



צמאה לך נפשי

LIFTED BY YEARNING

“צמאה לך נפש, כמה לך בשרי, בארץ ציה ועיף בלי מים. כן בקודש חזיתך לראות עוזך וכבודך...”

The *Niggun* of “*Tzomah Lecho Nafshi*” merited special attention by the Rebbe as it was the first *Niggun* he chose to teach us. But there is something unique and novel that we saw only by this *Niggun*; the Rebbe leading and the Chassidim answering on cue, like a perfectly rehearsed act, yet completely spontaneous.

Thousands of Chassidim standing side-by-

side, listening intently to every holy word being said by the Rebbe. Suddenly, the Rebbe's booming voice bursts through the air. “*Tzomah Lecho...*” – one can feel himself being transported to another sense of being.

“Aya aya ya...” The Chassidim answer in unison.

The power and emotions from those moments are precious; moments that are engraved forever on the hearts on any one who experienced it.

A SPECIAL FARBRENGEN

The *Niggun* “*Tzoma*” was not taught on *Simchas Torah* as many of the other *Niggunim* were, but rather at a Farbrengen.

The Farbrengen of Shabbos Parshas Kedoshim 5714 was memorable and unique. Memorable for, as mentioned above, the Rebbe taught the Chassidim a *Niggun* for the first time, and unique for the first five *Sichos* focused on the *Niggunim* which were being sung, by the Rebbe's farbrengens.

“ANI MAAMIN”

After entering and making *Kiddush*, the Rebbe instructed the crowd to say “*L’chaim*” and said, “Those who have still not been invited to say *L’chaim* should now raise their hand.”

The Rebbe then added, “Being that this *Farbrengen* is a continuation of *Seudas Moshiach* on *Acharon Shel Pesach*, it is appropriate to begin this *Farbrengen* with the *Niggun ‘Ani Maamin*.”

“NYE ZHURITZI”

When the singing died down, the Rebbe began to talk about the *Niggun* “*Nye Tzuritzi*.” The deeper meaning of this *Niggun* is that even when on the way to the tavern, one need not worry because he already has everything he needs with him now, and once he arrives and unpacks his belongings, he will recognize this.

The same thing applies to us, explained the Rebbe. On our journey towards *Moshiach*, we are told to be joyful. It’s true that one might believe his spiritual standing is no cause for joy and happiness, but nevertheless, one must bear in mind that all the revelations that will occur when *Moshiach* comes are already in existence now, and when he comes, they will be revealed.

The Rebbe then instructed the Chassidim to sing “*Nye Zhuritzi*”.

LONGING FOR ELOKUS

After the *Niggun* the Rebbe started a third *Sicha*, which, while a continuation of the previous one, served as an introduction to the highlight of the evening – the teaching of the *Niggun ‘Tzomah*’.

Returning to the analogy of those on the way to the tavern for a drink, the Rebbe engaged in further analysis and asked:

“True it’s comforting to know what lies in store for us once we reach our destination, but right now we cannot see it so why rejoice?”

In answer, the Rebbe explained that when a person thirsts for something, the desire itself somewhat satisfies him. And so, when a person develops a true thirst for *Elokus*, this already “quenches” his yearning.

Drawing an example, the Rebbe quoted a *Possuk* from *Tehillim*, “צמאה לך נפשי... כן” - “בקדש” - “My soul thirsts for you... As I saw you in the *Mikdash*,” and, as explained by the Alter Rebbe in the name of the Baal Shem Tov, reads, “[*Halevai*] If only I could see you in the *Mikdash*.” This means that although one might be on a low spiritual



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level, he can elevate himself to a higher level through genuine desire and yearning.

Concluding the *Sicha*, the Rebbe for the *Niggun* of the Alter Rebbe on the words “*Tzomah Lecho Nafshi*” to be sung.”

However, the request was met with silence, as no one seemed to know the *Niggun*. Then, slowly, one man’s voice could be heard singing a *Niggun* to those words, but after patiently hearing him out, the Rebbe indicated that this wasn’t the *Niggun*. This scene repeated itself three more times; someone attempting to sing and the Rebbe asking if anyone knows another *Niggun* with those words.

THE NEW NIGGUN

The moment arrived. The Rebbe leaned his head on his hands and with deep sincerity, began, “*Tzomah L’cho Nafshi*...”

Because no one had ever heard the *Niggun* before, the Rebbe repeated it a number of times. The Rebbe then requested from those present to join in the *Niggun*, but the crowd had still not properly grasped it. Turning to the *Bochurim*, the Rebbe asked that they help out, but they also had a hard time with it so the Rebbe repeated it one final time.

“ESSEN EST ZICH”

However, the *Niggun-Sicha* combination was still not finished, and in the fourth *Sicha*, the Rebbe focused on the *Niggun* “*Essen Est Zich*.”

“What should one do if he does not have such a thirst?” the Rebbe said, continuing the theme of the previous *Sichos*.

“It is for this that we ask Hashem for mercy, ‘With your great mercy have compassion on us’ – for the *Rachmonus* on the person is so great, that he himself does not even realize that he is in need of it.”

This is expressed in the *Niggun* – “*Esen Est Zich... Davenin Davent zich Nit*,” as the *Niggun* describes the bitterness one feels when he doesn’t thirst for *Elokus*. And this in turn sparks his desire to come closer to Hashem.

“MAAMOR NIGGUN”

It was now time for the *Maamor*.

However, keeping in line with the rest of this *Farbrengen*, something else unusual happened. Instead of simply indicating to begin singing the *Hachona Niggun* – as was done by most *Farbrengens* – the Rebbe explained why we sing a *Niggun* before the *Maamor*:

“Being that it is an old *Minhag* to sing a *Niggun* before the saying of a *Maamor*, we will now do so.”

PERFECTING THE NEW NIGGUN

Later in the *Farbrengen*, the Rebbe again instructed that they sing the new *Niggun*, “*Tzomah L’cho Nafshi*,” but because the Chassidim had still not grasped it properly, the Rebbe sang it a few more times. Before singing, the Rebbe commented, “The (Friediker) Rebbe once said that he would not be meticulous in the accuracy of one sixteenth of a note; but now I won’t even be careful with one eighth...”

In the interim, one of those present said to the Rebbe that the crowd had grasped the second part “*Kein Bakodesh*.” Immediately the Chassidim silenced him – they wanted to hear it from the Rebbe again. Hearing this the Rebbe chided, “He says ‘*Kein Bakodesh*’ and you are silencing him?”

When someone else tried singing the *Niggun* but still hadn’t quite got it right, the Rebbe sang it several more times and then said, “I have tried my best”.

The spectacle continued to repeat itself,

the Chassidim endeavoring to sing the new *Niggun* and the Rebbe continuously correcting them.

At one point the Rebbe explained the makeup of the *Niggun*, which would help in the singing of it.

"Until the third stanza the *Niggun* is ascending," the Rebbe said, and then, pointed out each stanza, explaining how they express the *Niggun's* message.

At the next Farbrengen, which was approximately one month later on Shabbos Mevorchim Sivan, the Rebbe instructed the Chassidim to sing the *Niggun* "*Tzomah L'cho Nafshi*." Then, again, at the end of one of the *Sichos*, the Rebbe spoke about the thirst that one should have for *Matan Torah*, and, while referring to "*Tzomah L'cho Nafshi*," concluded, "We will now sing a *Niggun* connected to this idea of a thirst and yearning."

From then on, and specifically in the pe-

riod immediately following that Farbrengen, the Rebbe instructed the Chassidim to sing this *Niggun* by Farbrengens.

The last time that we merited to hear the Rebbe sing the *Niggun* by himself was at the Farbrengen of Shabbos Parshas Nasso, 9 Sivan 5743.

[On Shabbos Parshas Lech L'cha, 5749, the Chassidim sang the *Niggun* in unison (without the Rebbe's solo as was done in previous years).]

The Rebbe's insight to the *Niggun* of "*Tzomah*" has special relevance to the circumstances of today. On the one hand, we are distressed at not being able to see the Rebbe, and yet, at the same time, we try our best to live with the Rebbe and strengthen our Hiskashrus, assured by his words of "לא יעזוב צאן מרעיתו".

The message of the *Sicha* is that even in our feeling of longing and yearning itself, we can strengthen our connection with the Rebbe and feel his presence in a more tangible sense.

The following is an incredible story told by the Friediker Rebbe about how a group of the Tzemach Tzedek's Chassidim were able to connect to their Rebbe and feel as though he were with them even decades after his *Histalkus*.

One of my childhood memories is a reunion that took place between a little group of elder chassidim during Chanukah in the year 5650: my teacher, the Rashbatz, Reb Hendel, Reb Aharon, Reb Yekusiel from Dokshytz, and Reb Zalman Cherbiner. They soon began to reminisce of when they had been young *Chassidim* of my great-grandfather, the Tzemach Tzedek.

Suddenly, Reb Zalman jumped up from his seat and began singing the melody to which my great-grandfather used to daven *Mus-*

safon Rosh Hashonah. Seeing this, the other elder *Chassidim* stood up too and sang with him.

Then they came to the stirring chords, so well-known among *Chassidim*, to which my great-grandfather used to sing the words, "אשרי האיש שלא ישכח, ובן אדם יתאמץ בך", "Happy is the man who does not forget You, the son of man who holds fast to You."

Burning with passion and sincerity, the men soon had tears streaming down their cheeks. Clearly they were reliving those hal-lowed moments, and surely each of them felt as though he were standing by the Tzemach Tzedek, seeing and hearing the Rebbe as he was davening.

Having had my great-grandfather's *Beis Midrash* described to me many times before, I knew exactly what it looked like and where he stood while davening. And thus, the aura of these five *Chassidim* made such an intense impression on me that I was swept along with their ecstasy.

In my mind's eye, I witnessed the sight of my great-grandfather, wrapped in his *Tallis*, dressed in his white garments, with a white *Yarmulke* on his head, as he said:

... "אשרי האיש שלא ישכח, ובן אדם יתאמץ בך" ...

