

# The Weekly Farbrenge



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## YUD-TEŠ KISLEV (II)

### RENEWING THE CONNECTION

In *HaYom Yom* it is written: *Yud-Tes Kislev* is a day for *farbrenge* and for undertaking positive *hachlato* 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 *farbrenge* 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 the *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 *meshgichim* and read out the letter word by word. It reads in part:

### CONSIDER

**Is Yud-Tes Kislev a day to be  
earnest or a day to celebrate?**

"*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, deep-seated 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*.

(לקו"ד ח"ד ע' 1518, קוב" ומעיי"ן ע' 15, היום יום בתחילתו)

### A DAY FOR CHASSIDISHE GROWTH

Early in תרפ"א (1920), 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 *farbrenge*, 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." And the Frierdiker Rebbe concludes his letter with the words, "*lechayim velivracha*".

(אגרות קודש מוהרי"צ ח"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 *farbrenge*. 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 *farbrenge*d for a short while and left."

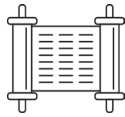
After relating this episode, the Frierdiker Rebbe stood up and returned to his study.

(לשמע אהון ע' 141)

The Alter Rebbe said regarding *Yud-Tes Kislev*, "Whoever rejoices in my *simcha*, I will take him 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*.

(סה"ש תרצ"ט ע' 315)



SCULPTURES AND DOLLS

Does the prohibition of human sculptures apply to play dolls?

When the Torah discusses the prohibition of graven images, the *posuk* says, "lo sa'asun **iti** (אתי) – Do not make **with Me**," which Chazal expound to read with alternative *nekudos* as "lo sa'asun **osi** (אתי) – Do not make **Me**." This refers to forming a 3-dimensional form of a human, since that is the form in which Hashem appeared to the *nevi'im*.<sup>1</sup>

Aside from the Torah prohibition to form such an image or sculpture, *miderabanan* one may not keep such an image that was formed by others, since people might think that he made it.

If part of the human form is missing – e.g. it doesn't have a nose or an ear – it is allowed. Some hold that it suffices to chip the nose or ear, while others require an entire limb to be removed.<sup>2</sup> This should be done to porcelain figurines and the like. A head without a body is subject to debate amongst *poskim*, and one should refrain from creating it, but one may keep an already made one.<sup>3</sup>

What about hard play dolls?

Many *poskim* are lenient based on multiple reasons, including: (1) Idol worship is not popular nowadays and he won't be suspected of having an idol, (2) contemporary play dolls are clearly not idols and are never worshiped by anyone;<sup>4</sup> and (3) the prohibition only applies to images that are treated with respect, not dolls that are played with.<sup>5</sup>

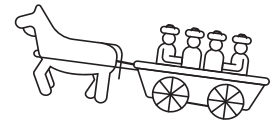
Others argue that it presents an issue since we don't have the authority to change Chazal's decrees even when circumstances have changed.<sup>6</sup> Some hold that even according to the lenient view, if the doll's leg or arm falls out, one should not reconnect it, since "making" a form is a questionable *issur d'oraisa*.<sup>7</sup>

In practice, the custom is to be lenient in owning such dolls, but not with making them. Yet, it's preferable to deform the doll by removing a tiny bit from the nose in a way that the child won't even notice.<sup>8</sup> Cloth dolls do not pose any concern since they don't have a humanlike figure. (A hard head with a cloth body would like a head alone which one may be lenient to keep.)

1. עבודה זרה מג ע"ב.  
2. ראה שו"ע יו"ד סי' רמ"א ס"ד וראה ווי העמודים וחשוקיהם חט"ז ע' 51, חת"ס ח"ו סי' ו'.  
3. ראה ב"י סי' קמ"א. וכן הוא בכותלי חדר רבינו.  
4. מהרי"ט יו"ד סי' ל"ה. חמ"א כלל פ"ה ס"ו.  
5. ראה שיערים מצויינים בהלכה סי' קס"ח אות ב' (ע"פ ב"י).  
6. ראה וישמע משה ח"א ע' שי"ט.  
7. שו"ת שבה"ל ח"ז סי' קל"ג אות ד'.  
8. ראה מעדני שלמה ע' רנ"ב, וראה רשומי אהרון ח"א ע' ל"ז בשם הגרמ"פ. וכן הורה הרב העלער שליט"א.

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

Our Heroes



R. CHAIM BENTZION RASKIN

R. Chaim Bentzion (Bentche) Raskin (5624-5699) was born in Dubravna, to a family of chassidim going back to the time of the Alter Rebbe. After his marriage, he lived in Rudniya, near Lubavitch, and was a chossid of the Magen Avos of Kopust. After the passing of the Kopuster, he became a staunch *mekushar* to the Rebbe Rashab, and later the Frierdiker Rebbe.

R. Benche was known for his incredible dedication to the chinuch of his children. As a result of his *mesiras nefesh*, R. Benche merited to raise Chassidishe children in very trying times, and he is the patriarch of the large Lubavitcher Raskin family.

Wishing to check out Lubavitch, R. Bentche spent a Shabbos with the Rebbe Rashab in *datche*. He later shared three things he saw that captured his heart: the Rebbe's care in *netilas yodayim* for the *seuda*, a *niggun dveikus* he heard the Rebbe sing, and the Rebbe saying the *maamar*. From then on, he was a Lubavitcher chossid.

(תשורה מונדשיין אב תשנ"ט ע' 32)

His children's chinuch was R. Bentche's life. For the first ten years after his marriage, he lived in Rudniya, a town near Lubavitch with a chassidishe bent. But the *haskala* reached that town too, and local youths began to promote secular ideals. When they tried to open a *haskala* school, R. Bentche and R. Boruch Shalom Kahan opposed it intensely, even throwing the desks out of the school building. Their efforts were successful and

the school did not open.

But R. Bentche was still concerned about his children, and decided to relocate. He chose Gzhatsk (Gagarin), a town that was been outside the Pale of Settlement, and therefore comprised almost completely of non-Jews, from whom he wasn't afraid his children would learn.

In Gzhatsk, he immediately established a chassidishe cheder. In hiring a *melamed*, he had to choose between one who had intense *yiras Shomayim* but read with a "Poilische" pronunciation, and a successful teacher with Lubavitch-like Russian pronunciation of the words, but didn't excel in *yiras Shomayim* to the same degree. The Rebbe Rashab told him to choose the first candidate, since the most important factor in choosing a *melamed* is *yiras Shomayim*.

R. Bentche would rise each day at 4 am and read Tehillim with great emotion and tears. When he would recite *birchos haTorah* and come to the words, "*nihyeh anachnu v'tze'etzaeinu*" – "may we and our children know Your name," he would say those words with intense concentration and feeling.

In the middle of a *farbrengen* in Leningrad, the Frierdiker Rebbe once said, "There's a Yid living near Moscow who wakes up at 4 o'clock each morning. He reads Tehillim and cries, and begs Hashem that his children and grandchildren should be *ehrlliche Yidden*."

(תשורה כ"ז, תשע"ט ע' 18)

A Moment with The Rebbe



EVERYONE MUST SPREAD CHASSIDUS!

Shortly after the *histalkus* of the Frierdiker Rebbe, a few *bochurim* approached the Rebbe and asked him to *farbreng* for the *bochurim*. The Rebbe agreed to *farbreng* a month later, on 2 Iyar.

At that landmark *farbrengen* the Rebbe made it clear that the work of a *bochur* includes having an influence on others: "To bring someone to learn Chassidus and become involved in *avodas hatefila*."

"One may use stories of *mofsim* and the like to attain this goal, but the objective remains to draw them closer to Chassidus."

In the winter of 5712 (1952), the Rebbe called the *bochurim* in charge of delivering Chassidus in *shuls* into his room and said, "Word has reached me that there are *bochurim* that don't go out to deliver Chassidus in *shuls*. This is unacceptable!

"It is important they realize that this is for their own good. If there aren't enough *shuls* to go to, then the *bochurim* should sit down in 770 or the *yeshiva* building and repeat *maamarim* amongst themselves, so that everyone hears Chassidus!"

(Toras Menachem Vol. 1, page 42; Vol. 4, Page 237)