



מעבן מיטן רבי'ן



10 SHEVAT 5716, JEM 3057

טור 'לעבן מיטן רבי'ן' הוקדש לזכרון ולעילוי נשמת
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ע"י בנם
ר' יקותיאל יהודה
וזוגתו מרת פעסל לאה ומשפחתם שיחיו
רוהר

The Most Memorable Purim

PURIM 5716*



Remembered as one of the most joyous farbrengens of the Rebbe's *nesius*, the memories of the farbrengen of Purim 5716* are especially vivid. Held in a rented hall on the corner of Nostrand Avenue and Eastern Parkway, this farbrengen left an indelible impression on those who were fortunate to attend. Presented is a collection of accounts and descriptions of what transpired during this exceptional farbrengen.

NUSACH LUBAVITCH

The uniqueness of this Purim was best described by Reb Uriel Zimmer¹ in his writeup for *Bitaon Chabad*:

“Purim 5716* - Nusach Lubavitch

The bus driver, who went about his route on Monday at 5:00 a.m. to pick up his usual early morning commuters, surely did not anticipate the unseemingly large influx of passengers who packed onto the bus from the stop at the corner of Nostrand and Eastern Parkway in Brooklyn. A group of travelers this size was rather out of place for an otherwise regular workday.

He certainly did not imagine that this large group, who had almost filled up the entire bus, was but a fraction of the crowd that experienced an unforgettable event that night.

These were no ordinary passengers. They were Yidden who had come to the Rebbe for his Motzei Purim farbrengen, which was held in a large hall rented specially for the occasion.

Purim is not a new festival. The joy that is unique to Purim — a fusion of utmost joy and utmost solemnity without compromising a hairsbreadth on either of them—such a joy, even the way it is “nusach Chabad,” was not quite unknown.

However, even those who had lived within the daled amos of Lubavitch and were familiar with its customs, lifestyle, spiritual environment, and brotherly camaraderie, found this farbrengen to be particularly exceptional, one that would remain in their hearts forever.

Why was this farbrengen any different? How exactly was it unique? It would be difficult to single out any one particular factor and decide that “this is what made the farbrengen outstanding.” It couldn’t be because of the vast multitude of guests, nor because the farbrengen lasted until dawn, and certainly not because of the great quantities of l’chaim—as none of



these were new to Lubavitch. Lubavitch has long been accustomed to large crowds; in fact, it was precisely for this reason that halls had to be rented in order to host the winter farbrengens. The concept of being “above the limits of time” wasn’t particularly novel either. As for the l’chaim, especially on Purim, that too was surely nothing new, especially for the Russian Jews.

It wasn’t this, that, or any of the above. Rather it was the spirit, the energy that surged through the giant rented hall, that raised the myriads of attendees and carried them to a loftier plane.

JUMP RIGHT IN

The Rebbe began the farbrengen with an explanation of the uniqueness of Purim over all other Yomim Tovim, in that it was entirely miraculous. The miracle of Purim did not come about through a gradual buildup, but in one moment “*nahpoch hu*,” our fate pivoted from the lowest depths to the greatest heights, from the worst catastrophe to the greatest salvation.

Such is the joy of Purim. It is not an experience that we need to warm up to in order to appreciate. On the contrary, we must jump right in enthusiastically.

The Rebbe exclaimed, “Therefore, everyone here must say *l’chaim* with *varemkait*, and sing a *freiliche niggun* with a *shturem* so that the beginning of the farbrengen will have the *koch* and energy of the climax. He then added, “Since we are speaking about skipping *hachanos*, there is no need to wait until after the *niggun* to say *l’chaim*, they can be done simultaneously.”



PRIORITIES IN CHINUCH

Another *sicha* discussed what had brought about the Purim miracle. In those times the Yidden had many connections in the palace. Esther was queen and Mordechai had an important position in the king’s court. But when the evil decree was announced, their political sway was irrelevant. Mordechai and Esther understood that the way to salvation was through learning Torah with Jewish children. To annul the decree they had to gather the children and teach them how to be Jews. Only after that would it be possible to pursue other avenues.

The Rebbe used this as a springboard to address the state of *Yiddishe chinuch* and sharply condemned certain changes to educational standards that were then being implemented by modern elements.

“This is an important lesson for the *chinuch* of our *Yiddishe* children. Our first priority must be to instill a proper understanding of the correct attitude towards learning Torah.

“The Friediker Rebbe outlined the correct way to teach the Alef Beis, namely; the “*kamatz alef uh kamatz beis buh*” method; this emphasizes the *kedushah* of the individual letters. Today they want to skip the lessons about the *kedushah* of the letters and instead only strive to get the children to parrot the letters perfectly. Don’t think that by utilizing modern innovative educational tools you will save time and teach children how to read much faster. Time belongs to Hashem, and if one takes the time to teach children properly, Hashem will pay back the lost time with *arichus yamim*.

“More important than the quantity of Torah that is studied is the quality and the emphasis that is placed on it. The Gemara² relates a story of an *Amora* who lived a great distance from a *beis midrash*, and he had to travel six months there and six months back for only one day of learning. All of that time spent was worth the *kedushah* of one day of learning. We must instill this approach in our children. Students must realize that Torah is unlike all other academic studies, as it is holy and pure. They should be able to clearly differentiate between their classes of *kedushah* and the classes where they learn the ways of the world. When they understand that those classes are required only in order to further their purposes in *avodas Hashem*, they will not accord them any more interest than absolutely necessary.

“It is thus of absolute importance that the children be sent to schools and institutions that have these priorities, and not, *chas veshalom*, a place that gives precedence to *limudei chol*, and only after a child is tired from a day’s work when he no longer has any energy to even play, do they throw in a token hour of *limudei kodesh*... Even if he were to learn the same quantity, but the schedule would be modified to have the Torah learning in the first hour of the day, garnering more attention and focus, that would already be an accomplishment. And if there would be more hours dedicated to Torah learning and less

to secular studies, that would be even better.

“The first message that must be imparted to a child is *yiras Shamayim*, and that will only happen if the teacher is also a *yarei Shamayim*. The same care must be taken with the curriculum, to ensure that it was crafted by someone who only has pure intentions. A teacher here, in America, teaching a child Alef Beis, *siddur*, *halacha*, etc, has to impart to the children an understanding and feeling that he is here to deliver a message from Hashem.

“With our energies directed towards the proper *chinuch* of our children, just like Mordechai, we will overturn any harsh decree, and we Yidden will be victorious over our enemies—the *yetzer hara*.”

L’CHAIM!

Throughout the *farbrengen*, the Rebbe asked many of those assembled to say *l’chaim*, some even multiple times. Notably amongst them were Rav Hershel Schachter and Reb Avrohom Mordechai Gil-Friedman (a descendant of the Alter Rebbe). Reb Yehuda Weinstock, who was visiting from Toronto, was asked to say *l’chaim* multiple times. In many of the instances when the Rebbe called someone by name and asked him to say *l’chaim*, he asked, “*S’iz a fuleh?*” (Is that a full cup?) When an individual answered in the negative, the Rebbe remarked disappointedly, “*Vemen narstu up?*” (Who are you fooling?)

After the *maamar*, the Rebbe requested that someone volunteer to say *l’chaim* to the point of “*ad delo yada*” and to stand on a table where





everyone can see and learn from him.

"In America, it is customary that candidates are elected, let someone be elected." After the Rebbe personally asked several people and they declined the invitation, he said, "If no one will volunteer, I will be forced to do it myself, and I will stop keeping track of the time and thus no one will be able to go to sleep on time!"

At other points, the Rebbe singled out several individuals and encouraged them to say *l'chaim*.

To a *shochet*: "Are you so reluctant to be *ad delo yada* because you are worried that you need to go to work tomorrow to *shecht*? Is there anyone over here who doesn't have to *shecht* their *nefesh habehamis* tomorrow?"

To Reb Yehudah Weinstock from Toronto: "Did you say *l'chaim*? You seem so down, say *l'chaim*—you're going back to Toronto, nobody will know about this *bizayon*."

To Reb Chaim Osher Kahanov: "Reb Chaim Osher, *nemt a keli*! (Take a cup/receptacle!)

To someone else, the Rebbe instructed to say *l'chaim* on a full cup, as "*kli shares ein mekadshin ela mele'in*" (a receptacle in the *Beis Hamikdash* is only sanctified when full).

To another: "*Daloy tzimtzum, harchev picha* (Enough with the narrow

"THE PRINTING PRESS"

(While the Rebbe was instructing individuals to say *l'chaim*, he told an individual who worked with a printing press and had said *l'chaim* on a small cup: "Enough with these *tzimtzumim* that you've been subjecting me to in printing, take a big cup of *l'chaim*!")

Later in the farbrengen, the Rebbe told this individual, "You should have *harchava* in *mochin* and *midos* (broaden your personal horizon, both in mind and in heart), and in business too, and to stop being miserly with Merkos L'inyonei Chinuch regarding anything in print, as Lubavitch wants to expand."

The Rebbe said, "The reason for this stinginess is the concern that perhaps he will lose money, and thus he is constantly depressed. As the son of Radatz Chernigover quipped: This is the sentiment of the *nachash hakadmoni*, who is constantly worried about where it will find food once it has finished eating all the dust of the earth... This should not be your worry, you should arrange that all printing matters be done with a generous attitude. Stop the penny-pinching negotiations with Merkos about how to distribute the money as there will be plenty of money, enough for both the *yetzer hara* and *yetzer tov*, for your wife and children and all other workers in the printing press."

The Rebbe concluded: "Since we are now in a time of '*ad delo yada*,' Hashem will ensure that the printing press is successful and you will be able to also include the offset. You will then be able to hire more employees and provide them with a livelihood without concern of detracting from the salaries of the other workers. Most importantly, you shall do your utmost to further the influence of Chassidus in your environment in a way that it becomes an everyday reality."

When the employees of the publishing house answered "*amen*," the Rebbe commented, "Misnagdim usually say '*U'va l'Tziyon goel*' first and only afterward do they answer *amen*."

THE HALL WHERE THIS FARBRENGEN TOOK PLACE (ON THE SECOND FLOOR), ON THE CORNER OF NOSTRAND AVE. AND EASTERN PARKWAY.

mindedness, open your mouth wide).

To a member of *hanhalas hayeshiva* the Rebbe told to say *l'chaim* on a big cup as it will help expand things related to the yeshiva.

When someone approached the Rebbe and informed him that Reb Yisroel Gordon was already in a state of “*ad delo yada*,” the Rebbe responded contentedly: “*Ye? Er ligt shoin...*” (He’s already asleep).

THE JEALOUSY OF A GADOL

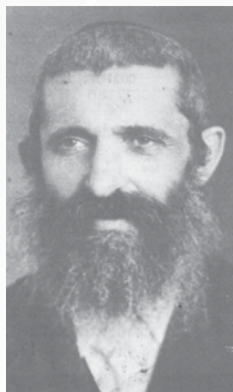
In the middle of the farbrengen, the Rebbe expressed that he would like to get in the habit of discussing an additional concept of *nigleh* at every farbrengen. “*Es shatd nisht* (it doesn’t hurt) to learn some *nigleh* from time to time, and *halevai* this should inspire a surge in motivation to learn *nigleh*.”

Thus, the Rebbe began a *sicha* on the topic of rolling up the Megillah after it is read. He introduced the opinion of the Magen Avraham who holds that it should be done after the last *bracha*, and the Gr”a who emphatically rejects this opinion and says that it should be rolled **before** the last *bracha*.

The Rebbe continued, “While it seems from the Alter Rebbe that we follow the opinion of the Magen Avraham, considering that the Friediker Rebbe didn’t provide a definite ruling we must still give some credence to the opinion that the Gr”a discredits.”

Once the Rebbe mentioned the Gr”a, he interrupted the *sicha* to relate a story about Reb Foleh Kahn and one of the leaders of the Litvishe community. (The Rebbe then turned to Reb Foleh’s son, Reb Yoel Kahn, and instructed him to say *l'chaim*.)

The story: At a Yud Shevat farbrengen in Eretz Yisroel, Reb Foleh got up and proclaimed that even “*ploni ben ploni*” is jealous of a young student in Tomchei Temimim who is fortunate to have the opportunity to learn Chassidus for now that he is in the *olam ha’emes*, he has finally come to realize the importance of learning Chassidus.



REB FOLEH KAHAN



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“As a result of this radical statement, the Israeli post was overwhelmed with mail and must have made a lot of money off of stamps from the many letters that flooded in. Everyone wrote in asking how this could be. How can he say such a thing? This individual was a *posek* and a *lamdan* who always learned with diligence! How could he be jealous of a mere child who learns Tanya?”

The Rebbe explained that in truth, there is a basis to this “radical” statement in Gemara Bava Basra,³ where it says that *talmidei chachamim* will be “scalded” by each other’s learning in Gan Eden.

K’PURIM

At midnight the manager of the hall showed up to see that everything was under control. At the Rebbe’s suggestion, he was given a cup of mashke, “a cocktail” as the Rebbe said, and he left happily. Thus, the farbrengen continued undisturbed throughout the night.

Towards the end of the farbrengen the Rebbe sang several *niggunim*. After singing *Vehi She’amda* by himself and the crowd not joining in, the Rebbe remarked, “*Ir farhert mir oif chazzanus?* (Are you assessing my *chazzanus*?)

The exaltation of the Chassidim reached its peak during the Alter Rebbe’s *niggun* of *Daled Bavos*. At that emotional crescendo, the famous teaching of the Tikkunei Zohar finally resonated with some, that Yom HakiPurim is only *k’Purim* (like Purim).

Upon the farbrengen’s conclusion, the Rebbe inquired if anyone knew the earliest time it would be possible to say the morning *Krias Shema*. **T**

1. See *Devoted Chossid, Man of the World*, Derher Sivan 5778.

2. Chagigah 5b.

3. 75a.