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THE CHABAD HOUSE

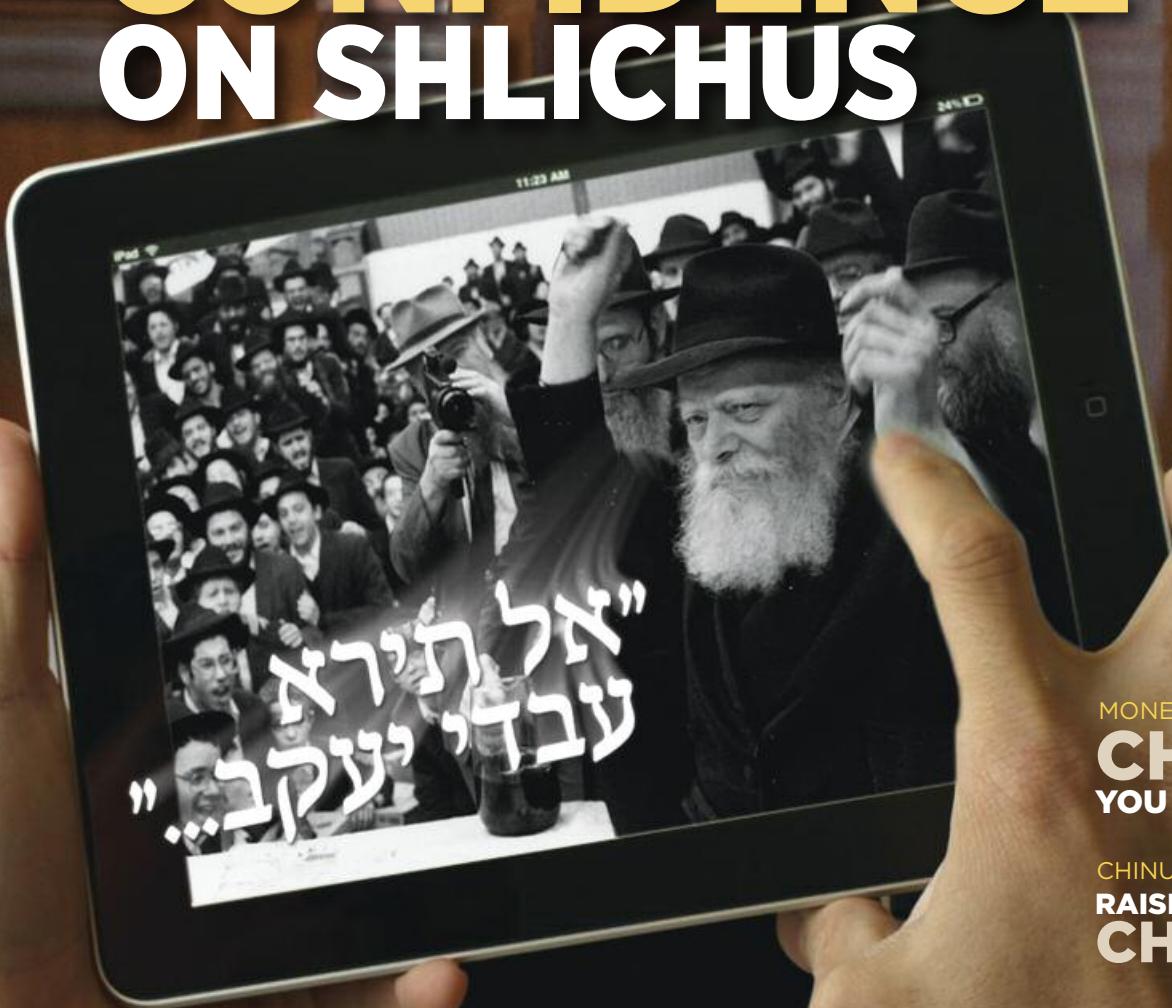
# COMPASS

NAVIGATE THE WORLD OF SHLICHUS  
FOR SHLUCHIM, BY SHLUCHIM

Pesach 5771

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## CONFIDENCE ON SHLICHUS

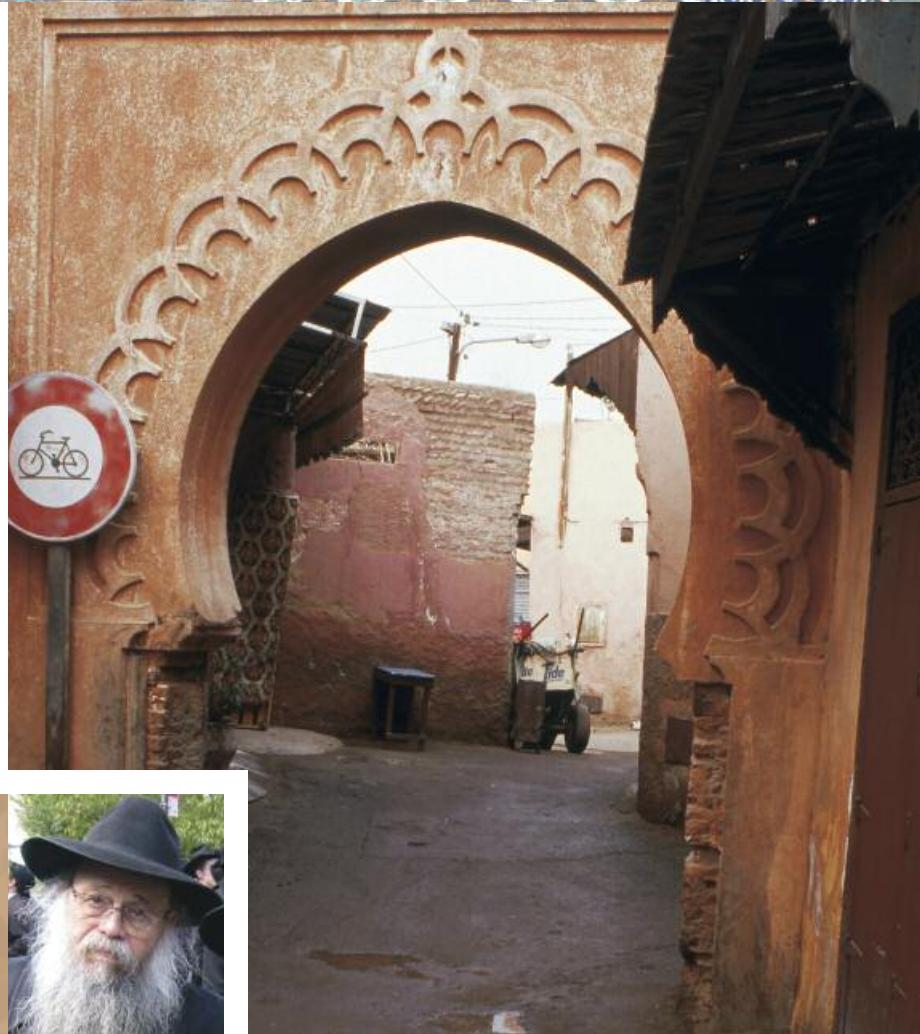


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# Shlichus with גאון יעקב

A glimpse into the life of  
**Rabbi Yehuda  
Leib Raskin**  
1933–2004



## CONFIDENCE IN SHLICHUS

**R**aucous laughter and loud chatter spill onto the cobblestone streets of Downtown Casablanca as the city welcomes the weekend break. Local Muslims and young university students loiter about. In the middle of it all, Rabbi Leibel Raskin and his sons weave their way through the uncongenial air of Morocco's largest city.

It takes only a minute for the stares

and jeers to begin. A group of Muslim students calls out "Jew! Jew!" and laughs in derision. Rabbi Leibel looks at them and calmly responds, "Thank you! Thank you for reminding me who I am!" And with his head held high, he walks in the direction of the setting sun, proud to be a Jew, proud to be a Shliach of the Rebbe.

## GEON YAakov FROM AN EARLY AGE

Born in 1933 Soviet Russia to Rabbi Yaakov Yosef and Draiza Raskin, Leibel's steadfast commitment and steeled confidence in protecting and propagating Yiddishe and Chassidishe values was vis-

ible from an early age.

After studying in Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim in Samarkand under extremely difficult and precarious conditions, he escaped with his family to Kazakhstan towards the end of World War II.

There, as a young eleven year old boy, he and his brother Dovid met the Rebbe's father, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Schneersohn, right after his release from prison and exile. The young Raskin often assisted Reb Levik with putting on Tefilin and other various physical needs, while benefitting tremendously from being in Reb Levik's holy presence.

Among the things that remained in-



**"...TO HEAR SUCH CLEAR AND CONFIDENT WORDS COMING FROM SUCH A YOUNG MAN, AND TO SEE HIS COMPLETE DEVOTION TO HIS REBBE, LEFT AN IMPRESSION ON ME FOR MANY YEARS TO COME."**

grained in his memory was the way in Reb Levik would greet every person who walked in the door. Even after suffering a brutal exile which would ultimately claim his life, Reb Levik would stand and welcome all who came to visit him, undeterred by the looming danger of government agents.

In the mid 1940s, the Raskin family left for Eretz Yisroel. There the Friediker Rebbe advised Leibel to go learn in Yeshivas Lud.

When the Rebbe assumed leadership in the winter of 1951, Leibel, then 18 years old, moved to Crown Heights, Brooklyn, to be by the Rebbe.

After some months of living in New

York, the Bureau of Immigration sent him a deportation notice. They had taken issue with his citizenship application, for he had titled himself "Head of activities of Chabad in Europe". Yehuda Leib consulted with the Rebbe, who instructed him to visit a lawyer by the name of Mr. Ring.

"I explained to him that it was ridiculous to write such a fabrication and that the only way out was to tell the truth," Mr. Ring later recounted. "Yet he refused for two reasons: One, he told me that that was the truth; he was indeed head of Chabad of Europe. And second, he said the Rebbe sent him not to hear any ideas or opinions on why it wouldn't

work, because he would get a green card."

"I must say," Ring continued, "that to hear such clear and confident words coming from such a young man, and to see his complete devotion to his Rebbe, left an impression on me for many years to come."

In court, Mr. Ring told the judge, "My client was born and raised in Communist Russia where life was absolutely horrendous. I'm certain that your honor can imagine the fortitude it must have taken for a young Orthodox Jewish boy to succeed under the pressures and prosecutions of that oppressive government. From the time he was in kindergarten he was already making life and death decisions about himself and those around him. I can assure you that my client was not exaggerating when he described his achievements."

The judge, visibly impressed by these words, approved his documents. Leibel got his green card as the Rebbe had said.

In the winter of 1960, Leibel married Hada Reizel Azimov from Paris, France. While he was still engaged, during a visit to New York for Pesach, the Rebbe summoned him; he had a special shlichus for him.

## THE WHITE HOUSE OF MOROCCO

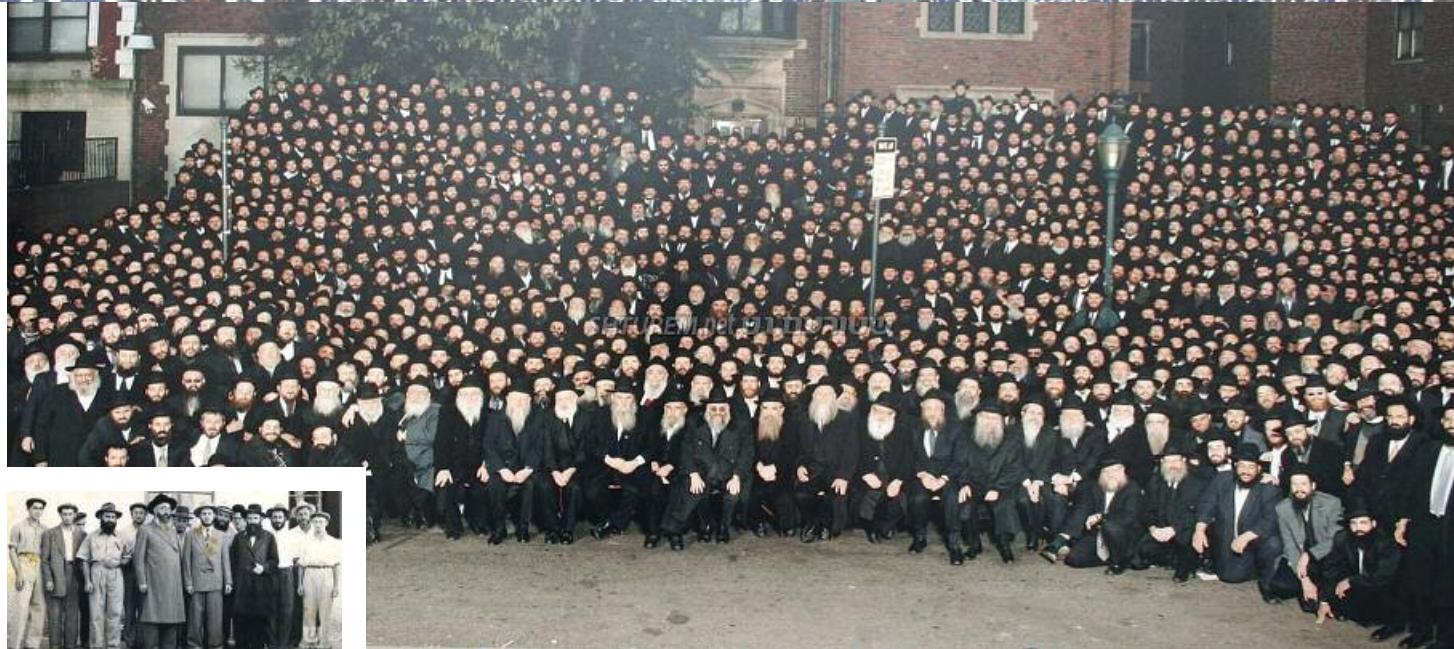
In their private yechidus, the Rebbe asked Rabbi Raskin to be his personal emissary to Casablanca, Morocco, otherwise known as the "White House of Morocco", and join Rabbi Shlomo Matusov in managing Chabad's 70 educational institutions there.

Upon his arrival in Casablanca, Rabbi Raskin was immediately appointed to the directorship of the elementary Beis Rivka School and the role of mashgiach of the local yeshiva. This vital chinuch work was something that Rabbi Raskin cherished, and he would hand-pick the melamdin, ensuring the children received an authentic Jewish chinuch.

When the Rebbe introduced the Ten Mivtzoim campaigns in the late 1960s



King Hassan II of Morocco.



Inset: Anash and Temimim escorting Rabbi Raskin on his way to the Rebbe.

and early to mid 1970s, Rabbi Raskin set out to fulfill the Rebbe's directives with determination and confidence, encouraging Jews to observe these practices. For Rabbi Raskin, one thing was clear; what was dear to the Rebbe was dear to him.

One of those things was the printing of the Tanya across the globe, which the Rebbe initiated in the late 1970s. Never one to be left on the side, Rabbi Raskin immediately approached a man named Dovid Bousklia to help him translate the Tanya into Arabic.

When he initially refused, Rabbi Raskin offered to learn with him Tanya twice a week. "As I familiarized myself with the Tanya, and with the constant encouragement of the Rav, I accepted the challenge," Bousklia later remarked.

When the translation was completed, they both traveled to present the Tanya to the Rebbe. In yechidus, the Rebbe emphasized to them the significance of completing such a project. "Translating the Tanya in Arabic will break the klipah of Yishmael, and this will bring the Geulah that much closer."

Throughout his shlichus in Casablanca, Rabbi Raskin endeavored to impart to others the Chassidic teachings that were imbued in him as a child in Soviet Russia. He would encourage Jews to daven with a minyan, observe Shabbos and set aside time for Torah study.

### THE REBBE AND THE KING

On the 23rd of July, 1999, King Hassan II passed away, sending the country of Morocco into a traditional 40-day mourning period.

Nine years earlier, in the spring of 1990, Morocco's Ambassador to the United States visited the Rebbe in Crown Heights during Sunday dollars. The Rebbe gave the Ambassador a dollar to give to King Hassan. The Rebbe told the Ambassador, "The King would appreciate the American dollar, for it says on the back 'In G-d We Trust'."

"I know the King received the dollar," Rabbi Raskin later related. "He did in fact appreciate its significance. "The King was very friendly and kindly disposed to Lubavitch and its work in Morocco throughout his rule, and would express his admiration to others."

"We had a summer camp at a hotel on top of a mountain near Ifrane. Once, King Hassan was visiting the countryside and stopped at the hotel for a meal. After the meal the owner of the hotel introduced himself to King Hassan. The King inquired as to how things were going at the hotel and the owner responded that all was well and that there was a camp going on, run by Lubavitch. The King replied, "That's good. The Lubavitch rabbis are very important people. Make sure to take good care of them."

The famously good relations that

Lubavitch had with the late King Hassan II was well known, and after anti-Semitic bombings in 2002, King Mohammed VI sent assurances to the Jewish community via Rabbi Raskin.

### HOLDING STRONG

Even as Moroccan Jewry shrunk from 250,000 to less than 5,000, Rabbi Raskin stayed in Casablanca. His commitment to Moroccan Jewry never weakened in any way. If there was even one Jew there, he felt he must be there for that Jew. He worked closely with the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee to maintain services for the remnants.

When Rabbi Raskin fell ill on Rosh Chodesh Kislev in 2002, he traveled to Montreal and New York to be treated. Before the Kinus Hashluchim in 2003, he told his family that he needs to return to Morocco. He said that "for the Kinus Hashluchim, one must come from his makon hashlichus."

It was moments like these that defined who Rabbi Raskin was as a person. His determination and conviction, as well as his unrelenting dedication, endured throughout his life and was a source of inspiration for all who knew him.

Rabbi Raskin was respected as a leader and a visionary who left his mark on the world by touching friends, families and communities.

On Sunday May 2nd, 2004, Rabbi

Above: Rabbi Raskin at the Kinus Hashluchim 5763, the last kinus he attended.

Yehuda Leib Raskin, Chabad Shliach to Morocco for more than 44 years, passed away. He was 71 years old.

Rabbi Raskin was buried in the Old Montefiore Cemetery in Queens, near the Rebbe's Ohel, and left behind six children who serve as Shluchim in Vermont, Montreal, Maine and California.

### HIS LEGACY

Standing proudly by his side throughout his life, Rebbetzin Raskin demonstrated her true devotion, especially during Rabbi Raskin z"l's long illness, never leaving him for a moment.

Today in Casablanca, she continues their shlichus, keeping aflame the legacy of one of the Rebbe's veteran soldiers. With love and care, and total commitment, she tends to the needs of Moroccan Jewry, walking the same proud yet selfless steps as her husband had, for so many faithful years. 

### המעשה הוא העיקר

- Recognize every step in the street as an opportunity to display Shem Hashem in Olam Hazeh.
- Even when dealing with official papers and government offices, remember that they are merely channels of Hashem's ratzon.
- Encourage others to set aside time to learn and to fulfill the Rebbe's mitzvaim.
- Stay strong when the going gets tough.

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