

# A Chossid Without Fanfare

The life story of Reb Shoel Moshe and Mrs Chaya Liba Klein

English edition of:

חסיד ללא פעמונים

Teshura from the bris of

Shoel שי' Levin

כ"ז טבת תשפ"א

## Preface

This history of the Klein, Chusidov and Massin families, and the life story of Reb Shoel Moshe and Mrs. Chaya Liba Klein was originally compiled in honor of the wedding of Harav Shmuel Gurary to Mrs. Chaya Liba (Levin,) on Chof Zayin Adar Sheini 5768 — 2008.

It was compiled and written in the Hebrew language by a cousin, Harav Shneur Zalman Berger.

It has now been translated to English by Eliyahu Baron, and is presented to you in the pages that follow, in honor of the Bris of Shoel 'ש' Levin on Chof Zayin Teves 5781.

Reading this book, you will learn about the lives of Reb Shoel Moshe and Mrs. Chaya Liba *a"b*, whose home in Tashkent was one of the centers of the Chabad community in that city for many years. The secret *minyán*, *kaparos*, *matza* baking, and all matters of holiness were hosted in their home and yard. They continued their work once they reached Eretz Yisroel, where Reb Moshe did much for the good of the immigrants from the Soviet Union in general, and his brothers, the chassidim who lived in Nachalas Har Chabad, in particular. His wife, Mrs. Chaya Liba helped him in this, and would also host students from public schools for Shabbos and *Yom Tov*, as was done those years in Nachalas Har Chabad.

We trust that you will be entertained by the story of their lives, and inspired by the example they set.

May we merit the complete redemption very speedily, with the *Hisgalus* of the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach Shlita.

יחי אדוננו מורנו ורבינו מלך המשיח לעולם ועד

Levin Family  
Teves 5781

## Table of Contents

<b>Chapter One</b> — From Galicia to Lubavitch .....	5
<b>Chapter Two</b> — The Lubavitch Community in Burtyuk .....	14
<b>Chapter Three</b> — Hosting Guests during the Holocaust .....	21
<b>Chapter Four</b> — Deprived of Rights .....	27
<b>Chapter Five</b> — A Meeting House for Chassidim .....	36
<b>Chapter Six</b> — Chossid without Bells and Fanfare .....	44
<b>Chapter Seven</b> — Hosting Guests by the Rebbe .....	50

## Chapter One — From Galicia to Lubavitch

### Pleasure from Doing Another Yid a Favor

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Physical and spiritual action, accomplished with simplicity and humility — these words personify the chossid, Reb Shoel Moshe and his *rebbetzin*, Mrs. Chaya Liba Klein. They were both raised with the value of *mesiras nefesh* embedded deep within them. Their parents were constantly harassed by the communist government of Russia for their activities for *Yiddishkeit*, and they too endeavoured to do good for other Yidden, whatever their circumstances. They initially established their home together in Tashkent, and it quickly became a gathering place for Chabad chassidim.

Reb Moshe translated the *mesiras nefesh* of Russia to continued *mesiras nefesh* after he left for Eretz Yisroel, when he began rigorous activities without relaxing for the good of his fellow Chabad chassidim who had left Russia for Eretz Yisroel, and had settled in Nachalas Har Chabad. He would greet the new immigrant chassidim, helping them find a place to live and furniture. He would take care of the elderly and needy, arrange *farbrengens*, and take a break from this work every day to do *mitvza* tefillin.



Reb Shoel Moshe and his wife, Mrs. Chaya Liba Klein

His *biskashrus* to the Rebbe knew no bounds, and he merited to be with the Rebbe every Tishrei after he left Russia, where he invested his energy and organizing skills to help accommodate the guests who came to be with the Rebbe.

It is hard to describe his dedication for the good of the public, and the special pleasure he derived from doing favors for Yidden. His brother, Reb Lipa Klein put it this way: “You cannot film a *nes homo*.”

But, we can at least describe the practical. In the pages which follow, we will tell the story of his life, and descriptions from his family and friends, who are still amazed by his impressive accomplishments for the community and for the individual.

This will teach us a bit about the special souls which were Reb Shoel Moshe and Mrs. Chaya Liba.

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### Tomchei Temimim in Poltava

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Reb Shoel Moshe Klein was born on Hei Teves, 5687 — 1927, in Poltava, Ukraine, to his parents Harav Shmuel Menachem and Mrs. Miryam Klein *a”b*. Harav Shmuel Menachem Mendel hailed from Turka, Galicia, (present-day Ukraine.) During the first world war, he was exiled by the Russians together with his family to Siberia, as “prisoners of war.” At the war’s end, they were allowed to return home; but, along the long way home from Siberia to Galicia, Reb Shmuel Menachem changed his plans.

It happened when the train arrived in Poltava for an extended stopover. The Klein family left the train station to look around the city, and by *hashgacha protis*, Reb Shmuel Menachem met a few Lubavitch chassidim who lived in the city. When they realized the young man’s qualities, they convinced him to remain in the city and learn in the local, underground branch of *yeshivas* Tomchei Temimim.

After difficult deliberation, Reb Shmuel Menachem decided to part with his family, and join the yeshiva. The dean of the yeshiva at that time was Reb Shmuel Leib Levin *a”b*. The Rosh Yeshiva and Mashgiach for *nigla* was Harav Yehuda Eber *hy”d*, and the Mashpia was Harav Yechezkel Feigin *hy”d*, who later became the Frierdiker Rebbe’s secretary. These three giants had quite an impression on the young *bochur*, and he began following the ways of chassidus Chabad, one step after another.

Another chossid who had a great impression on him was Harav Shlomo Chaim Keselman, who was exiled by the communists to Poltava, and had the courage to continue inspiring the *bochurim* to strengthen themselves in their study of *nigla* and chassidus.

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### The Lipsker Family Wedding in Their Yard

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After a few years of intense Torah learning, Reb Shmuel Menachem began working in a sunflower-oil factory, which was owned by Harav Shneur Zalman Chusidov. Reb Shmuel Menachem learned the work quickly, became the on-site director, And slowly became a member of the household of R Shoel Moshe chusidov, the father of the owner of the factory.



Great-grandfather: Harav Shoel Moshe Chusidov



Great-grandmother: Mrs. Ita Leah Chusidov



Grandfather: Harav Shneur Zalman Chusidov



Grandmother: Mrs. Doba Chusidov



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In 5682 — 1922 a typhus plague ravaged Poltava. Harav Shneur Zalman caught it, and passed away on Daled Sivan. After a few months, a *shidduch* with Reb Shenur Zalman's daughter, Miryam, was suggested to Reb Shmuel Menachem. The wedding took place in Kislev of 5683, and the young couple settled in Poltava.

About two years after their wedding, their first-born son, Harav Shneur Zalman Klein entered their home. On Hei Teves, 5687, their second son was born. For the *bris*, the father wavered as to who would be honored with being *sandek*, but at the end, he decided to honor the *rov* of the Lubavitch community in Poltava, Harav Berel Greenpass. The child was named after his great-grandfather, Harav Shoel Moshe Chusidov, who had passed away a few years earlier.

The house in which Reb Shoel Moshe Klein was raised was wide open to guests. One of the cherished memories of his brother, Reb Zalman, is of Harav Arye Leib *a"b* Lipsker's *chasuna*, which took place in the Klein family's yard, in Poltava.

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### Moving with the Hope of Better Livelihood

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When Reb Shoel Moshe was three years old, the family moved to the big city of Leningrad, (present-day S. Petersburg,) Russia. They lived in the Pushkin suburb, where there was a small Lubavitch community.

They moved there with the hope of a better economic outlook. At that time, a bitter famine engulfed Ukraine. A few of Reb Shoel Moshe's uncles had moved to Leningrad, and they asked their sister, Miryam and her husband, Reb Shmuel Menachem to join them there. The Klein family agreed, and together with Miryam's mother, Doba Chusidov, packed their bags, and made the journey to Pushkin. In Pushkin, their third son, Harav Lipa was born.

They supported themselves there through manufacturing socks and other textile products at home, with a few small sewing machines. They would take their products and sell them at the market, which brought in a little profit. Their business was not legal, and police officers once caught Miryam on her way to the market with her products, and brought her home for a search, at the end of which they decided to confiscate everything the Kleins owned. At the end, their furniture was not confiscated, but the anguish caused by this episode — coupled with their difficult monetary circumstances would be hard to describe.

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### The Pushkin Suburb

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The Pushkin suburb of Leningrad had previously been named "Tsarskoye Selo — Tsar's Village," because it was near the vacation palace of the Tsar. The village was a popular vacation spot, and many would come there in the summer months to breathe the refreshing air.



After the communist revolution, the name of the village was changed to “Detskoye Selo — Children’s Village,” and a few years later, to “Pushkin.” This small village was fifteen and a half miles away from Leningrad, and was considered an independent municipality. However, during the time that the Klein family lived there, it was annexed to Leningrad, and was considered one of the big city’s neighborhoods.

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### Shul in the Klein Family’s Basement

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The Rebbe Maharash first located the now famous painting of the Alter Rebbe in Pushkin, and in 5650 — 1880, the Rebbe Maharash stayed there for a week. In the year 5662 — 1882, the Frierdiker Rebbe stayed in the village for a night, in the home of the chossid and activist, Reb Eliezer Elianski.

Before the revolution, Jews were forbidden from living in S. Petersburg (Leningrad) and other large cities. Only after the revolution, during the years of famine and persecution did chassidim begin arriving in the big cities, among them Petersburg, which had been renamed Leningrad. Some families decided to live in Pushkin, the small village nearby, which was far from the center of things and the eyes of the secret police.

Members of the Pushkin Lubavitch community included the *rov*, Harav Avrohom Eliyahu Plotkin *a”h*, who was a great *gaon*, with amazingly sharp understanding and depth; Harav Shmuel Marozov *hy”d*, the son of Harav Chonye Marozov *hy”d*, the secretary of the Frierdiker Rebbe; Harav Shneur Zalman Kalmonson *a”h*, the son of Harav Yekusiel *a”h*; and Harav Yisroel Shimon Kalmonson *a”h*, together with his daughter, Mrs. Feiga *a”h*, and her husband, the known *mashpia*, Harav Berke Chein *a”h*.



Harav Shmuel Menachem and Mrs. Miryam Klein with their grandchildren

Young Shoel Moshe had relatives in town. Besides for his parents and grandmother, his mother’s siblings also lived there. Reb Kalman Chusidov *a”h*, together with his wife, Mrs. Fruma *a”h*, Mrs. Sara *a”h*, wife of Harav Avrohom Kapuvski *hy”d*, and the youngest sister, Ita Leah Chusidov.

As the community developed, Reb Shmuel Menachem established a Chabad *minyan* in the basement of his home. *Minyonim* took place there three times a day, and on Shabbos, lively *farbrengens* were held. Harav Lipa Klein relates:

“Our home was in an apartment building, and included one large room. Partitions separated our bedrooms, and most of the home served as a *shul*. The Plotkin family lived a floor above us, and when we needed to call them to help with a *minyan*, we would bang on our ceiling, and Harav Plotkin and his sons would arrive a few minutes later.

“Besides for *davening* and *farbrengens*, *simchas*, such as a few weddings of chassidim also took place there.”

The *chassidishe* life surrounded the *shul*, and because of the great fear those days, the only sukka in town was built near it. One year, the local gentiles destroyed the sukka, and the chassidim were then forced to walk twelve and a half miles to the Steri-Selo neighborhood, where they found a sukka near the *shul*.

The unofficial *rov* of the Lubavitch community in Pushkin was Harav Plotkin, who had previously served as the rabbi in different cities throughout the Soviet Union, before moving to Pushkin because of persecution by the authorities. Externally, he performed various jobs to support his family, but in truth, even during these hard years, he made sure to spread Torah to young and old. The brothers Reb Zalman and Reb Shoel Moshe Klein were among those who studied under Harav Plotkin.

Reb Lipa Klein tells about the education they received at home:

“My father *a”b* was careful that we receive an education of pure holiness, and did not want me to know the Russian language. When a book in the Russian language would turn up at home, by chance, he would immediately throw it out of the house. I received great support for this lifestyle from the *shul*’s attendees. I was a young boy then, and it would often happen that one of them would take me to the side and test me on the letters of the *alef-beis*.

“Because of my young age, I did not have to go study in the public school, but my older brothers were forced to go, because of the law. They only went to school on the weekdays, always remaining at home on Shabbos, using all types of excuses. However, the teachers and principles were not convinced by these reasons, and would say: ‘Your father grows a beard, and there is no doubt that he is an observant Jew. It is clearly only for this reason that you do not attend studies on Shabbos.’

“True joy would fill the home when my brothers would return from studies at public school, and would sit down to learn Torah for the entire afternoon and evening. This would usually be with our neighbor, Harav Plotkin, and sometimes with other chassidim who volunteered to teach. During these hours, I would also learn — *alef-beis* and some reading, together with my friend Meir Simcha, the son of Reb Berke Chein.”

## You Will Teach Me What Siberia Is?

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The men of the secret police monitored the happenings in their suburb, and Reb Shmuel Menachem, who held the Chabad *minyan* in his home was interrogated again and again. Despite their threats, he continued doing as he saw fit, and continued to host the *chassidishe minyan* in his home.

Harav Klein did not say much about his interrogations, and only told his son about one of many. This interrogation happened on Shabbos. At the head of the table sat three interrogators, their chief being a Jewish colonel. This colonel read to Harav Klein letters written by chassidim, which had been found during searches of his home.

One of the letters was written in *Loshon Hakodesh*, and included acronyms and hard words; but the Jewish interrogator was quite knowledgeable, and understood everything, asking for more details. However, Harav Klein kept his counsel and did not agree to answer the interrogator's questions.

During this interrogation, they also questioned him about his activities to strengthen *Yiddishkeit* in his area, and about the *Yiddishe chinuch* he gave his three sons. It angered the interrogators that his sons learnt Torah with Harav Plotkin and other chassidim. They said to him: "Learn chassidus, *daven*, but give your children to us, and let us educate them."

The interrogation lasted many hours, and the interrogators threatened him that if he would not tell them what they wanted to hear, they would send him to Siberia, where "There is enough room for Jews like you."



Leningrad in the 1920s

The repeated threats caused Harav Klein to angrily snap at his interrogators: "You will teach me what Siberia is?! I was sent to Sibeira by the previous regime, and after a few years of suffering, you, the communists freed me — and now you want to send me to Siberia again for no reason?!"

The interrogators understood that they would not gain any information from this man, and they decided to send him home. After hours of exhausting interrogations, they warned him not to tell anyone about his interrogation, and instructed him to sign a transcript of his interrogation and go home. But he refused to sign, and said just the words, "Today is Shabbos." The interrogators were baffled by his strange behavior, and without choice, Harav Klein remained there until after Shabbos, signed the transcript, and went home.

Ten years passed after their arrival in Pushkin, excited preparations were underway for Reb Shoel Moshe's bar mitzva, which took place on Hei Teves 5700 — 1940. During those difficult years, when tens of Chabad chassidim in Leningrad were exiled or shot, it was extremely difficult to obtain kosher tefillin; but Reb Shmuel Menachem would not forgo tefillin for his son, and managed to obtain them. His aunt, Mrs. Sara Kapuvski prepared a special tefillin bag to hold them in, with beautiful embroidery.

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### Smuggling Seforim

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There was a great shortage of *seforim* in the Soviet Union, for the communists would continuously confiscate *seforim* from private homes and *shuls*. It was specifically when dark clouds covered Europe, and the second world war was at its height that a special "shipment" of *seforim* reached Pushkin.

When Russia conquered numerous neighboring countries in the summer of 1940, including Galicia, (under their agreement with Nazi Germany,) Reb Shmuel Menachem was able to visit his parents and relatives in Turka, Galicia, who he hadn't seen in about twenty years. He did not know that this would be his last time seeing them. They all perished in the Holocaust, *by"d*.

When he returned to Leningrad, he brought along many holy *seforim*, because the Russians had not yet managed to confiscate all the *seforim* in Galicia, which they had just conquered. He worried the entire way home that he would be stopped by the police. But, with great miracles he arrived home in peace, together with the *seforim* which were a greatly desired and rare commodity during those dark days.

## Chapter Two — The Lubavitch Community in Burtyuk

### The Chassidim's Escape

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A new chapter in Reb Shoel Moshe's life began during the second world war. In the summer of 1941, about two years after the war's start, Germany invaded the Soviet Union. The red army suffered defeat after defeat, and the Nazis advanced with great speed. Citizens of the Soviet Union, and especially Jews, began a mass flight from the front.

When the Nazis neared Leningrad, a group of the Lubavitch community of Pushkin, including the Klein family, escaped together to the unknown, with one goal in mind: to put distance between themselves and the front — and quickly.

Among this group were Shoel Moshe's relatives: his grandmother, Mrs. Doba Chusidov, his uncle, Reb Kalman Chusidov, with his wife Mrs. Fruma and their newborn son, his aunt, Mrs. Sara Kapuvski and her daughter, Mrs. Zelda Kozliner.



Harav Shmuel Menachem and Mrs. Miryam Klein with their children: Zalman (back), Shoel Moshe (right), and Lipa (center.) This picture was taken during the second world war

Among the group were the families of Harav Plotkin, the Kalmonsons, Harav Shmuel Galperin, his daughter-in-law, Mrs. Bluma and her son, Reb Reuven Galperin.

With great miracles, the group managed to ride one of the last trains out of Leningrad. When the train went on its way, two chassidim who did not know when would be the next time they would see their family members who remained on the platform: Harav Avorhom Kapuvski, the husband of Sara, and Harav Shimon Galperin, the husband of Bluma. They were both forcefully recruited to the red army, and they were only allowed to part with their families. It ended up that this was the last time Reb Avrohom Kapuvski saw his family, for he did not return from the front, *hy"d*. Harav Shimon Galperin did return home at the war's end.

### Travelling Under Fire

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The journey began and feelings were mixed: On the one hand, it was clear that they had been saved from death for the meantime, but no one knew where the train was traveling, and where they would live. The chassidim took along with them a few holy *seforim*, which were hidden in pillows and bedding, and Harav Shneur Zalman Kalmonson carried a Sefer Torah with him.

The train traveled quickly to avoid the German bombardment. But, the enemy planes would not give up, and chased the trains to try and derail them. When the planes' bombs would begin zeroing in, the conductor would be forced to stop the train, and all the passengers would evacuate to the nearby forest, where they hid until the danger passed.

After every bombing, the group was exposed to horrible scenes of the bodies of people who had not managed to escape the train on time. When the remaining passengers returned to the train, they would find the remaining intact train cars, and pack into them. These scenes were understandably harder on the younger members of the group — fourteen year old Shoel Moshe among them.

After traveling for three days, the train reached the town of Yaroslavl. The food that the group had brought along was already depleted, and the women began gathering grass and roots, from which they prepared a form of patties, which were terribly bitter, but able to sustain them.

After a short rest in Yaroslavl, the group of chassidim boarded the ship "Sofia Pirovsky" which sailed on the Volga River. It was a cruise ship whose splendor was still evident. But the danger was not over yet. The German planes bombarded the ship as well, and only with open miracles did the Germans not succeed in their efforts to sink it. The chassidim later heard that the ship was sunk by German bombs on its way back.



## Burtyuk Kolkhoz — District of Bashkiria

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After a few days' journey, the passengers transferred to a small boat, which traveled through an inlet which extends from the Volga, called "Uh," and from it, to an inlet called "Kaga," until they reached a tall ridge which extended high above the river, at the top of which, was a small kolkhoz (collective farm,) named "Burtyuk." The entire journey had taken about three weeks.

When the group of chassidim reached the shore, a rumor reached the members of the kolkhoz that the travellers were Jewish, and a large crowd went down to the river bank to see these creatures called "Jews."

"We have never seen Jews," they explained. "Based on the descriptions we'd heard, we thought you were supposed to be weird creatures from another planet..." And yet, the kolkhoz members were eager to help the travelers climb the steps etched into the cliff, and reach the path which would bring them to the kolkhoz. It was a long trek, with dangerous climbs and curves, but at the end, the group of chassidim reached the kolkhoz where they would live for two years!

The Burtyuk kolkhoz was located in an autonomous state within the Soviet Union, called Bashkiria (or Bashkortostan.) The state is located on the west side of the Ural mountains, with its capital city in Ufa.

The place was remote and far from any urban center. There was no electricity, water pipes, or gas supply. The residents were mostly illiterate Tatars, who spoke only Tatar and not Russian. The group of chassidim from the big city of Leningrad had a very hard time digesting that they would have to live in such a primitive place — but they knew that they were in a safe location, far from the front. Having no choice, they began to learn the customs and language of the place.

Each family received a small home, and as soon as they got there, they began arranging *minyanim* and sometimes also *farbrengens*. The small community had a *rov*: Harav Plotkin, and also a *chazan* and *shochet*: Harav Shmuel Galperin — but yet, community life was odd and different for them. While there, Harav Galperin once said: "Now, we do not need a special arousal to cry during *davening*. The hardships of the war and the conditions here provide good enough reasons to cry..."

Despite the great hardship, the Klein family children Learned Torah. Reb Shmuel Menachem taught his three sons. He taught Shneur Zalman and Shoel Moshe chumash and gemoro, and his younger son, Lipa, reading and chumash.

Work was hard to come by. In the beginning, the women conceived original ways of acquiring food: They cut bedding and tablecloths they had brought with them, and decorated them with colorful paints. Other women created other handmade commodities, and they would trade these with the locals for food.

There were no local men in the kolkhoz during this time, because they had all been drafted and sent to the front. Organized shipments of food were still being sent during the first months of the war, but this completely ended as the second year of the war began. Because of this, the male chassidim were forced to farm the fields of the village.

A “Jewish Farmer” was an unheard of concept during those days in Russia, as the government was opposed to allotting plots of land to Jews. But during the war, they obligated the chassidim to roll up their sleeves, and head out to the fields. They were forced to learn a new line of work, and the process was difficult — but they did not have another choice. Only those who worked received food. At the end of every month, the work hours of every resident was calculated, and they received payment in accordance: flour, potatoes, etc. Whoever was given work was very happy.

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### Matza Baking which Caused a Fire

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New troubles befell the chassidim before they managed getting used to life in the kolkhoz. The first injured soldiers, who were members of the kolkhoz, began arriving home. These husbands and sons of the kolkhoz thought that the Jews were responsible for the war and their suffering. Truly difficult days began, as the injured soldiers would drink themselves drunk at night, and come banging on the windows of the chassidim’s homes, while cursing at Jews. There was great fear. The chassidim worried that the day would soon come when the soldiers would expel them from the kolkhoz.



Tashkent, Uzbekistan

There was a law in the kolkhoz that ovens could not be lit during the hot day, so that fires should not break out and burn the wooden homes. If someone would light a fire and smoke would rise from their chimney, firefighters and police would arrive quickly to put out the fire and punish the offender.

Therefore, when it was time to bake *matzos* for Pesach, it was decided that this would be done in a home where they would block the chimney, so it wouldn't be noticeable that they were transgressing the law.

The idea worked and many *matzos* were baked, but after a few days, the heat which built up in the home because they had blocked the chimney caused a fire which burnt down the home. It was only through miracles that no one was hurt.

The kolkhoz members who saw the fire surrounded the house and shouted, "Why did you light a fire like this?" and began cursing the Yidden. Through Hashem's kindness, they did not hurt anyone.

### **Sad News**

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The chassidim lived almost completely isolated from the big world for the two years that they lived in the village. There were no radios, and there was only an ancient telegraph machine in the local post office, which hardly worked. Letters which arrived were scrupulously censored, and no one knew or was able to estimate the going-on on the battlefronts throughout the country and Europe.

The small community was filled with shock and bewilderment when a letter from the red army arrived, stating that Reb Avrohom Kapuvski, husband of Sara, was no longer alive. Reb Avrohom had fought at the front near Leningrad, and passed away from a heart attack. The family was given the secular date of Reb Avrohom's passing, and were amazed to quickly ascertain that it was on Yud Tes Kislev, Rosh Hashana of Chassidus. Mrs. Sara Kapuvski mourned her husband, and her brother, Reb Kalman Chusidov, and sister, Mrs. Miriam Klein tried to comfort her.

### **From Gehinom to the Big City**

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At the start of 5703, a letter reached Reb Shoel Moshe's mother from her brother, Reb Yisroel Chusidov. He wrote that he was currently living in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, where he had fled during the war with many other chassidim. He suggested that the family join him and move to Tashkent, until the chaos would end.

Miryam barely finished reading the letter when she fainted. When she was awoken, she asked in a daze: "We're living in a tiny, forsaken kolkhoz at the end of the world, without any medicine, and with almost no food; we don't see any other Yidden, and

all the troubles in the world are falling upon us — and he's **asking** if we would like to leave this *gebinom* and move to a big city with a developed *Yiddishe* community?!"

The Klein family informed all the chabad families in Burtyuk that there was somewhere to go. They all immediately began their preparations for travel. But it soon became evident that there was a lot in the way of them getting to Tashkent. The war was still at its height, and the communist government demanded of each citizen traveling from one city to another to produce an invitation from a family member in their destination city.

Reb Shmuel Menachem Klein wrote to his brother-in-law, Reb Yisroel Chusidov about the problem, and after a few weeks, false documents for all the *anash* families in Burtyuk arrived at the Burtyuk post office. This enabled all of them to leave the forsaken kolkhoz, and be on their way to Tashkent.

The documents were not professionally forged, but the creators of the documents as well as the chabad families in Burtyuk both relied on the fact that the local security personnel could barely read and write. The documents were signed by Reb Elle Lipsket as Interior Minister, and Reb Zalman Sudakevich as Justice Minister...

At this point, the families packed up their belongings, said friendly goodbyes to their Tatar neighbors who usually treated them positively, got on horse-drawn carts and set off on their journey.

Their first goal was to descend safely from the cliff on which the kolkhoz was situated. The ride was extremely slow, with the women and children sitting on the carts with the packages, while the men walked by foot near the carts. There were some startling moments when descending the cliff, such as when one of the horses accelerated at a sharp turn, and the passengers in the cart fell into piles of snow and ice on the side of the road. After three days of travel, everyone arrived safely at the train station.

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### Shabbos on the Train

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At the station, they met "ordinary," literate and Russian-speaking people for the first time in two years, and of course, they also met Yidden who told them the little they knew about the events of the war, and especially the terrible Holocaust — which began with the imprisonment of Jews in ghettos and extermination camps, and was continuing with the extermination of millions of Yidden. They were all terribly shaken upon hearing this bitter news.

Reb Lipa Klein remembers: "We knew that the journey would take a long time, and there was great deliberation whether to travel on Shabbos or not. Some of the chassidim argued that there was no valid leniency to travel on Shabbos, and the

deliberation was as to the degree of danger to life in staying put over Shabbos. After extensive discussion, it was decided (to everyone's agreement) that the situation mandated traveling on Shabbos.

“When Shabbos arrived, my mother spread out a white tablecloth on the table of our train car, and after *maariv*, my father made *kiddush*. Everything was done quietly, and without unnecessary conspicuity which could bring tragedy upon us.”

After traveling by train for two weeks, the group of chassidim reached Tashkent, where they discovered, to their shock, a large community of refugee Chabad chassidim, who had arrived there from all over the Soviet Union, including close friends from Leningrad.



Resting place of Shoel Moshe and Shneur Zalmen Chusidov

## Chapter Three — Hosting Guests during the Holocaust

### Hunger

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Mrs. Klein's brother, Reb Yisroel Chusidov took care of the family after they arrived in Tashkent. He helped them with renting a small apartment in the Kursu neighborhood, where about ten *anash* families lived at the time. During this harsh period, Reb Shoel Moshe absorbed true education for *ahavas yisroel*, when, despite the difficult monetary situation, his parents opened their home to refugees who were starving for bread, in the most literal sense.

Many chassidim escaped the danger of battle, and chose to come to Uzbekistan, where, before the war, *shluchim* of the *rabbeim* had resided. Most chassidim settled in the city of Samarkand, and a minority settled in the capital city of Tashkent.

The situation of the Chabad refugees was not good. Thousands of refugees arrived in the city, the majority of them without food or money, only carrying a few portable objects. Many roamed the streets without knowing where they would lay their heads that night.

After the first few months of chassidim being in Tashkent, two concentrations of chassidim formed in the city. The larger was in the area of "Starigord" — the old city of Tashkent, and the second concentration was in "Kursu" — a neighborhood on the edge of the city. In the coming years, most of the chassidim who had settled in Kursu moved to Starigord.

In the beginning, the government tried to help the refugees a bit. However, they were unable to cope with the difficult tasks of finding lodging and work for the large quantities of refugees who constantly streamed into Tashkent. There wasn't enough bread in the stores to fill the need, which had drastically risen with the arrival of the refugees.

When the Klein family arrived in Tashkent, the situation was a little better, as the government had organized the distribution of bread, based on bread-cards. But despite this, there was still a strong hunger, and disease spread throughout the refugee population. This situation did not avoid the Chabad chassidim, many of whom sadly fell ill, or returned their souls to their maker.



## An Open Door to Refugees

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Many chassidim opened their homes to families who could not find a roof over their heads. These chassidim, who until a few days or weeks earlier were themselves looking for a place to stay, began hosting individuals and families, temporarily or permanently — regardless of the fact that they did not have a way to support themselves.

A comprehensive review of the chief activists who helped care for the Jewish refugees in Tashkent is to be found in the book, “History of the Jews in Central Asia.” Among those listed are Harav (Shemuel Menachem) Mendel Klein, who worked intensively for the refugees in general, and especially for the *frum* and Chabad ones.

The Klein family were one of the leaders in taking care of the many refugees who flocked to Tashkent. The family home was an address for hospitality; weddings, *brisim* and *fabrengens* were also held there.

Harav Nosson Kanelski relates: “During the war, I arrived in Tashkent with my mother, without anything. We were hosted many times in the Klein family home. Mrs. Miryam Klein treated each guest as a king. The moment you arrived in their home, she would immediately serve you a plate of varied and delicious food.

The chossid Reb Eliyahu Volovik, then a young *bochur*, lived in their home for half a year. He greatly admired the personality of the father of the family, Reb Shmuel Menachem: “He was a quiet Jew, humble and easygoing with others, and never raised his voice. He would sit and learn until the wee hours of the morning.”

The chossid Reb Berel Pruss remembered: “Reb Shmuel Menachem was a Yid of the previous generation, who hosted guests with great devotion. Even when his livelihood was not plentiful, his home was always full of guests who enjoyed lodging and food.”

Many *farbrengens* took place in their home during this period, and Reb Shmuel Menachem would often tell stories of the great chassidim of Poltava and other cities.

## Learning with Reb Shlomo Chaim

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While the war raged, *chadorim* and yeshivos were established in Tashkent for the Chabad boys and *bochurim*. They toiled in their learning notwithstanding the hunger and hardship which was their lot. Together with other children of chassidim, Reb Shoel Moshe and Reb Zalman learnt with Harav Shlomo Chaim Keselman, who had greatly influenced their father in his youth. The Klein brothers felt especially close with Reb Shlomo Chaim, and years later, Reb Zalman would relate how Reb Shlomo Chaim would secretly let them in on where the *fabrengens* would take place.

During this period, they were also influenced by Harav Nissan Nemanov, who lived in Tashkent at first, before moving to Samarkand; and also afterward would periodically visit Tashkent in his capacity as *menabel* of Tomchei Temimim. Reb Yosef Yitzchok (son of Reb Zalmen) Klein told about his long-lasting impact:

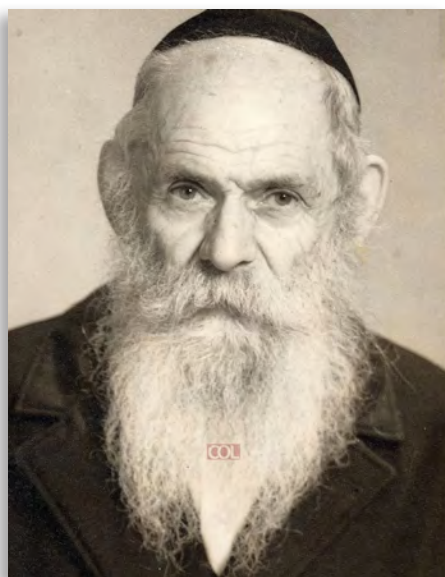
“During my uncle Reb Shoel Moshe’s last year, I once visited him during his breakfast. I watched him prepare bread smeared with butter. When he was ready to eat it, he cut it into small cubes, and ate one cube after another. I wondered about this, but I refrained from asking him about it. The matter bothered me, and so, I asked my father, Reb Zalman *a”h* why his brother ate like this. My father replied:

“During the war, butter would be found for the *bochurim* from time to time. Being that they suffered from hunger, they ate the bread they had smeared with butter quickly. When Reb Nissan saw this, he scolded them saying that for *iskafia*, they should instead cut the bread and butter to small cubes, and eat it like that. My brother, Reb Shoel Moshe, was there when Reb Nissan said this, and he follows this protocol until this day.”

### **Breaking Through the Window**

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Many chassidim managed to leave the Soviet Union after the war, but others, the Klein family among them, did not manage to leave. A short time after the war, the Klein family moved to the Starigord neighborhood; the address was 61 Yangi Machla street.



Harav Shlomo Chaim Keselman



Harav Nissan Nemanov

Despite his ill health, Reb Shmuel Menachem did not stop his activities for the community. During the first years after the war, he was the *gabai* of the *shul* near his residence, until one day, the men of KGB raided the *shul*, sealing it under lock and key.

Reb Shoel Moshe and his brother Reb Zalman *a"b* were not daunted, and decided to remove the *sefer* Torah from the *shul*. They broke in through the window, removed the *sefer* Torah, and brought it straight home. From then on, the Chabad *minyan* was held in the Klein family home — their son, Reb Moshe being the life behind its organization.

### KGB Tries to Recruit an Agent

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For a certain period of time, Reb Shmuel Menachem would *daven* in the official *shul* of Tashkent, so people would see him *davening* there and not suspect that he held a *minyan* in his home. He would walk to *shul* with a *talis* over his shoulder, and to cover it, he would wear a winter coat. Even though the *shul* was quite far from his home, he paid no attention to the great heat in Tashkent during the summer, nor the rain and snow which blocked his way during the winter.

His worry was not for naught. The KGB's interest in the *minyan* in his home was so great that they tried planting a mole there. Reb Zalman *a"b* told:



The Klein brothers, (from right to left:) Reb Shoel Moshe, Reb Lipa and Reb Zalman

“When I arrived at work one morning, I noticed that my partner was tense, walking to and fro with a white face and scared look, unable to calm down. I thought that he may be experiencing a personal issue, and would soon calm down. But he could not calm down for a long while, and continued pacing around with obvious restlessness.

“He then suddenly stopped pacing, came up to me, and whispered into my ear: ‘Listen my friend, I want to speak with you about a secret and important matter, but we can’t speak here because we may be overheard. Walk out to the street, and take a taxi to this and this address,’ giving me the name of a distant neighborhood. ‘I will come there right away also, and we’ll be able to talk.’ This partner of mine was a non-observant Yid, but we were very friendly. I realized that something was truly amiss, and I became quite frightened.

“I left the store, took a taxi and traveled to the place we had agreed upon. He got there a few minutes after myself, still tense and emotional, as before. As soon as the taxi left, he began speaking quietly: ‘When I left my home yesterday, I saw a KGB car parked near my home. After walking a few steps, a KGB man left the car and ordered me to enter it, taking me to the KGB station.’

“In short, my partner did not know why they had taken him — he hadn’t broken the law and hadn’t caused anyone harm, but the KGB men first interrogated him about random topics: Did he do everything legally in his store? Did he have organized accounting books? Etc. Then, they got to the point: ‘Only after an extended interrogation did the investigators tell me what they truly wanted: They said I would have to become a *ba’al teshuva*, start dressing like a religious Jew, and inspire confidence — then, ask to be allowed to pray in the *minyán* which takes place in the Klein family home, and report to them of the goings-on there. They explicitly told me that they needed an agent who would report to them about what was going on in the house.’

“After the interrogation finished, they commanded me to sign a transcript of the interrogation, and a commitment to not reveal its content to anyone — and then, a third document which stated that I knew that the interrogation was a national secret, and the punishment for someone who would reveal its content would be twenty years imprisonment. Now you understand why I came to work so confused and tense? But I promise you: I will not fulfill their request under any circumstances!”

“I was quite shaken when I heard his story, but on the other hand, I was amazed by his courage in telling me about this, a day after signing that he knew he would be imprisoned for twenty years for divulging the content of his interrogation. Already the next day, he was endangering himself by warning me about the imminent threat to the secret *minyán* at my father’s home.”

## Bris for KGB Officer's Son

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Already as a *bochur*, Reb Moshe was involved in communal matters, and would not shy away even from complicated and dangerous activities — but he was sure to do them with great cleverness.

One day, a son was born to Mrs. Ita Daviduvna, a Jewish woman who lived in the Kleins' neighborhood. Reb Moshe wanted to speak with her regarding arranging a *bris* for her newborn son, but he knew that her husband was a KGB officer, and it would therefore be difficult for her. During those years, Stalin was actively reinforcing his tyranny. If it would be found that the KGB officer's son was circumcised, there was a great danger that the officer would suffer a bitter end. In any event, when Reb Moshe saw Mrs. Ita in the street, he asked her if she would like to have her son circumcised; she replied that she was afraid of her husband.

In the coming days, whenever Reb Moshe would see her in the street, he would remind her that there she must arrange a *bris* for her son, but her fear was great.

After a while, Reb Moshe heard that her husband would be traveling to Moscow for work, and would remain there for two weeks. After Reb Moshe ascertained that he had traveled, he again approached Ita, and convinced her to hold a *bris* for her son. She agreed. The *bris* was held in the Klein family home, with the mother and her mother in attendance, in addition to the Klein family — without anyone else. Thus, thanks to Reb Moshe's stubbornness, the boy was entered into the covenant of Avrohom Avinu.

During the coming years, Reb Zalman Klein's sons received private lessons in the Russian language from Ita, but they did not know the secret.

Around 1998, Reb Zalman received a phone call from Mrs. Ita who had reached the Holy Land, and wanted to thank Reb Moshe for the *bris* which he had arranged. But Reb Moshe had already passed away, and she was forced to suffice with telling the story to Reb Zalman, who had not known about it, because he had already been married and out of the house!

## Chapter Four — Deprived of Rights

### Life in the Shadow of Persecution

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Reb Shoel Moshe Klein got married to Mrs. Chaya Liba Massin, on Tes Vov Kislev, 5714 — 1953. Mrs. Chaya Liba was a strong woman who stood by her opinion and believed in her truth — yet was humble and quiet.

Mrs. Chaya Liba was born in the year 5686 — 1926, in the city of Nevel, Russia, where the famous and prominent Lubavitch community resided. Her parents, Harav Tzvi Aizik, known as “Hirshel Dribiner,” and Mrs. Ruda Massin raised her in the ways of Torah and chassidus.

Reb Hirshel hailed from the city of Dribin, Russia. His parents were Harav Dov Ber and Mrs. Chaya Liba, who sent him in his youth to study in *yeshivas* Tomchei Temimim, in Lubavitch. On Lag Ba’omer 5683, he got married to Mrs. Ruda, the daughter of Harav Dovid Ber and Mrs. Bluma Rivka Shmulevitz of Nevel. After



Mrs. Ruda Massin with her granddaughter, Doba שתיח" (Levin,) standing, and Bluma Rivka Cohen א"ב



their marriage, Reb Tzvi Aizik and Ruda lived in Nevel, where Reb Hirshel served as a *shochet*. In the coming years, four children were born to them: Dovid Ber *hy*"d, Chaim Zev *a*"b, Chaya Liba *a*"b, and (may she be separated for good, long life,) Mrs. Leah Cohen *tichye*.

The young couple's life was not easy at all. The communists in Nevel pressured the chassidim to send their children to the communist schools, and the chassidim fought in various ways that their children receive a solely holy education. Reb Hirshel also did everything he could to not send his children to the communist schools, but when the persecution intensified, he was forced, with great pain, to send his children there. However, at home he instilled *Yiddishkeit* and *chassidishkeit*, in a manner which was evident in his children for their entire lives.

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### Deprived of Rights

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The communist government persecuted Reb Tzvi Aizik more than others, being that he was one of the "leeches" and those "deprived of rights," giving his status as a *shochet*.

The persecution of religious figures began during the first years of the government regime, based mainly on personal slander and conspiracies. The persecutions grew from year to year when the communists understood that in order to suppress observant Jews, they would need to first harm the religious figures who led their flock in observance, and would generally speak out against the communists. They figured out all types of methods to "deal" with this problem.

The persecution of religious figures began with denying them rights, and continued with placing



Mrs. Ruda Massin with her granddaughter, Mrs. Feiga Glitzin *שתח*,  
on her wedding day

heavy taxes specifically on them, and applying great pressure on them to leave their posts. When these methods did not succeed, they took harsher steps. Rabbis were evicted from their homes and their property nationalized. When this also did not produce their desired results, the communists began with arrests and imprisonments, which many times ended with exile and slave labor, and sometimes death.

The persecution got worse and worse, and Reb Hirshel could not continue living in Nevel. Therefore, in 5695 — 1935, he moved from Nevel, and settled in the neighboring city of Trupitz, where he sustained his family by creating metal rods. There was no Chabad community in Trupitz, and the family experienced intense loneliness. Throughout the years, chassidim had lived there for certain periods of time, but during the time Reb Hirshel lived there, there was no organized community.

## Leningrad

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Three years later, in 5698, Reb Tzvi Aizik was contacted by Harav Yehuda Leib “Leibl” Karasik, who had been a *mashpia* in Nevel and was forced to escape the authorities. Now, he lived in Leningrad and sustained himself by working with fine knitted fabrics. He asked his good friend Tzvi Aizik to join him, as there were more work opportunities in Leningrad. Reb Tzvi Aizik heard his friend’s suggestion and said a famous Russian saying which meant: “Better a hundred friends than a hundred rubble.” Meaning: even though there was no certainty that he would find work in Leningrad, he would certainly have chassidim-friends there.

So, that’s what he did. He arrived in Leningrad alone, while leaving his family in Trupitz, and regularly sending them money he earned.

In Leningrad, he stayed with his wife’s brother, the chossid Reb Chonye Shmulevitz, a Chabad chossid who wore a full beard despite the danger, and helped the chassidim who had been exiled, until he himself was exiled, and passed away while there.



Harav Leib Karasik

### **“Don’t Wait — Travel!”**

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When the Nazis’ invaded the Soviet Union, Reb Hirshel sent an urgent letter to his wife, instructing her: “Don’t wait, travel!” He told her not to be a doubter and escape right away. He had already suffered at the hands of the Germans, when they had conquered parts of Russia during the first world war, and he could not think what would happen if he or his family would end up under German rule. During those days, no one yet knew about the policy of systematic annihilation which the Germans had conceived and were applying to the Jews.

Even before she managed to leave Tropitz, her son, Dovid Ber was drafted to the red army, and was sadly killed at the front, while fighting against the Nazis, *by*’d.



Mrs. Chaya Liba with her daughter, Mrs. Doba Levin,  
on her wedding day

Before traveling, Mrs. Ruda turned to a wealthy family friend for advice, and he wondered about her traveling without help from her husband, with her children, into the dangerous unknown. She replied with a certain voice: “My husband says to travel, so I will travel.” She did travel and was saved from the Nazis, but her husband, Reb Tzvi Aizik and his close friend Reb Leib Karasik who hid and worked together did not manage to escape Leningrad, and passed away from hunger during the siege of Leningrad which the Nazis orchestrated.

Reb Tzvi Aizik passed away in Leningrad, on Chanuka 5702 — 1941. Reb Leib passed away about two months later, in Adar or 5702, after attempting to escape the city, and collapsing along the way.

### **Factory Manager at Age Sixteen**

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Mrs. Ruda left Tropitz with her three young children on the last train out. Among the journey and hardships, Chaya Liba became like a young, second mother, encouraging the family, and deciding together with her mother where they should go, and how to manage in the best possible way.



Mrs. Leah Cohen, sister of Mrs. Chaya Liba



Reb Chaim Zev Massin, brother of Mrs. Chaya Liba

During the escape, Chaya Liba overheard a rumor that there was a small settlement called Ravenna, where German citizens had lived, and with the outbreak of the war, were exiled to Siberia. Now the settlement was empty, and the authorities were settling refugees there. Despite her young age, Chaya Liba was the one who decided that the family should go to the former German settlement, because they would be better off there. Tickets were purchased, and the small family traveled to their new destination, where it turned out that Chaya Liba's decision was a truly wise one, as the German houses were furnished and full of food and clothing, and the Massin family managed to choose relatively good Quarters.

Despite her young age, Chaya Liba decided that she had to provide for her family, and soon found a job in a government factory which produced leather goods. The factory was successfully run by the chossid, Harav Moshe Chaim Iserov, her father's friend (probably from their time studying at the yeshiva in Lubavitch.)

She did her job with dedication and loyalty, and her employers were pleased with her work. Everything was calm until one fine day, disaster struck the factory when the manager, Reb Moshe Chaim was arrested by the authorities, and a large and suspicious amount of goods belonging to a factory was found in his possession. The arrest led to a search of the factory, and Chaya Liba immediately realized that the official documents documented that all the skins currently in place were divided into parts intended for production, while practically, the factory also had complete skins, which were considered 'illegal' by the authorities. She was very worried about what might happen if these skins were found, so she took care to hide them.

After a period of severe interrogation, Reb Moshe Chaim was put on trial, and Chaya Liba testified in his favor while risking her life, and thanks to her, heavy punishment was not imposed on him, and the judges contented themselves with conditional imprisonment. Despite this, Reb Moshe Chaim did not return to his post, and it was difficult to find a deputy, since during the war, all the men were drafted into the army.

At this point, Chaya Liba's dedicated work was recognized, and she was appointed factory manager even though she was only sixteen years old.

From now on she had to work with great responsibility, as she knew that the authorities would not let the slightest mistake pass. If they found any type of anomaly in the factory, she could potentially pay with her life. Working in the factory also required a great deal of physical effort, and despite all the difficulties and worries, she continued to work there for several years, in order to provide for her family with dignity.

Towards the end of the war, she moved on and worked as a cashier at a workers' restaurant. It was seemingly a simple job, but it is not for naught that someone who ran a factory was hired to work in this position. At the big workers' restaurant, cashiers did not last because the workers discovered different ways of cheating when their payment was to be collected, and so, the cashiers were fired one after the other due to the discrepancy between inventory sold and cash in the register. Because of her professionalism and dedication, Chaya Liba was able to tidy up the restaurant, and finish her work every day with a full cash register.

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### Teaching Jewish Songs

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As the war drew to a close, many began to let out a sigh of relief. But precisely after the victory was announced, as the Allies occupied Berlin, Chaya Liba's brother, Chaim Zev was drafted into the red army, and his commanders sought to send him to the front against Japan (which had not yet been won.) However, precisely when a group of soldiers was sent to Japan, Chaim Zev suffered from a high fever, and he was left to serve on Soviet soil.

Chaya Liba thanked Hashem for the miracles performed for her family members during the war — that they managed to escape the Nazis, and found a shelter in a furnished and tidy home. She thanked Hashem for being able to find work, while the vast majority of refugees suffered from hunger, scarcity and disease.

Her daughter, Mrs. Doba Levin relates:

"Ever since I can remember, I recall my mother speaking about the divine providence which occurred in every aspect of our lives. With great enthusiasm, she would tell time and again about her family being saved during the Holocaust; how



many good people with money, family and connections perished, unfortunately. And she, as a young girl, without a father, with an older mother and little brothers, survived by great miracles. For many years, she would tell these and other stories with repeated emphasis on seeing the hand of Hashem at every step.”

Mrs. Ruda and her daughters returned to Nevel after the war — the place where they had lived ten years earlier. The place looked entirely different, and not only because of the destruction caused by the war. Primarily, it was due to the fact that the vast, pre-war Jewish population sadly no longer existed.

The financial situation of the family was not easy, so Chaya Liba decided to study a profession, and earn money with dignity. She traveled to Leningrad where she studied bookkeeping, and at the end of the course, she found work in the city of Narva, Estonia. She was employed as an accountant in a weaving factory which employed thousands of workers. She sent most of her wages to her mother, and after a short time, she invited her mother and siblings to join her.

Life was not easy in Narva, even though Chaya Liba’s sister, Leah, also found work. However, her mother, Ruda began spiritual activities with the few Jewish families which lived there. She would gather them from time to time, and joyfully taught them Yiddishe song.

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### Wedding Attended by Many Chassidim

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Chaya Liba grew older and there weren’t any *shidduchim* on the horizon. There weren’t any *bochurim* in the area worthy of a girl who grew up in a *chassidishe* home, and it was unclear where to start. Until, one day, the family received a letter from their cousin, Mrs. Basya Meshulovin, (daughter of Reb Michoel Gershon Shmulevitz, the brother of Mrs. Ruda Massin,) from Samarkand, suggesting a match with Reb Shoel Moshe Klein of Tashkent.



Wedding of Harav Moshe Chaim and Mrs. Doba Levin. Sitting are Reb Shoel Moshe and Mrs. Chaya Liba. Standing from right to left are: Harav Yisroel Tzvi Glitzinstein, Harav Moshe Chaim Levin, Mrs. Doba Levin and Mrs. Faiga Glitzinstein



After proper inquiries were made, Chaya Liba traveled to Tashkent, and became engaged with Reb Shoel Moshe. Their *chasuna* took place on Tes Vov Kislev, 5714 — 1953, with the participation of many chassidim.

They lived in Reb Shoel Moshe's parents' home during the first years after their wedding. After a few years, Reb Shmuel Menachem, Mrs. Miryam and their young son Lipa moved to another home.

In the yard of the Klein family home was a small house in which three women, of three generations lived: Mrs. Doba Chusidov, Shoel Moshe's grandmother, her daughter, Mrs. Sara Kapuvski, and her daughter, Mrs. Zelda. In 5717, Mrs. Zelda got married to Harav Mordechai (Mottel) Kozliner *a"b*, and they lived in the Kozliner home for about ten years.

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### Surprise Visit by the Clinic Director

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Mrs. Chaya Liba worked as an accountant at a medical clinic, where they usually worked five days a week. The clinic was closed on Fridays and *Shabbosim*, which was a great advantage for her. On *Yomim Tovim*, she would be absent from work, each time with a different excuse. But one year on Shavuos, the director of the clinic, who was antisemitic, decided to put an end to her absences on *Yomim Tovim*, and unexpectedly arrived with her assistants at the Klein family home; but the house was locked.

The first miracle was that despite the fact the chabad *minyán* was always held at the Klein family's residence, this time they had *davened* elsewhere. The second miracle was that Chaya Liba was not at home when the director arrived, as she had gone to visit her mother with her daughters.

The clinic director did not give up and entered the house in the yard, where Mrs. Zelda Kozliner was at that moment, and forced her to open the Klein family's home for her entourage. The home was opened, and she and her assistants conducted a thorough search, with the goal of finding Chaya Liba — but she was not there.

This incident did not deter Chaya Liba, and she continued keeping mitzvos with self sacrifice, notwithstanding the mountains of obstacles which stood in her way.

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### A Chassidishe Education for her Daughters

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She provided her daughters, Mrs. Feiga (Glitzenstein) and Mrs. Doba (Levin) with an authentic *chassidishe* education. She did everything she could so that her daughters would not have to break Shabbos in school, *chas vesholom*. Reb Shoel Moshe and Mrs. Chaya Liba succeeded in "buying" the teachers and principles in

various ways, and they turned a blind eye to the absence of the girls on Shabbos and *Yom Tov*.

When Faiga was once forced to attend school on a Shabbos because of an important test which took place then, Reb Moshe wrapped her hand in a bandage, so she couldn't write.

Chaya Liba was very concerned about her daughters' education, and decided that they needed to learn holy subjects with a *melamed*. There were those who questioned this decision of hers, as other daughters of *anash* in Tashkent did not learn with *melamdin*, but she replied: "Because I did not merit sons, and only daughters, I will not have a part in the education of my children in the study of Torah?"

They chose Reb Yoel Itkin, who also taught children of other chabad families in Tashkent, to teach their daughters, Feiga and Doba.

Reb Yoel Itkin was the grandson of Harav Yaakov Mordechai Bezpalov, rabbi of Poltava, and a relative of the Rebbe's mother, *rebbetzin* Chana's family. Reb Yoel was worried that the authorities would figure out what he was involved in, so he presented himself as a bookbinder. His living room looked like a bookbinding operation, with books without covers, glue and boxes spread throughout the room.

The girls learnt *Loshon Hakodesh* reading, Chumash, Nach and other subjects with him. The fruit of their *chassidishe* education was evident during the Bas Mitzva celebration of the older daughter, Feiga, when she delivered a talk of the Rebbe, which had been smuggled in by the Rebbe's shluchim who were sent to the Soviet Union under the guise of being tourists.

Because of this education, it was much easier for the Klein daughters to integrate with the system of Chabad institutions in Eretz Yisroel, unlike typical new immigrants — as will be discussed later.



Wedding of Mrs. Doba Levin. From right to left: Mrs. Yechielov (sister of the chosson,) Mrs. Sara Levin, (mother of the chosson,) Mrs. Doba Levin and Mrs. Chaya Liba Klein

## Chapter Five — A Meeting House for Chassidim

### The Chabad Minyan

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Many immigrants from Tashkent remember how Reb Moshe and his wife, Chaya Liba's home was wide open for all matters of holiness. *Kaparos* were slaughtered there on *erev* Yom Kippur, and *hakafos* occurred there on Simchas Torah. Their home was also the location of the matza baking for Pesach. All this despite the hostility of the authorities, who spied on every event that smelled of religion.

There were periods when the Shabbos *minyan* occurred in the Klein home every week. But, during more difficult times, when the chassidim felt the noose tightening around them, they preferred that the *minyan* change locations weekly. More often than not, *minyanim* occurred at the Klein home.

*Farbrengens* occurred in their home every Shabbos Mevorchim, and on *chassidishe Yomim Tovim*. Reb Moshe and his wife, Chaya Liba did not spare any effort in preparing tasty food for the chassidim who came to *farbreng*. The chassidim would sit and *farbreng* for hours in the Klein family home, with food and drink being served throughout the night.



Reb Shoel Moshe and Mrs. Chaya Liba with their grandchildren

Harav Avrohom Presman, then a young lad, together with his father, Harav Levi Presman, were regular attendees of the *minyan* at the Kleins'. He remembers two episodes vividly:

"Reb Moshe was a chossid without showiness. He was a *penimi* (one who focuses on the inner dimension of matters,) and possessed a unique *kabolas ol* (accepting the yoke of Hashem.) Every Shabbos, about a half hour before the *davening* began in his home, Reb Moshe would stand in one his home's corners, and begin *davening* slowly and with presence. Sometimes, he would finish his *davening* together with everyone else, and sometimes, his *davening* lasted longer than the other participants.

"I still remember one *farbrengen* which occurred for one *chassidishe Yom Tov* in the Klein family home, when Reb Moshe spoke with passion and excitement about how disgusting the desires of this world are. One must understand that in those days, it wasn't about candies and delicacies found today in the western world. It was about eating an especially tasty dish one's wife had prepared. As he spoke, one of the chassidim entered the house with a plate of freshly baked cookies, and the pleasant smell filled the entire home. We hadn't had a chance to enjoy the cookies when Reb Moshe turned the plate over, with the cookies flying about, and Reb Moshe continuing to speak with passion against the desires of this world.

### Chavrusa for Tens of Years

The sounds of Torah and chassidus constantly emanated from the Klein family home. Many Torah classes were established in the home, but one was especially remembered by his family, friends, and anyone who knew Reb Shoel Moshe. This was his *chavrusa* with the chossid Harav Moshe Goldshmidt *a"b*. They would toil in the study of chassidus a few times a week, and the sound of their study would be heard clearly throughout the home. This *chavrusa* of theirs continued when the two immigrated to Eretz Yisroel.

Reb Moshe Goldshmidt told that during the years that they



Reb Shoel Moshe Klein

lived in Eretz Yisroel, they had quite a few set classes together: Every day before Shacharis, and after Maariv; on Shabbos: after the Shabbos meal, and in the morning, from eight to ten.

### **Yeshiva in the Courtyard**

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When the children of *anash* reached yeshiva age, they would be sent to Samarkand, where there was an established yeshiva. However, during the later sixties, the yeshiva dwindled down, because many families managed to immigrate to the Holy Land. Then, Reb Moshe hosted a group of chabad *temimim*, who learnt *nigla* and chassidus from morning until evening. This was like a small yeshiva.

The *bochurim* were housed in the small house in their courtyard where the Kapuvski and Kozliner families had lived, as they had moved to a different neighborhood. They learned in this house, and at first, they were taught by the chossid Harav Yosef Volovik.

Besides the bochurim who learned in Tashkent, *bochurim* from other cities would sometimes join. R' Shmuel Notik, who was then a lad of twelve years old, arrived from Samarkand to learn in the Tashkent yeshiva. Harav Shlomo Raskin made an even longer journey, from Gorki, Russia, to learn in the yeshiva housed at the Kleins.

### **Exemptions from the Army**

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One of the most difficult problems the *bochurim* faced during those days was the specter of draft to the Russian army. The draft was mandatory, and it was impossible to keep mitzvos while there. Therefore, every chabad *bochur* did whatever they could to receive an exemption from the army. However, the road to that end was not simple at all. Reb Moshe, through his own methods, managed to help many chabad *bochurim* receive an exemption from the army. These activities were conducted in great secrecy, and to his last day, he did not tell anyone about them.

When engaged in communal activities, he would sometimes take along his daughter Feiga, to reduce suspicion. She remembers going with him a few times to the draft office, and him talking with the officers there — but she was not able to hear what they spoke.

Harav Avrohom Presman remembers that when he reached the draft age, Reb Moshe made sure to introduce him to friends who had contacts in the draft office, and through them, much bribe money and other methods, Reb Avrohom managed to receive an exemption.

## The House Became a Matza Bakery

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Reb Moshe's daughter, Mrs. Feiga Glitzinstein recalled the seasonal activities which took place in her home in a special article of memories:

"We had the great merit to grow up in the home and be educated by parents who had the greatest devotion, and astounding *mesiras nefesh*.

"Ever since I can remember myself and our little home in distant Tashkent, I remember a home bustling with people, and constant activity. I will detail a little based on the yearly cycle:

"*Kaparos*: I remember members of *anash* arriving at our home alone or in twos, on *erev* Yom Kippur, before sunrise, with baskets containing chickens. They awaited the arrival of the *shochet*, Reb Leib Ravzin *a"b*. Great emotion and a special atmosphere filled the home. It is easy to imagine the scene when the *shochet* arrived: the sounds of chickens and great tumult filled the air. This obviously aroused the suspicion of neighbors and the authorities. Yet still, throughout all the years, the *kaparos* and *shechita* were held in our courtyard.

"At the conclusion of the *shechita*, everyone hurried home to have enough time to *kasher* the chicken and cook it for *yom tov*, with the cleaning work being left to the Klein family, which we did happily.

"Shmini Atzeres and Simchas Torah: During these joyous days the *farbrengens* would last for long hours. At the end of the *farbrengen*, *hakafos* would be held. They last for a long time. Usually, the *farbrengen* and *hakafos* of Shmini Atzeres would happen by us, in the *sukka* which we had in the yard. The yard was blocked by some type of fence, but around it lived non-Jews, some of whom were anti-semitic. The government turned a blind eye, but it was clear as the sun that they were monitoring and knew every move of all the attendees. Still, the *hakafos* of Shmini Atzeres usually happened at our place.

"Matza Baking: A few weeks before Pesach, a few members of *anash* traveled to buy wheat straight from the field, so that it would be protected from when it was cut. The wheat was grinded with the greatest stringencies, and was stored with the proper protocol so it would not become wet.

"Dried branches for rolling were also brought, and we protected them from getting wet. As the baking drew near, *mayim shelanu* was brought from a well. The baking itself would always take place on a Sunday, which was a day free of work. This way, all of *anash* could take part in the baking. On the day of the baking, our home turned into a literal bakery.

"Already from Motzoai Shabbos, we emptied the living room and set up tables which were covered with white paper to their entire lengths, so we could roll the



matzos on them. The necessary equipment for kneading was brought early in the morning to a bedroom, and the *mayim shelanu* to a nearby small room. The matzos were passed from the living room to the kitchen where the holes were made. The matzos were then passed through a large window to a small room, which was built in the yard directly adjacent to the kitchen. This room had a wooden wall, half of which could be lifted to the ceiling, which produced a type of large window adjacent to the kitchen. The matza baking oven was in this small room. (This room was covered with a collapsible roof, which could be removed for sukkos, when *schach* was placed there.)

“The baking lasted all day, from five in the morning, until late at night. The matzos would only be distributed at the end of the baking. Then, orderliness and cleanliness would be restored, and the rest of the Pesach preparations would commence.

“For us, children, this was obviously a day full of excitement, and we tried to help with whatever we could. Only today, looking back, do I recognize the great danger involved in baking matzos in our home.”

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### Keeping Shabbos

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Despite all the obstacles, Reb Moshe tried avoiding going to work on Shabbos, throughout all the years. In the beginning, he worked in a store which was open seven days a week, with every worker able to take one day off, which Reb Moshe obviously took on Shabbos. After a period of time, he began working in a small factory which produced warning signs for other factories, and employed other chassidim. There, it was relatively easy not to ever come to work on Shabbos.

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### The Rebbe's Secretary Signs on Visa

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Life was hard under communist rule, and Reb Moshe asked to be allowed to leave, but the authorities repeatedly rejected his requests. Reb Moshe would not give up, and tried again and again through different methods to receive an exit visa from the Soviet Union. One who worked hard for him and his brothers, Reb Zalman and Reb Lipa was a family friend, and *shliach* of the *rabbeim*, Harav Simcha Gorodetzki *a"b*.

The Rebbe sent a letter to Harav Gorodetzki which included a sentence in connection to arranging visas for the Kleins. The letter was sent in Cheshvan 5726 — 1965, and at the letter's end, the Rebbe added in his holy handwriting:

**“Send the requirements for the Klein family שיחיו — which you received.”**

It is not clear to us what exactly happened during Cheshvan of 5726, but we can learn from this short sentence that Harav Gorodetzki worked toward obtaining visas for the Klein family, with the encouragement and direction of the Rebbe.

A few years passed, and the Klein family was still not redeemed. All their requests were denied on the spot, until the end of the year 5731 — 1971, when the great exodus of chassidim from the Soviet Union began. At the beginning of Sivan, 5731, Reb Shoel Moshe's brother, Reb Lipa left the Soviet Union and arrived in the Holy Land. He came to the Rebbe for Tishrei of 5732. When he went into *yechidus*, he asked the Rebbe — in the name of his brothers who remained in Tashkent — if it was worthwhile for *anash* to attempt to bribe officials to receive the papers necessary to leave the Soviet Union. The Rebbe replied that they should not give bribes, and things would work out.

And so it was, a few months later, Reb Zalman and Reb Shoel Moshe and their families received the awaited exit visas, without bribing.

It was during the *farbrengen* which occurred in his home in honor of Chof Cheshvan 5732, when after years of waiting, Reb Moshe received a summons to the immigration office. When he got there, he was told that his departure from the Soviet Union had been approved.

A visa to Eretz Yisroel had already been arranged. In order to receive it, a relative from Eretz Yisroel had to send a "Visa Invitation," and at a certain point, Harav Binyomin Klein, the Rebbe's secretary was asked if he could sign it, as he had the same last name, and hailed from Yerushalayim. Reb Binyonim understood that this



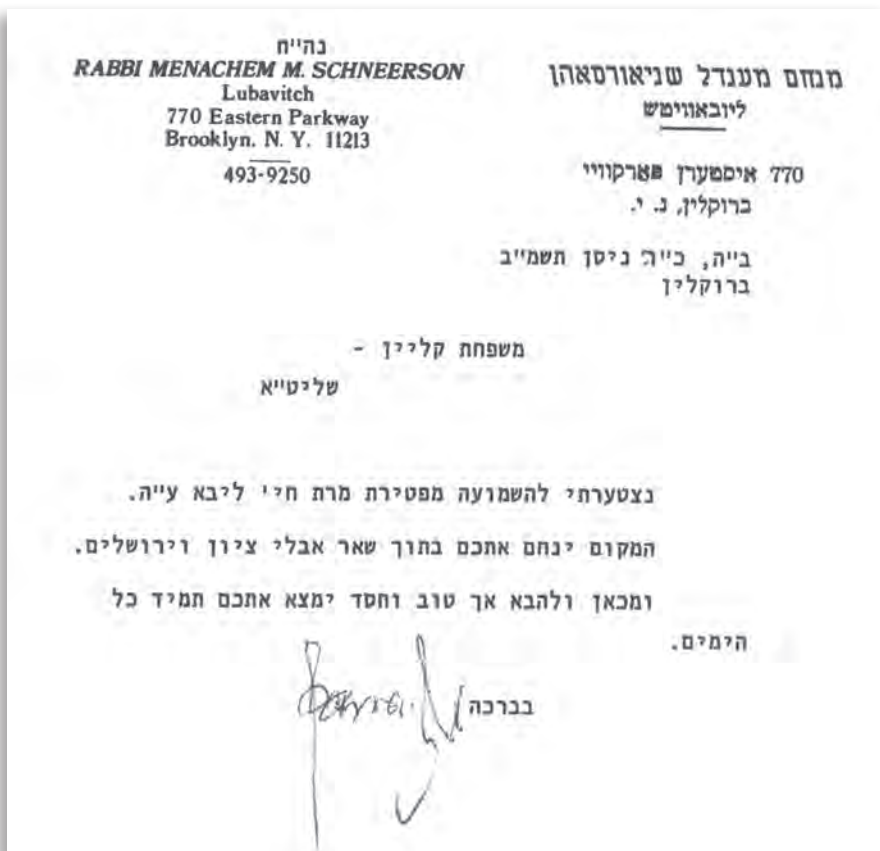
The Rebbe added in his holy handwriting in a letter to Harav Simcha Gorodetzki:  
"Send the requirements for the Klein family שיחי — which you received."

was slightly dangerous, as he wasn't truly a relative. He expressed his concerns to the Rebbe, and the Rebbe approved his signing the document. In his merit, Reb Moshe received a visa to the Holy Land.

Reb Moshe left Tashkent during Kislev of 5732, taking with him an ancient *sefer* Torah which was in his possession. In order to smuggle it outside the Soviet Union, Reb Moshe was forced to wrap it and give it to his daughter Doba, so it would seem like she was holding a large doll.

On Yud Tes Kislev 5732, Reb Moshe merited to step onto the earth of Eretz Yisroel. He settled in the neighborhood founded by the Rebbe in Kiryas Malachi: Nachalas Har Chabad.

Upon arriving in Eretz Yisroel, it became clear that the knowledge of *Loshon Hakodesh*, the Torah and Nach that their daughters acquired with the help of their



A letter of consolation from the Rebbe after Mrs. Chaya Liba's passing

teacher, Reb Yoel Itkin, was equal to the knowledge of Chabad students born in the Holy Land. Feiga, who was high school age, began her studies at Beis Rivka High School in Kfar Chabad — because in those years, there wasn't yet a Chabad high school in Nachalas Har Chabad. Due to her knowledge, she naturally integrated with the Israeli students. But Doba, who was younger, began studying in the Chabad elementary school in Nachalas Har Chabad. However, the students, most of whom were immigrants from the Soviet Union, did not match Doba's level of knowledge, so her mother, Mrs. Chaya Liba, insisted on also sending her to study in Kfar Chabad.

She always educated her daughters to have true faith in Hashem, and to be truthful — as Mrs. Doba Levin tells: “She instilled within us true faith in the Almighty, seeing the truth in every matter, and educated us with all her strength that we speak and act with truth.”

About three years after reaching Eretz Yisroel, Mrs. Chaya Liba was stricken with a severe illness, from which she suffered for seven years. During this period, she taught her family and friends a lesson in trusting Hashem. The entire time, she expressed her trust in Hashem that she would be healed, and she constantly thanked Hashem for every good thing he did for her throughout her life. Despite all her suffering, she did not complain, and tried to be joyful. On the first night of Pesach, 5742 — 1982 she sadly passed on.



The resting place of Mrs. Chaya Liba at Har Hazeisim

A tribute to Mrs. Chaya Liba Klein, written at the time of her passing by her daughter, Mrs. Doba Levin. It was originally published in the "Oholei Chana" newsletter of Neshi Chabad in Eretz Yisroel.

**Dedicated to the elevation of the soul of my mother,  
Chaya Liba bas Reb Tzvi Aizik z"l Klein**

**Free Translation:**

We do not eulogize by chassidim.

This is because we do not truly know who the person who has passed was, and we may limit them with our words.

Therefore, I have attempted to limit my words, and what is written here is only a synopsis.

It is certain that this does not limit what she was. But whatever is written here is certainly 100% true, to the last word:

It is stated in Pirkei Avos: "Appoint for yourself a teacher, and acquire for yourself a companion." Everyone searches for them day and night, because they seek guidance and advice.

The teacher is the one who shows the way, and leads everyone through the true path.

The friend is the one who will come to help you in any place, situation or time.

But it sometimes happens that the two figures come together in one soul. That they are the same person and do their work at the same time.

There aren't many of us in this category of excellence. Not even among educators. But I had a mother with such qualities, which is an example to all mothers.

אין מספידים אצל החסידים

וזאת מכיון שאין אנו יודעים  
מי היה האדם שנפטר מאתנו  
ואולי נגבילהו במילים שלנו

ולכן השתדלתי לא להרבות בדברים  
והכתוב הוא רק כבראשי פרקים  
ברור שאין זה כל מה שהיה בה  
אך מה שכאן, כך הוא במלוא מובן המילה

עשה לך רב וקנה לך חבר  
נאמר בפרקי אבות  
וכלום מחפשים אותם יומם וליל  
כי רוצים הדרכה ועצות

הרב – מורה דרך, מנחה ומוליך  
את כולם בדרך האמת  
החבר הוא אדם שיבוא לעזרך  
בכל מקום, מצב ועת

אך קורה לפעמים ששני הדברים  
החבר והרב שניהם יחד  
בתוך נפש אחת הם נכללים  
ועושים פעולתם כאחת

אין רבים בתוכנו שמצטיינים בזה  
גם לא בין מחנכים ומחנכות  
אך לי היתה אמא עם כח כזה  
שדוגמא היא לכל האמהות

Throughout the almost twenty years that I merited to be in her presence, she did not stop praising Hashem and being thankful for divine providence.

No special miracle that was obviously supernatural happened to her during her lifetime, but she constantly spoke about the day-to-day miracles, and how they saved her life.

She would tell how she and her family were saved from hunger and the terrible holocaust, even though she earned her bread through sweat.

She provided for her family as a young teenager, because she did not have a father.

She would tell how Hashem helped her in her studies and acquiring the necessary knowledge to work and help her family. When she traveled, shopped and did anything — she always thanked Hashem.

She hated falsehood, honor and “greatness” which are sought in our times. She could not handle bragging and ego so prevalent these days.

Few knew her and her qualities, because she was quiet in all of her ways. She rejoiced and was pained for those close to her or those not; and she bestowed her worry to all.

She educated us, her children, in these ways, and did this without a tumult. She showed us the ways of Hashem, and how to perform every detail.

במשך קצת מעל עשרים השנה  
שזכיתי להיות במחיצתה  
לא פסקה מלשבח לה' יתברך  
ולהודות להשגחה העליונה

לא קרה בחייה שום נס מיוחד  
שום דבר שלמעלה מדרך הטבע  
אך היא תמיד סיפרה על הניסים  
היום-יומיים. כיצד הם הצילו את חייה

אין ניצלה יחד עם המשפחה  
מרעב והשוואה הנוראה  
על אף שאת לחמה בעמל הרוויחה

בהיותה נערה צעירה  
ובזה פרנסה את בני משפחתה  
כי אבא כבר לא היה לה

כיצד עזר לה ה' בלימוד ובהשכלה  
בעבודה ובחיי המשפחה  
בנטיעה, בקניה, בכל עניינה  
על הכל לה' הודתה

היא שנאה שקר, כבוד וגדולה  
שכל כך מבוקשים בימינו  
לא יכלה שאת התפארות וגאווה  
שתמיד שומעים מסביבנו

מעטים הכירוה וידעו מעלתה  
כי צנועה היתה בכל דרכיה  
שמחה וכאבה על קרובים ורחוקים  
ועל כולם פרשה דאגתה

ואותנו חנכה באותן הדרכים  
ועשתה זאת בלי כל רעש  
הראתה לנו את דרכי אלוקים  
וכיצד לקיים כל מעש



She implored us to live with righteousness and not to learn from the ways of the world. To reach greatness through straightforwardness and truth, and not at the expense of others.

Praised are those who merited to know her, and to see the purity of her attributes.

She never caused anyone pain throughout her entire life.

She suffered through the hard years of her illness with hope and *emuna*, and was full of faith until the last moment.

On *erev* Pesach, at *shekia* time, she lit candles with tranquility and intention, and with this last mitzva of her life, she returned her soul to her maker.

I want everyone to know who my dear mother was. I will never be completely calm or happy until I see her again.

My prayer and request from Hashem is that my mother arise with those who will first, with the coming of Moshiach, very soon.

בקשתנו לחיות עם הצדק  
לא ללמוד מדרכי האנשים  
להגיע לגדולה ביושר ואמת  
ולא על חשבון אחרים

אשרי מי שזכה והכירה  
וראה את טוהר מידותיה  
ולא ציערה ולא הכאיב לה  
ולא גרם עגמת נפש בחייה

בתקוה ואמונה היא סבלה  
בשנים הקשות של המחלה  
והייתה מלאה ביטחון  
עד הרגע האחרון

ערב פסח עם השקיעה  
הדליקה נרות בשלוה וכונה  
ובמצוה זו האחרונה בחייה  
החזירה את נשמתה לקונה

ברצוני שיוודע לכולם  
מי היתה אמי היקרה  
עד שאראנה שוב לא אנוח  
ולא תהיה שום שמחתי שלימה

תפילתי ובקשתי היא  
מאת ה' יתברך  
שתקום אמי יחד  
עם ראשוני הקמים במהרה

## Chapter Six — Chossid without Bells and Fanfare

### Pleasure from Doing Another Yid a Favor

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The Rebbe Rashab once expressed himself about Reb Shoel Moshe's grandfather, Reb Shneur Zalman Chusidov, that he was "A chossid without a bell." After Reb Moshe Klein's passing, some expressed themselves that this title also fit Reb Moshe's many activities — as he did good for the public all the time and in all situations, without publicity and wishing for a thank you.

After arriving in the Holy Land, he worked in the Gulgutks textile factory, and after a few years, began working at the Nachalas Har Chabad Vaad (Committee,) where he worked to his last day in a variety of ways for the good of Nachalas Har



Prime Minister, Mr. Menachem Begin on a visit to Nachalas Har Chabad. Standing on the right is Reb Moshe.



Reb Moshe in the center of a dancing circle — *farbrengen* of *chag bageula* Yud Beis Tammuz 5733

Chabad's residents. He was the address for any hardship and problem, and there were many of these — doing everything with rigor and joy.

Harav Mordechai Gorodetzki, chairman of the Nachalas Har Chabad Committee told: "Reb Moshe was the social services department of the *vaad*, taking care of the needy, elderly and lonely. But as was his way, he did not do his job only because he needed to — he did it with joy and vigor, because he had a real pleasure from doing a favor for a Jew.



Daily *miutza* tefillin

"During the first years of his work, he helped a lot with absorbing the immigrants. From time to time, we would travel together to the airport to meet newly arrived immigrants. When they arrived in Nachala, Reb Moshe would help them find a place to live, get them the necessary furniture and equipment, and go with the immigrants to the bank and government offices. In short, he did everything to make it easier for them to become comfortable in the country. During the ensuing years, he continued to engage with devotion in assisting the committee and the residents."

Harav Yitzchok Yehuda Yeruslavski, the *rov* of Nachalas Har Chabad is full of admiration for Reb Moshe:

“He loved helping everyone, and did much good for the needy and downtrodden. He also helped a lot with loans, even though his own financial situation was not the best.”

### Talent for Recognizing Problems

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Every new resident who came to Nachala immediately received an enthusiastic welcome from Reb Moshe, who was completely dedicated to helping the new resident settle into the neighborhood. He would run to the various offices and fight the rigid bureaucracy until he settled things in the best possible manner for the new immigrant. He did not spare his precious time, notwithstanding the trouble involved. To him, the main thing was to do good for the chassidim who merited to live in the Rebbe's neighborhood.



Photo sent to the rebbe: Reb Moshe dancing in the middle at a *Melava Malka* for the new Russian immigrants



Photo sent to the rebbe: Reb Moshe at the laying of the cornerstone to the new Mikva of Nachlas Har Chabad

On cold and stormy nights, Reb Moshe would put on his plastic coat and ride his famous bicycle to the homes of the elderly in the neighborhood, to check if any of them were missing a blanket or if the rain was leaking.

For several years he was responsible for a kind of “soup kitchen” opened by the committee, for lonely old people who came to eat a hot meal.

His concern for the elderly and lonely knew no bounds. He made sure to get them steams and blankets, and would come to visit them, helping them in every way. When it happened that a lonely old person passed away, Reb Moshe arranged the funeral, and during the days of *shiva*, he brought a *minyan* three times a day to the deceased's house. At the end of *shiva* and at the end of the *shloshim*, he arranged a trip to the cemetery.

Reb Moshe especially excelled in his “secret giving.” There are many anecdotes about his “exploits” in this regard, such as paying off a debt at the neighborhood grocery store, leaving food parcels at one family’s door or another, and so on. How did he know they needed help? He developed a special sense for early detection of problems — he did not wait for them to come to him.

He asked and felt who needed a favor or a loan, and he helped using his methods. For himself, he did not worry, and he lived a bit ascetically in a tiny apartment, sufficing with little.

One of Nachala’s residents relates: “Reb Moshe knew everything — even who was planning on selling their home, and who wanted to buy. He was just always trying to help Yidden and *anash*. Every new resident of the neighborhood merited fatherly care from Reb Moshe. They found a warm corner and a listening ear by him. Reb Moshe also organized his charitable work on his own, in an amazingly organized fashion. After his passing, organized lists were found of the charity and loans he distributed. It became clear that most of the money he loaned was actually his own, personal money, and not from the official fund. It appears that to Reb Moshe, there was no difference between his personal life and his work for the community.”

### Mivtza Tefillin Every Day

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Also the soldiers on the nearby base, “Tovala,” near the neighborhood, received a daily visit by Reb Moshe, who would come along on his bicycle, in rain or heat, and help soldiers lay tefillin. The soldiers connected with him in a special way, and he became their “tzaddik,” to whom they poured out their troubles; with him helping them as much as he could.

Harav Mordechai Gorodetzki: “His ‘break’ from work at the committee was for mivtza tefillin at ‘Tovala.’ Every afternoon, he would travel for at least an hour to do mivtza tefillin with the soldiers.”

Reb Moshe would visit government officials and workers at city hall and public offices with whom he was in constant contact. They all remember his heartfelt smile when he would enter their offices with a bottle of vodka in one hand, and *mishloach manos* and *shmura matza* in the other,



Mivtza lulav with IDF soldiers



which he gave them in the name of the Nachala committee. His parting gesture of a swirling hand encouraging joy was remembered by them for years to come.

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### A True Chossid — Connected to the Rebbe

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He accepted important roles upon himself within the framework of the local Chabad *shul*, and was somewhat of a treasurer. He would arrange the food for *farbrengens* on *chassidishe Yomim Tovim*, and distributed *l'chaim* to the participants, while he listened to every word spoken by the speaker.

He would *daven* slowly and with great intention throughout his entire life, and on Shabbos, he *davened* at great length. After his passing, Harav Yosef Hartman wrote a special article where he “drew” pictures of Reb Moshe’s life. His sixth “picture” deals with the *farbrengens* on Shabbos Mevorchim:



Reb Shoel Moshe with his daughter, Mrs. Doba Levin, and son-in-law, Reb Moshe Chaim, and their children: Yehuda (right,) and Chana Ruda (left)

“Shabbos Mevorchim. At a late hour in the afternoon, the chossid Reb Moshe Klein *a”b* approaches the *farbrengen* table, with his *talis* over his shoulder. He has just completed his Shabbos *davening*, and with humility he quietly sits down at the corner of the table. The *gabai*, Reb Eliyahu Volovik makes sure to bring him wine for *kiddush*, and *challa* or *mezonos*. He makes *kiddush*, eats a little, and says *l'chaim*.



Reb Moshe — second from right — at the *Kabolas Ponim* of his daughter, Mrs. Doba Levin



“Reb Moshe was not a man of words, he did not have long speeches. But when he would ‘demand’ of the *yungerleit*, he would do so with all of his heart, and with words which emanated from the heart. For example: ‘How is a *yungerman* not embarrassed to pass an entire week without dedicating at least an hour to *mitvza tefillin*?!’

“Sometimes, he would weigh in on the topic of learning *chassidus* in the morning before *davening*: ‘How can a *chassidishe yungerman* sit down to *daven* without learning any *chassidus* beforehand?’ Everyone knew that he said this from a place of deep love, and not to gain respect for himself *ch”v*, which is why his words were listened to.”

Reb Moshe was a symbol of *ahavas yisroel*, of an *oved*, of a *penimi*, and of a true *chossid*, he was *mekushar* to the Rebbe and fulfilled his instructions with life, joy and youthful vigor, which did not evidence his advanced age. With this energy he attracted others, who also began going on *mitvzoim* in his merit, or donated for *maos chitim* and the like.



Reb Moshe and his *Mechutan*, Reb Yekusiel Zalman, leading the *chosson*,  
Reb Moshe Chaim Levin to the *chuppa*

## Chapter Seven — Hosting Guests by the Rebbe

### “You Have the Original at Home”

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Many Chabad chassidim remember Reb Moshe from “Hachnosas Orchim” by the Rebbe, in New York. From when he reached Eretz Yisroel, he would travel to the Rebbe each Tishrei, Throughout the entire month, he worked at Hachnosas Orchim, at the side of Harav Moshe Yeruslavski *a”h*.

The first time he came to the Rebbe was a few months after he got to Eretz Yisroel. He came to the Rebbe for Yud Alef Nissan 5732 — 1972, the Rebbe’s seventieth birthday. He merited to go into *yechidus* with the Rebbe on the eve of Yud Gimmel Nissan, the *yohrtzeit* of the Tzemach Tzedek.



Tishrei by the Rebbe

Harav Yosef Hartman told about this first *yechidus*:

"I merited to travel with Reb Moshe *a"b* and (may she be separated for life) his eldest daughter, for Yud Alef Nissan 5732. During the flight, Reb Moshe sat with great tension. His emotions and joy at his upcoming meeting the Rebbe is unimaginable.

"We merited to go into *yechidus* with the Rebbe on the eve of Yud Gimmel Nissan, and to receive the special *matzos* from the Rebbe, to bring to Eretz Yisroel. We also merited to receive a Hagada from the Rebbe's holy hand. There was no limit to Reb Moshe's great joy and happiness.

"During the *yechidus*, the Rebbe asked about the situation of the chassidim who remained in Russia. Afterward, Reb Moshe presented his family picture to the Rebbe, and the Rebbe gazed at it for a long while. When the Rebbe lifted his eyes from the picture, Reb Moshe instinctively stretched out his hand to take the picture, but the Rebbe smiled and said, 'You have the original at home — why do you need the copy?' This picture remained with the Rebbe."



*At Kos Shel Brocho*

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### Harav Moshe Yeruslavski's Right Hand Man

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The cost of the flight did not deter Red Moshe. In the following years, he saved pennies, managing to fly for Tishrei. A few years later, Harav Moshe Yaroslavsky decided to give him a plane ticket for the work he did during the month at the Hachnosas Orchim — the organization that has been in charge since then for caring for the Rebbe's guests.

Harav Moshe's son, Harav Yitzchok Yehuda Yeruslavski, (member of Beis Din Rabbonei Chabad in Eretz Yisroel, and the *rov* of Nachalas Har Chabad) says that Reb Moshe was his father's right hand man: "Reb Moshe helped without any limits,



Receiving a dollar from the Rebbe

with whatever was needed. My father *a"b* did not speak much — but I knew that he was very happy with the work of Reb Moshe Klein.”

Reb Moshe invested much energy in organizing the meals which fed thousands of guests, and as he was wont, he did it all from behind the scenes. Besides for on *sukkos*, when he would stand and pour coffee for long hours for those who had *benched* on the Rebbe's *lulov*.

Every year, he would come to the Rebbe with piles of letters and requests for *brochos* which was sent by residents of Kiryas Malachi and soldiers he was in contact with.

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### Mivtza Ahavas Yisroel

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A special story brings out Reb Moshe's dedication to the Rebbe's work, as well as his love for his fellow Jew, and the importance he attributed to helping another. It was told by his daughter, Mrs. Doba Levin:

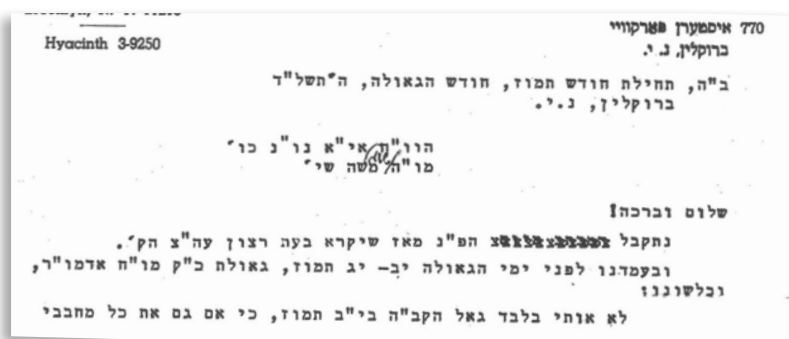
“After having four girls in a row, we had our second son, Yekusiel Zalman, in Shvat of 5750 — 1990, about which we were very excited. I asked my father that he come for the



*bris* and be *sandek*. He replied that he could not afford it as he had already come for Tishrei, but that he would come for our next son's *bris*.

"I laughed and said, 'We've had four girls before this one!' My father replied, 'You'll see, next year, you will have another son, and I will come for the *bris*.'

"Indeed, our son Menachem Mendel was born in Iyar of 5751, and as he promised, my father arrived in New York for the *bris*. However, he was very disappointed that he could not be involved in *mivtzoim*, as he could not speak English. Thus, he announced that because he could not be involved in *mivtza* tefillin, he would perform *mivtza ahavas yisroel*. The *bris* took place on Shabbos, and he stayed around the house that entire Shabbos, helping with everything needed: taking care of the children, setting up the *bris* etc. He did this with the same dedication to the Rebbe, as he would use for *mivtza* tefillin."



Above: The Rebbe added his first name — Shoel — in his holy handwriting.  
Below: The Rebbe added the title עוסק בצרכי ציבור — one who is involved in communal matters, in his holy handwriting



## By the Rebbe a Month Before his Passing

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Reb Moshe spent Elul 5753 — 1993, the month before his passing, by the Rebbe. The difficult illness from which he had suffered for a few years was getting worse, and he came to New York to be treated by famous doctors, thus meriting to see the Rebbe at the height of his illness. Sadly, the American doctors could not help him, and he returned to Eretz Yisroel at the end of Elul.

On Rosh Hashana 5754, he was in the hospital, in great pain from the malignant illness he was stricken with *l"v*. His son-in-law, (may he separated for good life) Harav Yisroel Tzvi Glitzinstein was with him, and wished to blow the *shofar* for him. But before he could begin, Reb Moshe asked that he walk him into the hallway, as walking was very difficult for him. He began to call other patients and hospital staff to come listen to the *shofar*; many of them heeded his call. Reb Moshe said the *brochos* in a voice choked with tears, and the sounds of the *shofar* echoed throughout the hallway of the hospital.

Throughout his illness, he suffered greatly, but never complained, so as not to cause anyone else pain. The Rebbe's health was constantly on his mind, and there was only one wish on his lips: "That the Rebbe be healthy and immediately redeem us from this dark *golus*."



4 Generations: Reb Moshe, his mother Mrs Miriam Klein, His daughter Feiga Glitzinstein and Grandson Shalom



On Chof Vov Tishrei 5754, he returned his soul to his maker, leaving after him his daughters, Mrs. Faiga and her husband Harav Yisroel Tzvi Glitzinstein, and Mrs. Doba and her husband Harav Moshe Chaim Levin, and their children, who are following in his ways — the ways of Torah and chassidus.



Reb Moshe (far left) during the period after his arrival in Eretz Yisroel, together with his brothers, Reb Lipa and Reb Zalman



Reb Moshe (second chossid from right) during the dedication of the central *shul* in Nachalas Har Chabad. Others seen in the picture are: Harav Avrohom Alter Heber — secretary of the Nachalas Har Chabad *vaad*, philanthropist Aizik Wolfson, and Harav Mordechai Gorodetzki, chairman of the *vaad*



Reb Moshe and his brother, Reb Zalman, with the *mashpia*, Reb Mendel Futerfas



Performing *mitvza* tefillin with new immigrants during his final years



The resting place of Reb Shoel Moshe Klein at Har Hazeisim



Feeding the guests, Tishrei, 5741



Dollars, 4 Tishrei, 5745



*Panim*, 27 Elul, 5749



At the *Yechidus Klalis* for the residents of Kfar chabad and Nachlas Har Chabad, 26 Tishrei, 5744



*Daled Minim*, 14 Tishrei, 5745



Kos Shel Bracha, with his son-in-law Reb Moshe Chaim Levin and Granddaughter Chanie (Hertzel), 3 Tishrei, 5744



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