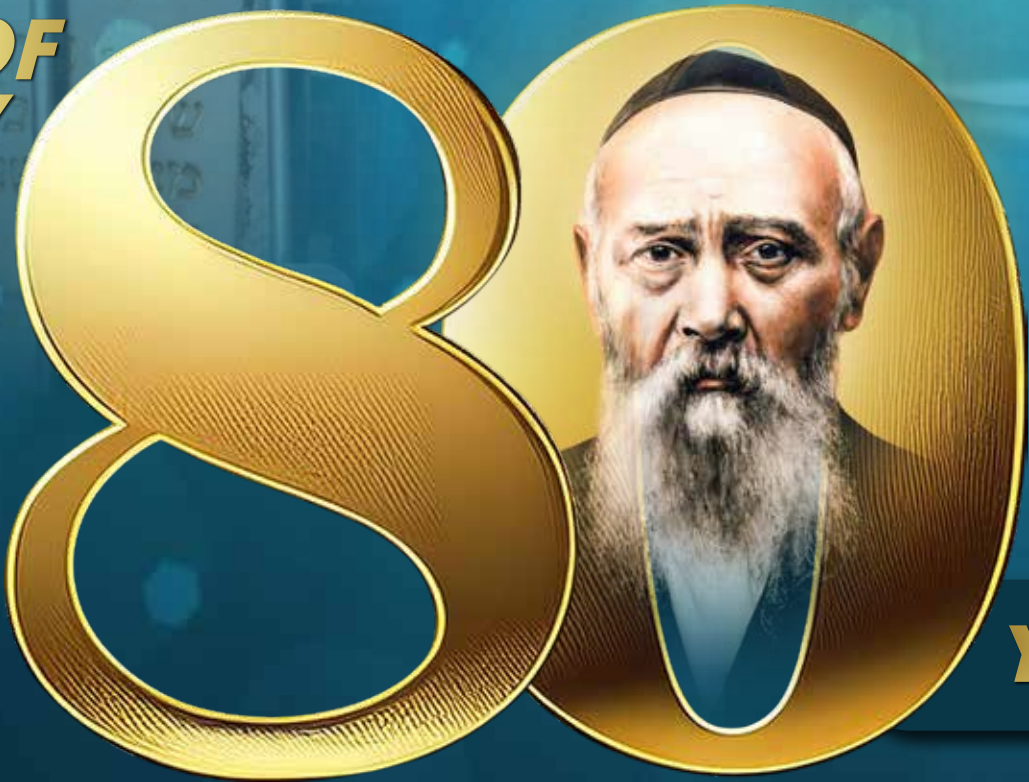


**CHOF  
AV**



**YEARS**

**SINCE THE PASSING OF THE TZADIK AND MEKUBAL  
HARAV LEVI YITZCHOK SCHNEERSON**

TO THE  
CAMPAIGN  
PAGE>>>>

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**500  
TIMES  
AS MUCH  
DAVENING AND  
SEEING YESHUOS**

**THROUGH  
THE EYES  
OF THE  
AMBASSADOR**

**THE LOT  
WAS OBTAINED  
BY HEAVENLY  
BLESSING**

**30 YEARS**

**OF JEWISH REVIVAL IN KAZAKHSTAN**





From the Shliach and Chief Rabbi of Kazakhstan

## KAZAKHSTAN: CHABAD ON THE MAP

### Dear brothers and fellow chassidim,

After three decades of outreach, Chabad-Lubavitch in Kazakhstan continues to flourish. This land, which absorbed the tears of the tzaddik and kabbalist Rabbi Levi Yitzchok Schneerson during his exile, has blossomed with numerous Jewish and Chabad institutions, fulfilling the verse, "And Yitzchok sowed in that land... and Hashem blessed him." Our mission here holds special significance, as it is close to the Rebbe's heart and houses the resting place of his father, Rabbi Levi Yitzchok Schneerson.

Today, Almaty boasts a vibrant Jewish community with comprehensive institutions serving all needs: a beautiful shul, mikvah, shechita, Torah classes for all ages, summer camps, Tzivos Hashem clubs, a soup kitchen, Shifra and Puah organizations, and even a chevra kadisha with a Jewish cemetery section.

Lubavitch in Almaty has catalyzed growth in other Jewish communities across Kazakhstan: in Astana (the capital), Pavlodar, Ust-Kamenogorsk, Kostanay, Karaganda, and Shymkent. In these cities, situated in the heart of the Kazakh desert both literally and spiritually, the Rebbe's shluchim are revitalizing Jewish communities and establishing impressive Jewish centers.

The institutions near the holy tziyun stand as a testament to the enduring spiritual legacy of the tzaddik exiled to Kazakhstan.

Now, we need your support to expand our work. This aligns with the wishes of both our Rebbe, our generation's leader, and his father, who was exiled and laid to rest here 80 years ago. Your participation is a holy privilege, bringing nachas ruach to the Rebbe and enabling us to reach thousands more souls scattered throughout the country.

The Rebbe encouraged donations to his father's fund, saying, **"not 'little by little' but 'abundantly,' assuring that Hashem would reciprocate "measure for measure, several times over, up to 500 times as much"** (Hitvaadut 20 Menachem Av 5739).

Recent years have shown that when Jews donate in Rabbi Levi Yitzchok's merit towards work that perpetuates his legacy, they witness the fulfillment of the Rebbe's blessing, experiencing goodness up to 500 times their contribution.

May the zechus of the baal ha'hilula and his son, the Rebbe, stand by all those who support the shlichus in his place of exile. May they be blessed with all good things. Surely, the thriving Jewish life and activities that have blossomed around his place of exile, thanks to the dedication of thousands of Jews, bring him immense joy and satisfaction.

With the blessings of chassidim,

**Rabbi Yeshaya Elazar Cohen**

Shliach of the Rebbe and Chief Rabbi of Kazakhstan

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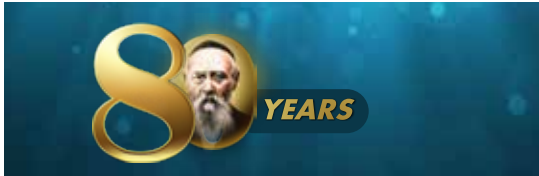
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**YEARS**

## ON THE TEACHINGS OF HARAV LEVI YITZCHOK

Rabbi Eliyahu Wolf

The Gemara in Tractate Chullin describes Rabbi Chanina's great strength, even at eighty years old: "It was said of Rabbi Chanina that at the age of eighty, he could stand on one foot and remove and put on his shoe." Rabbi Chanina said, 'The hot water and oil with which my mother anointed me in my youth have stood by me in my old age.'"

Rabbi Levi Yitzchok explains these details through the lens of Kabbalah.

The sefirot of Netzach and Hod are likened to legs, as is stated in the passage of Zohar titled "Posach Eliyahu" (which we recite every Erev Shabbos): "Netzach and Hod - two legs." They are also compared to 'children.'

Rabbi Chanina's spiritual level corresponds to the sefirot of Netzach and Hod, as alluded to in the possik "הַיְלָדִים אֲשֶׁר חָנַן" - "the children whom G-d has graciously given." "Graciously given" (chanan) hints at Rabbi Chanina's name, and G-d graciously gave "the children" - referring to Netzach and Hod.

The source of Netzach and Hod ("the children") is in the sefirah of Binah ("בינה" is an acronym for "בי נצח הוד" - In me are Netzach and Hod). Binah is called "Mother," hinting at Rabbi Chanina's source, his mother, who gave him strength for his feet.

יש לפרש שמו חנינא מורה על נצח והוד, כי חנינא הוא בנצח והוד, הילדים אשר חנן אלקים כו' (כמו שכתוב במאורי-אור מערכת חנינה). וזהו שהיה... הכח שלו ברגליו, שהיה עומד על רגלו אחת וחולץ כו', רגלים הם נצח והוד

**"One can interpret that the name Chanina indicates Netzach and Hod, for Chanina is in Netzach and Hod, 'the children whom God has graciously given' (as written in Meorei Ohr, entry Chaninah). This is why his strength was in his legs, that he could stand on one foot and remove [his shoe], etc. - legs are Netzach and Hod..."**

נמשכים מבינה, בינה ראשי-תבות בי נצח הוד; הינו האם דרבי חנינא, "אם" הוא בחינת בינה, היא האם בחינת בינה, נתנה לו הכח הזה ברגליו, בנצח והוד."

**"They are drawn from Binah, Binah being an acronym for 'Bi Netzach Hod'; that is, Rabbi Chanina's mother, 'mother' being the aspect of Binah, she is the mother, the aspect of Binah, who gave him this strength in his legs, in Netzach and Hod."**

Rabbi Chanina said his mother gave him this strength by anointing him in his youth with "hot water and oil."

"Hot water" expresses Gevurot (strengths), as heating is a result of fire. "Oil" expresses Chasadim (kindnesses), as in the verse "and he calls 'the oil of his right hand.'" - oil is associated with the right side, the side of kindness. Hot water and oil thus allude to the Gevurah and Chesed which are included in the sefirah of Binah.

ובמה נתנה לו הכח הזה, הוא על ידי חמין ושמן שרחצתו וסכתו בהם. חמין ושמן, הוא הגבורות והחסדים דבינה. חמין גבורות, שמן חסדים כמו שכתוב ושמן ימינו יקרא.

**"And how did she give him this strength? It was through the hot water and oil with which she washed and anointed him. Hot water and oil represent the Gevurot and Chasadim of Binah. Hot water is Gevurot (for heat comes from the side of fire, Gevurot. Also 'Cham,' Noach's son, corresponds to Gevurah...). Oil is Chasadim, as it is written "and he calls 'the oil of his right hand.'"**

Rabbi Levi Yitzchok elaborates further on these concepts, providing deeper insights. (It would be valuable for interested readers to study the original text to fully grasp the nuances of his explanations.)

\*\*\*



The Talmud relates that when Rabbi Chanina was eighty years old, he was “standing on one foot - and removing his shoe and putting on his shoe.”

This sequence in the Talmud’s account seems unusual. Typically, one would expect to put on shoes before taking them off. So it’s puzzling why the Talmud mentions “removing his shoe” before “putting on his shoe.”

וְנִמָּה שֶׁנִּקְטָנוּ מִתְחִלָּה “חֹלֵץ מְנַעְלוֹ” וְאַחֲרֵי כֵן “נוֹעֵל מְנַעְלוֹ”, וְלִכְאוּרָה הָרִי אִי אִמְפֶּשֶׁר לְחַלֵּץ אִם לֹא הָיָה נוֹעֵל מִתְחִלָּה, וְאִם כֵּן הָיָה לִיָּה לְהִקְדִּים “נוֹעֵל” לְ“חֹלֵץ”.

**“And as for mentioning first ‘removing his shoe’ and then ‘putting on his shoe,’ when apparently it’s impossible to remove if one hasn’t first put on, and if so, it should have prioritized ‘putting on’ before ‘removing.’”**

Rabbi Levi Yitzchok offers a practical explanation for this sequence:

According to Jewish tradition, a new day begins at sunset. So when Rabbi Chanina turned 80, it would have been in the evening. At that point, he would already be wearing shoes he had put on earlier that day.

Therefore, the first action related to his shoes upon turning 80 would be to remove them for the night. He would then put them on again the next morning. This explains why the Talmud mentions removing shoes before putting them on- it’s describing the sequence of events as they occurred when Rabbi Chanina entered his 80th year.

יֵשׁ לוֹמַר כִּי כְּשֶׁהֲגִיעַ לְשָׂמוֹנִים שָׁנָה, מוֹכֵן שֶׁמִּתְחִלָּה הוּא הִלְיָה וְאַחֲרַי כֵּן הַיּוֹם. זֶהוּ שֶׁהָיָה חֹלֵץ מְנַעְלוֹ - שֶׁהִנְעִילוֹ קֶדֶם שֶׁמוֹנִים כְּשֶׁהֲגִיעַ לְשָׂמוֹנִים; שֶׁמִּתְחִלָּה הוּא הִלְיָה שֶׁאֵז חֹלֵץ חוֹלְצִין מְנַעְלֵימָם כִּי הוֹלְכִין לִישׁוֹן אֵז חוֹלְצוֹ, וְנוֹעֵל מְנַעְלוֹ בְּבֹקֶר בְּקוֹמוֹ מִשְׁנָתוֹ.

**“One can say that when he reached eighty years, it’s understood that first is the night and then the day. This is why he was removing his shoe - which he had put on before eighty - when he reached eighty; because first is the night when one removes shoes as one goes to sleep, so he removes it, and puts on his shoe in the morning when he rises from his sleep.”**

After this “practical” explanation, Rabbi Levi Yitzchok deepens his interpretation based on Kabbalistic teachings, relating it to Yom Kippur, which is associated with Binah. On Yom Kippur, before Kol Nidrei, one removes their shoes, and only puts them on again the next day after the holiday ends. This is why the Talmud prioritizes “removing” before “putting on.” He elaborates on this, explaining the connection to Rabbi Chanina’s mother and to Rabbi Chanina himself.

\*\*\*

At the end of his explanation, Rabbi Levi Yitzchok offers an alternative interpretation of the Talmudic passage, framing it as a lesson in child-rearing. The lesson is a powerful one, illuminating how to educate children, what to emphasize, and how powerful the influence of proper education can be even into old age.

יֵשׁ לוֹמַר עוֹד עֲנִין מָה שֶׁחַמֵּין וְשָׂמֵן שֶׁסִּכְתָּהּ לוֹ אִמּוֹ בְּיָלְדוֹתוֹ עֲמָדוֹ לוֹ בְּעֵת זְקֻנוֹתוֹ.

**“Additionally, it can be said regarding ‘The hot water and oil with which my mother anointed me in my youth have stood by me in my old age.’”**

Rabbi Levi Yitzchok connects this to Shlomo Hamelech’s proverb: “Educate a child according to his way; even when he grows old, he will not depart from it.” The content of this verse- that education in youth sets a child on the right path until old age- parallels the Talmud’s story of Rabbi Chanina’s mother anointing him with hot water and oil in his youth, which affected him until his old age.

>> Continued on page 23

A house in Chili, the place of exile of R' Levi Yitzchok

## UNBROKEN SPIRIT:

# RABBI LEVI YITZCHOK'S TORAH LIGHT IN SOVIET DARKNESS

In a distant exile, far from Jewish communities, Rabbi Levi Yitzchok endured unbearable conditions. Yet, he preserved his Jewish identity and rabbinic nobility, delighting in Torah study as much as circumstances allowed, until that fateful day...

By Shneur Zalman Levin

Rabbi Levi Yitzchok Schneerson, of blessed memory, was an imposing figure with a noble and luminous presence. As the rabbi of Dnepropetrovsk, he led his flock with pride for many years, despite communist persecution. A compassionate father to his people, he displayed unwavering courage when it came to anything having to do with Yiddishkeit.

On the night of 9 Nissan 5699 (1939), four NKVD agents arrived at his door at 3 a.m. and took him to prison. After months of interrogations, including 32 grueling days in solitary confinement, he was sentenced to five years of exile.

Broken by harsh prison conditions and exhausting interrogations, Rabbi Levi Yitzchok spent days on a prisoners' train bound for Chili, Kazakhstan, in Central Asia. He later recounted, "For days, not a drop of water passed my lips. How great was my joy when I finally obtained a little water. It had been days that I hadn't washed my hands as halacha prescribes." This revelation showed that he had used his scarce drinking water to ritually purify his hands.

### THE TRAVAILS OF EXILE

Upon arrival in Chili, a name that evokes shudders, Rabbi Levi Yitzchok found himself in a small, desolate

village. The sandy earth formed a swamp that never dried, breeding swarms of mosquitoes. Clay houses with damp walls and mixed clay-lime floors barely provided shelter from the elements.

Rebbetzin Chana, who joined her husband in exile, described their living conditions in her diary: "To enter our quarters, one needed to pass through a damp, muddy corridor swarming with mosquitoes that darkened the light. We then had to traverse the landlord's eating area and bedroom to reach our small room."

**"For days, not a drop of water passed my lips. How great was my joy when I finally obtained a little water. It had been days that I hadn't washed my hands as halacha prescribes." This revelation showed that he had used his scarce drinking water to ritually purify his hands.**

The summer heat was unbearable, and even obtaining drinking water required waiting for sand to settle. Evenings brought relentless mosquito attacks, with smoke from lit fires offering the only respite, albeit at the cost of choking fumes.

Obtaining bread involved numerous difficulties. Rabbi Levi Yitzchok often rose early to queue for distribution, contending with unruly crowds of exiled prisoners and criminals. Despite his simple attire, his refined, Jewish appearance drew attention, sometimes earning respect but often leaving him without sustenance for extended periods.

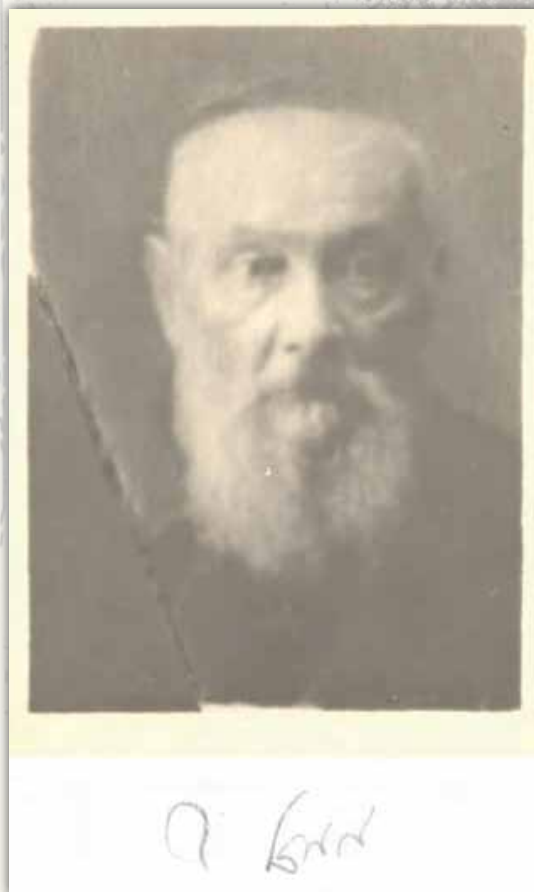
His situation in exile was so difficult that when his son, the Rebbe, received a picture of his father, decades later, he was shaken by his appearance. He couldn't look at the picture and quickly turned it over and put it on the table. He later wrote on the picture "Is this adoni avi z'?!?"

#### **HIS LOVE FOR TORAH**

Despite these sub-human conditions, Rabbi Levi Yitzchok maintained his holy practices. Using homemade ink prepared by Rebbetzin Chana, he continued writing his Torah commentaries, known as *Toras Levi Yitzchok*.

Rebbetzin Chana recalled, "One day, he entered the room with a joyous face and said, 'If only I could, I would farbreng now with someone. I finished writing an inyan, quite amazing!' He could not share the reason for his excitement with me, and there was no one else."

His dedication to Torah study was particularly poignant on *Simchas Torah*. Alone in exile, without a Torah scroll or congregation, Rabbi Levi Yitzchok recreated the joy of the holiday. He loudly recited the verses of "Ata Horeisa" in the tune of his former shul and danced the *hakafos* in the narrow space between the table and bed.



Rebbetzin Chana observed, "For me, it was a difficult experience. It is hard to describe the expression on his face while he loudly said these prayers. I sat in a corner, contemplating his greatness, his strength, and his love for Torah as he danced all seven *hakafos* with all his might."

#### **FINAL DAYS**

In the last period of his life, Rabbi Levi Yitzchok's health deteriorated severely. He was permitted to move to Alma Ata (Almaty), a larger city, where he continued to inspire the local Jewish community despite his condition.

On Wednesday, 20 Menachem Av 5704 (1944), Rabbi Levi Yitzchok passed away. A small group of fearful Jews accompanied him in a quiet procession to the cemetery, burying one of the last leaders of Soviet Jewry. The danger was palpable, as even a rabbi's funeral could be interpreted as an illegal demonstration.

His final resting place remains in exile, as over the years, non-Jews were interred in the Jewish section of the cemetery, their gravestones bearing images of idolatry – an exile within an exile.

**A small group of fearful Jews accompanied him in a quiet procession to the cemetery, burying one of the last leaders of Soviet Jewry.**

אהל  
כ"ק הרה"ק מוהר"ר  
לוי יצחק נ"ע  
שניאורסאהן



For nearly two decades, Rabbi Chaim Shaul Brook has made an annual journey to Almaty, Kazakhstan, to visit the tziyun of Rabbi Levi Yitzchok Schneerson, father of the Rebbe. Known for his work as director of Vaad Hanachos b'LaHak, Rabbi Brook has dedicated his life to publishing the Rebbe's teachings. In this exclusive interview, he shares insights into his profound experiences and the significance of these pilgrimages.

By Menachem Ziegelbaum



# I GO BECAUSE I WANT TO HONOR THE REBBE!

For decades, ever since he was a bochur, **Rabbi Chaim Shaul Brook** has dedicated himself to publishing the ma'amarim, sichos and Torah of our Rebbe. For the past 32 years, he has stood at the helm of Vaad Hanachos b'Lahak, established to transcribe and publish the Rebbe's Torah.

Under Rabbi Brook's guidance, hundreds of volumes of the Rebbe's teachings have been published in Hebrew. These include seminal works such as Toras Menachem Hisvaaduyos, Sefer HaMaamarim, Yein Malchus, Tiferes Levi Yitzchok, and Reshimos, among many others. His tireless efforts have provided the Chassidic community with unprecedented access to the Rebbe's vast corpus of wisdom.

For the past two decades, Rabbi Brook has undertaken an annual pilgrimage to Almaty, Kazakhstan, on Chof Av to visit the tziyun of Rabbi Levi Yitzchok Schneerson. This dedication distinguishes Rabbi Brook as one of the few who maintain such regularity in this profound journey.

## What motivates your annual trips to Almaty?

"The simple reason," Rabbi Brook explains, "is I want to honor the Rebbe. When you go to the tziyun of the Rebbe's father, it's an honor for the Rebbe himself."

Rabbi Brook reflects on a memorable moment from 5751, when a group of shluchim visited Almaty as part of the Kinus. The Rebbe spoke of this gathering with awe, calling it "a wonder occurring literally in these days" and linking it to signs of the Geula.

Rabbi Brook elaborates on the historical context: "After **Rabbi Dovid Nachshon** and **R' Avi Taub** traveled to erect

monuments for our Rebbeim, they also built the tziyun for Rabbi Levi Yitzchok. Upon their return, the Rebbe requested they personally hand over the keys, blessing them profusely."

"Visiting the resting place of the Rebbe's father is, in essence, an act of honoring the Rebbe himself. For years, travel to Almaty was impossible. Even after the fall of the Iron Curtain, the journey remained challenging," he continued.



**Rabbi Chaim Shaul Brook**  
davens at the tziyun of Harav Levi Yitzchok

"In one memorable year, I traveled with my friends, **R' Yossi Katz** and **R' Sholom Laine**, for Chof Av (the 20th of Av). We aimed to return to New York in time to visit the Rebbe's Ohel on the same day. Since 5764 (2004), leveraging the ten-hour time difference, we've managed to visit both sites on the yahrtzeit.

"This pilgrimage, while demanding, is undertaken as a tribute to the Rebbe. It's well-known that the Rebbe expressed profound gratitude to those who assisted his father, often stating that he himself should have been the one rendering such aid. As the Rebbe couldn't personally visit his father's resting place, our journey serves as a

proxy for his own desire to do so.

"Our work has also included publishing five volumes of "Toras Menachem – Tiferes Levi Yitzchok," and in 5771 (2011), we acquired Rebbetzin Chana's diary.

**"The Rebbe once noted that after the Previous Rebbe left Russia, Rabbi Levi Yitzchok remained the sole representative of Beis Harav there. He became a leader for Russian Jewry, even receiving pidyonos from afar.**

One could elaborate endlessly on Rabbi Levi Yitzchok's greatness and the profound respect the Rebbe held for him. It is this legacy that compels me to make this annual pilgrimage to his resting place on the yahrtzeit.

## Can you describe the experience of actually visiting the tziyun?

"When I first went there, I finally understood what the Rebbe meant when he said his father was sent to exile, passed away in exile, and remained buried in exile," Rabbi Brook reflects. "The Rebbe's father is buried in a gentile cemetery; only the adjacent area contains Jewish graves. It's very painful to witness, but there's also an inexplicable feeling at the site."

"Even after studying the sichos countless times, seeing the reality with my own eyes deepened my understanding of the exile endured by the Rebbe's father. It is profoundly painful."

## You mentioned returning to New York the same day to visit the Rebbe's resting place. What's the significance of this?

While visiting Rabbi Levi Yitzchok's tziyun in Almaty is important, we mustn't forget our own Rebbe. Upon returning, I also pay my respects at

## “ONE CAN RELY ON THE MERIT OF THE BA’AL HILULA.”

Last year, as in every year, the Jews of Almaty planned to commemorate the yahrtzeit on Chof Av 5783 with a grand gathering held in the spacious courtyard of the city’s shul. The event coincided with the arrival of hundreds of Chassidim and anash from around the world. Understandably, this event is one of the highlights of Almaty’s Jewish calendar.

However, on the morning of that day, weather forecasters predicted rain throughout the city. From the early hours, one could see early signs in the dark clouds that filled the sky.

Rabbi Yeshaya Cohen, the shliach and Chief Rabbi of Kazakhstan, hurried to the tziyun to daven that this special annual event would proceed smoothly without any issues. Upon returning, he wrote a letter to the Rebbe, which he inserted between the pages of the “Igrosh Kodesh” (the Rebbe’s collected letters). In his letter, he mentioned that he had just visited the Rebbe’s father’s resting place and requested that no rain fall during the event held in honor of Rabbi Levi Yitzchok. When he opened the Igros Kodesh, his eyes immediately fell on the phrase “there will be geulah b’geshem ub’ruach” – a phrase which means “physically and spiritually,” but the literal translation reads “there will be a redemption from rain and winds...”

The entire gathering proceeded smoothly and impressively. Throughout the event, not a drop of rain fell, and the wind remained calm. Later, it was discovered that heavy rains had soaked other parts of the city.

This occurrence affirmed a profound truth: the spiritual influence of the ba’al hahilula, the mara d’asra, proves to be a reliable source of blessing.

Rebbetzin Chana’s grave. Although I wouldn’t dare to “bring regards” from her husband, I share that I was there mere hours ago, and many people came to honor his memory.

Rebbetzin Chana often expressed concern about leaving her husband alone in exile. Now, thankfully, large crowds visit, bli ayin hara.

It’s heartrending to recall that in the early years, including when I first started going, sometimes only a minyan would show up for the yahrtzeit. One year, I arrived on Chof Av to find the site locked and deserted. We had to fetch the key from the Chabad House. It was truly heartbreaking.

**You’ve been going annually since 5764 (2004). How has the pilgrimage evolved?**

Indeed. Initially, just three or four of us traveled from New York. Gradually, more people joined, including organized groups. A significant change came when philanthropist R’ Avi Shaulson began participating. He revolutionized the pilgrimage, enabling many more people to visit over recent years. His involvement has truly revitalized the site.

### A SPECIAL CONNECTION

Rabbi Chaim Shaul Brook’s deep connection with Rabbi Levi Yitzchok stems not only from his work in publishing but also from his personal history.

His brother, Levi Yitzchok, was the first named after the Rebbe’s father. “Until then, the names ‘Yosef Yitzchok’ were given for the Rebbe Rayatz, but ‘Levi Yitzchok’ was uncommon,” he notes.

Rabbi Brook’s parents, Rabbi and Mrs. Menachem Mendel and Chana Brook, married in 5703 and initially lived in Rishon L’Tziyon. They resided

near Rabbi Yaakov Yosef Raskin, who devotedly assisted Rabbi Levi Yitzchok during his exile. Rabbi Raskin maintained correspondence with Rebbetzin Chana even after they had moved to safer countries. In one of her letters, Rebbetzin Chana lamented the lack of a name for her husband. She expressed her sorrow that her eldest son had no children, and her son Leibel had only one daughter, leaving no one to carry on the name.

“When my brother was born, R’ Yaakov Yosef approached my grandfather and related what Rebbetzin Chana had written to her. My grandfather said to my father, ‘Do you want to give nachas to the Rebbe? Name him for the Rebbe’s father.’ My father discussed it with my mother and both agreed and named the baby Levi Yitzchok.

My brother was born on Lag B’Omer 5712, and the bris was on 21 Iyar. Shortly after, my father wrote to the Rebbe. The Rebbe’s response, dated 12 Sivan 5712, was notably personal and emotional: “I received your letter announcing the birth of your son, who has been named after my father. I bless you and your wife to raise him to Torah, chuppa, and good deeds with prosperity, with peace of mind and peace of body.”

When I will be at the tziyun of my father-in-law the Rebbe... I will mention you and your wife and the baby for good health and material and spiritual good. May it be G-d’s will that just as you caused me exceptional satisfaction in naming your son after my father z’l, he should grant you to have satisfaction and pleasure from all your family members and from yourself, both materially and spiritually, and merit to always only relay goodness and kindness.

Since then, Rabbi Brook said, every



At the tziyun (r-l): Rabbi Simon Jacobson, Rabbi Moshe Kotlarsky, Rabbi Berel Lazar, Rabbi Yeshaya Cohen and Rabbi Shmuel Kaminetsky

year, my mother took a professional photograph of Levi Yitzchok and sent it to Rebbetzin Chana, who took pleasure in following his growth. The presence of Rabbi Levi Yitzchok has been a significant part of my life from a young age.

### **Returning to the actual trip, what other noteworthy experiences have you had there?**

Aside from the pain of seeing the Rebbe's father in exile, there is an inexplicable sense of significance. I recall meeting a talmid chacham at the tziyun, who, despite his usual emotional apathy, was visibly moved. He said, "What you see here, is found nowhere else."

Whenever we visit the tziyun, we prepare by studying Rabbi Levi Yitzchok and the Rebbe's explanations of his father's teachings. During our time in Almaty, we also study these teachings, and our return trip often becomes an opportunity for a Chassidische farbrengen.

### **PUBLISHING HIS TEACHINGS**

"In addition to our work on the Rebbe's teachings, Vaad Hanachos b'Lahak has been honored to publish the famous photograph of Rabbi Levi Yitzchok. For years, there was only one old photograph from the period of exile, and this photo was only discovered in the files of the NKVD after the fall of the USSR.

"At first, the Rebbe did not approve of its

publication, but when we were preparing to publish Tiferes Levi Yitzchok on Shemos, we requested permission to include this photograph. The image had to be meticulously touched up and approved by the Rebbe several times before it was finally accepted for publication. The Rebbe's attention to this detail was a significant motivator for us to continue our work.

"We also published Rebbetzin Chana's diaries bit by bit," he adds. "I hope that soon it will be published as a formal book, which will be a real treasure."

### **THE WORK OF THE SHLUCHIM IN ALMATY**

Rabbi Brook returns to the incredible change that Chof Av has seen in recent years, noting that the growing crowds benefit from the hospitality provided by the Rebbe's shluchim, who maintain a presence near the tziyun throughout the year.

"The shluchim exhibit real mesirus nefesh! It's heartwarming to see the large turnout for Chof Av, but after a day or two, everyone leaves, and the shluchim remain for the rest of the year. They are in a literal and spiritual wilderness, as Almaty is both geographically and spiritually remote.

"Over the years, the shluchim have transformed Almaty and all of Kazakhstan into a place where Jews can feel at home. Their dedication is beyond words. Although our contributions may seem modest, every effort makes a difference. Those who can offer more are truly blessed, and so are those who contribute what they can. Every act of support reinforces the work of the shluchim, who dedicate themselves to honoring the Rebbe and the the Rebbe's family.

This dedication is evident not only on Chof Av but throughout the year. Witnessing their work is simply awe-inspiring."



## **THANK THE REBBE'S FATHER FOR GIVING US THE REBBE...**

Two years ago, a special charter flight brought hundreds of Chabad shluchim from Florida to Almaty for Chof Av, where they were to hold a regional Kinus Hashluchim.

During the flight, Rabbi Yehuda Leib Schapiro, Rov of the Chabad community in Florida and Rosh Yeshiva of the Yeshiva Gedolah in Miami, delivered an impassioned speech, explaining the significance of the journey to Almaty:

"When we visit the tziyun, we must realize what we are dealing with. I recently spoke with Reb Nachum Litkowski, and asked him why he has been traveling to Almaty for so many years. He replied that having lived in Russia, where being Jewish was incredibly challenging, it was the Rebbe who enabled them to keep their heads above water and maintain their Jewish identity.



**Rabbi Leibel Schapiro speaking on the flight to Almaty**

"This is why he goes to Almaty every year – to thank the Rebbe's father for giving us the Rebbe..."

"It's not just him; the entire Jewish people come to express gratitude to the Rebbe's father for giving us the Rebbe. Certainly, the shluchim are coming to thank the Rebbe's father for giving them the Rebbe, who granted them the opportunity to undertake this sacred mission – the shlichus that will bring Moshiach.

"This journey isn't easy; we all feel it. But, the more difficult something is, the more we appreciate it. So now, let us appreciate more deeply that we have the privilege to visit the tziyun of the Rebbe's father and express our gratitude!"

# WHO WOULDN'T WANT THE REBBE'S PERSONAL GRATITUDE?

**Gratitude:** a concept rich with emotion, a powerful acknowledgment from recipient to giver. When it comes to the Rebbe's personal gratitude, its magnitude is almost incomprehensible. To have the Rebbe—who carries the weight of the world—express personal thanks is truly remarkable.

## WHAT INSPIRES THE REBBE'S GRATITUDE?

The Rebbe never remains indebted to those who assist him or his family. While he bestows spiritual blessings, he also ensures tangible rewards in this world. This is particularly evident in his response to those who aided his parents. For such individuals, the Rebbe's efforts knew no bounds, whether the help was rendered during his parents' lifetimes or after their passing.

A striking example is the Rebbe's heartfelt letter to Mr. Moshe Shub, who facilitated the recovery of the Rebbe's father's writings from the Soviet Union:

"I extend my profound gratitude for your role in salvaging the Zohar HaKadosh volumes annotated by my master, father, teacher, and Rebbi. Beyond the inherent value of rescuing Torah wisdom, this act holds deep personal significance for me, as do all matters of family legacy..."

## ENDURING GRATITUDE

The Rebbe's repayment to those who aided his parents, even posthumously, is legendary. R' Yosef Nimotin, who assisted Rabbi Levi Yitzchok in Almaty, experienced this firsthand.

Upon R' Yosef's arrival in the United States decades later, the Rebbe lavished him with blessings and financial support, regularly contributing to his expenses. When R' Yosef, now comfortably settled, expressed discomfort at the ongoing assistance, the Rebbe replied, "My debt to you for helping my father remains unpaid. I don't wish to feel it's been settled."



Rabbi Yosef Nimotin receives a dollar from the Rebbe

## ASKED AND RECEIVED

Omer Thurm recently wrote to Rabbi Mordechai Cohen, one of the shluchim in Almaty:

"Dear Rabbi Cohen,

I visited Kazakhstan a year ago and spent Yom Kippur with your community. I'd like to share something remarkable with you.

During my stay, I prayed at Rabbi Levi Yitzchok's grave on the eve of the holiday. At 27, I had long been searching for my life partner. I had recently met a girl, and at the tziyun, I prayed fervently for this relationship to flourish and lead to

marriage. I vowed that if it worked out, I would return to Kazakhstan, volunteer for ten days at the Chabad House, and study Masechet Kiddushin.

Though that particular relationship didn't last, a month later, I met Noga. We became engaged just last week!

I'm incredibly grateful for this blessing. After our wedding, Noga and I would be honored to fulfill my promise and come volunteer if that would be helpful to you and your community."

Imagine the overwhelming feeling of hearing the Rebbe say, "Thank you. I am personally grateful to you." Our hearts would swell with pride. We all desire to bring the Rebbe nachas ruach. It is possible for each one of us.

By Shneur Zalman Levin

## A HOME SECURED BY GRATITUDE

Rabbi Shlomo Aryeh Niazov of Shikun Chabad in Lud shares another powerful story. He visited Rabbi Levi Yitzchok's tziyun to ask for a bracha that he receive permission to leave Russia, describing it as "an inspiring, profound experience."

When he looked around, he was perturbed by the neglect of the tziyun and the surrounding area. The grave was surrounded by the graves of non-Jews. It was sad to see the tzaddik in exile among gentiles even after his passing.

Just two days later, he was shocked to see a letter from the emigration department in his mail box, with permission to leave the Soviet Union for him and his family.

"I had no doubt what was the reason, and thanks to whom, that I received permission," he says.

Before leaving the USSR, Rabbi Niazov with the help of R' Gavriel Ohanov, renovated the tziyun, restoring its dignity.

Upon reaching Israel, the Niazov family faced housing challenges. Learning of this, the Rebbe directed his representative, Rabbi Efraim Wolf, to secure them a home.

"Despite our financial constraints and my unemployment, we miraculously obtained an apartment within months," Niazov recounts. "We even had funds left for children's necessities and treats."



Rabbi Shlomo Aryeh Niazov

## A DOUBLE BLESSING

The Rebbe's profound gratitude extends to the many Jews who support the institutions of his shluchim in Almaty and throughout Kazakhstan. These centers of Jewish life revolve around the holy resting place of the Rebbe's father.

Recent fundraising campaigns for Chof Menachem Av, the yahrtzeit, have seen an outpouring of support for the institutions founded with great self-sacrifice by the Rebbe's shluchim. The Rebbe deeply appreciated all who opened their hearts and wallets. His shluchim in Kazakhstan recount numerous stories of individuals experiencing personal salvation after supporting causes related to the Rebbe's father, the last mara d'asra of Almaty.

## WHAT I ASKED FOR CAME TRUE

Rabbi Yeshaya Cohen shared, "A shliach from Israel just called. His request at Reb Levik's grave on Chof Menachem Av was fulfilled! He now plans to bring a group of about ten people for Shabbos Selichos to express gratitude."

## PRAYERS ANSWERED

**Mr. Tzvi Zimmerman**, an Israeli managing several international businesses, shares his story:

“While living in Almaty for work, I experienced a terrifying ordeal. Thugs forcibly entered my apartment, tied me up, and looted the place. It was miraculous that I survived. Afterward, I called Rabbi Yeshaya Cohen to request an aliyah and recite the ha’gomer blessing. He invited me to the Jewish center the following Monday.

“After the service, we talked. I mentioned my daughter, who had been married for four years without children despite ongoing treatments with top doctors. He suggested I pray at Rabbi Levi Yitzchok’s tziyun, which we did together.

“I prayed fervently for Shiralee bas Sarah. As we left, Rabbi Cohen confidently said the matter was in good hands and to expect good news.

“Soon after, my daughter called with joyous news: she was pregnant.”

## FINDING A WIFE

Here’s another story of gratitude:

Two years ago, on Rabbi Levi Yitzchok’s yahrtzeit, a woman called to donate \$18 during the fundraiser. She asked for a blessing for her older son to find a wife.

Shortly after, he became engaged. The following year, she called again, eager to donate in honor of her son and his new wife. Nine months later, the couple welcomed a son.

Inspired by these blessings, she decided to become a fundraiser herself. She reached out to her network and herself made a substantial donation to support the work in Almaty.



## I’LL GIVE THE FULL AMOUNT

Rabbi Elchanan Cohen, a shliach in Almaty, shared a story from a European colleague about the Rebbe’s gratitude:

“Last year, I urgently needed 50,000 euros for our work. I calculated how much to donate to receive the Rebbe’s blessing of ‘up to 500 times as much’ for those who contributed to his father’s causes. I made a donation in Reb Levik’s merit to the institutions in Almaty.

“Immediately after, I called a wealthy community member, requesting 50,000 euros. He initially agreed to 25,000. Minutes later, he called back saying, ‘On second thought, I’m willing to give you 48,000 euros.’

“I explained my situation, and he replied, ‘If that’s what you’re missing, I’ll add another 2,000.’

“This year, I plan to donate again and encourage my donors to contribute to the work in Reb Levik’s city. I know the Rebbe does not remain indebted.”

## PRAYERS ANSWERED: A TEACHER'S UNEXPECTED JOURNEY

Rabbi Levi Cohen, principal of the Chabad Talmud Torah in Emanuel, Israel, recently shared a remarkable story about the power of pilgrimage and prayer.

Last year, the school held a raffle among its teaching staff, with the prize being a flight ticket to Almaty, Kazakhstan for Chof Av.

One teacher won the draw but initially showed little enthusiasm for the trip, having no prior interest in making the journey. Nevertheless, recognizing the significance of Rabbi Levi Yitzchok's "invitation," he decided to go.

A few weeks ago, this same teacher approached Rabbi Cohen with an unexpected query: "Are there any charter flights planned from Israel to Almaty for Chof Av this year?" Surprised by this change of heart, Rabbi Cohen asked what had prompted his newfound interest.

The teacher's response was profound: "Last year, in 5783, a group of us made a commitment to recite the entire Tehillim at the holy resting place of Rabbi Levi Yitzchok. While there, I made several personal requests. To my astonishment, I've seen each of these requests fulfilled one after another. This experience has inspired me to return this year..."

### YES, EVEN A SINGLE DOLLAR

Mrs. Bracha Cohen, a shluha in Kazakhstan, received this message:

"Hello. I'm Devorah. My son is a shliach in \_\_\_\_\_, making it challenging to donate elsewhere when he struggles for every dollar. Still, he gave one dollar to the campaign in Rabbi Levi Yitzchok's merit.

"Upon returning home, he unexpectedly received a \$500 donation to his Chabad House—literally 500 times his contribution. Now, I also want to donate \$50 in twelve payments. Keep breathing life into Kazakhstan's Jewish community."

**The Rebbe himself promised:** "Each should give according to the generosity of their pure heart. Whatever they decide to give, add to that, not a little, but a lot, and G-d will surely multiply it many times over... up to 500 times as much..." (Hisvaadus Menachem Av 5739)

### Rabbi Yeshaya Cohen, shliach and Chief Rabbi of Kazakhstan, relates:

Following the banquet and farbrengen of Chof Av, 5783, I visited the ohel after midnight to express gratitude for the day's successful events. As I was leaving, I received a text from a relative in Israel about a community member's injured baby son. I returned to pray for the child.

The next night, she texted: "They experienced a miracle! There's no other word for it. They were discharged today. The doctor who signed the release form was stunned, certain the child had been admitted for head surgery."

That afternoon, her husband texted: "I'm leaving Kehot after buying a picture of Rabbi Levi Yitzchok to hang in the baby's room, in gratitude for the open miracle."

# A BRACHA FOR

# WEALTH

40 DAYS BEFORE  
ROSH HASHANA

The Rebbe drew a line between the day of hilula, Chof Av, and Rosh Hashanah, saying that now is the time to start making proper preparations for Yom Hadin.

**During one farbrengen he said:** “One can say that the preparation for anything begins 40 days prior, just as the Gemara says regarding a child, that “Forty days prior to the child’s creation a Divine Voice issues forth... Today, Chof Av, is forty days before Rosh Hashana.”

“By preparation with a true personal hisorerus to fix whatever needs fixing in serving Hashem, learning Torah, davening and gemilas chassodim during these forty days, we bring down a hisorerus from above, for a ksivah vachasima tova, a good and sweet year.”

**To partner with the shluchim in Kazakhstan, and to bring nachas to the Rebbe – could there be a better preparation for the days of awe?**

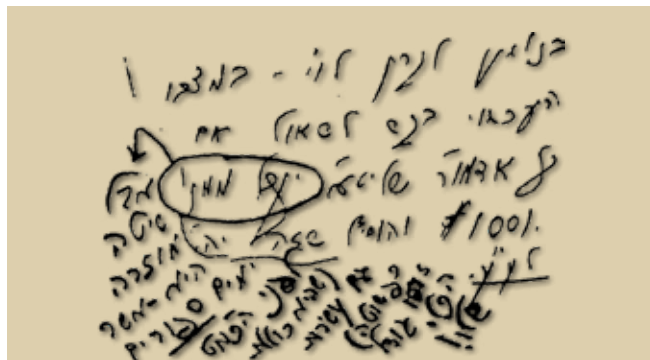
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“We wish to mention regarding the fund in my father’s name...and everyone should donate generously. Whatever you have already decided to give, add to that, and don’t add only a small amount, add a large number. Hashem will surely increase his brachos to you in turn, for ‘Hashem repays in measure’, and many times more, **up to even 500 times more**, as brought in Tosafos and the Medrash. (Farbrengen of Chof Av 5738).”

Don’t miss the opportunity! This is your chance to take part in the Rebbe’s mitzvah of “kibud av”, to be a partner in the revival of Judaism in the land of Baal Hilula’s exile - in the country of Kazakhstan!

**Donate now and bring brachos to your home!**

The names of all donors will be mentioned on Chof Av at the holy tziyun of R’ Levi Yitzchok.



## “THAT’S THE SIZE OF HIS VESSEL?”

This was how the Rebbe answered to one who donated \$100 to Keren Levi Yitzchok, and asked the Rebbe if he will receive for his participation even for his small amount.

The Rebbe answered “a strange theory-we are holding days away from ‘ksiva vachasima tova’ (which clearly it includes much wealth) and this is the size of his vessel?!”

The Rebbe at a Chof Av farbrengen



# PERSONAL IMPRESSIONS

## The Rebbe's 500-fold Promise: I Witnessed It!

Rabbi Shmaryahu Butman

In a memorable appeal for the “Keren Levi Yitzchok” fund, established to support teachers and named after his father, the Rebbe—our generation’s leader—made an extraordinary promise: donors could receive “up to 500 times” their contribution in return.

This powerful assurance, nearly forgotten over time, has been revitalized by the Rebbe’s emissaries in Kazakhstan. They’ve spread word that those who donate in honor of the Rebbe’s father may indeed see their generosity multiplied up to 500-fold. Remarkably, many who have contributed to support the work near the holy resting place in Almaty report witnessing wonders.

The significance of this bracha cannot be overstated. For the Rebbe to make such a statement about an organization bearing his father’s name underscores its profound importance to him. Indeed, the Rebbe deeply cherished anything named after or honoring his father.

Consider, then, what could be more meaningful to the Rebbe than perpetuating the work his father, Rabbi Levi Yitzchok, initiated some eight decades ago—the revitalization of Almaty’s Jewish community? This realization prompted my decision three years ago to donate 200 NIS monthly for ten months to the Jewish Center during a fundraiser for Chabad institutions in Almaty.

I harbored no expectations of a twofold return, let alone a 500-fold increase. Yet, what transpired in the following years was nothing short of remarkable.

Later that year, we received keys to an apartment in Charish—a purchase initiated six years prior for 600,000 NIS but only then finalized. Two years ago, inspired to contribute again, I made another donation to the Rebbe’s institutions in Almaty. Shortly after, an unexpected opportunity arose to purchase an apartment in Beitar Illit, where I reside. After careful consideration, I signed a contract for 1,900,000 NIS.

The cascade of blessings that followed was astounding. We sold the Charish apartment for 930,000 NIS—a profit of 330,000 NIS. Following the new purchase, property values surged. By Chof Av 5783, our new apartment was valued at 3,300,000 NIS. In just two years, we had gained 1,400,000 NIS in property value!

This experience echoes a profound lesson the Rebbe once shared. When a man complained about his perceived lack of divine care, the Rebbe gently redirected his focus to the many blessings in his life: a healthy family, a decent job, domestic harmony, and a supportive community. This wisdom reminds us that rewards manifest in various forms—not always monetary, but often in health, family, career, or other life aspects.

Our journey in acquiring the new apartment was marked by a series of what can only be described as miracles. When we signed for the Beitar Illit property, we faced a daunting challenge: a 100,000 NIS advance due within two weeks, with no clear source of funds. Remarkably, just a week later, we received a bank check from unexpected buyers for our Charish apartment, precisely covering the required amount.

This was but one link in a chain of providential events surrounding our property acquisition. It stands as a powerful testament to the Rebbe’s promise. When we support the Chabad institutions near his father’s resting place, we not only contribute to a worthy cause but also bring great joy to the Rebbe himself—a reward beyond measure.

As we reflect on these experiences, we’re left with a profound question: “What could be more important to the Rebbe than continuing the work Rabbi Levi Yitzchok began 80 years ago—reviving Almaty’s Jewish community?” The answer lies in our continued support and the miracles that unfold when we heed the call to give.

Of course, this year as well, I won’t be missing out on the opportunity to donate and receive these brachos.



# **PLANTING SEEDS OF FAITH IN THE KAZAKH DESERT: THE STORY OF CHABAD'S ARRIVAL IN ALMATY**

They scanned an atlas, searching for a country without Chabad emissaries. Their eyes settled on Almaty in far-off Kazakhstan. "That's where we're going," they decided. Rabbi Yeshaya Cohen, now Chief Rabbi of Kazakhstan, recounts the beginnings of his shlichus in the Almaty desert - the hardships, the widespread ignorance of Jewish practices, and the vast distances from established Jewish communities.

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By Shneur Zalman Levin



The Jewish community of Almaty welcomes the Rebbe's Shluchim.

Thirty years have passed since the spring of 1994, when **Rabbi Yeshaya Cohen** arrived in Almaty, Kazakhstan, to establish the first Chabad House in the country. His arrival coincided with the 50th anniversary of the passing of Rabbi Levi Yitzchok Schneerson, the father of the Rebbe, who had spent his final years exiled in this remote city. Rabbi Cohen's journey marked the beginning of a new chapter in Jewish life in Central Asia's largest country.

In a recent interview, Rabbi Cohen reflected on the early days of his mission in this distant land. Kazakhstan, the ninth-largest country in the world, was at that time far removed from any established Jewish centers. Embarking on a mission to such a remote location meant nearly severing ties with family and community. There was also absolutely no Chabad presence there at the time. But these were the exact reasons why Rabbi Cohen decided to go to Kazakhstan.

The decision to go to Kazakhstan unfolded a number of months prior, as chassidim worldwide intensified their tefilos and mitzvos following the Rebbe's second stroke on Chof Zayin Adar 5754. It was during this time that **Yaakov Kubitchek** approached his friend, **Yeshaya Cohen**, then a yeshiva student, with a bold proposition.

"We must do something extraordinary for the Rebbe's health," Kubitchek insisted. Both men had some experience in shlichus, Kubitchek in Riga and Cohen in St. Petersburg. When Cohen asked what Kubitchek had in mind, the response was ambitious: "We should open a Chabad House in a new country, where there is no Chabad activity."

Armed with an atlas, the two scoured the globe, eventually settling on Almaty. The city's significance in Chabad history, coupled with its lack of any organized Chabad presence, made it an ideal candidate for their mission.

The new shliach headed for Almaty, arriving there on 18 Nissan. The significance of the date was obvious – it is the birthday of Rabbi Levi Yitzchok.

"Almaty?" Cohen had wondered. "Which country is it in?"

When Rabbi Cohen showed his mother the atlas, his mother observed that Kazakhstan is located near Muslim countries. "Oy, isn't it dangerous?" she asked. But he was undeterred.

"What do you think about going there and staying there until Moshiach comes?" asked Kubitchek. Rabbi Cohen, who wasn't frightened by the hostile surrounding countries, gave his immediate consent.

"The way we felt at that time, it was clear to us that Moshiach was about to come. We didn't dream that thirty years would pass and we'd still be here," Rabbi Cohen remarked, a hint of wistfulness in his voice.

A small Jewish community existed in Almaty, but it had dwindled over the years. The Jewish spark had been maintained by the shochet, R' Hillel Liberow, until his passing in 5743 (1983), after which the community lost its spiritual leadership.

Determined to hasten the Rebbe's recovery and the coming of Moshiach, the friends set out for Kazakhstan just before Pesach.



A group picture of 25 children who received a bris at the first Gan Yisroel in Kazakhstan.

His plans were upended, however, when the flight left without him, and without the matzos and wine. There was no time to waste...Pesach was coming two days later.

Rabbi Cohen went back to the ticket agent and asked about the next flight. It would be the following week. The clerk, seeing that time was of the essence, suggested he travel to Tashkent. "From there, it's an hour and a half to Kazakhstan," he said.

Another ticket was purchased, this time for Tashkent, and Rabbi Cohen arrived there with his boxes early erev Pesach. He was welcomed by the new shliach, Rabbi Abba Dovid Gurewitz, who had been born there and had recently returned, this time on shlichus.

When he heard why his guest had arrived, Rabbi Gurewitz smiled and said, "From here to Almaty it is indeed an hour and a half, but by plane."

With no other choice, Rabbi Cohen spent Shabbos and the first two days of Pesach with Rabbi Gurewitz in Tashkent.

"In the end, I was very grateful that I ended up in Tashkent for Pesach," Rabbi Cohen recalls. "My stay there gave me a golden opportunity to learn from a veteran shliach some important principles in community leadership, lessons that have stayed with me for decades. The way he interacted with his community members, his unique way of running a seder or a tefillah, getting everyone to participate, these were the best introduction to my shlichus."

Finally, on the first day of Chol Ha'Moed, 17 Nissan, the new shliach headed for Almaty, **arriving there on 18 Nissan. The significance of the date was obvious – it is the birthday of Rabbi Levi Yitzchok.**

From the airport, they traveled immediately to Rabbi Levi Yitzchok's Ohel, after making the proper spiritual preparations.

"We davened for success on shlichus in this very location. I knew that I was coming here until the arrival of Moshiach."

### INITIAL SHOCK

The young emissaries were immediately confronted with the reality of the challenges faced by the Jewish community in Kazakhstan. Their first shock came upon discovering the state of the local matza situation. The small shul had improvised a matza bakery, but the conditions were far from ideal. The flour was stored in the bathroom, perilously close to the water faucet, and the electric roller used in the process was laden with chometz crumbs, as it couldn't be thoroughly cleaned.

Despite seventy years of communism, many Russian Jews had maintained the tradition of eating kosher matzah on Pesach. Even those who didn't observe mitzvos year-round made efforts to obtain matzos, often at great personal risk. Yet, there was a profound lack of

"There was tremendous ignorance, but also a great desire among the Jews of Kazakhstan to learn."



Lag B'Omer celebration by the remnants of Almaty's Jewish community, in front of the old synagogue.

Rabbi Kubitchek, together with a bachur from the yeshiva in Moscow, arrived in Kazakhstan right before Pesach. Rabbi Cohen's journey, on the other hand, was filled with complications. He first traveled to Moscow where he planned to get a visa for Kazakhstan. From there he was supposed to take a direct flight to Almaty, bringing along matzos and wine for the entire community.

knowledge coupled with a strong desire among the Jews of Kazakhstan to learn more.

Rabbi Cohen discovered that the shul was open only two hours a week. Initially, the shlichim rented an apartment on the outskirts of the city. “Every Shabbos, we walked for an hour and a half each way to the shul. We would arrive at ten in the morning and leave at twelve,” Rabbi Cohen recalls.

### 25 BRISSIN THE FIRST SUMMER

Shortly after beginning their mission, devastating news arrived from New York- news no Chassid had ever imagined. Rabbi Cohen asked the community leader, Sholom Ber Liberow, to visit the Ohel of Rabbi Levi Yitzchok and say what no one dared to utter, while he flew to New York to be with fellow Chassidim.

When asked if this turn of events made him consider returning home, Rabbi Cohen responds emphatically, “Chas v’shalom! Although we went for the Rebbe’s recovery, we didn’t even consider stopping the shlichus. On the contrary, we knew that now we needed to add more light and fulfill everything the Rebbe demanded of us, to bring Moshiach.”

That summer, Rabbi Cohen opened the first Gan Israel camp in Kazakhstan, bringing a group of bochorim to run it. “Thanks to the camp, we performed 25 brissin for children who attended. No doubt, this caused great joy to the Rebbe and his father. Almaty hadn’t seen Jewish events like this in decades.”

Addressing concerns about Kazakhstan’s Muslim majority, Rabbi Cohen explains, “Kazakhstan excels in religious tolerance. It’s a Muslim country, and the population is proud of their faith. Yet, it’s a symbol of peace and tolerance. Over the years, the government has promoted multicultural values and understanding due to the pluralistic nature of Kazakh society.”

### EMUNAH AND HASHGACHA PRATIS

The matzah situation wasn’t quickly resolved. Rabbi Elchanan Cohen, who joined three years later in 1997, recalls, “In the early years, we imported twelve tons of matzah annually. Kazakh Jews were thrilled to receive uniform, kosher matzos in nice boxes with certification from Israel.”

However, shipping matzos presented its own challenges. One year, there was extra space in the matzah shipment and the shlichim were happy to take the opportunity to add kosher for Pesach products, including a lot of sugar. Unfortunately, as the container with the valuable matzos was on its way, a new law was issued which limited the import of sugar to the country. Only certain companies were allowed to import sugar to Kazakhstan, with special permission. Because of the “illegal” sugar, the container was confiscated.

Despite their efforts, including offering to forfeit the sugar, the matzos remained stuck. The government authorities even made them pay for each day the container remained in customs. Eventually, a lawyer found a loophole- the new



The old synagogue in Almaty

## A PACIFIER AND AN ENDURING LESSON

Over fifty years ago, **Rabbi Asher Lemel Cohen**, then a young kollel student and now Rav of the Chabad community in Beitar Ilit, had a yechidus with the Rebbe. He was accompanied by his wife and their young son, Yeshaya, who was about a year old.

Minutes into the yechidus, the toddler began crying. His father motioned for his wife to wait outside with the child. The Rebbe then rang a bell, summoning his secretary. Pointing to a pacifier on the floor, the Rebbe instructed him to bring it to the child waiting outside.

This act of sensitivity and care for a crying child has stayed with Rabbi Yeshaya Cohen, now Chief Rabbi of Kazakhstan, throughout his life. It taught him to listen attentively to every Jew expressing material or spiritual troubles.

“This story of the pacifier reminds me to be sensitive to every boy and girl, man and woman, and do everything possible to help them,” Rabbi Cohen reflects. “Although I was quickly taken out of the yechidus room, the lesson of that yechidus has guided me throughout the years.”



**Rabbi Yeshaya Cohen as a bochur, receiving a dollar and bracha from the Rebbe**



law hadn't been published in Kazakh, only Russian- allowing the release of the matzos just in time for Pesach.

### FLOURISHING SHLICHUS

Since those early days, Judaism in Kazakhstan has flourished. The ember which had been preserved under seventy years of communism burst into flame.

Seven Jewish centers were established across the country, in Alma Ata, Astana, Ust-Kamenogorsk, Karaganda, Kostanay, Pavlodar and Shymkent, led by the Rebbe's shlichim who live there on a permanent basis. They've built shuls, formed communities, and restored Jewish pride.

Even in distant cities where there isn't yet a permanent shliach, young couples and bachurim occasionally visit. They meet Jews, put up mezuzos, urge them to keep in touch with shlichim in the central cities, etc.

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Rabbi Levi Yitzchok's self-sacrifice left an indelible mark on Kazakhstan. Today, in his place of exile, the Jews of Kazakhstan are living vibrant Jewish lives.

## THE PREVIOUS MARA D'ASRA

When Rabbi Cohen speaks of Rabbi Levi Yitzchok, he refers to him as the "Mara d'Asra" (local rabbinic authority). In his final years, Rabbi Levi Yitzchok served as the rabbi and spiritual leader for Jewish exiles in Kazakhstan. Despite his fragile health, he was moser nefesh to teach Torah and Chassidus, doing everything in his power to preserve the Jewish spirit in the most challenging circumstances.



Rabbi Yeshayahu Cohen with R' Moshe David Cohen, in front of the container of matzos.

>> Continued from page 5

Rabbi Levi Yitzchok posits that effective education should encompass both nurturing and disciplinary aspects, symbolized by “oil” and “hot water” respectively. The “oil” represents kindness and love (the “right side”), while “hot water” signifies strength and discipline.

Importantly, Rabbi Levi Yitzchok notes that while the Talmud initially mentions both hot water and oil, in the latter part it only states “that my mother anointed me,” referring solely to the oil. It doesn’t say “that she washed and anointed me,” omitting the expression of washing with hot water.

He interprets this nuance to mean that while both elements are necessary, the “hot water” (discipline) is not the ultimate goal of education, but rather a means to an end. It should be employed when needed, but the primary focus of education should be the “oil” - the line of love and kindness.

הוא על-דרך מה שכתוב “חנך לנער על פי דרכו גם כי יקין לא יסור ממנו” .. זהו “חמיו” ו”שמו”, הוא ירא-ה-חמיו, אהבה-שמו, שפסכתה (ונקט “סכתה” ולא “רחצה”, כי העקר הוא אהבה) לו אמו בילדותו, הוא היראה ואהבה שהרגל בה מונעוריו, עמדו לו בקנותו, כשהגיע לבחינת כי יקין.”

“This aligns with the verse, ‘Train a child according to his way; even when he grows old, he will not depart from it.’ The ‘hot water’ and ‘oil’ symbolize fear and love, respectively—‘hot water’ representing reverence and ‘oil’ representing love—that his mother anointed him with during his childhood (The Gemara uses ‘anointed’ rather than ‘washed,’ because the emphasis is on love). These traits, nurtured from his youth, continued to support him in his old age.”

The idea that the main aspect of education is through love, is noted also earlier in his explanation:

”כי העקר בכאן הוא הסיכה, והרחיצה היתה לצורך הסיכה. והיגו, שאם היה מלכלו, היתה צריכה לרחצו בחמין מתחלה, ואחר כך היה אפשר לסוכו.”

“The main aspect here is the anointing, and washing was necessary for the anointing. Meaning, that if the person was dirty, he needed to be washed with hot water initially, and only afterward could he be anointed.”

Regarding the age of eighty, Rabbi Levi Yitzchok suggests that it symbolizes the potential for setbacks during the preceding seven decades. However, upon entering the eighth decade, one achieves a state where they “will not depart from it.”

ובן שמונים דוקא, כי שבע פול צדיק” הוא בע’ שנה הראשונים, “הקם” קשהגיע לשמונים.

“And specifically at the age of eighty, because ‘A righteous man may fall seven times’ refers to the first seventy years, and ‘and he will arise’ when he reaches eighty.”

Rabbi Levi Yitzchok also connects the name Chanina and the concept of education. When Yosef Hatzadik reunited with his brother Benyamin after many years, he expressed, “May G-d grant you grace, my son.” The term “חנך” (may He grant you grace) is related to the concept of “חינוך” (education) and is, of course, also connected to the name חנינא - Chanina.

וחנינא הוא מלשון חנוף, וכמו “יחנך”, שהוא מלשון חנוף, והוא מלשון חנינא, ועין בפרוש רש”י בחמש בפסוק “יחנך בני”, עין שם.

“Chanina is derived from the term for ‘education,’ just like ‘חנך’ (may He grant you grace), which also relates to the concept of ‘education’ and is connected to the name Chanina. For further insight, refer to Rashi’s commentary on the verse ‘יחנך בני’ (may He grant you grace, my son).”

(Based on Torah Levi Yitzchok, page 246)

# THE LOT WAS OBTAINED BY HEAVENLY BLESSING

The incredible story of the Jewish center in Almaty which was built after a heartfelt promise at the tziyun in New York...

By Yitzchok Hershkowitz

Just a short walk from Rabbi Levi Yitzchok Schneerson's final resting place in Almaty, Kazakhstan, stands a testament to Jewish resilience and renewal. This impressive complex of institutions, directed by Rabbi Yeshaya Cohen and his brother Rabbi Elchanan Cohen, emerged from a heartfelt promise made three decades ago.

When Rebbetzin Chana, Rabbi Levi Yitzchok's widow, left Kazakhstan after her husband's passing, she worried his grave would be forgotten in this remote corner of the world. For fifty years, her concerns seemed justified. Then, young Lubavitch shluchim—devoted chassidim of her eldest son, the Lubavitcher Rebbe—arrived in Almaty. Their mission: to revitalize Judaism in Kazakhstan, creating a living monument to the tzaddik's memory.

Today, thousands of Jews participate in a vibrant community life, while countless others make

pilgrimages to the holy site each year. What once was a fading memory has become a beacon of Jewish continuity.

## A HEARTFELT PROMISE TO THE REBBE

The story behind the Jewish center's construction is nothing short of remarkable. Upon his arrival in Almaty thirty years ago, Rabbi Yeshaya Cohen found a community in dire need. The sole synagogue opened only on Shabbos, attracting just a handful of worshippers. There was no kosher mikvah. Initial attempts to secure land for a new Jewish center met with frustration.

Undeterred, Rabbi Cohen traveled to New York for Gimmel Tammuz, 5756. At the Rebbe's Ohel, cradling he made a heartfelt plea for a bracha to obtain land for a center honoring Rabbi Levi Yitzchok's legacy.



Here," Rabbi Cohen declared emotionally, "we will build a living monument to continue the tzaddik's work."

Astana



Kostanay



Karaganda





He vowed to lay the cornerstone on the upcoming yahrtzeit of Rabbi Levi Yitzchok if his prayer was answered.

Just a short while later, even before Rabbi Cohen returned to Kazakhstan, he received a call from a municipal official in Almaty, offering a choice of three plots. Upon his return, he discovered that to his astonishment, the 3,500-square-meter lot he had selected was a mere ten-minute walk from Rabbi Levi Yitzchok's resting place. "Here," Rabbi Cohen declared emotionally, "we will build a living monument to continue the tzaddik's work."

In the years that followed, a comprehensive Jewish center arose, housing a shul, mikvah, Kollel for the elderly, and numerous community programs. It also serves as a welcoming haven for pilgrims visiting the tziyun, offering respite, refreshment, and opportunities for study.

What was once the city's outskirts has since become central, with new neighborhoods springing up around the cemetery. When authorities considered relocating the burial ground, the shluchim's efforts led to its designation as an untouchable historical landmark.

This flagship center in Almaty has inspired a network of shuls and community hubs across Kazakhstan, each serving as a lighthouse of Judaism.

Rabbi Cohen reflects, "The Rebbe often expressed gratitude to those who maintained his father's resting place. I feel immensely privileged that we're not only preserving the tziyun but expanding its influence throughout Kazakhstan, honoring the tzaddik's legacy."



Dedicating the second Chabad House in Almaty.



Constant maintenance of the tziyun and Ohel.



## JEWISH MILESTONES IN KAZAKHSTAN >>



**5700** (1940) \_\_\_\_\_

R' Levi Yitzchok arrives in Almaty on 15 Shevat. From there he continues to his place of exile in Chili.



**5704** (1944) \_\_\_\_\_

R' Levi Yitzchok released from exile on 27 Nissan, returns to Almaty.



**5704** (1944) \_\_\_\_\_

R' Levi Yitzchok passes away on 20 Av, interred in Almaty.



**5754** (1994) \_\_\_\_\_

R' Yeshaya Cohen arrives in Almaty as the Rebbe's shliach, and begins to revive the historic Jewish community.



**5754** (1994) \_\_\_\_\_

Establishment of Camp Gan Yisroel.



**5756** (1996) \_\_\_\_\_

Kosher shechita resumes begins in Kazakhstan by the new shluchim.



**5760** (2000) \_\_\_\_\_

R' Levi Yitzchok's interrogation file is given to Agudas Chasidei Chabad.



**5762** (2002) \_\_\_\_\_

New Chabad center founded in Pavlodar.



**5764** (2004) \_\_\_\_\_

Groundbreaking for large Jewish center in Astana, named "Beis Rochel Chabad Lubavitch," for the mother of Mr. Mashkevitch.



**5779** (2019) \_\_\_\_\_

Branch opens in Shymkent.



**5779** (2019) \_\_\_\_\_

Mikvah opens in Karaganda.



**5780** (2020) \_\_\_\_\_

R' Levi Yitzchok's tziyun declared historical landmark by the U.S. and Kazakh governments.



**5732** (1972) \_\_\_\_\_

New matzeiva installed at R' Levi Yitzchok's tziyun.



**5740** (1980) \_\_\_\_\_

The Rebbe establishes "Tiferes Zikeinim Levi Yitzchok" network for seniors.



**5749** (1989) \_\_\_\_\_

Ohel constructed at the tziyun by R' Avi Taub, Rabbi Dovid Nachshon and Rabbi Nachum Tamarin.



**5757** (1997) \_\_\_\_\_

Cornerstone laying ceremony for the main shul in Almaty.



**5757** (1998) \_\_\_\_\_

Inauguration of first mikva in Almaty.



**5760** (2000) \_\_\_\_\_

Kazakhstan President issues letter exonerating R' Levi Yitzchok and provides historic death certificate.



**5769** (2009) \_\_\_\_\_

Opening of Beis Chabad in Kostanay.



**5769** (2009) \_\_\_\_\_

Inauguration of "Ohel Eliezer" branch in Ust-Kamenogorsk, named for the father of Mr. Shlomo Gehler.



**5775** (2015) \_\_\_\_\_

New branch opens in Karaganda.



**5780** (2020) \_\_\_\_\_

Additional branch established in Almaty.



**5781** (2021) \_\_\_\_\_

Launch of Smart J - Jewish Kids Club.



**5784** (2024) \_\_\_\_\_

New Mikvah opens in Shymkent.

# THROUGH THE EYES OF THE AMBASSADOR

Ran Ichay, who served as Israeli ambassador to Kazakhstan from 2006-2008, witnessed firsthand the work of Chabad shluchim. In this interview, he shares his astonishment at their dedication, the Jewish revival in Kazakhstan, and his introduction to the legacy of Rabbi Levi Yitzchok.

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By Moshe Kahane



**Ran Ichay**, currently the director of the Jerusalem Center for Applied Policy (JCAP), played a crucial role in relocating the Israeli embassy from Almaty to Astana during his tenure as ambassador. His contributions to Israeli-Kazakh relations and the Jewish community were significant, including a humanitarian initiative that saved dozens of infected infants, earning him the prestigious Kazakh Order of Jubilee.

In his capacity as ambassador, Ichay observed the shlichim's work throughout Kazakhstan, often becoming an active partner in their endeavors. This unique position provided him with intimate insights into their mission and impact.

"Rabbi Yeshaya Cohen and his brother, Rabbi Elchanan, arrived at a critical juncture, effectively saving the Jewish community from dispersal," Ichay reflects. "The predominantly Ashkenazi community was highly decentralized and at risk of extinction. The Rebbe's shlichim in Kazakhstan constructed what I consider a truly grand enterprise."

Ichay's role as ambassador allowed him to observe the shlichim's work across the country. He notes with admiration, "During my tenure, the shlichim established five communities throughout Kazakhstan, and I understand they've expanded further since then. In every city with a Jewish presence, no matter how small, they've established a community center and a Chabad House, conducting outstanding work."

The central community is now based in Almaty, with another significant presence in Astana, featuring a beautiful synagogue and community center. "I can attest that these facilities operate round the clock, seven days a week, with heightened activity on Shabbat and holidays," Ichay adds.

As a researcher at heart, Ichay investigated the shlichim's impact. "I discovered that when Rabbi Yeshaya Cohen first arrived in Kazakhstan, there wasn't a single organized Jewish community. He truly started from scratch. I've never encountered such a level of commitment, investment, and dedication as displayed by the Rebbe's shlichim."

When asked if there was any particular incident that moved him, Ichay recounts a story from Pavlodar, a remote border city. He had visited the city previously, for a major interfaith summit that was attended by Israel's Chief Rabbis.

"The visit of the Chief Rabbis caused great excitement among the local Jewish community, and many of them agreed to undergo a bris milah, or to marry under a chuppa in accordance with Halacha, as long as the Chief Rabbis participated," Ichay recalls.

Ichay himself was also honored, and given the position of sandak at the bris of a 60-year-old man.

"Two years later, I was back in the city on an official ambassadorial visit. I once again met the man who had the bris. I overheard him talking to a friend, himself 70 years old, and saying 'If only you would have listened to me two years ago, the ambassador could have been your sandak too.'



"I was surprised, to say the least, to hear the older man reply, 'If the ambassador will be my sandak, I'm willing to have a bris.'

"The local shliach, Rabbi Shmuel Karnauch, overhearing the conversation, immediately said, 'No problem, the ambassador will come. Just tell me when we're making the bris.' I was a bit surprised that he committed me without asking," Ichay recalls with a smile.

This conversation took place on a Thursday, and after some discussion, they decided to hold the bris on Monday, as Sunday was Tisha B'Av. Immediately, Rabbi Karnauch called Rabbi Elchanan Cohen, who also serves as a mohel, and performs thousands of brissin around the country. He asked him "We have a bris on Monday. Is that convenient for you?"

"I remember Rabbi Elchanan pausing for a moment, and I knew why. I had seen how his schedule was filled with his dedicated work for the community, and as is, he hardly has time to sleep. But then he responded with a line which remains with me until today. **'In this world, we don't only do that which is convenient.'**

Ichay continues, "Rabbi Elchanan organized a grand celebration, arranging for children from the Almaty day camp to travel to the bris by overnight train. The next morning, we realized that there were no flights, and we would have to drive. I took an embassy jeep, and we



drove together for six hours through difficult terrain to reach Pavlodar. The entire community came together for this momentous occasion. It was truly inspiring to see such dedication and the impact it had on the community.”

“After the bris, I had a meeting with the governor while Rabbi Cohen remained to take care of some things in the community. In my estimation, he didn’t sleep for 48 hours due to this bris which ‘landed in his lap.’”

wore a prominent cross, having been raised Christian by his father while his mother was Jewish,” Ichay explains.

“At the launch of the first official flight, I was present along with Chief Rabbi Yeshaya Cohen and, interestingly, Vladimir’s priest in full regalia. As we sat in the front of the plane, Rabbi Cohen suggested Vladimir put on tefillin. Vladimir looked to his priest for permission.”

Ichay continues, “The priest hesitated, mumbled something in Russian, and finally said, ‘Fine, you can put on that thing, but don’t say anything.’ Rabbi Cohen swiftly applied the tefillin and, without a moment’s hesitation, also guided Vladimir through reciting the bracha and the first paragraph of the Shema. It was a powerful moment of Jewish reconnection.”

#### **RABBI LEVI YITZCHOK’S ENDURING LEGACY**

Ichay’s experiences in Kazakhstan also led him to a deeper appreciation of Rabbi Levi Yitzchok Schneerson, the Rebbe’s father.

“Visiting Rabbi Levi Yitzchok’s gravesite was intensely moving,” Ichay reflects. “It took time for me to fully grasp the concept that tzaddikim are considered ‘alive’ even after death, but witnessing the impact of his legacy brought this idea to life.”

“This great man’s legacy continues through his Torah teachings and the work initiated by the Rebbe’s shluchim in Kazakhstan. They breathe new life into his vision through the flourishing Jewish communities I witnessed firsthand. From my research, I’ve come to regard Rabbi Levi Yitzchok as one of the great Jewish leaders. While he may have died in isolation, his spirit undoubtedly lives on with tremendous force.”



**Ran Ichay arrives for a Hachnasas Sefer Torah in Ust-Kamenogorsk, Kazakhstan**

#### **HESITATION ON THE FLIGHT DECK**

The former ambassador shares another compelling story that illustrates the shluchim’s impact:

“When a new airline route between Kazakhstan and Israel was inaugurated, the airline’s owner, Vladimir, presented an interesting case. He was Jewish by birth but





A bris in Almaty with shliach Rabbi Elchanan Cohen serving as mohel

## A BATTLE FOR EVERY JEW

Ichay recounts a particularly poignant story showcasing the shluchim's unwavering dedication:

"I remember a case where a Jew was murdered in a financial dispute by members of the underworld. The situation was complicated as the perpetrators had connections with the police, raising concerns about the proper handling and burial of the body," Ichay begins.

"The shluchim called me in the middle of the night for assistance. I immediately contacted one of the heads of the security services to ensure the body was guarded overnight. The next morning, the Cohen brothers and I went to the morgue. Despite being Kohanim and unable to enter, they insisted on being present to assert their right to be involved in the process."

Ichay continues, "We waited for hours outside the morgue. The Cohen brothers' silent resolve was more powerful than any vocal protest.

Eventually, the police granted permission for them to enter. The Cohen brothers quickly pointed out the ambassador, saying he would enter, while they remained outside.

"The astonished official said, 'What? You aren't going in? You just sat here half a day for that purpose!'" Ichay recalls.

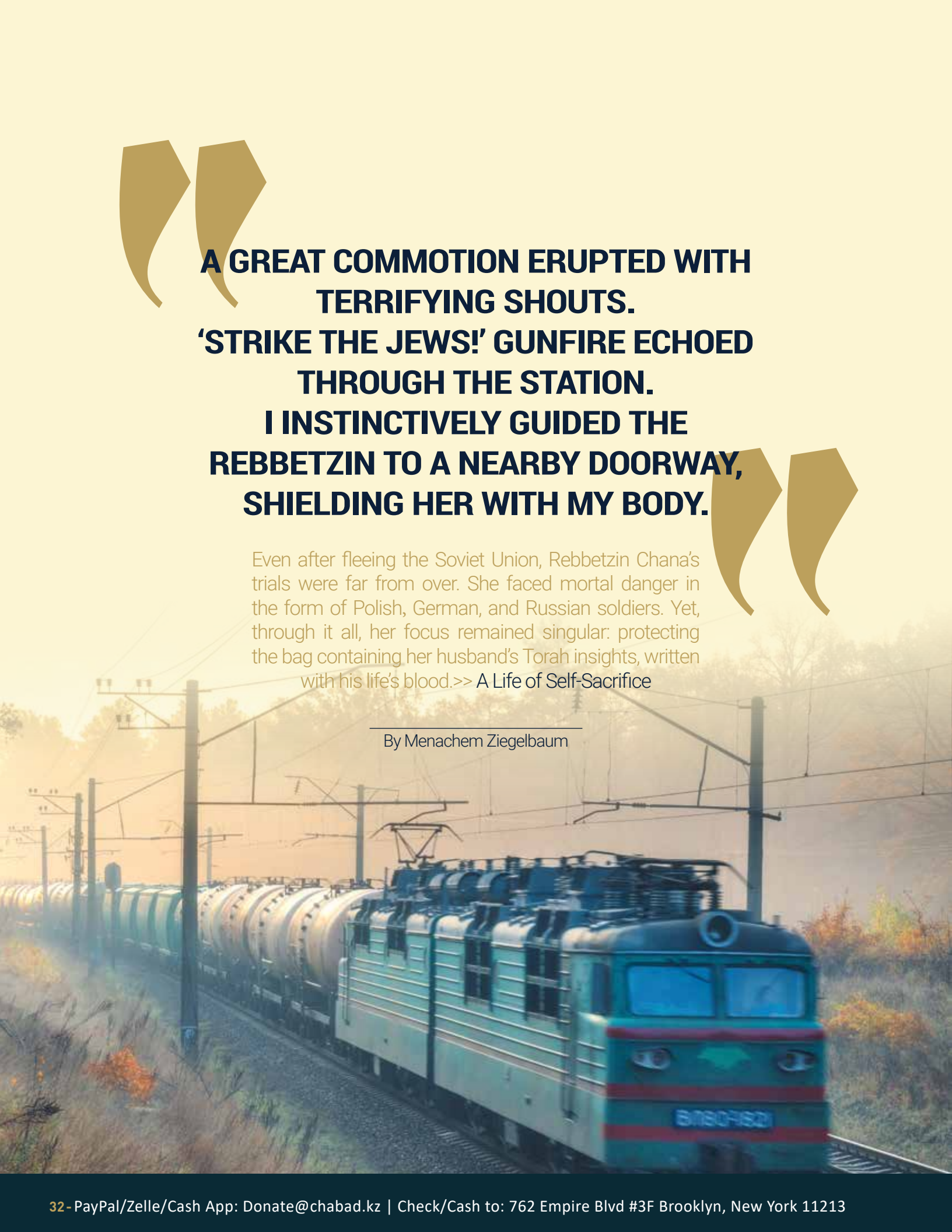
"Finally, I was allowed to enter and obtain a sample for DNA identification in Israel.

"The burial itself was challenging, taking place in the harsh Kazakh winter. A small group of us dug through snow and frozen earth to prepare the grave, as Jewish law requires only Jews to dig a Jewish grave.

After the burial, the wealthy family of the deceased offered to cover all expenses. "Rabbi Elchanan declined, saying they had done it 'for the mitzvah.' When asked what they could do in return, he simply requested that the father-in-law of the deceased put on tefillin.

"Witnessing this entire process, from the initial call to the final act of putting on tefillin, was truly exceptional. It exemplified the shluchim's commitment to every single Jewish soul, regardless of the circumstances," Ichay concludes, his admiration evident.





**A GREAT COMMOTION ERUPTED WITH  
TERRIFYING SHOUTS.  
'STRIKE THE JEWS!' GUNFIRE ECHOED  
THROUGH THE STATION.  
I INSTINCTIVELY GUIDED THE  
REBBETZIN TO A NEARBY DOORWAY,  
SHIELDING HER WITH MY BODY.**

Even after fleeing the Soviet Union, Rebbetzin Chana's trials were far from over. She faced mortal danger in the form of Polish, German, and Russian soldiers. Yet, through it all, her focus remained singular: protecting the bag containing her husband's Torah insights, written with his life's blood.>> A Life of Self-Sacrifice

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By Menachem Ziegelbaum



Following the passing of her husband, the esteemed **Rabbi Levi Yitzchok Schneerson**, Rebbetzin Chana found herself alone in a world of turmoil. One son had fallen victim to the Nazis, while her two other sons were beyond the Soviet borders, separated by the impenetrable Iron Curtain.

Exhausted and worn from years of hardship, Rebbetzin Chana initially resisted the opportunity to leave Russia using forged Polish documents. Her reluctance stemmed from emotional and physical fatigue, the weight of her experiences crushing her spirit.

**“I don’t want to go... It’s beyond my capabilities,”** she pleaded with the Chassidim who urged her to board the train to freedom. However, concerned for her welfare, they persisted in their efforts to persuade her.

Yocheved Zalmanov, a young girl traveling with the group, recalled the poignant scene: “I entered a brightly lit room where a noble-looking, middle-aged woman sat, her wise eyes filled with tears. In a refined, pained voice, she begged, ‘Believe me, it’s very, very hard for me to travel. My heart breaks to part with those who remain here forever.’”

Eventually yielding to their importuning, Rebbetzin Chana boarded the freight train, joining over a hundred Lubavitcher Chassidim. The journey, though short, was fraught with tension and fear. She left the Soviet Union with a forged Polish passport which was given to her at the last minute by Mrs. Sarah Katzenelenbogen, who sacrificed her life for the Rebbetzin and remained behind.



**Rebbetzin Chana Schneerson**

Throughout their perilous flight, the Rebbetzin guarded her most precious possession: her husband’s writings, a treasure trove of kabbalistic insights penned during his exile. This collection, preserved to this day, would later be published by her son, the Rebbe.

The refugees’ path led them through Krakow and eventually to a displaced persons camp in Poking, Germany. From there, Rebbetzin Chana embarked on another arduous journey, driven by the hope of reuniting with her eldest son after nearly two decades of separation.

Yocheved Zalmanov once again accompanied Rebbetzin Chana on the initial stage of her journey from Poking to Munich, documenting the experience in her diary. Despite having escaped immediate peril, the Rebbetzin still faced significant challenges ahead.

In Munich, Rebbetzin Chana needed to obtain legitimate documentation, as she had been traveling with forged papers. Officials from the Joint and two prominent Chabad Chassidim were present to assist her, as she was the mechutenesta of the (Friediker) Rebbe, mother of his son-in-law.

The group arrived at the Munich train station in the evening. Young Yocheved walked behind the Rebbetzin, while the two Chassidim remained close by. Rebbetzin Chana clutched her papers tightly in her pocketbook.

Yocheved wrote in her diary, “At the bustling station, amidst thousands of passengers, we sat on the side, facing the Chassidim, awaiting the train to Frankfurt.”



**Telegram from the Rebbe to Rabbi Binyomin Gorodetzky, dated 23 Cheshvan 5707: Expressing gratitude for assisting his mother, requesting continued support at his expense, and inquiring about her health.**



Resting place of Rebbetzin Chana next to the holy Ohel in New York.

Despite the peril, she steadfastly safeguarded her husband's sacred writings, inscribed with ink she had painstakingly produced under harsh conditions in exile."

The calm atmosphere was suddenly shattered by a violent outbreak that threatened the Rebbetzin's life.

**"A great commotion erupted with terrifying shouts. 'Strike the Jews!'** Gunfire echoed through the station," Yocheved recounted. "I instinctively guided the Rebbetzin to a nearby doorway, shielding her with my body. A young assailant fired his revolver in our direction; sparks flew past us, striking a nearby wall. His face, contorted with hatred, remains etched in my memory."

"Our Chassidim companions vanished in the chaos. Police arrived to disperse the attackers, eventually restoring a semblance of order. In the merit of the Rebbetzin, our lives were spared. We embraced, overwhelmed by our miraculous escape."

"As the Frankfurt train arrived, we realized our Chassidim had not returned. The Rebbetzin was exhausted, and we found ourselves without support or guidance."

"A compassionate ticket collector, noting our distress, assisted us onto the train moments before departure. Throughout the night, we traveled in a state of anxiety, holding hands and remaining vigilant. Later, we learned that the Chassidim had safely returned to Poking."

"Reflecting on our extraordinary deliverance, I felt humbled sitting beside the Rebbetzin, a figure of such spiritual magnitude."

The Rebbetzin bid an emotional farewell to her young escort, presenting her with photographs of herself and her granddaughter. "May your life be filled with joy and happiness," she said. They parted with tears and a heartfelt embrace. "To long life! May you always find favor in the eyes of G-d and man, befitting a Jewish, chassidische girl."

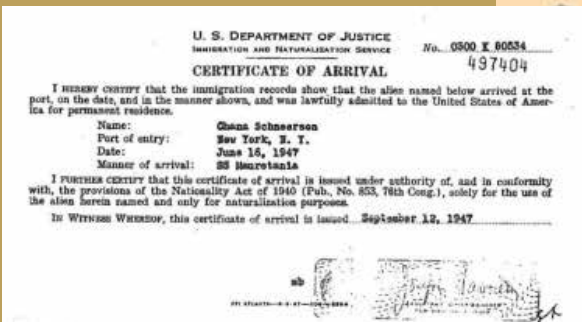
Rebbetzin Chana then boarded the train alone, bound for Paris, where local Chassidim awaited to care for her until her son, the Rebbe, arrived from the United States.

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Throughout her journey, Rebbetzin Chana faced numerous life-threatening situations. She encountered mortal danger from Russians, Germans, and Poles, all united in their antipathy towards Jews and disregard for Jewish lives.

Despite these perils, she steadfastly safeguarded her husband's sacred writings, inscribed with ink she had painstakingly produced under harsh conditions in exile.

During a farbrengen on his mother's yearzeit in 5742/1981, the Rebbe recounted, "In the remote village of my father's exile, ink for recording Torah insights was unavailable. After my mother joined him, she foraged for herbs, creating makeshift ink in various colors. This allowed my father to continue his Torah scholarship, even as they lacked basic necessities."



Certificate documenting the arrival of Rebbetzin Chana and her son, the Rebbe, to the United States.

“My father’s writings were concise due to the scarcity of materials. After his passing, my mother vigilantly protected these works, bringing them with her when she fled the country. I have since had the privilege of publishing them.”

The Rebbe emphasized to the chassidim, “Preserving and transporting these writings out of the country required tremendous self-sacrifice. Had authorities discovered these documents during the typical rigorous searches, she would have faced immediate imprisonment.”

These writings, published by their son, the Rebbe, are titled as Likutei Levi Yitzchok, containing commentaries on the Tanya, Zohar, Tanach, and Ma’amarei Chazal, as well as the letters and responsa; and Toras Levi Yitzchok, comprising insights on Mishnah and Gemara.




**Second telegram, dated 9 Tevet 5707: Expressing deep concern over the delayed transfer of his mother (to Paris), requesting urgent action. Instructs to send her warm clothes and all necessities.**

“The Rebbetzin was exhausted, her spirit worn by years of hardship. ‘I don’t want to go... It’s beyond my capabilities,’ she pleaded with the Chassidim urging her to board the train to freedom. Her wise eyes, filled with tears, reflected the weight of her experiences.”



The Rebbe and Rebbetzin Chana in Paris.



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