

YUD-TE'S KISLEV (2)

Renewing the Connection

In *HaYom Yom* it is written: *Yud-Tes* Kislev is a day for *farbrengen* and for undertaking positive *hachlatos* to fix times to study *nigleh* and *Chassidus* publicly, and to strengthen the ways of chassidim in true friendship. It is customary to divide up the *Shas* for learning, according to the procedure set out in *Iggeres HaKodesh*.

(היום יום י"ט כסלו)

In the winter of תרס"ב (1901), the Rebbe Rashab was in Moscow for the purpose of *pidyon shvuyim*. He succeeded in annulling a libel against some Yidden who had been arrested, but did not want to leave until they were actually freed.

On *Motzoei Shabbos*, which was *Yud-Gimmel* Kislev, the Frierdiker Rebbe called a meeting of the committee of older *bochurim* of Tomchei Temimim. He told them that it was doubtful whether the Rebbe Rashab would return to Lubavitch for *Yud-Tes* Kislev, but the schedule would nonetheless go on as planned. On the following *leil Shabbos* all the *talmidim* would have their *seuda* in the main *zal* together with their *mashpi'im* and *roshei yeshiva*, and there would be another *seuda* on *Motzoei Shabbos*. In addition, some privileged *bochurim* would join a special *farbrengen* with the Frierdiker Rebbe on Sunday night. Hearing that the Rebbe Rashab might not be in Lubavitch in time for *Yud-Tes* Kislev brought tears to the eyes of some of the older *bochurim*.

The Frierdiker Rebbe relates: A few days before *Yud-Tes* Kislev, many respected *orchim*, and the *talmidim* of nearby Lubavitch *yeshivos*, began to arrive in Lubavitch. There still was a hope that my father would return in time. On Thursday morning some chassidim discussed the possibility of either asking the Rebbe to come in from Moscow, or suggesting that they travel to join him there – though this was highly improbable for they lacked traveling permits. The hours elapsed and the cloud of sadness grew, especially since the Rebbe had not been with them in Lubavitch the previous *Yud-Tes* Kislev.

At 8:30 PM on Thursday night a letter arrived from my father, the Rebbe. At 9:30 I entered the *zal* and announced that we had merited

receiving a holy letter which explained the meaning of the approaching *Yom-Tov*, and that it would be read out on *Chag HaGeula*. This piece of news raised the spirits of the chassidim, and they eagerly anticipated the hour when the letter would be read.

On *erev Shabbos* after *Mincha*, I directed that everyone should learn *Chassidus*. An hour-and-a-half later we *davened Kabbolas Shabbos*, and then everyone returned to their places, ready to hear the letter. I stepped up to the *bimah* together with the two *mashgichim* and read out the letter word by word. It reads in part:

Yud-Tes Kislev is the *Yom-Tov* on which our soul's illumination and *chayus* were given to us, this day is Rosh Hashana for Chassidus [...] It is the fulfillment of the true intention behind the creation of man on earth – to reveal the light of the inward part of our holy Torah. [...] It is our duty, on this day, to awaken our hearts with an innermost, deepseated desire and will, in the very core of our heart, that *HaShem* illuminate our *neshama* with the light of His Inner Torah. [...] "From the depths I called to You, *HaShem*," to elicit the depth and *pnimiyus* of *HaShem's* Torah and *mitzvos* to illuminate the inwardness of our *neshama*, so that our entire being will be dedicated to *HaShem* alone, to banish from within us any of the natural traits that are evil and unworthy – so that everything we do, both in our service of *HaShem* and in worldly matters, will be carried out *leshem Shamayim*.

Everyone stood and listened with shining faces, and as I finished they broke out with a joyous *niggun*.

(לקיד"ח"ד ע' 1518, קוני ומעיינין ע' 15, היום יום בתהילת)

A Day for Chassidische Growth

Early in תרפ"א, the Frierdiker Rebbe, his mother Rebbetzin Shterna Sara, his three daughters, and many *bochurim*, became very ill. The doctors said that the Frierdiker Rebbe's situation was serious, but *Boruch HaShem*, on *Yud-Tes* Kislev, his health took a turn for the better. Instead of *farbrenging*, he wrote the following letter to the *temimim* and *Anash*:

On this holy day, which is the Rosh HaShana for *Chassidus* and for *kabbalas ol malchus Shamayim*,

every individual should do his *avoda* conscientiously, and beg that *HaShem* give him the strength to go in the way of the Alter Rebbe. On this day, as the Alter Rebbe stands before *HaShem*, asking that we and our children be strong *begashmiyus uveruchniyus*, everyone should give *tzedaka* to the *mosdos* that follow the will of the Alter Rebbe. Every person, young and old, should undertake to learn Torah every day, each according to his level, and should accept upon himself *ol malchus Shamayim* for the entire year. Keep in mind that on this day all of the Rebbeim, from the Baal Shem Tov on, are helping us. Be very careful with this day because it is holy.

The Frierdiker Rebbe concludes his letter with the words, "*lechayim velivracha*".

(אגרות קודש מוהרי"צ"א ע' קכ"ב)

It was the evening of *Yud-Tes* Kislev תרפ"ו (1925) and the Frierdiker Rebbe was sitting in the *zal* in Rostov, looking solemn and earnest. Finally, he spoke up and said:

"One *Yud-Tes* Kislev, my father, the Rebbe [Rashab], did not come out to address the crowd of chassidim who had gathered for a *farbrengen*. I entered his study and found him fearfully serious, and he said, 'Today, after all, *Yud-Tes* Kislev, is Rosh HaShana. This plainly means that it is a time for *teshuva*.' I told him that people were waiting, so he obliged and *farbrenged* for a short while and left."

After relating this episode, the Frierdiker Rebbe stood up and returned to his study.

(לשמע אהון ע' 141)

The Alter Rebbe said regarding *Yud-Tes* Kislev, "Whoever rejoices in my simcha, I will take out from distress to relief, from *gashmiyus* to *ruchniyus*, and out of Gehinnom."

The Tzemach Tzedek explained that "rejoicing in my simcha" means holding onto the Alter Rebbe's "door-handle" ("*kliamkeh*") – by learning Torah and by doing *avoda*.

(ס"ה ש"תרצ"ט ע' 315)

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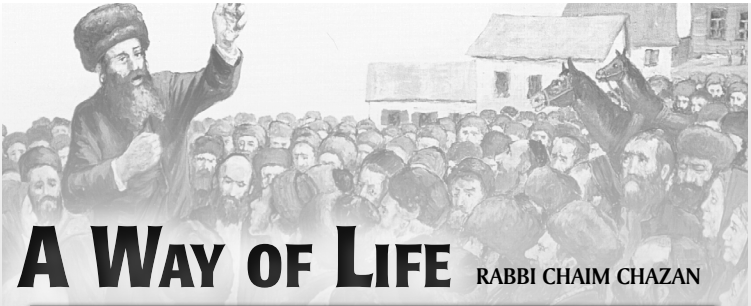
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A WAY OF LIFE RABBI CHAIM CHAZAN

Consenting To Serve As Chazan

If one is *davening* with a *minyan* where no *gabbai* is present to send someone to the *omud*, should he wait until being asked by one of the *mispalelim* to serve as a *chazan*, or approach the *omud* on his own?

- In general the Torah urges a person to flee from honor and positions of authority. On the contrary, *Chazal* say: "*hedyet kofetz b'rosh*" – a coarse individual jumps to lead.
- The practice in times of old, (which is still followed by some communities) was that the congregation would appoint a man of stature as a permanent *chazan* to lead the *davening* year round. The *Alter Rebbe* writes in his *Shulchan Aruch*¹: One who is not a permanently appointed *chazan* should decline somewhat before consenting to serve as *chazan*. He should not, however, refuse extensively. Rather, the first time he is asked he should refuse the honor entirely, as if to say "I am unworthy of this." When he is asked a second time, he should prepare himself as if he desires to rise and accept, and the third time, he should rise and accept.
- The reason why one should first refuse is because the *Shulchan Aruch* outlines many credentials required for a *chazan*, and it is arrogant to appear as he immediately agrees that he possesses those qualities². However, today when we don't have permanent *chazanim* and therefore don't insist that the *chazan* have special credentials (at least during the weekdays) there is no honor in serving as *chazan* (or arrogance in immediately consenting), hence contemporary *poskim*³ write that there is no reason to first refuse.
- When one sees that no one wants to *daven* before the *omud*, he should not refrain. On the contrary, it is a *mitzvah* to approach the *omud* even without being asked⁴, as it is a *chessed* to the congregation and it avoids making them wait (*tircha detzibura*). This is all the more necessary if there is a concern that someone who is in a hurry may go to the *omud* and rush the *davening*⁵.

1. סי' נג סעי' יט. תשובות והנהגות ח"א סי' קיב.
 2. רש"י ברכות לד, א ד"ה יסרב. [ויש לתקן הציון במהדו"ח דשוע"ר או"ק קכג]
 3. שבת הקהתי ח"ו סי' סז [הובא בפסקי תשובות סי' נג הע' 138 ויש לתקן שם ובסוף קו"א].
 4. תשובות נג שם.
 5. וראה תניא קדישא אגה"ק סי' א ובסוף קו"א.

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OUR HEROES

Reb Chaim Avraham ben Admor Hazaken



Reb Chaim Avraham, the oldest son of the Alter Rebbe, had an awesome appearance and looked similar to his father. He was very talented, a serious *masmid*, would *daven* at length, and did not speak more than necessary. Reb Chaim Avraham had refined character traits and would always greet people with a smile.



At his Bris, Reb Chaim Avraham was named Avraham after Reb Avraham the Malaach. When he was three years old, he fell dangerously ill, and the Alter Rebbe called upon ten of his choicest *talmidim* and four residents of the town, who had known the Alter Rebbe in his youth.

When they entered, the Alter Rebbe said to them, "Last night, I saw my teacher Reb Avraham the Malaach, and I asked him why he does not intercede on high for my son Avraham who is his namesake. The Malaach explained that this illness had come about because of the Alter Rebbe's grandfather's indignation that his name was not well known and no one carried it.

"I told to my teacher that I had done as the *halacha* dictates that the honor of a *rebbe* comes before the honor of a parent, especially a grandfather. This especially applies to a name, for the purpose of a name is to reveal the *neshomo* in the person, regarding which the name of a Rebbe would take precedence before another name."

The Alter Rebbe continued, "I did find out that my grandfather, the father of my mother, was called Chaim Avraham, and have therefore invited you to participate in the renaming of my son as Chaim Avraham ben Shterna. Hashem should send him a *refuah* and he should be a *chosid* and a *lamdan*."

Reb Chaim Avraham recovered and grew up as a healthy child.



When the *chosid* Reb Hendel saw the picture of the Alter Rebbe, he thought at first it was a portrait of Reb Chaim Avraham. He then noticed the only difference, the scar on the nose. Reb Hendel would describe Reb Chaim Avraham's *davening*: When I saw the *davening* of Reb Chaim Avraham, I was totally shaken and awed! His face was aflame, his eyes were closed and he was enunciating each word, breaking into a heart rending *nigun* from time to time.

ליכות ר' שלום מרדכי הלוי שי' בן רבקה

A MOMENT WITH THE REBBE

"The Hanhalah Has Kindly Agreed..."

It once happened that a *talmid* of the *yeshiva* on Bedford Ave. was suspended from the *yeshiva* by Harav Mentlik, the Rosh *Yeshiva*. He would only be allowed back if he learned a certain amount of *Tanya baal peh*.



The *talmid* wrote a letter to the Rebbe, in which he wrote that he feels the punishment is unfair. He asked of the Rebbe to please speak to the *hanhala*, to accept him back, without requiring him to learn *baal peh*.

The Rebbe's answer flabbergasted the *talmid*:

"In your letter, I was pleased to read that the *hanhala* has kindly agreed to facilitate your continued learning in the *yeshiva*, under various conditions. In truth, these conditions, should really be done out of your own accord, for this way you may rectify your misdeeds..."

(*Hiskashrus*, issue 535)