

# Defiance and Hope

## Nyet Nyet Nikavoh

"ניע בא'יסיא ניקאווא, איניווערו ניקאווא, טאלקא באגא אדנאווא"

"I fear no one, and I believe in no one, except for the One Hashem"

"ניעט ניעט ניקאווא, קראמיע באגא אדנאווא!"

"There is no one besides Hashem Echod!"

Harav HaChossid R' Michoel Dvorkin was born in Teves, in the year 5526, to his parents Reb Chaim Yitzchok and Leah Mechalya. His parents stemmed from a lineage of Kopuster Chassidim and he would visit the Kopuster Rebbe, known as the "Magen Avos," the son of the Maharil and grandson of the Tzemach Tzedek.

### FROM KOPUST TO LUBAVITCH

When the Kopuster Rebbe passed away, his son did not take over the position of Rebbe. Because of this, Reb Michoel's father, Reb Chaim, turned to him and said, "I see that you won't be able to live without a Rebbe; I suggest that you go to Lubavitch, to the Rebbe Rashab, and we in the meantime will discuss the future of Kopust."

This is how Reb Michoel came to be a Chabad Chossid.

In his later years Reb Michoel moved to Eretz Yisroel, but in the beginning of the year 5707, he moved again, this time to New York, to be near the Frieddiker Rebbe. On Erev Shavuos, 5709, Reb Michoel passed away.

### MUSICAL PRECISION

Reb Michoel was well known for being a tremendous Baal Menagen, and the Rabbe'im relied on him on many occasions for his meticulous knowledge of niggunim.

Indeed, when it came to Reb Michel Zlotshiver's Niggun, the Rebbe Rashab chose to use the nusach which Reb Michoel claimed to be the true nusach.<sup>1</sup> The Rebbe also used his nusach when singing this niggun.

[Parenthetically, Reb Y. Y. Eidelman relates that someone once went in for Yechidus with the Rebbe and played a tape on which Reb Michoel had recorded two Niggunim. The Rebbe kept the tape in his drawer for several years and, in 5738, when *Nichoach* put out tape #15, the Rebbe instructed that these two Niggunim be included.]

Reb Michoel was also a gifted violinist and even





played occasionally at farbrengens in front of the Frierdiker Rebbe. In his memoirs, Reb Mendel Deitch A"H relates one such occasion:



REB MICHOEL DVORKIN

"One night, during Chol Hamoed Sukkos, someone hosted many Chassidim for a farbrengen and, after the farbrengen, everyone went to participate in the Rebbe Rashab's farbrengen. My grandfather, Reb Yekusiel Deitch Z"L, was delayed and we arrived at the farbrengen towards the end, but we still caught a glimpse of the Rebbe Rashab sitting on the platform in the middle of the room. All the rest of the tables

and chairs in the room were dilapidated... and in a corner of the room, across from the Rebbe, Reb Michoel Dvorkin was playing a Niggun on his violin. I don't recall which niggun it was, but the scene left a strong impression on me.

As we left the farbrengen and walked the streets of Lubavitch, even the night's darkness and gloominess was unable to dim the way we felt having just seen all that..."

The Rebbe's mother, Rebbetzin Chana, said that Reb Michoel Dvorkin was among the many Chassidim who visited their home in Yekkaterineslav in celebration of the Rebbe's wedding in Warsaw, and he played the Alter Rebbe's Niggun, the Daled Bovos, on his violin. The Rebbetzin described how his playing the niggun moved everybody present and they felt as though were standing by the Rebbe's actual Chuppah across the border.

Reb Michoel's davening was also very *hartzig*, and on more than one occasion when he davened from the amud, he would suddenly break down in tears!

#### A NIGGUN FOR THE FOREST

When Reb Michoel first came to Lubavitch he became

very close with Reb Michoel 'Der Alter' who made a tremendous impact on him and shaped him into a Chassidisher bochur. When he returned home, he joined in his father's forestry business, and while working in the forest, he would sing: "Nyet Nyet Nikavoh."

Reb Michoel began to sing this niggun often. In the following excerpt, the Frierdiker Rebbe relates how the niggun came to be heard by the Rebbe Rashab:

"Several members of *anash*, including Reb Michoel Dvorkin, were once at a Simchas Beis HaShoeiva farbrengen in my Sukkah in Rostov (sometime between the years of 5677 and 5680).

### "WE SAT AND SPOKE FOR THREE OR FOUR HOURS OF THE FARBRENGEN AND IT DIDN'T DAWN ON ANYONE TO SING THAT NIGGUN?"

Without prior notification, my revered father, the Rebbe Rashab, decided to visit me in the sukkah. In order to get to the sukkah, which stood in the yard, the Rebbe would have to pass through the front foyer. Suddenly, at the same time as the Rebbe was arriving, Reb Michoel jumped up and ran to the foyer and began to sing and dance to the niggun, "Nyet Nyet Nikavo, Kromyeh Bogah Adnavoh." As he danced, he went red with passion, and he danced *mamash* with all his energy. He was completely oblivious to the fact that the Rebbe Rashab was standing nearby, waiting to enter the sukkah. The Rebbe Rashab, however, not wanting to disturb Reb Michoel, waited quietly until he stopped dancing. And when Reb Michoel finally opened his eyes and noticed the Rebbe waiting, he ran from the sukkah.

The Rebbe Rashab said, "This niggun of Reb Michoel comes from the forest. Not from Zohar, not from Eitz Chaim, but from the forest." The Rebbe went on to ex-

plain at great length the idea of אורות דתוהו בכלים דתיקון explaining that the niggun of “Nyet Nyet” is the אין עוד מלבדו of עולם התוהו, being that it came from the forest, from the wilderness. [Elsewhere, the Rebbe Rashab called this niggun “א. תוהו דיקער ניגון.”]

When Reb Michoel heard that the Rebbe Rashab was standing the entire time, listening and watching him sing and dance, he began hitting himself on the head from the overwhelming excitement.”

Years later, in 5707, the Frierdiker Rebbe said: “Thanks to Reb Michoel, we were zoche to hear several hours of Chassidus from the Rebbe Rashab.” The Frierdiker Rebbe then asked Reb Michoel if he remembered the niggun, to which Reb Michoel replied: “That was not a niggun, it was *hisboninus*!”

The Frierdiker Rebbe noted, “This was Hisboninus in

a way of *Hafshata* (complete removal), and in general, the avodah of Reb Michoel does not require any explaining.”

However, regarding the Niggun itself, it seems that it only really became known when R’ Michoel began singing it after hearing about the Frierdiker Rebbe’s release from prison on Yud Beis Tammuz 5687.

Remarkably, as soon as Reb Michoel heard about the Rebbe’s being sent to Golus Kastroma, he immediately went there, set up a cheder, and gathered children in order to learn Torah with them. And when he heard the news of the Rebbe’s release he broke out in “Nyet Nyet Nikavoh...!”

At the Farbrengen of Yud Beis Tammuz 5725, the Rebbe related:

“At the time of the original Yud Beis Tammuz, the







system was that the Frierdiker Rebbe was supposed to register on Tuesday, which was Yud Beis that year. When the Rebbe arrived at the office along with Reb Eli Chaim Althoiz, they realized that it was some kind of secular “holiday” and the offices were all closed. Only one official was in, in order to maintain the crucial matters, “dizhurne” in Russian. This official told the Rebbe that a notice had arrived from Moscow that he was being released, but being that all the offices were closed he would have to return the next day, Yud Gimmel Tammuz, to receive the official papers.

“The events which followed have already been told, how the Rebbe then had to calm Reb Eli Chaim and help him recover from the shock of the good news. By the time they returned from the office the news had already reached the community and Reb Michoel was already waiting for them when they arrived at the Rebbe’s lodging, the home of the Shoichet in Kostroma. Reb Michoel had with him a *fleshel* of mashke and, in his trademark excitement, began dancing around the house singing a niggun with the words of “Ein Od Milvado.”

“In Russian, the words translate as, “Nyet Nyet Nikavoh, Kromyeh” – and then the Aibershter’s name, “Adnavoh,” which he sang, obviously, using the Aibershter’s name in Russian.

[Later on, Chassidim clarified that according to poskim – as well as the Alter Rebbe – we avoid using Hashem’s name even in foreign languages. Therefore the words were altered to “Kromi nivoh,” meaning “besides for Him.”]

“And so he danced around the house for some time.

“Now, since there are those present who are familiar with the words, let us sing the Niggun and those who don’t know the words will learn them. And being that this is a niggun of “Ein Od Milvado,” we are being mekayem, in honor of Yud Beis Tammuz, drawing down Yichud Hashem not only into kedusha but into material things as well, until all the nations of the world will finally see the oneness of Hashem with the coming of Moshiach Tzidkeinu.”

It should be noted that since this was the first time the Rebbe ever asked for this niggun to be sung, very few Chassidim knew it. And certainly not very many Chassidim present at the time remembered Yud Beis Tammuz, which occurred more than 40 years earlier.

It took quite some asking around before someone who

could sing the Niggun was finally found. And when he began to sing, the Rebbe said, “Nu a little bit lebbedig! Are you on vacation?”

#### A BELOVED NIGGUN

The Rebbe showed a special liking for this niggun. On many occasions, towards the end of farbrengens or after Mincha, the Rebbe would start this niggun, especially in the years between 5738-5740, and again in the later years. The Rebbe would also sing this niggun whenever the topic of conversation turned to Russian Jewry.

#### CONNECTION WITH YUD BEIS TAMMUZ

At the farbrengen of Parshas Chukas, Yud Beis Tammuz, “*Shnas Tismach*” (5748), the Rebbe explained how

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## EVEN THE NIGHT’S DARKNESS AND GLOOMINESS WAS UNABLE TO DIM THE WAY WE FELT HAVING JUST SEEN ALL THAT...

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the Niggun “Nyet Nyet Nikavoh” has a unique relevance to the Yom Tov of Yud Beis, Yud Gimmel Tammuz:

“As mentioned, when news spread that the Frierdiker Rebbe had been released from prison, one particular chossid (Reb Michoel Dvorkin) sang and danced to the niggun “Nyet Nyet Nikavoh, Kromeh Yevoh Adnavoh.”

“It can be explained as follows:

“Each Golus stems from the original Golus – the Tzimtzum HaRishon – which preceded creation. Hashem’s great light “decended” from level to level, through many contractions and concealments, until finally a world was created [“Olam” stemming from the word “Helem” – concealment], a world in which spirituality is hidden behind the veil of materiality and evil seems to reign supreme.

“However, in each and every part of this material

world lies a small element of Hashem, exiled into the lowest of low places. In Geulah, physical matter will recognize the hidden spark of G-dliness within it, and realize that there is nothing else in this world other than Hashem.

“This is the idea of “Ein Od Milvado” – for the physical world in general, and more specifically the human body, Nefesh Hachiyonis and Nefesh HaBehamis, to recognize that their true existence is Kol Kulo Elokus.

“Now, it can be said that since the entire world was created for the sake of Bnei Yisroel and through the Geulah of Yud Beis Tammuz the truth was revealed to all Yidden that we have an inherent connection with Hashem, this lends the capacity for the universal Geulah through which the entire world will recognize its connection with Hashem.

“And the reason why the Geulah of Yud Beis Tammuz specifically has that connection with this Niggun, is because we stand in the last generation of Golus. All we need to still do is complete the last forms of avodah of bringing Moshiach, and every accomplishment is accredited to those who complete it. Therefore it is us, our generation who is assigned the task of revealing to the world the truth about Hashem’s existence in all creation, thereby transforming this lowly world into a proper dwelling place for Hashem. And Hashem, like one who dwells in a house, will dwell here in our world with His entire being, with the completion of the spreading of “Mayonosecha Chutzah,” bringing about the “Asi Mar – Da Malka Meshicha!”

On Yud Beis Tammuz, 5745, the Rebbe said at the farbrengen:

“Let’s sing the Niggun connected to Yud Beis Tammuz, which is sung in the language of the land where the Geulah took place. Through continuing to sing it in that language, demonstrating the idea of his’hapcha, may we cause that the building we are in and everything related to it, rise up and travel to Eretz Yisroel together with Moshiach.”

The Rebbe then started the niggun “Nyet Nyet Nikavoh.”

#### DOES IT NEED A REMINDER?!

At the Farbrengen of Parshas Matos Masey, 5740, the Rebbe said:

“Someone wrote to me asking why the Niggun of “Nyet Nyet Nikavoh” hadn’t been sung at the Yud Beis Tammuz farbrengen as it traditionally is. My question is

does there really need to be a reminder to sing it after so many years of singing it at these farbrengens?

“We sat and spoke for three or four hours of the farbrengen and it didn’t dawn on anyone to sing that niggun? If so, it would seem to me, that even if the Olam had been reminded, there would be no point...”

## WHEN HE HEARD THE NEWS OF THE REBBE’S RELEASE HE BROKE OUT IN “NYET NYET NIKAVOH...!”

#### WHAT IS THE AVODAH OF THE NIGGUN?

On Chof Tes Elul, 5741, the Rebbe concluded the Sichah with Brachos, as was customary.

“May this year be one of Geulah, and we should all be speedily taken out of the general Golus and merit very soon to greet Moshiach Tzidkeinu. All of us; men, women, and children, and even the smallest of children will go together to Eretz Yisroel, “The land that Hashem looks upon, from the beginning of the year until the end of the year. And within Eretz Yisroel itself we shall merit to go to the third Beis Hamikdosh, which will be built by Moshiach. There, all Jews will gather, men, women and children, all with proper health, proper spirit and enthusiasm.

“And in response to all those who raise doubts – that for all practical purposes this all seems far fetched – the response is already well known, inferred from the words of a Niggun in Russian, the words “Nyet Nyet Nikavoh!”

“And may it be Hashem’s will that very soon we will all see the fulfillment of those words, “from the beginning of the year...””

The Rebbe then started the niggun “Nyet Nyet Nikavoh.”



### THE NATIONAL ANTHEM

At the farbrengen of Parshas Haazinu, 5749, the Rebbe referred to this Niggun as the anthem of Russian Jewry and encouraged all the Russian Jews that had just recently arrived to sing the Niggun in connection with their recent Geulah from behind the iron curtain.

### “SHIRA HAASIRIS”

On Simchas Torah of that same year, the Rebbe said:

“Regarding the Shira Haasiris, which we will learn in the time of Moshiach, we don’t know yet which Niggun it will be but one thing is certain, it will be a Niggun expressing the joy of the unique new times of the final Geulah.”

The Rebbe then began the niggun of “Nyet Nyet,” and began dancing joyfully for a period of time.

### ON THE THRESHOLD OF THE REBBE’S HOME

On Purim, 5726, when the Rebbe announced “anyone who requests shall receive,” he stood distributing mashke to all the guests for several hours. The crowd waited in long lines and, upon reaching the Rebbe’s home, began singing “Nyet Nyet Nikavoh.” Hearing their singing, the Rebbe stopped and turned around to face the crowd,

and fervently encouraged the continued singing of the Niggun.

### CONNECTED TO THE REBBETZIN?

The Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka once told over on Yud Beis Tammuz, that when her father, the Frierdiker Rebbe, was released from prison, the Rebbetzin could not hold back from singing and dancing in front of her father, to the niggun “Nyet Nyet Nikavoh.”

However, after Chof Beis Shvat, when the timeline of the Rebbetzin’s life was being proofread by the Rebbe in order to be inserted into the Hayom Yom, the Rebbe crossed out the line, “When news of the release arrived, the Rebbetzin broke out in song and dance with “Nyet Nyet Nikavoh.” ■

*The niggun can be heard, together with the intro of “Nye Bayusya,” on Nichoach Tape #10 Track #7.*

*The traditional nusach can be found on Tape #11 Track #10.*

1. As was printed in the “Chassidisher Derher” of Nissan, תשע”ג.