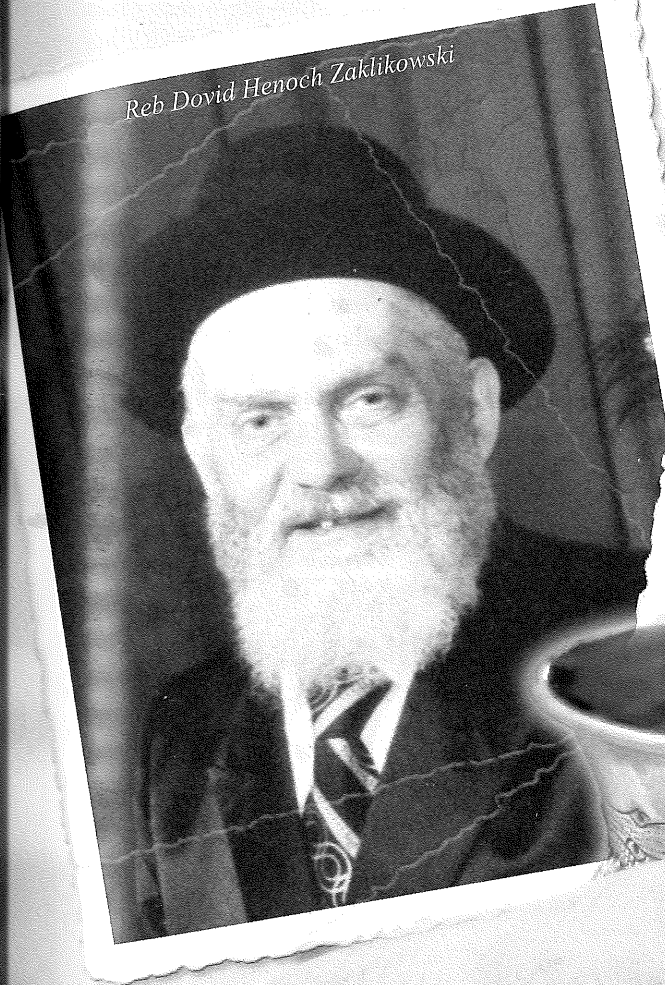


REB DOVID HENoch ZAKLIKOWSKI: **The Man Who Made Kiddush While on Line to the Gas Chamber**



In the town of Krashnik, Poland, in the year 1938, he had everything he wanted: a wonderful wife, a happy family, superb in-laws, and a job that provided him with enough money to spend a good part of his day devoted to the study of Torah.

My grandfather, Dovid Henoch Zaklikowski, or Reb Henoch, as he was affectionately known, was known for his diligence in Torah study, his kind smile and generous heart.

And then the Nazis came.

“We were from the same town,” Reb Moshe Yaakov Zambrovsky writes in Yiddish. “We went through the seven gates of hell together. Reb Henoch was a man of kindness, a total tzaddik who saved many hundreds of Jews with bread to revive them, even though he himself was starving in the concentration camps. Even here in the United States, where he resided since he moved from Germany, Reb Henoch did many kind deeds and gave tzedakah to many needy individuals. I will never forget him.”

To the utter amazement of those near him on the line, and despite their protests, he proceeded to recite aloud the kiddush as if he was standing at his Shabbos table.

Matzah in the Camps

The Nazis came in 1939, and my grandfather, like so many others, was first hauled off to a camp in Budzhin, near his hometown of Krashnik, and was later moved to the infamous Auschwitz death camp.

“Your grandfather was standing,” relates Reb Zalman Shur, “in line to the notorious Auschwitz gas chambers. He knew exactly where the line was headed; there were no secrets. It was Friday evening and the sun began to set. He began gathering the scraps of hard bread that he had

collected the entire week in his pocket. Since coming to Auschwitz, he had always rationed his meager portion of daily bread so that at the end of the week he could make kiddush over a few crusts of bread.

“He was determined to do this one mitzvah as he waited, even if it would be his last. To the utter amazement of those near him on the line, and despite their protests, he proceeded to recite aloud the kiddush as if he was standing at his Shabbos table. Then he ate a crumb and shared the rest with the other Jews around him.

“At that exact moment, the mechanism which operated



My grandmother, Mrs. Mattel Zaklikowski, holds her son Moshe.



Mrs. Mattel Zaklikowski soon after her arrival in the US.

the chamber of death malfunctioned. He and all those around him were saved from death.”

This was not the first time he displayed self-sacrifice for Yiddishkeit during his time in several concentration camps. Reb Tzvi Krohn, who was in the Budzhin concentration camp with him, relates:

“The Budzhin concentration camp was supervised by Germans who had immigrated to Poland several years before the war. Reb Henoah and I worked in the camp’s carpentry department. One of our duties was to fix buildings for the German army located outside of the concentration camp. The camp was not as hard as the other camps that we both endured for the remainder of the war.

“The Germans would always scream at us. We began to call them the *shreiars*, in Yiddish, the screamers. In truth we had no knowledge or experience in carpentry and we were not working fast enough. Reb Henoah never lost his smile and his good mood. The soldiers would hit every other group, but Reb Henoah’s smile would soften even their stony hearts, sparing us from beatings.

“My brother worked in a factory, not far from us, which was even more lax than ours. Before Pesach they baked matzos and he sent us several of them. However, we still worried about how we would have strength to work without eating bread.

“One of the workers in the kitchen, who was friendly with several Jewish families in his city and was knowledgeable about the Jewish holidays, approached us and offered to give us more soup on the holiday, and he would save for us the bread we would not eat until after Pesach. We were in total shock, since he was placing himself in grave danger. It was well known that the SS officers would warn the kitchen workers to never change the portions or give anyone extra.

“The religious Jews graciously accepted his offer and thought that they would more or less be able to survive the holiday. However, on the last day of Pesach the Germans decided to take them on a ‘walk,’ or as we would call it, a ‘death march.’

“They made us walk for many, many hours. Many of the Jews, who had not eaten normally for seven days, could not make it. Anyone who would fall down from hunger or fatigue was immediately murdered by the Germans. They rode on horses on the side of the road and would constantly scare us with the horses and with their wild dogs. This was a traumatic experience that I will never forget.

“When we arrived back to the concentration camp from our ‘walk,’ on the verge of death, we ate the bread that the kitchen worker was saving to give us after Pesach. However, I will never forget Reb Henoah’s self-sacrifice not to touch the bread until after Pesach ended.”

Another survivor shared this incident with the family: “Upon arrival in Auschwitz, there was great confusion. Everyone was frightened, not knowing what would be next. Henoah started calling loudly, so everyone could

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Reb Henoah’s niece, Hella Moshar, shared the



My grandmother, Mrs. Mattel Zaklikowski, in the DP camp in Pocking, Germany.

following stories that he related to her during a visit to Israel, 40 years after the Holocaust. “My uncle Dovid [Henoah] was from the few to survive the Auschwitz concentration camp. He was cruelly forced to clean up the bodies after they came out of the gas chambers. One day during his work, one of those working with him called him to the side and told him, ‘Your sister Esther and her two children were just taken into the gas chambers.’ He fainted and when he revived, he had a strong will to take revenge on the Germans; however, what could he ever do to the Germans?”

From Sokolov to Lubavitch

The young Dovid Henoah grew up in the court of the Sokolov dynasty. His father Reb Moshe was the shamash of the Sokolover Rebbe, Reb Yitzchak Zelig Morgenstern,

the grandchild of the Kotzker Rebbe. The Sokolover Rebbe was renowned across Poland and many would come to him for brochos and especially for medical advice.

Dovid Henoch was a diligent student and when he finished his yeshivah studies in Sokolov, his father searched for a good yeshivah for him. The Sokolover Rebbe told his father to send his son to learn in Tomchei Tmimim Lubavitch Yeshivah in Warsaw. He studied there diligently for two years, 1928-29.

Dovid Henoch married Miriam Chechler, the daughter of a wealthy Gerrer chossid from the town of Krashnik. He settled there and studied Torah until the birth of his first child, Tzirel. Then his father-in-law gave him seed money to open a stationery store. The store was very successful and Reb Henoch had enough time to sit and .

Finding Life's Joys

Reb Henoch's life, together with all of Polish Jewry, was changed forever when the Nazis marched into Krashnik on September 15, 1939. Most of his entire family was murdered by the Nazis. After the war he may have been physically alive, but he was a broken man. His perpetual smile disappeared, along with so many other smiles across Europe.

During the war he lost his wife and children. Some time after the war, a shidduch was suggested for him with a girl from Lublin, Mattel Rozenstein, the daughter of Miriam and Avraham. Before World War II they lived on the

outskirts of Lublin and were wealthy landowners. Only two from the family of nine siblings survived the war. The family hid in barns, in the floor under planks of wood, going from one hiding place to the next. Many family members joined the partisans; others were ratted on and delivered into the hands of the Germans by their "rescuers," the very ones who had hidden them.

During her time in hiding from the Germans, Mattel Rozenstein made a promise: if she survived, she would only marry a religious Jew. After the war, she was reunited

'And if they were your daughters would you let them remain outside in the freezing cold the entire night?!'

with the only living members of her immediate family, her father and her brother Yechiel.

Reb Henoch and Mattel married in Lublin. As in many marriages of those days, he was thirteen years older than her. They headed towards displaced persons (DP) camps in Germany, hoping to continue on to safer havens.

"We were travelling on the way to Germany," one of



Hella Moshar, my grandfather's niece, who related a lot of the details in this story.



The author's son, Moshe Zaklikowski, at his bris, with his mother, Mrs. Chana Reizel Zaklikowski.

the survivors told me. "When we arrived at the border it was late at night and the immigration office in the train station was already closed. We were all told to get off the train and wait in the station. With us were many children and women, it was a freezing night and there were strong winds outside in the open. We would have to remain there the entire night until morning, when the office would once again open.

"Your grandfather placed himself in grave danger – for there were no Jew-lovers at that time in European countries – and went to the police station. There he demanded that the police check everyone's papers and permit the train to continue. At first they were not moved, so he began to scream at them, 'And if they were your

Reb Henoch remained in Germany at the urging of the Rebbe Rayatz, who encouraged him to continue his involvement with the local Jewish community. In January 1950, a telegram arrived in my grandfather's home, informing the Jewish community of the Rebbe Rayatz's passing, "*Admur nistalek Shabbos halevayah mochor chatzos.*" The Rebbe passed away on Shabbos; the funeral is tomorrow at midday.

In 1928 Reb Henoch had attended the wedding of the Ramash, the Rebbe Rayatz's son-in-law and future successor, in Warsaw. Having heard of his yiras Shomayim and scholarship, Reb Henoch immediately accepted the Ramash as his Rebbe.

The new Rebbe's kind and empathetic letters addressed to him in Munich left Reb Henoch with the feeling that he had a truly caring family member in New York. The Rebbe concerned himself with Reb Henoch's health and livelihood, and advised him on how to go about his immigration to the United States.

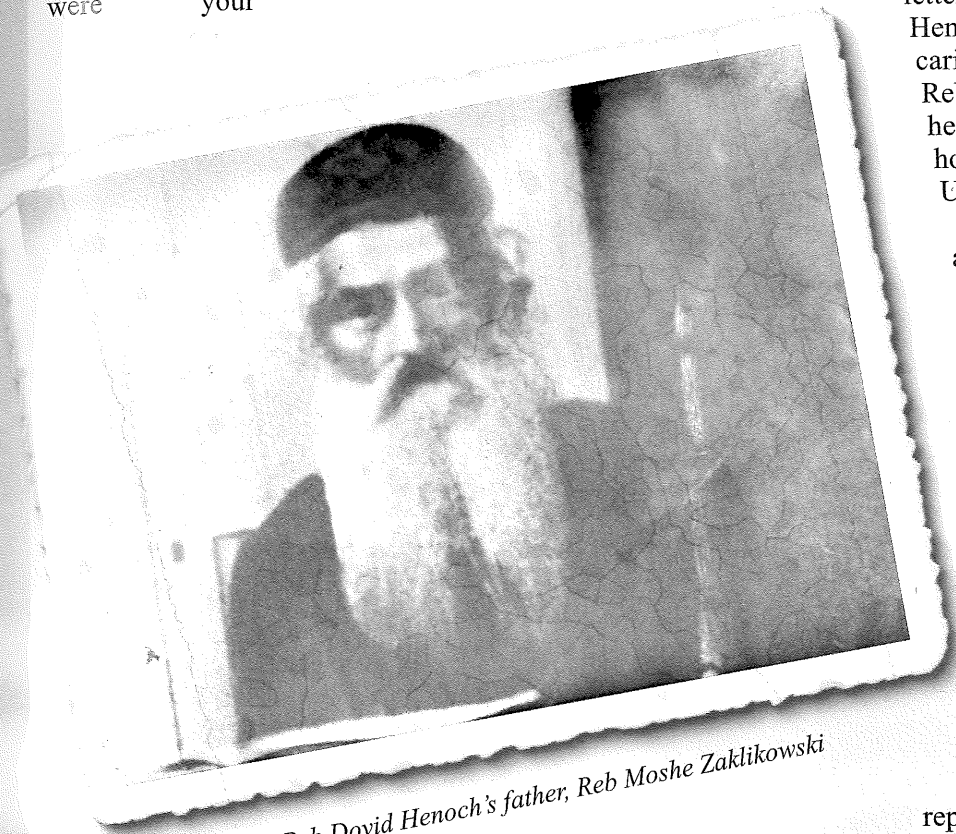
"Your wife should have an easy birth and she should give birth at the proper time; the child should be strong and healthy, and you should know no more sorrow, Heaven forbid," the Rebbe wrote to Reb Henoch on June 26, 1951, when his wife was due with their daughter, later named Miriam after her grandmother.

Life was not easy for my grandfather, physically or emotionally. Whereas before the war he had been a happy person, after the war he found himself beset with worries about his health and his future. In a letter dated the 11th of Nissan (April 17, 1951), the Rebbe instructed him to endeavor to

replace his current feelings of fear with the "fear of G-d," through studying and contemplating G-d's greatness and how the entire world is under constant individual Divine Providence, as taught in teachings of Chassidus. In doing so, he'd exchange one fear for another.

In another letter, dated September 2, 1951, the Rebbe writes to Reb Henoch, advising him on whether he should remain in Munich for Rosh Hashanah or head to the United States as soon as possible. My grandfather had obtained a visa for himself and his family, but it wasn't easy. He had finally passed the mandatory medical exam, an exam he had failed several times in the past. Remaining in Germany for Rosh Hashanah might jeopardize his visa, but would also give him a few extra dollars to have in his pocket upon his arrival in the United States, as there would be a greater demand for poultry for the holidays.

The Rebbe wrote to him that he had remembered him and his family in his prayers, and "G-d should grant you all



Reb Dovid Henoch's father, Reb Moshe Zaklikowski

daughters would you let them remain outside in the freezing cold the entire night?!"

"At that point some of the officers had mercy and went with him to the train station, where they checked the papers and we all continued on the journey."

Reb Henoch eventually arrived at the Pocking DP Camp in Germany, run by the Americans and the American Joint Distribution Center, where his son Moshe was born.

It was there that the sixth Chabad Rebbe, the Rebbe Rayatz, sent Reb Henoch a shechitah knife, and instructed him to learn the art of shechitah. He learnt it, and he learnt it well; it would later become his source of livelihood in the United States.

He later moved to Munich, Germany, where he met up once again with Gerrer chassidim.

[you wish] in a way that is good for you in physical and spiritual matters. And you and your family, may they be well, should be written for a good and sweet year. With blessing to be written and inscribed for good.”

The blessings warmed Reb Henoah’s heart, once again reminding him that across the Atlantic there was someone who cared about him.

At the end of the letter, the Rebbe advised him regarding his predicament: If he was certain that he could stay in Pocking over Rosh Hashanah and the visa would still be valid – without the need to retake the medical exam – then he should stay. Otherwise, he should leave to New York before Rosh Hashanah, which is what Reb Henoah ended up doing.

Upon Reb Henoah’s arrival at Ellis Island, he called Lubavitch World Headquarters, known today as 770, to inform the Rebbe of his arrival. The Rebbe was not there; however, the one who responded to the phone call said he would pass on the message.

A few days later, a letter from the Rebbe arrived to Ellis Island, written during an extremely busy time for the Rebbe, during the Yomim Noroim: “I received the message that you have arrived with your family to the shores of the United States. May it be G-d’s will that everything should go well and easily; you should quickly gain admission into the country.”

At the end of the typewritten letter, the Rebbe added by hand: “Please give my regards to all our Jewish brethren

who find themselves on Ellis Island, with the blessing to be signed and conclusively sealed for [a] good [year].”

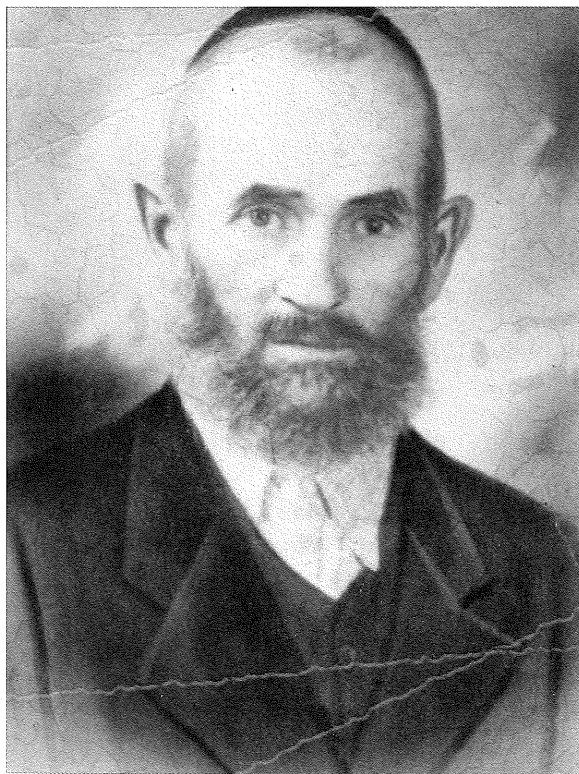
For Sukkos, Reb Henoah was hosted by Hebrew

During the dancing, the Rebbe pulled over Reb Henoah, as a father to a son, and began dancing with him.

Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) in a Manhattan hotel. Reb Henoah trekked the several-hours-long walk to Lubavitch World Headquarters in Crown Heights for Simchas Torah.

He arrived in middle of the dancing. During the dancing, the Rebbe pulled over Reb Henoah, as a father to a son, and began dancing with him. A broken man’s heart was touched and began to heal. That night, tears of joy rolled down Reb Henoah’s face, as he was welcomed to his new life, to a new beginning.

From that day on, Reb Henoah would not take a step without first asking the Rebbe for his blessings and advice. He did not have any family to turn to, but the Rebbe “adopted” him, constantly providing him with



My grandmother’s father, Reb Avraham Rozenstein.



My grandparents, Reb Dovid Henoah and Mrs. Mattel Zaklikowski.

encouragement and assistance. When times were hard, the Rebbe would send him money—without him even asking for it. The Rebbe offered him a loan to cover the down payment when he was trying to purchase a home. And once, when Reb Henoch was ill, he was discharged from the hospital only to get a message: “I want to see Zaklikowski when he comes out of the hospital.”

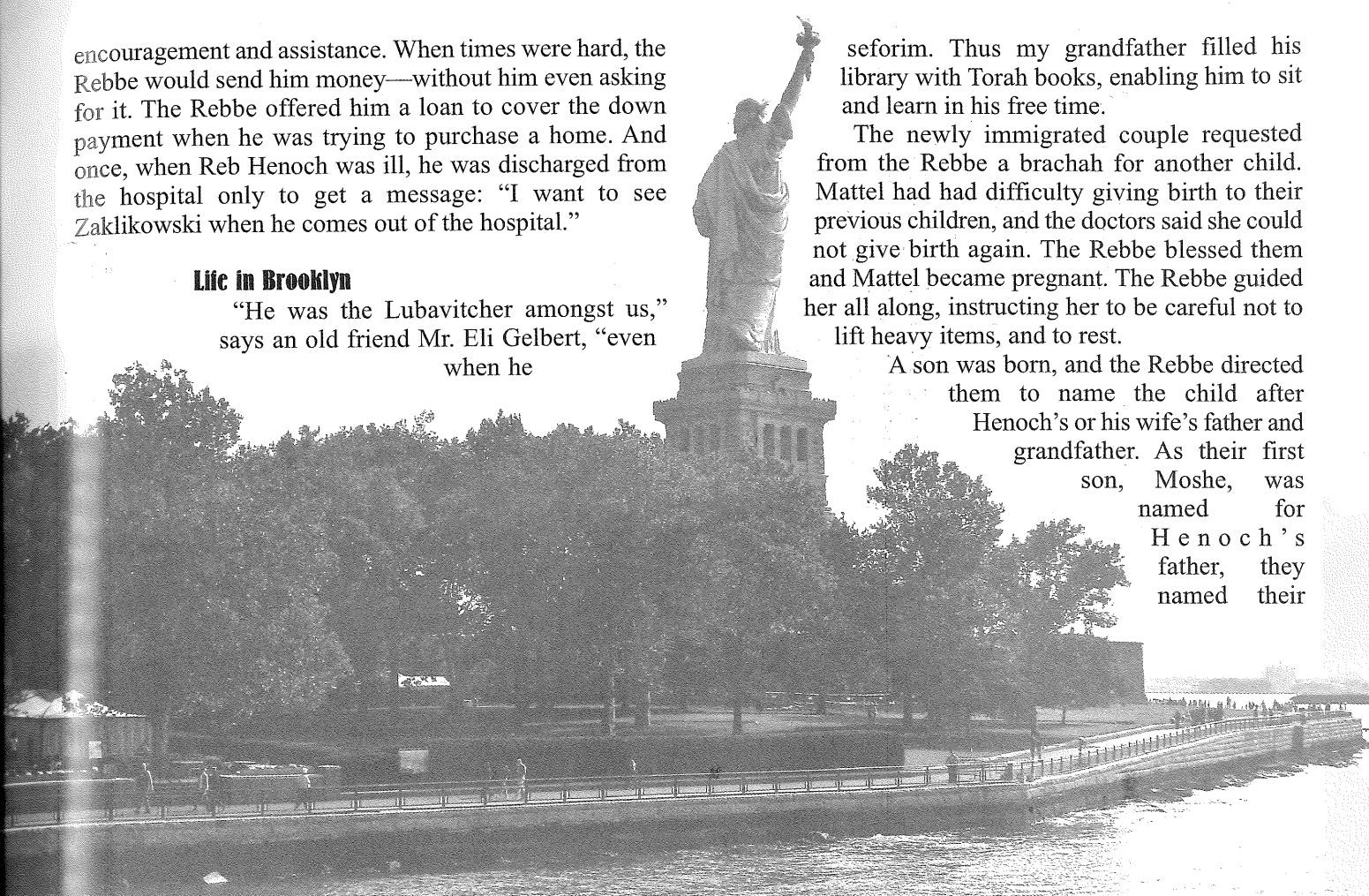
Life in Brooklyn

“He was the Lubavitcher amongst us,” says an old friend Mr. Eli Gelbert, “even when he

seforim. Thus my grandfather filled his library with Torah books, enabling him to sit and learn in his free time.

The newly immigrated couple requested from the Rebbe a brachah for another child. Mattel had had difficulty giving birth to their previous children, and the doctors said she could not give birth again. The Rebbe blessed them and Mattel became pregnant. The Rebbe guided her all along, instructing her to be careful not to lift heavy items, and to rest.

A son was born, and the Rebbe directed them to name the child after Henoch’s or his wife’s father and grandfather. As their first son, Moshe, was named for Henoch’s father, they named their



lived in Brownsville and he would daven in the Gerrer shtiebel.”

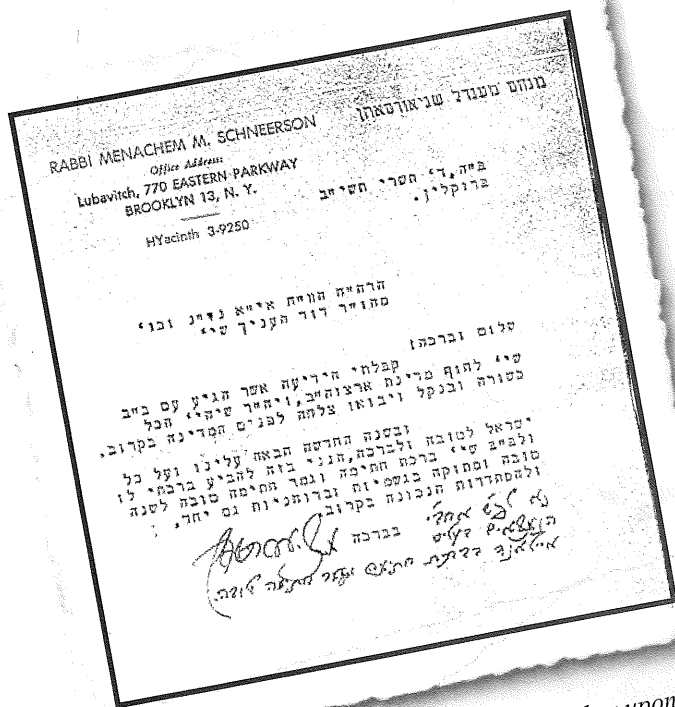
Mr. Gelbert described my grandfather as a “varemer Yid,” a warm Jew, “who was content with only a little and was very honest.” However, he could not answer why the Lubavitcher would daven in the Gerrer shul in Brownsville and later in the Gerrer shul in Crown Heights.

“He was a Lubliner, a Polisher yid,” guesses Gelbert, who davens in the Chabad Shul on Sixteenth Avenue in Boro Park. However, it turns out the reason was one that I, his grandson, never thought of.

Reb Henoch once told Mrs. Bina Farbiyash, who together with her husband Ovadya had arranged his shidduch, “Prior to my leaving home in Sokolov to learn in Warsaw my mother told me to daven in *eigene shtieblach* [to pray in our synagogues].”

My grandfather was keeping the only tzavaah, last will, that he had from his mother; by fulfilling her request and honoring her Gerrer tradition, he kept himself connected to his kind and pious mother.

While in Munich, Reb Henoch reprinted the sefer Beis Dovid, a classic volume on shechitah. He shipped most of the copies to be sold in New York. When he arrived in New York, the distributor wanted to pay him back for the books. My grandfather said that he wanted to be paid back with



Letter that the Rebbe sent to my grandfather upon his arrival at American shores.

second son Avraham Yaakov, after Mattel's father and grandfather. That child is my father.

With the birth of this baby, it was as if Reb Henoch got a new lease on life. Once again he became known for his kindness of heart. He arranged for others' employment, and would quietly assist others financially, once leaving a large portion of his paycheck in someone's home when he noticed their dire poverty.



Reb Dovid Henoch as a young bochur.

When Reb Henoch became ill, he requested from his children not to inform the Rebbe. "I do not want to cause him any grief."

"We never knew he was sick," says Gelbert, an old friend of my grandfather's, "until he did not show up in shul for several weeks. Then we went to visit him in the hospital. Shortly after, he passed away."

For Pesach Reb Henoch requested that the doctors permit him to go home to spend Pesach with his family. The doctors, after seeing his great persistence, permitted him to go.

In the hospital he relayed to my father several requests, amongst them: The Lubavitch custom is that a mourner leads the davening for the entire year of aveilus. My grandfather requested that his sons should not argue with their fellow mispallelim for the right to lead the davening. Another request was

that no one should remove anything from the house during my grandmother's lifetime; he did not want my grandmother's life to be disrupted.

A short while before he passed away, he once again begged his doctors to permit him to join the large children's parade outside of Lubavitch World Headquarters on Lag b'Omer. The Rebbe would preside over the parade, and he did not want to miss a chance to hear the Rebbe's talk. It was the last parade that he participated in.

On the 6th of Tammuz, 5740 (1980), my grandfather passed away at the age of 70.

My father today does not speak much about himself, as his father never did. I have come to terms with it and in many ways admire it. Our actions are what should speak volumes. My grandfather never thought about what people would one day say about him; however, his actions and chesed speak for him today, thirty years after his passing. We need to do what is right, and the crown of a good name, the golden reputation, will follow. ■

Dovid Zaklikowski is the director of Lubavitch Archives and is on the editorial staff of Chabad.org. A long-time reader of the N'shei Chabad Newsletter, he always comes through when the N.C.N. needs help with photos or info. Dovid and his wife Chana Raizel are the proud parents of Motti, Meir, Shaina and Moshe Binyomin



Reb Dovid Henoch Zaklikowski