



Rabbi Pinchas Hirschprung, who passed away this past month, was considered one of the foremost Torah scholars of our generation. He was born in the town of Kokla, Poland, in 5672 (1912). His teacher, Rabbi Meir Shapiro, head of the yeshiva *Chachmei Lublin*, affirmed that at a very young age Rabbi Hirschprung knew 2200 pages of Talmud by heart.

Soon after his *Bar Mitzva*, Rabbi Hirschprung published his first scholarly work. He also began editing a monthly journal that contained original Torah concepts of the greatest Torah Sages of that time. Upon Rabbi Shapiro's passing, Rabbi Hirschprung was appointed to test the students applying to yeshiva Chachmei Lublin. (For the entrance exam, applicants were tested on 400 folio of Talmud with commentaries by heart.)

During the War, Rabbi Hirschprung managed to miraculously escape from a concentration camp. In 1941 he arrived in Montreal, Canada, where he eventually became the director of the Rabbinical Council and head of the Rabbinical Court of Montreal, as well as Chief Rabbi of Canada.

Rabbi Meir Plotkin, one of Rabbi Hirschprung's devoted students for over 30 years, relates the following story:

In the summer of 1965, I wanted to move to New York to study in the Lubavitcher Kolel (a yeshiva for married men) there. The Rebbe told me to stay in Montreal and to establish a Kolel headed by Rabbi Hirschprung. Though at the time Rabbi Hirschprung had only tenuous ties to the Rebbe and Chabad-Lubavitch, we approached him and

he agreed. During that first year of the Kolel's existence, a great change began to take place in Rabbi Hirschprung's relationship with the Rebbe.

Close to the end of that first year, Rabbi Hirschprung travelled to Romania. A few months later, he related some of what had transpired at an audience he had had with the Rebbe just days after his return from Romania.

Before the War, Rabbi Hirschprung had had the great privilege of holding discussions with all of the Torah giants in Poland. After the War he had spoken with the Torah giants from Lithuania, and in America, he had spoken with all the Torah giants who had survived the War. The only great Torah scholar with whom he had not yet had a scholarly Torah discussion was the Rebbe. For, though by this time Rabbi Hirschprung had met numerous times with the Rebbe, the Rebbe always directed the conversation to communal matters and Jewish outreach.

Rabbi Hirschprung had therefore requested a special audience with the Rebbe in which they would exclusively "talk learning." The Rebbe consented and it was this audience that was scheduled for a few days after his return from Romania.

Rabbi Hirschprung related that from his youth he had a number of difficult questions which he had asked all the Torah giants and none had been able to satisfactorily answer his questions.

The Rebbe smiled at Rabbi Hirschprung and asked, "All the Torah giants you mentioned couldn't answer your questions and I can?"

Rabbi Hirschprung told the Rebbe that he was confident that the Rebbe could answer the questions. The Rebbe indicated that Rabbi Hirschprung could begin. The questions were on one of the most difficult sections of the Jerusalem Talmud. To Rabbi Hirschprung's surprise, it didn't seem as though the Rebbe was even concentrating on his questions. When Rabbi Hirschprung had concluded, the Rebbe said, "According to how you are explaining it, these are truly difficult questions. However, the difficulty is not in the Jerusalem Talmud but in the fact that you did not learn the topic properly."

The Rebbe proceeded to expound on the topic as though the Talmud was open in front of him, and showed that by understanding the passage properly, there were no questions.

Rabbi Hirschprung was amazed. Not one of the Torah scholars with whom he had discussed this difficulty in the past had thought there was no basis for the questions. Yet, the Rebbe had proven that the questions arose from not knowing how to understand the passage correctly in the first place.

Rabbi Hirschprung spent a long time asking the Rebbe many other questions. Then he told the Rebbe about a *shochet* [ritual slaughterer] whom he had met on his recent trip to Romania. Despite 40 years of Communist rule the *shochet* and his family continued to observe Torah and *mitzvot*.

The *shochet* told Rabbi Hirschprung that he feared for his children's spiritual lot. "Only one person can help," he had cried to Rabbi Hirschprung, "the Lubavitcher Rebbe. When you go back to America go to the Rebbe and tell him that I ask him to take me and my children out of here. I have no doubt that he can do it."

The Rebbe became very serious and asked Rabbi Hirschprung for all the details. The Rebbe's face became somber. Finally, the Rebbe said: "My father-in-law sent people to places like this and I should take them from there? And who will replace him?"

Rabbi Hirschprung said that when he saw how the Rebbe took responsibility for this *shochet* in Romania, his family, in fact the entire Jewish population of Romania, "I felt that I had found the leader of the generation. I felt strongly that the Rebbe is the *Moshe Rabbeinu* [Moses] of our generation and nobody else. He is a true Jewish leader."

From that time forth, Rabbi Hirschprung's ties with the Rebbe in particular and the Chabad-Lubavitch community in general grew stronger. His students say that it was this private audience which transformed Rabbi Hirschprung into a chasid of the Rebbe in every sense of the word.

Continued in next issue

etc.

DON'T PASS OVER PASSOVER

What do New York City, Nepal, Los Angeles, Moscow and Kinshasa all have in common? They are just a few of the thousands of cities where Chabad-Lubavitch will have communal *seders* on both nights of Passover, this year Friday, April 10, and Saturday, April 11. If you or anyone you know would like to reserve a place at a Chabad-Lubavitch seder call your local Chabad-Lubavitch Center or Lubavitch Youth Organization at (718) 953-1000.

JEWISH CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

Tzivos Hashem, producer of the Jewish Children's Expo, has begun work on the first ever Jewish Children's Museum. The 50,000 sq. ft. Museum will be located next door to Lubavitch World Headquarters and near the Brooklyn Museum and the Brooklyn Children's Museum. It will be completed in the year 2,000.

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The name of our publication has special meaning. It stands for the name of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka Schneerson (*obm*), wife of the Rebbe, *shlita*.

Published by
LUBAVITCH YOUTH ORGANIZATION
770 Eastern Parkway
Brooklyn, NY 11213
(718) 778-6000, 953-1000
Rabbi Dovid Raskin--Chairman
Rabbi Shmuel Butman--Director
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Shlomo Kurtz--Development Coordinator
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All contents © 1998 by L.Y.O. ISSN 1050-0480
For a one year subscription send \$36, payable to LYO,
(Foreign subscriptions: \$40 Canada, \$50 elsewhere)
to L'CHAIM, 1408 President St., Bklyn, NY 11213