



לזכות
הרה"ת ר' יהודה אריה לייב
וזוגתו מרת שרה גוטל שיחיו
פערלמוטער

בקשר עם נישואיהם
כ"ט אדר ה'תשע"ז

נדפס ע"י הוריהם
הרה"ת ר' אברהם אלי
וזוגתו מרת עלא שיחיו פינסאן
הרה"ת ר' אברהם אבא
וזוגתו מרת חנה שיחיו פערלמוטער



Neshamah Unleashed

The Power of a Niggun

“א חסידישער ניגון שטארקט די תקוה ובטחון,
בריינגט שמחה, און שטעלט אוועק די הויז מיט
דער הויז געזינד אין קרן אורה.”

**“A chassidisher niggun fortifies hope and
bitachon, brings joyousness, and places the
home and family in a state of light...”**

(היום יום כ"ב תמוז)

Once, while still a young man before going to Mezrich, the Alter Rebbe was invited to a wedding in Vitebsk and asked to say a *pilpul*. The Alter Rebbe delivered a deep founded *pilpul* professing thought provoking theories, speaking very quickly, leaving an ample impression on the crowd. Then the Alter Rebbe said: “Speech is the pen of the heart.”

After that, they asked the Alter Rebbe to sing a *niggun*. They knew that the Alter Rebbe sang very well. Hearing his singing while davening or learning, one was mesmerized and couldn't leave his presence.

The Alter Rebbe indeed sang a *niggun*, and then said: “Speech is the pen of the heart; song is the pen of the *nefesh*.”

Later, when the Alter Rebbe came to Mezrich, he learned that *niggunim* are actually a part of *avoda* according to Chassidus.¹



New Life in Song

Chassidus did not come to add, or *chas v'shalom* to diminish, from the existing truths of Yiddishkeit, but only to infuse life and joy in its everyday practice.

And so did Chassidus do to Jewish song.

Music has been a part of the fabric of our nation throughout all of our ancient history. But with the bitter hardships of *galus*, our song was sucked dry and lost its sense of life.

The Baal Shem Tov and his *talmidim* awakened this sleeping *neshamas*.

The *niggun* became the catalyst, allowing the Chossid to reach further in his *avodas Hashem*. Some of the most important teachings of Chassidus are the emphasis on joy of the heart and “*d’veikus*”—a heartfelt connection to Hashem, expressed by a longing and yearning to our father in heaven.

It is the *niggun* that will help drive the Chossid in this direction, lifting his heart up the steps of the spiritual ladder.

Chassidus Chabad took the *niggun* a step further.

For Chabad Chassidim, the *niggun* expresses a deep-founded connection to Hashem as a result of hours-long contemplation and enlivened davening. Chassidim are not so meticulous about following the musical “rules” and structure with their songs. The *niggun* is an expression of the *neshamas*, and therefore cannot be subject to these restrictions. Likewise many of the *niggunim* are wordless tunes. For words would only restrain the boundless message conveyed by the *niggun*.²

So powerful is the *chassidisher niggun* that Reb Hillel Particher summarized it: “One who has no ‘sense’ for music (חוש אין נגינה) has no ‘sense’ [understanding and feeling] for Chassidus.” Or in a slightly different variation: “One who has a ‘sense’ for music also has a better understanding and feel of Chassidus.”³

THE GATEWAY

A *niggun* shows the Chossid where he stands in *avodas Hashem*; where he should be and where he can be. It reveals the essence of his being, the *etzem haneshama*.

The *niggun* is a gateway to reaching the place where he needs to be.

(*Sefer Hasichos* 5706 p. 52)

The Alter Rebbe said:

A *niggun* has the power to *shlep* one out of the deepest “mud.”

(*Ibid.* p. 47)

A Different World

When the Rebbe Rashab founded Tomchei Tmimim, a structured system was put in place for the *talmidim* to learn and sing *niggunim* regularly. “*Seder niggunim*” took place twice during Shabbos, on Friday night and Shabbos evening (“רעוא דרעוין”), where a special group of “*menagnim*”—talented singers—led the singing of heartfelt *niggunim*.

Reb Nochum Shmaryahu Sassonkin, who studied in Tomchei Tmimim Lubavitch, later recounted:

“The Rebbe [Rashab] used to come out to the *zal* every Friday night and deliver a *maamar*. Before he arrived, we prepared the *zal* with four long tables forming a square across the entire room. On the northern side, a chair was set for the Rebbe.

“After everyone had their places, the group of *menagnim* began their song. The *niggunim* included some heartfelt ones, some joyous, and others were ‘*niggunei ga’aguim*’ (expressing a sense of yearning).

“These *niggunim* lifted our souls; we felt like we were being transferred from the weekday mode to a holy one (מחול אל הקדש). I remember the first time witnessing this scene; it was awe inspiring! The holiness of Shabbos shined on the faces of everyone present, as their hearts were captivated by these beautiful *niggunim*. For a moment, I soared to another world and couldn’t even realize where I was!

“Then the Rebbe’s footsteps were heard and total silence fell on the room. Everyone’s eyes turned eastward watching the Rebbe as he walked in, like an angel appearing from heaven.”⁴



Cleave to Hashem

Being that *neginah* is such an integral part of *avodas Hashem*, naturally, some of the most profound *niggunim* are those sung by Chassidim during davening. When a Chossid contemplates deeply on the concepts he studied in Chassidus and strives to be closer to Hashem, his *neshama* is aroused, and she expresses herself in the notes of a *niggun*. It is the faintest call of the *neshama* trying to free herself of the mundane everyday life and live a higher, more spiritual life.

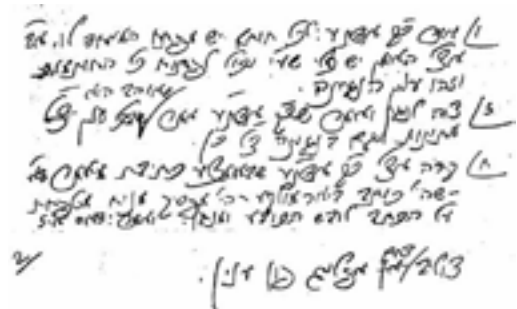
But it's not only during davening.

The power of a *chassidisher niggun* sung by Chassidim at a brotherly *farbrengen* should never be underestimated either. The *niggun* has the capability of transforming a person to an entirely new being. Chassidic legend is full of stories describing how

many lost souls found their way back to Torah and Yiddishkeit, pulled by the heartfelt tunes, the *chassidishe niggunim* sung at *farbrengens*.⁵

THE MASTER KEY

This *ksav yad kodesh* was written by the Rebbe; a “*hanacha*” transcribing the *sicha* of the Frierdiker Rebbe on Shabbos parshas Noach 5706. The Frierdiker Rebbe had elaborated on the significance of *neginah*. (Printed in *Yemei Melech* vol. 2 p. 602).



ו. אמר כ"ק אדנ"ע: לכל חותם יש מפתח המיוחד לו. אבל אצל האומן יש כלי שע"י יכול לפתוח כל החותמות וזהו ענין הנגינה.

ז. צוה לנגן ואמר שכ"ק אדנ"ע אמר שאוהב הוא בכל ענין מתינות וגם בנגינה צ"ל כן.

ח. קרה אצל כ"ק אדנ"ע שבאמצע כתיבת מאמר דא"ח – שה"י כותב ביארמולקע – ה' מפסיק, מניח מטפחת על הכתב, לובש הכובע ומנגן. ואמר: דאס איז צוליב דעם אפלייג פון ענין.

6. The Rebbe Rashab said: Every lock has a specific key to open it. But a craftsman may have a “master key” with which he can open any lock. The [master key] is *neginah*.

7. [The Frierdiker Rebbe] instructed to sing, and he said: The Rebbe [Rashab] said that he likes it when things are done slowly and attentively. *Neginah* must also be approached as such.

8. It happened at times that the Rebbe Rashab was in the midst of writing a *maamar*—which he would do in his *yarmulka* [i.e. not with a hat or *shtreimel*]—he would stop, place a cloth over the manuscript, put on his hat, and began singing. He said: This is so the subject at hand will be [better] instilled.

Two Stories

To adequately sum up the power of a *chassidisher niggun*, we turn to a *sicha* the Rebbe said at a Purim farbrengen one year, relating two stories and drawing a connection between. And of course, as always, concluding with a powerful lesson:

a) In his younger years, the Alter Rebbe had the custom that when he traveled home from Mezrich, he made stops on the way in towns and cities where Yidden lived, to spread the teachings of Chassidus and influence them to be *talmidim* of the Maggid.

On one such visit in the city of Shklov [a stronghold of many prestigious *Litvishe ge'onim*] he entered the central *beis midrash*. When the locals began bombarding him with many questions in *nigleh*, the Alter Rebbe said that instead of directly addressing their questions, he'll sing a *niggun*.

The Alter Rebbe had a special way with song. As he sang the *niggun*, members of the crowd felt that their previous questions had suddenly faded.

b) When the Tzemach Tzedek stood in staunch opposition to the Czarist government's decrees against the Jews, he was asked, "How can you put your life in danger like that when you know there are so many Yidden who need you and depend on you for guidance?"

The Tzemach Tzedek replied: "I'll give you one answer, then an alternate. The answer is: I rely on my sons to carry on my work. The alternate: the *achdus* of Chassidim will lead them towards Moshiach."

The Rebbe explained:

As the story of the Alter Rebbe demonstrates, the power of a *niggun* is such that it can eliminate a question in Torah. Since everything in our world is based on the Torah (for the Torah is the blueprint for the world), it can be said that any difficulty in the world can also be eliminated with the power of a *niggun*.

True, we don't have the power of a *niggun* like the Alter Rebbe would have sung. But applying the words of the Tzemach Tzedek in the second story above—we can sing a *niggun* with *achdus haChassidim*.

Let us sing a *niggun* together, and with our singing we will eliminate all the obstacles that stand in the way of our *avodas Hashem*, allowing each and every one of us to fulfill the shlichus and bring the *geulah*.⁶ **T**

1. Sefer Hasichos 5702 p. 121
2. From the introduction to Sefer Haniggunim—Chabad by Reb Shmuel Zalmanov
3. Sefer Hasichos 5697 p. 221
4. Zichronosai p. 46
5. Sefer Haniggunim *ibid*.
6. Purim 5720; Toras Menachem vol. 27 p. 457

