



THE REBBE HEADS TO THE OHEL FOLLOWING THE PARADE.

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”YACHAD KOL YALDEI YISROEL”

IYAR 5740*

COMPILED BY: RABBI YANKY BELL
WRITTEN BY: RABBI MENACHEM LAZAROFF

ע"י בנם	טור 'לעבן מיטן רבי' הוקדש לזכרון ולעילוי נשמת
ר' יקותיאל יהודה	ר' שמואל ב"ר יהושע אליהו ז"ל
וזוגתו מרת פעסל לאה ומשפחתם שיחיו	ואשתו מרת שרה ע"ה בת ר' יקותיאל ומרת לאה הי"ד
רוהר	תנ"צ'בה'

In the month of Nissan 5740*, the Rebbe initiated a new avenue of action titled “השיב לב אבות” (על ידי בנים), calling upon children to positively influence their parents, beginning with the proper observance of Pesach.

A few weeks prior to Lag B’omer the Rebbe transformed the huge demonstration of Kiddush Hashem into an international endeavor.

In every corner of the globe, in unprecedented fashion, hundreds of parades were to be arranged. Over a million children worldwide joined together in the cry of “Shema Yisroel.”

Thus began a new era of Chabad peulos for children. The following diary was written by one of the bochurim at 770 during this time!¹

Lag B’omer Parades Worldwide

On Sunday, Daled Iyar, two weeks before Lag B’omer, the Rebbe issued a call for 120 parades to be organized across the United States and 30 parades to be held in the rest of the world.

In a place where, for whatever reason, a parade would be impractical, a gathering of some sort should be arranged.

Towards this endeavor, the Rebbe distributed 120 \$1 bills for the 120 parades being arranged in the States and 30 \$1 bills for the 30 parades being organized internationally.

In addition, the Rebbe sent \$300 to the organizers of the central parade to take place in New York. Ultimately, the Rebbe was notified that a total of 141 parades were to take place across the United States and the Rebbe added another 60 dollars to the previous 120.

Preparations

Meanwhile, in Eretz Yisroel preparations were under way for a large parade, and Rabbi Nochum Cohen of Tzach coined the slogan “*Yachad Kol Yaldei Yisroel*,” which became the official motto of the parade. This would be the first time that parades would be held in Eretz Yisroel, and the instruction came on very short notice.

Preparations had to be completed in great haste. There were individual instances in the following days when the Rebbe asked people whether they were involved in making a parade in their city. For instance, closer to Lag B’omer, the Rebbe instructed Mazkirus to contact Chicago and inquire as to the latest developments.

On Tuesday, Yud-Gimmel Iyar, the Rebbe encountered Rabbi Yaakov Yehudah Hecht (the organizer of the main

parade), while on his way home. The Rebbe asked him why he wasn’t running around in preparation for the parade!

Leading up to the big day, increased efforts were made to bring as many children as possible to the grand parade in Crown Heights. With the help of the database prepared from the Matzah-ball Contest one month earlier,² scores of children were now reachable and invited to join.

The Power Of The Children

The next day, Pesach Sheni, after Mincha, it was announced that a farbrengen would take place at 9:30 p.m. During the farbrengen, the Rebbe spoke about the central theme of Pesach Sheni that “it’s never too late,” and the connection between Pesach Sheni, Rashbi, and



* 5740-1980

Lag B'omer.

The Rebbe expounded upon the unique relationship between children and Lag B'omer, highlighting their ability to overcome our enemies. The Rebbe also emphasized the significance of children's innate ability to recognize and connect with Hashem. Afterwards, the Rebbe spoke about the prohibition of giving away land in Eretz Yisroel.

The Rebbe instructed the children to say *l'chaim* and to sing "*Utzu Eitza Visufar*," which will also have an effect on the adults. Then the Rebbe instructed those assembled to sing "*Hoshi'a Es Amecha*."

At the end of the farbrengen, the Rebbe instructed to sing a number of *niggunim*, including the Alter Rebbe's *niggun*. Afterwards, the Rebbe instructed (again!) to sing "*Utzu Eitza*" and vigorously clapped along.

The farbrengen concluded around 12:40 a.m. after *benching*. Before the Rebbe left, the *niggun* "*Utzu Eitza*" was sung once again.

The Shabbos Before

On the Shabbos before Lag B'omer, upon arriving in 770, the Rebbe let it be known through *mazkirus* that there would be a farbrengen.

The farbrengen, which began at 1:30 p.m., was dedicated almost entirely to Rashbi and the general theme of Lag B'omer. Throughout the farbrengen the Rebbe spoke repeatedly about the upcoming parade, and its effect on the children throughout the year.

The Rebbe also said the *maamar* titled: "*Lehavin inyan hilula d'Rashbi*."

At one point the Rebbe said:

"My father-in-law, the [Friediker] Rebbe gave his life and educated all those around him that one must focus on *poel mamosh*, without searching for means of *kavod* and the like... Those who operated until now in a manner of *poel mamosh* for children, especially with regards to the participation of children in the upcoming parade, should increase their efforts for the success of these activities."

Later on, the Rebbe requested that following the parade a book be published containing essays by the children describing the event and what they thought of it. This will help to continue the connection with the children even after the parade. The best essays should be selected, and printed alongside pictures of the children marching at the parade. Furthermore, the Rebbe instructed that this book should be published in many languages, starting with *Lashon Hakodesh*, Russian, English, Farsi and more.

The Rebbe added that it was the obligation of the entire *tzibbur* to assist with the expenses. The book was later published as per the Rebbe's request.



Towards the end of the farbrengen the Rebbe instructed Rabbi Hecht to say *l'chaim*. Then the Rebbe instructed Rabbi Shmuel Butman to say *l'chaim* as well after which the Rebbe gave Rabbi Hecht some of the *mezonos* in front of him, and started the *niggun* of "*V'harikosi Lachem Bracha*." The farbrengen concluded at 5:10 p.m.

On Motzei Shabbos, the Rebbe entered the small *zal* relatively early for Maariv, which many interpreted as being an encouragement of the parade efforts, and leaving more time for them to prepare.

Generally, the Rebbe's inlaid wooden table in the upstairs shul was covered with a clear plastic table cloth, and removed a few minutes prior to the Rebbe's expected entrance. Now however, with the Rebbe's unexpected arrival some 15 minutes early, the Rebbe simply placed his siddur on the plastic as the *bochurim* scrambled in all directions!

Throughout the night, multitudes of *anash* and *temimim* worked with great haste to complete the final preparations for the great parade which would take place the following day.

A Phenomenal Turnout!

By the next morning, Eastern Parkway was closed to traffic, with hundreds of police officers on patrol. 770's exterior was transformed, resplendent in a vibrant display

of signs featuring the Twelve Pesukim. Alongside these, there were additional banners. One displayed a verse from the Rebbe's *kapitel*, another commemorated 30 years of the Rebbe's *nesius* and a third featured the words והשיב לב אבות על (ידי) בנים.

The Rebbe arrived at 770 by 9:30 a.m., entering through the side entrance, due to the large stage erected in front of the main entrance, an elevated and regal *bima* built for the Rebbe. It was decorated with a crown designed from the words שלושים שנה לנשיאות כ"ק אדמו"ר שליט"א as well as the official parade logo and the logo of Mesibos Shabbos. The Rebbe's *shtender* was set up on the stage and a red carpet was rolled out from the door of 770 to the Rebbe's place.

Ahead of the parade, a special agreement had been reached with the MTA and subway trains were running directly from Brighton Beach, a heavily Jewish neighborhood, to Crown Heights in order to facilitate the way for thousands of Russian children. Additionally, hundreds of buses began arriving non-stop, delivering thousands of children and adults.

In total, an unprecedented 20,000 people from all neighborhoods and backgrounds were in attendance.

At 11:20 a.m., the tune of *Ani Maamin* began to play, and the Rebbe emerged from the doorway of 770. The Rebbe walked majestically to his place accompanied by the sound of the *niggun*. He did not walk on the red carpet.

The Rebbe spoke to the children for almost two hours. The topics that were discussed included the concepts of *achdus*, והשיב לב אבות על (ידי) בנים, not to be affected by the distractions of *galus*, and the importance of valuing time.

In total, the Rebbe delivered four *sichos*, the last of which – to the surprise of everyone present – was given in Russian. In this *sicha* the Rebbe spoke very sharply regarding the situation of the Yidden trapped behind the Iron Curtain, declaring that the study of Torah and fulfillment of mitzvos is completely in accordance with the Russian constitution. The Rebbe also proclaimed that there will soon come a time when the Russian government itself will declare this.

The Rebbe also spoke strong words about the situation in Eretz Yisroel.³

After the *sichos*, which were translated at intervals by Rabbi Hecht, the parade commenced.

First to march was Eli Lipsker's drum corps, uniformed and synchronized. On their heels came representatives of the U.S. Army, bearing their weapons, to the excitement of the children assembled. The soldiers saluted the Rebbe, and the Rebbe responded with a salute of his own.

Next in line were the floats. The first float presented was created by the *Kevutza bochurim* and it portrayed Meron. There was the *tziyon* of Rashbi with people nearby saying Tehillim, a soldier standing on guard, a child receiving his upshernish, and even a real live goat with a *shochet* as per the custom of Sefardim to slaughter a goat in Meron on Lag B'omer. The Rebbe gazed at the float with a serious expression. When he saw the *shochet* sharpening his knife, he turned away.

Another float illustrated the plight of the Russian Yidden trapped behind the Iron Curtain, complete with a prison and barbed wire. A plane hung in mid air, symbolizing its flight to freedom and, on the other side, stood a replica of 770 with people sitting and learning Torah.

Other floats presented giant *sefarim*, tefillin, a giant tzedakah *pushka* and various other *mitvzoim*. In all, 26 floats passed before the Rebbe who studied them intently, all the while clapping, waving and saluting. When the giant *pushka* passed, the Rebbe indicated with his hand that tzedakah should be thrown in and when it was brought closer, the Rebbe tossed in a coin.

Afterwards, the children paraded in front of the Rebbe, who smiled and waved at them, sometimes clapping his hands. After all the children had marched past the Rebbe, Rabbi Hecht suggested that the Chassidim do the same and the *niggun* of "Al Hasela" was sung. The Rebbe clapped along vigorously while everyone danced in their places.

As the parade concluded, Rabbi Hecht asked the



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Rebbe if he should announce that there would be a farbrengen that evening, but the Rebbe replied that this was still uncertain.

He also asked if the Rebbe was satisfied and the Rebbe replied affirmatively. When he commented that much work had been put into the success of the parade, the Rebbe said, “Hashem helped as well...”

At 5:00 p.m., as the Rebbe departed to the Ohel, he asked Rabbi Hecht if the children’s carnival held in the park had ended. When he informed the Rebbe that it had concluded, and that it was a resounding success, the Rebbe replied: “May the success continue throughout the entire year.”

The success of the parade was mirrored with that of the international campaign, which turned out to be a tremendous success. Thousands of children participated in parades across the globe, particularly in Eretz Yisroel.

No Rest!

Finally, the hundreds of *bochurim* and *yungerleit* who worked tirelessly for days and nights before Lag B’omer, slipped away for some well-earned rest... but not for long because shortly after returning from the Ohel, at 9:30 p.m., the Rebbe announced that there would be a farbrengen that very night!

At the farbrengen, the Rebbe expounded on the new motto of the parades in Eretz Yisroel – “*Yachad Kol Yaldei Yisroel!*” and connected it to the theme of the latest campaign of “*V’hayshiv lev avos al banim.*” The Rebbe also connected this concept of Jewish unity to Rashbi.

On a different note, the Rebbe spoke again about the dire situation in Eretz Yisroel, and warned against giving away Jewish land in exchange for “peace,” painfully reflecting upon the most recent act of terror.

At a certain point in the farbrengen, the Rebbe instructed Rabbi Yosef Goldstein, who spoke at the parade, to say *l’chaim* with a full cup. Rabbi Goldstein promptly said *l’chaim* with a smaller cup (which was full). The Rebbe responded in surprise, “Is that a full cup? You spoke much more than that!” Afterward the Rebbe said, “Whoever wants to join may do so, Moshiach is coming soon!”

While addressing people who were satisfied with what had been achieved thus far in reaching tens of thousands of Jewish children, the Rebbe insisted on not being complacent; more rallies, more activities and more children!

The Rebbe asked that a meeting be held immediately following the farbrengen to discuss how to keep the momentum of Lag B’omer going with programs for Jewish children in the days that follow.



Towards the end of the farbrengen, the Rebbe gave the leftover *mezonos* to Rabbi Hecht as a contribution towards the upcoming activities.

The farbrengen concluded with the singing of “*Hoshi’a Es Amecha,*” which the Rebbe vigorously encouraged. The Rebbe then started the *niggun* “*Ki Vesimcha.*” The farbrengen ended at around 12:50 a.m.

Immediately after, a children’s rally with the Rebbe’s participation was called for Chof Iyar, a mere two days later.

The rally was a remarkable affair. The Rebbe encouraged the lively singing (including “*Utzu Eitza*” twice). The 12 *pesukim* were recited, coins for tzedakah were distributed, and the Rebbe said four *sichos* which were translated by Rabbi Hecht.

By now, after over a month of extraordinary occurrences, there were no surprises anymore. Each passing day shattered the expectations of common practice. **T**

1. Some of the events described below were originally published in “*A Salute To Judaism,*” Derher Iyar 5774 and “*Children at the Forefront,*” Derher of Sivan 5774, based on various sources and interviews.
2. See “*Children at the Forefront,*” Derher *ibid.*
3. One day earlier, a terrorist murdered a *yeshiva bochur* in Chevron.