

לזכות  
הרה"ת ר' שלום דוב בער וזוגתו מרת  
חיה מושקא  
בנותיהם ובנם  
ברכה ליפשא, עליזה, שיינדל, מנחם  
מענדל שיחיו  
שוחאט

# PURIM GUESTS

*In the*  
REBBE'S PRESENCE



**T**he yearly calendar by the Rebbe was always sprinkled with a mix of the usual and the outstanding, the common and the uncommon. There were regular

special events that came often—Shabbosim, Yomim Tovim, and *yomei depagra*—and the special experiences, be it special guests, surprise *sichos* or *chalukos*, or special stories involving the Rebbe’s work all around the world.

In truth, even the “regular” experiences or farbrengens by the Rebbe always had something “more” going on; a new *hora’a*, a special guest, or a unique *hanhaga*. The ordinary and the exceptional weave together into beautiful tapestry experienced at the Rebbe’s side.

Purim was a particularly special time by the Rebbe. A *sicha* from a Purim farbrengen is almost always immediately identifiable as such; uniquely rich, expressive with what seems to be a “higher spiritual tone” than the usual. Couple the special *simcha* of Purim with some of the exceptional occurrences that happened at these farbrengens and what unfolds are some of the most memorable times with the Rebbe.

In the following article we will explore a number of unique Purim farbrengens that were attended by interesting guests, whom the Rebbe either clearly pointed out or spoke a *sicha* in which a clear reference can be made to them.



# ZALMAN SHAZAR

*Purim 5720\*, 5723\*, 5731\**

Israeli President Zalman Shazar was a close friend of Lubavitch all of his life. In his various positions throughout the years, he greatly assisted the work of the Rabbeim; with efforts to save the Frierdiker Rebbe from the clutches of the Soviet regime and in his extensive work to build and grow Kfar Chabad and Lubavitch in Eretz Yisroel in general.

Born Shneur Zalman Rubashov in 5650\* to a family of Chabad Chassidim, Zalman Shazar received a religious Chabad education from his grandfather and father but also fell into the world of secularism and Zionism that spread among the Jewish youth of his time. He eventually became a Zionist activist, rising in rank from a small city organizer all the way to a seasoned diplomat. He ran a number of ministries and offices both before 5708\* and after, culminating with the coveted position of president, a position he held from 5723\* through 5733\*. He passed away shortly afterwards, in Tishrei 5735\*.

Throughout the years, President Shazar, as a devoted Chossid, visited the Rebbe a total of 13 times! These visits took place both as a diplomat, beginning with his first visit in the summer of 5712\*, and as a sitting president. The visits followed the great admiration he had for Lubavitch and the Rabbeim, going back to his

meetings with the Rebbe Rashab at the conference of rabbonim in 5670\* and with the Frierdiker Rebbe in New York in 5708\*.

The Rebbe's special fondness for President Shazar was clearly seen in the warm welcome the Rebbe showed him, and the many arrangements the Rebbe made for Chassidim to meet, host, and visit the president both in Eretz Yisroel and around the world.

Three of Shazar's most memorable visits were on Purim, two before he became president, in 5720\* and 5723\*, and once after he was elected president, on Purim 5731\*. The visit in 5731\* was well documented with many beautiful pictures and articles. It was also at this event that the Rebbe had special mementos distributed to Shazar himself and to his delegation, with "Purim Tof Shin Lamed Alef" embossed on their exterior.

## *Purim 5720\**

The farbrengen of Purim 5720\* was quite a powerful farbrengen, with a number of emotive and pointed *sichos*, as well as the famous *maamar Balayla Hahu 5720\**. Amongst the *sichos* there were several that—Chassidim explained—seemed to have a direct



SHAZAR SITS BEHIND THE REBBE AT THE FARBRENGEN OF PURIM 5723\*.

JEM 287078



AT THE RECEPTION IN THE HOTEL, SHAZAR RECEIVES ONE OF THE SPECIALLY PREPARED YARMULKES FROM REB BINYOMIN KLEIN.



ONE OF THE SIDDURIM EMBOSSED WITH THE INSCRIPTION: PURIM 5731.

connection to the visiting Israeli diplomat, Mr. Zalman Shazar.

The farbrengen began at 8:30 p.m. and at about 9:30 Mr. Shazar arrived. The Rebbe welcomed him warmly and gave him *l'chaim* and *mezonos*, following which Shazar took his seat behind the Rebbe.<sup>1</sup>

The Rebbe then began to speak about why when discussing Haman's plan to annihilate the Jewish people, the word Yehudim is spelled with two *yuds*. There are *yetzer tov Yidden* and *yetzer hara Yidden*, and both were included in Haman's decree. This is because both are included in "Atah vechartanu," the special connection that we have to Hashem, being chosen by Him as a holy people. In the subsequent *sichos*, the Rebbe went on to discuss that the hatred the nations of the world have towards the Jewish people isn't based on our behavior, rather based on who we are. That has not and will not change based on acting any less Jewish, as so vividly demonstrated in Europe just a few short years earlier.

Chassidim pointed out that this *sicha* seemed to have been a circuitous response to a groveling speech given by Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion during his visit to the United States, where he claimed that the Jewish people are a nation like all others, and the notion that we are chosen by Hashem is, *chas veshalom*, incorrect.

During this farbrengen the Rebbe also spoke a *sicha* where he explained a *maamar* from the Alter Rebbe that had recently been printed from a "*bichel*" of *hanachos* from Reb Pinchos Reizes. The Rebbe preceded this *sicha* with saying that there are a number of *bichelach* that have been resurfacing and reprinted with the assistance of an *ish zakkai* (a meritorious man),

and presumably the time will come when he will assist with this again. This *ish zakkai* was apparently Shazar.

In addition to this somewhat direct reference to Shazar, the Rebbe also spoke throughout the night about Kfar Chabad and the role it is meant to play in the general scheme of things in Eretz Yisroel, being a place that shares and spreads Yiddishkeit across the land. This may also have been directed at Shazar who was greatly instrumental in the creation and establishment of Kfar Chabad.

The special farbrengen carried on for a number of hours and ended just before 3:00 a.m.

## Purim 5723\*

For the farbrengen of Purim 5723\*, Zalman Shazar was once again invited. While there may not be so much written in the *yomanim* from this visit or farbrengen, there is a beautiful description written by another special guest at this farbrengen, Dr. Yosef Klarman from Eretz Yisroel.

Dr. Klarman was a prominent Zionist activist, beginning in prewar Europe, following with his work at the end of the war helping Jews leave Europe and come to Eretz Yisroel, leading into his varying leadership positions in Israeli politics. Dr. Klarman was first invited by the Rebbe to come for



ZALMAN SHAZAR IN HIS YOUTH. CIRCA 5670\*

\* 5723-1963, 5731-1971, 5670-1910



a *yechidus* in 5717\*, and following that meeting, he became a frequent visitor at 770. He served as a liaison to the Rebbe for many prominent Israeli officials, primarily for Menachem Begin, then the leader of the Cherut Party.

Klarman, who grew up in a family of Gerrer Chasidim, was very warm to Yiddishkeit and the Rebbe's work. As a writer and a man of ideas, he used his various platforms and connections to assist the Rebbe's work in Eretz Yisroel. There are a number of fascinating articles written either by him or about him and the Rebbe, that shed light on this special connection.

Later in life, he wrote an article describing his entire history with Lubavitch and the Rebbe. Among the stories he writes, he talks about the Purim farbrengen when he and Shazar were by the Rebbe:

"After about two and a half years, I was invited to the Rebbe for Purim. When I arrived on Purim night to Eastern Parkway, I was told that Reb Shneur Zalman Shazar will also be the Rebbe's guest (this was two years before Shazar was appointed president). The great hall was already so packed and overflowing with Chassidim, that even a needle would not be able to be squeezed in. The Rebbe went up onto the stage, to his right sat Reb Shneur Zalman Shazar and to the Rebbe's left—the writer of these lines. The Rebbe spoke many hours of *divrei Torah*, and during the small intermissions he sang with excitement, clapping his hands to strengthen the singing.

"When the Rebbe concluded, they drank *l'chaim*. What do I mean they 'drank?' Every Chossid in the room held a plastic cup, filled it with Benedictine and tried hard to 'catch the Rebbe's eye.' If he was fortunate, he'd immediately raise his glass, and call out, '*L'chaim*, Rebbe!'"

After the farbrengen, he was approached by Reb Ezriel Zelig Slonim, with whom he spoke for a long time about Chabad in Eretz Yisroel, about the Rebbe, and about the Rebbe's family and background.

Dr. Klarman concluded: "Anyone who has not seen this joy has never seen joy in his life. The crowd of Chassidim truly soared in the seventh heaven."

## Purim 5731\*

Shazar's Purim visit stood out as a beautiful royal visit, a visit that was covered by both the American and Israeli press and took place with much pomp and fanfare. Unlike the other visits discussed in this article, this visit was not for a farbrengen, rather it stood as its



THE REBBE GREETSHAZAR UPON HIS ARRIVAL AT 770.

own event, and created a unique schedule that we will read about going forward.

A message was sent with Reb Ezriel Zelig Slonim when he came for Yud Shevat that President Shazar would be in the United States and would like to celebrate Purim at the Rebbe's side.

In the week leading up to Shazar's visit, officials from the Israeli consulate and from both the Israeli and American security apparatuses showed up to 770, examining the building and the area in preparation for Shazar and his delegation's visit.

On Lubavitch's end, the Rebbe had planned a number of things as well. The Rebbe instructed to have a number of *sefarim* and mementos printed, some with the inscription "פורים תשל"א" embossed on them. The Rebbe wanted two leather-bound *siddurim* with that inscription, and another one hundred, not leather-bound. In addition, the Rebbe instructed to rush the binding of the Likutei Levi Yitzchok (on Shemos-Devarim), and had a few of them leather-bound as well. The Rebbe also had the Alter Rebbe's *maamar Ashrei Yoshvei Veisecha* printed, covered with decorative material, and "פורים תשל"א" printed on the cover.

This was in addition to an order of 50 *yarmulkes* with the same inscription, and of course the beautiful Megillah and exquisite silver Megillah case that the Rebbe gifted Shazar and that can be seen in the pictures from that night.

A committee was set up—"Vaad Erev V'Leil Purim"—consisting of Reb Moshe Pinchas Katz, Reb Binyomin Klein, Reb Shlomo Aharon Kazarnovsky, Reb Dovid Raskin, Reb Leibel Groner, and Reb Yudel Krinsky. The Rebbe gave specific instructions regarding the shul's set up for the visit. He instructed that he didn't need his *shtender*, and instead they should have three tables and chairs. The Rebbe also wanted them

to make sure that the *siddurim* should be given out to the delegation and other guests, that there should be someone to help hold the Megillah for Shazar, and that they should place some *bochurim* near the entrance to keep the *seder*.

The Rebbe wanted the refreshments to be catered and arranged beautifully, by a caterer.<sup>2</sup>

Taanis Esther was Wednesday. Following Mincha at 2:00 p.m., members of the American security team came to scan 770 and the Rebbe's room. The Rebbe didn't want them doing a thorough search of his room, and in the end they only did a short scan. At that point, the Rebbe sent a delegation to greet Shazar in his hotel. The delegation included Reb Eliyahu Simpson, Reb Shmuel Levitin, and the driver Reb Yudel Krinsky.

Around 5:30 p.m., Shazar arrived at 770 to a large and excited crowd, and the Rebbe was notified and came out to greet him. The Rebbe welcomed him with two warm kisses, and they walked into the Rebbe's room.

The Rebbe and Shazar spoke about a number of things: About the Yud Shevat farbrengen of that year that Shazar had listened to on tape (with a strong MiHu Yehudi *sicha*), and stories from his time in yeshiva.

Shazar gave the Rebbe copies of *maamarim* either from the Alter Rebbe or the Tzemach Tzedek, one with *remazim* for *geulah*. The Rebbe pointed out that *remazim* weren't something that were often discussed in Lubavitch, and when they were, it wasn't typically printed. Shazar also gave the Rebbe transcripts from

the conference of rabbonim in 5670\*, which the Rebbe Rashab attended and Shazar was there too as a young activist.

The Rebbe then gave Shazar the copy of the *maamar Ashrei Yoshvei Veisecha* that was printed in honor of this visit, and he also presented Shazar with the Megillah, pointing out the inscription "Purim 5731" that was on it.

The pre-Maariv *yechidus* went on for a bit, and would be continued for another four hours after the reading of the Megillah. Before they went down for Maariv, the Rebbe explained that the Frierdiker Rebbe, while having a great memory, davened everything out of a *siddur*, so therefore, there were *siddurim* prepared as well. The Rebbe put on his *gartel* and told Shazar that he will be using his Torah Ohr *siddur* because "it is already 20 years that I daven with the Shver's *siddur*." Shazar offered to have the Rebbe break his fast after Megillah and only then will he return but the Rebbe insisted that they come straight back up together after Maariv and the Megillah.

The Rebbe, Shazar, Rashag, and Rabbi Hodakov took the elevator together, accompanied by some security personnel. The Rebbe walked into the shul with Shazar's hand interlocked; there were three tables and chairs waiting, for the Rebbe, Shazar, and Rashag.

The crowd that night needed to be screened, and the security officials were at the door with the *gabba'im* checking each person, only allowing into the Megillah reading regulars and people they recognized.

## Shazar's gifts to the Rebbe



VELVEL SCHILDKRAUT VIA JEM 108415



VELVEL SCHILDKRAUT VIA JEM 109045



VELVEL SCHILDKRAUT VIA JEM 108396

SHAZAR HANDS THE REBBE A BUNDLE WITH THE MAAMARIM AS WELL AS THE TRANSCRIPTS OF THE CONFERENCE OF RABONIM



Following the reading of the Megillah, the Rebbe invited Shazar to join him once again in his room, and they sat there for more than four hours, from about 7:50 p.m. until midnight. A few minutes after they went in, Rabbi Groner brought in some refreshments, but the Rebbe continued fasting the entire time until after Shazar left.

After Shazar left the Rebbe's room, he went into the *mazkirus* office, where he left a *pan* and the money for a *pan* with Rabbi Hodakov, and spent a few minutes there. When he was about to leave 770, the Rebbe was notified and he came to escort him out. The Rebbe and Shazar were greeted by a large crowd of Chassidim and others who began singing "*Ki Elokim Yoishia Tzion*." They waited at the door for a few moments, until Shazar eventually went to his car, and the Rebbe waited at the door until they drove off.

The next day, the Rebbe sent a few Chassidim, shlu-chim, and Reb Binyomin Klein to deliver *mishloach manos* to Shazar. They spoke for a few minutes, and Shazar expressed remorse that the Rebbe hadn't eaten



THE REBBE WALKS WITH SHAZAR INTO THE SHUL. SHAZAR PAUSES TO SHAKE THE HAND OF REB BENTZION SHEMTOV.

until he left. Regarding the topic of his conversation with the Rebbe, he summarized, "The conversation was somber, but passionate." After receiving the *mishloach manos* he said he wanted to call the Rebbe immediately to thank him and requested that they bring him a tape from that night's Purim farbrengen before Sunday night, to take with him back to Eretz Yisroel.<sup>3</sup>

## CHAIM POTOK

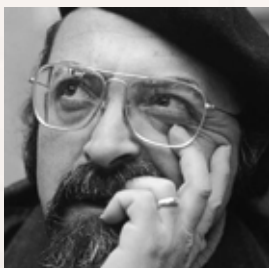
5733\*

The famed novelist Chaim Potok visited the Rebbe in 770 three times, one of these times being Purim 5733\*. What was unique about this visit was that the Rebbe spoke a *sicha* about creative artists using their talents for *kedusha*. This *sicha* seemed to be directed specifically to the award-winning author seated beside the Rebbe.

Chaim Potok, born in the Bronx in 1929, grew up in an Orthodox home and studied at Yeshiva University. Later on, he moved away from true Yiddishkeit, studying at a Conservative school and becoming a Conservative rabbi. Potok was primarily known as a novelist who wrote extensively about the Chassidic world.

As part of his research on Chassidic life, he got in touch with Lubavitch and Rabbi Avrohom Shemtov (since he lived in Philadelphia). Rabbi Shemtov brought him to Crown Heights, where he attended several farbrengens with the Rebbe.

While Potok visited



AUTHOR CHAIM POTOK

the Rebbe three times, he never had a *yechidus*. He explained once in an interview that he was afraid of the influence the Rebbe would have on him. While he was never in *yechidus*, there is footage of him introducing himself to the Rebbe at the Yud-Tes Kislev farbrengen in 5728\*, where the Rebbe reminds him to focus on the "Jewish" part of the Jewish Publication Society (a large publishing house that Potok headed at that time).

More famously, on Purim 5733\* the Rebbe spoke a *sicha* about everyone using their talents to create an awareness and appreciation for Hashem, and explained that a journalist must do more than just report the news; he must show the *hashgacha pratis* in each and every story. The Rebbe went on to say that someone who Hashem orchestrated for him a publisher and told him to write a book, the book must give the reader an understanding and appreciation that there is a *baal habayis* to this world. No matter the plot or the story, the cover or the jacket, a deeper message must exist in the book. The writer may believe on his own and share these sentiments with his family and friends, but that is not enough. If the message can reach further, then he must spread it even more and only then will he be

satisfied.

The Rebbe went on to say that, as the Megillah says, “*Tov lev hamelech bayayin*” (the king’s heart was exuberant from wine), was only after there were 180 days of celebration, using and displaying all of Achashveirosh’s riches. Only then could he truly rejoice. So, too, only after exhausting all the writer’s resources, one book leading to another and then another, plugging the true message that a Jew has for this world, can the writer reach true happiness.

In the video of this farbrengen, the camera moves back and forth during this *sicha* to show the writer, who can be seen listening intently.

While Chaim Potok never became a Chossid,

and—as he explained in interviews—he tried remaining impartial to Lubavitch, opting to get a writer’s “objective” look rather than being drawn in by Chasidus, he couldn’t help but be taken by his experience in 770. In a New York Times article published after Gimmel Tammuz, the writer of the article quotes Potok regarding the Rebbe:

“He had a way of gesturing minimally that was electrifying,” Chaim Potok, the novelist who recreated the world of the Hasidim in his books, said last week. “The slightest lift of a finger, the vaguest wave of the wrist. His was the mysterious ability to fill a room simply by being there.”

# YISRAEL KENIG

5738\*

The farbrengen of Purim 5738\* was a special one, dealing a lot about the north of Eretz Yisroel in general, and the holy city of Tzfas in particular.

This farbrengen took place one month after the third group of shluchim to Eretz Yisroel were sent, on Purim Katan that year, bringing the number of shluchim to more than forty, with an overwhelming number of them sent to Tzfas, where the Rebbe was in the midst of building up the Lubavitch community.

Perhaps even more time sensitive was the Israeli military operation “*Mivtza Litani*” that had recently begun in Lebanon, following a devastating terror attack just a few days before that in the northern region of Eretz Yisroel.

At this farbrengen, a special guest from Eretz Yisroel was present. While he wasn’t famous on a national level, in the rooms where things really happen he was quite the influential figure and was among the prime policy makers and organizational managers. This was Mr. Yisrael Kenig.

Yisroel (nicknamed Shimshon in the Lechi) grew up in Poland with a religious Zionist background. After emigrating with his family to Eretz Yisroel, he became active in the Zionist underground movement, and throughout the years filled many important positions in the burgeoning institutions in Eretz Yisroel,



MR. YISRAEL KENIG

most notably the responsibility in the interior ministry over the northern region, a position he held for nearly twenty years from 5727\*, following the Six Day War, when most of this land was recovered from the Arabs.

In his time in that weighty position, he planned and executed the Jewish settlement and infrastructure in the north, creating a Jewish strategic stronghold on this important area, and fighting to have it remain that way. Perhaps he is most known for a similarly themed report that carries his name—“*Mismach Kenig*”—where he outlined a plan to reduce Arab nationalist growth and progress, and to instead shift the funds and efforts to bolster Jewish development and prosperity. For this report, Kenig was greatly attacked in the press, mainly on the international front, but to some extent in Israel as well.

The Rebbe’s undertaking to create a Lubavitch presence in Tzfas and in the north of Eretz Yisroel in general, and his battle for the strategic and spiritual safety of Eretz Yisroel, seems to be something that Yisroel Kenig followed and shared. It is therefore quite propitious that Mr. Kenig would take part at this well-timed farbrengen where the Rebbe spoke a while on the topic of *Tzafon* and Tzfas.

At the farbrengen, the Rebbe discussed both the threats coming from directly across the border, and the importance of rebuilding the *Tzafon*, with a special emphasis on the holy city of Tzfas. The Rebbe explained, “*Mitzafon tipotach haraah*—negativity will come forth from the North,” saying that the PLO are “*Mibnei banav*

\*5738-1978, 5727-1967



*shel Haman*—descendants of Haman,” referring to the known terrorist organization that was stationed at that point in Southern Lebanon, and who just a few days earlier carried out a dreadful terror attack that killed more than thirty Jews. The Rebbe said that just as the Israeli army had fearlessly gone into Lebanon to clean up the mess, so too, in regards to creating Jewish settlements, they must be unafraid in the face of the nations’ condemnation and the public outcry. The Rebbe added that the fainthearted are meant to be sent home, and if they can’t be sent home, we definitely shouldn’t be asking their opinion.

The Rebbe also explained that *Tzafon* refers to a region within the borders of Eretz Yisroel, indicating that Israel’s *Tzafon* also has a natural predisposition for negativity. But just as in every other area, it may, and therefore should, be overturned. In reality, once overturned, it has a significant advantage over the more typically spiritually pleasant places.

The Rebbe pointed a spotlight at Tzfas, discussing its great importance in the world of *pnimiyus haTorah*, and how Tzfas could and should provide the positive influence of *Tzafon* spreading across the entire Galil



KIRYAT CHABAD, TZFAS.

and all of Eretz Yisroel, and combat the negative impacts of *Tzafon* that the Jewish people have been putting up with until now.

Between the *sichos* about the situation in Eretz Yisrael, the Rebbe welcomed Mr. Kenig and they spoke for a short while. When the Rebbe was distributing dollars to the *tankisten*, the Rebbe called him over and gave him two dollars and said, “*Yasher koach al haavar v’kabbalah tovah al lehaba*—thank you for the past, and [may you take on] good resolutions for the future.”

# THE IRANIAN CHILDREN

*Purim 5739\**

A special group of guests took part in the farbrengen of Purim 5739\*. These were the Persian children who, following their ancestors in Persia so long ago, had just experienced their own miraculous salvation, being transported thousands of miles away from the newly overturned Iranian regime to the Rebbe’s farbrengen in Brooklyn, NY.

The Rebbe’s work with the Yidden of Iran can be traced to letters from 5711\* and gathered steam in the late 5730s\*. By 5739\*, there were a number of shluchim and Merkos Shluchim who had gone and uplifted the community, strengthening the Jewish infrastructure and inspiring and encouraging better Jewish education. Rabbin Sholom Ber Hecht, Yossi Raichik, Yosef Gerlitzky, and Hertzel Ilulian, himself a Persian speaking *bochur*, had each gone and created a warm connection with the Iranian Jewish community.

During the months leading up to the Shah’s escape and the resurgence of radical revolutionary leader Khomeini in the beginning of 1979, the winds of revolution were already raging and feelings of unrest were affecting the Jewish community. While not entirely certain what

was best to do, many Jews feared for the fate of their children once the revolution would become a reality.

Using their connection with the Chabad shluchim who had visited Iran, Chabad infrastructure in America (NCFJE, including Hadar Hatorah, and Machon Chana), and Lubavitch’s ties around the world, a rescue plan was developed that eventually succeeded in allowing over 1000 Iranian children to flee their oppressive homeland. Under the guise of student visas, hundreds of children fled Iran, making their way to the United States where they were welcomed by the Chassidim in America. After the American consulate was sacked, the children began traveling through Rome with Italian visas, until they eventually made it to America. All this was done through the great effort and sacrifice of many people, specifically the ones who were in contact with the Iranian Jews—the shluchim.

In the United States, new classes were set up for the students across the Chabad schools under the direction of Rabbi J.J. Hecht and the NCFJE. For a large number of these Iranian children who didn’t have family to care for them, Lubavitch families in Crown Heights



A GROUP OF IRANIAN CHILDREN RECEIVE KOS SHEL BRACHA FROM THE REBBE.

welcomed them into their homes and took care of them. This entire time the Rebbe oversaw the rescue mission, ensuring that the children were being cared for and that all their physical and spiritual needs were met. For the next several years, the Rebbe even went to visit their *sedarim* on Pesach night.<sup>4</sup>

The first time the Rebbe publicly acknowledged the special operation and the miraculous arrival of the Iranian children was at the Purim farbrengen, where he celebrated their rescue, essentially welcoming them to their new, albeit temporary, home.

On Purim night, the *zal* was full of locals and guests who had come to celebrate with the Rebbe, among them hundreds of Persian children. The Rebbe started off the farbrengen with a *niggun* and great joy. Throughout the *niggunim* and the *sichos*, the Rebbe led the crowd, uplifting and exciting the attendants with incredible joy. At one point the Rebbe had someone announce “hurry up” three times in English to get the Chassidim to say *lchaim*, and throughout the night the Rebbe gestured to many to say a *lchaim*, or two, or three.

In middle of the farbrengen, the Rebbe unexpectedly declared: “Since there are those here who have just arrived from ‘Paras’ (Persia–Iran), they should all say *lchaim* together, and the entire crowd will probably help them, and with a joyous *niggun*.” The Rebbe asked that his words be translated to Farsi for the children to understand. He then instructed the group to sing one of their *niggunim* from back home and the children

began singing “Yigdal Elokim Chai” in the traditional Persian tune and *nusach*. (During the singing the Rebbe mentioned to Reb Yoel Kahn that he should catch on to the tune of the *niggun*.)

The Rebbe said, and once again had translated, that this *niggun* should be concluded with a *lchaim*, which was of course communicated and done. The Rebbe responded with a “*lchaim v’livracha*,” and then promptly began the appropriate *niggun* of “*MiMitzrayim Ge’altanu*.”

At the farbrengen, one of the children wanted to photograph the Rebbe. The Rebbe took notice and smiled at the child’s camera, making this child’s day. All in all, the Rebbe’s fatherly care and loving demeanor towards the Iranian children was evident that Purim and during the entire period going forward. Following the Purim farbrengen, the Rebbe also instructed Rabbi Hecht to have *mishloach manos* arranged and distributed to the children, from the Rebbe to the boys, and from the Rebbetzin to the girls, ensuring that the children feel as comfortable as possible in their new home. **1**

1. Letters from Moshe Slonim, Teshura Vorst 5779.
2. See the Rebbe’s notes in “*Presidential Preparations*,” Derher Adar I, 5782.
3. Yomanim from Meir Harlig, Eliyau Friedman, Berel Junik, and others.
4. See “*Escape from Iran*,” Derher Nissan, 5773; “*Leil Shimurim*,” Derher Nissan, 5775.