

## My Shlichus in the Washington, D.C. Area

In 1974 (with the *haskama* and *bracha* of the Rebbe) Rabbi Hadakov confirmed my Shlichus to the State of Maryland (see credential).

In fulfillment of this *shlichus*, I began to reach out to the Greater Washington area (Maryland and D.C.) in 1975 with a series of programs, including *mitzvot*, school and university programs, study groups etc. All of these activities were included in the regular reports that were sent to the Rebbe and Rabbi Hadakov. These *peulos* covered the entire Greater Washington area without any distinction. By this time, Rabbi A. Shemtov had already been active for a number of years on Capitol Hill and in Federal Government circles on behalf of Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch.

(Before Yud Shevat 5735 Rabbi S. D. Raichik was instructed by the Rebbe to visit Washington, D.C. on his way to New York and do *mitzva neshet*. Rabbi Raichik called me to make all the necessary arrangements and escort him around the community.)

In 1978, with the *haskama* and *bracha* of the Rebbe, a house was purchased in Rockville, Maryland to serve as the Chabad House of Greater Washington.

As a result of the purchase of the Chabad House, Rabbi Hadakov requested that an understanding be reached between Rabbi A. Shemtov and me, to ensure that there would not be any conflict between the different areas of activity. Rabbi Hadakov also wanted that the agreement be structured in a way that would exempt him from having to resolve any disagreements.

Rabbi A. Shemtov took the position that the only way that this could be achieved is if he would be the Merkos Shliach over the entire Washington D.C. area and that I would work in this area under him. Rabbi Hadakov rejected this approach and told me that the intention was that 'government' and 'community' should remain two distinct areas of activity. After much delay and difficulty, Rabbi Hadakov finally called me to New York (in Elul of 5739) and explained the parameters of how this was to be set up. Rabbi Hadakov asked me to type it and bring it back to him, where-upon he edited it. I was then instructed to bring the final document to Rabbi A. Shemtov and have him sign it. (Document attached.)

Once this was done, Rabbi A. Shemtov and I worked out the details of how this arrangement would be implemented on the ground which included informing each other in writing of new planned activities.

Rabbi Hadakov's document clearly recognizes that Merkos has different categories of activity in the Washington D.C. area. Rabbi A. Shemtov was designated as the Merkos representative for work with the Federal Government (and also given the right to decide which activities belong in which category, and where appropriate, have input into how

some activities are done) (Document available), but not for the local community, which was the sphere of the Greater Washington Chabad House.

From that point on there was never a single issue of dispute between the two of us. The lines were clear and each of us kept to his area of activity and cooperated with each other on various occasions.

One instructive example of how this functioned was the Neshei Chabad convention which was held in Washington D.C. in 1984. The idea for holding the convention in Washington was brought up and discussed between myself and Mrs. M. Popack. I decided to undertake the project and informed Rabbi A. Shemtov who wanted one event to be at the Capital under the auspices of American Friends of Lubavitch. The choice of Washington as the venue was brought to the Rebbe and he gave his *haskama*. The entire convention was organized and implemented by my wife (and myself) with the assistance of Zlata Geisinsky and the other Shluchos. All the printed material for the convention (which was also submitted to the Rebbe) clearly indicated that I was the one who was responsible for serving the entire Greater Washington area including D.C. proper. (Documents available)

Another example; In 1985 I had a supporter who agreed to sponsor a 'Chabad Store/Center' in D.C. I wrote to the Rebbe and received a *haskama* to go ahead with it. In accordance with my agreement with Rabbi A. Shemtov, I informed him of this but did not receive a response. As per our agreement, this meant that I had the right to proceed with the project as I saw fit, which, in fact, I did. Unfortunately, the project didn't come to fruition for other reasons. (Documents available)

In 1993, Rabbi A. Shemtov appointed his son Levi to work under him in his capacity as the Merkos representative to the Federal Government.

In 1994 Rabbi Eli Backman was hired to live and work at the Chabad House in Rockville. His area of activity was the universities of Washington, D.C. and particularly GW University. This activity continued until his marriage in 1995, when I decided that he should transfer his work to the University of Maryland in College Park.

In Conclusion: Rabbi A. Shemtov was clearly only appointed as the Merkos representative to the Federal Government and not to the D.C. Jewish community. This responsibility was included under the auspices of the Chabad House in Rockville which served D.C. and the Maryland suburbs.

If there is any disagreement about the above the matter can always be brought before the Vaad of our parent *mosad* Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch or to VRL.

כ"ה

דו"ד שדיכר הרה"ח חמ"א חדקאב עם הרה"ת ש. קפלן

יום א' כ"ד אלול תשל"ט

בנוגע לוואשינגטאן יש גדרים; א- יחס המל"ח עם חוגי הממשלה  
בוואשינגטאן. ב- פעולות ביהדות עם אלו השייכים להממשלה והמקורבים  
להם וכדומה שיש להמל"ח יחס להם. ג- פעולות בהקהילה היהודית של העיר  
וואשינגטאן (כדרך עסקנות סניפי המל"ח בכל אתר ואתר). על גדר א' וב'  
נתמנה הרב א"י שם טוב. על גדר הג' לא נתמנה עד עתה בא כח המל"ח  
ואחד הטעמים הוא כדי שלא יהי' סתירה לפעולות הרא"י שם טוב שם. ובאשר  
הפעולות של הבית חב"ד בראקוויל עולה בגדר הג', הנה בכדי שלא יהי'  
סתירה בין זה לזה הוטלה על הרא"י שם טוב האחריות להחליט איזה פעולה  
היא בסוג זו או זו, או אם אין סתירה בין פעולות הבית חב"ד לעבודת  
המל"ח בחוג הממשלה הנ"ל.

מובן שהנ"ל הוא רק בנוגע לוואשינגטאן והמקומות הקשורים עמה.

הוצא ע"י היכל יחזקאל חזקא

הנ"ל הוא כיוון מוכר בפני עצמו להעבירה באמצעותו.

(כ"ו ט' ז'ה

אשר