

Taking The Wrong Turn Outward

a critical review of

“Turning Judaism Outward” by Chaim Miller

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by Sholom Shuchat

Brooklyn, NY

On the first *Gimel Tamuz* after the passing of the Rebbe Rayatz, the Rebbe penned a fascinating letter, which was printed as an introduction to a booklet of *Ma'amarim* of the Rebbe Rayatz¹ (emphasis added):

“Many seek and propose to explain the qualities and greatness of Chabad Rebbes in general, and, in particular, the Rebbe of our generation [...] in various areas: as a man of self-sacrifice, Torah genius, lofty character, prophetic ability, miracle-worker, etc., etc.

“These qualities are further magnified when viewed in the light of Chassidic teaching, which explains what is true self-sacrifice, true Torah genius, and so on.

“And yet, none of this addresses the primary quality of the Rebbe—a quality which is not only primary in essence, but which is most important to us, his *Chassidim* and followers, namely: the fact that he is a nassi, and particularly a Chabad *Nassi*.

“A *Nassi*, broadly defined, is a "head of the multitudes of Israel." He is their "head" and "mind," their source of life and vitality. Through their attachment to him, they are bound and united with their source on high...”

¹ *Igrot Kodesh* Vol. 3 #635; *Likutei Sichos* Vol. 11 p 209. Translated into English by Chabad.org

In Chumash Bereshis (1:26) G-d says to the angels: “Let us make man in our image,” and G-d created Man in His image, in the image of G-d (1:27).

In 2014, two authors have chosen to make a man in their image, to portray a “humanized” portrait of the Rebbe, according to **their** image, an image detached from what a Rebbe is, and specifically what **The** Rebbe is.

These authors have chosen to ignore the central facet of the Rebbe, the fact that he is the spiritual channel of his generation, the ‘funnel’ through whom the light of G-d is transferred to the world; for the Rebbe is the ‘Moses’ of our generation, “Moses, the man of G-d,” as described by G-d in the Torah (Devarim 33:1); by eliminating the Godly aspect of the Rebbe, we are left with a “humanized” version “Moses, the man,” devoid of any G-dly aspect.

Whereas **Joseph Telushkin** has spent his adulthood preaching in non-Orthodox temples, his work “Rebbe” is true to its author and its publisher, without much expectation from people stemming from said circles, albeit not recommended for *Anash*;

However, **Chaim Miller** has spent his adult years as a Chabad Chossid, both as a Rosh Yeshiva, and as an author, publishing bestselling books about the Rebbe’s works, and his book “Turning Judaism Outward” which was promoted as “The Life of the Rebbe through the eyes of a Chossid,”² is a far cry from what anyone would expect from someone claiming to be a Chossid, especially if

² Press Release in CrownHeights.info

it is published by the “Kol Menachem” publishing house, one purporting to be “The Voice of the Rebbe.”

The following review will focus on Miller’s book, detailing the major flaws it contains, specifically the utmost Chutzpah with which he writes about the Rebbe and his family, and the winds of *Kefirah* which are blatantly portrayed across the book.

As a critical review, this article will outline the underlying issues of the book, both from a historical point of view, and from a Chassidic point of view.

Part I: Presentation

Disrespectful

Although our sages have stated³: “Look not at the vessel, but at what it contains,” or as a famous American author stated “Don’t judge a book by its cover,” in this instance, after reviewing the book, the cover can be reviewed too...

The Cover states: “Turning Judaism Outward, a biography of the Rebbe, Menachem Mendel Schneerson,” lacking the basic decency of writing “Rabbi” before the Rebbe’s name, something which even other authors had the decency to do... By omitting the title “Rabbi” from the Rebbe’s name, he joins the likes of Samuel Heilman and Menachem Friedman, who omitted the title “Rabbi” on the cover.

³ Ethics of Our Fathers (Pirkei Avos) 4:20.

His disrespectful attitude towards the Rebbe is also found across the whole book. While it is common for biographers to write a person's name without any titles, when discussing his childhood, it is common to write the title once he receives said title, however despite stating in page 36 that the Rebbe got *Smicha*, Miller still refers to the Rebbe by his first name without “Rabbi” until the end of Chapter Nine (ending in page 166).

This disrespectful tone is also present in the footnotes, such as page 438, where footnote 10 states “Menachem Mendel Schneerson, Torat Menachem...” without appending the title “Rabbi” to the Rebbe's name, whereas on footnote 20 he states “Rabbi Yoel Kahn,” mentioning his name **with** the title “Rabbi”...

A glaring example is found on Page 90: “What acquaintances did Menachem Mendel make in Berlin... He began a lifelong friendship with Rabbi Joseph Ber Soloveichik...” – Here, and in the following pages discussing the friendship, the Rebbe is referred to simply by his first name, while Rabbi Soloveichik is almost always honored with the title “Rabbi”.

The same goes for all the Rebbe's family, where the Rebbe's father is called “Levik” (p 7) without even the basic (albeit somewhat disrespectful) title of “**Reb** Levik.” The Rebbeim are called by their acronyms without appending the title “Rebbe,” so the Rebbe Rayatz is called simply “Rayatz,” and the same for the Rebbe Rashab.

The Rebbetzins are never called by their title. Rebbetzin Chana is routinely called “Chana Schneerson” or “Chana” (both in the book and in the footnotes), and Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka is called “Moussia” without any title.

On a similar vein, he writes in a disrespectful form about the Rebbe Rayatz and the Rebbe in various instances, such as page 100 “Rayatz **has no choice** other than to decipher...” and on page 101 “These strands of Chasidut ... **seemed to Menachem Mendel to better capture** the spirit of the movement’s founder Rabbi Israel Ba’al Shem Tov...”

Nothing comes close to his caption for picture 70 (between Chapters 13 & 14): “After 28 months of ill health, the Rebbe is **finally laid to rest** in the ohel...”

The unbelievable Chutzpah of Chossid to write about the Rebbe, that he was **finally laid to rest?! As if it is something which was delayed, and finally occurred!**

(This was fixed in the second edition)

Arrogant

Whereas the natural instinct of a Chossid is, that the thought process of a Rebbe is above and beyond his understanding, as is stated in Yeshaya (55:8-9) “For My thoughts are not your thoughts ... As the heavens are higher than the earth ... My thoughts [higher] than your thoughts,” and any attempt at trying to “understand” the Rebbe is ridiculed, Miller has arrogantly decided **he** is fit to

decide what was going through the Rebbe’s head, building conjecture upon conjecture to justify ridiculous and sometimes outright disgusting ideas, which he fabricated in his own head.

Although conjecturing is accepted when presented as conjecture, Miller presents his warped ideas in a decisive tone, stating what he conjectured – as facts (all emphasis is mine):

On page 21 he writes: “Menachem Mendel Schneerson had not grown up in a gated, insular community, and the image of his parents, dedicated to a very traditional, Chasidic Judaism, yet surrounded by Jews who did not share his outlook, **eventually served** as a model for the future growth of Chabad in thousands of locations around the world.”

To the ignorant this **may** make sense, but in reality the idea of a Chabad House was actually one that was **not** begun by the Rebbe, but rather by young Shluchim, who sought to advance their outreach, and the Rebbe encouraged and expanded it.

On page 26 he writes: “From 1923 to 1926 ... our young prodigy would have taken time on his regular visits to “Lubavitch” to absorb this **new world** of Rebbe and Chasidim...” Likewise on page 30: “On this occasion, Menachem Mendel was struck, **probably for the first time**, by the particular nuances of how Jewish rituals were practiced in “Lubavitch.” And yet again on page 32: “What

he was witnessing here, **probably for the first time...**" This repeats itself across the rest of the book too.

The author clearly tries to imply that the Rebbe's upbringing was **not** a Chabad-oriented one, and that the Rebbe had to "learn about Chabad" for the first time in his 20's, when he came to the Rebbe Rayatz, something which is completely untrue, and just throws mud at the Rebbe's father, who educated his son in the ways of Chassidus.

On page 59, the author tries to present reasons why the Rebbe chose to study in college: "A key motivation was **undoubtedly** the need for a vocation... While he was trained as a Rabbi, the profession of his father, Rabbinic work was **probably unappealing**... Menachem Mendel's vocational choice, engineering, **seems to fit his talents and natural dispositions...**"

Again, the author tries to conjecture what the Rebbe was thinking, presenting theories which **might** make sense to the ignorant, but do not stand up to the facts as we know them, that it was the Rebbe Rayatz who paid for his secular education, without raising an objection, and could have very well been done at his request.

At least on page 269 he admits: "While it is **impossible to know what was passing through the Rebbe's mind**" though he immediately adds another baseless conjecture following that statement...

However, these pale in comparison to some of the more audacious, and outright disrespectful ideas he concocts in his book, such as:

On page 65 he writes: “On an **emotional level**, there may also have been **some fear** associated with sending his young, newly married daughter off to a European mentality...”

How does he know what went on in the Rayatz’s heart?! Was the Rebbe Rayatz really worried about the spiritual fate of his daughter and son-in-law, when **he paid** for their education in said places?

On pages 103-104 he discusses the Rebbe’s copying of *Hemshech Ayin Beis* during the Rebbe Rayatz’s trip to USA in 1929-1930, and the Rebbe’s reluctance to printing it, bringing the Rebbe’s words that the copy was done without permission etc. and then says: “**Of course, this was a justification after the fact**, Menachem Mendel was actually **so concerned** that his copy has come through dubious means, that **he hesitated** to publish *Hemshech Ayin Beis* for almost fifty years...”

And again on page 129 while discussing what the Rebbe took with him when he escaped Paris: “He packed a trunk with his most precious possessions... the “unauthorized” photostated copies of Rashab’s discourses which he had made ten years earlier...”

Aside for the complete *Chutzpah* in writing in such manner about the Rebbe, the author also missed the historical fact that the Rebbe wrote that he has permission from the Rebbe Rayatz to publish the manuscript; that the main hurdle was financial, as stated by the Rebbe numerous times throughout the years, and that the Rebbe wasn't publishing Ma'amarim for fifty years in 1976... (see part II of this article for a detailed response).

*(This last comment [from page 104] was **partially** fixed in the second edition)*

On page 215, he writes: "Occasionally, after visiting Rayatz's graveside, he would intimate in private that he had "received" a certain directive from his father-in-law..."

With sheer *Chutzpah*, he makes light of the Rebbe's receiving directives at the Ohel, putting it in quotation marks, to show his disbelief in said directives.

Warped Values

The author professes to be a knowledgeable person in Chassidus, but his writing across the book shows a complete disrespect to what is holy, writing in a style which denigrates (albeit indirectly) topics which were of utmost importance to the Rebbe.

In his quest to sound sophisticated, the author begins his footnotes by writing (Chapter 1, footnote 2) about Rebbetzin Chana: "With all due consideration for a **mother's bias...**" implying that the memoirs of Rebbetzin

Chana should not be trusted; and the same for books written by Lubavitchers, such as *Toldos Levi Yitzchak*, about which he writes: “Notwithstanding the nature of such “in house” publications and **their lack of objectivity**, I have relied on their accounts **only in such places** where they support the narrative as gleaned from other **more reliable sources...**”

The message stemming from such comments is, that books authored by Chabad Chassidim are not to be trusted, rather Chassidim should seek books written by outsiders, who have not had any interaction with Chabad and do not understand the core elements of the movement.

In his introduction to “Sefer HaSichos – Toras Sholom” the Rebbe writes:

“... Bear in mind that **all** the writers of these *Sichos* were Chassidim to whom every word of the Rebbe was holy, and **there is no doubt** that they tried to the best of their capability to stick to the words of the Rebbe, not to add or remove anything. Although it is possible that because of the length of the *Sicha* the writer can make a mistake in a few words [...] in general the ideas are **definitely** accurate.”

Likewise, R' Chaim Lieberman, who served as the secretary of the Rebbe Rayatz, put it succinctly in a series of articles penned in 1956: “The obvious conclusion is, that this aspect [the research of

Chassidus] should be handled **only** by those who are experts in said topic, namely the Chassidim themselves...”

On page 3 he writes: “A Rebbe is **perceived** as ... a unique soul which contains a splinter of the soul of every Chasid (disciple)”

The disrespectful notion is clear, the Rebbe is only “perceived” by his Chassidim as having a unique soul. However, Miller would like you to believe that it is only a **perception**, not a reality. Obviously this is wrong, as stated in various Kabbalistic and Chassidic texts.

On page 28 he writes: “While Rashab and Rayatz discouraged the study of secular wisdom among their followers, they did have an appreciation of its value in those instances where its “**contaminating**” effects on the Jewish experience were **marginalized** or neutralized completely.”

Placing the word “contaminating” in quotation marks shows his disregard for said concept, which was discussed in Tanya, as he explains that when the “so-called contamination” is marginalized – secular studies are permitted and even encouraged! This can be no further than the truth, as seen in countless letters of the Rebbe, where the Rebbe was adamant against **any** secular education, especially in colleges (something which is not emphasized anywhere in the book).

On Page 234 he writes: “While the success was spectacular, there were the inevitable cases where **outside influences did draw young men away from Chabad.**”

His intention is clear, the Rebbe took a risk by sending Shluchim, and it was inevitable that outside influences will corrupt the young Chassidim. However, this is **clearly** not so, and the Rebbe has said that those who go on Shlichus will not be harmed. The two examples he brings, of Zalman Schachter and Shlomo Carlebach, are prime examples of “outreach professionals” who chose to run ‘their own show’ and not follow the Rebbe, and the result is evident. It had **nothing** to do with outside influences, and **everything** to do with the fact that they lacked the basic *Hiskashrus* needed from a Shliach.

On page 269 he makes light of the core Chassidic belief, that a Rebbe can indeed perform miracles: “It was difficult for the Rebbe’s followers not to perceive him as having **near-prophetic status...**”

The author forgets to state the obvious, that the Rebbe has stated regarding the Rebbe Rayatz, that it is an obligation to tell the world that G-d has chosen a prophet in this generation⁴, something which the Chassidim have always believed about their Rebbes, and this basic belief is ridiculed in his writing, as he does to many other ingrained beliefs of Chassidim.

⁴ *Sicha Parshas Shoftim* 5751.

On page 321, he presents his corrupted view of how Chassidim view the Rebbe, stating: “Another **growing concern** was the issue of **unhealthy veneration toward the Rebbe**”

He doesn't state who had this “growing concern,” and why no one had any issue with this before he came to present us with this “concern”...

On page 374, he crosses all lines, writing: “**In 1994, Chabad took time to absorb the fact that the Rebbe was not ‘the beginning, the middle and the end of Chabad’**”...

Implying that Chabad can indeed function without a Rebbe, and that the Rebbe was not central to the Chabad movement, but we needed Gimel Tamuz to understand it!

General

Missing among the pages of the book is **any** reference to what a Rebbe is, as discussed many times in the Sichos and Ma'amarim of the Rebbe, that a Rebbe is the leader of the generation, that he nourishes his flock with belief. At the least he could have mentioned these descriptions which appear in the last discourse which the Rebbe edited, the famed “V'atah Tetzaveh” discourse...

When he discusses the idea of *Yechidus* on page 217, he fails to explain the spiritual idea of *Yechidus*, of the Chassidim connecting to the Rebbe on the highest level possible. Though, he mentions it

in the footnotes, in a place where the vast majority of his readers will not look, instead staying with the mistaken notion, that the purpose of Yechidus was for the Rebbe to learn about the new developments in the secular world...

Same when he discusses the deviant streams of Judaism, such as Reform and Conservative (page 239 and on), which he presents in a somewhat positive light, showcasing stories of the Rebbe’s encouragement to their leaders, etc. leading the uneducated reader to believe that the Rebbe indeed supported said heresy, even implying that the Rebbe “informally tolerated” said movements, when indeed the Rebbe was fierce against any recognition of those abhorrent movements. Though he mentions it in the footnotes, he fails to write in the book, relying on the fact that most readers will **not** flip 300 pages to the back to read the footnote on it.

Same when he discusses Zionism (page 274 and on), he chooses to make light of the Rebbe’s staunch opposition to **any** reference of Zionism, and the Rebbe’s fierce reaction when Israel’s anthem was sung at Chabad events (see below, in Part II of this article).

Part II: History

When attempting to write a biography of the Rebbe, the author is saddled with numerous sources, some reliable and some not, and the author’s task is both to research all available material to ensure that the stories are accurate, and to put the stories to the “smell test,” to ensure that the story could have happened.

Sadly, Miller has done neither, and the result is a book filled with inaccuracies, and missing much information which was widely available before the publication of his book. This, aside for a glaring disregard for the Rebbe's written works, and a complete misunderstanding of the Rebbe's Torah; something which led him to write audacious assumptions.

This section will analyze the facts as they were presented, adding both the information which was available at the time of publication and information which surfaced after the publication of the book.

Chapter 1: Life At Home

Page 5: "Baruch Shalom . . left behind an ethical will which was found after his death"

The two extant sources on the will of the RaBaSh (Beis Rebbe Vol. 3, and Reshimos Inyonim V'Sipurim page 48) do not reference the fact that this will was an "ethical will."

Page 12 and on: Discussion about the Rebbe's education as a child

a) For some reason the author chooses to omit a story repeated twice in the memoirs of Rebbetzin Chana, and written in the Rebbe's brief biography penned by N. Gordon (Di Yiddishe Heim [Yiddish] Kislev 5724):

"I recall that, when he had just turned two, my son Shlita recited the traditional "Four Questions" at the Passover Seder. While

memorizing them on the day before the festival, he understood them like an adult.”⁵

And similarly in a different entry⁶: “When he turned two, he was able to ask the “Four Questions” [at the Passover Seder], although his mode of speech was like a child of that age.”

b) Additionally, R’ Nochum Gorelnik notes in his memoirs⁷ (page 36), that in the year 1912, when the Rebbe was merely nine years old, he was known among the scholarly circles as a *Ga’on Adir*, and the Rebbe’s father invited the young lad to meet his son, the future Rebbe. He notes his sadness at not being able to meet the Rebbe in person, but he saw R’ Yisroel Aryeh Leib (who was five years old at the time) sitting on a chair and focusing on a Sefer. R’ Nochum relates:

“I was surprised to see such a sight, and commented to the Rov (the Rebbe’s father), that it’s the first time I see such a toy in the hands of a young child. “A toy?” responded the Rov, and he took the book out of the child’s hand and showed it to me, it was the tractate *Menachos*. The Rov turned to his son and said “Please repeat what you have read,” and the young child opened his mouth and explained the Mishna. I was shocked by what I saw...”

⁵ [Booklet 7 p 9.](#)

⁶ [Booklet 33 p 4.](#)

⁷ Printed in *Tshura Bar Mitzvah Offner 5774*, available online at www.shturem.net.

c) The author fails to note the many times the Rebbe reflected on his memories from his education and his *Cheder* teacher, with a partial list of some 25 stories printed in *Yemei Melech*⁸.

Page 18: Footnote 77:

In a letter dated 3rd of Tamuz 5730⁹ the Rebbe writes to Mr. Eliezer Livneh: "... I was the son of the Chief Rabbi of a regional city, and since I had acquaintances among the students, etc. it was obvious that during arguments etc. I would "also" be attacked, and more so, since I had a knowledge also in the topics that those students [among them: members of the Yevsektzia and communists] were learning."

Chapter 2: Entering The Court

Page 25: "We do not know with historical certainty the precise date in 1923 of Menachem Mendel's first visit to Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak's court"

In the memoirs of Rabbi Avraham Skoblo he relates that the Rebbe and his brother travelled in the month of Heshvan 5683 (1922) to the Rebbe Rayatz passing through the city of Kharkov to and were present at his Bris (which took place on the 24th of Cheshvan of the same year).

⁸ Vol. 1 p 25-33.

⁹ Igrot Kodesh Vol. 26 #9927

In the diary of Rabbi Chodakov (17th of Av 5716)¹⁰ he writes: “Today the Rebbe told me, that the first time he met his father in law, the Rebbe [Rayatz] was during the holiday of Sukkos 5683.”

Which would mean that the Rebbe met the Rebbe Rayatz for the first time in the fall of 1922 (not 1923), and the visit to Kharkov was probably on the way back home to Dnepropetrovsk, and the brother he travelled with could have been R’ Dov Ber.

(In the second edition Miller mentions in the footnote the diary entry of Rabbi Chodakov, but leaves the text in the book unchanged, thus casting doubt on the Rebbe’s statement to Rabbi Chodakov, implying that although the Rebbe said it was in 1922, but Miller knows better, that it was in 1923...)

Page 28: “We do not find, though, that the future Rebbe was significantly involved in the day-to-day running of underground activities...”

However, we know the Rebbe visited various underground Yeshivos during this period, including Kharkov (see above my notes to page 13), and Kremenchug, as stated in the memoirs of R’ Dovid Okunov HY”D¹¹ who studied there in the 1920’s:

“Once during our study, the Rebbe entered the study hall... He was already known as a great *Lamdan*. The Bochorim were studying *Baba Metziah* 30b... The students asked him [the Rebbe] to explain the words of Rashi... The Rebbe began his response by saying ‘At

¹⁰ Printed in [Tshura Wedding Kievman-Kramer 5774](#)

¹¹ [Teshura Wedding Okunov 5769 page 5](#). See also Y’mei Melech Vol. 1 p 56 the recollection of Rabbi Chaim Zimmerman, that the Rebbe studied in his father’s non-Chassidic Yeshiva (in Kremenchug) during the 1919-1920 year, and was known as a tremendous scholar and extremely G-d fearing.

first glance it seems to me that...' and explained the Rashi in a way that left no place for any questions.”

Chapter 3: Scholar In Residence

Page 39: “Menachem Mendel . . . was standing in a corner the entire time, adorned in Talit and Tefilin”

The story occurred during the month of Tishrei 5685, four years before the Rebbe’s wedding, and the Rebbe was **not** wearing a Tallis...

*(This last comment was **partially** fixed in the second edition)*

Page 46: Discussion regarding the date of the Rebbe’s wedding

The author fails to mention, that the planned date for the wedding was the month of Elul 5688, and even after a winter date was set, there were still plans to hold the wedding in the month of Elul, as stated in a letter written by R’ Avraham Schneerson to his daughter Rebbetzin Nechama Dina on the 6th of Elul 5688¹²: “The wedding will probably take place during the winter; for if it will take place during the month of Elul you will surely notify me.”

Rabbi Sholom Ber Levitin of Seattle relates¹³: “My grandfather, R’ Shmuel Levitin, went into Yechidus before my wedding. When he mentioned that my wedding would take place during the month of

¹² Beis Moshiach 417 p 13.

¹³ As told to Rabbi Schneur Zalman Hertzfel, author of Nisuei HaNesi'im (Beis Moshiach 891 p 31)

Elul the Rebbe replied ‘Regarding my wedding, there was also plans to make it during the month of Elul.’”

Chapter 4: Leaving Home

Page 48: Footnote 2: “It is unclear why the Rebbe relocated to Leningrad. He may have enrolled in the university or another school, but documents have not yet surfaced”

The author fails to note the recollection of R’ Alexander Bin-Nun who spent the first half of 1927 in Yekatrinoslav¹⁴: “He [The Rebbe] was then learning Mineral Engineering in a University of Leningrad¹⁵, and came home for a short visit. He was always seen wearing a hat, serious and introverted. He didn’t get involved in the matters of the home, such as shopping, etc. he was fully dedicated to his studies.”

Page 51: “Moussia was not home when the GPU arrived”

a) In the diary of the Rebbe Rayatz he mentions that the GPU searched the room of his daughters, the Rebbetzin and her sister Shaina¹⁶:

¹⁴ *Reshet Chabad* #9, 11 Nissan 5741, p 4.

¹⁵ Possibly, the studies were taking place in the “[The G. V. Plekhanov Leningrad State Mining Institute and Technical University](#).” A different researcher has pointed out, that the Rebbe might have studied in the “Leningrad Shipbuilding Institute” (Renamed “[State Marine Technical University of S. Petersburg](#)”)

¹⁶ Translated into English by SIE, Prince In Prison Part I, section 3.

“They began their search in the room of my daughters, Chayah Mussia and Sheine, and asked them: “What party do you belong to?”

“We belong to our father's party,” they replied; “we are non-partisan daughters of Israel. We are fond of the old ways of our Patriarch Israel, and detest the new aspirations.”

Although it is possible that the search occurred after the Rebbetzin returned home, from the gist of the diary it seems that it was the first place they searched, and the author should have mentioned it.

b) However, in the diary of R' Avraham Weingarten¹⁷, he writes what the Rebbe said on the 13th of Tamuz (?) 5705: “During the search a Chossid came to the Rebbe [Rayatz] home and saw that all the lights were on, and he understood that something had happened, so he walked around the house not wanting to knock on the door, so he knocked on a window and Chana (daughter of the Rebbe Rayatz) came and told him what happened, so he immediately called R' Eli Chaim Althaus and others of Anash. Some Bochorim then went to the home of R' Chaim Lieberman to notify him, and they walked as drunkards not to be seen.”

c) A similar account was written by R' Eli Chaim Althaus, in a letter to his son¹⁸: “One of the daughters of the Rebbe [Rayatz] was alone in her room, and the window was open; she managed to

¹⁷ Nitzotzei Ohr 5705 p 241.

¹⁸ Likutei Diburim Vol. 5 (Hebrew) p 1357ff. The relevant quote is also available in a booklet titled [“Chag HaGeulah” \(Va'ad Chayolei Beis Dovid, 5770\) p 15.](#)

tell R' Mendel Schneerson [the Rebbe] “Schneerson, guests have come for a visit,” and he understood, and immediately ran over to my house. I was lying in bed and was scared when I heard him knocking, but when I asked who is there, and he answered “Mendel Schneerson” I knew a tragedy happened in the Rebbe’s house...” He then continues describing his activities during that night.

Page 53: “Steering committees in Leningrad and Moscow were established, which, despite his young age, included Menachem Mendel...”

Additional information which relates to the Rebbe’s personal involvement surfaced in 1941, during the 3rd Tamuz 5701 Farbrengen¹⁹ (a mere five days after the Rebbe arrived in the USA). The Rebbe Rayatz related: “The same day – Thursday [30th of Sivan] – I met from behind bars my son in law R’ Menachem Mendel, together with my son in law RaShaG and others²⁰, and I screamed to them: ‘Make sure that I shouldn’t need to travel on Shabbos!’.”

¹⁹ Beis Moshiah 283 p 77. Probably the first Farbrengen the Rebbe attended upon his arrival in the USA.

²⁰ Possibly, this group also included the grandson of the Rebbe Rayatz. See Sichos Kodesh 5740 3:1171 where the Rebbe tells R’ Gershon Jacobson “When he sat in jail, my father in law the Rebbe asked to see his grandson, and the reason was that he wanted that the last vision he will have of his grandfather should be of him behind bars” (See also Barry Gurary recollection of this episode in “From Lubavitch to 770” Section II 4-5. Reproduced in [Habad Portraits Vol. 1 by Chaim Dalfin.](#))

Chapter 5: New Beginnings

Page 69: Mention of the Smicha the Rebbe received from Rabbi Weinberg (Sridei Eish):

The author fails to mention that in the header to the response of the Rebbe to Rabbi Weinberg (which appeared in Reshimos²¹) the Rebbe writes “Teves,” which would give us an estimated date when this test occurred.

Page 69: “Menachem Mendel . . . trip back to Riga for the Passover Holidays”

Footnote 42: From Adar 16th until Iyar 6th (Mondshine, Derech Hamelech p 8)

The author fails to mention that the letter from the Rebbe to the Rogatchover Ga’on (printed in Reshimos²²) from the 21st of Shvat states “Riga” in the header, which would imply that the Rebbe was in Riga already during the month of Shvat.

And although the Rogatchover Gaon’s response (from the 24th of Shvat) was addressed to Berlin²³, it could be that the Rebbe wrote his Berlin address for he planned on returning to Berlin in the interim.

Page 74: “Menachem Mendel hated attention . . . He was even uncomfortable at being sat prominently at his own wedding, later writing in his diary ‘At the head of the table sits the groom . . . against the will of the groom’”

²¹ Booklets 127-8.

²² Booklet 33

²³ Kfar Chabad Yud Shvat 5760

Although the author is right in his assessment that the above statement was written by the Rebbe, he should have noted that the diary entry regarding the wedding (first published in Reshimos²⁴) is titled as a summary of the report penned by R' Shmuel Zalmanov²⁵, and the line specifying that it was against the will of the groom indeed isn't mentioned in the Zalmanov report (and neither in the memoir of R' Eli Chaim Althaus).

Additionally, he fails to mention what the Rebbe himself said about his wedding in this regard, that the Rebbe was told by the Rebbe Rayatz to stay seated while he distributed Mashke, and the Rebbe “sat on Shpilkes” the whole time²⁶.

Chapter 6: Straddling Worlds

Page 91: Regarding the friendship of the Rebbe and Rabbi JB Soloveichik:

In a recent article penned by Rabbi Aaron Rakeffet-Rothkoff, a student of Rabbi Soloveichik, he writes the following anecdote which he witnessed in 1967²⁷:

With a sense of admiration, the Rav said to me, “At the University, no one knew about my background and where I was coming from. Everyone knew who the future Lubavitcher Rebbe was!”

Rabbi David Holzer relates in the name of Rabbi Soloveichik²⁸:

²⁴ Reshimas HaYoman page 442

²⁵ Printed in Sefer HaToldos Admur HaRayatz Vol. 4 p 25.

²⁶ Hisvaaduyos 5747 Vol 3 p 464.

²⁷ http://www.ou.org/jewish_action/06/2014/rebbe-rav/

The Rav was already in the University of Berlin when the Lubavitcher Rebbe first came there. The Rav showed him the ropes when he arrived, and introduced him to R. Chaim's derech in learning. The Lubavitcher Rebbe was a very quiet person during those years.

Rabbi Sholom Kowalsky relates in the name of Rabbi Soloveichik²⁹:

There were other Jewish students from other communities in the university, studying together with us at the same time. Some of them are considered today to be famous gedolei Torah. In the university they behaved the same way as other university students, but this Jew (the Rebbe) behaved like a Jew from Warsaw or from Russia. Berlin made absolutely no impression upon him at all.

Page 93: Regarding the participation of the Rebbe in the classes of Rabbi Chaim Heller:

Rabbi Sholom Kowalsky relates in the name of Rabbi Soloveichik³⁰:

During that period they would often meet at the home of the Gaon, Rabbi Chaim Heller. It was in the course of these meetings that a strong friendship developed between the two men.

This would seem to imply that they met at the **house** of Rabbi Heller, **not** at his Yeshiva.

²⁸ The Rav: Thinking Aloud (Florida, 2009) page 42.

²⁹ From My Zaidy's House (Jerusalem, 2000) page 275.

³⁰ From My Zaidy's House (Jerusalem, 2000) page 274.

Page 97: “From the summer of 1929 until the summer of 1930 . . . Rayatz was away in Israel and the United States..”

Aside for the public appearance of the Rebbe during Tishrei 5690 (as stated in section VI of this chapter), when the holiday of Pesach came around and the Rebbe Rayatz was still in the USA, he appointed the Rebbe as his representative to sell his *Chametz*³¹.

Page 97: “*Shalom Ber fondly remembered his days in Berlin and how Mendel and Moussia had cared for him like parents, taking him regularly to the zoo*”

Although he doesn't mention the source for this anecdote, it is sourced in the memoirs of Barry Gurary titled “From Lubavitch to 770”³² and there he writes that the Rebbe took him to the zoo, not mentioning that the Rebbetzin took him ...

Page 97: Footnote 70: “Rayatz was seeking to move from Riga, and both America and the Holy Land were major Jewish centers”

I haven't found (yet) a source that the Friediker Rebbe was considering moving to Israel. In a letter from R' Avraham Schneerson to his daughter Rebbetzin Nechama Dina³³ dated 5th of Nissan 5690 he seems to imply that the USA was the only option: “He [the Rebbe Rayatz] is thinking about the future. Staying in Riga is not a good idea, neither is Poland because of various reasons; therefore the best option is the USA, both for *Parnassah*

³¹ See diary of Rebbe Rayatz, entry for Adar 27th 5690, printed in *Sefer HaSichos* 5690 page 59.

³² Section II 8-9. Reproduced in [Habad Portraits Vol. 1 \(Chaim Dalfin\)](#).

³³ Beis Moshiach 433 p 31.

reasons and also because there are many members of *Anash* here. However he needs to work on residence permits . . . Afterwards he will travel to you and bring you all to the USA, G-d willing... [Regarding] R' Mendel & Moussia? It's possible that he will need to finish his studies in Berlin [before coming to the USA]..."

In his next letters, from the month of Iyar 5690³⁴ he asks his daughter whether she has any news regarding the planned relocation.

Page 104: Regarding the printing of Hemshech Ayin Beis: "Of course, this was a just a justification after the fact. Menachem Mendel was actually so concerned that his copy has come through dubious means; that he hesitated to publish Hemshech Ayin Beis for almost fifty years"

The author failed to note some very important factors:

- a) The Rebbe didn't hesitate for "fifty years," for the Rebbe has not begun to publish Chassidic works of the previous Rebbes until after the founding of Kehot Publication Society in the early 1940's.
- b) The Rebbe didn't hesitate to print it because of the ridiculous and denigrating reason the author has stated, rather the reason the Rebbe repeated throughout the years was the lack of financial funding to pay for this *Hemshech*, which the Rebbe feared would not sell. This was the Rebbe's response in 1946 to Rabbi Moshe Gurary³⁵ and

³⁴ Beis Moshiach 434 p 22.

³⁵ Igrot Kodesh Vol. 2 p III.

Rabbi Yaakov Landau³⁶, and again in 1949 to same Rabbi Landau, adding that he now has permission (from the Rebbe Rayatz) to publish it³⁷, and in 1965 to the RaShaG during the Sukkos holiday meal³⁸. However, in the 1976 sermon, the Rebbe didn't state a specific reason.

*(This comment was **partially** fixed in the second edition)*

Page 104: Footnote 106: “In 1929 Rayatz was in America, but he was joined by Menachem Mendel for Nisan and Tishrei in 1930, 1931 and 1932...”

The Rebbe Rayatz celebrated the holiday of Pesach in the USA in 1930, and the Rebbe did **not** travel to the USA to celebrate Pesach. See above my notes to page 97, that the Rebbe was appointed to sell the Rebbe Rayatz's Chametz in Europe.

Page 104: “The future Rebbe records secrets . . . such as Rashab's visits to Dr. Sigmund Freud for the treatment of depression”

In addition to what is mentioned in Reshimas HaYoman, there are letters from the Rebbe Rashab which describe that he was suffering from pain in his hand³⁹:

In a letter dated 6th of Teves 5663 he writes: “We discussed the suffering of my hand, and that we need to ask a Professor... Maybe it's better to ask by [Dr.] Benedict of Vienna...”

³⁶ Igrot Kodesh Vol. 2 p 147.

³⁷ <http://www.chabad.info/#!g=1&url=article&id=69208>

³⁸ Toras Menachem – Hisvaaduyos 5726 Vol. 1 p 60ff

³⁹ http://www.col.org.il/show_news.rtx?artID=55582

In a letter dated 18th of Shvat 5663 he writes from Vienna: “I met Dr. [Sigmund] Freud who is knowledgeable in the science of the nerves, and I also called an appointment with Dr. [Hermann] Nothnagel, and both agreed that what I am suffering in my hands is because of the nerves, and they recommend I do electric [treatment] in a form different than what was administered to me in Kharkov...”

In the following letters, dated in the months of Shvat-Adar 5663 he describes the electric treatment he received, and the beneficial effect it has on his hand, and in a letter dated the 7th of Iyar 5663 he writes that he bought an electric machine and brought it back to Lubavitch so he can perform the electric treatment on himself.

Page 107: (Quote from Althaus Diary): “Rabbi Menachem Mendel Shlita . . spoke for hours on end, without interruption, saying words of Chasidut...”

An additional source regarding this event is found in a letter written by R' Avraham Schneerson to his daughter Rebbetzin Nechama Dina on the 2nd of Cheshvan 5690⁴⁰:

“This moment I have received your letter from Wednesday with much Nachas and delight from the holiday of *Simchat Torah*, regarding the joyous meal, and especially that my dear grandson R' Mendel said Chassidus for 3 hours. I can't describe in writing the enjoyment I had from it. May G-d help that I (together with you) will merit to hear how my grandson R' Mendel says Chassidus...”

⁴⁰ Beis Moshiach 421 p 13

Another interesting letter by the same R' Avraham Schneerson, addressed to the Rebbe and the Rebbetzin (dated 3rd of Kislev 5690) he writes:

“I was delighted to hear that you travelled one train station away from Berlin to greet your mother in law, for aside for the honor you showed, it also shows that you are dedicated from the depths of your heart, and I am very satisfied...”

Page 108: “Menachem Mendel left the country [Germany] in July 1932... Besides a brief visit for a couple of weeks in the summer of 1932 . . . Menachem Mendel and Moussia did not return to Berlin”

There are no records of the Rebbe leaving Berlin in July of 1932.

The passport records of the Rebbe record the Rebbe leaving Berlin on April 18th to Latvia⁴¹, after which the Rebbe spent the next few months with the Rebbe Rayatz both in Latvia and in Poland⁴², and participated in the wedding of Rebbetzin Shaina, the daughter of the Rebbe Rayatz, which took place in Landvarov, Poland. The Rebbe returned to Berlin on September 8th (7th of Elul)⁴³.

On the 10th of Elul 5692 (a short period after the July 1932 elections which saw major gains for the Nazi party), the Rebbe Rayatz penned a long letter to the Rebbe and the Rebbetzin to Berlin⁴⁴, in which he asks the Rebbe to acquire the catalogs of the various libraries in Berlin, and to make copies of various manuscripts, and

⁴¹ Mondshine, Derech Hamelech page 27

⁴² See Reshimas HaYoman page 222-253 for a detailed report of the wedding.

⁴³ Mondshine, Derech Hamelech page 29

⁴⁴ Igrot Kodesh Rayatz vol. 15 (Kehot 2010) page 121ff

concludes: “Thank G-d the peace reigns. May G-d protect you and us together with the rest of our brethren, and may G-d grant you success in the above.”

Additional letters penned by the Rebbe Rayatz to the Rebbe and Rebbetzin, on the 12th of Elul and on the 15th of Elul, were mailed to Berlin, and the Rebbe and Rebbetzin only arrived in Riga from Berlin on the 27th of Elul⁴⁵.

Chapter 7: The Quiet Years

Page 109: “From the spring of 1933 until the outbreak of World War Two, in 1939, Menachem Mendel and Moussia spent six relatively uneventful years in Paris. Mendel was enrolled in engineering school...”

The author mistakenly defines these years as “quiet” and “uneventful” when indeed the Rebbe was already involved in all the aspects of the Rebbe Rayatz’s activities, serving as a secretary for him, directing the Yeshiva, editing his works, managing the money coming in from the USA, caring for his health, and much more, as will be described below.

Page 110: “Relocate his court from Riga to Warsaw at the end of 1933”

The move of the Rebbe Rayatz’s court from Riga to Warsaw did not occur in the end of 1933, rather four months earlier, in the

⁴⁵ Mondshine, Derech Hamelech page 29

summer of 1933, as stated in the letter of the Rebbe Rayatz dated Elul 1st 5693⁴⁶.

Page 111: “Towards the end of 1934, the [medical] situation [of the Rebbe Rayatz] was so dire that Menachem Mendel was forced to exempt himself from the 1934-35 academic year to be at Rayatz’s side”

Although the Rebbe indeed spent most of the year travelling with the Rebbe Rayatz for medical needs, the Rebbe was not “forced to exempt himself,” rather he was appointed by the Rebbe Rayatz to serve as the *Menahel Po’el* of the Central Yeshiva Tomchei Tmimim Lubavitch in Warsaw, Poland, a position the Rebbe Rayatz has held since the founding of Yeshiva Tomchei Tmimim in Lubavitch. However, since the Rebbe lacked the necessary documents to reside in Poland he was forced to leave Poland⁴⁷.

Page 117: “While Menachem Mendel shied away from communal involvement, recollections have survived of his giving a Talmud class in local synagogues, at least from 1937 onwards”

The author failed to mention that in his Reshimos the Rebbe has an entry from Chanukah 5696 (1935)⁴⁸, with the header stating that it was delivered in the Parisian Chabad synagogue on Rue de Rosiers 17. An additional entry dated 5696⁴⁹ explain a section in

⁴⁶ Igrot Kodesh Admur HaRayatz Vol. 17 #6347.

⁴⁷ Rabbi Yitzchak Hendel OBM described one of the tests the Rebbe administered to him (and other Yeshiva students) as part of his new appointment as the *Menahel Po’el* of the Yeshiva (*Yemei Melech* Vol. 1 p 415).

⁴⁸ Booklets 125-126.

⁴⁹ Booklet 55.

the tractate Baba Basra, which might have been notes from a Talmud class the Rebbe delivered in local synagogues.

Page 118: Footnote 58: “Some Jews rely on Rabbinic leniencies that permit reliance on government supervision of milk production (though this is not accepted in Chassidic communities)”

The author seems to imply that the general Jewish population in France was not stringent on *Chalav Yisroel*, as opposed to the Chassidic community. He failed to research the origin of said leniency, which was not common in European countries at the time, because of the lack of proper government supervision.

Chapter 8: Survival

Page 122: Discusses the correspondence of R’ Chaim Lieberman with the Rebbe during the first months of World War II, when the Rebbe Rayatz was in Warsaw.

In the 27 years since the *Igrot Kodesh* were published, the letters from the Rebbe, Rebbetzin and Rebbetzin Shaina to R’ Chaim Lieberman have also surfaced⁵⁰, and were published in summer⁵¹

⁵⁰ The Rebbe instructed R’ Zalman Chanin to assist R’ Chaim Lieberman in printing his books *Ohel Rachel*, without revealing that he was instructed “from above.” R’ Chaim Lieberman was very thankful and gave Chanin all the letters he received from the Rebbe during the war period.

⁵¹ <http://www.chabad.info/#!g=1&url=article&id=29470>

and fall of 2007⁵², and again in a Teshura in 2013⁵³, and they give a fuller picture of the correspondence at the time.

In a letter dated November 30, the Rebbetzin writes: “I read your letter many times and read between the lines to see what you are hiding from us. I was overcome by despair... The letter which mentions their possible relocation to Riga gives me hope...”

In the same letter the Rebbe added: “Moussia doesn’t want to ask you to continue writing in detail to us about the regards [from the Rebbe Rayatz]. I however, as a person who is not ashamed, am asking you, and thank you wholeheartedly for it... We hope that by the time you receive this letter, all of the above [the Rebbe Rayatz and his family] will be with you, and they will be able to answer without any intermediaries.”

In a letter from Rebbetzin Shaina to R’ Chaim Lieberman she writes: “I found out yesterday that you have flown, and I was not able to calm down because of my worries for you, and especially to my father and grandmother. I would like to believe that everything is as you write, that everyone is feeling well, but I would like to receive some word from my father... I hope that we will again meet...”

⁵² Beis Moshiach 617 p 14ff

⁵³ Teshura wedding *Chanin* 2013.

Page 124: “Menachem Mendel, it seems, had been reluctant to join Rayatz in America, and preferred to stay in France”

Surprisingly, the author does not conjecture a reason for the Rebbe’s apparent reluctance. However, in an interview with R’ Ber Lax⁵⁴ he relates:

“During the war, his father-in-law, the Rebbe Rayatz asked him [the Rebbe] to immigrate to the USA. He came to my father [R’ Yankel Lax] and mentioned it to my father, adding that he doesn’t feel ready yet for it...⁵⁵ My father replied ‘I am not a Rebbe or a son of a Rebbe, and you surely didn’t come to hear my opinion on the matter. Your problem now is finding a financial source for the trip’ and he took out \$1000 and gave it to the Rebbe for travel expenses... He convinced the Rebbe to leave Paris for the USA.”

Page 129: “Utilizing a personal connection to obtain a much coveted ticket...”

Rabbi Sholom Ber Levine, the source for the above statement (in the name of the Rebbetzin), also stated that the Rebbe went and signed up for the French army, and got a certificate that he was a registered recruit; that certificate helped him get a ticket for the train⁵⁶.

⁵⁴ Beis Moshiach 596 p 87

⁵⁵ R’ Ber Lax adds: “The Rebbe might have been worried that the Chassidim will finally discover his greatness, something that he managed to hide from the Chassidim during the years he spent away from his father-in-law’s court.”

⁵⁶ Introduction to *Igrot Kodesh Admur Rayatz* Vol. 5 (Kehot, 1983) p 21.

Page 133: “*Though they did manage to receive some telegrams from New York via a neighbor*”

All letters to the Rebbe were addressed to “Avraham,” a neighbor of the Rebbe by the name of **DovBer Abraham**⁵⁷.

Page 134: “*The Schneersons sat, waited and prayed...*”

Sorely missing from the description of the Rebbe’s life in Vichy and Nice are the various stories of the Rebbe’s caring for every Jew, his dedication to Mitzvos, and even a blessing he gave someone. Examples:

a. During their stay in Nice or Marseilles, the 1940 Jewish census took place, with government agents visiting the homes and asking the residents for their names and race. When they arrived in the Rebbe’s residence, the Rebbetzin answered the door, and when asked for her religion she replied “Orthodox,” a word which is not inherently Jewish, nor clearly non-Jewish. When the Rebbe returned and heard about this, he returned to the local police station and changed the registration to “Orthodox Jew.”⁵⁸

⁵⁷ As told by Rabbi Sholom Ber Levine to R’ Schneur Zalman Berger (Beis Moshiah 597 p 46).

⁵⁸ Interview with R’ Menachem Tiechtel (*Early Years IV*). See also *Yemei Melech* Vol. 1 p 514.

See also the story related by Rebbetzin Chana in her memoirs ([Installation 2 p 5](#)): “Before Passover of that year, the government conducted a census of the entire population. One of the questions was, “Are you a believer in G-d?” and some believers were fearful to identify themselves as such. So my husband [R’ Levi Yitzchak] ascended the bimah in the synagogue on Shabbos, when a large crowd was assembled, and declared: “Failing to respond correctly is true heresy; no Jew may do so!”

b. A similar story is told by R' Mendel Notik, who heard it from the Rebbetzin: "It happened once when the Rebbe and Rebbetzin were walking in the street together, they realized that a group of Nazi soldiers were approaching from the opposite direction. The Rebbetzin urged the Rebbe to quickly enter one of the stores lining the street, so that they not hurt the Rebbe who was visibly Jewish. The Rebbe insisted that he will not be affected, and continued walking, and the soldiers continued without harming the Rebbe."⁵⁹

c. R' Ya'akov Moshe Rothschild lived in Nice at the time; his job was in a farm outside the city. He asked the Rebbe if he should leave his job because of the inherent dangers in travelling, and the Rebbe answered him that he should continue working there, and gave him a *Segulah* that he should recite *Tefilas Ha'derech* before leaving home every day and after returning. He relates that one day he forgot to recite said prayer and he was stopped by a Nazi patrol. In his despair he closed his eyes and pictured the image of the Rebbe sitting and saying Tehillim on Shabbos afternoon in Shul (a sight he saw every week), and he was let go. He later related, that

⁵⁹ Interviewed by [The Chassidische Derher Shvat 5774](#) p 31. See also the Rebbe's talk on Purim 5742 (Hisva'aduyos 5742 Vol. 2 p 955-6): "A mother must educate her child not to be ashamed of being Jewish, but the reverse: He/she is proud that G-d created him/her as a son of Avraham, Yitzchok and Yaakov or a daughter of Sarah, Rivkah, Rochel and Leah. And when a non-Jewish child asks him his identity, he proudly answers: I am Jewish!" (Translated into English by [Sichos In English](#))

after this episode he learned that he should be careful with the instruction he got, and that picturing the Rebbe can do miracles⁶⁰.

d. R' Mendel Notik related the following story he heard from the Rebbetzin: “Under the circumstances of war, the government has issued an order that to be able to remain in the city one had to show that he had a place of dwelling. Being caught homeless in the street was very dangerous, so the first option for a refugee was to check into a hotel. In order to register in a hotel one had to show he had the ability to pay, and the only proof accepted was to show the clerk a hundred dollar bill... The Rebbe would go out to the street to find Jews without a place to stay, hand them a hundred dollar bill and send them to a hotel to register. The Rebbe would wait for them to come back to return the bill and then the Rebbe would go and seek out more Jews.”⁶¹

Page 134: Footnote 59: “While in Marseille, Ramash farbrenged for students of a makeshift Yeshiva on 15th Shevat”

According to some reports, this Farbrengen took place at the orphanage in Marseilles, directed by Rabbi Schneur Zalman Schneerson, a distant relative of the Rebbe, and the Chief Rabbi of Paris.

⁶⁰ Beis Moshiach 596 p 88 (Yemei Melech ?).

⁶¹ Interviewed by [The Chassidische Derher Shvat 5774](#) p 31.

Page 138: *“When the Nazis occupied the city, the neighbors faithfully hid Rachel away in their home, but, perhaps fearing Nazi intimidation, another neighbor informed the Germans of her presence, and she was taken away to be killed”*

The Rebbe commemorated her Yohrtzeit on the 24th of Tishrei⁶².

Page 138: *Shmuel Schneerson . . . passed away shortly afterward on 8th December (11th Kislev) 1943”*

In the Rebbe’s personal calendar of 1947, he marked the Yohrtzeit of R’ Shmuel on the 10th of Kislev⁶³.

Page 138: Footnote 72: *“A ‘page of testimony’ filed with Yad Vashem by researcher P. Fazzini in 2009 lists Berel’s murder as having taken place on 25th of June 1941, whereas the Yad Vashem database of murder sites state that the Igren facility began to be liquidated in October.”*

In the Rebbe’s personal calendar of 1947, he marked the Yohrtzeit of his brother, R’ Dov Ber on the 24th of Tishrei⁶⁴, which would correspond to the Yad Vashem record, that he was killed in October.

Chapter 9: Life in America

Page 142: *“Menachem Mendel later attributed this to the Sixth Rebbe’s intense emotionality – Rayatz had no doubt been utterly devastated by the news of the*

⁶² See *Sefer HaSichos* 5750 Vol. 1 p 63, footnote *.

⁶³ *Beis Moshiach* #51 p 8.

⁶⁴ *Beis Moshiach* #51 p 8.

Nazi invasion of Russia ... As the Sixth Rebbe sat in safety, about to be reunited with his immediate family, he was painfully aware that his extended “family” of Lubavitch devotees in Russia were on the verge of extinction”

Whilst the author correctly states that the reason was the Rebbe Rayatz’s “emotionality,” he failed to present the reason the Rebbe stated during a conversation with R’ Gershon Jacobson. When the latter asked him why the Rebbe Rayatz did not meet them until three days later, the Rebbe responded⁶⁵: “A possible reason for this is: my father-in-law was a very emotional person, and you can imagine the great excitement he would have if we would enter immediately [after our arrival], and together [the Rebbe and the Rebbetzin]; since Chassidus demands that the intellect should be in control of the emotions – he waited a few days, despite the great pain he must have suffered from having to wait a few days to meet us.”

Page 152: “From the dearth of publicity and correspondence from the late 1940’s onwards, it appears that within a few years of the war’s end Machne Israel had become inactive”

Footnote 34: “In the 1980’s Machne Israel was revived as a fund for an elite group of Chabad supporters”

The author failed to do a quick search of the Rebbe’s correspondence, which would show that Machne Israel was still alive and functioning well past the 1940’s, such as a letter from

⁶⁵ Beis Moshiach #597 p 50.

1950⁶⁶ where the Rebbe mentions that Machne Israel would send Tallis and Tefillin to Czechoslovakia; a letter from 1956⁶⁷ where the Rebbe pledges the financial support of Machne Israel to help a Rabbi keep his rabbinical position in Pittsburgh; a letter from 1962⁶⁸ to the supporters of Machne Israel; a letter from 1970⁶⁹ where the Rebbe thanks a supporter for a large donation to Machne Israel, and pledges to use said donation for founding a *Gemach*.

He also fails to mention the many charitable aspects of Machne Israel which continue until today, such as financial help before the holidays, financial help for Jews in need, the monthly stipend for the members of *Kollels* in Crown Heights and Safed, The International Taharas Hamishpocho Organization, and more.

In 1984, a new division of Machne Israel was opened (it was not a revival), which was called the “Machne Israel Development Fund,” with the purpose of funneling large donations to developing Chabad activities around the globe.

Page 153: “Another innovative program of Merkos . . . is the summer placement of Yeshiva students in distant Jewish communities around the world...”

A similar program was also launched by Machne Israel geared specifically for Jewish farmers, with R’ Avrohom Popack being

⁶⁶ *Igrot Kodesh* Vol. 4 #816

⁶⁷ *Igrot Kodesh* Vol. 12 #4085

⁶⁸ *Igrot Kodesh* Vol. 22 #8540

⁶⁹ *Igrot Kodesh* Vol. 27 #10003

sent in the summer of 1944⁷⁰ to visit Jewish farmers around the USA.

Page 157: “Most notably, he [Nissan Mindel] authored Merkos’ children’s magazine, Talks and Tales... Ramash was also closely involved with the magazine, and among other tasks, he personally guided and approved all the hand-written illustrations.”

The author fails to note that the Rebbe edited meticulously every article in every issue of Talks and Tales in English, until its last issue⁷¹.

Chapter 10: Lubavitch Chooses a New Rebbe

Pages 182-186 - Section IV: “During the summer, Ramash conducted himself increasingly like a Rebbe... Ramash’s residual resistance to accepting the leadership... By this point, it seems that Ramash would have already been willing to accept the position had it not been for the rift that would inevitably erupt in the Schneerson-Gurary household...”

Page 185: “The Chassidim ... informed the major Yiddish newspapers of the day... that a committee of Chassidim ... had chosen Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson as the next Rebbe of Lubavitch...”

⁷⁰ See Kovetz Lubavitch #3 p 42 for the announcement, and Kovetz Lubavitch #4 p 54 for the report of his mission.

⁷¹ Copies of the Rebbe’s corrections appeared in various Teshuras throughout the years. See Teshura Shemtov-Wilansky 5770 for the Rebbe’s edits to Talks and Tales from Summer 1986.

The author paints a picture of the Rebbe agreeing to accept the leadership, but not ready to do it because of a potential family rift. However, in reality, the Rebbe steadfastly refused to accept the leadership even a week (!) before Yud Shvat. On the 2nd of Shvat, the Rebbe called into his room the Rabbis Shmuel Levitin, Eliyahu Simpson, Moshe DovBer Rivkin, Yisroel Jacobson and Shlomo Aharon Kazarnowsky, and read a statement which was typed by the Rebbe and edited by him⁷².

The Rebbe began by mentioning that people have asked him to accept the leadership; that people consider it final because he accepts letters, and that the newspapers have published it etc, and then the Rebbe said:

“(1) I have said the whole time that I am not taking upon myself [the leadership]... (2) I only found out about what was published in the newspapers **after** it was sold; (3) Regarding accepting letters [as a Rebbe] – I only heard about it for the first time.

“Regarding the question that I accept people who ask questions, and answer the letters... I have begun answering people’s questions and their letters because everyone – including my mother-in-law – have told me that ignoring these people will cause them to distance themselves from Lubavitch... And it’s not my job to distance Jews and to destroy Lubavitch, Heaven forbid...

“Regarding the conditions, the order [of succession in Lubavitch], and the fear of commotion:

⁷² Beis Moshiach #311 p 19ff

“(1) As I mentioned earlier, I am not taking upon myself [the leadership]; (2) Even the Rebbe has not placed any conditions on me, and I don’t see a need that you place conditions on me; (3) I will not cause any commotion, and I will not report your actions at the Ohel...”

“I have been accustomed that people rely on my words, however it seems like this issue is still in doubt; therefore I have called you in, as the elder Rabbis of Anash, to tell you this in an official manner, and you can publish it in my name...”

Despite these clear words, the elder Chassidim have not repeated the Rebbe’s words to anyone, and hoped to pressure the Rebbe to change his mind, and accept the leadership.

Page 183: “Ramash supporters leaked copies of a segment from Rayatz’s diary from the summer of 1929, in which the late Rebbe had penned disparaging remarks about his older son-in-law. When Ramash discovered what had happened, he was outraged and banned anyone from owning a copy of the document, describing it as akin to possessing a bomb.”

The author probably mixed up the Rebbe’s words in 1985 regarding the Rebbe Rayatz’s library, with this episode. With regards to the Rebbe Rayatz’s diary, the Rebbe told the leaker in Yiddish a saying that is akin to “You are getting under the skin of the Rebbe Rayatz, and that is dangerous.”

Additionally, the supporters didn’t leak “a segment,” rather they leaked the complete diary of the 1929 trip to Israel.

Chapter II: At the Court of the Seventh Rebbe

Page 202, when discussing the Rebbe's *Ma'amarim*, he writes: "The popularity of his discourses was overshadowed by those of the Fifth Rebbe, Rashab" and he explains that it was because the *Mashpi'im* were used to the discourses of the Rebbe Rashab...

However, this is not true: (1) The Rebbe's discourses were not available in print until the early 1980's, and immediately thereafter the Yeshivos began studying the Rebbe's *Ma'amarim*; (2) The *Mashpi'im* also taught the Rebbe Rayatz's discourses. They taught whatever was available at the time, some discourses of the Rebbe Rashab and some of the Rebbe Rayatz.

Page 202: "The Seventh Rebbe barely touched the genre of *Hemshech*, instead offering a faster pace of highly varied discourse ... resembling more the intellectual heritage of the Third Lubavitcher Rebbe, Tzemach Tzedek"

It seems like the author did not research the Rebbe's *Ma'amarim*, for during the years that this chapter covers, the Rebbe delivered quite a few *Hemshechim*, especially during the month of Tishrei, for example: all the discourses of the month of Tishrei 5723 form one *Hemshech*; the discourses of Chanukah 5723 form one *Hemshech*; in Tamuz 5724 there was one *Hemshech*; in Tishrei 5721 there was one *Hemshech*; and so in other years.

Additionally, the author did not learn the discourses of the Tzemach Tzedek, which are **completely** different than the Rebbe's, as evident from a cursory comparison between the two.

Page 224: *“While the Rebbe was fiercely independent, and chose not to attend public meetings of the American Rabbinic leadership...”*

The Rebbe has participated in Rabbinical meetings in Europe, and even in the USA, but the sad reality is, that the Rebbe was **not invited** to these meetings; and even when he was invited, it was done in a disrespectful manner to ensure that the Rebbe did **not** attend. See for example the 1963 letter of the *Skulener Rebbe*⁷³, Rabbi Eliezer Zusha Portugal, where he laments that the Rebbe wasn't personally invited to the convention of the Chassidic leaders in the USA.

On Page 237 he mentions the Russian-speaking Shluchim who went on Shlichus in the 1950's and 1960's, and forgets to mention Rabbi Moshe Gurkov, who went on Shlichus in 1962 to Boston; Rabbi Moshe Feller, who went on Shlichus in 1964 to Minnesota.

Page 242: *“In the seventh generation of Chabad, women would be accorded full equal status in the most sacred of activities...”*

It would be worthwhile to add the Yechidus of the daughter of Mr. Hans Morgenthau in 1971⁷⁴ regarding this matter.

⁷³ http://chabadinfo.com/index.php?url=article_en&id=27049

⁷⁴ Beis Moshiach #187 p 35

Chapter 12: Riding The Counterculture

Page 273: The author brings the story of the Rebbe Rayatz's encouragement to Shazar during the 1947 UN vote on the partition of Israel.

An important historical factor missing is that **immediately** after the establishment of the state of Israel, the Rebbe Rayatz sought to become a citizen of the USA. R' Herschel Fogelman related that the Rebbe had told him during that time the reason for it⁷⁵:

“The reason why the Rebbe [Rayatz] has chosen to become a citizen only at this time is to remove any shadow of doubt from the hearts of those who seek to make mistakes. Since the state [of Israel] was founded, he made it a point specifically to become a citizen...”

Page 274: The author describes the Rebbe's outlook on Zionism, presenting the Rebbe as somewhat agreeable to the Zionist cause, though not happy with the way the state was formed.

The author casually omits the Rebbe's staunch opposition to Zionism, which expressed itself in many aspects, such as the Rebbe removing his leadership from the Yeshiva Tomchei Tmimim after they sang HaTikvah at their dinner in 1957; the Rebbe's sharp letter to Rabbi Greenglass from Montreal in 1956⁷⁶ after the Rabbinical Ordination ceremony of the local Yeshiva had HaTikvah sung at their dinner; the Rebbe's adamant refusal that

⁷⁵ [Teshura 28 Sivan 5747 p 22](#)

⁷⁶ *Likutei Sipurei Hisvaadyos* (5772), letter of 26 Kislev 5716 and 5 Teves 5716.

Chabad Chassidim participate in Independence day celebrations⁷⁷; the famous Yechidus of the Shulsinger brothers with the Rebbe⁷⁸ after the Rebbe refused to allow them to mention Israel’s independence date in Chabad calendars, and the Rebbe then said: “Not only it is not the ‘beginning of the Redemption,’ and definitely it is not a Yom Tov or a day of salvation for the Jews, they [the Zionists] have delayed the redemption for tens of years!” (the Rebbe then mentioned a certain amount of years).

Page 278: The Rebbe told Ariel Sharon about the “terrible damage and tragedy this Bar-Lev line will bring”

It is worthwhile to add a story which circulated in Israel during the time of the building of the Bar-Lev line⁷⁹; that the Rebbe sent the cabinet ministers a treatise he composed during his study years in Paris describing the flaws in the Maginot line, and the letter sent to Mr. Bentzion Rader in 1974 where the Rebbe describes the similarities between the Maginot line and the Bar-Lev line, explaining why it failed.

⁷⁷ As an example, see *Igros Kodesh* Vol. 11 #3404

⁷⁸ Related by Rabbi Yehoshua Dubrawsky who heard it from the Shulsinger brothers: <http://www.chabad.info/#!g=1&url=article&cid=45941>

⁷⁹ Beis Moshiach #844 p 16; *Peninei HaTanya* (Ginsburg) additional sources to Tanya chapter 41.

Page 289: Discussion about the Rebbe's adamant opposition to the demonstrations for Russian Jewry.

See also various Yechidus during 5731⁸⁰ where the Rebbe explains that those who want to help Russian Jewry should focus their energies and resources in sending material assistance to the Jews in Russia.

Page 289: Discussion about the clandestine missions of Ezras Achim, sending Chassidim with food and religious objects for Russian Jews behind the Iron Curtain.

The author fails to mention the epic work by Mordechai Staiman “Secrets of the Rebbe that led to the fall of the Soviet Union” (Mendelson Press, 2001), which includes a detailed history of many of these missions.

Page 305-307: Discussion about Rashi Sichos.

The author fails to mention, that almost every Rashi Sicha included a lesson to be learned in practical life of a Jew (something which is seen across all the Rebbe's Sichos, in every topic; no Sicha was just an intellectual exercise without practical ramifications), and that many of these Sichos included an explanation of Rashi's words according to Chassidus.

⁸⁰ Beis Moshiach 178 p 24ff; 179 p 40ff.

Chapter 13: The Rebbe’s Army

Page 364: *“The Rebbe shared his view... [that the books stolen from the Rebbe’s library] would therefore not bring blessing, only the opposite”*

With regards to **this** episode (and **not** on page 183, as the author mistakenly wrote), the Rebbe described these books as “live bombs” which can explode at any moment⁸¹.

⁸¹ Farbrengen Parashas Balak 5745.