to have been not only to keep such treasures in the hands of Torah-observant Jews who knew how to cherish their holiness, but also out of a desire to establish an important Judaica library under Torah-observant ownership, dedicated to study and research by scholars.

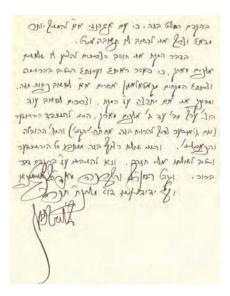
Negotiations about acquiring the collection continued on and off until the second half of 1902. Sometimes Merzbacher's son decided not to sell, and at other times he seemed ready to sell. Several of the Rebbe's letters on the subject have already been published. Shown here is a newly discovered letter from late summer, 1902, about the final stages of arranging the sale. After this point, however, we find no more mention of the sale, and apparently it did not materialize.

62. THREE LETTERS BY RABBI YISRAEL MEIR KAGAN, AUTHOR OF CHOFETZ CHAIM

Rabbi Yisrael Meir Kagan (1839-1933), was a beloved figure, a famed Torah leader and prolific author of Torah works, particularly practical works to guide Jews in actual observance of Judaism. He is renowned by the name of his first work, *Chofetz Chaim*, which codifies the rules of the Torah prohibition of slander and related prohibitions, and is especially famous for his *Mishnah Berurah*, a popular practical commentary on *Orach Chaim* (first section of the *Shulchan Aruch*) that is considered authoritative among many Ashkenazi Jews.

Shown here are three of his letters:

1) A letter written late in 1907, announcing completion of his Mishnah





Berurah (previously only five of its six volumes had been completed) and its availability for sale. The letter states that its bearer, a well-known preacher, would distribute this and the Chofetz Chaim's other works in towns close to Warsaw. In a postscript he gives exact prices for each volume of his works available for sale.

2) A letter written in spring, 1919, to Rabbi Moshe Madayevsky, Rabbi of Kharol, a renowned scholar and Chasid of Rabbi Shalom DovBer, fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe, who was particularly active on behalf of Russian Jewry during the Czarist era.

The Chofetz Chaim lived in the small town of Radin, Lithuania, where he headed a renowned yeshiva. During World War I, as German armies approached, he left with many of his students, in summer, 1915, in order to escape from the front. They settled deeper in Russia, staying there until summer 1921, first in Smilovitch, then in Shumyatz, and finally in Snovesk, supported in each community by the local Jewish population. The move from Shumyatz to Snovesk was around 1919, but the exact date is unknown, so we do not know where he wrote this letter, in which he asks Rabbi Madayevsky to assist one of his students whom he had sent to Kharol, with the mission of finding a suitable abode for his yeshiva for the next few months, because famine and high living expenses were forcing them to leave their present location.

3) An undated letter to his son, apparently written in winter, 1921, announcing his intention to leave Soviet rule, because the new atheistic Bolshevik regime was already forcing Jews—including his yeshiva students—to work on Shabbos, and pressuring for other breaches in Jewish observance. He planned to return to Radin (which had come under the jurisdiction of Poland) and advised his son, too, who was staying elsewhere under Soviet rule, to escape and return home to Lithuania, because, as Maimonides rules, Jews are obligated to seek residence in a place that lets them observe Judaism without restraint. He also mentions his desire to migrate to the Holy Land, but only after first reaching Radin—a desire not fulfilled in his lifetime.

The Chabad Library has in its possession also part of the Chofetz Chaim's original manuscript of *Mishnah Berurah*, a brief passage of which is reproduced here.



63. RABBI YOSEF YITZCHAK REQUESTS RETURN OF HIS LIBRARY

When Rabbi Shalom DovBer, fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe, and his family left Lubavitch (see above chapter 10), he took his collection of rare manuscripts with him. But he and his son, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak, sent their large library of published Torah works—which also included many rare volumes—for safe-keeping at a storage warehouse in Moscow belonging to one of the Rebbe's prominent Chasidim. Some time after the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, the new Soviet regime nationalized many businesses, including that warehouse.

As the civil war ended and the consequent chaotic conditions improved, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak—who had succeeded his father on the latter's passing in spring, 1920—applied in winter, 1921, to have the library restored to his possession. The governmental office *Narkompros*, which had jurisdiction over such

issues, granted him an official permit for this (as detailed in the Hebrew work *Sifriyas Lubavitch*).

At the time, however, the Rebbe was living in Rostov-on-Don, which was distant from Moscow, and it was impossible then to bring the library there. In summer, 1922, he applied for permission to bring the library to Rostov, but it was not granted. In summer, 1924, after settling in Leningrad that spring, the Rebbe sent the letter reproduced here, applying for permission to bring the library to Leningrad.

In the official reply, also reproduced here, the Rebbe is informed that, earlier that summer, *Narkompros* had transferred the books to Moscow's public library, which is why it is not empowered to return the books to him.

The following year, in winter, 1925, the Rebbe sent a similar request to the national Ministry of Culture.

Consequent efforts, during the 1920's, and then later, restarting in 1981 and continuing for many years, are detailed in *Sifriyas Lubavitch*, p. 84 ff.

64. PUBLISHING THE WORKS OF RABBI YOSEF ROZEN, THE ROGATCHOVER GAON

Rabbi Yosef Rozin (1858-1936), the Chasidic Rabbi of Dvinsk-Daugavpils, Latvia, was known—after the White Russian town where he was born—as the "Rogatchover Gaon." He was renowned for his prodigious erudition and particularly his revolutionary in-depth approach to Torah scholarship. A scion of a Chabad family, he received a blessing, in his childhood, from Rabbi Menachem Mendel, author of *Tzemach Tzedek*, and was close to the Chabad Rebbes of his era.

During his lifetime, several of his works were published under the name *Tzafnas Pa'ane'ach*, and gave the public a glimpse of his unique genius. But he left behind a vast treasure trove of scholarly writings, which his family and disciples hoped to publish.

During the week of mourning, his wife, Rebbetzin Rivka, organized a committee to arrange for and fund their publication. Immediately after the mourning, the committee wrote, in the Rebbetzin's name, to her son-in-law, Rabbi Abba Dovid Goldfein, a great scholar in his own right who was a Rabbi in Moscow, imploring him to request a Soviet passport to enable him to visit Latvia at least for a few months to supervise and organize this project. Weeks later, they wrote a second letter, expressing surprise at not receiving any reply, and begging him to come. The letters—both presented here—emphasized that he was the one best qualified for this special task of editing and arranging his father-in-law's works for publication.

They were unaware, however, that Rabbi Goldfein, too, was on his deathbed with a heart ailment, from which he passed away about two months after his father-in-law.

Instead, a daughter of the Rogatchover, Rebbetzin Rachel Citron, who lived in the Holy Land (her husband, Rabbi Yisrael Abba Citron, was Rabbi of Petach Tikva), returned to Latvia for the specific purpose of saving her father's works. In 1940, she published a volume of his Halachic responsa. World War II had just started and the Soviet Union was expected soon to occupy Latvia.



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הרקה כתבו וב קיצם כתב קום של בין

ערן שהרחות בל קליבה והו עינועו

קועוסקדם העשתבוות זסיפון צרטו

In a race against time, Rebbetzin Citron photographed as many of her father's writings as possible, sending the microfilms to relatives in the United States. She continued this holy task until the Nazis invaded Latvia in 1941, when she was martyred together with most of Latvian Jewry. Her supreme self-sacrifice succeeded in saving many of her father's works, although the rest were doubtless destroyed in the Nazi occupation.

In 1956, the microfilms were discovered and Rabbi Menachem Kasher, a noted Torah scholar, was entrusted with the complicated task of preparing them for publication. The first volume was published in 1959, followed by more volumes in later years.

As each volume was published, Rabbi Kasher sent a copy to the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, who replied enthusiastically, urging him to speed up publication of new volumes. The Rebbe also noted his own learned comments to the newly published work. Rabbi Kasher replied to the Rebbe's comments, and noted that, although more volumes were ready, budgetary constraints prevented faster publication. He requested the Rebbe to intercede for this purpose with representatives of certain organizations that could provide funding.

A few weeks later, Rabbi Kasher wrote again. Some time before, the Rebbe had already mentioned to a delegation of the American Joint Distribution Committee—which had met with the Rebbe to discuss funding of Chabad activities around the world—about the importance of funding publication of the Rogatchover's works. When Rabbi Kasher found out that the Rebbe had done this without even being asked (his above-mentioned letter was sent later), he thanked the Rebbe profusely.

The Rebbe replied urging him to publish as soon as possible a volume of the Rogatchover's writings on one of the Talmudic tractates customarily studied in *yeshivos*. The Rebbe also added his comments on the latest published volume. Unfortunately, we have only the first few words of these comments and the rest is not presently extant.

Several letters from this correspondence between the Rebbe and Rabbi Kasher are reproduced here, and others are published in the collection of the Rebbe's letters, *Igros Kodesh*.

One more reply of the Rebbe is reproduced here, thanking Rabbi Pinchas Teitz, Rabbi of Elizabeth, New Jersey, who edited a further volume of the Rogatchover's works in 1987, several years after Rabbi Kasher's passing, for forwarding a copy to the Rebbe.

In general, the Rebbe held the Rogatchover in the highest regard. After meeting him in Leningrad in 1924, before the Gaon returned to Dvinsk later that year, the Rebbe corresponded with him on a wide range of profound Torah subjects, and some of this learned correspondence has been discovered in recent years. The Rebbe often mentioned the Gaon in Torah talks at his *farbrengens* (Chasidic gatherings) always with unusual veneration, and on several occasions noted the Gaon's revolutionary approach (see also chapter 94 below).

65. TEHILLIM OF RABBI LEVI YITZCHAK AND REBBETZIN CHANA SCHNEERSON

After his arrest and imprisonment by the Soviet authorities in spring, 1939,

the Rebbe's father, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Schneersohn, Rabbi of Dniepropetrovsk, was sent, early in 1940, into exile in a remote, primitive village in Kazakhstan. At his request, his wife, Rebbetzin Chana, sent him certain Torah books etc., including a *Tehillim*—Book of Psalms. In order to be of assistance to him, she traveled to join him several months later.

On the front page of this *Tehillim*, Rebbetzin Chana later recorded its story in poignant Hebrew words, of which the following is a translation:

"This Psalms belonged to my husband, of blessed memory. I sent it to him, upon his request, to his place of exile, in the village of "Chi'ili" in the Republic of Kazakhstan.

"If these pages would have a mouth and a tongue, they would have a great deal to tell. Each and every page was constantly soaked with tears and was wet from them.

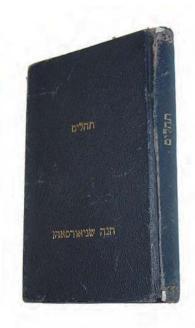
"From the day that he was arrested and jailed in March, 1939, his physical strength changed for the worse by the day. His spirit was strong. It was very difficult to hear the cries coming from the depths of his heart, and from his broken heart, that was more troubled by the lack of spiritual life than the troubles of simply starving without bread to eat and other terrible living conditions.

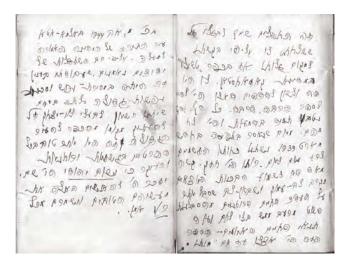
"This book was with him until the day of his passing on 20 Menachem Av 1944 in Alma-Ata, the capital city of the aforementioned country.

"Through much exertion of loyal friends, whose efforts in this regard was with self-sacrifice and great personal danger, they were able to achieve that permission be granted for my husband Levi Yitzchak, of blessed memory, to move from the village to the big city. This was better in all details, physically and spiritually, and mainly because there was a Jewish community there.

"May G-d remember for those people their good deeds, and guard them from all evil. Amen."

The Rebbetzin kept this book for the rest of her life, using it to recite *Tehillim*, until her passing on 6th Tishrei (September 12), 1964, in Brooklyn, New York (see also above, chapters 22, 23, 24, 26).







Rare Manuscripts







66. MANUSCRIPT PAGES OF THE BABYLONIAN TALMUD, TRACTATES SANHEDRIN & SHAVUOS

Before the start of Hebrew printing in the last third of the 15th century, all Torah works were handwritten. In he Chabad Library, besides the large collection of manuscripts relating to Chabad Chasidism (mainly from the 19th and 20th centuries), there are also several early manuscripts from before the dawn of Hebrew printing.

Here we present three manuscript folio (double-sided) pages of the Babylonian Talmud, written on parchment. In standard published editions, these correspond to tractate *Sanhedrin* 103b-104a, and tractate *Shavuos* 47a-49a.

The text of these folios, together with comparison to published editions, has already been publicized in the periodical *Yagdil Torah*.

67. MANUSCRIPT PAGES OF THE BABYLONIAN TALMUD, TRACTATE KIDDUSHIN

Another manuscript in the Library has ten folio pages from tractate Kiddushin, apparently written in Spain about 1470-1480. It is noteworthy that although the published editions of the Talmud have Rashi's commentary accompanying the text, this is virtually unknown in surviving manuscripts of the Talmud. Indeed, there is some similarity between this manuscript's page format and one of the earliest published editions of the Talmud, printed in Spain before the 1492 expulsion and later continued in Fez, Morocco. Nevertheless, this manuscript's many textual differences prove it was copied not from that edition but from an earlier manuscript.

Here, too, the text of these folios, together with comparison to published editions, has already been publicized in the periodical *Yagdil Torah*.

68. TRACTATES CHAGIGA & YOMA, PUBLISHED IN SPAIN BEFORE THE EXPULSION; MANUSCRIPT OF RASHI ON TRACTATE MENACHOS

The Library has 17 folio pages of tractates *Chaggiga* and *Yoma* from one of the first published editions of the Babylonian Talmud, printed in Spain around 1482. On the title page of tractate *Chaggiga*, a contemporary wrote a section of Rashi's commentary on tractate Menachos, corresponding in standard published editions to pages 40a-41a, which has variations from the standard published text.

Here, too, the text of these folios and of the manuscript, with comparison to standard published editions, has already been publicized in the periodical *Yagdil Torah*.

69. MANUSCRIPT OF EARLY HALACHIC CODE, ORCHOS CHAIM, IN OTHERWISE NON-EXTANT LATER VERSION OF FIRST SECTION

The Library once received an ancient volume, originating in Yemen, with

a thick, soft cover. The cover was carefully taken apart, to reveal 20 folio pages of a medieval manuscript in Spanish Rabbinic Hebrew script, written in Spain around the middle of the 15th century. It was part of the first section of *Orchos Chaim*, by Rabbi Aaron of Lunel (Provence, southern France), who passed away around 1325. The manuscript thus dated to just over a century after the author's passing

Generally, the manuscript's text corresponds to the published edition (Florence, 1750), with only slight variations. In many places, however, the manuscript has additions to the published text.

The existence of two versions of *Orchos Chaim* has been demonstrated by the publisher of its second section (Berlin, 1902). In 1306, after the king of France expelled the Jews, Rabbi Aaron wandered from place to place until he settled on the Spanish island of Majorca. There he learned much Torah wisdom from Rabbi ShemTov Falco, the island's Rabbi, who is quoted 15 times in the second section—although not even once in the first section's published version.

In this manuscript, however, Rabbi ShemTov is mentioned once (after his passing), revealing it as part of the second version as the author rewrote it in Majorca. Rabbi Yosef Karo (1488-1575), author of the *Shulchan Aruch*, in his work entitled *Beis Yosef*, quotes *Orchos Chaim* over 200 times. He too had that later version before him, as evidenced by one of his quotes that appears verbatim in the published version of *Orchos Chaim's* first section, except that Beis Yosef's quote adds the words "...and so, too, writes Rabbi ShemTov," showing it is from the later version.

The publisher of the *Orchos Chaim's* second section shows that Beis Yosef's contemporary, Rabbi Meir Katzenellenbogen (1482-1565, known as Maharam Padua), also had before him the first section in its later version, and in his time there were unsuccessful efforts to publish it.

Although incomplete—and damaged by the ravages of bookworms and glue used in binding the book—the Chabad Library's manuscript is unique in being the only known example of the first section's final version.

Here, too, the text of this manuscript, together with comparison to the published edition, has already been publicized in the periodical *Yagdil Torah*.

70. ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPT OF OR YAKAR, RABBI MOSHE CORDOVERO'S COMMENTARY ON THE ZOHAR

Rabbi Moshe Cordovero (1482-1570), renowned as "Ramak," studied Torah under Rabbi Yosef Karo and later was appointed a judge of the Rabbinic court of Safed in Galilee. He studied Kabbalah under his brother-in-law, Rabbi Shlomo Alkabetz (c.1505-1584), author of the *Lecha Dodi* recited on Shabbos evening. Ramak was the greatest Kabbalist of his day, and one of the greatest of all time. Rabbi Yitzchak Luria (1534-1572), the Arizal, came from Egypt in order to study under Ramak shortly before the latter's passing.

Ramak authored many works, mainly Kabbalistic, but his lengthiest work was *Or Yakar*, an in-depth commentary on all parts of the *Zohar*, the central work of Kabbalah. Only in recent decades have parts of this commentary been published.

The Chabad Library has Ramak's original manuscript of Or Yakar on the





Zohar's first section, which expounds the Book of Genesis. The manuscript, in three volumes totaling almost 400 folio pages, is described here, together with evidence indicating that it is indeed the author's original manuscript.

The Library also has several other manuscripts of Ramak's works—including part of his *Pardes Rimonim* that was copied during his lifetime—but they are not the author's original manuscripts. These, too, are described here.

Also shown are published volumes of Ramak's works that were studied by Rabbi Shalom DovBer, fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe, shortly before his passing in 1920, as noted by his son and successor, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak, in handwritten comments.

71. ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPTS OF ARIZAL'S SHEMONA SHE'ARIM – COMPILED BY RABBI CHAIM VITAL & ARRANGED BY RABBI SHMUEL VITAL

After the passing of Rabbi Moshe Cordovero in 1570, the Arizal headed the circle of Kabbalists in Safed. During the barely two years until his own passing, he revealed his comprehensive system of mystic Jewish thought, which was later accepted as the pre-eminent school of Kabbalah. After his passing, his disciples agreed to accept as authoritative only the transcripts of his leading disciple, Rabbi Chaim Vital (1543-1620).

His transcripts, however, covered a wide range of mystical subjects and were in no systematic order. The subjects were so exalted that Rabbi Chaim was reluctant to let them be copied until he organized the voluminous material properly. After spending many years on this task, he then reworked the material in a second edition, accompanied by his explanatory comments and elaborations where necessary.

Eventually, in stages before and after his passing, most of both editions were copied. Part was organized into works originally disseminated in manuscript and published only in the 1780's as *Eitz Chaim* and *Pri Eitz Chaim*. In the decades after Rabbi Chaim's passing, however, his son Rabbi Shmuel, a judge of the Rabbinic court of Damascus, Syria, rearranged his father's first edition into a compilation divided into eight sections, known as *Shemona She'arim* (literally "Eight Gates").

Of Rabbi Shmuel Vital's original manuscripts of these eight sections, six are now in the Chabad Library. Reproduced here are Rabbi Shmuel's notations at the start and end of each section, including dates when he started and completed them (1649-1653).

Also in the Library are numerous copies of each of the eight sections, made from the original, before they were published in the 19th century.

72. THE BAAL SHEM TOV'S MANUSCRIPT SIDDUR & THE ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPT OF A LETTER

The Chabad Library has two original manuscripts of Rabbi Yisrael Baal Shem Tov (1698-1760), founder of the Chasidic movement:

1) His handwritten Siddur, in which prayers are accompanied by *kavanos* (mystical meditations) as taught by the Arizal. In this Siddur, the Baal Shem



Tov prayed his daily prayers, and his disciples penned in their names for him to keep in mind during prayer. A description of the Siddur and details of its historical background and later ownership are given elsewhere.

2) A letter the Baal Shem Tov wrote to his disciple, Rabbi Yaakov Yosef, Rabbi of Polonnoye, author of *Toldos Yaakov Yosef*. It was first published in 1935 in *HaTomim* (a periodical issued during the 1930's by Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim of Warsaw, Poland), accompanied by a description of its historical background by Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak, sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe.

73. MANUSCRIPT OF TORAH INSIGHTS BY RABBI YEHONOSON EIBESCHUTZ

Rabbi Yehonoson Eibeschutz (1690-1764), who served as Rabbi of the three associated communities of Altona-Hamburg-Wandsbek, Germany, for the last 14 years of his life, was one of the greatest Torah giants of his period. He was a prolific author and great preacher, whose scholarly works are studied to this day. For most of his life, in all the communities where he lived, he headed a famous yeshiva of hundreds of Talmudic students, who often made notes of his scholarly lectures. Some of these have been published, while other manuscripts await publication.

The Chabad Library has three manuscripts of his Torah explanations.

One, described here in detail, consists mainly of insights on Scriptural verses, primarily by Rabbi Yehonoson, but including also Torah explanations by other prominent contemporaries. It also includes several pages of Rabbi Yehonoson's explanations of Talmudic tractate *Beitza*.

The introduction to this chapter demonstrates that these Talmudic explanations were written by one of Rabbi Yehonoson's students, between 1750, when he became Rabbi of Hamburg, and 1753. Also discussed is these explanations' relationship to other, usually different, explanations of the tractate by Rabbi Yehonoson published elsewhere, showing that all were written by students and are not the author's original written explanations—to which he refers in one place—which apparently are no longer extant.

The language of this transcription is not always clear and has occasional misspellings. Other mistakes were clearly made by the manuscript's copier. Part of these Talmudic explanations has been published in *Yagdil Torah*.

The other two manuscripts include Rabbi Yehonasan's insights on Scriptural verses. One was written in Prague during his years there as the community's official preacher and head of a yeshiva. The other was written after his passing, and includes also several explanations by other prominent scholars, mainly older contemporaries.

74. BOOKS WITH HANDWRITTEN NOTES BY RABBI SCHNEUR ZALMAN OF LIADI

In 1986, the Library received a copy of Responsa of Rabbi Yosef Kolon (c.1420-1480), published in Lvov, in 1798, with a sticker in it written by Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak. sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe, attesting to its having once belonged to Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, and noting his comments written in it.











Clearly it had been in Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak's library before World War II. These comments have since been published, most recently in Rabbi Schneur Zalman's Halachic responsa (#60) in the new edition of his *Shulchan Aruch* (Brooklyn, 2007).

Rabbi Schneur Zalman is known to have written comments in at least three other Halachic works. They are recorded in responsa *Tzemach Tzedek*, by his grandson, Rabbi Menachem Mendel, from where they, too, have been republished in the new edition of Rabbi Schneur Zalman's responsa (#61-63). The original books with his comments, however, are no longer extant.

75. MANUSCRIPT NOTES ON SHULCHAN ARUCH BY RABBI AKIVA EIGER

Rabbi Meir Ashkenazi was the Rabbi of Shanghai, China, from 1921 until the Communist Revolution, when the once important Jewish community there emigrated. In 1949, after he moved to New York, he sent Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak, sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe, a volume of the second section of *Shulchan Aruch*, *Yorah De'ah*, published in Amsterdam in 1711.

This volume had belonged to the renowned Rabbi Akiva Eiger (c.1762-1837), Rabbi of Pozna (Posen), Germany (now Poland), who had noted in it his learned comments. Most of his comments are written in Rashi script, and for the most part, are signed "Akiva."

76. MANUSCRIPT OF POETRY BY RABBI MOSHE SOFER, AUTHOR OF CHASAM SOFER

Rabbi Moshe Sofer (1763-1839), Rabbi of Pressburg (now Bratislava, Slovakia), one of the great Torah leaders of his generation and a prolific author, is renowned by the name of his Halachic responsa, *Chasam Sofer*. In his youth, he wrote Hebrew poetry inspired by Torah themes. A collection of his poems was published after his passing under the name *Shiras Moshe* (Pressburg, 1858).

In the Library's possession is a manuscript of poetry written by the *Chasam Sofer*. Reproduced in this chapter are two poems not included in the published volume.

77. MANUSCRIPTS BY RABBI AVRAHAM ABBALE OF VILNA

In the Library's possession are manuscripts of seven Halachic responsa, all unsigned, in the same handwriting, and all written in Vilna in the years 1833-1834. Most are addressed to their recipients. On comparison to the handwriting in a responsum—included in a different manuscript in the Chabad Library—that is explicitly written by Rabbi Avraham Abbale Pasveller (b. Pasval, 1764, d. Vilna, 1836), head of the Rabbinic court of Vilna, it appears that he wrote all seven of these responsa, too. Also in the Library is a Halachic query to him from a Rabbi of Horodna (Grodno, Lithuania).

One of these seven responsa is published elsewhere with differences and additions and is signed by the above author. The Library's seven responsa were prob-

ably Rabbi Avraham Abbale's original versions written for his records, which he then copied—with elaborations occurring to him at the time of writing—and signed before sending the final versions to his correspondents.

The responsum published elsewhere is addressed there to "Rabbi Avraham Leib, head of the Rabbinic court of Pasval." In the Library's original version written by the author, however, it reads "Rabbi Avraham Abbale, head of the Rabbinic court in Pasval." Although this recipient had the same name as our author, he is clearly a different person. He is also the recipient of a responsum in a published collection by another author.

The editor of the *Be'er Avraham* responsa by our author (Jerusalem, 1980), assumes, however, that the recipient in that other collection was identical to our author. On this basis, he concludes that our author originally served as Rabbi of Pasval at an early age, and already then was considered—according to the exalted titles given by the author of the responsum in that other collection—to be a scholar of extraordinary stature.

On the basis of the manuscript in the Chabad Library, however, that assumption and conclusion seem to be wrong. More likely, the two Rabbis of the same name were actually cousins, named after a common grandfather.

Be'er Avraham reproduces a facsimile of a manuscript of scholarly insights by our author, the original of which is in Moscow. At first glance the handwriting appears to differ from the Chabad Library's manuscript. Closer examination, however, reveals them to be written by the same person, but the Moscow manuscript was written at a younger age and in more orderly fashion than the other.

Based on that facsimile, another anonymous manuscript in the Chabad Library can be identified as our author's. The volume, consisting of scholarly insights on Talmudic-Halachic subjects, comprises parts of other manuscripts that have been bound together, and in some places refers to other volumes of the author's writings.

How did these manuscripts—from a Rabbi of "Misnagdic" Vilna at the height of the great controversy—get into the Chabad Library? An authoritative history notes that, after Rabbi Avraham Abbale's passing, three large chests of his manuscripts passed on to his stepson, whose son later inherited them. The son's father-in-law, apparently a Chabad Chasid, was related to the family of the Chabad Rebbes, and through him the manuscripts came into the possession of Rabbi Menachem Mendel, author of *Tzemach Tzedek*.

78. MANUSCRIPTS OF EISHEL AVRAHAM BY RABBI AVRAHAM DOVID OF BUCZACZ

Rabbi Avraham David (c.1770-1841) served as Rabbi of numerous communities for over half a century. In 1790, he became Rabbi of Yazlovitch, and from 1814 until his passing was Rabbi of Buczacz. Every day he had a practice of writing down all Torah insights that occurred to him. Over time, tens of thousands of papers accumulated, including his insights on all four sections of Shulchan Aruch, verses of Scripture, the Talmud and a wealth of other Torah subjects, none of which were published in his lifetime. From 1871 to 1933, many of his writings on *Shulchan Aruch* were copied, organized and published by his heirs, as were some of his other writings.





The Chabad Library has three manuscript volumes copied by his great-grandson from the author's original writings. One is written in no particular order but just numbers the insights copied as they came to the copier's hand. Its subjects include all four sections of *Shulchan Aruch*, conclusions of Talmudic tractates, insights on Scriptural verses, Talmud, the Siddur etc. Noted next to some paragraphs are the words "published" or "copied." Another includes mainly the author's comments on *Choshen Mishpat*, fourth section of the *Shulchan Aruch*. A third includes various subjects, some already published.

Certain extracts from these manuscripts were published in an issue of the journal Yagdil Torah. Later, at the request of Machon Yerushalyim (publisher of carefully prepared editions of works of Torah scholars of previous generations), copies of the manuscripts were sent for inclusion in their new comprehensive edition of the Shulchan Aruch now in the process of being published, which includes Eishel Avraham—comprising all the author's comments on Shulchan Aruch.

79. RABBI MENACHEM MENDEL ASKS A QUESTION TO HIS GRANDFATHER, RABBI SCHNEUR ZALMAN OF LIADI

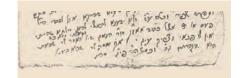
Over the years, many fires in Lubavitch unfortunately consumed untold numbers of irreplaceable manuscripts, particularly of Rabbi Menachem Mendel, author of *Tzemach Tzedek*. Despite these great losses, however, so much of his voluminous writings have survived that they have provided material for publication of close to a hundred volumes to date. These embrace the spectrum of Torah subjects, from profound explanations of Scripture, Talmud, Midrash and Halachic works to his own erudite and carefully argued Halachic responsa, and from Jewish philosophy and Kabbalah to Chasidus.

Virtually all his writings published until now, however (excluding his transcripts of discourses of his grandfather, Rabbi Schneur Zalman) were written after Rabbi Schneur Zalman's passing in 1812, when Rabbi Menachem Mendel was aged 23. His earliest dated writing until now has been a Halachic discussion concerning a divorce, written in 1813.

In several responsa, Rabbi Menachem Mendel mentions what he had heard from Rabbi Schneur Zalman or even what he witnessed in his childhood when the family lived in Liozna—from where they moved when he was 11 years old. But all were written in later years, not close to when he heard or witnessed what he writes.

The manuscript presented here, however, is unique. Rabbi Menachem Mendel's Halachic discussion in this four-page manuscript concludes with a problem he could not resolve, and he writes how he asked his grandfather about it—and refers to Rabbi Schneur Zalman with the blessing customary for someone still alive.

Also presented here is a Halachic comment Rabbi Menachem Mendel wrote close to the end of his life. For over six years until his passing before Pesach, 1866, he was sick and mostly bedridden. Chasidim addressed their requests to him through notes written on their behalf by his attendants, and he replied, either orally or in writing, in brief. Few writings remain from these years, and they clearly show how his hand trembled.



This comment concerns whether we wear *tefillin* on Chol Hamoed (the intermediate days of Pesach and Sukkos). He wrote the main discussion in earlier years and, after his passing, it was published in the *Tzemach Tzedek*. During his last years, however, he added this comment, of which his works' editors were apparently unaware and therefore did not include it. Interestingly, the comment notes that the custom now is not to wear *tefillin* on Chol Hamoed, "and that is also the opinion of the Explanations of the Gaon, Rabbi Eliyahu [the Vilna Gaon], may his memory be blessed..."

80. TANACH THAT BELONGED TO RABBI MENACHEM MENDEL, AUTHOR OF TZEMACH TZEDEK

The Hebrew Scriptures are usually referred to as *Tanach*—an acronym for *Torah* (the Five Books of the Pentateuch included in every Torah scroll), *Nevi'im* (books written by the Prophets), and *Kesuvim* ("Writings"—sacred books written at a lower level of Divine inspiration than prophecy).

The volume of *Tanach* featured here was published in Amsterdam in 1666-1667. On its first page, Rabbi Shalom DovBer, fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe, has written a quote from *Sifsei Y'sheinim* (Amsterdam, 1680, by Rabbi Shabbasai Bass, 1641-1718—probably the first work of Jewish bibliography), stating that this edition was carefully edited by Jewish and non-Jewish scholars and "has no mistakes at all." Inside the cover is a sticker, on which is written a note by Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak, sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe, that this volume belonged to Rabbi Menachem Mendel, author of *Tzemach Tzedek*, who used to read from it the Haftorah (portion from books of the Prophets that is read after the weekly Torah portion on Shabbos, festivals, and fastday afternoons).

Although his grandfather, Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, rules in his *Shulchan Aruch* that it is not required to read the Haftorah from a complete book, Rabbi Menachem Mendel apparently preferred to follow the stricter opinion of some Halachic authorities that it is best to read it from a complete book of the Prophets or *Tanach*.

Despite the above quote from *Sifsei Y'sheinim*, Rabbi Menachem Mendel did find several items to note and correct here:

- 1) Occasional differences of custom on which verses or portions of the Prophets are read as the Haftorah on certain occasions. Interestingly, Rabbi Menachem Mendel's written notes on this in his *Tanach* do not always accord with Rabbi Shalom DovBer's notes about the custom of his father, Rabbi Shmuel, nor with the "Order of the Haftorah according to Chabad Custom" as listed by the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, based on his father-in-law Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak's directions.
- 2) In some places Rabbi Menachem Mendel notes the location of each weekly Torah portions' divisions into seven *aliyos* (readings), which are not marked in this *Tanach*.
- 3) Occasionally, Rabbi Menachem Mendel comments on mistakes in this *Tanach* or textual differences according to other authorities. All these comments are shown here.

Evidently Rabbi Menachem Mendel used this *Tanach* also for listening to regular public Torah readings and for frequent study. The pages of the book of



Tehillim (Psalms) are especially well used, showing that he frequently recited *Tehillim* from this volume.

81. LETTER ACCOMPANYING RESPONSUM OF RABBI DOVID LURIA

The Chabad Library has a manuscript of a responsum by Rabbi Dovid Luria, Rabbi of Old Bikhov and a prolific author of learned Torah works. It was sent to Rabbi Yissachar Ber, who was then Rabbi and Halachic authority in the town of Lubavitch (see above, chapter 33). The responsum has been published in the journal *Yagdil Torah*. Reproduced here is Rabbi Luria's accompanying letter.

The query was about the validity of a divorce document—a subject of great complexity—and notes that the author was being asked because Rabbi Menachem Mendel, author of *Tzemach Tzedek*, was then away from Lubavitch (visiting several Chasidic communities).

Rabbi Luria writes that, in general, he had decided to stop issuing Halachic responsa for several years. He was replying now only because of his affection for Rabbi Yissachar Ber (who, it should be noted, had earlier served as Rabbi of New Bikhov, a neighboring community). He asked, however, not to bother him with such requests in future, "particularly as you are close [to] and [stand] before great ones, before the respected, great, renowned Rabbi, our teacher R[abbi] M[enachem] M[endel, author of *Tzemach Tzedek*]..., and why do you want to anoint with oil from my empty can?"

He asked that, when Rabbi Menachem Mendel would return home, he should send him his opinion on this subject, together with his reasoning. He further writes that, because of the Fast of 9th Av, which had been observed the previous day, he was too weak to write a copy of the responsum for himself, and was now rushing to catch the mail.

82. LETTER BY THE SONS OF RABBI MENACHEM MENDEL, AUTHOR OF TZEMACH TZEDEK REGARDING SETTLING THEIR DIFFERENCES AND OWNERSHIP & PUBLICATION OF HIS MANUSCRIPTS

After Rabbi Menachem Mendel's passing in spring, 1866, there were differences of opinion between his sons, which were resolved that summer by a *Din Torah* (Rabbinic lawsuit) before a panel of the most prominent Chabad Rabbis

The letter presented here describes the peace accord between them. Omitted are sections dealing with their disagreements—which are no matter of public concern—except for the sections about whether to divide their father's manuscripts. Signed by the third and fourth of the Rebbe's sons, Rabbi Chaim Schneur Zalman (1814-1880, later Rebbe of Liadi) and Rabbi Yisrael Noach (1815-1883, later Rebbe of Niezhin)—with two postscripts by the youngest son, Rabbi Shmuel (1834-1882), who succeeded his father as Lubavitcher Rebbe—they write here the reasons why they had decided to keep all the manuscripts together in their father's home.

Forty volumes of manuscripts were left, they write, of which twenty were on





Talmudic-Halachic subjects and were soon to be edited for publication, and the other twenty were on Chasidus. In another letter, already published elsewhere, they write similarly and note that they had appointed guards for these valued manuscripts.

In both his postscripts, Rabbi Shmuel writes that he strongly desired that all the manuscripts be published immediately, and "may all his wellsprings be spread outward, as stated in *Keser Shem Tov*." He was referring to the renowned letter of the Baal Shem Tov (published in *Keser Shem Tov*, an anthology of the Baal Shem Tov's teachings) describing his heavenly vision in which asked Moshiach when he will come, and received the reply: "When your teachings will be publicized and revealed in the world, and your wellsprings will be spread outward."

Rabbi Menachem Mendel's responsa and other Talmudic-Halachic writings were immediately given to editors to prepare for publication, and most were published between 1871 and 1884. His manuscripts on Chasidus, however, were published only many decades later, a few between 1911 and 1918, and most in the second half of the 20th century, in the multi-volume series *Or HaTorah*.

83. LETTER BY RABBI SHMUEL OF LUBAVITCH

This letter, by Rabbi Shmuel, is addressed to Rabbi Chaim Yaakov Vidrevitch, a renowned Talmudic scholar and Chabad Chasid who was the chief editor of Rabbi Menachem Mendel's Talmudic-Halachic writings, *Tzemach Tzedek*, for publication. Later he served as the Rabbi of communities in White Russia and Lithuania, and then of Moscow from 1877 to 1892. When Moscow's Jews were expelled in 1892, he moved to New York, where he served as Rabbi of the Chabad community on the Lower East Side until his passing in 1911.

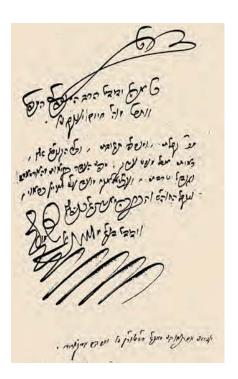
Apparently, Rabbi Vidrevitch had sent a letter and a learned manuscript he had written, requesting the Rebbe to examine it. The Rebbe wrote to him that he received his letter and was enclosing a reply. (The reply, however, is not presently extant.) In addition, the Rebbe wrote that, because of health problems and many pressing concerns, he had perused the manuscript only a little so far, but intended to find time to examine it properly. He also asked about the whereabouts of the sons of some of his Chasidim.

84. ENVELOPES WITH RABBI SHMUEL'S HANDWRITING

These are envelopes that have Rabbi Shmuel's handwriting on them in Russian and German. His grandson, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak, used to keep them in a special envelope, on which he noted their content, in Hebrew.

85. TORAH CORRESPONDENCE OF RABBI MORDECHAI SCHNEUR ZALMAN SCHNEERSOHN WITH RABBI YOSEF TUMARKIN

Rabbi Mordechai Schneur Zalman Schneersohn (d.1866) was the eldest son of Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak, the fifth son of Rabbi Menachem Mendel, author of *Tzemach Tzedek*. A brilliant scholar, he was appointed Rabbi of Zhitomir, an important city in Ukraine, at the young age of 17, during the lifetime of his







grandfather. Unfortunately, he passed away while still in his twenties, just 11 days after his grandfather. In recent years, his commentary and source references have been published on the summarized laws of hand-washing for meals and of blessings included in Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi's Siddur. His other known Torah writings are not presently extant.

His letter presented here is addressed to Rabbi Yosef Tumarkin, Rabbi of Krementchug, Ukraine, for many years. Rabbi Tumarkin was a Chasid of Rabbi Menachem Mendel, who was very fond of him and wrote to request him to accept the position of Rabbi in Krementchug. He was renowned as an outstanding scholar, to whom many contemporary Rabbis addressed Halachic queries. His responsa were very profound, but although, after his passing, his family wanted to publish them, they were eventually lost. A few have been published, including one in the Chabad journal *HaTomim*, which is in response to a previous query, also published there, by Rabbi Mordechai Schneur Zalman Schneersohn, author of this letter, which, in turn, is his reply to Rabbi Tumarkin's responsum there.

The letter's expressions show how personally close the author felt to Rabbi Tumarkin and how he admired and enjoyed his Torah profundity. Besides the scholarly subjects of his queries here, he also requests Rabbi Tumarkin to send him all copies of responsa of his grandfather, Rabbi Menachem Mendel, which he had in his possession, and asks to let him know the total cost of copying so that he could reimburse him.

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86. NOTES ON THE JERUSALEM TALMUD BY RABBI SHALOM DOVBER OF LUBAVITCH

When Rabbi Shalom DovBer, fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe, and his family left Lubavitch in fall, 1915, in the face of approaching German armies in World War I (see above, Introduction, and chapter 10), he sent most of his library to Moscow for safekeeping (see above, Introduction, and chapter 63). He took with him, however, his collection of manuscripts and about 100 Torah volumes for his own use and those that had belonged to his ancestors (such as Rabbi Menachem Mendel's *Tanach*, described above, chapter 80). Among them was his set of Jerusalem Talmud, published in Zhitomir, on the margins of which he wrote several comments and notes, which are presented here.

These include three learned comments, while the rest are notes comparing the text of the Jerusalem Talmud and its accompanying commentaries in the Zhitomir edition to that of other editions, or else obvious corrections.

87. RABBI SHALOM DOVBER'S CORRECTIONS ON THE HAFTORAH BLESSINGS

From 1915 to 1920, Rabbi Shalom DovBer lived in Rostov, southern Russia. During that time, on Rosh Hashanah in the four years 1916-1919, he used a Machzor published in Vilna, 1910.

In this Machzor, the blessings recited following the reading of the Haftorah do not include the addition of certain words included in the text of the Siddur as instituted by Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi and followed by Chabad Cha-



sidim. Rabbi Shalom DovBer therefore wrote in these extra words, as shown here.

At the beginning of the Machzor is attached a sticker on which Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak, sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe, has noted the above in brief.

88. HANDWRITTEN COMMENTS ON THE MARGINS OF ZOHAR BY RABBI LEVI YITZCHAK SCHNEERSON

In 1940, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak—father of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson—was sent into exile in a remote village in Kazakhstan (see above, chapter 65). Having no Torah books to study, he wrote to his wife, Rebbetzin Chana, asking her to send him certain books, including the three volumes of the *Zohar*, central work of the Kabbalah.

Later, she traveled to join him in order to be of assistance to him. Seeing his pain at being unable to write down his flow of Torah insights for lack of ink and paper, she learned how to manufacture ink from various herbs, and he used it to write his profound comments around the margins of his few Torah books. On several occasions, the Rebbe spoke about this publicly, explaining that since his mother lacked expertise in ink production, the ink varied in color from time to time.

This chapter shows three pages of Rabbi Levi Yitzchak's comments on the *Zohar* (which were later published), in the inks' varying colors—red, green, blue, purple and black.

89. CALENDAR OF LAWS & CUSTOMS ACCORDING TO NUSACH HA'ARIZAL & CHABAD CUSTOMS—AS EDITED BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE, RABBI MENACHEM M. SCHNEERSON

Rabbi Avraham Chaim Noeh (d. 1954) was a renowned scholar and Chabad Chasid born in Hebron, who lived his later decades in Jerusalem. Most of his life was devoted to compiling useful works to clarify practical Halacha in general, and particularly according to the rulings of the Chabad Rebbes and following Chabad custom.

Among his works was his annual Calendar of Synagogue Laws and Customs, according to Chabad custom. Originally he published it himself as a wall chart, and also as a booklet sent to supporters outside the Holy Land. Later, and continuing until today, it has been published annually by Colel Chabad—the aid organization for Jews in the Holy Land established by Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi and headed by all his successors, the Chabad Rebbes, in following generations.

The oldest sample of his calendar in the Chabad Library is a booklet for the Jewish year 5692 (1931-1932). The Israeli National Library in Jerusalem has an older sample, a wall chart for the year 5686 (1925-1926).

After the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, arrived in the United States in 1941, he frequently publicized Chabad customs as observed from and authorized by his father-in-law, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak, sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe. He published these in his Chasidic calendar *Hayom Yom*

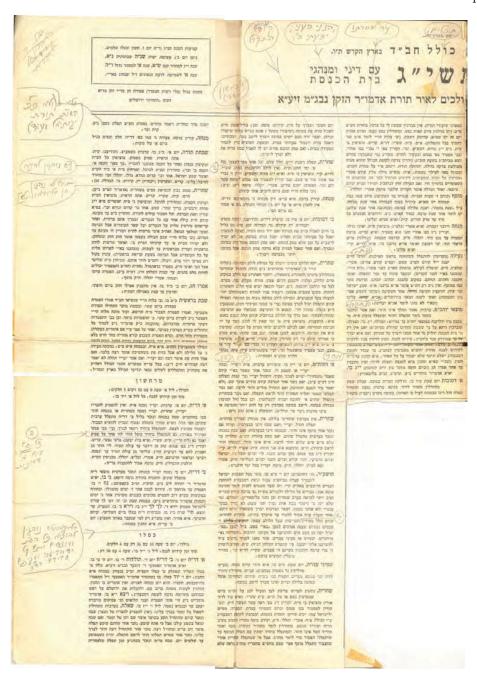




(1943), his *Haggadah* (1946), and in lists of customs for festivals etc., that appeared in various booklets of Chasidic discourses published by Chabad.

The Rebbe accepted the Chabad leadership in 1951. In summer, 1952, Rabbi Noeh sent the calendar of the following year, 5713 (1952-1953), in wall chart format, to New York for the Rebbe to edit. The Rebbe made many additions and corrections, which have been incorporated into every year's Colel Chabad calendar ever since.

The wall chart was in two separate sheets, but only the first of these is presently in the Library's possession, covering the months of Tishrei, MarCheshvan and part of Kislev. On this chart appear dozens of the Rebbe's handwritten additions and corrections—which have been published elsewhere.



Portraits and Photographs





90. PORTRAIT OF RABBI YOSEF HATZADDIK, RABBI OF POZNA

Rabbi Yechezkel Landau (1714-1793), Rabbi of Prague, one of the greatest Torah giants of his era, is renowned under the name of his Halachic responsa, *Noda B'Yehuda*. Less well-known is his son-in-law Rabbi Yosef "Hatzaddik" (1726-1801), author of *Zichron Sh'eiris Yosef* (Kolomaya, 1882) on the Talmud. In his generation, however, Rabbi Yosef was well known, serving as Rabbi of several cities before he became Rabbi of the important community of Pozna (Posen, Germany, now Poland) in 1780. His father-in-law was particularly fond of him and lauded his Torah prowess, calling him "unique in the generation."

91. PORTRAIT OF RABBI AKIVA EIGER

Rabbi Akiva Eiger (c.1762-1837) was a celebrated prodigy from an early age. Later he became Rabbi of Friedland, where he headed a yeshiva of hundeds of students, and became renowned among the Rabbis of his generation, who sent him a flow of Halachic queries. In 1815, he became Rabbi of Pozna, reestablishing there his yeshiva, which grew even larger and more famous. He was a prolific author of Talmudic-Halachic works, used and admired in *yeshivos* and by Torah scholars to this day.

The Chabad Library has an oil portrait of Rabbi Akiva Eiger, too. On the back is written the name of its owner, "Yosef, son of the renowned Torah scholar, Rabbi Akiva Eiger." The problem is that Rabbi Akiva Eiger did not, as far as we know, have any son of that name. He did, however, have a less well-known cousin with the same name as his, Rabbi Akiva Eiger, who served as Rabbi of Halberstadt, and was succeeded by his son, Rabbi Yosef, who passed away in 1851. Perhaps this portrait belonged to him.

This chapter traces how this portrait, and that described in the previous chapter, came into the possession of the Chabad Library, together with other items—a collection of Jewish calendars, historic documents and printed material.

92. ORIGINAL PORTRAIT OF RABBI MENACHEM MENDEL, AUTHOR OF TZEMACH TZEDEK

All pictures of Rabb Menachem Mendel, author of *Tzemach Tzedek*, publicized until recently are based on a portrait painted, without the Rebbe's knowledge, by a non-Jewis artist. During the Rebbe's later years, the artist was allowed into his room for a few moments on Shabbos, when the Rebbe wore his white Shabbos garments. With his eyes almost closed, the artist immediately returned to his lodging, keeping the Rebbe's image in his mind, and then painted from memory. He made just two errors: 1) The Rebbe's garment has its left side over the right, as is non-Jewish custom but contrary to Jewish (particularly Chasidic) custom; and 2) the book held by the Rebbe has the top cover at its left end, like books of European alphabets which are read from left to right, instead of at the right end, as are Hebrew books which are read from right to left.

Later pictures of the Rebbe were all attempts, of varying success, to imitate

this portrait. Shown here are seven pictures publicized until now, the first of which dates to 1886. One of them was given to Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak, sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe, by his grandmother, Rebbetzin Rivka, (wife of Rabbi Shmuel, fourth Lubavitcher Rebbe), who told him it is much closer to the appearance of her father-in-law than other publicized pictures.

Until recently, however, the original portrait's whereabouts were unknown. In 1991, the original oil painting was discovered in the Moscow home of a great-grandson of Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Schneersohn (1830-1900), Rebbe of Kopust. The latter was the eldest son of Rabbi Yehuda Leib, second son of Rabbi Menachem Mendel, and this portrait had adorned his home.

This full-color portrait is almost full-length and is very clear. Several of the books in the bookcase seen next to the Rebbe seem, according to the appearance of their bindings, identical to some preserved in the Chabad Library to this day. Of all pictures previously publicized, the one given to Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak by his grandmother is closest by far to this painting. Many points of similarity, besides other details, indicate this portrait to be the original.



93. PHOTO OF RABBINIC CONVENTION, KOROSTIN, UKRAINE, 1926

At the end of October, 1926, a convention was held of Rabbis of communities in central Ukraine was held in Korostin. This was the only spontaneous general Rabbinic convention ever held in the Soviet Union. It was greatly encouraged by Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak, sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe, for it comprised only traditional Rabbis interested in strengthening traditional Judaism even under the difficult conditions prevailing under the new regime.

A picture of participants in this convention has been published elsewhere, but it was from a contemporary newspaper and was not clear enough to identify anyone. Later, however, a copy of the original photo was discovered, on which each participant is marked with a number. Altogether, 101 individuals are shown, but the list identifying each by number is no longer extant.

A separate list of official participants exists, which includes 50 local Rabbis and 22 guest Rabbis—from communities outside the convention's official region. The other 29 individuals on the picture were apparently there in an unofficial capacity.

Efforts to identify the individuals on the photo have succeeded only partially—only 12 so far, some of them by conjecture.

The list of 72 official participants is given here in the hope that relatives or others may succeed in identifying more of them.

94. THREE PHOTOS OF RABBI YOSEF ROSEN, THE ROGATCHOVER GAON

As noted above (chapter 64), the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, held the Rogatchover Gaon (1858-1936) in the highest esteem. During the Gaon's lifetime he corresponded with him on profound Torah subjects, and later he strongly encouraged publication of the Gaon's works from manuscript. In the Rebbe's public Torah addresses, he often mentioned the





Gaon and his unique Torah approach and insights with the greatest respect.

In the Library there are three photos of the Rogatchover that were given to the Rebbe. On the back of one of them, the Rebbe wrote, in Hebrew, "The Gaon of Rogatchov."

95. PHOTOS OF RABBI LEVI YITZCHAK AND REBBETZIN CHANA SCHNEERSON

Two pictures presently exist of the Rebbe's father, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Schneerson.

- 1) One is from the files of the NKVD, the Soviet secret police, taken at the time of his arrest in spring, 1939.
- 2) The other was taken after his release from exile in a remote village in Kazakhstan, when he settled, in 1944, in that republic's capital, Alma Ata. His years in exile had so weakened his health that, at the end of that summer, just months after his release, he passed away. When the Rebbe received this picture, he wrote on the back, in Hebrew: "My father, of blessed memory?" The question mark apparently alluded to the difference between how his father looked in this picture and how he had looked before, a difference so vast that it was difficult for anyone who had known him before, even his own son, to identify him as the same person!

A number of pictures exist of Rebbetzin Chana, the Rebbe's mother. The last picture was taken when she came to watch the rally for Jewish children held on Lag B'Omer, spring 1963—about a year and a half before her passing in early fall, 1964.

When the Rebbe received this picture, he wrote on the back, in Hebrew: "Lag B'Omer, 5723."

96. PICTURES OF RABBI YOSEF YITZCHAK OF LUBAVITCH WITH THE REBBE, RABBI MENACHEM M. SCHNEERSON

Shown here are three pictures of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, together with his father-in-law, and predecessor, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak. Next to them are additional pictures of Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak taken at the same locations and at or around the same times.

1) In 1928, apparently close to the time of the Rebbe's wedding: The Rebbe is standing next to Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak, who is sitting by the dining room table—probably in his family dwelling in Riga, Latvia, where he then lived—holding the Rebbe's hand.

Next to it is another picture, at the same table, where Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak is sitting and reading a book, with his wife, Rebbetzin Nechama Dina, sitting next to him.

2) Spring, 1935, at the Austrian country resort of Purkersdorf, where Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak was staying: He is shown, standing among the trees, together with the Rebbe.

Next to it are two other pictures of Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak standing in the same location.

3) Summer, 1942, at the annual dinner of the United Lubavitcher Yeshi-





voth: Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak is giving a speech, while the Rebbe is supporting him with both hands.

Next to it are three more pictures showing those at the dinner's head table, including Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak, the Rebbe, his brother-in-law Rabbi Shmaryahu Gourary, guest Rabbis—including Rabbi J. B. Soloveitchik and Rabbi Dr. Leo Jung—and prominent Chasidim and Chabad supporters.

97. STUDENTS OF YESHIVAS TOMCHEI TEMIMIM, WARSAW-OTWOCK

The picture of all students of Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim-Lubavitch in Warsaw and its suburb of Otwock, Poland, has often been publicized. Here, however, is presented another picture that is not well known. The small pictures are actually the same as in the other picture but are printed here in a different shape.

The yeshiva's alumni who survived World War II have made great efforts to identify the individuals shown here, as already published elsewhere.



98. VIEWS OF LUBAVITCH WORLD HEADQUARTERS, 770 EASTERN PARKWAY, 1943-1945

These pictures were taken at a rally of Chadrei Torah Temimah—Lubavitch, a Chabad-organized network of Sunday and afternoon Torah schools for Jewish children who attended public schools. Possibly it was the rally held in spring, 1945, in the open courtyard then adjacent to Lubavitch World Headquarters at 770 Eastern Parkway. On most of that courtyard the first section of the central Lubavitch *shul* was later erected, presently the western end of the *shul*. This chapter discusses details of the pictures.



99. THE REBBE'S STUDY IN THE 1940S

During the 1940's, a delegation of alleged Ethiopian Jews once visited a number of Jewish organizations including Lubavitch. Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak, sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe, spoke to them words of encouragement and blessing, and told them to meet with his son-in-law, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson. They met with the Rebbe in his office, which served then also as the office of Merkos L'inyonei Chinuch, the educational department of Chabad-Lubavitch, and of Kehot, the Lubavitch publishing house. Also present were the important officials of the Rebbe's secretariat, Rabbi M. L. Rottstein and Rabbi C. M. I. Hodakov.

After the meeting, the visitors asked to have a picture taken. The two officials of the secretariat are seen here with the visitors.

The appearance of the Rebbe's room in the picture is different from its appearance in later years, and this chapter discusses the details.



Sacred and Historic Objects

100. TEFILLIN BELONGING TO THE CHABAD REBBES

In 1966, a Lubavitcher Chasid from Montreal visited his birthland, the Soviet Union, where someone gave him Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi's *tefillin* in order to bring them to the Rebbe. Soon after, the Rebbe allowed these *tefillin* to be displayed one day in the small upstairs *shul* at 770, and whoever had immersed that day in a *mikveh* was allowed to pass by and view them.

As is known, in accordance with the Kabbalah, the Chabad Rebbes wear on every weekday several sets of *tefillin*: 1) Rashi *tefillin*, worn by all Jews for weekday morning prayers, follow Rashi's Halachic opinion for the order of the *parshios*—parchments on which are written the four Scriptural texts that refer to the commandment of *tefillin*—and their placement in the leather boxes; 2) Rabbeinu Tam *tefillin*, which follow the opinion of Rashi's grandson, Rabbeinu (Yaakov) Tam, for a different order of the *parshios*, are worn by many, especially Chasidim, usually after morning prayers; 3) Shimusha Rabba *tefillin* have a different order for the head *tefillin* only, but the same order for the hand *tefillin* as Rashi, so they are worn after Rashi *tefillin*, just changing the shel rosh; 4) Raavad *tefillin* (also called Shimusha Rabba of Rabbeinu Tam) have a different order for the head *tefillin* only, but the same order for the shel yad as Rabbeinu Tam, so they are worn after Rabbeinu Tam *tefillin*, just changing the head *tefillin*.

Kabbalah sources emphasize that, of these four, the last two are not for most people, but may be worn only by those of exalted spiritual level.

Besides the four sets of *tefillin* worn by Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak himself, he left us two more groups of *tefillin*—eight sets altogether—which appear to be the *tefillin* of his grandfather, Rabbi Shmuel, and of his father, Rabbi Shalom DovBer. They are described in this chapter, together with reasons for identifying them as stated.

101. A SLEEVE, A SKULLCAP & AN ATARA

In Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak's private office, there is a wall that holds, among other items, several sacred objects inherited from his ancestors. They are not labeled for origin, but reasonable conjectures may be advanced:

1) One is a black silk sleeve, 55 cm. long, clearly well used, to the extent that it has a hole in the elbow. Its small size and simple style lead us to believe that it was from garment of Rabbi Menachem Mendel, author of *Tzemach Tzedek*, which, after his passing, is known to have been divided among his children, with one part given to Rabbi Shmuel, fourth Lubavitcher Rebbe.

The pictures of Rabbi Menachem Mendel, which all derive from a single source (see above, chapter 92), all have him wearing a white garment, which is what he wore on Shabbos and festivals. But he must also have had a black garment that he wore on weekdays, which apparently was the one divided between his children.

2) A white skullcap, in which are mixed silver threads, also has a small tassel. It was certainly worn by one of the Chabad Rebbes, but it was unknown which one until a note was discovered, in the handwriting of Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak, about a skullcap belonging to his grandfather, Rabbi Shmuel, which Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak received as a present, in 1928, from a cousin, a member of the Schneersohn family. It seems likely that the note refers to this skullcap.



3) An apparently very old silver *atara* (adornment, literally "crown") that some are accustomed to attach to the top end of their *tallis*.

This custom is widespread among non-Chabad Chasidim, but has not been customary among Chabad Chasidim. It has been suggested that this Chabad practice dates back to 1798, when Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi was arrested by the Czarist government and huge sums seemed likely to be required to obtain his release. Leading Chasidim gathered and decreed that, among other steps, every Chabad Chasid should remove his silver *atara* from his *tallis* and donate it to the fund for saving the Rebbe.

Since it is not Chabad custom, it is conjectured that perhaps Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak inherited this *atara* from his ancestors (through his mother, Rebbetzin Shterna Sarah), the Rebbes of Chernobyl and Cherkassy.



The Library's collection includes several canes, some with a known history:

- 1) One cane belonged to the renowned Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev (1740-1809), and was later inherited by a descendant. The latter's daughter-in-law was a granddaughter of one of the two sons of Rabbi Moshe Shapiro (son of Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz, a renowned disciple of the Baal Shem Tov), the Rabbi of Slavita and owner of the famous printing press there (see above, chapters 50, 55 and 57). The two sons were arrested on false charges during the 1830's, and were condemned to a cruel beating by soldiers. They were to be sent to Siberia but intercession got their sentence commuted to house arrest in Moscow (where few Jews were then permitted to live), from which they were released only after 17 years. The above-mentioned granddaughter traveled to visit them in Moscow, taking the cane with her (apparently for Rabbi Levi Yitzchak's merit to protect her on her sacred mission). While she was there, the cane was damaged in a storm, and one of the Polish noblemen trying to help the family later fixed it with a new handle (the cane is still somewhat damaged). In 1957, a descendant of one of the Shapiro brothers sent the cane to the Rebbe.
- 2) A second cane, too, is reputed to have belonged to Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev. Its metal handle is in the form of an eagle and on it are inscribed the letters ALPCCA (which could be either Latin or Cyrillic script). The Rebbe used to keep this cane in his private office, where it was hung on the table made by Rabbi Shmuel, fourth Lubavithcer Rebbe (see below, chapter 103). No other details about its origin or its ascription to Rabbi Levi Yitzchak are presently known.
- 3) Also unknown is the background of another cane found among Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak's belongings, which is not identifiable from his pictures of that period showing a cane.
- 4-5) In 1941-1942, Rabbi Zalman Bezpaloff (son of Rabbi Yaakov Mordechai Bezpalov, Rabbi of Poltava, see above, chapter 45) bought two canes with silver handles for Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak—because he felt the one the Rebbe used was not nice enough. The Rebbe accepted one from him, but apparently did not use it. This cane has the initials "S.B." engraved on it.

Rabbi Bezpaloff took back the other cane—apparently at the Rebbe's direction. Some time later, he moved to S. Francisco, California, and Lubavitcher







students who spent part of their summer traveling on "Merkos Shlichus" (tours to seek Jews for the purpose of strengthening Jewish identity and observance) sometimes visited him there. When Rabbi Yosef Chaim Rosenfeld (now administrator of Oholei Torah, Brooklyn) visited him as a student in 1959, Rabbi Bezpaloff gave him the second cane as a gift. It is engraved with the name "Z. Bezpaloff." Rabbi Rosenfeld sent it to the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, who in return sent a check in payment, noting that he avoids accepting gifts without payment.

All of the above canes are shown here in the above order.

7) Another cane, reputed to have belonged to the Baal Shem Tov, was given to the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, by a Jew born in Leningrad to an assimilated Jewish family. His father, before his passing, told his son this cane had belonged to the Baal Shem Tov, from whom they descended, and he should never sell it, because this family heirloom had been passed down from generation to generation.

For this reason he brought the cane with him when he emigrated from Russia. In New York he met Chabad Chasidim, who encouraged him to become more Jewishly involved and invited him to a farbrengen of the Rebbe, held at the central Lubavitch shul at 770 Eastern Parkway, in Brooklyn. He was so inspired that he later brought the cane to the Rebbe as a gift. The Rebbe asked its price, but the man did not feel comfortable accepting payment and requested instead to arrange for kaddish to be said on his father's yahrtzeit, to which the Rebbe agreed. The Rebbe asked whether he wore tefillin daily, and when he replied in the negative, the Rebbe requested him to start doing so. He agreed and the Rebbe accepted the cane, suggesting he go to a certain local Judaica store to choose a pair of tefillin. At the store, the man asked for the cheapest pair because he had little money. Just then, the storekeeper received a phonecall, and, after hanging up, gave the man the best pair of tefillin, telling him it was a present from the Rebbe! Some time later, the man passed away and the Rebbe said kaddish for him. The Rebbe kept the cane in his private office, where it remains to this day.

103. THE WOODWORK OF RABBI SHMUEL

In 1947, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson published a biography of Rabbi Shmuel, fourth Lubavitcher Rebbe, where he notes the following: Rabbi Shmuel's doctors advised him, because of his poor health, to exercise regularly (see above, chapter 6) and to work with his hands. The family home of the Rebbes in Lubavitch had several items of superb craftsmanship made by Rabbi Shmuel, including a tall lamp of 12-13 branches, tables inset with wood and stone mosaic etc. Rabbi Shmuel was also an expert scribe, and gave each of his sons a *megillah* (scroll of Esther) he had written, and there were also *mezuzos* that he had written.

The implication of the Rebbe's words was that the family no longer had the pieces of furniture—probably they were left in Lubavitch when the family moved to Rostov in 1915—but that the *megillos* and *mezuzos* were still known to exist. Indeed, the *megillah* he wrote for his son, Rabbi Shalom DovBer, is in the Library and several of its columns have been publicized. Nothing, however,



is presently known about the mezuzos he wrote.

Nevertheless, a table made by Rabbi Shmuel has stood in the Rebbe's office since 1947. How did it get there?

Rabbi Shmuel's youngest son, Rabbi Menachem Mendel (1867-1942), inherited one of the tables his father had made, and took it with him when he was compelled to leave Russia. He settled in Paris and had the table with him there. He later lived in Bastia on the isle of Corsica, where he passed away during World War II. His daughter, Mrs. Chana Ozerman, lived in Paris, and when the Rebbe traveled to Paris in 1947 to meet his mother, Rebbetzin Chana, and bring her to New York, Mrs. Ozerman paid him a visit, presenting him with the table as a gift.

The table can be taken apart. The Rebbe brought the pieces back with him on his voyage home and reassembled the table in his office at 770, where it stands to this day.

104. THE SATCHEL OF RABBI SHMUEL

Shown here are pictures of a leather despatch bag that belonged to Rabbi Shmuel, fourth Lubavitcher Rebbe, together with a note written by his grandson, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak, explaining that his grandmother, Rebbetzin Rivka, the wife of Rabbi Shmuel, had presented it to him as a gift in winter, 1887-1888 (when he was aged seven and a half).



105. ANTIQUE SCROLLS

Besides the *megillah* written by Rabbi Shmuel (see above, chapter 103), the Library has several other *megillos*. Five were acquired by Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak in 1925, when he bought the collection of around 5000 rare books that had belonged to the renowned bibliographer, Shmuel Wiener. Then in his later years, Mr. Wiener was moving to France, where his son lived, but the Soviet authorities refused to let him take his collection with him. He agreed to sell it in its entirety to the Rebbe, who asked him the background of many items. On each of the five antique *megillos*, the Rebbe attached a sticker giving brief details about its history—all of which are reproduced in this chapter.

There is also a Kabbalistic scroll written on parchment, dating back to at least the 18th century. It is a ornate copy of the "Great Tree" composed by Rabbi Meir Poppers (c.1624-1662, editor of *Eitz Chaim* and *Pri Eitz Chaim*, the Kabbalistic writings of Rabbi Chaim Vital, leading disciple of the Arizal), which shows the "order of the chain" of Divine revelation to the spiritual worlds that precedes the creation of this physical world. Comparison with the published version shows that this manuscript is missing at its beginning and end, and its text also has differences from the published version. This scroll, too, has a sticker with a note written by Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak giving the known details of its background.

The Library also has four published editions of this Kabbalistic scroll, which are described in this chapter.



106. SACRED OBJECTS FROM THE ARCHIVE OF RABBI CHAIM KEVES

Rabbi Chaim Keves (1889-1943) was born in Vyetka, and studied at Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim in Lubavitch. In 1926 he became Rabbi of Yuchovitch, near Polotzk, White Russia. Later, when the Soviet regime's persecutions of Rabbis made it impossible to remain there, he fled to Nevel. In 1941, when the Germans invaded the Soviet Union, he escaped and settled in Samarkand, Central Asia, together with many other Chasidim.

His wife was a daughter of the Vileiker Rebbe, who was somehow related to Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak, sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe. She had inherited a spoon reputed to have belonged to the Baal Shem Tov, and a cup that Rabbi Mordechai of Lekhovitch (1742-1810) was reputed to have received from Rabbi Yechiel Michel of Zlotchov (1721-1786), a renowned disciple of the Baal Shem Tov.

Rabbi Chaim and his wife refused to sell these precious heirlooms, but after their passing, apparently without heirs, the Chasidim sold their belongings to provide assistance to poor refugees. R. Meir Itkin bought some of the items and, after he escaped from the Soviet Union and arrived in Paris, sent them in 1947 to Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak.

Another sacred object left behind by Rabbi Chaim Keves was a small kettle reputed to have belonged to the Baal Shem Tov. Another Chasid in Samrkand bought it and later sold it to Rabbi Yisrael Posner of Klimovitch, who, after he left the Soviet Union around 1970, presented it to the Rebbe.

Together with the other two items, R. Meir Itkin also sent Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak a *paroches* (ark curtain) reputed to have belonged to Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi. His letter to the Rebbe explains how he obtained it, tracing its source to a descendant of Rabbi Schneur Zalman, Rabbi Shmuel Akiva Schneersohn of Moscow, who had inherited it as a family heirloom.



107. THE PRIVATE OFFICE OF RABBI YOSEF YITZCHAK OF LUBAVITCH

The first picture shown here reveals objects that remain on the desk of Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak, sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe, since before his passing in 1950: an electric lamp, an electric clock, and a bell he used to call his secretary when he needed him (another bell can be seen on the picture taken in spring, 1949, when the Rebbe was granted U.S. citizenship). In the corner is a small stepladder used for reaching books on higher shelves of the bookcases. In the picture of the Rebbe lighting Chanukah lights, his menorah is standing on this ladder.

Near the window several small books can be seen. These useful books were always on Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak's desk, and following the directive of the Rebbe's son-in-law and successor, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, were replaced there when they were returned in 1987 after the court case.

Another picture shows the Rebbe standing next to his father-in-law, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak, during the procedure to grant him U.S. citizenship. In honor of this special occasion, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak wore his fur *shtreimel*, or *spodik*, normally worn on Shabbos and festivals. The *shtreimel*, too, is shown here.

Also shown are the actual citizenship papers, signed by the Rebbe twice, once on the document itself and again on the photograph.

Shown, too, is a small revolving bookcase that stood next to Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak's desk. It was for books he often used, to save him the bother of having to go the main bookcases to get the books he needed.

Near the fireplace is a suitcase on which are engraved in gold letters Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak's initials "J.S." In this suitcase he kept the Baal Shem Tov's Siddur and letter, letters of the Chabad Rebbes, and manuscripts of the Chabad discourses of his father, Rabbi Shalom DovBer. He insisted on taking this suitcase with him wherever he went, even when running from shelter to shelter during the 1939 German bombardment of Warsaw.

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108. RABBI YOSEF YITZCHAK'S PROPELLER PENCIL

Over several years, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak used this propeller pencil to write replies to the thousands of letters he received. His replies were numbered according to the letters received, and later his secretaries copied them by typewriter. Accompanying the pencil is a note by the secretary, R. Nissan Mindel, giving its background.



109. PRAYER-STANDS USED BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE, RABBI MENACHEM M. SCHNEERSON

When the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, accepted the Chabad leadership, he refused to sit on a special chair or use a special *amud* (stand) during public prayers. Instead he sat on an ordinary bench, at an ordinary table, in the small upstairs *beis hamidrash* (study hall) used then for prayers (and for study by senior yeshiva students, then and to this day). For weekday prayers he stood, or sat on the bench, next to the door at the north-east corner. On Shabbos and festivals he stood, or sat on the bench, at the table along the south end (where he also sat during his *farbrengens*). On Shabbos and festivals, however, an *amud* was placed at the south-east corner for the Rebbe to use for each Amidah prayer, which is said standing.

The original *amud* was low and sloping—apparently so that it not be too high for the Rebbe to use even while sitting. Its top opened to form a "chest." It is unclear when this *amud* was made, but it was already used during the festivals of Tishrei, 1951.

During the 1950's it was replaced by a higher *amud*. A while later, that *amud* was replaced by a third, which was wider and more nicely made, with a small, two-door closet and an open-out shelf on which the Rebbe could place his Siddur while sitting.

In 1962, the Vocational School at Kfar Chabad, in the Holy Land, built for the Rebbe a new *amud*, similar to the third (with the difference that its closet doors close against a small vertical bar, preventing insertion of the Rebbe's hat on Yom Kippur for use in the evening prayer following the fast). This *amud* was sent with a large group of Chasidim from the Holy Land who came to the Rebbe on a special charter flight for the festivals of Tishrei. It was presented to the Rebbe at a special *farbrengen* he held in their honor on the evening before Rosh Hashanah. The Rebbe explained the significance of an *amud* and told a famous story of Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi in this connection.



After the *farbrengen*, the Rebbe directed that the new *amud* be brought into his room, where it remained for over half a year. At that time, the downstairs *shul* was already built, and the Rebbe used to pray there on Shabbos evening and morning. On Friday and Shabbos afternoons, however, he still prayed upstairs and the old *amud* was taken upstairs and downstairs as necessary. At Pesach time, 1963, the Rebbe directed that, instead of moving the *amud* back and forth, the new *amud* could be left permanently for use in the upstairs *shul*, and the old amud could remain downstairs.

All four of these original prayer-stands are now in the Library.

110. PARCHMENT HAFTOROS SCROLL IN THE REBBE'S ROOM

In the Rebbe's room, on the table made by Rabbi Shmuel, fourth Lubavitcher Rebbe, lay for many years a scroll of the Haftoros—specific selections from the books of the Prophets read after the Torah readings on Shabbos and festival mornings and fastday afternoons. It is written on parchment, rolled up like a Sefer Torah, with *atzei chaim* (wooden staves) at the two ends, and covered with a mantle.

Books that the Rebbe used, too, were often left on Rabbi Shmuel's table, but he directed his secretary not to place them on top of this Haftoros scroll.

On the scroll's *atzei chaim* is an inscription indicating who donated it to a *shul* in 1927. There is also a sticker stating that R. Gershon Galin gave it—apparently to the Rebbe—in 1958. He was a wealthy resident of Crown Heights who contributed generously to Chabad institutions, while trying to keep his philanthropy unpublicized. Beyond this, nothing further is known about this scroll.

Those privileged to enter the Rebbe's room for *yechidus* (private audience) thought the scroll was a Sefer Torah. In fall, 1977, when the Rebbe was not well and stayed in his room at 770, R. Yaakov Lipskier—who was a *gabbai* (warden) of the synagogue at Lubavitch World Headquarters, and had built the beautiful large ark in the downstairs *shul* at 770—decided to build a small ark for this scroll, too. When he brought it, the Rebbe replied that it was not a Sefer Torah but a book of Haftoros, and directed that the new ark be sent to the Library. Some time later, the scroll of Haftoros, too, was sent for safekeeping to the Library.



Strengthening Traditional Judaism

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111. THE DECREE TO BAN "JEWISH" CLOTHING

This letter, written in summer, 1845, and signed by the second, third and fourth sons of Rabbi Menachem Mendel, author of *Tzemach Tzedek*, relates to the infamous Czarist decree to compel Jews to change their distinctive Jewish clothing. Men would have to change their traditional long garments for short, European-style jackets, and could no longer wear traditional peaked caps or a *yarmulke* (skullcap) under the hat, nor grow long *peyos* (side-curls). Married Jewish women could no longer shave their heads (as was the custom of many) nor cover their heads with a kerchief.

This aroused deep distress among the Jews of Russia, who suspected—with some degree of justification—that the Czarist government thereby intended to tear Jews away from the Torah and eventually convert them to their own religion. Chasidim were very particular about distinctive Jewish dress, and many were prepared for the greatest self-sacrifice to continue wearing it. A number of Rabbis of the period wrote Halachic responsa on the subject, trying to determine the decree's purpose and whether, under the special circumstances of that decree, the Torah permitted Jews to change aspects of their clothing not directly related to Halachic obligations.

At the time—until spring, 1847—Rabbi Menachem Mendel himself was under close scrutiny of the Czarist secret police, and was afraid that any wrong move on his part might provoke stern punishment. Consequently, he could not become involved in issues relating to governmental decrees. That is probably why this letter was written by his sons.

Nevertheless, we find at least three of his responsa where Rabbi Menachem Mendel does relate—in veiled wording—to Halachic aspects of this issue. He apparently did not consider the purpose of the decree to be eventual conversion of the Jews, and is generally lenient when traditional Jewish clothing does not involve essential aspects of Judaism or relate to its required modesty of clothing.

In order to give Jews time to change their clothing, fulfillment of the decree was delayed for five years. During that time, however, every Jew aged 10-60 who wore a long garment had to pay the government a tax called *krubke* or *kropke*. This was done in two ways: Either every individual paid the tax himself, or else an agent, on behalf of the Jews of a town, leased from the provincial government the right to collect the tax.

Lubavitch was in the province of Mohilev. So was Belinitz, where Rabbi Aaron Lipshitz (see above, chapters 37, 53)—a Chasid of Rabbi Menachem Mendel and evidently a close personal friend of his family—was the Rabbi. In both towns, someone had leased the tax collection right. In Lubavitch it was uncertain whether such a lease automatically exempted the town's Jews from further payment or whether further payment might still be required if insufficient tax was collected. Rabbi Menachem Mendel's sons therefore wrote to Rabbi Aaron to ask about this and other questions they had about how Jews wishing to wear long garments should write their declarations about this to the government. They asked him to send back, with the letter's conveyor, precise information together with copies of relevant documents as received or filled out in Belinitz.

112. THREE LETTERS RECEIVED BY RABBI YEHUDA ASSAD

During the 19th century, Orthodox Judaism in Hungary—which then included many other lands, including Slovakia and Transylvania—was threatened by reformers, who pressed for changes in Jewish observance. Rabbi Yehuda Assad (1797-1866, see above, chapter 34) was a leading fighter against the reformers. He was appointed to his first position, as Rabbinic judge in Szardahel, in 1826. In 1831, he became Rabbi of Reta, and in 1832 of Szemnitz—a position he occupied when he received the three letters published here. Later, in 1854, he became Rabbi of Szardahel until his passing.

All three letters are replies to his letters to prominent contemporary Rabbis about the struggle against the reformers. The first, written in fall, 1844, is by Rabbi Avraham Shmuel Sofer (1815-1872)—renowned under the name of his work *K'sav Sofer*—son of the renowned Chasam Sofer (1763-1839) and his successor as Rabbi of Pressburg (now Bratislava, Slovakia). The second was written late in 1844 by Rabbi Yechezkel Bannet (1777-1855), who was then Rabbi of Neitra, Slovakia. Both were written following, and in connection with, a meeting of prominent Hungarian Rabbis in Pacs, Hungary, at the end of summer that year, to strengthen traditional Judaism. Among the subjects discussed—and treated in these two letters—was how to forestall the reformers' proposal to establish a seminary for educating Jewish preachers with modernist views.

The third letter, written before the other two, in late summer, 1843, by Rabbi Binyamin Wolf Lew (1773-1851), then Rabbi of Werbau, responds to Rabbi Assad's letter on the need to remedy breaches—unspecified here—in the wall of Jewish tradition.

113. LETTER OF TEACHERS & PRINCIPALS OF THE VITEBSK CHEDER-SCHOOLS AGAINST SECULAR STUDIES IN CHEDER-SCHOOLS

In 1910, a major comvention of leading Rabbis of the Russian Empire was held by the Czarist government in S. Petersburg. Rabbi Shalom DovBer, fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe, spent several years preparing for it, writing many letters in this connection, most of which are published in his collected letters. He worked to get the greatest Rabbis to participate and to vote against secularist proposals, supported by the Czarist government, to compel Rabbis and Torah teachers to obtain diplomas attesting to their qualifications in secular knowledge and their fluency in Russian.

Presented here is a well-written Hebrew letter, dated in spring, 1910, to the Rabbis participating in the convention, from 15 teachers and principals of the chadarim—Torah schools—of Vitebsk, a major city in White Russia. Writing as experts in the field of Jewish education, they argue persuasively against compelling Jewish children to study secular subjects before the age of 13. Based on their experience, they emphasize how essential it is to inculcate children with Torah and Jewish values from the earliest years until that age. Since children already know how to speak Russian from childhood, they can easily pick up reading and writing it at a later age once they are taught. If, on the other hand,





they study secular subjects at an early age, they become imbued with secular ideas that run counter to Jewish beliefs and values.

They also propose that, even when Jewish students enter secular schools after the age of 13, their teachers of religion should be local Rabbis, and that these subjects should earn marks in their examinations on equal terms with the secular subjects studied.

They sent this letter with Rabbi Shmarya Yehuda Leib Medalya, who represented the city of Vitebsk at the convention. A Chasid of Rabbi Shalom DovBer, Rabbi Medalya had been appointed Rabbi of Vitebsk in fall, 1908. Later, under the Communist regime, he became Rabbi of Moscow, where he was arrested and executed in 1938.

114. LETTER FROM THE JEWS OF ROMEN AGAINST COMPELLING RABBIS TO OBTAIN DIPLOMAS OF SECULAR KNOWLEDGE

Like the previous one, this letter was sent to the Rabbis participating in the Rabbinic convention in S. Petersburg in 1910. The letter is signed by over 110 Jews, including the city's Rabbis, especially its main Rabbi, Rabbi Chaim Schneersohn (see above, chapter 35). The letter was written in Russian and is here translated into Hebrew.

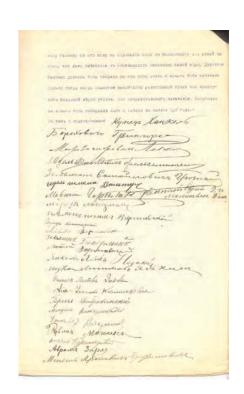
At the time, Jewish secularists, led by a lawyer named Slasberg, were urging the government to pass a decree to combine the position of each town's religious Rabbi with that of the state-appointed "rabbi," whose task was to register births, deaths, marriages etc. Until then, the latter position was most often occupied by secularists who cared little about Judaism. The new proposal was that Rabbis should be appointed only when they had diplomas attesting to their secular knowledge and fluency in Russian.

Rabbi Shalom DovBer, fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe, worked energetically against this proposal. He declared—as this letter argues cogently—that Rabbis needed to immerse their minds in Torah scholarship in order to exert the desired beneficial influence on their communities. Better to leave registration of life events to a separate registrar, who would have a diploma in secular knowledge and whose appointment should be renewed every few years.

It is likely that this letter and the previous one were sent at Rabbi Shalom DovBer's suggestion—possibly even with a suggested text sent from Lubavitch—and that many similar letters were sent by Jewish communities in Russia. Perhaps only these two did not reach their destination, for some reason, which is why they remained in the Rebbe's archives, whereas the others were received by the Rabbis to whom they were sent.

115. A CODED LETTER BY REB ZALMAN BUTMAN TO RABBI YOSEF YITZCHAK OF LUBAVITCH ABOUT VICTIMS OF THE SOVIET PURGES

Reb Schneur Zalman Butman, originally from Nevel, White Russia, was a well-known Chasid who lived in the USSR until he escaped in the 1946 exodus of hundreds of Chabad Chasidim. Later he lived in Paris and in Crown Heights,



and spent his last years in Kfar Chabad, Israel.

He was among the many Chabad Chasidim arrested by the Soviet regime, but was fortunate to be released after a few years of exile. Many others, especially those arrested during the later 1930's—the period of the infamous Soviet purges—were not so fortunate. A large proportion of them were shot soon after their arrest, without their families being informed of their fate. Others died from difficult conditions in jail or exile.

Previously, Chasidim had kept in touch with Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak—who had moved in late 1927 to Latvia, and to Poland in 1933—by addressing envelopes of their letters to him to Chasidim living in those lands. During the late 1930's, however, as the situation worsened, people were mortally afraid to send letters abroad, for it immediately aroused suspicion, inviting NKVD secret-police interrogation, arrest and worse.

In earlier years, when Chasidim (and Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak himself, before leaving the USSR) sent letters on sensitive subjects, they would use vague language and hints. Later on, they coded letters by using "mezuza script." Mezuzos have on the back three words that refer to Divine Names but use the letters immediately following the Names' letters. Likewise, mezuza script used the Hebrew letters immediately following the letters of the words intended.

The letter presented here was originally written by Reb Zalman Butman in *mezuza* script, and sent to his brother-in-law, Rabbi Yehuda Eber (they were married to sisters—daughters of Reb Menachem Mendel Schneersohn of Ref-ka, a great uncle of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson).

Rabbi Eber was a renowned Talmudic scholar who had headed the central Lubavitcher yeshiva in Otwock, Poland. After World War II broke out, he succeeded in escaping with his family in early 1940 to Riga, Latvia, where he awaited a visa to enter the United States to join Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak. Later in 1940, however, the Soviet Union occupied Latvia, requiring him now to obtain also permission to leave.

Since Latvia was now annexed to the Soviet Union, Soviet citizens could now send letters there without hindrance. And since the Soviet regime was not yet quite as harsh in Latvia as in the rest of the Soviet Union, letters could still be sent from there to the United States without fear of immediate retribution.

In early 1941, Reb Zalman Butman took advantage of this new window of opportunity to send the Rebbe a letter through his brother-in-law, Rabbi Eber. It was still coded in *mezuza* script, for its content was highly sensitive, reporting which Chasidim had been arrested, executed or exiled by the Soviet authorities. He also reported which of those previously arrested and exiled had been released. He wrote about his family, too, and about the dreadful economic conditions.

To avoid Reb Zalman Butman's handwriting being recognized by the Soviet secret police, Rabbi Eber rewrote the entire letter. At the beginning he writes about receiving a letter from his "brother-in-law RZB" (whom the Rebbe would certainly know) who "had found, among writings, incomprehensible words that he does not understand"—implying that they were Kabbalah or the like—and had copied them in the hope that his brother-in-law would understand. But he, too, could not understand them, so he was copying them for the Rebbe (whom he calls "our father, may he live long") to "instruct us about the words' meaning."

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Following his copy of Reb Zalman Butman's letter, Rabbi Eber added a few words about "RMD"—Reb Mordechai Dubin, a Chabad Chasid who, as a prominent member of the Latvian *Sejm* (parliament), had been instrumental in getting Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak released from Soviet imprisonment and exile in 1927 and permission for him to leave the USSR later that year. Soon after the Soviets entered Riga, Dubin had been arrested and imprisoned in Moscow. Rabbi Eber noted that there was no change to report.

The Rebbe's secretary noted on this letter that it was postmarked 27 February (1941).

A copy of Rabbi Eber's letter in *mezuza* script is reproduced here, together with its deciphered version.

Together with the letter, Rabbi Eber sent two *pidyonei nefesh* (requests for the Rebbe to pray on behalf of those named), one for his sister-in-law, Reb Zalman Butman's wife, who was in advanced pregnancy, and the other for his entire family, that they speedily receive permission to leave for the United States. These too are reproduced in this chapter.

Unfortunately, Rabbi Eber and his family remained in Riga until the German armies occupied the Baltic lands in summer, 1941, and murdered them together with most Latvian Jews.

Letters Concerning Fundraising for Charity



116. THREE LETTERS OF AN EMISSARY OF THE HOLY LAND, RABBI MOSHE YISRAEL

Presented here are three letters from Rabbi Moshe Yisrael (c.1680-1740), who traveled to the lands of North Africa as emissary of the Jews of Safed, in the Holy Land, to raise funds on their behalf, and stayed there from 1709 until 1713. In 1714, he became Rabbi of the island of Rhodes (now Greece), a position he occupied until 1736, except that from 1727 to 1731 he traveled to Italy and Holland as emissary of the Jews of Jerusalem. Around 1737, he moved to Alexandria, Egypt, where he passed away. His Halachic responsa are published in Masat Moshe (Constantinople, parts I-II 1734-1735; part III, 1742), and his collected sermons in *Appei Moshe* (Livorno, 1828).

All three letters were written in the week of the Torah portion of *Chayei Sarah* (in the fall), and are addressed to Rabbi Nissim Avraham HaKohen, who traveled to North Africa in 1709 as emissary of the Jews of Jerusalem. At the time of writing, Rabbi Moshe Yisrael was staying in Meknes, Morocco, and Rabbi Nissim Avraham in Fez. The letters concern funds pledged by wealthy members of the community, and mention contemporary Rabbis of Fez and Meknes (see above, chapters 30-31).

117. LETTERS OF AN EMISSARY OF THE HOLY LAND, RABBI YOM TOV CRISPO

From 1718 to 1722 Rabbi Yom Tov Crispo traveled to North Africa as an emissary of the Jews of Jerusalem. First he visited the communities of Morocco, and by late 1721 we find him visiting Algiers on his way to Tunisia and Egypt. From 1727 to 1731 he traveled to Europe as an emissary for the Jews of Hebron.

Presented here are three letters he sent Rabbi Yaakov Ibn Tzur (known as YaABeTz, see above, chapter 31). Rabbi Yaakov served as a Rabbinic judge in Fez until summer, 1718, when he left to become Rabbi of Meknes. He served there until 1729, when he returned to Fez to become its Rabbi.

Rabbi Crispo was in Fez all summer of 1718, and Rabbi Yaakov helped him greatly in raising funds in the city and surrounding communities. In the middle of the summer, however, Rabbi Yaakov became Rabbi of Meknes, and Rabbi Crispo wrote requesting him to ensure, even from a distance, that all pledges made to him and debts owed to him be paid in full.

As noted above (chapter 31), Rabbi Yaakov was a bibliophile and had a large library. As a mark of his esteem, Rabbi Crispo on his travels sought significant Torah works that Rabbi Yaakov did not yet have. In the second letter, from fall 1721, he writes to Rabbi Yaakov from Algiers that he had sent two books for him with Rabbi Chaim Yaakov, who was then traveling to Morocco as emissary of the Jews of Safed.

A few days later, Rabbi Crispo writes to Rabbi Yaakov again about Rabbi Shimon Nigrin of Jerusalem, whom he had met in Algiers. Rabbi Shimon was traveling to Morocco to raise funds for the support of his sick father, and Rabbi Crispo requests Rabbi Yaakov to help him in his mission. He also mentions again the books he had sent him.



118-119. LETTERS OF ENDORSEMENT BY RABBI SCHNEUR ZALMAN OF LIADI

Rabbi Schneur Zalman apparently wrote many letters of endorsement for individuals in need, requesting Jews to help them financially. This is clear from a letter written by one of his followers, stating that the Rebbe had directed him to write to all the Chasidim appealing for contributions towards the wedding expenses of a someone's daughter. He adds: "...the Rebbe explicitly said: 'Because my letters [for similar requests] have been so very many, and people almost don't pay attention, therefore it is necessary [in this case] to write at length."

Few of these letters, however, have reached us. A few are published in his published letters and three more are presented here. The individuals on whose behalf they were written are not named, but just "the bearer of this letter."

The first letter was written, apparently, for a respected member of the Chabad community, for the Rebbe calls him "our friend, the outstanding Rabbinic personality" etc. Since his name is not mentioned, he evidently was traveling from place to place to collect funds for "his many and huge needs," which are not, however, specified. With heartfelt words, the Rebbe appeals "to arouse your great compassion" to help him.

The second letter is addressed to the Rebbe's *mechutan* (relative by marriage), Rabbi Yosef Bunam, son-in-law of Rabbi Schneur Zalman's colleague, the renowned Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev (1740-1809). Rabbi Yosef Bunam's son, Rabbi Yekusiel Zalman (d.1867) had married Baila, a daughter of Rabbi Schneur Zalman's eldest son and future successor, Rabbi DovBer. The letter requests him to befriend its bearer with all his heart and to give him suitable advice. Based on the Talmudic source of the phrase the Rebbe uses, this might have been in connection with helping the bearer achieve marital harmony.

The third is a fragment of a letter, clearly in Rabbi Schneur Zalman's handwriting, apparently written to another Chasidic leader or leading Rabbi, appealing to him to call on his community to donate generously for some needy individuals.

120. LETTER OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT BY RABBI AVRAHAM KALISKER

Rabbi Avraham of Kalisk (d. 1810) was a disciple of Rabbi DovBer, the Maggid of Mezeritch (successor of the Baal Shem Tov as leader of the Chasidic movement). In 1777, he accompanied Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Horodok (or Vitebsk, 1730-1788) and 300 Chasidim who migrated to the Holy Land. After Rabbi Menachem Mendel's passing, he was considered the leader of the Chasidic settlement, which had settled in Tiberias and Safed.

Originally, Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi intended to accompany them to the Holy Land. On the way, however, Rabbi Menachem Mendel and others of the Maggid's disciples convinced him to stay, in order to provide leadership for the Chasidim of White Russia. Rabbi Schneur Zalman organized a massive campaign to send funds every year to support the Chasidic settlement in the Holy Land—a project that continued in later generations until today.

Every year, the funds from all Russian communities were brought to the Holy Land by a special emissary. As leader of the Chasidim there who benefited



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from these funds, Rabbi Avraham sent letters to various communities acknowledging receipt of the funds with the accompanying lists of donors, which often were coupled with requests to pray for their needs in the merit of their contributions. Some of these letters have been published elsewhere.

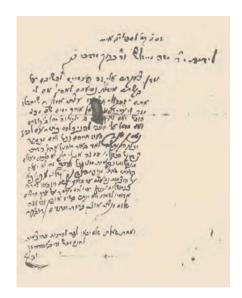
Presented here is his hitherto unpublished letter, sent in winter, 1801, to the congregation known as "Prosmushke's Minyan" in Vitebsk.



121. LETTER BY RABBI DOVBER OF LUBAVITCH URGING SUPPORT FOR A RESPECTED RABBI SETTLING IN THE HOLY LAND

Rabbi Shmuel Segal (c.1775-c.1850) was Rabbi of Rohatchov (later Russified to Rogatchov), White Russia, an important Chabad community, from about 1808 until 1823. In that year, he decided to devote the rest of his life to Divine service and Torah study in the Holy Land, even if it meant living in poverty. Indeed, he became the Rabbi, preacher and communal leader of the new Chabad community founded by Rabbi DovBer that year in Hebron. In the years 1826-1827, he traveled abroad as emissary to raise funds for the Hebron community. He passed away between 1849 and 1855.

In the following letter, probably written in summer, 1823, Rabbi DovBer appeals to the communities of Rohatchov, and neighboring towns such as Bobruisk, Paritch, Zhlobin and the surrounding villages, to pledge a total of 30 guilders for an annual stipend to support Rabbi Shmuel after he settles in the Holy Land, particularly as he has served them faithfully as Rabbi for over 15 years. He also asks the community of Rohatchov to appoint Rabbi Shmuel's son to succeed him as Rabbi.



122. LETTER BY RABBI DOVBER OF LUBAVITCH REGARDING A REQUEST TO SETTLE IN THE HOLY LAND

The following letter has already been published. Here, however, is presented a facsimile of the original, based on which the published text has now been corrected.

Written in 1814-1815, soon after Rabbi DovBer succeeded his father as Rebbe in 1813, it is addressed to two of his father's prominent Chasidim.

The first is Rabbi Moshe Meizels. A significant scholar both in Torah and secular subjects, he knew many languages and even authored a book of Hebrew poetry, *Shiras Moshe*, on the 613 commandments of the Torah. As a man of great intelligence, he was elected to lead the Vilna community, until it was discovered that he had become a Chasid. The townsfolk, who opposed Chasidism, then persecuted him so terribly that he lost all his wealth.

The second addressee is Rabbi Boruch Mordechai Ettinga, son-in-law of Rabbi Shmuel, the Rabbi of Vilna. A prodigious Torah scholar, he too became a Chasid of Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi and suffered from persecution.

The two had written to Rabbi DovBer twice that—perhaps because of the persecution—they desired to migrate to the Holy Land. In this letter, however, the Rebbe in stern words advises against it, declaring that, if they insist in going, he would not contribute a penny towards their travel expenses. Nevertheless,

once they arrived, they should settle in Jerusalem and he would grant an annual stipend of no more than 50 guilders between the two (i.e. 25 each). He ends with a postscript warning them not to waste money on travel to see him in an effort to try and persuade him to change his mind.

A year or two later, Rabbi DovBer directed several of his Chasidim to migrate to the Holy Land, and around 1817, Rabbi Moshe Meizels went, too. When Rabbi DovBer founded the Chabad settlement in Hebron around 1823, Rabbi Moshe settled there and became a leader of the community. He passed away there in the 1840's.

Meanwhile, Rabbi Boruch Mordechai became Rabbi of Bobruisk, White Russia, an important Chabad community, remaining there until 1851 (see above, chapter 37). He left that year for the Holy Land, passing away in Jerusalem a year later.

123. LETTER OF BLESSING FOR A SICK WOMAN BY RABBI DOVBER OF LUBAVITCH

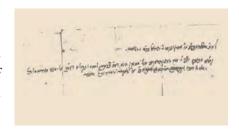
This letter is to two brothers-in-law, one of whom must have been close to the Rebbe—for the Rebbe entitles him "my soul-friend." The wife or daughter of the other brother-in-law, apparently, had become ill with a certain sickness, and perhaps he asked his brother-in-law who was close to the Rebbe to write requesting the Rebbe's blessing, and then also signed the letter with him together.

The Rebbe writes how deeply disturbed he was by this news, for it was a dangerous sickness that required great Divine mercy. They must not, however, despair. The Divine cure would come through natural means—a doctor who would prescribe some medication—and therefore they should find an expert doctor to treat her.

124. LETTERS BY REBBES OF THE CHERNOBYL CHASIDIC DYNASTY

Presented here are four letters signed by Rebbes of the various branches of the Chernobyl Chasidic dynasty:

- 1) Written between 1876 and 1881, this letter is signed by three Rebbes, Rabbi Yeshaya Meshulam Zusha (d.1881), his brother Rabbi Boruch Asher (d.1905)—both sons of Rabbi Aaron (1787-1871), son of Rabbi Mordechai Twersky of Chernobyl (1770-1837)—and their nephew Rabbi Mordechai (d.1911), son of Rabbi Menachem Nochum of Loyov (1810-1876), son of Rabbi Aaron. It acknowledges receipt of funds for support and sends blessings to the donors.
- 2) Written by the afore-mentioned Rebbe, Rabbi Mordechai of Loyov, during the years of his leadership, 1876-1911, this letter appeals to his followers in the towns of Brohin, Loyev, Mozir, Retchitza and Bobruisk, to raise funds for an annual stipend on behalf of a worthy Jew who desired to move with his family to the Holy Land in order to imbibe its holiness. He mentions that the Lubavitcher Rebbe—Rabbi Shmuel or Rabbi Shalom DovBer—had urged him to appeal for support on behalf of this Jew.
 - 3) Written in summer, 1887, by Rabbi Yochanan (1816-1895), Rebbe of





Rachmistrivke (son of Rabbi Mordechai of Chernobyl), this letter thanks the Jewish community of Rovno, Ukraine, for agreeing to his recommendation to appoint Rabbi Eliyahu Posek as its Rabbi. The latter, however, did not remain long at that position, for the following year he became Rabbi of Alapolia.

4) Written by Rabbi Yochanan's son, Rabbi Dovid (d.1914), during the lifetime of his father, this letter is addressed to the Rabbi of a community, endorsing the letter-bearer as an emissary to raise funds for the Rebbe's support.

125. LETTER BY RABBI MENACHEM NOCHUM OF TOLNA

Another son of Rabbi Mordechai of Chernobyl was Rabbi Dovid (1808-1882), Rebbe of Tolna. His son, Rabbi Mordechai, who passed away at a young age, had a son, Rabbi Menachem Nochum, who served as Tolner Rebbe. He wrote this letter in fall, 1894, to Rabbi Avrohom Yechezk'el Arlozaroff, Rabbi of Kharkov—a renowned Torah scholar and prominent Lubavitcher Chasid—on behalf of a Jew who had always supported himself by his own labors, but now had lost his eyesight and his ability to work. Doctors who examined him had been unable to help, and now he was to see a specialist in Kharkov. He urges Rabbi Arlozaroff to encourage the community to raise funds for the man's support and medical expenses while there.

126. LETTERS BY REBBES OF THE RUZHIN CHASIDIC DYNASTY

In 1991, Mr. Mordechai Perl of Moscow brought to the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, a letter written by the renowned Rebbe, Rabbi Yisroel Friedman of Ruzhin (1797-1850, great-grandson of Rabbi DovBer, Maggid of Mezeritch), together with several letters of his sons, the Rebbes of Tchortkov, Sadigora and Husiatin, and three letters of a great-grandson, the Rebbe of Mezibuzh. He had inherited them from his father, Mr. Yitzchak Dov Mutterperl, and his grandfather, Rabbi Asher Zelig Mutterperl, Rabbi of Michelpolia (son of Rabbi Shalom, Rabbi of Bar).

- 1) Rabbi Yisroel of Ruzhin writes to his followers in seven Ukrainian towns acknowledging receipt of funds for support of his court, promising to pray for the donors, and urging them to continue sending their support every half year, with directives to whom to give the contributions in future to be sure that he would receive them.
- 2) Rabbi Yisroel's fifth son, Rabbi Dovid Moshe (1828-1903), Rebbe of Potik and later of Tchortkov, writes in 1862 from Potik to his followers in certain Polish and Galician towns about the coming marriage of his son, Rabbi Nochum Mordechai, to his niece, the daughter of his late brother, Rabbi Shalom Yosef of Sadigora (1820-1851, Rabbi Yisroel's eldest son, who had passed away less than a year after their father). He appeals for help in covering the wedding expenses and urges them to celebrate with him.
- 3) Rabbi Yisroel's second son, Rabbi Avrohom Yaakov (1820-1883), Rebbe of Sadigora, writes in 1880 to his followers about the marriage of his grandson to the daughter of his nephew, Rabbi Yitzchak (1834-1896), Rebbe of Buhosh, son of Rabbi Shalom Yosef.





- 4) Another letter of Rabbi Avrohom Yaakov, of which only its conclusion remains.
- 5) Rabbi Yisroel's youngest son, Rabbi Mordechai (Shraga) Feivush (1834-1894), Rebbe of Husiatin, writes a letter of endorsement for an emissary to raise funds on behalf of the Rebbe's m'chutan, Rabbi Binyamin Wolf Orbach of Oziran, who was living in dire poverty and had borrowed heavily to marry off his orphaned granddaughter.
- 6) Rabbi Yisroel Shalom Yosef (1851-1912), Rebbe of Mezibuzh, a great-grandson of Rabbi Yisroel and son-in-law of Rabbi Avrohom Yaakov, writes an invitation to his daughter's marriage to his nephew, Rabbi Mordechai Shlomo (1890-1971), son of Rabbi Yitzchak, Rebbe of Boyan (son of Rabbi Avrohom Yaakov). The first part of the letter is missing. Rabbi Mordechai Shlomo Friedman, Boyaner Rebbe, moved from Vienna to New York in 1933, and led the Boyaner Chasidic congregation on the Upper West Side until his passing.
- 7) Rabbi Yisroel Shalom Yosef of Mezibuzh writes in spring, 1898, to the community leaders of Michelpolia to appoint Rabbi Asher Zeling Mutterperl to succeed his late father-in-law as the town's Rabbi.
- 8) Rabbi Yisroel Shalom Yosef of Mezibuzh writes to Rabbi Mutterperl and his other followers in Michelpolia, acknowledging receipt of a contribution for his support, noting that it had arrived at just the right time, for he was still sick, and he urges them to continue praying for him.

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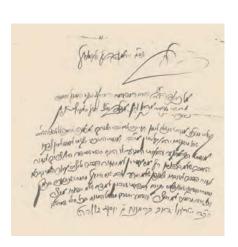
127. LETTERS BY RABBI YISROEL DOV, REBBE OF VILEDNIK

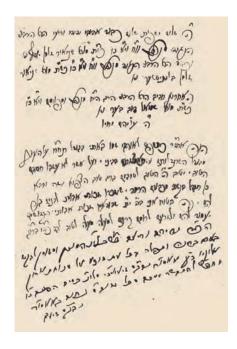
Presented here are four letters from Rabbi Yisroel Dov (d.1850), Rebbe of Vilednik, to Rabbi Aaron Lipshitz, Rabbi of Belinitz (see above, chapters 37, 53, 111). The first letter, dated fall, 1844, mentions an apparently complex Halachic question about which Rabbi Aaron was uncertain whether he had ruled correctly. The Viledniker Rebbe refuses to get involved and tells him to "send [it] to the great Rabbi, to Lubavitch"—i.e. to Rabbi Menachem Mendel, author of *Tzemach Tzedek*. The other letters are probably from the same period.

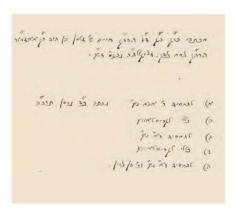
From these letters it appears that Rabbi Aaron, and particularly his wife, were very close to the Viledniker, asking his advice and requesting him to pray for them etc. Originally, Rabbi Aaron seems to have been a follower of Rabbi Aaron of Staroshele (c.1766-1828—see above, chapter 2, and below, chapter 132), and after his passing, apparently became close to the Viledniker. Gradually, especially after the Viledniker's passing in 1850, he became close to Rabbi Menachem Mendel and his sons (as evident from the chapters cited above).

128. LETTER BY RABBI MENACHEM NOCHUM, SON OF RABBI DOVBER OF LUBAVITCH

Rabbi Menachem Nochum (1798-c.1876), the older son of Rabbi DovBer, second Lubavitcher Rebbe, was exceptionally humble and refused to accept the Chabad leadership on his father's passing in 1827, deferring to his older cousin and brother-in-law, Rabbi Menachem Mendel. He had accompanied his father on his last journey to his grandfather Rabbi Schneur Zalman's burial place in Ha-







ditch, Ukraine, and was next to his father when, on his way back, he passed away in Niezhin in the midst of delivering a profound Chasidic discourse. Deeply affected by the experience, he moved to Niezhin and remained near his father's burial place for the rest of his life, except for occasional visits to Haditch.

Most of this letter was actually written by someone else on his behalf, and only the final lines and signature are in Rabbi Nochum's handwriting. It is addressed to three Chasidim—of whom the third is apparently the renowned Chasid, Rabbi Shmuel DovBer of Borisov (see above, chapters 5, 11, below chapter 134)—thanking them for their financial support and sending them his blessings in the merit of his holy ancestors.

129. LETTERS BY RABBI CHAIM SCHNEUR ZALMAN OF LIADI

Presented here are seven letters of Rabbi Chaim Schneur Zalman (1814-1880), Rabbi Menachem Mendel's third son, who, several years after his father's passing in 1866, settled in Liadi, where he became a Rebbe with many followers. Five of the seven letters are in regard to raising funds for his support, starting in 1862—the year of the first letter—even before Rabbi Menachem Mendel's passing. The last letter's content seems to date it to soon after his move to Liadi around 1869.

The first five letters were in the possession of R. Avraham Abba ("Abbale") Person—three are actually addressed to him—from whose heirs Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak, sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe, acquired them. R. Abba, a Chasid of Rabbi Menachem Mendel, Rabbi Shmuel, and Rabbi Shalom DovBer, was originally from Krislave—two of the letters concern raising funds there—and, before these letters were written, had moved to Denenburg (Dvinsk, now Daugavpils, Latvia). Later still, he moved over the border to Koenigsberg, Prussia. Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak often mentions him fondly in his memoirs and published talks.

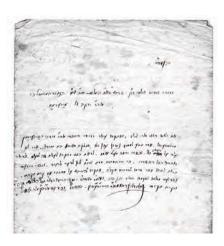
The third letter is of special interest. R. Abba had written to Rabbi Chaim Schneur Zalman requesting him to ask Rabbi Menachem Mendel for advice concerning some problem. But the Rebbe—who was bedridden during his last six and a half years—said that his great weakness prevented him from offering advice. Nevertheless, writes his son, he got his father to give R. Abba his blessing. Rabbi Menachem Mendel's reply that he was no longer able to offer advice was typical of those years, as recorded elsewhere.

130. LETTER BY RABBI NOCHUM DOVBER OF AVRUTCH

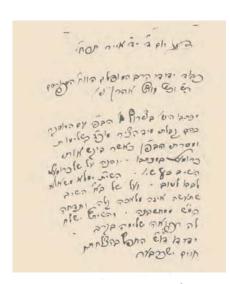
Rabbi Nochum DovBer Schneersohn (d.1894) was the son and successor of Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak (1822-1876, fifth son of Rabbi Menachem Mendel, see above chapter 6) as Rebbe of Avrutch. He was also a brother-in-law of Rabbi Shalom DovBer, whose wife, Rebbetzin Shterna Sarah, was his sister. His nephew, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak, sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe, describes him as a particularly saintly and humble personality.

He writes here to a wealthy Lubavitcher Chasid, R. Yaakov Ayerov (to whom several letters by Rabbi Shmuel and Rabbi Shalom DovBer have been published elsewhere). The letter-bearer's only son had been "taken from him," apparently

for military service, despite the fact that only sons usually were not drafted. He asks R. Yaakov, as a "friend and friend of my ancestors"—in other words, as a Chasid of the Chabad Rebbes—to do whatever he could to help, and to reply to him whether he had been able to fulfill his request. He ends his signature with the words: "grandson of the holy Rebbe of Lubavitch."

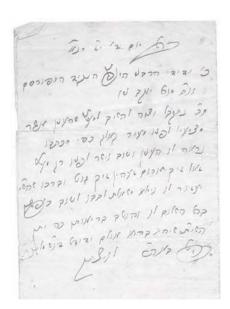


Advice and Blessings



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131. RABBI MENACHEM MENDEL'S REPLY THROUGH HIS SECRETARY

This letter, dated in spring 1858, was sent by Rabbi Menachem Mendel's close aide, R. Chaim Ber (whose full name, as he signs here, was Chaim Yissachar Ber). It is in response to a letter of Rabbi Aaron Lipshitz, Rabbi of Belinitz (see above, chapters 37, 53, 111, 127), enclosing two *pidyonei nefesh* (notes requesting the Rebbe to pray on behalf of those mentioned), for himself and for his niece, who apparently suffered from depression. The Rebbe sent his blessing that Rabbi Aaron's desires be fulfilled, and advised that his niece do some light work to help divert her mind from her depression, blessing her with a complete and speedy recovery.

132. LETTER BY RABBI AARON OF STAROSHELE

Rabbi Aaron HaLevi Horovitz (c.1766-1828), a brilliant Torah scholar, was a disciple of Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi for 30 years, starting when he was aged 17. After his Rebbe's passing in 1812, Rabbi Aaron attracted many Chasidim, who made him their Rebbe. He authored profound Chasidic works (see above, chapter 2), which differ on certain basic points with the approach of Rabbi DovBer, second Lubavitcher Rebbe.

This letter is in reply to a letter and *pidyon nefesh* of Rabbi Aaron Lipshitz (see previous chapter), who evidently was among his close followers and was probably soon after his marriage. He had asked about moving into a new home and requested a blessing for material needs in general—including, apparently for children—and in serving G-d. In warm words, the letter promises blessings for all his requests.

133. RABBI SHMUEL'S REPLY THROUGH HIS SECRETARY

This letter, probably from summer, 1879, is written by Rabbi Shmuel's secretary, R. Levi Yitzchak Idlevitz, to R. Yaakov Ayerov (see above, chapter 130). Apparently it concerns a match for one of R. Yaakov's children, and the secretary records the Rebbe's reply that it seems very appropriate, but advises him to investigate the details carefully (at this point he quotes the Rebbe's words in their original Yiddish). He sends him the Rebbe's blessings and notes that the Rebbe's health had improved.

134. RABBI SHMUEL'S REPLY TO RABBI SHMUEL DOVBER OF BORISOV

This letter, too, was written by R. Levi Yitzchak Idlevitz. It was sent at the end of 1872 to Rabbi Shmuel DovBer of Borisov, in reply to a letter from "R.Z.B.," who was apparently his business partner. R.Z.B. had written to Rabbi Shmuel, fourth Lubavitcher Rebbe, about an offer he had received in writing from a merchant of Pleshtzenitz promising him quality merchandise at a fixed price, without risk of competition, and had asked whether to travel there to buy the merchandise. Although the Rebbe is not mentioned at all, the secretary replies that R.Z.B. should deposit with Rabbi Shmuel Ber the letter received from

the merchant—apparently as evidence in case the merchant deals dishonestly—and then travel to Pleshtzenitz.

On receiving this reply, Rabbi Shmuel Ber immediately sent it to his close friend, the respected Chasid R. Avraham Chaim Rosenbaum, who lived in Pleshtzenitz, writing on the back his own letter—also reproduced here. He writes that since the Rebbe's advice is the opposite of what he had heard in R. Avraham Chaim's name (apparently that the merchant was unreliable), he asks him to write to him stating his opinion clearly, and he would then act upon his advice.

In a postscript he sends regards to his friends among the Chasidim of Pleshtzenitz, especially the shochet, R. Aaron Zev, and the brothers R. Hendel and R. Yosef Kugel. R. Hendel was a renowned Chasid who served as a *mash-piya* (spiritual guide) in the original Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim in Lubavitch for over two years, from its founding until his passing in early winter, 1900.

135. LETTER BY RABBI YITZCHAK DOVBER, LATER REBBE OF LIADI

This letter, sent to R. Avraham Abba Person, was written by Rabbi Yitzchak DovBer (1835-1910), son and successor of Rabbi Chaim Schneur Zalman (1814-1880, third son of Rabbi Menachem Mendel, see above chapter 129) as Rebbe of Liadi and author of *Siddur Maharid* and other works. The letter was written in late fall (Kislev), and, in a handwritten note, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak, sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe, dates it to the year 5624 (1863). The day of the week and date of the month given, however, correspond only to the years 5620 (1859) or 5623 (1862).

Rabbi Yitzchak DovBer gives R. Abba business advice and tells how he had put in a good word for some commission that R. Abba ought to receive. He also indicates his own need for financial support, and writes that his father is well. In a postscript he notes that his grandfather, the Rebbe, is also well, delivering discourses of Chasidus and granting personal audiences as normal. If this letter is from 1862-1863, it might indicate that the Rebbe's sickness became better for a while. If, on the other hand, it is from 1859, it was written just days before the Rebbe became sick in Kislev that year.



Communities and Synagogues

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136. EXTRACTS OF PINKAS (COMMUNITY RECORD) OF HRODISHTCH

During the heyday of Jewish communities in Europe before World War I, each community had its own *pinkas*—community record—in which were inscribed important events in the community, rules enacted for the community, appointments of communal leaders etc. Here are presented selected excerpts from the *pinkas* of Hrodishtch during the years 1773-1820.

These excerpts were copied by Rabbi Yissachar Ber HaLevi Hurvitz (see above, chapter 33, at length), a Rabbi of several communities, including ten years, 1833-1842, as Rabbi in Lubavitch. An avid collector of Halachic material, he had it bound in volumes, together with Halachic responsa and Torah insights of his own. One of these volumes, presently in the Chabad Library, has eight excerpts from the above *pinkas*, selected for their special interest, perhaps because all eight are signed by important Chasidic Rabbis:

- 1) From summer, 1773, confirming the appointment of communal leaders of Hrodishtch. It is signed by Rabbi Avrohom HaKohen of Kalisk (d.1810, see above, chapter 120), disciple of the Maggid of Mezeritch and colleague of Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi.
- 2) From fall, 1787, confirming an assessment of the town's residents for payment of communal taxes for the community's expenses (which often included necessary bribes to government officials). It is signed by Rabbi Yissachar Ber of Kabilnik of the town of Lubavitch. A disciple of the Baal Shem Tov and the Maggid of Mezeritch, he taught Rabbi Schneur Zalman for a short while during the latter's youth. After Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Horodok (or Vitebsk) left to the Holy Land (see chapter 120), he was briefly considered one of three leaders of the Chasidim in Reissin—White Russia. Later he subjugated himself to Rabbi Schneur Zalman's leadership as a respected follower. His son, R. Yosef, an outstanding Chasid known as "Reb Yossele der Maggid's" (i.e. son of the maggid—preacher—of Lubavitch), was an uncle by marriage of Rabbi Menachem Mendel, author of *Tzemach Tzedek*.
- 3) From winter, 1796, recording a compromise agreement reached among the residents of Hrodishtch, who accepted Rabbi Schneur Zalman to adjudicate a dispute. It is signed, at the Rebbe's directive, by his brother, Rabbi Yehuda Leib, Rabbi of Yanovitch.
- 4) From spring, 1817, recording a compromise agreement reached between the residents of Hrodishtch and residents of the surrounding villages concerning payment of communal taxes. It is signed by Rabbi Avrohom of Kalisk—not to be confused with the aforementioned disciple of the Maggid. This Rabbi Avrohom was a disciple of Rabbi Schneur Zalman, who in his youth studied together with Rabbi Menachem Mendel, author of *Tzemach Tzedek*, Rabbi Yehuda Leib "Batlan" (who later served as Rabbi of Deneburg (Dvinsk), and Rabbi Nechemia Ginsburg of Dubrovna. He was especially close to the latter. (There were also two other Rabbis named Rabbi Avrohom who served later as Rabbis of Kalisk.)
- 5) From spring, 1818, on the same subject, also signed by the Rabbi Avrohom of Kalisk mentioned in the previous paragraph.
- 6) From fall, 1818, on further details of the same subject, signed by Rabbi Yehuda Leib, Rabbi Schneur Zalman's brother.

- 7) From the end of 1820, confirming an assessment for taxes of the town's residents, signed again by Rabbi Yehuda Leib.
- 8) Undated, determining that residents of villages surrounding Hrodishtch who were not registered as members of its community were exempt from participating in expenses of supplying provisions for soldiers stationed near the town. It is signed by Rabbi Shimon, Rabbi of Liozna (who had served as assistant Rabbi of Liozna when Rabbi Schneur Zalman lived there—until late 1800—and recorded some of the Rebbe's oral rulings).

Following the above eight excerpts in the above volume is a ruling in a din-Torah (Halachic court case) on a similar subject—assessment of taxes for individual residents—in the town of Rudnia. The fact that this document, in Rabbi Yissachar Ber Hurvitz's own handwriting, has many of his corrections of language and content and is unsigned seems to indicate that it is a first draft of his own ruling, which he later copied and signed. It is dated in spring, 1837, during the period when he was Rabbi in Lubavitch, which is very close to Rudnia.

137. LETTER BY RABBI DOVBER OF LUBAVITCH ABOUT BUILDING A SYNAGOGUE

In 1804, the Czarist government issued a new law to regulate its Jewish subjects. It included a clause stating that when a community was divided and groups could not coexist with each other in the same house of worship, one group was permitted to secede from the community, build its own *shul* and appoint its own Rabbis.

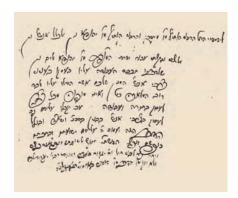
It is also recorded that, in order to avoid dissension and to consolidate the Chabad community, Rabbi DovBer encouraged his followers to establish their own *shuls* and communities wherever possible.

Presented here is a letter the Rebbe wrote concerning Chasidim in a certain town who had delegated one of their members to build a Chasidic *shul* and take care of other communal matters. He had written to the Rebbe that this took up so much time that he had none left for Torah study and service of G-d. The Rebbe writes to two prominent Chasidim in the same community to agree to share responsibility with that Chasid in his work on behalf of the community. He sends them his blessings and emphasizes the importance of the mission.

138. PINKAS OF THE CHEVRA SHAS (SOCIETY FOR TALMUD STUDY) OF NIKOLAYEV, UKRAINE, 1845-1861

The Chabad Library has the *pinkas* (record book) of the *Chevra Shas*—"society for [study of] Talmud" and Torah in general—of the Jewish community of Nikolayev in southern Ukraine, from the society's founding in 1845 until 1861. It includes the society's bylaws, names of officers appointed, and apportionment of Talmudic tractates—and also of the entire Mishnah and the entire Scriptures, and in, later years, also of the *Zohar*—among its members every year (or for longer periods).

The bylaws are particularly interesting. Judging by many expressions used, by the intentions members are directed to have while studying Torah, and by the approach recommended for actual study, the rules were obviously written by a





Chabad Chasid. It is also likely that many or most of the society's members were Chasidim.

The Rabbi of Nikolayev whose name appears through most of the years is Rabbi Efrayim Zalman (Rezumne), author of *Har Efrayim* (Odessa, 1897), who had been a Chasid of Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi. The Rabbi of the neighboring city of Kherson, Rabbi Yitzchak Yehuda (Deitschman), is also often mentioned as a member of the society.

Starting in 1857, the pinkas mentions Rabbi Avrohom Dovid (Lavut, d.1890) as Rabbi together with Rabbi Efrayim Zalman. A Chasid of Rabbi Menachem Mendel, author of *Tzemach Tzedek*, he was a renowned Torah scholar who authored highly useful works, including *Kav Naki* (a compendium of the Halachic laws of divorce), *Shaar Hakolel* (investigating sources for the text of Rabbi Schneur Zalman's Siddur), and others. Until around 1856, he was the Rabbi of the Chabad agricultural settlement Romanovka, not far from Nikolayev. Starting in 1860, he alone is mentioned in the *pinkas* as "the Rabbi," indicating that the previous Rabbi had passed away, and it was he who now took care of entries in the *pinkas*. His grandson and successor as Rabbi of Nikolayev, Rabbi Meir Shlomo Yanovsky (see above, chapter 23), was the father of Rebbetzin Chana, mother of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson.

Founder of the society was the wealthy R. Shlomo Yeshaya Rafalovitch, whose sons were also among its officers, continuing after their father's passing. The family had founded the Jewish community of Nikolayev, a port city where the Czarist government prohibited Jews to reside without a special permit. As wealthy contractors who did important work for the government, the family was permitted to live there and used the opportunity to give jobs to fellow Jews and Chasidim, obtaining for them the necessary permits. One of the sons, R. Alexander Sender, was instrumental in bringing Rabbi Lavut to Nikolayev.

Presented here are important and interesting excerpts from the *pinkas*.



139. PINKAS OF "MALBISH ARUMIM" SOCIETY OF LUBAVITCH (1859-1914)

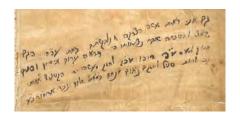
Most Jewish communities had special societies for helping the poor and other worthy charitable projects. In the town of Lubavitch there existed a *Chevras Malbish Arumim*—"Society for Clothing the Naked." According to the opening note in the *pinkas*, reproduced here, it had long existed there for the purpose of buying clothing and shoes for the poor, particularly poor schoolchildren, who were often ragged and barefoot. In the great fire, however, that broke out in Lubavitch between 1856 and 1858, destroying most of its houses, the society's records were destroyed and its activities ceased. In fall, 1859, however, it was renewed and residents were invited to make pledges and donations.

The first entry is in the handwriting of and signed by Rabbi Menachem Mendel, author of *Tzemach Tzedek*, who writes that such a vital cause does not need his agreement, but nevertheless he was participating in order to encourage it and educate the youth in the importance of charity.

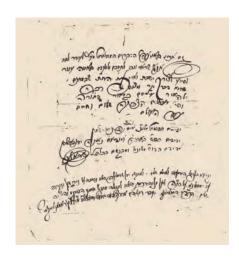
Following his signature are brief handwritten entries by each of the Rebbe's sons and many of his grandsons, noting the amount of their annual pledge or one-time donation. The final signatures here must have been added in later

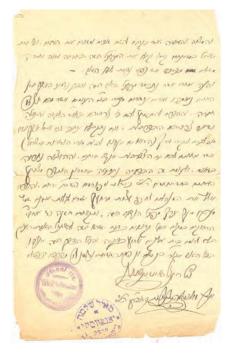
years, for they include Rabbi Shmuel's sons, R. Zalman Aaron, who had been born summer, 1859, and Rabbi Shalom DovBer, who was not born until fall, 1860.

The rest of the *pinkas*, not reproduced here, records elections of officers, acceptance of new members, donations, and accounting of income and expenditure, from fall, 1859—not long after the great fire in Lubavitch—until shortly before the start of World War I in summer, 1914.



Yeshivos and Organizations







140. APPEAL LETTER FOR YESHIVA OF RABBI AVRAHAM DOVID LAVUT IN ROMANOVKA

This letter is signed by three of Rabbi Menachem Mendel's sons—his second, Rabbi Yehuda Leib (1811-1866, later Rebbe of Kopust), his third, Rabbi Chaim Schneur Zalman (1814-1840, later Rebbe of Liadi), and his fourth, Rabbi Yisrael Noach (1815-1883, later Rebbe of Niezhin). It appears to be a supplement to a letter written by other Rabbis appealing for support of the yeshiva and Talmud Torah (Torah school for children) in the town of Romanovka, where Rabbi Avrohom Dovid Lavut (d.1890, see above, chapter 138) was then the Rabbi. Following their brief letter, Rabbi Lavut writes a postscript stating that their letter, written on thin paper, had become torn, so he had pasted it on thicker paper and bound it in the *pinkas*—probably the school's accounting ledger—in order to show it from there to those who would be aroused by an appeal from the Rebbe's sons.

Rabbi Lavut left Romanovka in 1856 to become one of the Rabbis of nearby Nikolayev, so the letter must have been written before then. Probably it was written after about 1845, since, before then, the Rebbe's sons were probably not old enough for their word to carry sufficient weight among the Chasidim (nor would Rabbi Lavut write about them, as he does here, that he "sits in the dust at their feet"—based on Pirkei Avos 1:4).

141. APPEAL LETTER FROM THE RABBIS OF NIKOLAYEV, FOR YESHIVAS TOMCHEI TEMIMIM IN LUBAVITCH

This letter appealing for support of the Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim in Lubavitch and its branches is signed by two Rabbis of Nikolayev, Rabbi Yisrael Eisenstein and Rabbi Meir Shlomo Yanovsky (d.1933, grandfather of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson). The yeshiva was founded in Lubavitch in 1897 and within a few years branches were established in other White Russian towns. The mention of these branches here dates the letter to no earlier than around the middle of the next decade. This is no "standard" appeal letter but sympathetically sings the praises of the yeshiva and its students in some detail.

142. YESHIVAS TOMCHEI TEMIMIM OF VILNA

Presented here are two letters written on the letterhead of the branch of Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim in Vilna, Lithuania, and stamped with the yeshiva's official rubber stamp. The first letter, written in spring, 1929, is signed by the members of its committee, and the second letter, written in the 1930's, is signed by its executive director and its general secretary.

The yeshiva, founded in spring, 1927, was located at the Lubavitch *shul*, the so-called "Opatov *shul*" (the yeshiva's office was at a different location). Founded around 1850, this *shul* was acquired by Chabad Chasidim in winter, 1909. That spring, a meeting of Rabbis was held in Vilna, and Rabbi Shalom DovBer, fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe, was among the meeting's leading organizers and participants. During that week, on Lag B'Omer, he visited the newly acquired *shul* and honored those present by delivering a Chasidic discourse.

Also shown here are two rubber stamps of the *shul* used to stamp its Torah books, one in Latin letters and the other in Hebrew.

The yeshiva was supported by monthly pledges and donations by the Chabad community of Vilna and the region. In addition, Rabbi Chaim Ozer Grodzinsky (1863-1940), the renowned Rabbi of Vilna, allocated the yeshiva a monthly grant from the fund of *Vaad Hayeshivos* (the association of all *yeshivos* in Poland, which received funds from Jews both locally and from other lands).

This yeshiva existed until the German invasion of the Soviet Union in summer, 1941. After the German invasion of Poland in September, 1939, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak, sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe, who lived then in Otwock, near Warsaw, advised students of the branches of Tomchei Temimim in Poland to try escaping to Vilna. Scores of them succeeded in reaching eastern Poland—the secret pact that summer between Germany and the Soviet Union had awarded to the latter—and from there to Vilna (previously part of Poland, but now presented by the USSR to Lithuania). These students continued their studies at Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim in Vilna, while awaiting visas to safer lands. Most eventually received visas from a courageous Japanese consul in Vilna and traveled across the Soviet Union to Japan, spending the later war years in Shanghai (except for nine students fortunate to receive visas to Canada, who founded Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim in Montreal in 1942). After the war they came to the United States.

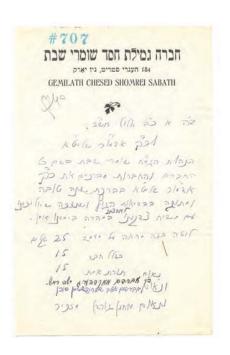


A memorable Chasid, R. Yochanan Gordon (1894-1969) was born in the Lithuanian town of Dokshitz. He studied in Lubavitch 1909-1917, and later became the *shochet* of Dokshitz. At the encouragement of Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak, sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe, he moved with his family in 1932 to New York, where he was again employed as a *shochet*. In conjunction with fellow graduates of Tomchei Temimim who had arrived here before him, he participated in teaching Chasidus to groups of young men and groups of young women. After the Rebbe reached New York in 1940, he appointed R. Yochanan a board member of Agudas Chasidei Chabad, the umbrella body of Chabad-Lubavitch. In 1944, the Rebbe founded a department for visiting the sick and appointed R. Yochanan its chairman.

At the time, R. Yochanan was the secretary of Gemilas Chassodim Shomrei Shabbos, a free-loan society for Torah-observant Jews founded in 1910. Nothing is known of the society's early history. However, the fact that its office was located in the building of Congregation Tzemach Tzedek of New York, the Chabad *shul* at 184 Henry Street on Manhattan's Lower East Side, implies that it was probably founded and certainly operated in later years by Chabad Chasidim. The first documentary mention extant is a 1942 letter of encouragement from Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak, enclosing a check "to participate with you in your good deeds."

The society's treasurer then was R. Tzvi Hirsh Padnos. After his passing in winter, 1945, R. Yochanan wrote about him to Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak. In his letter, he writes that R. Tzvi was left an orphan in childhood, and was appren-





ticed to a potter. Attending *shul* daily, he became inspired by the atmosphere at the *shul's* Torah lessons—*Ein Yaakov*, *Pirkei Avos* and Midrash—for unlearned Jews between Minchah and Maariv. He married a woman from Pleshtzenitz (see above, chapter 134), and later was drafted into the Russian army, serving for four years until he managed, during the 1905 Russo-Japanese War, to escape to the United States.

Here R. Tzvi worked as a peddler, but volunteered his evenings to distribute charity boxes and collect their contents for *Colel Chabad* (the organization founded by Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi to support needy Jews in the Holy Land)—a cause that inspired him deeply. He often visited R. Yochanan and other Chasidim to study Chasidus or just to reminisce about senior Chasidim he had known. During his retirement he spent his time paying visits to sick Jews every day, each day in a different neighborhood such the Bronx or parts of Brooklyn.

This chapter gives details about the society's officers during the 1940's and 1950's. R. Yochanan later operated it alone until his passing, when it was taken over by his son-in-law, Rabbi Shimon Goldman, may he be well.

Every year, on the evening following the Shabbos when the Torah reading includes the commandment to lend money to our coreligionists (Exodus 22:24), the society holds a fundraising function. At the *farbrengen* held on that Shabbos, the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, used to call on R. Yochanan—and later on his son-in-law—to don a *shtreimel* and to tell a Chasidic story. R. Yochanan was renowned for his knowledge of such stories and the unique way he told them. This would also take place at the *farbrengen* of Shabbos Bereishis, for R. Yochanan was also the *gabbai* (warden) of the central Lubavitcher *shul*. Often the Rebbe added some comment following his story.

Shown here are examples of invitations to the society's annual fundraising functions, reports that R. Yochanan submitted to Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak, and letters of blessing and encouragement that Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak sent the society.

Engagement and Marriage

Treasures from the Chabad Library



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144. ANCIENT MARRIAGE DOCUMENTS

The Chabad Library has over $50 \, kesubos$ —traditional marriage contracts—that date back over 100 years. Two of them, both from the 17^{th} century, are shown here.

The first is from a wedding that took place in summer, 1680, in Krasob(azar), Crimea, which belonged then to the Ottoman Empire of Turkey. The community there was Sefardic, and family names of the groom and witnesses are Sefardic, although the bride's family's name was "Ashkenazi." The *kesuba*, written in old Rashi script on paper, was part of the collection of bibliographer Shmuel Wiener, which Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak acquired from him in 1925 (see above, chapter 105). Many interesting details are noted in the Hebrew introduction.

The second was found inside the end-cover of an old book belonging to the Library. It is written decoratively on parchment, in square script and Sefardic Rashi script. The marriage took place in fall, 1659, and although the place and other details are illegible, it appears to be from Morocco.

145. TANAIM DOCUMENT OF RABBI SHALOM DOVBER'S ENGAGEMENT

This document has been published before, but from an unclear photograph, resulting in a lack of clarity about some details. Presented here is a facsimile of the original, which is in the Chabad Library. There were two copies, of which one was given to the family of the groom—Rabbi Shalom DovBer (son of Rabbi Shmuel), who was then aged four and a half. The other copy was given to the family of the bride—Rebbetzin Shterna Sarah (1860-1942, daughter of Rabbi Shalom DovBer's uncle, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak, 1822-1836, Rebbe of Avrutch), who was about a year older than her groom.

The document was written in early summer, 1865, about ten months before the passing of their grandfather, Rabbi Menachem Mendel, author of *Tzemach Tzedek*, who had suggested the match. He participated in writing the document, prefacing both copies with a traditional text expessing a brief prayer, and adding, on the other side of both copies, his personal obligation to contribute towards the couple's dowry.

The document itself obligates the groom's father to give the couple 1000 rubles, and to support them at his table (i.e. providing them with meals and general support) for five of the first ten years—the 1st-3rd years, and the 7th-8th—after the wedding. The bride's father was obligated to give the couple 1500 rubles and to support them at his table for five of the first ten years—the 4th-6th and the 9th-10th. The Rebbe, as grandfather of both bride and groom, committed himself in writing to contribute a further 500 rubles, giving 50 rubles yearly for 10 years. None of them, however, were to wait until the wedding to start giving their commitment, but each was to pay every year a tenth of his commitment to a mutually acceptable third party, who would hold the money until the wedding.

As is customary, the document stated that the marriage would take place "in Jerusalem," in summer, 1875. It did indeed take place in late summer that year, but in Avrutch. For various reasons, Rabbi Shmuel was not present there, but remained in Lubavitch. One reason was that since Lubavitch was considered the "Jerusalem of Chabad Chasidus," the wedding ought to have taken place there.

The guarantor for the groom's side was a brother of Rabbi Yekusiel Zalman (d. 1867, son of Rabbi Yosef Bunam, son-in-law of Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev). The latter was a son-in-law of Rabbi DovBer, second Lubavitcher Rebbe, and therefore a great-uncle of both groom and bride. The guarantor for the bride's side was her older brother, Rabbi Mordechai Schneur Zalman, Rabbi of Zhitomir (d. 1866, see above, chapter 85).

The Hebrew introduction also identifies the two witnesses.

146. INVITATION BYRABBI YISROEL NOACH TO HIS SON'S WEDDING

This letter was written by Rabbi Menachem Mendel's fourth son, Rabbi Yisroel Noach (1815-1883, later Rebbe of Niezhin), to the Chasidim living in Suraz, Amehlin, Starodub and Pahar—towns in White Russia—inviting them to the wedding of his second son, Rabbi Schneur DovBer. It was sent during his father's lifetime and, since no location is given, probably took place in Lubavitch, with the Rebbe's participation. The date is not given, either, so it must have been common knowledge among the Chasidim.

The groom later became Rabbi of Suraz, and after his father's passing became Rabbi (but not Rebbe) of Niezhin.

147. INVITATION BY FIRST REBBE OF GUR, AUTHOR OF CHIDDUSHEI HARIM TO HIS GRANDCHILDREN'S WEDDING

Rabbi Yitzchak Meir Alter (1799-1866, see above, chapter 56) was a renowned Torah scholar and author of *Chiddushei HaRim*. After the passing of the famous Kotzker Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel (1787-1859), he acceded to widespread urging to succeed him, becoming the first Gerer Rebbe. This letter is an invitation to participate in the marriage of his orphaned granddaughter—daughter of his deceased son, Rabbi Avrohom Mordechai—to her cousin, his grandson, Rabbi Pinchas Menachem Mendel, who later became Rebbe of Piltz.

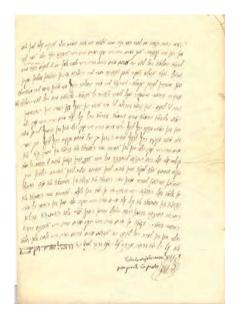
The invitation was sent to R. Meshulam Reich, son of a prominent Kotzker-Gerer Chasid (see above, chapter 44), who became the son-in-law of Rabbi Boruch Shalom, Rabbi Menachem Mendel's eldest son. While remaining close to the Gerer Rebbe, he became a Chabad Chasid, and often performed special missions on behalf of the Chabad Rebbes, including arranging publication of works by the Rebbes after their passing. For many years, until at least 1906, he served as emissary to raise funds for *Colel Chabad*. Like the above-mentioned letters (chapters 44, 56), this letter came into the possession of the Chabad Rebbes through him.

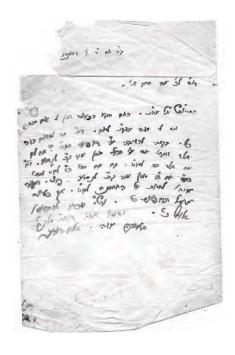
Noteworthy in this letter are two other points: 1) Rabbi Alter's explanation for participating in fellow Jews' personal celebrations—"as is the custom of all Jews to implant love and brotherhood in the heart of every one to rejoice in the joy of one's fellow," and 2) his conclusion with the wish for the ultimate Redemption, "may we merit, everyone together, to [participate in] the joy of the entire Jewish people, that 'we will go to the House of G-d' [Psalms 122:1]."





Treasures from the Chabad Library







148.MARRIAGECONTRACTOFRACHELLEAH, DAUGHTER OF RABBI SHLOMO ZALMAN OF KOPUST

Rabbi Shlomo Zalman (1830-1900), eldest son of Rabbi Yehuda Leib (the second son of Rabbi Menachem Mendel), succeeded his father as Rebbe of Kopust on his passing in fall, 1866, and attracted many Chasidim. After his own passing, his discourses of Chasidus were published in *Magen Avos*.

Reproduced here is the *kesuba* of his daughter, who married Rabbi Yaakov Vishletzky of Lodz, Poland.

149. LETTER OF RABBI SHALOM DOVBER, REBBE OF RETCHITZE

Rabbi Shalom DovBer (c.1841-1909), second son of Rabbi Yehuda Leib of Kopust, served as Rabbi of Retchitze, Ukraine. He had two brothers: 1) Rabbi Shlomo Zalman, Rebbe of Kopust, was his older brother; 2) Rabbi Shmaryahu Noach (1842-1923), author of *Shemen Lamaor*, Rabbi of Bobruisk, was his younger brother. On Rabbi Shlomo Zalman's passing in 1900, both surviving brothers succeeded him, Rabbi Shmaryahu in White Russia, remaining in Bobruisk, and Rabbi Shalom Ber in Ukraine, remaining in Rechitze.

In this undated letter to one of his brothers, he writes about his hope to be present at the wedding of that brother's child, due to take place the following week. At the time he was away from home and he writes how distressed he was not to have received any telegram from home about the condition of his wife, who was expecting a child any day. Therefore his presence at the wedding was still uncertain.

Rabbi Shalom Ber was married around 1855, and his children were likely born in the decades soon following. Since he entitles the letter's recipient "my respected brother, the Rabbi"—a title used (particularly in the Chabad Rebbes' family) for a Rebbe—it stands to reason that the recipient was his older brother, Rabbi Shlomo Zalman, not his younger brother, Rabbi Shmaryahu Noach, who became Rebbe only in 1900, when Rabbi Shalom Ber and his wife were beyond childbearing age.

150. BOOKS RECEIVED BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE AS WEDDING GIFTS

The Chabad Library has at least two books that the Rebbe received as gifts for his wedding in late fall, 1928.

One is *Or Hameir*, by the renowned Rabbi Meir Schapiro, Rabbi of Lublin and founder of the *Daf Hayomi* (popular worldwide daily Talmud study program), who inscribed his message on the title page. The Rebbe once recounted that, at the wedding banquet, his father-in-law, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak, sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe, directed him to discuss profound Torah subjects with Rabbi Schapiro.

The other gift is *Or Same'ach*, a profound commentary on Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah* code by the famous Rabbi Meir Simcha HaKohen, Rabbi of the non-Chasidic community in Dvinsk (Daugavpils), Latvia. On its title page, the Rebbe wrote his name and the wedding date.

151. REBBETZIN SHTERNA SARAH'S LETTER ABOUT THE WEDDING OF THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE & HER GRANDDAUGHTER, REBBETZIN CHAYA MUSHKA

This is a letter from Rebbetzin Shterna Sarah (1860-1942), wife of Rabbi Shalom DovBer, fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe, to her relative, Rabbi Shlomo Yehuda Leib Eliezrov, a grandson of Rebbetzin Menucha Rochel (1798-1888), the saintly daughter of Rabbi DovBer, second Lubavitcher Rebbe, who in 1845 settled with her family in Hebron, in the Holy Land. Around the turn of the 20th century, Rabbi Eliezrov, a great scholar, served as Rabbi of the Chabad community of Hebron for several years. Later he lived for several years in Samarkand, Central Asia, becoming Rabbi of the Bukharan Jews and deeply influencing them to raise their level of religious practice and intensify Torah education. After his return to the Holy Land, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak, sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe, appointed him head of *Colel Chabad* and his personal representative in the Holy Land.

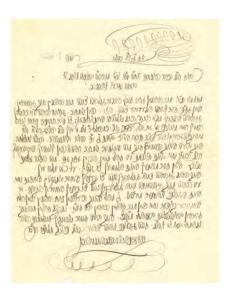
In her letter, written in Yiddish with many Hebrew words and expressions, Rebbetzin Shterna Sarah writes to him just over a year after she and the Rebbe's family left the Soviet Union in fall, 1927, and settled in Riga, Latvia. She refers in passing to their difficult experiences in the USSR, and to the approaching joyous event of the marriage of her granddaughter, the second daughter of Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak, to the son of their relative, the Rabbi of Yekatrinoslav. She asks Rabbi Eliezrov to participate in the celebration, even if from a distance, by blessing the couple on the day of their wedding and blessing the whole family "over a cup full of wine."

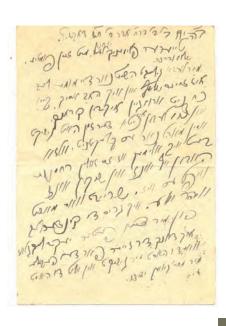
She also mentions that she had met a son-in-law of his, who had left a good impression on her, and she requests Rabbi Eliezrov to write to her.

152. RABBI LEIB SHEININ, RABBI OF DOKSHITZ, LITHUANIA, INSPIRES REB YOCHANAN GORDON TO ATTEND THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE'S WEDDING

Shown here is a postcard written by Rabbi Aryeh Leib Sheinin, Rabbi of Dokshitz, at the end of winter, 1940, to R. Yochanan Gordon in Brooklyn, N.Y. Because of the Soviet occupation, he was unable to writte in his own name and instead wrote in Yiddish in the name of R. Yochanan's uncle who lived in Dokshitz. He asks to send aid packages to keep them alive, and thanks R. Yochanan for sending him a package a half year earlier. That package was actually a copy of a letter of Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak, sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe, and a Yiddish discourse of Rabbi Menachem Mendel, author of *Tzemach Tzedek*, that was then published, which R. Yochanan had sent just before World War II broke out.

This postcard was written about a week before Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak reached New York, after having lived through the bombardment of Warsaw and miraculously escaping several months later to Riga, Latvia, and from there to the United States. The postcard must have reached R. Yochanan a few weeks later. He decided to send it in to the Rebbe, with a cover letter describing his deep admiration for Rabbi Leib, who, ever since his arrival in Dokshitz in 1923





at the Rebbe's behest, "has become attached to the very walls of my heart, for I found in him all the 48 qualities" with which the Torah is acquired (as enumerated in *Pirkei Avos*, chapter 6), "and above all his sincerity of heart and devotion to the Rebbe...For him there is not even a hair's breadth of difference between the holy Baal Shem Tov and the Rebbe."

In his cover letter, R. Yochanan goes on to relate how, when it became known that the Rebbe's daughter's wedding would take place in late fall, 1928, he had decided not to attend for he had already visited the Rebbe for Rosh Hashanah and could not afford another trip. When he mentioned this, Rabbi Leib pointed out how the souls of all the Rebbes, and maybe even of the Baal Shem Tov, would be present, and how could anyone miss such an opportunity? So impressed was R. Yochanan with these heartfelt words that he borrowed 100 *zlotys* for the fare to Warsaw, "and what I saw and heard and felt when I was at the wedding I hope shall never pass from my memory."

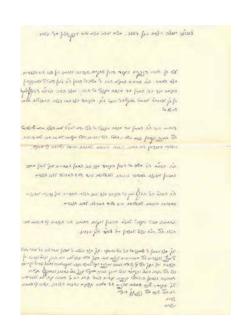
During his eight years in America, R. Yochanan continues, they had corresponded regularly, but since the war started he had heard nothing from Rabbi Leib. He and his wife and children were constantly wondering aloud what was happening to him.

R. Yochanan concludes that, knowing the Rebbe's love for all Jews, particularly for students and graduates of Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim, and especially for Rabbi Leib, he is sending the Rebbe this postcard written in Rabbi Leib's handwriting.

153. TANAIM DOCUMENT IN THE HANDWRITING OF RABBI YOSEF YITZCHAK OF LUBAVITCH

In late spring, 1932, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak's third daughter, Sheina, was married to her father's first cousin, R. Menachem Mendel Horenstein, son of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka, daughter of Rabbi Shmuel, fourth Lubavitcher Rebbe. Several weeks before the wedding, a formal engagement document was drawn up. Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak first wrote it in his own handwriting in order to provide the exact text to be used, and a copyist rewrote the copy actually used, making slight changes. For example, the Rebbe referred to himself in his text as "the Chasid...son of my father, the Rebbe," while the copyist changed that to "the Rebbe...son of the Rebbe." The copyist wrote the date, 18th Iyar, and the Rebbe added, between the lines, the words "Lag B'Omer." The witnesses signed on the copy.

Both texts—the Rebbe's handwritten text and the copy actually used—are reproduced here.



Moshiach and Redemption

154. THE SEFER TORAH TO GREET MOSHIACH

On Simchas Torah, 1941, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak, sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe, announced his intention to write a Sefer Torah "to greet Moshiach." The writing actually started in spring, 1942, but it was not completed until winter, 1970, to mark the 20th anniversary of Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak's passing. Shown here are two documents connected with it:

- 1) A letter written by Rabbi Shlomo Yehuda Leib Eliezrov (see above, chapter 151), the Rebbe's personal representative in the Holy Land and head of *Colel Chabad*, to Rabbi Shlomo Yosef Zevin (later editor of the *Encyclopedia Talmudit*), informing him of the Rebbe's telegram to him about his decision to start writing a Sefer Torah "to meet Moshiach with it."
- 2) A list of 156 people who bought letters in the future Sefer Torah. The secretary of *Colel Chabad* wrote their names in a special ledger, with their parents' names, town of residence, number of letters bought, how much paid etc. Most were Chabad Chasidim, of whom some of the prominent are noted here. Among others who bought letters was Rabbi Yaakov Yisroel Kanievsky, well known as the "Steipler Gaon," who is described here as "one of the prominent residents of Bnei Brak."

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