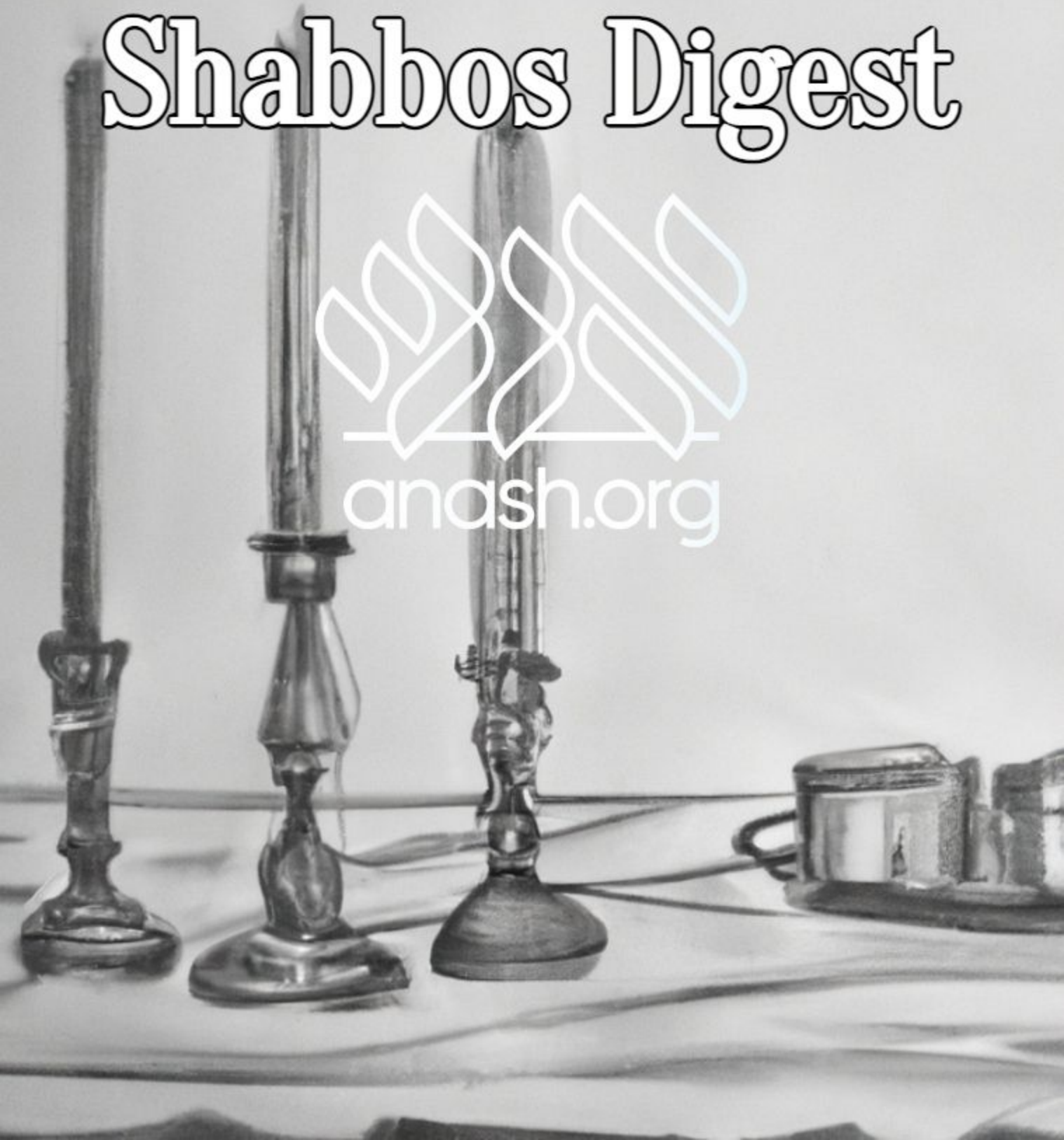


The Anash.org Shabbos Digest



HOW ONE MAN'S YOUTUBE CHANNEL MADE A CHASSIDUS REVOLUTION

NEWS כ"ט תמוז ה'תשפ"ג - JULY 18, 2023



Highlighting Our Own: The chance to join an in-depth *shiur* on a *ma'amar* or a farbrengen with a renowned *mashpia* is now accessible anytime, anywhere, thanks to the efforts of one man, and his YouTube channel.

By: Anash.org reporter

Not so long ago, the experience of joining a genuine *chassidishe* farbrengen or a shiur with a renowned *mashpia* was a precious commodity, hard to come by. That is thankfully changing, thanks to one individual and his YouTube channel.

Growing up in the Chassidic community in Monsey, Rabbi **Shlomo Zalmen Friedman** watched his father go learn Chabad

chassidus at Heichal Menachem and was inspired. As he went to learn in Eretz Yisroel, he also got the opportunity to attend the farbrengens of renowned *mashpi'im* Rabbi **Chaim Sholom Deitch**, Rabbi **Zalman Gopin**, and Rabbi **Yosef Yitzchok Ofen**.

During that time, he got close with Rabbi Deitch who launched the Chasidut.net website to publicize his *shiurim* and farbrengens. The *shiurim* were immensely popular, and he would sometimes have 1,000 live viewers join in at a farbrengen. Rabbi Friedman saw the outstanding impact the *shiurim* had on people and decided to take the idea further. He began getting involved in recording the farbrengens and *shiurim* of all the many other *mashpi'im* in Eretz Yisroel at the time and posting them on the site. Such, the seed of the Chassidus YouTube Channel was planted.

"When I moved back to America, I realized the huge lack of in-depth shiurim available online. If someone wanted to learn a *ma'amar* in-depth or listen to a genuine farbrengen of great *mashpi'im*, there wasn't much available," shares Rabbi Friedman.

"I felt so motivated and inspired by what I had seen so far with the Chasidut.net website, that I wanted to make that available to more people. I started to record the shiurim and *ma'amarim* in Bais Menachem in Boro Park which Reb **Yoel Kahn** would give every week. He gave a Thursday *ma'amar* shiur and a Motzei Shabbos one on Tanya. I also began

recording Rabbi **Shlomo Kaplan** at his Likkutei Torah and Derech Mitzvosecha classes as well. I would upload those to a new YouTube channel simply called 'Chassidus.'"

Rabbi Friedman then added Reb Yoel's shiurim he gave in the upstairs *zal* in 770 and many of his farbrengens as well as farbrengens by Rabbi **Pinye Korf a"h** and Rabbi **Yisroel Friedman a"h**. All of these were recorded, edited, and posted on the Chassidus YouTube channel.

The channel kept growing, with more and more *mashpi'im*, *shiurim*, and farbrengens added all the time. It quickly gained a large following as well, with people from all around the world watching the farbrengens and listening to the *shiurim*.

Currently, Rabbi Friedman has a whole network of people helping him in different countries around the world. When it comes to a special day on the *chassidishe* calendar, it is a huge operation to coordinate multiple events in myriads of locations all over Crown Heights and worldwide. There can often be fifteen recordings happening simultaneously.

Today, Chassidus YouTube Channel is an amazing resource, with tens of thousands of hours of classes and farbrengens up on the site, easily accessible for all. It has 50,000 views monthly, and clocks in over 100,000 hours of content viewed yearly.

Anytime someone wants to learn something on a particular topic, they can find a great shiur explaining and teaching it. If someone wants a series of *shiurim* on a *ma'amar* to learn as a preparation for a chassidishe yom tov that is approaching, or participate in a farbrengen about that special day, they can readily choose from multiple classes and series from known teachers such as Rabbi **Yoel Kahan a"h**, **Rabbi Meilich Tzwiebel a"h**, Rabbi **Pinye Korf a"h**, **Rabbi Yisroel Friedman a"h**, and *yblch"t* Rabbi **Chaim Sholom Deitsch**, Rabbi **Shlomo Zarchy**, Rabbi **Laibel Altein**, Rabbi **Nachman Shapiro**, and many more.

In times past, these invaluable *shiurim* and farbrengens would have been a one-time event. The channel is making that even after the *shiur* concluded, or the farbrengen dispersed, people can continue viewing and enjoying them. Indeed, it will leave an impact that is felt for many generations.

One group of people who especially benefit from the classes are the shluchim, many of whom find themselves in communities and cities that are far from where live events take place. It is a way for them to access the chassidishe farbrengens and inspiring *mashpi'im* that they otherwise couldn't, and enables them to learn with the guidance of teachers right from home.

"The Chassidus YouTube channel changed my life. The things I am learning there completely turnaround my whole view of Torah and mitzvos, and impacts me in a way that nothing else does," shares a very grateful shliach.

"I am so indebted to the people who are taking the time to make sure all of these valuable farbrengens are recorded and publicized. Especially now, when some of the great chassidim

of the last generation are passing, it is a gift like no other that I can go on the channel and instantly connect and listen to inspiring farbrengens from elter chassidim of past,” shares another bochur.

The influence of the classes has moved beyond the channel and has far-reaching effects as well. Many of the farbrengens have been transcribed into articles for the Kfar Chabad, and a few books were compiled from the classes that were posted there. *Hisva’adus* is a compilation of farbrengens by Rabbi Chaim Sholom Deitsch, that was created off of the recordings from the Chassidus YouTube channel.

Each of the recordings requires someone to set up and manage the equipment, make sure it remains charged and running for the hours of the event, and then edit and upload the footage to YouTube. This is a tremendous operation and it does a huge service for Chassidim and Yidden around the world.

“Our next project is to hopefully make a beautiful website of our own, to put up all the content and have clear categories and search engines so that people can quickly and smoothly find what they are looking for,” says Rabbi Friedman.

To access the channel, you can go to [YouTube.com/@chassidus](https://www.youtube.com/@chassidus).

If you would like to contact Rabbi Friedman email Zalmen4@gmail.com or click here to donate <https://secure.cardknox.com/chassidusonline>.

MANCHESTER YESHIVA HINTS AT REOPENING

NEWS כ"ח תמוז ה'תשפ"ג - JULY 17, 2023



Four years after the venerable Manchester Chabad Yeshiva closed its doors, it may be reopening them to welcome students for the upcoming Yeshiva year.

By Anash.org reporter

Four years after the venerable Manchester Chabad Yeshiva closed its doors, it may be reopening them to welcome students for the upcoming Yeshiva year.

The Manchester Yeshiva first opened for the Yeshiva year of 5743, after Reb **Zalmon Jaffe** asked the Rebbe regarding opening a branch of Tomchei Temimim in the city. the Rebbe supported the idea on condition that there would be a fitting

Rosh Yeshiva put in place who would draw in the hearts of the students and inspire in them a *chayus* in learning Torah. The Rebbe also instructed to open only if there are already ten students signed up at the start of the year.

Indeed, the conditions were met and in Elul of 5742, Yeshivas Lubavitch Manchester opened with Rabbi **Yosef Akiva Cohen** as the *rosh yeshiva* and Rabbi **Yitzchak Klein** as *mashpia*.

For the next quarter century, the yeshiva continued to grow, quickly establishing itself as a premier Yeshiva for bochurim from around the globe. The *hanhala* body also grew, attracting names such as Rabbi **Yaakov Moshe Wolberg** to serve as *magid shiur* and Rabbi **Berel Korf** as *mashpia*.

But then hardships arose, and the Yeshiva began struggling with registration. With student numbers dwindling, the Yeshiva was **at risk of closing** after the 5779 Yeshiva year. They then announced that for the upcoming year, the Yeshiva would take a "sabbatical", originally intended to be a short-term plan.

As one year passed and then another, it seemed like the short-term plan had become a long-term reality. Rabbi Wolberg joined the staff of the Yeshivas Tomchei Tmimim in Kfar Chabad, Rabbi Korf moved to New York and became a *mashpia* in Oholei Torah, and other *hanahala* members found other positions as well.

It seemed that Yeshivas Lubavitch Manchester was history.

That changed just this week when alumni and parents of former students of the Yeshiva received a surprising email in their inboxes.

"I am writing to you on behalf of Yeshivas Lubavitch Manchester, with some exciting news to share," the email, obtained by Anash.org.

The email, dated July 11th, said that the Yeshiva would be reopening for this upcoming Elul, the Yeshiva year of 5784. It then asked for updated information on former students, seemingly to build an alumni database.

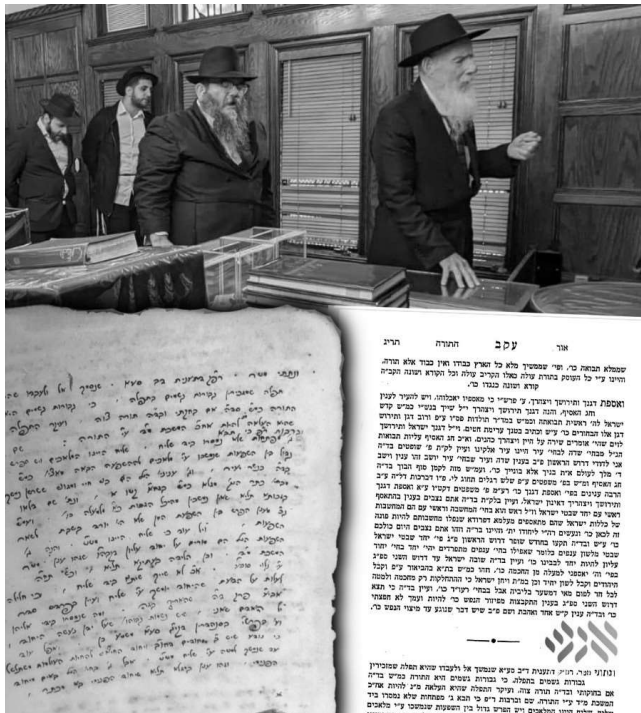
The email did not provide details about the reopening, including such pertinent ones such as where the Yeshiva would be located, who would serve as *hanhala*, *magidei shiurim* and *mashpi'im* and other such details.

Regardless, if accurate, the Yeshiva's reopening would undoubtedly be a great asset to Lubavitch and a great relief to parents, especially those in the UK and neighboring countries, offering an additional option for their sons to learn in.

Anash.org reached out to the Manchester Yeshiva for comment and will publish their response if they send one.

RETURN OF TZEMACH TZEDEK'S MAAMAR SEEN AS FORTUITOUS

NEWS | כ"ט תמוז ה'תשפ"ג - JULY 18, 2023



The past few months have seen a number of *kisvei yad kodesh* from our Rebbeim returned to the Rebbe's library, but the one returned on Monday was seen as especially timely.

By Anash.org reporter

After years of struggles to return the books and manuscripts of the Chabad Rebbeim to the Rebbe's library, the past few months have seen a steady trickle of seforim and *ksovim* being returned. Still, the return of another manuscript on Monday was seen as especially timely.

It has been over three decades that Chabad has been battling Russia to return two separate collections that belonged to

the Rebbeim: The Schneerson Collection, held captive in the Lenin Library in Moscow, and the Frierdiker Rebbe's library held in the Russian military archives.

The lawsuits are still ongoing, and Chabad continues to try every avenue to have the library returned. At the same time, efforts are expended to make sure that seforim or manuscripts that were taken from the Russian collections and made their way to the market are returned as well.

Aside from the abovementioned 'Schnerson Collection' and the military archive, a separate section of the Frierdiker Rebbe's library was looted by the Nazis following their invasion of Poland. These archives were later taken by the Russian Government following their defeat of Nazi Germany.

In 5738, after extensive negotiations with the Polish government, these treasures were brought back to the Rebbe. However, unscrupulous individuals stole a small but significant portion of holy *kisvei yad* and they disappeared into the black market of collector's items.

One of the many stolen items was a book of manuscripts of the Tzemach Tzedek in his *ksav yad kodesh*. A wealthy Jew named Halperin redeemed the book and returned it to the Rebbe. Unfortunately, the sefer was compromised and a number of pages had been removed.

On Monday, a number of pages from this manuscript were returned to Chabad. This one was a *ma'amar* of the Tzemach Tzedek in his *ksav yad kodesh*. The *ma'amar* was originally printed in Ohr HaTorah – Devorim volume two, on Parshas Eikev.

As we are just two weeks away from Parshas Eikev, the return of this manuscript on Monday was seen as especially timely. This *hashgacha pratis* will surely encourage Chassidim to learn this *ma'amer* in the coming weeks.

Over the past few months, items from all three collections have been making their way back to their rightful location in an almost steady manner; Every few weeks, a sefer or manuscript was redeemed one way or another and brought to the Rebbe's room before finally returning them to the Rebbe's library, where they belong.

These include a sefer on Kabbalah that had belonged to the Rebbe Rashab and Frierdiker Rebbe, an original handwritten letter by the Tzemach Tzedek, and 3 pages from a manuscript in the Tzemach Tzedek's *ksav yad kodesh*.

EUROPEAN RABBIS RAISE KASHRUS CONCERNS WITH SPRITE ZERO

NEWS כ"ח תמוז ה'תשפ"ג - JULY 17, 2023



A non-kosher controversy is brewing in Europe as local Kashrus organizations come out for and against the kosher status of locally manufactured Sprite Zero.

By Anash.org reporter

A non-kosher controversy is brewing in Europe as local Kashrus organizations come out for and against the kosher status of locally manufactured Sprite Zero.

Sprite Zero is a lemon-lime soft drink produced by The Coca-Cola Company. It is a sugar-free variant of Sprite, and is one of the drinks in Coca-Cola's "Zero Sugar" lineup.

Complications began when one of the kosher supervisors at a factory in Europe accidentally learned that the production

line of the local Sprite Zero had undergone a change in one of the ingredient formulas. The mashgiach immediately asked to verify the list of products after the change.

When he went through the new list of ingredients, he discovered to his great shock that one of the ingredients, which gives the characteristic sour taste to the Sprite Zero drink, is tartaric acid.

When he inquired about the reason for the change the factory's food technician explained to him that the component was recently replaced for reasons of quality and durability of the taste since the acid that was used up until now was a chemical compound that faded if the bottle was left open for a long time.

The problematic component is "tartaric acid" or by its more familiar name "wine acid" which is an organic acid that looks like white crystals. It appears in nature in many plants, especially in grapes, and in bananas and is one of the main acids in wine. The acid is used as an addition to other foods to give them a sour taste and serves as an antioxidant.

The mashgiach immediately consulted with a local rov, who told him that this acid should not be consumed, since during its processing it goes through a process of turning it into

wine and is in any case prohibited because of *yayin nesech*.

Immediately, local Kashrus organizations began to issue notices, warning their communities about the severe prohibition on *yayin nesech* and against consuming Sprite Zero.

Thus, in an unusual announcement, published at the end of last week, the kashrus committee of Buenos Aires headed by Rabbi **Fayvel Avraham Sofer**, warned against drinking Sprite Zero. The announcement states that the popular drink, which until now was approved by the committee due to the hechsher of Rabbi Landa, is no longer kosher and that this drink should not be consumed.

The Kashrut Committee of Vienna also announced that since Spirit Zero may contain tartaric acid, you should check the list of ingredients of the drink before consuming it and if the drink includes this ingredient, you should not drink this drink at all.

On the other hand, Rabbi **Pinchas Padwa** of Beis Din Shomre Hadas in Antwerp was quick to issue a clarification notice that the drink sold in stores in the city is without issue and there is no problem drinking it.

"After extensive investigation regarding the new recipe, we can confirm that the Kosher status of Sprite drinks in Belgium is unchanged," he wrote.

Rabbi Padwa is a worldwide recognized authority in the Kashrus world and has a reputation for solving many difficult challenges to kosher productions, based on his profound technical understanding and his vast knowledge of the laws of Kashrus.

It should be noted that there is no problem with the Sprite Zero products that are produced in the United States and Israel.

CHAIM SARCHI, 37, AH

NEWS ב' אב ה'תשפ"ג - JULY 20, 2023



Chaim Sarchi, a beloved young husband and father from South Africa who epitomized *chessed* and humility, passed away on Thursday, 2 Menachem Av, 5783.

Chaim Sarchi, a beloved young father from South Africa who united the world in *tefillos* and acts of kindness for his recovery passed away on Thursday, 2 Menachem Av, 5783.

He was 37 years old.

Chaim was a dedicated community member, an incredible and loving father to his 2 boys. Chaim was the epitome of pure humility in every sense of the word. He was a dedicated Hatzala volunteer.

A humble human with a selfless character. Generous to his core. His family was his life. Above that Chaim was a *mensch* always going the extra mile for anyone! The ultimate chossid!

Chaim suffered a brain aneurysm 17 days ago and Jews around the world united in prayer and acts of kindness for his recovery. His passing has left the entire Jewish community of Johannesburg in mourning.

He is survived by his wife **Liat** and two young sons **Levi** and **Idan**, as well as his parents **Michael** and **Rebecca Sarchi** and siblings **Moshe**, **Mendy**, **Monnis**, **Elki**, and **Shevi**.

A huge crowd attended Chaim's levaya today in Johannesburg, South Africa. He was escorted on his final journey by a Hatzalah entourage, the organization he selflessly served.

600 people joined a *hachlatos* group for him when he was sick. It's being continued now in his *zchus*. <https://chat.whatsapp.com/IfNKfyh2YIn1mxelMnqq2p>

Baruch Dayan Haemes.

JO-BERG HATZALAH ISSUES ONE FINAL CALL FOR PASSED MEMBER

NEWS ב' אב ה'תשפ"ג - JULY 20, 2023



The heartbreaking *levaya* of Chaim Sarchi, a young father from Johannesburg who was a dedicated Hatzalah member, included a moving tribute from his colleagues, who issued one final Hatzalah call for him.

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Chaim was a dedicated community member, an incredible and loving father to his 2 boys. Friends and family remembered him as the epitome of pure humility in every sense of the word.

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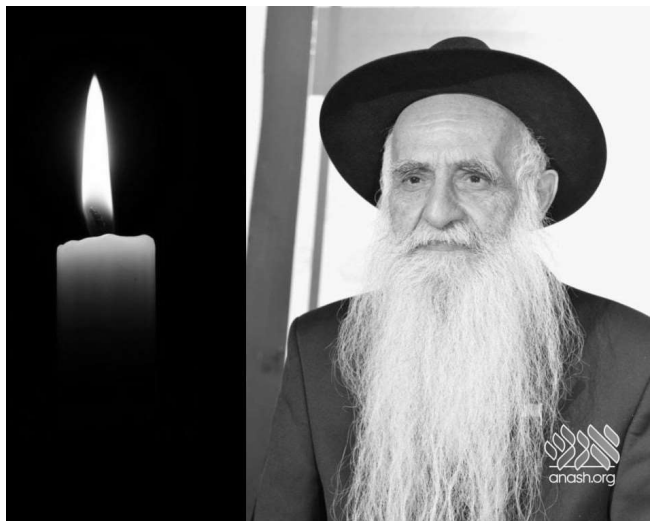
Hatzalah also paid a moving tribute to their fellow member, issuing a radio call to Chaim, thanking him for his service and commitment.

"Gone but not forgotten, your mission is now complete," they announced. "You are now off duty, your mission is complete. We have the watch from here."

600 people joined a *hachlatos* group for him when he was sick. It's being continued now in his *zchus*. <https://chat.whatsapp.com/IfNKfyh2YIn1mxelMnqq2p>

RABBI YITZCHOK YADGAR, 85, AH

NEWS א' אב ה'תשפ"ג - JULY 19, 2023



Rabbi Yitzchok Yadgar, a shliach to the Ta'anachim region in the North of Eretz Yisroel, and who the Rebbe appointed as 'Baal Habayis' over Iraq, passed away.

By Anash.org reporter

Rabbi **Yitzchok Yadgar**, the dedicated shliach to the Ta'anachim region in the North of Eretz Yisroel, passed away on Tuesday, 29 Tammuz, 5783.

He was 85 years old.

Rabbi Yadgar was born in Yerushalayim to Iraqi immigrant parents. He was raised in a traditional Mizrachi family, where he stumbled upon Chabad as a young boy and eventually made his way to the Chabad Yeshiva in Lod.

After his marriage to **Simcha Mizrachi**, the young couple settled in Kfar Chabad. A year later at the Rebbe's instructions their family moved to Moshav Avital, and joined the school staff in the move to the Taanach region.

Aside from his work with the residents of the area, Rabbi Yadgar led the Chabad community and Chabad shul in the settlement. His home became an address for the spiritual needs of residents of the area.

During *hakofos* on Shmini Atzeres 5731, the Rebbe appointed representatives who would be *balabatim* of each country in the world and who will ensure that everything there will be done according to the Torah. Rabbi Yadgar was appointed as the Baal Habayis over Iraq.

He is survived by his children, **Shterna Sarah Chaiby** – Rechovot; **Rochel Kill** – Gan Ner; Rabbi **Shimon Yadgar** – Yerushalayim; Rabbi **Shmuel Yadgar** – Beer Sheva; Rabbi **Moti Yadgar** – Tzfas; **Penina Levy** – Migdal Haemek; **Chani Edrei** – Yerushalayim; and **Mendy Yadgar** – Crown Heights. He is also survived by grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

The levaya will take place Wednesday, in Gan Ner, Eretz Yisroel.

Baruch Dayan Haemes.

RABBIS CLIMB INTO PIT TO ENSURE HIGH STANDARD FOR MIKVAH

NEWS א' אב ה'תשפ"ג - JULY 19, 2023



Changing the waters in a mikvah is no simple process, and it had two rabbis climbing into the a pit, opening seals, and searching for even a single drop of water.

The Chabad Mikvah in Gaithersburg, MD, under the leadership of Rabbi **Sholom Raichik** recently replaced the *mei geshomim* in the Mikvah *boros* with fresh clean rainwater from the *otzer mei geshomim*.

As reported on Anash.org, this past winter the Mikvah started refilling the *otzer* with fresh *mei geshomim*, in preparation to change the Mikvah's *mei geshomim boros*.

After the *otzer* filled to capacity with new fresh rain water, they emptied, washed, cleaned, and sanitized the *mei geshomim boros* in the Mikvah; the *bor hatachton*, and the *bor min hatzad*. The *boros* were dried using electric heaters and fans. and then refilled them with fresh rainwater from the *otzer*.

As the Chabad Mikvah of Gaithersburg, MD, has a separate *otzer* of *mei geshomim*, this process was done without any downtime for the Mikvah. The Mikvah was fully opened that night to serve its clientele.

Mikvaos without an *otzer mei geshomim*, however, have to be shut down and wait for new rainwater, which can take weeks or months to accomplish this, to refill the Mikvah *boros* with fresh *mei geshomim*.

This process of changing the *mei geshomim* in the *boros*, is being done as per the directives and guidelines of the Rebbe Rashab that the rainwater in the Mikvah *boros* has to be changed every year. That was the same way the Rebbe Rashab himself managed the original Chabad Mikvah in Rostov over 104 years ago.

The following Chabad Rabbonim, renowned Mikvah experts, concur with this approach, that the *mei geshomim* has to be changed yearly, in order to categorize your Mikvah is as

per the directives and guidelines of the Rebbe Rashab.

Harav **Eli Landau** – son of Harav **Yaakov Landau a”h**, Chief Rabbi of Bnai Brak. He supervised the building of the original Chabad Mikvah in Rostov.

Harav **Berel Levine** – Chief Librarian of the Rebbe’s Library, and author of סדר תיקוני מקוואות and many seforim on Halacha.

Harav **Yosef Yitzchok Feigelstock**, Rov of Kehilas Chabad Lubavitch, Argentina.

Vaad Rabbonei Chabad of Eretz Yisroel – [see here](#).

See also קונטרס תורת טבלין חלק ג [here](#).

As done previously, the mikvah Retained the services of Mikvah International under the leadership of Rabbi **Elozor Raichik**, to ensure that changing the *mei geshomim* in the *boros* is done to the highest standard of Halacha למהדרין מן המהדרין, the proper way a Mikvah should function.

Rabbi Raichik of Mikvah International and Harav **Alexander Shlomo Pollack** a world-renowned Mikvah expert, author of the Sefer הלכות מקוואות, traveled to the Chabad Mikvah in Gaithersburg MD. They inspected and ensured that the seals they previously placed on the *otzer* and all adjacent rooms associated with the *otzer* were intact and not tampered with.

Then they climbed into the *boros* and ensured the *boros* were 100% “bone dry.”

When they were satisfied everything was in proper halachik order, the *otzer* plugs were removed and fresh *mei geshomim* flowed into the Mikvah *boros*. The stored *mei geshomim* in the *otzer* was 100% crystal clear. The actual filling of *mei geshomim* took approximately 90 minutes.

The reserve *otzer* is now refilling with fresh *mei geshomim*, and *bez”h*, next year the Mikvah will be repeating this process and replacing the *mei geshomim* in the Mikvah *boros*, to ensure the Mikvah conforms to the directives and guidelines of the Rebbe Rashab.

LIFE IS LIKE A SCHOOLBUS STUCK IN THE MUD

NEWS א' אב ה'תשפ"ג - JULY 19, 2023



When a bus of boys coming to farbreng got stuck in the mud, it took two vehicles and coordination to get it out. At the ensuing farbrengen, we derived two important lessons.

*By Rabbi Sholom Mordechai Rubashkin –
AlephBeisGimmel.com*

I'm not one to put up my feet and relax – summer or not – but I still found myself in the Catskills this past Shabbos. My dear mother, *zol zain gezunt*, is spending the summer in the mountains, and I try to take every opportunity to fulfill the precious mitzvah of *kibud av va'eim*.

It turns out that the Yeshivas Kayitz of Oholei Torah is spending the summer not far from where I was for Shabbos. In order to make the most of my time there, we arranged for them to come over for a Farbrengen on Sunday afternoon.

It rained a lot over Shabbos. When the boys arrived on their bus, they found that the long unpaved road leading into the colony had turned muddy. The bus was wider than the usual family cars and vans and the well-worn ruts they created, so the driver took the road slowly, balancing carefully on the narrow strips on either side of the deep grooves in the road. Just as he reached the end of the road, his back tires slipped off the road and became mired in the mud.

The boys clustered around the bus, watching with interest as a couple of the more confident ones were trying to get the bus unstuck. They found some pallets that had been lying around and were wedging them in under the wheels, with little effect. The driver tried pulling forward or backing up, but the tires just kept spinning in the slick mud.

They didn't give up easily, but neither did the mud. Once or twice it seemed like the wheels were gaining traction, only to spin and slip back into the mud. Conceding that they might need help, they finally put in a call to Chavivim, a group of volunteers who bring roadside assistance to their fellow Yidden.

Two vehicles answered the call – a powerful pickup truck and a heavy suburban. Competent and well-equipped, they pulled out a heavy-duty towing strap and connected their vehicles to the bus. "Put your bus in neutral," one of them instructed, "and we'll pull you right out."

We all stepped back to watch from a safe distance. On the count of three, the two vehicles hit the gas. The bus rocked a little but it didn't budge, and now it was the Chavivim spinning their wheels in the wet mud. "OK," the guy told the bus driver. "This time, let's try it with you driving too."

The bus got into gear. At the count of three, the strap went taut and all of the vehicles rolled forward. The boys cheered as the bus got back on the road and pulled away to find a place to park. Baruch Hashem!

Everyone finally made it indoors and we started the Farbrengen. With the high drama of the bus fresh in everyone's mind, I started with the famous teaching of the Baal Shem Tov: from everything a Yid sees or hears, he can learn a lesson in serving Hashem. "So, boys... what did you take from this story with the bus?" I asked.

The symbolism of the mud and the solid ground jumped out at everyone. It's something to which we can all relate. There are times in all our lives when we slip out of the safe grooves in the road and find ourselves stuck, tires spinning, unable to get any traction.

We settled on two practical lessons for those situations:

First, even a big, powerful bus – a heavy-duty, high-torque vehicle – will be totally immobilized if it's not on solid ground. The makeshift foundation of the wooden pallets was not enough, and it was only when it was safely and fully back on solid ground that it was able to move under its own power.

Our journey through life is the same. We build up our strength, our abilities, and our techniques, but all of that counts for nothing if we're not on solid ground. We must ensure that we go through life on solid foundations.

The path our lives take might turn steeply upwards, demanding more strength and resolve to see things through. It might turn steeply downwards, requiring firm and determined application of our brakes. It might veer left or right and require careful and accurate steering.

None of that is possible if our wheels are not firmly in contact with the ground. Not the slippery, illusory ground, the mud that is the false reality asserted by the world around us and embraced by our *nefesh habahamis*, but the actual, firm ground revealed to us by the Torah and innately recognized by our *neschama* and *nefesh Elokis*.

The foundations of our life, the reality on which we build and within which we operate, must be Hashem, Emunah, Bitachon, *neschama*, Torah, Mitzvos, and so on.

Secondly, to stay on track – and certainly to get back on track – we need help. We need a Rebbe. We need a Mashpia, a Rav, we need chavivim, chavivim, good friends who can be there for us with heavy-duty towing rope, with a dose of honesty and true *ahavas yisroel*.

But, like the bus Hashem showed us this week, that doesn't mean we can stay in neutral. To get out of the mud, we need to get into gear ourselves. We need to want to escape the mud and, keeping in mind that we can't do it on our own, we need to do whatever is in our power to make that happen.

We're in this world, in the mud, facing our challenges, because Hashem wants our effort, our Avodah. It is precious to Him. He gives us everything we need – external assistance and internal strength and – and He is waiting to see us get into gear and hit the gas.

LIVELY FARBRENGEN CELEBRATES 90TH BIRTHDAY OF RABBI BEREL SHEMTOV

NEWS ג' אב ה'תשפ"ג - JULY 21, 2023



The 90th birthday of Rabbi Berel Shemtov, head shliach to Michigan, was marked this week with a lively farbrengen joined by family members, both in-person and virtually.

By Anash.org reporter

The 90th birthday of Rabbi **Berel Shemtov**, head shliach to Michigan, was marked this week with a lively farbrengen and Kinus Hakhel joined by family members, both in-person and virtually.

Reb Berel, born in 5693 (1933), was the Rebbe's first shliach in the United States, having been appointed during the week of *sheva brachos* following his marriage to

Mrs. **Bas-Sheva** (nee Korf). Previously, he had been part of the group of bochurim shlichim to Eretz Yisroel sent by the Rebbe in 5716 following the terror attack in Kfar Chabad.

Reb Berel's sons and daughter traveled from their respective *mekomos hashlichus* to join the farbrengen, and many of the grandchildren joined in person or via Zoom.

Also joining via Zoom were Reb Berel's siblings Rabbi **Avrohom Shemtov** and Mrs. **Fradel Sudak**, as well as Rabbi **Sholom Ber Levitin**, head shliach to Seattle and neighboring areas, and **Ronny Ferber**, a supporter of Friendship Circle of Michigan.

Besides coming together to celebrate, Reb Berel's children and grandchildren also presented a unique birthday present to their father and grandfather: In recent years, Reb Berel has had a tremendous *koch* in learning the Rebbe's Igros Kodesh, and being *m'orer* others to do so as well. As such, the present was *hachlatos* to increase learning Igros Kodesh, with a total of over 5,000 Igros Kodesh just during this farbrengen.

A poster noting each child and grandchild's *hachlata* was presented to Reb Berel, to his obvious delight.

WHY THIS WILLIAMSBURG ROV FELT INDEBTED TO LUBAVITCH

NEWS כ"ז תמוז ה'תשפ"ג - JULY 15, 2023



Motzaei Shabbos story: When the Lantzuter Rov insisted that Lubavitcher chassidim speak in his *shtiebel* in Williamsburg, it was because decades earlier the Rebbe Rashab had saved his father's life in a miraculous turn of events.

As heard by Rabbi Sholom DovBer Avtzon

The following story was sent to me by Rabbi Yossi Shochat who heard it from someone of the Satmar Bikur Cholim. It took me a few phone calls to the family to verify the details. The following is what I heard:

My grandfather HaRav **Alter Yitzchok Yaakov Wagschul** was the Rov in Lanczyc a town in Galicia (Poland). When the German army may their remembrance be erased attacked Poland, the first ones they were trying to take captive were the Rabbonim and the leaders of the community. Through Hashems' miracles and kindness, he was able to escape with his wife and five children to Russia.

On the 23rd of Sivan [I believe 5700 (1940)], the communist government decreed that all refugees have to become Russian citizens, or they will be exiled to Siberia. People were in a dilemma, they were fearful that if they became Russian citizens, they might not be allowed to return to their home in Poland after the war. On the other hand, who wanted to live in Siberia? You might not live long enough for the war to end.

My grandfather heard that the tzaddik Reb **Yitzchok Gvirmann**, known as Reb Itzikl of Pshevorsk, (who later settled in Antwerp, Belgium) was in the vicinity so he together with others asked him what to do

Reb Itzikl replied that the 23rd day of Sivan is a wonderful day in the Jewish calendar; for on that day, Mordechai wrote to the Jews the wonderful news that they are to defend themselves and change the cruel decree of Haman into a blessing, that crushed their enemies plans. So in truth, this is a positive decree.

No one understood how being thrown out of your house in the middle of the night exiled to Siberia is positive. But a tzaddik's vision is better than a regular person's vision.

The end was that those Jews who went to Siberia most of them survived and being that they were Polish refugees, after the war they were allowed to return to their homeland. However, those who became Russian citizens and remained in Russia many of them were killed in the war.

My grandfather, Reb Alter, was one of the Polish Jews who were exiled to Siberia.

In Siberia the communist authorities allowed a person to practice his religion, as long as you did so in the privacy of your home. However, it was forbidden to do so in a group setting or in someone else's home.

Since my grandfather was a Rov in Poland and he saw many religious Jews in the town that he settled in, he encouraged them one by one to come to his house and he had a minyan. He was arrested twice for a short period of time as a warning that this behavior is unacceptable. However, as a Rov that did not deter him, as he is answerable only to Hashem.

The third time he was arrested by the communist regime was more serious. This time they charged him with being counter-revolutionary and treason. He faced either a long sentence or even the possibility of the death penalty.

The day of the trial came, and the judge was around fifty years old. He spoke harshly to my grandfather and didn't allow anyone in the community to speak on his behalf. He then said, if the defendant wishes he can say something in his defense.

My grandfather said, "I am a religious Jew who is guided by Jewish law. Jewish law instructs us to pray for the well-being of the country and its government. I am personally indebted to this great country for giving me refuge from the onslaught of the German atrocities that are destroying the Jews. I have with me a prayer book and the Honorable Judge and court can see the prayer we say every day.

"In Jewish tradition, the prayers of a quorum of ten is much more powerful than the prayer of an individual. Therefore, out of my deep and sincere appreciation and gratitude, I asked nine other Jews to join me in this prayer. It is an act of loyalty, not rebellion. We pray for the well-being and success of this great country!"

The judge sat for a moment and then banging his gavel he declared, "Case dismissed!"

The family's relief was tremendous and many people there were shocked. This judge was so harsh with him and yet pardoned him. The speech must have swayed him.

Decorum is that no one leaves the courtroom before the judge. The judge stood up and began walking out and everyone stood up in respect. As he passed by my grandfather, he stretched out his hand as if to say Comrade be loyal. My grandfather took his hand and said thank you, but he broke out in a sweat. He felt the piece of paper that the judge had just placed in his hand.

Realizing that secrecy must be maintained, he put his hand in his pocket and took something from his pocket, while placing the note there.

When he came home, he looked at it and began to tremble. The judge wrote his address with the words hope to see you. What does he want from me? However, his Rebbetzin said to him, Alter don't be nervous. If the judge wanted to harm you, he could have easily done so. Go to him.

While my grandfather wasn't positive that his Rebbetzin was correct, he knew that to disobey or even ignore the Judge's request would be extremely foolish and perhaps dangerous. So that night he walked by himself as if he was out for a stroll and after making sure no one was following him he knocked on the judge's door.

The Judge welcomed him in and asked him to sit down. He then said, "You think that you gave a beautiful speech in your own defense and that is why I dismissed the charges against you. I have heard better speeches from accomplished orators, and I gave them severe punishments and sentences. So why did I free you?"

"Around twenty-five years ago I was drafted into the Czar's army. My father was a chossid of the **Rebbe Rashab** of Lubavitch and he took me to the Rebbe pleading that the Rebbe give me a blessing that I would be able to be discharged by the draft board as we were informed that he did this on behalf of others.

"The Rebbe replied, 'I can't free him from the army service, however, I can promise him that he will survive. Please bring him in.'

"I entered the Rebbe's room, and he said to me, 'I see you are a talented and intelligent individual. You are going to rise in the ranks. I will promise you that you will live if you promise me two things: 1. That you wear a *tallis koton* whenever possible so you will always be reminded that you are a Jew. 2. That when you have the opportunity to help another Jew you do so.'

"I gave the Rebbe my word and as you see his promise was fulfilled. I survived the war and rose in ranks until I became a judge. When you came in front of me today, I fulfilled my promise to the Rebbe."

The judge then unbuttoned his shirt and showed Reb Alter that he was wearing a *tallis koton* under his undershirt.

Boruch Hashem after the war my grandfather was able to leave Russia. He then came to America where he opened his *beis midrash*.

Now the aftermath of this story.

After the war in 1967, the difference of opinion between Lubavitch and Satmar was evident. Nevertheless, when Lubavitcher chassidim came to Williamsburg on yom tov, many shuls allowed them to speak and say over a teaching of the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

However, as the years passed some shuls became more aligned with Satmar and some of them no longer allowed the Lubavitchers to speak or even to enter. This came to a head in 5737 (1976) when there was an organized act to stop Lubavitchers from speaking.

The president of my father's shul decided that he too would ban them, however, this he cannot do on his own and decided to discuss it with the Rov.

My father informed him that he will allow them to speak and the man protested saying that the Rov is giving him no choice but to sever his relationship with the Rov and the shul that was so dear to him for so many years.

My father asked him to hear him out and related the above story. He then said if the Rebbe of Lubavitch helped save my father's life, his chassidim are always welcomed in my shul.

Rabbi Avtzon is a veteran mechanech and the author of numerous books on the Rebbeim and their chassidim. He can be contacted at avtzonbooks@gmail.com