

ETERNAL MEMENTOS

Yud-Aleph Nissan Chalukos

A new era of Yud-Aleph Nissan celebrations began in 5746*. The Rebbe had stopped farbrenging, choosing instead to explain the new *kapitel* on the Shabbos before (or immediately after) Yud-Aleph Nissan, and the pinnacle of the Yud-Aleph Nissan celebration became the annual *bracha* given by an elder Chossid—on behalf of all Chassidim—and the subsequent *sicha* spoken by the Rebbe.

Although Chassidim were obviously saddened by the change of events, there were some heartening changes in this new stage, namely: *Chalukos* of dollars and *kuntreisim*, as well as the publication of *mugedike maamarim* in honor of Yud-Aleph Nissan.

In reality, the Rebbe distributing something on Yud-Aleph Nissan was not a new concept, and had taken place already in the past. In 5742*, the Rebbe's eightieth birthday, at the end of the Yud-Aleph Nissan farbrenging, the Rebbe distributed a Tanya to each person present. This was the first time the Rebbe had ever publicly distributed a *sefer* to everyone—men, women and children.

The Rebbe explained that the *chaluka* was in appreciation for all those who took the time to travel to spend Yud-Aleph Nissan with

him, and stressed that the that the point of the *chaluka* is so that the Tanyas should be learned from, to the point that they tear, and new ones will need to be printed.

While distributing the Tanyas, the Rebbe seemed to be in a particularly uplifted mood, smiling to many people, especially children, even showing one child to kiss the Tanya. (For more details about this *chaluka*, see earlier - *Eighty Years—5742*.)

The same occurred—though in a slightly different way—at the end of the farbrenging of Yud-Aleph Nissan 5744*. Earlier that year the Rebbe instructed that Tanyas be printed in every country or city that had not yet had one. By Yud-Aleph Nissan time, a celebratory 1,000th edition of Tanya had been published. This edition included a copy of the title page of all the editions published to date. At the end of the Yud-Aleph Nissan farbrenging, the Rebbe announced that he would like to distribute this Tanya to all the assembled. However, unlike the last time the Rebbe distributed a Tanya, where the distribution took six hours, the Rebbe said that in order to make it easier for the crowd (that they shouldn't need to wait a long time) the distribution will be done through the *kolel yungerleit*.

As the Rebbe sat, waiting for the *kolel yungerleit* to be ready, the Rebbe told Reb Leibel Groner: "Why are you shouting instructions from here? Go there and help!" The Rebbe then looked around, searching for Reb Binyomin Klein. "Where is my second general?" the Rebbe asked.

The Rebbe said that he will remain seated in his place until the *yungerleit* will be ready for the *chaluka*. Boxes of Tanyas together with stacks of dollars were passed to all the *yungerleit* in the shul. When all was ready, the Rebbe said: "Nu, now I can go get my Tanya." The Rebbe began walking towards the exit of the shul, and received a Tanya and a dollar from Rabbi Yosef Levertov, who was standing near the door. In his excitement, Rabbi Levertov mistakenly gave the Rebbe two dollars stuck together. The Rebbe separated the two dollars, showed Rabbi Levertov that he gave two dollars, and put them in his pocket, all while smiling. While leaving the shul the Rebbe motioned to a woman with his Tanya, as if asking: "Where is your Tanya?"

These two occurrences however, were definitely out of the ordinary and unexpected by Chassidim. *Chalukos* on Yud-Aleph Nissan would only become the norm two years later, beginning

with Yud-Aleph Nissan 5746*.

The weeks leading up to Yud-Aleph Nissan that year were different from the familiar festive preparatory time-period preceding Yud-Aleph Nissan regularly. The *sefarim* case was at its peak, and the atmosphere in 770 was heavily impacted by the Rebbe's seriousness at the time.

To add to all this, Chassidim were pained by the Rebbe's state of health: In the weeks preceding Yud-Aleph Nissan, the Rebbe's foot was unwell. Because of this, the Rebbe was not using the *mikveh* or going downstairs for *tefillos* or *sichos*, in order to prevent any unnecessary strain.

Although the atmosphere at the time was a saddened one, especially after hearing that the Rebbe would not hold the annual Yud-Aleph Nissan farbrengen, the spirit of the Chassidim began to lift as some of the Rebbe's routine returned to normal. On Yud-Aleph Nissan the Rebbe went to the *mikveh* for the first time in over a month. And finally, it was on that Yud-Aleph Nissan that the Rebbe gifted the Chassidim a historic gift, lasting for the years to come: "Sunday dollars."

The big surprise took place on Yud-Aleph Nissan morning, when the Rebbe arrived in 770 surprisingly wearing a silk *sirtuk* (usually worn on Shabbos and Yom Tov) and began distributing dollars, wishing each recipient, "A kosher un freilichen Pesach." Despite the attempts of the *vaad hamesader* to cut the line early, the Rebbe insisted that every person have a chance to pass by and receive a dollar. The hour-and-a-half *chaluka* finished at 11:45 a.m.

(An additional joyous occurrence took place when the Rebbe returned from the Ohel and entered 770: Chassidim were singing the new *niggun* composed for Yud-Aleph Nissan, "Ratzisa Hashem," and the Rebbe encouraged the singing of the Chassidim. The *bochurim* were



FOLLOWING THE TANYA DISTRIBUTION ON YUD-ALEPH NISSAN 5744*, THE REBBE LEAVES 770 WITH A TANYA IN HIS HAND.

particularly overjoyed, as the Rebbe had not encouraged the singing while entering the shul in the past while.)

In 5747*, although the Rebbe did not farbreng, he did distribute dollars on Yud-Aleph Nissan eve following the annual *bracha* and the subsequent *sicha*. As the *sicha* was coming to a close the Rebbe suddenly notified he would like to distribute dollars. The *chaluka* began at 8:45 p.m. and lasted close to midnight.

In 5748*, the Rebbe once again distributed dollars on Yud-Aleph Nissan eve, this time in his home on President Street (where the Rebbe had been since the *histalkus* of the Rebbetzin on Chof-Beis Shevat).

On Yud-Aleph Nissan 5749*, the Rebbe distributed dollars—like every Sunday—in the afternoon, and after Maariv the Rebbe began distributing a limited amount of "Kuntres Ahavas Yisroel" along with two dollars. After the *kuntreisim* ran out, the Rebbe gave an additional dollar, totaling three dollars, instead.

On Yud-Aleph Nissan 5750*, the Rebbe distributed a *maamar* of his own for the first time, "Ki Yishalcha Bincha" (edited by the Rebbe in

honor of Yud-Aleph Nissan that year) with a dollar inside each *kuntres*. In 5751*, the Rebbe distributed dollars after the *sicha* at night and again the next evening after Maariv.

The annual publication of *maamarim* edited by the Rebbe for Yud-Aleph Nissan began in 5747*. That year, a *maamar* was submitted to the Rebbe for *hagaha* and the editors, not wanting to decide on their own, sent in two options for the date: "Pesach" or "Yud-Aleph Nissan." The Rebbe circled "Yud-Aleph Nissan," and the *pesach davar* included details about Yud-Aleph Nissan as well.

In honor of Yud-Aleph Nissan 5749* the Rebbe was *magiah* the famous *maamar* "B'yom Ashtei Asar Yom," said on Yud-Aleph Nissan 5731*. In 5750* the Rebbe edited and distributed (as mentioned) the *maamar* "Ki Yishalcha Bincha." For Yud-Aleph Nissan 5751*, the beginning of the Rebbe's ninetieth year, the Rebbe was *magiah* the *maamar* "Tefilah LeMoshe," based on *kapitel* 90 in Tehillim.

* 5746-1986, 5747-1987, 5748-1988, 5749-1989, 5750-1990, 5751-1991