



YUD TES KISLEV (2)

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 *teshuvah* 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"קס"ב (1801) ?

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 *minyoneim* 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."

(ס"ה ש"ק קי"ז 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.

(ס"ה ש"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*?
- How can we feel today the same joy the chassidim of the past felt?

כְּשֶׁנָּה טוֹבָה בְּלִמּוּד הַחֲסִידוֹת וּבְדַרְכֵי הַחֲסִידוֹת תִּכְתְּבוּ וּתִזְחַתְמוּ

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Playing the Lottery

Is it permissible to buy lottery tickets?

- In the previous issues we discussed a number of rules: (1) A commitment made with the assumption that it would not be carried out (*asmachta*), is not binding. Taking money on the basis of an *asmachta* would be stealing. (2) An *asmachta* of a non-Jew to a Jew is binding. (3) The Shulchan Aruch (according to one reading) holds that gambling is forbidden since it is an *asmachta* and a disgusting practice, whereas the Remo permits occasional gambling.
- According to these rules, if the lottery is akin to gambling, *Sefardim*, who follow the rulings of the *Mechaber*, would be prohibited from buying a lottery ticket under all circumstances since it is a disgusting practice. If one did play and won, he may only collect the money if it comes from non-Jewish money. Taking the prize from Yiddishe money (i.e. a lottery in *Eretz Yisroel*) is theft. Indeed, this was the position of some of the prominent contemporary *Sefardi* Poskim.¹ However, *Ashkenazim* who follow the *Remo*, would be permitted to buy tickets, provided that one does not make it his source of income.
- Some Poskim argue that the modern lotto is not like gambling, and does not constitute theft even according to the *Mechaber*. Thus it would be permissible for a *Sefardi* to collect a lottery prize even in *Eretz Yisroel*. Various distinctions can be made between gambling and the lottery:
- (1) Some Rishonim² explain that only gambling considered an *asmachta* is one similar to dice (the original case of the Mishna) where the players believe that they will win by throwing the dice in a certain fashion. Since the lottery is completely out of the player's control, they do not expect to win³.
- (2) The Rambam⁴ writes that although the commitment of a customer to a penalty if he backs out from a deal is not binding, while if he gave the owner a deposit, the fine is binding. The reason is because a deposit expresses a stronger commitment than words⁵. Similarly, in gambling the money sits on a table and has not been given to another party, thus the commitment is not binding. However, when playing lottery one gives the money to a cashier and it is binding.⁶
- (3) When gambling, the one who wins collects the money that he placed on the table. It is possible that he only bet the money with the hope of getting it back. By contrast, when playing the lottery, one receives a ticket for his payment, and with that the deal is closed. Only later, if he has the winning numbers, the company gives him a gift of money. Thus, he is not taking the money directly from the individual player's money.⁷

Please note that the above may not be applicable for your situation. Consult your Rov for a final psak.

1. ראה בארוכה בשו"ת יביע אומר ח"ו ח"מ ס"ו.
2. מורדכי פרק איזהו נשך רמז שכג בשם הראב"ה.
3. ראה שו"ת תפילה למושה ח"ה ס"י נח אות ד.
4. הלכות גזילה פ"ו ה"י.
5. המנואר בפנים הוא ע"פ מה שהסביר האור שמח בדברי הרמב"ם ע"ש, ששיך לדמות לכאול לגד"ה.
6. ראה שם אות א.
7. ראה שו"ת משנה הלכות חט"ו ס"י קעו. ועוד.

לע"נ מרת ציפא אסתר בת ר' שלום דובער ע"ה

לזכות דת מנחם מענדל וילהלם וב"ג חייהו ורגל סגל שיחיו לרגל בואם בקשרי שידוכין בשעטומ"צ

לזכות הילד מנחם מענדל שיי

שיגדלוהו הוריו לתורה לחופה ולמע"ט

נדבת הרה"ת ישראל מאיר ורעייתו שיחיו אברמסון

לזכות התינוק הנולד שיי שיכניסוהו בבריתו של אאע"ה

בשעטומ"צ ויגדלוהו לתורה לחופה ולמע"ט

נדבת הרה"ת אפרים פישל ורעייתו חנה שיחיו טסלר

OUR HEROES

Reb Michel Opotzker

Reb Yechiel Michel Opotzker (Opotzk is the name of an inn) was a great chossid of the Alter Rebbe. He had a tremendously deep mind and was a very great *masmid*. He was a great *gaon* with thorough knowledge of *Talmud Bavli* and *Yerushalmi*, the *Poskim* and their sources in the *Rambam* and *Rashba* and *Sifrei Kabbala*. Reb Michel was known to be a great *ba'al madreiga* who had *ruach hakodesh* and *gilui Eliyahu*. He was the teacher of the *Rashbatz*.



Reb Michel never became a *Rov* and despised any kind of position honor and authority. In general, he distanced himself from people and wanted to be alone. Nevertheless, when a chossid passed by his town on their way to Lubavitch, Reb Michel would carry his bags and escort him two or three kilometers. When the *Rashbatz* was seventeen, he was told by Reb Michel that he was ready to go to the Rebbe. Reb Michel was an old man but insisted on escorted the *Rashbatz* and carrying his suitcase. The *eltare chassidim* where wary of the bizarre scene and protested, "Is it correct for an older man to serve a *bochur*?!" Reb Michel replied, "He (the *Rashbatz*) will be a greater chossid than you..."

When *Rashbatz* traveled to the *Tzemach Tzeddek*, Reb Michel gave him a sealed PaN and warned him not to read it. On the way, *Rashbatz* could not resist and he opened the envelope: the PaN inside was blank on both sides...

He arrived in Lubavitch early Friday morning after having walked about 20 kilometers from the nearby town of Rudnia. Entering the *Beis Medrash* he found *chassidim* of all ages learning, as they would do all Thursday night, and he quickly fell asleep. Soon, Reb Chaim Ber the *meshares* entered the *Beis Medrash* and asked, "Who arrived from Reb Michel Opotzker?" *Rashbatz* was sound asleep and no one else knew from where he had come. Reb Chaim Ber left, but returned a short while later. On the fourth attempt, *Rashbatz* woke up and came forward. Reb Chaim Ber told him that he was immediately to go with him to the *Tzemach Tzeddek*. *Rashbatz* was hesitant to go before going to the *mikvah*, but he did not have a choice.

Upon entering the *Tzemach Tzeddek's* room he froze in shock and could not move a limb. The *Tzemach Tzeddek* rebuked him (for opening the PaN), "A young man must follow orders!" The *Tzemach Tzeddek* stuck his hand in *Rashbatz's* jacket pocket, took out the PaN, and began reading it... Stunned, *Rashbatz* remained frozen in his place, until Reb Chaim Ber carried him out of the room.

(רשימת היומן ע'י שעח)

לזכות הילדה דבורה לאה שפאלטר תחי' שיגדלוהו הוריו לתורה לחופה ולמע"ט

A MOMENT WITH THE REBBE

In the Alter Rebbe's Presence

This awe-inspiring event took place during the *farbrengen* of Yud Tes Kislev, 5715.

As the *farbrengen* drew to a close, the Rebbe turned to Reb Shmuel Zalmanov *a"h* and instructed him to sing all ten of the Alter Rebbe's *niggunim*.

The Rebbe said, "*Chazal* state that when one repeats the Torah teachings of a sage, one should imagine that the sage is present. The *Tzemach Tzedek* once said that when one repeats Torah teachings, it is only as if the original author is present. But regarding a *niggun*, the composer is present in actuality."

"When the Alter Rebbe's *niggun* was then sung at the *Tzemach Tzedek's farbrengen*, the *chassidim* actually turned to see whether they would merit a glimpse of the Alter Rebbe."

Suddenly, back in 770, the Rebbe stopped talking. His face turned ashen white, and his hand, which was on the table, began trembling...

לזכות השליח שלום דובער בן לובה