



Let the

WORLD SEE!

*Broadcasting the
Rebbe's Farbrengens
to Millions*

לעילוי נשמת השלוחה
מרת ראשא ע"ה מינקאוויטש
בת הרה"ח ר' חיים מאיר הלוי שליט"א
נפטרה בדמי ימיה אדר שני ה'תשע"ד
ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.
נדבת הרה"ח ר' מנחם מענדל ורעייתו שיחיו מינקאוויטש



A revolutionary use of modern technology beginning thirty-four years ago to rejuvenate Chassidim who lived far distances from the Rebbe, soon became a powerful channel in bringing the Rebbe to thousands of people around the world. Today, the video recordings of these broadcasts are a lifeline for our hiskashrus to the Rebbe.

The events which led to this, and the Rebbe's unique attention to the satellite farbrengen viewings are fascinating. Here we present you a review of this remarkable initiative. In preparation for this, A Chassidisher Derher interviewed many of the people involved in the farbrengen broadcasts, including: Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky, the Rebbe's Mazkir and Chairman of Merkos L'inyonei Chinuch; Rabbi Hillel Dovid Krinsky, founder of Jewish Educational Media; and Rabbi Yosef Boruch Friedman, director of the Kehot Publication Society.



The Rebbe's strong encouragement of Hafotzas Hamayanos brought Chassidus to areas in "Chutza" which had never before been chartered. Using media such as newspapers and radio to publicize the Rebbe's messages was one of the ways that Chassidim used to accomplish this.

In 5718, Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky was chosen to work in the Rebbe's Mazkirus, and in addition, to take charge of matters dealing with publicity of the Rebbe's vision.

One of Rabbi Krinsky's first projects was to establish "Lubavitch News Service," making the news of Lubavitch and the Rebbe's sichos available to news agencies around the world. The reporters would often write articles based on these press releases, which would essentially bring the Rebbe's message to their readership.

News spread rapidly about the Rebbe and Lubavitch, and soon journalists began flocking to witness a farbrengen and

often to film it. These clips would be broadcasted later on via their respective news channels, broadening the scope of the Rebbe's reach.

Although the technology used to record videos was quite new at the time, Rabbi Krinsky sensed that videos of these farbrengens would come to good use. Rabbi Krinsky therefore commissioned a video-camera man to record the Rebbe's farbrengens. The first farbrengen which was fully videoed by this cameraman was 19 Kislev 5731.

Having never been at a farbrengen, the cameraman was unprepared for the tightly packed crowd and pushing that typically occurred during the Rebbe's farbrengens. The camera bounced around as he tried to capture the farbrengen in its entirety.

After the bumpy start, Rabbi Krinsky continued bringing the video crew to most of the Rebbe's weekday farbrengens. In order to ensure a smooth recording, they would set up a secure tripod directly across from the Rebbe.

This became standard practice, until a special and unexpected occurrence in 5740.

A CLEAR MISSION

Rabbi Hillel Dovid Krinsky relates:

"It was the eve of 10 Shevat 5740, and 770 was packed with Chassidim and guests who had come to participate in the Rebbe's farbrengen.

Just minutes before the Rebbe was to enter the main shul of 770, a reporter and cameraman from a national TV station entered 770 in search of my father, Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky. My father was already at his "farbrengen place" and was unreachable and there was no one else to guide this reporter.

Although I was a bit nervous, I nevertheless escorted the reporter to the farbrengen, and explained what was going on. His cameramen filmed a large portion of the farbrengen.

Just a day or two later, I found out that the clip was going to be aired soon. In order to view it I had to buy a TV and what was called a Betamax VCR, which



REB MANIS FRIEDMAN AND HIS FATHER REB YAAKOV MOSHE FRIEDMAN SIT INSIDE THE TRANSLATORS BOOTH DURING A FARBRENGEN BROADCAST. CREDIT: YISROEL GOLDSHMIDT FOR LNS.



RABBI HILLEL DOVID KRINSKY AND RABBI YOSEF BORUCH FRIEDMAN HARD AT WORK ON THE LIVE BROADCAST OF A LAG BAOMER PARADE, IN A STUDIO IN MANHATTAN.



AN ADVERTISEMENT FOR A FARBRENGEN BROADCAST IN THE NEW YORK TIMES NEWSPAPER.
CREDIT: JEM/THE LIVING ARCHIVE

could also record the clip on a betamax tape. The TV station ended up screening a 5-minute clip of the farbrengen, much longer than what would usually be broadcast.

That evening, my father informed the Rebbe about the clip and that it had been recorded, and asked the Rebbe whether he would like to view it. The Rebbe replied that he would like to view it the next day.

As soon as I found out, I prepared the machine on a stand that could be wheeled in and only the play button needed to be pushed, however my father insisted that I come along with him to ensure that the video was played smoothly. With much trepidation I entered the Rebbe's room to play the video.

The Rebbe gazed intently at the screen while the video played. Upon the ending of the video, I wheeled the machine out of the room, leaving it in *Gan Eden Hatachton*. I went into the office of the Mazkirus and waited for my father to come out of the Rebbe's room.

A moment later my father entered, and told me that the Rebbe had a question for

me, and had stated that since I'm over Bar Mitzvah I should answer myself. Quite startled and shocked, I returned to the Rebbe's room.

The Rebbe asked me:

דו האסט מיט-געטאנצט?

Literally translated: *Did you dance alongside?*

Unsure what to answer I remained frozen in my place. The Rebbe repeated himself again, and then a third time, yet I still did not understand the Rebbe's question. Realizing, that I had to answer something, I shook my head in a few directions.

The Rebbe replied:

מיט-געטאנצט מיט אן אמת אדער צו יוצא

זיין?

Were you dancing with a emes, or just to be yotzei?

Now, I was really baffled. I remained silent, unsure how to answer the Rebbe. Seeing that I was not responding, the Rebbe concluded:

מסתמא וועסט דו זיכער באפרייען די צייט אויף טאן אין די ענינים, און זען מיט-טאנצען ניט נאר אויף יוצא זיין נאר מיט-טאנצען מיט אן אמת.

Surely, you will see to it to free your time to involve yourself in these matters, and you should make sure to "dance" with a emes, not just to be yotzei.

Upon leaving the Rebbe's room, I realized that the Rebbe had just tasked me with a special shlichus."

GOING LIVE

In the days following Reb Hillel Dovid's unique conversation with the Rebbe, he thought deeply into the Rebbe's words, wondering what the Rebbe was alluding to. He recalled a conversation he once had with an individual involved in satellite broadcasts, a technology that was fairly new at the time.

It occurred to him that perhaps it was possible to

air the Rebbe's farbrengen live over satellite, enabling Chassidim elsewhere in the world to watch it.

After many months of research and arduous work, Reb Hillel Dovid succeeded in preparing the first farbrengen broadcast. Satellite time had been reserved, equipment had been rented, and a location had been decided upon. The first satellite broadcast was set for Vov Tishrei, 5741, and would only be viewed in one place: Los Angeles, California.

Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky informed the Rebbe of what had been accomplished and the tentative broadcast. The Rebbe was pleased and agreed to the new idea.

Anash and Chassidim of California packed the Chabad House of Los Angeles in anticipation for this historic moment. The lights dimmed and the screen lit up, and suddenly the Rebbe's image appeared on the screen. Hearts brimming

AS FAST AS A SATELLITE!

Just a few years after Reb Hillel Dovid got involved in broadcasting the Rebbe's farbrengens, he received a hora'a from the Rebbe that it was time to look for a Shidduch. In due time he took to being mekayem the Rebbe's hora'a. After a very short time period, while he was driving the Rebbe, his father Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky informed the Rebbe that his son had met his potential kalla and soon he would be ready to get engaged. To this the Rebbe responded:

אזוי שנעל, ווי א סאטילייט!

As fast as a satellite!



CREDIT: JEM/THE LIVING ARCHIVE



COUNT ELKAÏM AT A YECHIDUS FOR THE MACHINE YISROEL DEVELOPMENT FUND. CREDIT: JEM/THE LIVING ARCHIVE



TOWARDS THE END OF A FARBRENGEN WHICH IS BEING BROADCASTED LIVE. PERCHED UP HIGH IS ONE OF THE CAMERAMEN. CREDIT: JEM/THE LIVING ARCHIVE

with emotion, the Chassidim gazed on in amazement at the scenes unfolding in front of them; it was as if they were actually participating in the Rebbe's farbrengen.

Rabbi Shlomo Cunin could not contain his excitement and rushed to the telephone, dialing the phone number of the Mazkirus. "Please," insisted Rabbi Cunin, "tell the Rebbe that we can see him live on the screen." To his delight, Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky approached the Rebbe in between the sichos, and informed him of the joyous news that the Chassidim of California were able to see

and hear the Rebbe during the farbrengen as it occurred.

After the farbrengen had ended the Rebbe asked Rabbi Krinsky for a report of the live broadcast, with all its details.

ACROSS THE COUNTRY

Having received much positive feedback in response to the first attempt, Reb Hillel Dovid resolved to take the project to the next level and to broadcast the next farbrengen on cable TV across the United States. Indeed, beginning with Yud Tes Kislev, 5741, all of the Rebbe's major weekday farbrengens were broad-

casted across the country.

As long as someone had the necessary cable connection they could tap into the Rebbe's farbrengen, even from their own home. Many shuls and Chabad Houses throughout North America held public viewings of the Rebbe's farbrengens each time the Rebbe's farbrengen would be broadcast live.

The farbrengens on the following dates would be broadcast live if they fell out during the week:

Vov Tishrei, Yud-Tes Kislev, Yud Shevat, Yud-Alef Nissan, Yud-Beis Tammuz and Chof Av.

In order to enable the viewers to understand the Rebbe's words, a simultaneous translation into English was given by Rabbi Manis Friedman while the Rebbe spoke. One can imagine that this was a rather difficult assignment to undertake, as the Rebbe spoke on a very wide variety of subjects throughout a single farbrengen, taking only a few (relatively short) pauses in between. Nevertheless, Rabbi Friedman uniquely qualified, never failing to carry out this task faithfully.

AN ORGANIZATION EMERGES

With the Rebbe's brocho, Reb Hillel Dovid founded an organization which was dedicated to broadcasting the Rebbe's farbrengens. He was joined by Rabbi Yosef Friedman who was a founding JEM board member and creative director. At first, the new organization was called "Chinuch Visual Center" and a short while later it was renamed JEM, which stands for Jewish Educational Media, its name still today.

A large room in 788 Eastern Parkway was transformed into a studio. It was filled with sophisticated technology and anything else necessary to produce the farbrengen broadcasts. The cameras that were inside 770 would stream the footage up to this studio.

Inside sat a group of technicians who were guided and directed by Rabbi Friedman. He spent every moment choosing the best views from the camera feeds, and skillfully combining shots of the Rebbe surrounded by Chassidim.

REACHING OVERSEAS

Anash in the United Kingdom recall the first broadcast taking place on Yud Aleph Nissan, 5742 (1982). This was due to specific instructions given by the Rebbe that year that Chassidim from abroad not leave their posts while Pesach was approaching (see more about this in this issue pg. 9).

The Chassidim were determined not to miss the monumental farbrengen that would mark the Rebbe's 80th birthday, so the audio-video connection was created, and in due time, the crowds filled the hall at Lubavitch House in London to celebrate the special occasion in the most authentic manner.

Needless to say, an arrangement of this kind was very costly back then, and the funds that had been raised were only able to cover the price of the connection for three hours of the six hour long farbrengen.

The Rebbe would regularly ask Reb Hillel Dovid for the results of each farbrengen broadcast, and how many people were reached. Looking for ways to reach more people, Reb Hillel Dovid arranged for a special phone line to be set up, through which people which could ask questions and receive more information about what they were viewing on the screens.

A huge conference room table was set up in the offices at 784 Eastern Parkway, and 20 phones were installed. When the farbrengen was being screened a message scrolled across the screen informing the viewers of the number they could call to obtain more information about what they were seeing.

One must bear in mind that any person who had a TV in their home with cable capability could easily chance upon the farbrengen broadcast while flipping through the channels. Indeed, hundreds of Yidden who had little or no involvement in Yiddishkeit were stirred when they came upon the Rebbe's image that was portrayed on their screen.

In fact even many non-Jews would also call the number on the screen, wanting to know more about the special individual

they saw upon the screen and about Lubavitch in general.

Another special feature that was incorporated into many of the farbrengen screenings also began in honor of this Yud Alef Nissan farbrengen.

Rabbi Yosef Boruch Friedman recalls:

"With thousands of people viewing the Rebbe, we felt that the farbrengen needed an introduction. So at 9:00 P.M., a half hour before the farbrengen was set to

tion to the farbrengen:

"I had the experience of tuning in one late night into a cable station and I came upon what looked like 2000 men and boys, many in black hats, beautifully singing their hearts out. Then this extraordinary man comes on the screen, speaking in Yiddish, and I listened to him and the simultaneous translation for over four hours. During the speeches he discussed matters and issues of such vast

"Please," insisted Rabbi Cunin, "tell the Rebbe that we can see him on the screen."

begin, we began by interviewing special guests, Rabbi Manis Friedman, and Mr. Joseph Papp. They spoke about the Rebbe, Lubavitch, Chassidim and what a farbrengen is.

Mr. Papp was a Yid who held a very influential position in the theatre world, and who had first heard of the Rebbe through chancing upon a farbrengen broadcast. He told his story to Rabbi Manis Friedman, during the introduc-

diversity, and such great scope, that I felt that there is a wise man in this world. I was very much taken by it and the spiritual exuberance of it."

The introduction faded away and the screen now displayed the main shul in 770 packed with Chassidim, awaiting the Rebbe's arrival.

Interspersed between the sichos, Reb Hillel Dovid had coordinated that a number of video presentations be dis-



JEW OF ALL BACKGROUNDS ATTEND THE REBBE'S FARBRENGENS. CREDIT: JEM/THE LIVING ARCHIVE



THIS PICTURE WAS TAKEN BY A REPORTER FROM THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE, DEPICTING THE LIVE BROADCASTS. THREE CAMERAS CAN BE SEEN IN THIS PICTURE. THE ONE IN THE FAR BACK BELONGED TO WLCC. CREDIT: JEM/THE LIVING ARCHIVE

played about Pesach, Mivtza Os B'sefer Torah and more.

A few days before the farbrengen broadcast, Reb Hillel Dovid presented the Rebbe with the new initiatives for this farbrengen. The Rebbe's reply displayed great Nachas Ruach:

ויה"ר שיהא כהנ"ל בהצלחה ושיפעול בפנימיות וכ'

May all of the above [mentioned in the duch] be with Hatzlocha and have pnimi-yus'dike effect.

The new additions to the regular broadcast brought in a tremendous amount of feedback. Hundreds called in and word about the farbrengen broadcasts began to spread.

Reb Hillel Dovid was excited to be able to present the Rebbe with a duch of the names of all those who had called in and the boost in participation from Yidden and even non-Jews across America.

Reb Yosef Boruch and Reb Hillel Dovid prepared a special "program guide" which was mailed out to all those who called in. It included a short biography of the Rebbe, with beautiful images and photographs, enhancing the practical

outcome of the farbrengen structure.

ERETZ YISROEL

The first satellite broadcast of a farbrengen in Eretz Yisroel took place on Yud Aleph Nissan, 5743. Yet, due to the fact that Yud Aleph Nissan is only a few days before Pesach, an inconvenient time for many, the turnout was relatively small.

Seeing the circumstances, it was decided that for the coming Yud Tes Kislev (5744), intense effort would be made to draw the largest crowd possible. Indeed, the organizers toiled endlessly so that the event would turn out to be a success. Much effort was spent on publicizing the date and time of the event and calling upon the public to join in the experience. One of the largest halls in Yerushalayim was rented for the night and tickets were available for purchase in advance.

When the Rebbe was notified of the large-scale planning that had been going on in Eretz Yisroel, he commented that initially he intended on farbrenging only on the Shabbos following Yud Tes Kislev (Yud Tes Kislev that year came out on a

Friday), but since all the publicity had already been done, he would farbreng on Thursday night as well.

Indeed, a very large crowd appeared at the hall to participate in the farbrengen. (One must not forget that while the farbrengen begins at 9:30 p.m. in New York City, the local time in Israel was 4:30 a.m.)

To illustrate how far an effect these televised farbrengens had, mention can be made of the following story:

Seated at the viewing of the Yud Tes Kislev farbrengen in Israel that year was a very distinguished Rov who sat at the editorial board of Encyclopedia Talmudis. Having watched first-hand as the Rebbe conducted a Siyum and built a masterpiece of a Torah discussion upon it, he commented in awe: "If only the Rebbe's opponents, who dare to freely speak so critical of him, would hear this, and they know once and for all with what sort of Torah-genius they are dealing."

With each additional farbrengen, more and more locations began participating in the broadcast, eventually even making it possible for Chassidim living as far as

Australia.

LAG BA'OMER PARADE

The Rebbe's appearance and participation at the children's Lag Ba'omer parades throughout the years was a most unforgettable event. Anticipated as the highlight of these events were the Rebbe's Sichos, when he relayed his special message to the children present.

In 5744, a recording of short excerpts of the Rebbe's sichos, along with some scenes of the parade was prepared and screened on television after the event. The next time that a parade took place, in 5747 it was decided that the entire event would be broadcast live to many locations around the globe including Canada, England, France, Italy, and Australia.

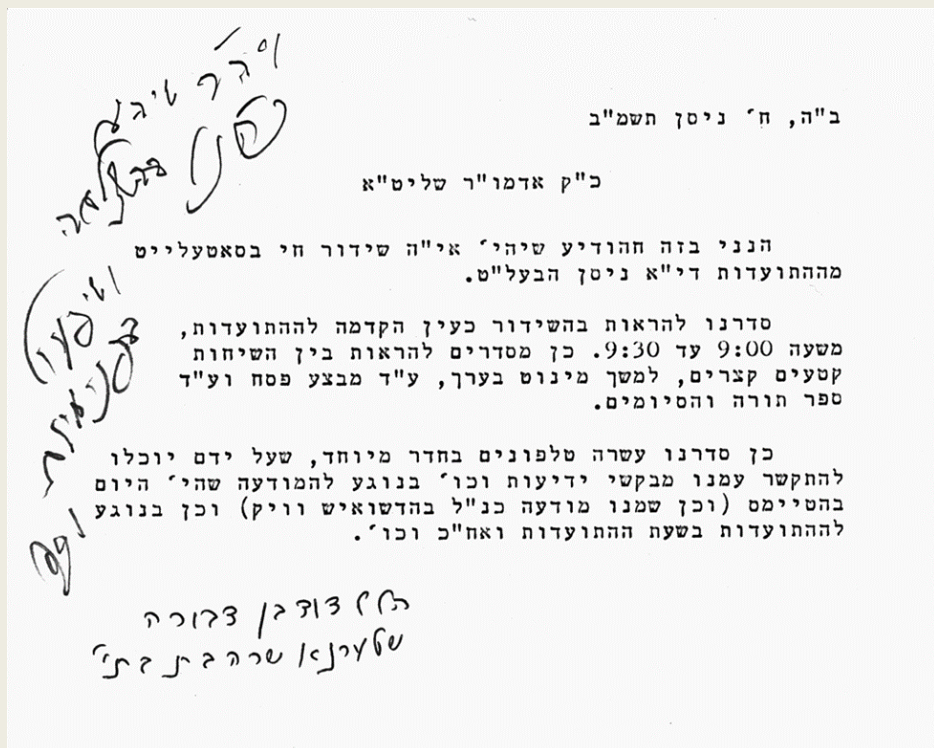
JEM hired a TV anchor named Les Nirenberg who along with Rabbi Shmuel Kaplan provided running commentary, explaining to the viewers the meaning of what was taking place. In addition, a video recording of that year's parade was carried over and screened behind the Iron Curtain, enlivening the spirit of the Jews stranded there.

A MESSAGE FOR THE UNIVERSE

One can notice a significant distinction between an regular farbrengen and those broadcast on television. The Rebbe often dedicated many of the sichos during these Farbrenges to discuss subjects that were of consequence to a much broader audience, addressing issues relevant to the general society.

It was during these sichos that the Rebbe spoke of improving morality and ethics throughout the world by implementing the "moment of silence" in public schools and heightening awareness of the Sheva Mitzvos B'nei Noach amongst non-Jews.

Even the terminology and expressions which the Rebbe used during these farbrengens seemed to have a "universal" tone (watch the farbrengen of Yud Alef Nissan 5742 for an example of this). The Rebbe would use many sophisticated words in Yiddish that Chassidim had rarely heard from the Rebbe previously. These words were linked with the more



THE DUCH REB HILLEL DOVID SENT TO THE REBBE, INFORMING OF THE NEW INITIATIVES FOR THE FARBRENGEN BROADCAST ON YUD ALEF NISSAN 5742. SEE ARTICLE FOR TRANSCRIPTION OF KSAV YAD.



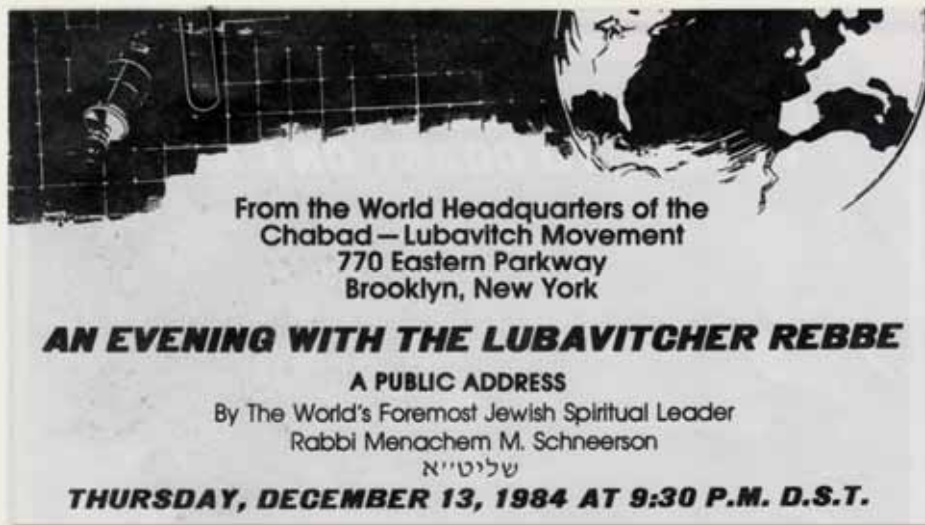
RABBI MANIS FRIEDMAN WITH MR. JOSEPH PAPP DURING THE INTRODUCTION TO THE FARBRENGEN OF YUD ALEF NISSAN 5742. CREDIT: JEM/THE LIVING ARCHIVE

universal subjects the Rebbe was addressing, relating to all of humanity. Interestingly, one can see that the words the Rebbe used is very similar to the language used in Michtovim K'loliyim.

THE WORTHIEST CAUSE

One would expect that a project of

such magnitude required tremendous funding, and the possibility of having the farbrengens run over satellite consistently was only due to the generous contributions of Jewish philanthropists who recognized the importance of this cause. Amongst the many sponsors, mention must be made of the foremost contribu-



AN ADVERTISEMENT FOR AN UPCOMING FARBRENGEN BROADCAST.

tor to this project, Count Machluf Elkaïm and his family of Bal Harbour, Florida.

Having personally attended many farbrengens of the Rebbe as well as the Yechidus for the supporters of the Machne Israel Development Fund, and hearing in person from the Rebbe many times of the need to disseminate Chassidus throughout the world, Mr. Elkaïm saw in these broadcasts incredible opportunity.

The Rebbe showed special appreciation for the Elkaïm family, often noting the great privilege that they had in playing a

In addition, Count Elkaïm relates that on a number of occasions, he himself witnessed first-hand the positive results of the televised farbrengens, meeting many other Yidden whose souls were awakened upon watching the Rebbe on TV.

CHANUKAH LIVE!

After the histalkus of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka in 5748, the Rebbe no longer held farbrengens during the weekdays, and thus the televised farbrengens were suspended for a few years, until the introduction of the “Chanukah Live” program. (See Derher Magazine; Teves 5774

One of the largest halls in Yerushalayim was rented for the night and tickets were available for purchase in advance.

major part in Hafotzas Hama’ayonos.

On one occasion, Reb Hillel Dovid wrote a tzetel to the Rebbe in which he asked a Brocha for Count Elkaïm and his family in honor of his birthday. The Rebbe replied in glowing terms:

וזכות פעולותיהם בהפצתה ובכלל תעמוד לכאור"א מהם.

The merit of their disseminating [the farbrengens] amongst everything else, will keep them in good stead.

for an extensive article on the topic).

With the approaching anniversary of forty years of the Rebbe’s leadership and the recent miraculous fall of communism in the USSR, American Friends of Lubavitch, headed by Rabbi Avrohom Shemtov, launched an unprecedented initiative that would unite several of Chabad’s public Menorah lighting events from across the globe via satellite, and

link them all with the children’s rally in 770 which the Rebbe was participating in.

Reb Hillel Dovid coordinated this special broadcast, and once again, the Rebbe’s words were transmitted, live, around the world.

He recorded and archived every Farbrengen, and any other broadcasts JEM had coordinated. Those precious films are the bulk of the videos of the Rebbe we are lucky to have today. With the advances of modern technology, the methods of viewing this footage has changed drastically.

The current staff of JEM, led by Rabbi Elkana Shmotkin has risen to the challenge, digitizing many of these videos and making them public. In a time when the Rebbe is no longer with us *b’guf gashmi* the urgency in making more videos of the Rebbe available has swept over JEM, propelling them toward getting ahold of any other video footage of the Rebbe that exists.

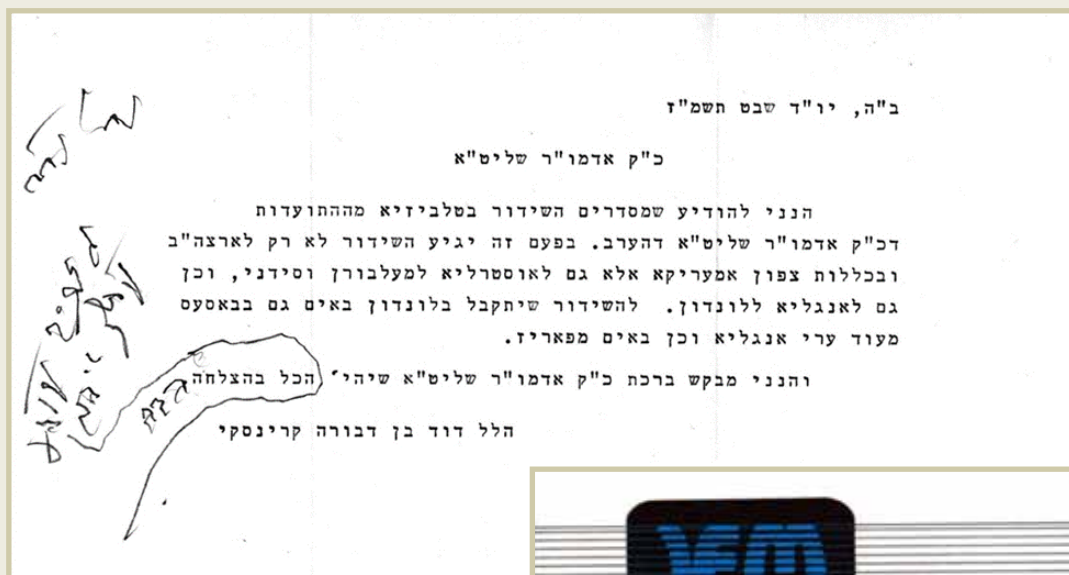
The effects of time has taken its time on much of the original videotapes and recordings, and they continue to deteriorate with every additional moment that passes. Working against the clock, the staff of JEM use intricate processes to repair, restore, and preserve these timeless moments.

Endeavoring to cater to each element of Klal Yisroel, JEM has produced tens of videos of the Rebbe in a variety of formats, and subtitled in many languages. A veritable jewel are the full farbrengen videos they have released, enabling today’s generation to participate in the Rebbe’s Farbrengens.

Many more still remain in their original format, and will surely soon be released, helping to relieve the never-satisfied thirst of “Retzoineinu Liros es Malkeinu.” We are confident, that very soon we will be zoche to the ultimate farbrengen broadcast, when all of Klal Yisroel will gather at the Rebbe’s farbrengen with the coming of Moshiach, Teikef U’miyad Mamosh! ■

כתבי יד קודש

In connection with the Farbrengen broadcasts



The Rebbe responds to a Duch of Reb Hillel Dovid on the JEM stationary:

דו"ח נת' וח"ח ודבר בעתו כו'

The Rebbe replies on a Duch of Reb Hillel Dovid about the upcoming Farbrengen broadcast of Yud Shevat 5747. The Rebbe circles two of the words and adds:

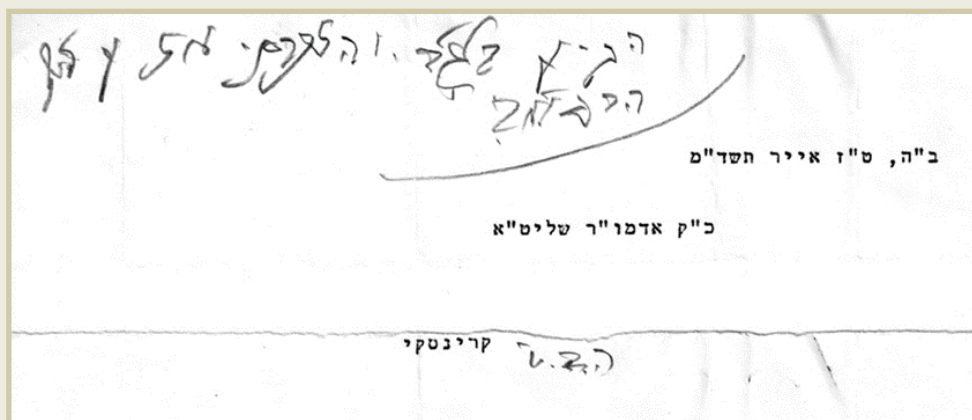
נת' ות"ח

אזכיר עוה"פ עה"צ שיהי' הכל בהצלחה רבה

I will mention once again at the Tziyon [of the Friediker Rebbe] that everything should be with great Hatzlocha.



דכ"ק אדמו"ר שליט"א



On this Duch the Rebbe replied:
הגיע בלג"ב [בל"ג בעומר] והזכרתי אז עה"צ [על הציון]
הבפ"מ [הבפועל ממש]?

[The Duch] arrived on Lag Bamer and I mentioned it then at the Tziyon [of the Friediker Rebbe].

[What is] the practical outcome?

Most of the letter was torn off by the Rebbe, and brought to the Ohel. On the bottom the Rebbe added the initial of Reb Hillel Dovid:

ה.ד. ש' [קרינסקי]