



אני  
מאמין



*"I believe with a complete belief in the coming of Moshiach,  
and even though he may tarry I will wait for him every day until He comes."*

770 looks fresh on this Lag BaOmer morning. The crowd is gathered, the floats are in place, and everyone is waiting with anticipation. As the band begins playing the first bars of Ani Maamin, the front door swings open and the Rebbe strides out to the bima.

This Ani Maamin is a very famous niggun. Although not of Lubavitch origin, it was accepted into the Lubavitch circles eventually became the official accompaniment to the Rebbe's entrance each Lag Baomer. What is it about this song that made it so dear to the Rebbe, and how did it become such an inseparable part of the yearly Lag Ba'Omer parades?

Ani Maamin was composed by a Modzitzer chassid. Modzitz is well known for their niggunim, many of their niggunim are now accepted songs in the Jewish world. These niggunim carry great depth and feeling, giving the listener a glimpse into the inner workings of their emotions. And Ani Maamin was composed in the depths of the Holocaust.

To understand the depths of this Niggun, we must remember the circumstances during which it was composed. It was a dark time for the Jewish people, a time when the Emunah of the Yidden was tested to the extreme. The cries of men, women and children being dragged to their deaths, would shake even the most strong minded of men. Yet, it was out of this darkness that a pure expression of faith shone through. This Niggun expresses simple Emunah without doubts or questions.

Reb Azriel David Fastag was a Chossid of the Modzitzer Rebbe who was well known for his talent in both singing and composing. From across Poland people came to Warsaw to take part in the teffilos in the shul where Reb Azriel David was the chazzan. Whenever a niggun he composed reached the Modzitzer Rebbe, the day would become a Yom Tov.

Through the great efforts of his chassidim, the Modzitzer Rebbe was able to escape the war-torn Europe, and make his way to Shanghai, and eventually making it to New York in 5700. Yet many of his chassidim, Reb Azriel David among them, were trapped in the clutches of the evil Nazis. It was on the train to Treblinka that Reb Azriel David sat deep in thought. He

knew what awaited him at the end of his ride, and yet his mind turned back back to his days as Chazzen before his beloved Rebbe.

Soon, he began to hum softly under his breath. The tune lifted and rose and the words of Ani Ma'min floated through the air. As he became more absorbed in the song his voice rose, so engrossed in his song, he did not even notice the looks of bewilderment of his fellow prisoners. And yet, slowly, one at a time the hum spread, slowly, lightly at first and then more, until the entire car, and then the entire train, was singing from the depths of their hearts. Singing this song of faith.

As if waking from a dream, Reb Azriel David opened his eyes to the sight of the singing train. His eyes were red from crying, his cheeks wet with tears. In a choked voice, he cried out: "I will give half of my portion in Olam Habbah to whoever can take my song to the Modzitzer Rebbe!"

Two young men accepted this holy task upon themselves, and squeezed out of a small hole in the roof of the car. One died when jumping from the fast moving car, but the other survived the war, and made his way to Eretz Yisroel. There he wrote down the notes of the song, and sent them to the Modzitzer Rebbe in New York. On the first Yom Kippur that this song was sung in the Modzitzer Rebbe's Shul, there was not a dry eye amongst the thousands of Jews present.

#### THE SONG COMES TO THE REBBE

Although this niggun was sung in front of the Rebbe even before Yud Shvat, at a dinner for Tomchei Temimim in 5706 it was not until seven years later that the Rebbe mentioned the niggun. It was by a Farbrengen on Shabbos Parshas Vo'era 5713 that the Rebbe surprised the crowd by requesting that this niggun be sung. Immediately when the niggun began, the Rebbe became very serious. The confused crowd thought that they were to stop singing, or sing low and quiet. It was only when the rebbe repeated his request that it be sung just as any other niggun that everyone joined in loudly, including the Rebbe himself. For the next twelve years at almost every farbrengen this niggun would be sung.

Interestingly enough when sung by the

Rebbe instead of singing the second half "and even though he may tarry" was not sung. For some reason, from 5725 this Niggun was no longer sung at farbrengens except on a few rare occasions.

On Shavuos 5713 the Rebbe explained his love for this niggun. "In general we appreciate the Niggunim of the Rabbeim, that they composed, or that they sang. The fact that this niggun was sung by Jews on their way to give their lives *Al Kidush Hashem, Be'poel Mamesh*, knowing where they were headed, brings a great love of this song. Just as by *Terumah*, we find that one drop affects the entire crop, so too through the *Mesiras Nefesh* of those Jews, this niggun was made holy, and caused that anyone who sings this niggun it adds to their strength for *Mesiras Nefesh*. This will in turn help in the following of mitzvos, as is explained in Tanya that through remembering the idea of *Mesiras Nefesh*, one can be sure that their Torah and Mitzvos are strengthened.

A few times the Rebbe connected this niggun with Acharon Shel Peasach (a time with a strong connection to Moshiach), and the month of Nissan in general. The Rebbe also connected this niggun with children, specifically when he visited Camp Gan Yisroel, and when the children of camp would come to Farbrengens.

#### ANI MA'MIN AT THE LAG BA'OMER PARADES.

5713 was the first time under the Rebbe's Nesius that Lag Ba'Omer was on Sunday and therefore a parade was held. The Rebbe came out onto the porch of 770 and before he spoke to the children asked them to sing Ani Ma'min. In 5717 for the first time the song was accompanied by music 15 minutes before the Rebbe walked in. Evidently they had remembered that the Rebbe had requested the niggun the last parade and so they used it to welcome the Rebbe.

And ever since then this was the Rebbe's Malchusdike entrance Niggun.

