

נדפס ע"י ולזכות
הרה"ת ר' יהושע דוד
וזוגתו מרת אייל חנה ומשפחתם שיחיו
שפוטץ



The Complete Story of
***Rosh
Chodesh
Kislev***



FOR CHASSIDIM IN DOR HASHVI'I, ROSH CHODESH KISLEV IS ONE OF THE MOST JOYOUS DAYS ON THE CALENDAR. THE DISTRESS OF SHEMINI ATZERES 5738, AND THE DOUBLE-FOLD SIMCHA OF ROSH CHODESH KISLEV, ARE MEMORIES THAT ARE ETCHED INTO THE HEARTS OF EVERY CHOSSID THAT EXPERIENCED THEM. THIS DAY HAS SINCE BEEN ESTABLISHED AS A FULL-FLEDGED YOM TOV, REplete WITH A SEUDAS HODA'A AND FARBRENGENS LATE INTO THE NIGHT.

IN THE FOLLOWING PAGES, WE BRING THE STORY OF THOSE CHARGED DAYS. THE FULL SEQUENCE OF EVENTS WOULD BE ABLE TO FILL AN ENTIRE BOOK; HERE WE HAVE CHOSEN TO FOCUS PRIMARILY ON THE EVENTS OF SIMCHAS TORAH, ROSH CHODESH KISLEV, YUD-TES KISLEV, AND ZOS CHANUKAH.

THE STORY PRESENTED HERE HAS BEEN COLLECTED FROM NUMEROUS SOURCES; DIARIES OF MAZKIRIM AND BOCHURIM, AND AN INFORMATIVE SPEECH BY DR. IRA WEISS, THE REBBE'S PRIMARY CARDIOLOGIST THROUGHOUT THAT PERIOD. PIECING TOGETHER THE ENTIRE STORY, THERE ARE SOME MINOR DIFFERENCES IN THE VARIOUS SOURCES. WE HAVE ATTEMPTED TO BRING THE VERSION THAT SEEMS THE MOST ACCURATE.

Hoshaanah Rabbah

Zeman Simchaseinu 5738 began on a high: Tishrei had seen larger groups of *orchim* than ever before, and right before Sukkos additional groups had arrived from Eretz Yisrael and France.

A special joy was noticeable on the Rebbe's face throughout Yom Tov and Chol Hamoed. At each davening, the spirited atmosphere prompted the Chassidim to sing joyously as the Rebbe entered the shul, and usually, upon arriving at his place on the *bimah*, the Rebbe would turn around and enthusiastically encourage the singing and dancing.

On Hoshaanah Rabbah morning, the Rebbe once again turned around to the crowd and clapped vigorously with the singing, bringing it to higher and higher tones of excitement.

The lengthy davening proceeded as usual. Some time after its conclusion, the Rebbe came out into the sukkah to distribute *lekach* to whoever had not received on Erev Yom Kippur, including women and children. It was many hours before this distribution was completed.

As the Rebbe was leaving 770 for home to prepare for Yom Tov, he noticed that a new line



ZITSHREI 5738. LEVI FREIDIN via JEM 22593



21 TISHREI 5738. LEVI FREIDIN via JEM 22661

JUST HOURS BEFORE SHEMINI ATZERES, THE REBBE STANDS AT THE DOOR OF THE SUKKAH HANDING OUT LEKACH.

had gathered at the sukkah, hoping to receive *lekach*. The Rebbe stopped over there once more and gave out *lekach* for another few minutes, and only afterwards did he go home, where he spent just a few short moments, as Yom Tov was fast approaching.

That day, the Rebbetzin had called *mazkirus* and asked them to see to it that *hakafos* be shorter than usual, and not to strain the Rebbe too much. Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky relates that when he drove the Rebbe back to 770 before Yom Tov, he noticed that the Rebbe's face was pale.

As Yom Tov set in, the doors to the big *zal* were opened, and the run for places began. At nine o'clock, the time set for *hakafos* (which took place after *maariv* and a short break), the shul was packed wall to wall, with bleachers reaching all the way up to the ceiling. 770 had never before seen such a packed Simchas Torah.

AS THE REBBE WAS LEAVING 770 FOR HOME TO PREPARE FOR YOM TOV, HE NOTICED THAT A NEW LINE HAD GATHERED AT THE SUKKAH, HOPING TO RECEIVE LEKACH. THE REBBE STOPPED OVER THERE ONCE MORE AND GAVE OUT LEKACH



21 TISHREI 5738. LEVI FREIDIN via JEM 22597

SHACHARIS ON HOSHAANAH RABBAH.

The Rebbe entered the shul, and the singing and dancing reached the high heavens. Reaching the *bimah*, the Rebbe turned around and encouraged the exuberant song for a few minutes, and then turned around to his place. The singing subsided; this was the signal for Atah Hareisah to begin.

As usual, the Rebbe was honored with reciting the first and last *possuk* of each round, and in between each round the Rebbe turned around and began a *lebediker niggun* (as is done every year). Then the *hakafos* began.

The small *sefer Torah* was passed to the Rebbe before making his way to the center of the shul with Rashag following closely behind. The Rebbe danced with more enthusiasm than usual, encouraging the joyous song, and the *hakafah* ended only when Rashag was no longer able to continue.

SUDDENLY, THE REBBE LEANED HIS WEIGHT ON THE SHTENDER, AND ASKED RABBI GRONER FOR HIS CHAIR. HE SAT DOWN AND LEANED BACK, AND IMMEDIATELY THE ENTIRE ROOM WAS THROWN INTO A TUMULT.

Hakafos continued, and the Rebbe encouraged the singing from his place with much energy and gusto. Then came the fourth *hakafah*.

Pandemonium

The fourth *hakafah* was led by the guests that had arrived from throughout the world, and they began singing “*Al haselah hoch*.” Unlike before *shacharis* that morning, when the Rebbe had encouraged the singing with vigor, now the Rebbe was barely clapping along.

In his *yoman*, Rabbi Yitzchok Meir Sassover, a *bochur* in 770 at the time, describes what happened next:

“Suddenly, the Rebbe leaned his weight on the *shtender*, and asked Rabbi Groner for his chair. He sat down and leaned back, and immediately the entire room was thrown into a tumult. No one understood what was going on; some began crying, while others began singing even louder, for one of the *mazkirim* had motioned to continue singing.

“Some of the *vaad hamesader* instructed that the bleachers near the *aron kodesh* be cleared to allow for fresh air. Others instructed that those standing on the bleachers across them remain in their place. Add to that Rabbi Groner motioning

that the *hakafos* should be concluded quickly, and the entire 770 was in total disarray.

“The fifth *hakafah* was quickly started, and meanwhile, the crowd, beginning to comprehend what was going on, began moving outside so that the Rebbe could have fresh air. Some also shattered the windows separating the *ezeras nashim* from the main shul so that fresh air would be able to come in from there as well.”

Meanwhile, the Rebbe was sitting back in his chair, his face chalk white, visibly in pain. A doctor who had been standing nearby approached the Rebbe and said that the Rebbe should be brought water, but the Rebbe refused to drink it.

After a few minutes, the Rebbe motioned for the continuation of the *hakafos*. The fifth and sixth *hakafos* were finished quickly, and then came time for the seventh *hakafah*, which is customarily led by the Rebbe.

Someone suggested that the Rebbe conduct the *hakafah* in the front of the shul near his place, but the Rebbe insisted on going to the middle of the shul and dancing with Rashag.

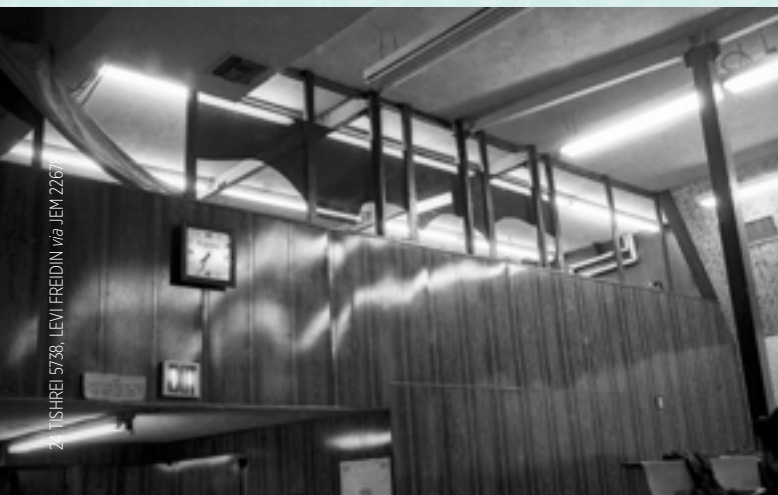
Aleinu was recited quickly, and the Rebbe exited the shul, while (weakly) encouraging the singing of “*Vesamachta*.”

“Kiddush is recited on wine”

Just a few minutes after the Rebbe entered his room after *hakafos*, Dr. Mordechai Glazman was called to check the Rebbe.

“I quickly came to the Rebbe’s room.” Dr. Glazman relates. “The Rebbe was pale and sweating, and I realized that the situation was dire. I told the Rebbe that I think he is going through a heart attack, and the Rebbe answered me that he did not eat a whole day, and he first wants to go into the sukkah and make *kiddush*.”

A few minutes later, the Rebbetzin arrived from home, and the Rebbe entered the sukkah to make *kiddush* and partake in some food.



THE SHATTERED GLASS OF THE EZRAS NASHIM, TO ALLOW CLEAN AIR TO ENTER 770.



THE LOCAL ROAD OF EASTERN PARKWAY IS BARRICADED, ISRU CHAG.

LEVI FREIDIN via JEM 22679

Taking note of the situation, grape juice had been prepared for the Rebbe, which he rejected, saying, “*Kiddush* is recited over wine.”

After partaking in a small *seudas yom tov*, the Rebbe seemed to regain a bit of strength. Leaving the sukkah, the Rebbe said to sing *Vesamachta* (a worried crowd was standing around, waiting to receive even the minutest piece of information regarding the Rebbe’s health), and even encouraged the singing twice with his hand. A message from the Rebbe soon arrived; everyone should go home and eat *seudas yom tov*, and those who did not yet conduct *hakafos*, should do so now with great *simcha*. Meanwhile, a bed had been brought from the Friediker Rebbe’s apartment into the Rebbe’s room so that the Rebbe would be able to rest.

Rabbi Krinsky relates what happened that night:

“We had managed to call four doctors; two from Manhattan, a heart physician from Long-Island who was acquainted with Rashag, and an additional doctor from Brooklyn, whom I knew personally. One of them brought a cardiograph machine, which enabled us to check the Rebbe’s heartbeat.

“The doctors, all of whom arrived between nine-thirty and twelve, agreed that the Rebbe had suffered a major heart-attack and that he needed to be transported to the hospital immediately, since there were no proper

machines or medication on hand in the Rebbe’s room. However the Rebbe was adamant that he would not go. The doctors, not willing to take responsibility, put on their coats and left. The situation was very serious, and not a single competent doctor was on sight...”

“For me, this room is *kodesh kadashim*”

Dr. Glazman relates:

“When asking that the Rebbe go to the hospital, I said to the Rebbe that in topics of Yiddishkeit and Torah I listen to the Rebbe, but in medical issues I request that the Rebbe should listen to me. The Rebbe answered, ‘In principle you are correct, but in this specific situation you do not know all of the details and therefore you are not qualified to decide.’

“I asked the Rebbe, ‘What do you mean that I don’t know all the details? What is there for me to know?’

“I prefer to stay here. Do you have an idea of what happened in this room, on my table?’ the Rebbe said.

“I don’t know, but I can imagine,’ I answered.

“I can’t begin to tell you what has taken place at this table,’ the Rebbe said. ‘For me this room is Holy of Holies, and you want me to leave the Holy of Holies to the hospital?’

“‘The *refuah* will come from here,’ the Rebbe declared.

At some point, when Rabbi Hodakov entered the Rebbe’s room to give over a message from a few rabbonim that the Rebbe must go to the hospital, the Rebbe spoke first:

“Since I follow the instructions of rabbonim, I request that they should not give over a *psak*, because I do not want to go to the hospital.”

At four o’clock in the morning, Reb Leibel Bistritzky, head of Hatzalah in Crown Heights came outside and asked that Tehillim be recited. The request brought great worry to those

“THE REBBETZIN ANSWERED, ‘IN ALL THE YEARS THAT I KNOW MY HUSBAND, THERE WAS NEVER A MOMENT WHERE HE WAS NOT IN FULL CONTROL OVER HIMSELF.’ SHE MADE IT VERY CLEAR THAT UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD WE MOVE THE REBBE WITHOUT HIS CONSENT.

assembled. A group of *bochurim*, together with Reb Yoel Kahan, began walking to the Ohel to daven there. Other groups of *bochurim* began walking to different neighborhoods to inform people of what had happened, so that they would be able to say Tehillim as well.

Rabbi Krinsky continues:

“In the early hours of the morning, we saw on the machine that the Rebbe was going through another serious heart-attack, worse than the first one. We didn’t know what to do. The doctors that were on site (not heart specialists) said that we have no choice but to take the Rebbe to the hospital. Between all the commotion, the Rebbetzin came down and was updated, and we asked her what to do.

“The Rebbetzin answered, ‘In all the years that I know my husband, there was never a moment where he was not in full control over himself.’ She made it very clear that under no circumstances should we move the Rebbe without his consent.

“I walked from *Gan Eden Hatachton* to the office of the *mazkirus*, and as I was pacing back and forth pondering what to do, I heard the Rebbetzin’s voice.

“Rabbi Krinsky’, she said, ‘you know so many people. Can’t you find a doctor for my husband?’

“As she said those words, I jumped. I knew just the doctor for this. Dr. Ira Weiss from Chicago. He was a young cardiologist, trained in Harvard, who was a student of my brother-in-law, Rabbi Hershel Shusterman in Chicago, and I knew that he was an *eideler Yid*.”

The Rebbe’s Doctor

Dr. Weiss relates:

“It was early Shemini Atzeres morning, I was in my home in Chicago, when my emergency phone rang; it was Rabbi Krinsky on the line. I had never spoken to him before, but I did know that he was one of the Rebbe’s executive secretaries, and I was aware of the Rebbe’s greatness and had great reverence for him.

“Rabbi Krinsky explained to me what had happened, and he asked if it was possible for the Rebbe to be treated in his room in 770. I told him that I thought it was possible, if a doctor would be there on sight to treat the Rebbe privately and nurse him back to health.

“Rabbi Krinsky asked me, ‘Can you be that doctor?’

“I was too far away, and the Rebbe needed immediate treatment. I said I would get to the airport right away, but for immediate treatment, I called Dr. Tishholtz, a very prestigious doctor and the head of the cardiac department at Mt. Sinai, and asked him to go over to 770.

“When I landed in New York, I was whisked to Brooklyn by police motorcade, and rushing into 770 on my way to see the Rebbe, I was intercepted by the Rebbetzin. I was hurrying to see the Rebbe, but she told me I don’t need to worry. ‘Dr. Tishholtz came and took care of everything, and my husband’s condition has stabilized.’ Dr. Tishholtz had dropped everything, including an important lecture he was supposed to give that morning, and made it to 770 in forty minutes.

“The Rebbetzin told me that since it is Yom Tov, I should first make *kiddush*, eat something, and afterwards I would go see the Rebbe.”

Dr. Weiss promised that he would remain with the Rebbe until he recovers fully. “Although I am not a big doctor, I know what a Rebbe is

and I hope to give the best possible treatment,” he said. Unlike the other doctors, Dr. Weiss was of the opinion that it was better for the Rebbe to be treated in his room, and not go to the hospital. This way he would have a private doctor—he would be able to give his opinion on the treatments, and he would not have to separate from the Chassidim.

The Rebbetzin would come down from the second floor every two hours to be updated on the situation. Surprisingly, each time she would enter the Rebbe’s room, the Rebbe’s face would appear to be normal.

Joy on Yom Tov

On Shemini Atzeres afternoon, Reb Shlomo Aharon Kazarnovsky came into the Rebbe’s room, and wished the Rebbe a *refuah shleima*, his voice choking with tears.

The Rebbe rebuked this, “It is a contradiction to *vesamachta bechagecha*. If you want my health to improve, it will be specifically through *simcha*. Crying is against my will.”

Der Rebbe iz gezunt

In his *yoman*, Rabbi Sassover describes the atmosphere on the night of Simchas Torah in 770:

“Despite the worry about the Rebbe’s condition, we had been explicitly instructed by the Rebbe himself to add in *simcha*, and not *chas veshalom*, to decrease. Hakafof were conducted in that spirit.

“The first and last *pesukim* of Atah Horeisa—the Rebbe’s *pesukim*—were recited by the entire crowd, in the merit of a complete recovery for the Rebbe *shlita*.

“At the start of the *hakafof*, they announced that the Rebbe is honored with the first *sefer Torah*. The Rebbe said that *hakafof* should be conducted with a *shturem*, and everyone danced with enthusiasm in 770 and outside, along the entire block. All together, as one voice, we sang “*Zol shoin kumen di refuah, der Rebbe zol shoin zein gezunt*” (the recovery should come fast: the Rebbe should be healthy) to the tune of “*Zol shoin zein di geulah*.” Then we went on to sing more pointedly, “*Der Rebbe iz gezunt*



MOTZEI SIMCHAS TORAH, 770 IS SWARMING WITH PEOPLE, HOPING TO HEAR AN UPDATE ON THE REBBE’S HEALTH.



KOS SHEL BRACHA SENT BY THE REBBE IS DISTRIBUTED IN THE MAIN SHUL AT 770 ON MOTZOEI SIMCHAS TORAH.

(the Rebbe IS well), *Moshiach zol shoin kumen.*” These words fired up the crowd even more. The *simcha* and *lebedikeit* that was on that night is indescribable. ‘*Mi shelo ra’ah simcha zu, lo ra’ah simcha m’yamav.*”

Meanwhile, the Rebbe was listening to the singing from his room, and hearing the words the Chassidim were chanting, the Rebbe commented to the doctor, “This is what Chassidim are.’ When asked if the loud noise from downstairs is disturbing him, the Rebbe replied, ‘*Es iz a geshmaker muzik*—it is pleasant music!’ ‘If the Chassidim would have seen the smile on the Rebbe’s face they would have bought out all the *mashke* in New York City,’ the doctor said.

“The dancing went on until morning. In middle of the night the Rebbe asked Rabbi Groner if they are dancing downstairs ‘with a *shturem*,’ and Rabbi Groner answered in the affirmative. The Rebbe continued, ‘With a big *shturem*? Go downstairs and tell them that just as they danced tonight with a *shturem* they should dance tomorrow with a bigger *shturem*.’

“Rabbi Groner gave over the message word-for-word, and also reported that the Rebbe is already walking back and forth in his room. All of this news elated the atmosphere, and our spirits were on a high.”

Vacuum

When a doctor prepared to take a blood sample from the Rebbe, the Rebbe asked him what causes the blood to leave the body; the stab of the needle or the vacuum created by the empty space in the vial. When the doctor replied that it is caused by the vacuum, the Rebbe related that someone once came to him and complained that he is void and incapable of accomplishing anything, and the Rebbe had answered him that “on the contrary, emptiness suctions in much more; the fact that he feels empty means that he is capable of being an even better vessel for all things good and holy.”

The Rebbe concluded:

“On Shemini Atzeres, rabbis have a custom to speak sermons. Since I am not allowed to speak, tell over what I said to the rest of the Chassidim.”

On the night of Simchas Torah, the Rebbe said over this point to Rabbi Groner, telling him to speak it over with Reb Yoel Kahan and repeat it at the next day’s farbrengen. The *tochen* was what the Rebbe had told the doctor, that emptiness should bring about more activity. The Rebbe added in this light, that his absence should not be a cause for decline; instead it should inspire more.



DR. AVRAHAM ABBA SELIGSON IS SEEN EXITING 770, 26 TISHREI 5738.

Surprise

On the following day, upon the Rebbe's instruction, thousands of Chassidim gathered in 770 at the time scheduled for the Rebbe's *farbrengen*. Some of the *elte* Chassidim spoke, the *sicha* (see sidebar) was given over and *niggunim* were sung. In the afternoon the Rebbe once again asked Rabbi Groner what is going on downstairs, to which he replied that everyone is very *besimcha*. The Rebbe said, "Tell the *olam* that the continuation should be with even more enthusiasm."

Rabbi Sassover writes:

"Towards the end of Yom Tov, Rabbi Groner came down with a surprise: the Rebbe had sent *kos shel bracha* to distribute after *havdalah*, and in addition, the Rebbe had told him to give over a certain message before *havdalah*. We felt that something exciting was in store for us.

"After *maariv*, he announced that the Rebbe would be saying a *sicha* from his room via hook-up to the big shul. Hearing the news, the entire crowd was elated and everyone began dancing in their places. Meanwhile, the *kos shel bracha* was distributed, and we prepared to hear the Rebbe speak."

Preparing to speak, the Rebbe donned his *sirtuk*, hat and gartel. The doctors gave the Rebbe permission to speak for five minutes, but he went on to speak for twenty-two. During the *sicha*, the Rebbe spoke about the *achdus* brought about through the hook-up, despite the physical separation. The Rebbe cried a few times, and when the doctors asked what he had been speaking about when he was crying he answered



THE REBBETZIN'S CAR, PARKED IN FRONT OF 770.

that he had blessed the Chassidim and spoke about the coming of Moshiach.

An Addiction

In his *yoman*, Rabbi Michael Seligson, a *bochur* in 770 at the time, writes:

"After Yom Tov, the Rebbe requested the mail that had arrived over the past few days. The doctors didn't want the Rebbe to go right back into his regular schedule, and suggested that the Rebbe rest for two weeks and then go back to his regular work.

"The Rebbe rejected the idea, explaining that he is accustomed to constantly receiving questions and answering letters, and if he will stop it could negatively affect his health, like the hazard of trying to pry someone too quickly off an addiction.

"Still trying to lighten the Rebbe's load, the doctors came up with another suggestion:

"The secretaries should read the letters, and they would give over a synopsis to the Rebbe. The Rebbe rejected this offer as well. Imagine if a doctor would get a general synopsis of the patient's condition, without actually doing an examination, the Rebbe told them."

When a few of the elder Chassidim came into the Rebbe's room with a similar request not to work too hard, the Rebbe answered that "*breingen Moshiach iz noch shverer*—bringing Moshiach is even harder."

Over the next few weeks, Yidden throughout the world would add in their prayers and Tehillim, and multitudes of people sent in letters, wishing the Rebbe a "*refuah shleimah u'krovah*." In an effort to bring the Rebbe *nachas*, many



RABBI Y. KRINSKY AND DR. WEISS IN CONVERSATION.

anash and *bochurim* across the globe took upon themselves to spend extra time doing *mitzvot*, and to add in their *shiurei Torah*. Each day, a *minyan* would travel to the Ohel (and the *tziun* of Rebbetzin Chana) to daven for the Rebbe's speedy recovery.

The initial worry and concern that Chassidim had felt on Yom Tov passed once the Rebbe's condition had stabilized, and it was clear that he was on the way to recovery. Still, no one was sure how long it would take for the Rebbe to return to complete health, and how the Rebbe would continue his schedule and activities afterwards. No one could guess when they would actually be able to see the Rebbe once again.

The guests that had arrived from overseas were especially dejected. Many were unsure when they would have another opportunity to make the trip, and while *yechidus* was obviously out of the question, they still hoped to be able to see the Rebbe once more before they leave, albeit even for a short moment.

On *isru chag*, to everyone's surprise, the guests were notified that the Rebbe would receive them by the door of his room. The encounter would be brief, and the Rebbe would not be reading the *panim* on the spot, and would suffice with a short *bracha*.

That evening, for the first time since Shemini Atzeres evening, the *orchim* were able to catch a glimpse of the Rebbe. The Rebbe sat at the doorway in front of a table as each guest passed by, and wished them a *shnas hatzlacha b'gashmius ubiruchnius*. These *yechidusim* were held a few

times over the next few days, until all of the guests had the opportunity to see the Rebbe.

Take Down the Barriers

In a diary written at the time, Rabbi Groner related that when Dr. Weiss entered the Rebbe's room a few days after Yom Tov, the Rebbe told him that he had read in the newspaper that barriers had been put up on the sidewalk in front of the windows to his room, in order to maintain the quiet. Walking over to the window while talking, the Rebbe noticed that there were barriers at the front entrance as well. The Rebbe asked that they be removed, and requesting as well that the small *zal* (which had been blocked off) should be reopened for the *bochurim* to learn there.

When Dr. Weiss agreed to do so, the Rebbe commented that now he knows that the doctors feel his situation is truly improving.

Dr. Weiss relates that as Shabbos Bereishis was approaching, the Rebbe had a request:

"The Rebbe told me, that it was his father-in-law's wish, or really, directive, that he hold a *farbrengen* every Shabbos Mevorchim.

"I told the Rebbe that it was out of the question to hold a public appearance so soon after the heart attack, but maybe the Rebbe should speak on the air, and anyone who wants

can tune in and listen on the radio, (as we did on Motzei Simchas Torah).

“The Rebbe agreed, and I asked the Rebbe to limit it to twenty minutes. We went on the air, the clock was ticking, and when fifteen minutes passed, I signaled to him that there were five minutes left; the Rebbe responded with a friendly nod. But five minutes passed, then ten, and soon I was motioning to him that it was double the time that we had agreed on. In the end he spoke for a good forty five minutes.”

These Motzei Shabbos hook-ups continued over the next two months, slowly becoming lengthier as the Rebbe’s health improved. This was the case even after the Rebbe began holding some weekday farbrengens downstairs. Those *sichos*, which usually included a *maamar k’ein sicha* and were basically a short synopsis of an entire farbrengen, were edited by the Rebbe each week.¹

The Motzei Shabbos Farbrengen

Towards the end of Kislev, when the Rebbe’s health had considerably improved, the Shabbos farbrengens were once again held downstairs in 770, but they continued to be held on Motzei Shabbos for the next two years—until the winter of 5740. All of these farbrengens were broadcast live via hook-up, which was a major blessing for Chassidim living out of town. It enabled Chassidim throughout the world to listen in to the Rebbe’s farbrengen on a constant, almost weekly basis.

The recordings of these farbrengens are an invaluable treasure. The Shabbos farbrengen is a genre for itself; its unique style with a distinct *seder* and special characteristics—Rashi *sichos*, a more informal style, etc.—are very different from the weekday farbrengens that we are accustomed to, and those were unrecordable throughout the years. But with the advent of the Motzei Shabbos farbrengens, we now have access to two years worth of Shabbos-like farbrengens that we can listen and learn from.

Catching A Glimpse

Towards the beginning of Cheshvan, Dr. Weiss returned to his practice in Chicago which he had so suddenly left a few weeks earlier, and Dr. Larry Resnick arrived to take his place. They would be in touch regularly by telephone.

Starting Shabbos Parshas Noach, the Rebbe began participating in some of the *tefillos* in the small *zal*; first just for *krias haTorah*, and later for the entire davening. The crowd was kept to a minimum, due to health concerns, and lots were drawn to determine who would be allowed to participate in these *minyanim*.

Many of those who did not win the raffle would crowd onto benches in the *chatzer* to catch a glimpse of the Rebbe’s face, and those close enough to the window would even manage to hear the Rebbe recite *maftir*.

The Rebbe’s health improved by leaps and bounds, to the surprise of the doctors and the delight of Chassidim. At times, the upstairs floor of 770 would be closed off, and the Rebbe would take walks along the hallway together with Dr. Resnick. Being a learned young man, Dr. Resnick would use such opportunities to ask the Rebbe questions in his Torah learning, often bringing up questions on Rashi *sichos* and the like.

Towards the end of Cheshvan, the *sefarim* that had been stranded in Poland for many years—since WWII—arrived in New York.² For the first time in over a month, the Rebbe walked out of 770 on his way to the library next door in order to see the books. The news spread on wings, and crowds of people came to catch a glimpse of the Rebbe. For many, this was the first time they merited to see the Rebbe’s holy countenance since Shemini Atzeres, more than a month earlier.

Rosh Chodesh Kislev

Five weeks had passed since Shemini Atzeres, and the doctors determined that the Rebbe had recovered enough that he no longer required constant medical supervision, and was well enough to suffice with frequent examinations.

This meant the Rebbe would be able to return home, after spending the previous weeks in his room in 770.

On Thursday afternoon, Erev Rosh Chodesh Kislev the news spread. The Rebbe would be returning home. Comprehending the meaning of the occasion, Chassidim were elated. The

Rebbe's return home seemed to signify that the period of *he'ellem v'hester* was over, and the Rebbe was well enough to return and be with the Chassidim once again. While the Rebbe had not yet returned to his full health, as that would take many more months, this night was a turning point—the Rebbe was leaving the supervision of



CHASSIDIM LISTEN AS THE REBBE SPEAKS FROM HIS ROOM VIA INTERCOM.

the doctors, and reverting to his normal schedule and activities.

Hours before the set time, crowds began to gather in front of 770, anticipating the moment that the Rebbe would leave his room and make his way outside.

Rabbi Sassover writes:



26 TISHREI 5738, LEVI FREIDIN via JEM 22815

“At seven forty, the Rebbe appeared at the doorway, holding a brown bag—as usual—and spontaneously the Chassidim began singing Napoleon’s March with the gusto usually reserved for Simchas Torah. The Rebbe walked slowly down the walkway, encouraging the singing with his arm just like in the past; in a manner that tells us to begin singing and dancing with no limits or boundaries.

“As the Rebbe’s car pulled away, the crowd turned into many circles of jubilant Chassidim, joyously celebrating the Rebbe’s recovery without stop. After two hours of dancing, everyone came into the shul and we attempted to “redo” Simchas Torah. The *pesukim* were sold, and the proceeds dedicated for buying *mashke*; someone sponsored a full *seudas mitzvah*. The first *hakafah* was given to the *mashpi'im*, and the following ones to the *bochurim*.

“Seven *hakafos* were not enough, and the dancing continued throughout the night. ‘*Es iz geven oif tish un oif benk.*’ Reb Sholom Marosov and Reb Itche Shpringer farbrenged the whole night as well.”

When the Rebbe was preparing to leave 770, the Rebbetzin was standing at the window of the Friediker Rebbe’s room, on the second floor, watching the proceedings below. Reb Mendel Notik, who was there with the Rebbetzin and another fellow, describes the emotion in the air: “It was absolutely electrifying. I glanced at the Rebbetzin and it seemed to me that her eyes became teary.” Observing the celebration and the outburst of love from Chassidim to the Rebbe, she commented, “*Ah-zelche maladyetz’n*” (roughly translated: Such great boys).³

The following day, Friday, the celebration continued, albeit in a different fashion. Many mitzvah tanks went out into the streets of New York, with Chassidim putting tefillin on hundreds of Yidden, and promoting the other *mivtzoim*.



DR. WEISS AND DR. TISHOLTZ IN CONVERSATION, 3 CHESHVAN 5738.

LEVI FREDIN via JEM 22884

On Shabbos, a large *kiddush* was organized in honor of the occasion, and the elder Chassidim led spirited farbrengens throughout the day. Even a children's program, a *mesibos Shabbos*, was organized in honor of the auspicious time. The farbrengens lasted until after Shabbos, and when the crowd heard that the Rebbe was about to leave for home, they all piled out of 770 to accompany the Rebbe with joyous song, and the Rebbe encouraged the singing on his way out.

On the morning of Rosh Chodesh Kislev, when the Rebbe arrived back in 770, he met Dr. Resnick. "I heard," the Rebbe told him "that everyone was dancing last night, besides for two people: you and me. Tonight, I want you to make up for it, and dance for me as well..."

Hearing the Rebbe's comment, Chassidim understood that they had the Rebbe's explicit approval for the celebrations. With that, the celebrations continued uninterrupted through Shabbos.

Yud-Tes Kislev

The first farbrengen after Shemini Atzeres that the Rebbe held in a public setting, downstairs in 770, took place on Yud-Tes Kislev, some two and a half weeks after going home for the first time. In a *yoman*, one *bochur* describes the excitement, and the sequence of events:

"This morning the news was confirmed: the Rebbe would conduct a farbrengen tonight at nine o'clock, in honor of Yud-Tes Kislev.

ON THURSDAY AFTERNOON, EREV ROSH CHODESH KISLEV THE NEWS SPREAD. THE REBBE WOULD BE RETURNING HOME! ...THE PERIOD OF HE'ELLEM V'HESTER WAS OVER, AND THE REBBE WAS WELL ENOUGH TO RETURN AND BE WITH THE CHASSIDIM ONCE AGAIN.

"The news brought a lot of buzz and excitement to 770. The farbrengen *bimah* was entirely renovated; it was totally dismantled and rebuilt in a sturdier fashion, and tiles were laid across its entire length.

"The *mazkirus* thought to publicize the occasion in the media, but the Rebbe didn't allow it.

"At nine o'clock, the Rebbe came down and the crowd spontaneously began joyously singing Napoleon's March. Intense emotions gripped the hearts of the multitudes seeing the Rebbe enter with confident and energetic steps. The Rebbe alighted onto the *bimah*, sat down in his spot, and after a few moments began the *sicha*.

"Despite the fact that the farbrengen had been kept quiet, many guests arrived. Most notable was Dr. Weiss from Chicago, who was responsible—*b'derech hatevah*—for the Rebbe's quick recovery. When he entered the shul (ahead of the Rebbe) he was greeted by clapping and cheers for his work, dedication, *menschlichkeit*, and love for the Rebbe. During the farbrengen the Rebbe motioned to him to say *l'chaim*, and after he did so, it is fair to say that both of their faces were shining with happiness, satisfaction, and pleasure. The whole team of doctors sat close to the *bimah*, and after the first *sicha*, they sent up a note to the Rebbe".

Dr. Weiss relates:

“Sitting at the farbrengen, after the Rebbe entered, everyone sat down and sort of looked down to concentrate on the first *sicha*, and I was looking down as well; parked under us was a telemonitor showing us the Rebbe’s heart rhythm.

“As the Rebbe started the *sicha*, for the first time in all these weeks, the rhythm went way off the deep end. We got very worried, but what were we supposed to do? Go up and derail the farbrengen? Or maybe let him go on and see what happens, and hope for the best.

“After the first *sicha* the singing began and the rhythm straightened out, and I signaled to the Rebbe that the rhythm is not right and we should not go into the *sicha* again. The Rebbe went on to the next *sicha*, and once again the rhythm went off, and the same happened in the third *sicha*.

“Then the Rebbe went into a *maamar*, and then the Rebbe’s rhythm was perfect, as it had been throughout the past few weeks.”

Seudas Hoda’ah

Some days after Shabbos Bereishis, the Rebbe had mentioned to Dr. Weiss that to compensate the Chassidim for the missed farbrengens of Simchas Torah and Shabbos Bereishis, he will probably hold a special farbrengen.⁴

At noon on Zos Chanukah, the final day of Chanukah, the Rebbe summoned Rabbi Yaakov Yehuda Hecht and asked him to prepare challah and other basic staples for a farbrengen, which he would hold after *mincha* that afternoon. The Rebbe instructed him to keep the knowledge to himself, and even the *mazkirus* should not find out about it.

This surprise farbrengen constituted a *seudas hoda’ah* and a compensation for Simchas Torah. The Rebbe washed for bread, and afterwards gave out *kos shel bracha*. In the *sichos*, the Rebbe connected Zos Chanukah with Shemini Atzeres, and conducted the entire farbrengen with much joy and *lebedikeit*. The Rebbe also stated that



THE REBBE FARBRENGS FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE THE HEART ATTACK, YUD-TES KISLEV 5738.

YOSSI MELAMED via JEM129158



FARBRENGEN 30 KISLEV 5738.

the *kos shel bracha* he is distributing now is “like the distribution of Motzei Simchas Torah; even though it was distributed then through a *shliach* and *shlucho shel adam k’moso*.”

Over the next few months, the Rebbe continued with a theme of *hashlama*: the Rebbe distributed *kos shel bracha* a total of six times throughout the winter.

A Yom Tov for Generations

The next year on Zos Chanukah, the Rebbe again held a farbrengen, explaining that as time passes and the *golus* grows increasingly darker, we need to add more spiritual light.

“This is why we find that Chassidim added new *yomim tovim* to the calendar—and specifically in the month of Kislev; like Yud-Tes Kislev and Yud Kislev,” the Rebbe explained. “More recently, we also mark the date of Yud-Beis Tammuz, celebrating the *geulah* of the [Friediker] Rebbe. The joy is a boundless and very personal one for each and every Jew in this generation...”

In our time as well, the yom tov of Rosh Chodesh Kislev has been added to the calendar. A joyous day for the *nossi hador*, and by extension, for each and every Yid in this generation.

It is said that the doctors would have allowed the Rebbe to go home earlier, but the Rebbe wished to wait the extra time until Rosh Chodesh. As Chazal say, “מגלגלין זכות ליום זכאי”—a meritable act is reserved for an already meritable day.

May the *zechus* of this *yom zakkai*, the day that marked the end of a short period of *he’elem v’hester*, extend even further to end our current *golus* and we will celebrate a new yom tov with the Rebbe, speedily. **1**

1. These *sichos* and *ma’amorim* were later printed in Likkutei Sichos vol 20.

2. See Derher, Adar II 5774

3. See Derher, Kislev 5772 (“Maladetz’n”)

4. See Derher, Teves 5775, (“Seudas Hoda’ah”) for a full description of the farbrengen.



CHASSIDIM'S JOY KNEW NO BOUNDS AS THEY HEARD THE NEWS OF THE REBBE'S RECOVERY AND RETURN HOME.