



לעבן מיט'ן רבי'ן

לזכות  
הרה"ת ר' יהודה  
חזקתו מרת רבקה  
ומשפחתם שיחיו  
שטיינער  
וואשינגטאן די. סי.



# Stretch Out Your Hand

PURIM 5726



*The following account is based on a number of yomanim written at the time:*

It was 8:30 p.m. when the Rebbe entered for the *farbrengen*.<sup>1</sup> After the crowd began singing a *niggun*, the Rebbe wrapped several pieces of cake in a napkin and said *l'chaim* to all those present. The Rebbe then said several *sichos*, including one about the three *pesukim* that the Jewish children told Mordechai—predicting the impending salvation.<sup>2</sup>

Between *sichos*, the Rebbe encouraged several individuals to say *l'chaim*. At midnight, the Rebbe said a *maamar* based on the *possuk*: “ויבז בעיניו” לשלוח יד במרדכי לבדו,” connecting it with the *possuk*: “ויבז עשו את הבכרה.” Prior to the *maamar*, the microphone stopped working. After it was briefly fixed, it broke again. Eventually, Reb Leima Minkowitz, who was recording the *farbrengen*, took the microphone from his tape recorder and

placed it under the Rebbe's tablecloth. Following the *maamar*, several individuals approached the Rebbe with *l'chaim*. While they conversed, the Rebbe covered the microphone with his hand.

During the singing, Reb Chaim Nachman Kowalsky presented a container of dates to the Rebbe. The Rebbe smilingly said that he won't eat it, because of the question about *bracha acharona*, and handed it to the *mazkir*, Reb Moshe Leib Rodshtein. The Rebbe then went on to say several additional *sichos*.

At around 2:00 a.m., the Rebbe proclaimed: "Being that it's already after *chatzos*, and therefore closer to the end of the *farbrengen* than the beginning, and being that *ad d'lo yada* must be fulfilled and so far I don't see anyone holding at that stage, someone should be *moser nefesh* and take this upon himself, thereby being *motzi* everyone else."

The elderly Reb Zalman Duchman volunteered, and promptly began pouring himself a cup of *mashke*. Although it seemed as though he was not the one the Rebbe had in mind for this "job," the Rebbe nevertheless gave some *l'chaim* to Reb Zalman, asking him if he is the "*nivchar sheb'am*" [appointee]. The Rebbe also handed him several pieces of cake. Chassidim immediately began to grab them from him.

"Soon he will<sup>3</sup> begin making speeches," the Rebbe proclaimed. When Reb Zalman began talking, the Rebbe responded: "I said you'll be making speeches soon." A little later, the Rebbe asked if Reb Zalman is doing his job. "That is why I gave him *mezonos*," the Rebbe said. Again Reb Zalman started to speak, but the Rebbe stopped him: "With speeches you'll accomplish nothing; what's needed is *ad d'lo yada*!"

The Rebbe then called for Reb Chaim Asher Kahanov to come over, saying, "He's a *kohen*, he should come up." When he reached the stage, the Rebbe poured a *l'chaim* of *mashke* with 95% alcohol for him. Turning to the Rebbe, he exclaimed, "*L'chaim!*" The Rebbe *bentched* him to have "a physically abundant year." The Rebbe then encouraged him to continue saying *l'chaim*, mentioning that "the first time I met him was in Paris, when he made *kiddush* on 95%..." The Rebbe then instructed him to have another *l'chaim*, which he immediately did.

In a later *sicha*, the Rebbe spoke about the advantage of recounting *mofsim*, wonder stories of the Rebbeim, over just studying Chassidus. He



G. SCHUSTERMAN VIA JEM 30304

mentioned the claim that an individual<sup>4</sup> brought to the Frieddiker Rebbe regarding the effectiveness of recounting *mofsim*, despite this not being the ideal Chabad way. After one receives a copy of a *maamar*, the Rebbe explained, it can happen that he'll "go and eat kugel," [i.e. it does not move him very much]. Experiencing *mofsim*, on the other hand, can have a greater effect on many people. This is why there were many *mofsim* by the Frieddiker Rebbe, including the very fact that he lived the last seventeen years of his life, despite the doctors' dire predictions. Today we are witness to an even greater *mofes*—after seeing so many *mofsim*, people go and eat kugel...

(While the Rebbe was saying this, an individual who was somewhat inebriated, was repeating words after the Rebbe. Chassidim wanted to remove him from the *farbrengen*, but the Rebbe gave him smiling glances several times. Later on, he was dancing around and Chassidim tried to take him out again, but he protested. The Rebbe asserted: "Just touch his tie, you'll immediately see that he's aware of everything taking place,"<sup>5</sup> and then remarked something in Russian.)

Later, the Rebbe asked where Reb Chaim Asher Kahanov is.<sup>6</sup> When Chassidim answered that he had gone to sleep, the Rebbe exclaimed: "That is the true *ad d'lo yada*—that he's sleeping."

Chassidim sang the *Niggun Hachana*, the Alter Rebbe's *niggun* (repeating the fourth stanza six times), *Nye Zhuritzki Chloptzi*, and *Ani Maamin*, all upon the Rebbe's request. The Rebbe then began singing *Tzama L'cha Nafshi*.

The Rebbe opened his *siddur*, and everyone thought that the *farbrengen* was about to end, but the Rebbe had other plans. “If Zevin’s grandson is here, he should come and say *l’chaim* for his *zeide*,” the Rebbe exclaimed. As the grandson (whose name was Nochum) was approaching with a small cup, the Rebbe instructed Reb Moshe Leib Rodshtein to give him a large cup. Nochum drank a bit from the cup and then proceeded to ask for *mashke* for his grandfather. Seeing that he had not finished the *mashke* in his cup, the Rebbe instructed him to finish it, adding, “You shouldn’t mix your *l’chaim* with your *zeide*’s. It must be *tofeiach al m’nas l’hatfiach* (“wet” enough to dampen something else). Therefore, first say *l’chaim* for yourself, and then for your *zeide*.” The Rebbe then poured for him again and handed him some cake. As Nochum was unsure about who the cake was for, the Rebbe remarked: “The *zeide* (in Russia) would make *kiddush* on 95% without needing *farbaisien*.” One of the attendees wanted to give him more *mashke*, which he refused. Seeing this, the Rebbe stated: “[*Ad d’lo yada*] is a *din* in *Shulchan Aruch*.” The Rebbe then began singing *Chutch Mi Chudi* in a very lively fashion.

The Rebbe continued to pour *l’chaim* for many individuals. When Reb Shmuel Levitin asked for *l’chaim*, the Rebbe responded: “With you I’m afraid to start...”

At around 2:30 a.m., the Rebbe drank several full cups of *l’chaim*, after which he rubbed his hand on his forehead, repeating this several times. When he noticed that his cup was empty, Rabbi Mentlik immediately rushed to refill it. At that very moment, the Rebbe began speaking with someone. Rabbi Mentlik waited until the Rebbe instructed him to pour, after which the Rebbe drank the entire cup.

The Rebbe gave wine (not *mashke*) to Rashag, saying, “It’s Purim, and there’s an *inyan* to increase in drinking wine.” The Rebbe then asked, “Where is my director?” referring to Rabbi Hodakov, after which he poured *mashke* for him.

Reb Chaim Asher Kahanov approached the Rebbe again. “Until now, the *bracha* was about *gashmiyus*; now I’m asking for *ruchniyus*, to merit a full *teshuva*.” The Rebbe answered, “*B’simcha uv’tuv leivov*.”

The Rebbe then asked about the *bochurim* who had traveled to read *megillah* at the army bases, inquiring as to their exact number—five, six, or seven. When the *bochurim*, Yitzchok Meir Kagan, Bentzion Shafran, and [יבלחט"א] Sholom Ber Hecht, approached the Rebbe, he asked each one of them if they had also traveled. They brought up *mashke* and oranges from the soldiers, and the Rebbe poured *l’chaim* for each one of them, after which he asked if they had received the telegram he had sent them.



When they replied that they hadn't, the Rebbe gave them a bewildered look. He also threw a glance of surprise at Rabbi Leibel Groner.

When Reb Leibel Mochkin asked the Rebbe for *mashke*, the Rebbe answered that he will give on condition that Reb Leibel takes upon himself to learn the weekly Likkutei Torah/Torah Or. Reb Leibel asked, "Every week?" To which the Rebbe responded, "That's the deal."

The Rebbe then gave *mashke* to Reb Yankel Hecht, quipping, "The girls [in Camp Emunah] won't find out; the counselors won't find out..." The Rebbe also inquired about Reb Moshe Yitzchok Hecht, but he wasn't present.

When a certain Shliach (who had come without permission) said to the Rebbe that he had to travel to spend Purim with the Rebbe, the Rebbe responded: "Who says you must travel? Maybe you ought to stay there. I see how precious the shlichus is to you." At a certain point in the *farbrenge*, the Rebbe remarked, "I give my שרביט הזהב (golden scepter) to those who travel on shlichus."

The Rebbe pointed to the *mashke* and cake on the table, and remarked, "There will probably be a *farbrenge* tomorrow, this should be used for it." The Rebbe then gave Reb Dovid Raskin a large cake he had received for *mishloach manos*, as well as some of his own cake, some *mashke*, and a bottle of soda. "We're about to finish [the *farbrenge*]," the Rebbe announced, and then said to Rabbi Zevin's grandson, "You can finish [the cup]..."

The Rebbe then instructed many of the attendees, including several senior Chassidim, to finish the *mashke* in their cup. Turning to Rabbi Ushpal, the Rebbe said, "*Tut zich ohn a koiach oif nemen mashke*" (roughly translated: gather the strength to drink *mashke*), adding that it be on a full cup—full according to *Shulchan Aruch*. To Rabbi Mentlik the Rebbe smiled and instructed, "*Tut mir a toiva un nem mashke*" (do me a favor and take *mashke*).

A half hour had passed since the Rebbe first opened the *siddur*. All of a sudden, he proclaimed, "All bottles present should be emptied. I don't mean to pour them out—that would be *bal tashchis*, especially as this year is a *shnas hashmita*, when all food must be consumed, not wasted."

The Rebbe immediately began pouring *l'chaim* for several individuals who approached. The Rebbe then exclaimed: "כלים ריקים אל-תמעיטי" (a play on Elisha's instruction not to skimp on empty vessels,



TI SHEVAT 5724

meaning to empty all the bottles). Pandemonium immediately ensued, as everyone began grabbing bottles and emptying them into cups. The Rebbe then asked again "*Keilim reikim*—are all the *keilim* empty?" after which he began singing *Avinu Malkeinu*.

The Rebbe then continued with one more *sicha*, about the *chiyuv* to begin studying *hilchos Pesach*. After the *sicha*, the Rebbe began distributing *mashke* to several more individuals. Suddenly the Rebbe proclaimed, "וכל הפושט יד נותנים לו" (We give to all who stretch out their hand.) Hundreds of people began running toward the Rebbe's place, only increasing the mayhem. The tape-recorders and microphone broke, as everyone pushed and jumped toward the Rebbe, who was distributing *mashke* to all. The Rebbe announced that all should proceed in an orderly fashion<sup>9</sup> in one direction, without pushing. People were extremely overwhelmed from the great *giluyim*, some were inebriated to the point that they jumped onto the table, one on top of another... It was miraculous that the elder Chassidim present managed to get away in time...

All the while, the Rebbe stood and joyously poured *mashke* for each and every individual. When one bottle would finish, another was immediately handed to the Rebbe. Eventually, the Rebbe took his *siddur* and recited the *bracha acharona*. The Rebbe then advanced—ever so slowly, as a path was being cleared—toward the exit, while Chassidim sang *Ki V'Simcha*.

When the Rebbe reached the stairs of the platform, a wall of people suddenly collapsed, Rabbi Hodakov (who had also taken *mashke*) amongst them. Lots of pushing ensued until they all managed to get up and clear the way. The Rebbe left the shul at 3:30 a.m.

As the Rebbe was walking out, one individual shouted: “Rebbe, Rebbe, you were going to give me... Rebbe, don’t forget about me!” To that, the Rebbe smiled.

After witnessing such *giluyim* from the Rebbe at the *farbrengen*, the Chassidim sang and danced with great joy. It was an amazing sight to behold.

The Rebbe entered his room for a brief while, after which he headed toward the front door to leave. Upon exiting his room, the Rebbe noticed Sholom Ber Wolpo standing near the door with a bottle of *mashke*. The Rebbe took it from him and began distributing it. When word reached the downstairs shul that the Rebbe was again distributing *mashke* outside, everyone ran out. The pushing was extremely intense. When someone attempted to halt the pushing, the Rebbe remarked “*Ohn hispailus...*” (calm the excitement). The Rebbe also announced repeatedly that those who already received once won’t gain anything by receiving again.

Upon seeing another individual who was attempting to stop the pushing, the Rebbe asked, “Why are you here? You already received.” When he answered that he was halting the pushing, the Rebbe retorted, “Whether you’re helping prevent the pushing or not I’m not sure; one thing I do know is that you’re taking up space.”

When one person came by, the Rebbe mentioned that he had already given him. When he answered that there was a hole in his cup and it emptied, the Rebbe responded, “What will it help if this cup also has a hole?”<sup>10</sup>

Another *bochur* asked the Rebbe for *mashke* for his friend. The Rebbe asked him why his friend hadn’t come to receive the *mashke* himself. The *bochur* answered that he didn’t want to push. To that

the Rebbe replied, “If he doesn’t want to push—he can’t get.” Many individuals utilized the *eis ratzon* to request *brachos* for their personal needs.

The *chalukah* continued near the car in which the Rebbe was going to go home, lasting close to an hour. The Rebbe announced several times that order should be maintained. The Rebbe motioned that the line should go in one direction, and when he saw someone coming from the other direction, the Rebbe instructed him to go to the back of the line. When one person pushed another’s cup, the Rebbe exclaimed that if so, no one will receive; it must proceed in an orderly fashion. Meanwhile, people had climbed onto the Rebbe’s car to ensure that they would receive.

When the Rebbe noticed the flash of a camera, he asked who was taking pictures. Rabbi Groner answered that he had confiscated the camera, but the Rebbe persisted, “Who is it?” Upon hearing his name, the Rebbe asked: “Has he at least received *l’chaim*?” Adding, “We’re distributing *mashke*... [the pictures are] *chitzoniyus mamosh*. (Is this why the *neshamas* descended to the world? –according to one diary.)”

Amidst the great pandemonium, the springs on the car busted completely, due to the intense pushing and people jumping onto the car. Part of the roof also caved in, and the door wouldn’t open. Reb Mordechai Rivkin brought his car to take the Rebbe home. When Reb Leibel Mochkin entered the car, people tried getting him out. The Rebbe, however, agreed that he should come along. The Rebbe also told Rabbi Hodakov that he may enter the car, so as not to be pushed. At 4:30, the Rebbe left 770, with Rabbi Krinsky driving. Rabbi Rivkin also rode along.

Many who were present followed the car while singing *Ki V’Simcha*. When the car disappeared from their view, they began dancing in the street.

As the car pulled up to the Rebbe’s house, a crowd of about thirty people was waiting outside. When the Rebbe reached his house they began singing. Others tried to hush them. The Rebbe, however, encouraged the singing with a wave of his hand. The Rebbe ascended the stairs, and rummaged through his pockets for the key. He then opened the door, and immediately continued to encourage the singing with great joy. Reb Leibel Mochkin made a somersault in front of the house, and the Rebbe continued to encourage the crowd, with the singing of *Nyet Nyet Nikavo*.



THE REBBE CONTINUES DISTRIBUTING MASHKE OUTSIDE AFTER THE FARBRENGEN.



When Rabbi Krinsky saw that someone was trying to give the Rebbe a bottle of *mashke*, he attempted to stop it. The Rebbe, however, took the *mashke*, and began distributing. (This was Rabbi Parshan's bottle, which the Rebbe had given him at the *farbrenge* to distribute; half in New York and half in Toronto. He still had half a bottle in his hand at the house. The Rebbe told him that he can still distribute in Toronto, because he will return the remainder.)

Reb Heishke Gansburg *bentched* the Rebbe with *gezunt*, to which the Rebbe responded, "You as well, and all of yours..." Rabbi Parshan wished the Rebbe "*Iber a yohr veiter*" (May you continue next year, and further). The Rebbe answered, "And with an addition."

At the end of the *chalukah*, the Rebbe asked, "Why is there pushing? It's a small crowd..." He also reiterated that people shouldn't take twice, as that won't add anything.

This all lasted around fifteen minutes, after which the Rebbe entered his home. Chassidim continued to sing and celebrate until the morning.

When the Rebbe entered the shul for *krias haTorah* the following day, Nosson Gurary approached the Rebbe, stating that he had not received *mashke* the night before. The Rebbe answered that according to *halacha*, it is forbidden to drink before *krias haTorah*,<sup>11</sup> and he should come afterward. Following *krias haTorah*, the Rebbe took a bottle from his room and gave *l'chaim* to Nosson and another individual. As today was the latter's birthday, the Rebbe *bentched* him with "a successful year *b'gashmiyus uv'ruchniyus*."

Following *Mincha*, several people approached the Rebbe with a bottle, saying that they hadn't received *mashke*. The Rebbe replied that they can pour for each other, as Purim is already over, and we don't say *V'al Hanissim*.<sup>12</sup>

When the same individual entered *yechidus* that night, the Rebbe told him, "Forgive me for not distributing *mashke* this afternoon; I was worried that they would turn over the shul..."

When someone wrote a note to the Rebbe saying that he hadn't received, the Rebbe responded that he should learn Torah diligently and persistently, and *talmud Torah k'neged kulam*. ①

1. Earlier in the day, the Rebbe had given twelve bottles of *mashke* to the organizers to distribute at the *farbrenge*.
2. These were later edited by the Rebbe and included in *Likkutei Sichos* vol. 21, p. 206.
3. Another version: "Soon you will begin..."
4. See the Rebbe's letter to the Friediker Rebbe, printed in *Reshimos* booklet 138.
5. Another version: "He'll immediately get worked up..."
6. According to another version, the Rebbe asked about Reb Zalman Duchman as well.
7. *Melachim* 2, 4:3.
8. See Rambam, *Hilchos Megillah v'Chanukah* 2:16, and *Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim* 694:3.
9. Not all at once, paraphrasing the topic of the fourteenth *sicha*—whether all-at once (בבת אחת) works when one-after-another is required.
10. In Yiddish: וואס וועט דאס העלפן אז אויך דער קאפ האט אין זיך א לאך? In Yiddish, the word "*kup*" means head. Another version: A broken vessel won't hold anything.
11. Another version: It has no place before davening.
12. Another version: "It's still Purim, although we don't recite *V'al Hanissim*."

