



YUD-TE'S KISLEV (1)

The Kedusha of the Day

After his release from prison, the Alter Rebbe wrote a letter to the *tzaddik*, Reb Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev: "It must be made known, that on the day of *Yud-Tes Kislev*, which *HaShem* made for us – on Tuesday, the day about which the Torah writes twice 'it was good', the *yahrzeit* of Rabbeinu HaKadosh (the Maggid) – when I was reading the *possuk* in *Tehillim* that begins '*pada beshalom nafshi*', before I reached the next *possuk*, I was freed *beshalom* (in peace) from *HaShem* who is called *Shalom*."

(אג"ק אדה"ז ע' צז)

After the *geula* of the Alter Rebbe, the chassidim wanted to write a *Megillas Yud-Tes Kislev* to be read each year, so they prepared a draft to present to him. The matter was kept a secret until they traveled to Liozna, where they asked for his consent for their project. The Alter Rebbe did not grant it, but told them, "This day will be established as a *Yom-Tov* amongst Yidden, in which *HaShem's* Name will be glorified and thousands of Yidden will be aroused to *teshuva* and *avoda*. This episode is engraved in the 'heart of Yisroel' above and is written in the heart of every Yid below."

(לקוטי דיבורים ח"א ע' 38)

Celebrating the Yom-Tov

How did the chassidim in Liadi celebrate the first anniversary of the *geula* of *Yud-Tes Kislev* in ב"תקס"ב?

Reb Aizik Homiler described it for us: "That year, during Tishrei, the Rebbe was extremely joyful. He mentioned to the chassidim who were close to him that he had not yet made a *seudas hoda'a* for his *geula*, as one is obligated to do, *al pi halachah*. From this, they understood that the coming *Yud-Tes Kislev* would be something out of the ordinary.

"At the beginning of *chodesh Kislev*, we, the young chassidim of Homil, Bobruisk and the surrounding villages, put together whatever money we had, hired a wagon, and bought a dozen pairs of *volikess*, felt-lined winter boots. We set off together by foot, except that from time to time we took turns resting on the wagon. As we passed through various towns, we were joined by many more chassidim – eight *minyanim* in all – and on Thursday of *Parshas Vayishlach* we arrived in Liadi.

"That *Shabbos* was the most joyous that chassidim ever experienced. During *Shabbos* the Rebbe gave

three *maamarim* – one before *Kabbalas Shabbos*, another early on *Shabbos* morning, and a third *maamar* after *Mincha*. We *chazered* the *maamarim* over and over, under the guidance of the *chozrim*, carefully recalling *divrei harav*.

"On Sunday and Monday people began arriving from far and near, from dozens of towns and villages. The townsmen of Liadi announced that all the *orchim* would be served meals without payment for the entire week, until after the forthcoming *Shabbos*. Even some of the *goyishe* townsmen took part in the *hachnasas orchim*, and dozens of them even cleared out their houses to make room for *orchim* to sleep. The manager of the estates of Count Liubermirsky announced that every single day a shipment of food would be delivered to them from the count's estates, including 1200 kg (over 2600 pounds) of flour for bread, as well as three cows and a few calves for *shechita*. In addition, he would deliver a few wagonloads of hay for the visitors' horses.

"On Tuesday, *Yud-Tes Kislev*, the *olam* went to *daven* in both the small and the large *beis midrash*, as well as in all the other *batei midrashim* in town. Wherever you went, the place was packed with people. It was announced that after *Mincha Gedola* the *olam* should gather in the large courtyard of the *beis midrash*, where the Rebbe would say a *maamar*. The courtyard was packed with people, and in the center of the large *beis midrash*, the big *bima* was set up, with a long table on it. Suddenly we heard the huge voice of Reb Shmuel Elye *der Heizeriker* ('the hoarse' – the nickname that jokingly referred to his resonating roar). He announced that the Rebbe was arriving and everyone should be silent. When Shmuel Elye said *Sha!* the entire room shook. Soon a group of broad-shouldered *yungeleit* arrived, and like strings, they slipped through the packed crowd, and in just a few short minutes they created a broad path from the door to the *bima*.

"As soon as the Rebbe appeared at the door, we were overcome by awe, a deeply-felt *hadras kavod*. The Rebbe was singing alone, to the words *tze'ena ure'ena*. He was accompanied by a brother on either side, a third brother and two eminent elders behind them, the Rebbe's three sons following, and then the *Tzemach Tzedek*. Approaching the steps leading up to the *bima*, the Rebbe began to sing *Keili Atah*, and took his seat at the table, along with those who were with him. As he sang, the awesome *hislahavus* within us grew from moment to moment, and the silence echoing in the *beis midrash* overwhelmed us with an inner dread.

"The Rebbe then began the *maamar* beginning with the words, *pada beshalom nafshi*. When he completed it, the entire *olam* burst out in a joyful *niggun*. In the smaller *yechidus-beis-midrash*, a table had been set for a *seudas hoda'a*. This was attended only by the Rebbe, his sons and brothers, and a few selected elder chassidim."

(סה"ש קיץ ה'ש"ת ע' 51)

Celebrating the Yom-Tov

Amongst chassidim *Yud-Tes Kislev* was celebrated as a real *Yom-Tov*. All would dress in their finest attire and would greet each other throughout the day with meaningful "*gut yom-tov!*"

Tremendous feasts were held in all *shuls* and homes in honor of the occasion. As a child, the Rebbe collected the funds for a special children's feast – this being the only time when he would be involved in something else other than Torah.

(סה"ש תש"ב עמ' 91, ימי מלך ח"א ע' 152)

Year after year, as if for the first time, Reb Nachum, the Alter Rebbe's grandson, would relate in patient detail all the events that took place during the stormy time of the Alter Rebbe's arrest. He would describe the tense atmosphere of that period, the libelous accusation the *misnagdim* brought to the czarist authorities, and their exultation when the Alter Rebbe's was arrested. Reb Nachum would then describe the Alter Rebbe's stay in prison, his *geula*, the way in which the good news spread, and the Rebbe's return trip to Liozna from the prison in Petersburg. When he recalled the arrest, his voice would drop, as if he were weeping; when he described the liberation, his voice would rise with the *simcha* of a remembered victory. Like the *Megilla* Reading on Purim, he would tell the whole story once at night and again by day. Moreover, if one of the dignified elder chassidim would join the gathering after he had begun, he would go back to the very beginning and start all over again!

(לקוטי דיבורים ח"א ע' 22)

CONSIDER THIS!

- Over what did the chassidim rejoice on *Yud-Tes Kislev*?
- Can we feel today the same joy the chassidim of the past felt?

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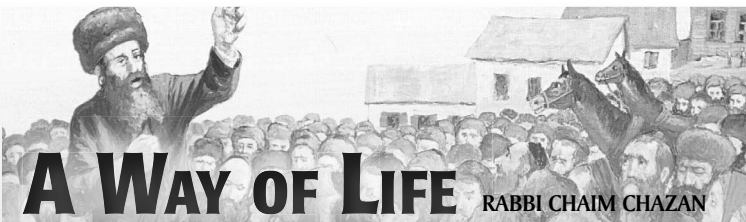
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A WAY OF LIFE

RABBI CHAIM CHAZAN

Discontinuing A Positive Practice

One who attends a daily *shiur* in an *omud Gemora* and now wishes to switch and join a *shiur* in *halacha*, must he be *matir neder*?

- According to *halacha*, a working man who only has a few hours a day to learn should rather learn *halacha* over *Gemora*¹.
- One who accepts upon himself to do a mitzvah or learn a specific subject, (some say even just in his own mind), and did not explicitly say *bli neder*, it has the din of a *neder* (oath) and he is obligated to fulfill his thought². Likewise, an ongoing practice in any area of *Yiddishkeit* becomes a *neder* and in order to discontinue it one must be *matir neder*³. (There are many details to this din and a *rov* must be consulted for practical guidance). Therefore at first glance it would seem that in order to switch his *shiur* he would have to be *matir neder*⁴.
- However, in the case of a *shiur* there are two aspects to the ongoing practice: a) attending a *shiur* at a specific time. b) The subject being learnt. The subject being learnt is not the significant aspect of the practice, because the mitzvah is the learning regardless of the topic. On the contrary, the rule is that a person should learn what he has an interest in. Only where one explicitly accepts a specific subject would the subject be considered a *neder*⁵.
- Moreover, since it is common for people to switch the subject of their study, it's considered as if it was explicitly stated at the outset that one is undertaking to learn *bli neder*⁶.

1. שוע"ר ס"י קנה ס"א, ומפורש יותר במשנ"ב דמצוה יותר ללמוד הלכה. אבל ראה המצויין שם ס"ק ג.
2. שו"ע יו"ד סי' ריג ס"ד.
3. שם סי' ריד ס"א. ובשוע"ר סי' רמט ס"ג.
4. שו"ת יחוה דעת ח"ו סי' נב, והתיר לשנות השיעור מגמרא להלכה בלי להתיר הנדר מטעם בערה.
5. הג"ר שלום פאללאק דומ"צ סקווער בקובץ זרע יעקב כו עמ' סז.
6. ספר יוסף דעת (בעניני נדרים, יזדי) עמ' סא בערה.

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כסלו

Reb Itche der Masmid



Reb Yitzchak Halevi Hurvitz, known as Reb Itche der Masmid, was recognized for his intense *hasmada* in learning and *hiddur* in *mitzvos*. He learned in Tomchei Temimim and became one of the greatest *chassidim* of the Rebbe Rashab and the Frierdiker Rebbe. He later became a *shadar*, traveling around from place to place as per the directives of the Frierdiker Rebbe, and had a profound effect on many. He was murdered in the holocaust *al kidush HaShem*, in Riga on the 10th of Kislev תש"ב (1941).

Late one evening, after one of his extensive journeys as a *shadar*, Reb Itche finally arrived at his host, and was graciously offered a meal. Reb Itche declined, saying that he was so tired from the trip, he just had no appetite, and only desired a room with a bed to lay down and sleep. The host quickly prepared a nice room with a comfortable bed, and Reb Itche entered, locking the door behind him.

An hour later, the owner passed Reb Itche's room and noticed that the light was still on. He was quite perplexed that his *chassidische* guest, who had claimed exhaustion, still had not retired for the night.

A few hours elapsed, but looking at the crack in the door, it was apparent that the light was still burning, and so it remained until before day break when the light was finally put out.

The following morning, the host curiously inquired of Reb Itche, "Yesterday, you declared you were so tired that you could not even eat and wanted to go straight to sleep, but then I saw that the light remained on and you did not retire until morning!"

Reb Itche clarified, "I really was very tired, but what could I do? *Krias Shma She'al Hamitah* must still be recited..."

An eye witness described what took place when Reb Itche was killed *al kidush Hashem*:

In Riga, the Nazis *ymsh* would catch the Yidden, assemble and lock them into a shul, and then set the shul on fire. Anyone trying to escape was immediately shot.

It was on the 10th of Kislev when Reb Itche and Reb Chatche Feigin, the secretary of the Frierdiker Rebbe, along with a multitude of Yidden, were forcibly led to be burned alive. The SS soldiers forced many to come and watch the horrific scene. From the outside, Reb Itche was seen opening the *aron hakodesh*, taking out the Sefer Torah, and announcing, "We have been privileged to die *al kidush Hashem* and we must do this with *simcha*." He put his hand on the shoulder of Reb Chatshe and began singing and dancing to the tune of the *hakafos nigun*...

לזכות ר' שלום מרדכי הלוי שי' בן רבקה

A MOMENT WITH THE REBBE

From Sidney to Sholom

Mr. Sidney Hecht was childless for eighteen years. He visited doctors and professors in the field, but to no avail.

During a *farbrengen* of 5716, between the *sichos*, the Rebbe suddenly called out to him, "Change your name from Sidney to Sholom, so that you may have peace in your body and soul, and you will have healthy child!" Sydney became Sholom, and was blessed with a daughter within the year.

Harav Tzvi Raisman, a member of the *Eidah Hachareidis Bes Din in Yerusholaim*, was a former *Rosh Yeshiva* of Mr. Hecht. This story of the Rebbe was his favorite, and he would always conclude with excitement, "Only the Lubavitcher Rebbe could promise a child in public, after eighteen years of waiting!"