



11 NISSAN 5732

לעילוי נשמת
הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' מרדכי ב"ר מרדכי ע"ה
רב קהילת חברת ש"ס - קראון הייטס כאן צוה"א את הברכה
נלב"ע ביום ש"ק פ' ויקרא ג' ניסן ה'תש"פ

ולע"נ זוגתו מרת פעסא רחל לאה בת ר' שניאור זלמן ע"ה
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גורארי'
תנ"צ'יה'

הוקדש ע"י בני משפחתם שיחיו

LIGHT & JOY

*Celebrating
the Rebbe's
121st birthday*

A CHASSIDISHER FARBRENGEN

As we celebrate the Rebbe's 121st birthday and conclude the Rebbe's 120th year, me'ah v'esrim shana, A Chassidisher Derher sat down with several Chassidim for a chassidisher farbrengen: Rabbi Yisroel Noach Vogel, shliach in Postville, Iowa; Rabbi Eli Nosson Silberberg, Rosh Yeshiva of Mesivta Lubavitch Chicago; Rabbi Zushe Greenberg, shliach in Solon, Ohio; and Rabbi Shmuel Butman, director of Tzach, Brooklyn, NY.

They graciously shared with us some of their memories of Yud-Aleph Nissan with the Rebbe, and imparted words of inspiration as we begin a new decade by the Rebbe, in the spirit of "והימים האלו נזכרים ונעשים".

We encourage our readers to review the special magazine published in honor of Yud-Aleph Nissan — 120 Years, "Yud-Aleph Nissan with the Rebbe," where many of the events described here are featured in greater detail.

Interviews by: Rabbi Yossi Katz | Written by: Mendel Zaklikovsky

שיר המעלות

YUD-ALEPH NISSAN WITH THE REBBE

Rabbi Yisroel Noach Vogel



Yud-Aleph Nissan by the Rebbe was a day rich with *giluyim* and much joy; so many different memories come to mind when I recall Yud-Aleph Nissan by the Rebbe.

I will try to impart from my memories of Yud-Aleph Nissan in the Rebbe's presence throughout the years; both my own personal memories and what I remember hearing from other Chassidim. Ultimately, sharing these memories evoke within every Chossid a strong yearning to be speedily reunited with the Rebbe physically, and merit the most joyous Yud-Aleph Nissan of all, with the *geulah ha'amitis v'hashleimah*.¹



Generally, the Rebbe did not farbreng on Yud-Aleph Nissan in the earlier years; the one exception was in 5722*, on the Rebbe's sixtieth birthday. The first of the annual Yud-Aleph Nissan farbrengens took place in 5731*. When the Rebbe returned from the Ohel on Yud-Aleph Nissan, he walked to the sink at the end of the hallway on the main floor of 770 to wash *netilas yadayim* before Mincha. The Rebbe then turned to Rabbi Groner and informed him that there will be "a short farbrengen." The farbrengen was such a surprise, that there wasn't even enough time to set up a microphone (although luckily, there is a recording of the farbrengen)!

The Rebbe began the farbrengen with the famous *maamar* "B'Yom Ashte' Asar," which was edited by the Rebbe and published in 5749*. During the *maamar*, a technician came to set up the microphone, but the speakers started emitting loud screeches. The Rebbe

motioned to the technician to turn off the speakers, and the technician ended up setting up the microphone after the *maamar*. The farbrengen was short; lasting under an hour.

The events surrounding the farbrengen of Yud-Aleph Nissan 5732* ("*shnas hashivim*") were very special; the Rebbe began speaking about Yud-Aleph Nissan almost a month earlier, on Purim!

During the months preceding Yud-Aleph Nissan,



I was learning in the Lubavitch Cheder of London. Although we were small children, we too wanted to give the Rebbe a *matana*. Before Yud-Aleph Nissan we were already learning Gemara, and with the encouragement of our teacher we reviewed 70 (!) *blatt* of Gemara *ba'al peh* in honor of Yud-Aleph Nissan.

After Pesach, we were informed of a pleasant surprise: The Rebbe had sent a pocket sized Tanya with a *michtav kloli* pasted in the back cover to every single child that participated in our gift! The class younger than mine, who had also given the Rebbe their own gift for Yud-Aleph Nissan, received a pocket sized siddur with a different *michtav kloli* attached.

One small difference in the letters was that in our letter the Rebbe wrote: "... As it is written in this Tanya you shall contemplate that Hashem is always over you..." In the other letter the Rebbe wrote: "... As it is written in this siddur before *Modeh Ani*, that immediately after awakening one should remember that Hashem is over him..." (The Rebbe sent the siddur and Tanya, together with the letters, to children worldwide in thanks of their gifts in honor of Yud-Aleph Nissan.)

One particular anecdote which comes to mind from the farbrengen of *shnas hashiv'im* occurred as the Rebbe was leaving the shul after the farbrengen. The enthused crowd of Chassidim pushed forwards, and the banister on the western bleacher broke, causing a number of people to end up on the floor, right in the Rebbe's path.



THE TANYA SENT BY THE REBBE WITH THE ACCOMPANYING LETTER

RABBI YISROEL NOACH VOGEL

The Rebbe's secretaries now had the job of helping all those on the floor to get up, handing them their hats and glasses etc.

One *bochur* who had ended up on the floor, in the confusion, reached out and pulled on someone's hand to pull himself up. When he looked up though he was shocked to see that he had pulled on the Rebbe's hand!

The *bochur* didn't know what to do with himself; he locked himself in his room for three days straight...

The next time the *hanhala* of 770 was in *yechidus*, they told the Rebbe about this *bochur* and about his current emotional state. The Rebbe commented: "Nu, *mistame iz er a chassidisher bochur*—He probably is a *chassidisher bochur*."

During the spring of 5733*, a controversy broke out





THE REBBE DISTRIBUTES DOLLARS FOLLOWING
MAARIV ON YUD GIMMEL NISSAN 5749

in the Crown Heights community, causing the Rebbe much *agmas nefesh*. Rabbi Nissan Mindel related that several days before Yud-Aleph Nissan, as he was leaving the Rebbe's room the Rebbe told him, "We will meet again on Erev Pesach, at the matzah distribution." When he asked the Rebbe why they would not meet at the Yud-Aleph Nissan farbrengen, the Rebbe responded: "How is it possible to farbreng when there is such controversy?"

Ultimately the Rebbe did farbreng but seemed to be in a withdrawn mood: the Rebbe did not encourage the singing, even of the new song for the Rebbe's Kapital, and didn't ask even once for a specific *niggun* to be sung, even before the *maamar*. (Before the *maamar* the Rebbe looked at the clock, motioned slightly with his head, and began the *maamar*.) Even at the end of the farbrengen when the Rebbe began to sing "*Ufaratzta*," he was looking down at the table as if singing to himself.

During the farbrengen the Rebbe spoke at length about the Holocaust, delivered the famous *hadran* on Kesubos (which was later edited and distributed by the

Rebbe in the *kovetz* "*Dvar Malchus*"), and also spoke about strengthening the 71 institutions from last year's Yud-Aleph Nissan and establishing an additional 72 institutions in the coming year.

At the Yud-Aleph Nissan farbrengen in 5735*, a *niggun* for that year had not yet been chosen. After the first *sicha*, Rabbi Shlomo Cunin began the *niggun* "*V'Elokim Malki Mikedem*," and in the following *sicha* the Rebbe began to speak about that very *possuk*! The Rebbe also delivered the *maamar* "*Vehigadta levincha*," a relatively rare *dibbur hamaschil*.

The famous *sicha* about the billionaire Howard Hughes was said at the Yud-Aleph Nissan farbrengen in 5736*. The Rebbe used this story of a billionaire—who despite his riches was held captive by his mind—to explain what true freedom is.

During the farbrengen of 5737*, the Rebbe rejected certain practices to remember the Yidden murdered in the Holocaust during the *seder*, as well as to leave an empty chair remembering the Yidden behind the Iron Curtain. The Rebbe also made a *siyum* on *maseches*

Pesachim for the fourth time at a Yud-Aleph Nissan farbrengen!² The Rebbe also began the *maamar* with the *possuk* “*Vekocha*,” commemorating 100 years from when this *maamar* was said by the Rebbe Maharash.

Yud Aleph Nissan 5738* marked the establishment of Education Day USA and the Rebbe addressed this at length at the farbrengen, thanking the American government and speaking about education. The Rebbe also spoke about the inauguration of the new shul in Kfar Chabad, named in honor of the Rebbe. At the end of the farbrengen the Rebbe proclaimed: “*Lshana haba’a b’Yerushalayim!*”

That year was also the first time the Rebbe farbrenged on Yud-Gimmel Nissan, saying to Rabbi Hoda-kov that it was “as a continuation of the Yud-Aleph Nissan farbrengen.” In the course of this farbrengen the Rebbe finished discussing some of the topics spoken about at the Yud-Aleph Nissan farbrengen. This custom continued until 5747* (even after a farbrengen on Yud-Aleph Nissan itself stopped in 5746*).

On Rosh Chodesh Nissan 5740*, the Rebbe spoke for the first time about “*Veheishiv lev avos al yedei banim*” (the concept of specifically children educating their families and impacting their home). The Rebbe continued to speak about this passionately on Yud-Aleph Nissan.

The first Yud-Aleph Nissan farbrengen to be televised was in 5741*, as the world reeled from the attempted assassination of President Ronald Reagan just over a week earlier. The Rebbe derived from this episode the need for education to be based on belief in Hashem. If a child knows that there’s an eye that sees and an ear that hears, he won’t be so fast to commit a crime. The Rebbe also wished the president a speedy and complete recovery.

The whirlwind of events throughout the following nights came as a surprise to the Chassidim:

Towards the end of the *leil* Yud-Aleph Nissan farbrengen the Rebbe launched a campaign to unite all Jewish children by having a Torah written in Yerushalayim especially for them with each letter purchased by a different child. The next night, *motzei* Yud-Aleph Nissan, the Rebbe surprisingly held another farbrengen, discussing more details about the new *sefer Torah* campaign. The Rebbe began the farbrengen by reporting the “good news,” that the writing of the *sefer Torah* had already started in the Old City of Yerushalayim. On the next night, *leil bedikas chometz*, for the third night in a row, the Rebbe farbrenged yet again! On Shabbos, (Erev Pesach), another farbrengen was held, also as a surprise (the Rebbe instructed not to notify the Chassidim until

an hour before the farbrengen was scheduled to begin). Thus ended a *Yud-Aleph Nissan* dike week full of *giluyim*!

Ahead of Yud-Aleph Nissan 5742*, *shmonim shana*, a massive *shturem* was underway among Chassidim in celebration of the Rebbe’s eightieth birthday. At a rally on Rosh Chodesh Nissan, the Rebbe said that because Pesach is a time to be with family, and because of the costs involved with coming to New York—those who were planning on coming to New York for Yud-Aleph Nissan should not come, and should instead spend the money on *tzedakah* and Pesach expenses.

I remember people saying that when Mr. Zalmon Jaffe asked the Rebbetzin if he should come, the Rebbetzin answered that the Rebbe’s words don’t apply to “good friends.”

That year was the first time the farbrengen was broadcasted live via satellite in my hometown, London. The cost was exorbitant; just the initial connection was extremely costly, and every additional minute incurred additional cost. Two hours into the farbrengen, the money ran out and a quick appeal was made and everybody gave what they were able to. We ended up watching another hour, and listening to the rest of the farbrengen.

Many important officials and dignitaries came to the actual farbrengen, and the mayor of New York City sat next to the Rebbe.

After the farbrengen, which finished at 3:30 a.m., the Rebbe distributed a Tanya to all the participants until 6:30 a.m.! The Rebbe heard *krias haTorah* before returning home for a few hours. The next day, the Rebbe went to the Ohel and upon returning, announced that there would be another farbrengen. During the farbrengen the Rebbe encouraged the singing of “*Al Achas*” in an extra special way.

If you think about the Rebbe’s schedule during those few days, the results are astounding: the Rebbe was occupied—either at the Ohel or with the Chassidim—for nearly 48 hours!

A large part of the farbrengen in 5743* was dedicated to spreading belief in Hashem amongst non-Jews. The Rebbe related a story of Mr. David Chase (the Rebbe shared the story without a name) who had been traveling on his yacht and needed to daven. He asked the ship’s captain which direction *mizrach* was and unknowingly inspired the captain in his devotion to Hashem. Several weeks later, during the Acharon Shel Pesach farbrengen, the Rebbe said that the story had not aroused the level of interest among the Chassidim that he had hoped, emphasizing how from this story one can make a ‘*trask*’ (big deal).

In honor of Yud-Aleph Nissan 5744*, the *niggun* “Veyeidu” was composed by Reb Sholom Bruchstat. The Rebbe displayed special affection to the *niggun*, as was evident from the Rebbe’s special encouragement of the *niggun* throughout the year (especially during the Purim farbrengen of 5745*).

At the conclusion of that Yud-Aleph Nissan farbrengen the Rebbe distributed a Tanya for the second time, this time through the Kollel *yungerleit*.

The Yud-Aleph Nissan farbrengen in 5745* (the last farbrengen to be held on Yud-Aleph Nissan, *le’eis ata*) stands out as the first *siyum haRambam*. The Rebbe himself made the *siyum* during the farbrengen amidst great joy and song. The Rebbe also spoke of the 850th birthday of the Rambam and spoke about using this milestone to impact even non-Jews. The Rebbe even proposed making a stamp with the Rambam’s picture or a saying of his in order to arouse interest.

During this farbrengen the Rebbe spoke about himself in a unique and humble manner, explaining that the farbrengen was not a personal celebration but rather a celebration of the whole movement.

The Rebbe explained that after the Frierdiker Rebbe’s *histalkus*, someone had to continue his activities, acting as his “hands and feet” on this world. Therefore, it doesn’t matter who this person is, rather what matters is the continuation of the Frierdiker Rebbe’s activities.

The Rebbe proceeded to relate a story he had heard in *cheder*, concerning a rav who was particularly short. When questioned as to how such a short person has such a great position he replied that although he himself is small, the chair is quite large. The Rebbe explained that being that the chair—the activities of the Frierdiker Rebbe—is large, it doesn’t matter who sits on the chair, because even if he is small “*der beinkel is grois...*”



ONE OF THE MANY STAMPS ISSUED WORLDWIDE MARKING THE 850TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE RAMBAM'S BIRTH, 5745

The Rebbe concluded by saying, that “the fact that a reason or cause was found, to connect this farbrengen to the birthday of a certain individual, is only a secondary reason and really nonessential; it is however important and helpful in raising and expanding ‘*der beinkel*’—encouraging more study of Chassidus and *hafatzas hamaayanos*.

From 5746* and on,

the Rebbe stopped farbrengen on Yud-Aleph Nissan, and the central event of Yud-Aleph Nissan shifted to the *bracha* from one of the elder Chassidim to the Rebbe. After their *bracha*, the Rebbe would respond with a short *sicha*.

Following the *bracha* on Yud-Aleph Nissan 5747*, the Rebbe responded with an eight minute *sicha*, mentioning the *bracha* that Yaakov Avinu gave Shevet Asher, that their bread would be exceptionally rich. Chassidim took this as a sign that the Rebbe would distribute something—“rich bread”—to the Chassidim, and indeed, the Rebbe distributed dollars after the *sicha*.

In 5748* the *bracha* took place in the Rebbe’s house (usually the *bracha* would be in *gan eden hatachton*). During the *sicha* after the *bracha*, the Rebbe mentioned several times the *maamar chazal*: “*Ein mazal l’Yisroel*,” noting that “*ayin*” (which is spelled the same as “*ein*”), referring to Hashem Himself, is the source of the Yidden’s *mazal*. I remember *bochurim* discussing that “*ayin*” is *roshei teivos* Yud-Aleph Nissan.

A few days later, on Erev Pesach, the Rebbe spoke a *sicha* after every *tefillah*—the only time throughout the *nesius* that the Rebbe did so! (The Rebbe also said a *sicha* every night of Pesach after Maariv, unusual and unique to that year of Hakhel.)

I remember returning to 770 for Yud-Aleph Nissan 5749* after being away for almost a year and thinking as if I had entered a new world. The style of the Rebbe’s farbrengens had changed drastically; the Rebbe had stopped delivering Rashi *sichos* and *biurim* in the Torah of his father, and in general the Rebbe spoke in much lower tone than I remembered.

Ahead of Yud-Aleph Nissan, several Chassidim composed *niggunim* for Yud-Aleph Nissan. That year, a special committee had chosen a *niggun* to be sung, and the Chasidim had followed their choice. However, at the beginning of the Shabbos farbrengen before Yud-Aleph Nissan, the Rebbe began speaking about the first *possuk* in his new *kapitel*, “*Shir mizmor livnei Korach*.” After the *sicha*, the Chassidim spontaneously burst into the (now) famous *niggun* that begins with the words “*Shir mizmor*.”

Motzei Shabbos was Yud-Aleph Nissan and Maariv was held in the big shul downstairs. After the *bracha* and the Rebbe’s *sicha*, everyone burst into the new *niggun* and the dancing and singing continued late into the night. I remember one of the shluchim remarking that those moments were “*emese minutin*—moments of truth.”

The feeling among Chassidim during that Yud-Aleph Nissan was special and personal. It was just a

few months after finishing the year of *aveilus* after the *histalkus* of the Rebbetzin, and here we were, together for Yud-Aleph Nissan, after all that the Rebbe went through.

The next night, the Rebbe distributed a limited number of copies of Kuntres Ahavas Yisroel, and then continued to distribute dollars to the rest of the Chassidim waiting in line.

But the surprises were not done. Two days later, on Yud-Gimmel Nissan, the Rebbe said a surprise *maamar*, “*Matzah Zu*,” in the tune unique to a *maamar*.

This was an unbelievably special moment and a massive surprise. The Rebbe had not said *maamarim* in the *maamar* tune for several years! Chassidim were in total shock!

In Crown Heights there was an alarm system set up to notify Chassidim if something special was happening in 770. One alarm meant that there was a *farbrengen* at the regular time (9:30 p.m.). Two alarms meant that the Rebbe was saying a surprise *sicha*. Three alarms were never sounded! Chassidim dropped whatever they were doing and ran to 770. I remember the crowds pouring into 770...

I remember vividly how the Rebbe wrapped a handkerchief around his hand and covered his hands with

his siddur. Then the Rebbe said: “*Zogen dem niggun*—sing the *niggun*,” meaning to begin the *hachana niggun* for a *maamar*.

Following the *maamar*, everyone just started dancing spontaneously.

On Yud-Aleph Nissan 5750* the Rebbe was in his house. Shortly before Yud-Aleph Nissan, word went out that the Rebbe was going to distribute the *maamar* “*Ki Yishalcha Bincha*.” This was the first time that the Rebbe distributed a *kuntres* containing solely a *maamar* of his own to everyone. (The Rebbe had once distributed his own *maamar* only to the shluchim in 5748*).



KUNTRES AHAVAS YISROEL, DISTRIBUTED BY THE REBBE ON 12 NISSAN 5749*.

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Yehi ratzon that all these anecdotes and memories will help strengthen the *hiskashrus* of the readers to the Rebbe in the spirit of “והימים האלו נזכרים ונעשים,” and that very soon, we will march to the *geulah*, with the Rebbe at our lead, now!



FARBRENGEN, YUD-ALEPH NISSAN 5742

בית ה' נלך

YUD-ALEPH NISSAN TODAY

Rabbi Eli Nosson Silberberg



My earliest memories of Yud-Aleph Nissan are from when I was a young boy, growing up on shlichus in West Bloomfield, Michigan. Every year my family would travel to New York for Pesach, and we would generally come a few days early, to be in the Rebbe's presence on Yud-Aleph Nissan.

Although I was a young boy at the time, the events of *shnas hashmonim*, the Rebbe's eightieth birthday in 5742*, are etched in my mind. Our journey from Michigan to New York began with driving through a massive snowstorm and our estimated time of arrival in 770 was delayed considerably.

Yud-Aleph Nissan that year was on a Sunday, and we finally arrived in New York just before the Rebbe's farbrengen on Sunday night. Because of our delay, my father drove our overstuffed station wagon directly to 770, so we would catch as much of the farbrengen as possible.

Towards the end of the farbrengen, the Rebbe surprised all the participants with the announcement that he would distribute a Tanya as a token of appreciation to all those who traveled and invested time and energy to participate in the farbrengen.

After a very long road-trip, my siblings and I were extremely tired. So we decided to leave 770 and go to our hosts in Crown Heights for a few hours, and then we'd come back to 770 in time to catch the end of the *chalukah* (we assumed that the *chalukah* would take a few hours, due to the thousands of people who were lining up to receive Tanyas).

My father received a Tanya from the Rebbe and

came to the house to bring me and my siblings. Unfortunately, by the time we arrived in 770, the *chalukah* had already finished, and the Rebbe returned to his room.

(Interestingly, my wife who was a little girl at the time also attended this farbrengen in the women's section and did receive the Tanya, so we do have this special Tanya in our home.)



Years later, in 5748*, I came to learn in yeshiva in Crown Heights, and I had the *zechus* of being in the Rebbe's presence for the next few years. By this time however, the Rebbe had stopped farbrenging on Yud-Aleph Nissan, and several months later, after the *histalkus* of the Rebbetzin on Chof-Beis Shevat, the Rebbe stopped farbrenging during the week altogether.

I vividly remember an annual debate that would take place among the *bochurim*. Yud-Aleph Nissan is just a few days before Pesach, and the overwhelming majority of *bochurim* would spend Pesach at home. The dilemma that *bochurim* would struggle with was simple: The Yud-Aleph Nissan farbrengens had ceased, and therefore it was possible that you would only see the Rebbe on Yud-Aleph Nissan for a few moments, perhaps on his way in or out of 770. Without these *giluyim* many *bochurim* didn't feel very strongly that they had to be with the Rebbe for Yud-Aleph Nissan; after all, it was possible that you would barely see the Rebbe!

But on the other hand, Yud-Aleph Nissan is a special day, notwithstanding any *giluyim* that might take place. True that the Rebbe may not be farbrenging, but the Rebbe's birthday is a day to be in the Rebbe's presence.

Obviously, the *chassidisher bochurim* would always stay by the Rebbe; Yud-Aleph Nissan is a time to be with the Rebbe, regardless of what *giluyim* we may be privy to. But this was the question that many *bochurim*

would struggle with; this was the debate.

As the years went on, this inner debate also continued, and in later years it intensified.

The months before Yud-Aleph Nissan 5752*, the Rebbe's ninetieth birthday, were filled with intense preparation and excitement. Newspaper reporters and film producers were in 770, reporting and filming the celebrations of *shnas hatzadik*, and as Yud-Aleph Nissan approached, the aura of *simcha*, coupled with a sense of "*ashreinu mah tov chelkeinu*," the great privilege we have to be the Rebbe's Chassidim, only grew and intensified.

Then came the bitter events of Chof-Zayin Adar. Initially, we were expecting things to clear up quickly, and we assumed that by Yud-Aleph Nissan, we would celebrate with the Rebbe just as in prior years.

But as Yud-Aleph Nissan approached, the reality sank in and it soon became clear to us that we would not merit a Yud-Aleph Nissan like we were used to, and we may not even see the Rebbe at all.

I remember the night of Yud-Aleph Nissan, standing outside of 770 across from the Rebbe's room. A few friends of mine and I were standing together and the feelings of *tzimaon* and longing were very strong. We began dancing together to the new *niggun*, "אָרץ יִמִּים, אֲשֶׁבִיעֵהוּ וְאֶרְאֶהוּ בִישׁוּעָתִי—I will satiate him with long years and show him my salvation." Gradually, the circle grew and many Chassidim joined together, dancing



and singing, with the heartfelt plea to Hashem that he grant the Rebbe *gezunt* and *arichas yomim*. The feelings were bittersweet.

Just as the time has gone on, so has the inner debate continued in the hearts of Chassidim: On one hand we do not experience the Rebbe's birthday with him physically, meriting special *giluyim* from the Rebbe and so on. Yet on the other hand it's Yud-Aleph Nissan, the Rebbe's birthday; a most special day no matter what.

Perhaps we can glean some insight by going back to 'the basics' of Yud-Aleph Nissan; looking at the way that the Rebbe looks at the birthday of a *nossi hador*.

The Gemara in *maseches Taanis* says:³ “משנכנס אדר—מרבין בשמחה—When the month of Adar comes, we increase in joy.” Rashi explains that the reason for the joy of the entire *chodesh Adar* is because the month consists of “days of miracles for the Yidden—Purim and Pesach.”

Rashi's words are somewhat puzzling; why does Rashi mention Pesach? Why is the joy of *chodesh Adar* connected to Pesach which falls out in *chodesh Nissan*?

In a fascinating *sicha*,⁴ the Rebbe explains that the joy of the entire month of Adar is rooted in the birth of Moshe Rabbeinu on Zayin Adar. It was Moshe's birth that brought about the miracles of Haman's lottery on Purim, and also the miracles of *yetzias Mitzrayim* that we celebrate on Pesach. Therefore the entire month of Adar, as soon as “משנכנס אדר—the month of Adar begins,” is a time to increase in joy; the entire month of Adar becomes transformed because of Moshe's birth.

Now we can understand why Rashi writes that the joy of *chodesh Adar* is connected to Pesach. Rashi is teaching us that the joy of *chodesh Adar* is because of Moshe's birth, the one who brought the Yidden out of Mitzrayim on Pesach. It is the joy of the birthday

of Moshe Rabbeinu, a *nossi hador*, that brought about “days of miracles,” both Purim and Pesach.

Yud-Aleph Nissan is the Rebbe's birthday, the birthday of the *nossi hador*, our Moshe Rabbeinu. A Rebbe's birthday is a *yom habahir*, a tremendously luminous day, a day that transforms entire months into joyous months.

And the joy of a *nossi's* birthday is not only during his physical lifetime. Just as with Moshe Rabbeinu, thousands

of years after Moshe's *histalkus* his birthday transformed a decree of annihilation into the Yom Tov of Purim.

The same is true regarding the birthday of our Rebbe. Yud-Aleph Nissan is a day that transformed and continues to transform Yidden everywhere, and in many ways now more than ever. Countless people all over the world are constantly being affected by the Rebbe and his shlichim in a real and meaningful way.

Yud-Aleph Nissan is therefore a tremendously joyous day. The Rebbe referred to the *fabrengens* on Yud-Aleph Nissan as “*hisvaaduyos shel simcha*,”⁵ joyous *farbrengens*. The day that the light of our Rebbe began to shine, the day of the Rebbe's “*mazalo gover*,” is a day that continues to transform and affect us notwithstanding the tremendous darkness of *galus*.

In other words, Yud-Aleph Nissan is much more than just a *hergesh* of Chassidim. The Rebbe himself explains what a birthday of a *nossi hador* really means. The Rebbe himself teaches us the tremendous joy that comes with the birthday of a Rebbe. We therefore travel to the Rebbe for Yud-Aleph Nissan and we celebrate with even more *chayus*, because the joy of Yud-Aleph Nissan is not limited to any *giluyim* we may experience; it's an eternal joy.

To conclude on a practical note: One way that Chassidim celebrate Yud-Aleph Nissan is by giving the Rebbe a *matana*. The Rebbe himself expressed his appreciation for these *matanos*, and even described the ideal *matana* that he would appreciate.

Giving a *matana* to the Rebbe is an expression of the deep love that a Chossid has to the Rebbe. Nobody gives their friend a gift because they owe him something; a gift by definition means that you're giving something to someone else for no other reason aside from the fact that you feel personally connected to him.

So too in regards to the *matanos* for Yud-Aleph Nissan. A *matana* should not be something that is done ‘*tzu yotzei zein*’ (just to fulfill your obligation), it should be a personal gift to the Rebbe.

Therefore, how and what to give as a *matana* for Yud-Aleph Nissan is something for you to decide, based on your talents and qualities. For *bochurim*, whose *avodah* is connected exclusively to *limmud haTorah*, there are many different areas of Torah that a *bochur* can find his niche in.

Personally, when I was a *bochur*, my personal feeling towards Yud-Aleph Nissan was very much connected to my work on the *maareches* of “Kovetz Pilpulim Oholei Torah,” a *sefer* which consisted of *pilpulim* from the *bochurim* and the *hanhala* of Oholei Torah.

During my four years on the *maareches*, we began



ONE OF THE KOVTZIM WITH PILPULIM FROM OHOLEI TORAH PUBLISHED IN HONOR OF YUD-ALEPH NISSAN.

working on publishing the *sefer* during the months before Yud-Aleph Nissan. We always wanted to present the first copy to the Rebbe; I remember going to the printer in Williamsburg on Yud-Aleph Nissan, picking up the freshly bound *sefer*, and running back to 770 to present it to the Rebbe.

I would give the *sefer* to Reb Mendel Marozov, who was a member of *hanhalas hayeshiva*, and he would typically give it to the Rebbe during the *chaluka* after the *sicha*. I remember the special feeling we had when we saw the Rebbe carrying our *sefer* back to his room after the *chalukah*.

That was my special Yud-Aleph Nissan moment; my special Yud-Aleph Nissan *avodah*, this is what I

invested myself into then.

The Midrash⁶ relates a story of Reb Chanina ben Dosa who once saw the residents of his city bringing *korbanos* to the Beis Hamikdash. Reb Chanina thought to himself: "All of them are bringing *korbanos shelamim*, what can I bring to the Beis Hamikdash?" He went to the outskirts of his city and found a particular stone. He smoothed it, chiseled it, painted it and decided to bring it to the Beis Hamikdash. This was his *matana*, his gift.

Just like Reb Chanina ben Dosa, try to find your *techum*, your precious stone, to bring as a personal gift to the Rebbe.

להודות לשם ה'

YUD-ALEPH NISSAN WITH THE BOCHURIM

Rabbi Zushe Greenberg



Growing up in Eretz Yisroel, my memories of Yud-Aleph Nissan as a child are mainly of the *shturem* and excitement among the Chassidim in the community preparing for Yud-Aleph Nissan.

One Yud-Aleph Nissan that I particularly remember from my youth was *shnas hashmonim*, 5742*. The *shturem* that enveloped Chassidim before Yud-Aleph Nissan was unbelievable; truly *more'dik*.

Several weeks before Yud-Aleph Nissan, two or

three of the "*shluchei kodesh*" (the shluchim that the Rebbe sent to Eretz Yisroel in the years 5736*-38*) called an assembly of our entire community in Bnei Brak. After the official part of the event, which included *divrei hisorerus* about the upcoming milestone of *shnas hashmonim*, everyone was encouraged to take on a commitment to participate in the Yud-Aleph Nissan *mivtzoim* campaign. When the *asifa* finished, the shluchim stood at the door and didn't let anyone leave



before they wrote down exactly what part they would help with.

Obviously Yud-Aleph Nissan itself was celebrated tremendously in Eretz Yisroel; there was a grand farbrengen in Kfar Chabad, similar to Yud-Tes Kislev, and many important rabbonim attended and spoke.

The first Yud-Aleph Nissan that I merited to be with the Rebbe was when I came to learn in 770 in 5746*.

That year Yud-Aleph Nissan was different; it was the first year since 5731* that the Rebbe did not farbreng on Yud-Aleph Nissan, and I remember the feelings of disappointment among the *bochurim*.

The *bochurim*'s feelings were not just because the Rebbe didn't farbreng, it was a lot more than that. During that time the Rebbe had tremendous pain in his foot, and needless to say, everyone had one thing on their minds on Yud-Aleph Nissan: that the Rebbe should be *gezunt*.

In that short *tekufa*, all the *tefillos*, Shabbos included, were held in the upstairs *zal*. I remember Maariv on Motzei Shabbos, *leil* Yud-Aleph Nissan. After Maariv,

everyone broke into a *lebedike* dance. The joy of Yud-Aleph Nissan dominated despite the bitter situation.

In general, Yud-Aleph Nissan was a most special time with the Rebbe. For the *bochurim* who were there it was extra special; being that many would leave for Pesach already before Yud-Aleph Nissan, there was a very personal and intimate feeling between all the *bochurim* who had stayed in 770.

I remember farbrenging with a few *chaverim* on Yud-Aleph Nissan in the *cheder sheni* of the upstairs *zal*. The feelings that all of us felt were simple: We were in the absolutely best place in the world at the right time. We were the luckiest people. Those were the feelings of Yud-Aleph Nissan; "אשרינו מה טוב חלקנו ומה נעים גורלנו", "ומה יפה ירושתינו."

But in addition to the feelings among the *bochurim*, it was clear from the Rebbe himself that Yud-Aleph Nissan was a special day.

I remember standing outside of 770, waiting for the Rebbe to arrive to catch a glimpse of the Rebbe on his birthday, as he arrived from the Ohel on Yud-Aleph Nissan 5747*. It was late Friday afternoon, right before *licht bentchen*, when the Rebbe rushed out of his car, his face shining with a special *simcha*.

The hundreds of Chassidim packed in front of 770 burst into song, and the feelings of thanks to the *Aibeshter* gushed forth from the hearts of all the Chassidim standing there.

In addition to all the above, the one feeling that was dominant on Yud-Aleph Nissan was one of *tefillah*. Yud-Aleph Nissan for us *bochurim* was a day when we davened that the Rebbe should be *gezunt*, that the Rebbe should have *arichas yamim*. This was on the heart of every one of us, whether we said it or not.

Looking around today at the fire of *hiskashrus* that burns brightly in the hearts of the younger Chassidim, many of whom never saw the Rebbe, it's clear *az der Rebbe lebt*. The fact that every year when it comes Yud-Aleph Nissan, more *bochurim* than ever are learning with such *lebedikeit* solely to give the Rebbe *nachas*; or the fact that shlichim are doing tremendous *peulos*, inspiring Yidden and building *mosdos*, is the biggest proof that the Rebbe lives on, giving us *chayus* and *kochos* to continue doing our shlichus.

Nowadays more than ever, Yud-Aleph Nissan is a day to say thank you. Thank you to Hashem for giving us the Rebbe, for giving us the *zechus* to be the Rebbe's Chassidim, and for giving us the privilege of being able to celebrate the Rebbe's birthday year after year; *l'hodos l'sheim Hashem*.

שלוה בארמנותיך

YUD-ALEPH NISSAN WITH GOVERNMENT LEADERS



Rabbi Shmuel Butman

Rabbi Butman, thank you for taking the time to share with us some of your memories of Yud-Aleph Nissan.

It has become tradition that on Yud-Aleph Nissan, local and state governments, and the president of the United States, honor the Rebbe and his efforts to promote true education with proclamations and resolutions declaring “Education and Sharing Day.”

As the director of Tzach in New York, you had the zechus of initiating Education Day in New York, and beyond. Can you share with us some of the history behind this special tradition?

Although by now the celebrations of Education Day are almost taken for granted, many years ago, this custom was totally nonexistent. It was in the early 5730s when we first had the idea to honor the Rebbe in the offices of the New York City government. I contacted Mayor Abraham Beame, who was a resident of Crown Heights and a close friend of Lubavitch, and he agreed to issue a proclamation honoring the Rebbe.

I must note, that the first proclamations that we arranged in New York were not honoring the Rebbe in connection with Yud-Aleph Nissan specifically, but were more general and not time constricted.

After confirming that the city would honor the Rebbe with a proclamation, we wrote up a draft with the text we wanted them to include, and submitted it to the Rebbe for approval.

We were pleasantly surprised to receive the draft from the Rebbe, with edits and corrections on the text of the proclamation in the Rebbe's *ksav yad kodesh!*

At a certain point we began working with the New

York State assembly and senate to honor the Rebbe on a state-wide level, and we began an initiative to honor the Rebbe's efforts in education with a specific number of ‘days of education.’ The amount of ‘days of education’ grew every year, corresponding to the Rebbe's age; for example in 5752, the Rebbe's ninetieth birthday, the state proclaimed 90 days of education, and so on.

I remember the first time we received a proclamation from the governor in honor of Yud-Aleph Nissan; we were told to come receive the proclamation on a Monday.

On the Friday before, I got a call from the Rebbe's *mazkirus*; Rabbi Hodakov was on the line. Rabbi Hodakov told me that no one should know about the proclamation until I actually receive a physical copy of it, even my own children. And if people ask where I'm going on Sunday, I should respond that I'm just leaving town.

Baruch Hashem, we received the proclamation, and since then we have received a proclamation from the governor every year for Yud-Aleph Nissan, in addition to the proclamations and resolutions from the state senate, assembly, and local mayors.

Did you receive any special responses from the Rebbe? Did the Rebbe ever express his appreciation?

The short answer is yes, I was privileged to see the Rebbe's appreciation for these proclamations, both in New York, and for the proclamations from many different states throughout America.

Allow me to give some background:

Some time in the 5740s, before Yud-Aleph Nissan,



RABBI SHMUEL BUTMAN PLACES A DOLLAR BILL IN A TZEDAKAH PUSHKA AS HE ADDRESSES MEMBERS OF CONGRESS IN HONOR OF CHOF-CHES SIVAN 5751.

I reached out to the governors of some 20 states that didn't have shluchim yet (some of them being Oklahoma, South Dakota, etc.), and I asked them if they would consider joining the states that are already honoring the Rebbe's birthday by proclaiming Education Day in their states as well.

I didn't know what to expect but ultimately around twelve governors agreed to join the Yud-Aleph Nissan celebration and sent back proclamations declaring Education Day in their state!

The Rebbe was very happy about it. I remember that Rabbi Nissen Mindel asked me for the contact information for the governors who had sent proclamations for Yud-Aleph Nissan to send them personal letters, thanking them for their declaration.

Once we're speaking about the Rebbe's appreciation for the proclamations, let me share with you an additional episode in this regard:

Chof-Ches Sivan 5751 was just a short while after the start of the Rebbe's ninetieth year, and I went to the United States Capitol to open the Senate with a prayer. Before I left, on Sunday, Chof-Zayin Sivan, I went to receive a dollar from the Rebbe. When I came by the Rebbe, Rabbi Groner told him that I was going to speak at the Capitol in Washington. The Rebbe said that I should take along a *pushka* with me to the Senate, and I should give tzedakah in front of everyone, showing an example of what money should be used for—to help other people.

Since then, every year, when I go to the New York State Capitol to speak before Yud-Aleph Nissan, I bring along a *pushka* and give tzedakah in front of everyone present. After I finish, all the senators and representatives line up to put tzedakah in the *pushka* as well.

So just to summarize:

Yes, the Rebbe's appreciation for the proclamations was clearly apparent. In fact, every year Rabbi Hodakov would call me and ask when the proclamation was

coming. Reb Dovid Raskin (the chairman of Tzach) would also get asked by Rabbi Hodakov about the proclamation.

Wow, thanks for sharing, Rabbi Butman!

We are certain that these memories will bring a new *chayus* to those already active in bringing Education Day to their local government, and will also inspire all Chassidim to further their efforts in bringing the Rebbe's message about Education to the world.

I hope so too. Please allow me to share one last insight:

After the Alter Rebbe was released from prison on Yud-Tes Kislev, he wrote a letter describing the tremendous miracle that happened, "...for Hashem magnified His great and holy Name which will be magnified and sanctified before many and in particular in the eyes of all the ministers and all the nations."

It's seemingly puzzling that the Alter Rebbe describes the effect of his release on the non-Jewish ministers so much. Why was that such a focal point of the *nes* of Yud-Tes Kislev?

The Rebbe explains that the *geulah* of Yud-Tes Kislev was a lead-up to—and in fact a taste of—the ultimate *geulah* with Moshiach. Therefore, just like the ultimate *geulah* will come after the maayanos of Chassidus are disseminated to the furthest places, so too the *geulah* of Yud-Tes Kislev is primarily connected to the fact that it affected the most distant people, even the non-Jewish ministers.

In our generation, standing on the threshold of the final *geulah*, we see clearly how the most influential ministers and highest levels of government are being affected and impacted—through the Rebbe's shluchim—by the Rebbe's vision for the world.

The celebrations of Education Day in the highest offices of government are testament to the tremendous *hafatzas hamaayanos* that the Rebbe orchestrated in our generation, as a prelude to the era when *ruchniyus* and *gashmiyus* will come together as one, "וראו כל בשר יחדיו," with the *geulah* ha'amitis v'hashleima. ❶

1. The memories that Rabbi Vogel shared with us were also featured in the Techayenu magazine, issue 4, pg. 50 and further.
2. The other three times were in 5722, 5732, and 5736.
3. 29a.
4. Likkutei Sichos vol. 16 pg. 342.
5. See the *sicha* of Yud-Aleph Nissan 5748.
6. Shir Hashirim Rabba 1:1.
7. See *Education Day USA*, Derher Nissan 5776. Derher Yud-Aleph Nissan supplement 5782, pg. 64.