



JONA
Journey
OF
Learning
**THE NIGGUN “TZOMAH
LECHA NAFSHI”**

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לע"נ
הרה"ח הרה"ת
ר' אהרן בן הרה"ח הרה"ת
יהושע שניאור זלמן ע"ה
סערעבריאנסקי
נלב"ע ט' ניסן ה'תשע"ט
ולע"נ זוגתו מרת זלאטא בת ר' אריל לייב ע"ה
נלב"ע י"ז אלול ה'תשפ"ג
תנ"צ'ב'ה'

נדפס ע"י בנו
הרה"ת ר' יוסף וזוגתו מרת חנה רחל שיחיו
סערעבריאנסקי

THE SCENE OF THE REBBE SINGING TZOMAH LECHA NAFSHI AT FARBRENGENS IS AN IMAGE FAMILIAR TO EVERY CHOSSID. HEARING THE REBBE'S HOLY VOICE, THE SOUL-STIRRING MELODY, THE CHASSIDIM PASSIONATELY JOINING IN, MADE THOSE PRECIOUS MOMENTS AN OTHERWORLDLY EXPERIENCE. AS WE MARK SEVENTY YEARS SINCE THE REBBE TAUGHT THE NIGGUN, A CHASSIDISHER DERHER PRESENTS FOR THE FIRST TIME THE FULL STORY OF THIS SPECIAL NIGGUN; THE EVENTS SURROUNDING WHEN THE REBBE TAUGHT IT, THE INNER MEANING OF THE NIGGUN, HOW THE REBBE SANG IT, AND MANY MORE FASCINATING DETAILS.

TO BE B'SIMCHA

The *zal* slowly filled with Chassidim in anticipation of the Rebbe's farbrengen. The date was Shabbos Mevorchim Iyar, Parshas Kedoshim, 5714, and as per the Rebbe's custom on every Shabbos Mevorchim, a farbrengen would be held on Shabbos afternoon.

Shortly before two o'clock, the Rebbe entered, took his place, and made kiddush.¹

"Since the farbrengen is a continuation of Moshiach's seudah, we should begin with *Ani Maamin*," the Rebbe began.²

The crowd of Chassidim sang *Ani Maamin*, and the farbrengen proceeded in its usual fashion.

The next few *sichos* were a most *geshmake hemshech*, as the Rebbe taught how a Yid can fulfill his *avodas Hashem b'simcha*. At times, a Yid can feel that his own spiritual standing is quite low, even the Mitzvos he performs and the Torah he learns don't seem to have any tangible effect. How then can he keep his spirits high in *avodas Hashem*?

The answer is simple: although a Yid may not see any immediate effect from his performance of Mitzvos, the fact is, that all the *hamshachos* are already drawn down, and in the times of Moshiach, all that was accomplished will be revealed. "Bearing this in mind," the Rebbe said, "can make a Yid *b'simcha*."

The niggun Nye Zhuritzi Chloptzi, the Rebbe explained, expresses this sentiment. "Have no worry, my young friends, about what will be with us (lit. what will we have to drink)," the *niggun* reads. "When we reach the tavern, we'll have plenty to drink."



There's no reason to be despondent, all the *hamshachos* are being drawn down now, and when we reach the "tavern," the *geulah*, everything will be revealed.

"Sing the niggun Nye Zhuritzi Chloptzi," the Rebbe concluded.

THE POWER OF TZIMAON

"But what about now?" The Rebbe continued in the next *sicha*, "Now we don't feel anything, everything is hidden!" Seemingly, we're back to square one. How can a Yid be *b'simcha* in his *avodas Hashem*?"

The solution is through arousing within oneself a "*tzimaon*," a yearning. When one yearns for something, thirsts for something, the yearning itself lifts him up to what he is thirsting for!

This special potency of "*tzimaon*," the feeling of yearning, can even *quench* one's thirst.

As Dovid Hamelech wrote, "צמאה לך נפשי... כן בקדש חזיתך." The Baal Shem Tov explained that Dovid Hamelech, standing in a barren spiritual desert, an "ארץ צ' ועיף בלי מים," was davening that *halevai* he should be able to see and feel Hashem in all His Glory when standing '*bakodesh*,'—even in the holiest of places. Because the *yearning itself* for *Elokus* that one experiences while in a spiritual wasteland can bring a person to the highest levels.

"There's a *niggun* from the Alter Rebbe to the *possuk* '*Tzomah lecha nafshi*,'" the Rebbe said, and instructed to sing it.

A NEW NIGGUN

Silence reigns in the *zal*. The Chassidim aren't sure which *niggun* the Rebbe means.

After a few moments, a voice rings out from the corner. A Chossid begins an old tune to the words "*Tzomah lecha nafshi*." After he finishes, the Rebbe responds that he wasn't referring to that *niggun*.

Confusion prevails as the crowd struggles to figure out which *niggun* to sing. Another "*Tzomah*" is sung, but with no success. After the *niggun* finishes the Rebbe asks: "Maybe there's a third *niggun*?"

Another Chossid stands up and begins to sing a *niggun* that begins in Russian and concludes with the words "*Tzomah lecha nafshi*." To no avail. When he finishes his *niggun*, the Rebbe asks again: "Maybe there's a fourth *niggun*?"

The Chassidim are stumped. No further proposals are made. The room falls silent.

The next few moments feel like forever. The tension in the room could be cut with a knife. Silence.

The Rebbe leans his head in his hands. And after a few moments, the Rebbe's voice rings out: "Tzomah lecha nafshi... Komah lecha vesari... B'oretz tziyah v'oyeif bli moyim."

The Rebbe sings the entire *niggun* solo, and the only sound heard in the packed *zal* is the pure melody emanating from the Rebbe's holy lips.

The Rebbe sang the *niggun* several times, teaching the intricacies of the tune to the Chassidim. After a few rounds of singing the *niggun* alone, the Rebbe asked that everyone join in and sing together. The *niggun* still hadn't caught on. The Rebbe sang it yet again, and after finishing, asked that the *bochurim* sing along, but the *bochurim* also hadn't caught on yet.

ESSEN EST ZICH

"And what can be done if the *tzimaon* is also lacking?" the Rebbe began the next *sicha*.

The solution is to think about this itself — how distanced you are from Hashem that you don't even feel the yearning to come closer. This itself will evoke within a Yid strong feelings of bitterness about his current state. And these feelings will arouse the *tzimaon*!

"This is the inner meaning of the *niggun* 'Essen est zich,'" the Rebbe said. "Bitterness about the fact that when it comes to eating, there's no need for *hisbonenus*; we manage to enjoy it automatically. But when it comes to davening, when it comes to having a *tzimaon* toward Hashem, there's a need for

NICHOACH

At the farbrengen of Yud-Aleph Nissan 5732, the Rebbe issued a call to establish seventy-one (Ayin-Aleph) new *mosdos*²⁰ in connection with his seventieth year.

Sometime after that, Rabbi Hodakov called the chazzan Reb Moshe Teleshevsky and informed him that the Rebbe wanted to appoint him as a representative of the *Ayin-Aleph mosdos* to produce a new record of Chabad *niggunim* (later appended to the set of *Nichoach* records as volume eleven). Rabbi Hodakov asked Reb Moshe if he was ready to take the appointment upon himself, and when Reb Moshe agreed, he told him that the Rebbe wanted the record to be ready quickly, but the haste shouldn't diminish the quality of the record.

The Rebbe instructed that the first *niggun* be "Shalosh Tenuos" and then *Tzomah lecha nafshi*. The album should also include the Rebbe's father's *niggun*, *Shamil*, and *Uforatzta*.

Reb Moshe submitted a list of additional *niggunim* and the Rebbe told him to include the *niggun* from Morocco (*Ozreini Kel chai*), from Bukhara (*Atem shalom*), and from Gruzia (*Adon Haselichot... Mi hu zeh*).

After several days, Chazzan Teleshevsky was called to meet Rabbi Hodakov and was informed that the Rebbe was going to the Ohel the next day, and



THE SLEEVE (COVER) ON THE SPECIAL RECORD OF NICHACH PRODUCED BY THE 'VAAD AYIN-ALEPH MOSDOS'.

wanted a list of the *niggunim* that were to be included in the new record. Reb Moshe gave him the list and after returning from the Ohel, the Rebbe instructed to add the *niggun* "Nyet nyet nikavo."

Reb Moshe wrote to the Rebbe asking if he could a recording of the Rebbe singing *Tzomah lecha nafshi* from the Farbrengen of Yud Shevat (5733). The Rebbe responded that it was a good suggestion ("הכונה"), and that he should note on the booklet accompanying the record that the track was taken from the farbrengen.²¹

An additional recording of the Rebbe singing "Tzomah," at the farbrengen of Chamisha-Asar B'Shevat 5737, was included in *Nichoach* record number twelve.

* 5732-1972, 5733-1973, 5737-1977

preparation and *hisbonenus*.”

“Sing the *niggun* ‘*Essen est zich*,’” the Rebbe concluded.

AN EIGHTH OF A NOTE

The *farbrengen* continued with a *maamar* and several more *sichos*.

At a later point, the Rebbe asked to sing the newly taught *niggun* again. Being that the Chassidim still hadn’t fully grasped the *niggun*, the Rebbe again sang it solo several times.

Before beginning to sing, the Rebbe said: “The [Friediker] Rebbe, my father-in-law, once said that he wouldn’t be particular about a “*zechtzentel*” (a sixteenth of a note). Now though, I won’t even be particular about an “*achtel*” (an eighth of a note).”

Slowly, the Chassidim caught on to the tune and joined the Rebbe in singing together. After one of the Chassidim sang the *niggun* with some mistakes, the Rebbe broke out in a smile and promptly began teaching the *niggun* yet again.

After several more rounds of everyone singing together, the Rebbe exclaimed, “I tried my best...”

When the Chassidim attempted to sing the *niggun*, they got several *tenuos* wrong. The Rebbe corrected them, saying, “The entire *niggun*, until the third stanza, ascends. The first two stanzas (including “*כן בקדש*”) are presented as a *baka-sha* and *tzimaon*, therefore the tune is ‘smooth.’ In the third

stanza, however, the words “*כן בקדש*” are [sung] as if “*כן*” means ‘indeed.’”

THROUGH THE YEARS

Already at the very next *farbrengen*, on Shabbos Mevorchim Sivan, the Rebbe said to sing the new *niggun* twice. The Rebbe instructed Chassidim to sing it several more times over the year.

In the following years, the Rebbe often said to sing this *niggun* at *farbrengens*. On special occasions, however, the Rebbe would sing parts of the *niggun* solo.

The *niggun* begins with “*Tzomah lecha nafshi*,” which the Rebbe would sing himself, and continues with a wordless part, which the Chassidim would sing together. The first iteration of *Kein Bakodesh* is sung twice. The Rebbe would sing the first one and Chassidim the second. Then *Kein Bakodesh* is sung again, in a different iteration, this the Rebbe would sing. The *niggun* concludes with a wordless melody, which the Chassidim would sing together. Following this, the Chassidim would start the *niggun* again and sing it together.

This *seder* seems to have taken shape gradually. At several *farbrengens* of the later 5710’s we hear the Rebbe singing different parts of the *niggun*, or at least starting it. The first time we hear the *niggun* being sung in the familiar way is at



NIGGUNIM AT THE FARBRENGEN, EREV YUD SHEVAT 5730.

CHAIM BARUCH HALBERSTAM 308720

the Purim farbrengen of 5719.⁴

In several instances when the Rebbe instructed to sing *niggunim* of all the Rabbeim, the Rebbe added “*Tzomah*”, apparently as the Rebbe’s *niggun*.⁵ At times the *niggun* was sung as a *hachana* to the Alter Rebbe’s *niggun* of *Daled Bavos*.⁶

There were different *tekufos* throughout the years with regard to how often the Rebbe sang the *niggun* himself, or asked that it be sung. There were times when the Rebbe would ask to sing the *niggun* often but sang it himself only rarely, while at other times, the Rebbe sang the *niggun* himself more frequently.

Interestingly, at many milestone farbrengens the Rebbe sang the *niggun* himself. Examples include Yud Shevat in the years 5720, 5730⁷, and 5740, as well as Yud-Aleph Nissan 5741, the start of the Rebbe’s 80th year. The last time that the Rebbe sang the *niggun* himself was on Shabbos Parshas Naso 5743.

Toward the end of the Farbrengen on Shabbos Parshas Lech Lecha 5749, after a long while that the Rebbe hadn’t asked to sing the *niggun*, the Rebbe asked to sing “*Tzomah*”. The crowd fell silent, hoping that the Rebbe would begin singing the *niggun* himself, but the Rebbe motioned to Reb Yoel Kahn to begin the *niggun*.⁸

That was the last time, *leis ata*, that the Rebbe instructed to sing the *niggun*.⁹

CHOICE OF WORDS

Participating in the Rebbe’s farbrengen was always a heavenly experience. From the long, rich *sichos* to the joyous - or serious - *niggunim*, to be at a farbrengen meant to experience a *giluy Elokus*.

There were rare instances when the Rebbe would display *himmel’dike hanhoga*, overtly otherworldly behavior. One example is when the Rebbe would sing “*Tzomah lecha nafshi*.” In addition to the incomparable experience of hearing the Rebbe singing the *niggun*, he would sometimes alter the words of the *niggun* in different ways.

The farbrengen of Tes Shevat 5730, is remembered for the *siyum* of Moshiach’s Sefer Torah that took place at the farbrengen.¹⁰ Toward the end of the farbrengen, which was replete with *giluyim*, the Rebbe began to sing “*Tzomah Lecha Nafshi*.” When the Rebbe reached “*Kein bakodesh*,” the Rebbe finished “*לראות טובך וחסדך*.” The Chassidim, who responded after the Rebbe’s solo with song, also repeated “*לראות טובך וחסדך*.”¹¹ Similarly, at the farbrengens of Yud-Beis Tammuz 5723¹² and Purim 5729,¹³ the Rebbe sang “*לראות טובך וכבודך*.”

At the farbrengen of Chai Elul 5737, the Rebbe sang “*לראותי וכבודי*.”¹⁴ After the crowd sang it once, the Rebbe repeated it, this time as regular.¹⁵

At the farbrengen of Purim 5742, when the Rebbe reached

MIHU YEHUDI

As the farbrengen of Shabbos Parshas Beshalach 5733 was concluding, and the Rebbe had already made a bracha acharona, the Rebbe suddenly began to sing “*Tzomah lecha nafshi*.” After the *niggun*, the Rebbe started to speak²²:

“The Torah of the Baal Shem Tov on the possuk “*Tzomah lecha nafshi*” is known, that *halevai* (if only) when in a state of ‘*bakodesh*’ we would have the same yearning for Hashem that we have in a barren desert.

“We can apply the same with regard to the current situation with ‘*Mihu Yehudi*’ in Eretz Yisroel.

“Instead of Eretz Yisroel being a place from where Torah emanates to Yidden around the world (‘*כי מציון תצא תורה ודבר ה' מירושלים*’), we are seeing the opposite: specifically over there they are approving conversions through a twenty-five dollar certificate, and through this considering [the ‘convert’] to be a Jew all over the world!

“Until now, no one in chutz la’aretz ever thought of doing such a thing; only in Eretz Yisroel!

About this we can say, ‘*כן בקדש חזיתך*,’ *halevai* that in Eretz Hakodesh they wouldn’t deviate from the right path and deteriorate so badly...

the high part of “*Kein bakodesh*,” he sang “*כן בקדש חזיתך בארץ*” *ציל בלי מים*.¹⁶ During the second “*Kein bakodesh*,” the Rebbe sang “*לראות נפשך וכבודך*.”¹⁷

RUSSIAN CHASSIDIM

The plight of the Russian Yidden was a common theme in the Rebbe’s *sichos* of the earlier years. At many farbrengens the Rebbe spoke with deep emotion, often with tears, about their difficult situation.¹⁸

At several farbrengens, the Rebbe spoke about “*Tzomah lecha nafshi*” and connected it to the Russian Chassidim, sometimes even singing the *niggun* in direct connection. If only, the Rebbe explained, “we would have the same

* 5719-1959, 5720-1960, 5730-1970, 5740-1980, 5741-1981, 5743-1983, 5749-1988, 5723-1963, 5729-1969, 5737-1977, 5733-1973, 5742-1982

yearning and thirst [for Hashem] as they have [in Russia] every moment.”

One notion that the Rebbe emphasized was with regard to the Chassidim that had already managed to leave Russia, and had come to safer shores. The message of “*Tzomah lecha nafshi*” for them was, that just as in the “barren desert,” they thirsted and yearned for *Elokus*, so too now, safe and comfortable, they must keep their passion for Torah and mitzvos. The material comfort of the free world would complement their *tzimaon*, allowing them to do their *avodah mitoch harchava* (at ease, with a broad mind) and *b’simcha uv’tuv leivav* (with joy and gladness of the heart).¹⁹

AN UNQUENCHABLE YEARNING

The image of the Rebbe singing “*Tzomah lecha nafshi*,” with a sea of Chassidim is etched deeply on the hearts of

Chassidim who merited to be there, or to those who have seen videos of those special moments.

The very words of the *niggun* stimulate a deep yearning to the *yemei ha’or*. “צמאה לך נפשי” - my *neshamah* thirsts for you, “בארץ צי’ ועיף בלי מים” - in a parched and thirsty land that has no water.

The message of the *niggun* takes on added significance in the current *golus*, when we cannot see or hear the Rebbe. On the one hand, we are certain that the Rebbe is with us, even more than before, yet, on the other hand, our yearning for the *geulah shleima* grows stronger every passing day.

The Rebbe teaches us a powerful lesson from this *niggun*: The feeling of yearning - the thirst - to the *yemei ha’or* itself, can strengthen our connection even more and bring us closer to those precious moments.

Ultimately though, we will not be satisfied until we are reunited physically with the Rebbe, in the *geulah shleima*, may it be very soon. **1**



STIRRING SOULS

There are many stories of people who were positively impacted by the niggun “Tzomah”. We present one of the many stories.

Rabbi Avrohom Yitzchok Glick was a traveling shliach of the Rebbe who would be sent to various places throughout Europe to strengthen Yiddishkeit.

On Chanukah 5734, Rabbi Glick and his wife were in Barcelona, and got a phone call from Rabbi Hodakov with instructions to travel to the island of Majorca (a half-hour’s flight from Barcelona).

Needless to say, Rabbi Glick and his wife took the short flight to Majorca, and immediately began searching for Yidden on the island. Right after they settled in, Rabbi Hodakov instructed them to translate the two *michtovim kloliyim* (one to all Yidden, and one to children) that the Rebbe had written for Chanukah into Spanish, and to distribute them to any Yidden with whom they came in contact.

One of the people Rabbi Glick met in Majorca was a young Yid named Benny. Benny was a wealthy individual who lived in a gorgeous home. Rabbi Glick arranged with Benny to meet him in his hotel, and had a very nice discussion about Torah and Mitzvos.

Before they parted ways, Rabbi Glick offered to

play a recording of the Rebbe. It was a recording of the Rebbe singing *Tzomah lecha nafshi*.

When Benny heard the soul-stirring notes of the Rebbe singing, he began crying like a baby. After composing himself, he told Rabbi Glick that the recording reminded him of his youth and that he felt an obligation to come back to his roots.

Benny constructed a Menorah atop his home, and brought about a big *his’orerus* to many Yidden on the island.

After Chanukah, Rabbi Glick wrote a detailed report about his Chanukah in Majorca and about the big *his’orerus* that happened, and sent it to the Rebbe.

On Erev Rosh Chodesh Shevat, Rabbi Glick received a letter from the Rebbe, in response to his *duc”h*.²³

(It’s interesting to note that while Rabbi Glick was on this shlichus, the Rebbe asked for him during a farbrengen at 770, thousands of miles away. The Rebbe later explained to Rabbi Hodakov that he knew that Rabbi Glick was not present, but he mentioned his name to give him additional *koichos* for the *shlichus*. See *Yomim Tovim im HaRebbe*, p. 71.)

1. It is noteworthy, that in those years the Rebbe wouldn’t usually make Kiddush at the farbrengen, with some special exceptions. See “*Shabbos with the Rebbe*,” Derher Sivan 5783.

2. The farbrengen in its entirety can be found in *Toras Menachem* vol. 9, pg. 242 and further.

3. *Tehillim* 63, 2-3.

4. Listen at Ashreinu audio: <https://ashreinu.page.link/4Jxb>.

5. E.g. *Yud Shevat* 5716, *Rosh Hashanah* 5721.

6. E.g. *Yud-Beis Tammuz* 5718 and 5720.

7. At the farbrengen on Friday, *Tes Shevat*, as related below.

8. According to the *yoman* of Rabbi Avraham Shmuel Mann.

9. The *niggun* was sung several times afterwards (at *kos shel bracha* etc.), but not at the Rebbe’s specific instruction.

10. See “*Sefer Torah shel Moshiach*,” Derher Shevat 5776.

11. Ashreinu audio: <https://ashreinu.page.link/Fw9p>.

12. Ashreinu audio: <https://ashreinu.page.link/7e2R>.

13. Ashreinu audio: <https://ashreinu.page.link/zaiQ>.

14. Just one month later, on *Shemini Atzeres* 5738, the Rebbe suffered a massive heart attack during *Hakofos* (see “*The Complete Story of Rosh Chodesh Kislev*,” Derher Kislev 5778). Some Chassidim connected this altered version of *Tzomah* with these events.

15. Ashreinu audio: <https://ashreinu.page.link/jy3s>.

16. See also farbrengen of *Yud-Gimmel Tammuz* 5732.

17. Ashreinu audio: <https://ashreinu.page.link/XGW1>.

18. See “*Love from Afar*,” Derher Tammuz 5779.

19. See *sichos* *Simchas Torah* 5722, *Rosh Hashanah* 5726, *Shavuos* 5729, *Yud-Gimmel Tammuz* 5732, *Motzei Shabbos Yud-Tes Kislev* 5733, et. al.

20. See “*Yud-Aleph Nissan Milestone Celebrations*,” Derher Supplement *Nissan* 5782 (120 Years).

21. *Hiskashrus*, issue 37 pg. 11-12.

22. *Toras Menachem* vol. 71 pg. 157-8.

23. *Kfar Chabad* issue 882 pg. 17.