



From One Farbrengen To...

DISTRIBUTION OF MASHKE
20 SHEVAT 5730

לזכות
הת' **מנחם מענדל** שיחי'
לרגל הכנסו לעול המצוות
ט' אלול, ה'תשע"ו - שנת הקהל

גדפס ע"י הוריו
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The Rebbe's farbrengens meant many things for different people. They were, first and foremost, the opportunity for chassidim, and the world, to come and hear the Rebbe directly, to learn from the Rebbe's torah as he taught it publicly. It is when cryptic *sugyos* in Gemara were deciphered, when seemingly conflicting Rashis were reconciled, and where apparently unrelated concepts in Chassidus found their common thread. There was the *maamar*, the *divrei Elokim chayim*, there were the *sichos*, the *niggunim*, the *hadranim*, the Rebbe's nods responding to Chassidim to saying *lchaim*, and more. Farbrengens were also a time when the Rebbe would address broader issues like the security of the yidden in eretz yisroel, 'mihu yehudi,' the yidden trapped behind the iron curtain, and beyond.

They were the 'outlet' where the Rebbe would set the agenda of Lubavitch as well the megaphone to the world of the Rebbe's thought and opinions.

One special *hanhaga*, which took place at farbrengens, was the Rebbe distributing bottles of *mashke* to participants who were going to perform some important shlichus or host a *simcha* in the coming days. After receiving the bottle from the Rebbe, the recipient would open it and distribute some to the assembled at the Rebbe's farbrengen. The rest would be distributed during the course of the event for which he had received the bottle (see below).

The first such occasion on record was Shabbos Bereishis 5714. The Rebbe announced that in order to connect the undertaking of those who were due to go out on shlichus in the near future with a 'davar gashmi'—to connect their departure with a physical and tangible object—they will receive a bottle of *mashke*, to which more *mashke* can later be added, in order to be served at future farbrengens. The Rebbe also cautioned that it had to be consumed entirely before the onset of the upcoming Pesach.¹

WHY MASHKE

The Rebbe explained² that he had specifically chosen *mashke* as a bridge between his farbrengen and future ones held elsewhere, because the mission of the shluchim was to turn their destination into a *chassidische* place, which is done with love, gentleness and through a farbrengen. Hence the idea of providing *mashke*.



On another occasion³, the Rebbe explained the power of the *mashke* that is distributed.

The Gemara states that a Yid may not drink a non-Jew's wine, lest it bring him to marriage with a non-Jewish woman. This indicates that even if not in the immediate company of the non-Jew while consuming the wine, the mere drinking is nevertheless conducive to that negative possibility, and thus the need to forbid it.

Surely then the same is true and manifold in matters of *kedusha*. The wine of a *chassidisher* farbrengen is sure to have a positive impact on its consumers elsewhere, even if they did not attend the farbrengen itself, and it can be hoped that this will help them in their *avodah*.

THE PROCESS

The process of receiving *mashke* from the Rebbe changed over the years, as the demand grew larger and while less time being available.

For a time the Rebbe would pour a bit of *mashke* from the bottle into his *becher*, and then



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pour back into the bottle, which he then handed to the recipient (resulting, often, in the color of the liquid in the mashke bottle having a purple tinge to it). Later, as the demand grew, the Rebbe would just pour some for himself and into the person's cup.

When the requests among Chassidim grew to an unsustainable high, the Rebbe's *hanhaga* changed, and for a time the distribution continued inconsistently. When it was resumed fully, some time later, only people representing an organization or event, and who had given a bottle before Shabbos to *mazkirus*, were able to receive it at the farbrengen. The Rebbe would then announce that those who sent in bottles should come up to the *bima* and invite everyone to the events they were hosting. After the distribution, the Rebbe would usually start a niggun. The niggun that was sung was the fast "*Veharikosi lochem brocha*". In later years the Rebbe would start his father's niggun.

A TIMELY CONNECTION

On one particular Shabbos in תשמ"ח a person got a bottle of *mashke* from the Rebbe and he announced that he was making a farbrengen in his house that very evening. After he had finished, the Rebbe told him something, and he got up again adding that the farbrengen was going to be in honor of '*Shmas Hakhel*'.

It seems that the Rebbe suggested that if the farbrengen wasn't related to any particular reason, it was to be dedicated to the year's theme of *Hakhel*.

While the distribution of bottles occurred primarily during Shabbos farbrengens, at times it would happen at weekday farbrengens as well, as depicted in these photos. **T**

1. See Likutei Sichos vol. 16 p. 129
2. Toras Menachem Hisvaaduyos Vol. 10 pg.136. See also Toras Menachem Hisvaaduyos Vol. 24 pg. 173.
3. Shabbos Bereishis 5717. See Toras Menachem Hisvaaduyos Vol. 18 pg. 167