

מוקדש לחיזוק ההתקשרות
לכ"ק אדמו"ר
בקשר עם יום הבהיר י"א ניסן

נדפס ע"י
הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל
וזוגתו מרת חנה שיינא
ומשפחתם ח' מושקא, לוי יצחק, רבקה
מאריאשא, ברכה, ויקותיאל זוסמאן
שיחיו
גנזבורג

שלוחי כ"ק אדמו"ר
לטאראנטא, קאנאדא.

Nichoach

*Preserving
Chabad Music
for Posterity*

The Nichoach records and tapes have been the background music in the homes of anash for decades. The Rebbe was closely involved in the production of these records. We present our readers the story of this important production.¹



Avodas Hashem through Music

Music is an integral element of *avodas Hashem*, serving as the highest expression of the *neshama's* connection with Hashem since the birth of *am Yisrael*. After experiencing *krias yam suf*, the Yidden sang *Az Yashir* and the women even played musical instruments. Upon witnessing the miracles at Nachal Arnon, they once again expressed their thanksgiving to Hashem through song.

Sefer Tehillim is a compilation of the beautiful compositions of Dovid Hamelech—*Ne'im Zemiros Yisrael*—and all previous *tehillos v'tishbachos* dating back to Adam Harishon. They were all composed with *ruach hakodesh*.

One of the loftiest elements of the service in the *Beis Hamikdash* was the singing of the Levi'im that accompanied *avodas hakorbanos*. *Chazal* describe in detail the sophistication of the choir and the orchestra, which incorporated musical talents and instruments unheard of today. Chassidus explains that the music in the *Beis Hamikdash* played an essential role in the *giluy haShechina* that was accomplished through *avodas hakorbanos*.

After the destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash* and the *galus* that followed, the limitations on music instituted by *Chazal* applied mainly to regular celebrations, whereas mitzvah occasions (such as *tefillah* and weddings) continued to feature the

spiritual depth and beauty of Jewish melody.

During the Middle Ages, the G-dly art of Jewish melody continued to thrive in all Jewish communities, but as the pain and suffering of *galus* intensified, the light of Jewish music dimmed.

The Renaissance of Jewish Music through Chassidus

The revelation of *Toras Hachassidus* through the Baal Shem Tov breathed new life into *am Yisrael* and its music, which had remained dormant for generations. Chassidus emphasized the importance of serving Hashem with joy, and music plays an integral role in banishing depression and inspiring the heart and mind.

From the dawn of Chassidus, the Baal Shem Tov and his *talmidim* composed various *niggunim* and *tenuos* (soulful movements). Greatest among the *talmidim* who engaged in *neginah* were Reb Yechiel Michel Zlotchever, Reb Levi Yitzchok Berdichever, the Shpuler Zeide and others.

Chabad Neginah

With the revelation of Chassidus Chabad, an inner dimension of *neginah* began to develop as well. The ten *niggunim* composed by the Alter Rebbe—most prominent among them the *Niggun Arba Bavos* (four

stanzas), known simply as “The Alter Rebbe’s Niggun”—serve as a blueprint for Chabad *neginah* throughout the generations.

In addition to the *niggunim* composed by the Rebbeim, every generation of Chassidus featured its own cadre of Chassidim who were excellent *baalei neginah*. A melody accompanied every part of *avodas Hashem* and there were different *niggunim* for learning, davening, *hisbonenus*, *farbrengens*, and other occasions. Each one a unique expression of the intellectual or emotional stage of the Chossid.

On Simchas Torah 5660 (תר”ס), the Rebbe Rashab instructed that Chabad *neginah* be learned and developed

in an organized fashion in Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim.² There were set times for the *bochurim* to learn and sing *niggunim* (such as prior to the Rebbe Rashab saying a *maamar* and on Shabbos after *Mincha*). Ultimately, the Tomim Reb Noteh Paharer organized a proper system of *neginah* in the *yeshiva*.

Chevras Nichoach

The Communist revolution and the Holocaust ushered in an era of unprecedented upheaval and destruction in the Jewish world and in Chabad life. Although the Frierdiker Rebbe escaped the Nazis, *ym”s*, and established the capital of Lubavitch in America, the majority of Chassidim were physically disconnected and



REB SHMUEL ZALMANOV.



The 200-year heritage of Chabad neginah was in danger of extinction.

This was a revolutionary and monumental task since throughout the history of Chabad, until recent years,⁷ Chabad *niggunim* were never transcribed in sheet music. Their very nature defies the classical rules and construct of music, as they are all expressions of the soul and rife with subtle nuance.

Sefer Haniggunim

Rabbi Zalmanov first set about collecting and organizing all the Chabad *niggunim* known to Chassidim. Drawing on his phenomenal memory and several other sources⁸ he succeeded in collecting 175 *niggunim*. A choir of Chassidim (including some who had learned in the city of Lubavitch) sang each *niggun* as would be done at a Chassidisher *farbrengen*, and the famous *chazan* Yehoshua Weisser transcribed the *niggunim* in musical notes.

The members of this choir were Reb Yochanan Gordon, Reb Berel Rivkin, Reb Shlomo Aharon Kazarnovsky, Reb Berel Chaskind, Reb Shmuel Kantaroff, Reb Shimon Leib Greenberg, Reb Binyomin Levitin, Reb Dovber Ushpal, and Reb Mendel Tenenbaum.

Sefer Haniggunim is divided into three sections. The first section is reserved for *niggunim* that were composed by the Rebbeim and are reflective of higher realms. Each nuance is accurate and specific (the ten *niggunim* of the Alter Rebbe, *Yemin Hashem*, etc.).

The second section contains *niggunim* that were composed by the giants of the early generations of

faced unbearable persecution. The 200-year heritage of Chabad *neginah* was in danger of extinction.

In the spring of 5704, the Frieddiker Rebbe instructed the *hanhala* of Tomchei Temimim in America to organize a group of “*talmidim menagnim*” based on their musical capabilities. Three times a week they should learn Chabad *niggunim* and sing them during the *seudas Shabbos* and after *Mincha* before and after *chazaras Dach*.³

During the summer of that year, the Frieddiker Rebbe appointed

the famous *baal menagen* Reb Shmuel Zalmanov to lead the newly established organization called “Nichoach” (an acronym of *Niggunei Chassidei Chabad*) with the goal of publishing all Chabad *niggunim* in musical notes.⁴

In subsequent letters to *hanhalas* Nichoach, the Frieddiker Rebbe gives several more instructions with regard to the collection of the *niggunim* and their publication,⁵ and requests that several *niggunim* be recorded with a choir and to register the proper copyright.⁶





Chassidus (Reb Michel Zlotchever's *niggun*, *Kol Bazaar* of the Shpoler Zeide, etc.) and *niggunim* that were beloved to the Rebbeim (*Rostover Niggun*, the *Beinoni*, etc.).

The diverse repertoire of Chabad *niggunim* for all occasions can be found in the seven subsections of the third section.

Musical notes of the *taamei hamikra* for *krias HaTorah*, *haftarah*, *Yomim Nora'im* and *Megillas Esther* are at the end of the *sefer*.

As an introduction to the *sefer*, Rabbi Zalmanov penned an original anthology of the rich history of music in Yiddishkeit in general and Chabad *neginah* in particular. In addition, there is a beautiful collection of the Frieddiker Rebbe's *sichos* on the topic of Chabad *neginah*, as well as a detailed description of each *niggun*.

Sefer Haniggunim Volume One was published in the year 5708—dedicated to the 250th anniversary of Chai Elul 5458 (ג'ת"ת)—the birth of the Baal

Shem Tov, and the 150th anniversary of Yud-Tes Kislev 5599 (תקנ"ט)—the release of the Alter Rebbe from prison.

As there were still many more *niggunim* to be collected and preserved, the Frieddiker Rebbe instructed Chevrus Nichoach to commence work on a second volume.⁹ During this time many Chassidim escaped from behind the Iron Curtain, settling in the United States, Eretz Yisrael, and throughout the world. Through various modes of communication, many more *niggunim* were collected and transcribed and 35 more *niggunim* were published in the second volume in honor of Yud Shevat 5717. (This was meant to be the first of several installments that would comprise the entirety of the second volume of Sefer Haniggunim, but this did not come to fruition for various reasons.¹⁰)

In his later years, after immigrating to Eretz Yisrael, Rabbi Zalmanov continued to collect Chabad *niggunim*

Sing a Sample

During the *farbrengen* of Yud-Beis Tammuz 5721, the Rebbe gave a bottle of *mashke* to Rabbi Zalmanov in honor of the upcoming release of the second record of Nichoach and said: "Perhaps sing something from the new record—a song. The custom in America is that before you sell merchandise, you provide a sample. Give a sample! Announce that this is a sample, and [the record] will cost such-and-such..."

Rabbi Zalmanov made the announcements as instructed and sang the *niggun Ata Vechartanu*.¹⁴

During the *farbrengen* of Motzai Shabbos Bereishis 5739, the Rebbe said: "Since a new volume of Nichoach was recently released, which includes the *niggun Hamavdil Bein Kodesh U'chol*,¹⁵ it would be appropriate to sing it now."¹⁶

Rabbi Moshe Teleshevsky led the crowd in singing the *niggun*.

to be published in a third volume, and presided over the musical notation of 137 more *niggunim*. After his passing in 5735, the Rebbe constantly encouraged the completion of the project in the best way possible, and Sefer Haniggunim Volume Three was finally published in honor of Yud Shevat 5740.

The Records

Following the publishing of the second volume of Sefer Haniggunim in 5717, the Rebbe instructed Chevrus Nichoach to begin producing musical records of Chabad *niggunim*. This was an entirely new frontier for Chassidim. No one in Lubavitch at the



AN EVENING WITH CHABAD CONCERT IN ERETZ YISRAEL, CIRCA 5730.

time had any experience in this field, as Lubavitcher Chassidim had never recorded music before.

Mr. Velvel Pasternak, a musicologist and producer with experience in arranging Chassidic music, was hired to shepherd the project to fruition, arranging the compositions for the professional musicians and the ringers who would sing the harmonies. Whereas previous Chassidic music records were recorded by choirs of professional cantors, the records of Nichoach were the first to be recorded by a choir of Chassidim.

The Rebbe was closely involved in the production of the records by reviewing the list of *niggunim* selected for each record. Rabbi Zalmanov would enter the Rebbe's room and play the first drafts of the recordings while the Rebbe continued learning. The Rebbe would then provide commentary on the tones and nuances of the *niggunim* so that they would be produced in the most authentic way possible.¹¹

Rabbi Moshe Herson was a member of the Nichoach choir in some of the early records. "The Rebbe would sometimes ask Rabbi Zalmanov who was singing the various solos. Upon hearing that I sang the solo of a Niggun Simcha in volume 2, the Rebbe commented: 'Moshe Herson? I did not know he was a *menagen!*' In fact, at

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several of the Rebbe's *farbrengens* we sang *niggunim* as a choir as well."

The Rebbe commented on Reb Shamshon Charitonow's rendition of *Stav Ya Pitu*:¹² "He sings it exactly the way I heard it."¹³

In 5720, the very first record of Chabad *niggunim* was produced, receiving rave reviews from *adas haChassidim* and others as well. The *London Jewish Chronicle* proclaimed it to be the finest recordings of authentic Jewish music ever made. Rabbi Zalmanov produced six more Nichoach records over the next ten years with the professional guidance of Mr. Shlomo Silbermintz.

An Evening With Chabad

One of the earliest programs of *hafatza* organized by Tzach in Eretz Yisrael was "Erev Chabad"—An Evening with Chabad—in the numerous *kibbutzim* and settlements throughout the land. Each group of Chassidim participating in these events consisted of a gifted orator, a *baal menagen*, and sometimes a full choir of Chassidim conducted by Rabbi Yosef Marton and a Klezmer band.

Presented as cultural and folksy events, they served as a powerful tool in bringing the light of Yiddishkeit and Chassidus to thousands of Yidden. The evening of Chassidisher *niggunim* interspersed with stories and messages of Chassidus had a profound and lasting impact on the participants.

In honor of the twentieth anniversary of the Rebbe's *nesius*, Tzach arranged a grand Erev Chabad in the prestigious Heichal Hatarbut, the largest concert hall in Tel Aviv, during the spring of 5730 with 3,000 participants. Prior to the event, the famous recording company CBS

Records International determined that Chassidic music records would sell nicely and they partnered with Lubavitch to record this event live.

A similar event was held in Binyanei Ha'uma, the International Convention Center in Yerushalayim, during that summer, and was recorded professionally by CBS as well. These two records were later included in the set as volumes 9 and 10.¹⁷

"Niggunei Chabad" as one of the 71 Mosdos

During the historic *farbrengen* of Yud-Alef Nissan 5732, the Rebbe announced the establishment of 71 new *mosdos* throughout the next year, in honor of *shnas hashivim*. A special committee was established to oversee the campaign (known as the *Vaad Ayin Aleph Mosdos*). The Rebbe instructed them to create an organization called "Niggunei Chabad" to produce a special record of *niggunim* in honor of *shnas hashivim* under the directorship of Rabbi Moshe Teleshevsky.

The Rebbe selected the *niggunim* for this record and agreed to have a recording of himself singing *Tzama Lcha Nafshi* at a *farbrengen* included as well. In addition to the four *niggunim* that were composed for the Rebbe's *kapitel* of that year and several other *niggunim*, there are three *niggunim* that originate from Sefardic communities (*Atem Shalom*, *Ozreini Keil Chai*, and *Adon Haselichos*) that were sung on various occasions at the Rebbe's *farbrengens*. This record was later included in the set as volume 11.

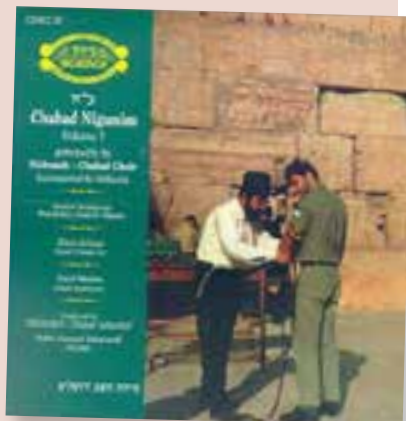
Gift for the Participants

After Rabbi Zalmanov's passing, the Rebbe instructed Rabbi Moshe Teleshevsky to continue producing the records under the auspices of



Following are several anecdotal examples of the Rebbe's involvement in the production of the Nichoach records.

A photo of *mitvza tefillin* at the Kosel is the cover jacket for Nichoach volume 7, based on the Rebbe's instruction. The first *niggun* on the record is *Prazos Teisheiv Yerushalayim*.



The list for Nichoach volume 8 included the *niggun Utzu Eitza*. The Rebbe noted that including this *niggun* was "essential." See accompanying photo.

The Rebbe included the *niggun Velokim Malki Mikedem*, which had been composed in connection with Yud Aleph Nissan 5735 on the list for Nichoach volume 8. See accompanying photo.

The *niggun Shalosh T'nuos* on Nichoach volume 11 was originally accompanied only by a piano. The Rebbe instructed to include a violin as well.



As Nichoach volume 14 was nearing completion, the Rebbe instructed that two recordings of Reb Michael Dvorkin²¹ singing Reb Michel Zlotchever's *niggun* and a *voloch* be included. The Rebbe rejected all suggestions to add any musical background to the recordings whatsoever. The producers removed two other *niggunim* to include these important recordings.

the "Vaad 71 Mosdos" and Kehos. The Rebbe was very involved in the selection of the *niggunim* and even edited the covers and the descriptions of the *niggunim* on the records that followed.

"I would write a *duch* to the Rebbe after every day of working on the records and I would receive answers the next day," Rabbi Teleshevsky recalled. "I would give the Rebbe the first copy of each new record and the *bochurim* would see the Rebbe taking it home that evening."¹⁸

Rabbi Sholom Horowitz sang in the Nichoach choir for the later records. "It was a big *zechus* to participate in the production of the records. We knew that the Rebbe was underwriting the entire project and that the Rebbe listened to every record before it was released. At times, *bochurim* were even able to hear the Nichoach records playing in the Rebbe's room."

"We would spend many nights rehearsing in Rabbi Heishke Gansburg's home and then numerous hours in the recording studio in Manhattan. I remember how Rabbi Eli Lipsker was extremely involved and guided us throughout."

"I heard that the Rebbe once told a *bochur* in *yechidus* that a Chassidisher *bochur* needs to listen to Nichoach."

During this time period, six more Nichoach records were released. The Rebbe would set a specific date for the release of each record. Typically each record was a production of several months. However, Chassidim worked around the clock to produce Nichoach volume 8 in a very short time at the Rebbe's behest.

On Friday, 28 Adar, shortly after Rabbi Teleshevsky submitted this record to the Rebbe in honor of Yud-Alef Nissan 5737, he was informed that the Rebbe wants to see him in *Gan Eiden Hatachton*. The Rebbe asked him how many people participated in the production of this particular

“We knew that the Rebbe was underwriting the entire project and that the Rebbe listened to every record before it was released.”

record, and then proceeded to give him copies of *Kuntres Ahavas Yisrael*, single dollar bills, and a note for each of the seventy participants as an appreciation for their hard work. Upon giving him the first *kuntres* the Rebbe said, “This is for your wife.”

The note reads:¹⁹

נת' ות"ח ת"ח ביותר כולל גם על הזריזות
 בחפץ וכו' ובוודאי ימסור כ"ז גם לכאו"א
 מהמשתתפים בצירוף קונטרס אהב"י ודבר
 בעתו בחודש דבריא (מזלי) ותקוף מזלי דבני"
 ומרבין בו בשמחה אזכיר עה"צ.

“It was received. Many thanks— also for the speedy work and dedication, etc. You will certainly convey this [message] to each one of the participants as well, along with the *Kuntres Ahavas Yisrael*. It is an appropriate time; the month [of Adar] when the *mazal* of the Jewish people is healthy and strong, and a time when we increase in joy. I will mention this at the Ohel.

Transforming the World through Neginah

On Shavuot 5721 the Rebbe articulated the ultimate purpose of *Nichoach*.²⁰

“The purpose of every aspect of *Nichoach*—the musical notes, the singing, and the orchestra—is for it to be utilized in bringing the wellsprings of Chassidus to the furthest reaches. To illuminate the world through *neginah* so that it can reach the essence of the *neshamah*. By executing this mission properly, they will manage to ‘submerge’ and transform the world into the wellsprings of Chassidus.” **1**

1. In the preparation of this article we were assisted by Rabbis Zalman Baumgarten, Avrohom Browd, Avrohom Charitonow,

Sholom Charitonow, Moshe Herson, Sholom Horowitz, Mendel Lipsker, Yossi Lipsker, Yitzchok Marton, Yitzchok Naparstek, Chaim Leima Teleshevsky, Michael Seligson, and the *Sefer Shaarei Hanegina* by Rabbi Zusha Wolf. זכות הרבים תלוי בהם.

2. *Hatomim* vol. 2, p. 482.
3. *Igros Kodesh Admur Harayatz* vol. 8, p. 304.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 338.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 539.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 559.
7. Several years earlier, the Friediker Rebbe requested several *baalei neginah* to transcribe *niggunim* in musical notes. See *ibid.* vol. 3, p. 444-448. Vol. 4, p. 170.
8. Mr. Meir Shimon Geshuri, a prominent researcher of Jewish and Chassidic music living in Eretz Yisrael at the time, was in contact with the Friediker Rebbe regarding his collection of *niggunim*. See *ibid.* Vol. 4, p. 170. Vol. 8, pp. 403 and 539. The *bochurim* learning in Shanghai, China, at the time sent several *niggunim*. *Ibid.* vol. 9, p. 89.
9. *Ibid.* vol. 10, p. 105.
10. See introduction to *Sefer Haniggunim* vol. 3, p. 10.
11. Told over by Rabbi Tuvia Bloy as heard from Rabbi Zalmanov. *Heichal Haneginah*, p. 357.
12. *Nichoach* vol. 4.
13. Rabbi Sholom Charitonow heard this from his father, Reb Shamshon.
14. *Toras Menachem* vol. 31, p. 126. *Living Torah* Program 541.
15. *Nichoach* vol. 15.
16. *Sichos Kodesh* 5739, p. 218.
17. See *Yemei Temimim* vol. 4.
18. *Kfar Chabad Magazine* Issue 794.
19. Rabbi Horowitz provided *Derher* with the text of this note. He also relates that the Rebbe once told the producers that the production should be “גך און גוט” - quick and good.”
20. *Toras Menachem* vol. 31, p. 47.
21. To read more about these recordings, see *Derher* Sivan 5776.

