

**CHABAD  
INFO**

# Weekly Roundup

THIS WEEK IN THE CHABAD WORLD

ב"ה

**№ 10**

FRIDAY, 25 KISLEV 5784  
EREV SHABBOS CHANUKAH  
PARSHAS VAYEISHEV

# פריילאך חנוכה

EXPANDED CHANUKAH EDITION

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יחי אדוננו מורנו ורבינו מלך המשיח לעולם ועד



# From Beis Chayeinu To Yerushalayim, Many Celebrate The Rosh Hashana of Chassidus

By Chabadinfo Reporter

This year, despite tying times, Yud Tes-Chof Kislev fell out on a Shabbos and Sunday. Many events and Farbrengen's including those in Yerushalayim and Paris, Boro Park and Beis Chayeinu chose to combine the Farbrengen events with a Melava Malka on Motzei Shabbos.

Other events, Colel Chabad's Nafshi Concert and in Paris held their events on Sunday. Another notable event - Tzama's concert was held on Wednesday and Thursday.

Our editor's have created a summary of the most unique events of Yud Tes Kislev as covered on Chabadinfo this past week:

## Thousands Celebrate Yud Tes Kislev in Beis Chayeinu

Over the 48 hours of Yud Tes Kislev, dozens of Farbrengens took place in all corners of Beis Chyeinu.

On Motzei Shabbos, the central Farbrengen in honor of Yud Tes Kislev took place in 770 to celebrate the Rosh Hashana for Chassidus. Thousands joined the Farbrengen, listening to words from the Rabbonim of Crown Heights, followed by Shluchim and Mashpi'im

The Farbrengen was addressed by Harav Avrohom Osdoba, Mara D'Asra and member of the Crown Heights Beis Din, Rabbi Baruch Boaz Yurkovich – Rov of the Chabad community of Lod, Rabbi Mendel Blau, menahel roshi of Oholei Torah, Rabbi Shloma Majeski, Rabbi Michael Golomb – Mashpa in 770, Rabbi Mendel Yusewitz, Rabbi Itche Mishulovin, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Kaminetzky – a Chabad historian and author, among others

The central Farbrengen was accompanied by lively music and dancing, and smaller Farbrengens across 770 for the remainder of the night.



Photos by Shalom Ross, Shneur Schiff, Dov Ber Hechtman

## Rosh Hashanah of Chassidus Joyously Celebrated in Kfar Chabad

The Kfar Chabad community and beyond celebrated Yud Tes Kislev – the Rosh Hashanah of Chassidus – was held in Beis Menachem, with the participation of a large crowd with Rabbonim, Shluchim and public figures.

Due to the current war – the Farbrengen, which has been held continuously for decades, this year was held inside the Beis Menachem Shul.

The guest speaker was Rabbi David Lau, Chief Rabbi of Eretz Yisroel, he emphasized the virtue of Chassidus and the importance of spreading it, especially when Yidden need encouragement. During his remarks, he offered a prayer for the security forces.

Among those present was a delegation of senior IDF officers led by Col. Udi Elbaz, the commander of the central region of the Home Front Command, who was joined by Rabbi Eliyahu Gutman.

Among the speakers were Rabb Moshe Pizem, the Rebbe's Shliach to Sderot; Rabbi Asi Spiegel; Rabbi Tzvi Zeira, Shliach to Jerusalem College; Rabbi Yosef Brod and Mara D'Asra Rabbi Meir Ashkenazi.



## Boro Park Unites To Celebrate Alter Rebbe's Chag Geula

Over a thousand men attended the Yud-Tes Kislev farbrengen, celebrating the Alter Rebbe's Chag Hageulah at Heichel Menachem in Boro Park. In attendance were *Admuri*"m, Rabbonim and Mashpi'im.

Joining the event were: Rabbi Yaakov Lev Altein – chairman of Haichel Menachem in Borough Park, Rabbi Yosef Yitzhak Ofen of Yerushalayim, Rabbi Gabriel Tzinner – author of Nitai Gavriel, Rabbi Binyamin Breyer – Rav of the Zichron Yehuda Vien community in Borough Park, Rabbi David Kemplinsky, Rabbi Dechsidie Gur, Rabbi Shalom Kharitonov a Mashpia, Rabbi Fishel Oster – *Maggid Shiur* in Oholei Torah and Heichel Menachem, Rabbi Jacob Blooming, Rabbi Zvi Altner – Rabbi of Linat HaTzedek Shul, Rabbi Moshe Ostreicher, and Rabbi Rechnitzer.

Rabbi Shlomo Sternberg – Menahel and Mashpia at Chovivei Torah, served as emcee.



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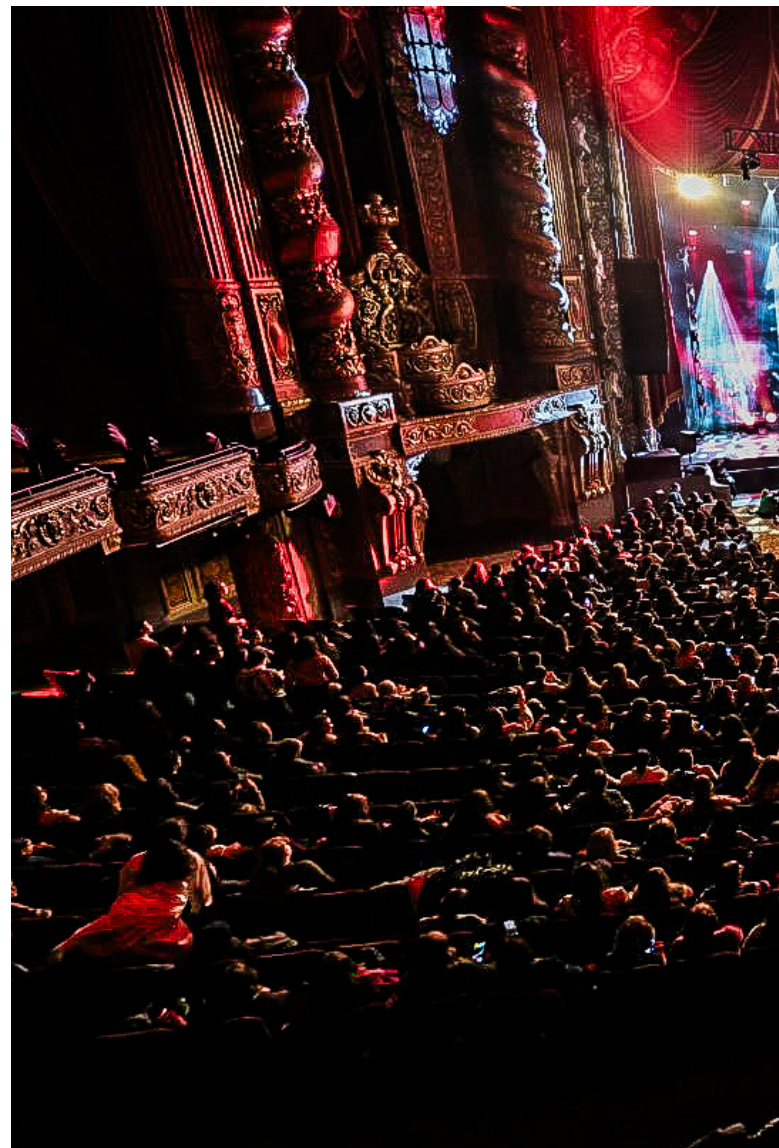
## Celebrating Yud Tes Kislev, 3,000 Join Colel Chabad's 'Nafshi' Concert in Brooklyn

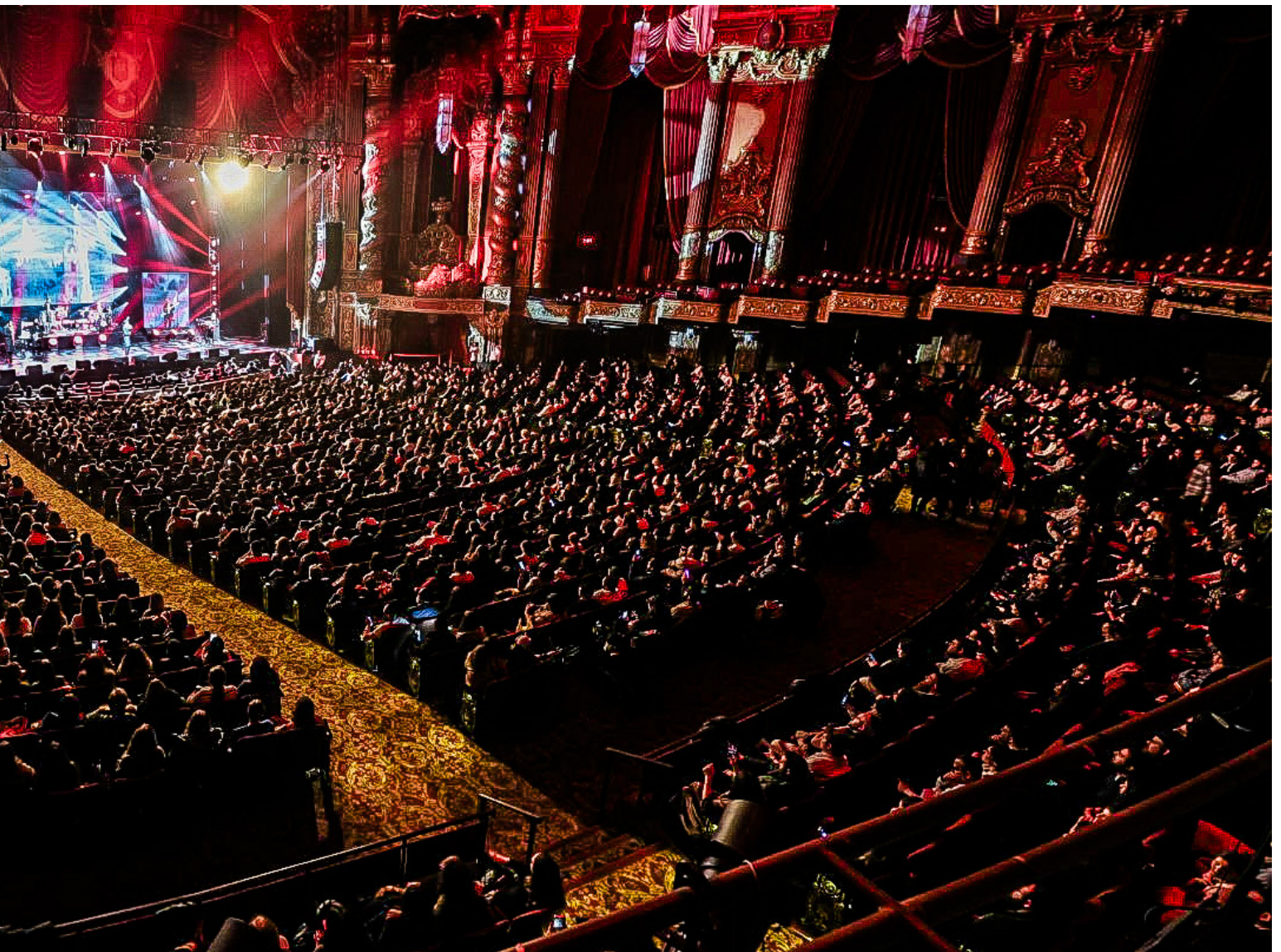
On Sunday night, over 3,000 packed Brooklyn's King Theater in support of Colel Chabad and celebrating Yud Tes Kislev – the Rosh Hashana of Chassidus with an inspiring event uniting Yidden from all over metro New York and beyond with Niggunim and inspiration.

The lineup for the event included Jewish music superstars Avraham Fried, Eitan Katz, Beri Weber and Alex Clare, with music by Freilach band. As well as renowned and riveting speakers, Rabbis Eli Mansour, Judah Mischel, Shais Taub, and Moshe Weinberger.

This combination of musical talent and spiritual leadership offered a night rich in Niggunim and song.

The proceeds from the 'Nafshi' event will support the initiatives of Colel Chabad, which the Alter Rebbe founded, particularly in their work aiding displaced families in Eretz Yisroel.





## 'Tzama' Concert Draws 25,000 With Inspiration and Niggunim

On Wednesday and Thursday, over 25,000 men women and children united to celebrate Yud Tes Kislev – the Rosh Hashanah of Chassidus – with Niggunim and Simcha at the 'Tzama' concert in Yerushalayim.

The event featured superstars Avraham Fried and Yonatan Razel. And inspiration from R' Moshe Shilot, R' Yaakov Halperin, and R' Pinchas Erlich,

The concert was adapted to the current security environment in Eretz Yisroel, in coordination with the IDF and was separated into a number of halls and a limit on participants.



## Thousands Mark Yud Tes Kislev in Yerushalayim

On Motzei Shabbos, Thousands flocked to the International Convention Center in Yerushalayim to celebrate the Rosh Hashana of Chassidus.

The 5-hour plus Farbrengen was Addressed by Rabbonim and Mashpi'im



## Thousands Celebrate Yud Tes Kislev in Paris

On Sunday evening, over 3,000 French Yidden joined the central Yud Tes Kislev event and Farbrengen took place.

Addressing the crown was guest speaker Rabbi Levi Banon, who serves as Shliach to Casablanca, Morocco. As well as Michel Gugenheim, Rabbi Shalom Cohen and Senior Paris shliach Rabbi Mendel Azimov.

Performing for the crowd was Chabad singer Berel Zucker together with Rabbi Yosef Barami's large orchestra. Pada B'Shalom was sung Lubavitcher Cheder Choir directed by Rabbi Yehuda Israelevich.



## Moscow Celebrates Yud Tes Kislev

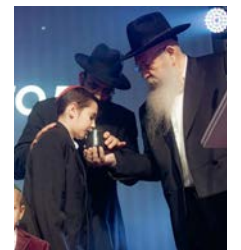
Beginning with Shabbos farbrengens, continuing with festive Melave Malka events and especially the central event in the Marina Rocha shul, the spirit of the Yom Tov was clearly felt.

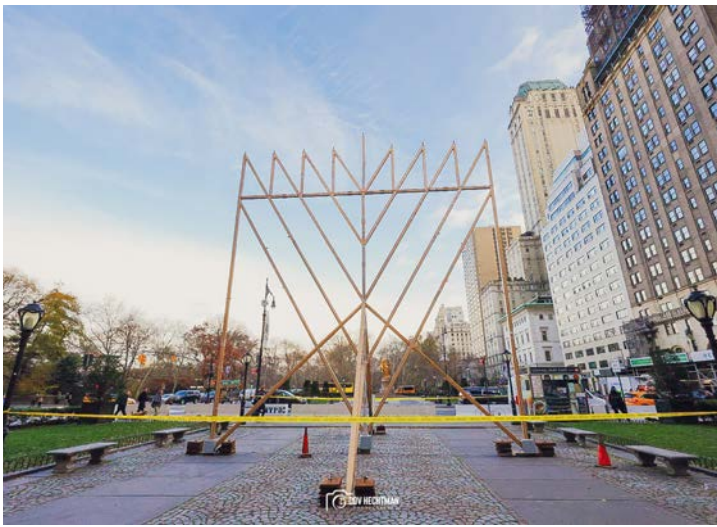
On Sunday evening, the hotel's main ballroom opened its doors and was quickly filled with hundreds of Yidden from across Moscow. Awaiting them was a complete Yom Tov seudah and an engaging program, headed by Rabbi Mordechai Weisberg, director of the Jewish community in Moscow, and under the slogan 'From Exile to Redemption'.

Beginning with Shabbos, opening the festivities was guest shliach Rabbi Yosef Dovid Weitman of S. Paulo, Brazil. Rabbi Weitman related his memories from those travels, when he smuggled in tefillin, mezuzos and other tashmishei kedusha, during the years of the oppressive Soviet regime.

Chief Rabbi of Russia, Berel Lazar delivered the keynote address to mark the great day, drawing on the possuk of Padah B'shalom and the explanations of Chazal on the possuk to inspire the crowd.

Another speaker with memories of a different era was Rabbi Shlomo Galperin of Crown Heights, who recalled his youth in the USSR.





## World's Largest Menorah Erected at Central Park

The World's Largest Menorah, a New York City icon and the world's premier menorah, was erected on Wednesday.

The World's Largest Menorah, a New York City icon and the world's premier menorah, is set to brighten the city once again when it is lit each of the eight nights of Chanukah, from December 7 to December 15.

With the recent surge of antisemitic incidents and the explicit embrace of these hateful sentiments by influential cultural figures following the Oct 7 terrorist attacks in Israel, organizers expect this year's festivities to be even larger and more joyous than ever before, as New Yorkers embrace the Chanukah's message of light and hope and ensure that hate will never win.

Throughout the eight-day holiday, many New Yorkers and visitors to the city will join the nightly lightings of the towering 36-foot menorah—certified by the Guinness World Records as the world's largest—on Fifth Avenue and 59th Street at Grand Army Plaza near Central Park, right outside of the Plaza Hotel. Organized by the Lubavitch Youth Organization, the event will feature a public menorah-lighting ceremony and live music with spirited Chassidic dancing. The menorah was designed by Israeli artist Yaacov Agam and spired by a hand drawing by the Rambam of the original menorah in the Beis Hamikdash in Yerushalayim.

On Sunday of Chanukah, free donuts and Menorah for participants. On Monday of Chanukah, singer Eli Marcus will perform.

## Sobolivka Commemorates Holocaust Victims with Memorial Reconstruction



In a joint effort between the "Memory Network – Netzwerk Erinnerung" organization and the collaborative work of architect Taras Savka and project coordinator Leonid Voloshin, a memorial honoring the victims of the Holocaust has been unveiled in Sobolivka.

During the Nazi occupation, the local Jewish youth were sent for forced labor, where many perished from exhaustion or were brutally killed. The ghetto primarily housed elderly individuals and mothers with children. On May 27, 1942, the SD Sonderkommando, with support from local auxiliary police and a unit of the Hungarian battalion, gathered over 300 Jews in the market square, led them to a forest, and executed them.

In 1948, relatives of the victims erected a memorial at this location. In 1968, through the initiative of local villagers and the Jewish community, and with the support of a local sugar factory, the monument was renovated.

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# THE SIN OF THE GOLDEN ROUND

The Rebbe's battle to restore halachic accuracy and Jewish pride to the shape of the Menorah

**I**t is hard to find clearer, sharper expressions from the Rebbe as we find on the subject of drawings of the menorah in the Beis HaMikdash made with rounded arms. The source for this depiction is the Arch of Titus in Rome which commemorates the victory of the wicked Titus over the Jews.

At the farbrengen on the afternoon of Shabbos parshas Mattos-Masei 5742, the Rebbe spoke at length about the shape of the branches of the menorah in the Beis HaMikdash and proved that they had to be diagonal as is clear from Rashi and Rambam; fortuitously, Rambam's diagram was discovered at that time. The Rebbe addressed questions and differing opinions on the subject.

Besides the halachic explanation about the menorah's branches, one could see that the Rebbe wanted to erase any connection to the wicked Titus.

**"The typical drawing of a menorah with six rounded half-circle arms are most likely based on the copying of a menorah which –non-Jews made in Rome and on the victory arch of Titus, may his name be erased. When the wicked Titus destroyed the Beis HaMikdash, he ordered that the vessels of the Mikdash be brought to Rome and in honor of the wicked one, they built a 'victory arch' bearing his name, 'The Arch of Titus.' On this arch they depicted the captive vessels of the Mikdash including the menorah which is drawn with half-circle branches.**

**"In addition to the menorah on the Arch of Titus not being at all accurate, it was obviously made to show and express the control and dominion of Rome over the Jews, r'l, so that they etched the words 'Judea Capta' (captive Jews) in several places and there were times that they compelled Jews to go to the arch to see what is written and inscribed there in order to humiliate them, etc."**

The Rebbe considers this not only a halachic problem, that the drawing of the menorah's branches as half-circles is incorrect, but also an identification with Titus and the degradation of the Jews in exile.

**"It comes out that drawing the branches of the menorah as half-circles ought to generate a hue and cry, in addition to it being**

**the opposite of Rashi and Rambam etc. Also because it gives a certain imprimatur, r'l, to the drawing on the Arch of Titus which was made to cause anguish to the Jews and humiliate them.**

**"Instead of the drawing of the menorah reminding a Jew and inspiring him that his job is to be a 'light to the nations,' they make the menorah in such a way that it reminds of the opposite, that Rome vanquished the Jews, r'l!"**

These sharp words of the Rebbe were meant to express his strong aversion to those who continue to draw menorahs and make menorahs copying that same humiliating menorah from the Arch of Titus.

Many Chassidim saw in this another step whereby the Rebbe was paving the way for Moshiach, by removing another layer of exile.

The handwritten diagram of Rambam shows the menorah with straight, diagonal arms, as his own son testified that the drawing was done specifically with diagonal arms.

The Rebbe said that it was even worthwhile

for Chanuka menorahs to be made with diagonal branches, noting that this would not be copying a vessel of the Mikdash (which is prohibited) since a Chanuka menorah has eight branches and the menorah of the Mikdash had seven.

The Rebbe's words were conveyed to the world. Thousands of shluchim and Chabad Chassidim began using menorahs with diagonal branches and in thousands of cities, shluchim set up huge menorahs with straight arms so the message spread even further.



*The round-shaped menorah in 770 before the Rebbe raised the issue*

## THE STORM THAT FOLLOWED

Like many things that the Rebbe innovated, this topic generated a storm. Many did not understand the Rebbe's point and some said it was a chiddush of Lubavitch. The Rebbe referred to this when Rabbi Sholom Steinberg, publisher of *HaChumash HaMevoar*, passed by the Rebbe for dollars. He showed the Rebbe the drawing of the menorah in his Chumash with diagonal branches. The Rebbe smiling said, "You probably know that they made a tumult around me about this."

In recent years, we are beginning to see some signs of the thought revolution wrought by the Rebbe even among groups that did not understand the Rebbe's words at the time. Decades ago, depicting a menorah like that on the Arch of Titus was standard practice, even among the most religious Jews including scholars. Today, most researchers contradict and have debunked the image of the menorah on the Arch of Titus. Some focus on other details of the menorah (like the base) but the common denominator among the researchers is that they have stopped treating it as "the Menorah of the Mikdash."

An example of a response sent to the Rebbe was one sent by Rabbi Reuven Brim, author of *Purim HaMeshulash* and other works, who wrote a long letter to the Rebbe about the menorah and tried to bring proofs that some of the poskim held that the branches were rounded. [He began his letter with profoundly respectful flowery verse which defies translation in English.]





**“However, once the Rambam’s diagram was discovered, obviously even they would agree that according to all opinions the branches were straight.”**

R’ Brim wrote that even great Torah scholars did not take note of Rashi’s view that the branches were diagonal. He said that in his elementary school class where he taught for 28 years, he hung up a menorah with diagonal arms like Rashi’s view, “Although many did not approve and until recently expressed surprise about the diagonal and even when I showed them clearly in Rashi they were still not swayed, because the half-circle shaped menorah is so engraved in the mind so that even Torah scholars did not notice that word ‘diagonal’ in Rashi (they were not yet aware of the Rambam’s drawing).”

This letter shows how widespread the ignorance was and to what extent the “rounded exile” was etched into the minds and hearts even of Torah scholars.

Rabbi Yosef Kapach is the one who deserves a lot of credit for attacking the depiction of the menorah of Titus, as he was the one who discovered the Rambam’s drawing of the menorah. In his notes on the Rambam’s commentary on Mishnayos, he wrote, “Unlike the widespread drawing that was copied from the Arch of Titus which has already been proven is fraudulent since in the beraisa it says that it has feet while in the widespread drawing it is on a wide base, and other contradictions.”

If the menorah that came to Rome had diagonal branches why is it drawn with half-circle arms on the Arch of Titus?

The Rebbe concludes it was another menorah that was similar to the menorah of the Mikdash. The Rebbe said there were many who produced menorahs that were similar to the menorah of the Mikdash since that menorah was of great importance and especially idol worshippers did so for their idol worship. In fact, the menorah of Titus is one of those made for idol worship, which is why it has etchings of a dragon on it, a symbol used by idol worshippers.” (For those who are unfamiliar, the dragon was a type of creature whose image was frequently used in idol worship, as the Sages taught, “One who finds vessels on which is the image of the sun, the moon, a dragon – he should take them to [dispose of them in] the Yam HeMelach [Dead Sea].” Meaning that this was a clear symbol of idolatry).

Mr. Yaakov Agam, an artist who designed the huge menorah put up in Manhattan by Tzeirei Agudas Chabad, did research on this and noted that even from an artistic perspective, Jewish art is based on straight or diagonal lines like the Magen Dovid, unlike Christian art which uses circles and half circles.

It should also be noted that many err in thinking that the Arch of Titus, which is the source for the half-circle menorahs, was made in the days of Titus. Actually, research shows that it was built many years after the victory and even after the death of Titus so that whoever tries to base himself on this image is mistaken.

Another proof that this menorah is not the one used in the Beis HaMikdash can be found in the article publicized by Rabbi Greenwald in the periodical *Meor Yisrael*. He refers to one of the Kinot about the destruction of the Mikdash which says that the menorah of the Mikdash fell and was broken when they tried taking it into captivity and this was miraculous. This is why the menorah on the Arch of Titus does not have legs as the menorah in the Mikdash had.

#### HALACHIC RULING

As mentioned, many questions were raised

### *Changing The Tide*

Unfortunately, even within Chabad the rounded menorah is still used whether in preschool crafts or when shlichim advertise or give rounded menorahs as gifts to distinguished people, having their pictures taken with them.

All these are exceptions yet we need to remember that this is not a trivial issue, but rather the essence of the Rebbe’s view is to uproot idol worship and the exile feeling from the root, to get rid of another layer of galus and bring the Geula.

It is sad to see silver stores with menorahs in the window that look like the one used to aggrandize the name of the wicked one who destroyed our Mikdash.

Those buying new menorahs should ask for ones with diagonal arms. When there is a demand for it, the supply will keep up. This will be a victory for halacha and pure Jewish hashkafa.

by Torah scholars as well as historians and researchers about the Rebbe’s position. One of the common questions asked was why are menorahs found among antiquities rounded; likewise, there are drawings of rounded menorahs in siddurim of the kabbalists.

The Rebbe responded that in archaeological digs there are many other things found that are against halacha like round tefillin. Do we say that these discoveries change the halacha? Science cannot contradict halacha especially when we occasionally see that science changes when scientists realize that not everything seen at first glance as authoritative, is in fact so.

The Rebbe, as always, takes a very strong position on any matter that is against halacha and against the Jewish religion. It should be noted that except for the author of *Maaseh Chosheiv* and the author of *Chochmas HaMishkan*, no other poskim hold the view that the branches were rounded.

Furthermore, the Rebbe notes that those poskim who write that the menorah was rounded, paskened this way based on their understanding of the Rambam. However, once the Rambam’s diagram was discovered, obviously even they would agree that according to all opinions the branches were straight.

#### DIAGONAL MENORAH READY AND WAITING

Machon HaMikdash in Yerushalayim has constructed vessels of the Mikdash out of silver and gold by way of preparing for the construction of the Beis HaMikdash. For many years, the institute had a menorah with rounded arms but about twenty years ago, they decided to build a new menorah according to the Rambam’s view, with diagonal branches. This menorah is made of pure silver and can be used for the avoda in the Mikdash.

Speedily, in our days, when the third Mikdash is built, the kohen gadol will be able to light this menorah which is similar to the original menorah [until we have the original gold menorah described in the Torah].

Rabbi Menachem Makover, one of the people who runs the institute, who was very involved in the menorah, notes that the difference between rounded and straight also relates to the running of the world. Rounded represents nature while straight represents the supernatural. Beyond the halachic angle, the Rebbe definitely opened the path for miraculous conduct of the world – a world of Geula.

# Crown Heights: “The Capital of Jewish Food”

By Levi Liberow

A close friend of mine was looking into *parmasah* prospects. He was considering entering the restaurant market and wanted to try something new and fresh in one of Brooklyn’s Jewish neighborhoods. He was looking into an Asian style of cuisine, which (at the time) did not exist in the kosher market.

He approached a potential investor, a mover-and-shaker in the kosher dining market, who was behind a respectable list of successful kosher restaurants, and asked what he thinks about it.

The investor — not a Chabadnik, at least openly — liked the idea. “But don’t try it here. People here are too traditional. You have to debut in Crown Heights first...”

I guess we — Lubavitchers — are trailblazers in everything Jewish. No one like the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach is open to using any legitimate trick and method to get more Jews involved.

So, this spirit of Jewish innovation, besides for, of course, fueling *shlichus*, also rubbed off on entrepreneurs in our community and so, Crown Heights has in the past decade earned the title of “the capital of Jewish Food.”

We have high-end and specialty restaurants both *milchig* and *Fleshig* (Izzy’s, Boeuf & Bun, Gruit, Carbon Charcoal), fine smoked meats, 24 hour and specialty coffee shops (Chocolatte, Patis, Artisan Bakehouse among others), liquor-infused ice cream (The Boozery), these “new-age” dining options sit side-by-side with thriving traditional restaurants, bakeries and world-famous cholent-and-kugel places (I know this firsthand — people in my Flatbush shul rant and rave over Dovid Malka’s potato kugel..)

## “Capital of Jewish food?”

Many of us —myself included — don’t like the sound of that. “Is that what we have to offer?” “Crown Heights should be known as the capital of Torah, of Jewish spirituality, of *simcha*, of Chassidus!”

“How do you think the Rebbe would react seeing a headline in the media reading that ‘Crown Heights is the capital of Jewish Food?’”

many of us think.

I don’t know how the Rebbe would react. But everything a Jew sees or hears must serve as a lesson in *Avodas Hashem*; Surely, when it happens in the Rebbe’s city and neighborhood.

We all know the song “*Essen est zich*” and we all know what Chassidus says about indulging in *ta’avos heter* — permissible kosher indulgences. The whole “culture” of food is antithetical to Judaism. We eat to be healthy and able-bodied to serve Hashem.

It really doesn’t matter if it’s a croissant, or *chulent* and *kugel* — all a *ta’avah* needs to fit into the category of *ta’avos heter* is a good *hechsher*. The fact that Jews have been eating



it for hundreds of years doesn’t make it less *klipas nogah*.

I shared my thoughts on this matter with a friend, someone I thought to be more “radical” than myself. He surprised me with his reaction: “What does every Chabad House do? Every shiur in a Yeshiva today advertises that ‘refreshments will be served!’ Of course, it’s not the main thing, but when you bring Jews to Crown Heights, ostensibly for food, they get to be in the Rebbe’s *shchuna*. They see Chassidim, they see Jewish life, and even the mere sight can have a tremendously positive effect.”

And he’s right. Avraham Avinu invented the formula. His four-door-tent was “the capital of kosher food” in the desert for miles around, and that’s how he brought thousands under the wings of the Shechinah!

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And with all this said, I still believe there is a balance that needs to be reached. True, Chabad Houses use food as a tool to bring Jews closer, but Chabad is not a restaurant chain. Crown Heights is the capital of Jewish life, not only of kosher food.

In a fascinating *sicha* (Mikeitz 5752), the

Rebbe points out that all Jewish festivals — in typical Jewish fashion — are food-related. There is an obligation of a *seuda* — nourishing the body — because we celebrate them to commemorate miracles that saved our bodies.

Chanukah has no such obligation. We mark the miracles with more spiritual acts, like lighting candles and reciting Hallel, because the Greek persecution was directed at our souls.

But the Rema (in *siman* 670:2), notes that while there is no obligation to feast, nonetheless, “*yesh ktzas mitzvah b’ribuy haseudos*” — it is customary to add in festive dining, and there is an aspect of a *mitzvah* involved too.

This is because a Jew’s spiritual life cannot be detached from his physical life. If you oppose a Jew’s religion and faith, you are bound to become a plain antisemite and lose all your intellectual sophistication on the way, which is exactly what happened at the time of Chanukah: the “enlightened” Hellenists couldn’t refrain from hurting Jewish property either.

When we celebrate our spiritual victory, the food just has to be there too, because Jewish food stands for much more than what meets the eye and the taste-buds... And we need to teach that secret too.

## Yud Tes Kislev is also all about food

The victory of Yud Tes Kislev was really the vindication of Chassidus from a heavenly *kitrug*, a claim that the world was unworthy for these secrets. But years before his own arrest and liberation, the Alter Rebbe gave his famous *mashal* of the ill prince and the crown jewels to fight off the same *kitrug*? How then did that Heavenly opposition return?

The Rebbe brilliantly explains (*Likkutei Sichos* vol. 30 on 19 Kislev), that that defense was for Chassidus as a medication; for droplets of divine wisdom sparingly administered to save a deathly ill nation.

The Alter Rebbe’s Chabad Chassidus wanted every Jew to thrive on Chassidus, not only survive through it! The new *kitrug* came about when the Alter Rebbe began “feeding” crown jewels to every “nobody” for breakfast, lunch, dinner and snack too!

Ultimately, that “menu” was approved by the Heavenly Court, and so, what Crown Heights has to offer to every Jew (and gentiles too) is Chassidus and Torah not as a potion or merely “supplemental” inspiration for Jewish life.

We are indeed the “Capital of Jewish Food,” with an emphasis on the “Jewish.”

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# Can We Talk About The Disturbing Trends At “Simchas”

By Rabbi Gershon Avtzon, Cincinnati, Ohio

**W**e are coming from Yud-Daled Kislev, the 95th wedding anniversary of our Rebbe and Rebbetzen, and it is a fitting time to have an open and honest discussion on the recent trends in Simchas in general and weddings in particular.

We all know that the wedding day, in the Torah view and especially according to the teaching of Chassidus, is the foundation for the entire marriage. It is an elevated and spiritual day and as the Rebbe’s father (whose 80th Yahrzeit is this year) wrote to the Rebbe: “Whoever increases and intensifies his tears [of teshuvah] during this fast day, a day that is likened to Yom Kippur, is to be praised.”

With this holy mindset, let us highlight how some of the preparatory stages to this very special day should really be:

1. The “Proposal”: It is in the last few years that I received this question from some of my – former – Talmidim: “Rabbi: Do you like the way that I proposed to my Kalla”? They will then send a video of some type of “will you marry me” scene. While it may seem cute, it is clearly sourced in secular culture.

The lines have become very blurred, especially with easily shared social media clips, and many young people think that this is what they are supposed to do. While there clearly must be a time where the two people agree to write to the Rebbe for a Bracha, it must be done in a dignified and refined way.

2. The “pre-game” and official L’chaim: There is a new way things have developed. After the couple get officially engaged, close family and friends – after being by the Ohel – get together and say Mazal Tov and L’chaim. At some later time (it could be a week later) the two families rent a hall and spend thousands of dollars on a “mini-wedding” called a L’chaim. Does anyone feel that this is really necessary (unless you are a shliach and doing it as a Peula in your community)?

It was just “recently” that it was common and acceptable to have a “vurt” in a house and people came and wished Mazal tov and the chevre sat for Farbrengen and everyone was happy. Most families are stretching themselves to make a wedding and could really benefit from scaling down these extra – and really unnecessary – events.

While it may not be practical for many families to make a Lchaim in the home, and they must do it in a hall to accommodate the crowd etc, it does not need to be an extremely lavish affair.

Most people just like to follow the crowd and want their children to feel that they “got what they deserved”. It will take a few brave people to forgo the lavish l’chaim that they can afford and recreate the standard for the rest of the community. While the Rebbe did not officially endorse “takanos” – as in other Chassidische communities – he did not want such wasted spending either.

[On a separate – and very important – note: Are people aware that there are people that make a full Parnasa by setting up these lavish events are working without a reputable hechsher or mashgiach? It is a very serious issue that is demanding communal attention.]

3. The wedding: We must have an open discussion about the current music, dancing and lighting that is happening by our weddings. Instead of a wedding being a time where true and Chassidische joy is expressed, which is so beautiful and uplifting for all those that attend, many weddings have turned into discos and rave parties. This affects the atmosphere and the level of Tznius.

While people have the ability to set their own standards in their own homes, the Rabbanim – and wedding halls – are allowed to “impose” standards in these important public areas and events. It affects the community and the moral compass of the young children – and bochorim and girls – attending the wedding.

[I will not start with the absolute waste of money that is spent on many seemingly extras and trivialities by a wedding. Parents must remember that the wedding night is a few hours and that money – if you are willing to spend – will be best spent on the couple themselves in their first year of marriage.]

4. Shana Rishona and Honeymoon: Shana Rishona is a very important year in the life of the young couple. It sets the true foundation of the home and it gives

them the time and opportunity to really connect to each other. In the ideal situation, the yungerman learns in Kollel while his wife is involved in some type of part-time occupation.

With many Bochorim already working full time, and the limited Kollel incomes and very high cost of living, it is becoming a little more difficult. Yet all married men should be encouraged to set up part of their day in the Beis Midrash. It creates a Torah foundation for the home.

What can be detrimental to the Torah-foundation of the home is an official “honeymoon”.

There are so many Halachik nuances that the young couple must get used to, in addition to the general adherence to Tznius etc, that many couples’ internal Shalom Bayis are ruined by these grand (so-called) vacations.

[This is not the forum to publicly address at length the tremendous Churban of marriages that are a result of young couples going out together for date-nights and other social events. The early years of marriage must be used for personal bonding and connection.]

We are a holy nation and, in the spirit of Yud-Tes Kislev, holy Chassidim. We must constantly strive to add and bring holiness in our lives and communities around us.

Davening for the safety and security of Klal Yisroel and for the Hisgalus of Melech Hamoshiach and have the ultimate simcha and wedding of Hashem and Bnei Yisrael!

Please feel free to share your thoughts, or possible solutions, on the above by sending me a personal email: [rabbiavtzon@gmail.com](mailto:rabbiavtzon@gmail.com)



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## FROM THE REBBE'S PEN

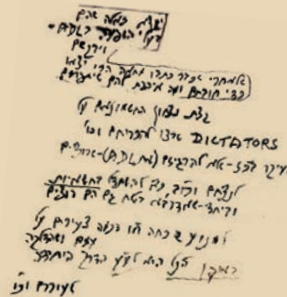
### How To Get The ADL On Board with Public Menorah Lightings

The response of the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach to a shliach who lit a public menorah in his city in the previous year, with the backing of the municipality and the tacit agreement of the Jewish Federation. The only ones who objected last year were people from the Anti-Defamation League (ADL). The shliach requested the advice and blessing of the Rebbe regarding the concern of opposition from the ADL:

You should seek people with influence in the ADL and request them to convey to the directors that after they have already issued a written protest, they have thus fulfilled their obligation, so what do they care if there is a bit of publicity about the victory of the Chashmonaim over DICTATORS who wanted to coerce them, etc.

A primary matter to consider in all this is not to antagonize them (the ADL) and give them the feeling that we want to defeat them and the like, but rather to work discreetly and in cooperation with them – for to the contrary, they too certainly want to prevent many of our youth from forgetting about their nation, and that lighting the menorah in this public manner is, for now, the only way to arouse them, etc.

ימצא כאלה שהם בעלי השפעה ב ADL ויבקשם שלאחרי שכבר כתבו מחאה הרי יצאו כדי חובתם ומה איכפת להם שיתפרסם קצת נצחון החשמונאים על DICTATORS [דיקטטורים] שרצו להכריחם וכו' ועיקר בכ"ז [= בכל זה] – שלא להרגיזם (את ADL) - שרוצים לנצחם וכיו"ב, כ"א [= כי אם] להשתדל בחשאיות וביחוד – שאדרכא בטוח גם הם רוצים למנוע שכחה ח"ו דכמה צעירים על עמם ושהדלקה באופן הנ"ל היא לע"ע [= לעת עתה] הדרך היחידה לעוררם וכו'.



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# MAZAL TOV

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- Yossi Gansburg (ben R' Berel) – Crown Heights to Sarah Rochel Hertzfel – Crown Heights
- Yisroel Dovber Kransjanski – Honolulu, Hawaii to Fradl Vishedski – Kyiv, Ukraine
- Binyamin Pinsky – Far Rockaway, NY to Aval Weitz – Hillside, NJ
- Avrohom Brawer – Crown Heights to Mimi Rabinowitz – Crown Heights
- Avraham Schneerson – Crown Heights to Mussi Rabinowitz – Crown Heights
- David Amishay – Miami, FL to Danielle Cohen – Boca Raton, FL
- Eliyahu Shlomo Ezagui – Crown Heights to Chaya Mushka Mooseek – Nachlas Har Chabad, Eretz Yisroel
- Mendel Gurary – Crown Heights to Miriam Lefkowitz – Monsey, NY
- Israel Mimoun – Montrouge, France to Rahel Sebag – St. Germain-en-Laye, France

## Newborn

- Baby boy to Chesky and Rochel Wasserman – Bayswater, NY
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