



VISITING THE REBBE

- 13 AV 5726 -

On his first presidential visit to the United States in 5726*, then president of Israel, Mr. Zalman Shazar, who had a Chabad family history that dates back to the Alter Rebbe and merited a unique relationship with the Rebbe, visited 770.



JEM 102916

Just before midnight, the crowd grew outside 770, singing Napoleon's March as Mr. Shazar arrived with his entourage. The Rebbe came outside to greet him with a warm embrace and kiss. "Rebbe, Rebbe!" Shazar announced excitedly as he put his hands on the Rebbe's holy face. The warm interaction was quite a unique scene.



JEM 110907

The Rebbe introduces the president to mazkir Rabbi Dr. Nissan Mindel



JEM 103218



JEM 109017

Upon entering, the Rebbe gave the president a tour of the upstairs of 770. For much of the time the Rebbe led him by the arm.



JEM 102915



Before this trip, some Israeli officials gave Mr. Shazar a difficult time about coming to the Rebbe. They felt that it would break protocol for the President to go to the Rebbe. If Mr. Shazar wanted to see the Rebbe—they contended—it would be more appropriate for the Rebbe to visit him. Ultimately Mr. Shazar prevailed and he did indeed visit the Rebbe at 770. During the tour the Rebbe showed him the place where the Friediker Rebbe would celebrate Simchas Torah, where he would cry on Tisha B'Av, where he would recite Chassidus, and where his yeshiva was. When reaching the Rebbe's room, he pointed to his desk and said, "From this table the tears of many Jews were heard; this I could not have brought to you."



In the Rebbe's room, Mr. Shazar introduced some members of his entourage to the Rebbe.



Shazar started the conversation asking about making a bracha Shehecheyanu. The Rebbe explained the different scenarios that may occur between two friends who have not seen each other for a period of 30 days. Shazar went on to notify the Rebbe that he had been keeping the shiurim in nigleh and Chassidus that the Rebbe had suggested during their last meeting. After a few moments, the room emptied for the Rebbe and Shazar—who the Rebbe so warmly referred to as “Reb Zalman”—to continue privately.



Shazar presented the Rebbe with a gift of a special wooden box containing original handwritten letters of the Rebbe Rashab. These letters were originally in the possession of the Frieddiker Rebbe’s library but were lost during the war, with a small portion later reaching Mr. Shazar. The Rebbe thanked him profusely, rendering it an act of pidyon shvuyim, and continued to do so in their correspondence for years to come. Mazkirim recalled that the box stayed in the Rebbe’s room for a long time.

The Rebbe gifted Shazar a newly printed maamar from the Rebbe Maharash, 5626 נחמו נחמו עמי—printed specially for the occasion—and autographed it.

