

ב"ה

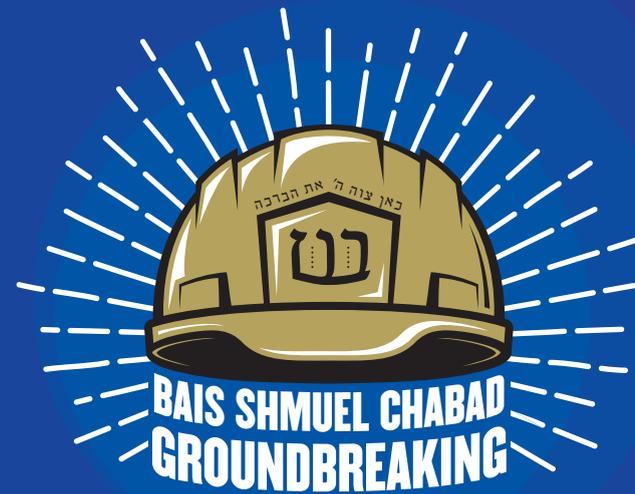
בית שמואל-חב"ד

BAIS SHMUEL-CHABAD



THE URGENT GROUNDBREAKING

**Fulfilling the Rebbe's 1988 Desire
for 1512 Union Street**



**MEMENTO FROM THE GROUNDBREAKING OF BAIS SHMUEL CHABAD
NISSAN 9, 5782 | APRIL 10, 2022**

*Jewish wealth is not
houses and money.
Jewish wealth, which
is eternal, is the
observance of Torah
and mitzvos, and
bringing children
and grandchildren
into the world
who will observe
the Torah and
its mitzvos.*

--Hayom Yom 9 Nissan

בס"ד

THE URGENT GROUNDBREAKING

*Fulfilling the Rebbe's 1988
Desire for 1512 Union Street*

Dovid Zaklikowski



בית שמואל-חב"ד

Bais Shmuel Chabad

Crown Heights, Brooklyn, New York

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www.LubavitchArchives.com
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Design by Hasidic Archives Studios

www.HasidicArchives.com
HasidicArchives@gmail.com

Printed in Crown Heights by
Print and Ship
478 Albany Ave
(718) 771-5000
www.chshippingcenter.com

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THE MESSAGE THAT THE REBBE SENT TO
THE GROUNDBREAKING OF THE BAIS MENACHEM
SHUL IN Kfar CHABAD

י"ע

[ח' שבט, ה'תשל"א]

ועד הכפר, כפר חב"ד, ארץ ישראל

תהא הנחת אבן הפינה למז"ט, והרי היא בעת רצון והילולא דנשיא
דורנו וגופא בתר רישא אזיל,
ולזכות בקרוב לגמר הבנין דמקדש מעט בכפר חב"ד,
ויתכף לזה בבנין בית־מקדשנו ע"י משיח צדקנו כשבני ישראל
יוצאים ביד רמה כבפרשת השבוע.
בברכת הצלחה.

נדפסה ב"התקשרות" גליון ל ע' 15.
הנחת אבן הפינה: לבנין בית הכנסת הגדול ("בית מנחם").
וגופא בתר רישא אזיל: ראה עירובין מא, א. סוטה מה, ב.
דמקדש מעט: מגילה כט, א.
כבפרשת השבוע: בשלח יד, ח.

Free translation

To the Vaad of Kfar Chabad, Eretz Yisroel

May the "Hanochas Even Hapina" (placing of the
cornerstone/groundbreaking) take place in a Mazal Tov, as it
is also in an עת רצון – the day of the Hilula (day of passing) of
the "Nossi"/head of our generation, and "the body follows the
head",

And may we merit speedily to the completion of the מקדש
מעט ("small sanctuary"/Shul) in Kfar Chabad,

And immediately to the building of the Bais Hamikdash
through Moshiach Tzidkeinu, when all the Yidden will go
out [of Golus] ביד רמה (triumphantly) as related in the weekly
Torah portion [of Parshas Beshalach].

With blessings of Hatzlocho!

Greetings

Two decades ago, we established Bais Shmuel Chabad, a
center for young residents and families of Crown Heights. It
was a unique venture—beyond establishing a shul, we created an
array of community programs, lecture series, and we gratefully
hosted rabbis and community to leaders to counsel us on our
journey.

Perhaps most memorable are the Purim programs which
were open to the community at large, and our initiative for
children to recite Tehillim on Shabbos Mevorchim (initiated in
memory of Shmuel Karnowsky).

Since our establishment, our shul has been a home for
shluchim to bring their community members when they visit
Crown Heights. Beyond these initiatives, Bais Shmuel stands at
the forefront of many projects in Crown Heights, including the
upcoming community events in honor of Yud Aleph Nissan.

Rooted in our mission, this building will be a center for
Jewish learning, and include a 5,000 square women's facilities,
among other features, for learning and fitness.

With appreciation to Rabbi Dovid Zaklikowski, Chana Lewis
and Yitzchok Cohen of Hasidic Archives for their dedication in
preparing this memento.

We thank you for coming here today, and taking a part in
fulfilling another step in the Rebbe's request.

Rabbi Moshe Pinson

President & Founder

Yitzie Kamman, Shaya Rochester,

Zalman Skoblo, Zalman Stock

Board Members



The Rebbe at the groundbreaking at 770.

PHOTO: LUBAVITCH ARCHIVES

Early Morning Call

As the clock struck 8:00 a.m. on Erev Rosh Hashana in 1988, quiet reigned in the Rosenfeld home on President Street. The Rosenfeld children knew that their father, Izzy, had only returned home in the early hours of the morning, after spending the night working on community matters.

At 8:45, the phone rang, jarring Izzy from his sleep. It was Rabbi Yehudah Krinsky on the line, delivering a message from the Rebbe. Rabbi Krinsky was calling from the Union Street mikvah, and the Rebbe wanted to know why Izzy had not yet arranged a groundbreaking at the lot on the corner of Union Street and Albany Avenue—across the street from the community mikvah.

Two weeks' prior, the Rebbe had announced that the upcoming year, 5749 (1988-89), would be one of expansion. Over the following week, plans were made for the renovation of 770, to which the Rebbe attended the groundbreaking. Two days later, after maariv, the Rebbe delivered another talk, in which he continued to discuss the need to build. He encouraged the building of shuls, work places, and private homes.

Rabbi Krinsky was calling from the Union Street mikvah, the Rebbe wanted to know why Izzy had not yet arranged a groundbreaking at the lot on the corner of Union Street and Albany Avenue.





A once thriving corner, with stores on Albany Avenue and dozens of apartments upstairs: 1512 Union Street, 1940's.

PHOTO: NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF RECORDS



Izzy speaking at a community event.
PHOTO: ROSENFELD FAMILY

The Rebbe expounded on the needs of every individual, saying that in general they are divided into three categories: food, clothing and a home. While every person needs food and clothing to survive, in order for a person to feel complete they need a home.

After explaining the spiritual reasons it completes the person, the Rebbe said, that it is an appropriate and good idea to build new homes, “Since you could build—because G-d gave you the capabilities—it is a sign that you need to build.”

Just as a person makes sure they eat now, so too when it comes to building homes, “There needs to be positive resolutions now to begin to build this [Jewish] year.”

Shortly thereafter, the Rebbe tasked Izzy with building more homes in the neighborhood. Calling from the Ohel, Rabbi Krinsky told him, “The Rebbe wants you to be in charge of building homes



in the neighborhood.”

Izzy had worn many hats over the years – as executive director of the Crown Heights Jewish Community Council, vice president of the Utica Avenue-Eastern Parkway Merchant Association and District Leader of the 43rd District in Brooklyn – but nonetheless was startled by the Rebbe’s direct request. Immediately, he began working on the development of several properties.

In two subsequent calls, Rabbi Krinsky told Izzy that the Rebbe requested he start developing the lot at 1512 Union Street. At the time, the property was going through many issues, and Izzy explained to Rabbi Krinsky that he was making little progress.

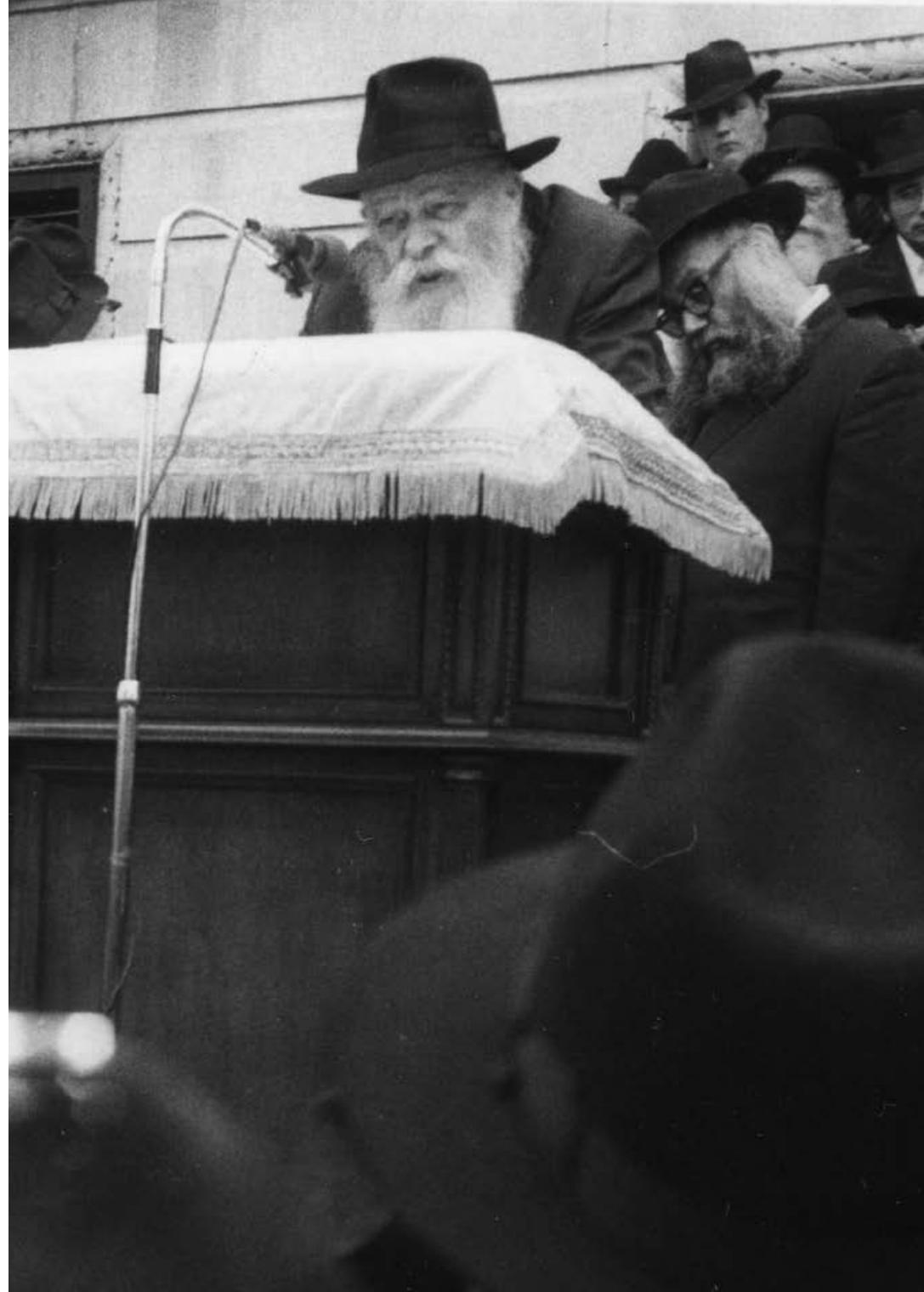
In a recently-discov-



The Rebbe walks towards the Ohel. Rabbi Krinsky can be seen in the background.

ered letter by the Rosenfeld family, summing up the events of that month, Izzy wrote that he did not know what the Rebbe had in mind how he would be able to make the project possible, “But being a devout, believing Chossid I was determined to do my best and to succeed B’ezras Hashem.”

But when Izzy answered Rabbi Krinsky’s call that 8:45 Sunday morning call, the Rebbe’s words came through clearly: “I have already asked him [Izzy] two times to start building. Do I have to ask him a third time? Let Yisroel [Izzy] come and make the ground-breaking right now.”



The Rebbe at the groundbreaking for the expansion of 770.

PHOTO: MENACHEM WOLF COLLECTION/LUBAVITCH ARCHIVES



Izzy Rosenfeld.

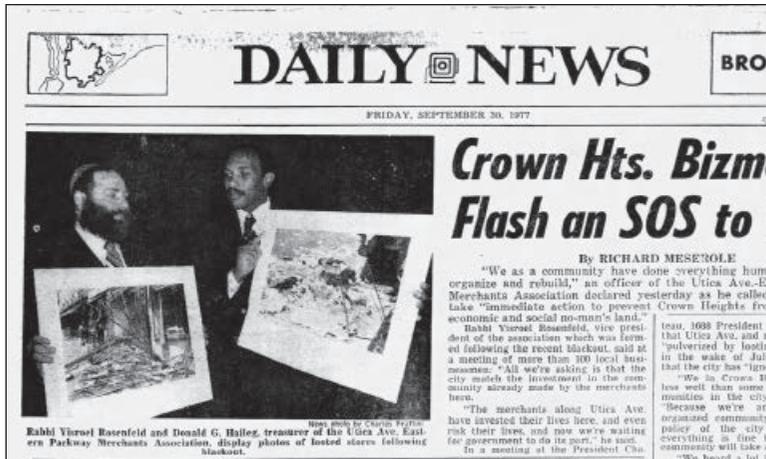
PHOTO: LUBAVITCH ARCHIVES

Man of All Trades

In 1974, Izzy – an educator – was thrust into activism when a car was torched beside his sukkah. Initially outraged by the decline of the area he had called home for so many years, he decided to take a stand.

At the time, Jews were fleeing Crown Heights in droves, and crime was on the rise on account of incoming residents. Initially, Izzy sought to ensure that the thousands of elderly or struggling Jews in the area, who could not afford to move, would have basic provisions. In a 1983 interview, he claimed to know Jews who were terrified to leave their homes, and indeed had been shuttered at home for years. He delivered food, organized transportation to senior centers, and mobilized government organizations to provide better housing.

It was also a priority for him to maintain peace with their new neighbors. “There are more good people than bad people,” he told the Daily News, who awarded him with a Crimefighter award. “It just seems the other way around sometimes. But if the good people



Reb Nissan farbrenging at the yeshivah in Montreal.

PHOTO: LUBAVITCH ARCHIVES

will consolidate forces, it will become obvious out there. We are not leaving. People have to get involved. They can't turn their eyes the other way."

Izzy felt that the city and the Jewish community at large were not advocating for the Jews of Crown Heights. "Our people live in slums," he once bellowed at a meeting with local officials after the murder of two Jews. "They are being raped, murdered and mugged, and American Jewish leaders do nothing to help us. They have forgotten us."

At a meeting with government officials, he told Ed Koch, mayor of New York, "We 'live integration' with our black brothers and sisters in Crown Heights. The government has done nothing at all to encourage integration by providing affordable housing and funds for social services." Roy Innis, chairman of the Congress for Racial Equality, hearing Izzy's words, professed that he wished more would hear "the rabbi's pain."

After the meeting, Izzy, a night owl, returned to his office on



Izzy, and committeewoman Joan Gill, meet with Mayor Ed Koch in city hall.

PHOTO: NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF RECORDS

Utica Avenue, one of the most dangerous streets in the neighborhood, steps from where a Jewish store owner was murdered. For Izzy, having the office there was a symbol that fringe elements would not divide the neighborhood.

Under Izzy's direction, the large staff at the Jewish Community Council were constantly active. They assisted locals with filling out basic government papers, finding employment, housing, rehabilitative care, and short term loans.

Local activist Tzali Lesches recalled that over the years he had witnessed Izzy assisting families who were being threatened with eviction. "He knew how to negotiate with banks and private lenders."

When Dr. Nissan Mandel told the Rebbe that there was someone who needed a loan for his business, the Rebbe referred him to

Blacks & Jews vie for Crown Heights Race tension grows



FLOWER SHOP owner Leroy Jackson, 30, talks with Rabbi Yisroel Rosenfeld, executive director of the Crown Heights Jewish Community Council, in Brooklyn.

Even though it's and several women in the storefront the Crown Heights Jewish Community Council, the ed. When a visitor knocked on a glazed panel opens and peeks out warily.

"In the beginning, when we first opened, we were robbed," says Rabbi Yisroel Rosenfeld, the council's executive director. "We because we opened our black community—a black in one day and robbed the every house has been broke yeshiva. The blacks believe thing to rob a Jew."

A few short blocks away line Nisbett, 53, who is the immaculate parlor of brownstone in which her lived for 37 years. "My hu ents bought it in 1950 fr family," she says.

"When we first moved were both whites and b the whites moved out at nice middle-class black hood. Then, 13 or 14 years sidies started moving in just want us out. You could ing your sidewalk, they car and say, "You want to lowed them to move in, could live together, and want the whole thing."

The attitudes and the an distressingly familiar tod Heights, a neighborhood majority of blacks and a knit minority of Hasidic J between Bedford-Stuyves Flatbush in central Bro neighborhood has become focus of race-relations is city.

Last year's violence Beach and several othe have generated concern ble racial violence in man hoods. On March 1, Police Benjamin Ward there will be "large-scale tions this summer. In n haven't seen since the 199 mark inevitably led to "Lome" headlines.

Ten days later, Ward s remarks, saying he'd mere ing "to get some peopl about the possibility" of think by alerting people tility, we may get away long, hot summer," he said

Many believe Crown Hei the flash point.

What sets the community other largely black neigh the presence of the city's i centration of Lubavitch Jews, a community of 15,0 residents, students and oth

The focal point of their bavitch World Headquarte ern Parkway. The building vitcher Hasidim what s Basilica is to Catholicism.

The blacks and Jews liv side by side, and share the eral economic level. In 198 census was last taken, ti

This stor
ported
McAllis
Santam
Don Sin
written
ton.



The Rebbe introduces Dr. Nissan Mindel to Israeli president Zalman Shazar.

PHOTO: LUBAVITCH ARCHIVES

Izzy. When Dr. Mandel expressed skepticism that the jolly, plump, cigar-wielding educator was capable of securing a large loan, the Rebbe said, "Over the years, I have sent many people to him and none have returned with complaints. This is my proof that they have been helped by him."

In fact, for many, Izzy was a last resort. One newspaper wrote, "Luckily they have chosen to come to the right place, because whatever Rabbi Rosenfeld can do to alleviate their difficulties, he will."



An Empty Lot

When the Rebbe's call arrived that Sunday morning, Izzy had already been working hard to secure the location. Izzy wrote that he did not know why the Rebbe chose him to become involved in housing: "It came to me as a great surprise but I threw myself into the task, into the project with great devotion, dedication, diligence and sincerity and seriousness of purpose... I went to many meetings... trying to make things work."

The building in question, situated at 1512 Union Street, had once been the hub of a bustling street, housing four stores on Albany Avenue, including an auto mechanic and a grocery store. In the late 1970s, when the Center for Jewish Culture purchased the property, the building had begun to deteriorate.

Headed, among others, by Rabbis Meir Roness, plans were drawn to build a social venue, a library, a Jewish children's museum, and several floors dedicated to affordable housing. It was to house a mobile library that traveled around New York delivering Jewish books and content.



The building in the 1980's shortly before the city demolished it.

PHOTO: NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF RECORDS

However, after several technical mishaps, funding to rehabilitate the building fell through, and the two rabbis found themselves in tax debt. By the mid-1980s, the building was in decay. After an incident in which part of the ceiling collapsed, the city demolished it.

The Rebbe was displeased that the lot was empty, and this is where he tasked Izzy to take charge, and organize a groundbreaking, on that fateful morning. Without delay, Izzy made calls to several community activists and friends. His wife Marilyn and their sons went to the property with some pastries, *l'chaim* and a shovel.

With a cigar dangling from his lips, Izzy led a dozen people in digging a small patch and placing a cornerstone. Someone shared a Torah thought, they all sang a *niggun* and then someone asked Izzy to say a few words. He said succinctly, "Moshi-



The Rebbe leaving the community mikvah, with 1512 Union Street in the background.

PHOTO: MENACHEM WOLF COLLECTION/LUBAVITCH ARCHIVES



ach zol kumen.”

They were about to part when the Rebbe exited the mikvah building across the street. Izzy ran over, and informed the Rebbe of the groundbreaking, adding, “A *chassidische niggun* has been sung, a *dvar Torah* has been said!”

The Rebbe thanked him in Yiddish and Hebrew, and replied, “This should be a good beginning and you should finish quickly.”

The Rebbe returned to his car, before re-emerging and pointing to the empty plot across the street, he quizzed Izzy, “Did you make the groundbreaking over there *mamish?*”

Izzy answered affirmatively.

Later that day, Rabbi Krinsky recorded a

*Pointing to the
empty plot across
the street, the
Rebbe quizzed
Izzy, “Did
you make the
groundbreaking
over there
mamish?”*





The Rebbe with Rabbi Krinsky, 1986.

PHOTO: THE SCHAFFRAN COLLECTION/LUBAVITCH ARCHIVES

short diary entry of the morning's occurrences:

Selichos at 7:30 AM.

Mikvah at 8:45.

The Rebbe prompted to make a groundbreaking on the lot across from the mikvah on Albany. I immediately organized via Reb Yisroel Rosenfeld a minyan. Afterwards, the Rebbe was amazed at the speed that it was done.

“By the time I arrived in 770,” Izzy wrote, “word was out that the Rebbe Shlita had asked me to make a ground-breaking etc., etc. People immediately approached me and gave me deposits wanting to insure that they would obtain housing at that location.”

“The Rebbe prompted to make a groundbreaking on the lot across from the mikvah on Albany. Afterwards, the Rebbe was amazed at the speed that it was done.”



The Rebbe at the groundbreaking at 770.

PHOTO: LUBAVITCH ARCHIVES

Full Circle

Plans were drawn for four townhouses, a total of twelve condos. Sadly, they were not to be. Several involved parties began to squabble over various property rights and Izzy was reluctantly forced to pull away from the project. “All I can say is that the Rebbe,” he wrote, “put me into it, so it is hard for me to disengage and disassociate myself.”

Over the next years, the Center for Jewish Culture regained the deed to the property, hoping to finally be able to realize their goal. When Rabbi Bronstein passed away in 2003, Rabbi Roness felt he could no longer do it.

In 2005, the property was transferred to the Chassidic Discovery Center, under the direction of Rabbi Beryl Epstein. He hoped to build a welcome center that would house a *sofer*, an art gallery, a library and a café, but he could not get the project off the ground. After Rabbi Epstein’s passing in 2017, the property was then sold to Bais Shmuel Chabad, with the hope to fulfill the Rebbe’s wish for a community center.

In an interview with Mrs. Rosenfeld, she spoke of her husband's distress that the property was not realized as per the Rebbe's request. Nonetheless, she felt that the Rebbe's encouragement to organize a groundbreaking indicated that "the Rebbe supported that one day something meaningful would be done with the property."

Indeed, she added, the community uniting to finally build a large center at 1512 Union – a lot that has been fraught with contention – is "a symbol that Moshiach is on his way."

This booklet was spurred by those who witnessed the groundbreaking and the Rebbe's exchange with Izzy: Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky, Rabbi Efraim Mintz, Rabbi Zalman Wolowik, Rachamim Chudaitov, Rabbi Eli Rosenfeld and Tzemach Rosenfeld.

With appreciation to the many people who assisted with this compilation (in addition to those who were quoted): Rabbi Kasriel Kastel, Rabbi Yosef Friedman, Rabbi Shmuel Light, Rabbi Yossi Butman, Rabbi Yisroel Botnick and Memke Schmukler.





PHOTO: NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF RECORDS

Once Gloom, Now Thriving

In the early twentieth century, Crown Heights was a popular neighborhood among Manhattan residents who wanted second homes over the relatively new Brooklyn Bridge. Stately brownstones were built along the tree-lined Eastern Parkway, and when the subway arrived, the neighborhood, which extends over a two-by-one mile area, became even more desirable.

By the mid-1920s, thousands of Jews lived in the neighborhood, which had some of the city's largest synagogues. On Shabbos and *yom tov*, crowds of people dressed in their holiday best strolled down the picturesque Eastern Parkway islands.

In 1940, the Rebbe Rayatz chose Crown Heights as Lubavitch World Headquarters. Chabad purchased a building on Eastern Parkway. The mansion soon became iconic, known simply by its address, 770. From there, the Rebbe Rayatz and the Rebbe reached out to world Jewry, directed Chabad activities, and hosted world leaders.

A decade and a half later, however, Crown Heights was be-



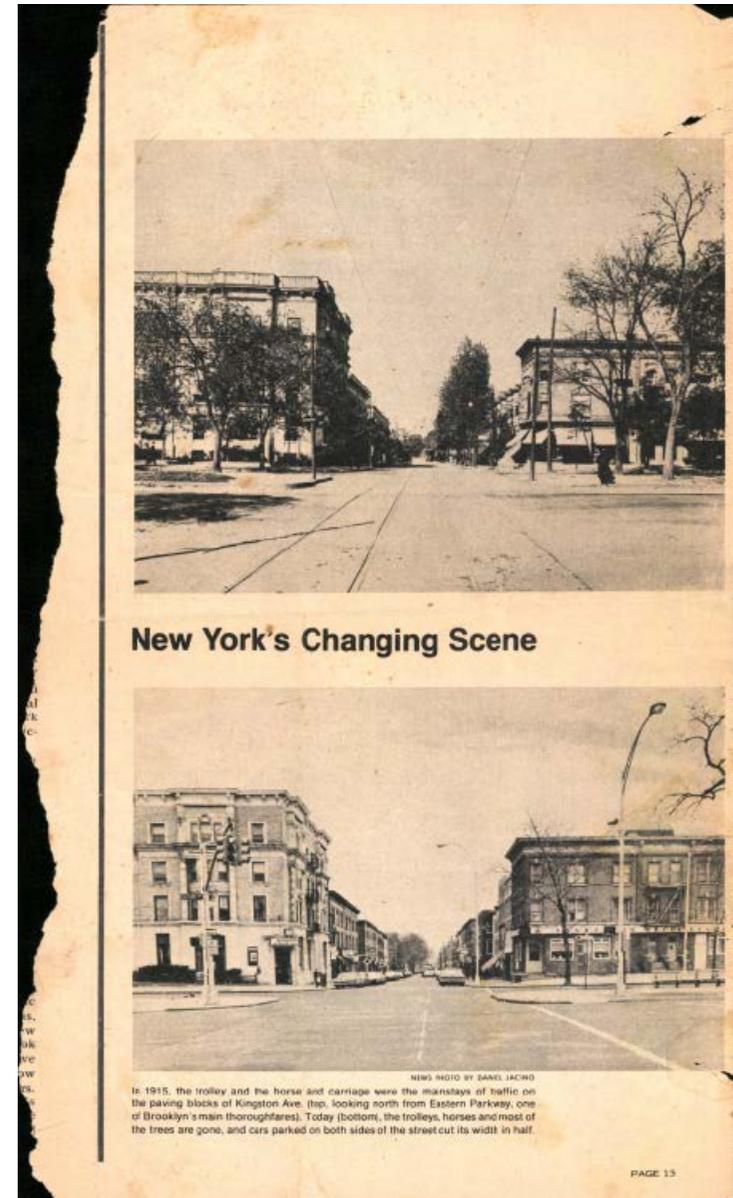
The Rebbe Rayatz and the Rebbe in 770, 1949.

PHOTO: LUBAVITCH ARCHIVES

coming less popular. Access to suburbs in outer Long Island by train and expressway encouraged more affluent residents to move out of the city entirely. The vacant real estate attracted lower-income buyers, who were mostly law-abiding people who lived peacefully side by side with their Jewish neighbors. Nevertheless, the Jews began to flee.

The Rebbe stood firm, refusing to abandon the place his father-in-law, the Rebbe Rayatz, had settled twenty years before. “There is no reason to panic,” he told those who asked, writing in 1952, “People of color are decent people, and you can live with them peacefully” (*Igros Kodesh* vol. 6, p. 299). Later, he would openly campaign and rally rabbinical figures to try to stop the flight.

White flight, as it was known, once begun, was difficult to stop, however, and as Jews continued to leave, the community gradually changed for the worse. By the 1960s, once-affluent areas



New York's Changing Scene

NEWS PHOTO BY DANIEL JACINO
 In 1915, the trolley and the horse and carriage were the mainstays of traffic on the paving blocks of Kingston Ave. (top, looking north from Eastern Parkway, one of Brooklyn's main thoroughfares). Today (bottom), the trolleys, horses and most of the trees are gone, and cars parked on both sides of the street cut its width in half.

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PHOTO: LUBAVITCH ARCHIVES



PHOTO: LUBAVITCH ARCHIVES

had become, in several sections, dangerous slums. Real estate, businesses, shuls, and charities were the hardest hit. The elderly, many of whom did not have the resources to move, especially suffered.

The Rebbe beseeched (*Likutei Sichos*, vol. 6, pp. 35off and *Sichos Kodesh* 5729, vol. 2, pp. 68–69): “Think not of yourself, but of your neighbors. Ask, ‘What damage will I be causing them by leaving? What will happen to those who can’t afford to move, or who don’t have the strength to begin life anew?’ Our sages said, ‘Do not do to others that which you don’t want done to you.’”

“*Kan tzivah G-d es haberachah*,” became the Rebbe’s rallying cry. Here (in Crown Heights), G-d directed His blessing. In 1970, on the last day of Pesach, the Rebbe cited the Torah principle that the poor of the city should receive priority: “Therefore community members should support the local stores and businesses, which will then assist those who spend their time in Torah study, who will then work on strengthening the community.”

All major events, the Rebbe said, should be held in Crown Heights. When Chadrei Torah Ohr, a network of afternoon schools and clubs in Israel, made their dinner in Crown Heights, the Rebbe wrote to thank them, “especially that it is being held in Crown Heights, where G-d decreed blessing—to show to all nations that the Jewish nation is near to Him.”

At the *farbrengen* the next week, the Rebbe said, “It is worthwhile for them to receive a special thank you that they are making the banquet here, in Crown Heights.”

A few violent incidents sealed the larger community’s fate, however, leaving the Rebbe and Chabad Chassidim almost alone in the neighborhood. Shuls were sold off one by one.

By the early 1970s, people’s homes were worth less than



Crown Heights, late 1960's.

PHOTO: PHILLIP GARVIN/LUBAVITCH ARCHIVES

their mortgages. During the Chanukah *farbrengen* in 1970 (*Toras Menachem* 5731, vol. 63, p. 26), after long talks on scholarly topics and the singing of *nigunim*, the Rebbe said that he wanted to discuss the situation in the neighborhood. There were those, the Rebbe said, who assumed that he had given up on the situation, because he had spoken about it only once recently.

“The truth is that this is not my personal issue. This is



1969 ad in the Jewish Press.

PHOTO: LUBAVITCH ARCHIVES

based on what it says in the Code of Jewish Law. . . . I am letting everyone know that it is false. I never went back on what I said, and I will not go back tomorrow or the next [day].”

In the winter of 1979, when Gershon Ber Jacobson, editor of the *Algemeiner Journal*, was planning a grand wedding for his daughter, he could not find a suitable venue and asked the Rebbe's permission to hold it outside of the neighborhood. G-d forbid, the Rebbe responded. “It would be contrary to all the efforts to strengthen the neighborhood, etc., especially when this is done by the editor of a newspaper.” The Jacobsons ultimately built a tent in the courtyard of the Beth Rivkah school on Crown Street to host the wedding.

By the late 1980s, when the Rebbe initiated the groundbreaking for 1512 Union Street, the neighborhood enjoyed a renaissance beyond what many of those who had fought for it in the 1970s could have imagined.

Today, thanks to their efforts, Crown Heights is a thriving center of Jewish life.

A version of this chapter, first appeared in A Chassid, a Businessman: The Story of Zalman Deitsch, reprinted here with the permission of the Deitsch family.

A Unique Shul

I admit I am intolerant. At times I am bigoted towards others. I judge people by the way they look, the way they walk, the way they talk, and an immeasurable amount of other calculated imagery I build up in my mind about them.

For example, if the first time I meet him he is slow to respond or doesn't have anything profound to say, I place him into my "not so smart" basket. If the first day I meet him he is not dressed well, I place him into my "untidy" basket.

By the end of the day, I've filed everyone away in my mental filing cabinet: this one is a helpful person, this one is lazy, this one is smart, this one is stupid . . . the list is endless. Ultimately, there are those with whom I want to associate myself, those whom I want to include in my circle of friends, and, of course, those who are not welcome.

Just over a year ago I moved to a new home, several blocks away from my old one. In our lazy world, I cannot walk that extra block to my old shul, so I changed shuls to one a little closer—a

whole block closer.

This new shul had a reputation as a place for "the better people"—the rich and famous, the important people, the know-it-alls. You know, that file I labeled "the higher society." I planned to try out this shul, and if I did not like it, I would go to another one (a little further away, up a flight of stairs).

The first time I arrived at the shul for prayers, I psyched myself up, preparing to encounter egotistical, snobby men, chattering with their close circle of friends. I cautiously made my way to an open seat and began my prayers.

Ten minutes into the davening, a man entered the shul. He was someone I'd known for many years—a member of the "misfit" file. He'd never made it in life, or so I thought. He seemed to be morose, not interested in much. I wondered what he was doing here. Or, was he, like me, just trying this place out?

One of those "snobby, egotistical" men slapped this man on his back, grasping his hand with warmth and wishing him "Shabbat Shalom," a peaceful Sabbath. Another macho man exchanged pleasantries with him and they shared smiles. I was shocked. These guys were his friends?!

A short while later another guy strolled into the shul. He is in the "overweight and obnoxious" file. "Misfit" does not even begin to describe this fellow. He was bouncing off the walls, running in and out of the shul, as if he could not decide whether to stay or leave. It was a strange scene. He was long on the list of those I do not associate with.

Evidently deciding to stay, he walked from table to table, exchanging a few words with each person, but leaving before anyone had a chance to fully respond. From there he went to the next

table, then to the next, and then back to the first to finish off the conversation.

But as I watched, he was not treated any differently than anyone else in the shul. Everyone responded to him with patience and kindness. I cannot describe how normal these two misfits seemed in the shul. There they were not misfits.

I slowly learned that in this shul, everyone is equal. There are no misfits in this community.

Today I am greatly ashamed of how I used to think. I became better acquainted with these two individuals, and many others, and have learned that there is much more to people than a label for my filing cabinet. They are complex individuals, with feelings, intellect, needs and wants, just like I have.

Several months ago a member of this shul became very ill. He was in a vegetative state in the hospital, while his wife and three children were left without a functional husband and father. On all accounts, it was a horrible situation. Previously this man had also been in my file of misfits, filed in the “never made it in life” file.

What transpired when the man's illness became known astounded me. I had never seen anything like it. Members of the shul visited the man in the hospital daily. Many were deeply involved in the financial aspects of his illness. Every time we met, he was a part of the conversation. The shul members constantly said prayers for him. They prepared meals for his family. It is hard to adequately describe the deep sense of responsibility they felt, as if they were all his brothers.

He passed away last night. The communal responsibility and love for another rubbed off on me, and I wanted to attend the funeral home and escort the body to the cemetery. I don't know

why—maybe because I thought most would not be able to take off a day of work.

I arrived a little early, expecting to be the first there. I was surprised, but by now not shocked, to find many shul members already at the funeral home. They were not people I could file under “unemployed.” On the contrary, they were well-to-do businessmen. And as the ceremony inched closer, more and more arrived.

Many continued to the cemetery, a half-hour's drive from Brooklyn. As we stood there, I looked around. Many have the custom that all the tombstones and plots should be the same. In our community, this is strictly kept.

It dawned on me that here everyone is equal. The rich and famous do not get a bigger stone than the poor and unfortunate. There are no files here, just as in my new shul there is no filing. Everyone is treated equal in death; so, too, they should be treated in life.

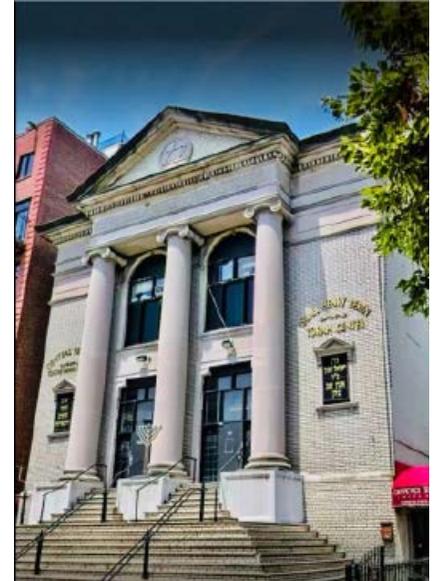
I did a lot of thinking and mental unloading on the way back home from the cemetery. By the time I arrived home, my filing cabinet was much, much emptier, and I intend for it to remain that way.

A TASTE OF BAIS SHMUEL

A Photo Essay



Shluchim Ožce
824 Eastern Parkway
2002
during the
Kinus Tzeirei
Hashluchos



Chovevei Torah
885 Eastern Parkway
2007- 2014

Machon Chana
827 Eastern Parkway
2002- 2006



JCM
792 Eastern Parkway
February 2014-2022

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 Say 30+ Kapitchach

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 KAPITACH WILL RECEIVE \$10 CASH! AFTER SHABBOS

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Sam Stern

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Rabbi Yosef Chaim Kantor

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THE REBBE'S KAPITAL:

Child from Bais Shmuel

DIVREI HISORIRUS:

Rabbi Levi Garelik

RABBI OF BAIS SHMUEL

HONORING OUR NAMESAKE:

Yisroel Motchkin

SON OF R' SHMUEL 'MULLE' MOTCHKIN

THE INSIDE STORY OF THE REBBE AND THIS PROPERTY:

Dudi Farkash

THANK YOU:

Rabbi Moshe Pinson

GROUNDBREAKING CEREMONY