



# חסידי הראשונים

## Stories of the Early Chassidim

### **Reb Avrohom Ber Yirmiya's of Babroisk (2)**

*Reb Avrohom Ber tells about the first time he went to the Tzemach Tzedek, when he was six years old.*

When I turned six years old, and I was going to start Cheder, my father took me with him to Lubavitch when he went there for the Yom Tov of Shavuot, to visit the Rebbe, the Tzemach Tzedek.

We went with a large group of Chassidim from our town, headed by the famous Chassid, Reb Aizik Homlier who was the Rav of our town. This is the way we traveled. There were four wagons; in each wagon, fifteen people could travel. Most of the Chassidim traveled by foot, and they would take turns going in to the wagons for an hour or two to rest up. Then they would go back to walking, and other people would go in to the wagons. Reb Aizik Homlier and my father were amongst the people that stayed on the wagons the whole time, and I traveled with them, sitting next to my father, just opposite Reb Aizik.

Everyone was in an extremely happy mood. We passed through many cities and villages. Wherever we went, there was rejoicing and celebration, and more people joined our group, also traveling to Lubavitch. The journey took us five days. We left on Sunday, and on Thursday toward evening, we finally arrived in Lubavitch.

I remember well how I went in to the Rebbe with my father for yechidus. Father entered the Rebbe's room, and I followed him, holding tightly to the corner of his coat. The room in which the Rebbe sat was quite large, the walls lined with cabinets full of seforim. The Rebbe sat behind a large table, upon which lay a few seforim, several boxes filled with coins, and two lit candles.

As Father entered the room, the Rebbe was studying a sefer which lay open before him. But when we approached the place where the Rebbe sat, he raised his eyes from the sefer and gazed into father's face, and into mine.

The Rebbe read the *Pan* that father had handed him, and studied it for some time. As he read it, he looked up into father's face, and into mine, from time to time. Then he began speaking to Father. The Rebbe continued speaking to Father for a long time; then Father asked him several questions, which the Rebbe answered.

When the Rebbe finished speaking, Father said, "Here is my son," as he pointed to me and moved me closer to the Rebbe. "I am about to enroll him in the cheder, and I beg the Rebbe to bless him."

The Rebbe studied me for a moment, then he closed his holy eyes. After a few moments he opened them again, looked directly at me, and said, "Study diligently (with *Shkidah*), and do not waste any time. May Hashem Yisborach help you to become a Lamdan and a chassid."

"Amen!" Father and I both exclaimed.

As soon as we emerged from the Rebbe's holy presence we went to the small minyan room. Father lifted me onto his shoulders and began to dance with the chassidim who were already rejoicing in song and dance. This was the usual custom in those days: whenever someone had the privilege of yechidus with the Rebbe, he would break into a dance upon leaving the holy chamber.