

*In an unprecedented interview, RABBI YEHUDA KRINSKY, perhaps the most powerful person in the contemporary Chabad movement, grants Mishpacha a rare window into the famed Chabad Headquarters at 770, and the forty years he spent as the personal assistant of the LUBAVITCHER REBBE, ztz"l. "Every second was a new adventure," he says, and his fascinatingly vivid memories and riveting stories reflect the unusual scope and nature of his position. The sole executor of the Rebbe's will, Rabbi Krinsky reflects on the legacy and mission that the Rebbe entrusted to him, and decries those who seek to distort his legacy*

# Where Heaven and Earth **TOU CHED** and When Every Second Was a New Adventure

*Rabbi Yitzchok Frankfurter*

Many fleeting thoughts were passing through my mind that cold Thanksgiving weekend as my wife and I headed towards Agudath Israel's 86<sup>th</sup> National Convention, in Stamford, Connecticut. Still, it never occurred to me that the speech fated to rivet us that Friday afternoon of November 28, 2008, would be delivered *not* at the speech-laden gathering in Stamford, but in Crown Heights, Brooklyn.

All those at the convention were seeking some rest and refuge from the financial crisis gripping the world. Little did we realize that some predators in Mumbai, India, were destined to drive some other ghastly points home.

There in front of the hotel's screens, we all sat transfixed by the images of the bright, smiling twenty-something faces of Gavriel and Rivka Holtzberg, *Hy"d*, Chabad's emissaries in India, juxtaposed by footage of their bullet-ridden Chabad House in Mumbai, which even in the best of times is a dirty, unsightly and crowded city. Then a news broadcaster announced in a somber voice that Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky of Lubavitch, who is the head of the movement's branch responsible for the Chabad Lubavitch emissaries around the world, was going to hold a press conference.

In his signature dignified and statesmanlike manner, Rabbi Krinsky, dressed in a black suit and wide brimmed black fedora, appeared behind a grim row of microphones accompanied by various other Lubavitcher leaders and New York City officials to address the shell-shocked world. At the same time, he attempted to relay words of encouragement to the Lubavitcher *shluchim* around the globe, invoking uplifting words of the late Lubavitcher Rebbe, *ztz"l*, as he urged them to remain strong in the face of hatred and adversity. Rabbi Krinsky's words were measured and concise, and did not allow too much emotion to come to the fore. But try as he might, Rabbi Krinsky couldn't keep his voice from breaking and his eyes from shedding some insubordinate tears when he mentioned the martyred couple's surviving child, Moishela, who was heroically rescued by his loving nanny. Lubavitch, he said, was going to adopt this orphaned toddler whose second birthday would be the next day.

What touched me most in his speech was something that — on the surface, at least — had no particular relationship to the tragic events of the day. In the middle of his solemn but measured remarks, Rabbi Krinsky reminded the viewers that Shabbos was approaching and that Jewish women and girls around the world should seize the opportunity and light candles eighteen minutes before sunset. For a moment I wasn't in Connecticut any longer. I suddenly found myself in my early twenties, back at the Brisker yeshivah in the holy city of Jerusalem.