



לעבן
מיט'ן
רבי'ן

"בגבורות ישע ימינו"

The months leading up to Yud Aleph Nissan 5742 were full of excitement. After all, the Rebbe's eightieth birthday was no small matter! Chassidim the world over, and especially the Yeshiva bochurim, each did their best to prepare appropriate "gifts" for the Rebbe for this monumental occasion. They each increased with an additional undertaking in Torah study, placing an emphasis in amounts of "eighty" (e.g., eighty Blatt Gemora, eighty Maamarei Chassidus, etc.). Many Yeshivos printed Kovtzim and Seforim containing their written Chiddushei Torah in honor of the day. Overall, everyone anticipated the upcoming momentous day very eagerly.

Those who recalled the occurrences ten years earlier – when the Rebbe reached the completion of his seventieth year – would tell of the sense of joy and gratitude to Hashem that prevailed amongst Chassidim during that period. Some may have seemed surprised when at the farbrengen on Yud Aleph Nissan that year, the Rebbe clearly notified the public of his intentions to continue with all his activities, and to know no rest during the

coming years. Indeed, now all were able to see how factual

this was over the past decade, wherein the Rebbe's holy work only expanded in an immeasurable manner – notwithstanding the Rebbe's suffering and recovering from a heart-attack at the start of the year 5738.

Now, with the completion of the Rebbe's eightieth year, it may have been presumed that the Rebbe would finally ease the work and take some time to rest. Nevertheless, the Rebbe again indicated very clearly that he had no intentions of entertaining such thoughts at all. Quite the contrary: In Yechidus with a family visiting from London, the Rebbe said, "I have plans of action for the next 10 years!"

In addition, it has been told, that while speaking with Rabbi Dovid Moshe Rosen, the Rebbe made a similar remark. Rabbi Rosen had served as Chief Rabbi of Romania for many years and felt exhausted from his decades-long career. When he shared his feelings with the Rebbe and proposed his idea of retiring and moving to Eretz Yisroel, the Rebbe said, "You must continue on the job. I am now approaching eighty and I intend on moving on with plans for at least an-

THE REBBE'S
EIGHTIETH YEAR
YUD ALEPH
NISSAN 5742

לעילוי נשמת
התמים חיים יוסף יצחק
ב"ר גבריאל שליט"א
פאיל
נקטף בדמי ימיו
י"ז אדר שני ה'תשע"ד
ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.



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other ten years of work!”

TRAVELING TO THE REBBE

On Thursday, 7 Nissan – with Yud Aleph Nissan just a few days away – numerous guests flocked to New York to spend these days in the Rebbe’s presence. Although the Rebbe generally davened Mincha and Maariv in the small Zal upstairs in those years, but, due to the increased number of people davening with the Rebbe’s Minyan, they had to relocate to the big Shul downstairs.

It came as somewhat of a surprise, to see so many Chassidim arrive in 770. A mere week earlier – on Rosh Chodesh Nissan – the Rebbe addressed a Tzivos Hashem rally for children, wherein he instructed Chassidim not to travel from distant places to be in his presence for Yud Aleph Nissan. He explained that, being as it was so close to Pesach, it would seem more appropriate that everyone stay in their cities and coordinate Mivtzoim, assisting other Jews with their Pesach preparations.

When one celebrates Yud Tes Kislev – the Rebbe continued – he is doing so with the Alter Rebbe in mind, as it is his Day of Liberation. The same applies to Yud Beis Tammuz with the [Friediker] Rebbe. As for Yud Aleph Nissan, it is *my* day, and therefore all are to take my word for it and *not* travel here. That is true in body only, but in spirit we will be

very much together, as the saying of the Baal Shem Tov, “Where the *ratzon* of man is, *there* he can be found...” As for the expenses of the proposed trip, half should be given to Tzedoka, while the remaining half should be used to cover the costs of the household Pesach needs.

The Rebbe added: “It says in HaYom Yom that a birthday is to be used for in-depth thought and introspection; a time when one would prefer to be alone. Therefore, I will be unable to greet each and every guest in person, although they are undoubtedly worthy that I should do so. I do intend – *bli neder* – to hold a farbrengen when we’ll all be together, but still, I don’t feel that I’ll be able to give each individual the attention that they deserve.”

Still and all, many Chassidim could not resist the urge, and made their way to 770 to spend these precious moments with the Rebbe. Needless to say, they did not regret their difficult decision, especially when they learned of the pleasant surprise that awaited them at the end of the farbrengen on Yud Aleph Nissan. It was then that the Rebbe disclosed that -- as a token of appreciation to everyone who made the effort to be at the farbrengen – he would personally hand a Tanya to each and every one of the attendees (see below in more detail).

SHABBOS HAGADOL – EREV YUD ALEPH NISSAN

Throughout Shacharis, the Rebbe held a Tehillim on his *Shtender*, open to *Kapitlach Pei and Pei Aleph*, and read from it very intensely.

The farbrengen this Shabbos was very high-spirited; very Yom Tov’dik. Indeed, Yud Aleph Nissan was already felt in the air. After the Maamor, the Rebbe acknowledged the presence of the many guests who had arrived, and said:

“Since there are many guests who have come in connection with the “*Shnas Hashmonim*”, we will now discuss the Pesukim of *Kapittel Pei* in Tehillim, as well as a few words on *Kapital Pei Aleph*. We’ll keep it very brief, for if not, we may very well be stuck here for an entire year, until the beginning of the eighty-second year!”

The Rebbe went on to give a beautiful interpretation of the *Kapittel*, possuk by possuk. The *Kapittel* itself expounds upon the hardships that the Yidden endure throughout the years of Golus and their heartfelt prayers to Hashem that he put an end to their suffering. True, we understand the advantages of our being in Golus, where we serve Hashem in foreign lands and refine the mundane world, but nevertheless, we cry to Hashem with bitter tears, “Enough is enough!”

One of the greatest difficulties we face in Golus is described in the seventh

possuk: Mockery from our foes. In our time, we have those who mock us for demanding the Geulah, and they have the nerve to claim to do so in the name of “*Daas Torah!*” The Jewish people are in Golus for more than nineteen-hundred years now, how much longer can we wait? (“גיוואלד! וויפיל איז א שיעור?!”)

With each additional possuk, the *Kappittel* emphasizes, with yet increasing passion, of the urgent need that Hashem take us out of Golus and lead us to the final Geulah *Bekarov Mamosh!*

In between Sichos, the Rebbe vigorously encouraged the singing, especially that of the newly-composed Yud Aleph Nissan Nigun, “*Harninu Le'Elokim*”. The Rebbe also motioned to some of those present to say Lechaim, including Rabbi Avrohom Shemtov, whom he instructed that he say it on a large cup. While encouraging the singing, the Rebbe seemed to show extra attention to Dr. Ira Weiss who had come in from Chicago to be with the Rebbe for Yud Aleph Nissan.

YUD ALEPH NISSAN – BORUCH SHEHECHEYANU VEKIY'MANU...!

When the Rebbe entered the Shul for Maariv, the excitement in the air could almost be touched with bare hands; Chassidim sang and danced with the new Nigun joyously! At the moment of Maariv's conclusion, Reb Avrohom (“*Bumi*”) Friedland of Nachalas Har Chabad stood up to recite a loud “*Shehecheyanu*”. With this spontaneous act, he seemed to include with him all the ecstatic Chassidim present, offering thanks to Hashem for having been granted the great privilege of being with the Rebbe on this special day. The Rebbe looked directly at him while he said the Brocha and answered “Amen” when he concluded.

After Havdala, the Chassidim broke out in a dance singing the new Nigun, and the Rebbe indicated to strengthen the singing on his way out of Shul. The dancing and celebration continued for a while. After hearing the “*Chazzara*” on the Rebbe's Shabbos farbrengen, Chassidim sat down to Farbreng throughout the night, until the light of dawn.

Words cannot do justice to the mood that dominated at the Chassidim's farbrengen on that joyous night, celebrating the Rebbe's special day. Some will recall the words of Rabbi G. M. Garelik, as he spoke passionately about the significance of a day such as this: “When the Rebbe appears at 770 on Yud Aleph Nissan, the sun shines with extraordinary brightness!” Chassidim said Lechaim with one

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another and wished heartfelt blessings that the Rebbe should be well, “געזונט און, שטארק” and continue to lead the Jewish people to the final Geulah!

THE GRAND FARBRENGEN

Already from the early hours of the afternoon, the Shul at 770 filled with people who had come to hold their places for the Rebbe's farbrengen. At 6:00 p.m. it was already difficult to find a space to stand, and even prior to the Rebbe's arrival at 9:30, it was virtually impossible to get in. There was an initial plan to erect a tent outside where the overflowing crowd would be able to watch the Rebbe on a screen, but, with the freezing weather temperatures, the idea was dismissed. In order to maintain a path with sufficient space for the Rebbe to enter the Shul, the organizers had to keep an empty bench on the floor, which they later shifted up on the Rebbe's entrance, thereby creating

an open space of sorts for the Rebbe to pass through. The accumulating excitement finally reached its climax, as the crowds of Chassidim anticipated the Rebbe's arrival at the grand farbrengen, breaking out into an ever so joyous singing of “*Chayolei Adoneinu*”.

The platform upon which the Rebbe sat, was filled with many distinguished guests, including then-Mayor of New York City, Mr. Edward Koch, as well as other government officials, senators, and many more dignitaries.

At the conclusion of the first Sicha, some of the guests approached the Rebbe to share a few words and say Lechaim. The first one was Mr. Koch. The Rebbe greeted him very warmly and, with a very large smile, asked, “You don't have a chair?” A folding chair was immediately brought forward and the Mayor sat down right near the Rebbe for a few minutes. In between each of the Sichos, the Rebbe greeted a few additional guests and conversed with each of them for a short while.

The Chassidim sang lively Nigunim all the while and the Rebbe showed them encouraging signs at occasion. Mr. Abe Sacks – the famous basketball coach who maintained a unique relationship with the Rebbe and often attended these farbrengens – was also present that evening. During the singing, he stood up on a bench and danced quite vibrantly along with the niggun and the Rebbe seemed to yield much pleasure from the scene. Dr. Ira Weiss also received the Rebbe's attention, when, during one of the Nigunim the Rebbe smiled broadly towards him while showing the doctor his pulse...

Those present at the farbrengen will recall that evening to be one of the most over-crowded moments in 770 throughout the years. It was simply impossible to move about as the Shul was packed from wall to wall. Ironical as it may have seemed, all the senators and other prestigious officials who had come to join the farbrengen, were forced to spring around upon the tables in order to reach their places and underwent a rather difficult time as they made their way up to the

Rebbe's place to meet with him.

IN APPRECIATION FOR EDUCATION DAY USA

Every year on Yud Aleph Nissan, the President of the United States signs a bill calling on the American people to increase their efforts in the realm of education in recognition of the Rebbe's incredible dedication in this regard: "Education Day, USA". During the second Sich'a of this farbrengen, the Rebbe expressed his appreciation for the recognition, which he perceived as an acknowledgement of the entire Chabad movement as a whole, rather than as a personal honor. The Rebbe went on to expound upon the importance of ascertaining a proper education for the youth of today in order to ensure a moral and ethical society for the future.

RETIREMENT?

As expected, the Rebbe addressed a most timely issue, one that must have been occupying the minds of many: The

Rebbe has reached eighty years; What now? To answer this, the Rebbe explained: "The prevailing custom in this country is for one to decrease activity as his years progress. The truth, however, demands quite the contrary: When Hashem grants an individual with additional years, he is to utilize them by increasing his efforts to fulfill his purpose on earth. True, with each passing year one may feel less capable to do so as his strength seems to dwindle, but, nevertheless, so long as one remains connected 'Above', he will always maintain the power to do more and achieve yet greater heights."

The Rebbe concluded with the famous anecdote of soldiers on their way to war. As they march, they sing an upbeat tune indicating their confidence in the anticipated victory. When following Hashem's

Will and fulfilling His mission here in this world, one can be sure that he'll always have the necessary capabilities, and he can thus go about his work joyously and with utmost confidence!

Upon the conclusion of this Sich'a, the Chassidim excitedly sang "Napoleon's March".

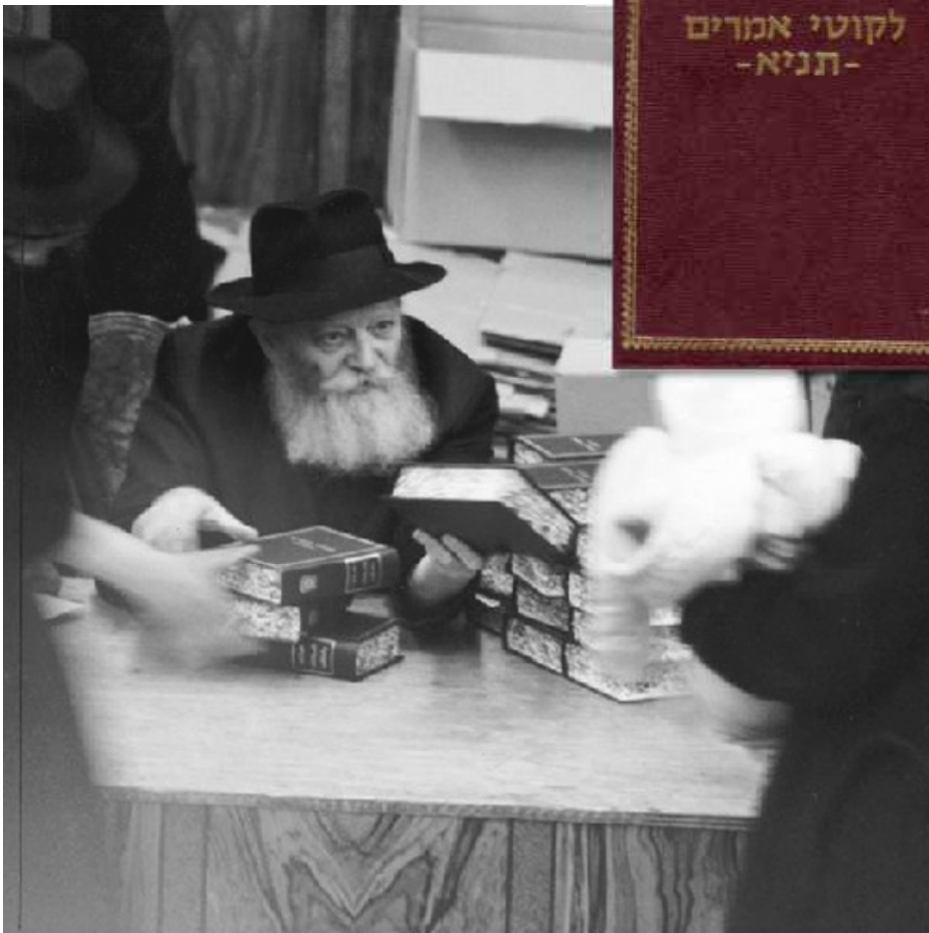
SIYUM ON RAMBAM

Before conducting a Siyum on Rambam, the Rebbe prefaced: "Although tomorrow is indeed a work-day and it is already quite late – being as things dragged out to take longer than initially intended – we must, nevertheless, still conduct a Siyum as always, in addition to the recitation of a Maamor Chassidus. The Rebbe then continued with a "Hadran" on the Rambam, explaining the various details of the final Hala-chos of the Sefer HaYad and linking them to the beginning of the Sefer.

THE TANYA

Towards the end of the farbrengen, the Rebbe disclosed a pleasant surprise to the unexpected crowd. "It is imperative to show appreciation, from the depth of my heart, for all those who took of their time and came to participate in this farbrengen for so many long hours," the Rebbe said.

"An appropriate token of appreciation – continued the Rebbe – would be giving a Tanya to each and every one of the participants at this farbrengen. The farbrengen is an expression of unity amongst Yidden. True achdus amongst the Jewish people is achieved through Torah, and, from all areas within Torah itself – the innermost part of the Torah does it best. As the soul of it all, it transcends the apparent diversity prevalent in the other facets of Torah. This particular edition of the Tanya displays the idea of Jewish unity yet furthermore! At the end of the Sefer, is a copy of every title-page of Tanyas printed all over the world. So, it would indeed be a suitable gift to those partaking in this farbrengen – which, itself, is a symbol of Jewish unity, by bringing so many together at once. Along



THE REBBE GIVES OUT SPECIAL TANYAS AFTER THE FARBRENGEN. CREDIT: JEM/THE LIVING ARCHIVE

with the Tanya, each and every one will also receive a dollar to be given to Tzedoka, which also bears the inscription “*E Pluribus Unum* – out of many, one” – yet another indication of unity. The learning and spreading of Chassidus (“הפצת המעיינות חוצה”) that will be increased with the distribution of the Tanya, as well as the giving of Tzedoka, are both said to hasten the final Geulah; may it come about speedily.”

The Rebbe concluded with a wish that everyone should accept the gift graciously (בסבר פנים יפות), inasmuch as the giving will be done in that manner...

While the Chassidim sang the Alter Rebbe’s Nigun, the Rebbe instructed Rabbi Groner to go ahead and begin bringing the boxes of Tanyas into the Shul. The boxes were passed in through the windows of the women’s section on Kingston Avenue. When the piles of boxes began accumulating next to the Rebbe’s chair, the Rebbe asked Rabbi Groner, “How will the people be able to pass through here?” Rabbi Groner pointed to the other side of the table, indicating that the crowds will pass by there, and the Rebbe would hand them each their Tanyas from across the table. The Rebbe then inquired as to whether passing through in that area would be sufficiently safe, as to avoid any potential hazards. Rabbi Avraham Parshan of Toronto then approached the Rebbe, requesting that he be granted the privilege of sponsoring the Tanyas of this unique evening, but the Rebbe smiled and said, “Even the Tanya that you’ll receive for yourself you will not pay for!”

After making a Brocha Acharonah, the Rebbe spoke a bit more, requesting that everyone assist in maintaining order, and avoid any extra pushing and shoving. “Especially,” underlined the Rebbe, “since, essentially, there is no need to push, as there are enough Tanyas for everyone. After all the men receive their Tanyas, they will be asked to leave the Shul, thus allowing the women who participated in this farbrengen to come by and receive Tanyas for themselves, for women are obligated to learn Chassidus



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as well.”

No sooner than the very beginning of the distribution, chaotic pushing erupted in the Shul amongst all the participants. Seeing the situation, the Rebbe sat down and announced over the microphone, “As long as there will be pushing, I will not give out any Tanyas!” The Rebbe then waited a few seconds, after which he resumed the distribution.

With the farbrengen having lasted five and a half hours, the distribution only began at 3:00 in the morning! At first, the Rebbe handed out the Tanyas from a standing position, and, at 3:45, he sat down and continued from his seat. One can only imagine the amount of energy that the Rebbe gave for the hours-long distribution; something that displayed itself when he eventually held one hand with the other for support... Still, the Rebbe continued to give more and more to each and every individual who passed by that night. After all the men had re-

ceived their Tanyas (around 4:55 a.m.), the Rebbe stood up and motioned everybody to exit the Shul while he began to sing “*Ki Ve’simcha*” with a big smile.

The distribution for the women then commenced, continuing until 6:10 in the morning. Again, the Rebbe started while in a standing position, and after a while sat down.

It was then that Chassidim realized the tremendous appreciation the Rebbe had to all those who had participated in the Farbrengen. True, the Rebbe had mentioned that coming in was not necessary, but now he expressed his gratitude to all those who had come in nonetheless. One can possibly say that the “*Is’arusa di’lisa-ta*” – the outpouring of love by those Chassidim who couldn’t resist celebrating 11 Nissan with the Rebbe, brought out an “*Is’arusa di’leila*” on the Rebbes part.

When the Rebbe left the Shul, Chassidim made their way to the small Zal upstairs in anticipation for the Rebbe’s arrival to hear Krias Hatorah (it was Monday morning). It was a beautiful sight to behold; each Chossid entered, one after the other with their Tanyas in hand...

After hearing Krias Hatorah, the Rebbe went into his room and spent some time with Dr. Weiss, leaving for home at 7:25 in the morning.

All the while, the Chassidim sang and danced joyously with their Tanyas in hand; a most natural effect of the unbelievable occurrences they had just merited to witness over the past two days. ■