



א חסיד'ישער דערהער...

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Mivtzoim – Lag B'omer 5735

"Lag B'omer must be utilized for heightening Torah and Mitzvos observance; beginning with the five *Mivtzoim*" the Rebbe wrote in a *Michtav Kloli* before Lag B'omer, 5735.

Faithful as always to the Rebbe's instructions, the Bochorim went out in full swing, carrying out the Mivtzoim with the greatest *Shturem*. Still in the early age of Mitzvah Tanks, they proudly organized a parade of eighteen tanks down Fifth Avenue in Mahatten, and scattered throughout the city for the remainder of the day assisting hundreds of fellow Yidden with Mitzvos. With Hashem's help, each group was able to report of the major success they experienced at their task.

While some of the groups had still not yet managed to return to 770 in the evening, the news circulated that the Rebbe planned to hold a Farbrengen!

This is how it evolved:

At 7:15, the Rebbe returned from the Ohel (approximately forty-five minutes before *Shkia*) and davened Mincha. Following Mincha, the Rebbe summoned Reb Yoel Kahn to his room and asked him to drop in at the Gansberg family wedding and see where they were holding there. Then Rabbi Groner entered the Rebbe's room (along with Reb Dovid Raskin A"H) and came out shortly thereafter saying, "*Loift arrup!*" ("Run downstairs...").

When the Rebbe entered the Shul for the Farbrengen it was on such short notice that his place was barely prepared for it. The Rebbe washed his hands for bread and ate Challah, and the Farbrengen began... Until halfway through the first Sicha the Rebbe spoke without a microphone, but the crowd was very small (due to the sudden notice) and everyone was able to hear quite well.

After the Maamor, the Rebbe spoke about again about the Mivtzoim, and then handed some of his Challah to Reb Hirsh Gansberg in honor of the wedding his family was celebrating today.

Then the Rebbe announced: In order to bring all the above-mentioned ideas into practice, I will now distribute *Kos Shel Brocha* to all present with the "*Tankisin*".

The method of distributing *Kos Shel Brocha* after Bentching was quite unusual. A row of empty bottles were arranged at the Rebbe's place on the table, and the Rebbe poured a bit of wine into each one before handing them to the Bochorim.

The line stretched very long and was passing by for over an hour. In the middle of the distribution, the Rebbe turned to Rabbi Mentlik (the Rosh Yeshivah) with a smile and asked, "Since when do you have such a big Yeshivah?!"

Before ending the Farbrengen, the Rebbe related:

There must be those who wonder how it is permissible to wash and have a meal at this time, after *Shkia* before Maariv and *Sefiras Ha'omer*. The Frierdiker Rebbe once held a Farbrengen in such an instance (in the year 5692) and he explained at the time that as we are many people together (a "*Rabbim*") we need not fear that we'll forget to count, for we'll each remind one another. This reasoning may be applied now as well. The reason why we did not begin earlier and easily evade all Halachic complications was so as not to intrude on the wedding celebration (on that night Hirshel Gansburg got married).

At the end of the Farbrengen the Rebbe gave the chosson challa and another piece for his wife. Then the Rebbe turned to Rabbi M. Metlik and handed him challa telling him to Farbreng Shabbos with the bochorim "those that *Torasam Ummasam*".

Interestingly, the Rebbe sent a note in the days before Lag B'Omer to the Hanhala of 770 saying that the *kvutze* bochorim, who had come from Eretz Yisroel, leaving on the heter of the Rambam (i.e. to learn), must continue to sit and learn, keeping all the sedorim punctually.

ל"ג בעומר

* מען באדארף זינגען א ניגון א התחלה צו שבועות. ל"ג בעומר און שבועות האבן א שייכות זל"ז. ל"ג בעומר איז גילוי פנימיות התורה און שבועות איז מ"ת פון גליא שבתורה.

(ל"ג בעומר תש"ד)

* עלה בכבש, אז מען ווערט אביסל העכער, ופנה לסובב, מ'קוקט זיך צו וואס טוט זיך ארום זיך, ובא לו לקרן דרומית, און מי ווערט ווארימער. איז מזרחית, ווערט ליכטיגער, איז מזרחית צפונית, דערלייכט דאס אויך אין נפש הבהמית, דער יצר הרע, אז מען איז מברר דעם יצר הרע איז צפונית מערבית, ווערט דערפון א עריבות ומתיקות למעלה.

(ספר השיחות תש"א עמ' 87)

בענין תוכן הרוחני והקשר בין הג' המנינים של בני"י ראה לקוטי שיחות חלק ח' פרשת במדבר שיחה א'



Lag B'Omer Parades

Bringing Yiddishkeit to the Streets

The highlight of Lag B'Omer with the Rebbe was undoubtedly the parades. It is impossible to describe the magnificent scene on paper: The Rebbe walking out onto the podium with the band playing "Ani Maamin" in the background. The Rebbe standing outside, speaking to tens of thousands of children. The way the Rebbe smiled and waved to all of the children marching by, cherishing each child as they passed. Every year that Lag B'Omer would fall out on Sunday, the Chassidim would anticipate the parade with great excitement, preparing for it weeks in advance. Now let's start from the beginning:

When the Frierdiker Rebbe came to America, he did everything in his power to preserve and promote Jewish identity, and especially Jewish education, in accordance with his idea that "America is no different." As soon as his younger son-in-law, the Rebbe, arrived in America, the Frierdiker Rebbe placed on him the responsibility of running the newly established organization "Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch". The responsibility of "Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch" was to take care of the education of the Jewish children in all aspects.

Immediately, various institutions began to open up under the auspices of Merkos. One very famous and active program was "Mesibos Shabbos", which began on Sukkos 5702. Every Shabbos afternoon the students of the Yeshiva would walk to Shuls all around the area where Jewish children had gathered. There they distributed Shabbos treats and told some interesting vertlach and stories about the Parsha. For many children, this was their only true Jewish experience for the week, which in turn had a strong impression on their entire week. Within a couple of years, in New York alone, there were more than fifty Mesibos Shabbos groups, with thousands of children participating. Many other cities began to organize Mesibos Shabbos groups, bringing the number of participants to more than ten thousand children.

Mesibos Shabbos was a very big part of Lubavitch activities in those early years. Interestingly enough, the Rebbe expressed this at a Farbrengen during Chol HaMoed Sukkos, 5702: "My father-in-law started with Mesibos Shabbos, and the end will be that we'll turn over the entire world!" It seems as if the Rebbe saw Mesibos Shabbos as a gateway to the Lubavitcher revolution in the world that would take place years later.

Rabbi J.J. Hecht, the then C.E.O. of Mesibos Shabbos, related: "Primarily the Bochorim and young people joined the Rebbe in his efforts to coordinate these activities. Many Rabbonim and respected educators scorned us, saying that the Rebbe didn't know what he was doing, Chas V'Sholom. Only years later, when they all saw the incredible success of the Rebbe's style in education, did they begin to emulate it themselves!"

Eventually, they began to gather children together for parades. The first time was Chol HaMoed Pesach, 5702. The second was on 15 Taamuz that same year and then again on Purim 5703. Rabbi Hecht recalls that around six hundred children arrived to that parade. The children said different Pesukim together (remember this was before the 12 Psukim had been, similar to today's Tzivos Hashem rallies. The

children gathered in the courtyard of 770, over which the big Shul of today was eventually built. The Rebbe was always in charge of these parades, as he was the chairman of the Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch.

Some people relate that during one of the parades the Frierdiker Rebbe watched the children throughout the entire parade from his window. When asked why he sat for a long time, even though it was hard on his health, he replied: "R' Levi Yitzchak of Barditchev once asked the Alter Rebbe why he didn't include the paragraph of "Veshomru" in the Friday night Davening, if it is known that when the Jewish people say "Veshomru" there is a entire "parade" in heaven?! The Alter Rebbe answered, 'One does not need to participate in every parade that goes on! But,' concluded the Frierdiker Rebbe, "in my son-in-law's parade, the Alter Rebbe does participate!"

The Rebbe Institutes Parades in Eretz Yisroel - 5740

Just a few days before Lag B'Omer came the Rebbe's instruction to make parades. The concept of Lag B'Omer parades wasn't foreign to Anash and the Tmimim, parades had been organized before at the beginning of the Rebbe's Nesius. Only those parades happened solely at 770 and nowhere else in the world. Up until 5740, other activities had taken place on Lag B'Omer, such as those in Meron, with soldiers, and Farbrengens

It was only two weeks before Lag B'Omer 5740. Professor Branover returned from 770 to Eretz Yisroel with a mission. It's unlikely that even he realized that this shlichus was a historic Jewish precedent, which would turn into a huge annual phenomenon.

Before he left for the airport, the Rebbe told him to take 60 fifty-lira notes and to give them to anybody who organized a children's parade on Lag B'Omer.

This was most surprising, because parades such as these had never taken place in Eretz Yisroel. On the contrary, public spectacles such as a parade went against the Chareidi position of isolating oneself from the street. The Rebbe blazed a new trail through the wall of Galus and brought Judaism to the outside, to the street, with a shturim the likes of which had never been seen before.

The Rebbe asked that parades take place everywhere, in every country of the world, emphasizing that efforts should be made to organize at least thirty parades in every country to mark the thirtieth year since the passing of the Frierdiker Rebbe, and that double that amount of parades take place in Eretz Yisroel.

On Sunday, 4 Iyar 5740, the Rebbe sent 120 dollar bills for the organizing of 120 parades in the United States, with thirty dollars sent to each state in which thirty parades took place. The Rebbe added, "Those who will not organize parades should at least try to make parties." the costs of these parades. The Rebbe later said a Sicha with a request: Everybody should come up with ideas and suggestions - the main thing [is that the parades] should be a Kiddush Hashem, a Kiddush Am Yisroel, and as a result a Kiddush HaTorah, and they should all march with the children to greet Moshiach Tzidkeinu and Rashbi among them and at their head.



שְׁעֵרֵי אֲגִינָה

Hinei Ma Tov

Hinei Ma Tov is a niggun connected with Lag B'Omer. This is both because one of the most famous teachings of the Rashbi is on this Possuk, and because its subject is Ahavas Yisroel, a major theme of Lag BaOmer.

Reb Shmuel Zalmanov writes in Sefer Haniggunim, that this Niggun originates from Sfardishe Yidden living in Eretz Yisroel. He heard it from his father Reb Shraga Feivesh Zalmanov. The way it is transcribed Sefer Haniggunim, however, is different from the original tune.

Another slightly different version is that of Pinya Althoiz, with more of a Chabad overtone. This version also contains two more stanzas, presumably added later, which repeat over and over.

The popular version is found on Nichoach without any trace of its Sefardic origins, with the last two stanzas also played with music. Interestingly, by the Rebbe it was sung without the two last parts.

There are two other Chabad Niggunim to the words "Hinei Mah Tov": one begins with the same tune as "Sisu V'simchu" and was sung several times by the Rebbe's farbrengens, the other is Niggun No. 254 in Sefer Haniggunim.

Lag B'omer 5733

In 5733, Lag B'Omer was on Sunday. The Rebbe would participate in the parade as usual when Lag BaOmer was on a Sunday, and preparations were in full swing.

Suddenly, the Rebbe hinted to the parade organizers that he might not participate in the parade. No-one knew the reason behind the Rebbe's words. An urgent meeting was called. Since the Rebbe hadn't formally withdrawn from the parade, the organizers decided to keep it quiet and continue with preparations as normal. Schools from all over the area were invited to attend the parade and nobody knew that anything was amiss.

As the parade drew nearer, the secret leaked and people found out that the Rebbe was not planning to attend the parade.

People speculated that the reason behind the Rebbe's refusal to join the parade was connected with a financial dispute that had started between two neighbors in Crown Heights, and which had escalated far out of proportions.

At the Farbrengen on Shabbos before Lag B'omer, the Rebbe himself connected these events:

"Due to the recent events, despite the fact that everything was prepared for my participation in the parade, and despite my own personal preparations, something disorderly has happened and this is will not allow my participation".

Then, with pain evident in his voice, the Rebbe continued:

"Rashbi will be there, my father-in-law the Rebbe, will be there, but I'm locked up in my room like Rashbi in the cave... but the children who have not tasted sin don't deserve this, so I will say now what I planned on saying tomorrow by the parade."

A *yuman* of this Farbrengen reads: "We were all in shock and disbelief from what we had just heard, woe to the ears that had to hear such words. The Rebbe admonished us softly, like a father admonishing his son. Several times throughout the sicha, the Rebbe burst into tears. A great trembling overcame us all."

After the Sichah the Rebbe began to softly sing 'Hinei Mah Tov', pausing between the words as if to emphasize the all too obvious meaning of what they mean. The hurt that he felt was recognizable

א ציור פון א חסיד

Reb Berke Chein Part 1

As a small boy Berke visited the Friediker Rebbe in Yechidus with his grandfather, the famous Reb Meir Simcha Chein of Nevel. The Rebbe spoke with his grandfather as Berke stood behind him. Suddenly, the Rebbe turned to his side and said to Berke, "You should learn, because you must learn."

"This," Reb Berke later related, "was very hard on me. By nature I was drawn to business and money. But the Rebbe's words caused a revolution within me." In time, he changed radically. He fought and worked on himself to exert all his energies in Torah and Mitzvos. When he fell ill with tuberculosis, the doctors gave up on him, but Hashem answered his Tefillos. After recuperating, he became a different person. "Berke" became "Reb Berke."

Reb Berke was basically a simple person. He didn't daven with the most profound meditation, but his davening was something special. His Avodah usually started long before he started to daven. By the crack of dawn, one could discern the hunched-over image of Reb Berke, cane in hand and bag on his shoulder, walking toward the Mikvah. "One must become pure before davening," he would say. His Mikvah was a special process in itself. It wasn't just one immersion, two or three, but many, many more!

Afterwards, he joined in a Chassidus shiur at 5 a.m. before the first minyan. Then he would go back home for a while following which he returned to the Shul for Shacharis. Someone once asked him about this strange custom. "Why do you go back and forth from the Shul to your house after the shiur? If you must eat something because you are weak, why not take something along in a bag, or have someone bring it to you?"

He explained: "I once saw it written that one should put on Tefillin in the morning in the house, too. But when I leave it is too early, so I go home to put on Tefillin and recite the Shema, then I return to Shul." To him this was natural; if it's written- then he must do it.

Back in Shul, he would sit down and learn Tanya, Perek 32. He had heard it said that one cannot declare, "I resolve to 'Love your fellow as yourself'" without first learning the part of Tanya which teaches Ahavas Yisroel. But that is not all. When he was about to put on his Tallis and Tefillin, he first learned Tanya, Perokim 41 and 42 because the famous Mashpia, Reb Nissan, told him to do so. These Perokim became part of his routine, and without them, he could not start Hodu.

He davened as one who counts pearls. Each word was very clearly pronounced and carefully articulated.

To be continued...

in his voice, and the Rebbe sang not in his usual tone, but rather like the way he would sing Tzama Lecho Nafshi.

When he finished the first stanza, the Rebbe waited for the crowd to continue, but from the immense shock that they just experienced, they were unable to open their mouths until the Rebbe motioned with his hand that they should sing.

That Motzai Shabbos, letters came pouring in; everybody pleaded with the Rebbe to change his mind but to no avail. The Rebbe insisted that everything continue as planned and wanted to be informed on all developments concerning the parade.

Thus, through his non-appearance, the Rebbe reminded the Chassidim the true meaning of the words Hinei Mah Tov...



Q & A:

What's Chodosh and can we eat it?

Part 3

Previously we had examined a number of different Heterim. However after everything, the Mechaber of the Shulchan Aruch (the Beis Yosef) clearly says, "Chodosh is *Assur*, all times...".

What are we to do?

The Rama writes that we can rely on the Sfek Sfeika (double doubt) which in effect means that you can eat the grain that you see and you need not check into it. If you know for a fact that it's Chodosh you can be strict, but if it is produce that everyone is eating you can't *pasken* that it's *Assur*, "better let them do it *B'shoigeg*, rather than *B'mezid*".

We previously brought the Bach who said that Goyishe grain is not *chayav* in chodosh. Both the Shach and the Taz (who was in fact the Bach's son-in-law) don't agree with his pilpul and question the very foundation of his idea.

"If there is only one Sofek then one must oppose the drinking of "Chodosh beer.", says the Shach, he then explains why he does not agree with the Bach and concludes "Chodosh definitely applies to Goyim as well".

A Region-based Dispute

The Taz begins by uprooting the whole Heter of his father-in-law, and says the same thing as the Shach. But he does not stop there.

He quotes the Ramo "you can't *pasken* it's *Ossur*, because better *B'shoigeg*..."

This bothered him greatly, what about all the Gedoli Yisroel who weren't careful? The whole "better *B'shoigeg*..." certainly doesn't apply to them. And even if the Bach is correct, their actions are still not justified, because all the other Poskim clearly state that it's *Ossur*!?

He then brings two Heterim. First, he explains the Gemorahs in a way that the conclusion is that Chodosh doesn't apply nowadays. Then, he says, it's a "*shaas Hadchak*", lit. dire circumstances, because people depend on this grain.

Therefore a pattern emerged. The Poskim who lived in hot countries, with the grain always rooted in the ground before Pesach, *Assured* Chodosh as clear Halocha mandates. However Rabbonim living in cold regions where the population was dependent on post-Pesach grain, found Heterim.

The Magen Avraham in Orach Chaim attacks from a different angle. He brings a Heter by one of the Baalei Tosfos, which up to this point was not mentioned. He simply says that Chodosh in Chutz L'oretz is only a *Gezeirah Midrabonan* and this decree is only for the neighboring cities in close proximity to Eretz Yisrael. Everywhere else there is no problem of Chodosh whatsoever!

Most other opinions do not agree with this. With this however, the Magen Avraham has effectively avoided all problems and declares that Chodosh is Muttar in Chutz L'oretz. Nevertheless, he adds, a "Baal Nefesh" (someone who is more careful {see further for more details}) should be Machmir.

The Alter Rebbe's Verdict

Now we have reached our last and final source the Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch¹. At this point it should be no surprise at all that he

begins, just like most others we mentioned that Chodosh is *Ossur* in all times, all places...

Yet in the very next Halocha he says something incredible: "Now we aren't careful about Chodosh". In the continuation many different Heterim are brought to justify this Minhag. First the "double doubt"; if that doesn't apply then in "dire circumstances" we can rely on the Heter of R' Boruch; the Bach says Chodosh does not apply to the grain of Goyim. The Alter Rebbe then finishes off by saying, "a Baal Nefesh should be strict and not rely on any leniencies".

{In regards to the different titles that the Alter Rebbe calls those that want to be strict, it is accepted amongst Chassidim that when it says "Baal Nefesh", it refers to someone who's Neshomah is in a revealed state, something which isn't applicable to everyone. To be a "Yorei Shomayim" on the other hand, is something which is practical for everyone. By Chodosh it says Yorei Shomayim.}

Not Even in Williamsburg

In a Sich'a on Achron Shel Pesach² the Rebbe speaks briefly on this topic. There he explains that Chodosh is a very unique Mitzvah. By all other Mitzvos you just open up a Shulchan Aruch and you have the answer right in front of you, but with Chodosh there is no definite P'sak. As we have seen, the early Poskim write that it's *Ossur*, yet we find many opinions who maintain that it's not. The Alter Rebbe writes an incredible thing, "Now we are not careful..." not that some or most aren't, but he says "no one is". True, he continues that some people should be strict, nevertheless in the beginning of the Halocha he says clearly, "Now we aren't careful".

"In fact this is the way things are now", continues the Rebbe, "go out onto the streets in Brooklyn, New York or even Williamsburg and you won't find anyone who is careful about Chodosh, if there is such a person then "Tovoi Olov B'rocha" (blessings on him), but I haven't found any and I am sure if there was such a person around it probably would have been publicized that he is careful about Chodosh even in Chutz L'oretz".

To conclude: Now we are not careful about Chodosh. Despite the fact that in many Seforim it says that it's *Ossur*, we see how the Poskim went to great lengths to find strong Heterim, all because this is what they saw their teachers and other Gedoli Yisroel doing.

1. Orach Chayim, Siman 489
2. Acharon Shel Pesach, 5740

פרק א' ליום	ג' פרקים ליום	מורה שיעור ללימוד הרמב"ם
ה' נזקי ממון פ' ו'	ה' שביתת עשור פ' ד-ו	ט"ז אייר
פרק ז'	פ' ז-ח ה' חמץ ומצה פ' א	י"ז אייר
פרק ח'	פ' ב-ד	י"ח אייר
פרק ט'	פ' ה-ז	י"ט אייר
פרק י'	פ' ח' ה' שופר לולב וסוכה פ' א-ב	כ' אייר
פרק י"א	פ' ג-ה	כ"א אייר
פרק י"ב	פ' ו-ח	כ"ב אייר