



YUD ALEPH NISSAN

with
The Rebbe



FARBRENGENS

Yud Aleph Nissan, 5745

Beginning from the year 5731, the Rebbe held a Farbrengen each year on Yud Aleph Nissan in honor of his birthday. Interestingly, from after the episode of the Seforim began, the Rebbe ceased this custom.

Before we begin to tell about the Yud Aleph Nissan Farbrengens, let us look at a very interesting point that the Rebbe discussed at the last Yud Aleph Nissan Farbrengen – in 5745, where the Rebbe gave an explanation as to why he holds a Farbrengen on this day.

The Rebbe began the second Sicha:

It is well known that one of the worst *Middos* according to the Torah (and especially *Mussar*) is *Ga'ava* – haughti-

ness. With that being said, how is it possible that all gather here and participate in a Farbrengen which is being held in honor of one single person?

But the truth is that this is not at all the case. Just as on Simchas Torah, we are told, the Torah wishes to dance, and the Yid has the Z'chus of serving as the Torah's hands and feet, the same is true in our instance. The (Frierdiker) Rebbe is on high and he needs someone to be his "hands and feet", so to speak, carrying out his work in Hafotzas Hama'ayonos, and so there is someone who fills this position.

A story:

When we were in Cheder, they would tell a story of a Rav who was very small in body, but had a very prestigious posi-

tion. When asked, how is it befitting that a man so small serves a position of such magnitude, he answered: "True I may be small, but the chair is very big!" (*"Der beinkel is a greiser!"*)

Meaning, the work and Torah of the (Frierdiker) Rebbe is great and it must be carried on, the one who is actually filling the position is not of all that much significance.

♦

The first time that the Rebbe held a Farbrengen in honor of Yud Aleph Nissan was in 5722, his 60th birthday (see insert).

Ten years earlier, in 5712, the Rebbe recited a *Ma'amor* in his room on Yud Aleph Nissan. Only approximately twenty-five people whom the Rebbe

The following story is related by Rabbi Leibel Alevsky, one of the heads of Tzach (Lubavitch Youth Organization) in 5722 (today the Rebbe's Shliach to Cleveland, Ohio):

It was in the months leading up to the Rebbe's sixtieth birthday on Yud Aleph Nissan 5722 (*"Shnas Hashishim"*), and the heads of Tzach wanted to do something substantial in honor of the momentous occasion. The problem was that something of this kind had never been done before, and one could not know how the Rebbe would accept such an idea. They could only hope that the Rebbe would give his consent.

In those years, members of Tzach gathered each week for a Melava Malka after which they sent in a report to the Rebbe of the new undertakings for the coming week. When they wrote about their decision regarding the upcoming day of Yud Aleph Nissan, the Rebbe did not respond, and in their minds this was his way of giving them the go-ahead; if the Rebbe wasn't satisfied with something, he would have clearly stated so.

As soon as the new week began, the administration of Tzach sent out letters to Chassidim all over the world, urging them to take heed to the fact that Yud Aleph Nissan was just around the bend and encouraging them to increase in *Torah*, *Avoda*, and *Gemilus Chassadim* in honor of *"Shnas Hashishim"* placing special emphasis on the number sixty (i.e. sixty dollars for *Tzedaka*, sixty lines of *Tanya*, and so on).

Each Chossid was asked to send in their Hachlotos and

monies to the office of Tzach, and they would bring it to the Rebbe on Yud Aleph Nissan.

As Yud Aleph Nissan got closer, the many envelopes began piling in to the Tzach office. Accidentally, a few of the envelopes ended up in the Rebbe's room before making it to their proper destination. The first few times that this accident occurred, the Rebbe wrote on the envelopes: *"Shayach L'Tzach"* (i.e. indicating to his secretaries to bring the envelopes to their proper place, the Tzach office).

But the third time that this mistake repeated itself, the Rebbe wrote instead *"Shayach L'keren Hashishim"*. The heads of Tzach were overjoyed! Not only had the Rebbe acknowledged their efforts; he had just established a new fund for their contributions – *"Keren Hashishim"*, the "Sixty Fund".

On the day of Yud Aleph Nissan right before *Mincha*, Rabbi Hadokov entered the Rebbe's room and brought all the *"Duchos"* containing all the *Hachlotos* of Chassidim around the world to the Rebbe, along with \$22,000 for *Tzedaka* (considered a very large big sum at the time). A few minutes later Rabbi Hadakov came out and announced that the Rebbe would hold a special Farbrengen in honor of Yud Aleph Nissan, *Shnas Hashishim*.

This was the first time that the Rebbe farbrenged on Yud Aleph Nissan, and at the time it was clear to all that the Farbrengen was an outcome of the Chassidim's major *Hisoirerus* before Yud Aleph Nissan that year.

clearly specified on paper were invited to be present.

The Rebbe said a short *Sicha* and a *Ma'amor* beginning with one of the *Pesukim* of his new *Kapitel* (*"Hashem sifosai tiftach"*). While reciting the *Ma'amor*, the Rebbe cried copiously.

♦

After the Farbrengen in 5722, the next Yud Aleph Nissan Farbrengen was nine years later, in 5731. After the Rebbe came back from the Ohel and Davened Mincha, the Rebbe came down to Farbreng. There was only a fairly small crowd present as not too many people knew about it in advance. It was during that Farbrengen that the Rebbe recited the famous *Ma'amor* of *"Bayom ashtei assar"* which was printed in honor of Yud Aleph Nissan, 5749.

From Yud Aleph Nissan, 5732 and on, the Rebbe held a Farbrengen in honor of Yud Aleph Nissan each year.

This continued until the year 5745.

After that, the Rebbe no longer conducted Farbrengens on Yud Aleph Nissan anymore. From the next year and onwards, the Rebbe wouldn't Farbreng. The Rebbe would typically say a short *Sicha* in a response to the blessing he received from the Chassidim after Maariv.

THE REBBE'S KAPITEL

Every year, the Rebbe would explain the *Pesukim* from his *Kapitel* during the Farbrengens on and around the date of Yud Aleph Nissan, during *Sichos* and *Ma'amorim*. The first time was on Yud Aleph Nissan 5712, when the Rebbe actually recited a *Ma'amor* beginning with a *Possuk* from the *Kapitel Nun-Aleph*.

In 5732, the Rebbe began a custom of explaining one *Possuk* from the *Kapitel* during each Farbrengen from Yud Aleph Nissan until *Shavous*. Then, for a short while the Rebbe ceased this custom, only to start it again in Elul that year.

YUD ALEPH NISSAN NIGGUNIM

Every year, as Yud Aleph Nissan approached, there was a buzz; "Is there a new *Niggun* yet?" the Chassidim wondered. Who composed it? How does it go? On the night of Yud Aleph Nissan at the Farbrengen, everyone would sing the new *Niggun*, and Chassidim in other places would learn it as well. This became the *Niggun* of the year.

There is a well-known saying from the Baal Shem Tov that in the morning after Davening, one should recite his *Kapitel* in *Tehillim*. The early Chassidim took upon themselves to say the Rebbe's *Kapitel* in addition to their own, as a way of strengthening their *Hiskashrus* to the Rebbe.

In our generation, a major push was added – every single year, several talented individuals would compose a song with a few *Pesukim* from the Rebbe's new *Kapitel*.





Many wonder when and how this custom was born. In fact, there were three stages:

1. In the early years of the Rebbe's *Nesius*, if there was a *Niggun* to words that were in that year's *Kapitel*, Chassidim would sing it at the Farbrengen. For example, "*Yomim al yemei melech*" in *Kapitel* 61, was sung at the Farbrengeno of Yud Aleph Nissan, 5722; "*Ach l'eilokim*" of *Kapitel* 62 was sung at the Yud Shevat Farbrengen of 5724 (see insert), or "*Tzoma lecha*" of *Kapitel* 63 and so on. Not every year was there a *Niggun*.

2. After some years, it was decided to choose a few *Pesukim* from that year's *Kapitel* and fit them to an old *Niggun* that previously had no words. This began from *Kapitel* 69 ("*Ki elokim yoshia tziyon*") and lasted through *Kapitel* 80 ("*Roeh Yisroel*").

3. In honor of Yud Aleph Nissan 5742, the Rebbe's 80th birthday, Reb Feitel Levin composed a new *Niggun* to the words "*Harninu L'eilokim*". The *Niggun* was accepted and from then on the whole event of Yud Aleph *Niggunim* took on a major turn. Every year a few *Baalei Minagnim* would compose *Niggunim*, and the one that would be accepted by the Chassidim would become the *Niggun* of the year.

The mood of Yud Aleph Nissan is reflected in the "Yud Aleph Nissan *Niggunim*".

The enthusiasm of the Chassidim during the Rebbe's 70th birthday in 5732 spilled over into the *Niggunim* and that Yud Aleph Nissan **four** *Niggunim* were made. All four were sung by the Rebbe's Farbrengen, the favorite being "*B'cha Hashem chasisi*." (This can be seen on the video of the Farbrengen. See the *Yoman* of Yud Aleph Nissan printed here).

In the beginning of the third period [in which a new *Niggun* would be composed in honor of the upcoming Yud Aleph Nissan] there was no clear method for choosing the *Niggun* of that year, and the lack of clarity generated conflict among the composers. Obviously, the Bochrin had a large part in

deciding which *Niggunim* would be sung at the Rebbe's Farbrengen. This was crucial to the composers, for the *Niggun* sung by the Rebbe's Farbrengen became the "Niggun of the year", so each composer would attempt to rally the Bochrin behind his *Niggun*.

Eventually, a Va'ad (committee) was established, comprised of a few individuals who were musically inclined. They decided which *Niggun* would be the official *Niggun* of that year.

The *Niggun* that was chosen and sung in the presence of the Rebbe became the first *Niggun* sung every Farbrengen for the entire year.

On occasion, even after the *Niggun* was officially chosen, it was changed later on.

One example of this phenomenon occurred in 5749. A few *Niggunim* were composed and the Va'ad chose one of them as that year's *Niggun*. However, there was a significant segment of Chassidim that disagreed with the Va'ad choice and they sang one of the other compositions. This caused some confusion during the singing. To clear the air, on *Shabbos Hagadol*, Erev Yud Aleph Nissan (which was on a Sunday), before

the Farbrengen, it was announced in 770 that all present should please sing the *Niggun* that the Va'ad had chosen.

After the Rebbe came downstairs and made Kiddush, Reb Moshe Taleshevsky led the crowd by singing the *Niggun* the Va'ad had chosen. (The *Niggun* starts with the *Possuk*: "Tavoi lefanecha"). To the surprise of all, the Rebbe started the first *Sicha* by explaining the *Possuk* of "Shir mizmor". The only *Niggun* that included this *Possuk* was the *Niggun* that Reb Sholom Brochshtat had composed. Obviously, that changed everything and the *Niggun* right after that first *Sicha* was "Shir Mizmor". It then became the *Niggun* of that year.

But in general, the Rebbe did not get involved in choosing the *Niggun*. On the other hand -- it was the Rebbe who had the "last word". As mentioned above, if the *Niggun* was sung by the Farbrengen and the Rebbe encouraged it, then this was essentially a final decision. There were some times when a *Niggun* was started and the Rebbe would not encourage the singing. In 5749 for example, when the Matzos were being sent to Eretz Yisroel the Bochrin tried a *Niggun* but the Rebbe showed no reaction.

To end on an interesting note: Many of the Yud Aleph Nissan *Niggunim* were recorded on the tapes of Nichoach. When they gave the Rebbe the list of *Niggunim* that were planned for Vol. 8 the Rebbe added "Velokim Maki Mikedem" – the *Niggun* of that year 5735.

"Shuva, shuva"

Of all the many *Niggunim* composed yearly in honor of Yud Aleph Nissan, some linger in the hearts and minds of Chassidim until today, having left an impression as "out of the ordinary." Among them we may count the *Niggun* of "Shuva", composed in honor of Yud Aleph Nissan 5751, constantly sung in the Rebbe's presence until *Chof Zayin Adar*, 5752. Any Chossid from that period will confirm that this *Niggun* was uniquely cherished by the Rebbe (and consequently, by the Bochrin and Anash), which was eminently conveyed by the Rebbe in the way he vigorously encouraged this particular *Niggun*.

"Yifrach"

Another treasured *Niggun* dear to all Chassidim is "Yifrach b'yomov tzaddik" from the year 5733. Originally an old

On Motzoei Shabbos Parshas Beshalach, 11 Shevat 5724, the Rebbe Farbrenged for a third time in connection with Yud Shevat. During the Farbrengen, he bemoaned the fact that although there is an existing Chassidishe Nigun with words from the Rebbe's Kapitel Tehillim (of that year), no one ever thought to sing it throughout the past year. The Rebbe then told Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky to start the Nigun. When Rabbi Krinsky started the Nigun, the Rebbe himself sang along in a unique and surprising way: The Rebbe sang the first part with the words; but then he sang the next part ("Ach Hu Tzuri..") *without* the words ... it was truly incredible!



Vizhenitzer tune, the words are from *Tehillim*, *Kapitel* 72 and they were put to the tune by Rabbi S. Cunin of California in honor of the Rebbe's seventy-first birthday. The Pesukim talk of the *Tzaddik* sprouting out and gaining rule over the world and crushing his enemies, and as the commentators explain, they speak of *Moshiach* himself.

With the appropriate words and a beautiful lively tune, the new *Niggun* instantly captured the souls of the Chassidim. But it would take time until the *Niggun* would be officially approved by the Rebbe.

At the Farbrengen on Yud Aleph Nissan the *Niggun* was presented, but the Rebbe made no remark at all. As the custom was in those years, Reb Yoel Kahan began this *Niggun* each week at the Rebbe's Shabbos Farbrengens after the Rebbe made Kiddush, but still the Rebbe seemed to ignore the new *Niggun*. At last, one week, Reb Yoel assumed that

the Rebbe does not appreciate the singing of the new *Niggun* and he resolved that he would discontinue doing so, replacing it with a different *Niggun*. Surprisingly, in the middle of the Farbrengen the Rebbe asked, "Why has the usual *Niggun* been omitted? Let it be sung now..." From that point onward, the Rebbe encouraged the singing of "*Yifrach*" energetically and with great satisfaction.

The following year, the Chassidim found it difficult to part with this precious *Niggun*, so instead of composing a new one, the words from the *Possuk* "*Kolah she'eiri*" were added to the wordless stanza in honor of Yud Aleph Nissan, 5734.

REB BENTZION SHENKER'S NIGGUN

Another interesting episode regarding Yud Aleph Nissan, 5734:

Reb Bentzion Shenker, the famous

Modzhitzer Chossid, who is widely acclaimed for his strong musical inclination was a resident of Crown Heights. He utilized his musical talent to compose a *Niggun* for the Rebbe, citing the words of the *Possuk* "*Va'ani kirvas Elokim*". He discussed the matter with his acquaintance, Reb Yossel Weinberg, who in turn asked the Rebbe for permission to teach the *Niggun* to the assembled at a Farbrengen.

Indeed, during the Farbrengen on Shavuos, 5734, Reb Bentzion stood up and taught the *Niggun* to the Chassidim.

While the Rebbe distributed *Kos shel Brocha* on Motzoei Shavuos, the crowd sang the new *Niggun* while the Rebbe encouraged the singing.

[To hear a recording of this *Niggun*, listen as it was sung at the Rebbe's Farbrengen of 15 Sivan, 5734, following the first *Sicha*.]

