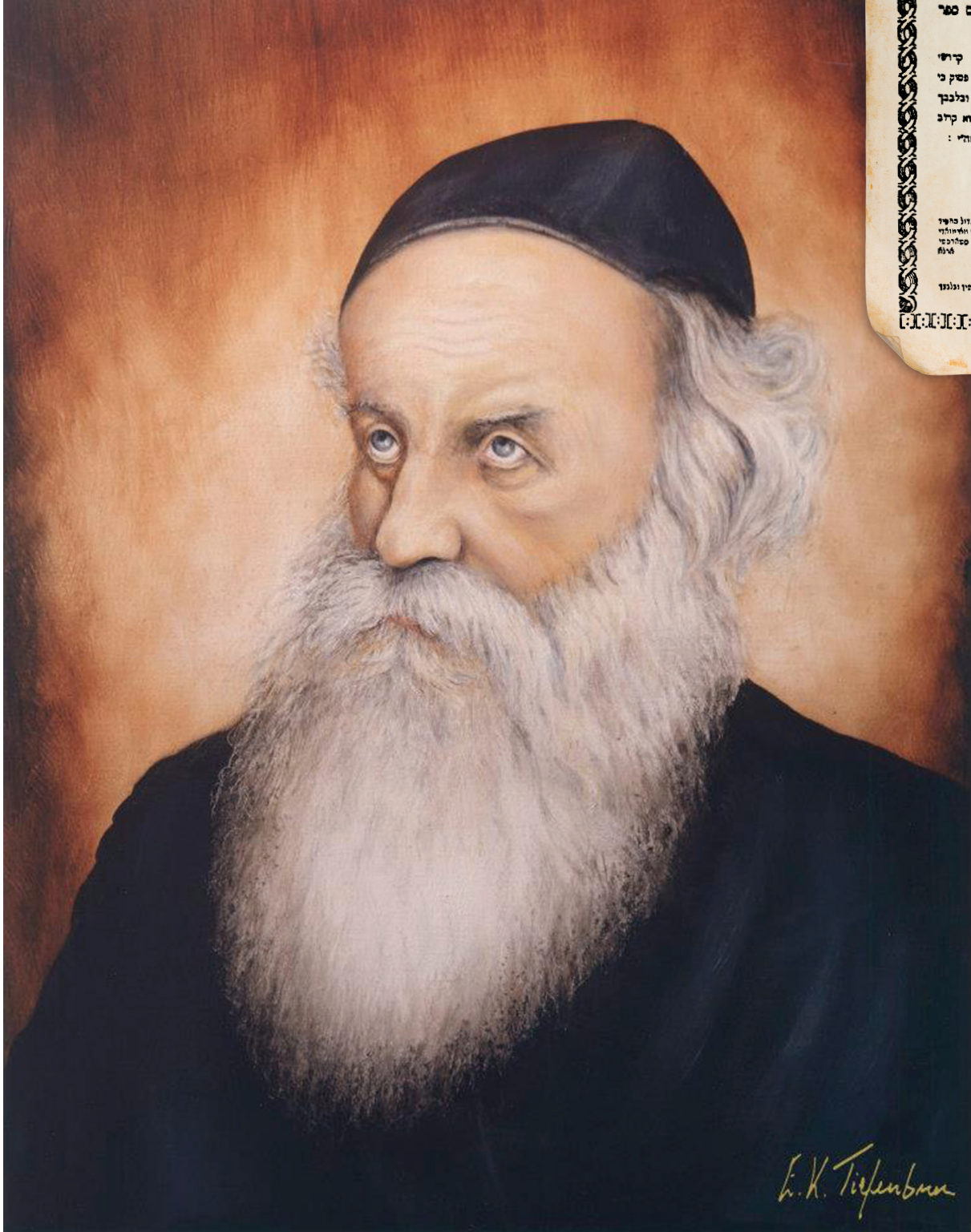


MAKING THE MOST OF YUD TES KISLEV

WHAT CAN WE DO TO HARNESS THE POWER OF YUD TES KISLEV IN OUR OWN LIVES?



COMPILED BY N'SHEI CHABAD
NEWSLETTER STAFF



כפר

לקוטי אחרים

חלק ראשון התקרא בשם ספר
של בעתים

מלקט מפי אבות וסביבות קרובי
עליו נ"ע מרוב על פסקי
קרב אלק דברי אדם כפך ובלבד
לעשות לבאר הסב אך ורא קרב
אשר מרד אדמה וקמה בעולמי :

גרס

במלאותיה

חנה משה אדמוני מרחם גדול מרד
מרים חרדי וקמחא לבקני ואדמוני
והנסיך סמולנסקי
ממקיץ אדמוני ירמיהו ארל

שם כי קרב אלקו מרד חנה מרד ובלבד
במלאותיה נ"ע

THE FOLLOWING IS A COLLECTION OF LOOSELY TRANSLATED EXCERPTS FROM THE REBBE'S SICHS REGARDING APPROPRIATE HACHLATOS TO MAKE ON YUD TES KISLEV

WHAT HAPPENED ON THE 19TH?

Yud Tes Kislev is “a day of *farbrengen* and good resolutions towards establishing times to study the revealed Torah and Chassidus publicly, and in bolstering the ways of *chassidim* in true friendship” (*Hayom Yom*, 19 Kislev).

It is the day of passing of the Mezritcher Maggid in 5533 (1773) in Mezritch. He is buried in Anipoli.

The Alter Rebbe was released from imprisonment for the first time on 19 Kislev 5549 (1789) towards evening.

Rebbetzin Menucha Rochel, daughter of the Mittlerer Rebbe and Rebbetzin Shaina, was born on this date. Keep reading for more on Rebbetzin Menucha Rochel...

POWERFUL DAY

Many families have the custom of holding a *farbrengen* at home on Yud Tes Kislev (with the men going to their own *farbrengens* later). They dress up, decorate the table, make special treats, sit down with the whole family, learn some *Tanya*, and sing *Padah B'sholom Nafshi*. The *farbrengen* can be as long or as short as you desire, tailored to the age and attention span of your children. Of all the requests the Rebbeim have made of us, this is not a very hard one! In fact, it is very enjoyable. To

hear *Padah B'sholom* sung by Shmulik Listvand, go to nsheichabadnewsletter.com home page.

Yud Tes Kislev is a powerful day, when the Alter Rebbe was freed from imprisonment in a manner that was above nature yet within nature. The whole world had to concede that it was an open miracle. After the salvation of Yud Tes Kislev, the Alter Rebbe stated that the day would be established as a Yom Tov for generations. It is a time when the hearts of the Jewish people are aroused to do *teshuvah* and to strengthen their *avodas Hashem*.

The Alter Rebbe promises to repay those who rejoice in his *simchah*. There are three versions of this promise: He will take them out of the straits into ease, out of the material into the spiritual, and out of *gebinnom*. The Tzemach Tzedek quotes all three versions and says they are all correct.

Just like Rosh Hashanah is the source of spiritual energy for the year to come, Yud Tes Kislev is a source of spiritual energy for the entire year specifically in our study and *avodah* of Chassidus. It is the day when the heavenly *kitrug*, accusation, against the study of Chassidus was lifted. When the Alter Rebbe was exonerated, his teachings were exonerated as well. After he was released from prison in S. Petersburg he began to teach Chassidus with greater breadth and intensity than ever before, a distinction known as “before Peterburg” and “after Peterburg.” (In Yiddish, the S is dropped from Petersburg.)

SUPPORTING THE PROJECTS OF THE REBBEIM

Although the Rebbeim had the highest *neshamos* and deeply understood the greatness of studying Torah, both *nigleh* and Chassidus, they didn't think only about themselves but threw themselves into communal activities. Not only this, they had *mesiras nefesh* to do a favor even for an individual. The Tzemach Tzedek said that all the *mesiras nefesh* that the Alter Rebbe had for Chassidus was like nothing compared to the *mesiras nefesh* it took him to tear himself away from his learning in order to do a favor for another Yid.

All the Rebbeim of Chabad, from the Alter Rebbe until the Frierdiker Rebbe, followed in this path. Not only did they engage in learning Torah and serving Hashem, but also in *ahavas Yisroel*, with no distinction between a *chossid* and a worldly Jew, a learned Jew or a simpleton, an adult or a child.

Some of their activities were done in public, and some were done in private. All these activities continue until today, and with the help of *chassidim* and *mekusharim* we can ensure that these holy campaigns will continue to meet the needs of Jews worldwide.

These days before Yud Tes Kislev and on Yud Tes Kislev itself, which is the Rosh Hashanah for the ways and study of Chassidus, all the Rebbeim and in particular the *baal simchah*, the Alter Rebbe, arouse compassion on all those who help with continuing the work that he, the *baal hasimchah*, founded and which his heirs continue, generation after generation.

Likutei Sichos vol. 35, p. 287

SPREADING THE WELLSPRINGS OUTWARD

We live in a time of darkness and only the pure oil of Chassidus and the light of Torah can light it up. We must begin in our own homes and spread the light outward to those who are “outside,” in a manner of “*v'ahavta l'rei-acha kamocho*” as explained in *Tanya* chapter 32.

Through spreading the wellsprings of Chassidus outward we will expand the channels and vessels for Hashem's blessings, in general and particular matters, in the spiritual and material together.

Likutei Sichos vol. 35, p. 310

FARBRENGEN POWER THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

With regard to Yud Tes Kislev, the Rosh Hashanah of Chassidus, the ultimate goal is not just to accept good resolutions on Yud Tes Kislev but to carry them out throughout the year. In other words, all good resolutions that were accepted on Yud Tes Kislev, with a *chassidische chayus*, should be constantly remembered throughout the year and be brought from potential to the actual, from thought to speech to action, for “the action is the main thing.”

The same is true regarding the *farbrengen* of Yud Tes Kislev, when Jews gather together to inspire and strengthen each other in all matters of Torah and Yiddishkeit, and in particular to connect with the Alter Rebbe, the *baal hageulah* of Yud Tes Kislev, who promised in his time that “this day will be established as a permanent Jewish holiday.

The purpose of all this is that the inspiration that comes about because of the *farbrengen* should be put into effect even after everyone returns home and does his work in his place during the coming year.

Hitvaaduyot 5745 vol. 2 p. 927

TEACHING CHASSIDUS TO OTHERS

On the Rosh Hashanah of Chassidus we bless each other, “May you be inscribed and sealed for a good year in the study of Chassidus and the ways of Chassidus.”

On Rosh Hashanah, the “head” of the year, we receive a general energy which is then drawn down each day, into the individual tasks and accomplishments of that day. The same is true of Rosh Hashanah of Chassidus—we draw strength from this day into each day of the year, in matters pertaining to the study of Chassidus.

There is no need to elaborate on the meaning of *Toras Hachassidus*, because there is an abundance of explanations of our Rebbeim, and they have been translated into several languages, so it is easy and within the grasp of every individual to study this Torah and to know what *Toras Hachassidus* is.

And if one feels one is lacking understanding in this matter, our sages tell us that “the bashful one does not learn.” Do not be embarrassed but ask and seek more explanation from those who know and understand.

On the contrary—it is a holy obligation on all those who can engage in “spreading the wellsprings outward” to help his friends in matters that he finds appropriate to help, in understanding and grasping all matters of *Toras Hachassidus*, and matters of Yud Tes Kislev.

Hitvaaduyot 5749 vol. 2 p. 4

CONNECTION BETWEEN ROSH HASHANAH AND YUD TES KISLEV

The idea of Rosh Hashanah is the Jewish people crown Hashem as King over us and through this as King over the world.

How is this concept connected to Yud Tes Kislev, the Rosh Hashanah of Chassidus? The main idea of this day is *yafutzu mayanosecha chutzab*—to spread the wellsprings of *pnimius haTorah* outward to the furthest reaches of

the world. Through this the entire world will recognize that Hashem is King. Thus Yud Tes Kislev is when the deeper meaning of Rosh Hashanah is expressed—the day when the deepest aspect of Hashem’s essence is spread throughout His world.

“Deed is most essential.” It is proper to arrange *farbrengens* everywhere in connection with Yud Tes Kislev for men, women, and children so that they will accept good resolutions together with others in regard to all aspects of Torah and *mitzvos* as they are illuminated with the light of the Torah, the teachings of Chassidus.

Hold *farbrengens* on the night between Yud Tes Kislev and the 20th of Kislev (the night when *chassidim* would customarily hold the *farbrengens* associated with Yud Tes Kislev), and continue these *farbrengens* until Chanukah.

The resolutions accepted in these *farbrengens* should center on the three pillars of service: Torah, prayer, and deeds of kindness as associated by our Sages with the verse, “He redeemed my soul in peace.” This refers to “those who are involved with Torah, deeds of kindness, and those who pray together with the community.” In particular, they should involve the construction or the enhancement of buildings connected with these activities.

May these activities lead to an added commitment to the study of Chassidus and the spreading of the wellsprings of Chassidus outward, both in regard to one’s self — having Chassidus permeate every aspect of one’s being — and similarly, spreading Chassidus to others.

Sichah of 19 Kislev, 5750

HOW YUD TES KISLEV BECAME KNOWN AS THE ROSH HASHANAH OF CHASSIDUS

Excerpted from an article by Menachem Ziegelboim in *Beis Moshiach*

“GUT YOM TOV! GUT YOM TOV!” HAPPY VOICES CALLED OUT IN THE HALL OF THE YESHIVAH GEDOLAH IN LUBAVITCH THE NIGHT OF ROSH HASHANAH L'CHASSIDUS 5662 (1901), WHICH FELL THAT YEAR ON A FRIDAY NIGHT. CANDLES WERE LIT AND TABLES WERE ROYALLY SET, FOR THIS WAS A SPECIAL HOLIDAY FOR CHABAD CHASSIDIM, A HOLIDAY FOR TORAS HACHASSIDUS—ACTUALLY A HOLIDAY FOR ALL OF CREATION. THE JOY REACHED THE HEAVENS, BUT NOT MANY KNOW HOW THIS JOY WAS NEARLY DAMPENED THAT YEAR...

Yud Tes Kislev was always celebrated in the great hall of the yeshivah in Lubavitch with great pomp and joy, the Rebbe Rashab *farbrenging* at the head of the table. Aside from hundreds of *temimim* who learned in the yeshivah, hundreds of *chassidim* and *baalei batim* would come to participate in this *farbrengen* with the Rebbe Rashab.

In Kislev 5662, enemies of the Jews in Russia were persecuting them harshly. The pretext: allegations that the *chossid* Reb Mendel Horenstein, brother-in-law of the Rebbe Rashab, had burned down his own factory in order to damage merchandise belonging to a gentile. The charge was baseless, yet Reb Mendel was imprisoned and awaiting trial.

The Rebbe Rashab suffered greatly. “A heavy cloud rested upon my father’s face,” recalls his son the (future Rebbe) Rayatz. On 5 Kislev, the Rebbe suddenly left Lubavitch for Moscow to work on Reb Mendel’s behalf, hiring a top lawyer in an attempt to obtain Reb Mendel’s release.

The trip was sudden and unexpected. Everyone thought the Rebbe would return in time for Yud Tes Kislev, but as days passed, *chassidim* and *temimim* began to doubt. Doubt became certainty following a committee meeting of *temimim* with the Rayatz, *menabel* of the yeshivah, officially informing them of the improbability of his father’s celebration with them. The *menabel* told the *talmidim* to celebrate on Yud Tes Kislev as they did every year: students of the *yeshivah gavoha* and *yeshivah ketanah* would eat together with the *mashpiim*, *mashgichim*, *roshei yeshivah*, *maggidei shiurim*, and even those who worked in the yeshivah offices. Moreover, to add to the celebration, this *seudah* was set to take place in the spacious yeshivah hall, as opposed to the yeshivah dining room where the students usually ate.

For the rest of the week preceding Yud Tes Kislev, preparations went on as usual with the hope and faith that perhaps the Rebbe would return to Lubavitch after all. A special committee of *bachurim* was established to organize the *farbrengens* and festivities. Many guests streamed to Lubavitch for the big day, among them famous *eltere chassidim* such as Reb Dovid Tzvi Chein from Chernigov (the Radatz), and the outstanding *chossid* Reb Dov Zev Kozhevnikov, Rav of Yekatrinaslav. People were full of anticipation, for who knew? Just maybe...

The yeshivah’s *hanbalah* was determined that although the Rebbe wouldn’t be there, everything would carry on as usual. The *mashpiim* also agreed that the *temimim* from other cities, who had already received permission to come to Lubavitch for Yud Tes Kislev to be with the Rebbe, should still come.

Thursday, the 17th of Kislev. The grand *farbrengen* would be taking place the following evening. Although little time remained, *chassidim* still hoped the Rebbe would make a last-minute appearance, but as time passed, “the cloud of gloom intensified,” as the Rayatz put it.

At 8:00 a.m., the two great *chassidim*, the Radatz and Reb Dov Zev Kozhevnikov, met and discussed the possibility of asking the Rebbe to come back especially for Yud Tes Kislev, and whether it was perhaps possible for all the *talmidim* to go to him. In the evening they went to Rebbetzin Rivkah, the Rebbe Rashab’s mother, with the request that she ask the Rebbe to come back to Lubavitch even for one day.

The Rebbetzin answered, “I am certain that if he could come, he would certainly do so.” Then she added, “I cannot ask of him something which his holy *daas* doesn’t agree with.” The two *chassidim* left her, heavyhearted.

At 8:30 p.m. on Thursday, the mailman knocked on the office door of Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim. The *menabel*, the Rayatz, opened the door and

was handed a letter from his father. This was a fundamental letter, written as a substitute for the Rebbe Rashab's presence, especially for the grand *farbrengen* that would take place the next night.

The Rayatz rejoiced. He rushed to the hall of the *yeshivah gedolah*, went up to the podium, and joyfully announced: "We have just merited to receive a holy letter from my holy father, my teacher and my Rebbe. The letter explains the significance of the upcoming holy day. With Hashem's help, tomorrow at the *farbrengen*, the letter will be read to everyone."

Many of the *bachurim* were uplifted and the heavy spirit was somewhat alleviated, even as they understood that a letter could not replace the Rebbe himself.

In the meantime, the members of the committee worked around the clock to ensure that all was prepared before Shabbos. The yeshivah's hall was washed and decorated. Long tables and hundreds of chairs were arranged. Beautiful vessels were brought from the home of the Rebbe Rashab and placed on the tables.

Many *talmidim* worked for hours setting up candles on the walls. Rows upon rows of candles were arranged, 1,668 candles in all, to correspond to the *gematria* of the words "*Chag Rabbeinu hagadol v'hakadosh nishmaso Eden*," referring to the Alter Rebbe. The hall was flooded with light, a marvelous sight to behold.

The Shabbos Queen spread her wings over the city of Lubavitch. Everyone gathered in the yeshivah. There was no better way to begin this holy day than by learning Chassidus. Hundreds of *talmidim* sat and learned. The sound of Torah echoed loudly, extending beyond the windows of the *zal*.

After an hour and a half of learning, the *gabbai* announced a break for *Kabbalas Shabbos*. When *davening* was over, the *gabbai* announced that the Rebbe's letter would now be read.

With measured steps, the Rayatz walked over to the podium with the two *mashgichim* (of the *sidrei chassidus* and *sidrei nigleh*) on either side of him. The sight was reminiscent of the Rebbe's *tekias shofar*, when the Rebbe stood at the lectern surrounded by *chassidim*. All rose, as befits *chassidim* who are being addressed by their Rebbe.

The tension was palpable and, simultaneously, the joy was boundless. The only sound heard was the rustling of the letter. The Rayatz began reading aloud. "My children, *sbeyichyu*," he began, and the loving voice of a father could be heard throughout the hall:

Baruch Hashem. Yom Daled, 16 Kislev 5662 Moscow

My sons, gather together on Yud Tes Kislev, which comes upon us for good—those who learn, their leaders and their teachers and their *mashgichim*—and rejoice with the joy of the holiday which redeemed our souls in peace, [when] the light and life of our souls was given to us. This day is the Rosh Hashanah for Chassidus that our holy fathers bequeathed to us, and this is the Torah of the Baal Shem Tov, z"l.

This day is the beginning of Your work, the completion of the true intention of the Creation of man on earth, to further draw down the revelation of the inner light of our holy Torah, which was drawn down on this day in a general way for the entire year. We must arouse our hearts on this day with desire, and inner, essential will with the true [innermost] point of our hearts, which will illuminate our souls with the light of the inner part of His Torah.

From the depths I call out to You, Hashem, to draw the aspect of the depth and *pnimius* of *Toras Hashem* and the *mitzvos* of Hashem from the aspect of the innermost and essential *Ohr Ein Sof Baruch Hu*, so that it illuminate the inner part of our souls, so that our entire essence ... will be [directed] to Him, blessed is He, alone—so that He banish from us every evil and disgusting trait

of the natural traits, so that all our deeds and affairs (whether in *avodah*, i.e., *tefilah*; Torah and *mitzvos*; or in matters of the world which are necessary to sustain the body) are in accordance with the true intention, for the sake of Heaven, as per the desire of Hashem...

May Hashem, Father of Mercy, have mercy on us and enliven us in the proper and straight path...

Following the reading, all were seated and began singing an old *chassidische niggun*, a tune that pierced the heart and reached the *neshamah*. The *niggun* poured forth sweetly, emanating from the hundreds of students in unison.

At this *farbrengen* the *chassidim* first merited to hear the unique appellation with which the Rebbe Rashab termed Yud Tes Kislev in his holy letter, calling

Gift from the Alter
Rebbe to Menucha Rochel.



Photo: Lubavitch Archives

it “*Rosh Hashanah L’Chassidus*,” as it has been known ever since.

At 6:45 p.m., Reb Dov Zev Kozhevnikov rose to tell the story of the arrest and *geulah*. In vivid tones he described the pain experienced by the *chassidim* when the Alter Rebbe was taken from them—the agony, the sorrow, the tears. He recounted the entire story up until the release of the Alter Rebbe from prison. He described the *chassidim* somersaulting in the snowy streets of Petersburg, and the tremendous joy they all experienced.

At this point Reb Dov Zev took a *Tanya* and began reading the famous letter the Alter Rebbe wrote entitled “*Katonti*.” The *talmidim* leaned over the volumes of *Tanya* in front of them, reading the holy letters, learning from the teachings of the *baal hageulah*. All listened in utter silence. The only sound that could be heard was the sputtering of thousands of candles.

When the reading was concluded, an elderly *chossid* by the name of Reb Shmuel Betzalel (the Rashbatz) stood up. He had seen many Yud Tes Kislevs in his time, but this was the first time he heard the wondrous phrase the Rebbe Rashab wrote designating this day as “*Rosh Hashanah L’Chassidus*,” elevating it over other holidays.

The Rashbatz raised a cup for *l’chaim* and his voice shook with emotion. The *talmidim* gazed upon him, always in awe, for he had merited to see the Tzemach Tzedek.

“Our day of celebration is extremely lofty,” the Rashbatz began. “If not for this day, the day of redemption and freedom of our great and holy Rebbe, we wouldn’t know Hashem, Who gave the Torah, for our holy [Alter] Rebbe taught us to know Hashem, our Maker. We ought to rejoice on this day of light, and included in this are the words of our luminary the Rebbe [Rashab], *sblita*, that this day is the Rosh Hashanah for Chassidus and the day of revelation of *pnimius haTorah*. We must offer thanks and praise to Hashem, who did not deprive us of descendants of our great Rebbe, the Alter Rebbe.

“*Temimim!* We have the Rebbe, who stands and serves before Hashem to teach knowledge of Torah and Hashem, Who gave the Torah—our *nasi* and teacher, the crown of our glory, who shows us wonders like in the days of the Alter Rebbe, to return the heart of beloved children to their Father in Heaven.

“I CANNOT ASK OF HIM SOMETHING WHICH HIS HOLY DAAS DOESN’T AGREE WITH.” THE TWO CHASSIDIM LEFT HER, HEAVYHEARTED.

I raise my cup to the life of our Rebbe, and with all the strength of my soul I call out: “*Yechi Rabbeinu l’olam!* May Hashem bolster his strength and power to carry the tower of light to illuminate the earth and its inhabitants upon it, until the coming of Moshiach!”

A resounding voice could be heard from one end of the hall to the other: “*Amen! Amen! Yechi Rabbeinu L’olam...*”

These were special moments, not just for the younger *chassidim*, but also for the older *chassidim* who sat at the head table. They all raised cups, said *l’chaim* and wished one another heartfelt *brachos* for the new year for Chassidus for all the Jewish people....

After a brief break, the meal began, which continued until 2:00 a.m. It was a royal feast fitting for the holiday of holidays, Yud Tes Kislev. At the end of the meal, all danced, and Lubavitch was “*orah v’simchah v’sasson vikar*.”

At 3:00 a.m., the Rayatz rose and blessed all present, and with great love he left the guests and *talmidim*. He turned to leave, the *talmidim* preceding him, all of whom stood in the doorway of the building in two long, straight rows. When he left they began singing, “*Ki b’simchah seitzieu uv’shalom tuvalun*,” and they accompanied the Rayatz to his home.

Since the great revelation of Kislev 5662, the *chassidim* began referring to Yud Tes Kislev as Rosh Hashanah L’Chassidus. In later years the traditional phrase became “*Gut Yom Tov*. May you be inscribed and sealed for a good year in the study of Chassidus and the ways of Chassidus.” The *Hayom Yom* begins and ends with Yud Tes Kislev... In a copy of the manuscript of the *Hayom Yom*, the Rebbe wrote “*Gut Yom Tov*,” and the Rebbe Rayatz added in his own handwriting, “for a good year in learning Chassidus and the ways of Chassidus.”

Sources: *Sefer HaToldos Admur HaRashab*, pp. 752+, *Kerem Chabad*, Vol. 3, pp. 45+.

WALKING BETWEEN THE RAINDROPS: REBBETZIN MENUCHA ROCHEL SLONIM

Compiled by N'shei Chabad Newsletter Staff

REBBETZIN MENUCHA ROCHEL, THE DAUGHTER OF THE MITTELER REBBE, WAS BORN ON YUD TES KISLEV 5559 (1798), THE DAY THE ALTER REBBE WAS FREED FROM PRISON.

The history of Chabad in Chevron goes back to the first wave of emigration of *chassidim* from Russia in the early part of the 19th century. Many of the original immigrants settled in Chevron. Though circumstances forced many to leave Chevron, the gravitational pull of the city attracted many more. For many years, Chevron was the headquarters of the Chabad community in Israel. The Alter Rebbe founded the charitable foundation “Colel Chabad” (which exists and operates to this day) to support Jews in Israel. The Alter Rebbe regularly sent funds to Israel to be disbursed among the poor and impoverished, as did his successors. These funds were raised by *chassidim* in Russia.

At the time, Turkey and Russia were enemies. Opponents of Chassidus alleged that the funds were sent to Israel, then a province of the Ottoman empire, in a clandestine effort to support a Turkish invasion of Russia. The Alter Rebbe was incarcerated in the fall of 1798 and tried for treason, but was found innocent and exonerated. On the 19th day of the Jewish month of Kislev, the day of his liberation from prison, the Rebbe was informed of the birth of his granddaughter, Menucha Rochel. Her father, the Mitteler Rebbe, named her Menucha, which means “rest,” saying, “From now on we will have a little *menuchah*.” Rochel was

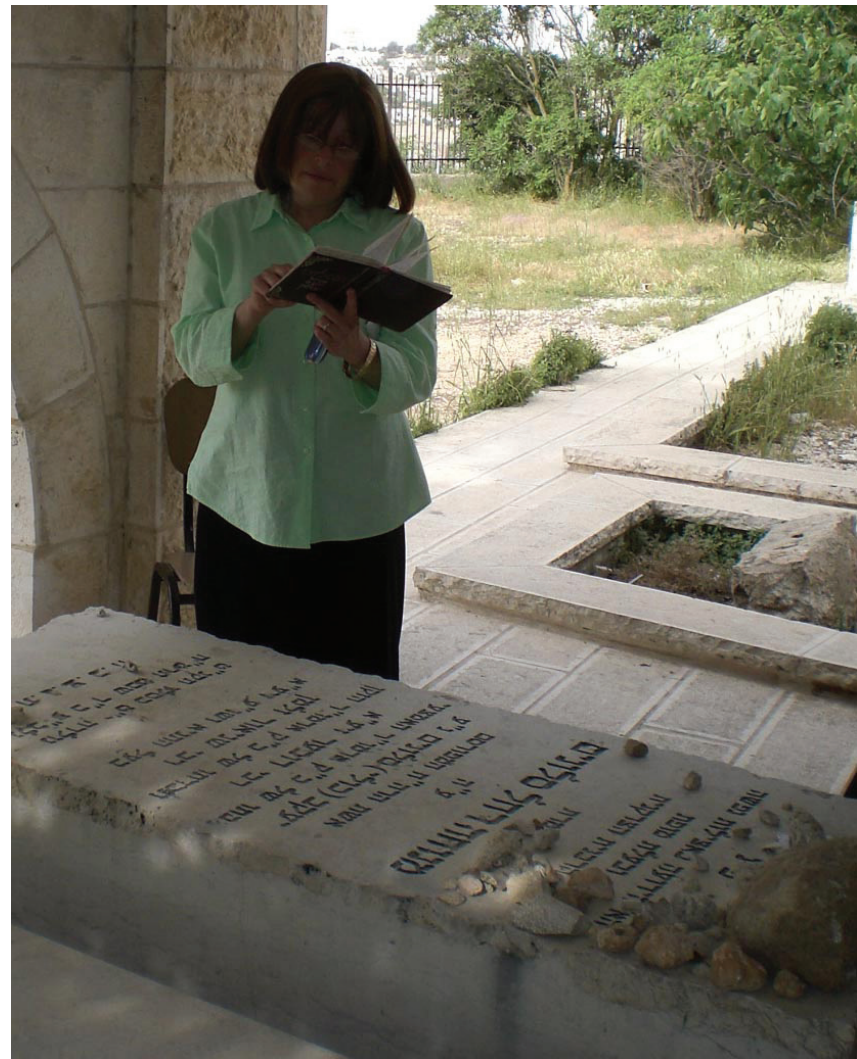


Photo: Lubavitch Archives

after an aunt who had died young.

It is only fitting that Menucha Rochel and her husband, Rabbi Yaakov Yosef (also known as Kuli) Slonim, emigrated to Israel in 1845 to lead the *chassidishe* community of Chevron. Her grandfather was incarcerated for sending funds to Chevron, and his granddaughter, born on the day of his liberation, emigrated to Chevron to further her grandfather's cause.

(Lazer Gurkov, *chabad.org*, and other sources)

While preparing to travel to Eretz Yisroel, Rebbetzin Menucha Rochel went to the Tzemach Tzedek and expressed her fear of travel in the winter when she would perhaps fall sick from the rain. The Rebbe replied, "Not to worry. You will travel between the rain drops!" For the rest of her life, not a drop of rain ever fell on her.

They began their journey from Lubavitch, traveling to Shklov, where they changed wagons and continued. Upon his return to Lubavitch, the wagon driver, who had been hired for the first leg of the journey, told everyone about his wonderful trip from Lubavitch to Shklov: Not one drop of rain had fallen on his wagon! Unfortunately, he had not been so lucky on his return trip, when he was buried in rain and mud.

(This wagon driver would always pride himself with this story. The Rebbe Maharash once told him, "Listen, the *goy* who drove the Baal Shem Tov was also part of the *kefitzas haderech*, yet he still remained the same *goy*...")

There was a group of bandits in Chevron called "The Black Hand," who would break into Yiddishe homes, robbing and plundering, cursing and threatening all the while. Then one day the group leader's wife was having difficulty giving birth and both she and the baby were in grave danger. Having no other choice, the chief bandit sent a message to the home of Rebbetzin Menucha Rochel pleading for a blessing. She returned with a message that if he would cease his wicked activities against the Yidden, everything would be alright. The *goy* swore that he would stop the violence, and hurried home, where he



Photo: Lubavitch Archives





Photo: Lubavitch Archives

thankfully found his wife and new baby. The Yidden of Chevron were thus able to live without fear.

(L'maan Yishmeu weekly email, info@lmaanyishmeu.com)

One of the Arabs in Chevron had absolute control over the springs of water in Chevron from where the townspeople drew water. This Arab used his utter control over the invaluable commodity of water to the detriment of the Jewish residents. The Jews suffered greatly, especially on Erev Shabbos and Erev Yom Tov, but nobody dared oppose this evil man.

One day, his only daughter became sick and she lay in bed, in pain. Her father stood at her bedside but could do nothing to help her. Even the doctors despaired.

One of his friends advised him to ask “the righteous grandmother” who lived in Chevron for a blessing for his daughter’s recovery. “She is a righteous woman,” said the man. “Go to her; you can’t lose out.”

The Arab quickly went to the home of Rebbetzin Menucha Rochel and met her grandson, Reb Zev Dov Slonim. The grandson heard the shouts of the Arab and went to his grandmother’s room and told her what he wanted. She did not need to be told who this wicked Arab was. She asked her grandson to go and tell the Arab in her name that if he promised her he would no longer harass the Jews of Chevron, then his daughter’s recovery was assured.

The Arab agreed to the condition, put his hand over his heart and swore that he

committed to doing whatever the *tzadekes* told him and he left the house in a rush. His daughter recovered.

The Jews of Chevron would add that since that episode, you could see the Arab himself knocking on the doors of the Jews of Chevron on Friday mornings and offering barrels full of spring water.

(Beis Moshiach Magazine)

For 43 years she served as the matriarch of the Chevron community. New brides and barren women would request blessings from her. Before she died on the 24th of Shevat 1888, she sent a letter to the then-Rebbe, Rabbi Sholom Dovber Schneerson (Rashab), informing him of her imminent passing. She lived during the leadership of all of the first five Lubavitcher Rebbes.

(Days in Chabad: Historic Events in the Dynasty of Chabad-Lubavitch, by Yosef Y. Kaminetzky)

A large building at the center of Chevron's Jewish community bears the name Bet Schneerson ("Schneerson House"). As its name implies, this building served as headquarters to the Chabad community of Chevron and, by extension, the entire Chabad community of Israel. A plaque at the entrance to the building attests that the illustrious Rebbetzin Menucha Rochel and her husband Rabbi Slonim resided in this building.

Rebbetzin Menucha Rochel was revered by her Jewish and Arab neighbors alike for her piety and wisdom. She was endowed with unique spiritual powers, and Chevronites regularly sought her blessing, counsel and guidance. For 35 years, the Rebbetzin served as matriarch to the *chassidishe* community of Chevron, and when she passed away in her 90th year, she was buried in the Chabad cemetery of Chevron. Access to her burial place was restricted to Jews for many decades, but through the tireless efforts of Rabbi Danny Cohen, *sbliach* in Chevron, it was recently made accessible to Jews. A yeshiva was established at her graveside, where students are paid a stipend to engage in daily study. Efforts to refurbish an old building on the premises are nearly complete. The newly renovated facility will serve the yeshiva as well as the many visitors making the pilgrimage to the illustrious Rebbetzin's grave.

(Lazer Gurkov, chabad.org) ■

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