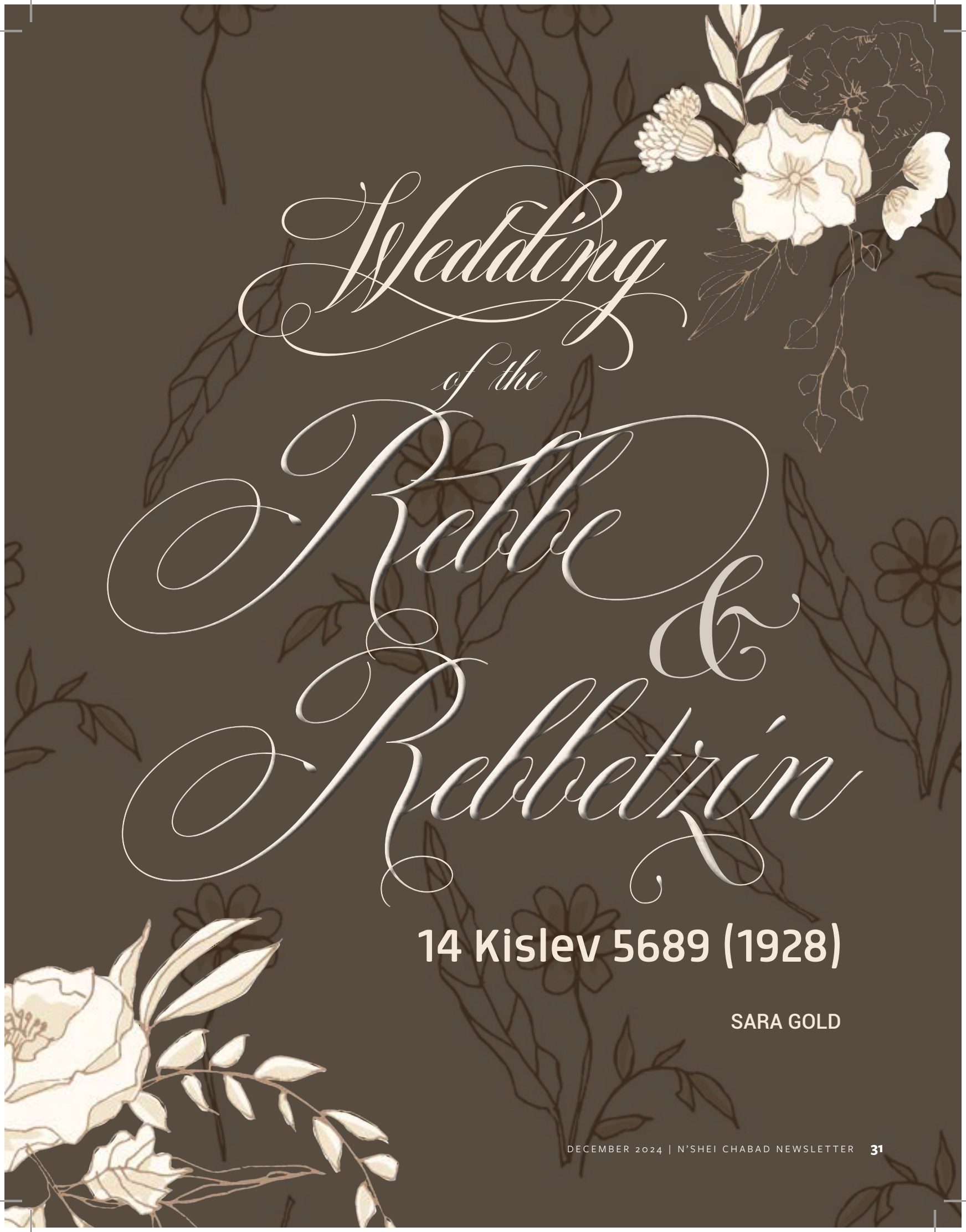




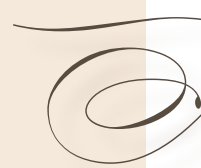
The Rebbetzin on her wedding day. JEM Photo ID#112708.



*Wedding*  
*of the*  
*Rebbe &*  
*Rebbetzin*

**14 Kislev 5689 (1928)**

**SARA GOLD**



When the Frierdiker Rebbe was preparing to leave Russia for Latvia in 1927, he told the officials that he would only be willing to leave on condition that his immediate circle is allowed to come with him. His immediate circle consisted of quite a list, including, of course, the Rebbe – the Frierdiker Rebbe’s future son-in-law. When the official saw the list, he remarked, “Certainly it’s no big deal to find another match for Chaya Mushka?” To which the Frierdiker Rebbe emphatically responded, “A son-in-law like this is impossible to find!” The Rebbe was then granted permission to leave along with the Frierdiker Rebbe.

*(A Day to Recall, a Day to Remember, Celebrations in Lubavitch, by Rabbi Sholom DovBer Avtzon)*



# Mrs. Esther Sternberg On the Rebbe's Wedding

**Y**eshivas Tomchei Temimim was then located in Warsaw, and the Frierdiker Rebbe wanted the *chuppah* to be held in the courtyard of the yeshivah. He and his family took an overnight train from Latvia to Warsaw. [Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka had already traveled to Warsaw with her mother, Rebbetzin Nechama Dina, two weeks prior.]

“The Rebbe’s parents, Harav Levi Yitzchak and Rebbetzin Chana Schneerson, were not allowed to leave Russia to come to the wedding. Many other *chassidim* were also not able to come. There were 5,000 people at the wedding, but very few of them were Chabad *chassidim*. My father, Rabbi Zalman Gurary, was fortunate to attend the weddings of all three of the Frierdiker Rebbe’s daughters and would often share his memories.

“On Sunday night, the Frierdiker Rebbe and his family left Riga by train to travel to Warsaw. Rabbi Elya Chaim Althaus [the Rebbe’s *shadchan* and *shomer*] joined them, [along with some ten *chassidim*,] traveling in a different part of the train. [The Frierdiker Rebbe’s daughter Sheina supplied the *chassidim* with food and drink, and the journey to Warsaw was a joyous, lively, *chassidische farbrengen*.] When they arrived in Warsaw, hundreds of people came to the train station to welcome them. The *chassan* told Rabbi Althaus, ‘There’s no time for this now. It’s the day before the wedding. Let’s run for the first taxi.’ [The Frierdiker Rebbe and his family got into one taxi; the Rebbe—the *chassan*—together with Rabbi Althaus went into another, as they were staying in separate hotels.] They got into a taxi, but didn’t know which hotel to go to. Rabbi Althaus asked the taxi driver to name hotels. One of them sounded familiar, so they went there. The Rebbe, accompanied by Rabbi Althaus, remained in his room all day.”

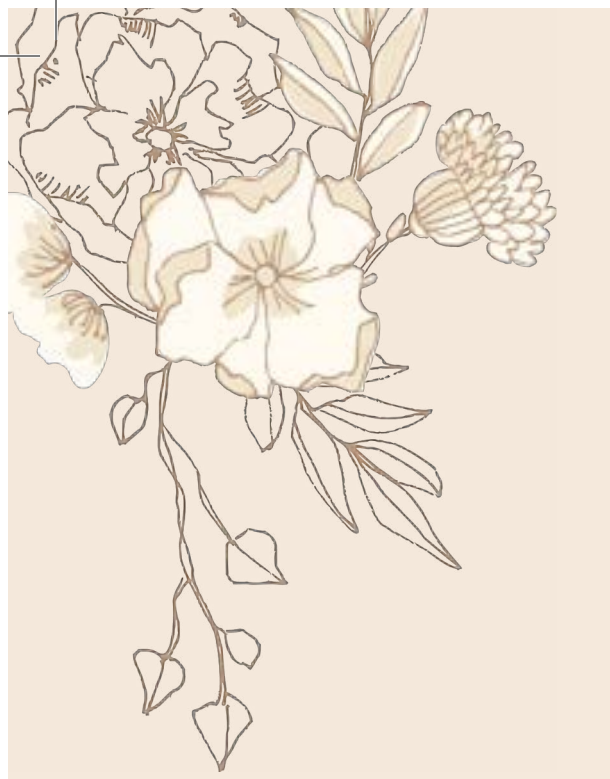
And then the *bachurim* were informed that they were about to receive a very special privilege.

“It was traditional to hold a *chassan mohl* the night before the wedding with dancing and a festive meal, to encourage the *chassan*. The *bachurim* had been told that at the wedding, they had to remain standing on bleachers and keep decorum. No running around in front of the Frierdiker Rebbe. But the Frierdiker Rebbe told them, ‘Tomorrow night you will have to stand on the bleachers and watch from afar, but tonight [at the *chassan mohl*] I will dance with YOU.’ That night all the *bachurim* in Tomchei Temimim danced vigorously with the Frierdiker Rebbe. My father, Rabbi Zalman Gurary, was one of the *bachurim* who merited to participate in that beautiful and memorable evening. They could all see the joy of the Frierdiker Rebbe for the son-in-law who would soon be joining him.

“A room had been decorated in the yeshivah for the *kallah*, with plants and lights.

“Four versions of the wedding invitation were sent out. One was handwritten by the Frierdiker Rebbe to all the Rebbeim and *roshei yeshivah*. Some people received

But the Frierdiker Rebbe told them, ‘Tomorrow night you will have to stand on the bleachers and watch from afar, but tonight [at the *chassan mohl*] I will dance with YOU.’



a copy of the handwritten invitation. Members of the general public received a printed invitation with the same words as the handwritten invitation. Then there was another invitation sent to *chassidim* all over the world, with the same wording but with an added paragraph, requesting *chassidim* wherever they were to make a *farbrengen* and celebrate this great *simchah* together with him, the *simchah* of his daughter marrying this wonderful *chassan*.

“Ever since then, Lubavitcher *chassidim* have been using the same words (and often even the same font) as the Frierdiker Rebbe in our own wedding invitations.

“The *maamar Lechah Dodi* was said by the Frierdiker Rebbe at the wedding. Before he started, he first made an announcement: ‘It is known, and well known, that at every wedding, at least three generations, and sometimes more, come to bless the *chassan-kallah*. I want to invite all the grandparents and all the ancestors of the *chassan-kallah* to come bless them, so I am going to say Chassidus from each of the Rebbeim going back to the Alter Rebbe. When you repeat something in the name of the one who said it, it’s as if they are standing right there.’

“The *kabbalas panim* and *chuppah* were in the courtyard of the yeshivah. My father said there were entry tickets given to those with permission to attend.

“There were many Rebbeim at the wedding. There were many smiles and some laughter. My father and the other *bachurim* were *chalishing* to hear what the Rebbe was discussing with the other Rebbeim. But the *bachurim* had been warned in advance, so they behaved and stayed in the bleachers.

“The *seudah* of the *chassunah* lasted from midnight until 5 a.m.”

## The Rebbe's Parents Celebrate in Yekaterinoslav



Rebbetzin Chana.  
JEM Photo ID#112724.

(From *Early Years, The Formative Years of the Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, as told by documents and archival data*, by Boruch Oberlander and Elkanah Shmotkin, excerpted here with permission)

**D**etermined not to let the cruel reality of not being able to attend their son’s wedding mar their joy, the Rebbe’s parents, Reb Levik and Rebbetzin Chana Schneerson, planned a celebration to take place in their home at the same time as the wedding.

The Rebbe’s parents had been forced by the Soviet government to relinquish a large portion of their apartment. The new occupant resented the religious practices that took place in the Schneersons’ home, and isolated himself from them. However, when he heard about the wedding celebration that was to take place, he offered the Schneersons to use his part of the apartment. He removed all of his



Reb Levik. JEM Photo ID#2973.

furniture and moved out for the night, giving the Schneersons use of the extra space for as long as they needed.

Hundreds of telegrams poured in, extending heartfelt wishes of *mazel tov* for the *chassan-kallah* and their parents. Rebbetzin Chana recalled that on that day, the telegraph office functioned almost exclusively for the Schneersons. The strict ban on Hebrew telegrams was lifted for two days, and a special order was given that the Schneerson telegrams should not be censored and should be delivered promptly.

The celebration was set for 7 o'clock on the evening of Yud Daled Kislev. Family members and guests streamed into the Rebbe's parents' home from Yekaterinoslav as well as from neighboring cities. Every shul sent a representative, and many

were accompanied by their wives. Reb Levik and Rebbetzin Chana were beloved and esteemed by all; their *simchah* was everyone's *simchah*.

Rebbetzin Chana writes in her memoirs:

*...Keep in mind that this took place at a time when any contact with clergymen was forbidden, and such a crime could cost one his job. Nevertheless, no one held back, and a large number of prominent doctors and attorneys with important positions in the local Ispolkom (regulatory council) headquarters and the municipality came and celebrated with us all night...*

*The celebration with all the guests was indescribable.*

*Besides for our pain at being absent from our eldest son's wedding, we had the feeling that we wouldn't be seeing him any time soon. Our longing for him was indescribable, and our anguish was felt by the community.*

*My husband danced with his father-in-law and his brother.*


*Rabbi Michoel Dworkin played the Alter Rebbe's niggun on a violin, and Rabbi Zalman Vilenkin, one of my son's first teachers in Yekaterinoslav, danced on the table, calling out, "Ani zochisi! — I have merited [that my student should marry the Rebbe's daughter]!"*

*The two rabbinical judges of the city, non-chassidim, rejoiced greatly. One of them turned his coat inside out, dancing as though it was his personal celebration.*

*The well-known people of the community brought to the celebration a magnificent cake with the names of all the community members. They also brought a gift for the groom.*

## Gift From N'shei u'Bnos Chabad

**THROUGHOUT HIS LEADERSHIP,** the Rebbe would mark his wedding anniversary with a *farbrengen* and would sometimes publish a new *sichah* or *maamer* in honor of the occasion. *Chassidim* would also organize gifts to give the Rebbe and Rebbetzin. One such gift, in honor of the Rebbe and Rebbetzin's 50th anniversary, was the commissioning of the writing of a *Sefer Torah*, arranged by N'shei u'Bnos Chabad. The Rebbe smiled broadly when he read the list of all who participated in the gift.



## Celebrating a Wedding Anniversary: Elevating a Modern Custom Into a Conduit for Increasing Torah and Mitzvos.

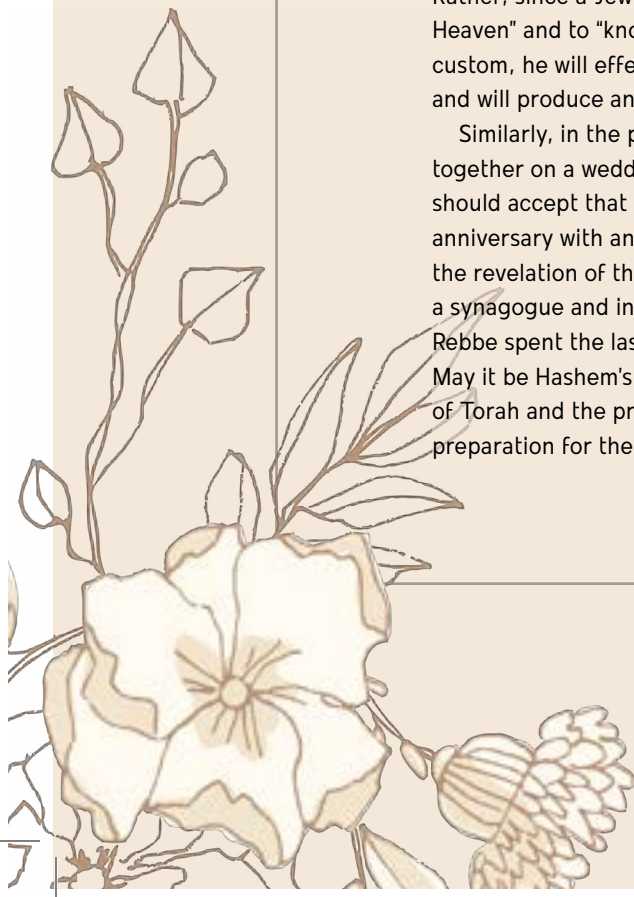
*Excerpt of a talk from the Rebbe's 50th wedding anniversary, 14 Kislev, 5739, translated by Sichos in English:*

**A UNIQUE TORAH REASON** must exist to explain why a wedding anniversary is commemorated in this fashion [celebrated publicly]. That reason can be appreciated through analysis of our Sages' statement, "When you enter a city, follow its customs." Whether an individual's state of refinement surpasses or falls below the norm of the city he enters, Torah requires him to accept its customs. Even though, generally, a person is advised not to accept practices that are above his spiritual level, that advice does not apply when he enters a new city. To illustrate this point, the Medrash brings the example of Moshe Rabbeinu, who, when he ascended Mt. Sinai, did not eat or drink for 40 days.

Likewise, from the opposite perspective, if a person's spiritual level surpasses that of the city into which he enters, it would seem logical to "place upon him the restrictions of the city from which he left." However, the Medrash advises, "When you enter a city, follow its customs." In support of that statement, it brings the example of the angels who visited Avraham and "ate and drank."

In the latter case, the intent of the Medrash's advice is not to cause a descent. Rather, since a Jew is instructed that "all your deeds must be for the sake of Heaven" and to "know Hashem in all of your ways," through acceptance of that custom, he will effect a metamorphosis. The custom will become a Jewish custom and will produce an advance in Torah and *mitzvos*.

Similarly, in the present case, it is customary that many friends gather together on a wedding anniversary and join in good wishes and celebration. A Jew should accept that custom and transform it into an act of Torah. By marking the anniversary with an assemblage of many thousands of Jews (which brings about the revelation of the *Shechinah*) and conducting that assembly in a holy place, in a synagogue and in a house of study (in particular, the place where the Frierdiker Rebbe spent the last ten years of his life), the celebration becomes a Torah event. May it be Hashem's will that this *farbrengen* will produce an increase in the study of Torah and the practice of its commandments and in this manner serve as a preparation for the festival of Yud Tes Kislev, the Rosh Hashanah of *Chassidus*.



דאס איז דער טאג וואס האט  
מיר פארבונדן מיט אייך און  
אייך מיט מיר, און צוזאמען  
וועלן מיר אויסמאטערן די  
גאולה האמיתית והשלימה

"This is the day which bound  
me to you, and you to me, and  
together we will toil and bring  
the true and complete *Geulah*"

*(Shabbos Parshas Vayishlach, Yud  
Daled Kislev 5714-1953)*



The Rebbe around the  
time of his wedding.  
JEM Photo ID#2724.

*According to our estimates before the event, less than 30 people were likely to attend. But our region's Jewish community was so inspired that 300 guests actually came to celebrate.*

*The Rabbis' dance continued for a long while. Everyone present remained standing and couldn't hold back their tears at this bittersweet rejoicing.*

*As day broke, everyone left to their jobs. My husband's inspiration had transported them to a different world. No one wanted to consider what price they might pay for showing us such friendship and participating in the celebration.*

*As they were about to leave, Dr. Baruch Motzkin, together with a lawyer who was a grandson of Rabbi Yitzchak Elchanan [Spektor], told me that all their lives they had never experienced such a remarkable night, nor would they ever forget this unique celebration and my husband's powerful spiritual energy.*

*The more religious of the guests, particularly the chassidim, were each inspired on their own level...*

*The president of the local Ispolkom later referred to this celebration in conversation with an acquaintance of ours, a physician. He spoke in such a malicious tone that we became concerned:*

*"Look, the wedding took place abroad, and the groom and bride are so far away from here, yet this personage has such influence! He possesses such power that whenever he requests something, we can't refuse him, and it's always concerning religious issues. Perhaps we give in to him too much? Surely this was a private celebration, yet it was held on such a large scale—when we don't permit even three Jews to gather together for religious purposes!"*

*These last words frightened the doctor, and unsettled us as well...*

Although the celebration was a joyous one, it masked an intense longing. As Rebbetzin Chana later wrote in her memoirs: *"I don't wish upon anyone to experience the taste of not being present at one's own child's personal celebration."*

Less than eight weeks after their wedding, the Rebbe and Rebbetzin left Riga for Berlin where they spent the next three years. ❧

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**SARA GOLD** is a graduate of Beth Rivkah Seminary Beis. She enjoys writing for the N'shei Chabad Newsletter and is also a morah in Bnos Menachem Preschool of Crown Heights.