



לע"נ

התינוק ישראל נח ע"ה

בן יבלחט"א

הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל שי

נלב"ע אדר"ח תמוז ה'תשס"ה

ת'נ'צ'ב'ה'

נדפס ע"י הוריו

הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל

וזוגתו מרת חנה ומשפחתם שיחיו

קארנפעלד



Third Visit to Gan Yisroel

15 TAMMUZ 5720*



Camp Gan Yisroel was established at the Rebbe's behest. Before its inaugural summer, the Rebbe visited the campgrounds in Ellenville, New York on 16 Tammuz 5716*. After touring the property, the Rebbe held a farbrengen. The following year, the Rebbe again paid a visit to camp, this time located in the newly-purchased grounds in Swan Lake, New York, and held a *chanukas habayis* farbrengen. (For more on its founding, as well as a description of the first visit,

see *In the Rebbe's Reshus*, Derher Av 5775.) This article about the third visit is based on the account published in *Sefer B'Neos Deshe*.

SHNAS HAMASAYIM

Gan Yisroel was expanding from year to year, becoming known as "the best camp in the mountains" because of its excellence both *b'gashmius ub'ruchnius*. Each year, the number of campers grew, reaching several hundred in 5720*.

The Rebbe's last visit to camp had taken place three years earlier, in honor of the *chanukas habayis*, in 5717*. Since then, the Rebbe had not visited.

On 15 Sivan 5720*, only days before camp's commencement, Rabbi Avraham Shemtov had a *yechidus* with the Rebbe (for a personal matter). During the *yechidus*, the Rebbe intimated his wish to visit camp this year, saying: "I was thinking of traveling to camp. This is connected with the *shnas hamasayim* of the Baal Shem Tov [200th anniversary of his *histalkus*, on Shavuos 5520*]."

When Avraham Levitansky and his parents were in *yechidus* several days before Yud- Beis Tammuz, they too were informed of the upcoming trip. The Rebbe inquired as to their son's summer plans, to which his father answered that he would be travelling home to Chicago to rest. Upon hearing this, the Rebbe revealed: "I'm not sure if he knows that I'm thinking of traveling to camp. He'll be upset if he misses it." Obviously, they decided right then and there that their son would attend Gan Yisroel.

Similarly, on Erev Shabbos, 13 Tammuz, when Reb Avraham Parshan of Toronto was in *yechidus*, the Rebbe inquired as to his return trip. When he replied that he was leaving that same day, the Rebbe suggested that he stay until after Shabbos, because "something" may happen on Sunday.

Indeed, on Motzei Shabbos, 14 Tammuz, the Rebbe officially announced that the following day he would be visiting camps Gan Yisroel and Emunah. Many Chassidim organized that very night and traveled to Gan Yisroel in Swan Lake.

THE TRIP AND KABBOLAS PONIM

In the afternoon hours of Sunday, 15 Tammuz, the Rebbe left 770 to visit the two summer camps. Seated in the car were also Rabbis Kazarnovsky and Hodakov, Reb Shmuel Levitin, Rabbi Leibel Groner, and Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky who drove.

A short time after leaving, they stopped for *tefillas haderech* on the New York State Thruway, after the Tappan Zee Bridge. The Rebbe got out of the car and washed his hands (with a faucet that was there). Reb Shmuel Levitin approached the Rebbe and offered him to eat something (a candy), but the Rebbe declined, saying that "it is unnecessary."¹ The Rebbe proceeded to recite *tefillas haderech* while standing.

During the two and a half hour ride, the Rebbe read the *sefer* "Reb Yisroel Baal Shem Tov" [Kehos

5720*], which was recently printed in honor of *shnas hamasayim*.

Upon their arrival at 4:00 p.m., the entire camp, as well as the large crowd that had come especially for the occasion, came out to greet the Rebbe. The grounds were adorned with signs proclaiming "ברוך הבא" and "יחי המלך אדונינו מורינו ורבינו שליט"א." The children were lined up in orderly fashion by bunks.

The Rebbe exited the car, stood up on the running board, and vigorously encouraged the singing of "Ufaratzta" with the wave of his hand.

TOUR OF CAMP

The Rebbe then walked through the entire campgrounds, visiting the buildings and sports fields, escorted by the camp directorship—Rabbi Yossi Weinbaum (director); Moshe Lazar (head counselor); Asher Heber; Simcha Bunim Piekarski (assistant head counselor), and Rabbi Avraham Shemtov (general director).

The Rebbe had requested for all the doors to be open, so that he could get into each room. Indeed,



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PINNY LEW

the Rebbe visited every single room without exception! When they got to the bunkhouses, each camper stood at attention by his bed. The Rebbe mentioned the need for sinks in each area, for *netilas yadayim*.

Upon reaching one bunkhouse's corridor after passing through all the rooms, the Rebbe noted that three rooms did not have mezuzos, and pointed out each door.

All the bunks were clean and organized, and this pleased the Rebbe very much. Upon reaching the watchman's room, however, the Rebbe was surprised to find a closed door, and said he'd like to take a peek. The walls were splotted with paint, and the words "*zecher lechurban*" were painted on the ceiling. Upon seeing the lettering the Rebbe smiled and remarked: "Why '*zecher lechurban*?!' '*Zecher lemikdash*!'"

When the Rebbe expressed his wish to go down to the basement of one of the buildings, the staff explained that no one goes down there. Nonetheless, the Rebbe persisted. After going down the Rebbe reasoned that because a child may wander down there, it's important that everything is safe, including the stairs which needed repair.

All throughout the visit, the Rebbe showed much interest in every detail. Upon reaching the monkey bars, the Rebbe asked what exactly they were for.

The Rebbe showed a special interest in everything related to the children's comfort and

wellbeing. Upon seeing the swings and slides, the Rebbe mentioned that it may be a good idea to add more such playgrounds.

After proceeding to the lake, the Rebbe pointed out the need for proper safety precautions, including competent lifeguards.

When passing the canteen, the Rebbe glanced at its managers, Rabbis Shmuel Marmulsteyn and Menachem Lipszyc. On the door hung a sign that read "Money is the root of all evil, so leave your evil here." When the Rebbe read it, he smiled, but then remarked that it is not appropriate.

The Rebbe inspected every area, even those not designated for use, and exuded a pleased expression throughout the visit. While there, the Rebbe asserted that although he never leaves Brooklyn, he visited camp because it is a part of 770!

FARBRENGEN

After touring the campgrounds, the Rebbe entered the shul and proceeded to its side room, where he changed into a silk *kapota*. The Rebbe then sat down at the center of the table on the stage and washed his hands for a *seuda*. The campers sat in the middle of the shul while the rest of the crowd stood on the sides.

The Rebbe said *l'chaim*, and requested that bottles of soda be brought for the campers so they could say *l'chaim* as well. A joyous *niggun* was sung,

during which the campers said *l'chaim*. The Rebbe then began the special farbrengen.

At the beginning of the *sicha*, after noting that someone would probably repeat it in English, the Rebbe stressed that his words are really intended for all Jewish children, wherever they may be, and said: "I will owe thanks to those who relay this to Jewish children wherever they are."

The Rebbe addressed camp's name, "Gan Yisroel," explaining that one of the reasons behind choosing this name was that it's the name of the Baal Shem Tov, and connected this with *shnas hamasayim* from his *histalkus*. "And being that a *manhig Yisroel's neshama* remains with his students," the Rebbe continued, "when we mention a Torah that the Baal Shem tov taught, and we follow in his ways, he is with each and every one of us, and assists everyone in adhering to the path he set forth, until the coming of Moshiach."

The Rebbe paused for a moment, turned to the camp directors, and said: "Perhaps you should give them something, they should say *l'chaim*. It's too much talk for them at one time." A moment later the Rebbe asked: "Can I continue? It's not too much for one time?" When someone answered in the affirmative, the Rebbe smiled and said "I'm not addressing you, I'm addressing them [the campers]!"

The Rebbe continued farbrenging, relating at great length a story about each of the Rabbeim, starting from the Baal Shem Tov. Each story was connected to a saying or event from the life of the Baal Shem Tov, and the Rebbe also explained, in simple terms, the lessons to be learned from these in *avodas Hashem*.

After this portion of the *sicha* there was a short break, during which the assembled sang "Ufaratzta," while the Rebbe energetically encouraged the singing with the

wave of his hand. The Rebbe then continued the *sicha*.

At the conclusion of this lengthy *sicha*, the Rebbe requested of the campers to sing a *niggun*, saying: "They should sing a *niggun* now, then they should be allowed to leave." The children sang a joyous *niggun* (the one sung today to the words "We Want Moshiach Now"), in middle of which the Rebbe began encouraging the singing, moving both of his hands in rapid motion. Moments later, the Rebbe stood up and began dancing in his place with great joy. The campers then left the farbrengen.

FARBRENGEN'S CONCLUSION AND BIRKAS HAMAZON

The next *sicha* began with an explanation on a *possuk* from the *parsha* "אראנו ולא עתה אשורנו ולא קרוב" דרך כוכב מיעקב וקם שבט מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל.²⁴ The assembled, who seem to have assumed that it was a *maamar kein sicha*, rose to their feet. Seeing this, the Rebbe paused and said: "You can sit, it's not a *maamar*."

After the crowd was seated, the Rebbe continued the *sicha*, describing fascinating things about the Melech HaMoshiach (who is alluded to in the word "שבט," as the Targum explains), who will rise ("קם") by means of spreading the wellsprings of "ישראל"—the Baal Shem Tov. The Rebbe said that this is "because the Baal Shem Tov's *inyan* was the beginning of revealing Moshiach's אור, this being



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'יפוצו מעיינותיך חוצה', which brings Moshiach *lemata me'asara tefachim*."

Following the *sicha*, the assembled sang a *niggun hisvaadus*. The Rebbe then requested for the *niggun hachana* to be sung, after which he recited the *maamar* "זהה בזמן הזה," a continuation of the *maamar* said on Yud-Beis Tammuz.

After the *maamar*, "Shalosh Tenuos" was sung, after which the Rebbe began singing "Lchatchila Aribet." At the *niggun's* end, the campers had rejoined the *farbrengen*, and the Rebbe asked if they know the *niggun* "Ani Maamin." They began singing it in unison, with the Rebbe encouraging the singing with his hand motions.

The Rebbe then asked if there was a *minyán* who had washed for a *seuda*, in order to *bentch* with a *minyán*. When they began counting, the Rebbe again asked: "Are there ten?" and added with a smile: "Six and a half?"

The Rebbe then announced: "Who here washed? Someone must find out!" He then smiled and said, "They probably won't be *machshil* me with the *zimun*..."

After it was confirmed that ten had indeed washed, the Rebbe led the *bentching*. At each *bracha's* conclusion, the campers loudly chanted "Baruch Hu U'varuch Shemo" and "Amen."

DISTRIBUTION OF KOS SHEL BRACHA AND KUNTRES

At the end of *bentching*, after the Rebbe had drunk the cup of wine, he announced that he would be distributing *kos shel bracha* to all the children, and pointed out exactly where the line should be formed and that it should be in an orderly fashion. The campers all passed before the Rebbe as he poured a bit of wine into each of their cups. After each child received his wine, he made a "*Hagafen*"—while still standing before the Rebbe—tasted a bit of the wine and said *lchaim*, to which the Rebbe responded "*lchaim v'livracha*."

During the *chaluka*, which included the camp's counselors and administration as well as the rest of the crowd, and lasted about half an hour, "Keili Ata" was sung. Later on, the campers began singing several camp songs.

The Rebbe then distributed "Mincha Maariv" booklets to every camper and counselor. (This was its second edition, and the words "שנת המאתיים"

להסתלקות הבעש"ט ז"ל" were printed in blue on the cover.)

Mincha then took place, with the Rebbe davening in the place he sat in at the *farbrengen*.

After Mincha, the Rebbe handed dollar bills to the administrators to be distributed to the staff. The Rebbe then left camp, and continued to Camp Emunah.

CAMP EMUNAH

Following a short drive, the Rebbe arrived at Camp Emunah. Despite the late hour, the Rebbe held a short visit in the camp, inspecting only one bunkhouse. The Rebbe also spoke to the campers.

Standing on the porch of the main building, with all the girls present, lined up by bunk, the Rebbe said: "Today is the *yahrtzeit* of the Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh, Rabbi Chaim ibn Attar. This has a special connection to Jewish girls, for as is known, he wrote his commentary on Chumash based on the lessons he gave his daughters (he only had daughters) every Friday night. He would then transcribe his commentary, from which the Pirush Ohr Hachaim al haTorah was published. Each of you must learn from this that it's not enough to educate yourselves in the proper way, rather, you should also try and influence others."

At the visit's end, the Rebbe left a stack of dollar bills with the camp's director, Rabbi Yaakov Yehuda Hecht, in order to distribute them to the head staff.

A short while later, the Rebbe left camp, and traveled back to Brooklyn, arriving in 770 at about 2:00 a.m. **T**



THE MINCHA-MAARIV DISTRIBUTED BY THE REBBE DURING THE VISIT TO CAMP, 5720*.

1. See Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 110:6.
2. Balak 24:17.