



(CIRCA. 5722) RABBI PINNY LEW

<p>ע"י בנם ר' יקותיאל יהודה וזוגתו מרת פעסל לאה ומשפחתם שיחיו רוהר</p>	<p>טור 'לעבן מיטן רבין' הוקדש לזכרון ולעילוי נשמת ר' שמואל ב"ר יהושע אליהו ז"ל ואשתו מרת שרה ע"ה בת ר' יקותיאל ומרת לאה הי"ד ת"נ צ"ב</p>
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# “When Rav Yosef Turned Sixty”

NISSAN 5722\*



Yud-Alef Nissan is known as a day that Chassidim celebrate the Rebbe's birthday. However, this wasn't always the case. In fact, this auspicious day wasn't widely known or openly celebrated for many years—until 5722\*, when the Rebbe celebrated his sixtieth birthday in public. For the first time, the Rebbe shared this personal milestone with all of the Chassidim.

Presented is an account of the events of this month based on the diary of Reb Avrohom Ber Blesofsky, a bochur in 770 at the time.

## EREV SHABBOS - BEIS NISSAN

Today, the Rebbe went to the Ohel. He brought along a copy of the new *Sefer Hamamaarim Kuntreisim* that was recently published by Merkos. The *sefer* is a compilation of the Friediker Rebbe's *kuntreisim* issues 1-22, many of which have since been out of print. A second volume is in the works and is expected to contain issues 23 - 43.

Also, many are anticipating the *sefer* Likkutei Sichos [volume 1] to soon be released. The *bochurim* involved with the *mareh mekomos* are working overtime to ensure that it should be out for Yud-Alef Nissan.

This week the Rebbe had a *yechidus* with Rabbi Avrohom Yehoshua Twersky, a son of the “Milwaukee Rebbe.” He resides in Pittsburgh and works as a psychiatrist, and is affiliated with Lubavitch.

During his *yechidus*, the Rebbe advised him to move to New York and practice as a psychiatrist there, and Dr. Twersky responded: “I wouldn’t be able to do that unless Hashem himself told me so.”



THE FIRST PRINTING OF LIKKUTEI SICHOS VOL. 1.

### BEIS NISSAN

“Today, the Rebbe gave me a beeswax candle and asked that it be lit to commemorate the [Rebbe Rashab’s] *yahrtzeit* on Beis Nissan.” – Diary entry of Reb Leibel Groner from Beis Nissan.

When I entered the Rebbe’s room that morning, he was standing and reading the mail. The Rebbe seemed to be in a rush as he glanced at the clock, and motioned that it’s late.

On the table, there were many open *sefarim*, both *nigleh* and Chassidus.

Overall, the Rebbe looked very tense.

He then davened Mincha earlier than usual and requested that Rabbi Hodakov bring him what he needs, because “*ich halt beim foren*” (I’m ready to go).

– From the diary of Reb Leibel Groner

The Rebbe replied, “What do you expect — an angel with two wings to come and tell you?”<sup>1</sup>

## SUNDAY - DALED NISSAN

As customary, the Rebbe went to draw *mayim shelanu* for the matzos that would be baked the next day for Kfar Chabad and for members of *beis harav*. After the Rebbe left, the *bochurim* added some water to the bucket while singing *Keli Atah*, and ended off with dancing.

Later that night, while I was in the bakery helping out with the preparations for the next day’s matzah baking, I was informed that Rabbi Hodakov had called and inquired (in the name of the Rebbe) if everything was going well and if all of the *hiddurim* were being followed.

## SUNDAY - YUD ALEF NISSAN

In the afternoon, the Rebbe went to the Ohel and brought along money that was sent in honor of Yud-Alef Nissan *Keren Hashishim*.

That night, Motzei Yud-Alef Nissan, the Rebbe came to the *farbrenge* with a *siddur* and a copy of the new Likkutei Sichos. It was a special edition copy made for the Rebbe, with a beautiful cover and embossed with gold lettering. This was the first time the Rebbe *farbrenge* on Yud-Alef Nissan!<sup>2</sup>

## THE FARBRENGEN

Right away, in the first *sicha*, the Rebbe began to expound on the significance of a birthday.<sup>3</sup> He mentioned the Talmud Yerushalmi which says that on a person’s birthday “*mazalo gover*”

## TUESDAY - YUD GIMMEL NISSAN

After Mincha, the Rebbe gave Reb Shmuel Levitin a stack of 61 crisp new dollars as a form of participation in the farbrengens of the coming year. Reb Shmuel raffled off these dollars, six per month, as he wanted them to last ten months. Each ticket cost twenty dollars. The significance of the number 61 was that it corresponded to the Rebbe's new *kapitel*.

– From a letter written by Reb Zusha Feldman to his friend Reb Meilach Zwiebel

(his *mazal* is strong), and explained how this gives a Yid the ability to correct his past.

“It is for this reason that the Frierdiker Rebbe advised that a birthday is a day of solitude, introspection, and an opportunity to do *teshuvah*.<sup>4</sup> This is especially the case when it comes to a milestone birthday, for example a bar mitzvah, or the turn of a decade. As the Gemara relates: “When Rav Yosef turned sixty, he made a holiday for *Rabanan*.”<sup>5</sup> For *Rabanan*, a birthday is a day to be celebrated with a *seudas mitzvah*. Now certainly here, where there is a large assembly of Yidden, and we will now make a *siyum* on a *mesechta*, this day will unanimously be rendered a day of celebration!”<sup>6</sup>

The Rebbe then made a *siyum* on Maseches Pesachim.

This was followed by a *hadran-sicha* about the mitzvah of *pidyon haben*, which discussed whether the *bracha* of *Shehecheyanu* is made by the father or the Kohen.<sup>7</sup> As the Gemara concludes that it is, in fact, the obligation of the father to make the *bracha*, the *sicha* evolved into a plea to Hashem—our father—to fulfill his obligation and redeem us Yidden—his sons.

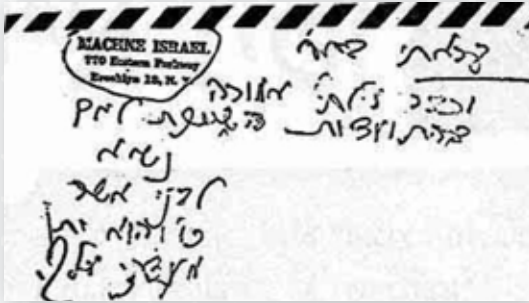
The Rebbe spoke very passionately about this topic. He cried that it has been so long since the famous statement of the Frierdiker Rebbe that our *avodah* is complete and all that remains is “*tzuputzen di k'neplach*,” to polish the buttons, as every *ketz* has long passed. The Rebbe tearfully exclaimed that we have already endured enough *chevlei Moshiach* (birth pangs of Moshiach), all that is now required is for Moshiach to arrive as *neshamah* in a *guf*.<sup>8</sup>

At certain points throughout the farbrengen, the Rebbe cried profusely. For some, it felt similar to the emotions of this past Simchas Torah, when the Rebbe spoke about the Yidden stuck in Russia. While sobbing, the Rebbe wiped his tears with the sleeve of his *kapota*.

At one point in the farbrengen, the Rebbe asked that *V'harikosi Lachem Bracha* be sung. When the singing reached a crescendo, the Rebbe paused and announced that this is an auspicious moment



(PURIM 5722) RABBI PINNY LEW



AN ANSWER FROM THE REBBE ON 12 NISSAN 5722\* IN WHICH HE REFERENCES HIS WORDS SPOKEN AT THE FARBRENGEN THE PREVIOUS DAY.

of *bracha* for all Chassidim who are physically distant from the Rebbe, such as the Chassidim in Kfar Chabad and Russia, and even those who cannot write to the Rebbe. After that, the singing picked up again and continued for some time.

In another *sicha*, the Rebbe revisited the mention of his sixtieth birthday and discussed the Mishnah in Pirkei Avos of “*ben shishim leziknah.*”

“As the Torah’s definition of *ziknah* [aging] is “*zeh shekanah chachmah*” [one who has acquired wisdom], it is clearly referring to learning Torah. It is thus appropriate that we utilize this opportunity to demand an increase in learning Torah.”

The Rebbe then added:

“For some reason, whenever we sit together we end up with some sort of “*gezeirah.*” I’m not sure why it is called a “*gezeirah*” as I am not overriding anyone’s free will. But either way, it is important that everything should always be marked by an

Before burning the *chometz*, the Rebbe read through a pile of papers while wearing a *gartel*. He separated those that he read and requested that I bundle them. He then took many *panim* that had accumulated since last year’s Pesach and burned them together with the *chometz*.

Before the Rebbe went back to his room, he told me that I should meet him there soon to collect more *panim* that would need to be burned. After some time, the Rebbe had read through more *panim*, and I came up to take them and burned them.

– From the diary of Reb Leibel Groner

On the third day of Chol Hamoed, I asked the Rebbe for a *bracha* for our young daughter, Chaya Mushka.

I informed the Rebbe that the doctor had just told me that it may be necessary to give her another shot of penicillin, as he is concerned that there may be a new infection, or that perhaps the old one will return. I also told the Rebbe that lately, my wife also hasn’t been feeling too well.

The Rebbe responded with an empathetic “*ach!*” He then reached for his filing cabinet and opened up a drawer. He withdrew a small package of matzah, opened it, and took out four pieces, two larger and two smaller. He said, “Take this for both your *balebusta* and your daughter, they should have a healthy Pesach and a healthy year.”

– From the diary of Reb Leibel Groner

increase in the realm of Torah and mitzvos.”

Overall it was a very joyous farbrengen. As far as I can recall, the Rebbe has never spoken about himself or about anything personal like a birthday, as much as he did in this farbrengen.

## WEDNESDAY - YUD DALED NISSAN/EREV PESACH

After Mincha, the Rebbe distributed shmurah matzah. He was wearing a silk *kapota*.

Before beginning his *seder*, the Rebbe visited the *bochurim*’s dining room at 676 Eastern Parkway and delivered a *bracha*: “This should be a *freiliche* Pesach, and we should go on from it having amassed *rechush gadol both beruchniyus and begashmiyus.*” The Rebbe’s face was shining throughout his visit.

## SUNDAY - CHAI NISSAN

As per his annual custom, Rabbi Yolles from Philadelphia came to visit on the anniversary of the Rebbe’s bris. Although in previous years they conducted their conversation in the shul, last year the Rebbe had expressed discontent with the disorderliness of the crowd and instead asked that Rabbi Yolles come to his room to speak.



This year, Rabbi Yolles approached the Rebbe in shul during the last *kaddish* and asked if they could remain in shul, assuring the Rebbe that there won't be a tumult. However, the Rebbe didn't respond and instead pointed him towards his room, where they went and spoke for approximately 45 minutes.

After the *yechidus*, he shared one of the topics they discussed. He related that the Rebbe offered additional insight into the Gemara of Rav Yosef and his birthday *seudah* that was referenced in the *sicha* of Yud-Alef Nissan.

## WEDNESDAY - CHOF BEIS NISSAN/SHEVI' I SHEL PESACH

When we returned from *tahalucha* we went upstairs to the Friediker Rebbe's apartment where the Rebbe's *seudah* was taking place. Right then the Rebbe said that those who had just returned from *tahalucha* should have the honor of starting a *niggun*. We chose to sing Napoleon's March.

After we sang the *niggun*, the Rebbe said that incidentally, this *niggun* has to do with the subject discussed earlier, regarding Polish Chassidim and Chabad. After some discussion, the Rebbe said: "The *Poishers* say that '*Hoshia Es Amecha*' is a *Poishish niggun*, let us now transform it into a *Chabadsker niggun*!"

## SHABBOS MEVARCHIM IYAR

In the farbrengen of this Shabbos, the Rebbe discussed the significance of his new *kapitel*—*samach-alef*, and highlighted the *possuk* "*Yamim*



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*al yemei melech tosif, shnosav kemo dor vador.*"

Another topic that featured prominently in the farbrengen was Moshiach. Even the *maamar* was about Moshiach, as the *dibbur hamaschil* was the *possuk* "*V'nigleh kvod Havaye vera'u kol basar yachdav.*" It seems that the topic of Moshiach was a recurring theme in recent farbrengens, especially that of Acharon Shel Pesach.

1. Details filled in from My Encounter JEM interview. [http://jemia.org/email/newsletter/My\\_Encounter/3-1-14.pdf](http://jemia.org/email/newsletter/My_Encounter/3-1-14.pdf)
2. Aside from one notable exception: In 5707 the Rebbe held a small farbrengen with Chassidim in Paris.
3. See Derher Shevat 5778, Mivtza Yom Huledes.
4. As brought in the Hayom Yom of Yud-Alef Nissan.
5. Moed Katan 28a.
6. Toras Menachem vol. 33, from page 284.
7. Printed in Likkutei Sichos vol. 11, from page 42.
8. Ashreinu.page.link/6y7Y from 25:00.
9. Another version of this story was recorded: "When the Rebbe left the farbrengen, he happened to meet Reb Shmuel Levitin. Reb Shmuel reacted in surprise and admitted that he didn't expect the Rebbe to leave then. The Rebbe replied: "That is exactly how Moshiach will arrive. We will be speaking and Moshiach will suddenly appear."

## HOW WILL MOSHIACH COME?

After the Shabbos farbrengen and Mincha, the Rebbe walked home. A few moments before the Rebbe emerged from 770, Reb Shmuel Levitin had walked out. The Rebbe was walking fast and Reb Shmuel, who was caught by surprise, reacted by saying "*Moshiach vet kummen pavalye*" [Moshiach will come at a slow pace]. The Rebbe replied: "*Moshiach vet kummen pison*" [Moshiach will come suddenly].<sup>9</sup>

– Reb Zusha Feldman