

KEFAR CHABAD MAGAZINE

לזכות שלוחי כ"ק אדמו"ר  
למדינת אריזאנא, ובכל אתר ואתר

נדפס ע"י

הרה"ת ר' חיים שניאור זלמן  
וזוגתו מרת צפורה חי'  
ומשפחתם שיחיו  
לברטוב



# The Rebbe Is Victorious!

An interview with  
Rabbi Yitzchok  
Goldsmid

*Valley Stream, NY*

*The yom tov of Hei Teves* marks a defining moment in dor hashvi'i and has been joyously celebrated by Chassidim around the world for 33 years. The Federal court's ruling in favor of the Rebbe and Agudas Chassidei Chabad was, as the Rebbe explained, indicative of the removal of a heavenly kitrug on the Chabad movement and the Rebbe's work in spreading Yiddishkeit and Chassidus around the world.

In previous issues the historical and spiritual meaning of the yom tov was covered extensively, along with its relevance in our lives as Chassidim.

In honor of Hei Teves this year, we sat down for a "farbrenge" interview with one of the shluchim who experienced the entire saga as a bochur learning in 770 at the time, sharing with us a feeling of what it was like to live some of these historic moments in the Rebbe's presence.



**Let's start from the beginning. The public only found out about the theft of the *sefarim* when the Rebbe spoke about it during the farbrengen of Yud-Beis Tammuz, summer 5745\*. Where were you at the time?**

When the story broke, I was still in Eretz Yisroel. Of course we heard the Rebbe's words on live hookup, but I can't say I really understood the situation in all its details until later on.

A few months later, I came to New York with the "Kvutza" in Elul 5745\*. There was some talk of what was going on, and I began to learn more of the details of the story.

The first time I experienced anything that had to do with the story of the *sefarim* was on 4 Tishrei 5746\*. That evening, the Rebbe met

with the lawyers in preparation for the court case. A while later, on 28 Cheshvan, the Rebbe had a *yechidus* with the members of Agudas Chabad. The Rebbe vehemently dismissed the idea of any compromise whatsoever with the opposing side and instead asked them if they were saying Tehillim and fasting to avert this terrible situation. Slowly but surely we began to understand that the issue at hand was not merely a dispute over precious *sefarim* but a heavenly *gezeira* that the Rebbe was confronting.

The first time that I saw how much the whole issue bothered the Rebbe was on Shabbos, Yud Kislev at the farbrengen. In between the *sichos*, Rashag approached the Rebbe and asked about something related to the court case. Although I couldn't hear any part of the conversation, I was able to see very well. The Rebbe was talking passionately and moving his hands up and down. The pain on



the Rebbe's face was so obvious; it hit me then how much this really means to the Rebbe. I never saw the Rebbe as serious as he was during that conversation. Generally, when the Rebbe spoke at farbrengens his hands were under the table. To see the Rebbe so animated and so terribly pained with such intense hand motions made a strong impression on me, and allowed us a glimpse of how critical this issue is.

Then, throughout the month of Kislev, the Rebbe started to push for an increase in *simcha* to combat the “darkness.” The Rebbe's call was so forceful and strong, and alongside the pain, the Rebbe exuded an immense sense of *simcha*. We all understood that it was part of the battle against evil.

The truth is, it was a bit difficult to bring ourselves to rejoice. The atmosphere in 770 was raw and at times even somewhat frightening. When we heard that the Rebbe might have to testify in court, everyone realized how serious the situation is and we davened and fasted that such a *chilul Hashem* should not come to be, *chas v'shalom*.

For a full week, we woke up every day at 6:00 in the morning and recited the entire Tehillim. The situation was serious.



A NOTE DATED WINTER 5746 CIRCULATED AMONG THE BOCHURIM ENCOURAGING THEM TO UNDERTAKE HACHLATOS TOVOS IN CONNECTION WITH THE COURT CASE.

But at the same time, we were increasing in *simcha* in every possible way. We farbrenged often. We started singing every time the Rebbe came in and out of shul—something that was not done at all before that time.

When the Rebbe used to go home after Maariv, we often continued the dancing



outside 770 for a while. The Rebbe wanted *simcha* and we were determined to fulfill his wish.

One of the people who had a great impact on us and helped us understand what was going on was our *mashpia*, Reb Shlomo Zarchi. Later, when the court case began, he would go to the court house every day to see and hear the proceedings. He sat with us and had long conversations, explaining how important this is to the Rebbe and how critical the situation is.

Looking back, it feels as though throughout that time, we developed a personal connection with the Rebbe. Living through a period of time watching the Rebbe go to the Ohel every day, and staying there for so long, hours at a time, and coming back so late; all these things made a great impact on us. All we wanted was that whatever the Rebbe wished should be fulfilled and that the Rebbe should be happy with no more pain and *agmas nefesh*.

I remember how anxious we felt on the morning of Yud-Gimmel Kislev, when the court was going to determine whether the Rebbe would have to testify. It felt like Tisha B'Av. The atmosphere was so serious. Then, all of a sudden we received the news that "*Didan*

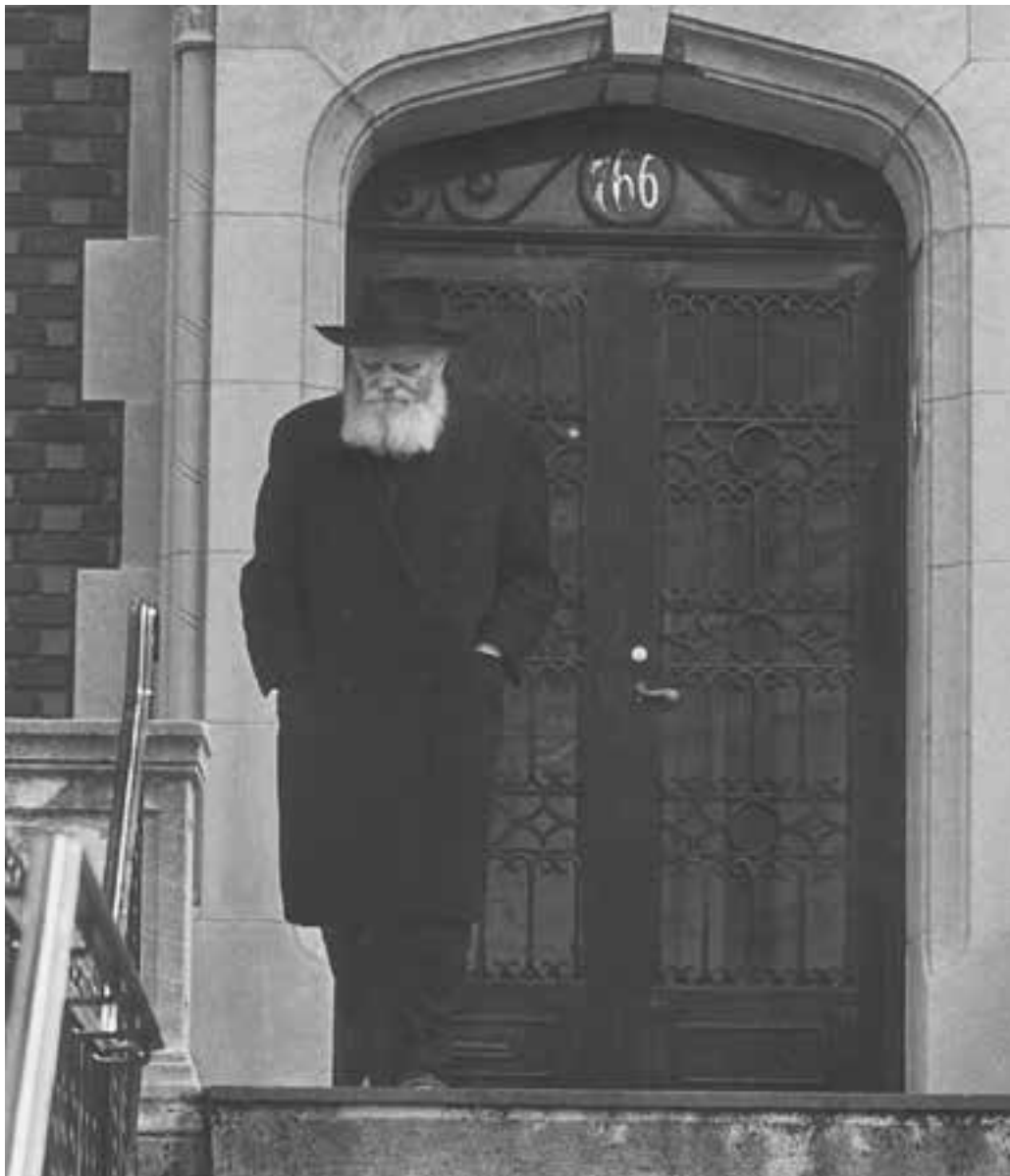
*notzach!*" The Rebbe would not have to testify! The *simcha* was out of this world!

Then the trial itself began. I went to the court house many times. I didn't understand a word of English, all I could do was sit there and say Tehillim. I knew that it's "*dem Rebbe'ns a zach*," something very important to the Rebbe. I would watch the venerated Chossid, Rabbi Mentlik standing there with his legendary *kabbalas ol*. It had a deep impression on us.

This is all just my own perspective, a young *bochur* at the time.

As mentioned, that winter the Rebbe was very serious. The Rebbe visited the Ohel every day of the court case and spent many long hours there; much longer than he usually would in the past. But at the same time, the Rebbe demanded an increase in *simcha*. And the Rebbe was the one leading the charge!

On Chanukah, there was a rally for both the children of Tzivos Hashem as well as the elderly members of Kollel Tiferes Zkeinim. The Rebbe repeatedly demanded more *simcha* and then, during the singing of "*Ufaratzta*," the Rebbe started encouraging the singing like we'd never seen before! It was unbelievable! I remember thinking to myself, "Simchas Torah has appeared in the middle of Chanukah!"



THE REBBE ON THE STEPS OF THE LIBRARY.

So much so that many years after Gimmel Tammuz, when a lot of the videos of the Rebbe became available, I saw the video of that “*Ufaratzta*” and without knowing what it was, I immediately identified it as the Chanukah rally of 5746\*. It was more than 20 years later, but the image was so vivid in my mind; it was incredible!

But nothing could have prepared us for the last two days of Chanukah.

On Shabbos, the seventh day of Chanukah, the Rebbe held a farbrengen, and at the end of the farbrengen he announced that

tonight, on Motzei Shabbos, there would be another farbrengen! Even though it was already arranged that the *mashpi'im* would farbreng, the Rebbe said he’s not freeing them from their obligation; they should farbreng tomorrow morning.

That night, the Rebbe farbrenged for a long time and spoke about the claim of the opposing side that Lubavitch is not active. Although this is completely false, the Rebbe said, we should take it as an indicator to do even more than until now!

The farbrengen ended late, then we sat down for *chazara*, and farbrenged a little bit ourselves.

Then next morning I came to 770, remembering that the Rebbe said there should be a farbrengen. Slowly the crowd started to fill up.

Everyone was in a great *hisorerus*. We all understood that the Rebbe was fighting the evil forces with all these farbrengens and wanted us to be *b'simcha*. All we wanted was for all this pain and *agmas nefesh* of the Rebbe to go away completely with a full *nitzachon*. I remember how the *mashpi'im* Reb Avram Mayorer, Reb Shlomo Zarchi, and others were farbrenging very *shtark*.

In the evening, when the Rebbe came in for Mincha and Maariv, we were singing the *hakafos niggun* very loudly and with great excitement. No one expected anything drastic to happen. Then, all of a sudden, after Maariv, Rabbi Groner announced there would be another farbrengen!

We were shocked.

We were all after a full day of farbrenging, and then this news comes! I remember running to my room to rest a little bit just to be able to concentrate through the Rebbe's *sichos*.

Throughout Chanukah the Rebbe had said that we need to increase in *mitvzoim*, and that shluchim should send in photographs of their Chanukah activities. One of the *bochurim* took a public menorah folded up in a bag and traveled to Ellis Island, where he erected the menorah in front of the Statue of Liberty! He just put it up without asking anyone and took photos. It was a natural response to the Rebbe's call. The *bochurim* felt like we just "gotta" do it! The Rebbe wants big things, let's do it big!

### **The tension must have been intense. Can you tell us what it felt like to finally experience the *nitzachon*?**

From when the court case started, all we could think about every day was: When will the *nitzachon* be? We would sing "*Didan Notzach*" and wait for the day.



LIBRARY OF AGUDAS CHASIDEI CHABAD



LIBRARY OF AGUDAS CHASIDEI CHABAD

BOCHURIM ASSEMBLE A MENORAH AT THE STATUE OF LIBERTY.

For me personally, on my own journey, these events had such a great impact. I came to 770 at an interesting time. It was a serious time and one of distress. But it taught me how important the Rebbe's *ratzon* is and how all a Chossid wants is for the Rebbe's wish to be fulfilled.

We waited for a long time. Almost an entire year went by and there was still no word on the verdict.

It so happened that I had to go back to Eretz Yisroel during the month of Tishrei 5747\* to rearrange my visa, and I was so afraid that I'd miss being with the Rebbe on the day of the *nitzachon*. I rushed back to New York immediately, as soon as I was able.



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THE REBBE SAYS A SICHA FOLLOWING MINCHA, HEI TEVES 5747\*.

Then it happened.

Hei Teves 5747\*, we received the news: “*Didan Notzach!*”

I remember some of the *bochurim* going around singing “*Rebbe notzach,*” the Rebbe was victorious. That’s the way we felt. We were so happy that the pain and *agmas nefesh* of the Rebbe was finally over and that the Rebbe was happy now. That’s all we had to think about and we were automatically happy.

Then the Rebbe came into the big shul for Mincha and said a *sicha* afterwards.

Many of us were so excited about all the goings on that we didn’t even realize that the Rebbe spoke clearly about the story during the *sicha*. It took time for the concept to sink in.

The Rebbe explained that just like the story of Yosef in that day’s Chumash, who was sent to a terrible place (Mitzrayim) in order to accomplish great things, we too were to utilize the terrible “*tzaar*” that we experienced as an impetus for further growth. Drawing on the story of the Alter Rebbe on Yud-Tes Kislev, the Rebbe said that we should learn from the claim of the opposing side that Chabad is “not-active,” as an indicator that we need to double and redouble our efforts in *hafatzas hamaayanos*, until the results are incomparably greater.

The Rebbe concluded with the *possuk* “תחי רוח יעקב אביהם”—Yaakov Avinu’s spirit was revived. That was the whole thing! That line summed up what we were all feeling at the time: The Rebbe is happy now. This is what the Yom Tov of Hei Teves is all about.

But I think the most amazing thing happened the next day, when the Rebbe invited everyone to write down their names and send in their petitions for *brachos*. When you think about it now, this is an amazing phenomenon! These were “*osios*” and expressions that we never heard from the Rebbe before. Now we understood that something big is really happening in the spiritual realms! I remember how Reb Yoel Kahn was so excited when he heard this *sicha*, he immediately began saying *l’chaim* and *farbrenging*.

A friend of mine was on the phone with his father, who is not a Lubavitcher, trying to convince him that it’s important to write to the Rebbe now. I told him, “Let me speak to your father...” I took the phone and said, “The Rebbe said now it’s an *eis ratzon!* This is the opportunity of a lifetime! Write to the Rebbe whatever you want, don’t be foolish and pass up on this opportunity!” He said, “Of course I’m going to write!”

**The next year, in 5748\*, Hei Teves was officially established by the Rebbe as a Yom Tov. Can you tell us a little bit about that?**

Indeed. A month before Hei Teves, on Beis Kislev 5748\*, the *sefarim* were finally brought back home to 770—after another long struggle in the court of appeals. Unfortunately, many *bochurim* and *anash* were standing outside waiting for the *sefarim* instead of making better use of their time, and when the Rebbe came out to leave for the Ohel he expressed his disappointment. It was extremely painful to see the Rebbe having *agmas nefesh* on a day that should have been a real *simcha*.

After that, many people weren't sure if the Rebbe would want to establish Hei Teves as a Yom Tov or just keep it quiet.

But for us, the *bochurim*, it was certain that Hei Teves needed to be a great Yom Tov.



THE LARGE SIGN POSTED IN CELEBRATION OF THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF HEI TEVES.

That year, Hei Teves fell out on a Shabbos. Just before Shabbos, we hung up a large sign in the big shul at 770, reading: "לתועדות חסידים: לרגל יום הבהיר ה' טבת-דידן נצח." Many of the elder Chassidim were very upset at us, saying that the Rebbe would not approve of such a thing and that we had made a big mistake.

On Friday night, when the Rebbe left the shul after Maariv, I remember distinctly how the Rebbe looked at the sign on the back wall for a short while.

The next day, when the Rebbe started the *farbrengen* I was quite scared. The Rebbe began by talking about how they were *mefarsem* "didan notzach." I wasn't sure what the Rebbe would say next. I got down from the box I was standing on and started shaking.

But it took only a few moments until I realized that the Rebbe appreciated it. Not only that—no one could have expected it, but almost the entire *farbrengen* was dedicated to the subject of "didan notzach," and the Rebbe even mentioned the *possuk* "הימים האלה נזכרים" "ונעשים," how this date is recalled and acted upon each and every year, turning it into a real Yom Tov.

The Rebbe explained that the *sefarim* were victorious and we therefore have to look into the *sefarim* to see how to celebrate this day.

In the early *sichos* the Rebbe said just when the story broke, he explained that the *sefarim* are a part of the life of the Rebbe, and that the Chassidim who learn the *sefarim* are an indication that "hu ba'chaim"—the Rebbe himself lives and gives life to all of us.

This is what Hei Teves is all about.

May Hashem help that we will celebrate Hei Teves with the Rebbe, "hu ba'chaim" in a tangible manner as well, *b'gashmiyus l'mata me'asara tefachim*. 🕉