

מיכה, ז, כ

# תתן אמת ליעקב



כ"ק אדמו"ר מנאוואמינסק זצ"ל

The Novominsker Rebbe  
Hagaon Harav Yaakov Perlow, Zt"l

כ"ה חשוון תרצ"א – י"ג ניסן תש"פ

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At a conversation with Hamodia  
Editorial Board in 2010.

## The Rebbe, the Mentor, the Yedid

Upon the Histalkus of the Novominsker Rebbe, Zt"l

The *histalkus* of the Novominsker Rebbe, zt"l, is an indescribable blow. To the Jewish world, to *Hamodia*, to Project Witness, and for us as individuals in *Klal Yisrael*. The enormity of our loss is not something that we can put into words, especially now when it is so fresh.

It is impossible to properly describe the sense of responsibility that the Rebbe, zt"l, felt for *Klal Yisrael*.

On so many complex issues and difficult challenges, he was the one who gave us not only clear guidance but set forth a vision of what an English-language Torah Newspaper in today's world should be promoting – and what pitfalls should be avoided. Many issues cannot be discussed yet; perhaps in the future, we will be able to share some of them with the public.

The *she'eilos* I asked the Rebbe during the years, relating to the newspaper, were unique and significant. In his responses, he imparted *Daas Torah*, particularly relating to how Orthodox Jews should comport themselves in contemporary times.

The Rebbe, zt"l, chose his words carefully. More than he spoke, he kept quiet – his silence spoke volumes. More than he elaborated, he condensed.

He had a deep understanding of the world we live in. He advised us when our newspaper was established, continued to guide us along the journey, and helped us carry out our mission.

He was the bridge to a world that was gone. He reflected the world of Kotzk and Sokolov, and at the same time he knew how Torah Jews should react to the most specific details of current events. His illuminating answers created the bridge that connected and unified both worlds.

A bridge of the Torah way.

The Rebbe always remembered a name for tefilah, as well as a formerly pressing issue that had already eluded the minds of others. Whenever we spoke with him, we always left with the impression that we were the only ones he carried in his mind and heart.

But it wasn't only *Hamodia*.

He mentored and treated the establishment of Project Witness like it would have been his own child. The Rebbe was the one who directly instructed and clearly explained how we ought to remember, teach, and write about *Churban Europa*. He was our mentor, he was our teacher.

The first time I had the *zechus* to speak to the Rebbe about it, he shared that what he carried in his mind was the day World War II broke out: 17 Elul 5699 – September 1, 1939.

"I came back from camp," the Rebbe said with tears in his eyes, "and my Tatte, the Novominsker Rebbe, *zichrono livrochah*, stood in the dining room, crying bitterly. What I understood from his crying was '*Vus vett zein mitt di Poilishe Yidentum?*'" (What will be with Polish Jewry)" the Rebbe related.

The Rebbe insisted that the younger generation must learn about the *Churban*. We cannot afford to forget what happened just 75 years ago to the generation of yesteryear, whether we are descendants of survivors or not.

His main doctrine was one that he stressed on numerous occasions in public and to Project Witness, that *talmidim* must be taught "to be *mishtatef betza'aran shel Yisrael*," but first they have to know the history. First comes the "what" and then the "why."

This is not the place to elaborate on all his contributions to Holocaust Chinuch, which we will do, *iy"H*, in the future.

Hundreds of pages could be written about the Rebbe, zt"l, but even thousands of words will not do close to justice to the life that the Rebbe dedicated to *Klal Yisrael*.

All that is left for us to do is to plead with him:

"Novominsker Rebbe, you who knows so well what kind of *yeshuah* we need now – look at us! Look what has befallen us! Be a *meilitz yosher* for us now, be our *Shaliach* to the *Kisei Hakavod*."

Ruth Lichtenstein,  
Publisher

“  
Novominsker  
Rebbe, you who  
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# תתן אמת ליעקב



## 'Davka Achshav':

The Novominsker Rebbe's Final Message to Klal Yisrael

**מכתב ברכה  
וחיזוק לאחינו  
בני ישראל**

אחים אהובים, רעים יקרים, יצא זה אתכם את הברכה לאורך  
ימים טובים.

בעשירי חיים, כל קהל יצרת ישראל, בכל העולם כולו, בפני  
מבט איום אשר לא שיעורו אבותינו, ואין אנו יודעים עוד  
מה, איך לסיים עונתנו בנפשונו, בנפשו פנימה, איך  
לחזקת ולחזקת לקראת חג הקדוש הבא עלינו לטובה,  
איך לקיים בעצמנו "בכל דור ודור חייב אדם לראות את עצמו  
באילן הזהב שבו עומדים" בשעה שהמבט האיום שבידו  
הוא כל כולו קשה ומסוכן, ומאבי על הנפש.

עוד שסוהר על נפשותינו סכנת המסוכן של אדוני והיהודים,  
תן אלה שסוכר עברו אל עולמם בעזרת וספחנותיהם  
האנוסלים, וזהו אלה שנספחו לסיכסוך חוקים לרפואה  
שלמות ולחיים טובים, וזהו אלה שידעו מנסיונות בעקבות  
מבט חספי העולם, וזהו אלה שידעו חבדושים מוסתים  
הסגור לראות את המספר הנבדל, ואין נקיים בהם צרכים  
וחסד להיות עליהם רחמים בני רחמים הדברים במהותו  
של אברהם אבינו, ואנו מלאים הברכה סבה ואהבה סודנה  
לכל אלה שספחם את עצמם לנרתיק עם קדוש ותנון עליהם  
ברכת ה'.

הנה אחים אהובים, דווקא בעת ובזמנה הזאת, דווקא עכשיו  
החובה מוסלת עלינו להתחזק בולנו באיש אחד בלב אחד,  
לחזקת בנפשותינו אסונות אנוסין כי פולט יוצאים זה העת,  
בנו בכל דור ודור, משכבד שפרים לחזקת עולם, חזקת  
הנפש לחזקת ומוסות, חזקת של כבוד שמים וממלכות  
חדים אשר היא מסיסות כל חינו, חזקת של דעת וראות  
השם אשר היא העזרה והעזרה של הברכה כולה, וסודות  
הנפש צריכים חיות, וזה תפקידנו עכשיו להתחזק ולהתאסר  
להתחזק ולהתחזק, לחזקת בתפלה לישור וצניעות ובבטחון  
על לראות שיעתה ה' במהרה, ולקבל עלינו באהבה את  
שליחותו של סודם בכתבי עם זה עידן "לי תהלה יספורו."

דעת לבטן נקל כי לרגל הסוגייה חייב כל אחד ואחד  
ליתן לחזקתו ומספלת, ולשמוע לרשימת הרופאים  
המוסמכים, ואין יסורו ששפחות ישראל חלילה בדברים  
הנוגעים לנפשות, וכידוע הדבר סכנתא מאסורא.

וחקונו ברור הוא ברוב חסדי חסדיו יענה עלינו ספרים  
עדיקת חסדו והרבים, ויכל נפשותינו מן השעות הרעות  
ויסיר שפחות ומרשע מעלינו ומעל כל עמו בית ישראל  
ראסור לעזרתו ד', וישמח ברעון בקול ההלל החסידות  
ישראל סקסיון כלילי שסודם, ויכל את ספחנות באהבה,  
ויכל לראות בירושלים עירי קסן הוברים וסן הספחים  
וזהו תוך שיר חדש על גאולתנו ועל פדות נפשות, אמן כן  
יהי רצון.

א"ב ביסן חסיד

- מועדון גדולי החסידים באמריקה -

**AN OPEN LETTER  
TO THE JEWISH  
PEOPLE**

(Free consultation)

Beloved brothers and precious friends,  
Hashem bless you all with long lives!

When the entire Jewish nation stands in  
an unprecedented situation of dread, when  
we are at a loss as to how to prepare for the  
upcoming holy Yom Yom of Pesach and to  
fulfill the requirement of "In each generation  
one must envision oneself as if the worst out of  
Mitzrayim" at a time when the situation is so  
hard, confusing, and painful.

The state of our fellow Jews weighs heavily  
upon us. Whether it is those who have  
passed away, and their mourning families;  
those who are ill, in need of Heavenly mercy  
for their recovery; those who are enduring  
economic hardship in this global economic  
crisis; or our brothers and sisters who will be  
in quarantine, alone, this Pesach. We must  
all follow in the footsteps of Avraham Avinu  
to do them kindness and to help them. We  
are exceedingly grateful to all whose giving  
of themselves to take care of the needs of  
their brethren – may Hashem's blessings  
rest upon them.

Beloved brothers – It is specifically at this  
time, specifically now, that we have the  
obligation to strengthen in unity, like one  
person with one heart, to declare with  
conviction to ourselves that we are going  
out now, like we do each generation, from  
the servitude of Mitzrayim to exalting  
freedom. Freedom of the spirit – to learn  
Torah and perform mitzvot, freedom to  
honor Hashem and to do kindness to others –  
the entire purpose of our life, freedom to  
know and fear Hashem – the hallmark and  
hope of all creation. It is the service of the  
G-d that needs to be strengthened now, to  
increase prayer, Torah learning, and  
charity, to have strong faith in the imminent  
salvation of Hashem, and to fulfill the  
message of the verse: "וְיָרֵא יְיָ וְיָרֵא יְיָ, 'This nation I have created so that they may  
rebel. My people'." (Devarim 32:6).

It is obvious that every person is obligated  
to obey the instructions of the government  
and medical professionals. Jewish families  
must be exceedingly careful not to err in  
issues which could endanger people, Heaven  
forbid.

May the Holy One, Blessed be He,  
compassionately bestow upon us support,  
kindness, and mercy; may He end our  
distress and deliver us and all of the Jewish  
people from this plague and may He listen  
with favor to the song of Hallel and the  
telling of the Hagaddah, and accept our  
mitzvot with love; and may we merit to  
celebrate Pesach in Yerushalayim, where  
we will be able to thank Hashem for our  
redemption of body and soul, Amen.

- Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah of America -

On Thursday afternoon, the 8th of Nisan, Rabbi Chaim Dovid Zwiebel, Executive Vice President of Agudas Yisroel of America, and Reb Shloime Werdiger (chairman of Agudah's board of trustees) called the Rebbe with a suggestion that the Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah issue a pre-Pesach message of *chizuk* to Klal Yisrael.

The Rebbe became extremely emotional on the phone. "I am very *shvach* and really don't have the *kochos* to write such a letter, but it's the right thing to do, and I have an *achrayus*."

On Friday morning Rabbi Zwiebel received a call from the Rebbe, who proceeded to dictate his draft statement. On Motzoei Shabbos, Rabbi Zwiebel and Mr. Werdiger suggested that an additional paragraph be added.

"I'm not feeling so well and don't have the *koach* to work

on this tonight," the Rebbe told Rabbi Zwiebel, "but *b'ezras Hashem* I hope to do it tomorrow."

On Sunday afternoon, 11 Nisan, the Rebbe called Rabbi Zwiebel to dictate the additional paragraph as well as several other changes he wanted made to the statement and asked that it be circulated to as many of the *chaveirim* of the Moetzes as possible. The draft was shared with members of the Moetzes, some of whom had minor comments and all of whom expressed enthusiastic support for the message it embodied.

The following afternoon, Monday, 12 Nisan, the Moetzes's *Michtav Brachah V'chizuk*, along with a rough English-language translation, was published.

Only hours later, in the early morning of 13 Nisan, the Rebbe was *niftar*.

## Nahara Nahara U'pashteih

RABBI CHAIM DOVID ZWIEBEL

A number of years ago, when New York City was considering regulating the practice of *metzitzah b'peh*, the Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah met to discuss the role of Agudas Yisroel in the controversy.

The question was raised whether the Agudah should get involved altogether. Given the highly controversial and sensitive nature of the practice, perhaps we should leave the battle to those individual groups whose *mesorah* insisted that *metzitzah* must be done directly *b'peh*?

The suggestion was raised but immediately dismissed. Speaking forcefully and passionately, the Novominsker Rebbe said that Agudas Yisroel had an obligation to aggressively defend the right of each *kehilla* in Klal Yisrael to follow its own *mesorah* and *morei hora'ah*. "Nahara nahara u'pashteih," the Rebbe said, quoting a Gemara in Chullin (18b) — the Jewish People is comprised of many *kehillas*, each with its own traditions and rulings, each an essential component of Klal Yisrael.

The Rebbe's position was accepted unanimously by the Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah. We had our marching orders.

And so, when Mayor Michael Bloomberg's administration promulgated a new rule designed to regulate the practice of *metzitzah b'peh*, Agudas Yisroel joined Satmar and Chabad in suing New York City in federal court. Eventually, an appeals court upheld our constitutional argument that the city's new rule inhibited the free exercise of religion, and Mayor Bill de Blasio undid his predecessor's action.

The Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah had another occasion, more recently, to direct Agudas Yisroel along the same advocacy path.

When a group of disgruntled former yeshivah students filed a formal complaint with the New York City Department of Education, alleging that 39 yeshivos were not in compliance with the state law requiring nonpublic schools to provide an education "substantially equivalent" to that of the public schools, the question again arose whether the Agudah should get involved. Most of Agudah's constituents enroll their children in yeshivos that have more robust



*limudei chol* programs than those identified in the complaint. Since "our yeshivos" were not (at least not yet) the target of the complaint, perhaps we should just stay on the sidelines?

The ruling of the Moetzes came quickly, and again it was the Novominsker Rebbe who set the tone. "What do you mean 'our yeshivos'? There is no such thing as 'our yeshivos' versus 'their yeshivos'!"

"Nahara nahara u'pashteih," the Rebbe continued. "Every yeshivah is entitled to follow its own *mesorah* of *chinuch habanim* and its own leaders in determining yeshivah curriculum. Government has no business telling any yeshivah what subjects it must teach, how it must teach them, and how many hours it must devote to each subject. Can we even consider standing on the sidelines when they're talking about forcing yeshivos to increase *limudei chol* at the expense of *limudei kodesh*? It will be a dereliction of Agudas Yisroel's mission if we don't stand up for the essential independence of these 39 *mosdos* along with all other yeshivos."

The decision of the Moetzes was clear. Since then, the Agudah has played a major, front-line role in the ongoing battle, never forgetting our mandate to advocate for the entirety of Klal Yisrael in its full, multifaceted glory.

This was an essential part of the Novominsker Rebbe's vision as Rosh Agudas Yisroel. "Ours" versus "theirs"? No such thing! *Nahara nahara u'pashteih!*

Just one of the great lessons this towering giant imparted to us.



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## A Nephew Remembers

RABBI AHARON PERLOW

It was at the time of the passing of my grandfather, the Rebbe Harav Nochum Mordechai, the Pe'er Nochum of Novominsk, *zt"l*, that his confidant, the *chareidi* author Reb Yosef Friedenson, *z"l*, wrote a tribute to him in *Dos Yiddishe Vort*. In that article there are a few lines that are equally fitting to write about his son, my uncle, the Adas Yaakov of Novominsk, *zt"l*, who passed away just before Pesach. He writes:

"...The Novominsker Rebbe, both in his holy personal life, and in his work for the *Klal*, carried on his shoulders, with dignity and prestige, two large, prestigious spiritual bequests: He inherited one from his eminent father, the Rebbe Rav Alter Yisrael Shimon, *zt"l*, of Novominsk, who lived in greater Warsaw, and from his ancestors who led the dynasty. The second was inherited from his father-in-law, who was famed all over the Jewish world — the Sokolover Rebbe, Harav Yitzchak Zelig Morgenstern, *zt"l*.

"It is hard to precisely define which part of his *avodah* he inherited from his father and which from his father-in-law. However, it can be said that in general, he inherited his *ahavas haTorah* and *avodas Hashem* from his father, who was known as the 'pillar of *avodah*,' while his responsibility for matters relating to *Klal Yisrael* and his leadership qualities were inherited from his father-in-law, who was known as the 'manhig shel *Klal Yisrael hamukar*' or 'hamanhig,' the leader.

"But, as noted, it is doubtful if we can divide and define it so clearly. That is because his father, the Tiferes Ish, *zt"l*, was also known as a tremendous *tzaddik* and *oved Hashem*, and at the same time he was an *askan* on behalf of the *Klal* and one of the founders of Agudas Yisroel in Poland. On the other hand, his father-in-law, the Sokolover Rebbe, who among the great Rebbes of his time was famed primarily for his leadership of Torah Jewry in Poland, was also a proficient *Gaon* and knowledgeable in all areas of Torah. With his holy *avodah*, he passed down to his Chassidim the great fire of Kotzker Chassidus, which he had absorbed from his forbears..." [From the article of Rabbi Friedenson, *z"l*]

If this was applicable to the Pe'er Nochum, it is clear that they apply also to his son and successor, the Adas Yaakov, *zt"l*. In addition to what he inherited from his grandfathers, he



In his youth, standing between Hagaon Harav Aharon Kotler, *zt"l*, and Hagaon Harav Moshe Feinstein, *zt"l*, at the wedding of his younger brother, Harav Yisrael *zt"l*. Next to the chosson is his father, the Novominsker Rebbe, *zt"l*, the Pe'er Nochum.



With Rabbi Moshe Sherer, *z"l*.

also carried on his father's diligence in Torah, which the Pe'er Nochum was known for.

Indeed, in addition to what my uncle inherited from the Tiferes Ish of Novominsk and Harav Yitzchak Zelig of Sokolov-Kotzk, he also inherited from his father the *hasmadah* that he was known for all his life, from a very early age until his passing. From the early morning hours until the evening he was engaged in Torah

learning with great *dveikus*.

I remember as a child spending the summer in Prager's bungalow colony, and the Rebbe joined us for *bein hazmanim*. It was his break from giving *shiurim* as *Rosh Yeshivah* and as *Rav* of the *beis medrash*. He would sit at a table next to his bungalow, under the tree, and learn Torah throughout the day. Years later, when reflecting on those days, he would say, "That was my *Gan Eden*."

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The Rebbe was born in Cheshvan 5691/1931 in the United States. It's hard to describe the depleted spiritual state of the country at that time. A few privileged individuals descended from Rebbes at that time continued in the Chassidic paths of their forebears. In those days, prior to the *churban* of Europe, there was more or less consensus that there was no future for *Chassidus* in America. The *tzaddikim* who lived there were thrilled when their sons became *bnei Torah* and *yirei Hashem*. The Rebbe would sometimes describe in anguish what America looked like at the time. Yet he himself was always drawn to Torah and would imbibe the path of *Chassidus* from his father.

Around the time of his bar mitzvah, the survivors began to arrive from Poland, Galicia, Hungary and Lithuania, followed by the *talmidim* of Mir, Chachmei Lublin and Chabad from Shanghai. Later, the Satmar Rebbe and other *Gedolei Yisrael* arrived, and the face of *chareidi* Jewry in America began to change. The Rebbe would emotionally recount memories of the Torah world in America. As a *bachur* and young married man, he learned in Yeshivas Chaim Berlin under his *Rebbi*, Harav Yitzchak Hutner, *zt"l*, with whom he was very close and became a *talmid muvhak*. In time, Rav Hutner was among the *Gedolei Torah* who crowned him as his father's successor.

His submission to his father was exemplary; for many years, the Adas Yaakov lived in Chicago, far from his father. Yet he spent all the Yamim Tovim with his father. The Rebbe's father held him in the greatest esteem and respected him deeply. When the Rebbe was with his father, the Pe'er Nochum always asked him to *daven* for the *amud* and *lein* the Torah. He learned from his father about the path of their forebears, and during the time he lived in Crown Heights even had a *chavrusa* with his father for several hours a day, during which they learned *Shulchan Aruch* and the *Nosei Keilim*. (A full biography of my uncle appears in this special section.)

I was close to my uncle from when I was a child, and I would ask my father, *z"l*, for my birthday to visit him in Washington Heights (a few years before he became Rebbe). Each year, as Lag BaOmer neared, I would travel to him for Shabbos. It is impossible to describe the pleasure that I had while in his presence. I would come

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Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah meet with Governor Mario Cuomo (1984).

on Thursday evening, and on Friday I traveled with him to his yeshivah and would sit in his office there. The *talmidim* would come to his room to speak with him in learning.

During the years he lived in Washington Heights, it was not possible to go into the street with a *spodik*, as the neighborhood was largely populated by non-Jews. He would *daven* at a shul of Yekkishe Yidden, where he served as Rav, but at home, he would wear the *spodik* and conduct his meals like a Chassidic Rebbe. (He once came into the street with a *spodik* – when his father, the Pe'er Nochum came to spend Shabbos with him in honor of the bar mitzvah of his twin sons.) Each Shabbos, there were many guests at his table. His home was always open to guests, including people who often lived in his house for extended periods of time, and even until recently, and he cared for them like a father to a son.

Each Shabbos morning while living in Washington Heights, the Rebbe walked a great distance to be able to immerse in the *mikveh*. Among his learning sessions on Shabbos was one in *sifrei Chassidus*. I remember that one Shabbos, he was learning *Sefer Likutei Torah*, by the Baal Hatanya, *zy"u*. These were the years when he learned Torah in difficult straits, as he lived in a modest, rented apartment in great simplicity, but with *kedushah* and purity.

When my grandfather, the Pe'er Nochum, *zy"u*, passed away, and

*Gedolei Yisrael* crowned my uncle as the successor, the community in Washington Heights did not want to let the Rebbe leave. He also did not want to leave the community and the *shiurim* that he gave in the yeshivah. Eventually the Rebbe agreed to move to Boro Park to lead his *kehillah* and the new yeshivah they committed to establish to continue his *harbotzas haTorah*. The yeshivah has, *b'ezeras Hashem*, produced thousands of *talmidim*, *ovdei Hashem*, many of whom are currently *marbitzei Torah*.

Like his forebears and his grandfather from Sokolov-Kotzk, he was very involved in the needs of *Klal Yisrael*, primarily in Agudas Yisrael, Torah Umesorah, Chinuch Atzmai, Shuvu and others. For nearly 50 years, he served as a member of the Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah.

Throughout his life, he would marvel at the leadership of the Imrei Emes of Gur, *zy"u*, and how all that he did was *l'Shem Shamayim*, without an ounce of consideration for "what people would say." He would note as an example his scrupulousness about *zman tefillah* and the establishment of the Agudas Yisroel newspapers and ensuring that they were completely clean. Apparently it is from him that the Rebbe learned not to be moved by what people say. When he learned that in order to connect to many *chareidi* Jews in Agudas Yisroel it would be necessary to give some speeches in English, he immediately offered that his should be among those, as he spoke the language fluently. He did not consider

whether it was worthy and fitting for a Chassidic Rebbe. There are many other examples proving how his *avodah* was all *l'Shem Shamayim*, with no subjective considerations.

*Titen emes l'Yaakov*. As he was descended from Kotzk, his *middah* of *emes*, without any deviations, was outstanding. Everything was calculated; even when he gave a gift of one of his *sefarim* and wrote a dedication, he was very careful about the honorifics he used. He never wrote "*shlita*" to a philanthropist who was not a *talmid chacham* and *ben Torah* (because he reserved this title only for *bnei Torah*). My brother-in-law, Rabbi Avraham Yaakov Hoffman, who was close to him, said that for several years, the Rebbe sent through him a few thousand dollars to a needy Torah scholar. Each time, the Rebbe said, "You should know, it's very hard for me these days to do this, but I promised him [that it would be steady] and a man needs to keep to his word." He then added, "If one does not do what he says [he will do], then what is he worth? He is not a *mentch*..."

His principal goal in life was being *marbitz Torah*, and he delivered many *shiurim* with uncompromising regularity, rarely, if ever, missing one. Likewise, he *davened* with fiery inner fervor. Until this year, at age 89, he *davened* for the *amud* during *Selichos* and the Yamim Nora'im for *Mussaf* and *Ne'ilah*. His *tefillah* was long, pleasant, very fervent and enthusiastic.

One high point of the year was

the last *hakafah* on Shemini Atzeres night. At the end of the *hakafos*, when the *sefer Torah* was placed in the *aron kodesh*, he followed a custom of his forbears to hold a specific small *sefer Torah*, passed down from his ancestors. As he did, he would sing with the assembled "*Eishes Chayil*" in the traditional *niggun* passed down. Then he would say Torah on each *passuk*, in rhyme, in a Chassidic manner. This was all done as he stood on his feet. He did it this year as well, in his ninetieth year of life.

As has already been written, he passed away at the pinnacle of his spiritual strength. Just a few days before his passing he delivered *shiurim* and *chizuk* to the students of his yeshivah and *mispallelim* of his *beis medrash*. He also spoke to and encouraged *Klal Yisrael* during this difficult period of the corona pandemic, and gave instructions regarding it. A day before his passing he wrote a letter in the name of the Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah, and as those close to him – Rabbi Chaim Dovid Zwiebel and Reb Shlomo Werdiger, leaders of Agudas Yisroel – have confirmed, all the letters of the Moetzes were written by him, and then conveyed to the other members, who would make suggestions regarding additions or deletions. But he wrote the core of the letter.

We offer a *tefillah* that just like he worked for *Klal Yisrael* all his life, he should advocate for us on High and plead to Hashem to bring an end to this plague, and that we should merit to see the *Geulah* speedily in our day.



# תתן אמת ליעקב

## ‘... And So Much More’ — Harav Yaakov Perlow, Novominsker Rebbe, Zt”l

RABBI BINYOMIN KARMAN & HAMODIA STAFF

“As much as it would benefit you personally to have the Rebbe involved in this project,” an *adam gadol* once told me, “I must advise you to try not to burden him with it unnecessarily. I have seen up close what he has on his plate each and every day, the pressure and constraints he has on his time, and it all takes a toll on his health. You cannot imagine how he is involved in every facet of *Klal Yisrael*, and we need to conserve his energy and *gezunt* as much as we can.”

Rebbe, *Rosh Yeshivah, Rav*, Rosh Agudas Yisroel, Vaad Roshei Yeshiva of Torah Umesorah, and so much more. These, coupled with a litany of activities and accomplishments which were hidden from the public view, will be missed by his *talmidim*, by *askanim*, and by the everyday Yid on the street. Nary a project or endeavor launched in his sphere escaped his purview, and he gave of his heart and soul to help it take hold, blossom and succeed. His legendary *achrayus*, the sense of responsibility he had for the individual and the *tzibbur*, will long be remembered and terribly missed.

The Rebbe was a scion of the pillars of the world of *Chassidus*. His paternal *zeide* was Harav Alter Yisrael Shimon, *zy”a*, known as the Tiferes Ish, who in turn was the son of the Shufra D’Yaakov of Novominsk, a branch of *Admorei Koidenov*, *Neschiz*, and *Chernobyl*. The Tiferes Ish was a son-in-law of Harav Baruch Meir of Azarnowitz, *zy”a*, a descendant of Harav Aharon of Chernobyl, *zy”a*. The Beis Yisrael of Gur described the Tiferes Ish as a dear friend of his father, the Imrei Emes of Gur, *zy”a*. On his mother’s side, he was a grandson of Harav Yitzchak Zelig of Sokolov-Kotzk, a direct descendant of the Kotzker Rebbe, *zy”a*. (Harav Shneur Kotler, *zt”l*, once told the Rebbe that his father, Harav Aharon Kotler, *zt”l*, told him that the Sokolover was considered one of the greatest *Geonim* of his time in Europe.)

The Rebbe’s father, Harav Nachum Mordechai, the Pe’er Nachum, *zy”a*, was a *Maggid Shiur* in his father-in-law’s yeshiva in Sokolov. Before Rav Nachum Mordechai left to America, Rav Yitzchak Zelig told him, “The Kotzker once opened his window and declared, ‘I see the Torah wandering; it wandered from Eretz Yisrael to Bavel, from Spain to France, and from Germany to Poland. And now it is wandering further, to America.’” After his arrival, Rav Nachum Mordechai’s greatness in Torah was recognized, and he became a *chaver* of the Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah of Agudas Yisroel of America.

The Rebbe was born to his illustrious parents in New York on 25 Cheshvan 5691/November 16, 1930. He attended Yeshiva Toras Chaim in Brownsville (today Yeshiva of South Shore in Hewlett, New York), and then went to Mesivta Rabbeinu Chaim Berlin, where he became one of the foremost *talmidim* of Harav Yitzchak Hutner, *zt”l*. In 1982, the Rebbe published the first of the seven volumes of his *sefer Adas Yaakov* (three on *sugyos*, three on *Yamim Tovim*,



A founding gathering of Project Witness.

and one on *Chumash*), in which he wrote in the introduction, “I learned there [MYRCB] and in Kollel Gur Aryeh all my youth, where I merited to be enriched from the wisdom and broad understanding of my *Rebbi*, who wondrously and wisely implanted the depth and breadth of the Torah in all his *talmidim*.”

The Rebbe married Rebbetzin Yehudis, *a”h*, the daughter of Harav Avraham Eichenstein,

*zy”a*, the Ziditchover Rebbe of Chicago. His mother-in-law, Rebbetzin Bopche, was the daughter of Harav Pinchos Shalom Rottenberg, *zy”a*, of Kosson. The Eichenstein family was and remains a mainstay of the *frum* community who have infused the city with a love of Torah and *chessed* for over a century, beginning with Harav Yehoshua Heshel of Chodorov, *zy”a*.

# תתן אמת ליעקב

## HOW WILL HE FIND THE TIME?

MR. SHLOMO WERDIGER

I'm not going to talk about the Rebbe's *gadlus b'Torah* or the unparalleled *makom haTorah* that he built when he established Yeshivas Novominsk and his illustrious *beis medrash*.

I would, instead, like to talk about what he taught me and so many others who had the *zechus* to work closely with him in our holy work at Agudas Yisrael.

When the Rebbe, *zt"l*, first assumed the position of Rosh Agudas Yisrael, more than 20 years ago, I quietly asked myself: How will he find the time for Agudas Yisrael while running a yeshivah, giving *shiurim*, tending his *beis medrash*, continuing his *kesher* with current and former *talmidim*, and facing so many other *klal* issues on a daily basis? How will this work? These were my thoughts.

I can now say unequivocally that in the past 22 years that I had the *zechus* to work with the Rebbe, there was never a single time that I called him regarding anything to do with Agudas Yisrael that he didn't drop everything and make time to meet or talk to resolve whatever it was that needed to be decided or done. His *achrayus* for Agudas Yisrael and *Klal Yisrael* so inspired me and all my wonderful *chaverim* who give *b'lev ub'nefesh* for Agudas Yisrael and *Klal Yisrael*. His sage advice and his clear, concise, and well-thought-out responses shaped our vision and our goals these past 20 years.



With *ybl"c*, Hagaon Harav Dovid Feinstein; Mr. Shlomo Werdiger (C).

The caring and warmth he extended to all of us was constant even during the most difficult of times.

The respect and *kavod* he and the other Chavrei Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah had for each other and how he always carefully listened to all sides in every situation left an indelible impression on all of those privileged to sit in on many of the historic meetings that shaped the future of *Klal Yisrael*.

His brilliance and compassion and real concern for every Yid will be sorely missed. Without his leadership it will be very difficult to go on, but the true *ahavas Yisrael* he demonstrated and the *mesirus nefesh* he taught us will prevail.

From his lofty place next to the *Kisei haKavod* he will surely be a *gutte beiter* for all of *Klal Yisrael* and especially his beloved Agudas Yisrael.

The Rebbe settled near his father-in-law in Chicago, where he taught in Beis Medrash LaTorah of Skokie, Illinois. During that period, he produced many *talmidim* of great stature who remained connected to him for decades afterward.

In time, the Rebbe returned to Brooklyn and lived in Crown Heights, where he joined the administration of Yeshiva Mesivta Rabbeinu Chaim Berlin. He spent many hours each day learning *Shulchan Aruch* with his father, the Pe'er Nachum.

In 1969, the Rebbe was appointed to serve as *Rosh Yeshivah* of Yeshiva Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, which was established in 1944 by Harav Yosef Breuer, *zt"l*, in Washington Heights. The Rebbe said his *shiurim* with legendary depth for the *talmidim* of the Beis Medrash Yeshurun (*al sheim* Rav Shlomo Breuer) and *kollel* for 11 years. He also served as the Rav of Congregation Bais Yosef in Washington Heights, and maintained his bonds with the members of the *kehillah* throughout his life. Even decades after he moved to Boro Park following his father's *petirah* on 9 Elul 5776, he maintained his connection with the members of the *kehillah*, delivering periodic *shiurim* for them until his last days.

For several years, he would split his Shabbosos between Washington Heights and Boro Park, staying at his mother's home every second Shabbos to lead Adas Yaakov of Novominsk, the shul his father had established.

In 1980, the Rebbe established Yeshivas Novominsk-Kol Yehudah, named after his great uncle Harav Yehudah Aryeh Perlow of Novominsk-Williamsburg. The yeshivah, now located on the corner of 17th Avenue and 60th Street, is the home to hundreds of *talmidim* and is one of the premier Torah institutions in America. The Rebbe delivered *shiurim* and *shmuessen* in the yeshivah, and stole away several hours from his busy schedule to spend time there toiling in learning whenever possible.

"It was a visual lesson to see the Rebbe enter the *beis medrash* and sit down, engrossed in his learning for hours at a time without lifting his head, despite the myriad problems and issues he was dealing with," a Novominsker *talmid* said. "We all knew he was preoccupied with every concern of *Klal Yisrael*, yet from the time he entered until the time he left, he was completely focused on his learning to the exclusion of anything else."

The Rebbe was known for his expertise in

*Tanach*, often quoting passages from *Sefer Yeshayahu* and elsewhere by heart. His proficiency in a whole host of *sefarim* — especially the *sefarim* of the Baal Hatanya, Reb Tzadok, and the Sfas Emes — was well known, and the words of the *Maharal*, which he often quoted verbatim, were apparent in the *shiurim* which he gave to the advanced *talmidim* in his yeshivah.

Beginning in 1975 and onward, the Rebbe became actively involved in Agudas Yisroel and addressed the *Siyum HaShas* of *Daf Yomi* that year. Moving forward, he took a leading role in Torah Umesorah as well, guiding it with wisdom, love and compassion. The *mechanchim* who attended the annual conventions of Torah Umesorah were well aware of the leadership he provided, both on the organizational and the personal level.

"Listen well to the Rebbe's *drashah* between *Minchah* and *Maariv* on Friday night," a colleague once told me, "and you will understand that it is not just a *drashah* or a pep talk. The Rebbe is giving a *shiur*, and he will impart to us what he feels we should concentrate on in the

*continued on page 8*



# תתן אמת ליעקב



With ybl"c Harav Elya Brudny.



Yated Ne'eman Israel

An aliyah le'Torah in Kehillas Beis Torah, Har Nof, Yerushalayim, during an atzeres l'zecher nishmos the Kedoshim of the Har Nof massacre, Hy"d.

continued from page 7

coming months." The words of the Rebbe, spoken deliberately and in measured tones, were just that. He delivered his thoughts on what was needed in the world of *chinuch* and gave clear direction as to how the *mechanchim* and *mechanchos* could achieve these goals.

The Rebbe was appointed Rosh Agudas Yisroel of America in 1998, and was considered the main spokesman for the Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah of Agudas Yisroel of America. His remarks at all Agudah functions, including its conventions and annual dinners, conveyed the *daas Torah* of the Moetzes Agudas Yisroel. A powerful orator whose mastery of language allowed him to paint a picture of his view of Torah life, and his audience, including the great *Roshei Yeshivah*, the Rabbanim, the laymen and even the political figures in attendance were mesmerized by his elocution. His assuredness, backed by his resolute belief in the ideals he was expressing, left no doubt about the position of the Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah of Agudas Yisroel on the burning issues of the day.

The Rebbe was intimately involved in many organizations, some of which were new to the Orthodox community. Having raised his own special-needs child, he encouraged parents of special-needs children, speaking on occasion at functions of Women's League and helping launch P'TACH, as well as being intimately involved in Ichud and other *mosdos*.

At times, when a head of an organization unloaded the difficulty in



meeting budgetary obligations, the Rebbe would help arrange meetings and provide connections with philanthropists in order to help stabilize the finances of the organization. After the passing of his first wife in 1998, he established Keren Yehudis through which he funneled hundreds of thousands of dollars to help support American Torah scholars living in Eretz Yisrael. (In 2004, the Rebbe married his wife's sister, Rebbetzin Miriam Landynski, the *almanah* of Harav Yaakov Zev Landynski, z"l.)

Besides supplying financial support, he encouraged young *talmidei chachamim* in their growth, writing numerous *haskamos* for their written works in which he heaped praise on them for their toil and success in learning.

In the last days of his life, he was

urged by the leadership of Agudas Yisroel to pen an inspirational letter to encourage the masses who were suffering the effects of the coronavirus here and abroad. As Rabbi Chaim Dovid Zwiebel, Executive Vice President of Agudath Israel of America, wrote, "The Rebbe became extremely emotional on the phone. 'I am very *shvach* and really don't have the *kochos* to write such a letter, but it's the right thing to do, and I have an *achrayus*.'"

"The Rebbe told us he had two prior public commitments he had to deal with first — a telephone *shiur* he was saying that evening for the *kehillah* of Washington Heights, and another telephone *shiur*, for the *misparallelim* of his *beis medrash*, at noon Friday — and that afterward he would do his best to draft a letter for the Moetzes.

"To my amazement, at approximately 10:00 Friday morning, I received a call from the Rebbe, telling me that he had decided to work on the text of the letter overnight, and that he would like to read it to me as a proposed Moetzes statement. He then proceeded to dictate his draft statement, four full paragraphs long, which I transcribed."

After hearing the request for an additional paragraph, the Rebbe called Rabbi Zwiebel on Sunday afternoon, 11 Nisan, to dictate it. "That's it, Chaim Dovid, this is what I can do. Please circulate this to as many of the *chaveirim* of the Moetzes as you can reach, make whatever additional changes they see fit, and let's get it out to the entire *tzibbur* tomorrow."

The turnaround time was tight, but true to the Rebbe's directive, the Agudah finalized the Moetzes' *Michtav Brocha V'chizuk* and published it, along with a rough English-language translation, on Monday afternoon, 12 Nisan.

Early Tuesday morning, on 13 Nisan, the Rebbe, zt"l, returned his lofty *neshamah* to its place above, ending his *avodas Hashem* and *avodas haklal* with the hallmark *achrayus* he always displayed.

The Rebbe is survived by, ybl"c, his *chashuve* wife, Rebbetzin Miriam, née Eichenstein; his sons, Harav Yehoshua Heschel, *shlita*, and Harav Alter Yisrael Shimon, *shlita*; and his daughters, Rebbetzin Feiga Dina Horowitz (wife of Harav Elisha Chaim Horowitz, *shlita*) and Rebbetzin Sarah Chana Traeger (wife of Harav Yitzchak Traeger, *shlita*).

*Zecher tzaddik livrachah.*



# תתן אמת ליעקב

## ‘This Is Our Zechus’

ADAPTED FROM THE REBBE'S REMARKS  
BY RABBI AHARON PERLOW &  
RABBI BINYOMIN ZEV KARMAN

I wish to begin by stating that I am a brother to the issue of parents who have a child with disabilities. My Rebbetzin and I have a son who lived with us in our home until the age of eight, until we became aware that his disabilities were so severe that it was no longer possible for us to help him within the parameters of the family.

We recognize the deep pain of dealing with a child who is not able to give the parents the form of *nachas* which they had hoped for. The false hopes and the thoughts of the future which suddenly are clouded, along with the feeling of failure.

I am only mentioning this because I wish to convey that I'm not merely one who stands at the side and supplies advice, but rather as a "member of the club," who has tasted what it means to adapt to the difficulty of the children we are discussing.

In this conference, *baruch Hashem*, we are able to open up to a certain extent, and therefore they can be classified that they can be helped. However, the incredible amount of work which is needed for their education is coupled with a great degree of pain, that we must first address the parents, and not the children.

First, you must make peace with yourselves that you are not to blame for what occurred. Furthermore, you must recognize that although you would rather forgo this situation, nevertheless it gives you an opportunity and an obligation to grow spiritually. This spiritual advancement requires a Torah outlook: how to accept pain, how to accept suffering without being destroyed. How to pick oneself up after falling, without a shadow of a doubt.

One cannot concede the essential strong emotional support from friends and family when trying to digest that "I am the parent of a special-needs child." However, those who believe that the Torah is their path of life, there is or at least must be an important source from which to draw the energy to deal with the situation. The Torah tells us that we must recognize that despite the pain and grief, Hashem placed a challenge upon us, and our responsibility is to educate with love and with a greater amount than in the past.

The word *chessed* in our lives has a new meaning. The care and cultivation of special-needs children, and the enormous requirements which we must supply them with in order for them to reach their potential, is a form of an indescribable, immense and elevated *chessed*. Perhaps it is even beyond what is described as "*chessed shel emes*," the kindness which is performed with those who have passed on. This *chessed* is accompanied with tears and misery. When Hashem calls upon a person to be such a *baal chessed*, he must recognize that although this is a great burden, it is a holy one.

Our ability to respond to this call is not just a test, but a condition to be part of the Chosen Nation. This is the holy burden for which you parents and educators have been drafted, which attests to the eternal testament that you are part of those who Chazal in *Yevamos* (79a) describe as "*gomlei chassadim* — those who perform kindness," the off-



A visit at HASC.

spring of those who perform kindness, who attach themselves to the covenant of Avraham Avinu.

The parent of a special-needs child is a double *nisayon*. First, it is a *nisayon* in *emunah* to accept the pain without any complaints to the *Ribbono shel Olam*. However, there is a second, more difficult *nisayon* involved: to transform the pain into a challenge to refuse to become depressed, and in its place to foster a love and to provide lovingkindness to a child who needs this in much greater quantities than other children do. We do all this and are suitable to receive the love and kindness of *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*.

I [am] not exaggerating when I say that a home of a special-needs child is first and foremost one which contains peace and harmony, acceptance and good *middos*. It is the directive of the hour. If the personal work of each member of the family focuses on the cultivation of these *middos*, it will result that in place of the expected depression of the affected family, there will be a powerful light which will enlighten their lives, and their paths will be uplifted.

This is all the result of the need to supply the special-needs child with the *middos* of love, peace and acceptance. They are living and tangible for the brothers and sisters of the special-needs child, since they see the care which is given. Their entire *chinuch* will be infinitely enriched.

I found one source for this great inspiration in the words of Rabbeinu Yonah (*Shaarei Teshuvah* 2:5) where he writes, "The one who relies on Hashem can hope that in the pinnacle of his troubles, the darkness will be a source for the light." The expectation of a Yid is based on the future light. Rabbeinu Yonah continues, "Do not rejoice, my enemies; when I fell, I stood up. When I sit in the darkness, Hashem is light for me. [*Michah* 7:8] Chazal [*Midrash Tehillim* 22] have taught us, 'Had I not fallen, I would not be able to stand up; had I not sat in the darkness, Hashem would not have been the light for me.'"

The *nisyonos* and troubles which are associated with the care of a special-needs child are many, and mandate many requirements on our behalf: our energy, our time, our emotions, and above all in our patience. However, the measure of our life is precisely our ability to withstand trials.

The root of the word *nisayon* is *nes*, a banner or symbol, as the Ramban explains in the *passuk*

which states, "*VehaElokim nisah es Avraham*" (*Bereishis* 22:1). Hashem did not merely place Avraham in a test during the *Akeidah*. Avraham was transformed and elevated through the episode, and his success was a symbol and sign of his character.

According to the Torah, the challenge confronting disabled children is if we face the challenge not with despair, but with faith. Then these parents will have accomplished their unique mission which Hashem placed specifically on them.

It is important to note this is an axiom in the education of any child. A basic portion of the devotion we place in educating our children is solely because this is a *mitzvah* that Hashem has placed upon us. *Chinuch* is a mission from Hashem, a service that He placed upon us. If He made us emissaries of His Mercifulness, it is incumbent upon us to remain faithful to the wishes of the Dispatcher. Certainly, we would prefer a mission which brings us more pleasure, but if Providence assigned us with this duty which does not entail such joy, it does not absolve us from the task of each Jewish child who is capable of learning Torah.

At whatever level the child may be, it is entitled to receive what it is eligible for. It is the responsibility of the parents to ensure that the child receives this. *Yirmiyahu HaNavi* (7:4) states, "*Heichal Hashem heimah*." This means that *Klal Yisrael* as a whole are compared to "the chamber of Hashem," or the *Beis Hamikdash*. This leads us to believe that each individual Jew is the embodiment of a *klei shareis*, a holy vessel. In the *Mishkan*, there were large vessels, such as the *Mizbe'ach*, the *Menorah* and the *Shulchan*, and there were smaller vessels as well, as the pans, the spoons and forks. Some were fabricated from gold and silver, some from copper, but each and every one was holy, and if anyone misuses it, he is liable to bring a *Korban Me'ilah*.

Each one of us, young and old, are destined to be a *klei shareis* in the Chamber of Hashem. Each one was educated to be a servant of Hashem, Who utilizes each vessel, whether a large golden one or a small copper one. I perceive a profound concept in this. *Mechanichim* and *mosdos* of Torah which are represented here are aware of the unique requirements of the holy vessels of the *Beis Hamikdash*. You should be blessed for the steps you are already taking to guarantee that these special-needs children are incorporated into the community of the *tinokos shel beis rabban*. Furthermore, I wish to convey my appreciation for your aspirations to find helpful ways to assist them with soul and spirit in this holy endeavor.

The education of these children, even just one of them, is included in the statement, "One who keeps one life of a Jew is as if he keeps an entire world" (*Sanhedrin* 37a). The parents and educators of special-needs children are destined to be unique people who can reach high plateaus which others cannot achieve. Through the *nisyonos* which they undergo, they attain good *middos* and dedication which is beyond the grasp of other people. In the end, "The reward is according to the pain" (*Avos* 5:23). The resources and work which they implant in their special-needs children will certainly help them merit kindness from Hashem, *nachas*, joy for the length of their days.



תתן אמת ליעקב 

## Taking *Achrayus* for the Future of *Klal Yisrael*



Hagaon Harav Aharon Leib Shteinman Zt"l at left; the Novominsker Rebbe, speaking.

### RABBI SHMUEL YAAKOV KLEIN

The gaping hole that has recently been seared into the hearts of Torah Umesorah (TU) upon the *petirah* of Harav Yaakov Perlow, the Novominsker Rebbe, *zt"l*, was aptly described by Rabbi Dovid Nojowitz, *Menahel* of TU:

"The Novominsker Rebbe's sudden *petirah*, with the simplest of *levayos*, encapsulated his life. He was not interested in the trappings of *kavod* or any form of fanfare ... such much so that he was very uncomfortable with any type of praise. '*Der Rebbe, zol zein gezunt*,' was the safest thing to say to him; to elaborate on any praise of him was to look for trouble!"

The Rebbe, as a senior member of TU's Vaad Roshei Yeshiva, was involved in all the pressing *chinuch* issues of the day, helping to ensure that the organization's policies would continue to be shaped *al taharas hakodesh*, without compromises and without cutting corners. The gravitas that entered with the Rebbe into any room where the Vaad's meetings would take place will be remembered by all who had the privilege of being present.

To all who knew him up close the Rebbe was an exemplar of *achrayus* for the entire *Klal*, the consummate leader who championed the need for being "*ro'eh es hanolad*," able to forecast how the future would be determined by the present, visibly shouldering responsibility for the affairs of not only the current generation of Jews, but for future ones as well.

This was as evident within the spheres of Agudath Israel of America, which he piloted for over

two decades as Rosh Agudas Yisroel, as it was in TU. The point was never simply what the Rebbe *felt* about any specific question *per se*; it was always about the ramifications of each of the varied courses of actions that were up for consideration. That was what ultimately shaped his feelings.

In this connection, it must be remarked that the Novominsker Rebbe was a paradigm of *middas ha'emes*, a singular devotion to truthfulness. Perhaps as a scion of the Kotzker Rebbe's dynasty (the Rebbe was a descendant of the Kotzker Rebbe, *zy"u*, whose disdain for falsehood was legendary), he represented integrity and sometimes incisive honesty. At the same time, the humor included in many of his pronouncements endeared him to all. Participants at many a TU Convention recall how at times, during the *She'eilos U'teshuvos* sessions, the Rebbe, feeling that a certain question would best be left unanswered, would say, "Sometimes one has to use his own *seichel*!"

TU's Vaad Roshei Yeshiva comprises an elite of Torah leaders from across America. The Rebbe's position among his peers was one of special esteem. Rabbi Nojowitz explained, "What does the Rebbe say?" So often, this was the follow-up question to any discussion regarding TU. In many of my private conversations with the late *Yoshev Rosh*, Harav Avraham Chaim Levin, *zt"l*, he would invariably say that I should check with the Rebbe to hear what he thinks. And there was also never a need for titles; 'the Rebbe' was all that was necessary to know who it is we were talking about. The Rebbe's clear vision and extensive experience in the world of *Klal Yisrael* made him the obvious go-to person

when a clear, definitive direction was required."

One of the directions toward which the Rebbe guided TU was its increasing initiative of reaching out to the *Chassidishe mosdos haTorah*. TU is making such strides in raising the standards of *chinuch* in America, he said, "We must get this word out to the *Chassidishe mosdos* as well." In response, TU proceeded to establish more meaningful connections with schools across that spectrum. Today, dozens of Chassidishe *yeshivos* — in Boro Park, Williamsburg, Monsey and Lakewood — are connected to TU, availing themselves of its vital services — the training programs, the mentoring, personnel placement, networking, conventions, professional development, teacher centers and more. Largely at the Rebbe's behest, the mood within TU is such that Torah Yidden of all stripes feel at home.

In fact, in many of ways the Rebbe was himself the very personification of the crucial bridge between the yeshivishe and Chassidishe worlds — between the various sister "camps" within the Torah universe. This was the natural outgrowth of the Rebbe's relentlessly keeping his finger on the pulse of *Klal Yisrael* as a whole.

In the words of Rabbi Nojowitz, "More than anything, the Rebbe's heart was the heartbeat of every Yid. His concern for the individual was genuine. I witnessed this often when speaking with the Rebbe about an individual's shortcomings or failings. The Rebbe's [response] was not one of anger, but rather one of pain for the individual. I think, though, that above all else, the Rebbe's common sense and normalcy were very refreshing to the soul.

"*Mi yiten temuraso?*"



# תתן אמת ליעקב

## ‘מפיו אנו חיים’ - ‘MIPIV ANU CHAYIM’

Excerpts of Addresses of the Novominsker Rebbe, Zt”l, at Torah Umesorah Conventions

### Torah Umesorah Convention, 2009

The *passuk* in Zechariah (Perek 14) says, “*Bayom hahu yehiyeh Hashem echad u'Shmo echad*.” The *Gemara* in *Pesachim* (50a) asks, “And nowadays, is not Hashem also one?” The *Gemara* answers that presently, when a good thing occurs, one says the *brachah* of *hatov vehameitiv*; if a bad thing occurs, the *brachah* of *Dayan ha'Emes* is recited. However, when Moshiach arrives, only *hatov vehameitiv* will be recited.

The Tzlach asks that it would seem that the reason that only one *brachah* will be recited is that only good will transpire. He quotes the Maggid of Brodt as answering that the *brachah* of *hatov vehameitiv* will be recited for those occurrences in the present times which appear to us as tragedies. When the Ultimate Redemption arrives, we will come to realize that it was actually good, and we will praise Hashem for it.

This can also be the explanation of the words of the *Navi* that we read in the *haftarah* of *Nachamu*. *Yeshayah HaNavi* (40:4) declares, “A voice calls in the desert, clear a road for Hashem, straighten out a path for our G-d. Every valley shall be raised, and every mountain and peak shall be lowered, and the crooked will become flat, and the hills will be smooth.” Every era has times of peaks and valleys, times that appear crooked and times that appear straight. When Moshiach arrives, we will understand that there were no actual bad times; they only had that appearance, and they now all look straight.

Hashem promised that the Jewish Nation will never be destroyed. *Yeshayah HaNavi* [said] (54:9), “Just like I swore never to bring the flood waters of Noach over the earth, so, too, I swore not to become angry with you or to rebuke you.” Children are aware of the promise that Hashem made not to bring another *mabul* on the world. They can also understand that there is a similar promise that the Jewish Nation will not be destroyed.

This understanding, together with the knowledge that “*hanistaros laHashem Elokeinu*,” will help foster the security needed to weather these difficult times.

### Torah Umesorah Convention, 2010

If we want to inspire our students to be *ehrlliche Yidden*, we must first explain to them in detail what it means to be a Yid. This should be done on their level, and can be put in plain words even in the fifth grade.

The Rebbe clarified that children should be taught that Yidden are children of the *Avos*, that *Am Yisrael* was developed through *Yetzi-as Mitzrayim*, and that we were taught how to carry out the *ratzon* of Hashem through *Mattan Torah*. On each point, the Rebbe elaborated the details of how it should be explained even to young children and the importance of implanting this knowledge in the hearts and minds of all our students. Through this, they will feel connected and will want to become *ehrlliche Yidden*.

The Rebbe ended by mentioning the *Gemara* in *Makkos* (24a) where Rav said, “I am frightened from the *passuk* (in the *tochachah* of the week's *parashah*) ‘*Va'avaditem bagoyim* — I will make you lost amongst the nations.’ To which the *Gemara* raises the question, “Perhaps it means like a lost object that is being searched for, and the *passuk* says in *Tehillim* (119), ‘*Ta'isi k'seh oved* — I was wandering like a lost sheep.’ We must realize that Hashem is searching for us to return to His outstretched arms.

### Torah Umesorah Convention, 2012

The *Gemara* in *Rosh Hashanah* (16a) tells us that on Shavuot we are judged on “the fruits of the trees.” *Sefarim* say that this refers to our offspring, the youth of *Klal Yisrael*. With this in mind, the Rebbe addressed the challenges that face our children in this era, which are most unlike those of previous times. “In the past,” said the Rebbe, “the refrain commonly heard was, ‘*Es iz shver tzu zein a Yid* — It is difficult to remain a true Jew.’ Our nation was constantly under physical and spiritual attack: pogroms, *shemiras Shabbos*, etc. I remember that as a child, when my father saw a policeman, he would distance himself, since he was accustomed to the abuse that the police rained upon the



Jews in his homeland. Yet in America, these difficulties are not prevalent. We live with the freedom to build our communities. And build we did! We would believe that a few decades after the terrible calamity and destruction we experienced during World War II, we would be able to achieve such growth!

“But we must be aware that ‘*Der yetzer hara shluft nisht* — the *yetzer hara* is not asleep!’ Today’s challenges, the scourge of technology that confronts us, are appalling. We can no longer act as if it is no concern of ours. The children are all too aware of the realities, and this leaves us no choice but to speak about these issues. We must address issues of *shemiras einayim* and *shemiras yadayim*. We must speak about *kedushas haguf*. This should be coached in the appropriate language of *Chazal*, but it cannot be addressed clearly.

“The shame and the guilt that our youth carry with them when they stumble in this area is at times unbearable. They often felt that they have no one to speak to; not to their parents or to their *Rebbeim*. Each *mosad* should find the person most suitable for this task and develop a way for this to be implemented.”

### Torah Umesorah Convention, 2014

The *nisyonos* that *Klal Yisrael* faced prior to World War II in America included the spiritual danger resisting *chillul Shabbos*, and in Europe involved the physical peril of pogroms. “In our times we are not faced with these threats, yet the *nisyonos* we face seem daunting. What must we do to overcome these trials?” asked the Rebbe.

“We cannot fight this by trying to capture the mind. The *yetzer hara* is called ‘*yetzer lev ha'adam*’; it is the heart of man, and we must reach the hearts of our *talmidim*. We must teach them in a manner in which the Torah penetrates the hearts of the students. This can be the simple understanding of the words of *Krias Shema*, where we say that ‘these words,’ which refer to the words of Torah, ‘should be on your heart.’ *Chazal* say, ‘*Rachmana liba ba'i* — Hashem wants our hearts.’ Only by having the Torah infiltrate their hearts we can overcome the power of the *yetzer hara*.”

The Rebbe’s clarion call resonated throughout the Shabbos, where speaker after speaker referred back to the call of “*Rachmana liba ba'i*” as they encouraged the guests to take the precious call of the Novominsker Rebbe back to their classrooms and *mosdos*.



# תתן אמת ליעקב

## The Individual and The *Klal*

RABBI YISRAEL FRIEDMAN

He was the sum of the valuable parts that made up his being. He was not the heart of *Klal Yisrael*, he was *Klal Yisrael*! He was the *Rosh Yeshivah*, Hagaon Harav Yaakov Perlow. He was the Novominsker Rebbe, who led his flock. Like a compassionate father, he was a listening ear to the suffering of every individual. He was a combination of the *klal* and the individual. He was a renowned speaker whose encouraging yet incisive messages were sharp and eloquent. He was an influential leader who strode at the head of the camp, yet he was as submissive as a youth in his father's home when in the presence of *Gedolei Hador*. While it is hard for such a tall tree to bend its strong trunk and lower its leaves, for him it was not only easy, it was his way of life. He saw the *Gedolim* of Eretz Yisrael as the leaders of the *chareidi* community all over the world. He was a Rav and authority for thousands, and at the same time, a "talmid tzamei," a thirsting student, until his final day. He was the chairman of Agudas Yisroel of America. He was a real Agudist.

The *chareidi* leader and thinker, Dr. Nathan Birnbaum, *z"l*, who was one of the first *baalei teshuvah* of the last era, described in his book *Am Hashem* the first Knessiah Gedolah that he attended. The German delegation "planted a bridge between the velvet hat and the cylinder, between the *chalat* and the pressed coat, between Yiddish and German." The Slovakian delegation "saved a large part of Jews and Judaism from the danger of assimilation and of forgetting Torah that was in store for them." The Lithuanian delegation "was relatively small in number, yet had a significant influence. They did not speak much, but whatever they did say was to the point and left a deep impression. They sufficed with little, but did not grab much either. Their few demands were with confident self-recognition. It seemed as though they had brought with them the atmosphere of the big yeshivos in their lands. Their faces radiated the light of Torah and knowledge." The Polish delegation "worked with alacrity and had extensive parliamentary experience. The influence of the Chassidic spirit, in whose light their fathers had warmed, was the reason for the special Jewish symbol imprinted upon them." Rabbi Birnbaum further concluded: "But anyone who thinks that the opposite views and the old disagreements were reawakened afresh



With Hagaon Harav Aharon Leib Shteinman *Zt"l*.

at the Knessiah is mistaken. Not at all. The *mitzvah* of that time — saving Torah Judaism from demise — which was a *mitzvah* that all the attendees had accepted upon themselves at Sinai, made the war — even a war of words — preventable! Agudas Yisroel can pave the path if it will be able to expand the institution of the Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah to be a high spiritual authority that unites within it the Torah and wisdom" (pp. 134-136).

The Rebbe, *zy"a*, was a real Agudist, one who met the description of all these different groups. He was the individual, the standout, and if you were to study him closely, he contained everything. He had absorbed in his home and from the *tzaddikim* of the generation the fiery Chassidic *bren* that characterized him in his every action for matters of *kedushah*, and with this fire that burned within him, he led his *Rebbisteve* and his public activities. He learned in the Litvishe yeshivos as the *talmid* of Harav Yitzchak Hutner, *zt"l*, and his *sefarim*, *Adas Yaakov*, reflect his *lamdanishe* brilliance. His Torah was the basis for his entire being — and it not only preceded his public leadership, it was the foundation of his leadership.

Anyone who saw him at the Agudah Convention, heard him speak, or read his letters in response to efforts to deviate from Torah and to alter *mesorah*, saw how he stood strong to prevent these breaches, saw his Slovakian resolve in the spirit of the Chasam Sofer that burst forth like the lava on a volcano, in a pillar of black smoke, with the same fervor with which he usually emanated goodness and pleasantness in a pillar of white smoke. Anyone who heard his "*Glatt Yosher*" speech, in which he demanded of *chareidi* Jewry in America to be perfectly honest in matters of *Choshen Mishpat* in inter-

actions with non-Jews as well, discerned that in addition to his being a man of Torah and *halachah*, there were vestiges of the "German delegation," the *Yekkishkeit*, in his personality and manner.

He could not contain this and that; he was everything, a man whose entire being was *Klal Yisrael*. He was the Knessiah Gedolah. He was the Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah of America, like one man with one heart with the elder *Roshei Yeshivah*, *shlita*, the *Gedolei Torah* of the land. He was the real Agudist.

He was a man of peace who did not allow dispute and discord to gain a foothold in American Jewry. A person cannot fight with himself, and he was everyone. He was one of the stewards of the historic unity visit of Harav Aharon Leib Steinman, *zt"l*, and, *ybl"e*, the Gerrer Rebbe, *shlita*. He called them to come and strengthen American Jewry with their very presence. In his home, he hosted the meeting of the Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah at which the Nesivos Moshe education network was established. That was the first time I met him personally; we met many times thereafter. He worked extensively for the children of Eretz Yisrael, and when I stood at his side when the network's school in Tzoren-Kadima was named for his Rebbetzin, *a"n*, in the presence of the *Rosh Yeshivah*, *zt"l*, and the Rebbe, *ybl"e*, he could not contain his emotions, and his voice choked up. Together with the executive director, Rabbi Tzvi Baumel, who knew him well, we saw the lone tear roll down the cheek of the Novominsker Rebbe, the leader and the general. It was a hot tear of emotion. It was not personal emotion of one who had received a token of appreciation for his great work; rather, it was a tear of emotion at the wondrous sight of children who were so distant grow-

ing closer. It was a contagious feeling, and the large heart of *Klal Yisrael* throbbed in front of us as well.

But more than anything, what remains etched in my heart was the special meeting of the *Rosh Yeshivah* Harav Steinman with the Novominsker Rebbe, because it so encapsulated who he was. The Rebbe would regularly visit the homes of *Gedolei Torah* from across the spectrum in Eretz Yisrael. He had a special connection with Harav Steinman which he often expressed in public. During one of the visits, he came with his family so they could receive a *brachah*. Then the Rebbe asked his guests to leave and asked to speak to the *Rosh Yeshivah* one on one. And then he magnanimously said to me, "You can stay." And I did. The Rebbe began with a *kushya*, a question, and he and the *Rosh Yeshivah* discussed the Torah matter for a number of moments. The Rebbe became animated during the *shakla v'tarya* while the *Rosh Yeshivah* replied with his trademark calm. They then bid each other farewell. The Rebbe departed from the room facing the *Rosh Yeshivah* and bowing slightly as he backed out; the *Rosh Yeshivah* escorted him to the door, down the stairs and to the street.

Downstairs, before entering the car, I asked the Rebbe, "Please, can the Rebbe explain? It is understandable that due to the many public matters that the Rebbe is involved in, he should want to speak one on one. It can be sensitive. But *divrei Torah*?" And the Rebbe then answered with a brilliant smile: "When you are in the presence of the *Rabban shel Yisrael*, sometimes all you want to do is cleave to him. For questions, there are answers, but to connect to another person, there is only *divrei Torah*!" And he said no more on the subject; he didn't need to.

The towering tree, whose branches cast a protective shadow on such a wide radius, collapsed. His broad shoulders could no longer bear the bitter situation and suffering of American Jewry at this time. "*Ich bin a tzubrochener Yid*," he told Rabbi Shlomo Gottesman, one of the leaders of Agudas Yisroel in America. "I cannot bear the suffering and the pain." And just a few days later, his heart stilled, and an era came to a close. A real Agudist, the Novominsker Rebbe, Harav Yaakov Perlow rose on High, leaving us yearning for a calmer time which is no longer.

Rabbi Israel Friedman is the Hebrew Yated Ne'eman Editor in Chief.



# תתן אמת ליעקב

## Setting the Agenda for the American Torah Velt

DR. IRVING LEBOVICS

I first met the Rebbe in the 1970s, when he was the Rav at the Agudah of Washington Heights, where I davened. I recall seeing the Rebbe at the Breuer's Yeshiva *beis medrash* during night *seider*, where he was the *Rosh Yeshiva*, stopping next to every *bachur* in the *beis medrash*, talking in learning and warmly checking on how he was doing.

We became reacquainted years later when I became involved with Agudas Yisroel after moving to Los Angeles. During an early meeting with the Rebbe and Rabbi Shmuel Bloom, the Rebbe kept referring to me as "Yitzchok" (not my name). I was too embarrassed to correct him, but at one point Rabbi Bloom did. He looked up at Rabbi Bloom with a gentle smile and asserted, "So you are Shmuel Alef," and then turned to me, "and you are Shmuel Beis!"

We personally hosted the Rebbe four times on his visits to L.A. During each trip, he was a tremendous inspiration to the *tzibbur* and to the *talmidei hayeshivos* he visited. The Rebbe had a presence of *gadlus* and *kedushah*, always packaged in visible humility. One Erev Shabbos, about an hour before Shabbos, the Rebbe remarked that he had a 30-year-old *minhag* to make *Kiddush* Friday night on wine that was not *mevushal*. Realizing it might be terribly difficult to procure such wine so close to Shabbos, he then insisted that he did not want to be *matriach* me, and that if it was at all difficult he would happily be *matir neder*. It goes without saying that we found the wine for the Rebbe, but I'll never forget his willingness to be *mevatel* a 30-year-old *minhag* to not bother a young *baal habayis*.

Over the years I have had many occasions to consult with the Rebbe on both personal and *tzibbur inyanim*. When we would discuss *tzibbur* issues, he would usually answer something like, "I trust your judgement — you will know what is proper to do," or "I think this is a possible way to accomplish it." I always left those conversations with a feeling of clear direction. While making sure that I understood what to do, the Rebbe's great *anivus* always came through. In that regard, as many know, he was *mevatel* his *daas* to those he felt were greater than himself. He spoke about that often at Agudah Conventions.

I once approached the Rebbe with a question regarding the *chinuch* of one of my children. He asked me if I



With Rabbi Sherer z"l (l) and Rabbi Yosef Elias z"l.

had discussed this issue with anyone else. I mentioned that 12 years before, I had discussed a similar issue about the same child with Rav Moshe, zt"l, and the Steipler, zt"l. Right away, he became upset. "And you are asking me to say something about this?" He refused to discuss it further.

What stood out to me most, however, was the Rebbe's genuine love and concern for every Yid. Paramount in that regard was his willingness to accept the title of Rosh Agud

das Yisroel in the wake of the *petirah* of Harav Moshe Sherer, zt"l. While he would always downplay the title, saying that he was merely the "*yada arichta*" of the Moetzes, in a practical sense it meant that in addition to leading a large yeshiva, *beis medrash* and *Chassidus*, he was intimately involved in the activities of Agudas Yisroel on a daily basis. How he fit all of those responsibilities into his day was wondrous. It was he who set the agenda for the American Torah velt,

who decided what *mussar* the *kehilah* needed to hear, and who was able to effectively say it.

I recall one *vort* that I heard from the Rebbe close to 45 years ago at a *teshuvah drashah* in Breuer's Yeshiva. The Rebbe quoted the *passuk* in *Eishes Chayil*, "*Lo sira l'veisa misheleg ki kol beisa lavush shanim*" — the *Eishes Chayil*'s family does not have to worry about the cold, because she dresses them all in woolen clothes. The Rebbe quoted a *Midrash*: "*Al tikra shanim ela shnayim, shne'amar, 'Paso'ach tiftach, nasson titein*" — Don't read it as 'woolen,' but rather as 'two,' as it states ... and then the *Midrash* brings a list of *mitzvos* written in the Torah with a double language, such as "*paso'ach tiftach*," "*nosson titein*," "*haanik taanik*," etc.

The Rebbe explained that Yidden do *mitzvos* from the heart. One sees this from the double language in the *pesukim* of *mitzvas gemilus chassadim*. The first word in each pair is the grammatical root of the verb and the second is the action itself. When a Jew, for example, opens his hand to give *tzedakah* (*tiftach*) it comes from his *shoresh*, or root (*paso'ach*).

Some 25-plus years after hearing this from the Rebbe, I had occasion to repeat it in front of him at an event in Los Angeles. I asked him if I had said it over correctly. His face lit up. He smiled at me and said, "*Emes...! Es iz a Shem MiShmuel!*"

Yehi zichro baruch.



# תתן אמת ליעקב

## Critical Questions — Enlightening Answers

*We present excerpts from a conversation with the Novominsker Rebbe held ten years ago, about some of the pressing issues facing our community. His prescient words are still relevant today.*

BY RABBI AVRAHAM HESCHEL & RABBI YOSEF RAPAPORT

*From its inception in 1910, Hamodia has served as a platform for expression and dissemination of Torah hashkafah, the eternal truth as articulated by our Torah leaders.*

**There is a growing crisis of placement of children in schools; this has spread even to communities that felt secure, where the people belong to a *kreiz*, and they were sure there was room for their *bachurim* or girls.**

*Al pi din* and *al pi yosher* – every boy and girl deserves to receive a *chinuch* that will enable them to grow into proper Yidden to the best of their potential. Proper Yidden means in their learning, their *yiras Shamayim*, and in *chinuch habanos*, to make them the best possible *bnos Yisrael* that our community can produce. And, of course, this is impossible without a school. This is of the highest priority to our *tzibbur*; boys and girls who need a *chinuch* cannot have all doors closed to them. It has happened, and it still does, that sometimes *mosdos hachinuch* turn the other way and say, let somebody else take in this girl or boy. That's not right.

There have been a number of times when I sat with other Rabbanim about placing girls who are out of school. I recall a meeting at which Harav Avrohom Pam, *zt"l*, was present, as well as, *ybl"e*, Harav Aharon Schechter, *shlita*.

A number of years ago, I attended such a meeting in Khal Chassidim regarding about thirty girls who were coming out of 8th grade and were not being accepted into a high school.

Israel Lefkowitz was very active in this matter; he called together the Rabbanim and the *menahelim*. The Mattersdorfer Rav, *shlita*, was present, Harav Aharon Schechter was present, and the matter was resolved, the children were placed...

It's a very difficult, very painful situation.... *Chinuch* is an *achrayus* for our entire *tzibbur*. It's not something that can be dumped on the father or mother, and others can look away. It's an *achrayus* of the community to see to it that children are educated. And therefore pressure has to be placed; everyone must meet together and share the burden in one way or another. And the Rabbanim have to take a leading role... and apply pressure on the *mosdos* to accept the various children.

**The Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah just released a statement in regard to internet use.**

We spent many hours on this statement.

**It strongly discourages the use of the internet and states that it is prohibited to have internet access without effective filters, but doesn't call for a ban on the internet...**

It's not possible to. One does not make a decree that most of the *tzibbur ein yecholin laamod bo*



(cannot withstand). The majority of the *tzibbur* uses the internet.

**There are *yungeleit* who are going into the workforce from *kollel*, or young married women, who sometimes have options; they can get internet-filtered jobs, or lower-paying jobs.**

A job today will require internet knowledge. I don't think you can get a job today where you don't... There is no choice...

I spoke recently in Chicago and in Baltimore and I said that *Yiddishkeit* has been made a lot easier to observe than years ago. I'm not talking about the old country, where the gentiles persecuted us. Even here in America, years ago Shabbos was a problem. *Kashrus* was a problem. There were not enough *mosdos hachinuch*. The *nisyonos* were of a different order.

All that has changed. Today Shabbos is almost not a problem at all. You can get *kashrus l'mehadrin* in the urban areas of Jewish life; you have the best *mosdos hachinuch*. Not only in New York City — in Chicago, in Detroit, in Cleveland. Today it is not difficult to be a Yid.

When I was a boy when I learned a *masechta*, the only *Shulchan Aruch* that had a *Ketzos* was the old European *Shulchan Aruch* that was printed in Lemberg [Lvov]. You were lucky if the page wasn't ripped out. Today a boy buys himself a *kovetz meforshim* [anthology of commentators] on each *masechta* and we have everything there, from Ramban to Rav Shmuel Rozovsky, the Pnei Yehoshua and the Nachalas Dovid and Rav Akiva Eiger and the Tzlach. Learning has [been] made easy. ArtScroll has translated *mikra*, *mishnah*, Talmud *Bavli*, *Yerushalmi*, and now *Midrash*. You

have an entire body of sacred literature today that people can read and enjoy. Today *Yiddishkeit* has been given to us on a silver platter. Today it is a *mechayeh* [pleasure] to be an *erliche* Yid. Today we have *vasikin minyanim* all over, a *mikveh* on every block.

So what did the *Ribbono shel Olam* do?

He made *yiras Shamayim* more difficult. Technology is full of *nisyonos* that are very difficult to overcome. Years ago the telephone was just an instrument to be able to communicate. With a tape recorder, you could hear *shiurim*. Today on a computer you can hear all of *Shas*, but the next button leads you to *Gehinnom*.

You press one button, you have all the *Rishonim* and *Acharonim*, you have an entire encyclopedia of Talmudic knowledge on the internet today. But if you push the next button, you're in *she'ol tachtis*. Make no mistake about it.

This never existed before. So on the one hand, the *Ribbono shel Olam* has made *Yiddishkeit* and Torah much more sweet, available and accessible. On the other hand, He has presented us, confronted us, with *nisyonos* that we never had before. *Yiras Shamayim* has become a lot more difficult today. A fourteen-year-old boy takes the bus to go to yeshiva and on the ten-minute ride on the bus, or when he goes on the subway he already saw *kol davar assur*. That's our problem today.

**What are the tools and mechanisms to be used to confront that test?**

The tools are *kirvas Elokim* [closeness to Hashem and *yiras Shamayim*. This is a great challenge to *mechanchim*: How to train towards *yiras Shamayim*, to make people understand, to make the young generation understand, that *kirvas Elokim*] is something that should be uppermost in people's lives. You have to bring the *Ribbono shel Olam* back into your lives, every moment of the day, not only when you learn the *gemara*.

[When] people have that feeling that we live with the *Ribbono shel Olam* all day long then it will be easier to pass a *nisayon* of *yiras Shamayim* on the internet.

When I was in Chicago — we had a big *kinus* there — I said something that I have also said to both the older and younger *bachurim* here in the Yeshiva.

What is the ultimate question in life? I like to answer this with a *mashal*. There are two people who are driving in an automobile; one is behind the wheel and the other one is being driven. So they're both going in the same direction, but the one behind the wheel is driving the car, he is in control; the other one is being taken along.

The ultimate question in life is as follows: Hash-



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em created us all with a body and a *neshamah* and He fused them together. Who is sitting behind the wheel? If the *neshamah* sits behind the wheel and the *guf* comes along, then the *guf* will eat matzah, the *guf* will put on *tefillin*, the *guf* will come along. But if the *guf* sits behind the wheel – it is a bitter *rachmanus*. The *guf* will lead one down to the worst places, and the *neshamah* will be *shlepped* along. The question in life is, these two forces are taking a journey through life, the *guf* and the *neshamah*, and they're both fused together in a Yid. Who is sitting behind the wheel? Is the *guf* driving you, driving the car, and the *neshamah* being dragged along? Or is the *neshamah* driving the car and the *guf* is coming along?

**A few months ago the Rebbe spoke in Flatbush at a meeting with Rabbanim about kids at risk, which was organized by Harav Mottel Twerski, the Hornosteipler Rebbe.**

Kids at risk are also a community responsibility. It's a *chovas hatzibur* to see to it that there are no kids at risk; it is not just for the parents. A person cannot say, "It's not my child, it's not my business."

What brings all this about and what are some of the ways that we can prevent this? And what are the ways that we can somehow reclaim some of these kids who are on the brink or off the *derech*?

It's important to understand that there is no single reason that is causing this.

A lot of children have come from the best of families. And they don't have learning disabilities and somehow wound up on the street. Of course, where there is a dysfunctional home, it's easy to see why ... kids grow up feeling that they are not making it, so there is somebody waiting for them in the street. And there are drugs waiting for them in

the streets.

But at the same time, it's not only that. Learning disabilities are a factor and the situation at home is a factor, but there could be many reasons.

...But one thing is clear: if a child is brought up in a way that makes *Yiddishkeit geshmak*, he enjoys it, he will not tend to go off. And I think this is very important for families and *mechanchim* to know.

One of the most important words in a Yiddish dictionary is *geshmak*. The Shabbos has to be *geshmak*, the social relationships have to be *geshmak* – but in a Yiddishe way, not with *rechilus* and *lashon hara*.

## Mitt a varemkeit.

*Varemkeit*, exactly, that's an important point. Where there's *varemkeit* in the home then he enjoys the Shabbos, enjoys speaking to his parents. There is a feeling that boosts his self-esteem. Where there is a sour mood at home ... how is *Yiddishkeit* made attractive to him? ...A Yiddishe lifestyle has to be made enjoyable.

It is very important to bring up your children with a spirit of *lieb huben* a Yid, with *kiruv rechokim* and *kiruv krovim*.

But it has to be done in a way where the children become part of the experience. But if he's bored stiff at the Shabbos table, the parents are talking to the *orchim* and he feels totally ignored, left out ... you sacrificed the *chinuch* of your child for the sake of *orchim*....

One of the kids at risk told a mentor: "Nobody put his arm around me; I was ignored."

Even more striking: One of them said to his teacher, "You can punish me, you can hit me, but you can't ignore me."

If you ignore him, you make him feel like dirt, so how do you expect him to have self-esteem? If he doesn't have any self-esteem in our society, he is going to [look for it elsewhere] because there are guys waiting for



Hebrew Language Yated Ne'eman  
A rare picture of the Novominsker Rebbe, Zt"l, during a visit to Eretz Yisrael. He is planting in the *karka* of the chareidi Moshav Yesodot near Yerushalayim.

him in the street.

The only way to confront the problem is to make the life of a young person enjoyable, and you should be able to discern a problem when he's 8 or 10 or 14 – if there is something bothering him, if he is socially not adept, if he's he's falling behind in class, maybe he is in the wrong school. Maybe he needs a tutor. But you have to address the problem and not allow him to fall into *yiush* [despair].

...It's a very complex problem; it's not black and white, there are all kinds of shades. Why did Hashem create *bein hashmashos*? Why does such a phenomenon exist as dusk, where light and dark operate in a mixture? That is our *matzav* today.

With the yeshivos full of wonderful scholars, with *vasikin davening*, with *mikvaos*, with everything good – it's wonderful to be a Jew today. But darkness is mixed in.

**There is such a thing as a typical Eretz Yisraeldige Yid, a Poilishe Yid, an Ungarisher Yid. America is full of nisyonos, as we discussed. Is there something unique about the Amerikanisher Yid?**

The Amerikanisher Yid is a product of all the influences that the chassidishe *velt*, the yeshivishe *velt*, has put in. ...60 years ago, as far as I can remember of that generation of

immigrants, [most of] their children were all lost. Today's Amerikanisher *charedi* Yid is an amalgam of the chassidishe influence and the yeshivish influence after the war. Rav Aharon Kotler revolutionized Torah learning here, and the Rebbes too, the Satmar Rebbe and the Skverer Rebbe, revolutionized the idea of *Chassidus* here in America.

So the Amerikaner *chareidishe* Yid is subject to both, for the better, plus the fact that he speaks the language, he has more self-esteem than the Europeishe Yid.

The Europeishe Yid felt persecuted, he lived in poverty; the American Jew is economically a lot better off. He is out in the world, he is not embarrassed to be himself; he feels more self-confident about what he does. He doesn't have to look over his shoulder so much. ... My father, *zt"l*, told me that when he came to America and he saw a policeman, he walked on the other side of the street. America is a *malchus shel chessed*.

...The Amerikanisher Yid is a great doer of *chesed*. This is the blessing and merit of our community. The *chesed* that American Jews exhibit is unmatched and unprecedented.

The *Amerikana frumme* Yid is still in the process of being molded, but it's a beautiful product – the *gemilus chassadim*, the Torah – everything.



Rabbi Avraham Heschel with the Rebbe



# תתן אמת ליעקב



At a wedding of the Finkel family. (L-R) Hagaon Harav Nosson Tzvi Finkel, *zt"l*; the *chassan*; Hagaon Harav Gershon Edelstein, *shlita*; the Novominsker Rebbe, *zt"l*; *ybl"ch*, Harav Gedalia Fink.



At Kever Rachel.

