

# The Unexpected Speech

The Shul was packed and guests from all over felt the great privilege of celebrating Rosh Hashonah L'Chassidus with the Rebbe.

## TWO INSTEAD OF ONE

The farbrengen of Shabbos Yud Tes Kislev 5737 was shorter than usual—a total of just two hours and fifteen minutes. However, instead of falling despondent, the Chassidim relished their moments with the Rebbe. That year, as was common with such a K'vius, they were lucky to receive two Farbrengens, because the main one was to be held the next evening, on 20 Kislev.

And even though it was short on the clock, it certainly wasn't lacking special moments. A Maamor for forty-five minutes, Freiliche niggunim and many L'chaims to the assembled crowd, the Chassidim treasured every precious second.

The famous activist Reb Yehuda Paldi was one of those singled out personally for a L'chaim.

Rabbi Chaim Yehuda Paldi was born in Hungary and studied at the famous Pressburg Yeshiva. He was an exceptional Talmid and received Smicha from Hagaon Reb Shimon Sofer. In his early youth he became a passionate Zionist. His move to Eretz Yisroel followed shortly after and he immediately began producing a newspaper in Hungarian, in which he expressed his opinion and support of the "Worker's party of Eretz Yisrael."

His first encounter with Lubavitch was a Brocha he received from the Rebbe for a medical problem. [The terrors of the Holocaust had left their mark on him. He could be heard many times saying that he was a walking miracle.]

The seeds had been sown.

In 5727, he attended a Bar Mitzva celebration for children of murdered Israeli soldiers, an event organized by Lubavitch<sup>1</sup>. The evening provided the final impetus for his coming to Chabad.

## BECOMING A CHOSSID

In honor of the upcoming Tishrei of the year 5728, Rabbi Paldi finally made his first trip to the Rebbe. Following quickly after, he began to gradually return to Yiddishkeit and eventually started growing his beard.

At that point, the Rebbe gave him the Shlichus to battle against the notion that had sprung up regarding the establishment of the state of Israel, known as "*Aschalta D'geula*." He took on this mission with complete dedication and wrote tens of newspaper articles on the topic. The Rebbe followed his progress and gave him tremendous encouragement.

In 5730, during the heat of the terrible decree of "*Mihu Yehudi*," Rabbi Paldi became actively involved and fervidly worked on salvaging the situation. With the support and Brochos of the Rebbe, he opened up a committee for the sake of Shleimus Ha'am.

The next day, 20 Kislev, the Shul filled up once again in anticipation for the grand Farbrengen. Many niggunim were sung throughout the night and the Rebbe joyously encouraged the singing both with motions of his head and by clapping his hands. (Picture 1)

## A RARE OPPORTUNITY

Towards the end of the Farbrengen, the Rebbe motioned for Rabbi Groner to approach. After exchanging some words, Rabbi Groner spoke to Rabbi Paldi for a few short moments and then returned to the Rebbe's place and related Rabbi Paldi's response.

The Rebbe then recited the seventh Sich'a of the night. He spoke passionately about the urgent need to uproot the "*Mi Hu Yehudi*" issue. Then the Rebbe announced, "Present here amongst us, is a Yid who deals with this with Messirus Nefesh...we request that he says a few words...and this decree should become nullified in a peaceful and pleasant manner. This is the Minhag of the country...we therefore give permission to Harav Reb Chaim Yehuda Paldi to speak."



In a scene that rarely repeated itself, the Rebbe handed over his microphone to Rabbi Paldi so that he could address the assembled crowd. (Picture 2)

He spoke to the Chassidim for a few moments about the decree and made subtle hints regarding the monetary burden that the committee was carrying. Right before this, he had requested permission from the Rebbe to speak about money, to which the Rebbe nodded his assent.

When he had finished, the Rebbe took the microphone and concluded, "It seems that he is shy and therefore only hinted about the money, but you should remember that life in America is one that is involved with the giving of Tzedoka. It is through this that one merits

to *"and Hashem will broaden your boundaries."*

The Rebbe then gave him a L'chaim, after which he returned to his place. (Picture 3)

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Rabbi Paldi passed away from his illnesses on the 26<sup>th</sup> of Cheshvan, 5743. Not many others can boast of such a unique and special privilege; he was truly a man who fought the Rebbe's battle. The horrifying effects of the Holocaust stole his ability to have children, yet his brave efforts and work in the Shleimus of Am Yisroel are certainly a continuation of his legacy. ■

1. This event is known as the Bar Mitzva for the sons of the 'mighty'—stressing the greatness of the boys' fathers.



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