

**TRIBUTE TO
RABBI SHLOMO MATUSOF
OF BLESSED MEMORY**

YOM KIPPUR, 5677 - 1916

1 KISLEV, 5768 – 2007



*The Newborn Baby
Grandson of Rabbi Shlomo Matusof*



*Rabbi Shlomo Matusof
of Blessed Memory*



MATUSOF BRIS
18 CHESHVAN, 5770 - NOVEMBER 5, 2009
CALGARY, ALBERTA
YEAR 5770 - UFARATZTA - BEYOND LIMITATIONS!

Dear Friends,

Welcome to our Simcha – the Bris of our dear son, Thursday 18 Cheshvan 5770!

We thank you for participating and enhancing our Simcha. In return Hashem will bless you and yours with all your needs and desires in good health and prosperity.

The tradition is not to name a baby boy prior to the Bris. This is why this souvenir booklet does not have the baby's name. At the same time, we hope you will enjoy reading about our father, father-in-law, Zeidy and great-grandfather, whose name this boy carries.

Upon reading this booklet, we hope that you will see that Zaidy was not just a Zaidy, but was one of the distinguished Jewish leaders of our generation, who was responsible for the physical and spiritual wellbeing of hundreds of thousands of Jews and worldwide leaders today!

We hope and pray that we each grow and learn from this great man of blessed memory, and that our children and grandchildren will see in him a role model of true life, standing firm in Judaism beyond limitations and despite all odds.

Our minds and thoughts are also with Bubby Rebbetzin Chaya Esther Zaltzman OBM, may she rest in peace and enjoy spiritual Nachas from her family who are following her footsteps.

We thank the Almighty for his blessings to date and wish our Bubby Rebbetzin Pessia Matusof and Zaidy Rabbi Berel & Leah Zaltzman many years of good health and happiness.

Our deepest appreciation goes out to our lovely children and grandchild for continuing to grow in the ways of yidishkeit and always bring us much nachas.

Special thanks to our daughter Chanie and son-in-law Dovid for preparing this 'memento – tribute'.

Finally, we hope and pray that as King David prophesied about his son Shlomo that Peace will reign in his days (Shlomo = Shalom), and as Zaidy Shlomo brought peace and harmony to thousands of homes, so may this little boy bring with him peace and harmony to our community, family and all of Israel until the ultimate peace with the coming and revelation of Moshiach and the Messianic era, NOW!

יחי אדונינו מורנו ורבינו מלך המשיח לעולם ועד

Rabbi Menachem & Rochel Matusof



A LIFE OF SELF-SACRIFICE

Rabbi Shlomo Matusof was born on Yom Kippur in 1916 in Vitebsk, Belarus. His parents were Reb Yitchok Issac and Beila. R' Shlomo was a year old when the Communist Revolution began. Despite being forbidden to teach Torah to children, R' Shlomo was sent to learn in the Lubavitch network of underground schools.


When he was only 12 and a half years old, the yeshiva moved permanently from his home town and from that time on, he did not see his parents much. Due to persecution they had to change locations weekly, sometimes moving from city to city. In one of the cities he found a good place to sleep, "on a shelf in a small room in a factory of someone I knew." Classes took place with closed windows, and a guard to warn them of any trouble coming.

At the age of 15, R' Shlomo traveled for five days to Kutaisi, Georgia, where the local government was somewhat less severe in its approach to the Jewish community. His life was relatively easy in his year in Georgia: "We at least had fruits and vegetables to eat and a place to sleep. ... We accepted everything with joy."

A group of Jews had presented the young man the opportunity to escape the Soviet Union through the Turkish border. R' Shlomo, who had two brothers already living in what was then Palestine, arranged for a visa there and paid to be smuggled out of the country.

The men who were supposed to aid him, however, turned out to be informants. An undercover operation undertaken by the Soviets soon saw him behind bars. He was the youngest prisoner in the group, being only 16. He sat in jail for 3 months and was then sent on his way.

After his imprisonment, he was homeless and wandered for months from house to house, subsisting on morsels of food. Finally, he found out about a yeshiva opening near Moscow in the city of Malakhovka. R' Shlomo described his 2 years there with



enthusiasm. Despite hunger, the spiritual situation and learning was good. “Thanks to Hashem, for us it was a time of growth and being firmly established on a Chassidic footing.”

Despite a failed escape attempt, the desire to leave Russia only grew. With the help of R’ Shlomo’s brothers in Israel, he managed to get a certificate to Israel as well a ticket with which to sail by ship. However, to his disappointment, he was refused an exit visa.


One day in 1935, news of some students’ arrests forced him to run once more. After packing up his personal belongings and exiting from the factories gates, he was tapped on the shoulder by a gentleman and was ordered to follow him. The destination was the secret police, where he was interrogated about the existence of the yeshiva. This lead to his second arrest when the NKVD began a wave of arrests.

After answering many questions mainly dealing with his connection with the family of the Sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn, of righteous memory, and the identity of his classmates, he was thrown into jail. It was then decided that he and a few more of his friends would be exiled to Kazakhstan for three years.



*R' Shlomo, Elul 1935 in a
photograph taken by the NKVD*

He spent a few days in prison in Tashkent, was then transferred to Alma Ata and finally stopped in Chimkent, a city in Kazakhstan. Life in this village was very harsh. R’ Shlomo continued to fulfill mitzvos and learn Torah despite the grave danger. Although he constantly tried to keep his deeds hidden, he was arrested yet again, without warning and for no apparent reason. After a month in jail in Chimkent, he was exiled to ten years of exile and forced labour. Yazhov, the new commander of the NKVD at the time decided to impose the harshest possible punishments to R’ Shlomo and another Chassid R’ Yankel.




Rabbi Shlomo's hard labour consisted of preparing tracts of land for train tracks. Despite the danger, R' Shlomo refused to desecrate the shabbos, not even Rabbinic laws. He paid for this by being sent to solidarity confinement or given other punishments, but he remained strong. In his words "How and what price I paid for this is too difficult to write, because every shabbos and holiday is another story, and most are different from one another."

R' Shlomo related that one year on Pesach, the only food he had access to besides for bread was beets. For the complete 8 days this was all he consumed. He juiced beets for the '4 cups' of wine, as well as ate slices of beets to represent the matzah for the pesach seder that he made for himself in hiding. Maror, the bitter herbs traditionally eaten at the pesach seder were definitely not missed that year. He expressed that he was living the 'maror' in the most harsh and terrible conditions he was in.

In 1940 R' Shlomo was released and transferred to an 'open' exile without hard labour. Soon the Nazis invaded the Soviet Union, which actually made his life a bit easier but this joy was mixed with great sorrow when he ultimately found out that many of his own family, including his parents, had been killed by the Nazis.

In 1943, R' Shlomo was released and then drafted into the Red Army, which was fighting against the Germans. Rabbi Shlomo was one of the first Chassidim to dare cross the border at the end of World War II.

In 1946, he joined the great migration of Polish citizens out of the Soviet Union using a forged visa, making his way to Germany. A year later he traveled with fellow yeshiva students to France to learn. There he was a teacher in Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim in Brunoy. "It was the first time that I was able to sit and learn as a free Jew and with no obstacles."



THE REBBE'S MISSION TO MOROCCO

A new chapter of Rabbi Shlomo's life began in the winter of 1950, with the Lubavitcher Rebbe's Shlichus assignment.

When the Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson MH"Y assumed leadership in 1950, Morocco was the first place to which he sent Shluchim/Emissaries to spread the light of Torah and Yiddishkeit. In a letter in Hebrew dated Aug. 9, 1950, the Rebbe writes that Instead of private individuals, emissaries are "candles that illuminate all their surroundings and ... people who live and grant vitality to another person, another two people, another three, etc. ... The fruits [of these efforts] will produce fruit and further generations of fruit for eternity."



Rabbi Shlomo Matusof receiving 'Lechaim' from the Rebbe in 770 Lubavitch World Headquarters during the 1980's

When he received the Rebbe's letter, Rabbi Shlomo was engaged to be married, and had a strong desire to finally live among Jews after a life of hardship under communism in Russia. But instead of settling down with his plans to make Aliya to Israel, the assignment to Morocco saw him once again display an inordinate amount of self-sacrifice.



Rabbi Shlomo & Rebbetzin Pessia Matusof

After getting married a short while later, the new couple arrived in Morocco in the spring of 1951.

Despite Rabbi Shlomo's lack of French he came to Morocco to build a Jewish education system, which was designed to buttress the ethnic customs of the Sephardic Jews living in Morocco.

Rabbi Shlomo and Rebbetzin Pessia Matusof encountered a proud Jewish community in a predominantly

Muslim country dealing with fallback from the establishment of the state of Israel three years prior. They worked hand in hand with the rabbis there.

When R' Shlomo started, the education was very poor in Morocco. The Jews were very poor. But he and his wife devoted themselves

to the cause, eventually developing a very good and warm relationship with Morocco's royal family, particularly the late King Hassan II. To this day, the Jewish community remaining in Morocco continues to be protected by the state.



Rabbis Matusof and Raskin presenting a picture of the Rebbe to a Moroccan Minister

and had no access to them by paved roads. He would take a donkey and travel from town to town just to make sure that Jewish children got a proper education.

Over the years more shluchim came to Morocco to help with the growing number of institutions. Led by R' Shlomo, they established a mighty empire of education throughout



Rabbi Shlomo Matusof, third from right, with Rabbi Menachem Matusof as a small child on his lap, sit down with Sephardic Jewish leaders in Morocco

In the early 1950's, in a single year, Rabbi Shlomo Matusof established a network of 70 institutions throughout Morocco. He would often travel to the various yeshivas throughout Morocco. Some of the villages were rundown



Group Picture of teachers and students at Oholei Yosef Yitzhak in Casablanca. Rabbi Shlomo is standing at the right, Rabbi Pinson OB" M in second from the left

Morocco, providing education for many thousands of students.

Many Jews from Morocco who settled in Israel, France and other countries remember their early education in Chabad schools of Morocco, thanks to Rabbi Shlomo. Among the famous graduates of these schools are Chief Rabbi of Israel Shlomo Amar and Av Beis Din (head of Jewish Court) in Beer Sheva, Rabbi Eliyahu Abergil and many more.

Rabbi Shlomo was a very simple, learned and humble man. Both him and his wife were true soldiers of the Lubavitcher Rebbe. Trying and successfully spreading Yiddishkeit in an Arab country with constant persecution from their neighbors, was not an easy task.

To this day Judaism continues to thrive in Morocco thanks to Rabbi Shlomo Matusof's work together with his fellow shluchim.

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One of the pages from the financial summary
of the 69 institutions at the time in 1952
Handwritten by Rabbi Shlomo Matusof



*Rabbi Shlomo Matusof and his former student
Rabbi Shlomo Amar, Chief Rabbi of Israel*



Jewish library in Casablanca. Standing from right to left: Rabbi Matusof, the librarian, Rabbi Eidellman, and Rabbi Aharon Mousonego, rav of Casablanca

RABBI SHLOMO'S LATER YEARS

In 1992 Rabbi Shlomo and his wife left Morocco and moved to New York where he lived until his passing on 1 Kislev 5768 - November 11, 2007.

Rabbi Shlomo was known as a person who never wasted time. Once in New York his life was devoted to learning Torah. In 1997 he completed and published a book

completed and published a book titled 'Rishmei Biurim' a collection of his commentaries on Talmud with insights from kaballah and chassidic philosophy. At the end of his book he recorded a very detailed description of his memories and life in communist Russia.



Rabbi Matusof is seen studying Talmud in his home in New York

Rabbi Menachem and Rochel Matusof along with their children had the privilege of having Zaidy and Bubby come visit them in Calgary.

“Although us grandchildren were young at the time,” says Chanie, “Zaidy had a profound effect on us. He was such a special, sincere



Rabbi Menachem & Rochel Matusof and children; Chanie, Yossi, Mussie, Levi and Brochie with Zaidy and Bubby Matusof in their home in Calgary in 1995



Rabbi Shlomo Matusof learning Talmud in Banff, Alberta. Next to him is his wife Rebetzin Pessia with grand-daughter Chanie



Zaidy Matusof, Sandek at the Bris of Yudi in Calgary

and holy man. On our visit to Banff, Zaidy took along a Torah book to study with while enjoying G-d's creations in the beautiful Canadian Rockies."



Rabbi Shlomo Matusof giving a class at the weekly Lunch & Learn in downtown Calgary

In 1998 Zaidy came to Calgary especially to be the Sandek at Yudi's Bris. During his visit he lectured and shared his wisdom with our Calgary community.



Rabbi Reuven Matusof, the Rebbe's emissary to Lubavitch office in Paris at the Torah Dedication in Calgary



Rabbi Shlomo Matusof holding the newly dedicated Sefer Torah under the Chuppah at the dedication ceremony in Calgary


Rabbi Shlomo and Rebbetzin Pessia Matusof were also honoured by our Calgary community with a Sefer Torah Dedication honouring their 50th wedding anniversary. The Sefer Torah is one of the Torah scrolls now used weekly at Chabad Lubavitch of Alberta.



Rabbi Shlomo and Rebbetzin Pessia Matusof at their 50th wedding anniversary with Rabbi Menachem & Rochel Matusof



Rabbi Shlomo Matusof officiating at the wedding of Rabbi Menachem and Rochel. To the sides are Rabbi Berel and Chaya Esther Zaltzman (Rochel's parents)



The last Shabbos of Rabbi Shlomo Matusof's life, was spent with his children and grandchildren in his apartment in Crown Heights, New York. It was the weekend of the annual International Conference of Shluchim. All his children and many grandchildren came to New York for the conference and to visit.

On Motzaei Shabbos - Saturday night, 1 Kislev 5768 - November 11, 2007, in his home surrounded by his wife, all his children and many grandchildren, he returned his soul to the creator, at the age of 91. The atmosphere was one of holiness and tranquility as his family sang 'Niggunim' Chassidic tunes at his bedside till the recitation of 'Shema'.


The news of his passing traveled quickly as thousands of Lubavitch emissaries gathered in New York for the annual international conference. Thousands of shluchim, including family and friends from across the globe attended the funeral and paid their last respects to Rabbi Shlomo of blessed memory.

Dozens of newspapers in Israel, France, America and internet media announced his passing and featured articles about his life and impact on Moroccan Jewry. Some of them include NY Times, Yediyot Acharonot, International Herald Tribune, Jerusalem Post, Boston Globe, Arutz Sheva and many more.

Below is one such article from Chabad.org written by Yehuda L. Ceitlin.

**MOROCCAN CONSUL CONSOLED FAMILY
OF DECEASED LUBAVITCH EMISSARY**

Mohamed Karmoune, the Moroccan consul in New York, visited the Crown Heights section of Brooklyn, N.Y., this week to pay his respects to the family of Rabbi Shlomo Matusof, who passed away during the International Conference of Chabad-Lubavitch Emissaries. In the visit, the diplomat gave credit to Chabad-Lubavitch as a major contributor to the country's educational system and the maintaining of Jewish life in North Africa.



“Between my diplomatic missions, I’ve heard about the Chabad activities in Morocco,” said Karmoune. “I would really like to preserve the connection, because we all know what great educational work you’ve done and your contribution to my country.”



Moroccan consul Mohamed Karmoune sits down with the family of the late Rabbi Shlomo Matusof

Accompanied by Maurice Perez, vice president of the Moroccan Netivot Yisrael community in Brooklyn, Karmoune praised the late Matusof, who died at the age of 91 after decades spent as a Lubavitch emissary to Morocco.

Matusof, a Russian native, was dispatched to Morocco in 1950 by the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, of righteous memory, to shepherd the Jewish community in North Africa. He arrived one year later and eagerly established a vast network of yeshivas that counted some 70 branches, many in remote villages.

“I heard that our father used to often travel to the various yeshivas,” Rabbi Menachem Matusof, executive director of Chabad-Lubavitch of Alberta, Canada, told the consul general. “Some of the villages were rundown and had no access to them by paved roads. So he used to take a donkey and travel from town to town just to make sure Jewish children got a proper education.”

Upon hearing this, his brother from Madison, Wis., Rabbi Yona Matusof, added: "I was lately in a visit to Israel visiting a former student of father and he showed me a photo of father riding on a donkey during one of these visits."

To this, Karmoune responded: "I want you to know that the Moroccan government sees you not only as an integral part of our past, but also our present and future. You are men of Morocco and part of the Jewish community, which is bearing the fruit of your father's activities."

The consul general spoke to Matusof's widow, Pessia Matusof about her partnership in her husband's efforts. They even reviewed some historic photos of community events.

Despite Matusof's warm relationship with Morocco's royal family, particularly the late King Hassan II, they had difficulty finding a photo of the two men together.

"Rabbi Shlomo was a simple man," explained Rabbi Lazer Avtzon, a nephew who spent two years in Morocco. "He acted like a soldier of the Rebbe. He had a mission and he stuck to it. All his life he escaped honor and fame, so we don't have many photos of him."

Rabbi Shlomo leaves behind his wife Rebbetzin Pessia Matusof and sons Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Matusof, Lubavitch emissary in Toulouse, France; Rabbi Yehuda Leib Matusof, Lubavitch emissary in Cannes, France; Rabbi Eliyahu Matusof, Librarian and researcher of Kabbala & Chassidic Philosophy at Lubavitch World Headquarters; Rabbi Yona Matusof, Lubavitch emissary to the University of Wisconsin in Madison; Rabbi Reuven Matusof, Lubavitch emissary in Paris, France; Rabbi Shmariyahu Matusof, Lubavitch emissary in Paris, France; Rabbi Menachem Mendel Matusof, Lubavitch emissary to Alberta, Canada; and daughters Baila Palatinski, M.S.W. Grant Writer For Communal Organizations in Edison, NJ and Aidaleh Nemenov, Principal of Beis Rivkah Early Childhood Center in New York.



*Family Photo at 50th wedding celebration in New York.
Top L-R; Rabbis Eli, Yona, Reuven, Shmerl, and Menachem.
Bottom L-R; Rabbis Yehudah Leib, and Yosef Yitzchok,
Rabbi Shlomo and Rebbetzin Pessia, and daughters Baila and Aidela*

To date there are over 100 grandchildren and great grandchildren, may they all continue in his footsteps.

Rabbi Shlomo Matusof's life and personality continues to be a role model and driving force to his children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, students, Rabbis, Spiritual leaders and active lay leaders in Jewish communities worldwide.



This memorial board at Chabad Lubavitch of Alberta is dedicated by Rabbi Menachem & Rochel Matusof and family and the Calgary Community to Rabbi Shlomo Matusof OB" M. Handcrafted by Lou Faber OB" M



**Dedicated by
Rabbi Menachem & Rochel Matusof
and Family**

**Prepared and compiled by Rabbi Dovid & Chanie Altein
Publications & Multimedia Director at Chabad Lubaivtch of Alberta**



*Bubby Matusof with Rabbi Menachem & Rochel and children;
Chanie & Dovid Altein with baby Shloimele, Yossi, Mussie,
Levi, Brochie, Yudi, Avremy and Chaya Esther
at Glenmore Park in Calgary. Pesach 5768-2008*



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