

# Likkutei Sichos

Volume 20 | Yud-Tes Kislev | Sichah 2

## Not Just a Tuesday

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Considerable effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the translation while maintaining readability. As in all translations, however, the possibility of inadvertent errors exists.

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## 1.

### THE THIRD DAY OF THE WEEK

The Alter Rebbe's liberation on Yud-Tes Kislev fell on a Tuesday. In his well-known letter, the Alter Rebbe wrote:<sup>1</sup> On “the day for which {the Divine blessing}, *it was good*,<sup>2</sup> was repeated,<sup>3</sup> Yud-Tes Kislev..., when I read the verse in Tehillim,<sup>4</sup> *He has redeemed my soul in peace*,... I left in peace.”

Since the Alter Rebbe himself emphasized that his liberation occurred on the third day of the week — the day for which Hashem's blessing “it was good” was repeated {in the scriptural narrative of Creation} — it is plainly understood that the liberation of Yud-Tes Kislev is **thematically** connected with the third day of the week.<sup>5</sup>

## 2.

### THE TORAH OF PEACE

The crux of the explanation is as follows:

As known, the teachings of Chassidus — “disseminating your wellsprings outward”<sup>6</sup> — began primarily “after Petersburg,” viz., after the Alter Rebbe's liberation on Yud-Tes Kislev.

Therefore, just as *Matan Torah*,<sup>7</sup> generally, is associated with the number three — especially regarding when it took place, “on the third day,<sup>8</sup> in the third month”<sup>9</sup> — similarly, the revelation of the inner teachings of the Torah<sup>10</sup> on Yud-Tes Kislev occurred: (a) in the month of Kislev, which is the third month of the year;<sup>11</sup> and (b) “on the third day” — on the third day of the week.

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<sup>1</sup> Printed in the Alter Rebbe's “*Iggros Kodesh*” (Kehot publ., 5740), sec. 38, **and the sources cited there.**

<sup>2</sup> {*Bereishis* 1:4.}

<sup>3</sup> {On the third day of Creation, Hashem uttered the words, “it was good,” twice.}

<sup>4</sup> {*Tehillim* 55:19.}

<sup>5</sup> See *Likkutei Levi Yitzchak*, “*Iggros*,” p. 219 ff. (according to Kabbalah).

<sup>6</sup> {When Mashiach replied to the Baal Shem Tov's question as to when he would come, Mashiach quoted the wording of the verse (*Mishlei* 5:16): When “your wellsprings will be spread outward.”}

<sup>7</sup> {The Giving of the Torah at Mt. Sinai.}

<sup>8</sup> {The third day of the separation of men and women in preparation for the giving of the Torah; see *Shemos* 19:15.}

<sup>9</sup> *Shabbos* 88a. {Sivan is the third month when counting from Nissan which is “the first of the months” (*Shemos* 12:2).}

<sup>10</sup> To note from the known teaching, in the name of the Rebbe (Rashab) of blessed memory that Yud-Tes Kislev is the Giving of the Torah of the deeper teachings of the Torah (see “*HaTomim*,” vol. 2, p. 88]; see *Likkutei Levi Yitzchak*, “*Iggros*,” p. 223 ff.

<sup>11</sup> See *Likkutei Levi Yitzchak*, “*Iggros*,” p. 219; *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 1, p. 25; vol. 4, p. 1251 ff.

We suggest the following explanation:<sup>12</sup>

At *Matan Torah*, the decree that the higher realms not descend to the lower realms and the lower realms not ascend to the higher realms was rescinded.<sup>13</sup> Thus, *Matan Torah* conjoined the “higher realms” and the “lower realms.” This merger is alluded to by the number “three”: “One” indicates that there is (at the outset) only **one** entity; “two” symbolizes separation<sup>14</sup> — two distinct entities (as the cosmos existed before the Giving of the Torah when the “higher realms” and the “lower realms” were **disparate** entities); and “three” symbolizes the union of these erstwhile separate entities.

Therefore, the Torah’s focus is “peace.” As Rambam writes,<sup>15</sup> “The entire Torah was given to make peace in the world.” In fact, the Torah is called “peace”<sup>16</sup> since peace involves **connecting two** (antithetical) entities.

Similarly, regarding the revelation and dissemination of Chassidus:

Before Yud-Tes Kislev, the **wellsprings** of Torah were not **broadly disseminated** — whether in terms of the “outward” faculties of the person, beginning with his intellect,<sup>17</sup> or in terms of “outward” in its plain meaning — teaching the deeper dimension of Torah in public and spreading it even to the most remote places. —

The liberation of Yud-Tes Kislev diffused the wellsprings outward, resembling the conjoining of the “higher realms” and the “lower realms” initiated by the Giving of the Torah.

As mentioned above, we can posit that this is the reason — at least one of the reasons — that the Alter Rebbe linked his liberation with his recitation of the verse, “He has redeemed my soul **in peace**,” since it expresses the idea of “peace” {alluding to his liberation which brought peace}.

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<sup>12</sup> See also *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 2, p. 301 ff.; et al.

<sup>13</sup> *Shemos Rabbah*, ch. 12, par. 3; *Midrash Tanchuma*, “*Vaeira*,” sec. 15.

<sup>14</sup> This is reflected by Hashem’s separation {of the upper and lower waters} on the **second** day of Creation (*Bereishis* 1:7; see *Bereishis Rabbah*, ch. 4, par. 6; Rashi on *Bereishis* 1:7).

<sup>15</sup> *Mishneh Torah*, end of “*Hilchos Chanukah*,” based on *Sifri*, “*Naso*,” sec. 6, par. 26; see *Gitin* 59b (*Or HaTorah*, “*Mishlei*,” p. 553); see *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 8, pp. 349 ff., which posits that Rambam’s source is *Bamidbar Rabbah* cited in the next footnote.

<sup>16</sup> This is the wording in *Likkutei Torah*, “*Matos*” (86b), **et al.** See also *Erchei HaKinuyim* (by the author of *Seder HaDoros*), entry “*Shalom*.” The wording used in *Bamidbar Rabbah*, ch 11, sec. 7: “The Torah is likened only to peace.” *Midrash Lekach Tov*, beg. of *parshas Kedoshim* states: “There is no peace except the Torah.”

<sup>17</sup> See *Or HaTorah*, *Tehillim (Yahal Or)*, p. 455, that the emotional faculties (*z”a*) are referred to as “external” in relation to *chochmah* and *binah*. Thus, we can posit that intellect is also referred to as “external” in relation to belief that transcends intellect, and especially in relation to the soul’s essence (see *Likkutei Torah*, “*Vayikra*,” 4b.)

### 3.

#### TWOFOLD GOOD

In light of this explanation, we can also understand the connection between Yud-Tes Kislev and the idea that “it was good,’ was repeated” — as the Alter Rebbe specifically points out in his letter that his liberation occurred on the day “for which, ‘it was good,’ was repeated” (and not simply “on the third day of the week”):

As known, the significance of the Torah repeating “it was good” about the third day alludes to the fact that the day is “good for Heaven and good for creations.” This “dual” good represents the cohesion of the higher and lower realms — the good was beneficial for Heaven and creations combined and unified.

This dual good is particularly emphasized in the teachings of Chassidus, which demands two paradoxical types of *avodah* from Jews:<sup>18</sup> On the one hand, Chassidus — Torah’s deeper dimension — elevates the *avodah* between a person and his Creator to an utterly sublime state — “Heaven” (imbued with the **wellsprings** of Torah). On the other hand, Chassidus demands that a person inculcates within himself the love of a fellow Jew, even to the extent of loving “**mere creations**,”<sup>19</sup> as the Alter Rebbe elucidates in *Tanya*,<sup>20</sup> chapter thirty-two.

### 4.

#### IN AVODAH

Another facet of this idea:

The *avodah* of Chassidus applies to and encompasses **all** Jews — those who stand at the level of heavenly heights and those at the level of “creations”:

On the “cover page” of *Tanya*, the Alter Rebbe emphasizes this point. He quotes the verse,<sup>21</sup> “The matter is very close *to you*, in your mouth and in your heart, to do it.” Every Jew should realize that for him — “**to you**” — Divine service is “**very close**.” The Alter Rebbe continues on the cover page to explain {that he intends to clarify} how this closeness can be achieved “in a long and short way.” He then expounds on this subject in his book — *Tanya*.

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<sup>18</sup> {Divine service.}

<sup>19</sup> {People whose only virtue is that they were created by Hashem.}

<sup>20</sup> {When the Rebbe refers to *Tanya* without specifying a particular section of this work, it refers to the first section of *Tanya*, “*Likkutei Amarim*.”}

<sup>21</sup> {*Devarim* 30:14.}

On the other hand, the Alter Rebbe emphasizes<sup>22</sup> that even a person already at the level of “Heaven,” whose divine service is already “habitual” and “instinctive” and who does not strive to reach even higher, is called “a person who does **not** serve Him.”<sup>23</sup> A Jew must always be a “**servant** of Hashem” — he must strive to surpass his own achievements.

The Alter Rebbe states that the verse, “the matter is very close to you,” also applies to **this** principle. A Jew might think that since he already finds himself at the level of “Heaven,” he cannot be expected to reach any higher. The Alter Rebbe assures him that Hashem also successfully empowered him to perform this *avodah*, so much so it is “very close” for every Jew {regardless of his station}.

## 5.

### THE WRITTEN TORAH OF CHASSIDUS

The above explanation of what Yud-Tes Kislev accomplished (at least one of its primary accomplishments) helps us understand the connection between Yud-Tes Kislev and *Tanya*.

— As known, the fifty-three days the Alter Rebbe was imprisoned correspond to the fifty-three chapters of *Tanya*.<sup>24</sup> His liberation from prison was merited by the “two years during which *Tanya* instilled life into the Torah study and *avodah* of the Chassidim.” (For this reason, the Alter Rebbe wanted *Tanya* to be printed before Yud-Tes Kislev.)<sup>25</sup> —

Although *Tanya* was printed two years **before** the liberation of Yud-Tes Kislev (*Tanya* was printed in the year 5557,<sup>26</sup> and the liberation occurred in 5559),<sup>27</sup> the **novelty** of *Tanya* (compared with his other Chassidic discourses) is linked with the achievement of Yud-Tes Kislev.<sup>28</sup>

This idea is alluded to by the adage of our Rebbeim that *Tanya* is “the **Written** Torah of the teachings of Chassidus.”<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> *Tanya*, “*Likkutei Amarim*,” ch. 15.

<sup>23</sup> {*Malachi* 3:18.}

<sup>24</sup> *Sefer HaSichos* 5703, p. 59.

<sup>25</sup> Letter of the Previous Rebbe in *Kitzurim VeHearos {al HaTanya}*, p. 120 ff.; Previous Rebbe’s *Iggros Kodesh*, vol. 4, p. 262 ff.

<sup>26</sup> {Corresponding to 1796 CE.}

<sup>27</sup> {Corresponding to 1798 CE.}

<sup>28</sup> See *Toras Shalom*, p. 55 and p. 114 ff., where it states that although *Tanya* was written before Petersburg, it is in the style of Chassidus after Petersburg.

<sup>29</sup> See at length, the letter of the Previous Rebbe (*Kitzurim VeHearos {al HaTanya}*, p. 118 ff.; Previous Rebbe’s *Iggros Kodesh*, vol. 4, p. 261 ff.).

As is readily understood, *Tanya* was dubbed the “the **Written** Torah of the teachings of Chassidus,” not only because the Alter Rebbe wrote it himself.

[In this respect, *Tanya* is unlike the Alter Rebbe’s chassidic discourses delivered orally but transcribed by his disciples. (Similarly, the discourses of the Maggid of Mezritch and those of the Baal Shem Tov were transcribed only by their disciples and not by the Maggid and the Baal Shem Tov themselves).]

Instead, the relationship between *Tanya* and all other Chassidic teachings parallels the relationship between the Written and the Oral Torah, as explained later in the text.

## 6.

### TANYA’S SIGNIFICANCE

The distinction between the Oral Torah and the Written Torah<sup>30</sup> leads to a halachic distinction regarding how they are learned: Even if someone reads the Written Torah without understanding what he is reading, he still fulfills the mitzvah of Torah study. However, when reading the Oral Torah, the mitzvah of Torah study is fulfilled only when the person comprehends its contents:<sup>31</sup> A person’s **comprehension** of the subject matter is essential; precision in articulating the letters and words is not. Conversely, the Written Torah requires that each letter be written precisely, and the exactitude of reading the words is of primary importance.

We can posit that the following is why the above distinction resulted from the Giving of the Torah: Before the Giving of the Torah, the idea of Torah study also existed, as it says,<sup>32</sup> “From the days of our forefathers, Torah study never left them {i.e., the Jews}.” In fact, the forefathers also had the Torah **transcribed**. As Rambam writes,<sup>33</sup> “Avraham compiled **books** about it {i.e., the principle of the Oneness of Hashem} and taught it to his son Yitzchak.” Nonetheless, none of this could be categorized as “**Written** Torah.” **This** designation was first introduced through the Giving of the Torah:

Before the Giving of the Torah, the decree that “the higher realms not descend and the lower realms not ascend”<sup>34</sup> also applied to the Torah. Its higher dimension — Torah’s **spirituality** (understanding and comprehension) — existed, but it did not **descend** into writing, into the book he wrote, to transform it into a holy **artifact**.

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<sup>30</sup> See *Torah Or* 57d ff.; *Likkutei Torah*, “*Vayikra*” 5b ff.; and in many places.

<sup>31</sup> Alter Rebbe’s *Hilchos Talmud Torah*, ch. 2, par. 12-13 and the sources cited there.

<sup>32</sup> *Yoma* 28b; see *Midrash Tanchuma*, end of *parshas Vayigash*; Rashi on *Bereishis* 46:28; et al.

<sup>33</sup> *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Avodah Zarah*,” ch. 1, par. 3.

<sup>34</sup> {See *Shemos Rabbah*, ch. 12, par. 3.}

Only after the decree was nullified did the “higher realms descend to the lower realms.” The Torah came into the realm of action, the Written Torah: “And the writing was the script of Hashem”<sup>35</sup> — when a person holds a Torah scroll or similar object, he takes **hold of a physical object**.

This was not a descent of the Torah, Heaven forbid, but instead, as Torah is in the realm of action, in “script,” it is “the script of Hashem” — a union of the “higher” and “lower” dimensions of Torah.

Similarly, the Alter Rebbe wrote the *Tanya* with great precision. Every **letter** was chosen after due deliberation. As the Previous Rebbe recounted, writing the *Tanya* took the Alter Rebbe twenty years:<sup>36</sup> “He meticulously revised his manuscript until it was refined and polished. Anything missing was added, and anything extraneous was deleted.”<sup>37</sup> (When he submitted the *Tanya* to be printed, the Alter Rebbe strongly urged the printer to be meticulous about not omitting or adding any letters). —

Embedding the deeper dimensions of the Torah into printed letters is intrinsically connected to the liberation of Yud-Tes Kislev, which disseminated “your wellsprings outward” so that these Torah “**wellsprings**” should be introduced into even to the most “**outward**” of areas.

Just as the Written Torah encapsulates not only the entire Oral Torah that was to be revealed **later** — “everything is alluded to in the Torah”<sup>38</sup> — it also includes Torah ideas studied before the Giving of the Torah.

Along the same lines, *Tanya* encapsulates concepts from the whole spectrum of Chassidus, including those discourses the Alter Rebbe revealed before writing *Tanya*. We can posit even more: As known, the Baal Shem Tov and the Maggid of Mezritch did **not** record their teachings — they taught them orally. Afterward, their disciples transcribed their teachings. With Chabad Chassidus, beginning with *Tanya*, the Alter Rebbe telescoped General

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<sup>35</sup> *Shemos* 32:16.

<sup>36</sup> Letter of the previous Rebbe in *Kitzurim VeHearos {al HaTanya}*, p. 120 ff.; previous Rebbe’s *Iggros Kodesh*, vol. 4, p. 262 ff.

<sup>37</sup> {In the tradition of the family of the House of the Rebbe, it is recounted that once, Rabbi Yehuda Leib (the Maharil) of Yanovitch found his brother, the Alter Rebbe, sitting at his writing desk in deep contemplation. About an hour passed, and the Alter Rebbe became aware of his brother standing beside him. He said to him: “For three weeks now, I have been contemplating how to write this word” —and he pointed to the written page of the *Tanya* lying before him—“whether to include the conjunctive *vav* (as in the word *ve'ikarah ve'shorashah* at the beginning of Chapter 41, where he could have written ‘the essence of the service, its root,’ but instead wrote ‘and its root’).” He then explained, saying: “On a single *vav* in the Book of the *Beinoni* (*Tanya*), one is permitted to spend six weeks of contemplation, and in the seventh week, there will be true illumination with an essential light. On every conjunctive *vav* in the Book of the *Beinoni*, I have deliberated over the entire book.”}

<sup>38</sup> See *Zohar*, vol. 3, 221a.

Chassidus into understanding and comprehension. Thus, it is clear that *Tanya* also incorporates ideas from General Chassidus into written form.<sup>39</sup>

On this basis, we understand the importance and advantage of studying *Tanya* — the Written Torah of Chassidus. By studying *Tanya* and Chassidus in general, we will soon merit to learn the Torah of Mashiach, the Torah’s **deeper dimension**. In the words of Rashi,<sup>40</sup> “{Hashem will appear to them again to explain} the secret of its reasons and its hidden mysteries” — through the agency of Mashiach in the very near future.

— From a talk delivered on Shabbos *parshas Vayishlach*, 5742 (1981)

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<sup>39</sup> See the talk delivered on *Shabbos parshas Ki Sisa* 5688 (*Sefer HaMaamarim* 5688, pp. 199 ff.) that the revelation of the Baal Shem Tov and the Maggid of Mezeritch prepared for the revelation of the essence of the inner dimension of Torah, revealed by the Alter Rebbe. This resembled how the service of the Patriarchs prepared for the revelation of Hashem’s Essence at the Giving of the Torah. See *Maamar “Padah BeShalom”* 5685, where the Previous Rebbe quotes the words of his father, the Rebbe Rashab, spoken on 19 Kislev 5679 (printed at the end of *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5679 (5748 edition); *Toras Shalom* (5743) at its end.

<sup>40</sup> Rashi on *Shir HaShirim* 1:2. (Further research is necessary to identify the source of this statement.)