



לזכות  
החתן הרה"ת ר' חיים אשר הלוי שיחי'  
לנדא  
והכלה המהוללה מרת בתי' פערל שתחי'  
שמוקלער  
לרגל חתונתם ביום י"ט כסלו ה'תשע"ז  
נדפס ע"י הוריהם  
הרה"ת ר' יוסף וזוגתו מרת שפּרה שיחיו  
סג"ל לנדא  
הרה"ת ר' מאיר אליעזר וזוגתו מרת לאה שיחיו  
שמוקלער



# Celebrating Our Connection

*The Yom Tov of Yud-Tes Kislev*

“זה היום יוקבע למועד תמידי בישראל, אשר בו יתגדל  
ויתקדש שמיה רבה ויתעוררו אלפי לבבות בישראל  
בתשובה ועבודה שבלב...”

**“This day shall be established as an everlasting  
yom tov for the Jewish people. [A day] when  
Hashem’s great name shall be exalted and  
sanctified, and thousands of Jewish hearts will be  
awakened to teshuvah and avodah of the heart...”**

*(The Alter Rebbe about the yom tov of Yud-Tes Kislev)*

The Alter Rebbe’s release from prison in 5559  
(תקנ"ט) marked the beginning of a new era; not only  
for Chabad Chassidim, but for the world at large.

From after the Alter Rebbe’s release (or in  
Chassidic terminology, “after Petersburg”), the  
mission given to the Baal Shem Tov by Moshiach  
really began its fulfillment: יפוצו מעיינותיך חוצה—  
disseminating the wellsprings of Chassidus to the  
outside.<sup>1</sup>

The Rebbe Rashab declared this day as “Rosh  
Hashanah L’Chassidus.” About Rosh Hashanah it  
is said “זה היום תחלת מעשיך”—this day, the day that  
man was created, is when the purpose of the entire  
creation was potentially fulfilled. The same is true  
of Yud-Tes Kislev: on this day, when Chassidus  
was revealed, the complete and ultimate purpose is  
actualized by bringing G-dliness into this world.<sup>2</sup>

Throughout the generations, this special day  
was celebrated by the Rabbeim and Chassidim with  
joyous farbrengens. It was the day that Chassidim  
expressed their gratitude to Hashem for having  
been exposed to the great light of Chassidus and

being connected with our Rabbeim; אילנא דחיי—the tree of life.

The Alter Rebbe promised that whoever will rejoice in his celebration, he will take them out of distress and bring them to a better place.<sup>3</sup>

## Early Celebrations

The yom tov of Yud-Tes Kislev has been celebrated every single year since the Alter Rebbe's release.

In fact, when the good news spread in towns and cities across the region, the joy erupted instantaneously.

Chassidim were somersaulting in the streets of Petersburg!<sup>4</sup>

In the city of Yas, the news only reached the Chassidim a week later, on the second night of Chanukah.

"There was only a *minyan* of Chassidim in Yas," Reb Berel of Yas told the Frierdiker Rebbe. "The joy was so great that *all* the inhabitants of the city were somersaulting in the streets!"

The Frierdiker Rebbe concludes the story: "This was the *bracha* that the Alter Rebbe gave Chassidim. Whenever they need 'assistants' to help with doing something good, they will always have them..."<sup>5</sup>

About Yud-Tes Kislev the following year and how it was actually established as a yom tov, the Frierdiker Rebbe related an interesting story:

That first Yud-Tes Kislev, in the year 5560 (תק"ס), the Alter Rebbe wanted to be cautious and did not allow the celebration to exceed normal limits. For this reason he had written the letter of קטנתי (printed in Iggeres Hakodesh chapter 2), warning Chassidim not to feel themselves higher than others, and not to antagonize the *misnagdim*, *chas v'shalom*, and so on.

A few months before Yud-Tes Kislev, a decree was issued through the Alter Rebbe's brother, Horav Yehudah Leib, known as the Maharil, that no one is to travel to the Alter Rebbe for Yud-Tes Kislev.

Because of this, Chassidim weren't sure how they were to mark the date; if it would be established as an official yom tov or not. All they knew was that *tachanun* was to be omitted.

There was a "*shadar*" named Reb Yaakov Smilianer who traveled from city to city collecting money for Colel Chabad. He advised Chassidim to give in all their monies earlier so that he'd have time to travel to Liozne before Yud-Tes Kislev, with the hope of

rescinding the decree. Indeed, Reb Yaakov's plan was successful and scores of Chassidim traveled to the Alter Rebbe for the new yom tov.

Establishing the yom tov of Yud-Tes Kislev, the Alter Rebbe delivered a *maamar* on the words "לשנה הבאה קבעום" (similar to the statement of *Chazal* about the inaugural celebration of Chanukah "לשנה אחרת קבעום"—the following year they established it).

The Rebbe adds that by this comparison to Chanukah the Alter Rebbe was in a sense declaring Yud-Tes Kislev as an everlasting yom tov, similar to Chanukah, which will be celebrated even after the coming of Moshiach.<sup>6</sup>

The Alter Rebbe promised that whoever will rejoice in his celebration, he will pull them out from distress to relief, from the physical to the spiritual, and from *gehinom*. The Tzemach Tzedek explains that to "rejoice in my celebration" means to hold on to the Rebbe's "*kliyamke*" (lit. "doorknob").

Why specifically the doorknob?

The doorknob is not a real part of the door, and it is certainly not a part of the house. However, once it becomes a feature of the door to the house, it is considered to be part of the house, even halachically (with regard to the laws of *tumah* and *taharah*).

The lesson being: even if one feels that he is not "inside the house" of the Rebbe, so to speak—he does not fully comprehend Chassidus—he must make a firm resolution to always grab hold of the doorknob. Then, he will certainly continue to work his way through and eventually enter into the house. The rest, the Alter Rebbe promises that he'll do!



Jews from all backgrounds join the famous Yud-Tes Kislev celebration in Kfar Chabad, 5724.

LEVI FREIDIN via JEM; 284928

## CELEBRATE TOGETHER

Throughout the generations, the farbrengen of Yud-Tes Kislev held a very important place for Chassidim. Even at times when farbrengens didn't occur that often, one of the times they did happen was on Yud-Tes Kislev.

The Alter Rebbe explains in Tanya that the effect of a mitzvah is everlasting on high.

The same could be said of the Yud-Tes Kislev farbrengens; their effect is everlasting. By farbrenging on this auspicious day, we connect with all the farbrengens of Yud-Tes Kislev throughout all the generations up until the Alter Rebbe. We are reconnecting with the first celebration that first year, together with the Alter Rebbe himself!

(Sichas Yud-Tes Kislev 5719)

## Rosh Hashanah L'Chassidus

In the year 5662 (תרס"ב), the Rebbe Rashab was busy with communal affairs, and as it turned out, he was not able to be in Lubavitch for the yom tov of Yud-Tes Kislev. All the Chassidim and *bochurim* of Tomchei Tmimim were devastated. "I saw tears in their eyes," the Frierdiker Rebbe records in his diary about some of the *bochurim*. "It is difficult to describe the *hiskashrus* of the *temimim* to the Rebbe [Rashab] at the time; their deep longing and desire to be in his presence for this yom tov. Even just to see his holy face, and certainly to hear his voice..."

A delegation of elder Chassidim pleaded with the Rebbe's mother, Rebbetzin Rivka, to request of her son to return to Lubavitch, if only for one day. But the Rebbetzin replied that if her son was able to come, he certainly would have arranged his travels in such a manner. He obviously sees it impossible, and she will not ask him to do it.

Instead, the Rebbe Rashab sent a letter to be read at the Yud-Tes Kislev farbrengen, expounding on the meaning of the day and declaring it as "Rosh Hashanah L'Chassidus." The contents of this letter created gigantic waves upon its release, reaching even some of the Litvishe leaders (who received the words very well). It has since become a classic, offering ever-deeper meaning to the auspicious day.

The Rebbe often explained that being Rosh Hashanah, the yom tov of Yud-Tes Kislev carries all the qualities of the head of the year:

Firstly, we call it "Rosh" Hashanah (the head of the year), not "*Techilas*" (the beginning), because it is like a head which contains the *chayus* for the whole year.

On each Yud-Tes Kislev, a new light illuminates the world that was never here before, similar to each year on Rosh Hashanah.

Just like on Rosh Hashanah, when we are judged for the coming year, on Yud-Tes Kislev we are judged for the coming year as well. Hence, the Frierdiker Rebbe instituted the *bracha* (printed in Hayom Yom):  
גוט יום טוב לשנה טובה בלימוד החסידות ודרכי החסידות:  
תכתבו ותחתמו.<sup>8</sup>

## THE REBBE; OUR FATHER

You write that people approached you in protest of the fact that Yud-Tes Kislev is referred to as "Rosh Hashanah L'Chassidus"; see the lengthy explanation on this subject in the introduction to Kunters Umaayon. There you will also see the words of the leaders of the *misnagdim* from the previous generation [in defense of this statement], to whom those of today cannot even compare.

Also regarding their criticism of the fact that we refer to the Alter Rebbe as "*Avinu HoRishon*" (our first father); I fail to see the difficulty here altogether! We find in **numerous** places in the words of *Razal* that a student refers to his teacher as "my father." As a matter of fact, this perception finds itself clearly in a *possuk* (Melachim II, 2; 12), "*Avi, avi, rechev Yisroel u'farashav—My father, my father, chariot of Israel and its horseman...*" [where Elisha refers to his Rebbe, Eliyahu Hanavi, as his father] although he was not his physical father.

From this we can discern that the one who was a first teacher in a particular field must be referred to as "our first father." All the more so when this is concerning a leader amongst the Jewish people, whose work, the Shulchan Aruch, has been accepted all across the world as an authoritative voice. A leader of the Jewish people is also called a father **for all generations**, as *Razal* teach us in Talmud Yerushalmi (Nedarim 5;6). If these skeptics don't know the Yerushalmi, why then, do they [have the audacity to] to question our holy Rebbeim?

(Igros Kodesh vol. 10 p. 287)





LETTER FROM THE REBBE RASHAB WHERE HE DECLARES YUD-TES KISLEV AS ROSH HASHANAH L'CHASSIDUS, PRINTED AT THE BEGINNING OF HAYOM YOM.

## The Farbrengen

A most important component of the Yud-Tes Kislev celebration is of course the *chassidisher* farbrengen.

In Hayom Yom for 19 Kislev, the Rebbe categorizes the day as a “יום התוועדות וקבלת החלטות” טובות בקביעות עתים לתורה הנגלית ודא”ח ברבים, וחיוזוק “...דרכי החסידים באהבת רעים” a day for farbrengen and taking *hachlatos* to establish times for study of *nigleh* and Chassidus publicly, and to strengthen the *darkei hachassidim* in true friendship.

Indeed, throughout the generations the Rabbeim all held joyous farbrengens on this day. In fact, one of

the only dates that all the Rabbeim held farbrengens on was Yud-Tes Kislev!

When the Rebbe was a young boy, his father, HoRav Levi Yitzchok used to farbreng for hours late into the night, pouring out words of Chassidus and Kabbalah and offering meaning into the nature of the day and the story of the Alter Rebbe’s liberation.

The children in Yekaterinoslav also held their own special “farbrengen.” Reb Nochum Goldshmid, who was a child there at the time, later related:

“Throughout the year, the Rebbe was generally more reserved and spent little time with other children. He was always engrossed in Torah study. But the one exception was on Yud-Tes Kislev. A few days before the yom tov, the children would put together some money and purchase food and drink for their farbrengen. The one in charge of holding the money and overseeing all the arrangements was the Rebbe.”<sup>9</sup>

In Likutei Diburim, the Frierdiker Rebbe tells the story of a descendant of Chassidim who had gone astray from the ways of Torah and mitzvos. It so happened that one year, while doing business with one of the Chassidim, he ended up at a Yud-Tes Kislev farbrengen with them in Petersburg.

Sitting at the farbrengen, the man was drawn by his surroundings and completely forgot about the



YUD-TES KISLEV 5741.

YOSSI MELAMED via JEM, 129888

tickets he had purchased for the theater that evening. He was so engrossed that he sat there for many hours.

The farbrengen had a deep effect on his conscience and stirred his soul. He was reminded of his rich and fulfilling childhood in the world of Chassidus.

As a result of participating in the farbrengen, the man completely transformed his lifestyle and began leading a Torah life again.

The Friediker Rebbe concludes:

The same *teshuvah* that emerges as a result of a terrible pogrom, *chas v'shalom*, or a wicked king or minister like Haman, can also come as a result of a *chassidisher* farbrengen and chassidic childhood memories. But in this case it is all good, without any pain and suffering.<sup>10</sup>



THE REBBE'S HAGAHOS TO 'MEGILAS YUD TES KISLEV' HEBREW TRANSLATION.

## FARBRENGEN IN HIDING

Even in the toughest times of Communist Russia, Chassidim would not forgo on the Yud-Tes Kislev farbrengen.

At the farbrengen of Yud-Tes Kislev 5719, the Rebbe spoke about the Yidden currently celebrating Yud-Tes Kislev in hiding:

All Yud-Tes Kislev farbrengens are connected; physical space is not a barrier in this instance.

This is true whether these farbrengens are celebrated in the open or as is the case in some places, it is being done in secret. Those celebrating in secret are also connected with the rest of *anash* who are celebrating openly.

We all give strength to one another, as the possuk says, "אִישׁ אֶת רֵעֵהוּ יַעֲזֹר" (Ezra 4:10). When we here talk about *פדה בשלום נפשי*—the redemption of the soul, this will bring about a complete redemption for all those who stand with *mesirus nefesh* to uphold Yiddishkeit and Chassidus in the land where the Alter Rebbe was born, and where Chassidus was revealed.

The Rebbe often instructed that each place should have two nights of farbrengens in honor of Yud-Tes Kislev. One night should have many smaller ones, reaching smaller crowds in further areas, and one night should have a grand farbrengen at a central location<sup>11</sup>.

At times the Rebbe instructed that two and sometimes three farbrengens are to be held in honor of the yom tov.

## Tachanun

The celebration of Yud-Tes Kislev is not only about what we do. It's also about what we don't do.

After concluding *mincha* on Erev Yud-Tes Kislev 5712, the Rebbe said:

"We have just davened *mincha* and omitted *tachanun*, thereby making a preparation for the yom tov by an act of "סור מרע", abstaining from the bad.

"In order to also include the element of "עשה טוב"—adding a positive deed, the appropriate thing to do now would be to say *l'chaim* and break out in a dance, as a prelude to the farbrengen."<sup>12</sup>





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YUD-TE'S KISLEV FARBRENGEN 5724.

The Rebbe was once asked whether others in the shul are allowed to say *tachanun* when the *minyan* skips it for Yud-Tes Kislev. The Rebbe explained:

By reciting *tachanun*, a person shows that they do not hold the Torah of the Alter Rebbe—whose vindication we celebrate on Yud-Tes Kislev—to be true, *chas v'shalom!*

Additionally, since so many hundreds of thousands of Yidden, through the span of seven generations, have celebrated this day as a yom tov, it is a day when there are less *dinim* (heavenly severities). When one person says *tachanun*, they could effectively be arousing *dinim* on a day when they're uncalled for!<sup>13</sup>

## Yud-Tes Kislev

*Ashreinu ma tov chelkeinu.* How fortunate we are to be connected with *toras haChassidus*. Each and every one of us has the inherent connection.

But we were also tasked with the duty of spreading the wellsprings of Chassidus to the world. Yud-Tes Kislev is the day to revitalize our connection and recommit ourselves to the task of bringing this precious treasure to the outside.

The Rebbe explains that the only way to carry the *maayan* to the *chutza*, is by maintaining an interminable connection and an ever-growing

connection with the Rebbe, the source of the wellsprings:

“ע”י התקשרות שאינה פוסקת עם המקור, התקשרות...  
הולכת ומתחזקת עם הנשיא הוא כ”ק מו”ח אדמו”ר הכ”מ מקור  
הפצת מעינות אלו בכל קצוי תבל...”<sup>14</sup>

With Hashem's help, our efforts will indeed bring about the desired effect that Moshiach promised the Baal Shem Tov: אתי מר דא מלכא משיחא—the coming of Moshiach now! **1**

1. Sefer Hasichos Toras Shalom p. 112.
2. The Rebbe Rashab's letter printed at the beginning of Hayom Yom.
3. Sefer Hasichos 5699 (תרצ”ט) p. 315; see there for the exact terms used.
4. Likutei Diburim vol. 1 p. 83; see beginning of sichas Yud-Tes Kislev 5722.
5. Sefer Hasichos 5697 (תרצ”ז) p. 211; see conclusion of sichas Chof Kislev 5717.
6. Sefer Hasichos ibid. Sichas Shabbos parshas Vayeshev 5717.
7. Sichas Yud-Tes Kislev 5712.
8. Sichas Shabbos parshas Vayeshev 5714; see detailed explanation, Igros Kodesh vol. 19 p. 179; vol. 10 p. 291.
9. Yemei Melech vol. 1 p. 12.
10. Likutei Diburim vol. 1 p. 241.
11. Sefer Haminhogim p. 93.
12. Toras Menachem vol. 4 p. 165.
13. Igros Kodesh vol. 7 p. 125.
14. Ibid. vol. 4 p. 60.