TO THE EDITOR:

Thank you for your enjoyable weekly magazine. I found the article in the Parshas Va'era/January 21 article on kivrei tzaddikim in America very interesting. The article mentioned kevarim in Chelsea, Massachusetts. I was born and bred in Chelsea; my father, alav hashalom, was a Ray there for over forty years. I had never heard about any tzaddikim buried there, but the mention caught my eye, and I was curious. Would there be a phone number or email to contact Rabbi Yonah Landau or the Vaad Hanesiah L’Kivrei Tzaddikim B’Arztos Habris V’Canada?

Thank you.

NAME WITHHELD

RABBI GESSER RESPONDS:

Thank you for your kind words. The tzaddik who is buried in the Chelsea, Massachusetts area is the Makarover Rebbe, Harav Menachem Nachum Twerksy, z’t’l. He is buried in Netzach Yisrael Cemetery, which I understand is actually in nearby Everett, Mass.

Rabbi Landau’s number is (718) 387-4139.

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TO THE EDITOR:

I read with great interest your article “Kivrei Tzaddikim in America, A Link With the Past” in a recent issue. Reb Baruch Amsel is to be commended for his work locating the kevarim of many outstanding rabbinical personalities buried here in America.

Rabbi Yosef Gesser quotes Reb Baruch as saying, “Reflective of Rav Henkin’s modesty is the fact that his matzeivah is a simple one and does not lie near those of other great Rabbanim.” Reb Baruch notes that Rav Henkin’s sefer, Lev Ivra, published in 1924, was the first sefer in lashon kodesh to be printed in the United States.

I contacted Reb Yosef Goldman, the author of the authoritative and exhaustive work Hebrew Printing in America, 1735-1926, A History and Annotated Bibliography, because I was sure that this statement by Reb Baruch was not correct. Reb Yosef replied, “You mean Perushei Ivra — Lev Ivra was published in 1957. As you can see in my book, the first sefer on drush is Avnei Yehoshua (#688), and the first halachah sefer is Yerushalmi Bikurim (#586).” Reb Yosef’s book gives 1860 as the date of publication for Avnei Yehoshua and 1887 for Yerushalmi Bikurim. Given that Rabbi Yosef Eliyahu Henkin was born in 1881, it is clear that he did not publish the first sefer in lashon kodesh to be printed in the U.S.

I realize that space considerations did not allow you to include information about the burial places of many other Rabbanim who made valuable contributions to Yiddishkeit in America. One such person is Rabbi Moshe Weinberger, who is buried in Union Field Cemetery, not far from the kever of Rabbi Yaakov Yosef. Hamodia published three articles about Rav Weinberger not too long ago.

Kol tuv,

PROFESSOR YITCHOKE LEVINE
STEVEN’S INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

RABBI GESSER RESPONDS:

Professor Levine is indeed correct about the fact that the sefer Lev Ivra was not the first sefer published in America; this was an error on my part.

In response to his other points, there are many, many kivrei tzaddikim in America, especially in the New York area, and it would be impossible to mention all of them. I selected a number of Torah personalities whom I felt would be of special interest to our readers. Hopefully, the article will prompt readers to visit the batei chaim and do their own research.

I am aware that Rav Moshe Weinberger, z’t’l, is buried in Union Field Cemetery and that he was the subject of past articles in Hamodia. The purpose of this latest article was to spotlight tzaddikim who may not have been featured previously in the paper.

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TO THE EDITOR:

I was surprised that your recent article on kivrei tzaddikim in America neglected to mention the kever of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, z’t’l, located in Montereire Cemetery in Queens, N.Y., to which Jews from all over the world come to pray.

ELANA ADLER
RAMAT BEIT SHEMESH

RABBI GESSER RESPONDS:

Thank you for taking the time to contact me with your concerns. In my first article on kivrei tzaddikim close to three years ago, I cited Rabbi Yonah Landau, who has revived interest in visiting kevarim in view of the great benefits to the niftar. It is especially meritorious to visit kevarim of tzaddikim who were not well known and don’t receive many visitors. As was said earlier, in an article of this type it is possible to mention only a small number of kevarim. As Ms. Adler herself states, the Lubavitcher ohel is very famous, and thousands come to daven there. This was reason, in view of space limitations, to discuss other kevarim that are not as well known.

I should also mention that an article on the seventh Lubavitcher Rebbe, Harav Menachem Mendel Schneerson, z’t’l, appeared in Hamodia Magazine about three years ago, and another one appeared in “Today in History” in the Hamodia daily, which included a photo of the Lubavitcher ohel.