



לעבן מיטן רבין



11 NISSAN 5732, JEM 104412

ע"י בנם  
ר' יקותיאל יהודה  
וזוגתו מרת פעסל לאה ומשפחתם שיחיו  
רוהר

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ת"נ צ"ב

# Ma Nishtana and the Russian Yidden

PESACH 5732\*



**Y**ud-Aleph Nissan 5732 will forever be remembered as one of the largest celebrations in the history of *Dor Hashvi'i*. For months beforehand, Chassidim and Yidden across the globe prepared for the momentous occasion when the Rebbe would celebrate שבעים שנה. At the farbrengen which took place on the eve of Yud-Aleph Nissan (which is available on video), the Rebbe famously announced the establishment of

71 new *mosdos*, a new beginning in the world of shlichus and the Rebbe's transformative efforts in *hafatzas hamaayanos*, and thus, the beginning of a new era in the Rebbe's *nesius*.

A full article about the story of Yud-Aleph Nissan and the days which preceded it has been featured in *Derher*, Nissan 5776.

For those who merited to be in 770 at the time, Pesach 5732\* was a continuation of this incredible Yud-Aleph Nissan, never to be forgotten.

While the first days of Pesach in 770 was usually a quieter Yom Tov (especially after the Rebbe no longer *farbrenge*d on the second night), Pesach 5732\* was filled with *giluyim*, including a *farbrengen* on every day of Yom Tov!

Here we present an overview of that very unique Pesach with the Rebbe. This article is based on descriptions of the *farbrengens* published by the *Vaad L'hafatzas Sichos*, and which were reviewed and edited by the Rebbe at the time. It is also partially based on the *yomanim* of Rabbis Mendel Wolosow and Moshe Chaim Levin (*bochurim* at the time), as well as on *hanachos* of the *sichos*.

### VISITING THE BOCHURIM

On Erev Pesach the Rebbe distributed *matzos*. There were many, many people waiting to receive matzah from the Rebbe, and shortly before *shkia* the Rebbe said that the locals will be able to continue receiving matzah after Maariv. Even after Maariv, with just those living within walking distance waiting in line, there was still a large number of people.

Afterwards, the Rebbe visited the *seder* of the *bochurim*. After passing through the yeshiva dining room, the Rebbe entered the kitchen and looked around. The Rebbe's picture was hanging on the wall and the Rebbe looked up at it a few times.

The Rebbe then *bentched* the *bochurim* with a "*chag kosher v'sameach*" and that very soon they should see with their own eyes the fulfillment of the words in *kapitel* נ"ז (the Rebbe's new *kapitel* of that year): "*K'mofes hayisi larabim...*" all the way to the conclusion of the *kapitel*, "*T'raneina sefasai...*"

The Rebbe then went to visit the *seder* of the *bochurim* in Hadar Hatorah. The Rebbe wished the non-Jewish workers a "Happy Holiday" and blessed everyone present with a "*Chag haPesach kosher v'sameach*."

Reb Yankel Katz of Chicago accompanied the Rebbe on his visit to the *sedarim*, and the Rebbe conversed with him while they walked. When the Rebbe returned to 770, he first stopped in the shul downstairs and gave a look around, and then went upstairs to his room. Reb Yankel then went into the Rebbe's room and the Rebbe gave him *matzos*

as well as the new *haggadah* printed in connection with Yud-Aleph Nissan. His son went inside afterwards and received matzah as well.

### FARBRENGEN AT 3:30!

After Shacharis on the first day of Yom Tov, the *gabbai* Reb Shea Pinson made an announcement about visiting different shuls in the afternoon to share words of Chassidus. To everyone's great surprise, there was no word about the time for Mincha. This was a sign that there would be a *farbrengen* in the afternoon; something that had never happened before on the first day of Pesach!

After returning to his room, the Rebbe asked Rabbi Hodakov what time people are leaving to go to the shuls to *chazer* chassidus. Rabbi Hodakov responded with the time, and the Rebbe instructed him to inform the *olam* that there will be a *farbrengen* at 3:30 p.m.

The Rebbe began the *farbrengen* by explaining at length the passage in the *haggadah* beginning with the words "*Hei lachma anya*:" Taking a closer look at the first sentence, it would seem that the *haggadah* should have said: "*K'hei lachma anya*"—adding a *kof* in the beginning of the word—which would then translate as: "This [matzah sitting before us] is *like* the bread of affliction that our forefathers ate..." But instead, we say "*Hei*," implying that the matzah sitting on our *seder* table is the *same* matzah that left Mitzrayim! But the truth is, the Rebbe explained, this is precisely the message the *haggadah* is seeking to convey to us: The story of *yetzias Mitzrayim* is not meant to be viewed as ancient history—and not even *as if* it is happening right now. Rather, when we sit by the *seder* and read the *haggadah*, one has to *re-live* the story; to feel that he is *actually*—albeit in a more spiritual form of expression—leaving Mitzrayim!

Then the Rebbe made a surprising request:

Calling upon those who had recently emerged from behind the Iron Curtain, the Rebbe observed that since for them it is easier to re-live such an experience as *yetzias Mitzrayim*, it would therefore be appropriate that they now ask the *Ma Nishtana*.

The Rebbe added that if there are any such children present, it would be even better that they ask the questions.

There were two Russian children present by the *farbrengen*, and the Rebbe gave them a *haggadah* so that they could read the *Ma Nishtana*. When



SIGNS PROTESTING THE ISSUE OF MIHU YEHUDI AT A GATHERING IN ERETZ YISROEL, NISSAN 5732.

they concluded with the closing words in Yiddish that appear in many *haggados*: “Tatte, ich hob ba dir gefregt fir kashes...” in which the son asks his father for an answer to his questions—the Rebbe’s face broke into a smile.

The Rebbe then gave a lengthy interpretation of the whole “*Ma Nishtana*” according to the Rebbe Rashab’s explanation (mentioned in *Hayom Yom*), employing *meshalim* and using simple terminology, making it easy for even a young child to understand.

Afterwards, the Rebbe said a *biur* on the second *possuk* of *kapitel* ט”ז in *Tehillim*.<sup>1</sup>

During the *farbrengen*, the Rebbe remarked that it is not too late to give people the opportunity to have *shmurah* matzah.

At the end of the *farbrengen*, the Rebbe stood up and vigorously encouraged the singing while facing towards the Chassidim who had recently come out of Russia. After the singing ended, the Rebbe did not sit back down but rather went straight to his *shtender* to daven *Mincha*.

After *Maariv*, the Rebbe informed Rabbi Hodakov that tomorrow there will be a *farbrengen* too. The Rebbe also wanted to know if people will be going on *tahalucha* the next day as well. Tonight the Rebbe continued distributing matzah.

### BRING THE CHILDREN

The next morning, the Rebbe instructed that everyone should bring their children to the *farbrengen* that will take place later that day. During the *farbrengen*, the Rebbe said, they can play

outside, but when it comes time for saying the “*Ma Nishtana*” they should be present.

The *farbrengen* started at 3:30 p.m like yesterday. The Rebbe began by continuing to discuss “*Hei lachma anya*.”

At the end of the *biur*, the Rebbe pointed out that in this short section of the *haggadah*, we are suggesting that one could be in Eretz Yisroel and still be in *galus*.<sup>2</sup>

The Rebbe then began speaking about a very painful subject, the terrible *gzeira* of “*Mihu Yehudi*.” Amongst other things, the Rebbe painfully noted that in the long history of the Jewish people, such a thing never occurred; that in the land of Eretz Yisrael a decree should be made to *chas v’shalom* assimilate the Jewish nation into the *goyim* around them!

Afterwards, the Rebbe said a short *sicha* about children asking questions (“*Ma Nishtana*”), noting that the child’s asking—an expression of his or her interest in *Yiddishkeit*—is a testament to the good *chinuch* the parents gave to the child.

The Rebbe then requested all the children present to recite together the “*Ma Nishtana*” on behalf of the entire *Klal Yisroel*.

The Rebbe poured wine into his *becher* (from his personal bottle), and gave it to the *vaad hamesader* to distribute amongst all the children to say *l’chaim*.

Some of the children were not standing together with the others, and the Rebbe emphasized that all the children should stand together.

The Rebbe asked a few times if all of the children had already received wine, making sure that everyone got. The Rebbe also instructed that before they begin, the children should choose a *niggun* to sing. When one of the usual *menagnim* started to sing, the Rebbe stopped him: “They themselves should choose the song.” The children began to sing “*Utzu eitza*.”

Throughout the recital of the “*Ma Nishtana*” the Rebbe gazed at the children with a solemn expression. After the children finished reciting the “*Ma Nishtana*,” the Rebbe instructed that they all be given more *l’chaim* as a “reward for asking the questions well.”

The Rebbe then said: It is known that in the days of King Achaz, the Yidden were in a spiritually poor state, as the Midrash says: “Why is he called with the name Achaz? שאחז בתי כנסיות ומדרשות; because he barred entry to the houses of study and worship.” And yet, despite all of this, when Yeshayahu Hanavi observed the pure ways of the *Yiddishe* children, he





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expressed hope for the future of the Jewish people. If it was true then, the Rebbe continued, how much more so now when we are *baruch Hashem* not living under such dire conditions, that the appropriate conduct of *Yiddishe* children will bring about the nullification of all undesirable things, beginning with the *gzeira* of “*Mihu Yehudi*.”

“Certainly, Hashem will bring us the true and complete *geula* as Yeshayahu proclaimed,” the Rebbe said, “in the spirit of the *niggun* that was

recently brought out from behind the Iron Curtain.” The Rebbe then began to sing the Russian song: “*Ee vadye mee nye patonim*; In water we shall not drown, and to fire we shall not succumb...”

Everybody joined in the singing, and once again, the Rebbe got up from his chair and danced with great enthusiasm in his place for quite a while.

Later, the Rebbe asked that the children sing “*Utzu eitza*” a second time.

The farbrengen concluded around 5:30 p.m.



10 SHEVAT 5730, CB HALBERSTAM VIA JEM 308654





## OIF DEM IZ ER DOCH A YID!

On Shvi'i Shel Pesach the Rebbe held yet another farbrengen, beginning at 3:30 p.m.

At the farbrengen, the Rebbe spoke about the special events that occurred on this day: *Krias Yam Suf* and *shiras hayam*. The same way one is supposed to relive the story of *yetzias Mitzrayim*, so too on Shvi'i Shel Pesach, the anniversary of *Krias Yam Suf*—one must experience his own personal *Kriyas Yam Suf*.

Later, the Rebbe directed his attention to the Chassidim who recently came from the Soviet Union, asking that they say *l'chaim* with joy, since they are individuals who are able to relate better to the concept of reliving the events of *yetzias Mitzrayim*.

The Rebbe then asked that those who left the Soviet Union within the last three years should say *l'chaim* too. The main thing, the Rebbe concluded, is that they should be a living example for those who already spent many years in our free society, and have grown accustomed to a relatively easy lifestyle. The lesson should be that there is no need to be *nispoel* when faced with challenges. Even in circumstances where one needs to have *mesiras nefesh*, there is still no reason to become intimidated—*oif dem iz er doch a Yid; ah mesiras nefesh-zach*—that is what a Yid is all about, the ultimate embodiment of selflessness and dedication.

The Rebbe then began to sing the Russian *niggun* “*Ee vadye...*” and during the singing, he stood up and danced in his place for some time.

Afterwards, the Rebbe requested that “*V’hi She’amda*” be sung, and after the *niggun* he again spoke with much pain about the *gzeira* of “*Mihu Yehudi*,” explaining how recent events make it clear that the primary way to rectify the situation is through communicating directly with the government itself, and not through members of the religious party in the Knesset.

## ACHARON SHEL PESACH

The farbrengen of Acharon Shel Pesach began shortly before *shkia* and went on until 1:00 a.m. Over the course of this farbrengen, the Rebbe spoke no less than 13 *sichos*!

Among many other topics, the Rebbe elaborated on the tremendous *zechus* and obligation of populating and living in the *shechunah* of Crown



Heights, as well as other neighborhoods in which Yidden live.

The Rebbe spoke again about the recent events in Eretz Yisrael, where the religious members of the Knesset were refusing to stand up for a rectification of “*Mihu Yehudi*.”

Later in the farbrengen, the Rebbe continued the *hadran* on Maseches Pesachim that he began at the Yud-Alef Nissan farbrengen.

Again, the Rebbe said a *sicha* directed towards the Chassidim who recently arrived from Russia, encouraging them to continue living with *mesiras nefesh* as they had until now, especially with regards to the *chinuch* of their children.

After the last *sicha*, the Rebbe started singing the Russian *niggun*: “*Ee vadye mee nye patonim...*”

The Rebbe led *birchas hamazon* holding a cup of wine, and after Maariv and *havdalah* he distributed *kos shel bracha*. After everyone received, the Rebbe began “*Ki Vesimcha*” and left the shul amidst the singing of the Chassidim. ❶

1. Starting on Shabbos Hagadol, the Rebbe began to elucidate the new *kapitel* of the year, *possuk* by *possuk*. At each *farbrengen* that followed, the Rebbe expounded on another *possuk* of his *kapitel*; *possuk beis* on the first day of Pesach (at the farbrengen of Yud-Alef Nissan the Rebbe explained *possuk aleph* a second time), *possuk gimmel* on the second day of Pesach, *possuk daled* on Shvi'i shel Pesach, and so on.

2. We say the words “השתא עבדין” *after* we say the words “לשנה ארעה בארעה דישראל” implying that it is possible to be in “ארעה דישראל” and *still* be an “עבד”.