

פרשת וישב י"ט כסלו

73

לימוד הדבר תורה ליכות ר' שלום מרדכי הלוי ש"י בן רבקה לגאולה קרובה מן המיצר אל המרחב

LIVING WITH THE EVENT

Year after year, Reb Nachum, the Alter Rebbe's grandson, would relate with great detail all the events which took place during the stormy time of the Alter Rebbe's arrest. He would describe the background, the libelous accusation the misnagdim brought to the Czarist authorities, and their celebration of the Alter Rebbe's arrest. Reb Nachum would then go on to tell of the Alter Rebbe's stay in Prison, his geula, the way the good news spread, and then the Rebbe's return trip from Petersburg (where the prison was located) to Liozna. When he spoke of 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 it 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)

After the geula of the Alter Rebbe, the Chassidim wanted to write a Megillas Yud Tes Kislev to be read each year, and they prepared a draft to present to the Alter Rebbe. The matter was kept a secret until they traveled to Liozna where they asked for permission. The Alter Rebbe did not give his consent and 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."

(לקוטי דיבורים ח"א ע' 38)

THE עבודה OF THE DAY

The Rebbe writes: Yud Tes Kislev is a day of farbrengen and taking on good hachlotos towards establishing times to study Nigleh and Chassidus publicly, and strengthening the ways of chassidim in true friendship. It is customary to divide the Shas for learning, according to the procedure set out in הקודש.

(היום יום י"ט כסלו)

In the beginning of 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 terrible, but Boruch Hashem, on Yud Tes Kislev, his health took a turn for the better. The Frierdiker Rebbe, instead of farbrenging, wrote letters to the temimim and אנ"ש, in which he wrote:

On this holy day which is Rosh Hashana for Chassidus and for accepting עול מלכות שמים, each person should do his avoda properly, and beg Hashem to strengthen him to go in the way of the Alter Rebbe. On this day, as the Alter Rebbe stands in front of Hashem, asking for us and our children that we be strong בגשמיות וברוחניות, one should give tzedaka to the מוסדות following the will of the Alter Rebbe. Every person, young and old, should take upon himself to learn Torah every day, each according to his level, and should accept the עול מלכות שמים for the entire year. Know, that on this day, all of the Rebbeim from the Baal Shem Tov are helping us. Be very careful with this day because it is holy. "לחיים ולברכה".

(אגרות קודש הרי"צ ח"א ע' קכ"ב)

The Alter Rebe said regarding Yud Tes Kislev, "He who will rejoice in my simcha, I will take him out מן המיצר אל המרחב (from distress to relief), from gashmius to ruchnius, and out of gehinom." The Tzemach Tzedek explained that 'rejoicing in my simcha' means to hold onto the 'door handle' ('kliamkeh'), which is accomplished through learning Torah and through avoda.

(סה"ש תרצ"ט ע' 315)

MARKING THE DAY

The chossid Reb Eizil Homilier described the Alter Rebbe's first Seudas Hoda'a for Yud Tes Kislev which was held in Liadi in תקס"ב: "During Tishrei that year, the Rebbe was extremely joyful, and mentioned to those close to him that he had not yet made a Seudas Hoda'a for his geula, as is required according to halochos. The Chassidim understood that the coming Yud Tes Kislev would be something special.

"At the beginning of Kislev, we, the young Chassidim of Homil, Babroisk, and the surrounding villages, put together whatever money we had, hired a wagon and bought a dozen pairs of 'volikes' (felt-lined winter boots). Together we set out on foot, though from time to time, we took turns resting on the riding wagon. As we passed through different towns, we were joined by many more Chassidim, and on the Thursday of פרשת וישלח, our group totaling eight minyonim arrived in Liadi.

"That Shabbos was the most joyous Shabbos ever experienced by Chassidim. The Rebbe said three maamarim, one before Kabbalas Shabbos, another early Shabbos morning and a third maamer after Mincha. We chazzered the maamarim many times, under the guidance of the chozrim, carefully recalling the words of the Rebbe.

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לע"נ שרה רבקה בת ר' יוסף ע"ה



"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 guests would receive meals without charge for the entire week, until after the forthcoming Shabbos. Even some of the goyishe townsmen took part in the Hachnosas Orchim, and tens of them even cleared out their houses to make room for the guests to sleep. The manager of the estates of Count Liubermirsky announced that every single day a shipment of food would be delivered to the chassidim from the count's estates, including 1200 kg (over 2600 pounds) of flour for bread, three cows and a few calves for shechita. In addition, he would deliver a number of wagonloads of hay for the traveler's horses.

"On Tuesday, Yud Tes Kislev, we davened in both the small and large Battei Medrashim, as well as in all the other Battei Medrashim in town. Wherever one went, it was packed with people. It was announced that after an early mincha (מנחה גדולה), everyone should gather in the large courtyard of the Beis Medrash where the Rebbe would say a maamer. The courtyard was packed with people, and in the center of the large Beis Medrash, the big bima was set up with a long table on it. Suddenly, Reb Shmuel Eliyahu der Heizeriker ("the hoarse", so called in reference to his loud roar) announced that the Rebbe would soon be arriving and everyone should be silent. His "Sha" was able to shake the entire room. Soon a group of broad-shouldered youngerliet arrived, and like strings, they slipped through the packed crowd, creating a broad pathway from the door to the bima in just a few short minutes.

"As soon as the Rebbe appeared at the door, we were overcome by a dreadful awe, with an innermost reverence, and we heard the Rebbe singing to the words צאינה וראינה. The Rebbe was accompanied by his brothers on either side of him, then a third brother and two known elders behind them, his three sons followed, with the Tzemach Tzedek behind them. Approaching the steps leading up to the bima, the Rebbe began the niggun Keili Atta, ascended the bima, and then sat down at the table together with those who were with him. As the Rebbe sang the niggun, the inner hislahavus of all those present grew from moment to moment, and the silence echoing in the Beis Medrash threw upon us an innermost fright.

"The Rebbe then began the maamer beginning with the possuk פדה בשלום נפשי. When he completed his maamer, we all burst out in a joyful niggun. In the smaller Yechidus Beis Medrash, a table had been set for a Seudas Hoda'a, which was only attended by the Rebbe, his sons and brothers, and a few selected החסידים.

(סה"ש קי"ז ה"ש"ת ע' 51)

In the winter of תרס"ב, the Rebbe Rashab was in Moscow, in an effort of pidyon shvuyim, to annul a libel and free Yidden who were taken captive. His undertaking was successful, but he did not want to leave until they were actually freed.

On Motzo'ei Shabbos Yud Gimmel Kislev, the Frierdiker Rebbe called together a meeting with the committee of older Bochorim of Tomchei Temimim, which led many functions in the Yeshivah. At the meeting they were told 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 Leil Shabbos, all the talmidim would have their seudah in the main Zal, together with their Mashpi'im and Roshei Yeshivah and another seuda on Moitzo'ei Shabbos; Some privileged Bochorim would join a special

farbrengen with the Frierdiker Rebbe which would take place on Sunday night. Hearing that the Rebbe Rashab may not be in Lubavitch for Yud Tes Kislev, had a strong impression on the older Bochorim, and even brought tears to the eyes of some.

The Frierdiker Rebbe relates: A few days before Yud Tes Kislev, the honorary orchim and talmidim of nearby Lubavitch yeshivos, began arriving in Lubavitch, and 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 that the chassidim travel to him, though this was highly improbable for they lacked traveling papers. As the hours elapsed, the cloud of sadness grew, especially since the Rebbe had not been with in Lubavitch the previous Yud Tes Kislev.

Thursday night at 8:30 pm, a letter arrived from the my father, the Rebbe. At 9:30 I entered the Zal and announced that we have merited receiving a holy letter which explains the meaning of the approaching Yom Tov, and that it would be read on the Chag Ha'geula. Hearing this, the spirits of the chassidim were raised, and with great longing, they anticipated the hour when the letter would be read.

On Erev Shabbos after Mincha, I instructed that everyone should learn chassidus. After learning for an hour and a half, we davened Kabolos Shabbos, and then everyone returned to their places ready to hear the special letter. I ascended the Bimah together with the two Mashgichim and read the letter word by word. It reads in part:

Yud Tes Kislev ... the Yom Tov on which the light and chayus of our neshama was given to us, is ראש השנה לחסידות, and is the completion of the true intent of man's creation to reveal the light of the secrets of our holy Torah. On this day, we must awaken an innermost desire that Hashem illuminate our neshama with the light of His Inner Torah. I daven to Hashem that the pnimius (essence) of our neshama should shine, so that our entire being be dedicated to Hashem, and all bad middos be chased out, so that everything we do, in service of Hashem and in worldly matters, should be for Hashem's sake.

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

(לקו"ד ח"ד ע' 1518, קונ' ומעיין ע' 15, היום יום בתחילתו)

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