



לעבן מיט'ן רבי'ן

“אור וחיות נפשנו...”

The Yom Tov of Yud-Tes Kislev has been celebrated in Lubavitch for almost as long as the movement has been in existence. In every generation, our Rabbeim have conducted joyous Farbrengens on this day, offering thanks to Hashem for the miracle of the Alter Rebbe's release and the subsequent upswing in *Hafotzas Hama'ayonos*.

In fact, Yud-Tes Kislev is one of the only occasions in the Chabad calendar where all the Rabbeim held Farbrengens. And each year, they would speak lengthy Sichos, urging their Chassidim to strengthen their commitment in the study of Chassidus and apply its teachings in their day-to-day lives.

This momentous day also granted an opportunity for Chassidim to express their feelings of great fortune, in having merited to learn the ways of Chassidus and to be guided by its teachings and the Rabbeim.

In our generation too, from the earliest years of the Rebbe's leadership, the Yud-Tes Kislev Farbrengen was a joyous event, attended by many Chassidim and guests.

In the ensuing years, as technology developed, the Rebbe's Farbrengens were broadcast live, via satellite, and many more thousands of people were able to participate in the Farbrengen. In this way, the Rebbe's Yud-Tes Kislev Farbrengens reached an audience even outside of the Chassidim, and the Rebbe addressed many global issues including the establishment of a moment of silence in public schools, the Sheva Mitzvos Bnei Noach, and heightening society's sense of morality.

Nevertheless, despite the globalization of the Rebbe's Farbrengen, Yud-Tes Kislev remained as it always had been: a day for Chassidim to offer thanks, a day enthused with the atmosphere of Yom Tov.

In between the Sichos, Chassidim sang lively Nigunim while the Rebbe strongly encouraged their singing, and greeted them each with blessings of “*Le'Chayim ve'Livrocha*.”

This was the hallmark of a Yud-Tes Kislev Farbrengen and Chassidim began to look forward to this day with anticipation.

In 5744, several months before Yud-Tes Kislev, the Chassidim in Eretz Yisroel reserved an enormous hall (the *Bin-yanei Ha'uma* in Yerushalayim) to stage the live hookup of the Farbrengen and

FARBRENGEN

19 KISLEV 5744

sold tickets to all those who wished to participate.

FARBRENGEN

When the night of Yud-Tes Kislev arrived, many distinguished guests filled Crown Heights, including Rabbonim, Government officials, news reporters and other public figures. At 9:30PM, with his Siddur in his hand, the Rebbe entered the Shul for the Farbrengen. As he passed various dignitaries on his way to the podium, the Rebbe greeted them with a smile and acknowledged their presence at the celebration.

INFLUENCE THE NATIONS OF THE WORLD

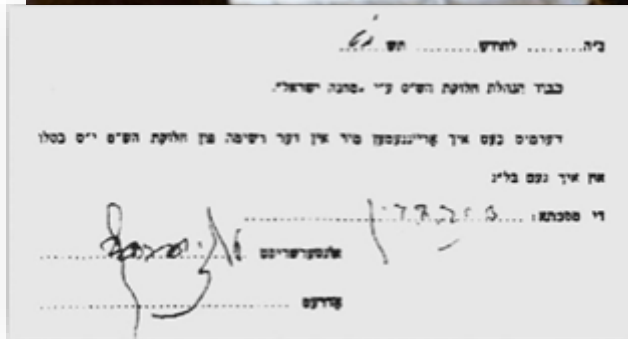
During the Farbrengen, the Rebbe spoke at length about deep topics in Torah, and conveyed their practical implications and lessons. In the second Sichah, the Rebbe asked why the Alter Rebbe, in his letter to his colleagues after his release, felt it necessary to specifically mention the reactions of the non-Jewish offic-

The Rebbe then added with a smile, “He surely knew that I would not be able to resist for too long, and that I would eventually make a whole ‘Trask’ of it.”

ers. The Rebbe explained that in fact, the Alter Rebbe was demonstrating just how important it is to influence and impact the world around us. The Rebbe then repeated his bidding for a moment of silence in public schools and the propagation of the Sheva Mitzvos Bnei Noach.

THE ALTER REBBE HIMSELF

In the third Sichah, the Rebbe recounted the well-known story of the Alter Rebbe leaving in the middle of his Yom Kippur Davening to walk to the outskirts of the city and help a woman who had only recently given birth. The Rebbe remarked that when the Frieddiker Rebbe told him the story, he added that there were peri-



ABOVE: THE REBBE TAKES PART IN THE CHALUKAS HASHAS DURING A FARBRENGEN ON 19 KISLEV.

LEFT: THIS NOTE CONTAINS THE REBBE HANDWRITING COMMITTING TO LEARN MASECHES SANHEDRIN FOR THE CHALUKAS HASHAS OF 5749.

ods when Chassidim refrained from telling this story. The Rebbe smiled and said, “He surely knew that I would not be able to resist for too long, and that I would eventually make a whole to-do of it.”

The Rebbe stressed that there could be nothing more important than the Alter Rebbe’s Davening on Yom Kippur, and thus, the fact that he left his Davening to help another person stands as an instruction for us to do the

same; that we must influence our non-Jewish neighbors and colleagues to fulfill the Sheva Mitzvos Bnei Noach.

CHALUKAS/SIYUM HASHAS

In the fourth Sichah, the Rebbe called upon all the participants at the Farbrengen to join in the *Chalukas HaShas*, the custom initiated by the Alter Rebbe to have each community divide the Gemora between its members so that the entire *Shas* would be completed by the next Yud-Tes Kislev.

The Rebbe then said the traditional *Hadran* in honor of completing the yearly cycle of the Gemora, and expounded upon the beginning and conclusion of

the entire *Shas*, as well as various specific *Mesichtos*.

[It is worthy to note that at the live viewing of the Farbrengen in Eretz Yisroel, a prominent Rav who sat on the editorial board of the famous “Talmudic Encyclopedia,” was present, and when he heard the Rebbe’s comprehensive *Hadran*, he commented, “If only the Rebbe’s opponents, who speak so freely against him, would hear this. Perhaps if they were aware of what a Torah giant they are dealing with, they wouldn’t have the audacity to take the position that they do.”]

At the conclusion of this Sichah, cards were distributed and each of the participants filled in which Masechta they would take on to study. The Rebbe also filled out a card, with a pen he borrowed from Rabbi E. Yalles of Philadelphia.

LAUNCHING A NEW CAMPAIGN

Perhaps one of the more dramatic moments of the Farbrengen was when the Rebbe introduced a new instruction: to recite *Hareini Mekabel* before davening and *Ach Tzaddikim* afterwards. The Rebbe explained that in order to combat the growing darkness of the Galus, we must increase in *Ahavas Yisroel*, which is proclaimed with *Hareini*, and also recite *Ach Tzaddikim*, which discusses the tranquility reserved for *Tzaddikim*.

Hareini Mekabel and Ach Tzaddikim

At this Farbrengen, the Rebbe urged all communities to recite *Hareini Mekabel* each day before *Shacharis* and the *Possuk* of *Ach Tzaddikim* at the end of each of the daily *Tefillos*. The Rebbe explained that while the world was descending into a mire of warfare, devastation and disharmony, it remained the Yidden's responsibility to add extra *Tefillos* to restore the peace.

The Rebbe added that this idea was brought in early Halachic sources and his call was therefore not exclusive to only those who Daven with our Nusach.

Two days later, at the Farbrengen of Shabbos Parshas Vayeshev, the Rebbe discussed this further. There had been, as expected, those who challenged the idea and protested that we need not institute new initiatives at this time.

"These are not new," the Rebbe argued. "The idea of saying *Hareini me'kabel* can be found in the writings of the *Arizal*, and *Ach Tzaddikim* following davening can be found in the works of many *Poskim*, as early as the *Rambam*."

After Shabbos, the Rebbe's words on this subject were compiled and edited for publishing, and then printed in Hebrew and Yiddish. The Chassidim went into action. Throughout the week, teams of *Bochurim* set out to hundreds of Shuls in all the various Jewish neighborhoods of the New York City area, bringing the Rebbe's new request to the attention of the congregants there.

Newspaper advertisements were prepared, bearing a brief explanation of the Rebbe's call, and including a small cutout with the two phrases on it – to be removed by the readers and inserted in their *Siddurim*. (The Yiddish version was actually edited by the Rebbe – see picture attached.)

At the Farbrengen the following Shabbos, the Rebbe thanked all those who assisted in bringing the new idea to the wider public, making specific mention of the newspaper ad along with the cutout included with it. The Rebbe also instructed that a Farbrengen should be held marking these achievements and handed a bottle of *Mashke* to the editor of the *Algemeiner Journal*, Reb G. B. Jacobson, in its honor. (The Farbrengen was held on Zos Chanukah – see below.)

When Rabbi Y. Weinberg reported to the Rebbe that he publicized the new idea on his weekly radio show, the Rebbe responded, "You will surely continue with the aforementioned, especially given the fact that if you've been reading the news that appears on the front page of the newspapers recently, you must have noticed that the turbulence in the world and the conflict between nations has taken a turn for the worse."

On the fifth day of Chanukah, a children's rally was held in 770. On the preceding day, the Rebbe instructed the administration of Tzivos Hashem to prepare a colored sticker with the two phrases on it in Hebrew and with translation into English, alongside an empty space for each child to fill in their name and address, as well as the Tzivos Hashem emblem.

[It should be noted that the Rebbe carried this sticker in the back of his *Siddur* for many years to come.]

At the Farbrengen that the Rebbe had requested in honor of the new idea, Reb G. B. Jacobson of the *Algemeiner Journal* related the following story:

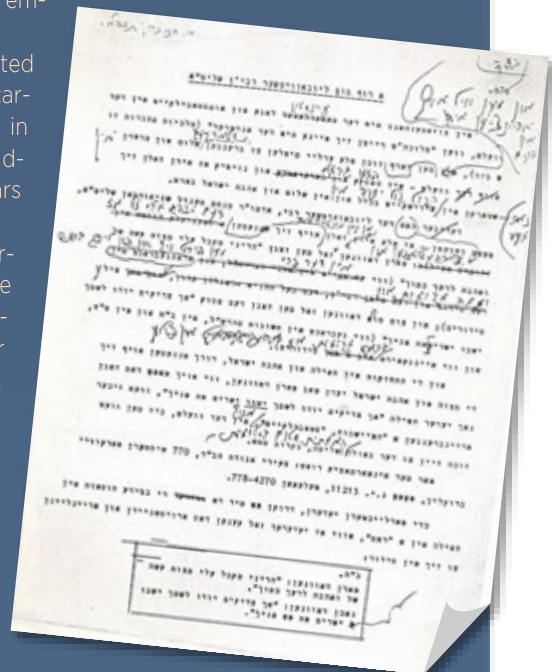
A few days earlier, he received a phone call from a respected rabbi in the New York City area,

asking him to explain the meaning behind the recitation of these two *Pessukim*, and if they actually possess the power of changing the world. In the end, he told the members of his congregation to take upon themselves to recite them every day, out of his reverence for the Rebbe (although he himself did not quite understand why it was so important).

On the following Sunday, the rabbi called Reb G. B. and excitedly reported that he had already witnessed unbelievable change brought about by the new campaign.

In his congregation there were two cousins that had been engaged in a legal battle for some fifteen years. When they heard about the Rebbe's call to increase in *Ahavas Yisroel*, they decided that it was time to make up, and they came to his home on Motzai Shabbos to resolve the dispute.

The rabbi concluded his phone call with Reb G. B. saying that now he understood the Rebbe's clear foresight with initiating this campaign and he wished to ask the Rebbe's forgiveness for originally doubting his words.



THE REBBE'S CORRECTIONS ON THE PRESS-RELEASE
PREPARED FOR THE ALGEMEINER JOURNAL.

This announcement soon snowballed into an immense campaign throughout the coming months. (See insert).

MIHU YEHUDI

Towards the end of the Farbrengen, the Rebbe mentioned the devastating decree of *Mihu Yehudi*.

Although the Rebbe often discussed this issue at Farbrengens, very rarely did he make use of such sharp wording in articulating the damage this law had caused.

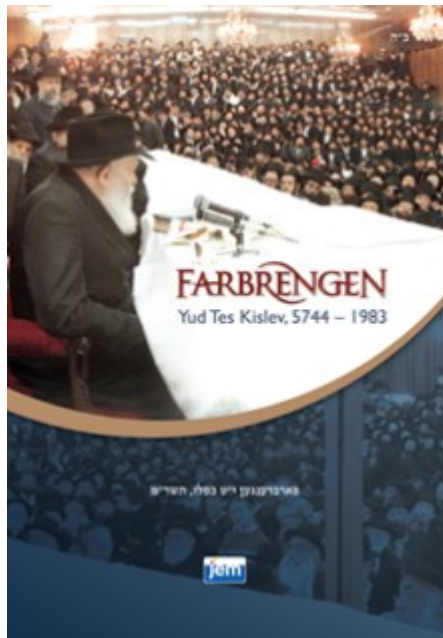
“There has never been such a harsh decree on the Jewish nation since the time of the Syrian Greeks, who forced the Jews to write on the horn of an ox that they have no share in the G-d of Israel,” the Rebbe said. “This is an embarrassment, a disgrace, a humiliation, and a *Chilul Hashem* like there has never been before.”

The Farbrengen lasted five hours and at its conclusion, after distributing dollars to everybody through the *Tankistin*, the Rebbe left the Shul while singing *Ki B’simcha*.

THE SHABBOS AFTER

With Yud-Tes Kislev being on Friday,

Shabbos was Chof Kislev, and the Rebbe Farbrenged again. During the Farbrengen, the Rebbe reflected on several points



from the Thursday night Farbrengen.

After expounding upon the true meaning of Chof Kislev, the Rebbe rebuked the Chassidim for not having held any Farbrengens on Friday night. Instead, each one went home and ate a lavish

Shabbos meal with fish, meat, soup, and more! It is possible that a quiet group of individuals gathered for a Farbrengen, but it was all hushed; Crown Heights was not Shtureming!

In the second Sicha, the Rebbe reprimanded those who come to the Farbrengen and excite themselves with trivial details, ignoring all the main points for which the Farbrengen was held in the first place. This one is enthusiastic about exactly which Goy came here to participate—a Senator, wow, *Mammosh!* And yet others rant about how the Farbrengen lasted for five hours and the crowd stayed until the end!

“Ask him,” challenged the Rebbe, “did you hear which *Divrei Torah* were discussed at the Farbrengen? He has nothing to answer. Did you hear which *Ma’amor* was said? Do you at least know with which *Possuk* it began? He has no idea. He was busy looking around him and taking note of who was there and who wasn’t.”

“When one participates in a Farbrengen,” the Rebbe continued “he is to be involved in the important aspects of it—the Torah and the Chassidus etc.” ■

